

Andrew

Hello everyone. This is Andrew Pond, Artistic director of Eclectic FULL Contact Theatre. Welcome to Season 4 of The Half Hour Audio Hour. Every month, we'll be featuring a different playwright, allowing you to not only hear their work, but to find out a little more about them and their process. If you enjoy what you hear, please remember to like, follow, and subscribe to our podcast. And feel free to leave a review! You can help us out in continuing this work by heading over to tinyurl.com/EFCTHHAH, where you can sponsor us through a one-time or recurring donation and become our partner in highlighting the voices and stories of women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists.

This month's production is "Bloody Footprints", written by Michael Yale, directed by Rinska Carrasco, and starring Michael Sherman, Kathleen Ruhl. and Nolan Robinson

Before we start, we'd like to briefly introduce you to Michael Yale

After the production, stay tuned for an interview with Michael for more insight into the play and this process.

Michael Yale trained as an actor at LAMDA in London and has worked extensively in theatre and television; both in the UK and Internationally. More recently he has found success as a playwright and director.

His play with music, *This Little Life of Mine*, which he wrote and directed, was produced at Park Theatre London ("*An absolute delight, a solid five-star show*" – *Broadway World*) and received multi award nominations including Best New Musical (Broadway World Awards/Off West End Awards), Best Musical Production and Best Director (Broadway World).

As a founder member of Stage Traffic his work was met with universal critical acclaim; "*Superb*" Time Out, "*Scintillating, a potent piece of work*" Daily Mail, "*A terrific play. Go!*" The Times, "*Superbly crafted*" The Telegraph.

Other writing includes *Thrice Ninth Kingdom* at Soho Theatre and Seven Dials Playhouse ("*Subtle, menacing, and powerful*" – *The Metro*), an acclaimed adaptation of Henry IV pt 1 at Shakespeare's original Rose Theatre ("*Bold, ambitious and terrific*" – *Reviewing Shakespeare*) and in 2020 his play *Not for*

You was a prize winner at The Wexford International Literary Festival, Ireland, (Best Short Play Award).

He is delighted to have *Bloody Footprints* adapted as an audio drama by Eclectic Full Contact Theatre, Chicago, in Fall 2024.

Michael lives and works in London.

And now, *Bloody Footprints*

Music can be heard;
Debussy 's "La fille aux cheveux
de lin" ("The Girl with the
Flaxen Hair").

LINDA

That 's it, you ' ve got it.

FRANK

And this was our first song?

LINDA

Yes.

FRANK

It's my favorite piece of music?

LINDA

You always said it reminded you of me.

LINDA (Continued)

The girl with the flaxen hair. It's the title. Of the
song.

LINDA (Continued)

I wish my hair was still that color.

FRANK

You had long blond hair.

LINDA

(Smiling gently)

I did.

LINDA (Continued)

There was a late snow that year as well. It was thick
on the ground. You could see the stained glass

reflecting on the white steps as you entered the church.

FRANK

I don 't remember that.

LINDA

The roads were icy, I was almost late.

FRANK

It 's not there.

LINDA

You were getting worried.

FRANK

But you weren 't late. Were you?

LINDA

No.

FRANK

You were exactly on time.

LINDA

Right on time (Beat) Such a beautiful service.

FRANK

Not too long?

LINDA

Just right. Afterwards we built snowmen outside the church.

FRANK

I don 't remember .

LINDA

You put my veil on one and said it was me.

FRANK

A veil?

LINDA

And your tie on the other and that was you/

FRANK

/Can we stop now/

LINDA

/we laughed so much/

FRANK

/I want to/

LINDA

/then you put your coat over my shoulders because I started to shiver/

FRANK

/stop!

LINDA

Of course, honey. Sorry.

LINDA (Continued)

Chris will be here soon anyway. Oh the noodles! The water will be boiled dry. (She dashes towards the door glancing out of the large window as she goes) I hope he 'll be okay on these roads; the radio said there was going to be black ice again tonight.

A doorbell rings)

LINDA

(OFF)

I'll go.

(CHRIS enters.)

CHRIS

Hey dad.

FRANK

Hello Christopher. Are you well?

CHRIS

Me? Yeah, I ' m good . How you doing though?

FRANK

Can 't complain, all things considered.

LINDA

Go in, go in. Let me grab your coat. (Looking at the flowers) Shall I take those?

CHRIS

What? Oh yeah . They 're for you .

LINDA

They're beautiful, I'll put them in water.

CHRIS

And this is for you dad.

(Chris hands Frank a cactus with a card attached)

CHRIS (Continued)

I thought , you know, as you can't get out in your garden, you can have it in your study, or somewhere.

FRANK

(Reading) "Dad , I ' m sure you'll be back to your old self in no time. Chris"

LINDA

Isn't that kind Frank?

FRANK

(To Chris)

Thank you .

LINDA

Dinner' s almost done. (To Chris) Go on, go in.

(Linda exits. Chris takes a step into the room.)

CHRIS

When did you get out of hospital?

FRANK

Four days ago.

CHRIS

Wow , I hadn't realised. Sorry I couldn 't get in touch earlier.

FRANK

Not a problem.

CHRIS

It's just, the family, you know. Busy. (Beat) You look okay.

FRANK

It was mostly internal.

FRANK (Continued)

The bleeding.

CHRIS

Must 've hurt.

FRANK

Not really. When I came round they had already pumped me with painkillers.

CHRIS

Right.

(Beat)

CHRIS (Continued)

So you don 't know what happened, mom said?

FRANK

I don 't remember the event no. They think I slipped on the ice and banged the old noggin.

CHRIS

Right. (Beat) What' s this you 're listening to?

FRANK

Debussy.

CHRIS

De-who-sy? Why are you listening to this?

FRANK

It's my favourite piece of music.

CHRIS

Er, okay.

(Linda hurriedly re-enters carrying the flowers in a vase)

LINDA

Go on, sit. I ' m just about to bring the food out.

(Linda places the flowers on the table and hurries out again.)

CHRIS

You don ' t sit there dad. You always sit at the head of the table.

FRANK

(Changing places)

Thank you .

(Chris remains standing)

FRANK (Continued)

How' s the family?

CHRIS

Good .

Busy.

FRANK

So we have 2 grandchildren Linda says.

CHRIS

Yeah.

FRANK

And your wife, Sarah?

CHRIS

Sam .

FRANK

Oh that's right. She' s a nurse.

CHRIS

Midwife. And she' s my girlfriend, not my wife. We 're not married.

FRANK

But you do have two children?

CHRIS

We do, yeah.

FRANK

Well, maybe you can bring them over next time you come .

CHRIS

Here?

FRANK

They must be worried about their old grandpa?

CHRIS

They don 't know what's happened.

FRANK

Didn 't want to worry them I bet?

CHRIS

Look , what do you remember? I thought concussion just affected your short-term memory.

FRANK

So I' m told.

CHRIS

But you can't remember things from the past either?

FRANK

Well I know who I am, where I ' m from, day to day things, but a lot is really hazy, or just not there at all.

CHRIS

Right. Isn't that weird? Losing it all?

FRANK

The doctor' s say it is rare. It normally occurs after a trauma or shock but it can happen after an accident apparently.

CHRIS

(Beat) Do you remember me?

FRANK

I know your face.

CHRIS

Well, that's something I guess.

FRANK

Your photograph is on the bookcase.

CHRIS

Right, yeah. (He goes over to the photograph and picks it up.) I remember that day, we were at the shore , I was upset because it was time to go home . None of the kids though?

FRANK

Kids?

CHRIS

Kids. My kids, your grandkids.

FRANK

Oh no. We must get some . I'll ask Linda to sort it out.

(Linda pops around the door.

LINDA

Ask Linda what?

FRANK

To get Christopher to send us pictures of the grandchildren.

LINDA

Wouldn 't that be great, I've been meaning to do it for a while.

CHRIS

I've got plenty on my phone , I can show you.

LINDA

Dinner' s ready now . You can show us later. (Handing the bowls over to Chris) Put these on the table for me will you sweetheart. Careful they re quite hot.

(Chris takes the bowls and arranges them on the table)

LINDA

Now , what can I get you to drink?

CHRIS

Beer 's good .

LINDA

Oh sorry sweetie, we do n't have any.

CHRIS

Wine then. Whatever color.

LINDA

We don 't have any wine either, I ' m sorry.

CHRIS

Since when you don 't you have booze in the house?

You 've always got a refrigerator full.

LINDA

Don 't exaggerate sweetie. I just haven 't had time to go to the grocery store since your father came out of hospital.

FRANK

And I don ' t drink alcohol.

LINDA

No. That' s right honey.

CHRIS

Wait, what?

LINDA

Soda okay? Or I've got a juice?

CHRIS

Yeah, yeah whatever you have.

LINDA

(To Chris)

Sit. Sit.

(Linda disappears into the kitchen again. Chris sits)

(Silence)

(Linda re-enters with a large pasta bowl)

LINDA(Continued)

Here you go. Hope you like it. (To Chris) I know you can be a bit iffy about fish but it's crab in a cream sauce, so no bones .

Your father's absolute favorite.

Oh , forgot the serving spoons . I'd forget my head if it wasn 't screwed on. I

didn 't mean. ..

FRANK

Like mine you mean.

(Linda laughs hesitantly. She exits)

FRANK (Continued)

Well, it smells good.

CHRIS

(Urgently)

Dad , dad don 't eat that.

FRANK

Why not? I 'm just having a taste, I ' m hungry.

CHRIS

You ' re allergic to shellfish.

FRANK

But your mother...said. ..it's my favorite.

CHRIS

Seriously, it will make you really ill.

(Linda re-enters with serving spoons)

LINDA

Here we are. Bon appetite. Do you want to serve yourselves or shall I be mother? (She notices that something isn't right) What 's wrong?

FRANK

I don 't , I don 't...the crab is bad.

LINDA

What do you mean honey I bought it fresh from that sweet fish guy in the market this morning?

FRANK

Christopher said/

LINDA

(To Chris)

/What did you say?

CHRIS

It was just a joke .

LINDA

What did you say to him?

CHRIS

I said he was allergic to shellfish okay? Just a little trick to test his memory.

LINDA

Christopher!

CHRIS

Sorry dad, just messing with you. You love it, it won 't hurt you . Promise.

LINDA

He's just trying to be funny, take no notice.

FRANK

(To Chris)

Bit of a joker are you?

CHRIS

So you used to tell me .

(Linda puts the pasta into their dishes. They eat in silence)

LINDA

This was the first meal we had on our honeymoon Frank.

FRANK

I...I think I recall. A shack on a beach.

LINDA

That 's right.

FRANK

Just around from a little harbor.

LINDA

You could hear the boats, all the colors of the rainbow they were. Such a beautiful day.

FRANK

The sea breeze rattled through the sails.

LINDA

Like music, you said.

FRANK

The song of the siren.

LINDA

Good honey, can you remember where we were?

FRANK

France, no Italy. it was in Italy.

LINDA

Oh honey that's wonderful. Yes, we were in Portofino. Isn't that wonderful Chris, he's really starting to remember things again now.

CHRIS

Wonderful.

(They eat)

FRANK

(Beat)

Allergic. That's a funny one. Like teasing your old man, did you? Funny guy are you Christopher?

CHRIS

I take after you dad. You're a funny man.

(They eat)

LINDA

(To Chris)

How's work sweetie?

CHRIS

Busy. New editor's pushing us like crazy, wants to make her mark.

FRANK

Your mother tells me you're a designer.

CHRIS

Yeah, I work for a magazine.

FRANK

A magazine eh?

CHRIS

Yep an online tech "magazine". Hardly a proper job though eh dad? Not like you. Do you remember what you

used to do?

FRANK

I was an accountant but now I ' m retired.

LINDA

You were made a partner of the firm honey. You were well thought after there. (To Chris) They sent a beautiful box of chocolates when they heard about his fall. Handmade.

CHRIS

Handmade? Wow . Couldn" t they afford to get one from a supermarket?

LINDA

Don 't tease, you know what I mean. Artisan.

CHRIS

Artisan eh? Fancy. (Beat) Did mom tell you what you used to do for a living or did you remember?

FRANK

No , I remembered that.

CHRIS

Did you? Well done you. But you don 't remember your family?

FRANK

Well, of course I remember bits and pieces.

CHRIS

Like you always call me Christopher never Chris? Even though no-one else ever does.

LINDA

(Beat)

Thank you for coming tonight sweetheart. It's so nice that the three of us are together. It means a lot to me. ..to us.

LINDA (Continued)

I think it will help you Frank, all of us being together like this.

FRANK

Yes. (To Chris) Your mother makes a fine nurse.

LINDA

Just doing what the doctors recommended .

CHRIS

And what's that?

LINDA

You know. Talking about the past, sharing memories,

playing familiar music...

FRANK

Don 't forget the exercise. (Gesturing to Linda) This one' s only got me dancing.

LINDA

The doctors said it would help to keep active.

CHRIS

Do you remember you used to take me to your office sometimes when I was little?

LINDA

I don 't remember that.

CHRIS

Once or twice. Didn' t they have some guy dress up and give presents out at Christmas.

LINDA

Oh , that's right. Mr Reynolds used to dress up as Santa Claus and give all the staff's children presents out of one the big mail sacks . I remember . One year you got a little calculator and used to pretend you worked for your father.

CHRIS

(To Frank)

I 'd sit upstairs under your desk with Molly and wait for you to come from work , then do some math to impress you when you got home . You were never very impressed.

LINDA

Oh sweetie your father was tired after being at work all day. (Lightly) Last thing he probably wanted to see was more numbers when he got home .

FRANK

Who the heck was Molly?

LINDA

The cat honey.

FRANK

Hmm , don 't recall that.

CHRIS

She was real sweet, a gentle Maine Coon with the softest fur. You had her put down because her fur used to get on your suits, oh ,and she 'd shit all over your lawn . You sure did love that lawn. "Smartest lawn in the whole goddam neighbourhood . "

FRANK

(Dismissively)

I...I don 't remember.

LINDA

She was old, she couldn 't help herself. It was for the best.

CHRIS

She wasn 't old

LINDA

You were only small sweetie, you won 't remember.

CHRIS

No , I remember clearly. Dad used to shout when he came back from the bar after work. " Mangy animal" you ' d say, "I'll wring its frickin neck when I get hold of it" . Only you didn 't say frickin, you said something else.

FRANK

Nonsense. You 're mother' s right. You must be mistaken. And I don 't even drink alcohol.

CHRIS

Oh yes you do.

LINDA

(To Frank)

Sorry honey, you must have misunderstood . The doctors said it's best not to drink after your fall. For your health. You enjoyed a drink before, every now and again .

CHRIS

No dad you didn 't like alcohol. You loved it.

FRANK

(To Linda)

That him being funny again?

CHRIS

Yeah. I ' m a funny guy me .

LINDA

Everyone finished.

(Linda goes to take the bowls away)

CHRIS

Let me do that for you mom .

LINDA

(She picks up the bowls

No , you sit down. I know it's not the weather for it, but we ' ve

got ice cream for desert. Ice cream and tiramisu.

CHRIS

Don 't tell me , his favorite?

FRANK

That 's right.

CHRIS

Well isn 't he lucky.

(Linda exits)

FRANK

You shouldn 't use that tone of voice with your mother.

CHRIS

No? What tone should I use?

FRANK

Respectful.

CHRIS

And what would you know about that?

FRANK

What 's that supposed to mean?

CHRIS

(Beat)

Shall I show you the photos of my kids now dad?

Would

you like to see my kids?

FRANK

Sure.

CHRIS

(Getting his cellphone out of his pocket)

Don ' t worry you ' ve never met them, so you don 't have to pretend to remember their names.

FRANK

I've never met them? But how old are they?

CHRIS

(Showing Frank the photos)

Jacob 's 7 and Ava is 4.

FRANK

They are very...

CHRIS

Very what dad?

(Linda re-enters with a tray of dessert)

FRANK

...very attractive children

CHRIS

That 's not what you normally say.

FRANK

Why , what do I normally say?

LINDA

Chris!

CHRIS (Continued)

That they 're very "dark" . In fact, do you want to know why you ' ve never met them?

LINDA

Chris don 't!

FRANK

Go ahead.

CHRIS

Because, and I quote, you "will have nothing to with the half-breed bastards of my black bitch. "

LINDA

That 's enough Christopher.

CHRIS

I ' m just reminding my dear dad what he has always said to me about my children' s mother. Your grandchildren.

FRANK

I don 't like your tone mister.

CHRIS

What again? Tut tut me . Well I don 't like the bullshit that comes from your mouth.

LINDA

Stop it Chris! You promised .

FRANK

(Standing)

How dare you !

CHRIS

(Standing)

Go on then big guy. You going to whup me for being a bad boy? Wouldn 't be the first time you ' ve punished me eh dad? Oh , I forgot you ' ve conveniently forgotten what a prick you are.

(Frank lurches forwards but stumbles bumping into Linda as he falls to the floor. The content of the dessert cover him)

LINDA

Frank!

FRANK

(Clearly dazed)

Don 't fuss. I ' m fine. I ' m fine.

LINDA

No , you ' re not. Chris please. He' s not well. He's only just come out of the hospital. Help him. Please.

CHRIS

Come on, get up.

FRANK

I can manage.

CHRIS

(Lifting his father)

No , you can't.

LINDA

Go upstairs and change. Go on. I'11 clear this away.

(Frank exits. Linda bends and begins to clear up the mess)

LINDA(Continued)

You promised.

CHRIS

Why do you always stick up for him?

LINDA

You promised. You promised.

CHRIS

Promised what? To be a good little boy and not to speak until I ' m spoken to, or else daddy will get mad?

LINDA

Don 't start up again Christopher please.

CHRIS

Let me help.

LINDA

Why did you come?

CHRIS

Because you asked me to.

LINDA

But why did you come if you couldn 't...

CHRIS

Couldn ' t behave?

LINDA

That 's not what I meant.

CHRIS

I came to see him suffer. Okay?

LINDA

Well you got what you wanted. Are you happy now?

CHRIS

No. I ' m not. I may be my father' s son but I am not like him. I wanted to see him weak and pathetic, but I just feel sorry for him.

LINDA

Shh he'11 hear you . Please don 't , you ' 1l ruin everything.

CHRIS

There' s nothing to ruin. He ruined everything a long time ago.

LINDA

You don ' t understand , I' m making him better.

CHRIS

How? By pretending he's somebody he's not. Making up bullshit that 's not real? That 's not his favorite meal, he hates classical music and you didn 't go to Italy on your honeymoon he was too mean to take you anywhere. And as for not drinking, what the/

LINDA

/That' s not who he is now . He's the man he was when we first met again.

CHRIS

You can 't believe that?

LINDA

I ' m fixing what was wrong.

CHRIS

This is crazy. He treated you like crap his whole life and you think you can just "fix him" .

LINDA

I can.

CHRIS

He's still got you where he wants you hasn 't he? Still making excuses for him and clearing up his mess.

LINDA

It' s not/

CHRIS

/Tell me I 'm wrong.

LINDA

It 's not/

CHRIS

/Tell me! Or have I lost my memory as well! Remember the nights he 'd come back rat ass drunk and smack you around while I was upstairs in bed?

LINDA

Don 't Chris.

CHRIS

Peeing myself in case he came for me next. Holding my breath so he couldn 't hear me. Well I ' m not scared anymore, even if you are.

LINDA

It' s not like that now .

CHRIS

Now . But when he gets his memory back it will start all over again. He will crap all over you and you will roll over and let him because you ' re scared. Scared of him and scared of being alone.

LINDA

I ' m not scared. I ' m in control now.

CHRIS

No , you are not! You 're weak mom and he knows it.

LINDA

Hush now baby.

CHRIS

He' s made you weak.

LINDA

Please just/

CHRIS

/scared and weak.

LINDA

(Angry now)

Be quiet! For once just be quiet!

CHRIS

Or what? Wait until dad gets back and see what I get?

LINDA

(Suddenly)

I did it!

CHRIS

Did what?

LINDA

He didn 't fall, he didn 't have an accident. I hit him.

CHRIS

Dor 't be stupid.

LINDA

He came home from the bar in town. He's been going there most days since he retired. Buying drinks for all of his buddies , meeting a woman he thinks I don 't know about. He thinks I don 't know but I do. I had my bags all packed that night. I was going to leave him but I wanted to see his face when I finally walked out of the door. When he came in he was worse than ever. He stank of booze and smoke and stale perfume . Then the foul language started and then the slaps . He hadn 't.. .been. ..like that...for years... I didn 't think he 'd/

CHRIS

/Mom I ' m sorry, I am so sorry.

LINDA

I didn't feel anything. I was numb, all I could hear was his laugh , all I could smell was the perfume and all I could see was your photograph over his shoulder , your sadness. I picked up the heaviest thing I could find and hit him as hard as I could. He just carried on laughing, I hit him again, I hit him with 4 0 years of pain behind me. That look on his face as he fell. He knew I wasn't scared anymore. I was the one in control.

CHRIS

Jesus mom .

LINDA

I dragged him outside and left him there. In the snow. In the gutter. He must 've crawled to the porch steps and passed out. One of the neighbours saw him and called an ambulance. They thought he'd fallen on the steps coming back from the bar. I said I didn 't hear a thing. (Beat) I wanted him to die. (Beat) But don ' t you see, we ' ve been given a second chance and this time it will be different, I ' m in charge.

CHRIS

What if he suddenly remembers? (Beat) Come back with me , to my place.

LINDA

I think it's time you left Christopher.

CHRIS

You gotta be kidding me?

LINDA

I think it's for the best.

CHRIS

No , you can't. (Quietly) You always did chose him over me. Always. Please come with me.

CHRIS (Continued)

Mom !

CHRIS (Continued)

You ' re as bad as he is.

(Linda

begins to tidy the table)

CHRIS (Continued)

Take care of yourself. I love you.

(Chris exits. The sound of the door closing. Linda slowly goes over to Chris 's photograph, picks it up and puts it away into a drawer. Frank enters,)

FRANK

Has Christopher gone?

LINDA

Christopher?

FRANK

My mistake.

(Linda returns to clearing the table, Frank walks to the CD player and puts on "La fille aux cheveux de lin" (The Girl With the Flaxen Hair)

FRANK (Continued)

Leave those.

(He opens his arms. Linda goes to him)

FRANK (Continued)

This is my favorite piece of music.

LINDA

Yes.

(He takes her in his arms)

FRANK

It was the first music at our wedding.

LINDA

Yes.

(They dance slowly)

FRANK

It reminds me of you.

(He runs his hands through her hair.

Linda smiles gently)

FRANK (Continued)

You 're my wife.

LINDA

No my love. You 're my husband.

FRANK

And I ' m your husband.

(They dance)

Andrew

Thank you for listening to Bloody Footprints, here on The Half Hour Audio Hour. Next up is a brief interview we conducted with Michael Yale after the recording of this show.

So Michael, I just want to say thank you so much for letting Eclectic Full Contact Theater be part of your show, Bloody Footprints.

Michael Yale

Well, thank you very much for putting it on. I'm really, really, really pleased you did.

Andrew Pond

Excellent. So my first question is, how long have you been writing?

Michael Yale

Well, um i've been I've been an actor for the last many years, for nearly 30 years. And during that time, I always loved improv. um So I've been kind of creating characters and creating stories as long as I've been acting. But a but more formally, I would say within the last 10 years, I've put all those worlds in my head that I make up on paper and yeah started to write for theatre initially. And I've written a whole bunch of plays. But this is the first time you know I've had a piece that's been adapted for audio.

Andrew Pond

Excellent. That's, that's what, was it just you decided one day, you know, I should get these things on paper. What, what inspired you to start writing?

Michael Yale

yeah do you know what i was in a play and something wasn't working and the director said oh mike can you uh can you do something different with your character can you add a monologue and i'm like okay sure that was going to be a set piece within it it wasn't going to change every night so i wrote a monologue for a play and it and it came across very well and i really enjoyed doing it and then i thought i had a few ideas about stuff that i'd always wanted to write about and so i then wrote a couple of plays that I had put on in London, which did pretty well. And I loved it, I have a sense really, so I write regularly now. I'm still an actor, but I don't really do, I don't act for theatre anymore, I act for TV. um But as a writer, I predominantly write for the stage, although I really like the idea of writing for audio.

And so I've just started to work on a piece that I think would really work well as an audio drama.

Andrew Pond

Awesome. So what inspired Bloody Footprints?

Michael Yale

Do you know, I was away, I was on holiday somewhere and I was in some big hotel sitting at the back. I don't normally go to big hotels. I think I was doing a job when i was overnight somewhere and there was um there a band on and there was ah there was an older couple dancing a waltz on the dance floor and at first glance I just thought how peaceful they looked and how how much in love they were and then I wasn't staring a prize but there was something about something about the expression on the woman's face told the story and I didn't know what the story was

Andrew Pond

Mm hmm.

Michael Yale

And then I thought, I'll make a story for what I'm seeing. And that was it, really. And they they stuck with me and it went away. And that was the starting point. So Bloody Footprint starts with an older couple dancing a waltz to some very tranquil music. It all looks very calm and very beautiful. But if you unpick the layers, there's a lot going on underneath the surface. So yeah, I just saw a couple dancing a waltz. And that's not the one I was with, bizarrely.

Andrew

You know, that sometimes the most interesting stuff comes from the oddest places. that's that's really kind of it's kind of I'm glad to hear it wasn't autobiographical.

Michael Yale

No, no, it wasn't. I would have to disappoint you, I'm afraid. I am fascinated by the secrets we keep or we tell ourselves to, you know, particularly within families and a lot of work that I've been writing in the last ah five or 10 years has been that, you know, the the way people get through their lives is by sometimes fooling themselves and trying to shape parts of their lives that are really quite difficult to shape. So yeah, now it's not autobiographical at all.

Andrew Pond

So you mentioned a little earlier that you started now writing things for um audio. had you written So you said this was the first one that had ever been adapted for audio.

Michael Yale

Yeah.

04:33.13

Andrew Pond

so What is it that you enjoy about writing for audio?

Michael Yale

I talked around with something a while ago for for an audio piece and I thought it might work. And I kind of put it on the back burner. And then Bloody Footprints, I wrote as a stage play. And then, brilliantly, you guys have turned it into an audio play. um And I think it lends itself very well to audio. And then I've been working

on something more recently. I've gone back to something I wanted to do. And turning rather than thinking of that for theatre, I've been thinking of that for all your drama.

I think it's the connection the writer could possibly have with a listener and it's that intimacy, that intimate experience that you know you engage the listener through their image directly through their imaginations and you can create worlds. Just focusing on dialogue and sound and you create that atmosphere that immerses the listener in in the story so much.

Andrew Pond

Mhm.

Michael Yale

And the play that the the other play that I write is very, very different to Bloody Footprints. It's actually based on a classic French play that's barely ever been done but couldn't be more um resonant, really. And it's it's set in you know France at the turn of the last century.

Andrew Pond

Mhm. Mhm.

Michael Yale

It was written in 1907. But some of the themes in it are just so relevant to what we experience in the United States and the UK around the world. um And you can create this whole world, I think, of of that time, the France at that time, I don't know about better on audio, but certainly, it and it's a very, it's not that it's a wordy piece, but the dialogue is so important.

Andrew Pond

Mm hmm.

Michael Yale

And there is that part of, it is a little bit bloody footprint in that there's a manipulation within a family and and you get to unpack that through the dialogue. And I just think with the dialogue and and and and and effects and music, it could really be brought to life in ways that maybe that's the best medium for it.

Andrew Pond

No, that that's one of the things that we've discovered doing this podcast is that some there it's a it is. It's a very intimate experience to listen to a play as opposed to necessarily going and seeing it because you. it's directly to you as the listener. And that's been, that's been a very interesting thing to see sort of develop over the the years that we've been doing this is how writers and listeners both kind of really get into that idea.

Michael Yale

yeah but I know it's the same in the States, I'm based in the UK and there's um we're very lucky. So bbc on BBC Radio 4 every afternoon there's an audio, there's ah there's a drama and ah you know my folks used to listen to it and and I've inherited that that passion for it and whenever I can and if I'm home I might but listen to the audio drama in the afternoon. I've kind of been brought up on without realising it that, you know, and and and it does affect you in different ways than going to the theater doesn't somehow. I love going to the theater, not passions about theater, but there is something about radio drama and audio drama that, you know, it really resonates when it went down well. Yeah, and know and I've i've done some ah've done some radio plays as an actor as well. And as an actor, I quite like just creating, you know, that connection with your voice and you the immediacy of it all.

Andrew Pond

Oh, yeah. Yeah. No, it's it's one of the. It's it's one of them, I think, as both and an actor as well. A really wonderful opportunity for actors to just be able to do. Whatever, because it so doesn't rely on so much of the stuff that kind of can pigeonhole you in um any kind of medium where there's where there's visuals to it.

Michael Yale

Yeah. Yeah. Sure. No, I can completely agree. And as a writer, you know, although that's probably not what I'm more drawn to, you you do you can create worlds that you can't create in the same way. You know, you can create worlds in people's imaginations on audio. And on stage it's a lot more tangible. Do You know, what you see is what you get and on film.

Andrew Pond

Mm-hmm.

Michael Yale

And of course it fires the imagination. But like you say with audio, it's just a whole different, yeah, lovely palette to play with.

Andrew Pond

Yeah. Yeah. And of course, on the on the back end is somebody who runs a theater company. I'm like, it's so much less expensive.

Michael Yale

Oh, oh yeah.

Andrew Pond

I don't have to figure out how to put a spaceship on stage.

Michael Yale

Yeah. and you And you don't have to, you know, you don't have to have 10, 20 actors for however many months, you know, every night doing on elaborate sets you know and theaters, you know, like most industries, you know, sadly, you know, needs to be aware of how spending's spent.

You know, we, the world we are in the moment, you know, costs are emerging.

Andrew Pond

Oh yeah.

Michael Yale

but in you' Like say you can create, you can have a spaceship, you can go to Mars, you can go to Venus, you can have a cast of thousands.

Andrew Pond

Yeah. Yeah. One of the. we're we're We're just about to start rehearsals for a um for a festival of audio scripts that will actually be performed live like they used to do on radio. And one of the great things is when we get submissions from people, one of the things we say is, look, you can have as many characters in this script as you want, but they have to be able to be done by five actors.

Michael Yale
Yeah.

Andrew Pond
because that's, mostly because that's how many microphones we have.
But it's so much fun because you get to watch, sometimes you get to watch somebody do an entire scene with themselves as two different people, which I always think is a lot of fun. Little sadistic, but a lot of fun.

Michael Yale
Yeah.

Andrew Pond
So Michael, um do you have any upcoming projects that you'd like to promote?

Michael Yale
um Yeah, I guess it kind of sprung out of doing bloody footprints before actually. but yeah i'm working with ah Although I'm based in the UK, just in the last couple of years, I seem to have more ah quite a few connections with the States. So I'm working with a company in Houston at the moment on a new piece for them. They're called We Give Productions. They're an amazing company that makes accessible daytime theatre for people in the community, for ed theater. And they're they're such a great company, and I'm i'm writing a new piece called The Mystery Guest, which won't give too much work at the moment, um set in the 1950s in the States, um and and looking at the dynamic of but the UK and the USA at that time, and um but also, again, hate being predictable, but there is a very family there's a family dynamic that goes on within that as well.
So yes, I'm working on that. And um'm I've also, over the last quite a number of years, I've been working on an adaptation of a French novel that I want to put to, well, I have put to music with a musician friend of mine. um And next year, fingers crossed, is the is the year that we're we're going to try and launch it.

Andrew Pond
Oh, wow.

Michael Yale

We've done workshops and we've done, they've gone down really, really well. uh so yeah just been biding our time really and and next year is as far as we you know we're happy with the book and we're happy with the lyrics we're happy with the music so watch this space for next year hopefully.

Andrew Pond
That's wonderful.

Michael Yale
very

Andrew Pond
Congratulations. Cause that's, that, that sounds like a massive undertaking.

Michael Yale
yeah Do you know what I've been taking along in the background for a long long time and we we did early songs probably 10 years ago that we just showcased a few songs and then we did a couple of um stage readings that have gone down brilliantly well and then went to you know re-wrote stuff did another reading then parked it for a while for various reasons um but we feel like now is kind of the right time next year to get it out there so um

Andrew Pond
Mhm. Right.

Michael Yale
I'm very excited. My background is not musical theatre, but I love music. so um And I've got a a good friend who's ah is an amazing musician, so we we got together and wrote some songs that I think are good, and I wrote the book. So I think it's more of a... It's a show with music rather than a pure musical. However you want to take it, yeah.

Andrew Pond
Excellent. so Hey, that's congratulations, because that ah that sounds really, really, really cool.

Michael Yale

I've really enjoyed it. we wrote we wrote us In the meantime, we wrote a shorter musical together, a forehander that was on in London um a few years ago. um So that was the second musical we wrote, but we we put it on first as a to see how we could try it out. And again, that went down really, really well. That was a contemporary piece, a brand new piece. um And i I love writing. the The process of writing songs, I just think, is is such a a wonderful thing to do.

Andrew Pond

Excellent so so now comes So now comes um I Would I would say it's a spoiler question except for the fact that anybody listening to this Interview has already listened to the show So they know what's going on um So Do you think Because it's left kind up in the air at the end of the show, which is awesome. But do you think Linda is successful in what she's trying to do?

Michael Yale

No. she...poor Linda um

Andrew Pond

Poor linda

Michael Yale

and No, she's creating a whole new world of trouble for herself and sadly I don't think she can help it. She's, you know, without giving everything away, you know, she's she's she's lost in and this world that has been difficult for her and she's struggled to break out of and Yeah, I think that lost is a word for her and and and wants to make sense of what's gone on before and have it some validation that it was, there was something good in it.

Andrew Pond

right

Michael Yale

And, and and that, that obviously, no, that's our whole life. And just, I'm trying to work my way through it without giving everything away.

Andrew Pond

Well, remember, like I said, everybody everybody listening to this has this, this interview basically goes up immediately after the end of the script on the episode.

Michael Yale

Oh, okay.

Andrew Pond

So everybody listening to this has already heard the script.

Michael Yale

Nice. Okay, gotcha. Yeah, no, I just think, you know, she has to believe that something of her life might be of value and that she didn't just suffer.

Andrew Pond

Mm-hmm.

Michael Yale

And, ah and yeah you know, I feel sorry for Chris and I feel so it's this kind of toxic maleness that, you know, Frank... emanated for their whole whole relationship.

This infested the whole family. And I think Chris has a habit has had to get out of it and he's gone out of it. But but Linda, you know she I think she adores the man and wants to make sense of why she adores the man.

Andrew Pond

Mm hmm.

Michael Yale

And Chris is left home, you know, he he's got his own life now and Linda knows that. so But she she needs something and, you know, she's got this idea that this is going to be their life. But as I said, no, poor Linda, it's a whole new world of... I think Frank will change. I think he has got to a different place. I think he's, but he's scared now, but that's not a relationship to have who's the most scared isn't a great basis for a relationship.

Andrew Pond

Well, I mean, there's also, there's also, I mean, as I was reading it and and got to the, got to the end, I had this kind of This horrible premonition of what happens if all of a sudden It all comes back to him You know Oh

Michael Yale

Yeah. and And just to add something in that, ah i'm I'm not sure how much he has forgotten or how much he's chosen to forget. So, you know, you can't always you can't always always trust Frank either. I'm not, I just want to leave it open to be, it I mean, do I think, sorry.

Andrew Pond

Yeah, no, I, I think no, go ahead.

Michael Yale

sorry I was gonna say, do I think he's lost his memory? Yeah, he has he has. But has some of it started to come back and he's not letting on? Yeah, possibly. I think so.

He'll do something.

Andrew Pond

Well, now that, that, that adds a whole new wrinkle to everything then.

Michael Yale

Yeah, and what he does with that next, that's, yeah.

Andrew Pond

Yeah.

Michael Yale

That's for the sequel
that Poor Linda, I'll call it.

Andrew Pond

There you go. Poor Linda.

That, that'll be the, I was going to say that'll be the the title of the full length. Poor Linda.

Michael Yale

Yeah, exactly. I do like Linda, but yeah, I feel so sorry for her.

Andrew Pond

Yeah.

Michael Yale

So much empathy for her. You know, we all do things for love.

Andrew Pond

Oh yeah. Well, Michael, thank you so much for taking the time to do this interview. And once again, thank you, uh, for sharing your show, bloody footprints with us.

It's a wonderful, wonderful script. And on behalf of myself and everyone here at EFCT, I just once again, want to say thank you so very much.

Michael Yale

Thank you. I'm absolutely delighted that you're putting it on. I really, really am. Glad you enjoyed it.

Andrew

We hope you enjoyed Bloody Footprints. Next month, we will be presenting Natasha Toughs It Out by Rex McGregor, And don't forget to head over to eclectic-theatre.com to find out about all our other shows and projects, like our second annual Crashbox Festival of Short Live Audio Plays, running December 5th-15th at the Edge off Broadway Theatre in Chicago. 6 amazing audio plays featuring the fantasy genre performed live, with Live music and incredible live sound effects! In person and livestream tickets now available at eclectic-theatre.com!

On behalf of myself and everyone here at EFCT, thanks for listening