

SOPHIE INT

[00:00:00] **ANDREW:** Hello everyone. This is Andrew Pond, Artistic director of EclecticFull Contact Theatre. Welcome to Season 2 of The Half Hour Audio Hour. Today we are featuring an interview with the director of Blag—Sophie Flack. We hope you enjoy

Sophie first off. Thank you very much for coming back and doing this.

[00:00:06] **SOPHIE:** Oh, you're welcome. Thank you for having me back. I really enjoyed it.

[00:00:10] **ANDREW:** So what is it that made you want to direct?

[00:00:14] **SOPHIE:** I mean, I've always kind of done it really ever since I was at school and we used to have drama festivals and I'd kind of put plays together and direct my friends and then, and be in them.

I think the thing I love about directing is that you sort of get to sort of shape the whole story, um, and that you get to kind of bring the whole team together. Um, you know, it's like one of the great pleasures for me is working with talented people and it's kind of getting everyone's opinions and listening to everyone and then kind of bringing the best out of everyone and shaping everyone in the same direction.

So that everyone's kind of on the same page and it part of the same story.

[00:00:57] **ANDREW:** Excellent. Excellent. And what drew you to this project?

[00:01:01] **SOPHIE:** I just really loved the script. I mean, I'm actually a big football fan. Um, so I was kind of really on board with it and really rooting for these guys. And I thought it was hilarious, especially when I messaged Victoria and found out that it's actually a true story.

I thought it was amazing. Um, and I just thought it was really funny. It just really good writing, um, but just really entertaining, but also quite moving, you know? Um, I think we it's, it's obviously funny, but also we really feel quite touched by these guys and what they acheive.

[00:01:30] **ANDREW:** I would agree with that. I mean, I think that's one of the really, uh, lovely things about the show and one of the things that I really enjoyed about it when I read it.

Um, now you directed Diltie Moss for the Half Hour Audio Hour last year. Um, tell me, what are some of the things that you enjoy about directing audio drama?

[00:01:52] **SOPHIE:** Uh, I think the thing I love about audio drama is that it's really intimate. Um, but on the one hand it's sort of quite expansive and imaginative and you can kind of go anywhere and be anywhere and you can make great leaps emotionally and scene changes wise without.... You know, if you're doing theatre or a film, you have to kind of visually show that and manage that. Um, whereas you're not restricted by that from an audio point of view. So you can go anywhere and do anything. Um, But at the same time. So on the one hand you can kind of go crazy, but at the same time, actually, there's something very real and truthful, I think about audio and about listening to people's voices. And you can kind of hear it when the actors aren't connected to the truth or aren't connected to the story. So it's kind of a real challenge as well. I think, to direct something that is real and truthful, but is also kind of big, if you know what I mean.

[00:02:53] **ANDREW:** Well, that was actually the next part which is what are some of the challenges about directing an audio drama as opposed to directing for stage or film?

[00:03:02] **SOPHIE:** Um, well, because people only have their voices, every change that you make has to come with people's voices, because the audience don't have anything to see to excite or distract them. So I think sometimes with audio dramas, you can hit a plateau, particularly because we've been recording separately remotely. Like sometimes actors can get into a rhythm with their voices that can be a bit soporific in a way. So I think one of the great challenges for a kind of audio play is to play the changes just through people's voices. So, um, to play the emotional changes, um, and also to play the sort of tension changes. So, um, That's something I'm always saying to voice actors and to these guys as well, is that we need kind of more energy and think about how to kind of keep upping the stakes. And upping the tension just in your voice, um, and also there are other interesting challenges, like when the, the characters are physically doing something, you need the, the sound and the exertion to be in their voices um, as well.

[00:04:07] **ANDREW:** Right. Without them actually doing it.

[00:04:10] **SOPHIE:** Yeah. Yeah. Like, for example, without any spoilers in the, in this show, you know, they're carrying a heavy object at one point so we to hear that when they're saying their lines or they're eating something. So how do we get that across? Um, so those kinds of challenges.

[00:04:23] **ANDREW:** Excellent. Excellent. So I'm going to ask you the same question I asked them, which is, what do you think the future of audio drama is now that we're going back to more, uh, in-person performance?

[00:04:39] **SOPHIE:** I mean, I think there is a future. I think there'll be more of a future in a way, because I think people got more into audio during lockdown, um, because obviously there wasn't as much kind of film happening or the theaters were closed. And I think also, you know, everyone's on their phones nowadays. Uh, nowadays I just turned into a grandmother! I don't know where that came from!

[00:05:01] **ANDREW:** These kids

[00:05:04] **SOPHIE:** Young people these days, always on their phones! But like, that's how most people listen. It's interesting because you know, in the forties and fifties families would have one wireless and they'd sort of gather around and listen to, to the wireless. And I think the kinds of radio shows that were made reflect that. Whereas now, I mean, some people do listen to audio drama on the radio. but I think the majority of people are actually listening with headphones while they're commuting or whether you're going for a walk or doing the dishes or whatever. So it's, it's slowly, it's a more intimate experience. Um, but also as I say, like everyone has their phone attached to them all the time. And like Sam was saying earlier, people get bored quite quickly, so people are always wanting to, to engage with media. So I think actually audio drama is going to kind of keep peaking and keep being popular.

[00:05:54] **ANDREW:** Well, we certainly hope so. I do because I really, I really love it. I really love this.

[00:06:04] **SOPHIE:** And I think something that I think is really admirable that you guys are doing. It's also a really great medium for new writers, you know, for people to kind of get their feet, to get stories out there and to find audiences kind of really quickly. I mean, it's still a difficult thing to do, but it's not like you've got to raise, you know, 1 million to get or TV show made, or, you know, however, it'd be more than that for TV show for a low budget film, for example, whereas an audio drama is not as expensive to make, but it can be just as entertaining.

[00:06:33] **ANDREW:** That's one thing that we actually discovered during the lockdown, because we pulled together not only this podcast, but four serialized audio, audio dramas, and putting those all together cost roughly what we would have ended up spending on one live show.

[00:06:58] **SOPHIE:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:06:59] **ANDREW:** So yeah, I that's one of the great things about it is you're absolutely right. It costs significantly less to pull together something like that. Um, and now the, the, the last question, which is, have you ever tried to blag your way in somewhere you didn't belong?

[00:07:21] **SOPHIE:** I'm quite bad at that, to be honest, I do it all the time . Yeah. I'll try not to incriminate myself too much and

[00:07:40] **ANDREW:** Change the names.

[00:07:42] **SOPHIE:** Yeah. Yeah. Actually, we've kind of me and my friends have like gone backstage at quite a few places. We've gone into like VIP-- we've gone into VIP areas all over the place with sort of, you know, not in a weird stalker way I might add, you know, we've kind of, you know, like film parties and stuff. We've kind of got into some backstage areas. Like just had some conversations with people. It's all about just doing it with confidence and acting like you belong. Yeah, I think-- Have I said too much?.

[00:08:12] **ANDREW:** Remember kids, if you want to get some place, you're not supposed to be just act like you should be there.

[00:08:20] **SOPHIE:** Yeah, yeah. A hundred percent, but I mean, it's, it's all quite harmless, isn't it?. And the. Yeah. Yeah. I'm perhaps not going to say any more

[00:08:32] **ANDREW:** And now we'll quit while we're ahead, Sophie, once again, thank you so much for coming back and, and directing another, another, uh, episode for us. It's really been wonderful, it's always a pleasure to work with you and just thank you for, for being part of this.

[00:08:50] **SOPHIE:** Oh, thank you so much. Well, it's a pleasure working with you guys. Um, yeah. Yourself, Daniel and Victoria everyone's been wonderful. So I'm yeah, I've really enjoyed it. I'm super excited to hear how this one turns out.

ANDREW: We hope you enjoyed this interview with the director of “Blag”. Join us next month for “Fairies”, by Adam Szudrich, and directed by Colette Cullen.

If you enjoyed what you heard, 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 redcircle.com/shows/half-hour-audio-hour, where you can sponsor us through a onetime or recurring donation and become our partner in highlighting the voices and stories of women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists. And head over to eclectic-theatre.com to find out about our serialized audio dramas, Deep Shadows, Bloody Bay, Clusterf**k, Monocyte, and Throwing Shade. On behalf of myself and everyone here at EFCT, thanks for listening.