

The Original Production of Dennis Kelly's DNA



PRODUCTION FACTS

- ▶ *DNA was first written by Dennis Kelly for the National Theatre Connections Programme in 2008.
- ▶ *It was performed in the Cottesloe at the National Theatre, London.
- ▶ *It was directed by Paul Miller
- ▶ * Set, Costume and Video Design by Simon Daw.
- ▶ *The lighting was designed by Paule Constable.
- ▶ *Sound Designer Rich Walsh

What Creative challenges did they face?

Originally presented part of triple bill with two other plays from Connections collection: Miller, was, tasked with, directing shows in one space, quick turn around. Daw, was required to, design set, that, could be used for all three shows.



Cast

Name	Role
Chillin; Gregg	Mark
Foy; Claire	Jan
Bentall; Ruby	Lea
Crane; Sam	Phil
Gordon; Jack	John Tate
Smith; Benjamin	Danny
Glasgow; Troy	Richard
Lams; Claire	Cathy
Bonar; Ian	Brian
Sampson; Ryan	A boy



How did they overcome these creative challenges?

▶ Empty stage and projections

▶ PROJECTIONS

▶ Daw filmed hours and hours of footage of the three locations: the Field, the Street and the Woods. He didn't want a static photo but neither did he want something distracting. He filmed in close up but there was potential for movement, such as leaves blowing in the wind or an aeroplane travelling in the distance across the frame. It created the sense that the characters were somewhere real.

▶ LOCATION

▶ The images, like the play text are generalised and non specific, the woods could be anywhere in Britain, as could the field and street. The year could be any year.



▶ **USE OF SPACE**

- ▶ The grey stage remained bare, if the characters wanted to sit down, they would sit on the floor. The whole space was used, but the action was fairly static as the characters spend much of the time listening to instructions. This allowed the dialogue to be heard and understood by the audience. The acting was stripped down of gestures and unnecessary movement, there was a strength in the stillness and the space between the characters.

▶ **USE OF COLOUR**

- ▶ There was a through line use of the colour blue. The woods were blue, creating a cold, tense atmosphere. The school uniform ties were blue and the plastic bag was blue.

TRANSITIONS

- ▶ The street scene was created by an isolated strip of light downstage. The transitions were swift and stylised movements were kept to a minimum and used as required to get characters from A to B. SFX were used to symbolise the passing of time as opposed to a soundtrack. The sound effect was similar to a “whoosh” sound.

How was colour used?

- ▶ use of colour blue. woods were blue, creating cold, tense atmosphere. school uniform ties were blue, plastic bag was blue.

▶ COSTUME

- ▶ The characters wore school uniform, the boys in trousers and the girls in skirts. Each character wore a jacket or hoody to create an individual image and the ties were loosened. Adam's shirt and face was muddied and bloodied.

Fun facts - not sure how relevant these are but eh



▶ Leah was played by Ruby Bentall as nasal, quick talking and chatty.

▶ Jan played by Claire Foy who is famous for her role as the queen in the crown.

▶ Phil played by Sam Crane who's since appeared in theatre & film. most recently Assassin's Creed.






Gregg Chillin (Mark), Claire Lams (Cathy), Ruby Bentall (Lea), Jack Gordon (John Tate), Troy Glasgow (Richard)

A photograph of four young people standing in a line on a stage, wearing school uniforms. From left to right: a young man in a grey jacket with red trim and a striped tie; a young woman in a blue cardigan, purple sweater, and grey skirt; a young man in a dark jacket and grey trousers holding a blue plastic bag; and a young man in a white hoodie and grey trousers. The background is dark with some stage lights.

Benjamin Smith (Danny), Ruby Bentall (Lea), Sam Crane (Phil), Gregg Chillin (Mark)

A stage performance featuring three actors. The actor on the left is wearing a grey and red jacket and dark trousers. The actor in the center is wearing a white and dark jacket and dark trousers, holding a book. The actor on the right is wearing a grey and white jacket and dark trousers. The background is a large screen displaying a dark, wooded scene. The floor is dark and reflective.

**Benjamin Smith
(Danny)**

**Jack Gordon (John
Tate)**

Ruby Bentall (Lea)



Claire Foy (Jan)

**Ryan Sampson
(The Boy –
Adam)**