



Tricking the Audience into Watching Performance Art: An Interview with Lucy McCormick

[00:00:19] INTRO

Duška Radosavljević: Hello and welcome to the Gallery!

Possibly one of the UK's least expected box office hits of 2016 was a story of Jesus Christ – in the form of a subversive cabaret, and performed out of a bag of supermarket goods. Nescafé Gold, frankfurters and 'myrrh-angue' served as the Three Wise Men's gifts, while the Slaughter of the Innocents was accomplished by downing a bottle of smoothie. This was Lucy McCormick's aptly named *Triple Threat*, a show in which, accompanied by two backing dancers, she proved herself worthy of the title in every way.

In the conversation that follows we find out how McCormick combined her initial training as a classical actor together with her interests in comedy, performance art and pop music to develop her own particular brand of performance within the intersection of these diverse traditions. We revisit the early beginnings of *Triple Threat* (2016) on the alternative entertainment circuit and follow McCormick's gradual move via live art and re-enactment towards becoming a pop star in her own right.

This interview was conducted on Zoom on 16th April 2020, in Week Five of the Covid19 Lockdown in the UK.

[00:01:41] BEGINNINGS

Duška Radosavljević: The way we are structuring these conversations is trying to understand where you come from as an artist – your formative influences, the training you had as a performer, both formal and informal. And I am obviously aware that you did work as part of a company as well – GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN – if you want to talk about that. That might be relevant to us as well, just to understand how you've arrived at making the work the way you make it now. And then we might talk a little bit about how you make work, and then maybe we can talk about what you're currently working on and how that is going. So how did your interest in performance come about? How did you grow up into a performer?

Lucy McCormick: Right back at school I was doing sort of youth theatre, a lot of musical theatre and really cheesy stuff like that. And then I did a quite traditional acting course. So I did, like, a three-year actor training. That was at a school called East 15 in East London–

DR: And you were on the acting course, not on one of those, like, contemporary performance ones?

LMcC: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah, and I still work as an actor now. So I think that's definitely something that really inspires my solo artist practice. You know, it's one of many influences, I guess, on my work, that kind of actor training and actually love for like real traditional theatre – but then in my own work, I'm really kind of messing with it and adding in loads of other things as well, I guess. Yes, so, I did a three-year actor training. And then I started devising my own work, like you say, in a company and, yes, I suppose I'd realised that I didn't just have to stand where someone told me to stand and say these lines that were given to me, and that I actually could do more than that, or had something to give, you know, more creatively and it really hadn't occurred to me until that point. So that was a real sort of formative experience for me, just creating theatre from scratch in a devised, very much collaborative environment with like long-form improvisation and stuff like that.

DR: And how did that come about? What was the first sort of impulse that gave you an opportunity to work in a devising way rather than traditional acting?



LMcC: I feel like because I was so seeped in the world of acting at that point, I really had an interest in deconstructing that training that I'd been through in that world that was all I knew really.

DR: And maybe you could tell us a little bit more about what they taught you on the acting course? What sort of acting training tradition did you train in?

LMcC: Well, it was essentially a sort of traditional Stanislavski. So very much: 'What's your objective and what are your obstacles?', and it was real nitty-gritty actor training. I mean, you do a bit of sort of other stuff as well. At that time – not that much. Like, it really was Chekhov, Shakespeare, all of that. And I do feel like that gave me a lot of confidence and insight with being really able to stand on a stage and really be quite present, not do too much. Like, being able to just stand there and hold yourself is a skill that you sort of have to hone. And I think that thinking about the work I make now, or a lot of the stuff I've done – which is like really absurd and doing quite weird stuff on stage – but I feel like it does hold you in quite a good stead to have this kind of central point, where you can really even just stand on a stage and eyeball the audience, and not feel too awkward about that... And, you know, ultimately, how I feel now is that traditional theatre is really absurd, right? You're all pretending to be called something else. Never mind pretending that the audience isn't there. I mean, okay, to me, that is so much more bizarre than making a theatre show like I do now and sort of talk to people and at least acknowledge them. To me, that's the most normal thing to do. And so I feel like they've got something to teach each other. That's how I feel. Working as an actor now, I feel that also making this much more experimental work has actually made me a better actor. And then when I was working with a group, I mean, partly, what you're doing there is sharing ideas and collaborating and then I just thought: 'I want to make a slightly different kind of work and just kind of follow through on...' – well, I suppose – 'not answer to other people'. And that's good for what that is, but the way that started was much more in cabaret environments and live art events, and so I was making just quite short, ten to 20 minutes – I guess a bit more like conceptual ideas. And the making process then, and as it remains now, it sort of is still devised, but I think it is less so. It's much more like: having the idea in the first place is really the gold. You know, and you sort of then find it out by doing it in those environments, rather than spending real long rehearsal processes, where you're doing the same thing over again, or whatever. It's more about having a concept and going out and doing it. So now I'd say, yeah, my process is sort of part devised, part written and part sort of improvised. And obviously, that became different once I decided I wanted to make a full-length show – that did become then for me about editing and finding a sort of arc to the show and actually sort of about rehearsing and stuff – but yeah, it's just a slightly different process. And especially with the two shows, like *Triple Threat* and *Post Popular*, they're both about using source texts really, in a way that I hadn't done before. So with *Triple Threat* using the New Testament, and then with *Post Popular* looking through these different women's stories in history. And it's about like looking at the text and making it my own, or choosing the bits that I think would be either entertaining, or maybe they feel like they're part of a certain – I don't know – feminist discourse or gender discourse, or whatever.

[00:08:20 to 00:09:00] Excerpt from *Post Popular* (2019)

[00:09:00] CABARET AND STAND-UP COMEDY AS FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

DR: So when you say your work is more influenced by cabaret and stand-up, can you maybe elaborate on this a little bit more – what specific formative influences in that respect might be significant?

LMcC: Well, for a start, I think I like the challenge of – in a cabaret or a nightclub environment, it's a hugely different contract to the theatre. So really, people are out, having a good time, drinking, chatting anyway. And what you have to do is kind of infiltrate that and find a way to engage them. And, you know, hopefully keep them on board with what you're doing, even if it's for ten minutes, but I mean that can be quite hard in itself. Those aren't necessarily the environments for sort of



quieter, more subtle work. And so I think my work was – my brain was working more visually and maybe just trying to judge the amount of text you're doing or kind of thinking of, in a way, tactics to get the audience on board with you in those environments, whether that might be via humour or singing, or yes, something very visual. And also, yeah, like I said, working a bit – I'm calling it – 'conceptually'. But also not, I don't really mean that in an experimental way. I mean, like: 'What's the reference, what's the joke, and how is that going to unfold?', and there's not much time for over-explaining, and you have to sort of make it very clear. And I think in a longer theatre show, there's more time to explore what it is you're looking at. And so those environments have become a place to create and test out material. But then, I know that I suppose [if] I'm making a longer version of it later down the line, I can kind of stretch it out a bit and open up the conversation a bit more. But in terms of the stand-up and stuff, it's another context again. And the rules are so completely different. So I've done a few stand-up nights, not loads, but it's interesting to see how differently the comedy works – a setup and a punchline and it's all, you know, if you step outside what the audience are expecting, it can become quite difficult. But I've always felt that these comedy environments, in a way, the kind of stuff that I've already talked about like deconstructing theatre and stuff, they're like so far ahead of that, even from the beginning, with talking to the audience, participation, really sort of complex puns and use of humour and stuff. Yeah, I just think like humour is a real central thing that I use in my work. And so [I've] just kind of been testing out what ways people do that on stage, whether that be visually, or very text-based, or whatever. There is a real community and a sort of network really for that kind of work in London, which, you know, I'm really thankful for. Like Duckie at the RVT, various nights at Bethnal Green Working Men's Club, The Glory in Dalston... I mean in terms of more night clubby sort of things, I used to do a bit of performance literally on top of the bar at Dalston Superstore, Vogue Fabrics. Yes. And like, basically a lot of the same venues as I'm doing now. I mean, not that I've been even doing my own solo practice for that long, but–

DR: You call it solo practice, but you do have a backing band, if you like.

LMcC: Oh, yeah, I was forgetting... [*Laughter.*]

DR: So how did that come about, because presumably you broke away – or I don't know whether you broke away but I'm just guessing – from that work in kind of like an ensemble situation, pursuing the solo practice. But then you talked about trying out and doing stand-up and then ending up doing something that is again a different kind of collaboration.

LMcC: Yeah. Well, I didn't break away – I mean, I was doing them both at the same time for a while. But quite literally how that happened was, like I said: I work as an actor, and I've also worked as a freelance performer – so, for other theatre-makers that are making more experimental work or whatever. And I did a project, quite a few years ago, really for more of a choreographer and it was for a gallery piece. I auditioned for it, but they sort of said: 'Oh, you don't have to be a dancer, it can be for, you know, just performers, who are kind of movement-based or whatever.' But it was a real kind of dance-based project. Very contemporary and minimalist movement, and it just gave me this, I don't know, this urge to do like 5-6-7-8s. I just really wanted to like dance it out and it was, you know, it was a great piece, but I sort of come from this much more simplistic and cheesy commercial dance background. So anyway, literally, the people I'd done that project with, I said to them: 'I'm just creating some of my own work, and would you consider just coming into my rehearsal process and doing some dance with me and for me, and it'll be very different to this – sort of making up dances to Christina Aguilera or whatever?'

[00:14:00] PUTTING THE SHOW TOGETHER: *TRIPLE THREAT* (2016)

LMcC: When I first was doing the dancing and choreographing and stuff – I didn't know why concretely, I just knew that I sort of desired to use that aspect within the performances, but I didn't have a good enough reason, or a good enough concept at the time. And the very first time that we



did it is when someone said do I want to be part of this Christmas cabaret, you know, a kind of stupid alternative late night Christmas offering. And I just thought: 'Well, we could do the Three Kings', you know, turning up dancing, and we'll give out the gifts, throwing the whatever it was, like the Gold Blend, frankfurters – yeah. That was the first time we did it. And I suppose there was something for me, personally, about how ridiculous that idea is, that it balanced out the use of this real sort of, you know... Commercial dance is quite sincere really, and so there was something about that combination that I found really pleasing and so then I just had this idea to keep looking at the New Testament, and for some reason the combination of the New Testament and the dance routines really worked.

DR: In terms of using the kind of music that you use in your shows, like Aguilera and so on, how does that choice come about?

LMcC: Well, it might be different reasons, or maybe it's like lots of reasons at the same time. One, I think I just have to want to sing the song. And also, maybe with *Triple Threat* in particular, I had to be able to sing the song. I mean, it's hard to be quite virtuosic with singing on stage, when you're also throwing yourself around, covering yourself in crap and, you know, doing all these different things. And so I've also made my peace with, like – they're not going to be the best renditions of the songs I could possibly do. But part of the joke and part of the name in a way with *Triple Threat* is there being quite a virtuosic offering within a show that is otherwise like quite failed and messy, and all of that stuff. So that is part of it. But it's also just, it is about the lyrics. It's about finding a song, which seems to respond to that bit. Just feeling that – using that particular song in that particular moment creates a kind of crack in, maybe in both of the things. It creates a crack in the pop song that we know and understand – or think we know and it becomes something else – and maybe also creates that feeling within the story. Like something is being subverted or, you know, just reframed.

[00:16:49 to 00:18:38] Excerpt from *Triple Threat* (2016)

DR: So you are putting the show together in terms of its structure and content, but you also, if I understand correctly, have worked with external directors like Ursula Martinez. And then the dancing itself – do you choreograph the numbers or do the dancers do the choreography? How do the other parts of the show come together?

LMcC: Well, in terms of the direction, when I first started to make the work, I'd met Ursula a couple of times, she'd mentioned that she was doing a bit of directing and I just asked her if she would work with me, and she's the only director I've worked with really. And obviously, when you make work like this, having a director is quite a specific thing and you have to work out between you what that role is. It isn't as simple as going: 'Right, the director holds the script and decides how everyone's going to do it.' And, obviously, the reason I was making my own work in the first place was to have in a way agency over the fundamental ideas and stuff. So you just find it together. And Ursula takes on that kind of 'outside eye' role and I think is really good at allowing me enough space to kind of create the material and have the impulses, but then she's very good at helping me shape it... What she's also really, really good at, I think, is text and being really specific with text. I think, because I've made mostly quite experimental work, what I really value in Ursula is taking something that's quite way out, but managing to make it kind of accessible enough for a mainstream audience or for a wide range of people anyway. In terms of the choreography, basically, it works differently all the time. So sometimes I will have just choreographed it and I'll be like: 'So this is what it is.' Other times, one of the other dancers has taken the lead and sometimes we literally will do quite a juvenile, old school thing of taking like a certain amount of bars each and putting it together. Because I'm not really from a proper dance training – I suppose like I'm not really embarrassed by working in such a simplistic way, and I'm not embarrassed by 5-6-7-8s in a way that a lot of the dancers I know that do really brilliant, you know, serious dance work just can't bring themselves to work like that or whatever. [Laughter.] And I just – I'm just such a sucker for a dance routine – as soon as there's at least two or three people doing the same moves, I'm just like: 'Yes, I love that!' And I think loads of people do.



And I think, similarly, with using the pop music in the shows, it's like: we all love that, but we are so aware of how crap it is that we feel bad to celebrate it, or whatever. And so I think, partly, the shows just become spaces to allow people to enjoy those moments as they're like: 'Yes, I love this song!' or 'Yes, dancing!', but we don't feel as bad, because I'm trying to offer them in a kind of three-dimensional way or whatever. But that is some feedback that I get a lot – the chance to just enjoy this moment of crap pop and like not feel too bad about it!

DR: And then what is the background of the dancers? I'm now curious about the show you mentioned, where you met them, where you kind of participated in a show with them. What kind of training background do they come from, and what was this show, who was it made by?

LMcC: It was made by someone called Andrew Hartwich and it was for a gallery in Geneva. So you know, it was a really, arty, dance-y project. But the other dancer, Lennie [sic], who still works with me, trained at Rambert. He literally went to ballet school, so, you know, we're talking really, really traditional training. And Samir [Kennedy], who I also have worked with for ages, I think went to Laban.

[00:22:44] THE AESTHETIC INTERSECTION OF POP, PUNK AND PERFORMANCE ART

DR: Just thinking about how the show brings together pop music and a very DIY punk aesthetic, and live art tradition comes into it as well. But it doesn't neatly belong to any one of those lineages. It kind of sits at the intersection of all of these different ways of thinking about performance and genre and all of that sort of stuff. So it kind of feels very much its own thing.

LMcC: Well, I mean, I really like that you said that. And that's how it feels to me. And that's also been quite a sort of proactive thing on my part, I suppose to never want to quite – and I don't know what it says about me or exactly why, but you know – I never wanted to quite land in anything concretely. Maybe that's the worry that – well, I suppose as anything in theatre, or whatever – feeling too complete feels slightly worrying. You sort of want to be ahead of the audience with whatever you're doing, but in this, it almost becomes a game, you know, it's sort of like: 'Well, what genre are we in at the moment? And how is it going to change?' Having done some quite like nitty-gritty performance art stuff, it's also, it's become a bit of a project of how do you use these quite intense bodily actions, for example? But make them in some way accessible? Or how can you... It became a bit of a game of almost like tricking the audience into watching performance art. And what it means is... Well, one, you always feel like a bit of an outsider, as the performer, because you're not concretely part of like one community or one type of work; and two, it means that a lot of the audience are going on this weird unexpected journey and so you can't just be like: 'Oh, well, the live art people'll love this, but other people'll be a bit stressed out', because that works differently for different people. And that is why I've done it and I'm proud that that does seem to be the journey. I am really happy with that, and I'm proud of it. But it is a little bit stressful. For everyone involved. *[Laughter.]*

DR: It's really interesting – I teach on a course at Central, which is called Performance Arts, and I know that you have come and you've taught on the course as well, and you really inspired the students, you know, some students were really like – never stopped talking about your workshops. I'm not quite sure what–

LMcC: Oh, that's so nice!

DR: Yes. And it's really interesting, because most of them... So we have students who come onto the course knowing what they're subscribing to, and then we have students, who come onto the course and not quite knowing what it is, until they really get there. And then some of them have this like personal crisis they go through, which is about: 'But I wanted to be an actor, actually, and I'm having to do performance!' And you were describing a process where you have been able to be an actor, and you are an actor as well, but you are choosing to do this sort of work because it gives you something else that acting doesn't.



LMcC: I know, but then I think there's so much less agency in acting! You don't really just get to choose to be an actor, whereas you can choose – I mean, maybe it's important for people to identify themselves as being an actor or whatever – but you can choose to make this work and set up a small budget, and I'm going to put it on or whatever. And so I think that's why the acting thing is so hard, because really, you're at the mercy of just everyone else. And, certainly, I can't imagine now ever just properly, full time – not that anyone really gets to do this – but just being an actor and not making my own work. I just absolutely can't imagine ever doing that now. And I think, it's really exciting that I'm able to balance these two things now. And that's hard as well, scheduling-wise, it's quite stressful. Yeah, definitely, I just think I need to have this like creative outlet for myself now, and just even, away from creatively, like – just not relying on other people and a lot of other bullshit, you know. There's only so much one can take.

[00:25:00] TEACHING

DR: And when you teach students, which obviously you have been in that position – I don't even know whether it's a matter of you trying to teach them to make performance in the way that you do it or whether it's a matter of just teaching them some principles that you believe in as a performance-maker. How do you kind of distil what you do in that form of passing it on? What do you think is the most important to teach students who are getting into the field of performance-making?

LMcC: I think it's much more about exploring – how did you just put it?

DR: Principles, principles.

LMcC: Yeah, principles. And it depends on the module. Like sometimes, I've worked creating a new piece of work over a certain amount of time with students and other times, if it's just like a quick, one-day workshop, I'm trying to set up exercises or something that we could do together, which will kind of demonstrate how I might make something or, in a way, make them just feel part of the process. I think what I really want to do – and when I go out feeling 'that's gone really' well and I can tell the students have as well – is just when they feel enabled in the space. Like, something has been set up, which has meant that they individually, with whatever they're doing, you know – it works. There is a certain kind of success. Even if that is about being messy and actually getting people to have the confidence to fail, you know, which actually quite often it is... Just making people feel enabled is like, I think what I would strive for. It's quite interesting also now, sometimes working with actors and then sometimes working with people on, say, contemporary theatre MA or something, there're quite different ways that you have to work with people. I find that, you know, actors are quite good taking directions and being quite simple, and actually doing what's asked of them, but they're less likely to be able to fail or improvise and work outside of that. But if you set something up with a more contemporary course or a more experimental-based thing, you set the thing up and then they actually do sometimes almost everything other than what you've asked them to do. [*Laughter.*] And I just find that just super interesting.

DR: Did you have any improvisation classes when you were training as an actor?

LMcC: We did some bits like commedia dell'arte, and things like that, which does include that. And we did some Laban, like movement training. And I think we probably did a little bit of improvising around new texts and stuff. But we didn't do anything like a module called 'Devising' or anything like that. We didn't do that at all.

DR: It's really interesting, I watched some rehearsals with some actors, who were all in their 70s and 80s. And when they trained as actors, you know, at RADA and wherever in the 1960s, or whenever it was, '50s and '60s, improvisation was the dirty word. You know, it was like you get disowned by the rest of the community if you ever mentioned that you're doing improvisation. And they were still saying now, at the age of 70 and 80, when they've said to their friends that they were doing an improvised show, they were like: 'Well, I'm not coming to see that.' [*Laughter.*]

LMcC: Yeah, well I think acting courses now are doing things like devising and more new writing and they've caught up with that. But because I left drama school quite a while ago – I don't know – yeah, nine-ten years ago, I actually can't remember. I sort of left just before I think they sort started getting



on board with that kind of thing again.

[00:30:56] MAKING *LIFE: LIVE!* (2019)

DR: And what about *Life: Live* as a show? You've done a version of it already in Birmingham, if I remember correctly—

LMcC: Yeah, yeah, I got this commission from Fierce Festival to make a show. So yeah, we've done the show once, so far.

DR: And then were you going to be redeveloping it or developing it more for the Battersea Arts Centre run? How was it being structured?

LMcC: Well, it's an album really. So I was writing two more songs. I guess the concept of the show is like: I wrote this album and then the show is the live performance of the album. It's still this kind of DIY aesthetic, but for me, it's the largest scale thing I've made – you know, even to have a set that we make and even to collaborate with an artist, who is doing the set and costumes for me. And I suppose it's just, again, it's in the concept – it's like Lucy wants it to be a kind of stadium show, but all they've got is sort of B&Q sort of thing. So it's about trying to make spectacle out of very inexpensive materials. But when I say writing another couple of songs, you know, even staging a three-minute song becomes a couple of weeks if not more work to really decide what the concept is, how it's going to work, to build it. You know, we've got stuff in the show already that's like making a waterfall in the middle of the room out of these hosepipes. We literally cut a hole into the stage – we made a custom-made piece of rostra that I could put into the stage secretly, so that during the show – we sort of cut a hole in the stage and I go through the stage. So even one new song takes like quite a lot of preparation and rehearsal. I was super happy with the show in Birmingham. But we'd sort of done it once and it was quite a hard show to – we couldn't really do like [what] I've been doing – testing out material at different nights and clubs and stuff. This is not a show that you can do that with. You know, it is a gig and I really didn't want to like deconstruct the gig too much, and make it a theatre show. Like, it's really important to me that this is a gig and that the audience, on the whole is standing. But, also I've had to find what the arc is of the show. Like, it's still, basically, what you were saying earlier about it sort of being on the edge of a lot of different things. I hope it's true of this as well, but in a different way. It is on the edge of a gig, but it still has theatre influences, and also what I hope is that it's also quite funny.

[00:33:38 to 00:34:12] Excerpt from *Life: LIVE!* (2019)

DR: And did you write the music as well? How do you write songs? Is it a process where you are a singer-songwriter type author who writes both the lyrics and the music? And also, how many people are involved in the gig, in the new show?

LMcC: So with the songs, I started off by writing the lyrics of a couple of songs – and then, the dancers are musicians as well [*laughing*] – they're just so talented! I knew that Samir had his own sort of music and sound practice and Ted [Rogers], who worked on some of the music with me, has worked as a lyricist as well, and has various bands. So I was given this residency in Lisbon, basically, just as support for my practice in the early days of making the show, and I just said to them: 'Let's go and do this residency.' I think it was a two-week one. 'And let's just write. Let's write music. Let's write an album. That's what we're going to do.' And we got, say, the first three songs or something. When the project became bigger, basically, I have brought on a music producer, who has been in various bands and has written songs for people, because I suppose I wanted the songs to be quite legitimately – I don't know if they're good or not, I think some of them are – good. I wanted the music to be quite slick, you know, because otherwise the whole thing just becomes too much of a joke. Because the staging is so kind of failed, the music is holding the whole thing up and the music kind of screams what it should be really. I'm more writing the lyrics and the melody. The melody is pretty much the thing that I always do. But yeah, I've collaborated with those people on the actual tracks. And in this show, there's actually five people on stage. And that is me, the two backing dancers, Morven [Mulgrew], who creates the set and the costume, and she's live doing that as part of the show, and then a new aspect that we have in the show, which I actually didn't have in Fierce, is



someone doing a live feed with a camera, just because I felt after that show that some things are being missed that I really wanted to pinpoint. So that's really exciting to me to think of, you know, there being five of us. To me that feels huge.

DR: And the person who's making costumes on stage – are they a performer, or are they a real costume-maker?

LMcC: Kind of both. Morven I think originally went to the Glasgow School of Art and did sculpture, but I think was very interested in performative sculptures, and then she went to Lecoq, and I think since then, now she makes loads of ceramics. I mean, she is incredibly talented, but, yeah, has done performance work. But [she] has such a passion and a joy for creating objects and sculptures, and – we wanted the set and the costume in a way to sort of be very much in conversation with each other, or sometimes be almost the same thing. So for example, there's one song towards the end where I get underneath the black flooring and actually it's all been pre-set. It's got a hole in it and I stand up in the floor and it just turns into a dress. We were trying to think about those two things as really being sort of one and the same.

DR: So it's a lot more spectacular?

LMcC: Yeah. It's on a larger scale and I do not usually, if I'm really honest, think very much about costume at all. That becomes part of the aesthetic of the piece, which is like: 'Oh, shit, I've got no time and no money. I'm going to grab these shorts from the corner of the room. I'm going to make the boys literally put on my underwear, because that's all I've got', and that becomes part of the identity of things. That is just like – I wouldn't see that even as an aesthetic. It's just like, a necessary way of working for me. [Laughter.] And so it's been, you know, really cool to actually think: 'Oh, what's it going to look like? What am I going to wear? How does this change into that?'

DR: And is Ursula still involved in this show?

LMcC: No, no, I'm not working with Ursula on this show. I think partly just because it's a very different kind of show, and it needs different things. And also, I just thought – I'll give the woman a break, do you know what I mean?

DR: And I want to ask you also – when you were talking about your collaborator training with Lecoq or at the school of Jacques Lecoq – did you ever have any clown training? Or how did the comedy aspect of your work come about? And is it still there? Is it still there in the new show, the comic element?

LMcC: I think so. I was pleased with how the humour worked in the show, when we did it at Fierce. The useful thing about this show is the gag is so obvious. Everyone knows what these slick, spectacular pop gigs are supposed to look like. Indoor fireworks and, you know, a platform bringing you onto the stage and all of that. So when it's done in such a failed, DIY way, I do think the humour is a really great part of it and I'm trying to narrate a little bit the idea around it, you know, throughout the show, sort of talking about why I'm doing it. How I wrote the songs, blah blah blah. And you know, there just being a bit of almost like cabaret banter within it. But I don't know. I think I did do, you know, when I was much younger and open-minded, I used to do bits of workshops here and there. I think I did one clown workshop once but I think probably a lot of actors have to be quite good with the old timing and stuff. And it's more just like a personal – yeah, I'm just drawn to comedy. And I think it's so useful in terms of getting the audience on side. The other thing that I like doing is being quite dark, quite political, and quite like challenging, and so I think I just need the humour in the shows to balance that out a bit.

[00:40:29] FUTURE PLANS

DR: Do you have any other ideas on the go, or plans that you're happy to talk about in terms of any other things you're thinking of making?

LMcC: Yes, I do have other things on the go. I am trying to think about what I could talk about at this stage really. Briefly, I've been sort of making the show for a while, on the side, that in my mind at the moment is just called *Poltergeist*. And the premise of that show I guess is a kind of a show where you



don't really see the performer. And the other show I really want to make is a sort of play on like a Spiegeltent, but that is sort of in opposition to a lot of the politics that you find within Spiegeltent and the kind of freak show environment. And so I see that as this kind of very queer, kind of poor space that is like a Spiegeltent, made for people that can't afford to go to an actual Spiegeltent.

DR: Right. Very interesting. It certainly feels like the works are coming out of each other, you know.

LMcC: Oh, that's really interesting to hear, because in a way they probably also sound a bit random, but in my mind, you know, in my mind I know how they link.

DR: Great! Well, thank you very much, Lucy!

LMcC: Thanks very much!

Transcription by Kalina Petrova

Clips Summary

[00:08:20 to 00:09:00] *Post Popular* (2019)

[00:16:49 to 00:18:38] *Triple Threat* (2016)

[00:33:38 to 00:34:12] *Life: LIVE!* (2019)

Audio available at www.auralia.space/gallery1-lucymccormick/.

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