



## **She Goat** **The Making of THE UNDEFINABLE (2019-2021)**

For this LMYE Laboratory documentary we join Eugénie Pastor and Shamira Turner, who work collaboratively as She Goat, for an exploration of their performance *The Undefinable*, which began its life as a live performance and was gradually reimagined as a six-part podcast as a result of the events of 2020. Turner and Pastor met in 2009 through their work with Little Bulb, eventually starting their career as a duo in 2014. Their practice is grounded in a UK gig theatre tradition, but also plays with the languages of radio, cabaret and other hybrid modes of contemporary performance. Foundational to their work is the fact of being two women on stage, of being theatre-makers and musicians, and of being fundamentally European artists – they describe themselves as a ‘Franglais collaboration’. You can learn more about She Goat’s history and poetics by visiting their LMYE Gallery interview.

*The Undefinable* is, in the artists’ own words, ‘a coffee-fuelled ode to alternative and underrepresented ways of loving and having relationships.’ Moving between canons of high literature and pop music, autobiographical experiences and generational concerns, poetic flourishes and the register of banter, the original performance is framed as a late-night radio station in which callers conjugate the playful and the confessional to try to get under the skin of the ‘undefinable qualities of love’. Its iteration as a 2020 mini-series – produced with the support of Camden People’s Theatre digital programme and accessible on multiple platforms – is a particularly good fit: the shift from radio on stage to radio as radio is a natural one given the performance’s integral use of the ‘intimacy’ of the medium.

As they guide us through their process, Pastor and Turner open up a number of rich questions central to a shift from the spectatorial to the purely aural: What does a lighting cue sound like? How can we creatively fill in the gaps of the visual with description? And how does audio description take on a life of its own? As well as dealing with these crucial interrogatives, She Goat also guide us through how their collaboration changed in the disembodied world: from photographing notebooks to working together in sound-editing software, to finding feeling in the edit rather than in the energy of the rehearsal room. While many of the artists present in the LMYE collection allow us to think about creative responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, this Laboratory essentially tells the story of a multifaceted and complex process of adaptation: from live to recorded, from visual to aural, from theatre to radio, from being together to discovering how we can still be together through sound.

### **[00:00:23 to 00:01:30] Trailer for *The Undefinable* (2019)**

#### **[00:01:35] INTRODUCTION**

**Shamira Turner:** So hello. I’m Shamira Turner.

**Eugénie Pastor:** I’m Eugénie Pastor.

**ST:** And together we are She Goat. She Goat is – it is us and what we make together, and we tended to always make live gig theatre shows and we tended to work from places of our authentic experience of different aspects of our relationship to each other, I suppose. But conditions this year have meant that we’ve been able to – and we’ve had to – explore working in a different way.

**EP:** And sound and music and voice and how text and how we speak and sing and play music with each other is key to our practice. That’s also something we’ve had to learn how to do remotely and separately and in different ways, this year.

**ST:** So just for the stats and facts, for those of you who are into that kind of thing, we realised for this that we’ve been going for six years. And we first met in July 2009 but we started working together remotely, technically, in a Little Bulb project in January 2009, starting the research for that remotely.



**EP:** So we met in a context of working on theatre and music together and then we formed She Goat out of that relationship, working relationship and friendship that emerged.

**ST:** The birth of She Goat came from a song that we wrote together for another project, and that was in 2011 and the first ever She Goat residency was September 2014. So that's all ancient history. But what are we talking and showing you today?

### **[00:03:35] FRAMING THE PROJECT**

**ST:** So, framing. What was this project? And I'm going to screen share a little dorky document that we have built together to help us take you through this journey. [*Screen-shares a Word document.*] And this is kind of an example of how we work a lot with typing stuff up together so we've got structures. What we're sharing with you today is how we reimagined our live theatre show called *The Undefinable* into what became, and is nearly finished, a six-part podcast.

**EP:** And when the pandemic hit, basically, we'd just started being on tour with *The Undefinable*. So we had a project grant from the Arts Council that was enabling us to tour the show, and obviously when lockdown happened, we had to cancel that. So we repurposed the money from that grant to make that six-part podcast series and adapt the show into an audio-only format.

**ST:** And it felt like an intuitive step because *The Undefinable* is set as a radio show with these two hosts. It's full of live music and text on and off mic, as we... It's kind of like a behind the scenes running of the radio show together. But it wasn't immediately obvious that this was going to be a podcast. We talked about whether it could be a live radio stream, whether it could be a full radio play and just kind of different, different ideas. So that was some of the first steps how we began talking about doing this. We had some creative and practical paths to making it happen. And these were our two main challenges that we kept having to find responses to.

**EP:** So the first challenge was that we live in different locations, so we had to find ways of working remotely. That's something we've done in the past, mostly with admin, for instance, or anything that can be done over a phone call. But working creatively beyond just sharing ideas was something that was new to us and we started – we worked on the phone quite a lot but we also started working on Zoom in a way that felt quite intuitive, that presented quite a few challenges but also some pockets of creative work that felt quite natural to us. So as a platform it's been a very useful thing for us to use. And I don't know if you want to go into some detail?

**ST:** Well, as we go through the different [points of] how we re-devised and adapted this show for a podcast, we'll come up with ways that we had to creatively adapt to being remote. For example, latency is an issue on Zoom. So we're used to being in a room together playing songs together and suddenly we couldn't play together in real time and be on the same rhythm. So we had to respond to those things and that was in some ways part of – like, the process of making became reflected into the kind of material that we made. As is always the case. You know, what's in the room, what's in the rehearsal room affects the show both emotionally and spatially and that was the case even being in a remote location online.

**EP:** And as we'll show through this tour of our archive, we've had to rethink ways of working, especially on sound as Shamira mentioned, but also how we work on text and on generating text and editing text. So we've had to adapt to the new way of working, basically.

**ST:** And the other thing is that we're theatre-makers and artists. We make live performance, and we were suddenly making a medium that would be recorded and set, and audio-only. And that was exciting in loads of ways, but it also meant we had to think differently about the art and structure. We're used to making material that we can play out in real time together, and we like extravagant multitasking, and suddenly we were having to think about laying things down in different layers, at different times from each other, being in separate rooms to record, to do with social distancing, and also trying to build a really rich and layered audio world because we couldn't use visual textures, and the idea of being all in a space together, we needed to deliver the world of the show and experience to people in these 20-minute pockets.



**EP:** And even in the past when we have recorded our music, for instance, we tend to do a take that's as close to the live experience as possible, meaning we play it and we record that, and sometimes we overlay something that went wrong, or if we need to take it out through a different channel. But that's not how we were working this time. This time it was more like a layering process. So, in a way, we've had to adapt what is an experience that's very often rooted in performance – and by that I mean, happening in real time – to something that was where temporality was maybe less linear in the way we were creating and recording.

**ST:** What we've got here [*screen-shares photos of handwritten pages*], we decided to take photos of our notebooks, because even though we're working online, Eugénie and I still very much think through our hands and we need to scribble things down and write as we go and take notes. This is a mix-up of our two notebooks. And in the early days we were really thinking about how to communicate the content and the world of the show in an audio-only domain. And basically it was identifying what things could stay the same, maybe what things worked as they were and what things have to go and what things could be rewritten. And if something had to go but in terms of the dramaturgy, the storytelling or the ambience it was bringing an important nugget of storytelling, we'd need to replace it with something. And so there's a thinking about like the overarching narrative, the narrative structure for each episode – and also rhythmically with each episode having its own journey and the right balance of ingredients to take you on these sort of – the same like mini journeys that an hour and ten minutes show would take you on.

**EP:** The show has quite a neat structure where dramaturgically it does a few things on a few different layers. So we were finding ways of having a similar dramaturgy work over a longer period of time – basically because there's more episodes than a one-hour show – and in a way that was, as Shamira said, also encapsulated within each episode where as a unit they will also work.

**ST:** Yeah. So one of the things we did when it was very early days – and, Euge, if you switch to our next slide show – we had three consultations on Zoom with other podcast producers or audio creatives, someone who writes plays for radio, and two people who work in different capacities in podcast producing, and we had a whole bunch of questions for them. [*Images of handwritten notes and annotated scripts on screen-share.*] We had certain questions about how to set up the relationship to the audience, when usually we can control the dynamics of them entering a space, and we know they're going to be in that space with us and we have a duty of care to them. But there's a kind of like, it's quite a big deal, certainly in the UK, to get up and leave the theatre. Whereas just stop listening to a podcast because someone called you or you're in the middle of washing up and the door goes, in terms of controlling the environment for somebody listening, it's really different. So we had a bunch of questions about that and we went to some people who maybe knew and picked their brains. The next thing that we wanted to talk to you about is how we actually made this work in terms of the timeframe. Like, what are the hours we clocked.

**EP:** So we started by doing a process that was echoing an earlier way of working that we'd experimented with when we were developing the early stages of *The Undefinable*, we established a monthly, I think, or every two weeks meet-up, a two-hour meeting that we would call 'Theatre Club', during which we were both each in charge of one hour that someone would come in with an idea for an experiment or a bit of rehearsal or an offering to the other to do together and then we'd swap. So by the time we actually got into a rehearsal room to create *The Undefinable*, we already had a wealth of material we could work from, and a wealth of tools we could work with. And that meant the world of the show was already present in a way. So when we decided to work a) remotely and b) on an audio-only version, we did something very similar with a weekly two-hour radio club where we'd meet on Zoom for two hours on a Friday afternoon usually, and start talking a little bit about how we could adapt the work and what would the next steps be. And also that allowed us to take a bit of time, whilst things around us and everyone were going a bit weird, to let everything percolate and yes, like, show us where they want it to go next, I guess.

**ST:** Before we dive into more specific examples of how we made bits of the material and adapting, one document that has endured through the whole process and we kept updating until we got so far that we sort of forgot about it, and that I'm going to share with you now, is our series structure.



[Screen-shares a Word document.] This used to look a little bit different, but something – it's basically how we broke down the material – existing material, and unknown but like ideas for material, cravings, like missing gaps. We broke it into a six-part structure and what we discovered was that we wanted each episode to have a kind of framing theme that was introduced by the hosts, which is Eugénie and I, and that's how we introduced the theatre show. We wanted each episode to be like an episode of this longstanding radio show. And we knew that we wanted each episode to have a 'firework'. That's what we came up with for something that the two hosts had prepared – so that would be a big number, like maybe an original song, they'd written. And we want to have a 'sparkler', which is a smaller item, and that would be of a different quality. So maybe a piece of immersive audio description, kind of storytelling with some underscoring. And then we wanted each episode to have a 'caller', and this is where you have, like in talk radio, a live caller rings up. We just press a sort of demo button on the keytar, like a backing button on the keytar, and then Eugénie or I pretend to be a caller. And that's like a 'disruption', where one of us is kind of, in the logic of the show, live, requesting something from the other. So each episode needs to have a frame: a firework, a sparkler, and a kind of live caller request. And we use colour coding because I find it really helpful when I'm looking at something to see what's missing and Eugénie is kind enough to accept that weird desire for colour coding things. But then, as you can see, we got to episode six and this is out of date because we started gaining real pace and really working just on the script and making changes at a fast rate. So we stopped needing the series structure because more and more the decisions we've made were becoming ingrained and we just knew what was in each episode. So this document was really important early on and it became less referred to.

**EP:** And what's useful for us with this delineation between sparkler and fireworks is that dramaturgically we work with both the themes – that are the undercurrent and the topic that's in each episode – but we also work on what dynamics of what textures or what atmospheres someone is getting and how that creates meaning, which is why it was useful to frame each episode with there's like a heart and then what goes around a heart and how do we reach the heart and how do we come out of it and why. That was a useful framework for us to work from.

## **[00:17:32] THE PROJECT ARCHIVE: DOCUMENTATION**

**ST:** We're now going to take you on a tour of our archives to bring that process we've overviewed to life.

**EP:** So we've decided to work in different sections and it will be part documentary–

**ST:** –through documentation–

**EP:** –and part re-enactment–

**ST:** –of rehearsals. And so we're kicking off with our first section 'Making Music Remotely' – how we practise music and how we make music. How we practise existing songs as they're developing, and how we invent songs or compose them – which was problematic because on Zoom we couldn't play at the same time. So we came up with a technique where if I was playing guitar, for example, and singing, Eugénie might mute herself so she could sing along, and then we might vice-versa, so she could practise our harmony in real time. But a more useful method in terms of recording our process and making decisions so we could listen back together is to use GarageBand in a kind of back and forth like 'pen pal' technique. [Screen-shares a GarageBand window.] So this is an example of just a small section in one of our songs we wanted to – we used to rock out and the audience could see us really going for it with our bodies playing guitar and bass, and then we were like: 'Do you know what? We can't do that, so how do we create that visual sort of sweaty committed vibe? We've just got to go for it with some all out layering of harmonies.' And so you can see here, this is – I laid down the guitar first and then I laid down my first vocal line, Eugénie 's first layer, Shim's second layer, Eugénie's second layer, and then some weird extra layers as it progresses. So this would be our kind of instrumental and I'm going to play it for you and unmute things as we built them.

## **[00:19:29 to 00:20:30] An example of layering an instrumental on GarageBand**



So that's an example of how we would send that back and forth to each other using Dropbox and add bits on, and then we could just listen together like this and say what we liked and what we wanted to change. And piecemeal that's what we did with a lot of our songs.

**EP:** And in a way that's helpful both for composing – so for instance, one of us lays out something and then the other person can in their own time work on there and make another proposition. And that's the pen pal process. It's also really useful to rehearse – because we can't rehearse or sing or play at the same time on Zoom, it's really helpful to work in your own time using GarageBand and it's also an archive of what we've done, and sometimes you just need a bit of a refresher to remember exactly what the harmony was that you came up with in the middle of a really hot August day, for instance, and you can't instantly remember. So that's a repository of that.

**ST:** It's not anything that we would obviously – it's not our best work, it's a record rather than a recording, but they are useful tools for us. And so another thing about making the podcast rather than a theatre show is that we had to think about copyright law. When we make a theatre show we tend to use a mixture of original songs that we make and weird surprising covers of existing songs. And why we like doing that is because there'll be a shared history in association with our audiences to do with those songs, and hearing them in a new way can open up a sort of space of listening and hearing the lyrics again. But in this format because of copyright law, we realised that we couldn't use that way of communicating, so we had to come up with an answer to how to have all original content and we talked about writing, replacing songs with new rights, but then we thought about this idea of the 'parallel universe' song. And that meant putting a song that we'd made for the show – a cover that we've made for the show – through a filter where we were like: 'What would this song be if it was in a parallel universe?' And we rewrote the melodies and harmonies, we maybe put it in a different key or a different tempo, perhaps we reorganised the chords, and maybe, and certainly, we rewrote an alternative version of the lyrics – and we might do those things in a different order. And that was a new way of working for us.

**EP:** And it was a real challenge to try and find what was the reason why we picked the covers we were suddenly not able to use anymore, and find, yes, an alternative version but also something that could – how were we going to find and bridge that, you know, if you can't recognise instantly with your audience what cultural reference you are using, how to work around that. So we're going to share an example of that. We're going to show you the script version of that, first.

**ST:** Yes, if you get up the script and I've got the GarageBand here of what we did. So we used to end our show with a few songs going into one another, which had been like rewrites of an old French folk song into a couple of different covers. And the final one was an Elvis cover of 'Can't Help Falling in Love', and we love doing an acoustic version on guitar and we wrote our own harmony to it. But we needed to make our parallel universe version of this. [*The script in Word is screen-shared.*] And so we've kept in the script – you've got the original, Euge, if you scroll right down to the very end of the script... [*Scrolling through the script.*] Yeah, just to the bit where it goes green... This is the Elvis and you can see the italics on that second bit: 'Take my hand' is Elvis's lyrics and the 'In another timeline' is bits of text that we wrote and we would pop in with the singing. We liked that element, we wanted to keep that, but we needed to rewrite Elvis's lyrics and we wanted to rewrite the harmonies a bit. And the bridge, we took the old French bridge of the original lyrics and I wrote a new harmony for those because those lyrics were free for everybody to use, they're in the public domain.

**[00:24:52 to 00:25:08] An example of the rewrite of Elvis's song on GarageBand**

So this is a halfway house where we're figuring out the lyrics and we're changing, but it's not fully what it would become yet. And in this, you can see the way that we worked with homework, because I've just got there a bit of talking for Eugénie for context. So I'm just saying:

**[00:25:27 to 00:25:42]] An example of the radio host commentary on GarageBand**

[*From the recording*] 'Okay, so this is– it's going to start with what would be the final verse of 'Plaisir d'amour'. So that's still in the old style old lyrics, et cetera, going into an offer for the rewrite of the–'

[*Stops playback.*]



I'm very tired when I'm talking in that. [*Laughter.*] I think I'm trying to think out what I'm staying as I go through it. But yes, this is the halfway house as we're getting there. You can see that I've put in different options for Eugénie to listen to and then we chatted in real time, and there's probably another version of this document that has the French one in it. We tend to keep our old documents and re-save them with later dates, in case you want to go back and capture anything, we don't want to just delete it, we want to have a bit of a trail. And we always put the fresh dates on because in *DoppelDänger*, we ended up accidentally re-devising a couple of scenes thinking that we haven't already done it and going back to the old documents. So we learned the hard way to do that practice.

**EP:** Another example of working in that way is with a song that's originally by Frank and Nancy Sinatra, which again we wrote an alternative universe version of it. And I'm going to share what the Word doc looks like. And it kind of like shows you what the process of rewriting it was.

[*Screen-shares a Word document.*]

**ST:** It's got that geeky colour coding going on again.

**EP:** Here you can see that all the new lyrics are in red. And we have the old lyrics in black because the original song has a very close harmony that we really liked, and we re-composed a harmony that was also a close one. So it was useful for extracting basically new lyrics and new melodies from a scansion that we are used to, and then seeing how that can morph into something else. So that's why it was useful to work in that way.

**ST:** And we generated this text by basically talking about why we'd chosen this text originally, what purpose it was serving, and how we wanted it to feel like a distant memory for people listening so it reminded them of the song, but was different enough that it wasn't, you know, it was like paying homage and we mention that in the text. But we generated it by really – we work this way a lot – setting a timer and free-writing about the kind of quality of feeling that this particular song manages to capture and how dangerous the words 'I love you' are and wanting to be able to find the right words to communicate your feelings but being stumped and overwhelmed in the moment. So we both did a big free-write on that and then we picked out the key phrases in each other's free-write that we liked and then work to set those to the correct scansion, and did another GarageBand where in various stages and layers we transferred that onto our new harmonies – which was fun.

**ST:** So the next thing that we wanted to talk about, our new heading, is 'Creative Audio Description', which is something that was already baked into the live theatre show because we wanted every performance to be fully accessible for our visually impaired audience members. And we love how radio is a wonderful format for you being able to have a duty of care to your listener by saying: 'Oh, I'm just picking up my coffee here and looking at...' You can describe things without it feeling like weird or superfluous, and it's sort of at direct odds with that old theatre rule of 'either say or do'. But we broke that rule and we said and did simultaneously, all the time, as a kind of duty of care to put everybody in this world of audio description.

**EP:** That's partly what inspired the idea of a radio show where suddenly talking a lot about what's happening is normal, because that's what the medium demands. And it also allows us to integrate music and live music and the personal and the persona in ways that are maybe more slippery than then if audio description wasn't used in that way. So it felt like the medium was really hosting that exercise we were working with.

**ST:** In building a theatre show we worked with Maria Oshodi from Extant to help us find ways to make this creative audio description, but also to frame the theatre show in different ways than you usually get with VI. We created these enhanced notes at the start, so you get the whole auditorium, like the theatre goes dark for everybody and then everybody hears a audio description, and as that's happening, slowly lights come up on the whole set. As you get the layout of the set, our costumes and what we're wearing – and it's all done in character, so it feels like it comes from the host setting the scene for you – but we couldn't have ever been on the same page if we got these six different episodes. So instead, we had to look through the script and pepper these descriptions as they are relevant. The fact that we're both wearing wigs is really important because it's an idea of the DJ persona. So we need to make sure that we mention the wigs in an effortless way by, like, helping



each other adjust them in each episode. So part of the job is going through and finding where can we sneak in extra audio description about the wigs, and about the drinking of coffee because that's symbolic for finding an excuse for togetherness.

### [00:31:35] THE PROJECT ARCHIVE: RE-ENACTMENT

**EP:** There is a song in the show – and it's an interesting case study because it straddles both having to create a new alternative universe version of a song, as well as integrate audio description in a way that encompasses what Shamira was mentioning, all those details that in the theatre show you would get in the enhanced notes. So it's a song by a French band that was very popular when Shamira and I were teenagers, and in the show you hear the song and you either know it or you don't know it. But if you do know it, it's something that might bring one back to the late '90s, early 2000s, basically. We couldn't do that in this one, so we composed a different version of the song, whilst audio describing the original music video, which is something we also do in the show but where, in this case, the music video becomes again a bit like a dreamlike version of another music video in a parallel universe. And you get the same audio description that is present in the theatre show but peppered with little interjections, which I'm going to share now...

**ST:** Yeah, so if you're a new audience, you could maybe hear, you could sense me scurry around the desk and then be off-mic, so we needed to find ways of audio describing this extra bits of, like, being off-mic but still on-mic. [*Script is screen-shared.*] So we went through our – we audio described the video to see what we've actually said, and then we popped in extra cues to each other. So for instance, [*reads from the screen*]: 'Foley Cue: drinks her coffee', 'Foley Cue: pours more coffee into cups', and then we've got here in italics, anything that's about us audio describing our own behaviour, not the music video

**EP:** So for instance, I would go [*reads*]: 'It's nice to have a little dance', because in the theatre show you will hear me shuffle across the floor, which you can't do in a podcast.

**ST:** And I would be, when it's not in italics, I'd be right on the mic, but when it is in italics, we'd be off the mic so we feel like we're more in this space and we're off-duty. So at one point I interrupt Eugénie and I say [*reads*]: 'Do you want a small shoulder rub?'

**EP:** 'Yes, please!'

**ST:** And then you can see another bit once I'm – so we can imagine she's getting a shoulder rub while she's talking and then when it says italics again, she's saying...

**EP:** So for instance, I'm midway through the description [*reads*]: 'Someone else also plays the guitar. They're rocking out. Watch out for my wig. They put the instruments down. You walk onto the stage.', et cetera. So playing with that interplay.

**ST:** And yeah, so that's an example of how we did this. And then from the sonic perspective, we also had to rewrite a song that was inspired by this, and we took elements of our audio description of the end of the music video as lyrics.

So moving on, we wanted to share with you another example of how we had to boost audio description. So in the theatre show we do the storytelling with how we move physically in the space. And we also layer that with audio description. For audio, for podcasts, it all had to shift and we had to find creative and full ways to do this – how we sound – and so that meant popping in layers of foley, which might be coffee beans crunching and it might be untangling wires and clicking desk lamps. And we created new descriptions of movement, instead of where we might have a movement sequence in the show.

Another dynamic is that with the Covid-19 restrictions, Eugénie and I would often dance together with each other and be in each other's space, but suddenly we couldn't do that anymore. So that was interesting because we were having to audio-describe being together but in separate rooms, and it impacted the new material we generated in an interesting way. We'd like to share with you 'The Alternative Lonesome Waltz' dance, and just kind of read a section so you can get the impression of how we make this creative audio description, you can visualise the past version, and we're going to



just read out a section for you.

[Screen-sharing the script and a still from the show of ST and EP dancing entangled in fairy lights.]

**EP:** 'Lovely request! How about we change the desk to disco mode?'

**ST:** 'Yeah, sure! Is that the one where the light bulb goes through all those different colours? Yeah yeah, go for it, it's a great idea. It's a bit of an office Christmas party vibe.'

**EP:** 'Exactly. Mine is on a setting called Smooth, which setting is the one you like?'

**ST:** 'Oh, select Flash for me, please. I like a bit of pizzazz for my desk lamp. I'll dig out the fairy lights and I think they'll still be in the drawer, but I don't know what state they'll be in.'

**EP:** 'Woohoo, that looks lovely. Oh yes, the fairy lights. I like these fairy lights. You can't often find them like this anymore. Just the primary colours, and green of course!'

**ST:** 'I'm just detangling them, they seem to always make friends with each other, no matter how carefully you wind them up.'

**EP:** 'Let me know when you're ready. And I can plug them in here.'

**ST:** 'Yeah, go for it. I'm good, I'm good.'

**EP:** 'Yeah? Ready?'

**ST:** 'Yes, switch them on now!'

**EP:** 'Oh, lovely. They look like multicoloured mistletoe with their little globes!'

**ST:** 'They do!'

**EP:** 'What are you doing swinging the string of lights in the air there?'

**ST:** 'I'm lassoing you.'

**EP:** 'Why?'

**ST:** 'It's just something you do, isn't it?'

**EP:** 'Is it?'

**ST:** 'Yeah, yeah. I throw it around your waist, and then you turn as it winds around your waist, and then I tug the end and you come into me like this.'

**EP:** 'Ooh, oh hello! We're close!'

**ST:** 'Yeah!'

**EP:** 'Should I put them around your neck?'

**ST:** 'Oh yes, follow your impulses! Oh careful not to catch my wig.'

**EP:** 'Of course!'

**ST:** 'Oh I see, yes, so it's around both of our shoulders now, like we're sharing a necklace.'

**EP:** 'Yeah, it's nice. Oh, and there's some left. What do we do with it? Can I hold some of it here, on your waist?'

**ST:** 'Yeah, yeah! And I'll take the last of it in my hand and hold onto your hip.'

**EP:** 'Oh nice. We've decorated ourselves!'

**ST:** 'Yeah, we've made ourselves into a party tree.'

**EP:** 'We're just missing a star for the top!'

**ST:** 'From where I'm standing, I can see a star.'

**EP:** 'But you're looking at me.'

**ST:** 'Oh, yeah. So what do we do now?'

And then as you can see in the script, there's a crunching sound which we had to do separately so that the editing could be respected and that our texts wouldn't be too impaired with the crunching. And then we say there's coffee beans on the floor because we're crunching them underfoot.





**EP:** 'Shall we waltz?'

**ST:** 'Yeah!'

But I think that's enough of this example. Although, yeah, it's a good example. It's funny to have the muscle memory of actually moving and then suddenly have to be sort of on the mic. It was a different way of working.

So the next thing that we wanted to talk about was 'Underscoring as a Sense of Environment'.

**EP:** So what we've found in the theatre show is that, from the fact of being in the room all together, when there's a section that has quite a lot of text, but you can hear and feel the textures of how the text is delivered and how the energy in the room changes and you get a sense of space through, you know, hearing text in a separate portion of the room, for instance, all that sense of environment, atmosphere and spatiality basically is quite hard to communicate in audio-only form. So there were moments where sections of text-heavy portions of a podcast for an episode, for example, could feel suddenly quite flat. And so it became necessary at times to underscore them with additional bits of musical soundscapes basically.

**ST:** Some of these we had hunches about as we worked and, for example, in the same way that we describe a lighting state before we go into it. It's kind of like: 'Oh, how would that lighting state sound?' It's almost like the two become commingled. Sometimes listening back, a lot of these underscoring decisions, or a handful of them, had to be made in post-production because it would just be like: whoa, without these other elements of – it just feels too, too much of the same quality. So sometimes it'd be pockets of just the keytar, a different synth pad, underscoring something and it would feel like the lights are dimmed. Yeah, we just had had less scale of tools than if having a whole theatre to play with. But once we got the game, we really enjoyed playing that way.

So we wanted to give an example of one of the new bits of material we made for this podcast and how underscoring felt really necessary for that. [*Screen-sharing the script.*] What we came up with was the idea that this would feel like it's something that happens, like we fall into this bit of material naturally, so we generated it by improvising and audio recording, then one of us transcribed. It was way too long we realised, reading it back, so we edited it down and restructured it to make sense and then pitched it to the other, which is a way that we work quite a lot. Yeah, the blue one is the old, much longer one.

**EP:** The improvisation, the text improvisation was based on an experiment we'd carried out ages before when we were devising our first show *DoppelDänger*.

**ST:** And it never got into the show.

**EP:** We tried but it never made it in. It just didn't – it wasn't right for that show. So we recreated this scene basically through remembering it and improvising what we both remembered of it – that experiment that happened a few years ago now.

**ST:** But that felt important because Eugénie and I were doing this while, you know, we hadn't seen each other since March when our tour got cancelled. So we hadn't seen each other since like mid-March, and we couldn't – it felt like, okay, we can't – everybody knows we can't touch, and we can't generate a new bit of audio description of us physically being together, but we want to have a movement sequence. So audio describing a memory, I don't know – it feels like there's something that we that we were able to indulge in remembering that experience of when we could be together, play together and be physical together, so we kind of live the audio of that physical journey. And it carries with it that kind of that muscle memory as Eugénie was saying. And then we were like – well, it was inspired by this thing we'd seen in a French circus, so we wanted it to feel like French circus music. So a quick tour of listening to YouTube songs of French circus searches proved that maybe that was the wrong impulse, but we wanted it to feel a little bit unhinged and a bit goofy, and like someone was improvising, that this is just a kind of improvised space. So I improvised on a guitar listening back to our recording, and I'm going to do that now while Eugénie reads both parts – which is kind of how we work sometimes.

Ready when you are. In fact can we go from, yes, so I would say, 'But we need to backtrack, this is



probably sounding abstract to our listeners. Let's go step by step.'

[*ST plays guitar as EP reads text.*]

**EP:** And then you'd say: 'You'd start by gently cracking the egg and passing the egg yolk back and forth between the two halves of the shell to remove the egg white. You could save this to make meringue later.'

And I'd say: 'Blueberry pavlova.'

You: 'Lemon meringue pie.'

You: 'So you gently release the yolk on to the skin. And it feels cooler than the outside air.'

Me: 'Yes, and as it begins to move it leaves a wet trail you don't notice at first.'

You: 'Yes, and where the trail dries on your skin it can be gently crusty.'

Me: 'As the egg moves it's getting always a little drier.'

You: 'As it rolls along the forearm, I can remember feeling conscious of the hairs, as if each little hair was an obstacle, a threat—'

Me: '—to the egg yolk's integrity, absolutely!'

You: 'And the steeper the limb, the more likely the egg yolk is to move very fast—'

Me: '—there's surprisingly few horizontal parts of the body—'

You: '—and the faster it travels, the more likely it is for the very thin membrane to split—'

Me: '—because it goes on a journey of its own and then it gets over-excited and then you can take just a tiny raised pore for it to burst.'

**ST:** Nice.

**ST:** So that's like us testing out the material in real time sometimes that way, and then we feed back to each other on how things feel. Sometimes we do that quickly in real time together, and sometimes we will record something – and we used to do this with video when we were working in theatre but we do it obviously with audio working in this podcast medium – listen back to stuff and then take a lot of notes. It's amazing how things can feel different when you're doing them. And suddenly you listen back or hear back something and it's just too long and needs editing down.

**EP:** So another section that we're going to take you to now is around 'Scripting a Fantasised Version of Radio'. So the show is hosted by those two hosts who we refer to as 'the Dudes', and a large part of the material – and the material we've been rewriting – is around their interaction with each other and basically some slightly corny banter that they like to indulge in.

**ST:** Yeah!

**EP:** So how we generated that new material—

**ST:** —is that sometimes we would start talking... More often we'd say: 'Oh, maybe this could be about this?' 'Yeah! And then I could say that.' And it was just happening, so one person would transcribe and we would screen-share and very, very quickly edit and write together. Sometimes we would work with fully improvising, recording, transcribing, then editing. And sometimes we would go back and – like, sometimes we'd even write a bit of text for each other and then read it as a script and test it. So different things need different ways of working and also it's surprising, like, we sometimes write a bit of material for a specific purpose, a feeling to fit in the rhythm of the arc of one of these episodes and then sometimes it doesn't work. So we want to do another case study for you, a whole section that we spent hours of love and labour on, that then got – spoiler alert! – ixnay, like – just cut!

So Eugénie has the old document where you can see how we make these decisions. [*Screen-sharing the script.*] This was where we're talking about Polari, a sort of cryptolect that's now fallen out of common usage, and we discuss it together and frame it. Everything crossed out is gone and everything in red is a new bit of text we're popping in. Everything in grey is stuff that maybe we want to cut but we need to check with the other person. And this, for example, say Eugénie has gone through this and she's made all these decisions, but she's left her work visible for me to then go in



and approve things, and maybe do another layer of cutting on top. And we really tried this in various formats, and this was us audio describing a poster because we felt very inspired by the idea of audio describing an artwork and...

**EP:** And I'm going to share the poster.

**ST:** Oh, yeah, yeah. Eugénie's just going to switch up the poster for you. It's by Jez Dolan, and it's called *Polari: An Etymology*. [*The poster is screen-shared alongside the script.*] So we did an audio description where we took you on the journey of going through the different arrows. And then we got to the end of having tried this long version, shorter version and it went into a song, and we realised that actually all of this, like this entire section that we tried so hard for, just wasn't – it was gorgeous, but it wasn't working so it all got deleted. And then we rewrote the little phone call to set us up to go straight into the song, and we lost the poster. But we do still really admire what Jez Dolan did with it.

**EP:** And part of the way we realised that it was too long, some of it is like we have a feeling that 'oh, this portion maybe is too long'. We know each other – we now share a creative language within the show but also within our practice in general. So we trust each other to make those decisions on each other's behalf and then the other person's invited to, you know, have a look to make sure we're both happy with what happened. But one way we tested how it was holding together basically was by creating GarageBand files for each podcast where we'd record the Zoom session together – so the back and forth – and then export some of the other GarageBand files we shared with you, for instance, some of the songs we'd been working on – export them into the file so as to create a draft episode and then listening back to that, taking notes. And very quickly some episodes were like, yeah, this whole ten minutes needs to go – and we sort of both knew it as soon as we'd finished listening back to it. But that was also an interesting new way of working for us, piecing everything together and then listening back to know where the cuts had to be made.

**ST:** And both what needed cutting, editing down, maybe restructuring, and sometimes just the feeling that something was missing. And one of the biggest changes we made is that we swapped what we thought was episode four and episode three for each other because we realised that we were revealing the stages in the dramaturgy of the Dudes, the host relationship, too soon and we needed to build the tension longer, so we swapped those two around.

#### **[00:51:45] PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT**

**ST:** Now we're going to shift from the creative components into the production management side of things. And as Eugénie and I, a lot of the time it's just the two of us for making these admin decisions and creative decisions, so this was about working in a new way. In these socially distanced conditions for recording and adapting to the project to the artists' needs is really important to us at She Goat. We often think people before objects and one of our taglines that we remind ourselves is 'our show, our bodies' and that kind of means that ultimately it's really important to us that our experience and our safety is being prioritised as much as the artwork, because they're kind of – you can't pull them apart really.

**EP:** So, initially the plan had been to work on Zoom for all the time leading up to a period of in-person rehearsal, followed by in-person recording, and as we were edging closer to the rehearsal period, I started feeling increasingly uneasy – I was just not really comfortable with the new rules and lockdown easing. Just the idea of commuting was generating a lot of anxiety. So we thought about what we could do in order to adapt the process, and that's how we shifted to having an entire week of remote rehearsal on Zoom and then using the recording time in a more condensed way. That also meant we had to adapt to how we were rehearsing which led to the GarageBand draft episodes, for instance. That felt like a very important thing that the process was able to reflect and respond to wellbeing needs, basically, around anxiety rather than anything else.

**ST:** Yeah, so it meant that for that week we revised how we were going to work and rehearse and what was essential to be together that we would bump to the together week. And we also revised the budget slightly to find some money to get Eugénie cars to and from rehearsal, certainly for the first few until she did volunteer to feel more comfortable to try out the Overground. And I think those



things are really important to do. You make these plans and these schedules, but then you have to adapt to life and artists' needs, and that is the process and that's as important as a creative troubleshooting. And so one thing that we did to be realistic and to feel prepared, is that we came up with a charter which I'm going to share with you now. [*Screen-shares a Word document.*] The 'Safe Rehearsal Practices for *The Undefinable* Podcast Recording' and these are mainly taken, or lot of them were taken from the music production guidance from DCMS [Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport]. And these were a useful set of rules and how we could make it safer and all have the same expectations for navigating the same space. And we shared these with Sam Halmarack, who recorded the episodes for us, and we were all clued up on these and in agreement about them. That was just a source of offering a kind of comfort and removing the unknown. It meant that we also – usually Eugénie and I are rehearsing all in the same space but because of Eugénie being a flute player and us doing a lot of singing, we were singing in different rooms with long wires linking us up so we could hear each other in sync, at the same time, but without that kind of droplets being a problem.

**EP:** And that enabled, like – it was obvious to us that we were starting from a shared understanding of what we needed the rehearsal room to be, but having the charter is something that we find overall that putting things in writing and sharing them openly with each other and with any collaborators we have, is just the best way for everyone to feel empowered to have the boundaries – like, what the boundaries are and how everyone can make their own decisions within those as well, and feel empowered to make those decisions.

**ST:** So another way that, from a production management perspective, we wanted to feel prepared and be prepared by building a recording list for Sam, [*screen-shares a Word document*] which was not exactly a creative structure, way more condensed than the script, but it worked out what all of our different recording inputs would be, because we work sometimes with electronic devices, sometimes with acoustic instruments, sometimes there'll be the foley sound which needs to be separate layers. So for each episode, we broke down the linear structure and what all the components were to record. Because usually, Eugénie and I would do this in a flow, but to make sure that Sam had all of the elements recorded separately, sometimes we could do things together, but sometimes, for instance, grinding coffee beans and talking means that it's inaudible. So we needed to do those as two separate layers which Sam can then mix together to feel like they're happening at the same time, but the coffee bean grinding is actually a lot quieter.

**EP:** We work with an electronic instrument called Push, which is a physical representation of the software Ableton. But what Push does is like it can't be recorded, like any other instruments, including MIDI instruments like the keytar, it has its own set of ways.

**ST:** It's supposed to be played live and not really used for recording.

**EP:** Exactly. Or for recording within itself. So basically, all the 'Push tracks' as we call them had to be recorded as separate units, and then we had to find ways of having sound effects that we normally have on our microphones live, for instance, re-integrated at a later stage, causing some headaches – but I think we've managed. [*Laughter.*]

**ST:** We actually recorded on three platforms: Logic, which Sam is super familiar with, Machine, which was a way for us to work on a couple of new compositions, and also Ableton as Eugénie described. So it was a very bespoke recording process.

## **[00:59:02] COMING SOON**

**ST:** This takes us to our final heading, which we call 'Coming soon', that's basically for us to give a concluding note and a bit of reflection and let you know that we're currently in the editing process, which means sometimes I've been sat at a distance from Sam helping him with the finicky stuff that only our ears would know about. And Sam is going to send us through the final drafts to listen to and then send back notes. I've been sending Eugénie email breakdowns of any post-production changes and requests and ideas. We did a day of pick-ups. So we're hoping to finish the podcast and launch it in October.



**EP:** We thought we'd share very briefly, the draft proposal of the credits [*screen-sharing Word document*] we put at the end of the podcast and that's in keeping with the tradition of podcasts of saying thank-yous and acknowledging your sponsors, et cetera. And also because with a theatre show that's all the information we'd give in the programme or in the freesheets or on the website. So we've found a way of integrating that as part of the artwork and the process. So we thought we'd share that quickly. And you can also see our 'classic' editing techniques of colour coding and crossing stuff out. [*Laughter.*]

**ST:** We feel like we have learned a lot working this way. We both made the project but we've also developed these tools for Eugénie and I to rehearse remotely, and we feel like at the moment we're keen to stay in a very actively curious space about what feels right for us and what interests us and suits our needs right now artistically as far as She Goat's further-ahead projects go, because we're very mindful about wanting to make work that feels ethical and useful in this ongoing current climate.

**EP:** Absolutely – and around making work that reflects taking care of ourselves and taking care of people we might be sharing the work with. And that's also the idea of working with sound and working in those new ways also linked to our commitment to making work that can be accessible to a wider audience. So having – integrating audio description is something we're committed to in order to make work that's accessible to visually impaired audiences, for instance, but now experimenting with a format that can be shared through audio-only, that can be shared online, it's also a way for us sharing the work with people for whom coming to a theatre in or not in a pandemic might be difficult, people who might live further away, et cetera. So it also feels like this is opening up an area of thinking that feels very close to our hearts as well.

**ST:** It's been interesting because it's conversations that pre-date lockdown and the pandemic in terms of wanting to find ways that we can make versions of our work accessible to people who can't or for whatever reasons are less likely to access public spaces. And it feels like this has given us the opportunity to really lean into that and make that version of a thing happen. So, yeah, continuing to ask those questions and find answers to those questions in our future. And in our immediate future, we've been adapting our workshops to a Zoom format that we're going to be delivering for some emerging visually impaired directors through Extant's Pathways project. And – I'm going to do a screen-share – we have been developing a digital and online version of what we wanted to offer as an outreach event for community engagement on our tour [*screen-sharing event flyers*], and we're doing that with the wonderful Daniel Fulvio, who we met when we were premiering this show at Camden People's Theatre and so this is our online listening party, which we call *Curious Hearts Song Club*, and it's a space to enjoy and share music and stories and reflections about this undefinable thing called 'love'. And this is our more visual and less text version of the flyer, which we created for neurodivergent potential participants.

**EP:** And again, having the possibility of hosting those online means perhaps hopefully being accessible to people who might not otherwise feel comfortable coming to talk about those things in another context. So we are hopeful about that.

**ST:** So that's what we're up to. And I'm just going to share my desktop now. [*Screen-shares her desktop and closes all individual windows layered on top of each other.*] We've really enjoyed taking a little tour and reflection through our process with you. And if I stop sharing, Eugé, you can do the undoing tidy as well.

**EP:** Absolutely, and I can share my desktop [*screen-shares the closing of files on her desktop*] and also say a massive thank you and that it's been a real pleasure. Now I'm not going to save this because it was just for core purposes. Performative examples! And that is all from us.

**ST:** Thank you.

**[01:05:14 to 01:05:31] *The Undefinable* (2019) teaser**

Transcription by Nick Awde



## Clips Summary

[00:00:23 to 00:01:30] Trailer for *The Undefinable* (2019)

[00:19:29 to 00:20:30] An example of layering an instrumental on GarageBand

[00:24:52 to 00:25:08] An example of the rewrite of Elvis's song on GarageBand

[00:25:27 to 00:25:42] An example of the radio host commentary on GarageBand

[01:05:14 to 01:05:31] *The Undefinable* (2019) teaser

Audio available at <https://www.auralia.space/laboratory5-shegoat/>.

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