

**Mia Crisafulli interviewing Shea Sullivan, dance student at London Contemporary Dance School, about Eleanor Marx: A Life in Movement
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Why were you initially interested in taking part in this project?

I was interested because I did *Talking Taboo* at St. Pancras Church with the Pascal Theatre Company last year, fall 2021. And I learned so much in that process about acting and performing and stylised theatre that I had never seen before and the different ways that you can organise that, make a collage of different ideas. I really enjoyed performing and learning that last year. So, when this year rolled around, it was a no-brainer that I would be doing it. I really like working with Julia because I feel she's so willing to invest in young people and young performers who just want to know the knowledge, and she's more than willing to take the time to build them up.

What were your expectations?

I think from last year, I knew that there would be a certain level of vocal training involved, not super intense, but I knew that we would have to have a couple of training sessions before the actual performing of the work started. I knew it was going to be about Eleanor Marx and I was going to learn something.

What was the rehearsal process like with Pascal Theatre Company?

The rehearsal process was only three weeks. But packed into those three weeks were so many opportunities for learning. Every single rehearsal, you are in something different. Honestly, it felt like taking acting classes for much longer, even though it was only three weeks.

So, what have you learned that you plan to carry with you?

When we first got the scripts, Julia explained that it was in the Brechtian routine. I'd definitely never thought about or I'd never been exposed to the fact there were different composition styles for theatre. So, after she explained that, everything we were doing within the texts, all of the time jumps, and the storytelling, it became a lot clearer to me. I'm really interested in continuing to learn about different styles within theatre to feed my dance practice.

Has this project open to any new thoughts or ideas for you? What are they if you have any?

Thinking about Eleanor Marx, it has made me think a little bit more about consumerism, obviously, the way that we view women from that time period. I feel like the audience was really affected by what some of the larger speaking parts work. That's not a great sentence! When you're in it, you don't realize that it will have an effect because you're like, 'Okay, I'm doing this

thing. It's about this thing that I believe in.' But to see audience members affected, that's really cool. Yeah, I got something that makes me more inspired to make political work.

What did you find most interesting about Eleanor Marx?

The fact that she just did so much. When I think about the hours in my day, compared to her, I have a lot of free time. I can't imagine the day-to-day time management organisation and doing everything that she did without the Internet. Especially, when they're talking about her travelling to America to organise. For me living in the UK for the last three years, I have no idea about the UK political system, no clue whatsoever. It takes so much to understand another country's social values, political values and the fact that she was able to do everything that she was doing in the UK, really diverse things, and then to be also involved in America. I can't imagine the amount of straight-up work. That's all a lot.

Has the project made you more curious about invisible women from the 19th century?

It's definitely made me more curious about Eleanor Marx specifically. I really want to look more into her. No one else comes to mind. When I think about, oh, invisible women or understated women, literally nothing comes to mind. And that's kind of the point. That's kind of a problem. So, I'm like, who are we forgetting that I really don't know about you. You know what I mean? Because I think that you could think about, for example, first ladies who stand in the shadow of the president of that time. Wives of famous people. I'm sure that there are more women that we don't even know about.

Is there anything I haven't asked you that you would like to say?

Really enjoyed the process. definitely giving this project about Eleanor Marx has made me think a lot about women who started the silent film and started the movie industry because it inspired me to start thinking about projects based on them. That's still invisible women, but that industry was built by them. That's something I've been thinking about a lot in the last year. How many women built industries and there's nothing.