**Audience discussion**

Q: What degree of creative involvement did the actresses have during the creation and rehearsal of the play?

A: The first half of the performance was conceived and rehearsed by our two assistant directors Abraham and Erica. This was a very text based performance, so the actresses had little wiggle room with regards to making a creative mark on the piece. The second half of the play however was created, by artistic director Marcin, through workshops with the actresses. The movements the audience saw were created by the actresses themselves in the workshops and then formed into a complete piece of theatre by Marcin.

Q: Could you speak briefly about the linking of the two pieces? How did you know the audience wouldn't clap at the end of the first section when the actresses left the stage?

A: We thought it was important to give the performance the feeling of a complete work, so from the very beginning Kevin and Marcin were insistent on linking the two halves instead of going back to the beginning and performing one version and then the other. If time had allowed there was also going to be a third piece that featured the absent male presence in the play being brought to life as a clown, but unfortunately there was too little time to rehearse this to include it on the day. The decision was taken to have the 'wordier' version come first, to give the audience a sort of route map through the second piece which was built more on feeling and ideas rather than the original structure of the play. As far as the clapping goes, you have to trust the audience to realise that the piece hasn't finished, not least because there were two musicians on stage at the end of the first section who still hadn't played a note. If the audience has clapped however, that would still have been OK.

Q: Why were there four actresses in the first piece and only three in the second?

A: For pragmatic and artistic reasons. In the first piece we had two human marionettes and needed two agents to control them. In the second imagining of the play, Marcin wanted to continue the idea of looking at a fragmented female mind, but developed this further to focus on the Id, Ego and Super-Ego, requiring three actresses to represent these concepts

Q: What did this interpretation of The Stronger have to do with the 'Digital Age'?

A: We are amidst an age where social media is on the rise, which brings with it the mechanisation of feelings and the loss of face to face conversations. In using marionettes, we showed live on stage this manipulation of the mechanical in order to express emotion, where the actresses used an external agent manipulated by themselves to forge expressions of feeling. It was also very fitting that we cut a lot of words from the second half of the show and forced the audience to 'read between the lines'. With the rise of Twitter (a medium now used to judge who won presidential debates) where thoughts and feeling have to be condensed into 126 characters, the digital age is cutting words and actively encouraging people to condense their means of expression. But it is important to remember that we did not focus solely on contextually modernising the play, our main aim was to modernise it in terms of performance. With our use of music, dance and dramatic devices, alongside a heavy focus on the visual, we brought the play into the world of contemporary performance.

Q: How did you create such an intense atmosphere in your production?

A: Mostly through contrast. There are a lot of words in Strindberg's plays - which makes the silence in them a lot more dramatic. A lot of focus was directed on these moments of pause and quiet by the dramaturg, once they had been located within the text. Our performance also sharply contrasted the loud and the quiet, with hushed tones sharply interspersed by big noises and gestures. However the music was probably the biggest help in this regard. When Marcin and Kevin composed the music, they were set on creating something tense, eerie, moody and contrasting between the traditional musical styles of Marcin's native Poland and Kevin's native Scotland. This was the genesis of a score that set out to specifically heighten the tension and atmosphere in the performance.