**Zed Gregory Extracts Joined**

**A:** you started talking about some amazing performances.

**Z:**  So the ones, the really that kind of really stick for me I suppose were … there were other Gloria shows. So Gloria did A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep which was the first one and they did still my favourite theatre show of all time which was a show called Saracene which had Betty Bourne and Francois de Testerie and Beverley Klein playing the three eras of a castrata, castrati, um, and again it was this sort of really velvety, sumptuous, most beautiful design. Music by Nicholas Bloomfield, the design was by Robin Wickmore and it was written by Neil, and Francois was a counter tenor, and he had the most beautiful voice.

Betty Bourne has a gorgeous kind of baritone and Beverley was soprano I think, and if you ever get a chance to see it I would thoroughly recommend it. I think there is one grainy old recording of it somewhere but it’s just beautiful. It’s from a story by Balzac and it kind of yeah, it charts a performance, a private performance by this castrati called, er, that it would be too good if I could remember their name, it’s just a beautiful, beautiful show. So that was there. The Bloo Lips used to come and do quite a few shows there as well, kind of, I suppose they were there the beginnings of alternative drag, I think they didn’t try to look like women, they tried to, they looked like kind of animations, I think really.

**A:**  Queer theatre?

**Z:**  Yeah, yes I think all gay men pretty much, and they were quite kind of their clothes were a little bit ragged, you know, they were making their own costumes, their make-up was big, so instead of, you know, kind of what I would call feminine makeup, it was like great big glittered eyebrows, and white face. So er, yeah, kind of the roots were more based in clowning almost, where clown meets drag I would say and …

**A:**  The Bloo Lips?

**Z:**  Yes. Spelt B.L.O.O. I don’t know what that means particularly but I’m sure there’s something cleve

Lois fan er, So Bloo Lips played a lot and Split Britches played a lot so that was Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver.

**A:**  And your memories of them?

**Z:**  Oh, I have many memories of them, yeah, the entire Drill Hall was, the women in the Drill Hall were kind of straight down the line - Are you are Peggy fan or are you a Lois fan?

**A:**  And you were?

**Z:**  I was a Peggy fan. Um, but if you’re listening to this Lois, I’m also a Lois fan. Because they are now my clients.

**A:**  OK.

**Z:**  So yeah, I do a lot of work with them

**A:**  I’d like to hear more about then before we come to present day

**Z:**  But there was a show where The Bloo Lips and Split Britches worked together, I think it was called Belle Reprieve and that was kind of based on maybe a Tennesse Williams Cat on a Hot Tin Roof kind of thing possibly. I’m sure you can imagine Lois plays those Southern belles really well. Yeah, and it was lovely. It was really nice and I think I terms of a kind of gay meets lesbian shows, that that was that was kind of perfect really. Gay Sweatshop used to do a lot of stuff there. That’s where I met David Benedict who also came and worked there.

**A:**  This must have been the real heyday of The Drill Hall?

**Z:**  I think so

**A:**  All the big names part of queer performance history

**Z:**  I think so, what else was on there. Elergy for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens was on there, beautiful, beautiful piece of musical theatre. I’m still the biggest fan of musicals, I think from then, and the joy of working there was that when you loved a show you could must go and see it every night. You could just sneak in the side and …

**A:**  See something different about it each time …

**Z:**  Yeah. I think I saw Saracene pretty much every night it was on, and Elergies, I saw maybe ten times, and a few of the shows would kind of do a run and because they were so popular they would come back a few months later. Um, and Elergies, Punks and Raging Queens was very much set in the kind of the Aids crisis, and it was a piece of protest, it was a kind of angry piece of theatre but it was just gorgeous. And after that show ... and then there were the Americans who used to come over, so Ridiculous Theatre Company came over quite a few times and did a few different shows and again they were fantastic. They were kind of off off Broadway I suppose there, they originally started by Charles Ludlum but he had died, I don’t know if he did a show in London. Um, so his boyfriend, whose name will come to me in a

minute, he ran, he ran the company and there was kind of probably about ten, ten people in the cast, and they were just so adorable, and they would come over and you’d get to hang out because they didn’t really know loads of people, so quite often part of the role was quite hosty. I remember Lea Delaria came over to do a show and myself and Jo, the friend from school, she came to our house for Christmas because she didn’t really have anywhere to go, so we kind of invited her for Christmas and came to the house

They’re early 20s and they have a very different idea of queer, In the last year, so I did in my mid thirties, I had a thought I was maybe trans and I started to explore that. So I went to the Doctor and started, talked to them, and they were basically useless, and I read some Kate Bournstein stuff, I kind of did Kate’s gender work book, and I didn’t, I didn’t pursue it because it didn’t feel like it fitted particularly. But it also didn’t feel like it fitted that I was a woman in a, and so over the last year, or so I suppose I kind of finally worked it out, and it fine just to sit somewhere in the middle and you don’t have to pick a side

**A:**  And being with those younger people has been an influence I guess, certainly younger people now seem to be much more comfortable to be somewhere in that middle place without a label, without ..

**Z:**  Yes I think for our generation its quite, feels quite new-fangled, then it feels quite obvious. So my partner is Australian, which has again a much better queer scene than we have. I think they’re way ahead of us but also her … one of her best friends is from Berlin and their partner is from Stockholm so we went to a wedding, a gorgeous queer wedding in a children’s camp. They have all these summer camps dotted around on the islands of Sweden and when they don’t use them they hire them out. So you’ve got kind of a huge house with some smaller houses, some grounds and then there it’s on a lake so ... It was just before, and my partner was officiating it and the other guests were from Berlin and Stockholm and they were, you know, incredibly queer, you know, there were people with beards and breasts and chest surgery but not doing testosterone, and then this real mixture of family. A lot of the families were three adults because of the way that, the way that the work place system works they can get maternity leave for three adults. Looking after a child, so quite often so for queer families that makes that, it makes real sense, I think. So they are brought up by three adults and they’re bringing up genderless children. … to go so we were with them for a week, and you don’t know their gender because they don’t need one at that point, and I think that sort of start stuff. I went away just with my eyes open, ah finally, I’ve just found my people, you know? And that was the beginning of it I think

**A:**  A new community for you

**Z:**  Yeah, totally, a new community and an understanding of the way I am, what I am, and how I fit in in the world and that’s been just gorgeous, and yeah kind of

some of the, some of the smaller Drakes, it’s now becoming such a ... almost commonplace in those circles.

So its lovely, they will ask people’s gender pronouns. Yes, so they meet and say “What’s your name. What’s your gender pronoun?” That’s really nice. My partner er, is a therapist who does a lot of work, she runs a company called Queer Hearted.com and the, so she does a lot of sort of work with Tantra, BDSM, so she works a lot in the Trans communities as well, and you kind of with body issues, who might not feel comfortable with their bodies, which is not a problem I’ve ever had, but yes, so basically, I’m quite kind, that, that world is quite present …

**A:**  It sounds like it’s got a big future, something to grow …

**Z:**  Yeah, it does feel like another coming out, it feels like there is that moment when you work out what the fuck you are. And it’s lovely,