BAFTA A Life in Pictures: Hugh Jackman
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Edith Bowman: Good evening ladies and gentleman, thank you very much to our friends at Audi UK for sponsoring tonight, thank you very much to you all for being here at this wonderful BAFTA A Life in Pictures. A gentleman who is one of the most versatile, committed actors in the business, but not just an actor – a producer, a singer, a dancer, a multi-instrumentalist, a showman. Let's remind ourselves of some of his work.

[Clip plays]

EB: I kind of want to do that!

[Laughter]

[Applause]

Hugh Jackman: Hi guys. Thank you. Thank you. Ah, thank you.

[Applause]

EB: They love what you—your mum—you were going to say your mum's here?

HJ: I was going to say your mum and dad are here.

EB: They are here, your mum's here! Hi mums and dads

HJ: My mum's here too.

EB: We love what you do, but you love what you do…

HJ: Yeah

EB: And that just oozes out of the screen.

HJ: Ah well thank you. Because I do love it. It's very self-indulgent, my job. I literally feel like I've never worked a day in my life. I have the luckiest—there's been a few Wednesday matinees that have been tough, but…

[Laughter]

I honestly pinch myself every single day. I got my first job when I was twenty-six, so it was kind of late, I suppose, for an actor. And just, it's been a journey that has been full of surprises the whole way, right up to tonight.

EB: Because you trained as a…

HJ: Can I, by the way…

EB: Yeah…

HJ: Is this rude to say? Can we rename it 'Half Life in Pictures'? I was just, you know…

[Laughter]

EB: Life so far?

HJ: What's that?

EB: Life so far.

HJ: Life so far? Yeah we can do that

EB: Life so far.

HJ: Appreciate it. Thank you.

EB: Life 'Til Now… Life So Far in Pictures. I think you're right. Um because you trained in journalism, is that right?

HJ: Yeah. I did a degree in Communications, which is basically an arts degree majoring in journalism. I thought romantically I would be a radio journalist travelling the world with—I mean, I'm talking back in the days with reel to reel—we had to start learning shorthand, it was those days of journalism. Um, and when I graduated, I—in the last semester of this three-year degree I did a minor elective in Drama because someone had told me 'there's no requirements, you turn up, there's nothing.' And for the first time in the course's history, the guy who did this class in Drama decided to do a play. And he was a Trotskyist, everything was just full on equal opportunity; he literally put down the class list and then the cast and he drew a line and I ended up getting the lead. And I begged him, I said 'please don't give me the lead, I'm graduating, I have a thesis to do.' He says 'no, I can't, you're the lead,' and we went on tour with that play and I realised I'd made a big mistake that I probably had wasted three years of my life, that I was—really what I loved to do was act. So yeah, that was—I was twenty-two or twenty-three and then I decided to go and do drama school.

EB: And what I found interesting—I was listening to a lovely interview you did where your drama school had to sort of sets to it, where there was the kind of musical theatre group and then the more kind of traditional kind of drama…

HJ: Yeah

EB: And you were in that group, you weren't in the musical theatre group.

HJ: No, no.

EB: But then you got this role in a musical

HJ: Yeah

EB: So all your mates in the musical were going, 'hold on a minute…'

HJ: They were really upset with me! Dude that's how… This is Australia, there's not a lot of work, it was like 'come on, can you just stick to the theatre? Like, there's like four musicals a year, can you just leave it to us?' But one of the first jobs I got was *Beauty and the Beast* and I remember my agent at the time putting me up to it—you know, I'm out of drama school, you say yes to everything, but I was like, I really thought she might have been smoking something at the time…

[Laughter]

And I went in and I auditioned and uh, luckily for me I got to read first and I could tell, you know this probably some actors, I could tell things had gone well with the read. And then they said 'oh great, we'd like you to sing a song,' and I said 'sure,' and so I sang Stars from *Les Mis*, and I cracked on the last note so badly, like a massive bomb. And I saw all that hope in the panel literally deflate.

[Laughter]

And at the end they say to me 'why did you sing that song?' and I said 'well, honestly, it was the only thing I had music for from drama school,' which was the truth. And they said 'well you can throw that away because you'll never be in that show.'

[Laughter]

EB: In your face!

HJ: So Greg! I wouldn't name him, I don't want to name him, but…

[Laughter]

But actually, I then went on to get the part and… but in my contract—and I don't think there's ever been a professional actor that's had it in his contract—that I had to have one singing lesson every week. That they paid for! So, and it was kind of great because I was an actor, I was in a musical, it was a huge departure for me, a huge surprise, and I was singing eight shows a week around amazing singers, with a lesson every week. And that's really when I learned to sing.

EB: Wow.

HJ: On the job.

EB: And theatre was the thing for you, really, you never really aspired or thought Hollywood would call, really, did you? You thought that was where you…

HJ: Yeah. There was, it was the holy grail for me… so to go back a little further, I did have, and actually this is one of those stories I can only tell in this country, I had a job offer for *Neighbours*—

[Laughter]

And…

EB: Who hasn't?

HJ: Huh?

EB: Who hasn't?

HJ: True! And I was shocked. So I was doing part-time classes and I got this job offer and I was—I'd auditioned for this prestigious school, WAPA—West Australian Academy of Performing Arts. And I got the offer for the drama school the same day I got the offer for *Neighbours.* And I ended up taking the drama school, mainly because in my heart of hearts, my dream, my goal, would be one day to be at the National Theatre, to one day be in the Royal Shakespeare Company. For me, watching the John Barton tapes, watching all those great actors, I thought 'that's the best place in the world to act'. And there's a photo of me outside the Cottesloe Theatre, now I think it's the Dorfman Theatre, literally like this, I'm about twenty years old, mum had taken me and I was seeing *Angels in America*, standing room seats…

EB: Oh wow.

HJ: And I took a photo outside which I stuck up on my wall for three years during drama school. So for me all my hopes, all my dreams, were realised when I was at the National Theatre. I was twenty-eight, walking across Waterloo Bridge every night thinking 'oh, what's next?' you know? So really that's what I thought, everything else has been a surprise for me.

EB: How much do you think theatre has shaped, excuse me, you as an actor in terms of the versatility and commitment that you have as an actor?

HJ: Uh, I'm so glad that I did it that way. And it's not without its challenges—film is different, it was a little uncomfortable when I first began on film. It felt very stop-start, technical; I found it hard to get a rhythm. The kind of comfort, at-home feeling I felt on stage I wasn't feeling early on in film. However, given all that, I would much prefer to start as an actor on stage, to learn that craft, to understand the sense of ensemble, the teamwork not only with the actors but with the crew—that unconscious listening to an audience. And I—I still take it onto a soundstage; I still feel that even, that the camera is that audience. So I'm doing a scene with you, Edith, but like you are on that stage, you're constantly feeling and understanding what that—and that I got from the stage. To this day when I go to the theatre or if I'm in a show I stand in the wings beforehand because nothing makes me more excited than that feeling that I'm about to see a show or be on stage. And probably a lot of my favourite moments as an actor have been on stage.

EB: How do you feel about watching yourself?

HJ: Well that's what's good about stage—

[Laughter]

You can't.

[Laughter]

I'm better now. I'm a lot better now. And listening—I think listening to yourself is even harder. I think everyone finds that, when you first hear yourself you're like 'I don't sound like that'. Recording and singing, that has been difficult, but I've had to force myself. I mean I know actors who have never, I'm talking Academy Award-winning actors, who have never seen themselves, who—and I say 'really, never?' and they said 'no, I'm afraid if I see myself I will never walk onto a soundstage again!' And it's uncomfortable and it's difficult and I think often what is important about the creative process is being critical.

EB: Yeah.

HJ: Pushing yourself. It can make it very uncomfortable watching. You tend to only see—and actually, I'm not sure that I've told mum this, but when I was becoming an actor—I haven't told many people this, Edith, you do this to me. Uh,

EB: Sorry!

HJ: I told my dad I wanted to go to drama school, and he said 'I think that's a very good idea, although I think you're very thin-skinned.' And I remember, and at the time I was like 'what do you mean, thin-skinned? I can do…' But he's right, I'm a sensitive soul, so the watching—having… You can't change it; It's there, it's done—is a difficult process.

EB: Well we're going to put you through some pain right now.

[Laughter]

We've got a few wonderful clips to share with our audience tonight and we're going to start of with a film from 2006, and bizarrely we were talking about this film just the other night with the director, Mr Christopher Nolan.

HJ: Oh boy, lucky you.

EB: Yes. So we're going to have a look at this wonderful clip from *The Prestige*.

[Clip plays]

[Applause]

EB: I love that line.

HJ: Which one?

EB: When you go 'he's mad, of course he is—'

HJ: 'He's an out of work actor' Exactly.

EB: So funny.

HJ: I know, it's so horrible.

EB: That scene of the camera walking around the two of you is really incredible. You're kind of constantly going 'how did they do that?'

HJ: I know. And he—the thing about Christopher Nolan is he does it all so easily, so I mean—everything feels real, documentary-like. Even when it came down to the look of Rupert, we had—you may have noticed I have no earlobes. Mum, do you have earlobes? I'm not sure—anyway, I have no earlobes, so we put on fake earlobes, a little bit on the bridge of the nose and some fake teeth, just to make him slightly different. I've actually had arguments with people who really did not believe that was me; they thought it was someone else. Anyway, so…

EB: Wow.

HJ: We just made little, slight changes to it, and that's where Chris Nolan was amazing—he really just let me play that he was an out of work actor, I had another life for him and Chris was like 'yeah, fine, explore what you want'. He's, in my experience, Baz Luhrmann and Chris Nolan, Jason Reitman and Darren Aronofsky, Jim Mangold probably more than anyone—these directors have such discipline about their storytelling, and yet—so they allow you to be free as an actor. Because they know exactly what the scene's about, they know what story they're telling, and they're not frightened if you go off to the right or left, and if you go too far they can easily bring you back. So working with Chris was one of my favourite experiences.

EB: You rattled off an amazing list of directors there—

HJ: I tried to drop as many as I could, just in case…

[Laughter]

EB: It's incredible. And I guess that each experience you learned so much as well. And you still learn, even after so many years in the business you're still learning. Do you feel like that?

HJ: One hundred per cent.

EB: Are you still willing to learn, as well?

HJ: I need to learn. I really feel that. I don't know why, I think, in the end I had teachers when I began… My acting teacher told me on day one, all of us, 'you're not here to learn how to act, you're here to learn how to learn.' That actually, your ability to learn about yourself, to constantly evolve, to learn about humanity, to learn about society, to learn about how to do things differently. That is what's held me in stead, and I think that and maybe the ability to say yes or the courage to give things a go has really helped me. And these directors—it was Nicole Kidman who taught me that; I've been friends with her for a long time. Sorry I'm dropping them all over the place here

[Laughter]

EB: We have a little bag here; we'll keep them in…

HJ: But she did, she told me, she said 'always director, director, director. And always push yourself, go for directors.' Go for movies that you think 'wow,' even if it's ones you find difficult to watch, even if there's something challenging in it work with them and they will—a great director will make you a better actor. Trevor Nunn on stage made me a better actor forever, not just in that show. Jim Mangold made me—he directed me in the seventh *Wolverine,* I think, that I'd done, and I think it was the best one that I'd done because he pushed me. And so, I certainly have that in my blood, I certainly have a belief about myself that there is a lot of room for improvement. Um, and so I hope I'm learning, I really do.

EB: Did Nicole give you that advice before or after *Australia*?

HJ: Before! Yeah.

EB: We're going to see *Australia* right now.

HJ: Nice segue!

EB: Nice segue! It's like we planned it! This is—I mean we'll talk about Baz Luhrmann as well—

HJ: Yeah.

EB: I mean this is just an epic film; it just feels like a classic film, as well. You know, something that could have been from the fifties or something, as well. It's just incredible; we'll take a look at this, this pretty epic scene actually from it, right now.

[Clip plays]

[Applause]

EB: That, when we see you kind of slow-mo on horseback, it's a kid's dream isn't it? I'm going to be a cowboy, slow-mo on horseback in a Western.

HJ: Um yeah. And we rode every day for a year, and I'll admit that was—

EB: A bit sore?

HJ: Sore and scared for about the first three months. I mean, I didn't tell anyone at the time of course, but riding horses, I came to it late, is nerve-wracking. And we did some crazy stuff; in fact the closest I've come to thinking my time was up was that very scene. As we rode in, if you remember the slow-mo of probably 150 horses, so there were four or five guys probably 500 metres up the way, so they got everyone, we're all in there and we're going. And I'm in the middle of this pack of horses; there has never been anything more exhilarating or frightening because there was absolutely nothing I could do to control my horse. When your horse is in the middle of 150 brumbies in the middle of the Outback with no saddles on them, you're just on the back of a wild horse. So we came around, all the horses were meant to go left… They all went right. So we'd done the shot, we'd passed the shot and now it was about basically just getting—stopping the horses. Because I thought 'this horse could go all the way to Owl Springs, you know! And they all went right, and there was so much dust and my horse and a few of them had broken off to the left and they got scared, I'm talking twenty horses. When they realised all the others had come back, as the dust cleared, I just saw twenty horses come at me. And my horse immediately just reared up and I literally hung on to the neck of this horse because if I had come off of that horse I would have just got trampled. I—

EB: Gosh.

HJ: There is actually a sound—because my mic was on the whole time…

[Laughter]

I would love to have said that it was very manly

[Laughter]

It was not. And thankfully it has not yet seen the light of day.

EB: Haven't checked out the DVD extras yet?

HJ: If you look at that scene, what amazes me is how Baz, in the middle of the Outback, we were in some of the most beautiful land, living out there and I will never forget it. I was also—and I had my son with me at the time who was seven, and probably the happiest, in a way, moments of his childhood. He would go to school with the aboriginal kids and I would go off and work and he would come and meet us and we would just be out there in the Outback just the two of us, just listening to the wind and just—sleeping out under the stars sometimes. It was heaven. But so much of that scene, which is a long scene, is shot at sunset, which is only about a one-hour window of the day. So literally every day Baz was like 'get on a horse! Let's go!' at the end of the day. He was a lover –the aesthetic that Baz held on to for such long scenes was amazing. How he pulled that off.

EB: It was a nine-month shoot? It was a long shoot—

HJ: It was a long shoot and honestly at the end of that nine months if he'd said we had to start again I would have done it happily. It was some of the most beautiful parts of the world, an incredible cast, Baz Luhrmann—to work, just work with Baz Luhrmann if you get a chance, OK? Don't turn him down. That's all I'm saying. For actors, for creative, he's one of the most sensitive, incredibly accommodating directors I've ever worked with. He loves actors and he loves to create an atmosphere and that's never been replicated on any set I've been on.

EB: And you and Nicole…

HJ: Yeah

EB: I know previously we'd had you as husband and wife in *Happy Feet*

HJ: I'd forgot that! That's right, you're right.

EB: But the chemistry and you two acting against and with and round each other was just fantastic. And I wanted to ask about that thing of working with people that you know.

HJ: Yeah

EB: Acting opposite people you know, and if it is—is it harder or is it easier than coming in with some one that you don't know particularly well?

HJ: Uh, I believe in talking with actors up front. So Nicole and I were down in Kangaroo Valley, which is as romantic as it sounds and is beautiful and we were learning to ride. And by the way Nicole lived with my wife Deb when she first came to Hollywood, so they're best of friends… Needless to say Deb wasn't on set when we had our kissing scenes, that would have been awkward, but we talked about it. I said 'let's talk about it,' and we just sort of, we both loved the project and created an atmosphere which was safe. The very—probably better story—literally the first job I did was a guest star in a show called *Halifax FP* and it was an Australian drama and Rebecca Gibney was the star of it. And I had a sex scene with her, probably the most graphic sex scene I've ever had to this day. And Rebecca and my wife were very good friends and Deb had previously been a guest star and had a lesbian sex scene with her on the show.

[Laughter]

EB: Wow.

HJ: Get your head around this one. And the director of that particular episode had directed Deb in one of her big movies called *Shame*. So we got to the sex scene, cameras are rolling, and did one take—and I remember Steve the director goes 'Cut let's all go home,' and I was like 'oh we're done,' and he goes 'yeah, your wife called me.'

[Laughter]

Which both Rebecca and I were thrilled with. That was very uncomfortable because we literally had a dinner party the next night: 'Hi Rebecca, how are you?'

[Laughter]

EB: There was various endings shot for *Australia*, is that right? There's a couple of different endings shot—

HJ: Yeah, there were. Um, various versions, I think probably… It's interesting, I had forgotten that. But we, I think Baz was always very certain about which characters would die, if characters died would they come back or not. Um, and so, you know, I don't mind that. I think most novelists would say if not on paper in their head they've got two or three endings, and I think in the end sometimes you don't know what is right. And if—I think from memory the studio said can we just shoot both options? We did it on *Prisoners* as well, there's a number of films we've done where I've had to—and then often the audience will tell you. You'll put up a screening with one ending and a screening with the other and it becomes super clear. Sometimes you don't know until you're there.

EB: I quite like the idea of you going to the premiere and not knowing what end you're going to watch—which one's it going to be? What's going to happen to me?

HJ: Yeah, right.

EB: Next up we're going to talk about an incredible film on so many levels, *Les Misérables*.

HJ: Oh thank you.

EB: Which, I mean there's so much to ask you about this. And I was really lucky that I got to talk to you and the rest of the cast and Tom quite a lot when the film came out—it's phenomenal to think about how that film came together and what you guys were put through and what you had to achieve. And it felt like it was almost everything that you're about. It was everything that you love to do, so there was theatre, there was being on a soundstage, there was singing, there was, you know, everything. Would you agree?

HJ: One hundred per cent. And I, I don't know how all the actors felt, but I was thrilled to hear we were going to sing live, particularly for *Les Mis* because there's really no dialogue; everything is in song. So you really, I think it was really important for the actors, for all of us, to feel we could start the songs whichever way we wanted, however the mood took us. And I remember auditioning for that, I actually demanded an audition—not sure why I put myself through that—

EB: Yeah, why?

HJ: Um—

EB: To prove to yourself?

HJ: I think some people in Cameron Mackintosh at the time thought that I would play another part; maybe I'm better for another part. I really wanted to play Jean Valjean. I loved it, and I just wanted to myself make sure that I felt that I could do it. I think it's one of those iconic parts—obviously in literature it's one of the greats; in musical theatre it is one of the most incredible parts played by some extraordinary people and I wanted to probably prove to myself, and I didn't want to have any doubts because I firmly believe as an actor you must walk into an audition or you must walk on to stage without those doubts. Whatever doubts you have, you've got to somehow get through them. So I had an audition, I didn't realise it would be a three-hour audition.

EB: Wow.

HJ: I sang all the songs for probably twenty minutes.

EB: All of them?

HJ: And then— all of mine. There was probably twenty, twenty-five minutes. And then Tom Hooper—I was the first person he'd auditioned—kept me there and he would come up and sit while I was singing like this, you know. And he was playing with the piano player there, going through the songs, saying 'can we change—just make it less, less, less, less, less.' Because he was playing the piano music from the stage show, but I could tell he was working out how he was going to shoot it. And I remember after three hours saying 'Tom—' it was about 8:30 at night, I'm like 'Tom, I've really gotta go because the kids, I've got to put the kids to bed,' and I'll never forget the look on his face it was like 'hmm, obviously not dedicated.'

[Laughter]

I'd literally been singing for three and a half hours. It was a good little tip for how Tom would be on set!

EB: You want it, but not that bad! Well we're gonna take—

HJ: But it was a wonderful experience.

EB: We'll talk some more after we see this fantastic clip.

[Clip plays]

[Applause]

EB: Makes me want to cry! So powerful.

HJ: Thank you.

EB: So powerful. Those singing lessons really paid off.

[Laughter]

They really, wow.

HJ: You just reminded me, actually. One of the best performances I've ever seen on stage was Judi Dench singing *Send in the Clowns*. And I remember being backstage with her—I hope she doesn't mind me saying this—

EB: From *Chess*?

HJ: Huh?

EB: From *Chess*? Is it *Chess, Send in the Clowns*?

HJ: *Send in the Clowns?* No, what is—

Audience: *A Little Night Music?*

EB: There you go, yeah. One person!

Audience: Sondheim!

HJ: Sondheim, but which Sondheim is it?

Audience: *A Little Night Music*

EB: There you go, thank you.

HJ: And um, she was very nervous and kind of 'why am I there?' it was a Royal Gala performance, and that was the performance that literally killed everyone. And uh, I think in the end when I worked with Trevor Nunn on *Oklahoma* he wouldn't let us sing for three weeks, you had to internalise the lyrics. So that's how I learned song or how to sing was really to understand the thoughts and the emotion of the character. And I always thought that was the pivotal moment for that character but Tom Hooper, I remember him saying to me, he said 'you cut from there to twenty-five years later, and this guy who had been almost an animal, turned into an animal, is the mayor of the town. And so I just need you, Hugh, in that song, to go to a place so

deep, to touch something so powerful we can believe that's possible. So, uh…'

[Laughter]

I do remember having a few sleepless nights the next few weeks. But in the end I think—what an opportunity to play a character who, because of circumstance, because of life, was filled with so much self-hatred and so much anger, that he finds it almost impossible to take on this spirit. And some spirit has come to him some kind of grace has come to him, a sense of forgiveness; it's almost impossible for him. And that is such an incredible opportunity, to play something like that.

EB: And that scene and how it worked with Tom, you guys had little earpieces in where the music was—but there's so much space you're given. It feels like you're given so much space to just really take your time and play with those characters and it not being about the rhythm of the song or the music as such... It being more about the rhythm of the characters and the storytelling through that character.

HJ: Right. And then being able to do it live, I mean in that song the lyric 'what have I done? Sweet Jesus, what have I done?' You know, you can do it any number of—but if you're thinking [*sings*] 'what have I done? Sweet Jesus, what have I done? Become a thief in the night, become a dog on the run. Have I fallen so far? And is—' it somehow—he'd have said 'don't worry about that,' he had—there was a guy not very far off set in a Perspex box, so that you couldn't even hear the sustain pedal or the pounding of the keys, watching a monitor; so he's watching that and he's watching my breathing. So I would just get a chord to give me the note and I could be [*whispers*] 'what have I done, oh sweet Jesus what have I done?' I could go whichever way I wanted—I could whisper, I could sing, I could stop singing, and that freedom was everything. He never cut a take. From beginning to end he went right through. Ever. He never said 'I just need this one line, can you pick that one line up?' always was the whole thing and I think that really helped. And I think for me as an actor it was—particularly a stage actor—that was just a gift.

EB: Did you spend much time watching other scenes when people were—were you able to?

HJ: Yeah.

EB: Because I mean—

HJ: It was a really extraordinary experience, because you'd wake up in the morning and I remember looking at my pillow and almost saying to myself 'when I put my head down on that pillow I may never sing that song again,' and it's that feeling of this is the Championship Final, this is the Superbowl. Like I've got to do it today, there's no going back (admittedly not just one take). So we all felt that for each other. I was greedier and luckier than others I had three or four of those days, but some one like Eddie Redmayne had one day for *Empty Chairs and Empty Tables*. He had another duet, but that song—and that's one guy upstairs on his own, so it kept getting moved in the schedule, the poor guy. It kept just getting bumped 'oh listen we've got this, some one's sick or the weather, we're going outside, we'll do it next week.' And finally he said 'I can't sleep anymore! It's like I've got my A-Levels tomorrow and you say no do them next week, do them next week.'

[Laughter]

I remember him saying 'it's like doing your A-Levels and you don't know what the date is.' And so when it got to his song, after take seven, and if you ever watch that back it's the most extraordinary performance. If you ever watch it back, take seven, Tom Hooper—who's not known to say 'we're done, let's move on,' said 'I've got it. It's brilliant Eddie, move on.' And he goes, 'no. I have waited three and a half months to sing this song, I will have another take!' and Tom goes 'alright, alright.'

[Laughter]

And in the film it's take twenty-two.

EB: No.

HJ: And Tom Hooper said 'I was just doing it for Eddie,' but when take twenty-two came he said 'ah, I'll always trust and actor when he says 'I want another take'.'

EB: Wow. Can we talk a little bit about Annie, as well? Anne Hathaway.

HJ: Anne, uh, I deliberately didn't go on set that day. Because *I Dreamed a Dream* is really the number one song, and I think it's such—this character goes to such a dark place, such a

vulnerable place, where you see such complexity of emotion, of pain, of hurt, of lost dreams, of anger, hopelessness, so many things. And I thought 'she doesn't want twenty-five people behind the monitor,' [claps].

[Laughter]

There's a time for that [claps]. I was on set but I was in my trailer, and I remember going to her at lunch and I could just see exhaustion and she'd lost so much weight—she was just exhausted emotionally, exhausted physically. And thank you Anne, because that four minutes on screen singing that song, one take, is absolutely astonishing.

EB: One take.

HJ: Yeah, one take.

EB: Unbelievable. You talk about the physicalities that, you know, she was emotionally and physically exhausted and stuff, but the physicalities that you had to go through for that character as well—and you see it particularly even in just the face in that scene we watched and stuff—it was a huge part of why it worked so well, and what you put yourselves through to prepare for that.

HJ: The one thing we had—the stage show, I absolutely love the stage show. If you watch the stage show, in the first ten minutes Jean Valjean goes through all of what you see in the film but it's all on revolves and literally you whip off the old beard put on the new one, stuff the thing in to put on weight—it's impossible to show what you can show on film. So we were really determined, Tom and I, as was Anne, to show the physical change. So I lost I think about thirty pounds, and put thirty pound on during the film, which was great fun, by the way. No hardship in that. But the first thirty pounds were really difficult, and I remember shooting that first scene with the ropes and that was shot in the ocean in Portsmouth in the docks, which they filled with ocean water in February, and I've never been colder. And I literally was thirty pounds lighter, I had not an ounce of body fat on me, and I also was doing dehydration before that first shot because it's a trick I learned on *Wolverine* but please don't try it at home, but you can lose ten pounds of body fat in thirty-six hours if you just basically dehydrate yourself. It's terrible for your body, not worth it—it gives you a shocking headache and cramps. And that was one of the—that first time I'm on screen, it gives you a horrible, haunted look, and they eyes are sunken and so it was a great opportunity to show that, that you can't do on stage.

EB: What's your—when you think about *Les Mis* what's the thing that pops in your head about that experience?

HJ: Erm. I think the word courage comes to mind. I do remember a great camaraderie of the actors knowing we were doing—kind of putting ourselves on the line, and everybody… Everybody was there for everybody. Everyone knew what was happening, we were trying to do something really different, and uh, it is—I almost, I thought about pulling out at one point.

EB: Really?

HJ: About three weeks before. It felt so—I was probably losing weight and very grumpy at the time, but I just—it felt so huge; huge characters, huge story, huge archetypes, massive literary figures and uh, I had doubt as to whether I could pull it off. And it was my wife who actually talked me off that cliff—

EB: Go on Debs

HJ: Yeah, love you Debs. She just, she said 'you should have doubt, because Jean Valjean would have doubt, because you need humility to play him. Now get over it because you're perfect for it.' Literally it was one gee-up talk and I thought 'OK, get over it.' And I think for me there's moments as an actor where you really want—one of the first jobs I remember going 'I want this and I'm going to go for it,' and to protect myself before that I think I'd had an attitude of 'oh I'll go for it; if I get it I get it, if I don't meh.' But really that's not the truth and I always wanted the job, and in this one I'd said 'I want it,' and I went for it and I got it and just before doing it I was like [gasps] 'what was I doing?' because it felt big to me—they're big emotions, they're big stakes, and it's an important story and so, yeah.

EB: I'm glad she talked you round! But I love your commitment to truth, I think is what I'm trying to say; being truthful about that but also in terms of when you get offered things that you know you're not right for, or like *Chicago* you turned that role down because you were like 'I'm too young'—

HJ: Yeah.

EB: And I love your commitment to the truth of that, you know, in terms of 'no it's not right for me and for that,' in terms of saying no to things as well as saying yes to things.

HJ: When I watched *Chicago* my palms were sweating, just by the way. And I was like 'why didn't I just put on make up?' But Richard Gere was so good and I think I was right, I think it's taken me a while—really in life you have your gut instinct, and by the way I haven't always done this, sometimes I've been talked into things. And I generally regret them. No, ultimately there's times where you're talked into doing things for a reason, 'oh this might be good for your career,' or this or that. Even if you make a mistake, even if you get something wrong, if you go from your gut and you choose to do something that is right for you, then even if it doesn't work it's OK. You can live with that. And I suppose, and I think I've always thought acting—screen acting, stage acting—is one of the—it is about truth, it is about uncovering the layers. I do firmly believe in life we want to be seen and see each other, not the masks. And we put a lot of effort into the masks, but deep down we really want to just be ourselves, warts and all, even the bits we don't like, and acting is really about that. And I think I get a little emotional watching that scene because it really reminds me of having to open up and risk showing things of myself I don't like. It's not always comfortable.

And I'm thinking, I've been giving that answer—I'm lucky, I have people around me, not just Debs, but I have people around me who have always encouraged that. And one of them is here and that's my agent of twenty years, my London agent Lou Coulson, so—I hope you don't mind me pointing her out, but she's always, Lou is here with the family and Tom and Megan, and I met them when I was doing *Oklahoma* in 1998 and they have always encouraged me to keep learning, take risks, do the thing that feels right to me.

EB: It's so important to have those people around you, who kind of can be truthful and honest with you about the good things and the bad things. Yeah.

HJ: Totally. And even if I say 'I really love this,' and Lou will say 'yeah I don't but good luck.' But always there for you. And I think that is really, really important. And I've been very lucky, when I found Lou here and she was fighting for me from the beginning. It's interesting—it was strange to me because I came as you were saying earlier, as an actor and somehow got into musicals, and weirdly when I was first here and the same in Australia, was struggling to get any auditions in film because I was known as a musical theatre guy. And I wanted to say 'I'm not a musical theatre guy!' And it's really hard to do the musical theatre stuff. But I'm thrilled that Lou is here tonight and she's been here from the beginning.

EB: Shall we give Lou a round of applause? Let's do it.

HJ: Please.

[Applause]

HJ: I love—that is the difference with America, you wouldn't have had to ask. They would have—

EB: Woo! Stand up, spotlight, boom. Erm, one of my favourites of yours out of so many is *Prisoners*. I mean it's not—

HJ: Thanks.

EB: It's not an easy film to watch

HJ: No, particularly with two young kids.

EB: Erm yeah. But I think it's just incredible and I think the performance that Denis Villeneuve—and I know that he pushed you as well and I know it was a wonderful relationship with you and Jake on screen as well, which we're going to watch in this particular scene right now.

[Clip plays]

[Applause]

EB: I heard Denis Villeneuve talk about the fact that Roger Deakins, originally they were doing it on one camera and you guys had done a rehearsal and he'd allowed you the space to improv and was like 'no, we're going to need two cameras because I don't want to miss any of this.'

HJ: He did. And by the way the first thing I notice there in that scene—I don't know if any of you could see in the background, it was—there was written in the script and I presumed it

impossible to do, that rain turns to snow. And Roger achieved that. I've never seen that in a film, and if you ever see that scene back you'll see in the background there's a mix of rain to snow. It's a beautiful little detail that the incredible Roger Deakins—four-time Oscar nominee, I believe—his instincts… The thing about Roger, if you're not on your game with Roger, if Roger's got the camera in his hand and it's you and me, if you're a little off your game the camera just drifts off.

[Laughter]

For real. He allowed—he created this atmosphere where Jake and I could improve. And actually, it took me by surprise, that scene. I should tell you, we had just wrapped the scene before that take; everyone was happy, moving on, and I was sitting in the car and I was just sitting there because the rain machines were on so I got back in the car and everyone was racing for the next thing and Jake looked at me and he just said 'we should do one more.' I said 'you don't think we got it?' And he said 'I don't know, I just have a feeling we should do one more.' And I said 'why?' And he said 'I think there's something deeper here; I think it's not just cop and suspect that in these cases they find a connection. And it's nothing spoken.' And I said 'yeah,' and I asked and of course they said yes and that was the next take.

And all that stuff, that line 'every day she's wondering why I'm not there, waiting for me not you,' that actually came from research I'd done from a real case. And I can tell you the real cases in these situations are so horrible and so heart breaking because literally people break, their minds break; they just can't cope with not being able to find their kid and help them. And literally that just sort of came out, and I just remember when we cut just looking to Jake—and we didn't say anything but I will never forget that, see that's an instinctive actor and I suspect director—I suspect that Jake is a director. He's just instinctive; his performance is so phenomenal in that movie. There was less on the page for his character than anyone else; his performance is so memorable.

EB: All those little things, even like those little twitches of the eye.

HJ: The twitches, the whole thing. Just, his background, the amount he put into it. He taught me something, actually, that I use to this day—again, Jake, I hope you don't mind me saying. But it was I think his first day on the film, and he's watching my house and there's a camera in the back seat and he's in the front and he's just watching and then he eventually gets out. And apparently, I wasn't there, but apparently, the cameraman told me, he sat there for about eight minutes and then he got out of the car—and of course the shot's probably going to be three seconds. And I said 'mate I heard you sat in the car for a long time,' and he goes 'yeah, that's my first shot. I was just feeling actor-y. I could feel the thing in the back, it was my first day, and I thought I'm just going to sit here until I feel like the character.' And I was like—I use that now, to this day: Just be patient, and just wait and don't expect that you're just going to be able to walk on set every day and feel it. But when you say dedication to truth, he will risk maybe someone going 'have you heard Jake sat in the car for eight minutes?' and he will just wait, wait until it's right and then go. And the same thing for that scene, 'I think there's one more.' And I, to be honest, me, because I was well brought up, was like 'yeah but everyone's moving and we, you know it's lunch—'

[Laughter]

'The caterers, the poor guys, they're like 'lunch now' really it's going to be dried out chicken…'

[Laughter]

EB: The veggies are going to be overcooked! And what about Denis in terms of that freedom that he allowed you, in terms of that improv and giving you space and you guys saying 'we want to go again' and him giving you that…

HJ: Always, Denis is… Denis is a lover of truth and all of his movies—he's on this incredible run, you know *Incendies*, *Sicario*, or you know *Arrival* or *Blade Runner*, which I think is a masterpiece. He's an astonishing filmmaker—he loves actors, he loves filmmaking. There's a scene I had with Paul Dano where we'd been going, and I don't want to give the movie away for anyone but basically I'm torturing him for information about my daughter because I strongly suspect he knows where she is, and I was exhausted. I was like that scene in *Les Mis*, 'I'm out, I'm out of ideas.' And I could see Denis walking up to me, we're on a soundstage, and he was walking towards me and he had a slight smile, and I really, I thought 'Oh this is that lovely moment where your

director's going so say 'oh thank you that was wonderful' and—'

EB: Have a hot chocolate!

HJ: Yeah, 'it was amazing, great, let's go and have that lovely chicken that they've prepared.'

[Laughter]

And he came up to me and he goes, he just put his arm around me and he goes 'I need you to go further. I don't really feel it, I just don't think you're really there and I need you go,' and I'm like 'you need me to go further than that?' and he goes 'Oh yes, yes, yes. Much further.' And the next—I think I was a little demoralised, grateful that he'd asked me to do it, and pushed me beyond—my inner critic was like 'no we're good,' so pushed me beyond that and the next take is the one in the movie. Indeed, actually, it's not just about anger and emotion, it was also about exhaustion. That's why Denis' one of the greats, you know.

EB: His—the way he speaks English is like the cutest thing ever.

HJ: Yeah, 'Love it, love it, love it, love it, love it.'

EB: 'Love it, love it, love it, love it, love it. Check, check, ooh, ooh, ooh.'

[Laughter]

HJ: 'I love it, simply love it, love it, love it.'

EB: We should say before we've seen this next clip, if no one has seen *Logan*, massive spoiler, OK?

[Laughter]

Massive spoiler. So maybe if you haven't seen it, cover your ears.

HJ: He's got claws, OK? I'm just going to say it. They come out of his hands, it's a little odd, you'll get used to it.

EB: Huge. When I watched this earlier I was like 'there's a huge spoiler in this!' But yeah, let's take a look at this.

[Clip plays]

[Applause]

EB: Such a touch. Such a touch with the cigars on the—

HJ: The little cigar, yeah.

EB: Yeah it's great. Before we talk about you, can we just mention young Dafne, who's just wow.

HJ: Dafne is astonishing. And I will admit to saying to Jim Mangold who wrote it, directed it—it was originally a father-son story on the road, pretty much as it is. He then came up with the idea about six months after beginning of having Laura, X-23, who's a character in the comic books, and I said 'this is a great idea, I understand it this whole idea of family and everybody together. But I don't know if you're going to find an eleven year-old girl that you're going to believe is young Wolverine, who—again, spoiler alert—doesn't speak for the first ninety minutes of the movie. Like this is a great idea, but the reality, Jim—are we setting ourselves up for failure?' And then we saw Dafne's test and the test—the test, actually somewhere in the middle she does the scene, it's in… Will, who's a quite famous English actor, her father, and Maria—it's in their living room she's bouncing around, she's doing some physical stuff, she does the scene and then she's like 'can I improvise one?' and she completely improvises the long scene and it's astonishing. And she is an extraordinary young actress, an extraordinary young girl, and she's the heart of the movie. And what she manages to pull off, this blossoming of someone who's been created in a laboratory and watching her open up to life; when she first smiles it is literally one of the most beautiful moments I've ever seen on film. And her ability, just her stillness, is astonishing.

EB: Congratulations on this film because it's just such a special one—

HJ: Thank you, thank you.

EB: And such an interesting journey for that character as well. Seventeen years you've played Wolverine, and then for James to come on board and be the person to kind of finish his story in a way—

HJ: I worked with Jim on *Kate and Leopold* back in the day, 2000 I think we filmed and we'd always wanted to work with each other

again. So I wanted him to do the *Wolverine* and that was a script that existed, so the idea of doing this last one (which I knew was going to be my last one), I immediately turned to Jim because he's an incredible filmmaker—incredible writer, as well as well as director, and I will be grateful to him for the rest of my life. Honestly when I saw the film finished, I must admit, I finally—all my nerves went, all my hopes which were high, my expectations were super high for the film, I let it all go and during the credits, we were at the Berlin Film Festival and Patrick Stewart was there and Jim and I was weeping. And I am so grateful to him, the way he captured me and that character; it was finally for me after seventeen years what I'd felt of the character on screen. And I felt we'd had moments of that, but I'd never felt it so fully as that. So I'll forever be grateful to him.

EB: What was the idea and what was the journey of that—because you say that you always knew that was how it was going to end—so you say it started off as a father-son kind of road trip and then Dafne kind of, that character kind of came into it, and without her it kind of almost—it's serendipity, whatever it is, that this is how it should have been—

HJ: It's amazing to me. Jim really shepherded it. I really didn't know what it would be, I kept seeing *Unforgiven*, I kept seeing *The Wrestler*—Jim had other movies in his mind. They were the movies I kept seeing and felt really strongly that a smaller movie would get us to the heart of this character because yes he's cool and the cigar chomping and the slicing and dicing and the women and all that thing—but to me this was a character who had lived in violence and what's the consequence of that? What are—why is love the most terrifying thing to him? Why is connection to anybody else the most frightening thing? So Jim puts him in a car, it's kind of like *Little Miss Sunshine* for a while, you know, we're in this car travelling across with this family that he's kind of—the amount of times he tells this girl to basically rack off, it's unbelievable what Jim did. And it just all started to make sense. I didn't know how it would end—I had a lot of faith in Jim and that was probably the smartest thing I ever did. Really him and Patrick—I'm going to tell another story an excuse me, you have the ability to edit it out, but it's to me one of the—I have to tell you a story about Patrick and Dafne, because it's one of my favourite stories about Patrick. It was super hot; we were in the car, that scene you've seen in the car, later, the next scene. We're driving, it was 120 degrees—I remember Dafne fainting, actually, in the scene. She immediately went red and then she was asleep during the take and one of the camera crew said 'oh I think Dafne's asleep,' I said 'no I think she's fainted,' and we had to take a break. It was super hot; we were in the car the whole day. And on our way back Dafne was now full of beans and feeling great, and she turned to Patrick who looked a little melancholic and said 'are you OK?' Patrick said 'I'm a little sad,' and she said 'why are you sad?' and he said 'because, here's the thing, Dafne: I need you to promise me that you're going to be in the theatre one day. Will you promise me that?' and she said 'alright, I'll do that,' you know, she's eleven, she's like 'sure, I'll be in the theatre.' And he's like 'seriously, be in the theatre because you're very rarely going to get scenes like the one we've just done today, that are so good that you only do for one day, you may only do it for three hours and then you never do it again as an actor. But in the theatre, six months, every night you get to do that scene over and over again.' And I always remember Dafne taking that in and I thought 'what a beautiful bit of advice to give an eleven year-old.'

EB: Wow, that's amazing. What was it like for you to work on those scenes with Patrick? Because—

HJ: It was so—

EB: For us to watch it was magical.

HJ: The first scene we had together is seven and a half minutes long. And I mean, I don't think we'd had that much screen time together in all the movies put together. Just two guys talking about stuff and life and him telling me to eff-off and all this stuff, and… It was such a different side to that character, it was heart breaking and literally not just me, the entire crew there were tears rolling down their faces because he'd lost twenty-two pounds, he looked very frail in that chair, his performance was so beautiful—and I just felt this great, I'm really glad I had the presence of mind that I was working on a great scene with one of the great actors of all time, with some one who's become not just a mentor but a friend, and I was like 'remember this, remember this, remember this.' And Jim brought us in to watch the first cut of that scene and Patrick at the end of it, and I've got a photo of it thanks to Michelle (who's here) who took a photo—of

him just—me hugging him. And he just hugged me and it was literally like, well it felt like family, I don't know how to describe it, where we had finally done the scene that we'd always wanted to do.

EB: Wow. After all that time of—was it between a matinee and an evening show that you went for the audition?

HJ: Yeah! I was doing—

EB: Wow! *Oklahoma?*

HJ: So I was doing *Oklahoma* at the Royal National Theatre. I had this audition—they put out this worldwide casting call and so I got four pages—of course they don't send the whole script—I get four pages and I'm reading them with Deb, my wife—I always go over auditions with her. She's like 'OK, uh Wolverine senses danger his nostrils flare,' she's like…

[Laughter]

'Snikt, S-N-I-K-T, claws come out of his hands,' she's like 'Hugh, come on, you can't do this,' and I say 'ah, you know, it's Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellan,' and she goes 'but you're at the Royal National Theatre with Sir Trevor Nunn, you cannot be having claws coming out of your hands!'

[Laughter]

And I'm like 'well, you know, I'm gonna give it a go,' and she literally threw it down and goes 'you're on your own.' So I the next day went for the audition after the matinee, and we came off, it was a three-hour show, I whipped off the leather chaps and I bolted—literally I didn't even go back to my changing room, I put on a baseball cap and I ran into Soho to do this test because I had to have the test done before six. And I ran there and I got in and I do the test, and the casting agent said to me 'maybe lose the baseball cap, you know, this is Wolverine, I don't see him as a baseball cap kind of guy.' So I take off—now I'm playing Curly in *Oklahoma,* I have a perm in my hair—I take off the baseball cap and she goes 'yeah, put it back on.'

[Laughter]

I put it back on and I get a call from my agent the next day saying 'you got a call back,' and I'm like 'really?' And they said 'yeah you got a call back and the only feedback was maybe you could lose the southern cowboy accent and maybe you could lose the perm,' which I did and about seven auditions later I got the job. And it is the only time in twenty-one years that my wife has been wrong, the only time.

[Laughter]

EB: We've got some time for questions from our lovely audience if that's alright? We've got a gentleman there if we can get the microphone to… And then a microphone to that lady there and we'll come to you next.

EB: Hello, what's your question?

Q: Hello

EB: Hi

Q: I was just wondering, me and my girlfriend here are both aspiring actors, so we were wondering, when you get a script or when you get cast how do you go about building the character from scratch?

HJ: I'm so glad you asked me that because I wish—when I was starting I made so many mistakes, did so many bad commercials. And you'll do bad ones and don't give up when you do bad ones, right? That's par for the course. But um, I really firmly believe the reason I went to study and not do *Neighbours* is because I felt I want to feel when I go into the industry that I've educated myself. I'm not going to stop, I still have an acting coach today, I still learn, I still have a singing teacher—you never stop learning, but that when you go out that you feel like 'I deserved to be in the industry.' So that's number one: When you get a script, ask for as much as you can. Ask for as much time as you can, sometimes you won't, sometimes you'll literally have to do a cold read and that's fine, do it. But whatever it takes you to walk in to that audition feeling like you deserve to be there—because as nervous as you are that director, that casting agent, that producer is way more nervous. And all they want is for someone to come in and for them to go 'oh great, I don't have to worry about Wolverine, now let's worry about Cyclops.'

[Laughter]

So I used to—the trick I would do to get over my nerves, is thinking this is the first day of rehearsal. That doesn't mean you're

arrogant—you're not going to walk in the first day of rehearsal like 'yo, this is my rehearsal,' you walk in like 'let's get to work, let's discover, let's work on this.' If they said to me 'right—' what's your name?

Q: Daniel

HJ: 'Daniel we've got a chair for you here, set up,' I would always say 'I think the character would stand, is that alright if we stand?' And they'll say 'oh sure.' I would always do something so that I felt I was part of the creation, like I was rehearsing. I would always say 'would you mind if we do it again?' and 'maybe we should do it this way?' I would really try to approach it like I've already got the job and now we're rehearsing it; we're not coming up with the final performance, we're digging in deeper. And that seemed to me, and maybe you can try it and see if it works, to take away the 'am I?' question mark to the 'I am.' So always feeling 'I am.' You're not going in, even though your name's Daniel, you're not going in going 'I'm Daniel Day Lewis,' but you're going 'I'm Daniel and I'm ready and I've learned the part and I'm ready for this job.' You have to believe it; you believe whatever you need to get there.

EB: What great advice, amazing. Lady here, please.

[Applause]

Q: Hi, I'm Janine.

HJ: Hi Janine

Q: Little bit beside myself…

[Laughter]

Hi Hugh's mum, as well, that's amazing.

[Laughter]

HJ: Aww, Grace, it's Grace.

Q: Hi Grace. Um, you talked about your perm at the National. I've also been at the National, same hairdresser—I didn't have a perm.

[Laughter]

Adele, she says hi. I was there a while ago. Um, you're big and loud on screen, amazing—I am too, always get told all the time I'm too loud. How do you get from being a stage actor to screen? I know you mentioned a bit of that process earlier but I find it really hard to channel that large-ness into something that you succeed so incredibly with on screen.

HJ: It took me a while. The story I've told about Jake is a good one to remember; it's a symbolic story but basically what he was doing was allowing his heartbeat to calm down. And sometimes on stage a little bit of adrenaline is a good thing—generally in film it's not. Allow yourself to calm down. I've worked with actors who will, while people are saying 'alright quiet on set, action,' they will start ad-libbing, they'll just start talking so there's no feeling like 'we're starting now, we're acting now, and now we've stopped acting. Now we're acting, now we've stopped…' So you can do that. But I think in the end, big picture, stage feels like a party of 100 people and film feels like a dinner for two. It's the same thing—you've got your actions, you know what you're going for, you're there to affect the other person and I really try to connect with the other actor. And all the things you've learned on film—on stage—still apply. The camera is not something to be ignored; the camera is your audience. So even though I'm talking to you, Janine, I can feel the camera and I want to invite that camera in like a best friend. So make yourself comfortable with the camera—literally, that's your best friend. And do the scene. And if you feel a little fluttery or a little nervous, say 'I feel a little nervous,' say it to the director, it's fine. I did it on my very last film—it just came up out of the blue I said 'I'm sorry I just feel a little nervous, could we just do another one straight away?' and it just went away. Um, he said he hadn't noticed, maybe he was being nice, I don't know, but I think it's important for you to feel calm, relaxed, and that relaxation is everything. Breathe and be, and focus on the other actor. I was telling a story earlier today—a director came up to me once and said 'uh, by the way before you start, do you like to do your coverage first or would you like to do it second?' and I said 'if it's OK I'd like you never to talk about your coverage again.' I said 'I don't like that feeling because it's our scene. Jean and I are doing a scene, the camera is on me right now, and five seconds ago the camera was on you, but at the end of the day we're doing a scene no matter what. We're connecting, we're listening, checking in—is the other actor there? That's what Jake did to me that day, he was like 'there's something else here. We've played the scene but there's

something else.' Connect, connect, connect, if that makes sense.

Q: Perfect.

EB: You just did a scene with Hugh Jackman!

[Laughter]

[Applause]

Now we've got a bit of a treat because Hugh's got a new film coming out on Boxing Day, so Merry Christmas to you all from Hugh.

HJ: Yes, Merry Christmas!

EB: And I've been lucky enough to see it and it's—oh it's wonderful. I just came out crying with joy. Tell us a little bit about *The Greatest Showman* before we get a little teaser.

HJ: This film is a little bigger—

EB: Yeah this is huge—but you use the camera, it's really interesting because you do play with the camera in this film.

HJ: Yeah

EB: It doesn't feel like there's a line between, it's great.

HJ: Yeah, mum, sorry mum I'm going to tell this story. She used to say to me when I was young, she told me and I don't remember it, I used to stand up on a chair or whatever and yell and I was the youngest at the time, and she would say 'you don't have to stand up on your chair to get attention,' and now she'll say 'man was I wrong!'

[Laughter]

This film is a guy standing on a chair to get attention. His name was P.T. Barnum and he came from the most crippling, horrific poverty. He had all these dreams and ideas and he would not take no for an answer and he had a lot of fight in him. And he was—yes, the birth of showbiz, definitely the birth of marketing. I just read a great quote from him: 'Without promotion something terrible will happen—nothing.'

[Laughter]

He could turn lemons into lemonade no matter what. He got the worst review I have ever read in my life, which basically started with 'this show is degrading, it is criminal, it is a circus,' and he read it and he goes 'I like circus.' And he literally, that's how we have the name circus today. And he literally printed the terrible review in every paper in New York and offered half price tickets to anyone who brought them in—because he knew there was no such thing as bad publicity. So it's a musical, it's an original movie musical, which at the time hadn't been done in twenty-three years when we were green-lit, so we figured it was the perfect story to take a chance on. And it was a great thrill for me to be able to do this movie musical.

EB: Well we're in luck because we have a little teaser from the film, so enjoy.

[Clip plays]

[Applause]

So good, it really is.

HJ: Ah thank you.

EB: The music's great in it, you kind of—you come out, you feel like you're in the audience of those performances when you're watching it. It's so clever; the choreography is really quite special.

HJ: Justin and Benj wrote the music, the just got nominated for three Grammy awards, they won the Tony award for *Dear Evan Hansen*, they won the Oscar for the lyrics of *La La Land*, and when we hired them the director had to lie that they had won the Tony award because they were literally out of college. And we were going to every single big recording artist out there to record stuff, the studio were like 'we need big names,' and they were like 'who's this Justin and Benj?' and the director, Michael Gracey said 'they've just won a Tony award,' 'For what?' '*James and the Giant Peach.*' And the Hollywood exec goes 'oh OK. Of course.'

[Laughter]

There's never been a Broadway production of *James and the Giant Peach*. And anyway, they were honoured, and Michael Gracey is this first-time director—there's so many great things about it—Zendaya and Zac Efron, Michelle Williams, Rebecca Ferguson—sorry I'm

sounding like Barnum giving the pitch, but I'm very… It is a great Christmas, all family movie, and I love the music and I love what the movie has to say, which is—what makes you different makes you special, which is really what Barnum's show was all about.

EB: Yeah. Twenty-sixth of December. We've got time for a couple more questions, actually. So lady right there, if we can get a microphone to you, and then the lady there. Let's finish with a couple of ladies! If you'd like to go first, please…

Q: Hello. You've actually answered three of the questions I had thought of before I came, so what I'm going to ask is about looking back to the golden-age of Hollywood—older actors, older musicals, older films—is there a film you think you would like to have been in before from the old days, maybe?

HJ: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Q: Would you have played what—Atticus?

HJ: As an actor I just think Gregory Peck is amazing and I love that character, I love that book and I love that story. I love his dignity, his ease, his panache. And *Singin' in the Rain.* I mean it's pure wishful thinking because—

EB: Oh, redo it!

[Laughter]

Please? Oh you would be so good.

HJ: That's crazy, no. No one should ever try to redo Gene Kelly in my mind.

EB: You should!

HJ: That movie is just perfection. It is—it still holds up; it's satirical, it is funny. Donald O'Connor, 'make 'em laugh,' 'Moses supposes,' I mean you name it, it is just a beautiful... The Cyd Charisse number… Yeah, that kind of stuff.

EB: The couch in *Good Morning*, yeah, ah.

HJ: But thankfully musicals are coming back. And I'm thrilled that *La La Land* did so well, I think a lot of people saw *La La Land* who may not normally have seen it. I think Baz Luhrmann has a lot to do with the musical coming back in vogue with *Moulin Rouge* fifteen years ago, because honestly when we—this was 2009 when we first approached the studio about doing this, there had not been an original movie musical in twenty-three years. It was considered just too risky. So anyway, it's a great thrill to be in it.

EB: Great, thank you for your question. And then our final question, the lady here. No pressure but it's got to be great.

Q: Thank you. Sorry, it's in relation to what Daniel was saying actually… I've got an eleven year-old son who is performing at the moment; he's been working really, really hard to get into the industry. He's now just got into a lead role in a local pantomime, which is really great news. You are his role model, so he'd rather be here than me today, but one of the things he has asked me to ask if have the opportunity, is what words of advice can you give to him—any tips for success and including, I know your agent's in here, so I hope you don't mind me asking, but in regards of getting an agent for him.

EB: How old is he, eleven?

Q: He's eleven years old.

HJ: I got my first job when I was twenty-six, so he's miles ahead of me, tell him that.

[Laughter]

So when my career's in the toilet, tell him to be nice to me, all right? But good on him, doing the panto; do the panto, do the play, do the school play, do the community thing. Go for auditions, do classes. If he ever stops loving it, take a break. He's too young, in my—don't tell him this, this is probably for you—but I'm a parent, that's my point of view, and I've worked with a lot of kid actors on set and some of which, I can tell don't love it. And I feel for them, if they're too young, not to love it. You should always love it. But at that age really you shouldn't feel pressure. As his parent I would advise you to make it as fun as possible, as joyous as available. If he wants to go for an agent and all of that and he's enjoying it—terrific. I'm sorry I don't know really the names of anyone—I mean there's Lou Coulson here, go for it, but…

[Laughter]

Find her afterwards! But even that, I would just say just keep going along, things will naturally

happen. And continue to learn, be open to learning. Learn to dance, learn to sing. I never thought I'd be in a musical, I thought I was going to be a Shakespearean actor, and I had so much joy doing musicals and it's been a surprise. So I would keep him on that track of learning, but bottom line, it should be fun.

Q: Thank you very much.

[Applause]

EB: Great, thank you. Thank you so much to you all being here tonight—

HJ: Yes, can I say thank you as well?

EB: Of course you can.

HJ: I really, really appreciate it on a Sunday night everybody coming out, and I saw other people ask—that wanted to ask questions and I'm sorry you didn't get time. But I do really appreciate everybody coming out to witness my first Half-Life in Film!

[Laughter]

[Applause]

EB: The fabulous Hugh Jackman!

HJ: Did I wrap it up? That was terrible!

EB: No! Not at all it was perfect!

HJ: Done!

[Applause]