

## MEET THE LATEST HOT YOUNG ACTOR LOCKING LIPS WITH A BLOKE ONSTAGE

**You were in Doctor Who as child genius Luke Rattigan, what's been your experience of the fans?** Doctor Who fans range from really nice to fucking insane. Mostly really nice. But when you meet someone and they quote one of your character's lines at you before saying anything else you know you're in danger territory.

**Following on from the recent survey by Equity, the union for actors, being openly gay yourself do you think playing a straight character is difficult for gay actors, or playing a gay character puts you in a stereotyped box?** I was an openly straight actor, then I was an

Floyd Collins as 'Skeets' Miller at the Southwark Playhouse, where your character has to kiss Floyd, played by Glenn Carter – what has the reaction been to the 'kiss'? We haven't done the kiss yet. Thanks for making it awkward. Now I might plant one on him and then start crying and apologizing for not doing it right. Me and the director had a bit of a chat about it and decided it's purposefully a bit ambiguous. Somewhere between "kiss me Hardy" and "kiss me, hard". It's a really amazing bit of writing. A man who is stuck in absolute confinement and is beginning to realise he's going to die there, asking the only person available for a moment of human contact; that Forster quote 'only connect'. Pretty brutal. I honestly don't know how people will react. **Why should people see Floyd Collins?** This is the most darkly

# RYAN SAMPSON

openly gay actor. Then I was openly bisexual and now I'm just openly confused. I don't think I'm the right person to ask, basically.

**You've just finished playing Billy in a new play, The Kitchen Sink, at the Bush Theatre, which got great reviews – do you approach new writing differently to classics or musicals?** Ouch. Didn't know you were going to grill me on my technique. Well firstly this is my first proper experience of doing musical theatre, so I'm more or less approaching this in the same way you'd approach being pushed out of an aeroplane. As for the classics versus new writing, I love new plays because you're on the edge of the creative process, nobody's been there before and you've only got your instincts to work with. To be honest though, I'm a massive Shakespeare geek. It's how I started out. Billy knows his shit.

**Now you're starring in the musical**

beautiful piece of theatre I've ever read. Some of the songs have haunted me for weeks. Sondheim was asked if there's a song in a show that he wishes he'd written, and he said yes – the riddle song from Floyd Collins. It's disturbing, nightmarish and touching by turns. Plus you get to see how the kiss turns out. I've got a fiver on tongues.

**Your character wants to be an operatic singer, but ends up being a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist.**

**What would you do if you weren't an actor?** Well I've just written a comedy pilot <plug> so I reckon I'd do that. Bit of a cop out? Okay so when I was 12 I wanted to be Lawrence Lewellyn Bowen. Then I met him in Foyles and he was a cunt. Dream shattered. ■

Ryan Sampson is currently playing 'Skeets' Miller in Floyd Collins The Musical at The Vault, Southwark Playhouse, London from 22 February to 31 March. Southwarkplayhouse.co.uk and britishtheatre.com/floydcollins. Theryansampson.com, @mrryansampson







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