



GEORGE'S MARVELLOUS MEDICINE

Thursday 7 –
Saturday 24 April 2022



Altrincham Garrick
PLAYHOUSE

MANY OF OUR STARRING ROLES ARE BEHIND THE SCENES!



Whatever your interest, the Garrick has a lot to offer!

Come and be part of a friendly and rewarding Theatre... WE NEED YOU!

Altrincham Garrick Playhouse is more than just a Community Theatre – it's a cultural and creative hub for the Arts in Altrincham. In the main, the Playhouse is run by volunteers who play a critical role in providing high-quality performances and experiences to our local community. Volunteers of all ages and abilities have discovered a warm welcome as well as new challenges, with many younger members having found the Garrick to be a springboard to future careers.

And, of course, we're always advertising auditions for upcoming productions... Perhaps you may want to be on stage too?!

Why not come and play your part in this vibrant Theatre Community? Open your social circle and meet new friends, gain new skills, and help to build your confidence and creativity. We promise you won't regret it! Altrincham Garrick Playhouse has been a home to volunteers, and has been staging top-quality productions, since 1913!

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Bar • Kiosk • IT

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Stage Management • Lighting • Sound

To get in touch and find out more, please e-mail admin@altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Hello!

Welcome to Altrincham Garrick Playhouse, and our Easter half-term production of *George's Marvellous Medicine*.



In planning all of our shows for the 2021-2022 season, I felt that it was hugely important for us to stage a variety of theatrical productions, from contemporary, challenging dramas to classic comedies, musical theatre and, of course, a show that would appeal to families, and offer them something to entertain everyone at this time of the year. It wasn't hard selecting an adaptation by David Wood of a Roald Dahl novel.

Over the years, children's theatre in the UK has achieved a somewhat higher status and profile than in the days when David Wood began his phenomenal output for young people. In the last forty years or so, the quantity and quality of theatre for children in the UK has undoubtedly gone up considerably, and there are more companies and more dedicated practitioners. However, the attitude still sometimes shown towards children's theatre in many areas - by the public, by the theatrical profession, and especially by critics and funding bodies - continues to relegate it to a 'lower division', rather than hailing it as the exciting and groundbreaking art form it can be. Children's theatre is not just a means to an end, and a way of building up an audience for adult theatre of the future. It is an important branch of theatre which should be celebrated and supported. It should not be an optional extra, and the first thing to be dropped when money is tight. The pressure is always on theatre companies, as children's theatre can often be costly to mount, yet the (rightly) affordable seat prices can yield far less at the box office than an equivalent adult show. We will always strive to include a children's show in our repertoire every year.

At the Garrick, we are in the fortunate position to be able to attract some of the most talented performers from across the North West of England to become involved in our productions. But that's not to say that we're not open to new faces. In my experience, the Garrick has always been a company where new participants are both welcomed and encouraged to become fully engaged. In the last year, we have seen many people making their debuts with us, both onstage and offstage, and I'm delighted that our commitment to giving opportunities to new talent of all ages has proved so successful. In *George's Marvellous Medicine*, we welcome another new face - Hannah Collman - to the company, and I really hope that this will be the first of many appearances she will make on one of our stages. Not only in terms of the theatre, but also including community groups like the Garrick's Show Choir, opportunities exist for people to try new things, develop new skills and achieve their potential. If you would like to know more about how you could play your part, simply contact us today at the e-mail address or phone number on the right.

We'll soon be announcing our hugely exciting plans for what lies ahead in the 2022-23 Season of productions. As with this year, there really will be 'something for everyone' at our theatre, both for you, our audiences, to savour and also to challenge the whole Garrick company to stretch their boundaries. If you'd like to be amongst the first to know what's coming up, follow us on our social media and join our mailing list. You'll be glad you did!

I sincerely hope you enjoy today's performance. Thank you for joining us, and we hope to see you back at the Garrick soon. Whether it's to see a show, taking part in a workshop or Community event, creating your own work, or simply stopping by to share time with friends, you're always welcome.

Joe

Joseph Meighan Artistic Director, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.



**Altrincham Garrick
PLAYHOUSE**



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Roald Dahl

Roald Dahl was a spy, an ace fighter pilot, a chocolate historian and a medical inventor.

*He was also the author of **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**, **Matilda**, **The BFG**, and a treasury of original, evergreen, and beloved children's books. He remains for many the world's No. 1 storyteller.*

Born in Llandaff, Wales, on 13th September 1916 to Norwegian parents, Harald Dahl and Sofie Magdalene Hesselberg, Dahl was named after Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian who had been the first man to reach the South Pole just four years earlier. A heroic start in life. But his early years were blighted by the tragic deaths of his older sister, Astri, and of his father.

Wanting the best for her only son, his mother sent him to boarding school - first to St Peter's, Weston-super-Mare; then, in 1929, to Repton - where many bizarre and memorable events would later be recounted in **Boy**. Pupils at Repton were invited to trial chocolate bars, a memory that stayed with Dahl throughout his life, inspiring **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**.

Schooldays happily behind him, Dahl's lust for travel took him first to Canada, then to East Africa, where he worked for an oil company until the outbreak of World War Two. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force at 23 years old.

In September 1940, Dahl received severe injuries to his head, nose and back when his Gloster Gladiator biplane crash-landed in the Western Desert. After six months recovering from his injuries he returned to action in Alexandria, taking part in The Battle of Athens and the defence of Greece, flying Hurricanes. After his squadron was withdrawn to Egypt following Greece's capitulation to the German forces, Dahl started experiencing occasional blackouts. He was grounded, and invalided back to Britain, but continued in the R.A.F. as an Air Attaché posted to Washington D.C. He subsequently came to the attention of MI6 and began to supply intelligence to them.

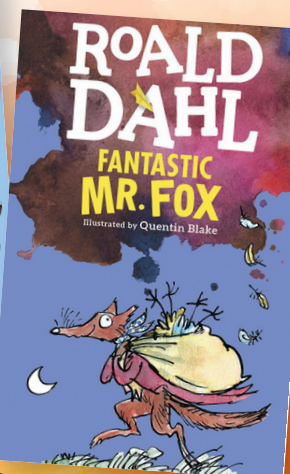
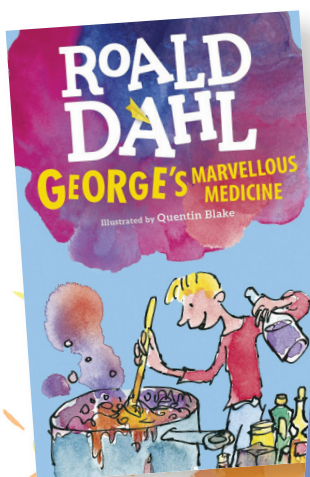


Above: Roald Dahl pictured at work in his writing shed.

Dahl began his writing career with short stories; in all, he published nine short story collections. Dahl first caught the writing bug while in Washington, D.C., when he met with author C.S. Forester, who had been asked to write an article about the RAF Officer's career for the Saturday Evening Post. Forester asked Dahl to supply some notes and anecdotes for reference purposes, but when he received Dahl's written notes, he decided not to change anything and the Post published it verbatim. Dahl then went on to write stories and articles for other magazines, including The New Yorker.

Of his early writing career, Dahl told New York Times book reviewer Willa Petschek, "*As I went on the stories became less and less realistic and more fantastic.*" He went on to describe his foray into writing as a "*pure fluke*," saying, "*Without being asked to, I doubt if I'd ever have thought to do it.*"

Dahl wrote his first story for children, **The Gremlins**, in 1942, for Walt Disney. The story wasn't terribly successful, so Dahl went back to writing macabre and mysterious stories geared toward adult readers. He continued in this vein into the 1950s, producing the best-selling story collection **Someone Like You** in 1953, and **Kiss, Kiss** in 1959.



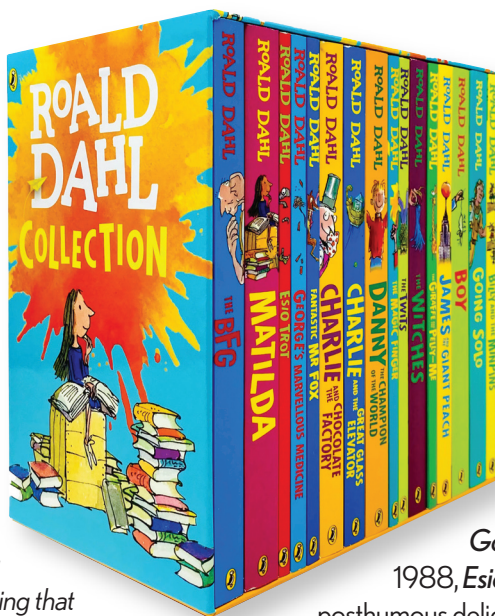
Penguin's publications of some of Roald Dahl's brilliantly imaginative works, brought to life with illustrations by Sir Quentin Blake... who also created the cartoon of the author and some of his characters (right).

The same year that *Someone Like You* was published, Dahl married film actress Patricia Neal, who won an Academy Award for her role in *Hud* in 1961. The marriage lasted three decades and resulted in five children, one of whom tragically died in 1962.

Dahl told his children nightly bedtime stories that inspired his future career as a children's writer. These stories became the basis for some of his most popular kids' books, as his children proved an informative test audience. "Children are ... highly critical. And they lose interest so quickly," he asserted in his New York Times book review interview. "You have to keep things ticking along. And if you think a child is getting bored, you must think up something that jolts it back. Something that tickles. You have to know what children like."

Roald once said that, had he not become a famous writer, he would have loved to have been a doctor. In fact, after his son, Theo, had an accident in the early 1960s in New York that led him to develop hydrocephalus (or "water on the brain"), Roald helped to create the Wade-Dahl-Till (WDT) valve. This was a cerebral shunt designed to more effectively drain excess fluid from the brains of hydrocephalus patients. By the time the WDT valve was ready for use Theo had recovered enough that he didn't need it, but it went on to be used in countless operations. Today, *Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity* continues this work, helping seriously ill children and young people to live a fuller and happier life.

There followed a burst of literary energy: in 1961 *James and the Giant Peach* was published, followed by *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Roald then wrote screenplays for the James Bond hit *You Only Live Twice* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, as well as adult novels such as *Kiss Kiss*. *Fantastic Mr. Fox* was published in 1970, the year before the film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* was released. The rest of the decade saw the publication of many other classics, including *Danny the*



Champion of the World, The Enormous Crocodile, and My Uncle Oswald.

Roald also enjoyed enormous success on television. Having already had his stories told in six episodes of the award winning US series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, his *Tales of the Unexpected* ran for several series between 1979 and 1988 in the UK.

In the early 1980s he published *The Twits*, *Revolting Rhymes*, *The BFG* and *The Witches*. There followed two auto-biographical books: *Boy*, in 1984 and

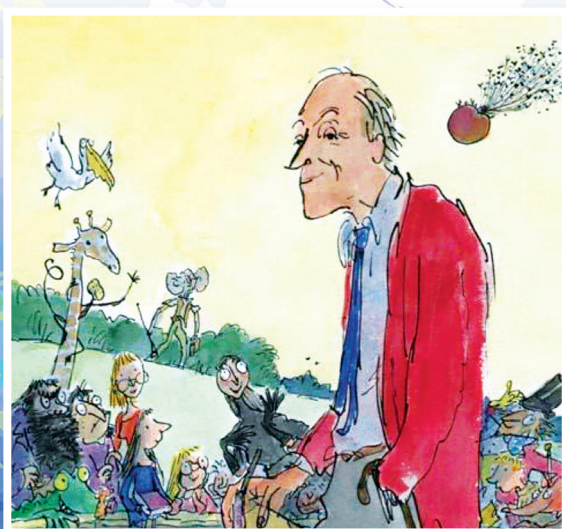
Going Solo, in 1986. *Matilda* was published in 1988, *Esio Trot* in 1990, and finally, in 1991, came the posthumous delight of *The Minpins*.



Roald Dahl died on 23 November 1990, aged 74. He was buried in the parish church of St Peter and St Paul in Great Missenden - the Buckinghamshire village where today *The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre* continues his extraordinary mission to amaze, thrill and inspire generations of children and their parents.



Above: The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre in Great Missenden, Bucks.



Plays

Just some of the works by David Wood:

Original works:

The Plotters Of Cabbage Patch Corner	(1970)
Flibberty and the Penguin	(1971)
The Papertown Paperchase	(1972)
Hijack Over Hygenia	(1973)
The Gingerbread Man	(1976)
Nutcracker Sweet	(1977)
The Ideal Gnome Expedition	(1980)
The Selfish Shellfish	(1983)
The See-Saw Tree	(1986)

Adaptations of Roald Dahl's books:

The BFG	(1991)
The Witches	(1992)
The Twits	(1999)
Fantastic Mr Fox	(2001)
James And The Giant Peach	(2001)
Danny The Champion Of The World	(2004)
George's Marvellous Medicine	(2009)
The Magic Finger	(2013)

Other adaptations of English authors of children's literature:

The Owl and the Pussycat went to See...	(1968)
Meg and Mog	(1981)
Noddy	(1993)
Rupert Bear	(1993)
Babe, the Sheep-Pig	(1997)
Spot's Birthday Party	(2000)
Tom's Midnight Garden	(2000)
The Tiger Who Came To Tea	(2008)
Guess How Much I Love You	(2010)
Goodnight Mister Tom	(2011)

Adaptations of adult literature:

The Go-Between	(2011)
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Above: The poster for Lindsay Anderson's 1968 film 'If', in which David Wood starred alongside Malcolm McDowell.

David Wood

Having started off treading the boards and appearing on the Silver Screen, David Wood has been called the "National Children's Dramatist", having written over 75 plays for children since 1967 and adapted a number of authors' books for the stage.

Born on 21st February 1944 in Sutton, Surrey, David Bernard Wood was educated at Chichester High School for Boys and Worcester College, Oxford, before training as an actor. Having played one of the leading roles in Lindsay Anderson's remarkable *If..* (1968), his performing career includes appearing as the character *Bingo Little* in the original London cast of the Andrew Lloyd Webber and Alan Ayck-bourn musical *Jeeves* in 1975, in the movies *Aces High* (1976) and playing one of the baddies pitted against a bearded Roger Moore in *North Sea Hijack* (1980), and small screen roles in now-classic TV series including *Danger UXB*, *Enemy At The Door* and *When The Boat Comes In*. David also had a tap-dancing martial arts duel with Joanna Lumley's *Purdey* in *The New Avengers*, one of the few times when that series approached the surreal heights of its '60s ancestor, while his last listed performing role was in the star-studded TV movie *Longitude* in 2000.



However, it's in the field of children's drama and literature that he has made his most lasting impression: writing his own play for children, *The Gingerbread Man*, which he later adapted for television, and adapting a number of classic children's books for the stage. He proved a gifted storyteller on the much-loved BBC institution *Jackanory* for many years, and can be seen in episodes of many made-for-schools programmes.

David Wood is still fully occupied with his work in children's drama, adapting Roald Dahl and other writers - including Dick King-Smith and Judith Kerr - for the stage, publishing plays and books, and lecturing school drama classes. He was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2004 Queen's Birthday Honours List, for his services to literature and drama.

"Since 1967 I have written approximately 75 plays for children. It is still a passion and a real challenge. It never gets easier! My plays are usually written for professional adult actors to perform in theatres for audiences of children in family and school parties; but an increasing number of schools put on productions of their own. I write original plays and adaptations of popular books. For musical plays I often write the music and lyrics of the songs.

My aims haven't changed. I am trying to give children an exciting, memorable theatre experience by triggering their imaginations, making them laugh and sometimes cry, emotionally involving them in a really good story. I want to use the magic of theatre - the lighting, the sound, the scenery, the costumes, the music, the movement, to provide a unique, special event; this is why I prefer to work in theatres rather than schools - in theatres I have more control! I produce and direct many of my plays for my own company, *Whirligig Theatre* (founded with John Gould in 1979), and for other companies, both commercial and subsidised.

Since the late 1980s I have also written children's books, many in collaboration with Richard Fowler, illustrator and paper engineer. School visits give me great pleasure. I try to enthuse children with the message, "Books are Fun", using my own books and stories. For the last 20 years I have also toured *The David Wood Magic And Music Show* to theatres all over the UK. This takes me back to my roots - entertaining at children's parties was how I started my career in my teens. In 2002 I was delighted to be promoted by the Magic Circle to become Member of the *Inner Magic Circle with Gold Star*, for my services to children's magic".

From Page to Stage

David Wood on adapting George's Marvellous Medicine for the first stage production by Birmingham Stage Company, and a few secrets about how it was staged... *If you don't want to know them, don't read this until after the show!*

"It has been a pleasure and a privilege to bring Roald Dahl's classic story, *George's Marvellous Medicine*, to the stage. One of his most popular tales, it combines his familiar and anarchic sense of humour with the enriching theme of a put-upon child approaching his situation with determination and an eventual sense of empowerment. Although adults may quake at the way George recklessly creates his marvellous medicine from the most unlikely and potentially dangerous ingredients, children react to his ingenuity with a satisfied feeling that justice is being done. George's grandmother is extremely unpleasant and deserves her comeuppance.

But because I wanted the audience to join in George's attempt to make his grandmother better, I decided to introduce a back story, to give George even more justification for his actions. I hoped Mr Dahl wouldn't mind me depicting Grandma's arrival at the Krankys' farm to convalesce. Poor George has to give up his bedroom to accommodate her, and she makes it quite clear that she is a "townie" who cannot stand being in the country. Her presence turns the whole family upside down. Mum, Grandma's daughter, finds it especially difficult having her loyalties so severely tested.

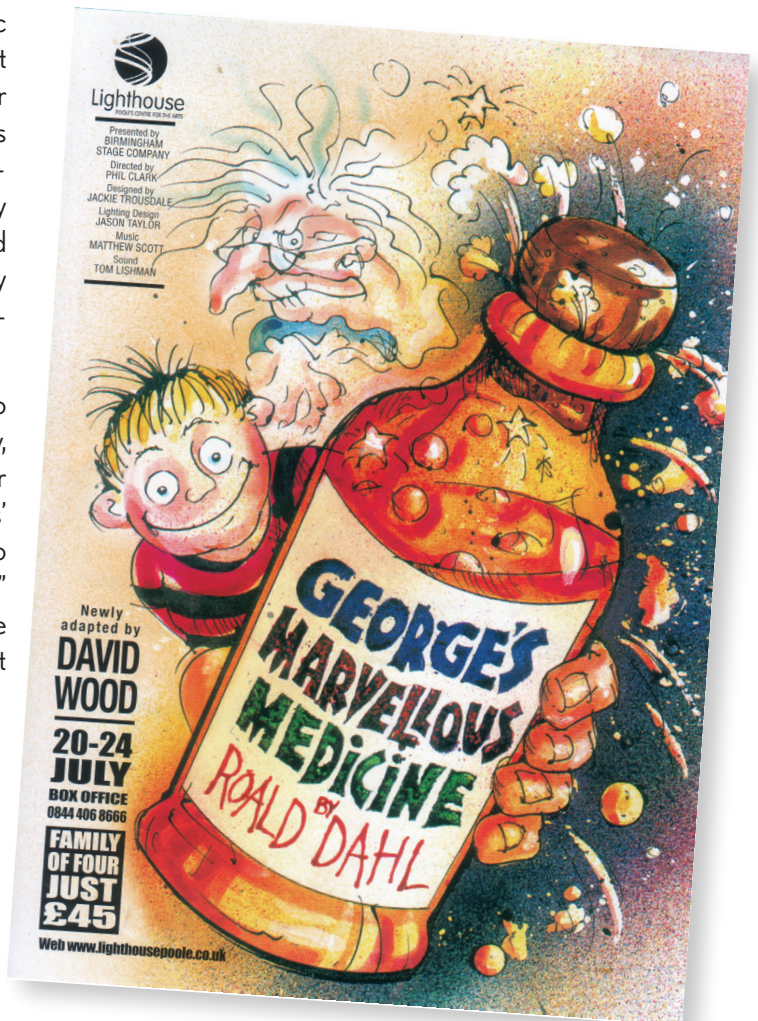
In fact, as the story progresses, Grandma becomes quite sparky, excited by the changes that occur, thanks to George's medicine. And, to give her a certain amount of audience sympathy, it was fun to embellish, with a fantasy scene, George's wish that she could be really nice and friendly. This also gave the actress another aspect of Grandma to play.

Interestingly, as in *The Witches*, Dahl is somewhat ambiguous as to whether Grandma might actually have dabbled in witchcraft. This adds another dramatic and somewhat darker dimension.

It also seemed to me to be important to emphasise that the fantasy elements of the story are deeply rooted in reality. Not only is the family in a very real sense brought to despair by Grandma living with them, Dad is also genuinely excited by the realisation that George's marvellous medicine might lead to a humanitarian miracle. He is not simply motivated by the possibility of becoming rich, he thinks that his son's invention could change the world for good, as well as change his family's lives.

Phil Clark's splendid premiere was full of fun and humour, but also emphasised the reality within the fantasy. This, I'm sure, echoes Dahl's intentions in the book.

As Birmingham Stage Company's production went on tour, the original set had to be fairly basic, with no complicated scene changes, while the device that enabled Grandma to grow and grow upwards until she burst through the roof was not, as many thought, an expensive, computerised piece of machinery. It was basically a see-saw, with Grandma on one end, and the stage crew backstage weighting down the other end, carefully causing Grandma to rise.



We successfully used a child to play the Large Chicken and "Little Grandma". Chicken puppets on wheels, pushed by rods, were often "walked" by Mum and Dad as they went about their farm business. The giant pigs were not really puppets, more large soft toys. All the animals contributed considerably to the enjoyment, and employing an experienced puppetry person paid great dividends.

Great care was taken with a detailed soundscape. Not only were the sounds of the farm animals effective, but the pouring of each ingredient into the saucepan was accompanied by appropriate fizzing and squelching and bubbling noises, which added humour and authenticity. We also discussed creating a smell to pervade the auditorium when George mixes his medicine; the idea was not implemented, but I still rather like it!

The audience's response to the first production was, quite frankly, a delight to witness. I do hope that everybody involved in this production of the play at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse will enjoy the same rewarding experience, and feel, as we did, that as the children left the theatre, they couldn't wait to come back! Maybe they will become theatregoers for life. I do hope so!"

Be there for us, and we'll be there for you..!



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The Cast

George

Andy Withers

Dad

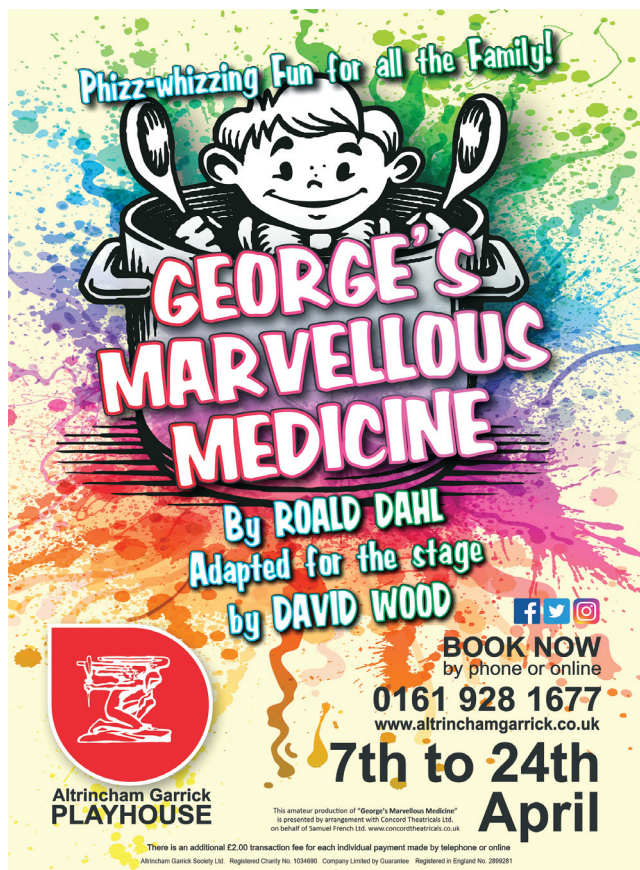
Michael Gallagher

Mum

Christine Perry

Grandma

Hannah Collman



George's Marvellous Medicine is packed to the rafters with mischief, music, magic and mammoth laughs. Just remember
- PLEASE DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME!

Please Note: This production contains haze, smoke, strobe effects and loud music. No animals (or Grandmas) will be harmed in the staging of this production. We hope!

The Crew

Director & Designer Sean Duvall

Stage Manager Paul Downham

Prompt Kathryn Worthington

ASMs / Puppeteers Jan Atkinson

..... Lindsey Barker

..... Sue Berry

..... Jenny Dixon

..... Sarah Lorenz

..... Sophie Taylor-Hall

Lighting James Merrington

Sound Christine Mills

Properties David Ades

Wardrobe Mike Shaw

Assisted by Stella Blackburn

..... Dallas Bradshaw

..... Betty Farmer

..... Helen Phillips

..... Lynne Saleh

..... Julie Shaw

Scenic Artist Mandy Cooke

Workshop Steve Cox

..... Trevor McKie

Set Construction Phil Gleave

..... Paul Simpson

..... Trevor McKie

..... Nicholas McKie

..... Mark McEwan

..... Steve Cox

..... John Murphy

..... Dave Bailey

..... Bob Green

..... Paul Downham

..... Andy McHugh

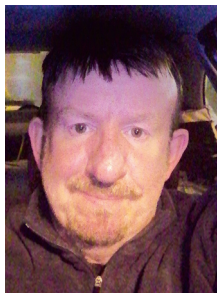
..... Barry Borgan

Without our incredibly dedicated, enthusiastic team of **Volunteers** and **Staff**, whose sheer hard work often goes unnoticed, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse would simply be unable to continue providing such a range of top quality productions for you to enjoy. With their continuous commitment to excellence, we owe them a huge debt of gratitude.



Altrincham Garrick PLAYHOUSE

The Company



Andy Withers George

Andy is thrilled to be back at the Garrick for his 4th production after appearing in *Corrie!*, *Aladdin* & *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

As an experienced actor he has performed in numerous plays and shows over many years at different theatres across the North West. Favourite roles have included Judd in *Bouncers*,

Gordon in *Neville's Island*, William Featherstone in *How The Other Half Loves* and Willie Mossop in *Hobson's Choice*, among many others.

Andy is delighted to be working with director Sean Duvall for the first time and such a talented and friendly cast / backstage crew who he thanks for all their hard work on the production. He hopes you all enjoy the play as much as he as enjoyed working on it.



Christine Perry Mum

Christine has been a member of the Garrick since 2009, her first play having been *The Shell Seekers*, and over the years she has appeared in numerous plays, pantomimes and musicals with the Garrick along with other local amateur societies. Christine enjoys singing, was a member of a Gospel Choir and is currently in the *Garrick Show Choir*. She is

looking forward to performing in this fun-filled show alongside the fantastic cast expertly directed by Sean Duvall, and hopes the audience will enjoy this "marvellous" production!



Michael Gallagher Dad

This will be Michael's sixth performance on the Altrincham Garrick's main stage, having previously appeared in *The Lieutenant Of Inishmore*, *BlackAdder the Third*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *BlackAdder Goes Forth* and *Corrie!*. Michael noted that the active involvement of the ASM's & Prompt during the rehearsals have been a vital ingredient to what

should be a high octane crowd-involved production.



Hannah Collman Grandma

Originally from Bracknell, Hannah moved to Wigan last September to study Acting at The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts. She is excited to be performing at the Garrick for the first time, though has previously performed in shows such as *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *Seasons Greetings*, *The Tempest*, *Peter Pan*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and many more!

Usually cast as somewhat friendlier characters, *Grandma* has been very fun to play; but Hannah is relieved that she was not required to eat any live slugs or beetley bugs during the show.

She would also like to point out that she, personally, does not advise eating mountains and mountains of cabbage three times a day, and the best way to grow big and strong is to have a varied diet. Although, what would she know? She gave up growing when she was extremely small.



Sean Duvall Director & Designer

"It is always a pleasure to be at the Altrincham Garrick Playhouse where the full range of acting skills are tested to the full. Sadly my range is only from *Seagull* to *Chicken* but it's great to be on stage again.

Oh, yes! And of course I've done a bit of directing and set design too.

This is my directorial debut at the Garrick and it has been so much fun, with a lot of hard work thrown in. I can't thank the wonderful team and cast enough and I hope you enjoy the culmination of their dedication and hard work too.

Enjoy the show, join in as much as you can".

Also featuring, behind the scenes...



Paul Downham Stage Manager

A giant of the theatre in England's North West, Paul has become almost essential to nearly every theatre company across the region. An in-demand director, producer and stage manager who has worked with the cream of non-professional theatre companies across the region, Paul is also the founder and Editor in Chief of North West End UK (www.northwestend.com), an online site which gives news, reviews and interviews from theatres across the U.K., as well as huge support and publicity to many local organisations.

Paul was officially named as *Ghost the Musical Uber Fan* by the show's producers, and has seen the show 116 times to date in Manchester and London and on the UK tour! You can follow Paul at @ghostmusicalfan on twitter!!! He is addicted to anything to do with the theatre, but he also does have his faults - his other passion is Liverpool F.C. We're delighted to have him back at the Garrick to stage manage *George's Marvellous Medicine*.



Kathryn Worthington Prompt

Kathryn most recently appeared on the Garrick's main stage last year as *Blanche Dubois* in our acclaimed production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Prior to that, in 2019 she played *Jackie* in *My Mother Said I Never Should*. Other work highlights include: *Something Hidden* (for the Larkin25 Festival in Hull);

Emmerdale (ITV), and her time as Festival Director at the *24:7 Theatre Festival*, a platform for new writers and theatre makers.

Not just an exceptionally talented actress, Kathryn is delighted to be involved in *George's Marvellous Medicine* - but, hopefully, not too involved!

Seriously – why you shouldn't try this at home!

Published in the British Medical Journal in December 2020, a report analysed the therapeutic effects and toxicity of the eponymous concoction described in George's Marvellous Medicine.

Roald Dahl's book *George's Marvellous Medicine* has been enjoyed by generations of young readers since it was first published in 1981. By the time the 2010 edition was published, a warning had been included which stated: **"WARNING TO READERS: Do not try to make George's Marvellous Medicine yourselves at home. It could be dangerous."** Is the eponymous marvellous medicine medically useful, dangerous, or both? It is possible that the disclaimer was printed in response to inadvertent harm caused by children experimenting on their grandmas.

In the United Kingdom, unintentional poisoning is a leading cause of accidental death in children, with more than 28,000 children receiving treatment for poisoning in the UK each year. The most common place for such poisonings is the home, typically with smaller children exploring and putting things in their mouths, although an important proportion of unintentional and intentional poisonings are in older children, often including alcohol ingestion.

As some of the ingredients in George's Marvellous Medicine can be easily found in houses, the study's home educators decided that it would be interesting to concoct a similar mixture to George's but without using unsuspecting recipients such as cranky grandmas. Before embarking on our experiment, it was deemed prudent to examine the potential toxicity of the ingredients in George's marvellous medicine. We then quantified the toxicological and therapeutic potential of the medicine and compared the known effects of the ingredients with the outcomes claimed in the book.

Thirty four different ingredients were identified – ten from the bathroom, four from the bedroom, five from the laundry room, six from the kitchen, five from the shed (and a further one after heating, bringing the total to six), and three from the garage.

Our findings suggest that far from being marvellous, George's medicine is in fact incredibly toxic. Fortunately, the restrictions imposed by the UK's Covid-19 lockdown ensured the researchers' parents were safe from sample concoctions.

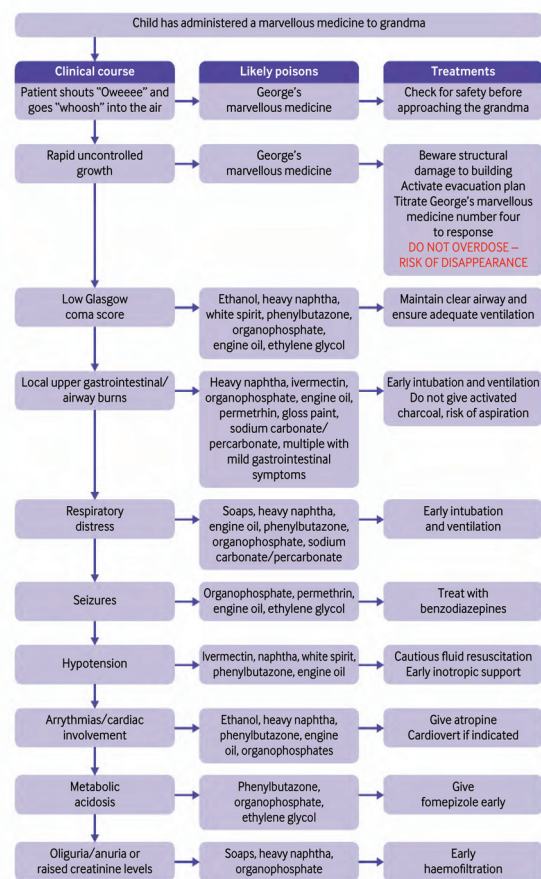
The account given of the likely effects of ingesting the medicine was extremely accurate (allowing for some poetic licence). Grandma initially *"shot up whoosh into the air"* and when she landed she shouted suddenly *"My stomach's on fire!"* This immediate effect was likely due to the high level of capsaicin – however, ingredients such as sheep dip (organophosphate), dark tan shoe polish (white spirit, heavy naphtha, trimethylbenzene), and floor polish (heavy naphtha) cause mucosal erosion and are likely to have contributed to severe gastric dyspepsia. George's treatment using a jug of water is unlikely to have been helpful and might have increased the risk of later aspiration as well as of later cardiogenic shock due to excess preload if grandma had developed myocarditis.

Subsequently grandma begins to swell, before developing a puncture and deflating. With four ingredients causing foaming, gastrointestinal bloating is to be expected. Puncture, however, was not a recommended treatment.

Thereafter *"Grandma's body gave a sudden sharp twist and a sudden sharp jerk and she flipped herself clear out of the chair."* Four of the ingredients (sheep dip, engine oil, antifreeze, and grease) cause convulsions or myoclonic jerks, or both, so again Dahl's research was accurate. Although it is highly unlikely that grandma would have *"landed neatly on her two feet on the carpet"*.

From this point the account of the effects of the medicine diverges from reality. Not only does grandma no longer feel any ill effects, but she grows to the size of a house, breaking through the roof. None of the 34 ingredients are documented as having any individual effect on growth.

The best case scenario for Grandma is that immediate, intractable, and vigorous vomiting would occur in time to prevent systemic absorption of a fatal dose of toxic ingredients. However, the highly caustic nature of the medicine would almost certainly have resulted in immediate and severe oesophageal burns, potentially leading to a catastrophic oesophageal-aortic erosion and dysphagic complications.



A pessimistic, but more realistic, scenario would be the high likelihood of rapid drowsiness and coma from the excessive amounts of alcohol consumed together with the other central nervous system depressants. The combination of vomiting and reduced conscious level would likely lead to aspiration pneumonitis, if not complete airway obstruction and suffocation.

Should grandma have survived this physiological insult, then seizures and respiratory depression would add to the risk of death from hypoxia. Myocarditis and arrhythmias would probably follow, along with gastrointestinal erosions, upper gastrointestinal haemorrhage, and gastrointestinal perforation. If these did not prove fatal, disseminated intravascular coagulopathies and irreversible hepatorenal failure would result. A suggested treatment algorithm has been provided (see table above), should a grandma (or any other unfortunate person) be administered George's Marvellous Medicine.

When George attempted to reassure grandma that the medicine will do her good, she prophetically exclaims *"Doing me good? It's killing me!"* Experienced healthcare professionals know to take such proclamations seriously.

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Ingredients of George's Marvellous Medicine and the likely clinical effects of ingestion.

CNS = Central Nervous System

	NAUSEA	VOMITING	DIARRHOEA	FOAMING	KIDNEY INJURY	CNS DEPRESSION	CONVULSIONS	EROSION	LUNG INJURY	CARDIAC TOXICITY
Golden Gloss Hair Shampoo	✓	✓								
Toothpaste	✓	✓								
Superfoam Shaving Soap				✓						✓
Vitamin Enriched Face Cream						✓				
Scarlet Nail Varnish	✓	✓	✓							
Hair Remover, Legs								✓	✓	
Dishworth's Dandruff Cure	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Brillident False Teeth Cleaner	✓	✓								
Nevermore Pinking Deodorant						✓				
Liquid Paraffin	✓	✓	✓							
Helga's Hairset						✓				
Perfume "Flowers of Turnips"						✓				
Pink Plaster Powder										
Lipsticks	✓	✓	✓							
Superwhite Washing Powder	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
Waxwell Floor Polish					✓	✓		✓	✓	
Flea Powder for Dogs	✓	✓								✓
Canary Seed										
Dark Tan Shoe Polish					✓	✓				✓
Gin						✓				
Curry Powder										
Mustard Powder										
"Extra Hot" Chili Sauce		✓								
Black Peppercorns										
Horseradish Sauce										
Fowl Pest Powder to mix with Feed						✓				✓
Purple Pills for Hoarse Horses	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
Thick Yellowish Liquid, for Cows	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
Sheep Dip	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
Pig Pills, Swine Sickness	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
Engine Oil	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Antifreeze	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Grease	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Dark Brown Gloss Paint	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓

Sir Quentin Blake

The man
who drew
Roald Dahl's
characters

Quentin Blake – or Sir Quentin Saxby Blake, CBE, FCSD, FRSL, RDI (to give him his full title), is an English cartoonist, caricaturist, illustrator and children's writer. He has illustrated over 300 books, including 18 written by Roald Dahl, which are among his most popular works.

Quentin Blake was born in Sidcup on 16th December 1932 and has drawn ever since he can remember. During the Second World War he was evacuated to the West Country, which he hated. He subsequently went to Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School.

National Service followed, before Blake studied English at Downing College, Cambridge, going on to do a postgraduate teaching diploma at the University of London, followed by life-classes at Chelsea Art School.



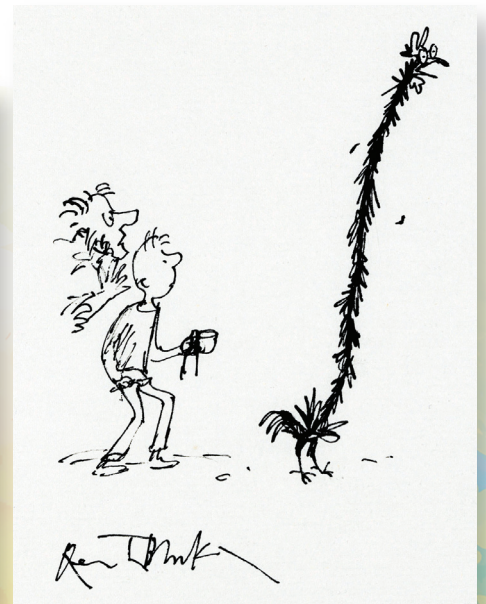
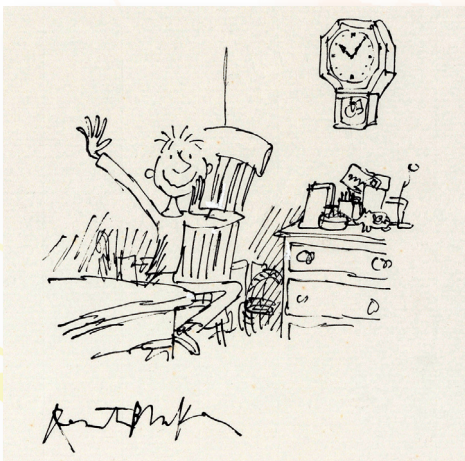
He has always made his living as an illustrator, as well as teaching for over twenty years at the Royal College of Art, where he was head of the Illustration department from 1978 to 1986. His first drawings were published in *Punch* while he was 16 and still at school. He continued to draw for *Punch*, *The Spectator* and other magazines over many years, while at the same time entering the world of children's books with *A Drink of Water* by John Yeoman in 1960.

He is known for his collaboration with writers such as Russell Hoban, Joan Aiken, Michael Rosen, John Yeoman and, most famously, Roald Dahl. He has also illustrated classic books, including *A Christmas Carol* and *Candide* and created much-loved characters of his own, including *Mister Magnolia* and *Mrs Armitage*.

Since the 1990s Quentin Blake has had an additional career as exhibition curator, curating shows in, among other places, the National Gallery, the British Library and the Musée du Petit Palais in Paris. In the last few years he has begun to make larger-scale work for hospitals and healthcare settings in the UK and France where his work can be seen in wards and public spaces.



Above and opposite page: Three finished illustrations from the Penguin publication of George's Marvellous Medicine.



Above: Three original pen and ink sketches for Roald Dahl's *George's Marvellous Medicine*. L to R: George has an idea; George douses Grandma with water; George, his father and a growing chicken.

His books have won numerous prizes and awards, including the Whitbread Award, the Kate Greenaway Medal, the Emil/Kurt Maschler Award and the international Bologna Ragazzi Prize. He won the 2002 Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration, the highest international recognition given to creators of children's books. In 2004 Quentin Blake was awarded the 'Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres' by the French Government for services to literature and in 2007 he was made Officier in the same order. In 2014 he was admitted to the Legion d'Honneur, an honour accorded to few people who are not French nationals.

In 1999 he was appointed the first ever Children's Laureate, a post designed to raise the profile of children's literature. His book *Laureate's Progress* (2002) recorded many of his activities and the illustrations he produced during his two-year tenure. Quentin Blake was created CBE in 2005, is an RDI and has numerous honorary degrees from universities throughout the UK. He received a knighthood for 'services to illustration' in the New Year's Honours for 2013, and became an Honourary Freeman of the City of London in 2015.



Scrawly, often joyful and entirely unmistakable, Blake's drawings have given some of children's literature's most cherished characters their visual identities, in books from Roald Dahl's *The BFG*, *Matilda*, *Fantastic Mr Fox* and *The Twits* to, more recently, David Walliams' *Mr Stink* and *The Boy in the Dress*.

Blake is, he says, a fast worker. He once described his style as "deceptively slapdash", though "if you know anything about it, (you know) it isn't slapdash." His style is known and defined by its scrappiness, yet at the same time manages to contain feeling, humour, and information. Much of his work is drawn with black ink and if the illustrations include colour, Blake uses watercolour over the ink. When Blake illustrates for books, he tries to make sure the characters look the same throughout the book. He believes that this allows him to draw as if he's drawing each character for the first time.

Sir Quentin rarely deals directly with authors when illustrating their books, although he would talk to Dahl from time to time – "We would have a discussion about what the BFG was going to wear, and that

kind of thing." Dahl once sent Blake a pair of sandals in the post and said he'd like the BFG to be wearing them, though he has said that most authors don't do such things. Once, when Rosen was asked about his working relationship with Blake, he replied, "I give it to him and he does it." Blake doesn't like to think too hard about where his ideas come from or what they mean. He just gets on with it.

Sir Quentin Blake's relationship with Roald Dahl began with a handshake in a publisher's office, when half a dozen of Dahl's books had already been published in the UK and illustrated by other people. Working with Roald Dahl made Blake nervous at first, but they soon struck up a rapport. "He was quite a powerful figure. But we got on very well. He liked winding me up - only in the most harmless way. I often wore these white shoes, and he'd say 'Here's old Quent' - no-one else ever calls me that - 'here's old Quent, he's going out for dinner in his plimsolls!' What was so nice about Roald was that he actually wanted the pictures - he didn't like it if there weren't enough. Not all authors are like that. We worked together for 13 years from 1977, until he died." Quentin ended up illustrating all of Dahl's books except for *The Minpins*, while his favourite Roald Dahl book is *The BFG*.



In February of this year, Islington Council's planning committee unanimously approved a scheme to see a group of derelict Grade II-listed buildings at New River Head converted into space for exhibitions, workshops, a café and a shop, to become 'The Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration'. Plans are to open it at the end of 2023.

Running until 16th April 2022 at Kirkby Gallery, The Kirkby Centre, Norwich Way, Kirkby, L32 8XY, *Quentin Blake: Illustrating Verse* is a touring exhibition which brings together a selection of more than 120 of Quentin's illustrations for poetry of all kinds, from comic nonsense to poignant ballads. It celebrates his illustrations for popular nursery rhymes and children's favourites like *The Owl and the Pussycat* and *Jabberwocky*. Work for more 'serious' poets such as Sylvia Plath, whose poem for children *The Bed Book* was illustrated by Quentin in 1984, also makes a rare appearance.

The show includes roughs and preliminary sketches alongside the finished artworks for both modern and classical writers, as well as illustrations for Quentin's own written works. Don't miss it!

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Altrincham Garrick
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Thursday 28 April at 7:30pm

Directed by Academy Award® winner **Steven Spielberg**, from a screenplay by Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award® winner **Tony Kushner**, **WEST SIDE STORY** tells the classic tale of fierce rivalries and young love in 1957 New York City. Love at first sight strikes when young Tony spots Maria at a dance. Their burgeoning romance helps to fuel the fire between the warring Jets and Sharks – two rival gangs vying for control of the street.

This reimagining of the beloved musical stars **Ansel Elgort** (Tony); **Rachel Zegler** (Maria); BAFTA Award-Winner **Ariana DeBose** (Anita); **David Alvarez** (Bernardo); **Mike Faist** (Riff); **Josh Andrés Rivera** (Chino); **Ana Isabelle** (Rosalia); **Corey Stoll** (Lieutenant Schrank); Broadway legend **Brian d'Arcy James** (Officer Krupke); and (as Valentina, widow of 'Doc' – and the original Anita from the classic 1961 Movie), Executive Producer **Rita Moreno** who is one of only three artists to be honoured with Academy®, Emmy®, GRAMMY®, Tony® and Peabody Awards.

Rating 12A **BOOK NOW!**



Friday 29 April at 7:30pm

For the first time in the cinematic history of Spider-Man, our friendly neighbourhood hero's (**Tom Holland**) identity is revealed as Peter Parker, bringing his SuperHero responsibilities into conflict with his normal life and putting those he cares about most at risk. When Peter enlists Doctor Strange's (**Benedict Cumberbatch**) help to restore his secret, the spell tears a hole in their world, releasing the most powerful villains who have ever fought a Spider-Man in any universe. Now, Peter will have to overcome his greatest challenge yet, which will not only forever alter his own future but the future of the Multiverse.

With a fabulous cast including **Zendaya**, **Jon Favreau** and **Marisa Tomei**, Marvel Cinematic Universe comes to the big screen at Altrincham Garrick PictureHouse!

Rating 12 **BOOK NOW!**

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THE
STUDIO

LAURISTON

• R.O.S.S. •
• A.N.D. •
• R.A.C.H.E.L. •

by **James Fritz**



Directed by **Carole Carr**

Tuesday 17 – Sunday 22 May at 7:30pm

Nobody told them life was gonna be this way...

Ross & Rachel. You know the ones. Will they? Won't they? On. Off. On again. Off again. On a break. Vegas. Emma. "I got off the plane"...

Ross & Rachel tells the mind-bending, heart-breaking story of what happens when a couple that was always meant to be together, gets together. And stays together. James Fritz's play isn't about Ross Geller and Rachel Green, the ultimate Friends-turned-lovers. But it's not – not about them.

A dark and uncompromising play that explores romance, expectation and mortality, and the idea of 'happy-ever-after' – sold to us by rom-coms and sitcoms, whether it's Ross and Rachel or Romeo and Juliet – and how this affects our real-life relationships.

Suitability: 14+. Contains strong language and scenes that some may find disturbing.

One-Dayers:

Saturday 4 June at 1.30pm and 4.00pm



The Twirlywoos are back for a Great Big Adventure!

Join **Great BigHoo**, **Toodloo**, **Chickadee**, **Chick** and their friends as they discover the wonderful world around us! Expect mischief, music and plenty of surprises as they set sail in their big red boat.

The funny, loveable **Twirlywoos** are brought to life on stage with beautifully inventive puppetry promising an hour of colourful fun and laughter. From the producers of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* and *Sarah and Duck Live* on Stage, *Twirlywoos Live* is an enchanting introduction to theatre for all ages.

★★★★ 'All the fun, mischief and colourful characters of the hit show. My son adored every second' *Manchester Evening News*

★★★★ 'A laugh-out-loud adventure, lapped up by little ones, great family fun.' *Opening Night*

Tickets £14.00 Concessions £12.00

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Walk with us through the Jurassic era on an unforgettable interactive experience as we introduce you to some of the most incredible species ever to have lived on Earth.

This awe-inspiring stage show captivates both young and young at heart, immersing audiences in an enthralling & realistic world of Dinosaurs.

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