



OPPENHEIMER

Monday
24 February –
Saturday 1 March

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Introduction

Welcome to Altrincham Garrick Playhouse, and our production of “*Oppenheimer*”, Tom Morton-Smith’s theatrical deep-dive into one of the most paradoxical figures of the 20th century.

When we think of J. Robert Oppenheimer, images come to mind – grainy black-and-white footage of mushroom clouds, a gaunt man with piercing eyes, a cigarette hanging from his lips. Perhaps we recall Paul Newman in *Fat Man and Little Boy* (1989), where Oppenheimer, played by Dwight Schultz, is relegated to a supporting role, overshadowed by Newman’s General Groves. Or maybe Sam Waterston’s brooding yet restrained portrayal in the 1980 miniseries *Oppenheimer* lingers in our minds, a product of Cold War anxieties that sought to reckon with the man who helped birth the atomic bomb. Most recently, Christopher Nolan’s 2023 cinematic spectacle, with a compelling central performance by Cillian Murphy, re-introduced *Oppenheimer* to the public imagination, blending existential horror with haunting biopic precision. But here, on stage, Morton-Smith gives us something different. Something visceral. Something immediate.

This is not just a story of science and war – it is a story of people, of ambition, of moral compromise. Theatre has always been the ideal medium for exploring the internal contradictions of great minds. Like Brecht’s *Galileo* or Michael Frayn’s *Copenhagen*, Oppenheimer asks us to step inside the momentous decisions that shape history, to feel their weight, not as a spectator but as a participant. And unlike the sprawling cinematic visions of Nolan or the procedural dramatisation of earlier adaptations, Morton-Smith’s play thrives in the electric intimacy of live performance. It invites us to witness Oppenheimer not as an abstract historical figure, but as a man – brilliant, conflicted, deeply flawed, and, above all, human.

Set against the backdrop of the Manhattan Project, the play immerses us in the feverish energy of Los Alamos, where a

collective of the world’s greatest scientific minds raced against time to create a weapon unlike any before. Yet, the focus is not merely on the mechanics of the bomb, but on the personal toll of its creation.

The script pulsates with the contradictions of its protagonist – a theoretical physicist steeped in poetry, a pacifist-turned-architect of mass destruction, a man whose idealism could not save him from the political machinations that would ultimately dismantle his reputation.

Morton-Smith’s writing is muscular and lyrical, brimming with urgency. Unlike film, where the bomb itself is often the climactic spectacle, here the explosion is emotional, intellectual. We do not see the blast; we feel its reverberations. Relationships fracture under ideological strain. Friendships dissolve in the shadow of paranoia. The actors must carry the full burden of history in their bodies, their voices, their presence. This is a play of minds at war – with the world, with each other, with themselves.

So, as we embark on this journey tonight, consider the echoes of history in the present moment. Nuclear anxiety has not vanished, nor has the moral complexity of scientific advancement. The ghosts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki still haunt us. And Oppenheimer himself remains an enigma – a man who looked into the abyss and saw, reflected back at him, both creation and annihilation.

Welcome to *Oppenheimer*. The countdown has begun.



Joseph Meighan

Artistic Director, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.

**altrincham
garrick
playhouse**

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Programme written, designed and produced for the Altrincham Garrick Playhouse by Nick Sample Creative Graphic Design 07950 332 645 njcsample1@mac.com www.nicksample.co.uk

Inside Los Alamos

Nestled atop a remote plateau in the northern mountains of New Mexico, Los Alamos remains one of the most legendary locations in modern history. During World War II, it became the heart of a top-secret mission: the Manhattan Project. This ambitious endeavour aimed to harness the power of atomic energy and construct the world's first nuclear weapons. The extraordinary team of scientists who gathered at Los Alamos transformed theoretical physics into a stark reality that would forever alter the course of history.

The Origins of Los Alamos

Los Alamos's journey into the annals of history began in 1942, when the United States government realised the urgency of developing an atomic bomb. Following intelligence reports suggesting that Nazi Germany was pursuing nuclear weapons, the United States accelerated its own research. **General Leslie Groves** of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was appointed to oversee the Manhattan Project, and physicist **J. Robert Oppenheimer** was selected to lead the scientific effort.

Oppenheimer, a theoretical physicist known for his brilliance and charisma, proposed Los Alamos as the ideal site for the project. Located in a remote area far from major cities, the site offered both seclusion and security. Previously home to the Los Alamos Ranch School, the plateau was quickly repurposed, and construction began in late 1942. By early 1943, a group of the world's most brilliant scientific minds had arrived, transforming the sleepy settlement into a hub of innovation and urgency.

The Scientists of Los Alamos

The team at Los Alamos was a remarkable collection of talent, including Nobel laureates, rising stars in physics, and skilled engineers. These individuals came from diverse backgrounds and disciplines but were united by a common purpose. Their efforts were driven by the dual imperatives of scientific discovery and the race to defeat fascism.

Among the most notable figures was **J. Robert Oppenheimer** himself, whose leadership proved pivotal. Known as the "**Father of the Atomic Bomb**," Oppenheimer not only guided the technical aspects of the project but also managed the delicate interpersonal dynamics of an interdisciplinary team under intense pressure.

Other luminaries included **Enrico Fermi**, an Italian physicist who had already achieved groundbreaking work in nuclear reactions and was instrumental in building the first nuclear reactor in Chicago. **Richard Feynman**, a young and energetic physicist, brought an irreverent wit and unparalleled problem-solving skills to the team. **Niels Bohr**, the Danish physicist who had developed foundational theories of quantum mechanics, served as both an



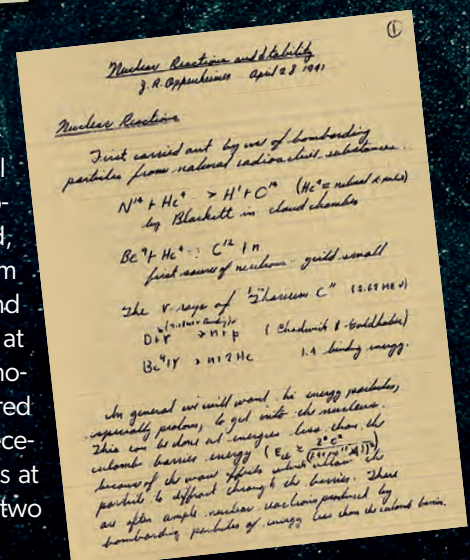
advisor and an inspirational figure.

Edward Teller, often referred to as the "**Father of the Hydrogen Bomb**," also worked at Los Alamos, though his focus leaned toward future projects beyond the immediate goals. **Hans Bethe**, a German-American physicist, led the theoretical division, providing essential calculations and insight that shaped the bomb's design. The project also included chemists, metallurgists, and engineers who contributed critical expertise in areas ranging from explosive materials to the refinement of uranium and plutonium.

The Science behind the Bomb

At the core of the Manhattan Project's mission was the exploitation of nuclear fission, a process discovered in the late 1930s. When certain isotopes of uranium or plutonium are bombarded with neutrons, their nuclei split, releasing a tremendous amount of energy and more neutrons. This chain reaction, if sustained, could unleash a catastrophic explosion.

The challenge was twofold: first, to produce sufficient quantities of fissile material (Uranium-235 and Plutonium-239) and second, to design a mechanism that could initiate and control the reaction at precisely the right moment. These tasks required innovation on an unprecedented scale. Scientists at Los Alamos devised two bomb designs:



1. The "Little Boy" Design:

This uranium-based weapon relied on a "gun-type" mechanism to bring two sub-critical masses of Uranium-235 together at high speed, achieving criticality.

2. The "Fat Man" Design:

The plutonium bomb was more complex, employing an "implosion" design. High explosives were arranged symmetrically around a core of Plutonium-239, compressing it into a supercritical state.

Theoretical calculations, laboratory experiments, and scaled-down tests consumed the team's efforts for over two years. This period was marked by relentless trial and error, as well as innovations in fields ranging from high-speed photography to the properties of shock waves.

Life at Los Alamos

Despite its critical mission, life at Los Alamos was an unusual mix of high-stakes secrecy and mundane routines. The site's isolation meant that scientists, their families, and support staff lived and worked in a bubble, shielded from the outside world. Letters were censored, and all correspondence referred to Los Alamos simply as "P.O. Box 1663."

Yet within this cloistered environment, a sense of camaraderie and intellectual curiosity flourished. Scientists debated problems late into the night, played impromptu games of tennis, and attended lectures on the latest developments in physics. Many residents described the atmosphere as simultaneously exhilarating and exhausting.

For the spouses and children of the scientists, life could be challenging. Security measures limited their movements, and the secrecy of the project meant they often had little understanding of the work being done. Still, the community formed strong bonds, creating a sense of shared purpose despite the hardships.

The Trinity Test

The culmination of the team's work came on July 16, 1945, when the first atomic bomb was tested at the Trinity site in the New Mexico desert. Named "*Gadget*," the device was essentially a prototype of the "*Fat Man*" bomb.

At precisely 5:29 a.m., the bomb detonated, producing a blinding flash of light and a mushroom cloud that rose over 40,000 feet into the sky. The energy released was equivalent to approximately 20 kilotons of TNT. Observers, including Oppenheimer, were awestruck by the magnitude of the explosion. Quoting the Bhagavad Gita, Oppenheimer later reflected, "*Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.*"

The success of the Trinity test validated the designs developed at Los Alamos and paved the way for the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. These events brought World War II to a swift conclusion but also ushered in the nuclear age, with all its attendant complexities and dangers.

Legacy and Controversy

The achievements of the Los Alamos team were unparalleled, but their legacy is fraught with moral and ethical questions. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused immense devastation, killing tens of thousands of people instantly and leaving many more to suffer from radiation sickness and injuries.

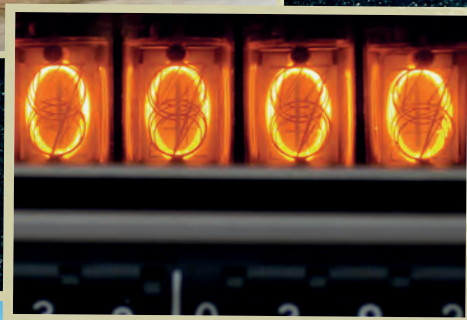
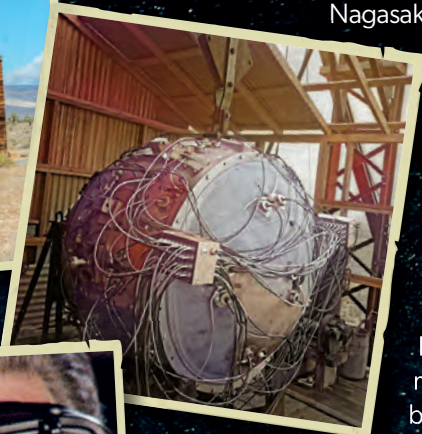
Many scientists grappled with their role in these events. Some, like **Leo Szilard** and **Joseph Rotblat**, expressed deep regret and advocated for international control of nuclear weapons. Others, including **Edward Teller**, argued that the development of the bomb was necessary to deter future conflicts.

In the decades following the war, Los Alamos continued to play a central role in nuclear research and development, becoming the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Today, it remains a symbol of both scientific ingenuity and the profound responsibility that accompanies such power.

Conclusion

The story of Los Alamos and the team of scientists who gathered there is one of extraordinary ambition and achievement. Their work reshaped the world, demonstrating the transformative potential of science while highlighting the ethical dilemmas it can pose. The legacy of the Manhattan Project endures as a testament to the brilliance and determination of those involved, as well as a cautionary tale about the consequences of wielding such immense power.

Los Alamos, once a quiet upland in New Mexico, will forever be remembered as the birthplace of the atomic age, a place where humanity's capacity for innovation met its profound capacity for destruction.



Tom Morton-Smith

Born in 1980, Tom Morton-Smith studied drama at the University of East Anglia before training as an actor at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

In 2006, he was selected to be part of *Future Perfect*, a writer's group attached to the Paines Plough theatre company. In 2007, he joined the company as their playwright-in-residence.

His debut stage play, *Salt Meets Wound*, premièred at Theatre503 in May 2007. *Everyday Maps for Everyday Use* was staged at the Finborough Theatre as part of the PapaTango New Writing Festival 2012. *In Doggerland* premièred at The Lowry in Salford before touring nationally in 2013.

Oppenheimer, charting the life of J Robert Oppenheimer and the development of the atomic bomb, was performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2015 in the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until it transferred to London's West End in April 2015. The play was nominated for *Best New Play* at the 2016 Whats OnStage Awards.

His 2017 play, *The Earthworks*, was remounted at the Young Vic Theatre in March 2024. *Ravens*, a Cold War thriller set during the 1972 World Chess Championship, opened at the Hampstead Theatre in November 2019.

In April 2022, it was announced that Tom would adapt Studio Ghibli's 1988 animated film *My Neighbour Totoro* for the stage. Produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company and the film's original composer Joe Hisaishi, and with puppets built by Jim Henson's Creature Shop, the play ran for a fifteen-week limited season at the Barbican Theatre from October 2022 and broke box office records, becoming the fastest selling show in the Barbican's history. The play won five categories at the 2023 Whats-On-Stage Awards, and won six Olivier Awards in 2023, including *Best Entertainment or Comedy Play*. Morton-Smith dedicated his Olivier award to the memory of his still-born daughter. The production is being revived from March this year at the Gillian Lynne Theatre in London.



"Father

J. Robert Oppenheimer was a theoretical physicist whose life and work left an indelible mark on science, history, and popular culture. His leadership of the Manhattan Project and his later struggles with ethical questions about nuclear weapons have made him a compelling figure in both scholarly studies and dramatic portrayals.

Early Life and Education

Born on April 22, 1904, in New York City, Julius Robert Oppenheimer was the elder son of a family of wealthy and cultured Jewish German immigrants. His father, Julius Oppenheimer, was a textile importer, and his mother, Ella Friedman, was an artist. Young Robert showed prodigious intellectual abilities, excelling in subjects like literature, languages, and science. He attended the Ethical Culture School in Manhattan, where he was deeply influenced by the school's emphasis on intellectual rigour and social responsibility.

Oppenheimer's academic journey took him to Harvard University, where he majored in chemistry but quickly shifted to theoretical physics. After graduating summa cum laude in 1925, he pursued graduate studies at the University of Cambridge, where he worked under the experimental physicist J.J. Thomson. Feeling unsuited to experimental work, he moved to the University of Göttingen in Germany, where he completed his PhD under Max Born in 1927. His doctoral research focused on quantum mechanics, contributing to what became known as the Born-Oppenheimer approximation, a critical development in molecular physics.

Career and The Manhattan Project

Oppenheimer's academic career flourished in the 1930s as he became a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and the California Institute of Technology. His research covered a wide range of topics, including quantum mechanics, astrophysics, and the nature of subatomic particles. He was known for his sharp intellect, ability to synthesize ideas, and magnetic personality, which drew students and collaborators to him.

World events, however, would soon pull Oppenheimer into a role that would define his legacy. With the outbreak of World War II and fears that Nazi Germany was developing nuclear weapons, the U.S. government launched the Manhattan Project in 1942 to build an atomic bomb. General Leslie Groves, the military leader of the project, appointed Oppenheimer as the scientific director, a decision that proved pivotal.



of the Atomic Bomb"

Under Oppenheimer's leadership, a team of brilliant scientists, including Enrico Fermi, Richard Feynman, and Niels Bohr, converged at Los Alamos, New Mexico. Oppenheimer's ability to coordinate diverse talents and foster collaboration was critical to the project's success. After years of intense work, the team successfully tested the first atomic bomb on July 16, 1945, at the Trinity site in the New Mexico desert. The detonation marked the beginning of the atomic age.

Ethical Studies and Public Controversy

The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 brought a swift end to World War II but caused unprecedented destruction and loss of life. Oppenheimer's initial reaction to the success of the Manhattan Project was a mix of pride and apprehension. Famously, he later reflected on the Trinity test by quoting the Bhagavad Gita: "*Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.*"

In the years following the war, Oppenheimer became a prominent advocate for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and international arms control. He chaired the General Advisory Committee of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and argued against the development of the hydrogen bomb, a weapon far more powerful than the atomic bomb. This stance put him at odds with figures like Edward Teller and led to suspicions about his loyalty during the Red Scare of the 1950s.

In 1954, Oppenheimer's security clearance was revoked after a highly publicised hearing by the AEC. Accused of associations with Communists, including his own brother and wife, and criticised for his opposition to certain military projects, Oppenheimer was effectively ostracised from government service. The hearing was widely regarded as a smear campaign, and its outcome left him disillusioned and embittered.

Later Life and Legacy

After his public disgrace, Oppenheimer retreated from the political spotlight but continued his academic pursuits. He served as the director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, where he engaged in philosophical and scientific discussions with colleagues like Albert Einstein. In 1963, the U.S. government awarded him the Enrico Fermi Award, a gesture seen as partial rehabilitation of his reputation.

Oppenheimer died on February 18, 1967, from throat cancer. His legacy is multifaceted: he is remembered as a scientific genius, a complex and conflicted individual, and a central figure in one of history's most consequential scientific endeavours. His life raises profound questions about the moral responsibilities of scientists and the ethical implications of technological progress.

Cultural and Ethical Reflections

Oppenheimer's story resonates not only as a historical narrative but also as a lens through which to explore broader cultural and ethical questions. His life invites reflection on the responsibilities of scientists, the relationship between knowledge and power, and the human costs of technological progress.

The dramatisations of his life – including this play, and Christopher Nolan's 2023 movie *Oppenheimer*, starring Cillian Murphy, which was based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography *American Prometheus* by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin – often serve as cautionary tales, warning of the perils of unbridled scientific ambition and the moral complexities of wielding transformative technologies. At the same time, they celebrate the intellectual achievements that made such transformations possible, highlighting the dual-edged nature of scientific discovery.

Oppenheimer's story continues to captivate and challenge audiences, serving as both a reflection on the past and a guide for navigating the complexities of the future. The enduring fascination with his life underscores the timeless relevance of his story in an age still grappling with the consequences of the atomic age he helped to usher in.



The Production Team



John Cunningham Co-Director

John's first production at the Garrick was *Miss Julie* in the Lauriston Studio in 2007. He also directed *Greek* and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* in the Lauriston Studio. His first main stage production in 2008 was *Drowning on Dry Land*. Since then John has directed *Crown Matrimonial*, *The Little Shop of Horrors*, *The History Boys*, *Things We Do For Love*, *An*

Inspector Calls, *Enlightenment*, *Neville's Island*, *Rebecca*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Rutherford and Son*, *Jerusalem*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Habit of Art* and *The Girl On The Train*.

Other independent productions include *Fully Committed* and *Presumed Guilty*, both performed in the Lauriston Studio.



Carole Carr Co-Director

Well-known to Altrincham Garrick Playhouse audiences for her long association with the company, both onstage in a huge variety of memorable roles and, more recently, of successfully directing innovative, imaginative productions on both our Main Stage and in the Garrick Studio. Recent, post-pandemic shows for the Garrick include *The Lady In The Van*, *All My*

Sons, *Bombshells*, an unforgettable staging of Lucy Roslyn's *Pennyroyal* – which was attended and acclaimed by the author herself, and most recently Carole directed last year's staging of *Jane Eyre*.



Ian Scullion Set Design

Ian is a practicing qualified Architect and multi-disciplined designer based in Altrincham and has been working with The Garrick since 2023. He approached The Garrick not expecting to be given an opportunity to design a set, but more for a chance to understand the design process. He has relished designing sets for *Blue Stockings*, *The Girl On The Train* and *The Father*.

Ian is also part of a small professional theatre company, *Ignition Stage* that specialises in translated contemporary drama from central and eastern European nations. Since its inception in 2007 he has designed the sets and posters for Ignition Stage for shows at The Lowry, Hampstead Theatre, Media City and the Royal Northern College of Music.

His creative interests and skills inform the debate and exchanges between the cast, director and production team to find the right creative response with attention to budget and logistics. Ian's approach to set design is to create a set that engages the audience with the story without compromising it, responding appropriately and concisely.

Co-Directors	John Cunningham
	Carole Carr
Set Design	Ian Scullion
Lighting Design	James Merrington
Sound Design	Josh McMillan
Stage Manager	Cliff Mills
Asst. Stage Managers	Jenny Dixon
	Louise Hope
Rehearsal Prompt	Anne O'Reilly
Properties	Claire Eddleston-Rose
Costume Production	Mike Shaw
Assisted by	Stella Blackburn
	Julie Shaw
	Betty Farmer
	Lynne Saleh
	Catherine Phillips
	Helen Phillips
	Sarah Steer
	Noel Watson
	Jen McEvoy
Head of Stage	Paul Simpson
Production Carpenter	Steve Cox
Scenic Artist	Mandy Cooke
Assisted by	Barry Purves
	Trevor McKie
	Jane Milner
	Charlotte Leigh
	Rob Robinson
	Ruth Stocks
	Holly Cooper
Set Construction	Paul Simpson
	Steve Cox
	Trevor McKie
	Alan Jones
	Barry Borgen
	Mark McEwan
	Nick McKie
	John Murphy
	Andy McHugh
	John Ross
	Cliff Mills
	Dave Bailey
	Bob Green
	Drew Lightfoot
	Alistair Duffy
Rehearsal & Production Photography	Martin Ogden
Publicity & Programme Design	Nick Sample

All information was believed to be correct at the time of going to press.
Some names or designations in the Creative Team may have since changed.

Thank You
VERY MUCH

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

The Cast

"Oppie" -

J. Robert Oppenheimer
Theoretical Physicist

Jonathan Higgs

Frank Oppenheimer
His younger brother

David Glover

Giovani Rossi
Lomanitz
Physicist, aged 18

Matt Dunn

Bob Serber
Physicist, aged 30

Aidan Burgess

Jackie Oppenheimer
Wife of Frank Oppenheimer

Cassie Groos

Jean Tatlock
A close female friend

Scarlet Newton

Joe Weinberg
Physicist, recently
arrived at Berkeley

Caleb Wainwright

Haakon Chevalier
Friend, a Novelist

Jamie Sloan

Charlotte Serber
Friend

Laura Smith

Robert Wilson
Student

Martin Fisher Jr.

All other parts played
by members of the Company.

Kitty Harrison
Richard Harrison's Wife,
later married to Oppie

Faye Alexandra

Richard Harrison
Husband of Kitty

Anthony Morris

Hans Bethe
Colleague, Prof. of Physics

Hector Macduff

Edward Teller
A rival Physicist, Hungarian

Sam Evans

Leslie Groves
General in the U.S. Army
O.C. the Atomic Bomb Project

Mark Jephcott

Kenneth Nichols
Colonel in the U.S. Army

Caleb Wainwright

Doctor
Julian Hope

Peer Da Silva
Captain in the U.S. Army

Matt Dunn

Richard Feynman
Jamie Sloan

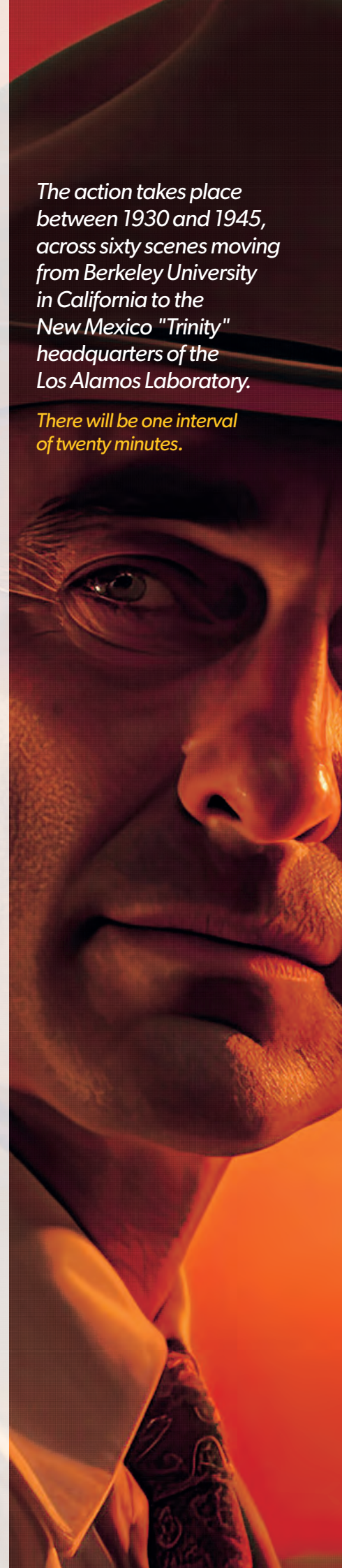
Luiz Alvarez
Julian Hope

Klaus Fuchs
Anthony Morris

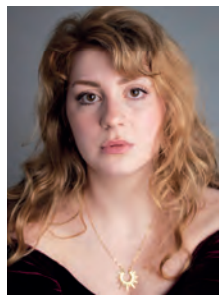
Ruth Tolman
Cassie Groos

The action takes place
between 1930 and 1945,
across sixty scenes moving
from Berkeley University
in California to the
New Mexico "Trinity"
headquarters of the
Los Alamos Laboratory.

There will be one interval
of twenty minutes.



The Company

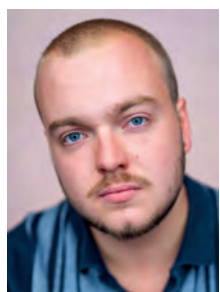


**Faye Alexandra
Kitty Harrison**

Originally from Bury St. Edmunds but now living in Manchester, Faye is an actor and singer who trained at East 15 Acting School and has since appeared in Harlan Coben's *Missing You* on Netflix. She has written, directed and acted in her own original work, *Mrs Smith*, with Heirloom Theatre Company, as well as having made further appearances in adverts for charities, short films,

original theatre and still shot advertisements. Faye has also worked as a singer, touring the UK at weddings and events; street performing and gigging in both London and Manchester as well as releasing her own self written music.

Oppenheimer is Faye's first production at The Altrincham Garrick Playhouse, and she's delighted to be working alongside such a talented, welcoming company in this compelling play.



**Aidan Burgess
Bob Serber**

Mancunian born and bred, Aidan is an Actor, Director & Writer, who has trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and East 15 Acting School. Aidan graduated from East 15 in July 2024 with a BA (Hons) in Acting First Class and is represented by Beccy Kilgariff at VSA.

Credits whilst in training include; *Firs* in *The Cherry Orchard*, *Leonato* in *Much Ado About*

Nothing, *Barry* in *Saved* and *Timothy West* in the premier production of *O'Toole's Macbeth*.

Aidan first began his time at the Garrick back in 2014 as a member of the cast in *Oh, What A Lovely War!* Other credits at the Garrick include: *Philip* in *Orphans* (2017), *Beadle Bamford* in *Sweeney Todd* (2016), *Abram* in *Romeo and Juliet* (2016), *The Secret Garden* (2017) and *Joseph Buquet* in *The Phantom of the Opera* (2014). This production marks a return to the theatre after 8 years away.

Aidan would like to thank his family and friends for their never ending support and also to John, Carole, Joe and everyone behind the scenes for making this a possibility.

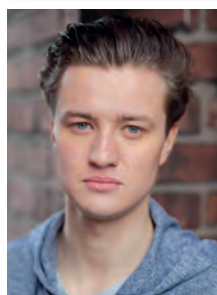


**Matt Dunn
Giovanni Rossi Lomanitz /
Capt. Peer Da Silva**

Matt trained as an actor at the American Musical & Dramatic Academy in Los Angeles, California. A versatile performer with a passion for storytelling, Matt has appeared in a variety of productions across stage and screen.

In *Oppenheimer*, Matt takes on the roles of *Giovanni Rossi Lomanitz*, a fiery physicist with unwavering ideals, and *Peer Da Silva*, a figure key to maintaining security within the Manhattan Project.

Outside of acting, Matt is also a filmmaker and aspiring voice artist, combining his creative talents to explore dynamic and engaging narratives. He is thrilled to be a part of this gripping production and would like to thank the cast, crew, and audience for their support.



**Sam Evans
Edward Teller**

Sam is a 24 year old northern actor, writer, filmmaker and musician. This will be Sam's thirteenth performance at the Garrick, and he's delighted to be back on the stage with such a talented cast and creative team.

Selected theatre credits include:- *Keith Richards* in *Out of Time* (North West Tour), *A Matter of Law* (Birmingham Blue Orange), *James Dean* in *Pronoun*, *Frankenstein*, *Piaf*, *The Shape of Things*, *Blue Stockings* and *Jonny* in *Let The Right One In* (all Altrincham Garrick), *The Curious Incident of The Dog In The Night-Time*, *A Doll's House* and *Our Country's Good*. Sam's award winning feature film *Another Day* is available to watch on Amazon Prime Video and his second feature film's pre-production is under way.



**Martin Fisher Jr.
Robert Wilson**

Martin is making his second appearance at the Garrick after performing in September as *Dakin* in *The History Boys*. Martin has been in several productions in the North West since moving to Manchester two years ago from his hometown Nottingham. In May 2024 he appeared at the Salford Arts Theatre for the production of Martin McDonagh's *Hangmen* - a play set in 1960s Oldham.

Martin has enjoyed working on *Oppenheimer* and learning from the great cast of actors joining him on stage.



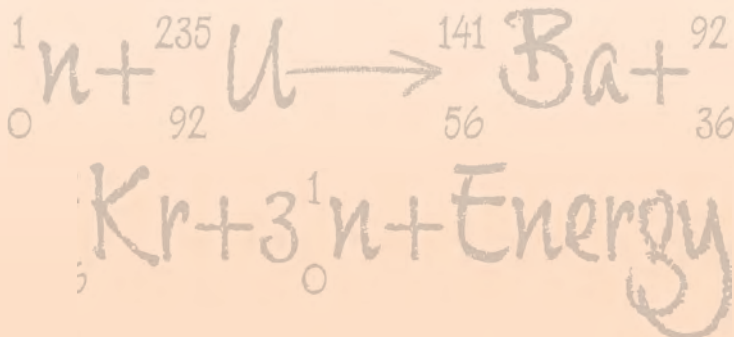
**David Glover
Frank Oppenheimer**

David has over 20 years of amateur dramatics experience in Manchester, including performances as *George* in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Winston* in *1984*, *Lysander* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Andrew Aguecheek* in *Twelfth Night*, *Harry*, *the Vicar* and *Charles* in *Confusions*, *Eilert Lovborg* in *Hedda Gabler*, *Sonny* in *Grease*, *Harry* in *Night of the Living Dead*, *Live!*, *Peter* in *Stags & Hens*, *Fred Vaughn* in *Little Women*, and the *Landlord* in *TWO*. He's also been a variety of dames, villains, kings and sidekicks in far too many pantomimes to list.

David has performed with the Altrincham Garrick once before, as *Neville Strange* in 2019's *Towards Zero* for which he was nominated for a Best Actor NODA award.

As well as acting David has directed multiple shows including *Salt* in 2021, *The Great Gatsby* in 2018 and Terry Pratchett's *Mort* in 2015.

Fission



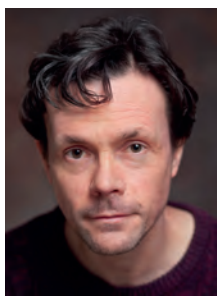


Cassie Groos

**Jackie Oppenheimer /
Ruth Tolman / Waitress**

Despite a brief flirtation with school theatre as a teen, twice playing *Helena* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a fleeting turn as *Cinderella*, along with a year at drama school, Cassie is making her adult stage debut in this production of *Oppenheimer*, fulfilling a long-held ambition. She has thoroughly enjoyed being part of this

warm and welcoming company and is thrilled by the opportunity.



Jonathan Higgs

**"Oppie"
J. Robert Oppenheimer**

'Oppie' is Jonathan's first role at the Altrincham Garrick. He has been acting in various forms for over 25 years, most often at another Garrick theatre, in Stockport, with appearances there this year in *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *A Bunch of Amateurs*. Other previous roles include *Garry Essendine* in *Present Laughter*, *Richard Hannay*

in *The 39 Steps*, *Bertie Wooster* in *Jeeves and Wooster* in 'Perfect Nonsense' and *Hamlet*, in *Hamlet*.

Recently, on screen, Jonathan has worked with Macclesfield-based film company Loud Voices, Silent Streets, appearing in their award-winning short films '*How to Avoid Death Forever*' and '*Completely Well Adjusted*', and in their forthcoming short, '*Killer*'.

Jonathan has been delighted to make the acquaintance of the Altrincham Garrick via Tom Morton-Smith's epic bio-play, though it has left him feeling that he needs a hat.



Julian Hope

Luis Alvarez / Doctor

Having returned home from performing in Disneyland Paris, Julian is delighted to be back at the Garrick, having previously appeared as *The Man* in last year's compelling production of Florian Zeller's *The Father*.

Julian started acting in primary school as one of the evil step sisters in a panto production. He continued performing through school and in

College joined the Shakespeare Society, closely followed by Manchester Gilbert & Sullivan Society (MUGSS). His first professional credit was as *The Prince / The Beast & Le Fou* in a production of *Beauty and The Beast* which toured England and Northern Ireland. His acting career then took a different route and his credits include a few TV shows such as *Cold Feet*, *The Stranger* and Sky's *Curfew*.

He is currently auditioning around for his next part!



Mark Jephcott

General Leslie Groves

Mark has been a Garrick member for over 35 years and has acted in and directed many productions over the years.

Favourite appearances here include *Bouncers*, *Up'n'Under*, *Vivat Vivat Regina*, *Bedroom Farce*, *Crown Matrimonial*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *Around the World in Eighty Days* and *The Audience*.

Mark has Directed a number of productions both here and at The Green Room Theatre Wilmslow and CHADS Theatre Cheadle Hulme which include: *Abigails Party*, *Prescription for Murder* and *Up and Coming* here, *Abigails Party*, *Come Blow Your Horn*, *The Price*, *Children's Day* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at The Green Room, and *The 39 Steps* and *Hound of The Baskervilles* at CHADS. He has also appeared in over 15 Shakespeare and Agatha Christie productions for The Green Room in Gawsorth Hall, near Macclesfield's summer season.

Mark's last appearance at the Garrick was in another commanding role, as Prime Minister Harold Wilson in last season's acclaimed production of *The Audience*.



Hector MacDuff

Hans Bethe

Hector is a voice actor and roleplayer who trained at The National Youth Film Academy and ActUp North, and works as a medical roleplayer for the GMC and as a games master online. Voice acting credits include in-house corporate training to walking heritage tours and URSPY, the award winning York University interactive audio adventure.

Recent theatre credits include *12 Scenes of Christmas*, *Quacks*, *Measure for Measure*, *Diane's Deli* and *Rank: A Tale from Paradise Heights*. For Altrincham Garrick Playhouse, Hector has appeared as *Richard Burbage* in *Shakespeare in Love*, *Howie Newsome* in *Our Town*, *Johnny* in *Home, I'm Darling*, Prime Minister *David Cameron* in *The Audience* and *Halmberg* in last year's Garrick Ensemble production of *Let The Right One In*.

Hector has recently finished a run of *Black Spring* that premièred in the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival, and following *Oppenheimer* he will be touring the UK with *Tales From Paradise Heights* throughout 2025.



Anthony Morris

**Klaus Fuchs /
Richard Harrison**

Anthony has most recently performed at the Altrincham Garrick Playhouse in *The Girl on the Train* (2024) which was also directed by John Cunningham. He has also appeared in a number of productions such as *When We Are Married* (2019, NODA Best Play) *An Inspector Calls* (2013, NODA Best Play), *Pride and Prejudice*

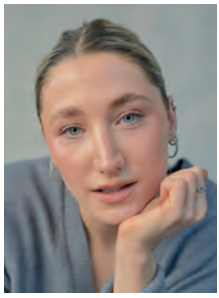
(2014) *The History Boys* (2016), *Wolf Hall* (2017), *Bronte* (2019), and many others.

Outside the Garrick, Anthony has performed as *L.S. Lowry* in the amateur première of *Mrs Lowry and Son* (2023) in Hyde Studio 9 (*Best Actor in Two Hander* - ACT Awards 2024) and *Glengarry Glen Ross* (2024) at the Stockport Garrick Theatre.

Fusion



The Company



Scarlet Newton Jean Tatlock

Scarlet made her debut at the Playhouse as *Marlene* in Charlie Tomlinson's 2022 Garrick Studio sell-out production of *Piaf*, before making her Main Stage debut last year as *Megan Hipwell* in John Cunningham's production of *The Girl On The Train*. Scarlet has been training with Actor Tribe since the age of 14, under the guidance of Lee Boardman, and more recently has been training with Anthony Crank in Manchester. Currently between agents, and eager for new representation, Scarlet has spent the last year working on a number of TV projects, with recent appearances in *Hollyoaks* and the BBC Drama *Time*. She has also completed a role in the film *Little Boxes*, Raffaello Degruttola's drama about how governmental decisions during the pandemic affected the lives of ordinary people in a small corner of Northern England.



Jamie Sloan Richard Feynman / Haakon Chevalier

Jamie has performed in many Altrincham Garrick productions, including *Vincent in Brixton* (2016), *Handbagged* (2017), *These Shining Lives* (2017), *Stones in His Pockets* (2018), *Around the World in 80 Days* (2018), *Jeeves and Wooster* (2020), *Constellations* (2022), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2023), and *A Christmas Carol* (2023). Jamie studied Feynman diagrams at University, and it has been a pleasure bringing this famous, eccentric physicist to life, as well as a pleasure working with such a talented cast. When not treading the boards, Jamie can often be found ballroom dancing at Topaz Dance Studio in Stretford.



Laura Smith Charlotte Serber

Laura is delighted to be doing her first production with the Altrincham Garrick Playhouse. She has recently moved from the West Coast of Canada and previously has been in works such as *Legally Blonde*, *Into the Woods*, and *Young Frankenstein* and performed with choirs such as *Ensemble Laude* and her quartet, *Soundwaves*. She

would like to thank the whole cast and crew for their hard work on this show!



Caleb Wainwright Joe Weinberg / Kenneth Nichols

This is Caleb's first ever production after leaving University, where he studied Philosophy, Ethics and Religion. In his spare time he took part in the University of Chester's Drama Society which put on numerous well known productions such as *Grease Lightning* and *Aladdin* along with various Cabaret performances. He has enjoyed

everything to do with the production of *Oppenheimer* and looks forward to taking part in more of the Garrick's productions.

Putting

Theatre, as an artistic medium, has long been a mirror reflecting the preoccupations and anxieties of its time. Since World War II, one of the central concerns of human society has been the role of science and its profound implications for humanity.

Plays involving science have been around for a long time. In *The Doctor's Dilemma*, George Bernard Shaw used "an exact record of an actual discovery in serum therapeutics" to inspire a sprightly and affecting comedy. Great plays about science do exist – but there aren't that many. Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo* and Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *The Physicists* were early contenders to be featured on the list. More recently, David Auburn's *Proof*, Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* and Nick Payne's *Constellations*, which merged traditional romance with highbrow talk about quantum mechanics and relativity, should also probably be included.

Other plays which have enjoyed success while 'dabbling' in science include *Humble Boy*, Charlotte Jones' story of a mother and son who live in the fictional Cotswold Village of Moreton in the Mold, with an obvious parallel in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The scientific link is the son's occupation of bee keeping and discussions of theoretical physics and the gap between reality and our perception of it. Shelagh Stephenson's fascinating, multi-layered drama *An Experiment With An Air Pump* takes its title, as well as its inspiration, from a 1767 painting by Joseph Wright whose work often depicted scientific or industrial subjects. More up-to-date, Aaron Sorkin's docu-drama about the invention of television, *The Farnsworth Invention*, enjoyed critical and box-office success.

Similar to Hugh Whitmore's *Breaking The Code*, Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* and the aforementioned *Copenhagen*, Tom Morton-Smith's *Oppenheimer* delves into the lives of scientists themselves, and the moral, ethical, and existential dilemmas that accompany scientific discovery. By exploring themes of genius, morality, uncertainty, and the societal consequences of scientific ventures, these works offer nuanced portraits of scientists as both heroic and flawed, and they grapple with the broader implications of their work on humanity.

Alan Turing in Breaking The Code

Hugh Whitmore's *Breaking the Code* (1986) focuses on Alan Turing, the mathematician and logician whose work was instrumental in breaking the Nazi Enigma code during the Second World War. The play juxtaposes Turing's groundbreaking scientific contributions with his persecution as a gay man in postwar Britain, ultimately presenting a poignant narrative of a brilliant yet misunderstood individual.

By structuring the play as a series of non-linear scenes that interweave Turing's professional achievements with his personal struggles, *Breaking the Code* highlights the contrast between Turing's intellectual triumphs and the societal injustices he endured. His work at Bletchley Park is shown to have shortened the war and saved countless lives, yet his post-war conviction for "gross indecency" led to his chemical castration and eventual suicide.

The play critiques the failure of society to recognise and support those who advance human knowledge, particularly when they fall

Science on the stage

outside societal norms. It also explores the idea of "code-breaking" in a broader sense, as Turing's genius lay in deciphering hidden patterns, whether in cryptographic systems or human behaviour. *Breaking the Code* thus portrays the scientist not only as a figure of intellect but also as a deeply human character grappling with alienation and prejudice.

Uncertainty in Copenhagen

Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* (1998) delves into the enigmatic 1941 meeting between physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg in Nazi-occupied Denmark. The play revolves around the "Copenhagen interpretation" of quantum mechanics, particularly Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, and uses this scientific concept as a metaphor for the uncertainty surrounding the characters' motivations and actions.

Frayn's script is structured as a series of speculative conversations among Bohr, Heisenberg, and Bohr's wife, Margrethe, who serve as both participants and commentators. This format allows the play to explore multiple interpretations of the meeting, mirroring the ambiguities inherent in quantum mechanics. Was Heisenberg seeking Bohr's advice on building a nuclear weapon, or was he subtly attempting to sabotage the Nazi atomic program? The play refuses to offer definitive answers, emphasising the moral and ethical grey areas that often accompany scientific discovery.

Copenhagen is as much about human relationships as it is about science. It examines the friendship and rivalry between Bohr and Heisenberg, the competing loyalties of scientists during wartime, and the profound moral questions surrounding the application of nuclear physics. Frayn's use of scientific principles as dramatic devices enriches the play's exploration of uncertainty, responsibility, and the interplay between knowledge and power.

Science and Philosophy in Arcadia

Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* (1993) is a dazzling exploration of the relationship between science, art, and human nature. Set in both the early 19th century and the present day, the play weaves together themes of chaos theory, thermodynamics, and romanticism, creating a tapestry of ideas that transcend temporal boundaries.

The central scientific theme of *Arcadia* is the interplay between order and disorder, epitomised by the second law of thermodynamics and the emerging field of chaos theory. These concepts are explored through the character of Thomasina Coverly, a precocious teenager in the 19th century who anticipates mathematical principles that would not be formally articulated until the 20th century. Her insights

serve as a metaphor for the human desire to find patterns and meaning in the universe.

In the modern-day storyline, scholars attempt to piece together the events of the past, mirroring the scientific process of hypothesis and discovery. Stoppard uses this dual narrative to highlight the continuity of intellectual enquiry across time. The play's intricate structure and lyrical dialogue underscore the beauty of both scientific and artistic pursuits, suggesting that they are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary ways of understanding the world.

Common themes and broader implications

Taken together, these plays reveal recurring themes in the theatrical portrayal of scientists and scientific ventures since World War II. One such theme is the tension between intellectual achievement and moral responsibility. From Heisenberg's ambiguous motivations in *Copenhagen* to Oppenheimer's guilt over the atomic bomb, these works grapple with the ethical dilemmas faced by scientists whose discoveries have far-reaching consequences.

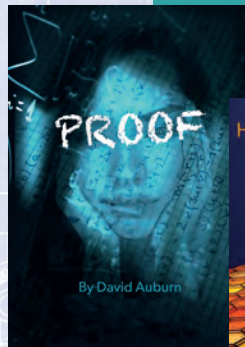
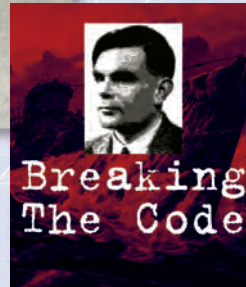
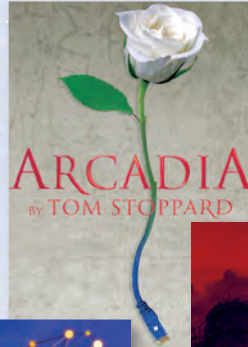
Another recurring motif is the intersection of science and society. Both *Breaking the Code* and *Oppenheimer* highlight the ways in which societal prejudices and political pressures shape the lives and legacies of scientists, while *Arcadia* celebrates the enduring human quest for knowledge.

The portrayal of scientists as complex, multi-faceted individuals is another hallmark of these plays. Rather than idealising their subjects, these works present them as flawed and vulnerable, capable of both greatness and error. This

humanisation of scientists serves to demystify the scientific process, emphasising its collaborative and repetitious nature.

Finally, these plays reflect broader cultural anxieties about the implications of scientific progress. Whether addressing the destructive potential of nuclear weapons, the ethical dilemmas of artificial intelligence, or the existential questions of consciousness, these works resonate with audiences by engaging with issues that continue to shape our world.

"Science and art are two different ways of being in the world. Science is about questions that have answers. Art is about questions that do not. It is the lack of answers, and the sense of being haunted by them, that gives art its power". Dr Alan Lightman.



Next on the Main Stage – 2 Great Family Shows!

Monday 17 – Sunday 23 March

Altrincham Garrick Academy of Performing Arts
in



The ADDAMS Family

Young@part

Book by **Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice**

Music and Lyrics by **Andrew Lippa**

Based on characters created by **Charles Addams**

Celebrate the wackiness in every family with this epic, hilarious Broadway musical!

Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family whom her parents have never met. She confides in her father and begs him not to tell her mother. Now, Gomez Addams must do something he's never done before – keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's "normal" boyfriend and his parents.

Monday 17, 7:30pm

Wednesday 19, 7:30pm

Friday 21, 7:30pm

GROUPS 3 & 6 (Aged 14 – 18)

Tuesday 18, 7:30pm

Thursday 20, 7:30pm

Saturday 22, 7:30pm

GROUPS 2 & 5 (Aged 11 – 14)

Saturday 22, 2:30pm

Sunday 23, 2:30pm

GROUPS 1, 4 & 7 (Aged 5 – 11)

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garrick
academy of
performing
arts

This amateur production of 'The Addams Family' is presented through special arrangement with, and all authorised performance materials are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide (TRW), 122-124 Regent Street, 5th Floor, London W1B 5SA. www.theatricalrights.co.uk

Friday 4 – Thursday 17 April

Please contact the Box Office for full dates and times of all performances.

Relaxed Performance

Sunday 13 April

5:30pm

Mildred Hubble
spells
trouble!



THE WORST WITCH

Based on the original books by
Jill Murphy

Adapted for the stage by

Emma Reeves

With music by

Luke Potter

Directed by

Kay Valentine

Musical Direction by

Peter England



Before Harry Potter exploded onto the scene there was another seemingly ordinary child, Mildred Hubble, who wound up in the most extraordinary of places... A school for witches! Now its time for you to join the world of magic and mayhem at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse next Easter Holiday!

Currently in her final year at Miss Cackle's Academy, accident prone Mildred and her fellow pupils are about to embark on their biggest adventure yet...

When Mildred and her friends decide to put on a play about their experiences as witches in training, mayhem inevitably ensues. Jealous Ethel Hallow is always out to spoil Mildred's fun. Stern Miss Hardbroom is opposed to all fun in general. Worst of all, an old enemy returns with a plan for revenge that could threaten not just the Academy, but the whole world.

Featuring all of Jill Murphy's beloved characters, this action-packed new stage adaptation by Emma Reeves includes original music, magic and a dose of Mildred's unique brand of utter pandemonium!

Olivier Awards 2020 **BEST FAMILY SHOW**

Age Guidance: 7 +

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Limited. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk



Sunday 2 March 7:30pm

Three-time Olivier Award-winner **Sharon D Clarke** is joined by **Ncuti Gatwa** (*Doctor Who*) in this joyful reimagining of Oscar Wilde's most celebrated comedy.

While assuming the role of a dutiful guardian in the country, Jack lets loose in town under a false identity. Meanwhile, his friend Algy adopts a similar facade. Hoping to impress two eligible ladies, the gentlemen find themselves caught in a web of lies they must carefully navigate. **Max Webster** directs this hilarious story of identity, impersonation and romance, filmed live from the National Theatre.



Sunday 9 March 7:30pm

Coinciding with its 35th triumphant year in London's West End, Sir Cameron Mackintosh produced a spectacular sell-out staged concert version of *Les Misérables* featuring an all-star cast including **Michael Ball**, **Alfie Boe**, **Carrie Hope Fletcher**, **Matt Lucas** and **John Owen Jones**. If you missed the recent Arena tour, experience the musical phenomenon on the big screen. Featuring a cast and orchestra of over 65 and including the songs *I Dreamed A Dream*, *Bring Him Home*, *One Day More* and *On My Own* this sensational staged concert is an absolute must-see for fans of musical theatre.

BOOK NOW! Tues 25 - Sun 30 March

"The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it" Oscar Wilde

A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

Music by
Stephen Flaherty

Lyrics by
Lynn Ahrens

Book by
Terrence McNally

Directed by
Barry Purves

Musical Direction by
Ceri Graves



In Dublin in 1964, bus conductor and Oscar Wilde fan Alfie has ambitions to stage *Salome*, despite the objections of the church hierarchy at St. Imelda's, where his amateur theatre group is based. When a newcomer to town, Adele, joins his passengers, he realises he has found the right person for the title role and starts to assemble his cast.

Meanwhile Alfie's sister Lily mistakes her brother's interest in Adele as romantic - she longs to have him off her hands so she can be free to marry. Little does Lily realise that Alfie's love "dare not speak its name" and the object of his affections is in fact bus driver Robbie.

As opening night draws near, secrets come spilling out which threaten to shake this little community to its core. But camaraderie and the redeeming power of theatre offer a thread of hope in this story of friendship, forbidden love and finding our place in the world.

Winner of the 2003 *Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical*, ***A Man Of No Importance*** is the second successful collaboration by the team of Terrence McNally, Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, all of whom won TONY Awards for ***Ragtime***.

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Limited on behalf of Music Theatre International of New York.
www.mtishows.co.uk

**altrincham
garrick
studio**

The affecting, Pulitzer Prize-winning story of enduring friendship
and the crumbling of the American dream

of mice and men

by John Steinbeck



Thursday 8 –
Sunday 18 May



Evenings at 7:30pm (except Sun 11 & Sun 18)
No performances Monday 12 & Tuesday 13
Matinées, Saturday 10 May at 2:30pm
Sunday 11 and Sunday 18 May at 4:00pm

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