

THE WORST WITCH



Friday 4 –
Thursday 17
April 2025

altrincham
garrick
playhouse

Magical Discounts!

Calling all young schoolgirl witches! Are you tired of spending all your hard-earned Golden Galleons (or allowance) on expensive theatre tickets? Fear not! With a flick of your wand and a sprinkle of spellbinding savvy, you can charm your way to magical discounts!

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playhouse

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Simply enrol online at www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk, or speak to our Box Office, either in person or by calling **0161-928 1677** to become a member of our Friends of the Garrick audience loyalty scheme.

Hello and Welcome

... to **Altrincham Garrick Playhouse**, and our now traditional Easter production for all of the family to enjoy. Following on from previous post-pandemic years when we have staged *George's Marvellous Medicine*, *The Jungle Book* and *Treasure Island* in this slot, this year's choice is a fantastically entertaining show involving magic... but not the one with "the boy who lived" and "He, whose name cannot be mentioned" ...

Emma Reeves' stage adaptation of *The Worst Witch* brings to life the beloved world of Miss Cackle's Academy, where magic and mayhem collide in Jill Murphy's classic children's series. Originally premièring in 2018 at the Royal & Derngate Theatre in Northampton before embarking on a successful UK tour and a West End run in 2019, where it won the coveted Olivier Award for "Best Family Entertainment", the production captures the heart, humour, and adventure that have made *The Worst Witch* a favourite for generations.

Jill Murphy's *The Worst Witch* series first appeared in 1974, long before the explosion of interest in magical schools brought about by *Harry Potter*. Often credited as a forerunner of J.K. Rowling's series, Murphy's books follow the misadventures of Mildred Hubble, a well-meaning but accident-prone young witch who struggles to fit in at her boarding school for magic. With her loyal friends, strict teachers, and a snobbish rival in the form of Ethel Hallow, Mildred's experiences at Miss Cackle's Academy bear undeniable similarities to the wizarding world that would later captivate millions. Rowling herself has never officially acknowledged an influence, but the thematic overlaps – such as the school setting, a stern but secretly caring teacher (*Miss Hardbroom*, comparable to *Professor McGonagall*), and the concept of a chosen outcast in a magical environment – suggest that *The Worst Witch* may have played a part in shaping the Harry Potter phenomenon.

Emma Reeves, who had previously adapted *The Worst Witch* for television, approached the stage production with a fresh and innovative perspective. Rather than simply retelling one of Murphy's existing books, Reeves crafted an original story that

weaves together key elements from the series while offering something new for audiences. In the play, Mildred is in her final year at Miss Cackle's Academy, facing her biggest challenge yet – not just passing her exams but also confronting a sinister plot that threatens the school itself.

The original production was widely praised for its imaginative staging, combining live-action storytelling with puppetry, aerial stunts, and musical numbers. Composer Luke Potter provided original songs that complemented the narrative, adding energy and emotion to key moments. His work helped elevate the production beyond a simple adaptation, creating a theatrical experience that was dynamic and engaging for audiences of all ages.

I was particularly thrilled when Kathleen Valentine agreed to direct this production. A graduate of GAPA, Kathleen's vast experience in all aspects of local amateur theatre has seen her directing, performing and also working in many roles behind the scenes on numerous productions. Having returned to the Garrick in recent years, I sincerely hope that we can continue to benefit from her expertise, energy and effervescence! Kathleen has also put together an exceptionally talented cast for this show, including someone who I work closely with every day, and I really hope they all have a great time performing *The Worst Witch* – and that you all also have a thoroughly magical experience!

Once again, thank you for choosing to support the Garrick. We really appreciate our audiences, without whom we simply couldn't continue. Enjoy the production, have a safe journey home and we look forward to welcoming you back soon.



Joseph Meighan

Artistic Director, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.

altrincham garrick playhouse Barrington Rd, Altrincham WA14 1HZ www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk Box Office Phone: 0161-928 1677		Board of Trustees: Hugh Everett (Chair) Charlie Tomlinson David Mazurkiewicz-Citrine April Miller Trevor McKie Nick Sample		Productions: Head of Stage Paul Simpson Head of Lighting James Merrington Head of Sound Josh McMillan Head of Wardrobe Mike Shaw Head of Design Barry Purves Head of Props Claire Eddleston-Rose Workshop Manager and Maintenance Supervisor Steve Cox Scenic Artist Amanda Cooke	
Theatre Management Team: Artistic Director Joseph Meighan Operations Director Sarah Reilly		Front-of-House Management: Front-of-House Manager Neill Walker Deputy Front-of-House Manager / Studio F-o-H Manager Eileen Smith		House Keepers: Sandra Smith Janine Barratt	
Theatre Administrators: Finance Manager Siobhán Linnett Diane White Patsy Newhouse Judi Quirke Diane Ashton Lauren Groves		Garrick Academy of Performing Arts: Principal Peter Birch Principal Helen Lawrence Senior Tutor Dean Sumner Assistant Tutor / LAMDA Tutor Grace Gonet Assistant Tutor Lottie Warburton Assistant Tutor Olivia Walsh		Theatre Membership: Secretary John Gibson	

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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**

Jill Murphy and The Worst Witch

The children's author and illustrator Jill Murphy was loved across generations for picture books that capture the essence of childhood in a realistic yet magical way.

Born in London on 5 July 1949, Jill grew up in Chessington, which was then in Surrey, the daughter of Reeney (Irene) and Eric Murphy. Her father, who worked in an aircraft factory, had a talent for drawing that he shared with Jill, regularly slipping illustrated notes into her school lunchbox. Her mother, previously a librarian in the Harrods lending library, had wanted to be a writer and did much to encourage Jill.

It was a chance remark from her mum which helped lift and transform the stories she'd been scribbling away in her school rough book into something original and special. "Look at you," Reeney said, opening the door one day to Jill and two rain-bedraggled school friends, in their dark convent school uniforms, "you look like three witches." And so, the idea of setting her stories in an academy for witches was born. She was 14, but had been writing, illustrating, and stapling her own books together since she was six, carefully writing the title and her name on the cover of each. One of Jill's earliest memories was of drawing on the brown paper grocers' bags Reeney – her great champion – ironed flat for her, and by the time Jill left primary school she had a library of 190 little books, safely stored in her knitting bag.

Successful at her primary school, Jill floundered at secondary school and left at 16 to do art foundation courses at Chelsea then Croydon art schools, before moving to Camberwell School of Art, where she lasted only a term. Two years later, she finished her first novel *The Worst Witch*, about a little witch who doesn't fit in at her new school – a story which was heavily based on her experiences at the convent. She sent it off to three big London publishers, who all turned it down, deeming a story about a school of

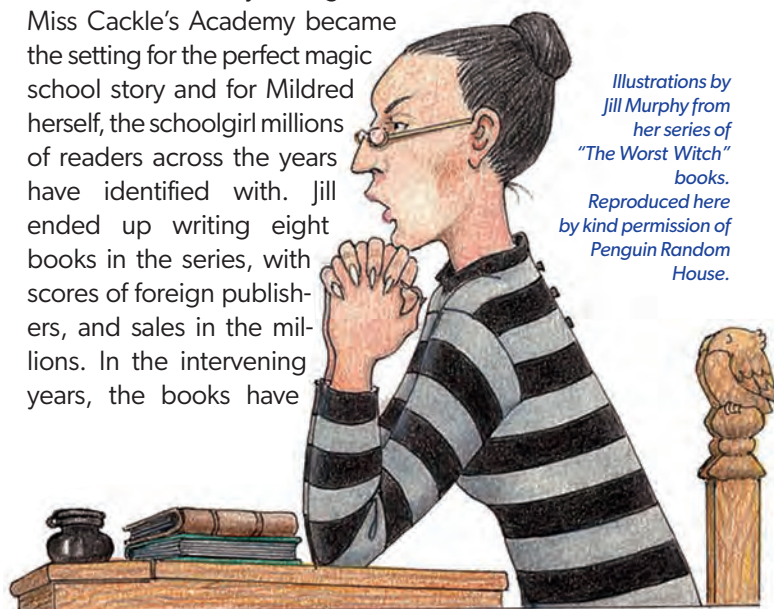
witches as being "too frightening", and Jill "put it in a drawer and decided to concentrate on other things instead."

After a spell working as a nanny for a year and in children's homes for four years, an environment that she loved, Jill had a phone call from the young founders of publishers Allison & Busby who were interested in *The Worst Witch*. It was printed when she was twenty-four, sold out almost immediately, and Jill knew for sure she wanted to follow a career as an author/illustrator. Jill revisited Mildred's school career in several sequels and finished it with a glorious ending for her in *First Prize for the Worst Witch* (2018).

When asked where her stories came from, she always said that she did not need to search for stories: everything she wrote about came from within her. That was truest in *The Worst Witch*.

By her own admission she'd 'bumped along the bottom' at secondary school – the strict Ursuline Convent in Wimbledon – where the nuns in their wimples seemed to materialise (just like *Miss Hardbroom*) at the end of long corridors at the very moment she was saying something awful or unwise about them. She'd failed her 11 plus but been given an interview on the strength of her obvious talent for art and English and, although she may not have shone at science or left with many formal qualifications, school gave her something more useful. It gave her copy. It was there, as a teenager, that she set and wrote *The Worst Witch*, changing the chemistry room into the potions lab, lifting the characters from life, turning her best friends into *Maud Spellbody* and *Enid Nightshade*, the school bully into *Ethel Hallow* and, of course, herself into *Mildred Hubble*, the accident-prone worst witch of the title: well-meaning, good-hearted, hopeless.

With the addition of Jill's magic touches, Miss Cackle's Academy became the setting for the perfect magic school story and for Mildred herself, the schoolgirl millions of readers across the years have identified with. Jill ended up writing eight books in the series, with scores of foreign publishers, and sales in the millions. In the intervening years, the books have



Illustrations by
Jill Murphy from
her series of
"The Worst Witch"
books.
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House.

repeatedly been adapted for film, stage, and two highly successful TV series, the first featuring the young *Felicity Jones* as *Ethel Hallow*, the second *Bella Ramsey* as *Mildred Hubble*, with a host of starry names playing the teachers. And then, the cherry on the cake – in 2019 the exuberant stage version of *The Worst Witch* won the coveted Olivier Award for ‘Best Family Show’. Above her drawing desk was pinned a gloriously happy picture of the (adult) cast of the musical on the stage at the Vaudeville Theatre with the visiting (young adult) cast of the CBBC series and Jill, glowing, at the centre.



The enduring appeal of all her books (for alongside *The Worst Witch* she wrote and illustrated warm, witty, prize-winning picture books for younger children featuring the well-loved Large and Bear families) lies in their message. Friendship counts for much. Bullies have backstories. Anything is possible. Don't be put off, don't be knocked back. There's magic in the everyday and imagination can transform ordinary lives. She was passionate about grammar and unapologetic about introducing her readers to new vocabulary. She had every faith in them, and that faith was often rewarded. She loved meeting her young readers and wrote long, often illustrated replies to their letters.

Jill's writing process may have seemed slightly haphazard – story ideas batted back and forth in numerous long phone conversations with her editor, followed by week-long get-togethers for them at her home in Cornwall, which included plenty of tea and toast in her cosy kitchen, walks on the beach, and breakfasts at the café across the harbour... but, all the time, Jill was constantly at work, always developing the storyline, scribbling down passages of dialogue, refining her characters until she felt ready to write a chapter-by-



chapter synopsis, followed by a complete first draft and then a final manuscript.

Jill's absolute favourite part of the *Worst Witch* journey was the illustrations. Once the galley pages were sent to her, Jill would draw detailed pencil roughs into carefully arranged page layouts, which involved painstakingly cutting out lines of text and glueing them in place around her sketches to mimic how each page should look. She would go over them in ink. In exquisite and meticulous detail – from the very tip of Mildred's hat to every single hair of Tabby's whiskers – each illustration was drawn and re-

drawn until it was exactly right.

In her eighth and last book in the series, *First Prize for the Worst Witch*, Jill allowed her hapless hero *Mildred Hubble* to fulfil her dream of no longer being the worst witch in Miss Cackle's Academy. In so doing, friends and colleagues thought that Jill was finally allowing herself to be proud of her remarkable achievements as an author and illustrator. She had reached the top, just like Mildred.

Jill famously once said that she wanted to make a book good enough to sit on the shelf between *The Secret Garden* and *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* and when Puffin brought out the gorgeous full-colour anniversary edition of *The Worst Witch* in 2014 she really felt she'd achieved that ambition, and, of course, with eight books in the series, she leaves a wonderful legacy for generations of readers to come.

Jill Murphy died from cancer on 18 August 2021, aged 72.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

We value your feedback, and would like to invite you to share your thoughts about the Altrincham Garrick Playhouse. Have you enjoyed a recent performance, or didn't enjoy it for some reason? Perhaps there's something we could improve on? Are there specific plays, musicals, or shows you'd love to see on our stage? Any visiting acts you'd like to recommend? What do you think of this programme? How did you find out about what you came to see? We would love to receive your reviews and suggestions.

This season, we've partnered with Star Feedback to make it easy for you to share your opinions. Simply scan the QR code (right) and let us know what you think. Thank you for helping us create the best experience possible!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Adapting The Worst Witch for the stage

Writer Emma Reeves on adapting Jill Murphy's hugely-loved characters into a production for the theatre.

I grew up with Jill Murphy's *Worst Witch* books – well, some of them. Only the first three had been published when I was a child, and I read them over and over again. As an adult I was delighted to work with Jill, first on a television adaptation of the books, and then on this new play.

Jill began writing *The Worst Witch* when she was still one of the few working-class students at a strict and somewhat snobbish Catholic grammar school. She excelled at writing and drawing, but the nuns who ran the school always made her feel that she didn't really belong. As Jill sought refuge in her imagination, transforming the everyday joys and miseries of childhood into something magical, the nuns who taught and tormented her became Miss Hardbroom and her coven of teacher-witches. Jill's school friends and rivals were transformed into Maud, Enid and Ethel. And Jill herself – a bright, well-intentioned but unlucky, accident-prone girl with a tendency to daydream – became Mildred Hubble.

Like her creator, Mildred is an outsider who is made to feel that she will never be good enough. Many people feel like that. Especially young people. Especially girls.

There are now eight *Worst Witch* books. I am sure many of those who read, perform in or watch this play will have read some or all of them. They might also have seen one or more of the television

and film adaptations – perhaps even the one I worked on! And so, in creating the stage show, we aimed to do something a little different. Something that would celebrate the unique connection between performers and audience offered by live theatre. We decided to bring the world of Miss Cackle's Academy into a contemporary theatre, as Mildred and her friends put on a play about life at witching school. A show written by and starring the "worst witch in the whole school" – what can possibly go wrong?

To me, the heart of the *Worst Witch* series lies in the deep connection between Jill and her material. Mildred's misadventures are very funny, but there's also something heartbreaking about an eleven-year-old girl who's been constantly told that she's the "worst". I don't think the messages we receive about ourselves in childhood can ever be entirely deleted, whether you're an entitled Ethel or an underdog like Mildred. But the message of *The Worst Witch* is eternally optimistic. Kindness, loyalty and bravery will be rewarded in the end – as long as you never give up.

I hope this play will send a message of support to the Mildred Hubble in all of us. May we all be inspired and encouraged – and never let anybody tell us we'll never be good enough.

Emma Reeves



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Selection from our Programme:

Friday 9th May 2025

Carol Lee

*"Heaton Park, my Grandad
and the RAF"*

Monday 16th June 2025

Dr Katy Kidd

"Settling the Pirates"

"My late father's family were genuine Pioneers, i.e. they settled and farmed the prairie from its wild state. He was an amateur historian, and kept details of his family history, including their early days on the prairies. One of the family farms is still being run as such, by a family member, some 5 generations on!"

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Telephone: **07942 979922**

The Adapters

Emma Reeves – Book

Emma Jane Reeves grew up in Wrexham. She gained a First Class degree in English from Magdalen College, Oxford and an MA in creative writing from the University of East Anglia.

Reeves has written extensively for theatre, including shows based on material she would also work on in television, such as **Hetty Feather** and **The Worst Witch**, as well as adaptations of **Cool Hand Luke** and **Little Women**. In 2005, she moved into television, gaining her first credit on BBC One's **Doctors**. She became a prolific children's writer following working on **The Story of Tracy Beaker**, writing for series like **Half Moon Investigations**, **Chuggington** and **Young Dracula**. She would return to the Tracy Beaker franchise several times, writing for **Tracy Beaker Returns**, spin-off **The Dumping Ground** and in 2021, **My Mum Tracy Beaker**. This was followed by **The Beaker Girls** that same year.

In 2015, she co-created with David Chikwe the CBBC science-fiction series **Eve**. It starred Poppy Lee Friar and follows the adventures of a gynoid, a female android, named Eve (also known as Project Eternity) living with a family in suburbia, trying to make sense of human life as a teenage girl. It concluded on 14 December 2016 with an hour-long episode, which was later split into two parts when it was repeated in January 2017.

Reeves developed and wrote a new adaptation of **The Worst Witch**, which ran for four series between 2017 and 2020. She would win 'Best British Children's Television' at the British Screenwriters' Awards for her work. In 2019, she helmed a sequel-reboot of **The Demon Headmaster** for CBBC. While well received, it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reeves returned to adult drama in 2024, writing on the period drama **The Hardacres**.

Reeves has written audio plays for the **Big Finish Doctor Who** ranges, starting with **Torchwood: Forgotten Lives** in 2015. She also wrote for the spin-offs **The Diary of River Song** and **The New Adventures of Bernice Summerfield**. Outside of the UK, Reeves co-wrote the Lifetime Television movie **The Murder of Princess Diana**.

She was announced in November 2023 as the new Chair of the WGGB.



Luke Potter – Music

Luke trained at Dartington College of Arts graduating with a BA Hons in Music Performance. He has worked in both the Music and Theatre industries since 2006.

As a guitarist, vocalist and songwriter Luke was a member of **Yes Sir Boss** (2005-13), performing alongside Joss Stone, Reef, Toots and the Maytals, before concentrating on his freelance career in theatre and as a lecturer at the BIMM Institute. Luke has worked extensively as a Composer / Musical Director and Musician on numerous shows including **A Monster Calls** (UK Tour), **Peter Pan** (National Theatre), **The Worst Witch** (Royal & Derngate, Northampton and Vaudeville Theatre, London), **Henry II**, **The Ballad of Maria Marten**, **La Strada** (UK Tour), **Hetty Feather** (Rose Theatre Kingston, Vaudeville Theatre, Duke of Yorks Theatre, UK & International Tour), **To Kill a Mockingbird** (Regents Park Open Air Theatre & UK Tour), **The Story Giant** (Marine Theatre), and **Outpost** (Green Ginger, Tobacco Factory, Norland Visual Theatre).

If you like theatre... no, if you love theatre, drama, comedy, musical theatre, play reading, poetry and much more and would relish the opportunity to meet new people, then the **Altrincham Garrick Play Reading Club** is for you!

The event is all about relaxed, no-pressure reading and the best way to read a play is to do it out loud, so join us and give it a go! Play readings take place once a month in the Garrick Bar.

The titles announced so far for 2025 are:

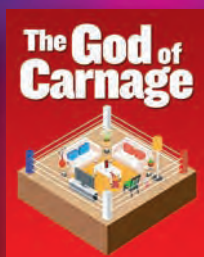
Friday 6 June:



Friday 4 July:



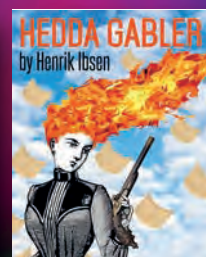
Friday 5 Sept:



Friday 3 Oct:



Friday 7 Nov:



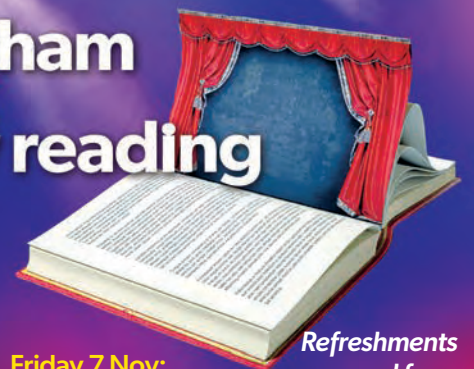
Refreshments served from 12:00 noon. Reading starts 12:30pm.

Duration: Approx 3 hours.

Age Guidance: 16 +

Tickets: £7.00

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play reading



The Production Team

Director and Choreographer	Kathleen Valentine
Musical Director	Peter England
Set Design	Paula Keen
Stage Manager	Jo Myers
Assistant Stage Managers	Sue Duffy
Dave Jones	Sandra Ash
.....	Laura Booth
Rehearsal Prompt	Ruth Metcalfe
Dance Captain & Rehearsal Swing ...	Tabitha Valentine
Lighting Design	James Merrington
Lighting Operation	James Merrington
.....	Tristan Reilly
Sound Design Peter England	Lucy Collins
Sound Operation	Lucy Collins
Special Effects & Pyros	Mark McEwan
Properties	Claire Eddleston-Rose
.....	Claire Corneill
.....	Christine Chrystal
.....	Alan Jones
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.

The Director



Kathleen Valentine

Kay is delighted to undertake her directorial debut for Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.

Kay has been involved in amateur theatre for many years. Directing credits include *The Wiz*, *Half a Sixpence*, *42nd Street*, *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, *West Side Story*, *Seussical the Musical*, *Hello*

Dolly, *Grease*, *Elf the Musical* and many more. Kay has recently won a NODA award for Best Director of a Youth production for Sale and Altrincham Musical Theatre Youth show - *The Addams Family*.

Kay was a member of the Garrick youth performing in the annual shows and then returned later in life to perform in *Calendar Girls - The Musical* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. Kay has also undertaken many different backstage roles at the Garrick Playhouse, such as stage manager for *The Wizard of Oz*, follow spot operator for several *Pantos* and the sound and lighting for *All The Little Lights* in the Garrick Studio.

Although Kay has directed a range of productions, she is definitely drawn to apply for the big spectacle shows with high energy, strong musical numbers, fun dances and large cast involvement. *The Worst Witch* is all of these combined with the addition of special effects and interactive theatre too.

Kay would like to thank Joe for trusting her with this production and a huge thanks to the cast and crew for their support and hard work bringing the magic to life.

Huge thanks from all the witches to a very special witch: Dance captain and rehearsal swing - **Tabitha Valentine**.

Director's Note...

Mildred Hubble has arrived at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse to show you a play. It's all about her first year at Miss Cackle's Academy, and all that she went through. However, knowing Mildred Hubble, things will not run smoothly. What starts off as her play is then used as a tool for the evil Agatha Cackle to start her bid for world domination, as she takes over the play – and the theatre – dreaming of a world ruled by herself and like minded witches.

Will you help Mildred defeat her?



The Cast

Miss Ada Cackle / Agatha Cackle

Helen Horridge

Miss Hecate Hardbroom

Lindsey Barker

Miss Bat

Sarah Reilly

Miss Drill

Rebekah Davies

Mildred Hubble

Megan Sorrel

Maud Spellbody

Paige Cunliffe

Enid Nightshade

Georgina Brame

Ethel Hallow

Sasha Carillo

Drusilla Paddock

Izzy Stuart-Cole

Fenella Feverfew

Jo Myers

Musical Numbers

ACT ONE

Introduction	The Company
Fly Over	The Company
Cats & Transportation	The Company
The Witching Kind	The Company
Potions Transition	The Company
The Potions Lab	The Company
She Broke The Code	The Company
Miss Cackle's Office	The Company
The Witching Kind (Reprise)	The Company
Montage 1	The Company
Chanting Class	Miss Bat and The Company
Montage 2	The Company
Broomstick Spell	Miss Bat and The Company
Mother Moon	Ethel Hallow and The Girls
Halloween	The Girls
She Broke The Code (Reprise)	The Girls
Mildred Sneaky with Tabby	The Company
Before The Stop Me	Mildred Hubble and The Girls
End of Act1	The Company

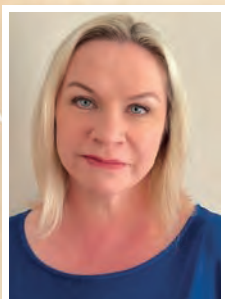
ACT TWO

The Spooky Forest	The Company
The Witching Hour	Agatha Cackle & The Company
Corridor Sneak	The Company
Give It Up	Miss Cackle, Agatha & The Girls
Superhero Tabby	The Company
Zombies	The Company
Enid & Ethel Fight	The Company
Cat Death / Mildred & Agatha Fight	The Company
Join The Circle	The Girls
Agatha's Final Stand	The Company
Waking Up Maud	The Company
The Witching Kind (Tag)	The Company
Finale	The Company

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. Thankyou all so much!**

The Company



Helen Horridge Miss Ada Cackle / Agatha Cackle

Helen trained at LAMDA and has worked in TV and theatre for many years including roles in *Where The Heart Is*, *Harold Shipman: Doctor Death*, *Always and Everyone*, *Little Bird* and *Dalziel and Pascoe*. Theatre roles include *The Baker's Wife* in *Into The Woods*, *Lynda* in *Blood Brothers*, *Helene* in *Sweet Charity*, *Mistress*

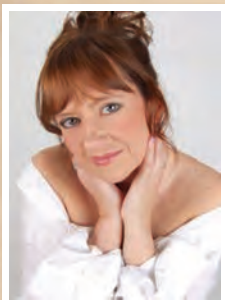
Quickly in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Miranda* in *The Tempest*.

Helen is the founder and principal of *The Helen Donohue School of Speech and Drama* which she established 25yrs ago here in Manchester.

Helen has been directing both children and adults for the past 25 years. She has also trained many professionals in public speaking and presentation work including nurses, doctors and head teachers.

Helen grew up performing on the Garrick stage and after a very long break returned to the stage last year in the *The Laramie Project* in the Garrick Studio, followed by directing *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*. Helen also performed in our spectacular production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, and played *Squire Trelawney* in *Treasure Island*.

Helen is thrilled to be playing *Miss Ada Cackle* and *Agatha Cackle* in *The Worst Witch* and has thoroughly enjoyed working with such a talented cast and production team.

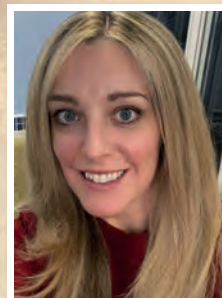


Lindsey Barker Miss Hecate Hardbroom

Lindsey joined the Garrick in 2018 as *Caroline Crake* in Agatha Christie's *Go Back For Murder*. Now in her seventh season, she is absolutely delighted to have been cast as *Miss Hardbroom* in *The Worst Witch*. She is a huge fan of Harry Potter, and this role could be classed as the female version of Severus Snape! It's her most challenging role to date, and has

provided a few firsts in her 27 years of acting on the stage.

Previous acting credits at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse: *Go Back For Murder*, *Jerusalem*, *Playhouse Creatures* (Studio), *People*, *Business Affairs*, *Towards Zero*, *When We Are Married*, *The Lady in the Van*, *Present Laughter*, *Calendar Girls the Musical*, *The Sound of Music*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Bombshells* (Studio), *The Father*, *The Audience*, and earlier this season *The History Boys*. Away from the Garrick, Lindsey is a Supporting Artist for television and recently signed with Nemesis Casting Agency.



Sarah Reilly Miss Bat

Having been a big fan of the Worst Witch books since a little girl, Sarah jumped at the chance to play *Miss Bat* alongside a talented but friendly coven of witches.

Sarah is obviously no stranger to the Garrick, however it's been a while since she has performed on this particular stage. Garrick performances include *Marion* in *Priscilla*,

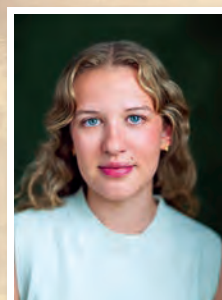
Queen of the Desert, and *Annie* and *Business Affairs*.

Sarah would like to thank, Kay our Director for her hard work and energy. It was lovely to work with her again having previously played opposite her in *Kinky Boots* and many Pantos! Finally, a big thank you to the Garrick team for bringing their customary magic to this production.



Rebekah Davies Miss Drill

Rebekah is thrilled to be back at the Garrick Playhouse following her previous performances as the *Social Worker* in *The Lady in the Van* and *Bombularina* in *Cats*. Jill Murphy's *The Worst Witch* was a staple growing up, and being given the opportunity to perform in this adaptation has been an absolute pleasure!

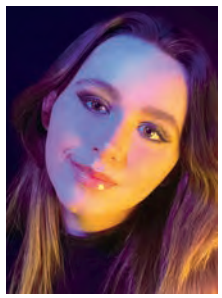
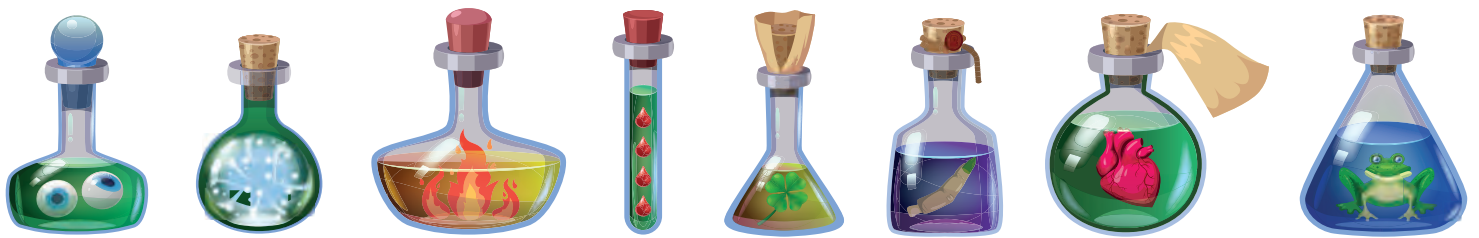


Megan Sorrel Mildred Hubble

The Worst Witch is Megan's debut show here at the Garrick. Megan studied at Portsmouth University where she graduated with a BA in Musical Theatre. She then went on to train in Musical Theatre Performance at Associated Studios London from where she graduated in 2023. Outside of the Garrick Megan has played *Jack* in *Into The Woods* (Playground Theatre), *Eurydice* in *Orpheus in The Underworld* (New Theatre Royal) and *Angie* in *Top Girls* (Bush Theatre).

Other credits include: *Jan* in *Grease*, *Patrice* in *13: The Musical*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, and *Beauty and The Beast*.





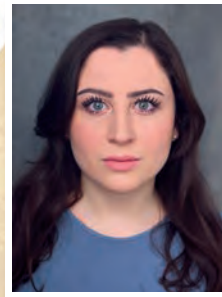
Paige Cunliffe

Maud Spellbody

From performing with steel orchestras at the RNCM, to rock bands at the Academy2 Concert Hall, to most recently being in the ensemble of Hope Mill Theatre's production of *Oliver!*, there is no place Paige feels more at home than in the company of a musical.

Currently studying drama at DSF, previous roles have included *Rosie Price* in *Things I Know To Be True* and *Judy Boone* from *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*.

Other theatre credits include both lighting design and stage management for *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*, and playing the roles of *Simba* in *The Lion King Jr.*, *Tracy Turnblad* in *Hairspray*, *Pepper* in *Annie* and *Miss Andrews* in *Mary Poppins Jr.* Following her Garrick Playhouse debut in *The Wizard of Oz* last October, Paige has recently finished a short run as *Fredrika* in Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* with South Manchester Operatic Society.



Sasha Carillo

Ethel Hallow

Sasha has been involved in a number of Garrick productions over the past couple of years, including *Shakespeare in Love*, *All My Sons* and *Into the Woods* where she played the role of *Rapunzel*. Sasha's previous credits include *Grace Farrell* in *Annie* and *Lily* in *The Secret Garden*. and most recently she appeared as *Princess Jill* in *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and most recently *Mrs Alexander* in the Garrick

Ensemble's production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*.

Outside of the Garrick she recently played *Johanna* in *Sweeney Todd* and *Josephine* in *HMS Pinafore* with North Manchester AOS – for which she was thrilled to win the Association of Community Theatre's *Spotlight Award for Most Accomplished Actress in a Musical Comedy*.

Sasha trained at the Guildford School of Acting, where she graduated in 2020 with a BA in Actor Musicianship. She plays both violin and piano and occasionally does so on stage!

Sasha has loved taking on the challenge of playing *Ethel Hallow*, and she hopes you enjoy what is sure to be a magical production.



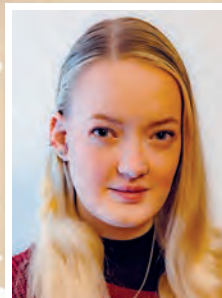
Georgina Brame

Enid Nightshade

Georgina's previous credits at the Altrincham Garrick Playhouse include *Joanne* in *All the Little Lights*, *Lucinda* in *Into the Woods*, multiple roles in *The Laramie Project*, *Mistress Quickly* in *Shakespeare in Love*, *Minnie* in *Blue Stockings*, *Ensemble* in *West Side Story*, *Fantine* in *Les Miserables*, *Ensemble* in *Footloose*, and *Elle Woods*, *Wednesday*

Addams and *Ensemble* in *Thank you for the Musicals*. Most recently, she played *Viv* in last season's *Di and Viv and Rose* in the Garrick Studio, and she's delighted to be back, working alongside such a great company in *The Worst Witch*.

Georgina has also performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Guide Bridge Theatre, Mossley Operatic and Dramatic Society, Pendleton College, and Urmston Musical Theatre. Georgina trained with Fourth Monkey Theatre Company, The International School of Commedia Dell'atre, and studied BA European Theatre Arts at Rose Bruford College.



Isabel Stuart-Cole

Drusilla Paddock

Isabel is delighted to be back on the Garrick stage once again. She has been performing with Sale Nomads since the age of six, mainly in panto as a dancer. Her first speaking role was one of the *Babes* in *Babes in the Wood*, and she also played *Fairy Twinkle* in *Sleeping Beauty*. Aside from panto, she appeared in *Oliver*, and also in a segment from *Matilda*. She has also played *Edith* in *Blithe Spirit*.

Isabel recently made her directorial and choreographer debut as well as playing *Rosie* in a *Mamma Mia* segment at Sale Nomads' summer showcase. Elsewhere, she's appeared in *Bugsy Malone* for Urmston Youth Musical Theatre, *Our Town* here at the Garrick, playing *Rebecca Gibbs* and *Amy* in *All The Little Lights* also here at the Garrick. She's also played *Penny* in *Hostile Witness* at Altrincham Little Theatre. She's studied dance from the age of two with Sale Academy of Dancing, and also attended Cadmans Dance Centre as part of the senior show dance team.

Isabel also enjoys being part of Nomads' makeup team and has worked on many shows.

Isabel is very excited to be part of such an amazing show and hopes you enjoy it just as much as the cast have!

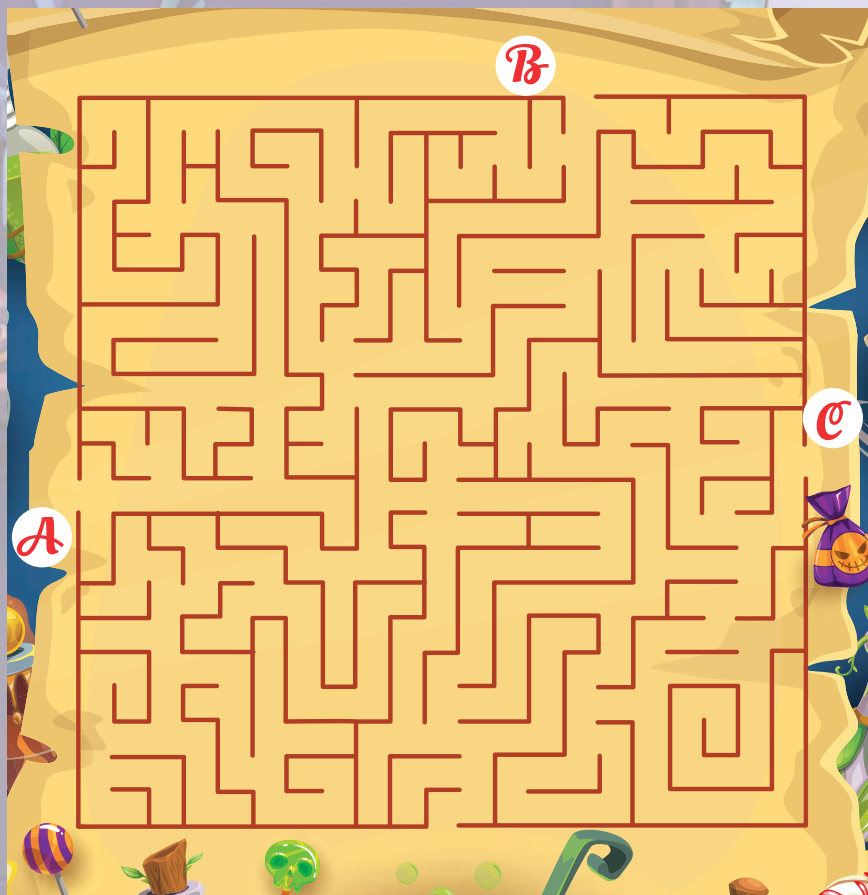


Games for Wand-ering Witches!

I SPY GAME





I-Spy Game (Above)

Count up how many of each item you can see on the left, and put the number in their box on the right. It's that simple... or is it?

Find The Exit (Left)

Starting at the gap at the bottom of the Maze, see if you can find your way through to each of the three exits, marked A, B and C.

Word Search (Opposite page, top)

Accident-prone Mildred Hubble has broken her broomstick. Can you help her to find the ingredients she needs to make a mending potion?

Spot The Differences

(Opposite page, bottom)

There are seven differences between the two illustrations. Can you spot them all?

Answers over the page... →



Y	T	O	N	G	U	E	S	T	E
C	R	Y	S	T	A	L	P	K	X
A	N	O	R	D	L	U	A	C	E
L	J	J	H	T	L	L	W	A	A
X	S	H	W	S	A	A	T	F	R
I	C	P	X	N	B	C	K	B	W
P	N	S	I	L	E	Q	A	A	I
M	A	S	K	D	Y	W	R	P	G
D	A	O	T	P	E	Z	T	D	I
I	L	M	D	Z	B	R	C	H	A

CAULDRON	MOSS	TOAD
EARWIG	EYEBALL	TONGUE
CRYSTAL	SPIDER	NEWT



Spells...

*Try some of these out
on your fellow witches..!*

Owl Summoning Chant

More than a bird, although it flies,
This great owl is incredibly wise.
Let it appear, let it draw near,
You and your friends have nothing to fear.

Owl Vanishing Chant

Owls are fine and owls are fair,
But only if you want them there.
Now then, shall I boil or bake,
I can make a wondrous cake.
Stir it round with all my might,
Twice to the left and once to the right,
Heat the brew with ice and flame,
Back you go from whence you came.

Bat's Conjuring Chant

Tail of ox and beard of goat,
Tooth of wolf and claw of stoat,
Put them in a bubbling stew,
And then the bats shall dance for you.

PE Class Chant

We're all hopeless and we're glad to be
The worst witches in the academy!
Lie in bed, that's our way,
Eat sweets, laze about everyday.

Eye of Toad

Eye of toad,
Ear of bat,
Leg of frog,
Tail of cat,
Drop them in, stir it up,
Pour it in a silver cup.
Skin of snake,
Lizard's lung,
Bane of newt,
Dragon's tongue.
Bring to boil,
add some spice,
Cook it up and
make it nice.
Sting of wasp,
Fur of dog,
Foot of mouse,
Tooth of hog,
Sieve it slow,
add some moth –
Serve it up as
witches broth!



Tuesday 29 April – Sunday 4 May

Love, sex, birth and salsa classes.
Three generations of women.
One extraordinary year.

LITTLE GEM



by **Elaine Murphy**

Directed by **Meg Brassington**

Happy-go-lucky Amber, fresh out of school, is high on life, double sambucas and boyfriend Paul. That is until the fierce indigestion starts. Lorraine attacks a customer and her boss wants her to see a psychiatrist. She is told to do one nice thing for herself each week, so she starts by signing up for Salsa classes. Meanwhile, Kay is finding life on the wrong side of sixty frustrating. Ailing husband Gem doesn't like the neighbours coming in to "mind" him, and she's missing more than just his conversation. And if all that wasn't bad enough, Little Gem makes his presence felt and – well – life is never the same again.

Hilarious and poignant, Elaine Murphy's award-winning play **Little Gem** was first staged by Guna Nua and Civic Theatre, Tallaght, in 2008, then at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, in 2009. It won the Carol Tambor Best of Edinburgh Award, the BBC Northern Ireland Drama Award in Association with the Stewart Parker Trust, and the Fishamble Award for Best New Irish Writing.

"Delightful... a play that, like its characters, gurgles and giggles with life even in the face of death" (The Guardian)

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with
Nick Hern Books Ltd.
www.nickhernbooks.co.uk

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NOW!**



Friday 25 April 7:30pm

Seven-time BAFTA Award-winner **Steve Coogan** plays four roles in the world premiere stage adaptation of Stanley Kubrick's comedy masterpiece **Dr. Strangelove**. This explosively funny satire, about a rogue U.S General who triggers a nuclear attack, is led by a world-renowned creative team including Emmy Award-winner **Armando Iannucci** and Olivier Award-winner **Sean Foley**.



Saturday 26 April 7:30pm

Tim Rice and **Andrew Lloyd Webber**'s rock classic returns to its roots with this sensational performance filmed in the UK during the Live Arena Tour. An incredible cast including **Tim Minchin** as **Judas Iscariot**, **Melanie Chisholm** as **Mary Magdalene**, **Chris Moyles** as **King Herod** and **Ben Forster** as **Jesus Christ** perform hit songs including *I Don't Know How to Love Him*, *Gethsemane*, *Heaven on Their Minds*, *Everything's Alright*, *King Herod's Song* and *Superstar* in an exciting and contemporary interpretation.

Puzzles Solutions (from previous pages)



Y	T	O	N	G	U	E	S	T	E
C	R	Y	S	T	A	L	P	K	X
A	N	O	R	D	I	U	A	C	E
L	J	J	H	T	L	L	W	A	A
X	S	H	W	S	A	A	T	F	R
I	C	P	X	N	B	C	K	B	W
P	N	S	I	L	E	Q	A	A	I
M	A	S	K	D	Y	W	R	P	G
D	A	O	T	P	E	Z	T	D	I
I	L	M	D	Z	B	R	C	H	A



WORKSHOPS

EASTER AND HALF-TERM HOLIDAY CLUBS

Easter Eggstravaganza (5 days):
Monday 7 - Friday 11 April

May-Hem - May Half-Term (4 days):
Tuesday 27 - Friday 30 May

Join us during the holidays to enjoy theatrical fun: combining music, movement, monologues and much much more! (NB: You can sign up to half-term holidays for a day or for the full week.)

GAPA's half-term workshops encourage the participants to explore their creative side and promote teamwork, in a safe and friendly environment.

Our aim is to deliver exciting drama workshops for students aged 6-18, where they can learn drama skills, gain confidence and above all have fun.

Classes run 10:00 am - 4:00 pm and cost **£35 PER DAY**,
or **BOOK THE FULL 5 DAYS** and receive a **£25 DISCOUNT!**

SUMMER HOLIDAY COURSES

Summer School Week 1 (full 5 days):
Monday 28 July - Friday 1 August

Summer School Week 2 (full 5 days):
Monday 4 - Friday 8 August

WEEK 1: Open to ages 6-18 years old, this fun-filled week will focus on musical theatre. Throughout the week we work intensively towards a performance of a musical, whilst we introduce the participants to a range of stage skills.

WEEK 2: Open to ages 6-18 years old, throughout the week we will enter the magical world of the musicals, working on group numbers and solos from a selection of West End and Broadway Musicals; looking at how stories are transformed through music. The students will get the chance to enhance their solo and group performance skills during this feel good week of Musical Theatre.

- ◆ Workshops start each day at 10.00am and finish at 4.00pm.
- ◆ Own refreshments required to see attendees through the day.
- ◆ Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear required to enable students to engage in all of the daily activities.
- ◆ Students will be required to read text unaided.

If you need a fun-filled week in a high energy, performance-based environment, then we'd love for you to join us!

Just **£35** per day, or **BOOK THE FULL 5 DAYS** for **£185!**

More information:

boxoffice@altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Our Next Production
on the Main Stage

Thursday 8 - Sunday 18 May

Evenings at 7:30pm (except Sun 11 & Sun 18)

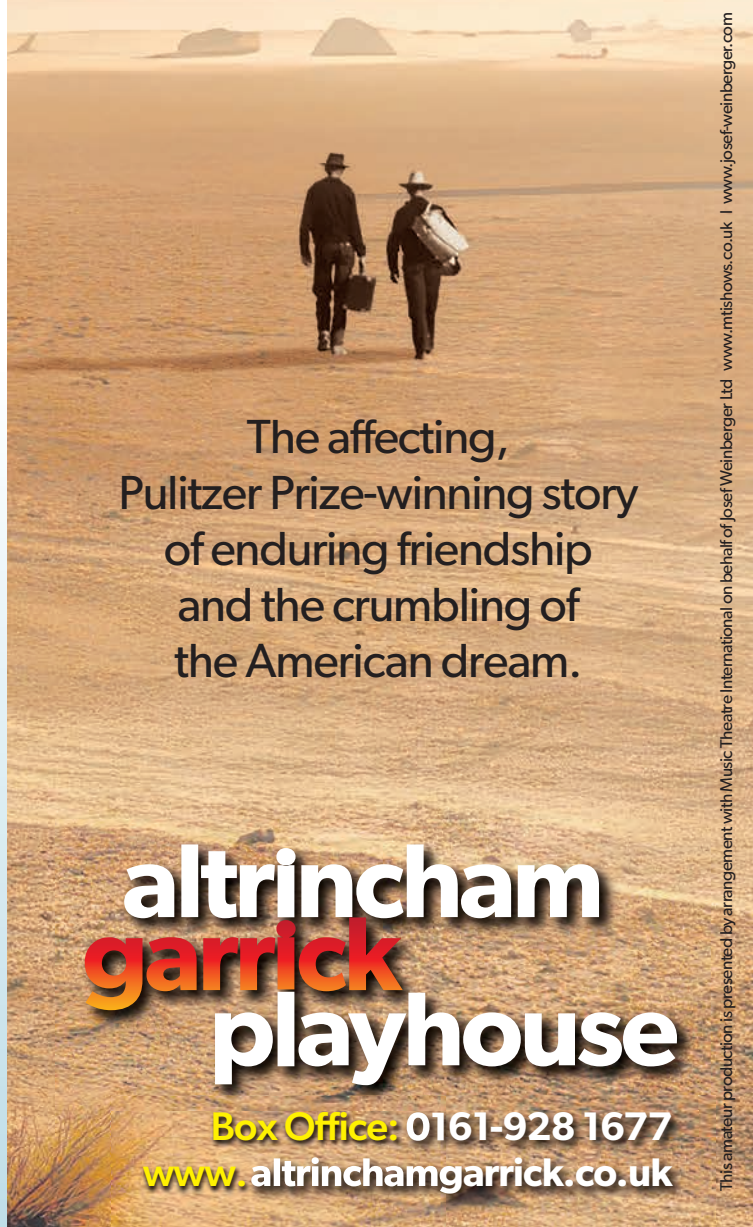
No performances Monday 12 & Tuesday 13

Matinées, Saturday 10 May at 2:30pm

Sunday 11 and Sunday 18 May at 4:00pm

of mice and men

by John Steinbeck



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

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ROALD DAHL'S
CHARLIE
AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Music by Marc Shaiman

Lyrics by Scott Whitman & Marc Shaiman

Book by David Greig

Based on the novel by Roald Dahl
and the Warner Bros. film



Director:

Joseph Meighan

Musical Direction:

Simon Mercer-Murray

Thurs 23 –
Sun 26 October &
Weds 29 October –
Sun 2 November 2025

Evenings: 7:30 pm (except Sunday 26, Sunday 2)

Sunday 26 October at 6:30 pm

Matinées: Saturday 25 October at 2:30 pm

Sunday 26 October at 1:30 pm

Saturday 1 November at 2:30 pm

Sunday 2 November at 4:00 pm

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This amateur production is presented by arrangement with
Music Theatre International. All authorised performance
materials are also supplied by MTI - www.mtishows.co.uk