

THE

STUDIO

S

LAURISTON



Neil LaBute's

The Shape of Things



Altrincham Garrick
PLAYHOUSE

Tuesday 9 –
Sunday 14
November 2021

Sponsored by

**ALLEN
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The Lauriston Trust is an Educational Charitable Trust which was established in 1989 after the sale of Lauriston School.

The Trust's aim is to promote the arts in all its forms, primarily to young people in Trafford and Greater Manchester.

Among the groups to have benefited are the Altrincham Creative Theatre School, The Lauriston Studio at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse, Trafford's Youth Philharmonic Orchestra and the Lauriston Gallery at the Waterside Arts Centre in Sale, as well as individual beneficiaries. Altrincham violinist Tom Rowan-Young was able to attend summer schools in Italy which helped further his musical studies, while concert violinist Sophie Rosa, a student at the RNCM, was helped with funding for her place on the International Artist Diploma course in solo performance.

"We can help by offering grants and financial support to individuals or organisations. The grants may not always be large, but we have a receptive mindset and if we can help you make something happen..."

Anyone interested in finding out more should visit

www.lauristontrust.org.uk

The Lauriston Trust
c/o 33 Oldfield Road,
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Cheshire WA14 4EQ

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This production of **The Shape Of Things** is sponsored by:

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Welcome

Since it first opened, the Lauriston Studio Theatre's reputation for being a place to see thought-provoking, exciting plays has burgeoned, and we are thrilled that audiences have responded so positively to what we choose to put on in this intimate 49-seat venue. You could be seeing anything from stagings of modern classics to première productions of newly-written plays. From challenging and deeply moving to hilarious or even outrageous, whatever the tone, the Lauriston Studio is perfect for that feeling of being part of the action, and the place where you can experience the intimacy of the story telling, getting up close and personal with the actors. As you'll read from Geoff Holman's introduction to *The Shape Of Things* (right), this week's production is all of the above, and more!



We are absolutely delighted that **Allen Mills Howard & Company** are continuing to offer their invaluable support to the Garrick, in honouring their sponsorship of our productions in the Lauriston Studio Theatre. Businesses sponsoring the Arts has always played a crucial role in allowing any theatre to form strong links with their local community, and we have enjoyed a mutually beneficial association with Allen Mills Howard & Company for several years. Our sincere and heartfelt thanks – and long may it continue!

Below, you will see brief details of the other productions we have planned for the Lauriston Studio in the coming months. More than this, on Saturday 13th November – in the Main Theatre – there will be a World Première of a short film by Barry Purves, starring Lindsay Duncan, that was actually shot in this very space earlier this year! If you're not witnessing *The Shape Of Things* on that night, we recommended getting a ticket for what is bound to be a both hugely entertaining and beautifully moving evening.

Joseph Meighan

Artistic Director, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse

Introduction

"The Shape of Things will get you talking"



So said the Variety review on the play's American release – and it's not wrong. The play involves four young men and women at university; it is funny, intriguing, sexy, provocative and, at times, creepy. Firstly, it takes a sardonic look at our increasing obsession with surface appearances (even more relevant today than when the play was written 20 years ago). Secondly, it asks us a number of questions: what would you really be prepared to do for love? What would you be prepared to do – or to have others do – in the name of art? What is art? Are there boundaries? Should there be? When does provocation in art become attention seeking – or worse? As the renowned critic Michael Billington said, "*It is fascinating territory.*" I think – and indeed hope – you will indeed be talking about it.

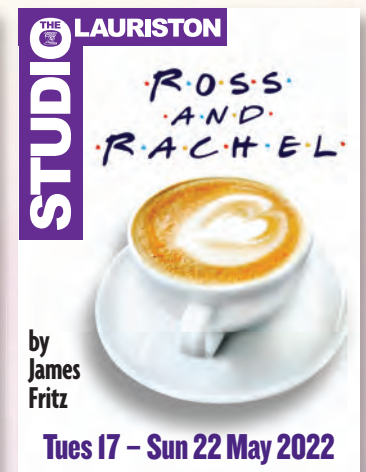
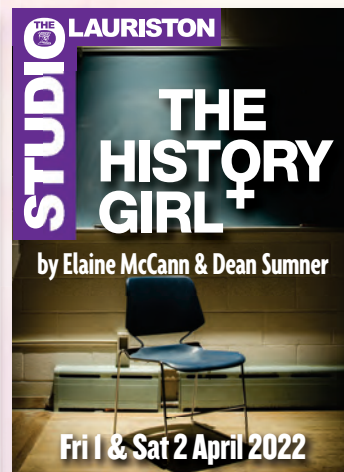
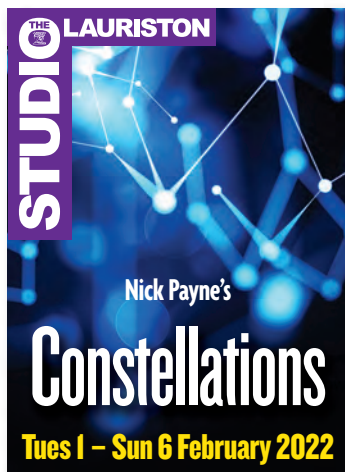
Geoff Holman

Director, "The Shape Of Things"

Note: This play contains very adult language and explicit sexual references.

This amateur production of "The Shape of Things" is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH LTD., a Concord Theatricals Company

Just announced! Forthcoming productions in The Lauriston Studio Theatre:



Keep up to date with everything that's happening by visiting our website at www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk or follow us on:



Neil LaBute

Born on 19 March 1963 in Detroit, Michigan, Neil LaBute is an American playwright, filmmaker and novelist. LaBute is of French Canadian, English, and Irish ancestry, and was raised in Spokane, Washington. He studied theatre at Brigham Young University (BYU), where he joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (aka The Mormon Church). At BYU he also met actor Aaron Eckhart, who would later play leading roles in several of his films. He produced a number of plays that pushed the envelope of what was acceptable at the conservative religious university, some of which were shut down after their premieres. However, he also was honoured as one of the "most promising undergraduate playwrights" at the BYU theatre department's annual awards. LaBute subsequently continued his education at the University of Kansas, New York University, and the Royal Academy in London, where he also participated in a writing workshop at the Royal Court Theatre.

LaBute is also known as "Mr. Nasty", due to his intense focus on dark themes of authenticity and betrayal. He arguably belongs to the school of 'in-yer-face' theatre of the '90s that characteristically examined scenes of abuse. His style is very language-oriented. His work is terse, rhythmic, and highly colloquial, and bears a similarity to one of his favourite playwrights, David Mamet. LaBute's work even shares some similar themes with Mamet's, including gender relations, political correctness, and masculinity.

In an article from 2009 in The New York Times, LaBute addressed the labels he is given by his audiences and critics. Associated by British audiences with the raft of Angry Young Men seen in the '50s, LaBute suggests this is because he reinforces very British stereotypes of Americans as brash, consumer and car-driven, loud and more often than not, obese.

Across the pond, however, Americans have proudly displayed him across Broadway. He is no stranger to Hollywood, which doubtlessly fed his preoccupation with ideals of youth and beauty. He wrote the film *In the Company of Men*, which portrays two businessmen (one played by Eckhart) cruelly plotting to romance and emotionally destroy a deaf woman, in 1997. His next film *Your Friends & Neighbors* (1998), with an ensemble cast including Eckhart and Ben Stiller, portrayed the sex lives of three yuppie couples in the big city. LaBute is no stranger to controversy: previously a Mormon, he was expelled from the church after he penned Mormon characters as murderers in *Bash: Latter-Day Plays*.

In 2001, LaBute wrote and directed the play *The Shape of Things*, which premièred in London, featuring Paul Rudd and Rachel Weisz. It was made into a film in 2003 with the same cast and director.

LaBute's 2002 play *The Mercy Seat* was a theatrical response to the September 11, 2001 attacks. Set on September 12, it concerns a man who worked at the World Trade Center but was away from the office during the infamous 2001 terrorist attack - with his mistress. Expecting that his family believes that he was killed in the towers' collapse, he contemplates using the tragedy to run away and start a new life with his lover. Starring Liev Schreiber and Sigourney Weaver, the play was a commercial and critical success. While hesitant to term *The Mercy Seat* "political theater", LaBute said, "I refer to this play in the printed introduction as a kind of emotional terrorism that we wage on those we profess to love." He dedicated this edition to David Hare, in response to Hare's "straightforward, thoughtful, probing work".

Critics have responded to his plays as having a misanthropic tone. The Independent dubbed him "America's misanthrope par excellence". Citing the plot in the films, *In the Company of Men*, *Your Friends & Neighbors* and *The Shape of Things*, film critic Daniel Kimmel identified a pattern running through LaBute's work - that the unlikeable, main antagonists of those three films end up getting away with their lying, scheming and mis-deeds, coming out on top of all the other characters as the real winners of those stories - by quoting: "Neil LaBute is a misanthrope who assumes that only callous and evil people, who use and abuse others, can survive in this world."



Plays

In the Company of Men	(1992)
Bash: Latter-Day Plays	(1999)
The Shape of Things	(2001)
The Distance From Here	(2002)
The Mercy Seat	(2002)
Autobahn	(2003)
Fat Pig	(2004)
This Is How It Goes	(2005)
Some Girl(s)	(2005)
Wrecks	(2005)
In a Dark Dark House	(2007)
Reasons to Be Pretty	(2008)
Helter Skelter/Land of the Dead	(2008)
The Break of Noon	(2009)
The New Testament	(2009)
Some White Chick	(2009)
The Furies	(2009)
Strange Fruit	(2011)
In a Forest, Dark and Deep	(2011)
Lovely Head & Other Plays	(2013)
Reasons to Be Happy	(2013)
Money Shot	(2014)
The Way We Get By	(2015)
All The Ways To Say I Love You	(2016)
How to Fight Loneliness	(2017)
True Love Will Find You in the End	(2020)

Recent TV includes

Full Circle	(2013–2015)
Hell on Wheels	(2013–2015)
Billy & Billie	(2015–2016)
Billions	(2016)
Van Helsing	(2016–present)
The I-Land	(2019)

Recent Movies include

Black Chicks	(2017)
A Boat Time	(2020)
Small World	(2020)



Cast & Production Team

Adam **Sam Evans**

Evelyn **Annie Rogers**

Jenny **Sophie Cain**

Phillip **Daniel Molnar**

Director / Set Design **Geoff Holman**

ASM **Jennie Holman**

Prompt **Ruth Metcalfe**

Lighting and Sound **Steven Vanzyl**

Properties **David Ades**

Wardrobe **Mike Shaw**

Assisted by **Stella Blackburn**

..... **Julie Shaw**

..... **Betty Farmer**

..... **Lynne Saleh**

..... **Dallas Bradshaw**

..... **Helen Phillips**

Set Construction **Paul Simpson**



Geoff Holman (Director)

Geoff has acted and directed at the Garrick for many years. Roles have ranged from Alan Ayckbourn to Shakespeare (*Oberon, Hotspur, Capulet, Prospero*). He won the GMDF Best Actor award for *Dysart* in *Equus* and a NODA Award for *Cardinal Wolsey* in *Wolf Hall*. Some of his favourite roles include *Frank* in Ayckbourn's *How the Other Half Loves* and the randy *Dr Wicksteed* in Alan Bennett's *Habeas Corpus*. Directing credits include modern drama (*Pack of Lies, Someone to Watch Over Me*) to larger scale, period productions (*Amadeus, The Winslow Boy, Anne of the Thousand Days*).

In the 1990's he took an MA in Contemporary Theatre Practice and then a year's acting training for a post-graduate diploma. He now has over 30 TV and film credits, including three stints in *Coronation Street*, plus *Clocking Off, Emmerdale, Heartbeat, The Falklands Play, The Bill, Peak Practice, A&E* and *Hollyoaks*. He played Martin Clunes' father in the film *A is for Acid*. Theatre includes regional tours of *Dealer's Choice, Prime Pinter, Kafka's Dick* and *Translations*, including Bolton Octagon, Oldham Coliseum, The Dukes Theatre Lancaster, Chester Gateway and Keswick's Theatre by the Lake.



Sam Evans (Adam)

Sam is a 22 year old northern actor, writer, filmmaker and musician. This will be Sam's sixth performance at the Garrick and he is really looking forward to getting back on the stage. Selected theatre credits include: *Keith Richards* in *Out of Time* (North West Tour), *A Matter of Law* (Birmingham Blue Orange), *Corrie, People* and *Blackadder Goes Forth* (Altrincham Garrick) and *The Curious Incident of The Dog In The Night-Time*. Sam's new feature film *Another Day* will be released on Amazon Prime Video in March 2022.



Annie Rogers (Evelyn)

Annie is a proud Northern actress, theatre maker and poet. She graduated from Royal Exchange Young Company in 2018. Annie is also a founding member of SwitchMCR Theatre Collective which aims to create new and accessible work for young creatives across Manchester. Credits include: *The Factory, The Space Between Us, NOTHING* (Royal Exchange Young Company), *Our Town* (Royal Exchange), *Figures of Speech* (Almeida), *Voluntold, We Won't Fall* (53two), *Oct.O.Pus* (Northern Core)



Sophie Cain (Jenny)

Performing and theatre has always been a massive part of Sophie's life, since she started ballet & tap at the age of 5. Sophie performed in a number of dance productions at her local theatre on the Isle of Man before discovering that her main passion was acting. Sophie featured in a number of productions as part of her BA Hons Course in Drama at the University of Cumbria, where roles included *Emma* in *People, Places & Things* by Duncan Macmillan, *Mandy* in *Protection* by Fin Kennedy and *Ruth* in Stefan Golaszewski's *Sex With A Stranger*. After graduating in 2018 and moving down to Manchester, Sophie took part in the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival in 2019, playing *Emma* in Mike Bartlett's *Contractions*. "I am so excited to be performing at The Garrick, alongside such a talented cast and crew. 'The Shape of Things' is a fantastic play and I can't wait for everyone to see it".



Daniel Molnar (Phillip)

Daniel Molnar, was born in Hungary but brought up in the North West. While training as an actor at The Arden School of Theatre, from where he graduated earlier this year, Daniel played a variety of roles in productions including *The Libertine, The Good Hope* and *Macbeth*. He also appeared in a recent production of *Miss Julie* at Hope Mill Theatre.

Without our incredibly dedicated, enthusiastic team of **Volunteers** and **Staff**, whose sheer hard work often goes unnoticed, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse would simply be unable to continue providing such a range of top quality productions for you to enjoy.

With their continuous commitment to excellence, we owe them a huge debt of gratitude.



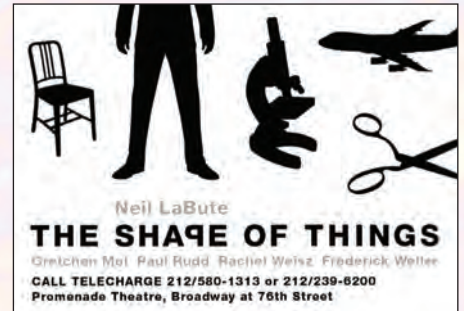
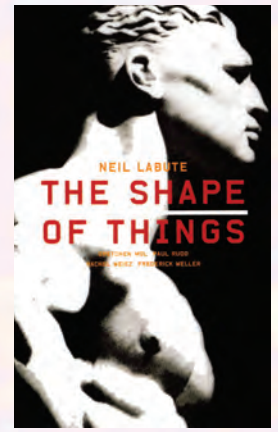
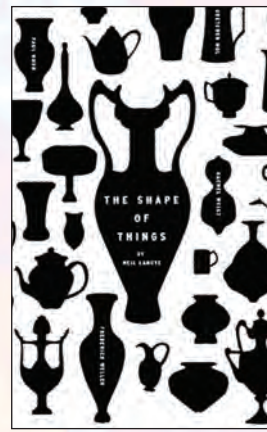
Altrincham Garrick
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Selling 'Shape'

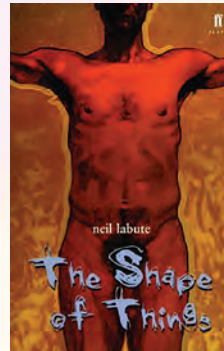
Neil LaBute looks back on the process of creating the publicity for the Broadway production and movie of *The Shape of Things*:

"I remember having a "meaningful dialogue" with the producers about the art up front and then being shown the comps (above and right), and what ended up being the final poster was clearly the standout, although I really liked the one with the classical sculpture too. But I just thought the final poster (below, left) took on the themes of the play very well - a human being acted upon, projecting the words onto the body, creating art on someone.

It was a great graphic, an iconic image that didn't give too much away. I mean, it's such a hard thing to do - to capture the spirit of a play. I'm not a thematic writer. I don't start out to write about religion or race. The themes emerge. So I really appreciate it when people can say, "This is what the play is about;" when they can figure it out graphically. And I was really impressed that the producers wanted to try something like this. We had four actors who were very sellable. They could have just shown a photo of them. But they wanted to do something else to catch the eye.



Seeing this now really brings back a lot of great memories to that place in our careers. In one calendar year, there were four distinctly different ad campaigns around this play. The first one, the Faber & Faber printed edition of the script from the London production (right), used a painting by a local artist I'd seen in a clothing store. At the same time, all four of the actors who were appearing in the London production were asked to show up at 7:00 a.m. before rehearsal for a shoot; they were all young and beautiful but when you see that photo now, you think, "They look like they were asked to show up at 7:00 a.m. for this photo shoot." Then there was the New York poster. Finally we all went to LA. and made the movie, which had yet a different poster (right). All in all, an amazing year filled with many artistic visions".



NO ORDINARY JOE

You are invited to an evening of animated passions, including the **WORLD PREMIERE SCREENING** of Barry Purves' and Glenn Holberton's new work, produced by Loose Moose Productions for the BFI, featuring Lindsay Duncan and Ben Keaton.

The 15-minute film, with Art Direction by Barbara Biddulph and a music score by Nigel Hess, was shot earlier this year here at the Garrick Playhouse, with many theatre staff closely involved.

The film will be preceded by 'Screen Play' and 'Achilles', both earlier collaborations by the same team. There will also be a 'making of...' and a Q & A with members of the cast and crew.

The bar will be open before and after the screening. Tickets at just £5.00 are available now from the Box Office. (Please note: This event is not suitable for children).

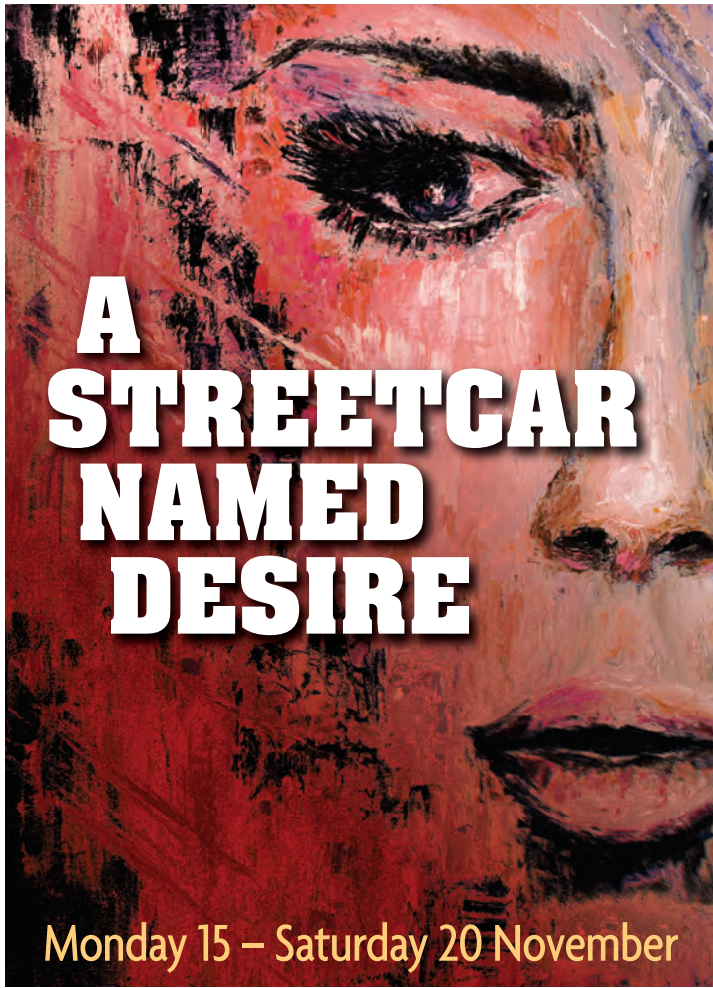


This Saturday, 13 November, 7:00pm – 8:30pm

Illustration by Paul 'Gripper' Flannery

Next Week:

on the Garrick's Main Stage



A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

Monday 15 – Saturday 20 November

Set in the French Quarter of New Orleans during the restless years following World War Two, *A Streetcar Named Desire* is the story of Blanche DuBois, a fragile and neurotic woman on a desperate prowl for somewhere in the world to call her own. Having recently lost the family plantation, Belle Reve, to creditors, Blanche is exiled from her hometown of Laurel, Mississippi, for seducing a seventeen-year-old boy at the school where she taught English, and relocates to the New Orleans home of her sister, Stella, and her husband, Stanley Kowalski. Knowing nothing about Stanley or the Kowalski's lives, Blanche is shocked to find that they live in a cramped and run down ground floor apartment, and that Stanley is not the gentleman that she is used to in men. When Mitch – a card-playing buddy of Stanley's – arrives on the scene, Blanche finds a glimmer of hope to alleviate her situation. Yet, as rumours of Blanche's past in Laurel begin to catch up to her, her circumstances become unbearable...

One of the greatest plays of the twentieth century, Tennessee Williams' explosive and ground-breaking drama tells the story of a catastrophic confrontation between fantasy and reality, embodied in the characters of Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski. **UNMISSABLE!**

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Silver Friends

- ◆ £20 Annual Fee
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25U

- ◆ For 16 to 25 year olds, a FREE membership scheme with one discounted ticket available for multiple performances of Garrick productions only.

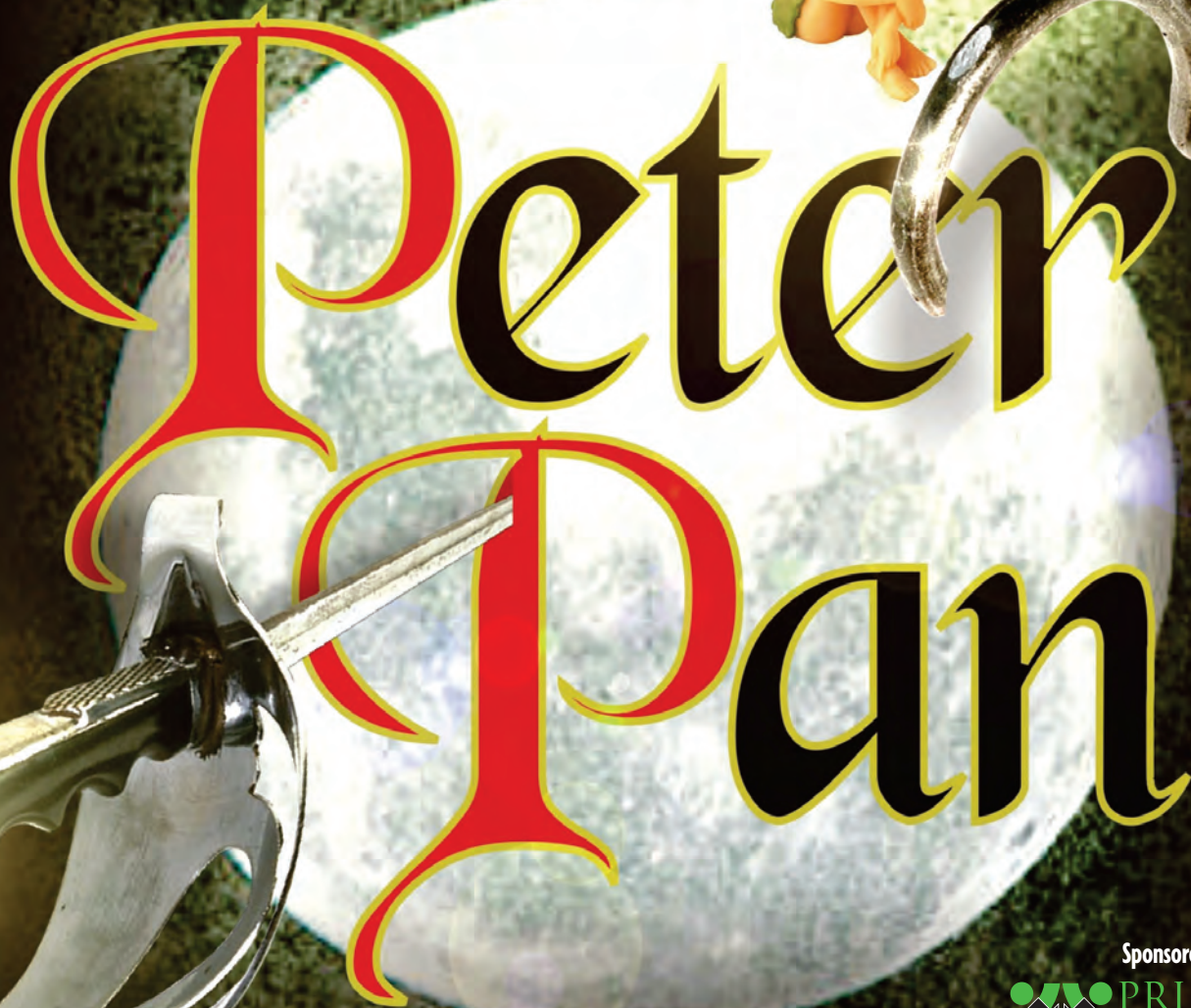


- Gold and Silver discounts apply to all Garrick productions, and also to some visiting shows.
- Please note existing members will automatically be enrolled in the new scheme, and no new payment will be requested until the existing membership renewal date.
- Single members will be transferred to the Gold scheme.
- Senior members will be transferred to the Silver scheme.
- Junior Members will be transferred to our new 25U scheme
- Honorary members will receive Gold scheme benefits.
- Simply enrol online, or speak to our Box Office to become a member of our Friends of the Garrick audience loyalty scheme.

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Peter Pan

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The forever-young Peter Pan sails through the skies to bring Wendy and the Darling children
to the Lost Boys' enchanted island, where the fearsome Captain Hook rules over the high seas.**

**Written by Tom Whalley and based on the timeless book by JM Barrie,
the Altrincham Garrick Playhouse brings you a perfect Pantomime for all the family.
Fairies, mythical creatures, pirates, singing, dancing and flying!**

Take the second star to the right and keep straight on 'til morning and we'll see you in Neverland!

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