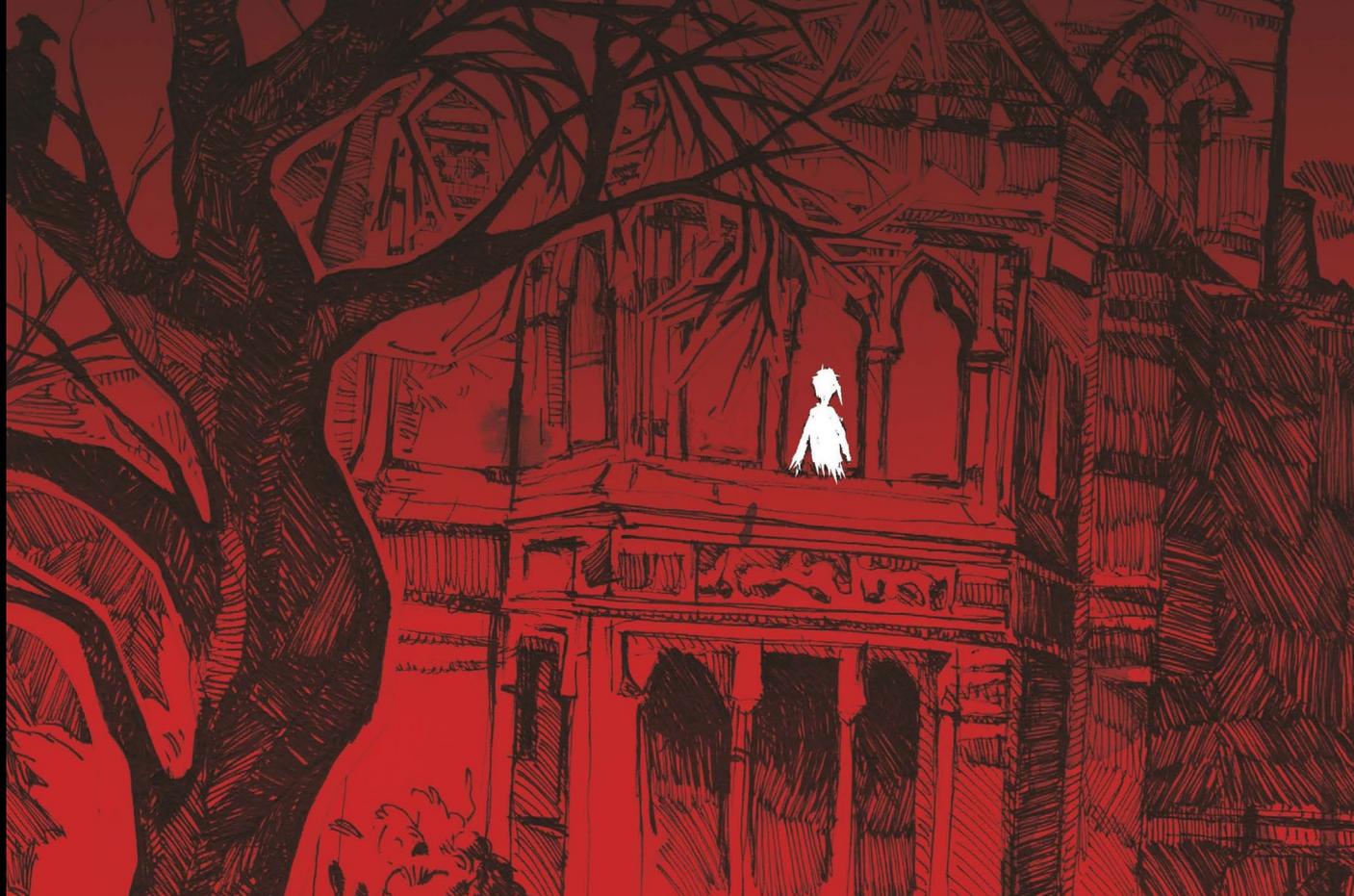


# The Haunting

by Charles Dickens    Adapted by Hugh Janes



PROGRAMME



# YOU AND CRI



As always, we extend a warm welcome to the Criterion as the nights start to draw in again. What better way to embrace the autumn, than by enjoying a good old fashioned ghost story!?

Whilst Dickens may be more famous for his major works, he also wrote over two dozen ghost stories. And let's not forget, probably his most famous work also includes a few ghosts as well!



Since the previous show, we've had the theatre's Annual General Meeting, in which one of the main talking points was the intention of the board to move forward with making the theatre more accessible. It has long been the wish for us to be able to offer more facilities for our customers, and we are delighted that we're now in a position to do this. Over a series of phases, the front of the theatre will see a variety of changes to include the installation of an accessible toilet, as well as updating the exterior and the bar area.

It's also nice to be able to welcome back our coffee bar, operating again for the first time since the pandemic struck back in 2020. It's the last real piece of our customer experience jigsaw to be put back into place. My thanks go to all those involved in the customer experience team aiming to help make your visit the most pleasurable it can be.

Of course, as we increase the number of roles within the theatre, it requires volunteers to help us make sure we can continue to staff them. With an exciting end to the year with "Alice" - where we will get to see a number of our drama class members involved in a main production for the first time - and onwards into a busy 2023, it's an ideal time to get involved. If you want to get involved, simply email [customerexperience@critteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:customerexperience@critteriontheatre.co.uk) or come along to one of our new member nights. The next one will be on Friday 25th November @ 8pm in the theatre bar).

Enjoy the show!

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I've always been a great admirer of Charles Dickens' work and have been involved in either playing in or directing stage adaptations of some of his most well-known and much-loved novels.

A Christmas Carol is still my favourite ghost story, but I knew little of some of the other ones he had written during his illustrious career. Then I came across Hugh Janes' cleverly written play *The Haunting*, which is based on several of Dickens' supernatural tales and immediately wanted to direct it.

Although it is not a particularly long play, it is a very challenging piece to put on, necessitating a complex set and demanding technical effects. It may have a small cast, but it requires a large number of people to get the play onto the stage and I have been exceptionally fortunate to work with over 50 of the most talented members of the Criterion including a gifted musician and composer, an imaginative set designer, a dedicated and hardworking technical support team, skilled set builders and painters, expert lighting, sound, costume and props designers, makers, and operators and, of course, an excellent cast.

I've also been fortunate to have at my side from the very beginning of this long journey an assistant director and stage manager who have given me total support, ideas and suggestions and kept me going when things got tough. Along the way I've also had the pleasure of working with many old friends and making several new ones.

Working on a play here is always a pleasure because of the tremendous mix of team work and friendship that make the Criterion so special.

We all hope that you enjoy watching this great piece of live theatre as much as we've enjoyed working on it.

Keith Railton  
Director

For all the latest updates from the theatre, check out the website

[www.criteriontheatre.co.uk](http://www.criteriontheatre.co.uk)

# Your Players



**David Filde**  
**Ted McGowan**

Rehearsing for The Haunting has been challenging for Ted, as he can't stand anything remotely scary. He once walked out of a showing of the Daniel Radcliffe film The Woman in Black (certificate 12), because he said that paying £15 to stare at the inside of his palms wasn't worth the money. He is looking forward to not having to wear brown trousers for rehearsals and is keen to take on something more jovial in the future. He hopes you enjoy the show!

**Lord Gray**  
**Peter Gillam**



Rehearsing for The Haunting has been challenging as Ted can't stop laughing when something is supposed to be scary. Despite this, it's been a joy to be on stage with Ted and to rehearse on such an imposing and beautifully crafted set. It's also been a pleasure to work on a production with Keith again, who seems to have now forgiven several over-enthusiastic face slaps during 2019's production of The Father. While Pete has never been scared by a ghost in real-life, he does have a long-standing phobia of a ventriloquist dummy called Mr Parlanchin



**Mary**  
**Louisa Ruscoe**

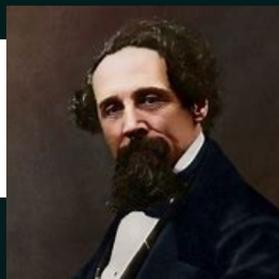
This is Louisa Ruscoe's first proper part in a play at the Criterion Theatre. She is studying A-Level Drama and enjoys seeing professional theatre with her dad. There is nothing in this world Louisa is more scared of than...spiders! She often has her (sometimes useful) servant, John Ruscoe, help dispose of them.

**There will be a 15-minute interval.**  
**WARNING: A strobe light is used in this performance**

# Your Crew

<b>Director</b>	<b>Keith Railton</b>	
<b>Assistant Director</b>	<b>Jon Elves</b>	
<b>Stage Manager</b>	<b>Helen Withers</b>	<b>Les Rahilly</b>
<b>Prompt</b>	<b>Jonathan Rees</b>	
<b>Wardrobe</b>	<b>Pam Coleman</b> <b>Elizabeth Stevens</b>	<b>Diana Slocombe</b>
<b>Props</b>	<b>Sally Patalong</b> <b>Helen McGowan</b> <b>Frances Dixon</b>	<b>Erica Young</b> <b>Bill Young</b> <b>Judy Talbot</b>
<b>Set Designer/build</b> <b>Set Build</b>	<b>Bob Morley</b> <b>Terry Rahilly</b> <b>Frances Dixon</b> <b>Chris Hernon</b> <b>Mark Ward</b> <b>Michael Waterson</b> <b>Hannah Burns</b> <b>Karl Stafford</b> <b>John Stanton</b>	<b>Judy Talbot</b> <b>Simon Sharpe</b> <b>Mandy Sutton</b> <b>Paul Tate</b> <b>Paul Harrison</b> <b>Gordon Booth</b> <b>Leo Hernon</b> <b>Judy Sharpe</b> <b>Jon Elves</b>
<b>Set Paint</b>	<b>Paul Chokran</b> <b>Paul Tate</b>	<b>Judy Talbot</b>
<b>Sound Design and operation</b>	<b>Dave Cornish</b>	<b>Becky Bartlett</b>
<b>Lighting Designer and Operation</b>	<b>Karl Stafford</b>	<b>Paul Harrison</b>
<b>Music Design</b> <b>Photography/Trailer</b>	<b>Mary Mohan</b> <b>Lucy Roslyn</b> <b>Steve Brown</b>	

# GET IN THE SPIRIT



Charles Dickens wrote some of the most popular novels in the English language. The richness of his characters, narrative descriptions, his concern for social reform, his comedy and his strong storylines mean his work is continually being adapted into one medium or the other. When I came to write *The Haunting*, I thought all Dickens' ghost stories had probably been done too — but no.

I already had the basic idea for the story; one of my uncles was an antiquarian book dealer in Brighton and, during a visit to an old Sussex manor, he was looking at some books in the cellar when a woman appeared. She watched him for a while and then vanished; he knew she was a ghost. He returned to the manor on several occasions, hoping to find out more about her, and it was written about in the local press, but the woman never reappeared. Although my uncle's story was a start, I needed more and fortunately came across some of Dickens' short ghost stories, which appeared either as independent pieces, or were included as part of a novel.

Individually the tales didn't strike me as dramatic enough for the stage, so *The Haunting* is a blend of five short stories with elements of Dickens' private life, his books and letters. The fog that creeps off the river crept straight out of *Bleak House* and the short ghost tales *The Queer Chair* and *A Madman's Manuscript* both appeared in *The Pickwick Papers* (1837). *The Haunted House* came out under its own name in the Christmas 1859 issue of *All the Year Round*. *The Ghost in the Bride's Chamber* is taken from *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices*, which itself appeared in *Household Words* in 1857, which he edited. *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain* was published in 1848 and ends with the words 'Lord, keep my memory green.'

Many aspects of *The Haunting*, especially the character of David, are based on Dickens himself. He was a great reader and a solitary walker. When he worked on *A Christmas Carol*, which he called 'this ghostly little tale', he 'never left home before the owls went out' and 'walked about the streets of London, fifteen and twenty miles, many a night when all the sober folks had gone to bed!'

Dickens was fascinated by spiritualism and often visited mediums. Even after he learned the nature of their gimmickry he continued to visit. He loved trickery and was a proficient magician himself. He describes how he and a friend entertained a large gathering of children at Christmas with 'wonderful conjuring tricks. A plum pudding was produced from an empty saucepan, held over a blazing fire kindled in Stanfield's hat without damage to the lining.'

Dickens' wife, Catherine, had a young sister Mary, who doted on him, and when she was sixteen went to live with the family. One evening they all returned home from the theatre and Mary went up to bed. Moments later she uttered a terrible choking cry and died the following day. She was seventeen. Dickens took a ring from her finger and wore it for the rest of his life. His deep feelings for her were displayed in a letter to Mary's mother. 'After she died I dreamed of her... sometimes as a spirit, sometimes as a living creature... I never lay down at night without the hope of the visitor coming back to me in one shape or other.' My inspiration for the character of Mary came from this revelation.

**Hugh Janes, Writer**

**CRITERION THEATRE**

## Play Readings

CONOR MCPHERSON  
**THE BIRDS**

**The Birds**

**Thurs 1st  
December,  
2022**

SCAN ME

**Online Zoom**

8pm start

Email [lucyhayton@hotmail.com](mailto:lucyhayton@hotmail.com) for link

Our online play readings have been a feature of theatre life since the pandemic, giving people the opportunity to read (or just listen) to a range of plays. The plays are generally new plays by a wide range of playwrights.

Some of the offerings have already found their way into the main season at the Criterion, with Lucy Kirkwood's *The Welkin* the next due to hit the main stage this time next year. The plays are chosen with a view to enabling as many people as possible to read-in parts, which are co-ordinated in advance by Lucy Hayton. All readings are currently accessed via Zoom

### **"For Lucy" by Andrew Sharpe.**

Open Reading Sunday 20th November 2022 at 7:00pm Criterion Theatre, Coventry.

Jo, 50, is on the point of leaving her husband Tim 65, for her lover Bex, 35, when her daughter Lucy is killed in a road crash. Will she choose her own happiness or try and hold the remains of her family together, and find herself losing Bex to Sam?

Told in reverse chronological order, a romantic quadrangle spanning four generations.

The table read of the working draft of this new work, without commitment, is to enable director Chris Ingall to give writing notes to Andrew, and identify whether to pitch for a studio production of the whole work and/or submit scenes to drama festivals in 2023.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact [christineingall67@gmail.com](mailto:christineingall67@gmail.com)



We're delighted to announce our 2023 season; a season that is exciting, interesting and challenging in equal measure. We're really hopeful that there is something for everyone, including actors, backstage teams, front of house and of course, audiences! Why not get involved and be part of a wonderful year of theatre?

**February 4-11: 'After Life' by Jack Thorne, Directed by Anne-marie Greene**

A group of strangers grapple with this impossible question as they find themselves in a bureaucratic waiting room between life and death. Encouraged by enigmatic officials, they must sift through their past lives to choose their forever moment. Adapted from Hirokazu Kore-eda's award-winning film, After Life is a surreal and powerfully human look at the way we view our lives, and a haunting, beautiful meditation on what it is to live.

**April 1-8 -Festival Development TBA**

This slot is set aside for creative collaboration with directors/teams in preparation for competition at Stratford and Lighthorne Drama Festivals. Hopefully this can see us reach out to wider networks right across the local community

**June 17-24: 'Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street' by Hugh Wheeler and Stephen Sondheim,**

**Directed by Debra Relton-Elves, Musical Director: Liam Walker**

An infamous tale, Sweeney Todd, an unjustly exiled barber, returns to 19th century London seeking vengeance against the lecherous judge who framed him and ravaged his young wife. The road to revenge leads Todd to Mrs. Lovett, a resourceful proprietress of a failing pie shop, above which he opens a new barber practice. Mrs. Lovett's luck sharply shifts when Todd's thirst for blood inspires the integration of an ingredient into her meat pies that has the people of London lining up, and the carnage has only just begun.

**September 2-9: 'Beryl' by Maxine Peake, Directed by Helen Withers**

It was 1954 when Beryl Charnock met keen cyclist Charlie Burton. In those days they cycled in clubs and once Beryl started she was smitten, not only with Charlie, but by the thrill and freedom found on two wheels. Beryl was better than good, she was the best, and she was determined to stay that way. Beryl Burton was five times world-pursuit champion, thirteen times national champion, twice road-racing world champion and twelve times national

champion.. Burton was one of the most astonishing sports people ever to have lived, but she remains something of a mystery.

**October 21-28: 'The Welkin' by Lucy Kirkwood, Directed by Nicol Cortese**

Rural Suffolk, 1759. As the country waits for Halley's Comet, Sally Poppy is sentenced to hang for a heinous murder. When she claims to be pregnant, a jury of twelve matrons are taken from their housework to decide whether she's telling the truth, or simply trying to escape the noose. With only midwife Lizzy Luke prepared to defend the girl, and a mob baying for blood outside, the matrons wrestle with their new authority, and the devil in their midst.

**December 9-16: 'Arsenic and Old Lace' by Joseph Kesselring, Directed by Bill Butler**

Mortimer Brewster is living a happy life: he has a steady job at a prominent New York newspaper, he's just become engaged, and he gets to visit his sweet spinster aunts to announce the engagement. Mortimer always knew that his family had a bit of a mad gene -- his brother believes himself to be Teddy Roosevelt and his great-grandfather used to scalp Indians for pleasure -- but his world is turned upside down when he realizes that his dear aunts have been poisoning lonely old men for years! When Mortimer's maniacal brother, Jonathan returns on the night that the aunts were planning to bury the newest victim, Mortimer must rally to help his aunts and protect his fiancé -- all while trying to keep his own sanity. as well. An uproarious farce on plays involving murder, Arsenic and Old Lace has become a timeless and classic hit both on Broadway and in the West End.

Full details of readings and auditions will be announced through the website and socials in due course.

## CRITERION FRIENDS

We are so grateful to our current Criterion Friends who continue to give us small, and larger, donations on a regular basis to help us keep going into our seventieth decade!

You can join this list - there is real power in lots of people giving us small amounts on a regular basis. And you can gift-aid your pledge too. Gifting the cost of a double gin and tonic every month will make all the difference to your local theatre!

So what are you waiting for? Contact [friends@criteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:friends@criteriontheatre.co.uk) or visit [www.criteriontheatre.co.uk/join/friend](http://www.criteriontheatre.co.uk/join/friend) to find out more.

- Alan Porter
- Mick Forey
- Ruth Miller and Bill Butler
- John and Kate Purcell
- Judy and Simon Sharpe
- John and Wendy Baxter
- Pete Gillam and Anne-marie Greene
- Chris Murly
- Jane and Keith Railton
- Zoe and Rob Wartnaby

# Criterion AGM

The Criterion's Annual General Meeting took place in September, detailing all areas of the theatre's activities over 2021/22. Part of the evening traditionally sees 4 members receive special recognition for their efforts over the year, as nominated by the membership.

**Verity Gillam-Greene** - Anthony Herbert Award:

For significant contribution to the Theatre's activities in any capacity by a younger member of the Company. Verity contributed to a number of productions, including getting a much coveted "tech team" t-shirt for her work on *Mary Stuart*.



**Mike Tooley** - Charles H Smith Award: For significant contribution to the Theatre's activities by a member of the Company.

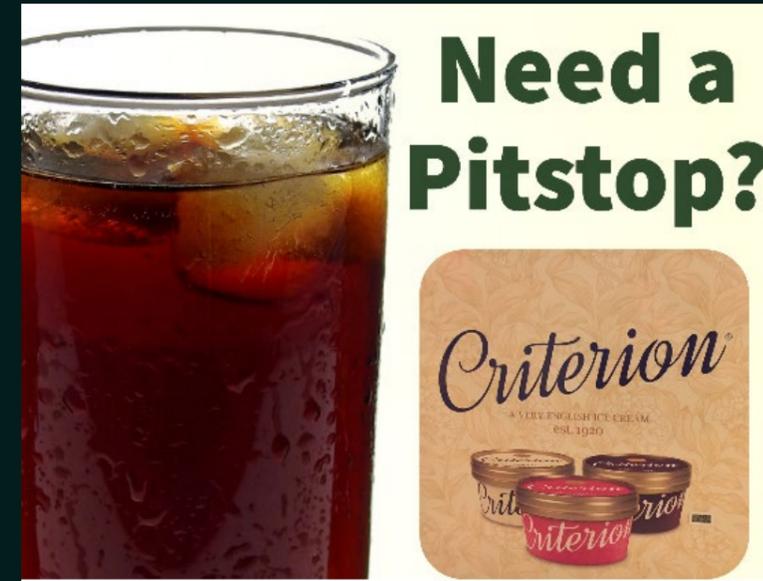
Mike has continued to support the theatre in a variety of ways over year, and his work on the theatre lottery continues to provide the theatre with much needed funds.

**Mandy Sutton** - Louise Bagley Award for design. Mandy's vision for the set of *Two* - in which she and her team managed to turn the auditorium into a pub, complete with a audience of regulars! She even threw in a customised "The Criterion Free House" pub sign outside the front of the theatre.



**Pete Gillam** - Criterion Award for artistic excellence.

Pete excelled in his Criterion directorial debut with *Midsummer*. Not only did he have to deal with two of the theatre's most notorious acting divas, but also brought a creative vision to really bring out the feel-good factor in this play with songs.



## Need a Pitstop?

We hope you enjoy the performance, but in case you have further need for pleasure, there's a range of refreshments on offer during your visit.

Drinks and ice cream are available from the bar prior to the show. Drinks can also be taken into the auditorium in a plastic glass.

You can also choose to order a drink for the interval, when coffee is also available in the foyer.

Please be aware that cash payments will not be available at the bar itself - CARD ONLY.

## CRITERION DRAMA CLASSES



## ALL THE FEELS

Spaces are available in the first of our Drama Classes at the Criterion Theatre which take place on Saturday mornings. They are open to children in School Years 3-6 (aged 7-11 years)

Using imaginative play, theatre games, visualisation and movement, role play and scripted action, students will have the opportunity to stretch and grow and experience the excitement of theatre in a relaxed environment. There is no pressure and there are no exams in our classes.

Drama techniques help children to learn to cooperate and create together, hone their listening skills and feel more confident. Most important of all, it's a lot of fun! Classes run on Saturdays 10:00-11:15 (Age 7-11). There are 10 classes per term for which the cost is £40.

For more information & to book a place email [dramaclasses@critteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:dramaclasses@critteriontheatre.co.uk)

# Our Sponsors

We are very grateful to Penmans Solicitors, who have continued their annual corporate sponsorship of the Criterion until at least July 2023. Over the course of our relationship, Penmans support has enabled the theatre to purchase a range of equipment to continue to produce a high-quality theatrical experience.

If your firm are interested in finding our about our sponsorship options, please email Barbara Sowerby on [finance@critteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:finance@critteriontheatre.co.uk)

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**17a Queens Road, Coventry, CV1 3DH**

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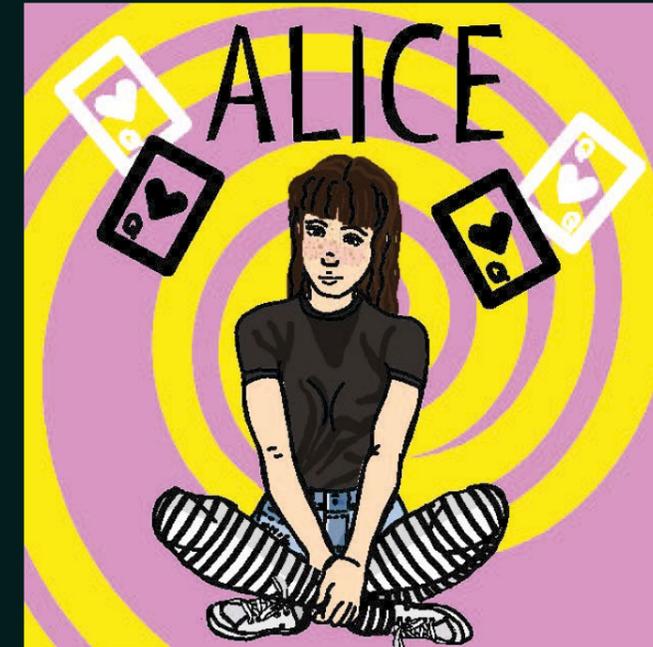
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# Coming Next



**Alice**  
**Saturday 10th - 17th December 2022**

The White Rabbit is late for the Duchess. The Cheshire Cat wont stop grinning. And the Hatter is, well, mad. In the middle of it all is Alice, a young girl with a vivid imagination and a family life thats less than perfect.

In this new adaptation by renowned playwright and Sheffield native, Laura Wade, you can follow Alice as she escapes her bedroom to find adventure in a topsy-turvy world. Based on Lewis Carroll's classic tale, Wade's adaptation breathes fresh life into a much-loved story about rabbit holes, pocket watches and talking caterpillars.

Our production involves a mixed age cast, including a number of roles being undertaken by members of our drama classes. A family production par excellence!

*"Wade's contemporary take on a Victorian classic is a genuine treat for the whole family."*

The Stage



If you have any comments about your experience with The Criterion Theatre, please email us at: [customerexperience@criteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:customerexperience@criteriontheatre.co.uk)

Video and/or audio recording of performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited

Registered Charity 11614

We believe that it is important as an organisation that serves the people of Coventry to speak out against racial injustice and prejudice.

**We want to be clear – Black Lives Matter.**

We are listening, and we are learning about how we can serve our communities better together.

WE'RE PART OF  
COVENTRY'S  
STORY



20  
21

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