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manchester actors company

**PROFESSIONAL THEATRE PRESENTATIONS
TOURING SECONDARY SCHOOLS,
ACADEMIES AND COLLEGES**

2023/2024



**For the 2023/2024 Academic Year we are touring
With THREE SPELLBINDING SHOWS for schools,
To BRING ALIVE the texts you are studying in English**

TOURING FROM 1st NOVEMBER 2023 TO 21st DECEMBER 2023:

‘A CHRISTMAS CAROL’

- Charles Dickens

The most famous Christmas story is vividly brought to life, with the tale of a bitter old miser, Scrooge, and his transformation into a gentler, kindlier man after visitations by four ghosts on the night before Christmas.

TOURING FROM 17th JANUARY 2024 TO 17th MAY 2024:

‘MACBETH’

- William Shakespeare

Shakespeare’s dazzling action-and-adventure tragedy is dramatically brought to life, as we perform this bloodthirsty tale of ambition, and the evils we will go to in order to get what we want.

TOURING FROM 22nd FEBRUARY 2024 TO 17th MAY 2024:

A WORKING GUIDE TO ‘AN INSPECTOR CALLS’

- J.B. Priestley

Priestley’s tense, haunting drama is given an exciting presentation as this famous play explores the way in which class, age and gender impact on people’s attitudes to prejudice and responsibility.

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PRESENTATION IN SCHOOLS

We present a concise abridged version of the entire text of each book or play, concentrating on the key scenes, speeches and incidents within each of the stories, flowing as a complete play in itself, and not a series of individual, unconnected scenes. Each performance lasts approx. 60 minutes, accurately capturing the drama of the text, and lifting the words off the page, enlivening the story, creating a strong, lasting impact with students: a live theatre event in your school that will bring the story and characters vividly to life.

We use an ensemble of skilled professional actors, and we are well known for our energetic, well-acted, vigorous physical theatre performances where close attention is paid to the language, bringing each performance alive as a dynamic, well-acted, well-spoken display of theatre. We have an outstanding reputation for clear and accessible interpretations of these texts, in which the vitality of the words is complemented by bold staging and strong characterisation to bring the play alive.

After each performance we have an optional Q&A session, lasting a maximum of 30 minutes, which is a face-to-face interactive discussion, guided by our actors, where the audience can talk directly to the CHARACTERS and ask any questions they may have to better understand the story. This is a unique opportunity for students to examine the characters' contrasting personalities and motives, and help to explain/ expand/explore the text farther. The session can also allow the audience to actively discuss the play with the actors and to examine the impact and meaning of different ways of performing and staging drama, and examine the choices made for our presentation. This session can be tailored to specifically meet your needs, and we can direct this session into pre-determined specific areas of discussion.

The presentations are staged front-on to the audience. We will use either the school hall, school theatre or drama studio. We do not need the school to provide any special sound or lighting equipment, and we will bring everything we need with us.

All of our performers have recently been DBS checked to Enhanced Level, and they will have their DBS certificates with them for inspection when they visit you.

In advance of our visit you will receive a "Performance Information Pack" containing in-depth information about the presentation; background notes to the play; specific performance notes and a list of the scenes contained in our performance; as well as suggested post-performance activities for both teachers and students, to help maximise the impact of our performance long after our visit has ended.

manchester actors company present

A WORKING GUIDE TO

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

by Charles Dickens



'A CHRISTMAS CAROL' - *Charles Dickens*

TOURING FROM 1st NOVEMBER 2023 TO 21st DECEMBER 2023

Our late Autumn presentation of Charles Dickens' most famous novella **'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'** will vividly bring to life the stream of characters and incidents that makes this story so compelling and impressive, and such a wonderful theatrical experience for your students to enjoy.

This is the famous story of a bitter old miser named Ebenezer Scrooge and his spiritual transformation into a gentler, kindlier man after visitations on the night before Christmas of the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, and also the ghosts of Christmases Past, Present and Yet to Come. There is drama, great sadness, despair and regret, but also some comedy, warmth and, ultimately, great joy, as Scrooge endures his epiphany. Beautifully etched characters are brought to life, and a fantastic story unfolds out of the gothic gloom in a way that will delight everyone who watches. Scrooge himself is the embodiment of winter and, just as winter is followed by spring and the renewal of life, so too Scrooge's cold, pinched heart is ultimately restored to the innocent goodwill he had known in his childhood and youth, and had since long forgotten, as life had fallen upon him and snuffed out the goodness in him. The parade of ghosts show him the error of his ways, just in time for his joyous redemption on Christmas Day.

For this BRAND NEW production we have created a clear, condensed, working guide to Dickens' famous novella, aimed particularly at students studying 'A Christmas Carol' as part of GCSE English. This is an abridged version of the entire book, concentrating on key scenes, characters and confrontations, and flows seamlessly. This detailed dramatic overview of the text will create a strong, lasting impact with students; and brings vividly to life the plot, the characters, and the themes of the need for charity, the Christian concept of redemption, and the need for personal moral conscience. The performance is very tight and compelling, and packs quite an emotional punch: accurately capturing the tense drama of the book.

After the performance, the audience will have the opportunity to 'hotseat' any of the fascinating characters in our play, and ask any questions they may have so that they can expand their awareness of the motives of the characters, and to have a greater understanding of this classic story.

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A WORKING GUIDE TO
MACBETH

by William Shakespeare



'MACBETH' - *William Shakespeare*

TOURING FROM 17th JANUARY 2024 TO 17th MAY 2024

We return in the new year with a brand new, sparkling presentation of Shakespeare's dazzling action-and-adventure tragedy **MACBETH**, which has universal themes that can be understood in any culture and time: a bloodthirsty tale of ambition, and the evils we will go to in order to get what we want.

MACBETH is Shakespeare's shortest and bloodiest tragedy, and tells the story of an heroic Scottish general who receives a prophecy from a trio of witches that one day he will become King of Scotland. Consumed by ambition and spurred to action by his wife, Macbeth murders King Duncan and takes the throne for himself. But his reign is soon racked with guilt and paranoia, and he becomes a tyrannical ruler as he is forced to commit more and more murders to protect himself from enmity and suspicion. The bloodbath swiftly takes Macbeth and Lady Macbeth into realms of arrogance, madness, and death. The play dramatises the corroding psychological and political effects produced when its protagonist chooses evil as the way to fulfil his ambition for power. He commits regicide to become king and then furthers his moral descent with a reign of murderous terror to stay in power, eventually plunging the country into civil war. In the end he loses everything that gives meaning and purpose to his life, before losing life itself.

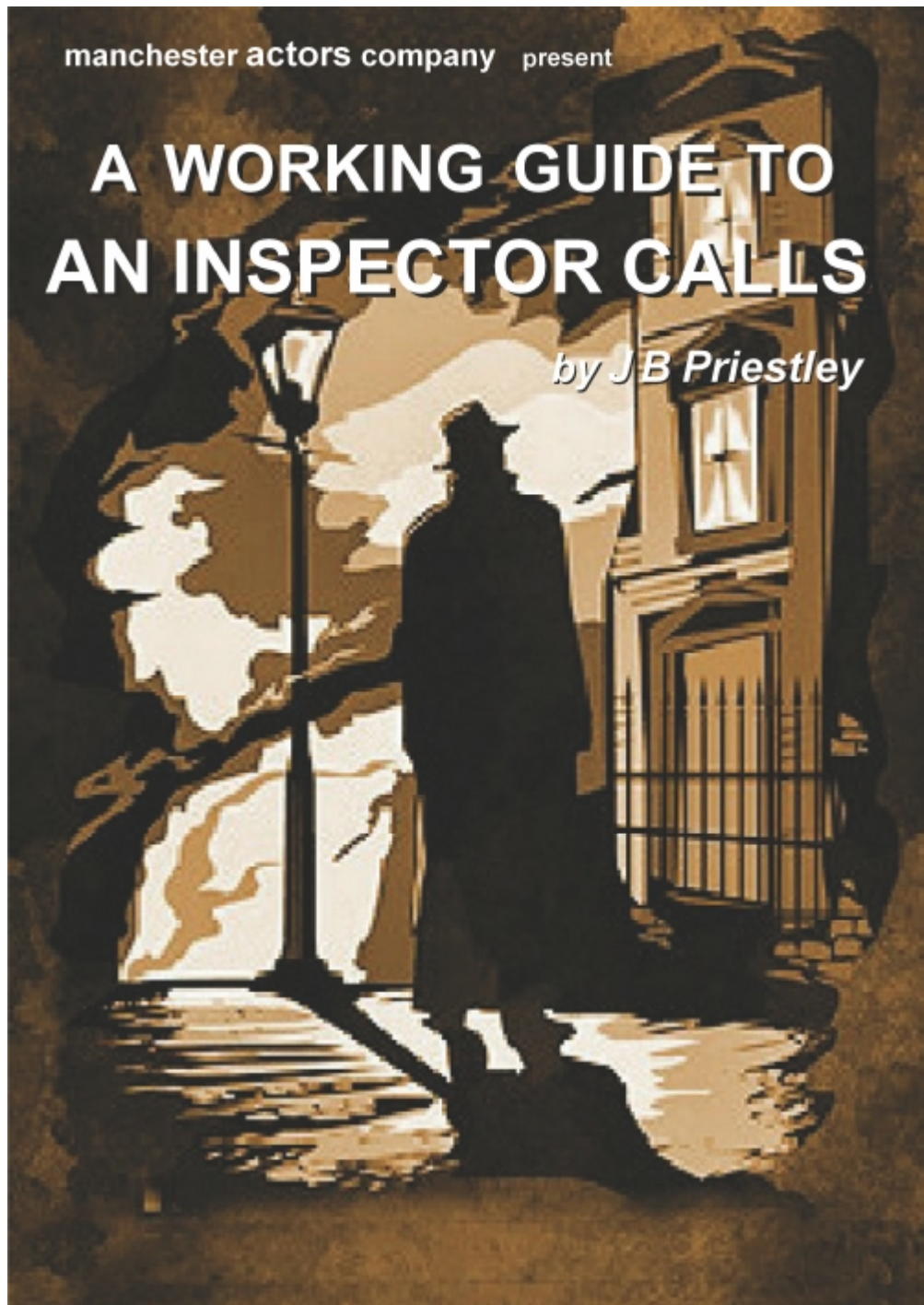
For this production we have created a clear, condensed, working guide to Shakespeare's dark tragedy, aimed particularly at those studying 'MACBETH' as part of their English course. This is an abridged version of the entire story, concentrating on the key scenes, characters and confrontations, and flows seamlessly. This detailed dramatic overview of the play will create a strong, lasting impact with students; and brings vividly to life the plot, the characters, and the themes of the corrupting power of unchecked ambition, use of the supernatural and superstition, and the guilt that sits like a permanent stain on the consciences of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, one that hounds them to their graves.

After the performance, the audience will have the opportunity to 'hotseat' any of the fascinating characters in this famous play, and ask any questions they may have so that they can expand their awareness of the motives and personalities of the characters, and to have a greater understanding of this bloodthirsty tale of ambition and murder.

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A WORKING GUIDE TO AN INSPECTOR CALLS

by J B Priestley



A WORKING GUIDE TO 'AN INSPECTOR CALLS'

- J.B. Priestley

TOURING FROM 22nd FEBRUARY 2024 TO 17th MAY 2024

Also in the new year we present our stage adaptation of a **WORKING GUIDE** to J.B. Priestley's tense, haunting drama '**AN INSPECTOR CALLS**', which examines the theme of responsibility, exploring the way that class, age and sex impact on people's attitudes to responsibility, and shows how prejudice can prevent people from acting responsibly.

It starts with the Birling family spending a happy, self-satisfied evening celebrating the engagement of Sheila Birling to Gerald Croft - a marriage that will result in the merging of two successful local businesses. Yet, just when everything seems to be going so well, they receive a surprise visit from an Inspector Goole who is investigating the suicide of a young woman, Eva Smith. At first, the family deny any involvement - but gradually they are all implicated in her exploitation, abandonment and social ruin, effectively leading to her death. How? In this unique psychological thriller there are shocking twists and turns for both the characters and the audience - right up to the very final moments!

For this production we have created a much-acclaimed, clear, condensed, **WORKING GUIDE** to Priestley's play aimed particularly at students studying 'An Inspector Calls' as part of GCSE English. This is an abridged version of the entire play, concentrating on key scenes, characters and confrontations, and flows seamlessly. This detailed Working Guide is a dramatic overview of the play and will create a strong, lasting impact with students; bringing the plot, the characters, and the twin themes of responsibility and class vividly to life. The whole 60 minute performance is crammed with tension, and is extremely tight and compelling, packing quite an emotional punch: accurately capturing the tension that the mysterious Inspector creates with his questioning of the Birling household. This is one of the classic plays of mid-20th century English theatre, and a call to action for English society to take more responsibility for working class people. Performed by our talented ensemble of professional actors, this production will have a strong and lasting impact on anyone studying this acclaimed play, and will bring the text vividly to life. After the performance, the audience will have the opportunity to 'hotseat' any of the fascinating characters in this famous play, and ask any questions they may have so that they can expand their awareness of the motives of the characters, and to have a greater understanding of this outstanding text.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who are these shows suitable for?

All of our presentations are extremely useful for those studying the texts as part of their English Literature course, but ALL students in years 7, 8, 9, 10 or 11 at Keystage 3 or Keystage 4 will find these presentations extremely helpful. They are also suitable for 'A' level English, 'A' level Theatre Studies, and Performing Arts students.

Do you have a limit to the numbers in the audience?

We have an upper limit of 250 to the number in the audience. Experience has shown that with any more in attendance then the presentation loses its impact for everyone watching.

What space and equipment do you need the school to provide?

We can use either the School Hall, School Theatre, Drama Studio or Sports Hall. All performances are presented front-on to the audience. If there is a stage then we will use that as a preference; otherwise we will perform on the floor and - if the seating is not fixed - we will arrange the seating to be on 3 sides of the performance area whenever possible. We DO NOT need the school to provide any special lighting or sound equipment, and we will bring everything we need with us. There is no set nor lighting equipment to erect. Set up time is approx. 25 minutes, and we would need the space to ourselves for this preparation.

What are the timings of our visit?

We can perform either a morning or afternoon session. Our morning presentations can start at any time from 8.45am through to 9.30am (latest), and our afternoon shows can start at any time from 1.15pm through to 2.00pm (latest). Our actors will aim to arrive with you no later than 45 minutes before the agreed start time, leaving them time to sign in at reception and then set up ready for the presentation, which lasts a maximum of 90 minutes. Once completed, our group will take an average of 15 minutes to pack up and leave the premises.

What can we expect from the presentation?

Each presentation lasts a maximum of **90 MINUTES**. The performance is a **WORKING GUIDE** to the text and lasts approx. 60 MINUTES, and is a concise, abridged version of the entire story, performed by our ensemble of talented, professional actors. Concentrating on key scenes, characters and confrontations, each play flows seamlessly, and our detailed dramatic overview of these compelling stories is constructed to create a strong, lasting impact with students, to bring the plot, characters, and themes vividly to life. Each performance is designed to capture the drama and tension of each of the texts. We are well known for our energetic, vigorous, physical theatre performances where close

attention is paid to the language, bringing the performance ALIVE as a dynamic, well-spoken display of theatre: each performance will have a strong and lasting impact on anyone studying these stories, and will vividly bring the text to life. Immediately following the performance there is an optional **INTERACTIVE Q&A SESSION** (lasting a maximum of 30 minutes) where the audience can discuss the performance with the actors to enhance their understanding of the text. The whole presentation can last a maximum of 90 minutes.

What can we expect from the Q&A session?

The optional Q&A session is a discussion guided by our actors, where the audience can talk directly to the fascinating CHARACTERS in the play by 'hot-seating' them, and ask any questions they may have. This is a unique opportunity for students to examine the characters' contrasting personalities and motives, and helps to explain/expand and explore the text farther. This allows students to better understand the motives of the main characters, and to clarify any parts of the story that they may otherwise not fully understand. The session can also allow students the opportunity to discuss with the actors how the drama is created and also the impact and meaning of the different ways of performing and staging drama, and to examine the choices made by the actors and director for our presentation.

Are your actors all DBS checked?

Yes, they are all recently DBS checked to ENHANCED LEVEL, and are instructed to have their DBS certificates and some form of Photo-ID with them for inspection when they visit you.

Do you provide resource material to accompany the presentation?

In advance of our visit to you we will Email you with a confirmation of timings, and will also include access to a 'PERFORMANCE INFORMATION PACK' for you to print. This pack maximises the impact of our visit: containing interesting background information to the play; a full list of the scenes included in our performance; individual character profiles; a detailed analysis of the story; and some follow-on activities for teachers and students to use after our visit has ended. This pack adds real value to our visit on the day, and has proven to be very popular with both teachers and students.

How does this presentation help our audiences?

A live performance of a printed text has a great impact on learning, and stays in the students' minds long after we have left the school. Our presentation is designed to concisely lift the words off the written page and bring the text vividly to life, giving voice, context, substance and character to the words, making it easier to understand the plot, characters, themes, language and style of the stories, whilst the Q&A session after the performance allows the audience to unlock the story even more by quizzing the characters and examining their motives.

CONTACT US

We are taking bookings NOW for ALL of our 2023/2024 presentations. If you would like to make a booking, receive a price quote, or get more information about any of our shows, then please contact us as early as you can, before all the dates have been taken.

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