presents

ROGER ALLAM, SAM KELLY,
MAUREEN LIPMAN, IAN MCKELLEN
and JOE MCFADDEN, JOANNA PAGE,
OWEN SHARPE, CAT SIMMONS, RAMON TIKARAM

in the classic family panto

ALADDIN

A new version by Bille Brown
Original score by Gareth Valentine
Additional song ‘I Believe in You’ music by Elton John & lyrics by Lee Hall

Director Sean Mathias
Designer John Napier
Choreographer Wayne McGregor
Musical Supervisor Gareth Valentine
Costumes Mark Bouman
Lighting Mark Henderson
Sound Fergus O’Hare
Orchestrations Chris Walker
Musical Director Kevin Amos
Additional script by Ian Brown & James Hendrie
Designs inspired by the drawings of Flo Perry

Producer David Liddiment
Executive Producer Colin Ingram
Associate Producer Mig Kimpton
Casting Director Joyce Nettles
Production Manager Dominic Fraser
Assistant Director Emma Stuart
Assistant Choreographer Laila Diallo

First performance at The Old Vic, Friday 17 December 2004

Season sponsor
Morgan Stanley

Media partner
The Daily Telegraph

Left: drawing by Flo Perry
CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Abbanazar
Aladdin
Hanky
Panky
Dim Sum
Widow Twankey
Princess
Emperor
Genie
Ensemble
Walk-on understudy

SONGS
1 Prologue/Anything That You Are Seeking
2 Family Matters
3 I Believe in You
4 Die! Die! Die!
5 Pantomime
6 Feng Yang
7 It's Not Over
8 Peace and Justice
9 There's Life in The Old Vic Yet/Panto Reprise

ALADDIN ORCHESTRA

Musical Director
Asst. Musical Director, keyboard
Flute, soprano sax, clarinet
Clarinet, recorder, alto sax
Bass clarinet, baritone sax, piccolo
Trumpet, flugel
Trumpet, flugel
Trombone
Double bass, bass guitar
Drums, percussion
Orchestra Management
Synthesiser Programmer

Kevin Amos
Simon Beck
Howard McGill
John Franchi
Colin Skinner
Simon Gardner
Andy Greenwood
Pat Hartley
Rutledge Turnland
Allan Cox
Steven Hill, Musicians UK Ltd
Mark Warman

Running time: approx 2 hours 15 minutes with one 15 minute interval
### FOR ALADDIN

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### FOR THE OLD VIC THEATRE COMPANY

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### Acknowledgements

- Set & boxes constructed & painted by Plymouth Theatre Royal Workshop
- Set construction & painting by Capital Scenery
- Vases & fans constructed by Extraordinary Designs
- Cave construction by The Kite Studio
- Cave decoration & painting by Samantha Fellows
- Fan & vase painting by Belinda Clisham & Anna Stamper
- Front cloth, walkdown & Hollywedge cloth painted by Belinda Clisham & Anna Stamper
- Washed & Peking cloths painted by Samantha Fellows
- Barbary clothes painted by Visual Scene
- Cloths supplied by J&B & C Joel & Ken Creasey Ltd
- Carpet supplied by Show Flooring Ltd
- Additional lighting equipment supplied by White Light Electrics
- Additional sound equipment supplied by Autograph Sound
- Human flying fx by AFX/Kirby's Flying Ballet
- Cave rigging by Vertigo Rigging
- M.A.V Wallcoverings Ltd
- Angels Fancy Dress
- Costumes by Paddy Dickie, Gill Linley, Stephen Harrington, Kevin Mattias, Bristol Costume Services, Sten Vollmuller, Selita Kier, Kit Reading, Leela Barnard
- Hats by Jenny Adby, Sean Barrett
- Wigs by Maria Audelo
- Ian McKellen's cabinet wig donated by Peter Owen
- Prop makers Nigel Schofield at MDM Props Ltd, Frank & Allan at Capital Scenery, Claude Sanderson, Damon Glister & Mark at Nomad Design, Lucy Coffiths, Victoria Fifeild & Lynnette, Lara Mason, Matt Lawrence, Paw & L.J. Stan Burston, Nazare at Angel Prints

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### Aladdin programme

Design R&D&Co with John Simmons
- Lawrence Harrison for Harrison Curtis Ltd
- Stephen Pennington

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All information is correct at the time of going to press, but may be subject to change.
Standing in the wings of the Grand Theatre, Bolton, a stage-struck lad marvels at the comics and magicians, the chorus girls and acrobats performing on the music-hall stage. Some 50 years later, having reached the theatrical heights and attained international screen stardom, Ian McKellen is fulfilling a long-held dream.

'I think everybody has some ideal about what a pantomime should be, and it's probably the first one they saw. I went to many of them in my childhood, at first with my parents, who had to hold me back when children were invited up on the stage, and then by myself. I've always thought it a wonderful form, because it can include anything the theatre is able to give a welcome to. For years I kept asking myself why I wasn't playing in one. The answer was, there was no opportunity. Eventually I realised I'd have to create my own.'

How then did the McKellen dream become a reality? How did this renowned Shakespearean actor come to be fooling around in frocks in a theatre best known for staging the classics? Shortly before rehearsals of Aladdin began I talked to the show's creative team and principal actors, to find out how this multi-talented group of artists were putting together their spanking new version of this ancient fable.

The story begins with McKellen himself. In his early days in rep at Ipswich he had played a Chinese policeman in Aladdin. Now, having also considered Cinderella and Mother Goose, he decided to stage the same show, with himself as the Dame, Widow Twankey. As a first step he read and digested several versions of the story. Then, at the 2004 Sydney Theatre Festival, he met the writer and actor Bille Brown, an old friend whose work included the RSC's panto The Swan Down Gloves. A true pantomime buff, Brown asked to be adviser on the project, but McKellen suggested he should write it instead, and commissioned a treatment.

After studying various versions and adaptations from different periods, Bille Brown produced a rough draft. The Old Vic snapped him up. 'It showed great trust on Kevin Spacey's part,' McKellen admits. 'To an American, pantomime is as mysterious as cricket. When I explained it to him, his face misted over. Then he laughed, and said, "I don't know what it's going to be, but you must do it!"'. The Old Vic then offered it to director Sean Mathias, who accepted, but without being able to see a proper script.
‘This was daunting, because normally it’s the text that unlocks my creative imagination’ he says. ‘But when it arrived I thought it was great. Because it’s inspired by a version of The Arabian Nights it has a romantic quality. It also has a very strong story, and because I’m used to narrative that made me feel I could do it.’

His chosen set designer was John Napier who, long before working on Cats, Starlight Express, Les Misérables and other glittering West End shows, had designed the celebrated McKellen/Dench Macbeth with a budget of just £250. This proved an excellent calling-card for the Old Vic show. ‘Pantos are often a bit tacky scenically,’ Napier says. ‘The challenge with this Aladdin was to do something terrific, but on a shoestring. You have to use your imagination in a different way.’

The first design idea emerged from discussions between designer and director. ‘Although the story is set in China, it takes us to a number of other places,’ Mathias points out. ‘I wondered how we could represent these places without using the traditional pantomime cloths, and also make it Chinese. I had this notion of a red lacquered box; John liked the idea, and quickly ran with it.’

While pondering what style to use for the sets, Napier had a ‘eureka’ moment. ‘Flo Perry, the daughter of a family who were neighbours of mine, had done a watercolour drawing of my house. I was looking at it one evening, and suddenly realised she might be the key. Her drawings were strange, very childlike, but also clever. I thought they would be a good basis for something fresh.’

He commissioned Flo, now 12, to do a few black and white drawings, which he then cut up, re-pasted and coloured. Their collaboration grew as the idea proved fruitful: first she drew the front cloth, then Widow Twankey’s washing line, next the Emperor’s palace, and eventually the finale curtain. ‘Originally I tried to draw them myself, but my versions were horrible, much too architectural,’ Napier says. ‘Flo’s were delicate and beautiful. She’s been a true inspiration. Flo, who intends to be a fashion designer, adds: ‘John says my drawings have got a naive sophistication, but I don’t really know what that means.’

Flo has also done several costume sketches, providing a jumping-off point for the costume designer. ‘They got me looking for images that relate to her vision as well as to John’s sets,’ Mark Bouman explains. ‘I’ve found contemporary photos of Japanese and Chinese kids dressing really creatively for the street, which could be the inspiration for the ensemble.’ With around 100 costumes to design, ten of them for Widow Twankey, he’s been uncovering many Chinese and Arabian images in books and museums.

For composer Gareth Valentine, recently seen on Channel 4’s Musicality, Aladdin has proved rich in musical possibilities. ‘It’s a really good story to write a score for,’ he says. ‘I wanted the numbers to be as diverse as possible, so I’ve treated it rather like a box of confectionery.’ The flavours on offer in his witty and brilliantly varied score include 1940s swing music, grand opera, a touch of Gilbert and Sullivan, a Broadway moment, a hint of Madame Butterfly, jazz, ballet music, a pastiche of Sheherazade, and a piece based on his own Requiem Mass.
'I wanted the numbers to be as diverse as possible, so I've treated it rather like a box of confectionery'

A lot of the music is gleaned from the Middle East, and some of it is akin to Jewish music. He's now sent the score to Chris Walker for orchestration. 'I have in mind a lot of Chinese sounds, percussive ones like tam tam gongs, finger cymbals and Chinese mouth organ.' He's also been working on the lyrics. 'Bille Brown's script included some lyrics, but really just as a guide. I've had carte blanche to rework them, and with some numbers to invent them from scratch. Ian and Sean have also had a hand in writing them, so we've all thrown our bit in, which has been great fun.' But one song will not be theirs: when McKellen and Mathias spoke about the show to Elton John at an Oscars party, he agreed to write a lovesong for it. 'We shook hands on it in the balmy Hollywood air,' McKellen recalls.

The choreography for the ten numbers is the responsibility of Wayne McGregor, who runs Random Dance, the resident company at Sadler's Wells. With only three weeks in which to rehearse, he's having to map out certain ideas in advance. 'Using Gareth's score, I'm discussing them with Sean. But really you need to have the actors there, so things might change radically in rehearsal.'

After all, the thing about panto is for the actors to get their personalities over, so I want to encourage them to physicalise their characters so they communicate properly.

Casting the ensemble has been one of the toughest tasks, he says. He and Mathias saw more than 200 people in order to select just eight. 'We got there in the end, but it took a long time to find the right balance. Those who are first-class dancers can't necessarily sing very well, while those with good voices aren't always the best movers. And that's without considering their acting ability, for the chosen eight will understudy the principals.'

While the creative team was busy, the script was being worked on collaboratively by the show's writer, director and star. 'It's like a Christmas pudding, we all get a stir,' Bille Brown observes. He recalls that the idea of Twankey's show business ambitions had its origins in McKellen's Lancashire background. 'Ian talked about the tradition of amateur dramatics in the north, and about his passion for the theatre.' But the idea also resonated with Mathias, whose mother, an amateur actress, loved to play the Dame in her village hall.
Casting the other three principal roles proved easier than expected. For Abbanazar, Mathias and McKellen were looking for a classical actor who could sing, catch the pantomime villain's dark and menacing quality, but also play light, have a sense of fun, and handle the camp element. Their first choice, Roger Allam - whose roles have included Javert in Les Misérables, Captain Dennis in Privates on Parade and Willy Brandt in Democracy - fulfilled all these requirements.

Although Sam Kelly, cast as the Emperor of China, has considerable pantomime experience - he've played Wishy Washy twice in Aladdin, and been in Cinderella and Robinson Crusoe - he was essentially chosen on the basis of his delicious performance in A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. 'I always thought he was a bit of a comic genius, a very good actor with great musicality,' Mathias says. 'Then Ian and I saw him in Forum, laughed a great deal, and that was it.'

Finding their Dim Sum - usually known as Wishy Washy - was a little more complicated. The original idea was to have a male actor. 'But then I read the script again,' Mathias recalls, 'and had this instinct it would be wonderful played by a woman.' Since Aladdin was to be male rather than a female principal boy, McKellen also supported the idea of a bit of extra cross-dressing. 'We made up a list, and just then Maureen rang to ask if there was a part for her. The answer was yes.'

Like McKellen, Maureen Lipman has had her Aladdin moment, as the Genie of the Ring at the Watford Palace in 1969. 'I had blue frizzy wig, John Lennon glasses, lots of beads and bangles, and I entered on a pogo-stick,' she remembers. 'It was great fun and absolutely exhausting.' Roger Allam, a former Sheriff of Nottingham in Babies in the Wood at the Glasgow Citizens, found the experience liberating, and is looking forward to playing another pantomime villain. 'I hope there’ll be many chances to over-act,' he says. 'The opportunity to change appearance and disappear through trapdoors is immensely appealing.' For Sam Kelly too it's a chance to let his hair down: 'You have to treat it seriously at first, but then you can go a little mad.'

Amidst all this intense and high-level creativity, it's apparent that everyone is also having enormous fun. As rehearsals loom, the main players are clearly relishing the work. 'It's wonderful to be doing something which requires such lightness and wit,' Mathias says. 'I hope it will really brighten up Christmas in London.' McKellen has similar hopes: 'It's all a bit of an adventure for me. In a pantomime there's a wider variety of pure theatre than you get even in Shakespeare. And if it works, it's unforgettable.'

Jonathan Croall is a freelance journalist and theatre biographer.
My first experience of panto was seeing an amateur production in Haywards Heath town hall. I was absolutely hooked. And then delighted when, aged ten, I discovered a book called Potted Pantomime Writer, a sort of Lego kit for the budding playwright. The book laid out the basic plots for all the classics (Cinderella, Babes in the Wood, Aladdin etc) and showed how to introduce the various routines – the haunted house scene, the Dame's comic striptease, the song sheet, and the spectacular transformation scene. Looking back, I suppose it was my first writer's workshop - a lesson in how you might combine story, patter, spectacle and song to create an evening's entertainment.

But it all began in the early 18th century as a rather high-minded experiment. The aim was to emulate the 'pantomimus' of classical Greek and Roman theatre, with the stories told, not with words, but through dance and movement. The experiment proved to be popular, and soon London's only licensed theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, were competing to produce spectacular productions that incorporated dance, music and clever scenic effects, some of which are still used in the transformation scenes today.

Gradually, the rather elevated style of these 'pantomimus' was squeezed aside by a cuckoo in the nest. Initially introduced as a short interlude, the Harlequinade proved a big hit with audiences. Based on the stock characters of Italian Commedia dell'arte, the sequences revelled in complex physical comedy and slapstick, and eventually grew longer and longer. The Harlequinade came to dominate the whole evening, and there were grumbles of 'things changing for the worse'. But at the same time, panto discovered its first star, the clown Joey Grimaldi, who had early 19th century audiences agog with the physical bravery of his comic stunts.

Over time, audiences' tastes changed and so did panto... again. The Victorians created a culture of family and nationhood that centred around Christmas. Panto became a seasonal entertainment and the middle-classes demanded a more genteel evening at the theatre. It started to draw on burlesque – retellings of popular fairy stories in prettified rhyming couplets, often in pastiche of Shakespeare and other authors. The Good and Bad Fairies made their entrances from opposite sides of the stage, and songs were introduced.
By the end of the 19th century, theatre managers came up with a ground-breaking idea to attract larger audiences. They cast music hall stars, who had previously only performed in working-class areas, and with them came hissing and booing from a rowdy crowd, song sheets and the distorting of traditional stories to incorporate the new stars’ music hall routines. Again, the grumblers complained that pantomime was being coarsened, but a new audience discovered the delights of panto and ensured it entered the 20th century in a healthy state.

The first half of the new century saw pantomime at its most popular. The arrival of radio, film and television meant that people were more aware than ever of music hall comics and singers, and eager to see them on stage. There were pantos all across the country, often running from Christmas to Easter.

By now the ingredients were all in place: cross-dressing principal characters who harked back to the men-only companies of Shakespeare’s day; the ‘breeches parts’ taken by the first female actors of Restoration theatre; spectacular scenery and costumes inspired by the 18th century’s very first ‘pantomimus’; physical knockabout introduced by the Harlequinade; the popular fairy stories introduced by the Victorians; and the rowdy shouting and sing-alongs that accompanied the music hall stars. The pudding was fully cooked.

During the 1970s and 80s, pantomime was still popular outside of London, but it had more or less disappeared from the capital. There was a sense that it had become a bit tacky, that washed-up soap stars and super-annuated pop acts were simply taking their money in a rather cynical way. Then Philip Hedley, Artistic Director of the Theatre Royal Stratford East, set about reinventing the form all over again, finding strong links between Jamaican comedy, urban rap and traditional pantomime, that appealed to the Theatre’s culturally diverse community. Less celebrated, but extremely popular, were comedian Jim Davison’s ‘blue’ pantos for adults-only. Although sold on their sexual titillation, Davison told me that what audiences actually enjoyed were all the traditional elements – the ‘smut’ simply gave them an excuse to come along.

As a teenager, I hugely enjoyed Peter Nicholl’s play *Poppy*, which cleverly and wittily used all the elements of pantomime to tell the story of the Victorians’ reliance on the opium trade with China. When my own play, *Mother Clap’s Molly House*, was produced at the National Theatre I was surprised when several people described it as ‘a kind of pantomime’. Although I suspected that some of them meant it to be slightly derogatory, looking at the play, which includes cross-dressing, songs, emblematic figures entering from opposite sides of the stage and a transformation scene just before the interval, I realised they were right. The lessons learned from studying the *Potted Pantomime Writer* all those years ago had obviously stuck with me.

It’s seems appropriate that The Old Vic is bringing panto back to the West End. A theatre that in its time has seen drunken evenings of rowdy Victorian music hall, as well as some of the finest classical acting, is an excellent home for a form which has always slung together the high and the low, tradition and novelty. Pantomime is going strong. Long live panto!

Playwright Mark Ravenhill’s work includes *Shopping and F***ing, Some Explicit Polaroids* and *Mother Clap’s Molly House*.

The budding playwright: Mark Ravenhill, aged 10
MARINA ABDEEN ensemble/understudy Princess
Marina made her West End debut in the original cast of Bombay Dreams (Apollo Victoria). Other credits include Intoto Dance Company (UK tour), Razzle Dazzle (Hackney Empire), The Royal Variety Performance (Hammersmith Apollo) and Stars of Stage and Screen with Simon Callow. Television includes All About Me (BBC) and V Graham Norton (Channel 4).

MADALENA ALBERTO ensemble
Theatre includes My Name is Alice and Songs for a New World (Bird Theatre Company, Portugal, Austria & Jersey) and A Musical Theatre Evening which she devised and performed. Aladdin is Madalena’s professional theatre debut.

ROGER ALLAM Abbanazar
Roger is an Associate Artist of the RSC where he has played many roles, including Benedick, Macbeth and Javert in Les Misérables. He has won two Oliviers and the Clarence Derwent Award for recent theatre work – Privates on Parade at the Donmar, and Troilus & Cressida and Money at the National Theatre, where he has also played in The Cherry Orchard, Albert Speer, Summerfolk and Democracy. Recent work in the West End includes City of Angels, Arcadia and Art. Recent television includes Manchild, Inspector Lynley, The Creatives and The Robinsons.

PETER CAULFIELD ensemble/understudy Aladdin
Theatre includes A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (NT); Elegies, Our House (West End); The Emporer and the Nightingale (Newbury), Falsettoland (Edinburgh Festival). Television includes Our House for the BBC.

SIMON CLARK ensemble/understudy Abbanazar, Widow;Twankey, Emperor
Theatre includes At the End of the Day, Oliver!, The Canterbury Tales, Windy City, High Society, Murderous Instincts (West End). He has appeared in productions at theatres across the UK and toured internationally, including Much Ado and Cyrano (PSC to USA & Europe). Television includes Colditz, How We Used to Live, A Dance to the Music of Time, Trial and Retribution II and Judge John Deed.

NINA FRENCH ensemble/swing
Theatre includes Brighton Rock (Almeida); Guys and Dolls, Sweet Charity, A Chorus Line (Sheffield Crucible); Chess (Scandinavian tour); The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals (Lyrical Theatre); Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat (national tour); Miss Saigon, Jesus Christ Superstar, Fame, Saturday Night Fever (West End); Chicago (Zimbabwe); Pal Joey (Chichester Festival Theatre) and Grease (national tour).

JULIA HINCHCLIFFE ensemble/understudy Dim Sum
Theatre includes Anything Goes, Cats (West End); On Your Toes with Adam Cooper (Festival Hall); Singin’ in the Rain (West Yorkshire Playhouse & tour); Grease, 42nd Street (national tours); Die Walkure; Das Rheingold (Royal Opera House); Giovanna D’Arco (Opera North & tour).

GAVIN KEENAN ensemble/understudy Hanky
Theatre includes Disney’s Beauty and the Beast (international tour), Cats (UK tour), Sunday Night Live (Drury Lane). He also participated in the demo recording for the new musical, Little Women.

SAM KELLY Emperor
Theatre includes The Two Ronnies (Palladium); Penicles, War and Peace, The Homecoming, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (NT); Dead Funny; HMS Pinfaro (Savoy); Toast, Under the Wholeback (Royal Court); Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme (Edinburgh Festival). Sam has appeared in numerous comedy series with Ronnie Barker, Victoria Wood, Les Dawson, Dave Allen and Cilla Black among many others. His films include Blue Ice with Michael Caine and Mike Leigh’s Topsy Turvy and All or Nothing.

MAUREEN LIPMAN Dim Sum
Maureen spent three years at The Old Vic, 1970–73, under the aegis of Sir Laurence Olivier, and half of 1994, in The Sisters Rosensweig. She thinks it’s the best theatre in the world. Her last film was Polanski’s The Pianist and her first was Up the Junction in 1967. Amongst her numerous acclaimed performances, she considers Oklahoma! at the National Theatre in 1998 the most fun, and Re:Joyce! and Peggy For You her best work to date. Her last pantomime was in 1967 at the Watford Theatre, and she’s still recovering.

JOE McFADDEN Aladdin
West End theatre includes A Life in the Theatre, A Christmas Carol, Entertaining Mr Sloane and Rent (West End). Films include The Trouble with Men and Women, Dad Savage and Small Faces; and for television Raphael, Peter Ackroyd’s London, Sex, Chips and Rock ‘n’ Roll, Spark House and The Crow Road.
IAN McKELLAN Widow Twankey
Ian McKellen first appeared at The Old Vic with Laurence Olivier’s fledgling National Theatre Company, as Claudio in Much Ado About Nothing. After 40 years, he is pleased to be back. Between times he has acted in much Shakespeare and produced classical and new plays for the Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre and other companies. In the West End, most recently, he was in Sean Mathias’ production of Dances of Death. On television he has appeared as David Copperfield, Walter, Chauvelin, Hitler and Amos Starkadder. On the big screen he has been DH Lawrence, Richard III, James Whale (Gods and Monsters), Magneto and Gandalf. Soon to come are Asylum and Nevermos. His first pantomime was in 1962 as ‘TV the comic Chinese policeman’ in another Aladdin for Ipswich Arts Theatre. There is a photograph of this and much more on www.mckellen.com. With thanks and respect to Christopher Biggins, Wynn Calvin MBE, Julian Clary, Ronnie Corbett, Royal Hudd, John Inman, Danny La Rue, Dave Lynn, Lily Savage and Richard Wilson; and remembering Les Dawson, Norman Evans, Regina Fong, Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss.

JOANNA PAGE Panky
Theatre includes Camera Obscura (Almeida); The Mysteries, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (NT); Billy Liar (UK tour). Films include Poliakov Film 2, Love Actually, Miss Julie, This Year’s Love, From Hell and Very Annie Mary; and for television Mine All Mine, To the Ends of the Earth, The Cazalet Chronicles, David Copperfield, The Lost World, Ready When You Are Mr McGill.

DANIEL REDMOND ensemble / understudy Genie
Theatre includes The People Next Door (Traverse Theatre Edinburgh & European tour); Jack and the Beanstalk (Oxford Playhouse); Mother Clap’s Molly House (NT); La Cova (Victoria Palace/Piccadilly Theatre); Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (Battersea Arts Centre). They Shoot Horses, Don’t They (Royal Academy of Music). Daniel has also recorded the soundtrack of La Cova, taking the role of Somal.

OWEN SHARPE Hanky
Theatre includes Oliver Twist (Lyric, Hammersmith), The Recruiting Officer (Lichfield), She Stoops To Conquer, A Laughing Matter, The Cripple of Inishmaan (NT), The Lieutenant of Inishmore, Jubilee, Bartholomew Fair, Shadows, This Lime Tree Bower (RSC), The Barbaric Comedies, Mrs Warren’s Profession, Macbeth; in Dublin, A Thief of a Christmas (Abbey), Christmas Carol (Gate), Brighton Beach Memoirs, Billy Liar (Andrews Lane), Dear Jack (Ark); and Jacko (Hawkswell, Sligo). Television includes The Favourite, Deco, The Lolly Man and My Oedipus Complex. Films include My Left Foot, Barstool Boys and A Second Death.

LEAH SHELDRICK ensemble / understudy Panky
Whilst training, Leah’s roles included Rosalia in West Side Story (Peacock Theatre); Christina in Phantom of the Opera and Ida in Homily (Cochraine Theatre); Bell in Beauty and the Beast (Nojesteatern, Sweden). Aladdin is her professional West End debut.

CAT SIMMONS Princess
Theatre includes We Happy Few (Gielgud), Simply Heavenly (Young Vic), Fame (Cambridge Theatre), Jesus Christ Superstar (national tour), Whistle Down the Wind (Aldwych); and workshops of Talking to Mr Warner and The Story (Soho Theatre). Television includes Holly City, Girl’s Weekend and Doctors.

RAMON TIKARAM Genie
Theatre includes Bombay Dreams, Jesus Christ Superstar (West End); The Ramayana (NT); Amphitryon (The Gate); LA Plays (Almeida). Television includes Murphy’s Law, Down to Earth, Silent Witness, MIT, Judge John Deed, Daylight Robbery, Dream Team and This Life. Films include Take Three Girls, Waiting at the Royal, Wolverine, Kamo Sutra and Cut Throat Island.

LEE WILLIAM-DAVIS ensemble / swing
Theatre includes Chicago, Mamma Mia!, Beauty and the Beast (West End); Loves Labours Lost (NT); Anything Goes (NT & West End); 42nd Street, A Chorus Line (UK tour); and the original cast of Summer Holiday (Blackpool Opera House). Television and film credits include La Passione, Without Words, Uncle Jack, An Actor’s Life and Birds of a Feather.

MATTHEW WOLFENDEN ensemble
Theatre includes A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (NT); Saturday Night Fever (national tour); Romeo and Juliet (West End). Television includes Courtroom for Mersey TV.
BILLE BROWN Playwright
Australian writer and actor Bille Brown’s career in film, theatre and television has taken him all over the world, including to the UK and America. He wrote a series of plays for young people for the Queensland Theatre Company, one of which, tuff, went on to a season at the Royal Court. He was commissioned by the RSC to write The Swan Down Gloves (Stratford & London). His recent play, Bill & Mary, was produced and published last year. He has also written for documentary and feature films, including The Light Fantastic, and worked with the John Cleese company, Lemur Entertainment. His most recent writing, Herself, is included in ‘Best Australian Essays 2004’. His acting credits include Wilde in The Judas Kiss (Company B), the title role in Howard Katz at The Sydney Opera House, and he defended God against Billy Connolly in the film, The Man Who Sued God. Bille is the Artist in Residence at The Queensland Performing Arts Centre.

GARETH VALENTINE Original Score
& Musical Supervisor
Gareth is currently a presenter and Musical Supervisor for Channel 4’s Musicality, and Musical Supervisor for the forthcoming Victoria Wood musical, Acorn Antiques. West End credits include Musical Supervisor/Dance Arranger/Musical Director for Anything Goes (NT & Drury Lane); Musical Supervisor/Dance Arranger for Tonight’s the Night, My One and Only, Kiss Me Kate (also RSC), Chicago (also Gottenburg & Moscow), Damn Yankees, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Miss Saigon, The Baker’s Wife, Cats, Cabaret, 42nd Street, Closer Than Ever and Windy City. Other theatre includes Merrily We Roll Along, Nine, Company (Donmar); Camelot (Covent Garden Festival); Toad of Toad Hall (Old Vic); Chita (Chita Rivera Tribute, New York); Strike Up the Band, 101 in the Shadow, Panama Hattie (Lost Musicals Project); Annie (Crucible); Wayne Sleep’s Sleep With Friends (Bath & York); Oh Kay! (Chichester); Oliver! (Toronto & UK tour). He has conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra; and has been an adjudicator for the Llangollen International Eisteddfod and the BBC Voice of Musical Theatre. Cast album recordings include Musicality, Anything Goes, The Baker’s Wife, Company, Chicago and Kiss of the Spider Woman. Gareth’s Requiem was recorded at Abbey Road Studios and has been performed all over the world, including Washington, San Francisco, Melbourne, Colorado, Scandinavia, San Diego and Southwark Cathedral, London.

SEAN MATHIAS Director
As a director, Sean’s work includes Antigone (Cape Town); Dance of Death (Broadway, West End & Sydney Festival); Company (Washington DC); The Elephant Man (Broadway); Suddenly Last Summer, Design for Living (West End); Anthony and Cleopatra, A Little Night Music, Uncle Vanya (NT); Marlene (West End, Broadway & international tour); Les Parents Terribles (NT & Broadway, as Indiscretions); Bent (NT, West End & film). As a writer, his plays include Cowardice, Infidelities, A Prayer for Wings, Poor Nanny and Swansea Boys; plus the adaptation of David Leavitt’s novel The Lost Language of Cranes for BBC TV; and a novel, Manhattan Mourning. He has won the Evening Standard and Critics’ Circle Awards for Best Director and his productions have been nominated for 18 Olivier and 14 Tony Awards. The film Bent won numerous international awards, including La Prix de la Jeunesse at Cannes.

JOHN NAPIER Designer
John’s designs for musical theatre include Cats, Starlight Express, Les Misérables, Miss Saigon, Sunset Boulevard (West End, Broadway & around the world); Time, Children of Eden, Jesus Christ Superstar (West End); Jane Eyre (Broadway). He is Associate Designer at the RSC, where his work includes Macbeth, The Comedy of Errors, King Lear, Once in a Lifetime, The Greeks, Nicholas Nickleby, Hedda Gabler, Peter Pan and Mother Courage. Other theatre work includes The Party (Olivier’s last performance at The Old Vic), Equus, Trelawny of the Wells; An Enemy of the People, Peter Pan, Candide, South Pacific (NT); The Tower, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Almeida); Skellig (Young Vic). Opera credits include Lohengrin, Macbeth (Royal Opera House); Idomeneo (Glyndebourne); The Devils (ENO); Nabucco (Metropolitan Opera). He also designed the films Captain EO (starring Michael Jackson) and Spielberg’s Hook; and designed and co-directed The Siegfried and Roy Show in Las Vegas. John has won two Society of West End Theatre Awards, an Olivier, a Bafta and five Tony Awards. He is a member of the American Academy of Achievement, a Royal Designer for Industry and an Honorary Fellow of the London Institute.

WAYNE Mcgregor Choreographer
Wayne is the founder and Artistic Director of Random Dance (resident company at Sadlers Wells) and has made over 30 works for the company. His many awards include two Time Out Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Dance. Ballet commissions include Qualia, Symbiant(s) (Royal Ballet); Nautilus (Stuttgart); 2Human (ENB); PreSentient, Detritus (Rambert). Theatre includes The Woman in White (West End); Antony and Cleopatra, A Little Night Music (NT); Cleansed (Royal Court). Opera includes La Boheme, The Marriage of Figaro, Hansel and Gretel, Orpheus et Eurydice (Scottish Opera); Solome (ENO); Manon (English Touring Opera). Films include Bent and the forthcoming Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.
MARK BOUMAN Costume Designer
Mark's recent theatre work for English Touring Theatre includes King Lear (Old Vic), Romeo & Juliet (Hong Kong), John Gabriel Borkman, Loves Labours Lost, Twelfth Night, Cabaret (Chichester). Opera designs include Idomeneo, La Bohème (Glyndebourne), Don Giovanni, The Marriage of Figaro (Garsington); The Tsarina's Shoes (Guildhall); L'Orfeo (Bologna Opera). As Associate Designer/Supervisor, his credits include Anything Goes (NT & West End); Hamlet (Old Vic); Mrs Warren's Profession, Lady Windermere's Fan (West End); and numerous productions for English Touring Theatre, Chichester Festival Theatre, ENO, Glyndebourne and in the U.S., the Spoleto Festival & Lyric Theatre Chicago. Television credits include The Lenny Henry Show and Comic Relief.

MARK HENDERSON Lighting Designer
Mark has worked with the UK's most prestigious theatre, opera and ballet companies. Recent West End productions include Cloaca, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Grease, Democracy, Our House, Endgame and Tonight's the Night. He has lit a number of Broadway and UK touring productions, and his film and television credits include The Tall Guy and Rowan Atkinson Live in Boston. He has also worked on architectural projects including the Royal Court re-development and Madame Tussauds in London, Las Vegas and New York. He has won four Olivier Awards for Best Lighting (plus four further nominations) and two Tony Award nominations.

FERGUS O'HARE Sound Designer
Previously for The Old Vic, Cloaca, Hamlet, The Tempest, 24 Hour Plays. Other recent work includes Anno in the Tropics (Hampstead); Vermillion Dream (Salisbury); Clouds (tour); Home, The Quare Fellow, Candida, Singer (Oxford Stage Company); Twelfth Night (Albery); Shimmer (Traverse); Holy Terror (Duke of York's). Work in New York, Los Angeles and Sydney includes The Shape of Things, A Day in the Death of Joe Egg, Dance of Death, Noises Off, Electra (Drama Desk nominee) and An Enemy of the People.

EMMA STUART Assistant Director
Work as Assistant Director includes Macbeth, King Lear, Midsommer Night's Dream, Don Giovanni, Death of a Salesman, The Shape of Things. As an accompanist, she has made appearances in major venues in London, Europe and at the Carnegie Hall in New York. As an arranger and conductor, she has worked extensively for theatre and radio both in England and Scandinavia.

KEVIN AMOS Musical Director
Kevin's West End credits as Musical Director include Phantom of the Opera, Cats (he conducted the final London performances), 42nd Street, Sugar Babies and Grand Hotel. He was Musical Director on Sean Mathias' production of Marlene, for which he also wrote the incidental music and arrangements for its production in the West End, South Africa, Paris and New York. As an accompanist, he has made appearances in major venues in London, Europe and at the Carnegie Hall in New York. As an arranger and conductor, he has worked extensively for theatre and radio both in England and Scandinavia.

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SALLY GREENE Chief Executive
Sally Greene is well known for rescuing and restoring The Old Vic, Criterion and Richmond theatres. In 1999 she launched Old Vic Productions plc, which to date has 700 investors and has produced over 40 plays in the West End and on Broadway. She appointed Kevin Spacey as Artistic Director of The Old Vic Theatre Company in 2000 and they intend to bring the best of American and British talent onto the stage over the next five years. Sally is starting work on her fourth theatre, an entirely new build, on the site of the Collins Music Hall in Islington. She is also co-producing Billy Elliot with Working Title Pictures and a creative team including Elton John and Stephen Daldry. She recently became the proprietor of the renowned Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club. She was presented with the Montblanc de la Culture Arts award for 2004.

LAILA DIALLO Assistant Choreographer
Laila has been performing with Random Dance since 1997, also acting as Wayne McGregor's assistant on Sarah Kane's Cleansed (Royal Court), as well as restaging his Skinned Prey with the National Youth Dance Company. She has recently appeared in Nick Mead's Dice Life, a dance film based on Luke Rhinehart's cult novel, The Dice Man.
KEVIN SPACEY Artistic Director, The Old Vic Theatre Company
Kevin Spacey directed Cloaca, the opening production for The Old Vic Theatre Company, and will star in the next two productions this season, National Anthems and The Philadelphia Story. Other theatre work includes The Iceman Cometh (Almeida, The Old Vic & Broadway) for which he won the Evening Standard and Olivier Awards for Best Actor and was nominated for a Tony, Long Day’s Journey Into Night (Broadway & West End), The Seagull (Washington DC), Barbarians (SoHo Rep), Playland (Manhattan Theatre Club) and Lost in Yonkers for which he won a Tony Award for Best Supporting Actor. Films include Beyond the Sea (producer, director & lead role), The Usual Suspects (Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor), American Beauty (Golden Globe, Screen Actors’ Guild, American & British Academy Awards for Best Actor), Swimming with Sharks, The Usual Suspects, Se7en, LA Confidential, Glengarry Glen Ross, Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, The Negotiator, Hurlyburly, Looking for Richard, The Big Kahuna, K-Pax, The Shipping News and The Life of David Gale. Kevin’s Trigger Street Productions has produced The Iceman Cometh, The Big Kahuna, the off-Broadway production of Cobb, and the film The United States of Leland.

DAVID LIDDIMENT Producer, The Old Vic Theatre Company
David started his career at Granada TV, where he became Executive Producer of Coronation Street and nurtured a new generation of TV dramatists including Paul Abbott, Kay Mellor and Russell T Davis. In 1997 he was appointed Director of Programmes at ITV, where he brought to the screen those two modern television phenomena: Who Wants to be a Millionaire? and Pop Idol. In addition, he presided over a rich period of drama including The Russian Bride, Bloody Sunday, Cold Feet, The Second Coming, Fat Friends, At Home with the Braithwaites and Foyle’s War. He was a governor of West Yorkshire Playhouse (1993-2003) where he directed the world premiere of Kay Mellor’s A Passionate Woman. He is Creative Director of independent producer, All3Media and is a regular columnist for the Guardian.

COLIN INGRAM Executive Producer, The Old Vic Theatre Company
Educated in Law and Chartered Accountancy, Colin began his theatre career at Cameron Mackintosh Ltd as Production Administrator, where he managed Les Misérables (West End & UK tour), Phantom of the Opera (Edinburgh & UK tour), Oklahoma! and Witches of Eastwick (West End). He also managed the Les Misérables 10th Anniversary Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, Cardiff Castle, Hyland Park and as part of the closing ceremony for Euro ’96 at Wembley. He then headed up Walt Disney Theatrical UK Ltd, where he managed Lion King (West End) and Beauty and the Beast (UK tour). As Executive Producer of Old Vic Productions plc he is also currently working on Billy Elliot, opening in the West End, April 2005.

MIG KIMPTON Associate Producer
Mig has spent more than 20 years working in theatre. He has been the General Manager for the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain, run West End theatres, including The Playhouse at Charing Cross, managed tours for Lesley Joseph, Sandi Toksvig, Sian Phillips, Elaine Stritch, Janet Street Porter, Lily Savage and toured extensively with Ian McKellen. As a producer, he has worked on many charity galas, including eight Stonewall Equality shows at the Royal Albert Hall and the 2003 Grand Concert at The Old Vic. As a company manager, he has recently worked on Stones in his Pockets, The Arab Israeli Cookbook and Batboy the Musical. Mig is also a flower design demonstrator and has just completed a successful tour of theatres across the country with his ‘Celebrity Flowers Christmas Roadshow’.

JOYCE NETTLES Casting Director, The Old Vic Theatre Company
Joyce was Head of Casting at the RSC for 10 years under the Artistic Directorship of Trevor Nunn. She cast most of Jonathan Kent’s productions whilst he was Artistic Director of the Almeida, and has worked with Peters Hall, Brook and Stein. Her television credits include five series of The Midsomer Murders, Foyle’s War, Kavanagh QC, Inspector Morse, the award-winning Goodnight Mr Tom and several films for HBO, including PKO 281 for which she won an Emmy. Her film credits include Zeffirelli’s Hamlet and several films with Lars von Trier, including Breaking the Waves.

DOMINIC FRASER Production Manager, The Old Vic Theatre Company
As Technical Director at the Donmar Warehouse, from its re-opening under Sam Mendes in 1992 until summer 2004, Dominic oversaw the technical development of the theatre and production managed more than 80 productions, including tours and transfers of work on both sides of the Atlantic. He has also been production manager for numerous shows in the West End and across the UK.
Her drawings caught the attention of John Napier, who used them as the inspiration for his set designs. Since the age of three, Flo has wanted to be a fashion designer, so she is delighted that Mark Bouman was also inspired by her work for his Aladdin costumes.

Flo's vases below
Can you spot TEN differences between these pictures of the Emperor and Aladdin?
Aladdin is trapped in the cave, but only one rope leads to freedom. Can you help him find his way to daylight?
Join the dots from 1 to 224 to find out who's hiding.