

WHITGIFT



# CHARIOTS OF FIRE

Wednesday 1 December – Friday 3 December | 7pm | Big School



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We all knew that we would get back here, although at times it seemed like an impossible dream, but there was always a determination that, as soon as we could, we would mount a full production with a live audience at Whitgift. Theatre is too valuable a part of our community for us not to do so. Theatre is a brilliant space within which to teach confidence, collaboration, and creativity, but at it's best it is also a place where we can all come together as a community 'to explore what it means to be human' in the same space, at the same time. Tonight, I am delighted that we get to do so again. The stakes were high then, when choosing this historic production. It seemed appropriate to do something with a big cast, after so long away, and something joyous and hopeful, as we emerge into a new and altered world. We also wanted to stage something which would remind us all of the thrill of liveness, an experience where we could celebrate the closeness of audience and

performer, and perhaps blur those lines. *Chariots of Fire* answered all our demands.

Excellently adapted from the well-known film by Mike Bartlett, in time for the 2012 London Olympics, *Chariots of Fire* tells the story of two men determined to achieve sporting immortality. Both characters are driven to succeed for different reasons, Harold Abrahams races in the face of bigotry and prejudice, whilst Eric Liddell in celebration of his faith. However, both men see their passion and dedication as a source of life and purpose. Their struggles and triumphs give us an opportunity to reaffirm what we know to be true, that to pursue our aspirations and ideals, in the face of obstacles and with the support of our friends, is the true challenge of our lives. A challenge that we all must face.

In our version of *Chariots of Fire* we have chosen to emphasise the importance of support, and togetherness, and liveness. So when the

runners run, they really run, and they require the support of the crowd to cheer them round those tight bends and those perilous straights. Together, perhaps, we can recreate a little piece of that Olympic glory.

This is my first full production at Whitgift, after chomping at the bit for four terms, and hearing the many anecdotes praising the quality of previous shows. It was a joy to get back into rehearsal and work with such talented performers and staff. *Chariots of Fire* is an ambitiously theatrical show, with a large cast, various accents, and constant scene changes, not to mention the actual running, but the pupils have taken on the challenge with a cheerful dedication that has been a pleasure to work with. I eagerly look forward to future theatrical endeavours here at school, and hope that you enjoy tonight's show.

JC Hammond  
Director of Drama

## PRODUCER'S NOTE

I'm lucky to have been part of a thriving Whitgift Drama Department over the last seven years. I have produced or stage managed (or both) over 15 Whitgift productions and been part of many more. Every production has had its challenges but each and every one has involved a stellar group of student actors and watching this particular group (the oldest of whom joined in my second year here!) flourish throughout their years at Whitgift has been a privilege.

My time here has allowed me to work with a dozen directors, all bringing their own ideas and quirks. They have each embraced me into their shows, allowing me to contribute, often way beyond my experience. In 2014, I joined Whitgift as a fresh-out-of-university Maths teacher and I was immediately welcomed into the theatre with a heartfelt bang, producing and stage managing *The Importance of Being Earnest* in my first term teaching. In my second year of teaching, my fifth production, *Treasure Island*, introduced me properly to Kit and Fraser who I have proudly followed up the school, working on

a multitude of productions, even producing a play that Kit directed.

As we come to my final production at Whitgift I have to thank everyone who I have ever worked with on a show; the students have provided constant entertainment both on stage and off, they have looked to me for support and their willingness to throw themselves into any challenge we set them has been inspiring. The directors have allowed me to develop skills which I will carry proudly into future productions and classrooms and many have become some of my closest friends. Finally, I can't thank the technical team enough; they immediately welcomed me into their fold and have provided the support I have needed in the most sleep-deprived and stressed moments of my time here.

I leave the Drama Department in very capable hands but will certainly be back soon as a member of the audience.

RO Seal



## CAST

<i>Harold</i>	Fraser Murray
<i>Eric</i>	Kit Connor
<i>Aubrey</i>	Damola Amusa
<i>Sandy</i>	Nifemi Bankole
<i>Andy</i>	Jude Keeper
<i>Sam Mussabini</i>	Teddy Homes Summers
<i>Sybil</i>	Sasha Willoughby
<i>Jennie</i>	Madinah Morrison
<i>Master of Trinity</i>	Henry Gillard
<i>Master of Caius</i>	Oscar Robinson
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	David Strong
<i>Lord Birkenhead</i>	Jack Godwin
<i>Sutherland</i>	Alex Braglewicz
<i>Florence</i>	Kate O'Connor
<i>Charlie Paddock</i>	Joe Reynolds
<i>Jackson Scholz</i>	Luke Ward
<i>Tom Watson</i>	Milo Moffitt
<i>John Keddie</i>	Charlie Kennedy
<i>Robin</i>	Harry Hutchinson
<i>Reg</i>	Joel Gulliford
<i>Jim</i>	Clifford Ho
<i>Charlie</i>	Dylan Viswanatha
<i>Frank</i>	Bakari Leon
<i>Alastair</i>	Felix Warren
<i>Colin</i>	Nick Seal
<i>Mr Liddell</i>	Miles Coppin
<i>Georges Andre</i>	Thomas Lofthouse
<i>G&amp;S President</i>	Jay Raymond
<i>G&amp;S Secretary</i>	James Perrott
<i>Provost</i>	Kevin Croos
<i>Toffy</i>	Ethan Hamilton
<i>Taylor</i>	Tom Bennett
<i>Girls from The Mikado</i>	Lucia Mayorga Sumaiya Bangura

<i>Announcer</i>	Jasper McNulty
<i>French Athletes</i>	Rafi Davis Leo Tabi
<i>French President</i>	Jack Mortlock
<i>Mr Ratcliffe</i>	Matthew Lee
<i>Foster</i>	Ting Wen
<i>Starter</i>	George Barnes
<i>Stagehand</i>	Aamir Hatimi
<i>Chorus</i>	Lizzie Granleese Tomos Harvey Vy Ngugen
<i>Contemporary Runner</i>	Ben Lewis

## CREATIVES

<i>Director</i>	JC Hammond
<i>Producer</i>	RO Seal
<i>Assistant Director/Producer</i>	ICS Jacob
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	DP Jenkinson
<i>Sound Designer</i>	AJ Hill
<i>Stage Manager</i>	RO Seal
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	HD Parritt
<i>Stage Crew</i>	Isabel Anyani-Boadum Mikaela Anyani-Boadum Zaki Fur Caspar Godwin Juanita Orukele Sam Parker Punit Soni
<i>Lighting</i>	Tom Saba
<i>Technical Consultant</i>	PJ Crook
<i>Singing Teacher</i>	AT Jones
<i>Repetiteur</i>	Andrew Lau
<i>Organist</i>	O Morrell
<i>Bagpipe Teacher</i>	B Ash
<i>Accent Coach</i>	K Higinbotham
<i>Scenic Artist</i>	L Crestani

*Costumes provided by Costume Workshop.*

## THE GIFT AND THE OLYMPICS

It is without doubt that Whitgift School and The Olympic Games are inexorably linked. There seems to be a cycle, almost built into the nature of the school by this point, that every few years or so, an individual is produced who excels in their chosen sport far past any county or national level. In recent memory, this relates to Joe Choong, who took home a Gold Medal for Modern Pentathlon from Tokyo in August. However, this tradition of exceptional Old Whitgiftians participating in this monumental competition goes back over 70 years.

Fencing at Whitgift has produced its fair share of Olympians, with both Arthur Smith and Peter Williams competing in the 1948 Olympics in both Individual and Team events, after leaving Whitgift in 1932 and 1937. World War II had brought about a 12-year hiatus (both men served in the military during this period), it is only one of three times that the Olympics have been postponed, with one of these instances being still quite fresh.

Whitgift's next appearance at the Olympics came soon after, with 17-year-old Steffen Cranmer being selected to

compete in the small-bore rifle event at Helsinki in 1952, halfway through his attendance in the Sixth Form. Being the youngest person ever to represent Great Britain in any shooting event, placing 19th on the rankings was certainly an incredible achievement. His love of shooting did not end after this, as Cranmer went on to compete in the next two Olympic Games, he visited the school briefly in 2012.

In 1976, nearly three decades after Whitgift's first appearance at the Games, Great Britain's Modern Pentathlon Team snatched Gold, under the guidance of OW Michael Proudfoot. Leaving Whitgift in 1963, Proudfoot continued his love of Modern Pentathlon representing GB at a World Junior Championships in 1966. However, soon he found his passion in coaching, after taking up the GB National Team in 1973 and leading them to victory in Montreal in '76. Although this win was not without some slight hiccups. After a bout between Soviet athlete Boris Onishchenko and GB Team Captain Jim Fox that involved the use of a 'faulty' épée, an indignant Proudfoot demanded further investigation, uncovering the use of a hidden switch under the guard, which allowed

Onishchenko to mark a hit on his opponent without contact. Onishchenko was subsequently disqualified and banned for life. I guess some things never change.

Our next Olympian truly was a driving force, in and out of Whitgift. Lawrence Okoye, after scoring a try in the 1XV's victory in the NatWest Schools Cup in 2010, decided to pursue athletics. The following year, Okoye made the longest discus throw by a teenager in history, setting him up for the GB squad for the 2012 London Olympics. Performing extremely well in the qualifiers, Okoye managed to reach the final for Men's Discus, where he placed 12th. Okoye also participated in Tokyo in August. I recall meeting Okoye briefly in the school gym some years ago now, around a year after his attendance at the London Olympics (which I also had the pleasure of viewing in person). I specifically remember the way in which, as he got up from a bench, he never seemed to stop rising towards the ceiling, such was his stature.

The most recent Olympian to pass through Whitgift is, of course, Joseph Choong, who left the school in 2013. The only Whitgiftian to

receive a Gold Medal in the Olympics, he is one of the most successful sportsmen our school has seen. After making the Modern Pentathlon final in 2016 in Rio, Choong persevered with his training, reaching the slightly delayed '2020' Tokyo Olympics. His performance was extraordinary. Setting a new Olympic Record for most points gained in total, Choong was a dominant figure from the outset, proving that hard work does indeed pay off. With over ten years' experience in Modern Pentathlon, it will be

interesting to see where he will go next.

Looking back on Whitgift's rich history of Olympic sport, it is certainly odd that, with how rare successful Olympians are, Whitgift has managed to raise to so many, and I haven't even mentioned Zack Wallace and Jack Waller who were members of the GB Hockey team in Tokyo. It almost makes you wonder who else will be joining them, and perhaps be plastered on the side of the Sports' Hall. Now, before you watch this performance of 'Chariots

of Fire' (a story which has Olympic spirit at its heart), I ask you to consider the importance of such an event. Being the most watched sporting event in the world, there is clearly a fascination that humanity has with it. It feels almost as if the entire world is honed in on these athletes. Is it not ironic that the very spectacle designed to pit as many countries against each other as possible, somehow brings us closer together.

Fraser Murray  
Lower Sixth Form



*Bring me my bow of burning gold:  
Bring me my arrows of desire:  
Bring me my spear: O clouds unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire.  
I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.*

## THANK YOU...

Mounting a theatrical production in such a busy school requires the help and goodwill of a great number of people. We would like to thank: the Headmaster and the Governors for their support; subject teachers for their patience as their lessons were disrupted, their inboxes

filled and their fixtures missed; Samantha Vary for sending letters and organising the calendar; the marketing team for advertising the show, compiling the programme, and Graham Maudsley for designing the poster; the catering team for their food during show week

and for organising interval refreshments; Christine Pennicott for managing the box office; the cleaning staff for cleaning up after long rehearsals and finally the parents of the cast and crew for supporting their sons and daughters through line learning and exhausting rehearsals.



CHARIOTS OF FIRE  
Stage Adaptation by  
MIKE BARTLETT

Based on the Enigma Productions  
Limited motion picture  
By arrangement with Twentieth  
Century Fox Film Corporation  
And Allied Stars S.A. Panama  
Screenplay by Colin Welland

This amateur production of "Chariots  
of Fire" is presented by arrangement  
with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on  
behalf of Samuel French Ltd.  
[www.concordtheatricals.co.uk](http://www.concordtheatricals.co.uk)



WHITGIFT

### **Forthcoming Events**

Thursday 9 December

#### ***John Rutter Choral Concert***

3pm and 7.30pm,

Royal Albert Hall

(booking via [rpo.co.uk](http://rpo.co.uk))

Tuesday 14 December

#### ***Carol Service***

7.30pm, Croydon Minster

FREE admission

(please reserve on WisePay)

Wednesday 22 December

#### ***BBC Radio 3 Broadcast***

#### ***Choral Evensong***

Live broadcast

[www.whitgift.co.uk/events](http://www.whitgift.co.uk/events)

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