

*An epic story of magic and migration*

# FEATHERS IN THE SNOW

21–23 June | Big School | 7pm



WHITGIFT





## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Philip Ridley's storytelling takes form through a range of art, including painting, filmmaking, song writing and playwriting. He is often referred to as a pioneer of in-yer-face theatre: a style of theatre that is confrontational and encourages the sensibility of drama. *Feathers In the Snow* manages this in a way that is appropriate for the young, bringing to the surface the humanity of our existence through stories of love, home, migration, community, death and our endless failures to live alongside each other in peace.

Covering a timespan of over five-hundred years, the play stresses the rippling and consequential power of our decisions, reminding us how war and conflict have existed since the beginning of our time on Earth. It is only in recent decades though that technological advancements have led to the rapid, global broadcasting of these conflicts, resulting in young people regularly faced with graphic footage, propaganda, fake news and algorithms of bias. Through rivalries, disagreeing historians and journeys of refuge, Ridley urges us to question what we consume in our pursuits of the truth and how we embrace the opportunity that comes with a new beginning.

Thankfully, the hard-hitting morality of the play is coupled with humour and engulfed within a fantastical world,

transporting us to kingdoms of murky lagoons, talking animals and wizardry. This makes for a play that does what theatre does best: enable people to explore challenging themes through play and storytelling.

Ridley's latest version of *Feathers In the Snow*, written in 2015, has 119 written characters: an additional 45 characters to the original version he wrote in 2012. Playfulness is in abundance with pupils using multi-role performance throughout, embodying a queen one moment and a famous leopard the next. Whilst this is central to the style of the play, it is also symbolic of the diversity of skills, strengths and experiences needed to make a strong community. I hope as both audience and performers come together for *Feathers In the Snow*, that the value of community is evident and a sense of togetherness here at Whitgift is felt.

It has been an honour to work with this company of performers, and the creative team, in bringing *Feathers In the Snow* to Big School.

**E Spedding**  
*Drama Teacher*

## STORIES IN HISTORY: HOW STORIES CHANGE OUR PERCEPTION OF HISTORICAL TRUTH

Stories of human experience have been passed down orally and visually since early human history. Early stories in the form of cave paintings depicting early tribal quests against mammoths and wild animals still remain visible to this day, captivating us and informing us on what life was like thousands of years ago. Storytelling through one form or another has been arguably the most important historical method of recording events and experiences. Even Herodotus, the 'father of history' and arguably the very first historian, was famous for incorporating storytelling elements into his work when he was writing about events in ancient Greece.

Great myths and legends such as the Minotaur, or the Greek gods would be lost to us if it weren't for story telling through generations and depictions. However, stories can also dangerously hide the truth of history from public perception. A modern example of this is with Native Americans and the North American settlers. A common narrative especially around Thanksgiving for Americans, is the story of friendship and the coming together of two opposite societies to help one another. However, the truth about the encounters between Native Americans and settlers is suggested to be a much darker one, including cases of settlers giving

blankets contaminated with smallpox to the local people under a guise of friendship, only for the reality to be the genocidal intention of removing the locals from their own land. The real stories are often less harmonious and joyous than the ones we hear, such is the nature of storytelling whereby stories are told to entertain rather than to scare.

In the play *Feathers In the Snow*, storytelling is central to the play's themes and characters. The play spans hundreds of years and therefore inevitably the play itself is a story, with the main characters trying to make sense of their experiences and where they fit in within a wider world.

Experience is something human nature has a deeply intertwined relationship with. We love to relive stories of our best experiences, proudly sharing with family and friends our achievements and moments of joy, but it is not the same for experiences we would rather forget. Throughout history this is seen countless times, the victors of a war recounting tales of heroic might and triumph but neglecting and choosing to let the stories of despair and loss fade into time. Modern examples such as the British Empire come to mind, with tales of the suffering the empire inflicted onto colonies being deliberately left

out of the stories that were brought back to Britain. Instead, colonisers and soldiers return with stories of riches and paradises told to future generations and written about vividly by historians. The truth, in this sense is lost, one side of history being suppressed to promote a narrative of conquerors and heroes for the 'winners', whilst the 'losers' are marginalised, their experiences often forgotten for an age.

Theatre and modern history aim to make sense of these experiences, bringing stories to life in order to educate and inspire future generations. Take *War Horse* for example: a play whereby the audience is taken on the journeys and experiences of war for a young soldier and a war horse.

*Feathers In the Snow* is a wide-reaching and topical play. Set in a fantastical world, the audience follows the characters telling their own stories of love, political drama and war. By the end of the play they are left defeated but unbroken, continuing in their own quest for a new place to call home, just as many civilians in history have and many civilians of today still do.

**Douglas McWilliam**  
*Lower Sixth Form*

*'Set in a fantastical world, the audience follows the characters telling their own stories of love, political drama and war'*





# FEATHERS IN THE SNOW

## Cast

Shylala	Rahul Chakravarty
TwoTwo	Marcos Byrne
Lena, TwoTwo's Cousin, Second Survivor	Azam Syed
Jared, Sea Witch	Joe Hill
Stefan, Kalef, TwoTwoian General, Fifth Survivor, Puppeteer Ensemble	Seyi Andes-Pelumi
First Neighbour, Fourth Survivor, Queen Zeta	Danny Montgomery
Second Neighbour, Gorash	Alexey Kosovan
Third Neighbour, Cook, Second Bodyguard	Rourke Mooney
First Youth (Crowd Ensemble), Great White Shark, Prisoner	Euan Miller
Fifth Youth (Crowd Ensemble), King Jarvish, Fourth Court Attendant, Puppeteer Ensemble	Milo Lamond
Sixth Youth (Crowd Ensemble), Puppeteer Ensemble	Rafa Sharma
TwoTwo's Mum, New Official Historian of TwoTwoia	Patrick Carswell
TwoTwo's Dad, Pleb Master, Soldier Ensemble	Otto Monge
TwoTwo's Aunt's Husband, First Survivor, Cake Person	Seb Wade
TwoTwo's Aunt, First Official Historian of TwoTwoia	Teddy Proud
Fourth Youth (Crowd Ensemble), Second Official Historian of TwoTwoia, Betty the Beetroot Boiler	Harry Mortimer
New Official Historian of Blazerbirdia, Seventh Youth (Crowd Ensemble), Third Survivor, LaKreesh LaRoo	Monty Moffitt
Blazerbirdian General, Third Soldier, Soldier Ensemble, Cake Person	George Manning
Blazerbirdian Captain, First Soldier, Soldier Ensemble, Cake Person	Arthur Brotherhood
Queen Farina, TwoTwoian Captain, Soldier Ensemble	William Henderson
Second Youth (Crowd Ensemble), Lena II, Second Court Attendant, Puppeteer Ensemble	Krish Patel
Professor Eccentric with Moustache, First Bodyguard, Sixth Survivor	Rafael Cianfarani
Figure, Pleb Prosecutor, Teacher	Oliver Richard
Pleb Judge, Second Soldier, Soldier Ensemble, Cake Person	Max Smolen
Second Advisor, Mya	Daniel Ampleford
Fairy, Second Shylala Follower, Puppeteer Ensemble	Aidan Mulvey
King Leondo, Seventh Shylala Follower, First Official Historian of Blazerbirdia, Soldier Ensemble, Cake Person	Zac Imona
Town Crier, First Court Attendant, Second Stinky Pleb, Tailor One	Sam Warren
First Stinky Pleb, Builder, Seventh Survivor, Soldier Ensemble	Elliott Schroeder
Legless	Joe Sigrist
Pleb Courtroom Clerk, Second Blazerbirdian, Tailor Two, Soldier Ensemble, Cake Person	Hamish McMillan
Third Stinky Pleb, First Advisor, Third Shylala Follower, Crowd Ensemble	Rupert Noble
Notorious Thug Twin One, Sixth Shylala Follower, Third Bodyguard Puppeteer Ensemble	Julian Church
Notorious Thug Twin Two, Fifth Shylala Follower, Puppeteer Ensemble	Shaurya Arora
First Shylala Follower, First Blazerbirdian, Puppeteer Ensemble	Zayan Majeed
Toro, Fourth Shylala Follower, Jenny the Juniper Juicer	Alexander Rice
Rashek, Second TwoTwoian, Soldier Ensemble, Pleb Master Guard One	Alby Edwards

<i>Third New TwoTwoian, Third TwoTwoian, Shekron, Soldier Ensemble</i>	JP Redway
<i>Kryella, First Witness, Third Blazerbirdian, Crowd Ensemble, Puppeteer Ensemble</i>	Ameer Lunga
<i>Second New TwoTwoian, Second Witness, Soldier Ensemble, Puppeteer Ensemble</i>	Benjamyn Gnanaseharam
<i>Famous Savage Leopard, Puppeteer Ensemble</i>	Yusuf Musalam
<i>First TwoTwoian, Crowd Ensemble, Puppeteer Ensemble, Harry the Handyman, Third Youth</i>	Xavier Taylor-Smith
<i>Blazerbird (puppeteer and voice), Puppeteer Ensemble</i>	Louis Boon
<i>Blazerbird (puppeteer), Pleb Master Guard Two</i>	Sam Moorhouse
<i>Lulu the Pig (voice and puppeteer), King, Puppeteer Ensemble, Whale</i>	Sam Hubber
<i>Fifth Court Attendant, Peter the Potato Peeler, Puppeteer Ensemble, Whale</i>	Jayden Lee
<i>Fleshy and Lumpy Thing, Octopus (voice)</i>	Konrad Merz
<i>Seagull, Fourth Blazerbirdian, Puppeteer Ensemble</i>	Sahil Phanse
<i>Jimmy the Jailer, Crowd Ensemble, Piarra, Puppeteer Ensemble</i>	Ayaan Chaudhry
<i>Bumblebee, Puppeteer Ensemble</i>	Dheer Patel
<i>First New TwoTwoian, Third Court Attendant, Puppeteer Ensemble</i>	Oscar Morrison
<i>Wizard, Graham the Gravy Gourmet</i>	Sam McIntyre
<i>Puppeteer Ensemble, Crowd Ensemble, Princess, Queen</i>	Felix Sweetser

## Creative Team

<i>Director</i>	E Spedding
<i>Producer</i>	E Jupp
<i>Lighting Design</i>	D Jenkinson
<i>Sound Design</i>	Y Dudnyk
<i>Production technician</i>	A Hill
<i>Assistant Director</i>	L Gill
<i>Lighting Operator</i>	Arjun Kashyap
<i>Stage Managers</i>	E Jupp & L Gill
<i>Prop Team Leads</i>	G Dixon & Arjun Kashyap
<i>Prop Support</i>	S Korski, L Kubasiak & E Spedding
<i>Prop Makers</i>	Jack Coppin, Cameron Hamilton, Arjun Kashyap, Shachin Konesh, Ismail Moavia, Felix Robinson, Arshia Saffarizadeh & Orlando Watt
<i>Backstage Support</i>	G Dixon, H Harding & J Robak
<i>Hair and Makeup Team</i>	L Allen, K Barker, J Barrat, O Bhatti, D Binacchi, H Harding, E Herbert, S Korski, H Macgregor & K Mason
<i>Blazerbird Puppet Designer</i>	Judith Hope
<i>Blazerbird Scenic Design</i>	Freddie Cary
<i>Musical Composers</i>	F Ellson, Lucian Ng & O Turner

## HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Home can mean many different things to people. In my view, home is somewhere you feel loved and have created fond memories: this may be your house, but could also be another place like the theatre, making my idea of home align with the idea that 'home is where the heart is'. Others may argue that home is somewhere that is safe from any danger or harm, which again could be a house, a community or someplace else. Usually, a house is synonymous with a home, but the two can be separate from each other. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word 'home' in quite a few different ways. One of them is, 'a dwelling-place, house, abode; the fixed residence of a family or household', which again returns to this idea that home is solely materialistic, which might be the case for some people; thinking of your home as the place with a comfy bed is definitely a valid description, but this isn't necessarily the case. As Pico Iyer says in his TED talk on home, "home has really less to do with a piece of soil than, you could say, with a piece of soul."

Iyer also questions the meaning of, "Where do you come from?" in an ancestral, educational, and residential

context. The analysis of this phrase led me to think about what home means to those immigrating from their home country in search of better opportunities, or seeking refuge from war. The passenger liner *HMT Empire Windrush* and the Windrush Generation come to mind with 22nd June 2023 marking the 75th anniversary of *HMT Empire Windrush*'s arrival in Britain. Most people who disembarked from the *Windrush* moved to areas in London, such as Brixton, which is well known for its Caribbean heritage and culture. As Sam Beaver King MBE (former mayor of Southwark, 1926-2016) stated in an interview with the BBC, "We had no intention of coming back to a colony, we were looking forward, we were looking towards a new home." As we can see here, those that immigrated from the *Windrush* left their homes to find new opportunities in a new country, with others that did the same. This created a community of people united by their experiences on the journey and bringing some of their culture over to their new homes and new communities, connecting ideas of a material home and home being a person (or indeed people) that you cherish and love.



Today, the theme of seeking refuge is incredibly relevant, with wars in Syria and Ukraine. Citizens find themselves fleeing from their country to find a safe place away from any harm and danger. They can go to extreme, but often necessary, lengths to find a new home – something many of us often take for granted. Having no other option but to leave a space where they felt safe and made so many fond memories is absolutely devastating. However, people's resilience and determination to get to a safe place so that they can start a new life away from conflict tells us how important home is and the power that it holds in our lives. It is something so much bigger than material goods, four walls and windows; it has the power to unite people in every country and continent, and that something is love.

**Bakari Leon**

*Lower Sixth Form*



***‘People’s resilience and determination to get to a safe place so that they can start a new life away from conflict and danger tells us how important home is’***

# FEATHERS IN THE SNOW



*Illustration by  
Justin Kravets  
(Lower First Form)*

## THANKS...

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; Director of Drama, J Hammond, for his support and guidance, subject teachers for their patience and good faith in helping the performers to balance their studies with rehearsals; S Vary for organising the calendar; G Maudsley for designing the programme; the marketing team for compiling the programme and advertising the show; the catering team for providing dinners during show week and for organising interval refreshments; the Art Department; J Johnson, L Kubasiak and O Bhatti, for providing prop making, art support, materials and use of their workshop; C Pennicott for managing the box office; the cleaning staff for cleaning up after long rehearsals, and, finally, the parents of the cast for supporting their children to commit to and attend rehearsals and learn lines.









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