



A TALE OF TWO CITIES

19-21 June | 7pm | Big School

WHITGIFT



A TALE OF TWO CITIES

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Junior Drama at Whitgift has flourished since the Pandemic, thanks in no small part to the dedication of an unusually large group of talented performers. Looking back to the exuberant and irreverent *Lionboy*, directed by Matthew Dann (Old Whitgiftian) in February 2022, I recall several truly memorable performances of huge promise. In the intervening years we have had four excellent junior shows, but prior to this production I hadn't yet had the opportunity to work with this age group myself. When the time came to choose my first Junior play at Whitgift, I knew that I had to choose something worthy of this fine company of actors, but also something unlike the work that they had performed before. It had to be something that would stretch them and aid them in continuing to develop their craft...

What better than a sleek and powerful adaptation of one of the most famous novels of all time? Mike Poulton's version of *A Tale of Two Cities* maintains much of the epic scope of the original narrative, but relentlessly focusses on the emotional journey of the characters. In this piece our fine junior actors have discovered intense dramatic scenes to navigate, and complex characters to convey, and I have witnessed them rise to the challenge with real dedication.

A Tale of Two Cities is also particularly relevant now, as the world seemingly navigates another period of increasing violence and unrest. Dickens' impassioned argument that the only answer to injustice is the application of compassion and mercy, rather than violence and conquest, might be especially hard to make in these circumstances, but it is consequently even more vital. *A Tale of Two Cities* is also a paean to self-sacrifice and selflessness. In an era where inflated ideas of success are blasted at us from every angle by social media, Sydney Carton can be an instructive hero to contemplate. What *does* make a worthwhile life?

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Theatre can be the place for a community such as ours to have these discussions and ponder how visions of the past can help us to understand the ever-evolving present.

The summer Junior show has, over the past three years, evolved into the production that best encapsulates the inclusive nature of theatre at Whitgift. After *Billy Elliot* and *Feathers in the Snow*, *A Tale of Two Cities* is another large cast (over fifty) with ambitious staging that employs the entire company throughout. Staging a show such as this, with twenty scenes and fifteen carefully rehearsed transitions, as well as over a hundred costume changes, is one of the biggest challenges a young performer can undertake. It requires huge focus, resolve, energy and creativity, and I feel that this company have all of that in them, and more. Whether they realise that promise so emphatically first demonstrated in *Lionboy* will be up to you, their audience, to decide.

JC Hammond
Director



'The summer Junior show best encapsulates the inclusive nature of theatre at Whitgift'





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CAST

<i>Charles Darnay</i>	Seb Wade
<i>Sydney Carton</i>	Marcos Byrne
<i>Lucie Manette</i>	Milo Lamond
<i>Dr Manette</i>	Danny Montgomery
<i>Mr Lorry</i>	Hamish McMillan
<i>Miss Pross</i>	Patrick Carswell
<i>Marquis St Evremond</i>	Rahul Chakravarty
<i>Jerry Cruncher</i>	Sam Warren
<i>John Barsad</i>	Monty Al-Qassab
<i>Madame Defarge</i>	Xavier Taylor-Smith
<i>Defarge</i>	George Pang
<i>Stryver</i>	Ethan Carmalt
<i>Gabelle</i>	Xander McMillan
<i>President 1</i>	Harry Mortimer
<i>President 2</i>	Max Kan
<i>Boy</i>	Tommy Carmalt
<i>Narrator/Judge</i>	Konrad Merz
<i>Attorney-General</i>	Austin Alder
<i>Citizen</i>	Rupert Noble
<i>Prosecutor</i>	Alby Edwards
<i>Pamela Keating</i>	Kai Gaillet
<i>Peasant Father</i>	Oliver Oldham
<i>Coachman</i>	Elliott Schroeder
<i>Jenny Herring</i>	Zebulon Duffy
<i>Frenchman 1</i>	Arthur Brotherhood
<i>Frenchman 2</i>	Louis Motte
<i>Frenchman 3</i>	Arshia Saffarizadeh
<i>Frenchman 4/Waiter</i>	Felix Sweetser
<i>Frenchman 5</i>	Joe O'Connor
<i>Frenchman 6</i>	Krish Patel
<i>Gaoler 1</i>	Wilfred Skerry
<i>Gaoler 2</i>	Kai Kazemi
<i>Clerk of the Court</i>	Daniel Ampleford
<i>Foreman/Bystander 2</i>	Benjamyn Gnanaseharam

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<i>Peasant Child</i>	Caleb Taylor-Smith
<i>Valet</i>	Leo Archer
<i>Bystander 1</i>	Samuel McIntyre
<i>Servant 1</i>	Alex Ostroverkhov
<i>Servant 2</i>	Howie Strang
<i>Court Official</i>	Timothy Denson
<i>Woman in Crowd</i>	Ellis Pang
<i>Juryman 1</i>	Oscar Morrison
<i>Officer 1</i>	Julien Gande
<i>Officer 2</i>	Ameer Lunga
<i>Guard</i>	Luca Brindle
<i>Juryman 2</i>	Nathaniel Owusu
<i>Juryman 3</i>	Nick Ostroverkhov
<i>Juryman 4</i>	Rory Reynolds
<i>Juryman 5</i>	Shriyans Ganjewar
<i>Woman 1</i>	Edi Hackman
<i>Woman 2</i>	Zachy Javaid
<i>Woman 3</i>	Maitreya Adhage

All other parts are played by members of the company

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

<i>Director</i>	JC Hammond
<i>Producer</i>	CO Aluko
<i>Costume Design</i>	EM Wells
<i>Sound Design</i>	DO Olufowora
<i>Sound</i>	Jack Coppin
<i>Lighting</i>	Arjun Kashyap
<i>Technical Director</i>	DP Jenkinson
<i>Stage Technician</i>	AJ Hill
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	AE Weddell
<i>Hair & Make-up assistant</i>	HI Macgregor
<i>Runner</i>	Orlando Watt

Photography by AJ Hill

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SOME THOUGHTS ON A TALE OF TWO CITIES

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.” The opening to Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities* reveals what lies at the heart of the novel: contrast.

Published in 1859, *A Tale of Two Cities* crosses between London and Paris at the start of the French Revolution. It focuses on Charles Darnay and Sydney Carton and their mutual love for Lucie Manette. Despite their remarkable physical resemblance, they are two very different characters and despite their entanglement, they go on different journeys.

Darnay is a straightforward character: kind and virtuous. He was born into French aristocracy but opposes its cruelty and indifference toward the working class, leading him to retreat to England. Although seemingly shallow, Carton is paradoxical: brilliant yet ambitionless. This wasting of his potential drives his self-loathing, fuelling his alcoholism. Darnay and Carton are both driven largely by their love for Lucie Manette, however because they start off in such different places, they take different paths through the story.

Lucie stands at the centre of a love triangle between her, Darnay and Carton. Throughout *A Tale of Two Cities*, she is a symbol of goodness and purity. She loves both characters but in different ways, and the love she has for each of them plays an influential role in guiding them on their respective journeys. All three care for one another, even though they are not always in each other’s lives. Dickens’ portrayal of this relationship speaks to his belief in

fate. Some critics argue *A Tale of Two Cities* has many far-fetched plot conveniences, however Dickens believed that people are more connected than they know; the right people will enter our lives at the right time. This is demonstrated by the relationship between Lucie, Darnay and Carton because their journeys intersect right when they need each other.

The vast majority of characters in *A Tale of Two Cities* are caricatures, meaning their defining trait is exaggerated. Critics say this is a failure of Dickens, as it means he does not develop enough conflict between or within his characters- a key element of any story. However, Dickens creates conflict by contrasting the simplicity of his characters with his complex thoughts on the French Revolution. Before the revolution starts, Dickens presents the cruelty of the French aristocracy toward the working class. However, he does not frame the revolution as a triumphant turning point, choosing to also present its cruel nature. He frames the revolution as wrong but inevitable due to the way the aristocracy treated the working class. Dickens creates complexity from this, as he conveys how the French Revolution was simply replacing injustice with itself, and questions if injustice can truly be eradicated- to which he provides no clear answer. This contrasts with the simplicity of his characters as it creates a conflict between their actions and character; how could such straightforward characters create such a complex situation?

Qasim Haque
Lower Sixth Form

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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

“One must never compromise with tyrants. One can only strike at kings through the head. Nothing can be expected from kings except force of arms. I vote for the death of the tyrant.” The tyrant Georges Danton speaks of is Louis XVI, who had once controlled France with an iron grip forged from centuries of feudal oppression and complacency. This all changed in the summer of 1788, when France fell into an unprecedented period of turmoil. The costly Seven Years and American Revolutionary Wars had drained the treasuries dry and France was spiralling toward bankruptcy. When Louis attempted to enforce radical financial reforms to fix this, his own aristocracy resisted, unwilling to waiver their privileges. With revolts from the urban masses over rising food prices; political resistance from the aristocracy of the 2nd Estate, and a rapidly declining economy, Louis XVI was forced to call upon the Estates-General to solve the crisis. Louis hoped that the three estates – clergy, nobility, and the commoners – could bring him an economic solution for France’s bankruptcy, but in an unexpected turn of events, it brought only revolution.

On June 17th 1789, the Third Estate broke off and proclaimed the National Assembly, sparking a decade of radical change and violence in France. With the support of the urban masses of Paris, the National Assembly became the sovereign body of the nation; abolishing feudalism, limiting the power of the monarchy, and

removing the privileges of the nobility. Radical new enlightenment ideas were discussed by Bourgeois clubs like the Jacobins and Cordeliers; papal influence was restricted with Church land being sold off to the people, and unpopular taxes were abolished.

The King’s flight from Paris and the threats from Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II to reinstate the French monarchy by force fuelled republicanism, and it soon dominated the public and political sphere. With this wave of radical republicanism came fear and violence: in April 1792, France declared war on Austria, sparking the 1st Coalition War, whilst in Paris, radical Jacobins exploited the fear of the mob

‘Led by Maximilian Robespierre, the Jacobins ruled through terror and war’

to purge monarchists and moderates from government. Led by Maximilian Robespierre, the Jacobins ruled through terror and war; executing thousands of supposed counter-revolutionists and conscripting hundreds of

thousands into wars with Europe and the rebellious provinces. Under the tyranny of Robespierre’s control, 70,000 would die by the guillotine; 250,000 would die in civil conflict, and a further 550,000 would die in a war against the joint-powers of Europe.

It was only when Robespierre’s blood-thirsty eyes lingered over the National Convention itself that his rule was brought to an end. Fearing that Robespierre and the Committee for Public Safety would soon purge many of them, the deputies of the National Convention made the first

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move against Robespierre, and on the 27th July 1794, he along with 18 other Jacobin leaders were arrested and executed.

To stop the popular masses from overthrowing the regime, the new Directory relied on their support of the army to stamp down resistance. Reliance on the army would prove to be their ultimate undoing, and without the support of the people, no one could or even wanted to stop the inevitable. Napoleon Bonaparte, a young Corsican general, along with several others, surrounded the Directory's chamber on the 9th November 1799 in what is known as the 'Coup of Brumaire'. The Directory was abolished and the First Consulate entered power, officially ending the French Revolution. The twisted irony of it all is that despite the millions of deaths and a decade of famine and war stemming from a desire to give the people the power, it would ultimately pave the way for Napoleon to become the country's first Emperor.



Charlie Kennedy
Lower Sixth Form

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; Mr Osborne for his support of Drama; subject teachers for their patience and good faith in helping the performers to balance their studies with rehearsals; the Marketing team for compiling the programme and advertising the show; the Catering team for their food during show week and for organising interval refreshments; Miss 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 through line learning and exhausting rehearsals.





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