



By Caryl Churchill | 26-28 March | 7pm | PAC

WHITGIFT

LOVE AND INFORMATION

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I have always been drawn to artistic freedom; of finding ways to express the self in ways that are radical and liberating. I spent my teenage years listening to pioneer performer Kate Bush and watching the cinematic works of the genius filmmaker David Lynch, wondering what worlds I would one day create myself. As a director, bringing to life another writer's playscript may seem an unlikely fit – surely I should be writing my own!

However, humans are contrary to their very core, and I am also a chronic rule abider. Indeed, being a teacher by day epitomises this: I manage busy school classrooms, prompted from room to room by the ringing of a bell, ensuring that our boys are well behaved and learning.

The very art of creating is, then, one of both freedom and structure. Even the most groundbreaking theatre maker creates within a context of references and inspirations whilst trying to make something that speaks for themselves.

Enter stage left Caryl Churchill's groundbreaking text, *Love and Information*, a play script unlike any other. A series of quick-fire vignettes that explore the ways humans connect (or indeed, fail to connect) in a technologically transformed world, Churchill's book offers both autonomy and clear guidelines.

Each scene offers little envisagement beyond a title. No directions, no character names, no context. It is up to the director to interpret as they wish.

However, rules must – as always – be followed. No characters may appear in more than one scene making only the briefest of cameos. And each section of the text (divided into seven by Churchill into thematic families) can be swapped into any order – but must remain within its section.

So when Churchill offers you an almost blank slate, what do you do with it? I knew, coming into my first production, that I



LOVE AND INFORMATION

needed a vision. As someone fascinated by the digital age and the ways in which it manages to both connect us and divide us, I wanted to find an appropriate medium to explore it.

Enter stage right our vision: a play that operates like a social media doomscore. These brief scenes remind me of TikTok videos, snippets that span genre and emotions; that blur fact and fiction; from different times and places: and yet utterly capture the spectrum of life on earth.

As someone with ADHD, I also hope to give the audience insight into the neurodiverse brain. It is a common misconception that ADHD is a condition that leads to high energy and a lack of concentration. My experience of it is very different. It is high sensitivity; an extreme sense of emotions; a strong sense of justice; but equally the relentless craving for dopamine. Social media is, therefore, often the place my brain seeks to take refuge.

I am also a pop culture aficionado. Historically, pop culture has been a reflection of the status quo and the world in which it is created. However, now we entertain a new age where the next generation have more access to enjoy

culture from the past synchronously with that of their own world. Was this ever summed up better than by my personal icon topping the charts with global hit 'Running Up That Hill', in 2022. I seek through this production to remind us that art – created by the human mind and heart – has the ability to transcend time and space, and to mean as much to viewers today as it did when it was inception.

'The very art of creating is one of freedom and structure'

Whilst a man may have a vision, it has been the collaborative process that brings a production to life. In the case of *Love and Information*, we have had less a cast than a company

of dynamic performers whose creativity, boldness, risk-taking and playful natures have led to scenes swiftly developed through their own imaginativeness. They have been truly extraordinary.

We hope that you enjoy tonight's production

J P Hodge
Director



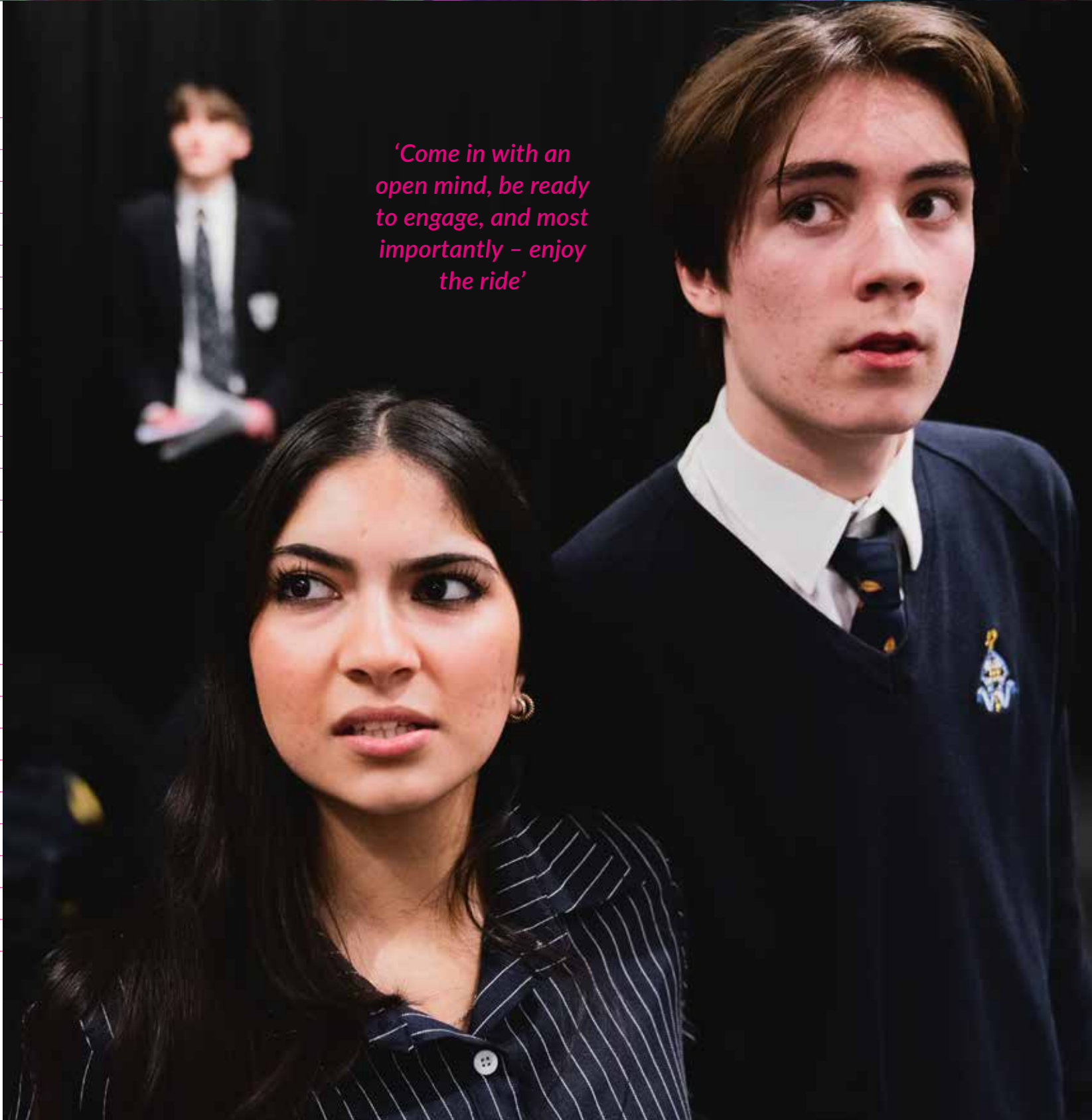
THE COMPANY

William Biletsky
Marcos Byrne
Raf Cianfarani
Omi Lashev
Solomon Marks
Konrad Merz
Arianna Mohammadi
Otto Monge
Elana Punjani
Daniel Thomas
Seb Wade
Felix Warren
Sam Warren
Kobi Watson

CREATIVE TEAM

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Director</i> | JP Hodge |
| <i>Producer</i> | CO Aluko |
| <i>Technical Director</i> | DP Jenkinson |
| <i>Costume Designer</i> | E Mulligan |
| <i>Assistant Directors</i> | AJ Glenin |
| <i>Hair & Make Up</i> | HI MacGregor |
| <i>Technicians</i> | AJ Hill, DO Olufowora |
| <i>Lighting</i> | Arjun Kashyap |
| <i>Video</i> | Michael Tsui |

Photography by AJ Hill



'Come in with an open mind, be ready to engage, and most importantly - enjoy the ride'

EXPLORING LOVE AND INFORMATION: A CONVERSATION WITH OTTO MONGE AND SOLOMON MARKS

Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information* presents a departure from traditional storytelling, offering audiences a kaleidoscope of fragmented, interwoven moments that reflect the way we process information in the modern world. We sat down with two of the production's key performers, Otto and Solomon, to discuss their experiences with this unique theatrical challenge.

Unlike conventional plays with a linear narrative, *Love and Information* is a series of short, seemingly unrelated scenes performed by a rotating cast of actors.

Otto explains:

"There aren't really set roles in this play. Everyone plays multiple characters across different scenes, which means we're constantly shifting accents, physicality, and emotional states. It's more of an ensemble piece than a play with leading roles, and that makes it a really exciting challenge."

Solomon adds:

"Each scene stands alone, yet they're all connected by themes rather than plot. You get these intense glimpses into different lives, but the real thread tying it all together is how we experience and process information in a world where everything is fragmented and fast-moving."

With such a diverse array of scenes, we asked Otto and Solomon to highlight moments that have resonated with them most during rehearsals.

Solomon reflects on a particularly poignant exchange:

"One scene I really connect with is a conversation between my character and another played by Daniel. It's subtle, but deeply emotional – he's talking about 'leaving the country,' but it's really a euphemism for suicidal thoughts. My character gradually pieces it together, and the realization is incredibly powerful. It

speaks to the struggles of men's mental health and the difficulty of expressing vulnerability. That's something really important to portray on stage."

For Otto, the fascination lies in the play's physical and conceptual demands:

"I perform in a scene called *The Child Who Didn't Know Pain*, where I play a character who's human but incapable of feeling any pain. It's a surreal role that requires me to move in an almost robotic, uncanny way. What's interesting is that I don't actually speak – I mouth the words while another actor voices them. That allows me to exaggerate my movements and create this eerie contrast between mechanical and human behavior. It's a really fun challenge."

'You might laugh one moment and feel deeply moved the next'

Caryl Churchill's work has long pushed boundaries in theatre, and *Love and Information* is no exception. We asked the actors why this play feels particularly relevant in today's world.



Solomon offers insight into its themes:

"We live in a time where we're bombarded with constant information – social media, news, entertainment – all of it coming

at us in short bursts. The play reflects that experience by presenting these tiny, intense moments, almost like scrolling through TikTok or flipping through channels. It forces us to think about how we absorb and interpret information."

Otto agrees, highlighting the innovative direction of the Whitgift production:

"Mr. Hodge has chosen to emphasize the idea of digital overload in our staging. The scenes will feel like fragments of online content, mirroring the way we consume stories today. This format is similar to other modern experimental plays, like *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons*, which play with structure and storytelling in new ways. It's an exciting direction for Whitgift's theatre programme."

Given the abstract and unconventional nature of *Love and Information*, we asked Otto and Solomon how they hope audiences will respond. Solomon emphasizes the importance of keeping an open mind:

"This isn't a traditional play with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Each scene presents a different moment, a different experience. I'd encourage audiences to embrace the randomness and let themselves be surprised. You might laugh one moment and feel deeply moved the next."

Otto adds:

"A lot of the fun comes from the unpredictability. Because the script leaves so much open to interpretation, our choices as performers shape the way the audience experiences it. Some moments are comedic, others are unsettling or thought-provoking. It's a play that invites you to think, but also to feel."



For those planning to attend, Otto and Solomon offer some final words of advice:

"Come in with an open mind, be ready to engage, and most importantly – enjoy the ride. *Love and Information* is unlike anything you've seen before, and that's what makes it so exciting."



THANK YOU...

Mounting a theatrical production in such a busy school requires the help and goodwill of a great number of people. Many people have been involved in getting our Frankensteinian social media monster alive on the slab, we would like to thank: the collective wisdom of the Drama department, J Hammond, E Spedding, C Aluko and E Mulligan, whose many extraordinary shows prior have shown me that anything is possible in a Whitgift production; the Headmaster and the Governors for their support; subject teachers for their patience and good faith in helping the performers to balance their studies with rehearsals; S Leonidas for sending letters and 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; 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 attend rehearsals, learn lines and commit to many exhausting rehearsals.





WHITGIFT

Forthcoming drama production:

**THE LIGHTNING THIEF:
THE PERCY JACKSON MUSICAL**

By Joe Tracz and Rob Rokicki

18-20 June
7pm
Big School

www.whitgift.co.uk/events

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