

## **Introduction**

### **Aladdin**

Welcome to this introduction to the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith's **Aladdin**, written by Vikki Stone and directed by Abigail Graham.

The audio-described performance is on Saturday 11 December at 6pm. Please check with the Box Office for the time of the touch tour. This introduction will be repeated live in the theatre 15 minutes before the show, at 5.45pm, to let you know of any last minute changes and so that you can check that your headset is working. The production is approximately 2 hours and 5 minutes with a 15 minute interval - 50 minutes for Act One and 55 minutes for Act Two. The live audio-description will be given by Alison Clarke and Ruth James.

Please be aware that there are flashing lights, strobe lighting, bright lights that flash into the audience, and haze. At times the sound effects and music are very loud and we'll try to avoid speaking then, but you may need to turn up the volume of the description in your headset.

If you've never been to a pantomime before, here's **what to expect**. Unlike some other plays where people sit and listen quietly, at pantomimes you're allowed to shout out and sing along, boo the baddies and cheer the goodies. There's a multicultural cast of different shapes, ages and sizes, with seven main characters and four ensemble members, who play everyone else. Everyone has fabulously extravagant costumes and wigs, most of them sparkling with sequins and glitter. Some characters will come out into the audience and cause chaos, and others will ask us to shout out greetings.

Aladdin longs for riches, good fortune and his one true love while stuck working in Dave Twankey's launderette. But when the dastardly Abanazer lures him into the depths of a deep cave, Aladdin's life is turned upside down! With the Genie by his side and the magic lamp in his pocket, Aladdin finds

himself on the adventure of a lifetime. But Abanazer has other plans... can Aladdin defeat him and win the hand of the Princess, or will he be back in the launderette before you can say “open sesame”?

In front of the stage is a space where the musicians sit to play. There's a curtain between them and us and because it's much lower down than the stage, *and* lower down than the floor of the theatre where we're sitting, it's called the **Pit**. For *Aladdin*, there's a drummer, a guitarist, who also plays bass guitar and a pianist in the Pit.

Facing us while we wait for the pantomime to start is a colourful scene: the word 'Aladdin' is written in huge black letters on a colourful background of fluffy clouds which change colour in time with the music. On the left of 'Aladdin' is a scrawl of random shapes including an arrow. Above the word 'Aladdin' is a scattering of small sparkling lights and small lights also swoop around the auditorium around and over us and play on the walls. A very small toy car with a large ball balanced on top meanders at random about the floor of the stage.

During the performance when the location of the action is changing a huge street map of London hides the stage with London in large letters in the centre. The floor of the stage stays the same and is painted in stripes of blue, purple and pink.

Once the frontcloth lifts up, we move quickly from one location to another. The stage is framed with three arches one behind the other, painted with brightly coloured flowers and with words painted on them, like 'Dream Big Dreams', 'There is no Planet B' and 'Love is Love'. A huge neon yellow sun hangs above.

We first visit Hammersmith's marketplace and face the front of the the home Aladdin shares with his Dad, Dave Twankey and his Sister Wishy. The shop front has Twankey's in huge letters above the door of the shop and above are two rows of windows. There's a Seafood stall and a Fresh Meat stall too, with its own black and white cow.

Next we visit the official residence of the Emperor. We are in the briefing room. A large screen stands in the centre, framed by two imposing wooden pillars. An official looking flag hangs from a pole standing in front of each of them. The flag has three thumbs up emojis on it, in yellow on a blue background. In front of the screen in the centre is an imposing large wooden lectern, with the words 'Thumbs, Bums, Tums' on it in yellow.

When we visit Twankey's we face a wall with a door in the centre. On either side of the door is a row of three washing machines and the word Twankey's glows in bright white letters at the top of the wall. Below this, in case we hadn't noticed is the word 'Launderette' framed with silver bubbles. Beneath it has been added the word 'Microbrewery'. An array of incongruous items stands beside and on top of the washing machines, which also provide the bar for several beer pumps.

Our next stop is a tall brick wall, somewhere in Hammersmith. It has barbed wire spread across the top and CCTV cameras on both ends. There's a view of Big Ben, the London Eye and St Paul's Cathedral behind it. Sad looking people in brown macs are reading newspapers on a bench in front of the wall, which has the words 'Modern Life is Rubbish' graffitied on it.

It turns and transforms into the palace garden: two grass covered steps lead up to a flowered covered wall above which hangs a huge thumbs up neon sign. Four gnomes are perched on the ends of the steps and an inflatable swan stands on either side of the arch.

At last we get to the cave and the lamp. The stage is now dark except for the inside of the cave; a structure of gold rock which glows in the darkness.

The first person we meet is **Aladdin**. He's a cheeky, but charming young lad, dressed in a red tracksuit, with white stripes down the arms of the jacket and a sparkly A in sequins on both jacket and trousers. His hi-top trainers are a bright sparkly blue, and match his T-shirt. Aladdin's thick black hair is neatly

cut, and stands up in a tuft from his light brown face, while his dark eyes twinkle with mischief.

His sister is **Wishy**. She's a cute, bouncy girl and very intelligent, with long ginger hair that is scraped up into two round bobbles on her head, like Mickey Mouse ears. They're tied with lots of sparkly gold streamers, that dangle round her pale face and there are coloured woolen balls woven in too. Wishy wears bright silver lace up boots, orange sparkly tights and a puffy out round skirt in shiny pink and orange check, that's held out with layers of pink petticoats. Wishy's T-shirt is also pink, with the words 'Choose Love' in shiny gold letters and short sleeves to show that one of her arms ends at the elbow. She carries an orange rucksack. When she comes on, she shouts "Hiya gang" and we shout back "Hiya Wishy".

We next meet **Princess Jasmine**, whose eyes meet Aladdin's in an electric reaction and a burst of soft music. Like him, she wears a tracksuit, but hers closer fitting and more elegant, in pale green, with bright pink sparkles in the shape of a lightning flash on the trousers and in triangles on the top. Her trainers have thick white soles, and are orange and green. Jasmine's black hair is styled in a round afro and there's a shiny dash of blue sparkly glitter on her dark brown cheek. She also has a tall, spiky pink tiara set into her hair.

Her father is the **Emperor**. Played by a woman, s/he is a bumbling and gormless chap, who keeps falling over his enormous clown shoes of red, green and yellow. He looks very like a certain Prime Minister of England! He's very fat indeed, with a round tummy that sticks out, and is dressed in a crumpled, baggy bright blue suit, the jacket lined with red and with a sparkly golden badge on the lapel, of a hand with a thumbs up. He also has a long red and yellow striped tie. The Emperor has a very pale complexion, made to seem even paler by his blonde hair, which is a huge wild mop, with a tiny golden crown that dangles from it on a wire. He often carries a Henry Hoover around with him and talks to it.

**Abanazer** is a very tall, imposing man with broad shoulders and an authoritative air of EVIL. He wears a bright fuschia pink satin suit, with a matching cape that swirls from his shoulders and sturdy brown boots. His blue tie sparkles against a crisp white shirt. Abanazer's black hair comes down into a point over his light brown forehead and his goatee beard and moustache are neatly trimmed, with touches of white. His eyebrows slant down over his deep-set brown eyes, making them look quite sinister. Every time he comes or leaves, there's a flash of light and a clap of thunder.

The next person we meet is **Dave Twankey**. He's Aladdin and Wishy's dad and wears fabulous dresses in bright colours. Twankey's black hair is closely curled and cut short, as is his neat beard and moustache and his dark eyes are permanently gleaming with laughter. When we first meet him, he's in a bright pink dressing gown, edged with pink feathers and with matching fluffy pink slippers, but his second outfit is an orange and pink tweed Chanel skirt suit, with floral material sewn into the skirt. On his head is a matching lampshade, that actually lights up and is covered with sequins and tied on with dangling white beaded loops that rattle as he moves his head. He has long pink satin boots and white socks, that make his strong legs look even browner.

The **Genie** wears a jumpsuit, glittering with big circular multicoloured sequins with a rainbow cape floating from her shoulders. It matches her large headress of swirling colours that hides her hair and sticks out like two enormous rabbit ears from her pale face. She carries a mic and beatboxes amazingly, rattling and sparkling as she leaps around.

The ensemble play lots of characters. They start off as Hammersmith inhabitants - there's a street cleaner in purple overalls; an office cleaner with a tabard and pink turban; a meat seller in red and white checked trousers; a fish seller in a stripy blue apron. They also play Abanazer's guards, wearing black trousers and black jackets or waistcoats, which sparkle with lines of multicoloured sequins, over blue shirts and red ties. They also dance with Princess Jasmine, in double denim shorts and waistcoats, with pink feathers

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as epaulettes on their shoulders. When they help to shift the props and furniture, they wear dark blue overalls.

In Act Two, there's a lot of gold costumes and even more sparkles, but we'll describe those when we get there!

Finally, there's a very tall red and yellow chicken who clucks around town, with stripy satin trousers and top, and a high red comb and wattles over his yellow head. His feet are yellow and clawed. He has an evil twin, whose face is purple instead of yellow.

### **Cast and Creatives**

#### **The Cast: in alphabetical order-**

Dave Twankey is played by Stephan Boyce

Genie by Kate Donnachie

The Emperor by Dan Hackie-Eton

Abanazer by Irvine Iqbal

Aladdin by Qasim Mahmood

Wishy by Gracie McGonigal

Jasmine by Ellena Vincent

#### **Ensemble-**

Caroline Adebayo

Harry Drane

Kane Feagan

Carla-Jean Lares

#### **The Band:**

Keyboard and Musical Director - Adam Gerber

Guitar and Bass Guitar - Danny Short

Drums/Percussion - Dave Keech

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**Creative and Production Team:**

Writer	Vikki Stone
Director	Abigail Graham
Set Designer	Lily Arnold
Costume Designer	Kinnetia Isidore
Lighting Designer	Sally Ferguson
Composition and Arrangement	Corin Buckeridge
Sound Designer	Nick Manning
Choreography	Chi-San Howard
Musical Director	Adam Gerber
Casting	Harry Blumenau