



Press Release

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CASTING & CREATIVE TEAM ANNOUNCED FOR RAYMOND BRIGGS' *FATHER CHRISTMAS*



The **Lyric Hammersmith Theatre** today announces the full cast and creative team for the return of **Raymond Briggs' *Father Christmas***, the critically acclaimed production adapted by **Pins and Needles**, running from Wednesday 22 November to Saturday 30 December in the Lyric Studio, **The Berry Theatre** from Thursday 07 – Sunday 31 December, and **Theatre Royal Plymouth** from 23 November – 31 December.

Directed by **Emma Earle**, the production is filled with live music and puppetry and is perfect for under 6-year-olds and their families. Completing the company at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre this year are **Kate Adams, Alejandra Bacelar Pereira, Stephen Chapman, Kat Johns-Burke, Lloyd Notice** and **Eliza Talman**.

For the touring production at The Berry Theatre the cast includes **Mike Aherne, Imogen Khan, Hazel Monaghan**. At Royal Theatre Plymouth, the cast features **Stacey Ghent, Nathan Masterson**, and **Amber-Rose Perry**.

Since being published in 1973, the late Raymond Briggs' much-loved children's book has been adapted for stage and screen and has now entertained thousands of families at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre for the last 12 years.

Further festivities at the Lyric continue this Winter with the arrival of the Lyric's annual highly anticipated pantomime, ***Cinderella***, written by award-winning writer and comedian, **Vikki**

Stone, and directed by **Tonderai Munyevu**. Featuring a brand-new take on the much loved fairy tale, *Cinderella* is set to be one of the biggest parties in Hammersmith, playing from Saturday 18 November 2023 to Saturday 06 January 2024 in the Main House.

Internationally acclaimed singer, pianist and songwriter, **Joe Stilgoe**, is also back this festive season for two nights only on Monday 11 and Monday 18 December for a night of jazz and a Christmas party to remember. Expect special guests, gospel choirs, brass bands and singalongs.

And finally, for a special one-off concert, **A Merry Lyric Christmas**, will play in the Main House on Monday 04 December in support of the Lyric's Big Give Christmas Challenge to help make theatre accessible for all. Hosted by **Gyles Brandreth**, expect festive fun, singalongs and performances from Barnes Community Choir, Next Level Voices, Olympic Choir and Sing West, accompanied by the Meredith White Jazz Trio.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

A Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Pins and Needles Co-Production

Written by **Raymond Briggs**

Directed by **Emma Earle**

Wednesday 22 November 2023 - Saturday 30 December 2023

Associate Director (Lyric Hammersmith Theatre / The Berry Theatre): **Hannah Drake**; Design: **Zoe Squire**; Lighting Designer: **George Ogilvie**; Music and Sound Designer: **Lucy Rivers**; Puppet Designer: **Max Humphries**; Musical Director (Lyric Hammersmith Theatre / The Berry Theatre): **Kate Adams**; Dramaturg: **Adam Peck**; Puppetry Direction: **Claire Harvey**.

The Cast includes: **Kate Adams, Mike Aherne, Alejandra Bacelar Pereira, Stephen Chapman, Kat Johns-Burke, Imogen Khan, Hazel Monaghan, Lloyd Notice** and **Eliza Talman**.

"Join Santa as he awakes from a dream of sun, sea and sand only to find it is the busiest day of the year: Christmas Eve. Watch as he prepares for his Christmas deliveries, feeds his reindeer and finally takes flight into the snowy night."

Back for another brilliant year, Christmas isn't Christmas without this Lyric family favourite, co-produced with the Olivier Award-nominated Pins & Needles Productions."

Biographies

Raymond Briggs (Writer) was born in London in 1934. He was the author of the hugely successful children's books *Father Christmas* and *The Snowman*. These books have been translated into many languages and adapted into films, stage shows and animations. His other books include *Fungus the Bogeyman*, *The Bear*, *Ug*, *When the Wind Blows*, *Ethel & Ernest*, a biography of his parents, and his latest, *Time for Lights Out*, a contemplation on old age, told through words and pictures.

Emma Earle (Director) returns to the Lyric for another festive season, directing family-favourite *Raymond Brigg's Father Christmas*. Other credits for the Lyric include *Scoop*, *Holly & Ivan's Christmas Adventure*. Other theatre includes: *Alice in Wonderland* (Mercury Theatre); *Adventures in Wonderland* (The Vaults and Shanghai); *The Bear* (Midlands Arts Centre); *OZ* (Tobacco Factory Theatres); *Oi Frog & Friends!* (Lyric, West End); *Select A*

Quest (online); *Mr Popper's Penguins* (Criterion, West End and New Victory New York); *Flies* (Pleasance, Edinburgh); *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (Theatre Royal Bath); *Little Mermaid* (the egg); *Dinner at the Twits* (The Vaults); *The Fantastical Flying Exploratory Laboratory* (GDIF); *The Marvellous Imaginary Menagerie* (Latitude); *Ernest and the Pale Moon* (Pleasance Edinburgh); *Twelfth Night* (Bristol Old Vic Theatre School); *Gizmo Love* (Tobacco Factory); *Elves and the Shoemakers* (Tobacco Factory); *The Shape of Things* (Ustinov Studio); *Yer Tis* (the egg); *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Ustinov Studio); *The Grapes of Wrath* (the egg); *Pavement* (Alma Theatre); *Riot* (the egg); *A Clockwork Orange* (Alma Theatre)

Pins and Needles Productions is an award-winning, female-led theatre company based in Bristol, led by Director/Designer partnership **Emma Earle** and **Zoe Squire**. They create imaginative, transformational theatre for all ages and are passionate about finding playful ways to tell stories full of heart, humour and magic. Pins and Needles Productions are well known for their bold adaptations of children's books and are incredibly proud to have been trusted to adapt two of Raymond Briggs' classic books for the stage; *Father Christmas* and *The Bear*, both of which are playing in the UK this Christmas. Recent work includes *OZ*, a new adaptation of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, which played at Tobacco Factory Theatres in 2021; *Oi Frog & Friends!*, produced by Kenny Wax Family Entertainment, which was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Family Show in 2020; and *Select A Quest*, an online interactive adventure. In 2018, they won the UK Theatre award for Best Show for Children and Young People for *Little Mermaid*, co-produced with the egg, Theatre Royal Bath, and their musical adaptation of *Mr Popper's Penguins* has toured the USA extensively, following runs in the West End and New York. Work for older audiences includes *Flies* by Oliver Lansley and their current project in development, an immersive, non-linear adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* by Matt Grinter.

www.pinsandneedlesproductions.co.uk

Click [here](#) for full cast and creative team biographies.

CINDERELLA

Written by **Vikki Stone**

Directed by **Tonderai Munyevu**

Saturday 18 November 2023 - Saturday 06 January 2024

Press day: Saturday 25 November

Set and Costume Designer: **Good Teeth**; Choreographer: **Arielle Smith**; Lighting Designer: **Ciarán Cunningham**; Composer and Arranger: **Corin Buckeridge**; Sound Designer: **Nick Manning**; Musical Director: **Adam Gerber**; Casting Director: **Sophie Parrott CDG**; Assistant Director: **Mo Korede**.

The Cast includes: **Emmanuel Akwafo** playing Lady Jelly Bottom, **Charlie Cameron** playing Muffy, **Maya De Faria** in the Ensemble, **Jodie Jacobs** playing the Fairy, **Damien James** playing Prince Henry, **Tilly La Belle Yengo** playing Cinderella, **Jerome Lincoln** in the Ensemble, **Bella Macdonald** in the Ensemble, and **Meghan Treadway** playing Gusset.

Musical Direction/Keys: **Adam Gerber**; Drums/Percussion: **Greg Pringle**; Bass Guitar: **Nixon Rosembert**; Guitars: **Amy Shaw**.

"In this brand-new show, the Queen of Panto herself, award-winning writer and composer Vikki Stone brings her outrageous adaptation of Cinderella, full to the brim with sass and magic, rip-roaring comedy, live music and chart-topping hits, directed by Tonderai Munyevu.

Cinderella is a bonafide boss-lady who runs her own business at Shepherd's Bush Market. One day the most handsome Prince Henry, who dreams of a life less spare, wears a disguise to the Market and falls instantly in love with Cinderella. With the paparazzi in hot pursuit the Prince is forced to flee. And so begins the quest to unite the unlikeliest of likely romances, Cinderella and the hapless Prince. But will Cinderella's step-sisters Muffy and Gusset and step-mother Lady Jelly Bottom get in the way of their happily ever after? Of course they will, it's panto.

So get ready to go to the ball, because this Prince is throwing one hell of a party in Hammersmith and everyone is invited!

The Lyric Panto is an unmissable Christmas essential, get your tickets early as prices increase with demand."

Biographies

Vikki Stone is an award-winning writer, composer, comedian and musician.

Writing credits include: co-adapter, writer and music supervisor for the Olivier Nominated *Hey Duggee Live*, #zoologicalsociety for Royal & Derngate, *Cinderella & Aladdin* for The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, *Alice In Wonderland* (music and lyrics) for the Liverpool Playhouse, *Peter Pan* (music and lyrics) for Rose Theatre Kingston, *Dick Whittington* for the New Wolsey Theatre, *Ten Pieces Special Report* for BAFTA Nominated children's music series *BBC Ten Pieces*, *Our Girls Our Game* for The British Youth Music Theatre.

Vikki made history when she was the musical director, pianist and band leader of the Saturday night ITV prime-time show *Romeo and Duet*, making her the first on-screen female musical director of a primetime entertainment show in the UK.

Other TV appearances include: *BBC Proms* coverage for BBC Four, *Romeo and Duet*, *Richard Osman's House of Games*, *Celebrity Pointless*, *The Dog Ate My Homework*, *The John Bishop Show*, *Partners in Rhyme* and the BAFTA award-winning *Ten Pieces* for BBC. As a composer, classical works include: *The Thing That Matters*, a massed choral piece commissioned by the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, and *The Concerto for Comedian and Orchestra* which premiered at Glastonbury Festival.

Tonderai Munyevu is an actor, writer and director for stage, screen and radio. Amongst his many critically acclaimed performances as an actor are *Two Gentlemen Of Verona* or *Vakomana vaviri veZimbabwe* (Two Gents/Shakespeare's Globe), *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead* at the Young Vic (and tour) and *Black Men Walking* at the Royal Court (and tour) and his role as Peter in the film *Something Nice From London* (Latimer Films), he is the co-artistic director of Two Gents Productions. Writing includes *Mansfield Park* (The Watermill); *Mugabe, My Dad and Me* (Brixton House, York Theatre Royal/ETT); *The Moors* (Tara Arts Theatre/Two Gents Productions); *Harare Files: How 700,000 People Lost Their Homes* (written with Sarah Norman); *Zhe [noun] Undefined* (written with Antonia Kemi Coker and Chuck Mike); the short radio play *A Tranquil Mind* (BBC Radio 4) *Blaccine: First Dose* for Pitlochry Theatre Festival and various prose including *The Visiting Hours*; *A Dispatch From Zimbabwe* (Johannesburg Book of Reviews), *Bullets* (Team Angelica) and *On James Baldwin* (Queer Bible). As a director Tonderai has directed for Talawa, Central School of Speech and Drama, Tara Arts and Watermill Theatre. *Mugabe, My Dad and Me* won Best New Play at the UK Theatre Awards 2022 and was shortlisted for The Alfred Fagon Award 2019. Tonderai is an Associate Artist at tiata fahodzi. He has been part of the Hightide's "The Lighthouse" Writers Group, he has

received the Peggy Ramsay Foundation Grant and is currently one of the Stockroom writers, a collective of theatre creatives working in-house at Stockroom in a writers room for theatre. Tonderai is currently under commission to Hampstead Theatre and the RSC.

Click [here](#) for full cast and creative team biographies.

JOE STILGOE'S CHRISTMAS AT THE LYRIC

Presented by Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Neil O'Brien Entertainment
Monday 11 & Monday 18 December 2023

Joe is back at the Lyric for Christmas 2023!

Returning to the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre this December, Joe brings all the festive cheer, ridiculous audience interaction and virtuoso musicianship to the party of the season. Featuring not only his all-star band but also special guests, plus The Salvation Army Brass Band and the globally renowned Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir. This show always sells fast so don't forget to book in advance.

Joe Stilgoe is an internationally acclaimed singer, pianist and songwriter. Over the course of his varied career he has become a true modern-day entertainer, known globally as a performer of wit, style and a level of musicianship which has seen him recognised as one of the best singer-pianists in the world.

A MERRY LYRIC CHRISTMAS

Hosted by Gyles Brandreth
Monday 04 December 2023

Join us for an evening of festive fun and fundraising hosted by Gyles Brandreth and his Christmas Jumpers. Singing and music from 4 of West London's best choirs will take to the Lyric stage to kick off the festive season. Don't miss the audience singalong, crackers, sweets, FREE mulled wine and Father Christmas himself!

Featuring: Olympic Choir, Barnes Community Choir, Sing West, Next Level Voices, accompanied by the Meredith White Jazz Trio as well as performances from Young Lyric alumni and special guests including Madeline Charlemagne, Esme Perry and Thomas McGuinness.

This is a fundraising event on behalf the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith (registered charity no. 278518) in support of our Big Give Christmas Challenge.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOLS

In conjunction with the run of *Cinderella*, the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is offering Education Workshops throughout November – December for students aged 11 – 14. Teachers can bring students to the Lyric to take part in a two-hour session comprising of a Panto acting workshop, theatre tour and set/costume design talk. To enquire email learning@lyric.co.uk

LYRIC BAR AND VENUE HIRE

The festive spirit extends all over the building with plenty of ticket and catering packages to suit all budgets, including pre-show Christmas party packages.

We have a range of modern spaces to hire, and delicious menus including festive cocktails, sparkling receptions, mince pies and a glass of mulled wine or two.

For Christmas party packages contact [hires@lyric.co.uk](mailto: hires@lyric.co.uk)

YOUNG LYRIC CLASSES

A range of FREE and low cost classes for all ages (0 to 25+) continue to be available this autumn including music, dance and theatre classes. Learn to pop and lock in DanceWest's Hip Hop & Street Dance, explore performing in our Acting Up sessions, or explore music from around the world in Musiko Musika's Songo Family Music Session.

As always, we offer bursary places for many of our classes - further details can be found on the specific class webpage.

Partners include: Action on Disability, Amici Dance Theatre Company, DanceWest, New English Ballet Theatre, Musiko Musika, Tri-borough Music Hub and Turtle Key Arts
<https://lyric.co.uk/whats-on/classes>

- ENDS -

Press contacts at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre:

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Notes to Editors

IMAGES available to download [here](#).

Listings

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL
Box office: 020 8741 6850
www.lyric.co.uk
Tickets from £10

Twitter: [@LyricHammer](https://twitter.com/LyricHammer)
Instagram: [/LyricHammersmith](https://www.instagram.com/LyricHammersmith)
Facebook: [/LyricHammersmith](https://www.facebook.com/LyricHammersmith)
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Festive Listings

RAYMOND BRIGGS' FATHER CHRISTMAS
22 November – 30 December

Performance schedule: For full listings see <https://lyric.co.uk/shows/father-christmas-2023/>

Relaxed Performances: Tuesday 28 November, 10.30am and Sunday 03 December, 9.30am
Audio Described Performance: Thursday 07 December, 9.45am
BSL Performance: Saturday 02 December, 4.30pm

CINDERELLA

18 November 2023 – 06 January 2024

Press Day: Saturday 25 November

Performance schedule: For full listings see <https://lyric.co.uk/shows/cinderella2023/>

Relaxed Performance: Tuesday 05 December, 10am

Open Captioned Performance: Wednesday 20 December, 6pm

Audio Described Performance: Thursday 14 December, 7pm

BSL Performance: Wednesday 27 December, 2pm

JOE STILGOE'S CHRISTMAS AT THE LYRIC

11 & 18 December 2023

Performance schedule: For full listings see <https://lyric.co.uk/shows/joe-stilgoes-christmas-at-the-lyric/>

A MERRY LYRIC CHRISTMAS

04 December 2023

Performance schedule: For full listings see <https://lyric.co.uk/shows/merry-lyric-christmas/>

ABOUT THE LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre produces bold and relevant world-class theatre from the heart of Hammersmith, the theatre's home for more than 125 years. Under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Rachel O'Riordan and Executive Director Amy Belson, it is committed to being vital to, and representative of, the local community. A major force in London and UK theatre, the Lyric produces adventurous and acclaimed theatrical work that tells the stories that matter.

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre has a national reputation for ground-breaking work to develop and nurture the next generation of talent, providing opportunities for young people to discover the power of creativity and to experience the life changing impact of theatre.

We are the creative heart of Hammersmith, proud of our history and ambitious for our future.

ABOUT THEATRE ROYAL PLYMOUTH

Theatre Royal Plymouth is a registered charity and the largest regional producing theatre in the UK housing three theatres – The Lyric, The Drum and The Lab. TR2, the Theatre Royal's Production and Learning Centre, is an award-winning production house on the banks of Plym Estuary, a building that combines internationally regarded scenic design and construction projects with state-of-the-art rehearsal studios. In March 2019, TRP unveiled Messenger, the UK's largest lost wax bronze sculpture created by the artist Joseph Hillier.

Recent and forthcoming productions and co-productions include *The Devil Wears Prada* (with Kevin McCollum/ Alchemation, Rocket Entertainment/David Furnish and Jamie Wilson), *The Artist* (A McOnie Company production produced by Theatre Royal Plymouth, The McOnie Company, Playful Productions, Bill Damaschke, Stephen and Nancy Gabriel and Underbelly) *Islander The Musical* (with Helen Milne Productions), *Madagascar The Musical* (with Selladoor Worldwide), *Metamorphosis* (a Frantic Assembly production, co-produced with Curve, MAST Mayflower Studios and Lyric Hammersmith Theatre) *Alice in Wonderland* (with

Liverpool Playhouse, produced in association with Stockroom), *Waldo's Circus of Magic & Terror* (with Extraordinary Bodies and Bristol Old Vic), *HAPPY MEAL* by Tabby Lamb (with Roots), *Still Floating* by Shon Dale-Jones, *Breathless* by Laura Horton, *Today I Killed My Very First Bird* (with Voodoo Monkeys), *Sorry, You're Not A Winner* by Samuel Bailey (with Paines Plough), *MUM* by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm (with Francesca Moody Productions and Soho Theatre, in association with Popcorn Group), *NHS The Musical* by Nick Stimson and Jimmy Jewell, *Amsterdam* by Maya Arad Yasur (with Actors Touring Company and Orange Tree Theatre), *I Think We Are Alone* by Sally Abbott (with Frantic Assembly), *The Strange Tale of Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel* (with Told By An Idiot), *One Under* by Winsome Pinnock (with Graeae), *The Unreturning* by Anna Jordan (with Frantic Assembly) and *You Stupid Darkness!* by Sam Steiner (with Paines Plough).

ABOUT THE BERRY THEATRE

The Berry Theatre is a Theatre located in Hedge End, Southampton. Opened in 2011 by Actor and Director Samuel West, the Theatre is known for hand-picking the very best productions from across the UK, bringing to your doorstep wonderful tales that you know, as well as some you don't. Their world-class theatre, film and comedy programme offers something for everyone. For more information, visit: <https://www.theberrytheatre.co.uk/>