Lyric

sfp SONIA FRIEDMAN PRODUCTIONS LIMITED

FANGIRLS

EDUCATION PACK

For Drama GCSE, A Level &
BTEC Performing Arts students

OVERVIEW & CONTENTS

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre's Young Lyric department are committed to deepening and nurturing young people's understanding of theatre and the arts. We aim to raise the cultural aspirations of young people and make theatre accessible to all. With this in mind, this education pack is designed for teachers of Drama GCSE and BTEC Performing Arts students and is geared towards the live theatre review and practitioner study.

This pack is written by the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and we hope it provides some interesting insights into how a production like *FANGIRLS* is created and performed.

This education pack includes content inspired by an original pack produced by Belvoir St Theatre, Sydney, Australia in 2019. **Here is a link** to the original Belvoir St Theatre version.

BELVOIR

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Acknowledgement of Country

FANGIRLS was initially created on the lands of the Gadigal of the Eora nation, and received further development on the lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, the lands of the Jagera and Turrbal people, and on the lands of the Kaurna people. First Australians have been telling stories on these lands for tens of thousands of years, and it's a privilege to be able to create stories on these lands. We'd like to pay our respects to their elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

This pack is produced by the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre for education purposes only. It is not for commercial use.

THE ROAD TO FANGIRLS

2015 Global heartbreak as Zayn Malik leaves One Direction – Yve Blake gets the inspiration for *FANGIRLS*.

2016 Yve receives the ATYP Rebel Wilson Theatremaker Scholarship, and starts writing the show.

2017-18 The development stage of the show: countless re-writes, a workshop supported by the Barbican Pit Open Lab, and another supported by the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, plus many a read-through around Yve's dinner table.

2019 *FANGIRLS* premieres in Brisbane, Australia and then heads to Sydney. It opens to 5 star reviews and sold-out shows, with people queuing up around the block for a ticket!

2020 The *FANGIRLS* team stay at home during the pandemic, but the original production collects three awards: a Matilda Award for Best Musical, a Sydney Theatre Award for best Mainstage Production, and an Australian Writers' Guild Award for Music Theatre.

2021 **JANUARY** At a time when most theatres in the world are closed, due to the pandemic, due to Australia's closed borders – FANGIRLS is lucky to embark on a national tour of Australia, playing to sell-out crowds and 5 star reviews.

APRIL The world premiere cast recording of *FANGIRLS* is released, which later scores an ARIA* award nomination (Australia's equivalent of the Grammys).

JULY The *FANGIRLS* team begin working with Sonia Friedman Productions to re-develop the show for a UK audience.

2022 **JUNE** A three week workshop takes place in London, where many scenes are changed, and new songs are added.

JULY Due to high demand, *FANGIRLS* returns to Sydney for a 5-star run at the Sydney Opera House.

2023 The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre teams up with Sonia Friedman Productions and announces *FANGIRLS* as a part of their 2024 Season.

2024 **FEBRUARY** We see hundreds of talented performers in an open audition call, and the team spend five months finding our perfect cast.

MAY Rehearsals begin for the UK premiere.

JULY *FANGIRLS* opens at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre!

IN CONVERSATION WITH

YVE BLAKE, WRITER

Photo by Andrew Fraser

What was your initial inspiration for *FANGIRLS*?
I became interested many years ago in news coverage specifically about fans of the band 'One Direction'. One of the members had left the group suddenly and It was this big news story. I noticed, in most news outlets, people were describing 'One Direction's' fans as 'hysterical', 'psycho' and 'over the top' teenage girls. Words like 'desperate' were being used and I wondered if the same adjectives would be used for a story covering some sort of scandal within a male sport? Would they describe, presumably, male sports fans with the same kind of words? I suddenly realised that the way we talk about 'Fangirls' is a microcosm of the different language we use towards young women and people who aren't men to describe them, and I felt that this was a really interesting topic. I asked myself what if I made a show that was fun and glittery, but a bit like a Trojan horse, so when you cracked it open we could smuggle out this message and idea into your heart, through the power of pop music and comedy?

How has *FANGIRLS* evolved since the original performances in Australia?
This production is so, so different from the Australian production. The heart of the show is still there but we have two brand-new songs and about seven songs I would describe as 50 percent renovated and every scene has changed a little. In addition, the design and the visual world of the show is completely different to the original. In Australia the show was magnificent, but now we have an LED screen as the floor! The first ever production of *FANGIRLS* had seven performers on stage and now we have twelve – and frankly a lot more wigs!

What has been the most exciting aspects of bringing *FANGIRLS* to a new audience?
There are so many exciting aspects! It's really an honour to get to work with people of the calibre we are working with – to think that Ebony, our choreographer, has worked with artists like Beyonce and Doja Cat is beyond my wildest dreams. I always get excited by the 'theatre magic' of it all, like seeing a row of wigs or the day someone brought in a wheel barrow of rhinestone knee high boots. It's stuff like that I get really excited about, but also this cast are so extraordinary and special.

When we cast this show something we really looked for was a cast that had a bit of a naughtiness to them, a cheekiness. I like to use the word 'feral' in good way and I know this cast will get the audience to tap into their inner 'feralness', because this is a show about what it's like to be 14 and to really love something with abandon. That's the energy I look to create in the theatre, that energy you have when you are young and you just love things.

What message would you like young people watching this production of *FANGIRLS* to be inspired by?

The show is a lot about not letting other people define you, and to define yourself on your own terms. Also it's about questioning the stories that people tell you about yourself and about what you are capable of, that's the big message at the heart of the show. I hope that people will also be inspired by seeing this extraordinarily talented cast that is bringing the story to life. They are amazing! For so many people in the cast this is their first gig and that personally really inspires me.

Yve Blake, photo by Manuel Harlan

IN CONVERSATION WITH

PAIGE RATTRAY, DIRECTOR

Paige Rattray

How is this production of *FANGIRLS* at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre different to previous productions?
It's completely different including a new design and two new songs. Many of the songs have changes and there have been some script re-writes. There is more focus on the character of Caroline, Edna's mum, which was a story thread we were eager to explore.

If you saw this production in Australia, this version is completely different in terms of how it looks and sounds, but it still has the same heart and fun of the previous shows.

What is it like creating this production for a UK audience? Is there anything in terms of the creative process that is different?
The way I work with the performers I choose is to bring their spirit to the fore. I feel like the performers are the most important aspect of the production. You can have all of the big screens and all of the big lights, but actually the spirit of the show is at its strongest when they are strong and I think the way of doing that is by providing an environment and enabling them to be the best versions of themselves. In that way it is a very UK orientated production because all the cast are from around here. I have loved getting to know everyone.

The show is still set in Australia and the reason why we kept it there is the distance between Australia and here which accentuates the inaccessibility of Harry, the big pop start in the show.

What is the relationship between you and the other creatives on a production like *FANGIRLS*?
It is interesting because a musical is quite different to a play. When I am directing a play I am 'on' all day, but with a musical because there are so many other elements, a lot of the time you provide a vision and that enables others to be able do their job so you can do yours later on. There is a lot more people management and

providing inspiration rather than hands on directing in the room, because everyone needs to learn the music and choreography before we start to put the scenes on stage. To create a really good foundation for that, in the first week I break down the entire script with the cast. We all know the story and understand what the show is about and who we are making for. This includes the message we want the audience to take away when they leave the theatre. In the last week of rehearsal, I will spend a lot of my time shaping the piece, but a lot of that will happen when we are actually in the theatre.

"...a lot of the time you provide a vision and that enables others to be able to do their job so you can do yours later on."

What do you want audiences and young people to take away from seeing this production of *FANGIRLS*?
There are so many things I want the audience, especially young people to take away. I want them to feel how powerful they are when they stick together, and that something they should never feel ashamed about is loving something or feel ridiculed for it. When you think about pop music and how people talk about fans, and fan girls in particular and the way that they love something, people never say the same things about someone loving sport. The most beautiful journey that I have been on is seeing the most gorgeous community of people come together on the show and the appreciation of how there is a power to having a shared love of something. It is not necessarily about the thing you love, but the ability to share and create a community and safe place to exist in, which should be celebrated. If you look after each other and stick together, you can achieve great things – you don't have to do it on your own!

Paige Rattray

IN CONVERSATION WITH

DAVID FLEISCHER, DESIGNER

What are the main differences of the design for this production of *FANGIRLS* at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre compared to previous productions?
The original production was presented in a corner studio space, so the configuration of the set and cast to audience is remarkably different. Now in a proscenium theatre, we have the ability to fly scenery, whilst also having wing space which has informed the choreographic language as well.

We also have a bigger cast of 12, so the scope of the costume design has evolved.

Are there cultural differences that you have taken into account when creating a design for a UK audience?
Not particularly. However, I have tried to incorporate a eucalyptus tone to the school uniform of the Australian girls' school uniform so the world on stage feels slightly foreign and novel to the audience.

How does your design support the message and themes of *FANGIRLS*?
The design aims to provide excitement, celebration, awe and the feeling of limitless possibilities - all things we should be instilling in young people, which *FANGIRLS* represents. I think the message of *FANGIRLS* is an empowering one- so the ambition, drama and outrageousness of the visual worlds we are creating hopefully reinforce that pride and passion.

What aspects of the design for this production of *FANGIRLS* are you most excited about?
There's a sequence called GOT NO CHILL and seeing all the elements of the production come together for that one is extremely exiting. Costume, choreography, lights, music, sound, video, vocals, special effects..... it will hopefully blow the audiences socks off!

"...it will hopefully blow the audience's socks off!"

Paige Rattray and David Fleischer

EDUCATION RESOURCES

These resources have been created by the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre to accompany its 2024 production of *FANGIRLS*, a Sonia Friedman co production.

SET DESIGN ANALYSIS

Here is an image of the box set design from the 2019 production.

Slotted wall variation Set Model Box by David Fleischer

Here is the set design for the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre production.

Image by Manuel Harlan.

What are the differences between the two set designs?

How does each design represent the themes of *FANGIRLS*?

REHEARSING FANGIRLS

Using the images below, practice using your analysis skills and use of precise details to be able to describe the way the performers are using their physicality and space and interaction to communicate meaning.

Physical drama skills:
- Facial Expressions
- Gestures
- Posture

Space and Interaction:
- Levels
- Proxemics/ distance
- Eye contact
- Touch

Miracle Chance, Mary Malone
Photo by Manuel Harlan

1. Describe how the performers in the image above are using physical theatrical skills along with space and interaction. Use precise details in your analysis.
2. Explain what the performers are communicating to the audience about their relationship and emotions they are feeling?

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2. Explain what the performers are communicating to the audience about their relationship and emotions they are feeling?

Mary Malone, Jasmine Elcock, Miracle Chance
Photo by Manuel Harlan

Cast of *FANGIRLS*
Photos by Manuel Harlan

Choose one of the images above and answer the questions below.

1. Describe how the performers in the image above are using physical theatrical skills along with space and interaction. Use precise details in your analysis.
2. How are the performers using movement to communicate to the audience?

DEVISING THEATRE

Mary Malone
Photo by Manuel Harlan

Look at the image above.

Devising Activity 1
Imagine that you are the character in the image. Think about the situation you might be in and improvise a monologue expressing how you are feeling.

Devising Activity 2
In groups create a mind map to capture your idea about the themes and issues you can see in this image . Use your ideas as the basis for a piece of drama based on one of the themes or issues you have identified.

Devising Activity 3
Look at the character's facial expression. What is the message they are looking at? Create a still image to depict what you think the message is about.

Further Resources
The creater of FANGIRLS, Yve Blake has her own website with a dedicated page for education resources as the play text for *FANGIRLS* is now on the curriculum for Drama in Australia. See link below to access some more content:

yveblake.co/teachers

FANDOM MONOLOGUE WRITING

Have you ever met your idol? Do you imagine what it would be like to meet a living legend?

Write a monologue about their ultimate 'FAN' experience or moment. It could be a celebrity moment like meeting your favourite singer or footballer. It might be a moment with a political figure you admire or someone that is an expert in a hobby you have like a skateboarder or chef. Your monologue needs to capture your thoughts and feelings of this 'fandom' moment. It can be based on a real life experience or an imagined event.

Looking for inspiration? Watch our video with *FANGIRLS* writer Yve Blake above.

Monologue Tips:
A monologue is dialogue written to be performed by one actor – usually in the form of direct address to the audience. Your monologue could take the form of a diary entry, letter or even a series of social media posts. Consider what the audience would find most interesting about your FAN moment – is there a funny incident that takes place or a case of misunderstanding?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & CREDITS

FANGIRLS is a Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Sonia Friedman Productions co-production.

This education pack was written and curated by Natalie Jim, Education Producer at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, inspired by original content created by Jane May, Education Manager, Belvoir St Theatre, Sydney, Australia.

CAST

Brianna
Miracle Chance
(she / her)

Pat / Ensemble
(cover Salty / Harry)
Max James Hodge (he / him)

Lily
Gracie McGonigal
(she / her)

Edna
Jasmine Elcock
(she / her)

Salty
Terique Jarrett
(he / him)

Dom / Ensemble
(coverJules / Caroline / Briana)
Eve De Leon Allen
(they / them)

Greta / Ensemble
(swing Ensemble roles)
Max Gill
(he / she / they)

Caroline
Debbie Kurup
(she / her)

Ash / Ensemble
(cover Edna / Lily)
Lena Pattie Jones
(she / her)

Harry
Thomas Grant
(he / him)

Jules
Mary Malone
(she / her)

Dancer / Ensemble
Nicky Wong Rush
(he / they)

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

Book, Music and Lyrics by
Yve Blake

Directed by
Paige Rattray

Production Design by
David Fleischer

Choreography by
Ebony Williams

Video Design by
Ash J Woodward

Lighting Design by
Jessica Hung Han Yun

Sound Design by
Tony Gayle

Music Supervisor, Orchestrator & Vocal Arranger
Zara Stanton

Musical Direction by
Candida Caldicot

Music Producer
David Muratore

Casting by
Lotte Hines CDG

Dialect / Voice Coach
Daniele Lydon

Associate Director
Kwame Owusu

Associate Musical Director
Laurence Stannard

Associate Choreographer
Justice Moore

Associate Sound Designer
Justin Teasedale

Casting Associate
Bobbie Chatt

Design Assistant
Emilia Mendez

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 nearly 130 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.

SONIA FRIEDMAN PRODUCTIONS

SONIA FRIEDMAN PRODUCTIONS (SFP) is an international production company responsible for some of the most successful theatre productions around the world.

Since 1990, SFP has developed, initiated and produced over 200 new productions and together the company has won 63 Olivier Awards, 48 Tonys and 3 BAFTAs. In 2019, Sonia Friedman CBE was awarded 'Producer of the Year' at the Stage Awards for a record-breaking fourth time. In 2018, Friedman was also featured in TIME 100, a list of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World.

Current productions include: *The Book of Mormon* (West End); *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (West End, Broadway, Hamburg and Tokyo); *Stranger Things: The First Shadow*, a co-production with Netflix (West End); *Mean Girls* (West End); *Stereophonic* (Broadway); *Funny Girl* (US tour).

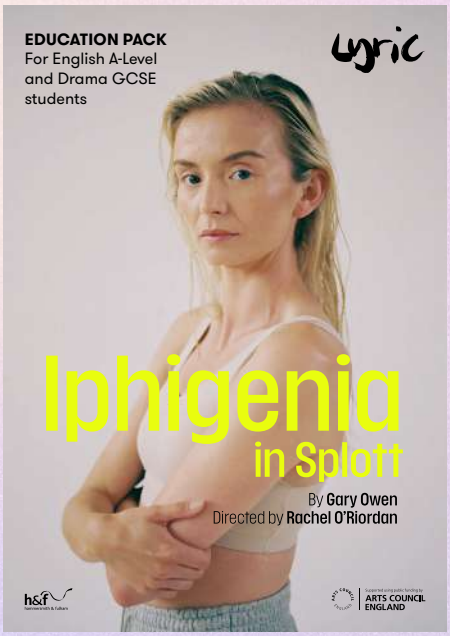
Forthcoming productions include: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (North American tour); *The Book of Mormon* (UK & international tour 2024); *Paddington - The Musical* (UK); *Juno and the Paycock* (West End); *Oedipus* (West End); *Shifters* (West End); *The Hills of California* (Broadway); *Bust* (Alliance Theatre).

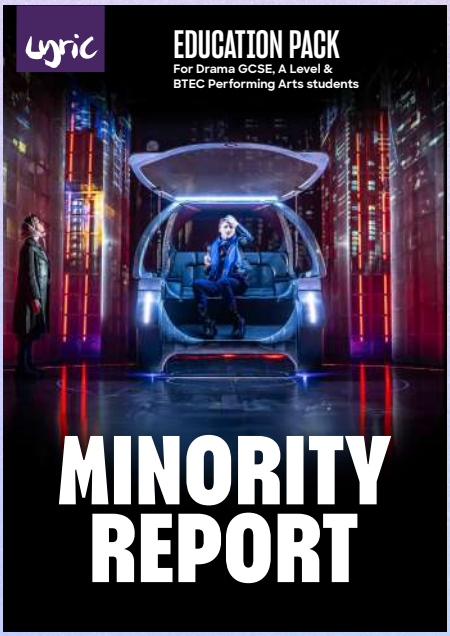
BELVOIR ST THEATRE

Under Artistic Director Eamon Flack and Executive Director Sue Donnelly, Belvoir engages Australia's most prominent and promising playwrights, directors, actors and designers to realise an annual season of work that is dynamic, challenging and visionary. As well as performing at home, Belvoir regularly takes to the road, touring both nationally and internationally.

EDUCATION PACKS

Take a look at some of our previous Education Packs:





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BELVOIR ST THEATRE

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