

ALTRINCHAM GARRICK PLAYHOUSE - AUDITION INFORMATION:

*"History? It's just one f***ing thing after another!"*

Alan Bennett's



THE HISTORY BOYS

An hilariously funny and exceptionally moving play
about the true purpose of education.

Voted *"The Nation's Favourite Play"* in 2013



Monday 16 –



Saturday 21 September



Evenings 7:30pm
Matinée, Saturday 21 at 2:30pm

altrincham
garrick
playhouse

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Thank you for expressing your interest in auditioning for “**THE HISTORY BOYS**”. This production will be opening our Autumn/ Winter 2024 Season at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.

The Audition Date for this production is
The Rehearsal Start Date for this production is
The Production Dates for this production are

Tuesday 11th June
Sunday 11th August
Monday 16th -
Saturday 21st September

Rehearsals

Rehearsals will be every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7.30pm - 10pm, and every Sunday from 2pm - 5.30pm.

We do ask that all those auditioning are able to make every rehearsal. We do, of course, understand that sometimes you may have other commitments and special occasions during the rehearsal process, and we therefore ask that you inform us of any dates you are not available in advance (at the audition) and we will try and make this work. If you have a date that you're unable to rehearse within ten days of the opening night (16th September) we may have to ask you to withdraw from the production.

You may not be called to every rehearsal, and the Director will produce a rehearsal schedule as far in advance as possible, but we do still ask that those successful in being cast in the production remain flexible, as rehearsal schedules can often change during the process.

THE HISTORY BOYS

Monday 16th - Saturday 21st September 2024
(7.30pm each evening with a 2.30pm Matinee on Saturday 21st September)
Altrincham Garrick Playhouse

Set in the 1980's, **The History Boys** is the story of a group of bright, funny and unruly sixth-formers in pursuit of sex, sport and a place at university.

Their maverick English teacher is at odds with the young and shrewd supply teacher, whilst their headmaster is obsessed with results and league tables.

Staffroom rivalry and the anarchy of adolescence overflow, provoking not only universal questions about the nature of history and how it is taught but also questions about the purpose of education today.

Their A Levels may be over, but the real learning has just begun...

Celebrating it's 20th Anniversary and hailed as “one of the finest plays Alan Bennett has ever written”, **The History Boys** opened at the National Theatre in 2004 to rave reviews, a sell-out run and went on to become one of their biggest ever hits, winning over 30 major awards including the Olivier and Tony Awards for Best New Play.

In a recent national survey this comic masterpiece was voted the nation's favourite play.

Characters

Set in a grammar school in Sheffield in the 1980s, *The History Boys* follows the path of eight sixth form pupils as they prepare to take their entrance exams to Oxford and Cambridge Universities. They are led by the eccentric Hector, a weary but passionate teacher who has a unique take on their General Studies course. However, his teaching is brought into question by the young, fresh Irwin, who has been employed specifically to ensure the boys excel in their Oxbridge exams and interviews. Mediating between the two is Mrs. Lintott, a teacher who goes by the book and follows a traditional, need-to-know teaching method. All three teachers face their own demons, as they attempt to guide the boys through examinations, interviews, and personal struggles. Throughout their studies, the boys and their teachers explore issues of gender roles, sexuality, the value of knowledge, and historical perception.

Hector

Irwin

Mrs Lintott

Headmaster

Dakin

Posner

Rudge

Scripps

Akthar

Crowther

Lockwood

Timms

Director

The Staff:

HECTOR

Hector is an eccentric and passionate teacher and is the central character in the play. His teaching style is irreverent and energetic and believes education should be pursued for its intrinsic value and not merely to pass exams. His purpose is to make his students more thoughtful, rounded people. He is an old-fashioned humanist who studies the past to gain a greater understanding of, and connection with, humanity. Although his pupils have a great affection for him, they ridicule him for his sexual urges towards them, which he takes advantage of when they ride behind him on his motorbike.

Mature Adult: 50s/60s

IRWIN

Irwin is a young, recent university graduate who has been employed to teach history at the school and help the boys pass their university entrance exams. He embraces modern teaching methods, and his philosophy of education centres around finding compelling arguments that overturn popular opinion, in order to attract the interest of the examiners.

He is pragmatic in his approach to education, and considers art, literature and history as commodities which can be traded for material gain.

Young Adult: Mid 20s

MRS LINTOTT

Mrs Lintott is a history teacher approaching retirement. She is disheartened by many things she observes, especially the headmaster's fixation on exam scores and Hector's improper behaviour with the students. In an all-boys school, she is an important female voice. She complains about the way the other characters confide in her, which she thinks only happens because she is a woman, and therefore finds it patronising. She attempts to get the boys to consider the role of women in history, and the power structures that excluded them from positions of power, which doesn't spark their interest.

Mature Adult: 50s/60s

HEADMASTER

The Headmaster is ambitious and is more concerned with sending the boys to Oxford and Cambridge to elevate the school's profile, rather than truly caring about the boys' futures. He wants education that is "quantifiable" rather than Hector's scattered teaching style. He hires Irwin in order to make the boys more competitive university applicants. He also sexually harasses his secretary – a fact that is used against him after he tries to force Hector to leave the school.

Mature Adult: 50s/60s

The Boys

The boys must all appear to be 17/ 18 years of age, but we are seeking actors who are aged 18 and above, but can pass for younger.

DAKIN

Dakin is the most confident of the boys. He is charming, manipulative, self-assured, and is described in the stage directions as 'handsome'. He uses his looks and intellect to seduce. He identifies as heterosexual (hence his relationship with the Headmaster's secretary Fiona), but his admiration for Irwin turns to sexual attraction, which brings about a growing tension in the play. In addition, both Hector and Posner are attracted to him.

POSNER

Posner is sensitive and gentle and doesn't always fit in with the other boys. He is Jewish and is viewed by the others as younger and more naïve; they treat him carefully, making sure not to talk about sex or Hector's wandering hands in front of him. Posner's unrequited crush on Dakin is an open secret, which he is teased about all the time. Of all

the boys, he aligns the most with Hector's teachings, and puts all his effort in to reaching his ultimate goal of gaining a place at Oxbridge.

RUDGE

Rudge, from a working-class background and skilled in sports, is the most insecure about his abilities and gaining a place at Oxbridge. He is the most hardworking of the boys, but the least academic, and the teachers regard him as a lost cause. He takes a cynical attitude towards too much analysis of history, calling it simply "one fucking thing after another." He is brusquely honest throughout the play, and several times makes blunt, insightful comments that cut to the core of things.

SCRIPPS

Scripps is the narrator for various scenes in the play, as well as best friend and confidante for Dakin, allowing the audience to follow Dakin's growing attraction for Irwin. He is a pianist and an aspiring writer. He is also a devout Christian and as a result does not want to pursue any pre-marital relationships, which places him in sharp contrast to Dakin.

These students are less prominent in the play and are not established as strong personalities. They serve to join in with the classroom discussions and provide the quick-witted repartee which is a feature of Hector and Irwin's lessons.

If you would like to audition for one of these roles, please select one of the suggested scene readings for Dakin, Posner, Rudge or Scripps.

AKTHAR is a Muslim student, and this aspect of his identity is referenced several times in the play.

CROWTHER is an aspiring actor and theatre enthusiast. He often plays secondary parts in the boy's theatrical performances. He is one of the quieter students in the class.

LOCKWOOD is from London. His attitude is sometimes read as haughty, and he occasionally considers himself superior. He is thoughtful and actively participates in the boy's irreverent joking.

TIMMS is the class clown and is cheeky and challenging towards Irwin when he first becomes their teacher.

Other Minor Characters:

DIRECTOR appears in one scene at the beginning of Act Two, helping Irwin with his television history piece.

What to Prepare

Audition pieces will be available from 6.30pm on Tuesday 11th June, but please see

below the page numbers from the published play text (faber and faber 2004 edition) that we will be using on the evening:

HECTOR

Scene reading at audition will be from Act One, pages 4 – 5, and 55 - 56

IRWIN

Scene reading at audition will be from Act One, pages 24 – 25, and 63

MRS LINTOTT

Scene reading at audition will be from Act Two, pages 83 - 85

HEADMASTER

Scene reading at audition will be from Act One, pages 51 - 53

DAKIN

Scene reading at audition will be from Act Two, pages 87 - 90

POSNER

Scene reading at audition will be from Act One, pages 43 - 44

RUDGE

Scene reading at audition will be from Act One, pages 33 - 34

SCRIPPS

Scene reading at audition will be from Act One, pages 44 - 46

AKTHAR, CROWTHER, LOCKWOOD, TIMMS *are less prominent in the play and are not established as strong personalities. They serve to join in with the classroom discussions and provide the quick-witted repartee which is a feature of Hector and Irwin's lessons.*

If you would like to audition for one of these roles, please select one of the suggested scene readings for Dakin, Posner, Rudge or Scripps.

The Audition Evening

Auditionees will need to sign in and complete a contact sheet in the Theatre Bar at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse from 6.30pm on Tuesday 11th June. We will then see each auditionee in the Annexe in front of the audition panel from about 7pm.

There will be Garrick personnel to show you around and help you through the process. Please be aware that these audition evenings often include quite a bit of waiting around

and can be long, but we will try to move as quickly as we can.

The audition panel will consist of the Director and members of the Altrincham Garrick's Artistic and Casting Team (ACT).

We are a diverse theatre and we welcome auditionees of all ages (above the age of 18) and all genders, ethnicities, sexualities, disabilities and races, to enrich the work of the production.

What Next?

If you've read all the information in this pack, and wish to audition, then please email casting@altrinchamgarrick.co.uk stating "**THE HISTORY BOYS**" in the subject heading and detailing your name and contact number. By emailing, you will have registered for an audition on Tuesday 11th June.

We'd like to wish you the very best of luck, and we look forward to welcoming you, or seeing you again! Thank you for taking the time and interest to prepare for this audition and Break-A-Leg!

Best wishes,

Joseph Meighan (Artistic Director/ Artistic and Casting Team)

Carole Carr (Artistic and Casting Team)

Mike Shaw (Artistic and Casting Team)

Val Watkinson (Artistic and Casting Team)

Fiona Primrose (Artistic and Casting Team)

Gemma Sales (Artistic and Casting Team)