

ALTRINCHAM GARRICK PLAYHOUSE - AUDITION INFORMATION:

Charlotte Bronte's

JANE EYRE

A bold, exciting and inspirational
retelling of one woman's struggle
for freedom against all odds.

Adapted by
Polly Teale



Monday 7 –



Saturday 12 October



Evenings 7:30pm
Matinée, Saturday 12 at 2:30pm

altrincham
garrick
playhouse

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

Thank you for expressing your interest in auditioning for “**JANE EYRE**”. This production will be part of 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

Monday 8th July
Sunday 1st September
Monday 7th -
Saturday 12th October

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 (7th October) 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.

JANE EYRE

Monday 7th - Saturday 12th October 2024
(Matinee at 2.30pm 12th October)
Altrincham Garrick Playhouse

Written by Charlotte Bronte
Adapted by Polly Teale
Directed by Carole Carr

As a child, the orphaned Jane Eyre is taught by a succession of severe guardians to stifle her natural exuberance. A part of herself is locked away, out of view of polite society... until she arrives at Rochester's house as a governess to his young child. Soon Rochester's passionate nature reawakens Jane's hidden self, but darker secrets are stirring in the attic...

A bold and theatrically inventive adaptation of the literary classic that puts the interior life of the novel on stage.

Charlotte Brontë's story of the trailblazing Jane Eyre is as inspiring as ever.

Characters

(1) JANE EYRE

Jane is strong minded and passionate with an unusually outgoing nature which forces her to speak against anything unfair and cruel. She has a desire to belong somewhere, find a home, friendship, love and has an intense desire for autonomy and freedom which lead her to Thornfield and Mr Rochester. She refuses Rochester's offer as a partner for it would mean sacrificing her integrity and principles. Whilst staying at the home of the St John Rivers and his Sisters she realises her true feelings still lie with Rochester and when she eventually finds him he is a blind, broken and wretched man. She immediately promises to stay with him as her only true and ever-lasting love. They get married and as his wife Jane finally finds true happiness as a totally confident and independent woman.

Playing Age: 18 - 30

(2) BERTHA

Bertha is not just one character - the mad wife of Rochester who writhes, screams and flails in her attic prison and roams Thornfield at night – she is also the representation of Jane's repressed and forbidden feelings and as the strait-laced Victorian Jane Eyre acts primly and calmly Bertha shows all the constrained passions, sensuality and anger beneath. She is the great tragedy of Rochester's life and is the main obstacle that Jane & Rochester's love must overcome. She is the catalyst that proves Jane's moral virtue and Rochester's ultimate redemption.

Playing Age: 20s - 30s

(3) ROCHESTER

Edward Rochester is described as being “not the most attractive of men” as he is a moody, dark, and intense presence however he is very desired in Society and also a great Host. On meeting Jane he finds with her he can engage in intense intellectual dialogue and share opinions which for him is a rare opportunity. Rochester is a complicated and prickly man who has not yet found his soul-mate, however when plain, penniless Jane Eyre arrives at Thornfield he is instantly attracted and intrigued by her. He is a proud and often cruelly sardonic man but also a tormented one. He does not believe himself to be a good man although his actions do make him a braver and kinder person so underneath the brusque behaviour, fiery nature and passionate personality, he is capable of great tenderness.

Playing Age: 30+

(4) MRS FAIRFAX

Mrs Fairfax is the very competent and hard-working Housekeeper at Thornfield Hall. She is a warm and very likeable person who befriends and welcomes Jane as a Governess to Adele.

(4) MRS REED

Jane's Aunt by marriage and the matron of Gateshead Hall . Mrs Reed represents the anxiety of a wealthy and conservative social class. She feels threatened by Jane's superior intellect and qualities which are so unlike her own children. She is in turn cruel, unkind and unfair in her treatment of Jane despite the fact she promised her Husband to always protect and look after her.

(5) JOHN REED

John Reed is a boy who is a cruel and sadistic bully who delights in tormenting his cousin Jane. He has no fondness for his Mother or his Sisters and is totally self-obsessed thinking only of himself. Years later he spirals downwards into a life of drinking and gambling and an early death.

(5) PILOT

Rochester's large and faithful dog – a Wolfhound type.

(5) ST JOHN RIVERS

St John is a Parson with two sisters who take Jane into their home and help to repair her life. They discover they are related to Jane and are her cousins. St. John is a restless character searching for purpose and has a commanding personality but gives up worldly happiness for a commitment to his religious principles. This stern religious faith makes him self-denying and cold.

(6) MR BROCKLEHURST

Brocklehurst is the Parson and hypocritical overseer of Lowood Institution. He advocates a severe religious program of self-improvement in denying the body to save the soul, thus starving the Pupils and Teachers of nourishing food and being a cruel and tyrannical Overseer. The pampered Mr. Brocklehurst however does not practice what he preaches for himself or his family who are all well dressed and very well fed.

(6) RICHARD MASON

Richard Mason is brother to Bertha and a pivotal character. His impact is felt at Thornfield when he is attacked by Bertha and then sometime later in the Church when he puts a stop to Rochester and Jane's marriage ceremony when he uncovers the existence of Rochester's wife. He is not a villain, just a straight upright man who wants the best for his sister and society in general.

(7) LORD INGRAM

Lord Ingram is totally in awe of his eldest daughter Blanche and is determined to marry her off to the richest and most socially acceptable match he can possibly find.

(7) CLERGYMAN - Church Marriage Ceremony

(7) FOOTMAN – Servant at Thornfield

(8) HELEN BURNS

Helen is Jane's best friend at Lowood School and is a model of personal strength and even temperament for Jane. Helen is a withdrawn intellectual with an optimistic religious view of universal salvation. She is accepting and patient when receiving punishments from her teachers, as she believes in their authority and wants to improve herself. When Helen becomes very ill she is accepting of her death and is content at the prospect of going to heaven. On her death-bed she instructs Jane not to grieve and says she will be in a better place making her almost angelic and leaves Jane totally bereft.

(8) BLANCHE INGRAM

Blanche is described as beautiful, clever and witty and arrives at Thornfield as Rochester's love interest. Blanche and her Father feel that Rochester with his wealth and social standing would make an advantageous match for her. Blanche is very self-absorbed and will listen only to her own facile opinions. She soon disappears from the "match making scene" when she hears that Rochester is not as wealthy as she had first thought.

(8) MARY RIVERS

St. John's sister and also Jane's Cousin. Both Mary and Diana are similar to Jane in temperament, intellect and personality. They show Jane a sincere heartfelt compassion, warmth and a good friendship that totally contrasts with St. John's more dutiful, dour and serious sense of charity.

(9) ADELE VARENS

Adele is Jane's young pupil at Thornfield, is Mr. Rochester's ward and the daughter of Céline Varens a French opera dancer who was Rochester's mistress. She is a lively, precocious young girl who is more focused on fashion than her studies. Jane however manages to reform Adèle's "French" characteristics with an English education.

(9) BESSIE

A pleasant and honest house servant of Mrs. Reed who is the only person at Gateshead to treat Jane with any kindness. Bessie looks after the elderly Mrs Reed and contacts Jane to visit her when Mrs Reed is close to dying.

(9) DIANA RIVERS

St. John's sister and also Jane's Cousin. Both Diana and Mary are similar to Jane in temperament, intellect and personality. They show Jane a sincere heartfelt compassion, warmth and a good friendship that totally contrasts with St. John's more dutiful, dour and serious sense of charity.

(10) GRACE POOL

The mysterious, unsmiling and strange servant at Thornfield who watches over Bertha Mason. Her name suggests religious grace, which Rochester cannot find until after Bertha's suicide.

(10) ABIGAIL

Young Servant at Thornfield with Bessie.

(10) TEACHER & (10) WOMAN

What to Prepare

Audition pieces will be available from 6.30pm on Monday 8th July, but please see below the page numbers from the published play text that we will be using on the evening:

1/JANE	Page 24/ 39/52	Pages 53 – 56/ Pages 83 - 85
2/BERTHA	Pages 7 – 13	Pages TBA
3/ROCHESTER	Pages 34/ 65 – 67	Pages 53 – 56/ Pages 83 - 85
4/MRS FAIRFAX 4/MRS REED:	Pages 38 – 39, Page 12	Page 57 Pages 49 – 50
5/JOHN REED 5/ ST JOHN RIVERS 5/ PILOT DOG	Pages 8 – 9 Pages 73 – 74 Pages 24	Pages 76 – 78 & 79 Pages TBA
6/BROCKLEHURST 6/MASON	Pages 15 - 17 Pages 43 – 44	Page 62
7/LORD INGRAM 7/CLERGYMAN 7/FOOTMAN	Pages 42 – 45 Page 62* Page 61*Quick Costume Change*	
8/BLANCHE 8/HELEN 8/ MARY RIVERS	Pages 40 – 41 Pages 18 – 19 Pages 70 – 73	Page 45 Pages 20 -21
9/ADELE 9/DIANA RIVERS 9/BESSIE	Pages 22 – 23 Pages 70 – 73 Pages 16	Pages 26 – 27 Pages 49 - 50
10/GRACE POOLE 10/TEACHER ENSEMBLE ROLES	Page 63 Pages 19 – 20	10/WOMAN Pages 80 - 82 10/ABIGAIL Page 10

The Audition Pieces for JANE and ROCHESTER are available at the back of this pack too, for advance preparation.

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 Monday 8th July. 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 "**JANE EYRE**" in the subject heading and detailing your name and contact number. By emailing, you will have registered for an audition on Monday 8th July.

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)

JANE AUDITION PIECES: Pages 53 – 56 & Pages 83 – 85

P24: “Oh Lord forgive me. I know that women are supposed to be calm. I know that women should be satisfied with tranquility but it is not so. Women feel just as men feel. They suffer from stagnation. They must not confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings and playing the piano. They must exercise their powers. They must have action and they will make it if they cannot find it.”

P39: “A greater fool than Jane Eyre never breathed the breath of life. You, a favourite with Mr Rochester? You, gifted with the power of pleasing him. You, of importance to him in any way?

He said something in praise of your eyes did he? Well, look at those eyes. Look at that tired, uneven, charmless face and draw it with chalk onto a piece of paper. Write under it ‘Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor and plain.’ Afterwards, mix your finest tints and paint the loveliest face you can imagine, according to Mrs Fairfax’s description. Whenever in future you should fancy Mr Rochester thinks well of you, take out those two pictures and compare them. I will do it!”

P52: “Oh Lord. Why does my heart beat as if it would leap from my breast? When I first saw him I trembled. I could not speak nor move and walked towards him I know not how. It was as if my limbs were not my own. As if something spoke for me in spite of me. What made me say such things? He is not a ghost and yet every nerve I have is unstrung. Oh Lord, what does it mean?”

MR ROCHESTER AUDITION PIECES

Pages: 53 – 56 & Pages: 83 - 85

Page 34:

Rochester: “You may well be right. Her mother was a French dancer and I believed I was deeply in love. I lavished her with gifts and set her up in her own apartment. Then one night, I decided to surprise her with a visit. I waited on her balcony. She returned from the theatre with another man and I was forced to listen to their whisperings and lovemaking. You never felt jealousy did you Miss Eyre? Of course not. You have never felt love. Your soul sleeps. You float on downstream with closed eyes and muffled ears. But I tell you, one day it will happen. You will be dragged helpless into the rapids. You will be tossed and crushed and flung. Either you will be dashed to pieces or lifted up and borne by some great wave into a calmer current, as I am now. One day like today, I might almost believe myself happy.”

Page 65 – 67:

Rochester: “You consider me accounted for is that it? You consider me married? It was my Father who contrived for us to marry as she possessed a great fortune. I fell instantly in love with her and that tropical clime and I was young and thought I loved her but it was not long before I discovered her true nature. When opposed she became violent and abusive and I discovered she had an appetite for every kind of excess and yes, other men.

I lived with her for four years at the end of which doctors declared her mad. I approached the verge of despair and eventually I decided to return to England and confine her at Thornfield, as I could not abandon her. I saw that she was cared for and went to Europe but it was a grovelling existence.

Then I finally returned to England, sourly disposed against all womankind, when on a frosty winter afternoon as I rode towards Thornfield, that abhorred spot, expecting no peace and no pleasure and there I passed a figure, a childish slender creature. I had no presentiment of what she would mean to me, no warning that the arbiter of my life stood there in disguise. I had fallen from my horse and she offered me help. I was proud and surly but she would not go away and when I leant upon her frail shoulder a fresh sap stole into my frame”.

Oh Jane, why dwell on the past when the future is so much brighter? You see now how the case stands do you not? After half a lifetime passed in misery and solitude, I have found what I can truly love. I have found you. My sympathy, my better self, my good angel, my saviour..... Why are you silent Jane?”