

ALTRINCHAM GARRICK PLAYHOUSE - AUDITION INFORMATION:

A hilariously funny parody on the works of Charles Dickens



Bleak Expectations



Written for the stage by **Mark Evans**

Based upon the award-winning
BBC Radio 4 Comedy series.

Directed by **Pete Brassington**



**Mon 29 September –
Sat 4 October 2025**

Evenings at 7:30pm
Matinée at 2:30pm, Sat 4 October

**altrincham
garrick
playhouse**

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

This amateur production of 'Bleak Expectations' is presented by arrangement with Nick Hern Books.

Thank you for expressing your interest in auditioning for “**BLEAK EXPECTATIONS**”. This production will feature in our 25/26 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 10th June
Sunday 24th August
Monday 29th September -
Saturday 4th 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 (29th 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.

BLEAK EXPECTATIONS

Written by Mark Evans
Directed by Pete Brassington

Monday 29th September - Saturday 4th October
(7.30pm each evening with a Saturday matinee at 2.30pm)
Altrincham Garrick Playhouse

The story Charles Dickens might have written after drinking too much gin...

Follow half-orphan Pip's extraordinary exploits with sisters Pippa and Poppy and best friend Harry Biscuit, as they attempt to escape the calculating clutches of the dastardly Mr Gently Benevolent, defeat the hideous Hardthrazer siblings, and deflect disaster at every turn! Will evil be vanquished by virtue? Can love triumph over hate?

Mark Evans' stage play ***Bleak Expectations*** is a hilarious, chaotic caper, featuring dastardly villains, preposterous names, pulse-quickening romances, heart-rending death scenes, and definitely, probably, hopefully a happy ending.

Based on the award-winning BBC Radio 4 series, the play opened at The Watermill Theatre, Newbury, in 2022, directed by Caroline Leslie. It transferred to the Criterion Theatre in London's West End in 2023, where it featured a medley of many well-known actors and comedians.

Characters

Please note that below when it states “Male” or “Female”, any actor that identifies as non-binary or any other gender different to the gender of the character, is welcome to audition for any role. The playing ages below are guidelines only, we are more interested in strong actors than auditionees perfectly matching the ages!

The listed characters below are the main roles, however most actors will need to double up with other characters and bit-parts throughout the play.

This play is a comedy farce and totally bonkers, so some of the audition pieces are a little bizarre! In terms of accents/voices and actions, where required please mime and use your own interpretation.

The audition evening is going to be a lot of fun!

Sir Philip Bin – Male or Female, playing age 40+

Sir Philip Bin is the narrator of the show and a celebrated author, retelling his life story about inventing the rubbish bin, and the trials and tribulations along the way. Sir Philip will appear at various points in the show, talking directly to the audience and to other characters on the stage. Sir Philip has been played on London’s West End by a variety of actors, both male and female for different performances as a “guest star”. The actor auditioning should have excellent comic timing and understanding of comedy, as well as the ability to speak confidently to the audience.

Agnes Bin / Flora Dies-Early – Female, playing age 30-50

Agnes Bin is the matriarch of the Bin family, hopelessly in love with Thomas and loses her mind when he is no longer around... or is she putting it on? She appears at various moments throughout the play in different states of insanity, resulting in some surreal and funny comedic moments. This actor will double up playing Flora Dies-Early, a beautiful but terminally ill woman who ends up marrying Pip Bin... for a very short time! This actor will likely be required to play other smaller characters throughout.

Thomas Bin / Bakewell Havertwitch – Male, playing age 40-60

Thomas Bin is the father of Pip, Pippa and Poppy, and helplessly in love with Agnes. He is a good father who wants the best for his children, but is lead astray to his ultimate doom by Benevolent. This actor will double up as Bakewell Havertwitch, who we first see as a convict freed by Pip, and goes on to help save the day, and soothe Agnes’ loss. This actor will likely be required to play other smaller characters throughout.

Pip Bin – Male or Female, playing age 18-30

Pip Bin is a young version of Sir Philip, and our hero. Naïve and idealistic, Pip's dramatic rising and falling in fortune, safety, and security (mostly at the hand of the evil Mr Benevolent) are the subject of Sir Philip's story and the crux of the play. This actor will have the most lines to learn of all, so should be someone happy to take this on, and be the central figure for the show.

Pippa Bin – Female, playing age 18-30

Pippa Bin is Pip's sister, who falls in love with Harry Biscuit and they eventually marry. An intelligent and passionate woman constrained by a time period that considers her ambitions silly at best and illegal at worst, Pippa channels her energies into era-appropriate pursuits such as charities, social causes, and bearing as many children as possible. Brilliant comedy moments including feminist views, she's a character the audience should fully get behind.

Poppy Bin / Ripely Fecund – Female, playing age 18-30

Poppy Bin is the other Bin sister, she gets given a puppy as a present, and is idealistic about her future until the family demise. She lingers around the area before being found on deaths doors because of a chill, which results in some excellent comedy both through the lines and physically. This actor will double up as Ripely Fecund, originally kept indoors under false pretences before being revealed as beautiful, she is a love interest for Pip Bin who thinks they are just friends at first before they both finally realise, they are more than that and meant to be.

Gently Benevolent – Male, playing age 40-60

The central villain of the play, Gently Benevolent is Pip's former guardian and his personal nemesis. The evilest man in the world, his massively complicated evil plans are designed both to conquer the world and to personally make Pip as miserable as possible. His plots often include very transparent disguises that Pip somehow never manages to see through. A really fun part, with lots of opportunity for comedy and over-the-top stylings.

Harry Biscuit – Male, playing age 18-30

Harry Biscuit is Pip Bin's best friend and, later, brother-in-law. Harry is impressively loyal, impulsively brave, and irrepressibly cheerful, but also incurably dim. The son of the man who invented the biscuit, Harry is anxious to prove himself as an inventor in his own right. His attempts to aid Pip usually occur in the form of pointlessly complicated devices, most of which are inspired by his obsession with cake, swans, or both. Harry is a parody of the loyal, happy-go-lucky Herbert Pocket in Great Expectations.

The Hardthrashers – Male or Female, playing age 40+

The Hardthrashers (of which there are four different siblings throughout the play) are all accomplices of Benevolent, and serve to make Pip's life hell. The Hardthrasher characters include a Headmaster, Vicar, Flora Dies-Early's keeper and a Judge. Plenty of scope for excellent comedy moments, and requires a versatile actor likely to need to do different voices.

Skinflint Parsimonious / Broadly Fecund – Male or Female, playing age 40-60

Skinflint Parsimonious is, ironically, an extremely generous and giving soul, and Pip's father's dearest friend and business advisor. His time in a workhouse left him providing contrarian business advice. He is loving towards the children, but ultimately naïve to Benevolents actions. This actor will double up as Broadly Fecund, Ripely's father who hides her away from society due to his own loneliness. Perfect for someone looking for a slightly smaller role, however this actor is also likely to play other roles throughout!

What to Prepare

Audition pieces will be available on the Audition Evening from 6.30pm in the Theatre Bar. However, we have listed the audition pieces and page numbers below, should you wish to prepare ahead of the evening. (The script is published and available to purchase on Amazon, Nick Hern Books and other retailers, should you wish to have your own copy).

There will be time for you to read and prepare before you come in to see the panel. We will start seeing auditionees from just after 7pm.

Sir Philip Bin

Audition Piece #1: Page 10 "Thank you, thank you." – Page 12 "... recently discovered North Indies."

Audition Piece #2: Page 82 "My mood was lower than..." – Page 84 "...especially if you were rich like me".

Agnes Bin / Flora Dies-Early

Audition Piece #1: Page 23 "Just move my beloved husband..." – Page 25 "We may have quite a wait!".

Audition Piece #2: Page 100 "Pip? Pippa?..." – "Perhaps you might... hold my hand some time?"

Thomas Bin / Bakewell Havertwitch

Audition Piece #1: Page 14 "Dear children!" – Page 15 "This is Mr Skinflint Parsimonious".

Audition Piece #2: Page 18 "Hold your noise, boy!" – Page 20 "Repaid it shall be!"

Pip Bin

Audition Piece #1: Page 32 Harry "Hey, new bug, are you awake?" – Page 34 Harry "... words such as mattress or cauliflower."

Audition Piece #2: Page 20 Poppy "Are you still reading..." – Page 21 Pip "Ah."

Pippa Bin

Audition Piece #1: Page 65 “Alright, gents...” – Page 67 “... for he died six months ago.”

Audition Piece #2: Page 17 Poppy “Come along, Pip!” – “Ooh, looks like he’s got Mr Barnett’s left ulna now”.

Poppy Bin / Ripely Fecund

Audition Piece #1: Page 43 “I am none of those...” – Page 45 “This is just making me feel colder because I do not have those warm things!”

Audition Piece #2: Page 67 “Dearest Pip...” – “...to remind me of you” and Page 72 “Dearest Pip...” – Love, Ripely.”

Gently Benevolent

Audition Piece #1: Page 22 “Such a sad occasion. Come...” – Page 23 “hand-made by trained penguins”.

Audition Piece #2: Page 36 “It’s a relief actually...” - Page 37 “Enjoy your birthday! Ha ha ha!”

Harry Biscuit

Audition Piece #1: Page 32 “Hey, new bug, are you awake?” – Page 34 “...words such as mattress or cauliflower.”

Audition Piece #2: Page 37 Pip “Harry! We must escape tonight...” – Page 38 Pip “While I go and see the headmaster...”

The Hardthrashers

Audition Piece #1: Page 29 “Ah, Pip Bin...” – Page 30 “Right, here we go!”

Audition Piece #2: Page 75 “How dare you approach my charge...” – Page 77 “Excellent. Then I shall summon Flora”

Audition Piece #3: Page 84 “Please be seated...” – Page 85 “Remove the woman!”

Skinflint Parsimonious / Broadly Fecund

Audition Piece #1: Page 26 “Dear Children...” – Page 27 “...fit of generosity.”

Audition Piece #2: Page 58 “Thank the Lord! You are finally awake.” – Page 59 “... on the already twice-startled woman”.

The Audition Day

Auditionees will need to sign in and complete a contact sheet in the Theatre Bar at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse from 6.30pm on Tuesday 10th June. We will then see auditionees 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 auditions 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 "**BLEAK EXPECTATIONS**" in the subject heading and detailing your name and contact number. By emailing, you will have registered for an audition on Tuesday 10th 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)

Fiona Primrose (Artistic and Casting Team)

Gemma Sales (Artistic and Casting Team)