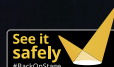


**STRATFORD  
EAST**

# RED RIDING HOOD

**A COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE PACK  
FOR TEACHERS, ARTISTS AND  
ARTS EDUCATORS**

Written by Stratford East's Learning Projects Manager  
Maya Pindar, with contributions from the *Red Riding Hood*  
Creative Team.



Supported by Garfield Weston Foundation

VAT No. 233 3120 59 Charity No. 233801 Reg No. 556251

# WELCOME

Welcome to Theatre Royal Stratford East! Thank you for booking for your students to see our pantomime, *Red Riding Hood*, as part of Newham Council's Cultural Enrichment Programme. We can't wait to welcome you back into our theatre.



In this pack, you will find:

- **WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR VISIT TO STRATFORD EAST**
- **INTRODUCTION TO BRITISH PANTOMIME**
- **EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**
  - **INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR**  
Robert Shaw Cameron
  - **NOTE FROM THE WRITER**  
Carl Smith
  - **A DESIGNER'S PERSPECTIVE**  
with Jean Chan
  - **A MOVEMENT DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE**  
with Ingrid Mackinnon
  - **INTERVIEW WITH AN ACTOR**  
Jodie Jacobs

# YOUR VISIT

## TICKETS

Please check your tickets – dates, times and number of seats – in advance. Any access requirements should be highlighted at the time of booking, but we may be able to accommodate any changes. Please contact Box Office ASAP if you need to let us know about any additional or access needs.

## WAITING LIST

We are operating a waiting list to notify registered schools of any FREE seats that become available at the last minute. The waiting list is available to students in Years 7-9. Schools will be notified via email within 7 days of the available performance date. To register onto the waiting list, please contact [mpindar@stratfordeast.com](mailto:mpindar@stratfordeast.com).

## ARRIVING & LATECOMERS

Please arrive approx. 20 minutes before the performance is due to begin – we would advise you not to arrive any earlier than this. If you are running late, please contact Box Office on 020 8534 0310. Latecomers will be admitted at a suitable break in the performance.

## SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

It is vital that your students are always supervised: before, during and after the performance, and during the interval. It is preferred that each school group has a ratio of 1 teacher to every 10 students.

## HEALTH & SAFETY / FRONT OF HOUSE

Our Ushers are your first point of call should you require any assistance from the Front of House team. In the event of an emergency, please ensure you and your students follow the instructions given by the Front of House team.

## ADDITIONAL ACCESS NEEDS

Members of your group with additional access needs should be identified during the booking process and at the point of arrival at the theatre. This will allow our Front of House team to ensure a safe and comfortable visit for everyone.

## HOUSEKEEPING

We would be grateful if you could ensure that your group:

- Switch off their mobile phones before the performance begins
- Only consume food or drink purchased in the theatre
- Are made aware that photography and recordings are strictly prohibited during the performance
- Do not talk or disturb other audience members during the performance

## AFTER THE SHOW

At the end of the of the show, we will ask you and a group of your students to complete a short feedback form on your experience. Please allow 5-10 minutes to do this.

# INTRODUCTION TO BRITISH PANTOMIME

British pantomime, or 'Panto', became a Christmas family tradition during the Victorian era, with stories typically based on fairy tales and folk legends. The genre is characterised by music, magic, singing and dancing, topical jokes, slapstick comedy, and the reversal, fluidity and caricature of gender stereotypes. British pantomime involves drag and eccentric costumes. This information may be useful to share with parents ahead of your visit to Stratford East.



*Sleeping Beauty at Stratford East*

# INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

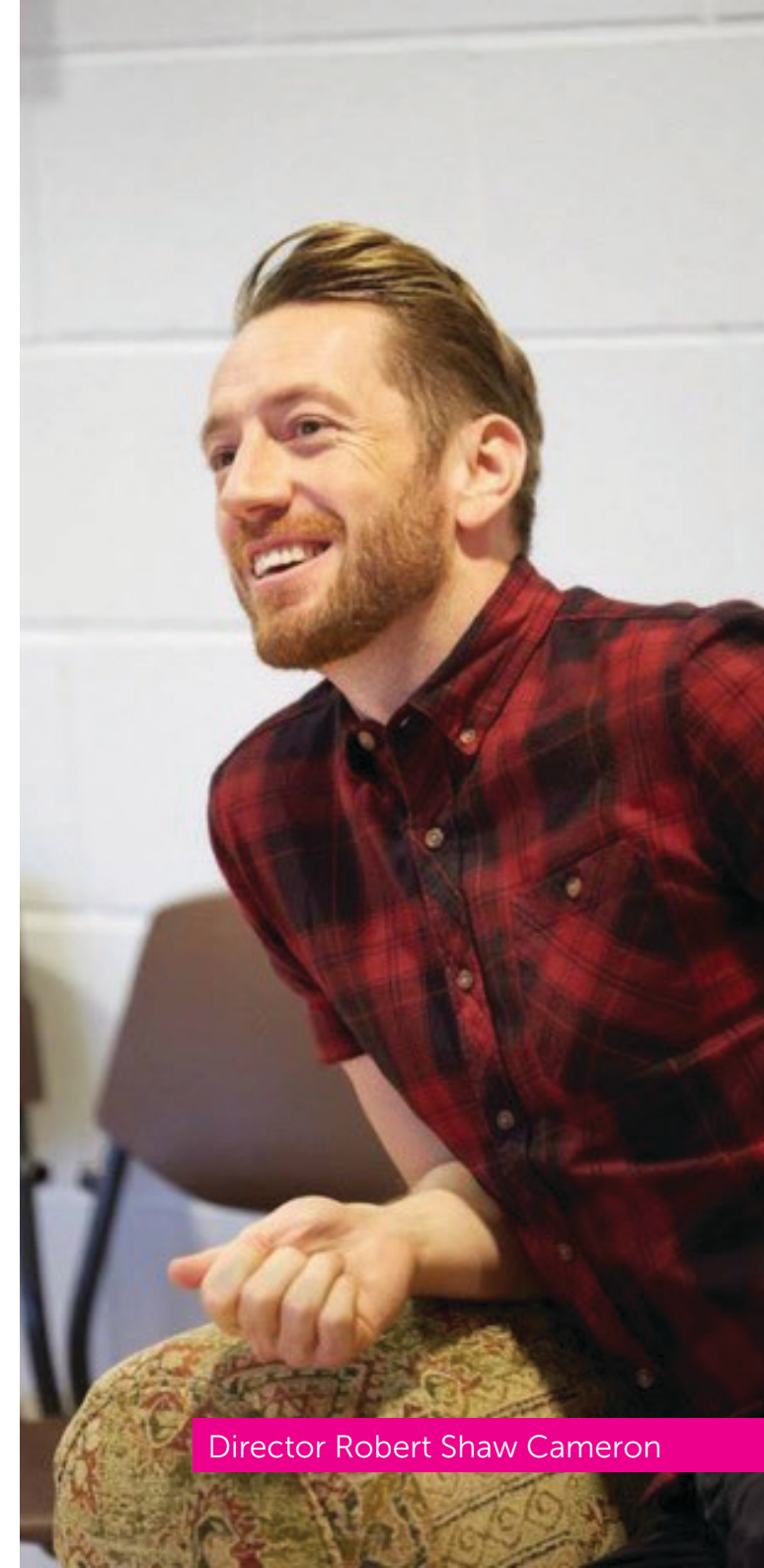
Stratford East's Learning Project Manager, **Maya Pindar**, joins Director **Robert Shaw Cameron**, in conversation about his role in creating *Red Riding Hood* for Stratford East.

## CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR ROLE IN INTERPRETING AND REALISING THE TEXT FROM 'PAGE TO STAGE'?

As the Director, I'm the creative lead on the project. That means everything from casting the actors, to creating the physical world of the play with the Designer, and ensuring that together the set, costume, light, sound, music and actors bring the story to life. Most importantly, I must put myself in the shoes of the audience, to ensure that their experience is at the heart of our creative decisions. That's what makes theatre special: the relationship between the story, the stage and the audience. That triangular relationship must always be fizzing! In a brand-new production like this, it's especially exciting to support the Writer in taking a traditional, familiar and loved story and reinventing it for a new audience. Not just any audience but for our Stratford audience, in this time and this world.

## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO EXPLORE THE POLARITY OF MAGIC AND REALITY?

What I love about Panto, fairy tales and musicals is how theatre is inherently magical and can transport audiences to enchanted worlds in a heartbeat. I'm most excited to explore the world beyond Fairyland - it's a world with a hint of our own reality. It's one we may recognise, and which needs a little bit of help from us all to make it magic again!



Director Robert Shaw Cameron



Red Riding Hood cast members

## WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *RED RIDING HOOD* TO STRATFORD AND EAST LONDON?

Pantos at Stratford are pretty unique. It's important that the creative team and I work to introduce a new generation of theatregoers to a brilliant tradition. We're very aware that, for many, this might be their first trip to the theatre, which is a huge privilege for us to hold. I hope that young people in Stratford and East London will see some of themselves in Red and her friends. I hope too that they'll want to step up, to make a difference and be heroes. Most of all, after a few difficult years, our audiences deserve a communal experience and one that makes them laugh!

## WHAT DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT COLLABORATING WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CREATIVE TEAM?

I am in awe of the talent of the creative team, there's such an incredibly diverse but complimentary set of skills. Theatre is special because using everyone's imagination we can make something greater than the sum of its parts. The biggest thrill is making a suggestion, offering it to a collaborator, and then having the idea returned to you in a way you couldn't have imagined - and invariably better. The trick is to trust and empower each other.

## AT THIS STAGE IN THE PROCESS, IN 3 WORDS, WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM *RED RIDING HOOD*?

Fierce, Fun, Friendship.

# NOTE FROM THE WRITER

**Carl Miller**

## **STARTING POINTS FOR *RED RIDING HOOD***

There are many different versions of this story in which a child meets a hungry beast in the forest, is eaten – and then escapes. The first one I know of with the title *Red Riding Hood* is French, from over three hundred years ago, but there are stories with similar elements from China, Germany, Palestine, Turkey and many other countries, going back even further. I wanted to write a version which would make Red an active child hero at the heart of the story, so I was interested to see how different versions treated her character. Some make being gobbled up a punishment for a girl who 'strays from the path' but I got more interested in those which explored a child's ingenuity and generosity.

As this is the first time I have written a pantomime (although I had seen lots at Stratford East and other theatres), I also researched the way this type of show has developed. Although it is now seen as a quirky British type of theatre, its roots are deep and wide, traced as far back as masked theatre in India a thousand years ago and Jewish acting companies in medieval Italy. I needed to create opportunities for song, verbal and physical humour, spectacle and audience participation, to be true to expectations of what a 'proper' pantomime is.



Writer Carl Miller

## THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Climate change, family relationships and gender all emerged as themes which interested me. The centre of the story is the encounter between Red and Wolf – a human and an animal. I was interested in how the story perhaps had roots in competition between humans and animals for food. That connected with the current climate crisis, which poses humans important questions about how we share this world with other species (and each other).

I first came to pantomime at Stratford East with my parents, and later with my own son. The idea of family – particularly of children’s relationships with parents – seemed a theme which would connect for the varied ages of the people coming to see the show. So, I created the character of Wolfie, whose relationship with his Dad mirrors Red’s relationship with her



Writer Carl Miller

Mum. There is also a rich tradition in pantomime of exploring gender as performance, with ‘cross-dressed’ characters like the ‘Dame’ and ‘Principal Boy’. From my experience as a gay man, writing a range of characters who don’t all conform to narrow ideas of what gender identity ‘should’ be was a fun and important part of the writing.

## WATCHING A SCRIPT COME TO LIFE IN THE REHEARSAL ROOM

One of the great things about writing a play is that actors make the words you have written on a page come alive. They can make them funnier, or more moving, and often discover things I did not consciously intend – which usually makes things better! I really enjoy how the other creative people involved in the production – Director, Set, Costume, Lighting and Sound Designers, Composer, Choreographer and others – have brilliant skills that can make things which start as words on a page become magical moments.

## THE WRITER’S ROLE IN THE REHEARSAL ROOM

A lot of it is to be encouraging, particularly as once we are in rehearsal the clock is ticking and everyone has a huge amount to do in limited time. Sometimes it can be helpful to explain elements that aren’t entirely clear from the script (although I also need to try and make sure it makes sense before we start rehearsal!) I often see points where I feel I can make the writing stronger by making things shorter, but I must be careful not to interfere too much and give the actors too many changes to learn.



# AN INSIGHT FROM SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

**Jean Chan**

## THEMES

The themes of *Red Riding Hood* are loosely based on the climate emergency and the world around us. Heavy stuff for a panto!

There are two worlds in this production, the first being the made-up fairyland world where Red and her friends live. Things here are brightly coloured, fake but beautiful. In contrast, as you enter the woods where Granny lives, we realise that the world isn't all as it seems. This wooded wasteland of a world is littered with piles of rubbish where mushrooms grow, and where the trees are losing their colour and turning monochrome.

## THE DESIGN PROCESS

There are many different aspects to designing a theatre show. I start my design process by reading the script, from here I then work on image research to help inspire me further. Depending on the show, I either start to draw certain scenes by hand or I go straight into model making. Sometimes it's better to model up a loose idea so that you can see how it works in 3D within the theatre model box.

The show is then developed further through White Card Model Design meetings, which provide an opportunity for the production team to explain their three-dimensional vision for the show. These meetings also allow the production team and wider company to forecast initial costings of the show. From here, I then move onto finalising my designs, which involves creating a coloured model, as well as technical drawings of the model, costume drawings and mood boards.



Set & Costume Designer Jean Chan

## INSPIRATIONS

I was particularly inspired by Robert Parke Harrison's sepia photography, and I watched Jim Carey's *The Truman Show* many times over. Both have the contrasting worlds that this show needed to convey. *The Truman Show* is based around Carey's character, who lives in a brightly coloured world, where the sun shines every day, and everyone is extremely friendly. But it's only when things fall apart that the protagonist begins to realise that everything around him is fake.

## COLLABORATION

Collaboration is always key in my design process. I hadn't worked with Director Robert Shaw Cameron before *Red Riding Hood*. So, it was important that we met and chatted about the show before the first lockdown came into effect and forced us to work remotely via Zoom. At the beginning of 2021, we had a new version of the ever-changing script from Writer Carl Miller, which had been developed further from the previous year. Which meant a lot of re-design of ideas to fit within the budget.

Above all, it's important to share ideas even if you're not confident in sharing them - they can often spark new ideas.



*Red Riding Hood* model box by Jean Chan

# A NOTE ON MOVEMENT DIRECTION

**Ingrid Mackinnon**

## THE ROLE OF THE MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

The broad definition of movement, in theatre, is anything that drives the play's narrative using physical storytelling. It creates the potential for the actors' physicality or gestures to bring focus to the text or even replace the text all together. As an audience member, one of the things that we enjoy most about theatre is the potential to get lost in a world of wonder, but

most of these stories are based on human experiences, so physicality becomes essential to telling those narratives. So, the role of the Movement Director is to create the physical language for the production, usually in collaboration with the actors, ensemble and creative team.



Movement Director Ingrid Mackinnon

## TRANSLATING THEMES AND CREATING MOVEMENT

I come from a dance background, but Movement Directors come from a variety of backgrounds including theatre and sports, so there are many ways to approach creating physicality. As a starting point, it's useful to have a detailed conversation with the creative team so that you understand the major themes of the production. From there, you can begin to translate those themes into movement - I tend to use music as a way into moving. It's helpful to create a playlist, which represents the themes of the production, and to listen to the Composer's musical score for the play. Music helps me get a sense of the pace and rhythm of the work, as well as sparking ideas for how movement could support the overall feeling of the production.

I also work closely with actors and find out how they think their characters might move. Together, we can create something that works for them. Equally, if there is a movement sequence that everyone needs to learn, I find it useful to come prepared with some choreography ideas to begin the process of creating and learning choreography with actors.

I also find still images (visual art and photography – especially images that feature people or bodies) helpful in creating movement themes and motifs. Lastly, if appropriate for the production, I will use historical references as a helpful starting point for movement simply because people move differently in 2021 compared to how people moved in 1951, for instance.

## Movement Task

A useful group task for creating ensemble choreography for a pantomime or musical is using the themes of good and evil to create a range of gestures. You can divide actors into two groups and assign 'good' to one group and 'evil' to the other.

Ask the actors to create 3 of their own gestures for good and evil; consider what does good and evil look like and how would good and evil forces and beings move? This could be abstract or everyday movements. Let your imagination run free.

The actors can then teach their 3 gestures to the rest of their group. Each group will now have a wide range of gestures to help them create choreography.



# INTERVIEW WITH AN ACTOR

Stratford East's Learning Project Manager, **Maya Pindar**, joins Actor **Jodie Jacobs** in conversation about her role in *Red Riding Hood*.

## WHAT SHAPE DID YOUR JOURNEY INTO ACTING TAKE?

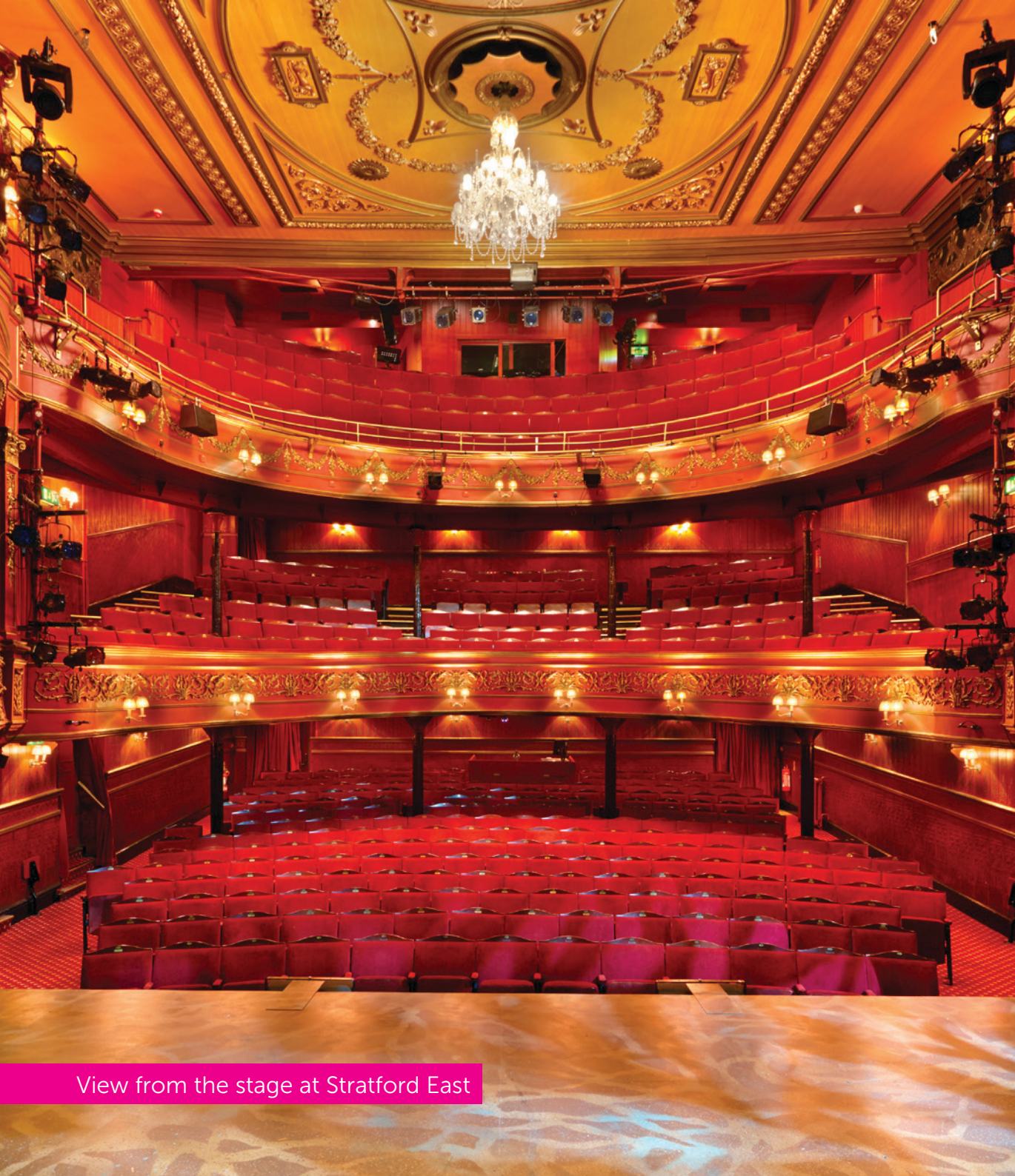
I didn't really know or trust what I wanted to do until I was well into my twenties. Even then I was tentative and not particularly brave about it. I was working a lovely job with lovely friends, but I was desperately frustrated, and I didn't know why. I did years of Amateur Dramatics and then took an uncharacteristic and courageous leap. I ran headfirst into open auditions for shows and schools, which led me to study for one year at London School of Musical Theatre, where I learned to love the whole creative process.

## HOW DO YOU USUALLY UNDERTAKE CHARACTER RESEARCH?

It begins as soon as the audition is booked! It's different for every part but we have access to so much material now. I often research past productions and portrayals and investigate previous creative choices. But ultimately, you must be prepared for characters and creative choices to change over the course of rehearsals and through the development of relationships with other characters. And again over the course of performance. It's important to be open to this change and not marry yourself to the material that you initially take into the rehearsal room.



Actor Jodie Jacobs



View from the stage at Stratford East

## **CAN YOU GIVE US AN INSIGHT INTO THE REHEARSAL ROOM OF A MAINSTAGE MUSICAL?**

The feelings in a room on the first day are chaotic but good. Rehearsals mould, hone, tumble, stir and wrangle that energy into a beautiful piece of art over the course of a few weeks. It can be daunting, emotional and difficult but being in a room where you are made to feel necessary to a story being told, changes and challenges you in wonderful ways. The more of yourself – your feelings, thoughts, words and ideas – that you put in, the more you are gifted back to take forward in your next journey.

## **WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT TELLING STORIES THROUGH SONG?**

I used to just love the sound of my own voice. Big and loud. All ego. Over the years I have discovered the spell that a song can cast. The alchemy of music and lyrics is an extension of feelings and meanings that words aren't enough to express. In a theatre production, this can be quiet and intimate moments, or sometimes, big and loud is exactly what you need.

Thanks to the Newham Cultural Enrichment Programme, we are offering an online Teachers' CPD and a sneak peek of *Red Riding Hood* for a group of students at the dress rehearsal. To find out more about these opportunities, please contact Maya at [mpindar@stratfordeast.com](mailto:mpindar@stratfordeast.com).

For more information on our schools programmes, work experience, youth theatres and to find out about schools' show tickets, please visit: [www.stratfordeast.com/get-involved](http://www.stratfordeast.com/get-involved)

If you have any questions, please contact Learning Projects Manager, Maya at [mpindar@stratfordeast.com](mailto:mpindar@stratfordeast.com).

### **THANKS TO CONTRIBUTORS:**

Robert Shaw Cameron, Carl Miller, Jean Chan, Ingrid Mackinnon, and Jodie Jacobs

With thanks to the Newham Cultural Enrichment Programme. This project is generously funded by Newham Council.



[#StratfordPanto](https://twitter.com/StratfordPanto)

