



MINACK
THEATRE



A MINACK THEATRE
PRODUCTION

TOM'S MIDNIGHT GARDEN

FROM THE NOVEL BY
PHILIPPA PEARCE

ADAPTED BY
DAVID WOOD

22 AUG - 1 SEPT

MINACK.COM

Time

Change

Memory



TOM'S MIDNIGHT GARDEN

A MINACK THEATRE
PRODUCTION

FROM THE NOVEL BY
PHILIPPA PEARCE

ADAPTED BY
DAVID WOOD



About Philippa Pearce

Philippa Pearce is best known as the author of *Tom's Midnight Garden*, but she wrote over 30 children's books including *Minnow on the Sey* and *A Dog so Small*.

Born in 1920, her father was a miller in the village of Great Shelford on the upper reaches of the River Cam. The family owned the Mill House with its large garden, which became the setting for Mrs Bartholomew's house in *Tom's Midnight Garden* – where Tom plays with his nineteenth century friend just as successive generations of Philippa's family had played in it.

Her early career was in the schools' broadcasting department of the BBC as a scriptwriter and producer until ill-health led to a year's leave during which

she began to write her own fiction. Her second novel, *Tom's Midnight Garden*, published in 1958, won the Carnegie Medal and secured her reputation as one of the foremost children's writers of her generation.

Philippa always loved the company of children and understood their concerns. "*People think how carefree children are. Children have different cares, and cares particularly which they don't want to articulate.*"

She spent the last years of her life in a cottage that her grandfather had built, close to the Mill House where she was born. The house and its riverside garden had changed over the years. Asked if this hurt, she would reply - *not at all, the years had changed her too.*

Taking Tom from Page to Stage

DAVID WOOD (Adapter)

Not long after the play was first produced, Philippa asked me what was the most difficult thing about adapting *Tom's Midnight Garden* for the stage. I told her that it was finding logical reasons for Tom to stay in his pyjamas throughout most of the play. There are several scenes set in the 50s in daytime, when he certainly wouldn't be wearing pyjamas, but I wanted to avoid scene breaks or superfluous dialogue to cover costume changes. Aunt Gwen finds him reading in his room. "*Not dressed yet, Tom?*" she frowns. "*It's nearly lunchtime!*"

I think Philippa enjoyed the fact that I had chosen an example of the nitty gritty, the craft of playwriting rather than some high-flown literary problem. A vital part of her artistry was the fact that she was a great craftswoman, affording great care to detail, choice of word or even punctuation mark.

Her practical approach made her sympathetic to the idea that children's theatre budgets might make it difficult to have a cast of more than eight, so doubling would be required. Two

parts played by one actor. She could understand my pleasure in the fact that the two time zones meant that the doubling was relatively easy – Uncle Alan and Abel, Aunt Gwen and Susan, Mrs Bartholomew and Aunt Grace. On paper it actually worked quite well, as long as time was allowed for their numerous costume changes.

Philippa accepted that sometimes changes had to be made, the running order of events adjusted. She understood that the narrative voice telling the story in the book couldn't be exactly the same voice in the play. But I think she trusted me to be faithful to the story, which to me is a vital ingredient of adaptation.

And because we discussed things from day one, I like to think that she felt part of the process. There was a lovely moment when, as we watched a performance together, after one exchange of lines, she whispered to me, "*Was that you or me? It was rather good! I hope it was me!*"

Philippa, thank you.

An extract from the Philippa Pearce Memorial Lecture (2008) – the first of a regular series of events remembering Philippa Pearce, who died in 2006. You can read David Wood's complete article on www.pearcelecture.com

The background image is a fantastical, steampunk-style set. It features a large, ornate, dark-colored clock with intricate metalwork and a portrait of a woman on its face. The clock is surrounded by various gears of different sizes, some mounted on poles. The floor is decorated with a circular, intricate pattern. The overall atmosphere is one of mystery and adventure, with a warm, golden light illuminating the scene.

Kirstie Davis (Director)

This is a fantastic adaptation by David Wood of a beautiful, iconic award-winning story by Philippa Pearce. We meet Tom, a ten-year-old who has been banished from his home due to his brother's measles to his uncle and aunt's flat in the 1950's. A beautiful Grandfather Clock resides in this property and enables this lonely boy to time travel to a Victorian England and make a new friend called Hatty. It is a story about friendship and memory – it is both a ghost story and a mystery and it is all wrapped up in the warmth of a time in childhood when friendships are at their most potent. We have four professional actors working with four young people from the Minack's Academy to create this vibrant piece of storytelling. Alongside two musicians providing the live soundscape. It is a fast moving, joyful ride of adventure with children and growing up at the heart of it. So, join us as the clock strikes thirteen.....

Kirstie Davis, August 2023



Cast

JESSE BATTLE	Tom
LUCY BEASLEY	Hatty
DARCEY BALL	Aunt Gwen & Susan
BEN KERNOW	Uncle Alan & Abel
JACK MULHOLLAND	Edgar & Peter
PATRICK CHRUSZCZ	James
ROSS TELFER	Young Hubert & Young Barty
ELEANOR TOMS	Mrs Bartholomew & Aunt Grace
BEN SUTCLIFFE	Musician
ZAID AL-RIKABI	Musician

Other parts played by members of the cast

Cover for performers Marnie Cole



Creative & production team

KIRSTIE DAVIS Director

JESSICA CURTIS Designer

BEN SUTCLIFFE Musical Director & Composer

SALLY KNIGHT Choreographer

SIMON HUTCHINGS Lighting Designer
& Production Manager

NADINE RENNIE Casting Director

LAU BATTY Assistant Director

ZAID AL-RIKABI Assistant Musical Director

JOHN BROLLY Acting Academy Leader

JORDAN LEVER Company Stage Manager

RORY LOCK Sound Operator

MARION HARRISON Costume Supervisor

ALICE KING Puppet Maker (Pincher)

MILLIE BROLLY ASM & Chaperone

TIM NORMAN Prop Support

YASMIN BAIRD Running Wardrobe

DAN RICHARDSON,

LYNN BATTEN & LOUIS KING Set Building

LYNN BATTEN, JUSTIN MACKAY

JEFF ROWE & DAN SUTCLIFFE Set Crew

ZOË CURNOW Producer

SIAN KENNEDY Assistant Producer

MATT TRAVIS Publicity Design

LYNN BATTEN Photography

ZAID AL-RIKABI (Musician)

What period would you like to time-travel to?
Ancient Egypt.

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?
Charades.

What would your perfect garden be like?
A mix of tropical and temperate with a water feature.

What is your next project?
FUP at the Minack.



JESSE BATTLE (Tom)

What period would you like to time-travel to?
If I could travel to any time period that I wanted to, I would probably travel back in time to before the pandemic, so that I could regain the lost years of childhood that I missed out on from the COVID-19 and create the childhood I never got to experience for myself.

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?
If I could play any game with my imaginary friend, I would produce, direct and act in a film with it since I have a great passion for the art of cinema and film-making. It would also be extremely entertaining!!

What would your perfect garden be like?
I would say that my ideal garden would be an elegant terrace garden filled with cherry blossoms, orchids and butterflies in an apartment overlooking a beautiful sunset of a stunning city skyline.

What is your next project?
Sadly, I do not have many projects lined up after *Tom's Midnight Garden* since I am taking my GCSEs next school year so I am trying to focus on that!



DARCEY BALL (Aunt Gwen & Susan)

What period would you like to time-travel to?
I'd time travel back to the neolithic times before there were roads, the only access to Porthcurno being by sea in a dugout log boat raft or over land by foot.

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?
I'd like to see how many tricks we could play on people that couldn't see my imaginary friend - using their power of invisibility.

What would your perfect garden be like?
A great stretch of grass to run and play on. An abundance of wild flowers. An orchard with apple trees. A green house. A vegetable patch. A river to swim in. I think I have just described a garden not dissimilar to **Tom's Midnight Garden!**

What is your next project?
I have a few months working with the Marina Abramovic Institute on her upcoming performances and exhibition at The Royal Academy of Art in London before I give birth in January!



LUCY BEASLEY (Hatty)

What period would you like to time-travel to?
I've always found something quite magical about Austen's poetic regency period, so I'd love to time travel there. Of course, it wasn't such a great time if you weren't mega rich and if you were a woman! So, I'd probably end up being a scullery maid, which is a little less poetic!

What would your perfect garden be like?
My perfect garden would have a river at the bottom and even better, have a weeping willow beside it. Perfect for sitting under and reading, or for climbing; although I'd try not to fall like Hatty!

What is your next project?
I'm looking forward to auditioning for the Minack Academy again this September. But in the meantime, I will enjoy playing the practically perfect nanny in *Mary Poppins*.



PATRICK CHRUSZCZ (James)

What period would you like to time-travel to?

The pirate golden era (preferably with a lot of oranges).

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?

Make believe (tribal or pirate characters).

What would your perfect garden be like?

A big garden with a tropical climate and plants, preferably next to the water for a quick swim or sail.

What is your next project?

I currently have no projects lined up after *Tom's Midnight Garden*.



KIRSTIE DAVIS (Director)

What period would you like to time-travel to?

I am a HUGE Elvis fan and so would love to go back to the late fifties and see him when he was just starting out....

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?

Keepy Uppy is my favourite game (as everyone who has ever been in a rehearsal room with me knows - as we do it most days!) So even an imaginary friend would have to be good at that!

What would your perfect garden be like?

I lived in Kenya for a couple of years and the Kakamega Rainforest was my favourite place. So my secret garden would have to be a Rainforest full of extraordinary creatures and plants.

What is your next project?

Ladies That Float by Joyce Branagh.



JESSICA CURTIS (Designer)

What period would you like to time-travel to?

Crikey, that's hard, as I am imagining whose clothes I would love to see in the flesh: perhaps the coronation of Elizabeth 1st? Or maybe looking over Vermeer's shoulder as he paints the girl with the pearl earring?

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?

A long, rambling, conversational game with lots of characters, extravagance and hiding.

What would your perfect garden be like?

It would have different areas - lots of wildness - wild flower meadows, grasses and rambling cottage garden flowers and shrubs contrasted with more cultivated topiaried trees and bushes. Lots of perfumed plants, nooks and crannies sheltering seats and tables connected by herringbone brick walkways, a walled vegetable garden, a timber framed green house, a pond with water lilies and rushes, a cabin that acts as a studio.. and lots of gardeners to look after it!

What is your next project?

A summer holiday with my family and possibly a new adaptation of *Northanger Abbey*...



BEN KERNOW (Uncle Alan & Abel)

What period would you like to time-travel to?

I would love to go back to the 18th century. Great frocks and even greater wigs, which appeals to me. I also would love to see London in all its Georgian grandeur, go to a few soirées. I think this would be followed very closely by a trip to Elizabethan London.

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?

Well, I have a small collection of board games and I'd probably play those. My favourite being *Secret Hitler* which is a very fun and addictive game! Definitely worth a buy for those board game enthusiasts out there.

What would your perfect garden be like?

I have a small vineyard and that is near enough my perfect garden. Vines have always fascinated me, as does wine to be fair, and I find a vineyard to be an extremely zen area. Ideally I'd like to add more agapanthus into the mix, which are my favourite flowers, alongside anything scented or edible.

What is your next project?

I've recently directed a Cornish language short film called Art, which is beginning its festival journey as we speak, so I shall be travelling round with that over the coming months.



JACK MULHOLLAND (Edgar & Peter)



What period would you like to time-travel to?

I think I would either want to go to the very far future, something like the year 3000, just to see what's in store for the Earth. However, I would be afraid that I'd find it disappointing, or just be lost and culture shocked, so if I only had one chance to time travel, I would go the other way - to the ancient past of the 80's. From what I have heard and seen, it sounded like a great time to grow up and I've always wished I could have been there for the millennium!

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?

I think I would be tempted to take full advantage of the fact that no one could see them and pull all kinds of tricks on people! However, if it's just us two in the garden, I think I would mostly just explore with them - perhaps some hide and seek in the woods! I would love to go swimming with them too.

What would your perfect garden be like?

My perfect garden would absolutely be vast and wild, with lots of trees, ponds or streams and general wildness. I would like a small lawn too, but huge, empty lawns just feel like a waste to me. I would much rather have an overgrown, mysterious place with character! I would also love to have some animals in the garden, with bird boxes and rabbits and maybe even deer! Really, the bigger and wilder the better.

What is your next project?

My plan at the moment is to be a part of the Acorn Youth Theatre, taking part in National Theatre Connections, a project where amateur theatre groups get to perform to National Theatre representatives, and the best ones get to perform at the National Theatre itself! I was a part of this fun project last year and we will hopefully be able to perform at the Drum Theatre in Plymouth again this year.

BEN SUTCLIFFE (Musical Director & Composer)



What period would you like to time-travel to?

First Century Rome.

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?

Black Jack in a Casino.

What would your perfect garden be like?

It would have a maze and lots of fountains.

What is your next project?

FUP at the Minack.

ELEANOR TOMS Mrs Bartholemew & Aunt Grace)



What period, past or future, would you like to time-travel to?

That's tricky! I love history so there's lots of periods I'd like to travel to, but I think being a Suffragette for a day would be interesting.

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?

My childhood was spent outdoors playing with my sisters, so I'd want to recreate some of that magic. Pushing hay bales together to make houses, roller blading down the lane and serving grass salads/flower stews to anyone and everyone!

What would your perfect garden be like?

Peaceful! I'd like to be surrounded by flowers and plants and lots of trees where I can have a hammock and a swing. I also love the sound of running water so a fountain or pond would be dreamy!

What is your next project?

I'm going to enjoy a week off at home in London and then I'm heading straight off to perform in *Astley's Astounding Adventures* at the New Vic Theatre.

ROSS TELFER (Young Hubert & Young Barty)



What period, past or future, would you like to time-travel to?

Before acting I read History at university so choosing an era is like choosing your favourite dunkable biscuit, almost impossible. Therefore, strangely I think I'd go to the future... Maybe the Year 3000 to see if they really do live underwater (for all you Busted fans out there)!

What game would you play with your secret or imaginary friend?

Board games! We have a collection of about 20 at home which has been rapidly growing since the pandemic... something like *Carcassonne* or *Wingspan* to be specific.

What would your perfect garden be like?

Everything is food. I love food. Something akin to River Cottage. I'm particularly fond of growing chilli plants and would try to have a variety of scoville spiciness, although not sure I'd be brave enough to taste the hottest!

What is your next project?

I play the Bagpipes and have a very small moment in an upcoming period drama on television... Alongside being in the early stages of writing a mythical folk musical. Other than that I'm free, please cast me!

Costume designs by JESSICA CURTIS





Photos by Lynn Batten

We would like to thank the following for their help with this production:

Ellen Swaile for stage management support.
Simon Harvey, Mike Shepherd & Sarah Wright for the loan of the puppet 'Hatty'.
Theatre Royal Plymouth & Bristol Old Vic Theatre School for the loan of props.
The Planted House plant shop Penzance for the plant.
Ben & Anna Colclough at St Ives Bikes for wheels.
Danny Jones for loan of cello stands.
Graham & Sarah Toms for loan of the Barometer.
The Minack Team.