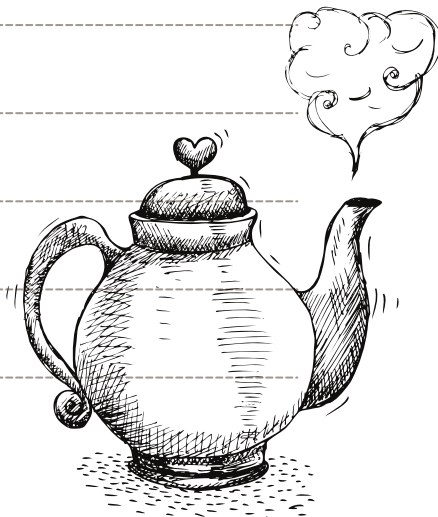


The History Boys

by Alan Bennett

Produced by Peedie
Productions



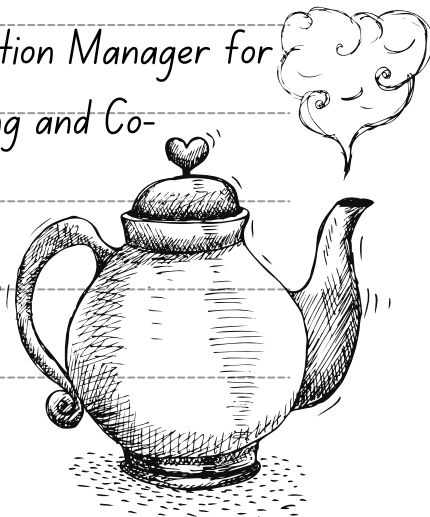
Team Bios

Director- Niamh Jones

Niamh Jones is a second year English student at Jesus College. Her background is in acting, having spent ten years at her local StageCoach group and taking LAMDA exams. During her time at Oxford, she has been Marketing Manager for both LMH Art Week's Top Girls (TT, 22) and Deborah Acheampong's Love Me (BT, MT22). Alongside theatre, she is Print Director for Oxford Student Publications Limited, which includes a necessity to be organised, balancing the requirements of multiple publications. This will be her first experience as a Director and she is looking forward to using her acting knowledge to explore the role. She is excited at the prospect of this new project and hopes that it will open the door to other directorial adventures.

Producer- Leah O'Grady-

During her time at Oxford, Leah has tried her hand at anything from writing to acting to lighting. Recent credits include Director, Adapter, and Lighting designer for Dracula (TT22), Writer and Producer for Unscene (MT22), Lighting and Sound Designer, Love Me (MT22), Producer and Lighting Designer for The Three (TT22), Assistant Stage Manager for Carrie (TT22) and Production Manager for Wednesday, Death Meditation. She is excited to be Co-Producing and Co-Directing 'Engraved' (HT23)



Team Bios

Set Designer- Natsumi Hayashi

Natsumi (she/her) is a visiting student studying PPE at St. Peter's College. Although this is her first time being involved with a drama production, she is eager to learn and grow her skills as a set designer and lighting designer, and hopes to bring new ideas to the Oxford Drama sphere. While she does not have technical experience for working backstage, she often devotes her spare time to drawing in both traditional and digital mediums, and is excited to implement her artistic senses to theatre and stagecraft. She also has some experience working with paper mache clay and needle felting as an extension of her artistic hobbies, which may become useful when in need of props on a budget!

Stage Manager- Tanya Ranadive

Tanya (she/her) is a second year Geography student at Hertford College. At home, Tanya has been involved in prop and set design in local productions. She has also held small roles in school productions like *The King and I* and *Jungle Book*. Having experience being on-stage as well as off-stage for various different performances, Tanya prefers helping backstage as it combines both creative vision and logistics. In Oxford, Tanya co-directed and worked on light design for the Hertford performance of *Maryland for Drama Cuppers*. Being involved in *The History Boys* will be Tanya's first big production in Oxford as well as her first time stage managing, and she is very excited for the new challenge.

Team Bios

Costume Designer- Maeve Hegarty

Maeve is a visiting student from Tufts University studying History at Pembroke College. Some of her recent student theater credits at Tufts include Stage Manager for the Department's production of Macbeth (Spring 2022), backstage crew for the Department's Almanac (Fall 2021), and assistant costuming for the Department's Spring Awakening (Winter 2022). She has worked briefly in professional theater as a scenic hand and as a Production Intern at Studio Theatre in Washington, DC. She is very excited for her first production at Oxford and looks forward to more.

Lighting Designer- Sav Sood

Sav (she/they) is a second year Classical Archaeology and Ancient History student at Wadham College. This project has been such a source of joy and they are so excited to finally be making it a reality. They have been involved with theatre both in front of and behind the stage during their time at Oxford and before. Their current credits include), Persephone (ASM - Playhouse), The Aliens (Technician - BT), Sweeney Todd (Lighting Assistant (Follow Spotter) - Playhouse), Skeletons Producer - BT), Persona (Lighting Designer - BT),, Much Ado About Nothing (Assistant director - Wadham Gardens), Carrie (Ensemble/Technical Assistant - Playhouse), The Three (Technical Lighting Designer - BT), Tick Tick Boom (Production Manager - Pilch), Girls and Dolls (Executive Lighting Designer - BT), Vessel (Lighting Designer - Old Fire Station).

Synopsis

The History Boys follows two teachers and a group of students at an all boys grammar school in England in the 1980s. The boys are all trying to get into Oxford and Cambridge. At the beginning of the play, we see Hector, a beloved teacher in his 50s. Hector tells the boys that they shouldn't be so concerned with getting into the most prestigious universities, Oxford and Cambridge.

The school's Headmaster wants the boys to attend prestigious universities in order to raise the profile of the school. He hires Irwin, a young Oxford graduate, to help.

Hector asks if anyone needs a ride on his motorcycle. We soon learn that Hector gropes the boys while they ride behind him on their way home from school.

Irwin becomes more and more curious about what goes on in Hector's classes, especially when he finds that Hector conducts class behind a locked door. We witness more General Studies sessions with Hector, in which he reminds the boys that literature will help soothe pain and heartache later in life.

We learn that Posner has a crush on his fellow student Dakin, but that Dakin is sleeping with the Headmaster's secretary, Fiona. Posner tells Irwin that he thinks he might be gay.

The Headmaster tells Mrs. Lintott about Hector's groping, and says that he's almost glad it happened. He's been wanting to fire Hector anyway, because Hector's results are so hard to quantify. He exits, and Mrs. Lintott tells Irwin that the Headmaster is a "twat."

Synopsis

In their first shared lesson, Hector and Irwin discuss the Holocaust. Hector and Posner argue that one shouldn't try to make a good point about the Holocaust on an exam, because this demeans the suffering of those involved. Dakin and Irwin argue that the Holocaust is an historical event, too, and can be discussed as such.

Afterwards, Dakin asks Irwin about his time at Oxford. Their conversation becomes flirtatious.

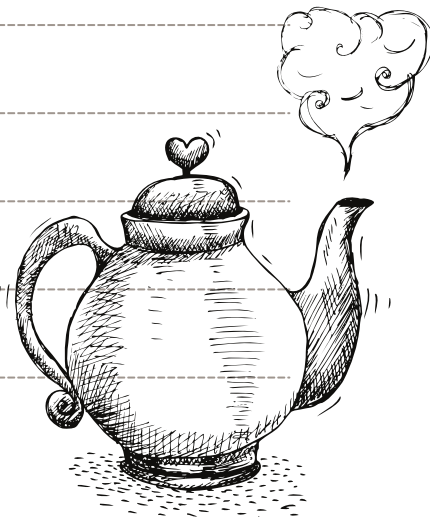
All the boys receive places at Oxford or Cambridge. While at Oxford, Dakin learns that Irwin lied about attending, before seducing him. Dakin tells Scripps that the Headmaster often makes passes at Fiona, and that he has used this information to get Hector a reprieve. He says that he's going to ride home with Hector today, for old-times sake. When the Headmaster sees Dakin in a helmet, however, he forbids this. Instead he tells Hector to take Irwin.

We hear from Scripps, in a narrative aside, that the motorcycle crashed on the way home that day. No one knows exactly what happened, but Irwin was left crippled, and Hector is dead. The boys gather and share their memories of Hector. Then Mrs. Lintott tells us about their lives. Most of the boys end up successful in some profession, but Timms gets into drugs, and Posner ends up leading a lonely life, though he always remembers Hector's teachings. The play ends when Hector says that the lesson he really wanted to teach the boys was this: "Pass the parcel. That's sometimes all you can do. Take it, feel it, and pass it on."

Director's Statement

Alan Bennett's *The History Boys* has established itself as something of a cult classic. As a portrayal of the Oxbridge application process, it is an incredibly relatable play that enables anyone who has been through the system to draw parallels between the students and their own experiences. These boys are talented, witty and a little troublesome, perfectly balancing the serious and taxing process of Oxbridge applications with comedy.

These boys come from a range of backgrounds, and we are committed to ensure diversity in our casting. The play is also a battleground for two differing ideas of education: learning for learning's sake and learning to pass exams. While we may idealise one, our society has been moulded to more highly value the other. Ultimately, audiences are left to debate the question and come to their own conclusion. The play has some problematic elements which we intend to address head-on, bringing the play into the modern age.

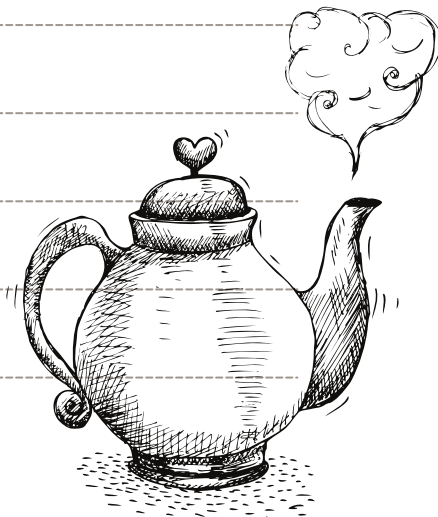


Producer's Statement

Oxford is the perfect place to put on 'The History Boys'. Not only is the play extremely well known, and centred around Oxford admissions, the aesthetic, the nerdy jokes, and cultural references appeal to an Oxford audience. We are flattered to have received a huge amount of interest in being part of the project, and we are excited to be casting a strong male ensemble. Between the large cast and commercially successful script, we are confident we could break even.

As a largely naturalistic piece, the set and technical elements are minimal. The big challenge is acquiring 9 matching uniforms for costume, but this can be done with little expense.

I am lucky to have some technical experience, and I'm committed to training the team in lights and sound, along with Sav, our very experienced lighting designer.



Marketing Statement

A strong advantage we have in the marketing of 'History Boys' is that it's a well known play that hasn't been done in Oxford in the past few years. We also have a very large cast which helps with ticket sales to friends and family.

We want to lean in to the 'dark academic' aspects of the show for marketing, so we will take inspiration from the colleges of Oxford and use lots of neutrals. Because we have a big ensemble cast, we want the print marketing to be graphics as well as photography based.

In terms of the medium for marketing, we have an instagram and facebook set up. With the less formal marketing such as instagram stories, we 're planning on focussing very much on the show itself and the process of making it, rather than the individuals comprising it. We sre planning on investing at least 15% of our marketing budget into digital marketing. We are also planning to order stickers, fliers, posters and programmes. . Because of the political nature of so much of the play, we'd also like to run a discussion with Niamh and some of the cast, discussing why the show is still important and some of the difficult themes within it.

We will also contact the relevant publications for review, including some 'town' papers to reach a wider audience.

Marketing Timeline

Michaelmas

8th week- Print material discussed,

Vac- Print and digital material designed, print ordered.

Hilary

0th week- Print distributed.. Facebook event live, ticket link live.

1st week- Cast and Crew intros collected.. Headshots

4th week- Cast and Crew intros up. Headshots and cover photos up..

Monday 5th week- OUDS Takeover on the weekend of 1st to 2nd week.

Throughout this, we will be using instagram stories to document the process of making the production. From 3rd week onwards, we are aiming to have story content every day. ,

Technical Statements

Lights and Sound

The lights and sound are to be kept fairly basic, leaning in to the fairly naturalistic nature of the play. We will use warm washes for almost the entire show with some cool fluorescent fixtures to give the impression of a school. Similarly, the only sound required are diegetic sound effects and music at the beginning and end, rather than stings to set the scene. There are two exceptions to this. We intend to use projection and pre-recorded audio for the first scene of each act, which depicts Irwin in the future, to demonstrate the temporal difference between these scenes and the rest of the play. The play also involves music, specifically a keyboard and a singer. We will use an electric keyboard and, since we do not have a drum-kit, there is no need to mic the actors for singing.

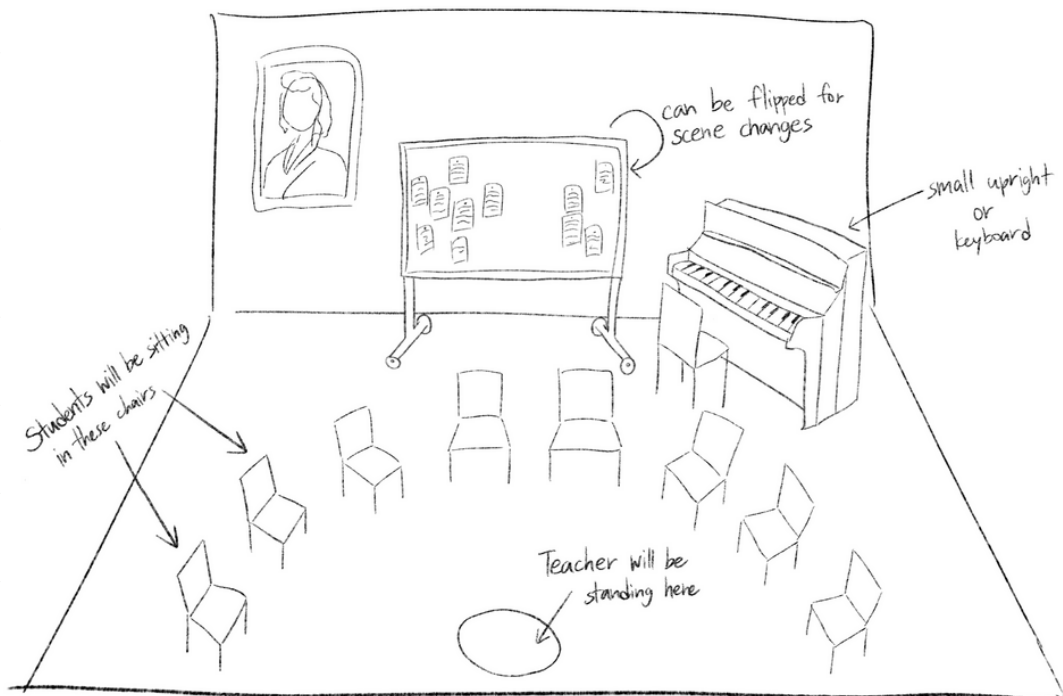
Costume

Costume for the boys, who comprise 8 of the 12 cast, is very simple. We will use a white button up shirt and black trousers, which all the actors can supply from their sub-fusc, for uniform. We will then acquire 8 matching jumpers, ties, and 8 embroidered crests .

Technical Statements

Set

For the set design, we are aiming to make it a relatively simplistic set, both due to the frequent scene changes and due to how we wish to keep the focus on the actors themselves rather than the set itself. Because of this, we will use most of the set for the boys and the teacher, with the piano to the side and only a couple of props to populate the set with. The most important prop we are planning to use is a double-sided corkboard, to which we will affix notes to in order to emulate the classroom on one side, and a whiteboard on the other, in order to create a contrast between the classroom setting and the staff room and to indicate scene changes.



Technical Statements

We hope that this difference, along with the rearrangement of the chairs, introduction of a desk, and a change in lighting, will be able to indicate that there has been a scene change while managing to repurpose most elements of the set. As all of the main sets, which are the classroom, staff room, and headmaster's office are indoors, changing the backdrop or placement of major props between scenes is not ideal nor really necessary, hence this arrangement. On top of this, if the play takes place in a thrust seating arrangement, the placement of all of the props at the back will make it so they do not unnecessarily block the sightlines of the audience. To top this all off, we must not forget the dark academia vibes that this production is also trying to emulate, so we will add a relatively large painting in the background, and possibly some stacks of books if the set looks a bit empty.

