

PETER PAN

by **J.M. BARRIE**

by arrangement with Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity



LED BY IWM

REGENT'S PARK
OPEN AIR THEATRE

EDUCATION PACK

written by Mark Palmer

INTRODUCTION

3

ABOUT THE SHOW

The story, the background and the context of PETER PAN.

4

CREATIVE INSIGHT

The creative talents behind PETER PAN share their vision for the work and for their individual contribution to a **“hugely entertaining, richly imaginative adaptation that also lends perspective to the ideologies of the First World War”** (The Stage).

10

ACTIVITIES

A variety of classroom ideas, activities and starting points to broaden and enrich your visit to see PETER PAN.

21

RESOURCES & LINKS

Ideas for reading, viewing and listening to further support your study of PETER PAN.

40



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“You think you know Pan? You don’t know Pan.”

So stated Time Out in their 2015 review of PETER PAN, which is being revived at the Open Air Theatre in Regent’s Park to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War.

A field hospital. A wounded soldier. A childhood story. A boy frozen in time. And a heartbreaking irony.

“Dreams do come true, if only we wish hard enough. You can have anything in life if you will sacrifice everything else for it.” (J.M.Barrie)

It was in Flanders in 1915 that George Llewelyn Davies was killed from a gunshot wound to the head. One of five brothers, he had been befriended some years earlier by J.M.Barrie whilst playing in Kensington Gardens. All children, Barrie told the boys, start off as birds, but they soon forget how to fly. All children grow up, except one.

The tragedy of George Llewelyn Davies, so far removed from the Never Land of his improvised games with Barrie those few short years before, struck home with Timothy Shearer at the Open Air Theatre. If growing up meant being a part of an adult world that allowed hundreds of thousands of soldiers to die, then remaining as a child and escaping that fate was surely understandable. This was his starting point to develop a production full of **“elegant, poetic irony that shadows the action... a shimmering mix of dream and nightmare”** (The Telegraph).

As Timothy Shearer says of his production:

“Unlike Peter, we do have to put childish things away and engage with a complicated world in which, at any given time, mankind is fighting. We play games of warfare in the playground – pirates and lost boys fighting for control of an island – and we grow up and engage in the same thing on a much bloodier scale. Is this how we want it to be?”

This Education Pack offers background information, insight and activities to support your visit to see PETER PAN.

Enjoy the show!

Mark Palmer

2018



Production and rehearsal photographs in this pack feature the 2015 cast of PETER PAN at the Open Air Theatre, Regent’s Park.



EARLY LIFE

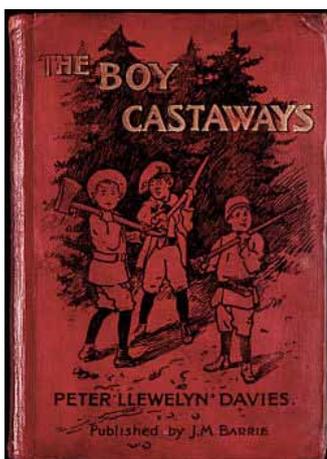
J.M.Barrie loved childhood. Some might say that he was obsessed by it. Certainly he had reason to yearn for the perfect childhood that he felt he never had. Born in Kirriemuir, Scotland in 1860, he always felt that his own childhood was marred by the premature death of his brother David, his mother's golden boy, in a skating accident the day before his 14th birthday. From then on, Barrie tried desperately to fill the void that his brother had left, particularly for his mother, who never truly recovered from the family tragedy. The unhappiness remained, and throughout his life he tried his hardest to recapture the happy years that he remembered from before his brother's untimely death.

Barrie studied for three years at Glasgow Academy, later spending time at Dumfries Academy before attending university in Edinburgh. Whilst at Edinburgh, he developed a love of the theatre and started writing theatrical reviews that would lead him to London in 1885. In London, he would start to write his own novels and plays.



THE GENESIS OF PETER PAN

In 1894, J.M.Barrie married the actress Mary Ansell, but the marriage was destined not to last. Just three years later, he met Sylvia Llewelyn Davies, the daughter of one of his favourite authors George du Maurier. Coincidentally, Barrie had already met Sylvia's sons in Kensington Gardens where they often went for walks with their nanny. Barrie had entertained them with stories that he invented, whilst walking his dog Porthos (equally coincidentally named after the dog in du Maurier's novel **Peter Ibbetson**).



The Llewelyn Davies clan expanded to five, as George and Jack, the eldest, were joined by Peter, Michael and Nicholas, and J.M.Barrie soon became 'Uncle Jim', accompanying them on family holidays and charming them with more of his stories. In 1901, Barrie compiled a photo storybook entitled **The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island** which featured the five brothers in a story of shipwrecks, pirates and exotic wild animals. The introduction to the book is written as if by Peter Llewelyn Davies, who is given author credit on the front cover, even though he was only four years old at the time.

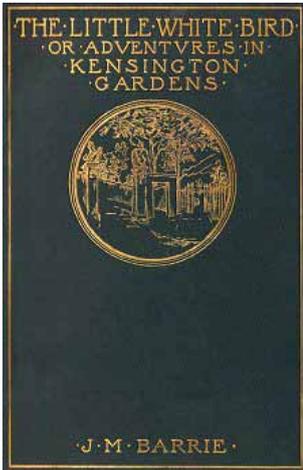
Living out the freedom of childhood once again, through the Llewelyn Davies boys, Barrie conceived his idea for the boy who never grew up. He named him, perhaps in a development of his original idea in **The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island**, after Peter, the third of the Llewelyn Davies brothers.

Peter Pan himself first appeared in Barrie's 1902 novel **The Little White Bird** and, whilst beginning life as a single chapter, grew to an **"elaborate book within a book"** before outgrowing the novel completely to become a play in 1904.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF PETER PAN

The early Pan is a seven day old baby, and yet immediately recognisable as the iconic character that he became:



“Well, Peter Pan got out by the window, which had no bars. Standing on the ledge he could see trees far away, which were doubtless the Kensington Gardens, and the moment he saw them he entirely forgot that he was now a little boy in a nightgown, and away he flew, right over the houses to the Gardens. It is wonderful that he could fly without wings, but the place itched tremendously, and, perhaps we could all fly if we were as dead-confident-sure of our capacity to do it as was bold Peter Pan that evening.”

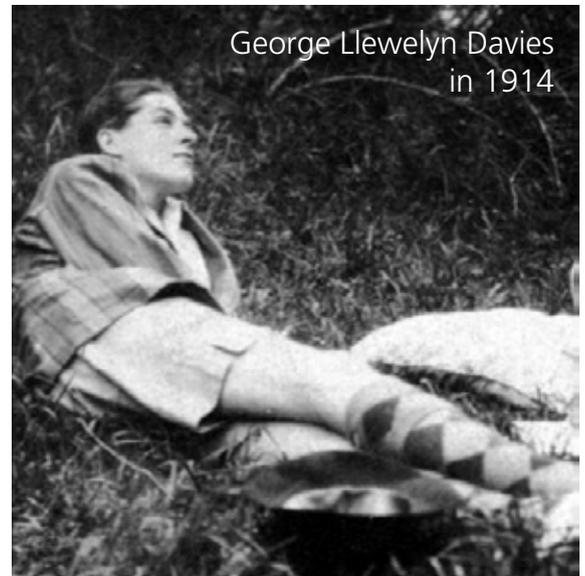
from *The Little White Bird*
by J.M.Barrie

Expanding the story to become the novel **Peter and Wendy** in 1911, the stage version continued, usually with a petite adult woman playing the part of Peter. The character of Hook was not in the original version of Peter’s story, but was added by Barrie as a time-filling device to enable a scene change to take place, and then developed in the later novel.

TRAGEDY FOR BARRIE

Meanwhile, in Barrie’s personal life, tragedy continued to play a part. Adopting the Llewelyn Davies boys in 1910, following the death of their father in 1907 and their mother three years later, Barrie was devastated when George, the eldest, died in 1915.

George Llewelyn Davies, who had been the model for the central character of David in *The Little White Bird* (eerily based on George but named after Barrie’s dead brother), had signed up to the King’s Royal Rifle Corps and served in Flanders. He died of a gunshot wound to the head. Just six years later, Michael drowned whilst swimming with a friend. Suicide was mentioned. Barrie died in 1937, Jack Llewelyn Davies died from lung disease in 1959 and Peter, forever unable to live up to his fictional namesake, committed suicide in 1960.



Barrie himself was made a Baronet in 1913 and was awarded the Order of Merit in 1922. In 1929, J.M.Barrie gifted the copyright of PETER PAN to Great Ormond Street Hospital Children’s Charity. In an unprecedented move, the 1988 British government amended an act of parliament specifically in relation to PETER PAN, granting an ongoing legacy for as long as the hospital exists. Thus, in perpetuity, PETER PAN continues to benefit seriously ill children who go to Great Ormond Street Hospital Children’s Charity for life-saving treatment every day.



ACT ONE

First World War. A field hospital somewhere near the Somme. Soldiers scream in agony as nurses valiantly try to stem their pain. Memories of childhood games merge with stirring patriotic songs from home. A nurse reads a soldier's letter from home. As he carefully places it inside a book for safe keeping, her attention is drawn to the story that he has protected throughout his ordeal.

“All children, except one, grow up.”

The field hospital is transformed into the nursery in the Darling house. And within a moment, Peter Pan has appeared to introduce himself. The nurse is Wendy Moira Angela Darling, who immediately takes charge and offers to help Peter by sewing his shadow back in place, it having come away, as shadows sometimes do. Soon, Peter is flying around the nursery in delight, introducing Wendy to Tinker Bell, his fairy companion, and teaching her how to fly. With brothers John and Michael awoken, all three are taught to think wonderful thoughts, and the unlikely quartet set course and fly 'second to the right and straight on till morning'. Their destination, the Never Land.

Never Land is not the same without Peter, and he has disappeared. He is away on a mission to discover more about a girl called Cinderella. The Lost Boys are anxious to hear news of her. But Cinderella is soon forgotten, as a terrible chorus announces the arrival of the Never Land Pirates. The Lost Boys go to ground, but not before being spotted and nearly shot by one of Captain Hook's disparate crew. It is Hook himself who stops the tragedy – he is only interested in one victim. Peter Pan.

As the pirates retreat, for now, the Lost Boys emerge from hiding and are distracted by a strange blue bird flying towards them. It is moaning its name as it flies, and Tootles take the opportunity to impress Peter and shoots down the Wendy bird. Peter, arriving back shortly after is not pleased at all, but thankfully, Wendy is alive, and to celebrate, the Lost Boys build her a house. A Wendy House.

Realising that John and Michael must have flown off course, Wendy, Peter and the Lost Boys start searching at The Mermaid's Lagoon. John and Michael have been captured by the pirates, but, tricked by Peter imitating Hook, they release the boys. When the real Hook arrives, the Pirates conjure up a plan to capture them all, make them walk the plank, and take Wendy as their mother!

Before they have time to put their plan into action, Peter reveals himself and a fight ensues. Peter is injured, but thankfully saved by the passing crocodile that haunts Hook's nightmares. Peter and Wendy are marooned on a rock but only one can be saved. Wendy is saved by a passing kite and thankfully, in the nick of time, Peter too is saved by a quacking Neverbird.



ACT TWO

Back at the Wendy House, Wendy and the Lost Boys play happy families, with Wendy being mother and Peter being father. As she tells the Lost Boys a bedtime story, Wendy reflects on her parents and the heartache that they must feel with their children flown away. She determines to go home and asks Peter to make the arrangements.

All alone, Peter tries to make the best of things. As he sleeps, Hook breaks into the House and adds five drops of poison to the medicine that Wendy has left for Peter. Despite Tink's warning about the poison, Peter decides to keep his promise to Wendy and drink the medicine. Nobly, Tink gets there first and drinks it instead. Realising the truth, Peter has only one option, to beg all of the boys and girls in the audience to say that they believe in fairies. Thankfully they do, and Tinker Bell is saved. Relieved, Peter turns his attention to his next task, rescuing Wendy.

On the Pirate Ship, Hook is in reflective mood. In an uncharacteristic show of humanity, he offers the Lost Boys a lifeline, offering to take on two of them as cabin boys aboard the Jolly Roger. John and Michael consider the prospect carefully, but their loyalty to King George does not allow them to swear an oath against him.

As the Lost Boys prepare to walk the plank, Wendy reminds them that their real mothers would want them to die like English Gentlemen. They steel themselves to do so, but in the nick of time, the sound of ticking sends Hook into hiding. But it is not the crocodile, it is Peter.

With the crocodile apparently gone, the pirates return to the matter in hand. Bravely, the Lost Boys sing the National Anthem, which only serves to rile Hook, who sends for the cat-o-nine-tails, any pity that he had now completely lost. Just then, a blood-curdling scream and the sound of a cock crowing comes from a dark cabin below deck. The pirates are scared and refuse Hook's order to go below and deal with the 'doodle doo'. Mutiny is in the offing if Hook insists, so instead, the pirate Captain sends the Lost Boys down to kill or be killed.

Emboldened by Peter, the Lost Boys escape as the pirates focus on the noises below. Releasing Wendy, they could all now fly away, but for Peter it is Hook or him this time. A furious battle ensues, with just Peter and Hook left to face each other, and the swords clash as they thrust and parry.

In a final act of defiance, Hook determines to blow the ship up, with everyone meeting their doom. Peter bravely grabs the smoking bomb from him and tosses it overboard. And yet, at the final reckoning, it is the crocodile who dispatches Hook. Peter is left wondering, **"So what now? What happens now?"**

Back in the field hospital, the war is over. As she is about to leave for the last time, Wendy finishes the story that she has been reading, and we hear snapshots of some of the soldier's stories from their lives after the war. Peter asks Wendy to fly away with him, but this time her answer is **"no"**. Peter is tempted for a moment, as she holds out her hand and beckons him to join her on life's awfully big adventure. But Peter just wants to be a little boy and have fun, and as he circles the stage all alone, flying free, we realise that this is exactly what he plans to do.



This character breakdown has been laid out as a card sort. Try printing it out, cutting up the cards, and testing your students' understanding of the characters in PETER PAN.

<p>PETER PAN</p>	<p>Ran away as a child to avoid growing up, he now lives in Never Land with the Lost Boys, telling Wendy, "I want always to be a little boy and have fun". Exceedingly polite, "having learned the grand manner at fairy ceremonies", there is a sadness about him, despite his braveness, love of adventure, and self-declared "cleverness".</p>
<p>WENDY DARLING</p>	<p>Feels herself to be "a nice motherly sort of person", and takes on that role for the Lost Boys and Peter (Peter is sometimes father, suggesting that, in their games, they are married). Despite wanting to stay young forever, ultimately she realizes that "to live would be an awfully big adventure".</p>
<p>JOHN & MICHAEL DARLING</p>	<p>Brave and courageous, they are younger than their sister, but equally in awe of Peter, who teaches them to fly by thinking wonderful thoughts, of "no more bathtimes", "fairytales", "mathematics", "pear drops", "fizz balls", "sugar mice and sherbert".</p>
<p>TINKER BELL</p>	<p>A fairy who "mends the fairy pots and kettles", she is given to fury and bad language which, thankfully, we are generally unable to understand. Desperate for Peter's attention, she is jealous of anyone else who might be competing for it.</p>
<p>SLIGHTLY</p>	<p>"Nothing frightens me", declares this Lost Boy, whilst at the same time worrying about the fate of Cinderella. Musically inclined by way of a home made whistle, his mother helpfully wrote his name of the pinafore he was lost in, to help with his later identification.</p>



TOOTLES

This Lost Boy always seems to miss the action in any adventure. **“He will go off, for instance, in some quiet hour to gather firewood, and then when he returns the others will be sweeping up the blood”**. He is sweet-natured and humble.

NIBS

This Lost Boy remembers little about his mother, except that she often said to his father, **“Oh, how I wish I had a cheque book of my own”**. He is debonair and slightly conceited.

CURLY

This Lost Boy is a **“pickle”** who has been in trouble so often that he now steps forward to admit things whether he has done them or not. He doesn't understand death, believing that it is **“only flowers that die”**.

TWINS

The final two of the Lost Boys, **“who cannot be described because we should probably be describing the wrong one”**. Peter doesn't think that they should dream differently, but maybe they do.

CAPTAIN HOOK

A **“dark and fearful man”**, the **“cruellest jewel”**, **“cadaverous and blackavized”** with eyes of a **“profound insensibility”**. He is **“never more sinister than when he is polite”**. Eminently polite, he always says **“sorry”** when prodding his victims along the plank.

SMEE

Boatswain of the Jolly Roger, this pirate is nonconformist and genial, somehow managing to **“stab without offence”**. His loveable traits include **“after killing, it was his spectacles he wiped instead of his weapon”**.



In this section, some of the creatives involved in the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN talk about their work on the show, and explain what inspired them to work in the theatre in the first place. From directing to set, costume and puppet designing, to composing and vocal coaching, this section offers a comprehensive insight into a major professional production. From its birth at the Open Air Theatre in 2015, to its revival in 2018, marking the centenary of the end of the First World War, this is an opportunity for teachers and students to learn about the real world of professional theatre production.

TIMOTHY SHEADER (CO-DIRECTOR)

When I was growing up, there were no vocational courses to become a theatre director. I studied law and French at university and then somehow persuaded Sam Walters at the Orange Tree Theatre to give me a place on his annual Trainee Director scheme. Whilst there, as well as observing rehearsals, I was able to become immersed in the core of the theatre's activities, from reading scripts to tearing tickets, from running workshops to working in the box office. It was a real apprenticeship. After that training, I assisted in other theatres before becoming a director and making my own work. After working in the regional theatres for a number of years, I decided I would like to try and become an artistic leader and run a company. I was fortunate enough to be offered this wonderful and unique job at the Open Air Theatre.



Creating a production such as PETER PAN, is a process of many many months. Initially, for me, it is a reading of the play several times. Then, I research the history of it - important to consider what was happening to the writer as he put pen to paper. In the case of PETER PAN, I discovered that J.M.Barrie had written the story before as both a short story and a full novel. So then I read those. And then I started to think and interrogate my response to the play and other source material. What does it mean to me? How does it speak to me? How might I like to present the story today, to this particular audience and in this particular theatre? This might be the beginning of a personal vision for this production. It is entirely subjective.

Following on from that, is a period of intense research - into the period, the author, the themes of the play and anything else that might interest me. At the same time as this, I assemble a creative team - those other artists that are going to make the production with me. Then, once I have a shape for my vision, I start work with the designers to create the actual world - the set, costumes, and music. This will involve a scale model of what you will eventually see on stage. All of this is subject to a strict budgetary process, which often tempers or shifts somewhat our artistic aspirations.

When I am clearer as to what it is I am making, I will start to look for a cast of performers to play the parts and create the show on stage. The casting process can be long and difficult. The performers will not only read from the script but they will complete a workshop where they will be tested to see if they have the physical skills and strength to carry out the demands that will be made of them. They may also have to pass a singing audition. All this is before we enter the studio and rehearse for five weeks with the final assembled company. We only have five days on the set, in costume, with the props and scenery to rehearse the show technically before it meets an audience. We then continue to work during the afternoons, whilst performing at night, to perfect the show, alter things as we learn more about them as they are shared with an audience each night. This, in my own process, is a crucial part of it. Learning how the audience respond, moment to moment, and subtly (or dramatically) refining the work accordingly.



There have been thousands of productions of PETER PAN, and there will be thousands more, so what makes this particular version specific is how you, as the director, respond to it. By which I mean, what is it that interests you most? What do you want to be influenced by and what would you like to convey about the story to the audience, using the writer's work. I was struck by two things. Firstly, what I refer to as 'The Riddle of Peter Pan'. I mean, what does he amount to? Why do I care about him? Who is he? What resolutions are made in the play? Not many regarding Peter. Why doesn't he want to grow up? Why does everyone else ultimately return from Never Land and he never does? He is the hero, and yet we ultimately fail to identify with him fully as we all must return and grow up.

I was also interested in the fact that one of the young boys, George Llewelyn Davis, who J.M. Barrie often played with in the park (and indeed created the Peter Pan adventures with during improvised games), died during the First World War, less than 10 years after these games. This felt shocking and tragic, and very much not of the world of Never Land that he had belonged to so few years before. I decided that this might be a starting point for the boy who very definitely didn't want to grow up. A boy who wanted to escape the fate that would be suffered by a generation of lost boys.

For us, PETER PAN became, what Time Out described as a "richly allegorical fantasia". Never Land is a fantasia, and the allegorical is in the very DNA of the story - addressing the challenges and fears of leaving the playground and growing up, and taking responsibility for ourselves and the complex world around us. We used the war as a metaphor for that. I think that's what J.M. Barrie was doing; consciously or sub-consciously.

The hospital is naturalistic. The world of the Lost Boys comes from worn clothing of the period when those soldiers would have been children. They are torn and mended and worn away from hours and hours of play. The Pirates each represent a known fighter from history - an allegorical reference to man's love of warfare. There's a Viking, a cavalier, a bow's man, a crusader, a Roman, and Hook himself, a First World War officer.

Many of the other costumes deliberately contain elements from the hospital. So, the fish are made out of pyjamas, Tinkerbell is the lamp and when the Lost Boys are told to pack their things, they pack their trench helmets and knapsacks. We didn't want to lose the war. We wanted it to be present as the greater conflict. The battle Peter is fighting, is to not grow up and join it. It's the 'fantasia' that's born out of the need to escape the horror of the field hospital. But it had to be subtle and not kill the joy of Never Land.

To achieve this, the journey of the beds from hospital bed, to Never Land forest, to the Wendy house (inside and out), was carefully tracked. The soldiers become a sea of dying men as Peter languishes on the rock. The materials used for the puppets, the gas mask heads of the mermaids, the corrugated iron of the crocodile skin, help to reinforce the vision.

J.M. Barrie will always survive. His play and his novel, like Shakespeare's plays, are objective things that exist. We are just artists that make choices for a single production, in a single moment in time, for a number of audiences. After that it will fade away, but Barrie's original will remain. It's what keeps things alive and kicking decades or hundreds of years after they were first written. They are re-imagined temporarily for the time in which they are being seen and heard.

I would like students, first and foremost, to have fun and engage with Barrie's timeless sense of play. And then, I guess I hope it might allow them to consider the often painful transition from childhood to adulthood. And the understanding that, unlike Peter, we do have to put childish things away and engage with a complicated world in which, at any given time, mankind is fighting. We play games of warfare in the playground - pirates and Lost Boys fighting for control of an island - and we grow up and engage in the same thing on a much bloodier scale. Is this how we want it to be?





BARBARA HOUSEMAN (ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR)

My mum met a woman on a train when I was three-years-old who was an elocution teacher. The woman didn't normally take such young children, but my mum wanted me to have confidence, so after some persuading, she agreed that she would tutor me from the age of five. When I was about eight she said, "I think you ought to go to Central School of Speech and Drama and train as a teacher". I knew very quickly that I didn't want to be a teacher in a classroom. I have enormous respect for teachers, but I knew that it wasn't for me. So I started to specialise in the voice and working with actors on the interpretation of script and developing performance. For the past ten years, this has included working with Timothy Sheader at the Open Air Theatre.

Usually there's a meeting, hopefully before rehearsals, where I say, "Tim, talk to me, just talk to me". Usually, after that, we work separately. I can then focus in more detail on things that he's set up and told me about. Sometimes I'll just ask him to give me some key words for a character that he wants me to work on. He might ask me to work with an actor on a particular piece of script, and he will tell me what he wants to achieve from the moment. Sometimes we get to the point where we decide that we need to be in the room together to nail something down. So it's quite fluid, and because we've worked together for ten years now, sometimes we don't need to say very much to each other, it's just a quick moment. We've got a very good understanding, I think. My job is to facilitate Tim's vision.

What I do later on in the process when we start to put it all together, is to say when I think that a part of the story isn't clear, or when I don't understand something. The great thing is that he's free to ignore anything that I say, which leaves me free to say it. He relies on me to be that objective set of eyes. I hold in my head that vision that he told me at the beginning that he wanted. Sometimes he will say that he's changed his mind, and that's absolutely fine, and at other times he will agree that something isn't working and change it. I'm there to enable that dialogue, but it comes from someone who has absolute respect for him and for his vision. I see myself as a protector of his vision, not a challenger of it.

Tim, has amazing intellect, he studied law and French at university, but he works from his heart. He looks at a piece and asks what's relevant about it now. "What am I interested in?" Then he'll do a lot of reading. So in PETER PAN, the idea of all those boys going to war and dying, struck him. He approaches things with a freshness and a curiosity, and so he finds something fresh in them. He doesn't come to them with a perception already made. It's visionary. He's very inspirational to work with.

With the actors, my goal is to give them a scaffold so that they can make lots of choices. Differences of character are differences of rhythm, people are different rhythmically. That rhythm should be in the text, particularly in the punctuation, so we'll do things like walking the sentences and changing direction at the punctuation marks. It's amazing that in very small pieces of text, you'll feel how the rhythm of one character is different from another. The actor can feel that, and the audience can feel that. Rhythmically all the characters are not the same. You can look at a play, I suppose, a little bit like an orchestra, with each character having a function and musicality within it all. What are the dynamics? Who is the confident one? Who's the one leading? Who's the one hanging back? Who's the one who's excited and going off? You look at that kind of dynamic in a group of characters. Who's got the power? Who's got the highest status and who's got the lowest status? Who do you trust? Who are you frightened of? This creates the same sort of dynamics that there would be in life. Then you can work with objectives and intentions for each character. It's about recreating the way that we are in real life, the fact that we are pulled by 'wants', we have intentions, we have the people we trust, we have the people we fear. If you take each of those separately and you build them up, you get something that is like a real group, with all its differences.



Peter says to Wendy early in the play, "I want always to be a little boy and have fun", so we looked into that idea – was it that he didn't want responsibility? What does growing up signify, both for Peter Pan and for the actor? Is it about adulthood being boring? Is it about dying? What does Peter want? Fun? There's a lot of people who have probably felt that they don't want to grow up at some point in their lives. And there's a lot of us who yearn for fun and for not having responsibility, so in that way there's an element of Peter Pan in all of us.

One of the things that we explored was what the loss is for Peter Pan in wanting to stay young. The offer that Wendy makes for him to come and live with the Darlings has to be tempting. He'd like that, but ultimately the cost, the loss of freedom, is too great. There are people like that in the world, who are free spirits, who don't settle down, who don't take on responsibility. The question for the audience is to what extent that's an ultimate sadness at the end of the play. Choices have their costs.

Wendy is on the cusp of moving out of childhood into teenage years and adulthood. She's yearning in a way that a teenager yearns to be free and there's a degree of rebellion. But the difference between her and Peter is that she sees that she won't want it forever. She sees that she doesn't want to just play at being a mother. That she would actually like to move on and have that experience. She doesn't, of course, know this at the beginning of the play. In a play it's always better if characters don't know, they discover.

Of course, girls are often more emotionally aware than boys at that age and that's also part of it. In the game that they play, Peter plays the father, but he is very happy to 'play' the father, he doesn't want to 'be' a father. And even in the play, you can see that he gets a bit bored with taking on that role. The father is a new role for him, probably at Wendy's behest. He's always played the leader.

In some ways, Hook is more complicated. Arguably, nobody is inherently evil, so one of the things that you're looking at with Hook, is where all that evil is coming from. There's a huge amount of fear and there's a huge amount of ego. Peter has been an adversary and Peter has caused him harm. He lost his hand as a result of Peter and the crocodile. So he is scared. He wants to be in control. He has an adversary who is possibly better than him at the game. This is someone with a fragile ego.

The actor playing Hook has to play it from 'inside'. Hook wants to feel good about himself and command his ship, and command respect and be the best. But he can't be the best while Peter's around. He's a brave Captain but he's terrified of the crocodile, so he has to hide that fear. You can play with these truths, but if you then want him to be a more flamboyant, larger than life character who is actually scary in the children's minds, where do you get that from in a real way? Is it to do with the size of bravado that's necessary to surmount his fear?

Given our war setting, the interesting part about the parallel is that Hook is the Kitchener character. Not so much the enemy, but rather the enemy within, the recruiting officer. In some ways the father figure who insists that the son grow up and take responsibility by going to war. This is interesting for Peter, in that the adult man is his enemy by representing the person that he doesn't want to become. Of course, one wants to do these things implicitly, but Hook certainly needs to have a level of recklessness and irresponsibility.

So working with the actors, I might want to take it outside the play and do some sort of improvisation, based around the relationship between that recruiting officer and the boy who doesn't want to go to war, and really investigate that tension. And then look back at the story where it's about this Captain and his adversaries in Never Land. Then we can allow the real world scenario to feed in underneath the world of the play. The real life one has got to be submerged within the symbolism of the story, otherwise it gets confusing, but if you get that tension and fear, it's a good way of allowing the underlying parallel to be there.



In terms of the student's experience of this production of PETER PAN, I don't think it's our job to tell people what to think. The only thing I'd ever want people to go away from a play doing, is thinking. And maybe arguing with each other about what they thought it was about. I would just like them to come away having been provoked to think.

For instance, at the end of the play Wendy's story is, to some extent, resolved. She has moved on. Peter hasn't, and his story is unresolved. He's left flying in circles as the lights fade, and you have to decide whether that's amazing or sad. And for some people it's amazing and for some people it's sad.

Art is there to help us to make sense of our lives – it's a difficult predicament being a human being, and art helps that. Seeing dilemmas and points of view and choices, and seeing that there are ways to navigate the world, and questioning how we might decide to do that. Is Wendy's route ultimately right? Sometimes, as adults, we need to remember our inner child. Sometimes, as adults, we don't follow our bliss and our joy enough. Maybe a world where we are asked to make such a stark choice as Wendy has to is, in itself, the issue. Is it really a choice between the freedom of childhood and the responsibility of adulthood, or can you somehow have the best of both?





JON MORRELL (COSTUME DESIGNER)

The Central School of Art and Design introduced me to some successful and interesting designers who offered me assistant work as soon as I graduated. I often worked long hours for not much money but I learnt so much. I was assisting for around 5 years and it was the most educational time for me, and introduced me to directors and choreographers who I went on to collaborate with and continue to do so to this day.

In terms of creating the costume designs for a production such as PETER PAN, first come the discussions with the director about their intent with the piece. These can be very minimal or extensive, it's always different. With PETER PAN, it was interesting to be working with two directors, Liam and Tim, that's not so usual. As well as the directors, important meetings are held with the set designer too. As costume designer, I follow the progress of the set design, which should be a great source of inspiration. Then I research a great deal, which can be illustrations / documentary photographs / film or newsreel stills and written material. I take this to the next meeting with the director, and we slowly start to form reference points for the characters.

From these, I go on to develop a drawing, or simply use a found image when its exactly the look we are after, and create a complete set of designs for each character and each costume change that they have. All these ideas need to be approved by the director before the next stage, which would be budgeting the costumes. Always there are constraints on the budget to contend with. I work closely with a costume supervisor throughout the rehearsal process, putting the costumes together. Choosing fabrics, sourcing bought elements, meeting with costume makers to give them the information they need ahead of construction. Next come the costume fittings with the actors, the first time they try the costume when we can still make alterations. This may be one fitting or several, depending on what is required and how much time there is. The technical rehearsals on stage are when we all see the finished costumes and this is a time when slight adjustments often need to be made for practical or aesthetic reasons, or sometimes we discover a costume is totally wrong and an alternative needs to be found. So this can be a stressful time. All the time through the rehearsals and realisation of the costumes, it is important for me to keep in close contact with the director and the rehearsal room to react to any changes or additions to costumes.

I think Pirates hold a fascination for many of us. Certainly, my most impressive memory from childhood was that it seemed anyone could be a pirate. They appeared to be a diverse group of people, men, women, aristocrats or ruffians, in international waters, they could be from anywhere in the world and they became surrounded by myth and legend which fire our imaginations. So, in PETER PAN, we needed to create a group that reflected that. We worked on the idea that they were internationally drawn archetypes of soldiers/warriors from different eras which then connected with idea of the First World War soldier archetype being a more contemporary reference. I was interested in not being necessarily slavish to historical detail with Hook and the pirates, but designing them with a broader brush stroke so that they are more graphic characters, maybe from a comic book, so their provenance would be easily identifiable to an audience. There needs to be an element of fun and the fantastical about them.

Retaining a link with the First World War throughout the piece was an important aspect, and not always obvious how to find parallels for. It was also important to consider when to let go of that as well, so that the story of PETER PAN could still be told within that context. The link needed to be there to create a framework for me.

Finding something new in a piece like PETER PAN, is quite hard and can paralyse the creative process if you're not careful.



I think it's important to be aware of the conventions and others interpretations that there have been, but it's important to have confidence in the director's vision and to develop and explore those ideas fully to create a piece of work that has integrity. However, it can also be dangerous to steer the work too self-consciously away from previous incarnations for its own sake.

I'd like students to see that there are different ways of interpreting a story and to be informed about the historical aspect of the setting and the reasons for us making the choices that we have in this production. Ultimately, it's important for them to be moved by the experience in some way. It's also a very entertaining piece, but this interpretation cuts between such opposing dynamics, so I hope that resonates in a meaningful way for them. I'd also like some of them to be inspired by it enough to want to continue an interest in theatre, and maybe even theatre design!



NICK POWELL (COMPOSER)

At school, I always played in bands and was also involved in theatre shows, often acting...badly! I went on to study literature at Bristol University and continued doing both. Towards the end of university I lived with a guy called David Greig and we made shows together which led to us forming a theatre company with another friend, Graham Eatough when we graduated.

The company was called Suspect Culture and ended up being based in Glasgow and we produced, initially devised, theatre shows for 20 years! Meanwhile I continued playing in bands. I started a band in Bristol where I was lead singer and then joined an indie band called Strangelove in the mid 90's. We were signed to EMI and toured all over the place. So basically I always had music and theatre going on in parallel, and gradually started writing music for shows with many different companies, writers and directors.



The process of creating the music for a show like PETER PAN? Wow. Big question! It normally starts through discussion with the director, or in this case directors. A big early question is whether the music will be performed live or pre-recorded as this hugely affects instrumentation and my whole approach. Then it's just lots of living with the script and letting ideas come. This can be a bit like a game of chicken, as I find I have to get into a bit of a panic about a show before I ever really have any good ideas!

In the case of PETER PAN, we knew that we wanted to use the frame of World War One to tell the story so I guess I thought fairly early on about using snippets of songs from the era, but using instrumentation that would enable them to sound magical and evoke the wonder of the book. We also knew we wanted to employ a singer, and, in the first production we chose Melanie Pappenheim who is extremely talented and creative and so brought lots of ideas, as did Rebecca Askew who also sang in the first production. The musical director on the show was Candida Caldicott, and she was involved from early on and helped hugely as I was working up my initial ideas into demos that I could play to the rest of the team and which we could use to work with the singers and cast. I always find it easier to have at least some people around that I have worked with before as this is reassuring and much less stressful than having to make entirely new creative relationships all the time. Although, working with new people can also sometimes bring the shock and excitement of the 'new' to a process. I have worked with Tim and Liam (the directors) quite a few times now, so we have developed quite a good shorthand for communicating with each other.

We spent a lot of time deciding on the instrumentation and then finding the absolutely best musicians we could to play in the band. I knew I could have four musicians plus the singer, so I thought about how to make as dynamic and exciting a sound as possible given that limitation. Percussion seemed obvious as there are lots of action sequences and moments of high adventure that I knew would need rhythmic propulsion and excitement. Many percussionists also play marimba so I thought of that next, as an instrument that is both melodic and percussive and also has an exotic sound (remember we have to evoke Never Land - a truly magical place).

So we decided that we would have two percussionists, one of whom would play marimba. Then I thought of having a harp, since it is a beautiful and ethereal sound, capturing something magical and other worldly. I also knew we had the singer and that we could use her voice as an instrument, playing 'top line melodies', so I was satisfied that the singer could provide sustained melodic parts over the other three essentially percussive instruments.

Lastly we have Candida, the MD playing an electronic keyboard. The advantage of this is that from one keyboard you can create any number of sounds electronically, so she fills in a lot of gaps.



I'm really pleased with the combination of instruments because I think it is very specific and makes a very recognisable combination. This collection of instruments can't play any type of music, but they do what they do in this show exceptionally well, and knowing that these were the ones we had made me write the music in a particular way. This ended up giving the music for the show, and therefore hopefully the show itself, a very strong and unique identity.

It was always the hope that the score would be exciting and support all the action sequences, but also have an otherworldly, possibly sadder and more melancholic quality to reflect the deeper preoccupations of the book and the production: the passing of youth and the tragedy of war. The instrumentation was chosen specifically because I thought it would achieve this. Using songs from the World War One era is also very evocative of a form of music that is very different to now, and so it also has a sort of nostalgic tinge.

Apart from the opening scene in the field hospital, the show is incredibly faithful to the original play and, ironically, I think this also makes the show fresh because gradually over the years, versions of PETER PAN have drifted away from that original, which is a shame. For all that some bits are difficult for contemporary sensibilities, the writing itself is beautiful, comic and complex.

I hope that students seeing the show at the Open Air Theatre will find joy in imagination. Excitement. Magic. Laughter. A sense that they have experienced something intrinsically live that couldn't have happened on film or on TV. There is something cathartic and ultimately uplifting about experiencing some of the sadder or more melancholic emotions communally as part of a large audience, so I hope they take that particular feeling away with them too. A strangely sweet pain somewhere in the stomach, and a prickling behind the eyes!





RACHAEL CANNING (PUPPET DESIGNER)

I loved studying art in school, creating characters and I have a deep love of drama and film. My mum studied at the Royal Welsh College when I was young and I was in one of the shows there! So I knew of the design course and managed to get a place. I didn't have a clear vision of what I wanted from the course, but knew I loved to create pictures and the characters within that picture. After leaving college I assisted other designers and started designing fringe shows. I worked on all sorts of productions; making, designing, assisting... nearly gave up! ...and through all of this experience, I met collaborators along the way who I continued to work with.

My puppetry interest started at college, where I developed a keen interest in animal and human movement and behaviour, and how to channel that into inanimate objects. I found I was using more and more puppetry and movement in my design work which has led to my work as a puppetry director, as well as a designer, and I am now a creative director within my own company, 'The Wrong Crowd'.

The usual process of creating a puppet design starts with reading the script, meeting with director and discussing design, puppetry and staging, usually with a lot of reference images. I then begin drawing up puppet concepts whilst thinking about possible materials, character and manipulation. With a show like PETER PAN, the idea of setting it in the First World War was already in place, so it gave me parameters to work within this world, such as usable objects and materials.

Some puppetry was quite devised and I made prototypes before rehearsals, working with the puppeteers and directors to find what was most successful. Sometimes this process can continue through to opening night, when we really discover what will be the best option theatrically. Some puppets in PETER PAN were added in the opening week! Though this process is different every time, the script and your collaborators give you different ideas, different ways of working, as well as the vision and inspiration to create and make the work. The job is never boring!

Working within the world of a field hospital during the First World War and the world imagined by the Lost Boys, I was able to put my love of reinvention and object manipulation to work. I started to look into typical items used in the First World War and hospitals in particular. A fairy made from an oil lamp; a crocodile made from broken ladders, mechanical mermaids with gas mask faces, jelly fish made from umbrellas and car lamps. It's great to have a lot of freedom in design, although parameters help focus the ideas process, allowing you to mine fruitfully for ideas.

Utilising reinvention in an unexpected way allows the audience to give in to in their imagination and curiosity. The act of re-imagining everyday objects and bringing them magically to life amongst the desolation of war was quite powerful.

The revival is a great opportunity to re-visit PETER PAN and I'm planning to expand on a few things... you may see another crocodile and some other fun extras lurking in the lagoon!

With Tinker Bell, the idea with the lamp came from the framework of the show and the setting of the hospital - the nurses used to carry hurricane lamps in the wards. Liam (co-director and choreographer) had the idea of the lamp to embody the character of Tink. I went about collecting lamp bits and something for a head.



This turned out to be an old car indicator that I had been hanging on to for a while and it turned out to be the perfect head. The result was a Tinker Bell that was quite an alternative fairy and fed into the puppeteer's performance, head strong, playful and heartbreaking. The puppeteer worked very hard to find the right voice for Tink too, using a combination of microphone distortion and her own broken speech to create a feisty fairy who the audience fell in love with. Tink is only 50cm tall but on that huge Regent's Park stage, she shone out with her light-up head and belly, and had the audience clapping very hard to keep her alive!

Casting an actor/puppeteer who embodies a character like Tink is key, as they are as much on show as the puppet. We took time in the rehearsal room to play and work off the other actors in the room, building on Tink's traits, thoughts and ticks... she blew a lot of raspberries! But even when it is in front of an audience we are still working on intentions, tone and movement to, changing things to better connect with the audience and our fellow actors until we get it right. It's a detailed process but a rewarding one.

I'd never designed for PETER PAN before, and we knew that this wasn't going to be anything like any other previous versions. If I had to design PETER PAN for another different production then I think I would find it tricky, as this one has such a strong vision.

I would like to think of students who come to see the show enjoying the magic of this production and the transformation of everyday objects into the wonders of Never Land. This show is a great reminder of the power of the imagination and the rewarding beauty of suspending disbelief as a theatregoer.



Study the synopsis of the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN on pages 6-7, and then test your understanding by trying to answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Where does the opening of the play take place?
2. Who is the nurse in the field hospital who reads the soldier's letter?
3. What is the name of the book that the soldier keeps his letter in?
4. What is the first thing that Wendy does for Peter?
5. What are the directions to find the Never Land?
6. Who are the Lost Boys anxiously waiting for news of?
7. Why does Hook stop the pirates shooting the Lost Boys?
8. What do the Lost Boys build for Wendy that children now might play in?
9. Where are Peter and Wendy when Peter tricks the pirates by imitating Hook?
10. The pirates devise a plan to make the Lost Boys walk the plank, but what is their plan for Wendy?
11. What creature saves Peter from Hook at the end of Act One?
12. How does Wendy escape from the rock in Mermaid's Lagoon?
13. What roles do Wendy and Peter play in the 'happy families' game?
14. How is Tinker Bell saved from the effects of the poisoned medicine?
15. Why won't John and Michael agree to become Hook's cabin boys?
16. What do the Lost Boys do to show that they are planning to die like English Gentlemen?
17. What are the pirates likely to do if Hook insists that they go down below to deal with the 'doodle doo'?
18. Why is the death of Hook a potential problem for Peter?
19. Why doesn't Wendy fly away again with Peter at the end of the story?
20. What is sad about the last image of Peter circling the stage at the end of the play?



A LETTER TO PETER PAN

NC English KS2/3

A long time before anybody could read about Peter Pan, when movie versions were just a dream, the only way to experience Peter's world and the world of Never Land was on stage. J.M.Barrie's original play was produced on the West End stage at the Duke of York's Theatre in December 1904. For a generation of young children, the magic of theatre brought Barrie's fantasy to life, and they were captivated. In an era where communication was significantly more limited than it is now, many expressed their appreciation by writing letters to Peter himself. For some lucky ones, Peter would write back, enclosing a postcard photograph, and maybe even an autograph. The letters have the charm and innocence of a bygone age, and an insight into a world where communication was very different from what we know today.

Paint a historical picture for your students. It is 1904. Queen Victoria has been dead for 3 years and Britain is getting used to life under a King for the first time in nearly 70 years, Edward VII. There is no internet and there are no smartphones. In fact, fixed line telephones are in their infancy, and generally seen as an emerging tool for business, not for personal or domestic use. Television will not be launched for another 32 years, until the BBC Television Service becomes the first terrestrial channel in 1936. Entertainment is largely homemade, or accessed via the theatre.

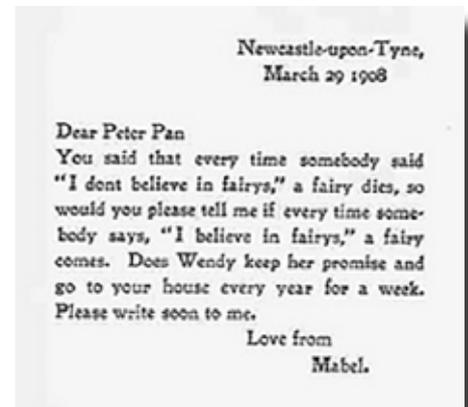
Children loved the escapism that PETER PAN allowed them, the ability to fly with Peter off to Never Land to hang around with fairies and fight evil pirates. And when they got home, after a couple of hours of magic in the theatre, their imaginations continued to be inspired by what they had seen. And they believed it. So much so, that many of them wrote to Peter himself to thank him for their evening at the theatre, to ask him questions, or to pass messages on to Wendy or the Lost Boys.

Ask your students to try to imagine this world, a world that is very different to the one that they now live in. In what ways would children think differently to the way that they think now? How would their language be different? Perhaps they are less worldly wise than we are now. How might this be translated into their imaginative worlds?

Without showing them any examples, ask them all to write a short letter, addressed to Peter Pan, following a night at the theatre where they have seen the original production of PETER PAN. They should believe that they are writing to Peter himself, not to the actress who played him. They will be sending their letter to The Duke of York's Theatre in London. Ask them to consider particularly how their language should be different to the sort of language that they might use today, and how their attitudes and experiences, very different from 21st Century childhood, might inform what they say and how they say it. Finally, ask them to remember the conventions of letter writing, and to adopt a layout that is appropriate.

Next, ask them to swap their letter with someone else in the class. They should now compare their letters and offer constructive feedback, particularly on the use of language in the letter. Does it seem appropriate for the time?

Now, show them the examples of letters written by real children, to two of the actresses who played Peter in the original production. How do their versions compare with the historical sources? How is the language different? Can you tell the ages of the children through the use of language?



Ask them to go back to their original letter and edit it, using the feedback from their friend, and also the real historical sources as a model. Ask them to do this by marking their original letter using a different coloured pen, and then re-writing their letter underneath so that the original version remains.

Ask them to reflect on how much has changed. How have they needed to change the grammar and vocabulary to reflect the language of the time?

Finally, ask them to imagine how a child of the same age that they have estimated would write now, in the 21st Century. Perhaps this would be via an e-mail rather than a letter? Would the language be more colloquial, or informal? Would they still be likely to address their letter to 'Peter Pan'? Why? Ask them to write a letter, taking on the role of a 21st Century child who has just been to see PETER PAN at the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park.

When this is complete, ask them to do a final comparison of their adapted 1904 letter with their modern-day equivalent. In what ways are they different?

CHILDREN'S LETTERS

My Dear Peter Pan,
It must be nice to be able to fly about like you and the other children do. I think the pirates and the Red Indians are fine. I should like to have a fight with them like you do. My sister says she likes the little mermaids best.
Yours affectionately,
Harold Whiteman

Dearest Peter,
I like your play very much and have been to see you three times. I asked father how you flew about the stage without hurting yourself, and he said you were fastened to a wire. My brother and I tried with a pair of paper wings and some wire, but couldn't manage it. Please come to see us and show how it is done.
Your little friends,
George and Harry Willis

Dearest Peter Pan,
I thought your play was lovely and the little mermaids were very pretty. I wish I could come and have tea with you and Wendy in her little house, but I should not like to see the Red Indians or the cruel Pirate Captain. My brother says it is just like a girl to be frightened of them.
Your loving little friend,
Lily

from The Letters of Peter Pan
by Cecilia (Cissie) Loftus
Published in The Tatler, No.244, February 28th 1906

Dear Peter Pan,
I want to know how you fly. I saw you on Thursday, I was in the front row next to Mummie. You did act nicely. Please excuse my writing as I am only a little boy. I send you a thimble. Much love and thimbles
From Derick
P.S. I have been trying to fly like you all day.

Dear Peter
I am frightfully anxious. I am still quite young & don't ever want to grow up. I always want to be a little boy (I mean girl) and have fun. Please don't show this letter to Tinkerbell or she might call me a silly ass!
Love and thimbles from Lesley.

Dear Peter Pan
You said that every time somebody said "I dont believe in fairys", a fairy dies, so would you please tell me if every time somebody says "I believe in fairys", a fairy comes.
Love from Mabel

Darling Peter
I should love to be you. I like you better than Wendy but don't tell her because it might make her jealous & I like her nearly as much as you.
Madge

from Peter Pan's Postbag: Letters to Pauline Chase
by Pauline Chase
Published by Heinemann, 1909



MY NEVER LAND

NC English & Geography KS2/3

The wonder of Never Land is central to the magic of PETER PAN. Found in the minds of children, the Never Lands vary child to child, but they are **“always more or less an island”**. Sharply focused only at night, **“after the night-lights were lit”**, these are the islands of the Lost Boys, of mermaids, of pirates, and, of course, Peter Pan. **“Second to the right, and straight on till morning”** might seem a funny address to Wendy, but it leads us to **“an open-air scene, a forest, with the beautiful lagoon beyond but not really far away, for the Never Land is very compact, not large and sprawly with tedious distances between one adventure and another, but nicely crammed”**.

Ask your students to imagine their own Never Land. In J.M.Barrie's original invention, Never Land was essentially a map of your mind, with lines representing roads and a wide variety of wonderful imaginary coves, inlets, mountains, clearings and glades. Perhaps these locations say something about our personality, or simply help to celebrate our creativity.

Ask them to invent the locations that would feature on the map of their own mind, considering carefully who might live in each area and what geographical landmarks might identify them. How would their own personality be represented in the places that they choose? They should, of course, have exciting names, to entice anyone flying past to visit. Consider those used by Barrie to identify the locations in the Never Land of PETER PAN:

Hangman's Tree
Crocodile Creek
Mermaid Lagoon
Skull Rock
Blindman's Bluff
Cannibal Cove
Marooner's Rock

What will students determine is most appropriate for their own map?

Using a numbered grid, ask them to create the shape of their island, carefully including the appropriate inlets and coves to provide the landmarks that they have invented. Next, plot the locations, perhaps including map-style icons to represent them along with their names.

Next, ask them to read Barrie's description of Never Land from the novel 'Peter and Wendy'. They should use this as a model to write a detailed paragraph that describes their own Never Land and aims to add vivid specifics to the outline that they have created on their map. Explain to them that the use of adjectives is very important here, as it will help them to add vividness to their writing and really bring it to life for their reader.

Once this is complete, they should use their paragraph, together with their map, to write a detailed set of clues that might lead a pirate to the treasure that is buried in Never Land. The clues should be cryptic and clever, and presented using vividly descriptive language in an attempt to confuse the foolish pirate and help the intelligent treasure seeker to find the prize!

They could use map coordinates, or compass directions to help to guide their reader. When they have completed their directions, they should try them out on each other and see whether they can solve the clues and discover the buried treasure!



THE NEVER LAND

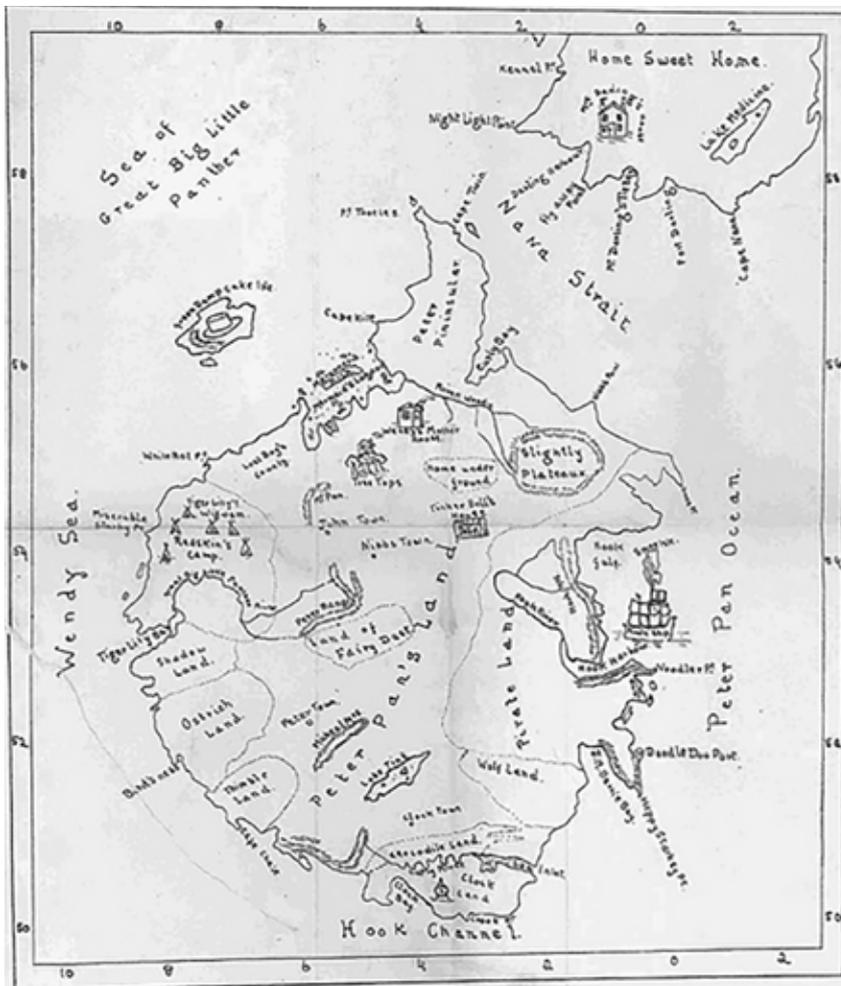
“Mrs Darling first heard of Peter when she was tidying up her children’s minds. It is the nightly custom of every good mother after her children are asleep to rummage in their minds and put things straight for next morning, repacking into their proper places the many articles that have wandered during the day.

I don’t know whether you have ever seen a map of a person’s mind. Doctors sometimes draw maps of other parts of you, and your own map can become intensely interesting.

There are zigzag lines on it, and these are probably roads in the island, for the Never Land is always more or less an island, with astonishing splashes of colour here and there, and coral reefs and rakish-looking craft in the offing, and savages and lonely lairs, and gnomes who are mostly tailors, and caves through which a river runs, and princes with six elder brothers, and a hut fast going to decay, and one very small old lady with a hooked nose.

It would be an easy map if that were all, but there is also first day at school, religion, fathers, the round pond, needle-work, murders, hangings, chocolate pudding day, getting into braces, three-pence for pulling out your tooth yourself, and so on, and either these are part of the island or they are another map showing through, and it is all rather confusing, especially as nothing will stand still.

Of course the Never Lands vary a good deal. John’s, for instance, had a lagoon with flamingos flying over, while Michael, who was very small, had a flamingo with lagoons flying over it. John lived in a boat turned upside down on the sands, Michael in a wigwam, Wendy in a house of leaves deftly sewn together. John had no friends, Michael had friends at night, Wendy had a pet wolf forsaken by its parents, but on the whole the Never Lands have a family resemblance.



Of all delectable islands the Never Land is the snuggest and most compact, not large and sprawly, you know, with tedious distances between one adventure and another, but nicely crammed. When you play at it by day with the chairs and table-cloth, it is not in the least alarming, but in the two minutes before you go to sleep it becomes very real. That is why there are night-lights.

Occasionally in her travels through her children’s minds Mrs Darling found things she could not understand, and of these quite the most perplexing was the word Peter.”

from Peter Pan and Wendy
by J.M.Barrie

‘The Never Never Never Land’, sent to ‘dear Mr Barrie’ by Beryl Hentschel, 3rd April 1908



PETER THE HERO

NC English KS2/3

Timothy Sheader, co-director of the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN refers to it as 'The Riddle of Peter Pan': **"I mean, what does he amount to? Why do I care about him? Who is he? What resolutions are made in the play - not many regarding Peter. WHY doesn't he want to grow up? Why does everyone else return from Never Land and he does? He is the hero and yet we ultimately fail to identify with him fully as we all MUST return and grow up"**.

In her essay 'Peter Pan's 'Greatest Pretend' is heroism', Emily Asher-Perrin goes further: **"Peter Pan is lord dictator of Never Land. His word is law. His adventures take precedence. His desires are paramount. Super fun as an avatar for any child, but what about everyone else who occupies space, who breathes Never Land's air? What happens to the Indians, the Lost Boys, the pirates? They are only relevant in terms of how they play into Peter's story"**.

So, is Peter a hero or a villain, both or neither?

Traditionally, Peter is the hero of PETER PAN and Hook is the archetypal villain, the **"boo, hiss"** villain of pantomime, the man with the hook for a hand and no mercy. But is this a true reflection of the roles that we are presented with by J.M.Barrie?

With a blank sheet of paper, ask your students to work in small groups to create a detailed mind map that seeks to define the qualities of a hero. Next, on the reverse side of the paper, ask them to do the same for the qualities of a villain. Using two different coloured highlighters (or similar), they should now mark the qualities that they have identified that apply to Peter, and those that apply to Hook. Are Peter's qualities all those of a hero? Are Hook's all those of a villain? Or is the truth more complex?

Of course, these judgements are ours as an audience (or reader). Ask them to consider the question of Peter as a hero, but this time from the point of view of Wendy. Emily Asher-Perrin sees it this way: **"His attachment to her family is passing fancy, nothing more. They are briefly interesting. They are equally disposable. He'll return in a generation or so to whisk away her daughter, and the daughter after that, his own never-ending supply of occasional moms-when-he-wants-them"**. Does Wendy actually exist in order to be the damsel in distress that Peter needs to rescue, because that's what heroes do? Except that Wendy is growing up, and in growing up she realises that this is a futile role for her, she wants more. **"To live would be an awfully big adventure"**. So is Peter actually her hero?

And what of Hook? He is the antagonist of the story and Peter's nemesis, but why? The entire basis for their relationship seems to be the event that happened years ago. **"Most of all I want their Captain, Peter Pan. 'Twas he cut off my arm... Pan flung my arm to a crocodile that happened to be passing by"**. Hook is a pirate, but he's also an Eton College gentleman, obsessed with good form. He exists to be available, whenever Peter wants to play with him, to fight him, to taunt and humiliate him, and then fly off until the next time. Because, of course, he never comes close to beating Peter. Looked at that way, it's not much of an existence for Hook, is it?

Ask your students to consider Hook's monologue from the end of the play. Can he really be a villain if we ultimately feel sorry for him? Does he, in fact, have more humanity than Peter in offering a lifeline to two of the Lost Boys? In the text, he seems to have an understanding of what he has lost. Does Peter have the same insight? How do they compare? Perhaps the most insightful line from Peter comes after Hook has finally been consumed by the crocodile, when he asks: **"So what now? What happens now?"**. So what does this tell us about him?



Divide your students into small groups. Ask them to work together to create a persuasive presentation that explores both sides of the debate. Allocate one of the following statements to each group (you should have a roughly equal mix of them in the room):

- Peter Pan is as bad as Hook. In the end, he only ever really thinks of himself.
- The character of Peter proves that children are both **“innocent and heartless”** (J.M.Barrie).
- Hook has more redeeming characteristics than Peter Pan.
- Peter sees himself as **“a little bird that has broken out of the egg”**, but, in fact, Hook’s assessment of him is more accurate when he describes him as a **“proud and insolent youth”**.

Allow them some planning time and then ask them to present their case.

Hook’s Monologue

HOOK (*communing with his ego*):

How still the night is; nothing sounds alive. Now is the hour when children in their homes are a-bed; their lips bright-browed with the good-night chocolate, and their tongues drows-ily searching for belated crumbs housed insecurely on their shining cheeks. Compare with them the children on this boat about to walk the plank. But ‘tis my hour of triumph!

(Clinging to this fair prospect he dances a few jubilant steps, but they fall below his usual form)

Peter killed at last and all his Boys about to meet their fate. And yet some disky spirit compels me now to make my dying speech, lest when dying there may be no time for it. All mortals envy me, yet better perhaps for Hook to have had less ambition! O fame, fame, thou glittering bauble. In striving for thee, what have I lost? I never sat down to tea, no women’s lips ever plucked the roses from my cheeks. No little child loves me.

‘Tis said they find Smee lovable. But an hour ago I found him letting the youngest of them try on his spectacles. Pathetic Smee, the Non-conformist pirate, a happy smile upon his face because he thinks they fear him! How can I break it to him that they think him lovable? No, no. Rouse, you dogs! Untie them, get them up!

Quiet, you dogs, or I’ll cast anchor in you!

(suddenly) So! Now then, you bullies, six of you walk the plank tonight, but I have room for two cabin boys. Which of you is it to be?

from Peter Pan
by J.M.Barrie



KEEP THE HOME FIRE'S BURNING

NC History KS3

The Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN skilfully blends original music with songs from World War One, using instrumentation that, as composer Nick Powell explains, **"would enable them to sound magical and evoke the wonder of the book"**. The instruments chosen for the production provided rhythmic percussion, along with melodic and exotic sounds by combining percussion (including the marimba), harp and electronic keyboard with voice, in an attempt to create **"a very strong and unique identity"** for the show.

Perhaps the most well-known of the World War One songs chosen for the production is 'Keep the Home Fire's Burning', the Ivor Novello and Lena Guilbert Ford composition from 1914. The genesis of this particular song is interesting, particularly in terms of the way that, at the time, it so astutely and powerfully reflected the mood of the nation, it's melancholy undercurrent combining with its simple message of hope.

In a study of World War One and its impact on both fronts (at home and in the field of battle), ask students to consider the importance of songs like 'Keep the Home Fire's Burning'. Ask them to consider how important they think national mood and empathy were to the war effort.

Ask them to read and consider the lyrics to 'Keep the Home Fire's Burning'. Where is the melancholy? Where is the message of hope? In what ways does irony play a part in bringing home the message of the song (the haunting music juxtaposed with the 'cheery' lyric, for instance)?

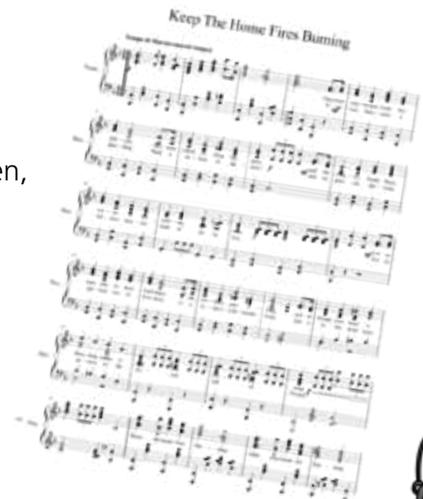
Ask them to use their contextual knowledge of World War One, alongside their skills of analysis and interpretation, and the notes on the development of the song 'Keep the Home Fire's Burning' to plan answers to the following questions:

- Why do you think 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' proved to be such a success with the public (both at home and on the front) when it was launched in 1914?
- How did composer Ivor Novello and lyricist Lena Guilbert Ford successfully manage to reflect the mood of the nation with 'Keep the Home Fire's Burning'?
- 'Keep the Home Fire's Burning' works on multiple levels to offer melancholy and hope at a time when the listening public needed both. To what extent do you agree?

KEEP THE HOME FIRE'S BURNING

They were summoned from the hillside, they were called in from the glen,
And the country found them ready at the stirring call for men.
Let no tears add to their hardships, as the soldiers pass along,
And although your heart is breaking, make it sing this cheery song:

Keep the Home Fires burning,
While your hearts are yearning,
Though your lads are far away they dream of home.
There's a silver lining, through the dark clouds shining,
Turn the dark cloud inside out, 'till the boys come home.



Overseas there came a pleading,
“Help a nation in distress.”
And we gave our glorious laddies, honour bade us do no less,
For no gallant son of freedom to a tyrant’s yoke should bend,
And a noble heart must answer to the sacred call of “Friend”.

Keep the Home Fires Burning,
While your hearts are yearning,
Though your lads are far away they dream of home.
There’s a silver lining, through the dark clouds shining,
Turn the dark cloud inside out ‘till the boys come home

Lyrics by Lena Guilbert Ford
Music by Ivor Novello

The Story of the Song

There are several alternative stories about how ‘Keep the Home Fires Burning’ came to fruition, but perhaps the most often told is recounted by W.Macqueen-Pope in his biography of Ivor Novello, the song’s composer. Novello’s mother was, by all accounts, quite formidable. Clara Novello Davies was a well-known choir mistress and music teacher who, at the outbreak of World War One, was looking for a stirring, patriotic song to use in her own concerts and in the Music Hall. Her son was little interested in such a commission, so she wrote her own song, entitled ‘Keep the Flag a’Flying’.

Embarrassed by his mother’s efforts, Novello wrote his own tune, for which he had a first line, but needed to complete the remaining lyrics. He sought help from his friend, Lena Guilbert Ford, an American poet and lyricist who had long lived in London after divorcing her physician husband and relocating with her son. Ford was the first to hear Novello sing the opening line, and was asked to go home and come up with ideas for the rest of the song. Within a few days, this is what she did. How long it took Novello to come up with the tune is a matter of some debate, but the New York Times reported in April 1916 that Novello had been inspired to complete it in just ten minutes, partly because his mother was fed up with hearing another World War One song ‘It’s A Long Way To Tipperary’.

‘Keep the Home Fires Burning’ was first performed as part of a National Sunday League concert at the Alhambra Theatre in Leicester Square by one of Clara Novello Davies’s pupils, Sybil Vane, accompanied by Novello himself. It was an immediate hit, sweeping the country and even making it to the World War One trenches. Within a year, ‘Keep the Home Fires Burning’ had earned Novello around £15,000, a lot of money at the time, and catapulted him to stardom. By the 1920’s, he was a major star of British cinema. Ironically, Lena Guilbert Ford did not live to share the success enjoyed by Novello. She died with her son in a London air raid in 1918.

The song’s success has often been analysed by commentators, particularly the way in which it seeks to bridge the physical and emotional distance between the Home Front and the trenches. The ‘boys’ at the front yearn for home, just as those at home yearn for them. The melody was both haunting, invoking the suffering of war, and at the same time appealed to the need for hope. It became both a song to be performed for the troops in the field, and a rousing choral number at the end of a pantomime. Novello was immensely proud of ‘Keep the Home Fires Burning’, saying in 1925 that it was **“the best thing that has happened in my life... It had to do with big issues and I am proud that I had this connection with them”**.



J.M.BARRIE AND GEORGE LLEWELYN DAVIES

NC History KS3

One of the inspirations for the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN was the friendship between J.M.Barrie and the Llewelyn Davies boys, who were the first people to hear the story of Peter and Never Land, as they played with Barrie in Kensington Gardens. Tragically, at the age of 21, just four years after Barrie has become his guardian following the death of his parents, George Llewelyn Davies was killed from a gunshot wound to the head, in action in Flanders in 1915. The blending of truth and fiction, the boy who genuinely never grew up, becomes a poignant framework for the Open Air production at Regent's Park. The correspondence between the author and his ward also provides an interesting viewpoint from these early stages of a war that would last for another three years.

The First World War, perhaps more than any other, relied on the patriotism of young men, who joined the army to fight for their country and defeat a common enemy. Of course, there was no glamour to the reality of their situation when they arrived in the trenches.

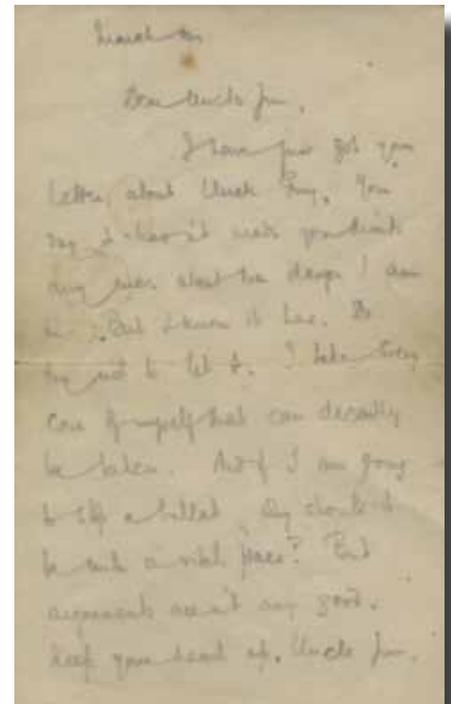
Share the final letters of J.M.Barrie and George Llewelyn Davies with your students. Ask them to consider their contrasting tones and how they might interpret these. Ask them to consider to what extent they agree with this statement:

In some ways, given that Barrie is at home in England and Davies is in genuine danger, the tone seems to be a reversal of what you might expect; the younger man trying his best to reassure the older, who seems somewhat more anxious and frightened.

During the First World War, the British Army Postal Service delivered around 2 billion letters. Ask them to discuss to what extent they are a useful historical record.

Ask them to consider how reliable they feel that the letters of Barrie and Davies are as historical in providing us with a contemporary reference point for 1915. How well do they reflect the views and opinions of others at the time? How could we determine this? What other sources might be useful to explore to provide a more balanced viewpoint? Are they more interesting to historians simply because of the link to Peter Pan? Does this link colour our judgement of them?

Ask them to consider how they feel about each of the authors. Was it fair for Barrie to write this sort of letter to George, who cannot do anything to change his situation. Should Barrie have kept his feelings to himself? Is George blind to the realities of the war that has placed him on the front line?



Letter Source 1

Of course I don't need this to bring home to me the danger you are always in more or less, but I do seem to be sadder today than ever, and more and more wishing you were a girl of 21 instead of a boy, so that I could say the things to you that are now always in my heart. I don't have any little iota of desire for you to get military glory. I do not care a farthing for anything of the kind, but I have one passionate desire that we may all be together again once at least. You would not mean a featherweight more to me tho' you come back a General. I just want yourself. There may be some moments when a knowledge of all you are to me will make you a little more careful, and so I can't help going on saying these things. It was terrible that man being killed next to you, but don't be afraid to tell me such things. You see it at night I fear with painful vividness. I have lost all sense I ever had of war being glorious, it is just unspeakably monstrous to me now.

Loving, J.M.B.

excerpt from the last letter from J.M.Barrie to George Llewelyn Davies, 1915

Letter Source 2

I have just got your letter about Uncle Guy. You say it hasn't made you think any more about the danger I am in. But I know it has. Do try not to let it. I take every care of myself that can decently be taken. And if I am going to stop a bullet, why should it be with a vital place? But arguments aren't any good. Keep your head up Uncle Jim, and remember how good an experience like this is for a chap who's been very idle before. Lord, I shall be proud when I am home again, and talking to you about all this. That old dinner at the Savoy will be pretty grand. It is very bad about Uncle Guy. I wonder how he was killed. As he was a colonel, I imagine his battalion was doing an attack. Poor Aunt Gwen. This war is a dreadful show. The ground is drying up now, and the weather far better. Soon the Spring will be on us, and the birds nesting right up in the firing line. Cats are the only other things left there. I wonder what Spring will bring to us in this part of the line. Something a little different from the forty-eight hours' routine in the trenches, I daresay. There have already been doings in various parts of the line. Meanwhile, dear Uncle Jim, you must carry on with your job of keeping up your courage. I will write every time I come out of action. We go up to the trenches in a few days again.

Your affect. George.

excerpt from the last letter from George Llewelyn Davies to J.M.Barrie, 1915
George was killed in action the day after this was written



LIVE THEATRE EVALUATION

GCSE Drama KS4

Whichever exam board specification they are following, GCSE Drama students learn to analyse and evaluate the performance of live theatre. Timothy Sheader, co-director of PETER PAN hopes that they will take something away from the performance and offers them this insight into his intention: **“I hope it might allow them to consider the often painful transition from childhood to adulthood. And the understanding that, unlike Peter, we do have to put childish things away and engage with a complicated world in which, at any given time, mankind is fighting. We play games of warfare in the playground - pirates and lost boys fighting for control of an island - and we grow up and engage in the same thing on a much bloodier scale. Is this how we want it to be?”**

Ask your students to consider Timothy Sheader’s intention for them as members of the audience for PETER PAN. Has he succeeded in his aim to stimulate their thoughts and questions? To encourage them to reflect on the world that they live in and the part that they have to play within it?

Offer them a copy of the professional reviews from The Guardian (1904) and the Telegraph (2015). More than 100 years separate these two reviews of essentially the same play, but in very different and contrasting settings. Ask them to compare the two. Although there are clearly some differences in plot (the Indians of Never Land, for instance, do not appear in the Open Air Theatre production, nor does Mr Darling), it is the views of the production that students should try to tease out. How has the play been brought to life?

Next, ask them to work in groups of two or three. They should decide together on one example of a scene or section in the play that they think either showcases the actor’s skill (vocal, physical etc) or uses a specific theatrical device successfully to communicate with the audience or help to tell the story. Ask them to write down as many adjectives as they can to vividly describe the moment that they have chosen. They should be as specific as possible, using concrete examples.

Finally, ask them to select the sample question that most closely resembles the style of question that they will be asked in their GCSE Drama exam, and to attempt to answer it using the example that they have fleshed out, or another if they can think of something more appropriate. They should try to weave their understanding of Timothy Sheader’s intention into their answers, making sure that they are analysing as well as describing and explaining.



Sample Questions

AQA

Select one scene or section from the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN and describe how one or more actors in it used their vocal and physical acting skills to create convincing characters.

Analyse and evaluate how successful they were in communicating their character to the audience.

You should refer to:

- the use of voice,
- physical skills,
- the actors' use of space.

OCR

Evaluate the visual impact that the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN had on you as an audience member. You must include examples from the production in your answer.

At the start of your answer state the name, venue and date (month and year) of the performance that you have seen.

WJEC

Analyse and evaluate the use of movement in two key scenes in the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN and how they were successful in communicating meaning to the audience.

In your answer refer to:

- the style of the production,
- how movement is used to create character and communicate meaning,
- your response to the performance as an audience member.

EDEXCEL

'Theatre should be used to explore the complexities of the human condition.'

Comment on the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN in the light of the above statement and by referring to its original performance conditions.



Professional Reviews

“Peter Pan” at The Duke of York’s Theatre

Again Mr. J.M. Barrie has drawn one of the great prizes of the theatrical lottery. There will be divergent opinions, no doubt, as to the quality of the humour which inspires and pervades “Peter Pan”, but all the world and his wife will go and see it, and will take their children.

We are first introduced into a nursery where three children, Wendy, John, and Michael Darling, are tended by a Newfoundland dog whom they call Nana. Mr. Darling, the father, being offended with Nana, banishes her from the nursery to the yard. Thereupon Mr. and Mrs. Darling incautiously go out to a dinner party leaving the children unprotected; and this is Peter Pan’s opportunity.

Peter Pan is a boy who flew away from his mother because he did not want to grow up, and now rules in the Never-Never Land, whither all those children go who fall out of their perambulators while the nurse is looking the other way. He comes to the Darling nursery to recover his shadow, which he has left behind him on a former visit. Having found his shadow, which has been rolled up and put away in a drawer, he awakens the three children and teaches them to fly, whereupon the wall opens, and they soar away with him to the Never-Never Land.

There Peter Pan and his band live in an underground house, which you access by means of several hollow trees. They are constantly at war with a tribe of redskins on the one hand, and with a pirate crew on the other, headed by a bloodthirsty bravo known as James Hook, from the iron claw which replaces his right hand. Eventually the children make peace with the redskins, and form an alliance against the pirates.

At last they all, save Peter Pan, determine to fly home with the three Darlings, and with that view ascend to the surface. But, alas though they do not know it, the Indians have been overpowered by the pirates, so that as the children emerge from the hollow trees they are one by one gagged and carried aboard the pirate schooner. The pirate captain has contrived to substitute a deadly poison for medicine Peter Pan has to take, but his guardian fairy drinks it in his stead, and is naturally taken very ill. But there is one restorative for fairies against which the most potent poison is unavailing, and that is that mortals, and especially children, should believe in them. So Peter Pan appeals to the audience to testify their faith in the existence of the fairy world, and a hearty round of applause restores the sufferer to perfect health.

The next scene, on board the pirate ship, is the most delightful of the whole production. The children, loaded with manacles, are about to be made to walk the plank, when they are rescued by the ingenuity and daring of Peter Pan, the avenger. After a terrific combat all the pirates are thrown overboard, the Jolly Roger is lowered, and the Union Jack floats bravely in instead.

This bare outline of Mr. Barrie’s fantasy conveys not even the faintest conception of the myriad quaint, and pretty, and delectable details inwoven into its texture. Every second speech is a new invention, always unforeseen and almost always delightful. Even those who least relish it must admit that no such play was ever seen before on any stage. It is absolutely original — the product of a unique imagination.

from The Guardian
28th December 1904



'A shimmering mix of dream and nightmare'
Peter Pan, Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, review

Timothy Sheader and Liam Steele's terrific new production of JM Barrie's 1904 play – from which the story we now know as Peter Pan originated – begins not at the Darling family residence but in a field hospital near the Somme during the First World War.

A soldier has been brought in screaming from a stomach wound. As he lies dying, his feverish mind summons from childhood the tale of the boy who never grew up: a nurse turns into Wendy and the hospital transforms into the nursery. At a stroke, No Man's Land has become Never Land. Or, to look at it the other way round, Pan and his loyal troupe of Lost Boys have become the vanished spirits of the very real boys who went to war in 1914 and never came back.

Sheader's elegiac response to what even Barrie called "the riddle" of Peter Pan's being, is rooted in history: one of the original "lost boys", George Llewelyn Davis, who together with his four brothers inspired many of Barrie's enduring characters, did indeed die in Flanders in 1915. In Sheader and Steele's boisterous production, that conflict stalks every crevice of Barrie's fantastical childhood realm. Jon Bausor's ravaged set cleverly rises out from a trench; Nick Powell's thrilling, percussive-driven live score has strains of military marching bands, while phantom soldiers serve as stagehands, moving the scenery and providing the counterweights to the on-set pulley system that enables Pan to fly.

Typically of Sheader's work at Regent's Park, the production is drenched in magical, earthy delights. Pan is a feather-footed scamp, although perhaps a touch more malign petulance wouldn't have gone amiss. Wendy is, pleasingly, no pushover, while the pirates are a motley crew of Vikings, Crusaders, Ninjas and Highwaymen. Props are deployed with childlike ingenuity – hospital beds are used to create both Wendy's house and a rock on the lagoon; a deckchair becomes the ticking crocodile's open jaw; naughty Tinkerbell is fashioned from an old-school lantern while the mermaids have gasmasks for faces.

The elegant, poetic irony that shadows the action is unmistakable; it's a shimmering mix of dream and nightmare.

review by Claire Allfree
from The Telegraph
22nd May 2015



THE CHARACTERISATION OF PETER PAN

GCSE Drama KS4

Drama involves a study of the craft of acting, the understanding of character and the skills involved in characterisation for performance. The character of Peter is complex and unusual. Most characters learn something or change during a play, they go on a journey; they are different at the beginning than they are at the end. In Timothy Sheader's view, this is not the case with Peter Pan.

“The truth is that Peter doesn't have a journey. He has chosen to be trapped - frozen in time - as a boy in Never Land. I see it that every time Peter wins, and Hook gets eaten by the crocodile, the game starts all over again, just like a computer game. It gets rebooted and Hook is alive again for another round of the same.”

Even in this context, however, should Peter have an internal journey, even if the lessons that he learns along the way are rebooted and he goes back to the default Peter when the game starts again? He makes choices and those choices have costs. What challenges does this present for the acting playing him?

Ask your students to carefully consider the character of Peter, exploring Timothy Sheader and Barbara Houseman's interpretations (see page 37) and also thinking about their own view. Ask them to discuss how they feel about the character. Is he a hero? Is he flawed? Is he a victim? If so, of what? Does his chosen fate represent freedom or an ultimate sadness?

Ask them to work in small groups with around three students in each. Using physical theatre skills, and thinking carefully about physical and facial expression, ask them to create a series of still images that represent their choice of three lines of dialogue that Peter says in the play. They should select them carefully so that they offer a contrast in Peter's character. They should then create images that represent each chosen line non-naturalistically, in an attempt to show clearly what the character is thinking and how he is feeling at this point. The lines of dialogue should then become the caption for the still images.

Once they have put these together, ask each group to show their series of images in a looped sequence, one after the other. The audience should try to determine how the group have attempted to show the changes in Peter through their still images.

Next, working in small groups, they should discuss which moments in the play they think demonstrate the biggest contrast or development in the character of Peter. Possible moments could include:

- The nursery and the meeting with Wendy
- Peter marooned on the rock
- The game of Mothers and Fathers
- Wendy tells Peter that she wants to go home
- The final duel with Hook
- Wendy's final goodbye

Referring to their knowledge of 'acting skills', they should now attempt to answer the following GCSE-style question, using what they have learned from the still image task to inform their answer.

Describe and explain how you would use your vocal and physical skills to show a development in the character of Peter Pan, making specific reference to at least two moments from the play.

Once the answers are complete, ask students to peer mark their work, assessing the knowledge and understanding of drama that is demonstrated. Credit should be given for answers that give specific examples to support the points being made and that describe the acting skills precisely and clearly.



Peter's Quotes

"To have faith is to have wings."

"No one was going to catch me and make me a man."

"I want always to be a little boy and to have fun."

"Come with me Wendy and you'll never, never have to worry about grown up things again."

"I'm youth, I'm joy, I'm a little bird that has broken out of the egg."

"I will not grow up, and you can't make me."

Timothy Sheader (Co-Director) on the character of Peter Pan

Peter appears in the mind of the grown up Wendy. She imagines him at a moment of high tension and she hopes to be distracted by him and what he represents - the past - a happier time of play and games and the Never Land. She remembers the day she met Peter (real or imaginary) and how he told her he had flown into her bedroom with a fairy and how he took her and her brothers back to Never Land for an adventure.

The truth is that Peter doesn't have a journey. He has chosen to be trapped - frozen in time - as a boy in Never Land and he plays a circular and repeating game of chasing Hook, on loop, as it were. I believe that he says the same things time and time again, and relives each moment with joy each and every time because he doesn't want to grow up.

He tells us everything we need to know about him in the first scene, he doesn't want to be a man and take responsibility for all that entails. So although he enjoys playing grown-ups with Wendy and pretending to be her husband, and father to the boys, he can only enjoy this if it is definitely pretend. His emotional development is arrested, perhaps by choice, perhaps because of some event that happens to him before the play starts. So when Wendy and the boys have finished playtime and decide that it is time to return home, and effectively start to grow up, he can't.

Barbara Houseman (Associate Director) on the character of Peter Pan

Peter says to Wendy early in the play, **"I want always to be a little boy and have fun"**, so we looked into that idea – was it that he didn't want responsibility? What does growing up signify, both for Peter Pan and for the actor? Is it about adulthood being boring? Is it about dying? What does Peter want? Fun? There's a lot of people who have probably felt that they don't want to grow up at some point in their lives. And there's a lot of us who yearn for fun and for not having responsibility, so in that way there's an element of Peter Pan in all of us.

One of the things that we explored was what the loss is for Peter Pan in wanting to stay young. The offer that Wendy makes for him to come and live with the Darlings has to be tempting. He'd like that, but ultimately the cost, the loss of freedom, is too great. There are people like that in the world, who are free spirits, who don't settle down, who don't take on responsibility.

The question for the audience is to what extent that's an ultimate sadness. Choices have their costs. At the end of the play Wendy's story is, to some extent, resolved. She has moved on. Peter hasn't, and his story is unresolved. He's left flying in circles as the lights fade, and you have to decide whether that's amazing or sad. And for some people it's amazing and for some people it's sad.



DESIGNING PETER PAN

GCSE Drama KS4

The design of the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN is rooted in the First World War. However, the designers have cleverly now allowed themselves to be constrained by this framing. In the case of Rachael Canning, Puppet Designer, the setting provided a fascinating opportunity to utilise period ephemera to create characters such as Tinker Bell and the crocodile. **"I started to look into typical items used in the First World War and hospitals in particular. A fairy made from an oil lamp; a crocodile made from broken ladders, mechanical mermaids with gas mask faces, jelly fish made from umbrellas and car lamps. It's great to have a lot of freedom in design, although parameters help focus the ideas process."**

Never Land, of course, is a fantasy setting, and one which allows a designer to take flight and do something a bit different. This was particularly true for Costume Designer Jon Morrell.

"I was interested in not being necessarily slavish to historical detail with Hook and the pirates, but designing them with a broader brush stroke so that they are more graphic characters, maybe from a comic book, so their provenance would be easily identifiable to an audience. There needs to be an element of fun and the fantastical about them."

For drama students interested in the design aspects of theatre, these alternative approaches offer a unique opportunity to consider how a production's concept can be stretched to its limits, and yet create a wonderful, cohesive 'look' that communicates very effectively with its audience; what Time Out called a **"richly allegorical fantasia"**.

Ask students to consider the term used by Time Out, **"a richly allegorical fantasia"**. What does it mean? To what extent can the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning? How, for instance, do the **"pan-historical and international bunch"** of pirates (The Independent), achieve this? How did students respond to this when they were in the audience at Regent's Park?

Next, ask them to create their own design for an additional pirate to join Hook's trusty crew, or a new fairy to be a companion to Tinker Bell in Never Land. How could they achieve this, so that their designs complement those of Jon Morrell and Rachael Canning?

Finally, ask them to consider the following GCSE-style question. How would they go about planning an answer to it, using their experience of designing their own additional characters in the same style as the Open Air Theatre's production to inform their answers?

Describe how design elements helped to create the style of the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN. Analyse and evaluate how successful these elements were in helping to communicate the style of the production to the audience.

Once the answers are complete, ask students to self mark their work, assessing whether they have been successful in demonstrating their own knowledge and understanding of drama. They should ensure that they have given specific examples to support their points, and that their examples have been described precisely and clearly. They should also ensure that they have clearly assessed how effectively the production elements that they have been discussing achieve the desired effect for the audience.





Pirate designs
by Jon Morrell



Tinker Bell design
by Rachael Canning

Books

Peter Pan

by J.M.Barrie
Published by Collins Classics (2015)
ISBN: 978-0007558179

J.M.Barrie's Peter Pan: The Graphic Novel

by Stephen White & Fin Cramb
Published by Birlinn Ltd (2015)
ISBN: 978-1780272900

Peter Pan (Acting Edition)

by J.M.Barrie
Published by Samuel French (New Edition, 2016)
ISBN: 978-0140302981

J.M. Barrie and the Lost Boys: The Real Story Behind Peter Pan

by Andrew Birkin
Published by Yale University Press (2003)
ISBN: 978-0300098228

Hide-And-Seek With Angels: The Life of J.M. Barrie

by Lisa Chaney
Published by Arrow Books (2006)
ISBN: 978-0099453239

Websites

<https://openairtheatre.com/production/peter-pan>

The Open Air Theatre's official website for the 2018 revival of PETER PAN

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/26654/26654-h/26654-h.htm#i166>

Public domain online copy of the novel of Peter & Wendy, by J.M.Barrie

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0300081h.html>

Public domain online copy of the original playscript of PETER PAN, by J.M.Barrie

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1376/1376-h/1376-h.htm>

Public domain online copy of Little White Bird, by J.M.Barrie, the original novel that later became Peter Pan

<http://jmbarrie.net/?q=node/1>

Website for The J.M.Barrie Society

<http://www.jmbarrie.co.uk/>

Online articles and discussion on the subject of author and playwright J.M.Barrie

<https://soundcloud.com/nick-oskar/peter-pan-flying-promo-mix>

Link to Nick Powell's 'Peter Pan Flying' music from the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN

http://www.liamsteel.com/Liam_Steel/Home.html

<https://www.jonbausor.com/>

<http://www.jon-morrell.com/>

<http://www.kombatkate.co.uk/>

<http://www.rachaelcanning.com/>

<http://www.barbarahouseman.com/>

Websites for some of the creative talents involved in the Open Air Theatre's production of PETER PAN

CDs

Peter Pan

Unabridged Audiobook
by J.M.Barrie
read by Jim Dale
Published by Listening Library (2006)
ISBN: 978-1419311116

Peter Pan

Radio dramatization
by J.M.Barrie
starring Toyah Wilcox, Ron Moody & June Whitfield
Released by BBC Worldwide (2006)

Forever: The Official Album of the World War One Commemorations

Featuring The Central Band Of The Royal British Legion
Released by Decca (2014)

DVDs

Finding Neverland, 2004

Starring Johnny Depp & Kate Winslett
Directed by Marc Forster
Released by: Lions Gate Home Entertainment

J.M.Barrie and The Lost Boys, 1978

Starring Ian Holm, Ann Bell & Tim Pigott-Smith
Directed by Rodney Bennett
Released by Simply Media



PETER PAN

17 May 2018 - 15 June 2018

Director Timothy Sheader & Liam Steel
Designer Jon Bausor
Costume Designer Jon Morrell
Puppet Designer/Director Rachael Canning
Composer & Sound Score Nick Powell
Lighting Designer Rick Fisher
Sound Designer Nick Lidster for Autograph
Season Associate Director (Voice & Text) Barbara Houseman
Fight Director Kate Waters
Casting Director Polly Jerrold
Musical Supervisor and Musical Director Candida Caldicot

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Photo on page 32 by David Jensen

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