

methuen | drama

Great Expectations

TOM CROWLEY

A 21ST CENTURY ADAPTATION

B L O O M S B U R Y

Tom Crowley

Great Expectations

A Twenty-First-Century Adaptation

Based on the novel by Charles Dickens

Bloomsbury Methuen Drama
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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Cast and Creative Team

Joshua Asaré | Pip



Fresh out of training with the National Youth Theatre on their Playing Up course, Joshua's recent stage credits include *The Comedy Troll* at the Northwall Arts Centre and *THREE* at the Arcola Theatre.

Maryam Grace | Estella and Biddy



Maryam graduated from the Oxford School of Drama in 2015. Recent stage credits include Juliet in *Shit-Faced Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* and Shez in one woman show *Strawberry Starburst* at IYAF festival, for which she won the Best Individual Performance award. Her screen credits include *The Mummy* (2017).

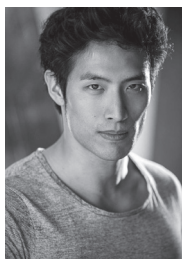
Sarah Thom | Jo and Miss Havisham



Sarah trained with Jacques Lecoq in Paris. She works frequently on Radio 4, including playing the regular character, Joan, in the long-running comedy, *Clare in the Community*. In 2012, Sarah won the BBC Radio Drama Norman Beaton Fellowship. Sarah's extensive theatre work includes *Posh* (All Female – The Pleasance), *Bette and Joan: The Final Curtain* (St James Theatre, Assembly and UK tour), *A Taste of Honey* and *The Adventures of the Stoneheads* (National Theatre), *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (Kings Head), *Thatcher the Musical!* (UK tour), the role of Dido in *Dido Queen of Carthage* (Kensington Palace and the

House of St Barnabas-in-Soho) and most recently her own comedic play *Beak Speaks* at Underbelly. She co-founded site-specific Angels in the Architecture and from 2007–12 was Co-Artistic Director of Foursight Theatre. She is now a regular facilitator on the National Theatre's Theatreworks Programme. Television includes *Taboo*, *Not Going Out*, *Doctors* and *Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle* (BBC) and *Home Fires* (ITV).

Christopher Goh | Herbert Pocket and Compeyson



Christopher trained at the Actors Temple in 2011. Theatre credits include *The Arrest of Ai Wei Wei* (Hampstead Theatre), *Spill* (Southwark Playhouse) and *The 38th Parallel* (Park Theatre/ Arcola Theatre). Television credits include *Spooks*, *Doctors*, *Holby City* (BBC), *Coronation Street* (ITV), *Strikeback* (Cinemax), *The Five, You, Me and the Apocalypse* (Sky) and *The Royals* (E! Channel). Film credits include *Hunter Killer* (Millennium), *RPG* (MGN Filmes) and *The Power of the Heart* (NL BV films).

Liam Bewley | Magwycz and Mister Jagers



Liam trained at Drama Centre London. Theatre credits include *Birthday Suit* (Old Red Lion – Nominated for an Offie Award for Best Actor), *Madame Manet* (Tabard Theatre), *Ace of Clubs* (The Union Theatre), *Margaret Catchpole* (Eastern Angles), *Three Faces of Evil* (New End Theatre) and *They Who Lay in the Field Like Beasts* (Theatre Royal Haymarket). Television includes *Silent Witness*, *Campus*, *Footballers' Wives*, *Extra Time* and *Celebdaq*. Film includes *The Double*, *The Waiting Room*, *The Diary of Tommy Crisp*, *Stand Up For Charlie Barr*, *Everywhere Is Nowhere*, *Luck*, *Channel Six*, *The Anchor* and *Macbeth*.

Peter Wicks | Orlick and Bentley Drummle



Peter was awarded the NSDF/RSC/Spotlight Emerging Artists Best Actor commendation for his role in *A Hero of Our Time* (Edinburgh Festival/Rose Theatre Kingston). Theatre credits include *The Alchemist* (Rose Playhouse), *The Elder Brother* (Globe Theatre) and, with Crowley & Co., *The Awkward Ghost* (VAULT Festival). Peter has also performed at the King's Head Theatre, the Drayton Arms, the Rose Theatre Kingston, Theatre503, the White Bear and the New Wimbledon Theatre.

Tom Crowley | Writer and Director

Tom is best known as a series writer and performer in the Prix Europa-nominated podcast sitcom *Wooden Overcoats* and as the playwright behind the stage adaptation of the *Rocky Horror* sequel, *Shock Treatment* (King's Head Theatre). He has also adapted a series of children's stories for the stage at Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, where he is an Associate Artist, and co-wrote the book for new musical *The Quentin Dentin Show* (Tristan Bates Theatre). Tom is the Artistic Director of theatre and events company Crowley & Co., with whom he has directed and produced *Radioman* (Old Red Lion Theatre), a two-week residency at VAULT Festival 2016 entitled *The Locker* and co-produced *Greywing House* by Molly Beth Morossa (Old Red Lion, VAULT Festival). With the company, Tom also produces and MCs *The Night*, a monthly variety showcase at Brasserie Zédel, and co-produces *Story Etc.*, a monthly fiction anthology podcast.

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Odinn Orn Hilmarsson | Composer and Sound Designer

Odinn is an Icelandic composer and filmmaker based in London. Since graduating with an MA in Digital Film and Television Production from the University of York, he has been working in theatre, film and podcasts making music, sound and various forms of video content. Recently Odinn has worked on several plays at

VAULT Festival 2017 including *Crocodile*, *Siren* and Casual Violence's *Grot in the Grotto*. In 2016 he was the composer for the comedy podcast *Hector Vs The Future* and worked on Crowley & Co.'s production of Felix Trench's *Radioman* at the Old Red Lion Theatre. Recently, Odinn has composed music for the National Youth Theatre's production of *Jekyll and Hyde*, which opened on the West End at the Ambassadors Theatre in October 2017.

Clancy Flynn | Set, Lighting and Costume Designer

Clancy is the lighting designer for the hugely popular ongoing touring production of *Trainspotting Live* and the technical designer for ImmerCity theatre company. They previously worked with Crowley & Co. as technical manager and lighting designer for their VAULT 2016 residency, *The Locker*. Clancy has also been a relighter or associate for other designers including Lee Curran, Malcolm Rippeth and Nic Farman. Design credits include *Paper Hearts* (Upstairs at the Gatehouse), *Piece of Silk* (Hope Theatre), *Portia* (Theatre503), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Pleasance), *Crocodile* (Network Theatre), *Chemsex Monologues* (King's Head Theatre) and *Little Red Riding Hood* (Gaiety Theatre and Swansea Grand).

Gina Abolins | Schools and Education Outreach

Gina has experience running programmes of educational and participatory work in theatre for the Ambassador Theatre Group and Out of Joint. She has coordinated and run workshops and courses for children and young people of all ages and is thrilled to be working with Crowley & Co. and the Heritage Arts Company on this brilliant, accessible modern adaptation of such a classic story.

Mat Burt | Line Producer

Mat Burt joined the Heritage Arts Company for their debut production *Where Soldiers Sleep* in 2008, and is their Creative Director. He is a producer, director and writer, and enjoys working with a wide variety of organisations throughout the UK, creating experiences for festivals, theatres, games and radio. He enjoys Tapirs and video games, both of which he tries to involve in his productions wherever possible. @batmurt

The Heritage Arts Company | Producer

The Heritage Arts Company (Mat Burt, Andy George and Tim Wilson) creates cultural events that excite the public imagination. Their guiding principles are equality and honesty, above everything else. As well as the annual VAULT Festival, London's biggest arts festival, they have so far created or produced radio plays, straight theatre, immersive events, gallery installations, multiplayer games and educational experiences, amongst others. They have worked with, or created work for, the Battersea Arts Centre, the National Theatre, Punchdrunk, Standon Calling, The Shunt Lounge, Secret Cinema, The British Fashion Council, Google, King's Cultural Institute, Lumin, Sky Atlantic, The Hospital Club, Old Vic Tunnels, IdeasTap, Kindle Theatre, Hammer Horror, The Roundhouse, English Heritage and more.

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The production would like to thank Anna Cook, John Martin and Alison Kemp of Trinity Theatre, Rishi Trikha, London Metropolitan University, VAULT Festival, Anton Rice, Dr Jen Sugden, Dr Jean Elliott, Tobias Wilson, Molly Beth Morossa and Gemma Arrowsmith for their support of the project.

A previous version of this adaptation of *Great Expectations* was produced by London Contemporary Theatre. It opened at the South Hill Park Arts Centre on 17 September 2014 and then toured the United Kingdom until 17 October 2014 with the following cast and creative team:

Jonathan Brindley | Pip

Catherine Thorncombe | Estella and Biddy

Lucy Peacock | Jo and Miss Havisham

Kaiden DuBois | Herbert Pocket and Compeyson

Joey Dexter | Magwycz and Mister Jagers

Adam Tucker | Orlick and Bentley Drummle

Produced by Philip Ryder and Jonathan Ashby-Rock for London Contemporary Theatre

Directed by Jonathan Ashby-Rock

Associate Director: Lucy Grudniewicz

Music and Sound by Philip Ryder

Lighting Design by Jordan Lightfoot

Production Assistants: Ellie Muscutt and Amelia Butcher

Great Expectations for the Twenty-first Century

Great Expectations is perhaps one of Charles Dickens's best known and best loved novels. It was first published in weekly instalments from December 1860 to August 1861 in *All The Year Round*, a magazine which Dickens himself owned. The serialisation of novels in this way was common during the nineteenth century, and popular novelists like Dickens had the power to boost the circulation of a publication with their work. In fact, Dickens had originally planned to serialise *Great Expectations* monthly, but revised his plan (writing it in weekly parts instead) when it became apparent that his periodical could do with a boost in sales figures after Charles Lever's *A Day's Ride* proved unpopular with *All The Year Round*'s readership.

As Deborah Wynne has pointed out in *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), serialisation also presented authors with the opportunity to respond to important social and cultural debates of the day, debates which were simultaneously being discussed in other articles which appeared in a publication's pages alongside the serialised novel. *Great Expectations* is no exception, and in Pip's growth and development we see Dickens exploring a range of contemporary ideas and concerns, including: class, nature versus nurture, identity, education, and what makes a gentleman.

Dickens's rendering of his world is so rich with realistic detail, so evocative of Victorian England, that it is easy to overlook any relevance it might carry today. Setting his adaptation in the present day, Tom Crowley challenges his audience to think carefully about those social failings which reveal that some things have not changed all that much since Dickens put pen to paper. Class divides and equality of opportunity, for example, appear every bit as relevant now as they did back then, and the exploration is just as uncomfortable. Crowley's decision to recast Joe as Jo, a single working mother struggling to pay the rent in a run-down flat, plays a key role in highlighting this, as does the contrast drawn between Pip's background and Bentley Drummle's unearned privilege – just as striking here as it was in the original text.

At the heart of Crowley's play is an exploration of the self which echoes Dickens's own. Both texts are deeply interested in questions about our own self-knowledge; our moral fortitude; and how much

control we have over our own destiny, the extent to which it is shaped by chance or others, and the impact this has on our own sense of self. In many respects *Great Expectations* offers a rather depressing take on human failings – not least our selfishness – which Crowley does not shy away from. That is not to say that the play does not have many moments of levity and genuine joy, yet in capturing the novel's bleaker aspects, and placing them in a modernised setting designed to remind us of the many social problems we face today, Crowley's play suggests that a bleak Dickensian lens might very well be a useful tool for understanding Britain in 2017.

*Dr Jen Sugden (Visiting University Lecturer
and Tutor in Nineteenth-century Literature), November 2017*

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