



ALADDIN

A DAZZLING NEW RIDE
THROUGH A CLASSIC PANTO TALE

FRI 28 NOV 2025 - SUN 4 JAN 2026

Chelmsford Theatre
Aladdin Education Pack

 Chelmsford
Theatre



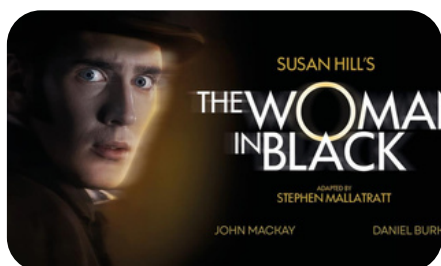
Aladdin Education Pack

This is a specially created education and activity pack, designed just for schools to be able to pick up and take straight into a lesson! You will find stories and activities to explore the tale of Aladdin and traditional pantomimes.

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Educational shows



The Woman in Black
Tue 3 - Sat 7 Feb



Getting Triggy With It: Matt
Parker Does The Maths
Thu 12 Mar



Lunchtime Concerts
Various dates throughout
the year





discover

Welcome to the Chelmsford Theatre Pantomime Education Pack! We hope that this pack is filled with informative, fun, and most importantly useful resources for you to use in the classroom. This year's pantomime of Aladdin is stacked full of those classic pantomime principles which we will be exploring in this pack.

This year we have been lucky enough to work with over 15 different schools, on everything from front of house to fun filled drama games, from pantomime characters to conversations with professional theatre makers. It has been a brilliant year, and we cannot wait to continue working with educators and young people across the county in 2026.

If you are interested in a workshop with Chelmsford Theatre, have a look below at a small selection of our offering. If you would like to know more, either [check out our website](#) which has an education focused area, or email our Creative Engagement Officer on outreach.theatre@chelmsford.gov.uk

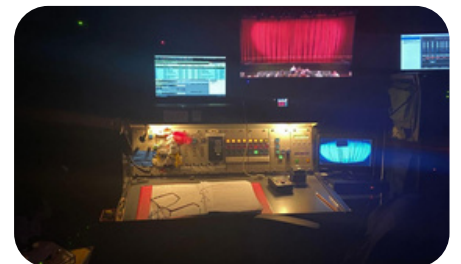
Discover Schools Workshops



Backstage Tours
1 hour
KS1 - KS5



Theatre Games
1 hour
KS2 - KS5



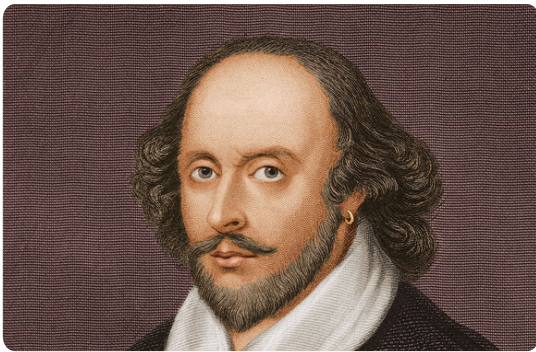
Technical Theatre Talk
1 hour
KS3 - KS5

The History of Pantomime

A great resource to support your students understanding more about the history of the British cultural staple that is pantomime.

16th century Commedia dell'Arte, a form of entertainment in Italy which used lots of mischievous stock characters. They would use dance, slapstick comedy, acrobatics and music to tell their stories to the audience.

These performances would take place outside. The actors would wear distinctive masks so you could tell easily who was playing what stock character. The harlequin was a popular character, a quick-witted cheeky character who carried a magic bat.



The first pantomime was performed in 1717 and was called 'The Love of Mars and Venus, an Entertainment of Dancing'.



Today pantomime is a core part of nearly every theatre up and down the country, and Chelmsford Theatre is no exception! Last year we welcomed over 27,000 people over 65 shows. Today, we still see glimpses of those 16th and 17th century performances with stock characters, music, dance and slapstick comedy.



As we go into the 17th century, Commedia dell'Arte is traveling all over Europe. Actors would have a repertoire of phrases, speeches, and jokes, depending on their characters, which they would use time and time again. Sound familiar? Oh, yes it does... These shows influenced famous playwrights like Shakespeare, who used Commedia dell'Arte characters and stories as inspiration for his own work!

Victorian era – Pantomime was a popular Christmas show. This is where we see the rise of a modern pantomime staple, the Dame. This, matched with the principal boy typically being played by a woman, made for a lot of fun for audiences.



Activity: Aladdin in 60 seconds...

This is a perfect activity to do just after you have seen the show, keeping the story and all its tricks and twists fresh in the young people's minds! If you choose, you could extend this task by giving them time for refinement or keep it short and sweet with a short time limit.

Objectives:

- Students will work collaboratively to create and share their retelling with the class.
- All young people will engage in planning and performance, creating their piece as a team.
- Young people will develop their confidence in verbal communication by performing in front of others.

Resources

- Pens and paper (optional).

Task:

Activity One (optional)

- Have the young people get into groups of around four or five and give each group some pens and a large sheet of paper.
- Have them write down everything they remember about what they saw – from small moments to major plot points, nothing is too big or too small!
- After they have brain dumped everything, have them now rank it all from most to least important.
- Using the most important moments, they are then going to plan their retelling of Aladdin, in a performance only 60 seconds long.

Activity Two:

- In the groups of around four or five, they have one task – retell the story of Aladdin in just 60 seconds!
- The story should be told in an energetic, over exaggerated pantomime style, whilst ensuring the story is still clear and can be followed.
- Give your students anywhere from 10 to 40 minutes on this task, depending on how much time you have and how much you would like them to refine their work.
- Everyone shares with the group what they have put together.

Extension:

- If you want to add in an extra layer of challenge, give each group an additional element they must include in their performance. We have compiled a list of key panto elements you may want to encourage them to use! Can the rest of the class work out what their secret inclusion was?
- Talk to the audience
- Get the audience to take part in the performance
- A chase scene
- Slapstick comedy
- Multi-role
- A piece of music or a song
- A silly joke



Activity: Emotion Line

We all know that over exaggeration is a HUGE part of a good pantomime (oh yes, we do!). Therefore, we think this is a great, quick task that gets young people thinking about just how big acting can get, and how different it is to naturalistic acting. This would be a great task to do before jumping into the script task on page 6.

Objectives:

- Students will recognise different emotions and practice expressing them in a clear and exaggerated way.
- Students will improve their ability to use body language and facial expressions to show emotions.
- Young people will be able to identify the correct acting level for pantomime and then be able to layer that into future tasks in this education pack.

Task:

- Have the young people stand in a line. If you have a large group, it may be best to split them into two groups and have them face opposite each other.
- Explain that this is our emotion line, we start at one end and work our way all the way to the other end, with each person exaggerating the emotion a little more.
- The person who starts the line does a very small and natural presentation of the emotion, the person down the other end will end up doing the most exaggerated version of that emotion possible!
- After a few attempts, let the young people mix up the lines so they can all take on a new place in the line and try a different level of exaggeration.

Some emotion inspiration:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| • Excitement | • Disgust |
| • Happiness | • Confusion |
| • Fear | • Disappointed |
| • Anger | • Love |
| • Sadness | • Embarrassment |
| • Surprise | • Jealousy |

Questions to ask the group as you go through the task:

- What level of exaggeration would you expect to see in the pantomime?
- At what point in this line did we reach that level?
- What did you notice changed as things got more exaggerated?
- How did your body feel when performing something really over the top?

Activity: Become a Pantomime Actor

This task can be done before or after seeing the show, or even if you haven't seen the show at all! Using a script extract straight from this year's pantomime, young people can have their turn at being an actor in the limelight.

Objectives:

- Students will read and explore a professional theatre script, understanding the characters' personalities and how to bring them to life.
- Young people will work collaboratively in pairs, supporting each other's ideas and providing constructive feedback.
- Students will develop skills as both performers and audience members, learning to appreciate different interpretations.

Resources:

- Script extracts (1 per person).

Task:

- In pairs have students read through the script and discuss what the characters are like and what is happening in this moment.
- This scene contains two classic characters, the Dame and the sidekick – both high energy comedy characters!
- Give them some time to explore the scene and characters – encourage them to make choices and try new things. We have a few tips below on how to support and scaffold a rehearsal.
- We always encourage that all rehearsals like this end in a sharing with everyone being encouraged to perform – it is a great way to develop confidence and their skills as an audience member.

How do we structure an effective rehearsal?

- Ensure that they don't spend too much time sitting and talking, the best creative work is done on your feet and moving.
- Encourage them to write on their script – highlighting words and making notes, whatever makes it easier to remember their choices.
- Find below a few rehearsal techniques you may want to try out!
 - Have them show six lines of their work to someone else, and they have to make three changes.
 - Have the young people run through their performance, and at random moments shout freeze. In that moment, they have to freeze instantly and think to themselves, am I showing my character right now?
 - Have them again run the performance, but this time you shout out 'bigger'! Every time you say bigger, their acting has to get even more exaggerated. This links back really well to the emotion line exercise.

Script Extract

Frankie has brought in a box containing two super soakers.

FRANKIE: How am I looking? (Audience shout: looking swanky Frankie!)

TWANKEY: What's in the box love?

FRANKIE: It's a delivery for you Mum.

He puts the box down next to his mum.

TWANKEY

Oh good! That'll be our two new washing machines.

FRANKIE

That box isn't big enough for two washing machines.

TWANKEY

These are the latest innovation in laundry technology. These are so good, we can wash people's clothes while they're still wearing them.

FRANKIE

Wow! That's amazing.

Twankey hands Frankie a super soaker from the box and grabs the other for herself.

TWANKEY

If only there was a large volume of people nearby that we could test them on.

Twankey and Frankie look at each other, then look knowingly at the audience.

TWANKEY

Now!

Music kicks in as they both run into the audience. Eventually they make their way back to the stage. Music ends.



TWANKEY

They work really well, look how much cleaner everyone looks! Right, Frankie love, go and talk some sense into your brother. He's just moping around thinking he's never going to see Jasmine again. (To audience) Can we have an Aaahhhh?

AUDIENCE

Aaahhhh!

FRANKIE

What should I say to him Mum?

TWANKEY

Tell him not to give up hope. You never know what opportunities might come knocking on your door.

SFX: Doorbell Rings

TWANKEY

I said knocking.

SFX: there's a knock on the door

TWANKEY

Right, there's somebody at the door. Off you go.

Frankie exits

Activity: Three Wishes Improv Game

Ever wondered what it would look like if your students wishes could come to life? Well, it is time to find out! This task focus on creativity, improvisation skills, with a little literacy thrown in for good measure, all framed in a silly and expressive game.

Objectives:

- All students can use their imagination and literacy skills to create and write down their three wishes.
- All students will use their communication skills in a performance setting, either through rehearsed drama or improvisation.
- All young people will collaborate with others, either by engaging in performance or creating a performance together.

Resources:

- Three pieces of paper per child.
- Pens and paper.
- A box or tub to put all the wishes in.
- An open space to work in.

Task

Activity one:

- This activity starts with a discussion – if you had three wishes like Aladdin, what would you wish for?
- Let students' imagination run as wild as they can, this Genie has no restrictions! The sillier, the bigger, the more creative the better.
- Then working on their own, each young person is going to write down three wishes, each on a separate piece of paper.
- Once all the wishes have been written, have the young people fold them up and put them in the box or tub.

Activity two:

- Have students sit in a large circle, with you a part of it.
- Explain that in turn, they will each come up and select a wish. They are then going to use their acting skills and bring this wish to life in the centre of the circle!
- It could be acting like they are flying around at a great height, trying to spend an unlimited amount of money, or traveling in time. They are allowed to talk and move all they like.
- Ask the young people who are audience members to put their hands up when they think they know what wish was being performed, and see if they are correct!
- Question: What made it clear what the wish was? How do we communicate with our audience?
- To make this harder, you can do it without talking!



Activity: Three Wishes Improv Game (cont.)

Ever wondered what it would look like if your students wishes could come to life? Well, it is time to find out! This task focus on creativity, improvisation skills, with a little literacy thrown in for good measure, all framed in a silly and expressive game.

Extension:

- For this extension task, the young people will work in groups of 3.
- Give each group a wish from the box, they shouldn't tell the other groups what they have.
- Each group are going to create a short performance that shows this wish being brought to life, but it turns out this Genie is very particular and loves to play tricks.
- For example, if someone wished for one million pounds it might mean the Genie gives them a million pounds stolen from a bank, or in 1p coins!
- It is up to them how they twist or trick the wish, but their performance must include how the wish is brought to life, and how it goes wrong!

I wish that everything
was made of jelly

I wish that I had a
magic flying carpet

I wish that I could run
as fast as a cheetah

I wish that money
would rain from the
sky!

Say Hello to our Lighting Designer!

Have you ever wondered how magical shows like Aladdin look so spectacular? Well, there's a special person behind the scenes called a lighting designer. They help make every scene sparkle, glow, and wow the audience. From creating mysterious caves to revealing the amazing Genie, their lights bring the story to life and make the magic real! Lets have a chat with our lighting designer, Will.

Hello Will! Could you let us know, what is a lighting designer, and what do you do?

Hi! The lighting designer is responsible for helping to bring the magic to panto! I look at how to make every scene and every moment sparkle. I look at how to set the scene, the location and make each song look magical and hopefully bring a little 'wow factor' to each moment through lighting.

There is no set way to become a lighting designer but most of us started by working backstage in the theatre. Often we'll train in backstage craft at a drama school just like performers do but instead of acting, we're learning how to do lighting, sound, building sets and stage management.

How does someone become a lighting designer?

Why is lighting so important for this show?

Lighting isn't just about being able to see the actors on stage (but that is important of course!), it's about adding a layer of magic, emotion and spectacle to help enhance all the performers, the set and the costumes.

Say Hello to our Lighting Designer (cont.)

Have you ever wondered how magical shows like Aladdin look so spectacular? Well, there's a special person behind the scenes called a lighting designer. They help make every scene sparkle, glow, and wow the audience. From creating mysterious caves to revealing the amazing Genie, their lights bring the story to life and make the magic real! Lets have a chat with our lighting designer, Will.

Do you have one moment you are particularly excited about lighting in this show, and can you tell us anything about it?

I'm looking forward to creating the 'Cave of Wonders' and revealing the Genie for the first time!

I love the fast pace of creating live theatre. I love hearing the reactions of the audience when they're transported away from the every day world to some place fantastical and unreal.

What do you love about your job?

Finally, with this year's panto being Aladdin we have to ask...if you had three wishes, what would they be?

I would wish for a happy and successful run of panto this year in Chelmsford, for everyone to get the Christmas presents they wished for, and a new car for me would be nice!

Activity: Become a lighting designer

Are you feeling inspired after reading the interview with our lighting designer, and want to give it a go yourself? Well good thing we have a lesson plan just for that! This can be done as independently or as scaffolded as you like, depending on the age or abilities in the group.

Objectives:

- Young people will understand the role and responsibilities of a lighting designer and explore different lighting techniques and effects
- Students will use their creativity and understanding to design their own lighting concept, linked to the pantomime Aladdin.

Resources:

- Paper and pens (if doing activity one)
- Script extract (1 per person)
- Storyboard print out (1 per person)
- Coloured pencils

Task

Activity one - Skip this step if your group don't require an information recap

- Discuss and mind map together...
- What is a lighting designer responsible for?
- What type of things can they change or do with the lights? (Change colour, change the shape, projection, strobe, etc.)
- What makes exciting lighting design?

Activity two:

- Read through the script extract on the next page and discuss (either as a class or in groups) what moments you think could have specific lighting states. We have left space for them to annotate with their ideas.
- Could there be something exciting when the character talks to the audience, when he enters, when the Spirit of the Ring enters?
- Using their ideas they are going to create a story board that picks out at least four key moments.
- Using the resource provided on page 15, each young person will draw out four moments of lighting (with the characters on stage), demonstrating exactly what their vision would look like on stage!
- They must also write under their drawing why they want to do what they have. For example, using red to show Abanazar is dangerous.
- Young people can either do this for themselves, or they can present their ideas to a peer or a group at the end.
- We always suggest sharing ideas out loud, it is a great chance to build oracy skills and get more creative inspiration!

Activity: Become a lighting designer

Script extract

ABANAZAR

Yes, stinky foolish children, it is I, the great Abanazar.
Call that a Boo, Ha! Come on you can do better than that, give me
your loudest Boo! Pathetic. Come on Chelmsford, I want your
biggest, baddest, meanest boo on three. Here we go. One, Two,
Three.

Oh Wow. (Feigning sadness) You've really hurt my feelings. Oh, hang
on... I haven't got any feelings! Ha!

Now I see and understand all... Princess Jasmine and Aladdin are in
love. Ewwww Yuck! They're giving me the ick! It's a good job I have a
dastardly plan. And Aladdin's gonna help me. Then it will be me
that's rich enough to buy a kingdom, me that will rule the universe
and me that will marry Princess Jasmine!

Now to my precious ring! (He rubs the ring)

Spirit, are you there?

SPIRIT OF THE RING

I am here Master.

ABANAZAR

Deploy the flying carpet!

Activity: Become a lighting designer

Story board

2		4	
1		3	



Pantomime Workshops

Want to keep the magic going?

Chelmsford Theatre offers a great array of pantomime workshops which can keep the magic going in your own school! For children KS2 all the way through to KS4 we have some exciting hands on workshops on offer, from slapstick comedy and panto character building, to learning how to execute the iconic pantomime ghost scene there's something to inspire every young mind.

An introduction to Pantomime Characters

55 minutes / KS2 / £60+VAT

This fun, high energy workshop will give your students a chance to throw themselves into the world of Pantomime. We will be exploring one of the most important parts of the show, its characters! Our facilitator will work with the students to learn about the different stock characters, and how to bring them to life.



Pantomime Conventions: Getting the audience involved

55 minutes / KS2 / £60+VAT

This lively, interactive workshop explores how pantomime performers engage their audiences through specific techniques of interaction and participation. Focusing on skill-building, students will learn how to effectively involve audiences, develop their improvisational skills, and understand the conventions of pantomime that make performances engaging and fun.

Pantomime Conventions: Ghost Routine with Audience Interaction

85 minutes / KS3 - KS5 / £85+VAT

Some call it the Ghost Routine, others the Ghost Gag, but no one disagrees that it is a fundamental element of a pantomime performance. In this session your students will learn the structure of the Ghost Routine, including audience participation, audience interaction and the basics of stock characters.



If you are interested in booking a workshop with Chelmsford Theatre, for this year or next, please contact our Creative Engagement Officer at outreach.theatre@chelmsford.gov.uk – we can't wait to bring magic to your school!



Thank You

We hope this pack can support your students' knowledge of the wonderful world of pantomime! We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to Chelmsford Theatre for many years to come.

We would love to hear your feedback on this education pack and to see examples of the work your class has created. Get in touch with our Discover department by emailing outreach.theatre@chelmsford.gov.uk.

Have a great holiday season!

Best wishes,

Megan Crisp

Creative Engagement Officer
discover Department
Chelmsford Theatre

discover