

Leeds Arts Centre presents

# Escaped Alone

by

**Caryl  
Churchill**

directed by

**Rachel  
Vernelle**



1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> May  
2024



**Carriageworks Theatre**  
Millennium Square, Leeds  
[www.leedsartscentre.org.uk](http://www.leedsartscentre.org.uk)



**Caryl Churchill** is a prolific playwright known for dramatising inequalities, abuses of power, and for her exploration of sexual politics and feminist themes.

Churchill was born on 3 September 1938 in London and grew up in the Lake District and in Montreal.

*Downstairs*, her first play, written while she was still at university, was first staged in 1958. *The Judge's Wife* was televised by the BBC in 1972 and *Owners*, her first professional stage production, premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in London in the same year. Much of her work has continued to premier at the Royal Court, including *Top Girls*, *Serious Money* and *Escaped Alone*. She has often pioneered non-naturalistic techniques, including unfinished sentences and distorted language. She has always focused on pressing issues of the day, including in *A Number*, about human cloning and *Seven Jewish Children*, prompted by the suffering of Gaza in 2008.

"Caryl always manages to have her pulse on the moral, social, and political issues that are current in our society. She is and has consistently been throughout her career, a formal adventurer in terms of her theatrical language ....constantly challenging not just literally the language in which theatre is spoken, but also the context, the theatricality and the dramatic landscape in which she works. In that sense she is one of the great innovators of post-war British drama." (*Stephen Daldry, Royal Court Artistic Director, 1992-1998, in an extract from The Royal Court Theatre: Inside Out by Ruth Little and Emily MacLaughlin, Oberon, 2007*).

I was drawn to *Escaped Alone* from the first read. It is a powerful piece of theatre, with four strong, older female roles. Churchill's only instruction to director and cast is that the female characters are "all at least seventy"; she was seventy-seven when she wrote it.



Immediately, the word 'juxtaposition' leapt to the forefront of my mind – of the domestic and the catastrophic, the personal and the universal. In directing a play that runs to little more than an hour, I have had the opportunity to present these contrasts and contradictions with all the means theatre offers a director. I've been very lucky to work with Ilias Ho, a student from Leeds University Music School, who has composed a breath-taking soundtrack to the play, so complex that music has become almost a fifth character in the drama.

James Macdonald, who directed the premier of *Escaped Alone* at the Royal Court in 2016, said: "She (Churchill) thinks in terms of images, the scripts are open-ended – they want you to enter into that world and play and find our own conclusions". I must thank the brave and adventurous cast of this production for coming along with me as we discovered the juxtaposition of pleasure and horror in this incredible play.

***Rachel Vernelle***  
**director**

*The action takes place in Sally's garden on a series of afternoons through one English summer.*

There is no interval; the three evening performances will be followed by a Q&A session with director and actors.

## **Cast**

***Sally***

**Jo Scott**

***Vi***

**Maureen Willis**

***Lena***

**Margaret Savage**

***Mrs Jarrett***

**Pam Wilson**

***Directed by Rachel Vernelle***

## **Crew**

***Production Manager***

**Zoe Freedman**

***Stage Manager***

**Barry Blatt**

***Original music composed by***

**Ilias Ho**

***Lighting Design***

**Peter Waddicor**

***Lighting mentee***

**Ryan Mehmi**

***Lighting operation***

**Carriageworks staff**

***Sound operation***

**Steve Fryatt**

***Rehearsal prompt***

**Maria Kwater and**

**Rachel Burton**

***Front of House***

**Addy Durrani  
and LAC members**

***Publicity***

**Spike Marshall  
and LAC members**

***Photography***

**Mark Hillier**

***Poster and flyer design***

**Emily Dewsnap**

## Meet the cast.....



**JO SCOTT** returned to Leeds Arts Centre two years ago after a long gap. She first joined the company in the late 1970s, when she appeared in *All My Sons*, *The Changeling*, *The Miser* and a number of other productions.

**MAUREEN WILLIS** has been a member of Leeds Arts Centre since 2012. She's a great fan of Caryl Churchill and played Isabella Bird, a Victorian explorer, in the Centre's last Churchill play - a far cry from *Vi*, a lively lady with a traumatic past. As well as enjoying acting, Maureen organises the play reading programme and is part of the costume team.

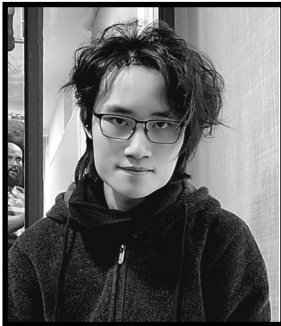


**MARGARET SAVAGE** has been involved with Leeds Arts Centre since 1985, initially in the former Fine Arts group as well as the theatre company. Margaret has directed as well as acted, playing a variety of different roles including a mischievous elf, several Alan Ayckbourn characters and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

**PAM WILSON** has been acting for many years, running the whole gamut of roles from naive ingenue to curmudgeonly old woman (with several sub and super-human characters on the way) and occasionally directing. Recent appearances for LAC have included *The Father*, *Tales of the Unexpected*, *Rough Sleepers* and *It's A Miracle*. Off-stage she has contributed to wardrobe, props and music - none of which involve learning any lines - and also edits LAC's monthly newsletter.



**RACHEL VERNELLE** has been a member of LAC for around twenty years, involved in many aspects of the company both on and off-stage. Her most recent performances have been as Anne in *The Father*, Christine in *Chicken Soup* and Gertrude in *Hamlet*; she is also an established director with Previous productions of *Kindertransport* and *The Mill on the Floss* to her credit.



**ILIAS HO** is a first-year music student from Hong Kong studying at the University of Leeds, specialising in composition, ensemble performance, and music and sound technology. Before coming to the UK, his five years in a local youth orchestra helped cultivate his great passion for composition. His *Festive Dance Overture* premiered in Hong Kong in October 2023, and his *Lullaby for String Orchestra* premiered in a Leeds University Union Concert in spring 2024. This is his first composition for a theatrical production.

**ESCAPED ALONE** was first presented by The English Stage Company at The Royal Court Theatre, London, on 28th January 2016. The US première was presented at BAM Harvey Theater, New York, on 15th February 2017, directed by James MacDonald.

This amateur production of *Escaped Alone* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd.

[www.concordtheatricals.co.uk](http://www.concordtheatricals.co.uk)

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**LEEDS ARTS CENTRE** was formed in 1945 as an amateur society to encourage and foster interest in the arts.

Originally it comprised Drama groups (including Children's Theatre), a Fine Arts group and Musical, Literary and Film sections and was based in the Civic Theatre (now Leeds City Museum).

In 2005 Leeds Arts Centre moved to the Carriageworks, where we now present four plays every season, usually in February, March/April, May/June and October/November. We are a friendly society, working together to maintain the high standard of our productions and new members are always welcome - with or without any previous experience.

We hold regular playreadings and social events and aim to give all our members the opportunity to try their hand at all aspects of theatre-making.

We are a registered charity and non profit-making organisation. Our members range in age from 18 to 80+ and come from a wide range of backgrounds. If you are interested in joining, then please speak to a member of our friendly team, or you can find out more, by visiting our website at [www.leedsartscentre.org.uk](http://www.leedsartscentre.org.uk) where you can complete an application form in the 'Join Us' section. Alternatively, email us at [info@leedsartscentre.org.uk](mailto:info@leedsartscentre.org.uk)

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### **Leeds Arts Centre Costume Hire**

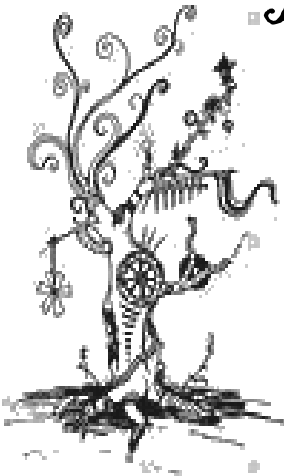
We have a wide range of high quality men's and women's costumes available to hire at competitive rates. These include:

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For more information, visit [www.leedsartscentre.org.uk/costume-hire](http://www.leedsartscentre.org.uk/costume-hire)

upcoming LEEDS ARTS CENTRE productions....

Thurs 18th - Sat 20th July 2024



# A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare  
directed by Ben Hopwood

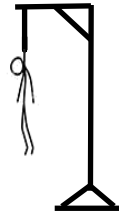


Spring 2025....

Martin McDonagh's black comedy

## HANGMEN

directed by Spike Marshall



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Leeds Arts Centre is part of  
**LEEDS COMMUNITY ARTS NETWORK**



**LeedsCAN** comprises a range of community drama, music, opera, youth theatre and other arts societies, working with Leeds City Council and the Carriageworks, where most of their performances take place. Current member groups are Leeds Arts Centre, Leeds Children's Theatre, Leeds Youth Opera, Leeds Gilbert & Sullivan Society, LIDOS, LAOS, Cosmopolitan Players, St. Mary's Youth Theatre, Our Community Dances, and Leeds Writers' Circle. Visit LeedsCAN at <http://www.leedscan.org.uk>