

Leeds Arts Centre invites you to...

# ROPE

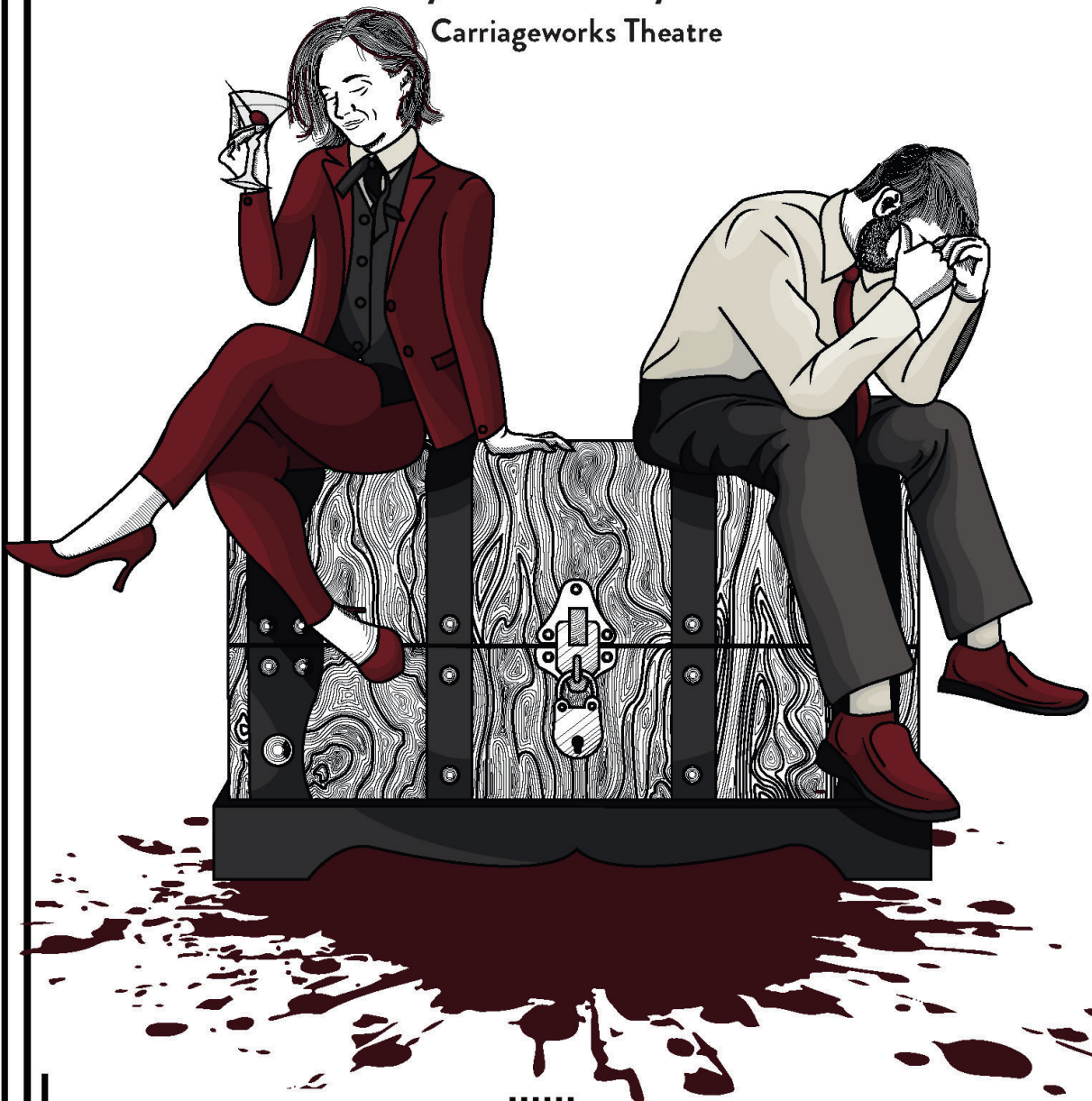
BY PATRICK HAMILTON

DIRECTED BY SPIKE MARSHALL

The Perfect Murder. An outrageous plot. A fiendish party...  
The Thriller that inspired Alfred Hitchcock.

**Wednesday 8 - Saturday 11 November**

Carriageworks Theatre



 LEEDS  
ARTS  
CENTRE

This amateur production of "Rope" is presented by  
arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf  
of Samuel French Ltd. [www.concordtheatricals.co.uk](http://www.concordtheatricals.co.uk).

## A note from the Director,

First performed in 1929, **ROPE** is

- ◇ a taut, audacious thriller about a brutal murder and hideous plot by two young university students, desperate to prove their superiority to the world.
- ◇ a darkly comic satire about how far the limits of civility and etiquette can be pushed by those wily enough to weaponize decorum itself
- ◇ a tragedy about what has become of society in the shadow of the Great War, and what becomes of the children raised by the men and women traumatised by those events.

It is those elements that drew me to the play, lured at first by the rip-roaring tale of suspense at its heart, and then enthralled by the grand ideas and character play that lie beneath the surface.

For those familiar with the Hitchcock screen adaptation, the beats of the story are well known. Two students have committed murder as an intellectual exercise, and host a macabre party centred around a chest where the body of their victim is interred. Amongst the guests is the father of the boy they have murdered, and a collection of their friends. They are apex social predators and understand the rules of the game enough to stage manage everyone, aside from their former teacher who senses something is terribly wrong.

Alfred Hitchcock's 1948 adaptation for the big screen is a masterclass in thriller filmmaking, it moves the action away from both England and away from its specific time period, transporting the action to Manhattan in the late 1940s. This seems like a small change at first, but when you go back to the original text it becomes clear how much of the play was specifically about England at the tail end of the 1920s.

**ROPE** is so specifically about the time it is written, that to divorce it from that period is to remove a central piquancy. Indeed, one of my mantras throughout the rehearsal process was that

*"ROPE is the thing used to strangle poor Ronald Kentley, ROPE is the spectre of the hangman's gallows that threatens the two killers, and ROPE is the individual bonds of social graces that Wyn Brandon weaponizes against her party guests."*

Everyone feels that there is indeed something 'mysterious and weird' about the evening, but also understand the social obligations that make them ignore their gut instincts; everyone except Rupert Cadell, a man detached from society, who sees through Brandon's games. But even he is not willing to accept the sheer depths that his former student has fallen to. Cadell's growing realisation is part of the tragedy of **ROPE**, an unfit mentor whose jaded worldview may have poisoned the young minds he was supposed to safeguard.

In bringing **ROPE** to the stage, I wanted to investigate the ideas around social connection and disconnection, and what becomes of the children of traumatised men and women. In doing so I wanted to work with heightened emotions and intensified feelings, drawing from gothic horror and impressionism to ensure the central ideological and emotional conflict of the play are always in sharp contrast.

I was delighted at how quickly the cast took to this tone, enjoying the process of playing around with the characters and really burrowing into what makes them tick.

Hamilton's original text is a rather acerbic satire, with little patience or love for its characters, and it is a credit to each of my actors that they found such vibrant emotional cores in characters who could read as pastiche. For a first-time director having such a keen, intelligent, and emotionally open troupe of actors was a true gift and their ownership of the material was inspiring to watch.

'My vision' has become all of our vision, including my crew.

My production Manager has done a wonderful job managing a crew of people who, in many cases, were taking on backstage roles for the first time, with mentoring from other LAC members. **ROPE** has been a great example of new members of LAC flourishing and meeting challenges, supported by our more experienced members.

I could not have asked for a better experience.

I would also like to give special thanks to Leeds Arts Centre as a whole in supporting me, as a newcomer to theatre. In particular I want to thank Camilla Asher, my long-suffering Assistant Director and vital mentor, who with the patience of a saint allowed me to discuss and workshop ideas around direction.

The success of **ROPE** is in no small part down to the support offered by Camilla and the other mentors.

One final piece of thanks must be given to Mitchell Perry who designed the core image below and the posters and fliers for **ROPE**. This image was such a perfect diffusion of the ideas and tone of the show, that it became a guiding part of the entire process. The moment I saw it, I knew exactly what the show would be, and hoped it could live up to such a striking central visual motif.

## Spike Marshall



The Action of the Play takes place across one night within the home of Wyn Brandon and Charles Granillo, The play runs linearly with no breaks between acts.

There will be an interval of approximately 20 minutes around one hour into the performance.

### **Cast by order of appearance**

<b>Wyn Brandon</b>	Lizzie Relins
<b>Charles Granillo</b>	Leigh Dawson
<b>Sabot</b>	Ryan Mehmi
<b>Kenneth Raglan</b>	Jacob Hartley
<b>Leila Arden</b>	Francesca Butler
<b>Sir Johnstone Kentley</b>	Ben Hopwood
<b>Mrs Debenham</b>	Kylie Hunt
<b>Rupert Cadell</b>	Brian Diamond

**Video and/or audio recording by any means is strictly prohibited.  
Please do not photograph the performance or disturb other patrons in any way**

Find exclusive behind the scenes documentaries and interviews on the making of **ROPE** and content for other Leeds Arts Centre shows on our YouTube. Scan the QR code for more information or visit

<https://www.youtube.com/@LeedsArtsCentre-fn9fk>



This production uses these sounds from freesound.org: Bell, Factory, Break.wav by dnewtonjr; Excellent thunder & rain 25 Sept '21.wav by gepetto3548; Heavy Rain by lebaston100; Static\_Radio.wav by kMoon

## Production Team

Assistant Director	Camilla Asher
Production Manager	Addy Durrani
Stage Manager	Becca Millard
Assistant Stage Manager	Barry Blatt
Set Manager	Enya Lucas
Set Design	Lydia Edwards
Set Team	<b>Enya Lucas</b> , Hannah Staples, Lydia Edwards, Oisin Owens, Steve Fryatt
Lighting Design	Spike Marshall, Camilla Asher, Lydia Edwards
Lighting Operation	The Carriageworks Technical Team
Sound Design and Technician	Steve Fryatt
Costume Design	Jay Lockwood
Wardrobe Team	<b>Jay Lockwood</b> , Maria Kwater, Maureen Willis, Zoe Freedman
Properties Team	<b>Chelsea Issot</b> , Laura Marshall, Rich Francis
Rehearsal Prompts	Addy Durrani, Barry Blatt, Nicole Smith
Publicity Artwork	Mitchell Perry
Publicity Team	<b>Camilla Asher</b> , Barry Blatt, Pam Wilson, Spike Marshall
Publicity Filmmaker	Ron Wright
Publicity Photographer	Mark Hillyer
Front of House	Addy Durrani, Moyo Adunola, Rina Begum, Shirley Broadbent
LAC Mentors	Camilla Asher, Pam Wilson, Rich Francis, Shirley Broadbent, Zoe Freedman

With special thanks to;

- East Street Arts and Red Ladder Theatre Company for use of rehearsal space
- Daru Rooke for consulting on period attire, furnishing and etiquette
- Brad Askew for early consultation on set
- Light on Leeds Podcast
- Chapel FM Radio
- Ronald Wright for filming the behind the scenes documentaries and the trailer for ROPE
- Lewis Francis Blackburn Bray for printing of the programmes
- Phil Dodgson and Partners for the preparation of LAC's annual accounts
- Everyone involved in moving various chests, chairs, sideboards and other bits of furniture



## Meet the Cast



The role of Wyn Brandon is Lizzie Relin's first lead in an LAC production, having been a member of LAC since summer of 2021. Lizzie has also taken on the role of Laura in the 2022 production of the Father and The Servant in Tales of The Unexpected, as well as several roles backstage. Lizzie has been involved in amateur theatre since 2018, but prior to that, hadn't been on stage since her primary school production of Bussy Malone.



Leigh Dawson has been a Leeds Arts Centre member for just over a year and in that time has played Godfrey Ablewhite in their recent production of The Moonstone as well as working on the Set team for Scarborough. Prior to joining LAC, Leigh's acting experience had been predominantly in school productions (many years ago) and as a member of the Warwick University Comedy Society (slightly fewer years ago), where he co-wrote and performed in several sketch shows, including a run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2014.



Ryan joined Leeds Arts Centre earlier this year. A Johnny-come-lately to the Theatrical world, Ryan enjoyed the backstage experience as a prompt on The Moonstone and is excited to tread the boards for the first time alongside an experienced & talented cast



Kylie is a recent addition to LAC, joining in April this year. She has a love of watching and performing in theatre! Before joining LAC, Kylie was a member of a pantomime after a 5 year break. She hopes to continue participating in productions both on and behind stage, working with wonderfully talented and kind actors

## Meet the Cast



Ben Hopwood has been a member of LAC for more years than he's comfortable counting. Appearing in a number of plays for the society, (Including; *The Visit*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Money's in the Bank* and *Blood & Ice*) and directing one, (*Flint Street Nativity*). He is also frequently seen at the sound desk, amidst the set builders, or backstage with a clutch of props in his hands. **ROPE** marks a return to the LAC stage for Ben after a six year acting hiatus, he hopes he doesn't look as nervous as he feels!



Brian Diamond has been an LAC member for just over a year but has enjoyed acting and theatre from a young age. His LAC credits include playing Michael in *God of Carnage* and Franklin Blake in *The Moonstone*. He also dipped his toe in behind the scenes work as Assistant Director on *Scarborough*. He is excited to once again don an over the top British accent for Rupert Cadell in **ROPE** and is looking forward to the audience reactions to the play. Brian is also a keen equestrian in his spare time.



Francesca Butler is a newbie to LAC and **ROPE** is the first play she's been involved in since moving to Leeds from her beloved Sheffield in May. She first caught the acting bug at age 7, in the village pantomime. She was involved in plays and musicals at school and then university, including landing the role of Alice in an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's classic set in a club toilet in York. She's thrilled to be back treading the boards as Leila, a part she immediately fell in love with.



This is Jacob Hartley's first acting role with LAC, after having joined last summer. Until now, Jacob has supported in backstage work such as set construction and props. He has previous experience in amateur dramatics through performing in musicals for operatic societies in his hometown of Watford before taking the move up to Yorkshire



## About the Director

Spike only stepped foot backstage in November 2021 when he supported Camilla Asher as Assistant Director on Leeds Arts Centres' production of Dinner. Adoring the process so much he threw himself into Leeds Arts Centre with gusto, directing a Green Room production of God of Carnage in October 2022 and then providing support to subsequent Leeds Arts Centre shows as part of the publicity team starting with SCARBOROUGH.

In Spring 2023 he provided properties support to CHICKEN SOUP and in Summer 2023 was Properties Manager for THE MOONSTONE and found the experience of observing how directors worked to be exceptionally informative and inspiring.



## Photos from Rehearsal







## More about LEEDS ARTS CENTRE.....

**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 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.leedsartcentre.org.uk](http://www.leedsartcentre.org.uk) where you can complete an application form in the 'Join Us' section.

You can also email us at [publicity@leedsartscentre.org.uk](mailto:publicity@leedsartscentre.org.uk) or write to The Membership Secretary, Leeds Arts Centre, c/o Carriageworks Theatre, Millennium Square, Leeds. LS2 3AD.

Keep up with our news on Facebook and Twitter at



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groups/LeedsArtsCentre/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/LeedsArtsCentre/)



[http://twitter.com/  
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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:

Period costumes, evening dress, accessories,

Character costumes, military uniforms, suits

For more information, please see our website:

[www.leedsartscentre.org.uk/costume-hire](http://www.leedsartscentre.org.uk/costume-hire)



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

14-16 Paradise Square  
Sheffield S1 2DE



<https://truenorthuk.com>



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



**LCAN** 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.

Its current member groups are Leeds Arts Centre, Leeds Children's Theatre, Leeds Youth Opera, Leeds Gilbert & Sullivan Society, LIDOS, Cosmopolitan Players, LAOS, St. Mary's Youth Theatre, Our Community Dances, and Leeds Writers' Circle.

For more information visit <http://www.leedscan.org.uk>

## Upcoming Leeds Arts Centre Shows

Coming Next July



Welcome to the city on midsummer's eve. Where the mortal and the magical realms collide. Where noble lords and ladies feud, their mischievous servants close at hand. Where four young lovers flee, in hopes of marrying for love rather than duty. And where a troupe of unlikely actors plan the show to end all shows.

Join Leeds Arts Centre next July for a raucous, vibrant and contemporary retelling of William Shakespeare's enthralling and joyous comedy. A story of love and duty, chaos and magic.

**Coming to the Carriageworks from 18 July to 20 July**

## Coming in 2025

Next from the Team Behind **ROPE**

Leeds Arts Centre invites you to,  
MARTIN MCDONAGH'S BLACK COMEDY;

**HANGMEN**

Coming in Early 2025 to the  
Carriageworks Theatre







“The Bullet” is a special short play for **Armistice Day (Nov 11th)**, preceding the performance of ROPE, with a running time of 10 mins. There will be a short break before the performance of ROPE begins.

### **Cast**

Connor Houlton..... Corporal Rook

### **Note from the Director**

I have always found the subject of WW1 a profound and deeply compelling chapter of history. A generation of young men rushed to defend their country, and found themselves hurled into a mindless meat-grinder, dying for a few inches of mud; treated as meaningless numbers in the game of war and, as in *The Bullet*, sometimes paying the ultimate price for simply wanting to escape the insanity around them. And who could blame them ?

For me, when Corporal Rook confesses to the chaplain about the part he has played in an unthinkable injustice, he speaks for all soldiers when he questions the way things are, and embodies the trauma and guilt so many young souls must have felt in that terrible time.

It is particularly poignant and special for me to see this play performed on Armistice Day, and I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Spike Marshall and Camilla Asher from Leeds Arts Centre for their incredible support and kindness; to Fiona Galloway for her excellent help on the production; to Zoe Freedman for her generous help sourcing costume; and of course to Connor Houlton for his beautiful, nuanced performance. Although Corporal Rook is not a ghost, I see this as a kind of ghost story; the haunting and tragic sacrifice of so many continues to echo through to today, and rightly so... for we must never forget the horror, the waste, the madness of war, and the many lessons we still have yet to learn.

### **About the Director**

Ronald J. Wright is a film writer/director from Leeds. *The Bullet* is his directorial debut for theatre.