

Leeds Arts Centre Presents...

# The Moonstone

By Robert Kauzlaric

Based on the novel by Wilkie Collins

Directed by Laurie Toczek

Wed 5 - Sat 8 July

Wed 5 - Fri 7 Jul, 7.30pm | Sat 8 Jul, 5pm



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## ***A note from the director.....***

**Wilkie Collins** (1824 – 1889) was an English novelist and playwright known especially for his two novels *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*. He met Charles Dickens in 1851; they became lifelong friends and collaborators. Collins soon began contributing short stories to Dickens' journal *Household Words*. In 1853, he suffered his first attack of the gout which plagued him for the rest of his life. He began taking laudanum (a tincture of opium), becoming addicted to it, which caused him problems later in life, but used his knowledge of the effects of opium to inform the similarly addicted character of Ezra Jennings in *The Moonstone*.

The story was serialised in Dickens' journal *All The Year Round* in 1868. It is an early example of the detective novel and established many of the ground rules of the genre, such as an English country house setting, a celebrated, skilled detective, a large number of suspects, red herrings, and a final twist in the plot. The detective, Sergeant Cuff, was based on the real-life Inspector Jonathan Whicher, who investigated the infamous 1860 Constance Kent murder case (the subject of Kate Summerscale's bestselling 2008 book *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*). Sergeant Cuff is acknowledged as one of the inspirations for Charles Dickens' Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House*, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and Colin Dexter's Inspector Morse among many others.

The significance of *The Moonstone* has been widely recognised: T.S.Eliot called it "the first, the longest and the best of English detective novels"; Dorothy L. Sayers praised it as "the very finest detective story ever written"; G.K. Chesterton described it as "the best detective story in the world".

One of the storylines is the attempt by three Hindu priests to repatriate a fabulously valuable diamond of enormous religious significance which was stolen by a British army officer who served in India. This, of course, is a very topical subject with the British Museum, for example, which is coming under increasing pressure to return the Parthenon marbles to Greece.

The diamond which features in *The Moonstone* is based on the famous Koh-i-Noor diamond which was 'acquired' by the East India Company and given to Queen Victoria and is currently part of the Crown Jewels; its return has been demanded at various times by the governments of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran.

For those of you who know this wonderful story, I hope you enjoy becoming reacquainted with it.

## **Cast**

<i>Rosanna Spearman</i>	Nicole Smith
<i>Drusilla Clack</i>	Taz Bennison
<i>Penelope/Woman</i>	Becca Millard
<i>Indian 1/Ablewhite Snr</i>	Mo Siddique
<i>Bruff/Candy</i>	Howard Russell
<i>Godfrey Ablewhite</i>	Leigh Dawson
<i>Franklin Blake</i>	Brian Diamond
<i>Murthwaite</i>	Matt Lorentz
<i>Luker</i>	Sam Woodward
<i>Betteredge</i>	Stu Gordon
<i>Sergeant Cuff/Herncastle</i>	Simon Twine
<i>Rachel Verinder</i>	Lucy Hewitt
<i>Lady Julia Verinder/Landlady</i>	Rachel Brewin
<i>Jennings/Indian 2</i>	Adam Churchman

The action of the play takes place c. 1868 in Yorkshire and in London. There are three acts, with an interval of fifteen minutes part way through Act Two.

## ***Production team***

<i>Director</i>	Laurie Toczek
<i>Production Manager</i>	Camilla Asher
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Brad Askew
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	Camilla Asher
<i>Lighting Design</i>	Lydia Edwards
<i>Sound design &amp; operation</i>	Steve Fryatt
<i>Wardrobe Team</i>	Zoe Freedman, Maria Kwater, Margaret Savage, Mo Willis, Pam Wilson
<i>Properties Team</i>	Spike Marshall, Ben Hopwood, Jay Lockwood, Lucy Doherty
<i>Prompters</i>	Ryan Mehmi, Lizzie Relins
<i>Publicity Artwork</i>	Emily Dewsnapp
<i>Publicity Team</i>	Camilla Asher, Spike Marshall
<i>Front of House</i>	Anna Middleton and LAC members

This production uses the following sounds from freesound.org:

Heavy Rain by lebaston100;

Light Rain by Warm\_Guy

Wind Indoors 001 by klankbeeld

Wind, Realistic, A by InspectorJ

Leeds Arts Centre would also like to thank:

Mark Hillyer for headshots and rehearsal photographs

Lewis Francis BlackburnBray for printing the programmes

Phil Dodgson & Partners for the preparation of LAC's annual accounts

*in rehearsal....*



Lucy Hewitt as  
*Rachel Verinder*



Brian Diamond as  
*Franklin Blake*



Leigh Dawson as  
*Godfrey Ablewhite*



Mo Siddique as  
*Indian 1*



Rachel Brewin as  
*Lady Julia Verinder*



Taz Bennison as  
*Drusilla Clack*



Nicole Smith as  
*Rosanna Spearman*



Matt Lorentz as  
*Murthwaite*



Simon Twine as  
*Sergeant Cuff*



## 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 [info@leedsartscentre.org.uk](mailto:info@leedsartscentre.org.uk)

Keep up with our news on Facebook and Twitter at



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[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)

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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.

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>

**LEEDS ARTS CENTRE's next production.....**

We will begin our **2023 - 2024** season with

## ***ROPE***

by Patrick Hamilton

directed by Spike Marshall

**Wed 8th - Sat 11th November**



Every bit as thrilling as the famous Hitchcock film which the stage play inspired, ***ROPE*** is a dark comedy about a dinner party at which the canapes are served from the top of a trunk where a fresh corpse is interred. The murderers have arranged the party because they think themselves too clever to be caught, but their guests only get more suspicious as the night goes on.



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

Also at The Carriageworks this autumn.....

**LEEDS CHILDREN'S THEATRE** presents

## ***Charlotte's Web***

based on the book by E.B. White

adapted by Joseph Robinette

directed by Dan Dainter



**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November**

When Wilbur, the runt of the litter, discovers his eventual fate, a wise and kind-hearted spider named Charlotte hatches a plan to save him. More information, offers, prices and booking at [charlottesweb.live](http://charlottesweb.live)