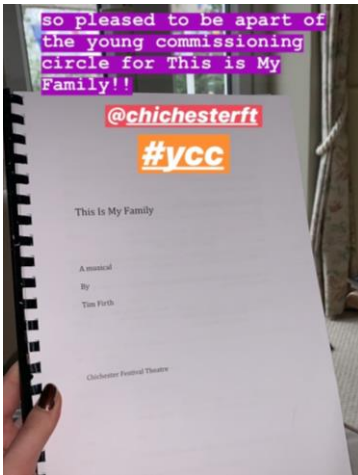


Hello! This is Polly and Evie and here is our blog!

We are a part of Chichester Festival Theatre's Young Commissioning Circle for **This is My Family**, directed by Daniel Evans.



ARRIVAL OF THE SCRIPT:

To begin with, we received a rehearsal copy of the wonderfully written script by Tim Firth.

After reading the script, I don't think we would be the only ones to say how frightfully confusing it looked at first with many lines interweaving with each other and sometimes 3 conversations were happening at the same time. However, after having seen the production more than once, because of Daniel's brilliant direction there was no confusion at all and a perfect example of 'page to stage' seeming effortless.

DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING:

On the 9th of April, we had a directors briefing with Daniel Evans. This was the first time all the commissioning circle and YCC had got together. The atmosphere was so

friendly and it was lovely to meet some of the people who have been big supporters of CFT for a long time.

The event began with the wonderful Eleanor Blackham in conversation with Daniel. Then, the questions were opened up to us! This gave all of the commissioning circle a chance to question the director ourselves about some of the technical challenges involving rain, wind and, working with such a multi-generational group of actors and querying how he dealt with such a complex script.

It was a lovely time hearing from a director's point of view and made us all even more excited for the technical rehearsals.



TECHNICAL REHEARSAL:

Having been in Chichester Festival Youth productions ourselves, we knew how 'stop and start' tech rehearsals can be. When we arrived at the Minerva on the 18th April the show was at the point where the family had decided to go on a camping holiday in a forest. The set had a floor covered in bark chippings to resemble the forest floor and there were around 6 *climbable*, prosthetic trees on stage (we had to ask if they were real or not because they looked so realistic)! We arrived at a

point where the actor Scott Folan (who played a goth called Matt) was actually up one of the trees where his coat was (intentionally) stuck and the creative team was trying to work out the positioning for Scott to be 'hanging' in. A moment later, we looked back and we were then watching Daniel wearing Scott's coat and is up on the tree himself to test it out! The next day, we spoke to Daniel just before the dress run and he told us "it's easier to work something out if you try it yourself and put yourself in the actor's shoes". Literally!





DRESS REHEARSAL:

On the 19th of April, we watched the dress rehearsal which was the first performance the cast had done to an audience so we all felt extremely privileged to have been able to watch! They all performed beautifully. We had a wonderful evening and looked forward to the next time we were watching the show!

SUPPORTERS NIGHT:

On the 9th of May was the Supporters night which was our second and unfortunately last

time watching the show as part of the YCC. Both of us loved to whisper to each other when we noticed things that had changed since the last time we had seen it.

After the show, we got a chance to meet the cast and congratulate them on (yet again!) a wonderful performance. First, we were talking to many of the other members of the



commissioning circle and everyone was talking about how they enjoyed it even more than the first time! Eleanor was very kind to introduce us to James Nesbitt who played the father, Steve. Trying We didn't want to take up too much of his time but we had lots of questions. He told us that he found working in theatre as opposed to TV was a big challenge and he felt he always had to be right "on top of it all, especially with the music.. the musicians aren't



just going to stop if we get it wrong!!'.

Then we met Scott Folan and Kirsty MacLaren who were both equally lovely, FAR FROM their onstage bickering as brother and sister, Matt and Nicky. It was great to such a range of actors act like family both onstage and offstage.



OUR FINAL THOUGHTS:

Thanks to CFT, we were very lucky to have had the chance to be part of the YCC. This has been such an amazing, once in a lifetime experience. We've thoroughly enjoyed following a piece of theatre from page to stage and it has been wonderful watching how the show has developed. We loved meeting the actors and finding out how they've enjoyed the show process and meeting Daniel made us able to openly ask questions that usually bubble during a

show and normally aren't able to answered. Being a part of this commissioning circle has really opened our eyes to all the possible jobs in the theatre world and we feel truly grateful to have been a part of the 'This Is My Family' team. We would highly recommend this experience to anyone who has the chance!!



Evie & Polly x