

**PRODUCTIONS FOR ALL THE FAMILY STREAMED ONLINE FROM CHICHESTER
FESTIVAL THEATRE:**

THE MIDNIGHT GANG* and *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

David Walliams's *The Midnight Gang* and the Chichester Festival Youth Theatre production of *Beauty and the Beast* (adapted by Anna Ledwich, music and lyrics by Richard Taylor) will be the next productions to be streamed online from Chichester Festival Theatre.

Especially suitable for family audiences from ages 7 up, both will be available on CFT's website for 30 days, starting with *The Midnight Gang* from 30 April and then *Beauty and the Beast* from 21 May, and will be free to watch.

To connect with as many people as possible in our community, both productions will be captioned for Deaf/deaf and hard of hearing audiences, and Polish-language captions will also be available. Audio introductions will help set the scene for blind and partially sighted audiences.

THE MIDNIGHT GANG

David Walliams's *The Midnight Gang*, adapted by Bryony Lavery with music and lyrics by Joe Stilgoe, premiered at Chichester Festival Theatre in 2018, directed by Dale Rooks.

This inventive tale of fun, friendship and the importance of kindness, about a gang of children who each night escape from their hospital beds to make their dreams come true, is adapted from David Walliams's biggest-selling children's book of 2016. This recording is taken from the live stream made at the time to Great Ormond Street Hospital, Chestnut Tree House children's hospice near Arundel, and the children's wards at Chichester's St Richard's Hospital and Worthing Hospital.

A bang on the head during a cricket match at his boarding school has landed twelve-year-old Tom in the children's ward of the spooky Lord Funt Hospital. Luckily, he's not on his own with the child-hating Matron and the scary-looking Porter. George, Amber, Robin and Sally are in there too, and they're not taking things lying down. When the lights go out and the clock strikes twelve, they're off. But will they let new boy Tom join their forbidden midnight adventures through the hospital's labyrinthine realm?

Bryony Lavery's many stage adaptations include Chichester's hit family shows *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* and *A Christmas Carol*, and the world premiere adaptation of Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*. Music and lyrics are by renowned musician and composer **Joe Stilgoe**, whose work also includes the songs for the 2017 theatrical staging of *The Jungle Book*.

Jennie Dale, known to a huge CBeebies' TV audience as 'Captain Captain' in *Swashbuckle*, plays the Matron; the cast also includes **Matthew Cavendish, Marilyn Cutts, Dickon Gough, Tim Mahendran** and **Lucy Vandl**, with a group of 11 – 14 year old actors – **Rafi Essex, Cerys Hill, Cody Molko, Jasmine Sakyiama** and **Felix Warren** – playing the children of 'The Midnight Gang'. It is directed by **Dale Rooks**, whose production of Michael Morpurgo's *Running Wild* won the 2015 UK Theatre Award for Best Show for Children and Young People.

The Midnight Gang is designed by **Simon Higlett**, with musical direction, orchestration and additional music by **Jennifer Whyte**, lighting by **James Whiteside**, sound by **Gregory Clarke**, movement by **Georgina Lamb** and casting by **Verity Naughton**. The production was sponsored by Jackson-Stops and Kenwood.

An Education Resource Pack will be available for parents and teachers wanting to use the online broadcast as a learning experience for children or students, containing background to the production and ideas for discussions and creative activities linked to the show.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Rather than a traditional pantomime, Chichester is the only major theatre in the country to hand over its main stage to its Youth Theatre for the Christmas production, which is produced to the same high standard as Festival offerings and with a professional creative team. In 2017, the award-winning **Chichester Festival Youth Theatre** presented a brand new adaptation of ***Beauty and the Beast*** by **Anna Ledwich** (*The Butterfly Lion*) from the original fairy tale, with music and lyrics by **Richard Taylor** (*Flowers for Mrs Harris*).

A cursed prince sits alone in an enchanted castle, destined to remain in monstrous form until he can learn to love and be loved in return. But who could ever love a Beast? Prejudice, jealousy, compassion and love are woven through this magical story, studded with enchanting and deliciously scary characters. The production is suitable for ages 7+.

Dale Rooks, whose work with CFYT includes *Grimm Tales*, *Running Wild* and *Peter Pan*, directs a cast of 72 young people in a visually spectacular show, with set design by **Simon Higlett**, costumes by **Ryan Dawson Laight**, lighting by **James Whiteside**, arrangements by **Richard Taylor**, musical direction by **Colin Billing**, sound by **Gregory Clarke**, movement by **Lizzie Gee** and puppetry by **Nick Barnes**.

The Midnight Gang will be streamed from 1pm on Thursday 30 April and available to watch online until Friday 29 May at <https://www.cft.org.uk/the-midnight-gang-broadcast>

Beauty and the Beast will be streamed from 1pm on Thursday 21 May and available until Friday 19 June at <https://www.cft.org.uk/beauty-and-the-beast-broadcast>. There's one more week to watch *Flowers for Mrs Harris* which is available until 8 May at <https://www.cft.org.uk/flowers-for-mrs-harris-broadcast>. Digital programmes are available to buy and read online. Donations to CFT's Keep Connected appeal would be welcome.

Both productions were originally filmed, edited and streamed live to children at local hospitals by The Umbrella Rooms.

Images can be downloaded from [cft.org.uk/pressimages](https://www.cft.org.uk/pressimages), password: festivalpress

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