

PLAY SYNOPSIS

Dorian Gray – handsome, hedonistic, narcissistic – sells his soul for eternal youth and beauty. His friends, Basil and Lord Henry join him for the ride until their excesses go too far and the hangovers become murderous. This thrilling adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s gothic fantasy novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is intertwined with the author’s own tragic life story, these dual narratives telling a story of Victorian morality and sensuality that still resonates to this day. Acclaimed playwrights Phoebe Éclair-Powell and Owen Horsley collaborate on an inventive script that is bursting with dandified characters, riotously camp humour, music and song.

'Eye-poppingly experimental... an explosion of glamorous and grotesque characters – some Victorian, some contemporary and some pure camp figments of the imagination... a dizzying adventure that always dares to dazzle... so very brave and original.'

Kell Cowley is a new director to the Harlequin Theatre following the successes of her sell-out production of Rajiv Joseph’s *Gruesome Playground Injuries* at Chester Little Theatre and Caryl Churchill’s *Escaped Alone* and *A Number* at Davenham Players

CAST NOTICE

Dorian is a play that calls for multiple role playing and gender-neutral casting. The parts on offer are a mixture of characters from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and real life figures from Oscar Wilde’s life and times, along with a trio of narrators. All parts are open to male, female and non-binary performers. While the script was originally devised for just three actors, I intend to spread the roles out and do this production with six actors. All performers will still play more than one part. Actors with good singing voices are essential for certain parts and performing a song will be part of the audition process for these roles.

AVAILABLE ROLES (all open to MALE, FEMALE or NON-BINARY performers)

DORIAN/BOSIE (20s/late teens): The titular Dorian trades his soul for eternal youth while the portrait he hides in his attic grows older and increasingly grotesque. He begins the play as an innocent, but quickly becomes corrupted and cruel. The Dorian actor will double as the real-life figure of Lord Alfred 'Bosie' Douglas, Oscar Wilde's spoilt capricious lover. This is a singing role, and the performer must appear very youthful on stage.

BASIL/ROBBIE/NURSE (late 20s/30s): Basil is the artist who paints the cursed portrait of Dorian. He is the moral voice of the play who repeatedly tries to pull Dorian back from his descent into wickedness. The Basil actor will double as the real-life figure of Robbie Ross, Oscar Wilde's closest and most loyal friend. They will also take a very minor role as a nurse. This is a singing role.

LORD HENRY/OSCAR WILDE (30s/40s): Lord Henry Wotton is a decadent dandy who leads Dorian into a life of self-serving hedonism. The Lord Henry character doubles as the real-life Oscar Wilde and will perform moments from his infamous trial for gross indecency. The performer need not be an Oscar Wilde look-a-like but must aim to capture the spirit of the famous writer. This is a singing role.

NARRATOR ONE/MRS VANE/ALAN CAMPBELL (40s/50s): One of three narrators who will act as both a Greek chorus and take on secondary roles. The first narrator should desirably be the oldest of the trio and double as the characters of Mrs Vane and Alan Campbell from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* novel. This is a non-singing role.

NARRATOR TWO/JAMES VANE/CARSON (30s/40s): One of three narrators who will act as both a Greek chorus and take on secondary roles. The second narrator should desirably be the second oldest of the trio and double as the character of James Vane from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* novel and Carson, the prosecutor in Oscar Wilde's trial. This is a non-singing role.

NARRATOR THREE/SIBYL VANE (20s/30s): One of three narrators who will act as both a Greek chorus and take on secondary roles. The third narrator should desirably be the youngest of the trio and double as the character of Sibyl Vane from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* novel. Sibyl is a Shakespearian actress who falls in love with Dorian in the first act. This is a non-singing role.