

# Rock 'n' Roll

by Tom Stoppard

28 Feb – 2 Mar 2023  
Greenwich Theatre



# Rock ‘n’ Roll

## by Tom Stoppard

Director **Katie Pesskin**  
Set and Costume Designer **Valeriya Voronkina**  
Set and Costume Designer **Nelly Rose**

Lighting Designer **Jack Hooper**  
Sound Designer **Dylan Reynolds**  
Assistant Lighting Designer **Tobie Seeley**

*Rock ‘N’ Roll* is a play about fear. Fear of action and fear of inaction. Fear of losing and fear of winning. Fear of the powerful and fear of the powerless.

In 1968, Alexander Dubček became leader of Czechoslovakia and attempted to roll back many of Soviet Communism’s oppressive policies, including the censorship of free speech, in a period widely known as the Prague Spring. However this did not go unnoticed and on 21 August 1968 the Soviets sent tanks into Prague, reinstated a pro-Soviet leader in Gustáv Husák and kicked off two decades of volatility in the region. Over the next 20 years, as cracks began to emerge in the Soviet Union’s strong-hold over Eastern Europe, a Czech dissident movement, led by writers, artists and intellectuals, like Ferdinand in our story, fought for freedom and ultimately changed the course of history.

Parallel to this movement was the underground rock band, The Plastic People of the Universe, led by their artistic director Iván Jirous, who had no interest in bringing down the government. They didn’t want to be heroes. They just wanted to make music.

Their refusal to conform meant The Plastics were forced to perform their concerts in a tiny barn at the house of writer and dissident leader, Václav Havel. But their music ultimately put the oppressive politics of Communist Czechoslovakia on a world stage. Along with many supporters, like our protagonist Jan, they were imprisoned purely for their art. So as fellow artists telling this story, we cannot help but ask ourselves: Would we do the same?

Today, this question is proving not to be hypothetical. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has brought into sharp focus the fragility of our freedom. And the ongoing cuts to arts funding that our own government is implementing mean it is vital for us to prove how sacred and powerful art can be. Now, more than ever, is the time to realise our own role in history and be faithful to what we know to be true. So may we all be as brave as Havel, as bold as Jirous and use whatever tools we have, be they pens or guitars, voices or tambourines, to fight for the truth as hard as Ferdinand and Jan.

Director **Katie Pesskin**

- Click on the headshots and underlined names to access student profiles -

### Cast

The Piper, Interrogator	Esme (Younger) Alice	Jan	Max	Eleanor	Gillian, Deirdre	Ferdinand
						
Barnaby Loveday Wilks	Kara Lynch	Florian Saturley	David Whiting	Niamh O'Donnell	Magdalena Puchalska	Lucas Seoane
Milan Policeman 1	Magda	Lenka	Nigel	Esme (Older)	Stephen	Candida Policeman 2
						
Alexander Cox	Sofiia Sydoruk	Rebecca Bell	Luke Jones	Alice Malyon	Alfie Jameson	Eva Rae Thomson

### Production Team

#### Production

Production Manager **Georgia Parkhill**  
Associate Production Manager **Ellie Holloway**  
Company Stage Manager **Alice Barclay**  
Technical Manager **Ella Welch**  
Head of Lighting **Harvey Williams**

#### Stage Management

Stage Manager **Drew Lachman**  
Deputy Stage Manager **Lucie Jennings**  
Assistant Stage Manager **Amy Gelnar**

#### Technical

Production Electrician **Tyler Chaney**  
Lighting Programmer **Max Baxter**

#### Costume

Costume Supervisor **Ellis Winter**  
Costume Assistant **Violett Spear**  
Costume Assistant **Calina Nair**  
Costume Assistant **Katie Layson**

#### Scenic

Scenic Manager **Carly Thompson**  
Scenic Manager **Jessica Perkins**  
Scenic Assistant **Alistair Angus**  
Scenic Assistant **Darcey Lancaster-adlam**  
Scenic Assistant **Ella Goodier**

**Content warnings**  
**Strong language, sexual references and references of cancer**

This amateur production of “*Rock ‘n’ Roll (Stoppard)*” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd.on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. [www.concordtheatricals.co.uk](http://www.concordtheatricals.co.uk)

*“In war, truth is the first casualty” - Aeschylus*