WEST YORKSHIRE PLAYHOUSE

Teachers Resource Pack

AUTUMN / WINTER 2016



©Quentin Blake The Witches 1983

CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools & Colleges

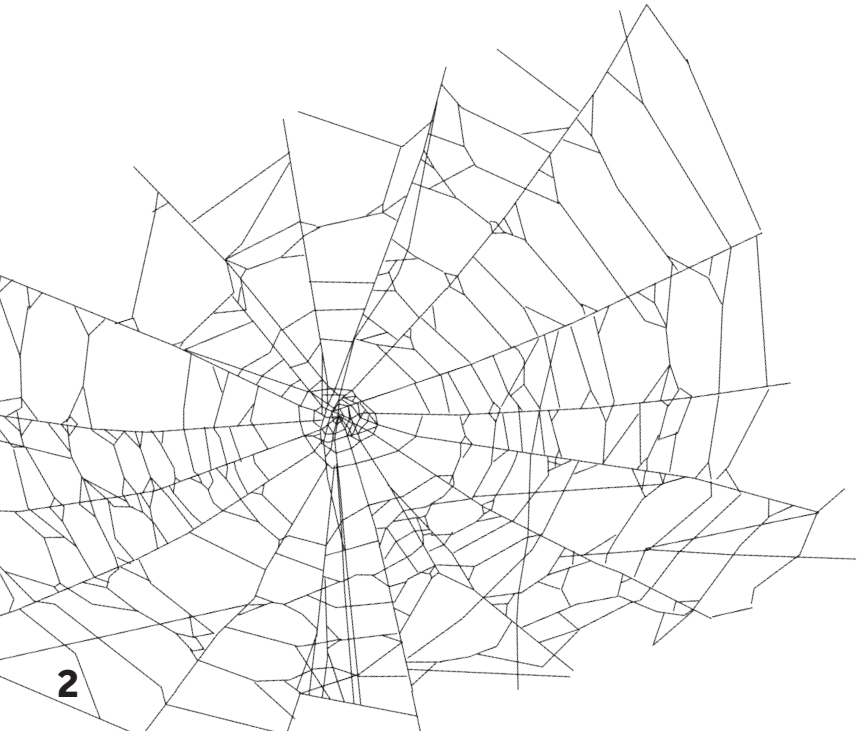
A Curve and Rose Theatre Kingston co-production
in association with West Yorkshire Playhouse

ROALD DAHL'S

THE WITCHES

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A REAL WITCH COULD SMELL YOU ACROSS THE STREET... TO A WITCH, YOU WOULD SMELL LIKE FRESH DOG DROPPINGS!

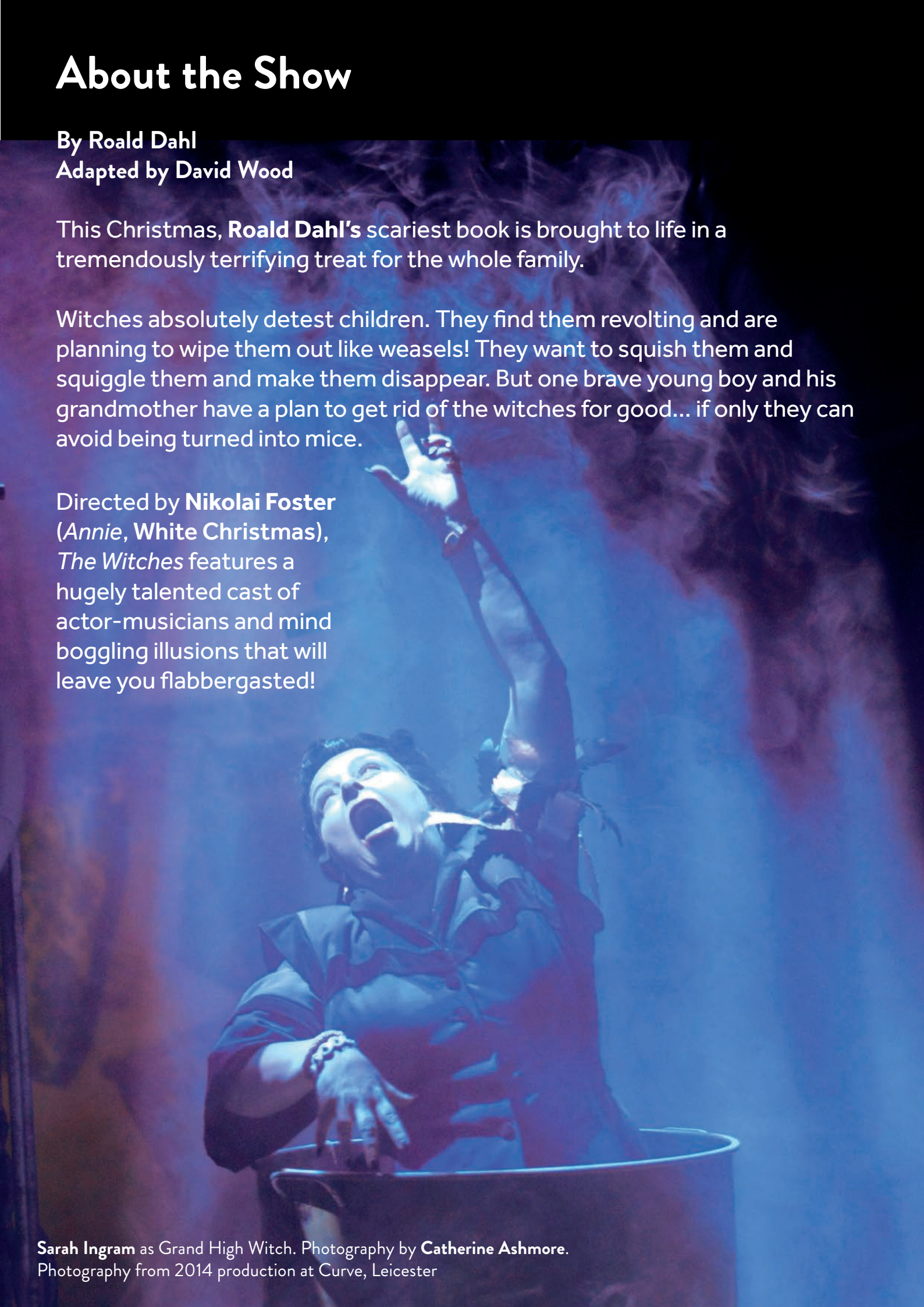
About the Show

By Roald Dahl
Adapted by David Wood

This Christmas, **Roald Dahl's** scariest book is brought to life in a tremendously terrifying treat for the whole family.

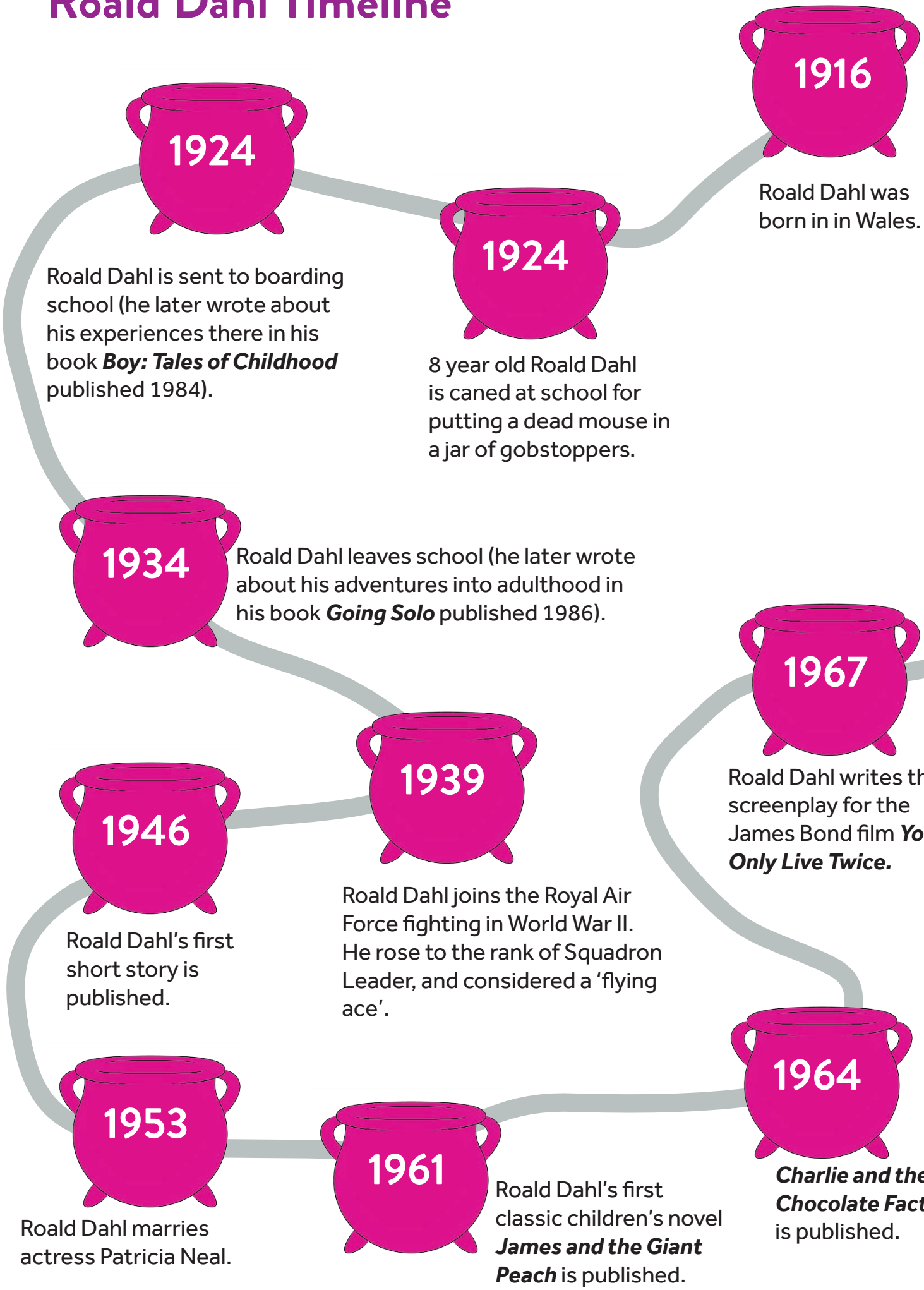
Witches absolutely detest children. They find them revolting and are planning to wipe them out like weasels! They want to squish them and squiggle them and make them disappear. But one brave young boy and his grandmother have a plan to get rid of the witches for good... if only they can avoid being turned into mice.

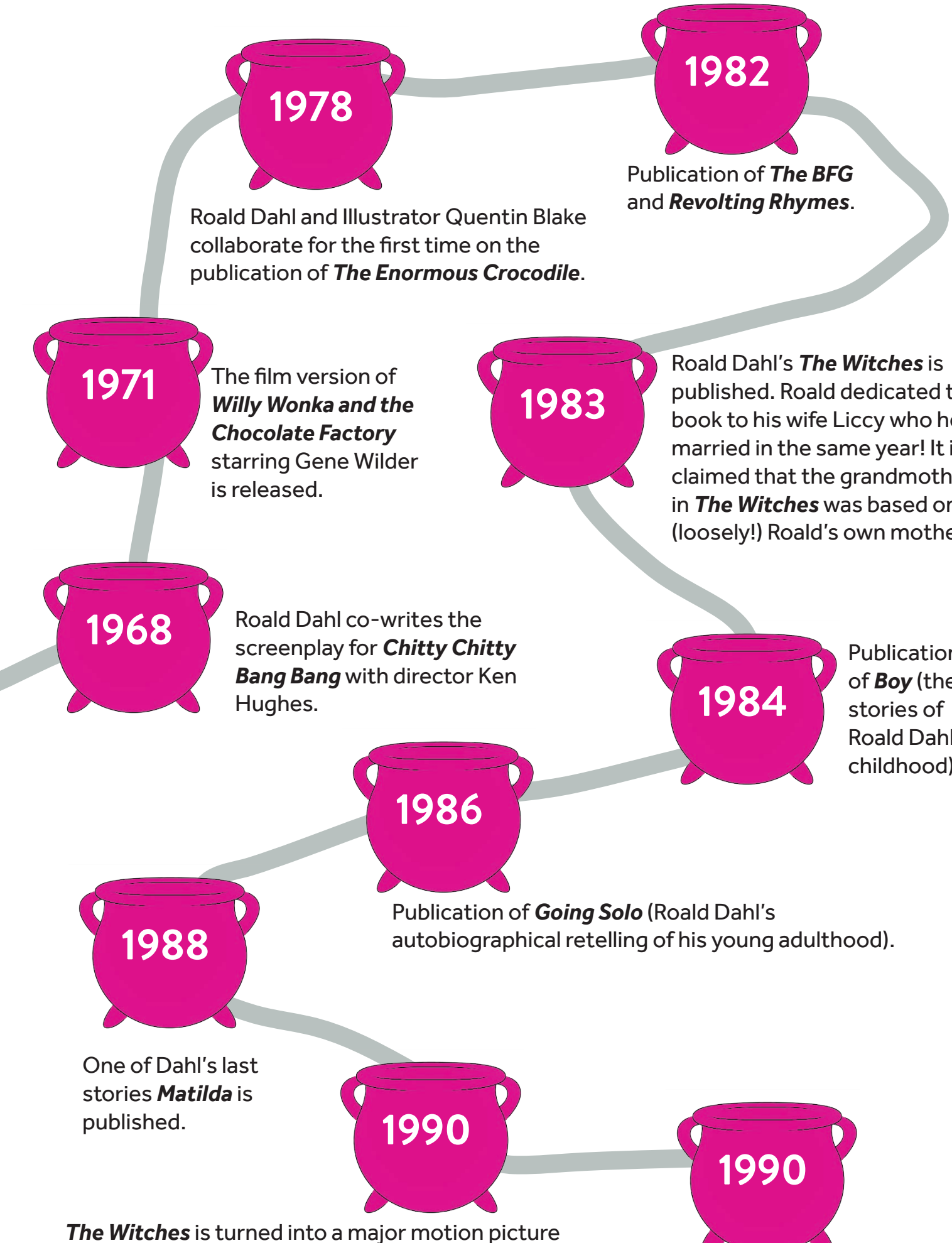
Directed by **Nikolai Foster** (*Annie*, **White Christmas**), *The Witches* features a hugely talented cast of actor-musicians and mind boggling illusions that will leave you flabbergasted!



Sarah Ingram as Grand High Witch. Photography by **Catherine Ashmore**.
Photography from 2014 production at Curve, Leicester

Roald Dahl Timeline




1978
Roald Dahl and Illustrator Quentin Blake collaborate for the first time on the publication of ***The Enormous Crocodile***.
1982
Publication of ***The BFG*** and ***Revolting Rhymes***.
1971
The film version of ***Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*** starring Gene Wilder is released.
1983
Roald Dahl's ***The Witches*** is published. Roald dedicated the book to his wife Liccy who he married in the same year! It is claimed that the grandmother in ***The Witches*** was based on (loosely!) Roald's own mother.
1968
Roald Dahl co-writes the screenplay for ***Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*** with director Ken Hughes.
1984
Publication of ***Boy*** (the stories of Roald Dahl's childhood).
1986
Publication of ***Going Solo*** (Roald Dahl's autobiographical retelling of his young adulthood).
1988
One of Dahl's last stories ***Matilda*** is published.
1990
The Witches is turned into a major motion picture starring Angelica Huston, but Roald Dahl himself regarded the film as "utterly appalling", and hated the altered ending!
1990
Roald Dahl dies aged 74.

Roald Dahl's Revolting Words

In his writing Roald Dahl created his very own language called 'Gobblefunk'. When Dahl couldn't find a word for exactly what he was trying to describe he would make one up. Many of these are now featured in the Oxford English Dictionary.

We can use this method as a way of exploring language constructs with students, and as stimuli for creative writing.

Activity 1: Dahl's Definitions

Using the list of Dahl's Gobblefunk words, and the accompanying worksheet ask students to work in pairs to try and decipher the meanings for the words and present these back. They can then compare their choices to Dahl's and discuss what made them choose the definitions they came up with.

Roald Dahl's Revolting Words

Gobblefunk
Roald Dahl language

Babblement
A nice gossipy conversation

Chatbag
Someone who talks too much

Glubbage
Rubbish

Srumdiddlyumptious
Delicious or lovely

Rotsome
When something is off or rotting

Bogglebox
A school for young boys

Frothbungling
Stupid

Gloriumptious
Gloriously wonderful

Jumpsquiffling
Something absolutely huge

Muggled
To be a bit confused

Quogwinkle
An alien from outerspace

Lixivate
Being squashed and turned into liquid at the same time

Snozzcumber
The BFG eats these - a vegetable

Trogglehumper
A nightmare

Swatchscollop
Disgusting food

Kiddles
Children

Jumbly
Mixed up

Revolting Words Worksheet

Fill in the table below, using the middle column to write your own definition for Dahl's Revoting Words, and the right column with Dahl's actual definition.

The first one has been completed for you as an example.

Word	Your Definition	Dahl's Definition
Eg. Gobblefunk	Gibberish	Roald Dahl's made up language
Babblement		
Chatbag		
Glubbage		
Srumdiddlyumptious		
Rotsome		
Bogglebox		
Frothbungling		
Gloriumptious		
Jumpsquiffling		
Muggled		
Quogwinkle		
Lixivate		
Snozzcumber		
Trogglehumper		
Swatchscollop		
Kiddles		
Jumbly		

Activity 2: Scrumdiddlyumptious Sentences

Now we have discussed Dahl's Gobblefunk words, and his definitions for these, ask students to construct a sentence for each of the words in the list.

Activity 3: Generating Gobblefunk

Ask students to create their own Gobblefunk words to describe something, and write this in the style of a dictionary definition. We can use this as an opportunity to look at the format in which definitions are presented in a dictionary, and how we can most effectively use a dictionary when writing and learning new vocabulary.



Fox Jackson-Keen as Boy. Photography by **Catherine Ashmore**. Photography from 2014 production at Curve, Leicester

Mixed up Witches Narrative Activity

The story of Roald Dahl's ***The Witches*** has been simplified into 10 points.
Cut these out separately and ask students to work out which order they should go in.
Discuss your choices as a whole class, why have they chosen to put the story in this order.
The extracts are listed in the correct order for your reference.

Once upon a time there was a young boy, who lived with his Grandma in Norway. She told him all about Witches, and how to spot them.

One day the boy and his Grandma went to stay in a hotel by the seaside. The boy would wander around the hotel playing with his pet mice.

One day the boy wandered into a big room where the RSPCC (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) were due to have a big meeting.

When the RSPCC meeting started, the little boy hid behind a screen, and listened. He found out that the women meeting were actually Witches, who were planning to turn all the children of England into mice!

The Witches discover the boy hiding behind the screen, and decide to use their potion to transform him into a mouse!

In his mouse form, the little boy escapes, and rushes to tell his Grandma what has happened.

Together, the boy (as a mouse) and his Grandma, make a plan to trick the Witches, and use their own potion against them.

The boy (as a mouse) steals a vial of the potion, and pours it in to the Witches' soup at dinner time. They begin to transform into mice, right there in the dining room.

The boy (as a mouse) and his Grandma leave the hotel, and return home to Norway.

When safely back at home, the boy and his Grandma start to plot ways of ridding the whole world of Witches once and for all.

Making a Masterplan

Narrative Activity 2

The little boy and his Grandma come up with lots of plans to rid the world of Witches once and for all inspired by the **Formula 86: Delayed-Action Mouse Making Potion** which the Witches create.

Ask students to use the following points to generate a potion and masterplan of their own. They will need to use creative writing ideas, and non-fiction text types to complete this task.

Points to include:

- A title for their potion
- A description of how their potion will work
- An ingredients list
- How will this potion be administered to the Witches?

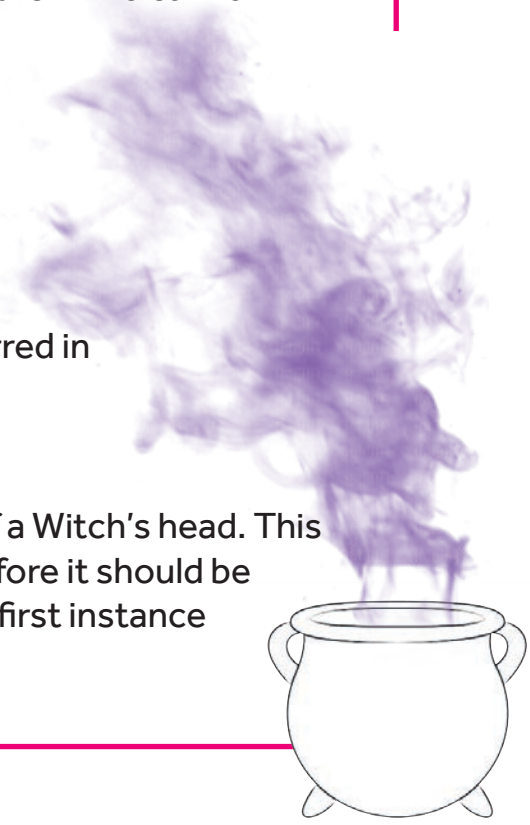
Example:

Title: The fast-action fur growing potion

How does it work?
Witches who take this potion, instantly grow a full body of fluffy green fur, restricting their eye-sight and sense of smell- and thus making them less dangerous. It also makes them easily identifiable to children who can run away whenever they see a Witch covered in green fur.

Ingredients
1 cup of sugar
10oz of teddy bear stuffing
2kg of baby spit
1kg of drawing pins (ground down into dust)
1 x copy of Roald Dahl's 'The Witches' shredded and stirred in
Boil for 1 hour

How to administer the potion
The potion must be carefully administered to the top of a Witch's head. This must done when they are not wearing their wigs. Therefore it should be given to wig makers, hat- shops and hairdressers in the first instance to ensure that it is applied directly.



Spotting a Witch

To spot a Witch (according to Mr Dahl) first we have to understand and find out as much about them as we can!

Drama Activity

Using the descriptions below, ask students to slowly transform themselves into witches. Read each bullet point aloud, and ask students to layer on the characteristics and become a classroom full of witches.

CLAWS
Witches have claws instead of fingernails - like a cat.

GLOVES
They always wear gloves – mime putting on your gloves.

HAIR
They'll be as bald a boiled egg - now not everyone who is bald is a witch mind - don't mistake me! But they have very expensive wigs - pop your wig on and style it. Lovely!

NOSE
Wicthes have very large noses and a very keen sense of smell. Imagine your nose is growing. Smell different things – flowers – lovely! Chocolate – lovely! Children- eeeurgh!

EYES
Their eyes change colour – try changing your eyes by opening them very wide, and squeezing them shut tight.

TOES
They don't have any toes. Just square feet. Tuck your toes away, how hard is it to walk without any toes?

SPIT
They have BLUE spit.Now no actual spitting please! Chew a big imaginary toffee, it gets bigger and bigger and bigger, and now poke your tongue out! And to someone else! Ooh I think they are going blue you know! And they use it to write with, dip your imaginary pen on your inky tongue. Write a nice little postcard- but keep your tongue stuck out! REPEAT after me...?

e.g. "Dear Mum,
I have been spotting witches, and learning how they behave. They look very different when disguised, so be wary! Lots of Love from Me!"

Dressing a Witch

In our version of the play, the Witches don't have bald heads, they wear amazing wigs instead. Take a look at the costume designs for the show by designer **Isla Shaw** below:



Design Activity

Using the template can you design your very own witch's costume?



Witches WANTED Poster Activity

Use the poster template to draw two versions of a 'Wanted' Witch (using the character descriptions from the previous exercise)

a) A Witch in disguise

b) A Witch without her disguise





Leeds CITY COUNCIL

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