

THE SEASON OUTLINED

Is there an overall theme to Playbox Theatre's 2019 autumn season? Perhaps each work questions core relationships in our lives, those we meet, encounter, build relationships with and, at times, the consequences of those bonds.

STRIKES is a large canvas depicting a Britain long gone when social conditions for the poor were beyond dreadful. Education in the hands of bullies and child labour a regular part of life. Within this divided country, a boy from the lowest social class meets a girl from the private, well heeled world of the bosses. Such a relationship is doomed from the start as the play takes audiences across social barriers and reveals the desperate poverty of 1911.

If **STRIKES** explores a social condition, **MEDEA** reveals the horrors of betrayal, pain and revenge. We may consider Medea a monster and question how a mother can behave in such a way. Yet, in Mike Bartlett's adaptation, Medea is seen as a very damaged woman, out of her own society, cast aside for the younger woman and living amongst us at her most vulnerable. Medea lives in our neighbourhood yet we don't see what is coming.

GRETEL explores the relationship between mother and daughter and places this at the heart of a retelling of Hansel and Gretel in a new Playbox commission from Toby Quash. Often with so-called fairy tales, we think we know the stories – the Brothers Grimm made a lifetime's work collecting these from many sources – some ancient. They reworked them, so with our work this Christmas – to look at the story through a fresh prism.

Over 40 young artists will create these three pieces of work drawing on a range of theatre styles and techniques to ensure each piece speaks directly to an audience today. The human condition is at the heart of our autumn season, a look at how we respond to each other in these pressured days.

