

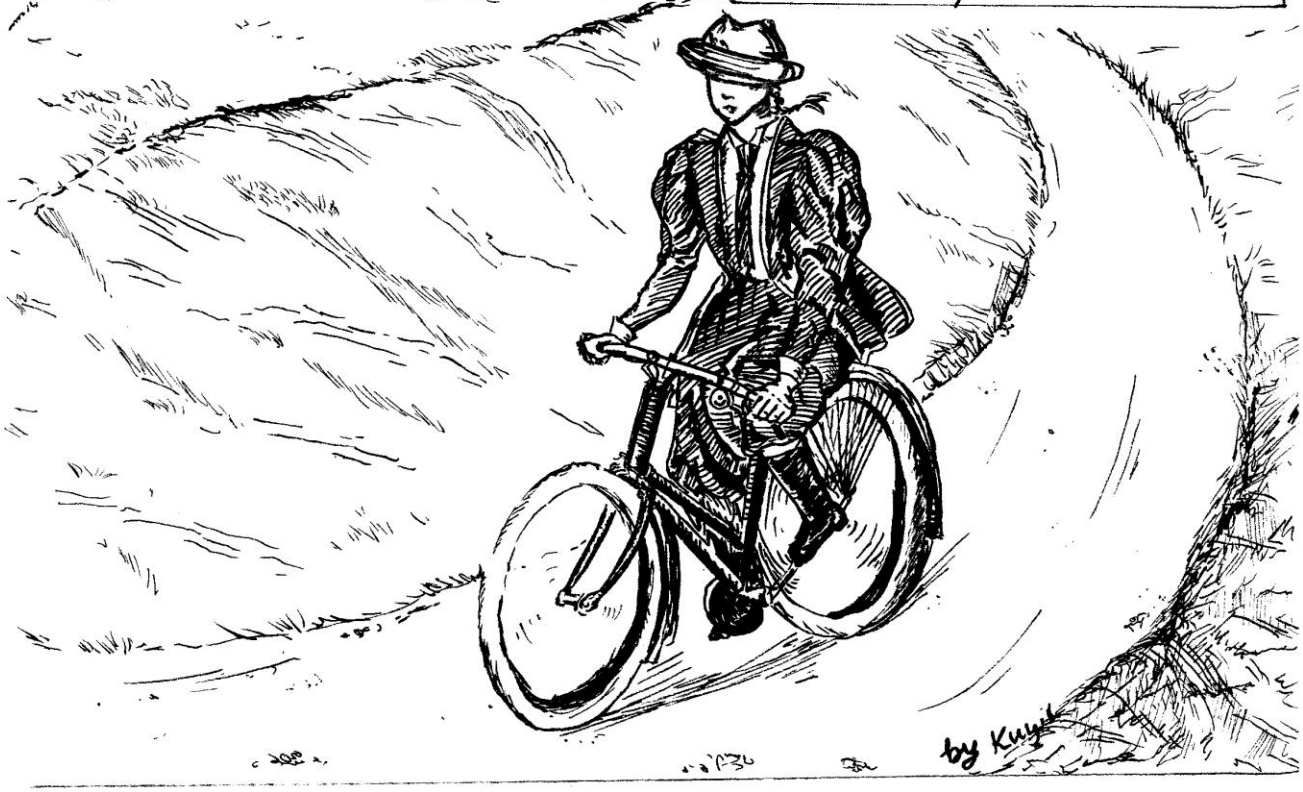
BLUESTOCKINGS SEEN AT HBS!

by Jessica Swale



SHOWTIMES

Wednesday 25 &
Thursday 26 November
Doors Open 5:30 pm
Production Starts 6 pm
Main Hall,
Henrietta Barnett School



"You saw it too? A woman on a bicycle-"

This amateur production of 'Blue Stockings' by Jessica Swale is presented by arrangement with Nick Hern Books.

Directors Note

Welcome to *Blue Stockings* by Jessica Swale.

It has been an absolute pleasure to bring this production to life, and I am incredibly proud of every student who has been involved. The commitment, enthusiasm and hard work shown by the cast throughout the rehearsal process have been extraordinary. From learning lines and developing characters to refining scenes and responding to direction, the students have approached the challenges of this play with real determination, generosity and creativity. They have worked tirelessly to create something they can be truly proud of, and I hope you enjoy watching their hard work come together on stage.

Blue Stockings is a particularly special play to stage at an all-girls school. Set in 1896 at Girton College, Cambridge, it tells the story of a group of young women fighting for the right to receive degrees at a time when higher education was still largely closed to them. It is a story about ambition, equality, friendship and the courage to challenge expectations. Although the play is set over a century ago, its themes remain incredibly relevant today.

At Henrietta Barnett School, where young women are encouraged to think independently, pursue their ambitions and make their voices heard, this story feels especially close to home. It is a reminder that the opportunities our students have today were hard-won by generations of women who refused to accept the limitations placed upon them. The young women in *Blue Stockings* were not simply fighting for a qualification; they were fighting to be taken seriously, to have their intellect recognised and to have the same opportunities as their male counterparts. Their determination paved the way for the freedoms and choices that so many young women enjoy today.

I hope that watching this production encourages our students to reflect on the importance of education, the power of standing up for what you believe in and the responsibility we all have to continue challenging inequality. Above all, I hope they recognise something of themselves in these characters: their ambition, their friendships, their frustrations and their determination to shape their own futures.

A production of this scale would not be possible without the support and dedication of so many people. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Vicky Levy, Richard Cain and Ben Haigh for their invaluable contributions, expertise and support throughout the process. I am equally grateful to all the staff who have given their time, energy and enthusiasm to help bring this production together, particularly those working behind the scenes and supporting our backstage and front-of-house teams. From technical preparation and set changes to costumes, props, organisation and welcoming our audiences, every contribution has played an important part in making this production possible. Finally, to the cast: thank you for your hard work, resilience and willingness to throw yourselves into this production. It has been a privilege to direct you. You have brought such energy, intelligence and heart to this story, and I could not be prouder of what you have achieved.

Thank you for joining us. I hope you enjoy the performance.

Abigail Whitfield
Director and Head of Drama
The Henrietta Barnett School



Cast



Tess Moffat….Emma Shah
Elizabeth Welsh….Katia Deaner
Celia Willbond….Shyama Dalal
Carolyn Addison….Hitha Rashvin
Maeve Sullivan….Kuyil Nikhar
Ralph Mayhew….Maya Maimaris
Will Bennett….Nidu Venkatesan
Lloyd….Agrima Tiwari
Mr Banks….Shivaty Srivisgan
Miss Blake….Anna-Mia Woodward
Dr Maudsley….Navyaa Shah
Holmes….Moella Leugue
Edwards….Bia Sauma
Professor Radleigh….Dyuti Colluru
Professor Anderson….Dhwani Desai
Professor Collins….Yiyan Shi
Minnie….Jemima Blendis
Miss Bott….Iniya Boothiraj
Mr Peck….Arabelle Mazumder
Billy Sullivan….Rodela Samir
Mrs Lindley….Natali Manghani





Chorus / Ensemble



Maggie Yuen
Krishika Sarin
Sophia Rosen
Afreen Islam
Anji Vakesan





Crew



Stage Managers & Assistant Directors
Amelia Sinclair, Sowmya Govind Kumar

Lighting Lead....Lara Karadeniz
Assistant Lighting....Chahat Gupta

Lead Costume....Katya Rotar

Lead Runner....Ines Mensah
Assistant Lead Runner....Clara Hannay
Runners
Tanmana Mondal, Jyoshita Datta Juluru, Zella Kendall, Anoushka Saraf, Kyara Kansagara, Mattea Gatt, Suhaani Kothari



Lead Sound....Isoken Osarumwense
Sound (Mic Team)
Tanmana Mondal, Honoree Wallis, Avani Sasikanth



Lead Hair & Make-up....Elisha Rashid
Hair & Make-up Team
Sianna Patel, Amelie Thin, Sophie Pule

Lead Props....Huilin Yin
Prop Team
Zahra Jassim, Cassia Marangoni, Lasya Yalla
Krisha Patel, Eva Sarpal, Amelie Thin

Publicity and General Assistance
Mirah Ren, Prisha Jadhav, Aaryahi Naik, Aarya Tarhalker, Rihana Giri

Director....Abigail Whitfield

Assistant Director....Vicky Levy



Thank you

Richard Cain, Ben Haigh, Danny Brophy, Gallin Hornick, Obioma Nosiri, Jean Boal, Liza Hack, Lesley Anderson, Swagatika Jena, HBS Parents Association

Cast Comments

Jemima (11H) playing Minnie

I auditioned to be in the school play because I found the process in previous years so much fun, and the end result is always incredible to watch and be a part of. I think Blue Stockings is a really interesting story to tell, with both the historical aspect and the themes of gender and class that are still relevant today. I am particularly enjoying seeing how we can work together to bring each scene to life, and make this play our own.





Shyama (11W) playing Celia

I auditioned for the play initially due to how enjoyable it seemed to be a part of a cast. However, as I did research on the play itself, I saw how relevant it is to our school and the importance of the key themes that are portrayed: passion for an education, fighting for rights and the strong relationships that are built during school, especially between girls. Being in the play so far has been a wonderful experience - I have built friendships with a range of people across year groups and am thoroughly enjoying the process of watching the lines on the pages come to life and being built into something incredible!

Kuyil (10M) playing Maeve

Having been part of the Midsummer Night's Dream cast last year, I jumped at the chance to be in another one of our school's productions, because it meant looking forward to performing someone new, being part of an awesome cast community and the unbeatable energy of show nights! And, rehearsing Bluestockings is full of just that, as well as it being a fresh, feminist piece based on the struggles of women who fought for girls like us to get an education. Plays like this are so important because they teach us the struggles that went behind what we take for granted, as well as what 19th century girlhood was truly like..!!

I hope that the performance we have been working towards will really knock your blue stockings off!

Cast Comments

Maggie (9H) Ensemble member

I auditioned for Blue Stockings because I've always wanted to try something new in Drama and because I was intrigued by how much we could relate to the play from the perspective of a modern audience. At first, I expected strict rehearsals, and to be aiming for immediate perfection in our roles. However, I have come to learn that being a part of a play (however minor) is not defined by being perfect or serious, but rather by being there and simply enjoying yourself, socialising with other year groups (however terrifying) and simply watching the play unfold.



Bia (9W) playing Edwards

I've always loved acting and performing, so after being in last year's play, auditioning for Blue Stockings was a no-brainer - mostly because there's nothing quite like the fun of rehearsals and the atmosphere backstage right before performances. Being part of this cast has been one of the best experiences of my year, and it's given me the chance to get close with people across different year groups who I probably never would have spoken to otherwise. Watching the show actually coming together has been so special. I can't wait for opening night and I'm sure it's going to be amazing!





Krishika (10M) playing Waiter and Ensemble member

I auditioned for Blue Stockings because I love acting and meeting new people. I was very excited to be a part of this play as I had been involved as a cast member last year as well. Spending time with more people and making new friends was a rewarding experience. Taking part in the production also helped me become more confident on stage and I was excited to do the same this year.



Yiyan (9W) playing Professor Collins

I joined Blue Stockings because I remembered how fun last years was. I made loads of friends across the years who I still talk to now. Theatre has always been something I love and being able to take part in it really allows me to step back from my normal school life. I think all members of the play can agree that it creates memories that can't be forgotten.



Kuyil (Maeve) "All the great scientists, Copernicus, Galileo, made their discoveries because they had imagination."
Agrima (Lloyd) "The petticoats descend."
Krishika (Waiter, Ensemble) "Keep your voice soft but your brain sharp."
Iniya (Miss Bott) “I am not agitated because I am a woman!”
Anna Mia (Miss Blake) “Good God, Miss Addison, you've discovered the library!”
Yiyan (Collins) “Bugger off Edwards.”
Shyama (Celia) ”'If he believes in this, then he likes you because of your mind. We're thinkers, scientists!'”









Maya (Ralph) “We're like time travellers...”
Emma (Tess) “Imagine. Maybe one day we'll even have a voice.”
Katia (Mrs Welsh) “The only thing a woman can own is knowledge.”
Dyuti (Radleigh) “ A student's mind might be bright enough to transcend their gender.”
Moella (Holmes) “It's a feat! Places like this don't happen without blood and sweat.”
Navyaa (Dr Maudsley) “This is a lecture hall, not a laundry.”
Kuyil (Maeve) "Give us a bucket of water and we will work out the laws of gravity."











Interview

Interview with Emma Shah, playing the role of Tess, conducted by Mirah Ren

Q: Did you appear in the production of A Midsummer Night's Dream last year?
A: No, but I was in the crew as Stage Manager.

Q: How did you find the transition from crew to cast?
A: I'm usually in the cast but was in Year 11 doing my GCSEs at the time, so couldn't commit so much time. I thought why not try backstage instead as backstage crew always look like they're having a good time! It was a great experience. But now I'm in Year 12 so this will be my last play, so I had to return to the cast.

Q: What do you get out of being in the cast?
A: I've always done Drama – it's a sense of community you don't get in other aspects of school life. And Mrs Whitfield and Mrs Levy are brilliant to work with.

Q: Did you audition for the role of Tess specifically?
A: No, I was in Year 11 and on study leave so I sent in a video of a monologue. The Drama department then selected roles rather than having individual auditions. This was helpful as not everyone knows which character they are most suited to,
so this allowed the Drama teachers to select.

Q: What do you like about Tess?
A: She's a headstrong character who is determined to get the right to study. You can also see how her character develops across the play. She also gets two separate love stories – you can see how this affects her thinking as she has to choose between love and knowledge. Eventually she gets what she wants and you will see the decision she makes when you watch the play!

Q: Did you relate to the character personally?
A: She is more outspoken than I am but nice to play someone different to myself. I understand her desire for education and I think all the girls at HBS do too.

Q: What is your favourite scene or quotation from the play?
A: There's a scene where Tess is in a lecture with a misogynistic professor and she says "Imagine, maybe someday we'll even have a voice." We really see her character in that moment.

Q: What advice would you give to students lower down the school who are interested in getting involved in Drama?
A: Audition for the play - what's the worst that can happen? You may not get in but it's great to have a go! And if you do get in, you may not get the lead role, but it's a community and a fun experience for everyone. I was in the movement ensemble in The Tempest in Year 8 and it was a blast. Go to LAMDA and Musical Theatre club too.

Q: Will you be pursuing Drama after life at HBS?
A: I'm currently deciding between Music and Economics at university. I want to get involved in Drama productions too – I'd love to do a musical!

Music

As You Sing (Upper Voices)
Sarah Quartel, Commotio, Joanna Tomlinson & Bernard West

Alice (Upper Voices)
Sarah Quartel, The Oxford Choir

Songbird (Upper Voices)
Sarah Quartel, The Oxford Choir

When Breezes Blow: 2. Into The Garden
Sarah Quartel, London Voices & Ben Perry

The Four Seasons "Summer": Presto (Antonio Vivaldi)
Capella Istropolitana, Stephen Gunzenhauser & Takako Nishizaki

Des Orages Pour La Nuit
Gabriel Yared

Cargo Voyage
Gabriel Yared

Can-Can (Jacques Offenbach)
Johann Strauss Orchestra

Tides
Nitin Sawhney

Henrecia Latina
Nitin Sawhney

You Don't Own Me
Lesley Gore

There'll Be A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight
Bessie Smith

Serenade For String in E Major, Op. 22, B.52: II. Tempo Di Vaise
Antonin Dvorak

Experience (Starky Remix)
Ludovico Einaudi

