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We recently spoke to the *The BFG* director Nicholas Atkinson about the show, and his passion for turning the story into a stage show.



Nicholas Atkinson

### Why did you choose to stage Roald Dahl's *The BFG*?

It's the ultimate children's story really. There are times when every child feels lost and lonely and to be able to befriend a Big Friendly Giant, come up with a plan to save the world and have the Queen of England help you would cheer even the saddest of children! My first encounter with *The BFG* came when the book was read to us as a bedtime time story in my boarding school. The idea that a twenty-four foot friendly giant might one might reach in through the dormitory window and steal me away into the night seemed very appealing and I would often lie awake after lights out and imagine just that. So when I was asked to come up with a title for Faust's next show there was really only one to choose from. It's a great story and I hope those who don't know it fall in love with it as much I have.

### How do you go about adapting the written word in a book to a play on stage?

We have used a wonderful play adaptation by David Wood. He's a leading writer and director of plays and musicals for children, with a host of successes to his name, including *Fantastic Mr*

*Fox and The Gingerbread Man*. What I think Wood does really well is capture the real wonder of the book. It's about imagination and dreams and specifically children's imagination and it's that that I thought came across really well in the script when I first read it.

### Roald Dahl's *The BFG* is a children's book. What was your favorite book when you were a child?

Roald Dahl's *The BFG*, hand's down. That and *Swallows & Amazons*.

### How do you get the children in the show to portray 54 foot Giants?

Not easily! Obviously the costumes help. And we've had some fantastic costumes designed for the show. But really it was a case of convincing the children that they could do it. As long as they believe that they are giants then the lighting, sound and costume will do the rest.

### What are you looking forward to most in the performance?

Seeing it all come together! August! There is a moment in every show, just after the house lights have gone out and the curtain is about to raise. It's the point when every ones hard work comes to a head and you have to let go as a Director. Everything comes down to that moment. You hand it over

to the cast and let them fly. It's both exciting and terrifying. But we have a really talented cast, and I know they are going to soar!

Faust's version of Roald Dahl's *The BFG* runs between the 17th and 20th February at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (Drama Theatre, 1 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong). There are evening (7.30pm) and weekend matinee (11.00am and 2.30pm) performances available. Tickets are now available from HK Ticketing (online through [www.hkticketing.com](http://www.hkticketing.com) or by phone 31 288 288).

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