

AUDITION NOTICE

CHURCHILL IN MOSCOW

by Howard Brenton



Director Derek Trimmer derektrimmer@me.com (07920 524944)

Production Assistant Mary Morgan mary.morgan1071@gmail.com (07718 538765)

Read Through Tuesday 22nd September at 7.45pm in the Rehearsal Room
(Bar open at 7.30pm)

Auditions Friday 2nd October at 7.30pm Rehearsal Room
Sunday 4th October at 2.30pm Rehearsal Room

Rehearsals Tuesday and Thursdays at 7.30pm starting 12th November
Sundays will be added mid-January

Performances Monday 22nd February 2027 to Saturday 27th February 2027 at 7.30pm
Matinee Saturday 27th February at 2pm

Scripts will be available at the end of the Play Reading

Synopsis of play

In August 1942, Winston Churchill travels to Moscow to meet Joseph Stalin at a critical moment in the war. Britain is under strain, the Soviet Union is fighting for survival, and the alliance between the two nations is fragile. The play follows Churchill, his military advisers, and the Soviet diplomatic staff as they navigate a series of charged conversations, negotiations, and confrontations.

Although the subject matter is serious, the play contains plenty of humour, irony, and moments of stylised parody, revealing the absurdities that sit beneath high-stakes diplomacy. These shifts in tone illuminate the human side of political theatre — the awkwardness, the missteps, and the strange comedy that emerges when powerful men attempt to control events far larger than themselves.

The drama also highlights the roles the interpreters and ambassadors play, in shaping the rhythm and meaning of every exchange. They are the ones who carry the emotional temperature of the room, soften or sharpen the language, and hold the fragile bridge between two leaders who cannot speak directly. Their work becomes a quiet but essential force in the unfolding negotiations.

The result is an intimate, ensemble-driven portrait of leadership under pressure — a play where political strategy, personal vulnerability, and unexpected humour collide in the most consequential room of the war.

Characters and playing age

We are not necessarily seeking strict historical look-alike casting, but we are aiming for performances that capture the authority, weariness, and inner conflict of the characters.

Actors do not need to match the exact historical ages exactly but should be able to credibly play the emotional and psychological weight of the roles.

Churchill- actual age at the time 67, but for the purposes of the play there is significant flexibility: A man carrying the full weight of the war on his shoulders. He must project authority, fatigue, wit, and emotional volatility. The role requires an actor who can shift between public bravado and private vulnerability. Physical precision is important: pacing, gesturing, and restless energy.

Stalin – 40-60. Controlled, calculating, and unreadable. Stalin's power comes from stillness, silence, and the ability to unsettle others without raising his voice. The actor should convey strategic intelligence, emotional opacity, and quiet menace. Stylised restraint is key. Stalin comes from peasant stock and in the play, this will be characterised by him speaking with a west country accent.

Olga- Stalin's interpreter. 25-40 Olga poses as lieutenant in the Red Army but is really NKVD, Stalin's secret police. Olga is highly trained, impeccably disciplined, and acutely aware of the stakes of every word she speaks. She works under immense pressure, knowing that tone, emphasis, and timing can shift the meaning of an entire negotiation. Her presence in the room is quiet but essential: she is the bridge between Churchill and Stalin, and her choices subtly shape the atmosphere of each encounter.

Sally- Churchill's interpreter. 25-40. Sally says she is a flight lieutenant and has been seconded from fighter command, however in reality she is MI6. Sally is intelligent, quick-thinking, and adept at managing the emotional temperature of the room. She must navigate Churchill's volatility, humour, and sudden shifts in tone while maintaining diplomatic clarity. Sally is both a linguistic conduit and a stabilising presence, helping Churchill stay coherent and controlled in high-stakes moments.

Molotov-Stalin's loyal, disciplined Foreign Minister. Age 40-60. A man who has learned to survive by being impeccably controlled, unfailingly precise, and reliable. His presence in the play is defined by calm authority, careful diplomacy, and an almost unnerving steadiness. He rarely reveals emotion, but his silence carries weight, and his interventions are measured, strategic, and always aligned with Stalin's interests.

Archie- Britain's ambassador in Moscow. 40-60. Intelligent, worldly, and adept at navigating the delicate, often absurd theatre of wartime diplomacy. He brings a dry wit, a sense of civilised charm, and an ability to stay composed in situations that would rattle most people. His role in the play is to mediate, smooth tensions, and quietly steer Churchill through the complexities of Soviet protocol.

Svetlana- Stalin's daughter. 18-25. Svetlana moves through the play with a quiet, reflective presence that contrasts sharply with the political intensity around her. She often appears at the edges of scenes, reading from Dickens, observing the adults, and offering a perspective untouched by power or ideology. At times she becomes a narrator-like figure, stepping forward to speak about the future with clarity and emotional honesty.

Audition Pieces:

Churchill: 1: Scene 1, top of pg. 5 to end of pg.7 'soviet forces are carrying a great burden'

2: Scene 4, bottom of pg. 40, 'we reached good ground last night', to end of scene on pg. 43.

3: Scene 7, bottom of pg. 58 'Welcome to Moscow, Mr Prime Minister' to bottom of pg. 59 exit.

Stalin: 1: Scene 1, top of pg. 5 to end of pg.7 'soviet forces are carrying a great burden'

2: Scene 3, pg. 29 'Noisy day.....' to top of pg. 31 'Keep the British sweet'

3: Scene 3, top of pg. 26 'Ah my little hostess' to end of pg. 27, 'Oh the devil in the story....'

Olga: 1: Scene 6, halfway down pg. 52: 'I think the drinking is...' to end of pg. 55.

2: Scene 1, top of pg. 5 to end of pg.7 'soviet forces are carrying a great burden'

Sally: 1: Scene 6, halfway down pg. 52: 'I think the drinking is...' to end of pg. 55.

2: Scene 1, top of pg. 5 to end of pg.7 'soviet forces are carrying a great burden'

Molotov: 1: Scene 5: from top of pg. 46 to the end of the scene on pg. 48.

2: Scene 3, pg. 29 'Noisy day.....' to top of pg. 31 'Keep the British sweet'

Archie: 1: Scene 5: from top of pg. 46 to the end of the scene on pg. 48.

2: Scene 4, bottom of pg. 40, 'we reached good ground last night', to end of scene on pg. 43.

Svetlana: 1: Scene 7, bottom of pg. 58 'Welcome to Moscow, Mr Prime Minister' to bottom of pg. 59 exit.

2: Scene 3, top of pg. 26 'Ah my little hostess' to end of pg. 27, 'Oh the devil in the story....'

Note: We may not do all of the audition pieces for all of the characters but will select from the list above.