Entertainment

Open up a box of magic

A thrilling new stage play is set to enchant audiences this winter.



The cast of *The Box of Delights*.

WIG WONDERS
The RSC uses hair from yaks (a type of long-haired cow) to make beards for its shows.

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is staging a new festive production of *The Box of Delights* in Stratford upon Avon, England.

It's a play about a schoolboy called Kay Harker who, after a chance meeting on a train, is entrusted with a small wooden box with magical powers. Kay – played by Callum Balmforth – soon becomes caught up in a battle between two powerful magicians and finds himself trying to save those he loves – as well as Christmas itself.



Kay Harker is the hero.

The play is based on a children's fantasy novel, *The Box of Delights* by John Masefield, which was published in 1935. For 37 years, Masefield was the Poet Laureate – a title given to a UK poet whose work is thought to be of national importance.

Justin Audibert, the director of the play, believes Masefield's novel is a children's classic. "You can see its influence on books like the *Harry Potter* series." He's excited to be bringing it to life as a play. "We're telling the story through the imagination of a child, so the staging promises to be breathtaking." Masefield says the play includes trains, boats, planes, mythical creatures and characters that turn into flying animals.

Author Piers Torday, who turned the book into the play, said one of his highlights is a car that turns into an aeroplane. "We're using a mixture of stage magic and imagination," he said, to make audiences gasp.

The show runs from 31 October to 7 January 2024.