

Press Cuttings
School of Rock – The Musical
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Group Leisure caught up with David Flynn to talk about his leading role in the new West End musical *School of Rock*.

Did you watch the original *School of Rock* film when it first came out?

Of course! I saw it in the cinema. I'd been a fan of Jack Black since *High Fidelity* and loved seeing him front and centre in *School of Rock*. Jack Black has always been a bit of a hero of mine as he kind of flies the flag for non-conventional leading men. It's become one of my favourite comedies of all time, and I think it still completely holds up now.

How did you get the role of Dewey?

I went down the traditional route of auditions and call backs etcetera, although it involved a few trips across to New York! The audition process was so fun though. The team created such a supportive atmosphere in the room and it really put me at ease.

You're best known for your on-screen roles in the likes of *Game of Thrones* and *Undateable*. How do you feel about making the transition from big screen to stage?

I actually come from a theatre background so I'm used to it. What I'm not used to though is throwing myself around the stage for two hours with a guitar around my neck. I'm picking up a few lumps and bruises, but it's all part of the character.

How does the musical version of *School of Rock* differ to the film?

I think the main difference the musical offers is how it expands on the relationship between the kids and the parents. It delves



a little deeper into that world, which ultimately gives the show a lot of heart. Also there's way more songs. And sweat.

The role of Dewey comes with some big boots to fill, how did you feel when you got the part?

Huge boots! Not just Jack Black, but Alex Brightman. Both are incredible at what they do and I'd be a fool to try and imitate them. So when I found out I got the part I was just looking forward to putting my stamp on it, whilst at the same time trying to bottle the energy and passion of the mighty Deweys that have gone before me.

How have you made the character your own?

I think it's just about knowing what my strengths are and trying to harness those. I know Laurence and Andrew don't want carbon copies so they've been really supportive in that respect.

Tell us about Dewey as you have come to understand him as a character.

Dewey is a loveable puppy of a man. He has so much enthusiasm but no real idea what to do with it, until he meets the child genius' of Horace Green.

Do you play the guitar? If so, when did you start and did you find it hard?

I didn't ever really play until finding out about the show. So as a result I had lessons immediately. I thought I was nailing it until day one of rehearsal and I saw the kids playing their instruments.

Do you have a favourite character other than your own?

Yes, if I was to play another role, it'd be Ms Mullins. My high soprano is on point.



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What sort of music did you listen to as a kid?

I used to love garage music when I was a teenager. I also grew up with my parents playing the Beatles and the Eagles all the time, so have a real love for those too.

They say never work with children, what's it like working with a team of kids?

Incredible. There's no time to sit and be tired as there are three teams of kids so you've got to match them for energy. Also, when you see them play their instruments it almost feels as though what you're seeing isn't real. Someone playing a bass that's essentially bigger than them doesn't make logical sense to me. But they can shred.

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What is your favourite part of the production?

My favourite part of the show changes on a daily basis. Sometimes it'll be the 45 seconds that I can stand in the wings and drink water. Today my favourite is "Stick it to the man".

This show is brand new to the West End, why do you feel it will be a success?

The show comes with such pedigree; from Andrew to Julian to Laurence. The entire creative team are some of the best at what they do in the world and have been part in some of the most successful theatre ever. But really the heart of the show is the kids. They really do kick asses.

What's the biggest challenge in your role?

It's physically and vocally the most challenging thing I've ever done. But it's brilliant material, so it's all worth it.

I've seen that you worked in schools yourself before you got your break into TV and Hollywood. Can you tell me a bit more about that experience?

It kind of saved my sanity really. When I first left drama school I didn't get much acting work so had to do lots of very depressing jobs to make ends meet. I eventually stumbled into being a teaching assistant and it changed everything really. I felt at the end of every day that I'd done something worthwhile, even if it was a small thing like helping a kid with handwriting or reading. I try to carry that with me when working with these kids but they don't need any help!

What was school like for yourself?

I loved school for the most part. I struggled with concentrating if it was a subject I wasn't into so would get into a lot of trouble for that. I managed to just about to get my head together by A levels and scrape through, though. ■