



IF YOU'VE BEEN suffering Percy Jackson

withdrawal symptoms since the TV adaptation of *The Lightning Thief* aired in December 2023, rest assured you'll be able to get your fix of all things Olympian when a musical version of Rick Riordan's book hits the West End this November.

Adapted by Joe Tracz, who also worked on the Disney+ TV series, *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* originally premiered off-Broadway in 2014, but it's only now – 10 years on – that it's made its way to London, and Tracz couldn't be prouder.

"It's very exciting," he tells Red Alert. "We have a new director in Lizzi Gee who just had all these fresh ideas about how to stage it. Rob and I, we've pretty much only ever had one director before, so for us part of the fun of this London production is getting to see a totally different vision of the show."

Tracz is keen for fans to know that, even if they know the book and indeed the TV series inside out, this stage musical of *The Lightning Thief* offers something new. "In theatre you're never going to have the budget that a film or TV show has, where you're creating monsters through VFX and you're able to film in real locations," he says.

"So we knew we just had to embrace the theatricality of it. So when Percy uses his water powers, he does that by firing a leaf blower and you have toilet



Max Harwood (*Everybody's Talking About Jamie*) is Percy.

WRITER EXCLUSIVE

Curtain Up

A lavish stage musical of the first **Percy Jackson** book is coming to London's West End

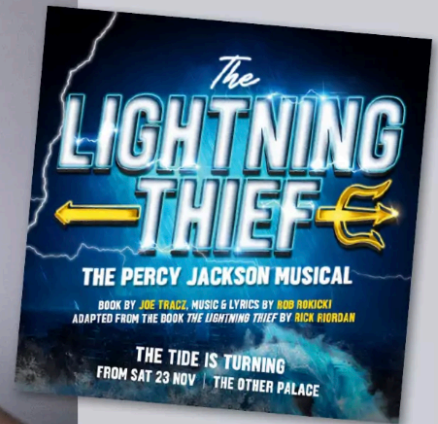
WORDS: STEVE O'BRIEN

paper representing water. You would never do that in a film or TV show, but in theatre, it feels punk rock!"

He adds that the tone of this adaptation is different, with a degree of self-referentiality that certainly isn't there in the TV show. "You can be a little cheeky and self-aware on stage," he points

out, "because you're ultimately telling the audience, 'We're all on this adventure together, we're all making believe in this as we go.'"

For a committed theatre-head like Tracz (he's also adapted Joe Iconis's YA novel *Be More Chill* for the stage), getting younger people to see a live show is a particular thrill. "What's been cool is seeing



audiences of all different ages," he says. "So you've got people in their twenties and thirties who grew up with the books, and we've been seeing parents and grandparents coming with their kids, maybe for the first time themselves, so they're having this amazing intro to what theatre can be."

Tracz says that at the moment there's no plan to adapt second book *The Sea Of Monsters*. He's also absent from the dramatising of that novel for the TV screen, having recently jumped ship to work on another beloved title, Netflix's *One Piece*, showrunning season two with Matt Owens.

"It feels like a kindred spirit to Percy in so many ways," he says of his new job on the live-action version of Eiichiro Oda's manga series. "It's another show about young people, leading with power and positivity to try to find a way to make a difference in the world and about standing up to corrupt authority." ●

The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical opens at *The Other Palace* on 23 November.



Stills from the musical's trailer.



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► **SCI-FACT!** Aside from his work on the *Percy Jackson* TV show, Joe Tracz has also written for Netflix's *Lemony Snicket* adaptation.