

David Pugh, Told by an Idiot and Theatre Royal Bath Productions
present the Told by an Idiot production of



CHARLIE & STAN

WRITER & DIRECTOR **PAUL HUNTER**
PHYSICAL COMEDY CONSULTANT **JOS HOUBEN**
DESIGNER **IOANA CURELEA**
LIGHTING DESIGNER **AIDEEN MALONE**
COMPOSER **ZOE RAHMAN**
SONG ARRANGEMENTS **SOPHIE COTTON**
DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY **NUNA SANDY**
FOR ZOONATION: THE KATE PRINCE COMPANY

Originally produced by Told by an Idiot & Theatre Royal Plymouth
with Royal & Derngate, Northampton and Unity Theatre, Liverpool

*Told
by an
Idiot*

Mon 13 - Sat 18 September 2021

Charlie & Stan was first performed as *The Strange Tale of Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel* on Thursday 14th November 2019 at The Drum, Theatre Royal Plymouth.

"Without him I would never have made a film. With Keaton he was the master of us all. His work is always contemporary, yet eternal, and what he brought to the cinema and to his time is irreplaceable"

Jacques Tati on Chaplin

"They made us laugh because in them we kind of saw ourselves – ridiculous, frustrated, up to our necks in trouble, but nevertheless ourselves"

Danny Kaye on Laurel and Hardy

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

At Told by an Idiot we have often been fascinated by the deconstruction of an iconic figure and the idea of creating a 'true fantasy' has always appealed to us.

As a company who has consistently sought to inhabit the space between laughter and pain, we were intrigued to uncover a hidden and poignant chapter of comedy history. In some ways we set out to create a comically unreliable tribute to two extraordinary artists. We were determined to value fiction over fact, fantasy over reality, and shine a very unusual light on a pair of show business legends.

Paul Hunter

Writer and Director of *The Strange Tale of Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel*

From an idea by Irene Cotton

The events in this play are fictional. This play is certainly not endorsed by the estates of Charlie Chaplin, Stan Laurel or anyone else for that matter!

SEEING DOUBLE!

A brief look at double acts in variety and comedy

That old notion that "two heads can sometimes be better than one" has a long and noble history in the field of comedy and variety shows.

Indeed, the double act had already become a successful feature during the heydays of the Victorian music hall, and from there it went on to feature heavily in theatre, radio, the movies and, latterly, television. For many spectators, there's a special chemistry in the way a comedy duo works, giving a performance that extra zip that a solo artist can never enjoy. Of course, the straight halves of many successful double acts often give the impression that if they could just get that crucial break, they'd be up there on their own like a shot, dazzling us with their unique, and hitherto hidden, showbiz talents - sadly for them, but perhaps fortunately for us, it is never to be: so whenever little Ern tries to stage a play "what he writ", or 'Supersonic' Sid Little wants to give us a song, their partners are guaranteed to pop up to spoil everything, thus ensuring that the double act goes on, much to the audience's delight!

The classic relationship in comedy partnerships is that of long-suffering parent and naughty child, the poker-faced half of a duo doing their level best to keep an unruly partner from causing too much chaos. So when Bobby snaps his braces and tells Tommy to "rock on", Tommy's there desperately trying to keep him in order; while Ernie Wise played the genial host, he lived in fear of Eric pointing out his toupee or, worse still, opening his wallet; and Sid Little was always beset with

impressions of Deputy Dawg from Eddie. Altogether, this is pretty familiar territory to most viewers, who can usually relate to both sides of the pairing. There can't be many of us who haven't been embarrassed by friends or family acting up at terribly inappropriate moments. And who can resist putting down someone who has got too big for their own boots? Perhaps the stooge, desperately trying to save face, behaves the way we do most of the time while the joker does and says things the way we'd like to - if only we dared?

As mentioned, entertaining double acts were an established part of the music hall traditions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as the variety acts that followed. Some of these are now obscure and largely forgotten: few of us are familiar with, say, the Sisters Bilton and their once famous ditty 'Fresh As the New Mown Hay', or the Poluski Brothers, Will and Sam, one of the most popular pre-war straight man/funny man acts. Others, such as the iconic Flanagan and Allen, however, are still household names. This latter pairing were big stars of the music hall and stage during the interwar years and are best remembered for their song 'Underneath the Arches', but they were also responsible for such classic tracks as 'Dreaming', 'We're Gonna Hang Out the Washing on the Siegfried Line', 'Run, Rabbit, Run' and 'The Umbrella Man'.

Bud Flanagan and Chesney Allen first teamed up in 1924 to perform revues, switching to variety in 1931. The pair then went on to join a team of comedy and



slapstick entertainers called the Crazy Gang, which was essentially a grouping of three double acts: Flanagan and Allen, Jimmy Nervo and Teddy Knox, and Charlie Naughton and Jimmy Gold, with occasional help from another music hall star 'Monsewer' Eddie Gray. Although the Gang disbanded in 1962, Flanagan and Allen continued their own successful stage act and TV appearances. In particular, Bud Flanagan's voice became known throughout the land as that singing 'Who Do You Think You Are Kidding, Mr Hitler?' the theme song to the classic BBC TV comedy series *Dad's Army*.

Another excellent example of the music hall double act was 'Old Mother Riley and her daughter, Kitty': in reality, the husband and wife team of Arthur Lucan and Kitty McShane. The pair started performing together after Lincolnshire-born Lucan met and married 15-year-old Kitty McShane in Dublin in 1913. Their original act was dubbed Lucan and McShane, but after a stint playing a pantomime dame, Lucan created the character of Old Mother Riley, an Irish washerwoman, which was first performed in 1925 at the Alhambra, London, in a sketch called *Bridget's Night Out*. The act was a great success and was repeated at theatres across the country, as well as in a highly successful series of films.

As the 20th century progressed, the music hall and variety tradition gave rise to a new breed of comedians and entertainers for whom television and radio became the main stage on which to show off their talents. Of these, one of Britain's most popular partnerships was the Two Ronnies, who were very much creatures of the small screen. After working together on *The Frost Report* in the 60s, they brought their brand of humour to our living rooms between 1971 and 1985. Although definitely a duo, Ronnies Barker and Corbett broke with the straight man/funny man routine and were both jokers in their own right. Instead of a stand-up routine at the beginning and end of each show, they read comic 'news items', appearing both together and separately in sketches, with Ronnie Corbett turning in a regular funny story slot. Unlike many double acts,

the Two Ronnies also had solo careers and both starred in successful sitcoms - Ronnie Barker appearing as lovable thief Fletch in *Porridge* and miserly shopkeeper Arkwright in *Open All Hours*, and Ronnie Corbett starring as mummy's boy Timothy in *Sorry*. Incidentally, the Two Ronnies were followed a few years later by the Two Rons, a pair of tough-talking, but non-too-bright gangsters-cum-nightclub owners, played by the slightly more risqué comedy double act of Hale and Pace during the 1980s.

Another television-based double act of note is that of Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones, who surfaced in the hugely popular *Not the Nine O'Clock News* at the end of the 1970s and went on to have their own series. Their offbeat style includes many of the classic techniques of the comedy duo, but they take turns at playing the joker and fall guy in stand-up routines. Of particular note are their famous face-to-face philosophical discussions in which the duo outdoes each other in displays of ignorance. The idea that 'two heads are funnier than one' crops up many times in TV sitcoms, with some very memorable double acts in the starring roles. One of the first of these twosomes was Rodney Bewes and James Bolam as Terry and Bob in *The Likely Lads*. This series, and its follow-up, *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?*, drew on the traditional stooge-and-joker combination, with straight-faced Bob being led astray by jack-the-lad Terry. Meanwhile, Wilfred Bramble and Harry H Corbett played rag-and-bone men Albert and Harold in *Steptoe and Son*, a series which had a middle-aged son continually trying to escape the clutches of his elderly father. The show, written by a scriptwriting double act, Ray Galton and Alan Simpson, had the pair continually clashing as they wrecked each other's plans.

After appearing together in *Carry On* films, Terry Scott and June Whitfield teamed up to play sitcom couple *Terry and June*, while *Man About the House* turned up another comedy husband and wife partnership when Brian Murphy and Yootha Joyce starred as the Ropers in *George and Mildred*. Recent years have seen June Whitfield appearing opposite a terrible

twosome played by Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley - Edina and Patsy in *Absolutely Fabulous*. All of these go to show that two is a magic number in every brand of comedy.

Although the straight man might make out in the act that he'd do just as well on his own, the reality is that he needs the joker just as much as the joker needs him. Performing in a double act - relying totally on the talents of another as well as yourself and, crucially, having to share the credit - is not an easy thing to do. It takes a special kind of performer to stay in a partnership and make it work over many years. Sometimes members of a duo do also pursue solo careers, as with the Two Ronnies, but with many duos such as Cannon and Ball, Morecambe and Wise, and Little and Large, it is difficult to imagine the one without the other. Thus, following the untimely death of Eric Morecambe in 1984, Ernie Wise went into retirement, unable to perform without his late partner. The comic combination of Les Dennis and Dustin Gee also ended in tragedy with Gee's sudden death, but Les Dennis has since rebuilt his career as a solo artist and TV game show host.

There's no doubting the enduring appeal of the comedy double act. As each new generation of entertainers come to the fore, so a new batch of double acts become household names. Recent additions to the ever-growing list of successful double acts have included names such as Fry and Laurie, Mayall and Edmondson, French and Saunders, Baddiel and Newman, and then Baddiel and Skinner, Punt and Dennis, Lee and Herring, Armstrong and Miller, Ant and Dec, Mitchell and Webb and many more, not to mention the dozens of new partnerships formed each year. Not all will be successful, but those that do win our affections will, as we have seen, continue a tradition that stretches back to the days of music hall, while helping to ensure that we, the viewers, will be doubling up with laughter for years to come.

Nick Hobbes
© John Good



CUSTARD PIES & BANANA SKINS

The Story of Slapstick

Although neither the slap-stick itself nor what we now think of as slapstick comedy were officially invented until much later, surely the Greeks and the Romans must have had their own versions of what the dictionary describes as "knockabout low comedy or farce". And it is perhaps fitting that the very last piece worked on by one of the greatest of the slapstick comedy stars, Buster Keaton (more of whom later), was the 1966 film *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. The actual slap-stick itself was said to have evolved from a symbolic phallus, becoming in the Italian commedia dell'arte a wooden, flat, double paddle, rather like a big castanet that has been flattened. When struck against another performer, this 'battacio' or slap-stick would make a loud, rather satisfying noise, but would hardly be felt by the recipient of the blow. Slapstick comedy itself is a descendant of the comic routines of these Italian touring players of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At that time audiences were not interested in seeing new plays or the development of character, but paid to see the actors play the same broadly drawn

characters in a variety of basic plot scenarios. The enjoyment was in how any particular troupe could manipulate these basic characters, such as the lovers Harlequin and Columbine, zany servants and pompous masters, and produce high quality farce and performance. Each of the actors in such a troupe would perfect just one of these stereotypical characters but could also bring something of his own personality to bear upon it.

Even Shakespeare in his tragedies thought it prudent to add a little light relief, and certainly the various misunderstandings and knockabout farce for instance, in the wood in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or on Prospero's island in *The Tempest*, are dangerously close to such a definition. And most performances in Shakespeare's theatre were rounded off by a jig, showcasing those acrobatic skills so necessary to pulling off slapstick stunts.

This very physical style of performance derived from the commedia dell'arte had a huge influence on later theatrical genres such as pantomime and the circus. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it could be found in vaudeville,



which also emphasised a fast-moving, gag-based and knockabout comedy. This was a great success in America because, in a country with a population made up of immigrants from so many different countries, comedy based on a shared knowledge of language was always going to be less accessible, and consequently less popular, than visual, physical comedy.

When we think of slapstick comedy now, probably the first thing that comes to mind is the era of the early silent films. This too did not, indeed until the coming of the talkies in the late 1920s, could not, rely on spoken language. Many of the early film exponents of slapstick had done their apprenticeships in the vaudeville theatre. Mack Sennett, W.C. Fields and the Marx Brothers all began their careers in this way. Sennett moved swiftly into producing and directing, and was responsible for giving many of the legendary performers their start in the business: Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, Harry Langdon, Charlie Chaplin, Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle and Mabel Normand. Sennett is believed to have invented that staple of slapstick comedy, the custard pie fight and also to have realised the comic potential of the chase, most famously brought to life in the (literally) long-running antics of the Keystone Kops.

Joseph Francis Keaton got his nickname when, at the tender age of six months, he fell down a flight of stairs and was picked up at the bottom, unhurt and hardly bothered by the experience, by no less a figure than Harry Houdini. Houdini remarked that the kid could really take a 'buster' and the name stuck. He was in the family's vaudeville act by the age of three and for years was variously knocked over, thrown through windows and dropped down stairs! An unusual childhood, but all good training for his later career in films. Considered one of the greatest acrobatic actors, Keaton could step on or off a moving train with ease. Charlie Chaplin's slapstick acrobatics made him famous too, but he also brought a subtlety of acting to his work and experimented continuously with improvisation. In the silent film era it was vital to hold the audience's attention by overdramatic acting which, of necessity, exaggerated all emotions, but Chaplin



managed to manipulate the environment too. The humour in *The Gold Rush* for instance comes from the contrast of his Tramp character insisting on the social nicety of using his cutlery properly, even when he is so close to starvation that he is eating one of his own boots!

The comedy in slapstick is created out of just this tension between control of a situation and loss of that control. Success depends on maintaining the delicate balance between resisting the circumstances and the inevitable surrender to the situation. The persistence and quality of the performer's resistance usually makes the eventual surrender even funnier. The classic slipping on a banana skin is only funny if we see both the dignified walk before the event and the leap in the air ending in an undignified heap afterwards.

Laurel and Hardy are the archetypal slapstick comedy duo. Stan Laurel was a member of Fred Karno's music hall troupe concentrating on mime, called the Mumming Birds (Chaplin was a member too). Because of his build, Oliver Hardy tended to be typecast as a 'heavy' in his early comedy films and this was the beginning of the role he was to play alongside Stan Laurel, partly based on a cartoon character called 'Helpful Henry', who was always trying to be helpful but always made a mess of things. The legendary partnership came together in 1926 and the simple gags

Original cast photography by Manuel Harlan

and incidents in their films are inspired by the foibles of everyday human behaviour. Oliver Hardy once said, "We had fun and we did a lot of crazy things in our pictures, but we were always real". Always aware that on screen what you see is more important than what you hear, Laurel and Hardy did however make a successful transition to talking picture. Some film historians believe that talkies marked the beginning of the end of the classic slapstick comedy in film. In the early days of the talkies it was necessary to use a more static camera than previously so this was obviously no good for fast-moving stunts. It has also been argued that after about 1930 slapstick began to be regarded as a very low form of humour and filmmakers began to court more genteel tastes.

Slapstick had always been essentially an ensemble form of comedy and, after the coming of sound, slapstick comedians tended to work in pairs. As well as Laurel and Hardy there was Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope (remember all those 'Road' films?) and also perhaps less well known now, the pairing of Dean Martin with Jerry Lewis. Lewis, whether paired or alone, is considered to be the pre-eminent film performer of post-silent slapstick.

Whether because the original slap-stick evolved from a symbolic phallus or for some other reason, slapstick performers have tended to be predominantly men. However there are always the glorious exceptions which prove the rule. Mabel Normand has already been mentioned. A product of the Mack Sennett stable, she was the heroine of many comedy films with titles like *Mabel at the Wheel* and *Mabel's New Hero*. In the 1950s and '60s the much-revered Doris Day frequently found herself the butt of elaborate slapstick routines, but one of the few genuine slapstick comedienne of that period was Lucille Ball. Having appeared in many B movies she created, first on the radio and then on television, the character which was to become an American comedy institution: the scatterbrained housewife who had the uncanny knack of turning the simplest of chores into a complete fiasco.

So, are today's twenty-first century audiences too sophisticated for slapstick comedy? You must be joking! Paul Merton has fronted a nationwide tour showcasing his silent comedy heroes and also co-founded an annual silent comedy festival in Bristol. When asked about more contemporary exponents of slapstick, co-organiser Chris Daniels said: "What you get these days is elements of slapstick and silent comedy within spoken routines" and he suggests Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer as prime examples. He went on to reference *The Goodies*, Neil Innes and more recently Rik Mayall and Adrian Edmondson's *Bottom*. Norman Wisdom he believes to be our last truly slapstick comedian.

But even if slapstick is now more suited to the thirty minute sitcom or a live show such as the one you will see today, slapstick does live on in different media. It is an element in many films, from the antics of Jim Carrey and Mr Bean (whose fourteen short films have been seen and loved worldwide), through off beat full-length features like *There's Something About Mary* and *Stuck on You* to the almost cartoon-like slapstick violence of, say, the Indiana Jones films. And slapstick is still a vital ingredient in sketch shows, from contemporary *Little Britain* back to the famous fish-slapping dance from *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. Invited to respond to an article entitled *What happened to slapstick?* by Steve Tomkins on BBC News, readers mentioned Jackie Chan and Lee Evans, and one pointed out that the *Washington Post* recently described Gromit (the silent one in the Wallace and Gromit partnership) as "perhaps the most expressive silent star since Buster Keaton"! The Film Site's Comedy Section describes slapstick like this: "...one of the earliest forms of comedy, poked fun at farcical situations of physical mishap and indignity, usually in pratfalls, practical jokes, accidents, acrobatic death-defying stunts, water soakings, or wild chases with trains and cars".

I'm exhausted just reading that, but exhilarated too – and that's why slapstick will always be popular!

Elaine Peake
© John Good

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ZOE RAHMAN

Song Arrangements

SOPHIE COTTON

Dance Choreography

NUNA SANDY

**FOR ZOONATION: THE
KATE PRINCE COMPANY**

Projection

DOMINIC BAKER

From an idea by

IRENE COTTON

Production Manager

MARTYN SANDS

Production LX and tour relights

BEN COWENS

Assistant Director

ANDREA CABRERA LUNA

Casting Director for tour

SARAH BIRD

Technical Stage Manager

RUSS MARQUIS

Deputy Stage Manager

CAROL PESTRIDGE

ASM/Wardrobe Manager

SOPHIE ALICE COOPER



Stan Laurel

JERONE MARSH-REID

Charlie Chaplin

DANIELLE BIRD

Frank Karno

NICK HAVERSON

Pianist / Chaplin's Mother

SARA ALEXANDER

Scraps the Dog

REGGIE

All other parts played

by members of the company

Understudies

HARRIS CAIN

FRANCES KNOX

SCENE ORDER

1. The Departure
2. A Victorian Childhood
3. A Late Arrival
4. The Understudy
5. Back on board ship
6. Stan meets Olly
7. Charlie entrances a member of the audience
8. Rubbing Along
9. The Reunion
10. The Chase
11. New York

JERONE MARSH-REID

Stan Laurel



Jerone Marsh-Reid trained on the Physical Theatre course at East 15 Acting School. Theatre credits include: *The Deep* (Clifftown Theatre, Rich Rusk from Gecko); *The Things I've Dismissed* (Clifftown Theatre, Project Lockout); *Feel the Fear* (Camden Fringe/Fusion

Festival, Project Lockout); *Mood* (Clifftown Theatre, Simon Hunt); *Catch Me* (Upswing, European tour); *Breathe the Beat* (UK tour, Lucie Talbott). Films and music videos include: *Still Got Time* (Zayn Malik Ft PartyNextDoor); *Not Letting Go* (Tinie Tempah and Jess Glynne); *You Want Me* (Tom Zinneti); *Maybe?* (The Beach); *Fam That's Peak* (Arnold Jorje and Stormzy *Parody*). Commercials include: BBC Radio 1 Summer Mix (BBC). Jerone is an Artistic Associate of Project Lockout. He was engaged as Movement Director for their recent production *The Maniac Complex*, which can be seen as part of the Vaults Festival 2020.

DANIELLE BIRD

Charlie Chaplin



Theatre credits include: *The Comedy of Errors* (Storyhouse Theatre); *The Prince and the Pauper* (New Victoria Theatre); *The Worst Witch* (Vaudeville Theatre); *Astley's Astounding Adventures* (New Victoria Theatre Newcastle); *Aladdin* (Theatre Royal Wakefield); *The*

Hypocrite (Hull Truck/Royal Shakespeare Company); *Macbeth* (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre); *Not Moses* (Arts Theatre); *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Birmingham REP); *Alice's Adventures Underground* (Les Enfants Terribles); *The Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Chester Performs/Grosvenor Open Air Theatre); *The Princess and the Pea* (York Theatre Royal); *Father Christmas and the Icicle Bicycle*, *Tea Time* (Oxford Playhouse); *The Prince and the Pauper* (Unicorn Theatre); *Colin Hout's Real Horror Show* (Leicester Square Theatre); *No Ball Games* (New Wolsey Theatre); *As You Like It* (Principal Theatre); *Slick* (Scarabeus Theatre Dance Company); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* (Young Shakespeare Company); *Magician's Assistant* (You Me Bum Bum Train). Danielle also performs stilt walking, puppetry and storytelling shows with the circus theatre company Circo Rum Ba Ba.

Television credits include: *The Jewish Enquirer* (Magnet Films); *Vengeance* (Light Films); *The Investigator* (ITV/Netflix); *The Wives Did It* (Discovery); *Holby City* (BBC) and *The Double Life of Morton Coyle* (The Comedy Unit/BBC). Film credits include: *Now You See Me 2* (Lionsgate); *A Running Jump*, Mike Leigh's Olympic film (BBC Films/Film4).

NICK HAVERSON

Fred Karno, Charlie's Dad, Arthur, Oliver Hardy, Charlie's Butler



Nick trained at LAMDA. Theatre credits include: *Love's Labour's Lost & Won* (*Much Ado About Nothing*) (RSC Stratford and Haymarket London); *Too Clever By Half* (Royal Exchange Manchester, Told by an Idiot); *Ben Hur* (Watermill Newbury); *The Devil and Mr. Punch*

(*Improbable*, Philadelphia USA/ Barbican UK); '1984' (Northern Broadsides); *Low Pay, Don't Pay* (Salisbury Playhouse); *The Lost Voice* (Southbank Centre); *The Venetian Twins* (Bolton Octagon); *Ruby Moon* (Northern Stage); *Satyagraha* (*Improbable* at London Coliseum/Metropolitan Opera House, NY); *Theatre of Blood* (*Improbable* at The National Theatre); *The Hanging Man* (*Improbable* US tour and Sydney Opera House); *And the Horse You Rode In On*, *Beauty and the Beast* (Told by an Idiot); *The Pirates of Penzance* (Orange Tree, Richmond); *The Solid Gold Cadillac* (Garrick); *By Jeeves* (Duke of York's/ Lyric); *The Magic Carpet* (Lyric Hammersmith). Television credits include: *Scott & Bailey*, *Tales from the Old Bailey*, *The Mimic*, *Thank God You're Here* (series), *Ashes to Ashes*, *Spooks*, *New Tricks*, *Casualty*, *Head over Heels* (series, for which he also recorded the title song); *Murder Rooms - The Dark Beginnings of Sherlock Holmes*, *Sunday, A Fatal Inversion*, *Last Days of Ashenden*, *The Bill*, *Redemption*, *Devices and Desires*, *Absolutely True*, *Wyrd Sisters* (*The Worst Witch 2*). Films include: Tim Burton's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Hilary and Jackie*, *Susie Gold*, *Sherman* (short), *The Tales of Despereaux* (cartoon), *Gulliver's Travels*, *Gli Zii* (short), *Muppets Most Wanted*, *Men Who Sleep in Cars*. Radio: *Hilda*, *The Barchester Chronicles*, *Two to Tander*, *Men Who Sleep in Cars*, *By Jeeves* (BBC Radio 4); *The Edge* (BBC Radio York).

SARA ALEXANDER

Pianist, Hannah Chaplin (Charlie's Mother)



Sara is Brit-Sardinian and a graduate of the University of Bristol and Drama Studio London. Theatre credits include: *A Pacifists Guide to the War on Cancer* (Complicité); *Rejoicing at Her Wondrous Vulva* *The Young Woman Applauded Herself* (Offie

nominated, *All About Me* and *Ovalhouse*); *World's Apart* and *The Wizard of Oz* (RSC); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (National Theatre Outreach); *Romeo and Juliet/Twelfth Night* (Globe Players Theatre Company); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Bedouin Shakespeare Company/Globe Theatre Rome); *Pygmalion* (Tour De Force theatre company). Television credits include: *The Mysti Show*, *Hounded*, *Doctor Who*, *Waking the Dead*, *EastEnders*, *Doctors*, *Casualty* (BBC); *Presenter* (CBeebies). Film credits include: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* (Warner Bros); *Sparrow* (Franco Zeffirelli).

Sara is an associate artist with All About Me theatre company and is also a published novelist with HarperCollins. Her latest novel is *The Last Concerto*, a story about an Italian concert pianist set in 1970s Rome. Previous titles are *Under a Sardinian Sky* and *The Secret Legacy*. saraalexander.net

REGGIE

Scraps the Dog



Reggie is relatively new to show business, perhaps this is because he is a French Bulldog puppy. He has so far in his short career sat upon the knees of stars from Nigel Havers to Sheridan Smith and weed up against Gary Barlow. Reggie is very much looking forward to

recreating the part of Scraps which was a part originally played by Scraps in the Charlie Chaplin film *A Dog's Life*. Reggie's understudy will be performing at certain performances due to prior contractual negotiations and is a puppet.

HARRIS CAIN

Understudy



Harris graduated from East 15 drama school in 2018. He has gone on to do many types of work such as a cameo in *Enterprise* for BBC 3 and a stunt man in the opera *Simon Boccanegra* at the Royal Opera House. He most recently worked with Zest Theatre, on the production of *Youthquake*, which toured the UK.

FRANCES KNOX

Understudy



Frances trained at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Since graduating her stage credits have included: Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Shallow in *Henry IV Part 2* (Cambridge Shakespeare Festival); Somani in *Somnai* (the immersive theatre production); Ensemble/Juno in *The Tempest* (Printroom Theatre); dancer in *Late Night Gimp Fight* (Soho Theatre). Theatre credits whilst training include: Cathy in *Wuthering Heights* (in collaboration with Inspector Sands); Thomas in *Coram Boy* and Zinaida in *Ivanov*.

PAUL HUNTER

Writer and Director

Paul Hunter is co-founder and Artistic Director of Told by an Idiot and has been involved in all of their work to date.

Directing credits include: *The Ghost Train* (Told by an Idiot/Royal Exchange, Manchester); *Too Clever By Half* (Told by an Idiot/Royal Exchange, Manchester); *Every Last Trick* (Royal & Derngate, Northampton); *You Can't Take It With You* (Told by an Idiot/Royal Exchange, Manchester); *The Mouse and his Child* (RSC); *Low Pay, Don't Pay* (Salisbury Playhouse); *Señora Carrar's Rifles* (Young Vic); *The Opium Eaters* (Brouhaha); *The Underpants* (Hope Street, Liverpool); *The Firework Maker's Daughter* (Swedish Theatre, Helsinki); *One Set to Love* (National Theatre, Hungary); *Jiggery Pokery* (tour/BAC); *Ordago* (for Punto Finco in Bilbao). As Associate Director at the Octagon Theatre, Bolton. Paul Hunter directed: *The Venetian Twins*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Best Production, Manchester Evening News Award), *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and *Cleo, Camping Emmanuelle and Dick*.

JOS HOUBEN

Physical Comedy Consultant

Jos Houben is internationally acclaimed as a leader in the field of comedy and physical theatre. Performing, writing, teaching, and directing world-wide for the past 30 years, he has worked with leading international organisations and artists including: Peter Brook, Ecole Jacques Lecoq, The Right Size, Georges Aperghis, Théâtre de Complicité - Simon McBurney, National Theatre London, Ragdoll Ltd, Thames TV, Opera North, Centre National des Arts du Cirque, British Council and Opéra Comique.

He has received the prestigious Perrier Comedy Award (1986, Théâtre de Complicité) and Olivier Award for Best Entertainment (1999, The Right Size). Houben's one man show *The Art of Laughter* has been touring the world for the past 12 years. He has played month-long stints to sell-out audiences at the prestigious Théâtre du Rond-Point on the Champs-Élysées three years in a row. The show is such a success that Jos was featured on the front page of France's Le Monde and interviewed on national news channels.

In 2016 Jos did comedy directing for the hit West End musical *Girls* and toured extensively with the comedy duo Marcel.

He directed Czech physical theatre company Squadra Sua's new hit show *Crossings* which opened to wide acclaim in Prague in May 2019.

He is currently preparing two operas for Opéra de Rennes and Opera Caen as well as a new movement-based show with contemporary dancer Raphaëlle Delaunay.

IOANA CURELEA

Designer

Ioana is the recipient of the inaugural Naomi Wilkinson Award for Stage Design with Told by an Idiot and supported by The Charles Mason and Naomi Wilkinson Foundation.

Ioana Curelea is a set and costume designer who was born and raised in Romania. She studied Fine Art for 10 years in Bucharest, before moving to the UK in 2013 to train as a theatre designer. She holds a BA and an MA in Set Design for Theatre from Wimbledon College of Art. She has an active interest in radical art and unorthodox theatre making. Her recent credits include: set and costume design for *The Others* (Camden People's Theatre); *Welcome to the UK* (Bunker Theatre); *Attic* (King's Head Theatre); *CLAY* (Pleasance Theatre) and *Crestfall* (RADA Studios).

Ioana is also a member of the award-winning company We Are Kilter wearekilter.co.uk. Supported by The Charles Mason and Naomi Wilkinson Foundation.

AIDEEN MALONE

Lighting Designer

Theatre credits include: *Death of a Salesman* (Young Vic); *The Worst Witch* (Royal & Derngate); *Princess and the Hustler* and *Raisin in the Sun* (Eclipse); *A Monster Calls* (Old Vic and Bristol Old Vic); *Jack Lear* (Hull Truck); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Watford Palace); *Brighton Rock* (York Theatre Royal); *Napoleon Disrobed* (Told by an Idiot); *La Strada* (Belgrade Theatre); *Jane Eyre* and *Peter Pan* (National Theatre and Bristol Old Vic); *Fiddler on the Roof* / *Conquest to the North Pole* (Liverpool Everyman); *Hetty Feather* (Duke of York); *Frankenstein* (Living Spit).

Dance credits include: *Darbar Festival* (Sadler's Wells); *Kaash* (Akram Kahn Co); *Raft* (GED); *Unkindest Cut* (Sadhana); *Time Over Distance Over Time* (Liz Roche); *La Tete* (Jasmin Vardimon).

Opera credits include: *Ariodante*, *Turn of the Screw*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mary Queen of Scots*, *Così fan tutte*, *Jenůfa* and *Tosca* (English Touring Opera).

Aideen is currently working alongside Sadler's Wells Theatre and O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects to create the foyer lighting design for their new theatre Sadler's Wells East.

Future productions: *Outwitting the Devil* (Akram Khan Co); *Mold Riots* (Clwyd Theatr Cymru).

ZOE RAHMAN

Composer

Described in The Observer as "a remarkable pianist by any standard", Zoe has firmly established herself as one of the brightest stars on the contemporary jazz scene. She won a MOBO Award for Best Jazz Act in 2012 and was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize for her 2006 album *Melting Pot*, which also won Jazz Album of the Year at the UK's first Parliamentary Jazz Awards.

A vibrant and highly individual pianist/composer, her style is deeply rooted in jazz yet it reflects her classical background, British/Bengali heritage and her very broad musical taste. Known for her powerful technique, wide-ranging imagination and exuberant performance, she has become a highly sought-after musician, working with the likes of Courtney Pine, George Mraz, Jerry Dammers' Spatial A.K.A Orchestra, Martha Wainwright, among many others. Zoe studied classical piano at the Royal Academy of Music, took a music degree at Oxford University and then won a scholarship to study jazz performance at Berklee College of Music, Boston. She has toured extensively throughout the UK and internationally, including performances in USA, Japan, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Italy, France, Barbados, Romania, Hungary, Algeria, Germany, Estonia, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Zoe has been a featured artist on numerous television and radio programmes and is frequently invited to sit on high-profile panels – most notably, the Mercury Music Prize and BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year and Nottingham International Jazz Piano competition. She shares her passion for music through teaching in a variety of contexts, inspiring musicians of all ages and abilities.



Original cast photography by Manuel Harlan

SOPHIE COTTON

Song Arrangement

Sophie is a graduate of the Royal College of Music where she studied composition with Jonathan Cole. Since graduating she has worked in theatre, film and television as a composer/arranger, including roles at Shakespeare's Globe, RSC, The National Theatre, St James's Theatre and Park Theatre. Highlights include: *Romeo and Juliet* (RSC); *the Remains of the Day* (Out of Joint/Royal & Derngate, Northampton); *Rosenbaum's Rescue* (Park Theatre); *All You Need Is LSD* (Told by an Idiot UK tour); *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* and *Mighty Atoms* (Hull Truck Theatre); *Bang Bang* (directed by Nicky Henson and written by John Cleese); *Don't Wake Me: The Ballad of Nihal Armstrong* (St James's Theatre); *Little Black Book* (Park Theatre); *Unlined* (film – directed by John Michael Muskos - shortlisted for National Independent Film Awards 2015). Sophie assisted Claire van Kampen in her arrangements for the Olivier-nominated *Farinelli and the King* at both the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and the Duke of York's Theatre and she has also recently composed a section of score for the BFI/Shakespeare's Globe collaborative film *Play On*, alongside five other Globe composers.

NUNA SANDY FOR ZOONATION: THE KATE PRINCE COMPANY

Dance Choreography

Nuna is a member of ZooNation: The Kate Prince Company and Laurence Olivier Award-winning company Boy Blue Entertainment. She was one of the founding members of the dance group Plague and has appeared as a backing dancer for various artists. As a freelancer Nuna has worked as teacher, choreographer, movement director and facilitator for companies such as ZooNation: The Kate Prince Company, Boy Blue Entertainment, Company 3, Lyric Hammersmith and London Studio Centre. Nuna's choreography credits include: *Allstars* (2013), *Apple Tree House* (2018) and assistant choreographer and dancer for Emeli Sandé (Brits 2017). She has also choreographed performances at Sadler Wells, Barbican Centre, The Place and the Pleasance Theatre.

DOM BAKER

Video Designer

Dom studied trained at Guildhall School of Music & Drama on the Technical Theatre BA. Theatre video design credits include: *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (Harold Pinter Theatre, UK tour); *Knights of the Rose* (The Arts Theatre); *Jersey Boys* international tour (Selladoor Productions); *An Evening with Primrose* (ACCA); *Beyond the Fence* (The Arts Theatre); *Valhalla* (Theatre503); *Le donne curiose* and *Opera Makers* (Guildhall School of Music & Drama); Associate Video Designer on *I Wish to Die Singing* (Finborough Theatre). Other work includes: video design Porth Festival (Pontio Arts Centre); video design for The Common at Glastonbury Festival; Editor and Director of Photography on *Don't Eat Anything Blue - Advice on Life*.

ANDREA CABRERA LUNA

Assistant Director

Mexican-born, UK-based Andrea is the artistic director of Anahat Theatre. Directing credits include: *The Arsonists*, by Max Frisch (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow); scenes from *The Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster (Globe Theatre, London); *Hotel Juárez*, by Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda (University of Edinburgh, Assembly Roxy); *I Am That Girl*, written by Andrea Cabrera Luna (Scottish Storytelling Centre); *Medea Material Landscape with Argonauts* by Heiner Müller (Etcetera Theatre, London); *Seven Jewish Children*, by Caryl Churchill, actor and director (El Taller, Mexico, 2009).

Assistant director credits include: *The Lyceum's Christmas Tales*, directed by Zinnie Harris and Wils Wilson (Edinburgh, 2020); *Life is a Dream* R&D, directed by Wils Wilson (Lyceum Theatre). Prior to training as a director at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Andrea won a FONCA scholarship to read an MA in Performance and Culture from Goldsmiths College, University of London. She holds a BA in acting from the National School of Performing Arts and a BA in English Literature from the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Andrea is currently developing *Instructions on How to Cry*, a devised physical theatre show exploring the science and mystery of emotional tears. Anahattheatre.com

DAVID PUGH

Producer

David first produced *Art* at the Wyndham's Theatre where it won every major theatre award. This has subsequently become the most successful new play in London for the last 25 years. *Art* subsequently opened on Broadway at the Royale Theatre, winning David his first Tony Award.

David's production of the juke box musical *The Blues Brothers* played in London's West End for four separate seasons, toured throughout the world for 15 years and was nominated for the Olivier Award for Best Entertainment.

David produced *The Play What I Wrote* by Hamish McColl and Sean Foley, directed by Kenneth Branagh. *The Play What I Wrote*, which opened at the Wyndham's Theatre, won the Olivier Award for Best Comedy, and every review was a rave. *The Play What I Wrote* opened at the Lyceum Theatre on Broadway and was nominated for the Tony Award for Special Achievement. Tom Stoppard's adaptation of Gérard Sibleyras' play *Heroes* opened in the West End and won the Olivier Award for Best Comedy, whilst *Ducktastic* opened for a very short run at the Noël Coward Theatre in the West End whilst still managing to be nominated for the Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Entertainment.

David then produced *Equus* in London's West End, which starred Daniel Radcliffe and Richard Griffiths and played a sell-out season at the Gielgud Theatre. Following this at the same theatre his production of *God of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton, which starred Ralph Fiennes, Tamsin Grieg, Janet McTeer and Ken Stott, where it played a phenomenally successful season and won the Olivier Award for Best Comedy.

God of Carnage then opened on Broadway starring James Gandolfini, Jeff Daniels, Marcia Gay Harden and Hope Davis, where it was one of Broadway's biggest play successes. *God of Carnage* played for four hundred and seventy-six performances and won David his second Tony Award.

David commissioned and produced Kneehigh Theatre's production of Noël Coward's *Brief Encounter*, which played for nearly a year in an old cinema on the Haymarket in London and toured the UK winning the UK Theatre Award. His production then played at St Ann's Warehouse in New York, where it received a rave review from The New York Times, and transferred to Broadway.

David's production of Tim Firth's award-winning comedy *Calendar Girls* opened at the Chichester Festival Theatre, transferred to the West End, played in nearly every English-speaking country around the world and then toured the UK where it ran for over four years with 14 different casts and

has become one of the most successful touring productions of a play ever. David produced *The Full Monty*, which was Simon Beaufoy's adaptation of his own screenplay. The play won the UK Theatre Award for Best Touring Production and toured the UK successfully for three years.

David produced the musical *The Girls* by Gary Barlow and Tim Firth which was tried out at Leeds Grand Theatre and The Lowry, Manchester where it received marvellous reviews. *The Girls* opened in London's West End and was then re-entitled *Calendar Girls the Musical* which embarked on a 60-week tour of the UK.

The Band – the Take That musical written by Tim Firth and produced by David – opened at Manchester Opera House to the largest advance box office ever and toured throughout the UK for 18 months. David has produced on tour a highly acclaimed production of Willy Russell's *Educating Rita* which was curtailed by lockdown. However, in August last year David presented this production at the Minack Open Air Theatre in Cornwall making worldwide news as at that time he was the only producer in the world producing a play. David will present *Pride and Prejudice* (*sort of)* by Isobel McArthur after Jane Austen at the Criterion Theatre in London's West End opening this Autumn.



TOLD BY AN IDIOT

Producer

Told by an Idiot is a critically-acclaimed theatre company, touring work in the UK and internationally for over 27 years. We explore the human condition through theatre that is ambitious, but never pretentious, experimental, but always accessible and we avoid boredom at all costs. Our mission is to make provocative and relevant work that is rooted in the live experience and thrives on a sense of spontaneity and risk. We are fascinated by the space between laughter and pain and our desire to laugh taps into something universal. It can provide hope and relief and it brings people together. We consistently experiment with what theatre can be and who gets to make it. In doing so our work blurs the line between theatre maker, participant and audience. Our work excludes no one, stimulates and challenges people across the world, and we remain committed to making theatre for anyone who breathes.

www.toldbyanidiot.org



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THEATRE ROYAL BATH PRODUCTIONS

Producer

Theatre Royal Bath consists of an historic Main House, the Ustinov Studio and the Egg Theatre. Theatre Royal Bath Productions is the Theatre Royal Bath's production arm. West End credits include Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (Piccadilly Theatre); Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (Arts Theatre); Ron Hutchinson's *The Beau* (Theatre Royal Haymarket); David Williamson's *Up for Grabs* (Wyndham's Theatre); Mike Leigh's *Abigail's Party* (New Ambassadors/ Whitehall Theatre); *Shakespeare's R & J* (Arts Theatre); Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* (Duchess Theatre); Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* (Arts Theatre); Ronald Harwood's *The Dresser* (Duke of York's Theatre); Bernard Shaw's *You Never Can Tell* (Garrick Theatre); *Amy's View* by David Hare (Garrick Theatre); Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Vaudeville Theatre); *Legal Fictions* by John Mortimer (Savoy Theatre); *The Deep Blue Sea* by Terence Rattigan (Vaudeville Theatre); Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* (Old Vic); Alan Bennett's *Enjoy* (Gielgud Theatre); Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker* (Trafalgar Studios); Noël Coward's *Private Lives* (Vaudeville Theatre); Bernard Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Comedy Theatre); Sheridan's *The Rivals* (Theatre Royal Haymarket); Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* (Apollo Theatre); Alan Bennett's *The Madness of George III* (Apollo Theatre); Mike Leigh's *Abigail's Party* (Wyndham's); David Hare's *The Judas Kiss* (Duke of York's); Simon Gray's *Quartermaine's Terms* (Wyndham's Theatre); Alan Ayckbourn's *Relatively Speaking* (Wyndham's Theatre); August Wilson's *Fences* (Duchess Theatre); Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* (Trafalgar Studios); Noël Coward's *Relative Values* (Harold Pinter Theatre); David Mamet's *Speed-The-Plow* (Playhouse Theatre); *Bad Jews* by Joshua Harmon (Arts Theatre/Theatre Royal Haymarket); Noël Coward's *Hay Fever* (Duke of York's Theatre); *The Father* by Florian Zeller (Wyndham's Theatre/Duke of York's Theatre); *Mrs Henderson Presents* (Noël Coward Theatre); *The Libertine* by Stephen Jeffreys (Theatre Royal Haymarket); *Hobson's Choice* by Harold Brighouse (Vaudeville Theatre); *Stepping Out* by Richard Harris (Vaudeville Theatre); *The Mentor* by Daniel Kehlman (Vaudeville Theatre); *Switzerland* by Joanna Murray Smith (Ambassadors Theatre) and Arthur Miller's *The Price* (Wyndham's Theatre). The acclaimed new production of David Mamet's *Oleanna* transfers to London's Arts Theatre from July 2021. Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* starring Jennifer Saunders will resume its West End run from September 2021 at the Harold Pinter Theatre which will be immediately followed by Ralph Fiennes giving his acclaimed performance of TS Eliot's *Four Quartets*.

FOR DAVID PUGH LTD

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General Manager **Eugene Hibbert**
Production Administrator **Nicky Palmer**
Finance Supervisor **Cheryl Hardy**
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Assistant Producer **Amy Reade**

FOR CHARLIE AND STAN

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Funnel construction **Splinter Scenery**
Costumes **Theatre Royal Plymouth**
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Thanks to:

Tom Storey
Paul Anderson
Huw Semmens
Pollard Rehearsal Rooms
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