

Things are not as they seem for those living in this particular Home

HOME

Minerva Theatre, Chichester
October 8–November 6
cft.org.uk

In a neglected garden, small talk oscillates between the weather, the neighbours, reminiscences of friends and family and anecdotes of past exploits in love and war.

But this quintet of characters, with their foibles and failings, are not what they seem to be, and nor is their home. And overhead, the clouds are gathering.

The play is Home by David Storey which will play in Chichester's Minerva for the next month.

Josh Roche directs Leon Annor, Hayley Carmichael, Daniel Cerqueira, Doña Croll and John Mackay.

Doña, who plays Marjorie, is delighted to be back on stage for the first time in two-and-a-half years: 'In lockdown I did a few radio plays from my front room.'

'The equipment arrives and you have to make sure it is all Covid-free and you then set it up.'

'I did two radio plays like that. One was a series actually. And then just as lockdown finished, I did a couple of films.'

'But the last time I was on the stage was at The Globe in 2019, March or April in an all-female production of Richard II, I was John of Gaunt.'

'I am not sure how it will feel going back, but this play is just marvellous. It is the kind of theatre that I really wanted to do, absurdist theatre. It is very funny but it is also a very human



Doña Croll in rehearsal for Home.

Picture: Manuel Harlan

play.

'David Storey seems to know a lot about the human condition and how we operate with each other. To start with, you don't know who all these people are or where they are.'

'I haven't done a Storey before, but I knew the name. When I was very young in the business, he was like a John Osborne character. Those guys

at the Royal Court were the centre of new writing.'

'In this play I love the fact that he writes obliquely. Nothing is explained to the audience. Nothing is on the nose.'

'You have to keep up and you have to listen. A lot of plays these days and certainly TV have become very obvious. Everything is obvious. The

'If you give somebody a particular event, there are things that would keep referring back to the event, but she just has this particular condition.'

'It is not post-partum depression or anything like that. It is just that some people do spend their whole lives battling.'

'I just see her as someone who her whole life has just had to try to stop the ground beneath her feet from shifting beneath her.'

'When she goes off balance she doesn't land for a long time. I think of her as someone who is trying to balance in the world.'

And in that respect she will resonate today, post-pandemic.

Doña likens it to the celebrated speech which she delivered as John of Gaunt: 'That England, that was wont to conquer others, Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.'

As she says, it is not often a Shakespeare speech draws applause, but this one did with all its Brexit echoes when she delivered it.

So too will people see elements of what we have all been through in Home, Doña believes.

So in a sense, Storey is ripe for recovery from his relative obscurity: 'Every generation has to produce its own stuff, but there are elements here that are very apt for our times now.'

'And I have always wanted to do absurdist theatre – it's the kind of thing that isn't done very often.'

'And I have done everything else. I have done Shakespeare. I have done comedy. But I have never done anything like this.'

PHIL HEWITT



Wearing Mum's Make-up is at The New Theatre Royal on October 9-10. Picture by The Liberty Lounge

Mum's the word for taking cabaret into new places

WEARING MUM'S MAKEUP

New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth
October 9-10
newtheatroyal.com

Wearing Mum's Make-up is a show that's been two years in the making.

Of course, a large part of this is due to the pandemic.

But over that period, a fruitful relationship has built up between local performers from the queer community and mums. The project was started back in 2019 by Downtown Pompey, a queer community theatre company. They brought a bunch of Pompey mums together, asking questions about identity, health and theatre. And over the past two years they've seen a new community grow. It culminates this weekend in two cabaret-style shows on the main stage of the New Theatre Royal.

Josh Breach, the show's co-creator says: 'Originally the project was to provide a series of workshops over six months where we would create a safe

space using our queer practice to invite mums from the area in to create a piece of cabaret performance that they would then show.'

'We found a really beautiful relationship between how queer people are seen and treated in the news and the media, and expectations and stereotypes, and that of mums.'

'We talked a lot about this situation where a mum watches GMTV in the morning and is told how she should be, then she's watching Lorraine and told what she should wear, then she's watching Loose Women and she's told by a bunch of other women how she should live her life.'

'It was understanding that a lot of the messages we're told as queer people are some of the same messages and boxes that these mums are being told to live in.'

'They felt like although there are all-women spaces, and spaces for mums, that they were the sort of outcasts in those groups and there was nowhere that could capture them.'

For Josh, who performs cabaret as The Fabulous Josh, the community aspect is key: 'For the company Downtown, it's about making sure that we can centre the voices in Portsmouth, about Portsmouth.'

'There's a civic responsibility in theatre – for us to be responsive to the people. And there wasn't enough of that work in Portsmouth that had that level of engagement.'

Working with the mums, they've put together a series of autobiographical works, drawing on what they learned in the workshops.

'What makes my brain explode is that we're redefining cabaret,' Josh adds. 'There's been such an emergence of cabaret and drag being so much bigger now, we're inundated with that type of work, so it's great to say: "Actually, let's look at it from a different perspective. Let's use the cabaret format as a way of engaging communities in accessing theatre and accessing that performance space".'

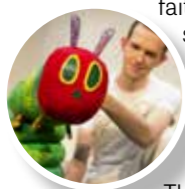
Let's use the cabaret format as a way of engaging communities

CHILDREN'S SHOW

Hungry for a classic story?

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR SHOW
Theatre Royal Winchester
Sunday, October 17, 10.30am, 1.30pm, 4pm
theatroyalwinchester.co.uk

Four of Eric Carle's timeless children's classics have made their way off the page and on to the stage and head to Theatre Royal Winchester in The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show. Eric's well-known books captivate readers with his iconic colourful hand-painted tissue paper collage illustrations and distinctively simple stories, introducing generations of children to a bigger,



brighter world – and to their first experience of reading itself. This critically acclaimed show has been created by Jonathan Rockefeller and features a menagerie of 75 lovable puppets faithfully adapting four of Eric Carle's stories, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, 10 Little Rubber Ducks, The Very Lonely Firefly and of course, the star of the show The Very Hungry Caterpillar, which celebrated its 50th birthday in 2019.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show is a vibrant celebration of Eric Carle's adored classics and the perfect introduction to live theatre. Time Out described the show as 'Beautiful, Rhythmic. A Triumph.'

SOMETHING FISHY

Britain's oldest boy band emerge from lockdown and hit the road as The Fisherman's Friends – combined age 365 (and three-quarters) – announce their Unlocked & Unleashed tour, which is at Portsmouth Guildhall on Sunday. Thanks to the small film with a big heart that shares their name, the story of the original Cornish 'buoy band' is known around the world – bound by shared experience, for 40 years they have met on the Platt on the harbour in their native Port Isaac to sing the songs of the sea. 'And now we can't wait to show the rest of the country what they've been missing – singing live in our blood, almost as much as the sea,' says extravagantly moustachioed MC and bass man Jon

Cleave. Starring Daniel Mays, James Purefoy, Tuppence Middleton and Noel Clarke with cameo appearances from the group whose voices also appear on the soundtrack, Fisherman's Friends took \$10 million at the box office and saw the boys perform at the 2019 Cannes film festival as well as sell out another UK tour. Since last year, despite the best efforts of the global pandemic, the boys have kept fans entertained in lockdown posting weekly songs and poems on their YouTube series Mares Tales & Mackerel Scales. Tickets from £31. Go to portsmouth-guildhall.org.uk.

ARTS SCENE

with CHRIS BROOM



SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD
Titchfield Festival Theatre
October 11-16
titchfieldfestivaltheatre.com

Songs for a New World is the first musical from Tony Award winner Jason Robert Brown (Parade, Bridges Of Madison County), coming to Titchfield Festival Theatre.

It's about one moment. It's about hitting the wall and having to make a choice, or take a stand, or turn around and go back. These are the stories and characters of today, the Songs For A New World, this moving collection of powerful songs which examines life, love and the choices we make. It is also about looking forward and knowing that there is always someone there rooting for you. Director Karla Watkins says: 'Songs for a New World is technically a song cycle, a collection of stories from unnamed characters around a



theme. They are all based around a moment of decision or change in a person's life, whether that be circumstantial or they themselves make a decision to change their lives.

'I have been working with cast members in the show on other projects, and I wanted the opportunity to work together

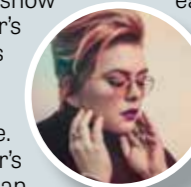
with this extremely talented group of amazing singers – Songs for a New World showcases their talent perfectly.'

'For me, the show is truly inspirational. The audience will watch as people seek to fight through their difficulties, or make decisions to improve their lives. They will discover that even when people are in turmoil, there still manages to be something uplifting about the music.'

'There is something for everyone, from your traditional sounding musical ballads to songs with elements of jazz or funk. The singers are incredible and will have people on the edge of their seats with their performances.'

JAYDE ADAMS
Portsmouth Guildhall Studio
Sunday, October 10
portsmouthguildhall.org.uk

Multi-award winning comedian Jayde Adams is stopping by in Portsmouth on her debut nationwide tour with the show The Ballad of Kylie Jenner's Old Face, hot off the heels of a sold-out, critically-acclaimed run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The Ballad of Kylie Jenner's Old Face sees the Bristolian stand-up take a completely new direction, she's packed away the sequins and glamour (for now) and has got rid of the show-stopping music numbers and glitzy costumes to reinvent herself as a 'Successful Independent Woman Person', exploring what



it means to be a feminist today, and to showcase herself as an intelligent working class voice. Jayde invites you to discover what it takes to be a real role model, while wearing the feminist wardrobe staple attire; the Serious Black Jumper™.

Jayde's 'rafter-rattling' (Alice Jones, The I) performances earned her a nomination for Best Newcomer at the 2016 Edinburgh Comedy Awards, followed by a spot on the BBC New Talent Hotlist 2017. 2019 saw Jayde host a successful podcast with Scott Mills with the BBC in the lead up to Eurovision 2019, host BBC4's Eurovision Semi Finals from Tel Aviv, co-host Channel 4's series Snackmasters, and took her cult live musical comedy show, Amusical to the screen for Comedy Central.

COUNTRY

Sounds good in a bar... and Square Tower

One of the UK's most promising young Country stars comes to Portsmouth on Sunday, for a full band show at Old Portsmouth's Square Tower. Katy Hurt, following on from sold-out Portsmouth shows pre-pandemic,

combines the old with the new, the traditional with the modern, and possessing a voice undeniably influenced by the first ladies of country – Dolly Parton and Patsy Cline among them. With a hatrick of nominations under

her belt from the British Country Music Awards, the maturity of Katy's songwriting could easily trick you into thinking you were listening to one of the old Nashville greats. Tickets £14 advance from squareerootspromotions.co.uk.

Jayde invites you to discover what it takes to be a real role model, while wearing the feminist wardrobe staple attire; the Serious Black Jumper