

FOOLISH HOPE
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE'S SON!

(SORT OF)

A NEW COMEDY
BY TOM MALLABURN



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A joyous, family-friendly farce from the creators of the hit comedy *Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain*.

Meet William Davenant – playwright, libertine, and the (alleged) lovechild of William Shakespeare. Captured by the party-pooing Puritans, Davenant saves his skin by promising to write a play that will big-up Cromwell. The only problem is, he's already promised the Royalists a play that will glorify the King! His hair-brained scheming and foolhardy plans make for a wild romp through the theatre-making process, culminating in an artistic debacle of side-splitting proportions.

Now remember,
this play had better be
unrelentingly Godly and
supportive of the Puritan
cause. Or else my spoon
meets your guts!



WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE?

Fusing the wicked wit of *Blackadder*, the gruesome silliness of *Horrible Histories*, and the joyous fun of *Shakespeare in Love*, this is comedy at its most fast-paced and ridiculous.

A superbly performed, funny and engaging ensemble piece that cleverly combines modern references, word play, a nod to guitar rock, a mash-up of Shakespeare's more famous plays, a specially constructed IKEA torture rack, and one very nasty folk song. You could call it black absurdist farce with elements of pantomime.

Australian Stage*

A joyful and fun show that was designed to appeal to a wide age range, from young children through to parents and grandparents. It was witty, self-referential and warm-hearted, played to good houses, and was very well received by audiences and critics.

Dr Miles Gregory, Artistic Director, Pop-up Globe*

*In 2017 a one-act version of the play ran for four months at the 900-capacity Pop-up Globe in Melbourne.

WHY THIS? WHY NOW?

Shakespeare's Son! (sort of) has a very simple mission – to spread as much joy and silliness as possible. As the world stumbles from crisis to crisis, we want to give audiences a well deserved break. The success of shows like *Six the Musical*, *The Play that Goes Wrong* and *Only Fool and Horses* demonstrates that audiences are hungry for this kind of work.

As an experience the whole family can enjoy, *Shakespeare's Son! (sort of)* also taps into the resilient market for family shows.

At the same time, there's no denying our country feels more divided than ever. But we've been here before. The Civil War was fuelled by fake news, anti-European rhetoric, national populism, an entitled elite, and bitter social divisions. The show lightly explores these parallels, bringing to life a crucial period of British history with much to learn from.



WHO IS IT FOR?

Shakespeare's Son! (sort of) is that rare thing: a laugh-out-loud comedy with genuine inter-generational appeal. Full of smart wit for adults and physical silliness for, well – everyone – the show is suitable for all ages from eight to eighty, and beyond!

Target audiences include:

- fans of theatre companies like Kneehigh, Spymonkey, Mischief Theatre, Oddsocks and Peepolykus
- fans of films and TV like *Blackadder*, *Horrible Histories*, *Upstart Crow* and *Shakespeare in Love*
- families looking for a great night out
- lovers of classical theatre and history
- anyone looking for a laugh

For school groups, the show is a brilliantly accessible introduction to both the the Civil War era and classical theatre tropes.



WHO ARE FOOLISH HOPE?

Previous shows include:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMERICAN SERVICEMEN IN BRITAIN



"Wholly idiotic, inducing a helpless laughter that almost incapacitates the audience... an unforgettable experience."

The Stage



"Fast paced and witty... the feel-good factor started as soon as we entered the building."

The Richmond Magazine

Previously known as Fol Espoir, we make fun, accessible and high-craft popular theatre that has been enjoyed by over 16,000 people to date.

Our last show Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain toured to over 60 regional venues before transferring to London's Jermyn Street Theatre and New York's Theatres 59E59 – selling over 90% capacity for its entire Off-Broadway run.

Foolish Hope is led by John Walton, whose work as a freelance director includes productions for the Roundhouse in London, the 900-capacity Pop-up Globe in Australia, and three circus shows for the 600-capacity Spiegeltent at London Wonderground.

www.foolishhope.com

WINSTON ON THE RUN



"A model of its kind."

WhatsOnStage



"A gem of new writing"

Three Weeks



"Consistently entertaining and often hilarious"

Exuent

DR BROWN BECAUSE



"About as bonkers an hour of comedy as ever you would find"

The Sunday Times



"Laugh out loud hilarious... so stupid it plops back into the realm of bizarre genius"

The List

WHO IS TOM MALLABURN?

For the last decade Tom has written for *The Fitzrovia Radio Hour* - a 1940s inspired radio theatre show that has had several successful runs in the West End, at the Edinburgh Fringe and on national tours.

He has also been under commission to the Nottingham Playhouse, Salisbury Playhouse and the Mercury Theatre Colchester.

Press for *The Fitzrovia Radio Hour*:



"Deft and deliciously daft"

The Times



"Absolutely spiffing. A joy!"

Telegraph



"A triumph of visual comedy"

Time Out



**"Snappy scripts, plentiful gags
and a spirited love of the era"**

Metro

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Having commissioned both Tom Mallaburn and John Walton to create work for regional theatre audiences previously, I am confident that they will craft what is already a tried and tested concept into a high quality, popular show with broad appeal, for which I believe there will be significant demand within the touring market. It's certainly something that we're interested in bringing to Exeter for our audiences in the South West.

Daniel Buckroyd, Artistic Director & CEO,
Exeter Northcott Theatre

We have been a proud supporter of John and Fol Espoir's work, which has also thus far proved a hit with audiences. Their work is engaging and accessible, built upon careful planning and preparation. We would be keen to invite the company back again in the future.

John Terry, Director,
The Theatre Chipping Norton

Fol Espoir has a rare gift for devising work that literally reaches into the audience with an adventurousness that sets it apart. We can't wait to see what they've cooked up this next!

Val Day, Artistic Director,
Theatres 59E59, New York

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

Audience feedback from our recent R&D sharing:

“Hilarious and clever – don’t change a thing!”

“Witty, anarchic and clever – can’t wait to see the finished show!”

“I loved the references to modern issues, showing that there is nothing new under the sun”

Audience feedback from previous Foolish Hope shows:

“I can’t remember when I’ve laughed so much.”

“I took along my friend who hadn’t really been to much theatre before and I think he’s now converted!”

Venue feedback from previous Foolish Hope shows:

“The standing ovation was a first for theatre at Farnham Maltings!”

Vikki Jones, Farnham Maltings

“The production was superb and the audience enjoyed it enormously.”

Brian Kirk, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre

“One of the funniest, and most perfect rural touring shows I’ve seen for a long time.”

Sue Robinson, Spot On Lancashire



OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

90 minute workshops for either primary or secondary school groups include:

The Idiotic Actor

Finding your feet in comedy improvisation

Full Bodied

Physical approaches to character and performance

Devising 101

A taster course in devising for theatre

Very entertaining,
interactive and informative.
Please come back!

You should definitely
do lots more workshops like
this to inspire budding
playwrights of the
future.

Workshop Participants

John was really engaging
and his love of this profession
was evident throughout.
The students were engaged
and appropriately challenged.
I would have loved more time -
maybe a follow up?!

Meg Searle, Wiltshire College



BOOKING INFORMATION

Contact John Walton at john@foolishhope.com or 07813 961964
for more information.

Running time

95 minutes plus interval

Age guidance

8+

Cast

5 performers

Trailer from our recent R&D



Trailer from the show's Australian run



The most recent draft of the script is available [HERE](#)



**FOOLISH
HOPE!**



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www.foolishhope.com