

13 November 2020

CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE: AUTUMN SEASON UPDATE AND SPRING SEASON PREVIEW

Hugh Dennis and Claire Skinner to star in Michael Frayn's *Benefactors* next February

New dates for *A Merry Little Christmas Celebration* and *Pinocchio*

Online streams for Sheila Hancock, Michael Ball, Joe Stilgoe and *A Merry Little Christmas Celebration*

Following the COVID-19 lockdown until 2 December, Chichester Festival Theatre is deeply sorry to have had to cancel or postpone some of the shows in the Autumn season.

However, we are glad to be able to stream a number of performances to audiences at home; and after 2 December, our Christmas shows are scheduled to go ahead with some date alterations. We are also actively planning our Spring season.

BENEFACTORS

Looking ahead to early 2021, **Hugh Dennis** and **Claire Skinner** – who starred in the BBC's hugely popular *Outnumbered* – will lead the cast of a new production of Michael Frayn's multi award-winning classic comedy, ***Benefactors***.

Directed by **Charlotte Gwinner** in a co-production with Jonathan Church Theatre Productions, and touring to Bath Theatre Royal, Cambridge Arts Theatre, Marlowe Theatre Canterbury, The Lowry Salford and Everyman Theatre Cheltenham after its Chichester run, *Benefactors* is a funny, gripping and wryly shrewd look at the unforeseen consequences of our best intentions.

The production will run at Chichester from 5 – 27 February, and booking will open in early January.

Streaming to audiences at home this Autumn will be:

Facing The Music: Sheila Hancock in conversation with **Edward Seckerson**, Wednesday 18 November at 2.30pm

Facing The Music: Michael Ball in conversation with **Edward Seckerson**, Wednesday 25 November at 2.30pm

Joe Stilgoe – Out of the Shed, Wednesday 25 November at 7.30pm

A new intimate show performed on the Festival Theatre stage – Joe's own songs, classics from Jimmy Webb to Joni Mitchell to Stevie Wonder to Cole Porter – and the spotlight back on his first love, the piano.

A Merry Little Christmas Celebration, Friday 4 December as below

Christmas shows to live, socially distanced audiences at CFT will now run as follows:

A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION – NEW DATES:

Thursday 3 December – Saturday 5 December, Festival Theatre

Thu & Sat 2.30pm & 7.30pm, Fri 7.30pm

Friday 4 December, 7.30pm, Live Stream

A joyous and warming evening of seasonal words and music, with **Simon Callow** reading yuletide poems and an extract from *A Christmas Carol*, and West End singers **Rebecca Caine**, **Emmanuel Kojo** and **Rebecca Trehearn** joining CFT Artistic Director **Daniel Evans** and a special surprise guest each night for a range of traditional carols and festive favourites.

DEAR SANTA will play as originally scheduled:

5 – 24 December, Minerva Theatre at Chichester Festival Theatre

Music, laughter and plenty of (socially distanced) audience participation, with a chance to meet Santa himself after the show. A perfect introduction to theatre for ages 2 – 7.

PINOCCHIO - NEW DATES:

16 December 2020 – 2 January 2021, Festival Theatre

New press night: Tuesday 22 December, 7.00pm

Chichester Festival Youth Theatre present a brand-new version of this classic tale, written especially for them by CFT's Writer-in-Residence **Anna Ledwich** with music by **Tom Brady**. Director **Dale Rooks**, whose work at Chichester includes *The Butterfly Lion*, *The Midnight Gang* and *Running Wild*, will bring her trademark visual flair and gift for storytelling to this darkly magical reinvention. Recommended for ages 7+.

There will be a **Polish-translated** performance of *Pinocchio* on 21 December at 7pm and a **Relaxed Performance** on Sunday 27 December at 2pm.

All remaining shows in the Autumn season have been cancelled. We hope it may be possible to reschedule them in the future. All ticket holders are being contacted with the option of exchanges, credits, refunds or donations.

BOOKING INFORMATION

cft.org.uk 01243 781312

Tickets from £10. Booking for *Benefactors* will open in the New Year.

Prologue: £5 tickets for 16 – 30s

£5 tickets are available for 16 to 30 year-olds for *A Merry Little Christmas Celebration* and *Pinocchio*; sign up for free at **cft.org.uk/prologue**.

Autumn & Spring 2020 sponsors

A Merry Little Christmas Celebration is sponsored by itd Consultants

Pinocchio is sponsored by Henry Adams and Mercer

Seaward Properties sponsor our Autumn season

Benefactors is sponsored by Wiley

Images can be downloaded from cft.org.uk/pressimages, password: festivalpress

For further information please contact Lucinda Morrison, Head of Press on lucinda.morrison@cft.org.uk