

11 November 2021

**CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE ANNOUNCES  
OPENING PRODUCTIONS OF 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON**

***SOUTH PACIFIC* TO PLAY IN LONDON AND ON UK TOUR**

**New plays by KATE MOSSE and ALECKY BLYTHE open Festival 2022, Chichester's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season:**

- Chichester's internationally best-selling author Kate Mosse's new play, ***THE TAXIDERMIST'S DAUGHTER***, premieres in the Festival Theatre in April 2022, directed by **Róisín McBrinn**
- Alecky Blythe's ***OUR GENERATION***, a co-production with the National Theatre, is directed by **Daniel Evans**, opening the Minerva Theatre season
- Festival 2022 will also include **Stephen Beresford's** new play ***THE SOUTHBURY CHILD***, directed by **Nicholas Hytner** with a cast led by **Alex Jennings**, a co-production with The Bridge Theatre, opening at Chichester in June before its London run

**Rodgers & Hammerstein's *SOUTH PACIFIC* transfers to Sadler's Wells in July 2022:**

- **Daniel Evans's** exhilarating Festival 2021 production will open in **Manchester** before its **London** run at **Sadler's Wells**, where **Julian Ovenden** and **Gina Beck** will lead the cast; after which it tours to **Dublin, Newcastle, Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff, Nottingham, Edinburgh, Leeds** and **Canterbury**

**Artistic Director Daniel Evans and Executive Director Kathy Bourne said:**

'The prospect of Chichester Festival Theatre's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary season is a truly joyous one. This Theatre, built by the community, for the community, has been at the heart of West Sussex cultural life since its inception. It was here, in 1962, that Laurence Olivier established the nucleus of the National Theatre company that opened at the Old Vic the following year; so it's especially appropriate that, 60 years on, we begin our Minerva season with a co-production with the National. We are thrilled to be introducing Alecky Blythe's engrossing verbatim work to Chichester audiences with her new play, *Our Generation*.

'And what could be more appropriate for our 60th anniversary curtain raiser in the Festival Theatre than a new play by an internationally best-selling writer with Chichester in her very bones? Not only has Kate Mosse been intimately connected with CFT since childhood, her thrilling and timely play *The Taxidermist's Daughter* is set in historic Chichester itself. We are equally delighted that Róisín McBrinn makes her directorial debut here.

'The importance of forging new partnerships has been given greater impetus by the vicissitudes of the pandemic, so we relish the opportunity for Chichester audiences to see the world premiere of Stephen Beresford's new play *The Southbury Child*, which brings Nicholas Hytner and Alex Jennings back to Chichester for the first time since the mid-1980s, in a co-production with The Bridge Theatre.

'We are always delighted to be able to share work made in Chichester beyond the borders of Sussex, and we're proud to be working with our friends at Sadler's Wells and many other

regional theatres to bring Rodgers & Hammerstein's beloved musical *South Pacific* to wider audiences across the country.

'The full Festival 2022 season will be announced next February, along with a roster of special digital and community events to mark a momentous year for our Theatre and city.'

### **THE TAXIDERMIST'S DAUGHTER**

Adapted for the stage by **Kate Mosse**

A new play based on her novel

Directed by **Róisín McBrinn**

8 – 30 April, Festival Theatre

Press night: Tuesday 19 April at 7pm

1912. In the isolated Blackthorn House on Sussex's Fishbourne Marshes, Connie Gifford lives with her father. His Museum of Avian Taxidermy was once legendary, but since its closure Gifford has become a broken man, taking refuge in the bottle.

Robbed of her childhood memories by a mysterious accident, Connie is haunted by fitful glimpses of her past. A strange woman has been seen in the graveyard; and at Chichester's Graylingwell Asylum, two female patients have, inexplicably, disappeared.

As a major storm hits the Sussex landscape, old wounds are about to be opened as one woman, intent on revenge, attempts to liberate another from the horrifying crimes of the past.

A story of retribution and justice, *The Taxidermist's Daughter* is a thrilling Gothic mystery set in and around historic Chichester. This world premiere is written by Cicestrian **Kate Mosse**, based on her No 1 internationally best-selling novel.

Kate Mosse's novels include The Languedoc Trilogy (*Labyrinth*, *Sepulchre* and *Citadel*), *The Winter Ghosts* and her new historical series, *The Burning Chambers* and *The City of Tears*; non-fiction includes *An Extra Pair of Hands*. She is Founder Director of the Women's Prize for Fiction, Founder of the global Woman in History campaign and Visiting Professor in Contemporary Fiction & Creative Writing at the University of Chichester.

**Róisín McBrinn** is currently Joint Artistic Director of Clean Break; elsewhere she has directed many productions for theatres including The Abbey and Gate Theatres (Dublin), Leeds Playhouse, Sheffield Theatres, Donmar Warehouse, Bush Theatre and Sherman Theatre.

*The Taxidermist's Daughter* will be designed by **Paul Wills**, with casting by **Charlotte Sutton**.

The production is sponsored by Seaward Properties

### **OUR GENERATION**

A new play by **Alecky Blythe**

Directed by **Daniel Evans**

A co-production with the **National Theatre**

22 April – 14 May, Minerva Theatre

Press night: Tuesday 26 April at 6.30pm

(National Theatre: 10 February – 9 April, press night 17 February)

Alecky Blythe's engrossing new verbatim play tells the stories of a generation. Created from five years of interviews with 12 young people from all four corners of the UK, *Our Generation* is a captivating portrait of their teenage years as they journey into adulthood.

Often too extraordinary to be fiction, this funny and moving play is for anyone who is - or has ever been - a teenager.

Daniel Evans directs this co-production with the National Theatre, which runs at the Minerva Theatre immediately following its London premiere.

The cast is **Dee Ahluwalia, Joe Bolland, Anna Burnett, Anushka Chakravarti, Debbie Chazen, Gavi Singh Chera, Rachelle Diedericks, Hasan Dixon, Hélder Fernandes, Sarita Gabony, Conor Gormally, Alex Jarrett, Callum Mardy, Poppy Shepherd** and **Stephanie Street**, who returns to Chichester where she played Diana Ingram in *Quiz* in 2017.

**Alecky Blythe's** acclaimed verbatim musical *London Road* premiered at the National Theatre in 2011 and she later adapted it for the 2015 feature film. Her other work includes *Little Revolution* (Almeida Theatre) and *The Riots: In Their Own Words* for BBC2.

*Our Generation* will be **Daniel Evans's** directorial debut at the National Theatre; as an actor, his work there included *Cardiff East, Peter Pan, Troilus and Cressida, Candide* and *The Merchant of Venice*. His Chichester productions include *South Pacific, This Is My Family, Quiz* and *Fiddler on the Roof*.

*Our Generation* will have set design by **Vicki Mortimer**, costume design by **Kinnetia Isidore**, video design by **Akhila Krishnan**, lighting design by **Zoe Spurr**, sound design by **Paul Arditti**, movement direction by **Carrie-Anne Ingrouille**, music composition, production & direction by **DJ Walde**, dramaturgy by **Sebastian Born** and casting by **Charlotte Sutton**.

### **THE SOUTHBURY CHILD**

A new play by **Stephen Beresford**

Directed by **Nicholas Hytner**

A co-production with **The Bridge Theatre**

13 – 25 June, Festival Theatre

Press night: Friday 17 June at 7pm

(Bridge Theatre: 1 July – 27 August)

Raffish, urbane and frequently drunk, David Highland has kept a grip on his remote coastal parish through a combination of disordered charm and high-handed determination.

But when his faith impels him to take a hard line with a bereaved parishioner, he finds himself dangerously isolated from public opinion. As his own family begins to fracture and his marriage falls apart, David must face a future that threatens to extinguish not only his position in the town, but everything he stands for.

**Stephen Beresford's** darkly comic new play is an exploration of family and community, the savage divisions of contemporary society and the rituals that punctuate our lives. His work includes *The Last of the Haussmans* at the National Theatre, an adaptation of Bergman's *Fanny & Alexander* for The Old Vic and the BAFTA-winning film *Pride*.

Triple Olivier Award-winner **Alex Jennings** returns to Chichester to lead the cast. *The Southbury Child* reunites him with Nicholas Hytner who has previously directed him in *Hymn* and *Cocktail Sticks, Collaborators, The Habit of Art, The Alchemist* and *The Winter's Tale* (all at the National Theatre) amongst others. His many other credits range from *My Fair Lady* to *Stuff Happens* and *Hansard* at the NT, as well as *Hamlet* for the RSC. His screen work includes *The Crown, The Lady in the Van, The Queen, Victoria, A Very English Scandal* and *Small Axe: Mangrove*.

**Nicholas Hytner** also makes a welcome return to Chichester, where he previously directed *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (with a cast including Alex Jennings) in 1985. Director of the National

Theatre from 2003-215, he is Co-Founder of the Bridge Theatre where his recent work includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Beat The Devil*, *Bach & Sons* and the forthcoming *The Book of Dust – La Belle Sauvage* and *Straight Line Crazy*.

The production will have set designs by **Mark Thompson** and costume by **Yvonne Milnes**, with lighting by **Max Narula**, sound by **George Dennis** and casting by **Robert Sterne**.

**Rodgers & Hammerstein's  
SOUTH PACIFIC**

Music by **Richard Rodgers**

Lyrics by **Oscar Hammerstein II**

Book by Oscar Hammerstein II and Joshua Logan

Adapted from the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Tales of the South Pacific* by James A. Michener

**Daniel Evans's** exhilarating, critically-acclaimed Festival 2021 production of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *South Pacific* will open at **Manchester Opera House** (16 – 23 July) before a strictly limited **London** season at **Sadler's Wells** from 27 July – 28 August (press night: 4 August). **Julian Ovenden** and **Gina Beck** lead the cast in Manchester and at Sadler's Wells, recreating their roles as Emile de Becque and Nellie Forbush.

The production will then tour to **Dublin, Newcastle, Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff, Nottingham, Edinburgh, Leeds** and **Canterbury**, with Gina Beck as Nellie and further casting to be announced.

This much-loved Tony and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical, set on a South Pacific island during World War II, boasts one of Rodgers & Hammerstein's most memorable scores, including songs such as *Some Enchanted Evening*, *I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair* and *Bali Ha'i*.

The set and costume designer is **Peter McKintosh**, and the choreographer and movement director, **Ann Yee**. Musical supervision is by **Nigel Lilley**, with musical direction by **Cat Beveridge**, new orchestration by **David Cullen**, original Broadway orchestration by **Robert Russell Bennett**, lighting design by **Howard Harrison**, sound design by **Paul Groothuis**, video design by **Gillian Tan**, additional arrangements and *Happy Talk* orchestrations by **Theo Jamieson**, casting by **Charlotte Sutton CDG** and additional children's casting by **Verity Naughton CDG**.

*South Pacific* is presented by Jamie Wilson, Jonathan Church Theatre Productions, and Gavin Kalin.

For full tour details, visit [southpacificshow.com](http://southpacificshow.com)

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**BOOKING INFORMATION**

Tickets for *The Taxidermist's Daughter* and *Our Generation* go on sale this month. Tickets for *The Southbury Child* will go on sale with the full Festival 2022 season in early spring.

Priority booking for Friends of Chichester Festival Theatre opens:

**Friday 19 November** (online and booking forms only)

**Monday 22 November** (phone and in person)

Booking for Groups and Schools opens:

**Wednesday 24 November**

General booking opens:

**Friday 26 November** (online only)  
**Monday 29 November** (phone and in person)

**cft.org.uk** Box Office **01243 781312**  
Tickets from £10 and **20,000 tickets at £10**

**Prologue: £5 tickets for 16 – 30s**

£5 tickets are available for 16 to 30 year-olds for all productions throughout Festival 2022; sign up for free at **cft.org.uk/prologue**. Members also have access to a range of exclusive events.

Twitter **@ChichesterFT** Facebook **ChichesterFestivalTheatre**  
Instagram **ChichesterFT** YouTube **ChichesterTheatre**

For tickets and booking dates for:

*Our Generation* at the National Theatre, visit [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk)

*The Southbury Child* at the Bridge Theatre, visit [www.bridgetheatre.co.uk](http://www.bridgetheatre.co.uk)

*South Pacific*, visit [southpacificshow.com](http://southpacificshow.com)

*Images can be downloaded from [cft.org.uk/pressimages](http://cft.org.uk/pressimages), password: festivalpress*

**Press contacts**

For further information, please contact the press representatives below:

All press ticket requests for Chichester press nights, and for interviews/information about:

*The Taxidermist's Daughter*

*Our Generation* at Chichester

*The Southbury Child* at Chichester

Lucinda Morrison, Head of Press, Chichester Festival Theatre

[lucinda.morrison@cft.org.uk](mailto:lucinda.morrison@cft.org.uk)

*Our Generation* at the National Theatre

Louisa Terry, Press Officer, National Theatre

[lterry@nationaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:lterry@nationaltheatre.org.uk)

*The Southbury Child* at The Bridge Theatre

Janine Shalom, Premier

[Janine.Shalom@premiercomms.com](mailto:Janine.Shalom@premiercomms.com)

*South Pacific* on tour and at Sadler's Wells

Simon Raw, Raw PR

[simon@rawpr.co.uk](mailto:simon@rawpr.co.uk)