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CASTING ANNOUNCEMENT

Bristol Old Vic and Trafalgar Entertainment Group
present the Bristol Old Vic production of

THE GRINNING MAN

A new musical based on the novel by Victor Hugo
Directed by Tom Morris

"The best puppetry since War Horse" The Mail on Sunday

"The best British score in years" WhatsOnStage

*"An extraordinary amalgam of fairytale, puppetry,
romantic drama and black comedy"* StageTalk

Trafalgar Studios
Opens 6 December 2017

Tickets on sale now

Full casting has been announced for the critically acclaimed production of *The Grinning Man*, directed by Tony award-winning Tom Morris (*War Horse*) and based on the classic Victor Hugo (*Les Misérables*) novel, *The Man Who Laughs*, which opens at the Trafalgar Studios on 6 December.

Sean Kingsley (*Les Misérables*, *Billy Elliot*) and Ewan Black (*Sleeping Beauty*, *The Merchant of Venice*), who previously co-starred in the award-winning Bristol Old Vic production of the musical, have been confirmed to play Ursus and Trelaw in the West End premiere. Sanne den Besten (*Les Misérables*, *Mamma Mia!*), new to the cast, will play Dea, a blind woman who is the childhood friend and closest companion to the show's title character Grinpayne.

This updated production of *The Grinning Man* follows the critically acclaimed premiere of the show in autumn 2016 at Bristol Old Vic. Louis Maskell (*My Fair Lady*, *West Side Story*), who was recently nominated for Best Performance in a Musical for his role in the Bristol production, will again lead the cast in the title role of Grinpayne, the show's disfigured hero. Julian Bleach (*St George in the Dragon*, *Shockheaded Peter*, *The Tempest*), who also starred in the Bristol season, plays the role of the deliciously corrupt court clown Barkilphedro.

Joining the cast are Mark Anderson (*The Toxic Avenger*), Julie Atherton (*Avenue Q*), Jim Kitson (*Much Ado About Nothing*), Sophia Mackay (*The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds her Chameleon Skin*) and Amanda Wilkin (*Hamlet*). Completing the company are James Alexander-Taylor, Christina Bloom, Jonathan Cobb, Leo Elso, Claire-Marie Hall, and Loren O'Dair.

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The Grinning Man is a romantic gothic musical love story, set in a fantastical world with a dark heart, and brought to life by Kneehigh writer Carl Grose (*Dead Dog in a Suitcase*) and “powered by an outstanding score” (Sunday Times) by Tim Phillips and Marc Teitler. Macabre, magical and visually astonishing, this ultimately elating love story is a distinctive delight.

The show reunites Tom Morris with two puppeteers who began their careers inside Joey and Tophorn in the original production of *War Horse* – Finn Caldwell and Toby Olié - now leading their own brilliant puppetry company Gyre & Gimble.

When it opened last year as the climax of Bristol Old Vic’s 250th anniversary programme the critics raved: the Telegraph cited its “blackly comic brilliance”; the Daily Mail hailed it as “weird and wonderful, a dark delight”; the Guardian said the production “deftly walks a tightrope between romantic and grotesque... it defies theatrical convention by keeping its hand on its heart and its tongue in its cheek”.

The Grinning Man is produced by Bristol Old Vic, Trafalgar Entertainment Group, Eilene Davidson, Richard O’Brien, David Adkin and Neil Laidlaw.

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Previews: From Wednesday 6 December
Press night: Monday 18 December at 7.00pm
Performances: Monday – Saturday at 7:30pm, Thursday and Saturday matinees at 2:30pm
Box Office: www.atgtickets.com/trafalgarstudios / 0844 871 7632
Ticket Prices: From £15.00
Website: TheGrinningManMusical.com
Twitter: @GrinningManLDN

The producers of *The Grinning Man* are delighted to continue Bristol Old Vic’s commitment to ensuring that tickets to the highest quality productions remain affordable and accessible, particularly to younger audience members, by offering the following special rate:

£25 UNDER 25 RATE: A general under 25 rate of £25 (redeemable for any standard-priced seat, subject to availability at time of booking) will be available throughout the run for every performance Monday – Thursday inclusive. Meaning that anybody under 25 will be able to see the show during the week at this special accessible rate. This rate will be available through ATG Tickets, the principal ticketing provider for Trafalgar Studios.

BRISTOL OLD VIC

Bristol Old Vic is the longest continuously running theatre in the UK, and celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2016. Under Artistic Director Tom Morris, the historic playhouse aims to inspire audiences with its own original productions, both at home and on tour, whilst nurturing the next generation of artists, whether that be through their 350-strong Young Company, their many outreach and education projects or their trailblazing artist development programme, Bristol Ferment.

Bristol Old Vic uses its funding to support experiment and innovation, to allow access to their programme for people who would not otherwise encounter it, or be able to afford it, and to keep

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their extraordinary heritage alive and animated.

Since 2016, while the theatre continues to present work, it has simultaneously been undergoing a multi-million pound redevelopment project to transform its front of house space into a warm and welcoming public building for all of Bristol to enjoy, create a new studio theatre and open up its unique theatrical heritage to the public for the first time. The project is due to be completed in autumn 2018.

www.bristololdvic.org.uk

TRAFALGAR ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Trafalgar Entertainment Group is a live entertainment business that owns and operates distinctive, stylish cultural buildings as well as creating, distributing and live-streaming innovative content. Based at the iconic Trafalgar Studios in London's West End, it is the latest venture from Sir Howard Panter and Rosemary Squire OBE – two of the most influential entertainment entrepreneurs of the last 20 years.

www.trafalgarentertainment.com

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