

Pigeon

Lunabug Theatre

storytelling, puppetry and live music



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Pegasus

THE
CIVIC
BARNSELEY

The Show...

It all started with an egg, and inside that egg was a squab, a tiny little pigeon. The pigeon grew and grew and learnt to fly. But what this little bird didn't know, is that it had hatched in war time. Soon the call came; the little pigeon was taken far from home, to join the soldiers in their fight. The 'Pigeoneers' tied messages to the pigeon's leg and trained the pigeon to fly in extreme danger, to take them from the battlefields back to base. Soon the pigeon was ready and it travelled with the Pigeoneers to join the troops in their fight. The pigeon flew on many important missions and the pigeoneers were delighted with the lucky bird, who always returned carrying its vital message. One day the pigeoneers were sent on their most dangerous mission yet. They carried their lucky pigeon and two others with them into battle. Soon the pigeoneers found themselves in terrible danger. They needed to send for help. They sent the first two birds, but they were shot down. All that was left was our pigeon, their last hope. The pigeoneers and soldiers watched as this pigeon too, was shot down. All was lost. But then the pigeon rose again. It flew on to deliver the message that saved the soldier's lives. In recognition it was given a medal for bravery (la croix de guerre) and was named forever 'Cher Ami', our Dear Friend. This is the tale of one very special pigeon from WW1. A story worth telling indeed.



'...educational and captivating'

Linzi Tate, Programme Manager, Carriageworks Theatre, Leeds

This true story is brought to life for a family audience through Lunabug Theatre's inventive and visual approach. Drawing on elements of physical comedy and clowning and an interactive performance style, we bring to life this incredible story with warmth and charm.

Developed with the input of children and family audiences, we use everyday objects and live sound effects to imaginative and beautiful effect. The little pigeon is portrayed through use of shadow and puppetry to create moments of simplicity and reflection. Our original score by Chris Reed (The Paper Cinema) features live sound effects created on stage, all accompanied by an original sound design.

As the WW1 Centenary approaches, this is a story suitable for both old and young to connect with big themes told in an engaging and accessible way.

Development of the show...

Lunabug discovered the incredible story of Cher Ami and began creating Pigeon with a week of research and development at Harrogate Theatre in February 2013. The creative team were assembled and spent three weeks of research and development (supported by ACE) at Barnsley Civic in August 2013. This was part of the theatre's CARP residency and culminated in a work in progress showing to a range of ages from 5 years upwards. In February 2014 we spent a further week of development at Pegasus Theatre in Oxford, finishing with a sold out work in progress performance. The show will tour in Autumn 2014 and throughout the centenary years in remembrance of WW1.

Working from a true story for the first time, Lunabug have been fortunate to have input from Leeds University centenary project Legacies of War to support their research. Lunabug Theatre also gratefully acknowledges the support of PRS for Music Foundation. Musician and Composer Chris Reed (The Paper Cinema) is being supported to develop a score and sound effects – foley – that will be performed live as part of the show.

Throughout the development process we have shared the work in progress performances with audiences of children and adults. We think it's important that our creative process includes our audience and we find the feedback from these audiences invaluable.

Who is it for?

Pigeon is for a family audience aged 6+

As the centenary of the First World War approaches, we would like to tell the less well known story of Cher Ami and bring to life the subject in a way that children and their families can understand and relate to. Although the story is of a little pigeon, the themes are very human and touch on ideas of conscription, choice and bravery.

Our experience and development process tells us that family audiences appreciate high quality and inventive theatre, and we are working with an experienced creative team to incorporate puppetry, shadow play, live original music and sound effects into our interactive approach to performance

Some segments of a family audience that the show could appeal to are:

- Intergenerational family groups – the use of shadow and everyday objects in puppetry will appeal to younger audiences, with the themes of interest to both younger and older audiences.
- Existing family audiences with interest in music – the show will feature live music on accordion and sound effects
- Existing family audiences with interest in puppetry – we are working with Tom Waltong (The Borrowers, Northern Stage) to develop imaginative ways of portraying the little pigeon using simple everyday objects
- Audiences interested in learning and schools – Pigeon is based on a true story, and our research is supported by Leeds University's Legacies of War project. We offer tailored participation packages and have lots of facts about pigeons and communications in WW1 to share!
- Audiences with an interest in animals – the character of the little pigeon Cher Ami allows a younger audience to begin to engage with other themes in the show about bravery, conscription and WW1

Who is involved?...

Lunabug Theatre tell original stories with a heart-warming charm. Honest and playful, we create a visual adventure for audiences old and young. We are committed to creating high quality contemporary theatre for all the family to enjoy. We take our audience with us on a magical journey that is crammed with imagination and full of twists and turns. We create a beautiful blend of visual imagery and original sound design, which is all combined with our playful brand of physical storytelling.

The company formed in 2010 with co-artistic directors Beth Caudle and Naomi Rothwell. Our first show, The Dreams of Philomina, was developed with the support of a mentored commission from Emerge Festival and has since toured nationally. We have also developed our innovative participation and outreach program which includes The Memory Project with Ellie Harrison - creative workshops specifically tailored for young people who have experienced bereavement. We are associate artists of Pegasus Theatre and Barnsley Civic.

Naomi Rothwell has worked creatively as a performer and theatre maker since leaving Bretton hall in 2007. As co-founder of Lost Spectacles Theatre Company, she co-created award winning show Lost in the Wind. Naomi's work includes development on Space with Fionn Gill, supported by Ferment at The Bristol Old Vic, Parabola Arts Centre and The Carriageworks. She most recently took part in research and development at Nottingham Playhouse of multi-sensory show WAVE, inspired by The Tempest, for young people with severe and profound disabilities. Naomi is currently working as a freelance performer and workshop facilitator across Yorkshire, and as a performer for Pif-Paf Theatre Company and Tell Tale Hearts Theatre Company.

Beth has worked creatively as a performer, musician and circus artist. Beth's recent work has included aerial and physical theatre performance for Greentop Circus, collaboration with Gerry Flanagan's Shifting Sands Theatre and community theatre and circus across South Yorkshire. Beth currently works as a performer for Pif-Paf Theatre Company and is an Outreach Co-ordinator for Oxford's Christmas Light Night Lantern Procession (Ian Nolan Events). She is also currently devising Hurricane Boy, which is being produced and directed by Ellen Havard (Oxford Playhouse Resident Artist).

The Creative Team...

As well as the core members of Lunabug Theatre, Naomi Rothwell and Beth Caudle, Pigeon brings together the following team of artists:

Musician and Composer - Chris Reed (The Paper Cinema)

Performer and Puppeteer - Tom Walton (Fallen From Grace Theatre Company and Northern Stage)

Director/Dramaturg (first stage of development) - Ellen Havard (Oxford Playhouse Resident Artist)

Technician - Alyson Howe (Paper Birds Theatre Company, Carriageworks Theatre)

Lunabug Theatre are produced by LittleMightyUK, a producing partnership between Gloria Lindh and Dick Bonham who are based in Leeds, West Yorkshire.

Audience comments

Work in Progress at Barnsley Civic Theatre August 2013:

I loved the 'Pigeon training'

...great story and concept- imagery was attractive & engaging for a younger children

I thought the imaginative and engaging use of props was fantastic and demonstrated fantastic knowledge of audience

The story and the characters were so strong that you forgot about the 'work in progress'

Excellent! I cried with the feathers at the end

I fell in love with two forks and a tea strainer!

Work in Progress at Pegasus Theatre, Oxford February 2014:

The storyline was brilliant!

...really funny as well as poignant

Loved the 'phone' and the speaker's eyebrows!

Loved the different coloured gloves and the plane prop

Leila 8 yrs says "Don't change anything!"

So creative and clever! The music really added to it

What was your favourite part? 'All of it'

Example programme copy

First there was an egg and when it hatched the kindly pigeon keeper cared for his dear little pigeon. But not so far away, over the hills and across the sea, all was not well with the world. A war was raging.

Follow the incredible story of an ordinary little pigeon who took an extraordinary flight.

Travel back 100 years to the battle fields of WWI, to a time when lives depended on the flight of pigeons to carry vital messages behind enemy lines. Charming puppets, live music and delightfully daft characters combine to tell this astonishing tale.

Example copy and publicity is still in the design process as the show is still in development.



Show images...



Technical Info and Pricing...

Cast and technical on the road:

3 performers + 1 musician + 1 technician

Minimum space requirements:

Suitable for large studio spaces and small main houses. Exact dimensions are tbc as the show is still in development.

Running time

60 minutes

No interval

Who is it for?

Ages 6+

Family show

Cost

TBC

no VAT

+ Significant travel expenses may be negotiated

+ Expenses for providing technical equipment in non-theatre spaces

Dates available:

Autumn 2014

For further information, availability and bookings please contact:

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Credits:

Graphic Design - Ben Nolan

Photography - Matt Mulligan and Matt Tullet

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