



ENGLISH **CABARET** with **c** theatre

Oscar Wilde's
The Happy Prince
by Sue Casson

A musical touched by magic 



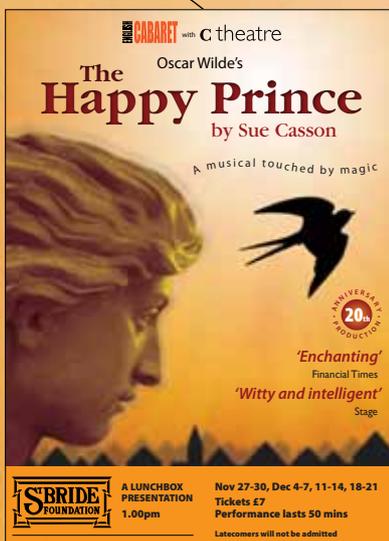
A LUNCHBOX
PRESENTATION
1.00pm

Nov 27-30, Dec 4-7, 11-14, 18-21
Tickets £7

Performance lasts 50 mins

BRIDEWELL THEATRE

020 7353 3331 www.stbridefoundation.org



THE RETURN OF A SOARAWAY SUCCESS

Sue Casson's highly acclaimed musical adaptation of *The Happy Prince* returns to the Bridewell Theatre in a new 20th anniversary production. The original show formed part of the theatre's inaugural season in 1994 and now following a successful run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is ready once again to delight London audiences with its poignant retelling of Oscar Wilde's short story. The tale of the gilded statue prince who, with the help of a migrating swallow, selflessly relieves the hardship of his townspeople is movingly brought to life by a small and versatile cast.

This 20th anniversary production has even more resonance today with its themes of philanthropy, love and loss, and the emptiness of wealth in the face of heartbreaking poverty. At the same time, this version of *The Happy Prince* explores what it is to tell a story, playfully deconstructing the make-believe of theatre and charting the different journeys of the performers.

Crammed full of soaring melodies and witty lyrics, Casson's *The Happy Prince*, as realised by director Tom Blackmore, is a multi-layered musical morality play for our times.

The Bridewell, converted from a Victorian swimming pool, is now one of London's few off-West End theatres and a key performing arts venue in the heart of the City.

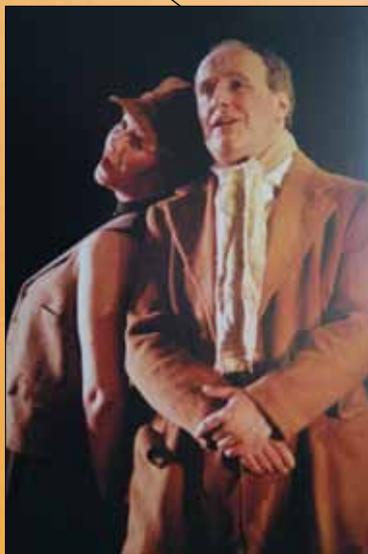
ENGLISH CABARET

English Cabaret, the production company behind *The Happy Prince*, was formed by Blackmore and Casson with a mission to bring ideas to life through story and song. As well as having a variety of film and theatre projects in the pipeline for the coming year, English Cabaret plan to tour *The Happy Prince* to festivals and venues associated with the life of Oscar Wilde including Enniskillen, Dublin, his American tour venues, and Paris.

c theatre

C theatre is the in-house theatre company at C venues at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. C theatre's signature show, *Shakespeare for Breakfast*, has seen brand new editions at Edinburgh every year since 1992. C theatre also brings productions from the UK and around the world to Edinburgh and produces theatre in Edinburgh and further afield. C theatre's productions have transferred and toured to London, North America, Poland and Singapore.





THE STORY OF THE SHOW

Twenty years ago, Sue Casson and Tom Blackmore took Oscar Wilde's well-loved story of a statue prince and a migrating swallow and created what one critic memorably described as 'a little pool of magic'.

Originally work-shopped at Buxton as part of their first Quest for new musicals, the show, with a cast of 4 and a small band, was developed in Bristol's QEH theatre, and subsequently premiered at the Old Fire Station in Oxford the following spring. Over the next year the show was one of the first shows to be recorded for the new Dress Circle label and toured nationwide coming to rest at London's Bridewell Theatre in Christmas 1994.

Since then, *The Happy Prince* has been presented twice in New York - at the Manhattan Theatre Club, with an English cast including Sheridan Smith, and at the York Theatre with an American cast, as part of their developmental reading series, whilst some of the songs were recorded for BBC Radio 2's *NIGHTRIDE* by Casson's jazz trio Premier Cru.

The idea for the newly reworked show was inspired by the growth of Sue and Tom's children. Each of the players embarks on a journey - in the original production they were actors seeking to distinguish themselves, now they are young people seeking to identify themselves. The dynamic between the storyteller, Chorus, and his assistant Pandora reflects this tension as Pandora craves Chorus' power, just as a child wants to usurp a parent.

This new production, a hit at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe, examines in more depth how stories are told and how they foster personal growth.





THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

Having won the Newdigate prize for poetry whilst he was at Oxford, Oscar Wilde's first inclination was to make his name as a poet. Though he had already memorably 'declared his genius' on an American lecture tour and published a slim volume of poetry, his growing celebrity was not yet founded on a firm literary base when he was invited to address a meeting of Cambridge undergraduates late in 1885.

Flattered by their youthful interest, Wilde was prompted to entertain his new friends with a story. Perhaps it was Wilde's recent fatherhood that turned the story into the form of a fairy tale, though as yet his son Cyril was too young to listen, having been born earlier that year. The story was so well received by the students that on returning to his rooms he wrote it down and called it *The Happy Prince*.

Vivyan Holland, Wilde's youngest son describes *The Happy Prince* as a 'poem in prose' rather than a fairy tale and its publication in 1888 as part of a collection of 5 stories, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* established Wilde's literary reputation once and for all.

A FAMILY SHOW IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

As well as being the brainchild of husband and wife team Tom Blackmore and Sue Casson, this production features their two children Lily and Robert. With its fairy tale plot and catchy music set against some more searching adult themes, *The Happy Prince* is that rare animal, a show for all the family.

Sue Casson has recorded the story of *The Happy Prince* for the English Cabaret website where musical highlights from the show are also available.



Bridewell Theatre 2012
Nov 27-30, Dec 4-7, 11-14, 18-21
1.00pm

CAST

THE HAPPY PRINCE
THE SWALLOW
CHORUS
PANDORA

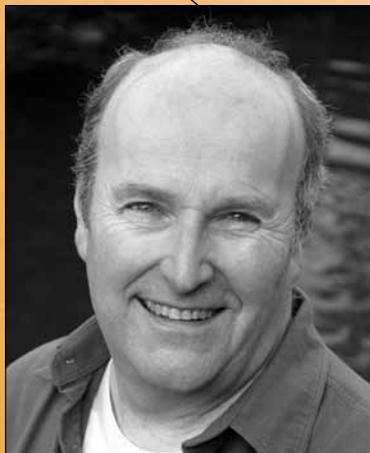
ANDREW BOLTON
ROBERT BLACKMORE
SUE CASSON
LILY BLACKMORE

CREW

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/STAGE
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

DEBORAH MACHIN
TOM BLACKMORE





BIOGRAPHIES

Andrew Bolton

Andrew has appeared in many plays and musicals over a long career, with over 1000 West End appearances to his credit, including 'The Mousetrap' (where he met the Queen in the 50th anniversary year), 'Annie Get Your Gun' and the original casts of 'Fame' and 'Batboy the Musical'.

Playing lead roles in 'Annie', 'My Fair Lady', 'Guys and Dolls' and 'The Threepenny Opera' in regional theatres, he has also toured extensively, in the UK, France, Spain, Germany and the Far East, most recently in 'Half a Sixpence' starring Gary Wilmott produced by Bill Kenwright.

This summer Andrew appeared for the first time at Glyndebourne in Purcell's Fairy Queen directed by Jonathan Kent and then played Egeus in the Midsummer Night's Dream at the Globe and Borough Market.

A great deal of film work in the last few years has taken him to Hollywood playing Father Tanner in the award winning horror classic 'The Scar Crow' as well as many acclaimed prize short films such as 'Memories', 'Anaam' and 'Sally and Clive'. Most recently he appeared in a short film 'Mr Invisible' starring Julian Glover featured at Cannes this year.

Andrew is delighted to return to Tom and Sue and the Happy Prince having toured extensively with the show in 1993 originally playing the role of Chorus.



Robert Blackmore

Robert has a big passion for performing, and introduced a cabaret in the Great hall of Chiddingstone Castle when he was just five, singing parts of *The Happy Prince* for the first time in a concert there a few years later. He sang the solo for Casson's setting of Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier* as part of the soundtrack for *Under an English Heaven*, and also appeared in *Making History* at the Old Fire Station Oxford. Two years ago, he popped up on BBC London News at Kew gardens with Louise Preston talking about trees.





BIOGRAPHIES

Sue Casson - writer and performer

Casson is a songwriter, singer and actor. A graduate in English from St Hugh's College Oxford, she began singing her songs on BBC radio whilst still a student, on *Pen to Paper* and *Pick of the Week*, which led to commissions from BBC Schools radio and local TV. On leaving she joined the BBC spending time as a producer of World Service arts programmes, *Book Choice* and *Meridian*, but found the lure of performing too strong. Using her place in the final of the Vivian Ellis Prize for writers of the musical stage as a springboard to leave, her career since has been a tapestry of writing, performing, acting, voice-over and teaching.

Radio credits include appearances on *Stop the Week*, *Pick of the Week*, *Word of Mouth* (R4), *Cocktails with Kit & The Widow*, (R3) and several sessions for *Night Ride* (R2) TV composing credits for Children's BBC - *Melvin & Maureen's Music-a-grams*, *Millie's Models* and *Superbods*.

Cabaret with The Brannick Academy – 2 CDs based on their stage shows - *Elegantly Wasted* and *Tutankhamun All Wrapped Up*.

As well as this year's Happy Prince production, Sue's Edinburgh fringe credits include *Two Tigers* (1988), *Requiem* (1996) songs for Simon Rae's adaptation of *The Life & Times of President Ubu* (2006) and his children's shows - *The Pirate, The Potato and the Camel, not forgetting the parrot*, (2007) and *The Pirate and The Potato... in Space*. (2008) *Cabaret After Midnight with Premier Cru* (1989) with poet Simon Rae and Willie Rushton (1991 and 1992).

Most recently Casson has written a choral adaptation and setting of Rupert Brooke's war sonnets for girls choir as a soundtrack to *Under an English Heaven*, Tom Blackmore's intimate history of the Nuremberg trials, due for release next year.





BIOGRAPHIES

Lily Blackmore

Lily is in her third year of leading the Southwark Cathedral Girls Choir as Launderer Chanter. With them she has twice sung choral evensong for BBC Radio 3 and was part of the televised Easter Eucharist, on BBC 1. She has sung for the Queen, and last Christmas sang at the Royal Albert Hall with John Rutter. Lily's flute playing can also be heard alongside Casson on her most recent CD, *Beachcomber*. She made her stage debut playing Mo in Blackmore's *Making History*, at Sevenoaks Stag and at the Old Fire Station in Oxford. She is also to appear in *Under an English Heaven*.



Deborah Machin

Debs is studying drama at Bristol University. She has been involved in theatre since the age of 9, including a stint in panto, but her most recent credits include productions at Bristol as director (*Anything Goes*), producer (*Cy Rano*), actor (*Something's Got to Give*) and DSM (*The Temporal Tale of the Tortoise and the Hare*). In the 2011 summer season at the Westacre Theatre, Norfolk she performed in *Cabaret* and *Animal Farm*.





BIOGRAPHIES

Tom Blackmore – story adaptor and director

Tom has been developing new work for the theatre for 20 years, adapting and directing new work by writers such as Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Jean Findlay, Simon Rae, and Sue Casson.

He produced his first play at Edinburgh, by Robert Farrar, whilst at Winchester College, and has produced and directed at the fringe many times since. Credits include *Two Tigers* (Pleasance), *Call me Susan* (Traverse), Jean Findlay's first solo play with the Grassmarket Project, Casson and Rae's *Requiem* (Café Royal), and Simon Rae's adaptation of *The Life & Times of President Ubu* (Venue 45).

Away from Edinburgh, he has directed two further Rae plays, *A Quiet Night In* (Finboro) and *The Pill Box*, as well as the original *Southwark Mysteries* in Southwark Cathedral.

Tom has also had a long association with the cabaret of Casson and The Brannick Academy, conceiving, writing and directing their cabaret shows from *After Midnight with Premier Cru* to the their most recent, *Tutankhamun All Wrapped Up*, inspired by his experiences in the Valley of the Kings with the Armana Royal Tombs Project, which he also explores in his film *Last Call for Nefertiti*.

His own first play, *Making History*, an intimate history of the Nuremberg Trials, based on recovered letters exchanged between chief British prosecutor David Maxwell Fyfe and his wife in 1946, was premiered in Britain to critical acclaim, and is the basis for his latest film exploring the evolution of human rights following the trials, *Under an English Heaven*.

As well as his theatre work, Blackmore creates films that employ melody and humour to challenge, provoke and teach.





REVIEWS OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY PRODUCTION

'That rare thing - a well-written new musical.....Casson's harmonies could give Andrew Lloyd Webber a run for his money'

Stage

'There can be no more charming and radiant a show at the Fringe... consistently entertaining from start to finish'

www.ayoungertheatre.com

'A quirky, endearing treat'

Three Weeks Edinburgh

REVIEWS OF THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

'An enchanting musical – it makes a fine evening: no sex, no violence, no reality'
Financial Times

'Casson's witty lyrics and soaring melodies transform a simple morality fable into a poignant meditation on the nature of poverty, generosity and the illusion of theatre'

Big Issue

'A little pool of magic. The music had variety and charm, the concept was simple and relevant'

Derbyshire Times

'The power of imagination was fully exploited by the company which presented a novel adaptation of Oscar Wilde's enchanting tale'

Darlington & Stockton Times



For more information, photos and musical highlights from the show go to
www.englishcabaret.co.uk