

## News and Events

Welcome to the The HopBarn's newsletter, which provides information and insights into The HopBarn, as well as offering further notification of up coming events and performances.

We hope that such information proves to be useful and informative to our readers, but if you would like to offer feedback and suggestions as to what to include or what to focus on, please feel free to e-mail or write in with your suggestions and we will try to accommodate them where best we can.

### A Look Back Over the Summer

The summer period is often the most prolific for both The HopBarn and the for the main farm business, and this year has been even more so. Since late June, The HopBarn has hosted a number of different theatre companies, all of which have been associated with *In Good Company*, the regions development programme for young theatre companies and directors. *The HopYards* played their annual *Summer Blues and Jazz* event towards the end of July and the culmination of The Lowry's Centre for Advanced Training in Dance 10th Birthday celebrations took place at The Lowry, Salford Quays during the week of the 24th to 29th July.

In addition, The HopBarn supported both the annual *Gate to Southwell Festival* and the *Music Festival* with host accommodation for musicians taking part, along with vital rehearsal space for the Music Festival prior to the week's events taking place around

Southwell from 21st – 26th August.

All of the above, took place in front of a backdrop of farm activity as preparations and undertaking of the harvest could not be postponed (although the weather did its very best to try and delay this somewhat).

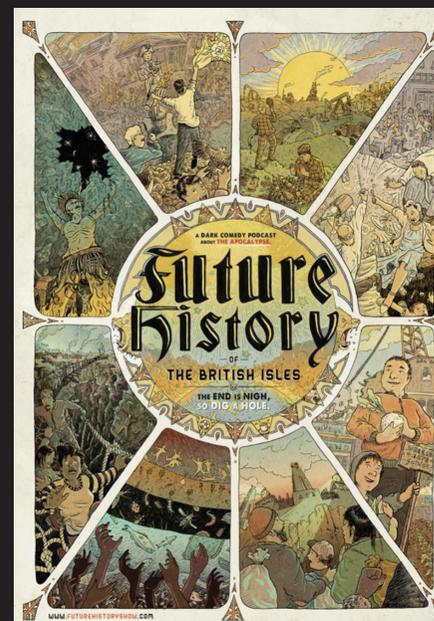
It has therefore, been a rather dynamic period and hopefully as we start to move into the autumn, a calmer and more serene landscape will start to emerge. There are however, some fantastic musicians and groups booked throughout the autumn and winter helping to ensure that the summer festival feelings linger well into the end of the year.

### Influencing Machine *A Future History of The British Isles* 24th to 29th November 2019

After receiving acknowledgement from *In Good Company* during a scratch night event, writer Hugh Dichmont was offered further funding as part of the Big House Project (a multi-million pound opportunity funded by the European Development Fund) to spend a week at The HopBarn to further develop his ideas and theatre writing.

Hugh's theatre company *Influencing Machine*, is based in Nottingham and delves into dark comedy and the surreal. Their current production *The Future History of the British Isles* is largely a satirical look at the consequences of ignoring and not acting on events that could potentially cause the country to face an apocalypse. The work stems from a series of individual podcasts that Hugh Dichmont wrote and presented before applying for additional funding in order for the work to be

amalgamated together into a full-length production. Initially *The Future History of the British Isles* was presented as a series of sketches at a number of scratch night events across the east midlands, although whilst at The HopBarn, Hugh brought the individual sketches together, linking them in order to spawn a more concise and detailed full-length work.



Hugh's world is somewhat chaotic, a continuous jump from mini disasters and dilemmas resulting in a rather surreal encounter between cast and audience members. The action has the sense of someone who has ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder) who cannot sit still and loses their focus as quickly as their lines. This is not helped by the way the stage design encircles the audience members into the performance world with endless old clothes, draped and hung over washing lines as if you were in a laundrette or charity shop. It's a bit of a mess, done on purpose to make the audience feel on edge even before the action has begun. This strategy, despite its rather chaotic direction works well however, that is

once you get used to the work jumping in and out of one scenario into another without any warning. Some scenes never quite seem to be brought to a conclusion before Hugh switches the action and the direction in to something new. Like a medley of your favourite playlist songs jumping from one to another, this work captures your attention due to the action never pausing enough to allow you to think or contemplate on what just took place.

On the surface, this is a fun and entertaining work that features an extraordinary array of bizarre and surreal encounters following fracking activity in and around a north Nottinghamshire village. Under the surface however Hugh is drawing a more immediate concern to the dangers of ignoring the scientific evidence of climate change.

Because of the nature of the work is surreal and satirical, a week of research and development was never going to be enough to pull the threads of this work into a more tangible piece ready for performance. This work needs time to ferment and fine tune its voice before it can be considered having a strong performance foundation, although given Hugh's determination and creative passion, there is no doubt that *The Future History of the British Isles* will feature as a live piece of performance work sometime in the near future.

[influencingmachine.org.uk](http://influencingmachine.org.uk)



Olwen Davies (Front) and Ollie Smith In *The Future History of The British Isles*

**Motherland –  
Derby Theatre Departure Lounge  
Package Holiday recipient 2019  
Monday 1st – Saturday 7th July 2019**

Taking a completely different view point and direction for her work, Jo Tyabji a performer and director of British and Indian descent undertook a week of rehearsals at The HopBarn following her successful application to Derby Theatre as part of *The Departure Lounge Festival – Package Holiday 2019*.

This annual opportunity, which has taken place each year since 2016, awards a theatre company the opportunity to reside at The HopBarn and intensely focus on a piece of theatre in order to prepare it for performance as part of The Departure Lounge Festival as well as other platforms in the UK and abroad.

Motherland, the title of this year's work was submitted with the view that the Departure Lounge Festival will be a pre-cursor to the work being taken up to Edinburgh and presented as part of the Fringe Festival

In stark contrast to Hugh Dichmont, Jo presents a defiant, accusing and finger pointing jibe at the direct links between ethno-religious nationalism that is taking place both in India as well as in the UK.

The work is political in the extreme and there is no apology from Jo towards her stance on what she considers the farcical and dangerous world of leaders today, caused by the global rise of national populism. The main focus of this attack is Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has been accused of genocide following his role in the deaths of hundreds if not thousands of Muslims in Gujarat in 2002. It was Modi's role within the regional government that has continued to blight his international reputation, and for Jo, Modi's personal involvement in the killings continues along with current rhetoric,

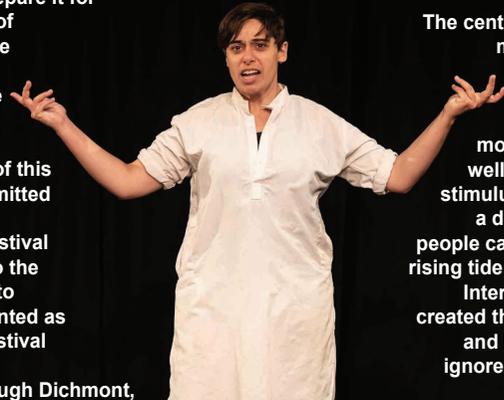
to maintain the ethnic and religious divide between Muslims and Hindu's living in India. For Jo, this is clearly orchestrated by Modi.

Modi is not alone in this attack. Following Modi's 3-day visit to the UK in November 2013, and his subsequent appearance at Wembley stadium in front of 60,000 people; David Camaron gave a passionate speech setting out a vision for the the future relationship between India and Britain. For Jo, the UK Government's decision to forget or ignore Modi's past demonstrated a sense of lazy white supremacism and again there is anger in her work that such a blatant disregard for justice could be washed over for gaining future aspirations of the British Government in its relationship with India.

The central theme and subject matter is continuously supported by further references to other political movements and Jo does well to weave the array of stimulus together to present a detailed picture of how people can be swept up in a rising tide of national populism. Interesting is the distance created that focuses on the UK and India, but deliberately ignores the politics of North America.

The work was originally presented as 30-minute draft although the intention was to extend the work to 60-minutes. To convey her message, Jo utilises found sound, interviews and speeches from actual events that have taken place, editing them together into one full length transcript which is then played out through a PA system. The performer (Jo herself) through lip-sinking, exaggerates each political message through tightly choreographed body language and facial expressions, mimicking the speakers dynamic message as though possessed by the speaker themselves. It's a clever use of *micky-moussing* through physical re-enactment, whilst providing a clear message that the hate and division encouraged through such leadership

(Centre) Jo Tyabji performing in Motherland



is not what Jo herself adheres to.

Whether you agree with Jo or not, or whether you find connection to the political messages that she is trying to highlight, this does not seem to matter; what is brought across however is the technique in which Jo uses her body and acting skills to bring across a personal representation of how two distinct cultures have equal and profound political implications when it comes to the acceptance of other ethnic and religious fractions. The work clearly wants to bring about dialogue and debate in order to ensure that what she feels is the rising tide of populism inevitably repeating history's past mistakes.

**Ben Norris – The Distance  
Monday 15th to Saturday 20th August 2019**



Akin to Hugh Dichmont, Ben Norris was also successful in gaining additional support from *In Good Company* through the Big House Project to re-visit a work that started life in 2018.

Through Ben's work, serious questions are raised in regards to the amount or rather lack of pastoral support provided to young athletes who strive for excellence and the ultimate dream, but unfortunately due to injury or other unfortunate events, are prevented from reaching their ultimate goal.

This is a largely semi-autobiographical work and directly relates to Ben's own experience of striving as a long distant runner only to find his dream shattered following an injury that meant he was dropped from team GB. Here, questions are raised as to how such incidences are properly managed by coaches and team managers and whether enough is done to support the athletes both physically and mentally following such unfortunate events. For Ben, the notion of young bodies, not yet sufficiently developed to warrant the stress and strain of intense training, as well as the mental pressure of continuing to achieve such high expectations, can cause immense trauma if and when injury occurs. It is a scenario that applies to many areas of sports and the arts from Football to Ballet where young people commit themselves whole heartedly in order to meet the required

expectations of their coaches and teachers, only to find themselves abandoned if they do not meet the required standards.

Within the subtext of the play, Ben questions the support network and ability of such coaches

and teachers to probably manage such exits in order that the young people are given a proper transition period with the hope of finding a suitable alternative.

The play is not solely focused on the disappointment, but incorporates the friendship, rivalry, and coming-of-age between two athletes who form a close and lasting relationship as they train alongside each other. All or most of the action is centred on or around two treadmills, as the audience follow the stories of the two

athletes as they run alongside each other getting hotter and sweeter and inevitably losing their breath. It's a physically demanding work that requires great fitness levels between the performers as they push themselves harder and harder to replicate the physical demands of the training that they have both endured.

There is still much work to be done on the script and direction of this work, but substance is there that warrants further attention. If Ben can only find the time to probably give to the writing and direction, there would certainly be a piece of theatre that connects to an awful lot of young people who have found themselves in similar situations.

### The HopYards – Summer Blues and Jazz Saturday 20th July 2019

It seems that a sure sign of summer each year and one that has become an annual event at The HopBarn is the Summer Blues and Jazz evening that features The HopYards.

The HopYards have established a good reputation for presenting popular Jazz and Blues numbers and whilst their previous set lists have included a number or well known numbers *Fever, Cry Me a River, Liquid Lunch* for example, they have recently started to work intently on presenting works that may not be so well known and have a more profound meaning.

Their recent set includes a fantastic rendition of Melody Gardot's *Morning Sun* a powerful and emotionally charged number that details the hopes and optimism of getting through a difficult period. For Leona who leads the band on vocals, this song has particular meaning for her and it clearly shows in her delivery. The lyrics contain an extremely poignant and thought provoking reaction, and coupled with Leona's powerfully deep and soulful voice mean that this one song seems to endorse The HopYards in the quality of their work.

They are not afraid too of taking risks and

trying something a little different. Now a little more established, The HopYards are deciding their own interpretation and arrangements. Even the recent addition of *Creep* by Radiohead, a song not considered to be Jazz or Blues has provided a fresh new direction and one that perhaps will allow The HopYards to continue to be a more creative and experimental in the future.

Joining The HopYards, Sam Adams who played at The HopBarn in September 2018 as part of Plug In Tune Up, brought his own interpretation of some well known numbers along with his own collection of songs. Sam has clearly developed since last year and it was a real pleasure to have him as support for this event

The HopYards have a new website now and are a little more active on Social media so its worth looking back and perhaps hearing some of their current numbers to get a better sense of how far they have come since the early days when they were playing lounge bar style Jazz as background music to dinners and parties.

Have a look at [www.thehopyards.org](http://www.thehopyards.org) with links to social media



The HopYards

### The Lowry CAT Alumni Project Sat 28th and Sunday 29th July 2019

Having undertaken two periods of Research and Development at The HopBarn during February and June, and a full week's rehearsals at The Lowry back in April, the

culmination of The Lowry CAT Alumni Project took place at The Lowry towards the end of July.

The project, which was commissioned to mark the 10th Birthday Celebrations of The Lowry's Centre for Advanced Training in Dance (CAT) featured 6 dancers who each began their formal dance training as part of this amazing scheme. Having worked with the former Centre for Advanced Training Manager at The Lowry, the Alumni students presented *enMass*, a work that focused on the physical demands of counterbalances and containment; a feature of American Sculptor Richard Serra. The choreography drew on the physical demands of the dancers as they pursued extreme contact work that supported each of the dancer's weight, playing on gravity and the risk of collapse.

The celebration event entitled *Past, Present and Future* not only featured the alumni students but also included a number of works featuring the current student cohort. Works presented included an excerpt of *The Birth of Destruction* created for The Lowry CAT in 2018 by the world renowned Akram Khan Dance Company. This dynamic and physically demanding work focused on the Hindu God Shiva, the Creator and the Destroyer. A fabulous work that challenges the dancers in both physical energy and performance technique.

Funded by the Department for Education's Music and Dance Scheme, The Lowry CAT is one of 9 centre's across England that provides high quality training and nurturing in dance for young people who aspire to succeed in dance. What's distinctive about these programmes is that they allow access to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and whose families could not afford the full cost of such high profile training to embark on a life in dance and therefore receive a direction in their lives. The CATs are a remarkable initiative that were first established in 2009 and have now spawned a truly lasting legacy. The Lowry CAT programme was established in 2009 and was the last programme to be implemented to cover the North West region.

This celebratory event marked an important milestone in the life span of the CAT programmes as they have now been endorsed by a number of successive governments with varying political agendas. What it means is that due to the nature of the CAT schemes being able to support students from a diverse range of social, ethnic and religious backgrounds, along with providing them with a life direction into professional dance training and beyond; they have become an important part of the dance ecology and more importantly are recognised for supporting social change in young people who would otherwise miss out on such life chances.



*Past, Present and Future* definitely felt like an achievement although it was not so much a case of how much has been achieved, but a case of how much more can be achieved in the future now that the foundations have been properly laid and allowed to set.

## Forthcoming Events

**Sunjay**  
A True Blue Music Event  
28 Sep 2019  
£15.68 (Incl Booking Fee)



"Sunjay is very much the man of the moment. Not so much the flavour of the month is the flavour of the year." – Living Tradition

You could be forgiven for thinking at first listen that Sunjay is older than his 22 years. With a relaxed and confident manner, vocal style and mastery of his instrument he walks onto a stage and addresses the audience as though he is sitting down to play music with a group of close friends; a completely natural approach for a young man who picked up the guitar when he was just 4 years old and hasn't put it down since.

Drawing from a rich, musical and cultural background it is hardly surprising that Sunjay has quickly become recognised as one of the UK's rising stars. His performances have been described as "mature & confident", while his guitar playing has been hailed as "superb, brilliant, experienced, intricate & faultless".

"Listen, watch and take note." -  
FATEA Magazine

**Richard Smith**  
A Gate To Southwell Event  
12 Oct 2019  
£13 (adv) £15 (on the door)

Without doubt one of the finest guitarists in the world, Richard started playing the guitar at age 5 and has never looked back. Focusing early on with the fingerstyle guitar of Chet Atkins and Jerry Reed, he began transcribing classical music, Jazz, the gypsy style of Django Reinhardt, bluegrass, ragtime, the blues and even Sousa marches.

Now a seasoned performer in his forties he has thousands of performances worldwide to his credit. In 2018, Richard performed in five continents... North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia including performances with and alongside Tommy Emmanuel, Eric Clapton, Albert Lee, Dave Peacock, Martin Taylor, Brent Mason, Gary Brooker, Stuart Duncan, Bryan Sutton, Joe Brown, Ralph McTell and many others.



"The most amazing guy I know on the guitar., play anything I know, only better!"

Chet Atkins

"If you like my playing, you should hear Richard Smith! The world champion!"

Tommy Emmanuel

Book Online @ [thehopbarn.org.uk/whatsonmusicandperformance](http://thehopbarn.org.uk/whatsonmusicandperformance)



[www.thehopbarn.org.uk](http://www.thehopbarn.org.uk)

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