

JORVIK Viking Festival

presents

Egil Skallagrimsson Keeps His Head

Adapted from episodes of the 10th Century Egil's Saga

by Nobby Dimon

Wednesday 17th & Thursday 18th February 2010

National Centre for Early Music



EGIL SKALLAGRIMSSON KEEPS HIS HEAD

Adapted from episodes of the 10th Century Egil's Saga
by NOBBY DIMON

– THE COMPANY –

SUSAN JINKS

SIMON KIRK

THOMAS FRERE

NOBBY DIMON

Set Design & Construction – Malcolm Wood
Support - Jacquie Wood & Gillian Howells

The Icelandic Sagas paint a picture of a well-established Viking culture across modern Nordic countries and the British Isles. They are often the only written source of social and political history in the Early Middle Ages. But they blur the lines between mythic and imaginary characters and historical events. It is however the beauty and power of the poetry for which they are most prized.

Many years ago North Country Theatre created and performed a piece of street theatre for the festival, but now they have been commissioned to perform a slightly more substantial piece, not a fully fashioned play but something of a halfway house for festivalgoers of every age. Egil's Saga was requested as it mentions Jorvik and Erik Bloodaxe, the Viking king of the city.

Poetry in Old Norse, with its peculiar punchiness and kennings*, is hard to render into modern English, but we have tried to capture some of the flavour – the distant echo of the Viking bard reciting his poetry in the fire-lit hall – whilst lightly sprinkling the story with a little modern humour.

*highly stylised metaphors for well-known ideas or objects

e.g. whale road = the sea, raven's feast = dead on battlefield

Nobby Dimon has been the Artistic Director of North Country Theatre since it was founded in 1996. He has been writer and adapter as well as director of most of the company's output since then, including acclaimed adaptations of J L Carr's *A Month in the Country*, Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*, as well as writing the large-scale community play for Richmondshire *Last Dance of a Dalesman* which moved its audiences from gales of laughter to tears and back again. His adaptation with Simon Corble of Buchan's *The 39 Steps* inspired the West End production that received the Olivier award for BEST NEW COMEDY in 2007. Described as 'uproariously funny ...strikingly inventive' in the Guardian, as well as being the Critic's Choice it also won the People's Choice Award and the Broadway production a couple of Tony Awards.

Thomas Frere first performed with North Country as Hannay in *The 39 Steps* and since then as Mak in *Mak the Sheep Stealer*, Jesus in *The Passion Plays* and in *Moll Flanders*. He made his directorial debut with *The Man who Would Be King*. He has performed at many repertory theatres including Liverpool Everyman, Lancaster Dukes Theatre, Southampton Nuffield, York Theatre Royal, West Yorkshire Playhouse and Bolton Octagon. He has toured with countless other productions, including the hit musical *The Return to the Forbidden Planet*.

Susan Jinks trained at Mountview Theatre Academy and is now an established Yorkshire-based actress. Her most recent work includes the film *Babbling Fools* and playing Davina Pike in *Emmerdale*. She has appeared in six North Country productions, including *Moll Flanders*, *Northanger Abbey* and *The Electrical Wizard of the North*.

Simon Kirk has appeared in tours of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *The Electrical Wizard of the North*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, *The 39 Steps*, and *Cartimandua* for North Country Theatre. He has toured with companies including Midsomer Actors, Heartbreak, Found Theatre and many more. His film and TV credits include *Emmerdale*, *The Bill*, *Casualty*, *Conviction*, *Mary Tudor* and *Historyonics*. Simon also writes and directs plays and is currently working on a piece about the end of the Roman Empire in Britain for English Heritage.

North Country Theatre is a professional company based in the beautiful market town of Richmond North Yorkshire. Since it began in 1996 it has created many original new plays along with exciting adaptations of classic novels under the direction of its Artistic Director Nobby Dimon. It specialises in taking professional theatre to rural areas and in site specific work. It is a Regularly Funded Client of Arts Council England. The next production Blood Wedding in Wensleydale opens at Harrogate theatre on 29th September and tours through to 4th December.

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An annual subscription of £20 per household brings newsletters and events and helps to support the company's work. Contact Tim Kendall on timkenda11@aol.com or see www.northcountrytheatre.com

