THE GIFT OF STONES
BY JIM CRACE

“Salute the liars – they can make the real world disappear and a fresh world take its place”

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE AND DIRECTED BY NOBBY DIMON

PROGRAMME £2
North Country Theatre is a professional theatre company based in the beautiful market town of Richmond in North Yorkshire. Under the direction of its Artistic Director Nobby Dimon it has created many original new plays along with exciting adaptations of classic novels since it began in 1996. It has a special understanding of the nature of touring to a rural area as well as educational and site specific drama. It is committed to giving exciting, entertaining and intelligent theatre to audiences whose access to live theatre is limited by geography or who simply enjoy sharing the experience of live theatre in their local community.

We would like to express our gratitude to the local promoters, the majority of whom are unpaid, whose hard work allows us to visit their venues. We’d also like to thank our Angels who by committing to regular giving have not only endorsed our work but kept the company on the road for another three years at least. To find out more download the brochure from www.northcountrytheatre.com or ring 01748 825362.

What You Will

Can you believe it? 2016 will be North Country Theatre’s 20th anniversary!

To celebrate we’d like to do something special, something the company has never done before, but which it can’t do without your help.

We’re planning to do a North Country Shakespeare and to invite actors who have worked with the company over the last 20 years to come together to do a short outdoor run of Shakespeare’s best comedy Twelfth Night or What You Will.

We’re planning seven performances in Richmondshire at the end of June and beginning of July plus an extra one in Shropshire where we have an enthusiastic audience who have booked us from the early days.

However, employing ten actors (and Shep) is way beyond our usual budget/means, so we will need substantial extra sponsorship.

Behind The Gift of Stones

This year’s production received financial support not just from North Country’s Friends and Angels but also two small awards from Arts Council England through the Grants for the Arts scheme.

The first grant funded a two week development period in May when Nobby Dimon had the time to research and explore ideas for The Gift of Stones along with three actors, without the pressure of an imminent deadline.

One exciting part of this process was a weekend in Norfolk where they spent a day with John Lord, a flint knapper and expert in the Neolithic. They found it fascinating to watch and listen as John shaped fine tools and arrowheads from rough flint cores, and then they tried to work the material themselves under his tuition. It was a really great experience. John also makes prehistoric flutes from hollowed out elder and he has given us some eerie music he recorded to use in the production.

Here you can see Mark, Nobby and Vivienne looking into one of the passages that radiated out from the deep pit. This was a rich source of black flint. Tools made from this particular flint have been found at Neolithic sites across Europe which shows that there was international trade taking place all those thousands of years ago!
Jim Crace
“A writer of hallucinatory skill” John Updike
Jim Crace is the author of 13 novels and books of stories as well as many essays and journalism, and has won many literary prizes. This year he was awarded the prestigious (and valuable) international Impac award, and he has been short listed twice for the Booker Prize, most recently in 2013 for Harvest. The Gift of Stones (1988) was his second published book.

“Amongst the many attributes that human beings have, which aren’t possessed by other animals – such as making fire, dressing ourselves in clothes, laughter, all of those things we have - amongst those many things which distinguishes us as human beings is the ability to invent the past and imagine the future and turn it into stories.” Jim Crace

His other work includes:

Copies of Jim Crace’s book The Gift of Stones are available after the show price £9. Supplied by Castle Hill Bookshop, Richmond, who also have copies of his other books.

Call in or ring 01748 824243 or order online at www.castlehillbookshop.co.uk for next day delivery. Castle Hill Bookshop have just celebrated 40 years of excellent local service. Shop local, shop ethically and keep the richness and diversity of your local market place

Director’s Note
The Gift of Stones appealed to me because it is about the origins of storytelling and by extension the origins of theatre, because its language has a poetry which is not found often in contemporary fiction and because its remote setting is both strange yet recognisable. “The past is another country, they do things differently there”, but Crace reminds us that even our remote ancestors share intellect and feelings with us.

I have a personal reason for being drawn to this book. The central character loses his right arm as a boy and struggles to be much use in his flint-knapping community until he discovers his gift is not stones but storytelling. I have limited use of my right arm and leg because of cerebral palsy but like the character I have found a role in life as an entertainer, a storyteller. This is only the second time North Country has adapted the work of a living author, (some may remember we adapted Ian McEwan’s TV play The Imitation Game in 2005), but we have plundered the work of some of the best, Austen, Kipling, Defoe, Conan Doyle, Lorca, J L Carr, and we are proud to add Jim Crace to that list.

Why adapted existing material? Well we are in good company doing so. Shakespeare himself mostly adapted plots and characters from other authors, poets, and chroniclers and did so I think because his talent was in the dramatic arts, the public presentation and sharing of a story rather than its private communication. We are trying to make not a replica of an existing thing but a new thing which opens up the story in a different way.

Nobby Dimon

The Gift of Stones
By Jim Crace

Adapted for the stage and scripted by Nobby Dimon

CAST

Daughter/Doe    Vivienne Garnett
Father (when older)    Nobby Dimon
Father (when younger)    Mark Cronfield
Leaf/Villager/Horseman/Farmer    Martin Dower
Horseman/Cousin    Edward Darling

Digital backdrop design    Andy Thursfield
Costume    Alice Lawson
Lighting design    Tony Wilcock
Music/sfx    Dave Harris, John Lord
Rehearsal stage management    Lindsay Trenholme
Director    Nobby Dimon
Company Administrator    Colin Bailey
Fundraiser/PR    Gillian Howells

THERE WILL BE AN INTERVAL. DURATION TO BE ANNOUNCED

We are grateful to the many Angels of the North Country and the Friends of North Country Theatre for their continuing sponsorship which keeps us on the road.

Also Richmond Town Council, the Elm House Trust, G W Cadbury Trust, Richmond Fairtrade Group, the Upper Wensleydale Newsletter, thecitysecret, John Blenkiron & Sons, Dawn Clarkson & Associates, Yorkshire Country Holidays and Cllr Clive World the Mayor of Richmond.

We’d also like to thank people who support the company throughout the year along with those who have helped with this production: Simon Kirk, Nicola Moxey, John Lord, Will Lord, Ray Davies at Garden House Pottery, Richmond YMCA, Dales Countryside Museum, Castle Hill Books Richmond, Andy Thursfield, Richmondshire District Council, Carillion, John Ward, Wendy Patch, Gilly’s Trade Supplies, Richmond Company of Fellmongers, Amy Brannigan, Caroline Woodroffe, Jenny & Tony Power, Mike Nicholls, Fayе Doorbar, Amanda Cook, Geoff Wall, Tim Kendall, Judith Brickwood, Donald & Nina Cline, Wilma Burniston, Liz Floyd, Mike Potter, Julian Farrand, Brenda Hale.
Alice Lawson  Costume
Alice trained in costume making in Leicester, apprenticing in traditional bespoke tailoring before moving to New Zealand for a change of scenery. Swapping suiting and tweeds for fake fur and foam with a mascot making company. Now back home in Richmond, she runs a business making whatever people want, and dabbling in costume whenever the opportunity arises. Contact 0774 2922384.

Tony Wilcock  Lighting
Tony is currently the Production Manager at The Georgian Theatre Royal but has worked for many national touring companies across the UK and worldwide including Northern Broadsides and Jean Anne Ryan Worldwide Productions. He worked on North Country Theatre’s productions of The Lost World, Blame it on Bartle! A Month in the Country and looks forward to working with them once again on The Gift of Stones.

Dave Harris  Sound
Dave has written music for theatre, television and film, is an award-winning songwriter and also a session musician. Previous work for North Country Theatre includes music direction and arrangement for The Passion Plays, Last Dance of a Dalesman, and Blame it on Bartle!, composing and recording the soundtrack for 2001 Space Idiocy, Moll Flanders, The Prisoner of Zenda, the seventh annual production of The 39 Steps, The Rocking Horse Winner, The Lighthouse on Shivering Sands and A Month in the Country.

Lindsay Trenholme  Rehearsal stage management
Lindsay spent 20 years working in production for BBC television, ranging from being a runner on I, Claudius to Assistant Floor Manager on Blackadder’s Christmas Carol and The Hour of the Pig with Colin Firth. Returned home to Yorkshire as a Stage Manager for several years with Emmerdale and Heartbeat, and first joined North Country Theatre rehearsals in 2011 for The Rocking Horse Winner.

Nobby Dimon  Lighting
Has been the Artistic Director of North Country Theatre since it was founded in 1996, writing, adapting as well as directing most of the company’s output. His adaptation with Simon Corble of Buchan’s The 39 Steps inspired the West End production that received an Olivier Award as BEST NEW COMEDY in February 2007, took the both Critics' and People's Choice Awards plus a couple of Tonys on Broadway. His adaptation of DH Lawrence's The Rocking Horse Winner, received rave reviews locally, regionally and nationally.

He has also directed for Cleveland Theatre Company, Harrogate Theatre, Durham Theatre Company, Charvari and Snap Theatre.

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Vivienne Garnett  Lighting
This is Vivienne’s seventh production for North Country Theatre; previous shows have included The Imitation Game, The Sheepsheater, Prisoner of Zenda, Home on the Range and The Lighthouse on Shivering Sands. Since graduating from Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in 2004 she has also performed at Frinton Summer Season in Essex, Gasworks and Chapel Off Chapel in Melbourne and she has done commercials for Sky, Virgin, Sony and the Co-op. Last month she returned to Australia and filmed Absent Minded, due to be released next year. Vivienne is originally from North Yorkshire and is now based in London.

Mark Cronfield  Lighting
The Gift of Stones is Mark’s eleventh production for North Country Theatre, including Blood Wedding in Wensleydale, The Rocking Horse Winner, and most recently as Birkin in A Month in the Country. He lives in Bishopdale with his wife and children.

Martin Dower  Stage Manager
A resident of Thwaite, Martin trained at Dartington College of Arts and then worked throughout the 70’s in Theatre-in-Education and rural community theatre. An Arts Development officer in Oxfordshire for nine years, he also ran a wholefood shop! In 1995 he returned to his native dales, first working for North Country Theatre as a stage manager on Home on the Range, and performing in the plays Meantime (John Harrison), The Passion Plays (John the Baptist), A Month in the Country (Reverend Keach), Moby Dick (Captain Ahab), Last Dance of a Dalesman (Dan Ottershaw), The 2nd Shepherd’s Play (Gib, the 2nd Shepherd) and Blame it on Bartle! (Pastor Collins).

Edward Darling  Lighting
Edward began acting around three years ago with a lead role in Lorca’s Blood Wedding. Then spent time training in screen technique at Manchester’s ActUpNorth and learning “on the job” on both stage and screen. He recently finished filming a lead in Period Short, Emmott & Rowland, set in the plague village of Eyam in 1666. This is his first theatre tour and he’s excited to be working with everyone on The Gift Of Stones.
The village of Flint knappers is safe, self-satisfied, and inward-looking, but a stray arrow, an amputation, and a wild woman from the salt sea marshes bring murder, mystery, and cataclysmic change.

Jim Crack’s award-winning historical novel is brought to the stage by the company whose brilliant adaptations have ranged from the hilarious The 39 Steps to the deeply moving A Month in the Country.