



THE ALLESLEY SILAS

Sat 23 - Sat 30 July

Belgrade
Theatre
Coventry

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Welcome to this performance of **The Allesley Silas**, the critically-acclaimed play which made its world premiere last summer during Coventry's year as UK City of Culture. The sell-out run took place in Allesley, the very place of inspiration behind George Eliot's novel, **Silas Marner**.

With its new home of our B2 auditorium, we're delighted to be restaging **The Allesley Silas** this year, bringing it back to its rightful home of Coventry. Featuring a cast of both professional and community performers, most of whom return from last summer's premiere production, **The Allesley Silas** perfectly embodies our ambition to be a theatre which platforms local stories and artists.

With a team of professional local creatives, **The Allesley Silas** is adapted for the stage by Coventry playwright Alan Pollock (*One Night in November*). Last year's production was co-created and directed by Nick Walker (*We Love You City*) and returns this year under the direction of Olivia Marie, with original music composed by Rebecca Applin and costume design by Abby Clarke.

Set in the village of Raveloe, a fictional version of Allesley, **The Allesley Silas** is a tale of hope, redemption and the unshakeable power of the human spirit. Silas Marner is an outcast in his community. But as he comes to care for an orphaned child, he finds love, happiness and an extended family.

From September onwards, we welcome an incredible Autumn Season with highlights like West End hit musicals **SIX**, **Beautiful: The Carole King Musical**, and **The Rocky Horror Show**, classic drama **An Inspector Calls** and **The Mousetrap**, plus the world premiere of the brand-new musical **Bombay Superstar**, co-produced by the Belgrade, Phizzical Productions (*Stardust*, *Bring on the Bollywood*) and New Wolsey Theatre.

Our B2 auditorium will play host to a season of talent development opportunities, with a new local artist taking over the space each week to develop a new idea. Here at the Belgrade, our whole team are passionate about trying new ways of working, in partnership with others who bring different expertise and lived experience. We are excited to find even more inclusive ways of working to support the breadth of local talent.

We're also looking forward to announcing our Spring 2023 Season in September this year, with lots of new, exciting local work to look forward to.

Thank you to our loyal audiences for your continued support of the Belgrade. We can't wait to welcome you back through our doors soon.

Laura Elliot (CEO) and Corey Campbell (Creative Director)



The Allesley Silas has been a two year project with the communities of Allesley and Allesley Park to tell the story of Silas Marner, the weaver of Raveloe. The fictional village of Raveloe is partly modelled on Allesley (anyone in doubt look at the descriptions of the Stone House - the Red House - and the Rainbow pub in George Eliot's novel!)

We first mounted the show as we emerged from lockdown in 2021. Even before the pandemic it had felt like a good story to be telling: a man fleeing injustice finds shelter on the outskirts of a village – first shunning and shunned by it – then gradually being welcomed into its embrace....

But as we staggered into the light in July last year, it felt like an absolutely vital story to be telling - a story about fellowship, about isolation and mistrust, and the triumphant re-assertion of love, charity, and the values of community.

Here is what the writer Michael Morpurgo had to say to us on the eve of last year's show. "**Silas Marner** is the story of a man, once an outsider, who in his caring for a child finds redemption, acceptance, respect and love in his community. It is a story for all times, and for our times more than ever, at a time when we all realise - and had often forgotten - how much care, and truth, and love matters to every one of us."

At its root, **The Allesley Silas** is a story about a community – one that will be familiar to most of us. The show was made – and has been re-made - by that community. We are extremely lucky to be welcoming back the vast majority of our company – around half of whom were born or live within two miles of Allesley. The people you will watch tonight – professional and community performers - have travelled from far and near to tell the story. From Barn Close, from Winsford Avenue, from Portugal, Mount Nod, Cheylesmore and Staircase lane...

From The Heart Theatre is a new company. **The Allesley Silas** is our first show. Our aim is to tell Midlands stories, working with, and in, Midlands communities. In addition, our ambition is to find and train a new generation of Midlands artists, forming a core company that will work with us far into the future...

City of Culture has moved the dial on Coventry. Our city feels like a young, open, forward-looking place, where creativity flourishes and artists feel at home. We hope you enjoy this - and all our future - shows...

Alan Pollock (Writer) and Jess Pinson (Producer)
From The Heart Theatre



CAST & CREATIVES

CAST

Adrian Decosta - **Silas**
Alex Allison - **Eppie**
Jill Dowse - **Narrator**
Nicholas Goode - **Godfrey**
Amy Kakoura - **Nancy**
Gabbii Rothwell - **Priscilla**
Charlie Lewis - **Dolly**
Mark Carey - **Squire Cass**
Andre Santos - **Kimble**
Julie Macdonald - **Mrs. Kimble/Dowlas/Choir**
John Bennell - **Dunsy**
Sam Barrowcliffe - **Aaron/Samuel**
Gemma-Louise Sharman - **Molly/Mags**
Jake Barrowcliffe - **Bryce/Jem Rodney**
Sonia Tranter - **Macey/Choir**
Dominic Cottrill - **Crackenthorp/Choir**
Joe Beglin - **Landlord**
Rishard Beckett - **Vicar**

CHOIR AND MUSICIANS

Cathy Renken - **Choir**
Craig Holmes-Dominey - **Flute**
Lydia Sampson-Foster - **Harp/Choir**

CREATIVES & PRODUCTION

Alan Pollock - **Writer**
Rebecca Applin - **Composer**
Abby Clarke - **Designer**
Olivia Marie - **Director**
Tracy Croft - **Stage Manager**
Gabriela Lysicanova - **ASM**
Jessica Pinson - **Producer**
Adrian Heron - **Technical Manager**
Cathy Renken - **Illustrator/Artist**
Gabriela Sopińska - **Production Assistant**



ADRIAN DECOSTA - SILAS

Adrian's credits include: **Ma Vie En Rose** (*The Young Vic*); **Nation** (*The National Theatre*); **The Taming of The Shrew**, **The Merchant of Venice**, **Midsummer Night's Dream**, and **The Tragedy of Thomas Hobbes** (*The Royal Shakespeare Company*); **Aaron** in **Titus Andronicus** (*Edinburgh*); **Jimmy** in **A Taste of Honey** (*The Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh*); **Duwayne** (*New Vic Productions*); **We Love You City** (*Belgrade Theatre*); **The Inland Sea** (*Greenwich Theatre*); **Venus/Mars** (*The Bush Theatre*); **Dr Martin Luther King** (*TNT's European tour of Americas Dreams and Nightmares*); **The Life and Death of Martin Luther King** and **Mercutio In Romeo and Juliet** (*TNT's National Tour of China*). Adrian has performed in the **Scoop**, **The Odyssey**, **The Wizard of Oz** and **King Arthur**, as well as Stokely Carmichael in **Dialektikon** (*Park Theatre*). He directed and performed as Silas Jones in **Crooked Letter**, **Crooked Letter** (*TNT's European tour*). Duncan, Lennox and McDuff in **Macbeth** (*Proteus Theatre*). Radio work for **The Music Teacher** and **Base Lines** (*BBC Radio 4*). Adrian's film credits include: **Jab Tak Hai Jaan** by Bollywood director Yash Chopra. TV credit: Vincent Lewis in the crime series **Ragdoll**.



ALEX ALLISON - EPPIE

Alex Allison is an actor / singer, who graduated from the London College of Music in 2018.

Her previous credits include Charity Hope Valentine in **Sweet Charity**, Hope Caldwell in **Urinetown** and Morella in the **Morella: Gothic Opera Concept Album**.

Alex appeared in the open-air production of **Allesley Silas** in 2021 and is very excited to reprise the role of Eppie Marner again at the Belgrade this July.



JILL DOWSE - NARRATOR

Jill is a theatre and music practitioner, co-artistic director of The Bone Ensemble and co-founder of Foursight theatre.

Her creative work spans a wide range of activities, from songwriting and creating intimate pieces for adults and families, to shows for empty show windows, canals and cemeteries.

Recent performance work includes **Triffids!** (*Platform 4*), **Extra Time** (*Derby Theatre*); **Snow** (*Tiny Light*); **Gulp! & Where's My Igloo Gone?** (*The Bone Ensemble*); **Chocolate – the Cabaret!** (*The Bone Ensemble's ChocFest*), made with communities and artists in Birmingham and Ghana, for the Birmingham 2022 Festival.



NICHOLAS GOODE - GODFREY

Nicholas completed his training in Theatre Practices at Rose Bruford College in Sidcup.

His most recent Theatre credits include: **Romeo and Juliet** (*Hull Truck Theatre*); **The Nutcracker** (*Royal Albert Hall*); **Private Lives** (*Esk Valley Theatre*); **Tales from the Arabian Nights** (*London Bubble*); **The Invisible Man** (*Queen's Theatre Hornchurch*); **Of Mice and Men** (*Birmingham Repertory Theatre*); **Treasure Island**, **Sleeping Beauty** and **Cinderella** (*Hull Truck Theatre*).

TV/Film/Site Specific credits include: **Christmas at Chatsworth** (*Chatsworth House*); **Bigfoot** (*Movingimage*); **LIDL** (*Commercial for TBWA London Ltd*).



GABBII ROTHWELL - PRISCILLA

Born and raised in Coventry with a degree in Theatre and Professional Practice from Coventry University, Gabrielle is passionate about a career in acting.

Her theatre practice also functions as a tool to manage a personality disorder which greatly impacts her life. She is very passionate about physical theatre and hopes one day to make a one woman show based on her personality disorder to create awareness.



CHARLIE LEWIS - DOLLY

Charlie has been performing since she was a teenager in everything from musicals to pantos, from short films to Shakespeare.

Charlie spent a few years performing around the UK before settling back in Coventry. She has performed in amateur shows with Rugby theatre, The Priory, The Loft and The Criterion. She has also set up a small theatre group - Funny Business Theatre Company!

Charlie has watched many shows at the Belgrade and since she was a child, it has been her dream to perform there, so she cannot wait to share this amazing adaptation of the classic George Eliot novel.



MARK CAREY - SQUIRE CASS

Mark Carey is from Devon and trained at The Royal Central School. He has since worked in countless theatres across the UK and in the west end. Theatre credits include: **Dick Wittington**, **Death of a Salesman**, **Larkrise** and **Twelfth Night** (*Cheltenham Everyman*). He played Frank in **Educating Rita**, the Mayor in **The Tailor of Gloucester**, Lomov in **The Proposal** and Grigori in **The Bear**. His one man show **Into the Breach** started at Cheltenham and has subsequently toured all over the country.

As a member of the Royal National Theatre Company Mark worked on **Betrayal**, **The Relapse** and **The Merchant of Venice** all for **Trevor Nunn**. Mark played Macbeth, Bottom, The Inspector in **An Inspector Calls**, Stephano in **The Tempest** and Torvald in **A Dolls House** at the Bridge House Theatre in Warwick. On TV he has appeared in **The Invincibles**, **Widows**, **Murphy's Law**, **Underbelly**, **London's Burning**, **Doctors**, **Luther** and most recently **Seaview**. Mark's many Radio appearances include **Wuthering Heights**, **Ashes to Antarctica**, **The Kingsnorth Six**, and the **Archers**. Mark was John Rossiter in **Homefront**.

Mark has written many plays including **Body Double** (*National Tour*); **Keeping our End up** (*Loft Theatre*); **Fire at the Clarence** and **Dick Whittington** (*Cygnets Exeter*); **Over the purple Moor** (*Bike Shed*); **Magic Moments** (*Rural Warwickshire*); **Back from the Front** (*Cheddar Arts*); and for radio **The Last Country House** and **Voices out of the Air**.



ANDRÉ SANTOS - KIMBLE

André Santos is based in Coventry, where he graduated from Coventry University, in Theatre and Professional Practice. Originally from Portugal, André has worked in the UK as a performer, puppeteer and has done backstage work in a variety of projects.

André hopes to make theatre that spreads awareness into human and animal rights alike, whilst keeping these themes something that people from all ages and backgrounds can enjoy. Having initially joined the project in 2021 as assistant producer, André is excited to rejoin the project as a member of the cast.



JULIE MACDONALD - MRS KIMBLE/DOWLAS/CHOIR

Julie is one of the community actors in the production of **The Allesley Silas**. She has lived in Allesley Village for most of her life and loves the sense of community there. Julie is a big fan of music and theatre, so when the opportunity to be part of **The Allesley Silas** came along she jumped at the chance.

During her lifetime, she has been part of an amateur theatre company, sung in charity concerts at her church and has been a member of a number of choirs, but this production of **The Allesley Silas** is the most exciting and rewarding performance based thing she has done to date.



JOHN BENNELL - DUNSY

John studied Acting at the Birmingham Ormiston Academy from 2015-2017. After completing his course, John then became the Belgrade Theatre's Click Spring Apprentice. Here, John focused on community arts management. Since then, John has worked for the Belgrade Theatre, Open Theatre and Spot Drama, facilitating drama workshops as a theatre practitioner.

John is looking forward to reprising the role of Dunsy, after originally appearing in the role last summer. John cannot wait to be back performing in **The Allesley Silas** on a stage he knows so well.



SAM BARROWCLIFFE - AARON/SAMUEL

Sam Barrowcliffe is an actor, writer and filmmaker training at the University of Warwick. Sam is extremely proud to be returning to the cast of **The Allesley Silas**, having previously played the role of Samuel in last year's run. As well as acting, Sam has written and directed two films and hopes to continue making more in the future. Sam also writes short stories, his favourite genres being horror and weird fiction.

Sam would like to thank the cast and crew of **The Allesley Silas** for another fantastic run and hopes the audience enjoy the show as much as he has working on it.



GEMMA-LOUISE SHARMAN - MOLLY/MAGS

Gemma-Louise is an actress and artist based in Coventry. In 2021, she graduated from Coventry University with a BA Hons degree in Theatre and Professional Practice. Her creativity expands within the industry from acting, to writing, and directing. She continues to thrive in improving her acting career, taking on new challenges along the way.

She has experience both behind and in front of the camera, in theatre, voiceover, radio, and television commercials.



SONIA TRANTER - MACEY/CHOIR

Sonia was born in Allesley Park Coventry, Christened in Allesley All Saints Church, and then confirmed and married in the same church.

Sonia was thrilled to be asked to take part in **The Allelsey Silas** because of her connections to Allesely and the surrounding areas. Although 17 years ago Sonia moved to live in Spain, Coventry is home to her. During her stay in Spain, Sonia was involved with an amateur dramatics group under the umbrella of T.A.P.A.S (*The Andalucian Performing Arts Society*) partaking in theatre, radio readings and singing as an alto in the choir. The Coventry City of Culture production of *Silas Marner* brought the same sense of belonging for Sonia and she looks forward to future events either as a spectator or a member of the cast.



DOMINIC COTTRILL - CRACKENTHORP/CHOIR

Dominic is a keen musician and classically trained as a piano player since the age of 8. He also learned the guitar mostly self taught. Over the last 2 or 3 years, Dominic has focused more on drama and choir singing. He joined the Choir with no Name just after lockdown, performed as backing choir for the **Ruff Tuff** at the Belgrade, and was on stage with the Coventry Musical Theatre Society's very successful production of **Peter Pan** also performed at the Belgrade. Dominic is working on writing a musical play which he hopes may be developed and performed on stage. Acting and stage performance has helped Dominic build his character and recover from anxiety.



JOE BEGLIN - LANDLORD

Joe is a passionate performer throughout Coventry's great theatre scene appearing in various shows with **Bold as Bard**, **Ego**, **Underground Lights** and **Cardboard Citizens**.

Joe is currently a member of the Choir with No Name who performed at the Belgrade as part of the **Ruff Tough Cream Puff Estate Agency** show and at the Cathedral for the **Ghost Within the Ruins** performances. Joe is a local activist with Connecting for Good and Crisis Skylight Homeless Charity as well as being a local musician.



RISHARD BECKETT - VICAR

Rishard is very excited to be part of **The Allesley Silas**. Rishard and playwright Richard Walls are a Belgrade Springboard company. Together they wrote and starred in their pilot episode of **The Square**, a fully fledged soap opera set in Coventry during the pandemic.

Rishard also played Lawrence in **Doctors** (BBC) and is represented by model agency Zebedee Talent Management. He enjoys working out daily and listening to inspirational podcasts.

Photo credit: Ayesha Jones



CATHY RENKEN - CHOIR/ILLUSTRATOR/ARTIST

Cathy Renken is a landscape painter/illustrator and textiles artist who lives in Coventry (cathyrenkenartist.com). She created and made the textiles banners on set as part of the creative team. Cathy's silk painting, printing, weaving and flower making workshops and kits gave people in the local community the chance to take part creating prints, drawings and weaving samples that were collated and sewn together to make the eight large banners on the stage set. She also likes to sing so we will also see her performing in the choir.



CRAIG HOLMES-DOMINEY - FLUTE

As a musician Craig Holmes has performed with the Jersey Symphony Orchestra and regularly with Le Rocquier Big band and La Ronde concert band performing all over Jersey and France. Now back within the West Midlands performing with local chamber groups, playing for shows and with three local big bands. Crash Collective Big Band www.thecrashcollective.wordpress.com, The Rhythm Jukebox Orchestra www.thejukeboxrhythmorchestra.simplesite.com and Tenor saxophone with Chain of Fools www.chainoffools.co.uk



ALAN POLLOCK - WRITER

Alan Pollock's 10 plays for stage include **What Do I Get**, **The Death of Cool** (*Hampstead Theatre*) and **Pigplay** (*Traverse Theatre*). For TV, Alan co-created BBC2's **Attachments** (starring Romola Garai and David Walliams) and has worked as a writer on a number of long-running drama serials.

Radio includes: **Philip and Sydney**, **Every Duchess in England** and **May There Always Be Sunshine**. His play **One Night in November** is the most successful new play ever produced at the Belgrade Theatre, revived three times since 2008. His children's book **The Bear Who Went to War** was published in May 2019.

Adaptations include: **A Christmas Carol** and **Peter Pan**, and original Christmas shows include **The Brothers Grimm** present **Cinderella** and **The True Adventures of Marian and Robin Hood** (Barn Theatre). **The Allesley Silas** – his adaptation of George Eliot's **Silas Marner** – was first seen last summer during Coventry's year as City of Culture.

REBECCA APPLIN - COMPOSER

Rebecca is an award-winning composer for theatre and media. Recent projects include British Council-funded **Connections Through Culture India-Wales**; **The Beauty Parade** a collaboration between D/deaf and hearing cultures, commissioned by Wales Millennium Centre and **Hourglass**, originally commissioned by The Mayflower Theatre and performed at Chichester Conservatoire.

She is currently working on an Eco musical for the Lyric, Belfast, intended to tour primary schools in Northern Ireland in 2023. Rebecca was the Cameron Mackintosh Resident Composer Award holder at the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, and Mercury Theatre, Colchester. Her media work includes **I Know Me** with Gamelab, a TV musical working with and for teenagers with SEND, commissioned by BBC Learning Zones, nominated for a BAFTA award.

ABBY CLARKE - DESIGNER

Abby is a Theatre Designer from Coventry. She trained in Performance Design at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, was nominated as Best Designer for the The Stage Debut Awards 2019 for her design for **Beauty and the Beast** (Theatre by the Lake), and was a finalist in the 2017 Linbury Prize for Stage Design.

Some of Abby's design credits include: **Unfortunate** (UK Tour); **Alphabus** (Great Northern Warehouse) and **Abida Parveen** (The Lowry Theatre) both for Manchester International Festival. **Read All About It** (Belgrade Theatre); **Swim, Luminosity, Our Friends in the North, Taming of the Shrew** (Home Theatre); **The Witching Way** (Royal Exchange Theatre); **Humans At Work** (Warwick Arts Centre); **Bird in the Window** (UK tour) and **The Furies and Living Together** (Oxford Playhouse).

OLIVIA MARIE - DIRECTOR

Olivia Marie is a Coventry-based theatre maker. After graduating from Coventry University in Theatre and Professional Practice, Olivia has been working as a performer, director and technician across multiple projects. Olivia has a passion for creating theatre that is fun for people of all ages to enjoy. As a theatre maker with a disability, Olivia aims to make work that is accessible, putting inclusivity at the forefront of her shows to ensure they appeal and speak to as many different people as possible. This is Olivia's second time directing, after co-directing the first public run of **The Allesley Silas** with Nick Walker in 2021.

TRACY CROFT - STAGE MANAGER

Tracy has had many years of stage management experience, within a range of theatres and groups, mainly across the Midlands. She is part of the technical production company 1stintheatre, and has worked with community and school groups across Coventry.

During the past year, she has worked as a Stage Manager on many events, including **Coventry Moves** (*Coventry UK City of Culture 2021*); **Faith** (*in conjunction with the RSC*); **The Lost Lending Library with Punchdrunk Enrichment**, **Hungry Nation**, **Ghosts In The Ruins**, **Her Day Opera**, **Milesians**, **Haus of Kraft**, **This Is The City**, and Operas by Charpentier and Offenbach. She is delighted to be back with **The Allesley Silas** company.

GABRIELA LYSICANOVA - ASM

Gabriela is an active theatre maker working locally and abroad in multiple contemporary Slovak theatres in various roles. After graduating the School of Scenic Arts in 2019 she gained accreditation in film making and photography. She then moved to Coventry and recently graduated from Coventry University in Theatre and Professional Practice.

She continues to develop her career as a backstage theatre member on titles such as **The ballad of the Black Angels**, **Secret in the Wings** and her co-director debut **Table Manners**.

JESSICA PINSON - PRODUCER

Jess is a producer working across a range of arts practices with a passion for increasing community involvement as participant and lead. Twenty plus years experience in outdoor arts co-created with communities as acts of joy or social action. Twelve years running the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum's event programme supporting artist development and driving audience development. Chair of HillzFM steering group, and board member for Talking Birds.

Jess works as a Community Organiser for Grapevine as well as freelancer for arts companies such as Imagineer. She is part of the From the Heart Theatre team developing the company and producing it's new shows.

ADRIAN HERON - TECHNICAL MANAGER

Adrian has spent thirty five years in the theatre. Starting at Newcastle Arts Centre at Sixteen years old, and going on to work around the UK & Europe as Stage/Technical/Production & Theatre Manager on countless productions

A big warm FROM THE HEART thank you to

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