

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.

March(ing) back to music, then dance and then again music

Keith James in Concert
The Songs of Leonard Cohen
Sat 16th March 2019

It goes beyond any reasonable doubt that Leonard Cohen's legacy continues to provide substance to our continued pursuit of making sense of humanity and human nature. Even more so at this present time, it is possible to relate current events taking place around the world and in the media, to much of Cohen's poetry and music making. Cohen has essentially become a cult figure with his poetry and music continuing to resonate well beyond his sudden death in 2016.

Considered *one of the most fascinating and enigmatic singer-songwriters in the late 1960's* by AllMusic Critic Bruce Eder; Cohen is often drawn together with musicians Bob Dylan and Paul Simon (Dylan himself was an admirer of



Keith James

Cohen's work). Despite branching into music from his earlier days as a poet, much of Cohen's accreditation lies in the bridge he established between the thresholds of poetry and music. He has often been described in this instance as a Renaissance Man, straddling the artistic barriers and establishing a new creative medium. His work, thoughtful and poignant, evokes a deep sense of questioning within all the subjects he sings and writes about. To many younger musicians and groups such as Nirvana and Sisters of Mercy (coined by one of Cohen's songs), Cohen's attentive focus given to love, despair and hope provides an essential springboard for all future artistic development.

As Cohen can clearly be recognised as an important contributor to the music industry, as well as being essentially a *larger than life figure* it would truly be a mistake to assume

that anyone thinking of performing his work and paying him tribute by carrying on his musical legacy could do him justice. Tribute bands are numerous, although for a musician to deliver on the promises that Cohen encompasses in his writing and performing, there would need to be someone who embodies the spirit of the artist in all his manifestations. Here, Keith James does just that.

Its like Leonard Cohen has personally endorsed Keith James to continue delivering his music to wider audiences. Here Keith James provides much needed and emotive reminiscing of being young for one generation, whilst at the same time providing the context and cause for generations of musicians since, who again like Nirvana and Sisters of Mercy have used Cohen's legacy to influence their own artistic practice.



Mike Mellor (foreground) undertaking the sound check with Keith James (background)

For anyone who has not been introduced to Leonard Cohen or does not know of him or his work, listening to Keith James and being captured by his quiet sense of self and the mysterious aura that surrounds him; it is impossible not to be captivated by the whole

experience. There is nothing to compare it to and in many ways it would be wrong to do so. What is important to state, is that Keith James does Cohen justice. A truly gifted musician who truly understands where Cohen was coming from and is able to translate with absolute honesty and precision his work for future generations. Keith James in Concert is one very memorable event that will always continue to resonate.

Keith will be back at The HopBarn in Spring 2020.

Rachel Clarke Dance Company in Residence

Monday 18th to Saturday 23rd March

Back in July 2018, The HopBarn welcomed Rachel Clarke and dancers Alexandra Mettam, Amelia McCarthy and Kayleigh Price for a weeks long residency following a successful application to the Arts Council of England. During their time here, Rachel explored the barriers in situ between the hearing and the deaf. The title of the work, *White Noise* focused on the physical, emotional, cultural, language, gender and interpersonal barriers that are attributed to disrupting effective communication for those who are hard of hearing or are deaf.

Rachel uses as a medium British Sign Language (BSL) within her work and takes this as a starting point of choreographic vocabulary before expanding the movement into full scale dance repertoire. The work at the time was seen to give a greater voice and be more accessible to audiences who are deaf rather than their hearing counterparts. What was really fascinating during the subsequent sharing that took place at Yorkshire Dance in Leeds following their residency at The HopBarn, was that the audience members who were able to hear, and therefore did not acquire the skills of British Sign Language, suddenly felt excluded from the story and action that was taking place. This had a really profound emotional effect and it is commendable that Rachel is not afraid to raise this within her

work. Having developed the first stages of *White Noise* in the summer of 2018, Rachel returns to The HopBarn with the intent on expanding the work further into a full length piece of choreography. The work has already received wider recognition as it made the final 4 pieces selected for Hull Dance Prize in 2018. Rachel was joint winner of the prize and received further financial assistance for her company.



Dancers Amelia McCarthy and Kayleigh Price in *White Noise* by Rachel Clarke

For the second residency period that took place in March, Rachel along with her dancers looked to create a 2nd phase of the work which will again be further developed during additional rehearsal periods in Leeds and Bradford later this year. Further news of the choreographic development and how the project is continuing will be featured within later editions of The HopBarn's News and Events publications.

Sue Bennett Pupils Concert

Sunday 24th March

Piano teacher Sue Bennett once again brought her pupils to The HopBarn for an informal end of term sharing on Sunday 24th March 2019. So often when witnessing professional

musicians and dancers perform at The HopBarn, it is easy to forget and distant the end results from the long hours of hard work and struggle each artist has to endure in order to get to where they want to be professionally.



Piano Students of Sue Bennett at The Pupils Concert

Ranging from 5 years to late teenagers, Sue's pupils are in essence at the beginning stages of their musical journey and the *Pupils Concert* was an informal opportunity for them to demonstrate their learning over the course of the past term, but also to gain some very important performance skills whilst building their confidence.

A relaxed and enjoyable afternoon, but also one that had the upmost importance to the continuing development of these young pianists. We look forward to welcoming them back at The HopBarn later in the year.

News and Reviews

Derby Theatre and In Good Company – Departure Lounge Festival 2019 Package Holiday Recipients

Derby Theatre and In Good Company were recently delighted in that over 20 theatre companies applied for this years, Departure Lounge Festival Package Holiday 2019. This annual offer is now in its 4th year and The HopBarn welcomes Theatre Maker Jo Tyabji who has been selected for this years Package

Holiday offer.

Jo is a performer and director based in Bethnal Green, East London and is also is a Company Associate at Milk Presents. Jo's past works include *Dharavi ki Kel*, an interactive promenade show for some of Mumbai's most crowded streets, and *Howl on the Underground*, a pop up performance on London's tube network.



Jo Tyabji

In 2017 she was resident director at the Almeida theatre, and in 2018 is a Staff Director at the UK's National Theatre. She was previously the editor of open Security, an online publication focused on conflict and peace building. She drags as Joé de Vivre.

Motherland, her work which has been selected as part of this package holiday opportunity questions her sense of national identity when both the UK and in India, nationalistic populism is on the increase. Having been brought up to accept all forms of cultural identity and religious belief, Jo looks to expose the link between both British and Indian ethno-religious nationalism and how her dual national heritage is splitting her in two. Where should, or where does she exist?

Jo Tyabji will spend a week at The HopBarn in July revising and developing further *Motherland* prior to its performance as part of Departure Lounge Festival from Thursday 18th to Sunday 21st July 2019

Counting Sheep - Staging a Revolution

from the directors of **Belarus Free Theatre** VAULT Festival London

So often, when watching the news and being briefed about events that have or are occurring around the world, we feel as sense of emotional detachment from the people who are affected, or perhaps a lack of sympathy towards what is actually taking place. We hear the facts, see the images and watch the footage, but unless it affects us directly, how often do we really think deeply enough to be forced into taking some form of action.

Theatre in many ways can bring these experiences to us, allowing us to get close and helping us to understand physically,



emotionally and spiritually what is truly happening. In some cases however, the lasting effect can dissipate the moment the curtain comes down or when we step out from the theatre, but in some very rare

instances the lasting impression changes our views entirely and you are left with an overwhelming sense of duty or obligation to shout out about what you have just witnessed, tell others how brilliant the production was and take some form of action.

Counting Sheep - Staging a Revolution by the theatre directors of Belarus Free Theatre is one such show that has to be acknowledged for its overwhelming ability to make you feel personally connected to the political events that take place, as well as to each and every audience and cast member.

The production recalls the first meeting of Mark and Marichka Marczyk during the summer of 2014 when Ukraine stood up to the might of Russian oppression and what started as a peaceful protest ended in bloodshed and political uncertainty. This is gig theatre at its best, and as audience members you are encouraged to join in, singing raucously at the table as a wedding banquet takes place, eating traditional food and drinking vodka before being led in a dance. Getting close to cast and audience members alike is a must and builds a sense of rapport with everyone who is sharing the same experience. It feels at first electric, and you can't but help enjoy the vibrant and jubilant mood as the cast sing and play traditional Ukrainian songs whilst serving the vodka and food.

Its not long though before all this is shattered and suddenly from celebrating a joyous occasion, the entire set is transformed into barricades as protests begin to take place against the ruling government party and its decision to side with Russia and not the EU. Suddenly the atmosphere is tense, joy and laughter turn to anger and frustration and audience members take up positions with riot shields as company members encircle them attempting to break out. The action becomes threatening, eventually turning violent and it is here, at this moment of desperation that the connection to other audience and cast members that was established at the beginning has significant meaning. When death comes, its heart-breaking. Loved ones that were once alive are now shrouded in the very table cloth

used for the wedding banquet. These images, coupled with the howling cry of their partners who are having to bury their bodies, leaves a distinctly sombre and harrowing feeling in the gut.

To get to understand the political turmoil that many Eastern European Countries have or are experiencing, or other countries around the world for that matter; this is a truly ingenious and well thought out piece of theatre. As an audience member, you are not simply a passive body in the room, again witnessing something that is happening to other people, but rather an active part of the play and action. In creating this work, both Mark and Marichka have essentially invited us into their front room to meet the family and in doing so, we feel a personal connection to them and the country that they love. You leave feeling that Ukraine is in your heart and blood, a sense of patriotism and a stronger belief that despite our many differences, we are still very much connected in our ethics, ideals and values.

This is a powerful work and definitely one to make the effort to go and see, whenever and wherever it is performed next.... unfortunately the run at VAULT Festival in London came to and end in March but due to its popularity as a truly immersive piece of political theatre, it will no doubt become resurrected once more

Check out: belarusfreetheatre.com



Counting Sheep - Staging a Revolution

**Whats On
April 2019**

Miranda Sykes
A True Blue Music Event
06 Apr 2019
£13.52 (incl of booking fee)



Miranda Sykes, the acclaimed singer and bassist with *Show of Hands* is returning to her roots. After a career spanning over 20 years, during which time she has played with many of the top musicians and singers within the folk world, she will be touring as she started out: one woman, one bass, and one guitar.

Borrowed Places is a project that draws its inspiration primarily from the songs and landscapes of her native Lincolnshire but seen through the eyes of someone who has lived away for many years. The themes are not specific; the land changes, it grows, it shrinks, it adapts and it resists but most of all it lives and breathes.

With her sensational voice, and accompanying herself, Miranda interprets the soul of the land and takes her audience on a journey that resonates with us all, wherever we live and it is one you won't want to miss. Join us for another evening of brilliant music and memories at this gem of a venue.

All profits from this and all TrueBlue Music events go to Beaumont House Hospice Newark

To Book Tickets Visit: thehopbarn.org.uk

The Julie July Band
Who Knows Where the Time Goes? -
Sandy Denny Songbook
27 Apr 2019
£11.37 (Inclusive of Booking Fee)



The Julie July Band has built a substantial reputation on re-interpretations of Sandy Denny's songs and play a heartfelt tribute to the great singer-songwriter. From dreamy acoustic melodies to driving progressive folk-rock, she was one of the UK's singer songwriters of the British Folk-Rock movement.

In her brief Career Sandy Denny left a legacy of beautiful, haunting original and traditional compositions. Richard Thompson called her *The Greatest artist of her generation*. Melody maker readers twice voted her *Best British Female Singer* in 1970 and 1971. Her most famous song *Who Knows Where the Time Goes?*, was voted favourite folk-track of all time by listeners of BBC Radio 2 and has been covered by many artists incl:- Judy Collins, Nina Simone, Eva Cassidy and Kate Rusby.

Now, 40 years on "The Band perform a selection of her songs from: The Strawbs, Fotheringay, Fairport Convention and her Solo Career.