

KATHERINE MACALISTER gets clued up about an ambitious production in Chippy

SEPTEMBER 20th 2017

Theatre takes Sherlock's crimson caper out on the road across UK

THE world premiere of a Sherlock Holmes caper sounds like enormous fun, but for The Theatre, Chipping Norton it's also involves a huge amount of work, signalling its most ambitious project to date.

Because not only is the production in-house, but is also going on a national tour.

"Our in-house productions are a really big deal," producer Emily Moseley agrees, as she prepares to stage *Sherlock Holmes and The Crimson Cobbles*.

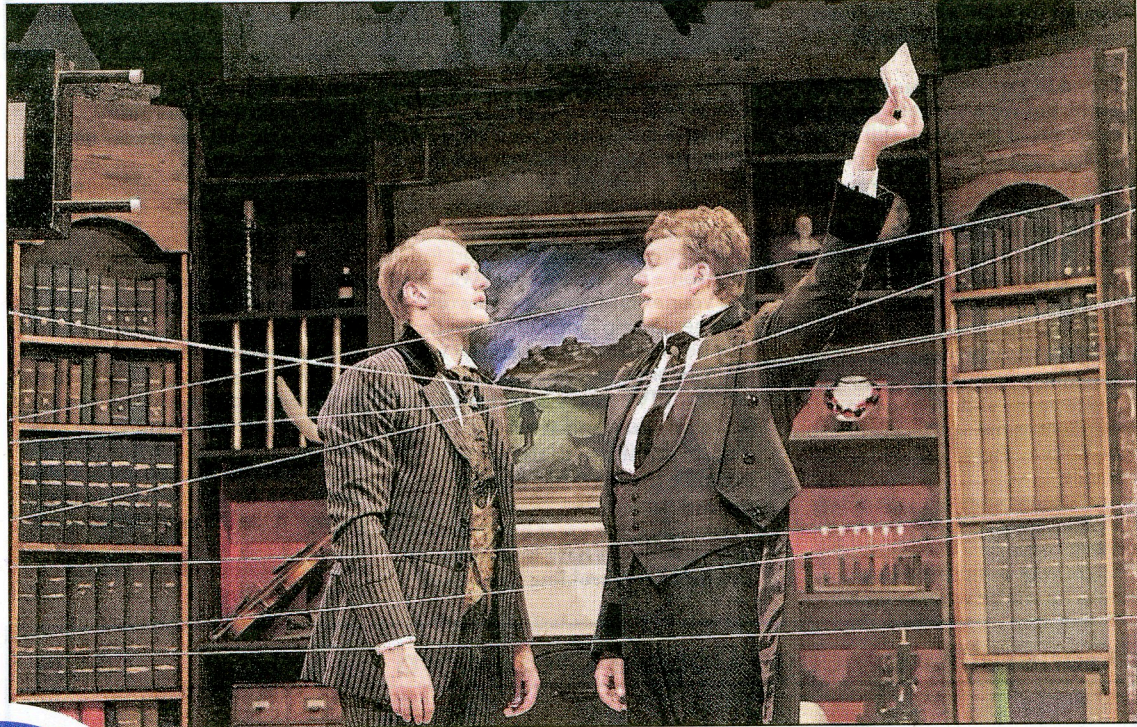
But then The Theatre is increasingly opting to showcase its own work, its ambitions increasing with every production. The current adaption about the famous gothic detective is no different, raising its game on every level.

"Our in-house shows get bigger every time we do one, because of the expectations of the national and regional venues, so we are thrilled with how the audiences are reacting to our Sherlock Holmes play," Emily says, the play having opened in Salisbury last week.

"Touring it is a new thing for us, to be able to do something bigger than we have ever done before in terms of its potential is enormous," she adds, "so we have worked with some incredible designers to ensure that the set can be erected in any venue, and have an amazing Victorian wardrobe.

"We have all been on a real journey and yet the play is still a homegrown product that we are really proud of."

So why tour at all? "We couldn't justify the scale of the expense just for two weeks in Chipping Norton, so we saw who else was interested in *Sherlock Holmes and the Crimson Cobbles* and now we have a six-week tour, which along with



PASTICHE: Sherlock Holmes and the *Crimson Cobbles*

the panto should help pay for the rest of the year at the theatre. It has to be financially viable," Emily points out.

As for the play itself, Emily says: "It is a pastiche of sorts but also a play that comes from a love of all things Sherlock Holmes.

"Everyone involved is a real Sherlock nerd and is shows, from the script to the design, set and costumes – there are geeky twists everywhere, from the Hound of the Baskervilles painting on the wall of the set to the Conan Doyle lines inadvertently planted all the way through, which get recognised by the fans.

"So it comes from a place of love but is daft and silly at the same

time," Emily explains.

Massive fans of the writer Toby Hulse's work, having adapted his *Around The World in 80 Days*, The Theatre therefore jumped at the chance to stage his newest offering.

"We are always looking for new plays, but we really love Toby's writing. Most of it involves three actors playing a ridiculous amount of characters, and he has used the same approach with Sherlock Holmes.

"So as ever *Sherlock Holmes and the Crimson Cobbles* is incredibly funny, witty and unashamedly sinister, accompanied by a sense of joy and fun and silliness that characterises all his work."

As for the future, Emily shrugs: "Who knows? Next year we might manage an even bigger production, because while all slightly experimental, our in-house

shows always sell well and give us the kudos of producing really professional work."

OTHER DATES

● The show also visits Bampton Village Hall on September 9 (01993 851142), The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury on Oct 5 (01295 279002), Cassington Village Hall on October 7 (cassingtonvillagehall.org.uk.01865 883512 / 01865 881813), Ramsden Memorial Hall on 13 Oct (ramsdenvillage.co.uk. 01993 868222), Mollington Village Hall on 14 Oct (01295 750230), Steeple Aston Village Hall on Oct 15 (01869 340423 / 01869 340485), Pegasus Theatre on October 27 (pegasustheatre.org.uk, 01865 812150) and Cornerstone, Didcot on 28/10/2017 (cornerstone-arts.org, 01235 515144).

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A stylized poster for a play. The background is dark blue with a repeating floral pattern. At the top, the text 'SHERLOCK HOLMES' is written in a white, gothic-style font. The 'O' in 'HOLMES' is replaced by a yellow gear. Below it, 'AND THE' is written in a smaller, white, cursive font. The main title 'CRIMSON CABBLES' is in large, bold, orange letters with a white outline. A magnifying glass is positioned over the 'C' in 'CABBLES', showing a close-up of a wooden surface. To the left of the title is a golden smoking pipe. To the right is a purple top hat and a green violin. At the bottom, a white mustache graphic contains the text 'BY TOBY HULSC FROM AN ORIGINAL STORY BY DAVID HASTINGS'. A small figure of a woman in a purple dress is visible on the right side. A street lamp is on the left, and a green silhouette of a building is at the bottom.

SHERLOCK
HOLMES
AND THE

CRIMSON
CABBLES

DIRECTED BY KIRSTIE DAVIS

BY TOBY HULSC
FROM AN ORIGINAL STORY BY DAVID HASTINGS

Bampton Village Hall
Saturday 30th September
at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: £12, £10, £6
Ticket No. 71