**For immediate release: 21 September 2023**

![A black and white sign

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**Cast announced for the 10th anniversary of *Get Happy,* Told by an Idiot’s showfor the whole family, just in time for Christmas**

A person smiling at the camera

Description automatically generated A person with dreadlocks laughing

Description automatically generated A person smiling at the camera

Description automatically generated **A close-up of a person smiling

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[**Told by an Idiot – Get Happy**](https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2023/event/told-by-an-idiot-get-happy)

**Thu 7—Tue 19 Dec 2023**

**The Pit**

**Press performance: Friday 8 December, 3.30pm  
Barbican commission (2013)**

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the production first commissioned by the Barbican, **Told by an Idiot** returns once again for a winter residency,inviting everyone of any age (babies to great-grandparents!) to enter the artfully controlled chaos of ***Get Happy***, a madcap, mischievous show featuring acrobatics, dance, live music and physical comedy. Taking its inspirations from sources as diverse as Charlie Chaplin, Dr Seuss and Pina Bausch, the show bursts with life, takes many unexpected turns and involves plenty of interaction and engagement.

The *Get Happy* cast includes **Katy Ellis**, **Kyll Thomas-Cole**, **Nick Haverson** and **Rachel Donovan**. It is directed by **Paul Hunter**, designed by **Sophia Clist** with sound design from **Adrienne Quartly** andlighting design by **Tom Snell.**

This 10th anniversary production is dedicated to a true Idiot, **Stephen Harper** (1967-2022).

**Paul Hunter, Artistic Director of Told by an Idiot, said:***“We are delighted to end our 30th anniversary year with the revival of our anarchic family sketch show* Get Happy*. We look forward to welcoming anyone who breathes to the Barbican this festive season.”*

Told by an Idiot’s original production of *Get Happy* was devised as a show accessible to all, to be enjoyed by family members and friends of all ages. It was commissioned by and first performed by its original cast at the Barbican in 2013, where it was revived in 2015. In 2017, the production toured to Luxembourg and Beijing. It was performed outdoors for socially distanced audiences at Greenwich + Docklands International Festival in August 2020. It was also reimagined as ***Get Happy 21*** exploring a new touring model, integrating performance and participation in four communities around the UK in 2021.

**Toni Racklin, Head of Theatre & Dance at the Barbican, said:**

***“****We are delighted to welcome back the inventive and playful Told by an Idiot to celebrate the 10th anniversary of this wonderful production. Their energy and enthusiasm for connecting with audiences is always such a joyful experience and this Barbican commission will once again be a treat for all the family during the festive season.”*

Celebrating its 30th year in 2023, **Told by an Idiot** has established an international reputation for its comic and startlingly original productions. Recent productions include *The Killing of Sister George* (New Vic Theatre), *Charlie and Stan* (London, Luxembourg and UK tour), *Would You Be Against Us?* (Birmingham Rep and community tour), *I Am Thomas* (National Theatre of Scotland), *The Ghost Train, Too Clever By Half, You Can’t Take It With You* (Manchester Royal Exchange) and *My Perfect Mind*, created by Paul Hunter, Edward Petherbridge and Kathryn Hunter(Young Vic, Theatre Royal Plymouth and touring).

The Barbican’s popular **Squish Space** will be available before and after selected performances; a free, creative play space for under 5s and their families. Designed by artist/designer duo **India Harvey** and **Lisa Marie** **Bengtsson**, the space brings people together to learn through interaction, collaboration and play. Using a variety of materials and tactile objects, Squish Space features objects crafted from recycled materials, as well as moving image and sound from artists **Di Mainstone** and **Xavier Velastin**, to explore ideas of the planet and our ecology. A place for children to spin, jump, hide, touch, and explore, during the run of *Get Happy* the Squish Space will be open from 10.30am to 16.30pm on Monday 11-Tuesday 19 December.

**ENDS**

**Press Information**  
For further information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:

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**Images & Video**

Images can be downloaded here: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/khom9jt6d7678gc/AAD7pMuFCAbSuMbZd2LILKWKa?dl=0>

Trailer can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/YR-bp12PXS0>

**Listings**

**Get Happy**

Told by an Idiot

Directed by Paul Hunter

Designed by Sophia Clist

Lighting Design by Tom Snell

Sound Design by Adrienne Quartly

Thu 7 - Tue 19 Dec 2023

The Pit

Press performance: Fri 8 Dec 3:30pm

Thu 7, Fri 8, Sat 9, Sun 10, Tue 12, Wed 13, Fri 15, Sat 16, Mon 18 & Tue 19 Dec 2023

10am, 12pm & 3:30pm

BSL-interpreted performance: Wed 13th Dec, 10am & Sat 16 Dec, 10am

1 hour / no interval

Age Guidance: Suitable for all ages

Adult £15, Child £11 (plus booking fee), £5 Young Barbican tickets available

All performances are relaxed.

*Get Happy* has very little scripted speech. There may be occasional spoken ad libs.

Presented by the Barbican. Originally commissioned by the Barbican in 2013.

Created and produced by Told by an Idiot.

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Cast Biographies**

**Kyll Thomas-Cole** is a 2020 graduate from the East 15 Acting School and an associate Artist with the David Glass Ensemble, Flabbergast Theatre and Babel Theatre. He has performed multiple iterations of HOLD/FALLING, originally a standalone dance piece performed at TEDx Bedford, New Diorama SHINE BLACK, SHINE Takeover at Latitude 2021, and later developed into a theatre production alongside Created a Monster Theatre and performed at Tramshed and Bloomsbury Festival. Kyll’s aim is to continue exploration into the structure of race through work with varied groups of people from varied communities, not just through a study of the self, but through collaborative creation of poignant and provocative art centred around our societal norms. With focus on aiming to give a conscious and fair view of situations from every perspective, giving voice and recognition to the voiceless, challenging the norms of the everyday and working to promote equity for all, and to move and inform those that don’t accept or understand the scale of these problems caused by Humanity.

**Katy Ellis’** credits include: *Ride* (Leicester Curve / Southwark Playhouse); *Wuthering Heights, Malory Towers* (Wise Children, UK & International Tours); *Never Tickle a Tiger, The Pesky Rat* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *The Scarecrow’s Wedding* (Leicester Square Theatre, UK Tour); *Metamorphosis* (Tristan Bates Theatre); *Daisy Pulls It Off* (Charing Cross Theatre); and commercials with Amazon Prime.

**Nick Haverson**’s theatre credits include: *The Yeoman of the Guard* (The Grange Festival); *Charlie & Stan* (Told by an Idiot); *Loves Labour’s Lost & Won* (Much Ado About Nothing) (RSC Stratford & Haymarket London); [*Too Clever By Half*](https://www.toldbyanidiot.org/too-clever-by-half) (Royal Exchange Manchester, Told by an Idiot); *Ben Hur*(Watermill Newbury); *The Devil and Mr.Punch* (Improbable, Philadelphia USA/ Barbican UK);*‘1984’* (Northern Broadsides); *Low Pay, Don’t Pay* (Salisbury Playhouse); *The Lost Voice* (Southbank Centre); *The Venetian Twins* (Bolton Octagon); *Ruby Moon* (Northern Stage); *Satyagraha* (Improbable at London Coliseum/Metropolitan Opera House, NY); *Theatre Of Blood* (Improbable at The National Theatre); *The Hanging Man* (Improbable US tour & Sydney Opera House); [*And The Horse You Rode In On*](https://www.toldbyanidiot.org/and-the-horse-you-rode-in-on), [*Beauty & The Beast*](https://www.toldbyanidiot.org/beauty-and-the-beast)(Told by an Idiot); *The Pirates of Penzance* (Orange Tree, Richmond); *The Solid Gold Cadillac* (Garrick); *By Jeeves* (Duke of York /Lyric); *The Magic Carpet* (Lyric Hammersmith).

TV credits include: *Scott & Bailey*; *Tales from the Old Bailey*; *The Mimic*; *Thank God You’re Here* (series); *Ashes to Ashes*; *Spooks*; *New Tricks*; *Casualty*; *Head Over Heels* (series, for which he also recorded the title song ); *Murder Rooms -The Dark Beginnings Of Sherlock Holmes*; *Sunday*; *A Fatal Inversion*; *Last Days of Ashenden*; *The Bill*; *Redemption*; *Devices and Desires*; *Absolutely True*; *Wyrd sisters* (The Worst Witch 2). Film credits include: *Matriarch*; *Muppets Most Wanted*; Tim Burton’s *Sweeney Todd*; *Hilary & Jackie*; *Susie Gold*; *The Tales of Despereaux* (animation); *Gulliver's Travels*; *Men Who Sleep in Cars*.; *Original Skin* (BBC short); *Gli Zii* (short); *Sherman* (Short).

Radio credits include: *Hilda*, *The Barchester Chronicles*, *Two to Tandem*, *Men Who Sleep in Cars*, *By Jeeves* (BBC Radio 4); *The Edge* (BBC Radio York).

**Rachel Donovan**’s theatre credits with Told by an Idiot - *Get Happy 2015, A Little Fantasy and The Evocation of Papa Mas.*

Further theatre credits include: *Peter Pan*(Regents Park); *Macbeth*(Colchester Mercury); *Cheese* (Fanshen); *The Great Gatsby* (Wilton’s Music Hall); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Ludlow Castle); *Mojo*(on Broadway for Theatre Rites); *Low Pay? Won’t Pay!* (Salisbury Playhouse); *The Venetian Twins* (Bolton Octagon); *Our Country’s Good, Invincible, See How They Run*and *Twelfth Night* (all for Original Theatre); *Mischief* (on Broadway for Theatre Rites); *Don Quixote* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Cleo, Camping, Emmanuelle & Dick* (Bolton Octagon); *The Merchant of Venice, The Tempest* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (Guildford Shakespeare); *The Miser, Beauty & the Beast, The Mysteries* and *The Twits* (Coventry Belgrade); *Rapunzel* (Creation); *Queen Bee* (New Writing North); *Book of Little Things*(Oval House); *Trojan Women* (Actors of Dionysus);*The Pink Bits* (Riverside Studios); *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Orange Tree).

Screen credits include: *The Crown, Silent Eye - The Museum of Me, Breakfast on Pluto, Birth* and *The Bill*. Rachel is a Motion Capture Artist for computer games and movies, including the*Harry Potter*Series,*Angels and Demons, John Carter*and *Iron Man 2.*

**About Told by an Idiot**

Told by an Idiot explores the human condition through theatre that is ambitious but never pretentious, experimental but always accessible and we avoid boredom at all costs. We are fascinated by the space between laughter and pain, and we consistently experiment with what theatre can be and who gets to make it. In doing so, our work blurs the line between theatre maker, participant and audience. We nurture the skills and talents of emerging theatre makers, and our work excludes no one. It stimulates and challenges people across the world and we remain committed to making theatre for anyone who breathes.

Told by an Idiot is a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England and a Registered Charity. Demand for our work far exceeds our funding and our activity and ambition remain high across each year. We value our [Taught by an Idiot](https://www.toldbyanidiot.org/taughtbyanidiot) participation, community engagement and education programme on a par with our professional productions, and this work is only made possible through additional funding. We are grateful for the generosity of Trusts and Foundations and individuals who have supported us in the past and continue to work alongside us in order to help us achieve our vision of making our work accessible to all. For more information about possible ways to invest in or support our work, please visit [www.toldbyanidiot.org](http://www.toldbyanidiot.org) or email [info@toldbyanidiot.org](mailto:info@toldbyanidiot.org)

To join Told by an Idiot’s mailing list visit [www.toldbyanidiot.org](http://www.toldbyanidiot.org). You can also connect with us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/toldbyanidiot93/), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/toldbyanidiot/) and [Twitter/X](https://twitter.com/toldbyanidiot93).

**About the Barbican**

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We are the home of the London Symphony Orchestra, and a London base of the Royal Shakespeare Company. We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other partners and associates: the Academy of Ancient Music, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boy Blue, Britten Sinfonia, Cheek by Jowl, Drum Works, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and We Are Parable.

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