

A CHRISTMAS FAIR

BY JIM CARTWRIGHT



PROGRAMME

17 DEC - 2 JAN / CHADDERTON TOWN HALL



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

GMCA GREATER
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AUTHORITY

OLDHAM
Coliseum
THEATRE

Not Too Tame

WELCOME

Martina Murphy
*CEO, Oldham Coliseum
Theatre*

Being part of shaping this next chapter of the Coliseum has been one of the great privileges of my life. It has asked all of us – artists, staff, audiences, communities – to work in new ways, be braver, and to imagine beyond the familiar. And for me, this is also deeply personal.

Growing up working class in Oldham, in a family that didn't speak the language of arts or higher education, I know what it means to walk into rooms you're not sure were built for you. The accents, the unspoken codes, the quiet shrinking of yourself just to fit in – it lingers. Yet those of us who grew up on the edges often carry powerful instincts for community, humour, graft and storytelling. I want those instincts at the heart of the Coliseum we're rebuilding.

That's why A Christmas Fair feels so important. It embodies everything we are: gritty, northern, warm, and rooted in real people and real places. It champions local talent, from the performers discovered through our open auditions, and it opens the door wide for our Young Company; giving Oldham's young people a platform to learn, stretch, and shine.

At the helm is Jimmy, whose star brings freshness, an emotional truth, and a sense of play that feels unmistakably of this place. He holds the community at the centre of his vision. Even the market at the heart of the show reflects Oldham's spirit – makers, crafters, small businesses, people grafting with pride. Audiences can enjoy a brilliant night at the theatre and pick up their Christmas presents from local creatives. It's theatre woven into everyday life.

This Spring and Summer, as we gather in rooms big and small, in studios and outdoor spaces across the town, we're not just programming a season. We're rehearsing for the future Coliseum – the one that will return to Fairbottom Street carrying the stories, skills, humour and heart of a borough that refuses to be underestimated.

It takes a village, they say. I was raised by one. And now I get to build one.

Jimmy Fairhurst
*Director, Founder and
Artistic Director of Not
Too Tame*

DIRECTORS NOTE

Working on the words of Jim Cartwright is, for me, both a privilege and a homecoming. Jim has long been one of my heroes; a writer who can take the everyday rhythms of ordinary people and spin them into something powerful, poetic, and full of heart. His work reminds us that magic doesn't just belong to far-off places or perfect lives; it's right here, in the mundane, messy, brilliant reality of our own communities.

With A Christmas Fair, we've tried to honour that spirit. This show celebrates the laughter, the graft, the chaos, and the tenderness that live side by side in towns like Oldham, Chadderton, and across the North West. These places, our places, deserve great stories, great nights out, and theatre that meets people where they are and celebrates their communities.

It's been a joy bringing this tale to life in Chadderton Town Hall, a building woven into the fabric of the community, and a reminder that theatre doesn't need a grand stage to be grand. It just needs people willing to gather, to listen, to laugh, and to feel something together.

To Jim, thank you for giving us a world full of wonder and grit.

To our audiences, thanks for coming out, getting stuck in, and keeping the magic alive. Have a cracking night, and a proper Merry Christmas!



A CHRISTMAS FAIR

CAST (in order of appearance)

Lee Toomes	Caretaker
Samantha Robinson	Veronica
Paddy Stafford	Johnny
Dickon Tyrrell	Vicar
Kelise Gordon-Harrison	Lucy

YOUNG COMPANY

Kaylan Ashford, Sophie Clayton, Ariana Fitzpatrick, Max Healey, Charlie Hill, Aoife Holt, Scarlett Jones, Ryan Kinsi, Jessica Liddle, Oscar McAndrew, Tadi Mkwaturi, Libby Needle, Summer-Elora Newton, Jaxon Openshaw, Jessica Travers.

CREATIVE TEAM

Jimmy Fairhurst	Director
Jen McGinley	Designer
Kayleigh Hawkins	Associate Director
Benny Goodman	Lighting Designer
Jack Baxter	Sound Designer
Benjamin Holder	Musical Supervisor & Composer
Annie-Lunnette Deakin-Foster	Movement Director & Choreographer
Lucy Woodcock	Costumer Supervisor
Josh Tomalin	Lighting Operator
Amy Tinniswood	Sound Operator
Lewis Champney	Production Manager for Estage
Catryn Fray	Company Stage Manager
Annette Gamble	Deputy Stage Manager
Nathan Allum	Assistant Stage Manager
Jennie Holdsworth	Assistant Stage Manager
Charlotte Williams	Assistant Stage Manager
Caroline Lees	Wardrobe Assistant

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ABOUT OLDHAM COLISEUM THEATRE

Oldham Coliseum is entering a bold new chapter. Supported by Oldham Council's £12 million investment in the Fairbottom Street theatre re-opening, we are transforming from a traditional venue into a creative campus for the whole borough. This new model brings together performance, participation, and production, with multi-artform work across theatre, music, dance, film, and digital media.

Our future is being shaped with Oldham's communities through genuine co-authorship. Projects such as Crafted, our artist-development programme, and the Khushi Festival, a joyful celebration of Oldham's South Asian communities, help us grow creativity, expand audiences, and open new pathways for local artists.

As we reimagine the Coliseum, our mission is simple: to build an open, ambitious, community-led cultural home for Oldham. We're excited to create a place where local stories are made, shared, and celebrated – and we're delighted to have you with us on the journey.

Martina Murphy - CEO; Helen Goodman - Head of Creative Engagement; Harriet Grubb - Head of Communications; Cyrus Ho - General Assistant, Jon McGrath - Head of Development & Partnership, Helen Morris - Technical Production Manager; Miles Murgett - Digital Content Creator; Jess Lawrence - Programme & Production Assistant; Conrad Lynch - Consultant Executive Producer; Karen Podesta - People, Systems and Culture lead; Catherine Sharp - Welcome Team Manager, Sanjana Talukder - Marketing Assistant.

ABOUT NOT TOO TAME

Not Too Tame

Not Too Tame are award-winning, 'great night out' specialists producing high-octane, heart-on-sleeve stories steeped in working-class culture and made by working-class artists. For more than a decade, Not Too Tame has been quietly, and sometimes raucously, rewriting the rules of popular theatre. Over its 11 years of critical and audience acclaim, the company has developed a signature style that is equal parts raw energy, finely tuned craft and a refusal to put barriers between stage and stalls. Much of that ethos can be traced to artistic director Jimmy Fairhurst, whose initial three years with Cheek By Jowl brought a nuanced understanding of space, a rigorous physicality and an ensemble discipline to his work. Add to that the influence of directors like Mike Leigh and Matthew Dunster, and the creative friendships he has fostered with figures such as Trevor Griffiths, and you find a methodology steeped in precision yet bristling with vitality. It is this fusion, exacting artistry rooted in lived experience, that has kept Not Too Tame both relevant and beloved, a company that manages to be populist without ever feeling compromised.

Jimmy Fairhurst - Artistic Director, Louise Haggerty - Associate Director, Andrew Butler - Associate Director, Matthew Schmolle - Producer, Laura Harrison - Associate Artist & General Manager.

ABOUT CHADDERTON TOWN HALL

Chadderton Town Hall is a magnificent Edwardian building, built in 1912, and recently restored. Home to the Oldham Registrars Service, it is licensed for civil ceremonies; but it is also available to hire for other occasions. For booking enquiries call **0161 770 4083** or email qeh@oldham.gov.uk.

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COMING UP AT OLDHAM COLISEUM THEATRE

Thu 5 Feb - OLDHAM COMEDY CLUB, *Billingtons*

A powerhouse line up of top comedians provide a night of unforgettable laughs.

Wed 18 Feb - TENTACLES, *Venue tbc*

The launch of Tentacles, a vibrant, touring textile installation and workshop popping up across Oldham to spark creativity and conversation.

Tue 24 Feb - CENSUS A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP,

Crompton Central Working Men's Club

A hands-on exploration of working-class storytelling, with techniques and practical skills for preserving your own stories.

Thu 26 Feb - CULTURE AND CHIPS WITH LISA

MALLAGHAN, *The Old Museum – Greaves St*

Join Lisa Mallaghan from Bradford Producing Hub for an informal conversation about arts and culture – served with chips.

Thu 5 March - CENSUS, *Billingtons*

A bus ride. A bingo card. A memory you didn't know you shared. Award winning duo Malandra Jacks introduce you to what happens when a working-class community tells its own story.

Sat 14 March - AFRICAN DRUMMING AND STORY

TELLING WORKSHOP, *The Old Museum – Greaves St*

Learn traditional drumming techniques and discover how rhythm drives storytelling with Oluwasegun Lafup Ogundipe (from ÌLỌYÁ).

Thu 19 March - ÌLỌYÁ...LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN, *George*

Street Chapel

A laugh-out-loud, heart-punching one-man show about migration and the search for belonging, with live drumming, music, dance and audience interaction.

Tue 7 April - KHOOGHI, *Oldham Library Theatre*

A magical, puppet-filled journey where music and storytelling bridge generations, blending biography and Punjabi legend to keep heritage alive.

Thu 9 April - SMOKE & MIRRORS, *Gallery Oldham's*

Old Library

All Frankie wants to do is make great art – but does trauma make the artist? Written by Jake Talbot and Directed by Miranda Parker from Oldham's Dare to Know theatre company.

Sat 11 April - CRAFT BREW, *Oldham Library Theatre*

Experience fresh theatre as artists share brand-new work and invite your feedback.

Tue 12 May - CULTURE & CHIPS WITH P B MORGAN,

The Old Museum – Greaves St

Discuss arts and culture over chips with poet and Metta Theatre Artistic Director P B Morgan.

Wed 13 May - RUNNING COMMENTARY, *George Street*

Chapel

After a decade of no exercise, 40-year-old poet P B Morgan finds themselves newly single and returning to fitness in a witty, sweaty and unexpectedly emotional romp.

Wed 18- Fri 22 May - MANCHESTER JAZZ FESTIVAL GIGS

1 Aug - SAVE THE DATE: KHUSHI FESTIVAL

Khushi Festival is a vibrant celebration of culture, music and community spirit in Oldham.

The season is an invitation to talk, listen and explore how the Coliseum can best serve you. Events are taking place throughout Oldham. Please visit coliseum.org.uk for all the details.

SUPPORT OLDHAM COLISEUM THEATRE

HELP US SHARE THE MAGIC OF THEATRE THIS CHRISTMAS

This year, we celebrate A Christmas Fair, we invite you to help bring joy, creativity, and connection to families and individuals across Oldham who might otherwise miss out on the magic of live performance. Wonderful experiences like tonight's show should be for everyone, can you help us with that?

Oldham Coliseum is rebuilding not just a theatre, but a cultural home for the whole community. With your support, we can offer free or low-cost theatre experiences to people facing financial hardship, social isolation, or challenging circumstances. Your gift helps us open our doors wider, transform lives through creativity, and keep the arts as a source of warmth and wellbeing

Every donation makes a meaningful difference:

- £15 helps us offer a ticket to a child or young person.
- £25 supports a family to enjoy a show together.
- £50 contributes to specialist workshops led by local creatives.
- £100+ helps fund broader creative opportunities that strengthen Oldham's cultural ecosystem.

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By giving, you're not just supporting individuals, you're investing in local artists, freelancers, and the town's creative economy, helping us create sustainable jobs and vibrant cultural activity. Donations can be made as a one-off gift or as a regular monthly standing order, helping us plan ahead and reach even more people.

Thank you for helping us keep the magic of theatre alive for everyone in Oldham.

PLEASE
HELP, DONATE
TODAY



SCAN THE QR CODE AND HELP
US MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO
THE COMMUNITY.



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