

COMMON CHORUS IN ASSOCIATION WITH LITTELMIGHTY PRESENTS

# IF I SAY JUMP



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**TOUR PACK**

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## WHAT'S THE SHOW ABOUT?

Jenny's a vicar. But she's got problems. Her creepy ex-husband keeps sending her flowers and won't sign the divorce papers. The church hall is being renovated by a dodgy builder, who's being investigated by the police. And her best friend Danny has turned up in the vestry with a gun.

Danny has anger issues. He's just had a fight with his best mate Benson. They're in too deep and running out of options. So when he turns to the church Jenny has to choose between doing the right thing or doing the legal thing.

A bold and exhilarating tale of contemporary Britain, *If I Say Jump* is a show for anyone who has ever asked themselves "why did I just do that?" It skilfully blends storytelling, comedy, original music and a live soundscape to chart a morally ambiguous quest for peace and wellbeing in a chaotic time.

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## IS THERE A TRAILER?

Yes. You can find it at:  
[youtu.be/fkgZnTHWz4w](https://youtu.be/fkgZnTHWz4w)



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## WHAT'S IT LIKE FOR THE AUDIENCE?

A two-hander designed for touring to studio spaces, *If I Say Jump* is a fast-paced but thoughtful storytelling show about facing up to our past and taking control of our future.

Evoking wild emotions and laugh out loud comedy, the actors skilfully multi-role all of the characters. Using a stripped-back theatricality that mixes live foley sound art with sensitive, direct performances and physical theatre, the piece follows two complex central characters making well-intentioned but morally questionable choices.

Led by Artistic Director **Simon Brewis** (Red Ladder Theatre Associate Artist), the creative team includes writer/dramaturg **Dick Bonham** (Fringe First Award winner for Daniel Bye's *Going Viral*), as well as performers **Jake England Johns** (Chotto Ookkii, Serious Mischief, Tell Tale Hearts) and **Lynsey Jones** (*Emmerdale*, *Suitcase and Spectacles*).

The show was inspired by the fascinating, heart-wrenching stories of people in recovery from addiction, who we worked with during our previous project, *Drink with a Chimp*. At the same time we

met Dr Steve Peters, author of *The Chimp Paradox*, who led us to think about the ways in which people react to stressful situations.

Like all of Common Chorus' work, the show is politically and socially engaged. Set against the background of a depressed ex-mining village, the show covers issues of mental health, violence and doing the right thing in impossible circumstances.

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## WHAT IS COMMON CHORUS THEATRE?

Led by Artistic Director Simon Brewis, Common Chorus tells truthful, provocative and entertaining stories inspired by the people and places we work with.

The company was formed in 2014 after being commissioned by Red Ladder Theatre to create a performance for the Big Book End Festival, working with people in recovery from addiction at the Spacious Spaces Recovery Centre. This led to an ongoing relationship with the centre and the creation of full-length show *Drink With A Chimp*, which toured to community, recovery and theatre venues in Yorkshire.

You can find out more about *Drink With A Chimp* by watching the trailer here: [youtu.be/OP2LDjyYhU0](https://youtu.be/OP2LDjyYhU0)

This was followed by *After the Flood*, a site-based theatre performance commissioned by Professor Steve Bottoms of Multi-Story Water for the Leeds Waterfront Festival. Set six months after the devastating Christmas floods, it dramatised the real experiences of people who made a response to the tragedy.

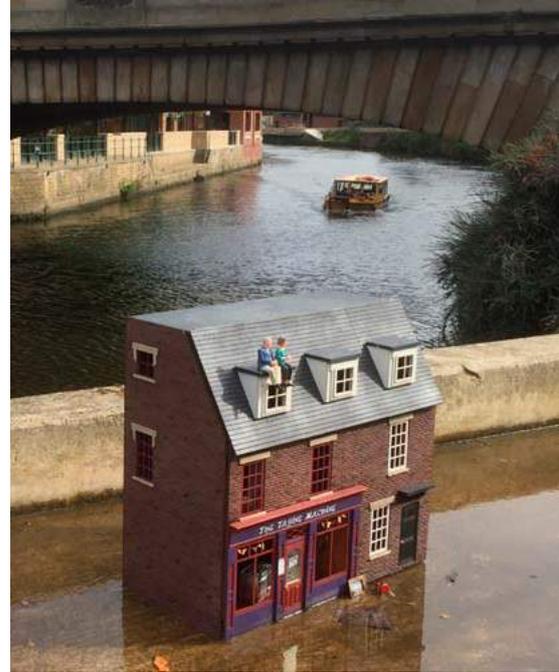
*If I Say Jump* brings together existing collaborators Lynsey Jones and Jake England-Johns with new team member Dick Bonham, who will help shape the play's narrative and mentor us as we produce our first national tour.



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**“THIS COMPANY HAS GOT UNDER THE SKIN TO DEVELOP A PLAY THAT HAS FOUND BOTH THE MISERY OF ADDICTION AND THE COMMUNAL HOPE – EVEN JOY – OF THOSE THAT ARE REDISCOVERING DIGNITY AND SELF-WORTH”**

THE PUBLIC REVIEWS



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**“IT MADE ME THINK OF THE CITY DIFFERENTLY... ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE COUNTRYSIDE... IT DID ALL THIS IN A CLEVER, FUNNY AND GENTLE WAY, WITHOUT FORCING A MESSAGE ON TO THE AUDIENCE”**

DR LOURDES OROZCO, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, WORKSHOP THEATRE



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**“I THOUGHT THE ACTING WAS EXCELLENT – A REALLY IMAGINATIVE SETTING, IT WAS TOTALLY ENGAGING, COMPELLING AND CHALLENGING”**

JOHN BATTLE MP

[@common\\_chorus](https://twitter.com/common_chorus)  
[/simonbrewistheatre](https://www.facebook.com/simonbrewistheatre)  
[www.commonchorus.co.uk](http://www.commonchorus.co.uk)

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## WHO HAS SUPPORTED THE SHOW SO FAR?

In Autumn 2016 and Spring 2017 we undertook a Research & Development project with the financial backing of Arts Council England. This took place with the support of CAST, Doncaster; The Civic, Barnsley; The Carriageworks, Leeds; Slung Low's HUB, Interplay Theatre and Love Arts Festival.

This enabled us to think about the stories we had heard during our work with people in recovery, and begin to shape these into an exciting narrative.

Work-in-progress performances working with our partners allowed us to test out material with audiences, who were very enthusiastic.

Having completed the R&D, we have a full draft of the script, ready to take into final rehearsals. We can't wait to get out on the road!

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**“LOVELY TO SEE COMMON CHORUS'S WORK IN PROGRESS THIS EVENING. SOME LOVELY MOMENTS THERE.”**

DANIEL INGRAM-BROWN, AUTHOR

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# WHO'S INVOLVED IN THE SHOW?

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## SIMON BREWIS DIRECTOR

Common Chorus is a young company led by Director Simon Brewis. After 12 years creating award-winning work in youth and community settings he has created Common Chorus to drive the next chapter of his career making exceptional work for theatre and site-based spaces. Outside of Common Chorus he has worked as an assistant director with Red Ladder Theatre Company and directed the eponymous *Multi Story Water* and *Seven Bridges* performances for the Multi Story Water project. From 2007 – 2011 he collaborated as part of the creative team at Pointed Arrow Performance, where his work included *Leonard's Bones*, *Heave* ("a bold and desperate venture to raise open discussion of social, religious, ethical, family and personal values" – *In Touch*), *The Lone and Level Sands* and *The Crossing*.

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## DICK BONHAM MENTOR AND WRITER

Dick is an experienced director, writer and dramaturg. He has an ongoing partnership with Daniel Bye, having recently directed the Fringe First Award winning *Going Viral*, as well as previous pieces *The Price of Everything* and *How*

*To Occupy An Oil Rig*. Other projects include Matthew Bellwood's *An Icy Man* (West Yorkshire Playhouse) and Emma Decent's *Beyond Dreams of Aberystwyth*. He wrote and directed Sometimes We Play's *We Can Be Heroes* in 2014, and is currently developing a new solo performance *Thinner Blood*, which explores the impact of chronic illness.

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## JAKE ENGLAND JOHNS PERFORMER AND DEVISOR

Jake is a physical theatre trained actor, circus performer, director and workshop leader. In 2006 Jake was a founding member of Chotto Ookii Theatre Company who went on to win a Total Theatre Award at the Edinburgh fringe festival for the show *And Even My Goldfish*. The company went on to tour nationally as well as in Europe, producing three highly acclaimed physical theatre shows. In 2013 Jake codirected the *Slamboree* stagemusical, which won a Breakspoll award for Best Live Act at the 2014 Break Beat awards. Currently Jake is the artistic director of Serious Mischief Theatre Company, which specialises in weaving both the serious and the playful to create circus and theatre work with a twinkle in it's eye. Over the last 12 years he has performed circus, puppetry, mime, clown and theatre in numerous companies, streets and venues.

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## LYNSEY JONES PERFORMER AND DEVISOR

Lynsey began acting as part of Red Ladder Theatre Company's Red Grit training programme in 2010. Since then she has worked with the company through taking lead roles in *Promised Land* and *Leeds Lads*. She has toured with Libellule Theatre in *Cloth of Dreams* and *Just a Bit of Paper*, as well as being a core collaborator on *Miss Dotty's Specs* and *Rise of the Shadow Stealers* for Suitcase & Spectacles. TV appearances include *Emmerdale*, *The Syndicate* and *Grace's Story*.

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## PRODUCER LITTLEMIGHTY

LittleMighty work with remarkable artists to make brilliant theatre happen. Recent work includes Unfolding Theatre's *Putting the Band Back Together* ("Fantastic – funny, big-hearted, moving and truthful" – *The Guardian*) and Testament's *Blake Remixed*, co-produced with West Yorkshire Playhouse ("An entertaining fusion of hip hop, rap and beatboxing that thrusts the Blake mythology into the 21st Century" – *The Stage*). Other successes include Move to Stand's *Fat Man* ("Full of wounded heart, this is a show that lingers in the mind" – Lyn Gardner, *The Guardian*; VAULT Festival Pick of the Year Award).



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## WHO IS THIS SHOW FOR?

*If I Say Jump* is a fast-paced, dramatic storytelling piece about recognisable characters who must make morally complex decisions. It has the potential to appeal to fans of new writing and contemporary devised theatre alike – in fact anyone who enjoys a good night out!



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## KEY TARGET AUDIENCES INCLUDE

- Adults and teenagers who enjoy the entertaining twists and turns of contemporary TV drama, particularly within a crime genre such as *Broadchurch*.
- People in recovery from addiction from recovery and mental health groups, interested in the themes and connections we made during the research process for the show. Evaluation of previous work demonstrates that this audience is empowered by seeing relatable experiences portrayed in mainstream arts spaces. We can support venues in reaching these groups.
- Socially progressive church communities involved in community social action projects, who will be attracted by the central character of a vicar – but one who doesn't conform to established tropes and stereotypes.
- Due to some mature content we recommend the show for anyone aged 12+.

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## SELLING POINTS

- Accessible, entertaining story of our times with a contemporary edge.
- Skilled performers fuse original music, live sound, physicality and storytelling.
- Strong cross-audience appeal to people who enjoy narrative-led work and physical/devoted theatre.
- Award-winning creative team.
- Excellent engagement and wraparound workshop potential.

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## WORKSHOPS AND PARTICIPATION

With 12 years' experience working in community and youth theatre Simon is a seasoned workshop facilitator. He also teaches a Devising module to Undergraduates at Manchester University. Workshops and wraparound activities can be bespoke and we are happy to create new workshops or projects, however here are some things we know we can already deliver.



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## STAND ALONE WORKSHOPS APPROX. 2 HOURS TO A FULL DAY

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### MY TRUE FICTION

This workshop begins with the idea that a story can speak of truth without being a true story. We guide participants through storytelling games and exercises that honour important real life events in the creation of entertaining and provoking fiction.

This is a highly accessible and adaptable workshop suitable for academic and community settings and different skill, age and experience levels. It also forms the cornerstone of most community project work and can be used to address specific subjects (e.g. recovery, difficult life transitions, faith, coming to terms with illness, etc).

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### MIME AND THE MONSTER INSIDE

This workshop teaches physical theatre and mime technique that participants then apply when creating autobiographical performances, as a safe way of exploring inner demons and real life frustrations. It has been inspired by 'The Chimp Paradox', a book by Dr Steve Peters that was influential on the development of *If I Say Jump*.

This workshop balances the teaching of physical performance technique and exploring personal development. It is appropriate to students of theatre at all levels and potentially in some community settings. It requires a moderate degree of physical aptitude and openness to or some previous experience of drama.

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### COMMUNITY PROJECTS

We are eager to hear from special interest community groups who want to use storytelling and theatre as a new way of exploring the things that bring that group together and give it purpose. Our projects would also be suited to youth theatre or amateur theatre groups who want to engage with professionals to theatrically explore a specific subject in a performance.

Projects usually use the 'My True Fiction' workshop as a launchpad to create material that leads to the creation of a performance. We usually split projects into a 'writing and creation phase' and a 'rehearsal and performance phase' to make them accessible to people with different skills to bring to the table.

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### THE SOUND OF STORIES MOVING

This technique led workshop breaks down three key theatre conventions used in *If I Say Jump*: generating live sound on stage, physical theatre and verbal storytelling. Depending upon the workshop length, students can practice combining the techniques either by mounting their interpretation of scenes from the production and/or applying the techniques to their own stories.

It is appropriate to students of drama at any level, and can be adjusted for keen young performers to professionals looking to add to their toolkit.

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### FURTHER EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECTS

Simon tutors in Devising techniques at Manchester University and would be happy to support students at further and higher education levels to help build the skills they need to make their own work.





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## HOW DO I BOOK?

If you want to bring *If I Say Jump* to your venue, please get in touch with producer Dick Bonham of LittleMighty to discuss dates and a financial package:

E [dick@littlemighty.co.uk](mailto:dick@littlemighty.co.uk)

T 07956 573 679

[www.littlemighty.co.uk](http://www.littlemighty.co.uk)

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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

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### COMPANY

2 performers with 3 on the road.

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### MINIMUM PLAYING SPACE

5m x 4m.

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### GET-IN

Minimum 4 hours.

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### GET-OUT

1 hour following performance.

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### RUNNING TIME

70 minutes with no interval.

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### SET

Table and chair, on which are set various hand props and sound equipment for generating live foley sound.

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### SOUND

The show has been designed for the performers to operate Sound equipment onstage as part of the action. Please provide suitable PA for venue and 2 x suitable vocal mic (SM58 or similar) with stands. Inputs accessible to stage for laptop to be toured by company to operate sound.

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### LIGHTING

Please provide support from one in-house technician to operate LX. A fully marked up script will be provided on arrival. Full design available on request. Pre-rig if available.



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ENGLAND**

