

THOMAS HARDY'S
FAR FROM THE
MADDING
CROWD

ADAPTED BY NICK YOUNG & ROSS MUIR

Marketing Pack

Marketing Pack – Contents

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Conn Artists Theatre Company – an introduction

We are the professional theatre company associated with the Connaught Theatre in Worthing having been supported by Worthing Theatres since 2013.

We create live theatre that engages audiences; sharing great stories that resonate with timeless, universal themes about the human condition which are socially relevant; often a reimagining or adaptation of a classic or neglected work.

Recently we produced a successful revival of *The Haunting* by Hugh Janes which played 53 performances and toured to 41 regional theatres from Autumn 2023 to Spring 2024.

From 2021-2023, we toured the UK Premiere of *A Perfect Likeness* by Daniel Rover Singer (founder of the Reduced Shakespeare Company); a new play about an imagined and revealing encounter between two of the 19th Century's most iconic English authors, Charles Dickens and Lewis Carroll which delighted all audiences who saw it.

In 2022, we toured a revival of J.M. Barrie's ghost play *Mary Rose*, described by a 5 star review from Theatre South East as "*Hauntingly beautiful*". In 2019, we mounted a regional tour of George Eliot's *Silas Marner* adapted by Geoffrey Beevers. Supported by Arts Council England and The George Eliot Fellowship in the writer's bicentenary year the production was highly praised as the company's best work to date and gained 5 star and 4 star reviews from The Argus, Remote Goat and The Stage. Integral to this tour was the engagement with GCSE students, homeless people and refugees through workshops and outreach sessions.

In 2017 we mounted our first tour and landmark production of Hilaire Belloc's book *The Four Men* adapted by Sussex playwright Ann Feloy and directed by former Artistic Director of the Connaught Theatre, Nick Young. Supported by and working in partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority and Worthing Museum, the show was a huge hit with regional audiences.

Previous productions:

The Haunting (2023-2024), *A Perfect Likeness* (2021-2023); *Mary Rose* (2022), *Silas Marner* (2019); *The Four Men* (2017); *Courage* (2015); *The Good Doctor* (2014); *The Importance of Being Oscar* (2014); *Vintage Hitchcock: A Live Radio Play* (2013)

Marketing & Press Enquiries and Interviews, please contact:

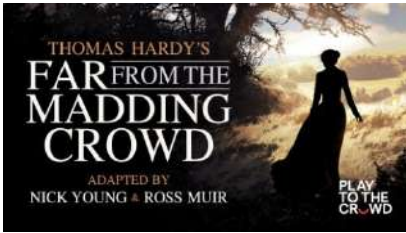
Ross Muir – Co-founder, Artistic Director, Producer and Actor
E: ross@conn-artists.co.uk
M: 07813 275 459

Other Company Contacts:

Matthew Pike – Co-founder, Production and Technical Manager
E: matt@conn-artists.co.uk

Laura Kimber – Co-founder, Designer and Volunteer Co-ordinator
E: laura@conn-artists.co.uk

Digital Assets



Far from the Madding Crowd: **Photography**

<https://flic.kr/ps/45iwZ8>

Far from the Madding Crowd: **Artwork**

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/dgc4qo6j5eism3vlmdsir/FFMC_Artwork-Copy-2024.zip?rlkey=s4ttvvk5b8x1xpubd73oyezrc&st=p9xmp0d1&dl=0

Far from the Madding Crowd: **Teaser Trailer**

Available February 2025

Social Media Handles

Facebook: [connartistscompany](https://www.facebook.com/connartistscompany)

X: @ConnArtistsCo

Instagram: @connartistscompany

Press Release Template

Conn Artists present a new stage adaptation of “*Far from the Madding Crowd*” for a National UK Tour in spring 2025

Conn Artists Theatre Company revives Thomas Hardy’s classic novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, adapted by Nick Young & Ross Muir, for a nationwide theatre tour starting February 2025 and will visit (VENUE NAME) on (DATE).

This adaptation brings to life the story of Bathsheba Everdene, a headstrong woman managing her inherited farm in Victorian England, as she navigates romantic entanglements with three very different suitors: the steadfast shepherd Gabriel Oak, the charming but reckless Sergeant Troy, and the wealthy landowner Mr. Boldwood.

Touring to over 40 venues, this production captures Hardy’s themes of independence, class, love and marriage. The play features a cast of five actors with live period music and ballads, ensemble storytelling, embodying the spirit of rural Victorian England.

Actor and Producer, Ross Muir, says “*Far from the Madding Crowd is an exciting return to previous literary stage adaptations that we have produced in the past, like George Eliot’s Silas Marner and Hilaire Belloc’s The Four Men, which I feel are the heart and soul of Conn Artists live theatre work. Our adaptation will be fast moving and inventive with interlinking folk songs. Far from the Madding Crowd will appeal not only to fans of Thomas Hardy but to anyone who simply wants to come to the theatre and enjoy a gripping romantic story.*”

Director, Nick Young says, “*A great novel, great characters and lots of dramatic action. Bringing these all to life is what theatre does best. The heroine is, in many ways, a very contemporary woman. Strong, independent, attractive but flawed by her vanity. Tragedy, comedy and passion walk hand in hand in this unforgettable piece of drama, performed in Conn Artists unique style*”

Conn Artists Theatre Company’s tour of *Far from the Madding Crowd* is produced in association with Play to the Crowd and opens at Theatre Royal Winchester on 4th February 2025.

To purchase tickets at (VENUE NAME) please call (VENUE BOX OFFICE) or visit (VENUE WEBSITE)

Tour Dates: Complete listing of venues, dates, and box office information can be found on www.conn-artists.co.uk/tour-dates or on the last page of this pack.

----- ENDS -----

Box Office Information:

CREATIVES:

Title:	Far from the Madding Crowd
Author:	Thomas Hardy adapted for the stage by Nick Young & Ross Muir
Company:	Conn Artists Theatre Company – www.conn-artists.co.uk
Director:	Nick Young
Producer:	Ross Muir
Set Designer:	Laura Kimber
Lighting Designer:	Matthew Pike
Photographer:	Sam Pharoah

CAST:

Bathsheba Everdene:	Abi Casson Thompson
Gabriel Oak:	George Turner
Sergeant Troy:	Jaymes Sygrove
William Boldwood:	Ross Muir
Liddy Smallbury / Fanny:	Emily Huxter

All other parts played by members of the cast

Type of event:	Play (Professional touring production)
Style of work:	Brand new stage adaptation of Thomas Hardy's classic novel performed by an ensemble cast with music and songs from the period.
Description:	Capricious, independent and beautiful Bathsheba Everdene inherits and manages her uncle's farm. She is courted by three infatuated suitors: an honest, loyal and capable shepherd; a womanising and charming Sergeant; and a lonely, wealthy farmer. Who will she choose? If any of them? She plays with all their hearts to devastating and dramatic effect.
Warnings:	Gunshots, Strobe Lighting, Haze/Smoke
Age Suitability:	12+
No. performers:	5
Running time:	Approx 120 minutes plus a 20 minute interval

Selling the Show

Target Audience

- Fans and students of classic English literature and period dramas.
- Local book clubs, library groups, and members of regional theatre networks.
- Enthusiasts of Victorian history, rural heritage, and Thomas Hardy's work.
- General audiences who enjoy stories centred on romance, personal resilience, and society.

Key Selling Points:

- *Far from the Madding Crowd* is a vibrant adaptation of Hardy's novel, showcasing a compelling story of love, independence, and personal choices.
- Features live period music and authentic Victorian costumes, creating a rich, immersive experience of 19th-century England.
- Known for past productions like *Silas Marner* and *Mary Rose*, Conn Artists Theatre Company's adaptations are critically acclaimed and a favourite with audiences across the UK.
- Directed by Nick Young, former RSC and Connaught Theatre director, this production offers a fresh perspective on Hardy's characters and is presented with an ensemble cast of five actors that brings Hardy's rural world to life
- Post show Q&A's are available upon request with the cast.

Press Quotes:

For Conn Artists previous work:

"Hauntingly beautiful." ★★★★★
(Theatre South East on *Mary Rose*)

"A riveting example of ensemble theatre at its very best." ★★★★★
(The Argus on *Silas Marner*)

"Strong, vivid and emotional story telling." ★★★★★
(Remote Goat on *Silas Marner*)

"This new touring production from Worthing company Conn Artists has made regional theatre feel in ruder health overnight." ★★★★★
(The Stage on *The Four Men*)

Audience Engagement & Cross-Campaign Suggestions

Digital and Social Media Campaigns

- Share promotional photos, trailers, and teasers on your website and social media channels weekly, creating anticipation and showcasing the main themes.
- Encourage audiences to share their favourite Thomas Hardy quotes or discuss their own experiences with *Far from the Madding Crowd* using a dedicated hashtag, e.g., #MaddingCrowdPlay.
- Schedule pre-show interviews and features with cast members and the director on local radio, newspapers, magazines or online publications.
- Send a targeted e-shot out to your drama season/theatre goers especially those audiences who have seen Conn Artists previous productions at your venue including *The Haunting*, *Mary Rose* and *Silas Marner*.

Cross-Campaign Opportunities

- **Local Book Clubs and Libraries:** Offer group rates for book clubs and libraries, particularly Hardy discussion groups. <https://readinggroups.org/groups>
- **Tourist Engagement:** Connect with local historical societies and regional museums, possibly offering special ticket packages or display options at locations related to Hardy's life or Victorian England.
- **Educational Outreach:** Contact local English departments at universities or colleges, offering discounts for students and encouraging group discussions about Hardy's work.
- **Community Events:** Organize a themed "Victorian Night" in select venues, encouraging audiences to dress in Victorian attire and creating an immersive experience around the play.

Show Copy

SHORT COPY (78 words)

Capricious, independent and beautiful Bathsheba Everdene inherits and manages her uncle's farm. She is courted by three infatuated suitors: an honest, loyal and capable shepherd; a womanising and charming Sergeant; and a lonely, wealthy farmer. Who will she choose? If any of them? She plays with all their hearts to devastating and dramatic effect.

Far from the Madding Crowd demonstrates live, vibrant theatre at its very best.

“strong, vivid and emotional story telling.” ★★★★★

(Remote Goat on *Silas Marner*)

MEDIUM COPY (111 words)

Capricious, independent and beautiful Bathsheba Everdene inherits and manages her uncle's farm. She is courted by three infatuated suitors: an honest, loyal and capable shepherd; a womanising and charming Sergeant; and a lonely, wealthy farmer. Who will she choose? If any of them? She plays with all their hearts to devastating and dramatic effect.

Far from the Madding Crowd demonstrates live, vibrant theatre at its very best.

This new adaptation of Hardy's novel is presented by the acclaimed Conn Artists Theatre Company, performed by an ensemble cast accompanied by music and songs of the period.

“a riveting example of ensemble theatre at its very best.” ★★★★★

(The Argus on *Silas Marner*)

LONG COPY (161 words)

Capricious, independent and beautiful Bathsheba Everdene inherits and manages her uncle's farm. She is courted by three infatuated suitors: an honest, loyal and capable shepherd; a womanising and charming Sergeant; and a lonely, wealthy farmer. Who will she choose? If any of them? She plays with all their hearts to devastating and dramatic effect.

Far from the Madding Crowd demonstrates live, vibrant theatre at its very best.

Thomas Hardy's masterpiece about love, class and gender roles is set against the rural landscape of Victorian England and is thrillingly brought to life in a new adaptation by the acclaimed Conn Artists Theatre Company, performed by an ensemble cast accompanied by music and songs of the period.

“a riveting example of ensemble theatre at its very best.” ★★★★★

(The Argus on *Silas Marner*)

“strong, vivid and emotional story telling.” ★★★★★

(Remote Goat on *Silas Marner*)

“Conn Artists has made regional theatre feel in ruder health overnight.” ★★★★★

(The Stage on *The Four Men*)

Suggested Social Media Posts

Please feel free to accompany these posts with the selection of promotional photographs provided.

Facebook/Instagram

- “Conn Artists Theatre Company presents *Far from the Madding Crowd* – a timeless story of love, independence, and societal expectations. Join us this spring 2025 for an unforgettable theatrical experience! [\[Ticket Link\]](#)”
- “What happens when a woman has to choose between love, independence, and duty? *Far from the Madding Crowd* explores these timeless questions. Touring soon!” [\[Image of Bathsheba with suitors\]](#)

X

- “Thomas Hardy’s *Far from the Madding Crowd* comes to life on stage this spring. Follow Bathsheba Everdene as she navigates love and independence! #MaddingCrowdPlay [\[Link\]](#)”
 - “Three suitors, one choice. Who will Bathsheba Everdene choose? Find out this spring! #MaddingCrowdPlay [\[Link\]](#)”
-

The Production Team & Cast



NICK YOUNG – Adapter & Director

Nick got the directing bug when he used to invite another 5-year-old from school to come and watch his puppet shows, staged in an old empty wireless. He launched his first company, Rafter Players, modestly, with a production of *Hamlet*, staged in a Victorian attic. Over the next ten years the company grew, touring its productions throughout Scandinavia and Russia – as well as Brixton!

At Oxford he read English (very occasionally) and directed numerous shows, including the famous Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor *Dr Faustus*, when he was the student director to Professor Nevill Coghill. He joined the RSC as a trainee director and worked with actors such as Dame Helen Mirren and Patrick Stewart.

For three years he was the director of the world-famous Ludlow Festival, staging epic Shakespeare in the Castle. For ten years he was the Artistic Director of the Connaught Theatre, Worthing where he had enormous fun creating ensemble companies and directing musicals, premieres, classics, thrillers and farces.

He formed Rainbow Theatre in 1983 to inspire children with drama, and writing and directing its repertoire. Over the past twenty years Rainbow Shakespeare, the company that he formed with his wife Alex, has been creating exciting Shakespeare for family audiences in Worthing, London and France.

Nick has directed several productions for Conn Artists, and is excited to be working on their new adaptation of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which opens at Theatre Royal Winchester.



ROSS MUIR – Adapter, Producer and as William Boldwood

Ross trained at Guildford School of Acting and graduated with a BA First Class Honours in Theatre.

London appearances as an actor include the Almeida Theatre, Arts Theatre and New Players Theatre. National tours in the UK and Germany include *Figaro-the play*, *Black Comedy*, *The Real Inspector Hound* and *The Caretaker*.

Ross became a major performer with Rainbow Theatre in schools where he first met Nick; and went onto play Hamlet, Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*, Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, among many leading roles with Rainbow Shakespeare over the past 20 years.

Ross co-founded Conn Artists in 2013 and has produced all of their shows to date. As an actor for the company, he enjoyed playing the title role in *Silas Marner* in 2019, and Hilaire Belloc in *The Four Men* in 2017. He also starred as Lewis Carroll opposite David Stephens as Charles Dickens in the acclaimed UK Premiere of Daniel Rover Singer's play *A Perfect Likeness* which toured 2021 – 2023.

Recently he played David Filde in the company's UK tour of *The Haunting* 2023 – 2024



ABI CASSON THOMPSON – Bathsheba Everdene

Training: Arts Educational schools, London (Ba Hons Musical Theatre)

Since training Abi has worked on a range of theatre and film projects, with a stint in the ‘real world’ running the Marketing department for a London live music venue.

Abi also has a Masters Degree in Psychology and teaches piano!

Theatre includes: Crazy For You (UK tour), Dick Whittington (The Drayton Arms, London), Love Shots (Canal Cafe theatre, London), Prince/David (The Golden Goose Theatre, London).

Film includes: Fatal Affair, Cupid, The Candy Witch, Hellkat, Rise of the Mummy, The Mutation, The Legend of Jack and Jill, Summoning Bloody Mary, Looks Can Kill, Wrath of Van Helsing, An Assassin Walks Through the Trees, Island of Dolls, Harry, Dead Friend.

Abi would like to dedicate her performance to her Nanna - her inspiration.

GEORGE TURNER – Gabriel Oak



George Turner trained at Drama Centre London.

Theatre: *The Tell-Tale Heart* (Southwark Playhouse) *Dancing at Lughnasa* (National Theatre) *The Coast of Utopia* (Pleasance Theatre) *Salomé* (Southwark Playhouse) *The Lady Vanishes* (Theatre Royal Brighton, Richmond Theatre, Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge Arts Theatre and UK Tour) *Vinegar Tom* (Arcola Theatre) Benedict in *Much Ado About Nothing* (The New Diorama) Father in *Metamorphosis* (Seven Dials Playhouse) *The Lady Vanishes* (Theatre Royal Windsor) Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet* (Brighton Open Air Theatre, Hawth Theatre and UK Tour) Cassius in *Julius Caesar* (Cockpit Theatre) Maxwell in *Time For Tea* (Southwark Playhouse) David Powell in *Find Your Way Home* (Etcetera Theatre) Eliert Loveborg in *Hedda Garbler* (Gatehouse Theatre) Adam in *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* (Bridewell Theatre) Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet* (Brighton Open Air Theatre) Peter in *After The Dance* (Gatehouse Theatre) Tom in *The Accrington Pals* (Bridewell Theatre) *Wind In the Willows* (Open Air UK Tour, Sixteenfeet Productions) Lvov in *Ivanov* (Boris Schukin Theatre, Moscow)

Television: Josh in Peckham Mix (Amazon Studios) Borrowed Time (Raw TV)

Film: *Milked* (Pulse Films Ltd) *Our Sons* (Film Tank Ltd) *Gardens At Sunset* (British Film Festival) *Park Life* (Blue Magma Ltd) *Masks* (Grapevine Films) *Begotten* (Pyramid Films) *Saved* (Driftwood Films)

Commercials: Play OJO (Greenroom Films)

JAYMES SYGROVE – Sergeant Troy



Jaymes trained at the Guildford School of Acting.

Theatre credits include:

Trinculo in *The Tempest* (European tour), Soldier/Alex in *Sunday In The Park With George* (Quick Fantastic) George Bailey in *It's A Wonderful Life* (Town & Gown), Sergeant Major in *Journey's End* (Southern UK Tour) Demetrius in *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (European tour), Ego in *Punchy! The Musical* (The Courtyard) Paulina in *The Winters Tale* (European tour), John Brook in *Little Women* (Tour), *Way Up Stream* (Yvonne Arnaud's The Mill Studio) *Coffin* (The Kings Head), Marley in *A Christmas Carol (The Tabard)*, *Snow White/Cinderella* (Bedford Corn Exchange).

Jaymes can be seen in the role of Clarke Gable in Ed Hall's movie adaptation of *Blithe Spirit* starring Judi Dench.

Jaymes is also a play write having penned the original drama *Kingdom*, staged as a rehearsed reading by LynchPin Productions. His new play *Killing Time* is currently in development alongside collaborator Jack Lynch, as well as other projects which will be looking for venues later in the year.

Jaymes would like to extend his thanks to all at Conn Artists.

EMILY HUXTER – Liddy Smallbury / Fanny Robin



Emily is an actor, musician and musical director who trained at the Guildford School of Acting on the Actor-Musicianship BA. She grew up in Cambridge, training in classical music before studying Musical Theatre at Emil Dale Academy. Her recent credits include *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Cambridge Shakespeare Festival) (MD and actor), *The Metamorphosis* (Tour), *On Your Bike* (Edinburgh and Warsaw 2023, Best Musical at the Edinburgh Fringe 2021), *Jingle Street* (Edinburgh 2023), *Spring Awakening* (ADC Theatre) (MD), and *The Witches of Eastwick* (West End Concert).

Emily grew up loving folk music and literature, and can't wait to combine these passions in her work on *Far from The Madding Crowd*.



LAURA KIMBER – Set Design and Costume

Laura studied at Northbrook College, Worthing, from 2001 to 2004. In that time she gained an HND in Technical Theatre, specialising in Prop Making, Set Design and Construction. She then carried on to achieve a BA (Hons) in Theatre Arts, specialising in Set, Props, Costume Design and construction.

After graduating, she worked for Worthing Theatres for nearly 18 years in various departments including; Front of House; as Box Office Supervisor and Venue Hire Manager. She loves to visit the Theatres and support their cultural programme.

Laura is proud to be a part of the Conn Artists Theatre Company. She has been the Designer for all of their productions since she had an interesting conversation with Ross, which led to forming the company and eventually their first production *Vintage Hitchcock* in November of 2013. With each show she feels she is progressing and finding a greater love of Costume Design and shopping.



MATTHEW PIKE – Production Manager / Lighting Designer

Matthew graduated from Northbrook College with a BA in Theatre Arts specialising in Production Management, Lighting Design and Stage Management. Matthew is Technical Manager for Worthing Theatres and Museum and working alongside the technical team looks after all the technical needs for the 4 venues in Worthing.

Matthew works as a freelance lighting designer and has worked with a number of companies in the Worthing area. Most recent of these was designing for BROS Musical Productions in Bognor Regis on their production of *Sister Act*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. He has also designed for CAOS Musical Productions on *Half a Sixpence* and worked with the Arundel Players on productions of *Chess*, *Little Voice* and *25th Annual Putnam Spelling Bee*. Matthew has designed for Worthing Musical Theatre Company for many years and has designed for their productions of *Bad Girls the Musical*, *The Sound of Music*, *Into the Woods*, *Legally Blonde* and *Hairspray*.

Alongside Ross and Laura, Matthew is proud to be a founding member of Conn Artists Theatre Company and has worked on every production the company has produced.

SPRING 2025 TOUR DATES:

4 – 5 Feb	7:30pm (1:30pm Wed)	Theatre Royal Winchester
6 Feb	7:30pm	Swan Theatre, Worcester
7 Feb	7:30pm	Taunton Brewhouse
8 Feb	7:30pm	Swindon Arts Centre
11 Feb	7:30pm	Lancaster Grand Theatre
12 Feb	7:30pm	The Atkinson, Southport
13 Feb	7:30pm	Theatre Royal Wakefield
14 – 15 Feb	7:30pm	Pavilion Arts Centre, Buxton
18 Feb	7:30pm	Marina Theatre, Lowestoft
19 Feb	7:30pm	The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury
20 Feb	7:45pm	Lichfield Garrick
26 Feb	7:30pm	Haverhill Arts Centre
27 – 28 Feb	7:30pm (2:30pm Fri)	New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth
1 Mar	7:30pm	Pavilions, Teignmouth
4 Mar	7:30pm	Waterside, Sale
5 – 6 Mar	7:30pm (2pm Thu)	Winding Wheel Theatre, Chesterfield
7 Mar	7:30pm	Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich
8 Mar	7:30pm	The Corn Hall, Diss
11 – 15 Mar	7:30pm (2:30pm Thu/Sat)	Theatre Royal Windsor
19 Mar	7:00pm	South Mill Arts, Bishop's Stortford
20 Mar	7:30pm	Hanger Farm Arts Centre, Totton
21 Mar	7:30pm	The Princess Theatre, Burnham-on-Sea
23 Mar	7:00pm	The Capitol, Horsham
27 Mar	7:30pm	Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis
28 Mar	7:00pm	Ffwrnes, Llanelli
29 Mar	7:30pm	Blackwood Miners' Institute
2 Apr	7:30pm	Civic Theatre, Rotherham
3 Apr	7:30pm	Alnwick Playhouse
4 Apr	7:30pm	Middlesbrough Theatre
5 Apr	7:30pm	The Albany Theatre, Coventry
9 Apr	7:30pm	The Gaiety Theatre, Ayr
10 Apr	7:30pm	Theatre Royal Dumfries
11 Apr	7:30pm	The Beggar's Theatre, Millom
12 Apr	7:30pm	Darwen Library Theatre, Blackburn
14 Apr	7:30pm	The Malthouse Theatre, Canterbury
15 Apr	7:30pm	Grove Theatre, Dunstable
16 Apr	7:30pm	Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot
22 Apr	7:30pm	Chelmsford Theatre (Studio)
23 Apr	7:30pm	Epsom Playhouse
25 Apr	7:30pm	Quay Arts, Isle of Wight
26 Apr	7:30pm	Strode Theatre, Somerset

