

About the show and Content Warnings

Village Idiot is a new play by Samson Hawkins. The story is set in a (real) small countryside village called Syresham in Northamptonshire and follows the events of the village, which is going to be demolished by HS2 (high-speed rail). Our story focuses on two families – the Mahoneys and the Honeybones – and how they are coping with threat of losing their homes.

There are two distinct performance styles within the show. Some scenes are performed in a more traditional – or ‘naturalistic’ – way. Some scenes are performed in a more variety or cabaret style.

Village Idiot uses outrageous comedy to tell the story. It will certainly shock and offend some people. Some will be upset by the very strong language, which includes swearing, and jokes about race, sexuality, gender and disability. We're aware that it won't be to everyone's liking. The will hopefully challenge you and it may well make you reconsider your comfortable view of the world.

There are several moments in the show that contain loud noises, atmospheric sounds and flashing lights. There are also two instances of the smoking of herbal cigarettes and there is a prop gun (not fired on stage). These are detailed in the scene-by-scene breakdown below.

Language used within the show

The show contains strong language that some may find offensive. This includes repeated use of the 'c-word' and the 'f-word', fatphobia, as well as racist language including 'pikeys' and 'oriental'. There are homophobic, biphobic and transphobic references such as 'poof', 'bender', 'lady boy' and 'soft lad'. There are several instances of sexual references relating to anal and oral sex.

The show does not aim to condone the opinions expressed but aims to expose them for what they are (generally fear or ignorance) and acknowledges that these terms are used in real life and that people have different experiences and opinions.

Age Guidance

We advise that the show is suitable for those aged 14 and above.

Runtime

The first act is approximately 1 hour 20 minutes

The second act is approximately 50 minutes

There will be a 20-minute interval (a break) in between the acts.

Filming and photography

Filming and photography are not permitted during the show.

Latecomers

If you arrive after the show has started, a member of the Front of House team will show you into the auditorium.

Relaxed Environment Performance

All performances of Village Idiot will be in a Relaxed Environment. Relaxed Environment performances are open to all audience members, and can be useful for those with an Autistic Spectrum Condition, sensory and communication disorder, learning disability and anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed theatre environment. For Relaxed Environment performances, there won't be any changes to the show itself but movement in and out of the

auditorium is allowed, there is less emphasis on the audience being quiet during the performance and there will be a separate chill-out room for any audience members that require it.

Captions

All performances of Village Idiot will be captioned. This means you can read what the actors are saying throughout the show by watching the caption units displayed either at the sides of the stage or above the stage.



About the Characters

Barbara Honeybone

Barbara is Peter's and Harry's grandmother. She raised both her grandchildren and loves them very much. She is very strong willed and is willing to fight for what she believes in. Barbara doesn't want her house to be knocked down by HS2.



Peter Honeybone

Peter is Barbara's oldest grandson, Harry's brother and Liam's best friend. He moved away from the village and thinks a lot of the ways people live in the village are wrong. Peter is trying to make a success of his career, but feels insecure that no one takes him seriously. Peter works for HS2 and wants the railway to happen.



Harry Honeybone

Harry is Barbara's youngest grandson, Peter's brother and Debbie's boyfriend. Harry likes things to be done a certain way and can become overwhelmed if things change. He is very much in love with Debbie. Harry doesn't want HS2 as it would stop him and Debbie being together.



Kevin Mahoney

Kevin is Liam's and Debbie's dad. He runs a fencing contractors, and owns a house, both of which are being bought by HS2. Kevin is a very forceful, and that can scare some people, but he is very loving to his daughter. Kevin is okay with HS2 as it is giving him the money to move to Thailand.



Liam Honeybone

Liam is Kevin's son, Peter's best friend and Debbie's brother. Liam is sad that most of his old friends have left the village. Liam is laid back and doesn't want to take things so seriously. He doesn't want HS2 as he will have to leave Syresham and move to Banbury.



Debbie Honeybone

Debbie is Kevin's daughter, Liam's sister and Harry's girlfriend. She is outspoken, passionate and will fight for what she believes in. She is very much in love with Harry. Debbie does not want HS2 as it would stop her from being with Harry.



What happens? Scene-by-scene breakdown

Please note that this contains spoilers.

Prologue – the opening



When the show is about to begin, music plays and Debbie Mahoney appears onstage in front of the closed curtain to greet the audience. Harry Honeybone enters with a clipboard and asks for the music to be cut. They both introduce the world of the play, telling the audience they will be watching a romantic comedy adventure that chronicles a battle against the evil HS2 (High-Speed Rail 2) in the countryside, specifically the village of Syresham.

They demonstrate how the captioning works and ask people to turn their phones off so as not to disturb others. They explain the performance is in a relaxed environment so people can leave and re-enter the auditorium if they need to. Debbie calls her father, Kevin Mahoney, to see if he is ready for the meat raffle. He pokes his head onstage, and he says he is not yet ready, but that there will indeed be a meat raffle. He leaves. Debbie encourages everyone to enjoy the show and exits.

Act 1 Scene 1



The curtain lifts as jaunty, upbeat music plays. The scene takes place in the sitting room of the Honeybone house. Barbara is unwrapping china plates from boxes, which are packed with bubble wrap. A very loud, profane song is playing on the radio (sound warning), which Barbara dances to. Peter Honeybone enters and turns the music off. They discuss her medication. Barbara makes a comment on her nurse's weight. She mocks Peter and tells him that Harry is in a relationship with Debbie. Peter teases his younger brother about his new relationship. Harry gets Camilla, his pet tarantula, to scare Peter, who is frightened. (This is not a real tarantula; it is a puppet.) Peter and Barbara argue about packing the boxes. Barbara and Harry need to leave their house because of a Compulsory Purchase Order (where a public authority can acquire land without the consent of the owner), as HS2, the high-speed rail company, is planning to demolish their house, which is also where Peter grew up, to make way for a new train route. Peter works for the high-speed rail company. Barbara becomes very angry and refuses to ever leave. Harry has a meltdown while singing the Syresham folk song 'Take Your Seats for Syresham' and breaks a plate. Barbara comforts him as the curtain goes down. (Please note that the actor is perfectly safe during these moments, and they are not having a real meltdown.)



Village Hall variety scene – The Award Show



A voiceover introduces Harry as the host of the Syresham Village Awards at the annual village fair. He enters in front of the curtain to present the last ever awards due to HS2's development, and Barbara comes onstage and interrupts him to express her support. He presents three awards, including the winner of The Syresham Scarecrow of the Year. Harry and Barbara win for their giant scarecrow of Queen Elizabeth II, which appears by being lowered in from the ceiling. Harry gives an emotional tribute to the departed monarch. They sing their own version of the National Anthem to say farewell to the Queen. Harry calls offstage to Kevin to see if he's ready for the meat raffle. Kevin crosses the stage with his gun and a shot and thud are heard offstage. Nothing is actually harmed by this.

Act 1 Scene 2



The curtain comes up and the setting for this scene is outside in a field where Kevin Mahoney and Liam Mahoney are eating Pot Noodles. Kevin and Liam discuss having to leave Syresham, and Kevin moving to Thailand where Kevin's new wife Sue lives. Liam is concerned that his dad, Kevin, is not prepared, and that moving will have a bad impact on Debbie. Peter enters the scene and is wearing lots of high visibility clothing. Kevin has to move out of his house due to the high-speed rail, thus he is irritated with Peter.

Kevin leaves the scene leaving the two boys alone. Peter and Kevin used to be friends but their relationship has changed since Peter left the village for university in London. They start building a fence and talk about how their lives have changed, particularly for Peter who has been exploring his sexuality since moving away from Syresham. They talk about their relationship and their past. The scene ends with Peter and Liam kissing against a tree as the curtain comes down. Neither of them has realised that Barbara has been watching them from the back of the stage.

Village Hall variety scene – The Rap



Please note – this scene includes loud music, flashing lights, violent language and high-energy dancing and the actors are wearing masks and balaclavas. We are now back at the Village Hall for the variety show. Liam performs a drill rap about the effects that high-speed rail will have on the countryside. The rest of the cast are dancing in the back as support. At the end of the rap Liam realises that he may have been over the top and regains his composure. He asks all those interested in nature to join the village's nature club, Pocket Park Pals. He also checks whether Kevin is ready for the meat raffle. Kevin is not ready yet.



Act 1 Scene 3



Debbie is sitting on a roundabout in the Pocket Park, waiting for Harry. Harry arrives late with flowers. They are in love and discuss how the destruction of the village is going to affect them. Harry explains that he's going to move away to Milton Keynes to live with his brother Peter. Debbie is worried about moving to Thailand. They talk about their relationship and Debbie's desire to take it to the next level - physically. Debbie dances for Harry flirtatiously. Harry gets flustered and isn't sure what to do. Debbie holds his hands, calms him down, kisses him, and puts his hand on her breast. They talk about how the world views them as disabled people and how unfairly they are treated. Debbie and Harry decide that they should lie to their families, run away together and get married. Neither of them has realised that Barbara has been watching them from the back of the stage.

Village Hall variety scene – Drag Show



We're back in the Village Hall for the next variety act. There is a loud boat horn as Peter enters the stage dressed as a Drag Queen. He sings Cher's famous song 'If I Could Turn Back Time'. It's very over the top and extravagant and good fun! During the song a glitter canon is fired. The rest of the cast are back-up dancers. Liam joins Peter and they sing the song together. At the end of the song, Peter asks Kevin whether he's ready for the meat raffle. Kevin is not ready yet.



Act 1 Scene 4



Kevin and Debbie are at home playing a video game. There are various boxes and bin bags scattered around their room. Kevin talks to Debbie about how much she'll love Thailand and how he's excited to start his new life. He's sad about how Syresham has changed and blames the 'townies' for ruining their way of life. Debbie tells Kevin that she doesn't want to move to Thailand. She says she wants to move to Banbury with Liam so that she can live her own life and be an adult.

As Debbie leaves, Barbara enters. Kevin and Barbara have known each other for a long time and they do not like each other. Barbara says some horrible insults to Kevin and is disappointed that he's not fighting to save Syresham. As they continue to argue, Barbara reveals that she's been spying on Debbie and Harry, and tells him the truth that they are in a relationship and plan on getting married. Barbara makes several lewd comments about Debbie and Harry having sex. She then simulates them having sex by clapping her hands and making sounds. Kevin is enraged and runs off.



Village Hall variety scene – Not Syresham



We're back in the Village Hall for another variety performance. This time Barbara sings a song about not wanting to leave Syresham. The rest of the cast provide back-up vocals and dance moves. It's a jazzy, old-school song with very strong language. At the end of the song Barbara continues to declare that she will never leave Syresham. The curtain comes down for the interval.

END OF ACT 1 – there will be a 20-minute break.

Act 2 Scene 1



Harry, Debbie, Peter and Liam are sitting in the beer garden of a pub. Kevin bursts in and grabs Harry by the neck. Barbara follows. Debbie tries to convince Kevin to calm down. Harry explains that he is madly in love with Debbie and that he'll do anything to protect her. He announces he wants to marry her. Kevin realises how happy Debbie is with Harry and celebrates their relationship. Kevin is happy with Debbie and Harry living together with Peter in Milton Keynes. Barbara is irritated that things seem to be working against her and the preservation of the village and tries to cause an argument. She announces that Liam is gay, in the hopes that Kevin will be angry. But



Kevin doesn't mind. They all moan to Barbara that she's not being very nice and that she needs to leave because of the village getting demolished. Kevin tells her he hopes she dies. Harry starts to hum the tune to 'Take Your Seats for Syresham' signalling that he's getting distressed. Debbie takes his hand and he calms down. Barbara is furious that no-one is defending the village and exits. No-one knows where she has gone.

Village Hall variety Scene – The Magic Show

Please note – this scene contains mild jeopardy. The tricks performed are perfectly safe and no-one is harmed. Please do not recreate any of the tricks performed.

The next scene is a Magic Show where Debbie and Kevin perform a series of magic tricks. Debbie is The Great Debdini, and Kevin is her glamorous assistant. There are some loud sounds of a motorcycle revving and music, and Kevin appears on the stage playing the guitar. Debbie makes the guitar amp burst into flames. Liam puts it out with a fire extinguisher, which makes a whooshing noise. The next trick is then set up. Debbie has three brown bags. Kevin places a sharp nail



into one of them, leaving a block of wood in the other bags. She mixes up the bags so that Kevin doesn't know where the nail is. Debbie tells the audience that Kevin will slam his hand on top of one of the bags. The audience are to decide which one. After the audience have decided, Kevin slams his hand down on the bag. This is repeated.

For the next trick, Debbie announces that she is going to chop Kevin's head off in a guillotine. Kevin places his head in the guillotine and places a carrot in the bottom compartment to show how sharp the blade is. The guillotine falls and chops the carrot. Kevin reveals he has not been hurt. For the final trick Debbie makes Kevin disappear to Thailand.



Act 2 Scene 2



Liam and Peter are by the brook. Neither have been able to find Barbara. Liam asks Peter if he'd be interested in moving to Milton Keynes together and becoming boyfriends. Peter rejects him and they argue. They start to fight and Liam punches Peter. Neither have spotted that Barbara has been watching this happen from behind a tree. She enters the scene to break up the fight. At this point, Harry and Debbie enter carrying a tea tray and an array of chains and padlocks.

Barbara climbs a ladder and has chained herself to a tree and starts to convince the group, one-by-one, to stay and fight for the village. They each chain themselves to the trees. Only Peter refuses. She



then asks him to sing the song of Syresham, 'Take Your Seats for Syresham', which he does. Peter asks Barbara to sign the Compulsory Purchase Order, but she refuses. He then states that it doesn't matter as he has power of attorney over her and signs it regardless.

Liam then thinks of a plan to save the village where they put the newts into the brook as they're endangered. The scene ends with Barbara falling out of the tree. There is a flash of light, pulsing sounds and a black out (where the lights turn out completely).

Act 2 Scene 3 – The Revolution

Please note - this scene contains loud sounds, atmospheric noises and flashing white and red lights. The scene builds and builds to a climax. We are caught between two performance styles – the traditional theatre play and the Village Hall variety scenes.

The cast are dressed as animals. They dance with high energy and sharp movements throughout the scene to some loud heavy metal music. They move towards the front of the stage. Peter is a great crested newt, Debbie is a moth in cocoon. Harry is a red squirrel. Liam is bearded false darkling beetle. Kevin is a wild boar. Barbara is a druid badger. She is in control and declares her power over the world. The animals characters represent the fight to save the village and the power of nature.



Act 2 Scene 4

The atmosphere changes and things begin to settle. Kevin starts to make a speech and Debbie enters the stage wearing a wedding dress. Harry and Debbie kiss. Peter begins a eulogy for Barbara (who died when she fell). He talks about how Barbara has sacrificed herself to save the village. The village has now been saved and HS2 re-routed.



The Bow

As the actors start bowing, Kevin finally runs on the with the meat raffle. He announces the two winning seat numbers. THE END.