

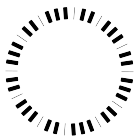
CONCORD THEATRICALS SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an excerpt from a full Samuel French title.

This sample is just for you to try out, and it can't be used for performance, downloaded, printed or distributed in any way.

For more information about licensing this or other shows, or to browse thousands more plays and theatre books to buy please visit our website.

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk
or, in the US www.concordtheatricals.com



CONCORD
THEATRICALS

VESPERTILIO

by Barry McStay

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

Copyright © 2021 by Barry McStay
All Rights Reserved

Vespertilio is fully protected under the copyright laws of the British Commonwealth, including Canada, the United States of America, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television, online/digital production, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-13259-9

concordtheatricals.co.uk

concordtheatricals.com

Cover artwork by Rebecca Pitt

FOR AMATEUR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED KINGDOM AND WORLD

EXCLUDING NORTH AMERICA

licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk

020-7054-7200

Each title is subject to availability from Concord Theatricals,
depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *Vespertilio* is subject to a licensing fee. The purchase, renting, lending or use of this book does not constitute a license to perform this title(s), which license must be obtained from the appropriate agent prior to any performance. Performance of this title(s) without a license is a violation of copyright law and may subject the producer and/or presenter of such performances to penalties. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

This work is published by Samuel French, an imprint of Concord Theatricals. Ltd

The Professional Rights in this play are controlled by The Agency, 24 Pottery Lane, Notting Hill, London W11 4LZ.

No one shall make any changes in this title for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, scanned, uploaded, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, digital, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior

written permission of the publisher. No one shall share this title, or part of this title, to any social media or file hosting websites.

The moral right of Barry McStay to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

USE OF COPYRIGHTED MUSIC

A licence issued by Concord Theatricals to perform this play does not include permission to use the incidental music specified in this publication. In the United Kingdom: Where the place of performance is already licensed by the PERFORMING RIGHT SOCIETY (PRS) a return of the music used must be made to them. If the place of performance is not so licensed then application should be made to PRS for Music (www.prsformusic.com). A separate and additional licence from PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE LTD (www.ppluk.com) may be needed whenever commercial recordings are used. Outside the United Kingdom: Please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

USE OF COPYRIGHTED THIRD-PARTY MATERIALS

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted third-party materials (e.g., artworks, logos) in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original materials that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for clearances of all third-party copyrighted materials, and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Concord Theatricals Ltd., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of such copyrighted third-party materials by licensees.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

CAST AND CREATIVE

JOSHUA OAKES-ROGERS | JOSH

Joshua trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre includes: *Vespertilio* (VAULT Festival and Dublin Fringe 2019); *Roseline* (Milan Tour 2018); *Lord Dismiss Us* (which received a nomination for Best Actor in a Supporting Role at the Offies – Edinburgh Fringe/Above the Stag 2017); *Body and Sold* (Park Theatre 2017); *Beauty On The Piste* (Above the Stag 2016).

Television includes: *The Dead Room* (BBC 2018); *Little Crackers: Harry Hill* (SKY1 2011).

BENEDICT SALTER | ALAN

Benedict trained at LAMDA.

Theatre credits include: *Lone Flyer* (Watermill Theatre); *A Christmas Carol* (Derby Theatre); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Watermill Theatre); *Vespertilio* (VAULT Festival and Dublin Fringe); *Lady Windermere's Fan* (West End); *The Last Days of Anne Boleyn* (Tower of London); *A Little Night Music* (Watermill Theatre); *An Inspector Calls* (West End); *Shakespeare in Music* (RSC/ Southbank Sinfonia). Benedict was also a BBC Carleton Hobbs Bursary Award finalist in 2016.

BARRY MCSTAY | WRITER

Barry is an Irish writer and actor based in London. *Vespertilio* was his UK debut play when it opened in February 2019, winning a Show of the Week Award at VAULT Festival. It later ran at Smock Alley at the Dublin Fringe Festival in September 2019 before being filmed for streaming by the King's Head Theatre in April 2021.

His first play *Our Island* (dir. Maisie Lee, Project Arts Centre) ran at the Dublin Fringe Festival 2015 and was nominated for five Dublin Fringe Awards and a Writers Guild of Ireland Award.

Other work includes *Bir Tawil* (dir. Caitriona McLaughlin, Druid Theatre, 2017) and *The First* (dir. Emily Jenkins, VAULT Festival 2020). He has written short work for Miniaturists and the Abbey Theatre. In 2018, he was one of thirty writers selected to create a play for *A Play For Ireland* by Fishamble: The New Play Company. His writing has been longlisted for the Bruntwood Prize, the Theatre503 Playwriting Award and the Papatango Prize.

Barry has a BA (English Literature & History) from Trinity College Dublin and an MA (Acting) from East 15 Acting School.

LUCY JANE ATKINSON | DIRECTOR

Lucy is an experienced and award-winning director. Her work focuses on new writing, including musical theatre, devising, and immersive theatre. In 2018 she was named number 1 on The Stage's Top Talents To Watch, stating "her direction is simple, but acutely sensitive to the shifting energy of the writing. Evident but never overbearing."

Theatre credits include: *A Hundred Words For Snow* by Tatty Hennessy – VAULT Festival, UK tour, Trafalgar Studios (winner: Outstanding New Work, VAULT 2018; Winner: Off West-End Award for Best Actress; Nominated: Off West-End Awards for Best Director, Most Promising Playwright, and Best New Play), *Vespertilio* (VAULT Festival, Dublin Fringe; winner: Show of the Week VAULT 2019), and *MEAT*, by Gillian Greer, (Theatre503).

Her first filmed piece, *Testament*, by Tristan Bernays, was released in spring 2021.

She has directed work in Britain, the United States, and Canada, and is currently developing a further host of plays with an eclectic mix of some of the UK's most exciting up-and-coming playwrights.

JESS DUXBURY | PRODUCER

Jess has worked in theatre and live events since 2012. She produces theatre as well as virtual, digital and physical live events across the UK and Europe. She started out producing for comedy collective Casual Violence Comedy at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and London venues, and went on to work with Dream Think Speak on their site-specific piece *Absent* at Shoreditch Town Hall. She produced *Vespertilio*'s inaugural production at the VAULT Festival in 2019 with Fight & Hope before helping it transfer to the Dublin Fringe Festival in September 2019.

She is passionate about female-led theatre and queer stories being given the space and the platform they deserve.

She has a BA (Hons) in English Literature and Drama from the University of Sussex.

VERITY JOHNSON | DESIGNER

Theatre includes as lead designer: *1984* (Nuffield Theatre Southampton); *Maggie May* (Finborough Theatre – Offie nominated for set design); *Vespertilio* (VAULT Festival); *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found* (Nuffield Theatre Southampton); *The Queen's Nose* (LSMT); *Bury The Dead* (Finborough Theatre); *Unexpected Joy* (Southwark Playhouse); *Half Me Half You* (Wild Project, NYC); *Mermaids* (King's Head Theatre); *Nine Foot Nine* (Bunker Theatre); *Hilda and Virginia* (Jermyn Street Theatre); *Testament* (VAULT Festival); *The House of Usher* (The Hope Theatre); *The Dumb Waiter* (Maltings Arts Theatre). As an assistant *Hamlet* and *As You Like It* (Shakespeare's Globe);

The Audience (NST City); *Rotterdam* (The Arts Theatre); *German Skerries* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Microcosm* (Soho Theatre).
Verity trained at Wimbledon College of Art.

ZIA BERGIN-HOLLY | LIGHTING DESIGNER

Lighting designs for Theatre include: *Two* (HullTruck Theatre); *Flights* (One Duck Theatre); *MEAT* (Theatre503); *Promises Promises* (Centrál Színház Budapest); *Cleft, Melt* (Rough Magic); *Top Hat* (Silver Blue Entertainment); *Bread Not Profits* (Gúna Nua); *Apologia, The Lion in Winter* and *Hand to God* (The English Theatre Frankfurt); *Frankie and Johnny* in *The Clair De Lune* (Northern Stage); *Annie* (Cork Opera House); *The Nest* (Lyric Theatre Belfast and Young Vic Theatre London); *The Importance Of Nothing* (Pan Pan) for which Zia won Best Lighting Design at The Irish Times Theatre Awards and *FABRIC* (Robin Rayner Productions) which won a Scotsman Fringe First Award.

Set and Lighting designs for Theatre include: *EMBARGO* (Fishamble); *Solar Bones* (Rough Magic and Kilkenny Arts Festival); *The Misfits* (Corn Exchange); *User Not Found* (Dante or Die); *They Called Her Vivaldi* (Theatre Lovett).

She also designed the set for the Olympia Theatre, Dublin performances of Grace Jones concerts for Bloodlight and Bami by Blinder Films.

ANNIE MAY FLETCHER | SOUND DESIGNER

Annie trained at LAMDA and was the Lab Associate Sound Designer at Nuffield Southampton Theatres in 2018/19. She is currently an Associate Artist with Snapper Theatre and is a runner up in the Evening Standard's Future Theatre Fund 2021 in the Audio Design category.

Theatre credits include: *The Understudy Live* (Palace Theatre); *MEAT* and *The Amber Trap* (Theatre503); *Humbug! The Hedgehog Who Couldn't Sleep* (The Albany, NST City); *In My Lungs The Ocean Swells* (VAULT Festival); *Ad Libido* (Soho Theatre, UK Tour); *Fledglings, 1984* and *How To Disappear Completely and Never Be Found* (NST City) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Bolton Octagon).

Associate credits include: *Enough* (Traverse Theatre); *HOW NOT TO DROWN* (Glasgow Tron, Lawrence Batley Theatre); *The Audience* (NST City); *Acceptance* (Hampstead Theatre) and *100 Words For Snow* (Trafalgar Studios, VAULT Festival).

Digital credits include: *Oh Woman!* (Manchester Royal Exchange); *A Passion Play* (45North); *Luna The Jaguar* (Greenpeace UK); *TOAST* (Lawrence Batley Theatre) and *The Understudy* (Lawrence Batley Theatre).

www.anniemayfletcher.co.uk

KING'S HEAD THEATRE

The King's Head Theatre was established in 1970. Passionate about championing ethically produced fringe theatre, we are known for our challenging work and support of young artists.

In 2019, 88,029 audience members saw a show of ours: 37,586 at our 110-seater home on Upper Street and 50,443 elsewhere. At our home in Islington we had 686 performances last year of 113 different shows.

We are committed to fighting prejudice through the work we stage, the artists and staff we work with and by producing work for minority audience groups. We believe in fair pay for all on the fringe and create accessible routes for early career artists to stage their work; work we are passionate about.

In 2017, we announced the theatre is on the move. Subject to a fundraising campaign, the King's Head Theatre will move into a custom-built space in the heart of Islington Square, directly behind its current home securing the future of the venue for generations to come.

115 Upper Street, London, N1 1QN
kingsheadtheatre.com



SUPPORT THE KING'S HEAD THEATRE

"The King's Head Theatre is a genuine community space. It's part of the lifeblood of Upper Street and a hub for actors, directors and stage managers."

Mark Gatiss

The King's Head Theatre is an ambitious, thriving producing house located in the heart of Islington. From the emerging companies and creatives, to the thousands of audience members we welcome through our doors every year, people are at the heart of everything we do.

Famous for an unapologetically broad programme of work and an unwavering commitment to ethical employment on the fringe, the King's Head Theatre occupies a unique place in the capital's theatre ecology.

Each year, the King's Head Theatre needs to raise £100,000 to keep producing and presenting ambitious work that supports, develops and values our artists, staff, audiences and alumni. We hope you will join us on that journey by becoming one of our Supporters.

For further information visit **www.kingsheadtheatre.com** or to discuss bespoke packages, please contact us on **info@kingsheadtheatre.com**

King's Head Theatre is a registered charity Charity No: 1161483



KEY TO THE STAGE DOOR from £150 per year

Priority booking period

Exchange and reserve tickets at no extra cost

KHT Insights email with news and announcements Invitation to supporters night

Acknowledgement in our published programmes

£310 pays an actor's wages for one week

KEY TO THE DRESSING ROOM from £500 per year

Key to the Stage Door membership benefits plus:

Invitation to annual 'Behind the Scenes Breakfast' to hear the Artistic Director share upcoming plans

Personal booking via the office

£500 pays for the costumes for one opera

KEY TO THE KING'S HEAD from £1,000 per year

Key to the Dressing Room membership benefits plus:

Invitation to breakfast with the Executive Director Opportunity to book house seats to sold out shows

£1,375 supports the Director for one show

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE from £2,500 per year

Key to the King's Head membership benefits plus:

Signed playtext for each production attended

Invitation to lunch with the Artistic Director once a year A

backstage tour of the theatre for you and up to 5 guests finishing with drinks on our stage

£2,500 pays for set design for one play

AMBASSADOR from £5,000 per year

All of the benefits of Artistic Director's Circle plus:

Invitations to our Press Nights and post-show parties and the chance to create additional bespoke benefits suited to your interests

£5,775 pays for actors throughout rehearsals



Executive Director
Interim Programme Director *
Producer
Marketing Manager
Box Office Manager
Theatre Manager *
Development Manager
Finance Manager *
Assistant Producer
Assistant Theatre Manager
Marketing Officer

Fiona English
Heather Ruck
Michelle Barnette
Oscar French
Alan Stratford
Richard Lambert
Mabs Rahman
Katherine De Halpert
Rohan Perumatantri
Christina Gazelidis
Shaadi Khosravi-Rad

Box Office Assistants*

Hannah Collins
Alexander Hick
Dominic Listori
Katie Mcleod
Charlie Norburn
Gemma Orleans-Thompson

Trainee Resident Directors ^

Amber Sinclair-Case
Matt Strachan
Monty Leigh
Ella Murdoch

Trustees ^

Kate Farrell
Mary Lauder
Amanda Mascarenhas
Amanda Moulson
James Seabright (Chair)
Molly Waiting
Richard Williamson

*** Part Time ^ Voluntary**

KING'S HEAD THEATRE

The King's Head Theatre is 51 years old, here are just a few of the highlights of our journey so far...

- 1970** Dan Crawford founds the first pub theatre in London for over 400 years and the King's Head Theatre is born.
- 1982** Mr Cinders, starring Joanna Lumley, opens, before transferring to the West End for 527 performances.
- 1983** Victoria Wood's first solo stand-up show, Lucky Bag, opens to rave reviews.
- 1988** Premier of Tom Stoppard's Artist Descending a Staircase opens before transferring to Broadway.
- 1991** Steven Berkoff directs and stars in the UK premiere of Kvetch at the King's Head Theatre.
- 2002** Trainee Resident Directors Scheme wins Royal Anniversary Trust Award.
- 2010** OperaUpClose becomes a resident company.
- 2011** La bohème wins the Olivier Award for Best New Opera.
- 2015** Trainspotting is first performed at the King's Head Theatre – it has since had more than 1000 performances all over the world.
- 2016** 43,857 audience members see a show at our London home - our highest footfall ever.
- 2017** La bohème & Strangers in Between transfer Trafalgar Studios 2 in London's West End.
- 2019** Kevin Elyot's Coming Clean and Opera Undone transfer to Trafalgar Studios 2 in London's West End.
- 2022** Subject to a successful fundraising campaign, we move to our permanent new home in Islington Square.

THANKS

Barry would like to thank Patrick Barkham, Dr Joe Nunez-Mino and The Bat Conservation Trust, Jenny Clark OBE, Tony Hutson. Tristan Bernays, Bob Duxbury and Joan Frank, Annie and Gary Duxbury, Seana Mallen and Richard Atkinson, Terry Mallen, Mark McStay, Cristina Thorson. LAMDA, Italia Conti and the Abbey Theatre set departments. Liz Isles. Ian Bonar, Trieve Blackwood-Cambridge and Richard Lounds. Gill Greer, Becky Brown, Bríd Kirby, Mat Burtcher, Andy George and VAULT Festival. Ruth McGowan, Smock Alley Theatre and the Dublin Fringe Festival. Michelle Barnette and the King's Head Theatre. Charlie Coulthard. Nick Quinn and Maeve Bolger for looking after me. Jess and Lizzie for making it happen. Verity, Zia, Annie, Amie, Frances, Madison and Hanan for giving pictures to the words. Benedict and Joshua for making my heart swell and break. Mum and Dad for everything and more. Mikey for all the heartbeats. And Lucy for going for a walk on Primrose Hill, for singing "The Bat Song" and for your generosity of genius. You are amazing.

VESPERTILIO received its world premiere on 20th February 2019 in The Cavern at the VAULT Festival, Waterloo, London. Written by Barry McStay, Director Lucy Jane Atkinson, Producer Jess Duxbury, Designer Verity Johnson, Lighting Designer Zia Bergin-Holly, Sound Designer Annie May Fletcher, Assistant Director Amie Burns-Walker, Stage Manager Frances White. Original artwork Madison Coby. The cast was as follows:

ALAN.....Benedict Salter
JOSH.....Joshua Oakes-Rogers
RADIO VOICES Victoria Cook, Toby Manley,
Rhiannon Neads and Andrew McDonald

VESPERTILIO was performed at Dublin Fringe Festival (Smock Alley – the Boys School), 17th–22nd September 2019. Produced by Jess Duxbury & Elizabeth Benbow (Fight and Hope), Director Lucy Jane Atkinson, Producer Jess Duxbury, Designer Verity Johnson, Lighting Designer Zia Bergin-Holly, Sound Designer Annie May Fletcher, Stage Manager Frances White. The cast was as follows:

ALAN.....Benedict Salter
JOSH.....Joshua Oakes-Rogers
RADIO VOICES Victoria Cook, Toby Manley,
Rhiannon Neads and Andrew McDonald

This production of *VESPERTILIO* was recorded at the King’s Head Theatre and was available to watch on the venue’s website from Thursday 15 April to Wednesday 12 May 2021. Filmed by Shoot Media and streamed by Kings Head Theatre as part of Plays On Film. Produced by Jess Duxbury (Fight and Hope), Director Lucy Jane Atkinson, Set Designer Verity Johnson, Lighting Designer Zia Bergin-Holly, Sound Designer Annie May Fletcher, Artwork Designer Rebecca Pitt. The cast was as follows:

ALAN.....Benedict Salter
JOSH.....Joshua Oakes-Rogers
RADIO VOICES Victoria Cook, Toby Manley,
Rhiannon Neads and Mikey Brett

CHARACTERS

ALAN – 39ish

JOSH – 19ish

RADIO VOICES

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Vespertilio was inspired by an article in *The Guardian* newspaper by Patrick Barkham, “The last bat: the mystery of Britain’s most solitary animal” (12th June 2018). If possible, the opening scene should be lit by Alan’s torchlight alone.

CONTENT WARNING

Contains very strong language, scenes of a sexual nature, references to homophobic abuse, bullying, suicide and homelessness.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Line breaks within speech are intended to indicate the characters speech and thought patterns. A dash – is used to indicate hesitation, interruption, change of mind or the unsaid. A slash / is used to indicate overlapping lines. Lines without / may still overlap.

*(An abandoned railway tunnel near
Chichester.)*

(A torch flares on.)

JOSH. Fuck!

ALAN. Jesus!

JOSH. Fuck!

ALAN. Who's there?!

JOSH. Fuck man!

ALAN. Stay there!

JOSH. Fucking hell –

ALAN. Stop!

JOSH. Stop shining that / in my –

ALAN. / Hands up!

JOSH. Hands up!?

ALAN. Shhhh!

JOSH. Hands up?!

ALAN. Shhhhhhhhhhh!

JOSH. Hands up?!

ALAN. Shhhhhh!!

JOSH. You don't / even –

ALAN. / Keep it / down –

JOSH. / You ain't got a / gun mate!

ALAN. / I know! Just hush!

JOSH. Hush?

ALAN. Shhhhhh!

JOSH. Why!?

ALAN. Bloody hell, be quiet!

JOSH. Fucking scared the / shit outta –

ALAN. / Who are you?

JOSH. Who the fuck are / YOU?

ALAN. / What are you doing / here?

JOSH. / What are YOU doing / here?

ALAN. / You shouldn't be here!

JOSH. Should you?

ALAN. Yes.

JOSH. Yeah?

ALAN. How did you get in?

JOSH. What?

ALAN. You broke in.

JOSH. No?

ALAN. Picked the lock did you?

JOSH. What?

ALAN. I told / them –

JOSH. / I didn't pick any / locks –

ALAN. / The path is too clear, / it's way too obvious –

JOSH. / You're fucking crazy, / bruv –

ALAN. / You shouldn't be here –

JOSH. Why?

ALAN. You need to leave –

JOSH. Fucking –

ALAN. Come peacefully / or –

JOSH. / Come / peacefully?!

ALAN. / I'll be forced / to –

JOSH. / Don't touch me, mate!

ALAN. I don't want things to get violent –

JOSH. Who's getting violent?!

ALAN. I'm making a citizen's arrest!

JOSH. Who are you!?

ALAN. You have a right to remain / silent –

JOSH. / Hahaha / ha –

ALAN. / But anything you do say / will be –

JOSH. / Hahahahahahahaha / haha –

ALAN. / Used against – what? Why are you –

Be quiet, for heaven's sake!

JOSH. Hahahahaha – sorry.

Sorry sorry shhh sorry.

Hahahaha.

ALAN. Shhh.

JOSH. Shhhhhh! Yes, shhhh!

Ha.

Man – where are you, like what planet are you from?

ALAN. I don't know / what –

JOSH. / Is this your first time speaking English?

ALAN. You really must leave.

JOSH. Says who, bruv?

ALAN. For the final time, be quiet!

JOSH. What's the problem?

ALAN. Them.

JOSH. Who?

ALAN. The bats.

JOSH. What?

ALAN. Bats.

JOSH. Shit man, bats!?

ALAN. Shut up!

JOSH. There are bats here!?

ALAN. Calm down.

JOSH. That's fucking cool – where?

ALAN. There.

(All over the roof of the tunnel.)

JOSH. Shit man, that's wicked.

Shit – there's fucking tonnes of them.

ALAN. Exactly –

JOSH. That's fucking cool – my friend Lee has snakes and lizards and stuff, I love weird pets and shit like that –

ALAN. They're not pets –

JOSH. No, right –

ALAN. This is their hibernation roost.

JOSH. Oh right –

ALAN. You're disturbing them.

JOSH. There's tonnes of 'em, how many are there –

ALAN. Tonnes, can you please leave?

JOSH. Why are you here then?

ALAN. Are you listening?

JOSH. No – why won't you answer me?

ALAN. Because you're a stranger and you shouldn't be here.

JOSH. Well far as I know, you're a stranger and you shouldn't be here.

ALAN. I should.

JOSH. Says you.

So. We're stuck. Aren't we?

–

Shall we start again? Hi, I'm Josh.

ALAN. Please go.

JOSH. What's your name?

ALAN. Go.

JOSH. Do you come here often?

ALAN. Go!

JOSH. Shhh! You'll wake the bats.

ALAN. I'm going to call the police.

JOSH. Mate, chill out. What's your name?

For fuck's sake, I'm not gonna attack you or anything, just be a normal human being, right?

I'm Josh.

ALAN. Alan Stafford.

JOSH. Nice to meet you, Alan Stafford.

See, not so bad is it?

ALAN. How did you get in?

JOSH. The drain down the end, it was hanging open –

ALAN. I told them – it's been rusting through –

JOSH. Is it your tunnel then, like do you own the land or something?

ALAN. No.

JOSH. Right.

Listen, I'm sorry. I didn't know about the bats did I? I just needed a place to sleep. For a few nights.

Okay?

ALAN. Oh. Right.

I didn't –

–

I'm sorry. To hear that.

Sorry.

But isn't there – is there not somewhere else – you could – a bit nicer –?

JOSH. No.

Good enough for the bats, innit? Good enough for me.

So you're their – what? Zookeeper?

ALAN. I monitor them.

JOSH. Right. Monitor. The bat guy.

–

You're Batman!

ALAN. Please don't.

JOSH. That makes you Batman!

ALAN. Really –

JOSH. You're a superhero!

ALAN. It's not very original –

JOSH. (*Bale Batman voice.*) 'There's a storm coming –'

ALAN. Please –

JOSH. (*Ledger Joker voice.*) 'Why so serious?'

ALAN. I'd really prefer it if you stopped, alright?

(*Silence.*)

Look. I'm sorry but –

disturbing bats mid-hibernation can kill them – and
several are highly endangered –

well, there's one in particular –

he's the only one left. And I don't want to –

I'm sorry – you can't stay here.

I can – I can call someone for you. If you need. What
about your parents or –? A hostel or –

JOSH. I've got my own phone, mate.

ALAN. I feel awful –

JOSH. Yeah. Well.

If I was a bat –

ALAN. Come on –

JOSH. Yeah yeah yeah –

ALAN. I really hope you understand.

JOSH. I don't. But you don't either, so it's cool.

ALAN. He's unique.

JOSH. So am I.

(*Exits.*)

(*A civic hall.*)

ALAN. Bats are amazing. *Chiroptera* are cool. And I'm going to tell you why.

They're the only mammal that can fly. There's over twelve hundred species worldwide – actually, one in five species of mammal is a bat. They've been around for a long time – the oldest bat fossil is fifty two million years old. They pollinate flowers – hashtag Not Just Bees. They have huge variety – from the tiny pipistrelle which weighs less than a pound coin, to the huge flying foxes of Java, with a wing span of two metres – they're remarkable.

Let me tell you a story. The hero of this story is the greater mouse-eared bat.

Yes, there is also a lesser mouse-eared bat. I'll actually take questions at the end, if that's alright. The greater mouse-eared bat is part of a family called the *vespertilionidae* or evening bats. The Latin for bat is *vespertilio*. There's a bit of Latin in this, sorry. The official species name for the greater mouse-eared bat is *myotis myotis*. *Myotis myotis* has been extinct in Britain since 1992.

Yes. They're widespread across Europe but we managed to wipe them out, the first mammal we drove to extinction in this country since the wolf, in the seventeen hundreds. Well done us.

The greater-mouse eared bat became a celebrity when it first appeared in Britain. In 1957, a colony was discovered in an old mine on the Isle of Purbeck, down in Dorset. And the country went bats for bats. Ahem. *The Times* published photographs, collectors stole them, rewards were offered for dead ones, TV programmes came and took them out of hibernation to put them on telly.

It was the Fifties, there wasn't much else to do.

So that colony didn't return. And they were completely gone from the UK by the early nineties. All sorts of things have helped drive down the bat population – insecticides, too many bright lights, wind turbines, even things like the new section of the A27, near here, the bit they're about to build – it'll disrupt hunting and migration routes.

But that's not the end of the story.

In 2002, a single male was found in an abandoned railway tunnel near Chichester. He was barely a year old at the time. Every winter since then he has hibernated, about three hundred metres inside this dark damp tunnel for nearly five months. It's perfect for our heroic greater mouse-eared bat .

He safely spends the winter months there, among many other hibernating bats.

And then he disappears every spring – we don't know where. We've never seen him in flight. We've never made the location of the tunnel public – we don't want a repeat of 1957.

We carefully inspected the greater mouse-eared bat while he hibernated in 2007 and found that his private parts have never been sexually active. Chances are he will spend the rest of his life alone. But that doesn't make him, in any sense, a loser. In my eyes, and hopefully in yours too, he's a winner. Durable. Indefatigable. Triumphant. A real survivor.

After all, that's the goal. The whole point of things. To survive.

(After the speech.)

JOSH. That was good.

ALAN. What?

JOSH. Really good.

ALAN. Why are you here?

JOSH. Are you gonna ask me that every time we meet –

ALAN. What are you doing?

JOSH. I wanted to see your speech.

ALAN. How did –

JOSH. I googled your name, Alan Stafford. Some bat fancier's message board came up, someone was saying "oh, Alan Stafford is giving a talk tonight, can't wait, he's so dreamy" et cetera – you've got a following, mate. People stanning for you hard online –

ALAN. I don't know what that means –

JOSH. You're a bat celeb. The Justin Bieber of the bat world –

ALAN. I don't know who that is.

JOSH. Yes you do.

ALAN. I know of him.

JOSH. How old are you, like eighty?

ALAN. I'm thirty-nine –

JOSH. Even my nan knows who he is –

ALAN. Did you find somewhere to stay?

JOSH. Sure.

ALAN. Where?

JOSH. Is this bat really the only one then?

ALAN. Josh –

JOSH. And he's never had sex?

ALAN. Josh –

JOSH. Cos that must suck.

ALAN. Please –

JOSH. Lucky he has you to look after him –

ALAN. Where did you –

JOSH. In a fucking field under a trailer, alright?

–

I didn't go back to the tunnel. Alright?

And after hearing you talk, I'm glad I didn't disturb anything.

It's a good story. You're a good man. Well done.

ALAN. Wait.

JOSH. Yes?

–

I don't want your pity.

ALAN. Okay.

I'm sorry.

JOSH. You were frightened. You were just protecting him.

ALAN. Still –

JOSH. It's alright. I understand. You have to protect the things that matter. I get it. And you look good. Up there, in full flight. Wings spread! I like people who care about stuff. It's good to give a shit.

ALAN. That sounds like it should be on a poster.

JOSH. Or a meme.

ALAN. What's a meme?

JOSH. I can't tell if you're joking or not.

ALAN. I don't really do jokes.

JOSH. Is that a joke?

ALAN. You're very confident.

JOSH. Charming even.

Your mouth.

ALAN. What?

JOSH. It's – ha. I've just noticed. I've never seen that.

ALAN. What?

JOSH. It turns down at one end and up at the other.

ALAN. Does it?

JOSH. Has no one ever pointed it out?

ALAN. No?

JOSH. It does.

This end is a smile and this end is a frown.

Like it can't make up its mind.

ALAN. I hadn't – noticed.

JOSH. It's cute.

Bae got curves.

ALAN. Um. Thank you.

I should probably be – you know?

JOSH. Meeting your fans.

ALAN. Well. There are some other members of the Bat Conservation Trust in and –

JOSH. But you'd rather talk to me.

ALAN. Would I?

JOSH. You're intrigued that I'm here.

ALAN. I'm more suspicious.

JOSH. So why are you still here?

ALAN. Gosh, you're exhausting.

JOSH. Yeah but you like me more than you're gonna admit. And you wouldn't mind buying me a drink. But you're a bit too scared to ask me. Which is fine because, lucky for you, I'm the sort of guy who will do the asking and answering for you. Yes, I'll have a drink with you – you're buying – mine's a lager.

ALAN. I'm not sure.

JOSH. Yes you are.

(ALAN's house. Crumbling and overcrowded with things.)

ALAN. Mind your step. Sorry about all the – stuff, and stuff.

JOSH. Whoops!

ALAN. Careful!

JOSH. That shouldn't be – shouldn't be there –

ALAN. No yes, I should move it, or put up a sign or –

JOSH. A sign!? Ha!

ALAN. No no, not, that's silly – haha!

JOSH. This place is sick!

ALAN. That's a good thing, right?

JOSH. It's like Hogwarts or Narnia or something!

ALAN. You mean it's old.

JOSH. Yeah it's old but – I mean I like old things! Ha!

ALAN. Hey!

JOSH. There's so much STUFF!

ALAN. A life – lots of lives.

JOSH. This is all yours.

ALAN. I don't like throwing things out –

JOSH. Yeah, that's called hoarding, they could film – wassitcalled – “Storage Wars” in here, you know? Yeah, I know you don't know what that is.

ALAN. No. Haha.

JOSH. You live alone?

ALAN. I don't think anyone could – I'm very particular.

JOSH. Fuck that bollocks, we're all particular.

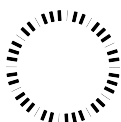
WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a licence to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk or,
in the US www.concordtheatricals.com

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and anything theatre-related do follow us on our social media channels.

@ConcordUKShows and @ConcordShows on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



CONCORD
THEATRICALS