

Welcome to this audio introduction to *Get Happy* by Told by an Idiot

Told by an Idiot describe themselves as “a theatre company that explores the human condition through theatre that is bigger than life. We acknowledge the artifice of performance and make no attempt to put reality on stage, but we inhabit the space between laughter and pain which exists in the real world. Our work is rooted in the live event and thrives on a sense of spontaneity and risk, celebrating the unpredictability of performance.”

*Get Happy* is presented as part of GDIF's *On Your Doorstep* programme, a mini-festival that tours to local communities, and has been adapted for the outdoor setting.

*Get Happy* is a family show made up of sketches, closer in style to variety performance rather than having a straight through storyline, the main influences for the show being Pina Bausch, Charlie Chaplin and Dr Seuss.

There are 4 performers, 2 women - Sara Alexander and Sophie Mercell and 2 men - Stephen Harper, and Jerone Marsh Reid. They are all clown-like circus performers who use physical comedy, live music, acrobatics, hip hop and audience interaction in this quirky show, which invites you “to smile and follow the instructions on the tin”.

The performers are all dressed fairly smartly, as though for a posh night out, with 3 - Sara, Stephen and Jerone - wearing dark suit jackets and trousers, with white shirts, and 1 - Sophie - wearing an ankle-length, sleeveless black evening dress.

Sara and Sophie are on stage at the beginning. Sophie is dj-ing and Sara is playing along on guitar. Sara is in her 40s and is dressed in a black suit and white shirt, though she has a grey ribbon tied neatly at her throat, and soon pulls on a black bowler hat, with feathers pinned to it. Sophie is in her 20s, taller than Sara and a bit more sophisticated and refined than the others, she often joins in, but sometimes looks disapprovingly at their antics. Her brown curly hair is worn up and sometimes tucked under a black bowler hat (with fruit on).

Stephen and Jerone then appear. Stephen is the oldest of the group, in his early 50s. He's also the tallest, standing about 6 feet tall. Stephen's face is friendly, sometimes looking a bit bemused at all the antics going on around him. He has wisps of grey hair curling out from beneath a black trilby hat. When they first arrive, Stephen and Jerone take time to meet and play with the audience, waving and joking, at a suitably social distanced.

Jerone is dressed similarly to Stephen. He's younger, in his early 20s and slightly shorter. His boyish face is smiley and mischievous, topped with a black baseball cap, worn backwards, which sometimes falls off as he tumbles, cartwheels and flips acrobatically about. He wears a black bow tie, red braces and black trainers with his suit.

Together, the 4 play out sketches that involve radioactive wigs, strange egg sandwiches and other unexpected and off the wall things that happen throughout, including a dance off between Stephen and Jerone who try to outdo each other with their moves.

The madcap sketches are played out in front of an audience on three sides. There's a gazebo at the back of the stage which has a piano, microphones and guitar inside. Sara sits here when she plays the piano. Either side of the stage are different coloured buckets with props and costumes inside. Throughout the performance, various props and items of furniture come and go, including: a child's yellow, plastic paddling pool; a step ladder and a black bag with a doll inside. These items, along with the performers' circus and clowning skills, are used to create mayhem, as items of clothing are ripped; underpants are magically whipped out

from beneath trousers; a swimmer attempts to swim in the paddling pool, or even attempts a dive into it from atop the step ladder.

Director – Paul Hunter

Designer – Sophie Clist

Sound designer – Adrienne Quartly