

LaPelle's
Factory

SHUCK



*All down the **church** in midst of **fire***

*The **Hellish monster** flew*

And passing onward to the quire

He many people slew



CLOUDCUCKOOLANDERS

was our cinema show

Desperado

was our dance show

The Black Cat

was our literature show

and now ***Shuck***

is our folklore show . . .

LaPelle's
Factory

SHUCK

Commissioned by
Nottingham Playhouse &
Attenborough Arts Centre

NOTTINGHAM
PLAYHOUSE

AO

ATTENBOROUGH
ARTS CENTRE

Written, devised & performed by
Olwen Davies & Ollie Smith

Dramaturgy by
Mufaro Makubika

Photography by
Julian Hughes

A WORD FROM THE COMPANY

Hello. Thanks for watching this first work-in-progress performance of *Shuck*. We started developing this show about a month ago, and over that time we've thought a lot about place and identity, fear and anxiety, presence, loss and the glam rock band The Darkness. (And dogs. Obs.) We've also been watching Michael Reeves' *Witchfinder General* (1968), Piers Haggard's *Blood on Satan's Claw* (1971) and Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man* (1973) - three folk horror films which have retrospectively been given the top-notch moniker of the 'Unholy Trinity'. Some smart fella called Adam Scovell wrote the actual book on them, summing up the folk horror magic formula thusly:

rural location + isolated groups x skewed beliefs = supernatural and/or violent shenanigans

The Japanese film *Ring* (1998) - the one about the cursed videotape - whilst not strictly folk horror, it deals with similar themes of dread. There's a scene towards the end where the two main characters discuss the origins and meaning of the story they've become caught up in:

- **Who did the story start with?**
- **Stories like that don't start with anyone. People feel anxious, rumours start flying. Or people start them hoping things will turn out like this.**

A WORD FROM THE COMPANY (CONTINUED . . .)

Now we don't know what kind of terrible person would intentionally start a story with the sole objective of making others feel **anxious** or **fearful**. The world does a pretty good job of that on its own - because it's definitely not just us, is it, the phrase '**strange times**' has lost all meaning. There are no words for the times we're living through. Those of you at home, on your sofas, in your bedrooms, under the covers with your laptops and your phones, you're already watching the **cursed video**. Those of you in the room with us: we can't guarantee there's nothing **waiting for you outside**. Strange but true. But we sit tight and together because we're still a community and community guides us through. When we're running scared, we find solace in connection with others. Storytelling has achieved that end for pretty much forever. This was our starting point. A scary tale and our relationships to it.

Thanks for being here tonight, **in person** or **in the online**, in the **city** or in the **countryside**.

You're wonderful for supporting the live theatre and performance sector tonight.

WHO THE SHUCK ARE LAPELLE'S FACTORY?

LaPelle's Factory is the creative partnership between theatre makers **Olwen Davies** & **Ollie Smith**

They make **weird** theatre

They're based in **Nottingham**

They had **fairly different** upbringings

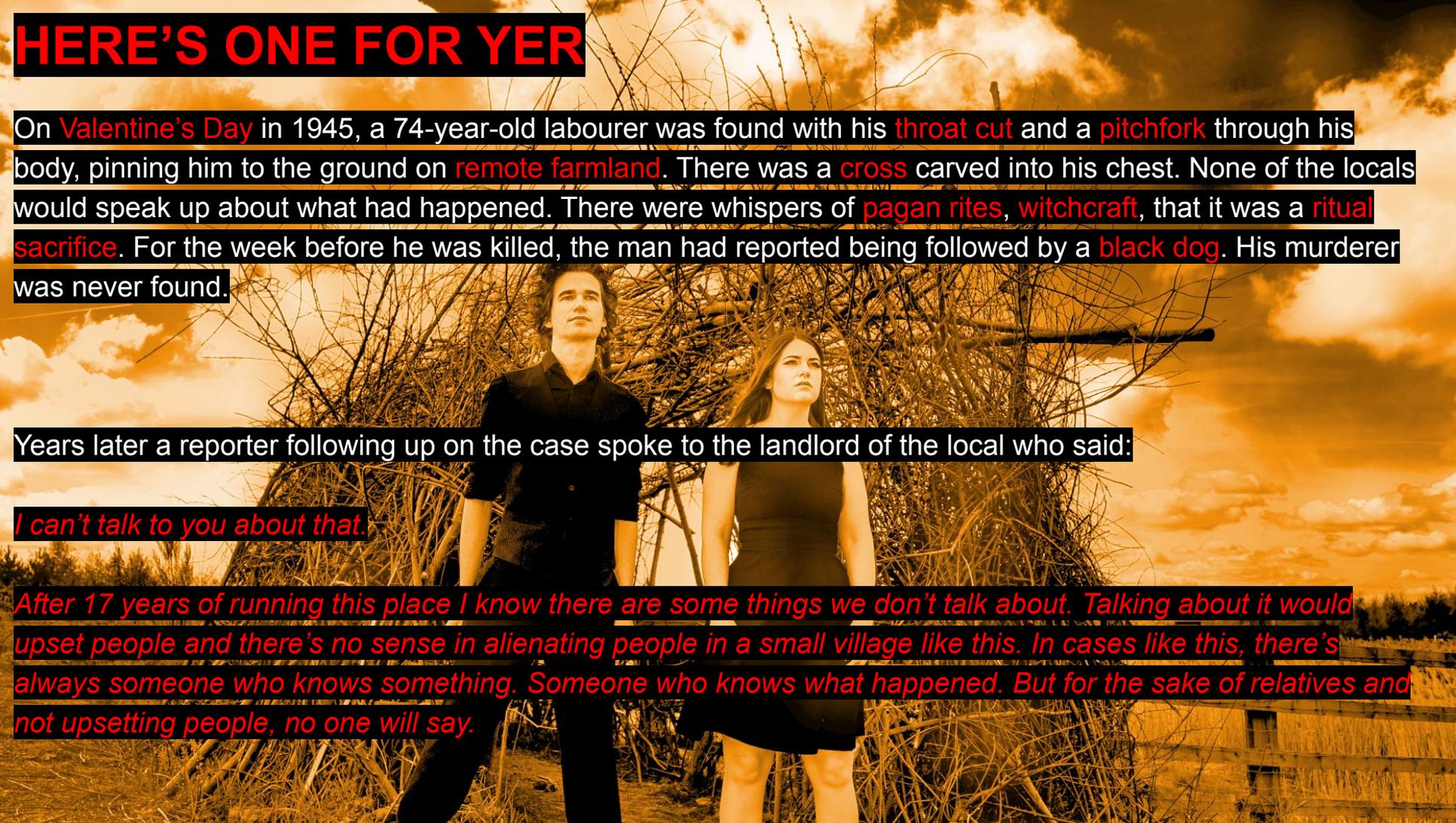
They're like the **couple-next-door** but you **shouldn't trust them** with your **pets**

They take not being serious **very seriously**

Olwen has the most **dangerous eyes** in contemporary theatre

If **Ollie** was in a film about a **drug cartel** he'd be the one who gets **shot in the face** within the first 10 minutes

HERE'S ONE FOR YER

A man and a woman in black clothing stand in a field of tall, dry grass under a dramatic, orange-hued sky. The man is on the left, looking slightly to the right. The woman is on the right, looking forward. The background is a dense field of tall, dry grass or reeds, and the sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is mysterious and somber.

On **Valentine's Day** in 1945, a 74-year-old labourer was found with his **throat cut** and a **pitchfork** through his body, pinning him to the ground on **remote farmland**. There was a **cross** carved into his chest. None of the locals would speak up about what had happened. There were whispers of **pagan rites**, **witchcraft**, that it was a **ritual sacrifice**. For the week before he was killed, the man had reported being followed by a **black dog**. His murderer was never found.

Years later a reporter following up on the case spoke to the landlord of the local who said:

I can't talk to you about that.

After 17 years of running this place I know there are some things we don't talk about. Talking about it would upset people and there's no sense in alienating people in a small village like this. In cases like this, there's always someone who knows something. Someone who knows what happened. But for the sake of relatives and not upsetting people, no one will say.

STUFF WHAT FOLK SAID ONCE

A man and a woman are standing in a field of tall, dry grass. The man is on the left, wearing a dark shirt and pants. The woman is on the right, wearing a black dress. The background is a dramatic, orange-hued sky with dark clouds. The overall scene is lit with a warm, golden light.

"Ollie Smith and Olwen Davies ooze charm and darkness in equal measure, like some old fashioned double act gone off the rails"

Richard Lowden (Forced Entertainment) on LaPelle's Factory

"... sharply perceptive ... incredibly enjoyable ... fantastically sinister ..."

Exeunt on CLOUDCUCKOOLANDERS

"You don't have to read Poe's original tale before seeing this clever, sideways adaptation but it will increase your appreciation for the ingenuity shown by its devisers and performers, Olwen Davies and Ollie Smith"

The Scotsman on The Black Cat

"By far one of the most bizarre, surreal experiences of my life"

Omar Khan (workshop participant) on The Night Shift

"Olwen is great"

Ollie Smith on Olwen Davies

"Ollie learns his lines sometimes"

Olwen Davies on Ollie Smith

