

THE SOUTHBURY CHILD

A new play by Stephen Beresford

13 - 25 June 2022 Festival Theatre

Stephen Beresford's new play **The Southbury Child**, directed by Nicholas Hytner with a cast led by Alex Jennings, a co-production with The Bridge Theatre, will open at Chichester in June before its London run. Raffish, urbane and frequently drunk, David Highland has kept a grip on his remote coastal parish through a combination of disordered charm and high-handed determination.

But when his faith impels him to take a hard line with a bereaved parishioner, he finds himself dangerously isolated from public opinion. As his own family begins to fracture and his marriage falls apart, David must face a future that threatens to extinguish not only his position in the town, but everything he stands for. Stephen Beresford's darkly comic new play is an exploration of family and community, the savage divisions of contemporary society and the rituals that punctuate our lives. His work includes *The Last of the Haussmans* at the National Theatre, an adaptation of Bergman's *Fanny & Alexander* for The Old Vic and the BAFTA-winning film *Pride*.

Triple Olivier Award-winner Alex Jennings returns to Chichester to lead the cast. The *Southbury Child* reunites him with Nicholas Hytner who has previously directed him in *Hymn* and *Cocktail Sticks*, *Collaborators*, *The Habit of Art*, *The Alchemist* and *The Winter's Tale* (all at the National Theatre) amongst others. His many other credits range from *My Fair Lady* to *Stuff Happens* and *Hansard* at the NT, as well as *Hamlet* for the RSC. His screen work includes *The Crown*, *The Lady in the Van*, *The Queen*, *Victoria*, *A Very English Scandal* and *Small Axe: Mangrove*.

Nicholas Hytner also makes a welcome return to Chichester, where he previously directed *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (with a cast including Alex Jennings) in 1985. Director of the National Theatre from 2003-2015, he is Co-Founder of The Bridge Theatre where his recent work includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Beat The Devil*, *Bach & Sons* and the forthcoming *The Book of Dust – La Belle Sauvage* and *Straight Line Crazy*.

The production will be designed by Mark Thompson, with lighting by Max Narula, sound by George Dennis and casting by Robert Sterne. Tickets for *The Southbury Child* at Chichester will go on sale with the full Festival 2022 season in early spring.

This is the play that we plan to try to get tickets for on the Tuesday night of Summer School. I think it will be popular so we may not be lucky but it is in the main Festival theatre so hopefully we will succeed. I do not have a price as yet but usually it is about £28. Please indicate on your Booking Form if you wish to go to this play if we can get tickets.

There will be a film on campus for those not going to the theatre