

VISUAL STORY WITH SOUND INFORMATION

Introduction

This visual story will let you know what happens in our show Mary & the Matrons.

We'll be going over:

- The cast
- The characters
- The show details
- The sounds you can expect to hear

- The story using Communication in Print Widgets (spoiler alert!)

If you would like to visit the Northcott, see the set and meet the company before you come to the show, please call us on 01392 72 63 63 or email us at access@exeternorthcott.co.uk and we'll do our best to make this happen.

If there is anything else that you would like to know about the show that we don't cover in this visual story, please get in touch at

boxoffice@exeternorthcott.co.uk and we'll try to help as best we can. Please note the show is at The Barnfield Theatre in central Exeter. Here is a guide to getting in and around The Barnfield Theatre: <https://exeternorthcott.co.uk/your-visit/barnfield-theatre-plan-your-visit/> There are spaces for two wheelchairs in the auditorium so please book these in advance.

The Cast

There are 4 actors in Mary & the Matrons. Victoria and Ted are from Cardiff-based theatre company Hijinx and are joined by Kerry and Alex

The actors are supported by the Northcott's technical team. Our technicians make sure that the show runs safely and smoothly, but you probably won't see them on stage. Some of our technicians sit in the technical box, behind your seats, where they operate the lights and the sound. Other technicians will be above and at the sides of the stage, helping to raise or lower curtains, move scenery, and help actors change costumes during the show. There are no sustained strobe lights in the show.



Kerry Norton



Victoria Walters



Alex Kidder



Ted Lishman

Mary & the Matrons characters

The 4 actors play 9 different characters in Mary & the Matrons.

You can learn more about the main characters that each of the actors play in Mary & the Matrons below.

You can also learn about the minor characters in the play. They may only appear once or twice on our stage for a short amount of time.

Kerry Norton plays one main character, Mary Sheridan. Mary Sheridan was particularly concerned about speech and language delay in the young child. She wanted there to be better testing of children when young, and better care of children with disabilities. She inspected the hospitals where many children with disabilities lived, back in the 1950's and 60's. Sometimes Kerry reads out narration, or extracts from Mary Sheridan's writing.

Alex Kidder's primary role is Lou, Millie's mother, who is an aspiring singer. We watch Lou struggle to balance chasing her own dreams while also trying to help Millie figure out what she wants to do. Alex also plays a care assistant called Janice, and the then primeminister, Harold Macmillan.

Victoria Walter is playing Millie, a 19 year old girl who is trying to find her place in the world and while trying to fulfil her ultimate dream of becoming an astronaut and exploring the wonders of space.

Ted Lishman reads a lot of the narration in the performance. He also is multi rolling a variety of characters, from Jez, Millie's social worker, to Dr George Godber who was running the Ministry of Health when Dr Mary Sheridan worked there. Ted also plays two different boys living in long-stay hospitals: Sam and Peter.

About the show

It's the start of the Swinging Sixties, Harold Macmillan says "We've Never Had It So Good" and Dr Mary Sheridan is on a nationwide inspection tour of "Mental Deficiency Hospitals", the places many children with learning disabilities lived out their childhoods. Because some of the story is set in the past, the show will include outdated language about disability that we would not use now.

Meanwhile, it is also 2023 and Millie Moore, a tenacious school leaver, wants to find the right placement to follow her star.

Both Mary and Millie know things never work till everyone sings from the same song sheet. Can Mary change the system in time for Millie to get her chance? Six short decades later, we'll find out.

Inspired by the inspection reports of Dr Mary Sheridan, this workshop performance of a fun new musical-in-development features a band, an infectious 60's-inspired soundtrack, Makaton signing and integrated cast.

Mary & the Matrons is created by award-winning Northcott Associates, Documental Theatre and is supported by Stage One & Hijinx Theatre, in partnership with Makaton Charity, with funding from Arts Council England.

How long is Mary & the Matrons ?

Mary & the Matrons has a running time of maximum 90 minutes. It is a relaxed performance, so people are welcome to get up to use the facilities if needed.

How do we tell the story of Mary & the Matrons?

Mary & the Matrons is a musical in development, with part of the story told via our cast reading out narration. Some of our songs and scenes will be accompanied by Makaton signing. The show is not fully developed yet, so you won't see the full story like in a traditional musical theatre performance. There is not a full set and parts of the story are narrated rather than acted out. There are seven songs from the musical which will be performed in full.

Mary & the Matrons is a relaxed and inclusive performance in which it is completely fine for audience members to make noise, move around and come in and out of the theatre if they wish. We'll make it less dark inside the auditorium and loud noises and big flashing lights will be turned down.

Sound information in Mary & the Matrons

We have 7 songs included in our musical.

Millie's Lament 1 – where Millie imagines being in Space

I Want Song – where Lou sings to Millie after she runs off at the music festival

Twilight Zone – Mary starts her inspection tour of hospitals and is surprised by what she sees

Treat Me Like A Child – Sam, a boy in one of the hospitals, sings to the audience what he is really thinking

Still For Me – Where care assistant Janice explains the things Peter finds difficult, and how they find a way to communicate.

Dr Godber – Mary writes a letter to her boss about the changes she wants to see, and prepares to give a speech to all the other doctors

Never Had It So Good – Meanwhile, the Government, and their voters, are more interested in their new prosperity, and don't want to hear the bad news Mary has to share

Millie's Lament 2 – At the end of the show, Millie goes for an interview at a college and prepares to tell them why she loves learning about Space.

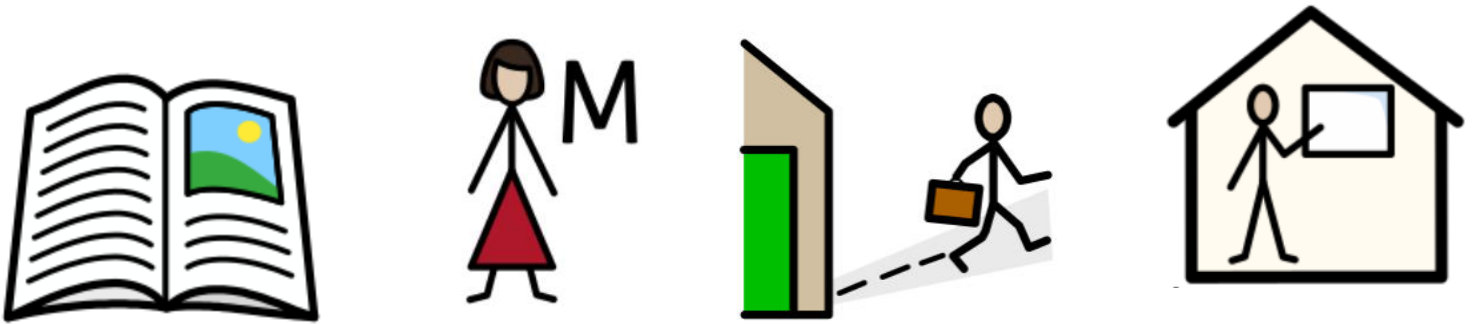
Please note, we have a live band, including a piano, drums and bass guitar. Sound will get louder during our musical numbers. Please bring ear defenders if necessary.

If you would like to see or learn the Makaton signs for two of the songs (I Want song and Still For Me), please click on these links.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hO_8s9z0pik4GSWxQM1YQ_MYBLDwgK8e/view?usp=sharing

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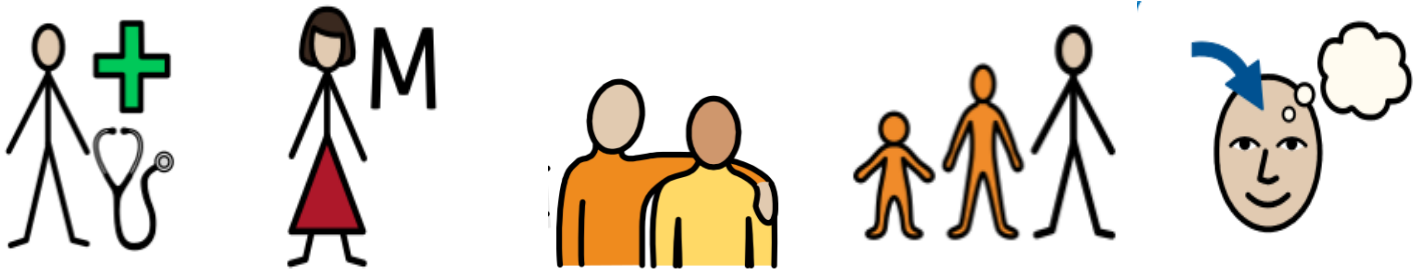
Mary & the Matrons Story



This is the story of Millie who is 19 and leaving school.



Her mum is called Lou. Lou wants to help Millie. She finds out about a doctor called Dr. Mary Sheridan.



Dr. Mary Sheridan cared for children with learning disabilities.



In the 1960's many of these children still lived in hospitals.



Lou is inspired by Mary Sheridan's courage



Lou helps Millie get on a course



to study space.

