

PRESS RELEASE

Ophaboom's Robin Hood back on tour by popular demand

Acclaimed masters of family-friendly theatre Ophaboom are back on the road this summer with their raucous, swashbuckling rendition of the Robin Hood legend. Combining masks, lyrical music, knockabout physical comedy and ever-changing topical references, Ophaboom's unique performance style wittily updates this classic story.

The script and characterisations were devised through improvisation, and have resulted in a completely fresh take on some familiar characters: Robin himself may be a hero and eco-warrior, but displays a streak of vanity that helps the feisty Maid Marian twist him round her little finger. The Sheriff is undoubtedly a villain that audiences love to hate, but suffers the flaws of a more famous tragic figure, with his Macbeth-like reliance on prophecies and spirits. Throughout, *Ophaboom's Robin Hood* is enlivened with exquisite medieval music and singing, which – combined with details such as Friar Tuck's pig-like half mask and a charming puppet-sized Nottingham castle – make a show with equal parts silliness and skill.

This production originally toured across the UK and Europe last year, notching up an incredible 120 performances over nine months. This culminated in a three-week off-West-End appearance at Riverside Studios, which attracted critical acclaim from the London and national press. TimeOut listed the show among their Top Ten Critics Choices for 2002.

Between May and August 2003, Ophaboom will once again travel across Europe, with 30 performances already scheduled and more being added regularly. In between touring commitments the company is developing *Burke and Hare*, a new show for 2004. Details of new tour dates and the new show will appear at www.ophaboom.com when available.

"This criminally insane comedy delivers the legend in rough, concentrated style"

TimeOut

"Hurls the slings and arrows of outrageous comedy. The actors are masked, the action is loud and the satire is topical. The four-strong company generate a winning warmth"

The Times

"one of the cleverest and most screamingly funny versions of the Robin Hood legend you could ever hope to see"

Whats On * * * * *

"Ophaboom seduced the audience with their inimitable style, fusing physical humour with the magical madness of commedia dell'arte"

Vendée Matin, France

"Impossible to resist the talent that raged through this company's show. You don't come across classics like this every day"

France Soir on *Faustus*

"a riotous assembly of comic acting"

The List on *Faustus*

NOTES TO EDITORS

OPHABOOM'S ROBIN HOOD

Performed by Geoff Beale, Howard Gayton, Claire Jones and Sarah Ratheram
 Directed by Howard Gayton Designed by Janet Bird and Catherine Lindow
 Masks by Ninnian Kinnear-Wilson Costumes by Jennifer Gayton

OPHABOOM was founded in 1991 by Geoff Beale and Howard Gayton and began as street theatre performers and are now the leading UK group working with *commedia dell'arte*. Previous productions include *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Alchemy*, *The Miller's Tale*, *Faustus* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. In addition to extensive touring through the rural networks in the UK, they are the only British company to have been invited to perform at the Venice Carnival (five times), as well as performing in Belgium, France (at eight different open-air festivals over seven years), Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Denmark, Korea, Canada and the USA (where they have taken part in an international commedia symposium). *Robin Hood* was developed and toured with Arts Council funding through the National Touring Programme. They are now an ensemble of four and, between them have backgrounds in such varied disciplines as classical music, puppetry, Tai Chi, physical theatre and mime and have worked with Theatre de Complicite and Philippe Gaulier. For more see www.ophaboom.com.

JAMES SEABRIGHT is an independent theatre producer and general manager who has been working with Ophaboom since 2001. As well as working with a number of other world-class British theatre companies, he runs his own production company Bright Choice. With Martin Sutherland, James is producing the largest independent programme of shows at this year's Edinburgh Festivals (www.festivalhighlights.com). Contact details - tel 08707 701934 / 07803 044008 – email james@seabright.info

TOURING SCHEDULE 2003

Saturday	17-May	Commedia Festival	Ath, Belgium	
Thur-Sat	22-24 May	Young at Art Festival	Lyric, Belfast	028 9038 1081
Saturday	01-Jun	National Independent Schools Drama Association	<i>Private Performance</i>	01189 767430
Tuesday	03-Jun	Barn Theatre <i>Adur Festival</i>	Southwick West Sussex	01273 263160
Wednesday	04-Jun	Glasshouse College <i>Black Country Touring</i>	Amblecote West Midlands	01384 399400
Sat-Sun	07- 08 Jun	Alcala Festival	Alcala	Spain
Saturday	14-Jun	<i>Outdoor Performance</i>	Vic sur Seille	France
Sunday	15-Jun	<i>Outdoor Performance</i>	Malbrouck	France
Thursday	19-Jun	Devonshire School	Smethwick	0121 558 1654
Friday	20-Jun	Sir Harold Hillier Gardens	Romsey, Hants	01794 368787
Saturday	21-Jun	Theatre Royal Winchester	Winchester, Hants	01962 840440
Monday	23-Jun	Bishops Waltham Palace <i>Bishops Waltham Festival</i>	Bishops Waltham Hampshire	01489 893197
Friday - Sunday	27-29 Jun	Glastonbury Festival <i>3 Outdoor Performances</i>	Worthy Farm, Pilton, Somerset	01438 834596
Sat-Sun	05- 06 Jul	Fêtes Médiévales Bayeux	Bayeux	France
Monday	14-Jul	Village en Fete	Lassay les Chateaux	France
Tuesday	15-Jul	Festival des Histrions	Bernieres sur Mer	France
Thur-Sun	17-20 Jul	Chalon dans la Rue	Chalon	France
Saturday	26-Jul	Plough Arts Centre	Torrington, Devon	01805 622552
Mon-Tues	28- 29 Jul	Sterts Arts Centre	Liskeard, Cornwall	01579 362382
Saturday	09-Aug	South Hill Park	Bracknell, Berkshire	01344 484123
Friday	29-Aug	Vendredi de l'Ete	Bagnoles de l'Orne	France