

# Marketing Pack

Bruce Chatwin's

## **On the Black Hill**

Adapted by Charles Way

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Our website [www.ajtctheatre.co.uk](http://www.ajtctheatre.co.uk) is a rich source of  
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**Contact Information**

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**About the Company**

**ajtc** was formed by two actors with many years of professional experience – fed up of waiting for someone to give them a job they decided to do something about it.

**On the Black Hill is our seventh production.**

**We are a professional theatre company based in the South East region. Through the 10 years of our existence we have earned a national and international reputation for work that is immediate, innovative and always challenging.**

**We work** in new writing and new productions of established scripts touring to small and mid-scale theatre and non-theatre venues, schools and community centres. Performances include: The National Theatre, the Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam, the Leicester Haymarket, the Unicorn Theatre for children, the Cardiff Sherman, the Edinburgh Traverse, the Bristol Old Vic (NewVic Studio) and the Plymouth Drum. Festivals include: Edinburgh, Belfast, Spark Children’s Festival, London Live and Inspiration Children’s Theatre Festival, Glasgow.

**“These two are fantastic” Lyn Gardner The Guardian**

Previous Productions:

Adult and community work:

‘Beside Picasso’ - by Brian McAvera

‘The Two-Man Tempest’ - adapted by Geoff Bullen

‘Red Sun’ - by David Rudkin

Young People’s work:

‘The Book of Miracles’ – by David S Craig and Robert Morgan

‘The Gardener’ - by Mike Kenny

‘Wedding Story’ - by Sara Clifford

**Co-Producers The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford**

**[www.ajtctheatre.co.uk](http://www.ajtctheatre.co.uk)**  
for reviews of all ajtc productions

**Reviews of Previous productions                      Red Sun, Beside Picasso, The Tempest,  
The Gardener**

‘Such quality work. I loved the integration of the music’. Venue manager Basingstoke

The Irish Times            **It was fitting that the (Belfast) festival kicked off with a show about Spain’s greatest artist. Beside Picasso, written by Northern Irish writer Brian McAvera & receiving its Irish premiere here at the Lyric was a fascinating, and oft hilarious two-hander about the nature of art, friendship, genius and celebrity Both the writing and acting were excellent.**

**Eastern Daily Press**

**‘A striking presentation. Set on an island in a sea of troubles, The Tempest is magic & illusion, poetry & fancy.**

**The action bowls along but not too fast to spoil either the play’s surprises or the richness of Shakespeare’s language.**

**Combining quick-change routines with deft teamwork the mini cast know how to create mood in a moment.’**

**Christopher Smith**

**The Stage** The duel between the two is absorbing and explosive.

Times Online

As Wana-Apu, Armstrong is proud and passionate, while Jasper’s Adàmu is a sweet-faced, lumbering, oversized infant. Together they make Rudkin’s allegory touchingly human.

Steve Cramer

***‘Unlike anything currently seen on show’ The Guardian (Michael Billington)***

***‘These two are fantastic’ ’The Guardian (Lyn Gardner)***

***‘A theatrical tour de force’ The Scotsman***

***‘Dynamic’ The Independent***

**Selected Audience Comments**

**Beside Picasso** Really superb performance and play.

Stunning! Formidable performances!

Mind blowing thought provoking. Tremendous writing & what performances.

What a team, thank you.

An enthralling, impressive and powerful performance Iain Armstrong’s portrayal of Picasso was totally convincing and Mick Jasper’s Sabartes was a powerful portrayal of a symbol of all of us in awe of Picasso’s vast output of Art. Great Experience!

**The Gardener** Lovely experience for us all, the children laughed and the teachers cried!

Two excellent performances very well received. It was perfect.

‘My favourite bit was all of it.’ Sam – aged 5

### **On the Black Hill**

‘For forty- two years, Lewis and Benjamin Jones slept side by side, in their parent's bed, at their farm which was known as 'The Vision'.’

So begins Bruce Chatwin's award winning tale of twinship, love and belonging, set on the border of England and Wales. Charles Way's beautiful new adaptation captures the harsh realities and humour of farming life and the unique struggle of the twins, who have one identity but two realities. Their remarkable lives span almost the whole of the last century and throw an extraordinary light on the values of our changing times through war and peace. Bound together and yet driven apart by nature they struggle to find meaning and purpose in their existence which, finally, is dominated by one question.

Who will inherit their farm, their 'Vision?'

### **Production Information**

**On the Black Hill** is a ‘three-hander’ – 2 actors & a cellist.

The production features a specially commissioned score.

It is designed for flexible touring to community centres, venues and colleges.

**Length:** Approximately 1 hour 40 minutes + interval

**Age Range:** Ideal for adult and community audiences. We recommend 16+.

This is a storytelling piece with integrated music.

The style is intimate and friendly.

### **The Company**

Adapted for the company by:	Charles Way
Directed by:	Geoff Bullen
Designed by:	Maz Bullen
Original Score by:	Lewis Gibson
Performed by:	Iain Armstrong Mick Jasper Amy Vodden
Print Design	David O'Connor

### **Biographies of Creative Team**

#### ***Charles Way - Writer/Adaptor***

Over 40 plays produced, many now performed all over the world. Published by Seren Books, Harper Collins and Aurora Metro Press. He is a member of the Writer's Guild of Great Britain and the Welsh Academy of Authors.

Charles' plays for adults include a well-known version of Bruce Chatwin's *On the Black Hill* and an adaptation of *Independent People* by Halldor Laxness. This New Perspectives production was directed by the author and toured Iceland where the story is set. He has won numerous awards

## Plays Include:

'*She Scored for Wales*', '*Funny Boys*', '*In Living Memory*', '*The Tinderbox*' [Gwent Theatre].  
 '*The Dutiful Daughter*' [the West Yorkshire Playhouse]  
 '*In the Bleak Midwinter*', '*Paradise Drive*', '*Ill Met By Moonlight*', '*The Dove Maiden*', [Hijinx]  
 '*Somebody Loves You*', '*Independent People*', [New Perspectives Theatre, rural touring]  
 '*On the Black Hill*', '*The Search for Odysseus*' [Made in Wales]  
 '*A Spell of Cold Weather*', '*Looking out to See*' [Sherman Theatre, Cardiff]  
 '*Playing from the Heart*', '*Sleeping Beauty*', '*The Night Before Christmas*'  
 [Polka Theatre for Children]  
 '*Dead Man's Hat*', '*Frankenstein*', '*Sweeney Todd*', [Orchard Theatre Devon]  
 '*Cinderella*', '*Beauty and the Beast*' [Library Theatre Manchester].  
 '*Red Red Shoes*', '*The Flood*', '*The Tinderbox*', '*Alice in Wonderland*'  
 [Unicorn theatre for Children]  
 '*One Snowy Night*' [Minerva Theatre Chichester]  
 '*Merlin and the cave of Dreams*' [Imagination stage, Washington DC].

Charles has written many plays for radio and television including '*No Borders*' a TV poem for BBC2, set in England and Wales, '*A Figure of Eight*' BBC2 Wales.

**Geoff Bullen - Director**

His career has encompassed all areas of theatre, with particular emphasis on Theatre in Education, Community Theatre and Adult Education. Highlights include the Olivier-award winning *Of Mice and Men* in The West End, *Murder in the Cathedral* in Japanese, and *Oliver!* in HMP Wormwood Scrubs (just visiting!).

**Regional Theatre:** Exeter, Plymouth, Watford, Leeds, Colchester and Bromley.

**West End:** *Never the Sinner*, The Playhouse, *Of Mice and Men*, The Mermaid.

**No 1 tours:** *Of Mice and Men*, The Touring Consortium. *The Dark Side*, BKL. *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, The Touring Consortium.

**T.I.E:** Theatre Centre, ( associate director ), Roundabout (Nottingham Playhouse ).

**Recent Work:** *Oliver* for D Wing Wormwood Scrubs. *Murder in the Cathedral*. Sambyakunin Gekijo, Tokyo. David Storey's *The March on Russia*, Mercury Theatre, Colchester). Adaptations of *The Oresteia* and Sophocles' *The Family of Antigone*. *Richard the Third* in Cleveland, Ohio. *Cavaliere Rusticana*, Nottingham, and *Assassins*, RADA

**For ajtc** *Beside Picasso*. *The Two-Man Tempest* ( adaptation & direction) *Red Sun*.

Geoff Bullen currently teaches Shakespeare at RADA and for New York University. He is involved in Arts Management training for the City of Liverpool, European Capital of Culture 2008.

ajtc Theatre Company

On the Black Hill

www.ajtctheatre.co.uk

***Wardrobe & Design - Maz Bullen***

Credits include The Royal National Theatre, The Nottingham Playhouse, Century Theatre, Kneehigh, Pip Utton & Theatre Centre. She has worked extensively in repertory & touring companies throughout Britain.

**For ajtc.** *Beside Picasso. The Tempest, Red Sun.*

***Composer - Lewis Gibson***

Lewis received a First Class Honours degree in music from Dartington College of Arts in 1999. Since then he has played with Tarleton's Jig on violin, rebec, and percussion, set up sound installations, both in this country and abroad, and toured in the U.K. and Europe with music ensembles and combined arts projects including Wishbone Ash (Europe 2000), Ricciotti Ensemble (Amsterdam 1998), and Zuzu (London 1999).

Lewis has also composed **Into the Mystic** for Graeae, **Bretevski Street** and **The Nightingale** for Nottingham Playhouse Roundabout Theatre Company, **The Dark Side** for Bill Kenwright Productions, and **Of Mice and Men** and **To Kill a Mockingbird**, both for the Touring Consortium

***Performers***

***Cellist – Amy Vodden***

Amy studied at the **Colchester** Institute, graduating this summer. She has worked for several orchestras and ensembles, including Colchester Institute Cello Ensemble, the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, and the Clacton Chamber Orchestra.

***Actors - Mick Jasper & Iain Armstrong***

Both actors have worked in television, film, video and radio. They have over 40 years combined experience of professional acting.

**Mick** has worked in **regional theatre** at Ipswich, Northampton, and the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff; and **on tour** with Forest Forge, Telltale, Footloose, New Perspectives Zap Theatre, Bracknell, Theatre Centre, Royal Touring, Wolsey T.I.E. & Nottingham Playhouse, and in the **West End** at the Arts Theatre. The National Theatre (Children's Platform 2001 *Walking the Tightrope* )

**Iain** has worked in **regional theatre** at Sheffield, Peterborough, Chester, Leatherhead, Ludlow, Perth, Stockholm, Lahore, Sarajevo and Chichester, and **on tour** with Century Theatre, Temba, Jill Freud and Company, Vanessa Ford, Theatre Set-Up, Wildcard Theatre Company, Nottingham Playhouse, Theatre Centre and in the **West End** at The Piccadilly Theatre.

**Technical Information**

The production is designed for touring to studio theatres, community venues, arts centres and colleges. Technical requirements are minimal.

Basic lighting with a general 'cover' would be ideal.

Tech Spec: t.b.c.

**Brochure Copy**

**Suggested Target Audience**

Adults 16+  
Literature and Drama students  
General arts participants/audiences.

**Suggested Selling points**

**This is a story about a rural community**  
**Much loved award winning novel.**  
**Bruce Chatwin – his life & writings.**  
**Charles Way – a friend of Bruce Chatwin’s**  
**- renowned playwright**  
**Theatre techniques - Storytelling -**  
**Music – classically trained cellist**  
**The company & the creative team**  
**Tour**  
**Yvonne Arnaud – co -producers**

**Press**

**Sample Press 'Grabs'**

**On the Black Hill** is a vibrant collaboration between a major playwright and a dynamic theatre company.

'For forty- two years, Lewis and Benjamin Jones slept side by side, in their parent's bed, at their farm which was known as 'The Vision'.'

So begins Bruce Chatwin's award winning tale of twinship, love and belonging, set on the border of England and Wales. Charles Way's beautiful new adaptation captures the harsh realities and humour of farming life and the unique struggle of the twins, who have one identity but two realities. Their remarkable lives span almost the whole of the last century and throw an extraordinary light on the values of our changing times through war and peace. Bound together and yet driven apart by nature they struggle to find meaning and purpose in their existence which, finally, is dominated by one question.

Who will inherit their farm, their 'Vision?'

A lyrical story of twin brothers growing up in a borders community

On the Black Hill is a spellbinding portrayal of the unbreakable link between nature and the human spirit.

**Los Angeles Times Book Review**

Winner of the James Tait Black prize for the best novel of 1981

'His deepest and best book' Independent

Winner of the Whitbread Best First Novel Award

'He belongs, like Lawrence and Hardy before him, to that line of novelists, poets, diarists, and amateur naturalists who have made the rural life of Great Britain more intimately known to generations of readers than that of any other country in Europe or America'

New York Times Book Review

**ajtc;**

This Guildford based company has won international renown for innovative and exhilarating work.

The company tours throughout Britain and Europe with productions that have wowed audiences and critics alike.

**ajtc** – a small-scale theatre company with a big scale reputation brings its latest work to .....

If Tortelier returned to earth he would applaud Hattie Bennett's playing of the cello

A stunning cello score composed by Lewis Gibson

**ajtc** is back, with a new adaptation of the much loved Bruce Chatwin novel On the Black Hill



**ajtc** is an established theatre company known for its high quality productions of new work for small and mid-scale venues. It has toured three successful productions forging a national and international touring circuit. The company's first production, *'Beside Picasso'*, toured throughout the UK and abroad receiving critical acclaim from the national press for performances at the Edinburgh Festival and the National Theatre.

Committed to the production of new work for national and international touring, with performances at the Royal National Theatre, the Edinburgh and Belfast Festivals, and the Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam,

**ajtc - a company of two - "are virtuosi in the art of pure theatre".**

With backing from Arts Council England – South East

PR Opportunities:

Please let us know if there is anything we can do  
**to assist your marketing plan.**

**Interviews** ajtc is keen to do radio & press interviews to support your general marketing plan.

The creative personnel are all willing to do PR interviews – please contact ajtc 01483 232795

**Open Door Policy** We have a general open door policy and will be happy to work with individuals &/or groups at any time during our visit - where time allows.

**After Show Talks** The company is happy to spend time chatting with the audience, answering questions etc - on a formal or informal basis - after the performance.

**Workshops** ajtc offers a combination of workshops and performances run by highly trained, experienced, educators and community arts workers.

## BOX OFFICE BRIEFING SHEET

Bruce Chatwin's

# On the Black Hill

Adapted by Charles Way

Co-Produced by

**ajtc & The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford**

with support from

**ACE (The Arts Council of England)**

**Venue:**

**Date:**

**Time/s:**

**Ticket Prices:**

**Length of performance:** 1hr 40 minutes (approx.) + interval

Suitable for 16+

### *Workshop Information:*

**Company contact – (venue use only): 01483 232795 [michael.jasper1@btinternet.com](mailto:michael.jasper1@btinternet.com)**

**About the play:** 'For forty- two years, Lewis and Benjamin Jones slept side by side, in their parent's bed, at their farm which was known as 'The Vision'.'

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Who will inherit their farm, their 'Vision?'

**Lewis and Benjamin's story is told by two actors and a cellist**

**ajtc** tours to schools, community centres, theatres and arts centres throughout Britain and in Continental Europe. Theatres and festivals have included: The National Theatre, The Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam, Leicester Haymarket, Cardiff Sherman, Bristol Old Vic (NewVic Studio), The Unicorn Theatre for children, Plymouth Drum, The Edinburgh Festival and The Belfast Festival. The company is based in the South East region.