

# ***Welcome to Desperateland!***

## ***What have we been up to recently?***

Well, here at Desperate Men we're waiting to hear if the **Severn Project** is going ahead! We spent much of last year doing the preliminary work on this big, big project...

In the meantime we've been busy with the fabulous **Sequins and Sawdust**. Produced by Cirque Bijou so not actually a Desperate Men project but with most of our crew on board: Jon Beedell co-directing with Mitch Mitchelson; Shirley Pegna doing musical direction; Richard Headon and DM regular Jo Kessell performing.



Jo Kessell & Richard Headon. Photo: Fritz Curzon

The production got great reviews:

"Spans a tale of life behind the scenes at a touring circus, and the result was... an evening of superb heart in mouth acrobatics. But where that might not have captivated audiences for two solid hours, this show added real narrative, strong characters, and plenty of both beauty and humour. What emerged was a gothic, romantic picture of a thoroughly eccentric extended family. Beautiful and touching... A great evening: circus skills to make you ooh and aah, but comedy and drama too.

Venue Magazine

"...vivacious, busy and very likeable show. Many impressive acts, including jiving acrobats, a rock and roll trapeze act, a flirtatious hula-hoop ensemble and a Pierrot who sweeps up the spotlight. There are also inspired scenes in Jon Beedell's production. The wedding of the ringmaster's daughter is witty and touching, with a priest who scurries up a pole, cassock billowing. Lovely details too, such as the drunken ringmaster dancing with a fire extinguisher and one performer falling asleep on an ironing board."

The Financial Times

"Stuffed with good intentions and a youthful, spring-like spirit, further enlivened by a six-piece band. Richard Headon plays the amiable but alcoholic director of an old-style travelling circus, Emma Lloyd is his wife, Richard Durnford the strong man they hire. Jo Kessell is the sad clown whose sole connection with the spotlight is to sweep it into a dustpan. This quartet provides a simple plot line around which unfold the activities of Capelli's Circus. Jon Beedell and co-director Mitch Mitchelson handle big human events lightly. Under their guidance this sprawling show generates loads of bustling energy."

The Times

So well done to Cirque Bijou, Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and the Circus Space for a great collaboration.

We've also been off over the water in Northern Ireland, doing the Film Crew (The usual suspects, right), and Streets of Brighton Festival (below). Boy was it windy!



We've got lots of Eco-Pirates gigs booked in for the summer. So if you bump into some scurvy rogues while you're out sunning yerself on the coast, don't be surprised.

So, what else is happening..? Our rehearsal studio has been busy, busy, busy. We've also got the lovely Helen Crocker, Circus and Street Arts Producer for Theatre Bristol, squatting in the corner of our office. We've tried everything, and still can't get rid of her.

And, of course, we've got this shiny new website. But you knew that already, or you wouldn't be reading this. This is the first Desperate Men newsletter, there should be another one along in a couple of months. Till then...

...Stay Desperate.