



Jack Absolute FLIES AGAIN

BY RICHARD BEAN AND OLIVER CHRIS

based on Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals*

DIRECTED BY
ROBIN CLARK AND NATALIE JONES

20 – 23 JULY 2026 AT 7.30PM
MATINÉES **TUESDAY 21 JULY** & **THURSDAY 23 JULY** 2.30PM

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This is a non-professional production.


MINACK
THEATRE



Jack Absolute FLIES AGAIN

BY RICHARD BEAN AND OLIVER CHRIS

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Jack Absolute Flies Again transports one of theatre's most charming rogues into the perilous skies of the Second World War. Premiering in 2022 at the National Theatre, Richard Bean (playwright of *One Man, Two Guvvors*) and Oliver Chris retain the sharp verbal humour and comic energy of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's eighteenth-century comedy *The Rivals*, but with fresh flavours. The result is a play that celebrates courage, resilience and the enduring human desire for connection in uncertain times. Beneath the laughter lies a recognition of the sacrifices made by those who lived through the war, lending emotional depth to the play's high-spirited antics.



**RAF Pilots scramble during the Battle of Britain.
Circa August 1940. © Mirrorpix**



ATS Officers arrive in Canada, 1st May 1944

© Mirrorpix

We both saw the National's production and instantly wanted to bring it to the Minack stage. The production delights in theatricality, from rapid-fire dialogue and comic misunderstandings to larger than life characters whose flaws and foibles remain instantly recognisable. It also celebrates the significant contribution of women to the war effort. At its heart, however, *Jack Absolute Flies Again* is a love letter to classic British comedy, demonstrating how timeless

characters and themes can be reimagined for new audiences. And like the best comedies, it combines laughter with pathos and so many quotable lines.

It's been a year of planning and we've been so grateful to work with such an excellent team. Mike Bell's set must suit the needs of our theatre in Caterham, as well as the glorious granite stage of the Minack, with a backdrop of the Atlantic Sea, sunset and the occasional seal. Berry Butler's had her hands full sourcing authentic RAF uniforms, and our cast has more than embraced the lindyhop under the guidance of choreographer Elke Desanghere. Together with our backstage crew, set builders and painters and a hardworking cast and ensemble, we hope that our production is a fitting tribute to Sheridan's original vision as well as the bravery of those boys - and girls - in blue.

ROBIN CLARK & NATALIE JONES
DIRECTORS





ROBIN CLARK Director

This is Robin's second production in the Director's chair, having co-directed *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* in 2024 for the Miller Theatre. He is grateful to be sharing the role again with Natalie this time. It's been a labour of love putting this together for the Minack Theatre. Robin is no stranger to the Minack stage having performed in four previous productions, playing Geoffrey in *The Lion in Winter* (2011), Gabriel Oak in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (2014), Edward Kynaston in *Nell Gwynn* (2017) and Edward Murdstone in *David Copperfield* (2022).



NATALIE JONES Director

Natalie is thrilled to be at the directorial helm as Group Captain Jones alongside her good theatrical chum, Group Captain Clark. Keeping tabs on over 20 personnel is a true military operation! When not directing, she designs sets, most recently *Kindertransport*. Her on stage highlights are playing Di in *Di and Viv and Rose* and Judy in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. She would like to thank the cast and crew for all their sterling work into making this production one to remember!



MIKE BELL Set Designer

Mike was delighted to be asked to design *Jack Absolute Flies Again* for the Miller. The original set at the National Theatre was massive and very technical. To design for the Miller and then to take elements of the set to the Minack was daunting but with the directors initial concept he hopes to have achieved a fun design.

The Battle of Britain: 1940

KEY DETAILS AND TIMELINE

Dates: Officially recognised by the UK as running from July 10 to October 31, 1940.

The stakes: Following the Fall of France, Britain stood alone against the Nazi war machine.

German strategy: Commanded by Hermann Göring, the Luftwaffe initially targeted coastal shipping, then shifted to heavily bomb RAF airfields, radar stations, and aircraft factories.

British advantages: The RAF utilised the “Dowding System,” an advanced network of early-warning radar and ground-control communications, to quickly intercept German raids.

Iconic aircraft: The fast and agile Supermarine Spitfire took on German fighters (Messerschmitt Bf 109s), while the durable Hawker Hurricane engaged enemy bombers.



A formation of Hawker Hurricane fighters of No 85 Squadron in search of enemy aircraft. © Mirrorpix

TURNING POINTS

The Shift to London: In early September, Hitler ordered the Luftwaffe to bomb London and other civilian centres, giving the battered RAF airfields crucial time to recover.

Battle of Britain Day (September 15, 1940): The RAF decisively repelled a massive, sustained Luftwaffe daylight raid on London. Severe losses forced Germany to abandon daylight operations in favour of nighttime bombings (a campaign that became known as “The Blitz”).

AFTERMATH

Casualties: Approximately 544 RAF aircrew and 312 ground personnel were killed. The Luftwaffe lost roughly 1,887 aircraft compared to the RAF's 1,023.

Legacy: The victory is remembered as Britain's “finest hour,” preventing an invasion of the UK and keeping the Allied war effort alive in Western Europe.

Planes of the Battle of Britain



HAWKER HURRICANE MK1

The Hawker Hurricane Mk.I was the Royal Air Force's first modern monoplane fighter and the unsung hero of the Battle of Britain. Designed by Sydney Camm, it entered service in 1937 and was responsible for destroying 60% of all German aircraft during the 1940 summer campaign.



SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE MK1

The Spitfire became a symbol of freedom during the summer months of 1940 by helping to defeat the German air attacks during the Battle of Britain. It was the highest performing Allied aircraft in 1940 and proved to be the only British fighter capable of meeting the Messerschmitt Bf109E on equal terms.



Jack Absolute

FLIES AGAIN

BY RICHARD BEAN AND OLIVER CHRIS


based on Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals*

CAST

Mrs Malaprop
Brian Coventry
Roy Faulkland
Bob Acres
Bikram 'Tony' Khattri
Jack Absolute
Lydia Languish
Dudley Scunthorpe
Lucy
Julia Melville
Sir Anthony Absolute
Sampson / Ensemble
Kingsmith / Ensemble
Ensemble

DIANE EBDEN
RICHARD HASLAM
PETER BROWN
ZIGGI SZAFRANSKI
RAX LAKHANI
ADAM STEVENS
GAIL BISHOP
JAMES MERCER
JULIA STEVENS
LAURA MACKIE
CHRIS HANNIGAN
ELKE DESANGHERE
JAY ROLFE
SALLY BOSMAN
HELEN DUNFORD-HEARN
TAMZIN KERSLAKE
JANE MONAGHAN
ANTHONY PERRY-PORTSMOUTH
TAMSIN REEVE
TONY RICHARDSON
LUCINDA ROLFE





*The action takes place in August 1940 over 24 hours in and around
the grounds of Malaprop Hall, Fontwell, West Sussex.*


There will be one 20-minute interval

PRODUCTION TEAM

Directors	ROBIN CLARK & NATALIE JONES
Choreographer	ELKE DESANGHERE
Fight Director	EMMA CHRISTMAS
Set Designer	MIKE BELL
Stage Managers	DENYS MARTIN, JAN KOOL
Wardrobe	BERRY BUTLER, NIGEL KEMP PAULA RICHARDSON
Properties	CHRIS HEARN
Lighting Design	MARTIN SWAIN
Sound	JONATHAN MASH & IAN GRAYSON
Set Construction	PHIL WILLIAMS & MIKE BELL assisted by MIKE ALLEN, ROGER ASTLEY, JOHN KERR, PHIL RICHARDS, DICK WOODS
Set Painting	MARY GRIFFITHS, KEITH ORTON, MEGAN MUIR, ANGELIQUE PATNETT
Rehearsal Prompt PA	HELEN DUNFORD-HEARN, SALLY BOSMAN SALLY BOSMAN
Tour Manager	NIALL MONAGHAN
Poster/Programme Design	ROBIN CLARK

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whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

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of this production is a violation of United Kingdom copyright, Designs and
Patents Act 1988 and an actionable offence.





GAIL BISHOP Lydia Languish

Gail is thrilled to be playing terribly left-wing heiress Lydia alongside such a talented cast of friends. This is her 8th time performing at magical Minack; some of her favourite past roles have included Queen Catherine in *Nell Gwynn* and Jane Murdstone in *David Copperfield*. She's looking forward to directing *Quiz* by James Graham at the Miller Theatre for April 2027.



SALLY BOSMAN Ensemble

After appearing as Peggotty in the Miller Theatre's production of *David Copperfield* at the Minack in 2022, Sally couldn't resist the opportunity to step foot onto the Minack stage once again - even if in a very small way! She has enjoyed a bigger role in *Jack Absolute* though - as a member of the production team!



PETER BROWN Roy Faulkland

Peter has played many roles on and offstage at the Miller since he started with us in 2023. He has also played Macduff in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and most recently Bob in Hugh Whitmore's *Pack of Lies*. He's delighted to play Roy, though fears he might bring a little too much of himself to the role.



ELKE DESANGHERE Sampson / Ensemble / Choreographer

After learning a fight sequence as Banquo in *Macbeth* and a brief shimmy as Judy in *Home, I'm Darling*, Elke is excited to finally don the hat of choreographer for this production. High energy and big smiles are a given, but she wasn't quite expecting to be piloting a plane.



HELEN DUNFORD-HEARN Ensemble

This is Helen's sixth production at the Minack, all with the Miller Theatre Company, the most recent being in the ensemble of *David Copperfield* in 2022. Her absolute favourite was playing Nancy in *Nell Gwynn* in 2017, and it's great to return to this wonderful and unique place once more.



DIANE EBDEN Mrs Malaprop

Diane is delighted to be playing another delusional and deranged character (typecast?). Behind all the fun on stage, we honour the memory of all the brave, unsung, WWII heroes of the RAF who never came home.



CHRIS HANNIGAN Sir Anthony Absolute

Chris was last seen at the Miller as Dilwyn Knox in *Breaking the Code* and Canon Chasuble in last summer's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Other recent roles include Sir Robert Morton in *The Winslow Boy* and General Eisenhower in David Haig's *Pressure*. This production marks his debut at the Minack Theatre.



RICHARD HASLAM Brian Coventry

Richard returns to the Miller having previously performed in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. He is having a hoot playing Brian, a square peg looking for a round hole. Chocks away!



TAMZIN KERSLAKE Ensemble

Tamzin isn't great with words. Luckily, she's been told to keep this short. Like her. She's looking forward to spending the summer with some smashing comrades. Thanks for coming!



RAX LAKHANI Bikram 'Tony' Khattri

This Rax's debut with the Miller Theatre and at the Minack. He began his journey five years ago. He acts, writes, and directs, recently starring as Dame Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* pantomime, as well as Prince Feisal in *Lawrence After Arabia* and Mr. Dussel in *The Diary of Anne Frank*.



LAURA MACKIE Julia Melville

Laura would love to tell you about herself, however as everyone was given a limit of 30 words she will make do with telling you about the time she nearly...



JAMES MERCER Dudley Scunthorpe

James marks his 26th year in London theatre and his fifth Miller production. Recent roles include the Monster in *Frankenstein* and Bertie in *The King's Speech*. Enjoy the show!



JANE MONAGHAN Ensemble

Jane is delighted to have been given her joining up papers for the cast of *Jack Absolute Flies Again* and is looking forward to working alongside a fantastic team of cast and crew. She has had the privilege of being on the Minack Theatre stage a few times and has thoroughly enjoyed every second. She hopes that you enjoy the show.



ANTHONY PERRY-PORTSMOUTH Ensemble

This is Anthony's fourth show with the Miller Theatre, having previously played Donalbain/Murderer in *Macbeth*, Clive Morris in *Season's Greetings* and Toad in *The Wind In The Willows*.



TAMSIN REEVE Ensemble

Tamsin was last seen on stage at the Miller in 2017's *Arcadia*. She is pleased to be flying in the RAF formation and is thoroughly delighted to be dancing alongside the fabulously named Tamzin!



TONY RICARDSON Ensemble

This is the second time that Tony has had the opportunity to be on the unique stage, which is the Minack Theatre. Having recently directed Sheridan's *The Rivals*, the starting point for this production, he is excited to be part of this 1940's update.



JAY ROLFE Kingsmith / Ensemble

Jay is a regular at the Miller. Previous notable roles include King Charles II in *Nell Gwynn*, John Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility* and Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield*.



LUCINDA ROLFE Ensemble

Lucinda is looking forward to returning to the Minack for her second production with the Miller Theatre. A keen dancer, she has especially enjoyed the chance to learn a new dance style for this show.



ADAM STEVENS Jack Absolute

Adam has been performing amongst local drama groups for nearly 10 years having been introduced to the hobby by his wife (Julia), by whom he has been directed twice! Adam's previous credits include Alan Turing in *Breaking the Code*, Marcus in *Home, I'm Darling*, Scott in *The Girl on the Train*, Peter in *The Unfriend* and Richard Willey in *Out of Order*.



JULIA STEVENS Lucy

Julia's credits include Nancy (*Oliver!*), Lily St Regis (*Annie*), Ann (*Half a Sixpence*), Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*), Maria (*Twelfth Night*) and Anne (*The Father*). She also directs and produces in local theatre, and enjoys the chaos and camaraderie of making live theatre happen both on stage and behind the scenes.



ZIGGI SZAFANSKI Bob Acres

As a former Naval Officer, Ziggi has struggled to fully embrace the life of a Crab, although he has enjoyed perfecting his Aussie accent! Ziggi is delighted to be returning to the Minack, especially since his makeup routine is significantly shorter than when he was last here playing the Monster in 2024's Award Winning *Young Frankenstein!*



ABOUT THE...

MILLER THEATRE



The Miller Theatre is delighted to be making their eleventh appearance at the Minack Theatre having first performed here in 1994 with *Abelard & Heloise*. This was followed two years later by *The Fifteen Streets*, then *King Lear* in 1998, *Twelfth Night* in 2001, *Beauty and the Beast* in 2004, *Peer Gynt* in 2007, *The Lion in Winter* in 2011, *Far From the Madding Crowd* in 2014, *Nell Gwynn* in 2017, and most recently, *David Copperfield* in 2022.

The Miller Theatre is in Caterham, Surrey, about 20 miles south of London. We have exclusive use of a 186-seat professionally equipped, air conditioned theatre and we stage nine productions each season, ranging from farce to costume drama, musical to thriller. Each production runs for ten performances.

Our theatre is normally set for standard proscenium productions, but can be easily adapted for arena and in the round settings.

Our talented actors come from all walks of life and cover a range of acting ages, from teenager to octogenarian. All are amateurs, although many have skills indistinguishable from the professionals you might see on the London stage. Indeed, some have appeared professionally, but prefer the *joie de vivre* of the amateur world.

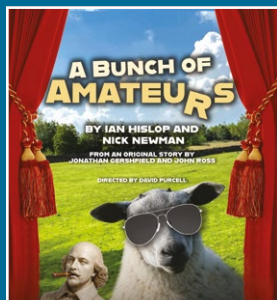
They are supported by an army of volunteers who direct and stage manage the productions, design and build our exceptional sets, source authentic props, design and operate often complex lighting and sound plots, run the Box Office, serve drinks at the bar... and carry out many, many more support activities.

Finally, we are very fortunate to sponsor a Youth Theatre, tomorrow's amateur – and sometimes professional – actors. They range in age from eight to eighteen and stage a full blown production in the theatre at the end of every season.

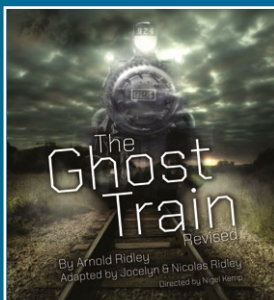
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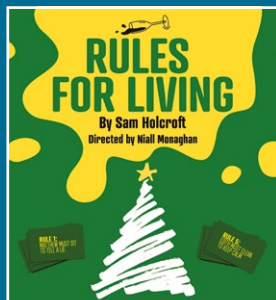
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17 – 26 SEPT 2026



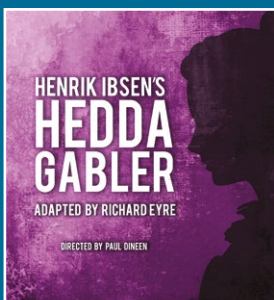
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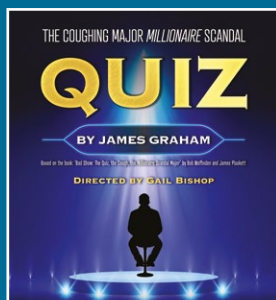
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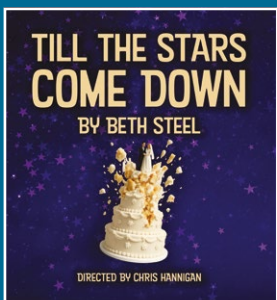
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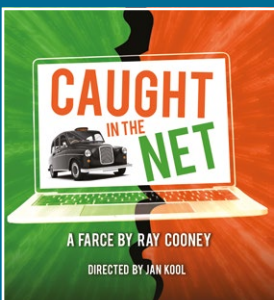
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