

# *Told by an Idiot*

## **Relaxed Performance Information Pack for**



## **The Strange Tale of Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel**

**Thursday 16th January 2020 at 3pm  
Wilton's Music Hall, London**

This pack is to help make your trip to the theatre easy and fun. It includes pictures and information about the venue and the show you are coming to watch.

This performance is relaxed, which means that we've made a few changes to the show to allow everyone to enjoy it and to feel comfortable.

# About Wilton's Music Hall

Wilton's Music Hall is down Graces Alley, just off Cable Street. There is a sign directing you towards the building.



This is what Wilton's Music Hall looks like from the outside. You will come into the foyer (inside area) through the double doors.





The foyer can get busy before the show. There are places where you can sit down if you arrive early.

The Box Office looks like this.



If you need to collect your tickets when you arrive, please queue here and someone will help you.

## Food and drink

There are two bars where you can buy drinks and light bites before the show starts. We are open from 1pm.

The ground floor Mahogany Bar looks like this:



The first floor Cocktail Bar looks like this:





## Toilets

The women's toilets are on the ground floor of the building and the men's toilets are on the first floor.

There are accessible toilets suitable for wheelchair users on the ground floor of the building.

Look out for these signs to help you find the toilets:



## Wilton's Staff

When you arrive at Wilton's Music Hall there will be ushers, who will answer any of your questions, help you find your way around and show you where to go to find your seats.

Wilton's staff are always happy to help and answer any questions. They wear black aprons and will be in the Foyer to greet you.

## Your ticket

**WILTON'S**  
MUSIC HALL  
Thu 16 Jan 20  
3:00PM  
The Strange Tale of Charlie Chaplin & Stan La  
19-NH-3N7M

**The Strange Tale of Charlie Chaplin**  
Thu 16 Jan 20 - 3:00PM Nathan Rumney  
Stalls  
Wilton's Guest  
19-NH-3N7M  
Wilton's Music Hall, Graces Alley, London E1 8JB  
Box Office 020 7702 2789 • wiltons.org.uk  
Registered Charity No. 1003041 • VAT No. 583681407

**Row: G**  
**Seat: 12**  
£0.00

**WILTON'S**

This is the row that you're in.

This is the seat that you're in.

## The Hall

The Hall is where you will sit while you watch *The Strange Tale of Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel*.

If you are sitting in the Stalls you enter from the ground floor and if you are sitting in the Balcony you enter from the first floor.

The Hall looks like this:



You will have time before the show starts to find your seats and get comfortable.

The stage will look like this:





## The Actors

This show is about Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel and the story is told by four actors:



**Amalia Vitale** plays Charlie Chaplin



**Jerone Marsh-Reid** plays Stan Laurel, as well as Bell Boy, Landlord, Doctor



**Nick Haverson** plays Fred Karno, Charlie Chaplin's Dad, Arthur the Stage Manager, a guest at the Savoy Hotel, Oliver Hardy, Charlie's Butler



**Sara Alexander** plays the piano all the way through the show and also plays Charlie Chaplin's mother (Hannah Chaplin)



## About the show

A member of Wilton's Music Hall staff will talk to the audience before the show starts to give you some more information about what will happen.

The show will start at 3pm and last for around 90 minutes.

The main lights in the auditorium will be on throughout the show. The lights on stage will change at different points in the show.

During the show there will be someone playing the piano and someone will also play the drums. If it is too loud, you can cover your ears, or wear your headphones.



**Nick Haverson on drums**



**Sara Alexander on the piano**

Everything in the show is pretend, the actors sometimes pretend to fight and fall over. They aren't really fighting and no one really gets hurt. Sometimes the actors will also walk up the aisle in the middle of the audience.

Here are two of the actors pretending to fight.



The rats in the show are just soft toys so no animals are hurt.

There are two times when people from the audience are invited onto the stage. If one of the actors asks you to join them on stage, you don't have to if you don't want to. The first time, Sara, who plays the piano, will show someone how to play two keys on the piano. The second time, Charlie Chaplin will pretend to swim with someone in the audience.

You can talk or make noise during the show.

There will be captions projected on to the red curtain all the way through the show. These will help to tell the story. These are included in the story below, you can find them wherever there is the word CAPTION.



Here is an example of a caption:



At the end of the show, the actors will come out on stage. After this the actors will bow. Many people will clap a lot so the actors know how much they liked the show.

After the show is over, everyone will leave the auditorium.

**If you want to read more detail about what happens in the show, the next section of this pack gives you a step by step guide.**

If you have any questions before you see the show, you can email [info@toldbyandidiot.org](mailto:info@toldbyandidiot.org) and someone will get back to you with answers.

**We hope you enjoy the show!**

# What happens in the show, step by step:

## Prologue

Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel are standing on the upper part of the set.

They jump, and we hear a splash

There is a spotlight on Fred Karno, who is playing the drums

Drumroll...

## The Departure

CAPTION: 1910 Fred Karno

CAPTION: The Producer

CAPTION: Sets sail with his troupe for New York

Fred Karno welcomes the rest of the cast on board the ship, they load up the luggage and the ship sets sail!

Charlie Chaplin climbs out from inside a suitcase, he then gets a tablecloth, knife and fork, candelabra, bottle of wine and roast chicken. He lays them all out and prepares to eat.

Karno sees him and takes everything from him, putting it back in his case and then leaves Charlie on stage. Charlie picks up his case and goes to leave.

## A Victorian Childhood

CAPTION: Charlie bids a fond farewell to England

Charlie turns to 'England' and gets very angry.

CAPTION: A Victorian Childhood

Charlies' mum leaves the piano and leads Charlie up to the upper platform.

They throw snow over themselves – it is cold.





Charlie and his mum sit and play ukulele together. The drums are played and the Landlord who comes knocking on the door with an eviction notice.

Mum tears the notice up and tells Charlie to start sweeping, whilst Mum sweeps and then starts to cry. Charlie plays the flute to cheer her up.



Charlie's mum dances and starts to sing. She goes into the audience and gets upset. Charlie tries to stop her, and she throws him back.

The drums are played loudly and the doctor arrives. Charlie tries to fight the Doctor, but the Doctor puts Mum in a straitjacket. The Doctor pushes Charlie down the trapdoor in the floor, and then the Doctor carries Mum off to the piano.

She immediately starts to play the piano and Charlie's Dad plays the drums and sings. Charlie appears from the trapdoor in the floor.

CAPTION: Dad?



Charlie's Dad is singing and drinking from a pint glass, a bucket and a bathtub! Charlie gets angry again and we're back on the boat.

CAPTION: Charlie bids a fond farewell to England

### **Stan Laurel's Arrival**

CAPTION: A late arrival

Stan Laurel appears on the upper platform, wearing a snorkel and with some starfish stuck inside his jacket. He throws the starfish into a bucket.

Stan climbs down into the boat and unpacks his case, which includes a fish and a pair of clogs. He has a fight with the fish and puts it in his mouth. He puts the fish on the piano.

Stan puts his case on the top bunk and climbs into the bottom bunk.

Charlie wakes up in the top bunk and throws his case out. This happens a few more times, before Charlie climbs out of the bunks altogether and sees who he is sharing with.

Charlie looks shocked.

CAPTION: One year earlier

CAPTION: The Understudy

Charlie is putting his make up on, when he hears Karno arriving by car.

Charlie goes to Karno's office and they have an argument about money.

Charlie says he quits and leaves. Karno panics.

CAPTION: Arthur! Arthur!

CAPTION: Meanwhile, at the top of the theatre

Stan Laurel is in his dressing room. He is putting his make up on.

Arthur the Stage Manager appears.

CAPTION: Righto, Mr Karno! I'll go up and get him!

Arthur the stage manager climbs up lots of stairs and gets Stan.

Stan goes back down the stairs and Arthur doesn't want to so he jumps out of the window.

Stan goes into Charlie's dressing room and prepares to go on stage.

Arthur the Stage Manager collects Stan from the dressing room, puts the Show Jacket on Stan and sends him on stage (behind the red curtain).

Charlie appears on the top platform. He looks angry.

Stan comes offstage, very pleased with himself. Charlie takes his jacket off Stan, puts it on and goes onstage to finish the show. Stan slowly walks back to his dressing room. Charlie comes off stage with flowers and goes back to his dressing room to remove his makeup.

We are back on the boat.



## **The Death of Stan**

CAPTION: Day 2: onboard the ship

Charlie is writing, Stan watches him.

CAPTION: Day 3

Charlie is reading, Stan watches him.

CAPTION: Day 4

Charlie is practising ukulele, Stan watches him.

Charlie comes down to the lower deck of the boat away from Stan and continues to play ukulele.

Charlie opens the curtain and Stan is cooking a fish in Charlie's bed.

Charlie tells him to leave, and blows the smell of fish away with his jacket.

CAPTION: Day 28

Charlie is asleep, Stan starts to cook another fish.

Stan offers Charlie some fish, and Charlie hits him over the head with it. Charlie hits him a few more times and kills him.

CAPTION: 1971 The Savoy, London

CAPTION: Charlie's Favourite hotel

A guest at the Savoy hotel enters.

The story goes back and forth several times between The Savoy Hotel and Charlie trying to get rid of Stan's body on the boat.

Charlie needs help with the body so he gets help from the pianist.

Now there is nobody to play the piano.

CAPTION: Is there a pianist in the house?

CAPTION: Anyone at all who plays the piano?

CAPTION: Did you learn at school?

CAPTION: Come on. There must be one.

CAPTION: Please?

A member of the audience comes up to play the piano, while Charlie and the pianist wrap up the dead body.

Charlie wraps Stan up in a sheet and he bangs his head on the stage. This isn't real, it's a fake body so no one gets hurt!

The seagull cries and falls to the ground.

Once the body is wrapped, the pianist goes back to the piano and Charlie carries the body off. We cut to the Savoy one final time. The guest is very angry and is complaining that there was no shower curtain and that there were rats in the hotel.

CAPTION: I'm off

The hotel guest leaves.

Back on the boat, Charlie throws the body over the edge of the boat into the sea. A drunk man sees him do it and waves.

The drunk man starts to sing.

CAPTION: Dad?

Dad is singing, dead Stan is playing the drums and Charlie doesn't like it and jumps into the sea. At the end of the song, Charlie wakes up in his bunk and Stan hands him a mug of tea. It was all a dream!

### **Rubbing Along**

Charlie is happy to see Stan alive, and they practise some comedy routines for their shows. Charlie sends Stan off to get some drinks.

Charlie spots a member of the audience he likes.

Charlie swims into the sea and invites the member of the audience out to dance with him.

They swim around in the sea together.

Charlie sits them back down in the audience and swims off.

### **Stan Bumps into his Destiny, Literally**

An actor enters and gets dressed up like Oliver Hardy in front of the audience.

CAPTION: Stan bumps into his destiny...

CAPTION: literally

Oliver Hardy plays golf, and Stan investigates.





Oliver Hardy hits Stan's tray of drinks, and they continue to slip, hit and knock each other over.

The Laurel and Hardy theme plays. The spotlight on Stan and Ollie gets smaller and they try to stay in it until it disappears.

### **Charlie's stage Debut**

Charlie's mum enters the theatre, with Charlie following her and playing the ukulele.

CAPTION: Charlie's stage debut

CAPTION: Aged 6

The stage manager goes to the dressing room and calls Mum and Charlie down to stage.

CAPTION: Ladies and Gentlemen! Put your hands together for Mrs Hannah Chaplin!

She begins to play.

CAPTION:   When he's up to Covent garden  
               You can see him standing all alone  
               Won't join in a quiet Tommy Dodd  
               Drinking scotch and soda on his own

She starts to cough and can't continue. The crowd starts to boo and throw vegetables.

Charlie sings with her to try to encourage her.

As he starts singing the booing stops. He gains confidence and sings out to the audience.

There are cheers and a soldier carries Charlie on his shoulder.

Charlie is left on the top platform. The cheers stop as he looks at his mother behind the piano.

Charlie starts to play the flute.  
He puts the flute down and jumps off the top platform.

### **The Reunion**

CAPTION: 1952 Beverly Hills California

Old Stan enters, carrying a large gift, wrapped.

CAPTION: The Reunion

Stan approaches the door and rings the doorbell 3 times.  
The Butler's head appears out of the trapdoor in the floor.

CAPTION: The Chaplin residence

CAPTION: I'm here to see Charlie

CAPTION: Who shall I say is calling?

CAPTION: Tell him it's Stan

CAPTION: Very well

Charlie is doing some exercises. The butler goes and tells Charlie that Stan is here, and lets Stan in.

Stan gives Charlie the gift, it is a photo of them from a long time ago.



Charlie thanks him.



They dance together, a mix of old fashioned clog dancing and modern hip hop.



They freeze, and a rewind track plays.

They do the same dance in reverse.

They freeze.

The pianist holds up a roll of projection reel, and cuts it three times

CAPTION: 5 minutes 3 seconds earlier

Stan is alone on stage. He rings the doorbell. Nobody answers.

### **The Birth of Charlie**

The drums start, and Mum and Charlie move into a strange position.

CAPTION: 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1889

CAPTION: The Birth of Charlie

Mum screams, there is red confetti thrown and Charlie comes out like a baby.



Charlie's bowler hat and cane comes out from under Mum's skirt.  
Charlie stands, puts the hat on, picks up the cane.  
Charlie does a little Tramp walk and exits.

### **The Death of Ollie**

CAPTION: 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1957

CAPTION: The Death of Ollie

Oliver Hardy pulls the curtain back on the beds. He takes the cushion out from under his Tshirt. He doesn't look very well.  
Stan enters with a small bag, and helps Ollie into the top bunk. It keeps going wrong but he gets Ollie into the bunk eventually.  
Stan takes 3 eggs out of the bag and juggles them, throwing them to Ollie.  
Stan leaves to get another gift.  
Ollie dies.  
Stan returns and slowly realises his friend is dead.  
He leaves the gifts in the bed with him and slowly draws the curtain.

### **The Chase**

CAPTION: The Photograph

Stan, Charlie and Fred Karno gather on board the boat for a photograph.  
Charlie stamps on Stan and Fred's toes when they try to get in front of him. He wants to be in the middle.  
They take the photograph.





Karno realises his money is gone from his pocket.

CAPTION: Where is my money?

CAPTION: I haven't got your money!

Charlie realises he accidentally took Karno's money.

There is a chase all over the boat.

As Charlie almost gets caught, he pulls out a director's megaphone.

CAPTION: Cut!

Charlie tells Stan and Karno what to do, like he's directing a film.

CAPTION: Action!

Stan throws the money to Charlie. Charlie throws the money to Karno.

Karno accidentally throws it overboard.

Stan throws the life ring to it.

They all look out to the audience.

### **New York...at last**

CAPTION: New York

Everyone runs to pack up their things and ready to get off the boat.

The gangplank arrives on board again.

Karno gives a flower to the pianist and leaves.

Stan and Charlie have finished packing and look out to the city.

Stan has forgotten his hat and goes back to the bunk.

Charlie shouts out to New York.

CAPTION: America! I'm coming to conquer you!

Charlie leaves the boat.

Stan comes back from the bunk, picks up his case and leaves.

The pianist notices they forgot something and stops playing.

Eric Clapton playing Smile begins to play.

She looks at the old photograph.

CAPTION: Projection of real photograph of Fred Karno's Company



The pianist leaves.

CAPTION: Karno's Company 1910

CAPTION: Within 3 years Chaplin would become the most famous man in the world

CAPTION: Laurel, with Hardy, would form the greatest comedy duo of all time