**Only Fools and Horses – the Musical.**

Saturday 24th May 2025

2:30pm performance at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth.

Audio description notes for Act 1 by W.S.

Welcome to the Theatre Royal, Plymouth and this afternoon’s touring performance of “**Only Fools and Horses- the Musical”** brought to you by Phil McIntyre Live Ltd. Acts 1 and 2 run for approximately 62 minutes each.

My name is Wendy and I shall audio describe Act 1 for you. There will be a 20 minute Interval, during which my colleague Pauline will read her notes for Act 2 then continue with the performance.

 The show is lively and quite loud with its own band of 5 fantastic musicians and a large amazingly versatile cast of ensemble actors, often playing several roles whilst also dancing, singing AND moving the furniture and set ! The show is very warm and funny- it brilliantly conjures up run-down, working class parts of Peckham in South East London in 1989, during the Thatcher era before it became Yuppy-fied !

 The show contains flashing lights, with mild swearing, adult humour and some violence but is deemed to be suitable for those aged 8 and above.

 “Only Fools and Horses- the Musical” opened in the West End in 2019 and had a smash hit run, charming old fans of the TV series and newcomers alike. It was written by John Sullivan’s son Jim and the comedian and actor Paul Whitehouse- they had the unenviable task of condensing 7 massively popular television series and many “ specials” into a 2 hour musical. They have cleverly extracted many well-loved scenes and alluded to many more, joining everything together with new songs and some old favourites. The actors faced the problem of whether to imitate or re-interpret the original group of detailed characters whilst the costume and set designers ( Liz Ascroft and Alice Power ) had to emulate and realise the many venues and settings so recognisable from the TV series on a range of stages of limited size.

The stage set is extremely detailed and very cleverly designed – as the show opens most of the stage is in darkness. On the left and right of the stage, leading back at an angle from the proscenium arch are 2 sections of sooty red brick tenement blocks- some have their net-curtained windows lit from inside. The ground floor flats are set back to allow for brick pillars and a semi covered, lit walkway- there are also lights above the dark green front doors. In the centre of the stage is a huge backdrop where images change depending on the venue- we open on a scene depicting The Nag’s Head pub, Del Boy’s local. This is a heavy, grimy, detached Victorian stone building with large sash windows and a black sign with gold lettering, all set against the streaky night sky. To the left is a partial view of an industrial estate with chimneys and other buildings with the silhouettes of large trees behind. On the right are 2 Brutalist brick and glass tower blocks just like Nelson Mandela House where the Trotter family live.

 The centre of the stage has 2 large pieces of detailed set that can quickly revolve to form a variety of interiors. When the show opens we see the market on the left of a set of double wooden doors with the exterior of the pub behind. This is a single storey black building with 2 sash windows on the right. The large yellowing panes have ALES & STOUTS etched on them.

Act 1 begins as the market comes to life and we gradually meet most of the ensemble cast. There are 2 large wooden barrows on wheels set in a reversed L shape- boxes of apples, oranges and grapes are laid out with plastic carrier bags and hands of bananas hanging down. There are also piles of metal pots and pans. Several traders, dressed casually in jeans, jumpers or sweatshirts and woolly hats against the cold, stand around chatting and waiting for customers. The Trotters are classed as unlicensed “fly” traders in that they set up where ever they can, selling their dubious wares from a suitcase and several cardboard boxes. Del and Rodney have a selection of tat including some decidedly wonky gold Eiffel Tower statues and a soggy box of old LPs.

 To complete the scene there is an upright pub piano on the far left, 2 sack trolleys ( one of them morphs into an armchair later ) in the centre and several large metal beer barrels over on the right.

 **Derek “Del Boy” Trotter** replete in his uniform of a sheepskin coat, red shirt, black trousers, braces and flat tweed cap bursts onto the stage. He is played to a T by Sam Lupton- right down to the slicked back, black hair, cheap, chunky gold jewellery, the mannerisms and catch phrases and the pompous swaggering. **Rodney or Rodders (** played by newcomer Tom Major )- is doing all the work-obviously ! He is thin, tall and gangly with short brown hair and an awkward, nervous, self-conscious stoop. He wears pale trousers, walking boots and a red plaid jacket over a logoed T shirt.

We also meet **Trigger** played by Lee VG, the slow, unsmiling road sweeper, dressed for work in a brown cotton warehouse coat and carrying his trusty 20 year old broom ! **Mickey Pearce** the local spiv and small-time thief, lurks in the background dressed in a dark suit and pork pie hat with a silver band. **Boycie** the pompous 2nd hand car dealer appears, dressed smartly in his customary shiny black shoes, sand coloured trousers and camel coat over a navy double breasted blazer with a shirt and tie. Boycie has a thick black moustache and slicked back hair – the actor Craig Berry really captures his loud braying laugh and patronising wannabe Yuppy mannerisms.

We also meet the gullible **Denzil**-a tall black lorry driver with a pronounced Scouse accent. He is dressed casually in jeans, a padded jacket and a colourful crocheted beanie hat. **Doris**, the Trotters’ downstairs neighbour is elderly, stooped and pulls a shopping trolley. She wears a dark patterned dress, fleecy boots and a brown, moth-eaten short fur coat. She has her hair tucked into a 1940s style rolled scarf and wears large framed glasses. Doris who loves a good sing-song and an old-fashioned knees up often lurks in the background in the pub until closing time.

The next major set is the Trotters’ home in Nelson Mandela House, one of the high rise blocks of flats. Inside, the decor it an assault on the eyes - with beige, cream and brown geometric patterned wallpaper and truly hideous dark brown curtains with a repeat pattern of massive orange and yellow flowers. On the left as you enter the flat, is a small wooden cupboard next to a green magazine rack. Above are some laden coat pegs and an ornate silver mirror. In the centre is a set of dark wooden doors surrounded by bottle green vitreous tiles. Over on the far right is a curved cream coloured cocktail bar with a glass shelf showing 2 white china dogs and several bottles of spirits . A naff biscuit barrel with a gurning face, houses cheap cigars and sits on the top. In the middle of this front room are 2 low, mismatched armchairs- they are turned towards us to face a small unseen television set. **Grandad** – the 3rd Trotter –in his late 70s with grey hair, bristly chin and moustache- slumps in one of the saggy old chairs with the TV and a wooden box containing all his treasures in his lap. His clothes are in various shades of beige and grey- from his battered slippers, crumpled trousers, none-too-clean pyjama top, old woolly cardi and neckerchief to his rakish old trilby.

 The other main setting is the inside of the pub. The central set swings round to reveal a wooden bar facing us, complete with a counter, shelves of bottles, glasses and optics behind and bar stools in front over on the left. The bar also has a wooden flap on the right hand side to close it off to the punters – very important in a legendary scene with Del in the TV series and used to great effect to tease us here ! The central double doors are flanked on the right by a bench and a table that run along the back wall in front of the curtained etched window that has a top panel of yellow and orange small glass squares. There are also chairs and a table in the centre of the bar- Grandad holds court here during several lively ensemble songs, discussions and revelations.

Rodney and Del often bicker and fall out. Rodney is due to marry Cassandra- he needs £2,000 as his share of a down payment on a flat so that he can finally leave home and lead his own life. **Cassandra** is tall, slender and upwardly mobile- she has a shoulder length blonde bob , works in a bank and wears boring, neat beige clothes such as a business-like A line skirt ,a simple blouse and camel coat with court shoes and a handbag. Rodney is taking Cassandra to a performance of “Phantom of the Opera” and several in-jokes and projected images on the backdrop, about chandeliers, follow.

 Nicola Munns plays both Cassandra and Marlene, Boycie’s wife who we meet later in the pub. The long-suffering rather shrill **Marlene**, wears a leopard print dress with 80s style shoulder pads and a matching peplum, lots of chunky gold jewellery and white stilettos. She has a fake tan and a shoulder-length poodle perm- the picture of a wannabe–Yuppy, like her husband Boycie. Del Boy has sold them some dodgy mobile phones ( then the size of a house brick- and just as useless ! )

Whilst in the pub one night, the regulars mention the recent exploits of the local villains and hard men, the Driscoll brothers. Trigger appears dressed in an awful multicoloured shirt and knitted waistcoat, carrying a bunch of flowers ready for a “ blind” date. Later Del Boy, after an unusual bout of melancholy decides to join the same dating agency. The scene shifts swiftly to the local office of “ Technomatch”- conveyed by a large neon pink sign on the backdrop and a simple office desk , phone and 2 chairs. A rotund, rather sleazy dating agent interviews Del who is deliberately economical with the truth.

The rest of Act 1 deals with the outcome of this meeting as Del meets Raquel under the clock at Waterloo station ( an image projected onto the backdrop ), a hopeful actress and singer for a date. **Raquel** has glossy, wavy shoulder length dark hair, an ample figure and a winning personality- she is smartly dressed in a grey and cream herringbone coat over a black dress. Del is very smart in a dark suit with lashings of aftershave- he is full of charm as his alter ego Derek Duval, “casting agent to the stars” . A touching and funny scene involving a wine bottle and the cork plus lots of Del’s Franglais phrases in a supposedly Italian restaurant, ensues.

Del later meets the **Driscoll brothers**  after a secret phone call. Danny Driscoll is tall, deep voiced and rather scary with hard- boiled staring eyes and a shaven head- he looks like an undertaker in a very smart, dark 3 piece suit, watch chain and Crombie overcoat. He is having an existential crisis- unlike his younger punchier, shorter, similarly immaculately dressed brother Tony who loves his job as a feared local mobster and is spoiling for a fight !

Act 1 ends with Danny handing Del a thick brown envelope on the sly, as the ensemble cast break into a rousing rendition of Bill Wither’s cheerful song “ A lovely day”. Del is on the up- hope is in the air- and “This time next year we could be millionaires !”

Act 2

Hello and welcome back to the Phil Mc Intyre Live Ltd  musical based on the television series, **Only Fools and Horses** where several hilarious  popular episodes have been condensed  into the show for your enjoyment.

My name is Pauline, your describer for this Act.

The scenery will remain the same with the addition of  relevant props  and  the  side sets  will revolve   to take us to Nelson Mandela House , Sid’s Cafe  or the Nags Head.

We left Del boy negotiating with Raquel and discussing her  burgeoning career with the possible  help of a loan from the Driscolls.

This Act will have 11 scenes interspersed with  approximately 10   songs and will  run for 62 minutes  commencing with the  wedding preparations  for Rodney and Cassandra at the Wedding fitters.

Vast  rich blue cloths  are draped from ceiling to floor across the scenery  with a central exit. A  projection of a large chandelier  suspended from an ornate ceiling arch and a blue starry sky is visible. Two chairs are central, cluttered  with wedding accessories and a folding screen is on the right, also  adorned with a wedding dress and veils. The smartly dressed  wedding Fitter sings **Marriage and Love.**

Rodney, in a t shirt under a  checked shirt, under a parka, over jeans and boots is uncomfortable on a chair and Cassandra in her mac  is excited.  She moves to the screen and reappears in  silk  cami knickers to join in the song  before donning a beautiful  simple full length  sleeveless wedding  dress.

The cloths are whisked away and we move to Sid’s cafe, a greasy Spoon establishment  where there is a smoky atmosphere; a few tables and chairs  are occupied by labourers, market traders etc. Sid, a  well fed greasy and stained owner stands at the counter with a roll up hanging from his lips. His   wares are advertised on fluorescent stars above the curtained  counter,Pie and Mash £1.40, Full breakfast £1.75, egg and chips £1.50, Tea 15p Toast 10p and a roughly written blackboard  advertises the regular meals.  if  only.  Del, wearing smart trousers and shirt with his crombie hanging  on his shoulders,  arrives to join a relieved Raquel who is wearing a blouse and skirt and sitting at a table .The group dance to **West End Wendy** before we move to Nelson Mandela House.

 It is   the evening and Trigger is just leaving Grandad and  Rodney.  Del comes in  to join them dressed in a  short fancy  japanese style  black dressing gown and red socks with sock suspenders.  He removes it to reveal  a white vest and speedo style leopard print  underpants, before dressing in a white shirt, pale blue v neck sweater and jeans. He teases Rodney who leaves to find Cassandra and she stands on the right singing **What have I let myself in for,** dressed in a turquoise smart knee length dress  whilst  suited Rodney is standing on the left smoking a cigarette.

The Nags Head is the next port of call where the family are with  Boycie, Trigger, Denzil and Mickey Pearce and Marlene joins them

Trigger in a smart light blue suit, sporting a medal on his lapel is sitting next to Grandad. He explains the medal to all  including   Marlene  in her leopard print two piece and Boycie in his obligatory camel crombie. They listen to  Trigger talking about the future with the help of a large illuminated crystal ball and he sings **Gaze Into My Ball.**

 The atmosphere quietens as a uniformed blonde policewoman comes in to confront Rodney and she is revealed as a stripogram but no ordinary one as Del discovers.

We move to the market where the traders sing **Only Fools,** before we  go inside Nelson Mandela House to allow Del to put on his  leather bomber jacket and flat cap to go back outside to his yellow battered  three wheeler and start trading.The Driscoll brothers find him but Del escapes a beating and the ailing van is pushed off by Trigger and Denzil.

We move to the Fertility  Clinic with two large blue signs above the wall  pointing inward. There is green wallpaper and   a curtained window with a bench below it. A  sloping rack  of leaflets stands on the left. Marlene is in a soft green waisted  dress and Boycie is in a belted mac, trilby and dark glasses, trying hard not to be recognised.  They are waiting to be seen by the specialist. He sings**The Tadpole Song** which is  accompanied by the image of a sole tadpole on the back screen and exploding tadpoles and  fireworks.

Back at the Nags Head and it is the Wedding Day,   the simple one layer cake is on the bar with two tiny figures on the top. Trigger is briefly  with  Rodney and Grandad presents Rodney with a present and explains its history,  before Del and Rodney leave for the church.

Back in the Nags Head and the reception has been in full swing for some time, Del is dishevelled and the rest of the guests drift away to leave Del and Rodney before Trigger announces the car   has arrived. Del is alone, but the Driscolls arrive. Doris sings **Holding Back The Years.**

Raquel is at Waterloo station with her suitcase, hoping Del will stop her but he is in a metal  hospital bed under a blue blanket.  A blue sign above the wall says Intensive Care Unit and Geriatric Ward.  Grandad in a wheel chair comes to his bedside and   he  has an unexpected visitor after Grandad leaves.

Rodney is in Italy on his honeymoon with the colourful  hillside town visible behind him. He has a  worrying phone call from an older  family member.

Back at the Nags Head and there is a lively party atmosphere, and  recovered Rodney joins them all to prepare for the Jolly Boys Outing the next day. Del and Raquel are embracing and Boycie and Marlene have some news. **Margate** is sung by all and there is  dancing and singing and  we hear the title song **Only Fools and Horses**  before  the  whole company take a bow.

The End.

 The next Audio described performance is Quadrophenia on Saturday  May 31st  @ 2 p.m. with a touch tour at 1 p.m.

Then little Women on Saturday June 21st @ 2.30p.m. with a touch tour @ 1.30p.m. A  captioned performance  for the deaf will be on Thursday June 19th @ 7.30p.m.