

MISS LINDSAY'S SECRET :

General marketing copy - Different word count options

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Come in. Shut the door. Open the Box. What's inside? 'An outstanding and heartbreakingly beautiful play' (Jenny Gilruth, Scottish Culture Minister 2021) A museum curator finds hidden letters binding Glenesk to Canada's Klondike goldrush. But should she tell their intimate secrets? A true tale of sewing and 1900's sexting, revealed by The Curator, The Musician and The Man. Four and five star reviews. 'Powerful' (Broadway Baby), 'Adelight' (British Theatre Guide), 'Confidently sweeps us away' (Wee Review)

Come in. Shut the door. Open the Box. What's inside? 'An outstanding and heartbreakingly beautiful play' (@JennyGilruth, Scottish Culture Minister 2021) A museum curator finds hidden letters binding Glenesk to Canada's Klondike goldrush. But should she tell their intimate secrets? A true tale of sewing and 1900's sexting, revealed by The Curator, Musician and Man - Maria MacDonell, Georgina MacDonell Finlayson, Alan Finlayson. Original live music and letters bring the past to the present, Scotland to the world. Four and five star reviews: 'Powerful' (Broadway Baby), 'Adelight' (British Theatre Guide), 'Confidently sweeps us away' (Wee Review)

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A curator has found, in her museum, a hidden box of letters, from a young Scotsman, Alexander Middleton, gone to the Klondike Goldrush. He writes to his childhood sweetheart, Minnie Lindsay, a seamstress, left behind in their glen in the early 1900s. As The Curator explains, this is a true story from The Glenesk Folk Museum, Angus. She decides to reveal the letters' content and, in doing so, leads the audience into parallel worlds of a close-knit early 20th century glen community and the heady yearnings of Canada's famous goldrush; But this is no ordinary history talk and the letters have an uncanny power. There are consequences in engaging with them too deeply.

Miss Lindsay's Secret tells a universal story of friendship, love and separation. In this time of invaded privacy, it questions the morality of reading private mail and turning it into a play. This moving story is evocatively told through an ebb and flow of music, drama and the original letters used verbatim. The cast of The Curator, The Musician and The Man conjure an

onstage alchemy in which the unknown story of long ago lovers becomes a quietly powerful allegory of global forces continuing to shape our lives and identity. Miss Lindsay's Secret brings the past to the present, Scotland to the world, shining a light on Scotland's diaspora and the things that bind us to home.

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TARGET AUDIENCE: 12+ interested in love stories, theatre, true life, travel, history, women's lives, museums, live music and Scotland. Responses include 'Spellbinding' 'Witty' 'Poignant' 'A tour de force' 'I was so moved I could hardly speak afterwards'. 'Superb performance and writing. Beautiful music' 'Witty, poignant, funny and sad' 'A great central performance & a wonderful sense of place. A Fringe highlight.' 'Faultless'. 'In one word- outstanding'.

On Tour 2022 selection of written audience comments

'Just as memorable as the first time I saw it'

'The writing and performance is outstanding, you remain gripped and curious and deeply moved. I give it five stars' (Kendal. Third time travelling to Scotland to see it)

'Excellent - well worth seeing'

'Amazing performance' 'Haunting and poetic'

'Just brilliant. I want to see it again' (from Illinois)

'Special and touching' 'Beautiful music. It seemed to seep into the words and letters themselves and created the most haunting atmosphere'.

'I loved how you brought this touching ache of a story to life for us tonight. And so vividly. Your quality of performance was delightful, deep, respectful, connecting with your audience and always present'

'It was a wonderful show, held my attention. Excellent.' West Sussex to Scotland

'Fantastic production - worth the trip from Queensland Australia'

'Worth coming out in the rain to see this production. Held spellbound'

'Wonderfully woven. Such a perfect human piece. Thank you'

'Spellbinding. Thank you so much. Loved it all. Musician so talented'

'What a journey - fascinating human story so beautifully told, to perfect musical accompaniment. Thank you so much.'

'Loved it' 'Truly touching performance'

'Thanks so much for this story and performance. I found it very moving because I worked in the Yukon for a year. I remember the cold and solitude and bravado and sometimes wonderment and stars and the aurora borealis. And I missed my family and a home and day dreamed crazily about a mythic girlfriend... I remember many men hiding in their cabins. I've been back there this evening. Great touching story'

'So beautifully unfolding' 'Haunting' 'Poignant and beautiful' 'Special' 'Excellent. Riveting'
'I loved this and became entirely engrossed' 'So touching and intimate'
'Bring it to Suffolk' 'What a super performance- Music, language, emotion . Thank you '
' The last time we were at the theatre it was The National. Guess which performance we
enjoyed more' tweet. (Cambridge to Portgordon especially to see show)
Facebook Sept 30th 'I saw it at Fringe and I think about it all the time still' 'Faultless! A
brilliant combination of acting, music, soundtrack.' 'What an inspirational, mesmerising
delight. Thankyou for weaving your magic and bringing this story to life'. 'Brought me to
tears and I am still crying'. 'An exquisite story of longing'. 'Absolutely engrossing. Goes
beyond expectation'. 'A fine story beautifully told. I agree utterly engrossing'. 'Enthralling
and emotional. Very well done. I really got into the story. Very moving' 'Very well done
working on different levels and coming together so effectively'. 'A remarkable insight into
this intriguing and very personal story'. 'Really enjoyed the performance and the
combination of music, dance and spoken word' 'Fantastic. What a lovely story and so
cleverly told'. 'Just wonderful. Thank you' (south Australia) 'Very comforting to know that
long distance communication has always had the potential to mean so much- a play worth
seeing for the Covid generation of young people' 'A very captivating play. You felt as though
you were there in the Klondike or with Miss Lindsay on her bicycle. Fiddle playing fantastic.'
'Thank you. I was away with the story- magical'. 'Wonderful I was totally absorbed in the
story' 'Magical show. Really enjoyed. Took me back to my days in Dawson and the
Klondike'. 'Lovely moving performance. A dream like experience. Thank you. I didn't want
to wake up'

Visual assets continue to next page

MISS LINDSAY'S SECRET - VISUAL ASSETS:

All albums available on Flickr

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/143343313@N06/albums>

***Images :**

Stills from performances/ portraits/illustrations made during live performance/ square image with strapline

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/143343313@N06/albums/72157720203936115>

***3 minute promo:**

<https://vimeo.com/647346598>

***Short film (16 min): Miss Lindsay's Love in Lockdown**

16 minute film shot in Glenesk during Lockdown in true locations of story. Explores themes from, and sets the scene for, the play.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyC1glYlg94>

publicity pics for film

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/143343313@N06/albums/72177720299078117>

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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/143343313@N06/albums/72177720299522044>

***Glenesk Folk Museum www.gleneskfolkmuseum.org**

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Sample draft Press Release :

MISS LINDSAY'S SECRET IS REVEALED AT

Miss Lindsay's Secret is coming to aton.....hot with audience and critical acclaim.

'We have had seven four and five star reviews, sell out shows and such enthusiastic audience responses' says writer and performer Maria MacDonell.' It is amazing how this play touches people in so many ways. We are delighted to bring Miss Lindsay's Secret to

Have you read private letters or diaries that were never for your eyes? What did you do?

Miss Lindsay's Secret is a story of love, legacy, landscape and secret letters found in the Glenesk Folk Museum, Angus. This moving and lively play takes audiences from the gentle Angus hills to Canada's heady Klondike Goldrush, in the company of The Curator, The Musician and The Man - Maria MacDonell, Georgina MacDonell Finlayson and Alan Finlayson. And it explores The Curator's deep dilemma in finding, revealing and becoming too involved in this intimate tale of a Scottish seamstress. Do the dead have a voice? Does Miss Lindsay have a choice in having her story told?

Minnie Lindsay was a well known Glenesk figure. But her story was not known and has indeed remained concealed until revealed in this acclaimed theatre piece to packed audiences. 'I was captivated by the detail and drama', 'absolutely stupendous', 'honest' and 'beautiful' 'A Fringe highlight' 'an absolute treat', 'amazing music' 'I was blown away', 'Faultless' are amongst the audience comments at Edinburgh Fringe and on tour.

'The story takes us from the Angus glens to the great wildernesses of Yukon Territory in Northern Canada during the Klondike goldrush' says writer and performer MacDonell who also volunteers at the Glenesk Folk Museum where the letters were found. 'Both areas experienced permanent change as a result'.

'Although it is a local story specific to Glenesk at the turn of the twentieth century', she says 'it also touches on themes which matter to everyone now, wherever they are. Personal tales like this will soon be hard to preserve, as we don't seem to write letters anymore. With all we are going through at the moment, life stories matter more than ever.'

As an introduction, people can watch *Miss Lindsay's Love in Lockdown*, a sixteen minute film made by the cast last year, touching upon elements of the play. It was shot in the story's real Glenesk locations, evoked in Miss Lindsay's secret, and is available to watch on the North East Arts Touring (NEAT) website www.neatshows.org and on Youtube

Miss Lindsay's Secret has grown out of the performers' shared knowledge and love of Glenesk. It is written and performed by actor Maria MacDonell, with music composed and performed by Georgina MacDonell Finlayson, with actor Alan Finlayson and costume and props by costume artist Molly MacDonell Finlayson.

The show is suitable for adults and young people aged 12+ and lasts seventy minutes The cast can also offer a fascinating question and answer session, a live music performance and further readings of letters, revealing stories not in the show.' It seems to raise many questions and move many hearts', says MacDonell. 'This is a story of stories'

MISS LINDSAY'S SECRET - Museum Curator becomes lost in story she tells. This is for sending to your local museum/ heritage centre.

A museum curator finds a secret box of love letters, long concealed from prying eyes. She cannot resist revealing their contents and embarks on giving a talk. But she becomes lost in the story she tells and this has consequences.

This is not uncommon. Just as a novelist might find their characters living alongside them, so an historian can discover their research subjects are tantalisingly present.

Miss Lindsay's Secret is an exciting example of what museums can do with their trove of stories. This play has emerged from the remarkable collection at the Glenesk Folk Museum founded in 1955 by Greta Michie in an Angus glen, North East Scotland.

Miss Lindsay's Secret is intriguingly presented by The Curator, The Musician and The Man, nameless characters who weave and thread a true love story held within fifty five intimate letters, discovered, almost twenty years ago, in a box wedged behind an old display cabinet in the Glenesk Folk Museum where the play is set.

The letters are from Alexander Middleton, a young man who left his Glenesk home in 1902 to join Canada's Klondike goldrush. They represent only one side of a remarkable correspondence with his childhood sweetheart, Williamina Lindsay, Minnie, the glen seamstress. Her letters to him have not been found.

'I did not want to create a period drama in which I invented historic speech' explains writer and performer Maria MacDonell who has volunteered at the museum for almost 30 years. 'It was very important to me that the letters should keep their own voice, that Alex should speak for himself. I have used his words verbatim. I did not want to invent words for Minnie. She is so alive in Alex's letters to her. I have used the archive without changing it. I wanted the past to live in the present in its own way. This is my experience of historical research. It is very easy for historians to slip into the present tense when they are talking about the past. In our story The Curator engages with the material just a little too deeply and becomes lost in it.'

'I was one of the first people to read the letters almost twenty years ago. I have read them frequently since then. Every time they make the hair stand up on the back of my neck. Here is a young man speaking directly and very privately from the past- to me perhaps?'

The play was written in Glenesk and rehearsed at The Glenesk Folk Museum which was created in response to the depopulation of the Angus glens of which this story is a part. Fascinatingly, it holds over a thousand objects belonging to Minnie Lindsay, recipient of the letters. Every object is connected to others in the museum and to stories reaching out across the world. Minnie Lindsay's own story is just one of many.

'I would like to imagine Greta Michie, being pleased with our play' says MacDonell, 'She was the visionary founder of Glenesk Folk Museum, inspired by living history displays she had seen in Scandinavia in 1929. However, I do also think it was she who hid the letters'. Miss Lindsay's Secret has won critical acclaim at Edinburgh Fringe and is now on tour in Scotland and England. 'The play touches so many people in different ways, says MacDonell. 'People of all ages want to share their own experiences and very many are keen to take up letter writing. Historians, museum curators, researchers are enthralled by this way of releasing a story from a museum. It is so exciting that our

play is encouraging both conversation and museum visits. It is a perfect prompt for people to explore the power of objects to tell stories and of archives to be heard'.

In a way, MacDonell has her own personal museum around her on stage. The set is made up of furniture and objects from her parents' family home which she cleared just before writing Miss Lindsay's Secret.

Miss Lindsay's Secret seems to stay with people a long time, not least the audience member who saw it in August 2020 and eight months later found herself on holiday in Glenesk. The museum was closed due to Lockdown, but volunteers let her in. When she realised she was in the very home of Miss Lindsay's Secret she was delighted to be shown the letters. The box was opened for her and she burst into tears.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Images of Miss Lindsay's Secret, Glenesk landscape, Glenesk Folk Museum

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/143343313@N06/albums>

Please watch **Miss Lindsay's Love in Lockdown** on youtube. This sixteen minute film was made in Glenesk and in the **Glenesk Folk Museum** in July 2020. It is a short drama exploring themes and moods from the play.

For further information please contact

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