

Thursday 20 June 2019

CELEBRATING DAVID BINTLEY'S FINAL SEASON AS DIRECTOR OF BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

HOBSON'S CHOICE

Choreography David Bintley; **Music** Paul Reade;**Designs** Hayden Griffin; **Lighting** John B. Read**Henry Hobson** Jonathan Payn**Maggie Hobson** Samara Downs
*his eldest daughter***Vickey Hobson** Laura Purkiss
*Hobson's youngest daughter***Fred Beenstock** Mathias Dingman
*son of a local corn merchant***Albert Prosser** Rory Mackay
*a young lawyer***Alice Hobson** Delia Mathews
*Hobson's middle daughter***Mrs Hepworth** Yijing Zhang
*Hobson's wealthiest customer***Will Mossop** Lachlan Monaghan
*Hobson's boot hand***Salvation Army** Arancha Baselga, Momoko Hirata, Maureya Lebowitz
Yasuo Atsuji, Tzu-Chao Chou, Tyrone Singleton**Jim Heeler** Kit Holder**Sam Minns** James Barton**Mr Tudsbury** Tom Rogers
*drinking companions of Hobson***Dr Macfarlane** Miles Gilliver**Coachmen, creditors, cricketers,** Artists of Birmingham Royal Ballet
nurses, park-keepers, women*Children are members of Birmingham Royal Ballet's Dance Track programme*

ROYAL BALLET SINFONIA

Conductor Jonathan Lo; Leader Robert Gibbs

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

Act I 34 minutes; *Interval* 20 minutes;*Act II* 28 minutes; *Interval* 20 minutes;*Act III* 42 minutes; the performance will end at approximately 10pm

THE STORY

ACT I

Scene 1: Henry Hobson's boot shop

Henry Hobson, an inveterate drinker, is the proprietor of a successful boot shop. His younger daughters are Alice and Vickey. Alice is being courted by a young lawyer, the well-to-do Albert Prosser, and Vickey by Fred Beenstock, son of a local corn merchant. However, Hobson refuses to agree to give them in marriage as they are essential for his creature comforts and also provide him with cheap labour in his shop. It is his eldest daughter Maggie who is Hobson's greatest asset, though: she is a seemingly hard-headed and unsentimental woman of 30 and is considered an old maid by her father – who laughs out loud at Maggie's suggestion that she too may wish to marry some day.

Mrs Hepworth, Hobson's wealthiest patron, visits the shop and inquires about some shoes she has purchased. Hobson's boot hand, Will Mossop, admits to the workmanship and Mrs Hepworth praises him, declaring that no-one but he shall make her shoes. Quick to see her main chance, Maggie later proposes to the astonished Will. He protests that he is only a boot hand and she is the Master's daughter; but Maggie brushes aside his objections and says what a good working partnership they will make.

ACT II

Scene 1: Peel Park, Sunday afternoon

Maggie and Will, walking out together, are seen by Alice and Vickey, who are appalled to be thus linked to a common boot hand. They resolve to tell their father what is going on.

Scene 2: The shop, Monday morning

Hobson, having learnt of Maggie's intentions, threatens 'to beat the love out of Will Mossop' with his belt, whereupon the unlikely couple leave the shop. They borrow £100 from Mrs Hepworth to set up a business on their own. Three weeks later, Hobson, dead drunk, accidentally falls down the cellar trap into Beenstock's corn warehouse.

HOBSON'S CHOICE SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

Don't miss out on the *Hobson's Choice* souvenir programme, celebrating David Bintley's final season as Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet. As well as the usual beautiful photography and interesting articles, the programme features moving tributes to David.

Available in the foyer for just £5.

ACT III

Scene 1: Beenstock's corn warehouse, morning

Hobson emerges from the trap and, at Maggie's instigation, Fred and Albert serve Hobson a writ for trespass and damages.

Scene 2: Mossop's boot shop, Oldfield Road

Mossop's shop is a dingy cellar, but the business has already met with some success. Will and Maggie are happy returning from their wedding. Alice and Vickey, with their sweethearts, are reluctantly present. When their father arrives they hide.

Hobson asks Maggie's advice about the writ: he foresees financial ruin and the defamation of his 'good name'. Maggie summons the couples out of hiding. She tells Hobson that if he allows his daughters to marry, the charges against him will all be dropped. Hobson storms out, but his compliance is evident.

Scene 3: Hobson's shop, nine months later

Hobson has drunk himself into a dangerous state of health. His shop has lost all its business and he is in debt. Creditors arrive demanding payment of their bills. Hobson solicits the help of his daughters to relieve his financial embarrassment.

Alice and Vickey give him the cold shoulder but Maggie and Will agree to pay his debts on condition that he hands over the shop to Will, becomes a sleeping partner and the firm be called 'Mossop and Hobson'. Hobson is forced to agree and Will is left to contemplate his newfound position. In less than a year he has risen from boot hand to Master.

THE LILY OF LAGUNA

PLEASE JOIN IN!

*She's my lady love,
She is my dove, my baby love,
She's no girl for sitting down to dream,
She's the only queen Laguna knows.
I know she likes me.
I know she likes me
Because she says so;
She is my Lily of Laguna.
She is my Lily and my Rose.*