

MISS LINDSAY'S SECRET

COME IN - SHUT THE DOOR - OPEN THE BOX



What's inside?

An outstanding and heartbreakingly beautiful play. Go and see it.

Jenny Gilruth MSP

Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development (tweet 17.08.21)

Miss Lindsay's Secret is a true story of love, legacy, landscape and secret letters concealed in the Glenesk Folk Museum, Scotland. This moving and lively show takes audiences from the Angus hills to Canada's Klondike Goldrush, during the turbulent years of the early 20th century, in the company of The Curator, The Musician and The Man. It explores The Curator's dilemma in finding, revealing and becoming too involved in this intimate tale of a Scottish seamstress.

The show transcends time and place, using original live music and historical material to conjure an onstage alchemy in which the hidden story of separated lovers becomes a quietly powerful allegory of global forces continuing to shape our lives and identity. It binds the past to the present, Scotland to the world, and in this time of invaded privacy, questions the morality of reading such private mail and turning it into a play.

Do the dead have a voice? Does Miss Lindsay have a choice in having her story told?

Written and performed by Maria MacDonell with Alan Finlayson and musician Georgina MacDonell Finlayson

The Wee Review ****

Edinburgh Guide ****

Broadway Baby ****

Corrblimey ****

British Theatre Guide****

Everything Theatre ** Scots Gay Arts ******

Sinners Review *****

**Some audience reviews Edinburgh Fringe and on tour:
(for more responses see separate document Reviews and Responses)**

A tour de force. Deeply moving and so sad. The Scottish diaspora and its effects. A story the world over. In these times all over again. Love and separation.

A beautiful tale of enduring love and sexting in the early 1900s. Captivating and beautifully melancholic with outstanding music

An engrossing show about what it means and feels like to discover and come to inhabit the life of another person and the responsibilities that come with that discovery and the sharing of it.

A great central performance and a wonderful sense of place. A Fringe highlight.

I was so moved I could hardly speak afterwards. Beautifully crafted piece of theatre

In one word- outstanding Faultless – a brilliant combination of acting, music, soundtrack.

An inspirational, mesmerising delight. The wide world deserves to hear Miss Lindsay's Secret.



Professional Reviews Edinburgh Fringe 2021

**'The play confidently sweeps us away with its intriguing tale'
Mathew Keeley, The Wee Review ******

'The keenest sign of respect and appreciation comes from the audience's chattering feet and hungry eyes for more of Miss Lindsay's Secret.' Dominic Corr ****

**'This story leaps off the pages of these long lost letters and out into the world for us to find'
Amy MacRae, BroadwayBaby ******

A wee gem of a show.harks back to a simpler time, but also to those human desires for love and connection, just as important now as a hundred years ago.leaves you with a warm glow for some time after' Angela Milton, Edinburgh Guide. ****

'A delight', Graeme Strachan. British Theatre Guide. ****

WHO WAS MISS LINDSAY?

Wilhelmina Lindsay, known as Minnie, was born in 1878 in Glenesk, North East Scotland. Minnie lived with her grandparents, her mother, her aunt and her half sister. Minnie's father may have been Thomas Lindsay, a married shepherd working on a nearby farm.

Alexander Middleton, a few years older than her, was the fifth of seven children. They were friends since childhood and grew up together in the close knit glen community.

At the beginning of the 20th century change was racing through small Scottish communities including Glenesk. Thousands of Scots were leaving their homelands to make their fortunes abroad. Alex was among them, setting off in 1902 to the gold fields of Canada. Minnie and Alex exchanged letters. Although only those from Alex have been found, they reveal as much about the hardship of the Yukon prospector as they do about the life of a busy Scottish seamstress at the turn of the twentieth century. The letters are important social history documents from a time of long lasting Scottish upheaval and Yukon exploitation. They carry universal truths which reach out across the globe and the centuries.

Perhaps most poignant of all, the letters were meant to be kept very secret.



Williamina Lindsay, Minnie, in Glenesk c1902, when Alexander Middleton left for the Goldrush.



This compelling show grows from the performers' shared knowledge and experience of Glenesk where the love story of Miss Lindsay has been so long hidden. It comes from a deep respect for our material culture at a time when life stories can be lost to the ether. It reveals secrets which touch the hearts and minds of young and old, anywhere.



THE COMPANY

Maria MacDonell (writer performer, The Curator) is a writer, actor and performer who has enjoyed many creative adventures as screenwriter, television researcher/presenter (BBC, STV), journalist (UK broadsheets) and actor in film, theatre and television (UK and international). She has also run an arts charity and was drama/creative arts tutor for adults with learning difficulties at Dundee and Angus College. She is a long-time volunteer at Glenesk Folk Museum. Maria is also a performance storyteller, creating shows of all kinds for all ages in different settings. She is fascinated by the power of objects to tell stories of human experience. In July 2020 Maria wrote and performed in a short film *Miss Lindsay's Love in Lockdown*, shot in Glenesk and Glenesk Folk Museum, true locations of Miss Lindsay's story. The film is available on Youtube. She is co editor of *From the Burgh and Beyond*, a book of spoken tales from Burgh Blatherers published 2022. She played Mary in award winning film *The Motorist* produced by Forest of Black and directed by Ciaran Lyons. In 2022 she featured as onion eating donkey whispering Maude in The Proclaimers' latest video *The World That Was* also directed by Ciaran Lyons and produced by Forest of Black.. Other performance projects include *The Not So Ugly Duckling*, supported by Creative Scotland, as co-writer and performer with playwright Jo Clifford (Made In Scotland showcase Fringe 2022). *Miss Lindsay's Secret* was invited back to Scottish Storytelling Centre for Fringe 2022 and on tour in Autumn 2022 has 20 performances in 18 venues in Scotland and England. She has been short listed for Luminate Scotland's *Outstanding Older Artist Award* (result to be announced November 2022)

Alan Finlayson (The Man) is a film maker, puppeteer and performer. He was a founder member of Scottish Mime Theatre (UK and international) and has developed his own puppet theatre shows, most notably *The White Cat* which toured throughout Scotland for Puppet Animation Scotland. As a filmmaker Alan has screened work at the Edinburgh Film Festival and is currently developing a number of projects. His film *Miss Lindsay's Love in Lockdown* helped to keep alive Miss Lindsay's Secret during 2020/2021 and is still available on Youtube.

Georgina MacDonell Finlayson (The Musician) is a musician, composer, community arts practitioner and environmentalist. Her compositions have been performed by the *Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Red Note Ensemble and Any Enemy, broadcast on BBC Radio 3's New Music Show and performed at Sound Festival*. Her work incorporates traditional to contemporary classical styles, sound design, theatre scores, field recording, spoken word and electroacoustic composition. She is a violinist and founder member of *Nevis Ensemble*, Scotland's first street orchestra. Georgina is an experienced instrumental teacher and community arts practitioner, involving theatre, dance, storytelling, exhibition curation, installation and archival research. She is interested in Scottish history, ethnomusicology, landscape, and throughout her work seeks to find ways music and art can help to tackle the climate crisis. She has first class music degrees from Edinburgh University and the Royal Northern College of Music and is a core performer with *Sinfonia Cymru*.

Molly MacDonell Finlayson (Costume/Props/Design) is a costume maker and textile artist with wide ranging experience in opera, theatre, dance, film/tv and community arts including *Scottish Opera, Magnetic Opera, Jabuti Theatre, Charades Theatre (USA and UK) and National Theatre of Scotland*. More personal work is inspired by people and stories, colour and texture, music, words, walking in urban and remote places, life drawing, dress and textile history. Molly has her own business, MacFin, creating clothing sustainably.

Ian Cameron (Consultant director) - Artist, mime (Jacques le Coq, Phillipe Faulier), Puppeteer. Ian has formed three theatre companies including In triplicate Mime and Plutot La Vie. Performed with English National Opera, London Sinfonietta. He has spent over ten years performing with Catherine Wheels, including international tours of White. As a director he has worked with Puppet Lab, Shona Reppe, Red Dridge Arts, Magnetic North, Traverse Theatre. Clown Doctor/ Elderflower with Hearts and Minds. Tutor at RCS. He has extensive touring experience as director and performer.



'Flippin' fantastic', 'We loved loved, loved it', Engaging , witty and atmospheric',

'Stupendous' 'I was away with the story. Thank you'

'A lovely moving performance- a dream like experience. Thank you. I didn't want to wake up'.

'The music was perfect'.

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

'Just brilliant'.

'I need to see it a third time'

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Thank you.



PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Duration: 70 mins. **Audience Capacity:** small/mid-scale theatre. 100 without rake.

Size: minimum :4m wide x 4m deep x 3m high

Get-in: tbc **Get-out:** 1 hour **Blackout:** Yes **Travel:** Van **Accomm:** x2 sgl, x1 dble

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The company can bring own technician, or work with in-house staff. In non theatre venues they can bring own lights/sound operated from within the show. This will determine get in time.

VIDEO AND PHOTOGRAPHY by Roddy Simpson.

Stills by Andy Catlin **SHOW FEE**

TBC and negotiable for multiple shows

INTERVAL Second half : choice of Music performance - readings of letters not included in show – Q and A (topics including the true story, rehearsal, script, music, similar family stories, personal archives, Goldrush.) – Screening 16 min film *Miss Lindsay's Love in Lockdown*, made in actual locations of true story, Glenesk.

WORKSHOPS Creative team is experienced in running workshops for any age/ability. Topics to explore include 'Life Story' real or imagined, expressed through drama, creative writing, Music or simple art making.

CREATIVE TEAM Flexible in delivering what is exactly best for each venue and its audience.

ENQUIRIES

Please contact Maria MacDonell at misslindsayssecret@gmail.com. 0775 257 0273

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And THE FILM : *Miss Lindsay's Love in Lockdown*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyC1gIYlg94>

Written and performed by Maria MacDonell
With Georgina MacDonell Finlayson and Alan Finlayson

Filmed by Alan Finlayson during lockdown 2020

Commissioned by Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival 2020. Length 16 minutes

We were in development for *Miss Lindsay's Secret* when lockdown came. We made this film in Glenesk and the Glenesk Folk Museum, the actual locations where this story has lain hidden for so long. It explores themes from the play. We made it to keep the heart of our play still beating.

Miss Lindsay's Love in Lockdown is a short film about secrets, long concealed.

What would you do? Would you tell?

This is a film about a secret box of letters. They tell an intimate tale of a Scottish seamstress, Minnie Lindsay. Her story, hidden in the Angus hills for over a hundred years, binds the gentle hills of Glenesk to the heady Klondike of Canada's famous gold rush at the beginning of the twentieth century.

But do the dead have a choice? Does Miss Lindsay have a voice? Does she want her secrets told?

This is a film about a play, *Miss Lindsay's Secret*, performed only three times and then hidden away by Lockdown.

This is a film by the Curator, the Musician and The Man, who made that play and now this film, to keep alive Miss Lindsay's love in Lockdown.

'Amazing photography' 'What a wonderful mystery' 'Can't wait to see the play'



Photo: Georgina MacDonell Finlayson

Miss Lindsay's Secret- Staging

Set :

Two benches, One small round table, One folding seat and music stand

One folding floor rug, One very small low stool, One chair

One suitcase of props. Sewing machine. Musical instruments.

Costume x 3

Minimum playing area:

4mx 4m x 3m . We have performed in a smaller area

Village hall seating – The best seating arrangement for the best sight lines. We can perform sideways along a side wall, or along an end wall. Sometimes with audience on stage.

Theatre seating – mid to small scale theatre max 250 - 300

Sound and lighting theatre –

We are pleased to work with in house theatre technician or bring our own. Please enquire.

Sound and lighting village hall –

We bring our own lights and sound operated from within the show.

Get in/out –

Theatre – 4 hours get in. 45 min get out.

Village hall- get in tbc. 45 min get out.

Any enquiries to

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Roddy Simpson

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Netherbow Theatre, Scottish Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh. Not including table upstage centre.



Get in at The Burnton, Musselburgh



Get In at The Byre, St Andrews.



Sketch by kim Howard made during first performance.