

Story Space presents Watchers of the Skies Tour Pack 2016/17



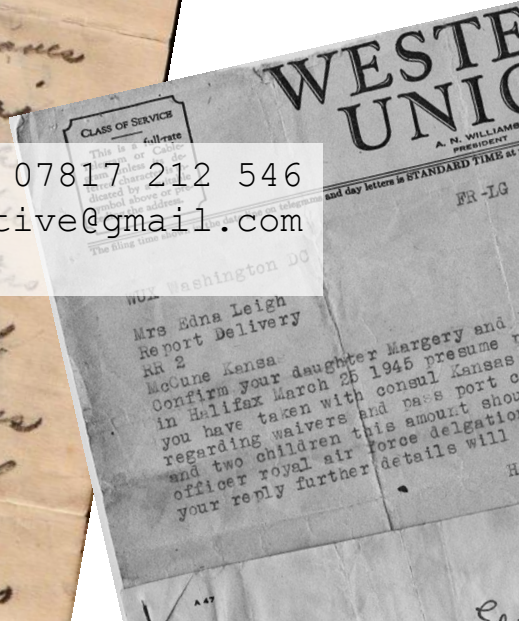
"Our house in Kansas had a tower with nine windows. In the heat of summer my sisters and I used to lift the mattresses from our beds and sleep on the floor there- with all the windows open to the night air- and we would watch the stars"

view by a
living flocks
sea blue
dotted
checked
merrily
manish
hills
myriads of honey bees
white, blue and purple
colored Spanish needles.
rows of mournfully cooing turtle-doves, gathered
a last sad song before starting their long journey
ripe pears and ruddy chestnuts
books of the orchard
migrating monarch butterflies. Mar...



Kansas
1934
17
southward
the
hillside
litters
aves

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The Show

Edna Leigh was born in Kansas in 1916. Her story takes us from the dust bowl of the 1930's American depression, on a dramatic journey across the Atlantic, to post-war England.

Though her upbringing had prepared her more for an understanding of crop yields than classical poetry, this ordinary woman made extraordinary discoveries. Edna stumbled upon a mystery in Homer's Odyssey, decoding the hidden meaning, which had eluded even the poet Keats over 100 years previously.

Edna kept her findings a secret throughout her life. Now Edna's granddaughter shares this fascinating journey and her family's discoveries, combining her story with poetry, astronomy and a live cello soundscape.



Watchers of the Skies is written and performed by Carol Florence Graham. It tells the true story of her American grandmother, Edna Leigh, who embarked on a dramatic voyage from New York to Liverpool just before the end of World War Two in order to start a new life.

Edna lived in the North West of England for over forty years and during that time she undertook a very different sort of journey which led her deep into the heart of ancient cultures and to the discovery of an encyclopaedia of astronomy hidden within Homer's epic poems.

The mysteries Edna uncovered and her discoveries of hidden star charts and maps remained a secret throughout her life. In 1991 her daughter inherited her papers and eventually published two books verifying the discoveries.

The narrative is multi-layered and brings together Carol's childhood memories of her grandmother, Edna's life on the plains of Kansas and industrial post war Britain, as well as unravelling the secrets of her incredible discoveries.

The story is interwoven with poetry, myths, and references to the work of Homer and Keats. The delicate melodies of Simon McCorry's accompaniment on the cello is an essential part of the narrative and creates a spellbinding effect as you are drawn into a story spanning generations, continents and thousands of years of poetry and astronomy.

A totally immersive experience.... I was enchanted and immersed in a journey of the imagination which drew together story, myth, music and the heavens – it left me utterly transformed

Phillippa Slinger - Manager Ledbury Poetry Festival

The Company

Carol has been a professional storyteller and performer for over fifteen years and has performed in a wide variety of formal and informal venues ranging from rural village halls and urban community centres to City Hall in Westminster; from woodlands, parks and gardens to major arts venues such as Compton Verney in Warwickshire and the CBSO Centre in Birmingham. She has worked in theatre spaces across the West Midlands including Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, the Courtyard in Hereford and the Market Theatre Ledbury.



www.storyspace.co.uk

Simon McCorry is a composer and sound designer working with theatre companies such as Headlong and Old Vic Productions and designing for productions at West Yorkshire Playhouse, Liverpool Everyman and Farnham Maltings. He is an accomplished cellist and has worked with spoken word artists, visual artists and poets, including Lemn Sissay. Simon also releases work under 'Amonism' for various labels, creating music combining influences of modern classical with electronics and field recording.



www.simonmccorry.com <https://soundcloud.com/amonism>

The Audience

As the production spans several genres and draws from a number of disciplines there are a range of audience groups that this performance would appeal to:



- Storytelling and contemporary theatre audiences
- Live music audiences- contemporary classical
- Spoken word and poetry audiences
- Groups with an interest in astronomy
- Groups with an interest in family history or twentieth century history
- Creative Writing students or groups and those with an interest in writing poetry and telling their family story
- Groups with an interest in classical poetry including English Romantics e.g. Keats, and Greek Epics e.g. those by Homer

This performance is an opportunity to see ideas of arts and sciences brought to life and explored in a true story and therefore contacting groups who study these areas e.g. U3A groups, local history groups, poetry societies etc should prove fruitful when marketing the production.

Technical

The touring company is two- one performer, one musician. The technical requirements are minimal and therefore we do not tour with a technician and would require a house tech to operate simple cues from a script which we would provide.

The below requirements are all our ideal. This performance has taken place in alternative spaces however, and we may be able to adapt some requirements so please do contact us to discuss possibilities.

- A 3 hour get in to include rehearsal with the technician
- Playing space of 4m x 4m, ideally a black box space with an end-on layout
- Two dressing rooms and parking for two cars

Lighting

The show only uses general states- warm wash, cool wash and a centre stage highlight. Two specials, one for each performer. For colour, blues and lavenders work well. Side lighting or angled FOH lighting would be preferable to create shadows.

Sound

House PA with 3 channels for performance (1 x lav. mic and 2 x xlr from cello DI). Radio mic: transmitter, receiver and lavalier mic for performer, Carol. The musician, Simon, plays a cello throughout the performance and will bring a DI box. Simon requires 13amp power on stage and an on stage monitor for the cello.

Set

The show does not have a set. We tour a small table and hand props. Venue to provide two plain chairs (no arms) e.g. black or wooden chairs, and two music stands (non-folding). If this is not possible please let us know.

Front of House

The performance runs for 65 mins with no interval. If the post show discussion/ workshop is taking place then running times are:

65 mins performance
15 mins interval
45 mins discussion/ workshop

Timings on the workshop are flexible depending on how much audiences would like to ask questions etc.

The performance does not contain strong language or any other aspects which would require audience warnings or age ratings.



What else we offer

The performance can either be offered stand alone or combined with a post show talk, Q&A and informal workshop.

The performance brings up lots of interesting ideas and the story behind how Carol's family inherited Edna's papers, charts and handwritten notes, edited and subsequently published her work, as well as the astronomy linked to her discoveries is a fascinating topic for a post performance event.

This will be particularly popular with audiences interested in exploring their own family history as well as general interest audiences.

We would suggest that this takes place in a more informal setting than the auditorium as this also provides an opportunity for audience members to examine the artefacts and books from Edna's life and the family's possessions.

Carol, the performer, is an experienced storyteller and workshop leader and can also offer storytelling or creative writing workshops tailored to your audience and setting, alongside the production.

We can also offer a package where the performance is linked to a workshop on telling your own and your family's story, using constellations as a creative means of plotting and mapping your history.

We are interested in the crossover possibilities with this production and are happy to be programmed as part of events or alongside workshops linked to astronomy, classical poetry, history or storytelling.

We would love to chat through possibilities so please get in touch with any ideas.

Contact and booking

Watchers of the Skies is available for venues and festivals Feb-May 2017.

To discuss possibilities for including the production in your programme, or for any further information, please contact Christina Poulton, producer on 07817 212 546 or christinapoultoncreative@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you

