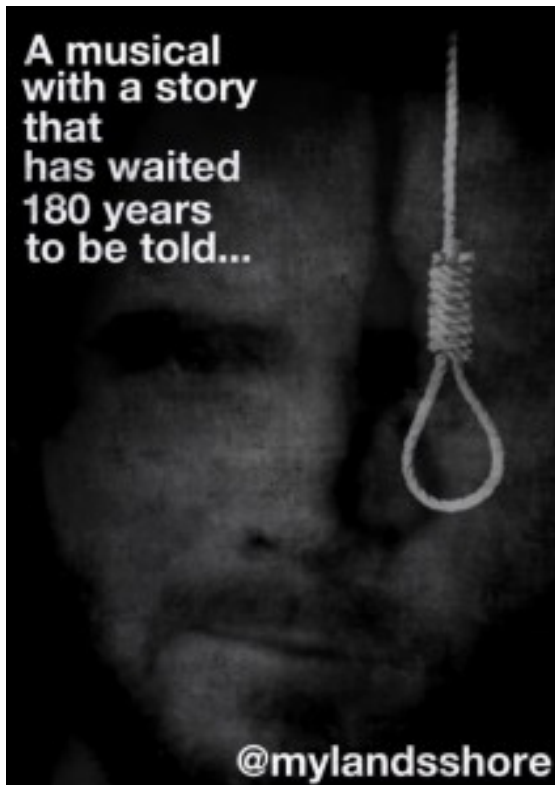


My Land's Shore: Making new writing happen

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We all know how hard it is to get new writing off the ground in this current climate. Audience appetites are leaning towards the familiar tastes they already know they like, so investing in the new and unknown is a risk for any producer; not to mention that, as a new writer, you have to get the producers/investors/audience interested in your work the first place. It's a long, hard trek to the stage and many will stumble along the way and never reach their destination, but there are options out there for the new writer to help them on their way.

It's all too easy to complain and berate the way things are, blaming the industry or the audience, etc. if your work isn't being heard. The truth is though; even if your songs, your play, your musical – whatever it is that you're creating – is the most wonderful piece of writing ever to have been produced, success is not going to just fall into your lap. The quality of your work is not always the most important aspect of success; it's what you choose to do with it. There are a lot of hopeful and talented new writers out there and if you sit on your work and expect a queue of people to come knocking on your door, then chances are you're not going to be the next Sondheim, Lloyd-Webber, Rogers or Hammerstein...

That's why I like to see writers who truly believe in their work and pull out all the stops to get it heard; like Christopher Orton and Bob Gould, who have

started by recording a demo of some of the musical's songs.

I went along to one of these recording sessions in August. They have some great West End names involved in the project, including *Les Miserables'* alternate Valjean, Jonathan Williams and Killian Donnelly, currently playing the role of Raoul in *The Phantom of the Opera*. Based upon the historical events of the 1831 Methyr Rising, *My Land's Shore* tells the story of Dic Penderyn, who was tried and hanged for a crime he didn't commit, becoming the first martyr of the Welsh working class. It's an epic and powerful story that deals with the themes of love, morality and social injustice – and it has some tremendous music, with songs that inspire and break your heart, all at the same time.

A concert of the musical was staged Cardiff in 2007, directed by Craig Revel-Horwood and after some extensive re-writes, Orton and Gould believe it is now ready for the stage and are doing all they can to make it happen.

My Land's Shore is currently being pitched to an array of producers and in the next stage of their plan for the musical, Orton and Gould have turned to the crowd funding website Sponsume. They are hoping to put out a full cast recording of *My Land's Shore* and are asking for the help of the Public to achieve that.

Sites like Sponsume and WeFund are becoming an increasingly popular method of funding a project. The production of 1780 play, *The Belle's Stratagem*, now in the final week of its highly acclaimed run at the Southwark Playhouse was funded by members of the public on WeFund and Simon Greiff of SimG Productions has used the same strategy to fund projects, which include Adam Hunter's play, *The Pork Crunch* and the debut album of Dougal Irvine.

Those who pledge money towards a project receive rewards for their support, which in the case of *My Land's Shore* range from having your name credited to sitting in on one of the recording sessions and meeting some of the cast; pledgers can even become Associate Producers. It's an interesting and effective method, allowing a project to gain the funding it needs as well as garnering in-built support through its pledgers, who are invited to share in the creative process.

Whether a new writer succeeds or fails in their attempt to 'make it' relies on the standard of the work and the awareness they can raise for it. If you write something amazing, people will show an interest and the more people interested, the better your chances are; it's simply supply and demand. Produce work that people want to see or hear and you're already half way

there.

After experiencing a little slice of *My Land's Shore* for myself, I can say with confidence that this is a musical that others should get to experience too. Orton and Gould have been working on it for ten years now and are as passionate about it now as when they first began. It's a highly original piece of work with strong writing and beautiful music and, in my opinion, there is a huge gap in the West End for a musical like that right now.

By Julie Robinson (@missjulie25)

You can pledge towards the full cast recording of *My Lands Shore* on their [Sponsume page](#).