

Twitter Thread by Howard Goodall



Howard Goodall

@Howard_Goodall



I'd like to say a few things in tribute to the brilliant musical director & vocal coach Kate Young, who died far too young last week. Even fellow musical theatre folk may not know what a trail-blazing talent she was, so here's my story of Kate (thread)/1

I first met Kate at a rehearsal for Wayne Sleep's 1983 touring dance show DASH, for which I was composer. What struck me first about her (apart from the poetic lilt of her warm, Edinburgh accent) was the impeccable care she was taking playing piano for dance rehearsals /2

WAYNE SLEEP

WITH *Dash* '83



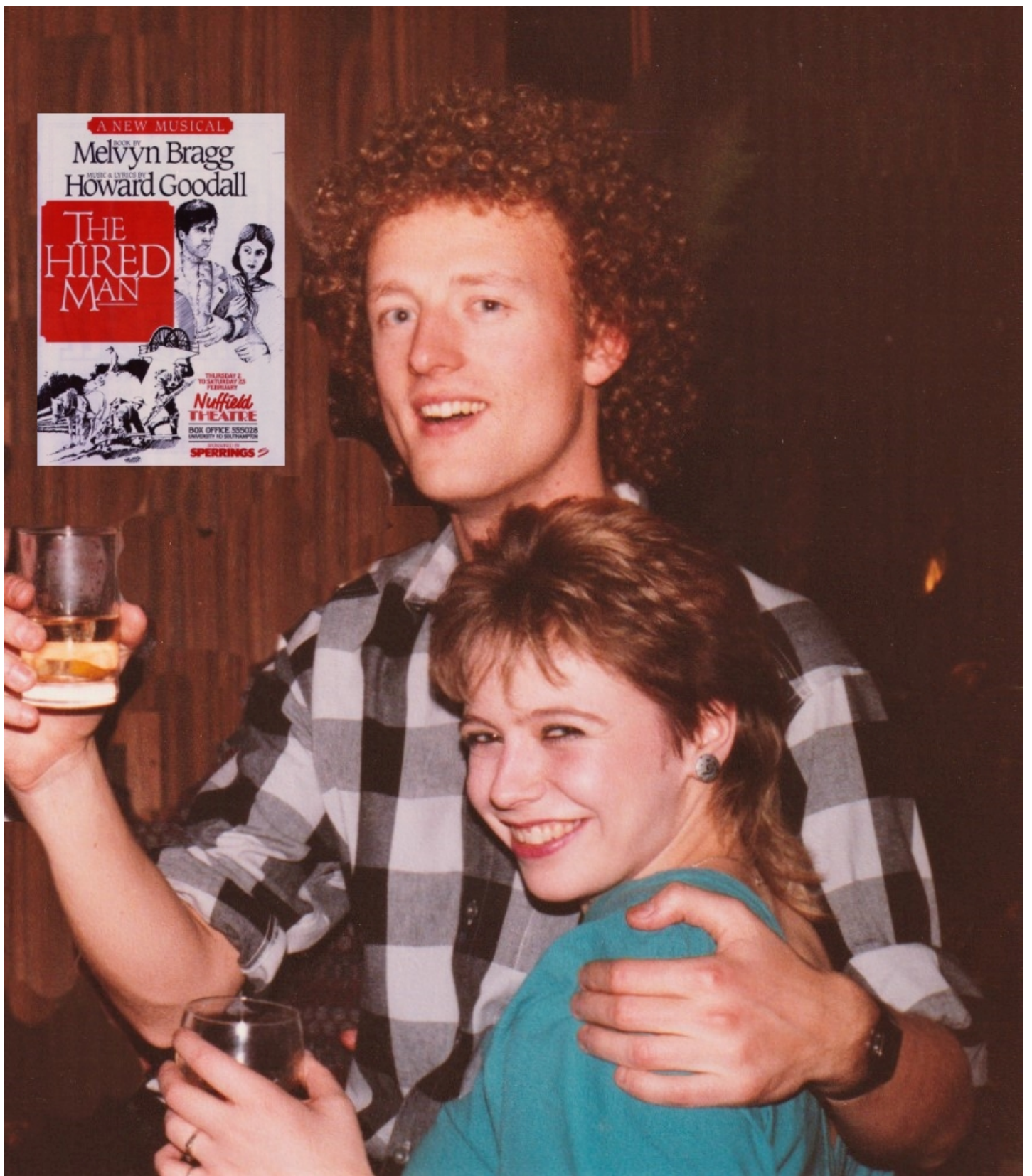
(believe me, & I mean no disrespect to lovely dancers & choreographers but playing piano for dance sessions isn't called REPETITEUR for nothing and many repetiteurs switch to auto-pilot at the keys. Kate never did. Her playing was always immaculate)/3

We hit it off immediately & had long, ranty discussions about how we wanted to change musical theatre, like young people do. We had specific aims to do with the way singing was taught & shaped for the stage. /4

We wanted the singing to be much more text & meaning-focused, for actors to have the confidence to sing as well as trained singers & for the sound to be more nuanced, more plural in style & less belty & samey (tbh not sure we won that battle..) /5

We took our 'manifesto' into the first show she MD-ed for me, THE HIRED MAN, which opened in the West End in October 1984, after two stints at Southampton & Leicester. I'm pretty sure that Kate was the first woman to MD a West End show ■/6

She was certainly the youngest. Here she is at the opening night at the Nuffield Southampton in Feb 84, when she was just 24. Take a bow, Kate. /7



(The assistant MD of THE HIRED MAN was also a woman, Helen Ireland, who went on to assist Kate in GIRLFRIENDS, our second West End foray, which we'll come to in a minute) /8

Between THE HIRED MAN in Southampton & the West End, Kate MD-ed for me MANDRAGOLA at the [@NationalTheatre](#) & I'm pretty sure she was the first woman to MD a show there too ■ /9

Mandragola

by **Niccolò Machiavelli**

Translated by **Wallace Shawn**

Music and Lyrics by **Howard Goodall**

Callimaco	Nicky Henson
Siro	Daniel Webb
Nicia	John Savident
Ligurio	Timothy Spall
Sostrata	Jane Lowe
Father Timoteo	Jim Norton
The Young Widow	Theresa Watson
Lucrezia	Phyllis Roome
Singing Hotelier	David Bacon
Swedish Tourists	Robert Bathurst Richard Syms
Street Spiv	Matthew Sim
Municipal Fountain Mechanic	Robin Lloyd
Singing Waiter	Robert Ralph
Groupies	Debbie Snook Fiona Williams
Au Pair	Allison Dean
Musicians	Kate Young (<i>music director/piano</i>) Erica Howard (<i>bass guitar</i>) Barbara Snow (<i>trumpet</i>) Shelagh Sutherland (<i>synthesizer</i>) Elizabeth Davis (<i>drums</i>)

Director	David Gilmore
Designer	Roger Glossop
Lighting	David Hersey
Staff Director	Kenneth Mackintosh
Production Manager	Michael Cass Jones
Senior Stage Manager	Rosemary Beattie
Stage Manager	Courtney Bryant
Deputy Stage Manager	Lesley Walmsley
Assistant Stage Managers	Emma B Lloyd Brewyeen Rowland
Sound	Rick Clark
Assistant to the Lighting Designer	Paul McLeish
Assistant Production Manager	George Ellerington

Opening: **The Olivier Theatre** 14 June 1984

Length: about 1 hour 55 minutes.
There is no interval

Production photographed by **John Haynes**

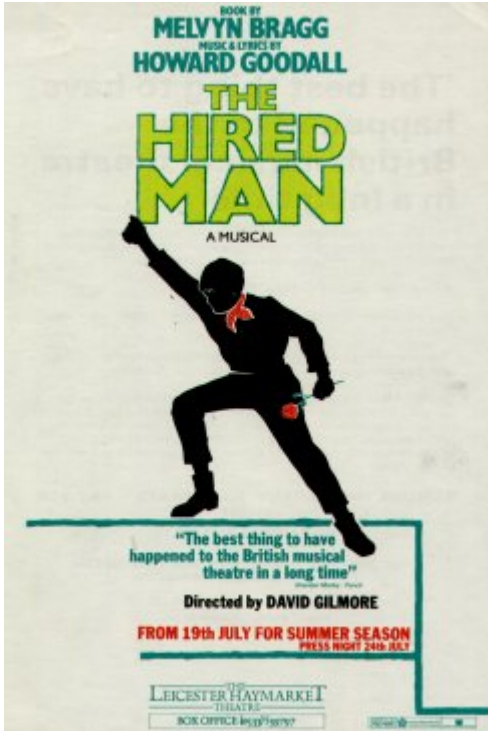
Programme cover (and poster, on sale at NT bookshops) uses Bernini's statue of Pluto and Proserpina (Borghese, Rome)

Programme compiled by A.C.H. Smith and Lyn Haill



We managed to persuade the National's music dept to let us have an all-female band for that show, another first, I think. It was here I first heard other male musicians sniping that I'd done it for 'tokenistic' reasons, not 'merit'. Kate had to field the same sort of twaddle /10

From the National we went straight to Leicester Haymarket for the 2nd, revised HIRED MAN before London. Kate met, fell in love with & subsequently married the lovely [@garethsnook](#) during that run /11



In a move for which I shall forever be deeply grateful, [@OfficialALW](#) took that show to the West End, with Kate as its MD. She also played the big, tricky piano part every night, more or less, for its 5 month run. I never heard a single, tiniest slip in it, all that time. /12



A year after THE HIRED MAN closed we were @OldhamColiseum for my next show GIRLFRIENDS. again Kate was MD, filling that nearly-all-female cast with incredible energy, commitment & musical depth. I wonder if you can spot some future stars in this pic? /13



And here we are in a GIRLFRIENDS rehearsal at Oldham /14



A year after that, in Oct 1987, that show transferred to the Playhouse Theatre in the West End and Kate had her 2nd MD-ing job in the West End on the trot. While I was flakey & short-fused, she was steady as a rock, good-humoured & unbelievably dedicated & professional /15



What's more, she was pregnant with her daughter Laura for the entire run, playing & conducting, supported by Helen Ireland (3rd from R) & the mostly female band (the tall trombonist at the back was just passing through) /16



In her work on various shows that followed, she came up against many of the same obstacles STILL being faced by working mums in our industry. Often away from home in cheap digs working unsocial hours. She undoubtedly struggled, not least because of the sexism she endured /17

In long phone calls from tour she'd recount the endless demeaning 'banter' she had to put up with from male colleagues, appalling stuff I'm not going to repeat here. But she'd laugh it off like those who are teased/bullied/belittled/objectified routinely do /18

It takes its toll, though. In retrospect I for one feel I didn't call out this shit more at the time. Cowardly, early-career instincts but all the time women like Kate just had to put up with it to make her way in the industry. We're still not where we should be, 40 years on /19

When Kate's dad George, & Gareth's brother Derek died, both of cancer, they turned their grief into something wonderful, a charity concert of THE HIRED MAN at the Palace Theatre in March 1992, in aid of Cancer charities /20

KATE YOUNG AND GARETH SNOOK

We first met during the Leicester production of *The Hired Man*, where Kate was the Musical Director and Gareth played the 'heavily mentioned' (although not so heavily featured!) Joe Sharpe.



We got married in April 1986, in St. Bernard's Church, Edinburgh, where Kate's dad was minister. We were both so thrilled that so many of The Hired Men could make the trek up north to join in the celebrations.

We now have a theatrically-wise four year old daughter, Laura, who informed us – after seeing a production of *Giselle* at The Royal Opera House – that *Giselle's* prince was called Phillip Schofield:

Early last year we were given the tragic news that Gareth's brother Derek was suffering from terminal cancer. It was a devastating blow – made only more so by the fact that Derek was only 42

years of age. He died in August, at home – only made possible by the tender care of his family and the Macmillan nurses.

Kate's father, George, who had overcome two major operations from cancer in 1986, was now diagnosed as terminally ill with cancer of the oesophagus. George, like Derek, bore his illness with remarkable courage. He spent the last five weeks of his life at St. Columba's Hospice in Edinburgh. The wonderful facilities there enabled his wife, May, to stay overnight far longer than anyone had anticipated.

Kate and Gareth dedicate this performance of *The Hired Man* to Derek and George's memory and to the unstinting devotion of Macmillan and hospice workers everywhere.

Thank you all for your support of this event – we very sincerely hope you enjoy the evening.

This concert, which brought back the original cast and a huge additional chorus of West Enders, testimony to the respect and affection in which Kate was held, was a triumph, and a double CD of it was released. /21

IN CONCERT THE HIRED MAN

Book by
MELVYN BRAGG

Music & Lyrics by
HOWARD GOODALL

Narrated by
PHILLIP SCHÖFIELD

Directed by
DAVID GILMORE

Co-director **ANTHONY VAN LAAST**

Sound Design by **BOBBY AITKEN**

Lighting Design by **CHRIS ELLIS**

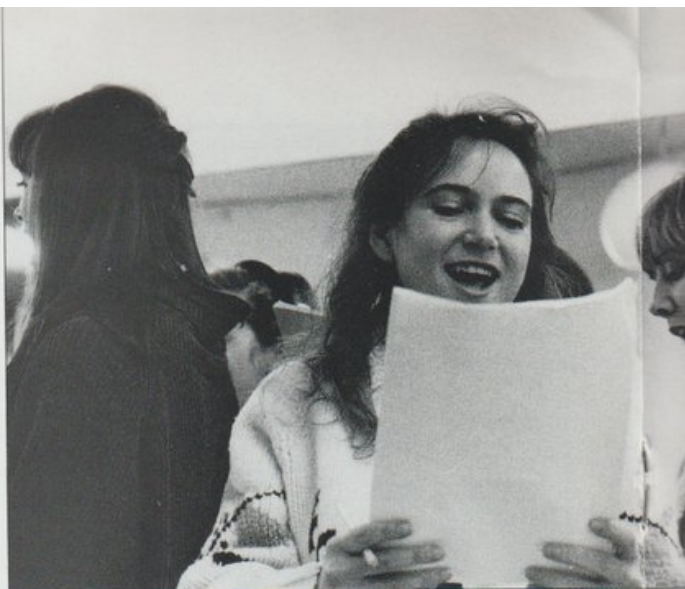
CAST

John*PAUL CLARKSON**
 Emily*JULIA HILLS**
 Jackson*RICHARD WALSH**
 Ted Blacklock/Isaac*BILLY HARTMAN**
 Seth*GERARD DOYLE**
 Sally*CAROLINE MANDER*
 May*CLARE BURT**
 Harry*CHRISTOPHER WILD**
 Ensemble*DAVID ARNEIL, NORMA ATTALLAH,
 JAMES BULLER, MAGGIE CHILDS, PHIL CHILDS*,
 JANICE CRAMER*, TONY CREAN*, STEPHEN EARLE*,
 JONATHAN D ELLIS, ALAN FORRESTER, STEVE FORTUNE,
 ROBERT GILL*, MICHAEL GYNGELL, JODY HALL,
 ANDREW HALLIDAY, STEPHEN JAMIESON*,
 TERRY JOHN-WOOD, JULIE JUPP, SEAN KERRYSON,
 MURRAY LANE, GERARD LEIGHTON,
 JO LLOYD COLLATIN, DAVID LYNDON, MICHAEL MAWBY,
 DEBBIE McCULLOCH, NELLY MORRISON*, LIZ MORTON,
 CRAIG PINDER*, DALE RAPLEY, TERESA REVILL,
 DARREN ROBERTS, GARETH SNOOK*, SARA WEYMOUTH,
 ANDREW WIGHTMAN, MICHAEL WYETH*
(Indicates original London Cast)*

Piano/Musical Director*KATE YOUNG*
 Synthesiser*HELEN IRELAND*
 Bass*BRIAN AUKER*
 Trumpets*PAULINE FISHER, PAUL ESHELBY*
 Harp*ROWENA WILKINSON*
 Violin (Leader)*IAN BELTON*
 Violin*HELEN COOPER*
 Viola*RICHARD NELSON*
 Cello*DOMINIC O'DELL*

The casting is subject to late change.
 This programme was correct at the time of going to press.

Original Leicester Haymarket production photographs: Malcolm Andrew
 Rehearsal photographs: Adam Matalon



Throughout her career, Kate as MD and as vocal coach stayed resolutely faithful to those first principles we'd hoped to follow: give the performers confidence, make the text & the emotional journey of the song paramount, care for the tiny nuanced details. /22

I know this must seem pretty standard Route 1 stuff to modern MT students but the repertoire we inherited often had different priorities, remember the great Sondheim revolution was still in its infancy when we started. /23

Here's the other thing though. Kate wielded her 'power' as MD with kindness, respect & humour. She was so NOT a megalomaniac, and positions like MD, as they are for directors & choreographers, can often lead to control-freakery. She was a paragon of collaboration /24

So please raise your glass this evening to Kate Young, who was a pathfinder for every girl who wants to be a world-class conductor/musical director. Kate did. You can. Our hearts are heavy with grief but we celebrate her shining life. Farewell, dear friend. /25

