

You had a Christmas Party!
Oh No We Didn't!
Oh Yes You Did!

The writers of *Scotch Egg*, a post-pandemic musical, throw toe-tapping melodies and satire at the government's farcical management of the Covid crisis - catch it while you can!

The title derives from the Dec 20 rule that pubs could only serve drinks with a 'substantial meal' and the surreal ministerial debate as to whether a Scotch Egg fell within the definition.

For writers, Jonny Dixon-Smith & Dom Hartley, this episode symbolises the many absurdities of the governmental response to the pandemic, providing much intoxicating fodder for their new show.

With numbers like, "The Laws are Set in Stone" (Keep the people sheeple / Make them stay at home) "He's gonna save Christmas"/ (We're gonna have bubbles of fun)" and "Key Workers" (a call-girl powerfully sings, We're all key workers, after all), the show satirises inconsistent decision-making, dodgy science and the theatrical daily press briefings that lead to a heightened state of fear and drama.

Smith & Hartley are no strangers to political parody, writing and producing *Crunch The Musical* set to the backdrop of the financial crisis in 2008.

According to Hartley at the keyboards, "It's really light-hearted and Boris is easy prey with guaranteed laughs as he duets with Chris Whitty in a rap, but the message of the musical is more profound". He explains: "We're questioning the ease at which the government's been able to manipulate people through hype and fear and the unintended future consequences of that."

Dixon-Smith, who teaches A-level English, finds the parallels with dystopian fiction all too familiar. "Margaret Attwood said it best: "Anything can happen anywhere, given the circumstances." We're not Covid deniers and we dedicate a triumphant song to the vaccines (albeit dressed as Cowboys), but we are interested in how this crisis exposed the big questions: What constitutes a life worth living? Is democracy still useful? Does a Scotch Egg constitute a substantial meal?"

The show's final message, presented in the comic number "You Can't Be Too Careful, After All" may resonate with commuters tired of public address hectoring, justified by the platitude, "it's there to protect us all".

Scotch Egg plays between Lockdowns at the Drayton Arms, London SW5, Jan 23/24 2022.



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REHEARSALS FOR PRESS

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