

# Our House by Tim Firth

Music and lyrics by Madness

OUR HOUSE was first produced at the Cambridge Theatre, London on 28th October 2002. Producers were TigerAspect Productions, Rupert Lord, Andre Ptaszynski and Phil McIntyre in association with Madness.

This will be the first production of Our House at **The Minack Theatre**

## Synopsis Act 1

Our House is the story of Joe Casey who, on the night of his sixteenth birthday, takes Sarah, the girl of his dreams, out on their first date. In an effort to impress her with bravado, he breaks into a building site overlooking his home on Casey Street, which is owned by Mr. Pressman, a high-end property developer. The police turn up, at which point Joe's life splits into two: Good Joe, who stays to help, and Bad Joe, who flees.

Good Joe, having stayed to help Sarah, is sent to a 'correctional facility' for two years. On his release, finding that his past prevents him from getting a good job, he struggles to make ends meet. Despite managing to buy himself a second-hand car, he convinces himself that he is an embarrassment to all who care about him – especially Sarah, whose new college lifestyle reading law is complicated by Callum, a fellow student. In an effort to keep up with this guy, Good Joe is beguiled by his 'mate' Reecey into helping stage a break-in for some easy money – is caught and this time sent down.

Meanwhile, Bad Joe has lost Sarah, but is making a success of a burgeoning career, using his breaking and entering skills to install security systems which he then instructs a lowlife 'mate' called Reecey how to breach. His efforts soon earn him enough money to start his own business in property development, where he attracts the attention of Mr. Pressman. Now a successful businessman, he is able to swan back into Sarah's life, literally sweeping her off her feet at her college dance.

## Act 2

Three years later, at 21, Bad Joe and Sarah get married in Vegas, while Good Joe is leaving prison, forced to sleep rough in the second-hand car he bought all those years ago. At this point, Good Joe and Bad Joe's worlds start to collide. Mr. Pressman has decided to 'redevelop' Camden by demolishing Casey Street – except Joe's mum Kath refuses to leave. This house is special, she says, given to her family in perpetuity because their ancestors helped build Casey Street. Good Joe vows to save the house. He calls on Sarah, now a trainee lawyer engaged to Callum, to help prove that Kath does own the deeds to 25 Casey Street. Bad Joe, meanwhile, is called on by Mr. Pressman to help destroy the house in a strong-arm final straw tactic to get the occupant to move out. Bad Joe does this by arranging – with Reecey's help - for the house to be burned down while she is out celebrating her birthday. Except tragically all Kath wants to do is wait in the house for her son to come

visit her on that special day. In the Good Joe story, the errant son returns, holding the property deeds, to find the house burning down but his mum safe; in the Bad Joe story the 'successful' son returns too late, to realise his mum was in there, waiting for him.

From the ashes of the house fire Good Joe is reborn, reunited with Sarah, who he marries, and with his mum. Mr. Pressman and Reecey are sent down for arson. Bad Joe, having lost Sarah and his mum, is sent down as an accomplice to manslaughter. And in the final beat of the show we wind back time to where we started, the moment of decision on Joe's sixteenth birthday: when asked what he wants to do, somehow, he knows now the right decision to make.

He simply says 'Let's go dancing!'

