**Media Release Thurs 13 March**

From Common Players, in association with Exeter Northcott, a new production, of Jez Butterworths’

**Jerusalem**

**Thurs 29 May - Sat 31 May 8pm
Rougement Gardens, Exeter**

**Then on tour to 8 Westcountry communities until Midsummer's Day**

From Common Players, in association with Exeter Northcott Theatre, a new production of Jez Butterworth’s critically acclaimed play, **Jerusalem**, will tour the WestCountry in May and June.The new production will be made in a new way which will involve local artists and communities and teach new skills to those involved.

First performed in 2009, **Jerusalem** became the Evening Standard’s Best Play of the Year and is an epic and heroic play about our great British need for a connection with the landscape and our roots; an underpinning theme of the 2012 Olympic opening ceremony.

 In part a lament about the erosion of country life and in part a rebuff to the antiseptic modern world, **Jerusalem** charts the chaotic and hilarious events over the 24 hours of a local mid-summer festival.  Imagine Midsummer Nights’ Dream populated with characters straight out of Shameless and Skins.

  *'Refreshing, humane, touching and wickedly funny.'* Evening Standard

 The New **Jerusalem** project will take this indoor play and plant it outside, locating its roots in and around the communities of the Westcountry.  Common Players and Exeter Northcott Theatre are creating a new midsummer event with the play at its centre, and they are seeking out both old and new audiences who want to come to an engaging event with a moving story at its heart.

Anthony Richards, Director, said, “*Over 120 people have come forward to be involved in New Jerusalem. It’s a big experiment to see how epic and large-cast theatre can be crafted and presented locally, in the fields and forests of the area.  I’m inspired by the wealth of talent that exists around us and I’m excited about building on Common Players heritage of outdoors shows by taking a great play which can startle and surprise people, to be part of a locally owned event.*

*We’re very lucky to be working with some great local artists like Braunton sculptor Jon Rodney-Jones and Kentisbeare Musician Alan Boxer, and the theatre-making experience embedded in Exeter Northcott.  It’s a great development opportunity for skilled and energetic local artists to come together and create something engaging, fun and connected to our time and place. Conceived, cast, created and consumed in Devon; high quality local produce, using the best local ingredients. “*

**-ends-**

For more information, please contact Jenny Hogg on 01392 223 989 or email her at j.l.hogg@exeter.ac.uk

**Notes to editors**

***Jerusalem*** is a play by [Jez Butterworth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jez_Butterworth) that opened at the downstairs theatre of the [Royal Court Theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Court_Theatre) in London in 2009. The production starred [Mark Rylance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Rylance) as Johnny 'Rooster' Byron and [Mackenzie Crook](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mackenzie_Crook) as Ginger. After receiving rave reviews its run was extended. In January 2010 it transferred to the [Apollo Theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_Theatre).

Since 1989, ***Common Players*** have been providing theatre productions and activities for communities of the South West, particularly for people with limited access, to see and interact with professional theatre. …..they exist to enable the magic of performance to happen.

***Exeter Northcott Theatre*** is a 460 seat venue serving Exeter and heart of Devon from its home on the University of Exeter Streatham Campus. They offer a mixed programme of touring theatre productions, contemporary dance, opera, music, comedy and family shows.