

Matt Burman
Director
Cambridge Junction
Clifton Way
Cambridge
CB1 7GX

30 September 2021

Dear Matt Burman,

We are writing to you to express our grave concern about the so-called Palaver performances for children 3-8 that have taken place in your theatre. We do not believe that these highly sexualised drag performances constitute suitable entertainment for children so young, many of whom will not even have started school.

The Cambridge Junction website explains its rationale for putting on these performances as advancing LGBTQ+ equality. This is political agenda based around issues of sex and sexuality and it is one that young children that are unlikely to understand. On the same webpage the theatre states:

Like all art-forms, drag performance covers a wide spectrum of content, styles, and form - some of this, we agree, is only suitable for 18+ audiences.

It then goes on however, to claim that the Palaver performances are entirely age-appropriate and suitable for children. This although the imagery is highly sexualised. This can be particularly seen in the lead performer Adam Carver who invariably appears dressed in tight, highly sexual, feminine clothing. On his website Mr Carver describes himself as a '*cultural activist...on a mission to celebrate low-culture and camp and to use them as weapons to disrupt normatively*'. He also states that part of his mission is to '*celebrate queerness*'. A photograph of Mr Carver posted on Instagram shows him wearing some form of bondage gear and holding a sex toy. We consider this strange behaviour from a man posing as a children's entertainer. The references to cultural activism and 'weapons to disrupt normatively' are significant and reveal precisely the agenda behind such performances. They are a form of activism and indoctrination masquerading as children's entertainment.

We acknowledge that the theatre states that it wants to 'challenge ideas and expectations of how the world tells us we have to look, dress, and behave'. However, there are better and more suitable ways of doing this than exposing children to highly sexualised imagery. The Palaver performances belong in an adults-only venue and are certainly not suitable for early years and primary school age children.

Yours sincerely



Piers Shepherd
Senior Researcher

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