

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2023 – Chopped Liver and Unions

Women have always faced exploitation in the workplace – back in the 1920s Sara Wesker was a trade unionist, activist and radical who battled for change.

Largely forgotten today, her name and story deserve to be remembered, not least because the struggle is far from won. This may be a tale from a century ago but it is a play for today.

Lottie Walker will appear as Sara in *Chopped Liver & Unions*, by J.J. Leppink, at theSpace on the Mile from 4-26 August as part of the 2023 Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The one-woman play gives a vivid account of her life and the long struggle to improve the working conditions of female garment workers in the East End of London.

With no income or savings the women she helped lead in the 12-week strike of 1928 became known as the Singing Strikers – singing on the picket lines in return for coins from well-wishers. A Ukrainian refugee and leading light of the Communist Party, she later went on to fight in the 1936 Battle of Cable Street when East Enders united to prevent Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, who were under police protection, from marching on their communities.

Lottie, herself an Eastender and the child of trade

unionists, says: *“This is a woman we should all know about. She sacrificed everything for the cause. And these are people, times and places that deserve to be remembered. The East End of London has burned with the fires of rebellion for centuries.*

“From the Matchgirls in 1888 to the Made in Dagenham workers at Ford’s in 1968, its women have fought for change. Sara was one of the outstanding champions of the struggle for women’s rights – a struggle that has still has not been won. Indeed, we are currently witnessing the plight of refugees from the very country Sara came from, war in Europe, and civil unrest and industrial action worldwide. Nothing is new.”

During the show Lottie will perform songs handed down from the Singing Strikers.

She and J.J. Leppink are not the first to believe that Sara’s story should be widely known. Her nephew, the celebrated playwright Arnold Wesker, wrote a fictionalised version of her into *Chicken Soup with Barley. Chopped Liver & Unions’* creative team include director Laura Killeen, MD James Hall and designer Zoe Harvey-Lee who collaborated on the well-received *Marie Lloyd Stole My Life*.

- Venue: theSpace on the Mile – Space 2 (Venue 39)
- Time: 15:10 4-12 August and 13:10 for the rest of the run
- Dates: August 7-12, 14-19, 21-26. Previews 4 & 5 August
- Duration: 45 min
- Ticket prices: £6 to £8 preview. Full price £10, concessions £8
- Advisory: Age 12+ guideline
- Tickets: <https://tickets.edfringe.com>

