

OLDHAM COLISEUM NAMES FINE COMB AND ROGUE BONES AS ASSOCIATE COMPANIES

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is welcoming two Manchester theatre organisations, **Fine Comb Theatre** and **Rogue Bones Theatre Company**, to join the team as Associate Companies.

Working with the Coliseum, **Fine Comb** and **Rogue Bones** will contribute to the creative life of the theatre and benefit from support in developing, presenting and promoting their work, including rehearsal space and access to the skills and experience of the theatre's in-house team. Alongside this the two organisations will help to deliver the Coliseum's broad range of work with young people and in the community, including workshops at Oldham's Youth Zone, MAHDLO, and sessions with the theatre's scriptwriting group, Scribbles.

Chris Lawson, the Coliseum's Associate Director, commented: *"The Coliseum is dedicated to supporting and developing emerging artists across the region to enrich the Greater Manchester theatre scene. Both **Fine Comb** and **Rogue Bones** will be working with the Coliseum to reflect our mutual values and strengthen the link between our work on stage and in the community; we're excited to support both organisations in all elements of creating and presenting theatre and in running a successful theatre company."*

Fine Comb Theatre is a new-writing theatre company which was founded by Rachel McMurray and Catherine Morefield whilst studying at Salford University in 2013. Rachel and Catherine make issue-based theatre and have established a reputation for creating stylised, innovative and intriguing plays based on delicate subject matters.

They have performed at various venues across the North West, including 53Two and Square Chapel Arts Centre, Halifax, along with two successful tours of Switzerland. Last year's production, *Matchsticks*, which came to the Coliseum Studio in April, was nominated for the Best Drama and Best Newcomer Awards at the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival and nominated for the Write for the Stage New Writing Award.

Rachel and Catherine from Fine Comb Theatre commented: *"It's not often that an established theatre not only supports your work so passionately, but supports it enough to give you the opportunity to develop under their roof. It's such a privilege to work with Oldham Coliseum."*

Rogue Bones Theatre Company were formed by co-artistic directors Kash Arshad and Amie George in 2016. Kash and Amie first came together to share 15 minutes of original work at a *Shoots Scratch Night* at The Lowry, Salford, and were subsequently invited to perform at Paines Plough Roundabout, as an opener for award-winning production, *Growth*, by Luke Norris. In 2017 **Rogue Bones** produced the regional premiere of Vinay Patel's *Free Fall* at the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival, followed by two original plays: *Selfies Kill More People than Sharks* and *Making Love* as part of the Coliseum's Studio Takeover Season 2018.

Kash and Amie from Rogue Bones Theatre Company commented: *“This partnership means that **Rogue Bones** will have the space to play and experiment, helping us develop our unique style of work. The recognition and support of the Coliseum is invaluable to us as we strive to grow our company, and we’re excited to see what the next year brings!”*

As Associate Companies **Fine Comb** and **Rogue Bones** will receive organisational and artistic development, access to the Coliseum’s rehearsal space, support from the theatre’s in-house teams, press and marketing support and audience development support. The organisations will work closely with the Coliseum to develop new audiences and provide critical feedback for other Coliseum productions. They will also be part of a peer-to-peer support network and act as mentors for young aspiring theatre-makers working with the theatre.

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Notes to Editor:

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Oldham Coliseum Theatre is a cultural and educational charity that works with over 150,000 individuals per year.

The Coliseum has a rich history in Greater Manchester dating back to 1885. It provides a wide variety of distinctive theatre performances and participatory activities for people from all communities in Oldham, Greater Manchester and beyond. It creates eight original productions each year, of which up to half are newly-commissioned work, which are presented at the Coliseum and on tour. Intrinsic to the town’s on-going regeneration, the theatre works with its local communities and young people to develop creative programmes to facilitate learning, engagement and community cohesion.

The Coliseum is actively engaged with Oldham Council and Arts Council England to deliver a new theatre in the town by 2020.

Biographies:

Rachel McMurray, Fine Comb Theatre

Rachel is Fine Comb Theatre’s Company Director and Writer and has written all of the company’s original scripts for their productions. She is a theatre practitioner and director, creating theatre for, and with, a variety of communities and individuals.

Rachel is committed to directing and devising theatre which rouses conversation and stimulates social change. She has a Master of Arts in Applied Theatre and has worked with companies across the North West including: The Lowry, Salford; Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester; Octagon Theatre, Bolton; Theatre in Prison and Probation.

Catherine Morefield, Fine Comb Theatre

Catherine is Fine Comb Theatre’s Producer and Designer. Following Salford University, she trained at the Independent Centre for Actor Training, using Mike Alfred’s techniques to explore the complexity of what makes a truthful performance. She has worked as an actor in theatre, television and commercials, including: Blast Theory, Hydrocracker, Moxie Pictures, Channel 4 and BBC.

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Kash Arshad, Rogue Bones Theatre Company

Kash is Trainee Artistic Director at Freedom Studios, Bradford, and Associate Director on their tour of *When We Were Brothers*, a new play by Ben Tagoe. He is currently directing *Airplays* for Leeds Playhouse and recently directed *Selfies Kill More People Than Sharks* for Rogue Bones and *Ninja Division* for Slung Low Shorts.

Other directing credits include: *Memories of Partition* (Royal Exchange Theatre); *Free Fall* (Rogue Bones) and *Street Voices 6* (Freedom Studios). Kash was Assistant Director for *Threepenny Opera* (Octagon Theatre, Bolton, working with Director David Thacker); *Handbagged* (Theatre By The Lake, Keswick, working with Director Liz Stevenson); *Romeo and Juliet* (West Yorkshire Playhouse, working with Director Amy Leach), and *#ChipShoptheMusical* (Octagon Theatre, Bolton, working with Director Ben Occhipinti).

Amie George, Rogue Bones Theatre Company

Amie is a writer and performer who trained at ALRA North. She most recently wrote and performed in *Selfies Kill More People Than Sharks* for Rogue Bones and has been touring *Horace and The Yeti* for Little Mighty. Amie also played the role of Andrea in Rogue Bones' production of *Free Fall*.

In 2016 Amie trained at the Royal Court Theatre's writers' programme, where she was taught by playwrights Brad Birch and Polly Stenham. In 2017 she won Oldham Coliseum Theatre's First Break New Writing Competition with her short play *Waiting*. She has also had work performed at The Lowry, Salford, Paines Plough's Roundabout, and HOME, Manchester. Amie currently teaches the Scribbles writing group at Oldham Coliseum Theatre, and in autumn 2018 will have a piece of new writing produced by Powder Keg Theatre Company.

www.roguebones.com

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