

COLISEUM ANNOUNCES STUDIO PROGRAMME OF INDEPENDENT PLAYS AND MUSICALS FOR SPRING-SUMMER 2019

Oldham Coliseum Theatre's popular Studio programme returns for its third year this Spring with a mix of comedy, drama, new writing and musicals from artists across the country as well as talented companies closer to home. Alongside 11 independent productions, the Studio will also play host to Scratch Nights and New Writing events, and in June the second annual **Cultivate Festival** for theatre makers takes over the building with a week of workshops, opportunities and industry insights.

Chris Lawson, Acting Artistic Director of the Coliseum commented: *"Now in its third year, the Studio programme continues to grow running alongside our productions on the Main Stage. We're extremely proud of the reputation our Studio has built and will continue to develop artists, showcase the best in new work and inspire conversations long after the show has finished."*

Hard-hitting productions inspired by real events and true stories feature throughout the season. Hiding Place Theatre's **Bottleneck** by Luke Barnes tells the story of the Hillsborough disaster through the eyes of a 14 year-old football fan growing up in 'the boot' in Liverpool; Crowded Room's **The Listening Room** tells the true stories of five people whose lives were transformed by three moments of violence; Coliseum Associate Company Fine Comb Theatre's **Not Yours, Mine** looks at the complexities involved in the family court system and Useful Productions' **Three Mothers** tells three stories of immigration.

We take a look inside ourselves and at modern day society with Holly Gallagher's **Tensile Strength (Or How to Survive at your Wits End)** and Jess Gibson's **Work in Progress**. Presented by Arc Stockton, **Tensile Strength** is a performance about stress and why so many people feel it to an unhealthy degree. In **Work in Progress** we meet Jess, a Scouse girl who struggles to manage her mental health, borderline personality disorder, anxiety and depression, but through a passion for dancing to Britney Spears, has learnt to feel comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Following the Coliseum's Manchester Theatre Award winning 2017 production of *The Father* on the Main Stage, the Studio programme for 2019 features two independent productions which continue to explore the vital topic of dementia. **In Other Words** by Off The Middle is a moving and funny love story which

highlights the effects of Alzheimer's disease and the transformative power of music, utilising the songs of Frank Sinatra. Smashing Mirrors Theatre's **Three Emos** is the story of three friends whose lives are changed when one of their grandparents is diagnosed with dementia. With an original rock soundtrack, generations clash and come together in a tale of finding inspiration in the most unlikely of places.

Further cross-overs between the Main Stage and the Studio include **Drip** by Tom Wells, the writer behind the Coliseum's 2016 and 2018 hit productions of *Jumpers For Goalposts* and *The Kitchen Sink*, and Freedom Studios' production of Adelle Stripe's **Black Teeth and a Brilliant Smile**, which is inspired by the life and work of Andrea Dunbar, writer of *Rita, Sue and Bob Too*. **Drip** is a one-man musical comedy about 15 year-old optimist, Liam, who has just signed up for Bev Road Baths' first ever synchronised swimming team to help out his friend Caz. The problem is, Liam can't swim. **Black Teeth and a Brilliant Smile** introduces us to Andrea Dunbar in 1990 as she struggles with her latest work with an aching head full of voices telling stories from her past.

The Coliseum's commitment to developing emerging artists and their work remains at the heart of the Studio programme. Following on from *Scripts Aloud*, *What The Dickens* (a response to *Hard Times*) and *A Taste of Home* (a response to *A Taste of Honey*), the Coliseum's relationship with Manchester ADP continues with two nights of their second full-length production, **Purge**. In this show about women, their bodies and their relationship with the internet we meet 16 year old Regina, who has gained 125million subscribers in 24 hours, and her mother, who knows her as 'Sarah'. The Coliseum's Associate Company Fine Comb Theatre present their first **Scratch Night** in the studio, showcasing brand new work from four companies in an informal and inclusive environment.

In June the Coliseum's festival for theatre-makers, **Cultivate**, returns for the second year with a week dedicated to artist development and theatre upskilling. Taking place across the entire building **Cultivate** features opportunities including open auditions, scratch nights, funding application guidance and guest speakers and workshops covering acting, voice, movement and puppetry, with much more to be announced.

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

Full details of the programme for Cultivate Festival 2019 will be available from April.

For further press information, please contact Shelly Ramsdale on 0161 785 7012 or shellyramsdale@coliseum.org.uk

Link for upcoming events at Oldham Coliseum Theatre: <http://www.coliseum.org.uk/whats-on/>

Download the Studio brochure: <http://www.coliseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Studio-Web-Version-2.pdf>

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 original productions each year 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.

Performance runs:

Off The Middle presents <i>In Other Words</i>	Saturday 23 February, 7.30pm
Boundless Theatre and Script Club presents <i>Drip</i> By Tom Wells and Matthew Robins	Friday 1 & Saturday 2 March, 7.30pm
Hiding Place Theatre presents <i>Bottleneck</i> By Luke Barnes	Wednesday 6 & Thursday 7 March, 7.30pm
Fine Comb Theatre hosts <i>Scratch Night</i>	Wednesday 13 March, 7.30pm
Manchester ADP presents <i>Purge</i>	Thursday 14 & Friday 15 March, 7.30pm
Smashing Mirrors Theatre presents <i>Three Emos</i>	Wednesday 15 May, 7.30pm
Crowded Room presents <i>The Listening Room</i>	Thursday 16 May, 7.30pm
Arc Stockton presents <i>Tensile Strength (Or How to Survive at your Wits End)</i> By Holly Gallagher. Directed by Daniel Bye	Friday 17 May, 7.30pm
Fine Comb Theatre presents <i>Not Yours, Mine</i>	Saturday 1 – Friday 7 June (excluding Sunday, Monday & Wednesday)
Useful Productions presents <i>Three Mothers</i>	Tuesday 11 June, 7.30pm

Oldham Coliseum Theatre presents <i>Cultivate Festival</i>	Monday 10 – Saturday 15 June
Freedom Studios presents <i>Black Teeth and a Brilliant Smile</i> By Adelle Stripe. Directed by Kash Arshad	Wednesday 26 & Tuesday 27 June, 7.30pm
Jess Gibson presents <i>Work in Progress</i>	Friday 28 June, 7.30pm