

Visitors

Thursday 18 April – Saturday 4 May
An Oldham Coliseum Theatre Production
By Barney Norris
Directed by Chris Lawson
Designed by Sammy Dowson

Press Night: Thursday 18 April, 7.30pm

Barney Norris' multi-award winning debut play **Visitors** is an ode to life-long love that encourages us to stop and appreciate the beauty of the every day.

"You look at a wedding photograph, it looks like the end of a story. I s'pose that's the books we read when we're babies. But it's not an ending, is it?" – Edie in **Visitors**

Edie and Arthur have lived together on their farm for the majority of their lives, we meet them as they sit together in their living room reminiscing about the past and contemplating the latest change to come into their lives. Their son Stephen has hired twenty-something stranger Kate to move in and care for Edie as her mind begins to unravel.

Barney Norris' compassionate and wryly comic love story depicts the indiscriminate effects of dementia with frankness and light humour and illustrates the challenges facing three different generations. **Visitors** premiered at the Arcola Theatre, London in 2014, winning the Critics Circle Award for Most Promising Playwright and Best New Play at the Off West End Awards.

Actor, Director and former Artistic Director of the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough, Robin Herford, plays Arthur.

Robin is best known as the director of Steven Mallatratt's phenomenally successful adaptation of *The Woman in Black*, which has been running in the West End for 30 years. Trained as an actor, he started his career in 1976 at the Stephen Joseph Theatre and has appeared in the original production of more of Alan Ayckbourn plays than any other actor. Amongst his many other acting credits he has also played Arthur Kipps in *The Woman in Black* in London, Singapore, India, Hong Kong and New Zealand, Frank in *Educating Rita* at the Stephen Joseph Theatre and appeared in *Only Fools and Horses* (BBC), *Casualty* (BBC), *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* and *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole* (Thames Television).

Robin will be joined by **Ben Porter**, who was nominated for the Manchester Theatre Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role for his performance in the Coliseum's 2015 production of *Boeing Boeing* – as Stephen; **Liz Crowther**, whose recent credits include *Kite* at Soho Theatre and *The Witch of Edmonton*, *The White Devil* and *The Roaring Girl* at RSC – as Edie; and **Kitty Douglas**, who was seen as part of the Coliseum's Cultivate Open Auditions in 2018 – as Kate.

Visitors follows the Coliseum's critically acclaimed 2017 production of *The Father* (Best Production, Manchester Theatre Awards) in telling stories that highlight the difficult yet universal subject of dementia

and its effects on our lives; a theme which is also seen in independent plays in the theatre's Studio this season with Off The Middle's *In Other Words* and Smashing Mirrors Theatre's forthcoming *Three Emos*. Off-stage, the theatre supports people who are living with dementia and their carers by presenting Dementia Friendly performances each season and running Dementia Friendly workshops both at the theatre and in local care homes.

Visitors is directed by the Coliseum's Acting Artistic Director **Chris Lawson**, whose most recent production *A Skull in Connemara* received both critical and public acclaim. Designer **Sammy Dowson** returns to Oldham for the production following 2018's *A Taste of Honey* and 2016's *Hard Times*.

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

Visitors runs from Thursday 18 April – Saturday 4 May 2019 at Oldham Coliseum Theatre.

Tickets can be booked on 0161 624 2829 or at www.coliseum.org.uk
Link to production page: <http://www.coliseum.org.uk/plays/visitors/>

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

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.

Images:

A high-resolution JPEG of the image for **Visitors** is available to download from Dropbox via:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/hwgndkev6qcht5l/Visitors%20-%20An%20Oldham%20Coliseum%20Theatre%20Production.jpg?dl=0>

Rehearsal photographs will be available from 8 April 2019

Production photographs will be available from 5pm on Thursday 18 April 2019

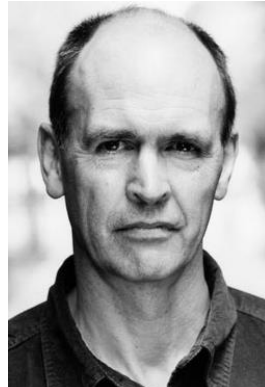
Cast:



Liz Crowther
– *Edie*



Kitty Douglas
– *Kate*



Robin Herford
– *Arthur*



Ben Porter
– *Stephen*

Directed by **Chris Lawson**

Designed by **Sammy Dowson**

Deputy Stage Manager (On the Book) **Caroline Bowen**