

## **Frantic Assembly workshop amongst highlights at second Cultivate theatre upskilling festival in Oldham**

Internationally renowned theatre company **Frantic Assembly** are set to run their physical theatre workshop at Oldham Coliseum Theatre's **Cultivate 2019**, a week-long festival packed with workshops, opportunities and industry insights for theatre makers. Now in its second year, the festival also includes **open auditions**, workshops in **stage combat**, **puppetry**, **acting**, **producing** and **crowdfunding**, and **new writing** and **virtual reality** performances.

**Chris Lawson, Acting Artistic Director of Oldham Coliseum Theatre, commented:** *"Cultivate is a celebration of all elements of theatre including making, critiquing and its use as a learning tool - and an unmissable opportunity for anyone interested in working in the industry. The inaugural festival in 2018 welcomed 200 people into the building using all of our public spaces for a variety of workshops and activities. We're proud to contribute toward meeting the demand for accessible and affordable training opportunities in our region."*

**Frantic Assembly** are one of the most studied and praised theatre companies working today. They have toured extensively across the UK and worked in over 40 countries internationally with their productions including: *The Unreturning*, *Fatherland* and *Things I Know To Be True*, and collaborated with leading artists, including providing movement direction on The National Theatre's award-winning production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (West End, Broadway, UK & Ireland tour and USA tour) and the BAFTA nominated Channel 4 series *Humans*. Their **Physical Theatre Workshop** is an active exploration of the Frantic method of devising, based in empowering people to be better at making theatre from a physical starting point.

For the second year running the Coliseum is holding **Open Auditions** as part of **Cultivate** with a panel of theatre and television professionals. In 2018 the theatre received over 400 applications for Open Auditions and met with 62 actors, including Kitty Douglas, who completes a run playing *Kate* in the Coliseum's production of Barney Norris' *Visitors* (★★★★ - The Stage) on Saturday 4 May. The 2019 Open Auditions panel includes Chris Lawson (Acting Artistic Director of Oldham Coliseum Theatre), Sarah Punshon

(current Artistic Director of The Dukes, Lancaster), Claire Bleasdale (Casting Director) and Joanne Moss (ITV *Coronation Street* Casting). The deadline for applications for **Open Auditions** is 10am, Friday 24 May.

**Kaitlin Howard**, an Academy of Performance Combat Senior Instructor and one of only three women on the Equity Register of Fight Directors, will lead an **Introduction to Unarmed Stage Combat** for theatrical and film purposes. Suitable for actors and performers wishing to have a taster into a subject that may widen their skill set, those who wish to refresh their knowledge, or those who are just curious, the masterclass will take participants through various stage combat techniques suitable for use in different media and staging situations and the acting skills needed to convince the audience of the violence, culminating in a short sequence and performance opportunity on stage.

Other workshops throughout **Cultivate** include: a **Puppetry Workshop** with Lancashire based puppet and mask theatre company **Horse + Bamboo**, **Acting** and **Producing Workshops** with new writing company **Box Of Tricks Theatre** and **Crowdfunding for Creatives** with **Art With Heart**.

Alongside professional development opportunities **Cultivate** features performances of new work from established and emerging Northern writers and artists.

**The Understudy** is a virtual reality experience produced by digital artist and co-founder of Take Back Theatre, **Grant Archer**. Allowing audiences to step into a fictional world as an understudy, the experience offers a glimpse backstage to witness first-hand the tensions and relationships of the world of theatre.

Coliseum Associate Company **Rogue Bones Theatre** host a new writing night with a difference, **Write Here, Write Now**. Rogue Bones invites a group of established Northern writers to take up a challenge: write a short piece of work in response to a provocation in just eight days. On the ninth day the work will be rehearsed and staged with professional actors at **Cultivate** in front of an audience ready and raring to give feedback on how each piece made them feel.

**Scribbles**, the Coliseum's fortnightly scriptwriting group, present a sharing of their work, with actors and directors bringing a scene to life from each of their full-length plays. Led by Rogue Bones Theatre's Aime George, **Scribbles** have been meeting over a number of months to learn elements of playwriting including story structure, character and dialogue. Their sharing offers an opportunity to support the work of Oldham's newest writing talent.

**Cultivate** culminates with **Creative Matchmaking** from **Girl Gang Manchester** on Friday 14 June. **Girl Gang Manchester** is a collective of artists, activists, academics and party instigators who put on events and create projects building connection, community, collaboration, confidence and connectivity. Taking inspiration from dating shows, bad business meetings, teenage sleepovers, *Art Attack* and agony aunts, **Creative Matchmaking** rebels against the pressures of adulthood and our increasingly online lives to get people in a room together, talking to strangers, being your most authentic self and making connections. The event is a twist on Girl Gang's *Speed Mate-ing* and is open to creatives of all levels of experience.

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**Notes to Editor:**

**Cultivate 2019** runs from Monday 10 – Saturday 15 June at Oldham Coliseum Theatre

Full details of the festival's workshops and events are available online at <http://www.coliseum.org.uk/whats-on/cultivate-festival/>

For further press information, please contact Shelly Ramsdale on 0161 785 7012 or email [shellyramsdale@coliseum.org.uk](mailto:shellyramsdale@coliseum.org.uk)

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**Cultivate 2019**

Mon 10 June	Puppetry Workshop with Horse + Bamboo Theatre	10.30am - 12.30pm
	Physical Theatre with Frantic Assembly	1 - 5pm
Tue 11 June	<b><i>The Understudy:</i></b> A VR Experience	11am - 5pm
Wed 12 June	Crowdfunding for Creatives with Art With Heart	10.30am - 12.30pm
	Introduction to Unarmed Stage Combat with Kaitlin Howard	2 - 4pm
	<b><i>Scribbles</i></b> sharing	4pm
Thu 13 June	Open Auditions (deadline for applications: 10am, Friday 24 May)	10am - 6pm
	An Actor's Introduction to New Plays with Box Of Tricks Theatre	10.30am - 12.30pm
	Producing New Work on the Small-Scale with Box Of Tricks Theatre	2 - 4.30pm
Fri 14 June	<b><i>Write Here, Write Now</i></b> with Rogue Bones Theatre	7.30pm
	Creative Matchmaking with Girl Gang Manchester	2 - 4pm

- *Further opportunities to be announced*
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## **Oldham Coliseum Theatre**

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 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.

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