

Double Bill:

Men Chase Women Choose by People Zoo Productions
Clouds by Time & Again Theatre Company

Part of Oldham Coliseum Theatre's Main House Takeover

Friday 27 September, 7.30pm

Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) links two independent productions from this year's Greater Manchester Fringe Festival due to **double bill** on the Coliseum's historic stage as part of the theatre's hugely successful **Main House Takeover**.

Men Chase Women Choose by People Zoo Productions, one of the Coliseum's Venues North supported shows at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival, will be joined by the theatre's Pick of the Fringe Award winner, **Clouds** by Time & Again Theatre Company on Friday 27 September.

Chris Lawson, Acting Artistic Director of the Coliseum, commented: "*The Coliseum is dedicated to supporting theatre makers creating fresh and interesting new work in our region. This year our Picks of the Fringe share messages of feminism – past, present and future – and science and education. The double bill is a brilliant opportunity for these companies and their shows to gain a bigger platform and a wider reach.*"

Men Chase Women Choose is a riotous romp through the history of the female body and the patriarchy intended on skewering widely held gender myths and unearthing the bad science behind them.

A scientist and an arts student are tasked with a presentation on 'the point of women.' What begins as an attempt at a science and sociology lecture is derailed by the student's dramatisation of their research.

Taking the form of a sketch show, with co-creators Sophie Giddens and Eve Shotton at the helm, **Men Chase Women Choose** is an informative and uproarious feminist romp that features fruit flies, film, physical theatre and a flute solo, putting women, sex and science under the microscope.

People Zoo Productions presented **Men Chase Women Choose** at the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival on 6 and 7 July at Hope Mill Theatre and then at Edinburgh Fringe Festival at Summerhall from 13 – 18 August supported by the Coliseum as part of Venues North, alongside *Best Girl* by Best Girl Productions.

Combining the suffocating society of pre-war Britain with a touch of comedy, early feminism, and pure vintage flair, **Clouds** won the Coliseum's Pick of the Fringe Award at this year's Greater Manchester Fringe Festival.

The year is 1913 and women are rising up...

Amidst the flock of pioneers fighting to rule the skies, Winifred (Freddie) Baxter is determined to become the first Englishwoman to enter an air race, learning to fly amidst the chaos of the suffragette movement, a glorious garden party and far too much nephology: the study of clouds. **Clouds** takes Britain's 'last glorious summer' and slowly draws to the surface the simmering tensions and stark inequality lurking just beneath the surface of repressed Edwardian respectability.

Writer and performer Laura Crow commented: *"We're hugely excited to bring **Clouds** to the Coliseum. Oldham's links to the suffragette movement through notable residents Lydia Becker; who founded the Women's Suffrage Journal and helped to inspire a young Emmeline Pankhurst, and Annie Kenney; a leading member of the WSPU, give the show a sense of homecoming. The suffragette movement was born in Manchester and we're so excited to bring our story to life in such a beautiful local theatre. It's a truly huge opportunity for us."*

Time & Again Theatre Company formed in the summer of 2017 and use history to highlight issues still relevant to the world today. With **Clouds** the company aim to raise awareness of the ongoing gender disparity in STEM fields, particularly the lack of women in the aviation industry. Currently, only 22% of the workforce in core STEM occupations is female. This percentage is even lower in areas such as engineering (12%) and IT (16%).* Lower still, only 5.18% of commercial pilots worldwide are women.**

To select the winner of the Pick of the Fringe Award the Coliseum sent a team of 7 judges to see over 40 shows throughout this year's Greater Manchester Fringe Festival. **Clouds** ran at the Greater Manchester Fringe on 25 July at The Pankhurst Centre and at Edinburgh Fringe Festival from 2 – 17 August at The Space on the Mile.

Oldham Coliseum Theatre's Main House Takeover brings the new and often daring work seen across the North West's independent theatre scene to Oldham's historic Main Stage. Putting the spotlight on Greater Manchester's eclectic fringe theatre scene, the Main House Takeover also features a three-night run of **Tinned Up** by Chris Hoyle, presented by 53two and Manchester Actor's Platform Productions (24 – 26 September).

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

Men Chase Women Choose and **Clouds** double bill on Friday 27 September 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/main-house-takeover-pick-of-the-fringe/>

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

*Statistics from wisecampaign.co.uk 2018 workforce statistics

**Statistic from Air Line Pilots Association International trade union, 7th November 2018

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 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.

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