

Black Men Walking

Thursday 24 – Saturday 26 October

An Eclipse Theatre production

By Testament

Directed by Dawn Walton

Inspired by a real-life walking men's group in Sheffield, ***Black Men Walking*** comes to Oldham Coliseum Theatre this October.

Black Men Walking tells the compelling story of three middle-aged Black men: Thomas, Matthew and Richard, who meet every month as part of a walking group to explore the dramatic landscape of the Peak District in Yorkshire. On this particular trip, the rest of group cancels and it soon feels like maybe they should have done too. The men find themselves forced to walk backwards through two thousand years of Black history, embarking on a dangerous journey that invokes an element of the supernatural, an encounter with the spirits of their ancestors and an exploration of what it means to be both Black and British today.

The Sheffield-based walking group which inspired the production was founded in 2004 by a group of men of African and African-Caribbean heritage who started walking for health, wellbeing and camaraderie.

The first work staged as part of the Eclipse's ground-breaking 'Revolution Mix' movement, which is delivering the largest ever national programme of Black British stories produced and performed in UK theatres, ***Black Men Walking*** premiered at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester in January 2018. Nominated for UK Theatre's Best New Play Award and The Writer's Guild's Best Play Award, the original production was conceived by Eclipse Theatre in collaboration with Leeds-based rapper **Testament** and directed by **Dawn Walton**. The play won rave reviews for its exploration of complex themes including race and identity, expressed through dramatic story telling which mixes prose, poetry and original music.

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

Black Men Walking runs from Thursday 24 – Saturday 26 October 2019 at Oldham Coliseum Theatre.

Black Men Walking is recommended for ages 14+.

Tickets can be booked on 0161 624 2829 or at www.coliseum.org.uk

Link to production page: <http://www.coliseum.org.uk/plays/black-men-walking/>

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

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.

www.coliseum.org.uk

Twitter @OldhamColiseum

Facebook @oldhamcoliseumtheatre

Instagram @OldhamColiseum

Eclipse Theatre

Eclipse is the foremost Black-led national touring company in the UK, at the vanguard of delivering diverse programming in theatre, film and radio across the country. It is their mission to use the Black* British experience to create new work to enrich the stories shared with theatre audiences nationwide, and to diversify those audiences.

* Eclipse use "Black" to include anyone marginalised for their race or ethnicity.

www.eclipsetheatre.org.uk

Twitter @eclipsedcl

Testament is a rapper, beatboxer and theatre maker currently based in West Yorkshire. He is Ch4 Playwright in Residence at The Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester.

Credits include performances on BBC, MTV, BBC Radio 1 and BBC 1xtra, radio 3, 4, 5 & 6. He also holds the Guinness World Record for leading the world's largest Human Beatbox ensemble. Testament won the BBC Urban Music Talent Award in 2007 and has since worked with a diverse range of artists from Corinne Bailey Rae and Soweto Kinch to US legend, DJ KoolHerc.

Testament (aka Andy Brooks) is passionate pushing further into his journey as a playwright. He has gone from using his voice to confront issues as an underground hip-hop artist, transitioning to a one man theatre performer and is now finding his voice as a new and exciting playwright with things to say about the world and how we treat one another.

Dawn Walton has more than twenty years' experience as a professional Theatre Director. She has directed more than twenty full productions for (amongst others) Sheffield Theatres, Royal Court Theatre, Young Vic, Sadlers Wells, RSC and five national middle-scale tours (four produced with Eclipse). Previous productions have received nominations for Olivier awards and at the TMA Awards. From 2009 – 2019, Dawn was artistic director of Eclipse Theatre, the UK's foremost Black-led production company. Whilst at helm of the company, Dawn was instrumental in the creating and driving two major movements, '**Revolution Mix**' – which is delivering the largest ever national delivery of new Black British productions in theatre, film and radio and '**Slate: Black. Arts. World**', supporting Black artists in the North.