

Chris Lawson announces Oldham Coliseum Spring-Summer 2020 Programme

- THE FIRST COLISEUM-PRODUCED FAMILY SHOW OUTSIDE OF THE FESTIVE SEASON IN ALMOST 20 YEARS
- A NORTHERN TOUR OF GARETH FARR'S *SHANDYLAND*
- A REVIVAL OF LEE HALL'S *COOKING WITH ELVIS*
- CO-PRODUCING PAINES PLOUGH ROUNABOUT 2020
- THE THIRD ANNUAL CULTIVATE FESTIVAL
- THE INAUGURAL KHUSHI FESTIVAL

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE VIA:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tq3aw3fmahtsavw/AAAnyJxpSEzIBxEqcvpxRr1Da?dl=0>

Oldham Coliseum Theatre's Acting Artistic Director **Chris Lawson** announces the theatre's Spring-Summer 2020 season with a programme featuring Northern voices, new writing, dark comedy, exciting collaborations and a modern adaptation of a classic family favourite.

The theatre also welcomes three new Associate Artists: **Grant Archer**, **Hafsah Aneela Bashir** and **RedBobble Arts**, who will join continuing Associates **Fine Comb Theatre**, and three Supported Artists: **Caitlin Gleeson**, **Nana-Kofi Kufuor** and **Sorcha McCaffrey** for the year 2020. All six will begin working with the Coliseum in January.

Chris Lawson comments: "*Our Spring-Summer programme signifies the future direction of the Coliseum and reflects a contemporary Oldham. I believe there's something here for everyone and I'm overjoyed by the positive response from our audiences, who are keen to come with us on this next chapter in the Coliseum's journey. We're delighted to be working with a whole host of partners - new and old - to bring the best work to Oldham.*"

The season opens with a modern musical reworking of Rudyard Kipling's ***The Jungle Book*** by Olivier Award winning writer Jessica Swale, which will be directed by Sarah Punshon.

The first Coliseum-produced family show outside of the festive season in almost 20 years, ***The Jungle Book*** is packed with memorable characters, original songs and brilliant storytelling. With a little help from his animal friends Mowgli the man-cub faces Shere Khan the tiger and learns the law of the Jungle.

Swale's adaptation of the much loved children's classic features powerful female characters and champions diversity, unity and acceptance. ***The Jungle Book*** runs from **Friday 3 – Sunday 19 April**. Additional activity around the production includes Jungle Trail Guided Walks and family craft workshops.

From **Tuesday 9 – Saturday 20 June** the Coliseum teams up with Northern Stage, Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse, York Theatre Royal and Greyscale to present Gareth Farr's ***Shandyland***. On average 27 pubs close each week in the UK, predominantly in working class towns and cities. ***Shandyland*** is a story of life, love, death and drink at the heart of a small, northern family run pub, and a shout of frustration from an abandoned working class community. Gareth Farr's third full length play, it was written as part of the prestigious Old Vic12 scheme.

Speaking with The Old Vic, Farr commented: *"I come from a small, working class mining town in Lancashire where pubs are social spaces, they are community venues, they are places of comfort and exceptional conversation... The fact that so many are closing and at such a fast rate means that local working-class pubs could disappear completely from the cultural landscape of Britain and if that happens then what would happen to that environment?"*

Additional activity around the production of ***Shandyland*** includes a panel discussion exploring the social and economic challenges surrounding local pubs and their communities and a short reading at Oldham's White Hart Inn followed by the pub quiz.

The Coliseum presents Lee Hall's dark comedy ***Cooking with Elvis*** from **Friday 11 – Saturday 26 September**. When an amateur Elvis impersonator is paralysed in a car crash his wife and daughter are forced to deal with the aftermath. Jill tries to replace him with cooking, Mam tries to replace him with sex. Unfortunately, they both try out their talents with the same man.

From the writer of *Billy Elliot*, *The Pitmen Painters* and the 2019 hit film *Rocketman*, ***Cooking with Elvis*** is both provocative and hilarious.

The Coliseum welcomes a touring production of Richard Cameron's ***The Glee Club*** presented by Out of Joint, Cast and Kiln Theatre from **Tuesday 12 – Saturday 16 May**. Described as *Brassed Off* meets *The Full Monty*, Cameron's celebrated play about miners preparing for the local gala is a raucous comedy featuring live music.

The Glee Club - a group of five hard-working, hard drinking miners and a church organist – are well established in the working men's clubs, but they're not exactly at the vanguard of a musical revolution. It's the summer of '62 and Britain and music are about to change, so too are the lives of these six men...

Elsewhere in the season the theatre welcomes ***Friendsical***, a musical parody inspired by the hit TV show (**Monday 18 – Wednesday 20 May**), and Olivier Award winning comedy ***Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*** (**Tuesday 26 & Wednesday 27 May**).

Friendsical features original new songs including *(He's Her) Lobster!*, *Richard's Moustache* and *You're Over Me, When Were You Under Me?* The gang take on Naked Thursdays, a power cut and a dinosaur convention. What could possibly go wrong?

Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense is a new play adapted from the works of PG Wodehouse, written by the Goodale Brothers. Aristocratic buffoon Bertie Wooster has hires the theatre for the night to present his one man show detailing a recent and rather spectacular series of misadventures. In a joyous reimagining of the classic PG Wodehouse characters, three actors hurl themselves from role to role as they race to tell the story.

Oldham Coliseum Theatre co-produce Paines Plough **Roundabout** this year, bringing the award-winning pop up venue to Oldham town centre from Saturday 27 June – Saturday 18 July.

The 2020 Roundabout programme includes world premieres: **Hungry** by Chris Bush (*Steel, The Changing Room*), **Black Love** by Chinonyerem Odimba (*The Sweetness of a Sting*) and family show **Really Big and Really Loud** by 2019 Bruntwood Award winner Phoebe Éclair-Powell (*Fury, Epic Love and Pop Songs*) performed in rep, directed by Paines Plough Joint Artistic Director Katie Posner, plus a new 'trailblazer' 30-minute short play, **The Inconvenience Store** by Charlotte Keatley. Roundabout will also host a programme of visiting companies, comedy, music and local community events. Full listings will be announced in due course.

Chris Lawson comments: "We are delighted to be co-producing **Roundabout** 2020 season with Paines Plough, and elevating our long-standing commitment to new writing in such an exciting way. We can't wait for the Roundabout to take centre stage in Oldham town centre and would like to thank our colleagues at Oldham Council for their support of this programme."

Hungry by Chris Bush is a new play about food, class and grief in a world where there is little left to savour.

Black Love by Chinonyerem Odimba is brand new musical about love. Chinonyerem's latest work explores romantic relationships between black people, and in particular how this is portrayed, or more often than not, isn't portrayed on stage.

Really Big and Really Loud by Phoebe Éclair-Powell is a new play for families about living loudly.

The Inconvenience Store by Charlotte Keatley is a new 30 minute short play about a shop that allows people the change themselves, not just their clothes.

2020 is **Roundabout's** seventh consecutive year; the season will be co-produced by Paines Plough and Oldham Coliseum Theatre in association with York Theatre Royal. It will open in Oldham town centre in June and continue onto Summerhall, Edinburgh before transferring to York Theatre Royal in September. They will then tour to Salford, Ramsgate, Doncaster, Bournemouth and Lincoln.

From **Monday 1 – Friday 5 June** Oldham Coliseum Theatre presents its third annual **Cultivate Festival** focussed on theatre upskilling. An unmissable opportunity for anyone looking to get into any of the many

areas of theatre, previous **Cultivate** festivals have included workshops from Frantic Assembly, Equity Fight Director Kaitlin Howard and renowned director Chris Honer plus open auditions, Virtual Reality Theatre experiences and networking opportunities. Full details of this year's festival will be revealed in due course.

Khushi, a brand new festival showcasing work made and inspired by Oldham's South Asian communities, takes over the Coliseum from **Wednesday 12 – Saturday 15 August**. Through a series of dynamic projects that will bring artists and communities together, **Khushi** will present a rich mix of events for everyone including live performance, art installations, poetry, music and workshops.

The Coliseum welcomes six Independent Theatre companies throughout the season:

Plant Fetish by performance artist Chanje Kunda is presented at Oldham Library on **Tuesday 10 March**. It looks at anxiety and women in Mexico who, fed up of men, are getting married to trees.

The Last Quiz Night on Earth by Box Of Tricks is presented at Oldham's Bank Top Tavern pub. The explosive new pre-apocalyptic comedy runs on **Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 March**.

Best Girl is a semi-autobiographical play written by actor Christine Mackie (The Coliseum's production of *Whisky Galore* and *Coronation Street's* Dr Gaddas) inspired by the loss of her father and performed by her daughter Lois. The production was supported at Edinburgh Fringe Festival by the Coliseum as part of Venues North in Summer 2019. It comes to the Coliseum Studio from **Thursday 16 – Saturday 18 April**.

Drowning, in the Coliseum Studio on **Wednesday 6 and Thursday 7 May** is the debut play by Dare To Know Theatre, a show about a 16 year old's struggle with mental health.

Ladybones by Coliseum Supported Artist Sorcha McCaffrey is an uplifting and compelling story about OCD, dungarees and being weird but not a weirdo. Following a successful run at Edinburgh Fringe it comes to the Coliseum Studio on **Thursday 14 May**.

Shine in the Coliseum Studio on **Wednesday 27 May** is an immersive psychological thriller that blurs the senses and tricks the mind as the audience search for a missing girl.

Last but certainly not least the Coliseum also welcomes an array of special one night events. Family fun includes Northern Ballet's **Little Red Riding Hood (Saturday 2 May)** and Julia Donaldson's **Zog (Friday 27 – Sunday 29 March)**; music includes **The South**, formerly known as The Beautiful South (**Monday 22 June**) and a tribute to Queen (**Thursday 28 May**), comedy includes **Russell Kane (Saturday 25 April)** plus there's a little bit of magic with *Britain's Got Talent* 2019 finalist **Ben Hart (Tuesday 21 April)**.

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

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

Images for the Coliseum's Spring-Summer Season are available via:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tq3aw3fmahtsavw/AAAnyJxpSEzIBxEgcvpXRr1Da?dl=0>

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.

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is supported by Arts Council England, Oldham Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is a Registered Charity, no 508829.

Oldham Coliseum Theatre Ltd Reg no: 1415547

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Performance runs:

<i>Trojan Horse</i> A LUNG production Part of the Autumn/Winter 2019-20 Season	Thursday 6 & Friday 7 February Main Theatre
<i>Four Minutes Twelve Seconds</i> An Oldham Coliseum Theatre production Part of the Autumn/Winter 2019-20 Season	Friday 21 February – Saturday 7 March Main Theatre
<i>Ladies That Bus</i> Joyce Branagh Part of the Autumn/Winter 2019-20 Season	Wednesday 26 February Studio
<i>Absurd Person Singular</i> A London Classic Theatre production Part of the Autumn/Winter 2019-20 Season	Tuesday 10 – Saturday 14 March Main Theatre
<i>The Last Quiz Night on Earth</i>	Monday 16 & Tuesday 17 March

Box of Tricks Presented by Oldham Coliseum Theatre and live@thelibrary	Bank Top Tavern, Oldham, OL8 1ES
The Jungle Book An Oldham Coliseum Theatre Production	Friday 3 – Sunday 19 April Main Theatre
Best Girl Best Girl Productions	Thursday 16 – Saturday 18 April Studio
Drowning Dare to Know Theatre	Wednesday 6 – Thursday 7 May Studio
The Glee Club Presented by Out of Joint, Cast and Kiln Theatre	Tuesday 12 – Saturday 16 May Main Theatre
Ladybones Sorcha McCaffrey	Thursday 14 May Studio
Friendsical	Monday 18 – Wednesday 20 May Main Theatre
Shine	Wednesday 17 May Studio
Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense Presented by The Theatre Chipping Norton and Barn Theatre	Tuesday 26 – Wednesday 27 May Main Theatre
Cultivate An Oldham Coliseum Theatre festival	Monday 1 – Friday 5 June Oldham Coliseum Theatre – all spaces
Shandyland A Northern Stage co-production with Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse, Oldham Coliseum Theatre, York Theatre Royal and Greyscale	Tuesday 9 – Saturday 20 June Main Theatre
Roundabout Paines Plough and Oldham Coliseum Theatre in Association with York Theatre Royal	Saturday 27 June – Saturday 18 July Oldham Town Centre
Khushi An Oldham Coliseum Theatre festival	Wednesday 12 – Saturday 15 August Oldham Coliseum Theatre – all spaces
Cooking with Elvis An Oldham Coliseum Theatre production	Friday 11 – Saturday 26 September Main Theatre