

26 February 2021

Spring Digital Season on sale at Oldham Coliseum

This Spring Oldham Coliseum Theatre presents a season of online events and experiences for audiences of all ages to enjoy, using interactivity and digital technology to transport audiences to different worlds and put them at the heart of the story.

From Friday 9 - Sunday 25 April Oldham Coliseum Theatre and Front Room Productions present ***Whodunnit at the Coliseum?*** – a tongue-in-cheek interactive murder mystery set at the theatre in 1954 on the opening night of *The Scottish Play*.

It's moments before curtain up and Front of House Manager Edward Fitch is found... dead! Everyone is a suspect – and it's up to you to figure out whodunnit.

Front Room is a female-led theatre company existing to create site specific theatre in unconventional spaces. ***Whodunnit at the Coliseum?*** is part theatre, part film and part video game, all taking place online. Audiences can return to the theatre for the first time since March 2020 without physically leaving their homes. A series of choices will determine which scenes are seen and players have the opportunity to explore the theatre using a special game board.

In real life actor Harold Norman was accidentally stabbed during the 1947 production of *Macbeth* at the Coliseum, later dying of his wounds in hospital. ***Whodunnit at the Coliseum?*** is set during the theatre's first production of *Macbeth* since the tragic event.

This March the Coliseum is supporting Riptide to present ***Project Intimacy*** from Thursday 4 – Thursday 18 March and working in partnership with Riptide to present ***The Lucky Ones*** from Saturday 20 – Friday 26 March.

Riptide create unique immersive and interactive theatrical experience which transport you to another world, combining innovative storytelling with digital technologies.

Project Intimacy is a two-week experience which aims to forge new connections and combat isolation with people from across the country. Each audience member is paired with someone for a two-week experience in which they receive daily instructions and through SMS text messaging form a remote pairing, and maybe even a friendship. The experience is based on scientific evidence on how we make friends.

The Lucky Ones is a week-long experience that is part theatre, part video game and part escape room, coming to audiences via their phones, computers and letterboxes. First contact will be made on Day One

(20 March) and from there audiences will have parts of the narrative fed to them across the week. Audiences can play individually or in a team of up to four people.

Available now, the Coliseum is proud to support two free online events from Stand and Be Counted (SBC) Theatre as part of the digital season: ***Hidden Winter*** and ***Have Your Passport Ready***.

SBC Theatre is the UK's first Theatre Company of Sanctuary, making work with, about and for those seeking sanctuary in the UK and internationally.

Hidden Winter is a brand-new story walk adventure for families, was co-created with young asylum-seeker children and families in Bradford. The interactive adventure follows eight-year-old Hiba, a mischievous cat and a trail of winter clothes in a story celebrating the joys and difficulties of making friends in a new place. The adventure is available in English and Arabic, with a free activity pack also available to download.

Led by brothers Khaled and Mohammed Aljawad from Syria, now based in Sheffield, ***Have Your Passport Ready*** is a virtual experience that explores an unknown city without an interpreter. Audiences become players collecting evidence to prove their right to remain in the UK. The short film meets video game was originally commissioned by Knaive Theatre to launch A Digital Lyceum.

Previously announced, the Coliseum presents ThickSkin's virtual reality experience ***PETRICHOR*** from 1- 7 March.

PETRICHOR is a dystopian reality where everything is routine, every moment is muted, managed and monochrome. A chance meeting brings two unlikely individuals together and they start to question everything they have ever known.

Originally planned to take place in the theatre's auditorium during the Covid-secure November season (cancelled due to lockdown), audiences can experience ***PETRICHOR*** in 360-degrees at home on their phones or tablets.

In addition to the Digital Season now on sale Oldham Coliseum this month announced the recipients of its Micro Commissions, with seven new works being created for audiences to experience online this Spring. Exploring themes of health and wellbeing, local stories of work for and with young people from Oldham, the works respond to the world as we live in it today, almost one year on from the beginning of the pandemic.

The works include: Joyce Branagh's ***The Newcomer*** – exploring the true story of a survivor of a WWII Nazi German concentration camp who came to Oldham aged 12, Jade Williams's creativity and wellbeing project for young people inspired by Black British history, Grant Archer's investigation of how lockdown has

affected people working in the creative industry, Tori Burgess’s audio drama ***A Tale of Two Giants*** - based on the Saddleworth folk tale of Alphin and Alder, Dare to Know Theatre’s community verbatim piece ***The Wobble Room***, Caitlin Gleeson’s ***One Foot In Front Of The Other*** – exploring health and wellbeing through the lens of walking, and Chloe Heywood and Rowan Prescott’s piece about growing up in a poverty cycle in Oldham.

Oldham Coliseum closed its doors to the public with immediate effect following the Prime Minister’s announcement on Monday 16 March. Since its closure the theatre’s teams have been working remotely to create and share great art and opportunities to be creative, and making regular phone calls to participants at risk of experiencing loneliness due to lockdown. The theatre’s previous work in lockdown includes: the Advent Plays, Digital Panto Storytelling, the Mini-Podcast series, the Poetry Health Service – a Homemakers commission in partnership with HOME, Manchester, streaming of last year’s hit musical *The Hired Man* and Coliseum Creates – a resource pack of fun activities for families and children of all ages.

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

For further press information, please contact:

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(please note I am currently working from home)

Spring 2021 digital events with Oldham Coliseum Theatre:

<p><i>Hidden Winter</i> Stand and Be Counted (SBC) Theatre in association with Oldham Coliseum Theatre, Theatre in the Mill, Cast and Hull Truck Theatre</p>	<p>Available now</p>
<p><i>Have Your Passport Ready</i> Stand and Be Counted (SBC) Theatre</p>	<p>Available now</p>
<p><i>PETRICHOR</i> A MATCHBOX production by ThickSkin</p>	<p>Monday 1 – Sunday 7 March</p>
<p><i>Project Intimacy</i> Riptide supported by Oldham Coliseum Theatre</p>	<p>Thursday 4 – Thursday 18 March</p>
<p><i>The Lucky Ones</i></p>	<p>Saturday 20 – Friday 26 March</p>

Riptide in Partnership with Oldham Coliseum Theatre	
<i>Whodunnit at the Coliseum?</i> Presented by Oldham Coliseum Theatre and Front Room Productions	Friday 9 – Sunday 25 April 2021

Images

Images are available to download from Dropbox via:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3lt4y0fvbjezeky/AADDAEQlaOqR0745nqXD_ZuMa?dl=0

Oldham Coliseum Theatre

The Coliseum 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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