

Wednesday 13 October 2021

TRP Press Contact: Savanna Myszka, savanna.myszka@theatreroyal.com

For Immediate Release

**Extraordinary Bodies presents *Human*: a collage of intimate,
funny, real life stories**

Performing at Theatre Royal Plymouth Funky Llama Festival, *Human* combines the visual spectacle of aerial circus and dance, film and a binaural soundtrack. *Human* is an antidote to anxiety, gently bridging the transition from being at home in a pandemic to live performance in a tender, quirky collage of lives past and now. The show has been created to be as accessible as possible.

Extraordinary Bodies is a collaboration between two distinct companies, [Cirque Bijou](#) and [Diverse City](#). It brings together a circus company of disabled and non-disabled artists creating new, hybrid shows crisscrossing the boundaries of music, film, technology, circus and theatre. *Human* is a different show to those Extraordinary Bodies has presented previously because it was made during the pandemic and the company has evolved.

During the pandemic lockdowns, *Human* was created through the sharing of stories in voice and video messages about the meaning, the uncertainty and the unknown of being human. To make *Human*, the team explored their experiences of the pandemic and were inspired by recollections of childhood memories, their mums, falling in love, life-changing moments and a love of sweets.

The stories in *Human* are intimate, funny and celebratory, looking into the heart of these small moments that shape us. The show is separated into chapters in the film, such as *A Short Interlude on Kissing* and *A Short Interlude on Sweets*, with the artists' physicality capturing the emotional quality of the stories on stage.

The music is an original score by Ted Barnes incorporating live drumming and singing from on-stage performers with audio and music played through headphones, creating an intimate relationship between performer and audience. Extraordinary Bodies is



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Plymouth
Britain's Ocean City

committed to making circus accessible for everybody. The show is BSL interpreted by well-known Deaf actor David Ellington who is present on film, becoming a conjoined part of the show.

Touring with Extraordinary Bodies was not feasible for performer John Kelly, so his character appears on screen only. Onstage, another character enters the show to deliver a parcel, manifesting the artists' ever-present fear of performance opportunities drying up due to the impact of Covid-19.

Performing artists Tilly Lee-Kronick and Jonny Leitch are a unique circus double act. They combine wheelchair dance, floor work on hands and, new aerial doubles choreography. A new, specialist double trapeze was co-created with the artists to enable them to tell Jonny's story of his relationship with twin sister Becky.

Performer Jonny Leitch says: *"The relationship and artistry I have with Tilly has always stemmed from us exploring new or wacky ideas on the trapeze or other circus equipment. We explore storytelling in new ways through movement. The equipment that facilitates our artistic expression is essential to communicating with our audience and encourages us to be even more innovative in our performance. Human gets to the heart of how we are all feeling right now and I can't wait to share it with everyone and tour around the country."*

Claire Hodgson MBE, Artistic Director, Diverse City said: *"Human is a poetic record of our time. Weaving together real life stories through circus, combined with our use of technology, has created a show that connects with its audiences in a soothing, sublime, immersive way. It was important for us to work with our performers in a way that suited them and make a show that is accessible without compromise. With Extraordinary Bodies, we can experiment and develop work that is genre-defying as well as gravity-defying."*

After each performance, as part of the show, the audience is encouraged to meet some of the team informally and ask questions about what they've seen and share their own stories about what it means to them to be human.

Funky Llama Festival 2021 will be held in Central Park, Plymouth on Friday 29 and Saturday 30 October. Tickets are on sale to the public now on the [TRP website](#) and can be booked online or by calling the Theatre Royal Plymouth Box Office on 01752 267222.

The festival is a totally inclusive event that is programmed by our differently abled Funky Llama Steering Group. Funky Llama offers people opportunities to actively participate in creating and delivering a programme of inclusive arts events. Monthly socials and creative workshops are designed to develop well-being, enhance life skills, promote social networking and reduce isolation. You can find out more about Theatre Royal Plymouth's Funky Llama group [here](#).

ENDS

For further information please contact the Media and Communications team on public.relations@theatreroyal.com / 01752 230439

Extraordinary Bodies

Production Images: credit Ali Wright [DROPBOX LINK](#)

Video Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfNC-l9X4iM>

Language Guide for referring to disability [LINK](#)

Duration: approx 70 minutes

Age recommendation: All ages, although not a 'family show'.

Access: Captions and BSL are both embedded into the show and displayed on a large screen at the rear of the stage. Audio Description pre-recorded, embedded into the show throughout and played through headsets. Access tours (15 minutes) are available before the show. All performances are relaxed.

Creative team:

Created by Claire Hodgson, Billy Alwen & Steven Lake

Co-directed by Claire Hodgson, Billy Alwen

Written by Hattie Naylor, with the Company

Music by Ted Barnes

Film Directed & Produced by Steven Lake, Film edited by Monika Jastrzębska

Produced by Kate McStraw

Performers: John Kelly, Tilly Lee-Kronick, Jonny Leitch, Alfa Marks & Rebecca Solomon

Movement direction by Vicki Igbokwe

Sound Design by Jonny Leitch

Lighting Design by James Loudon

Sound Mix & Mastering by Odinn Ingibergsson BSL translation & performance by David Ellington

Understudies: Rosie Rowlands, Daryl Beeton & Jamie Beddard

Access consultation by Karina Jones & David Ellington

Audio description by Willie Elliot

Production Management by Paula Birtwistle

Company & Stage Management by Abi Hill

Technical Stage Management by Dean Sudron

Rigging by Saul Baum

Costumes by Georgia Burgess

Creation of Community artists short film & audio by Jodie Cole

Headphones for *Human* are provided with the kind support of Silent Disco King.

About Extraordinary Bodies.

Extraordinary Bodies was founded in 2013 as a radical and integrated circus performance company. It is a strong and unlikely partnership between sensational show-makers Cirque Bijou and cultural justice leaders Diverse City. The collaboration breaks boundaries, and the work does too with a bold mix of circus, dance, theatre and live music. With D/deaf, disabled and non-disabled artists working equally together, Extraordinary Bodies spotlights real life stories through joyous and fearless large scale performance and provides career pathways, training and mentorship for people



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Plymouth
Britain's Ocean City

historically excluded by the performing arts. Extraordinary Bodies is a national charitable organisation touring throughout the UK. extraordinarybodies.org.uk

Funded by Arts Council England, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the National Lottery.

Theatre Royal Plymouth (TRP) is a registered charity providing art, education and community engagement in Plymouth and across the region. It engages and inspires with the aim of touching lives. Theatre Royal Plymouth presents a year-round programme of world class productions on all scales as the South West's principal centre for performing arts.

Theatre Royal Plymouth works with partners to understand the challenges people face accessing the arts, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged people. It creates pathways that are genuinely accessible to those who might otherwise never get to engage with the arts. They collaborate to co-create and co-author work that represents the community, creating the space needed for people to tell their story in their own way.

Theatre Royal Plymouth is the UK's largest regional producing theatre. With a focus on embracing the vitality of new talent and supporting emerging and established artists. It collaborates with a range of partners to provide dynamic cultural leadership for the city of Plymouth.