

Press Release:

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PQA Venues @Riddle's Court returns to the Fringe for a second year and announces its 2019 line-up of more than 75 shows

PQA Venues @Riddle's Court (venue 277) has a jam-packed and vibrant programme of entertainment with more than 75 top-quality events including shows, workshops, talks and stand-up comedians planned for this August, as it heads into the second year of its five-year Edinburgh Festival Fringe partnership with the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust.

PQA Venues @Riddle's Court is located in a prime position off the top of the Royal Mile. The fully accessible venue's friendly staff, free Wi-Fi and phone charging stations, alongside the relaxing café bar within the unique 16th century courtyard, proved to be a hit with Fringe audiences last year, with it being presented with the 'Best Venue' accolade by Theatre Weekly website. This year, exciting additions to the courtyard include comfortable all-weather yurt seating areas and a global range of street food.

In a nutshell, here are the delights in store for Fringe-goers at PQA Venues @Riddle's Court in 2019:

One of many **shows with a Scottish connection**, and befitting of Riddle's Court's proximity to Edinburgh Castle, Iain Smith's *My Finest Hour* tells a funny and heartwarming story of his grandfather, a Scottish war hero, whose painting hangs in the Castle. *Para Handy: A Radio Play on Stage* (No Nonsense Productions) returns due to popular demand, with Neil Munro's classic tales performed as a 1950s radio broadcast with live sound effects created by the cast and audience. Other home-grown talent includes Edinburgh-based Paradigm presenting Madison Pollack's new play *Pink House* looking at a woman's take on belonging and tradition, an updated version of Scottish comedian Davy Mitchell's show *Irony?*, Marie Koehler's acclaimed play *Boswell* (MHK Productions/Rhymes With Purple), Fiona Henderson School of Dance's show-stopping *One Singular Sensation* and Jason Robert Brown's acclaimed musical *The Last Five Years* (Q Productions) which returns after a sell-out run in 2018, and stars local Edinburgh MGA Academy of Performing Arts talent Connor Burnett and Lori Davidson. *Monsters: A New Musical* (Paisley's Take the Leap Productions) sees Antony Irwin's contemporary reimagining of horror characters such as Dracula, his brides and Frankenstein.

New musical theatre writing is further championed with *Courage Calls to Courage: The Suffragist Musical* by Suzanne Hawkes, looking at the struggle for the vote between Emmeline Pankhurst's Suffragettes and Millicent Fawcett's Suffragists (Black and White Productions). Alexander Abbott's new musical *The Room* (Cromus) sees a girl alone in a room - why is she here, and what's her story?

Productions exploring **mental health, trauma and the darker side of relationships**, include *Samantha Pressdee: Covered*, *Monogamy* (The Inevitable Theatre Company), *Contractions* (Thomford Theatre), *Suicide Pact* (Acidflashback Productions), *Bear Pit* and *Void* (both by Elvin Acting Theatre Company) and poet and comedian Dan Webber in *Genre Fluid*.

Acclaimed international artists include *There She Is* (Gabriela Flarys, Brazil), *Marx in Soho* (The Marx Sisters / Nu Sass Productions, USA), *The Best Show We've Ever Done At The Edinburgh Fringe* (The Fish Girls, Australia), *The Silent House* (Iran Saye Theatre Group), *Brown Guys Grey Skies* (Deepu Dileepan and Sundeep Bhardwaj, Luxemburg), *I Went to Barcelona And All I Got Was This Lousy Comedy Show* (English Comedy in Barcelona, Spain), James Stellos's one-man play,

tEMPORARY sANITY (USA), family drama *Mama's Eggnog* (Before You Think Productions, USA) and Lavinia Savignoni's *The Perfect Body* (La Loba Productions/Rhymes with Purple, Italy).

A number of productions tell – or reimagine - **the stories of well-known figures, real or fictional**, including the Brontë sisters in *More Myself Than I Am* (Eleventh Hour Theatre), Douglas Adams in *We Apologise for the Inconvenience* (5064 Productions), the notorious serial killer Ed Gein in *Under the Floorboards* (Simon Shaw), *Dancing in the Moonlight – A Play About Phil Lynott* (Miles Mlambo), *Wuthering Heights* through a child's eyes (Be Amazing Productions) and *Puppet King Richard II* (Pocket Epics).

In further **unmissable drama**, following their success at last year's Fringe with five-star show *After Today*, Stage D'Or return with two new plays from acclaimed playwright Tim Connery, *Hitman and Her* and *The Legacy of William Ireland*. *The Passion of the Playboy Riots* (The Playboy Rioters) tells the true story of the role played by theatre in the birth of modern Ireland, set backstage during performances of ground-breaking Irish plays. *Dr Faustus* is a funny and fast-paced abridgement of Christopher Marlowe's most famous show. *Victor* is a new comedy play about relationships by Russell Obeney and Janet Garner (OBE Productions), whilst the black comedy *Time Please*, by John Knowles, is unexpected, powerful and brilliant, touching on serious domestic issues.

There is plenty for fans of **comedy, spoken word and storytelling** including *The 30 Year Old Virgo* (Michelle Aldridge), *Age Fright: 35 and Counting* (Jaleelah Galbraith), *Axolotl: A Poetry Reading* (Ryan Ward), *Emancipation* (Lorraine Chademunhu), *Buzzing* (Debbie Bird), *And I Think it Might Be... New Romantic!* (Marie Forrest), *Hesitation Remarks* (Chrissy Ross) and *The Chronic Complainer* (Ryan Bicheranloo).

Cabaret and entertainment are delivered with style by musical comedy performers Freyja Westdal and Beth Hayward in *Westdal & Hayward Need Work* and Rachel Dingle and Ruth West in *A Little R and R*, stage hypnotist Mark Knight, the *Trashfuture* podcast and, for young children, *Spec-tacular* (Tiny T's Tiny Theatre) a show about a girl and her magical glasses.

From other branches of the PQA family, **PQA Full-Time Academy** students from London present love stories with a difference in Harriet Braun's play, *Three*. These students, aged 16+, will be attending Fringe for the first time as part of their two-year Diploma in Performing Arts. This unique opportunity is provided by PQA for all students at the end of their first year. **The Pauline Quirke Academy of Performing Arts** also offers its weekend Academy students many opportunities to share their talents, from the bright lights of the West End to the international performing arts arena of Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Students from a number of Academies around the UK, aged 10-18, including Edinburgh and Glasgow, will bring their range of productions from hard-hitting drama to fairy tales with a spin: *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon*, *Mugged*, *The Norse Mythology Ragnasplosion*, *Second Person Narrative* (all four by PQA Edinburgh), *Alice in Wonderland* (PQA Glasgow), *The Terrible Tail of Adelaide Worthing* (PQA Stroud), *I Don't Want to Talk About It* (PQA Swindon), *The Trial* (PQA Cambridge), *That's How I See It* (PQA York, PQA Scarborough, PQA Beverley and PQA Hull), *Shadow of the Rose* (PQA Tunbridge Wells), *Written with Crayons* (PQA Hemel Hempstead), *So-Called Gen Z* (PQA Sutton) and *Wingmen* (PQA Wolverhampton).

The Fringe's first Education Festival, *EduMod at the Fringe*, will include public seminars such as *Promoting Diversity in Education* and *Are The Kids Alright? Generations Z's Mental Health Crisis*.

Actress, and Founder of PQA Venues, **Pauline Quirke**, said: "Our aim is to be welcoming and accessible to everyone, whether they are watching a show, performing or just popping in to recharge their batteries. It is invaluable for our PQA students to have the exciting experience of performing at the Fringe, alongside such a high-calibre roster of professional companies. We couldn't have wished

for a warmer welcome from SHBT last year and we are looking forward to continuing our partnership with them in 2019.”

For further information on all shows, or to book tickets, visit: <http://pqavenues.co.uk/> or via the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Box Office, in person, or by telephone: 0131 226 0000.

-ENDS-

PQA VENUES @RIDDLE’S COURT – PRESS OFFICE

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DROPBOX LINK TO ALL SHOWS’ RESOURCES (images, press releases, trailers):

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ca23is5ga1abgcu/AACwq65VkgVHX0gKCioooX-Na?dl=0>

NOTES TO EDITORS

- **The venue’s press launch** will take place on the morning of 1 August, from 11am – 12.30pm. Email pressoffice@pqavenues.co.uk to register interest.
- PQA Venues @Riddle’s Court offers **free coffee and tea for Fringe journalists** throughout opening hours – just show your accreditation.
- Following a £6million restoration project, in 2018 the beautiful Grade A listed building Riddle’s Court became a Fringe venue for the first time since 2014.
- Riddle’s Court has a long history of use as a Fringe venue, with past performers including Stephen Fry in 1979 and 1980 and Maggie Smith in 1953.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website: <http://pqavenues.co.uk/>

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