

Press Release

National Theatre Platform:

The 2012 Paralympics: legacy, Rio and the future

- Graeae return to the National Theatre for one evening only to host Platform event commemorating four years since London Paralympic Games
- Video recording of Platform event released on Graeae's website (Graeae.org) on 29 August 2016, the 4 year anniversary of the London 2012 Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony

To commemorate four years on from the London Paralympics and celebrate the Rio Paralympics in summer 2016, Graeae will be returning to the National Theatre for one evening only on Wednesday 3 August to host Platform event *The 2012 Paralympics: legacy, Rio and the future*.

On 29 August 2012, the world watched as Deaf and disabled people quite literally took to the stage in the spectacular and potentially game-changing Opening Ceremony for the London 2012 Paralympic Games, directed by Jenny Sealey and Bradley Hemmings.

Artists involved in the 2012 Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony join **Rufus Norris**, Director of the National Theatre, to discuss what has happened to the lives and rights of Deaf and disabled people in the last four years as the government has cut welfare entitlements, the continuing battle for equality and what we can do as a collective arts community to ensure the fight continues. The hopes, fears and opportunities for the Paralympic Games in Rio this summer will also be discussed.

After a panel discussion, the floor will be opened up for questions from the audience.

Guests include actor, musician, writer and Graeae patron **Mat Fraser**, Director of the National Theatre **Rufus Norris**, co-director of the Paralympic Opening Ceremony and Artistic Director of Graeae **Jenny Sealey** and actors from the 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony **Nicola Miles-Wildin** (who played Miranda opposite Ian McKellen's Prospero) and **John Kelly**.

This Platform will be filmed, and released on Graeae's website on 29 August 2016, the anniversary of the Paralympic Opening Games Ceremony. It will also be available on the National Theatre's website from 30 August.

This event will be captioned and British Sign Language interpreted.

[ENDS]

Please contact Richard Matthews on richard@graeae.org or call 020 7613 6906 if you would like this press release in alternative forms.

Editor's notes

Rufus Norris is Director of the National Theatre where he has been an Associate Director since 2011. For the National he has directed *Everyman*, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, *The Amen Corner*, *Table*, *London Road*, *Death and the King's Horseman*, *Market Boy*, *wonder.land* (created with Damon Albarn and Moira Buffini). His production of *The Threepenny Opera* is currently running in the Olivier Theatre. He was an Associate Director at the Young Vic, where his work included *Feast*, *Vernon God Little*, *Herge's Adventures of Tintin* (also Barbican, UK tour and West End) and *Afore Night Come* (Evening Standard Best Newcomer Award). Other work includes *Cabaret* and *The Country Girl* in the West End; *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Broadway: five Tony nominations); *Festen* (Almeida, West End and Broadway: Evening Standard & Critics' Circle Awards for Best Director); and *Blood Wedding* (Almeida). Opera includes *Doctor Dee*, which he co-created with Damon Albarn (Manchester International Festival and ENO) and *Don Giovanni* (ENO). Rufus Norris' debut feature film *Broken* premiered at Cannes in 2012 and won Best Film at the British Independent Film Awards in 2013.

Jenny Sealey has been Graeae's Artistic Director since 1997. In 2009, she was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Honours and became an Artistic Advisor for *Unlimited* 2012 Festival. UK theatre credits for Graeae include: *Blood Wedding* (co-production with Dundee Rep and Derby Theatre), *The Threepenny Opera* (co-production with West Yorkshire Playhouse, New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich, Nottingham Playhouse Company and Birmingham Rep Theatre), *Belonging* (co-production with Circo Crescere e Viver), *Reasons To Be Cheerful* (2010 co-production with The New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich and Theatre Royal Stratford East, 2012 national tour co-produced with the New Wolsey Theatre and 2012 performance at Southbank Centre), *Signs of a Star Shaped Diva* and *Blasted*. Other theatre and outdoor credits include: *Romeo and Juliet* (National Theatre Dhaka for A Different Shakespeare British Council programme 2016), *Blood Wedding* (Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo), *Against the Tide* (GDIF, Milton Keynes International Festival and The National Theatre's Watch This Space); *The Iron Man* (Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Brighton Festival, Bristol Do Festival, GDIF and SIRF) and *The Garden* (National Theatre GDIF and Southbank Centre). In 2012 Jenny co-directed the London 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony alongside Bradley Hemmings (GDIF). She also won the Liberty Human Rights Arts Award and was named on the Time Out London and Hospital Club h.Club100 list of the most influential and creative people in the creative industries.

Mat Fraser is a multi disciplinary performing artist, actor, writer and musician, who over the last 18 years, has played to audiences from The Olympic stadium in London, The Royal Albert Hall, to many dive bars and late night clubs in NYC and elsewhere. Recently he starred in the fourth series of *American Horror Story: Freak Show*, and in 2013 he and his partner in art and life Julie Atlas Muz, created an adult, hit version of *Beauty and the Beast* through their company ONEOFUS, which plays Chicago MCA this December. Mat's recent museum site-specific solo show *Cabinet of Curiosities: How Disability Was Kept in a Box*, won the UK's Observer Ethical Award for Arts & Entertainment 2014, and he has just finished writing a new play, *A Multitude Of Elvii*. He is a patron of Graeae Theatre Company.

Nicola Miles-Wildin is best known for her role as Miranda in the Paralympics Opening Ceremony 2012. She is Associate Artist for Kazzum, Graeae and GDance and co-director for TwoCan Theatre Company. Nicola graduated from the University of Glamorgan with a 2:1 in Theatre and began her acting career with Spare Tyre Theatre

Company in London in 2003. Since then she has worked as an actor, workshop facilitator and has recently moved into directing. Nicola thoroughly enjoys working with young audiences in mind and making work playful and accessible for all. She has worked with companies such as Graeae, Kazzum, Forest Forge, Natural Diversions, Face Front, Immediate Theatre, Taking Flight and Slung Low. Last year Nicola was short listed for disabled Positive Role Model at the National Diversity Awards and also advised Jacqueline Wilson on her latest book *Katy*.

John Kelly is a singer, actor, writer and musician, playing guitar, bass and keyboard. From 2010 – 2012, he toured the UK with Graeae's *Reasons to be Cheerful* (fully staged and concert versions), including singing lead vocals on *Spasticus Autisticus* at the Paralympics Opening Ceremony 2012. The show subsequently visited Hackney Empire, Grosvenor House Hotel, The Liberty Festival in Trafalgar Square and a final sell-out date at Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall. He has sung with the Blockheads in various venues since 2010 and in 2011 performed *Spasticus Autisticus* with the group at Ronnie Scotts for the first time since Ian Dury died. John has international experience as an artist/performer and facilitator and has gigged in America, Russia, Germany, Estonia Poland, France, Greece, in Brazil and Mexico (with *Reasons to be Cheerful*) and at home in Ireland. John continued his relationship with Graeae in 2014 as the Narrator in *The Threepenny Opera* and continued performing primarily around London as a guest artist, as well as a headlining act, returning to the Olympic Park and Liberty Festival in September 2014 to MC the music stage. In 2015, John toured with ExtraOrdinary Bodies in *Weighting* and was featured in national media, discussing his music and the impact on him with the closure of the Independent Living Fund. John has been Artistic Director of The Disability Arts in Surrey Festival for the past four years. He is National Associate Artist for Drake Music and carries out a number of roles from delivering training and workshops through to strategic work including the Think 20/20 programme. He is currently developing a new accessible guitar, The Kellycaster.

About Graeae

Graeae is a force for change in world-class theatre - breaking down barriers, challenging preconceptions and boldly placing Deaf and disabled artists centre stage.

Artistically led by Jenny Sealey, Graeae's signature characteristic is the compelling creative integration of sign language, captioning and audio description, which engages brilliantly with both disabled and non-disabled audiences. Championing accessibility and providing a platform for new generations of artists, Graeae leads the way in pioneering, trail-blazing theatre.

Recent productions include: *The Solid Life of Sugar Water* on UK tour and at the National Theatre (co-production with Theatre Royal Plymouth), *Blood Wedding* (co-production with Dundee Rep Ensemble and Derby Theatre), *The Threepenny Opera* (co-production with West Yorkshire Playhouse, New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich, Nottingham Playhouse Company and Birmingham Rep Theatre), *Belonging* (co-production with Circo Crescer e Viver), *Reasons to be Cheerful* and *Blasted*. Spectacular outdoor productions include *The Limbless Knight* (with Strange Fruit/commissioned by GDIF), *Prometheus Awakes* (with La Fura dels Baus/co-commissioned by GDIF and SIRF) and *The Iron Man*. Graeae won the Promotion of Diversity Award at the TMA Theatre Awards UK 2012. www.graeae.org @graeae

About National Theatre

The National Theatre is dedicated to making the very best theatre and sharing it with as many people as possible. They produce productions on the South Bank in London each year, ranging from re-imagined classics to modern masterpieces and new work by contemporary writers and theatre-makers. The National's work is seen on tour throughout the UK, in London's West End, internationally (including on Broadway) and in collaborations and co-productions with regional theatres.

National Theatre Live, which broadcasts live performances to cinema screens internationally, is now celebrating its 7th year and has been experienced by over 5.5 million people worldwide in 200 countries. For more information, visit NTLive.com

The Clore Learning Centre at the NT is committed to providing programmes for schools, young people, families, community groups and adult learners. The nationwide youth theatre festival [Connections](#) and playwriting competition [New Views](#) engage thousands of young people around the country. Further, over 2,200 secondary schools have signed up to the free streaming service, [On Demand in Schools](#) since its launch in September 2015.

In 2015-2016 the NT:

- Staged 34 productions and gave 3,057 performances in the UK and internationally.
- Reached audiences of over 787,000 on the South Bank, and over 3.7 million worldwide (South Bank, West End, touring and NT Live).
- Broadcast, via the [NT Live](#) programme, to nearly 1.5 million people around the world.
- Engaged with over 189,000 participants through the NT Learning events programme.

www.nationaltheatre.org.uk @nationaltheatre

Event details

Wednesday 3 August 6pm – 6.45pm

Cottesloe Room (Dorfman Theatre entrance)

National Theatre, Upper Ground, London SE1 9PX

This event is by invitation only and not publically ticketed. Space strictly limited.

If you are interesting in attending, please email richard@graeae.org or telephone 020 7613 6906.

The event will be captioned and British Sign Language interpreted.

A recording of this event will be available on Graeae's website from 29 August 2016, and on the National Theatre's website from 30 August 2016.

Contacts

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