

18 July 2017

In Touch

**Co-produced by Inclusion Theatre Company and Theatre of Nations
In association with Graeae Theatre Company, Sense, the British Council and
the National Theatre**

Written by Marina Krapivina

Directed by Ruslan Malikov

Associate Direction by Jenny Sealey

Dorfman Theatre

Saturday 14 October, 5pm and 8pm

Tickets on sale: 8.30am GMT, 7 July 2017

nationaltheatre.org.uk

In Touch captures the real stories of people who are deafblind, blind, visually impaired, D/deaf, hard-of-hearing, sighted and hearing, told through an eclectic style of spoken, signed and physical theatre. The show explores the emotional rollercoaster of being human, how we each navigate our lives and what happens when different worlds collide and unite.

In Touch is part of a long-term project between Inclusion Theatre Company and the Theatre of Nations, using the arts to connect people who are deafblind, sighted and hearing in different spaces. The original production, *Touch-Ables*, based on the real stories of the actors and their interactions with the world and the diaries of two women that are deafblind from 20th Century Russia, had its premiere in 2015 in Russia. The show was shown on leading stages in Moscow and St Petersburg, and was nominated for the prestigious Russian 'Golden Mask' Theatre Award.

Viktoriya Avdeeva, Producer of *Touch-Ables*, said: *"The original play Touch-ables was created to raise awareness in Russia about people who are deafblind. Deafblind people are some of the least visible and least involved in professional and cultural activity, not just in Russia but everywhere. The production not only was an opportunity for actors that are deafblind to tell their story, it influenced the development of inclusive theatre in Russia for the better. I am excited to bring this production to the UK, further exploring the very nature of communication, through and beyond different cultures and languages."*

For this staging at the NT, **Jenny Sealey** will work with the company to develop the original production with actors who have sensory impairments from the original Russian show, plus British and French performers who are deafblind, sighted and hearing.

Jenny Sealey, Artistic Director Graeae, said: *"I feel very privileged to be able to work with this extraordinary ensemble of actors, developing their show, embracing new stories, not least those from UK deafblind actors. I'm really excited to be part of this collaboration where diverse communication is the foundation of everything. It's also a wonderful new challenge for Graeae, to further understand the complexity of deafblind sign language in particular, and how this can be embedded within a theatrical narrative. It's always wonderful to be back at the National."*

Inclusion Theatre Company is a part of Deafblind Support Fund Connection.

In Touch is designed by **Ekaterina Dzhadarova**, with choreography by **Evgeny Kulagin** and **Alexandra Rudik**, produced by **Viktoriya Avdeeva**.

The cast includes **Rustam Ahmadeev, Zara-Jayne Arnold, Arnaud Balard, Kirill Byrkin, Raji Gopalakrishnan, Alexey Gorelov, Roman Evdokimov, Alyona Kapustyan, Yuliya Khamitova, Olga Lapshina, Sophie Lebedeva, Vera Lyzhenkova, Irina Povolotskaya, Alexandra Rudik, Ekaterina Sakhno, Alexandr Silyanov**, with reading by **Evgeniy Mironov**.

Further cast to be announced.

Please note: The production will be captioned and will include surtitles as it is performed in Russian, French and English. The show will be audio described and British Sign Language interpreted.

TICKETS: For anyone with access requirements, please subscribe to the [NT's Access List](#), which will allow you to select your own seats when booking online, or call Box Office on 020 7452 3000 or email access@nationaltheatre.org.uk

ENDS

For images, [click here](#).

To read Graeae's Media Language Guide, [click here](#).

For more information, contact **Emma Hardy**
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About Inclusion Theatre Company

Inclusion Theatre Company is a centre for the development of professional inclusive theatre in Russia, bringing together artists and directors of leading drama theatres and its own inclusive troupe. It is a part of Inclusion Arts Centre which also includes Inclusion.School and Inclusion.Laboratory. Since the first staging of *Touch-Ables* (2015), Inclusion Theatre has produced four productions and is developing two new ones this year. *Touch-Ables* was created to raise social awareness about Deafblind people in Russia. Three further plays were co-created with three leading drama schools in Russia to explore different forms of theatre with inclusive opportunities: *Marriage after Gogol*, *Seagull after Chekhov* and *Carmen after Merime*. The productions were all brilliant examples of how high quality performance erases any limits and stereotypes, uniting actors with various abilities in breath-taking, hilarious, unforgettable plays. The search for best practices and how to apply them in Russian inclusive theatre resulted in creating the sensory performance *Four Winds* as a part of accessibility programme with the British director Tim Webb and in initiating this international project *In Touch*.

Inclusion's latest project is *Living Paintings*, a play about paintings and how people with and without eyesight perceive them, which will premiere in November 2017. The inner view, the hidden images in actors' minds will be animated by Oscar-winning artist Aleksandr Petrov. Like in *In Touch*, in *Living Paintings* there are Deafblind, hearing and sighted actors.

Inclusion Theatre Company projects use various forms of theatre to enable actors with different abilities to reach the highest levels of artistry.

About Theatre of Nations

Theatre of Nations is both a repertory theatre and a producing centre. It operates without a permanent company of actors, while each project is managed using an individually designed production plan. The primary mission of the Theatre of Nations is to establish an international theatre dialogue and bring the best forces of international theatre to its stage. The ongoing performance roster currently lists performances directed by top international stage directors who frequent theatre festivals all over the

world. Among those are Thomas Ostermeier, Robert Wilson, Robert Lepage, Alvis Hermanis, Eimuntas Nekrošius and Javor Gardev. Theatre of Nations also introduces its audience to the works of best stage directors of Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Russian regions.

theatreofnations.ru

About Graeae Theatre Company

Graeae is a force for change in world-class theatre – breaking down barriers, challenging preconceptions and boldly placing D/deaf and disabled artists centre stage. Artistically led by Jenny Sealey MBE, Graeae's signature characteristic is the creative integration of sign language, audio description and captioning, which engages 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 House of Bernarda Alba* (co-production with Royal Exchange Theatre) and *The Solid Life of Sugar Water* (co-production with Theatre Royal Plymouth) one of the last productions to play in the National Theatre's Temporary Theatre in March 2016. In 2017, Graeae is touring a brand new production of *Reasons to be Cheerful* supported by Arts Council England, and premiering *Cosmic Scallies* by new playwright Jackie Hagan at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (co-production with Royal Exchange Theatre).

Graeae develops the next generation of D/deaf and disabled artists through groundbreaking programmes and courses including: 'Write to Play', a bold initiative committed to developing new writers in collaboration with the most creative minds in the industry and 'Ensemble', a work-based learning programme for D/deaf and disabled artists aged between 18 and 22.

Throughout the year, Graeae runs workshops and training programmes internationally from Brazil to Bangladesh.

Graeae works extensively with young people through its outreach programme. Workshops and residencies run by their pool of D/deaf and disabled facilitators in a variety of education settings help to build new audiences, engage young creative minds and empower young disabled artists.

graeae.org

Twitter: @graeae

About Jenny Sealey

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. 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 2012* list of the most influential people in the creative industries. Since 2012 Jenny has been awarded an honorary doctorate degree in Drama from Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, in Performing Arts from Middlesex University and a Fellowship at Central School of Speech and Drama.

Twitter: @GraeaeJennyS

About Sense

Sense is a national charity that supports people who are deafblind, have sensory impairments or complex needs, to enjoy more independent lives. Their expertise in supporting individuals with communication needs benefits people of all ages, as well as their families and carers. Sense provide information and advice, offer a wide range of flexible services and campaign passionately for the rights of the people they serve.

sense.org.uk

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. They create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. Using the UK's cultural resources they make a positive contribution to the countries they work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. The British Council work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Each year they reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, they are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. The majority of their income is raised delivering a range of projects and contracts in English teaching and examinations, education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. Eighteen per cent of their funding is received from the UK government.

britishcouncil.org

About the 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 theatres across the country.

Across 2015-2016, the NT staged 34 productions and gave 3,134 performances in the UK and internationally. The NT's award-winning programme had a UK audience of 2.5 million, 700,000 of which were NT Live audiences.

The Clore Learning Centre at the NT is committed to providing programmes for schools, young people, families, community groups and adult learners, including the nationwide youth theatre festival Connections and playwriting competition New Views. In 2015-2016, the NT engaged with over 181,000 participants through the NT Learning events programme. Further, over 2,200 secondary schools have signed up to the free streaming service, *On Demand. In Schools* since its launch in September 2015.

nationaltheatre.org.uk

Twitter: @nationaltheatre

@NT_PressOffice

Access at the National Theatre

The NT is dedicated to making the best theatre and sharing it with as many people as possible. Access facilities include captioned, audio-described and relaxed performances, as well as touch tours, braille and large print cast lists and infrared audio headsets. For more information visit

nationaltheatre.org.uk/access or call Box Office: 020 7452 3000.