

**PRESS RELEASE
12.10.17**

IMAGES CAN BE DOWNLOAD [HERE](http://www.thecornershoppr.com/download/reasons-cheerful-production-images/).

SONG CAN BE DOWNLOADED [HERE.](http://graeae.org/cant-be-right/)

Twitter:[@R2BCheerful](https://twitter.com/r2bcheerful) [@graeae](https://twitter.com/graeae) #Reasons17 Facebook: [Reasons to be Cheerful – the Musical](https://www.facebook.com/R2BCheerful/) / [GraeaeTheatreCompany](https://www.facebook.com/graeae/) YouTube: [GraeaeTheatreCompany](https://www.youtube.com/user/GraeaeTheatreCompany)

**Graeae Theatre Company presents…
*Reasons to be Cheerful*
A raucous musical featuring the hits of Ian Dury and the Blockheads, in a new production for 2017 directed by Jenny Sealey.**

* **Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn backs new anti-austerity song by members of Ian Dury’s band The Blockheads and Graeae performer John Kelly**
* **‘If It Can’t Be Right Then It Must Be Wrong’, was written exclusively for *Reasons to be Cheerful*, pioneering disabled-led theatre company Graeae’s musical featuring the hits of Ian Dury and The Blockheads**
* **The hit show is leading a new protest song movement with over 100 new anti-austerity protest songs being written across UK as part of Graeae’s Community Engagement programme**
* **You can view the video of the company in rehearsal of the brand new song** [**here**](https://vimeo.com/237919673)**.**

Pioneering disabled-led theatre company Graeae has been a proud standard-bearer for protest and disability rights for many years. In conjunction with the final tour of their smash hit musical ***Reasons to be Cheerful***, set in 1979 Thatcher’s Britain, Blockheads **Chaz Jankel**, **Derek Hussey** and cast member **John Kelly** have written a protest song for 2017, ‘**If It Can’t Be Right Then It Must Be Wrong**’. You can download the song [here](http://graeae.org/cant-be-right/). As part of Graeae’s Reasons To Be Cheerful extensive community engagement programme, nearly 100 songwriters across the country have written and submitted their protest songs.

Graeae Theatre Companycommented*: “Thanks to Chaz Jankel and Derek Hussey from The Blockheads, and to John Kelly, the lead singer from our hit show Reasons to be Cheerful, Graeae now has our very own protest song that perfectly sums up how we feel.*

*The song: ‘If It Can’t Be Right Then It Must Be Wrong’ is performed each night in Reasons To Be Cheerful.*

*We approached the heads of all of the major UK political parties to comment on our new protest song. We got a response from one:*

***"This new anti austerity song from Graeae and the Blockheads captures the current mood of the country. It's lyrics bring people together in a moment of shared experience to challenge the status quo.” Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party.***

The song is a rallying cry against the current government cuts; specifically the austerity and cuts directed at the D/deaf and disabled community in the UK and the systematic disintegration of the NHS and the Welfare State. The lyrics of ***‘*If It Can’t Be Right Then It Must Be Wrong’** reflect back to the era ***Reasons to be Cheerful*** is set, when Ian Dury and The Blockheads were dominating the charts. Full lyrics can be seen [here](http://graeae.org/cant-right-must-wrong/) and streaming details can be provided.

 ***‘*If It Can’t Be Right Then It Must Be Wrong*’*** will be available as a free download and will be performed exclusively at each show on the tour by the cast and band. The show is on tour now.

**-ENDS-**

**For further information please contact Maisie Lawrence** **maisie@thecornershoppr.com** **// 020 7831 7657**

This tour is supported by Arts Council England through their Strategic Touring Fund.

Graeae’s media language guide can be viewed [here](http://graeae.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Media-Language-Guide-update.pdf)

If you would like this information in a different format please contact helen@graeae.org

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**John Kelly** (Lead Vocals) has completed five UK tours as well as many international performances.  John is Artistic Director of DaisyFest, National Associate Artist for Drake Music, musician with circus company ExtraOrdinary Bodies and Policy & Strategy manager at Merton Centre For Independent Living. John sang *Spasticus Autisticus*, live at the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games in London, and has also guested with The Blockheads.

**Chaz Jankel and Derek Hussey** are members of the iconic band The Blockheads. For more information, [click here.](http://www.theblockheads.com/category/biographies/)

**LISTINGS**

***Reasons to be Cheerful***
**Writer** Paul Sirett

**Director** Jenny Sealey
**Designer** Liz Ascroft

**Associate Director** Daryl Beeton

**Lighting** Ian Scott

**Sound** Lewis Gibson

**Choreography** Mark Smith

**Musical Director** Joey Hickman
**Musical Supervision & Arrangements** Robert Hyman

**Casting** Sarah Hughes CDG

**Tuesday 10 – Saturday 14 October**
West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds
<https://www.wyp.org.uk>
0113 213 7700

**Tuesday 17 – Saturday 21 October**
Liverpool Everyman
<https://www.everymanplayhouse.com>
0151 709 4776

**Tuesday 24 October – Saturday 4 November**
Theatre Royal Stratford East
<http://www.stratfordeast.com>
020 8534 0310

Press night: 24 October

Age recommendation 14+

All performances include creative British Sign Language, captioning and audio description.

**NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Reasons to be Cheerful**This joyful and defiant production will visit seven regions around the country, kicking off at the **Belgrade Theatre**, Coventry, who are also associate producers, on **Friday 8 September** before touring to **Derby**, **Southampton**, **Ipswich**, **Leeds**, **Liverpool** and ending with a two-week run at **Theatre Royal** **Stratford East** in London from 24 October – 4 November. Press night is 13September at Derby Theatre.

This coming of age tale rejoices in the infectious and enduring music of Ian Dury and the Blockheads. Featuring stone-cold classic songs including **Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick; Plaistow Patricia; Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll; Sweet Gene Vincent; What A Waste**and the titular **Reasons to be Cheerful Part 3**, this show is loud, bold and jubilant.

Reprising their roles from the hugely successful 2010 and 2012 tours**, Stephen Lloyd** will play Vinnie alongside **Stephen Collins** as Colin, **Karen Spicer** as Pat, **Wayne ‘Pickles’ Norman** as Pickles and **Jude Mahon** in the role of Debbie. With **John Kelly** on lead vocals, the on-stage band is completed by **Paul Sirett** (Guitar, also writer), **Nixon Rosembert** (Bass) and **Paula Stanbridge-Faircloth** (Drums). **Beth Hinton-Lever** will play Janine in her Graeae debut, while **Gerard McDermott** (Blood Wedding and Blasted for Graeae), **Joey Hickman** (The Threepenny Opera for Graeae) and **Max Runham** (Captain Walker in Tommy for Ramps on the Moon) will also join the company. The band will be completed with Graeae newcomer **Louis Schultz-Wiremu** on saxophone, making his stage debut.

Using Graeae’s signature theatrical language, all performances of **Reasons to be Cheerful**seamlessly include British Sign Language, audio description and creative captioning.

 **About Graeae**

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, 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. Graeae won the Promotion of Diversity Award at the TMA Theatre Awards UK 2012. Recent productions include: *Cosmic Scallies* at the 2017 Edinburgh Festival Fringe (co-production with Royal Exchange Theatre) *The House Of Bernarda Alba* (co- production with Royal Exchange Theatre), *The Solid Life Of Sugar Water* (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* (originally co-production with New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich and Theatre Royal Stratford East), *Blasted* and *Bent*. 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*.

[www.graeae.org](http://www.graeae.org)

<https://twitter.com/graeae>

**Jenny Sealey MBE**

Director / Artistic Director of Graeae Jenny Sealey co-directed the London 2012 Paralympics Opening Ceremony alongside Bradley Hemmings (GDIF). She has been Artistic Director and CEO of Graeae since 1997 and has pioneered a new theatrical language, coining the term ‘aesthetics of access’. Credits for Graeae *include The House Of Bernarda Alba*, *Blood Wedding*, *Blasted*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Limbless Knight*, *Belonging* and *Reasons To Be Cheerful*. International work includes *Romeo and Juliet* in Bangladesh, *Blood Wedding* in Tokyo and *Belonging* in Brazil. Jenny was awarded her MBE in 2009 and The Human Rights Awards for the Arts in 2012.

<https://twitter.com/GraeaeJennyS>

**Paul Sirett**

Paul is a playwright, dramaturg and musician. He is currently working as the dramaturg on the new Ramps on the Moon production of *The Who’s* rock opera *Tommy* – a job that includes integrating two new songs from Pete Townshend and revising the script to make the production fully accessible. Most recently, Paul wrote Stratford East’s biggest ever selling pantomime, *Simbad The Sailor,* and worked as the dramaturg on a re-working of the John Mellencamp and Stephen King musical, *Ghost Brothers Of Darkland County* in New York. Previously, Paul was nominated for an Olivier for his musical *The Big Life* and he wrote *Come Dancing* with Ray Davies. Upcoming productions include a new Punk Rock musical, *Oxy and the Morons*, at the New Wolsey in Ipswich, and a new Graeae tour of Paul’s Ian Dury and the Blockheads musical *Reasons to be Cheerful*.