

# GRAEae

THE UK'S LEADING DISABLED LED THEATRE COMPANY RETURNS TO THE LIVE STAGE  
WITH  
TWO MAJOR NEW PRODUCTIONS

Graeae and Tamasha in association with Bush Theatre  
presents

## 10 NIGHTS

Written by Shahid Iqbal Khan

Directed by Kash Arshad

Thursday 7 October – Saturday 6 November.

Bush Theatre Studio

Belgrade Theatre Coventry and Graeae Theatre Company for Coventry City of Culture  
presents

## KERBS

By Michael Southan

Saturday 26 February – Saturday 5 March 22

Belgrade Theatre Coventry



10 Nights - Shahid Iqbal Khan



Kerbs

Following over a year of solely online activity due to the pandemic, this autumn and winter sees the return to the live stage of the UK's leading disabled led theatre company **Graeae**. Working in association with some of the most acclaimed producing venues across the country, the company presents two premieres created by writers who have emerged through their **Write a Play Programme**, a flagship writer development initiative that sets out to cultivate and champion Deaf and disabled playwrights nationwide.

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**10 Nights**, which was postponed because of the first lockdown in 2020, will run at **Bush Theatre** from 7 October – 6 November. It is written by **Shahid Iqbal Khan**, whose theatre credits include *The Smile of Despair* - Attenborough Arts Centre, *Stardust* - Belgrade Theatre and *Never Been Away* - 2020: Collection - Tara Theatre and directed by **Kash Arshad** (*Guards at the Taj* - Theatre by the Lake, *Airplays* - Leeds Playhouse).

The work tells the story of Yasser a young Muslim man who decides to take part in itikaf, sleeping and fasting in the mosque for the last ten nights of Ramadan, only to regret his decision soon after he begins. But as he navigates smug worshippers, shared bathrooms, and recurring thoughts of chunky chips, Yasser's isolation forces him to confront a side of himself he's been trying to keep hidden. This moving and funny new play is the story of one man's journey of self-discovery and facing the consequences of one's own actions.

*10 Nights* is a co-production between Graeae and **Tamasha** in association with **Bush Theatre**. **Press night is 11 October.**

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**Kerbs** is the first major production by Wolverhampton based playwright and poet **Michael Southan**. Directed by Graeae Associate Director **Nickie Miles-Wildin** (*Cuttin' It, Crips without Constraints*), it runs from **Saturday 26 February to Saturday 5 March 2022** at **Belgrade Theatre Coventry**.

Exploring taboos around sex, romance and disability the play charts the relationship between Lucy and David who are dating and desperate to find some time alone. The perfect spot? A caravan holiday park, of course. But can this romantic weekend away go to plan? With everything stacked against them including broken toilets, patronising staff and Lucy's constantly interfering mum, not to mention broken pink wafers, this holiday could be make or break.

**Kerbs** is a co-production between Graeae and **Belgrade Theatre Coventry** for **Coventry City of Culture**. **Press night is 1 March 2022.**

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Both *10 Nights* and *Kerbs* will feature Graeae's signature integrated creative captioning and audio description at every show.

**Jenny Sealey Artistic Director of Graeae says –**

*"Our industry has - and still continues to - weather the economic political and social impact of the pandemic. We are cautiously moving towards real life theatre and are so happy and proud to be announcing two very different plays *10 Nights* by Shahid Iqbal Khan and *Kerbs* by Michael Southan. Every care for safety, aesthetics and access will be taken for audiences who come to the theatre, and for audiences who continue to shield, there is bespoke digital offers to ensure you don't miss out."*

### **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 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 and co-productions include *One Under*, *This Is Not For You*, *Reasons to be Cheerful*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Blood Wedding*, *The Iron Man* and *The Threepenny Opera*. Graeae are a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England. [www.graeae.org](http://www.graeae.org)

### **About Tamasha**

Causing a commotion since 1989.

Our mission is to create a home for a new generation of ethnically diverse artists, enabling them to create the most powerful stories to move, provoke and inspire audiences across the UK. We do this by throwing a spotlight on stories that are otherwise kept in the shadows. We nurture talent and provide a creative home for emerging and established artists. We challenge perceptions and spark conversations.

Three decades of experience gives us the depth, strength and confidence to pursue ambitious dreams, with landmark productions that include *East Is East* (1996), *A Fine Balance* (2006), *Snookered* (2012), *My Name is...* (2014), *Made In India* (2017), *Does My Bomb Look Big In This?* (2019) and *I Wanna Be Yours* (2019) winning acclaim from audiences and critics alike.

**tamasha.org.uk | Twitter: @TamashaTheatre | Facebook & Instagram: tamashatheatre**

### **About The Bush Theatre**

Opened in 1972, the Bush Theatre is an internationally renowned 'new writing powerhouse whose size belies its influence' (Financial Times).

A champion of playwrights and operating in one of the most culturally diverse areas of London, the Bush Theatre has a commitment to its local community and the wider artistic community. Braiding these two strands of work together, the Bush produces an engaging and challenging programme that reflects the world we live in. Recent successes include Arinzé Kene's *Misty* which transferred to the West End and opens in New York in 2021; *Jellyfish*, Ben Weatherill's love story about a young woman with Down's Syndrome which transferred to the National Theatre; a re-imagining of Jackie Kay's 1986 masterpiece, *Chiaroscuro*, directed by the Bush's Artistic Director Lynette Linton; and the co-production of Richard Gadd's *Baby Reindeer*, which won the Olivier Award for 'Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre' and opens in the West End in 2021.

The Bush Theatre's talent development programmes discover and develop the very best of the UK's leading artists. The Bush team believe the theatre has a responsibility to programme and generate opportunities for new and established makers and with long-term residencies, add to the sustainability of their careers.

Since re-opening in March 2017 after a year-long £4.3 million renovation by architects Haworth Tompkins, the Bush continues to create a space where all communities can be part of its future and call the theatre home.

### **About Belgrade Theatre**

**The Belgrade** is Coventry's largest professional theatre, producing and presenting a diverse range of shows, events and ground-breaking community and education initiatives. In its landmark building, across the region, the UK and online, it uses theatre to entertain, inspire, share the city's stories, uncover hidden histories, and unleash the creativity of diverse communities.

After a year of partial closure due to the pandemic, Belgrade reopened to a socially distanced public on Monday 17 May, determined to be open as much as possible during City of Culture, launching an eclectic mix of music, theatre and comedy over the summer months, with an Autumn Season of non-socially distanced show announced in June.

A key partner of **Coventry UK City of Culture 2021**, the Belgrade Theatre's 2021 programme is being led by three artists from diverse backgrounds, under the role of Co-Artistic Directors, alongside members of the local community. Corey Campbell, Balisha Karra and Justine Themen are developing a new vision and way of working for a 21st Century Theatre, bringing with them a unique perspective that celebrates Coventry's diversity and drives positive change. **The KEYS project** aims to achieve a strategic shift to embed diversity, community collaboration and talent development at the heart of the theatre process.

### **About Belgrade City of Culture Programme**

The Belgrade's City of Culture programme includes a festival of new writing in a co-production with Paines Plough in Paines Plough's **Roundabout**, the world's first plug-in, pop-up and play theatre, with four new plays performed in repertory from July to August. As part of **UK Asian Film Festival** (Thurs 27 - Sat 29 May 2021) the Belgrade Theatre hosted five film premieres, socially distanced in their B2 auditorium. It also included a brand-new digital version of **Like There's No Tomorrow** (Weds 19 May – Sunday 13 June 2021), a National Theatre Connections play first created in 2020 that gives voice to young people's climate concerns, presented by Belgrade Youth Theatre. Filming has now wrapped on **SeaView**, an original digital series developed by Strictly Arts Theatre Company and Belgrade Film and Digital Ltd using theatre techniques, conceived before Covid-19 took the world of theatre online, and directed by Corey Campbell. Inspired by a true story, and lived experiences, **SeaView** is a supernatural drama centred on urban, working class communities in the Midlands, due to premiere at the Belgrade on 10 November. Other recently announced highlights include the world premiere of **This Little Relic** by Karla Marie Sweet, a metaplay about producing Ira Aldridge's *The Black Doctor*, as part of the BBC's Contains Strong Language Festival, to be performed to a live audience on Fri 24 Sept and then broadcast on BBC Radio 3 at a later date. **This Little Relic** will then run in the Belgrade's B2 auditorium from Weds 29 Sept – Sat 2 Oct. Then running from Sat 26 Feb – Sat 5 March 2022, The Belgrade will present the world premiere of **Kerbs**, a debut play from Michael Southan exploring taboos around sex, romance and disability, in association with **Graeae Theatre Company**.

### **About Michael Southan**

Michael Southan is a playwright and poet from Wolverhampton in the West Midlands. He is an alumni of Birmingham Repertory Theatre's Foundry development programme and was a member of BBC Writersroom's first Writers' Access Group in 2018. Michael's radio drama 'A Moment's Paws' was part of the Connections series nominated for a BBC Audio Drama Award in 2021.

### **About Shahid Iqbal Khan**

Shahid Iqbal Khan's foray into creative writing began with a short play for Carol Godby's Festival of Plays (Met Theatre, Bury). He joined the Manchester Muslim Writers' group not long after, a collective that inspired him to explore and compose poetry.

He was Associate Artist for Phizzical Productions and is an alumni of Graeae Theatre's prestigious Write To Play programme.

Theatre credits: *The Smile of Despair* (Attenborough Arts Centre), *Stardust* (Belgrade Theatre), *Never Been Away (2020: Collection 1)* (Tara Theatre).

Audio credits: *The Return (That Podcast)* (English Touring Theatre and Fremantle's Storyglass), *Bhavika (Connections)* (Naked Productions). Upcoming: *Befriended (United Kingdoms)* (BBC Radio 4).

Shahid Iqbal Khan is part of BBC Writersroom Writers Access Group (20/21) and Writers Group co-led by Royal Court Theatre and Deafinitely Theatre (20/21).

**For Graeae's media language guide please visit <https://graeae.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Media-Language-Guide-update.pdf>**