

Coliseum Launches Spring-Summer 2016 Season

Tuesday 27 October 2015

Oldham Coliseum Theatre's Spring-Summer 2016 season promises to be joyous, funny and touching; featuring two brand new plays created in co-production with New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, classics from George Bernard Shaw and Harold Pinter and side-splitting modern farce to see in the summer months.

The season opens with ***Our Gracie***, a new play on Rochdale's finest export, Gracie Fields, written for the Coliseum and New Vic Theatre by **Philip Goulding** (*A Fine Bright Day Today* and *The Road To Nab End*). ***Our Gracie*** will be produced as a music hall-style piece directed by Coliseum Artistic Director **Kevin Shaw**. **Sue Devaney** (*Coronation Street*, *Dinnerladies*, *Casualty*) will star as Gracie Fields as she tells, in her own words and some very famous songs, the real-life Cinderella story of how an ordinary working-class lass became Britain's greatest all-round female entertainer. ***Our Gracie*** opens at the Coliseum on Friday 4 March 2016.

A second new play comes to the Coliseum in April, this time from writer **Amanda Whittington** (*Ladies Day*, *Be My Baby*). ***Kiss Me Quickstep*** is the story of the real people behind the fixed smiles, fake tans and sparkly spandex of competitive ballroom dancing. What do you do if your dance-floor dreams are turning into a nightmare? How do you stop dancing to other people's tunes? What can you do if your partner's secret could cost you the crown? ***Kiss Me Quickstep*** is a must for fans of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Kevin Shaw, Artistic Director and CEO of Oldham Coliseum Theatre comments:

"We're committed to supporting writers and theatre-makers with inspirational and exciting new productions to delight our audiences; and so I'm thrilled that, in co-production with the New Vic, we're able to present two brand new yet very different plays in succession this coming season."

The Coliseum presents **George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*** in May, directed by **Robin Herford** with new Coliseum Associate Director **Chris Lawson** making his main stage debut as Robin's AD. ***Pygmalion*** is one of Shaw's most popular plays; it examines the roles of men and women and the limitations of social class as the feisty Eliza Doolittle transforms from a cockney flower seller into a 'proper-speaking' lady under the tutelage of Professor Henry Higgins.

The final Coliseum production of the season is ***The Ladykillers*** – a dark comedy in which a dear old lady and her parrot are pitted against a gang of ruthless criminals disguised as a string quartet. ***The Ladykillers*** was written by **Graham Linehan** (*Father Ted*), inspired by the classic Ealing black and white film. It opens at the Coliseum on Friday 10 June 2016.

Elsewhere in the season, **London Classic Theatre** return to the Coliseum for a week's run of their production of Harold Pinter's ***The Birthday Party***. ***The Birthday Party*** was Pinter's first major work; it is set in a shabby boarding house where an elderly couple take care of a solitary guest until the arrival of two enigmatic strangers stirs everything up with horrifying repercussions. London Classic's tour of the production will be its first significant touring revival of the twenty-first century.

For children next season the Coliseum welcomes **The People's Theatre Company** with ***How the Koala Learn To Hug*** on Wednesday 30 March and the popular **LipService Theatre Company** return with their children's comedy adaptation of ***Snow White*** on Thursday 2 June.

Last, but certainly not least, the theatre will be welcoming its traditional eclectic mix of comedy and musical one-night events including the return of **Ken Dodd** (1 June), award-winning vocalist **Clare Martin OBE** (3 June), comedic musical Lancashire musings of **Bernard Wrigley and the Oldham Tinkers** (4 June) and **The Lancashire Hotpots** (9 July) plus an evening with British Asian singer-songwriter **Zack Knight** in ***Dhanak*** (2 April) – the Coliseum's follow-up from 2015's Alchemy Festival which was held in association with The Southbank Centre, London.

Alongside the spring season, the Coliseum is also pleased to announce its ever-popular pantomime for 2016, with tickets due to go on sale on Saturday 14 November 2015 to coincide with opening night of 2015's ***Mother Goose***. Opening on Saturday 12 November 2016 the Coliseum will present traditional family pantomime ***Sleeping Beauty***, running until Saturday 7 January 2017.