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Stage Door News

Toronto: Kendra Jones's Zoom production of "An Acorn" by Caridad Svich travels to the UK

Monday, April 26, 2021



impel Theatre and Oldham Coliseum Theatre proudly present a fresh collaboration of the acclaimed remote digital and interactive production of Caridad Svich's An Acorn via Zoom. This production marks the first digital co-production for the two companies. The single performance will be live May 6th, and then available on demand through May 17th.

Tickets are £10 and can be purchased through the Oldham Coliseum at www.coliseum.org.uk.

forest_acorn



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"An Acorn is a truly remarkable play. We cannot be grateful enough that impel Theatre has chosen to present it and has given it such a thoughtful production, especially at a time when it resonates so clearly with our present sense of loss and isolation. " ([Stage Door](#), Christopher Hoile ★★★★★)

As a company focused on site-specific and interactive experiences, moving to this realm poses exciting challenges. The play, first commissioned in 2016 by American Blues Theatre, is a meditation on isolation and separation -- both physical and political -- in our society. Now more than a year on from the day the world shut down in 2020, these themes could not be more relevant, particularly when we consider that many of us have now spent more months under a stay-at-home order than not in the past year. How do we create interactive and connective art when we must be apart?

The original production in March 2021 marked Impel Theatre's first foray into creating a digital-first performance. It was this critically acclaimed production that came to the attention of Artistic Director Chris Lawson of the Oldham Coliseum Theatre in Manchester.

Conceived by Kendra Jones and Blythe Haynes, the production features 2 actors who will be rehearsed in advance and present at the live performance; Canadians Ryan G. Hinds (#KanderAndEbb, *We Will Rock You*) and returning Blythe Haynes (*An Atlas, A Necktie & Other Concerns*, *Six Stories, Told At Night*) who will perform from their homes. They will be joined by two guest performers from the UK who have never before read the script: Greater Manchester actors Mina Anwar (*The Thin Blue Line*, *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*) and Darren Jeffries (*Hollyoaks*);

The guest performers will receive the script and some instructions only 1 hour before their performance, and will share their cold read with the audience. The two groups will not meet until the day of the performance. The audience, too, will receive instructions for how they can participate and interact with the performers.

These layers of surprise and elements of chaos bring a new energy and vitality to digital performance which is reflective of our own chaotic and changing experience of the world from our houses during lockdowns. Merging Zoom performances with the many readings we saw earlier during the pandemic, the production continues to encourage the audience to consider their position as auditors, providing avenues for live interaction with the performance.

Impel Theatre's recent performances have challenged audiences across Canada; the production of *I, Malvolio* was acclaimed in Toronto, receiving NNNN from NOW Magazine ("The audience remains perched on child-sized chairs in a suddenly silent former public school classroom, pencils and teacher evaluation sheets in hand, mulling over questions of cruelty and spectacle and what purpose theatre serves.") and *Mooney on Theatre* ("What ensued was total madness."). It then toured to Winnipeg's RMTTC ShakespeareFest where it received 4.5 Stars from the Winnipeg Free Press.

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is committed to developing the work of emerging artists and companies from across the region and beyond to explore the stories and issues that affect and reflect our local communities. The Studio programme runs alongside that of the Main Stage with a mix of new writing, visiting companies, rehearsed readings, bespoke and in-house productions

About An Acorn

“it seemed as if a certain part of the world changed forever”

We continue to be isolated, more than 1 year on from the initial lockdowns. While vaccine rollouts mean that some semblance of “normal” life will return, the experience of this isolation, fear, and upheaval will linger with us. We have learned in this time about our fellow humans, and while there have been moments of hope, the divide between factions feels to have grown into a chasm. Will we ever reconnect? Or has the awareness of these differences changed us forever?

Join us May 6th at 8:00PM BST for a live digital performance.

More info: [Oldham Coliseum Theatre](#)

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