

**barbican**    **Headlong**

A PLAY  
FOR THE  
LIVING  
IN A TIME OF  
EXTINCTION

**10 - 13 May 2023**

 **BELGRADE  
THEATRE**  
COVENTRY



# Programme Notes

Thank you for joining us for the UK premiere of Miranda Rose Hall's **A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction**. Tonight you are part of an exciting experiment in sustainability. What might theatre-making in the future look like?

This play aims to take you on a life-changing journey to confront the urgent ecological disaster that is unfolding around us. Part ritual, part battle cry, it is a moving exploration of what it means to be human in an era of man-made extinction.

This life-affirming script has been central to an international experiment in sustainable performance and touring. In its original form, conceived by Katie Mitchell in collaboration with Jérôme Bel and Vidy Theatre, an international tour happened where no materials or people moved between touring venues. Instead, a set of written guidelines were passed to local teams in each touring city.

In its UK premiere directed and conceived by Katie Mitchell for Headlong, the Barbican Centre, and the Belgrade Theatre the production moves off-grid during the performance to integrate a bike-powered electricity system. With the help of a live wattage counter, you will watch a group of cyclists create electricity in real time to power this innovative show.

Following on from its London performances, Headlong, the Barbican and the Belgrade explore a unique UK touring iteration of the original European model where one centralised blueprint for how to create the show is shared across six cities and brought to life by entirely new local teams; an eco-relay of sorts, eliminating travel as much as possible.

Today you will see Kimisha Lewis' take on this character. The show will then play at the Shakespeare North Playhouse, the New Vic Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent, The Drum in Theatre Royal Plymouth, before finishing at the York Theatre Royal in September.

In engaging in this unique process of theatre making, initiated by Katie Mitchell in Europe, Headlong, the Barbican Centre, our partner venues and freelancers have discovered alternatives, made mistakes, and found hope. It has been a feat of national imagination and European collaboration.

We hope you leave the theatre feeling fired up to collaborate and innovate in the face of the climate emergency wherever you have influence.



**Photos taken by Helen Murray**  
*Barbican Centre Dress Rehearsal*

# Cast

Kimisha Lewis.....Naomi

# Creatives

Miranda Rose Hall.....**Writer**  
Nyasha Gudo.....**Director**  
Rob Clews .....**Associate Lighting Designer**  
Bex Key.....**Lighting Operator**  
Iain Armstrong.....**Sound Designer**  
Oliver Howard.....**Sound Operator**  
Amy Ball.....**Casting Director**  
Naomi Thompson.....**Wardrobe**  
Kevina Williams.....**Choir Director**  
Paul Sawtell.....**Stage Manager**  
Rachel Tipping.....**BSL Interpreter**

# Cyclists

Sarah Middleton, Jeremy Bevan, Mark Taylor, Mark Berrett, Norman Brown, Gemma Morris, Alison Insley, Chloe Whittall, Tobi James, Bhavin Shindroja, Claire Smith, David Knibb

# Choir

## **Coventry & Warwickshire Gospel Choir -**

Kevina Williams, Macaeley Chappell, Suzanna Polos, Nicholas Russell, Sandra Russell, Jackie Latty, Millicent Dews, Rebecca Sunjan, Sandra Taylor, Annie Train, Elaine Barrett, Maria Adebote



## Kimisha Lewis

### Naomi

Kimisha is a Coventry actress and movement director.

She has previously performed Internationally and West End and has starred in several shows at the Belgrade, including their alternative B2 Christmas show, **Over the Top** (2018); **I ain't Dumb** (2022); **Noughts and Crosses** (2019), and **Rise Up** (2015).

Kimisha was also in Multi-award winning **Freeman** (*Strictly Arts*) and Olivier Award-nominated **Upstart Crow**.

Kimisha trained at Rose Bruford and graduated with a BA(hons) in Acting. She is a board member for EGO Arts and proud owner of Razzamataz Theatre Schools Coventry - a part-time professional children's theatre school.

Instagram: [@razzcoventry](#) Facebook: [Razzamatazcoventry](#)

## Miranda Rose Hall

### Writer

Miranda Rose Hall is an American playwright and screenwriter who lives in Brooklyn, New York. Her plays include *A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction* (finalist for the 2021 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize); *Plot Points in Our Sexual Development* (finalist for the 2019 Lambda Literary Award in Drama); *The Kind Ones* and *Menstruation: A Period Piece*. She is writing commissioned works for Yale Repertory Theater, Playwrights Horizons Soundstage, and LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater as a Berwin Lee New York London Commissioned Playwright. In 2020, she was honoured with a Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award. She has written for television on Showtime and ABC, and is a founding member of LubDub Theatre Company.

# Get to know our cyclists

## Norman Brown

I'm a personal trainer and have been an active cyclist for 20 years. I love cycling for the mental health and physical benefits that I feel as I cycle the quiet countryside lanes and climb undulating roads all around the country.

I was curious about this project especially to see how we can build ecological awareness, that this production will highlight. Oh and I need the extra training (!) as I plan to cycle from the Channel to the Mediterranean in a few weeks.

## Tobi James

One of my favourite cycling experiences has been taking part in the SkyRide, and later HSBC City Ride. Being able to ride on the infamous Coventry Ring Road is quite unique. Usually it's fast, dangerous, and chaotic, and that's just as a driver. Seeing it turned into a peaceful celebration of pedal power was eye opening. The whole city was abuzz with excitement and sweat, I'll never forget it.

## Jeremy Bevan

Jeremy has been cycling since he was old enough to stop pedalling his tricycle up a hill, descend backwards at speed, and fall off at the bottom.

Now a member of Earlsdon Wheelers, he cycles to keep fit, relax and enjoy the beautiful Warwickshire countryside. The day after appearing in the show, Jeremy (who is an ordained church minister) will be inviting his congregation to be wowed by the incredible richness and diversity of life on God's earth, as an encouragement to treating it with greater respect.

Powering **A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction** is a wonderful illustration of how we can adapt creatively so that we tread more lightly - but still have fun and entertain.

## **Mark Barrett**

I am a member of a cycling gang called the Coventry Demons. We resurrected the name from history, the original demons started before the first world war, and my father in law was a member in the 50s. We raise money for different charities on our regular adventures, our current favourite is Earlsdon Stroke Survivors. All the current team are over 50, so no speed records are about to be broken! I took part in the queen's pageant last year, that has to be one of my favourite memories.

This event is important to show the principle that theatre can have a lower carbon footprint by moving just the gear around the country. It's also useful to make people look at an alternative power source for events. I want to be involved as it raises the profile of local cycling, and contributes to a piece of high art in our city. Looking forward to getting on the bikes for our performances.

## **David Knibb**

I'm David and cycle with the Earlsdon Wheelers that I cofounded about 20 years ago.

My first encounter with cycling was when I was about 10. Mum & Dad got me a kingfisher blue Raleigh Trent Tourist bike, 3 Sturmey Archer gears and of close relevance to the play - a front wheel dynamo to power the lights. So we were environmentally aware some 65 years ago!

I suppose the cycling event that is most memorable was when I was a member of a team of some 50 cyclists who cycled an enormous puppet of Lady Godiva from Coventry to London for London Olympics a few years ago.

So again pedal power showed its use and power!

## **Gemma Morris**

I am part of Warwick Lanterne Rouge Cycling Club.

I wanted to take part in the performance as I am passionate about cycling and delivering an important message about environmental issues.

Cycling has always been a big part of my life. I do as much by bicycles as possible. My favourite cycling adventure was cycling across the whole of the UK and France, camping along the way. It was an amazing experience.

## **Claire Smith**

I'm Claire and I cycle with the Warwick Lantern Rouge cycle club.

It's such a rare thing to have cycling crossed with sustainability and culture and I'm so excited to be involved! Very intrigued to see how hard we need to cycle to keep the power up, it has made me even more conscious of how much energy we use, but also how great bikes and the biking community are. I've cycled all over the country but my favourite memory is the first time I managed to cycle next to my young daughter, it's brilliant to share something I love with her, and the first of many adventures to come.

## **Alison Insley**

My name is Alison Insley, I ride for fitness and pleasure, usually solo! I am a Cycling Instructor and a Squash Coach, but I don't do both at the same time!

I wanted to be part of this show because I think it is an interesting idea to deliver a show off grid, and of course another opportunity to ride a bike.

My favourite memory on a bike has to be any of the many charity bike rides I have completed over the years, such as cycling to all 32 Warwickshire Libraries, cycling to all 17 Warwickshire Fire Stations and cycling around 7 squash clubs, to play 7 matches in 7 hours! I had so much fun and raised a lot of much needed funds for charities.



## **Bhavin Shindroja**

I'm Bhavin, and love cycling. I'm part of a local cycling group Earlsdon Wheelers. I was excited to be part of this innovative play. I have lots of cycling memories to name, from getting my first bike as a child to cycling I have done for charity.

## **Chloe Whittall**

I have cycled in many different forms, ranging from mountain biking in North Wales, to commuting to work and taking part in Triathlon events.

I have been a member of Warwick Lanterne Rouge Cycling Club for two years. I joined after enjoying road cycling on the car-free roads during the pandemic and I have been hooked since! I find I can fit cycling relatively easily into my life as a Mum of two young boys.

I wanted to take part in this show as I love the theatre and I am passionate about the environment.

## **Mark Taylor**

Club: not paid my membership fees!

I wanted to be part of the show because the concept sounded interesting and relevant; plus it gives me a chance to be on a bike.

My favourite thing about cycling is being outside, and finding a good hill somewhere in the middle of nowhere and seeing how fast you can get up it.

# **Special Thanks**

**Thank you to The Cycling Centre** - a non-profit bike workshop, part of Coventry Piece House, their volunteers make and repair and sell donated bikes for charity.

The bikes that are used in this production are made up of recycled bike parts that were put together by their volunteers, we'd like to give a big thank you to Adrian Morton and the other volunteers for making this happen.

**The Belgrade would like to give a special mention to Naomi, Renata, Helen, Emma, and Sonya for giving up their time to jump on a bike and power our tech rehearsal.**

# About Headlong

We're Headlong. We make theatre with the power to move.

Big, exhilarating productions that use the unexpected to connect everyone we reach, right across the nation. Whether a work is old or new, there are always different questions we can ask. So our productions are an invitation: to come and see something in a new way. Join us.

Previous Headlong productions include *Henry V*, *Jitney*, *Corrina, Corrina*, *Best of Enemies*, *People, Places & Things* and *Enron*, and major digital theatre innovations *Signal Fires* and *Unprecedented*.

[headlong.co.uk](http://headlong.co.uk)

## For Headlong

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Development Consultant **Kirstin Peltonen**

Literary Manager **Frank Peschier**

Producer **Zoë Anjuli Robinson**

Artistic Director **Holly Race Roughan**

Communities Associate **Iskandar اسکندر R. Sharazuddin**

Artist/Designer in Residence **Moi Tran**

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**Beth and Ian Mill KC**

**Rob O'Rahilly**

We are also grateful for the dedicated support of our Board members:

**Justin Audibert, Paddy Dillon, Cas Donald, Sarah Ellis, Lucinda Harvey, Julia Head, Jacqueline Hurt, Prime Isaac, Nicky Jones, Lil Lambley, Donna Munday, Sir Trevor Phillips OBE, Toni Racklin, Lesley Wan**

# About A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction

The original production of A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction directed by Katie Mitchell was created at the Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne as part of the project Sustainable Theatre?, conceived by Katie Mitchell, Jérôme Bel and Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, with the collaboration of the Competence Centre in Sustainability of the University of Lausanne, co-produced by STAGES - Sustainable Theatre Alliance for a Green Environmental Shift (NTGent - Théâtre de Liège - National Theatre of Croatia in Zagreb - MC93, Maison de la culture de Seine-Saint-Denis - Trafo House of Contemporary Arts - Piccolo Teatro di Milano, Teatro d'Europa - Lithuanian National Drama Theatre - Teatro Nacional D. Maria II - Maribor Slovene National Theatre - The Royal Dramatic Theatre, Dramaten, Stockholm - National Theater & Concert Hall, Taipei) and co-funded by the European Union. Sustainable Theatre? includes two shows and a workshop touring in the form of scripts recreated locally.

A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction was commissioned and developed by LubDub Theatre Company, Caitlin Nasema Cassidy, and Geoff Kanick, Co-Artistic Directors, Robert Duffley, Dramaturg.

The production was developed, in part, with assistance from the Orchard Project ([www.orchardproject.com](http://www.orchardproject.com)), Ari Edelson Artistic Director.

There is a playtext by Nick Hern Books available to purchase online at [www.nickhernbooks.co.uk](http://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk)

# Concept Team

Design Concept conceived by **Moi Tran**

Original Composer and Sound Design conceived by **Paul Clark**

Lighting Design touring concept conceived by **Bethany Gupwell**

Bicycle Power Specialists: **Colin Tonks and Elliot Townsend for Electric Pedals**

Touring Production Manager **Kat Ellis**

# On Tour

**Shakespeare North Playhouse, Prescot, from 16 May 2023**

Directed by Nathan Powell

**New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, from 19 June 2023**

Directed by Ellie Taylor

**Theatre Royal Plymouth, from 28 June 2023**

Directed by Kay Michael

**York Theatre Royal, from 27 September 2023**

Directed by Mingyu Lin



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