

**Embargoed until 6am on 31/08/2017**

**HULL TRUCK THEATRE AND HULL UK CITY OF CULTURE 2017 ANNOUNCE THE WORLD PREMIERE OF MAXINE PEAKE’S *THE LAST TESTAMENT OF LILLIAN BILOCCA***

**Hull Truck Theatre and Hull UK City of Culture 2017 present**

**THE LAST TESTAMENT OF LILLIAN BILOCCA**

**Written by Maxine Peake**

**Music by Adrian McNally and The Unthanks**

Associate Movement Director: **Jon Beney**;Lighting Designer: **Chris Davey**; Director: **Sarah Frankcom**;Co-director & Choreographer: **Imogen Knight**; Sound Designer: **Peter Malkin**; Designer: **Amanda Stoodley**

**The Guildhall, Hull**

**3 – 18 November 2017**

**Press night: 9 November, 7.30pm**

**Hull Truck Theatre** and **Hull UK City of Culture 2017** today announce the world première of ***The Last Testament of Lillian Bilocca***, a new play written by **Maxine Peake** especially for the final season of Hull 2017**.** Tickets will go on sale today at2pm.

This **site-specific performance** will lead audiences through Hull’s historic Guildhall, the Grade II listed home of Hull City Council. It sees Peake reunite with regular collaborator **Sarah Frankcom** and features a live musical score from celebrated folk artists **Adrian McNally and The Unthanks**.

Follow Hull hero Lillian Bilocca and her crew of head-scarved women through The Guildhall, joining them in 1968 as they dare to speak out and take action to improve the safety conditions for their men at sea.

Witness the Three Day Millionaires’ riotous return home from the wet and wild west, and dance at the ghostly Silver Cod Ball, the trawler owners’ annual slap on the back.

Become part of their story as it unfolds and immerse yourself in Hull’s fishing community. Celebrate the vivid and dangerous lives of its trawler men and unite against the feudal power of the ship owners.

Written by Maxine Peake, directed by Sarah Frankcom and Imogen Knight, and with an original live score by folk’s finest - The Unthanks - this unique site-specific production will take audiences on an unforgettable journey using music, storytelling, movement and performance to celebrate an inspirational period in Hull’s history and a force for change that resonated far beyond the city.

It’s time to tell the world.

**Join the community company**

Hull Truck Theatre and Hull UK City of Culture 2017 are looking for men aged 18+ to join a community company as part of *The Last Testament of Lillian Bilocca*.

The community company will help to bring the performance to life through a series of physical and movement sequences, alongside the professional company and world class creative team. They will participate in a series of workshops and rehearsals with Co-director/Choreographer Imogen Knight and Associate Movement Director, Jon Beney, to build movement ability and confidence before appearing in the production.

For more information visit [www.hulltruck.co.uk](http://www.hulltruck.co.uk) or visit the Hull Truck Theatre Box Office to pick up a form.

**Quotes**

**Maxine Peake, Writer, says:**

‘*I am extremely honoured and more than a little excited to be working in collaboration with Hull City of Culture on The Last Testament of Lilian Billoca. We hope our telling of this story about the extraordinary women from this extraordinary city will entertain and stimulate an outsiders view on a past community in a city that is very much alive and kicking hard!’*

**Adrian McNally, Composer, says:**

*‘We are so tremendously excited to work with the brilliant Maxine Peake and Sarah Frankcom, on a story that is so specific to one place and yet the themes of power, gender, community, mob mentality, superstition, survival and love, speak of us all. It is both thrilling and nerve wracking to work with modern history that to some will still feel like yesterday, in a city I went through 6 times a year for most of my childhood, on our way to family holidays in Withernsea.’*

**Sarah Frankcom, Director, says:**

*‘I’m thrilled to be making The Last Testament of Lillian Bilocca for Hull 2017 in collaboration with Maxine Peake and Imogen Knight. It’s a real privilege to be creating and exploring such an vital and revolutionary story with the City, and with an amazingly talented creative team and local community ensemble.’*

**Mark Babych, Artistic Director at Hull Truck Theatre, says:**

‘The Last Testament of Lillian Bilocca *is exactly the kind of story that Hull Truck Theatre is passionate about; it has a powerful local resonance but also celebrates the national significance of a Hull hero. Lillian achieved a great deal in her life and it’s an honour to share her story as part of the* Tell the World *season.*

*We’re really excited to be taking the work of Hull Truck Theatre beyond its walls, delivering a piece of exceptional drama with world-class artists at the Guildhall in Hull. Local people can be a part of the community company which is a truly unique opportunity, and something I urge people to get involved with. It’s going to be such a special event and one of the highlights of our Hull 2017 programme.’*

**Martin Green, Director of Hull 2017, says:**

 *‘Maxine Peake and Sarah Frankcom have been collaborating on critically acclaimed shows for over a decade so it’s exciting to see them bring their incredibly successful creative partnership to Hull for a world premiere, which explores a story rooted in the city. Once again we are taking amazing work into non-traditional theatre venues, offering the audience a unique and immersive experience in one of the city’s most historic buildings.’*

**Notes to Editors**

**Historical context**

**Lillian Bilocca** rallied the women of Hull’s close-knit fishing community into fighting for better conditions for men at sea, following the Triple Trawler Tragedy of 1968 in which 58 men were lost in just three weeks. Amongst their demands, the women wanted radio operators on board every trawler and an end to men having to supply their own bedding and clothing. They drew together a petition which attracted 10,000 signatures in just 3 days. Lillian and her fellow women were dubbed the ‘Headscarf Revolutionaries’, taking their fight all the way from the docks in Hull to the Houses of Parliament. Their campaign became headline news around the world and paved the way for better working conditions across the fishing industry. A mural to honour Lillian Bilocca and the ‘Headscarf Revolutionaries’ was unveiled on Hessle Road in Hull last year, which had once been the heart of the city’s fishing community.

**Biographies**

**Maxine Peake**’s previous writing credits include critically-acclaimed *Beryl*, commissioned by West Yorkshire Playhouse and presented on a UK tour, about the pioneering and record breaking cycling champion Beryl Burton. More recently Maxine worked with Headlong and the Guardian on their *Brexit Shorts: From a Divided Nation* series, writing *Shattered* starring Nassar Memarzia. Her performing career spans stage, TV and film, garnering critical acclaim in roles as diverse as *Dinnerladies’* Twinkle, *Silk’s* Martha Costello QC, as well as performing in *Hamlet* and *The Skriker* for Manchester international Festival. She won the Broadcasting Press Guild Awards for her performances in *Criminal Justice* and *The Street*. Her other television credits include *See No Evil: The Moors Murders, Red Riding, The Devil’s Whore, Criminal Justice, Little Dorrit, Henry IV, The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister*, BAFTA nominated dramas *Silk, The Village, Room at the Top, Hancock & Joan*, *The Street* and *Shameless.* She starred in features *Private Peaceful*, *Run and Jump,* *Keeping Rosy, Svengali, The Theory of Everything* and *The Falling. Hamlet***,** filmed during the run at the Royal Exchange, was released in cinemas March 2015. She has performed at some of the most prestigious theatres in the country including *The Cherry Orchard, The Relapse*and *Luther* (The National Theatre), *The Deep Blue Sea*and *Hamlet* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *How to Hold Your Breath* (Royal Court), *The Children’s Hour* (Royal Exchange) and *Miss Julie* (Theatre Royal Haymarket/Royal Exchange).

**Sarah Frankcom** directs. Having originally joined the Royal Exchange Theatre as Literary Manager, when in 2007 she established the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting – the UK’s biggest prize of its kind, she is now the sole Artistic Director. Forthcoming productions include: *Our Town*. Her recent productions have included *A Streetcar Named Desire, Hamlet* (also an international feature film, screened in over 200 cinemas across the UK and over 30 countries worldwide), *The Skriker* (MIF15), *The Masque Of Anarchy* (MIF13) (all four with Maxine Peake), *All I Want Is One Night, Blindsided* (by Simon Stephens), *That Day We Sang, Black Roses, Three Birds, Orpheus Descending, Miss Julie* (a new version by David Eldridge), *Beautiful Thing, A View From The Bridge, Winterlong* (by Andrew Sheridan winner of the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting), *Punk Rock* (by Simon Stephens, winner of the MEN Award for Best Production), *Blithe Spirit, Three Sisters, On The Shore Of The Wide World* (by Simon Stephens, winner of the Olivier Award for Best Play) and *Kes*. Her work has also been seen at the National Theatre, the Bush Theatre, the Lyric Hammersmith, the Soho Theatre and the Crucible, Sheffield.

**Adrian McNally** is a pianist, composer and record producer, born and raised in a small pit village near Barnsley. He now lives in Northumberland and is married to Rachel Unthank. He is musical director of **The Unthanks**, the Mercury nominated band fronted by Tyneside sisters Rachel and Becky Unthank, with fans including Martin Freeman, Nick Hornby, Elvis Costello, Rosanne Cash, Robert Wyatt and Dawn French. There is a socially conscious heart to much of The Unthanks’ work, with the band seeing folk music less as a style of music and more as an oral history that offers perspective on our own time. Their approach to storytelling straddles the complex relationship between modernism and learning from the past. Staunch traditionalism and sonic adventure may seem like polar opposites, yet they are easy bedfellows in the gentle hands of The Unthanks. Despite having no formal training and still being unable to read or write music, Adrian McNally has composed for symphony orchestra and brass band projects with The Unthanks, while for stage and screen, the band have worked on several plays with Newcastle's Live Theatre, and composed a live soundtrack to a film about the shipbuilding industry. Most recently, they toured an audio-visual project based on the songs of poems of Molly Drake.

 **Hull Truck Theatre** is a producing theatre right in the heart of Hull, making thrilling work of exceptional quality with a distinctive northern voice. Inspired by their city, they tell powerful human stories that resonate with our times. We make work with local people, programme the very best in live performance and build partnerships with others to create a vibrant and dynamic cultural hub for Hull that is inspiring, creative and welcoming.

**Hull UK City of Culture** is a 365 day programme of cultural events and creativity inspired by the city and told to the world. Hull secured the title of UK City of Culture 2017 in November 2013. It is only the second city to hold the title and the first in England.

Divided into four seasons, starting with Made in Hull, this nationally significant event draws on the distinctive spirit of the city and the artists, writers, directors, musicians, revolutionaries and thinkers that have contributed to the development of art and ideas.

Hull 2017's second season, Roots and Routes (April to June) explored the city's unique place as a gateway to Europe and one of the world's busiest ports. Its maritime history and global connections inspire the stories of the city and this season also celebrated Hull's international links, including Rotterdam, Reykjavik and Freetown. Freedom runs from July to September. Building on the legacy of Hull-born anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce MP, Freedom will explore the concept of freedom in all its many forms. The final season, Tell the World will run from October to December.

The Culture Company was set up to deliver the Hull 2017 programme and is an independent organisation with charitable status. It has raised £32 million, with over 70 partners supporting the project, including public bodies, trusts and foundations and local and national businesses. Key contributions are coming from: Host City – Hull City Council; Principal Partners - Arts Council England, BBC, Big Lottery Fund, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, KCOM, KWL, Spirit of 2012, Yorkshire Water and the University of Hull; Major Partners –Associated British Ports, Arco, BP, the British Council, British Film Institute, Green Port Hull, Hull Clinical Commissioning Group, MKM Building Supplies, P&O Ferries, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sewell Group, Siemens, Smith & Nephew and Wykeland Group. The National Lottery has contributed more than £10m of this funding, making it the largest single funding body for Hull 2017.

Hull 2017's International Partners are: Aarhus, Denmark, which is European Capital of Culture 2017; Reykjavik, Iceland; Rotterdam, The Netherlands; and Freetown, Sierra Leone (twinned with Hull). These relationships are reflected in a number of events throughout the year.

For information go to [www.hull2017.co.uk](http://www.hull2017.co.uk) Follow us on Twitter @2017Hull Instagram @2017hull Facebook HullCityofCulture

**The Last Testament of Lillian Bilocca Listings**

**The Guildhall, Alfred Gelder Street, Hull, HU1 2AA**

**3 – 18 November**

**Press night: 9 November**

**www.hulltruck.co.uk**

**Box office: 01482 323638**

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