**Waldo’s Circus of Magic & Terror**

Come one, come all to the spectacular new musical Waldo’s Circus of Magic & Terror

**Synopsis**

Under the twinkling stars of the big top, sensational circus, powerful magic and electrifying music combine to tell a poignant story of courage, resistance and love.

It’s 1933 Brandenburg and the Nazis are burning books and suspending civil rights. Many are desperate to escape, but for Waldo and his travelling circus of outcasts, acrobats and aerialists, ‘the show must go on’.

As Hitler’s dictatorship strengthens and oppression grows, the daring humanity and courage of this circus troupe stay hidden beneath the painted-on glamour of Waldo’s big top. Love, loyalty and risk-taking balance on the tightwire as the world outside becomes darker and more dangerous.

Waldo’s Circus is informed by historical research and the experiences of real performers. Based on an original idea by Hattie Naylor, written by Hattie Naylor (Ivan and the Dogs, The Night Watch) and Jamie Beddard (Messiah, The Elephant Man) with an original score by Charles Hazlewood (Paraorchestra), it is a large-scale collaboration between D/deaf, disabled, and non-disabled artists and creators and tours nationally this year.

All performances are chilled, BSL interpreted, captioned and audio described.

**Creative Team Q&A**

I was already aware that circus performers were used at many of the Nazi rallies. So, I started researching, and I found that not only was this the case, but some of these performers were also smuggled out of the country through the circus networks of Paris, and on to South America. This amazing story had barely been told.

The overall thing that has driven me more than anything else is the need to tell stories from voices of people that have been silenced, or been pushed outside of society. This explains why I was drawn so much to the story we tell in Waldo’s Circus, because it’s so fundamentally about those things.

It is a story about humanity, good and bad. It is a story about how some of us can see the darkness in front of us and some cannot. It is about how we are judged at important moments in history. It places circus at the heart of a story we think we know well, and it also shines a light on a lesser-known community of people that were persecuted by the Nazi regime.

We’ve created the show we wanted to make, and which we’ve talked about for years; we’re taking on not only what happened to disabled people in the Nazi era, which is unbelievably cruel and disturbing – it’s the most horrendous research I’ve ever done for a project – but also fascism, and the poisonous idea that ‘we are better than you’, which lies at its heart. Hattie Naylor, Co-Writer.

Waldo’s Circus is a story about a time and people I am passionately interested in and want others to understand, explore and think about. As a disabled person and artist, I’m aware that much of our history, and many of our stories and experiences have been ignored or underrepresented so the opportunity to craft and present these is both exciting and daunting. Working with so many brilliant disabled and non-disabled artists and teams to bring such a project together is incredibly rewarding. Jamie Beddard, Co-Writer

**What is exciting about the script to you?**

Extraordinary Bodies is a non-traditional circus company, celebrating the bodies, skills, stories and aesthetics of those disabled and underrepresented. We work across art forms, always employing theatricality and music in our work. The story and scale – bigger than previous productions – of Waldo’s Circus and the collaborators – old and new – we wished to work with, necessitated the mix of these elements. Underpinning this is the desire to make the show as full, accessible and broad- reaching as possible. All elements present wonderful storytelling possibilities and drawing these together is vital to the work we do. Combining the energy, skills and creativity of artists across these disciplines is an incredibly rich tapestry on which to create a spectacular, meaningful and vital piece. Jamie Beddard, Co-Writer

I haven’t made anything like Waldo’s before. It is unique as it’s new writing, an unheard story and it has new original music, songs, dance and circus. There is magic and terror in this show. The terror of how humans can treat each other and the magic of community, and also some real stage magic. Claire Hodgson, Co-Director

It is a story about humanity, good and bad. It is a story about how some of us can see the darkness in front of us and some cannot. It is about how we are judged at important moments in history. It places circus at the heart of a story we think we know well, and it also shines a light on a lesser-known community of people that were persecuted by the Nazi regime. Billy Alwen, Co-Director

**Tell us about the score... What was your inspiration?**

When I write a score for a piece of theatre, I write for the performers in the rehearsal room and borrow from each and any, and all musical worlds. For Waldo’s Circus where Hattie and Jamie have written very beautiful, lyrical prose, I thought how about if we created a kind of punk circus that also borrowed from new romanticism, disco and Schubert?

There’s no incongruity about having a punk aria followed by elements of a Schubert quartet and that’s what the show will be. Extraordinary Bodies is a phenomenally skilled, and ultimately, very, very open-hearted, adventurous bunch of individuals. Charles Hazlewood, Composer

**What was the inspiration behind the costumes?**

The costumes suggest a flamboyant, but insular world that is resistant to change and untouched initially by the rise of German fascism. The colours draw on Chagall’s circus prints, depicting turquoise tents filled with performers wearing pink, orange and green. As the Nazis and Brownshirts take hold of Waldo’s circus, our colours and styles become more subdued. Ultimately, the costumes are forced into alignment with the uniforms of the SA with their horrific Nazi insignia. Ti Green, Set and Costume Design

**CAST**

**Abbie Purvis   
Krista**

Abbie Purvis grew up in Scotland where from a young age she developed her love for performing. She attended many local theatre schools and at 14 landed her first leading role in Annie (East Ayrshire Youth Theatre).

Since then Abbie has gone on to study Musical Theatre at MGA Academy of Performing Arts as well as appearing in a number of professional pantomimes. Her acting and musical theatre credits include Willow (filmed, 2022), Peter Pan (Eastwood Park Theatre), Snow White (Motherwell Theatre) and Jack and the Beanstalk (Motherwell Theatre).

Abbie comes from a lineage of actors. She is  
the granddaughter of Jack Purvis (Time Bandits, Monty Python and Star Wars) and her mother Katie Purvis played the iconic role of Maternal Ewok  
in Star Wars: Episode VI Return of the Jedi.

**Brooklyn Melvin   
Mosh**

Brooklyn Melvin holds a BA in Performance in BSL/English from The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS). Brooklyn also translates songs into BSL.

Brooklyn’s credits include Oliver in Oliver Twist (Leeds Playhouse/Ramps on the Moon), for which they were nominated for Best Actor in The Stage Debut Awards 2020, Listening Party (Buzzcut), Happiness Project (Solar Bear), Emperor’s New Clothes (Derby Theatre/ Polka Theatre), Holding/Holding On (National Theatre of Scotland) and Sleeping Beauty (CAST, Doncaster).

**Dave ‘Johnzy’ Johns   
Band/Associate Music Director**

Dave Johnzy graduated from the British Academy of Music (Trinity College London)

in 2007 and has since toured the world as a session musician. He has performed and recorded with the likes of Basement Jaxx, Chali 2na, Babyhead, Dub Mafia, Eva Lazarus, Mohawkestra and The Jungle Brothers.

His previous theatre work includes Twelfth Night (Shakespeare’s Globe), The Little Match Girl  
and other Happier Tales (Shakespeare’s Globe), Dead Dog in a Suitcase (Kneehigh) and Kiss (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama).

**Garry Robson   
Waldo**

Garry Robson is a Disabled writer, actor and director who has directed over 40 professional productions in the UK and internationally. He has received several awards for this work including a Manchester Evening News Theatre Award and a Herald Angel.

His acting credits include The Commander the host of CBBC’s gameshow Crisis Control, as well as leading roles in Pitching In (BBC Wales) and Silent Witness (BBC).

He has also appeared in numerous theatre productions including Guys and Dolls (Sheffield’s Crucible), White Christmas (Curve), Two (Graeae), Reasons To BeCheerful (Graeae), Tommy (Ramps on the Moon), and  
has just completed a national tour of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical (Curve / Bath Theatre Royal).

**Harriet Riley   
Band/Percussion**

Harriet Riley is a British Percussionist and Composer based in Bristol. She has worked all over the world playing with chamber ensembles, orchestras, dance projects, theatrical performances and bands.

Harriet studied orchestra percussion after growing up in a musical household, learning percussion traditions from around the world. She regularly plays with chamber quartet Spindle Ensemble (featured in The Guardian’s Top 10 Contemporary Classical albums of 2021) and alt-pop project Stevie Toddler (featured on BBC Radio 6 and BBC Radio 2).

With Charles Hazlewood’s Paraorchestra Harriet has performed around the world and headlined the Bluedot Festival. She also studies Balinese Gamelan and regularly goes back to Bali to learn and perform Gender Wayang, a chamber music gamelan used for ceremonies and shadow puppetry.

**Jack Reitman   
Joseph Benowitz**

Jack Reitman trained at the Royal Academy of Music (Musical Theatre MA) and with the National Youth Music Theatre. In 2020 he was the recipient of the OffWestEnd Award for Best Actor in a Musical for his performance in Thrill Me: The Leopold & Loeb Story (Hope Theatre and Jermyn Street Theatre).

He has also performed in other theatre productions including Amour (Charing Cross Theatre), Assassins (Pleasance Theatre) and Jewish Hollywood (Upstairs at the Gatehouse). Other credits of his include Disney’s Broadway Hits

(Royal Albert Hall, Disney+), Jessica Vosk: Live In Concert (Cadogan Hall) and Sunshine (workshop for Pitch Perfect). Jack is also a librettist for original musicals, and a member of BML (BOOK Music & Lyrics).

**JoAnne Haines   
Dora**

JoAnne Haines is a neurodiverse artist, performer and facilitator who has been performing professionally since 2009. With experience in theatre, television, film and outdoor spectacle, she has toured internationally with Mind the Gap on productions such as A Little Space, ZARA and Mia.

Her own work is multisensory, participatory and accessible with a focus on learning-disabled inclusion. JoAnne’s project Dancing with Colours premiered at Mind the  
Gap in 2022, and Colour Full was commissioned by BEYOND Festival and Unlimited, and adapted to a digital version for Southbank Centre’s Unlimited Festival.

JoAnne sees her audiences as people who take part in the work rather than simply watching.

**Jonny Leitch   
Renee/Band-Drums**

Jonny Leitch is a long-time member of Extraordinary Bodies, having worked with the project on previous productions

What Am I Worth and Human as a drummer, aerialist and sound designer. He also performed with them in What Do You See In Me and Terry Riley’s In C, a collaboration with Paraorchestra.

As a musician, Jonny has played at Glastonbury Festival with Paraorchestra, as a percussionist for the Love Unlimited Synth Orchestra and on Hannah Peel’s No.1 Classical Chart album The Unfounding. He has also worked on several projects with Graeae Theatre Company as a drummer and composer.

**Lawrence Swaddle   
Gerhard**

Lawrence Swaddle is an actor and circus performer who trained at the Oxford School of Drama. Over his career he has performed nationally and internationally in circus shows and theatre productions. His main discipline is partner acrobatics, however, his passion lies in marrying circus to theatre in order to create a deeper dimension of emotion and storytelling.

**Max Marchewicz   
vip/show interpreter**

Max Marchewicz is a creative practitioner, BSL interpreter (specialising in performance), audio describer, access consultant and trainer.

They studied theatre, dance and music from a young age and have a long professional history in access work. Among the shows they have interpreted, they were one of two integrated performance interpreters in Graeae Theatre’s multi-award winning 2022 production, The Paradis Files.

Alongside their BSL/English interpreter qualification, they also hold a diploma in Decrouxian Corporeal Mime.

**Mirabelle Gremaud   
Dr Margot Krüger & Queenie**

Mirabelle Gremaud has a BA in Physical Theatre from the Accademia Teatro Dimitri (CH) and a postgraduate degree from the Laban Conservatory of Dance (UK).

She is an actress and dancer with a specific movement language that involves acrobatics and contortion.  
She is also a musician, harpist and singer. Her performer credits include Emma Rice’s productions of Wise Children, Malory Towers and Wuthering Heights, and Peter Pan (Birmingham Repertory Theatre). She continues to work in Switzerland with directors such as Omar Porras and Joelle Richard.

Mirabelle also writes and composes songs for theatre, as well as devising her own work and music under the label Le Mirabellier.

**Raphaella Julien   
Mish**

Raphaella ‘Raffie’ Julien is a professional Deaf dancer, actor, BSL director and movement director. She is fluent in BSL and SSE and highly skilled in mime, physical theatre and choreography.

In 2022 she won the Deaffest Best Actress award for her role in the short film Lost, Taken, Murdered, and has appeared in a number of television productions, including Jerk (Rough-Cut TV), Hunch (Reid Productions), Trinity (Tilt Films) and Clink (Channel 5).

Raffie’s theatre credits include Follow the Signs (Soho Theatre), The Emperor’s New Clothes’ (Derby Theatre/Polka Theatre) and Treasure Island (Derby Theatre), and she co-choreographed Bossy (ZooCo).

Her dance credits include The International Dance Show (Cyprus), The Michael Jackson Show (Crete), and More than Words (MNEK Music Video Warner Records).

**Ryan Murphy   
Darragh Finnegan**

Ryan Murphy is a Circus Theatre maker based in Bristol, specialising in unusual object juggling and narrative-driven circus. Ryan’s hearing loss inspired him towards visual arts and physical theatre, with a passion for telling silent stories without barriers.

Having trained at Circomedia, the National Centre of Circus Arts and Ecole Philippe Gaulier, he works widely in the outdoor arts. With Wet Picnic and Unstable King he has toured across the UK and France with shows such as The Lift, GAME and The Most Dangerous Cup Of Tea In The World.

Through his company, Tit for Tat, he delivers absurd spectacles to outdoor events and is currently researching a new collaboration, Shush, exploring connections between identity and sound.

**Tilly Lee-Kronick   
Peter**

Tilly Lee-Kronick is a multi-disciplinary artist and singer, performing in circus, dance and theatre. Having trained at Circomedia specialising in static trapeze and physical theatre, Tilly strives to integrate her previous theatrical and dance experience with her love of trapeze to create unique aerial work.

She has performed her solo show Ripe directed by Mish Weaver across the UK and was selected as  
a highlight of Resolutions 2018 Festival. She was a resident circus artist at the Roundhouse 2018- 2019, and an Associate Artist at Deda 2019-2020.

As well as creating her own work Tilly has performed nationally and internationally with Cirque Bijou,  
Full Tilt Aerial Dance, Parade of Horribles, and in Extraordinary Bodies’ previous production Human.

**From our co-producers**

“We know that creating a brand-new musical is a major feat. So what happens when you add circus into the mix? It makes for a new and exciting way of working and what’s so brilliant about working with Extraordinary Bodies is that they are not only up for this, they’re also fantastically adept at making terrific things happen.

Our work with Diverse City over the years has led to this collaboration with them on Waldo’s Circus of Magic & Terror - through their circus and theatre company Extraordinary Bodies, a collaboration with Cirque Bijou.

In 2015 as Agents for Change, Diverse City supported our work to become  
a more accessible, inclusive space for performers and visitors alike. They met each of our questions with openness, honesty and friendship. That work still continues everyday thanks to their generosity.

We also know the case for inclusion and diversity can be made in  
a different way; by making art that shows everyone’s creative potential; by telling stories of people who have been silenced or pushed to the outskirts of society. And that’s why Extraordinary Bodies is such a powerful force for change, and a company we’re proud to work alongside.

I am really pleased that Bristol Old Vic has played a small role in supporting Extraordinary Bodies to bring Waldos Circus of Magic & Terror to the stage.”

Charlotte Geeves, Executive Director, Bristol Old Vic

“From the moment we heard about Waldo’s Circus of Terror and Magic we knew it was something we wanted to co-produce: for its ambition, and its story of defiance, love, and survival in plain sight at a time when freedom was in peril. This resonated with us because whilst it’s a story of the past, it’s a salient reminder of how exclusion works to weaken us all.

We are delighted to be working with Extraordinary Bodies whose values and ambitions around inclusion, equity, and engagement of all our communities matches our own.

The show is artistically ambitious with the combination of circus and musical theatre, and an important staging post on our creative renewal journey. We are very much looking forward to it arriving in Plymouth.”

Mandy Precious, Director of Strategic Projects, Theatre Royal Plymouth

**Credits**

CREATIVE TEAM

Hattie Naylor, Co-Writer

Jamie Beddard, Co-Writer

Charles Hazlewood, Composer & Music Director

Billy Alwen, Co-Director   
  
Claire Hodgson, Co-Director

Jenny Davies, Co-Director

Ti Green Set & Costume Designer  
  
Katy Morison, Lighting Designer

Andy Rose, Sound Designer

Vicki Igbokwe-Ozoagu, Choreographer

Kate Webb, Associate Circus Director   
  
Polly Jerrold, Casting Director

PRODUCTION

Alex Ford, Assistant Stage Manager

Anna Dixon, Costume Supervisor   
  
Bethany St John, Rigger  
  
Cassie Harrison, Deputy Stage Manager   
  
Daisy Drury, Lead Producer  
  
Dan Blaker, Sound No. 2  
  
Danial Thatcher, Head of Running Wardrobe

Dean Sudron, Technical Stage Manager

Ed Borgnis, Production Manager   
  
Joe Dickens, Associate Lighting Designer

Liz Kay, Company Stage Manager  
  
Rachel Pender-Cudlip, Associate Producer   
  
Rupert de Renzy-Martin, Sound No. 1  
  
Sascha Goslin, Project Producer

ACCESS

Abi Hill, Venue Access Advisor

Anna Curd, BSL Interpreter

Anna Kitson, BSL Interpreter

Charli Ward, Access Facilitator

Daniella Faircloth, Access Facilitator

Eleanor Williams, Access Facilitator

Elizabeth Clare, Access Facilitator

Elizabeth Oliver, BSL Interpreter

Helen Shringler, BSL Interpreter

Jacob Bevan, BSL Interpreter

Kate McStraw, Access Adviser

Lana Walker, Access Facilitator

Lucie Jowett, Access Facilitator

Karen Huntley, BSL Interpreter

Kate Neill, BSL Interpreter

Maria Fellows, BSL Interpreter

Megan McArthur, BSL Interpreter

Nikki Champagnie Harris, BSL Intepreter

Pascale Maroney, BSL Interpreter

Paul Mancini, BSL Interpreter

Paul Mari, Access Facilitator

Pickles Norman, Access Facilitator

Sophia Knox-Miller, Access Supervisor

Sherrie Eugene-Hart, BSL Interpreter

COLLABORATORS & CONSULTANTS   
  
Daryl Jackson, BSL Consultant

David Ellington, BSL Consultant

Elana Binysh, Script Adviser

Ella McKay, Tightwire Trainer

Hana Moisala,Tightwire Consultant

Jacqueline Nicholls, Communications Consultant

Lex Kaby, Intimacy Director

Michael Achtman, Script Adviser  
  
Nina Steiger, Script Adviser

Peter Clifford, Magic Consultant  
  
Rachel Kirby, Juggling Trainer   
  
Richard Headon, Clowning Consultant   
  
Sarah Sigal, Script Adviser & Marketing Consultant   
  
Stav Meishar, Historical Consultant /Dramaturg  
  
Vee Smith, Tightwire Trainer

Willie Elliott, Audio Describer

EXTRAORDINARY BODIES  
Becky Chapman, Executive Director, Diverse City

Beryl Dzambo, Marketing & Communications Manager  
  
Billy Alwen, Co-Artistic Director   
  
Binita Walia, PR Consultant

Claire Hodgson, Co-Artistic Director

David Ellington, Filmmaker

Eva H Lee, Marketing Coordinator

Gemma Alldred, Connecting Communities Project Lead  
  
Geraldine Giddings, Executive Director - Cirque Bijou

Jakob Mellin, Production & Logistics - Cirque Bijou  
  
Jamie Beddard Co-Artistic Director, Diverse City

Jodie Cole, Connecting Communities Co-Evaluation   
  
Producer Liz Craig, Finance Director - Diverse City

Lucy Descourtier, Touring Diverse Led Circus Coordinator   
  
Nic Prior, Production Manager - Cirque Bijou

Dr Roz Stewart-Hall, Evaluation Consultant

**With Thanks**

Aerial Edge, Aircraft Circus, Barny Wreyford, Bristol Costume Services, Bristol Dye & Print Studio, Bryony Attwood, Charlotte Law   
Circomedia, Denise Heywood, Elizabeth Oliver, Eilís Davis, Hatty Greenway, Isabella Mars, Jacksons Lane, Jacqui Beckford, John Havenh, Katie Brailsford, Kelly Jago, Lucy Turner, Mekella Broomberg, Milla Kurronen, Natacha Marro, National Theatre Studio, Panda Cooper, Paul Blakemore, Serefina Taylor, Steve Tanner, Tony Stiles  
Unit 15 Creation Space, Wernick, Will Datson, Your Stay Bristol

**About Extraordinary Bodies**

Extraordinary Bodies creates powerful performances that celebrate our vast potential as humans. Exploring a vibrant mix of circus, dance, theatre, and music, we tell meaningful stories that question the value of our bodies and give a voice to those who are often silenced.

Extraordinary Bodies is a vital collaboration between show-makers, Cirque Bijou, and Diverse City, a charity that champions diversity and equity in the performing arts. Together we hold a unique and magical space where diverse bodies are embraced, boundaries are broken, and inclusivity is championed. Bringing together the skill and talent of D/deaf, disabled, and non-disabled artists, our work is testament to how diverse, extraordinary people can work equally together on and off stage.

**Circus for everybody**

**Touring Diverse-Led Circus**

Extraordinary Bodies has created works for outdoor performances for 10 years.

Since 2020, we have taken our unique style of circus indoors. Our aim is to bring our existing audiences with us and to attract established venue audiences to new, diverse-led circus shows. We are working with a network of venues and co-producing partners, all committed to inviting audiences into their buildings who are as diverse as the shows on their stages.

Waldo’s Circus of Magic and Terror is the third show in our Touring Diverse-Led Circus programme, supported by investment from Arts Council England, National Lottery and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

**Connecting Communities**

Alongside live shows, Extraordinary Bodies work to connect with communities local to the venues we are touring to. Currently we are supporting diverse groups across the country to engage in the artistic themes and processes of Waldo’s Circus of Magic and Terror, to connect with their venue and to link with other groups nationally.

At the same time, we nurture leadership in a small number of community members who, if the world was made differently, would have a voice in shaping our cultural life. We call these people Unexpected Leaders and we coach them to take up roles as evaluators, decision makers and communicators.

Through Connecting Communities, Extraordinary Bodies and our partners are developing 14 Unexpected Leaders and engaging with over 300 people in 10 community groups and education settings across the country.

This work is possible thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.

**Support Extraordinary Bodies**

Making change happen takes strength. But there’s no doubt that we’re stronger together. Extraordinary Bodies is powered by passion and purpose, but we depend hugely on the support of like-minded people and organisations who share our belief in inspiring a fairer and more equal world. The fact is, we can’t share our incredible performances with diverse communities around the UK without your support.

If you share our vision for a better future for humanity, please consider supporting Extraordinary Bodies in any way you can. Your support could mean any of the following: donating to Extraordinary Bodies, filling in our show survey, telling your friends and family about us, following us on social media or signing up to our newsletter.

Charitable giving to Extraordinary Bodies is administered by Diverse City Ltd.  
Charity number 1176855. VAT number 399994981.

Scan this QR code to donate

Qr code

Description automatically generated

Scan this QR code to sign up to the newsletter

Qr code

Description automatically generated

Scan this QR code to explore the resources

Qr code

Description automatically generated

Scan this QR code to fill in our survey

Qr code

Description automatically generated