



Press Release: Wednesday 11 November 2020

Watermans announces first online children's theatre commission based on the Greek Myths

Watermans is delighted to present *Myths and Adventures from Ancient Greece*, a series of four online children's theatre shows written by **Hannah Khalil** (*15 Heroines*, Jermyn Street Theatre; *Not The Gingerbread Man* and *Mrs Scrooge*, Fly High Stories; and *A Museum in Baghdad*, RSC). Created for 3-8 year olds, *Myths and Adventures from Ancient Greece* will explore the tales of **Persephone, Theseus and the Minotaur, King Midas and his Golden Touch** and **Pandora's Box**. The plays will be available to view online from 13 January 2021.

Children will enter a miniature world full of exciting adventures, with the battered insect Hope as their guide. Hope journeys into the world of Ancient Greece to escape Pandora's Box, warn King Midas of his greed, seek Persephone in the Underworld and help Theseus to defeat the Minotaur. With charming designs from **Sam Wilde** (*Fly High Stories*, Hiccup Theatre Company), under the direction of **Ian Nicholson** (*I Want My Hat Back*, *This is Not My Hat*, *I Found My Hat* with Little Angel Theatre), this project offers an engaging and delightfully imaginative adventure to Ancient Greece. **Ian Nicholson** and **Peyvand Sadeghian** (Little Angel Theatre, Goblin Theatre) perform.

Following successful forays into online events in live gigs and film talks, Watermans has turned its attentions to this commission for children because of its continued commitment to widening access to theatre among young people. It is also clear that many children simply won't have that opportunity to visit the theatre over the coming months because of coronavirus restrictions and Watermans believes this poses a risk to developing future audiences. This commission helps to bridge that gap, bringing the joy of theatre into the home or classroom in theatre shows designed to be viewed online.

Watermans chose the Greek Myths because of their enduring and timeless appeal and the way they address what it means to be human which can ignite interesting conversations with even the youngest children. The Greek Myths are also on the KS2 curriculum so this series is an additional resource for teachers who are looking to inspire their pupils.

Director of Watermans, Jan Lennox, said:

"It is exciting to be commissioning children's theatre specifically designed to be watched online as we know that in this way we can reach new audiences, including those who don't usually come to the theatre. It's also important that we support the early careers of talented young artists like Hannah Khalil, Ian Nicholson and Sam Wilde who have so much to contribute in terms of inspiring a love of theatre in children."

Playwright Hannah Khalil said:

"I'm so excited to have the opportunity to make a piece for young people. My 8 year old has long wanted to watch my work, and at last she can. To be reimagining four classic myths that I love and working with the brilliant team behind I want My Hat Back has been a light in a dark time. I hope these pieces bring smiles to lots of faces, both young and old alike."

Director Ian Nicholson and Designer Sam Wilde said:

"Creating these new Greek adventures with Hannah has been incredible fun for us to work on. Her stories bring fresh imagination and mischief to the ancient tales and we've loved the challenge of exploring them in puppetry."

Myths and Adventures from Ancient Greece will premiere on YouTube over 4 days from 13th January and then be available on that platform for 3 months.

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**For more information please contact: Watermans Marketing Director Erica Weston
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Notes to Editors:

Watermans

Watermans is West London's arts centre with a thriving and inclusive programme of independent cinema, family theatre, live performance, exhibitions and outdoor arts. It has been presenting a successful children's theatre programme for over 35 years. Watermans also leads several outreach projects, primarily concerned with broadening access to high quality arts in communities where there is little arts provision, particularly across the borough of Hounslow.

<https://www.watermans.org.uk/>

Hannah Khalil, Playwright

Hannah was the recipient of the Arab British Centre's Award for Culture in 2017. Her stage plays include *A Museum in Baghdad* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *The Scar Test* (Soho Theatre), *Scenes from 68* Years* - shortlisted for the James Tait Black Award (Arcola), *Interference* (National Theatre of Scotland).

In 2020 Hannah has written *Not The Gingerbread Man* and *Mrs Scrooge* for Fly High Stories; *Penelope* for Jermyn Street Theatre's *15 Heroines* project, which premieres on 9

November; *The Censor or How to put on a political play without being fined or arrested* for Central School of Speech and Drama; and *The Message* for Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

Hannah's radio plays include *The Unwelcome*, *Last of the Pearl Fishers* and *The Deportation Room* for BBC Radio 4. Twitter: @hannykha

Ian Nicholson, Director

Ian trained as a director at the National Theatre, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and École Philippe Gaulier.

Ian was the director of Little Angel Theatre's *I Want My Hat Back*, *This Is Not My Hat*, and *We Found a Hat* released during lockdown this year. Receiving 300,000 views online and featuring on the BBC and in the New York Times, they were called "a joy" by the Guardian and "an inspiration" in the Daily Mail.

He was director of *Othello* at the Unicorn Theatre, reviewed as '★★★★ A poetic, crisp and clever staging for younger audiences' by The Stage, and has recently been developing a new production for the Unicorn Theatre's upcoming season.

Ian was Associate Director for the National Theatre on 14-18 NOW's *We're Here Because We're Here*, created by Turner Prize winner, Jeremy Deller. Twitter: @idgnicholson

Sam Wilde, Designer

Sam is a theatre and puppetry designer and maker based in Bristol. He was the 2016/17 Laboratory Set and Costume Designer at Nuffield Theatres, Southampton and trained in Theatre Design at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School graduating with an MA in 2015.

Selected design credits include: *Fly High* (Singapore Rep Theatre), *Lifespan Of A Fact* (Singapore Rep Theatre) *Polly: A Heartbreak Opera* (Bristol Old Vic and UK Tour), *Hamlet* (The Egg, Bath), *Influence* (Royal and Derngate), *Humbug* (Nuffield City), *Little Red Riding Hood* (Derby Theatre), *Spooky Ship* (SS Great Britain and Bristol Old Vic), *The Edit* (Salisbury Playhouse), *A Thing Mislaid* (Maison Foo and Deda Theatre), *Electra* (Bunker theatre), *Eloise* and *the Curse of the Golden Whisk* (The Wardrobe Theatre and UK Tour). Twitter: @samueljwilde