

THE WHITE BIKE: Dramatising the personal cost of road death

What if, one day, you didn't come home? New play THE WHITE BIKE looks at the personal cost of road death, through the eyes of the victim. Inspired by the case of Eilidh Cairns, who was killed by a lorry as she cycled to work, THE WHITE BIKE uses witness statements, personal recollections of family members and years of cycling experience on the streets of London to create a deeply personal portrait of a life cut short too soon.

Playwright Tamara von Werthern says:

“Being killed in traffic as a pedestrian or cyclist is such a random senseless death that it could literally happen to anyone. I cycle the same route as Eilidh, and her death really brought home to me how vulnerable we are on our roads. The “ghost bike” erected in Eilidh’s memory was such a striking image, I wanted to find out more.”

Meeting with the family of Eilidh and other cyclists killed in London, Tamara has created a deeply personal portrait of a life cut short too soon. After initial showcases at the Arcola and Queen Mary University, a successful Kickstarter campaign has raised money for a dramatic reading at the Edinburgh Festival of Cycling on 11 June, with a view to a full production later in the year. The Royal Court is providing rehearsal space in support of the production.

The cast includes Lois Jones and Rosalind Philips reprising their roles as Isabelle and Debbie, respectively. Henry will be played by Chris Harper, who is performing with the cast prior to taking the role as Benedick in The Globe’s Much Ado About Nothing.

Directed by Lily McLeish, Staff Director at the National Theatre and Creative Fellow of the RSC, this will be the first public reading of the full-length script of THE WHITE BIKE. Audience members will have a chance to feedback on the piece during a post-show Q&A session.

At the reading there will be a collection for RoadPeace, the national charity for road crash victims.

Tickets are available from <http://www.edfoc.org.uk/events/event/the-white-bike-a-play-by-tamara-von-werthern/>

QUOTES ABOUT THE WHITE BIKE:

“The White Bike is immediately engaging and at times truly haunting. It possesses a darkly poetic quality” **Amanda Whittington, Playwright**

“The White Bike filled me with sweet sadness and anger. Focusing on one young woman's death, it humanised statistics, foreshadowing what later became an epidemic of cyclists' fatalities.” **Ellie Yannas, audience member (Arcola, 2010)**

Editor's notes:

Performance details:

Title: The White Bike by Tamara von Werthern

Date: 11 June 2015, 6.30pm

Place: Pleasance Cabaret Bar, Pleasance Theatre, EH8 9TJ

Tickets: £7, £6 (conc) <http://www.edfoc.org.uk/events/event/the-white-bike-a-play-by-tamara-von-werthern/>

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Social media:

Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/TheWhiteBike>

Twitter: @tamarawerthern

Useful links:

Kickstarter campaign: <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1933130638/the-white-bike/>

Edinburgh Festival of Cycling <http://www.edfoc.org.uk/events/event/the-white-bike-a-play-by-tamara-von-werthern/>

RoadPeace <http://www.roadpeace.org/>

About the cast:

Lois Jones (Isabelle) <http://reganmanagement.co.uk/project/lois-jones/>

Rosalind Philips (Debbie)

Chris Harper (Henry) <http://www.spotlight.com/0690-8949-5866>