

PRESS RELEASE

27th February 2017

Original cast member Peter Straker returns to The Who's *Tommy* after 38 years

UK Tour 30th March to 1st July

PRESS NIGHT: New Wolsey Theatre, 4th April, 7pm

After playing the Narrator in the original West End production in 1979, Peter Straker returns to the iconic rock opera as the **Acid Queen**. Peter Straker is known across TV, theatre and music, starting his career as Hud in the original London production of *Hair* and notably working with Freddie Mercury on two solo albums. His hit solo show *Peter Straker Sings Brel* played the Famous Spiegeltent at last year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe. *Tommy* is part of **Ramps On The Moon**, a ground-breaking project which signals a change in the UK's disability arts provision, and Straker will be joined on stage by an inclusive cast of Deaf and disabled and non-disabled actors including Lukus Alexander, Alim Jayda, Donna Mullings, Garry Robson, Max Runham, Amy Trigg, and William Grint in the title role. The show is produced by the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, who leads the **Ramps on the Moon** consortium, and directed by artistic director of Theatre Royal Stratford East, Kerry Michael.

Garry Robson takes on the controversial role of Uncle Ernie. One of the most respected names in disability arts with more than thirty years in the industry, Garry Robson is an actor, writer, director, one half of the singing duo Blind Gurl and the Cripz, and is currently Artistic Director at *Birds of Paradise*. Tommy's mother, Mrs Walker, will be played by *Magic Hands* presenter **Donna Mullings**, and **Max Runham** (*A Pacifist's Guide to the War on Cancer*) takes on the role of Captain Walker. The role of Tommy is taken by **William Grint**, whose most recent role was as Imogen's long-lost brother Arviragus in the Globe's *Cymbeline*. They're joined by **Amy Trigg** as Sally Simpson, **Lukus Alexander** as Cousin Kevin, **Alim Jayda** as the Lover, and an ensemble of fourteen performers and musicians.

The Who's *Tommy* is an iconic rock opera which has entertained and intrigued audiences for more than 40 years. The original concept album composed by Pete Townshend was the fourth album released by the band in 1969. The rock opera was then resurrected through various media including an orchestral version by Lou Reizner in 1972, a film in 1975 with a star studded cast including the likes of Tina Turner, Elton John and the band members themselves, before coming to the stage at the Queen's Theatre in 1979. The Broadway revival in 1992 won various awards including five Tony awards and a Grammy for Best Musical Show Album.

Director Kerry Michael is artistic director of Theatre Royal Stratford East. His recent credits include *Harder They Come*, which transferred to the Barbican, national tour, West End, North America and Canada. He said, "For Tommy, we have gone back to the concept album for our inspiration and mounting a new production of this iconic rock musical with such a big and diverse cast so exciting - vibrate, surprising full of amazing songs."

Ramps On The Moon is a consortium of seven major theatre companies committed to putting Deaf and disabled artists and audiences at the centre of their work; to accelerate positive change, explore opportunities and stimulate awareness of disability issues within arts and culture. The project is supported by public funding through the Arts Council's Strategic Touring programme – the largest award of its kind. The consortium venues are New Wolsey Theatre, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Nottingham Playhouse, Sheffield Theatres, Theatre Royal Stratford East and Graeae Theatre Company.

MOBIUS.

The Lower Vestry
St George's Bloomsbury
6-7 Little Russell St
London WC1A 2HR

This production will have embedded creative use of Audio Description, Captioning and British Sign Language in all performances.

@RampsOTM | #TommyTour | tommthemusical.co.uk

Suitable for ages 14+

Company Information

Music and Lyrics by Pete Townshend **Book by** Pete Townshend and Des McAnuff

Additional Music and Lyrics by John Entwistle and Keith Moon

Originally Produced On Broadway by Pace Theatrical Group and Dodger Productions with Kardana Productions.

Performed By Arrangement with Music Theatre International (Europe) Limited

Cast

Tommy William Grint

Mrs Walker Donna Mullings

Captain Walker Max Runham

Acid Queen Peter Straker

Cousin Kevin Lukus Alexander

Sally Simpson Amy Trigg

Uncle Ernie Garry Robson

Lover Alim Jayda

Becky Barry, Julian Capolei, Amelia Cavallo, Stacey Ghent, Robert Hyman, Matthew Jacobs-Morgan, Natasha Julien, Adam Langstaff, Natasha Lewis, Shekinah McFarlane, Tony Qunta, Hearn's Sebuado, Steve Simmonds, Anthony Snowden

Creative Team

Director Kerry Michael

Associate Director Nicola Miles-Wildin

Casting Director Polly Jerrold

Dramaturg Paul Sirett

Designer Neil Irish

Musical Director Robert Hyman

Assistant Musical Director Oliver Vibrans

Choreographer Mark Smith

Assistant Choreographer Kevin Jewell

Lighting and AV Designer Arnim Friess

Sound Designer Andrew Johnson (for Creative Technology)

BSL Creative Consultants Jeni Draper and Daryl Jackson

Fight Director Bret Yount

Creative Design Assistant Nikki Charlesworth

Creative Assistant David Young

Listings information

UK tour 30th March to 1st July

30 Mar – 15 April

New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich

Civic Drive, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2AS

Mon – Sat, various times

www.wolseytheatre.co.uk | 01473 295 900

19 – 29 April

Nottingham Playhouse

Wellington Circus, Nottingham NG1 5AF

Various times

nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk | 0115 941 9419

4 – 13 May

West Yorkshire Playhouse

Playhouse Square, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS2 7UP

Mon – Sat 7.30pm, Sat 2pm

www.wyp.org.uk | 0113 213 7700

17 – 27 May

Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2EP

Various Times

birmingham-rep.co.uk | 0121 236 4455

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The Lower Vestry
St George's Bloomsbury
6-7 Little Russell St
London WC1A 2HR

7 – 17 June

Theatre Royal, Stratford East

Gerry Raffles Square, London E15 1BN
Mon – Tues 7.30pm, Sat 2.30pm, Thu 15 Jun 1.30pm
stratfordeast.com | 020 8534 0310

22 June – 1 July

The Crucible, Sheffield

Norfolk Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S1 2LA
Tues – Sat 7.30pm, Sat 2.30pm, Wed 28 Jun 1.30pm
www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk | 0114 249 6000