

NewsLetter

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VIDEO: Prime Cut Productions and Tinderbox Theatre explore the edges of male mental health

Hot off the heels of receiving seven nominations in the prestigious Irish Times Theatre Awards for their Lyric Theatre co-production of Red by John Logan , Prime Cut Productions are set to stage not one, but two upcoming plays at EdgeFest in the MAC from 15th February to 2nd March. Edgefest is a 3-week festival of explosive new theatre by leading independent companies Prime Cut Productions and Tinderbox Theatre that dares to take audiences to the very edge of human experience.

EdgeFest, a 3-week festival of explosive theatre, which deals with issues around mental health and wellbeing, is now on at the MAC Belfast. Presented by leading theatre companies, Prime Cut Productions and Tinderbox, EdgeFest continues until 3 March featuring a series of powerful dramas and accompanying workshops, supported by National Lottery funding through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Pictured (L-R) are actors Charlie Bonner and Ryan McParland. Visit www.artscouncil-ni.org

After the loss of 3 well known Northern Irish actors and friends, the silent scourge of suicide in the arts formed the catalyst for Prime Cut to shine a spotlight on mental health issues in modern society.

As rehearsals for 'Every Day I wake Up Hopeful' by John Patrick Higgins and 'East Belfast Boy' by Fintan Brady near completion, Prime Cut's Artistic Director Emma Jordan said:

'We are so excited to be producing these two plays by two very talented Northern Irish writers. The plays are very different; Every Day I Wake Up Hopeful stars Charlie Bonner and is directed by Rhiann Jeffrey. It is a heartbreakingly funny story of Malachy a man facing an epic mid-life crisis. I'm personally directing East Belfast Boy which brings us into the world of Davy, a young DJ and father who is at a precipice in his life'.

East Belfast Boy was originally created by Partisan Productions through a collaborative process involving young men from the Beersbridge and Newtownards Roads in Belfast. It was first presented at Ballymacarrett Friendship Centre in August 2015 as part of the Eastside Arts Festival. The EdgeFest incarnation harnesses a thrilling performance, more

street poetry than monologue, by actor Ryan McParland and an original soundtrack by International DJ Phil Kieran.

Jordan adds that 'Prime Cut are thrilled to be bringing this authentic exciting play to new audiences in the MAC. Both these plays and Tinderbox's The Man Who Fell To Pieces are funny and real and encourage audiences to engage in an act of empathy as we understand the worlds in which these characters exist'

The theatre productions are complimented by a series of free workshops and talks based on NI Public Health Agency's Take 5 model of emotional wellbeing. The free sessions, also hosted at the MAC, focus on practical and positive ways to care for yourself, manage stress and evolve a deeper understanding of holistic practices that can help us manage the stresses of our daily lives. Activities include yoga, mindfulness, craniosacral therapy and meditation sessions, a social pop-up pharmacy and a panel discussion on the interface between mental health and emotional wellbeing and the arts.

Gilly Campbell, Arts Development Officer for Drama and Dance, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, commented, "Congratulations to Prime Cut Productions and the Lyric Theatre on their well-deserved seven Irish Times Theatre Awards nominations. Prime Cut Productions continue to push boundaries and offer audiences challenging, impressive and innovative theatre. I would also encourage everyone to go along to Prime Cut's Edgefest at The MAC which demonstrates the power of the arts in highlighting and opening dialogue around difficult subjects." Tickets are available on the MAC website www.themalive.com Prime Cut's work is supported by the Arts Council Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/whats-on/theatre-and-comedy/video-prime-cut-productions-and-tinderbox-theatre-explore-the-edges-of-male-mental-health-1-8377098>