

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2016 – The Forest



The Forest is an immersive groundbreaking multi-sensory show that brings the deep woodland to life

Trapped in lives filled with daydreams, Thea and Robin both crave an escape from their everyday routines. One day they are drawn into a dark and mysterious forest finding themselves on an unexpected journey of discovery.

Part love story, part mythical quest, The Forest places audiences at the heart of the action in a mysterious wooded glade, allowing them to experience the smell of the forest before a storm, the feel of raindrops on their palms and the sounds of birds singing overhead and twigs cracking underfoot.

Fringe debutants Frozen Light devised this accessible and inclusive production especially for teenagers and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). They say that this is the first time a production created specifically for audiences with PMLD has been presented at The Fringe.

In an age when the arts (and Edinburgh Fringe especially) has come under scrutiny for accessibility, The Forest is a timely reminder of the inclusive power of the arts to encourage accessibility. It also highlights The Fringe's stated commitment to improving accessibility for all.

Frozen Light co-artistic director Amber Onat Gregory said 'For many of our audience it will be their first time in a mainstream theatre. We want to enable people who rarely attend high street arts venues to experience the theatre. As the largest arts festival in the world we want to make the

Edinburgh Fringe Festival accessible for people with PMLD.’  
The show is performed for to up to 12 people – six people with disabilities, each supported by a companion – and there is also space for up to 12 ‘observers’. The three-strong cast accompanies each audience member from the entrance into the performance space, ensuring a smooth transition into the theatre environment. Inside, one-to-one interactions between cast and audience include singing directly to each audience member and encouraging props to be touched.

The production incorporates live music specifically composed to highlight the emotional narrative and multi-sensory elements of the story.

Frozen Light launched in 2013 as a response to the fact that arts venues rarely cater for audiences with complex disabilities. Those with PMLD have more than one disability. The most significant is a profound learning disability and all people who have PMLD will have great difficulty communicating. Many have additional sensory or physical disabilities, complex health needs or mental health difficulties.

## **The Forest**

Pleasance Beyond

22nd – 25th August

10.30am