

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2016 – We Live By The Sea

☒ Theatre (music, multimedia)

Giving A Voice To Girls With Autism

When Ryan moves from the city to Katie's coastal town, they make a connection that will shake their worlds forever. Playful visual storytelling with a live electronic score about autism, friendship and a very big wave.

We Live By The Sea is just one of those serendipitous Fringe Show occasions that The Edinburgh Reporter has the pleasure in exploring in more depth.

With their show about to start its mid-month run until the 29th of August we spoke with the delightfully named Patch Of Blue theatre company Producer Caroline McCaffrey-Howarth. If Caroline's web-site biography is anything to go by, she must be rather delightful!

'Caroline directs things, acts in things, adds up numbers, makes lists, organises unruly boys, bats her eyelids at people, types very loudly, charity shop shops, and buys things on buy one get one free. As well as directing things, Caroline likes things with flowers and things with chocolate and chocolate covered flowers.' So there!

☒

TER : This show draws on a diverse and eclectic use of media. Was that a deliberate choice based on your experiences working with people with autism and how their stimuli can vary in need and reward?

CMH : We have spent the past year researching and devising our new play 'We Live By The Sea'. The play is about autism,

friendship and a very big wave, with live electronic score by our acclaimed composers Wovoka Gentle in association with the National Autistic Society and Greenwich Theatre.

Artistic Director Alex Howarth wrote the play after the cast worked closely with autistic carers and autistic women, including award-winning consultant Robyn Steward whose own experiences with ASD greatly inspired the play.

'We Live By The Sea' tells the story of Katy and her (imaginary) dog Paul Williams, who live with their sister Hannah in a sleepy coastal town. When lonely teenager Ryan moves there from the city he and Katy make a connection that shake their worlds forever.



Caroline McCaffrey-
Howarth

TER : With a very proactive and inclusive approach you challenge some urban myths and misconceptions about ASD. Why was this important?

CMH : Autism is typically thought to be a male condition as many women learn to hide and format their ASD by conforming to social rules and so often female autism goes undiagnosed.

With 'We Live By The Sea' we really wanted to give a voice to girls with autism, who often use imaginary friends or animals to communicate their ideas and to make connections, which is where Paul Williams comes into the story.

Katy uses Paul Williams to help her understand the world around her, yet what she wants more than anything is to make a human friend. With 'We Live By The Sea' we really want to change any preconceived conceptions about autism, we have created an honest, funny and moving play which asks audiences to think a bit differently about people and to understand that

every person is different and that this difference should be celebrated.

Patch of Blue are an award-winning company from the South of England and an associate company of Greenwich Theatre, making fresh, exciting and touching devised theatre for festivals and touring. Their folk-play Back to Blackbrick transferred to the Arts Theatre, West End in 2015, and will tour the UK in Autumn 2016.



'We Live By The Sea' runs until 29th August at 4.30pm in the Attic, Pleasance Courtyard before transferring to the Arts Theatre, London in late September.

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/we-live-by-the-sea>

Pleasance Courtyard (Venue 33) . 16:30. Aug 14, 16-29. 1 hour

Suitability: 12+ (Guideline)

Country: United Kingdom – England

Group: Patch of Blue in association with Greenwich Theatre

Warnings : Some strong language, contains strobe lighting.