

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017 – What if I Told You

Theatre/dance crossover explores personal boundaries and histories, directed by multi Fringe First winner Chris Goode

Fringe first-timer Pauline Mayers is used to people making assumptions about her based on her gender, background and skin colour; it's been happening all of her life. But she's defied those expectations at every turn, tearing up the narrative that society tried to impose on her.

Last year Pauline hit a crisis point. Perhaps not that unusual for a woman in her mid 40s, but a pretty big deal when it happens to you. She didn't know where her life was taking her, had no sense of where she'd come from. She was at a crossroads but couldn't see where the routes led. So she looked back through her life and thought about how her experiences may relate to others.

What if I Told You is Pauline's way of telling her (his)tory as a black woman, a dancer and choreographer. It's a story of universal truths and contradictions that we can all relate to. She invites her audience to spend an hour playing together to challenge boundaries, personal histories, gender and skin colour, carefully balancing dance and theatre and dispensing with traditional barriers between performer and audiences.

Along the way the story of James Sims, cited by some as the 'father of modern gynaecology', weaves through Pauline's own. Sims bought then operated on, black female slaves, without anaesthetic, believing that black bodies didn't suffer pain in

the way white bodies do. Many of Sims' methods and discoveries are still used today.

In the second part of the show, Koan: What If You Told Us the audience is invited by poet, playwright and activist Khadijah Ibrahiim to share thoughts and ideas inspired by the show.

What If I Told You is written and performed by Pauline Mayers and directed by Chris Goode. It was developed at West Yorkshire Playhouse and is a co-production by The Mayers Ensemble and West Yorkshire Playhouse.

The show is performed at Summerhall's newest space, The Army Reserve Centre on East Claremont Street EH7 4HU.

Pauline Mayers trained at the Rambert School and is a theatremaker, choreographer and dancer. She has performed in contemporary dance companies and taught choreographers across the UK and internationally including Janet Smith & Dancers, Diversions Dance, Phoenix Dance Company and The Ensemble Group. She has also worked with theatre companies such as Tell Tale Hearts and Red Ladder.

Chris Goode is a writer, director and performer described as 'one of the most exciting talents working in Britain today' (Guardian). His work includes four Fringe First award-winning shows: Neutrino (with Unlimited Theatre), Kiss of Life, Monkey Bars (Traverse) and Men in the Cities (Royal Court and Traverse).

Army@The Fringe in association with Summerhall |11-26 Aug (not 14, 21) 17.00 (60 mins + 60 mins |Koan: What If You Told Us)

[Tickets here](#)