

Film by Grid Iron Theatre Company documents issues of theatre production during COVID

Award-winning, Edinburgh-based Grid Iron Theatre Company is pleased to announce the release of its long-awaited film, 'Doppler: The Story So Far', which tells the fascinating story of producing an outdoor theatre show during the global pandemic of Covid-19 in 2020.

Using interviews with the cast, creatives and some of the key arts figures in Scotland, the documentary charts the journey of Doppler, a theatre show Grid Iron had planned to present in August 2020 as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, only to have to pivot to a filmed version in light of the Covid-19-related restrictions before finally having its filming schedule thwarted by Storm Francis.

Judith Doherty, Chief Executive and Co-Artistic Director of Grid Iron Theatre Company said: "'Doppler' had been in our plans for a couple of years and when Covid-19 hit, we really thought that given our track-record of producing outdoor shows coupled with the ability this production would give us to physically distance the cast and crew, we had a good chance of making at least a clutch of live performances happen towards the end of August.



"Unfortunately, it wasn't to be and we had to go with our plan B which was a film. What we hadn't bargained for, however, was

the wonderfully timed arrival of Storm Francis! Fast forward a few months and here we are, presenting 'Doppler: The Story So Far', which we hope gives a great insight into all the ups and downs of producing a theatre show in a global pandemic. And we were delighted to be able to feature in it four leading arts figures in Scotland who share their views on the show but also on the wider state of the theatre industry.

"We hope our audiences enjoy the behind-the-scenes access the film offers. It was such a privilege to be able to work together during Covid, even online but especially in-person, and we hope the joy and pride that we take in work that we do is evident in the film."

'Doppler: The Story So Far' features in-depth interviews with Doppler's director and producer, Ben Harrison and Judith Doherty respectively, as well as its cast, most of them Grid Iron regulars: Sean Hay, Itxaso Moreno and Keith Fleming who is known to wider audiences from Outlander, and Doppler's creative team, including, among others, David Pollock who composed music and foley for the show and costume and set designer Becky Minto.

Showing great passion for their work, and resilience in light of mounting time pressure, the Doppler team navigate the ever-changing challenges of Covid with admirable commitment and humour. From Zoom rehearsals to puppets disintegrating under a touch of disinfectant-soaked hands, they share fascinating and often astounding tales of the process of adapting 'Doppler'. This documentary is a testament to their creativity, skills and undying love for theatre. It also showcases the profound and devastating impact the pandemic had on the theatre industry.



Director of 'Doppler' and Grid Iron's Co-Artistic Director Ben Harrison said: "What an extraordinary adventure 'Doppler' has been so far. It gave concrete evidence once again of the

remarkable resilience and creativity of theatre artists, able to improvise and react to a rapidly-changing situation. To meet up in real life at this time, to practice those theatre-making muscles which were in danger of getting slack, was joyous.

“Doppler chose his self-isolation, whilst we are all of course forced into it. So to come together, alas so far without an audience, the critical component of theatre, was extraordinary, both online, in open-air rehearsal, and on a film location. By the accident of our history as a theatre company, we were well resourced to ride the wave of the pandemic; but that is not to say that it wasn’t at times extremely hard. It was only through the collective endeavour, and the wonderful commitment of our team, that we came as far as we did. We can’t wait to share the live production with our audiences later this year.”

‘Doppler: The Story So Far’ features a range of key figures on the Scottish arts scene, including the country’s leading theatre critic, Joyce McMillan, Festivals Edinburgh’s Director Julia Armour, Edinburgh Festival Fringe’s Chief Executive Shona McCarthy and ex- Director of the Federation of Scottish Theatre, Jude Henderson.

In their interviews, Jude Henderson said: “I think it’s also leadership, and that’s one of the things that Grid Iron really demonstrated here actually – it was really brave leadership.” while Joyce McMillan commented: “...we were beginning to know that being outside in outdoor locations was much less risky than doing anything indoors as far as Covid’s concerned. And so as soon as I knew that, who was I going to think of but Grid Iron?”

‘Doppler’ is an adaptation of a satirical novel by a Norwegian writer Erlend Loe, translated to English by Don Bartlett and Don Shaw. It focuses on Doppler, a man who, following the death of his father, decides to abandon his family and move to

the forest on the outskirts of Oslo. He is determined to live a life as far removed from his previous as possible but struggles to maintain his isolation as his existence garners a lot of unwanted attention.



'Doppler: The Story So Far' is available to watch on [Grid Iron Theatre Company's website](#) from 7pm on Friday, 26 March. It will also host a captioned and a BSL-interpreted version of the film. In a tribute to Erlend Loe and Grid Iron's Norwegian fanbase which has been growing since 2008 – the year Grid Iron produced Tryst for Stavanger2008 European Capital of Culture and found many fantastic and loyal friends among the Norwegian team – the Company has also produced a version of the film with Norwegian subtitles.

Access to the documentary is free but donations are welcome and can be done via the [Company's website](#). The documentary will be available to audiences until **midnight on Friday, 9 May**.

Grid Iron Theatre Company hopes to be able to bring a live version of 'Doppler' to Edinburgh audiences later this year.

Within article images – Doppler filming in Gifford Community Woodlands – credit Janeanne Gilchrist.