

### Noor Inayat Khan (1914 - 1944)

Noor Inayat Khan was of Indian descent, born in Moscow, who despite being against war, became a British special agent during the second world war. She had a circulatory condition which affected her hands and feet. She was the first female radio operator sent into Nazi-occupied France by the Special Operations Executive. She was arrested and eventually executed, alongside three other women by the Gestapo in Dachau Concentration Camp.

### Elizabeth Device (d. 1612)

Elizabeth Device was one of eleven women to be tried as witches in the Pendle Witch Trials in Lancashire, Britain. She was the daughter of Old Demdike, head of a family of healers who used herbs and talismans to heal people. By the early 1590s King James I believed he was being plotted against by Scottish witches and a year after he became king he passed a law applying the death penalty to anyone thought to be causing harm using magic. Elizabeth Device was hanged in 1612, as a result of her trial, using evidence from her 9 year old daughter.

### Frances O'Connor (1914 - 1982)

Frances O'Connor was an American entertainer who was born without arms and worked largely in 'freak' shows, carnival sideshows and circuses, including Barnum and Bailey. She was known as the armless wonder or the living Venus de Milo and used her feet to perform everyday tasks and her act involved demonstrating this to audiences. She was cast in Tod Browning's 1932 film Freaks - regarded as a cult film classic - alongside other disabled performers. She died in relative obscurity in 1982.

### Dora

Dora is an anonymous woman the writer met who had been put into hospital in the early 20th century for swearing in the street, in the aftermath of Churchill's Mental Deficiency Act (1913) where he claimed that the feeble minded represented a 'race danger'. Dora was described as having a learning disability. She was in hospital for 60 years before being rehoused, first into a temporary group home, and then her own flat.

### Adelaide Knight (1861-1950)

Adelaide Knight was a working class activist within the suffragette movement who also campaigned for workers rights and racial equality. An injury as a child meant that she used crutches for the remainder of her life. Part of the Canning Town Three, these suffragettes chose 6 weeks in prison over a year of silence in their campaigning. Her health was impacted by being in prison but she sang The Red Flag socialist song, every morning in there. She remained an outspoken campaigner throughout her life.

An ARC Stockton and Live Theatre Newcastle commission funded by Arts Council England.

A LITTLE COG PRODUCTION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH ARC STOCKTON

VICI WREFORD-SINNOTT PRESENTS

# UNWRAP

ARC Stockton  
**Thursday**  
**23 May**

7pm. Pay What You Decide

Directed by Bex Bowsher  
Original music score by Beccy Owen

With integral BSL and captioning. Audio description is written into the script.

A Little Cog production co-commissioned by ARC and Live Theatre, and funded by Arts Council England

Made in the Tees Valley

**ARC**  
Stockton Arts Centre

**TUCA**

live  
theatre

 **Little Cog**

 Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## **Production Credits**

Vici Wreford-Sinnott - Writer and Performer

Bex Bowsher - Dramaturg and Director

Beccy Owen - Composer, Sound Design and Live Musician

Kim McDermottroe - Production Designer

Amy Watts - Costume Designer

Kamilla Jonsson - Production Manager and Lighting Designer

Alicia Meehan - Movement Director

Sue Lee - BSL Interpreter

Alex Dechbamrung - PA/Access Support

Erika Tanith - Photography

## **For ARC**

Allison Birt - Producer | Alec Peach - Show Technician

Patrick Hollifield - Marketing Manager | Touch Tour - Louise Wilkin

This is a PREVIEW performance which means it's the first try-out in front of an audience, which gives the company the opportunity to 'test' the piece before touring the show at a later date.

## **Access and Content**

First of all the show has been made around the fluctuating pain and mobility access of the writer performer as a disabled person. We feel it's important to do this to demonstrate possible practice in the wider arts. There is not a mould you have to fit.

Access for the audience - there is BSL interpretation, audio description and touch tour, and the show has captions throughout.

Content - there is strong language and references to sex. The piece explores or references themes of death (including in war and in witchcraft trials), loss, disability discrimination, the pandemic, there is scene told in dark humour about a breast clinic visit. This is balanced by the passion of the rights movement, it's successes and introducing a historical lineage for disabled women to belong to.

## **Fiction and Truth**

Although there are autobiographical threads in this piece, it is not an autobiographical play. It is deeply personal and aims to reflect the experiences of being disabled women involved in activism and the arts in the North East of England. It is a work of fiction about a character called Marina and her best friend Suze. Many other characters appear in their story, and some recognisable events, but all are fictionalised for dramatic purposes. Similarities are a coincidence but it is important to say that the fiction reflects many truths.

## **Some words from Vici Wreford-Sinnott**

I created UNRULY because I wanted to say something creatively and out loud about what living as a disabled woman with a punk activist spirit as been like in this particular epoch of humanity. I don't get how society does not let us crack the code of equity, still in the 21st century. The Victorians introduced us to the concept of linear progress - that everything improves in the future. It doesn't, it's fragmented and insecure and relies on humanity holding itself accountable and challenging those who view 'progress' through a lens of economic productivity and perfect human specimens bred to advance that. There are many things to be explored about our society's relationship to disability. Despite it's serious nature, parts of the show use humour as a way through difficult ideas. It also reflects deeply personal experiences and is a story told with love and admiration for disabled people everywhere. I'm so grateful to the team for their dedication and skill and to my family and friends for their support.

## **Some words from Bex Bowsher**

I joined Vici on this journey nearly 12 months ago. Vici told me about that she wanted to create a piece that spoke to the experience of disabled women who have felt they've spent their artistic career also being activists and advocates. The original working title was Wrapping Myself In All The Women I Might Have Been and I feel this working title has infused our creative journey to the version of UNRULY you will witness today. It's been a privilege to work alongside Vici, learn more about the disability art history that comes before my own practice as a disabled woman and help her shape this epic piece of work. We have tried to work in a kind and generous way, and I have tried to curate a space that has allowed the production to develop in response to the evolving needs and ideas of the whole creative team. I am proud of the way we have embedded access into all fibres of this show and I am excited to share this work with you, our preview audience. I hope you are delighted and challenged in equal measure.

## **Women from history**

Real women from history feature - you can see their biographies below - and whilst the writer pays tribute to these women by reflecting elements of their experiences, they too have been interpreted and presented fictionally. Do research these disabled women's lives. They are fascinating. (There is a little bit of information about each of these women on the back of this guide to get you started.)

## **Bollocks To You Song Lyrics**

These chorus lyrics are from Bar Room Bollocks and are credited to Karen Sheader and crip punk band The Fugertivs. They are included as both a tribute to Karen who sadly died in 2023 and because they became an anthem of defiance in the disability rights movement. PLEASE NOTE - The character of Suze is not based on Karen.