



UNKNOWN MALE

Written by
Stephanie Ridings

Directed by
Nick Walker

*The track looks like
any other ordinary train track.*

*Nothing to indicate what
happened here.*



Supported by Peggy Ramsay Foundation and The Peter Brook Awards

Unknown Male | Touring Spring / Summer 2016
Written By Stephanie Ridings | Directed by Nick Walker

Booking enquires to Pippa Frith:
Pippafrith@gmail.com | 07500 015298

UNKNOWN MALE



The track looks like any other ordinary train track. Nothing to indicate what happened here.

Heather loves being a train driver, but she has been off work since the incident. Emily is in the middle of her GCSE's, but her head has been turned by uncovering unknown answers. Mark has never been able to manage

emotion, especially his own. How does one family find its way through a tragedy that doesn't even belong to them?

Stephanie Ridings first major script, *Me, Mum & Dusty Springfield* enjoyed a sell-out Edinburgh Festival run before embarking on an acclaimed national tour. **Unknown Male** is her unforgettable and darkly comic new play, written during her time in The REP Foundry, exploring how the anguish of a 'jumper' continues after their death.

"Unknown Male came about after watching a documentary about the London Underground. One episode featured a 'one under'. I found it wasn't the horror of seeing footage of the male pace the platform moments before he jumped, or seeing his shoe abandoned on the track, it was the opening of his wallet brimming with receipts and bank cards in order to identify him, which resonated deeply.

In my research I discovered that train drivers often have a very difficult battle with posttraumatic stress and are often never able to drive a train again. The horror and violence of the situation often overwhelms the last person to see the 'jumper' alive. How do you cope with such a violent incident when all you did was go to work and do your job? I discovered the pain, which leads someone to take their own life, does not die with them, but is merely transferred to those they touch with their suicide. There's a ripple effect such an act causes." Stephanie Ridings



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RESPONSES TO UNKNOWN MALE



*****'Ridings is an exceptional writer and her creative mind and moral thoughts shine through with this world premiere which explores the ideas of coping with tragedy, and moving on from self-blame' Behind the Arras


**** 'A real strength of this play is its use of humour in the midst of despair.' The Public Reviews


**** 'Ridings ambitiously captivates the audience with the other side of the


story: the victim being the person who ran over the individual...a quick glance at the audience, there was evidence of a few tears being shed with many eyes.' The Gay UK


The attention to detail is outstanding and the emotions – onstage and in the stalls – are raw.' Virtual Shropshire

'Above all, Unknown Male moves you, and certainly makes you think twice about complaining about someone 'selfishly' delaying your train journey.' Offbeat Magazine

 **@Nikki S R**: Really enjoyed [#UnknownMale](#) [@BirminghamRep](#). Great to watch loving if flawed family grapple with real issue (not just middle class angst)

 **@sara k beadle**: Unknown Male is fantastic! Go see while you can. A short, sharp look at life and death; and funny to boot. [@BirminghamRep](#) [@writingwestmids](#)

 **@hilchr81**: Unknown Male is a beautiful understated gem of a play. Huge congrats to [@Stephaniser](#) and the entire cast and crew. Tour soon?

 Read the full storify [here](#)

WINNER OF THE MARK MARVIN / PETER BROOK RENT SUBSIDY AWARD

In November 2014 Pippa Frith was awarded the **Peter Brook / Mark Marvin Rent Subsidy Award 2014** for her work with The Door, Birmingham Repertory's Studio space, specifically for the development of *Unknown Male*.

The selection panel for the award included Peter Wilson (producer of *The Woman in Black*), Thelma Holt (West End producer), Laura Collier (Head of National Theatre Studio) and Blanche Marvin (publisher/ critic of London TheatReviews + founder of the awards). Laura Collier commented:

"Unknown Male really stood out during selection for the awards. Stephanie has an authentic and important new voice; the truth with which she draws her characters and the pain of a family's falling apart and their ultimate healing delivers an impact that is hard to shake. I'm really delighted that this play is getting the life it deserves and very excited to see the production"

Selection was decided based on the script, and documentation of Pippa's previous producing work with the Door and wider producing activity. As well as a contribution to the costs of producing the show the award gained the project valuable press coverage:

'Moreover I was thrilled to see Pippa Frith Productions at Birmingham Rep Door win the Mark Marvin Award...an independent producer making vital work with artists such as Francesca Millican-Slater and Babakas'. Honour Bayes, The Stage



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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SHOW

Credits

Writer:	Stephanie Ridings
Director:	Nick Walker
Assistant Director:	Nick Pitt
Dramturg:	Tessa Walker
Production Management:	Tomas Wright
Stage Management:	Claire Browne
Set Design:	Olly Shapley
Lighting Design:	Liam Jones
Sound Design:	Clive Meldrum
Produced by:	Pippa Frith in association with Birmingham Repertory Theatre
Original Cast:	
Heather:	Lorraine Stanley
Emily:	Phoebe Frances-Brown
Mark:	Ged Simmons



Development History



Unknown Male was originally developed by writer, Stephanie Ridings during her time on the inaugural Foundry Programme (Birmingham Repertory's artist development programme) in 2013, during which time it was scratch at a Foundry Night and showcased at the Foundry Showcase in January 2014.

Stephanie when on to forge a relationship with Producer Pippa Frith and in partnership with Birmingham REP the team planned the full development of the show. It received funding

from Arts Council England, The Sir Barry Jackson Trust, The Peggy Ramsey Foundation and The Peter Brook Awards during its development.



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Marketing

Promoter Trailer: A dedicated promoter trailer is available [here](#) (password: Heather)

Target Markets:

- New writing audiences
- Audiences who are interested in contemporary non-traditional theatre
- Young people
- Commuters
- Those that work in the transportation industry
- Mental health workers and those with lived experienced of mental health issues



For touring venues we will provide the following marketing materials:

- A dedicated marketing pack
- A pre-agreed quantity of print
- High resolution production shots
- Sample press release
- links to existing coverage / reviews
- Support for e-marketing including eflyers and social media activity
 - A developed series of trailers: during the opening we developed the following trailers, it is likely these will be

reworked before tour, but they can be viewed here:

- [Full Trailer](#)
- [The Creative Team](#)
- [HEATHER](#)
- [EMILY](#)
- [MARK](#)

Practical Information

Unknown Male will be specifically reworked for touring, working with a brand new set design specifically made to be flexible to work in a wide range of venues.

Running time: 1 hour 10 (no interval)

Suitable spaces: Unknown Male is ideal for small – mid scale studio theatres

Technical requirements: The show runs sound through Qlab, and will require access to

the venue PA. The lighting design will be redeveloped specifically for touring, but will be based on working with a standard basic rig. The show will tour with a Production Manager who will run the show, and will require the support of 1 x venue technician.



Minimum playing area: 6 metres by 6 metres. Please contact the producer to discuss smaller playing areas as small adaptations may be made to accommodate these needs

Touring period: Spring / Summer 2016

On the road: 3 Actors, 1 Production Manager

Age Guidance: 14+

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

Stephanie Ridings (Writer)

Most recently Stephanie has been commissioned to write a radio play for Cotesbach Educational Trust, in 2014 she was commissioned by Women & Theatre to write a monologue to be staged at Birmingham REP, October 2014 to celebrate the company's 30th Birthday. In January 2014 she was commissioned to write a verbatim piece 'The Incredibles' for Birmingham REP's Learning & Participation department.

During 2013 she was a writer on Birmingham REP's inaugural Foundry project during which time she showcased extracts of 'Unknown Male' and 'In Dreams' as well as writing short 'Gwen and Edith' for REP 100. Prior to this she received support from Writing West Midlands and their Room 204 writers development programme.

Her first major script 'Me, Mum & Dusty Springfield' enjoyed a sell-out run and critical success at the Edinburgh Fringe, going onto be supported by The Lowry (Salford), then undertaking a substantial national tour. In 2011 it received support from the Core @ Corby, touring venues in the Midlands.

In 2009 Stephanie was Artist-in-Residence at Contact Theatre during which time she wrote 'The National Express', which went on to be selected for Re:Play at The Library Theatre (Manchester). Stephanie has been commissioned to write several short works for a range of festivals including, 'It's Not What it Looks Like' & 'Afternoon Tea' (Contact Theatre), and a Pecha Kucha style play 'One day Music will Play', (Capital Festival). In addition she has over 10 years experience as a theatre maker and performer.

Nick Walker (Director)

Nick is a writer and director. He was co-founder of Talking Birds, a Coventry-based theatre company whose work has been presented across the UK, Europe, and the USA. He has worked with some of the country's leading new work theatre companies including Action Hero, Stan's Cafe, Insomniac, Debbie Isitt's Snarling Beasties, NoFit State (on their international hit *Barricade*), Bootworks, and Kiln.

Recent rep theatre work include new writing commissions for the Oxford Playhouse, and the Belgrade Theatre (including the popular football hit *We Love You City*). His plays and short stories are regularly featured on BBC Radio 4, including 3 series of *The First King of Mars* (starring Peter Capaldi), 3 series of *The Bigger Issues*, and 2 series of his Scandinavian thriller, *Annika Stranded*, starring Nicola Walker. He is director of independent radio company Top Dog whose series *The Music Teacher* was nominated for a Writers Guild of Great Britain award. He is the author of two critically acclaimed novels *Blackbox* and *Helloland*. He is currently working for on a new drama series for BBC1, and on a screenplay with Black Camel pictures.



Nick Pitt (Assistant Director)

Nicholas Pitt studied Drama at The University of Bristol, where he received the Vice Chancellor Warren Scholarship and is currently training on the prestigious Birkbeck Theatre Directing MFA. He has previously worked as assistant director to Paulette Randall on *Rudy's Rare Records* at the Birmingham REP and Annie Tyson on *Madness in Valencia* at Drama Centre London. Nicholas is also an artistic associate with Idle Motion theatre company who, working with the British Council, have toured their original work to Europe, the Middle East and East Asia.

Credits with Idle Motion include: *That Is All You Need To Know* (2013), *Borges & I* (2012), *The Seagull Effect* (2011) and *The Vanishing Horizon* (2010). Nicholas will next be working as assistant director on the upcoming production of Steve Thompson's *Feed The Beast* at the Birmingham REP.

Tessa Walker (Dramaturge)

Tessa Walker is an Associate Director at Birmingham Repertory Theatre where she has directed A Christmas Carol adapt. by Bryony Lavery and The Mother by Bertolt Brecht, adapt. by Mark Ravenhill.

She has been the Literary Director at Paines Plough and a Literary Associate at the National Theatre of Scotland.

Directing includes: The Gatekeeper by Chloe Moss (The Royal Exchange), The Glee Club by Richard Cameron (Hull Truck), The Company Will Overlook a Moment of Madness by Rodolfo Santana, adapted by Morna Pearson (The National Theatre of Scotland), Dream Pill by Rebecca Prichard and Dancing Bears by Sam Holcroft (Soho Theatre), Puss in Boots adapted by Sally Siner (Derby Theatre, Guildhall), The Red Helicopter by Robin French (The Almeida), She From the Sea by Zawe Ashton (LIFT), Women on the Verge of HRT by Marie Jones (Derby Theatre), Harm's Way by Zawe Ashton (The Lowry, Manchester), Black Crows by Linda Brogan (Arcola Theatre), Orange by Alan Harris (Script Cymru), Matches for Monkeys by Sean Buckley (The Chelsea Theatre), Debris by Dennis Kelly (Theatre 503, BAC Critics' Choice Season, The Traverse Edinburgh and Staatstheater Biennale, Germany), Blackout by Dennis Kelly (Soho Theatre), The Watched by Christopher William Hill (Tour), The Supposed Person by Francesca Bartellini (Le Petit Herbertot, Paris) and Hysteric Studs by Charlotte Mann (BAC and Theater Lab, Houston).

Pippa Frith (Producer)

Pippa is an Independent Producer based in Birmingham. Her primary background is theatre, although she also has experience of spoken-word (*My Father and Other Superheroes, commissioned by mac birmingham, Nick Mokoha, 2011*), producing outdoor-circus work (*If Only I Could..., Six Summer Saturdays, 2012*), visual arts / performance crossover (*If Walls Could Speak, Commissioned by Holding Space, Mohammed Ali, 2013*), and cross-media projects (*HOAX, in association with the Royal Exchange, Ravi Thornton, 2014*).

She is the long-term producer for celebrated solo artist Francesca Millican-Slater (*Me, Myself and Miss Gibbs, supported by mac birmingham; The Forensics of a Flat, in association with Birmingham REP; My Dearest Girls, commissioned by Shropshire Archives and Arts Alive*).



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She was Co-Producer of *Our Fathers (Babakas, commissioned by Warwick Arts Centre, mac birmingham and China Plate)*, supporting the work through two national tours, a number of international dates and a critically acclaimed run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (2013).

She is a Co-Director of well-loved work-in-progress platform PILOT Nights. In 2013 she Co-Curated and Project Managed *Theatre Fever*, a celebration of theatre in the West Midlands, commissioned by *The Holding Space Consortium (Birmingham REP, mac birmingham, Warwick Arts Centre, Stans Café and Black Country Touring)*. She continues to work with the *Holding Space Consortium* to explore future activity.

CONTACT:

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