

Grid Iron Theatre Company presents

Doppler: The Story So Far

A documentary about the ups and downs of producing theatre during a global pandemic.



Doppler's cast and creatives in Gifford Community Woodland, August 2020

Edinburgh-based, award-winning 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 Stavanger 2008 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.

/ENDS

#DopplerShow

Facebook and Twitter: @GridIronTheatre

Rehearsal images, credit Delilah Rose Niel:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sj19cl1yiolqrcd/AAAIVjt5vJL21WziYT_G_AQOa?dl=0

Images of filming in Gifford Community Woodlands:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ueb74wd0iwikkh6/AAAxvFi4aGKqw-P21HxXFdg-a?dl=0>

Doppler Cast and Creatives

Cast

Keith Fleming

Sean Hay

Itxaso Moreno

David A. Pollock

Production Team

Adapter & Director: Ben Harrison

Producer: Judith Doherty

Finance & Development Manager: Deborah Crewe

Dramaturg: Eszter Marsalko

Composer & Live Foley Artist: David A. Pollock

Set & Costume Designer: Becky Minto

Lighting Designer: Elle Taylor

Puppet Designer: Fergus Dunnet

Production Manager: Elle Taylor

Technical Manager: Roy Fairhead

Deputy Stage Manager: Kara Jackson

Technical Stage Manager: Ellie Agnew

Production Design Assistant: Megan Adair

Production Design Placement: Rachael Amey

Press & Marketing: The Corner Shop PR Scotland

Social Media Manager: Delilah Rose Niel

BSL: Paul Belmonte & Rachel Amey

Doppler: The Story So Far Creatives

Media Producer & Film-maker: Delilah Rose Niel

Director of Photography: Andrew Begg

Sound Engineer: Angus McPake

Film Editor: Bill Thompson

Dubbing Mixer: Ali Murray

With thanks to Gifford Community Woodland, Arts Residency Thailand, the people of Gifford, Neville Kilkenny, The Davies Family, Andrew Abbott, Julia Amour, Jude Henderson, Shona McCarthy, Joyce McMillan, Paul Claydon and GlasGlow, Anne-Kristin Saether, Tim Niel, Mr Adair and all the many people who helped us try to make the live show happen in 2020.

Grid Iron Theatre Company

Grid Iron are an Edinburgh-based theatre company who, following their incorporation in 1995 and their first show Clearance at the Traverse, Edinburgh, swiftly gained a reputation for creating high-quality, high profile shows. The Company went on to specialise in presenting shows in unusual locations. They are a new writing company who work in challenging sites that lend themselves especially well to Grid Iron's taut production style. Occasionally they create work for the stage or use theatre buildings in a site-specific, promenade manner.

In 1997 Grid Iron produced their first full-scale site-specific production, The Bloody Chamber, their adaptation of Angela Carter's Bluebeard fairytale, which they presented in famously haunted underground vaults beneath Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile. It was the company's first appearance at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and, by the opening night, the show had sold out for its entire three-week run. Awards: Herald Angel for Outstanding Contribution and Achievement in Theatre and Total Theatre Nominations for Best Newcomers and Best Design.

www.gridiron.org.uk

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