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June 2008

LAMDA Mixes It Up With Robin Soans & Max Stafford-Clark

Mixed Up North by Robin Soans

Premiering 7-15 July 2008 at LAMDA's MacOwan Theatre

"Have you heard the latest? The council have applied for another thirty thousand to tackle 'Extremism in Burnley'... Everyone's too bored to be extreme."

A heavily pregnant director and a social worker with a Christian calling. This is the unlikely duo struggling to begin a dress rehearsal at Burnley's Street YY Youth Theatre. Their underlying mission: to bring harmony to the town through a youth theatre group that unites Burnley's fiercely divided racial communities. But with missing props, broken speakers and a leading man with attitude, it's going to take a lot more than a brew and a butty to get this particular show on the road...

And so begins *Mixed Up North* – the latest work from the master of verbatim theatre, Robin Soans (*Talking to Terrorists* and *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*). Directed by Out of Joint's Artistic Director Max Stafford-Clark and premiering at LAMDA's MacOwan Theatre (W8), this exciting new play is the latest product of the Academy's *Long Project* initiative.

Established in 1994 by incoming Principal Peter James, the *Long Project* enables LAMDA students to collaborate with a professional playwright and director to create the first draft of a new work. The hope is always that this draft will develop further into a full-scale production at LAMDA and then go on to have a life beyond the Academy. Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* is one example of a LAMDA *Long Project* that made this transition, becoming a hit at the National Theatre under the direction of Nicholas Hytner.

Inspired by the Burnley Riots and the first truly inclusive theatre group in that town, *Mixed Up North* is based on conversations held in Burnley between 2007 and 2008. By interviewing people at the heart of the issues – residents, local celebrities and politicians – and then using the material to help devise the script through a series of play-making workshops,

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LAMDA's students took a leading role in the creation of this original work. It was an opportunity that often proves all too rare for student actors and one that Peter James considers a vital element of the LAMDA training. Commenting on the Academy's *Long Project* initiative, he said: "I hope that it teaches our acting students that the biggest buzz of all comes from creating a role in a new play. There's nothing like it."

For further information and/or tickets, please contact Sarah-Jane Chapman on 020 8834 0513, 07876 527320 or sarah-jane.chapman@lamda.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

PRAISE FOR RECENT LAMDA NEW WRITING PROJECTS

"And last week, LAMDA put on a new play by Doug Lucie, *Still*, which evolved through an 18-month workshop period with the actors and the director, Penny Cherns. The result was extraordinary... I've always thought of Lucie as a precise observer of contemporary mores. Here he created a modern socialist epic about London life: not something you ever see on our national stages." **Michael Billington, The Guardian Online, Wednesday 11th June 2008**

"There can't be many drama school studio theatres that have West End producers and artistic directors standing in the aisles for a show, but perhaps that's because there's only one that can boast world premieres of works by Mark Ravenhill." **Simon Tait, The Independent, Thursday 4th November 2004**

ROBIN SOANS Writer

As a playwright credits include: *Bet Noir* (Young Vic); *Sinners and Saints* (The Croydon Warehouse); *Will and Testament* (The Oval House). In 1997, he wrote his first verbatim play *Across the Divine*, followed in 2000 by *A State Affair* for Out of Joint, which toured nationally twice and played two seasons at Soho Theatre. His third verbatim play, *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*, was produced at The Gate in June 2004 and revived at The Tricycle the following year. The play was broadcast by the BBC World Service. There have been productions in the USA, Canada, Japan and Holland. *Talking to Terrorists* was jointly commissioned by Out of Joint and The Royal Court. The play was broadcast on Radio 3 and has been produced in the USA, Dublin and Tehran. *Life After Scandal*, a Hampstead Theatre production, played the Drum in Plymouth following the Hampstead run.

MAX STAFFORD-CLARK Director

Founded Joint Stock Theatre Group in 1974 following his artistic directorship of The Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh. From 1979 to 1993, he was Artistic Director of The Royal Court Theatre. In 1993, he founded the touring company, Out of Joint. His work as a director has overwhelmingly been with new writing, and he has commissioned and directed first productions by many of the country's leading writers.

OUT OF JOINT

Out of Joint is a national and international touring theatre company dedicated to the development and production of new writing. Under the direction of Max Stafford-Clark the company has premiered plays from leading writers including David Edgar, David Hare, Caryl Churchill, Alistair Beaton, April De Angelis, Sebastian Barry and Timberlake Wertenbaker, as well as launching first-time writers such as Mark Ravenhill and Stella Feehily. Touring all over the UK, Out of Joint frequently performs at and co-produces with key venues such as the Royal Court and the National Theatre. The company has performed in six continents – recently including a world tour of its award-winning, Africa-inspired *Macbeth*. Back home, Out of Joint also pursues an extensive education programme.

LAMDA

- Dating back to 1861, LAMDA is the oldest drama school in the United Kingdom. Its graduates are recognised as among the leading theatre practitioners in the English-speaking world.
- Based in Kensington and Barons Court, LAMDA is an affiliate of the UK's prestigious Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD) – a premier division in performing arts training established by the Government to strengthen access to training for talented students, regardless of their background.
- LAMDA provides acting, stage management & technical theatre tuition, as well as special programmes in directing, musical direction, movement and scenic design.
- 98% of LAMDA's stage management & technical theatre graduates in the last three years have found work in their chosen field within three months of graduation.