

The Idiot Colony

REDCAPE
THEATRE

**October 2009
PRESS RELEASE**

**The Idiot Colony
RedCape Theatre
7.30pm, Saturday 31st October 2009
Workshop and free post show discussion**

"Endlessly inventive ... thoroughly disquieting. It's stunning; you can't help but catch your breath." ★★★★★ The Metro

"A delicate work of damaged poetry and slow-moving grace. Beautifully accomplished, a remarkable debut." The Herald

"an affecting, humorous piece of physical theatre" The Times

SCOTSMAN FRINGE FIRST WINNER 2008

**TOTAL THEATRE AWARD FOR BEST VISUAL THEATRE AT EDINBURGH FRINGE
FESTIVAL 2008**

www.redcapetheatre.com

RedCape Theatre is committed to telling stories that matter, move and entertain using visuals, physical storytelling and original writing. RedCape's debut performance - **The Idiot Colony** - will run at Aberystwyth Arts Centre on Saturday 31st October, 7.30pm.

Following **The Idiot Colony's** award winning run at **Edinburgh 2008** and a sold out run at **The ICA** as part of the **London International Mime Festival 2009** it now embarks on an 11 week UK tour.

Three women have spent decades wandering the wards and corridors of **The Idiot Colony**. Locked away for their illicit loves, they relive their faltering memories amidst the drugs, brutality and restraints of the asylum.

The Idiot Colony is a tragicomic exposé of the forced incarceration of young women in mental asylums during the 1940's and 1950's for crimes ranging from illegitimate pregnancy to lesbianism, anti-social behaviour, being abused, even for being considered 'too promiscuous' or 'flirtatious'. An original new work of devised theatre, **The Idiot Colony** is a spectacular vision depicting human rights abuses not in some far off totalitarian state, but in recent history in our own backyard.

Based on real life accounts, **The Idiot Colony** tells the story of lives destroyed for the crime of falling in love with the wrong person. Detained, often on the orders of family members for the

sake of saving grace from social scandal, some would stay within the asylum for the rest of their lives. For the inmates of The Idiot Colony, the only respite is the hospital's hairdressing salon. In this haven of intimacy, laughter and eighties pop songs they find endings to the stories they have waited so long to tell.

Genuinely moving and humorous with beautiful visual imagery – The Idiot Colony is physically devised and performed by Fringe First award winning actors/devisors, **Claire Coaché, Rebecca Loukes** and **Cassandra Friend**, directed by award winning visual theatre artist **Andrew Dawson**, (Pandora 88, Absence & Presence) and written by **Bafta** and **Rose D'or** nominated **Lisle Turner**.

A workshop and Free Post-show Discussion are available. For more information contact the Arts Centre ticket office on 01970 62 32 32 or online at www.aber.ac.uk/artscentre

Tickets for this performance are £8 (£7) CC £7.50 (£6.50) and can be booked by contacting the Arts Centre ticket office on 01970 62 32 32 or online at www.aber.ac.uk/artscentre

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Notes to editors:

Researched for over a year, interviewing staff and patients of mental hospitals all over England, the original inspiration for the play came from a story told by a hairdresser who worked in a salon inside a Midlands Mental Hospital in the 1980's. She talked about some of the elderly long-term female patients who were in the hospital because they had had illegitimate babies by American GI's. 50 years of institutionalisation, drug treatments, electric shock therapies and in some cases neuro-surgery left these women permanently altered. The women stayed within these hospitals until their closure during the late 1980's and early 1990's under the 'Care in the Community Act'. A recent news story featured Jean Gambell, freed after 70 years in mental institutions (and finally a care home for being wrongfully accused of stealing 2s 6d) died in October 2007. The action in The Idiot Colony takes place inside the hairdressing salon of a mental institution.

Further information is available from Rachel Taylor on 01970 622894 email rst@aber.ac.uk
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Further Aberystwyth Arts Centre press releases can be found at www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/press.shtml.