VICTORIA MELODY
AND
MARK THOMAS
PRESENT

TROUBLE STRUGGLE BUBBLE & Squeak

BY
VICTORIA MELODY

DIRECTED BY
MARK THOMAS



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PRESENT

TROUBLE STRUGGLE BUBBLE & Squeak

BY

VICTORIA MELODY

DIRECTED BY

MARK THOMAS

– CAST –

VICTORIA MELODY*

– CREATIVE TEAM –

Playwright	VICTORIA MELODY
Director	MARK THOMAS
Producer	FAITH DODKINS**
Design Consultant	KATHERINA RADEVA
Lighting Designer	SEAN
Sound Designer	SIMON JAMES
Prop Makers	YVETTE DRIVER, ALEX HATHWAY
Production Stage Manager	ANT PRIOLA

Run time: 60 minutes with no intermission

The Production Stage Manager is a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

*Member of British Actors' Equity

**Member of BECTU: the union for creative ambition. They represent nearly 40,000 staff, contract and freelance workers in the media and entertainment industries.

TROUBLE, STRUGGLE, BUBBLE AND SQUEAK STARTED WITH A HILL.

Whitehawk Hill sits above Brighton on the south coast of England. At first glance it looks like an ordinary place, but if you zoom in you realise it holds thousands of years of history. There's a Neolithic causewayed enclosure up there that's around 5,500 years old. It's the kind of place that reminds you how many stories a single landscape can hold.

Just below the hill is Whitehawk, a council estate that has been neglected by the rest of the city. Around half the children growing up there live in poverty. For a long time, it has been talked about more than it has been listened to.

While making this show I kept thinking about Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers. In 1649, in the aftermath of the English Civil War, Winstanley and a small group of ordinary people began cultivating common land and publishing pamphlets arguing that the earth should belong to everyone, not just the wealthy few. Their ideas about land, equality, and the commons were considered radical at the time, but they still resonate today.

Over the last few years, I've been working closely with people in East Brighton, particularly in the neighbourhood of Whitehawk. Community organizers, youth workers, volunteers, and residents have all helped shape this piece. They came to early readings, challenged me, corrected me, gave me more stories, and trusted me with their experiences.

So, while it's only me on stage in front of you tonight, the show really belongs to a whole community. One of the proudest moments of my life was when we premiered the show at Brighton Dome Corn Exchange and sold out 500 seats and half the audience were people from Whitehawk. Many of them had never stepped inside a theater before. I cared far more about what they thought of the show than what any critic might say.

At the end of the performance one local resident stood up and said, "You showed the magic in this place," and the whole room cheered. That's when I knew we'd made a good piece of art. When I announced that I was coming to the USA one local resident texted me and said, "From Whitehawk to New York. What an achievement for all of us."

Even though this is a story about a very specific place, there are Whitehawks everywhere. It's a universal story about poverty, but also about the people who quietly hold communities together. Grassroots organizations who see a gap where they live and step in to fill it.

There are Bryan's, Lacie's and Dave's everywhere. Ordinary heroes doing extraordinary things. For me, these are the people history should be remembering.

VICTORIA MELODY,
Playwright

WHO WERE GERRARD WINSTANLEY AND THE DIGGERS?

Gerrard Winstanley was a 17th-century English political thinker and activist who helped lead a group known as the Diggers during the English Civil War. In 1649, they began cultivating common land on St. George's Hill in Surrey, believing that the Earth was a "common treasury" meant to be shared by everyone rather than owned by the wealthy.

Winstanley wrote a series of radical pamphlets explaining this vision, most famously "The True Levellers Standard Advanced," in which he argued that private land ownership created poverty and injustice. At a time when there was an explosion of new ideas, England's political system was being completely reshaped after the execution of King Charles I, the Diggers put these ideas into practice by planting crops and attempting to build a small egalitarian community on common land. Although their settlement was violently shut down by local landowners, Winstanley's writings and the Diggers' actions remain powerful symbols of grassroots resistance. Their ideas about land, food, community, and equality still resonate today, particularly in movements concerned with environmental stewardship, shared resources, and the rights of ordinary people to shape the places they live.

VICTORIA MELODY
(Writer/Performer)



Victoria Melody is an award winning British artist with a passion for other people's passions. Her work is rooted in playful, human-centered storytelling and combines meticulous research with on-the-ground community engagement, creating pieces that are accessible, witty, and deeply moving. She embeds herself in unique subcultures becoming an active participant in their rituals, then blends documentary techniques with theatrical performance to give a voice to these often-overlooked stories. She works in theater, film, and stand-up comedy producing work on-stage, on-screen, in audio, and in the public realm. In the past she has become a pigeon racer, northern soul dancer, championship dog handler, beauty queen, funeral director, historical re-enactor, comedian, and skipper.

www.victoriamelody.com

MARK THOMAS
(Director)

Mark is a British comedian, writer, and theater maker who has been working professionally in performance since 1985. Over the past four decades he has toured extensively throughout the United Kingdom and internationally, creating theater and stand-up work that has been presented at major venues and festivals around the world. He has written and performed seven television series for Channel 4, created multiple radio series for the BBC, and authored books exploring the relationship between storytelling, performance, and investigative research. His work has received numerous awards, including a Time Out Award for contribution to comedy, a Sony Award for radio broadcasting, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Bradford in recognition of his contribution to theater and public discourse.

FAITH DODKINS
(Producer)

Since 2006 Faith has collaborated with artists to conceive and deliver transformative cultural experiences across the UK and internationally. She is interested in projects that amplify marginalized voices, that have their roots in activism and an ambition to support social change. She has produced work in car parks and concert halls, disused office blocks and ice cream vans, on beaches and online with organizations including Brighton Festival, the Barbican, Shoreditch Town Hall, The Lowry, and Brisbane Powerhouse. Faith has worked with TalkShow for the past twelve years and has recently collaborated with trailblazing women artists Abigail Conway, Victoria Melody, and Bryony Kimmings on the development of new work for the stage and in the public realm. Producing credits include ***Yap! Yap! Yap!*** (Gaggle), ***And the Birds Fell From the Sky*** (Il Pixel Rosso), and ***Tighten Our Belts*** (Brighton People's Theatre). Between 2012 and 2024 Faith was the co-director of The Spire, a performance and development space in East Brighton.

KATHERINA RADEVA
(Design Consultant)

Katherina Radeva is a Bulgarian-born, UK-based theater maker, performance artist, and award-winning set and costume designer. She is co-artistic director of the internationally touring company Two Destination Language. Her interdisciplinary work blends theater, dance, visual art, and socially engaged practice, often exploring migration, identity, belonging, and community. Radeva trained in fine art before graduating with a First-Class degree in Set and Costume Design from Wimbledon School of Art. Her designs and performances have toured internationally, and she has collaborated with numerous artists and companies across the UK and Europe. Her work is known for its striking visual style, political storytelling, and commitment to collaboration and care within the arts.

SEAN
(Lighting Designer)

Sean has been the production manager on all five of Victoria's previous shows, touring extensively in the UK with her. Lighting design with Victoria includes ***Northern Soul***, ***Hair Peace***, ***Ugly Chief***, and ***Head Set***. Recent re-light credits include Stuart Waters' ***A Queer Collision***, Sophie Nuzell's ***Watersprite***, Xenia Aidonopoulous' ***SKYDIVER***, and A&E Comedy's ***Witch Hunt***. Recent music lighting design on ***Shida Shahida***, ***Erland Cooper***, and ***Xiu Xiu*** at the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts (UK).

SIMON JAMES
(Sound Designer)

Simon James is a self-trained sound artist from a working-class background engaging in deep listening to the unheard - mixing environmental field recordings with electronic and electro acoustic sources. Over three decades of using field recordings in music and commercial work, including creating sonic landscapes for radio drama, TV, and film, Simon's field recording practice has shifted over the last 10 years to focus on natural and constructed environmental recordings and a growing sensitivity to the hidden, quieter sounds that often go unnoticed or dismissed as noise, alongside neglected communities and voices. He brings decades of deep listening to workshops with a wide range of participants and believes strongly in the power that listening holds to bring about meaningful change. Simon's sound design skills have been called upon by Massive Attack, Toy Drum, UNKLE, and Max de Wardener, and have featured extensively in Emmy Award winning composer Andrew Phillips' soundtracks.

YVETTE DRIVER
(Prop Maker)

Yvette is a miniaturist and prop maker. She was born in Switzerland and grew up in Manchester but now lives and works in Brighton. You will usually find her covered in glue and sawdust in the studio or working in local art gallery Paxton + Glew surrounded with incredible art and talking about it all day! Previous prop making credits include the creation of a prawn-ring wreath for an Iceland Christmas TV campaign and a heart-shaped lifebuoy ring for the charity Choose Love. She was also commissioned to recreate the TV set of *Vic and Bob's Big Night Out* in miniature and the wrap party gifts for Daisy-May Cooper's *Am I Being Unreasonable?*

ALEX HATHWAY
(Prop Maker)

Alex is an artist, writer, and performer who studied theatre at RHUL and trained at Mountiew. Recent credits include writing and performing in ***Hocus Focus*** for The Magician's Table, designing the SpiegelGarden's venue, part of Brighton Fringe 2025 and prop work for Victoria Melody's ***Trouble, Struggle, Bubble and Squeak***.

ANT PRIOLA
(Production Stage Manager)

Ant Priola is an Equity Stage Manager excited to return to the Brits Off Broadway festival! Past credits include: 59E59 Theaters: ***The Mistake*** (PSM), ***Gertrude Lawrence*** (PSM), ***A Special Relationship*** (PSM); Twilight Theatre Company: ***Polishing Shakespeare*** (PSM), ***Not Nobody*** (PSM); San Francisco Playhouse: ***Home?*** (PSM); Various works for the National New Play Network; Theater for the New City: ***Party?*** (PSM), ***Chesapeake Chicks*** (ASM); The Tank: ***Vatican Falls*** (ASM).

TROUBLE, STRUGGLE, BUBBLE AND SQUEAK

Commissioned by Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival with financial support from East Brighton Trust, Creative Crawley as part of Creative Playground and Keep It Fringe. Supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

Developed with Crew Club, East Brighton Food Co-op, Friends of Whitehawk Hill, The English Civil War Society and Woolly Umbrella.

CURATOR'S NOTE

When I'm scouting shows in Edinburgh, I tend to gravitate toward anything with a historical thread. That's what led me to this show. I thought I knew what I was getting. I didn't.

Victoria Melody is a deceptively gentle force of nature, and watching her feels less like being told a story and more like being invited along on the journey. What stays with me is the feeling in the room: a kind of shared openness, where an audience leans in together and goes somewhere surprising.

It's hard to describe exactly what she creates—but the experience is full of humor, humanity, and, unexpectedly, a sense of healing.



Val

VAL DAY
Artistic Director,
59E59 Theaters

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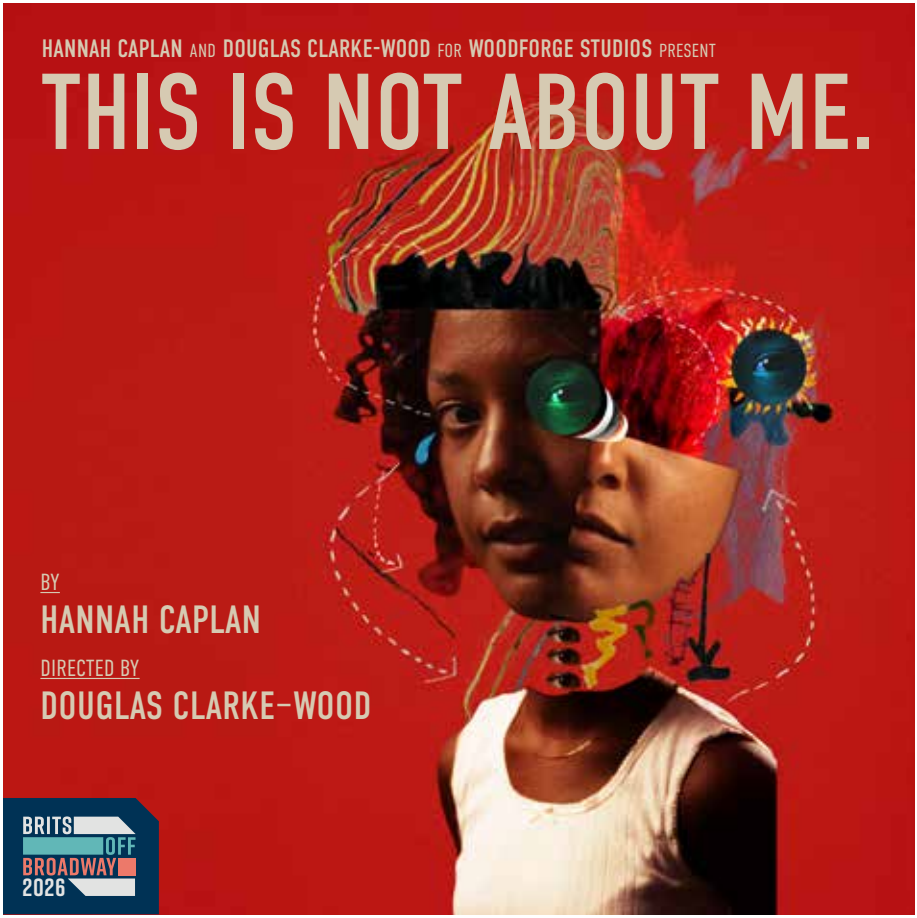
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OUR MISSION

59E59 Theaters was established by the Elysabeth Kleinhans Theatrical Foundation in 2004 to grant professional space and expertise to non-profit theater companies premiering their work in New York City. Under the leadership of Val Day, Artistic Director, and Brian Beirne, Managing Director, 59E59 Theaters presents a year-round curated program of Off Broadway plays and musicals that are nurtured and supported by providing performance spaces and equipment as well as production, ticketing, FOH, marketing, and press support. These theater companies receive 80% or more of the ticket revenue and pay no weekly rent to 59E59.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

59E59 Theaters reside on the traditional homelands of the Lenni-Lenape People on the Lenape Island of Mannahatta. We acknowledge the Lenni-Lenape as the original people of the land who were forcefully removed during colonization resulting in erased and excluded peoples and culture. We are grateful for the opportunity to work on the land and honor their elders, past and present alongside future generations for their stewardship and continuing relationship with their territory.

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