

# BREAKING DAY

**A passion play**

By Les Ellison

DIGITAL PROGRAMME

# BREAKING DAY

## THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING BREAKING DAY

As day begins to break on Good Friday, the occupying Governor's tenuous grip on authority is slipping. It's festival time in Jerusalem but his wife is plagued with disturbing dreams. Amid the demands of the Sanhedrin and the murderous cries of the mob, the lines between personal and political in Pilate's house start to blur. The teacher at the centre of it all remains silent.

Confused by the hopes and fears of her people, a Jewish servant in the Praetorium clearly knows more than she should. Pilate wrestles with a quandary of his own devising, while outside momentum is gathering – the power of the Capitol in tension with the will of the people.

Created during the lockdowns of early 2021, *Breaking Day* is a virtual passion play, filmed and edited remotely, which speaks right to the heart of Easter in our modern world. With start intimacy, it casts a surprising light on the death of Jesus from inside the Governor's household, immersing us in the decisions that led to crucifixion.

# CAST



## CLAUDIA PROCULA | GRACE COOKEY-GAM

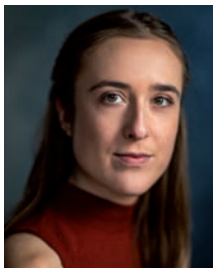
Grace Coockey-Gam is delighted to be working with Riding Lights, having been inspired to start training as a professional actor by their 2011 Summer School!

Since graduating in 2013, theatre credits include: *Richard III*, *Romeo & Juliet* (Shakespeare's Rose Theatre, Blenheim Palace); *Othello*, *Macbeth* (Lyric Hammersmith & HOME); *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* (Menier Chocolate Factory); *Di & Viv & Rose* (Stephen Joseph Theatre/ New Vic); *#Hashtag Lightie* (Arcola).

Television & Film includes *Soulmates* (AMC), *Dawn* (Hulu/ MGM), *Tyrant* (Fox), *Saved* (ITV), *Justice League* (Warner Bros).

For BBC Radio: *Things Fall Apart*. She has also been a reader for *Words and Music*.

Grace is also a singer, with a music degree from Birmingham University and a background in arts education. She is represented by Rebecca Singer Management.



## HANNAH | RACHEL HAMMOND

Rachel graduated from Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in 2018, where she trained as an Actor Musician. She first worked with Riding Lights in Autumn 2018, touring the libraries of York as Smidge in *Surprise Ending*.

Other credits include: *Swallows and Amazons* (York Theatre Royal); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Northern Broadsides); *Babe, the Sheep-Pig* (Mercury Theatre, Colchester); *A Christmas Carol* (TNT Theatre); *Macbeth* (Wilton's Music Hall); *On Hope: A Digital Song Cycle* (The Other Palace); *Hear No evil* (Prodigy Film Festival).

Theatre at Mountview includes: Rita O'Grady in *Made in Dagenham*, Luce in *The Comedy of Errors*, and Hermione in *The Winters Tale*.



## PONTIUS PILATE | TOM PETERS

Tom trained at The Rose Bruford College in Sidcup. He has worked mainly in theatre and the odd commercial. In 'normal' times, he also busks on the London Underground. Tom has worked with Riding Lights for many years, touring *The Narrow Road* in 2010 and performing in *The Winter's Tale* in 2012, *The Alchemist* in 2014, and as part of the Living Stones trips to Israel and Palestine.

He's hugely grateful to be a part of *Breaking Day*, during strange times for all involved in the arts!



# CREATIVES



## LES ELLISON | WRITER

The product of a long association with Riding Lights Summer Theatre Schools, credits for Riding Lights include *Saving Grace*, *Redemption Song* and co-authorship of *Crosslight* together with sketches for *Add Drama to Christmas* and the company's *Living Stones* tours of the Holy Land. Published work includes *Red Star – The Yuri Gagarin Story*, *Sacred Spaces – Short Plays for The Church Year*, a modern re working of *Everyman* and *The Dark before the Dawn* for RADIUS, *Away From The Manger* for Moorleys, *Utter Garbage* and *Space Junk* environmental plays for children for Samuel French.



## PAUL BURBRIDGE | DIRECTOR

Paul is the Artistic Director of Riding Lights. He has directed a number of passion plays for the Company, including *Inheritance*, *Redemption Song* and *Crosslight* (co-written with Les Ellison and available on DVD and download). In 2012, he also co-directed the acclaimed *2012 York Mystery Plays* with a 500 strong cast. Other recent directing includes the satirical show *Baked Alaska*, calling for urgent action on climate change, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *The Alchemist* (Belgrade Coventry), *Simeon's Watch* and *The Selfish Giant*. Projects in development include a one-act play about Artificial Intelligence and *My Place*, Bridget Foreman's new play to be produced in partnership with the fostering and adoption charity Home for Good.



## ERIN BURBRIDGE | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Erin is a Creative Associate of Riding Lights and directed *The Narrow Road* in 2019 & 2020. She trained at the University of York in Theatre: Writing, Directing, and Performance. In 2017, she directed *An Italian Straw Hat* at university and in 2018, Sandi Toksvig's *Bully Boy* for York's inaugural Venture Fest. Erin has worked as a stage manager for York Theatre Royal's TakeOver Festival and Hull Truck Theatre's *Ugly Duckling*, *Jack Lear* and *Peter Pan*. For Riding Lights, she has performed in Roughshod: *irRESISTible* and *The Kaleidoscope Tour*, and was the movement director for numerous Roughshod tours.



## SEAN CAVANAGH | DESIGNER

Sean trained under Ralph Koltai at the Central School of Art and Design. He is a long-standing Associate Director of Riding Lights for which he has designed many productions, including the acclaimed Riding Lights 2012 production of *The York Mystery Plays* and most recently *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Surprise Ending*. London credits include *The Tempest*, *The Mikado*, *The Aspern Papers*, *Sherlock Holmes - The Musical*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Treasure Island*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Rat Pack - Live from Las Vegas*, *Dancing in the Streets*, *Dreamboats and Petticoats*, *The Trial of Jane Fonda* and *The Rubenstein Kiss*.



## PATRICK BURBRIDGE | COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Patrick trained as an actor-musician at Rose Bruford College. As composer and sound designer for Riding Lights, credits include *The Selfish Giant*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Surprise Ending*, *GospelSTREET*, *A Yorkshire Christmas*, *Where Adventure Begins* and *The People's Passion*. Other credits include *Clay Fever* for York Theatre Royal and *Taro'r Bar* for S4C.

As an actor-musician, credits include *Dreamboats and Petticoats* (UK Tour), *Save The Last Dance For Me* (UK Tour), *Fantastic Mr Fox* (Nuffield Theatre Southampton/Curve Leicester), *Creedence Clearwater Reimagined* (Maple Tree Production), *Godspell* (Queen's Theatre Hornchurch), *The Selfish Giant* (Riding Lights Theatre Company – Tour & Film).

Patrick also spent four years touring internationally as one quarter of 1950's style rock and roll band The Bluejays. Patrick's time with the band saw him record 2 albums and perform with artists such as Brian May. He is now a founding member and lead guitarist of The Boulevards – a brand new 1950's rock and roll band.



## JARED MORE | EDITOR

Jared is a Creative Associate of Riding Lights and trained at the Newcastle Theatre Royal, graduating from the Project A actor training programme in 2019. Performance credits include *Roughshod Deliver* (2018), *The Selfish Giant* (2019) and *The Kaleidoscope Tour* (2019 & 2020) and as a video editor, *Spring Harvest Big Start* (2020) and *Add Drama to Christmas* (2020).

# THE MAKING OF



2020 was a strange year to be a theatre company. For us, the first casualty was 2020's national tour of Passion Play *The Narrow Road*, cut short after just one dress rehearsal-cum-performance. However by the end of the year, after months of Zoom and furlough and staring at our own walls, we were able to take all the seats out of our theatre and use the space as a studio to make a film of the previous year's Christmas tour – *The Selfish Giant*.

Buoyed by its success, as the new year arrived, we were ready to make another theatre-on-film offering, this time another Passion Play for Easter. With a script by Les Ellison, we assembled a creative team to come to York and make the show in the studio. Pre-production was halted, however, by the announcement of the early 2021 lockdown. With our three actors stranded across London, and the production team similarly spread out across England and Wales, it seemed we were altogether snookered.

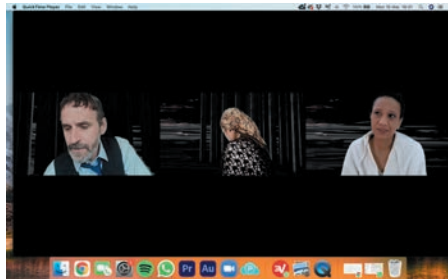
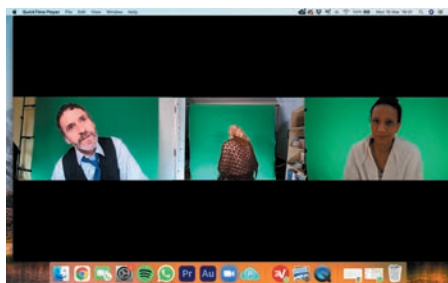
But, if nothing else, the previous year had been full of creative solutions to seemingly impossible problems. Okay, so we couldn't bring the actors to the studio... But what if we sent the studio to the actors? After some hurried screen tests, we hired three identical Go-Pro cameras and sent them to our actors, along with costume, props, microphones, lights and greenscreens. We rehearsed over Zoom, with directors Paul and Erin sculpting the story and drawing out the characters. We had to adapt the script slightly as we went to



fit the new medium, but soon it was time for Lights, Cameras, Action!

The cast – Grace, Rachel and Tom – did a spectacular job, despite being in a church hall, a spare bedroom and a shed, respectively. They not only delivered powerful and nuanced performances without being able to play off one another in the usual way, they also acted as their own crew, operating lights, camera, sound kit, and managing make-up, props and costume. In rehearsal the actors were able to see each other's performances but once the cameras were rolling they could only hear one another, with some scenes actually being filmed over the phone due to Wi-Fi issues. The iconic shots of overflowing wine were the only ones shot in York - we thought asking Rachel to ruin her carpet might be a bridge too far!

After a whirlwind six days of filming, it was time to edit. All the footage and sound was sent out by internet transfer and, over the next couple of weeks, was cut together into the narrative of the film. Then, while Pat edited the sound in London, the green backdrops were keyed out and the CG backgrounds, created by designer Sean Cavanagh, were dropped in behind by editor Jared. The whole film was colour-graded for that eery early morning feeling, and Pat's score was added along with the finished sound design.



Ongoing restrictions meant we couldn't roll out the red carpet, but the cast and crew gathered on Zoom after the virtual premiere and to breathe a collective sigh of relief and satisfaction that we had pulled off this mad-cap, skin-of-the-teeth theatrical experiment.

*Breaking Day* is a product of a very strange time, created in a crucible of circumstances we hope never to live through again. The story it tells, however, is timeless. A story of sacrifice, betrayal, upheaval, and grace, and the film remains a powerful testament to this Easter story.



**WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED THIS PRODUCTION!** If you'd like to know more, there are a number of ways you can get involved and support our company

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE** for information on all that we offer - online digital resources for you to use at home / church, live and filmed performances, summer theatre school, youth theatre, our annual Members Day and more... [www.ridinglights.org](http://www.ridinglights.org)

**SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER** for regular news and updates from Friargate Theatre straight to your inbox.

**BECOME A MEMBER** and support the immotive work of Riding Lights, through regular donations and prayer. You'll receive a quartlery newsletter, have access to priority bookings and an invitation to join our annual Members Day when we come together in York and celebrate you!

**MAKE A ONE OFF DONATION** and contribute to our projects. Your donation could pay for a place at our annual summer theatre school, or towards our Youth Theatre for those with additional learning needs, or fund one of our tours up and down the country, or vital prison work.



**We are Riding Lights Theatre Company:**

Paul Burbridge | Artistic Director  
Bernadette Burbridge | General Manager  
Sean Cavanagh | Associate Director  
Bridget Foreman | Associate Director  
Rob Gooch | Operations & Production Manager  
Hannah Carter-Brown | Graphic Designer

Erin Burbridge | Creative Associate  
Jared More | Creative Associate  
Ruth Gould | Tour Booker  
Rachel Sanders | Tour Administrator  
Chloe Oldroyd | Office Apprentice

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