

PRESS RELEASE from: Bonnet and Belt Productions

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Roses and Castles

Roses and Castles is a drama for the stage by emerging playwright Phil Underwood. It tells the story - through music, poetry and prose - of the English canals from the 18th century to the present day, following the fortunes of a canal family and their boat across nearly two hundred years of history.

Based on the writer's personal experiences as a boatman living on the Grand Union Canal and inspired by his training with the National Theatre's **War Horse** production, Roses and Castles is based on solid oral and written historical research, weaving actual canal life and real stories into the plot.

Told in a personal and intimate way, it features historical and original songs & music composed and performed by the writer. There is a strong **creative learning** aspect to the production, suitable for all ages. It is aimed at increasing awareness, not only of the key part that the canals played in the development of industry and trade in the 18th and 19th Centuries, but also down to the detail of the realities of life aboard a canal boat and the society that the boat people created.

With the support of director Bernie C Byrnes and The New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth the production gained Arts Council England funding to develop the play for a professional touring production, culminating in creative learning workshops and an evening performance of the play in October 2016.

We are now programming a touring production for 2017 and are looking for venues who share our passion for learning through drama and music. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Best wishes

Phil Underwood, Writer, Producer

For more information please visit:

Website: <http://bonnetandbelt.com>

Phil Underwood, the writer said:

"Canals are very much in the news nowadays. I am delighted to be telling the story of England's canals from the perspective of the people who lived and worked on them during the Industrial Revolution".

Feedback from the Performance:

"It was great to be entertained by a show that covered so much ground without the over-obvious signposting that we have seen in other canal-based productions." DI Harris, Folk Music and Waterways Journalist

Feedback from the workshops:

[The children] were excited to see the performance in the evening and they were completely fascinated with every aspect, costumes, set, music and amazing acting. The outcome for these learners is huge.." AG