

## PRESS RELEASE



### ‘EAT ME’

## A NEW PLAY TO RECEIVE ITS EDINBURGH FESTIVAL PREMIERE

### FUNDING INITIATIVE PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUALS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES TO GET INVOLVED AND SUPPORT THE ARTS

*‘So powerful and emotional’ Audience Member*

**Ahead of Eating Disorder Day on 2 June, an ambitious fundraising initiative** has now been launched to help raise money for a 4-week season at the acclaimed **Edinburgh Fringe Festival** of **EAT ME**, a brand-new play written by **Surrey-born writer Suzanna Walters** which aims to take on the eating disorder Anorexia.

**EAT ME**, directed by **Birmingham-born actress, writer and director Sally McCormack**, is a thought provoking, often chilling and dramatic exploration of the sensitive subject of eating disorders based on real-life experiences.

**Produced by Surrey-based Matrix Theatre Company**, this innovative piece is a compelling insight into the cruel and prevalent eating disorder. It is told through the eyes of three characters as audiences hear their stories and watch them fight to regain control of their lives.

As their stories weave between present and past, **EAT ME** will shed light on Anorexia’s iron grip whilst bringing a message of hope for recovery.

*‘I hope you will get the chance to stage this elsewhere: it deserves a much wider audience.’ Audience Member*

**Writer Suzanna Walters** said *“Everything that happens in the play to either Libby, Kate or Jonathan happened to me or to someone I know. These stories are based on true-life events; they are real. I want to share these to help others gain an understanding of the way Anorexia can take control of a person’s life.”*

Matrix Theatre Company, who will be taking **EAT ME** to Edinburgh in August, produces plays on a variety of mental health subjects including early psychosis, schizophrenia and eating disorders. They regularly perform in Secondary Schools and provide follow-up support supplied by mental health teams. The company have also supplied workshops on bullying, stress and cyber bullying.

**Sally McCormack, EAT ME Director from Matrix Theatre Company** said *“I know from my previous experience that audiences are hungry for a truthful but engaging insight into the conditions that can face any one of us. Anorexia really doesn’t seem to distinguish gender, education or up-bringing. In giving Anorexia a voice of its own, writer Suzanna Walters has so brilliantly allowed us to see it wheedling its way into our lives but also to see how it can be defeated.”*

Sally continued *“EAT ME is a play that will appeal to a wide range of audiences from 14 upwards, including those suffering with an eating disorder, their friends, family, carers and those working in the field of mental health. To be given the chance to perform at the acclaimed Edinburgh Festival gives us the chance to reach a bigger audience and hopefully help more people with the condition.”*

This fundraising initiative provides a unique opportunity for individuals and businesses to get involved and support the arts whilst bringing hope to people with Anorexia.

Since the launch earlier today a total of £1885.00 (30 April) of the £25,000 target has already been donated. Monies raised will go towards a signer for access performances, the cost of costumes, sets, venue hire and travel costs amongst others.

Those wishing to donate have the chance to be mentioned in the company blog, meet and greet the cast, receive tickets to the production with signed photos or attend an exclusive meet and greet with the writer and director.

For further information and to make a donation, however small, please go to

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eatmetheplay](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eatmetheplay)

#TakingOnAnorexia

Website: [www.eatmetheplay.co.uk](http://www.eatmetheplay.co.uk)

The season at Edinburgh will also help to provide a platform to raise funds for BEAT a national charity that supports people of all ages and backgrounds with eating disorders. 5% of JustGiving money raised will be donated to the charity. [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/)

**EAT ME** receives its Edinburgh Festival premiere at C venues Aquila Studio, Roman Eagle Lodge, Johnston Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2PW on Thursday 2 August until Monday 27 August 2018.

-ENDS-

30 April 2018

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#### **Note to Editors**

#### **Eating Disorder Stats – [via BEAT](#)**

- Approximately 1.25 million people in the UK have an eating disorder, 11% of those affected by an eating disorder are male.
- The latest version of the DSM (Diagnostic Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders) cites the main eating disorders as anorexia, bulimia and binge eating disorder (BED), eliminating EDNOS (eating disorder not otherwise specified).
- Research carried out in Australia suggests that the average duration of anorexia is eight years.

- Research suggests that around 46% of anorexia patients fully recover, 33% improving and 20% remaining chronically ill.
- Anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric disorder, from medical complications associated with the illness as well as suicide.
- Research has found that 20% of anorexia sufferers will die prematurely from their illness.
- **EAT ME** was previewed at the Mole Valley Arts Festival Surrey in 2017 and opens at Edinburgh Festival on 2 August.

#### **Biography – Sally McCormack – Director**

- Sally was in Birmingham and trained at the acclaimed Birmingham School of Speech and Drama before she went on to work in theatre, television and film. She was a puppeteer for 'Playdays live on Stage' and 'Little Shop of Horrors' at Pinewood Studios and Henson's Creature shop. She enjoys writing and directing these days and has performed 'Cinderella' 'Dick Whittington' and Mrs Duster's Magic Toyshop', at The Leatherhead Theatre.
- In 2002 she launched her company Matrix Theatre, offering fully interactive history workshops, following and enhancing the curriculum. She has also produced a number one tour of 'Stepping Out' featuring Anita Harris and adapted 'I'm Telling you, They're Aliens', a book by Jeremy Strong, into a musical play. This is how Suzanne Davies, the writer for 'Eat Me' and Sally met. They have worked together on various projects ever since and look forward to working together in the future.
- Sally also Stage Manages the Leatherhead Drama Festival, which always takes place during the month of May.

#### **Biography – Suzanne Davies – Writer**

- Suzanna trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.
- Theatre roles include Mrs Zewlinsky in "I'm Telling You They're Aliens!" (Matrix Theatre/touring), Suhir in "Salaam Bethlehem" (Riding Lights Theatre Company, York/touring), Mrs Micawber in "The Micawbers" (King's Head/English Theatre of Bruges), Titania in "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Nerissa in "The Merchant of Venice" & Emilia in "Othello" (all Tight Fit Theatre, Wycombe Swan), Emily in "The Needle's Eye" (King's Head), Witch in "Macbeth" (Pentameters), Lady Macbeth in "Macbeth" and Olivia in "Twelfth Night" (Bitesize Theatre), the one-woman play "A Woman Alone" (Merton Abbeyfest) and various roles with the Cat's Grin Theatre Company (touring).
- Film/TV roles include "Parallel Lines" (Dir. Jackie Clarke, 2014), "Consider Her Ways" (Dir. Laura Tunstall), "Grand Opening" (Dir. Darryl Fernandez) & NatWest commercial (Dir. Ged Forshaw).
- Suzanna has more recently performed in the premiere of two new plays, 'Bare Reality' and 'A Drama out of a Crisis', both for Matrix Theatre, as well as playing various characters from Sheridan in Pop Up Scandal at Polesden Lacey National Trust.
- 'Eat Me' is Suzanna's first play as a writer.