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**The UK’s only youth-led festival of physical theatre returns to Coventry for 2021.**

Now in its 12th year, the UK’s only physical theatre festival exclusively for young people returns to Coventry, from Monday 29th June to Thursday 1st July. The youth-led Changing Climates Festival will take over the Belgrade Theatre with a packed programme of workshops and performances, this year focussing in on the theme of the climate crisis. This follows the launch of Coventry City of Culture 2021 and connects strongly to its ambitions, as the city looks ahead to a greener future. Changing Climates will provide transformative opportunities for 400 young people, harnessing the energy and power they hold towards environmental problems. It will champion theatre as a creative response to these issues and will leave audiences feeling inspired.

Developed by award-winning physical theatre company Highly Sprung, the Changing Climates Festival presents a unique way of working with and for young people. Students aged 11-18 receive professional-standard performance training and devise thought-provoking pieces of work, to be shared on the festival’s main stage. This is followed each night by ‘Winter Rites,’ the headline show from Highly Sprung’s talented youth company Sprung Advance, set in a dystopian future. Each performance will tackle head on the challenges & implications of the climate crisis, using theatre to provide fresh insights and motivate audiences to make change.

*“The Changing Climates Festival marks a really important moment for Highly Sprung and for the incredible young people we are working with. It’s a chance to reconnect after lockdown and look forwards, coming together in a physical space to create and to start important conversations on the climate emergency we are facing. This opportunity will enable young people to engage with local and global environmental themes, helping them to better understand the role they play in making positive changes for our future and giving them agency to take action.*

*After a year in and out of lockdowns, our city is finally buzzing again after the launch of Coventry 2021. As we look ahead to a busy year of culture, Highly Sprung can’t wait for this festival, being the first of many* *events, performances and partnerships we are working on within the city.”*

**Sarah Worth, Executive Director, Highly Sprung**

Coventry has been home to Highly Sprung for over 20 years. Empowering young people to access the arts and find their unique creativity is the driving force of Highly Sprung’s work and, this year, they have taken that one step further. The festival has been produced with the help of the Coventry Young Producers Collective – a group of 30 students in Years 10 & 11 who are receiving invaluable skills, knowledge and hands-on experience, playing a key role. For some of them, it will be their first time stepping into an arts venue. Changing Climates invites them in, challenging the young people to immerse themselves in a new experience and to discover their voice.

**The Changing Climates Festival takes place Monday 28th June – Thursday 1st July 2021, 7pm at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. Tickets available here:** [**https://www.belgrade.co.uk/events/changing-climates-festival/**](https://www.belgrade.co.uk/events/changing-climates-festival/)

**Ends**

**For more information please contact:**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About Highly Sprung**

Highly Sprung Performance is the UK’s leading physical theatre company creating work with and for children and young people. We use our signature approach to empower young people, helping them find their unique performance style and discover their voice.

We create award-winning outdoor and indoor performances that tell stories through movement, gesture and dance. Stories inspired by humanity, science and the complex world around us. Highly Sprung are best known for Urban Astronaut, which has toured over 40 venues and festivals internationally, as well as Home, an aerial spectacle celebrating Coventry’s history, and additionally for the Physical Fellowship, the UK’s only festival exclusively for young people and emerging artists.

For the last 20 years, Highly Sprung has worked with primary and secondary schools across the UK and internationally and runs weekly performance workshops in Coventry for children and young people aged 5-18. In 2020 we were awarded the Pearson’s Teaching Gold Award for our collaboration in commemorative arts engagement project Echo Eternal, working with the Core Education Trust and schools across the West Midlands.

<http://www.highlysprungperformance.co.uk>

**Social Media**

Twitter [(@highlysprung](https://twitter.com/highlysprung))

Instagram [(@highlysprung](https://www.instagram.com/highlysprung/))

Facebook ([Highly Sprung Performance Company](https://www.facebook.com/highlysprungperformance))

YouTube ([Highly Sprung Performance](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4H5ghTVSW2Z7_xcIMVJsgA/videos))

**About the Coventry Young Producers Collective**

The Coventry Producers Collective (CYPC) is a group of 30 young people aged 14-15 from Coventry Schools. Through weekly sessions, they have been introduced to key aspects of creative producing for theatre, helping them gain essential skills and knowledge. The programme culminates in this year’s Changing Climates Festival, providing them with hands-on experience of producing for a large-scale event.

**About Winter Rites**

Winter Rites is the headline show for this year’s Changing Climates Festival at the Belgrade Theatre, devised by Highly Sprung’s experienced cohort of young performers Sprung Advance. Set in a dystopian future, earth finds itself slowing on its axis. One day now lasts weeks. **Winter Rites** examines the reasons for the slowing and the power of possibility. Exploring consumerism, plastic and pollution, this performance will interrogate beliefs for how and why the earth slowed down. Examining the role of individuals, how we act as a society now and unpacking what it means to be human.