

# ROD DIXON

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: 2006 - Present

## Biography

Rod became Artistic Director of Red Ladder Theatre Company in 2006, following his role as associate director at the Barbican Theatre in Plymouth. He also ran The Hub Theatre School in Cornwall and was an actor with several companies including Kneehigh Theatre.

Directing credits for Red Ladder include *Where's Vietnam?*, *Forgotten Things*, *Riot*, *Rebellion & Bloody Insurrection*, *Ugly*, *Sex & Docks & Rock 'N' Roll*, *Big Society!*, *Promised Land*, *The Damned United*, *The Shed Crew*, *Mother Courage and Glory*. Rod is both a life-long Liverpool supporter and a believer in Proudhon's principles of anarchy – the two might be connected.



## Mission Statement:

To make theatre which celebrates, inspires and challenges young people, developing in them the desire and ability to express ideas and strengthen social and cultural cohesion.

## Artistic Policy:

- To include young people in the creative process of making theatre
- To embellish current text-driven practice by experimentation with new theatre practice – including working with other art forms
- To inspire a new generation of theatre-makers through the quality and originality of our creative practice
- To tour this work nationally, targeting young people who have little or no access to theatre
- To seek international collaboration actively and to engage with theatre-making in troubled parts of the world – helping ordinary people investigate global issues
- To create a reputation of a unique artistic process and a 21<sup>st</sup> Century style to compliment the reputation that precedes us
- To continue to raise our local and regional profile particularly through enabling and inspiring emerging local artists
- To celebrate and build upon Red Ladder's 40 year history of making theatre

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**MY VOICE WAS HEARD BUT IT WAS IGNORED**  
DECEMBER 2020

DIRECTED BY:  
Dermot Daly

WRITTEN BY:  
Nana-Kofi Kufuor

**A Red Ladder Theatre Company production  
with support from Oldham Coliseum Theatre**

15 year-old Reece is roughly accosted by the police outside M&S. His young, Black teacher Gillian witnesses it all – but she doesn't question or intervene in the disturbing scene that plays out.

As the hard and wet gravel embosses Reece's face and the policeman's knee digs into his back, his teacher stands frozen, with fears for her own safety engulfing her mind.

The consequences of her lack of action erupt the following day. Gillian finds herself locked in a classroom with her angry student. With no clear intent, Reece refuses to relinquish the key. He wants her to feel the irreversible breakdown of trust. He wants her to pay – and to know his pain.

A gripping tussle of power and an urgent interrogation of racial identity, written by emerging playwright Nana-Kofi Kufuor and directed by Dermot Daly

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/my-voice-was-heard-but-it-was-ignored/>



**My Voice Was  
Heard But It  
Was Ignored**  
by Nana-Kofi Kufuor

**CONNECTED**  
APRIL – JULY 2020

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Chris O'Connor & Paul Fox

*Paul and Danny meet every Wednesday for a pint after work. It has been a tradition for three years, and 2020 is no different.*

*But 2020 is different. And as the weeks continue the reality of this new world dawns upon them both and we see how they react as the world starts to fall into chaos all around them...*

*Paul and Danny are connected, and so are all of us.*

Connected was commissioned by Red Ladder to be broadcast as a 15-part podcast series in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

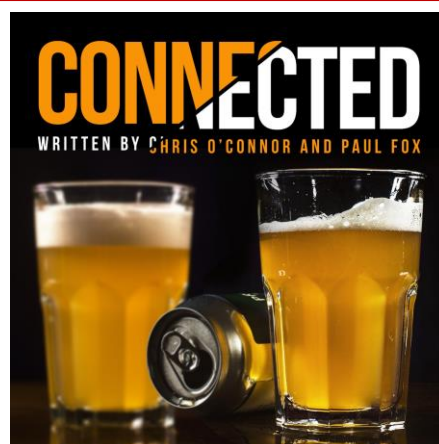
The show was written by Chris O'Connor and Paul Fox, performed by Stevie Ward and Paul Fox, directed by Rod Dixon, with sound by Dom Smith and is produced by Red Ladder Theatre Company in association with Mantality. Music was composed and performed by Claire-Marie Seddon with lyrics by Chris O'Connor and Claire-Marie Seddon.

Connected remains available on Red Ladder's Podcast, which should be on all good podcasting apps. It is also available via Red Ladder's Soundcloud here:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-676480749>

Links and further information:

<http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/connected/>



## SMILE CLUB

MARCH 2020

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Andrea Heaton & Adam Z. Robinson

Welcome to Smile Club. Life's so much better when you smile. Everyone knows that. So go on – give us a smile.

Meet Lisa, a Smile Club attendee. Lisa's been through it all and she now knows – beyond a shadow of a doubt – that nobody likes a girl who makes a fuss; nobody likes girl who can't take a joke. She knows too, that life is simpler when you let things go. And she certainly has. All of it.

Join Lisa as she presents the perks and rewards of being a Smile Club Member. Hear about her descent into dejection, rage, and bloody violence, before her remarkable transformation into the smiley, well-adjusted human you see before you today. Set in a dystopian world in which a government drive exists to tame and prune unruly women deemed unable to fit into society, Smile Club is a pertinent, thrilling and richly comedic piece of theatre.



Smile Club opened in March 2020, and completed only half of its performances before the Covid-19 pandemic dictated the shut down of all live performance. The show was brilliantly received:

'Heaton is a commanding storyteller who keeps the twists and turns coming – not to mention the feminist rage' **The Guardian** ★★★★★

'Smile Club is hard-hitting and ingenious – and the satirical punch fairly often comes with a laugh.' **The Reviews Hub** ★★★★★

'You will not forget Smile Club in a hurry.' **The Culture Vulture**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/smile-club/>

## WESELE/WEDDING

March 2020

DIRECTED BY:  
Patrizia Paolini

WRITTEN BY:  
Margot Przymierska

**Presented by Red Ladder Theatre Company on the Northern Social Circuit:**

An immersive one woman show rooted in the European tradition of absurdist political comedy with a Polish-English love story at heart.

It's the last Polish-English wedding before the Brexit-imposed borders close around the UK, sealing it off from the rest of Europe. The MC invites all the guests to take part in wedding games and Disco Polo singalongs in a bid to keep the international community together. She needs this wedding to go off without a hitch. Will she succeed?

This comic (and at times dark) collage of authentic and fictional migrant stories told by a real-life wedding MC uses stand-up, storytelling and physical theatre modes to subvert Polish and British cultural and gender stereotypes.

The show examines and challenges the role of tradition, folklore, national identity, religion and family bonds, and investigates how they shape society's perceptions of itself and the 'other.' Celebratory and uplifting, Wesele / Wedding is also an unexpectedly moving and politically relevant meditation on the dangers of populism and of borders – both physical and mental.

"A fresh angle on the popular topic of Brexit and a charismatic performance from Margot Przymierska" A Younger Theatre

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/wesele-wedding/>



## Brenda's Got a Baby

OCTOBER 2019

DIRECTED BY:  
Bloomin' Buds

WRITTEN BY:  
Bloomin' Buds

**Presented by Red Ladder Theatre Company on the Northern Social Circuit:**

*Brenda is 16 and pregnant. Amy, her older sister, is the first in her family to go to university. As one sister finds it hard to fit in at university with her council estate background, the other is discovering that becoming a mum is not what she thought it might be. As friends disappear and finances tighten, the sisters confront and confide in each other about their increasingly challenging lives.*

Based on interviews with working-class women in Bradford, Brenda's Got a Baby is a new verbatim play by Bloomin' Buds Theatre Company that explores the challenges that these two working class women face.

The show tours to Red Ladder local venue St John's Parish Church in Staincross after a run in New York and stars real-life sisters Jenny and Katie Mahon.

*'A spectacular piece of theatre... Bloomin' Buds' brand of social commentary through drama will soon be gracing stages far more hallowed than that of our university... A complex issue has been discussed maturely and effectively, tied up in a narrative as spellbinding as it is familiar.'* *The Gryphon (Leeds University) review*

*'Brenda's Got a Baby makes its points clearly and with enjoyable performances'* ★★★★★ *The Stage*

Links and further information:

<http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/brendas-got-a-baby/>



## THE PARTING GLASS

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2019

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Chris O'Connor

**Can you ever really know what someone's going through?**

*Jim's always been a bit of a character – cracking jokes, telling funny stories, the life and soul of the party. You'll most likely find him down the pub with his mates, or at the footie. A Leeds lad through and through, just like his Dad. And what's more, he's met his perfect match: Sara. She's a Leeds lass with a sense of adventure and a cutting wit, always up for a laugh.*

*At Jim's 30th birthday party, they should be having the time of their lives. The world is at their feet, right? But Jim is hiding a lingering feeling that he's not quite built for this world.*

*Like there's always been something wrong. Tonight, he wants to talk, to tell you his story – one he's never told before.*

Exploring mental health, masculinity and human connection in a social media-obsessed world, *The Parting Glass* is a moving new play (with a fair few laughs along the way) by Chris O'Connor, directed by Red Ladder Theatre Company's Rod Dixon, and developed from O'Connor's previous production '*The Life and Soul*.'

**'...a serious examination of important and life-changing issues... but with a fair few laughs along the way.'** [Reviews Hub](#) on O'Connor's *The Life & Soul*

Links and further information:

<http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/the-parting-glass/>



## BLACK TEETH AND A BRILLIANT SMILE

JUNE 2019

DIRECTED BY:  
Kash Arshad

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY:  
Lisa Holdsworth

Presented by Red Ladder Theatre Company on the Northern Social Circuit:

We're in The Beacon, Buttershaw, and it's Christmas 1990. That's in Bradford.

Andrea Dunbar is here, she's the one that wrote Rita Sue and Bob Too and The Arbor – a true Bradford lass, a mum, sister, and best friend too.

'Black Teeth and a Brilliant Smile' is a play, adapted by Lisa Holdsworth from Adelle Stripe's acclaimed novel of Dunbar's life. Filled with a host of Bradford characters, laugh out loud banter, and some dark times too.

Men have always told Andrea's story. But this evening, she's telling it for herself.

Black Teeth and a Brilliant Smile was produced by Freedom Studios and presented on the Northern Social Circuit in association with Red Ladder. All performances were followed by a Q&A featuring the cast and director Kash Arshad, and in certain locations, playwright Lisa Holdsworth.

"In Holdsworth's snappy, engaging adaptation, the drama becomes a sort of dialogue between Dunbar's older and younger selves..." **The Guardian ★★★★★**

"Poignant and stark staging of Adelle Stripe's novel based on the life of Bradford playwright Andrea Dunbar" **The Stage ★★★★★**

"The set, by Hannah Sibai, feels authentic, as does the entire production." **The Times ★★★★★**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/black-teeth-brilliant-smile/>



## GLORY

FEBRUARY – APRIL 2019

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Nick Ahad

Meet Dan, Ben and Sami. Three wrestlers compelled over the ropes and into the ring to fight for glory. Three men wrestling with demons, life, each other.

Jim 'Glorious' Glory used to be somebody. In the heyday of British wrestling, he was a colossus. Now his empire has crumbled.

Through Dan, Ben and Sami, Jim catches a glimpse of resurrection; a chance to re-establish his great name and his decaying gym. But do they want to wrestle and restore Jim's glory? Or do they have a different fight in mind? Only one hero can emerge.

A new play from the writer of Partition and the award-winning The Chef Show – Glory takes us into the wrestling ring in this painfully funny, sweaty and gutsy story about what people will do to achieve glory.

Glory was a co-production between Red Ladder and The Dukes, Lancaster, in association with Tamasha. It toured nationally, as well as to the Northern Social Circuit.

"It has the best stage fighting this side of the Royal Albert Hall, courtesy of choreographer Kevin McCurdy, and a keen sense of an old order being upturned." **The Guardian ★★★★★**

"Nick Ahad's controlled, witty writing holds the production together while Rod Dixon's direction keeps it from spilling into just another Rocky-esque testosterone comeback story... it is exhilarating to watch." **The Stage ★★★★★**

"Nick Ahad is never afraid to confront the thornier issues of life in modern day multicultural Britain [...] entertainment with a powerful message that gets you in a headlock, hits you in the funny bone and breaks your heart." **The Yorkshire Post ★★★★★**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/glory/>



## WHEN WE WERE BROTHERS

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2018

DIRECTED BY:  
Aisha Khan

WRITTEN BY:  
Ben Tagoe

### Presented by Red Ladder Theatre Company on the Northern Social Circuit:

*Lads don't cry. But what if you have to? When you feel like you're going to explode. When everything's closing in. And you don't even know if you can stand it anymore. What then?*

*Danny and Tommo have been friends since they were eight years old. Played, fought, had each other's backs. Like brothers.*

*Now they're grown up; Danny's down in that London and Tommo is off work and back at his old bedroom. But Tommo's mum, Julie, is really worried about him, and Danny may be the only one who can help...*



'When We Were Brothers', was produced by Freedom Studios and presented on Red Ladder's Northern Social Circuit. It was a one-hour new play by Ben Tagoe (*Coronation Street*, *Lucky Man*) about being a man, mental health, and friendship. It was set in a bar, where audience members could sit and enjoy a drink while watching the show.

*"The three actors all give moving, honest and utterly authentic performances"* **The Yorkshire Post** ★★★★★

*"Containing echoes of Andrea Dunbar's working class stories, this is an ultimately uplifting tale of hope"* **The Stage** ★★★★★

*"a beautiful, touching, and heart-warming piece of theatre"* **Plays To See** ★★★★★

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/when-we-were-brothers/>

## MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2018

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Bertold Brecht

*Peace is bad for business.*

*The 'Thirty Years War' rages on. Whether flogging leather belts, greasy pots, bullets or her children's lives – life for Mother Courage is reduced to a series of transactions, and escape routes.*

Bertolt Brecht's timeless and epic drama about the turmoil and trauma of conflict is vividly depicted through Lee Hall's dark and witty translation.

In this wholly immersive production audiences follow in the steps of Brecht's fearless matriarch, as Mother Courage hauls her tinkering wagon of junk through crackling battlefields and bombed-out villages – echoing the modern-day refugee's universal displacement.



Starring Pauline McLynn (*Father Ted* / *Shameless* / *EastEnders*) in this iconic title role, *Mother Courage and Her Children* marked Red Ladder's 50th anniversary; over five decades of presenting stories of human struggle and resounding spirit in times of stark adversity. This piece was presented, promenade, in Albion Electric Warehouse, with music by Chumbawumba's Boff Whalley and a Community Chorus of Leeds residents.

*"Shockingly contemporary"* **The Observer** ★★★★★

*"A true ensemble piece"* **The Sunday Times** ★★★★★

*"Outstanding"* **The Yorkshire Post** ★★★★★

*"A truly remarkable performance from Pauline McLynn"* **Culture Vulture**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/mother-courage-children/>

**THE LAST SEAM**  
SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2018

DIRECTED BY:  
Daljinder Singh

WRITTEN BY:  
Garry Lyons

**Presented by Red Ladder Theatre Company on the Northern Social Circuit:**

*Paying tribute to the people of the coalfields, The Last Seam brings to life the voices and stories of miners, their families and the local community.*

*Marking the closure of England's last deep seam mine Hatfield Colliery in 2015, this powerful new production brings to life the real voices of Hatfield and uncovers the stories behind our country's colliery heritage that will not be forgotten.*

*Earthy, funny and ever relevant.*



The play toured community venues around South Yorkshire, Leeds, Newcastle and Sunderland.

*'But the piece is more than a claustrophobic concentration on politics and bitter recriminations. Details of personal lives unfold and stories expand into the worlds of social work, nightclubs, court hearings and humanitarian work in Turkey, the actors giving realistic, wonderfully moving portrayals. Paul, in fact, was never a miner, but – bursts of punk music – a wild and free Punk rebel back in the day. As he battles from a difficult childhood through episodes of mental illness, witnessing brutal suicide and suffering unbearable loss, Jamie Smelt's is just one of the highly moving performances.*

*This is a slice of history brought to life, via gifted actors, by those who lived it.'*

Links and further information:  
<http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/the-last-seam/>

**CORNERMAN**  
FEBRUARY 2018

DIRECTED BY:  
Joe Lichtenstein

WRITTEN BY:  
Oli Forsyth

**Presented by Red Ladder Theatre Company on the Northern Social Circuit, a production by Smoke & Oakum Theatre:**

*Mickey and his team of cornermen never seem to have much luck in the boxing world.*

*The fighters they manage always end up losing and, after a bruising last outing, no one wants to work with them. Until, that is, they sign a young boxer whose winning ways catapult them into a world of success they've never dreamed of.*

*Is Sid Sparks their meal ticket to fame and fortune?*



*"A strong play, a real achievement" **Broadway Baby***

*"Thrilling to watch" **The Scotsman***

*"A real knockout" **The Stage***

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/cornermen/>

**SHED CREW**  
SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2017

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY:  
Kevin Fegan

*A stage play in verse by Kevin Fegan; adapted from the book URBAN GRIMSHAW AND THE SHED CREW by Bernard Hare*

*Hark back to the techno thumping, joy riding, glue-sniffing, dragon-chasing 90's. Pounding beats, dirty streets, swirling haze and squalor – piss stained velour. Ashtrayland.*

*You weren't in a gang, you were in a crew, and life was a drug-fuelled helter skelter.*

*It's 20 years later, and tonight, fasten your seat belts. Best to travel light. Keep your eyes open and watch your back. But no worries, with this crew you're one of us, you're family, we'll show you what 'survival' really means..*

*"outstanding" – ★★★★★ North West End*

*"it swings between highs and lows, leaving you wanting but somehow still managing to energise and uplift, exuding youthful energy and a cheeky rebellion." – Ilkley Gazette*

*"The visceral energy and authentic language of the Crew, together with the unique staging, creates an unforgettable ninety minutes of theatre." – Culture Vulture*

*"Striking and Powerful" – The Stage*

*"a production and performances full of energy, imagination and potential for danger." – ★★★★★ The Reviews Hub*

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/the-shed-crew/>



**THIS REALLY IS TOO MUCH**  
NOVEMBER 2016 - APRIL 2017

DIRECTED BY:  
Gracefool Collective

WRITTEN BY:  
Gracefool Collective

*Look. (point) You've never had it so good. We. Are moving. Forward.*

*Raucous, provocative and laugh-out-loud funny, this genre-busting performance reveals the downright absurd realities of life as a 3-dimensional, high definition, water-drinking, salad-eating, WO-man in modern society. 'Gleefully compelling' (Exeunt), slickly choreographed and dripping with feminist charm and anarchic wit.*

*Gracefool combine dancing with dark comedy to delve into a world of farcical stereotypes and preposterous power struggles, wrestling with gender, identity and social convention. An outlandish and wildly entertaining medley of absurd political speeches, talent contests and box ticking.*

*This Really Is Too Much* toured in tandem with Red Ladder's Production 'Wrong'Un'.

*"The choreography is slick, the punchlines dark and the laughs constant. This is a remarkable, genre-defying performance, superbly written and fantastically performed." - Three Weeks*

*"This Really is Too Much... is the fierce and farcical feminist theatre of today that is needed to invite conversations about whether we really have 'never had it so good'" - EdFringe Review*

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/convicts-and-lunatics/>



## LEEDS LADS

JUNE 2016

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WORDS & MUSIC BY:  
Anthony Clavane, Nick Stimson & Beccy Owen

*A young woman's journey into Leeds' secret, inspiring past.*

*It's 2016. Tara stands on the steps of Leeds Town Hall on the day the city commemorates the Leeds Pals at the Battle of the Somme. She holds in her hand her great grandfather's medal for bravery. Why should Tara care about the past when the present seems so bleak?*

**Leeds Lads** is a new play about the people of Leeds past and present – their fears, their love and their friendships, performed by the people of Leeds, for the people of Leeds.



Coinciding with the centenary anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, Red Ladder Theatre Company, Carriageworks Theatre and Leeds Civic Arts Guild presented a new play - *Leeds Lads*.

Breathing life into the characters of Leeds's past, this vibrant production transported audiences from the turmoil and tensions of war, to the rich and multi-cultural city we know today.

A community cast of 40 local performers and musicians were joined by Leeds Rhinos and Great Britain international Rugby League player Jamie Jones-Buchanan for his debut appearance on stage.

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/leeds-lads/>

## THE LIFE AND SOUL

MAY 2016 – JUNE 2019

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY  
Chris O'Connor

*Jim's always been a bit of a character, just like his Dad, and spends most of his life between the bookies, the pub and the football.*

*He's always had this lingering feeling though that he doesn't quite fit into this world, that there's something different about him, something wrong...*

*Jim's never told his story to anyone before, but tonight he's going to tell it to you...*

An incredibly versatile short piece, *The Life & Soul* has received glowing praise from audiences across the country. The show is a sensitive, yet uncompromising observation of stigma and isolation associated with men's mental health issues in modern day Britain.



Drawing on themes of class, family and identity, *The Life & Soul* resonates deeply with anybody who has known somebody who struggles with depression. Glowing with charm, *The Life & Soul* is funny, grounded and very, very real.

*The powerful intimacy of the performance put over the dark reality below the cheerfully matey exterior and opened the way for discussion of the mental health issues afterwards' – Reviews Hub*

**'An important step in a long journey to destigmatize mental health, within our local and national community' – The State of the Arts**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/the-life-and-soul/>

## THE DAMNED UNITED

MARCH 2016 – APRIL 2018

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Anders Lustgarten

*Down the stairs... Along the corridor... Round the corner... Into the dressing room... HIS dressing room. Hateful, hateful place. Spiteful, spiteful place. Dirty, dirty Leeds.*

*1974. Brian Clough, the enfant terrible of British football, tries to redeem his managerial career and reputation by winning the European Cup with his new team: Leeds United. The team he has openly despised for years, the team he hates and which hates him. Don Revie's Leeds.*

Originally co-produced with the Leeds Playhouse, The Damned United takes you inside the tortured mind of a genius slamming up against his limits, and brings to life the beauty and brutality of football, the working man's ballet.

*'a cracking piece of theatre' ★★★★★ from British Theatre*

*'swift, compact and bullishly to the point' ★★★★★ from Entertainment Focus*

*'Yes, this a play about football, but it's so much more than that. It's a tribute to an era-defining genius, a portrait of a man terminally wrapped-up in his own bravado, a study of loyalty and friendship under pressure...' ★★★★★ in The Stage*

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/the-damned-united/>



## RABBITSKIN

JULY 2015 – AUGUST 2016

DIRECTED BY:  
Chris Hill

WRITTEN BY:  
Dominic Grace

**Presented by Red Ladder Theatre Company on the Northern Social Circuit:**

*Joe's always loved stories – reading them, listening to them and making them up himself, but tonight he's going to tell you his story... one that he's never told before, and that no one else knows.*

*Joe's dad loves football and poaching for rabbits, Cal mostly loves picking on Joe (but that's what big brothers are for isn't it?). Joe can't remember what his mum loves, it's a long time since she was around and he was only little then.*

Sometimes funny, sometimes sad, Rabbitskin is a one-man play about family and childhood and love, and the pain that sometimes walks hand in hand with them.

This new show starring West Yorkshire actor William Fox (Coronation Street, Playing The Joker, Promised Land, The Thing About Psychopaths) was presented alongside background about Red Ladder, and clips from our previous plays.

*"In the hands of a skilled actor like Coronation Street regular William Fox it works beautifully as he even wrings out plenty of laughs...in this fluid performance" - Backseat Mafia*

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/rabbitskin/>



## HURLING RUBBLE AT THE SUN

MAY 2015 – JUNE 2015

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY  
Avaes Mohammad

*"Sometimes all you can do is make them see what it is they're doing to you. What they've done to you. What they've turned you into. Sometimes that's all you have left to show."*

That side of town. July 2005. One blistering night. One blazing day. T labours over hot-plates cooking up the final ingredients for his mission while his mother labours over a hot stove, cooking up his final meal.

Wearied by staring into all-consuming retribution, T reaches out to her seeking fresh insight.

Desperate to be folded into her bosom once again, instead he's thrust onto a course of his own design, but with a force far greater than his alone.

Park Theatre and Red Ladder presented a double bill by Avaes Mohammad, looking at white working class extremism in Britain. See the partner piece, **Hurling Rubble at the Moon**, below.

*"The story of mother-son relationships ripped apart by fundamentalism is an under-explored one – and this, in particular, terrifyingly highlights the double-life that T must lead."*

– **The Times**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/hurling-rubble-sun/>



## HURLING RUBBLE AT THE MOON

MAY 2015 – JUNE 2015

DIRECTED BY:  
Jez Bond

WRITTEN BY:  
Avaes Mohammad

*"It's not about the Scousers, or the Geordies or even the Irish anymore. It's not even about the Blacks or the Asians. It's a new age with a new threat and you don't even know it."*

This side of town. The first years of the millennium and Skef's dad is back.

Reliving his glory days on the terraces, he stands shoulder to shoulder with his son for the first time as they give it to the Asians.



For Skef this isn't about reliving bygone glory but reclaiming all that's fast being stolen by the new insidious scourge all around.

But, committed to battling this enemy within, he's in danger of soiling the very thing he's fighting for by violating the very thing he loves.

**'This hard-hitting double bill offers a troubling take on modern radicalism.'** – **Time Out**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/hurling-rubble-moon/>

## NICOBOBINUS

Dec 2014 – March 2015

DIRECTED BY:  
John Ward

WORDS & MUSIC BY:  
DUMBWISE

*This is the story of the most incredible child... His name was Nicobobinus. He lived a long time ago in a city called Venice, and he could do anything.'*

*Or, could he?*

*When Nicobobinus is magically turned to gold, he and his wild best friend Rosie embark on a musical voyage to the Land of Dragons to find the cure. On the way, their friendship, humanity and overall brilliantness is put to the test as they are propelled into a non-stop world of fantasy and mayhem.*

*Kidnapping pirates, murderous monks and moving mountains all lie in store for these two best friends as they wind their way through this hilarious and thrilling adventure.*



Red Ladder Theatre Company and DumbWise present a new family musical based on Monty Python star Terry Jones' much loved children's book.

Told from the mouths and instruments of an unruly band of gypsies, this adaptation of Terry Jones' original children's novel is cheeky, clever and bursting with songs; brought to life by a cast of actor musicians to produce a unique and unusual modern fairy tale for all of the family to enjoy.

*'Out-rihtly one of the most magical pieces of theatre I've seen as both a child and an adult. A dazzling Christmas show that will have each and every member of the family utterly dumbstruck with amazement.'* - ★★★★★ **from Grumpy Gay Critic.**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/nicobobinus/>

## WE'RE NOT GOING BACK

July 2014 – Feb 2015

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Boff Whalley

Red Ladder Theatre Company and Unite the Union present *We're Not Going Back*, a hard hitting musical comedy about the 1984/85 miners' strike.

*But in this play there are no miners. Instead, we follow the fortunes of three sisters in a pit village, hit hard by the Government's war against the miners and determined to set up a branch of 'Women Against Pit Closures'*

*Olive, Mary and Isabel are like any other sisters whose everyday squabbles became a background hum to the strike that forced them to question their lives, their relationships and their family ties.*



*We're Not Going Back* tackles the resilience of working communities, the make-and-mend fabric of family and the power of sticking two fingers up to a government hell-bent on destruction... and all with humour, song and a six pack of Babycham.

Red Ladder are delighted to be working with Unite the union, North East, Yorkshire & Humberside on this production. For further information about their work visit their website

*'This is top quality musical drama, exceedingly good and thoroughly uplifting. Viva Red Ladder!'* - **What's On Stage.**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/going-back>

**WRONG'UN**  
JUNE 2013 – NOVEMBER 2018

DIRECTED BY:  
Justin Audibert

WORDS & MUSIC BY:  
Boff Whalley

*February 1918, and after several decades of protest and four years of bloody war Parliament is poised to grant what the suffragettes have demanded and fought for – votes for all women.*

*After years of direct action, arrest, imprisonment and force-feeding, it seems their time has come.*

**Wrong 'Un** tells of the adventures of Annie Wilde, a Lancashire mill-girl galvanised by a rousing mixture of injustice, conviction, self-doubt and fear on her journey from schoolroom to prison cell and beyond.



Wrong 'Un has toured for five years the longest tour in the history of the company. The show has played a wide range of spaces: theatre studios, pubs, village halls, trade union conferences, and even a tent at Shambala Festival. It is still in demand.

This one woman show is a musical with no musicians – the performer takes on five different roles and sings all the songs unaccompanied! In recent years, Kathleen Yore (of Odd Doll Puppetry) has taken on the challenging role of Annie Wilde which was originally written with and for Ella Harris.

*'Ella Harris's portrayal of Annie, with its complex mixture of sharpness, fun and intelligence, made this reviewer glad to have met her and the causes she cared about' – The Guardian*

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/wrong-un/>

**THE MATCHGIRLS**  
JULY 2013

DIRECTED BY:  
John Ward

BOOK & LYRICS BY:  
Bill Owen

MUSIC BY:  
Tony Russel

Presented by Red Ladder Theatre Company, Dumbwise Theatre, and Unite the Union.

*A riotous and gritty play with stomping show tunes that captures the spirit and energy of these extraordinary women, this is the story of the Matchgirls as they take on one of the largest industrial forces of the era and sing through it against all the odds.*

This production was staged to commemorate the one hundredth and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Matchgirls strike in Bow, East London with

a cast of professional and East End community actors. A group of ordinary women did the extraordinary and walked out of the Bryant & May match factory, changing British history forever. Arranged and staged by award winning actor musician company Dumbwise, this production was co-produced by Unite the Union and Red Ladder Theatre Company, supported by Wilton's Music Hall and Arts Council England.



Links and further information:  
<http://www.dumbwise.co.uk/shows/matchgirls>

## PLAYING THE JOKER

NOVEMBER 2013 – AUGUST 2018

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon & James Blakey

WRITTEN BY:  
Anthony Clavane

*December, 1977 – it's nine years since the infamous 'Watersplash Final' – and the once revered "Uncle Eddie" has withdrawn into the protective walls of the The Queens Hotel.*

*Out front fanatical Rugby League fan Eddie Marlowe, grieving the recent loss of his father, is hellbent on speaking alone with his idol. Will he get that chance?*

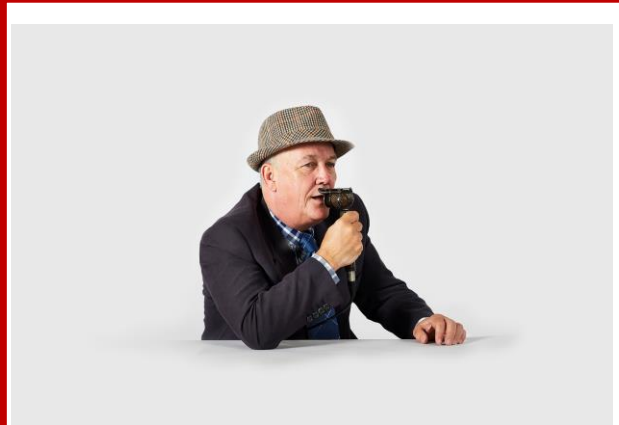
*Playing The Joker is about one man's dream to give rugby league a national profile – written by award winning author and former Sunday Mirror journalist Anthony Clavane (Leeds Lads).*

*Through a winning combination of gripping action and infectious humour, Playing the Joker presents a moving and funny slice of 1970s northern life.*

After a sell out run of the show at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in 2013, Red Ladder were awarded Strategic Touring Funding to tour *Playing the Joker* to Rugby League clubs across Northern England, kicking off at the world-famous Headingley Stadium, popping in to the Queens Hotel – where it was set – and then taking in 20-odd venues from Hull to Hunslet, Whitehaven to Wigan. The show toured again in 2018, 50 years on from the 'Wintersplash Final'.

*'The performances of Dicken Ashworth, William Fox and Dominic Gately are all genuinely brilliant'* - **Yorkshire Post**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/playing-joker/>



## THE THING ABOUT PSYCHOPATHS

MARCH 2013 – MAY 2013

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY  
Ben Tagoe

*Britain. 2013. Times are hard, but the money's still out there if you know where to look and are prepared to gamble. Whether it's prison or the corporate world, there are rules to be followed. Only the fittest survive. It's every man for himself.*

*A searing, funny and thought-provoking new play from Ben Tagoe ('Cold Turkey at Nana's' – Oran Mor / Perth Theatre, 'Bittersweet Sunshine' – Red Ladder and BBC Writers Academy), 'The Thing about Psychopaths' asks important questions about power and empathy in modern Britain.*

The national tour opened at Carriageworks Theatre Leeds before going to Crucible Studio Sheffield, Bury Met, Barnsley Civic, Guildhall Arts Centre Grantham, Stamford Arts Centre, The John Godber Theatre Pontefract, Arts Centre Washington, York Theatre Royal, Harrogate Theatre, Octagon Theatre Bolton, Square Chapel Halifax, The Lowry Salford Quays, Derby Theatre, The Brunton Musselburgh, Dundee Rep, Carnegie Hall Dunfermline, The Maltings Theatre Berwick-upon-Tweed, Hull Truck Theatre, The Lantern Liverpool, Colchester Mercury and Park Theatre Finsbury Park.

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/national-tour-of-the-thing-about-psychopaths-announced/>



## SEX & DOCKS & ROCK & ROLL

JAN 2013

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Boff Whalley

*A musical comedy written and composed by Chumbawamba founder member and guitarist, Boff Whalley, with musical direction from former band mate Harry Hamer.*

*Sex & Docks & Rock 'n' Roll returns to Leeds and Liverpool following its national tour in 2010, this time with Red Ladder Artistic Director, Liverpool-born Rod Dixon, playing the leading role of Ronnie.*



A riot of songs, cookery classes, cups of tea and class war... Sex & Docks & Rock 'N' Roll is a family comedy about love, change and solidarity, set against the backdrop of the 1960 Liverpool dockworkers' and seafarers' strike. Following the ups and downs of a typically untypical family on strike and featuring live music, the show promises to have you laughing and singing along to one family's unashamed battlecry of Justice, Equality and two tickets for Gene Vincent down the Odeon.

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/liverpool-date-added-to-sex-docks-rock-n-roll-2013/>

## PROMISED LAND

JUNE 2012

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Anthony Clavane & Nick Stimson

*Winner of Sports Book of the Year 2011, 'Promised Land' tells the story of Leeds, its football club and its communities.*

*The stage adaptation tells that same story through the eyes of Nathan and Caitlin, two young idealists growing up in mid-1970s Leeds, living in the same city but on opposite sides of a cultural and religious divide.*

*A co-production between Leeds Civic Arts Guild, The Carriageworks and Red Ladder, the story moves from the 1900s to the early 1960s and then on to the mid-1970s. It is a love story – but also a love letter to a great city.*



In the month of the Olympics and the week that the Olympic Torch came to Leeds, this new play was a large-scale celebration of Leeds people and Leeds sport. The show was performed with a cast of 35 local participants and a live band.

*'The cast perfectly portrayed the fear and conflict of the time engaging the audience throughout.'* – **The Public Reviews**

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/promised-land/>

**BIG SOCIETY**  
JANUARY 2012

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Boff Whalley

*Crash-landing loudly into the rambunctious world of Edwardian Music Hall, Big Society! follows the on- and off-stage exploits of the cast of a Music Hall variety show.*

*It's 1910 and the cast are fighting for survival, threatened with shock/horror disclosures by a corrupt and moralistic newspaper, 'The Double Standard'. (Yes, the whole show is based soundly on the premise "Where have I heard that before?"). Trapped between an elitist, public-schooled government and a two-faced, mercenary press, the performers grapple to justify their existence and hold onto their jobs – that is, until Eve, escapologist and mistress to King Edward VII, decides to take things into her own hands.*



Written by Chumbawamba founder member and guitarist, Boff Whalley, the show opens at The City Varieties Music Hall in Leeds in January 2012, the show features the band performing twelve new songs, alongside the cast of the show. The show also stars comedian Phill Jupitus in the title role of George Lightfeather.

This show is the fourth collaboration between Red Ladder Theatre Company and the band, the first to feature Phill Jupitus. Previous shows written for the company by Boff Whalley include UK tours – Sex & Docks & Rock 'n' Roll and Riot, Rebellion & Bloody Insurrection.

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/big-society-a-music-hall-comedy/>

**NOR ANY DROP**  
AUTUMN 2011

DIRECTED BY:  
Jim Johnson

WRITTEN BY:  
Nick Ahad

Originally commissioned by Peshkar Productions and co-produced with Red Ladder Theatre Company, *Nor Any Drop* toured schools in Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Nick Ahad based *Nor Any Drop* on his experiences visiting his father's birthplace in Bangladesh. The play followed the lives of five characters connected by the effects of climate change in the UK and Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh a single mother, left homeless by the flood that killed her husband, is forced to

steal to feed her family. In England, a 16-year old British Bangladeshi is curious about his background and a trip to Bangladesh changes his views about the country.



The play became the centre of a climate change row, and was referred to Michael Gove (then Secretary of State for Education) by Shipley MP Philip Davies (a climate change sceptic), who complained that the show was 'propaganda'. Read more about the controversy here:

<https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/9565577.school-play-at-centre-of-climate-change-row/>

Review in the Sylhet Times: <http://sylhettimesdigital.co.uk/nor-any-drop-peshkar/>

**UGLY**  
SEPTEMBER 2010

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY  
Emma Adams

*Set in the not too distant future where climate change has reached the point of no return, where mass global migration is the norm and a new malevolent world order has begun to exist, UGLY presents audiences with bold and darkly funny theatre. An absurd futuristic satire about 4 characters' survival and their search for hope and tenderness in a world that is suffering an environmental eclipse of the heart...*

*Mrs Mason, a disgraced home economics teacher, has been exiled to the Ghetto-Zone, a segregated place for those labelled Not Special. Here she is faced with the dilemma to keep sane and lose all hope or go mad and retain some humanity.*



She chooses the latter, which is how she manages to meet each day working as a 'food memories prostitute' in such ridiculously high spirits. It's also why she's so convinced that one day, the Minister from the Ministry for Mistakes, will let her return home... Only a terrible day of reckoning is coming when it falls to her to save two former pupils: Woody, now a successful army officer and Ben, a student, who have stumbled into the Ghetto-Zone by accident... Can she save them without destroying herself? And, perhaps more importantly, can she do it without giving away the fact that she has Mert, a highly illegal immigrant hidden in her cupboard?

It's going to be funny... very funny but you better believe it's going to get very, very, UGLY...

Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/ugly/>

**BITTERSWEET SUNSHINE**  
JUNE 2010

DIRECTED BY:  
Duncan Marwick

WRITTEN BY:  
Ben Tagoe

*Britain. Terry is living the dream. Twenty years after escaping from grey England, he's now the proud licensee of a beach bar on the Costa Brava.*

*But Terry's Utopian England in the sun now has a cloud floating above it – namely the arrival of his niece Hayley, who reopens his oldest wounds and forces him to confront a dark past. Terry's been running all his life and now he's on the verge of running again.*

*Solomon is a beachhawker from Sierra Leone who earns a few extra Euros helping Terry to sweep his terrace every day.*

*Like Terry, Solomon is also running from some demons. Will either of them be brave enough to go home and face up to their past?*



Links and further information: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/bittersweet-sunshine/>



**FORGOTTEN THINGS**  
SEPT 2008 – NOV 2009

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Emma Adams

*16 year old Toby believes he's a failure. He's losing the will to live.....*

*His parents are frightened. They don't want to lose their baby.....*

*Then there's Grandma Lilly - she's just losing her mind ..... having forgotten 'something important' Lilly interrupts Toby to lead him into a mystery of half memories and family secrets. Finding answers might just save both their lives.....*



This dark comic play was about finding hope, and what happens when it's taken away. The acclaimed cross-generational story fused puppetry, innovative theatre and a surreal style. It toured theatre spaces in Autumn 2008, followed by a stint at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2009 and an Autumn 2009 tour.

Links and further info here: <https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/leisure/theatre/3848363.preview-red-ladder-theatre-company-presents-forgotten-things-pocklington-arts-centre-november-18/>

**WHERE'S VIETNAM?**  
JUNE 2008

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Alice Nutter

*Hungry for revenge, two brothers, Banks and Arthur set off on a road trip that takes them down the M1 and into a world they don't understand. 1968, and the sexual revolution is stuck in a traffic jam just outside Leeds but Banks and Arthur are about to see beyond the city's narrow perimeters.*

*A fan of the Kray twins, Banks proudly models himself on Reggie Kray and pushes his gentle giant of a brother into the subservient role of Ronnie. As they hitch across country they encounter a shifting cast of characters, who offer them everything from fish paste sandwiches to balloon based sex.*



*A new world unfolds before them, a world where the young demonstrate and get laid; the last thing Banks wants to do is give peace a chance.*

Performed by a cast of professional artists and actors from the Leeds community, *Where's Vietnam* was Red Ladder's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary production. With a soundtrack of sixties soul and dirty funk, this dark comedy was about love, loyalty, and not letting disability stand in the way of extreme violence.

Links and further info here: <http://www.redladder.co.uk/whatson/wheres-vietnam/>

**DOORS; THIS LIFE WAS GIVEN TO ME**  
JULY 2007

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Madani Younis

*A modern piece of Absurd Theatre made by and for a new generation. Three strangers are caught in a web spun from the mistaken choices of their past.*

*As each one struggles, the web tightens. Giles teases and manipulates like a cruel puppet master; Jo hides behind his angry mask; Leah comforts herself in fantasy.*

*Painful old wounds split open lies and deceit smother the truth.*

*Can anyone escape this 21st century hell?*

*We either change the way we live, or the world in which we live changes us forever.*

Fusing symbolism, style and physicality the performance refuses to talk down to its audience by pretending to be film or television, aiming instead to raise expectations of what theatre itself can do.



**KAAHINI**  
SEPT - DEC 2006

DIRECTED BY:  
Rod Dixon

WRITTEN BY:  
Maya Chowdhry

*Originally commissioned by Red Ladder and performed to high accolade in the 1990s this was an updated version reaching out to 21st Century audiences. Using high energy movement, film and a hip-hop soundtrack. A physical show that speaks directly to young people.*

*Set in contemporary Britain, using rich poetic language Kaahini reveals the dreams, aspirations and frustrations of adolescence and questions gender and identity in Britain today*



*"Writing for me is about survival. I wrote Kaahini because of injustices of gender and sexuality, particularly for Asian women. The duality of the central character is loosely based on me. Society gives us 'girls' roles and boys' roles' and this is oppressive. Identity is more fluid where is there a choice about who you are?" - Maya Chowdhry*