



The Political History of Smack and Crack

Paines Plough's ROUNDABOUT @ Summerhall, Edinburgh, EH9 1PL

Friday 3rd – Sunday 26th August 2018 (not 7th, 14th, 21st), 17:30

Press Days: Sunday 5th and Monday 6th August 2018

***The history of England jumps off its axis. 2am, 8th July, 1981,
all the major cities of England burn.***

The Political History of Smack and Crack is an angry, funny love-song to a lost generation annihilated by the heroin epidemic of Thatcher's years, leaping from the 1981 riots to present day survival on the streets of Manchester. This arresting first production from writer Ed Edwards, inspired by his own experience and directed by Cressida Brown, crackles with anger, humour and authenticity about the road to recovery.

This urgent two-hander traces a pair of star-crossed lovers from the epicentre of the working class riots in 1981 on Moss Side - an uprising which spread to London, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and many more - to their eventual struggles on the streets of Manchester.

The Political History of Smack and Crack is based on Edwards' experiences of rehab, narcotics dependency, and three and a half years in jail in the early 1990s.

In the present time of unprecedented political uncertainty and deepening inequality, Edwards' authentic voice allows us to consider past acts of rebellion against the status quo. Funny and relevant the play is also bold in terms of its form. Written mainly in the third person, the play's two 'neutral' narrators seamlessly blend into the two leading protagonists.

Edwards comments, *Most plays I've seen about heroin show the horrors and the degradation of the experience from the personal perspective as if hard drugs have just fallen from the sky. We see some smackhead heading for the bottom and then getting better - again as if by magic. I wanted to show two things differently. Firstly, that the smack - and in its wake crack - didn't appear from nowhere: they appeared at a particular time for a particular reason and this reason*

is political. Secondly, I wanted to deal with addicts in recovery - mainly because most of the addicts I know are in recovery - and I wanted to show the madness that goes along with stopping using drugs. I also wanted to depict a fucked-up relationship because this is the only type of relationships I know. I want to make people laugh and make people cry.

Later this year, *The Political History of Smack and Crack* will transfer to the city from which it was born, Manchester. This authentic and urgent play will open at the Mustard Tree - a local refuge providing care for people trapped by homelessness, dependency and poverty since 1994.

Notes to Editors

Title	<i>The Political History of Smack and Crack</i>
Performance Dates	Friday 3 rd – Sunday 26 th August (not 7 th , 14 th , 21 st) 17:30
Running time	60 minutes
Location	Paines Plough's ROUNDABOUT @ Summerhall, Summerhall Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1PL
Box Office	Tickets are available from www.summerhall.co.uk Previews: £9 Off-peak: £14 (£10) Peak: £15 (£12)
Writer	Ed Edwards
Director	Cressida Brown
Sound Designer	Jon McLeod
Lighting Designer	Richard Williamson
Movement Director	Kate Sagovsky
Producer	Annabel Williamson, W14 Productions
Producer	Alastair Michael
Cast	Neil Bell Eve Steele
Twitter	@smackandcrack, @MostWantedShows, @Offstage_UK, @w14productions, @sohotheatre, @painesplough, #smackandcrack
Notes	Ages 12+

Ed Edwards

Ed Edwards started his creative career as a circus performer but stopped at the age when you start to think “This is actually dangerous”. Ed now juggles a writing career, lecturing, studying for a PhD and child rearing. The latter being far more potentially injurious than slack-rope walking because these are two boys who share a love of violence. Ed was semi-literate at the age of eleven but eventually managed to educate himself, get to university and become a professional writer. He is now only one tenth illiterate. He was in jail in the early 90s doing a three and a half years for drugs offences where he published his first novel. He has now published five novels, a children’s book, worked for several continuing TV dramas including *Holby City* and the now defunct *Brookside* and *The Bill*. He maintains his having worked for these shows isn’t why they died. He has had several original plays broadcast on Radio 4 as well as short films on Channel 4 and BBC2. Ed has recently turned to guerilla film making.

Cressida Brown and Offstage

Cress is half American, half British. She was the recipient of the Bulldog Prinsep Bursary from the NT Studio (2007 – 2008), a British Council AIDF (2013) and the Kevin Spacey Foundation's Artist of Choice (2016). She is the Artistic Director of the incendiary Offstage Theatre; who since 2006 have been dedicated to celebrating unheard voices.

Offstage is probably best known for: *Amphibians* by Steve Waters inspired from interviews with former Olympic swimmers and staged in the hidden pool under the Bridewell Theatre stage; *Home* by Gbolahan Obisesan based on interviews with former residents of the Beaumont Estate towers and staged promenade around one of their towers pending demolition. In Edinburgh Offstage have produced *Walking the Tightrope* a series of short plays presenting polar opposite opinions on freedom of expression by writers including Caryl Churchill, Timberlake Wertenbaker, and Mark Ravenhill at the Underbelly, (2016); Racine’s *Phaedre* adapted to reflect the testimonies of the local community Craigmillar and staged in the Craigmillar Castle ruins (2007). For more information, see www.offstage.org.uk.

As a freelancer she is most proud of *Septimus Bean* by Adam Peck (Unicorn Theatre), *Caught* by Chris Chen (Arcola) and *Almost not Quite* by Somalia Seaton (Tricycle Theatre). Internationally she has directed *The Tempest* (RSC, Ohio), *Konchia* by Adam Peck (British Council, Georgia), *Macbeth* (Barde-en-Seine, Paris) and *Theatre Uncut* (Theatre Row, NY). This year she will direct *Twelfth Night* in China for the Guangzhou Dramatic Arts Centre and Royal Shakespeare Company.

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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