

CAITLIN BARNETT COMPANY

"The performers of Comrades in the Dark put their feet down - metaphorically and literally - and energise the whole theatre"

ASTEROPI TIA CHATZINIKOLA



COMRADES IN THE DARK

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streatham
space
project



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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CAITLIN BARNETT COMPANY PRESENTS
COMRADES IN THE DARK

HM Prison Maze, Belfast. 1981. Bobby Sands embarks on hunger strike in pursuit of political status. On day 66 he dies. Nine other prisoners would die before the strike is called off.

This highly physical, contemporary dance for theatre explores the brutality and humanity within the POETRY and prose, written in secret by Sands whilst behind bars.

Expect raw, PULSATING DANCE, accompanied LIVE by the rhythms of the traditional IRISH DRUM - the bodhrán.

"Inspired by the secret writings of Irish nationalist Bobby Sands, who led a fatal hunger strike while in prison in Belfast in 1981, UK choreographer Caitlin Barnett's intense male quartet 'Comrades in the Dark' is both powerful in content and economical in execution. Strong work from a promising talent."

Donald Huetera - dance and arts writer (The Times)

PROMO CLIP

[CLICK HERE](#)

Supported by Arts Council England and Streatham Space Project.

Available for touring Autumn 2021

Running Time: 40 minutes (no interval)

Option 1: Comrades in the Dark

Option 2: Comrades in the Dark + Theatre Youth Group Curtain Raiser

Option 3: Double Bill (Duet + Comrades in the Dark)

Age range: 12 +

Brochure/lead image: Please contact caitlin.barnett@hotmail.com for high res versions

ABOUT THE SHOW

COMRADES IN THE DARK

Four male dancers command the space; cramped and stark, reflecting the severe conditions of the cells in the H-Blocks. The audience are transported back to a time of social unrest as the dancers perform raw, visceral, yet beautiful movement evocative of the characters and themes that run through Sands' poetry and prison writings.

Interacting with the dancers is a musician who accompanies them live on the bodhrán, as a contemporary soundtrack that takes inspiration from traditional Irish music kicks in alongside it creating an exhilarating, and powerful experience.

Audiences will hear the voices of other volunteers imprisoned alongside Sands, reading his writings; genuine, human interpretations of a man's attempt to maintain his identity against a never-ending stream of physical and mental abuse.

Created by emerging choreographer Caitlin Barnett, this socio-politically charged show looks at themes of oppression, resistance and freedom, creating awareness around the history of Anglo-Irish relations.

"Caitlin has mined something individual out of a melting pot of influences"

KEITH WATSON ON 'EVEN THE DEVILS HAVE DEMONS'

Caitlin collaborated with Danny Morrison, secretary of the Bobby Sands Trust, travelling to Belfast to meet with four former republican prisoners: Laurence McKeown; Colm Scullion; Brendan McFarlane and Rosie McKorley. They shared their memories of the events, lending their voices to the recordings which were integrated into the soundtrack providing an authentic, human connection.

As the Brexit deadline looms, the issue of a Northern Ireland border remains a divisive and destabilising one. This work serves as a gateway for more of us to comprehend the complexities of the relationship between Ireland and Britain.

For further historical context please refer to *Bobby Sands: 66 Days*, a documentary available on Netflix and Youtube

FORMER REPUBLICAN PRISONERS SAID...

"I WAS VERY MOVED BY YOUR PRODUCTION.
THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME TO PARTICIPATE AND
THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO CONTINUE THE
STORY OF BOBBY AND THE YEARS 1976-81"

LAURENCE MCKEOWN (FORMER IRISH HUNGER STRIKER)

"IT CAPTURES THAT DARK MOMENT IN OUR
HISTORY IN A VERY UNIQUE WAY. THANKS AGAIN
FOR ALLOWING ME TO PLAY A PART"

COLM SCULLION (FORMER REPUBLICAN PRISONER AND
CELLMATE OF BOBBY SANDS)

VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH THE CAST

[CLICK HERE](#)

"SO POWERFUL, SO MOVING. THANKS FOR LETTING
ME TAKE PART"

ROSIE McCORLEY (FORMER REPUBLICAN PRISONER)

"ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT CHOREOGRAPHY,
BRILLIANT PERFORMERS, INSPIRATIONAL
SOUNDTRACK...ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND MY
COMRADES, GO RAIBH MAITH AGAT (thank you)
CAITLIN FOR BRINGING A DARKNESS TO LIGHT"

DANNY MORRISON (FORMER REPUBLICAN PRISONER &
NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF PUBLICITY FOR SINN FÉIN)

ABOUT THE ARTIST

CAITLIN BARNETT

Caitlin Barnett is an emerging choreographer creating powerful, thought-provoking work that packs a punch! She has been commissioned by DanceWest and was awarded 'Best Short Performance' for her work 'Wovoka's Prophecy' at the International Youth Arts Festival 2019.

BOLD CHARACTERS AND UNTOLD STORIES

Caitlin is drawn most to the stories of those that are brushed under the carpet or forgotten about; that teach us about our history and challenge perceptions, all of which compel her to find ways to humanise these characters through dance.

STYLISTIC MOVEMENT AND MUSICALITY

Taking inspiration from various dance styles and genres has allowed Caitlin to forge an artistic voice that continues to evolve whilst remaining distinctly her own.

Music and rhythm play a vital role - creating atmosphere; driving the movement; evoking a character, all of which produce an experience that is immediate and compelling.

THE IRISH CONNECTION

Along with 10% of the UK population, Caitlin has an Irish grandparent. Yet her awareness of the Anglo-Irish relationship, up to now, has been uninformed. She was born in the 80s and knew very little about the conflict in Northern Ireland. It took a hung parliament in the 2017 UK general election for people to start asking the question: "Who are the DUP?"

Researching for this work has enabled Caitlin to become more socially, politically and historically aware. With her cinematic approach Caitlin aims to understand the conflict through exciting, emotive and stimulating dance.

TARGET AUDIENCE

"We were delighted with Comrades in the Dark at Streatham Space Project. Engaging and moving, it was an education for us on the power of dance to tell a story, and has opened up our thinking to programming more of it as a medium. The company also did a fantastic job in bringing in a dance audience to the venue, which could be the start of a potential segment for us."

ANDY MCKEAN (CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT STREATHAM SPACE PROJECT)

Arts audiences:

- Strong level of dance content/musicianship will attract dance & live-music audiences.
- Target age is 12+.
- The high octane, graphic style will attract young audiences.
- The themes of this production will attract those who engage with socio-political issues.

Irish Diaspora:

- Communities with strong Irish ancestry will connect with the subject matter.
- It is estimated that 10% of the UK have at least one Irish Grandparent.

School/college/university students:

- Emerging professionals and young students studying dance/theatre will have the opportunity to participate in contemporary dance workshops with industry professionals.
- The stylistic, high quality material will challenge and encourage participants physically, creatively and intellectually.

"I found the workshop extremely fun, challenging and informative. It engaged my body and mind."

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT (AGE 16)

TECHNICAL

Running Time: 40 minutes (no interval)

Company: 5 cast (4 dancers, 1 musician), 1 choreographer, 1 touring technician

Configuration: End-on staging

Staging: Minimum performance space 8m X 4m

Venue to provide: 1 chair

Dressing rooms: 1 dressing room required

Sound: XLR Line straight into the desk with Phantom Power - 48v (venue to provide)

Musician provides own mic (Shure Beta 97)

Use of general venue PA required.

Lighting: Side lights required

Haze

A full lx plan and lighting plot will be available on request

INTERNATIONAL TOURING

Freight: All props and costume will be transported in extra luggage.

Company: 7 touring (5 cast, 1 choreographer, 1 touring technician)

The venue/festival to cover all travel (including transfers), freight/excess luggage charges, accommodation and PDs unless otherwise agreed.