



GREY by Koko Brown

Ovalhouse, 52-54 Kennington Oval, London SE11 5SW

Thursday 27th June – Saturday 13th July 2019

Press Night: Tuesday 2nd July 2019, 7:30pm

I should have a hot bath? Yeah, I'll totally try that.

I should do a face mask? Yeah, I'll totally try that.

I should listen to whale sounds? Yeah I'll totally try that.

I should write my feelings down. Yeah I'll totally try that.

Following her five-star solo show *WHITE*, Koko Brown now brings the world premiere of *GREY*, the second instalment of her Colour Trilogy, to Ovalhouse this summer. This autobiographical new show candidly explores depression and challenges the taboos which so often obscure black women's mental health. But, this is not a production about suffering from depression, this is a show about living with it.

Koko is a strong, independent, black woman. She has a roof over her head. She has food in her fridge. She lives a good life. She's also a little bit sad, a lot of the time. She doesn't understand why. Numerous studies have found that black people are bearing the brunt of a global mental health crisis and *GREY* is an urgent piece of multidisciplinary theatre which opens its arms to comfort and our need to be comforted.

GREY is written in Koko's inimitable lyrically powerful blend of spoken word and vocal looping, the show also stars Sapphire Joy (*Imogen*, Shakespeare's Globe; *Casualty*, BBC). Working with movement director, Shelley Maxwell, it is also fully British Sign Language integrated and this has been made creatively and theatrically integral to the performance.

Koko comments, *I started working with Ovalhouse in 2016 so I'm really excited to be doing GREY with them and to continue on that journey with them. It's a venue that has become a second*

home for me and a place where I feel safe to explore new pieces of work. GREY is a fun story, full of colour, which follows my journey of dealing with mental health issues. It explores what it's like before people ask for help, to get help and then what happens that, which I think can be glossed over into simple happy endings in mainstream media.

As part of the run at Ovalhouse, there will be a discussion about *Accessibility in Theatre*, hosted by Georgia Dodsworth with panellists made up of black, female industry professionals, as well as a poetry workshop led by poet and journalist Bridget Minamore. The Lost Kids Collective will also present a free, BSL interpreted night of performances with *Sounds, Signs and Spoken Word* which will feature live music and poetry. And, for one night only, it will be possible to experience the first two parts of *The Colour Trilogy* in a double bill matinee on Saturday 13th July.

WHITE is an honest production, and is a joy to listen to and watch. Brown mentions that she wanted to make a show that was "important" but instead "ended up making a show about me". It is for this reason that Brown's charismatic and skillfully constructed performance is interesting, important and intelligent (★★★★★ A Younger Theatre).

GREY is generously supported by Arts Council England.

Notes to Editors

Title	GREY
Performance Dates	Thursday 27 th June – Saturday 13 th July 2019, 7.30pm
Location	Ovalhouse, 52-54 Kennington Oval, London SE11 5SW
Box Office	Tickets are available priced £16 with £10 concessions and £10 previews from www.ovalhouse.com and 020 7582 7680.
How to get there	Ovalhouse is located directly opposite the Oval cricket ground. The nearest underground stations are Oval (on Northern line) and Vauxhall (on the Northern and Victoria lines). The nearest rail station is Vauxhall.
Running time	1 hour
Twitter	#GREYPlay, @TheKokoBrown, @Ovalhouse
Notes	Ages 12+

Cast	Sapphire Joy Koko Brown
Director	Nicholai La Barrie
Writer	Koko Brown
Movement Direction	Shelley Maxwell
Lighting Design	Martha Godfrey
Set Design	Emily Harewood
Sound Design	Xana

Koko Brown

Born and bred in North-West London and 'works well with others', according to all her school reports, Koko Brown is a multidisciplinary artist who blends theatre, spoken word and live vocal looping in all her work. She takes pride in her roots and creates work about being the other - mainly focusing on race, mental health, sexuality, gender, and identity.

She has performed with venues such as the National Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith, and the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh. Her work has been performed at the Roundhouse, Soho Theatre and at Glastonbury Festival. She has collaborated with Sean Holmes, Simon Stephens and Stef O'Driscoll on various shows and projects. She is an Alumni Associate Artist at Ovalhouse theatre and an Alumni Resident Artist at the Roundhouse.

Nicholai La Barrie

Nicholai is a director, actor and musician who has worked internationally for the last 20 years. He has worked as the Head of Youth Arts and resident youth theatre director at Ovalhouse, and Director of Young People and Emerging Artists at the Lyric Hammersmith. Acting credits include: *Passports to the Promised Lands* (Nito); *High Heel Parrot Fish* (Theatre Royal Stratford East); *Twelfth Night* (Nottingham Playhouse). Directing credits include: *It Had To Be You* (Ragoo Productions); *Passport to Posterity* (Tiata Fahodizi) and award-winning productions of *Chatroom* and *Romeo & Juliet*

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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