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GODS & KINGS RURAL TOURING PACK



"It's smart, it's acerbic, it's generous, it's funny, it's genuinely moving."

Kaite O'Reilly

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## GODS & KINGS

Written by Paul Whittaker

Co-directed by Paul Whittaker & Tamsin Griffiths

Performed by Robert Bowman



### Synopsis:

*"Ever since I can remember I have always been different..*

*If I take the pill that they have placed in my hand, who will I become?"*

At the age of 23, Paul walks into a psychiatrist's office believing he is either a God, or a King. He leaves with a diagnosis of Bipolar Manic Depression, and facing a life-changing decision: Take the pill and live, or don't take the pill and die.

23 years later; Gods & Kings draws on Paul's real-life experience to produce an emotionally honest, and darkly funny, account of what it is to live a life ruled by mental illness.

### The show is:

- An autobiographical monologue
- Honest and blackly comic
- 70 min (can book a post-show discussion)



"I was so smacked in the face by the veracity of what I was hearing and seeing that I found it almost unbearable. I wanted to keep joining in, wanting to say YES and say, Jesus, I have felt that, I have seen that – and I have never said a word to anyone about it nor heard another human being say what I had experienced and what I had thought, felt and still think and feel."

Mike Smith - Arts Scene Wales

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## Production logistics:

- Created for studio / village hall
- Playing space - max 5m x 5m / min 3m x 3m
- Get in 3 hours / get out 1 hr
- For larger venues we can provide full lighting plan / for village halls we can provide a small lighting rig
- In terms of sound, it just needs left and right sound system
- Company – actor & stage manager
- A post show discussion pack can be provided for free. (For an additional fee Tamsin Griffiths & Paul Whittaker are available to lead a post-show discussion on mental health)
- Mental Health resources provided (information on how to support your audiences / colleagues with mental health services contact details etc.)



## Reaction from Sherman Theatre studio performance in Cardiff

- Tickets sold 67.2%
- No. of first time attenders to venue 35.6%
- Audience members travelled from Swansea, Brecon and Reading
- Julie Morgan AM pledged her support for the project, stating that every politician, doctor and teacher should see the play
- Arts Council Wales referenced the production as Best Practice in its Arts & Health mapping report
- Play to be published by Oberon Books

## Fee

- approx. £600 per performance (but able to negotiate if part of a tour)

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## Company Biog

Tamsin Griffiths and Paul Whittaker are cross disciplinary Artists with a Mental Health (MH) diagnosis, based in Cardiff. We create participatory interactive projects that blur the boundaries of art-forms and challenge perceptions about MH, both through form and content.

As Service Users we believe in equality for all, justice, empathy, compassion, positivity, collaboration and robust discourse. We have worked with MH Service Users, Adult & Child Disability Groups, Asylum Seekers & Refugees, Street Based Drug Users, Dementia and Vulnerable Children. We have a duty of care for every member of society regardless of gender, sexuality, income, race, religion or age.

Our clients include: Public Health Wales, NHS Cymru, Llandough Hospital, Hafan y Coed , Mind Cymru, The National Centre for Mental Health, Welsh Government, ACW, Sherman Cymru, Rubicon Dance, the Schools Service and Universities.

## Feedback

'I really think Paul Whittaker is an outstanding writer, he has the perfect balance between dark and light, much like the main character. I love how it delves into mental health with a full heart, from describing how each person's mental illness is all at once classified into sections, yet not one is alike really stood out to me.'

[kellyallenwriter.com](http://kellyallenwriter.com)

'Every politician should see Gods and Kings which is a gripping piece of theatre which follows one man's journey of discovery of diagnosis and treatment. The portrayal of how the health service works in these situations should also be seen by health professionals. It gives much food for thought and I hope it will be widely performed.'

Julie Morgan AM

'Attending the play without really knowing what to expect we actually found it to be a thought provoking, powerful, emotional and riveting portrayal of mental illness with the right amount of humour to lift what could have been an otherwise dark evening of entertainment. Having worked in

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the NHS for over twenty years including a number of years associated with mental health care it was all disturbingly familiar. The set and lighting were designed in a way that did not detract from the play and only added to the well written and portrayed reality.'

Zoe Couzens - PHW

'We watched this performance via closed captioning and Benn Tinniswood who did the captions did a fantastic and honest job of it. We all loved it and there were plenty of discussions afterward. It was positive and I thought using the closed captions was a massive success. Lets' hope we see more of this!'

Jonny Cotsen - Deaf Club

'During the performance of Gods and Kings I realised much of the experience of the main character resonated with findings of my PhD research. This being the case I have requested the full script as I plan to use quotes in my thesis to evidence the topic I am researching.'

Nicole Burchett

'I work on a project that supports people with any lived experience of mental ill health into volunteering. I saw Gods & kings in a personal capacity and was blown away by it. The way the play deals with the difficult subject of mental health diagnosis and the accompanying difficulties, in particular bipolar, was funny, dark and realistic. On Pave the Way, we have many volunteers who would value the experience and if I had the opportunity again I would arrange for a group of us to attend a performance, and if we could tie it in with a Q&A session / workshop all the better. Everyone's experience of mental ill health differs but Paul Whitaker and his team captured the bare bones of shared experience.'

Jo Harry – VCS

For more information contact [info@fourinfour.co.uk](mailto:info@fourinfour.co.uk)



*LLANGAIN & DISTRICT MEMORIAL HALL*

*Carmarthen*

Images provided by John Campbell