PRESS RELEASE **| BILL ELMS ASSOCIATES**

**WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY 2018 |** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WHO WANTS TO LIVE FOREVER?**

**FIRST TOUR DATES ANNOUNCED**

**JAZZ GREAT BILLIE HOLIDAY FORMS THE SOUNDTRACK TO A STORY OF LOVE, LOSS AND HOPE**

Writer, director, performer, poet and jazz singer **Cheryl Martin** is taking her **Billie Holiday** inspired show **Who Wants to Live Forever?** on tour this year, following the show’s success in Manchester last Autumn.

The hour-long, one-woman show told from the heart will be performed at theatres across the UK in **March, April and May**, visiting towns and cities throughout the North and South.

A jazz fantasy about loss, love and hope, set among the stars, Who Wants To Live Forever? combines science fact, real-world psychological observation and autobiography with lots of live jazz vocals to ask why some stars shine more brightly than others, human and celestial, and why people love to watch them falling.

It’s all channelled through the music of legendary African-American jazz singer Billie Holiday, the first star Cheryl wished on as a child.

The tour will begin on **Thu 15 March** in **Oldham**, before stopping off in **Sheffield, London, Brighton, Leeds, Liverpool** and finally, **York**.

**Cheryl Martin explains:** *“My father had a really good jazz collection, lots of be-bop, Thelonious Monk, Sarah Vaughan and Billie Holiday. Billie was my main influence, and I talk about singing along when I used to share a bunk bed with my little sister.*

*“In the show, I wonder why people are so fascinated by falling stars, both human and the real thing. I talk about how stars are formed and why I love to go camping and look at the stars.*

*“I also talk about my family, about my little brother and how he died. They told me a white guy was shooting into cars with Black people in them.”*

Martin’s brother was hit, finally passing away 20 years later at the age of 39.

**She adds:** *“Like my other show Alaska, Who Wants to Live Forever? ended up being about my own life because I didn’t know how to digest what happened any other way. Most people in society don’t talk about these things either, and people don’t know how to talk to you.*

*“The show is also very funny though. The truth of life is that nobody cries all the time.”*

Who Wants to Live Forever? is **directed by Darren Pritchard**, with lighting and **set design by** **Andrew Crofts** and **dramaturgy by** **Sonia Hughes**.

A work in progress version was previously part of the 2017 PUSH Festival, the annual celebration of some of the North West’s most creative and exciting talent. The Dukes in Lancaster also provided a week’s residency for the show this September.

**FULL TOUR LISTING**

**OLDHAM**

**Oldham Library**

Thu 15 March 2018 @ 7pm

[www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200395/find\_a\_library/722/oldham\_library\_and\_lifelong\_learning\_centre](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200395/find_a_library/722/oldham_library_and_lifelong_learning_centre)

0161 770 8000

**SHEFFIELD**

**The University of Sheffield**

Tue 17 April 2018 @ 8pm

[www.enableus.group.shef.ac.uk/](http://www.enableus.group.shef.ac.uk/)

0114 222 0200

**LONDON
The Albany, London**

Wed 18 and Thu 19 April 2018 @ 7.45pm

[www.thealbany.org.uk/](http://www.thealbany.org.uk/)

020 8692 4446

**BRIGHTON**

**The Marlborough**

Fri 20 April 2018 @7.30pm

[www.marlboroughtheatre.org.uk/](http://www.marlboroughtheatre.org.uk/)

01273 273 870

**LEEDS
Slung Low**

Sun 13 May 2018 @ 5pm

[www.slunglow.org/](http://www.slunglow.org/)

**LIVERPOOL
Unity Theatre**

Thu 24 May 2018 @ 8pm

[www.unitytheatreliverpool.co.uk/](http://www.unitytheatreliverpool.co.uk/)

0844 873 2888

**YORK
York Theatre Royal**

Fri 25 May 2018 @ 7.45pm

[www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk)

01904 623568

**TICKETS**

For prices, check Box Office for details.

**ENDS**

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**For more information, interviews or images please contact Bill Elms at Bill Elms Associates on 0151 245 0135 or** **bill@billelms.com****.**

\*Who Wants To Live Forever also received a commission from hÅb and a residency with Lawrence Batley Theatre, and Arts Council England.

**EDITORS NOTES**

More about Cheryl Martin

Cheryl Martin was born in Washington DC, grew up in nearby Maryland, and went to university at [Williams College](http://www.williams.edu/) in Williamstown, Massachusetts in the States and [Emmanuel College,](http://www.emma.cam.ac.uk/) Cambridge in England.  She loves Manchester, her adopted city.

Cheryl Martin is a unique voice in today’s theatre, both in her own performances and in the work she makes with others as a director. In both kinds of work, she examines experiences that most people are afraid to talk about, but approaches them with a humour, warmth, and raw honesty that draws audiences in and allows them to explore with her, fearlessly.

Whether directing a writer like Alan Bissett in unearthing Scotland’s uneasy colonial history, or performing in her one-person show, **Alaska,** to unearth a personal history of hospitalisation and mental illness, she brings a lightness and wealth of imagery to create worlds audiences love to dwell in.

That relationship with the audience is always key, creating a bond, creating trust, carrying them with you into a world they may think they fear to enter. In many immersive shows created with refugees, she invites the audience to live, for a short time, what other people’s lives feel like. With the joy and the wonder and the beauty that entails, as well as the harsh edges.

Cheryl has won Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards as both writer [ Best Community Production, **Heart and Soul** (Oldham Coliseum) and director, Best Studio Production, **Iron** by Rona Munro (Working Girls/Contact); an Edinburgh Fringe First as co-director and producer of Traverse Theatre’s Breakfast Series **The World Is Too Much**, and in 2015, a Lloyd’s Bank Regional Award for the immersive play she directed for Community Arts Northwest, **Rule 35**. She was longlisted for the 2015 Polari Book Prize for her collection of poems, **Alaska** (Crocus/Commonword) that was made into her critically acclaimed debut show **Alaska.**