

DATUM POINT
Productions
Presents

WORLD PREMIERE



9

BLYTHE DUFF
IS

Just Checking



BY KAREN McLACHLAN (BBC'S NEWTRICKS)
DIRECTED BY LIZ CARRUTHERS (THE TOBACCO MERCHANTS LAWYER)
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY PJ MOORE FROM THE BLUE NILE

DATUM POINT
Productions
Presents

Just Checking



2-12 FEBRUARY 2011

by Karen McLachlan

Cast

Blythe Duff – Izzy Grant

Directed By: **Liz Carruthers**

Original Music Composed By **PJ Moore**

Associate Producer **John Cairns**

Executive Producer for Datum Point **Tom Forrest**

Lighting **Simon Hayes**

Sound **Steve Bain**

Stage Manager **Samantha Ramsay**

Costume **Susie Will**

Voiceovers **Gemma Bannatyne**

Movement Director **Karen McLachlan**

Stage Carpenter and Scenic Artist **Scott Bisset**

Stage Carpenter and Scenic Artist **Lenny Whittit**

Press & Marketing **Ruth Marsh**

Production Images **Renato Ventoso**

(www.renatoventoso.com)

Design and Print **DPI Print**

(www.dpi-print.com)

Just Checking runs for 90 minutes approx (no interval)

The company would like to thank: Michelle and everyone at Porcelanosa, Braehead, Harvey Nicholas, House of Fraser
With special thanks to Danny and everyone at Alliance, Andy Arnold and all the staff at Tron Theatre, Scope Design, Blythe's jewellery courtesy of Nancy Smillie

www.datumpoint.org

www.facebook.com/justcheckingblytheduff



Photo: Renato Ventoso



Blythe Duff

On the 3rd January 2011, while Scotland was recovering not only from a month of snow but no doubt nursing a delicate head... I sat in a warehouse in East Kilbride and had the joy of welcoming an incredible team of professionals to the first read through of *Just Checking*. Having had a really insightful year watching the script develop through workshops with writer, Karen McLachlan and director Liz Carruthers, being part of the process from start to finish, and becoming increasingly intrigued by the character of Issy Grant the immense pleasure and sense of achievement I felt on that morning, will remain with me and serve as a high point in my career. I have always loved working in the theatre and every moment of this production has reminded me why. I have always found the rehearsal process a joy, but it needs to be a 'safe haven' where you are allowed to feel at your most creative. Thankfully Liz Carruthers skill in this area is tried and tested and with Karen McLachlan's script and sense of movement I have felt in safe hands. The joy of putting Robin Peoples (who incidentally gave me my first professional theatre job) into the mix and a splash of class that is PJ Moore's wonderful soundscape, only serves to remind me of the wealth of talent we have in Scotland. I hope you, the audience enjoy being part of this journey. Thank you for leaving the comfort of your home. Enjoy!

Introduction



Director's Notes – Liz Carruthers

This project has been a twinkle in our eye for a very long time...

Blythe and I first met in 1988 when I directed Blythe in SHEILA by Ann Marie di Mambro at the Traverse. We were both very young...

Now great friends, we would often go through to the Fringe to catch a few shows and in 1995 we saw one called "Ten Women in One Frock Show" - our favourite sketch was written by a young Karen McLachlan.

20 years later and Blythe and I are having a catch-up in a cafe in the West End. As ever, Blythe is making me laugh with her fantastic stories and brilliant impersonations. I am looking at her so full of energy and fun. I think... that woman should be on the stage. And of course she often is, and brilliant, too... but I want to see her in a show that lets people in on a secret - Blythe Duff is really funny, and boy, can she move!

"What about doing a one-woman show?" I say. And of course we decide that Karen should write it. Between Christmas and New Year 2009, the three of us meet in the Arches Bar - and had a great chat and a good laugh and knew this would be a team.

Writer's Notes – Karen McLachlan

The starting point for Izzy was an article about how falling in love can trigger the same behaviours that serious obsessives struggle with. I wondered what would happen if a high functioning obsessive fell passionately in love.

I initially thought of Just Checking as a piece for TV, so I had to switch from thinking of cutting between pictures to a person performing to a live audience. I wrote a couple of sample scenes and sent them to Blythe and Liz. They went back and forth till we agreed on a story telling style.

In Autumn 2010 we had a week of workshops establishing a physical vocabulary and a series of movements that would be key for Izzy's character.

Under Liz's deceptively gentle direction the rehearsals developed their own routine and rhythm. One day Blythe suddenly possessed Izzy and it was a real buzz; PJ's music fitted the phrase of movement we were working on perfectly; Stage Manager Sam iced the sponge and there was the cassata. Things just started cooking.

I think it worked because even when we weren't sure, we still trusted the process. I trusted when Blythe and Liz ruthlessly cut the script that it would work better and Blythe trusted her instincts, and Liz's direction, when the script stopped making sense. Hard though it is for a writer to admit, the script is only a starting point; theatre is a collaboration and for me, a very happy one. I hope you enjoy watching it as much as I enjoyed working on it.



PJ Moore works on soundtrack

Steve Bain – Sound Designer

Steve is a freelance sound designer, composer and musician, graduating from Stow College in 2008 with an HND in Sound Production. He is currently a lecturer in Technical Theatre at Stow College and has worked previously as a Technician at the Tron Theatre for two years.

Recent sound design credits include; *That Face*, *Cooking With Elvis*, *Bliss and Mud*, *Six Acts Of Love*, *Suddenly Last Summer* and *Like the Rain* (Tron Theatre Company); *Steel Magnolias*, *Three Guys In Drag Selling Their Stuff* and *Calamity Jane* (Upstage Theatre Company); *Autobahn* (Theatre Jezebel); *Romeo and Juliet* (Open Book), *Ghost Story* (Scottish Youth Theatre), *Hartland* (RSAMD). Upcoming projects include *Macbeth* and *Para Handy* (Open Book).

John Cairns – Associate Producer

John Cairns has worked in Scottish theatre with a wide range of companies for over twenty years. As lighting designer, production manager and project manager; he has worked primarily on touring and venue specific projects across Scotland. Shows have included *Rab C Nesbitt*, *City Lights*, *The Cheviot*, *The Stag* and *The Black Black Oil*, *John McGrath's The Silver Darlings & Border Warfare*, *Oh! What a Lovely War*, *The Celtic Story (Wildcat)*, *Mobile*, *The Song of Wick*, *Winteryarns* and many more.

From 2002 until 2010, he ran Grey Coast Theatre Company based in Thurso and in 2010 Liz Carruthers and John Cairns set up Open Book - Plays by Writers, a new theatre company based in Wester Ross. With Open Book, they have toured, among others, the highly successful *The Tobacco Merchant's Lawyer* across Scotland and to London and a new production of *Romeo and Juliet* to schools in the Highlands. In 2011, they will be touring a new production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in the Highlands and a new version of *Para Handy* to theatres across Scotland.



Liz Carruthers – Director

Liz Carruthers has previously worked with Blythe on *Sheila* by Ann Marie di Mambro at the Traverse and *Two* by Jim Cartwright, which toured all over Scotland.

She started her career as SAC Trainee director at Perth and Pitlochry and has been Staff Director at Chichester Festival Theatre and Artistic Director of Cumbernauld Theatre and Open Book.

She has extensive experience in directing new work and has collaborated with many Scottish writers, including *Sue Glover*, *Iain Heggie*, *Stephen Greenhorn* and *John McKay*. Recent work includes *The Importance Of Being Alfred* by Louise Welsh, which was nominated for a Scottish Critics Award for Best New Play, and *Cinderella* by Johnny McKnight, which was nominated for Best Production for Children and Young People. Previous productions have won the Guinness Pub Theatre Award and the LWT Plays on Stage Award.

Her production of the critically acclaimed *The Tobacco Merchant's Lawyer* by Iain Heggie garnered ten four star reviews and has recently finished a tour of Scotland following a London run at the Finborough Theatre last year. She has directed 17 new plays for A Play, A Pie and A Pint at Oran Mor in Glasgow, and was recently the winner of the coveted Diamond Pie Award.

Blythe Duff – Performer

Blythe Duff is best known as DS Jackie Reid in *Taggart*, the UK's longest running television crime drama. Broadcast in over 56 countries and translated into over 30 languages, *Taggart* has made Blythe an instantly recognizable face all around the world.

Blythe has also performed extensively with all of Scotland's major theatre companies - National Theatre of Scotland, The Traverse, The Royal Lyceum, The Citizens, Communicado, TAG, Cumbernauld and Wildcat. Her favourite roles include Lucia in *Tally's Blood*, Jean in *King of the Fields*, Deborah in Scotland's premiere tour of *Mum's The Word* and Shirley Kaplan in *Street Scene* for Scottish Opera/English National Opera, making her London West End debut at the Coliseum. In 2003 she reprised her role in *Mum's The Word* touring New Zealand for Volcanic productions.

Her performance as 'Mrs Poole' in *Be Near Me* (directed by John Tiffany for the National Theatre of Scotland and the Donmar Warehouse) was nominated for a Manchester Evening News Award and she recently received rave reviews for her lead performance in *Good With People*, the new play from David Harrower produced by Paines Plough and Oran Mor. In 2010 Blythe played the part of Rachael Lewis in Datum Points first short film Sarajevo.

Simon Hayes – Lighting Designer

Simon Hayes trained in Theatre Production at Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh. His theatre lighting design credits include *Urinetown* (Eight O Clock Theatre, USA), *High School Musical* (Kings Lynn Corn Exchange), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Kings Lynn Corn Exchange), *Oklahoma!* (Kings Lynn Corn Exchange), *Fear of Flat Three* (Byre Theatre, St Andrews), *Love Labours Lost* (Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh), *Into the Woods* (St Brides, Edinburgh), *Oliver* (Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline), *The Pajama Game* (Eight O Clock Theatre, USA), *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (St Brides, Edinburgh), *'Jerry Springer' the Opera* (One Academy), *First Lady Suite* (One Academy), *Rocket Science* (One Academy), *Wizard of Oz* (Alhambra, Dunfermline), *Witt* (St Brides, Edinburgh), *Hamlet* (RSAMD), *A Winters Tale* (RSAMD), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Alhambra, Dunfermline), *Spring Awakening* (One Academy), *Beauty & the Beast* (Alhambra, Dunfermline) and *Cinderella* (Alhambra, Dunfermline).

Karen McLachlan – Writer

Karen McLachlan trained in physical theatre and formed Kahoon Kahoon with Clare Hoper and Orla Brady in the 1980's. In the 1990's she worked as a movement teacher at The Royal College of Music in London and performed with Improv groups, Zoo House and The Comedy Store Players. In 2000 she started writing professionally for theatre and television. In 2001 her play *Betty* was performed in The West End, directed by Kathy Burke. Her television credits include, *New Tricks*, *Where The Heart Is*, *Bosom Pals*, *Waterloo Road* and *Missing*. She is currently working on *The Brink* with writer Matt Leyes.





Associate Producer John Cairns,
Director Liz Carruthers &
Stage Manager Samantha Ramsay

PJ Moore – Composer

80's synth band...or post-Hopper pre-digital sonic colourists?
Scottish shoegazers...or international go-to 'Art-Soul' specialists?
High end, hi-fi perfect...or just plain high on 'music as visuals'?

However you describe The Blue Nile and the music they made, the sound pictures painted by PJ Moore in the 1980s, using the earliest drum boxes and synthesisers alongside producer Calum Malcolm's strings, became a kind of global gold standard which few (even the band themselves) ever bettered.

This sound drew the attention of both a worldwide audience and other emerging and established artists and before settling back in Glasgow PJ lived in East Lothian, The West Village, South Dublin and North Hollywood and worked extensively with Annie Lennox, Robbie Robertson, Rickie Lee Jones, Joe Soap and many others.

Ruth Marsh – Press & Marketing

Ruth Marsh has worked as a freelance Press / Marketing Manager on campaigns for Magnetic North, Comunicado, Reeling & Writhing, Rapture, Fish & Game, Open Book, The Traverse, Tramway, Junction 25, Paramount International and The Australian Shakespeare Company. At the Edinburgh Fringe she has been Press Officer for Assembly venues and has worked in press for EdCom for three years, the last as their Head of Press; in 2010 she also worked at the Melbourne Comedy Festival as Press Officer for Lantana PR.

Robin Peoples – Designer

Robin Peoples was born and bred in Derry/Londonderry depending on your tribal inclinations. He is a graduate of the University of St Andrews, and taught at the University of Erlangen-Nurnberg, Germany. He was the holder of the first Scottish Arts Council Director's Bursary, and is the former Artistic Director of the Scottish Youth Theatre and of the Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh. He has guest directed and designed for a wide variety of companies, including the Tron, Tag, 7:84, Theatrebabel, the Byre, Perth Rep., Wee Stories, the Traverse, and many others. He has directed and designed hundreds of productions ranging from Shaw, Shakespeare and Fugard, to Pinter, Stoppard and Wilde, from new Scottish writing to panto; his productions and designs have appeared on stages as diverse as the SECC, Mull Little Theatre, the London Palladium, the American Folk Theatre New York, Plockton Village Hall and the Sydney Opera House. He has commissioned a wide range of new writing, over twenty full length and one act plays, and ten musical scores. His current work includes *Jason and the Argonauts*, *Visible Fictions*, *Funny Farm*, *The Singing Kettle*; and *Extreme*, the National Theatre of Scotland.

Samantha Ramsay – Stage Manager

Since graduating from RSAMD in 2005, Samantha has worked extensively in Scottish theatre and live event management in a number of roles, including Stage Management, Carpentry, Pyrotechnics and student mentoring. Recent work has included a diverse range projects (musical theatre, small scale touring, new writing, physical theatre and disability theatre) for companies such as Bard in the Botanics, the Tron theatre, Macrobert Stirling, the Citizens theatre, Dundee Rep, the Royal Albert Hall, Liverpool Echo Arena, Pitlochry Festival theatre, UK theatre school and Scottish Youth Theatre.



Designer Robin Peoples



Susie Will – Costume

Susie Will was born in Edinburgh, and has lived in England and France. She ran a craft shop in Kilcraggan in the early 80's when her children were small, making and designing a range of childrens clothing and supplying Libertys among other outlets. In the early 80s she became involved with 7:84 Theatre Company and decided to move into theatre, training at the Citizens Theatre. In 1985 she became costume supervisor for Wildcat Theatre Company where she worked for 7 years, based at The Clyde Theatre. Susie has worked for Scottish Opera, Lyceum in Edinburgh, Eden Court in Inverness, and Borderline; she toured with Phil McIntyre productions with *Rab C. Nesbitt*, and on several comedy and entertainment shows including Ben Elton, Torville and Dean and Shirely Valentine starring Elaine C Smith.

Her work for film and TV includes *Taggart* (where she first met Blythe) and filming in Holland and where she accompanied and costumed Kristin Scott Thomas on *Man to Man*.

OCD Action Week

let's get OCD noticed

ocd week 7th - 15th February 2011

It is not always possible to tell whether somebody has OCD. The UK's OCD community is a 'hidden community'. People with the disorder often live lives designed to hide their internal pain, so when they should be receiving support and help they often receive ridicule. One of our volunteers put it very simply, "I would rather have lost a leg - at least then people would understand what is wrong with me."

OCD is a clinically recognised condition which affects 1-2% of the population. It is a debilitating and paralysing disorder in which people experience intensely negative, repetitive and intrusive thoughts, combined with a chronic feeling of doubt or danger (obsessions). In order to quell the thought or quieten the anxiety, they will often repeat an action, again and again (compulsions).

One of the greatest challenges that people with OCD face is the need to combat the all pervasive stigma of mental health disorders while at the same time addressing the widely held belief that OCD is a mild or even "quirky" problem that is nothing more than hand washing. Many people now use the term "a bit OCD" without understanding the onerous nature of the disorder in its severe form.

OCD Action is the national charity for people affected by OCD, it provides vital help and support services and works to raise awareness of the disorder.

For more information about OCD or for help and advice please call us on **0845 3906232** or visit **www.ocdaction.org.uk**



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Datum Point is a new and innovative production company who can capitalise on the wealth of talent within the television, theatre and film industry.

With Blythe Duff in the role of Artistic Director, the company has direct access to producers, writers, directors, actors, composers, designers, directors of photography, sound and camera operators and can facilitate a full film, television or theatre crew. In April 2010 the company set out to make a short film, the premise being, one actor, one location, and one days shoot. The result was Sarajevo a 20 min short produced by Linda Fraser, directed by Pat Harkins, written by Rob Fraser and score by Patrick Doyle.

For more information please visit www.datumpoint.org