



OLIVIER
AWARDS 
NOMINEE
2024



Rhiannon Faith Company

presents

Lay Down Your Burdens

A new Olivier Award nominated dance theatre production available for
touring from March 2025

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Lay Down Your Burdens



Co-commissioned by the Barbican, London and Harlow Playhouse

Restore your weary soul with this radically tender dance theatre show that invites you to explore the beauty of humanity and the eternal need for community and compassion.

Step into an evening at the local pub, like no other. Every night the same landlady, the same regulars, the same shots, until suddenly a stranger gets blown in from the cold.

With extraordinary physical performance, brave testimonials, live music and riotous pub games, this visceral dance theatre world draws together those who have been estranged or never even dreamed they were connected. Set in a pub on-stage, you're invited to join in with the proceedings.

Choreographer **Rhiannon Faith** makes socially conscious work that raises awareness and lobbies for change. *Lay Down Your Burdens* was grown out of conversations with communities and developed from real-life experiences of company members. Their work gives you space to consider the meaning and importance of community.

Co-commissioned by Barbican, London and Harlow Playhouse. With support from Oxford Playhouse, Déda, and South East Dance. Funded using public money from Arts Council England. With thanks to Restoke and the Lay Down Your Burdens Creative Friends.

Lay Down Your Burdens was shortlisted for a 2024 Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance and a 2023 One Dance UK Award for Innovation in Dance.

[Watch the Research and Development Promotional Film](#)

[Watch the full recording of the Dress Rehearsal](#)

“ A bold and exciting production”

— REVIEWS HUB



Key Info



- **The show** -----

Lay Down Your Burdens is a live dance theatre show performed by 6 intergenerational performers and 2 musicians. Running time 2 hours including an interval. Age Guidance 16+ (Contains adult language and explores themes of grief, serious illness and personal suffering). Audience participation is encouraged but self-selective. The show premiered at the Barbican, London, in November 2023 and is available for national touring from September 2024.

- **Staging** -----

Lay Down Your Burdens is staged in thrust. The show tours with its own seating bank with 150 audience capacity and requires a empty space of 11.5m x 13.6m. If you can create thrust seating in house, we can use your seating at your maximum capacity, and require a playing space of 7.7m x 10.5m.

- **Music** -----

Inspired by Bob Dylan's Lay Down Your Weary Tune, music is a key element of the work. The pub is scored by an original score composed by John Victor (Gengahr) with India Merrett and Anna Clock played by live string section, and the voices of the audience are recorded, through unstructured and structured tasks and supported testimonials. The result is a collective weary tune, live edited, bespoke to each performance and place, played as the final moment of the show.

- **The audience** -----

Lay Down Your Burdens takes place 'in a pub'. Audiences surround a central bar area, either on bar stools, pub tables or in seating banks. The work is inherently accessible, inviting audiences to participate in a fun and playful live event simultaneously exploring the inclusivity, warmth and power of community and how we build and sustain it, audiences will laugh play, be moved and find connection. It is experiential evening out which will appeal to wide dance, theatre and music audiences.

- **The impact** -----

RFC is committed to developing a model to support an innovative new approach to DEEP and WIDE Touring, which will enable us to broaden access to the show via a series of workshops with marginalised communities. Our offer will test a model to change the way UK touring impacts on audiences.

★ ★ ★ ★ 'the local pub reimaged as a space of collective care, catharsis and redemption' – LONDON PUB THEATRES



About the Work

In development

Lay Down Your Burdens was grown out of conversations with communities and developed from the lived experiences of company members. The work was developed in phases of R&D in Stoke-on-Trent, Oxford, Brighton and Harlow, meeting lots of local people and talking about our burdens. At Oxford Playhouse we delivered creative workshops exploring personal experiences of loneliness, the things that are hard to carry, and how we care for one another. The aim was to lighten the load by carrying it collectively.

Alongside company dancers and inspired by Bob Dylan's *Lay Down your Weary Tune*, musicians India and Anna have developed a string score that is live and responsive. Throughout the show the voices of the audience are recorded through unstructured and structured tasks and supported testimonials. The result is a collective weary tune, live edited, bespoke to each performance and place, played as the final moment of the show.

The final work creates a familiar space (pub) that invites anyone who would like to, to share what they are carrying. It's a space where they are listened to and where their worries or troubles are held and the gift back is music, poetry, dance; but mostly the real gift is for a moment in time, in the theatre, in our pub, we see one another, and for this moment we are all connected. We are in a time when the heaviness of world actions can feel like they are pulling us apart, so it feels vitals to us to come together to share the weight of another, and know in what we share, we are not alone.

Synopsis

Lay Down Your Burdens is set in a working class pub. The pub is hosted by a charismatic Landlady and her slightly useless sidekick entertainer. As the regulars enter the pub, the audience learn that they are also guests at the pub for the night and are welcomed in with open arms. With fun songs and games, they are made to feel at ease in the warm and joyful atmosphere. The pub is scored by the live string section...



...The warm familiar atmosphere changes when a new customer, Donni, arrives. Donni is carrying a lot of baggage, he is travelling with his mother's ashes and prosthetic leg.

At various points during the evening audience members are invited to speak into a microphone. Sometimes through unstructured chat about baggage, heaviness, weight, sometimes through more structured pub games and karaoke, sometimes through private testimonials in the booths. Unbeknownst to the audience members these recordings will grow into our collective weary tune as the evening continues we learn more about the burdens of the regulars, and of each other. The constant in this world, the matriarchal landlady Sarah holds the heightened emotions together with stoicism, batting away Donni's provocations and menacing nature with humour and grace, until she receives bad news on the telephone about her cancer diagnosis. She falls apart, her burden too much to bear, and the regulars carry her away.

As the regulars leave and Donni is left running the bar, the final audience song is played, a collective weary tune - 'I carry you, you carry me'.

Team

Choreographer/Director Rhiannon Faith
Devising Performers Dominic Coffey, Shelley Eva Haden, Donald Hutera, Sam Ford, Finetta Sidgwick, Sara Turner
Composed with and performed by Anna Clock, India Merrett
Rehearsal Director Shelley Eva Haden
Dramaturg Lou Cope
Design Noemi Daboczi
Lighting Design Bethany Gupwell
Lead Composer John Victor
Sound Design Anna Clock
Sound and System Design Dan Hunt

Production Manager Jack Boissieux
Stage Manager Lauren Cross
Technical Stage Managers Jon Calvert, Zak Brewin
Production Electrician Jen L Roxburgh
Lighting Programmer Joseph Bryant
Costume Supervisor Lucy Woodcock
Production Carpenter Jay Williamson
Company Counsellor Joy Griffiths
Video Big Egg Films
Photography Foteini Christofilopoulou
RFC Executive Director Maddy Morgan
RFC Producer Anna Dominian





Rhiannon Faith Company

www.rhiannonfaith.com



Rhiannon Faith Company (RFC) makes radically tender dance theatre, working nationally on big stages and locally with communities on the margins, always with social change and care at its heart.

The company are a female-led Arts Council NPO. Based in Harlow, Essex, with nation-wide impact, they are making bold, ambitious moves to secure a future as global leaders in original dance theatre with a social purpose, to champion community transformation and authentic belonging for all.

LAY DOWN YOUR BURDENS

★★★★

'the local pub reimaged as a space of collective care, catharsis and redemption'
— London Pub Theatres

"A bold and exciting production" — *The Reviews Hub*

"Fizzing with Energy" — *The Stage*

Olivier Awards 2024 Nominee: Outstanding Achievement in Dance

One Dance UK Awards 2023 Nominee: Artistic Innovation in Dance Award

RHIANNON FAITH COMPANY

National Dance Awards 2023

Nominee: Best Independent Company (Rhiannon Faith Company)

National Dance Awards 2022

Nominee: Best Independent Company (Rhiannon Faith Company)

AWA DANCE Women In Dance Leadership Award 2021

Nominee

National Dance Awards 2021

Nominee: Best Independent Company (Rhiannon Faith Company)

DROWNTOWN

★★★★

'Rich, compelling, intriguing, and frequently beautiful, this is a piece that needs to be experienced' - [The Reviews Hub](#)

★★★★

'Thought provoking physical theatre' - [The Stage](#)

★★★★

'Impressive' - [The Observer](#)

'Choreographer Rhiannon Faith is one of the few UK artists making dance theatre that is pointedly socially conscious' - [The Guardian](#)

National Dance Awards 2022 Nominee: Best Dance Film (DROWNTOWN)

SMACK THAT (A CONVERSATION)

★★★★

'Party games to change the world' - [The Guardian](#)

★★★★

'Bold, inventive and discomfiting, this is a work of urgent importance' - [The Stage](#)

★★★★

'Smack That... Treats its subject matter with huge sensitivity and honesty' - [DanceTabs](#)

★★★★

'An emotionally intelligent, conscientious and affirmative production' - [LondonTheatre1](#)

One Dance UK Awards 2018 Shortlist: Innovation in Dance

Essex High Sheriff Award 2018 Winner: Contribution to the community

"Fizzing energy"
- THE STAGE



DEEP and WIDE Touring

RFC is a sector leader in socially engaged dance, embedding work in communities, committed to create a legacy of change and progress. We are now actively seeking funding to support a unique DEEP and WIDE engagement offer for Lay Down Your Burdens at touring venues. We are keen to explore how this might work with each tour venue so we can best connect with and benefit your local community.

In each venue we will create 2 workshop offers in the lead-in to LDYB performances. Using local partnerships with venues and third party specialist groups, we will recruit participants not engaged with arts or culture.

- **DEEP** offer: Participants are identified by local third sector partners. 6 workshops are delivered by 2 company members and 1 musician for up to 15 participants. The aim is to create a sense of community, inter-connectedness and improved wellbeing with a legacy of ongoing connection. All participants receive 2 x complimentary tickets to a performance of LDYB
- **WIDE** offer: All LDYB ticket holders invited to a workshop the evening/day before the show. With up to 50 participants, exploring the themes of the show. Delivered by the full company of dancers and musicians. The aim is to reveal layered content in the work, widening access and building confidence towards participation in the show.

Our workshop offer has been tested with partners at Restoke and Oxford Playhouse. Data clearly evidenced workshop activity leading directly to clear improvements in mental and physical health outcomes.

Participant feedback at Oxford Playhouse:

"Your work creating dance pieces to explore things that are happening in people's lives is really important but from a personal point of view, what I took away was a feeling of gratitude for sharing a space with a group of talented, creative, kind people. Your dancers and musicians are lovely, empathetic human beings and I still think of you all with fondness. My journey of grief following my sister's brain injury is a long and complex one, but the two weeks I spent with you all moved me several steps forward in the healing process."

"Thank you for this opportunity - it was brilliant!"

"Excellent words, music and dance"

"A wonderful experience."





Technical Details

Running Time - 2 hours including an interval

Company - 12 touring (8 Performers, Relighter, Technical Stage Manager, Production Sound Engineer, Stage Manager (on book), and Artistic Director)

Dressing rooms - Two dressing rooms minimum required.

Configuration - the show is performed in thrust.

Thrust Staging (touring) - The show tours with its own seating bank with 150 audience capacity and requires the venue to provide an empty space of 11.5m x 13.6m and 125 loose chairs.

Thrust Staging (venue) - If you can create thrust seating in house, we can use your seating at your maximum capacity, and in this instance require a playing space of 7.7m x 10.5m.

Get-in Schedule - Pre-rig by venue technicians (4-hour call), Day 1 Load in (12 hour call), Day 2 Tech and Show (12 hour call)

Get Out - The get-out will take approximately 4 hours (including reinstating standard LX rig)

Venue staff - The show requires 2 x multi disciplined technicians for our whole time in the venue.

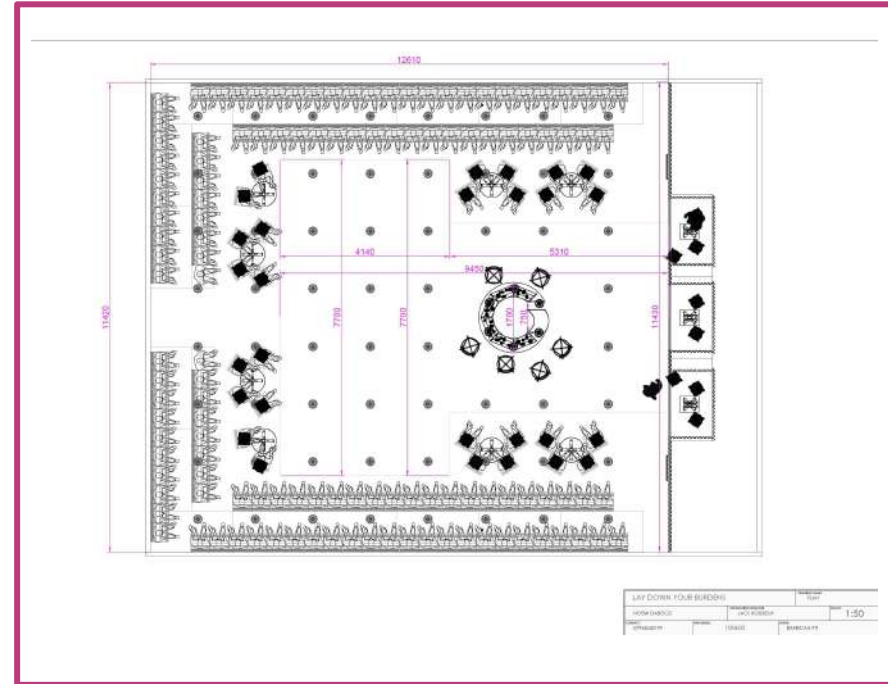
Lighting - The LX plan is currently in development. The design will include Hanging pendant practicals, with hires TBC. We will require an Eos family lighting desk as we tour an ETC show file and full access to venue equipment and rigging stock.

Sound - The Sound Design is currently in development. We will require use of full venue PA system, and the ability to move it around with hires TBC

Our staff will operate the show. The lighting desk needs to be next to the DSM position, the sound desk needs to be in the auditorium.

A full technical specifications pack is available on request – Production and Technical Contact

jackboissieuxpm@gmail.com





Media

Assets available:

- [Production Images](#)
- [Rehearsal gallery](#)
- [Staged rehearsal gallery](#)
- Approved copy
- Promo video
- Full production film
- Press release and PR campaign led by Steven Forster PR. And Marketing Campaign led by HDK.
- RFC works with a dedicated social media specialist to deliver campaigns supporting each tour venue. A variety of bespoke social media assets will be created and shared with each venue.
- www.rhiannonfaith.com
- X / [@rhiannonfaith](#)
- Facebook/ [@rhiannonfaithpage](#)
- Instagram / [@rhiannon_faith](#)





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