

Rupert Graves to make his directorial debut with the world premiere of Philip Goodhew's *The Ungrateful Biped*



Rupert Graves



Philip Goodhew

“The only valid function of an intelligent 21st-century person is the conscious spewing forth of emptiness. Stuff and nonsense! Blather and guff! Yak yak yackety-yack.”

Rupert Graves is to make his debut as a director with **The Ungrateful Biped**, a one-man play starring and adapted by Philip Goodhew from *Notes From Underground* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

It will get its world premiere at the White Bear Theatre, 138 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 from Tuesday 30 January to Saturday 17 February.

Press night is Friday February 2 at 7pm

Question: “what does a civilised man drive on about with most satisfaction?” Answer: “himself”.

Immured in a horrid basement flat in the hinterlands of London, an anonymous Man creates a video blog. Haunted by disturbing memories and nurturing an abiding malice towards all humanity, including himself, he embarks on a forensic analysis of his “underground soul”. Sick, spiteful, and ugly, yet convinced of his own genius, he is tormented by the belief that his intelligence is a disease which, in an irrational world, renders him less valuable than an insect. Bitter, alienated and crippled with inertia, the Man shamelessly revels in the depths of degradation he has plumbed in order to validate his existence and demands the right to screw up his life as he see fit. After all, is he really any different to the rest of us?

Fyodor Dostoyevsky created the underground Man in 1864. In doing so, he created one of the most paradoxical, self-lacerating and mesmerising characters in literature; the first existentialist anti-hero.

Rupert Graves, known as an actor for his roles in *A Room with a View*, *Maurice*, *The Madness of King George*, *The Forsyte Saga* and *DI Lestrade* in the BBC TV series *Sherlock* said: “Philip and I have known each other for a very long time. I enjoyed working on a film he directed me in and like his writing so I was intrigued when he told me he was writing a play and asked to read it. I loved it. When he asked if I was interested in directing, I was a little nervous as this would be my first time directing. It took me nearly 10 minutes to say yes. It’s a great piece of work. We have done a lot of work together over the last months, refining and honing the script. Philip is doing a great job getting under the skin of the character and revealing his human face. Knowing each other for so long is a definite bonus as it gives us a shortcut in our communication and we can really dig into the task without dancing around each other’s egos. I can’t wait to get it up and running.”

As an actor, Philip Goodhew was in the original award winning West End production of *Another Country*, playing a major role opposite Daniel Day Lewis. His 1996 debut film as a writer/director, *Intimate Relations* starring Julie Walters and Rupert Graves, saw Rupert winning Best Actor at the Montreal Film Festival. He said: "I have had this play at the back of my mind for many, many years, and wrote an initial version when I was really too young to come to grips with the complexities of the book. I always wanted to play the character as I identified strongly with it (which is quite an admission) but shelved the idea when I started writing and directing films. The story would never fully go away and nagged at me on and off for a couple of decades. I finally wrote it last year. Rupert is an old friend: we have worked together a couple of times, firstly acting on a film called *Good and Bad at Games* and much later I directed him in my film *Intimate Relations* with Julie Walters. He asked to read it, and did so immediately I gave him the script. His enthusiasm led me to ask him if he would like to direct and I am pleased to say he jumped at it. I am delighted he did as he is a fantastic director; a real stickler for detail with a great understanding of the work. His vast experience working with great directors has obviously paid off."

The Ungrateful Biped is produced by Milburn Browning Associates in association with the White Bear Theatre

LISTINGS INFO

THE UNGRATEFUL BIPED

White Bear Theatre
138 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11

Tuesday 30 January to
Saturday 17 February

Press night
Friday 2 February at 7pm

Tuesday - Saturday at 7pm
Sunday at 4pm

Prices:
£16 and £12 concs inc booking fee

Twitter:
@WhiteBearTheatr

Facebook:

Website:
www.whitebeartheatre.co.uk

Box Office: 0333 012 4963 (Local rate)

10% off food with every ticket sold

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