

PRESS RELEASE

Friday 8 January 2016



## ROSE THEATRE KINGSTON ANNOUNCES LONDON PREMIÈRE OF *BERYL* BY MAXINE PEAKE

West Yorkshire Playhouse in association with Rose Theatre Kingston presents

***BERYL***

Written by Maxine Peake

Director: **Rebecca Gatward**; Associate Director: **David Crowley**; Design: **Naomi Dawson**;  
Lighting Design: **David Holmes**; Sound Designer/Composer: **Mic Pool**; Casting Director: **Kay Magson**

8 – 19 March 2016

Press night: **Wed 9 March**

**Rose Theatre Kingston** in association with **West Yorkshire Playhouse** announces the London première of ***BERYL***, Maxine Peake's critically-acclaimed play celebrating the life of sporting legend Beryl Burton – the greatest woman on two wheels.

**Rebecca Gatward** directs the cast in a play about the loves, trials and tribulations of the down-to-earth Yorkshire cycling heroine with **Samantha Power** in the title role and **Rebecca Ryan** (*Shameless*) as her daughter Denise. The cast also features **Dominic Gately** and **Lee Toomes**.

Originally written for Radio 4 in 2012, ***BERYL*** opened at West Yorkshire Playhouse in summer 2014, just as the Tour de France was racing through Yorkshire. The critical and popular acclaim was such that the idea was born to revive and tour the production in 2015 before its London premiere here at the Rose in March 2016.

Peake's stage writing debut looks back at the extraordinary sporting achievements of the Leeds-born cyclist. When Beryl Charnock, met keen cyclist Charlie Burton she was smitten, not only with Charlie but by the thrill and freedom found on her bike. She would outwork the men in the rhubarb fields, she could outclass the cyclists on the road, and still find time to over-knit young Denise an enviable cycling jumper.

No other British sportswoman has dominated their field in the way that Beryl Burton dominated the world of cycling. With her husband, daughter and cycling club at her side she became five times world pursuit champion, 13 times national champion, twice road-racing world champion and made it home in time for dinner. She was one of the most astonishing sports people ever to have lived whose down-to-earth, no-nonsense approach to life and to success is an inspiration to us all.

Beryl Burton MBE, OBE, wife and mother cycled her way into the record books becoming world record holder and former British record holder, and with a determination to be the best she always cycled home a hero.

Beryl's daughter **Denise Burton-Cole** welcomes the revival of the play, "We are thrilled as it's an outstanding play and it's great that more people will see it".

**Maxine Peake** has a career that spans stage, TV and film, garnering critical acclaim in roles as diverse as *Dinnerladies'* Twinkle and *Silk's* Martha Costello QC. She won the Broadcasting Press Guild Awards for her performances in *Criminal Justice* and *The Street*. Her other television credits include *See No Evil: The Moors Murders*, *Red Riding*, *The Devil's Whore*, *Criminal Justice*, *Little Dorrit*, *Henry IV*, *The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister*, BAFTA nominated dramas *Silk*, *The Village*, *Room at the Top*, *Hancock & Joan*, *The Street* and *Shameless*. She starred in features *Private Peaceful*, *Run and Jump*, *Keeping Rosy*, *Svengali*, *The Theory of Everything* and *The Falling*. *Hamlet*, filmed during the run at the Royal Exchange, was released in cinemas March 2015. She has performed at some of the most prestigious theatres in the country including *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Relapse* and *Luther* (The National Theatre), *The Deep Blue Sea* and *Hamlet* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Mother Theresa is Dead* (Royal Court), *The Children's Hour* (Royal Exchange) and *Miss Julie* (Theatre Royal Haymarket/Royal Exchange). This is Peake's stage writing debut.

**Rebecca Gatward** directs. Her theatre credits include *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre, Chester, summer 2015); *Beryl* (West Yorkshire Playhouse) *The Trial Of Dennis The Menace* (Southbank Centre); *The Comedy Of Errors*, *The Merchant Of Venice* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Pandas* (Traverse Theatre); *The Indian Boy* (RSC Complete Works Festival); *The Canterbury Tales* directed in partnership with Greg Doran and Jonathan Munby and *Thyestes* for The Other Place (RSC); *Touched* (Salisbury Playhouse); *Cancer Tales* (New Wolsey); *The Accrington Pals* (WYP). She also restaged *This Is Our Youth* with Matt Damon and Casey Affleck at the Garrick Theatre. Her work for television includes *Eastenders* (winner Broadcast award and soap award nominations for best episode and scene), *Casualty*, *Doctors* and *Sadie J*.

**Samantha Power** plays Beryl. Her theatre work includes *Accrington Pals*, *Coming Around Again*, *Me, As a Penguin*, *It's a Lovely Day Tomorrow* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Zack* (Royal Exchange), *Little Britain Live* (UK and Australian Tour), *Flint Street Nativity* (Liverpool Playhouse); *School Daze* (Riverside Studios); *It's a Fine Bright Day Today* (Oldham Coliseum); *Raw, Kid* (Theatre Absolute). Her television credits include *Coronation Street*, *Ordinary Lies*, *4 O'Clock club*, *All at Sea*, *Shameless*, *Little Britain*, *Waterloo Road*, *The Cup*, *In With the Flynns*, *Twisted Tales*, *The Mimic*, *Prisoners Wives*. Her film credits include *The Low Down* and *Mischief Night*.

**Rebecca Ryan** plays Denise. Her theatre credits include *Solace of the Road* (Derby Theatre); *A Taste of Honey* (Hull Truck); *Lost Monsters* (Liverpool Everyman); *Scarborough* (Royal Court Theatre); *Tommy* (Manchester Palace). Her television credits include *DCI Banks*, *Monroe*, *Waterloo Road*, *Emmerdale* (ITV), *Shameless* and *State of Play* (BBC).

**Dominic Gately** plays Nim. Dominic trained at Guildford School of Acting. He appeared in the original cast of *Beryl* at West Yorkshire Playhouse in 2014 and in the 2015 revival. His other extensive theatre credits include: *Absent Friends* and *The Sunshine Boys* (Oldham Coliseum) *Perfect Light*, *Time Moghul Gardens*, *Basil*, *Meggie and the Most Beautiful Man in the World*, and *Castaway Café* (Slung Low Theatre), *The Pillars of Society* (Dale Theatre), *An Absolute Turkey* (Electric Theatre), *Hamlet* (Attic Theatre), *Othello* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare 4 Kids), *The Crucible*, *Refugee Boy*, *Scuffer*, *Monkey!* and *Company Along the Mile* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *The Good Person of Sichuan* (Colchester Mercury), *A View From the Bridge*, *The Deep Blue Sea*, *Loot* and *The Birthday Party* (Keswick Theatre-by-the-Lake), *The Weir* (Stoke New Victoria), *Kes* (Liverpool Playhouse/Touring Consortium) and *The Diary of Anna Frank* (York Theatre Royal/Touring Consortium), *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (York Theatre Royal/Pilot Theatre). Dominic has also taken part in many rehearsed readings and workshopped new writing for many theatres around the country. In Film and Television he has appeared in *Coronation Street* (Granada) *Virus 2050* (LSB Productions), *Waterloo Road* (Shed Productions), *Emmerdale* and *The Royal* (ITV Yorkshire), *Paradox* (Clerkenwell Films for BBC) *Walk Like a Panther* (Finite Films)

**Lee Toomes** plays Charlie. Lee trained at The Arden School of Theatre. Theatre credits include: *One-Man Show Before The Leaves Fall* (Space2); *A Christmas Carol*, *When I'm cleaning Windows* (Northeast Productions Tour); *The House Behind The Lines* (Buglight Theatre); *Santa's Grotty* (Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith); *The Fanny Hill Project* (Theatre State); *All through A Glass Of Port*, *No Exit* (Hands On Theatre Company); *Engagement With Murder*, *Up 'N' Under* (Lamproom Theatre); *Blood Brothers* (WLT); *Comedy Of Errors* (On Your Toes); *Not Hard To Die*, *Charade*, *Behind Closed Doors*, *Ruby Quicksilver* (Jaba); *Illyria*, *Romeo And Juliet*, *A Chorus Of Disapproval*, *The Good Person Of Szechwan* whilst training. Television and film credits include: *The Driver* (Red Productions); *In The Flesh* (BBC3); *The Syndicate* (Rollem Productions); *Shameless* (Channel 4), *The Body Farm* (BBC); *Jobseekers* (YPS Media); *The Downward Spiral Of Kevin Lames*, *Finding Vivian* (National Media Museum); *Snowball* (TM Productions).

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

Twitter: @Rosetheatre Facebook: /RoseTheatreKingston

For further information, please contact:

Kate Morley / 07970 465 648 / [kate@katemorleypr.com](mailto:kate@katemorleypr.com)

Alex Milward / 07903 218 280 / [alexander@katemorleypr.com](mailto:alexander@katemorleypr.com)

**Listings****Rose Theatre Kingston**

24-26 High Street, Kingston, KT1 1HL

[www.rosetheatrekingston.org](http://www.rosetheatrekingston.org)The Rose is only 25 minutes from Waterloo. See [rosetheatrekingston.org/getting-here](http://rosetheatrekingston.org/getting-here)

- Ticket prices:** £26.50 £22 £18 £8\* / Previews £23, £19, £15, £8\*  
\*pit cushions and extreme sides of upper circle
- Box Office:** 020 8174 0090 (bkg fee)  
Monday – Saturday: 10am – 8pm (6pm non-performance days)  
Sunday: one hour before the performance  
No fees are payable when booking in person at the Box Office  
An additional £1 per ticket booking fee and £1.60 per booking transaction fee are payable when booking online and by phone
- Pit Cushions:** Priced just £10 and situated in the area directly in front of the stage
- Friends Loyalty Card:** Best available ticket only £19. To join the Friends, call the Box Office
- Groups:** Discounts available, call the Box Office for details
- 16-26s & students** £5 tickets for best available seats (Tue)  
Please note valid ID will be required upon collection  
Subject to availability, terms and conditions apply
- Schools** Best available seats £12, 11<sup>th</sup> teacher ticket free with every 10 purchased  
Please contact the Box Office for more details
- Concessions & Senior Citizens** £3 off top three prices (Mon-Thu), not available on previews  
Only one discount per ticket, subject to availability  
Terms and conditions apply
- Access:** Patrons with disabilities enjoy half price tickets  
The Rose is a fully accessible organisation and welcome everyone  
Please contact us in advance to discuss how we can help make your visit as comfortable as possible
- Sensory Access:** A digital hearing system is available for patrons with a hearing aid, and Sennheiser headsets for patrons without a hearing aid. Guide and hearing dogs are welcome. Please let us know in advance so we can provide a dog-sitter and water bowl

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About Beryl Burton**

Beryl married Charlie when she was 17 and he supported her, throughout her life, as helpmate, mechanic and companion. His family provided the young couple with the support that allowed her to continue her racing career after their daughter Denise was born in 1955.

In the course of a career that spanned five decades, the fiercely competitive Yorkshirewoman won seven world titles - two road race championships and five track pursuit titles - and 96 national titles - 12 road race championships, 13 pursuit titles and 71 time trial titles against the clock.

When Beryl was at the peak of her powers, she regularly beat the men. In 1967, she overtook Mike McNamara in an Otley CC 12-hour time trial on her way to setting a women's record of 277.25 miles in the set time. McNamara's distance of 276.52 miles in the same event was itself a new men's record.

Time-trialling, racing against the clock over a set distance, was Beryl's speciality. It is a solitary discipline, both mentally and physically taxing. Starting in 1959, Beryl won 25 consecutive Best British All-Rounder titles, awarded to the fastest woman against the watch over 25, 50 and 100 mile distances. Along the way she set speed records (some in 1976 at the age of 39) at all three distances, which still stand.

Cycling, at least in Britain, is not a rich sport, and Beryl worked throughout her life in order to support her ambitions. Asked in the 1980s why she continued to ride prodigious distances every week and race against women half her age, Beryl replied "because I like cycling". She was a true amateur in that respect, loyally riding throughout her career for Morley CC. Beryl supervised her own training, rode the races she wanted and had little to do with the sport's governing bodies. But her achievements were impossible to ignore and she was awarded an MBE in 1964 and an OBE in 1968.

Beryl's involvement with the sport that dominated her life came about by chance. Her first job as a teenager was in a tailoring firm in Leeds where she noticed a young man make a clicking noise as he walked across the factory floor. This was Charlie Burton and he was wearing cycling shoes with metal cleats on their soles.

When Burton overtook men during a race, they could always expect a quick-fire witticism or word of encouragement. When she overtook McNamara, she nonchalantly offered him a liquorice allsort. The next year, in 1968, she set a women's 100-mile record in a time of three hours and 55 minutes. It was the fourth fastest ride over that distance in Britain by any rider of the time. Such feats in another, more popular sport would have earned Burton world-wide recognition.

Beryl and Charlie's daughter Denise became a powerful cyclist, representing her country at international level. Relations between mother and daughter became difficult as they emerged as racing rivals in the 1970s. After Denise out-sprinted her mother in the 1975 national road race championship to take the title, her mother refused to shake hands with her on the podium as she felt Denise had not showed the team spirit with which even competing cyclists support each other. An emotional reconciliation followed and Denise remains a loving champion of her mother's achievements to this day.

Beryl Charnock was born in Leeds in 1937. She died in Harrogate in 1996.