****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Plastic pollution and climate change tackled in premiere of stunning outdoor aerial performance for Coventry City of Culture 2021.**

This August Bank Holiday weekend, **Coventry City of Culture Trust** and leading physical theatre company **Highly Sprung** present the premiere of *CastAway****,*** a stunning new outdoor performance that tackles the ever-present plastic pollution in our waterways and is a core part of the city’s approach to ‘Green Futures’. Green Futures is one of Coventry’s flagship cultural programmes, aiming to make the city the the greenest and most environmentally conscious UK City of Culture to date.

The show brings a brand new approach to aerial theatre, featuring a unique, fully gyroscopic aerial rig which elevates performers over nine metres up into the air, promising a unique and captivating production to delight audiences of all ages.

*CastAway* examines the realities and complexities of the climate crisis, and looks forward with hope to a more positive, sustainable future for the city. The performance premieres at the Canal Basin and conveys a powerful environmental message supported by the Canal & River Trust.

Highly Sprung, who are based at the newly opened Daimler Powerhouse, have been working in Coventry for over 20 years, and have a reputation for producing bold, environmentally led outdoor theatre. *CastAway* uses dynamic, lyrical movement to interrogate today’s ‘throwaway society’ and is their response to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch – a floating island of everlasting plastic that has is now 6½ times the size of the UK.

Featuring an all-female cast, it tells the story of two characters, the *Disposables*, who are polluting the city’s canals. Their actions awaken the *Keeper of the Waterways* who rises up to challenge them and guide them to a more compassionate way of behaving. The piece is set to a beautiful soundtrack by award-winning composer Tom Haines.

Earlier this year, CastAway received royal attention when Highly Sprung performed a preview for HRH Prince Charles of Wales, who has a longstanding commitment to environmental concerns.

*“We can’t wait to show the world this incredible new performance that has been in development over the last 2 years. We are passionate believers in the role theatre can play in starting conversations on difficult topics such as the climate crisis and pollution. The prevalence of plastics and disposables in our canals and waterways can easily feel overwhelming, but with CastAway we aim to leave audiences feeling hopeful, inspiring real action and change.”*

**Sarah Worth, CastAway Director**

*“Our Green Futures Programme aims to highlight the range of issues that affect climate crisis with a focus on our natural environment. In partnership with artists in the city, like the nationally acclaimed Highly Sprung, we hope to encourage our audiences to think about their green footprint and to make personal changes that can halt the pace of climate change.”*

*“CastAway leads a conversation about waste and pollution and the impact that this has on our waterways and more widely the global climate crisis.”*

*“Coventry City of Culture has put environmental awareness and sustainability at the heart of its vision. Brilliant shows like CastAway will help deliver a strong message to audiences to inspire change.”*

**Chenine Bhathena, Creative Director at Coventry City of Culture Trust**

*CastAway* features as part of Coventry 2021 alongside a busy programme of arts and cultural activity in the city. To watch this free outdoor performance, simply come along to the Coventry Canal Basin on the August Bank Holiday Weekend.

***CastAway will be performed at:***

**Coventry Canal Basin, Sat 28th & Sun 29th August 2021, 12:30pm & 4:30pm**

**For more information please contact:**

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**Access images & video footage here:**

[**https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6w6k9kexok5isqh/AADquYL83IVscaJZRjkQDRG3a?dl=0**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6w6k9kexok5isqh/AADquYL83IVscaJZRjkQDRG3a?dl=0)

**Review for CastAway**

“It draws interest and crowds long before the performance starts. This fantastic new aerial spectacle from Highly Sprung is a visual treat, but has some much deeper messages for its entranced audience.”

**West End Best Friend** ★★★★

**About Highly Sprung**

Highly Sprung Performance is the UK’s leading physical theatre company creating work with and for children and young people. As a charitable organisation, we use our signature approach to empower young people, helping them find their unique performance style and discover their voice.

We create award-winning outdoor and indoor performances that tell stories through movement, gesture and dance. Stories inspired by humanity, science and the complex world around us. Highly Sprung are best known for Urban Astronaut, which has toured over 40 venues and festivals internationally, as well as Home, an aerial spectacle celebrating Coventry’s history, and additionally for the Physical Fellowship, the UK’s only festival exclusively for young people and emerging artists.

For the last 20 years, Highly Sprung has worked with primary and secondary schools across the UK and internationally and runs weekly performance workshops in Coventry for children and young people aged 5-18. In 2020 we were awarded the Pearson’s Teaching Gold Award for our collaboration in commemorative arts engagement project Echo Eternal, working with the Core Education Trust and schools across the West Midlands.

<http://www.highlysprungperformance.co.uk>

[@HighlySprung](http://www.twitter.com/highlysprung)

**Social Media**

Twitter [(@highlysprung](https://twitter.com/highlysprung))

Instagram [(@highlysprung](https://www.instagram.com/highlysprung/))

Facebook ([Highly Sprung Performance Company](https://www.facebook.com/highlysprungperformance))

YouTube ([Highly Sprung Performance](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4H5ghTVSW2Z7_xcIMVJsgA/videos))

**About CastAway**

Drowning under a crushing mass of plastic, the Keeper of the Waterways awakens and rises up. It’s time for change. Highly Sprung’s CastAway is a stunning outdoor performance that explores the impact of today’s throwaway society on our waterways. Featuring a unique gyroscopic flying machine, it presents a brand new approach to aerial theatre. Castaway by Highly Sprung Performance is co-commissioned by Coventry City of Culture, The Arches Worcester Festivals Severn Arts, Basingstoke Festival and the Canal and River Trust. Supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

**ABOUT COVENTRY UK CITY OF CULTURE 2021**

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 commenced on 15 May 2021, running for 12 months. The 365-day cultural programme will reflect Coventry as a diverse, modern city, demonstrating that culture is a force that changes lives. Coventry is the UK’s only city of peace and reconciliation, and known internationally as a city of welcome, a city of activists and pioneers, innovation, and invention, and now a City of Culture.

Coventry is the city where movement began, from innovation in the transport industry to a history of welcome, it has moved people for centuries. For a whole year, Coventry will celebrate with events, music, dance, theatre, and large-scale spectacle. As well as the expected celebrations, it will throw a spotlight onto city voices with a range of hyper local experiences and ways to get involved across every neighbourhood. And it’s not just Coventry. This epic celebration will also witness the entire region getting involved and benefitting from the opportunities that being City of Culture brings.

Our year of culture will be co-created with the people of Coventry and bring about long-term social, economic, and cultural benefits.

**Principal Partners**

Coventry City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Arts Council England, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Spirit of 2012, Warwickshire County Council, The University of Warwick, Coventry University

**Major Partners**

Coventry Building Society, Paul Hamlyn Foundation

**Regional Partners**

The National Lottery Community Fund, Ricoh Arena/Wasps

**City Champions**

Coventry College, Exasoft Group, Foyle Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Orbit Group, PET-Xi

**International Partner**

British Council

**Honorary Partner**

Positive Youth Foundation

**Delivery Partners**

Coventry Business Improvement District, Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, EnV, West Midlands Police

**Local Creative Partners**

The Albany Theatre, BBC CWR, Belgrade Theatre, Central England Law Centre, Coventry Artspace, Coventry Business Improvement District, Coventry Biennial, Coventry Cathedral, Coventry Hospital Radio, Coventry Libraries and Information Service, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, Create Central, Crisis, EGO, Performance Company, The Empire, Foleshill Creates, Grapevine, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, The Highlife Centre, Highly Sprung, Hillz FM, Historic Coventry, Imagineer Productions, Ludic Rooms, MaoKwo, Nine Arches Press, Positive Images Festival, Positive Youth Foundation, Royal Shakespeare Company, SAMPAD, Talking Birds, Theatre Absolute, Underground Lights Community Theatre, Warwick Arts Centre, West Midlands Police, The Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Writing West Midlands

**National Creative Partners**

64 Million Artists, Arts & Homelessness International, BBC, The Booker Prizes, British Council, Canal & River Trust, Crafts Council, Creative Europe, Historic England, Julie’s Bicycle, Royal Institute of British Architects, Sky Arts, Story Futures Academy, Tate, Unlimited, Voluntary Arts

[coventry2021.co.uk/](https://coventry2021.co.uk/)

**About Green Futures**

Green Futures is a flagship programme for Coventry UK City of Culture 2021. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with support from Garfield Weston Foundation and Severn Trent Community Fund, Green Futures explores Coventry and Warwickshire’s wildlife, natural heritage, and landscape, uncovering the story of its ‘hidden nature’ and increasing local stewardship. Through the Green Futures programme, Coventry will become the greenest and most environmentally conscious UK City of Culture to date.

**About Canal and River Trust**

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2000 miles of canals and river navigations across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people’s lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk>