

**INNOVATIVE ARTS COMPANY BACKED BY DAME EMMA THOMPSON
BRINGS NEW AWARD-NOMINATED 'PRESENT/ABSENT' SHOW
TO EDINBURGH FESTIVAL 2019**

DISTRICT64 presents: 'PRESENT/ABSENT' Emerald Theatre (Venue 209), Nicolson Square 5 – 10 August 2019 1.50pm

****Hard-hitting production examining digital dependence now in the running for prestigious SIT-UP Award****

MONDAY 22 JULY 2019:

District64, a new and vibrant youth theatre company, is making its Edinburgh Fringe debut this August when it premieres its latest production '**Present/Absent**'.

The company, based in Marlow and Maidenhead, works with 9 to 20 year olds, and creates novel and thought-provoking performance pieces on the issues that matter to today's young people, using all mediums of the creative arts to communicate their message.

Their new show **Present/Absent** poses and explores the questions - **Are we digital dependent? Has tech stopped enhancing our lives and instead begun to infringe upon them? How do we re-frame our relationship to tech?** The visceral, provocative, timely piece uses physical theatre, storytelling, music and movement to explore a topic critical to society discourse with the power to cause a huge and detrimental impact on humanity's mental health globally, especially amongst the young.

District64's production is now in consideration for a prestigious SIT-UP award, an annual award given at the Edinburgh Fringe to recognise socially impactful theatre. The production also shares the pioneering ethos and core values of the company's new patron, **Dame Emma Thompson DBE**. The two-time Oscar winner and international star of stage and screen, was announced as patron of District64 earlier this year after being drawn to their courageous, innovative and campaigning approach to theatre. Dame Emma Thompson is a well known activist and campaigner for human rights, mental health and the environment and it was District64's determination to give their young performers a platform on which to voice their views in creative and inventive ways that led her to lend her support and backing to the company. She said:

'I am delighted to be District64's Patron and to support their work and purpose. It's such a joy to see young people using their creativity within the Arts in such a powerful and positive way - to elicit change and inspire conversation - about the important issues we all face in the world. District64 is such an exciting, innovative and talented young company and I wish them well at the Edinburgh Festival this August.'

District64 was created by **BAFTA** award-winning actor Jane Trainer, Anthony Mackey & Josh Barrow. Co-Artistic Director Anthony Mackey said ***'We are so excited to be making our Edinburgh debut this August and to share Present/Absent with Edinburgh audiences who will engage with this important subject and invest in our company's messages. We are beyond honoured and thrilled to have such an iconic Patron of District64. To have her affirmation and endorsement of the work we do and what we stand for means so much. Emma is not only a wonderful actor and outstanding role model, but also an activist and passionate voice for many incredible causes, which are also dear to D64's hearts. We can't wait to welcome her to our performances at the Edinburgh Festival in August.'***

Present/Absent performances take place from 5 – 10 August at 1.50pm each day at The Emerald Theatre – Venue 209, Nicolson Square, Edinburgh

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