

Review of Harry Stokes

by Greg Thorpe
GAZE LGBTQ+ Film Festival Director

I was lucky enough to see the short play, 'Mister Stokes: The Man-Woman of Manchester,' performed in 2016 at The People's History Museum. Written by Abi Hynes and drawing on collective historical research, the central performance by Joey Hateley was stunning. In many ways Harry Stokes is the part Joey was born to make as a dramatic reclamation of an almost disappeared historical 'F2M' figure from Industrial Manchester; brought to the stage in an era of contemporary trans revolution.

Joey's work has always interrogated gender, existing before their time beyond emerging trans narratives; making them the perfect holder of Harry's story, which itself cannot easily be fitted into contemporary notions of queer identity. The story of Harry requires careful development in the hands of an experienced trans performance artist, with a team of cutting - edge diverse specialists, and that is precisely what Joey is taking on with this new iteration.

Insisting on the proximity of trans people in real historical experiences and upheavals - such as the Industrial Revolution, Peterloo and more. How often do we get to see trans romance, domestic tension, historical comedy, and Victorian legality in our current contemporary scene? Not enough. This work has it all!



As a Queer Heritage researcher who watched the first R&D iteration @ godrag! 22 Berlin's International Festival, I love how Joey activates primary materials in myriads of styles, which even includes originally composed songs inspired by 'The Manchester Ballads.' Harry's multi-layered structures are intended to be Queer in 2D traditional and 3D non-linear technological hybridity, fusion and form. Designed to incite education through conversation, learning, questions and dialogue, we are all

invited to contribute to this unique work in many different ways.

I look forward to seeing more live shows, audience feedback, 'hilarious out-takes, 'specialist 1 on 1 zoom recordings, specific interest groups, intersectional arts organisations, health social workers and diverse feedback -all bringing new debate and ideas to this on-going collective process. Please send Joey your thoughts and ideas via the [contact page](#).



Greg Thorpe, GAZE LGBTQ+ Film Festival Director, Dublin, is also a creative producer at Islington Mill in Salford. For six years he was Creative Director of Superbia, the arts and culture programme at Manchester Pride and was on the board of Trans Creative for 4 years. Greg is also an independent curator and writes historical queer fiction.

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