

The Living Unknown Soldier - Arcola Theatre



Preview by Lizzie Guilfoyle

STRAWBERRY Vale Productions is presenting Simple8's **The Living Unknown Soldier** at Arcola Theatre (Studio 1) – from February 12 to March 15, 2008.

France, 1918. The Great War has ended. Thousands are missing. Relatives are desperately seeking their loved ones as men come back from the front. A soldier is found wandering a station platform with no knowledge of his identity or the country he has been defending. Diagnosed with amnesia and sectioned in an asylum, he is saved from death but exiled from life – facing a no-man's land once more.

As news spreads across the country, families flock to him in search of the fathers, brothers, husbands and sons who will never come home. This one man becomes a symbol for a generation ripped apart by war – a living unknown soldier.

The Living Unknown Soldier is based on *Le Soldat Inconnu Vivant* by Jean-Yves Le Naour. It explores the fine line between memory and imagination and serves as a vital reminder of the fallout from war.

Created using not only Le Naour's book and the original source material but also imagination, *The Living Unknown Soldier* is a war story, a ghost story, an absurd comedy and a chilling tragedy, in which the life of the living unknown soldier is imagined and remembered.

Simple8's previous work includes *Les Enfants du Paradis*, adapted and co-directed by Sebastian Armesto who is also an actor and currently appearing in ITV's *The Palace* (as Prince George).

Strawberry Vale Productions' credits include Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground* (Arcola Theatre), Owen McCafferty's *Mojo Mickybo* (Arcola Theatre and Trafalgar Studios); and Declan Feenan's *Limbo*. Lilli Geissendorfer has also produced the inaugural High Tide Festival.

Tickets: £15, £10 concessions.

Duration: approximately 95 minutes.

For more information call the box office on 020 7503 1646 or visit the website.

You may be interested to know that Summer 2007 saw the launch of **Arcola Energy** – a bold and unique venture to make Arcola the world's first 'carbon neutral' theatre. *The Living Unknown Soldier*, which launches Phase II of the project, is London's premiere ecologically sustainable theatre production.

The aim of Arcola Energy is to create a testing ground to promote ecological and ethical standards in the industry. It links directly to the Sustainable Theatre Initiative, 'Greening London Theatre', that was launched in October by London Mayor Ken Livingstone. Innovative partnerships are an integral part of the project. For example, London Hydrogen Partnership are donating a fuel cell; Global Action Plan are responsible for auditing; and BASH creations are supporting the radical transformation of the Arcola Bar into an eco-cafe.

The greatest challenge is to manage the natural tension between Simple8's artistic vision and the demands of sustainability. The hope is to capitalise on the massive interest and pockets of exemplary work already happening across the theatre industry and become a practical resource for other venues and theatre companies.

<http://www.indielondon.co.uk/Theatre-Review/the-living-unknown-soldier-arcola-theatre>