

Cross-media publisher Ziggy's Wish presents graphic novel

BOOKS

HOAX Psychosis Blues

Can a potent chemistry of poetry, comics and performance finally be the perfect way to describe the realities of schizophrenia?

This is the question cross-media scriptwriter Ravi Thornton sets out to answer in her latest multi-collaborative project *HOAX*, comprising graphic novel memoir *HOAX Psychosis Blues*, and raw dark musical *HOAX My Lonely Heart*. The project is based on a poem written by Ravi Thornton's younger brother, Rob, who committed suicide in 2008 at the age of 31, after a long battle with schizophrenia.

Both musical and graphic novel are written by Ravi Thornton. The musical, which unfolds a painful love story in the six months prior to Rob's diagnosis as schizophrenic, premieres at The Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester, 4th to 7th June 2014. The graphic novel, which charts Rob's further facts, fictions and altered realities over the nine years after his diagnosis through to his death, is available for pre-order now at www.ziggyswish.com

With an introduction by Dr Matthew J. A. Green, the professor of literature researching the graphic novel and its place in Medical Humanities, *HOAX Psychosis Blues* is an intensely moving and personal account of a young man's journey through recovery, relapse and ultimate release. It is told through the poems he wrote, in his own handwritten script, and brought to life by ten of the finest comics and graphic artists from around the world – multi-award winners Bryan Talbot (*The Adventures of Luther Arkwright*), Rian Hughes (*2000AD*), Julian Hanshaw (*The Art of Pho*), along with acclaimed authors and artists Hannah Berry (*Adamtine*), Karrie Fransman (*The House that Groaned*), Mark Stafford (*Cherubs*), Leonardo M. Giron (*Dead Girls*) and rising stars Rhiana Jade, Ian Jones and Rozi Hathaway.

Extracts from the graphic novel, as well as free downloads from the musical and further resources, are available at www.ravithornton.com/hoax

Andy Oliver, from international comics news site Broken Frontier, described the book as: "The ultimate expression of the graphic memoir's unique power to share and communicate personal experience. A hauntingly beautiful masterpiece."

Dr Ian Williams, author and practitioner at the forefront of graphic medicine in the UK said: "A tale of schizophrenia could, in a lesser author, have led to melodrama, but Thornton's sparse dialogue gives the reader plenty of space to fill in the gaps and work out the larger story, showing us Rob's humanity rather than telling of the effects of his illness. This is a moving and important work."

Writer Ravi Thornton said: "Whilst chronologically one follows the other, I don't really think of the graphic novel as a sequel to the musical. My brother's manifestations of his illness were so immediate and yet at the same time so distant that I felt compelled to explore both of these extremes. Thus the musical is intense, whilst the graphic novel is much more reflective. Ultimately, both pieces are very honest – yet I've been careful not to lay everything bare. Some things I simply need to keep to myself, or rather to keep for myself. Whatever impression these works may leave on the world of Rob, I hope they do him justice. He was a flawed and troubled man with a painfully beautiful mind. But more than this, he was my brother."

Ravi Thornton lives in Manchester with her partner and daughter. She is keenly interested in narrative environment as storytelling device, and an active advocate of collaboration. Her first graphic novel, *The Tale of Brin & Bent and Minno Marylebone*, illustrated by Andy Hixon and musically scored by Othon Mataragas, was published by Jonathan Cape in 2012. Her numerous awards include being Shortlisted for the Observer Graphic Short Story Prize, Winner of Best Debut Book, Broken Frontier Awards, Nominated for Bram Stoker Award and Winner of the Barry Reckord Bursary Award.

Pre-launch book signings: Travelling Man Manchester, Saturday 7th June 2014, 3pm

Official *HOAX Psychosis Blues* 'LATE NIGHT BOOK LAUNCH', with presentations, Q&A and signings: Sandinista Bar opposite Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester, following the performance's closing night Saturday 7th June 2014, 10pm

HOAX Psychosis Blues (graphic novel)

Written by Ravi Thornton

Illustrated by Bryan Talbot, Rian Hughes, Julian Hanshaw, Karrie Fransman, Mark Stafford, Hannah Berry, Rhiana Jade, Ian Jones, Leonardo M. Giron, Rozi Hathaway

Introduction by Dr Matthew J.A. Green

Designed by Wayne Marsden

Published by Ziggy's Wish

HOAX My Lonely Heart (musical)

Written by Ravi Thornton

Directed by Benji Reid

Composed by Minute Taker (Ben McGarvey)

Produced by Pippa Frith in association with the Royal Exchange Theatre

Researched by Dr Matthew J. A. Green

Set design by Jim Bond

AV design by Sumit Sarkar

Cast: Tachia Newall (Rob), Olivia Sweeney (Helen), Stephen Myott-Meadows ('The Condition')

Listings Information

HOAX Psychosis Blues (graphic novel signing)

7th June at 3pm

Travelling Man

4 Dale Street, Manchester, M1 1JW

0161 237 1877 / **FREE EVENT**

HOAX Psychosis Blues (graphic novel book launch)

7th June at 10pm (entry from 9pm)

Sandinista Bar (downstairs)

2 Old Bank Street (off St Ann's Square), Manchester, M2 7PF

0161 832 9955 / **FREE EVENT**

HOAX My Lonely Heart (musical premiere)

4th to 6th June at 7.30pm, 7th June at 8pm

Royal Exchange Theatre (studio)

St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7DH

0161 833 9833 | www.royalexchange.co.uk

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