

**Cornish cultural doyenne takes to the main stage at Glastonbury’s Circus this summer**

The artistic director for renowned feminist production hub Scary Little Girls takes centre stage at the Big Top at Glastonbury after years as the tent’s only female compère – marking her 20th year performing at the famous festival.

Rebecca Mordan – responsible for hit Cornish shows including Queenagers and Duffy Beats The Devil, as well as the creator of The Riot Showgrrrls Club and the Mayven festivals – has worked her way up from volunteering in the Big Top offices at the age of 17 to MCing the main stage in the Theatre and Circus fields over the last two decades.

Becca said: “My fantastic Glasto boss, Jade Dunbar, saw something in me while I was working backstage and told me one year, ‘Oh, you’ll be trying some compèring shifts next year by the way.’ I was terrified – I’d seen compères clear that huge Big Top of hundreds of people in under five minutes because they couldn’t hold the crowd. But she was adamant I could do it – and that was 20 years ago!”

Rebecca is now one of the small handful of compères in the Big Top at the huge Somerset festival and is the only one who doesn’t come from a traditional circus background.

Performing to crowds of over 3,000 people, Becca opens the tent this year and introduces acts from all over the world.

Becca said: “I am so lucky to be able to open the Big Top, which I absolutely love. I have to help create a unique atmosphere for the audience, make them want to stay in our tent, warm them up, and make sure they’re excited and enthusiastic about what they’re experiencing – they are going to see some of the best circus in existence in that tent and I want them to go wild for it!’

She added; “For many of the years I have worked at Glastonbury, I was the only female compère. That’s started to change now. I work with some incredible people and together we try to create a sense of party and community in this tent filled with thousands of people.”

The cultural scene in Cornwall has benefitted through Becca’s association with Glastonbury as the relationships she has forged there – along with the SPF funding that Scary Little Girls have received – means that many of the circus performers from Glastonbury have appeared in Scary Little Girls productions.

Becca said: “Our SPF funding has allowed us to bring some of those Glastonbury circus performers including Annabelle Holland, now a fellow Big Top compère, who brought her knife-throwing skills to our Mayven; and Charlie Bicknell, who recently performed her Cabaret with Claws show in Falmouth and is an amazing aerialist, incorporating acro-balance, music and comedy into her act.

“It was fantastic to give a platform to the young women of Cirk Hes, a brilliant Cornish circus school, who performed with Scary Little Girls at venues across Cornwall even as they were in rehearsals for their Glastonbury Big Top debut this year.”

Becca’s experience over two decades at the legendary festival has seen her reflect on many changes in the performing arts, played out in the Glastonbury Big Top.

She said: “It’s been interesting to be a woman in a world which has mostly seen men running the show behind the scenes and on the stage – to be a woman’s voice in that space, while not necessarily fitting into the typical image of a woman in the circus. I am a woman in my late 40s and there aren’t a lot of women who look like me in that Big Top – most performers in the tent are young athletes!

“But, like all storytelling, circus is for everyone and so is fun and glamour, so I hope I can be part of showing that.  My boss Jade works hard to bring strong representation of women into the Big Top – I’m so glad she didn’t let me chicken out all those years ago!”

Becca’s greatest hope is that she can give permission for future female performers in the circus space, showing what’s possible in a long career.

She said: “There are a lot of young performers coming to festivals, and too often that can be heavily gendered with boys getting to be the comedians and ringmasters and girls putting on the sparkly costumes. For years young circus women at Glastonbury have been fascinated by how I got to be a compère – it’s been so unusual for them to hear a woman’s voice doing that job and filling that huge tent.  I always tell them that you need to get the microphone. Your body can do amazing things, but only for so long – you can be funny forever.”

Becca will be appearing at Glastonbury Festival from 26th-30th June 2024.

Her theatre company, Scary Little Girls, is creating a body of artistic work including festivals, tours and new commissions for delivery until April 2025 with the £296,200 grant from the UK Government, received through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – part of a £4.4m investment in a cultural events and talent programme across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Cornwall Council has been chosen by the Government as a Lead Authority for the fund and is responsible for monitoring the progress of projects funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Find full details of the work of Scary Little Girls here:

https://scarylittlegirls.co.uk/



**ENDS**

**Media Enquiries**

Rebecca Mordan, Artistic Director of Scary Little Girls, is available for interview and will be on site at the Glastonbury Festival from Sunday 23rd June.

All requests to be directed to:

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**Photography**

Attached to the press release

**Editorial Notes**

**About Scary Little Girls**

Scary Little Girls is a feminist production hub with a passion for stories that are historically or culturally excluded, or usually told from one perspective only. We actively create jobs for women, cross-collaborating and skills sharing for the benefit of the artistic and wider community and are committed to the creative case for diversity.

SLG employs around 100 artists annually, reaches live audiences of 25,000, creating both indoor and outside work and collaborating and touring with artistic partners, commissioners, pubs, libraries, town councils, and venues from Lands End to John O’Groats. The diversity of our projects is unified by our overriding belief in the power of stories to change society, our love for our audiences and our dedication to improving human and women’s experiences.

This gives us a unique, wide reach, despite being a small organisation, and a devoted, growing audience who demand that we keep innovating and risk-taking.

**Shared Prosperity Fund**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK Government’s Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025.

The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK by investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

For more information, visit https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperityfund-prospectus.