

PRESS RELEASE  
24 May 2022

## **THEATRE ROYAL STRATFORD EAST ANNOUNCES 2022-23 SEASON ALSO ANNOUNCED IS NEW ROYALTY SCHEME FOR EAST LONDON FREELANCERS, THOSE AGED 25 AND UNDER AND LOCALS**

**Theatre Royal Stratford East** today announces its 2022/23 season. The season includes **Anthony Neilson's** poignant and comical delve into the nature of mental illness, ***The Wonderful World of Dissocia***, directed by **Emma Baggott**, which opens in September 2022. Then, continuing their collaboration, Stratford East's Artistic Director, **Nadia Fall** directs **Ramps on the Moon's** first new play, ***Village Idiot*** by **Samson Hawkins**, in a co-production with Theatre Royal Stratford East and **Nottingham Playhouse**. Following this, Stratford East presents the UK premiere of award-winning play, ***Tambo & Bones***, a satirical interrogation of the commodification and commercialisation of Black pain, written by **Dave Harris** and directed by **Matthew Xia**, in a co-production with the **Actors Touring Company**.

This year's pantomime, ***Cinderella*** by **Leo Butler** and **Robert Hyman**, is directed by one of Theatre Royal Stratford East's Sky Arts Artistic Associates, **Eva Sampson**. The production opens on 19 November (Press Night: 26 November).

The season also includes work from youth companies including new play, ***painkiller*** written by **Sophie Ellerby** and presented by the 2022 **Stratford East Young Company**, and the **National Youth Theatre** presenting **Bola Agbaje's** Olivier Award-winning ***Gone Too Far!***

They also welcome visiting productions including a **Sheffield Theatres** and **Ramps on the Moon** co-production of ***Much Ado About Nothing*** directed by **Robert Hastie**, and the **ThickSkin** and **Traverse Theatre Company** production of ***How Not to Drown***, the true story of an 11-year-old unaccompanied asylum-seeker.

Priority booking for Theatre Royal Stratford East Members and customers with access requirements opens on Tuesday 24 May at 12pm. Public booking opens on Thursday 26 May at 12pm.

In addition, Theatre Royal Stratford East announce their new Royalty Scheme, including **Freelance Royalty**, a new free membership scheme designed to support arts freelancers living or working in East London. The Freelance Royalty scheme offers exclusive benefits, including free or discounted rehearsal space, networking events, workshops, freelance surgeries and showcase opportunities for artists.

They also launch **Young Royalty**, for 17-25 year olds, and **Local Royalty**, for those living in specific East London postcodes – with those eligible able to access £15 tickets across Theatre Royal Stratford East productions. For full information please visit: [www.stratfordeast.com/join-us](http://www.stratfordeast.com/join-us)

Artistic Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East, **Nadia Fall** said today, *"This new season has a tantalising sense of mischief and the chance for a delicious collusion between the stage and the audience. From Anthony Neilson's cult play, **The Wonderful World of Dissocia**, which transports us to another dimension, exploring mental health through a kind of Alice in Wonderland meets David Lynch experience, to the UK premiere of Dave Harris' **Tambo & Bones** which looks at the commodification of Black lives with an actual hip-hop concert slap bang in the middle of it.*

*Although each production tells its own unique story, conjuring up wildly different worlds, they are all brilliantly theatrical, often addressing the audience directly. It's certainly the opposite of staying in and watching the television, unless you have a television where the characters leap out of the box and envelop you in the story!*

*Village Idiot, Samson Hawkins' debut play, invites you to a village fair where you can actually enter a meat raffle. And we're delighted to announce Eva Sampson, one of our new Sky Arts Associates, as director for our panto Cinderella.*

*We're also excited to welcome a visit from Sheffield Theatres, with a Ramps on the Moon production of Much Ado About Nothing, directed by Artistic Director Rob Hastie. ThickSkin and Traverse Theatre Company bring us How Not to Drown, an incredible real-life story with human resilience at its heart, whilst National Youth Theatre present Bola Agbaje's Olivier Award-winning Gone Too Far!. Our talented Young Company take to the stage with painkiller, a new play by Sophie Ellerby. If there's one thing that unites our next season it's that of bold and unapologetically pure theatre."*

**Eleanor Lang**, Executive Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East, commented, *"Freelancers are the life blood of the theatre industry, and it is our job to support them at all stages of their career. We are, therefore, excited to launch Stratford East's Freelance Royalty Scheme. Our new scheme will provide a range of training and development opportunities, and provide freelancers who live and work in East London with a welcoming base.*

*Newham was particularly affected by the pandemic and has huge challenges ahead, as the cost-of-living crisis deepens. We also know the deep effect the pandemic has had on young people. With both our local community and young people at the heart of our organisation, we are also delighted to launch two additional schemes - Local Royalty and Young Royalty. These schemes will ensure we can welcome everyone to our theatre, as we increase access to low-priced tickets here at Stratford East."*

**Theatre Royal Stratford East presents**

## **PAINKILLER**

Written by **Sophie Ellerby**

Directed by **Toby Clarke**

**28 – 30 July 2022**

**Press Night: Thursday 28 July at 7.30pm**

We're at war. Firebombs blaze, families flee food shortages as cyberattacks cut the electricity supply. Whole cities face blackouts for days.

Confronted by conscription, the young are drafted in to fight the invading force, their destinies decided. These soldiers are on the frontline and the violence is escalating. It feels utterly relentless. Until a group of soldiers say no.

Downing arms, faced with the prospect of prison time for desertion, they're offered another form of service - to enrol in a military clinical trial to test a cutting-edge gene therapy to treat pain. A treatment never yet trialled on humans. They could undergo rehabilitation and be completely pain free for the rest of their lives... but what is life without pain?

Members of the 2022 Stratford East Young Company are Grace Coulson-Harris, Taliyah Defreitas-Smith, Jade Franks, Morgan Hilaire, Junior Kapesi-Tuku, Pelé Kelland-Beau, Bibi MacDougall, Mariama Mansary, Karl Markey-Lee, David Olaniregun, Moussa Samba.

**Sophie Ellerby** is a writer and theatre maker. Her career began at 15, starring in *This is England* (directed by Shane Meadows). She went onto study Drama at Manchester University, specialising in Theatre in Prisons. In 2016 she was awarded a place on HighTide's First Commission scheme, where she wrote her debut play *Lit*, co-produced in 2019 by HighTide and Nottingham Playhouse, with a sell-out run and rave reviews. Other theatre includes *Three* (Arcola Theatre) and *Function* (Criterion Theatre). Most recently she was Lead Artist for a site-specific piece around the Royal Docks in London, *Arrival* (2021, directed by Matthew Dunster). Last year she was Head Writer on *SeaView*, a six-part web-series, produced by Belgrade Theatre. Her BFI funded debut short film *The Walk*, inspired by a true story of a man who had to make a 24-mile round pilgrimage each week to sign on at the Job Centre due to a lack of public transport, is currently in pre-production.

**Toby Clarke** has had an extensive career in theatre, TV and film as a director, playwright and acting coach, spanning over 20 years. He directed the Olivier Award-nominated *Warheads* at Park Theatre, is currently Resident Director at Theatre Peckham, Young Company Director at Stratford East and Head Acting Coach of the Young Vic's new Over 25 Acting Company. As a Playwright, Toby has been shortlisted and longlisted for the Bruntwood Playwriting Award. He is currently Acting Coach on HBO/Channel 4 Series *Get Millie Black*.

Theatre Royal Stratford East presents

## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISSOCIA

Written by **Anthony Neilson**

Directed by **Emma Baggott**

**16 September – 15 October 2022**

**Press Night: Thursday 22 September at 7pm**

What would you do if you lost an hour from your day? How far would you go to rescue what you've lost?

In search of a lost hour that has tipped the balance of her life, Lisa Jones is on a quest through a surreal world, filled with insecurity guards, flying cars, singing polar bears and wild-goose chases. The inhabitants of Dissocia are a curious blend of the funny, the friendly and the downright brutal.

Anthony Neilson's cult play is a poignant and comical delve into the nature of mental illness.

**Anthony Neilson** is a ground-breaking playwright and director known for his collaborative way of writing and workshopping plays, characterised by their formal playfulness and often dark themes and humour. Writing and Directing credits include *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Menu* (National Theatre), *The Séance* (National Theatre Connections), *The Prudes*, *Unreachable*, *Narrative*, *Get Santa!*, *Relocated*, *Penetrator* (also Edinburgh Festival), *The Lying Kind*, *The Censor* (Royal Court), *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* (Royal Court, Tron, Edinburgh Lyceum, Theatre Royal Plymouth, UK tour), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Realism* (Edinburgh Lyceum), *The Haunting of Hill House* (Liverpool Playhouse), *God in Ruins* (Soho Theatre), *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* (Theatre Royal Plymouth, UK tour), *Stitching* (Traverse, Bush). Directing credits include *Marat/Sade*,

*The Drunks* (RSC), *The Big Lie* (Latitude Festival), *The Death of Klinghoffer* (Scottish Opera, Edinburgh International Festival).

**Emma Baggott** trained at Goldsmiths College and Young Vic. She is an Associate Artist at National Youth Theatre and a Mentor Director for National Theatre Connections. Recent credits include *Face the Music: The Social Care Workers Play* (Almeida Theatre), *Neville's Island*, *Misfits*, *Stiletto Beach* (Queens Theatre Hornchurch), *The Things We Leave Behind* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Mr Burns, X*, *The Christians* (LAMDA), *She is Fierce* (The Swirl, RSC), *Leaving*, *How To Kill Your Mother*, *Copper & Steel* (The Bunker) and *Normal* (Styx). Credits as an Associate and Assistant Director include *As You Like It* (RSC), *This House* (Headlong/National Theatre), *The Village* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *The Sound of Yellow*, *Victoria Station*, *One for The Road* (Young Vic) and *McQueen* (Theatre Royal Haymarket). Emma is a Guest Director at LAMDA, RWCMD and Theatre Academy London and taught and directed at the Brit School for six years. She facilitates regular workshops for organisations such as Cardboard Citizens, National Theatre, Young Vic, RTYDS, Arts Ed, University of Kent and Goldsmiths College.

**Sheffield Theatres and Ramps on the Moon present**

**William Shakespeare's**

## **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**

Adapted and directed by **Robert Hastie**

**01 – 05 November 2022**

*'I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is not that strange?'*

Besotted young couple Claudio and Hero have fallen fast and are quickly engaged. Not everyone finds romance so straightforward – Benedick balks at the very thought of it and Beatrice agrees with him, on that if nothing else. But somewhere in this world, there's someone for everyone, even if they're right under your nose.

Shakespeare's raucous comedy is directed by Robert Hastie (*Coriolanus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Sheffield Theatres). Every performance features the use of integrated creative sign language, audio description and captioning. Ramps on the Moon is the pioneering initiative committed to putting D/deaf and disabled artists and audiences at the centre of their work.

**Robert Hastie** is Artistic Director of Sheffield Theatres. For Sheffield Theatres, credits include *She Loves Me*, *The Band Plays On*, *Coriolanus*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Standing at the Sky's Edge*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The York Realist* (co-produced with the Donmar Warehouse), *The Wizard of Oz*, *Of Kith and Kin* (co-produced with the Bush Theatre) and *Julius Caesar*. Other theatre credits include *Macbeth* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Breaking the Code* (Manchester Royal Exchange), *Henry V* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Theatr Clwyd), *My Night with Reg*, *Splendour* (Donmar Warehouse), *Carthage*, *Events While Guarding The Bofors Gun* (Finborough Theatre), *Sixty-Six Books* (Bush Theatre) and *A Breakfast of Eels* (Print Room). Television includes *Sex Education - Romeo and Juliet* stage direction (Netflix).

**Theatre Royal Stratford East presents**

## **CINDERELLA**

Book and Lyrics by **Leo Butler**

Music and Lyrics by **Robert Hyman**

Directed by **Eva Sampson**

**19 November 2022 - 07 January 2023**

**Press Night: Saturday 26 November at 7pm**

Each year, Stratford Panto tears up the rulebook and turns a classic story on its head to make it relevant to our local community and beyond.

Get ready to experience Stratford East's unique twist on this classic tale, set in the ancient home of Sphinx cats, pharaohs and the empress Cleopatra.

This year's panto will feature all the right ingredients. You can expect our much-loved mix of show-stopping original music and laugh-out-loud comedy alongside magical sets and costumes in this perfect festive treat for all ages. Come along and find out if Cinderella will make it to the ball after all.

**Leo Butler** is an award-winning UK playwright. His plays include *Boy* (Almeida Theatre), *All You Need Is LSD* (Birmingham Rep/Told by an Idiot), *I'll Be The Devil* (RSC) and *Redundant, Lucky Dog, Made of Stone* (Royal Court Theatre). He also wrote music and lyrics for *Alison! A Rock Opera* with Dan Persad, and has released a number of alternative rock albums.

**Robert Hyman** was born down the road in East Ham, and is a composer, lyricist, musical director and performer. Robert has been associated with the Theatre Royal Stratford East panto for the last 24 years, ever since being the Musical Director of *Cinderella* in 1998, sometimes as Musical Director, sometimes as Composer/Lyricist and often as both. Highlights include writing the music and lyrics for *Cinderella* (2007) which was the first pantomime ever to be nominated for an Olivier Award and *Rapunzel* (2017) which won him a Great British Pantomime Award. Robert was also Musical Director for hit musicals *The Big Life* (Theatre Royal Stratford East/West End), *Reasons To Be Cheerful* (Theatre Royal Stratford East/UK tour), *Come Dancing* with Ray Davies of The Kinks and the UK tour of *Tommy* produced by Ramps on the Moon. Other projects include composing a new version of *A Tale of Two Cities*, which reached the finals of the Vivian Ellis Awards, conducting a choir of 4000 at the O2, and musical directing the inaugural performance of the World Children's Ensemble at the Royal Albert Hall involving young people from 37 different countries. He writes songs and lyrics as Resident Composer for Image Musical Theatre Co. Robert also works extensively in the training of young people as Musical Director of Theatretrain.

**Eva Sampson** trained on the National Theatre Studio Directors' Course and at the University of Birmingham. She is the Co-Artistic Director of How It Ended theatre company and is an Associate of NYT. Eva is currently Sky Arts Artistic Associate for Theatre Royal Stratford East. Her credits as a Director include *The Ultimate Pickle* (Roundabout/Paines Plough), *Wild* (How It Ended/Unicorn Theatre), *More Than We Can Bear* (Almeida Theatre/Clean Break), *Heart of Hammersmith* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Maryland*, *Meet Mo*, *Ribena*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *At the Statue of Venus* (Royal Opera House), *The Little Gardener* (Kew Gardens), *Last Nine Months* (Vaults), *Sticky* (Southwark Playhouse), *The Tide* (Young Vic), *The Scarecrows' Wedding* (Watford Palace Theatre), *A Peter Rabbit Tale* (Singapore Repertory), *Rudolf* (Leeds Playhouse), *Decades* (Brixton House). For TV/Radio: *Keep the Home Fires Burning* (The Culture Trust Luton), *That's How It Feels: REED TVC Campaign* (MYNT/Kingdom Creative). As Associate/Assistant Director *Four Quartets* (West End), *Noye's Fludde* (Theatre Royal Stratford East/ENO), *Twelfth Night* (Young Vic), *Father Christmas* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Unprecedented* (Headlong/Century Films/BBC Four). As Resident Assistant Director *This is My Family*, *8 Hotels* (Chichester Festival Theatre). As Staff Director at The National Theatre *The Visit*, *Downstate* (co-production with Steppenwolf Theatre).

ThickSkin and Traverse Theatre Company supported by Theatre Royal Stratford East present

## **HOW NOT TO DROWN**

Written by **Nicola McCartney** and **Dritan Kastrati**

Directed by **Neil Bettles**

**26 January – 11 February 2023**

**Press Night: Tuesday 31 January at 7.30pm**

Award-winning theatre company, ThickSkin, returns to the stage with an action-packed, highly visual production telling the painful yet uplifting true story of an 11-year-old unaccompanied asylum-seeker.

*"I don't know why my Dad let me go, especially when he knew how dangerous, how hard it was... I was too young, too weak to make this journey. I wouldn't have sent me... He wouldn't have sent me unless there was a reason."*

In 2002, in the turmoil after the end of the Kosovan War, Dritan is sent on the notoriously perilous journey across the Adriatic with a gang of people smugglers to a new life in Europe. He relies on his young wit and charm to make it to the UK. But the fight for survival continues as he clings to his identity and sense of self when he ends up in the British care system.

*How Not to Drown* shares a story of endurance for a kid who wasn't safe or welcome anywhere in the world, performed by an ensemble cast starring Dritan Kastrati himself.

Commissioned by ThickSkin and Lawrence Batley Theatre.

Theatre Royal Stratford East and the National Youth Theatre present

## **GONE TOO FAR!**

Written by **Bola Agbaje**

**24 March – 1 April 2023**

**Press Night: Tuesday 28 March at 7.30pm**

Bola Agbaje's Olivier Award-winning remarkable debut *GONE TOO FAR!* returns to the London stage in 2023 for the first time since becoming a GCSE set text.

When two brothers from different continents go down the street to buy a pint of milk, they lift the lid on a disunited nation; a world where everyone wants to be an individual, but no one wants to stand out from the crowd, and where respect is always demanded but rarely freely given.

Agbaje's comic and vibrant drama examining identity and heritage is the first co-production between Theatre Royal Stratford East and the National Youth Theatre.

Starring some of Britain's best young talent from the illustrious NYT REP Company in its 10th anniversary season, the production follows the NYT's collaboration with Agbaje on *Bitches* at the Finborough Theatre in 2016. *Gone Too Far!*'s premiere at the Royal Court Theatre in 2007 starred NYT Patron and alumnus Zawe Ashton. It was adapted for the big screen to critical acclaim in 2013.

Graduates of the NYT REP Company include Seraphina Beh (*Top Boy*), Ellise Chappell (*Yesterday*), Sope Dirisù (*Gangs of London*), Chinenye Ezeudu (*Sex Education*), Kate Kennedy (*Halo*) and Lauren Lyle (*Outlander*).

Theatre Royal Stratford East, Nottingham Playhouse and Ramps on the Moon present

## VILLAGE IDIOT

Written by **Samson Hawkins**

Directed by **Nadia Fall**

**13 April – 06 May 2023**

**Press Night: Wednesday 19 April at 7pm**

*"If I were an animal there would be legislation to protect my home, but because I'm just a bloody human they can do whatever the f\*\*k they like."*

Townies have decided they want a lie in, so they're building a new high-speed railway. Issue is, it's going right through Barbara Honeybone's house, and she 'ent having none of it. Barbara's grandson Peter works for the townies and it's his job to convince the village that having a two-tonne bullet hurtling through the cabbage patches will actually be for the best.

Then there's Harry, Barbara's younger grandson, he 'ent that bothered about trains, he's only got eyes for Debbie Mahoney. But the only thing Barbara hates more than townies is the Mahoneys.

Welcome to Syresham, South Northamptonshire. It's not quite the Cotswolds, not quite one of those posh villages Americans have in movies but it does have *Syresham's Got Talent*, the headline event of the village fair. There'll be songs, dancing, magic, drag, a bit of wrestling, and Kevin's doing a meat raffle (vegetarian option two tins of Strongbow).

*Village Idiot* is an audacious comedy, where family feuds kick off around a country fair that you townies are all invited to.

We hope it's a bit like the other plays you've seen here, but less s\*\*t.

*Ramps on the Moon* is the pioneering initiative committed to putting D/deaf and disabled artists and audiences at the centre of their work.

**Samson Hawkins** is a playwright and theatre director. He's from Northamptonshire, but he now lives on a boat. This is Samson's debut full-length play. Other writing includes audio play *Oh for F\*ck's Sake (I'm in love with you)* which received In Good Company's Take Off award and was produced by The Nottingham Playhouse, a comedy puppet ballet *Swan Bake* (Brighton Fringe, Edinburgh Fringe, Soho Theatre), short play *The Unremarkable Adventures of Prozac Man & his Kind of Friend Low Self-esteem Boy* (The Bunker), TIE show *Rainbow Rex* which workshopped at Leicester Curve and adaptations of *Moby Dick*, *The Hobbit* and *Animal Farm* which were performed in schools. Samson has been a member of The Royal Court Writers Group, Soho Writers Lab, BBC Arts and Rural Media New Creatives, New Perspectives New Associates, Graeae Beyond member and is currently a Leicester Curve Resident Artist. Samson has also been the trainee theatre director of the Orange Tree Theatre, Resident Director of The Oxford Playhouse and Resident Director of Eton College.

**Nadia Fall** trained at Goldsmiths College, University of London (MA Directing) and on the NT Studio's Directors programme. Nadia directed *The Village* and *King Hedley II* as her first shows as Artistic Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East.

In May 2020 she directed *The Outside Dog* for BBC One as part of London Theatre Company's *Talking Heads* monologue series. In September 2020 she directed *NO MASKS* for Sky Arts, a one-off drama based on testimonials from key workers. Nadia wrote and directed *Welcome To Iran*, which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 as part of the Lockdown Theatre Festival.

She recently directed *Shining City* and *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars* at Stratford East. Her other directing credits include *Three Sisters*, *The Suicide*, *Our Country's Good*, *Dara*, *Chewing Gum Dreams*, *Home*, *Hymn*, *The Doctor's Dilemma* (National Theatre), *Hir*, *Disgraced* (Bush Theatre), *R and D* (Hampstead Theatre), *Way Upstream* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Hobson's Choice* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *How Was It For You?* (Unicorn Theatre), *Sticks & Stones* (Polka Theatre), *The Maids* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Miss Julie* (Croydon Warehouse Theatre) and *Wild Turkey* (Site Specific).

As Associate Director *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Gielgud Theatre), *Collaborators* and *The Habit of Art* (National Theatre), and as Staff Director, *Rocket to the Moon*, *Really Old*, *Like Forty Five*, *Phèdre* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (National Theatre). Fall has directed at Guildhall School of Music and Drama and led participation initiatives with partners such as the Young Vic, Clean Break, Soho Theatre and the Royal Court.

**Theatre Royal Stratford East and Actors Touring Company present**

**The UK premiere of**

**TAMBO & BONES**

Written by **Dave Harris**

Directed by **Matthew Xia**

**16 June – 15 July 2023**

**Press Night: Thursday 22 June at 7pm**

*Tambo & Bones* are trapped in a minstrel show. It's mad hard to feel like a real person when you're trapped in a minstrel show. Their escape plan: get out, get bank, get even.

So, accept our invitation, if you will, to step from the heart of the crumbling Empire into an America at the epicentre of the global Black Lives Matter movement.

Part distorted clown-show, part spectacular hip-hop concert, part absurdist Afro-futuristic lecture (with robots!), *Tambo & Bones* interrogates the commodification and commercialisation of Black pain in a satirical roller coaster of a show.

**Dave Harris** is a poet and playwright from West Philly. Selected plays include *Tambo & Bones* (Playwrights Horizons, Center Theatre Group, 2022), *Exception to the Rule* (Roundabout Theatre Company, 2022), *Incendiary* (Woolly Mammoth 2023) and *Everybody Black* (Humana Festival, 2019). His first feature film, *Summertime* premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. Dave is currently writing the feature adaptation of *The Fortress of Solitude* for Amazon, and an original television project at FX, ABC Studios and Goddard Textiles. Selected honours include the Ollie Award, The Lorraine Hansberry Award and Mark Twain Award from The Kennedy Center, The International Commendation for The Bruntwood Prize and a Cave Canem poetry fellowship, amongst others.



**Matthew Xia** is Artistic Director of Actors Touring Company where he has directed *Amsterdam*, *Rice* and the Alfred Fagon Award-winning play *Family Tree*. He is a former Associate Artistic Director of Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, Director in Residence at Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse and Associate Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East (where he started in the youth theatre in 1993!).

Matthew's acclaimed productions include *The Wiz* (Hope Mill), *Into the Woods*, *Frankenstein* (Manchester Royal Exchange), *Wish List* (Royal Court), *Blue/Orange*, *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* (Young Vic), *Shebeen*, *One Night in Miami* (Nottingham Playhouse). Other work of note includes *Blood Knot* (Orange Tree), *The Blacks*, *Sleeping Beauty* (Theatre Royal Stratford East) and *Suckerpunch Boomsuite* (Barbican). At 19, Matthew became the first DJ to join BBC 1Xtra as hip-hop specialist DJ Excalibah. He has played most major festivals and clubs in the UK and Europe including Glastonbury, Ministry of Sound, and Fabric. Excalibah performed for a global audience of over 1 billion as a headline DJ at the London 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony. Matthew has worked with renowned writers as a director and dramaturg, including Joe Penhall, Arinzé Kene, April De Angelis, Katherine Soper and Mojisola Adebayo. In 2019 Matthew was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of the Arts London for "indefatigably working to make theatre universally accessible by working to promote minority groups as theatre leaders, makers and consumers."

### **THEATRE ROYAL STRATFORD EAST LISTINGS**

Gerry Raffles Square, London E15 1BN

Box Office: **020 8534 0310** | [www.stratfordeast.com](http://www.stratfordeast.com)

Twitter: **@stratford\_east**  
Instagram: **@stratford\_east**  
Facebook: **/theatroyalstratfordeast**

#### **PAINKILLER**

**28 – 30 July 2022**

**Press Night: Thursday 28 July at 7.30pm**

##### **Schedule:**

Thu 28 & Sat 30 Jul, 7.30pm

Fri 29 Jul, 8pm

**Tickets:** £8 Standard, £5 under 25s

**Age Guidance:** 12+ (contains strong language, violence and references to PTSD and trauma)

#### **THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISSOCIA**

**16 September – 15 October 2022**

**Press night: Thursday 22 September at 7pm**

##### **Schedule:**

Tue - Fri, 7.30pm

Sat, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Thu 13 Oct, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Thu 22 Sep, 7pm

##### **Access Performances:**

Socially Distanced & Masked - Sat 24 Sep, 2.30pm

Relaxed Environment - Sat 1 Oct, 2.30pm

BSL Interpreted - Thu 6 Oct, 7.30pm

Captioned - Fri 7 Oct, 7.30pm

Audio Described - Sat 8 Oct, 2.30pm

**Tickets:** from £10

**Age Guidance:** 14+ (the show contains strong language and scenes some may find upsetting relating to sexual violence and mental health)

## **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**

**01 – 05 November 2022**

**Schedule:**

Tue – Sat, 7.30pm

Thu & Sat, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

**Access:** every performance features the use of integrated creative sign language, audio description and captioning

**Tickets:** from £10

**Age Guidance:** suitable for all ages

## **CINDERELLA**

**19 November 2022 - 07 January 2023**

**Press Night: Saturday 26 November at 7pm**

**Schedule:** Performance times vary (see website for full schedule)

**Access performances:**

BSL Interpreted - Sat 10 Dec, 12pm

Captioned - Fri 16 Dec, 7pm

Audio Described - Sat 22 Dec, 2pm

Relaxed Performance - Fri 30 Dec, 12pm

**Tickets:** £10 - £35

**Age Guidance:** Suitable for all ages

## **HOW NOT TO DROWN**

**26 January – 11 February 2023**

**Press Night: Tuesday 31 January at 7.30pm**

**Schedule:**

Tue-Sat, 7.30pm

Sat, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Mon 06 Feb 7.30pm

Thu 02 & Thu 09 Feb, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

**Access performances:**

Audio Described - Sat 11 Feb, 2.30pm

BSL Interpreted - Thu 09 Feb, 7.30pm

Captioned - Fri 10 Feb, 7.30pm

**Tickets:** from £10

**Age Guidance:** 14+ (contains loud sound effects and bangs, flashing lights and haze. The show contains themes of war)

## **GONE TOO FAR!**

**24 March – 01 April 2023**

**Press Night: Tuesday 28 March at 7.30pm**

**Schedule:**

Mon-Sat, 7.30pm

Thu 30 Mar & Sat 01 Apr, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

**Access performances:**

Relaxed Environment – Wednesday 29 March, 7.30pm

**Tickets:** from £10

### **VILLAGE IDIOT**

**13 April – 06 May 2023**

**Press Night: Wednesday 19 April at 7pm**

#### **Schedule:**

Tue-Sat, 7.30pm

Sat, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Wed 26 Apr, 2.30pm

#### **Access performances:**

Socially Distanced & Masked - Sat 22 Apr, 2.30pm

BSL Interpreted – Thu 04 May, 7.30pm

Captioned - Fri 05 May, 7.30pm

Audio Described - Sat 06 May, 2.30pm

Every performance of *Village Idiot* will be in a Relaxed Environment

**Tickets:** from £10

**Age Guidance:** 14+ (this show contains very strong language and discusses themes some may find upsetting relating to race, sexuality and disability)

### **TAMBO & BONES**

**16 June – 15 July 2023**

**Press Night: Thursday 22 June at 7pm**

#### **Schedule:**

Mon-Sat, 7.30pm

Thu 22 Jun, 7pm

Sat, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Thu 13 Jul, 2.30pm & 7.30pm

#### **Access performances:**

Socially Distanced & Masked - Sat 24 Jun, 2.30pm

Relaxed Environment – Sat 1 July 2.30pm

BSL Interpreted – Thu 06 Jul, 7.30pm

Captioned - Fri 07 Jul, 7.30pm

Audio Described - Sat 08 Jul, 2.30pm

**Tickets:** from £10

**Age Guidance:** 14+ (this show contains sounds of gunfire, violence, strong language, repeated use of a racial slur, references to genocide and discusses themes some may find upsetting relating to race)

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

#### **Theatre Royal Stratford East**

Since 1884, Theatre Royal Stratford East, the historic producing house in the heart of London's East End, has spearheaded diverse work and championed often marginalised stories on its stage. Many leading actors, writers and directors have been part of the Theatre Royal Stratford East family including Meera Syal, Barbara Windsor, Don Warrington, Indhu Rubasingham, Tanika Gupta, Roy Williams and Cynthia Erivo to name but a few. Now with Artistic Director Nadia Fall at the helm, Theatre Royal Stratford East presents a bold programme of reimagined classics, timely revivals and ground-breaking new work.

#### **Sheffield Theatres**

Sheffield Theatres is home to three theatres: the Crucible, the Sheffield landmark with a world-famous reputation; the Studio, an intimate, versatile space for getting closer to the action; and the gleaming Lyceum, the beautiful proscenium that hosts the best of the UK's touring shows.

Having held the title 'Regional Theatre of the Year' on four separate occasions, Sheffield Theatres is the ticket to big names and local heroes, timeless treasures and new voices. Committed to investing in the creative leaders of the future, Sheffield Theatres' dedicated talent development hub, The Bank, opened in 2019 to support a new cohort of emerging theatre-makers every year.

In November 2021, the Crucible and Studio theatres celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The anniversary season includes a theatrical first, with Chris Bush's new trilogy *Rock/Paper/Scissors* to be performed across all three venues with the same cast at the same time, plus the highly anticipated return of Sheffield-set new musical *Standing at the Sky's Edge*. With music and lyrics by Mercury Prize nominated Richard Hawley, the production won the 2020 South Bank Sky Arts Award for theatre and was named Best Musical Production at the 2019 UK Theatre Awards.

Sheffield Theatres has a reputation for bold new work. Dazzling adaptation *Life of Pi* won four awards at the 2019 UK Theatre Awards, 'Achievement in Technical Theatre' at the Stage Awards and 'Best New Play' at the WhatsOnStage Awards. The show opened in the West End in 2021. This success follows the phenomenal Sheffield musical *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* which started life at the Crucible in 2017, before transferring to the West End, embarking on a UK tour and being turned into a feature film released simultaneously to 244 countries on Amazon Prime in September 2021.

### **Ramps on the Moon**

Ramps on the Moon is enriching the stories we tell and the way we tell them by normalising the presence of D/deaf and disabled people both on and off stage. Led by New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, Ramps on the Moon brings together a collaborative network of six National Portfolio Organisation theatres: Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Nottingham Playhouse, Leeds Playhouse, and Sheffield Theatres. The Regional Theatre Young Directors Scheme (RTYDS) and Wiltshire Creative (WC) are Associate Partners.

### **ThickSkin**

ThickSkin is an award-winning theatre company based in Manchester, making work across live and digital platforms. We create bold and ambitious theatre using our distinctive physicality and cinematic style to reach and inspire young, new and diverse audiences across the world. We nurture talented theatre makers, providing a springboard for artists who are ready to take a leap.

Our work includes a wide range of creative approaches to tell stories in new and inspiring ways. From live stage productions to virtual reality experiences, to immersive audio plays, we make theatre that is rooted in contemporary culture.

ThickSkin is committed to supporting young people and early-career artists through education, training and employment in the arts. We work hard to reach new audiences through our work and especially young people who have less opportunities or interest in going to the theatre.

### **Traverse Theatre**

As Scotland's new writing theatre, the Traverse Theatre is a dynamic centre for performance, experience and discovery, often referred to as Edinburgh's 'beating heart of the Fringe' in August. Enabling people across society to access and engage with theatre is our fundamental mission.

Our year-round programme bursts with new stories and live performances that challenge, inform and entertain. We empower artists and audiences to make sense of the world today, providing a safe space to question, learn, empathise and – crucially – encounter different people and experiences.

The timely, powerful stories that start life on our stages have global impact, resulting in dozens of tours, productions and translations. We are critically acclaimed and recognised the world over for our originality and artistic risk, which we hope will create some of the most talked-about plays, productions, directors, writers and actors for years to come.

### **National Youth Theatre**

National Youth Theatre is a pioneering youth arts charity which has nurtured the talent of hundreds of thousands of young creative people over the past 66 years. It has an active creative network of over 14,000 young people UK-wide and regularly produces critically acclaimed work on screen, on leading stages and at iconic sites at home and abroad.

In 2022 the charity will launch its 10th anniversary NYT REP Company, an award-winning free alternative to formal training, continue its work in non-mainstream schools through its national Inclusive Practice Collective and continue to support and nurture 5,000 young creative people through its short courses and long-term employment programmes. The charity recently won the 2022 Architects Journal Retrofit Award for the major redevelopment of its Creative Production House and is a major partner on LEEDS 2023. Its alumni include some of the world's most celebrated performers, award-winning backstage talent working globally at leading theatres, stadiums and events and cultural leaders around the world.

### **Nottingham Playhouse**

Nottingham Playhouse is dedicated to making bold and thrilling theatre in the heart of Nottingham. The theatre is a central part of cultural life in the city and is driven by a belief that theatre should be accessible to everyone. Its rich programme of work in its theatre and its Neville Studio, which sits alongside its ambitious and inclusive outreach and community work, has earned it the reputation of being one of the leading regional theatres in the UK.

### **Actors Touring Company**

Actors Touring Company (ATC) is a portable portal to the world. Through our work, we connect global artistic voices to local communities.

ATC is the UK's leading theatre producer of international plays. We create dialogue between Britain and the rest of the world – and between the intersecting cultures within nations.

We are passionate about giving voice to the 'outsider within'. We create a dialogue between those deemed 'the other' and audiences in every UK region and beyond: from Scarborough to Hong Kong.

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