

## PRESS RELEASE

# NATIONAL YOUTH THEATRE LAUNCHES 2017 SEASON



- **NYT LAUNCHES 2017 SEASON TODAY WITH 50 PLAY READINGS IN A DAY OF NYT COMMISSIONS ACROSS THE UK - FROM THE NATIONAL SPACE CENTRE IN LEICESTER, TO A FURNITURE SHOP IN FINSBURY PARK - STREAMED VIA NYT'S CHANNELS AS THEY CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF COMMISSIONING NEW WRITING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**
- **2017 PROGRAMME A NEW SEASON IN THE EAST END, A FIFTH SEASON IN THE WEST END, A PARTNERSHIP WITH FRANTIC ASSEMBLY, AND A RESTAGING OF THEIR FIRST EVER COMMISSION AT WILTON'S MUSIC HALL**
- ***THREE* - A NEW PLAY BY SOPHIE ELLERBY PERFORMED BY SOCIAL INCLUSION COURSE, 'PLAYING UP' MEMBERS AT THE ARCOLA FROM 20 - 22 JULY**
- **FOUR PLAYS TO BE STAGED IN AN 'EAST END SEASON' AT THE YARD THEATRE AND WILTON'S MUSIC HALL**
- **AT THE YARD THEATRE FROM 8-26 AUGUST:**
  - **THE STAGE ADAPTATION OF MOHSIN HAMID'S MAN BOOKER SHORTLISTED NOVEL *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST* WILL RETURN**
  - **JESSICA SWALE'S *BLUE STOCKINGS* ABOUT THE PIONEERS OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN THE UK, DIRECTED BY ALICE KNIGHT**
  - ***THE HOST*, A NEW PLAY FOLLOWING A SYRIAN REFUGEE IN SOUTH EAST LONDON BY NESSAH MUTHY, DIRECTED BY ZOE LAFFERTY**

- A RESTAGING OF THE DEFINITIVE PLAY ON FOOTBALL HOOLIGANISM, *ZIGGER ZAGGER*, FOR ITS 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY AT WILTON'S MUSIC HALL FROM 6 - 9 SEPTEMBER
- FOR A FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR THE FREE NYT REP COMPANY OF SIXTEEN 18-25 YEAR-OLDS WILL PERFORM IN REPERTORY IN LONDON'S WEST END FROM 26 SEPTEMBER - 8 DECEMBER 2017
  - A BRAND NEW FEMALE-LED ADAPTATION OF *JEKYLL AND HYDE* BY EVAN PLACEY, DIRECTED BY ROY ALEXANDER WEISE
  - FRANTIC ASSEMBLY'S *OTHELLO* DIRECTED BY SIMON PITTMAN
  - A THIRD PLAY DIRECTED BY THE 2017 BRYAN FORBES BURSARY RECIPIENT STILL TO BE ANNOUNCED
- JAMES BOND PRODUCER BARBARA BROCCOLI BECOMES NEW PRESIDENT OF NYT
- TICKETS FOR THE WEST END SEASON GO ON SALE AT 10AM ON 4 APRIL, TICKETS FOR THE YARD GO ON SALE ON 4 APRIL AND TICKETS FOR WILTON'S GO ON SALE 10 APRIL MORE INFORMATION AT [WWW.NYT.ORG.UK](http://WWW.NYT.ORG.UK)
- IMAGE DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)  
 USERNAME: National Youth Theatre  
 PASSWORD: 2017
- TWITTER: [@NYTOFGB](#) | FACEBOOK: [NATIONALYOUTHTHEATRE](#)

Paul Roseby, Artistic Director and Chief Executive of the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain (NYT) has today announced its new season of work. 2017 marks 50 years of the organisation commissioning new work for young people and in celebration 50 play readings are taking place in weird and wonderful locations across the UK today. Some notable writers who received early commissions from NYT, such as James Graham (*This House, Finding Neverland*), Jack Thorne (*Harry Potter and The Cursed Child*) and Zawe Ashton have plays being showcased.

The '50 Plays in a Day', performed by NYT members and presented by young producers include, amongst others, James Graham's political drama *Tory Boyz* at the Houses of Parliament with NYT alumni Ben Aldridge (*Our Girl*), Al Smith's 1960s based *Astronaut's Wives Club* at The National Space Centre Leicester, *The Host*, part of the NYT 2017 season, by Nessah Muthy in Calais at a Help Refugee Warehouse and *The World's Wife* by Carol Ann Duffy in Cannock Chase Forest, Staffordshire where Duffy is from. Other readings are taking place at Kenilworth Castle, Birmingham Shakespeare Memorial Library, Porthcawl Comprehensive School in Wales, Sheffield Lyceum Theatre, Wycombe Museum, Govanhill Baths in Glasgow, as well as a pub in Doncaster and a furniture shop in Finsbury Park. The full line up can be found at [www.nyt.org.uk/whats-on/50plays](http://www.nyt.org.uk/whats-on/50plays). Selected plays will also be broadcast on Facebook Live and can be accessed via the National Youth Theatre's social media ([Twitter](#)/ [Facebook](#)) and website.

The initiative marks the launch of NYT's 2017 season which will include their first ever 'East End season' at the Yard Theatre this summer after the sell out success of their season of new writing at the Finborough last year. The East End Season will feature Olivier Award-winning **Jessica Swale's** *Blue Stockings*, the premiere of *The Host*, a new play commission by NYT in response to 23 June 2016 and the European refugee crisis by **Nessah Muthy** and the return of **Mohsin Hamid's** *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In October they will take a 50 strong cast to Wilton's Music Hall to bring back Peter Terson's iconic play about football hooliganism, *Zigger Zagger*, 50 years after it was first commissioned by them. For autumn, following the success of four previous West End REP Seasons, the company will return to the Ambassadors Theatre for a fifth year in September with a brand new female-led adaptation of *Jekyll and Hyde* exploring women's roles and rights in Victorian society, by **Evan Placey** who wrote their 2015 hit *Consensual*. The second REP show, which marks an exciting new collaboration, will see NYT present **Frantic Assembly's** award-winning modern-day *Othello* under the direction of Frantic's Associate Director **Simon Pittman**. NYT's social inclusion course will also run at the Arcola Theatre with a new play by **Sophie Ellerby**.

It is also announced today that **Barbara Broccoli** will succeed **Lord Waheed Alli** as President of the National Youth Theatre. Broccoli is a one of the entertainment industry's most successful female producers, perhaps best known for her work on the *James Bond* film franchise, including *Skyfall* and *Spectre*. Stage producer credits include *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Once* and *The Kid Stays in The Picture*.

**Paul Roseby** said: *"In 2017 we celebrate our growing diverse cohort by marking 50 years of new writing and I'm delighted to see our entrepreneurial young creatives simultaneously stage 50 plays in 50 locations across the UK today from catalogue of past commissions. I'm also a champion of the need for theatre to have greater parity with sport in education so it's timely that we bring the passion for the beautiful game and passion for theatre together once more in re-staging Zigger Zagger. With seven further productions and work at over 100 sites nationwide, including a record 44 audition centres, NYT remains a vital and relevant contributor to our cultural landscape. We will continue to strive to do more to make sure that talented young people can access our opportunities regardless of where they're from or their background."*

**Barbara Broccoli** said: *"I'm delighted to be working with the National Youth Theatre in developing and celebrating the most talented and diverse young people that the UK has to offer."*

**Scott Graham**, **Frantic Assembly's** Artistic Director said: *"We are thrilled to be collaborating with this brilliant, young ensemble, engaging again with the fire, rage and beauty at the heart of this classic text. We can't wait to see this young company take hold of it and make it their own."*

NYT and leading theatre publisher Nick Hern Books is delighted to announce the upcoming publication of *National Youth Theatre Monologues: Speeches for Young People*, a new collection of audition speeches drawn from material produced by world-leading youth arts organisation the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain. The book, edited by National Youth Theatre Associate Artist **Michael Bryher** and published on 6 July, contains over 75 monologues all taken from plays performed by the NYT, by writers such as **Zawe Ashton**,

Moira Buffini, Carol Ann Duffy, Brian Friel, James Graham, Dennis Kelly, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Gbolahan Obisesan, Evan Placey and Jack Thorne. The collection also offers tips on performing the speeches from current and former NYT members, plus advice on preparing for auditions.

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### SOCIAL INCLUSION AT THE ARCOLA THEATRE

Arcola Theatre

*Three*

20 - 22 July

By Sophie Ellerby

Directed by Anna Niland

Outside of the West End, NYT will stage *Three* by **Sophie Ellerby** (HighTide First Commissions Writer and NYT REP Company 2013), starring social inclusion participants at the Arcola Theatre as part of NYT's '**Playing Up**' course, which is now in its eighth year. The course, for 19 - 24 year olds not in full time education, employment or training, creates productions and commissions new work. It has an 85% success rate of moving young people into higher education, further training or employment, with recent alumni including **Seraphina Beh**, who after joining NYT's 2016 REP Company was spotted for a role in *Eastenders*, where she is currently starring as Madison Drake, **Gavi Singh Chera** who's currently appearing in Headlong Theatre's *Pygmalion* and **Ria Zmitrowicz** from ITV's *Mr Selfridge*. Ellerby's urban and domestic new drama following three sisters will be directed by NYT Associate Director **Anna Niland** (*Pigeon English*).

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### EAST END SEASON AT THE YARD THEATRE

The Yard Theatre

8 - 26 August 2017

Press Nights: 9, 16, 23 August 2017

#### ***The Reluctant Fundamentalist***

8 - 12 August

By Mohsin Hamid

Adapted by Stephanie Street

Directed by Prasanna Puwanarajah

#### ***Blue Stockings***

14 - 19 August

by Jessica Swale

Directed by Alice Knight

#### ***The Host***

22 - 26 August

By Nessah Muthy

Directed by Zoe Lafferty

After the sell-out success of their new writing season at the Finborough Theatre in West London last year, a new venture for NYT this summer will be a season of work at East London's the Yard Theatre. The programme includes two new productions (one new play) and the return of one of the successes from the Finborough season.

The stage adaptation of **Mohsin Hamid's** Man Booker Prize shortlisted novel and Hollywood blockbuster film, ***The Reluctant Fundamentalist*** will return, having received its World Premiere in NYT's season of new writing at the Finborough Theatre in 2016. The production looks at the ironies of prejudice and representation in a post 9/11 New York. It follows Pakistani native Changez's disenchantment with the West and his journey back to Lahore. The production was adapted for stage by **Stephanie Street** (*Sisters*) and will be directed by **Prasanna Puwanarajah** (*Moth*).

Following its world premiere at the Globe Theatre in 2013, NYT present the first play by Olivier Award winning playwright **Jessica Swale** (*Nell Gwynn*) for which she was nominated for the Evening Standards' Most Promising Playwright Award. ***Blue Stockings*** follows the battle at Girton College, Cambridge in 1896 to earn women the right to graduate. Challenging gendered views about women's moral judgement and suitability to academia the play has heavy parallels with the fight for female suffrage. The brand new production will be directed by **Alice Knight**, recipient of the 2014 Bryan Forbes Director Bursary Fund.

NYT has also commissioned its most recent play, ***The Host*** by **Nessah Muthy** (recently listed by BBC as a one-to-watch), directed by **Zoe Lafferty** (*Queens of Syria*). Commissioned in response to 23 June 2016 and the European refugee crisis, *The Host* is set on a South East London council estate and tells the story of Riam, a Syrian refugee as she forges new relationships with the family who have taken her in all the while battling the memories of her journey to England.

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## NATIONAL YOUTH THEATRE PRESENT ZIGGER ZAGGER BY PETER TERSON

### **Wilton's Music Hall**

6 - 9 September

Press Night: 7 September

By Peter Terson

Directed by Juliet Knight

*The original football hooliganism play is back.*

Widely considered one of the definitive plays on football hooliganism, ***Zigger Zagger*** is to return 50 years after becoming the National Youth Theatre's first ever new writing commission. **Peter Terson's** widely studied play will receive a special anniversary production at Wilton's Music Hall marking half a century since its world premiere. The production is set to have cast of 50 under the direction of **Juliet Knight** (*White Boy*).

An irreverent tale of tribalism, the play follows the story of Harry Philton, a passionate fan of the local football team, who struggles between the life of sex, violence and drink football offers and a stable future.

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## **NYT'S 2017 WEST END REP SEASON**

### **Ambassadors Theatre**

26 September - 8 December

Press Nights: 10 and 11 October

### ***Jekyll and Hyde***

In a new version by Evan Placey

Based on the novella by Robert Louis Stevenson

Directed by Roy Alexander Weise

### **NYT present Frantic Assembly's**

### ***Othello***

By William Shakespeare

Adapted by Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett for Frantic Assembly

Directed by Simon Pittman

Now in its fifth consecutive year, the NYT REP is inspired by the traditional repertory theatre model and was set up by Artistic Director Paul Roseby in 2012 to provide a much needed free alternative to expensive formal training. The course is a unique free talent development initiative allowing the best young talent to work for nine months with leading institutions culminating in three months of performances in the West End. REP company alumni include Sope Dirisu (2013) who is about to play Coriolanus at the RSC, Seraphina Beh who is starring in EastEnders after being spotted in the REP and beginning filming the following week (2016), Ellise Chappell who is set to play a lead role in BBC One's series of Poldark (2015) and Lauren Lyle (2015) who is filming a major role for a new Amazon series. Mentors to REP members this year include Denise Gough (People Places Things), Paterson Joseph (Peep Show), Shane Zaza (Happy Valley) as well as the Heads of Casting at the Royal Court Theatre and National Theatre.

*Everyone has another face they hide behind...*

**Evan Placey** (*Consensual* for the 2015 NYT REP, *Girls Like That*) will adapt **Robert Louis Stevenson's** classic Victorian novel ***Jekyll and Hyde***. Placey's female-led adaptation will interrogate the Victorian separate spheres domestic-public dichotomy putting women centre stage where they are completely absent in the novella. The production will explore late nineteenth century society's relationship to women's destinies, properties and bodies, against the backdrop of the tumultuous drive for women's suffrage and first wave feminism. The production will be directed by **Roy Alexander Weise** (JMK 2016 Winner), who most recently directed the Young Vic's acclaimed production on *The Mountaintop*.

*This is a mating ground. A dog-eat-dog kind of place. And it's about to kick off...*

In brand new collaboration for 2017, NYT are working in partnership with **Frantic Assembly** to present their award-winning adaptation of ***Othello***. Their electrifying take on Shakespeare's thriller is set in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain and is celebrated for its physical and collaborative theatre, bringing the sex, violence and jealousy of the tragedy into the

modern day. The production will be directed by **Simon Pittman** (Associate Director, Frantic Assembly).

Alongside NYT's annual theatre courses engaging 1500 young people from all over the UK, this year the charity is also offering young people not in education or employment free film workshops in Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Nottingham through new initiative Shortflix. Shortflix is led by Creative England in partnership with NYT and Sky Arts with support from Creative Skillset's Film Skills Fund and seeks to give young people from backgrounds underrepresented in the industry a voice.

**ENDS**

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**LISTINGS**

**PLAYING UP**

**Three**

Arcola Theatre, E8 3DL  
20 - 22 July

**EAST END SEASON AT THE YARD**

The Yard Theatre, E9 5EN  
8 - 26 August

**The Reluctant Fundamentalist**

**Press Performance: 9 August**

8 - 12 August

Evening performances: 7.30pm 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 August

Matinee performances: 3pm 12 August

**Blue Stockings**

**Press Performance: 16 August**

15 - 19 August

Evening performances: 7.30pm 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 August

Matinee performances 3pm 19 August

**Host**

**Press Performance: 23 August**

22 - 26 August

Evening performances 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 August

Matinee performances 3pm 26 August

**ZIGGER ZAGGER**

Wilton's Music Hall, E1 8JB

**Press performance: 7 September**

6-9 September

Evening performances 7.30pm 6,7,8,9 September

Matinee performances 2.30pm 7,8,9 September

## **REP SEASON**

Ambassadors Theatre, WC2H 9ND

26 September - 8 December

Press Performances: Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 October

### **Jekyll and Hyde**

In a new version by Evan Placey

Based on the novella by Robert Louis Stevenson

Directed by Roy Alexander Weise

Evening performances (7:30pm): 27 Sep, 2,4,11,17,31 Oct, 8,14,22,28 Nov, 6 Dec

Matinee performances (2:00pm): 2,4,11,17,27,31 Oct, 3,8,14,17, 22, 28 Nov, 1,6 Dec

### **National Youth Theatre present Frantic Assembly's Othello**

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Simon Pittman

Evening performances (7:30pm): 26 Sep, 3,10,24 Oct, 1,7,15,21,29 Nov, 5 Dec

Matinee performances (2:00pm): 29 Sep, 3,6,10,13,20,24 Oct, 1,7,10,15,21,24,29 Nov, 5,8 Dec

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Biographies**

#### Playing Up

**Sophie Ellerby** was a member of the NYT rep company in 2013 starring in *Tory Boyz*, *Prince of Denmark* and *Romeo and Juliet*. She has also starred in Channel 4's *This Is England* and *Saxon Court* at Southwark Playhouse. Sophie has been chosen for HighTide First Commissions scheme with her play *Birds*.

**Anna Niland** is the Associate Director of National Youth Theatre and oversees their courses, NYT REP Company and flagship social inclusion course Playing Up. She trained with the National Youth Theatre and at Rose Bruford College and worked extensively as an actor on stage, screen and radio. Recent directing credits include: William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* abridged by Tom Stoppard (Ambassadors Theatre); *You Can* by Luke Barnes (Ambassadors Theatre); *Red Riding Hood* (Latitude Festival); *NYT's 2013 Season Highlights* (Buckingham Palace); *SLICK* (Sheffield Park Hill Estate) and *Tits Teeth* by Michael Wynne (Soho Theatre).

#### Blue Stockings

**Jessica Swale** is an Olivier Award winning playwright, director and screenwriter. Theatre writing credits include *Nell Gwynn* (West End; Shakespeare's Globe); *The Mission* (Arts Ed); *Stig of the Dump*; *The Secret Garden* (Grosvenor Park Theatre); *Far from the Madding Crowd*; *Sense & Sensibility* (Watermill Theatre). Screenwriting projects include *Nell Gwynn* and *Horrible Histories*. Jessica is the Artistic Director of Red Handed Theatre Company which aims to produce fresh interpretations of classics and develop new writing. She is also an Associate Director for Youth Bridge Global, an International NGO which uses theatre as a development tool and aims to instill social and linguistic skills in the participants and assist damaged communities worldwide.

**Alice Knight** was the Bryan Forbes 2014 Bursary Recipient and has previously directed *Ghost Dance*, *Beat* and *Coward: Revue Sketches* for National Youth Theatre. Additional credits include *Ensemble* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Protest* (Young Vic), *The World's Wife* (Latitude, Hay Festival & Ambassadors



Theatre) and *Cosmic Jives* (Albany Theatre). Upcoming projects include Associate Director on *Twelfth Night* at the National Theatre.

#### Host

**Nessah Muthy** is a writer for TV and theatre. She has worked with a number of theatres including the Royal Court and is currently writing plays for HighTide, Pursued By A Bear Productions, Cardboard Citizens and Theatre Centre. For screen, Nessah has written for *Holby City*, following successful completion of the show's shadow scheme and has previously written for *EastEnders: E20*. She is currently developing a number of original ideas and is part of the BBC Drama Writers Scheme for 2016.

**Zoe Lafferty** is an Associate Director with The Freedom Theatre in Palestine, a director with the Old Vic 12 and Creative Producer with ice&fire. Previous directing credits include *Queens of Syria* (Young Vic; National Tour), *The Siege* (Nottingham Playhouse; National Tour), *The Keepers of Infinite Space* (The Park Theatre), *The Fear of Breathing* (Finborough Theatre), *Concrete Jungle* (Riverside Studios) and *Alice in Wonderland* (The Freedom Theatre, Palestine).

#### The Reluctant Fundamentalist

**Prasanna Puwanarajah** is a writer and director for film, TV and theatre. Prasanna's debut play *Nightwatchman* premiered at the National Theatre. His directing credits include *Moth* (HighTide Festival, Bush Theatre). His short film *The Half-Light*, which he both wrote and directed also received critical acclaim and awards in film festivals around the world. Prasanna is currently in development on his debut screenplay, *V.C.*, commissioned by Sir Ben Kingsley for Lavender Pictures. He also created an original political drama series called *Troll* with Riz Ahmed which is in development with Drama Republic.

**Stephanie Street** is an actor, writer, Literary Associate of HighTide festival and founder member of The Act for Change Project. Street's theatre credits include *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* (National Theatre), *Nightwatchman* (National Theatre); *Rough Cuts, Shades* (both Royal Court Theatre), *Sweet Cider (Arcola)*, *Not the End of the World* (Bristol Old Vic) *Too Close to Home (Lyric Theatre)* and *The Vagina Monologues (UK Tour)*. Her TV credits include: *Silk, Lewis, Apparitions* and *Primeval*. Her writing credits include an adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* (NYT REP season 2015) and *Sisters*, a verbatim piece which re-opened the Sheffield Crucible Studio in March 2010.

#### Zigger Zagger

**Peter Terson** is a British playwright whose plays have been produced for stage, television and radio. His early work in the 1960s focused on the working class culture of industrial England such as *The Apprentices*. Several of his plays have been produced by the National Youth Theatre including *Zigger Zagger, Fuzz, Spring Heeled Jack, Good Lads at Heart* and *Geordie's March*

**Juliet Knight** is a director, actor and facilitator. Previous directing credits for the National Youth Theatre include *Talking to Byron* by Tanika Gupta, *Out of Me* by Jane Bodie and *Weekday Nights* by Luke Barnes. Additional directing credits include *The Day After* (The Vault Festival), *White Boy* (Soho Theatre) and *Prime Resident* (Soho Theatre).

#### Jekyll and Hyde

**Evan Placey** won a Writers' Guild Award for Best Play for Young Audiences for *Girls Like That* (Unicorn Theatre). His other plays include: *Mother of Him* (Courtyard Theatre; King's Cross Award for New Writing, UK; RBC National Playwriting Competition, Canada; and the Samuel French

Canadian Play Contest, USA); *Pronoun* (National Theatre Connections); *Banana Boys* (Hampstead Theatre); *How Was It For You?* (Unicorn Theatre); *Little Criminals* (Polka/ York Theatre Royal/ Plymouth Theatre Royal) and *Holloway Jones* (Synergy Theatre Project, schools tour & Unicorn Theatre) which won the Brian Way Award 2012 for Best Play for Young People and was nominated for a Writers' Guild Award. Evan was commissioned to write *Consensual* for NYT which ran as part of the 2015 West End rep season.

**Roy Alexander Weise** won the 2016 James Menzies-Kitchin Young Director Award to have his production of Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop* staged at the Young Vic. Roy was a trainee director of the Royal Court, working on *X* and *Hangmen*. He made his professional directing debut with *Stone Face* at the Finborough Theatre.

### Othello

**Simon Pittman** is Associate Director at Frantic Assembly and Co-director and Founder of ensemble theatre company Rough Fiction. Simon is currently working as movement associate on the recast of *The Curious Incident of The Dog in The Night-time* (National Theatre / West End), directing *His Wild Imaginings*; a cross-arts collaboration between Rough Fiction and London Arts Orchestra supported by Arts Council England, and working as a selector for The National Student Drama Festival 2017 ([nsdf.org.uk](http://nsdf.org.uk)). He was trainee director at the Library Theatre Manchester 2006-2007.