

# TRAVFEST22

## Traverse Supporters Newsletter

Can you believe we're going to have a full-on Festival again? After an exciting and packed Spring programme, we at the Traverse are now looking forward to all things Festival 2022. We're delighted to have had no less than four of our TravFest22 shows - *This is Paradise*, *One-Woman Show*, *Bloody Elle* and *Eavesdropping* – are included in [the Guardian's Edinburgh fringe 2022: 20 theatre, comedy and dance shows you shouldn't miss](#) list and two shows- *Wilf* and *Happy Meal* in [Broadway World's EDINBURGH 2022: Pick of the Programme- Theatre!](#) Read on for the latest Traverse news and get an overview of what to expect in August and beyond...

## Travfest19 hit *How Not to Drown* at Stratford East

THU 26 JAN – SAT 11 FEB 2023



Originally presented during Travfest19, *How Not to Drown* by Nicola McCartney & Dritan Kastrati won the 2019 Scotsman Fringe First award and 2019 Herald Angel award. Now, *How Not to Drown* will be making a come back at Stratford East at the beginning of next year.

*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.

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. You can [watch the 2019 trailer here](#).

Ready for a little road trip? [Book your tickets now](#).

Commissioned by ThickSkin and Lawrence Batley Theatre. Presented by ThickSkin and Traverse Theatre Company.



## Scotland's Years of Stories

We are pleased to be taking part in Scotland's Year of Stories 2022 with Year of Stories Community Stories Fund support from VisitScotland's Events, Heritage Fund UK, and Museums Galleries Scotland.

Scotland's Year of Stories 2022 is a celebration of stories inspired by, written, or created in Scotland. Stories are a vital part of Scotland's culture and every community has a different tale to tell. A whole host of events are being held across Scotland this year – by community groups, museums, culture and heritage organisations and visitor attractions – showcasing our rich storytelling and literary heritage.

As Scotland's leading new writing theatre, we are delighted that the selected works from our Breakthrough Writers, - anonymously selected by our reading panel after open submission-, will be part of Year of Stories, debuting at the Traverse from November onwards.

Find out more about Year of Stories 2022 here:

<https://www.visitscotland.org/news/2022/community-stories-projects-announced>

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### ALOK

WED 10TH – SUN 21ST AUG



FULL PRICE £22/ CONCESSIONS £17/£15/£5  
(PREVIEW TUE 9TH AUG, FULL PRICE  
£17/CONCESSIONS £12) BSL PERFORMANCE  
THURS 11<sup>TH</sup>

ALOK (they/them) is an internationally acclaimed writer, performer and public speaker. This is their new comedy and poetry show. A mixed-media artist, ALOK's work explores themes of trauma, belonging and the human condition. They are also the author of *Femme in Public* (2017), *Beyond the Gender Binary* (2020) and *Your Wound/My Garden* (2021), and have been honoured as one of HuffPo's Culture Shifters and NBC's Pride 50.

**Writer and performer:** ALOK VAID-MENON

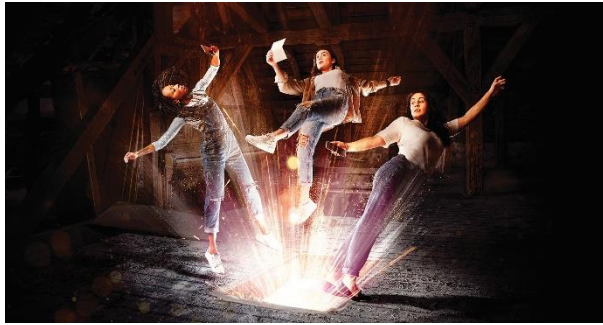
*'Moves seamlessly among poetry, comedy, fashion and writing'* - The New York Times

*'Fierce, poetic beauty... the way they threaded together movement, poetry, technology and music reverberated long afterward'* -The Huffington Post

Book your tickets [here!](#)

## BLOOD HARMONY

SUN 7TH – SUN 28TH AUGUST



FULL PRICE £22/ CONCESSIONS £17/£15/£5  
(PREVIEWS TUE 2ND + SAT 6TH AUG, FULL  
PRICE £17/CONCESSIONS £12)

Soaring music by Atlantic Records artists, The Staves, combines with bold new writing and dynamic physicality in *Blood Harmony*, an uplifting and powerful new play with songs about love, loss and legacy. A fractured trio of sisters are pulled back together with news that turns their worlds upside down. When it feels like your world has come to a stop, how do you find a way to keep moving forward? Award-winning theatre company, ThickSkin makes a thrilling return to the stage with this highly visual and musically charged production. Created by the company behind the five-star hit show *How Not to Drown*.

**Writer:** Matthew Bulgo

**Direction & Choreography:** Jonnie Riordan and Jess Williams

**Musical Direction & Musical Arrangements:** Kate Marlais

**Set & Costume Design:** Hayley Grindle

**Composers:** The Staves

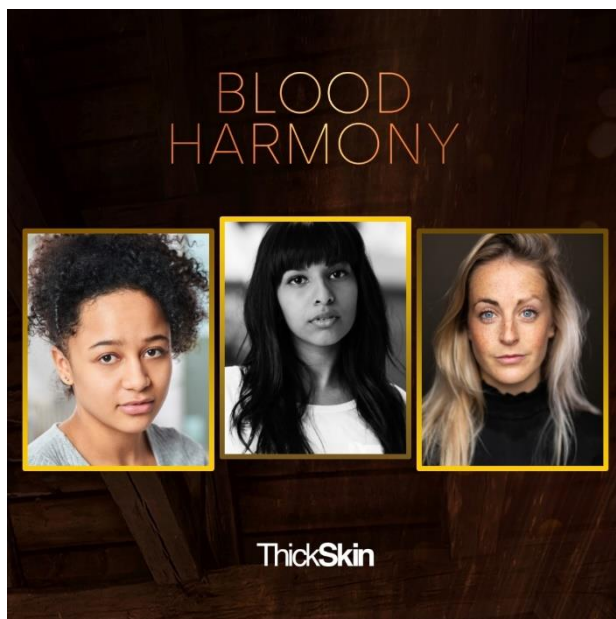
**Sound Design:** Charlotte Barber

**Lighting Design:** Charly Dunford

RTYDS **Assistant Director** is part of the Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme: Joseph Walsh

**Producer:** Li Kennedy

**Production Manager:** Tom Robbins



**Cast:** (L-R) Eve de Leon Allen, Keshini Misha & Phillippa Hogg.

★★★★★ *'Truly stunning'* The Scotsman on *How Not to Drown*

★★★★★ *'Poetically powerful'* The Times on *Chalk Farm*

Book your tickets [here!](#)

**BLOODY ELLE – A GIG MUSICAL**  
FRI 5TH – SUN 28TH AUG



FULL PRICE £22/ CONCESSIONS £17/£15/£5  
(PREVIEW THU 4TH AUG, FULL PRICE  
£17/CONCESSIONS £12)

Elle meets Eve - Nothing is ever the same again. This loud, proud, love story is heart-warmingly honest & belly-achingly funny. Eve's eyes are green like guacamole, she has posh-hair and a freckle on her chin and when she puts her hand on Elle's arm...This heart-warming and belly-achingly funny story is stuffed full of those stomach-flipping-time-stopping moments, a touch, a glance, a kiss, that everyone will recognise. *Bloody Elle* is set to an original score, building loops and layers of sound that make you feel like there is a ten-piece band on stage, transporting the audience to a sweaty, packed-out gig in the back of a pub or a 10,000-seat arena.

**Director:** Bryony Shanahan

**Sound Designer and Composer:** Alexandra Faye Braithwaite

**Lighting Designer:** Mark Distin Webster



**Writer and Performer:** Lauryn Redding

Guardian's Top 20 Fringe shows 2022

★★★★ *'It's a performance that fills every last inch of the auditorium, which buzzes with energy'* The Guardian

★★★★ *'A warm-hearted, embrative bit of gig theatre'* The Stage

Book your tickets [here!](#)

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## EXODUS

SUN 7TH – SUN 28TH AUG



FULL PRICE £22/ CONCESSIONS  
£17/£15/£5  
(PREVIEWS SUN 31ST JUL+ SAT 6TH  
AUG, FULL PRICE £17/CONCESSIONS  
£12)

How far will a politician go? In her bid to become the country's leader, Home Secretary Asiya Rao prepares to make a major policy announcement that will establish her as the front-runner of the political race. Alongside her calculating advisor Phoebe, she embarks on a publicity stunt starting with a photo shoot by the white cliffs of Dover. But rather than the tide washing her reputation clean, something else washes up... An omen or an opportunity? The women are determined to keep their eyes on the prize, no matter the cost, even if it's a human one.

**Writer:** Uma Nada-Rajah

**Director:** Debbie Hannan

**Set & Costume Design:** Alisa Kalyanova

**Sound Design:** Mark Melville



**Cast:** (L-R)

Habiba Saleh

Sophie Steer

Anna Russell-Martin

Aryana Ramkhalawon

Part of the Made in Scotland Showcase 2022: [madeinscotlandshowcase.com](http://madeinscotlandshowcase.com)

Book your tickets [here!](#)

## HAPPY MEAL

FRI 5TH – SUN 28TH AUGUST



FULL PRICE £22/  
CONCESSIONS £17/£15/£5  
(PREVIEW THU 4TH AUG  
FULL PRICE  
£17/CONCESSIONS £12)

*"Gender is life tbh. It's like time too I guess. It kinda doesn't exist, but our world revolves around the expectations we put on it."*

Join us for an online show irl. Travel back to the quaint days of dial up and MSN, where you'll follow two strangers on their journeys to become who they always were. A funny, moving and nostalgic story of transition. From teen to adult. From MySpace to TikTok. From cis to trans.

The world premiere of Tabby Lamb's *Happy Meal* is a joyful queer rom-com where Millennial meets Gen Z and change is all around. Exhilaratingly staged by Roots and Theatre Royal Plymouth and directed by Jamie Fletcher, fresh from her acclaimed production of Hedwig and the Angry Inch (★★★★★ The Stage).

**Writer:** Tabby Lamb (she/they)

**Director:** Jamie Fletcher (she/her)

**Set and Costume:** Ben Stones (he/him)

**Video:** Daniel Denton (he/him)

**Lighting:** Kieron Johnson (they/them)

**Sound:** Eliyana Evans (she/her)

**Dramaturg:** Jennifer Bakst (she/her)

**Producer for Roots:** Steven Atkinson (he/him)

**Production Manager:** Shawna Cadence (she/her)

**Head of Production for Theatre Royal Plymouth:** Hugh Borthwick (he/him)

**Marketing:** Emma Martin (she/her)

**Press:** Michelle Mangan (she/her)



**Cast:** Sam Crerar (they/he)



Allie Daniel (she/her)

Book your tickets [here!](#)

**LIZ KINGSMAN: ONE WOMAN SHOW**  
WED 17TH – SUN 28TH AUGUST



FULL PRICE £22/ CONCESSIONS  
£17/£15/£5  
(PREVIEW TUE 16TH AUG FULL  
PRICE £17/CONCESSIONS £12)

The Guardian's #1 Comedy Show of 2021 comes to the Fringe for a limited run. A bold, irreverent, raw, moving and triumphant celebration of adjectives, this blurb will nail down nothing.

**Writer and Performer:** Liz Kingsman  
**Director:** Adam Brace  
**Lighting Designer:** Daniel Carter-Brennan  
**Choreographer:** Josh Lay  
**Costume & Set Associate:** Emma Hollows  
**Producers:** Country Mile Productions

Guardian's Top 20 Fringe shows 2022  
Times' Top 5 Comedy Shows of 2021  
Telegraph's Best Cultural Events of 2021

"*The hands-down funniest live comedy show of 2021. A tour de force*" - Guardian

"*Do everything legal you can to get a ticket*" - Evening Standard

"*Fight for a ticket*" - Telegraph

"*Superbly funny*" – Times



(David Monteith)

★★★★★ Independent ★★★★★ Guardian ★★★★★ Telegraph ★★★★★ Evening Standard  
★★★★★ Stage ★★★★★ Time Out ★★★★★ The I ★★★★★ Arts Desk ★★★★★

Londonist

Trigger warning: contains blinding ambition.

Book your tickets [here!](#)

## PSYCHODRAMA

FRI 5TH – SUN 28TH AUGUST



FULL PRICE £21/ CONCESSIONS £17/£15/£5 (PREVIEW  
THU 4TH AUG FULL PRICE £17/CONCESSIONS £12)

A fortysomething actress is investigated for the murder of a theatre director whilst rehearsing a production of Hitchcock's *Psycho*. A gripping, at times hilarious, revenge tale about an actress in her 40's under investigation for the murder of an auteur theatre director. Set against the backdrop of a stage production of Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Emily Bruni (Peep Show) plunges us into the dark heart of show business.

Nominated for two Off West End Theatre Awards.



Watch the trailer [here!](#)

**Performer:** Emily Bruni

**Writer and Director:** Matt Wilkinson

**Set Designer:** James Turner

**Lighting Designer:** Elliot Griggs

**Sound Designer:** Gareth Fry

**Producer:** Pádraig Cusack

★★★★★ *'Pitch perfect... if this dazzling monologue play and Bruni's star turn are not nominated for any theatre prizes this year, I'll be very surprised.'* Camden New Journal

★★★★★ *'Against a terrific wall of sound devised by Gareth Fry, Emily Bruni gives a powerhouse performance; it's a role to relish which she seizes with everything she has.'* - ReviewsGate

Book your tickets [here!](#)



## THE LAST RETURN

TUE 7TH – SUN 28TH AUGUST



FULL PRICE £22/ CONCESSIONS  
£17/£15/£5 (PREVIEWS THU 4TH +  
SAT 6TH AUG FULL PRICE  
£16/CONCESSIONS £11)

A queue for the last seat in the house... Not all good things come to those who wait. One final night. One last chance. Five people queue for a ticket to the hottest show in town. All they must do is simply wait in line. But what in life is ever simple? Who will triumph, who will fail, and who will walk away with... *The Last Return*? A new play by acclaimed playwright Sonya Kelly (*Once Upon a Bridge*, *Furniture*), *The Last Return* is a thrilling comedy about conflict, peace and the pursuit of territory at any cost. Sara Joyce (*Once Upon a Bridge*) directs a cast of Fiona Bell, Anna Healy, Bosco Hogan, Fionn Ó Loingsigh and Naima Swaleh.

Druid's world premiere production of *The Last Return* will open at Galway International Arts Festival this summer before touring to Traverse Theatre as part of Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

**Writer:** Sonya Kelly

**Director:** Sara Joyce

**Set & Costume Design:** Francis O'Connor

**Lighting Design:** Amy Mae

**Sound Design & Composition:** Michael John McCarthy

**Movement:** Jessica & Megan Kennedy (Junk Ensemble)

**Dramatherapy:** Wabriya King

**Hair and Make-up:** Gráinne Coughlan

**Associate Costume Designer:** Clíodhna Hallissey

**Assistant Director:** Katie O'Halloran

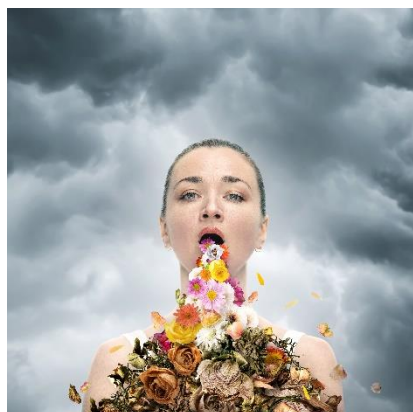


**Cast:** (L-R) Bosco Hogan, Fiona Bell, Naima Swaleh, Anna Healy, Fionn Ó Loingsigh

Book your tickets [here](#)!

## THIS IS PARADISE

FRI 5TH – SUN 28TH AUGUST



FULL PRICE £22/ CONCESSIONS £17/£15/£5 (PREVIEWS  
SAT 30TH JUL + THU 4TH AUG FULL PRICE  
£16/CONCESSIONS £12)

Belfast, 1998. Kate answers a phone call from a desperate young woman, unknown to her but with a fear she knows well.

*some wee girl  
she's calling me saying  
"Diver isn't answering my calls"  
crying "please I don't know what to do"*

10 April 1998, Belfast. The Good Friday Agreement is signed, promising peace to Northern Ireland. Away from all that pageantry, a river is rising in Kate. When a phone call from a desperate young woman compels Kate to return to a relationship she hoped was left in another life, she embarks on a journey which risks breaking the uneasy peace she has since made for herself. A powerful, intimate and dream-like monologue shot through with the vibrancy of living, Michael John O'Neill's Popcorn Award-winning *This is Paradise*, directed by Katherine Nesbitt, explores the ramifications of what happens when one woman is asked to rescue the man who promised to destroy her – and what it takes from any of us to decide to begin again.

**Writer:** Michael John O'Neill

**Performer:** Amy Molloy

**Director:** Katherine Nesbitt

**Designer:** Lulu Tam

**Lighting Designer:** Colin Grenfell

**Composer & Sound Designer:** Danny Krass

Guardian's Top 20 Fringe shows 2022

Part of the Made in Scotland Showcase 2022: [madeinscotlandshowcase.com](http://madeinscotlandshowcase.com)

Book your tickets [here!](#)

## WILF

SUN 7TH – SUN 28TH AUGUST



FULL PRICE £22/ CONCESSIONS £17/£15/£5  
(PREVIEWS FRI 5TH + SAT 6TH FULL PRICE  
£17/CONCESSIONS £12)

*"My story is about love... No, it's about loss... No, it's about love and loss and pain and loneliness... But it's funny!"*

Calvin is going to completely revolutionise his life. Escape his abusive boyfriend, detonate his inner sex bomb, see (and shag) the world. Yes, he's going to change things, and everything will be wonderful, and he's going to be so happy. Definitely. Finally. Right? After a mere 104 driving lessons with Thelma, his beleaguered instructor and a lapsed psychotherapist (who knows far more about Calvin and his kinks than she ever wanted to), Calvin has finally passed his test on the 12th attempt, and there's officially no stopping him. Now he's found his partner in crime - the Cagney to his Lacey, the Celine Dion to his...Celine Dion - in the form of Wilf, a rusty Volkswagen Polo which, like Calvin, has seen better days. Together they hit the road on a wild and bumpy ride of dodgy Airbnbs, greasy takeaways, anonymous graveyard sex and banging 80s power ballads - ending up somewhere they never imagined they'd go.

But is Calvin breaking free, breaking down, or just breakdancing in hot pants?

This riotous and heartfelt new play from James Ley (*Love Song to Lavender Menace*), directed by the Traverse's Artistic Director Gareth Nicholls (*Ulster American*, *Crocodile Fever*), takes audiences on a hilarious and unapologetic ride through Scotland as Calvin and Wilf attempt to escape loneliness, cope with mental illness and learn to love themselves, with the help of one another.

**Director:** Gareth Nicholls

**Designer:** Becky Minto

**Lighting Designer:** Renny Robertson

**Sound Designer:** Susan Bear

**Costume Supervisor:** Sophie Ferguson

**Choreographer:** Emily Jane Boyle

Strong language and adult themes throughout. Frequent graphic references to sex and drug use.



**Cast:** (L-R) Michael Dylan, Irene Allan, Neil John Gibson



Watch backstage interviews [here!](#)



Watch the Production Gallery [here!](#)

★★★★ *'A fine, filthy and brilliantly-paced joyride'* The Scotsman

★★★★ *'Brutal, dark, hilarious'* -The Stage

Book your tickets [here!](#)

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**On behalf of all of us at the Traverse, we thank you for your support and for sharing the joy of theatre with others.**

**With your help, we can keep these pages full of news and ensure the Traverse is a home for powerful, new theatre.  
Thank you.**

**Laura, Ellen, and Team Traverse**