

TRAVERSE THEATRE MEDIA RELEASE
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TRAVERSE THEATRE INVITES YOU TO IGNITE YOUR CREATIVITY WITH LAUNCH OF FIRST STAGES FESTIVAL 2022



- All workshops and interactive events to be delivered digitally, for anyone around the world to attend
 - Free five-part online workshop series on *How to Build Your Voice* with playwright Laurie Motherwell
 - Interactive workshop programme includes sessions led by Travis Alabanza, Hannah Lavery, May Sumbwanyambe, Eve Leigh, Oliver Emanuel, Robert Softley, *Positive Stories for Negative Times*’ Debris Stevenson and Ellen Bannerman, Produced Moon and Morna Young
 - Very special Q&A with acclaimed writer David Ireland (*Ulster American*, *Cyprus Avenue*)
 - Writers and directors given opportunity to meet and collaborate with one another in an exclusive networking workshop led by Associate Artist Katherine Nesbitt and writer Michael John O’Neill
 - Free lunchtime Zoom sessions for writers, led by James Ley and Uma Nada-Rajah
 - In-person readings of six new plays from writers selected from previous Open Submissions scripts to take place at the Traverse
 - Weekly creative prompts to get your juices going!
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The Traverse today announces the Spring 2022 edition of our First Stages Festival, a celebration of storytelling and creativity, with skills development opportunities for creatives at any stage of their career. With all workshops and interactive events being delivered digitally, we invite those keen to explore their creativity to attend from anywhere around the world.

Running from **Monday 14 February to Monday 28 March**, the 2022 programme includes free events including a new five-part on demand series from playwright **Laurie Motherwell** on *How to Build Your Voice*; **weekly writers' sessions on Zoom**, led by playwrights **James Ley** and **Uma Nada-Rajah** during which writers can work alongside one another and support each other's process; an exclusive networking workshop with Associate Artist **Katherine Nesbitt** and writer **Michael John O'Neill** which gives writers and directors the opportunity to meet and collaborate with one another; and a series of **creative prompts**, distributed via social media, which can be used by anyone to get themselves inspired and their creative juices flowing!

We will also present a wide range of intimate, interactive workshops with some of the most exciting artists working in the UK today, who will be offering their insight and expertise on a range of topics, including:

May Sumbwanyambe *Characters and Actions*

Travis Alabanza *Working with Spontaneity: A Writing Workshop for LGBT+ Creatives*

Hannah Lavery *Poetry for Performance*

Eve Leigh *Changing the Rules*

Oliver Emanuel *Podcast Drama: The Hidden Truth*

Robert Softley *Embedding Access in New Work*

Produced Moon *Playing with Mixed Reality*

Morna Young *Game Plays (how to find the play in a game)*

Debris Stevenson *Write Now* (Positive Stories for Negative Times workshop)

Ellen Bannerman *Creating the world on stage* (Positive Stories for Negative Times workshop)

Hannah Lavery *Exploring your own story for the stage* (Positive Stories for Negative Times workshop)

Award-winning writer **David Ireland** (*Ulster America*, *Cyprus Avenue*) will give a rare Q&A for you to ask him your most pressing questions about his work, writing, characters – and maybe even the new series of *Derry Girls*?

In person events include readings of six new plays from our **2022 First Stages Writers** - six writers who have developed their craft with the Traverse and were selected from our 2020 Open Submissions entrants for personal, creative, and script development with the Traverse's Literary Manager, Artistic Team, Associate Artists and a company of theatre makers.

The selected writers and pieces which will receive full-length readings are:

TOBOJO by **Jack Gemmell**

This Game Right Here by **Aaron Gordon**

Cow and Pig by **Ava Hickey**

Yes Chef by **Laurie Ogden**

The Cleaner by Kate Reid

Soldiers by Fraser Scott

Eleanor White, Traverse Theatre Literary Manager, said:

"We were bowled over by the response to First Stages Festival in 2021, and are delighted to be back in 2022 with even more opportunities for creatives around the world to further their knowledge and craft. We are absolutely thrilled to be working with so many important artists pushing the boundaries and expanding the vision of theatre, across our workshops, readings and other events – and we're very excited for all those who are bound to learn a raft of new skills, ways of thinking, and fresh ideas from engaging with them! Although late winter can feel both literally and metaphorically like the darkest time of year, we hope the creativity on show across the First Stages Festival will provide some much-needed bright spots in the gloom – because where there is creativity, it will always bring light."

First Stages Festival Spring 2022 is generously supported by the Dr David Summers Charitable Trust and the Noël Coward Foundation.



LISTINGS INFO

Full programme and booking: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/first-stages-festival>

Many events are on sale now, with more to follow shortly.

Traverse Theatre, 10 Cambridge St, Edinburgh, EH1 2ED | traverse.co.uk

For more information, interviews or images, contact press@traverse.co.uk

Traverse Theatre is supported by:



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