

Founded by DAVID MACLENNAN

# HE WHO OPENS THE DOOR

Written by  
NEDA NEZHDANA

Adapted by  
JOHN FARADON

Directed by  
BECKY HOPE-PALMER

## Starring

VERA LOUISE STEWART

VIKA YOLANDA MITCHELL

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR NILOO FAR-KHAN

SET DESIGN GEMMA PATCHETT  
JONNY SCOTT

SOUND DESIGN ANDY COWAN

LIGHTING DESIGN ROSS KIRKLAND

*Ukraine, the present: two women wake up to find themselves trapped in a morgue. Are they actually dead and being held in limbo...? Or maybe there is a nuclear war or pandemic outside...? Is help on its way? Is someone listening in? Could their escape depend on playing for the right side – pro-European or pro-Russian? And if the door does open, will it be safe to leave? This very funny black comedy by leading Ukrainian playwright Neda Nezhdana is highly topical, reflecting the limbo for some people in eastern Ukraine, caught between opposing forces. “Leave or stay. You can be alive, or you can be dead. You choose!”*

*Presented in association with Aberdeen Performing Arts and The Traverse Theatre*

**NEDA NEZHDANA** is one of Ukraine's leading playwrights, theatre-makers, poets and translators. She is the author of twenty-four original plays, including *The Suicide of Loneliness* and *When the Rain Returns*, plus eight adaptations and two collections of poetry. Born in Kramatorsk in the Donetsk region, she lives in Kyiv, but is now in internal exile in Chernivtsi. She has worked with the Lesya Kurbas National Centre for Theatre Arts for twenty years, founded the Kyiv independent theatre MIST and is Chairman of the Confederation of Playwrights of Ukraine. Her plays such as *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness*, *He Opens the Door*, and *Lost In the Fog* have become potent symbols of Ukraine's battle for independent existence. One of her most celebrated plays is the culture-defining semi-documentary drama *Maidan Inferno* about the pivotal events of the Maidan of 2014. It has been performed in France as well as across Ukraine. Stage readings and excerpts from *Maidan Inferno* have been performed in several Ukrainian cities in the months since the invasion, and her play *Ovetka* received its wartime premiere in Uzhhorod in April 2022.

**BECKY HOPE-PALMER** trained as a director at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and was a finalist for the prestigious JMK Award in 2021 and 2019. A Play, A Pie, A Pint credits: *Not Now* by David Ireland; *Absolute Bowlocks* by Graeme Rooney; *Celestial Body* by Morna Pearson and *The Cameo* by DC Jackson. Directing credits include: *The Steamie* (Dundee Rep); *The Fairy That Fell Off The Christmas Tree* (She Productions); *9 to 5 The Musical*, *Parliament Square*, *The Pajama Game*, *Bad Roads*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Enron*, *Blue Stockings* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland); *The Comedy of Errors* (Petersfield Shakespeare Company); *Bombshells*, *It's Different for Girls* (She Productions/East Riding Theatre); *Macbeth* (Summer on Stage/Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh); *Buffer*, *Riot Squat* (Thrive Theatre); *The Hen Night*, *Like a Moth to a Flame* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland).

Becky has previously spent two years at the Royal Shakespeare Company between 2017- 2019. At the Lyceum in Edinburgh she has been an Associate Director, was Resident Assistant Director for the 2014/15 season and has recently written her first play, *Seven Against Edinburgh*, which was performed by the inaugural Young Company in 2022.

**LOUISE STEWART** is an actor and writer from Glasgow. Recent acting credits include *Code 404* (Sky/World Productions), *Good Omens* (Amazon), *Xenoblade 3* (Nintendo), *The Nest* (BBC), *Burnistoun* (BBC Scotland), *ScotSquad* (BBC Scotland) and *Still Game* (BBC Scotland)

**YOLANDA MITCHELL** trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, graduating in 2021 - making *He Who Opens The Door* her professional stage debut. TV credits include: *Mayflies*, *The Control Room* (BBC)

**NILOO FAR-KHAN** is an Edinburgh theatre-maker that believes stories can encourage us to look deeper into how we navigate belonging and find compassion for each other. Her recent works include directing: radio play '*Glory, Glory an Edinburgh Story*' (by Kamala Santos/Tamasha & HolyMountain Productions, 2022; '*Black Scots*' (National Theatre of Scotland/BBC Scotland, 2020; and assisting on: '*A Christmas Carol*' (adapted by Noisemaker & Andrew Panton/Dundee Rep, 2021) and '*Orphans*', (by Peter Mullan, adapted by Douglas Maxwell, directed by Cora Bissett, composed by Roddy Hart & Tommy Reilly/National Theatre of Scotland, 2022).

*Next week's play is...*

**'MADE IN CHINA**

written by **ALICE CLARK** and directed by **PHILIP HOWARD**

starring **JO FREER and AMBER LIN**

Deliveries pile up in a semi in Wishaw, as Janet panic-buys for her daughter's sixteenth. She wants to get everything right. Five thousand miles away, Hui Ting works relentless factory shifts to keep her daughter off the assembly line. But when Janet discovers a secret note – hidden in a bauble – the two women are bound together beyond typo-laden novelty mugs. *Made in China* looks into the West's material reliance on the East and the heart-warming parallels between two women a world apart.

Presented in association with **The Traverse Theatre**.

For interviews with actors, writers and directors from *A Play, A Pie and A Pint*, listen to the '*Putting it Together*' Podcast

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