Quines Cast episode 1 – CITY

[INTRODUCTION]

Hannah Lavery: Hello and welcome to Quines Cast, Scotland's feminist arts podcast. My name is Hannah Lavery

Caitlin Skinner: And I am Caitlin Skinner.

HL: Quines Cast is a space for us all to explore some big questions, themes and ideas together.

CS: To really listen to each other - imagine that.

HL: Each episode we invite some of Scotland's leading feminist writers, poets, playwrights and musicians to respond to the big questions that matter to women, non-binary people and people of other marginalised genders in Scotland today.

CS: Quines if you didn't know is a Scottish word for women and girls and it comes from the theatre company Stellar Quines who are bringing you this podcast in association with the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh International Festival, Jupiter Artland. We are an intersectional feminist theatre company based in Edinburgh.

HL: And this is the first ever episode of Quines Cast.

CS: So welcome here are are recording from the Traverse Theatre.

HL: So we are really excited to welcome you in and come coorie in. I hope you, uh, are sitting comfortably and maybe we should say a little bit about how this podcast came to be. Pandemic - Caitlin came out to visit me in Dunbar, and we went for this lovely walk on Bellehaven Beach. I suppose both of us were sort of hungry for conversation and hungry for conversation around ideas and about the world we were living in. And it felt really isolating and lonely, I think, because there's so many big things happening, there was so many, it felt we're on the edge of all these huge historical moments. We didn't, within our own lives, have space to talk about them, especially with our female friends. There was that desire to create a space, those conversations on one level and another, I think, at least I felt that I kind of lived my life in this country where when we'd have these big state of the nation moments, whether that's in theatre, whether that's, um, politically, women's voices and women's experience do not seem to be central to those. So I felt like, together with Stellar Quines and the two of us, we could work towards creating that space. And this podcast is a sense of realisation of that.

CS: Absolutely. And I think you and I've had many of those conversations where we've sat and put the world to rights and talked about those things that make us angry and frustrated and inspired and hopeful about the future and how we would sort it all out. And that's felt such an, um, important thing to be doing in this time, in the time of change and the time of

political upheaval. It turns out we have a lot of questions about who we are and who we want to be as a society.

HL: But I suppose with all of that in mind, for us, this podcast is also a space of real coming, uh, together in a respectful way, where people are listened and heard. And I think it's really exciting that our first podcast, we're going to give you today, we recorded at the Edinburgh International Book Festival and there's something so exciting about literary festivals, or any festival, really, but particularly the Edinburgh Book Festival, I think, because there is this space for ideas and there's a space for conversation and a model, I think, about how we talk about difficult things and how we talk to each other. And it felt to bring Quines Cast our first, this idea that we'd been kind of nurturing together to this space. Yeah. It just felt right.

CS: Yeah. It was a really magical evening and a, uh, kind of conversation we desired and creating the podcast gave us an opportunity to invite some really brilliant, talented artists and thinkers into one space to respond to a theme. But you don't really know if it's what people want or what people need in the same way that you feel like it is. And there was just something about that night. It really felt like the audience really wanted it, really needed it, and it was quite emotional, actually.

HL: I suppose this was the night where we really tested the idea, and it felt like that our desire was a lot of other people's desire as well. And I think when you resonate like that with people, I think it's really exciting. And I feel like it's probably a time for us to start introducing and talking about it.

We chose the theme CITY. Each of the podcasts that we're going to bring to you are on a different theme, but the theme is deliberately chosen to be, um, I suppose quite wide, so that people can come to it any way they want to. And that was really important not to sort of dictate what the conversation will be or what where people will take these. So we took CITY and for me, CITY felt really important because we'd been, I think, as we were talking about building back better and coming back into the world, there was a lot of conversations. I felt there was a lot of conversations with a lot of need for conversation about how we as women, occupy city and space and what a feminist city would look like and how we're safe in a city. You were also thinking about things around, like, the 20 mile… What was that?

CS: Oh the 20 minutes neighborhoods where in order to achieve, uh, our goals to combat the climate crisis, everyone would need to live in a neighborhood where they had basically access to all sorts of things within 20 minutes. So access to services, access to culture, access to school, all that kind of thing, so you don't have to travel. Yeah. Uh, I was really interested in that idea and how that might change our relationship to living. Uh, that was a really interesting proposition for me.

HL: Yeah and I think what you'll find as you hear our guests and our discussion group, is the way they've come at it, and it's always surprising. Let's begin. Caitlin would you let everyone know the lineup that we have for our first podcast?

CS: Yes. So for our first episode responding to theme of CITY we have invited musician and storyteller Karine Polwart, author Denise Mina, writer and author Chitra Ramaswamy and uh, short play from playwright Sara Shaarawi.

HL: So let's take you back the Edinburgh International Book Festival and to our first guest of the evening Karine Polwart.

[MUSIC]

Karine Polwart: I moved to the city of Edinburgh 25 years ago. I don't live here anymore, but I moved here 25 years ago to take up a job with Scottish Women's Aid. And before that I had worked as a children's worker in Refuge in Glasgow and also as a volunteer at Dundee Women's Aid. So my experience of being in all three of those cities, Dundee then Glasgow, then Edinburgh was as as cities as uh, sanctuaries. Whether it's the kind of sanctuary that you can get just by moving from one side of Glasgow to another side or the kind of invisibility and anonymity that the city can afford you if you come from a small town or a kind of rural area which is more my natural habitat. It's the kind of the indifference of cities I suppose is what I'm saying. It can be a blessing, but they can also be places of isolation and vulnerability for the very same reasons that they can be places of safety. And that's one of the questions that I have in my head this evening around what cities are and who they work for and who they don't work for. So I was fishing for a song that kind of spoke to those themes and this song, strictly speaking, isn't really about them but there's something about the imagery of it and the feeling of it that captures kind of what I want to the ambivalence, um, maybe of what I want to see. And it's one of my favorite songs which is always ah, a slightly um trepidacious endeavor. It's by Imogen Heap. It's called 'Hide and Seek'.

Lyrics:

Where are we?
What the hell is going on?
The dust has only just begun to form
Crop circles in the carpet
Sinking, feeling
Spin me around again
And rub my eyes
This can't be happening
When busy streets
A mess with people
Would stop to hold their heads heavy
Hide and seek
Trains and sewing machines
All those years
They were here first
Oily marks appear on walls
Where pleasure moments hung before
The takeover
The sweeping insensitivity of this
Still life
Hide and seek
Trains and sewing machines
Blood and tears

They were here first
Mm, what'd you say?
Mm, that you only meant well
Well of course you did
Mm, what'd you say?
Mm, that it's all for the best
Of course it is
Mm, what'd you say?
Mm, that it's just what we need
You decided this
Mm, what'd you say?
Mm, what did she say?
Ransom notes keep falling out your mouth
Mid-sweet talk, newspaper word cutouts
Speak no feeling, no, I don't believe you
You don't care a bit, you don't care a bit
Ransom notes keep falling out your mouth
Mid-sweet talk, newspaper word cutouts
Speak no feeling, no, I don't believe it
You don't care a bit, you don't care a bit
You don't care a bit
No, you don't care a bit
Uh-uh, you don't care a bit
No, You don't care a bit
You don't care a bit
Busy streets
A mess with people

HL: What an incredible artist Karine is, and what a wonderful opening to the night. What I found really interesting listening back to that is how much what she said about who gets to occupy a city and who is safe within that, who has agency within that was such a recurring theme through the whole night.

CS: Yeah. And that song that she has chosen, which is ‘Hide and Seek’ by Imogen Heap, uh, it's amazing how well that song actually conjures those images. And yeah, it really sets the tone for a lot of the themes and ideas that runs around all the other pieces as well. So, um, let's introduce our next guest, who is the brilliant author, fashion icon, generally brilliant crime writer, Denise Mina. And she has written us a provocation piece, uh, for us, each episode will have a provocation piece, which is when we invite someone to write something that gets us thinking, gets us going, gets us started on the theme. So here is Denise and her provocation piece about city.

[PROVOCATION]

Denise Mina: To save you wondering halfway through all of this is true, and I'm sorry if you have a 14 year old daughter, but it is a bit terrifying. It's called: ‘That Time I Forgot I Was A Woman’.

“For twelve years I had longed to go to New York and visit Momma. I wanted to see Picasso's painting Les Demoiselles d'Avignon. I wanted to stand face to face with it, to see it as all those painters had seen it in the studio. Not an image in a book or a postcard reproduction. And I wanted to go by myself. I've always loved to travel alone. At 14 at school in South London, I'd get up at 05:00 a.m. Some Saturdays and buy a ticket from Bromley South to Calais. £13.50, same day, return, ferry included. Because alone means seeing, not being seen. The subject sees, the object is seen. The object is passively perceived, framed by the eye of the active subject. But alone, I am the subject, not the object. But it's not safe for women to travel alone to cities. Alone is a gendered luxury, and I know New York is populated entirely by murderers and maniac cops, so I decide not to speak to anyone all week. We land, out of the airplane window. I see a man in a high vis vest guiding the plane to its gate with what looks like tennis bats. Wow, I think that man actually lives in New York, in America. He lives here. Wow. This is the level of critique I applied to almost everything that week. And I won't go into detail because it makes me sound stupid. But here are some of the snapshots of things I saw. A very tall waspy man loudly ordering food in fluent Japanese as his Japanese girlfriend turns away and rolls her eyes. “Hey Mr Z”, said the doorman at the Paramount Hotel, an American, he said it to an old man who lived there. Mr Z inspired genuine affection in the staff. A man watching Michael Moore filming a piece to camera in Times Square and wiping his trousers, his hands on his trousers, over and over and over and over. A small girl skipping with her mother and singing, “we're going to the angel store”. Nobody else saw these things.

In the New York Public Library. I go through Microfilm and I find my great grandfather's death certificate. James McGuerty died in New York in 1929, a month before the Wall Street crash. He worked the boats McGuerty. He came back to Glasgow and he found his wife, Catherine lying drunk in Springburn. He stole their two wee girls away. He sent Rose back to the family in Ireland and my gran, Bessie to the John Street Orphanage in Glasgow. Catherine McGuerty only found Bessie again decades later. Bessie was ashamed of her mother. She often kept her at the door or gave her money to go away, or else Catherine came to the door for money. We'll never know. She was a bad and shameful woman. She was not spoken of.

I go to the temenent where McGuerty died. In the diner downstairs, I bore an Irish waitress was part of the story but I stop out of compassion. I have never, nor I suspect ever will meet anyone as hungover as that waitress was that day. I go to Momma. I stand in front of the Demoiselles d'Avignon. It's a mad painting. Picasso did it and he kept it in his studio for 20 years. It's a Sex Pistols of a painting i.e. it's not very good in and of itself, but it presented a new way of seeing things. It kicked off cubism and it changed art from a purely representational form to something new, something exploratory and wild and baffling. In it naked women with mask like faces stand and they look out at us, the viewer, like that, defiant. Many years later, I will come and see this painting again with my son and I'll say to him, See that painting? That, um, means an awful lot to me. I really love it. Let me take a picture of you in front of it. And he, sensing my excitement and wanting to please me, will turn and raise his tiny hands in appreciation and bomb towards the Demoiselles d'Avignon and be rugby tackled by a guard, but alone in the city I forget myself.

On the plane coming back. I know I'm changed. I've barely spoken for a week. I have stopped feeling seen. I just am. The plane lands in Glasgow. As we get up and file out, a

very drunk woman in front of me struggles to get her bag down from the overhead compartment. She announces to the plane, “could some kind young man please help me?” And I step forward and reach up and I lift out for her. People look at me as scans. I forgot I was a woman and I can't lift things. For a woman to step up after a man was asked for it is a statement. No one likes this, but I am now holding the silky duffel bag above my head and I think to lighten the mood and make a sort of Hulk smash noise by having spoken for a week and I misjudged the volume. The drunk woman falls back on her chair. People startle away from me all the way down the aisle. A steward looks down. They're really concerned, they don't know what's going on. And suddenly I'm being looked at and judged. The bag is halfway down but I get so embarrassed, I lose my grip and the bag slithers away from me and drops to the floor and I hear bottles break inside. The high tang of liberated duty free vodka wafts up at me. Everyone's looking, everyone's annoyed and everyone thinks I've done something wrong and awful. And then I think fuck it. And I step over the bag of bottles that I broke with my feminist nonsense and I just swagger off the plane. Yeah, fuck it. Because I am the subject. All day, every day. I'm all kinds of wrong. But I am the subject of this story.”

CS: Ah, I just love that story. It's so good to listen back.

HL: So many moments that you just want to write down. Like, um, “alone is a gendered luxury. Alone, I am, the subject. Alone means seeing”. There's so much wisdom, but it was just so funny.

CS: I am really struck by how deviant and defiant it means for her to be exploring a city on her own and in a non-apologetic like way. Um, you forget how cities are those place to be both anonymous and vulnerable. Exactly as Karine said at the beginning, for women and people of other marginalised genders, it's not your space all the time, you have to own it.

HL: And also just how acutely aware we are of being object or being seen, which I suppose I knew but really forced me to reflect upon that actually. And yeah, that alone is a gendered thing. That being anonymous is a gendered thing. Um, as well as, um, being able to sort of explore cities. I think this is a really good moment for us to talk about our next part of or one of the most important parts I suppose, of our podcast, or one of the most important, um, elements, which is our discussion group. When we were bringing this and having this idea about this podcast, what we really wanted to do was to bring in different voices because I think what we felt, as both of us working in the arts, is that we sometimes it feels a bit of an echo chamber. And actually, we were really hungry for voices from other sectors, from women that come in with different wisdoms and different viewpoints, different perspectives, maybe like that Picasso, all these different perspectives. And so we invited a group of women together, from the law, from academia, from activists, um, doctors, social workers, and we bought them together to respond and to discuss, to listen to each other. Maybe you could tell us who is in that group.

CS: Yeah, absolutely. So the group are Lisa George, Talat Yaqoob, Aman Uppal, Clementine Burnley, Carey Lunan and Bee Asha. Their conversation was beautifully captured by our editor, Halina Rifai. And throughout this podcast, and for each of our contributors, you'll hear a little clip from their discussion, also around the theme of city.

HL: Yeah, like a little palette cleanser in between. So, uh, here's our first clip from our discussion group.

[DISCUSSION GROUP CLIP 1]

Talat Yaqoob: COVID-19 has been used as an excuse not to put the money in even a little bit, the too little that existed before to even call that back. And that, again, is one of the ways in which you can't, that's not a feminist city. That's not an inclusive city. Those are not inclusive decisions that are being made, particularly when it comes to feminism. Because who takes on the burden of that care? Vast, vast majority are women. Vast majority of those who are unpaid carers are women. So when the city doesn't invest, actually, it disproportionately means that women are the ones that have to pick up the slack of what the city isn't doing.

Carey Lunan: So I think it would feel different. I think instead of being largely horizontal, it would be vertical. Um, it would have more curves rather than the more edges. It would have more spaces for people to come together and meet. Um, and it would have more spaces for children. It, um, would have more green. Um, and it would feel safer to walk around in. So some of it would be logistics, so there would be free public transport. It would be safe to get home at night. It would be well lit. Um, but I think it feels like it would have a different, um, ambience around it than a masculine city. We'd probably have less traffic, less noise, um, but definitely more spaces for people to come together and collaborate and be creative.

Clementine Burnley: I think it would have, um, universal basic income. Because I think that this is the foundation on which most of people's, uh, deprivation is based, is not being able to support themselves without ending up completely exhausted. Um, so exhausted at the end of the day, that they have no resources left to work, to do anything at all. So I picked up a little bit on something you said about cities, being safe in the sense that, um, people being able to get home safely. Well, for most women, um, home is the most unsafe place that there is. And if they, I really believe as women have become more financially independent, they have been staying for much shorter periods in families that abuse and exploit them, whether those are their families of birth or the families which they happen to form because they have a relationship. So I think people are being kept deliberately short of money in order to make them into an unpaid and deprived resource for other people to have cheap services from. Because you couldn't have a coffee for £3 in the center of, um, Edinburgh unless the person that was serving you that coffee was not being paid a proper wage for, um, what they were doing.

Aman Uppal: I'm just thinking about how, like, in my life, what I would be a feminist city to be, and this might be really bad, but the first thing I thought of was when there were so many girls being spiked in nightclubs and it had evolved. It was as if during COVID the people that were doing this went away and thought, how do we do this better? How do we spike people in a more efficient way where we don't need to touch their drinks? And then it was the jags, and I thought that was around Halloween time. And I remember it was like my first night out, ah, after COVID, and I was looking at the way that the clubs were responding, clubs in the city, and I thought, oh, they're going to shut, they're going to shut and they're going to think, oh, they don't want any of the girls in their clubs to be to be spiked. And life continued and nothing really stopped. And you're just sitting in the little town of Renfrew looking at you thinking, what on earth? This is a crisis. This is a huge danger to young women or young

men or whoever was being spiked. Whoever it was, it was a problem and it was a danger. And it was predominantly young women that were being affected. And then, God knows, I dread to think what was happening to them after they've, uh, been spiked. And would a feminist city have continued? Absolutely not.

Talat: No, And what a feminist city wouldn't do is, after that put the emphasis on the victim.

CS: So you just said “ooft” at the end of that…

HL: Aww, do you know what I found so incredible about these discussion groups? I mean, obviously we'd chosen that clip from a much longer discussion and so we had the sense of the power of it, but listening to it again in the context with the audience as well, and just, uh, I think especially that idea about this wouldn't happen in a feminist city. The things that we would accept and wouldn't accept and the idea of who has agency? Was just so powerful to me. And I think what I found credible about this discussion group, uh, think the reason why we had this discussion group and we brought this group together from women from such a diverse range of backgrounds and different fields was that I think sometimes you and I are so sort of part of very much. We live within the arts community, I suppose, and so that is something really exciting about having those different viewpoints and different perspectives in and I think it's something that we don't create enough time for. So yeah just oof.

CS: So yeah, Glasgow has just announced that it's going to be the UK's first feminist city. It’s going to be taking a feminist approach to time planning. So, yeah, it'd be interesting to kind of hold that to account and think, okay, you mean that?

HL: Yeah who gets to be part of these discussions as well.

CS: So, for every Quines Cast, we invite a playwright to create a short play inspired by our theme, For City, our writer has been the brilliant Sara Shaarawi. Sarah is an, uh, Egyptian born writer based in Glasgow. And I've had the pleasure this year of directing her play, *Sister Radio*, which has been out on tour in Scotland for Stellar Quines. But the play we have today is called *A Tourist*, and it's performed by Emilie Patry, Helen Katamba and Natalie Arle-Toyne.

HL: And this will be followed by another clip from our group's discussion.

[PLAY]

T: The air smells different.

F: Nah it’s the same.

T: No, it’s definitely different.

N: What’s wrong with her?

T: I’m telling you, it’s the air.

F: Will you stop?

N: She can’t find it.

F: What?

N: She can’t find the place.

F: It must be around here somewhere.

T: Maybe it shut?

N: No.

T: Maybe?

F: But it’s the place.

N: Her place.

T: It’s just a place.

N: It’s her milestones.

F: Where she went on dates and fell in love.

N: Where she went on dates and got dumped.

F: Where she celebrated birthdays

T: Graduations

N: Had leaving dos

F: And arrival drinks!

N: It can’t have shut.

F: Someone would have told her.

T: They don’t live in the city anymore.

F: Who?

T: They live in the suburbs now.

N: It’s all changed.

T: She left.

F: This is what happens when you leave.

T: You can’t just hit pause on a city and expect it to just…

N: Wait?

T: Be there all the time.

F: Timeless.

T: She can’t find this place.

N: Her place.

T: Not hers anymore though, is it?

F: What are you talking about?

N: This place will always be hers.

T: Not if it doesn't exist anymore.

F: She'll find it.

T: How long has she been away?

N: It doesn't matter.

F: Everything changes.

N: She's changed.

T: That's why she can't find it. She doesn't remember the city anymore. It's not in her bones anymore.

F: It's not completely alien though. She recognises it. This city.

N: That building.

F: This street.

T: That massive sign.

F: Those smiles.

N: And the sounds.

Those sounds trapped in her throat.

T: Cutting.

N: Cutting into her throat.

F: That familiar feeling.

N: The air. The air thick with –

T: No. No, the air is different.

N: Is it though?

F: Maybe it's her.

T: She's different.

F: The air in her lungs feel different.

T: Maybe it's her.

F: With her new lungs.

T: With her new tongue.

F: With her new hair.

T: Maybe.

N: Maybe it is her.

F: Awkwardly moving through space

T: Struggling to find the right words

N: Trying to picture herself in her stories as she told them over and over

T: Trying to picture herself in this place

F: This place that doesn't seem to exist anymore

N: This place that is undermining her grip on her identity and who she is

T: This place that makes her feel like she belongs, she's local, don't worry

F: This place that holds her youth, this place that she never thought would change

N: This place

T: Maybe the city doesn't recognise her anymore.

(maybe)

N: Maybe the city has grown and grown in another direction.

(maybe)

F: Maybe the city needed a break.

(maybe)

N: Maybe it's time for me to move.

T: What?

F: No!

N: I only hurt her.

T: We are her memories!

F: We keep her connected.

N: We're delusional!

T: You're being ridiculous!

N: Maybe I'm no memory at all, maybe I'm just a fantasy! A false sense of belonging, an imagined state of being. She'll be happier if I weren't here, how can she grow if I am constantly holding back her idea of herself and –

F: SHE FOUND IT!

N: Oh thank fuck.

T: The place… it looks different.

Doesn't it?

[DISCUSSION GROUP CLIP 2]

Carey Lunan: I think that was one of the interesting things about the pandemic people wearing masks meant that if you didn't feel like that, you weren't. Because, uh, I think it did affect all of our confidence and social confidence because you just got kind of deskilled at it.

You're kind of walking around and hidden and feeling anxious and standing apart from people. And then when people started to take masks off, suddenly you felt really vulnerable because it's like people you're walking down the street and people will recognise you. Whereas if you've only got your eyes showing, people maybe don't so much, or they don't clock you. And sometimes that was quite nice as well, when you were not feeling like it.

Clementine Burnley: The thing also that I noticed, actually, is, um, for me, um, cities have been about being, um, blending in, because I think that I stick out in the countryside when I go out to the West Coast, I'm always the only Black person that is there. And so, um, I lose my anonymity completely if anything happens in that space. Everybody knows, um, who was there when that happened, and everybody else is anonymous to me. And so I think when I'm in cities or when I've been in big cities, I've never, ever been the only Black person in that city.

Talat Yaqoob: I think you make a really good point about who is othered, particularly in rural Scotland, particularly in the small towns. I've, um, been in places where even if you're just visiting, you're there as a woman of colour, and it's like heads turn. We know that you're not from here, but we also know *you in particular* are not from here. So I think that's part of the anonymity that's like within cities. And I sometimes wonder if that's why you have there's a whole host of things like, uh, Um, access of jobs, um, access of services and whatever within city landscapes. But you also have more diverse populations within cities. And I do often feel that it would be quite hard to be from communities of colour and in rural spaces where you are potentially the only family of colour that is in that space. And I just think the way that that even if it's not intended, the spotlight that puts on you, I think must be really, really difficult to deal with.

Aman Uppal: Yeah, actually interesting. My dad was born in Huddersfield and then he moved to Scotland when he was about 16, but he moved to the neighborhood that we're still in now. And that was the first Asian family to move into that neighborhood or that part of the town. And I think he basically scoped Renfrew out for us. And I think he grew up realising, okay, this is quite a racist space. And that's really informed where we went to school or the areas that we would spend time in. It's also gotten better over time. But for him, I do just sit and think, wow, that must have been really challenging to have been the first Asian family in this area.

HL: The discussion and the play and this idea of belonging about cities being ever changing places, but also the sites of memory I found really powerful. And I think especially that last discussion group, uh, that idea of being, especially I think when you're from a minority or person of colour that cities are a place of sanctuary. I just found those insights in that discussion group and those moments just really powerful. And I think that's just what we really wanted was that sharing of people's truths. And I think that the piece we're going to listen to now by um Chitra Ramaswamy, um, from her absolutely sensational book, *Homelands*. She reads about a place within Glasgow that was sanctuary, a place for people to come together and hold culture and hold belonging. And I think that we often forget when we think about cities, that for many people, it's a place that actually offers safety. I'm really pleased that Chitra came along to read this because it feels like it's just that this piece that she chose just is absolutely perfect.

[READING]

Chitra Ramaswamy: I'm going to read from a chapter of the book called it All Goes Back to the House On the Hill.

“The house on the hill is at 358 Sauchiehall Street. It is simple in style, a child's drawing come to life with a pitched roof, five large windows and a portico held aloft by slender columns. It stands back from the street, perched in another era at the top of the steep slope that gives it its nickname. Enclosed in its own landscaped garden, hemmed in by younger tenement cousins. It's arrived at by a long flight of stairs that ascend at a slant from one of the most famous thoroughfares in Glasgow. Here, for now, is the place where Henry and Ingrid meet during the wartime summer of 1941. It was a very powerful youth club, says Henry. Its members, I think there are around 60 of us, were from Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Germany, though not all Jewish. The people there were a few years older than we were. We learned a lot from them. It was our first contact with music and art. One of the chaps was a chorus master, and we sang Mozart. It was the most interesting way to find out what being young is all about. Henry, Ingrid protests. It wasn't my first contact with music. I've always loved music. Yes, says Henry, but it all goes back to the house on the hill. He turns to his wife. You tell the story, Ingrid, about the sandwiches. The sandwiches were put in the middle, says Ingrid, looking intently at Henry. Why? Henry prompts her. Because we wanted everyone to have the same. You weren't allowed to eat your own, Henry explains. You put them in the middle, and it was a lucky dip. They were Marxist sandwiches. That's right. Henry laughs. That's how it was. At the refugee center, uh, there is a library, theatre group meeting rooms, and a canteen famous for its proper coffee and cheap meals cooked by Austrian chefs. Soup, rye bread, liver sausage. The continental cuisine becomes locally renowned, and students begin to drift over from the art school for a bowl of soup. When Henry enters the house on the hill, he steps inside a world that to the rest of the city is foreign, but to him is home. A home, moreover, that does not reject, persecute and seek to obliterate him. A home that no longer exists for him in Germany and never will again, but is somehow here in a shabby Georgian mansion. And here, for once, assimilation is not the ultimate aim of every interaction. Here, Henry can be free amongst his own. He can speak German, sing German songs, talk about his internment, eat the food of his childhood, stay up late discussing what might become of Europe, share news of the war, listen to young men and women talk about returning to rebuild their countries after it's all over, make friends for life, fall in love. The house on the Hill is the center of their world chess, music, philosophy, medicine, literature, politics, war, antisemitism, home. Everything is up for discussion under the probably leaking roof of 358 Sauchiehall Street. And it's here that Henry is politicised, and it is this proud history of activism that will threaten Henry and Ingrid's application for naturalisation in the near future, a history that, for the refugees, is a matter of moral and political obligation both to homeland and host country. During the war, this place they call home, where they meet, fall in love, and together become themselves, will, in a few short years, be viewed as a cause for suspicion, a sinister place, a potential risk to their British citizenship. Do not join any political organisation or take part in any political activities. Advises a booklet issued by the Jewish Board of Deputies and the German Jewish Aid Committee. This is what it is to be a refugee in wartime Britain. This is how fraught with danger belonging can be. Daddy did say I shouldn't go there, says Ingrid. Your father didn't like it. Henry agrees. He said you're too political. You march on Mayday. You're too left wing. It could get you into trouble. Well, he was right, we now see. It just shows you that whatever you do, somebody is watching you. By 1946, the war is over and the refugee cente is dissolving. The last Georgian villa on Sauchiehall Street will not be here for much longer. In

a couple of decades, the House on the Hill will be demolished to make way for an extension to Glasgow's Dental Hospital. By the time I arrive in the city, you would never have known it was there. During my student years, when I'm the same age as Henry was at the House on the Hill. I will also spend most of my recreational life on Sauchiehall Street, the party street of Scotland's, party capital, as it's now become. This is where I will go drinking at the weekends, filling my belly with greasy noodles before the long stagger home in the dark, picking my way past the piles of vomit and abandoned polystyrene trays lining the street. This is where I will go clubbing, see bands, art exhibitions and watch films in a newly refurbished gallery a few doors down from the Dental Hospital. This is one of the places where I will fall in love with a woman for the first and only time in my life. The woman with whom I will go on to have children and share this precious life. For a few charmed years, this gallery will be a beacon for people like me, the place where my new love and I will sit cloaked in the dark of a tiny cinema, nestled in the building, watching a double bill of uh films Richard Linklaters' Before Sunrise and Before Sunset. That in another 15 years will influence these words I'm writing right now. This bold reset of Alexander Greek Thompson's, Grecian Chambers, all millennially spirited steel and glass, light and exposed sandstone, will be my very own House on the Hill. At the time, I'm oblivious to my surroundings. This is what it is to be young, carefree, not yet rebuilt by the passing of time. Living out your lives inside its most present part in the spacious rooms of youth guarantees that you cannot appreciate it, so nor do I know this, but when the refurbishment of the gallery begins and decades of plaster work and false ceilings are removed layer by layer, day after day, a ghost from another time emerges. A lost Georgian villa of Sauchiehall Street, towering 15ft high on iron stilts in the midst of the Grecian chambers, part of the same terrace as the House on the Hill entombed in the street for more than 140 years."

Thank you.

[DISCUSSION GROUP CLIP 3]

Talat Yaqoob: A good life is created with the people furthest away in mind. Um, and then it catches everybody else.

Lisa George: It's so interesting during the pandemic, because working as a social work at that point, there were all these pockets of money that were suddenly available to us. We could apply to loads of different funds for our families. And actually, their circumstances hadn't really changed. They mostly weren't earning any less money because a lot of them were living on benefits or very low incomes anyway. But I just applied for everything anyway because it was so nice. But you just have to question if all this money can be available during a time like that. Why?

Bee Asha: If you can cure homelessness in a night, suddenly all the homeless people in the UK are like, they've got a place to stay for a night if you can do that, just like that. But you can say, the money isn't there

Lisa George: Asylum seekers and the detention centres all released…

Bee Asha: yeah everyone suddenly safe and comfortable and okay.

Carey Lunan: I've a friend who works as a psychologist and he's worked within homelessness for 20 years, and he has always reflected, which I find really helpful, that, for

example, health care systems are designed by healthy people for use by healthy people. And that is so true. It's really difficult for a lot of people to navigate the really complex systems that we've designed around health or education or social care or benefits or whatever it is. You have to have a certain level of literacy, confidence, agency, money, access to transport, to be able to access any of that stuff. And there, uh, are huge pockets of people who just never, ever access it. So I think you're right. I think it's about how can we ensure that the people who are missing in all of this are the people that we design this service for? Um, because everyone else will be able to make use of it regardless. So, you know, kind of design it for the people that are most marginalised in mind.

Talat Yaqoob: That's it. And if you do that, that's intersectional design, right? That's intersectional feminism is thinking about those who are further away with compounding inequalities women who are in that space and then designing it from there, because you will catch everybody else along the way. Forget that people like you are the ones that might be in need, but actually design it with, not just on behalf of, with people who are further to be marginalised.

Bee Asha: And have them included in the conversation. It's ridiculous not having people that are experiencing these things in those conversations, and just like the others who have never experienced that, are the ones who decide it makes no sense that…

Aman Uppal: If we can come in this room and have this conversation. It's not a difficult one to have. It comes really naturally. They could do it.

CS: I love that you can really hear in that discussion group, you can really see that they're getting into it. Like as a group, you can really hear the energy in that conversation, the passion, the back and forward. Yeah, it's really nice to hear.

HL: I remember listening to that on the night and just thinking about how it felt like we created our own House in the Hill. That idea where everyone finds belonging and community and their own voice. And this thing about designing and having everyone included in the conversation. And what I loved about that was that thing, we can come together and talk about this. Why can't they? And what, uh, inspirational ways to kind of close the night in some ways, but actually, that isn't how we close the night.

CS: Exactly. And I'm so excited that this is the end of it. Like, having listened to it all back and come to this end point. We're welcoming back Karine Polwart, uh, a really special cover. And I, uh, hope you can hear in the recording that the audience very much, uh, are singing along with her. And I'm also hoping that wherever you are, you might have the opportunity to sing along as well.

HL: Yeah, I'm just imagining you all with your headphones on her. But yes, thank you so much in it. And um, we'll bring back Karine Polwart.

[MUSIC]

Karine Polwart: I met my sister on the weekend. She lives in Glasgow and so she's five years younger than me, so she's in her, um, mid to late 40s. Let's call it mid. Um, for 25 years she worked in bars and restaurants, so she worked behind the bar. She got up to

being a duty manager in bars in Glasgow. So she knows all about the kind of nether end of the day experience of working in a city. And then she kind of, um, works. In 2020, when the lockdown happened, she was working in, ah, a posh restaurant in Finnieston in Glasgow and she was given furlough and came back in the autumn. And she hated it so much, the experience of not having been at work. Um, after just a few weeks of being in a posh restaurant in Finnieston and being patronised and exploited by the customers in the restaurant, she quit. And she works now as a social carer in a supported housing project. So she's gone from one extreme of the day to another. And, um, has a very good awareness of, um, hard work in a city context. Anyway, being well acquainted with bars and how to navigate them for all of our adult life. What she does for craic now and if she goes to Manchester on the train by herself, I loved Denise's story. And my sister does that and she does it remarkably well. And she goes and she drinks an old men's bars in Manchester and goes in and out of charity shops. Um, and I think perhaps she has an air about her uh she's kind of uh she's a very tall and eccentrically dressed woman so she's perhaps not a threatening person to find beside you in a wee booth in an old man's bar in Manchester. Anyway it's got me thinking about my experiences of arriving in Edinburgh and bars and being in bars because I was never any good at working in bars. I was too shy and I was too um, busy, too frigity for to be trusted with them. A tray of beer. But actually one of the places I'm a folk singer so my introduction to the city was these twin things of working for Women's Aid and discovering that the world of Scottish traditional music and folk music through the bars of Edinburgh and one in particular which is a city institution, the Royal Oak on Infirmary Street. Um, and I'm going to do a song connected with that because one of the things that was striking about that place I'm now in my 50s and actually I think I would probably be quite terrified to go into a bar on my own at this point in life apart from anything else. If you try to get a drink at a bar at the age of this age um, you're invisible to the bartenders. So it's a complicated business just um, getting your pint of lager in. Um, anyway, the Royal Oak this is a long introduction for a short song. The Royal Oak I would like to praise as a microcosm of good city behavior because the owners of the Royal Oak at the time were sisters Sandra and Dorothy and they had been dancers in the White Heather Club in the 1960s and they were incredible. Well, actually, I say dorothy was quite, um, um, a mousy woman. But sandra was absolutely the most incredible, extravagant, kind of copperhaired made, immaculate. She was an immaculate kind of just madam of the whole place. And what was beautiful about the royal oak was that it was a haven for kind of poor souls and people struggling, and people on the margins were welcomed into the royal oak. And you could go into the royal look on your own, and almost everyone else would be in the Royal Oak on their own. And I went there as a woman in my mid 20s, mid to late twenty s and I felt safe in the Royal Oak because actually like Denise said I felt like I had authorship of my evening and I found a sense of community in the bar of the Royal Oak. So I know there are horrendous experiences have come to light during lockdown of my younger peers in particular in the folks scene about their experiences of being out and about in bars and that needs uh, a light Shawn upon it but I would just like to remember the Royal Oak. And there's something in the spirit of singing together and welcoming waves and trees of which I was one at the time. So I'm going to do a song with a nod to Manchester with my sister in mind. It's a song about yeah, I guess, just looking after each other. It's another cover. I'm all about the covers at the minute. And it's by James, who are a Manchester band. And you can sing along if like.

Lyrics:

I'll sing myself to sleep
A song from the darkest hour
Secrets I can't keep
Inside of a day
Swing from high to deep
Extremes of sweet and sour
Hope that God exists
I hope, I pray
Drawn by the undertow
My life is out of control
I believe this wave will bear my weight
So let it flow
Oh, sit down
Oh, sit down
Oh, sit down
Sit down next to me
Sit down (sit down, sit down, sit down, down)
In sympathy
Now I'm relieved to hear
That you've been to some far out places
It's hard to carry on
When you feel all alone
Now I've swung back down again
It's worse than it was before
If I hadn't seen such riches
I could live with being poor
Oh, sit down
Oh, sit down
Oh, sit down
Sit down next to me
Sit down (sit down, sit down, sit down, down)
In sympathy
Those who feel the breath of sadness
Sit down next to me
Those who find they're touched by madness
Sit down next to me
Those who find themselves ridiculous
Sit down next to me
In love, in fear, in hate, in tears
In love, in fear, in hate, in tears
In love, in fear, in hate, in tears
In love, in fear, in hate
Down
Down
Oh, sit down
Oh, sit down
Oh, sit down
Sit down next to me

Sit down (sit down, sit down, sit down, down)
In sympathy
Oh, sit down
Oh, sit down
Oh, sit down
Sit down next to me
Sit down (sit down, sit down, sit down, down)
In sympathy
Down

[OUTRO]

HL: Thank you for listening. We hope you enjoyed our show and if you did, please tell your pals.

CS: You can find us on all your favorite podcast platforms. If you're enjoying it, then please wait and review, which helps us to make more podcasts and also helps people find our show. Our second episode will be out next week and the theme is WILD.

HL: Our guests include writer Dr. Amanda Thompson, the sensational musician Kathryn Joseph, performance poet Victoria McNulty, and a new play from Ronan Monroe. I hope you can join us then.

CS: Thank you so much for everyone who's been part of our first episode and we'll see you next time. Thank you. Bye bye.

[CREDITS]

CS: This episode of Quines Cast was created and presented by Hannah Lavery and Caitlin Skinner.

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CS: Performers in A Tourist by Sara Saarawi were Emilie Patry, Helen Katamba and Natalie Arle-Toyne.

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We are Stellar Quines because of the many people who've supported us over the years. Next year we'll see us reach our 30th year of asking for better representation and equality and we still have a long way to go. We need your support and sponsorship to help us keep that work going. Please get in touch via stellarquines.co.uk if you can help support our

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