

# Celebrate New Writing

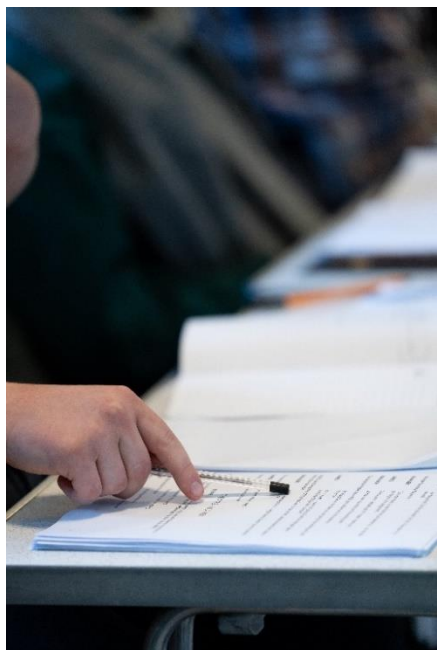


## Traverse Supporters Newsletter: December

As the days are getting shorter, and the nights colder, the Traverse is getting festive, ensuring everyone continues to feel warm and welcome this season. As mentioned in our last Newsletter, we have many artists using our free rehearsal spaces this month and our bar will serve as a co-working space alongside welcoming families attending *Once Upon a Snowstorm*. If you'd rather stay warm and cosy at home, you can enjoy our brand-new *Building Blocks* creative writing series to let your creative juices flow.

We are also planning some festive drinks in the bar on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> of December, where you will also have the opportunity to hear some of Debi Pirie's new work! Read on for all news Traverse...

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### Class Act Edinburgh

Class Act in Edinburgh continues to challenge pupils from across Edinburgh to become artists and writers, creating brand new creative work for staging at the Traverse in 2023.

Within this iteration of Class Act we are working with City of Edinburgh Council schools - Craigmount High School, Craigroyston High School, Tynecastle High School, and Trinity High School - as well as Intercultural Youth Scotland. We're working with these five groups to support young people to unleash their creativity and develop their unique voice. Each group has a dedicated facilitator who is working with them to realise their creative ideas alongside a programme of digital tasks by guest artists, who each work with writing as part of their practice. This edition's facilitators are James Ley (*Wilf, Love Song to Lavender Menace*), Fiona MacKinnon (*Summer Heart*, Assistant Director on *Meet Me At Dawn*), Michael John O'Neill (*This is Paradise*), Nell O'Hara (Assistant Director on *549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War*) and Sara Shaarawi (*Niqabi Ninja, Sister Radio*).

As most of the groups are starting to wrap up before Christmas, we have already managed to collect some great feedback!

*'It is so good to see the enthusiasm of the group. Fiona and Robbie have been inspirational.'* – Trinity Teacher

*'Michael is wonderful with the students and the kids are really enjoying it. We have one non-attender who is coming in just for this!! Thank you for the opportunity.'* – Craigmount Teacher

*'I couldn't be happier with how the Class Act sessions are going. James is incredible with the pupils and he's already got them really engaged in the work.'* – Tynecastle Teacher

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## Class Act Helsinki

Over the past few months, the Traverse has worked with long-term collaborators Mikhail Durnenkov and Aleksandra Sidorova, currently connected to The National Theatre of Finland, to use the Class Act project model to work with a number of Russian and Ukrainian refugees living in Finland.

We have brought young people, all of whom are living with the consequences of the war in different ways, together through creative writing. The short plays written by the young people were performed live in Helsinki on the 3rd of December. Robbie Gordon, who

leads on the Class Act project in Scotland, went along to watch the performances and took some pictures for us! Stay tuned in the next couple of weeks as he will continue to share some brilliant stories from his travels and time with our Helsinki-based colleagues.



## *Once Upon a Snowstorm* by Richard Johnson, adapted by Jo Timmins

FRI 9 - 23 DEC

A gentle winter tale for young audiences aged 5-8 and their families.

Based on the beautiful illustration story book by Richard Johnson, *Once Upon a Snowstorm* tells the story of a father and son who live an isolated life in the woods.



## WEEKEND

### 1. ONCE UPON A SNOWSTORM

This is a great option for little ones (ideally five to eight) who might find big pantos somewhat overwhelming. Based on Richard Johnson's illustrated storybook, and brought to life by Lyra and Catherine Wheels, it tells the story of a boy and his dad who live an isolated life in the woods. When they are separated by a snowstorm, the child finds himself surrounded by curious woodland creatures. There will be a draw-along and book signing with Richard before the two performances on December 17. Friday to December 23, Traverse, Edinburgh, [traverse.co.uk](http://traverse.co.uk)



her grandma from the forest. Friday to December 23, Tramway, Glasgow, [tramway.org](http://tramway.org)

When one day a howling snowstorm separates them, the boy falls asleep in the shelter of the trees. When he awakes, he is surrounded by some inquisitive woodland creatures – are they friends or are they foe?

Transforming Traverse 2 into a snow-covered landscape, this charming production is a real treat for all. Filled with music and atmospheric lighting, young audiences will be seated on 'tree-stumps' as they are transported into the rich storytelling from our two performers.

We delighted that the Metro have flagged this delightful family show as their number 1 Christmas show to watch this Christmas!

Don't delay, book your tickets [here!](#)

## Creating Space Writers' group



This Autumn marked the first iteration of our Creating Space Writer's Group, an initiative to create a safe, supportive, and inspiring environment for writers of the Global Majority to develop their work. After completing their final workshop a couple of weeks ago, we hosted a special rehearsed reading to share extracts of their work, which also allowed the participants to share some feedback with us on the experience:

*"I hoped to feel more comfortable with writing and find a routine/tools that would help to write. I found that it's all about putting words to paper...or screen. I realised, through talking with peers and the guest writers that there isn't a set style of work. Knowing that you work to your own rhythm really helped in taking the pressure off myself and allowed me to enjoy the flow, and know when I'm overworking or pushing myself."*

*"I was hoping to boost my productivity. In the group, I spent time working on my first play. I read plays from the guest speakers and peers in the group. It was good to learn from other playwrights about their creative approaches. It also helps to boost the morale to write and share together."*

*"The variety of artists was amazing. I loved seeing Kieran [Hurley]'s first draft of Mouthpiece. I used Apphia [Campbell]'s book recommendation to write the play and I felt really identified with her when she said that she had to write herself characters to show people what SHE could do. Hannah [Lavery]'s incorporation of different styles within the writing. Maryam [Hamidi]'s talk about identity and writing as people from the Global Majority. Shilpa [T-Hyland]'s perspective as a director and Mariem [Omari]'s journey with her own story and how to make it into a show. Personally, as mine is also autobiographical, it was very interesting learning how it came about. Tawona [Sithole]'s outlook on life is just something I always admire and his challenging us to experiment with more things."*

*"Creating Space brought me together with an amazing set of fellow writers who understood my experience."*

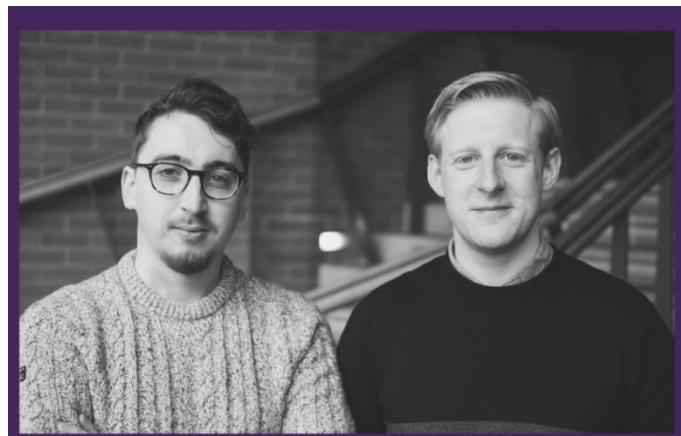
*"A great opportunity to meet new talented writers of the Global Majority."*

*"An exciting first step towards more diversity on Scottish stages."*

*"This experience will feed your creative soul, motivate you to do all those things you put off and make the unachievable seem possible. Do it! You'll never regret it."*

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## Building Blocks: How to Structure Your Story & Live Q&A



Releasing its newest episode today, the new digital workshop series by Michael Patrick and Oisín Kearney will guide you through the building blocks of structure to take your story to the next level. Having gathered their skills and knowledge from an array of workshops similar to this and know first-hand the struggle of reworking a script, they are here to divulge their techniques to creating a great story.

By breaking down the elements of ACTS, SCENES, TIME, PLACE, and the HERO'S JOURNEY, you'll be more equipped than ever before to put pen to paper and tell the world your story.

**Check out the latest episode in the series [here](#)!**

As part of our Co-Working Mornings that are being hosted in the Traverse Bar this December, we will also be hosting a live Q&A with Michael Patrick and Oisín Kearney in relation to their digital workshop series, *Building Blocks: How To Structure Your Story*.

This Q&A will be hosted via Zoom by Traverse Creative Engagement Producer, Mahri Reilly, who will be chatting with Michael and Oisín about the digital workshop series as well as facilitating questions from the audience.

If you are interested in attending this session in person, please [book in to our Co-Working Morning](#) on Fri 9 Dec, where you'll be able to join our live audience. Or, if you are interested in attending via Zoom, please book in [here](#).

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## Artist Takeover: Look who's visiting us this month!

We received many expressions of interest following our public call-out for artists to use our free spaces this December, and important offer of local groups, companies and individuals to work on and develop pieces for audiences. With over 85 notes of interest, our 8 guest artists were selected at random, and include the following:

### **Fraser Scott** (previous Traverse Breakthrough Writer, *Soldiers*)

Fraser will be working on *War Songs*, a new piece of gig theatre about the ethics of war, conscription and the necessity of art. It is a three-person show, currently in development, written and directed by Fraser Scott.

### **Mihalis Michailidis**

Mihalis will work on the show *Cam, Die With Me*, a queer dark comedy with musical elements. It made an introductory premiere in October and the team is now working on the show to put it on at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2023.

### **Debi Pirie** (featured in last Supporters Newsletter, recently completed a Federation of Scottish Theatre work placement at the Traverse)

Debi will be working on the Research and Development of a new piece by John McEwan Whyte that explores loss, grief through a neurodivergent brain. Funny, dark and filled with Sci-fi and DIY. The script is at an early stage, so they will use the space at the Traverse to get the work on its feet for further development.

### **Morna Burdon**

Morna will work on a piece that is a compilation of songs and stories about women whose courage and struggle have been lost to history. From the Scottish suffrage bagpiper, to the women of Vietnam, and many in between. Her time at the Traverse will be part rehearsal for the Adelaide Fringe, part development for the future.

### **Ellen Bannerman** (previous Traverse Young Writer and commissioned Positive Stories For Negative Times writer, *The Skirt*)

Ellen will be working on *Kill The Second Coming With Slime And Pies*, - an absurdist feminist romp, which examines how sexism is rooted in religion and prevents women in society, religious or not from having agency over their own bodies. Set in a Baptist bakery in Glenrothes, Fife.

### **Rebekah Smith**

Rebekah will be working on a feminist exploration of grief from the bad relationships that shape us as we enter adulthood. A blended genre duologue that explore seven stages of healing and self-exploration.

### **Tom Mullins**

Tom will be working on a new play, set not too far in the future we see four refugees of tomorrow forced to leave their homes and journey across the world to find safety. When they all meet at Waiting Island, relationships are formed and tested as they wait to see if they fit the criteria to make it to safety. 2030 confronts the best and worst of humanity, our brutal immigration systems and what it could be like if YOU were the next to have to run from your homeland.

### **Adrian Moore**

Adrian will be working on *Killjoy*, the story of one alienated young man's descent into the online alt-right, attempting to shut down incel posters whilst becoming susceptible to their talking points. An experimental work, using live video and movement to attempt to create an online space in a tangible, physical form.

**Two of the artists, Debi Pirie and Ellen Bannerman, will be conducting informal public sharings of their work as rehearsed readings in the bar on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of December.**

In addition to the above, we'll be hosting **co-working mornings** for people to get out of the Work From Home mode and hopefully encourage them to make some useful connections with other artists based in Edinburgh. **Everyone is invited to RSVP by booking in, for free, via [our website](#).** We will be providing free tea & coffee and of course everyone is more than welcome to stay when the bar officially opens for *Once Upon a Snowstorm*.

**On Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>, we'll be partnering with EPAD [Edinburgh Performing Arts Development] for our working morning to maximise artists' network opportunities, and on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> we'll be welcoming our partners from Playwrights' Studio Scotland.**

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### **Debi Pirie Sharing & Supporters Festive drinks**



As mentioned above and in our previous newsletter, Debi Pirie has recently spent some time at the Traverse working on Apphia Campbell's new piece and Isobel McArthur's *The Grand Opera House Hotel*, thanks to the Federation of Scottish Theatre's Assistant Director Bursary. You can read Debi's full reflection of their time at the Traverse [here!](#)

We are thrilled that Debi is joining us again in December to work on a new piece by John McEwan Whyte that explores loss, grief through a neurodivergent brain.

As loyal supporters of the Traverse, we would love to **introduce you to their work and raise a glass during the festive season on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December.**

**The rehearsed reading will kick off at 7pm, so we would be delighted to welcome you from 6.30 pm. Please do let us know if you wish to attend before the 12<sup>th</sup> of December by responding to this email.**

**DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: Festive drinks, Traverse Bar @18:30, Wed 14 Dec**

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### **Hellos and Goodbyes within the Traverse Team**

Following our recent Ticketing & Data Manager recruitment process, we were lucky enough to meet two extremely strong candidates, who bring different experiences and strengths, all of which the Traverse will need going forward, as we optimise our opportunities and increase our audiences. We have therefore made the decision to appoint two **Ticketing and Data Managers**, who will fast become familiar faces at our Sales and Welcome desk.

**Marcin Dobrowolski** has joined the team this week, most recently working with the Filmhouse, where he was latterly Cinema Manager. Marcin brings a wealth of management and event delivery experience, as well as ticketing system and commercial knowledge.

**Gordon Strachan** will join the Traverse at the end of February from Scottish Chamber Orchestra, where he has most recently been in the role of Ticketing & CRM Manager – prior to this he was Box Office Manager at the Queen's Hall, a venue that we know is loved by many of you.

Welcome to the team Marcin and Gordon, and congratulations!



And a final bit of news... this will be the last Supporters Newsletter by myself (Laura), as I am leaving my post here at the Traverse. I've thoroughly enjoyed working at the Traverse, and meeting such an extraordinary group of passionate theatre lovers. Thank you so much for all the stories and post show discussions. Although you will not be receiving emails from me anymore, I'm sure we will meet again in the Traverse auditoria, bar and beyond. I hope to see some of you on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December for some festive drinks and an in-person goodbye.

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**We would like to thank you all for your continued support of the Traverse Theatre. Thanks to your support, we can continue to discover, develop and showcase new stories and new writers.**

**Laura, Ellen, and Team Traverse**