

EMBARGOED UNTIL: Wed 15 May, 12:30pm

Contact: [press@traverse.co.uk](mailto:press@traverse.co.uk)



## **TravFest24: The home of impactful stories, innovative performances and shared connections.**

- **Bringing the drama to Edinburgh this August, with ten productions, eight premieres, returning stage favourites, and the best new writing from across the globe**
- **Traverse Theatre Company's World Premieres include: *So Young* by Douglas Maxwell, in co-production with Raw Material and the Citizens Theatre; *A History of Paper* by Oliver Emanuel and Gareth Williams, co-produced with Dundee Rep Theatre; and *My English Persian Kitchen* by Hannah Khalil, co-produced with Soho Theatre**
- **Fan favourite *Same Team*, by Robbie Gordon and Jack Nurse, created with Street Soccer's Women Players, returns with a festival-long run in Traverse 1**
- **Traverse collaborates with Cusack Projects to present the UK premiere of *The Sound Inside* by Adam Rapp**
  - **Joining the TravFest showcase in Traverse 1 is the World Premiere of *Natalie Palamides: WEER* from Soho Theatre and the European Premiere of *Cyrano* by Virginia Gay, from Roast Productions.**
  - **Traverse 2 will showcase bold new works from Khawla Ibraheem in the World Premiere of *A Knock On The Roof* (piece by piece productions), the European Premiere of *BATSHIT* by Leah Shelton and the UK Premiere of *In Two Minds* by Joanne Ryan (Fishamble)**

The Traverse is delighted to announce its programme for TravFest 2024. A bold, exciting, entertaining and timely selection of new work, curated alongside hits from world-leading writers, comedians, actors and musicians taking to the stage from Thursday 25 July to Sunday 25 August.

Voices from Scotland, England, Palestine, Australia, Iran, the USA, and Ireland bring pressing stories of now from around the world. Stories of community, war, forbidden love, belonging, football, mental health, family, and LGBTQIA+ experiences that will fill hearts, minds and the Traverse's stages this summer. TravFest 2024 is packed with stories that will touch everyone, and are as urgent and important as they are captivating.

Making its World Premiere on the Traverse 1 stage, the Traverse Theatre Company is proud to present ***So Young* by Douglas Maxwell**, in co-production with Raw Material and Citizens Theatre. A notable name on the Scottish stage with hits like ***Decky Does A Bronco*** and previous Traverse commission ***I Can Go Anywhere***, this touching and funny new play explores the challenges of middle age, shifting friendships, and the impact of losing those close to us. *So Young* will be brought to life by direction from Traverse Artistic Director **Gareth Nicholls**.

Back for extra time after a critically-acclaimed run in December 2023, ***Same Team*, by Robbie Gordon and Jack Nurse created with Street Soccer's Women Players**, makes its way back into Traverse 1 ready to delight audiences all over again, directed by Bryony Shanahan. Co-created through workshops that wove a tapestry of real women's experiences into each of the characters, *Same Team* shines a light on the daily social and economic challenges faced by many in Scotland – and across the world – demonstrating the immense power of community in bringing us together to overcome adversity.

Following the success of last year's TravFest hit *No Love Songs*, Dundee Rep Theatre returns in co-production with the Traverse with the World Premiere of ***A History of Paper*, a new play by Oliver Emanuel and Gareth Williams, directed by Andrew Panton**. Originally developed as an award-winning radio drama for the BBC Radio 4, the play has blossomed into a tender, uplifting musical love-story about the little bits of paper that make up life, and arrives on the Traverse 2 stage following Oliver Emanuel's passing in late 2023.

Traverse Theatre joins forces in co-production with Soho Theatre to bring the World Premiere of ***My English Persian Kitchen* by Hannah Khalil**, based on the story by **Atoosa Sepehr and directed by Chris White**, to Traverse 2. Utilising live cooking on stage, one woman creates the dishes of her homeland whilst building a new life and community around food. **Soho Theatre** also present **Edinburgh Comedy Award-Winner, Natalie Palamides**, in a regular late-night slot in Traverse 1 with her new show ***WEER***, an achingly tender 90s rom-drom (romantic dramedy) that asks you to look at every argument from two sides.

Riding the tide of waves made in Australia, Roast Productions brings a brand-new production of Virginia Gay's gender-flipped retelling of *Cyrano* as it makes its European premiere in Traverse 1, directed by Clare Watson. Leah Shelton's wildly theatrical and deeply intimate story of female madness, ***BATSHIT*** directed by **Ursula Martinez** and produced by **Quiet Riot**, also transfers from Australia having been described as '*moving, thought provoking and terrific fun*' by The Age.

Four-time Scotsman Fringe First and Olivier award-winning ***Fishamble*** return to TravFest following a sell-out TravFest 2023 run with *Heaven*, presenting the UK premiere of **Joanne Ryan's *In Two Minds*** which explores the humour, pain and tenderness within a mother-daughter relationship. Also making their grand return to TravFest stages are **Cusack Projects Ltd** with **Half Moon Street Ltd**, bringing the UK premiere of six-time Tony Award nominated ***The Sound Inside* by Adam Rapp, directed by Matt Wilkinson**.

Traverse 2 will also be home to the World Premiere of ***A Knock On The Roof* by Khawla Ibraheem. Directed and developed by Oliver Butler**, for the final two weeks of August ahead of an Off-Broadway run in early 2025. Performed by Khawla, this is a heart-breaking, gripping, and surprisingly comedic solo show depicting the realities of those living in Gaza during these fractured times, produced by piece by piece productions.

Bringing young voices to the festival programme once again, the Traverse presents **Letters To Our Future Government** – a public call-out to those aged 16-25 to create rapid-response for short plays and work of creative writing for performance. Asking “Given the opportunity, what would you say to those in charge – or who are about to be?” – this limited week-long series will be sure to shed a light on our ever-changing world. Full details of call-out will be announced in early June.

Completing the festival programme will be a series of Monday events with partners from across the creative industries, including the **Society of Scottish Playwrights** and **Playwrights Studio Scotland** – who also return with their bookshop. There will be a special launch event for the Traverse and Wonder Fools project **Positive Stories for Negative Times Season 4**, and a unique meet-up event for creatives working in all things immersive, spanning theatre, games, escape rooms, TV, film and more.

TravFest 2024 marks the third year running that every production within the programme is taking part within our £1 Tickets Project. This means that there is an allocation of tickets for every performance priced at only £1 for those receiving low income benefits or under the age or 25. Together with our partners, we are committed to making theatre accessible for those across society, breaking down barriers and welcoming in a new generation of theatre-goers.

**Linda Crooks, Traverse CEO / Executive Producer, said:**

*“We live in an era where information is exchanged perpetually, often carelessly, and frequently with malice, across borders and cultures. This August, we are excited to share a tapestry of carefully selected, resonant, global stories from the world of new writing (and reimagined classics through a contemporary lens). Our offer aims to give insights into what that world looks and feels like, from the perspective of a divergent group of storytellers, reflecting the audiences we seek to engage, connect and entertain. We are proud to be presenting a fresh and invigorating programme from artists, both home-grown and international, reflecting the familiar and communal - as well as that which may seem distant to us - but all of which are vital and urgent to connect us together, to care enough to speak truth to power.”*

**Gareth Nicholls, Traverse Artistic Director and director of So Young, said:**

*“With this year’s TravFest we continue our future forward approach, exploring our world together with the artists, communities and audiences that we serve within the Scottish and UK arts landscape. I am inspired by the powerful stories and innovative productions that will take to the Traverse stages, each show offering a vital take on what it means to be human, connecting us to the power of our own actions, as we gather to share in rich and urgent storytelling. I am delighted to be joining this group of artists to direct Douglas Maxwell’s ‘So Young’ as part of TravFest. It is a play with humour, humility and heart, and I am excited to share it with our audiences this August.”*

**TravFest24 productions** (on sale from Wed 15 May at 12:30pm):

### **SO YOUNG**

by Douglas Maxwell, directed by Gareth Nicholls

**Traverse Theatre Company in co-production with Raw Material and Citizens Theatre**  
World Premiere

Traverse 1: Thu 25 Jul – Sun 25 Aug

Press Performance: Sun 4 Aug, 6pm

On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/so-young-festival-24>

Thumbing through a record collection, having a glass of wine, remembering the old times. There's nothing better than catching up with pals.

When Milo invites his two best friends Davie and Liane around for a takeaway to meet his new girlfriend, it promises to be a great night reconnecting. They delve into the past and swap the same old stories they've been through a thousand times before; the night becomes more about those absent than present. Remembering who they have lost and who they were, or thought they were.

From the celebrated writer of *Decky Does a Bronco* and *I Can Go Anywhere*, and in the vein of *God of Carnage*, Douglas Maxwell's *So Young* sees an innocuous evening slide into ruin as old friends face the challenges of middle age, growing apart and losing those close to them, whether that's to the grave, or to London.

Both touching and funny, *So Young* is a story about coming back together after time apart.

\*

### **SAME TEAM**

by Robbie Gordon & Jack Nurse, story created with Street Soccer's Women Players, directed by Bryony Shanahan

**Traverse Theatre Company**

Traverse 1: Tue 30 Jul – Sun 25 Aug

Press Performance: Sun 4 Aug, 9.30pm

On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/same-team-festival-24>

They play by 5 rules.

No.1 – Players always come first

No.2 – We look to the future

No.3 – We never leave anyone behind

No.4 – We place others before ourselves

No.5 – We keep our promises

Five women have come together with one goal, one dream. Coming from very different backgrounds in life they have to work together as a team if they want to do what no one from Scotland has ever done before. To win the Homeless World Cup, and bring the trophy home.

This joyful story of community, teamwork and overcoming hardship is back for extra time having delighted audiences in December 2023. Written with Street Soccer's women players, *Same Team* is an uplifting whirlwind through the highs and lows of homeless football. Come and have a kickabout!

*Same Team* also runs at Tron Theatre, Glasgow, Thu 25 – Fri 26 Jul.

\*

### **A HISTORY OF PAPER**

by Oliver Emanuel and Gareth Williams, directed by Andrew Panton

**Co-produced by Dundee Rep Theatre and Traverse Theatre**

World Premiere

Traverse 2: Thu 1 – Sun 25 Aug

Press Performance: Fri 2 Aug, 1pm

On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/a-history-of-paper-festival-24>

It starts when she puts a note through his letterbox. “Hello Number 4, this is Number 6. Please could you SHUT THE \*\*\*\* UP? Ta.” Not a promising beginning, but... they meet, they fall in love, they get married.

Then one day a letter arrives that will change them, and the world, forever...

A musical love story about a man and a woman and the little bits of paper that make up a life.

**Andrew Panton, Artistic Director of Dundee Rep and director of *A History of Paper*, said:**

*“I’m honoured to be directing this celebration of Olly’s work. He and Gareth created a beautiful piece of new music theatre that tells a story of two people, two countries and how a moment of chance can change our lives forever. I’m thrilled that we’re bringing this new work to Travfest24, building on Dundee Rep and the Traverse’s ongoing festival collaboration.”*

\*

### **MY ENGLISH PERSIAN KITCHEN**

by Hannah Khalil, Based on the story by Atoosa Sepehr, directed by Chris White

**A Soho Theatre and Traverse Theatre Co-Production**

World Premiere

Traverse 2: Thu 1 – Sun 25 Aug

Press Performance: Fri 2 Aug, 8.30pm

On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/my-english-persian-kitchen-festival-24>

'What would you take if you were forced to leave home with no hope of returning? How would you make a fresh start somewhere completely new? This is the true story of one woman who loses everything.

Remembering the tastes and aromas of her mother’s kitchen with live cooking on stage, she recreates the dishes of her childhood and homeland, building a new life and community around food.

Written by award-winning Hannah Khalil and starring Isabella Nefar (*Salome*, National Theatre) this life-affirming new play chronicles the journey of one woman’s quest to start again.

Production supported by the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at The University of Edinburgh.

**David Luff, Head of Theatre at Soho Theatre, said:**

*“Soho Theatre’s excited to be returning to Traverse following our many festival collaborations over the years with highlights including ALOK, Bryony Kimmings, Underground Railroad Game, Kim Noble and Panti Bliss. The Traverse is the home of new work in the festival and we are thrilled to be working together on two new shows this summer including My English Persian Kitchen, a powerful and life-affirming new drama by Hannah Khalil and Atoosa Sepehr.”*

\*

## **NATALIE PALAMIDES: WEER**

by Natalie Palamides

**Soho Theatre**

World Premiere

Traverse 1: Mon 5 – Sun 25 Aug

Press Performance: Wed 7 Aug, 9.30pm

On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/natalie-palamides-weer-festival-24>

New Year's Eve 1999. Star-crossed lovers. A quarrel at the stroke of midnight. Edinburgh Comedy Award Winner Natalie Palamides (*Nate*, Netflix; *Laid*, Edinburgh Comedy Award Best Newcomer) presents an aching tender 90s rom-drom (romantic dramedy) which asks you to look at every argument from two sides.

★★★★★ 'Outrageous and electrifying comedy' - The Guardian (Nate)

★★★★★ 'I sat open-mouthed with surprise and excitement through most of this 21st-century clowning, laughed often and found myself moved to tears at the end... Stunning.' - The Times (Nate)

★★★★★ 'Hilarious & unsettling... Natalie's performance is an undoubted triumph' - The Skinny (Nate)

'Natalie Palamides is probably the world's most talented and boundary-pushing purveyor of this type of comedy' - The Telegraph (Bill O'Neill: *The Amazing Banana Brothers*)

**Steve Lock, Head of Comedy at Soho Theatre, said:**

*"Soho Theatre are delighted to return to the Traverse with the premiere of Natalie Palamides' brand-new show WEER for TravFest24. One of today's most exciting and fearless comedy performers, we've worked with Natalie since her Edinburgh Comedy Award winning debut show LAID in 2017 and it's been a joyous journey collaborating with her since – from NATE (2018) to last year's award-nominated The Amazing Banana Brothers by Bill O'Neill (directed by Natalie). We cannot wait for you to see WEER."*

\*

## **CYRANO**

by Virginia Gay, directed by Clare Watson

**Roast Productions**

European Premiere

Traverse 1: Thu 1 – Sun 25 Aug

Press: Sun 4 Aug, 2.30pm

On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/cyrano-festival-24>

A joyous, gender-flipped retelling of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, packed with music, wit and aching romance. A love letter to hope, to overcoming loneliness, to language and desire; to the irrepressible magic of theatre. *Cyrano* is a big-hearted, irreverent rom-com for our times.

*Cyrano* is the most interesting person in any room – a wordsmith, a charmer. She works twice as hard and runs twice as fast as the pretty boys, because she's deeply ashamed of something about

herself. Enter Roxanne: brilliant and beautiful, with a penchant for poetry and a way with words, just like Cyrano. But Roxanne only has eyes for Yan: hot, manly Yan; who is dumbstruck around Roxanne. Probably shy, right? Until suddenly he starts saying the most amazing things. But it's not Yan writing these perfect love scenes, it's Cyrano...

**Virginia Gay, writer and performer of *Cyrano*, said:**

*"Cyrano is someone who's decided they're unworthy of love, believes in the transformative nature of art and poetry, and is a hopeless romantic. You know, it's all of us in our 20s. But so few people remember the original is a tragedy. So, if you've got a queer woman playing and reimagining Cyrano ... well, I don't ever want to be part of something that says queer love is impossible. What does it take to jump the tracks of the narrative and get a hard-won happy ending? Cyrano is about theatre: a writer who writes perfect dialogue for another, a more handsome version of themselves to deliver; the whole worlds we can build with just words and lo-fi-theatre-magic. It's a love letter to live performance and what it can do, and how we can't create this mad, bold, mass-imagining without the audience. We are so excited to bring this feisty, sexy comedy about love, hope and longing to the Edinburgh Fringe."*

\*

## **THE SOUND INSIDE**

by Adam Rapp, directed by Matt Wilkinson

**Cusack Projects Ltd & Half Moon Street Ltd in association with Traverse Theatre Company**

UK Premiere

Traverse 1: Sun 28 Jul – Sun 25 Aug

Press Performance: Sun 4 Aug, 11am

On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/the-sound-inside-festival-24>

An Ivy League creative writing professor is captivated by a brilliant, rebellious freshman student. Delicate, provocative, bursting with wit - so begins the story of two outsiders on the threshold of breaking an indelible taboo.

And when the darkest of favours is requested, the stage is set. The Sound Inside drives inexorably towards a climax filled with tension, mystery and the ultimate gesture of love.

Nominated for six Tony Awards, this UK premiere of Adam Rapp's spellbinding play stars Merchant Ivory's Madeleine Potter and The Kite Runner's Eric Sirakian. From director of Psychodrama Matt Wilkinson.

**Matt Wilkinson, director of *The Sound Inside*, said:**

*"The themes of isolation, loss and grief in Adam's writing speak so powerfully to me. Then there's the mystery, the thriller element. You hope for things to turn out ok. You don't know if they will. Adam's work is never didactic. The Sound Inside is funny as hell, very delicate, totally gripping, but fundamentally I think it's a profound, haunting love story of two people, damaged in their own ways, who reach out to one other, across space, without ever speaking of it."*

\*

## **BATSHIT**

by Leah Shelton, directed by Ursula Martinez  
**Presented by Leah Shelton and Quiet Riot**  
European Premiere

Traverse 2: Thu 1 – Sun 25 Aug  
Press Performance: Fri 2 Aug, 3.30pm  
On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/batshit-festival-24>

'She's off her trolley. Nuttier than a fruitcake. A couple of kangaroos loose in the top paddock'. Women have long been locked up, medicated, pathologized and silenced by a simple label - 'crazy'.

*BATSHIT* is a wildly theatrical and deeply intimate story of female madness. Created by psycho-siren Leah Shelton (AU) and directed by Olivier award-winning Ursula Martinez (UK), this is a requiem for Leah's grandmother Gwen, who was incarcerated for seeking independence in 1960s Australia. *BATSHIT* draws on personal stories, pop psychology and Prozac-laden humour to explore the myths that keep us compliant and the systems that let us down.

**Leah Shelton, writer and performer of *BATSHIT*, said:**

*"Through the making of BATSHIT, I've realised how much gaslighting and stereotyping of women as 'crazy' still takes place today - from being disbelieved in a court of law to being told we're imagining our symptoms in the doctor's office - so I think it's fair to say the system is f\*cked and it's time for a reboot. Alongside feeling the rage, this is very much a vulnerable show, so I've been lucky to work with the inimitable Ursula Martinez to step outside my comfort zone and blend the autobiographical with the ridiculous."*

\*

### **IN TWO MINDS**

by Joanne Ryan, directed by Sarah Jane Scaife  
**Fishamble: The New Play Company**  
UK Premiere

Traverse 2: Thu 1 – Sun 25 Aug  
Press Performance: Fri 2 Aug, 6pm  
On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/in-two-minds-festival-24>

Four-time Fringe First and Olivier award-winning Fishamble returns to the Traverse.

Explored through the dynamic of a mother-daughter relationship, *In Two Minds* is deeply personal, inventive, funny and life-affirming. From writer Joanne Ryan (Lustrum Award winner) and director Sarah Jane Scaife (*Beckett sa Chreig: Laethanta Sona*) comes a tale of an adult child and parent sharing the same home. Pom Boyd (*The Dry*) and Karen McCartney (*A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*) perform a delicate piece grappling with mental health, love and humanity. *In Two Minds* finds insight in the darkness, humour in the pain, and tenderness in difficult family dynamics.

**Jim Culleton, Artistic Director & CEO of Fishamble: The New Play Company, said:**

*"Fishamble is always delighted to present its work in the Traverse. We are thrilled to be back in Traverse 2 as part of the Culture Ireland Showcase with IN TWO MINDS, following last year's sell-out"*



run of HEAVEN. We love bringing our stories from Ireland to the home of new plays in Scotland, and look forward very much to engaging with audiences there again this August.”

\*

### **A KNOCK ON THE ROOF**

by Khawla Ibraheem, directed and developed by Oliver Butler

**piece by piece productions**

World Premiere

Traverse 2: Tue 13 – Sun 25 Aug

Press/Opening Performance: Wed 14 Aug, 8.30pm

On sale now: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/a-knock-on-the-roof-festival-24>

Mariam is preparing for war. She knows that the army often drops small warning bombs on residential buildings in Gaza, giving tenants 5 minutes to evacuate before a rocket comes to demolish their home. So, she decides to train for the possibility of a “Knock on the Roof”, frantically (and sometimes quite humorously) practicing how far she can run in 5 minutes, and what she can carry to safety. Mariam is able to find the humour in her dire situation, and shares this with the audience, weaving together the story of her life and family in Gaza.

This timely piece comes to Edinburgh for only 12 performances in advance of a NYC premiere at the renowned Off-Broadway theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, in January 2025.

**Khawla Ibraheem, creator of *A Knock on the Roof*, said:**

*“Writing and developing this piece began as an intimate collaboration with director Oliver Butler and that collaboration has expanded in such a lovely way as we've assembled a fantastic creative team from Palestine, the United States, and around the world. I can't think of a better place for this piece to premiere than in Edinburgh at TravFest24, where new work and international artistic collaboration truly shine.”*

**Oliver Butler, director and developer of *A Knock on the Roof*, said:**

*“It has been a privilege to help tell such a deeply relevant story with Khawla, one of the most creative and collaborative artists I've ever worked with. And while this piece will be in New York City next year, it was a priority for us to reach audiences as soon as possible -- and we feel incredibly lucky to be able to do that at the Traverse Theatre.”*

\*

### **Traverse Festival 2024**

Thu 25 July – Sun 25 Aug

Full programme and booking: <https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/travfest24>

Traverse Theatre, 10 Cambridge St, Edinburgh, EH1 2ED | [traverse.co.uk](http://traverse.co.uk)

**For more information, interviews, press tickets or images, contact [press@traverse.co.uk](mailto:press@traverse.co.uk)**

**Please find a selection of press images etc [here](#).**

**Traverse Theatre is supported by:**



**The Traverse is funded by Creative Scotland and The City of Edinburgh Council.**

Traverse Theatre (Scotland) is a Limited Company (Registered Number SC076037) and a Scottish Charity (Registered Number SC002368) with its Registered Office at 10 Cambridge Street, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH1 2ED.