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**AWARD-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT GARY MCNAIR APPOINTED AS
TRAVERSE THEATRE ASSOCIATE ARTIST**

**CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR *LOCKER ROOM TALK*; GARY MCNAIR'S
VERBATIM WORK IN PROGRESS PERFORMANCE, 17TH & 18TH FEBRUARY 2017**

The Traverse Theatre is delighted to announce that award-winning playwright Gary McNair will be joining the Company as a Traverse Associate Artist. Gary joins the Company's family of Associate Artists – a group of writers and directors who work closely with the theatre, sharing and supporting its commitment to new writing and talent development. Other Traverse Associate Artists are Morna Pearson, Tim Price, Emma Callander, Stef Smith and Rob Drummond.

Gary and the Traverse have developed a successful and supportive creative relationship. His show *A Gambler's Guide to Dying* premiered at the Traverse during the 2015 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It was a hit with audiences and critics alike, winning a Scotsman Fringe First and a Holden Street Theatre Award. His earlier pieces, *Born to Run* (2012) and *Donald Robertson is Not a Stand Up Comedian* (2014), started life at the Traverse and have gone on to enjoy touring success, with *Donald Robertson is Not a Stand Up Comedian* returning to the Traverse in 2016. His new work in progress, *Locker Room Talk*, will be performed at the Traverse on the 17th and 18th February 2017.

Gary McNair says

"The Traverse is my favourite theatre in the world. I've performed there more than any other venue and it never loses its excitement. The first time I performed there it felt like the theatre equivalent of playing Glastonbury and I still get that same buzz now. I've also seen some of the most exciting and important theatre at the Traverse so you can imagine my delight at being asked to join the team. Given its incredible reputation and high quality of its work I take it as no small feat to be its representative, and it's something I'll do with pride. I find the other Associate Artists really inspiring writers so it's a real honour to be standing alongside them in this way. I look forward to being an ambassador for the theatre as I travel with my work but also to my responsibility of helping, along with the rest of the brilliant Associates and creative team, to shape the future of this important theatre."

Orla O'Loughlin, Artistic Director, Traverse Theatre says

*"As an organisation which champions the brightest new talent in contemporary drama, I am delighted to welcome Gary to join the Traverse's acclaimed team of Associate Artists. As we begin work on his next show, *Locker Room Talk*, it is clear that in turbulent times theatre becomes more vital than ever and the Traverse remains a place for artists and audiences to gather, examine and debate the pressing issues of the day. At tipping points in history, such as this, writers like Gary offer an urgent, challenging and heartfelt response to the rapidly evolving world around us and I am so looking forward to seeing where this unique theatrical adventure leads."*

Casting is also confirmed for *Locker Room Talk*, written by Gary McNair and directed by Orla O'Loughlin, which runs at the Traverse from Friday 17th to Saturday 18th February at 7.30pm.

The cast is Caroline Deyga, Jamie Marie Leary, Alison Peebles and Rachael Spence.

Locker Room Talk is a verbatim, work in progress theatre piece, inspired by Donald Trump's dismissal of controversial comments made during his presidential campaign as 'locker room talk'. Gary McNair has been having honest conversations with men about women to explore this phenomenon, with the words of these men being performed by a cast of women, directed by Orla O'Loughlin. There will be a post-show discussion after each performance.

Notes to Editors:

WRITER BIOGRAPHY

Gary McNair

Gary McNair is a playwright, director and performer based in Glasgow.

His aim is to make work that will entertain and challenge audiences in equal measures.

After graduating with first class honours in Contemporary Theatre Practice from the RSAMD (now RCS) in 2007 he has produced work with and for many of Scotland's major theatre companies and his work has been translated into several languages and performed around the world.

His most recent work includes *A Gambler's Guide to Dying* which enjoyed a successful run at the Traverse theatre during the 2015 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, a subsequent world tour and was part of the Adelaide Festival in 2016. The show received huge critical acclaim, was the recipient of a Fringe First and the Holden Street Theatre awards and was featured in the BBC's best solo shows of the Fringe.

Gary's other recent writing credits include *Let The Bitch Burn* (RCS), *After the Cuts* (Oran Mor), *Fess Up* (Company of Angels), *Donald Robertson is Not a Stand Up Comedian* (Traverse/NTS) and *How to Choose* and *What You Don't Know* (Trigger).

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Orla O'Loughlin

Orla is Artistic Director of the Traverse Theatre. Prior to taking up post at the Traverse, she was Artistic Director of Pentabus Theatre and International Associate at the Royal Court Theatre.

Directing work for the Traverse includes *Grain in the Blood*, *Milk*, *Tracks of the Winter Bear*, The Scotsman Fringe First and Scottish Arts Club Theatre award-winning *Swallow*, The Scotsman Fringe First award-winning *Spoiling*, The Scotsman Fringe First, Herald Angel and CATS award-winning *Ciara*, *The Devil Masters*, *Clean*, *A Respectable Widow Takes to Vulgarly*, *Fifty Plays for Edinburgh*, *The Arthur Conan Doyle Appreciation Society*, *The Artist Man and the Mother Woman*, and the Herald Angel award-winning *Dream Plays* (Scenes From A Play I'll Never Write). Other directing work includes: *For Once* (Hampstead Theatre Studio, National Tour); *Kebab* (Dublin International Festival/ Royal Court Theatre); *How Much is your Iron?* (Young Vic); *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (West Yorkshire Playhouse/ National Tour/ West End); *Tales of the Country*, *Origins* (Pleasance/ Theatre Severn); *Relatively Speaking*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Black Comedy* (Watermill Theatre); *Small Talk: Big Picture* (BBC World Service/ ICA/ Royal Court Theatre); *A Dulditch Angel* (National Tour) and *The Fire Raisers*, *sob stories*, *Refrain* (BAC).

Orla is a former recipient of the James Menzies Kitchin Award and the Carlton Bursary at the Donmar Warehouse. She was also listed in the Observer as one of the top 50 cultural leaders in the UK.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Caroline Deyga

Caroline trained at Napier & Queen Margaret Universities, graduating in 2013 with a BA (Hons) Acting for Stage and Screen. Immediately after graduating she was picked for the graduate scheme at Dundee Rep, where productions included: *Cars and Boys*; *And Then There Were None*; *The BFG*; *Hecuba*; and *Victoria*. She also toured the one-woman show, *The Shape of a Girl*.

Caroline's other recent theatre credits include: the sell-out *Our Ladies* (NTS & London National) which is due to move to the West End this Spring; *Tracks of the Winter Bear* (Traverse Theatre Company); *Flora's Fairy Challenge* (Beacon Arts Centre); *The Fair Intellectual Club* (Stellar Quines Theatre Company); *Telling the Truth Beautifully* and *Greenvoe* (both for St Magnus International Festival). After a successful run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and a UK tour which included *The Women of the World Festival* at the Royal Festival Hall, *The Fair Intellectual Club* was adapted into a 6 part series for BBC Radio 4.

Jamie Marie Leary

Jamie is a Glasgow based actress. She is delighted be returning to the Traverse, having previously performed in *Expensive Shit* (Acura Onashile), *F*cked.Com* (Merchant Culture), *Class Act: Silver* (Traverse).

Alison Peebles

Alison is an actor and director whose career has spanned thirty years. She is also co-founder of Communicado Theatre Company, who created many award-winning productions which have toured throughout the UK and America. Alison was diagnosed with Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis in 1999 despite which, she continues to have a prolific career as an actor in Theatre, Film and Television alongside her work as a director.

Recent Theatre credits include: *Horizontal Collaboration* and *Sub Rosa* (David Leddy/Fire Exit.) *Polonius in Ophelia* directed by Stewart Laing and *Paul Bright's Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (NTS) She created and devised *My Shrinking Life* with Lies Pauwels also for National Theatre of Scotland about living and working with MS. Extensive Film/TV credits include: *Where Do We Go From Here* written and directed by John McPhail; Meg in *Seven Lucky Gods* directed by Jamil Dehlavi; *Trouble Sleeping*; *Fast Romance*; *Acid House* (The Soft Touch); *Shetland* (ITV); *To India With Love* (BBC) and *River City* (BBC Scotland)

Rachael Spence

Rachael is an actress and theatre maker who trained at The Central School of Speech and Drama and with Philippe Gaulier. She has worked regularly with Improbable over the last ten years and is one of their associate artists, performing in *No Idea*, *The Wolves in the Walls*, *Theatre of Blood* and *The Hanging Man*. She has also worked for The National Theatre, The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Globe, The Young Vic, The National Theatres of Wales and Scotland and many other regional and international theatres and companies. Her television and radio credits include *The Lost Honour of Christopher Jeffries* (ITV directed by Roger Michell); *Eastenders* (BBC) and *The Best Of Men* (BBC); *Pilgrim* and *Filthy Rich* (Radio Four). Rachael is currently developing a TV comedy series and a new theatre show called Old St. with fellow Improbable associate artist Lisa Hammond.

About the Traverse Theatre

The Traverse is Scotland's new writing theatre.

Formed in 1963 by a group of passionate theatre enthusiasts, the Traverse was founded to extend the spirit of the Edinburgh festivals throughout the year. Today, under Artistic Director Orla O'Loughlin, the Traverse nurtures emerging talent, produces award-winning new plays and offers a curated programme of the best work from the UK and beyond, spanning theatre, dance, performance, music and spoken word.

The Traverse has launched the careers of some of the UK's most celebrated writers – David Greig, David Harrower and Zinnie Harris - and continues to discover and support new voices - Stef Smith, Morna Pearson, Gary McNair and Rob Drummond.

With two custom-built and versatile theatre spaces, the Traverse's home in Edinburgh's city centre is a powerhouse of vibrant new work for, and of, our time. Every August, it holds an iconic status as the theatrical heart of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Outside the theatre walls, it runs an extensive engagement programme, offering audiences of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to explore, create and develop. Further afield, the Traverse frequently tours internationally and engages in exchanges and partnerships – most recently in Quebec, Turkey and South Korea.