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Contact: Anna Docherty, Press and Media Officer
anna.docherty@traverse.co.uk / press@traverse.co.uk
Direct: 0131 659 7104



LETTERS TO MORRISSEY BY GARY MCNAIR TO RECEIVE WORLD PREMIERE AT TRAVERSE FESTIVAL 17

PART OF MADE IN SCOTLAND SHOWCASE

Award-winning playwright Gary McNair returns to the Traverse Theatre after his sell-out hit *A Gambler's Guide to Dying*, and pioneering verbatim work *Locker Room Talk*, with the World Premiere of *Letters to Morrissey*, presented by the Traverse Theatre Company in association with Tron Theatre, as part of Traverse Festival 2017. Reunited with director Gareth Nicholls (now Associate Director at the Traverse), McNair has written, and will perform in, this new one-man show.

Letters to Morrissey is the third in a trilogy of often darkly comic works drawing on the joys and struggles of growing up in working class Scotland, explored through letters written to renowned singer-songwriter Morrissey at the turn of the millennium by a conflicted teenager from the outskirts of Glasgow. It's a thoughtful play, riddled with secrets, considering our human desire to be understood, and about finding potentially false kinship in an icon you don't actually know. Spanning a timeframe from the late '90s to now, our protagonist is prompted to confront embarrassing teenage memories, brutal truths, and *those* letters and ask, as Morrissey did: "... is evil just something you are. Or something you do?".

Letters to Morrissey will mark McNair's fourth festival run at the Traverse, following *A Gambler's Guide to Dying* (2015), *Donald Robertson Is Not a Stand-Up Comedian* (2014) – both directed by Nicholls – and *Born To Run* (2012), directed by McNair. *A Gambler's Guide to Dying* won McNair and Nicholls a Fringe First and a Holden Street Theatres' award, enjoyed a subsequent world tour and stint at Adelaide Festival 2016, and has just completed a successful off-Broadway run in New York.

During Traverse Festival 2017, the Traverse will also present the World Premiere of *Locker Room Talk*, written by McNair, with a special two performance event on Monday 21 August.

Letters to Morrissey is presented as part of the Made in Scotland showcase.

Gary McNair, Writer, says:

"I am delighted to be sharing Letters To Morrissey at the Traverse – it's a piece that I've wanted to make for many years and I believe it opens up a new side of me I don't often get to share, so I'm very excited to bring it into the world. The Traverse curate the most vital work from incredible artists from near and far and they attract a passionate, international audience to the space, so to be opening new work there, especially in August, is a great feeling. It's a pleasure to work with Gareth again; we've been making work together since we left drama school over ten years ago, when he became my most trusted collaborator. It also means a great deal to be selected for the Made in Scotland showcase again. Being a part of it in 2015 gave me the opportunity to take my work across the world, to places I never could have otherwise. It's a fantastic programme and I'm proud to be included."

Gareth Nicholls, Associate Director, Traverse Theatre says:

"Letters to Morrissey will be the third show Gary and myself have opened at the Traverse Festival and we feel very proud to be back again. The Traverse during the festival is a unique place with eclectic audiences, packed houses and artists from all over the world"

sharing their passions, fears and hopes. It's an environment we adore and the perfect place for us to present this new show. Having worked together for years we hope this piece will build on our existing work, bringing together Gary's unique blend of humour and heart, whilst pushing forward down some new artistic avenues. We're very excited and looking forward to sharing the results."

LISTINGS:

Traverse Theatre

3-27 August (not 7, 14, 21), various times

On sale Wednesday 7 June, 10am (0131 228 1404 / traverse.co.uk)

WRITER BIOGRAPHY, Gary McNair

Gary McNair is an award-winning writer and performer from Glasgow. His aim is to make work that entertains and challenges in equal measure

He trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where he graduated with First Class-Honours in Contemporary Theatre Practice. Since then he has gone on to author plays which have toured internationally, been translated and performed across the world. He is currently an Associate Artist at the Traverse Theatre.

His most recent works include sold-out festival hits *Donald Robertson Is Not a Stand-Up Comedian* and *A Gambler's Guide to Dying*, which received a Fringe First and a Holden Street Theatres' award, was nominated for 'Best New Play' at the Critics' Awards for Theatre in Scotland and has just completed an off-Broadway run in New York.

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY, Gareth Nicholls

Gareth is a Glasgow-based theatre director who aims to produce bold, challenging and uncompromising work with strong aesthetics and robust texts at their heart.

Most recently he held the post of Citizens Theatre's Main Stage Director in Residence (2014-16), where his shows included *Into That Darkness*, *Vanya*, *Blackbird* and a sell-out production of Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* – all of which went on to gain much critical acclaim, including four- and five-star reviews, plus CATS (Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland) nominations for *Blackbird* and *Into That Darkness*.

He has directed productions for a range of companies including National Theatre of Scotland, Traverse Theatre, Tron Theatre, The Arches, A Play, A Pie and A Pint, Macrobert Arts Centre, HighTide Theatre and The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He trained in Contemporary Theatre Practice at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and previously held the posts of *National Theatre of Scotland Emerging Artist* and *Imagine Artist in Residence*.

He has won several awards including two Fringe First awards (*Educating Ronnie* and *A Gambler's Guide To Dying*), a Scottish Arts Club award (*Donald Robertson Is Not A Stand-Up Comedian*) and The Arches' Platform 18: New Directions award (2011).

More information about the Traverse: [here](#).

Made in Scotland is a curated showcase of high quality performance from Scotland at the world's biggest arts festival, made possible by support from the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund. It is a partnership between the Festival Fringe Society, the Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST) Scottish Music Centre and Creative Scotland.
www.madeinscotlandshowcase.com/

