

**PRESS RELEASE**

**World Premiere**

**National Theatre of Scotland presents**

***Orphans*** – **a new Scottish musical**

Directed by **Cora Bissett**, music and lyrics by **Roddy Hart** and **Tommy Reilly,** book by **Douglas Maxwell**

**Based on the Film ORPHANS written and directed by Peter Mullan © Channel Four Television Corporation and the Glasgow Film Fund 1997.**

Set and Costume Designer **Emily James**, Sound Designer **Pippa Murphy**, Lighting Designer **Lizzie Powell**, Cultural Consultant **Kerry Michael,**Assistant Director **Niloo-Far Khan,** Movement Director **Vicki Manderson**, Associate Movement Director **Jade Adamson,** Associate Musical Director**Shonagh Murray**. BSL Performance Interpreters **Catherine King** and **Yvonne Strain**.

Cast includes: **Amy Conachan**, **Amber Sylvia Edwards, Robert Florence,** **Chloe Hodgson**, **Reuben Joseph, Louise McCarthy, John McLarnon, Patricia Panther**, **Paul McCole, Martin Quinn, Betty Valencia**, **Harry Ward** and **Dylan Wood**.

**Opening at Glasgow’s SEC Armadillo and touring to King’s Theatre, Edinburgh and Eden Court, Inverness, with previews at Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock - from 01 to 30 April 2022.**

**Opening Performance at SEC Armadillo on Thursday 7th April 2022**

National Theatre of Scotland is thrilled to be presenting the world premiere of ***Orphans***, a darkly comic musical about family, grief and forgiveness, based on the much-loved cult film written and directed by **Peter Mullan**. Directed for the first time for the stage by award-winning theatre director **Cora Bissett, *Orphans*** is a big, bold Scottish musical with raucous and heartfelt songs from Glaswegian composing team **Roddy Hart**and **Tommy** Reilly, ingeniously adapted for the stage by playwright **Douglas Maxwell.**

***Orphans*** is set in the streets of Glasgow and will open at Glasgow’s SEC Armadillo before touring to the King’s Theatre, Edinburgh and Eden Court, Inverness with preview performances at Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock in April 2022. The production signals the welcome return of National Theatre of Scotland live performances to Scotland’s largest theatres.

Set in 1998, ***Orphans*** follows the Flynn siblings on a stormy night in Glasgow after the death of their mother. Thomas won’t leave the church, Michael is bleeding and roaming the streets, John has a gun and is set on revenge while Sheila wants to live life on her own terms. But will the siblings survive the night to get to their mother’s funeral?

*“Grotesquely funny and desperately sad, a headbutt and a hymn, the film is something special." Empire Magazine*

***Orphans***(1998) was Peter Mullan’s first feature film, made in Glasgow’s Southside around the streets where he grew up. The award-winning film is now regarded as a cult classic of European cinema and secured Mullan’s career as a writer-director. He went on to write and direct *The Magdalene Sisters* (2002) and *Neds* (2010) but is also known for starring roles in television series and films including *My Name is Joe*, *Westworld*, *Ozark* and *Mum*.

**Peter Mullan**, writer and director of the *Orphans* film said:

“It’s a brave and ballsy thing to do, to adapt any film and then put it on stage. The story lends itself well to being a musical because, however misplaced, however funny, it’s all about emotion. Orphans is an epic journey through the night. The thing that draws you in is the characters, how they interact and what implications there are for the world that’s around them which combine into a cauldron of craziness and hurt and grief. The idea of putting that to music made sense to me. Oh, and if you f\*\*k it up, you’re on your own, my disclaimer is going in the programme but if it’s good, I’m taking all the credit.”

The stage musical of ***Orphans*** is brought to life by a highly talented cast.

**Meet the family**

**Robert Florence** makes his musical theatre debut in the role of eldest brother Thomas. Robert is best known to audiences as co-creator and performer in the BBC comedy sketch show *Burnistoun* and he returns to our screens in 2022 in the second series of *The Scotts,* a BBC Scotland sitcom starring and written by the Burnistoun creators. **Amy Conachan** (Sheila) played Courtney Campbell in the Channel 4 soap *Hollyoaks* and has previously worked with National Theatre of Scotland on *Skeleton Wumman for* *Scenes for Survival;* **Reuben Joseph** (Michael) previously appeared in the National Theatre of Scotland’s musical festive film *Rapunzel* and has recently appeared in the Almeida Theatre’s *Macbeth* and in BBC’s *Vigil.* The final family member John is played by recent graduate **Dylan Wood.**

Other cast and ensemble members include: Scottish stage stalwart **Harry Ward** (Tanga) who reunites with Cora Bissett, following his role in Cora’s *What Girls Are Made Of;* **Amber Sylvia Edwards** (Carole) who starred as Rapunzel in National Theatre of Scotland’s musical festive film *Rapunzel* and is currently touring the UK in *Dirty Dancing*; **Louise McCarthy** (Mrs Hanson) worked with National Theatre of Scotland in its co-production with Birds of Paradise Theatre Company, *My Left Right Foot,* is well known as one half of the comedy duo *The Dolls* and will be co-starring alongside Robert Florence in the second series of BBC Scotland sitcom *The Scotts* in 2022; **John McLarnon** (Jacko) who also appeared in *My Left Right Foot*, *Local Hero* (Royal Lyceum Theatre and The Old Vic) and recently collaborated on *The* *3M Mixtape* for Dundee Rep; **Patricia Panther** (Sara), appeared recently in Hannah Lavery’s *Lament for Sheku Bayoh* for National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh and Edinburgh International Festival and previously worked with Cora Bissett on the musical *Glasgow Girls*; **Paul McCole** (Frank) known to screen audiences for his roles in *Still Game*, *Limmy’s Show* and *Sunshine on Leith* and previously worked with the National Theatre of Scotland on *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*; **Martin Quinn** (Seamus) made his stage debut playing Oskar for National Theatre of Scotland’s *Let The Right One* In and can be seen in the film *Our Ladies* (Sigma Films); **Chloe Hodgson**(Bernadette) who is making her National Theatre of Scotland debut in the production and **Betty Valencia** (Ann-Marie) currently appearing in *Cinderella* at Perth Theatre, with previous appearances in *WeCameToDance (*Food Tank), *The Last Bus* (Hurricane Films) and *This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing* (Stellar Quines, Imaginate).

**Cora Bissett** director of *Orphans* said:

 “*Orphans is for me, and a secret legion of devotees, the quintessential cult Scottish film and bringing it to the stage now, in this new musical version, couldn’t be more timely. Over the last 18 months we have lost family, jobs, relationships, health and…. hope, and in some ways we are just finding it again. This musical is about raw grief, and the madness that lies within that.  The emotions are epic and messy and the songs raucous, and heart aching. It’s for people who think they hate musicals but love a great story, and for musical lovers who would like to see a musical rooted firmly in a world that feels like theirs. I am thrilled Peter Mullan has allowed us to re-imagine this Scottish classic with an incredible team of creative collaborators and a brilliant new generation of actors.”*

The music for ***Orphans*** is created by independent Glasgow-based artists **Roddy Hart** and **Tommy Reilly**. Together they have written the score for the film, *Our Ladies,* the music and lyrics for the zombie comedy film *Anna and the Apocalypse*, and for Steven Spielberg’s revival of *Animaniacs* winning a Daytime Emmy award for Best Original Song for an Animation.

**Douglas Maxwell** is one of Scotland’s leading playwrights. His previous work with National Theatre of Scotland includes the short film *Fatbaws*for Scenes for Survival, performed and directed by Peter Mullan and *Yer Granny*. Douglas’s recent work includes *I Can Go Anywhere* (Traverse Theatre), *Charlie Sonata* (Royal Lyceum Theatre) and *Fever Dream: Southside* for the Citizens Theatre.

**Cora Bissett** is an acclaimed Glasgow-based director, actor and writer. Her first production *Roadkill,*created with writer Stef Smith, won nine major awards and an Olivier award for Outstanding Production. She is an Associate Director with the National Theatre of Scotland and her productions include the hit musical *Glasgow Girls*, *Adam* and *Rites.* Cora recently wrote and performed her own autobiographical story, *What Girls Are Made Of* (Traverse Theatre/Raw Material). The award-winning gig theatre production toured internationally She also recently co-directed*Adam* for the National Theatre of Scotland, Hopscotch Films, BBC Scotland and BBC Arts which won a Scottish BAFTA for Best Scripted TV.

Cast and creative biogs can be found on the National Theatre of Scotland [website](https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/events/orphans).

A National Theatre of Scotland production based on the Film ORPHANS written and directed by Peter Mullan © Channel Four Television Corporation and the Glasgow Film Fund 1997.

 Join the conversation**#NTSOrphans**

**Touring to Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock**(Previews 1 & 2 April 2022)**SEC Armadillo, Glasgow**(6 to 9 April 2022**) King’s Theatre, Edinburgh (**12 to 16 April 2022**) and Eden Court, Inverness (**26 to 30 April 2022**)**

**Booking, on sale and access information can be found** [**here**](https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/events/orphans)

Visit **nationaltheatrescotland.com** for full details

**NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND PRESS OFFICE CONTACTS:**

**Jane Hamilton – Media and Communications officer –****jane.hamilton@nationaltheatrescotland.com**

M: +44 (0)7967 742491

 **Emma Schad – Head of Communications -e****mma.schad@nationaltheatrescotland.com**

 Tel: +44 (0)227 9016 M: +44 (0)7930 308018

**Press Images available here** – [**Dropbox link**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7qk0fdyju4vvuks/AAAvBanvtsViVVoWJOU3SAGla?dl=0)

**Notes for Editors**

**The National Theatre of Scotland** is dedicated to playing the great stages, arts centres, village halls, schools and site-specific locations of Scotland, the UK and internationally. As well as creating ground-breaking productions and working with the most talented theatre-makers, the National Theatre of Scotland produces significant community engagement projects, innovates digitally, and works constantly to develop new talent. Central to this is finding pioneering ways to reach current and new audiences and to encourage people’s full participation in the Company’s work. With no performance building of its own, the Company works with existing and new venues and companies to create and tour theatre of the highest quality. Founded in 2006, the Company, in its short life, has become a globally significant theatrical player, with an extensive repertoire of award-winning work. The National Theatre of Scotland is supported by the Scottish Government. [www.nationaltheatrescotland.com](http://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/)

Sponsored by:



 