



# SPOTLIGHT

On your National  
Theatre of Scotland

A Quarterly Update  
For Donors and Supporters  
August 2022



# WELCOME



Jackie Wylie. Photography by Niall Walker

Welcome, dear donors and supporters, to the first in a series of regular updates, in which we give you some insights into how the team here is working hard to deliver the wide range of National Theatre of Scotland activity that your generosity helps us to create.

Some of you will have joined us during lockdown for the online Salon series, hosted by our NTS Board member, the lovely Shereen Nanjiani. The Salon was created to keep you connected with the work we were doing behind the scenes to develop new productions and projects during those two years, and to introduce you to some of the brilliant people involved. I hope you'll find these updates useful in a similar way.

As a charity and a fundraising organisation, we are hugely grateful for your support. If there's anything you'd like to know more about within these updates, drop us a line (email on p.22) and tell us what interests you.

This time round, I'm delighted that you get to meet some of the NTS team and hear about what they're working on, find out about some of our projects with Scottish schools and communities, and get an idea of how our Green Plan is translating into tangible targets within each new production.

First up though... Edinburgh in August – we're thrilled to be back with three new productions!





*Burn Rehearsals.* Photography by Tommy Ga-Ken Wan



*Medea Rehearsals.* Photography by Julie Howden





# NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND AT THE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL AND FRINGE 2022

It was 22 years ago that the legendary Liz Lochhead's *Medea* was first staged by Theatre Babel, directed by Graham McLaren with Maureen Beattie in the starring role. It's an extraordinary piece of writing in the Scots language and we're delighted to celebrate this seminal retelling through a contemporary lens. This new production also gives us an opportunity to welcome Michael Boyd back to the EIF, a director of truly global standing. Michael was founding director of Glasgow's Tron Theatre before later becoming Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company. The wonderful Adura Onashile leads a cast featuring NTS veterans and debutants alike.



*Medea*. Photography by Pete Dibdin



Among its many timeless themes, *Medea* is an examination of how we treat outsiders. Our next production, *Exodus*, explores foreignness and 'the other' in a completely different form. Playing at the Traverse as part of the Fringe programme, this new work from Uma Nada-Rajah is the story of a ruthless politician and her cut-throat advisor, who will stop at nothing in their bid for the party leadership. It's dark, uncomfortably funny, at times surreal and farcical, and just a little bit timely.

It's satirical and political and at the same time promises an extremely enjoyable night out. *Exodus* writer Uma Nada-Rajah and director Debbie Hannan are two powerful voices of the next generation of radical theatre makers in Scotland. Uma's *Scenes For Survival* piece *The Domestic*, inspired by her own experiences as a nurse, is our most widely viewed work in that incredible series – at the last count it had racked up over 4.4 million views around the world.

Debbie is one of our new Associate Directors at NTS and you may have caught their last production for the Company, *The Panopticon*, which played at the Traverse in 2019. Debbie was also Associate Director on *Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour*. We've got a cracking tour lined up for *Exodus*, taking in Stirling, Peebles, Stornoway, Kilmarnock, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Mull.



Medea Company



Exodus Company

And just to maintain a little more variety in your NTS festival diet, how about the great Alan Cumming exploring some of the unknown corners of Robert Burns' life, via the medium of dance, with choreography by Steven Hoggett of *Black Watch*, *Beautiful Burnout* and *Harry Potter*, and featuring the music of Anna Meredith MBE.

It's always a joy to welcome Alan back to National Theatre of Scotland and discover which unknown territory he'll be wading into next – the man is fearless! The prospect of him delving into the life of perhaps the most globally celebrated Scot of all time is a tantalising one. *Burn* is a co-production with the EIF and with New York City's Joyce Theater, where the show will run for a week later this year. Before then, we'll be touring it to Perth, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Inverness.



*Burn*. Photography by Laurence Winram



# THAT'S NOT QUITE ALL

Over at the Scottish Parliament between 11 – 13 August, we'll be taking part in the Festival of Politics. On Saturday 13 August, the Company will present a live rehearsed reading of *Holding/Holding On*, scripted by playwright Nicola McCartney in collaboration with care experienced people and those within the care system. *Holding/Holding On* was originally commissioned as part of the National Theatre of Scotland's *Care in Contemporary Scotland – A Creative Enquiry* programme. Following the reading, a panel discussion, *Care, Love and Understanding?* will explore the way society treats and views young people and adults in the Scottish care system.

National Theatre of Scotland's *Portraits of an LGBTI+ Generation* exhibition will be displayed throughout the Festival in the Cafe Bar of the Parliament building. The exhibition celebrates National Theatre of Scotland's LGBTI+ Elders *Social Dance Club* members. The LGBTI+ Elders *Social Dance Clubs* were presented monthly from 2019 to 2021 as part of *The Coming Back Out Ball*, a multi-event celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, and intersex elders in Scotland. A panel discussion, *LGBTI+ Elder Care*, will ask if the care profession is offering safe and respectful environments for all sexualities. Chaired by Emma Roddick MSP, panelists include Karen Hedge, Dr Rebecca Crowther and Carrie Bates.

So a fair bit there to keep us all busy between now and the end of August. We can't wait to be back in Edinburgh - look forward to seeing you there!

With warmest wishes and sincere thanks,

Jackie

**Artistic Director and Chief Executive**





# FLYING THE FLAG FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WITH ST. TERESA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our National Theatre of Scotland Neighbourhood Project launched last month with an inspirational *Fly the Flag* performance from the P5s and P6s of St Teresa's Primary School in North Glasgow.

The Neighbourhood Project is a series of creative engagements and artistic residencies with communities in the local neighbourhood surrounding our Rockvilla HQ. Since settling in the area, we've been involved in several projects including the annual *Canal Festival*, *Glasgow Doors Open Day*, *Submarine Time Machine* and *Little Amal*.





*Fly the Flag* is a UK-wide programme for young people, launched with artist Ai Weiwei back in 2019. This year's *Fly the Flag* is highlighting Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - the right to protest - and young people across the four nations of the UK have been co-creating work with arts organisations around this theme.

The kids from St Teresa's collaborated on a creative protest with lead artist Saffy Setohy for performance at the nearby Cowlairs Labyrinth, a site lying on a piece of long-derelict land which the children pass through every day on their way to school. The performance celebrated their right to protest and occupy the space, and to have a say in its future regeneration.

We look forward to welcoming our young protestor-performers back to Rockvilla for a special screening of the event later in the year...

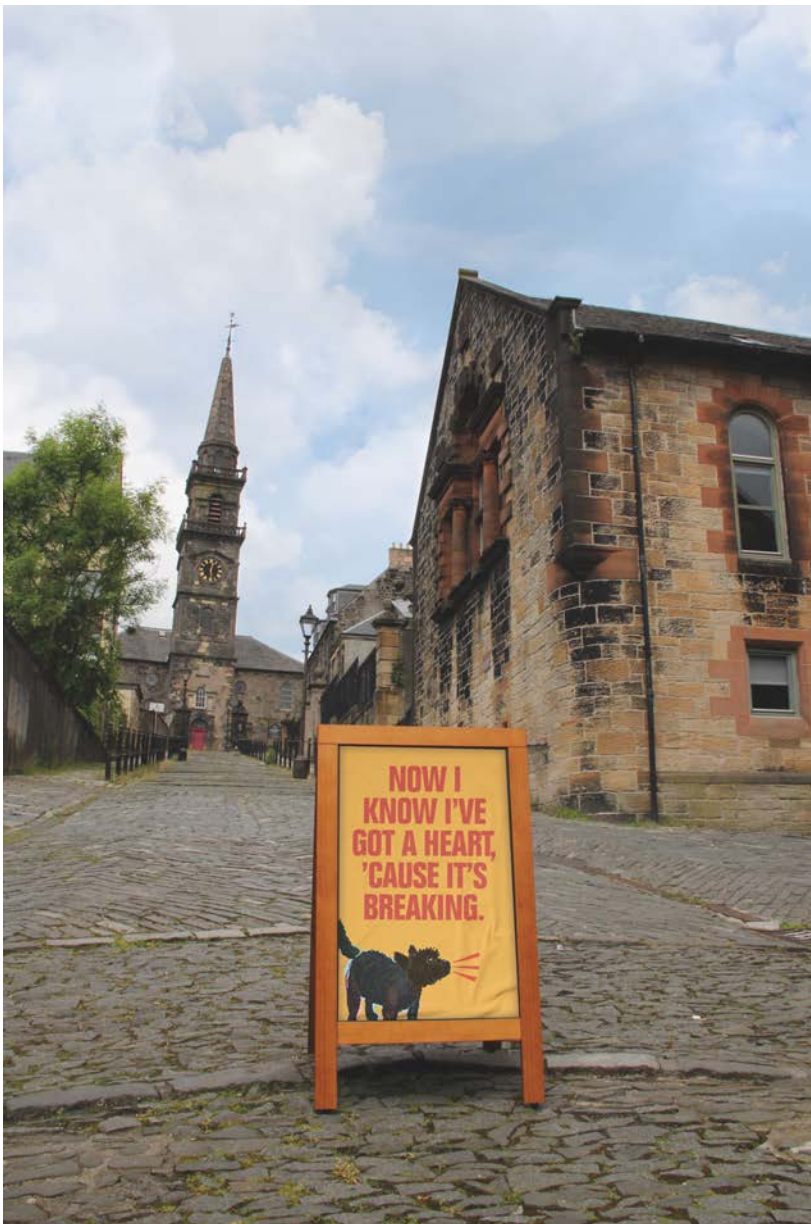


*Fly the Flag*. Photography by James Chapelard



*Fly the Flag*. Photography by James Chapelard





# OZ!

## A YELLOW BRICK ROAD ADVENTURE IN PAISLEY

People of Paisley! Grab your red shoes, wee dug and oil cans, and join us on a magical journey to Oz!

We're going to be in Paisley for the next year, inviting its to become part of something big, something spectacular, something that culminates in the streets being transformed into a weird and wonderful version of Oz in June 2023.

The National Theatre of Scotland team's goal is to get as many Paisley people as possible participating in the project. What does that mean? Basically, offering up opportunities for individuals and groups to be creative, to try something new, to think about the place they call home, and to contribute their ideas and artistic abilities to the Paisley version of Oz created for the theatrical finale. It remains to be seen what that might look like, but we do know it will involve dance, theatre, music, puppetry, circus and wee Dorothy from Paisley herself.



Illustrations by Jennie Bates





OZ! Photography by Aglika Hristeva

There are some incredible community groups in Paisley and a lot of talent in that town.

**Among those already signed up to take part are:**

- Kibble: supporting at risk children and young people
- The STAR Project: award-winning community organisation tackling the impacts of poverty, deprivation and associated stigma
- Paisley Men's Shed: a space for men from across Renfrewshire to meet, talk, exchange knowledge, and learn new skills
- PACE Theatre Company: amazing local theatre company, which runs the largest youth theatre in the UK
- Art Boss: award-winning creative arts organisation for young people

Anyone in Paisley can get involved. How about learning to channel your inner pooch with the Woaaaaoof! Toto the Dog workshop? Or helping to design the Emerald Lounge wallpaper? Plenty more of that kind of thing on the way over the next 12 months...

We're over the moon (and the rainbow) to be working in partnership with OneRen and Future Paisley on this one; they've done an amazing job already in turning Paisley into a vibrant cultural destination. Imagine what we can do together!

Watch this space for more updates across the year...

# ORPHANS IN NUMBERS



We got there in the end! Just the two years late due to you-know-what, our new musical *Orphans* was the biggest piece of touring theatre to travel across Scotland post-lockdown in April and May this year.

A mighty undertaking for a mighty big team of people, the show got a lot of love from audiences and critics across the country, brought in a lot of first-timers to an NTS show and probably expanded a lot of people's vocabularies, not least through that candidate for new national anthem.

A new Scottish musical based on a cult 90s film about a dysfunctional, grief-stricken family about to bury their mother – probably not a pitch that you'd make to a commercial West End theatre producer but exactly the kind of show that the National Theatre of Scotland should be making. And thanks to your support, we *could* make it and we did!



*Orphans Safe with You* Music Video: [LINK TO VIDEO](#)



## Here are a few numbers that tell the story of *Orphans*:

- 24 months late appearing on Scottish stages (thanks to that pesky Covid)
- 6 cases of Covid negotiated in rehearsals (but none on tour!)
- 68 freelance staff employed
- 5 lorries required to tour that beautiful big set
- 9414 audience members (in the flesh again!)
- 52.3million sets of eyeballs reached through media campaign
- 133 costume changes per performance
- 327 swear words per performance (not including 'bloody')
- 3 brilliantly Integrated BSL Interpretation performances
- 2 Grammy Award winning songwriters (Tommy Reilly and Roddy Hart)
- 52 participants from 6 community groups attended through First Nights
- 885 Theatre For A Fiver Tickets sold (highest number yet)



Again, we couldn't deliver shows like this without your support. We're chuffed with that last figure – Theatre For A Fiver is one of our audience schemes designed to remove the barriers that stop some people from taking part in theatre. In this case, the financial barrier.

These £5 tickets are open to young people aged 14-26 and to those on Universal Credit. We did a huge campaign around TFAF (catchy eh?) for *Orphans* and sold the highest ever number of £5 tickets, and signed up over 2,800 people to the TFAF mailing list, so we're hoping we'll see lots of them at another NTS show this year...



*Orphans Rehearsals.*  
Photography by Eoin Carey

*Orphans.* Photography by Mihaela Boldlovic





# MAKING THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND SUSTAINABLE

**Question:** How do you make a Theatre Without Walls, a national (occasionally international) touring theatre company sustainable and ultimately carbon net zero?

**Answer:** Make a start. Think about all the different kinds of “Sustainable.” Make a plan. Keep adding to the plan. Share your plan. Ask other people about their plans. Factor sustainability into every production, project and decision you make.



We're just at the start of our journey but we've covered a lot of ground already. Last year we set up our Green Team. We published our Green Plan. We're working daily on the Green Action Plan, which breaks things down to granular level, department by department, from the lighting we use to the touring accommodation we book, from our artistic programme to the staff training we provide, from the way we heat Rockvilla to the partnerships we form. We're active members of Creative Carbon Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, Scottish National Companies for Climate Change and the Carbon Literacy Project.

And we've also signed up to the Theatre Green Book: in three volumes, it sets standards for making productions sustainably, for making theatre buildings sustainable, and for improving operations like catering and front of house.



*Exodus Costume Designs- Alisa Kaylanova*

As of this year, NTS creative and production teams are contractually obliged to source 75% of all materials for our productions from sustainable sources and dispose of 80% of all waste sustainably. For Alisa Kalyanova and Elle Taylor, Set & Costume Designer and Production Manager for *Exodus*, this requires a shift in philosophy and some adjustments to the whole design process. On top of that, the *Exodus* set also has to be designed with a Scottish tour in mind, visiting different sized venues from Stornoway to Peebles. And for its Fringe run at the Traverse, it needs to be constructed each day within a tight 45 minute turnaround period. Thankfully, creative solutions is what theatre people do!

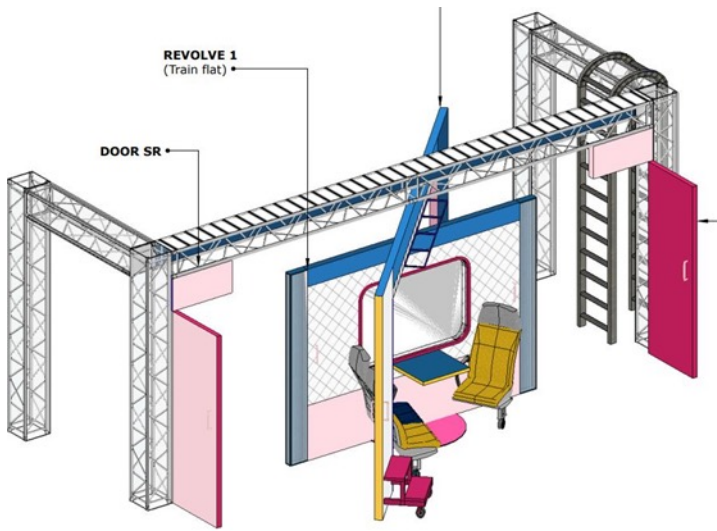
*Medea* designer Tom Piper is fully committed to this circular approach and has already identified what he can use from the *Medea* set for the next production he is designing. Likewise Ana Ines Jabares-Pita, designer for *Burn*, who enjoys the creative challenge of sustainable design but underlines the need for everyone within the company to be onboard from the start and to build in more time for back-and-forth conversations to find solutions.



*Exodus Costume Designs- Alisa Kaylanova*

For freelance designers, it's also important to know that NTS as an organisation is there to support and facilitate them in reaching these targets. As NTS Technical Director Gemma Swallow says: *'We don't want to freak anyone out by having them think the responsibility lies only with them. One of the first conversations we have with designers is around the Green Book benchmarks and how we can support them in working to those standards.'*





*Exodus Set Design by Alisa Kalyanova*

Those same standards also apply to props and costumes. Historically, theatre has relied on fast-fashion outlets and online retailers to provide cheap, last-minute costume solutions, especially where schedules are tight and time with actors is limited. Just as many people in their personal lives have decided these are no longer acceptable options, theatre designers and companies are adopting a similar position.

There are, however, occasions when it's just not possible to "thrift fancy" or to find the re-used costume that you need. For the *Exodus* photoshoot, it wasn't possible to find a royal blue pantsuit in the required size, so one had to be purchased new. In these situations, it's up to the team to check the credentials of the outlet they're buying from and not just buy the first item that fits the bill. If there has to be a 25%, then it has to be as sustainable a 25% as possible.

It's so inspiring to see such talented people adapting so eagerly and brilliantly to what is a big cultural shift within our sector, with no discernible impact on aesthetic values. It feels like these are the early stages of the new normal.



*Exodus. Photography by Pete Dibdin*

# DR JACKIE WYLIE



Jackie Wylie.  
Photography by Neil Miller

We're fairly sure she won't be asking us to address her thus from now on...but we were all delighted for Jackie to receive an honorary doctorate from her alma mater the University of Glasgow earlier this month, in acknowledgement of her significant contribution to and leadership of Scottish Theatre. Yes, she gets the title and a nice certificate, but she doesn't get to keep the silky robes. We asked.



# WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

These updates are created for you, our beloved donors and supporters, to bring you closer to your National Theatre of Scotland. Please do get in touch if there are any aspects of our work you'd like to know more about – we'd love to hear from you.

Drop us a line at **[development@nationaltheatrescotland.com](mailto:development@nationaltheatrescotland.com)**

## COMING UP NEXT TIME:

- Teaching young people to fly above their fears – the return of *Like Flying*
- *James IV* – the next chapter in the epic series
- Supporting Scotland's drama teachers
- Meet the artists - 12 new NTS-supported residencies

and much more...

Thank you!

With love from your NTS Development Team  
Stella, Adam, Ruth and Anne-Marie



[nationaltheatrescotland.com](http://nationaltheatrescotland.com)