



PRESS RELEASE

World Premiere

National Theatre of Scotland presents

KIDNAPPED:

Adapted by **Isobel McArthur** with **Michael John McCarthy**
Based on the novel by **Robert Louis Stevenson**

Video Design **Tim Reid**

Opening at the Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock and touring to Theatre Royal, Glasgow; Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh; Eden Court, Inverness; Perth Theatre and Northern Stage, Newcastle from March to May 2023.

Opening Performance at the Beacon Arts Centre on 31 March 2023

[Kidnapped PR Images](#)

Kidnapped, Robert Louis Stevenson's classic adventure novella is touring Scotland and Northern England in a riotous new retelling in 2023.

This swashbuckling new production from the National Theatre of Scotland, adapted by **Isobel McArthur** with **Michael John McCarthy**, premieres at the Beacon Arts Centre in Greenock in March 2023 before touring to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Perth and Newcastle.

Kidnapped is a colourful new take on Stevenson's historical adventure story about David Balfour who leaves home for the first time and must grow up fast to solve a family mystery and take revenge on an evil assailant. This vibrant production is a coming-of-age rom com for today, which celebrates the poetry, humour and heart of Stevenson's writing.

Co-created by Isobel McArthur and Michael John McCarthy, writer and musical supervisor of the Olivier award-winning *Pride & Prejudice** (*sort of), ***Kidnapped*** is packed full of 20th century pop music and 18th century romance performed by a dynamic ensemble of actor-musicians.

"I don't believe it.....I finally have a chance at a decent future – and my only surviving relative pays to have me knocked unconscious and forced onto a knackered old boat by a load of bloody... Pirates!"

19-year-old Davie Balfour has never left home, never been kissed and never fired a gun. Armed with nothing but a hand-drawn map, he heads off on an adventure like no other – quickly realising that he has a lot of catching up to do. The production follows Davie on a journey of eye-opening discovery as he navigates murderous foes, Jacobite outlaws and the most inept crew of pirates this side of the Atlantic.

This version of ***Kidnapped*** reframes the relationship between the central characters Davie Balfour and Alan Breck Stewart as a romance, which is played out through their adventures across the Lowlands and Highlands of a Scotland, still reeling from the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. Robert Louis Stevenson's wife, Frances, an American writer who supported Robert throughout his writing, also features in the production in the role of a spirit guide to the protagonist.

The music - performed live - is arranged by Michael John McCarthy and will include well-loved songs including denim-clad Americana, late 90s love songs, art rock, protest anthems, 80s synth-pop, Gaelic folk song and more.

Isobel McArthur is an Oliver award-winning actor, director and playwright. Her plays have toured the UK and have been performed internationally. Her five-star West End adaptation of the classic novel *Pride & Prejudice** (**sort of*) is currently on tour. Previous work for National Theatre of Scotland as an actor includes Edwin Morgan's Scots language *Cyrano De Bergerac* (with Citizens Theatre) and as writer/co-director of *The Quiz!* (with BBC Scotland) as part of *Scenes for Survival*.

Michael John McCarthy is a musician, sound designer and composer for stage and screen. He has worked on over eighty theatrical productions and has collaborated on the making of ten Scotsman Fringe First Award winners, most recently *The Last Return* by Druid Theatre Company. He is the musical supervisor & co-sound designer on *Pride and Prejudice** (**sort of*), winner of the 2022 Olivier Award for Best Entertainment or Comedy Play, and his previous work for National Theatre of Scotland includes *The Cheviot, The Stag, & The Black, Black Oil, Rocket Post* and *In Time O' Strife*.

Isobel McArthur and **Michael John McCarthy** – ***Kidnapped*** co-creators said

"In Kidnapped, there seemed to us to be more of Stevenson the man, his beliefs and experiences, than in any other of his works of fiction. His deeply romantic view of being human, his attempts to hold onto a sense of innocence and wonder at the world, his lust for travel, his attraction to glamour and physical strength... they are all here! In this novella, Stevenson asks what it is to be Scottish, to be in in love, to be a grown-up – all through the telling of a historical tale, full of humour, heart and song. It's a true adventure story – where body, heart and soul are put through their paces – to, by turns, thrilling, moving and humorous effect. We just couldn't pass it up."

Jackie Wylie, Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Scotland said:

"We are thrilled to be bringing Isobel McArthur and Michael John McCarthy's joyful version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic to UK stages in 2023. It is important to us that audiences across Scotland and beyond will have the chance to jump on board with this life affirming, musical romance that retells a brilliant Scottish adventure story with fearless theatrical panache."

Kidnapped was originally written as serialised fiction in the magazine *Young Folks* from May to July 1886. The novel first appeared in book form from Cassell and Company in July 1886 and has since been adapted a number of times with numerous versions for film and television. Edinburgh born Stevenson based many of the characters and events in the much-loved classic on actual people and places. Principal characters Davie Balfour and Alan Breck Stewart are celebrated in a 15 foot tall statue by Alexander Stoddart situated on the outskirts of Edinburgh near Corstorphine Hill.

Touring to **Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock** (previews Tue 28, Wed 29, Thurs 30 March) Fri 31 March – Sat 1 April 2023; **Theatre Royal, Glasgow** Wed 5 – Sat 8 April 2023, **Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh** Tue 11 – Sat 22 April 2023; **Eden Court, Inverness** Tue 25 – Sat 29 April 2023; **Perth Theatre** Wed 3 – Sat 6 May 2023 and **Northern Stage, Newcastle** Wed 10 – Sat 13 May 2023.

The National Theatre of Scotland's popular Theatre for a Fiver scheme will be available at all Scottish venues for this tour, available, on this occasion, for 12 to 16 year olds and those on Universal Credit.

Access – further information about accessible performances will be announced later in the year.

Full tour information [here](#)

Cast and full creative team to be announced.

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Notes to 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

