 

**PRESS RELEASE**

**World Premiere**

**National Theatre of Scotland and Aberdeen Performing Arts in association with Belgrade Theatre, Coventry present**

***DRACULA: MINA’S RECKONING***

Conceived by **Morna Pearson** and **Sally Cookson**

Story by **Morna Pearson, Sally Cookson and Rosie Kellagher**

Additional material devised by **The Company**

Written by **Morna Pearson** after Bram Stoker

Directed by **Sally Cookson**

Full cast: **Natalie Arle-Toyne, Maggie Bain, Ailsa Davidson, Catriona Faint, Danielle Jam, Liz Kettle, Anne Lacey and Ros Watt.**

Set and Costume Designer - **Kenneth MacLeod,** Composer - **Benji Bower,** Movement Director - **Vicki Manderson,** Lighting Designer - **Aideen Malone,** Video Designer - **Lewis den Hertog,** Casting Directors - **Simone Pereira Hind CDG** and **Anna Dawson.** BSL Performance interpreters **Catherine King and Yvonne Strain.**

Corporate Sponsor: **Pinsent Mason**

**Touring the UK from Saturday 2 September to Saturday 28 October 2023,**

**Opening at His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen and touring to Theatre Royal, Glasgow; Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling; Eden Court, Inverness; Dundee Rep; Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry and Liverpool Playhouse from September to October 2023.**

**Opening Performance at His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen on Thursday 7 September 2023.**

[Dracula PR images](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ce8dv9h9rzyh6tlrv8ic3/h?dl=0&rlkey=s59e42kllvvqgv0353tul2noo)

*“Protect your loved ains fae the claws* *o a beast.”*

A thrilling new adaptation of *Dracula* by acclaimed Scottish playwright Morna Pearson, directed by Sally Cookson, is brought to stages across Scotland and England by the National Theatre of Scotland in a co-production with Aberdeen Performing Arts in association with Belgrade Theatre, Coventry.

Sally Cookson’s sweeping, atmospheric productionof Morna Pearson’s bold new adaptation is relocated to Aberdeenshire and the wild beauty of North-East Scotland, acknowledging the area’s recently reported inspiration for Bram Stoker’s classic novel. To mark this, *Dracula: Mina’s Reckoning* opens at His Majesty’s Theatre in Aberdeen in September 2023 before touring to Glasgow, Stirling, Inverness, Dundee, Edinburgh, Coventry and Liverpool.

Set in a psychiatric hospital in Aberdeenshire in 1897, this unique Scottish adaptation places the character of Mina Murray at the centre of the action. Mina seeks refuge at the hospital to escape the horrors she has experienced, retelling her encounters with the most terrifying of beasts: Dracula. Mina is joined by the patients, an all-women and non-binary ensemble, and together they tell a unique version of Bram Stoker’s legendary tale. We are transported to a world where immortality and ultimate power is possible, even for women - but with terrible consequences.

The lead character of Mina is played by **Danielle Jam**, who recently toured with *Kidnapped* (National Theatre of Scotland) and *James IV: Queen of the Fight*, (Raw Material and Capital Theatres, in association with National Theatre of Scotland) and appeared in *Wings Around Dundee* (Dundee Rep) and is known to TV audiences for her roles in *Scot Squad* (BBC) and *Molly and Mack* (CBeebies). She will be joined by **Ailsa Davidson** (Lucy and Elsie). Ailsa has performed in *Heathers the Musical* (Bill Kenwright & Paul Taylor-Mills) in London’s West End, *Lipsync* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (Cumbernauld Theatre), *Elegies for Angels Punks and Raging Queens* (Union Theatre) and *Grease* (UK & International Tour).

**Liz Kettle** takes on the role of Dracula, she was most recently seen on Scottish stages in *Macbeth – An Undoing* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh) and has appeared in numerous roles on TV including *Unforgotten IV, The Secret Life of Mrs Beeton, Doctors* (BBC), *Fracture* (20th Century Digital / Disney), Honoria Glossop in *Jeeves & Wooster, Inspector Morse, Rosemary & Thyme and Poirot.*

They are joined by **Natalie Arle-Toyne** (Van Helsing and Titchy). Natalie’s recent theatre work includes *Mrs Puntila and Her Man Matti, Arabian Nights, Rhinoceros* (CATS Ensemble Award) at the Lyceum Theatre and *The Lost Lending Library* (Punch Drunk/Imaginate). **Maggie Bain** (Dr Seward and Georgina) has appeared in roles in theatre, TV, film and radio most recently on stage in *Linck & Mülhahn* (Hampstead Theatre), *We'll Meet in Moscow* (Traverse Theatre), *Dream* (RSC) and on TV in I *Hate Suzie* (Sky) and *Luther: The Fallen Sun* (Netflix).

**Catriona Faint** (Jonathan and Annie) most recently performed in *Enough of Him* (National Theatre of Scotland). **Anne Lacey** (Mr Swails and Bella), who has worked extensively in theatre, film, TV and radio was recently on stage in *Medea* (National Theatre of Scotland at the Edinburgh International Festival), and *Earthquakes In London* (National Theatre); *a*nd on TV in *Shetland* (ITV). **Ros Watt’s** (Renfield and Katherine) previous includes *Godot is a Woman* (Silent Faces) at the Pleasance, Edinburgh.

*Dracula* is dripping with Morna Pearson’s trademark humour, theatricality, and her taste for the strange, the shocking and the grotesque. The production celebrates the novel’s gothic horror origins while, in a radical twist, it allows audiences to view the story through the eyes of Mina and the patients. Elements of the piece will be devised by the company.

The production features atmospheric, Gothic-inspired set and costumes designed by Kenneth MacLeod with video design by Lewis den Hertog, a dark, distinctive score from composer Benji Bower and visceral movement from Vicki Manderson.

Writer **Morna Pearson** said:

*“I was excited to adapt Dracula and place it in the familiar setting of the North-East, the place where my writing feels at home. I wanted to examine themes of our times – fear, trauma, and powerlessness – in ways the horror genre lends itself to.*

*With Stoker drawing influence from Cruden Bay, it felt appropriate to relocate the narrative to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, exploring the area and characters I find most inspirational.*

*There is room for more horror and stories from the North-East in theatre, so I am thrilled that my first large scale production is a bold retelling of Dracula set there.”*

**Morna Pearson** was born in the North-East of Scotland, in Elgin, and is an award-winning Edinburgh-based playwright and screenwriter. Morna’s work for National Theatre of Scotland includes *Darklands* written as part of *Interference* trilogy and *Clearing* for Scenes for Survival. Other theatre work includes *Let’s Inherit the Earth* (Dogstar/Profilteatern); *How to Disappear* (Traverse) and *Dr Stirlingshire’s Discovery* (Lung Ha/Grid Iron). She was a recipient of the Meyer-Whitworth Award and her first short film, *I Was Here*, gained BAFTA Scotland and EIFF nominations for Best Short Film.

***“One of the freshest, most fearless and taboo-busting voices to be heard anywhere right now*” The Herald on *The Artist Man and the Mother Woman***

**Sally Cookson** is an Olivier award-winning director (*A Monster Calls),* an associate director at Bristol Old Vic and a collaborator with Travelling Light Theatre Company. Her theatre credits include *Wonder Boy* (Bristol Old Vic); A *Monster Calls* (The Old Vic/UK tour); The *Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* (West Yorkshire Playhouse/Bridge Theatre/UK Tour/Gillian Lynne) and *Jane Eyre* and *Peter Pan* (Bristol Old Vic/National Theatre).

***“Audaciously inventive”* \*\*\*\*\*** **The Guardian on *Wonder Boy***

Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* was first published in 1897 and has since been adapted into numerous films and plays. Stoker himself wrote the first theatrical adaptation, which was presented at London’s Lyceum Theatre on 18 May 1897 under the title *Dracula, or The Undead*. For years Dracula has been associated with Whitby and Transylvania, but recent research suggests that Aberdeenshire played a significant part in shaping the novel, and in particular Slains Castle which features an octagonal room like the one described by Stoker in Dracula’s Castle.

Join in the conversation: **#ScottishDracula**

Touring from September to October 2023 to **His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen** (previews Sat 2, Tues 5, Wed 6 Sept) Thurs 7 – Sat 9 Sept; **Theatre Royal, Glasgow** Wed 13 – Sat 16 Sept; **Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling** Thurs 21 – Sat 23 Sept; **Eden Court, Inverness** Thurs 28 – Sat 30 Sept; **Dundee Rep** Thurs 5 – Sat 7 Oct; **Festival Theatre, Edinburgh** Wed 11 – Sat 14 Oct, **Belgrade Theatre, Coventry** (18 to 21 October) and **Liverpool Playhouse** (24 to 28 October).

Full tour information and biogs [here](https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/events/dracula).

Full information on accessible performances [here](https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/events/dracula#access)

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

**Aberdeen Performing Arts** is a charitable trust founded in 2004. Our vision is to create a vibrant, cultural hub at the heart of city life – inspiring, exploring and engaging through live performance and creative projects. Aberdeen Performing Arts manages three Aberdeen city-centre venues, His Majesty’s Theatre, The Music Hall and the Lemon Tree. We run three festivals a year, and a production company, with over 1,000,000 visits to our venues annually.

Aberdeen City Council and Creative Scotland are key funders of Aberdeen Performing Arts.

**Belgrade Theatre** is Coventry’s largest professional theatre, producing and presenting a diverse range of shows, events and ground-breaking community and education initiatives. In its landmark building, across the region, the UK and online, it uses theatre to entertain, inspire, share the city’s stories, uncover hidden histories, and unleash the creativity of diverse communities.

64 years ago, critic Kenneth Tynan saw the theatre’s completion as the beginning of a new era. ‘*Enter most theatres and it’s the gilded, cupidaceous past’*, he wrote. *‘Enter this one, and you enter the future.*’

The Belgrade is in a period of transition into a new future, led by CEO Laura Elliot and Creative Director Corey Campbell. These leaders have ambitious plans to build on the Theatre’s rich history of pioneering theatre, participation, and talent development, to realise a lasting place of sanctuary for creatives and communities.

Through values of collaboration, evolution and authenticity, their working mission is to use the transformative power of theatre to enrich the lives of the people of Coventry and beyond.

Over the next three years, Laura Elliot and Corey Campbell will lead a people first approach; prioritising co-creation and cultural democracy, aiming to be a leading example of a regional inclusive learning theatre that sits at the heart of its community.

