



World Premiere

National Theatre of Scotland presents

DEAR BILLY
A Love Letter to the Big Yin
From the People of Scotland

Written by **Gary McNair**, Directed by **Joe Douglas**

Music performed and composed by **Simon Liddell** and **Jill O'Sullivan**, Set and Costume designed by **Claire Halleran** Lighting design by **Kate Bonney** and **Simon Hayes**

[PR Images available here](#)

Touring Scotland from 16 May to 24 June 2023

Touring to Palace Theatre Kilmarnock; Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh; Ayr Gaiety, Ayr; Dundee Rep, Dundee, Barn Banchory; East Kilbride Arts Centre; Heart of Hawick; Theatre Royal Dumfries; Lyth Arts Centre; Strathpeffer Pavilion; Nairn Community & Arts Centre; Byre Theatre, St Andrews; Lanternhouse, Cumbernauld; Barrfields Pavilion, Largs; Dunoon Burgh Hall; Perth Theatre; Kings Theatre Glasgow.

There's a guy. You know him. You know...big hair, wee beard, glasses, talks like that. You know? You know. The guy...The Big Yin.

Billy Connolly needs no introduction. He is a national treasure. From the shipyards of the Clydeside to his trailblazing and extraordinary stage and movie exploits, he is woven into Scottish culture.

Everyone has a Billy Story.

An expert team of story gatherers has created a collection of these moving and hilarious tales. Gary McNair, one of Scotland's best theatre makers, has turned these stories into a special show celebrating the Big Yin and what he means to the people of Scotland.

Dear Billy is a unique touring production that will evolve on the road. It will travel the length and breadth of Scotland, visiting local theatres, art and community centres, building up to a final run at the Kings Theatre in Glasgow. The production was announced last year to mark Billy Connolly's 80th birthday year.

Gary is hitting the road with musicians, collecting more stories from audience members which may become woven into the show as the tour progresses.

Each show offers a unique chance to audiences, to laugh, sing, and celebrate the man and the legend.

Dear Billy is written and performed by leading Scottish theatre-maker Gary McNair, whose work has been celebrated on the international stage and directed by Joe Douglas (*The*

Cheviot, The Stag and the Black Black Oil). Musicians joining Gary on the road will be Simon Liddell and Jill O'Sullivan.

Gary McNair said:

"It's an honour to be doing this show. To take on a subject and a figure as beloved by the public as Billy, with our National Theatre is a very proud moment indeed and one that I will cherish.

It has been a joyous production to be a part of with so many wonderful artists involved in its research and development. I hope we can continue that feeling of joy when we get on the road and share it with audiences up and down the country.

There will be a seat for Billy every night and we hope he can come along and see just what he means to the people of Scotland."

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

"Billy Connolly is arguably Scotland's most loved artist. We thought it fitting that his National Theatre should honour him with a theatrical love letter, in the form of a special new show.

Dear Billy is created with the words, collected from the people of Scotland about what Billy means to them and written and performed by the brilliant Gary McNair which is touring the length and breadth of Scotland in May and June 2023"

Billy Connolly, or, the **Big Yin**, whom this show is dedicated to, is Scotland's most beloved comedian, with an impressive career as a stand-up, actor, writer and musician spanning more than 50 years. In 2022, Connolly was awarded the BAFTA Fellowship for lifetime achievement.

Gary McNair is a Glasgow based writer and performer. He is a three-time Fringe First winner and has produced work for and with many of Scotland's major theatre companies. His plays have been translated and performed all over the world, from Germany to Japan, from New York to New Zealand. Gary's work includes *A Gambler's Guide to Dying*, *Square Go* (co-written with Kieran Hurley); *McGonagall's Chronicles Which Will Be Remembered for a Very Long Time*, *Donald Robertson Is Not a Stand-Up Comedian*, *After The Cuts*, *Letters to Morrissey* and *Locker Room Talk*. These plays are published by Methuen.

Joe Douglas is a theatre director, playwright and performer. Joe's career began as Trainee Director at the National Theatre of Scotland from 2007 to 2008. He was the Artistic Director of Live Theatre from 2018 to 2020, and before that, Artistic Director of Dundee Rep and Co-Artistic Director of the Utter touring company. His work includes *Clear White Light*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Spoiling*, *The BFG*, *George's Marvellous Medicine*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Educating Ronnie*, *Letters Home*, *The Red Shed*, *Stand By* and *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*.

Join the conversation: **#DearBilly**

Touring to **Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock** Tues 16 May; **Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh** Thurs 18 to Sat 20 May; **Ayr Gaiety** Tues 23 May; **Dundee Rep** Wed 24 May; **Barn Banchory** Thurs 25 May; **East Kilbride Arts Centre** Tues 30 May; **Heart of Hawick** Fri 2 June; **Theatre Royal Dumfries** Sat 3 June; **Lyth Arts Centre** Tues 6 June & Wed 7 June; **Strathpeffer Pavilion** Thurs 8 June; **Nairn Community & Arts Centre** Fri 9 June; **Byre Theatre, St Andrews** Sat 10 June; **Lanternhouse, Cumbernauld** Wed 14 June; **Barrfields**

Pavilion, Largs Fri 16 June; **Dunoon Burgh Hall** Sat 17 June; **Perth Theatre** Tue 20 June; **Kings Theatre Glasgow** Thurs 22 to Sat 24 June.

Press Performance: Press are welcome to see the show at any point in the tour.

Access: *Theatre for a Fiver* tickets available for under 26's and those on universal credit BSL interpreted, audio described and captioned performances across the tour – [full information here](#).

Full tour information [here](#).

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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