



## PRESS RELEASE

World Premiere

National Theatre of Scotland presents

### ***THROWN***

Written by **Nat McCleary** Directed by **Johnny McKnight**

Touring locations on the Highland Games circuit and community halls in Scotland in Summer 2023 before coming to the Traverse Theatre as part of the Edinburgh International Festival in August 2023.

Touring to Dunblane; Dunoon; Helensburgh; Ballater; Aberdeen; Tobermory, Isle of Mull; Oban; Dunkeld; Portree, Isle of Skye and Edinburgh International Festival from 02 July to 27 August 2023.

Opening performance at Queens Hall, Dunoon on Thursday 06 July at 6.30pm  
Edinburgh International Festival opening performance on Saturday 05 August at 6.30pm

**Creative team** - Set Design, **Karen Tennent**; Lighting Design, **Lizzie Powell**; Costume Design, **Sabrina Henry**; Composer, **Luke Sutherland**; Sound Design, **Tom Penny**; Movement Director, **Lucy Glassbrook**; Associate Director, **Niloo Far Khan**; Casting Director, **Carolyn McLeod, CGD, CSA**.

**Full Cast:** **Efè Agwele, Maureen Carr, Lesley Hart, Chloe-Ann Tylor and Adiza Shardow**

#### [PR IMAGES HERE](#)

*Sweat. Opposition. Negotiation. Hold on Tight*

**Thrown** is a punchy and playful new production inspired by Scottish Backhold Wrestling, by fresh new writer Nat McCleary. The production will embark on a tour of Highland Games locations and community halls in the North and West of Scotland from 03 July before opening at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2023 from 03 to 27 August 2023.

Featuring a diverse inter-generational all-female cast, **Thrown** celebrates this uniquely Scottish cultural phenomenon, telling the story of Glasgow's most unlikely backhold wrestling team.

Five wildly different women gather in the muddy fields of the Highland Games circuit to compete in the obscure art of Backhold wrestling. The pearls are off, influencer video posted, 'Gucci' bag from the barras set aside as the bold beginners attempt to become a team and win the championship. But nothing will prepare them for the competition that could stop them taking home the trophy – each other.

Can there be unity with diversity? *Thrown* gets to grips with identity and belonging in Scotland, challenging contemporary notions of Scottishness.

Scottish Backhold is a style of folk wrestling originating in Scotland. It is one of the traditional tests of strength and guile at the Highland Games. *Thrown* will embody the physicality and passion at the heart of the sport.

National Theatre of Scotland, with their unique “theatre without walls” model, will be touring Scotland, playing in community arts spaces in association with a variety of Highland Games and Gatherings.

- Victoria Hall, Dunblane in association with Bridge of Allan Games
- Queen's Hall, Dunoon, in association with Cowal Gathering
- Victoria Halls, Helensburgh, in association with Helensburgh & Lomond Games
- Mull Theatre, Tobermory, in association with Mull Highland Games;
- The production is also touring to Victoria & Albert Halls, Ballater; Aberdeen; Rockfield Centre, Oban; Birnam Arts, Dunkeld, and Gathering Hall, Portree, Skye, before landing at the Edinburgh International Festival
- The presentation of *Thrown* in Ballater and Aberdeen is in association with the North East Touring Network (NEAT) and in Portree, in association with SEALL.

An all-female ensemble of Efè Agwele, Maureen Carr, Lesley Hart, Chloe-Ann Tylor and Adiza Shardow will take to the turf in this new production.

Maureen Carr, is a popular Scottish actor of stage and screen whose credits include the films *Wild Rose* and *Afterlife* and was recently seen on TV in the documentary series *Growing Up Scottish* and on stage in *Fibres* (Citizens Theatre) and *Chic Murray- A Funny Place for a Window* (Traverse Theatre). Lesley Hart is an actor and writer. Most known to TV audiences for her longstanding role as Lou Caplan in *River City*. Her version of *Anna Karenina* is being presented to Edinburgh audiences at the Lyceum Theatre in Spring 2023.

Efè Agwele, Adiza Shardow and Chloe-Ann Tylor make their National Theatre of Scotland debuts with Efè and Adiza making their Scottish stage debuts.

Efè Agwele has recently appeared in the National Theatre's *Hamlet – for younger audiences* and in *Tell Me Everything* for ITV2. Adiza Shardow is most known for her TV roles which include series regular characters on BBC's *Waterloo Road*, *River City* and BAFTA-winning CBBC's show *Last Commanders*.

Chloe-Ann Tylor, stage roles include the one woman show *Svengali* (Pitlochry Theatre/Pleasance) which won her the Filipa Braganca award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, *I am Tiger* (Perth Theatre/Imagine) and *Trainspotting* (Citizens Theatre).

Writer **Nat McCleary** said:

*“At its heart, Thrown explores belonging and identity through questioning what it is to be Scottish now.*

*As someone who wrestles with identity, Backhold Wrestling seemed to be the perfect conduit for exploring a sense of self, belonging, notions of Scottishness and their place on a personal and national level at this moment in time.*

*Audiences can expect a show that is honest, funny, and unapologetic.”*

**Nat McCleary** is an actor, writer and mover based in Glasgow whose work focuses predominantly on intersectionality and identity - currently through the prism of nationalism. She is known to TV audiences as an actor with roles in *Jamie Johnson*, *Guilt* and *Mayflies* and *The Control Room*. She has recently been touring the USA in *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*. Previous performance work for National Theatre of Scotland includes the digital spoken word dance piece *Thirteen Fragments* (co-production with the Royal Society of Edinburgh), *Dear Europe Cadaver Police in The Electrocution Afterlife* and *Them!*

She is an emergent writer and this is her debut theatre production as a playwright.

**Johnny McKnight** is a writer, director, performer and joint artistic director of Random Accomplice Theatre Company. He is a National Theatre of Scotland Associate Artist and his work for the company includes the online festive show *Rapunzel*. He is also one of Scotland's most celebrated contemporary panto artists. Johnny wrote the book for the recent Regents Park Open Air Theatre production of *101 Dalmatians* and has written on Series 16-22 of *River City* (BBC).

Join the conversation: **#Thrown**

#### Full Tour

<b>2 July at 7.30pm</b>	<b>Victoria Hall, Dunblane</b>
<b>6 July at 6.30pm</b>	<b>Queen's Hall, Dunoon</b>
<b>08 July at 7.30pm</b>	<b>Victoria Halls, Helensburgh</b>
<b>12 July at 7.30pm</b>	<b>Victoria &amp; Albert Hall, Ballater</b>
<b>15 July at 7:00pm</b>	<b>Woodside Community Centre, Aberdeen</b>
<b>18 - 19 July at 7.30pm</b>	<b>Mull Theatre, Tobermory, Isle of Mull</b>
<b>22 July at 7.30pm</b>	<b>Rockfield Centre, Oban</b>
<b>26 July at 7.30pm</b>	<b>Birnam Arts, Dunkeld</b>
<b>28 July at 7.30pm</b>	<b>Gathering Hall, Portree, Isle of Skye</b>
<b>03 to 27 August 2023</b>	<b>Edinburgh International Festival (Traverse Theatre)</b>

Full tour and creative information [here](#).

**Access:** Theatre for a Fiver tickets are available for 14 to 26-year-olds and those on Universal Credit at selected performances. BSL (British Sign Language) interpreted, captioned, audio-described performances are available across the tour. Full access schedule [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](http://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com)

### **LEAD CREATIVES BIOGS**

#### **JOHNNY MCKNIGHT – DIRECTOR**

Johnny McKnight is an award-winning writer, director, educator, dramaturg and performer. Current/ Recent Credits for National Theatre of Scotland include the digital Christmas show, *Rapunzel – A Hairy Tale Adventure* (in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland). His theatre work includes the accoladed *Wendy Hoose*, *The Incredible Adventures of See Thru Sam and The Joke*. For over 15 years he was Co-Artistic Director of Random Accomplice Theatre Company. He has been described as the 'vanguard of post-modernist panto', with 23 productions and a slew of nominations for these works. In the last few years Johnny has transitioned into television, working as part of the core writing team for BBC's Continuing Drama *River City* (with 30+ Hour episodes) and *Holby City*. This summer saw new productions for which he'd written the book - *101 Dalmatians* at Regents Park (London) and *Rubble* for Scottish Opera.

#### **NAT MCLEARY – WRITER**

Nat is an actor, writer and mover based in Glasgow. Acting theatre credits include: *The Strange Undoing with Prudencia Hart*, (Lyceum and Double M Arts) *Cadaver Police in The Electrocutation Afterlife* (National Theatre of Scotland); *The Dark Carnival* (Vanishing Point). Television credits include: *Mayflies*, *The Control Room*, *Jamie Johnson*, *Guilt*. Natali is currently under commission with Stellar Quines. As an actor and movement specialist, Nat has a unique perspective on the relationship between text and the body as narrative and is excited by unearthing authentic embodied performance.

