



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON 15 MAY 2018

- ***The Reason I Jump*** - an outdoor site-specific performance event at The Children's Wood and North Kelvin Meadow, Glasgow from 11 to 23 June 2018, conceived and directed by Graham Eatough, based on Naoki Higashida's bestselling book, translated by David Mitchell and Keiko Yoshida
  - A new partnership with the National Autistic Society who will provide training, guidance and support across the National Theatre of Scotland's 2018 programme.
  - A new, free augmented reality experience for visitors to the Children's Wood and North Kelvin Meadow in June 2018, celebrating neurodiversity through storytelling
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The National Theatre of Scotland presents

## ***The Reason I Jump***

based on the book by **Naoki Higashida**, translated by **David Mitchell** and **Keiko Yoshida**  
Production conceived and directed by **Graham Eatough**, designed by **Observatorium**, dramaturgy by **Clare Duffy**, choreography by **Zoe Halliday**.

Full cast is **Fletcher Mathers, Michael Dawson, Calum MacRitchie, Emma McCaffrey** and **Nicola Tuxworth** with four young performers from schools in Glasgow, Edinburgh and East Renfrewshire – Abercorn, St Crispins and Isobel Mair.

**At The Children's Wood and North Kelvin Meadow, Glasgow from 11 to 23 June 2018**  
**Opening performance on 12 June 2018 at 7pm.**

### **Part of the West End Festival**

Leading Scottish artist and theatre-maker Graham Eatough directs and adapts *The Reason I Jump*, a new project exploring the realities and experience of living with autism. Inspired by the bestselling Naoki Higashida book of the same name, translated into English by Keiko Yoshida and Cloud Atlas-author David Mitchell in 2013, the piece takes the form of a unique site-specific installation in the Children's Wood and North Kelvin Meadow in the summer of 2018.

Naoki is a non-verbal, autistic, Japanese boy, who was just thirteen years old when he wrote the book *The Reason I Jump*, a one-of-a-kind memoir that demonstrated how an autistic mind thinks, feels, perceives, and responds. Now audiences will be invited to take a unique journey into his world and meet the magical gardeners of his outdoor maze.

In this innovative adaptation, the book becomes an experience, a mysterious journey through a beautiful outdoor maze designed by renowned Dutch collective Observatorium, which will take over the Children's Wood and North Kelvin Meadow in Glasgow's West End. There, audiences will encounter the stories and insights of Naoki's gardeners and become immersed in his playful world.

This adaptation will be a unique blend of site-specific promenade performance and interactive installation, created with, and performed by, a group of artists with autism ranging from 16 to 60 years old. During performances the piece will see audiences free to explore the outdoor maze, in which they will find storytellers and performances drawn from experiences in the book as well as the personal experiences of the performers themselves. At the centre of the maze is a stone labyrinth, constructed by members of the local community using reclaimed cobblestone from nearby Maryhill. Once the performance is complete, the labyrinth will remain in the meadow as a legacy for residents and visitors.

***The Reason I Jump*** has its roots in a Scottish government initiative called ***Limitless***, a collaboration between The National Theatre of Scotland, RCS, and the National Autistic Society Scotland which explored the potential of creative arts in engaging and encouraging work by and for autistic children, teenagers, and young adults.

#### **A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY SCOTLAND**

The National Theatre of Scotland in partnership with the National Autistic Society Scotland has been a pioneer in the field of offering audiences with autism access to high quality theatre productions in Scotland. The first autism friendly performance in Scotland was *A Christmas Carol* in Kirkcaldy in December 2012.

In 2018, the National Theatre of Scotland and the National Autistic Society Scotland will work together to deliver a series of autism-friendly performances across the Company's programme and additional support for performances created specifically for neuro-diverse audiences. These include the National Theatre of Scotland's first autism-friendly production at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe of *My Left-Right Foot: The Musical*, with *Birds of Paradise*, and an autism friendly performance of *Eddie and the Slumber Sisters*, in partnership with Catherine Wheels at the Edinburgh International Children's Festival. Full details on all autism friendly performances, to be announced.

The overall aims of the partnership, for the National Theatre of Scotland, are to increase audiences to educate and train artists and artistic partners in the needs of this community/individuals and to explore the potential for opening up more National Theatre of Scotland performances to neuro diverse audiences.

Fiona McGrevey from the National Autistic Society Scotland said: "We are delighted to be strengthening our relationship with the National Theatre of Scotland through this new partnership this year.

*"We warmly welcome this exciting production of **The Reason I Jump** to Glasgow in June and we look forward to seeing the autistic artists in action. We look forward to providing training and support to the National Theatre of Scotland company to help raise further awareness of autism. We will also help them identify any adaptations that may be required for this production as well as other accessible performances throughout 2018.*

*“Around 53,000 people in Scotland are on the autism spectrum. Together with their families they make up around 232,000 people whose lives are touched by autism every single day. I hope other organisations throughout Scotland will be inspired by the National Theatre of Scotland to learn more about becoming more autism friendly.”*

Jackie Wylie – Chief Executive and Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Scotland said

*“Identifying and nurturing diverse talent and reaching new audiences is at the heart of the National Theatre of Scotland and continues our commitment to opening up the Company to new ways of working. In 2018 we are delighted to be entering into a partnership with the National Autistic Society Scotland in order to celebrate the work of autistic artists, and to ensure that neuro-diverse audiences are accommodated and welcomed at our performances.”*

### **A NEW FREE AUGMENTED REALITY EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS TO THE NORTH KELVIN MEADOW AND CHILDREN’S WOOD**

In support of the evening performances, visitors to the space during the day will be able to enjoy aspects of the Reason I Jump production through a specially developed augmented reality experience. Available for free for Android devices and downloadable from the Google Play store, audiences can walk the maze in search of labyrinthine marker-points. Once located – and viewed through the app – the marker points begin to transform the surrounding space, filling it with the sights and sounds of the evening performances. In late June the site will continue to fill with marker points and an update to the app will be released. Users will experience music, stories and creative expressions gathered through a series of workshops with young people on the autistic spectrum, celebrating neurodiversity through storytelling. Schools involved in this project to date include High Park PS and Abercorn School.

The Children’s Wood and North Kelvin Meadow is a much loved community greenspace in Glasgow’s West End, which is regularly accessed by the local community, specific groups, and 22 neighbouring schools and nurseries. Regular events are organised by The Children’s Wood community, designed to connect children to nature, raise aspirations and bring people together.

Emily Cutts on behalf of the Children’s Wood

*“We are delighted to be the venue for this innovative production and hope it will raise the awareness of what it can be like living with autism. We also hope **The Reason I Jump** will highlight the benefit of being outdoors in nature for children and adults with autism. Restrictions are being placed on access to nature for children and young people with autism, and as a consequence they are suffering. Having more places locally to connect with nature is important. The Children’s Wood and North Kelvin Meadow is a magical place for people with autism because being in nature can reduce anxiety and encourage communication and social interactions.”*

### **Listings and booking Info**

#### ***The Reason I Jump***

**The Children’s Wood and North Kelvin Meadow, Glasgow**

**Dates:** 11 to 23 June 2018

**Tickets:** £4 - £8. Tickets can be booked at [nationaltheatrescotland.com](http://nationaltheatrescotland.com)

**Additional Box Office info**

*The Reason I Jump* is ticketed and open from 7pm until 9.30pm (or 1pm until 3.30pm/ 12 noon until 2.30pm for matinees). It takes approximately 1 hour to walk through the maze and last entry is at 8:30pm) It is an outdoor maze so please dress appropriately for the weather. The ground is uneven so wheelchair and buggy/pram access is limited. There is some outdoor seating along the way if you need to rest.

**Access info:** all performances are open to all ages, and will be autism-friendly.

BSL performances **on 15 and 23 June.**

Audio described performance **on 16 June.**

Please call 0141 221 0970 for further information on these performances, companion tickets, wheelchair access or any other access information.

Please call 0141 221 0970 for information on school bookings.

From 11 June, remaining tickets can also be bought from a temporary box office at The Children's Wood and North Kelvin Meadow.

**Local ticket offer**

All those living in postcodes **G20 8, G20 9, G20 6, G20 7** are entitled to £5 tickets to Reason I Jump (normal price £8). These can be booked using the code G20. Proof of address will need to be brought when collecting tickets from the box office.

<https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/production/the-reason-i-jump/>

*The Reason I Jump* is supported by The RS Macdonald Charitable Trust and The Mickel Fund. A percentage of the ticket price for *The Reason I Jump* will go towards The Children's Wood and North Kelvin Meadow.

Join the conversation: **#TheReasonIJump**

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**Press Imagery:** please contact the press office for images.

## 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)

### About the National Autistic Society Scotland

- The National Autistic Society is the leading charity for autistic people and their families. It provides information, support and pioneering services, and campaigns for a better world for autistic people.
- To find out more about autism or the National Autistic Society Scotland, please visit ([autism.org.uk/scotland](http://autism.org.uk/scotland)).
- Follow the National Autistic Society on Twitter (@Autism) or Facebook ([www.facebook.com/autismscotland](http://www.facebook.com/autismscotland)).

### About autism

- Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others.
- More than 1 in 100 people are autistic, including an estimated 57,000 people in Scotland.
- Every autistic person is different. It can present some serious challenges – but, with the right support and understanding, autistic people and their families can live full lives.
- Although everyone is different, autistic people may:
  - o Be under or oversensitive to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours, which can make everyday life extremely difficult.
  - o Find social situations and change a challenge, sometimes leading to extreme levels of anxiety.
  - o Experience a 'meltdown' if overwhelmed by anxiety or sensory overload.
  - o Benefit from extra time to process and respond to communication.
- Asperger syndrome is a form of autism. People with Asperger syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence. They have fewer problems with speech but may still have difficulties with understanding and processing language

