

PRESS RELEASE Friday 23 June 2017

PRIMETIME 2017 NEW PLAYS WRITTEN BY CHILDREN AGED EIGHT TO 11 TOUR LONDON PRIMARY SCHOOLS



Image by Helen Murray

Throughout June the Royal Court Theatre have toured a series of short plays written by children between the ages of eight and 11 to nine primary schools in London boroughs. Following the tour *Primetime* will be performed at the Royal Court's Jerwood Theatre Upstairs, on 23 and 24 June 2017.

Primetime is a free primary schools tour that has been running for the past five years. The tour is accompanied by playwriting workshops, to inspire children who have seen the play to become writers themselves. Each autumn a selection of children are then invited to playwriting groups, run by a Royal Court playwright. During these workshops the children are taught the craft of playwriting, and a selection of these plays are then chosen for next year's tour. The plays are directed, performed and designed by professionals to give the young playwrights the same opportunities as their older counterparts. *Primetime* improves literacy and imagination in its audiences, and, as of 2017, the Royal Court have toured 32 plays to 55 schools, and performed to over 4000 children.

The 2017 *Primetime* plays are written by Hezron Bavanathan, Ava Reid, Madhuksharaa Sekar, Sujit Jawahar Selvam, Safiyya Amin, Michel Molekela, Moses Lopes and Tehya Payne who are all primary school children aged eight to 11 from Merton, Richmond, Harrow, Brent and Barnet.

The plays:

Get ready for weird and wonderful adventures through Central London, Planet Invisible and the Serengeti. Befriend Sharon the Gigantic Animal and a valiant superhero made of paper. And discover a dastardly plot to rid the world of water before escaping an evil mastermind determined to use breakdancing to get what he wants.

Ronaldo & Cristian & Hezzie by Hezron Bavananthan, aged 9

“My name is Hezzie. I am going to tell you a little bit about myself.”

Hezzie has lots of friends in and out of school. But when his classmates Ronaldo and Cristian won't stop picking on him, he has to challenge them to a contest. Then they say they want to be his friend, but what is their true motive?

Dreamer by Ava Reid, aged 11

“This is gonna sound weird but I had a dream...”

When Rebecca sees her brother Harry get poisoned in a dream and it turns out to be real, she knows she has to find a way to stop the poisoner before they strike again. But who is it, and why are they targeting children?

WHO WANTS TO GO ON AN ADVENTURE? by Madhuksharaa Sekar, aged 11

“We came here for an adventure not just sightseeing.”

James, Andrew and Alexia have decided to have an adventure. When a stranger called John locks them up in a cave, their only hope of rescue is Sharon the Gigantic Animal. Luckily she isn't as scary as she seems...

Paper Cut by Moses Lopes, aged 9

“Oh sorry diary readers I hear piercing screams. Time to save the world.”

It's a tough life protecting a city from crime, but brave hero Papercut and his son Paperboy are the saviours everyone needs.

Geogyman vs The World by Michel Molekela, aged 9

“I need you to blow up a volcano.”

Geogyman is fed up. He's allergic to water, and this stupid world has a lot of water on it. So Geogyman comes up with a plan: he's going to cover the whole planet with lava. That will solve his allergy, right?

RIBBER THE ROBBER! by Sujit Jawahar Selvam, aged 10

“Good job guys now we can take over the world!!!”

Ribber is invisible. So are his family and friends. Robbing is easy when nobody can see you. And Ribber's mum has only four rules: don't rob a rib store, don't rob her store, don't become visible and whatever you do, don't stop her pool parties. Unfortunately for Ribber, he's broken every single one.

Jody's Big Break by Tehya Payne, aged 9

"I'm too pretty for jail!"

When Jody receives a mysterious invitation for a break-dance competition, she knows she can't miss out. But when she has to travel back in time to the start of the world in order to attend, it's obvious that this is no ordinary competition.

The Best Catch of All by Safiyya Amin, aged 9

"I have always had my suspicions about Sally..."

Elizabeth is an elephant and Sally is a crocodile living in the Serengeti. There are poachers about, and Elizabeth must make sure she keeps herself and the baby elephants safe. But Sally is acting strangely, and Elizabeth must figure out which side her friend is on...

Commenting on Primetime **Ava Reid, aged 11 said;**

"I came up with Harry and Rebecca and it involved a field and a horse and she found Harry on the ground. And she had to go and find a cure from a magic old woman and she had a deadline of 3 weeks to save Harry's life."

Sujit Jawahar Selvam, aged 10 added;

"I love writing plays as it brings out the creativity in me and this has given me that opportunity to see what I visualise, on stage. The idea first came to my mind when my friend asked me what super power I would love to have been born with and my immediate response was invisibility which I wanted my character Ribber to experience in the invisible world. My play is important because it tells people that doing things in the right way means no punishment."

Moses Lopes, aged 9 describing writing Paper Cuts said;

"I found it fun, and I'm really good at writing stories. It was between drawing and video games. I've already made up stories about video games so I picked drawing. It's slightly a challenge because I don't want my stories to be silly and must have sense."

Romana Fello, Young Court Manager added;

“This year’s Primetime is an immersive experience which gives real agency to the writers and audience. The writers have been involved in the entire process, we have rehearsed with children at Camelot Primary School and empowered the audience during the workshops and performance to have a real ownership of the show; creating music, building set, performing and being in the playing space with the actors, smashing any notion of adults preaching to children but it all being entirely theirs. This agency and immersion was celebrated by our first visit to a SEN (special educational needs) school with Primetime, through the design being completely accessible and empowering to all. As Young Court’s projects are about youth led work, it feels natural that our youngest participants should have this experience too.”

The *Primetime* plays toured to Heathbrook Primary School in Lambeth, Invicta Primary School in Greenwich, Globe Primary School in Tower Hamlets, Sudbury Primary School in Brent, Brentfield Primary School in Brent, Mulberry Primary School in Haringey, Barn Croft Primary School in Walthamstow, Ickburgh School in Hackney and Berrymede Junior School in Ealing.

Primetime is directed by Associate Director for the Royal Court, Hamish Pirie. With design by Rosie Elnile, composition and sound design by Xana and choreography by Sarah Golding.

Cast includes Alex Austin, Eben Figueiredo, Sarah Golding, Kiran Landa and Clare Perkins.

The work was developed by Young Court, the Royal Court’s inclusive programme of activities by, for and with young people up to the age of 25.

For biographies see below.

For more info on Young Court see www.royalcourttheatre.com/what-else/young-court/

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Notes to Editors:

For more information or images please contact Anoushka Warden on 0207 565 5063 / AnoushkaWarden@royalcourttheatre.com

Young Court is the Royal Court’s inclusive programme of activities by, for and with young people up to the age of 25.

Young Court aims to encourage young people to discover their power to influence and change theatre, giving them a platform to experiment, question and innovate, placing young people at our centre and fostering a live dialogue in which their views and ideas are valued and can inform our work.

Young people can experience unique learning exchanges across all departments, opening up the world of the rehearsal room as well as backstage, offering a fascinating insight into

the professional process of staging Royal Court productions and encouraging them to investigate the craft of theatre making.

Biographies:

Hamish Pirie (Director)

For the Royal Court: **Human Animals, Violence & Son, Who Cares, Teh Internet is Serious Business.**

Other theatre includes: **Shibboleth (Abbey, Dublin); I'm With The Band (Traverse/Wales Millennium Centre); Quiz Show, Demos, 50 Plays for Edinburgh (Traverse); Love With A Capital 'L', 3 Seconds, Most Favoured, The Last Bloom (Traverse/Òran Mór); Bravo Figaro (Royal Opera House/Traverse); Salt Root & Roe (Donmar/ Trafalgar); Stacy (& Trafalgar), Purgatory (Arcola); Pennies (nabokov); Paper House (Flight 5065).**

Hamish trained as Resident Assistant Director at Paines Plough & at the Donmar Warehouse. He was previously Associate Director at the Traverse Theatre. Hamish is an Associate Director at the Royal Court.

Alex Austin (Cast)

For the Royal Court: **Yen, Pigeons.**

Other theatre includes: **Thebes Land (Arcola); Fury (Soho); Barbarians (Young Vic); Henry V (Unicorn); Idomeneus (Gate).**

Television includes: **The Interceptor, Sherlock, New Tricks, Misfits.**

Film includes: **The Hooligan Factory, The World's End.**

Eben Figueiredo (Cast)

Theatre includes: **Ross (Chichester Festival); Around the World in 80 Days (St. James); 15 16 17 (Old Vic New Voices); Peter Pan (Regent's Park Open Air); Pitcairn (Out of Joint/Chichester Festival).**

Television includes: **The Attack, Scatooney.**

Film includes: **The Red Cup, Daphne.**

Sarah Golding (Cast/Choreographer)

For the Royal Court: **Teh Internet is Serious Business**

Other theatre includes: **STOMP (West End)**

Dance includes: **The Deluge (Lila DanceUK tour);**

Kiran Landa (Cast)

Theatre includes: **Great Expectations (ETT/Watford Palace); Arabian Nights (RSC); Dov & Ali (503).**

Television includes: **Ackley Bridge, 4 O'Clock Club, Line of Duty, Hollyoaks, Scott & Bailey, Doctors, Wire in the Blood.**

Film includes: **Jadoo, Shoot on Sight.**

Clare Perkins (Cast)

For the Royal Court: **Mules (& Clean Break).**

Other theatre includes: **Roundelay (Southwark); The Convert (Gate); Removal Men (Yard); Play On, Little Revolution (Almeida); The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (National); Twelve (Kali); The House That Will Not Stand, How Long Is Never?, Fabulation (Tricycle); How to be Immortal (Penny Dreadful/Soho); The Rover (Artluxe/Hampton Court Palace); Neighbours (HighTide); Welcome to Thebes (National); The Caucasian Chalk Circle (Shared Experience); The Hounding of David Oluwale (Eclipse/West Yorkshire Playhouse); Any Which Way (Only Connect); A Fag Burning the Carpet (King's Head); Our Country's Good, Cyrano de Bergerac (Nuffield); Generations of the Dead (Young Vic); Ready or Not (Theatre Royal, Stratford East); Meridan (Contact).**

Television includes: **Damned, Doctors, Run, EastEnders, Verbatim Riots, BBC Learning: True Stories, Doctors, Holby City, Casualty, Clapham Junction, Talk to Me, All in the Game, Shoot the Messenger, Family Affairs, The Crouch's, Baby Father, Doctors, Mersey Beat, Casualty, A&E, My Wonderful Life, Pigheart Boy.**

Film includes: **Kaleidoscope, Blacklands, 7 Lives, Deadmeat, Bullet Boy, The Football Factory, It Just Came Out, Secrets & Lies, Ladybird Ladybird.**

Radio includes: **Words & Music, The Zone, Carnival, Miss You Still, The Winter House, Best Interests, Corinne Come Back & Gone, Landfall, Fact Not Fiction, The Black Bono, Number 10, These Are the Times, Paid Servant, History Clips, The Lamp Lighter, Small Island, Weak at the Top, Madame Butterfly & the Stockwell Diva, Westway, Sundiata, Ministry of Performing Arts.**

Awards include: **Screen Nation Film and Television Award for Best Actress (Bullet Boy)**

Listings Information:

Primetime

By Hezron Bavanathan, Ava Reid, Madhuksharaa Sekar, Sujit Jawahar Selvam, Safiyya Amin, Michel Molekala, Moses Lopes and Tehya Payne

Directed by Hamish Pirie

Jerwood Theatre Upstairs

Friday 23 June – Saturday 24 June 2017

Friday 23 June 2.00pm & 3.30pm

Saturday 24 June 11.00am

Age guidance 7+



Coutts is the Royal Court Theatre Innovation Partner.

Coutts is the wealth division of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group. Coutts has a long history of supporting the arts going back 200 years, having looked after the financial affairs of many famous clients connected with the arts such as Bram Stoker, Charles Dickens and Chopin. In 1816, Thomas Coutts married Harriot Mellon, a popular actress of her day, and together they became partners of a number of London Theatres, including the Drury Lane and the Royal Opera House. Coutts has even featured in a number of artistic works including *The Gondoliers* by Gilbert and Sullivan, and Robert Louis Stevenson's classic story *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. In the new millennium, this tradition has continued not only through Coutts managing the finances of many of today's top writers, actors and musicians, but also through our arts sponsorship programme. We are delighted to support The Royal Court and its diverse range of ground-breaking performances. For further information please visit coutts.com

JERWOOD CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Cuttin' It and *Torn* are part of the Royal Court's Jerwood New Playwrights programme, supported by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation.

Jerwood New Playwrights is a longstanding partnership between Jerwood Charitable Foundation and the Royal Court. Each year, Jerwood New Playwrights supports the production of three new works by emerging writers, all of whom are in the first 10 years of their career. The Royal Court carefully identifies playwrights whose careers would benefit from the challenge and profile of being fully produced either in the Jerwood Downsstairs or Jerwood Upstairs Theatres at the Royal Court.

Jerwood Charitable Foundation supports the Jerwood New Playwrights programme and is dedicated to imaginative and responsible revenue funding of the arts, supporting emerging artists to develop and grow at important stages in their careers. The aim of its funding is to allow artists and arts organisations to thrive; to continue to develop their skills, imagination and creativity with integrity. It works with artists across art forms, from dance and theatre to literature, music and the visual arts. For more information visit

www.jerwoodcharitablefoundation.org