

## PRESS RELEASE

### Bristol-based stage and screen composer wins 2017 Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting



From L-R: Timothy X Atack, Laurie Nunn, Tim Foley and Sharon Clark. Photographer: The Other Richards, 2017.

- **Timothy X Atack's new play receives stamp of approval from industry leaders as he is named the sixth Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting winner**
- **Three Judges' Prizes awarded to Tim Foley, Laurie Nunn and Sharon Clark**

The Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting, Europe's largest playwriting competition, today announced **Timothy X Atack** as its 2017 winner for his original play, *Heartworm*. Atack was awarded the £16,000 prize by Chair of the judging panel and BBC presenter, Kirsty Lang, at a ceremony at the Royal Exchange Theatre earlier today.

Bristol-based Timothy X Atack is an award-winning writer, composer and sound designer for stage and screen. *Heartworm*, Atack's original and unperformed winning play was judged anonymously by eight leading industry figures who were highly impressed by the haunting and tense atmospheric qualities in the writing.

His previous plays have already been met with great acclaim, a number having been adapted for BBC Radio 4 and *The Morpeth Carol* won best drama at the 2014 Radio Academy Awards. He now joins the Bruntwood Prize's prestigious alumni that includes leading UK playwrights such as Phil Porter, Duncan Macmillan, Alistair McDowall, Vivienne Franzmann and Anna Jordan.

**On winning the 2017 Bruntwood Prize, Timothy X Atack said:** 'It is the most amazing boost to my confidence as a writer and theatre-maker. I'm truly excited for conversations to begin about making a play I'm very proud of in a theatre I really love'.

*Heartworm* follows a couple renting out their spare room to an odd guest, who upon arrival reveals that she grew up in the house. Despite their suspicions the couple look past the initial incident, drawn in by the guest's funny, young and vivacious nature, but as the situation escalates they start to rapidly question their decision.

the bruntwood  
prize for playwriting 2017

in partnership with the Royal Exchange Theatre



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Three Judges' Prizes of £8,000 were also awarded at today's ceremony to **Tim Foley** for his play *Electric Rosary*, **Laurie Nunn** for *King Brown* and to **Sharon Clark** for *Plow*. All four scripts will now enter into a development process with the Royal Exchange Theatre and *Heartworm* will be co-produced between the Royal Exchange and Royal Court. The Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC) in New York will also be supporting the development of Tim Foley's *Electric Rosary*.

In total 1,898 original plays were submitted to the Bruntwood Prize this year, each entered under a pseudonym, creating an equal opportunity for writers of any background and experience to participate. Due to the high standards of entries, co-founder of the Bruntwood Prize Michael Oglesby also awarded Joshua Val Martin and Rebecca Callard £4,000 each, as a commendation for their compelling plays, *This Is Not America* and *A Bit Of Light* respectively.

**Michael Oglesby CBE, Bruntwood Prize judge and Chairman of Bruntwood commented:**

'Ambition, community and innovation are at the heart of everything we strive to achieve at Bruntwood and the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting is central to our talent development work in the UK. This year we've seen a remarkable standard in entries to the competition. Our overall winner Timothy X Atack has produced a beautiful piece of work and we are thrilled to be supporting him and the other Judges' Prize winners on their playwriting journey.'

**Kirsty Lang, Chair of the 2017 Judging panel, commented:** 'I think the Bruntwood Prize has become the Turner Prize of playwriting. British theatre is the envy of the world and the sheer number of submissions this year – 1,898 – is a testament to the vitality of new writing talent in this county. I am astounded at the quality and breadth of topics covered by the submissions. What is so remarkable from a judge's perspective is that the anonymity of the prize takes away any possible prejudices one could conceive, it was such a surprise to learn who the playwrights are, as they did not match the images in our heads when it came to gender, age, class or ethnicity. This year's winning play, *Heartworm*, centres around a wonderfully enigmatic and complex female character and I can't wait to see how she is brought to life'.

Full details of the Bruntwood Prize can be found at [writeaplay.co.uk](http://writeaplay.co.uk), where a series of free workshops and video tutorials from theatre industry experts can also be accessed.

#BruntwoodPrize

– ENDS –

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**NOTES TO EDITOR**

**Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting**

The Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting is Europe's biggest competition for playwriting which searches for original and unperformed plays by writers of any experience and background. Since its inception in 2005, over 11,000 scripts have been submitted and 22 winners awarded £208,000. There have been

18 premiere productions in over 25 venues and work has gone on to be produced in Australia, USA, Germany, France, Canada and Sweden.

[www.writeaplay.co.uk](http://www.writeaplay.co.uk) | [twitter.com/bruntwoodprize](https://twitter.com/bruntwoodprize) | [facebook.com/bruntwoodprize](https://facebook.com/bruntwoodprize)

**Vicky Featherstone, Artistic Director, Royal Court Theatre commented:**

“We are delighted to be continuing our partnership with the Royal Exchange Theatre to bring the winner of the prestigious Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting to life in our theatres.

Bruntwood is a vital opportunity for the RC to connect with writers and plays who may not necessarily come through our structures and whose voice and talent will contribute to the Theatre landscape for years to come.

Following the huge success of both WISH LIST by Katherine Soper and YEN by Anna Jordan, it will be wonderful to work again with the team at the Royal Exchange Theatre to bring Tim X Atack’s beautifully haunting script to life. We felt HEARTWORM is a brilliantly unnerving and visceral piece of work by a distinctive and vividly theatrical voice.”

**Timothy X Atack**

Timothy is a writer and composer, based in Bristol. His stage plays include *The Bullet And The Bass Trombone*, *Dark Land Light House* and *The Morpeth Carol*, adapted for BBC Radio 4 and winner of best drama at the 2014 Radio Academy Awards. His radio series *The Stroma Sessions* was nominated for the Tinniswood Award for Best Audio Drama Script in the 2017 BBC Audio Drama Awards. He was previously a finalist of the Red Planet prize and was selected for the Channel 4 screenwriting scheme. Under the name of Sleepdogs he collaborates with theatre director Tanuja Amarasuriya, and has written and scored all their shows to date. He is currently sound designing Chris Goode’s adaptation of Derek Jarman’s *Jubilee* at Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre.

**Tim Foley**

Manchester-based Tim Foley, an Associate Artist at Pentabus Theatre, was honored for his play *Electric Rosary* set in a convent in the near future where technology is taking over. The play questions technology versus religion, and asks - what makes us human?

**Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC) commented:** *‘MTC has long been an admirer and close follower of the Bruntwood Prize and the numerous playwrights whose careers it has helped to launch. We are thrilled to be joining as a partner in a year of such outstanding new plays. We were particularly taken by Tim Foley’s Electric Rosary, which shrewdly explores ideas around religious identity and the place of technology in our society with a darkly comedic sensibility.’*

**Laurie Nunn**

*King Brown*, the first stage play by Laurie Nunn, is set in the outskirts of 1970s Melbourne and explores toxic masculinity. Nunn is an established film and television writer and her feature film script, *The Summer House* is currently in development.

**Sharon Clark**

Clark is Creative Director of Bristol-based immersive theatre company, Raucous and a lecturer at Bath Spa University. Her previous works have been produced by Bristol Old Vic, Theatre 503, New Diorama and Arcola. Clark’s script, *Plow* follows an African-American woman as she walks across the US on a pilgrimage to where her husband and son died. Through social media she is slowly turned into a modern-day Messiah.

### **2017 Bruntwood Prize Judging Panel**

- British broadcaster and journalist **Kirsty Lang**
- Award-winning screenwriter **Russell T. Davies** (*Queer as Folk*, C4; *Doctor Who*, BBC)
- British Actor **Alfred Enoch** (*Harry Potter*; *How To Get Away With Murder*)
- Previous Bruntwood Prize winner **Phil Porter** (*The Miser*, West End; *Vice Versa*, RSC; *The Cracks in my Skin*, Royal Exchange Theatre)
- Stage and screen writer **Lucy Prebble** (*The Effect*, National Theatre; *Enron*, Royal Court, Chichester Festival Theatre, West End & Broadway)
- Director **Lyndsey Turner** (*Hamlet*, Barbican; *Chimerica*, Almeida; *Posh*, Royal Court & West End and Associate Director of the National Theatre)
- Royal Exchange Theatre Associate Artistic Director, **Matthew Xia**
- Chairman of Bruntwood, **Michael Oglesby CBE**