

Ava Wong Davies announced as winner
of the 2022 Ambassador Theatre Group Playwright's Prize
in association with Platform Presents

Her winning play, 'Graceland', will be produced
at the Royal Court Theatre Jerwood Theatre Upstairs



Ava Wong Davies

Emerging playwright Ava Wong Davies has won the £5,000 Ambassador Theatre Group Playwright's Prize in association with Platform Presents for her play 'Graceland'.

Wong Davies said: "I'm hugely honoured to have won. To have even been one of the finalists was an enormous pleasure - congratulations to everyone who submitted."

'Graceland' was announced in the Royal Court Theatre's new season of work and will be staged in the Jerwood Theatre Upstairs in 2023, directed by Anna Himali Howard and developed as part of an Introduction to Playwriting group at the Royal Court.

Five new £1,000 cash prizes for runners-up, sponsored by Time Out, were awarded to 'Caceroleo' by Rhys Hastings, 'Extrapolation' by Richard Ely, 'Ikaria' by Philippa Lawford, 'Spooky Action at a Distance' by Jess Edwards, and 'VAR (Very Audible Racism)' by Isaac Tomiczek.

Mark Cornell, CEO of Ambassador Theatre Group, said: "Our industry is all about telling stories. We must continue to encourage and recognise the extraordinary talent of the playwrights that bring these stories to life. I was particularly delighted to see that we have seen a 50% increase in script submissions compared to 2021, surely an indication of the growth in popularity that this prestigious prize is enjoying. Huge congratulations to Ava, all of the finalists and to every single writer for sharing their hard work with the world. I hope this wonderful initiative encourages any and all emerging playwrights to put pen to paper or finger to keyboard and tell their stories".

Isabella Macpherson, Founder of Platform Presents, said: "We are astounded at Platform Presents by the formidable number of scripts entered this year, the brilliantly engaged judging panel, and of course by Ava's exquisite play."

This year's prize received 1,174 script submissions, up more than 50% than in 2021, with 10 finalists shortlisted. The 10 finalists were then anonymously passed onto the judges.

The submissions were judged by a panel of industry experts including Aki Omoshaybi (Actor, Writer and Director), Amy Gardner (Finite Films & TV), Caroline Dyott (Ambassador Theatre Group), Charlotte Colbert (Director), Caroline McGinn (Editor in Chief, Time Out), Dipal Acharya (Writer & Journalist), Dougray Scott (Actor & Producer), Helena Lee (Writer & Journalist), Isabella Macpherson (Platform Presents), Jack Farthing (Actor), Jasmine Lee-Jones (Writer & Actor), Laura Weir (Writer & Journalist), Pearl Mackie (Actor), Pippa Bennett-Warner (Actor) and Zoë Rocha (Producer).

The annual prize is preceded by a West End fundraiser, co-produced with Finite Films & TV, founded by Amy Gardner. This year the fundraiser, 'The Joy of Text' at the Savoy Theatre, was directed by Josie Rourke, written by Josie Rourke & Michael Stranney, and performed by Aki Omoshaybi, Bessie Carter, David Mumeni, Indira Varma, Lizzy Connolly, Nicholas Pinnock, Nicholas Burns, Nicola Stephenson, Oliver Chris, Pearl Mackie, Pippa Bennett-Warner, Robert Bathurst, Ronni Ancona, Rosalie Craig, Sally Phillips, Tamzin Outhwaite and Tracy Ann Oberman.

Platform Presents aims to create a platform for rising star talent - actors, writers and directors, with a particular interest in female voices, through theatre and film.

Actor Pippa Bennett-Warner said “I think the work that Platform Presents is doing to bring new talent into actually quite a difficult industry to navigate, is amazing and if I was a young writer I’d be so excited by the platform that Platform Presents gives them”

Actor & Writer David Mumeni said “Where would theatre be without new writers and new stories and new voices, especially after the pandemic, where we’re all a bit worried about money, so to invest our time and money and support in new voices and new writing is super important.”

BACKGROUND TO PLATFORM PRESENTS PLAYWRIGHT’S PRIZE

The Platform Presents Playwright’s Prize was founded in 2018 to nurture and provide more opportunities for playwrights.

In the first year, 162 scripts were submitted. In its fourth year Platform Presents partnered with one of the largest live entertainment companies in the world, Ambassador Theatre Group, on the prize re-naming it the Ambassador Theatre Group Playwright’s Prize in association with Platform Presents.

Also in 2022, international city media brand Time Out partnered with Platform Presents and Finite Films to announce five new £1,000 cash prizes for runners-up.

www.platformpresents.com

@platformpresents