

PRESS RELEASE - Monday 5 December 2022

## CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR SOUND OF THE UNDERGROUND AT THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE



Casting has been announced for **Travis Alabanza's** first play for the Royal Court Theatre, *Sound of the Underground*. Spotlighting London's iconic underground club culture and

questioning what it means to get your money's worth when it comes to art, *Sound of the Underground* will bring together legends of the London Queer club scene from **Thursday 19 January - Saturday 25 February 2023** in the **Jerwood Theatre Downstairs**.

The cast includes: **CHIYO** (he/they), **Lilly SnatchDragon** (she/her), **Ms Sharon Le Grand** (she/they), **Mwice Kavindele** as **Sadie Sinner The Songbird** (she/her), **Rhys Hollis** as **Rhys's Pieces** (he/they), **Sue Gives A F\*ck** (she/they), **Tammy Reynolds** as **Midgitte Bardot** (they/them – as Midgitte Bardot she/her) and **Wet Mess** (they/them).

**Travis Alabanza (they/them)**, writer, said: *"I wouldn't be working in the arts today without the London cabaret scene. All my shows, understanding of live work and theatre came from places like Duckie, Bar Wotever and Her Upstairs giving me space - it's so exciting to interrogate and showcase that world on the Royal Court stage. Right now art and live art has a money problem, a crossroad to choose from - and I think cabaret artists are the most suited to interrogate these questions. I'm so excited to see what we all make together."*

**Debbie Hannan (they/them)**, co-creator and director said: *"At 17 I started emceeing at cabaret nights - I then spent over 10 years making new theatre in London, starting at the Royal Court - come 2023, those worlds will collide for me with a brave, bold and wildly talented set of Queens, Kings and Things taking over the theatre downstairs. A room full of creatives with their roots in the cabaret scene are preparing to explode on to one of London's most prestigious main stages and will be diving into difficult questions about art and commerce. It's an honour to be creating this show with such sublime artists at the top of their field, and I'm excited about them bringing their brilliance to Sloane Square."*

#### **Introducing the cast:**

**CHIYO (he/they):** *"I would describe myself as a very mentally unstable, p\*ssed off, misfit - who is simultaneously in love with and bored of the Drag industry. I love Travis Alabanza with all my heart. They are extremely talented, and being part of something which has their name on it is my proudest career move to date - and bishhh, I'm on tour with a banging pop star, have danced for a Spice Girl, have bagged multiple modelling campaigns, and was the first Trans man to compete for Mr Gay UK - the repertoire ain't too shabby!!"*

**Lilly SnatchDragon (she/her):** *"I would describe myself as an award winning, international Neo - Burlesque, comedy drag performer, host and producer. I'm very excited about performing at the Royal Court. This is the theatre that premiered 'The Rocky Horror Picture Show' - that THE Laurence Olivier performed in. I did originally train in acting, but 12 years ago, there weren't many opportunities for a plus size Asian actress. I genuinely thought that I wouldn't get to perform in theatres like this. I'm achieving bucket list venues I thought I'd never get a look in. I think I might cry when I stand on the stage for the first time. I hope that's not stupid."*

*I love doing theatre, I miss taking a piece of text and making it my own...but this show? It's OUR voices, OUR thoughts and a little of my life. The idea of a bunch of 'cabaret night folks' in a 'proper theatre', causing havoc in a place that might look at us as a bunch of freaks, geeks and outcasts showcasing what WE can do - that's inspiring. Who wouldn't want to be part of a cabaret theatre revolution?"*

**Ms Sharon Le Grand (she/they):** *“to be honest i had no idea what the Royal Court was until 2021 when I was asked by Travis to perform their monologue as part of Living Newspaper, an online theatre spectacular where I performed in the foyer... so it feels correct to be back and on the stage now that that’s a thing again”*

**Mwice Kavindele as Sadie Sinner The Songbird (she/her):** *“I am the source and the sauce. I’m passionate, pensive and definitely a Princess. (agender tho)... After being captivated by Reece Lyons in Overflow, my soul decided it would be in a Travis Alabanza play. I’m literally here because of the catharsis I saw in Reece. It seems that Travis writes in a way that honours the actor and not just the role they play. I’ve seen it for Travis in Burgerz. Some sort of release.”*

**Rhys Hollis as Rhys’s Pieces (he/they):** *“I’m a gender-f\*\*king cabaret creature! A one stop cabaret troupe, multitalented, multi-award winning messy, smelly, fabulous, running late and putting on a show! I wanna mess with the conventions of what 'Theatre' is- I wanna be a part of shaking it up and smashing the world of cabaret with this theatrical realm. I wanna be there amongst my fellow nightlife darlings making magic and working with the mind of my good sis, Travis. I wanna do something new.”*

**Sue Gives A F\*ck (she/they):** *“I’m a failed actor turned drag queen turned possibly not failed actor? Travis Alabanza is amazing so I’d be part of anything they’d written but honestly it’s just nice not to have to do hen do’s for a bit.”*

**Tammy Reynolds as Midgitte Bardot (they/them – as Midgitte Bardot she/her):** *“[I am] a presence, a liability, a talent, a time-waster, a writer, a fan, a rock star, a sh\*t and a pleasure. It’s really special that the whole cast [of Sound of the Underground] are cabaret/drag performers, because I love being in the theatre. It’s just a shame about the actors.”*

**Wet Mess (they/them):** *“WET MESS is a wet mess, horny for your confusion. Let it all out and guess again at the insecure balding white man/pu\*\*y prince/alien baby. Have a lollygag, think about your fantasy flesh suits, call me sweet prince. Choose to make some silly campy decisions, with all the hairy thems and dykey men.”*

Written by **Travis Alabanza**, co-created and directed by **Debbie Hannan**. The production is designed by **Rosie Elnile** (she/her) and **Max Johns** (he/they). Lighting design is by **Simisola Majekodunmi** (she/they). Sound design by **Alexandra Faye Braithwaite** (she/her). Musical supervision and arrangement by **Martin Lowe** (he/him). Movement direction by **Omar Jordan Phillips** (she/her/they/them). Assistant direction by **Michelle Femi Tiwo** (they/them). Design associate is **Tomás Palmer** (he/him).

**ENDS**

For images see [here](#).

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**Press Performance:**

7pm Wednesday 25 January 2023	<i>Sound of the Underground</i> by Travis Alabanza, co-created by Debbie Hannan	Jerwood Theatre Downstairs
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**Listings Information:**

**Thursday 19 January – Saturday 25 February 2023, 7.30pm & 2.30pm**

**Captioned Performances:** Wednesday 8 February and Wednesday 15 February at 7.30pm

**Relaxed Environment Performance:** Saturday 18 February at 2.30pm

**Audio Described Matinee:** Saturday 25 February at 2.30pm (Touch Tour at 1pm)

**Press Performance:** Wednesday 25 January 2023, 7pm

**Post-show talk:** Tuesday 31 January 2023

**Standard Tickets:** £49, £45, £35, £29, £20, £15

**Concessions\* £5 off selected bands**

**First Look Tickets\*\*** £38, £32, £25, £18, £14

**Under 27s\*\*\*:** £15 during previews and matinees after press night

**Access:** £17.50

\*ID required. All discounts subject to availability

**Concessions\*** - available for previews and matinees. Limited to Band A – B in the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs. Concessions are available for Over 65s, Students, recipients of Jobseekers Allowance, and members of Equity, BECTU, Stage Directors UK or the Writers' Guild of Great Britain.

**First Look Tickets\*\*** - as most of the plays we stage at the Royal Court have never been seen before, the first few performances in front of an audience are the final part of a long creative process that starts with the playwright. Our First Look Performances, which are sold at a reduced price, are an integral part of the process. If you book tickets for a First Look Performance (usually the first three previews of a new play), you'll be asked for your feedback which is then shared with the artistic team during the preview period, potentially influencing the final piece.

**Under 27s Tickets\*\*\*** – We have extended our Under 26s ticket offer to Under 27s due to a year of missed discounts during the Covid-19 pandemic. We offer a limited number of £12 tickets for all performances in the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs. Available on Band B tickets, subject to availability.

**Mondays** – all tickets £12. Available on the day of the performance from 9am online. A limited number are available in advance, subject to availability, to Friends and Supporters.

**Standing Tickets** – A limited number of 10p standing places go on sale one hour before each Jerwood Theatre Downstairs performance. The places are production dependent and may not always be available so please check in advance, no sooner than 9 September.