

Press Release
Thursday 5 June 2025

ROYAL COURT THEATRE ANNOUNCES WINNERS FOR INAUGURAL YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS AWARD

YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS AWARD FESTIVAL RUNS 10-12 JULY

The **Royal Court Theatre** has today announced the winners of the first ever **Young Playwrights Award**. The six winning writers, aged 13-18, will have their plays showcased in a Festival at the Royal Court's Jerwood Theatre Upstairs this summer between 10-12 July and published in an anthology by Nick Hern Books.

The award was launched by the Royal Court Theatre to support playwriting in children of secondary school age for whom playwriting is not a compulsory part of the curriculum, unlike short stories and poetry. This is the pilot year of the scheme which will run across the UK in the future.

The shortlisted works range from comedy, family drama and spoken word through to the more surreal and fantastical. They feature ghosts, magical libraries, estranged aunts and omniscient voice assistants and cover everything from a real life look at the struggles of Black girlhood through to a Beckettian take on artificial intelligence.

Over 150 entries were submitted from all over London, a shortlist of 21 was decided upon by the Royal Court Theatre and then read by a judging panel. The Young Playwrights Award Festival will showcase plays from each age category as well as an Awards Ceremony. The Royal Court Theatre is inviting schools across the city to attend the play readings for £1 a ticket. The Award is being led by Beth Flintoff, Associate Playwright and Young Writers Associate at the Royal Court.

Beth Flintoff said: *We were so impressed by the imagination, creativity and writing talent on display in all the entries we received, it has been a real joy reading them. Congratulations to the shortlisted writers, whose outstanding plays have surprised and moved us, thrilled us and made us laugh. A huge thank you to everyone who entered, for trusting us with your writing and making this such an impressive first year for the Young Playwrights Award.*

David Byrne, Artistic Director and CEO said: *"The buzz in the building as we've read these incredible plays has been amazing. I can't wait to share these brilliant plays more widely. If this is the future of theatre, count me in."*

The winning plays:

Aged 13-15

Happily Haunted
By Aasiya Nsubuga

Sabirah is just trying to survive maths class, get through the week, and enjoy the company of her cousin Sara – a ghost.

Happily Haunted is a heartfelt and funny coming-of-age story about memory, grief, and the friends we carry with us - whether they're really there or not.

Hello, My Name Is...

by Marcos Byrne

Meet Carlos - a 15-year-old - juggling exams, crowded school corridors, and the weight of family expectations. With a powerful blend of storytelling and spoken word, Hello, My Name Is... follows one boy's struggle to get through the day, chase his dreams and find his voice.

Library of the Imagination

by Leon Chin-Kemp

12-year-old Alex stumbles into a magical library that holds every thought ever thought. When thoughts start escaping from their books, Alex finds himself swept into a spellbinding adventure.

Aged 16-18

Bad Hair Day

by Sapphire Naggie

Aria's hair is more than just hair - it is a battleground of identity, beauty, and belonging. From biting remarks from family to microaggressions at school, Bad Hair Day is a bold and hilarious play that untangles the struggles of Black girlhood.

Fox Hunt

By George McAree

In this house, the predators wear smiles. When sixteen-year-old Lorna visits her estranged aunt Sophia for a weekend, she enters a world where fear, hypocrisy and denial rule. Fox Hunt is an unflinching and surreal portrait of complex family dynamics and the hypocrisy that often turns conversations around gender into a battleground.

Godot's To-Do List

by Leo Simpe-Asante

A man, an omniscient voice and an endless to-do-list. A bewildered man struggles to complete an increasingly surreal series of tasks set by his bossy voice assistant. Sharp and unsettling, Godot's To-Do List is a hauntingly hilarious exploration of the chaos of being alive.

ENDS

For the Royal Court press team, please contact:

Natasha Ryszka-Onions NatashaRyszka-Onions@royalcourttheatre.com

Maisie Lawrence on maisie@breadandbutterpr.uk

Chloe Heard on chloe@breadandbutterpr.uk

The Young Playwrights Award is supported by:

NJA - Core Values & Creative Management

The Golsoncott Foundation

The John Thaw Foundation

Nick Hern Books

The Richard Radcliffe Charitable Trust

Unity Theatre Trust

Listings Information:

Jerwood Theatre Upstairs, Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, SW1W 8AS

Thursday 10 July - Friday 12 July

Thu 10th July 1.30pm (13 - 15 Age Category)

Thu 10th July, 6.30pm (16 - 18 Age Category)

Fri 11th July 1.30pm (16 - 18 Age Category)

Fri 11th July 6.30pm (13 - 15 Age Category)

Sat 12th July 1.30pm (13 - 15 Age Category)

Sat 12th July 6.30pm (16 - 18 Age Category)

Press Access: By request

Price: £5

Support

As a registered charity, all donations received via bookings will go to Support the Court, a fund which enables the Royal Court to continue to create ground-breaking new work for audiences. The support allows the theatre to keep running all of its behind-the-scenes projects, delivering writers programmes here in the UK and across the world, and schemes for, and with, young people. Find out more [here](#).

Backstage tours

Join us on a backstage tour of the Royal Court Theatre, one of the most important theatres of its time. Explore the design of the building before going behind the scenes for a glimpse of how our work goes from page to stage, and everything in between.

Post-tour cream tea packages are available. See website for tour dates. Group & bespoke tour packages available.





NJA and Nick Hern Books