

PRESS RELEASE - 21 AUGUST 2025

ROYAL COURT THEATRE AND PLAYFUL PRODUCTIONS ANNOUNCE FULL CAST FOR *THE UNBELIEVERS*



The Royal Court Theatre and Playful Productions have today announced the full cast for ***The Unbelievers***, a new play about family, memory and hope by **Nick Payne**. Directed by **Marianne Elliott** and designed by **Bunny Christie** it stars **Nicola Walker** as a mother facing the disappearance of her son. The cast will include **Ella Lily Hyland** who appeared in Netflix's *Black Doves* and the BBC's *Towards Zero* and **Paul Higgins**, best known for his roles in the BBC's *The Thick of It* and *Line of Duty* and more recently *Slow Horses*.

The Unbelievers will run at the Royal Court's Jerwood Theatre Downstairs from Friday 10 October - Saturday 29 November 2025 with a Press Night on Monday 20 October 2025.

The full cast announced today includes **Esh Alladi**, **Alby Baldwin**, **Paul Higgins**, **Ella Lily Hyland**, **Harry Kershaw**, **Martin Marquez**, **Lucy Thackeray**, **Nicola Walker** and **Isabel Adomakoh Young**.

'I love my son. My son is alive.'

A teenager disappears. Time fractures. His mother will never give up hope.

The Unbelievers is a new play about the moments that shatter our world, and the ones that help us piece it back together.

Playwright **Nick Payne** (*Constellations*, *We Live in Time*) returns to the Royal Court with a startling portrait of motherhood, faith, family – and the lengths we go to for those we refuse to forget.

Directed by **Marianne Elliott** (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Angels in America*), designed by **Bunny Christie** (*Company*, *People Places and Things*) and starring **Nicola Walker** (*Unforgotten*, *The Split*). The lighting design is by **Jack Knowles**, the composer and sound designer is **Nicola T.Chang**, movement direction by **Etta Murfitt** and casting by **Charlotte Sutton CDG**.

Cast biographies:

Esh Alladi

Theatre includes: **This Much I Know** (Hampstead); **Great Expectations**, **Hobson's Choice**, **Wit** (Royal Exchange); **The P Word** (Bush); **Out West** (Lyric Hammersmith); **Theatrical Digs** (Yvonne Arnaud Theatre); **The Argument** (Theatre Royal Bath); **Absolute Hell**, **The Beaux Stratagem**, **Dara**, **Behind The Beautiful Forevers War Horse Prom** (&Royal Albert Hall) **From Morning to Midnight**, (National); **Rutherford and Son** (Crucible); **An Adventure** (Octagon Theatre); **Twelfth Night** (RSC); **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (New Wolsey); **Lions and Tigers**, **Nell Gwynn** (&ETT) (Globe); **The House of Inbetween** (Stratford East); **Boxer Bettle** (Local Girls Productions).

Film includes: **Cardiff**, **The Leak**, **Ordinary Love**, **Christmas at the Palace**, **The Backseat**, **Still Life**.

TV includes: **Mr Bates vs The Post Office**, **The Chelsea Detective**, **Red Rose**, **The Other One**, **Halo**, **Anthony**, **Fear Fatigue / Unprecedented**, **Eastenders**, **Casualty**.

Alby Baldwin

Theatre includes: **Hamlet** **Hail to the Thief**, **Julius Caesar** (RSC); **Tender**, **Paradise Now!** (Bush); **Through the Cracks** (ETT); **Antigone** (Holy What); **Wild Swimming** (Full Rogue); **Harry Potter and the Cursed Child**, **Pride & Prejudice Sort Of*** (West End); **The Wolves** (Stratford East); **Dear Elizabeth** (Gate); **Chatter** (CPT); **The Reasons** (NDT); **Love Scenes for the End of the World**, **how to build a wax figure** (November Theatre) **Scripted** (Sheffield Crucible).

Film includes: **Love Wins**.

Television includes: **The Great**, **I hate Suzie**, **The Jewish Enquirer**.

Radio includes: **V**, **Homebody**, **Persuasion**, **Our Wives Under the Sea**, **Experienced**, **Faking It**, **Homebody**

Paul Higgins

For the Royal Court: **Hope**, **Nightsongs**, **American Bagpipes**, **Conquest of the South Pole**, **A Wholly Healthy Glasgow**.

Theatre includes: **The Seagull** (Barbican); **Romeo and Juliet**, **The Doctor**, **Macbeth**, **Conversations After a Burial** (Almeida); **Local Hero** (Chichester Festival); **This is Memorial Device** (Traverse/ Tron/ Riverside); **The Meaning of Zong** (Bristol Old Vic);

Aristocrats, Temple, Luise Miller, The Cosmonaut's Last Message... (Donmar); The Seagull (Lyric Hammersmith); Twilight Song (Park); Blackbird, King Lear (Citizens Theatre); Children of the Sun, Caledonia, The White Guard, Paul, An Enemy of the People (& Ahmanson, LA), The Hare Trilogy (National); Damascus (Traverse/ Kiln); Black Watch (National Theatre of Scotland); The Tempest (Tron); Measure for Measure (RSC); A Midsummer Night's Dream (Globe); Buried Alive (Hampstead); The Way of the World, Romeo & Juliet, A View from the Bridge (Royal Exchange); The Slab Boys Trilogy (Young Vic).

Television includes: **The Simpsons, Slow Horses, The Ipcress Files, Beep, Cold Call, Line of Duty, Raised by Wolves, The Wrong Mans, Case Histories, Utopia, Hope Springs, Purves and Pekkala, The Last Enemy, The Thick of It, Low Winter Sun, Murder, Lucky Ones, Staying Alive.**

Film includes: **Kill, Greed, Apostle, The Party's Just Beginning, Couple in a Hole, Victoria and Abdul, In The Loop, The Red Road, Complicity, Beautiful Creatures, Bedrooms and Hallways Goal!, No Holds Bard.**

Ella Lily Hyland

Theatre includes: **Grania (Abbey).**

Television includes: **Towards Zero, Black Doves, Wrapped, A Thousand Blows, Fifteen-Love.**

Film includes: **Silent Roar.**

Martin Marquez

For the Royal Court: **Stoning Mary, Identical Twins, Cleansed.**

Other theatre includes: **Dear England, Othello, This House, Husbands and Sons, Mother Courage and Her Children, Anything Goes (&West End) and Love's Labour's Lost (National); A View from the Bridge, Brokeback Mountain, From Here to Eternity, Macbeth (West End); Ah, Wilderness! (Young Vic); Blasted (Sheffield Theatres); The Crucible, Of Mice and Men and Don Juan (West Yorkshire Playhouse); I Caught My Death in Venice, Gondoliers, Pal Joey and Insignificance (Chichester Festival); Snowbull (Hampstead); Brothers Marquez (Soho); Four Nights in Knaresborough (Kiln); The Iceman Cometh (Old Vic); The Front Page, Fool for Love (Donmar); Jude the Obscure, Private Lives and Flesh & Blood for Method & Madness; and Hamlet, A View from the Bridge, The Slicing Edge and Road (New Wolsey, Ipswich).**

Television includes: **Doc Martin, Kate and Koji, The Chelsea Detective, The Crown, Woody, Vera, Falcon, Holy Flying Circus, New Tricks, Hotel Babylon, Waking the Dead Lead Balloon, Elizabeth, Empire and Heartbeat.**

Film includes: **Les Misérables, The Business.**

Harry Kershaw

Theatre includes: **Our Country's Good (Lyric Hammersmith), Fanny (Watermill**

Theatre), Peter Pan Goes Wrong (Broadway/LA/ West End, Good Luck Studio (UK Tour), Boris III (Edinburgh), What's New Pussycat, Edmond De Bergerac (Birmingham Rep), The Madness Of George III (Nottingham Playhouse/ NT Live), This House (National Theatre/Headlong), Mischief Movie Night (West End), The Play That Goes Wrong (West End), One Man Two Guvnors (Theatre Royal Haymarket)

Film Includes: Skyfall (MGM); Great Expectations (BBC Films); Exhibition (Wild Horses Films); Unrelated (Raw Siena); Office Royale (People Love Film)

Television includes: Jerk, Cuckoo (Roughcut); Endeavour (Mammoth Screen/ITV); The Interceptor (BBC Productions/BBC 1); Switch (Touchpaper/ITV 2); Omid Djalili's Little Crackers (Tiger Aspect for Sky One); Wallander (Leftbank/BBC)

Lucy Thackeray

Theatre includes: The Buddha of Suburbia (RSC/Wise Children/Barbican); Brief Encounter (West End); Heroine (High Tide/ Theatre Clwyd); A Midsummer Night's Dream (Globe); Bike, Fallen Angels (Salisbury Playhouse); Corrie! (UK/New Zealand Tour); Amaka (Jack Studio); My Beautiful Black Dog (Bush); Sweeney Todd, Noises Off, How the Other Half Loves (Queen's Theatre Hornchurch).

Television includes: Doctor Who, Until I Kill You, Call the Midwife, Black Ops, Top Boy, Moon Knight, The Walk-in, Eastenders, Casualty, Don't Forget The Driver, Damned, Hatton Garden, New Tricks, The Five, Doctors, The Dumping Ground, Charlie Brooker's How TV Ruined Your life.

Film includes: Jurassic World Rebirth, Surge, IBoy, A Royal Night Out.

Nicola Walker

For the Royal Court: The Cane, Relocated, Fresh Kills, Sweetheart, The Libertine/The Man of Mode, Hated Nightfall.

Other theatre includes: Unicorn (West End); The Corn is Green, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Season's Greetings, Gethsemane, Tales from the Vienna Woods, Edmond (National); A View From the Bridge (Young Vic/West End/Broadway); Di and Viv and Rose, The Dead Eye Boy (Hampstead); Mrs Klein, Cloud Nine (Almeida); Modern Dance for Beginners (Soho); Sexual Perversity in Chicago (Sheffield Crucible); A Lie of the Mind, Passion Play (& Comedy Theatre) (Donmar); Fifty Revolutions (Whitehall).

Television includes: The Split, Barcelona, Mary & George, Annika, Marriage, Unforgotten, Collateral, Inside No. 9, River, Last Tango in Halifax, Babylon, Scott and Bailey, Prisoner's Wives, Heading Out, Inside Men, Spooks, Being Human, Law & Order, Luther, Turn of the Screw, Oliver Twist, Torn, Broken News, People Like Us, The Last Train, Touching Evil, A Dance to the Music of Time, Faith, Moll Flanders.

Film includes: Shooting Dogs, Shiner, Four Weddings and a Funeral.

Awards include: **Olivier Award for Best Supporting Actress (The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time).**

Isabel Adomakoh Young (shey/they)

For the Royal Court: **Living Newspaper**

Theatre credits include: **0800 Cupid (THISISPOPBABY) Listen Dance, Little Bulb (Little Bulb), As You Like It (Shakespeare's Globe), Modest (UK Tour, Kiln), Hamlet (Bristol Old Vic), Dear Elizabeth (Gate Theatre), Meatballs (Hampstead Theatre), The Provoked Wife (RSC), Venice Preserved (RSC), Bite Your Tongue (Hackney Showroom/Talawa), Brood (Arcola) and The 80s Show (The Glory).**

Television includes: **Eastenders, Cheaters, Heartstopper and Foundation**

ENDS

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Images [here](#).

Upcoming press performances:

Thursday 4 September 2025, 7pm	<i>Deaf Republic</i> by Dead Centre and Zoë McWhinney, adapted from the book by Ilya Kaminsky	Jerwood Theatre Downstairs
Wednesday 10 September 2025, 7pm	<i>Cow Deer</i> co-created by Katie Mitchell, Nina Segal and Melanie Wilson	Jerwood Theatre Upstairs
Monday 20 October 2025, 7pm	<i>The Unbelievers</i> by Nick Payne	Jerwood Theatre Downstairs
Thursday 13 November 2025, 7pm	<i>Porn Play</i> by Sophia Chetin-Leuner	Jerwood Theatre Upstairs

The Unbelievers

By Nick Payne

Directed by Marianne Elliott

Starring Nicola Walker

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

Friday 10 October - Saturday 29 November 2025

Press night: Monday 20 October 2025, 7pm

Monday - Friday, 7.30pm and 2.30pm

Saturday, 1.30pm and 6.30pm

Post show talk: Tuesday 21 October 2025, 7:30pm
Chilled Performance: Saturday 29 November 2025, 1.30pm
Captioned Performance: Saturday 8 November 2025, 1.30pm
BSL-interpreted Performance: Tuesday 4 November 2025, 7.30pm
Audio-Described Performance: Saturday 15 November 2025, 1.30pm with a touch tour at 12pm
Standard Tickets £15 - £64
Concessions*
Under 30s***
Access £19 (plus a companion at the same rate)

*ID required. All discounts subject to availability.

Playful Productions

Founded by Matthew Byam Shaw, Nia Janis and Nick Salmon in 2010, Playful Productions is celebrating its 15th birthday as one of the most eminent independent theatre producers in the West End. Alongside its producing work, Playful is also a full-service executive producer and general management company.

As Producer productions include *All My Sons* (Wyndham's - November 2025); *Born With Teeth* (Wyndham's); *Make It Happen* (Dundee Rep and Edinburgh International Festival); *The Fifth Step* (@SohoPlace); *Buena Vista Social Club* (Broadway); *Dr. Strangelove* (Noël Coward and Bord Gáis, Dublin); *Macbeth* (Harold Pinter); *MJ* (Prince Edward and Broadway); *The Artist* (Theatre Royal Plymouth); *The House of Bernarda Alba* (National Theatre); *A Little Life* (Richmond, Harold Pinter and Savoy); *The Unfriend* (Chichester Festival Theatre, Criterion and Wyndham's); *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Sheffield, Lyric Hammersmith and Theatre Royal Haymarket); *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – The Musical* (UK & Ireland Tour); *Good* (Harold Pinter); *Get Up Stand Up! The Bob Marley Musical* (Lyric); *My Fair Lady* (Coliseum and UK & Ireland Tour); *The Mirror and the Light* (Gielgud); *Noises Off* (Garrick); *Kinky Boots* (UK & Ireland Tour); *Imperium* (Gielgud); *Quiz* (Noël Coward); *Shrek The Musical* (UK & Ireland Tours); Edward Albee's *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* (Theatre Royal Haymarket); *Don Juan in Soho* (Wyndham's); *No Man's Land* (UK Tour and Wyndham's); *Kinky Boots* (Adelphi); *Hangmen* (Wyndham's); *American Buffalo* (Wyndham's); *The Audience* (Gielgud, Apollo and Broadway) and Executive Producer on multi Emmy award-winning Netflix Series *The Crown* based on *The Audience*; *Wolf Hall: Parts 1 & 2* (Broadway); *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up The Bodies* (Aldwych); *The Weir* (Wyndham's); *South Downs/The Browning Version* (Harold Pinter); *Sweeney Todd* (Adelphi); *Hay Fever* (Noël Coward); *Flare Path* (Theatre Royal Haymarket); *Yes, Prime Minister* (Gielgud, Apollo, Trafalgar Studios and UK Tours); *Krapp's Last Tape* (Duchess); *Enron* (Noël Coward); *Frost/Nixon* (Donmar Warehouse, Gielgud and Broadway); *Don Carlos* (Gielgud) and *Mary Stuart* (Apollo and Broadway).

playfuluk.com