



ATC COMMISSIONS NEW PLAYS NOW – FOR WHATEVER HAPPENS NEXT

NEW PLAYS FROM NESSAH MUTHY AND YASMIN JOSEPH, CO-COMMISSIONED WITH THEATRE ROYAL PLYMOUTH AND SOHO THEATRE

Actors Touring Company is commissioning the first new plays under Artistic Director Matthew Xia's policy of developing new plays by women of colour.

Playwrights **Yasmin Joseph** (*J'Ouvert* – Theatre 503) and **Nessah Muthy** (*Heroine* – High Tide) will work closely with ATC artistic director **Matthew Xia** over the coming months. The move comes as ATC launches its fundraising campaign #ContinueCreativity to commission more plays NOW for whatever happens NEXT.

Matthew Xia says –

“The world seems to have stopped spinning momentarily, magnifying the racial disparity and social inequality that has always been present. As ever, in crisis, the marginalised become more so, the vulnerable become the acutely vulnerable.”

“Our #continuecreativity appeal is the way to enable people to help us commission and amplify the marginalised voices who are at the centre of this very moment.”

Nessah Muthy's new work is a co-commission between ATC and **Theatre Royal Plymouth**, examining right wing grooming and radicalisation in the online gaming community.

Yasmin Joseph's work is a co-commission with **Soho Theatre** as part of the **Soho Six**. Inspired by Joseph's 2019 tweet about travelling alone “whilst Black / whilst woman” that went viral, with thousands of Black women from across the world responding with their own stories of being hounded whilst travelling. The play will explore the “minefield of having to navigate other people's “voyeurism and ignorance at a time when we're supposed to be solely focused on finding the nearest museum”.

Xia adds –

“Nessah's new play explores misogyny and racism on the internet and how this infects our societies, Yasmin's looks at the voyeurism which places the Black female body under intense and damaging scrutiny.”

Nessah Muthy is a multi-awarding Writer's Guild nominated writer, winner of the Character 7 Prize and the Adrian Pagan Award 2018. She has worked with a number of established theatres and arts organisations including: the Royal Court Theatre, Punchdrunk, the National Youth Theatre, Cardboard Citizens, HighTide, Kali Theatre, Theatre Centre, Iris Theatre, Cloakroom Theatre and the Kings Head Theatre.

Yasmin Joseph's debut play *J'Ouvert* premiered at Theatre503 in 2019. She is currently a member of the Royal Court's invitational writers group and is under commission with Clean Break and the Royal Court via the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. She has been nominated for Most Promising Playwright at the 2019 Evening Standard Theatre Awards.

The announcement of the two new commissions follows the successful online screening of **Amsterdam** by May Arud Yassur, a co-production with Orange Tree Theatre, which replaced this spring's national tour cut short by the coronavirus lockdown. The streaming played to a total of 27,000 people between mid-March and the end of May, exactly mirroring the lost tour dates, often accompanied by online Q&As and workshops with local audiences and practitioners from the 10 tour venues, from Glasgow to Birmingham.

Please see the following links

ATC Commissions report in *The Stage*

<https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/matthew-xia-commits-to-commissioning-female-playwrights-only-in-first-three-years-at-atc>

Nessah Muthy

https://i-d.vice.com/en_uk/article/neknnz/playwright-nessah-muthy-is-growing-older-and-giving-less-of-a-shit

Yasmin Joseph

<http://www.afridiziak.com/interviews/yasmin-joseph/>

Open Letter on the Importance of Protecting Representation in the theatre sector

<https://www.atctheatre.com/blog/an-open-letter-to-the-culture-secretary>

Matthew Xia one of the busiest and most exciting directors in the UK, was appointed Artistic Director of Actors Touring Company in November 2018. He is a former Associate Artistic Director of Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester; Director in Residence at Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse; and Associate Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East. He is currently an Associate Artist at Nottingham Playhouse. Matthew is a founding member of *Act for Change*, a trustee of *Artistic Directors of the Future*, *Cardboard Citizens* and Patron of *COMMON*.

Actors Touring Company (ATC) creates dialogue between Britain and the rest of the world – and between the intersecting cultures within our country. It is the only UK theatre company committed to producing plays that come from beyond our shores.

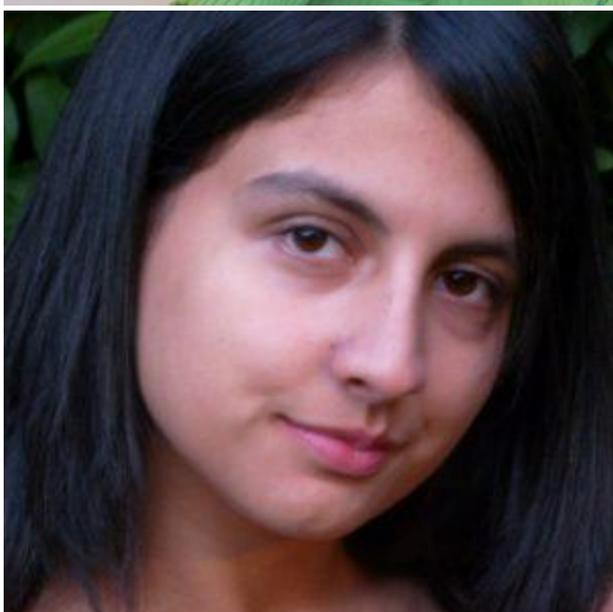
We are passionate about giving voice to the ‘outsider within’ – the cross-cultural nations within our own nation. We tour our plays right across Britain: creating, developing and sustaining a dialogue between ‘the other’ and UK audiences. In the last few years, we have produced first English language productions of plays from Iran, Norway, the US, Germany, Austria, Russia - bringing international voices to school and village halls, studio theatres and main houses: from Barcelona to Glasgow, from Hong Kong to Scarborough. Signature productions include: *The Brothers Size*, *The Events*, *The Suppliant Women*, *Winter Solstice* and *Amsterdam*, the ATC debut of Artistic Director Matthew Xia.

Theatre Royal Plymouth is the South West’s home of new writing, specialising in the production of new plays, both as producer and co-producer, alongside the presentation of a broad range of theatre - including classic and contemporary drama, musicals, opera, ballet and dance. They have three performance spaces – The Lyric, The Drum and The Lab. Their work with young people and communities is extensive and radical, taking place across all three venues and beyond. Recent productions and co-productions include *The Kneebone Cadillac* by Carl Grose, *You Stupid Darkness!* by Sam Steiner (with Paines Plough), *The Unreturning* by Anna Jordan (with Frantic Assembly) and *Amsterdam* (with Orange Tree Theatre and Actors Touring Company).

Soho Theatre is a registered charity and social enterprise – London’s most vibrant producer of new theatre, comedy and cabaret. Ordinarily it plays to live audiences of 250,000 audiences a year in its Dean Street venue, at the Edinburgh Fringe and beyond. Whilst its doors are closed, its priorities are to safeguard Soho Theatre’s future, do its best to look after its staff team and wider network of artists and practitioners, and where it can contribute to the wider community response. This spring sees the relaunch of Soho Theatre On Demand, Soho Theatre’s digital service delivered by Easel TV (whose other clients include Curzon Home Cinema), broadening the range of work available so that its audiences can continue to see great theatre, comedy and cabaret, and provide a platform for independent artists, theatre companies and practitioners.



Yasmin Joseph



Nessah Muthy