WONDER FOOLS

Positive Stories For Negative Times

Volume 2
Seven Plays For Young People to Perform in Real Life or Remotely
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Perform in Real Life or Remotely

Ellen Bannerman, Robbie Gordon,
Lewis Hetherington, Bryony Kimmings,
Hannah Lavery, Douglas Maxwell, Jack Nurse,
Debris Stevenson, The PappyShow

Edited by Wonder Fools
Positive Stories for Negative Times: Season Two

Presented by Wonder Fools in association with the Traverse Theatre


Wonder Fools is a Scottish Charity (Registered Number SC047673).

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Wonder Fools would also like to thank Eilidh Nurse, Gemma Nicol, Lisa Williamson and Serden Salih for their dedication in creating and promoting the project, Orlando Lloyd and Neil Scott for making the project look fabulous, Linda Crooks, Ruth McEwan, Ellen Gledhill and Eleanor White from the Traverse Theatre for all their support, the Wonder Fools board; Maureen Beattie, Vikki Doig, Dominic Hill, Anne McCluskey, Gary McNair, Harriet Mould for their endless encouragement and advice and all of those that participated in Season One for their feedback and creativity.

Positive Stories for Negative Times: Season 2 was first produced as an online participatory project for Wonder Fools, June 2021–July 2022.
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ABOUT THE PROJECT

SEASON ONE:

Positive Stories for Negative Times was born in August 2020 in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. This innovative and exciting project responded to the lack of physical spaces for young people to participate in creative activities due to the pandemic, and instead allowed them to come together to make new work online or live in the space, if government guidelines allowed.

Wonder Fools commissioned five of the UKs top playwrights to create new work especially for young people to rehearse, explore and perform remotely or in person. Playwrights were Sabrina Mahfouz, Chris Thorpe, Stef Smith, Bea Webster and our very own Robbie Gordon and Jack Nurse.

The project engaged:

2,703 young people

2,000 + audience members

282 groups from 119 organisations, including 57 schools, from across the UK, Spain, Canada and Sweden.

Groups were invited to upload their performances to the Positive Stories website. These can be seen at www.positivestories.scot/season-1/

‘A wonderful project providing a platform for young people’s creativity and engagement at a time when they need it most’

Suzie Lundy, Teacher, The Royal High School, Edinburgh

SEASON TWO:

Positive Stories for Negative Times: Season Two launched in June 2021, after the success of Season One. Season Two has grown in both scale and ambition and this time includes seven brilliant plays of varying styles for groups of any size.
As well as being performed, the plays in Season Two can be used as a stimulus for all kinds of creative activity.

If you are reading this book before March 2022 then we invite you to sign up to take part in the project and share with us the work that they inspire.

You can find more information, sign up and see performances from the hundreds of other groups taking part at www.positiviestories.scot.
EDITORS’ NOTE

Positive Stories for Negative Times started life in our living rooms in Spring 2020 during the national lockdown. We wanted to find ways for young people to still be creative and connect with one another during a time when we were all forced to be apart. Over a whirlwind couple of months, thanks to the brilliance of the team around us and the playwrights involved, we managed to pull together a project that fulfilled these aims. Originally setting out to engage 75 groups in Scotland, we were thrilled by the response when nearly 3,000 young people from nearly 200 groups signed up from eight different countries.

We are absolutely delighted to have had the privilege of working with such a brilliant selection of writers who are some of our favourite voices working in the UK today. We know some young people, and their group leaders, will be desperate to get back in real space and work together again, while others will have embraced technology and discovered a knack for digital work. For this reason, for Season Two we’ve commissioned a plethora of different styles of work to choose from, including poetry, devising, song cycles and the classic play format we all know and love so groups can pick the one that works for them.

We’ve also opened up submissions this year inviting groups to use the plays as a stimulus for any creative activity they choose, whatever helps them come together and have fun. If you can’t create a whole production then that’s fine, use the work to start a conversation and inspire something else, creative writing, photography, artwork, podcast, music, a live production, a digital production or a letter to your local MP. All we ask is that you share something of your process with us so we can celebrate your work and all the brilliant things these plays will inspire around the world.

Have fun! We are so excited to see what you all come up with.

*Steph, Jack and Robbie aka Wonder Fools*

*September 2021*

www.positivestories.scot
ABOUT WONDER FOOLS

‘One of the most vibrant young companies to emerge onto the Scottish theatre scene in recent years’
_The Scotsman, 2021_

Wonder Fools SCIO (SC047673) are a registered charity and arts organisation. We create contemporary theatre based on a diverse range of current and historical real life stories. We seek unknown and forgotten stories lost in the evolving social landscape of Britain that we are able to reshape and make theatre from. Between 2014 and 2019 we produced four full-scale productions reaching over 15,000 audience members and participants. Since March 2020 we have produced five digital projects including audio plays, short films and an international participatory project reaching over 45,000 people in eight countries.

Productions include: _McNeill of Tranent: Fastest Man in the World_ (2014/2015), an autobiographical show performed by retired athlete George McNeill, who in 1972 was the fastest man in the world despite never being allowed to compete in the Olympic or Commonwealth Games; _The Coolidge Effect_ (2016–present), an interactive performance and audio play that examines how pornography affects our mental health, relationships and sexual experiences using a blend of storytelling, poetry and science; _Lampedusa_ (2017) by Anders Lustgarten, exploring the acts of human kindness behind the headlines of the migrant crisis; _549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War_ (2018–2019), telling the true stories of four miners from Prestonpans who volunteered as part of the International Brigade; and _Meet Jan Black_ by Johnny McKnight, celebrating community drama with a cast of professional and amateur dramatic performers.
'The perfect example of what makes live theatre so brilliant'

★★★★ Broadway Baby (on Meet Jan Black, 2021)

'A formidable piece of popular small-scale touring theatre in the 7:84 tradition, educating working-class audiences across Scotland about their own history, while providing a superb night out'

★★★★ The Scotsman (on 549, 2020)

'Fiercely curious Glasgow-based Wonder Fools company'

The Herald, 2018

'We see our role in developing new Scottish theatre talent as absolutely central to everything we do. I can think of few better ways to express this than working with Wonder Fools'

Dominic Hill (Artistic Director of the Citizens Theatre) on Lampedusa, 2017

'Surely one of Scotland’s best new companies'

David Byrne, Artistic Director of the New Diorama, London (on 549, 2018)

Website: www.wonderfools.org

Twitter: @wonder_fools
Facebook: @wonderfoolsonline
Instagram: @wonder_fools_online

For more information about the company and how you can work support our work please contact contact@wonderfools.org

SUPPORT US

Wonder Fools SCIO (SC047673) is a registered charity and arts organisation. We depend upon the generosity of individuals like you to make our work happen. From live touring shows to workshops with people living with dementia to plays made for and with young people, all our activity is supported by the kindness of others.
We’ll give you a wee example of why we need your help. In 2017, we received a rejected funding bid for our touring production of *549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War* – the project was in jeopardy. It simply could not have happened without the generous and wide-ranging support of individuals, organisations, charities and trade unions. People like you saved the project and enabled *549* to become a sell-out and critically acclaimed touring show. Likewise, *Positive Stories for Negative Times* provided opportunities for creativity and active participation for 3,000 young people thanks to financial support from a wide range of individuals and organisations.

We would love for there to be a Season Three next year, and we are currently fundraising for new live work that will tour across Scotland post-pandemic with accompanying creative learning programmes so we can actually meet some of the young people taking part in Positive Stories from all over the place. Every little bit helps, genuinely, so if you can spare anything, we would appreciate it massively.

To donate, visit www.wonderfools.org/donate – the form is really straightforward and takes two minutes to fill out.

Thank you. With your donation, together, we can continue to take our work to audiences across Scotland and beyond.
WONDER FOOLS TEAM

Robbie Gordon    Co-Founder
Jack Nurse       Co-Founder
Steph Connell    Executive Producer
Gemma Nicol (hidden route)  Participation Associate
Lisa Williamson (hidden route)  Participation Associate
Serden Salih    Marketing and Communications Coordinator

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ABOUT THE TRAVERSE

We are the Traverse – champion of stories and storytellers. The stories we share are by anyone and for everyone.

As Scotland’s new writing theatre, the Traverse Theatre is a dynamic centre for performance, experience and discovery. Enabling people across society to access and engage with theatre is our fundamental mission.

Our year-round programme bursts with new stories and live performances that challenge, inform and entertain. We empower artists and audiences to make sense of the world today, providing a safe space to question, learn, empathise and – crucially – encounter different people and experiences. Conversation and the coming together of groups are central to a democratic society, and we champion equal expression and understanding.

We commission, produce and programme for existing and future audiences to offer new and exciting experiences for everyone, and our partnerships with other theatre companies and festivals enable us to present a wide range of innovative performances.

The Traverse would not exist without our overarching passion for talent development and embracing the unexplored. We work with the newest and rawest talent – with an emphasis on the Scottish-based – nurturing it to become the art, artists and performances that can be seen on our stages through a variety of creative learning and literary programmes.

The timely, powerful stories that start life on our stages have a global impact, resulting in dozens of tours, productions
and translations. We are critically acclaimed and recognised
the world over for our originality and artistic risk, which we
hope will create some of the most talked-about plays,
productions, directors, writers and actors for years to come.

Find out more about our work at traverse.co.uk
With thanks
The Traverse Theatre extends grateful thanks to all those who generously support our work, including those who prefer their support to remain anonymous.

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The Traverse Theatre is funded by Creative Scotland and The City of Edinburgh Council. With additional support from The Scottish Government’s Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund, and Adapt & Thrive, part of the Community and Third Sector Recovery Programme, delivered in partnership by Firstport, Corra Foundation, SCVO, Just Enterprise, Community Enterprise and Social Investment Scotland.  

Traverse Theatre (Scotland) is a Limited Company (SC076037) and a Scottish Charity (SC002368) with its Registered Office at 10 Cambridge Street, Edinburgh.  

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Raman Mundair IASH/Traverse Digital Fellow for 2021
Uma Nada-Rajah Writer in Residence
Jack Nurse Artist in Residence
Andrew Thompson British Council ‘UK in Japan’ Writer in Residence 2020
Morna Young British Council ‘UK in Japan’ Writer in Residence 2020
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Christopher Wynn
BIOGRAPHIES

CREATIVE TEAM

Robbie Gordon – Artistic Lead and Playwright

Robbie is a theatre-maker born in Prestonpans specialising in making work with and for communities. He trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland graduating in 2016.

He is the co-founder of Wonder Fools, Creative Engagement Director at the Gaiety Theatre and a Creative Development Producer for the Traverse Theatre.

Other theatre work includes: co-creator of Positive Stories for Negative Times (Wonder Fools in association with the Traverse Theatre); creator of Open Your Lugs (Ayr Gaiety); producer of Class Act (Traverse Theatre); writer and movement director of 549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War (Wonder Fools in association with the Citizens Theatre); writer and movement director of The Coolidge Effect (Wonder Fools); writer and director of McNeill of Tranent: Fastest Man in the World (Wonder Fools); writer of When the Sun Meets the Sky (Traverse Theatre and Capital Theatres); associate director of Meet Jan Black (Ayr Gaiety in association with Wonder Fools); associate director of Square Go (Francesca Moody Productions); lead artist (Ayrshire) on Danny Boyle’s Pages of the Sea (National Theatre of Scotland); movement director of The Enemy (National Theatre of Scotland); assistant director on Julius Caesar (Company of Wolves); assistant director on Graham McLaren’s Dream On! (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and BBC Symphony Orchestra); and research assistant on Locker Room Talk (Traverse Theatre).

www.robbiegordon.org

Jack Nurse – Artistic Lead and Playwright

Jack is a director and theatre-maker and co-founder of Wonder Fools. He trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the National Theatre Studio.
He is currently Creative Engagement Director at the Ayr Gaiety Theatre, an Artist in Residence (Creative Development) at the Traverse Theatre and an Origins Artist with Headlong.

Directing credits include: 549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War, McNeill of Tranent: Fastest Man in the World, The Coolidge Effect (Wonder Fools); Larchview (National Theatre of Scotland); Meet Jan Black (Ayr Gaiety/Wonder Fools); When the Sun Meets the Sky; Lampedusa (Citizens Theatre/Wonder Fools); The Lost Elves (Citizens Theatre/Royal Conservatoire of Scotland); The Mack (Play, Pie, Pint/Traverse Theatre). Associate/staff/resident directing credits: Red Dust Road (National Theatre of Scotland/HOME); The Broons (Sell a Door); Dr Dolittle (Music & Lyrics).

Assistant director credits: Oresteia: This Restless House (Citizens Theatre/National Theatre of Scotland); Blackbird (Citizens Theatre); The Winter’s Tale (Royal Lyceum); Hay Fever (Royal Lyceum/Citizens Theatre). Jack was also a member of the Almeida Theatre’s inaugural Resident Director Network in 2016–17 and is a reader for the Traverse Theatre and Bruntwood Prize.

www.jacknurse.com

**Steph Connell – Executive Producer**

Steph is a freelance producer working in theatre and events across the UK. Her experience includes live theatre, digital and outdoor work across new writing, circus, dance and children’s theatre.

She is producer of Manchester-based company ThickSkin for which credits include Shade, Petrichor, How Not to Drown, AWOL, Chalk Farm and as assistant producer for The Static.

She is also producer for Glasgow-based Wonder Fools, recently producing flagship participation programme Positive Stories for Negative Times (Seasons 1 & 2), 549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War (national tour) and Lampedusa (Citizens Theatre).
She was Stage One Producer at the Citizens Theatre in 2017. Other producing credits include *No Way Back* (Frantic Assembly), *Surreal Carnival Experience* (Frantic Assembly/Underworld), *Leaper – A Fish Tale* and *Finding Victoria* (Tucked In), *Full Stop* and *Playground Victories* (Light the Fuse/Scribbled Thought) and *Superhero Snail Boy* (Scribbled Thought).

Steph has also worked for Artichoke, National Theatre of Scotland, Greenwich and Docklands International Festival, National Centre for Circus Arts and is currently Project Coordinator at the Tron Theatre specialising in artist development.

www.stephconnell.co.uk

**Gemma Nicol and Lisa Williamson (hidden route) – Participation Associates**

Gemma and Lisa are co-artistic directors of hidden route and the Positive Stories for Negative Times Participation Associates. Collectively they have been working within the participation sector for over twenty years. During this time, they have created, directed and managed theatre productions and projects with people of all ages in a range of settings, including Mills Observatory, Verdant Works and Dundee University’s School of Life Sciences. Before setting up hidden route, they worked together for six years within the renowned Engage department at Dundee Rep Theatre where they collaborated with communities and participants in diverse contexts such as schools, health and social care, and a variety of community settings. In addition, as freelance artists they have worked with companies such as National Theatre of Scotland, The Point, Macrobert Arts Centre, Youth Theatre Arts Scotland and Imaginate.

Gemma and Lisa love to create work that is driven by collaboration and curiosity and are passionate about bringing theatre-makers and audiences into new spaces. Fundamentally, the work they make is about amplifying the
voices and creative ambitions of the young people they work with.

www.hiddenroute.co.uk

Serden Salih – Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Serden is a queer non-binary freelance marketing coordinator, events coordinator and artist, with experience in both the film industry and creative arts sector. They graduated with an MA in Film, Television and Screen Media from Birkbeck, University of London in 2015 and have since worked as a distribution manager handling press/marketing for the LGBT+ film distributor Peccadillo Pictures. Serden has also worked at various festivals across the UK and internationally, including the Berlin International Film Festival, BFI London Film Festival, Fringe! Queer Film & Arts Fest and Edinburgh Film Festival. They also have a background in film production and programming.

Serden worked as a 2nd assistant director and played a small role in the infamous short film Trouser Bar which premiered at the BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival in 2016 and went on to win awards across twenty film festivals worldwide. They also helped win the Screen Award for Specialist Film Campaign of the Year for Ciro Guerra’s Embrace of the Serpent and achieved the highest grossing film for Peccadillo Pictures to date.

They are passionate about bringing diverse stories and experiences to audiences and they are currently working on two screenplays for production. They are also the editor/publisher of the queer magazine The Thief’s Journal, with volume two scheduled for release in 2022. Serden is passionate about LGBTIQ+ rights and education on queer culture/history through various different mediums and has used their magazine as a way to bring together diverse groups of queer artists from across the world to create dialogues on our current social/political climate.
PLAYWRIGHTS

Ellen Bannerman

Ellen trained as an actor at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (BA, Acting). She recently took part in the Traverse Young Writers group, which was led by poet and playwright Hannah Lavery. She is delighted to premiere her first play as part of Positive Stories for Negative Times. Since leaving drama school Ellen has made her theatre debut in Rebus: Long Shadows by Rona Munro and Ian Rankin, and recently played the role of Sophie in season two of Netflix’s The Alienist.

Bryony Kimmings

Bryony is a playwright, performer, documentary maker and screenwriter from the UK. She is inspired by female stories, social taboos and dismantling power structures. Her work is brutally honest, very funny and often a bit geeky and dangerous.

Bryony’s stage work includes her plays (as writer and performer): Sex Idiot, 7 Day Drunk, Credible Likeable Superstar Role Model, Fake It ’Til You Make It and I’m a Phoenix, Bitch.

Her TV and film work includes the documentaries The Sex Clinic (Channel 4) and Opera Mums (BBC) and the feature film Last Christmas, which Bryony co-wrote with Emma Thompson.

Bryony is working class and loud mouthed, a deep thinker, world fixer, activist and troublemaker all wrapped into one. She likes adapting and reimagining books, creating three-dimensional female characters. She enjoys writing about class, gender and disability. Having toured all over the world with her shows (created about real events in her life) from the National Theatre to the Sydney Opera House, she is now focusing on writing for film and TV.
‘Kimmings is an artist of exceptional integrity, compassion, imagination and guts.’ The Guardian

www.bryonykimmings.com

Hannah Lavery

Hannah is a poet, playwright, performer and director. Her poetry has been published widely and her poem ‘Scotland, You’re No Mine’, was selected by Roseanne Watt as one of the Best Scottish Poems 2019.

Her autobiographical play *The Drift* toured Scotland as part of the National Theatre of Scotland’s 2019 season.

In 2020, she was awarded a New Playwrights Award by the Playwrights’ Studio Scotland and selected by Owen Sheers as one of his Ten Writers Asking Questions That Will Shape Our Future for the International Literature Showcase, a project from the National Writing Centre and the British Council. She was also selected as one of the Scottish Voices for the BBC Writers’ Room.

In November 2020, her highly acclaimed play *Lament for Sheku Bayoh* was directed by Hannah in a co-production with the Royal Lyceum Theatre, National Theatre of Scotland and Edinburgh International Festival.

Hannah is one of Imaginate’s Accelerator Artists and an Associate Artist with the National Theatre of Scotland as well as Writer in Residence at Lyceum Youth Theatre.

She was recently selected for the Adopt a Playwright Award by OffWestEnd.com and was commissioned by Pitlochry Festival Theatre to adapt *Jekyll and Hyde* for their 2021 summer season.

Hannah is an experienced workshop facilitator and mentor and received the Creative Edinburgh Leadership Award in 2020, for her work with the Writers of Colour Writing Group and for curating and directing a film poetry series for Fringe of Colour.
Douglas Maxwell

Douglas has been one of Scotland’s top playwrights since his debut in 2000. His work includes *I Can Go Anywhere* at the Traverse, *Charlie Sonata* at the Royal Lyceum, *The Whip Hand* for the Traverse/Birmingham Rep, *Yer Granny* (a version of Roberto Cossa’s *La Nona*) for the National Theatre of Scotland and *Fever Dream: Southside* at The Citizens.

His online lockdown work includes *Beautiful Boy* for Pitlochry Festival Theatre, *The Assumption* for Solar Bear/Royal Conservatoire Scotland and *Fatbaws* for the National Theatre of Scotland/BBC. *Fatbaws*, directed by and starring Peter Mullan, has been seen by a million people and was subsequently screened on BBC Scotland and iPlayer.

His many other plays include *Decky Does a Bronco, Mancub, Promises Promises* (staged in New York as *The Promise*) and *A Respectable Widow Takes to Vulgarity*.

His plays have been performed in translation in Germany, Norway, Hong Kong, New York, Chicago, Holland, Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, Wales, Japan, France, Belgium and South Korea, where his debut play *Our Bad Magnet* ran for over ten years.

His plays are published by Methuen Drama. His first collection of work focuses on his writing for younger audiences. As well as *Decky Does a Bronco* and *Mancub* that volume also contains *Too Fast, The Mother Ship* and *Helmet*.

His upcoming work includes the musical *Orphans*, written with Roddy Hart and Tommy Riley for the National Theatre of Scotland, which is set to open in the SECC Armadillo in spring 2022.

Debris Stevenson

Dyslexic academic, grime poet and bashment dancing social activist. Debris explores the intersectional, unexpected and unjust – ideally whilst making you laugh and/or dance.
Debris has worked in thirty countries, raised over £300,000 with her company The Mouthy Poets to develop young talent, designed foundation performance poetry modules at Nottingham University and had her debut poetry pamphlet, *Pigeon Party*, published by Flipped Eye.

Her debut show, *Poet in da Corner*, premiered at the Royal Court in 2018, receiving 4–5 stars, and saw Debris nominated for an Emerging Talent of the Year Award (Evening Standard Theatre Awards). *Poet in da Corner* toured the UK in early 2020 alongside the release of the album (on Accidental Records).

Debris is currently developing several TV shows, a play for HighTide Theatre and *Write to Rave*, an immersive play exploring raving as radicalism. When she is not writing she can be found dancing for The Heatwave, Red Bull Music Academy and Sillis Movement.

www.debrisstevenson.co.uk

**The PappyShow and Lewis Hetherington**

The PappyShow is a playful and physical ensemble theatre company who create distinctive and critically acclaimed productions, lead inclusive workshops rooted in kindness, and work tirelessly to develop the industry we move in through connection and uplifting. The PappyShow was formed in 2013 by Kane Husbands to bring people together to move, dance, create moments of radical joy, share stories and take time just to *play*! They exist as a social enterprise – working across performance and platforming the marginalised identities that we believe society could do better with. Their physical training is central to the company and the company offer this for everybody and every body, no matter your previous experience. By moving, playing, talking and listening, they create rooms (physical or digital) that are full of heart and where you can just be you. Diverse and collaborative, their productions explore identities that
are rooted in the lived experience of their performers and span from the stage to the screen.

Productions *BOYS* and *GIRLS* were critically acclaimed for their vibrant, revelatory and expectation-defying explorations of contemporary masculinity and femininity. Our upcoming shows *What Do You See*, and *Black Girl Magic* will delve even deeper into exploring and elevating the underrepresented identities that we want to see on stage.

www.thepappyshow.co.uk

Lewis Hetherington is an award-winning playwright, director and performance maker. His work is rooted in collaboration and storytelling. He is passionate about the arts creating space for social change. He has won two Fringe First Awards, the Arches Brick Award, and an Adelaide Fringe Award. He is one of the co-directors of fieldwork performance. His work has toured extensively throughout Scotland and the rest of the world including performances in Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and the USA.
The Handbook
by Wonder Fools
Steps of the process

In all likelihood, some of you will have been glued to a screen for the last 18 months, maybe some of you have been out and about the whole time, but most of you have probably done a bit of both by now.

This handbook is all about helping us remember what it is like to be in the room again and to help us to continue working digitally if that’s what we need to do at any point. Working digitally has given us so much over the last wee while, so we want to continue to embrace it whilst still tapping back into the buzz of the room.

Most of you will have led creative processes before, but some of you might have never led a creative process before, and that’s totally fine. That’s what this handbook is for.

After a year of rolling out Season 1 across the world, we have learnt loads about ways we can make everyone’s experience this year even better. We’ve been up and down the country from the comfort of our living rooms chatting to organisations online about thoughts, concerns and questions ahead of a new term and academic year.

Some people have said:

“I’m pure buzzing to be back.”

Some people have said:

“We are ecstatic about coming back to real space with our groups although we have concerns around the uncertainty of the year ahead.”

And some have simply said:

“WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO.”

We are here to help and share practice through this handbook, which is the culmination of conversations, trying things out, borrowing and adapting. We are genuine believers that creative practice is all about looking at what’s out there and cherry-picking exercises, ideas and strategies that suit your group, your style and whatever context you’re working in.

We designed Positive Stories for Negative Times with flexibility in mind, and this handbook is a place to return to if you ever feel lost, need a game, or want some inspiration.
Here’s some ideas of the things you could make:

Creative writing  Music  Film  Trailer
Photography  Poetry  Blogs/Vlogs  Rehearsal work
Radio plays  Arts and crafts  Digital performance
Extracts  Audio recording  Stage productions
Outdoor work  Letter to your local MP

Ultimately, this year it is up to individual groups to decide how they take part and what they make. The plays can be performed or just used as a stimulus for other creative activity. The only thing we ask is that you document what you create in some way and send it to us to celebrate all the brilliant work, in all the different forms, that the plays have inspired. This allows us to spotlight your work and share it on the Positive Stories for Negative Times website.

To help you lead a group through Positive Stories for Negative Times Season 2, we have created this ten-step process so that the work can happen effectively, safely and creatively. This year the steps are:

1. Pick your play
2. Prepare your process
3. Create an open, safe, and inclusive space
4. Build a creative and fun environment to work in
5. Form positive relationships through active listening, storytelling and discussion
6. Explore the play
7. Make a response
8. Upload your work
9. Share and celebrate
10. Evaluate
If you have any questions or require any further help with any of the exercises, strategies or ideas in this handbook, then feel free to get in touch with our Participation Associates, Gemma (she/her) gemma@wonderfools.org and Lisa (she/her) lisa@wonderfools.org.

Through taking part in the project you’re also invited to join the Positive Stories club. Our team are here to help you throughout the project offering lots of resources to give you ideas, techniques and friendly ears to listen.

**Workshops:**
This year we are offering a programme of workshops especially for group leaders. These will be online and led by the incredible Positive Stories artists: Ellen Bannerman, Bryony Kimmings, Hannah Lavery, Douglas Maxwell, The PappyShow with Lewis Hetherington and Debris Stevenson. They will talk about their plays and their practice to help group leaders learn new skills and find new ways to approach their work. There will also be some workshops led by the Wonder Fools team about more general and practical ways to develop your skills including digital safeguarding and facilitation best practice. The dates and times of the workshops can be found at positivestories.scot/workshops and you’ll receive a link to sign up from Gemma and Lisa.

**Practitioner Forum:**
We’ll also be launching an online forum just for group leaders. You will have access to this throughout the process. It is there for you to meet others, share ideas and best practice.

**Play Meets:**
We’ll also be hosting online sessions based around each play. These will be Zoom meetings where you can share ideas, queries, struggles and ponderings about the play you’re working on with other participants from around the world.

**Portal:**
You’ll also be sent a link to our online portal where you can get updates, sign up for workshops and access resources including template permission slips and even press releases and marketing assets so you can shout about your work and involvement in the project.
1. Pick your play

You’re at the start of the process. The world is your oyster. What a buzz! The first thing you need to do is pick your play.

We have a brilliant collection of different styles and forms for you to pick from this year. Some are brilliant narrative-based scripts, and others are exciting devising processes. We hope there is something for everyone. So have a wee look at the list below and think about what feels most appropriate for your group. Maybe it’s more than one?

**Spyrates (Spies vs Pirates) 2: Journey to the Forbidden Island**
by Robbie Gordon & Jack Nurse

Featuring spies, pirates, robots, talking animals and everything in between, Spyrates is an interactive, playful and imaginative adventure story with an accompanying process drama.

Age: 6+
Cast size: 14+

**At First I Was Afraid... (I Was Petrified!)**
by Douglas Maxwell

A feel-good comedy-drama about a girl who keeps a diary of all her anxieties; but as she moves from Primary School to Secondary, from normal life to Lockdown, she’s starting to believe that the diary might have dark magical powers, making all of her worries – no matter how crazy – come true.

Age: 11+
Cast size: There are 19 named speaking parts in the play. Many of the smaller parts can be “doubled up”, so the same actors could play a few roles. For bigger groups, there is a narration that is designed to be read aloud, like a storyteller. However, the narration is also disposable – meaning that if you have a smaller group, you could cut the lines completely and treat them as stage directions.
The Raven
by Hannah Lavery

A play full of adventure and an exploration of what shapes and what divides us, exploring issues of blended families, bullying, overeating, depression and isolation.

Age: 11+
Cast size: 5+

Thanks for Nothing
by The PappyShow with Lewis Hetherington

This isn’t a play but a blueprint for performance. What are you thankful for? Not the big things. Not the deep things. What are the little, everyday things which give you moments of gratitude and joy?

Age: 11+
Cast size: 6+

Revolting
by Bryony Kimmings

A series of tasks and actions that make a narrative to be performed with props. We are agents of the revolution. How do we revolt? How do we not get into trouble? Where do we get power, and then how do we use it for good?

Age: 13+
Cast size: 1 – 100.
It is autobiographical. It has no characters, so it can be split up however groups would like and is very much fun, funny and self-authored.
The Skirt
by Ellen Bannerman

An absurdist feminist fable for the next generation of feminists.

Age: 16+
Cast size: 1-100

Write to Rave: Step Pon
by Debris Stevenson

A mash-up of movement, music, poetry and lyrics. As funny and surreal as it is moving and political.

Age: 18+
Cast size: 1-100
2. Prepare your process

Our beliefs

When Wonder Fools are preparing projects, we think first about creating a safe environment for young people and to do so we embed the same principles into all of the work we make.

There are **three cornerstones** of any Wonder Fools work:

1. Create an open, safe and inclusive space.
2. Build a creative and fun environment to work in.
3. Form positive relationships through active listening, storytelling and discussion.

We always feel like if we get these things right, the good work will follow!

In tandem with our principles about creating and making work, we have organisational beliefs about the safeguarding of the children and young people that we work with:

- The welfare and safety of children and young people should always be protected and promoted.
- Children and young people are individuals with their own needs, wishes and feelings.
- Children and young people should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are always kept safe.

If you’re working online, it’s best to think about your organisation’s principles and how to best achieve them in a digital space. You may already have your own set of beliefs or values, and if you do, that’s brilliant. If you don’t, that’s absolutely fine too. This project is potentially a catalyst to create them, redefine them or think about what they could be in the future.

What you will need

Importantly, as well as a set of beliefs and values, you will need the following in place to begin work:

- Your chosen script!
- This handbook.
- A group of young people.
- A space to work. This could be physical or digital. It’s completely up to you!
- Paper, pens and pencils.

If you are working with young people under the age of 18 you will need:

- Child Protection Policy
- Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)
• Criminal record checks in place
• Code of Conduct for staff
• Code of Conduct for young people
• Child protection training
• Risk assessment
• Permission slips

If you are working with young people online, in addition to the above, you will also need:

• Online Code of Conduct for staff
• Online Code of Conduct for young people
• Digital child protection training
• Online Risk Assessment
• Preventative measures and response to bullying and online abuse

Wonder Fools have been offering child protection and digital safeguarding training as part of this project, so if there is anything from the above list that you do not have or are worried about, then reach out to the team, and we can help! You can also find some of the above in our online portal.

There’s a couple of plays – Write to Rave: Step Pon, and At First I Was Afraid... - that might require you to have a PRS licence as they contain licensed music with rights implications. Don’t worry. Many organisations will have annual PRS cover, and if not, then there’s guidance on the Portal part of our website for anyone that needs further information. If you’re unsure of what you need to do, just get in touch with one of the team.

Technology

We’ve been using some free and low-cost pieces of software that enable us to lead our participatory work online, but we also believe that they are excellent tools for the future.

The six pieces of software we work with are:

1. Zoom for online classes, workshops and rehearsals
2. WeTransfer for the transfer of large video files
3. Dropbox for the secure storage of files
4. FinalCut Pro for the editing of videos
5. YouTube for the sharing of work (both publicly and privately)
6. Eventbrite for creating a public-facing event around final performances

1. ZOOM

Even as we’ve returned to real spaces, we’ve continued to use Zoom for our online sessions. We think it is going to be a fundamental part of our toolkit moving forwards. For example, we run the Positive Stories youth board on Zoom, and we wouldn’t be able to work with people from across the country and achieve as massive a geographical spread if we worked in real space. At the time of writing, things are looking OK in the UK, but who knows what the future holds and in other
parts of the world the pandemic is still unfolding. So depending on where you are and when you are participating, Zoom might be the only way you can deliver the process, a backup if you are in real space or even an innovative way to widen access and integrate people hard to reach in your community into your group. The Pro account is £11.99 a month with no time limit and free cloud storage for recording meetings. If you are a charity, you can receive discounts on membership through Charity Digital Exchange. We think Zoom is the best software for online teaching, having experimented with Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts and Webex. There are multiple reasons for this, including cost, accessibility, additional features and the ‘democracy’ of the space. Although, you should always check if the security and privacy features are right for your organisation.

2. WE TRANSFER
At the end of the process, we’ll ask you to submit your files via WeTransfer (more on this in Step 8). WeTransfer is brilliant because you can transfer pretty much any file type using the platform, including films, photos, music and documents. Wonder Fools finds WeTransfer the most effective way of transferring large video files from participants to the company, whether in a large-scale participatory project like Positive Stories for Negative Times or the weekly sessions we run with young people. It is easy to use and gives everyone a simple and streamlined way to get their work to us no matter their technological experience. Wonder Fools has a WeTransfer Pro account which allows you to send up to 200Gb to us - more than plenty - and a free account is 2Gb which is ample for most online processes and normal use.

3. DROPBOX
We use Dropbox for the secure storage of any files we receive during a process. This can include films, photos, scripts, and anything submitted digitally whilst working with young people. It allows us to keep files somewhere safe and secure and provides easy access when we need them. Your organisation will also likely have cloud storage in places such as Sharepoint or Google Drive; if not, this is an easy to use and cheap piece of software that you could use for this project and beyond.

4. FINAL CUT PRO
If our process requires any video editing, we use Final Cut Pro, which is currently available (at the time of writing) for a 90-day free trial. This will give you professional quality editing software to use during the pandemic (and beyond if you like it and want to try the paid version). We have been so impressed with its ability to add production value to our work and its relatively easy-to-use interface that we have now purchased the full product. We would recommend Final Cut Pro as a free but high-quality editing software with lots of tutorials online to get you started, but there are also other free editing software available, including Adobe Premiere Pro, Lightworks and Davinci Resolve.

We’ll also be providing a free tutorial on how to edit using DaVinci Resolve tailored to the project.

If you are asking young people to do some of their own editing, there are a number of free apps available including Splice, Adobe Premiere Clip, Quik and iMovie.