Positive Stories For Negative Times

Volume 3
Six Plays For Young People to Perform in Real Life or Remotely
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Tim Crouch, Leyla Josephine, Bryony Kimmings, The PappyShow with Lewis Hetherington, Sara Shaarawi, Robert Softley Gale

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

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Positive Stories for Negative Times: Season 3

Produced by Wonder Fools in association with Traverse Theatre, Ayr Gaiety, Eden Court, Perth Theatre and Youth Theatre Arts Scotland with plays co-commissioned by Wonder Fools and Traverse Theatre

Supported by Creative Scotland, the Gannochy Trust, Hugh Fraser Foundation, William Syson Foundation, Trades Hall of Glasgow Commonweal Fund and Gordon Fraser Foundation. The Traverse is supported by Creative Scotland and Edinburgh City Council

Wonder Fools is a Scottish Charity (Registered Number SC047673)

Traverse Theatre (Scotland) is a Limited Company (Registered Number SC076037) and a Scottish Charity (Registered Number SC002368) with its Registered Office at 10 Cambridge Street, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH1 2ED

The Traverse Theatre is funded by Creative Scotland and The City of Edinburgh Council, with additional support from The Scottish Government Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund

Positive Stories For Negative Times: Season 3 was first produced by Wonder Fools from January–July 2023
ABOUT THE PROJECT

SEASON ONE

Positive Stories for Negative Times was born in August 2020 in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. The 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 UK’s 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 fifty-seven 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 peoples’ 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 grew in both scale and ambition and this included seven brilliant plays of varying styles for groups of any size. As well
as being performed, the plays in Season Two were used as a stimulus for all kinds of creative activity.

Wonder Fools and the Traverse Theatre commissioned some of the UK’s most exciting voices to write seven new plays for young people. These were developed in collaboration with the Wonder Fools’ Youth Board and included not only traditional scripts but also blueprints for devising. Therefore, regardless of a group’s size, age, experience or context, there was something for everyone. The brilliant artists commissioned as part of Season Two were Bryony Kimmings, Hannah Lavery, Douglas Maxwell, Debris Stevenson, The PappyShow with Lewis Hetherington and Trav Young Writer Ellen Bannerman as well as Wonder Fools’ Robbie Gordon and Jack Nurse.

Season Two stats:

2,830 young participants*
182 teachers and practitioners engaged*
171 groups*
89 organisations and schools*
24 online workshops
11 countries, 5 continents
19 new Youth Board members
7 new plays commissioned
5,000 audience members (approximately)

*These are the numbers of official sign ups to the project. We have since heard of hundreds more young people who have taken part in the project via friends.

Groups were invited to upload their work to the Positive Stories website. These can be seen at www.positivestories.scot/season-2/
‘This project has had a real impact on the kind of group we are, the group dynamic, the way we interact with each other, the way we think about making theatre, it’s really positively helped.’

Lee, Perfect Circle Youth Theatre, Malvern

SEASON THREE

Positive Stories for Negative Times: Season Three is an international participatory project offering organisations who work with young people a process, newly commissioned plays and training by the best theatre artists working in the UK free of charge. It is produced by Wonder Fools in association with Traverse Theatre, Ayr Gaiety, Eden Court, Perth Theatre and Youth Theatre Arts Scotland with plays co-commissioned by Wonder Fools and Traverse Theatre.

This season, we are taking Positive Stories out on the road and want to get more young people involved than ever before! We have two pathways you can take, like previous seasons, participants can get involved and create anything they like with their chosen play or process. Or for the first time ever, groups have the opportunity to perform at a Positive Stories Festival at one of our four new regional hubs across Scotland in Summer 2023, these are Eden Court (Inverness), Traverse Theatre (Edinburgh), Ayr Gaiety (Ayr) and Perth Theatre (Perth).

Festival dates are:

Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh: 24 and 25 June

The Gaiety, Ayr: 1 and 2 July

Eden Court, Inverness: 8 and 9 July

Perth Theatre, Perth: 15 and 16 July

If you are reading this before 26 May 2023, you can still sign up to take part in the online element of the project – go to www.positivestories.scot to find out more.
PARTICIPANTS OF THE POSITIVE STORIES
FESTIVALS 2023

TRAVERSE THEATRE, EDINBURGH – 24 & 25 JUNE

Beath High School
Miss Hanson
Mrs Watson
Mr Forbes
Acid
Aimee
Aivah
Alex A
Alex B
Alfie
Amanda
Amy
Benji
Bethany
Brooke
Caitlin
Cara
Eilish
Emily
Grace
Holly
Iona
Kirsty
Leigh
Mirren
Moxxie
Olivia
Paris
Pati
Ray
Rosie
Roxy
Sophie
Tyler
Yaroslav
Zoriana

Firhill High School

Lyceum Youth Theatre Minis (8–10)
Director: Heather Johns
Director: Sophie Howell
Assistant Director: Leila Price
Assistant Director: Katy Bancroft
Creative Learning Assistant Producer: Connel Burnett
Creative Learning Producer: Kerrie Walker
Director of Creative Learning: Sharon May
Ada
Aelle
Alena
Amber
Anna
Annamaria
Ayanda
Bella
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<tr>
<th>Carlos</th>
<th>Lizzie</th>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Nathan</td>
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<td>Daisy</td>
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<td>Eilish</td>
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<td>Henry</td>
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<td>Isabel</td>
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<td>Iselle</td>
<td>Willow</td>
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<td>Ivy</td>
<td>Yaana</td>
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<td>Lila</td>
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**The Mill Youth Theatre** (S1 group North Berwick)

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<tr>
<th>Amber</th>
<th>Josh</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Maia</td>
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<td>Daisy</td>
<td>Murray</td>
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<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Poppy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eve</td>
<td>Rowan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isla</td>
<td>Sophie</td>
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**Wester Hailes High School Drama Club**

**THE GAIETY, AYR – 1 & 2 JULY**

**Drama Llama Youth Theatre**

**Gaiety Young Company**

Group leaders: Steven Leach & Mhairi Gilmour

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<tr>
<th>Aiden</th>
<th>Katie W</th>
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<td>Andrew</td>
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<td>Katie D</td>
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**Toonspeak**
Toonspeak Theatre Makers Juniors
Toonspeak Theatre Makers Intermediate
Toonspeak Theatre Makers Seniors

**What Happens Now?**

**Wonder Fools Youth Board**
Arron Leo
Catriona Morna
Danny Sophie
Eve Vicky

**EDEN COURT, INVERNESS – 8 & 9 JULY**

**Charleston Academy**

**Eden Court Youth Theatre (11–13s)**

**Eden Court Collective**

**Borealis Theatre Arts – Nairn Youth Theatre**

**PERTH THEATRE, PERTH – 15 & 16 JULY**

**FADs**
Ellie Luisa
Emma Megan
Evie Naomi
George Tate
Hannah Thomas
Isla Zosia
Katrina

**Firefly Arts**
Alice Kennedy
Charlotte Lily
Emily Niamh
Esther Oscar
Kayleigh Viktoria

**Perth Youth Theatre**
EDITORS’ NOTE

We are delighted to return with a third season of Positive Stories for Negative Times. It is still humbling to us that in the first lockdown in 2020 we initially set out to work with seventy-five groups and now thousands of young people from across the world have participated in the project. We are always bowled over by the creativity and joy of everyone involved and can’t wait to see what comes from this new programme of plays.

It’s a pleasure to welcome some of our favourite artists to write plays for Season Three – Tim Crouch, Leyla Josephine, Sara Shaarawi and Robert Softley Gale. The work this year is incredibly rich and full of theatrical potential for groups to play with, we can’t thank the participating artists enough. We are also really pleased to include the two devising guides from Season Two – Bryony Kimmings’s Revolting and The PappyShow with Lewis Hetherington’s Thanks for Nothing – giving groups a broad scope of forms and themes to choose from.

The major development of this year’s project is the creation of four regional hubs in Scotland, working with the Traverse Theatre, Perth Theatre, Ayr Gaiety and Inverness’ Eden Court to host four Positive Stories festivals where local groups can come and perform. It’s going to be an amazing series of weekends where young people can connect with different groups and watch each other’s work.

We’d like to express our thanks to a range of different people without whom the project could not thrive – the commissioned artists whose work is going to be an inspiration for so many; the Positive Stories team, the wonderful Participation Associates Gemma Nicol and Lisa Williamson who are the point of contact for all participating groups; Serden Salih, our brilliant Marketing and Comms Manager; the ridiculously talented Positive Stories Youth Board who collaborate with the commissioned artists at every step of the creative process to inform the making of
the work; the Traverse Theatre who have been invaluable partners with us since Season One; the other festival partners this year Perth Theatre, Ayr Gaiety and Eden Court who we can’t wait to visit in the summer; Orlando Lloyd and Neil Scott for making the project look fabulous; and the Wonder Fools Board of Trustees whose support and guidance in steering the company is as vital as ever.

Finally, we’d like to thank every participating young person and group leader past and present for being the lifeblood of the project and filling us with joy every day. We can’t wait to see what comes from this year and look forward to seeing you at the Positive Stories Festivals.

Steph, Jack, Robbie
Wonder Fools
April 2023
ABOUT WONDER FOOLS

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

Wonder Fools SCIO (SC047673) is a registered charity and theatre company. We tell untold stories that need to be heard throughout Scotland and beyond. We create exceptional arts experiences relevant to the communities we work with. Our belief is that theatre is for everyone. We work with young people and communities, on stage and off, as collaborators, participants and audience members to ensure their stories are heard and their potential is realised.

Established in 2017, our work takes many forms, shapes, and sizes; whichever is most suited to the stories we are telling. Since March 2020 alone we have produced five digital projects including audio plays, short films, interactive installations and an international participatory project, as well as touring productions performed in rural town halls and on Scotland’s most famous stages reaching over 58,000 people in sixteen countries across five continents. All our work is made with the communities in which we perform ensuring that it is relevant, authentic and accessible to them, whilst amplifying their voices through telling their stories to new audiences.

We believe in young people and all our work comes with accompanying creative learning packages to engage new audiences and empowers them to tell their stories too. We offer career development opportunities to young people from across Scotland including paid apprenticeships, workshops and have a youth board made up of twenty
young people who guide our work from idea to final performance.

‘I am just so continuously impressed by the heart and values at the core of Wonder Fools, everyone who is a part of WF or works with you has been so lovely, every production and project seems to hang on questions of story and accessibility, and I can’t think of a single other company whose name is so synonymous with fun and hope. I am so proud to have worked on this show and I am so excited to see what’s to come. No one else is doing theatre like you guys and the impact you have in people’s lives is huge. Just, thank you.’ Sophie, Wonder Fools Youth Board Member

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

**WONDER FOOLS TEAM**

Robbie Gordon: Co-Founder & Artistic Director
Jack Nurse: Co-Founder & Artistic Director
Steph Connell: Executive Producer
Gemma Nicol (hidden route): Participation Associate
Lisa Williamson (hidden route): Participation Associate
Emma Ruse: Participation Associate
Serden Salih: Marketing Manager

**WONDER FOOLS YOUTH BOARD**

Molly Bryson
Eve Campbell
Eve Dickson Batchelor
Arron Greechan
Ava Hickey
Catriona Hill
Sophie Jacome
Vicky MacRae
Gregor McMillan
Mollie Milne
Morna Ross
Leo Shak
Danny Taggart
Lucy Wilson

WONDER FOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Maureen Beattie OBE
Vikki Doig
Robbie Gordon
Dominic Hill
Anne McCluskey
Gary McNair
Harriet Mould
Jack Nurse
Jeremy Wyatt
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 over-arching 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 the Traverse:

www.traverse.co.uk
With thanks

The Traverse extends grateful thanks to all of its supporters, including those who prefer to remain anonymous. Their valuable contributions ensure that the Traverse continues to champion stories and storytellers in all of its forms, help develop the next generation of creative talent and lead vital projects in our local community, Scotland and beyond.

With your help, we can write the next scene of our story. Visit traverse.co.uk/support-us to find out more.

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We have received additional support from the Scottish Government’s Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund and Adapt and Thrive, part of the Scottish Government’s Community and Third Sector Recovery Programme and 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, Scotland, EH1 2ED.

Traverse Theatre
David Bailey – Lighting & Sound Technician
Linda Crooks – Executive Producer & Chief Executive
Marcin Dobrowolski – Ticketing & Data Manager
David Drummond – General Manager
Fi Elliot – Lighting & Sound Technician
Jennifer Galt – Class Act Producing Assistant
Jenny Gilvear – Producing & Programme Co-ordinator
Ellen Gledhill – Head of Business Development
Robbie Gordon – Creative Development Producer
Becca King – Administration & Finance Assistant
Michelle Mangan – Publicist
Kevin McCallum – Head of Production
Anne McCluskey – Senior Creative Producer
Luke Morley – Producing Assistant
Gareth Nicholls – Artistic Director
Conor O’Donnelly – Marketing Manager
Julie Pigott – Head of Finance & Operations
Pauleen Rafferty – Payroll & HR Manager
Renny Robertson – Head of Lighting & Sound
Serden Salih – Digital Content Associate
Lauren Scott – Marketing & Media Assistant
Gordon Strachan – Ticketing & Data Manager
Linda Taylor – Front of House Manager

Also working for the Traverse

Artists in Residence
Apphia Campbell
Hannah Lavery
Uma Nada-Rajah
Katherine Nesbitt
Jack Nurse
Shilpa T-Hyland

Traverse Theatre Board of Directors
Helen Forsyth – Chair
Morag Ballantyne
Kate Gibb
Kieran Hurley
Zakia Moulaoui Guery
Dave Moutrey
Rebecca O’Brien
Donna Reynolds
Bryony Shanahan
May Sumbwanyambe
Christopher Wynn
BIOGRAPHIES
CREATIVE TEAM

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 Executive Producer for recently producing flagship participation programme Positive Stories for Negative Times, 549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War (national tour); And Then Come the Nightjars and Lampedusa (Citizens Theatre). She is also Producer of Manchester based company ThickSkin for which credits include Shade, Petrichor, How Not To Drown, Chalk Farm and as Assistant Producer for The Static. She has recently worked as Associate Producer for Raw Material and is currently Producer for Sleeping Warrior Theatre Company.

Steph 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 Tron Theatre, Artichoke, National Theatre of Scotland, Greenwich and Docklands International Festival and National Centre for Circus Arts. She has an MA in Arts and Cultural Management from Queen Margaret University and is a graduate of the Clore Emerging Leaders Course in 2017.

stephconnell.co.uk
Robbie Gordon – Co-Artistic Director

Robbie Gordon 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-Artistic Director of Wonder Fools and the Creative Engagement Director at the Traverse Theatre.

For Wonder Fools: Co-creator of Positive Stories for Negative Times (Wonder Fools in association with the 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); Associate Director of Meet Jan Black (Ayr Gaiety in association with Wonder Fools); Associate Director of Lampedusa (Citizens Theatre in association with Wonder Fools).

Creative Engagement work: Creative Engagement Director of Ayr Gaiety’s Culture Collective projects with Jack Nurse; Producer and Director of Class Act (Traverse Theatre); Co-creator of the New Scottish Companies Programme (Ayr Gaiety); Speaker at the 2022 Edinburgh International Culture Summit at the Scottish Parliament; Creator of Open Your Lugs (Ayr Gaiety); lead artist (Ayrshire) on Danny Boyle’s Pages of the Sea (National Theatre of Scotland and 1418 NOW); Assistant on Jeremy Deller’s we’re here because we’re here (National Theatre of Scotland and 1418 NOW).

Other selected theatre work: Writer of When the Sun Meets the Sky (Traverse Theatre and Capital Theatres); Co-movement Director of The Enemy (National Theatre of Scotland); Movement Director of Eve Nicol’s Svengali (Pleasance Theatre in association with Pitlochry Festival Theatre); Associate Director of Square Go (Francesca Moody Productions); Movement Director of the Lost Elves (Citizens Theatre in association with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland); Assistant Director for Julius Caesar (Company of Wolves); Assistant Director on Graham McLaren’s Dream On!