

28 Sep

SHEFF!ELD THEATRES

10 Oct

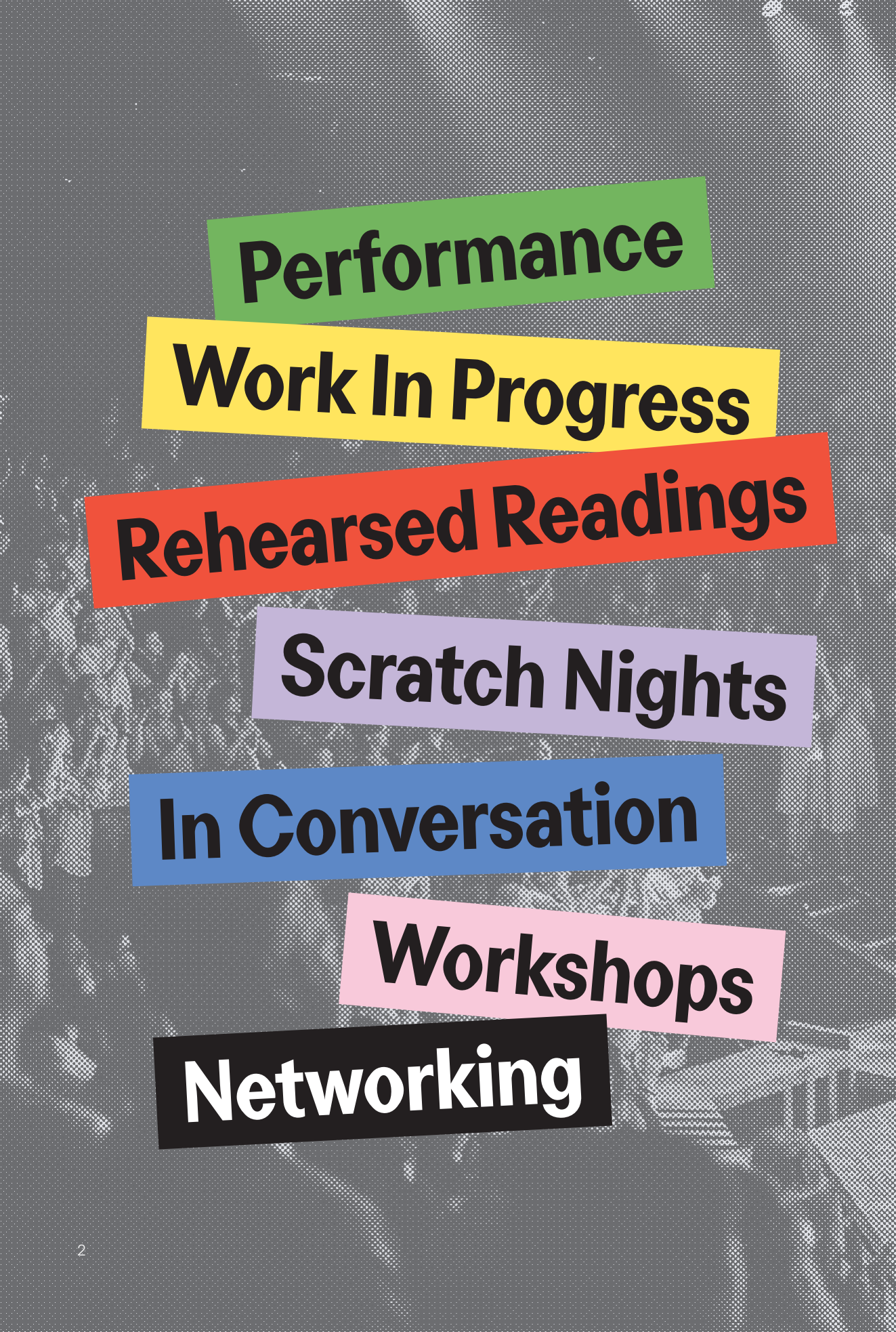
OPEN WORKS²⁶

**Festival
Guide**

Theatre

SHEFF!ELD THEATRES

Festival



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Welcome to the very first Open Works Festival. This is a celebration of artists, bold new ideas and the stories that help us see the world – and one another – in new ways.

Open Works brings together theatre-makers from Sheffield and across the UK, creating space for established artists and emerging voices to share ideas, take risks and inspire one another. It's a festival rooted in this city while looking outwards, reflecting the richness, curiosity, and possibility of theatre today.

I wanted us to create the Open Works Festival because, at Sheffield Theatres, we believe the best theatre begins with connection. Connection between artists and audiences. Between different perspectives and lived experiences. Between people, communities, and ideas. It's in those moments of exchange – when we come together to listen, question, imagine and share – that theatre is at its most powerful. Open Works is an invitation to make those connections: to discover new artists, encounter fresh ideas, share experience and be part of the conversations that shape the future of theatre.

Please join us and we hope you'll leave feeling inspired.

Elizabeth Newman,
Artistic Director of Sheffield Theatres

Performance

What to expect

The festival features new work from Sheffield Theatres' Associate Companies **Forced Entertainment**, **Roots Mbili Theatre** and **Stand & Be Counted Theatre** and two workshops by **The Bare Project**, alongside a wide range of performances selected through open submissions.



Good Day Sunshine

By Monica Hunken

Playhouse / Tickets £15
Mon 28 Sep / 7.30pm

A woman cycles through New York delivering charity valentines, and fights to stay hopeful. A new solo show from a frontline American activist about the struggle to remain tender in a collapsing world.



A Simply Beastly Murder

By Rachel E. Thorn

Montgomery / Tickets £15
Tue 29 Sep / 7.30pm

A film noir for the stage starring the Famous Five. Expect gangsters, intrigue, and lashings of tinned pineapple. Featuring the voice of Bafta award-winner **Alistair McGowan**. Nominated for the Funny Women Awards.



Batty!

By Victoria Firth

Playhouse / Tickets £15
Thu 1 Oct / 7pm

Have you got a wild side? Batty has, she dreams of running barefoot, wild swimming, of talking trees, strange animals and the scent of the seasons turning. In fact she's starting to wonder if she might be a witch...



Big Strong Man

By The Growth House

Montgomery / Tickets £15
Thu 1 Oct / 7.30pm

Four Northern lads have the impossible task of fixing the men's mental health crisis in one night. Join us for a raucous cabaret-comedy featuring song, dance, gameshow parodies and a bear.



Cold Sweat

By Forced Entertainment

Playhouse / Tickets £15
Fri 2 - Sat 3 Oct / 7pm

Virtuoso performers map their bodies to the strange rhythms and tonalities created from nonhuman AI voices. The result is an absurd, comical, unsettling and poetic contemporary theatre.



Woodhill

By LUNG

Playhouse / Tickets £15
Tue 6 Oct, 7pm / Wed 7 Oct, 2pm & 7pm

Three men at Woodhill prison are dead. The families demand answers. This is a call to arms about the crisis facing prisons. An explosive true story by multi-award-winning LUNG.

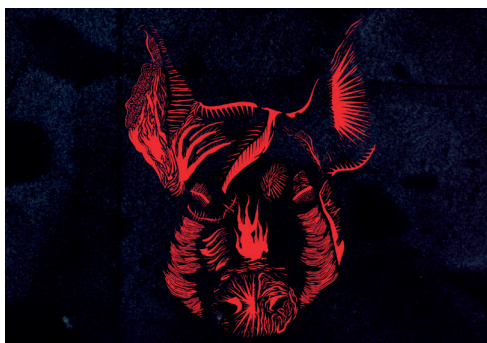


Ìlọyá... the Journey Begins

By Oluwasegun Lafup Ogundipe

Montgomery Studio / Tickets £15
Wed 7 Oct / 2 & 6pm

Mokan has a plan: dream job, family home, the girl. Lagos has other plans. A joyful, moving, immersive one-man odyssey of migration, ambition and love.



The Hunger

By Black Bright Theatre

Montgomery / Tickets £15
Wed 7 - Thu 8 Oct / 7.30pm

Megan and Deborah live alone on their farm in the Yorkshire Dales. What was once their home has now become their only refuge. Kitchen sink drama meets post-apocalyptic horror.



How Could I Forget?

By Joe Carnall Jnr

Playhouse / Tickets £15
Fri 9 Oct, 7pm (Sold Out)
Sat 10 Oct, 2pm & 7pm (Sold Out)

Blending heartfelt storytelling, humour and unforgettable songs. Created by Sheffield musician **Joe Carnall Jnr** (*Milburn, Reverend & The Makers*).

Local artists and talent development at Sheffield Theatres

Here at Sheffield Theatres we offer a wide range of opportunities and resources for artists and companies from our region.

Throughout the year, we provide meeting and development spaces at The Bank hub, talent development programmes, residencies, career support, open script submissions, invitations to observe rehearsals, general actor auditions and more.

Sign up to the *Making Room* newsletter for new opportunities:

sheffieldtheatres.co.uk/for-artists

Creative engagement in our communities

Alongside our work in developing local and emerging artists, we're passionate about working and engaging with communities from across our city.

Our *Youth Theatre* works with children from 8–17 years old, offering them weekly sessions and the opportunity to perform on our stages.

Our schools programme gets students behind the scenes and up close to the workings of one of the country's largest producing houses, whilst our regular *Launchpad* sessions support adults with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism to create their own production.

Visit our website to find out more:

sheffieldtheatres.co.uk/get-involved

Work In Progress

What to expect

The Work in Progress strand of the festival presents unfinished, developmental stagings of plays or performance pieces featuring minimal props, costumes, lights, music and sound.

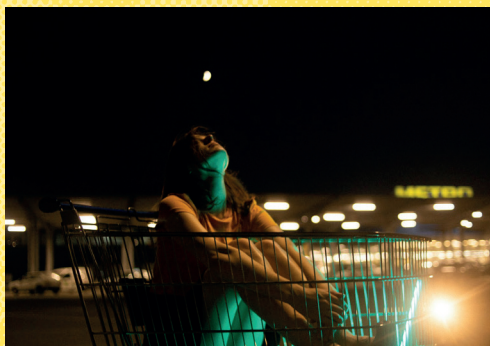


For Worms

By Caitlin Clough

Montgomery / Tickets £8
Mon 28 Sep / 7pm

Suzie makes a land grab – breaking ground on an urban guerrilla garden. But her digging disturbs trauma long buried and soon the garden is under threat from mysterious enemies.



Tuesdays at Tesco's

By Emmanuel Darley

Playhouse / Tickets £8
Tue 29 Sep / 1pm

All eyes are on Jacqueline when she takes her father shopping at Tesco's on Tuesdays. They know her, you see. Before Jacqueline, her name was something else. A dead name. And to her father she remains that dead name.



TOFU

By Ke Li

Montgomery Studio / Tickets £8
Wed 30 Sep / 2pm

Built from real conversations with British East and Southeast Asian people about food, family, and everyday life. Tofu is not just an ingredient, but something that holds memories and stories.



Soap Box Spotlight

By Stand & Be Counted

Playhouse / Tickets £8
Wed 30 Sep / 7pm

Join **Stand & Be Counted**, the UK's first Theatre Company of Sanctuary, for a vibrant celebration of storytelling and new works from international artists **Lihle Mdlalana** and **Alina Aleva**.



KalakutHER Queens of Fela's Republic

By Oluwasegun Lafup Ogundipe

Montgomery / Tickets £8
Fri 2 Oct / 2pm

18 February 1977. Soldiers stormed Kalakuta to silence the Afrobeat revolution. They failed. Now the Queens who rebuilt it from the ashes finally speak.



Seven Magic Birds: An African Panto

By Roots Mbili

Montgomery / Tickets £8
Sat 3 Oct / 2pm & 7pm

What happens when the rules and conventions of a British pantomime are thrown into chaos by an African folktale? Let's find out together.



Cat

By Chris Salt

Playhouse / Tickets £8

Mon 5 Oct / 1pm

Catalina of Motril, former servant to Queen Catherine of Aragon, suddenly becomes Europe's Most Wanted – and, at that moment, her hard-won sanctuary and liberty begin to slip away, again.

Cat is the story of one woman's fight to exist and flourish in a world where the odds are constantly stacked against her, where any power she achieves is provisional, any freedom illusory.



School Uniforms

By Chris Dean

Not that Asian

By Not That Asian Theatre

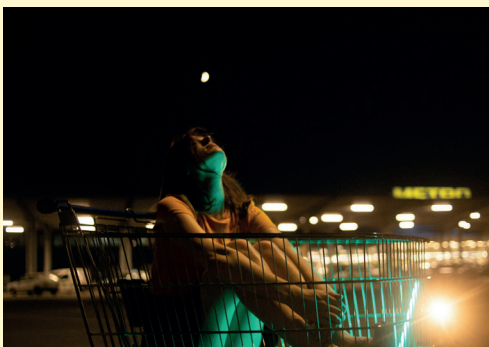
Montgomery / Double Bill £8

Tue 6 Oct / 6.30pm

School Uniforms, it's the last day of year eleven and Joe is buzzing! He's got it all worked out. But then he follows Liam Hardy into the science block toilets, and his whole world turns upside down.

—

Not That Asian is a theatre company that mixes clowning with projection and music to investigate and celebrate East Asian culture. This is their new work in progress clown show.



Echo Echo Beach

By Sh!t Theatre

Tuesdays at Tesco's

By Emmanuel Darley

Playhouse / Double Bill £8

Thu 8 Oct / 7pm

Echo Echo Beach, is an ode to the crumbling, faded glory of seaside towns and the faded glory of our crumbling bodies.

—

All eyes are on Jacqueline when she takes her father shopping at Tesco's on Tuesdays. They know her, you see. Before Jacqueline, her name was something else. A dead name. And to her father she remains that dead name.



The Thin Places

By Voyager 3

Montgomery Studio / Tickets £8

Fri 9 Oct / 1pm & 4.30pm

An intimate storytelling performance exploring the folklore and legends born from the landscape of our islands; from Balmoral to Barbrook, Iona to the Mendip Hills.



Ijakadi (The Wrestle)

By Julius Obende
and Joshua Alabi

Montgomery / Tickets £8

Sat 10 Oct / 12pm

Blending spoken word, movement, live African percussion and visual storytelling, Julius takes audiences on a journey through colourism, identity, masculinity and belonging.

Rehearsed Readings

What to expect

A performance of a script, that is new and in development where the actors perform seated or with minimal staging, holding their scripts and reading their lines. It focuses on voice and character interpretation to allow the writers to gauge audience reaction and develop their work.



Jack and Gill

By Grace Waga Glevey

Playhouse / Tickets £8
Mon 28 Sep / 1pm

Set in a fading Humberside care home, **Jack and Gill** is a tender, funny and honest exploration of ageing, community, and the ties that bind us.



Brown Nose

By Noor Sobka

Montgomery / Tickets £8
Wed 30 Sep / 6pm

British-Libyan Sabreen's future Mother in Law is basically a Disney Villain! A feral reclaiming of Aladdin – with a sassy, shape-shifting genie included.



A Sound is Still a Sound

By CJ Simon

Montgomery Studio / Tickets £8
Thu 1 Oct / 1pm

The club is packed. Tyrell should be behind the bar, but he's abandoned his post to chase after his ex. At least he thinks it was his ex...



Blame it on the Pop

By Melissa Parker

Playhouse / Tickets £8
Thu 8 Oct / 1pm

A darkly funny new play set between 2009 and the present day in small-town Yorkshire, about female friendship, teenagerhood, and the fallout of growing up in the noughties.



Run Away With

By Erin Revell

Cottagecore

By Simon Marshall

Montgomery / Double Bill £8
Mon 5 Oct / 7pm

Darkly comic, **Run Away With** asks if Sam and Ali are putting off starting a family because of politics or actually something far more personal.

—
A queer folk drama set in rural Cornwall, **Cottagecore** explores shapeshifting within relationships, isolation and the cycles we haunt ourselves with.

Workshops

What to expect

There are a fantastic range of workshops on offer in the festival led by some of the performing companies and BBC Writers, The Bare Project and other industry professionals. Workshops are aimed at artists and theatre-makers who want to develop their craft and knowledge, and anyone curious about different ways of making theatre and telling stories.

More workshops will be added to the programme. For festival updates visit the website.



Character Through Movement

Led by Roots Mbili

Montgomery Studio / Tickets £5
Mon 28 Sep / 11am

Explore exercises to help understand the way our bodies have led to us move and talk in the way we do. Before going on to create fictional characters and a monologue.

The Street is the Theatre!

Led by Monica Hunken

Montgomery Studio / Tickets £5
Tue 29 Sep / 11am

Sheffield carries a long history of collective voice – we invite you to step into that lineage and explore how public space becomes a stage for resistance, storytelling, and imagination.

Listening to Landscapes

Led by The Bare Project

Montgomery / Tickets £5
Wed 30 Sep / 11am

Using nature-based field recordings as starting points for devising performance, stories, and as a means of exploring our relationship with the landscapes we live in.

Text, Rules, Improvisation and Performance

Led by Forced Entertainment

Montgomery Studio / Tickets £5
Fri 2 Oct / 11am

Tim Etchells, Artistic Director of Sheffield's **Forced Entertainment**, leads the group in a set of exercises, games and experiments exploring improvisation, working with text and new approaches to performance.

BBC Writers

Led by Esther Jackson-Burton

Montgomery Studio / Free
Mon 5 Oct / 11.30am

BBC Writers Development Producer, **Esther Jackson-Burton** will talk about the BBC Writers team, their remit, how to submit your scripts, top tips and details on their writing schemes and opportunities.

Verbatim Bootcamp

Led by LUNG

Montgomery Studio / Tickets £5
Tue 6 Oct / 11am

A hands-on introduction to verbatim theatre. Working with real testimony and interview transcripts, participants will explore how stories are edited, shaped, and brought to the stage.

Art and Activism

Led by Stand & Be Counted Theatre

Montgomery / Tickets £5
Thu 8 Oct / 11am

Inspired by Sheffield's history of collective action, explore the arts as a tool for social change and the forms of protest we use to make a difference.

In Conversation

What to expect

Join us for a series of thought-provoking conversations about all things theatre. An exceptional line-up of playwrights, directors and theatre-makers will share their perspectives and creative insights with our Artistic Director, **Elizabeth Newman**.



Leo
Butler



David
Eldridge

Leo Butler and David Eldridge

Playhouse / Pay what you feel £3, £5, £7
Mon 28 Sep / 3pm

Leo Butler (*Lucky Dog, Boy, Living*)
Born and raised in Sheffield, Leo is an award-winning playwright whose plays have premiered at venues including the Royal Court, RSC, Birmingham Rep, Almeida and Sheffield Theatres.

David Eldridge (*Beginning; Middle; End, In Basildon*) is a prominent playwright whose productions have premiered across the UK at venues including The National, The Royal Court, The Royal Exchange and The Donmar.



Mike
Bartlett



Stephanie
Street

Mike Bartlett and Stephanie Street

Playhouse / Pay what you feel £3, £5, £7
Tue 29 Sep / 3pm

Mike Bartlett (*Doctor Foster, King Charles III*) is currently developing a number of original projects for theatre and TV. His adaptation of Colin Welland's screenplay of *Chariots of Fire* was performed at the Crucible in 2024.

Stephanie Street (*Force Majeure, Sisters*) co-founded Act for Change, campaigning for representative diversity in the industry and is diversity champion on the board of Chichester Festival Theatre. In 2027, her adaptation of *The Year of the Runaways* will premiere in the Crucible.



Elin
Schofield



Aisha
Khan

Elin Schofield and Aisha Khan

Playhouse / Pay what you feel £3, £5, £7
Sat 3 Oct / 3pm

Elin Schofield has directed numerous shows at Sheffield Theatres, including *A Christmas Carol*, *A Doll's House* and *Scissors*, for which she was awarded the UK Theatre Award for Best Director.

Aisha Khan (*No Man's Land, The Market*) is a writer and director for theatre and radio with a recent collaboration with Elin, adapting *A Christmas Carol* for the Crucible in 2025.



David Greig



John Rwothomack

David Greig and John Rwothomack

Playhouse / Pay what you feel £3, £5, £7
Mon 5 Oct / 5pm

David Greig (*Two Sisters, Adventures with Painted People*) has most recently adapted *One Day* into a musical performed in 2026 at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, where he was Artistic Director between 2016 and 2025.

As Artistic Director of Roots Mbili Theatre, **John Rwothomack** (*Far Gone, Lines*) brings African stories, culture, and history to the forefront of theatre. In 2027, *Never Look Back* will premiere in the Crucible in a co-production with Sheffield Theatres.



David Byrne

Playhouse / Pay what you feel £3, £5, £7
Thu 8 Oct / 3pm

Artistic Director and CEO of the Royal Court Theatre London. Known for his innovative approach to working with artists, David has won multiple awards for his programmes and radical approaches to developing new work.

Scratch Nights

What to expect

Our informal Scratch Nights invite artists to take risks, test new material, and share it with an audience for the very first time. Expect bold beginnings, extracts, experiments, sparks of something bigger. Some pieces will grow and develop. Some pieces will change altogether. Each Scratch Night includes four pieces of up to 30 minutes each.

Scratch Night One

Four performances, 30mins each

**Playhouse / Tickets £8
Tue 29 Sep / 7pm**

Scratch Night Two

Four performances, 30mins each

**Playhouse / Tickets £8
Mon 5 Oct / 7pm**

Networking

There will be informal networking events during the festival for artists and theatre makers to meet, connect and chat.

See website for details.

Setting the Stage

How to book

Box Office

0114 249 6000

Crucible Theatre
55 Norfolk Street
Sheffield
S1 1DA

sheffieldtheatres.co.uk

By email

supervisors@sheffieldtheatres.co.uk

On performance days the Box Office counter will remain open in the Crucible, Lyceum and Montgomery until the event has begun.



Food and Drink

We have a number of bars and refreshment points in the Crucible, Lyceum, Playhouse and Montgomery Theatres offering a great choice of drinks, sweets and locally produced ice cream.

Crucible Kitchen is our cosy and modern café bar located in the lower foyer of the Crucible, open Monday–Saturday, 10am until the evening show begins.

You can enjoy a selection of homemade soups, salads, and sandwiches, alongside tasty treats and freshly-made coffee.

Getting here

We are located in Sheffield's city centre – the Crucible, Lyceum and Playhouse (which is located in the Crucible building) are on Tudor Square at the corner of Norfolk Street and Arundel Gate. The Montgomery is located a short distance away on Surrey Street across from the Town Hall.

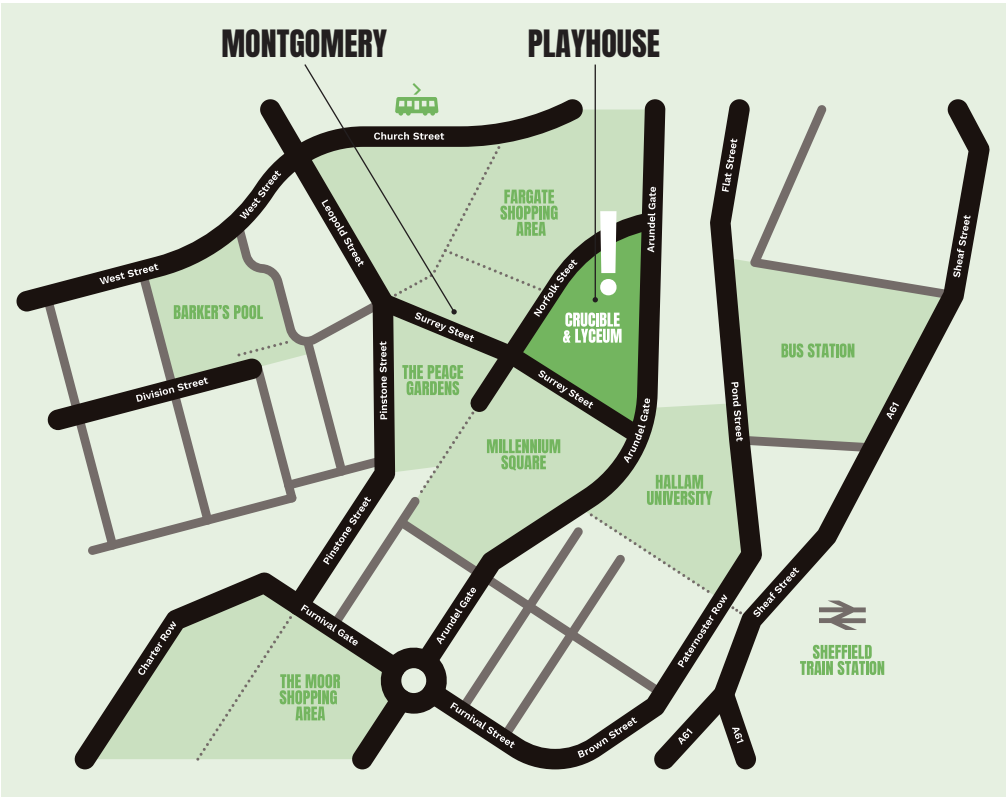
By Car

Audiences are entitled to discount parking at Q Park Charles Street, located on Arundel Gate. Simply visit the Box Office or speak to a member of the Front of House Team to claim your 1 hour free parking voucher. If you are using a Sat Nav please use the postcode S1 2NJ.

By Public Transport

The nearest bus stops are on Arundel Gate (50m) and High Street (300m). We are also close by to Sheffield Interchange.

There are two Supertram stops in close proximity to the Theatres; Castle Square and Cathedral (400m), and we're a 10–15 minute walk from the train station and the transport interchange nearby.



Festival at a glance

Playhouse			Montgomery		Montgomery Studio	
Date	Performance/Event	Time	Performance/Event	Time	Performance/Event	Time
September						
Mon 28	Jack and Gill	1pm			Character Through Movement	11am
	Leo Butler and David Eldridge	3pm				
	Good Day Sunshine	7.30pm	For Worms	7pm		
Tue 29	Tuesdays at Tesco's	1pm			The Street is the Theatre!	11am
	Mike Bartlett and Stephanie Street	3pm				
	Scratch Night One	7pm	A Simply Beastly Murder	7.30pm		
Wed 30			Listening to Landscapes	11am		
	Soap Box Spotlight	7pm	Brown Nose	6pm	Tofu	2pm
October						
Thu 1	Batty!	7pm	Big Strong Man	7.30pm	A Sound is Still a Sound	1pm
Fri 2	Cold Sweat	7pm	KalakutHer	2pm	Text, Rules, Improvisation and Performance	11am
Sat 3	Elin Schofield and Aisha Khan	3pm	Seven Magic Birds	2pm		
	Cold Sweat	7pm	Seven Magic Birds	7pm		
Mon 5	Cat	1pm			BBC Writers	11.30am
	David Grieg and John Rwothomack	5pm				
	Scratch Night Two	7pm	Cottagecore Run Away With	7pm		
Tue 6	Woodhill	7pm	School Uniforms Not That Asian	6.30pm	Verbatim Bootcamp	11am
Wed 7	Woodhill	2pm			Ìlòyá... the Journey Begins	2pm
	Woodhill	7pm	The Hunger	7.30pm	Ìlòyá... the Journey Begins	6pm
Thu 8	Blame it on the Pop	1pm			Art and Activism	11am
	David Byrne	3pm				
	Echo Echo Beach Tuesdays at Tesco's	7pm	The Hunger	7.30pm		
Fri 9					The Thin Places	1pm
	How Could I Forget?	7pm			The Thin Places	4.30pm
Sat 10	How Could I Forget?	2pm	Ijakadi (The Wrestle)	12pm		
	How Could I Forget?	7pm				

- Performance
- Work in Progress
- Rehearsed Reading
- Scratch Night
- Workshop
- In Conversation

Box Office

0114 249 6000 | sheffieldtheatres.co.uk
Sheffield Theatres, 55 Norfolk St, Sheffield, S1 1DA



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