

PRESS RELEASE – 28 OCTOBER 2026

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ROYAL COURT THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2027 SEASON



The **Royal Court Theatre** today announces the first part of its 2027 season: one Broadway transfer and six world premieres, including a look ahead to 2028.

Royal Court Artistic Director David Byrne said:

"Three years since I became Artistic Director of the Royal Court, and coming out of our 70th anniversary year, this is the most thrilling season we could imagine bringing together. I almost can't believe it's ours - but of course it is, because this extraordinary set of knotty, original, adventurous new plays couldn't be truly at home anywhere else."

JERWOOD THEATRE DOWNSTAIRS:

- Transferring from Broadway, the European premiere of 2025 Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winner **PURPOSE** by **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins** (*An Octoroon*), a family drama centred on a Black American political dynasty, welcoming the **Steppenwolf Theatre Company** to London, directed by **Phylicia Rashad** (16 January - 27 February 2027).
- Internationally-renowned theatre company **Complicité** return to the Court with the world premiere of **THE APOLOGY**, written by and starring Tony-winner **V, formerly**

known as **Eve Ensler** (*The Vagina Monologues*) as herself alongside Emmy Award-winner **Tobias Menzies** (*The Crown*) in an autobiographical reckoning with sexual violence, justice and atonement, directed by Complicité Artistic Director **Simon McBurney** (*The Encounter*), with set design by **Es Devlin** (*The Lehman Trilogy*), presented in association with Brian & Dayna Lee and Tectonic Theater Project (19 March - 24 April 2027).

- The world premiere of **THE BRIAR PATCH**, a domestic thriller about losing trust in the people closest to you by **Ciara Elizabeth Smyth** (*Lie Low*), starring Olivier Award winner **Juliet Stevenson** (*The Doctor*) and directed by Royal Court Artistic Director **David Byrne**, presented in association with Prime Cut and Brian & Dayna Lee (14 May - 26 June 2027).
- Oscar winner **Jessie Buckley** (*Hamnet*, *Cabaret*) makes her Royal Court debut in the world premiere of **AFTERBIRTH**, a story about the disorienting reality of life after birth by Royal Court Associate Playwright **Nina Segal** (*Cow|Deer*), directed by **Maria Aberg** (*[BLANK]*), designed by **Rosanna Vize** (*The Other Place*), co-produced with **English Touring Theatre** in association with Brian & Dayna Lee (15 January - 26 February 2028).
- The **YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS AWARD FESTIVAL 2027** returns to showcase the best plays by 13-18 year-olds from across the UK, marking the Award's third year and following the previous announcement of competition dates and expanded national workshop partners (8 - 10 July 2027).

JERWOOD THEATRE UPSTAIRS

- **WE'RE GONNA KILL BILLY**, a comedic eco-thriller and the professional debut of playwright **Alex Medland**, winner of the **Concord Theatricals Unpublished Playwright Award**, directed by Royal Court Associate Director and Olivier Award nominee **Aneesha Srinivasan** (*Godot's To-Do List*) and supported as a case study partnership with **ReStage** and **NT Green Store** towards reducing the environmental impact of production (18 February - 27 March 2027).
- **WAR FACE** reunites Stage Debut Award-winner **Georgie Dettmer** and director **Jess Edwards** (*Are You Watching?*) for a new play created with serving and retired soldiers in collaboration with the **Chelsea Pensioners** and co-produced with **Orange Juice Productions**, while Dettmer is also named 2027 **Jerwood New Playwright**, supported by Jerwood Foundation in its 50th anniversary year (22 April - 1 May 2027).
- **WORKING MEN**, a new play by **Benjamin Kuffuor** about a routine site visit that becomes a defining day for a declining council estate, receiving its world premiere following acclaim as winner of the **George Devine Award** (4 June - 10 July 2027).
- The season will also include the fourth edition of the Royal Court's week-long **OPEN SUBMISSIONS FESTIVAL** in partnership with **Character 7**, platforming the best work by new playwrights discovered from the 3,000+ new plays read every year as

part of the theatre's open script submissions commitment – including *The Briar Patch*, *We're Gonna Kill Billy* and *Working Men*, which all featured in previous festivals prior to their full productions announced today.

Executive Director Will Young said:

*"Beyond these new shows, we're proud that the Royal Court's role as a national institution is reflected this year in more opportunities than ever to engage audiences across the UK and around the world. Between now and next summer, Rhys Warrington's **Monument** plays in Cardiff and Emteaz Hussain's **Expendable** in Nottingham; Manfred Karge's **Man To Man** tours to Edinburgh, Berlin and New York; Kimberly Belflower's **John Proctor Is The Villain** has three months in the West End – and the live capture of Olivier and Tony Award-winner **Giant** by Mark Rosenblatt will hit 900 cinemas in its global release. Wherever you're watching, we can't wait to welcome you."*

The Royal Court unveils its 2027 season with a music video created in collaboration with British-Chilean artist Naomi in Blue. Starring Naomi alongside performers from across the season including Jessie Buckley, Juliet Stevenson and Tobias Menzies, the video features her new single *Who Knows* and reveals all seven upcoming shows. The collaboration marks a new approach to the theatre's season launch, bringing together the Royal Court's 2027 programme and Naomi's newly released debut album, *Is This Body Mine?*.

Tickets for all newly announced productions will go on sale to supporters from **12pm on Wednesday 28 October 2026**, to Friends and Good Friends at **12pm on Friday 30 October 2026**, and to the general public at **12pm on Wednesday 4 November 2026**.

SHOW BY SHOW

Royal Court Theatre, David Stone, Debra Martin Chase, Marc Platt and Robyn Coles present

The Steppenwolf Theatre Company Production of

Purpose

By Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

Directed by Phylicia Rashad

Saturday 16 January - Saturday 27 February 2027

Jerwood Theatre Downstairs

Press Night Monday 25 January 2027

From civil rights leaders to pastors and congressmen, the Jasper dynasty is a pillar of Black American Politics – with a reputation to protect. When a snowstorm traps three generations under one roof, family secrets claw their way to the surface.

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's 2025 Tony Award-winning Best Play and Pulitzer Prize-winning drama is a portrait of a family struggling to live up to its own legacy.

Presented by the internationally renowned **Steppenwolf Theatre Company** (*Downstate*, *August: Osage County*) in a European Premiere straight from Broadway, directed by **Phylicia Rashad** (*Grey's Anatomy*).

Kalyne Coleman (*Interview with the Vampire*) will join the original Broadway company **Alana Arenas** (*David Makes Man*), **Glenn Davis** (*Downstate*), **Jon Michael Hill** (*Pass Over*), **Harry Lennix** (*Justice League*), and **LaTanya Richardson Jackson** (*To Kill a Mockingbird*).

The full creative team will also transfer with the production: Set Design by **Todd Rosenthal**, Costume Design by **Dede Ayite**, Lighting Design by **Amith Chandrashaker**, and Sound Design by **Rob Milburn & Michael Bodeen**. Hair & Wig Design by **Nikiya Mathis**, Dramaturgy by **Jonathan L. Green**. The Production Stage Manager is **Tiffany N. Robinson**, casting for this production is by **JC Clementz, CSA** and **Calleri Jensen Davis**.

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Writer, said: *"I imagine for most writers a play at the Royal Court is a bit of a dream and I am no exception. I'm thrilled to bring the Jasper family to this powerhouse of new writing and hopeful for the conversations they might spark among audiences."*

'Hilarious and explosive... a densely packed powder keg of a play' - Washington Post

'A merciless dissection of hypocrisy – you have trouble catching your breath from laughing so hard' - New York Times

'A thrilling battle royale... the superb Steppenwolf ensemble gives bravura performances' - The New Yorker

Originally Produced on Broadway by David Stone, Debra Martin Chase, Marc Platt, LaChanze, Rashad V. Chambers, Aaron Glick, Universal Theatrical Group, Eastern Standard Time, Trate Productions, Nancy Nagel Gibbs, James L. Nederlander, John Gore, ATG Entertainment, The Shubert Organization, and Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

Royal Court Theatre presents

We're Gonna Kill Billy

By Alex Medland

Directed by Aneesha Srinivasan

Set and Costume Design by Shankho Chaudhuri

Thursday 18 February - Saturday 27 March 2027

Jerwood Theatre Upstairs

Press Night Wednesday 24 February 2027

'Not that we're actually gonna kill him though'

Four teenage girls want to stop a billionaire building a marina that will destroy local wildlife. Step one: kidnap his grandson. Step two: revolution.

Part comedy, part eco-thriller, *We're Gonna Kill Billy* is **Alex Medland's** professional debut and winner of the Concord Theatricals Unpublished Playwright Award. Directed by Royal Court Associate Director and Olivier Award nominee **Aneesha Srinivasan** (*Godot's To-Do List*), the show is supported as a case study partnership with **ReStage** and **NT Green Store** towards reducing the environmental impact of production.

Alex Medland, Writer, said: *"I am so honoured that this story about four gutsy rangatahi from Aotearoa has found a home on the other side of the world. From working with the Royal Court team, to hearing the play read at The Open Submissions Festival, and to now a fully staged season, this has been so far beyond anything I could have ever imagined happening when I submitted We're Gonna Kill Billy to the open submissions portal. Ngā mihi maioha to the Royal Court. I can't wait to see the play come to life and I hope audiences leave with a feeling of righteous, hopeful, teenage rage."*

Aneesha Srinivasan, Director, said: *"We're Gonna Kill Billy is a razor-sharp caper that holds, at its heart, important questions about protest and resistance in climate justice. Alex's play is all my very favourite things: audacious, unapologetic and mischievous, and with ReStage, we have the opportunity to investigate how to hold the play's political ideas of sustainability and ecological responsibility within the process of making it. I am delighted to be directing."*

Sherry Dobbin, Executive Director, ReStage said: *"ReStage helps to empower design and production to rethink a circular approach as a benefit. We're Gonna Kill Billy represents more than just one show - it demonstrates how to use it as a creative challenge, an adjustment in production process, and access to a supportive UK-network to call upon."*

Supported by the Concord Theatricals Unpublished Playwrights Award. This play was originally featured in the Open Submissions Festival, in partnership with Character 7.

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Royal Court Theatre and Complicité in association with Brian & Dayna Lee and Tectonic Theater Project present

The Apology

By V (formerly Eve Ensler)

Directed by Simon McBurney

Set Design by Es Devlin

Friday 19 March - Saturday 24 April 2027

Jerwood Theatre Downstairs

Press Night Tuesday 30 March 2027

For all the women who are still waiting for an apology.

The Apology is an act of theatrical imagination: a ritual in which V conjures her dead father to confront the abuse he inflicted on her as a child.

Written by **V** (formerly known as Eve Ensler, Tony and Obie Award-winning writer of *The Vagina Monologues*), *The Apology* stars Emmy Award-winner **Tobias Menzies** (*The Crown*) alongside V herself and a choral ensemble.

Complicité's artistic director **Simon McBurney** (*The Encounter*, *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, *Mnemonic*) directs this world premiere, bringing her extraordinary work to the stage.

This marks Complicité's return to the Royal Court following the award-winning production of *The Chairs*, translated by Martin Crimp, and 2017's stage adaptation of Hollywood studio executive Robert Evans's memoir *The Kid Stays in the Picture*.

V, Writer, said: *"It's a dream come true to have The Apology premiere at The Royal Court. It is a place I have long admired for birthing boundary-pushing luminous new work and supporting some of the most original, compelling theater artists in the world. It has been an amazing process working with the visionary Simon McBurney and the brilliant Tobias Menzies, transforming what was once a letter into a theatrical event. I sense we are onto something subversive, transformative, and ultimately liberating."*

Simon McBurney, Director, said: *"In The Apology, V does something extra-ordinary. She summons her dead father to speak the words he never spoke in life, forcing him to confront the truth of what he did. It is an astonishing act of courage and imagination. But it asks something of us, too. Can imagining what never happened change our relationship to what did? And if we can reimagine the past, might we transform the present, and make a different future possible?"*

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Royal Court Theatre in association with Prime Cut and Brian & Dayna Lee presents

The Briar Patch

By Ciara Elizabeth Smyth

Directed by David Byrne

Friday 14 May - Saturday 26 June 2027

Jerwood Theatre Downstairs

Press Night Monday 24 May 2027

'I was starting to feel like my head was full of holes.'

Dara is learning to live with the blank spaces – conversations she can't remember, the occasional hallucination.

When scandal rocks her community and a family friend is arrested, Dara starts asking questions. The answers risk pulling her life apart.

Ciara Elizabeth Smyth's *The Briar Patch* is a domestic thriller about losing trust in the people closest to you.

Olivier Award-winner **Juliet Stevenson** (*The Doctor*, *Truly Madly Deeply*) stars in this world premiere, directed by Royal Court Artistic Director and Olivier Award nominee **David Byrne**.

Ciara Elizabeth Smyth, Writer, said: *"Having The Briar Patch premiere at the Royal Court is beyond my wildest dreams. To have gone from Open Submissions to a full production feels nothing short of a miracle. I'm endlessly grateful to everyone at the Royal Court for their extraordinary warmth and generosity in all our interactions. I'm especially grateful to David Byrne and Gillian Greer for championing this play and me. Thank you to everyone who has read, supported and helped shape the play along the way. And finally a massive thank you to Prime Cut Productions, who gave me my first professional commission for The Briar*

Patch. The catalyst for this play was compartmentalisation within a marriage, and although every word has changed more than once, that has remained a constant. At its core I hope The Briar Patch asks whether we can ever possess the full truth without honesty."

This production has been supported by a lead gift from Charles Holloway OBE.

Developed through the Genesis Next Generation Programme at the Royal Court.

This play was originally featured in the Open Submissions Festival, in partnership with Character 7.

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Royal Court Theatre and Orange Juice Productions present

War Face

By Georgie Dettmer, created with the company

Directed by Jess Edwards

Thursday 22 April - Saturday 1 May 2027

Jerwood Theatre Upstairs

At the Royal Hospital Chelsea, a community of British Army veterans reflect on lives shaped by service.

Weaving together real experiences across generations, *War Face* is a brand-new play by 2027 Jerwood New Playwright **Georgie Dettmer**, created with serving and retired soldiers. Directed by **Jess Edwards**, reuniting with Georgie Dettmer following their award-winning Royal Court production of *Are You Watching?*

Performed by a company made up of army veterans and actors, *War Face* is a funny, frank and deeply moving look beyond the uniform we think we know.

Georgie Dettmer, Writer, said: *"It's a complete joy to be back at the Royal Court; this time, collaborating alongside the community of veterans at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Writing a play on the British Army and those within it is a dangerously mammoth task which I have found to be exciting, painful, playful, and knotty. I hope audiences will engage in new and complicated ways when watching War Face - bring your preconceptions and join us!"*

Jess Edwards, Director, said: *"I am thrilled and delighted to be back working with the Royal Court and Georgie Dettmer - and collaborating with the brilliant team at Orange Juice for the first time. I don't have any personal experience of the military. The Chelsea Pensioners are such an extraordinary group of people and it feels like an important time to be making work that brokers conversations about Britain and the army between people who might disagree. I can't wait to share it with audiences and see how they respond."*

Imogen Brodie, Orange Juice Productions said: *"Orange Juice Productions is thrilled that our inaugural production is a collaboration with the brilliant, visionary Royal Court. Creating WAR FACE with the uniquely talented Georgie Dettmer, the wonderfully insightful Jess Edwards and the open-hearted, irreverent veterans of the Royal Hospital Chelsea is a real*

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privilege. We can't wait for audiences to share the surprises and complexities of bringing this show to life."

Commissioned by the Genesis Foundation through the Genesis Next Generation Programme at the Royal Court.

Georgie is this year's recipient of the Jerwood New Playwright accolade. The Royal Court Theatre's Jerwood New Playwright Programme is supported by Jerwood Foundation.

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Royal Court Theatre presents

Working Men

By Benjamin Kuffuor

Friday 4 June - Saturday 10 July 2027

Jerwood Theatre Upstairs

Press Night Thursday 10 June 2027

'They want for working men to betray working men so they can say it wasn't them.'

A quantity surveyor, a building contractor and a project manager walk onto a council estate. What starts as another routine site visit could become the day that defines the rest of their lives.

The world premiere of **Benjamin Kuffuor's** George Devine Award-winning *Working Men*.

Benjamin Kuffuor, Writer, said: *"Working Men is a play about institutions and money. It speaks as much to the cost-of-living crisis as it does to the housing crisis. The play has had a long journey, but in many ways it feels like it might be arriving exactly when it's supposed to. I did the Young Writers' Programme back in 2008. It was the first theatre I connected with in a meaningful way, where I began buying plays and developing my own tastes. To be bringing my work here nearly twenty years later, to a theatre with such a rich history of being in conversation with the times, feels like the right place to capture and present the world of this play."*

This play was originally featured in the Royal Court's Open Submissions Festival.

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Royal Court Theatre and English Touring Theatre in association with Brian & Dayna Lee present

Afterbirth

By Nina Segal

Directed by Maria Aberg

Set and Costume by Rosanna Vize

Saturday 15 January - Saturday 26 February 2028

Jerwood Theatre Downstairs

Press Night Monday 24 January 2028

'People think the birth's the end of it. The hard part. But there's all the rest.'

The baby is fine. The birth was fine. Annie is fine. She's fine. She's really, really, really fine.

Nina Segal's *Afterbirth* is a funny, furious and unflinching story about the disorienting reality of life after birth.

Oscar-winner **Jessie Buckley** (*Hamnet*) stars in this world premiere, directed by **Maria Aberg** (*[BLANK]*), with set and costume design by **Rosanna Vize** (*The Other Place*).

Royal Court Associate Playwright Nina Segal, Writer, said: *"To do this play - a weird, funny, brutal play about the weird, funny, brutal reality of birth and parenthood - in the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs is a genuine dream. To do it with Jessie, Maria and Rosanna is more than I could have imagined. I'm so grateful to the Court and ETT for all their support - and so excited to bring Afterbirth into the world."*

Maria Aberg, Director, said: *"It's the kind of project every director dreams about - a stunning, muscular, intelligent play; a lead actress of luminous, generation-defining talent; and an iconic venue with exactly the right balance of the intimate and the epic. Thrilled doesn't even begin to describe it."*

An English Touring Theatre commission supported by the Royal Court. Production developed through the Genesis Next Generation Programme at the Royal Court.

ENDS.

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Biographies for writers and creatives in the season can be found [here](#).

Boilerplate information for companies listed in the press release can be found [here](#).

Full listings information can be found [here](#).

If you would like the press release in a different format for access reasons please let us know.

Press Performances:

Monday 25 January 2027	<i>Purpose</i> by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins	Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs
Wednesday 24 February 2027	<i>We're Gonna Kill Billy</i> by Alex Medland	Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs
Tuesday 30 March 2027	<i>The Apology</i> by V (formerly Eve Ensler)	Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs
Monday 24 May 2027	<i>The Briar Patch</i> by Ciara Elizabeth Smyth	Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs

Thursday 10 June 2027	<i>Working Men</i> by Benjamin Kuffuor	Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs
Monday 24 January 2028	<i>Afterbirth</i> by Nina Segal	Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs

Code of Conduct

The Royal Court has devised a Code of Conduct intended for staff, freelancers, audiences, participants, supporters, independent companies and wider stakeholders. It sets out the fundamental principles for how we work together: guidelines and expectations which reflect our legal duties, as well as our values and ethics – including anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice. [Please read more here.](#)