



Press Release

Thursday 06 January 2022

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Evolution Festival returns to the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre in March 2022 showcasing young talent, new writing and reinvented classics

Evolution Festival is back at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre in March 2022 for a sixth year, showcasing emerging talent, exciting new writing and re-imagined classics across the Lyric stages and cinema. The festival runs from Tuesday 01 to Friday 04 March, headlined by The Bill Cashmore Award-winning new play *Kick* and including Evolution: Labs featuring four classic plays – *Electra*, *Yerma*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Three Sisters* - re-imagined and co-created by young directors and designers; Evolution: Scratches with four nights of scratch performances created by members of the Lyric's inaugural Springboard training programme; and Evolution: Films, in collaboration with the Lyric and the Roundhouse, bringing five short premiere screenings of new takes on classic dramas.

Evolution Festival gives a platform to young theatre makers to produce new work for stage and screen. Artists from previous years have gone on to create shows at the Lyric, the Vaults, the Bunker Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre, and the Young Vic and include directors Stef O'Driscoll, Gavin Joseph, TD. Moyo and Diane Page, and actor and author Nathan Bryon to name a few.

Rachel O'Riordan, Artistic Director at Lyric Hammersmith Theatre said: *"I am delighted Evolution Festival is returning to the Lyric for a sixth year and that we can bring together these extraordinary young artists to reimagine plays in a new way, reframing them and taking ownership of classic texts. From directors, designers, writers to filmmakers and performers, each artist will be given the opportunity to develop vital skills and create new work for audiences in a professional, supportive atmosphere. I am also delighted that we are working with the Roundhouse to expand Evolution Festival onto screen. This is a really exciting new festival partnership for us."*

Rob Lehmann, Director of Young Lyric at Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, said: *"We couldn't be happier to support and showcase innovative work being produced in West London by theatre's future makers. We're thrilled to stage the excellent Bill Cashmore Award winning play and our festival headliner Kick which demonstrates how vital this award is to take new ideas from rehearsal to stage. Audiences can also see reimagined classics in Evolution: Labs in partnership with Wimbledon College of Arts led by exciting collaborations between directors and designers."*

EVOLUTION FESTIVAL 2022

KICK

Presented by the Bill Cashmore Award and The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
01 March – 04 March, 8pm | Lyric Studio

The festival will be headlined by the Bill Cashmore Award-winning play *Kick*, exploring motherhood, abortion and loss, bringing together an all-female creative team with writer **Martha Watson Allpress**, director **Yasmin Hafesji** and designer **Xinping Wang**. Their production will headline each evening of the festival in the Lyric Studio.

When two motherless sisters find out they are pregnant at the same time, their seemingly identical situations lead to vastly different outcomes. As they grapple with their own bodies, the familiar patterns of their relationship and their grief, neither can breathe without it feeling like a judgement on the other.

The Bill Cashmore Award enables emerging artists to transform a fledgling idea from the page to the professional stage, run in conjunction with the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre. It was founded by Sasha Bates in 2018 in memory of her husband, actor, playwright, director and entrepreneur Bill Cashmore.

Sasha Bates said: *“The Bill Cashmore Award provides creative young artists with an opportunity to discover their voices and learn to express them through theatre. The Award aims to promote experimental new writing which reflects the diversity of today’s world, and to thereby create outstanding work while providing a platform to those who deserve to be heard but are all too often overlooked.”*

Martha Watson Allpress is a writer from Lincolnshire, based in London. Her debut play; *Patricia Gets Ready (for a date with the man that used to hit her)*; received 5-star reviews from The Guardian and The Stage. In her writing, Martha’s aim is to explore the nuances of shame and anger with a female-centric lens.

Yasmin Hafesji is a director and dramaturg. She is Associate Director at the Gate Theatre and was a member of the Young Vic Introduction to Directing Programme 2017, led by Natalie Abrahami. As director, theatre includes: *Rhino(s)* (Lyric Hammersmith Theatre); *The Letters Project* (Gate Theatre Online, Co-Director); *George* (Gate Theatre Online); *Rashida* (Young Vic); *Two Heads and a Hand & The Jokers* (Gate Theatre); *A Little Iraqi* (Bunker Theatre); *Watch Me Dance!*, Young Writers Group Showcase (Bush Theatre). As dramaturg, theatre includes: *Omeros* (Staged Reading, Gate Theatre). As assistant director, theatre includes: *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (Almeida Theatre); *Women Beware Women* (Globe Theatre); *Fairview* (Young Vic); *Dear Elizabeth* (Gate Theatre); *The Mob Reformers* (Lyric Hammersmith Theatre).

Xinping Wang is a theatre designer and maker who graduated from Wimbledon College of Arts. She creates stage spaces with visual impact through lighting, shadow, and colours. She likes to break free from the constraints of reality, let her imagination run wild, and incorporate fantastic elements into her designs. Previous credits include Assistant Designer for *Kissing Rebellion* (Ovalhouse) and Designer for *The Little Prince* (Wimbledon College of Arts and the Mercure Hotel Mural).

EVOLUTION: LABS

Presented by Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Wimbledon College of Art
01 March – 04 March, 6pm | Rehearsal Room 1

Evolution Labs was set up in 2016 by Young Lyric and Wimbledon College of Arts as a much needed collaborative opportunity for early career directors and designers to meet and co-create new work. This year **Alessandra Davison**, **Samara Gannon**, **Mo Korede** and **Jessica Mensah** will each direct re-lensed classic plays, respectively: a reframing of Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, centralising the female characters and exploring how they are perceived through a male lens; a queer presentation of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*; a psychological reimagining of Sophocles' Greek tragedy *Electra*; and Federico García Lorca's *Yerma* relocated to a Ghanaian village. All plays are co-created with final year BA Theatre Design students from Wimbledon College of Arts.

Two shows will be staged each night of the festival before *Kick*. On 01 and 03 March, the productions will be *Electra* directed by **Mo Korede**, designed by **Leva Levina** and **Eilyn Cheung**, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* directed by **Samara Gannon**, designed by **Fiona Wagstaff** and **George Zhou**. Lighting Design for all four productions is by **Alex Forey**. On 02 and 04 March the productions will be *Yerma* directed by **Jessica Mensah**, designed by **Raffi Philcox** and **Peijia Luo**, and *Three Sisters* directed by **Alessandra Davison**, designed by **Sonya Smullen** and **Jiayi Zhu**. Lighting Design for all four productions is by **Alex Forey**.

Alessandra Davison is a director, photographer and dramaturg. She is a START Associate Director at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, a director in the Jamie Lloyd Emerge Company, a reader for Park Theatre and a committee member of Stage Sight. She is also the current Bayliss Assistant Director at the Old Vic, working with Lyndsey Turner on *A Number*.

Samara Gannon has worked as a freelance theatre director and assistant director since 2017 on productions including: *Forgetting*, *Heledd*, *Camp Be Yourself* and *Always Right There*. She recently started her own theatre company Pint of Plain Productions.

Mo Korede is a director, playwright, poet, actor, and the founder of Imagiphoria Studios, a theatre company based in psychological realism and perspective theatre. He is a Young Lyric Associate and joined the youth advisory group for the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre in 2020. He has previously performed as part of the Evolution Scratch company at the 2019 Festival.

Jessica Mensah has trained with Stonecrabs Theatre Young Directors Programme, RTYDS placement at tiata fahodzi and the Young Vic's Introduction to Directing programme. Her short film *I Stand Proud* was nominated for an FFTG Award and screened in the festival. Directing includes *House* (Southwark Playhouse), *The Life of Olu* (Theatre Peckham & Golden Goose Theatre), *Tales from the Frontline – part 4* (Talawa).

EVOLUTION: SCRATCHES

Devised by SPRINGBOARD

01 March and 02 March, 7pm | Lyric Film & TV Studio

Trainees from the Lyric's flagship industry-leading **SPRINGBOARD** programme will give their first ever performances at the theatre showcasing brand new 10-minute scratch performances

created entirely by them. One of these Scratch ideas will be awarded the Bill Cashmore Award and will go on to be developed into a full length play for Evolution Festival 2023.

SPRINGBOARD is a ground-breaking, free two-year training programme providing unrivalled theatre-based training and development opportunities to nurture the next generation of performers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and groups underrepresented in theatre. The first year of the programme launches in January 2022. <https://lyric.co.uk/young-lyric/springboard/>

EVOLUTION: FILMS

Presented by Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and the Roundhouse
03 March and 04 March, 7pm | Lyric Cinema

In a new collaboration between the **Lyric Hammersmith Theatre** and the **Roundhouse**, **Evolution: Films** will premiere five short films in the Lyric Cinema, directed by **Abigail Sewell** with cinematography by **Bani Mendy**.

The project brings together the Lyric's SPRINGBOARD trainees and young people from the Roundhouse's Behind The Lens programme who will create modern day workings of classic dramas. Duologues extracts will be chosen by the students from Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Sophocles' *Electra* and/or Lorca's *Yerma*.

Abigail Sewell is a director of film and theatre and a trainee drama therapist. She is the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Uproot, a socially driven arts production company with the mission of supporting Black artists. Abigail's work is motivated by championing untold narratives from systemically excluded voices. Her work has featured on BBC Two, BBC Four, London Short Film Festival, and at the Harold Pinter Theatre, Royal Court and Young Vic.

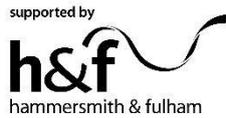
Bani Mendy is a London based Director of Photography, working worldwide, specialising in narrative and commercials. Work for television and drama most recently includes: Ch4 Big Age, BBC3 comedy *PRU*, RAMBERT *Note to Self*, *PTSD*, *Say Nothing*, *Drawn Out*. Documentary includes: *Reconnect*, *IronMind* and *The Amy Winehouse Foundation*. Commercial works includes: *What Makes a Champion*, *THINK!* and *NIO EP9 Super Car*.

The **Roundhouse** is a hub of inspiration where artists and emerging talent create extraordinary work and where young people can grow creatively as individuals. We believe in the power of creativity to change lives. By giving young people the chance to engage with the arts through our music, media and performance projects, we inspire them to reach further, dream bigger, and achieve more.

Tickets for *Kick* and *Evolution: Labs* are available from £5. Tickets for *Evolution: Scratches* and *Evolution: Films* are free but must be booked in advance. All tickets are available via www.lyric.co.uk

- ENDS -

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Notes to Editors

IMAGES available to download [here](#)

Listings

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL
Box office: 020 8741 6850
www.lyric.co.uk

Twitter: [@LyricHammer](https://twitter.com/LyricHammer)
Instagram: [/LyricHammersmith](https://www.instagram.com/LyricHammersmith)
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#EvolutionFest

EVOLUTION FESTIVAL 2022

Kick

Presented by the Bill Cashmore Award and The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
01 March – 04 March, 8pm | Lyric Studio
By Martha Watson Allpress
Directed by Yasmin Hafesji
Designed by Xinping Wang
Tickets: £10 / £5 for Young Lyric Members
Age guidance: 14+

EVOLUTION: LABS

Presented by Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Wimbledon College of Art
01 March – 04 March, 6pm | Rehearsal Room 1
Tickets: £5
Age guidance: 14+

***Electra* (01 and 03 March)**

By Sophocles
Directed by Mo Korede
Designed by Leva Levina and Eilyn Cheung
Lighting Design by Alex Forey

***The Importance of Being Earnest* (01 and 03 March)**

By Oscar Wilde,
Directed by Samara Gannon
Designed by Fiona Wagstaff and George Zhou
Lighting Design by Alex Forey

Yerma (02 and 04 March)

By Federico García Lorca

Directed by Jessica Mensah

Designed by Raffi Philcox and Peijia Luo

Lighting Design by Alex Forey

Three Sisters (02 and 04 March)

By Anton Chekhov

Directed by Alessandra Davison

Designed by Sonya Smullen and Jiayi Zhu

Lighting Design by Alex Forey

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Director of Photography Bani Mendy

Performed by Springboard

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