

The New Wolsey Theatre announces its first Associate Artists and Artist Relationship programme

Six East Anglian artists and companies – **Aspire Black Suffolk**, **Jamie Beddard**, **Martha Loader**, **Mae Munuo**, **The Paper Birds** and **Spinning Wheel** – are delighted to have been appointed to work with the New Wolsey Theatre's Chief Executive/Artistic Director **Douglas Rintoul** in Ipswich, as part of its inaugural Associate Artists programme celebrating and supporting creativity in the region.

The Associate Artists will be supported by the New Wolsey Theatre over the forthcoming 18 months with a bespoke programme designed to enable individual development or to act as a step change.

The Associate Artists come from a range of artistic backgrounds:

Aspire Black Suffolk (<https://www.aspireblacksuffolk.org.uk>) is an award-winning, Ipswich based not-for-profit community interest company dedicated to tackling the causes of inequality by creating meaningful and lasting creative and educational solutions.

Jamie Beddard (<https://jamiebeddard.wordpress.com>) is a Suffolk performer, director and writer who is Co-Artistic Director of Diverse City and Lead Artist with Extraordinary Bodies.

Martha Loader is an Ipswich based award-winning writer, actor and producer whose work has been performed across the UK.

Mae Munuo is an actor, deviser and writer who grew up attending the New Wolsey Theatre's Youth Theatre and Young Company, most recently returning as a professional actor earlier this year in *DNA*.

The Paper Birds (<https://www.thepaperbirds.com>) is an Essex based devising theatre company, with a social and political agenda, and recognised as UK leaders in devised verbatim theatre.

Spinning Wheel Theatre (<https://spinningwheeltheatre.com>) is a Suffolk based rural touring company, creating work with and for families in communities across East Anglia.

Douglas Rintoul, Chief Executive/Artistic Director of the New Wolsey Theatre, said: "Supporting the independent creative ecology in Ipswich, Suffolk and East Anglia is a priority. I'm inspired by the vision and determination of these individuals and companies and we are excited to bring them into the sphere of the Theatre, not only to support them to achieve their ambitions by putting the weight of the Theatre behind them, but also to be influenced by them. It's vital we unearth the major questions and stories that are pertinent to our communities, and this is only possible in collaboration with a range of voices. This associate scheme is part of a wider artist relationship programme supporting hundreds of local artists over the next three years through one-to-one support, scratch nights, take overs, employment opportunities and peer-to-peer skills development sessions. As the programme grows it will respond to the needs of our artistic community."

To find out more about the programme visit: <https://www.wolseytheatre.co.uk/artist-relationship-programme/>.

BIOGRAPHIES:

ASPIRE BLACK SUFFOLK

Aspire Black Suffolk is an award-winning, not-for-profit community interest company dedicated to tackling the causes of inequality by creating meaningful and lasting creative and educational solutions.

Their mission is to embrace diversity, equality and inclusion, and seek to challenge inequalities through positive action, focusing on young people.

Through grant-funded cultural education projects, they set out to engage with schools, cultural organisations and employers in fun, informative and creative ways.

Aspire Black Suffolk is led by Black female professionals with a shared passion and vision; to change lives, empower communities and raise awareness of the key issues surrounding race, equality and inclusion in Suffolk and beyond.

They are unique. Their genesis was the pioneering exhibition, Power of Stories, which was a milestone in the UK heritage sector and a catalyst for positive change. Their work extends the legacy of the exhibition, aiming to bring unity and greater tolerance to our society.



Aspire Black Suffolk.

L-R: co Directors, Tonia wilson, Elisha Soanes and Franstine Jones
and founding member, Elma Glasgow.

JAMIE BEDDARD

Jamie Beddard is Co-Artistic Director of Diverse City, and Lead Artist in Extraordinary Bodies.

Recent artistic projects include two Extraordinary Bodies theatre productions; Delicate, (writer and co-director) that toured nationally autumn 2022, and Waldo's Circus of Magic and Terror (co-writer with Hattie Naylor) touring nationally spring 2023. He was also involved in co-directing a large-scale outdoor film and community project on Dartmoor as part of Green Spaces Dark Skies in 2022, and co-directing Extraordinary Bodies' outdoor, inclusive circus performance, 'Splash!'.



Jamie Beddard. Photo: Paul Blakemore

As a performer Jamie has played the title role in the Elephant Man, the Leader in The Messiah at Bristol Old Vic, the role of Mathias in The National Theatre's production of The

Threepenny Opera, and performed in 'Weighting', a large-scale outdoor circus show created by Extraordinary Bodies.

He has previously been Agent for Change at The New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, Diversity Officer (Arts Council), Associate Director (Graeae Theatre Company) and Editor of 'Disability Arts in London' magazine (DAIL). Additional directing credits include 'The Last Freakshow' (Fittings), 'Can I Be Frank With You' ('Datco') and 'The Trouble With Richard' (Graeae). Numerous acting credits include Quills, I.D, All the King's Men, Wonderful You (Film/TV) and Ubu, Alice in Wonderland, Flesh Fly (Graeae), 15 Seconds (Traverse) and Waiting for Godot (Tottering Bipeds).

He is a Clore Fellow and a qualified RD1st coach.

MARTHA LOADER



Martha Loader.

Martha is a writer, actor and producer. Her work has been performed across the UK (incl. Mercury Theatre, Eastern Angles, INK Festival, Cambridge Junction, HighTide Festival and Tristan Bates Theatre). She was a Mercury Playwright 2021-22, and is an alumna of the Soho Theatre Writers' Lab and HighTide Writers Group programmes. She has been shortlisted for HighTide's First Commissions and BBC Interconnected, and longlisted for the Theatre503 Playwriting Award. She won the Judges Award at the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting 2022.

MAE MUNUO

Mae is delighted to partner with the New Wolsey Theatre, her home theatre, as an Associate Artist, with Douglas Rintoul. Doug and Mae recently worked together when directed her in DNA at the New Wolsey Theatre, as Leah, in 2023 and before in 2019, as Mark, at Queen's Theatre Hornchurch.

Mae started her journey with the New Wolsey Youth Theatre at 11 years old, moving to the (then) Young Company at 15, performing in shows and devising work with Gecko Theatre, Nigel and Louise and other exciting theatre companies. She then left at 18 to start her degree in Acting with Collaborative and Devised Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.



Mae Munro.

Mae became a Complicité associate after leaving drama

school early to collaborate and devise on the show 'I'LL TAKE YOU TO MRS COLE", *dir Catherine Alexander*, they performed at Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2019. She also collaborated, devised and performed in GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, *dir Jaz Woodcock Stewart*, performed at the Unicorn theatre in 2022. Mae also wrote and directed a mini-series called MEA AND GEE in 2020 and last year wrote and performed her debut play HOW TO BECOME A REVOLUTIONARY, *dir Abi Falase*, for Small Truth Theatre which is returning to Portobello Road in June 2023.

Other credits include: Leah in *DNA* at The New Wolsey Theatre, directed by Douglas Rintoul; Claire in *The Nutcracker* at Bristol Old Vic, directed by Lee Lyford; *The Canterville Ghost* (Justin Audibert) and *The Bolds* (Lee Lyford) all with the Unicorn Theatre; *Anansi the Spider* (Justin Audibert) at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, in collaboration with The Unicorn Theatre; *September Skies* (Yasmeen Arden) and *Centre Ground* (Sarah Davey-Hull) with Small Truth Theatre; Mark in *DNA* at Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, directed by Douglas Rintoul. Film: *Behind Your Back* (*Rastine Mir*).

THE PAPER BIRDS

Established in 2003, The Paper Birds is a socially and politically engaged theatre company with a vision to provoke change. They recently joined Arts Council England as one of their National Portfolio Organisation for the South East. They are recognised as UK leaders in devised verbatim theatre and have an impressive national and international reach thanks to its high-quality digital offer. They are artists, investigators, entrepreneurs, educators and pride themselves on taking complex, multi-faceted subjects and making them accessible. They have an artistic programme and a creative learning programme and nurture both equally.



The Paper Birds.

They make theatre with and for communities using themes that feel important in the here and now and believe that process is as significant and empowering as product. They are known for their use of verbatim and bringing multiple, diverse voices to the fore. They believe people have more in common than that which divides them, and they seek to unite and bring about dialogue in society through our work. Each year up to 20,000 young people around the world engage with their work as participants, audiences or co-authors.

They strive to encourage change one encounter at a time; they want people's lives to be improved by the arts and to encourage agency through the workshops, performances and conversations that they lead. www.thepaperbirds.com

SPINNING WHEEL THEATRE

Spinning Wheel Theatre is a rural touring company, creating work with and for families in



communities across East Anglia. The company incorporates multi-rolling performances, puppetry, song, and accessible devices such as makaton signing to create magical worlds which welcome young audiences to engage in shared cultural experiences. Alongside their touring work, they create bespoke community and schools projects, providing opportunities to explore creativity, acquire new skills, build confidence, improve well-being and meet new people. <https://spinningwheeltheatre.com>

Spinning Wheel Theatre.

ABOUT NEW WOLSEY THEATRE

The New Wolsey is Ipswich's award-winning theatre. With a 400-seat main auditorium, the Theatre is nationally recognised for the quality, diversity and reach of its productions, both as a producer, and in collaboration with a diverse range of visiting artists and companies from across the UK. It's renowned for staging world premieres and landmark revivals of musicals including *20th Century Boy*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Made in Dagenham*, *Never Lost At Home*, *Once*, *Our Blue Heaven*, *Sweet Charity*, *The Who's Tommy* (UK Theatre Award for Best Touring Production), *Kinky Boots* and for its annual Rock 'n' Roll pantomime. The theatre has also recently begun a new phase of talent development, with their recent production of Dennis Kelly's *DNA* providing the professional debut of four local young performers.
