

HOME announces exciting season for Theatre 1 Autumn 2023 – Spring 2024 including new musicals, iconic drama, comedy, poetry, and adaptations of literary classics



- Theatre 1's exciting new season will run from Sat 16 Sep 2023 – Sat 25 May 2024
- A rich and varied programme including new musicals, iconic drama, comedy, poetry, and adaptations of literary classics
- HOME will collaborate with five venues and producers from across the UK on brand new productions including, Jonathan Harvey's iconic, coming-out and coming-of-age story **Beautiful Thing**, the highly anticipated return of **The Merchant of Venice (1936)**, primetime TV screenwriter and playwright Anne-Marie Casey's adaptation of the literary classic **Little Women**, HOME's latest production **Work It Out** a new comedy-drama by award-winning writer-performer Eve Steele, a new adaptation of **Blue Beard** by Emma Rice (for Wise Children) and a brand new, musical **Frankie Goes to Bollywood** from award winning Rifco Theatre Company.
- Artists/companies include, celebrated poet **Lemn Sissay**, **Frances Moody Productions** (the Olivier Award-winning producers behind *Fleabag*), award winning comedians **Reuben Kaye** and **Reginald D. Hunter**, acclaimed writer **Jonathan Harvey**, TV's **Tracy-Ann Oberman**, primetime TV screenwriter and playwright **Anne-Marie Casey**, multi-award-winning director, writer and actor, **Emma Rice**, award-winning writer-performer **Eve Steele** and the award winning **Rifco Theatre Company**.

[Images can be downloaded here.](#) Additional images are available on request.

HOME has today announced its exciting season for Theatre 1, featuring dazzling new musicals, iconic drama, comedy, poetry, and adaptations of literary classics.

The programme features several exciting new HOME co-productions collaborating with venues and producers across the UK, including: Theatre Royal Stratford East and Leeds Playhouse on the 30th-anniversary revival of celebrated playwright Jonathan Harvey's (*Babies* Royal National Theatre, *Boom Bang-A-Bang* Bush Theatre, *Gimme Gimme Gimme* BBC) iconic, coming-out and coming-of-age story ***Beautiful Thing*** which comes to HOME this Autumn; the highly anticipated return of the "electrifying" co-production of ***The Merchant of Venice (1936)*** starring Tracy-Ann Oberman as Shylock which returns to HOME this November as part of its national tour; for this year's festive season – primetime TV screenwriter and playwright Anne-Marie Casey's adaptation of the literary classic ***Little Women*** (presented by arrangement with Lee Dean and produced by Pitlochry Festival Theatre in association with HOME) offers an exciting theatrical experience guaranteed to be a night (or afternoon) filled with laughter, tears, and a lifting of the spirits; a new intoxicating adaptation of ***Blue Beard*** by multi-award-winning director and writer Emma Rice, for Wise Children and co-produced by HOME, Wise Children, Birmingham Rep, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh and York Theatre Royal, that lands at HOME February 2024 as part of its national tour; in March 2024 we present HOME's latest production ***Work It Out*** by award-winning writer-performer Eve Steele, which follows a community based fitness class, presenting a compelling comedy drama of triumph, friendship, and conquering inner demons; and in May 2024 a brand new, dazzling musical inspired by real stories looking at the behind-the-scenes world of the Bollywood film industry ***Frankie Goes to Bollywood***, from the award winning Rifco Theatre Company and co-produced by HOME, Rifco Theatre Company and Watford Palace Theatre.

The ambitious season also features touring productions including, the utterly joyous new comedy musical ***Kathy & Stella Solve a Murder!*** from Frances Moody Productions (the Olivier Award-winning producers behind *Fleabag*, *Baby Reindeer* and *Feeling Afraid As If Something Terrible Is Going To Happen*) that comes to HOME this October following its highly anticipated return to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival this summer, Watershed Productions' acclaimed family puppetry show ***The Singing Mermaid*** – a "fun warm-hearted adventure" from Little Angel Theatre and Royal & Derngate, Northampton which is adapted from Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks' beloved children's book of the same name – opens this October half term.

We are also pleased to present several one/two-night touring shows as part of this upcoming season, including: BAFTA-nominated, award-winning writer and broadcaster ***Lemn Sissay*** who opens the season this September with a special preview event to launch his latest poetry collection ***Let the Light Pour In*** as part of Manchester Literature Festival, award winning Australian comedian, singer and writer ***Reuben Kaye*** latest cabaret show ***The Butch is Back*** for one night only (Fri 27 Oct), and acclaimed American comedian ***Reginald D. Hunter*** who comes to HOME for two nights only in November (12 & 13 Nov) with new comedy show ***The Man Who Could See Through Sh*t***.

Dave Moutrey, Director and CEO of HOME, said: *"I believe our audiences are in for a treat this season with several new ambitious and collaborative co-productions coming to our stages alongside acclaimed new touring work. This season revives and reinvents literary classics, presents uplifting new musicals and comedy, and amplifies important and often lesser heard, stories and voices. It is a programme full of warmth and joy and we look forward to sharing this work with you."*

Priority ticket booking will be available for HOME Friends from Wed 21 Jun, and HOME Members from Thu 22 Jun with tickets on general sale from Fri 23 Jun.

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Full details of the season can be found online here:

<https://homemcr.org/event/theatre-1-autumn-2023-spring-2024-season/>

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

For interviews and additional information, please contact Julia White, Press & Communications Manager at HOME, on 0161 212 3463 or by email julia.white@homemcr.org

Season event listings:

Lemn Sissay: Let The Light Pour In
Sat 16 Sep (only)

Presented by Manchester Literature Festival, in partnership with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

Tickets £15 / £17

'How do you do it?' said night
'How do you wake up and shine?'
'I keep it simple,' said light
'One day at a time.'

We are delighted to welcome back Lemn Sissay for a special preview event to launch his latest poetry collection, *Let the Light Pour In*, as part of Manchester Literature Festival. Lemn begins every day by writing a short poem. A way to exercise his mind, to connect, to explore, to be curious, to start each day with an act of hope. It's a practice he's had for ten years, and now, he's collected the best of them in one volume.

Lemn is a phenomenal performer. Exuberant, funny and occasionally heart-wrenching, he's a pleasure to watch. Come listen, be entertained and inspired. Step into the light.

Lemn is a BAFTA-nominated, award-winning writer and broadcaster. He is the author of several collections of poetry including *Gold from the Stone*, numerous plays for stage and radio and the Sunday Times bestselling memoir *My Name Is Why*. In 2019 he was awarded the PEN Pinter Prize. Presented by Manchester Literature Festival, in partnership with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

There will be a book signing after this event.

Kathy & Stella Solve a Murder!
Thu 5 - Sat 21 Oct 2023

Presented by Francesca Moody Productions, Kater Gordon, Wessex Grove and Fiery Angel

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Book and Lyrics by Jon Brittain
Music and Lyrics by Matthew Floyd Jones

Tickets from £10 – £32

BFFs Kathy and Stella host Hull's least successful true crime podcast. When their favourite author is killed, they are thrust into a thrilling whodunnit of their own! Can they crack the case (and become global podcast superstars) before the killer strikes again...?

The hilarious comedy musical from the Olivier Award-winners behind *Fleabag*, *Baby Reindeer* and *A Super Happy Story (About Feeling Super Sad)* comes to Manchester!

Kathy and Stella Solve a Murder is Written by Jon Brittain (Rotterdam) and Matthew Floyd Jones (Frisky & Mannish), directed by Jon Brittain and Fabian Aloise (Evita) and stars Bronte Barbé (Newsies), Rebekah Hinds (Oklahoma!), Jodie Jacobs (Rock of Ages), Imelda Warren Green (Doctor Who Time Fracture) and TJ Lloyd (Guys and Dolls).

Find out more about the super sleuths at kathyandstella.com

The Singing Mermaid

Tue 24 – Thu 26 Oct

Watershed Productions present a Little Angel Theatre and Royal & Derngate, Northampton, production

Tickets £14

Ages 3 – 8

Did you ever go to Silversands
On a sunny day?
Then perhaps you saw the mermaid
Who sang in the deep blue bay...

The singing mermaid is tempted away to join a travelling circus, with the promise of a life of excitement (and her own swimming pool!). The circus audiences love her singing but she soon finds she's been tricked by the dastardly circus master.

Will she ever escape? And who will help her along the way?

With three talented performers, beautiful puppets and music & songs by Barb Jungr, Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks' much-loved story comes to the stage.

Find out more by visiting the official website for the show www.singingmermaid.co.uk

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This play is based on the original book *The Singing Mermaid*
Written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Lydia Monks
Text © Julia Donaldson 2013
Illustrations © Lydia Monks 2013
Published by Macmillan Children's Books

Reuben Kaye: The Butch Is Back
Fri 27 Oct (only)

Presented by Chambers Managment

Tickets £26

Fast, on the edge and brutally funny.

Best Cabaret Show Off West End Awards 2023
Best Cabaret ARTISTE Green Room Awards 2022
Best Production Green Room Awards 2022
Best Musical Direction Green Room Awards 2022

Australia's favourite comedian Reuben Kaye is back to tear the world apart and put it back together. Backed by a full band, this show is guaranteed to have you on your feet screaming or bent over in hysterics. Kaye is utterly unforgettable and not to be missed!

Beautiful Thing

Tue 31 Oct – Sat 11 Nov 2023

By Jonathan Harvey.

Directed by Anthony Simpson-Pike.

Presented by HOME, Manchester, Theatre Royal Stratford East and Leeds Playhouse.

Tickets £10 - £32

Teenage boys Ste and Jamie are neighbours on a South London estate. Jamie is more knowledgeable about *The Sound of Music* than football, while classmate Ste never misses a sports day. Both are being bullied, Jamie at school and Ste at home by his violent father and brother. One night, when things get too much, Ste seeks refuge in Jamie's flat and, sharing a bed, the boys strike up a new relationship. Together they come to terms with their sexuality and explore their feelings alongside their Mama Cass loving, rebellious friend Leah and with the much-needed emotional support of Jamie's lioness mother, Sandra.

This 30th-anniversary revival of Jonathan Harvey's iconic, coming-out and coming-of-age story set in the nineties, is about community, friendship, rites of passage and what it is to be 16 and in love.

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Beautiful Thing is a touching, urban love story, full of warmth and humour

Reginald D. Hunter: The Man Who Could See Through Sh*t
Sun 12 Nov – Mon 13 Nov

Tickets £24

In these supercharged socio-political times the challenge is more and more becoming separating what's true and what's real.

Lucille Hunter proudly proclaimed "It's easy to see through sh*t, the hard part is pretending you haven't." Join Reginald D. Hunter for an hour of exploring this phenomena in this progressive work in a pre next-variant world.

As seen on Live at the Apollo, HIGNFY, and 8 out of 10 Cats Does Countdown.

The Merchant of Venice (1936)
Tue 28 Nov - Sat 2 Dec 2023

Presented by Watford Palace Theatre in association with HOME. Supported by Trafalgar Theatre Productions, Eilene Davidson Productions and developed with support from the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Tickets from £10 - £32

Following a sell-out run in March 2023 *The Merchant of Venice (1936)* returns to Manchester in November 2023, with Tracy-Ann Oberman as Shylock.

Ambition, power and political unrest explode onto the stage in *The Merchant of Venice 1936*, direct from the RSC. Starring **Tracy-Ann Oberman** (EastEnders, Doctor Who) as Shylock, Shakespeare's classic is transported to 1930s Britain in this "*striking and impactful*" (Guardian) new production that "*makes theatre history*" (The Telegraph), from acclaimed director Brigid Larmour.

Tensions in London's East End are rising and Shylock, a resilient single mother and hard-working businesswoman, is desperate to protect her daughter's future. When the charismatic merchant Antonio comes to her for a loan, a high-stakes deal is struck. Will Shylock take revenge, and who will pay the ultimate price?

Don't miss this unforgettable, electrifying new production of *The Merchant of Venice*, a "*fascinating and timely*" (Daily Mail) reminder of a key moment in British history.

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Blue Beard

Tue 13 - Sat 24 Feb 2024

Adapted and directed by Emma Rice.

Presented by Wise Children, Birmingham Rep, HOME, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh and York Theatre Royal.

Tickets £10 - £32

Blue Beard the Magician makes hearts flutter and pupils dilate. With a wink, a stroke and a flick – things just seem to vanish.

Cards, coins, scarves... and women. Puff! Gone. Without a trace.

He meets his match when his young bride discovers his dark and murderous secret. She summons all her rage, all her smarts and all her sisters to bring the curtain down on his tyrannous reign.

Emma Rice brings her own brand of theatrical wonder to this most beguiling and disturbing of tales. With her signature sleight of hand, Blue Beard explores curiosity and consent, violence and vengeance – all through an intoxicating lens of music, wit and tender truth.

When someone tells you not to look, OPEN THE BLOODY DOOR!

Work It Out

Fri 1 Mar – Sat 16 Mar

Presented by HOME

Tickets £10 - £32

I'm standing here. Wishing I hadn't come. Staring at my phone, pretending to text, feeling the others watching me. And then the teacher, this perfect, pretty, smiley woman with no problems, says how good it is for my mental health if I start jumping about like a dickhead. Yeah right. Yet something makes them stay. Something about a shared experience, something about desperation, something about being in a too-big too-bright room in the community centre... And then the music starts.

Work It Out follows a community based fitness class where a rag tag band of participants, all with their own issues, swallow their fear and step out of their comfort zones. Together, they work out their problems with music, exercise and gallows humour. But amidst the sweat and camaraderie there is a simmering mix of fragile egos and impulsive behaviour that threatens to boil over at any moment.

This compelling comedy drama by award-winning writer-performer Eve Steele weaves a bittersweet tale of triumph, friendship, and conquering inner demons.

Frankie Goes to Bollywood

Wed 15 - Sat 25 May 2024

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Presented by Rifco Theatre Company, HOME Manchester and Watford Palace Theatre.

Tickets £10 - £32

Get swept away into the dazzling world of Bollywood!

Frankie never wanted to be a star, she just wanted a family – and after a chance encounter with an up-and-coming director, she finds herself transported to Bollywood.

As she climbs the sparkling staircase of stardom, Frankie has to confront what she is willing to do for fame and fortune. Can she stay in the Bollywood family and still be true to herself?

Inspired by real stories of British women who have been caught in the spotlight of the biggest film industry in the world, Frankie Goes to Bollywood is a breathtakingly colourful journey of romance, sweeping songs and vibrant dance.

Amidst the heroes and the villains, the costumes and the spectacle, get ready for this tale of being British in Bollywood.

Little Women

Fri 8 – Sat 23 Dec, 2023

By Louisa May Alcott – adapted for stage by Anne-Marie Casey

Presented by Pitlochry Festival Theatre in association with HOME

Presented by arrangement with Lee Dean

Tickets £10 - £32

Published in 1868, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* was an immediate critical and commercial success and is now one of the best loved novels of all time. By turns comic, dramatic, romantic, and tragic, the book was inspired by Alcott's experiences growing up with her three sisters, and is the story of the March family: mother Marmee and her daughters, beautiful Meg, tomboy Jo, sensitive Beth, and spoilt Amy, as they struggle to survive in New England during the American Civil War.

Anne-Marie Casey's adaptation of the classic story offers an exciting theatrical experience guaranteed to be a night (or afternoon!) filled with laughter, tears, and a lifting of the spirits.

This hit show is directed by Brigid Larmour, whose 'bold and moving' (WhatsOnStage) ***The Merchant of Venice 1936*** was a sell-out smash hit at HOME, and returns to the venue in December.

Original co-production at Pitlochry Festival Theatre and Watford Palace Theatre

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Presented by arrangement with Lee Dean.

HOME is Manchester's centre for international contemporary culture.

Since opening in May 2015, HOME has welcomed over four million visitors to its two theatres, five cinemas, art gallery, book shop and restaurants. HOME works with international and UK artists to produce extraordinary theatrical experiences, producing an exciting mix of thought-provoking drama, dance and festivals, with a strong focus on new commissions and talent development. Since opening, HOME has co-produced and co-commissioned work with: Complicité, National Theatre, National Theatre Scotland, Javaad Alipoor, Boy Blue, Hofesh Shechter, Rhum and Clay, Kneehigh, MIF and many more.

HOME's ambition is to push the boundaries of form and technology, to experiment, have fun, take risks and share great new art with the widest possible audience. The patrons of HOME are Danny Boyle, actress Suranne Jones, playwright and poet Jackie Kay CBE, artists Rosa Barba and Phil Collins, filmmaker Asif Kapadia, and actress and author Meera Syal CBE.

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