

NEWS RELEASE

THE INAUGURAL SIT-UP AWARDS TODAY ANNOUNCES ITS SHORTLIST



Six productions have been selected as the shortlist for The SIT-UP Awards - a new award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe to support theatre for social change, which aims to encourage audiences *'to do something'* if they are affected by work they have seen on stage.

Web: <https://situpawards.com/> Twitter: @situpawards

The issues that have been tackled by these plays include anti-semitism, #metoo, domestic abuse, disability, race and antibiotic resistance. The companies range from larger established ones to new productions appearing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe for the first time. All selected companies are achieving social impact at the heart of their productions and within their organisation.

David Graham founder of SIT-UP awards said: "All of the shortlisted productions shine a light on different issues and show the power of theatre to achieve change through their audiences. And that was the idea in setting up these awards in the first place".

The shortlisted productions are:

Christina Murdoch: Dangerous Giant Animals (Underbelly)

From newcomer, Christina Murdoch, comes a game of hide-and-seek exploring how surreal, challenging and remarkable it is growing up with a disabled sister.

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/dangerous-giant-animals>

Strictly Arts: Freeman (Pleasance Courtyard)

This production looks at issues of race and mental health from young theatre group, Strictly Arts - winners of the Charlie Hartill Fund Award.

https://www.edfringe.com/event/2018FREEMAN_PC

Smokescreen Productions: Mengele (Assembly George Square Theatre)

A spotlight on anti-semitism and a warning from the past of the consequences when the world buys into hatred and bigotry.

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/mengele>

Futures Theatre: Never Vera Blue - (Summerhall)

From Futures Theatre comes comes a play about domestic abuse and the power of coercion.

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/never-vera-blue>

Power Play: The Empty chair (site-specific Flat 7, 21 Broughton Street, EH1 3JU)

A play with an interesting twist on #metoo from the young feminist activist company Power Play Theatre.

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/venues/pleasance-pop-up-power-play-hq>

Charades Musicals and BSAC: The Mould that changed the world - (The Space at Surgeons Hall)

A musical with an important message about the spread of antibiotic resistance. It comes from Charades Musicals, a company committed to taking musicals into schools.

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/mould-that-changed-the-world>

Celia Tennant, Chief Executive, Inspiring Scotland added: "There are many pressing social issues affecting our society today and often it is those who are already most disadvantaged that suffer disproportionately from these ills. Charities in Scotland play a vital role in supporting those most in need, providing dedicated care and often challenging us to better understand how we can improve things and move closer to a Scotland without poverty or disadvantage. But we need to gather round these extraordinary charities and help them to shine a spotlight on the issues, so that together we can make a lasting difference. This is where theatre can play such an important role by bringing challenging issues such as race, mental health, disability and domestic abuse, issues which our charities encounter on a daily basis, to the forefront of our thinking, challenging us to act and build on the incredible work that is already being done"

A panel of experts will decide on the winner which will be announced next week. The panel comprises Robert Iles (co-founder of the UK Theatre Web), Alice Millett (trustee of the charity theatre company Clean Break and youth-led initiative Art Against Knives), Jez Bond (Park Theatre Director); Celia Tennant (Chief Executive of Inspiring Scotland); Rhea Lewis (Creative Producer and Co-Founder of Project X); and Adam Kashmiry, whose play *Adam* inspired Graham to set up these awards.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Award criteria:

As well as great artistic merit, the winner will also have excelled in one or more of the following:

- **Changing minds** –A powerful play could achieve a ‘full 180’ of opinion and sustain this change long term. This criteria reflects the play’s ability to incite empathy, and for the story to linger in the heart and mind after the festival.
- **Changing behaviours** – The best productions will have a loud, specific call to action with information or mechanisms to help audiences achieve that goal.
- **Research integrity** –This could be informing the content or direction of the play as a result of collaboration with a charity, or through involving those with lived experience in the production.
- **Raising awareness** – Plays that educate audiences, helping them to understand issues they never knew existed or to see a new perspective or be given a greater insight, leaving them challenged by what they have experienced.

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