

## THEATRE503: THE STORY OF OUR YEAR – 2022/23



This year, Theatre503 audiences have been treated to one extraordinary play after another. It's clear that we're reaping the rewards of the infinite amounts of expertise and enthusiasm shown by the entire Theatre503 team to the development of new writers and their work. We've also been lucky enough to have worked with 21 phenomenal theatre companies to bring you the best in new writing.

**"An arresting debut... hugely entertaining and politically sparky"**  
Evening Standard – Moreno

**"An astute comedy about mental health... Like a lot of work being birthed by Theatre503, Tapped has the feel of a structurally sound new play"**  
The Stage – Tapped

**"Truly gripping drama... a worthwhile piece of theatre, which should not be missed"**  
London Pub Theatres - Til Death Do Us Part

**"Heralds a fiery new talent in Joel Tan"**  
Evening Standard - No Particular Order

**"This is a compelling new play: smart, gripping, cautionary and bang-up-to-date"**  
What's On Stage – Zombiegate

**"Adventurous in form and so entertaining"**  
The Guardian – The Boys Are Kissing

It's artistically exciting and thrilling to see the plans for our new building [The 503Studio](#) take shape. This is a game-changing moment for both Theatre503, the new writing ecology and the wider arts sector. The main construction phase of the external building has nearly finished and we'll be launching a fundraising campaign later in 2023 to fit out the interior.

Whilst awaiting its physical home, the hugely successful online iteration of our **503Studio: Writers' Programme** is going from strength to strength. As well as mentoring our current cohort of **503Five** writers, who've just delivered their commissioned plays to be considered for production, we've managed to extend our reach into the local community and beyond. Our **Rapid Write Response** project, brilliantly overseen by Carne Associate Director Jade Lewis, recently had **68 submissions** - the highest ever. Wandsworth Council have also made a significant difference by sponsoring two introductory online playwriting courses "**Wandsworth Writes**" for anyone, of any age, who lives or works in Wandsworth.

With so many amazing performances taking place on our stage this year, we've been particularly grateful for our continued partnership with local social enterprise, Chocolate Films. By extending **503Live** we've been able to offer online access to live performances of our longer runs, widening our audience base further still.

We ended 2022 celebrating the many successes of our wonderful writers and creative teams. In October we were delighted to hear that **Safaa Benson-Effiom's Til Death Do Us Part** had won the London Pub Theatres Award for Best Production – Premiere, and **Michael Fatogun's** performance in **Foxes**, that premiered here in 2021, had won him the Black British Theatre Best Male Actor In A Play award. We're overjoyed too that **Pravin Wilkins – Moreno, Katie Redford - Tapped and Matthew Gabrielli - Zombiegate** have all been nominated by the Offies for their Most Promising New Playwright award, with Pravin Wilkins making the final three at the February 2023 ceremony.

So far in 2023, we've seen our bestselling show since 2015 with ACE Project Grants supported production **The Boys Are Kissing**, written by **2020-21 503Five writer Zak Zarafshan**, as well as four co-productions: 2018-20 503Five Writer **Mahad Ali's My Brother's Keeper**, **Stray Dogs** by **Theo Chester**, **Faun** by **Vinnie Heaven** in co-production with **Cardboard Citizens**, and 2020 Theatre503 International Playwriting Award shortlisted **Helen** by **Maureen Lennon**. Plus, our 2022 production of Katie Redford's debut play **Tapped** has been **on tour across the UK** in co-production with Bethany Cooper Productions.

We announced the winner of our prestigious **International Playwriting Award** in March, narrowing down over **1400 plays from 49 countries** to a final 5 finalists whose scripts were judged by a panel of industry experts. **Roxy Cook** became the sixth winner of the award with her seminal debut on the state of modern Russia, **A Woman Walks into a Bank**, following in the footsteps of **Paul Murphy (Valhalla)** and **Bea Roberts (And Then Come The Nightjars)** – joint winners in 2014, **Andrew Thompson (In Event of Moone Disaster, 2016)**, **Danusia Samal (Out of Sorts, 2018)** and **Pravin Wilkins (Moreno, 2020)**. The finalists were selected by a panel chaired by **Erica Whyman (RSC Acting Artistic Director / Theatre503Chair)** with **Alice Birch, Jon Brittain, Diane Borger, Kyo Choi, Iman Qureshi, Winsome Pinnock** and **Roy Williams OBE**.



*The Great Privation: How to flip ten cents into a dollar*  
by **Nia Akilah Robinson**

Nia Akilah Robinson (she/her) is a playwright and actor from Harlem, USA. She has developed her work with residencies in the USA. *The Great Privation: How to flip ten cents into a dollar* is about Grave Robbing: Grave Robbing during the early 1800's. Grave Robbing during the Cholera outbreak. Grave Robbing in Pennsylvania. Robbing of Black bodies for medical research. Black bodies that were commodified even after death. Black bodies that never got their rest.



*Time, like the Sea* by **Georgia Bruce**

Georgia Bruce (they/them) has written and performed live comedy, co-written for film, and worked as an actor. *Time, like the Sea* is a story that explores the relationship between two generations amid changing times. Linda (she/her) is a butch lesbian separatist who, when confronted with her grandchild, Ky (they/them), is forced to choose between the ideals she sacrificed so much for or yield to change with the guidance of her grandchild.



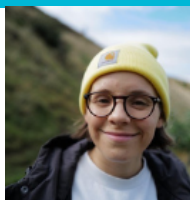
*Return to Sender* by **Olga Braga**

Olga Braga (she/her) is Ukrainian living in Britain. *Return to Sender* is set in Modern Day Ukraine (or anywhere) and is an impassioned plea for empathy and understanding from our shared, flawed humanity. Written from lived experience, it explores what happens when an 'us vs. them' mentality escalates leading to the ultimate breakdown of diplomacy – war.



*Mouse* by **Charlotte Cromie**

Charlotte Cromie (she/her) is based in the Midlands. Previous playwriting achievements include winning the Marlowe/Metheun 'Other' Prize. *Mouse* is about a couple who find their business turning a massive profit – and how a dead mouse on the floor of their new mansion triggers an all-consuming spiral of guilt, one culpability at a time.



*A Woman Walks Into a Bank* by **Roxy Cook**

Roxy Cook (she/her) is London-based theatre director and writer. *A Woman Walks Into a Bank* is her first solo play. *A Woman Walks Into a Bank* is set in Moscow, after the success of the 2018 World Cup. It follows an old woman who is living with dementia who falls foul of one of Moscow's notoriously dodgy loans, with only her cat to bear witness. Inspired by her relatives and fairytales from childhood, it explores the social apathy tearing Russia apart from the inside out.