

TRON THEATRE

TRAVERSE
THEATRE



A TRON THEATRE COMPANY & TRAVERSE THEATRE COMPANY
CO-PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND

BLACK HOLE SIGN

BY UMA NADA-RAJAH
DIRECTED BY GARETH NICHOLLS

WORLD PREMIERE

TRON THEATRE
19 SEP – 4 OCT '25

TRAVERSE THEATRE
8 – 18 OCT '25

PROGRAMME

CAST LIST

Billy/Mr Turnbull/Mr Ivan Hopper.....	Martin Docherty
Ani/Apparition Mary.....	Dani Heron
Lina/Isla/Apparition Gloria.....	Betty Valencia
Mr Iain Hopper.....	Beruce Khan
Crea.....	Helen Logan
Tersia/NMC Panel Chair.....	Ann Louise Ross

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer.....	Uma Nada-Rajah
Director.....	Gareth Nicholls
Set & Costume Designer.....	Anna Orton
Lighting Designer.....	Lizzie Powell
Composer & Sound Designer.....	Michael John McCarthy
Movement Director.....	Emily Jane Boyle
Deputy Stage Manager.....	Ruth Burgon
Assistant Stage Manager & Stage Manager, Edin.....	Babette Wickham-Riddick
Wardrobe Supervisor.....	Jennie Lööf
Wardrobe Assistant.....	Beth Allnutt

For Tron Theatre Company

Production Manager.....	Laura Skinner
Technical Manager.....	Alex Hatfield
Stage Manager.....	Suzanne Goldberg
Venue Technician.....	Fi Elliott
Venue Technician.....	Adi Currie
Audio Describers.....	Lynn Mulvenna & Hazel Ann Crawford
BSL Interpreters.....	Megan McArthur & Nicolle Docherty
Captioner.....	Glenda Carson

For Traverse Theatre Company

Head of Production.....	Kevin McCallum
Head of Lighting & Sound.....	Renny Robertson
Lighting & Sound Technician.....	Dave Bailey
Lighting & Sound Technician.....	Alasdair Hood
Audio Descriptor.....	Amanda Drollinger
BSL Interpreters.....	Megan McArthur & Nicolle Docherty
Image Credit.....	Laurence Winram
Print Design.....	Jamhot
Production Photography.....	Mihaela Bodlovic
Videography.....	81 Films

Black Hole Sign was originally commissioned by Traverse Theatre.

WITH THANKS TO:

Ella Appleton, Bard in the Botanics, BEYMED, Sarah Carter, Andy Clark, Gary Green, Hana Greer, Greg Hemphill, Jessica Hardwick, Kathryn Howden, Robert Jack, Eilidh Loan, Kristi McDonald, John Macaulay, Anna Russell Martin, National Theatre of Scotland, Grant O'Rourke, Gabriel Quigley, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, Giles Smart, Star Nurses, Naomi Stirrat, Kirsty Stuart, Anita Vettesse, Jonathan Watson.

The writer is indebted to the nurses she interviewed in the process of writing this play, and to all the actors and nurses who contributed invaluable feedback during the development process.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Uma Nada-Rajah joined the Traverse Theatre as one of our Writers in Residence in 2021. During her time with us she shared a first idea that would eventually go on to become *Black Hole Sign*, a bold, complex and darkly comic play that brought together her two professional worlds – one as a practising critical care nurse and the other as one of Scotland's most exciting playwrights.

Since that initial idea and its subsequent commission, the play has been on a long creative journey, developing through innumerable drafts, countless developments and multiple readings. Throughout, Uma's experience as a practising nurse has deeply informed the play and it's this perspective, alongside the views of many other NHS workers interviewed as part of the process, that gives *Black Hole Sign* such a deep sense of authenticity and rich spirit.

At its core *Black Hole Sign* is a play about Care. It asks why we should care for those around us, what it means to care for those in need and how, in an increasingly isolated world, we can ensure care (in its widest sense) remains at the heart of our health service.

Working with Uma to bring this story to life has been a huge privilege. The process has demanded rigour, openness and a collaborative spirit from everyone involved. The Traverse Theatre has long been a home for radical new voices and I'm proud that this production continues that tradition in collaboration with our brilliant partners at the Tron Theatre and National Theatre of Scotland.

Huge thanks to the incredible creative team, cast and collaborators who have poured such skill, imagination and care into this work. I hope we have built a world that is surreal, sharp and thought-provoking. One that honours Uma's bold writing and the incredible character of the NHS and the people that make it.

Gareth Nicholls,
Director

BIOGRAPHIES

EMILY JANE BOYLE - MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Theatre credits include: *Leopoldstadt* (West End/Broadway); *Pride and Prejudice** (*sort of) (Tron Theatre/Criterion Theatre); *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Sunshine on Leith*, *Richard III* (Leeds Playhouse/UK Tours); *Make It Happen* (Edinburgh International Festival/National Theatre of Scotland/Dundee Rep); *Kidnapped* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Hedda Gabler*, *Jumpy* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *The Grand Old Opera House Hotel* (Traverse Theatre/Dundee Rep); *Adults*, *Wilf* (Traverse Theatre); *Exit the King* (National Theatre); *Oresteia: This Restless House*, *Trainspotting*, *Cuttin' a Rug* (Citizens Theatre); *The Mirror and the Light*, *The Fair Maid of the West*, *Henry VI* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Victoria*, *Great Expectations*, *Tay Bridge*, *The Cheviot*, *The Stag and The Black*, *Black Oil* (Dundee Rep); *Nachtland*, *Nora: A Doll's House* (Young Vic); *Maggie*, *Hi My Name is Ben* (Goodspeed); *Measure for Measure* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Cook*, *The Thief*, *His Wife and Her Lover* (Faena); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre).

Film and television credits include: *Summerwater* (Channel 4); *The Crown* (Netflix); *Our Ladies* (Sony); *In Plain Sight* (ITV); *God Help the Girl* (Sundance); *Still Game: Live*, *Two Doors Down*, *Glasgow Commonwealth Games* (BBC).

MARTIN DOCHERTY - BILLY/MR TURNBULL/MR IVAN HOPPER

Theatre credits include: *Risk*, *Club Asylum*, *Antigone*, *Cooking With Elvis*, *Moorcroft* (Tron Theatre); *Venice Preserved*, *Snow White*, *Anville*, *Scarfed For Life*, *Whatever Happened To The Jaggy Nettles* (Citizens Theatre); *Decky Does A Bronco* (Grid Iron); *The Hard Man* (Finborough Theatre); *Thieves And Boy* (A Play, A Pie & A Pint); *Stitchers* (Jermyn Street Theatre); *The Invisible Hand* (Edinburgh Fringe); *The Year Of The Hare* (Rymateaterri); *Continuous Growth* (Helsinki Group); and one-man show *McLuckie's Line* which he performed and co-wrote with Martin Travers.

Film work includes: *Cloud Atlas* (Warner Bros); *Borges And Me* (Big Beach); and *Wild Rose* (Fable Pictures/Film 4).

Television credits include: *The Chief*, *River City*, *Gary Tank Commander*, *Rab C Nesbitt* (BBC Scotland); *Still Game*, *Dear Green Place* (Effingee); *Outlander* (Sony/Starz); *Father Brown*, *Young James Herriot*, *Case Histories* (BBC); and *Annika* (Black Camel). Martin was also the subject of the 2015 documentary *Marty Goes To Hollywood* which won a new talent Scottish BAFTA Award.

DANI HERON - ANI/APPARITION MARY

Theatre credits include: *Alright Sunshine*, *Fleg*, *Fruitcake*, *Radiant Vermin*, *Underwood Lane* (Tron Theatre); *Rollers Forever* (Pavilion Theatre); *There's No Room In Our Bathroom for Lewis Capaldi* (PACE Theatre Company); *90 Days* (So Strong Productions/Traverse Theatre); *Adults* (Traverse Theatre); *Tally's Blood* (Perth Theatre/Scottish Tour); *Sugar Coat* (Southwark Playhouse/Vaults Festival); *The Golden Rage*, *Ten Things To Do Before You Die*, *My Name is Sarah and...*, *A Perfect Stroke* (A Play, A Pie & A Pint); *Peter Gynt* (National Theatre/Edinburgh Festival Theatre); *Rebus: Long Shadows* (Birmingham Rep/National Tour); *Immaculate Correction* (King's Head Theatre, London); *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Citizens Theatre/Home Manchester); *306: Day*, *The James Plays* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Jumpy*, *The Venetian Twins* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *Chariots of Fire* (West End).

Television credits include: *Crime* (Britbox); *Murder Island* (Channel 4); *Casualty* (BBC); and *Armchair Detectives* (BBC).

BETTY VALENCIA - LINA/ISLA/APPARITION GLORIA

Betty trained at New College Lanarkshire.

Theatre credits include: *Ivor*, *Disfunction* (A Play, A Pie & A Pint); *Aladdin*, *Rapunzel: A Hair Braiding Adventure* (Macrobert Arts Centre); *Local Hero* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Orphans* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Cinderella* (Perth Theatre); *We Came To Dance* (Yardheads); *This Girl Laughs*, *This Girl Cries*, *This Girl Does Nothing* (Stellar Quines/Imagine); *August: Osage County* (Dundee Rep Theatre).

Films credits include: *The Last Bus*.

BERUCE KHAN - MR IAIN HOPPER

Film credits: *Greenland: Migration*.

Television credits include: *The Capture*, *The Chief* (BBC Scotland); *Vera*, *War of the Worlds* (Canal+); *Canoe* (ITV); *Britannia* (Sky UK/Amazon Prime Video).

Voice Over credits: *Final Fantasy XVI*.

Theatre credits include: *The Winter's Tale*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Henry V*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* (Shakespeare's Globe World Tour); *A Christmas Carol*, *Twelfth Night* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *We Are The Best* (Live Theatre); *Yellowfin* (Southwark Playhouse); *Adult Children* (Donmar Warehouse); *Neville's Island* (Queen's Theatre); *Ravens* (Hampstead Theatre); *Shadowlands* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Henry V*, *As You Like It* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *Coast* (A Play, A Pie & A Pint); *Combustion* (Arcola Theatre); *Gary Tank Commander: Mission Quite Possible* (SSE); *The Madness of George III* (Apollo Theatre); *The History Boys* (Bath Theatre Royal/UK Tour); *The Black Album* (National Theatre) and various productions in the West End.

HELEN LOGAN - CREA

Theatre credits include: *To Save the Sea* (Sleeping Warrior); *Lena* (Feather Productions/Assembly); *Local Hero* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *Who Pays the Piper*, *The Worm Who Turned*, *The Golden Rage* (A Play, A Pie & A Pint); *Hamlet* (Bard in the Botanics); *Bill McLaren – The Voice of Rugby* (Firebrand Theatre); *The Sunshine Ghost* (Scottish Theatre Producers); *Blithe Spirit*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Moonlight and Magnolias*, *Proof*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Tales from Hollywood* (Perth Theatre); *The Cone Gatherers* (APA Tour).

Helen has been the Panto Baddie at Perth Theatre for the past seven years and has performed in several seasons at Pitlochry Festival Theatre. Productions include: *Chicago*, *The Last Witch*, *This Happy Breed*, *A Little Night Music*, *Perfect Days*, *Whisky Galore: A Musical!* and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*.

Film and television credits include: the new Sky series *Lockerkbie: A Search For Truth*; *River City* (BBC); *The Descent* (Celador Films/Pathé); *We've Gotta Get Out of This Place*, *A Mug's Game* (BBC); and *Dr. Finlay* (STV).

MICHAEL JOHN MCCARTHY - COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Michael John is a composer, sound designer and theatre-maker – originally from West Cork, currently based in Glasgow – who has worked on over one hundred productions, including twelve Edinburgh Fringe First winners. He is the musical supervisor and co-sound designer on the Olivier Award winning *Pride and Prejudice* (*sort of)*, which was first produced at the Tron in 2018. He has also worked for the Tron on *Studio 3*, *The Lonesome West*, *Grain In The Blood* and *Under Milk Wood*.

Other credits include: *The Green Line* (Landmark Productions/Octopus Theatricals); *The Duchess (of Malfi)* (Trafalgar Theatre/Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *Two Sisters* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh/Malmö Stadsteater); *The Fair Maid of the West* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *England and Son* (Tin Cat/HOME Manchester); *The Grand Old Opera House Hotel* (Traverse Theatre/Dundee Rep); *What Girls Are Made Of* (Raw Material/Traverse Theatre); *The Last Return* (Druid Theatre Company); *Kidnapped*, *Rocket Post*, *In Time O' Strife* (National Theatre of Scotland); *NORA: A Doll's House* (Young Vic/Citizens Theatre); *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Trainspotting*, *Into That Darkness*, *Fever Dream: Southside* (Citizens Theatre); *Cinderella*, *Tay Bridge*, *August: Osage County*, *The Cheviot*, *The Stag and The Black*, *Black Oil*, *The BFG* (Dundee Rep); *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *Jimmy's Hall* (Abbey Theatre); *Glory On Earth*, *A Number*, *The Weir*, *Bondagers* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *I Can Go Anywhere*, *Crocodile Fever*, *Ulster American*, *How To Disappear*, *A Gambler's Guide to Dying* (Traverse Theatre).

His band Album Club released their debut LP in May 2022. It reached #6 in the UK Vinyl Albums chart, and #2 in the Scottish Albums chart, spending six weeks in the Top 100.

UMA NADA-RAJAH - WRITER

Uma is a playwright based in Kilbarchan, Scotland. She was one of the BBC's Scottish Voices 2020 and was the Starter Female Political Comedy writer-in-residence at the National Theatre of Scotland.

Uma is a graduate of École Philippe Gaulier and a previous participant of the Royal Court's Young Writers' Programme. In 2014 Uma won the New Playwrights Award from Playwrights' Studio Scotland. Her play *Exodus* had its premiere at the Traverse Theatre in August 2022.

Awards include: Kavva Prize 2022, Shakespeare is Dead International Selection 2024.

She works as a staff nurse in critical care with NHS Scotland.

GARETH NICHOLLS - DIRECTOR

Gareth Nicholls is Artistic Director of the Traverse Theatre.

For the Traverse, his shows include *So Young* by Douglas Maxwell, *The Grand Old Opera House Hotel* by Isobel McArthur, *Wilf* by James Ley, *Still* by Frances Poet, *The Monstrous Heart* by Oliver Emanuel, *Crocodile Fever* by Meghan Tyler, *Ulster American* by David Ireland, *Arctic Oil* by Clare Duffy, *How To Disappear* by Morna Pearson and *Letters to Morrissey* and *A Gambler's Guide to Dying* by Gary McNair.

Other productions include: *Kidnapped* by Isobel McArthur (National Theatre of Scotland), *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh, *Blackbird* by David Harrower, *Into That Darkness* by Gitta Sereny, *Vanya* by Sam Holcroft (Citizens Theatre), *God Of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza, *Under Milk Wood* by Dylan Thomas (Tron Theatre) and *Educating Ronnie* by Joe Douglas (Utter).

His work has toured extensively across the UK as well as transferring to Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and USA. Gareth has won numerous awards including six Scotsman Fringe Firsts.

Previously, he was Main-Stage Director in Residence at the Citizens Theatre, Artist In Residence at Imagineate International Children's Festival and an Emerging Artist at the National Theatre of Scotland.

ANNA ORTON - SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Anna Orton is a designer working across Theatre, Dance, Opera and Exhibition. Her previous work exhibiting, performing and curating as a visual artist in some of Scotland's most pioneering spaces continues to influence her work in performance design.

Her design work includes the multi-award-winning production of Handel's *Messiah* directed by Tom Morris, which premiered at Bristol Old Vic and was followed by a national cinema and online streaming release.

Recent credits include: *Oedipus Rex*, *The Tsar Has His Photo Taken*, *La Bohème* (Scottish Opera); *GUNTER* (Dirty Hare/Royal Court); *VL* (Francesca Moody Productions/Roundabout); *LEAR* (Raw Material); *Blond Eckbert*, *Acis & Galatea* (Hans Otto Theatre, Germany); *Escaped Alone* (Tron Theatre); *Adults* (Traverse Theatre); *Kidnapped* (National Theatre of Scotland); *This Is Memorial Device* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, Fringe First Award/UK Tour); *Robin Hood Legend of the Forgotten Forest*, *King Lear* (Bristol Old Vic); *Peter Pan and Wendy*, *A Christmas Carol* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre - Shortlisted for Best Emerging Designer, World Stage Design Awards 2021); *Welcome Home* (Soho Theatre); and *The Effect* (English Theatre Frankfurt).

She was a recipient of the OLD VIC 12 Designer Affiliation in 2019, an MGC Futures recipient in 2021 and was the first JMK runner up in 2023. Anna's designs have also been nominated for the Offies and CATS Awards. She has an MA in Theatre Design from Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and an MA in Fine Art from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design.

LIZZIE POWELL - LIGHTING DESIGNER

Lizzie Powell is a Lighting Designer working internationally in theatre and opera.

Some credits include: *A View from the Bridge* (Tron Theatre); *The Fifth Step, Thrown* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Make It Happen* (Edinburgh International Festival/National Theatre of Scotland/Dundee Rep); *Robin Red Breast* (Factory International Manchester); *The Outrun, Macbeth – An Undoing* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *August: Osage County* (Malmo Stadsteater); *Same Team, The Grand Old Opera House Hotel* (Traverse Theatre/Dundee Rep); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Mountaintop, Mother Courage* (Royal Exchange); *The Comedy of Errors, Endgame, The Libertine, Cyrano De Bergerac* (Citizens Theatre); *James IV* (Raw Material/Capital Theatres/National Theatre of Scotland); *Windblown, What Girls Are Made Of* (Raw Material); *King John, Macbeth* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Avalanche, A Love Story* (Barbican/Sydney Theatre Company); *Inspector Morse, The Da Vinci Code, Dial M for Murder* (Simon Friend Productions); *Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour* (West End/National Theatre of Scotland); *Victory Condition, B, Human Animals, Violence and Son* (Royal Court Theatre); *Romeo & Juliet* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield).

Opera credits include: *Queen of Spades* (Garsington Opera Festival); *Maria Stuarda* (Teatro Real, Madrid); *Falstaff* (Scottish Opera/Santa Fe Opera); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Scottish Opera).

ANN LOUISE ROSS - TERSIA/NMC PANEL CHAIR

Ann Louise's screen credits include: *Good Omens 2; Shetland; The Farm; Case Histories; Rebus; Bob Servant Independent; Trainspotting; The Acid House Trilogy; Whisky Galore; River City; Stone of Destiny; The Witch's Daughter; The Key; The Bill; Life Support; Looking After Jo Jo; Hamish Macbeth*; and playing Grannie Island in the CBeebies series *Katie Morag*, amongst others.

Ann Louise's recent theatre credits include: *Make It Happen* (Edinburgh International Festival/National Theatre of Scotland/Dundee Rep); *Doubt* (Dundee Rep); *Cyprus Avenue* (Tron Theatre); *The Grand Old Opera House Hotel* (Traverse Theatre/Dundee Rep); *Peter Gynt* (National Theatre/Edinburgh International Festival); *The Dark Carnival* (Vanishing Point/Citizens Theatre/Dundee Rep Ensemble); *Doctor Faustus* (Citizens Theatre/West Yorkshire Playhouse); *The Guid Sisters* (National Theatre of Scotland/Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off, Age of Arousal* (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh).



Ann Louise has also been a member of the Dundee Rep Ensemble for 26 years, winning a CATS Award for Best Female Performance as Mill Laverello in *Further Than The Furthest Thing*, a TMA Award for Best Supporting Performance in a Musical as Jean in *Sunshine on Leith* and a Best Supporting Actress for her performance as Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*. She also won huge critical acclaim in the pivotal role of Rose in the musical *Gypsy*, as well as her performance as Mrs Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*.

GIVE FEEDBACK

Let us know what you thought of *Black Hole Sign* by emailing feedback@tron.co.uk or write to **Tron Theatre, 63 Trongate, Glasgow G1 5HB**.

You can also join us online for behind-the-scenes footage, photos, news, gossip and updates on our social media pages:

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FUNDERS

***Black Hole Sign* is a Tron Theatre Company & Traverse Theatre Company co-production in association with National Theatre of Scotland.**

TRON THEATRE

The Tron gratefully acknowledges support from Creative Scotland, our corporate partners, funders, Patrons and Tron Champions.

Tron Theatre is a company limited by guarantee (SC77475) and a Scottish registered charity (SC012081).

More than ever before the Tron Theatre needs your contributions to support the work of our creative community, offer opportunities to young people and deliver outreach work in our immediate locale and across the city.



For more info on how to support the Tron Theatre visit tron.co.uk



The Traverse Theatre is funded by Creative Scotland and The City of Edinburgh Council.

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Traverse Theatre is a not-for-profit organisation, that relies on the generosity of their Supporters to continue championing new stories and storytellers.



For more info on how to support the Traverse Theatre visit traverse.co.uk



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National Theatre of Scotland breaks down barriers to theatre nationwide, opening doors for audiences and artists.

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