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**The Hermitage Artist Retreat Announces
UK Playwright and Lyricist
Chris Bush
as the Fourth Recipient of the \$35,000
Hermitage Major Theater Award**

*The Hermitage Major Theater Award (HMTA) recognizes a playwright or theater artist with a **commission of \$35,000** to create an original work, in addition to a **residency at the Hermitage** and an **inaugural workshop** of the newly created work, anticipated for **autumn of 2025 in London** at a theater to be announced.*

*The distinguished UK-based Award Committee for 2024 included:
Tony and Olivier Award-winning Artistic Director of MGC **Michael Grandage**,
BAFTA Award winner and Co-CEO of House Productions **Tessa Ross**, and
Olivier Award-winning director and incoming Director of the National Theatre
Indhu Rubasingham.*

February 2, 2024 – **Andy Sandberg**, Artistic Director and CEO of the **Hermitage Artist Retreat**, announced today that UK-based playwright and Olivier Award-winning lyricist **Chris Bush** has been selected as the fourth recipient of the **Hermitage Major Theater Award** (HMTA). This jury-selected prize, established by the Hermitage in 2021 with generous support from Flora Major and the Kutya Major Foundation, offers one of the largest nonprofit theater commissions in the United States, and now adds the United Kingdom to its expanding international footprint. Bush will receive a cash prize of \$35,000, as well as a residency at the Hermitage (Sarasota County, Florida) and a developmental workshop in a major arts capital – which for this commission will be London in late 2025.

Chris Bush is an award-winning playwright, lyricist, and theater maker based in the United Kingdom. Her comprehensive body of work includes *Standing at the Sky's Edge*, which won her an Olivier Award and a UK Theatre Award for Best Musical. Following sold-out runs at the National Theatre and Sheffield Theatres, the acclaimed production is opening this month on the West End and has been described as “the most exciting new British musical in years” by *WhatsOnStage* and heralded by *The*

Times as “a moving and resonant piece of popular entertainment — magnificent and meaningful.” Bush received a UK Theatre Award for Best Show for Children & Young People for her production *Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World* and a UK Theatre Award for Best Musical for *Assassination of Katie Hopkins*, heralded by *The Guardian* as “an intelligent, thoughtful, and often wryly enjoyable look at the polarization of public debate in the age of social media.” Raised in Sheffield, England, Chris Bush currently lives in London.

“I’m delighted — and still a little surprised — to be the recipient of this year’s Hermitage Major Theater Award,” said 2024 HMTA winner **Chris Bush** upon receiving the news. “Having spent a lot of my career writing specifically about northern England, I’m excited to shift my gaze across the Atlantic and dive into a new landscape. I’m very grateful to the Hermitage and Flora Major for this opportunity. I hear the weather in Florida is a little better too.”

“This is the first time a Hermitage commission has been presented to an artist in the United Kingdom,” added **Andy Sandberg**. “With a goal of bringing this initiative to London, we deliberately selected a committee of preeminent arts leaders in the U.K. who identified four outstanding playwrights among a wealth of worthy theatrical talent, broadening the international reach and impact of the Hermitage and this initiative.”

The Hermitage Major Theater Award (HMTA) was established in 2021 to recognize a playwright or theater artist with a \$35,000 commission to create a new, original, and impactful piece of theater. Three distinguished finalists for the fourth Hermitage Major Theater Award include **Natasha Gordon**, an Olivier Award-nominated British playwright and actor of Jamaican descent, whose play *Nine Night* enjoyed a sold-out run at the National Theatre in 2018 before transferring to Trafalgar Studios in 2019; **Beth Steel**, an award-winning playwright whose new play *Till the Stars Come Down* is currently running at the National Theatre; and **Sam Steiner**, an accomplished playwright and screenwriter whose play *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons* has been performed all over the world and made its West End debut in 2023. Each finalist has been awarded a Hermitage residency and Fellowship, in addition to a cash prize of \$1,500.

HMTA winners and finalists are nominated and selected by a jury of visionary and forward-thinking artistic leaders. The 2024 HMTA Award Committee included **Michael Grandage**, Tony and Olivier-Award winning director of stage and screen, former Artistic Director of the Donmar Warehouse, and current Artistic Director of the Michael Grandage Company; **Tessa Ross**, CBE and BAFTA Award-winning Co-CEO of House Productions; and **Indhu Rubasingham**, an Olivier Award-winning director, longtime Artistic Director of the Kiln Theatre, and newly announced as the incoming Director of the National Theatre.

Full bios for winner, finalists, and the Award Committee can be found below.

“The Hermitage Major Theater Award is an incredible opportunity for an artist to develop their craft,” said **Michael Grandage**, “and Chris Bush is a hugely talented playwright who has already demonstrated that big ideas can change the world. I’m delighted this award will afford her an opportunity to continue to evolve in a fully supported environment.”

“We were thrilled by Chris Bush’s proposal – by its ambition and articulacy and by its relevance to our world,” added **Tessa Ross**. “Here is an exciting, brave writer, and we feel very proud to be able to support the next stage of Chris’ journey with this wonderful award.”

“Chris Bush is an artist the theater world cannot ignore, and this award from the Hermitage offers her the opportunity to make a work that is deeply personal,” said **Indhu Rubasingham**. “I know that Chris will make a really powerful play that I can’t wait to see. Truly, all four finalists are talented and interesting artists worthy of this commission and great success.”

“Amidst four extraordinary and deserving finalists, **Chris Bush** confirmed herself to be a passionate theater artist who impressed us all with her compelling and inspiring proposal,” said Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. “We are honored to support Chris as she creates this ambitious and inventive new play. I must thank our brilliant and dedicated Award Committee – Michael Grandage, Tessa Ross, and Indhu Rubasingham – for their passion, intelligence, and care throughout this process. I also want to congratulate Natasha Gordon, Beth Steel, and Sam Steiner, each of whom are exceptional playwrights with bold voices and thrilling ideas.”

In addition to the \$35,000 commission, the recipient of the annual HMTA will receive six weeks of residency at the Hermitage’s historic beachfront campus to develop the new theatrical work, as well as a reading or workshop in a leading arts and cultural center. Chris Bush’s commission is expected to receive its first presentation in autumn of 2025 in London.

In describing her intended HMTA commission, currently titled ***Orlando (FL)***, Bush shares: “This original play will be a story of transformation, translation, and self-determination. The play follows Lana, a trans woman living in Orlando, Florida, whose life is turned upside down by the arrival of a fantastical stranger. Lana is stuck in a rut; her friendship circle is dwindling, her acting career is going nowhere fast, and she’s ejected from her Doomsday cult for being too unreliable. The world outside is too terrifying for her to deal with, so she opts to self-medicate and disassociate. Then crashing into her life headfirst comes Orlando, the freewheeling, gender-switching protagonist of Virginia Woolf’s iconic novel. Orlando is sexy, confident, unguarded — when Lana is with them, anything seems possible. Together, maybe they could take on the world. *Orlando (FL)* aspires to be a queer fantasia set against a backdrop of rising hate; a gloriously funny, angry, and defiant testament to the power of literature and the resilience of LGBTQ+ communities.”

In the spirit of the Hermitage’s commitment to the arts across multiple disciplines, recipients of the Hermitage Major Theater Award are encouraged to create a commission that directly or indirectly represents the role and impact of art – musical, literary, theatrical, visual, dance, or otherwise – in our culture and society. As to how this will infuse Bush’s commission, she explains that “*Orlando (FL)* takes Virginia Woolf’s classic novel as a jumping off point to explore contemporary queer identities. This piece is all about the power of fiction,” notes Bush. “Art can offer us a means of escape, but also become a tool for our own liberation.”

This distinguished Hermitage Major Theater Award recognition is not an award for an existing work, but rather it is designed as a commission that shall serve as a catalyst and inspiration to a theater artist to create a new, original, and impactful piece of theater. Further, the prize is intended to bridge the connection between the Hermitage in Sarasota County, Florida – where the commission is born – and other leading arts and culture centers around the world, including New York, London, Chicago, and other notable arts capitals where great theater is frequently developed and presented. Previous recipients of the HMTA have included acclaimed playwright and “Only Murders in the Building” writer **Madeleine George**; The New Group's Director of Artistic Projects, theater-maker, and director **Shariffa Ali**; and award-winning composer and theater artist **Imani Uzuri**. George and Ali had their first readings at New York’s MCC Theater in November of 2023. George’s *The Sore Loser* is a Faustian comedy reimagining the patriarchy through a small-town bowling tournament, and Ali’s play *Hero* chronicles a South African village faced with an opportunity for national glory through a singling competition.

“This award is designed to be transformational for its recipients, providing not only significant funds and recognition, but also invaluable time, space, and inspiration at the Hermitage, plus an opportunity for these innovative theater artists to workshop and develop their original ideas,” said **Andy Sandberg**. An acclaimed director, writer, and Tony Award-winning producer who recently directed the U.K. premiere of *Operation Epsilon*, Sandberg took the helm as Artistic Director and CEO of the Hermitage in early 2020. “In addition to introducing a new work of theater to the world each year, this is a meaningful way for the Hermitage to take a further step in supporting the artistic process, offering developmental resources to these extraordinary artists and their new commissions.”

The Hermitage Major Theater Award is made possible with a generous multi-year gift to the Hermitage from Flora Major and the Kutya Major Foundation. In the aftermath of the pandemic and recognizing the difficult challenges facing theater artists, the Hermitage and Major awarded three HMTA commissions in the inaugural twelve months of this initiative. Moving forward, the recipient will be selected annually and will have two years to complete their commissions.

“No one does more for the arts and the creation of new work than the Hermitage,” added **Flora Major**, founder and trustee of the Kutya Major Foundation. “This award being presented this year in the UK is just further evidence that Andy and his team are establishing the Hermitage as a leading international arts incubator. I hope others who are passionate about the arts will support the important work that’s happening there. The impact and reach of the Hermitage is greater than most people realize – it’s truly unbelievable.”

In addition to this commission, the Hermitage Artist Retreat annually awards the prestigious jury-selected Hermitage Greenfield Prize (HGP), a \$35,000 commission (recently increased from \$30,000) that rotates each year between the disciplines of music, theater, and visual art. The recently announced Hermitage Greenfield Prize winner for 2024 is **Deepa Purohit**. Past HGP recipients in theater have included **Aleshea Harris**

(2021), **Martyna Majok** (2018), **Nilo Cruz** (2015), **John Guare** (2012), and **Craig Lucas** (2009).

A leading national arts incubator, the Hermitage is the only major arts organization in Florida exclusively committed to supporting the development and creation of new work across all artistic disciplines. The Hermitage hosts artists on its Gulf Coast Manasota Key campus for multi-week residencies, where diverse and accomplished artists from around the world and across multiple disciplines create and develop new works of theater, music, visual art, literature, dance, film, and more. As part of their residencies, Hermitage Fellows participate in free community programs, offering audiences in the region a unique opportunity to engage with some of the world's leading artists and to get an authentic "sneak peek" into extraordinary projects and artistic minds before their works go on to major galleries, concert halls, theaters, and museums around the world. These free and innovative programs include performances, conversations, readings, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

For more information about the Hermitage and the Hermitage Major Theater Award, visit HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

"In a challenged theatrical landscape, the Hermitage has done something heroic; they have instituted a financially generous commission for a theater artist of demonstrable achievement to draft a new work. It is one of the premier commissions of its kind and could not come at a more auspicious time."

—Doug Wright, 2021 HMTA Award Committee, Pulitzer Prize & Tony Award-Winning Playwright

"An organization that does more for artists than any I have encountered."

—Craig Lucas, Tony Award Nominee & Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner

"The Hermitage breeds something unique, and without it, I cannot tell you how much work would not happen. This award is so incredibly powerful and unlike anything out there. There are very few recognitions which give structure and freedom at the same time as capital — there is a graciousness, generosity, and elegance to this award."

Jeanine Tesori, 2022 HMTA Award Committee; Tony Award-Winning Composer & Pulitzer Prize Finalist

"Art and Theater are our spiritual daily bread, and we're making it here at the Hermitage... and we go from the Hermitage and break bread in every community we travel to."

—Paula Vogel Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-Winning Playwright

"The Hermitage is the place where the work that you don't see getting done is done – the building of ideas, the nurturing of thoughts and dreams that eventually turn into the symphony you'll see at your performing arts center or the great touring musical that comes through your town."

—Gavin Creel, Tony and Olivier Award-Winning Performer and Composer

"Because of the Hermitage, some of the most beautiful plays have been written, and the most beautiful music has been made."

—Emily Mann, Playwright, Director, and Tony Award Winner

“The Hermitage provides an ideal landscape and environment for the artistic process.”

—Michael R. Jackson, Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award Winner

“The impact of the Hermitage extends far beyond the weeks that the artists are in residence. The inspiration that we draw there — we take back home with us. What the Hermitage offers artists and composers like me is truly rare.”

—Adam Gwon, Award-Winning Musical Theater Composer

“The Hermitage sparks an authentic creative magic. The campus on Manasota Key fosters the space to dream in ways the rest of the world rarely allows. The lush surrounding nature, the opportunity to connect with other artists, and an enthusiastic audience at the weekly presentation is the perfect alchemy in which to create.”

—Christopher Burney, Hermitage Curatorial Council and Artistic Director of New York Stage and Film

***“It was like someone opened the door and invited me to create a work that is responsive to this time, a work that can be reflective of this time...
I am super grateful for that.”***

—Aleshea Harris, Playwright and 2021 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner

“The Hermitage been truly meaningful to me. It's been a very traumatic few years, and the Hermitage is really a place of healing – a place where artists can come to reset, think about why it is we do what we do, and find a way to work from a deeper place.”

—Bess Wohl, Tony Award-Nominated Playwright

“A spark plug for ideas and collaborations: a miraculous co-mingling of music, literature, visual art, theater, nature, and wildlife.”

—Claire Chase, Flutist, MacArthur Genius & Avery Fisher Prize Winner

“If you trace the trajectory of the artists and the works that come out of the Hermitage, the body of work that has been unleashed into the world is not just big in terms of number, but big in terms of impact.”

Limor Tomer, Director of Live Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Hermitage Artist Retreat

Sarasota County, Florida

Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO

The Hermitage is a leading international arts incubator and nonprofit artist retreat based in the United States, located on Manasota Key, Florida. For more than two decades, the Hermitage has invited accomplished artists across multiple disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermitage artists are invited to interact with the local community, reaching thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors each year with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage Fellows have included 15 Pulitzer Prize winners, Poets Laureate, MacArthur ‘Genius’ Fellows, and multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar winners and nominees. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse and accomplished group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theaters, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the Hermitage Greenfield Prize for a new work of art or performance, the Hermitage Major Theater Award for an original theater commission, and the Aspen Music Festival’s Hermitage Prize in Composition.

For more information, visit HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

BIOS

WINNER OF THE 2024 HERMITAGE MAJOR THEATER AWARD

CHRIS BUSH

Chris Bush is a Sheffield-born playwright, lyricist, and theatre maker. Past work includes *Standing at the Sky's Edge* (Sheffield Theatres/National Theatre – Olivier Award and UK Theatre Award for Best Musical, South Bank Sky Arts Award for Best Theatre), *Pericles* and *The Odyssey* (both National Theatre); *Rock/Paper/Scissors*, *The Band Plays On*, *What We Wished For*, *A Dream*, and *The Sheffield Mysteries* (all Sheffield Theatres); *Jane Eyre* (Stephen Joseph Theatre, New Vic Theatre); *The Doncastrain Chalk Circle* (CAST Doncaster/National Theatre); *Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World* (Kenny Wax, UK Tour – UK Theatre Award for Best Show for Children & Young People); *Hungry* (Paines Plough); *Kein Weltuntergang/Not the End of the World* (Schaubühne, Berlin); *Nine Lessons and Carols: Stories for a Long Winter* (Almeida Theatre); *Faustus: That Damned Woman* (Headlong/Lyric Hammersmith/Birmingham Rep); *The Last Noël* (Attic Theatre/UK tour); *The Assassination of Katie Hopkins* (Theatr Clwyd - UK Theatre Award for Best Musical); *The Changing Room* (NT Connections); *A Declaration from the People* (National Theatre: Dorfman); and *Larksong* (New Vic, Stoke-on-Trent). Film includes *Mars* (dir. Abel Rubinstein).

2024 AWARD COMMITTEE

MICHAEL GRANDAGE

Michael Grandage is a director, producer, and the Artistic Director of MGC, a production company he established in 2012 to work in theater, film, and television. Before that, he was Artistic Director of the Donmar Warehouse (2002-2012) and Sheffield Theatre (1999-2005), and President of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (2010-2022). His charity, MGC Futures, was set up to help young theatre makers and can be found at www.MGCFutures.com. His book, *A Decade at the Donmar*, was published by Constable & Robbins in 2012. In 2011, he was appointed a CBE in the Queen's birthday honours for services to drama. His work in London theatre has included *Backstairs Billy* with Penelope Wilton and Luke Evans, *Orlando* with Emma Corrin, *30 Million Minutes* with Dawn French, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* with Aiden Turner, *Photograph 51* with Nicole Kidman, *The Cripple of Inishmaan* with Daniel Radcliffe, *Peter and Alice* with Judi Dench and Ben Whishaw, *Frost/Nixon* with Frank Langella and Michael Sheen (also West End, Broadway, USA tour, Tony nomination for Best Director), *Red* with Eddie Redmayne and Alfred Molina (also Broadway, Tony Award and Drama Desk Awards for Best Director), *Hamlet* with Jude Law (also Elsinore and Broadway), *Ivanov* with Kenneth Branagh (Evening Standard and Critics' Circle Award for Best Director), *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear* with Derek Jacobi (Evening Standard Award), *The Chalk Garden* (Evening Standard and Critics' Circle Award) and *Othello* with Chiwetel Ejiofor (Evening Standard Award). His musicals include *Guys and Dolls* with Ewan McGregor and Jane Krakowski (Olivier Award), *Evita* (also Broadway), the British premiere of *Merrily We Roll Along* (Olivier Award and Evening Standard Award), *Grand Hotel* (Olivier Award), and most recently Disney's *Frozen the Musical* (also Broadway). His opera work includes *Billy Budd* (Glyndebourne, San Francisco & BAM), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Glyndebourne & HGO), *Madame Butterfly* (HGO & Chicago Lyric Opera), and *Don Giovanni* (*Met*). His screen work includes *My Policeman*, *Red*, *30 Million Minutes*, and *Genius*.

TESSA ROSS

Tessa Ross is the Co-CEO of House Productions, the film and television production company she launched in 2016 with her business partner Juliette Howell, which now sits within BBC Studios' portfolio of indies. Recent productions include Sebastián Lelio's BAFTA-nominated *The Wonder*; *Starve Acre*, from BAFTA Award-nominated writer and director Daniel Kokotajlo; *The Iron Claw*, written and directed by award-winning Sean Durkin; and Oscar-winning director Edward Berger's *Conclave*. TV productions include the six-part BBC phenomenon *Sherwood*, and *Brexit: The Uncivil War*, the Emmy-nominated film for Channel 4 and HBO starring Benedict Cumberbatch, both written by multi award-winning writer James Graham; *Life After Life*, a four-part drama from Bash Doran based on the bestselling novel by Kate Atkinson; *Trigonometry*, an eight-part relationship drama written by award-winning playwright Duncan Macmillan and Effie Woods for the BBC; *Six Four*, starring Kevin McKidd, from award-winning writer Gregory Burke for ITV; and the award-winning *The Good Mothers* for Disney+ and Hulu. As executive producers: *They Shall Not Grow Old*, helmed by Oscar-winning director Peter Jackson, and Jonathan Glazer's acclaimed *The Zone of Interest*, based on the late Martin Amis' bestseller. Tessa Ross was previously Controller of Film and Drama at Channel 4, during which time Film4 worked with the most innovative talent in the UK and built a reputation for developing and financing some of the most acclaimed British films of recent years. These include Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, Kevin Macdonald's *The Last King of Scotland*, Chris Morris' *Four Lions*, Shane Meadows' *This is England*, Steve McQueen's *Hunger*, *Shame*, and *12 Years A Slave*, Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges*, Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin*, Lenny Abrahamson's *Frank and Room*, Todd Haynes' *Carol*, and Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*. Her work in television includes commissioning programmes such as *Shameless*, *Sex Traffic*, *The Devil's Whore*, *Longford*, *White Teeth*, and *Clocking Off*. She was on the Board of the National Theatre and appointed as its first CEO. She was awarded a BAFTA for Outstanding British Contribution to Film in 2013. She was Chair of the Bailey's Prize for Fiction in 2017 and was on the National Council of the Arts Council.

INDHU RUBASINGHAM

Indhu Rubasingham was recently announced as the new Director of the UK's National Theatre. She will be departing her long-tenured role as Artistic Director of Kiln Theatre (formerly Tricycle Theatre). Her work for the company includes *Handbagged* (winner of the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre), also West End, UK tour, Washington, New York; *The Invisible Hand*; *Pass Over*; *When the Crows Visit*; *Wife*; *White Teeth*; *Holy Sht*; *Red Velvet* (which transferred to New York and later to the Garrick Theatre as part of the Kenneth Branagh season); *A Wolf in Snakeskin Shoes*; *Multitudes*; *The House That Will Not Stand*; *Paper Dolls*; *Women, Power, and Politics*; *Stones in His Pockets*; *Detaining Justice*; *The Great Game: Afghanistan*; *Fabulation*; and *Starstruck*. Other theatre credits include: *Kerry Jackson*; *The Father and the Assassin*; *The Great Wave*; *Ugly Lies the Bone*; *The Motherf**cker with the Hat* (Evening Standard Award for Best Play); *The Waiting Room*, all at the National Theatre; *The Ramayana*, National Theatre/Birmingham Rep; *Belong*, *Disconnect*, *Free Outgoing*, *Lift Off*, *Clubland*, *The Crutch*, *Sugar Mummies*, all at Royal Court Theatre; *Ruined*, Almeida Theatre; *Yellowman* and *Anna in the Tropics*, both at Hampstead Theatre; *Secret Rapture*, *The Misanthrope*, *Romeo and Juliet*, all for Chichester Festival Theatre; *Pure Gold*, Soho Theatre; *The No Boys Cricket Club* and *Party Girls* at Theatre Royal Stratford East; *Wuthering Heights*, Birmingham Rep; *Heartbreak House*, Watford Palace Theatre; *Sugar Dollies* and *Shakuntala*, both at the Gate Theatre; *A River Sutra*, Three Mill Island Studios; *Rhinoceros*, UC Davis; and *A Doll's House*, Young Vic Theatre.

2024 HMTA FINALISTS

NATASHA GORDON

Natasha Gordon is a British playwright and actress of Jamaican descent. Her debut play *Nine Night* enjoyed a sold-out run at the National Theatre in April 2018 before transferring to Trafalgar

Studios in 2019. In 2022, the play received its US premiere at the Round House in Washington, DC, and a revival was produced by Leeds and Nottingham Playhouses in the UK. In 2018, Natasha won the Charles Wintour Award for most promising playwright at the Evening Standard Theatre Awards as well as the Critics Circle Award, and the play was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Comedy. She is currently working on commissions for the National Theatre and the Old Vic Theatre, and she is an Associate Artist at the National Theatre. As a performer, her stage credits include: *Nine Night* (Trafalgar Studios); *Red Velvet* (Tricycle Theatre/St Ann's Warehouse); *The Low Road* and *Clubland* (Royal Court Theatre); *Mules* (Young Vic), and *As You Like It* (Royal Shakespeare Company). Film and TV credits include *Dough*, *Line of Duty*, *Class*, and *Danny and the Human Zoo*.

BETH STEEL

Beth Steel is an award-winning playwright and screenwriter. Her work in theatre includes *Ditch* (John Whiting Award finalist) for HighTide Festival and Old Vic Tunnels; *Wonderland* (Charles Wintour Award, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize finalist) and *Labyrinth*, both at Hampstead Theatre; and *The House of Shades* (Susan Smith Blackburn Prize finalist, WGGB Award finalist) at the Almeida. For *Wonderland*, Beth also won the Evening Standard Theatre Award for Most Promising Playwright. *Wonderland* was broadcast live worldwide through the Guardian website and has since had multiple sold-out regional productions. Her new play *Till the Stars Come Down* opened in January of 2024 at the National Theatre, where she has been a writer-in residence. Beth has screen projects in development with The Forge and Fable Pictures. Originally from Nottinghamshire, she is now based in London.

SAM STEINER

Sam Steiner is a playwright and screenwriter hailing from Manchester, England. His acclaimed plays include *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons* (Walrus Theatre, 2015, Edinburgh Fringe, West End 2023), *A Table Tennis Play* (Walrus Theatre, Edinburgh Fringe, 2019), *You Stupid Darkness!* (Paines Plough & Theatre Royal Plymouth, 2019 and Southwark Theatre, 2020), and *Kanye the First* (HighTide, 2017). He also has new commissions with the Almeida Theatre and Francesca Moody. *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons* has been performed all over the world in over a dozen languages and made its West End debut in January 2023. On the film side, Sam co-wrote *Fingernails* (2023, dir. Christos Nikou) starring Jesse Buckley, Riz Ahmed, and Jeremy Allen White, as well as the upcoming *Rich Flu* (dir. Galder Gaztelu-Urrutia) starring Mary-Elizabeth Winstead and Rafe Spall. His current feature slate includes *Morning*, which Justin Kurzel will direct; Laura Dern, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Noah Jupe will star with Cumberbatch's SunnyMarch producing. Sam is also working on original horror *Banquet* and an original feature drama *The Endling*.

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