



Welcome to Serene was the 2024 NMTA Award Winner, composed and written Bethany Tennick and Iona Ramsay and performed for 4 wonderfully received performances at The New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich. A local reviewer wrote:

"This has to be one of the most powerful endings I've ever seen to any piece of theatre ever.... Everyone involved in this production clearly and palpably gave it all of their strength, courage and life-force - we feel the impassioned screaming of their very souls. This show deserves to go further."

THE AWARD

This annual award is held in memory of opera and musical theatre director Vernon Mound, a founding Associate Director of British Youth Music Theatre, who died in 2010. The NMTA offers the rare opportunity of awarding a music theatre commission to a young writer or team of writer/creators who are ready to have their first fully staged new music theatre production. They will receive mentoring from established music theatre writers, development support from BYMT, dramaturgical support from a director and a staged production at a UK regional venue with a large company of young people from across the UK.

"This award is the perfect opportunity for us to reach out to writers, or potential writers, under the age of 30 who want to develop a new music theatre piece and bring their unique musical ideas to life. We hope to hear from composers, lyricists, story writers, song makers, music producers who are excited by the idea of creating something completely original with a group of young, and inspiring progress in new music theatre."

Emily Gray - Creative Director of BYMT

In 2023 and 2024 the winning show was produced at New Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich. Whilst this theatre remains a valued partner of BYMT, we have strong partnerships with Birmingham Hippodrome, Southwark Playhouse and other theatres across the UK, and we will ensure the NMTA 2025 production happens in a space dedicated to supporting young people and new work. We aim to fit the show to the most appropriate venue.

ELIGIBILITY

- The award is intended to support writer/composer/creators, aged 30 or under on the deadline for submission (14th October 2024)
- Writing teams need to be based in the UK or Ireland
- Submissions can be made by one writer/lyricist/composer/music producer or by a team of any combination of those elements
- The individual or team must be available to develop their show through 2025, for a production in August

DEADLINES

- The deadline for submissions is 12pm on Monday 14th October 2024
- Interview teams will be selected and informed by 1st November 2024
- Interview/pitches will take place the week of 11th November 2024
- The Award winners will be announced at BYMT's Let It Snow concert 1st December 2024

INCLUSIVITY

BYMT is committed to creating an inclusive culture in all its activities, ensuring equality of opportunity for all our creative practitioners and encouraging applications from individuals regardless of disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships. We are particularly keen to hear from writers from global majority backgrounds and those who self-identify as disabled, as they are under-represented in the new music theatre sector.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- An outline of the show and casting will be needed for BYMT's in person auditions, starting mid-January 2025
- The performance company of young people will be selected by 1 March 2025
- First draft will be due April 2025
- Second draft to be completed by the end of May 2025 for a development workshop
- Final rehearsal draft deadline 30th June 2025
- Rehearsals around late July/August 2025
- Production August 2025

THE PRODUCTION

The winning idea will be produced with a company of about 36 young people whose ages will range between 11 and 21, although the final decisions on age range will be agreed with the writing team on the basis of the material. The performers will be drawn from the company's national auditions, online and in person from November 2024 to February 2025. Many of the performers will be advancing to drama school or conservatoire training within a year or two of being a member of BYMT. The work can therefore be complex and challenging if the material requires this.

BYMT's production of *Babies*, the 2021 NMTA Winner, was mounted at the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich. Following this initial production, *Babies* has been licensed and developed by a commercial company, who have produced professional recordings, a staged concert at the Lyric Theatre in 2023 and an eight week run at The Other Palace in 2024.

The idea must provide satisfying performance opportunities for a large company and have within it the opportunity for the young performers to be collaborative in the process of creating the show. Examples of this way of working might include ghost lyrics created by the writer, that are then turned into show lyrics by the young company, or characters within the story being created by the performers. The writers could be involved as director/MD/choreographer/music producers.

Please note that 70-75% of successful participants at our BYMT auditions are female and non-binary. Each year the company encourages and produces at least one production with female and non-binary identifying young people and we encourage gender fluid casting on all our productions.

Music theatre is a wide-ranging art form and submissions are encouraged from a diverse range of genres, including contemporary, pop, folk, electronic, blues, hip-hop, grime, rock, jazz, roots, world and opera, as well as musical theatre, and the form can be influenced by musicals, plays with songs, song cycles with a narrative, dance theatre, staged oratorio, alternative, physical, political and experimental theatre. Potential arrangements can be orchestral, recorded tracks or live music production. We are looking for a distinctive musical 'voice' that uses any genre to explore and express story through the music theatre form.

The narrative/story could be totally original or based on an existing other work, such as a book, film, event or true-life story; if your idea is based on an existing work, then it is important that the rights to the original are obtained in advance, at least in principal.

The intention of the Award is to:

- support the writer/creators in their chosen path
- push the boundaries of what music theatre can be
- highlight the voices wanting to diversify and challenge traditional notions of musical theatre
- share the resources BYMT has to develop and showcase the writers of the future
- inspire young people to engage with writing music theatre

BYMT will appoint the creative, technical and pastoral team for the production in consultation with the writer/s. The Award winners will be expected to attend at least one BYMT audition in January/February 2025. They will receive at least two mentoring meetings between January and June 2025 with experienced writers. The production will receive a development workshop with the young company in May 2025. The writers will have the opportunity to continue working on the script following this, with a final rehearsal ready script and score to be provided to the rest of the creative and technical team by 30th June 2025.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions should be made using the application form downloaded from the company website supported by the following:

- Synopsis or outline or concept of up to 2,000 words
- Short biogs of the writer/composers involved and why they want to collaborate on this production
- Links to Soundcloud or other samples of two pieces of music by the writer/composer OR 2 recorded songs or pieces of music from the proposed show if available
- A piece of sheet music to support one of these samples, if possible
- Samples of writing/dialogue up to 4 pages in length from the proposed work or other work by the writer(s)
- Samples of lyrics or libretto up to 2 pages in length from the proposed work or other work by the lyricist
- A reference from a creative professional that the writer/s have worked with in the past; ideally this is both a character and professional reference, outlining how the writer/s like to work and the quality of their writing

SELECTION PROCESS

Submissions will be reviewed by a panel drawn from BYMT staff, freelance composer/writers and BYMT young people. Assessment will be based on:

- Concept/Idea
- Music originality – an individual sound/voice
- Writing quality - feel and purpose
- Lyric content
- Relevance to being created with a company of young people
- Collaborative team (how you would like to develop the show)

Every piece will be read and scored by two members of the panel.

Writers who are shortlisted will be invited to come and meet the BYMT staff and pitch their idea to a panel of experienced writers and young people.

If you have any questions or concerns about the submission or need the information in another format, please call the BYMT office on 020 8563 7725 or email cerysjones@bymt.org.

Applications can be submitted via Google Forms on the company website or entered onto a Word document from the website and emailed to cerysjones@bymt.org. In the subject line, please state NMTA Submission 2025.

We wish you the best of luck with your application.

APPLY HERE

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