

BRITISH
YOUTH
MUSIC
THEATRE

NEW MUSIC THEATRE

WELCOME TO SERENE

"The town with the machine!"



NW
NEW
WOLSEY
THEATRE

30 - 31
AUG

WELCOME

Welcome to BYMT's 20th Anniversary Summer Season. We are delighted to be returning once again to the New Wolsey with our New Music Theatre Award winner; this year it is called Welcome to Serene, a brand new musical conjured up over the past two weeks by a dedicated team of professional adults and a fabulous cast of young people. The Award is given to young writer/composers who are creating their first fully staged musical and in May we spent two days at the New Wolsey with the cast, exploring the script and developing ideas and characters. Young people are involved in deciding which shows BYMT are going to create and they were particularly excited by the challenging yet playful nature of this piece, along with its quirky characters and inspirational music.

At BYMT, we commission more new musicals a year than any other company in the UK and we are thrilled to be showcasing the work of Iona Ramsay and Bethany Tennick, writers from Scotland who have dreamed up Serene, a seaside town and community under threat from sea and sand and not dissimilar to parts of coastal East Anglia.

BYMT couldn't make the work it does without our brilliant Pastoral and Technical staff supporting the Creative team and young people. We thank the parents, carers, schools and supporters of the Young Company, who enable these performers and musicians to learn and grow their creative flair, theatrical understanding and social development through BYMT projects. Thank you to the venue and to everyone who has helped to make this show possible, and to those who have supported the Company through its 20 years. We hope to be making new musicals for many more decades and to continue seeing our young people inspiring the way ahead for music theatre.

Emily Gray and BYMT Staff Team

A NOTE FROM BETHANY TENNICK & IONA RAMSAY

Welcome to Serene. The Town with the MACHINE.

On the morning of our first rehearsal, our director, Hannah Benson, sent us an article detailing a hurricane that had just hit the coast of North Carolina's Outer Banks, the area that inspired Serene. Attached was a video of a house on stilts cracking under the pressure of a wave and being dragged out to the Atlantic Ocean. I think we went into rehearsals with a little more urgency that morning, knowing the story of Serene was still being written, and perhaps, in some small way, we could have a hand in the ending.

We started writing Welcome to Serene in 2022, and we couldn't have dreamed then of the way it's developed and the incredible support we've been given by BYMT. We feel very privileged to have a creative team that saw this absurd little world with us: the Machine, the sandcastles, in all their life and color. We want to dedicate this show to the talented cast of young people who have lent us their imaginations for a couple of weeks, and to all the Pia's and Bo's of the world, deciding which kind of grown-ups they want to become.

To our audience... hey, stranger. Welcome to Serene. We hope you enjoy your sway!

Bethany Tennick & Iona Ramsay

ABOUT BRITISH YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE

British Youth Music Theatre (BYMT) is a national performing arts education charity and the largest commissioner of new musicals in the UK. Every year we engage around 2000 11-21 year olds in our auditions, workshops, Young Company and projects; BYMT helps young people and developing artists to navigate and further their training and careers in the arts. As an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and National Youth Music Organisation, we ensure that youth voice is at the heart of everything we do. BYMT's mission is to create opportunities for young people and early career creatives from all backgrounds to develop theatre skills and enhance wellbeing, through the collaborative and inclusive process of making original music theatre.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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Supported using public funding by



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ENGLAND**

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR

NASUWT
The Teachers' Union

A long-time sponsor of BYMT, the union supports our work to engage young people in schools and give them opportunities beyond the classroom, with both funding and use of their fantastic Hillscourt conference centre in Birmingham. BYMT and NASUWT share a passion for supporting teachers and ensuring creativity in the curriculum.

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Jeff Stratford

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Sarah Double

Fern Stoner

Linda Nightingale

ADVISORS TO THE TRUSTEES

Bridget Kalloushi (Finance)

Rachel Victor-Sampson (Inclusivity)

BOARD

Jimmy Jewell

Alastair Roberts

Aniela Shuckburgh

Lucy Stocks

Phillip Siddle

Francesca Unsworth

Roger Jones

Simon Millson (Chair)

We would like to thank the following for their contribution to our work:

New Wolsey Theatre Staff

Nancy Poole PR

ArtTouchesArt

Artwork by Rhiannon Dunn

Photography by Leanne Dixon

Our Creative Work Placements: Maddie

Smith, Janne Legaspi & Charlie Corral

Mary Swan and John Anderson for their
kind donation

Evie Press

ENJOYED THE SHOW? BECOME A FRIEND OF BYMT

For just £25 per month, your contribution will help support enthusiastic and underrepresented young performers and musicians through our bursary scheme, the commissioning of new music theatre and the training of emerging theatre artists. Plus, all our FRIENDS receive free admission* to one of our shows every year! To sign up please visit our website for more information:

www.britishyouthmusictheatre.org/support-us/become-friend

*free admission for up to 4 people

CREATIVES

IONA RAMSAY - BOOK WRITER, LYRICIST & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Iona Ramsay (she/her) is a writer and theatre-maker from Paisley, Scotland. She graduated from the University of St Andrews with an MA in English in 2019 and has since worked on several theatre and film projects. Recent writing credits include: *Thread: A New Musical* (One Ren) *Crisis: A Rallying Cry* (Traverse Theatre), *Land* (Kick the Door), *Not So Wee At All* (PACE Theatre Company) and *Beau and the Snowfairy* (PACE, One Ren).

BETHANY TENNICK - COMPOSER, MUSICAL DIRECTOR & LYRICIST

Bethany Tennick (she/they) is an actor-musician and composer based in Glasgow. They graduated with a BA in musical theatre from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2018, and was nominated for Best Performer in a Musical for The Stage in 2020. Recent theatre credits include: *Babs* (Traverse Theatre & PPP), *A Mother's Song* (Macrobert Theatre), *Land* (Gilded Balloon), *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Sleeping Beauty* (Gaiety Theatre), *All I Want for Christmas* (Macrobert Theatre). Bethany also originated their role in the musical *Islander*, taking the production on tour, off-West End, and off-Broadway. Screen credits include: *Our Ladies* (dir. Michael Caton-Jones) and short films *Bleed* and *Ghosted* (Kick the Door). Bethany composed the score for *Babs* (PPP) with Morna Young, and the music and lyrics for *Thread* and *Land* (Kick the Door). They are currently writing music and Music Directing for *Antigone* (Perth Youth Theatre) and *Beau and the Snow Fairy* (PACE).

HANNAH BENSON - DIRECTOR

Hannah is a Director and Artistic Director of multi-award winning theatre company Burnt Lemon Theatre. Hannah is passionate about developing innovative new musicals and is thrilled to be developing *Welcome to Serene* with the brilliant emerging

talent at BYMT. Hannah's previous work has been nominated for a WhatsOnStage and Visionary honours award as well as winning the LET Stepladder Award and New Diorama's Untapped Award. Credits include *Millennials* (The Other Palace, Director), *The Marathon Project* (Co-Creator, The Lowry), *Jerusalem* (West End, Research Consultant), *Tokyo Rose* (UK Tour, Director), *Footloose* (Leicester Curve, Director), *Merrily We Roll Along* (Leicester Curve, Director), *She Loves Me* (Sheffield Crucible, Assistant Director), *Shorts and Shocks* (New Diorama, Assistant Director and Composer), *The Half Moon Shania*, (Vault Festival and UK Tour, Director), *Here Comes The Flood* (Oxford Playhouse, Composer). Hannah is also training to be an illusion consultant for theatre.

ASH MUKHERJEE - CHOREOGRAPHER

Born in Kolkata, India, Ash trained in Bharatanatyam at Kalamandalam Kolkata with Guru Smt Thankamani Kutty. He pursued ballet with Lady Doreen Wells from the Royal Ballet and earned a BA (hons) in Jazz Theatre Dance from London Studio Centre. Acclaimed by Dance Europe Magazine as one of the finest Indian classical dancers in the UK, Ash was hand picked by the *This Is It!* team, to dance a duet with Michael Jackson at London's O2 Arena. Ash starred on BBC 3's *Move Like Michael Jackson* and created with choreographer Lavelle Smith Junior a solo integrating Indian classical dance with Michael's iconic hit *Man In The Mirror*, broadcast to three million viewers. Choreographic works include BBC 2's Royal Wedding Duet for *So You Think You Can Dance UK*, Katie Melua/William Orbit's *The Flood* video, and British Youth Music Theatre's *Educating Yorkshire T'Musical* and *The Naughty Carriage On The Orphan Train*. Awards include Outstanding Male Dancer Critics' Circle National Dance Awards UK nominee, Time Out London Rising Talent, and Critics' Choice artist by Dance Europe. As an actor

Ash has appeared in TNT's *Will*, Marvel's *The Eternals*, and HBO's *House Of Dragon*. His one-person show *Vishnu's Got My Back*, delving into mental health from post-colonial Kolkata to London, premiered at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, followed by a 2022 UK tour. Ash currently serves as Movement Director for The Citizens of the World Refugee Choir, performing at the Queens Platinum Jubilee Party at Buckingham Palace and Glastonbury 2022.

CLAIRE NICOLL - DESIGNER

Claire Nicoll is a talented designer, currently returning for her second show with British Youth Music Theatre. Having previously designed for last season's acclaimed production of *The Naughty Carriage on the Orphan Train*, directed by Emily Gray. Claire continues to captivate audiences with her innovative approach to design, connecting viewers to the intricate worlds inhabited by the characters on stage. Most recently, Claire worked in the costume department of *Grease* in the West End, and on the UK tour of *The Lion King* showcasing her versatility and skill working across multiple creative disciplines. Claire has just graduated with a diploma in Art Department for TV and Film from the prestigious Pinewood Studios, further honing her craft and solidifying her place in the industry. Her work is characterised by a keen eye for detail and understanding of the narrative power of visual elements.

DANNY VAVREČKA - LIGHTING DESIGNER

Danny trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, following a degree in Theatre at the University of Warwick. He was selected as the 2023 Design Lumière by the Association for Lighting, Production and Design. Theatre includes: *The Watsons* (Jermyn Street Theatre); *work.txt* (Soho Theatre & International Tour); *Without* (Underbelly, Edinburgh Fringe Festival); *Compositor E* (VAULTS

Festival); *Zombiegate* (Theatre503); *Period Dramas* (Other Palace); *Noson yn y Glwys* (Neuadd Dewi Sant); *Jigsaw, The Abductions* (Rose Theatre, Kingston); *The Moors* (Richard Burton Theatre); *Fires Our Shoes Have Made, The Improv Musical!* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival); *Dogfight* (Warwick Arts Centre Studio); *Timpson: The Musical* (King's Head Theatre). Opera includes: *Beauty and the Seven Beasts* (Brixton Jamm); *Don Giovanni / Il barbiere di Siviglia / Le nozze di Figaro* (Sherman Theatre); *Hansel and Gretel* (Goose Nest Theatre). Dance includes: *English National Ballet Emerging Dancer 2024* (Sadler's Wells Theatre); *Re- Play* (Mulryan Centre for Dance); *Empower in Motion* (Sadler's Wells Theatre); *Terra Nova* (Theatre Royal, Winchester). Credits as Associate/Assistant Lighting Designer include: *Starlight Express* (Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre); *Just For One Day* (Old Vic Theatre); *Roald Dahl's The Witches* (National Theatre); *The Hypochondriac* (Sheffield Crucible); *The Little Big Things* (Soho Place); *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Glyndebourne).

A&M PRODUCTIONS - SOUND DESIGN

A&M are an independent equipment rental and production company based in Northamptonshire. Although we offer a wide range in services such as Audio, Lighting, Sales, Installation & Power our speciality is with live theatre audio. A&M prides itself in providing industry standard - latest equipment prepared to the highest level, so that our customers and clients have nothing to worry about when hiring from us. Along side our equipment hire we are able to supply design and staffing for theatrical productions utilising staff and freelancers that work on many west end and regional touring professional productions, giving your performance that west end quality feel. A&M and their freelance Sound Designer, Marcin "Polski" Weber, are thrilled to be working on *Welcome to Serene* at New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich.

YOUNG CAST

Isabelle Anns
.....
Rebecca Ash
.....
Alexander Cameron
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Eithne Carson
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Yasmin Chenery
.....
Bethany Clarkson
.....
Agnes Cole
.....
Darcey Conway
.....
Amber Craig
.....
Philippa Cummings
.....
Elise Derrick
.....
Elizabeth Diamond-Conway
.....
Beau Dowinton
.....
Sophie Epps
.....
Charles Hagen
.....
Joel Haslam
.....
Charlotte Holmes
.....
Henry Reginald Johnson
.....
Shannen-Louise Jones
.....
Amos Lane
.....
Amelie Lloyd
.....
Georgina Madeley
.....
Anna Massey
.....
Ayaan Mohamed
.....
Mia Odeleye
.....
Heidi Olson
.....
Arthur Owen
.....
Lucy Parfitt
.....
Chloe Roberts
.....
Isla Robertson
.....
Issy Skinner
.....
Harry Taylor
.....
Joshua Turley
.....
Alex Viveash
.....
Millie Whale
.....
Leah Wingfield
.....
Alexa Wolff
.....
Xiaofu Zeng
.....

YOUNG INSTRUMENTALISTS

Drums **Alexander Cameron**
Reeds **Bethany Clarkson**
Flute **Charlotte McDonald**
Viola **Harry Taylor**

CREATIVE TEAM

Book Writer, Lyricist & Assistant Director	Iona Ramsay
Composer, Musical Director & Lyricist	Bethany Tennick
Director	Hannah Benson
Choreographer	Ash Mukherjee
Designer	Claire Nicoll
Production Manager	Emily Obasohan
Stage Manager	Assen Chan
Deputy Stage Manager	Iz Brett
Lighting Designer	Danny Vavrečka
Sound Design	Marcin "Polski" Weber (A&M Productions)
Assistant Musical Director	Maddie Smith
Assistant Designer	Janne Legaspi
Assistant Stage Manager	Charlie Corral
Professional Musician	Will Henderson

PASTORAL TEAM

Pastoral Lead	Alex Lonsdale
Pastoral Team Member	David Leo Stewart
Pastoral Team Member	Laurence Beveridge
Pastoral Team Member	Rebecca Bolton
Pastoral Team Member	Lydia Turner

OFFICE STAFF

Chief Executive & Creative Director	Emily Gray
Development Director	Alex Mastihi
Producer	Milly Summer
Finance Director	Clare Russell
Casting & Young Company Manager	Cerys Jones
Welfare & Outreach Manager	Rosa Higgs
Marketing Manager	Megan Gibbons
Marketing Assistant	Rhiannon Dunn
Production Coordinator	Heather MacInnes
Production & Office Assistant	Hope Kagutha
Music Coordinator	Anna Wood
Social Media Assistant	Olivia Nielsen

PATRONS

James Bourne, Jean Diamond, Peter Duncan, Grace Mouat, Ed Sheeran MBE, Zoë Wanamaker CBE



2025 SEASON OF BYMT



BREAKING NEWS

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A NEW MUSICAL WITHIN THE UK'S
MOST PRESTIGIOUS VENUES

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