

Cumbernauld Theatre to stage a new adaptation of Rona Munro's *Bold Girls*



Re-imagined production of the seminal Belfast-set play, directed by Michael Duke, will be staged from 24th September to 1st October.

- *Bold Girls* returns to the Cumbernauld stage more than 30 years since the original 7:84 Theatre production, which opened at the venue in 1990 before touring to critical and audience acclaim.
- Part of an Autumn season marking Cumbernauld Theatre's first year in its new venue at Lanternhouse, part of Cumbernauld Community Campus.
- Writer Rona Munro says: *'I couldn't tell you how delighted I was that Bold Girls is returning to its first home.'*

A new production of *Bold Girls* by Rona Munro will open on 24th September in Cumbernauld. The play is being produced in-house at Cumbernauld Theatre Trust's new home at Lanternhouse, a state-of-the-art performing arts centre based at Cumbernauld Community Campus.

It's 1991 in West Belfast. Despite the bombs, the soldiers, and their husbands being either locked away or killed, Marie, Cassie, and Nora are determined to get on with their lives. That is, until a mysterious young woman turns up on Marie's doorstep, disrupting their girls' night out and bringing devastating revelations that threaten to leave their friendships changed forever. Sharply funny, moving, yet never shying from the harsh realities of life during the Troubles, *Bold Girls* is a celebration of women's strength under siege.

This new production is being directed by Michael Duke, former Tinderbox Theatre Company (Belfast) Artistic Director, who is originally from County Down, and currently based in Glasgow. It will star Pauline Goldsmith, Katya Searle, Julie Martis, and Leigh Lothian.

The play is returning to Cumbernauld more than 30 years after its first performance there, where the acclaimed original production by the legendary 7:84 company opened in 1990. Touring Scotland in 1991, it also appeared at London's Hampstead Theatre with a cast including Imelda Staunton and Catherine Cusack. Rona Munro won the 'Evening Standard' Most Promising Playwright Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Award in 1991, and the play eventually became part of the Scottish school curriculum. **Bold**

Girls has since been re-staged numerous times, including a 1999 production at Cumbernauld Theatre directed by then-Artistic Director Simon Sharkey.

Director Michael Duke said: *'This play is a modern classic - so many people in Scotland have seen it, or read it in school. Plays don't get that sort of status for no reason - it's full of brilliantly written characters that audiences recognise, it has a great story, and so many memorable moments. It's set against the darkest period of the conflict in Northern Ireland, among these women who are laughing and battling their way through desperate times, until they eventually have to face up to secrets that might break up even these life long friendships.'*

Cumbernauld Theatre Trust started its life in 1963 as an informal group of local arts enthusiasts promoting events for the recently established population of the new town, and by 1963 established a theatre in a row of 18th century cottages. The cottage theatre closed in December 2019, with original plans to open the new performing arts venue delayed due to the pandemic.

Cumbernauld's new cultural home for theatre, cinema, music, comedy and dance opened in October 2021. Located in the heart of Cumbernauld, on the Cumbernauld Academy campus, this state-of-the-art venue houses two performance spaces - a 270-seat auditorium and Studio Theatre, a dance studio, and a newly opened 84-seat cinema and café.

Cumbernauld Theatre Chief Executive, Sarah Price said: *'With this new production of Bold Girls we celebrate one of Scotland's greatest female theatre writers, we celebrate our strong theatre tradition in Cumbernauld and we look ahead to engaging our schools and younger adult audiences in the stories that have shaped our world.'*

Ends -

Show info

Bold Girls is at Lanternhouse, Cumbernauld Theatre from 24th September – 1st October.

Opening press performance at 7.30pm on Sat 24th September.

[Images - Rehearsal photography, cast headshots, and archive images from the 1999 production at Cumbernauld Theatre](#)

Listings

Saturday 24 Sept - 19:30pm (Press Night)

Tuesday 27 Sept - 13:00, 19:30pm

Wednesday 28 Sept - 13:00 (sold out), 19:30

Thursday, 29 Sept - 13:00, 19:30

Friday 30 Sept - 10:00, 19:30

Saturday 1 Oct -14:30, 19:30

There will be a BSL interpreted and audio described performance on Thursday 29 September (13:00). All weekday performances are school matinees.

Running time: 2 hours (approximate)

Tickets on sale now online at www.lanternhousearts.org and by telephone: 01236 732887

Cast and Creative Team

Pauline Goldsmith - Nora
Katya Searle - Dierdre
Julie Martis - Marie
Leigh Lothian - Cassie

Kate Nelson - Executive Producer
Amanda Glover - Producer
Michael Duke - Director
Kai Fischer - Set/LX/Costume Designer
Dave Shea - Production Manager
Adam Tucker - Sound Designer
Jools Wall - Stage Manager
Christine Moffat - Stage Manager
Claire Semple-Gallacher - Assistant Stage Manager
Sophie Malcolm - Wardrobe Supervisor

For more information, contact:

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Biographies

Rona Munro, Writer

Rona Munro has written extensively for stage, radio, film and television.

Her recent theatre credits include *Lucy Barton*, adapted from the novel by Elizabeth Strout and performed by Laura Linney at The Bridge Theatre London in 2018-19. Other credits include *The James Plays*, a trilogy of award-winning plays produced by the National Theatre of Scotland, The National Theatre UK and Edinburgh International festival, *Scuttlers* (The Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester), *Little Eagles* (Royal Shakespeare Company), and *Iron* (Traverse, Edinburgh, Royal Court), for which she won the John Whiting Award in 2003.

Her television credits include the BAFTA-nominated *Bumping the Odds* and *Rehab*, and her films include *Ladybird Ladybird* and *Oranges and Sunshine*. Her work for radio includes several dramas for The Stanley Baxter Playhouse. Rona is the only writer so far to have contributed episodes to both the classic and contemporary series of *Dr Who*.

Michael Duke, Director

Michael Duke is originally from Banbridge, County Down in the north of Ireland and currently based in Glasgow.

He has worked with a wide range of companies, as a playwright, director and dramaturg, in Scotland, Ireland, England, Denmark and the USA. His writing includes sole authored, full length plays and many collaborative works, often created through devising processes with international ensembles of theatre and dance artists.

Personal highlights include:

Devising and scripting *Borderland*, the opening production by *Birds of Paradise* in 1991



Developing and directing many community theatre productions at Dundee Rep from 1992 - 1998 including the mainstage collaboration with Michael Marra on Blood Red Berries

Collaborating with Melanie Stewart Dance Theatre (Philadelphia) and Benchtoours (Scotland) across a series of highly innovative productions including Cocktail in the Sky, Perfect and Babel between 1995 and 2004

Working as a dramaturg with Scottish Dance Theatre for Still Cries at a Good Film choreographed by Stevie Prickett and Errol White

Devising and scripting Love After Death with Julia Ritter Performance Group in Philadelphia, New York and Prague from 2000 - 2003

Collaborating with on John Cobb as the script writer on Elmer McCurdy Rides Again at Northern Stage, Newcastle in 2001

Kinderbett, a Danish / English collaboration with Nina Kareis, Pete Livingstone and Gitta Malling at Limfjordsteatret and Kaleidoskop, Copenhagen, Denmark in 2002.

Working with Patrick Raynor on a series of productions for BBC Radio, including the Faith Hope and Charity trilogy

Directing Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme by Frank McGuinness at the Lyric Theatre in Belfast in 2003.

Writing Revenge for Tinderbox's Irish tour in 2003. Revenge was described as the first major post conflict play in Northern Ireland, and in 2018 was listed in the 25 Best Irish Plays since Dancing at Lughnasa

In 2003 being invited to take up the post of Artistic Director at Tinderbox Theatre Company to nurture and develop emerging and established playwrights in Northern Ireland, and the twelve years that followed, working in partnership with dramaturg Hanna Slatne and with a host of great playwrights including David Ireland, Jimmy McAleavey and Abbie Spallen

Being nominated for the Kenneth Tynan Award, for excellence in the field of Dramaturgy, in 2012

Working with the students of the unique course for deaf and hard of hearing actors at the RCS in Glasgow to create Last Woman Left in 2018, and continuing the collaboration with the show's director Claire Lamont and dramaturg Rita McDaid on his new play Irene Barr

Pauline Goldsmith - Nora

Pauline hails from Belfast and lives in Glasgow. She creates her own comedy shows, including Bright Colours Only, which she toured internationally in a hearse. Pauline is a double nominee of The Stage Best Actress Award, which she won for Samuel Beckett's Not I. Most recent theatre credits include Muster Station: Leith at the Edinburgh International Festival (Grid Iron), Hang (Tron Theatre), Interiors (Vanishing Point), the Olivier Award winning Baby Reindeer, The House (American Absurdum), and Eidolon (Beverley Hood). She is a creative associate of Vanishing Point Theatre.

Katya Searle - Dierdre

Katya Searle is a recent graduate from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she studied on the BA Acting programme During Katya's time training she has performed in Macbeth, Parliament Square and Takin' Over The Asylum. She is thrilled to be joining the cast of Bold Girls in her professional Debut. Katya was a finalist in the BBC's Carlton Hobbs competition. She also received the Charles Brooke Memorial Prize for speaking in Scots.

Julie Martis - Marie



Julie Martis is an actor from Glasgow. Recent theatre credits include Retribution Day, with Blueberry Goose Theatre, Bright Azzurro Sea with Lumenis Theatre, and Henry IV Part 1 - The Show Must Go Online. Screen credits include Till The Violets Come, with Mothcatcher Films, and the highly acclaimed short film 'A Boy's Life'.

Leigh Lothian - Cassie

Leigh is originally from Scotland and trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. Theatre Credits Include: Collet in The Da Vinci Code (UK Tour), Ruth Connors/Buckley 'The Lovely Bones' (Birmingham Rep/UK Tour), Alternate Carole King 'Beautiful: The Carole King Musical' (Aldwych Theatre/UK Tour), Jennie Liddell 'Chariots of Fire' (Gielgud Theatre), Kate Monster/Lucy 'Avenue Q' (Gatehouse Theatre), Kate Mair 'The Flowers O'Edinburgh' (Finborough Theatre), Mabel 'Selkie' (Southwark Playhouse), The Beautiful Game (Union Theatre) and Old Goat Song (Lion and Unicorn Theatre). Workshops Include: 'Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour' (National Theatre of Scotland/Royal Court), 'Lager Ladies' (National Theatre of Scotland), 'Being Groucho' (Theatre Royal, Drury Lane). TV and Film Include: Chorus Girl in Nolly (ITV).

Notes for editors

Cumbernauld Theatre Trust

Cumbernauld Theatre Trust is a performing arts charity that produces and presents professional theatre, music, dance and comedy experiences for a community of 50,000 Cumbernauld residents and 100,000 North Lanarkshire population. Established in 1963, Cumbernauld Theatre is the only professional independent arts organisation in Cumbernauld and North Lanarkshire and serves a vital social, cultural and economic purpose in a community that is economically disadvantaged, with widespread material poverty and deprivation, low academic attainment and poor-quality built environment.

As an established, professional producing theatre, we are both community-led and community conscious with activity that responds to the needs of the local community, yet we deliver outputs that achieve national and international recognition.

We aim for our work to have relevance and resonate with our audiences and participants to achieve deep and lasting impact and change. This work is informed by place, by the opportunities our new arts centre provides and by a desire to deliver affordable access to culture for everyone at all life-stages. Cumbernauld Theatre Trust is a key part of the infrastructure of Scotland's performing arts and is a Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) within the Creative Scotland portfolio. We receive investment in support of our work from a range of sources including Creative Scotland and North Lanarkshire Council, Weston Culture Fund and Scottish Government's Empowering Communities Programme – Investing in Communities Fund.

Cumbernauld Theatre Trust is also supported by Screen Scotland, Equity Charitable Trust, Foyle Foundation, The Levensat Trust, The Trades House of Glasgow Commonweal Fund, Land Trust, Robert Barr's Charitable Trust, Hugh Fraser Foundation, The Robertson Trust and Patersons Quarries, our Friends, and donors.

Lanternhouse is a privately-owned property built through Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) investment jointly operated by North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) and Cumbernauld Theatre Trust. The construction of Lanternhouse was financed via the SFT-managed hub community infrastructure programme for local authorities in support of the Scottish Government's National Infrastructure Mission to drive inclusive economic growth and build resilient places. For more information visit <https://www.scottishfuturestrust.org.uk/>.

<http://www.lanternhousearts.org/> | info@lanternhousearts.org

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Cumbernauld Theatre Trust (History)

The charity started life in 1963 as an informal group of local arts enthusiasts promoting events for Cumbernauld's newly established town's folk. Cumbernauld itself was a new town, perhaps one of the most ambitious modernist designs of the 20th century in the UK and its masterplan represented all kinds of aspirations for a modern way of life. By 1963 a the group under the direction of Tom Laurie established a theatre in a row of 18th century cottages.

Tom's vision was to establish a membership-based, community led arts centre where there was an opportunity to experience a melting pot of local creative talent and performances of folk, jazz, poetry, art exhibitions and drama, all open to the public. The influence of APG led to the appointment of many New-Town artists including Cumbernauld's Brian Miller whose appointment provided a unique opportunity for an artist to influence the formation of the town.

Cumbernauld Theatre became the regular home for the works of figures from the world of theatre and music who were renowned for developing distinctly political works that collectively explored and expressed critical perspectives on land ownership, mineral rights, political control and the economic divide within society. Such leading artists included for example, Tom McGrath and 7:84, and Ewan McColl and Peggy Seegar.

Generations of young people have been involved in the Cumbernauld Youth Theatre whose work has tackled pertinent issues such as unemployment, drug use or explored social movements such as feminism or racial equality. In the 1980's Simon Sharkey developed International Youth Theatre programmes creating opportunities for the young theatre participants to travel to take part in festivals in Singapore, Portugal and Jordan. In more recent years under Ed Robson, the Theatre branched out into delivering the Yay Ya Schools Literary Festival, and projects for Primary and Secondary schools that were linked to the curriculum for drama and English, as well as co-productions with New College Lanarkshire for trainee actors to gain valuable experience as they embarked on their careers. Our programmes have built up community togetherness and developed individuals' confidence and ambition, with many Youth Theatre graduates going on to study professional arts practices and have successful careers in the creative industries.

This history of continued investment in community creativity has led to a phenomena now clearly visible when visiting Cumbernauld Theatre of an audience that is representational of the community, people of all ages and from all walks of life. Our community in Cumbernauld of 50,000 is one where we see ourselves as creative people, having grown up in the company of fantastic creatives like Tom Laurie, John Baraldi, Robert Robson, Liz Carruthers, Simon Sharkey and Ed Robson.

We look back fondly on our days at the old Cottage Theatre and the friends we made there and we will continue to champion the arts as an intrinsic part of our community life. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone for sharing their recollections and history of the origins of Cumbernauld Theatre.

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and The National Lottery. Further information at creativescotland.com.

Scottish Government's Empowering Communities Programme – Investing in Communities Fund supports a range of activity through a staged funding approach and aims to encourage a more holistic response in tackling poverty, inequality and rural disadvantage. It does this by recognising that such



approaches to the design of projects and services, which are informed by lived experience and are person centred, can deliver multiple positive outcomes.

Weston Culture Fund award supports the artistic and creative development of the company's live performance, community arts and engagement programmes in its new home and their accessibility to the community of Cumbernauld and North Lanarkshire. The Weston Culture Fund was created in response to Covid-19 and aims to support the cultural sector to restart its work, refresh activities and re-engage audiences following Covid-19 closures.