**Monday 28 August 2023**

**Cast announced for The Gaiety, Perth Theatre and Cumbernauld Theatre Company’s co-production Tally’s Blood**

The Gaiety, Ayr, Perth Theatre and Cumbernauld Theatre Company have announced the cast for their co-production of Ann Marie Di Mambro’s *Tally’s Blood*.

The ensemble cast includes Scots-Italian actors Carmen Pieraccini (*River City*, *Scot Squad*) as Rosinella Pedreschi and Chiara Sparkes (*Glasgow Girls*, *Mamma Mia*) as Lucia Ianelli. Andy Clark (*Lost At Sea*, *Guilt*) plays Massimo Pedreschi, Craig McLean (*Rebus*, *A Play A Pie and A Pint*) is Hughie Devlin, Dani Heron (*The James Plays*, *The 306: Day*) is Bridget Devlin and Paul Corrigan (*River City*, *Black Watch*) is Franco Pedreschi.

*Tally’s Blood* will be directed by Ken Alexander, with design by Fraser Lappin, lighting design by Wayne Dowdeswell and sound design by Hilary Brooks.

Announcing the cast as rehearsals started in Perth Theatre, Ken Alexander said:

"I’m so delighted with the team of actors we have been able to bring together for Tally’s Blood. I’m particularly happy that we have been able to cast two Scotland based actors of Scots-Italian heritage, who will bring their own authentic experience to Ann Marie Di Mambro's play.

Carmen Pieraccini will play matriarch Rosinella Pedreschi and Chiara Sparkes plays her niece Lucia Ianelli. I’m thrilled to be working with Carmen for the first time, she will be a familiar face to television viewers from her work on the BBC Scotland drama series River City in which she played long-running character Kelly-Marie Adams and her role as Tina in Dear Green Place. In addition to her film and TV work, Carmen also has a wealth of stage experience including appearing as Magrit in the Scottish tour of The Steamie. She has also carved out a special niche as a Clowndoctor, providing play therapy for sick children.

Chiara Sparkes joined Dundee Rep Ensemble straight out of training at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and went on to appear in the tours of Glasgow Girls and the ABBA musical Mamma Mia. I worked with Chiara for the first time when she played the title role in Sleeping Beauty at the Gaiety Theatre in Ayr last year. All six actors in the production are really talented and strong, I can’t wait to start rehearsals.”

Twenty years after it was last seen in full-scale production, The Gaiety Ayr, Perth Theatre and Cumbernauld Theatre Company are combining to present the brand-new tour of Ann Marie Di Mambro’s modern Scottish classic *Tally’s Blood*.

Directed by Ken Alexander, who also directed the last professional production, *Tally’s Blood* will open in Perth Theatre from Thursday 21 until Saturday 30 September 2023 before touring to Adam Smith Theatre, Kirkcaldy; Cumbernauld Theatre at Lanternhouse; Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock; Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling and Theatre Royal, Dumfries, concluding its run at The Gaiety from Thursday 2 until Saturday 4 November.

There is hardly a town or city in Scotland that doesn’t have its own Italian café, chippy or ice-cream parlour. And it’s in one of these much-loved establishments that the story of *Tally’s Blood* starts…

Lucia can wrap her aunt and uncle around her little finger, cry to order, and she doesn’t like going to school. She likes Hughie though, so much so that they seal their friendship with a secret ceremony in the storeroom of her family’s ‘Tally’ shop – aided by an illicit bottle of ‘ginger’.

Auntie Rosinella loves Lucia like all the children she never had, but will anyone – particularly a ‘Scotch’ boy – ever be good enough for the girl she loves ‘best in the whole wide world’’?

As their childhood camaraderie blossoms into romance, Lucia and Hughie face more challenges than their countries taking opposing sides in the Second World War.

Told with heart and humour, *Tally’s Blood* follows the lives of an Italian immigrant family in Scotland, from the 1930s through to the 1950s, in a sweeping tale of poverty, passion and prejudice that travels from the west of Scotland to the sun-baked Italian countryside.

First performed at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh in 1990, *Tally’s Blood* is a Set Text for National 5 English.

For tickets and information for *Tally’s Blood* in Perth Theatre from Thursday 21 until Saturday 30 September, visit perththeatreandconcerthall.com, or call or visit the Perth Theatre Box Office (01738 621031 10:00 – 16:00 Monday to Saturday).

***Notes to editors***

**Director**

**Ken Alexander**

Ken Alexander is from Glasgow and trained as a director at Perth Theatre via the Scottish Arts Council Trainee Directors’ Bursary Scheme, mentored by the incomparable Joan Knight. His work includes *Oliver!* by Lionel Bart (nominated Best Ensemble CATS Awards); *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* by Liz Lochhead; *Macbeth* adapted by Jo Clifford; *Peace Child* by David Woolcombe, *The Slab Boys’* by John Byrne; *Phoenix* by Susan McClymont and David Gray Buchanan (Perth Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet* adapted by Jo Clifford; *Bondagers* by Sue Glover; *Parking Lot in Pittsburgh* by Anne Downie; *Into the Woods* by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* and *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams (Byre Theatre); *The Grapes of Wrath* adapted by Frank Galati; *Whisky Galore – A Musical*’ by Shona McKee McNeil and Ian Hammond Brown (nominated Best Director CATS Awards); *Bus Stop* by William Inge; *Passing Places* by Stephen Greenhorn, *Good Things* by Liz Lochhead; *Outlying Islands* by David Greig; *Dr Angelus* by James Bridie (Pitlochry Festival Theatre).

More recently his directing work has included *Aye, Elvis* by Morna Young (Oran Mor, Gilded Balloon and Traverse Theatre at MultiStory); *The Signalman* by Peter Arnott (Oran Mor/Traverse Theatre and Perth Theatre /RAW Materials Tour (nominated Best Director, Winner Best Production, Best New Play, Best Actor CATS Awards); *Melania* by Hilary Brooks and Clive King; *Rachel’s Cousins* by Ann Marie Di Mambro (A Play, A Pie and A Pint – Oran Mor/Traverse); *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The Scunner That Stole Christmas* (a five part digital series); an original panto *Jamie and the Unicorn* and *Sleeping Beauty* all co-written with Fraser Boyle (Gaiety Theatre, Ayr).

Other recent work includes *Jack and the Beanstalk* by Alan McHugh (Xroads Pantomimes, Orchard Theatre, Dartford); *A Doll’s House, Part Two* by Lucas Hnath (Vienna’s English Theatre); the Broadway musical *Little Women* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland at the Assembly Rooms Ballroom, Edinburgh Fringe Festival) and the premiere of *Break My Windows* by David Gerow (A Play, A Pie and A Pint at Oran Mor and Traverse Theatre).

His most recent work includes the premiere of *The Merry Wives of the Wyndford* by Linda Duncan McLaughlin for A Play, A Pie and A Pint (Oran Mor Glasgow/Macrobert Stirling) and currently this new tour of *Tally’s Blood* by Ann Marie Di Mambro in a co-production between Perth Theatre, Cumbernauld Theatre Lanternhouse and the Gaiety Theatre, Ayr.

Future work includes *Misty’s Magical Adventure* a new musical by Alan McHugh, with songs by Alan Penman and Olly Ashmore, for young children, on tour this autumn and and *Cinderella*, which Ken has co-written with Fraser Boyle for the Gaiety Theatre, Ayr.

**Playwright**

**Ann Marie Di Mambro**

Ann Marie has written extensively for theatre, television and radio in a career spanning more than 30 years. Her TV credits include *River City*, *Casualty*, *Eastenders*, *Inspector Lynley Mysteries* and *The Coroner*. She was writer in residence at the Traverse Theatre in 1990 and *Tally’s Blood* was a product of that time. Her stage plays include *Brothers of Thunder* and *The Letterbox*. She has written 3 plays for Glasgow’s Play Pie and Pint and is currently co-writing a play for the Citizen’s Theatre with Maureen Carr.

**Cast**

**Carmen Pieraccini**

Theatre credits include: Bizet’s *Carmen* (Scottish Opera); *The Steamie* 30th Anniversary Tour (Neil Laidlaw productions); *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Abroath Theatre); *Peer Gynt*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Nobody Will Ever Forgive Us* (NTS); *Six Black Candles* (Goldfish Theatre Company); *The Breathing House* (Rekindle Theatre Co.); *A Very Cosy Christmas*, *Sea* and *Land and Sky* (Tron Theatre); *Huxley’s Lab* (Grid Iron); *Steel Magnolias* (Tron Theatre) and *An Advert For The Army* (Oran Mor).

Television credits include: *River City* (BBC Scotland, series regular from 2003-2020); *Scot Squad* (BBC Comedy Unit); *Rab C Nesbitt* (BBC Comedy Unit); *Dear Green Place* (BBC Scotland); *Taggart* (SMG); *The Key* (BBC Scotland); *Brotherly Love* (BBC Scotland); *G-Force* (BBC) and *Glasgow Kiss* (BBC).

Film credits include: *Solid Air* (Elemental Films); *Late night shopping* (Film Four/Ideal World); *My Life So Far* (Miramax) and *Small Faces* (Idealworld).

Carmen has also been working as a Clowndoctor for charity Hearts and Minds for the past 13 years.

**Chiara Sparkes**

Chiara trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and The Dance School of Scotland.

Theatre Credits include: *Mamma Mia!* (UK & International Tour); *Glasgow Girls* (2017 & 2019 Tour); *The Yellow on the Broom*, *The Snow Queen* (Dundee Rep); *Eddie and the Slumber Sisters* (NTS/Catherine Wheels); *Thread* (Kick the Door); *Sleeping Beauty* (Ayr Gaiety); *Robin Hood* (Cumbernauld Theatre); *Orphans* (recorded vocalist, NTS)

Film Credits include: *Scotland is Open* Global Campaign (Scotland is Now); *Logan High* (CBBC)

Chiara was The Young Scottish Musical Theatre Performer of the Year 2017.

**Dani Heron**

Dani trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA)

Theatre credits include: *Adults* (Traverse Theatre); *Sugar Coat* (Southwark Playhouse, London); *Cinderella* (PACE Theatre, Paisley); *Underwood Lane* (Tron Theatre, Glasgow); *The Golden Rage;Ten Things To Do Before You Die*, *My Name is Sarah and...* (Play, Pie and a Pint); *Sugar Coat* (Vault Festival, London); *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 Glasgow/Home Manchester); *306: Day* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Jumpy* (The Lyceum Edinburgh); *The James Plays* (National Theatre of Scotland); *The Venetian Twins* (The Lyceum Edinburgh); *A Perfect Stroke* (Oran Mor/Traverse Theatre); *Chariots of Fire* (West End).

Television credits include: *Crime* (Britbox); *Murder Island* (Channel 4); *Casualty* (BBC); *Armchair Detectives* (BBC). Film includes *Skin Deep*, *I Am Me*, *Rat Trap*.

**Andy Clark**

Andy Clark is originally from Blairgowrie and studied at Dundee College and RSAMD (now RCS).

Previous appearances at Perth Theatre include: *Kidnapped*, *Tam O’Shanter* and *Lost At Sea*. Other theatre work includes: *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart, Julie (*National Theatre of Scotland); *Lampedusa, Hamlet, Othello, A Handful of Dust, Cleo, Camping, Emmanuelle & Dick* (Citizens Theatre); *The Winter’s Tale, The Cherry Orchard* (Royal Lyceum); *Anthony & Cleopatra,* *Edward II* (Bard in the Botanics); V*ernon God Little* (Young Vic); *Gastronauts* (Royal Court); *Of Mice & Men* (Leeds Playhouse); *Measure for Measure* (Theatr Clwyd); *The Government Inspector* (Communicado); *The Seagull, The Duchess of Malfi, Cabaret* (Dundee Rep Ensemble)*.*

Televisionincludes: *Guilt, Bob Servant, River City, Sea of Souls*, *Shetland*, *Rebus, Taggart.*

Film includes: *The Da Vinci Code*, *Behold Me Standing*.

Radio includes: *Killing Kate, The Poet & the Echo, Boswell at Large & McLevy.*

**Craig McLean**

Craig McLean is a Glasgow based actor from Holytown.

After graduating from New College Lanarkshire, Craig began his career at Òran Mór's *Play Pie And A Pint*, acting in several of their productions, the first being *A Respectable Widow Takes To Vulgarity.*

Screen credits include *Rebus* (Eleventh Hour Films); *Dirty Water* (STV); *Unders* (Angel Face Productions)

**Paul James Corrigan**

Paul can most recently be seen in *Bend It Like Bertie* at the Glasgow Pavilion as well as in Aberdeen’s production of *Peter Pan*.

He also recently starred in the Crossroads Production of *Beauty & the Beast* in Aberdeen, and in *The Ticket Meister* at the Oran Mor and The Beacon, directed by April Chamberlain.

Theatre includes: *Black Watch, Cuttin A Rug* (NTS, Citizen’s theatre); *It’s Behind You* (Oran Mor) *Sunshine On Leith* (West Yorkshire Playhouse and touring).

Further TV Credits include: *Scot Squad*, *Still Game* (BBC).

Paul is probably best known for appearing as Stevie in the recurring Scottish drama *River City* for the BBC and the role of Adam in the beloved *Gary: Tank Commander*, a role which he reprised last year for an arena tour in Scotland.

**The Gaiety, Ayr, Perth Theatre and Cumbernauld Theatre Company present**

**Tally’s Blood**

Written by Ann Marie Di Mambro

Directed by Ken Alexander

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Told with heart and humour, *Tally’s Blood* follows the lives of an Italian immigrant family in Scotland, from the 1930s through to the 1950s, in a sweeping tale of poverty, passion and prejudice that travels from the west of Scotland to the sun-baked Italian countryside.

This new production marks 20 years since the last professional tour of *Tally’s Blood*, which was also directed by Ken Alexander in 2003.

*‘we love and laugh and hope and fear and dance and play… this is the stuff of life’* **Ann Marie Di Mambro**

**Tour**

[Opening at Perth Theatre from Thu 21 – Sat 30 Sep 2023](https://www.perththeatreandconcerthall.com/whats-on/tally-s-blood-240202), then touring to:

[Adam Smith Theatre, Kirkcaldy: Tue 3 + Wed 4 Oct](https://www.whatsonfife.co.uk/event/121972-tally%E2%80%99s-blood/)

[Cumbernauld Theatre at Lanternhouse: Tue 10 – Sat 14 Oct](https://lanternhousearts.org/events/tallys-blood/)

[Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock: Mon 23 + Tue 24 Oct](https://www.ercultureandleisure.org/events/tallys-blood/)

[Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling: Wed 25 – Fri 27 Oct](https://www.macrobertartscentre.org/shows/517827ADKRRLNDMGDHKTQKLVHGBRSRDKB)

[Theatre Royal, Dumfries: Mon 30 + Tue 31 Oct](https://www.theatreroyaldumfries.co.uk/whats-on/tally%E2%80%99s-blood)

[The Gaiety, Ayr: Thu 2 – Sat 4 Nov](https://thegaiety.co.uk/events/tallys-blood/)

**The Gaiety** has been an iconic part of Ayr Town Centre since 1902. During this time, it’s survived fires, world wars, threatened demolitions, and most recently, a global pandemic; overcoming the odds time and time again to bring a vibrant theatre programme to Ayrshire. We aim to ensure that in every season, you’ll find something for everyone on our stage.

The Gaiety is so much more than just a theatre, however. We’re committed to ensuring that everyone in Ayrshire has access to the performing arts. Our creative engagement programme offers real opportunities to take part in theatre to those who might otherwise never get the chance – from youth theatre to summer drama school, writing groups to art exhibitions, workshops and projects in writing, directing, performing, stage management and much, much more. Our Gaiety On Tour programme meanwhile, brings live theatre to local venues across rural Ayrshire. We also use both our touring, and our main and studio stages, to platform local and emerging performers. Our community is at the heart of everything we do.

**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 Levenseat 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.

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**The Gannochy Trust** was established for charitable and public purposes by philanthropist and businessman A K Bell in 1937. A K Bell’s belief that “after you have a roof over your head and your bread and butter” you should look to invest any surplus for the benefit of your native town, has matured into a lasting legacy that has improved the quality of life of many thousands of people, not only in Perth but all over Scotland.

Over the past five years, the Trust has disbursed over £15m in grants which included a grant of £3m towards the redevelopment of Perth Theatre and grants to many community led groups across Perth and Kinross.



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