

NATIONAL CONVENTION *of* YOUTH DRAMA

Saturday 30 March 2024 | #DramaCon2024



Youth
Theatre
Arts
Scotland

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REP



Welcome to #DramaCon2024

Welcome to Dundee Rep and to the National Convention of Youth Drama 2024, affectionately known as #DramaCon2024.

Over the years, YTAS's conferences and symposia have celebrated and reflected upon changes happening across Scotland's youth theatre sector. These events have served as platforms to share ideas, challenges and ambitions, and they've helped shape the course of our collective future. The importance of DramaCon in 2024 remains as vital as ever.

Current social and political changes are inspiring both fear and progress nationwide, affecting the lives of our youth theatre participants, staff, and volunteers. All whilst we continue to deal with the legacy of COVID and ongoing challenges posed by the cost of living crisis. At times it can all feel like too much to manage. Nevertheless, there are still moments which reaffirm our purpose and provide insight into how we can improve in the future. So, we improvise, we rehearse, then we perform at our best. This is how we make youth theatre which changes the lives of young people.

It's also why we've chosen the focus of this year's convention as 'Acting on our Learning'. We aim to draw new insights, ambitions, and practice from what we've seen and experienced. During today's event we'll build upon last year's discussions and reflect on the findings of YTAS's 2023 Sector Review. We'll explore action research taking place across Scotland and beyond, and we'll highlight some of the amazing work of our members.

#DramaCon2024 is not a place to be passive, but a place to actively work together for Scotland's young theatre-makers. So, don't hesitate to get stuck in and make connections. If you have any questions, remember that the YTAS staff and the Dundee Rep front of house team are all here to help, so be sure to ask!

YTAS's sector support and development work is possible thanks to funding from Creative Scotland, the Gannochy Trust, Scottish Government's Youth Work and Adult Learning Workforce Development Fund, the Backstage Trust, the Brownlie Charitable Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation, the William Syson Foundation and the Britford Bridge Trust. A huge thanks also goes to our hosts, Dundee Rep, for all their support with today's event.

We wish you an inspiring day.

All of the team at **Youth Theatre Arts Scotland**

Today at a Glance

- 9.30am Registration | Refreshments | Workshop/Discussion Sign-up
- 10.30am Welcome and update from YTAGS
- 11am Coffee Break
- 11.15am Morning Workshops & Discussions
- Dance Workshop with Scottish Dance Theatre
 - Engaging Advocacy workshop with Children's and Youth Arts Advocacy
 - LGBT Youth Scotland Charter with YTAGS, Eden Court and PACE
- 12.30pm **Keynote Call to Action: Youth Theatre and the Justice System**
- 1pm Lunch
- 2.15pm Afternoon Workshops & Discussions
- Dance Workshop with Scottish Dance Theatre
 - International Collaboration with YTAGS, Firefly Arts and BUZZ Artists
 - National Youth Work Outcomes with YouthLink Scotland
 - Early Career Practitioners Meet-up with YTAGS
- 3.15pm Afternoon Break
- 3.30pm Shout Outs
- 4.30pm Wrap-up and end of day drinks
- 5pm **End of #DramaCon2024**
- 7.30pm Performance: *The Life and Times* by Scottish Dance Theatre (optional)
Discounted £12 tickets for this evening's dance performance are available to purchase from Dundee Rep Box Office, using the code **NCYD12**

WiFi Instructions

#DramaCon2024 attendees should use Dundee Rep's public WiFi. Look for the network name *Dundee Rep Guest* and the password is *taysquare*.

Social Media

As you've probably figured out by now, we'll be using **#DramaCon2024** across our social media channels throughout the day. Feel free to join in the conversation!



@YTAGS Scot



@YTAGS Scot



@YTAGS Scot



/company/youth-theatre-arts-scotland

Keynote Call to Action

Beyond the Walls: The story of Polmont Youth Theatre

In May 2023, **Glass Performance** and **Polmont Youth Theatre** hosted a Symposium to investigate how the youth theatre sector can better support young people with experience of the justice system. YTAS have invited the team Tashi, Jess and Louise to share their learning from this event as well as reflect on the journey of their organisation and as individual artists. The presentation will be the next step in acting on their learning with an aim to inspire the wider sector in a call to action.

Glass is an award-winning Arts Company that gives voice to unheard stories, told by everyday people. They began working together in 2004 and since then have made performances and co-produced projects on small and large scales – from theatres to



(Photo: © Eoin Carey • Polmont Youth Theatre 2023)

nightclubs and football pitches – for an audience of 600 to an audience of just one. In February 2019, Glass launched Polmont Youth Theatre (PYT) in HMPYOI Polmont, the first ever Youth Theatre in a Scottish prison. It is delivered through their ongoing partnership with Barnardo's and the Scottish Prison Service.

Polmont Youth Theatre is a legacy from the National Theatre of Scotland's *Futureproof* programme in Year of Young People 2018, when Glass worked

with a group of young men in the prison to create *MOTION*; an original show about what it means to be a young man in Scotland today. The group continue to meet every Thursday inside the prison and make original devised theatre from their own ideas and perspectives about the world as they find it.

While many of the individuals in the group find a place to belong and a creative home in PYT it can be difficult for them to continue their love of the performing arts post-release. Many of them were brought up thinking that Drama was not for them or struggle to understand how to make it part of their future. This talk asks why? How can this change? How are we making sure Youth Theatre is for everyone? And how are we supporting everyone to take part in it?

www.glassperformance.co.uk/polmont-youth-theatre/

Networking

In the spirit of Easter (you know, with the bunnies and the chocolate) YTAS is sending you on a **Networking EGG HUNT!**

Dotted around the theatre are YTAS Networking Eggs, each containing a chocolate treat and a question, statement or challenge. Your task is to find someone with a matching egg quest and answer the question, statement or challenge together! There are 10 people with the same egg quest as you... can you find them all?



Workshops & Discussions

The workshops and discussions are your chance to dive in a bit deeper into topics that interest you and to pick up ideas to apply to your own youth theatre. Make sure you sign up before the morning break for your preferred morning and afternoon sessions at the registration desk.

11.15am - 12.15pm

Dance Workshop

Join Dundee's own Scottish Dance Theatre in a one-hour workshop to get your blood pumping and to inspire you. Take away practical movement activities you can use in your own youth theatre. www.scottishdancetheatre.com

Engaging Advocacy

A fun and practical workshop which will help you understand what advocacy means and how to get creative with how you influence decision-makers. Hosted by representatives from the national collective Children's and Youth Arts Advocacy (CYAA).

www.cyaa.scot

LGBT Youth Scotland Charter

Join YTAS, Eden Court and PACE to learn about their experience of embedding LGBT inclusion in their organisations on their path to obtain the LGBT Youth Scotland Silver Charter Award. Take away an action plan for supporting LGBT young people in your youth theatre. www.lgbtyouth.org.uk



(Photo: © Andy Catlin • Emergence Edinburgh Nov 2019 | Dumfries Hub Nov 2023)

1.15pm - 2.15pm

Dance Workshop

Join Dundee's own Scottish Dance Theatre in a one-hour workshop to get your blood pumping and to inspire you. Take away practical movement activities you can use in your own youth theatre. www.scottishdancetheatre.com

International Collaboration

Hear artists from Scotland feedback on their experience of YTAS' BUZZ project, which brought together youth theatre practitioners from across Europe. This Q&A session will be followed by an open discussion about international collaboration opportunities. Take away ideas for new international projects and some basic knowledge about where to look for support. www.buzznetwork.eu

National Youth Work Outcomes

Following the release of the updated National Youth Work Outcomes, YouthLink Scotland joins us for workshop investigating how these outcomes can be used to enhance the evaluation tools of the youth theatre sector. Take away a deeper understanding of the National Youth Work Outcomes and some practical tools for using them in your youth theatre. www.youthlink.scot

Early Career Practitioners Meet-up

For practitioners aged 25 years and younger, this session offers the chance to meet up in person after a series of online events and to build and feedback on YTAS' training events. This is a great chance to join an expanding network of youth theatre artists. Take away some new contacts and a personal development plan for the next 12 months.



(Photos: © Andy Catlin • BUZZ Jun 2023 | DramaCon Edinburgh Mar 2023)

Membership Development Programme

YTAS members have access to our Membership Support Portal, where we have collated a vast number of resources to help develop various aspects of your organisation, anything from re-evaluating the structure of your organisation to creating a new fundraising strategy.

The 'Supportal' is split into Four Support Zones:

Support Zone One: Foundations

This Zone covers everything that a youth theatre should have in order to run legally and be governed well. If you find that you don't have everything in place or you are a new youth theatre, please don't panic.

Support Zone Two: Policy and Access

This Zone provides guidance on what policies and procedures you should have in place and how to make youth theatre as accessible as possible.

Support Zone Three: Your Team

Whether you're a team of two or twenty-two, in this Zone YTAS has collated guidance for best practice when working with others.

Support Zone Four: Business Development & Fundraising

This Zone covers: business planning, managing money, marketing, fundraising, evaluation, and sustainability. YTAS hopes to alleviate some of this pressure through providing guidance and useful tools to support these areas.



(Photo: © Emma Bar • Inverness Hub Jan 2024)



(Photo: © Andy Catlin • Dumfries Hub Nov 2023)

Our Membership Support Co-ordinator, Anthony Steel, is happy to guide you through these resources and identify where and how to address your development goals. We can do this with the help of our handy **Membership Support Checklist**, which allows us all to identify where you feel you're at with certain topics in each Support Zone. This can be an ongoing conversation to help track your progression and work towards a more sustainable business.

Freelancers can also benefit from the resources available in the portal and from Anthony's 1-2-1 support.

Contact Anthony at any time at anthony@ytas.org.uk to learn more or visit our website at www.ytas.org.uk/about-ytas/membership.

Sector Shout Outs

A chance to shout about your work from the rooftops – or at least from a stage!

YTAS invites attendees of DramaCon to share your current projects, aims, wishes for a project partner, celebrations, or anything else! The catch is, you only have two minutes to do it in. The clock is ticking...



(Photos: © Andy Catlin • DramaCon Edinburgh Mar 2023)

Tell Us About It!

Travel Survey and Green Info



YTAS is a climate aware and climate active organisation. We are proud to be a member of the Green Arts Initiative, an interactive community of arts organisations working to reduce their environmental impact and contribute to a more sustainable Scotland. We are committed to paying close attention to our own environmental impact, and to inspiring, encouraging and supporting our sector to act sustainably as we transition towards a climate resilient and low-carbon economy.

One way we are doing this is through the Travel Survey you completed when you arrived today. By telling us how you travelled to DramaCon, you're helping us monitor and reduce the travel emissions that we cause and helping Scotland on its journey to becoming a net-zero society. Thank you for playing a part in that.

At DramaCon, we are also:

- Encouraging you to consider making the most sustainable transport choice to travel to and from DramaCon.
- Reducing paper resources. We'll be sending out any delegate lists by email, and where printing is used, we've chosen recycled paper where possible.
- Providing vegetarian-based catering, with vegan and other dietary requirement options available.
- Encouraging you to bring your own keep cup to use throughout the day.

Event Feedback



Thanks for being here today! Your interest in being a part of this dedicated, skilled and vibrant community is what keeps Scotland's youth theatre sector alive.

Now, we'd love to hear from you, so please scan the QR code and complete the form. We're all about feedback – it's what helps us figure out what's working and how we can make things even better. So, don't hold back. Let us know what you think and keep the conversation going!

What's Next at YTAS?

2024 is jam-packed with YTAS opportunities for you to continue to grow, connect and learn.

National Festival of Youth Theatre 2024

Pitching its marquee in Rozelle Park, Ayr, for the fourth time, the National Festival of Youth Theatre (otherwise known as #NFYT2024) will be a fun-packed weekend of performances, workshops, making new pals, and inspiring new experiences for our young participants. Join us from Friday 5 - Monday 8 July 2024 as we take over Rozelle Park and the historic Gaiety Theatre.

- Group Bookings close on 16 April
- One-day Bookings close on 7 June
- Amigos applications close on 15 April (our NFYT volunteer programme for assistants and early career practitioners)

Training Opportunities

YTAS Regional Hubs have been designed to upskill practitioners, share practice, support emerging artists, spark ideas for future partnerships and create stronger regional working relationships. Join us across the country for workshops, networking activity and lots of lively discussion.

- Ayr Regional Hub: 6 - 7 July at NFYT (Bookings open May)
- Borders Regional Hub: Autumn 2024 (Bookings open August)
- North Lanarkshire Hub: Autumn 2024 (Booking open August)

Interested in hosting your own Hub? Contact Emma Barr, Sector Development Manager, on emma@ytas.org.uk to arrange a chat.

Next Generation

Thanks to funding from Young Start, YTAS has embarked on a new multi-year project to support early career practitioners get started in the youth theatre sector. The project will include:

- Training in facilitation and youth theatre as an artform
- Accredited training with Youth Scotland
- Training and support in employment practice
- Networking opportunities with peers and employers
- Tickets to theatre and social events
- Work experience with YTAS and our members

If you are an early career practitioner or have a young colleague or senior youth theatre member who you think might benefit from joining this programme, contact Emma Barr, Sector Development Manager, on emma@ytas.org.uk.



Youth Theatre Arts Scotland

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(Cover Photo: © Andy Catlin • Emergence 2023)



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Funded by



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