

# National Theatre

Cast announced as rehearsals are underway for National Theatre's schools tour of *The LeftBehinds*, reaching 10,000 students from 11 areas across England

Thursday 5 December 2024



- Cast and full creative team announced for new production co-created by **Ned Bennett** and **Ross Willis** to inspire young people by transforming school halls to create theatre magic
- The production will be seen by 10,000 young people from Devon to Sunderland from January to March 2025
- *The LeftBehinds* marks six years of extensive touring into school halls as part of the *Theatre Nation Partnerships* programme

For images, click [here](#)

The National Theatre kicks off the new year with a new schools touring production, *The LeftBehinds*. Part of the *Theatre Nation Partnerships* programme, the tour will be seen

by 10,000 young people, visiting secondary school halls in 11 areas across 11 weeks. In partnership with local theatres, the tour runs from 13 January - 28 March 2025.

Co-created by Bristol playwright **Ross Willis** and director **Ned Bennett**, *The LeftBehinds* is a new production set in a post-apocalyptic future. *The LeftBehinds* must race across a desolate wasteland in a high-octane quest to rebuild an android, unlock its power and save the planet. This new production gives students access to a genre-pushing theatrical experience in their school hall. In addition to seeing the show in their school hall, pupils will take part in an interactive workshop exploring the technical elements to produce the show and teachers will receive accompanying education resources.

Announced today, *The LeftBehinds* cast includes **Ryn Alleyne** as Kit Knightshade, **Tanaka Mpofo** as Bandit, **Julian Brett** as Shadow, **Gabriella Foley** as Rot, **Francis Nunnery** as the Android, **Ethan Hughes** as Beandigo, **Emma Gray** as Ducky, and **Brandon Kimaryo** as swing.

The creative team includes Associate Director **Rachel Lemon**, Movement Director **Jackie Kibuka**, Puppetry Designer, Builder and Director **Matt Hutchinson**, Production Manager **Jordan Harris**, Set and Costume Designer **Georgia Lowe**, Lighting Designer **Jessica Hung Han Yun**, Composer & Sound Designer **Giles Thomas**, Casting Director **Abby Galvin**, Associate Designer **Jasmine Araujo**, Associate Lighting Designer **Lucy Adams** and Trainee Resident Director **Rita Pula**.

*The LeftBehinds* is a new version of a play Ross and Ned made with Technical, Acting and Directing students at LAMDA in 2022. In partnership with local theatres, the production will be seen by students in schools across Outer East London and South Essex, Sunderland, Stoke-on-Trent, Wolverhampton, North Devon, Wakefield, Doncaster, Greater Manchester, Leicester and Peterborough.

The **Theatre Nation Partnerships** network introduces new audiences to theatre in areas which have historically experienced low investment and engagement in cultural activities. The network combines local expertise with nationally delivered activity, creating more opportunities for local communities and schools to engage with cultural and creative experiences. Through Theatre Nation Partnerships, many schools are also taking part in *Speak Up*, a nationwide schools programme in collaboration with local artists to inspire young people to speak up about issues that are important to them.

*The LeftBehinds* will also tour into Morley College in North Kensington in its last week, where it will host local schools across Greater London to watch the show together and reach as many students as possible. The National Theatre has been developing its relationship with Morley College as part of a multi-year creative project with people and organisations across North Kensington. As part of this, the National Theatre has worked

with Morley College on projects including Space to Create and Writing for Theatre programmes, careers fairs, and community events.

Co-creators **Ned Bennett** and **Ross Willis** said “*We are thrilled to be collaborating again on this new incarnation of The LeftBehinds. From its beginnings at LAMDA to its development with the NT, this production has continually evolved, and we’re delighted to now share it with young people. We couldn’t be more excited that the National Theatre is bringing this production directly into school halls across the country.*”

**Emma Hudson**, a Performing Arts teacher from Sir Thomas Wharton Academy in Doncaster, said about last year’s secondary school tour of Jekyll & Hyde “*The prestige of having The National Theatre in our school was a great honour. The production was slick and exciting. The cast and crew were great with our students and everyone I spoke to really enjoyed watching the production.*”

Reaching a record number of young people this year, the National Theatre’s Learning & National Partnerships Department aims to inspire young people nationwide, widen access to creative experiences in schools and boost skills to support the next generation of theatre-makers. Through student conferences, youth theatre programmes, training opportunities and digital learning, the National Theatre is committed to enabling every young person in the UK to experience the NT before they leave school. 89% of secondary schools are signed up for free access to the National Theatre Collection, reaching 1.3 million students across the UK.

Working with theatres nationally, the National Theatre also encourages new ways for young people to access theatre making through programmes like Speak Up, which will engage 140,000 young people in 55 secondary schools between 2022-2025, and Nationwide Young Technicians, which offers young people the chance to develop skills and learn about the variety of backstage and off-stage roles.

For more information about Theatre Nation Partnerships and the schools’ tour, visit the [NT Website](#).

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

To download images please click [here](#).

For press enquiries and more information, please contact Orla Bentley at [Obentley@nationaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:Obentley@nationaltheatre.org.uk)

### **Tour Schedule**

Date	Location
------	----------

13-17 January	Outer East London and South Essex
20-24 January	Sunderland
27-31 January	Stoke-on-Trent
3-7 February	Wolverhampton
10-14 February	North Devon
24-28 February	Wakefield/ Doncaster
3-7 March	Greater Manchester
10-14 March	Leicester
17-21 March	Peterborough
24-28 March	London

### **With Thanks**

Secondary Schools Touring is supported by The Mohn Westlake Foundation, Delta Air Lines, The Ingram Trust, The Constance Travis Charitable Trust, Susan Miller & Byron Grote, The Anthony and Elizabeth Mellows Charitable Settlement, The Britford Bridge Trust, and The Dow Clewer Foundation.

The Mohn Westlake Foundation supports nationwide Learning programmes for young people. Nationwide learning is supported by Buffini Chao Foundation, Clore Duffield Foundation, Crevan O'Grady & Jane McClenahan, MFPA Trust Fund for the Training of Disabled Children in the Arts, The Kartik Foundation, Behrens Foundation, Marlow Trust, Cleopatra Trust, and The Andor Charitable Trust.

### **About the National Theatre**

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. The National Theatre shares unforgettable stories with millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

World-leading artists make their best work at the National Theatre with the widest possible audience and impact. The National Theatre invests in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously its role as the nation's theatre. Of the new productions developed each year with a wide range of theatre companies, a third of that research and development resource is dedicated to shows staged at theatres outside London.

Through touring our work to local theatres and schools and nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in every local authority in the UK. A registered charity with deeply embedded social purpose, the National Theatre works with hundreds of schools and communities across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity, and to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre.

For more information, please visit [nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://nationaltheatre.org.uk)

@NationalTheatre

@NT\_PressOffice

### **About Theatre Nation Partnerships**

A collaboration between 13 partners across 14 areas, TNP combines local expertise with nationally-delivered activity to build and sustain audiences for theatre across England.

Activity includes touring to local venues and into schools, participatory opportunities and in-depth engagement with community groups.

Between 2022 to 2025, the network's focus is on welcoming new audiences to theatre and creating more opportunities for people to engage, supporting the long-term health of local theatre audiences. The Theatre Nation Partnerships network will reach 500,000 targeted audiences, young people, and community groups over this three-year period.

Our Theatre Nation Partners are Cast in Doncaster; Curve in Leicester; New Theatre and Key Theatre in Peterborough, Queen's Theatre Barnstaple and The Landmark in Ilfracombe, North Devon with Landmark Theatres; Queen's Theatre Hornchurch; Restoke, Regent Theatre & Victoria Hall (Ambassador Theatre Group) in Stoke-on-Trent; Sunderland Empire, Sunderland Culture; the Lowry in Salford (covering Greater Manchester including Rochdale & Wigan); Theatre Royal Wakefield; Trowbridge Town Hall; and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

[www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-us/theatre-nation-partnerships](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-us/theatre-nation-partnerships)