

## **Playwrights' Studio, Scotland Proposal Document**

### **The National Play Resource, Scotland**

The Playwrights' Studio aims to build an accessible resource of plays professionally produced in Scotland for the public and industry professionals alike. This resource will be available to search online, with direct links to the purchase of plays and will eventually cover the last three decades.

This enterprise would be a significant tool in the promotion of Scotland, creating trade opportunities overseas and throughout the UK.

This is a large scale project but has the potential to be a significant national resource. This proposal is in two discrete parts, a Feasibility Study and a Stage One Development and Implementation. Each part should be considered independently.

### **Context**

There is an existing model for this type of national resource in Ireland managed by Theatreworks. They have already been consulted and their web based resource [www.irishplayography](http://www.irishplayography.com) is a working model of how the internet can be used to make a nation's dramatic writing available to the public, student, educators, researchers and theatre producers all over the world. They estimate that the cost for the irishplayography has been approximately €250,000 for a resource which includes all plays produced in Ireland since 1975. They are constantly adding all newly produced plays and are working back to include plays since 1907.

Playwrights' Studio needs to undertake a feasibility study into similar provision for Scotland, and hope to replicate the irishplayography's profound success.

### **Feasibility Study**

Over a three month period a researcher and technical consultant will work to create a report detailing; the cost of establishing and sustaining the National Play Resource, the cost of maintaining it including the likely levels of income generation, and also approximating the demand from public, students, educators, researchers and theatre producers.

### **Stage One Development and Implementation**

This work will take approximately 12 months and will include arranging the legal, financial and technical systems to sell plays via the internet. It includes the purchase of IT hard & software, licence costs, design costs and promotion of the resource. Gathering and maintaining up to dates entries to the resource and the day to operation of the National Play Resource.

## **The Playwrights' Studio, Scotland**

### **Mission Statement**

The Playwrights' Studio, Scotland is a new national initiative designed to directly engage the people of Scotland with new playwriting and raise the standard of plays for presentation to the public.

It will celebrate, promote and develop Scotland's rich and growing culture of writing for live performance; improving and sustaining artistic quality, raising awareness, and increasing access to new playwriting.

### **Artistic Policy**

A vibrant, cultured nation is engaged in open dialogue, exploring & questioning contemporary life and society. The work of playwrights is a vital cultural tool in stimulating that discussion.

By raising the standard and maximising the production of contemporary Scottish plays we aim to enrich the quality of cultural life. Through our work we will increase awareness of the wealth of creative talent within Scotland, both at home and internationally.

We encourage the creative voice of the playwright. We aim to ensure that the playwright's artistic vision and imagination is always at the heart of script development. We will work to develop the art form of theatre, examining and expanding the playwright's role within it. We will create and select projects that are of the highest artistic standard from the diverse community of Scotland's playwrights.

### **Extract from Playwrights' Studio, Scotland Business Plan 2004**

#### **Aims & Objectives (Extract)**

<b>Aim 1</b>	<b>Improve Access to Plays</b>
<b>Objective 1.1</b>	<b>Create a library and online database of play scripts and other related information. Promote the use of the database to schools, libraries and other education establishments as well as to potential producers of new plays.</b>
Year one	Research and develop a system. Collect hard and electronic copies of all new plays produced in the last 5 years and launch web site of extracts from play scripts in the collection plus other details of interest.
Medium term	Grow the collection to include all newly produced plays in Scotland and retrospectively include plays dating back to 1961.
Long term	Create a post for a specialist Archivist/Librarian to develop and promote the collection. Increase collection to include completed commissions that haven't been produced and play scripts from New Playwrights project and New Plays Market. Maintain a record of productions where plays were found through this service.

## **The Studio**

The Playwrights' Studio, Scotland is a new national initiative designed to directly engage the people of Scotland with new playwriting and raise the standard of plays for presentation to the public.

It celebrates, promotes and develops Scotland's rich and growing culture of writing for live performance; improving and sustaining artistic quality, raising awareness, and increasing access to new playwriting.

The idea for a playwrights' studio was championed over many years by Tom McGrath and the Traverse Theatre. In 2001 the Scottish Arts Council funded research which clearly demonstrated the demand for the Playwrights' Studio from playwrights, their membership organisation the Scottish Society of Playwrights and others for whom the quality of new playwriting is significant. In response to these findings the SAC awarded funding and support to establish the Playwrights' Studio, Scotland.

The Playwrights' Studio is led by Creative Director, Julie Ellen with support from Operations Manager, Caroline Newall and an annually appointed team of Associate Playwrights, currently David Greig, Liz Lochhead and Nicola McCartney.

## **Who we work with**

The Playwrights' Studio will work with a wide range of people to engage them with new playwriting.

As we wish to raise the standard of plays then the majority of our work will be with playwrights, those living and working in Scotland as well as Scottish playwrights resident elsewhere within the UK (and internationally on occasion). The Playwrights' Studio operates a policy of accessibility and inclusiveness, giving playwrights at all stages of their careers access to resources and activities.

We will work in partnership with theatres, writers groups and other organisations to give the people of Scotland greater access to new plays, the creators of those plays and the opportunity to engage with playwriting in a variety of ways through our activities.

The Studio will also work in collaboration with, and as advisors to, artists and theatres/theatre companies through Scotland and Internationally to raise the quality to new work and increase it's visibility.

## **Artistic Policy**

A vibrant, cultured nation is engaged in open dialogue, exploring & questioning contemporary life and society. The work of playwrights is a vital cultural tool in stimulating that discussion.

By raising the standard and maximising the production of contemporary Scottish plays we aim to enrich the quality of cultural life. Through our work we will increase awareness of the wealth of creative talent within Scotland, both at home and internationally.

We encourage the creative voice of the playwright. We aim to ensure that the playwright's artistic vision and imagination is always at the heart of script development. We will work to develop the art form of theatre, examining and expanding the playwright's role within it. We will create and select projects that are of the highest artistic standard from the diverse community of Scotland's playwrights.

Artistic selection is made by the Creative Director with the guidance of the Associate Playwrights and the support of a Board, which currently has three professional playwright members.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The Aims and Objectives are the engine of the organisation, informing all the choices of activity for the Playwrights' Studio, including choice of personnel and selection of office space. They represent the current collective vision of the Board and employees of the Playwrights' Studio, but will be reviewed on a yearly basis. All organisations need to evolve through time and, whilst adhering to the fundamental principals they contain, some of the detail may adjust in response to internal and external changes.

Aims & Objectives 1 to 3 deliver our mission to directly engage the people of Scotland with new playwriting.

Aims & Objectives 4 to 6 respond to our mission to raise the standard of plays for presentation to the public.

- 1. Improve access to plays;**
- 2. Identify new talent;**
- 3. Increase number of new plays produced ;**
- 4. Develop quality of new plays;**
- 5. Develop skills and experience of playwrights;**
- 6. Make best use of existing skills, experience and contacts;**

## **The Company**



### **Julie Ellen: Creative Director**

Julie became the first Creative Director of the Playwrights' Studio in February 2004. Julie is responsible for determining the organisations artistic policy and activities with support from Associate Playwrights and the Operations Manager. Julie is also responsible for lobbying for increased funding for new writing and the wider development of the artform to increase opportunities for playwrights.

General areas of responsibility include:

Meeting with playwrights, theatre companies and other theatre artists to tailor artistic activity and increase opportunities for playwrights to be developed and commissioned ;  
Fundraising and forging partnership with other arts organisations;  
Lobbying the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Executive;  
Working with the Scottish Society of Playwrights and the National Theatre of Scotland to increase commissioning levels and international profile.

In the last 6 years Julie has been General Manager of Suspect Culture and prior to that was Deputy General Manager of Theatre Centre. Julie originally trained as an actor at QMUC, Edinburgh and worked as an actor and director in Scotland and London.



**Caroline Newall: Operations Manager**

Caroline joined the Playwrights' Studio, Scotland in 2004 to implement and manage the strategic and efficient running of the organisation. Caroline works closely with the Creative Director on all company matters to support the delivery of artistic activities and initiatives. General areas of responsibility include:

Running of the office  
Financial Management and control  
Fundraising  
Contractual and Legal Matters  
Information Resources  
Online Play Archive  
Marketing and Communications  
Strategic Planning

Caroline was previously General Manager of music theatre company Theatre Cryptic and General Manager of Britain's leading new writing touring theatre company Paines Plough.

---



**David Greig: Associate Playwright**

June 2004 – June 2005

David Greig's first professional play was produced in Glasgow in 1992. Since then his plays have been widely performed in Scotland and abroad. In 1990 he co-founded

**Suspect Culture** with Graham Eatough.

Recent plays include: **San Diego** (Tron Theatre and Edinburgh International Theatre), **Outlying Islands** (Traverse Theatre), **Not About Pomegranites** (Al Kasaba Theatre, Ramallah, Palestine), **The Speculator** (Edinburgh International Theatre and Traverse Theatre), **Caledonia Dreaming** (7:84 Theatre Company Scotland), **The Cosmonaut's Last Message to the Woman He Once Loved in the Former Soviet Union** (Paines Plough), **Victoria** (RSC), **The Architect** (Traverse Theatre).

For Suspect Culture recent plays include: **8000M, Lament, Casanova, Candide 2000, Mainstream, Timeless.**

David has been Writer in Residence at the Traverse Theatre and The RSC.

David has also written extensively for TV and Radio.

---



**Liz Lochhead: Associate Playwright**

June 2004 – June 2005

Liz Lochhead is a poet, playwright, performer and occasional broadcaster. Born in Motherwell, she was educated at Glasgow School of Art, where she graduated in 1970 from the Department of Drawing and Painting, and has been ever since then mainly resident in that city.

Her first stage play, **Blood and Ice**, was performed at the Traverse Theatre in 1982, has been extensively rewritten and frequently produced, most recently at the Royal Lyceum in Edinburgh last Autumn, 2003.

She has adapted and translated extensively for the stage. Notably dramatisations like **Dracula** and **Beauty and the Beast** as well as Moliere's **Tartuffe** and **Le Misanthrope** (as **Miseryguts**); Chekhov's **Three Sisters**; the **York Mystery Plays** and – for Theatre Babel -- **Medea** and then Oedipus Rex, Jokasta and Antigone as the trilogy **Thebans**.

Of her score of original stage plays, the best known are **Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off**, **Quelques Fleurs**, **Shanghai'd**, **Britannia Rules**, **Cuba** and **Perfect Days**, which won many awards, had a West End run and has had several productions in translation all over the world after its Traverse opening in 1988. **Good Things**, another new comedy is currently in production for Borderline Theatre in a co-production with the Byre St Andrews, and will open early Sept 2004 in the Tron Theatre, Glasgow.

---



**Nicola McCartney: Associate Playwright**

June 2004 – June 2005

Nicola McCartney is a playwright, theatre director and visiting drama tutor.

In 2003 Nicola was awarded a prestigious Creative Scotland Award from the Scottish Arts Council to write a novel. Recent plays include: **Lifeboat** (Catherine Wheels), **Cave Dwellers** (7:84 Theatre Company Scotland), **Heritage** (Traverse Theatre), **Underworld** (Frantic Assembly), **Convictions** (Tinderbox Theatre Co), **Home**, **Transatlantic**, **The Hanging Tree**, **Entertaining Angels**, **Easy and Laundry** (LookOut Theatre Company). Nicola has also written extensively for TV.

**Activities and Initiatives**

The Playwrights' Studio has programmed a range of activities and initiatives that represent the ambitions set out in our mission statement and fulfil the organisation's aims and objectives.

The following pages outline plans for 2004/5. Many of these initiatives will continue on an annual basis with the addition and development of one-off projects to enable as many people to engage with The Studio as possible.

Each section outlines who the activities are aimed at and any experience that may be necessary. Hopefully there is something for everyone, so see what's for you and let us know what you'd like to be considered for.

**Creating Space**

Resources for established playwrights to develop scripts in line with their own needs over a period of up to three days. This development will be writer led, putting the playwright at the heart of the process. If you are an established playwright who has a play you would like to develop, please contact Julie Ellen, Creative Director to discuss your proposed project for Creating Space on 0141 332 4403 or at [julie@playwrightsstudio.co.uk](mailto:julie@playwrightsstudio.co.uk).

**Mentoring**

Less experienced or established playwrights will be selected and matched with an experienced playwright mentor to develop their craft and/or a particular play.

**Script Development**

The Playwrights' Studio will also secure date and time slots within venues throughout Scotland suitable for developing scripts and provide writers with actors, directors and other development resources.

**ILLUMINATE: Dramaturgy and the Word: Friday 1 April 2005**

Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh

In association with GAIN and Queen Margaret University College.

A day of discussion and activity for theatre professionals to explore the role of the dramaturg in the development of new theatre works which have text as a significant element. We will also assess the demand for dramaturgical support in the creation and public presentation of work of a higher quality.

The event is for Playwrights, Directors, Funders, Dramaturgs and Theatre Critics.

The participation fee will be £25 per person (including lunch).

**NB. Information about how to book a place for the event will be available in early 2005.**

**Writers Forum**

The Playwrights' Studio is looking for playwrights with varying levels of experience to join a monthly writers forum. Members will discuss contemporary plays to increase critical exchange amongst artists and guest speakers from a wide variety of professions will be introduced to inspire and stimulate ideas.

**Dramaturgy and Director Development**

The Playwrights' Studio will team up directors interested in working with new scripts and those who wish to develop their skills in this area with dramaturgs, to advance professional practice.

**Readers Groups**

Over the next year the Playwrights' Studio will be developing public play reading groups at various locations around the country, made up from current audiences for new writing. Participants will be set contemporary plays to read and discuss, often in advance of a touring production. Readers groups will allow the public to critically debate contemporary Scottish writing and increase their interest in and knowledge of contemporary plays. In conjunction with touring companies, guest speakers and Associate Playwrights will visit a reading group at least twice per annum.

**Contemporary Scottish Plays As Part Of The National Curriculum**

The Playwrights' Studio will lobby the Scottish Executive to make contemporary Scottish plays a requirement of English and Drama courses across the country to increase public access to and understanding of the importance of contemporary plays as a vehicle for creating a more cultured Scotland.

**Projects**

EVOLVE: Cultivating the Strongest New Voices for Scottish Theatre

EVOLVE is a new development programme for non-produced and aspiring playwrights at the very start of their playwriting career. The programme is designed to give new writers their first professional development, to hone their skills and cultivate their voice. Over several months the Playwrights' Studio, together with leading theatre professionals, will provide focused dramaturgical and directorial support, advice and training on the development of selected new plays. The final plays will be presented to targeted public and professional groups at various locations around Scotland.

Places on EVOLVE will be selected through IGNITE, a national competition.

The Playwrights' Studio received over 504 requests for entry packs and 160 applications. Shortlisting will take place over the next three weeks. Winners are scheduled to be announced on Friday 15 February.

## **Resources**

### **Play Library:**

The Playwrights' Studio is building a library of contemporary Scottish & UK plays accessible to industry professionals and the public.

This resource will eventually be available to search online. See Play Resource, Scotland for more details.

If you would like to use this information resource, please call Caroline on 0141 332 4403 to book an appointment.

### **The Space**

The Playwrights' Studio has a space available to writers for the following purposes:

- Workstation;
- A desk and computer for you to write in a working environment;
- Meetings with other writers, press interviews and producers;
- Round the table script development;
- Reading Room with access to Plays Library.

Use of the space is free and subject to availability. To book a time to use the space, please contact Caroline on 0141 332 4403.

The following information resources are currently in development and will be updated as soon as new information has been gathered. If you know any of the details to be out of date, please do contact Caroline on 0141 332 4403 so that these resources can be kept as relevant and up-to-date as possible.

**NB** In presenting the following information, the Playwrights' Studio does not vouch for the standard and accessibility of the schemes listed

### **Writers' Groups Scotland**

The Playwrights' Studio is currently researching writers' groups across Scotland. Once a comprehensive and up-to-date list has been compiled, details of these groups will be added to this page.

If you are a member of a writers' group in Scotland and would like details of your group to be added to this list, please contact Caroline on 0141 332 4403 or at [caroline@playwrightsstudio.co.uk](mailto:caroline@playwrightsstudio.co.uk)

### **Writing Schemes UK**

If you run, or are a member of an alternative writing scheme, please do contact Caroline on 0141 332 4403 or at [caroline@playwrightsstudio.co.uk](mailto:caroline@playwrightsstudio.co.uk) so that details of your scheme may be added.

### **Script Reading Services UK**

Caroline on 0141 332 4403 or at [caroline@playwrightsstudio.co.uk](mailto:caroline@playwrightsstudio.co.uk) so that details of your scheme may be added.

**NB.** In presenting the following information the Playwrights' Studio does not vouch for the standard and accessibility of the services listed.

## **PLAY RESOURCE SCOTLAND**

Over the next few years the Playwrights' Studio intends to create an online directory of all new plays professionally produced in Scotland. This directory will allow people all over the world to search for Scottish plays by a variety of categories i.e. playwright, theatre company, cast size, original cast and venue at which it premiered etc. This directory will allow the public, industry professionals and amateur groups to learn more about Scottish plays and theatre and purchase copies of each play via publishers or via a fee based download facility. A great example of a directory which currently exists in Ireland can be viewed at [www.irishplayography.com](http://www.irishplayography.com)

Dependent upon funding, the Playwrights' Studio hopes to have a pilot of this directory, containing records for plays produced between 1999-2004, up and running by summer 2005.

We hope that The Directory will be expanded over subsequent years to cover the last three decades and that copies of all unpublished texts contained within the directory will be disseminated to accessible libraries around Scotland.

In order to realise this ambitious project, the Playwrights' Studio needs your help. If you are a professional theatre company or playwright who has had a play professionally produced between Jan 1999- Dec 2004, we want to hear from you.

Below is an online submission form that allows you to enter details of the new plays you have premiered. This information will be collated into a database which will form the basis of the search engine.

Though the Playwrights' Studio will be active in researching these plays, your assistance in sending us these details will help us to reach our deadline and will guarantee your entry in the directory.

### **Contact Us**

Playwrights' Studio, Scotland  
Centre for Contemporary Arts  
350 Sauchiehall Street  
Glasgow G2 3JD

T: + 44 (0) 141 332 4403

F: + 44 (0) 141 332 6352

E: [info@playwrightsstudio.co.uk](mailto:info@playwrightsstudio.co.uk)

This information is available in large print on request.

It is only through building relationships with writers at all stages of their development, that the Playwrights' Studio can tailor its artistic plans to be relevant to writers needs

lan

---

**From:** Stuart  
**Sent:** 12 April 2005 14:56  
**To:** lan  
**Subject:** FW: Julie Ellen - Playwrights' Studio[Scanned]

Could you log this as a submission.

Thanks

Stuart Thomas  
Cultural Commission  
Broughton High School  
1 Carrington Road  
Edinburgh  
EH4 1EG  
0131 315 0262  
[www.culturalcommission.org.uk](http://www.culturalcommission.org.uk)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** James  
**Sent:** 12 April 2005 14:33  
**To:** Stuart  
**Subject:** FW: Julie Ellen - Playwrights' Studio[Scanned]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Julie Ellen [mailto:[julie@playwrightsstudio.co.uk](mailto:julie@playwrightsstudio.co.uk)]  
**Sent:** 23 March 2005 16:27  
**To:** James  
**Subject:** Julie Ellen - Playwrights' Studio[Scanned]

Dear James

Thanks for last night, it was great to hear someone speak with such passionate and a positive view for the future. It was also encouraging to hear plays included in the literary cannon (they and their writers are so often forgotten).

We are in the process of developing an internet based national collection of plays: Play Resource Scotland. We have raised the funds for, and have just appointed someone to deliver, a feasibility study. By August we will have the feasibility report in the form of a business plan for the project, plus a prototype working model for the site. By the autumn we will be pressing ahead with the serious job of finding the money to do it (ball park whilst waiting for the feasibility study result £200,000).

I have attached some info about it as it is a text book example of what you were talking about as the way forward for the arts. We need people to be aware of it and friends in high places to talk it up. How is the view from there?

Cheers

13/04/2005

Julie

Julie Ellen  
Creative Director

Playwrights' Studio, Scotland  
CCA  
350 Sauchiehall Street  
Glasgow  
G2 3JD

T: +44 (0)141 332 4403

F: +44 (0)141 332 6352

[www.playwrightsstudio.co.uk](http://www.playwrightsstudio.co.uk)

13/04/2005