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## PRESS RELEASE

### Immediate Release

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## Young Playwriting Scheme 'Pitch Your Play' to Champion Writers from "All Corners of the UK" in West End Showcase

[Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust](#) announces the successful winning scripts from their successful playwriting scheme 'Pitch Your Play' and free tickets to staged readings at the Theatre Royal Haymarket.

The future of theatre relies on today's generation having the opportunities and support to go forward and create. As such, Masterclass is delighted have brought back their successful Pitch Your Play scheme which invites people aged 16-30 to pitch for the opportunity to stage a reading of a new, unpublished play at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. In addition, the three winning pitches will receive four weeks of admin support, marketing provision, rehearsal space, office space and creative guidance to hone their ideas at the Theatre Royal Haymarket.

In spring this year Masterclass received nearly 200 applications for the scheme and last week invited 6 teams to pitch their plays to the 2018 panel consisting of director **Pooja Ghai**, producer **Vicky Graham** and Masterclass' Programmer **Hazel Kerr**.

Speaking about her experience of Pitch Your Play, **Vicky Graham** said:

"It was a privilege to meet this year's finalists of the Masterclass Pitch Your Play scheme. Coming from all corners of the UK, each of the six teams showed thrilling talent, vision and originality. I look forward to following the careers of all of the shortlisted artists, and to hearing the winning plays read on the Theatre Royal Haymarket stage in the autumn."

The successful scripts and writers are:

***Penny's From Huddersfield***  
by **Wendy Dickinson** from Wirral, Merseyside  
2:30pm, Friday 28 September  
[See full details here](#)

***Zombiegate***  
by **Matthew Gabrielli** from the West Midlands  
2:30pm, Friday 26 October  
[See full details here](#)

***Passing***  
by **Indigo Griffiths** from Uxbridge  
2:30pm, Friday 23 November  
[See full details here](#)

**MASTERCLASS**  
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Each rehearsed reading will take place on stage at the Theatre Royal Haymarket with a professional. Booking is now open and tickets will remain completely free and open to all.

Working closely with Masterclass, this is an exclusive education opportunity for the young playwrights to showcase their work in front of an invited audience of peers, industry professionals and the general theatre-going audience.

Speaking about the opportunity **Indigo Griffiths** said:

"I am beyond thrilled to have been accepted onto Masterclass's Pitch Your Play Scheme. As an emerging writer, to have my work on a West End stage at this point in my career is a fantastic opportunity and I'm so grateful to Masterclass and the 2018 panel. I'm excited to not only share *Passing* with a wide audience, but for the exposure and development that taking part in Pitch Your Play will offer."

Commenting on the return of the Pitch Your Play scheme, renowned playwright **Jez Butterworth** said:

"Twenty five years ago when I gave up my first and last paying job to try to write for a living, I swiftly felt alone. A scheme such as Pitch Your Play would have felt like a lifeline. Witnessing work rehearsed and hearing it read aloud is oxygen for fledgling playwrights. I'm a bit jealous of those taking part, who will hear something for the first time; the strange and familiar voice, which startles, haunts, galvanises and nourishes them enough to try again."

The Masterclass Pitch Your Play initiative is generously supported by the [Noel Coward Foundation](#).

[For further information on the successful plays, each writer and to book free tickets, visit the Masterclass website here.](#)

- ENDS -

For more information, please contact Josh Brown on josh@masterclass.org.uk or 020 7389 9662



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## Penny's From Huddersfield

by Wendy Dickinson

2:30pm, Friday 28 September

[Click here for tickets & more info](#)

Sally is in her thirties: she's single, unemployed, overweight and annoyed at the world.

Her best friend Emmeline married a barrister and seems to have it all whilst her mum Sandra still treats her like a teenager. After Sally's grandad dies, she realises just how bad her Nanna Penny's dementia has become. Spurred on by an argument about care homes, Sally defies her mother and decides to move in with Penny to look after her. As Sally gradually makes sense of her new life as a carer, Penny's confusion deepens and those around them are forced to re-evaluate their own lives.

In this tender, poignant piece laced with delicate humour we unearth the roots of humanity. Just like the Brighton Rock quote "bite down as far as you like and it still says Brighton", even once the essence of Penny begins to fade, she always remains Penny from Huddersfield.

## Zombiegate

by Matthew Gabrielli

2:30pm, Friday 26 October

[Click here for tickets & more info](#)

Sophie and Jamie are on their way to a fancy dress party dressed as zombies when a misjudged selfie makes them the centre of a social media storm. Battling online abuse, internet trolls and the consequences of a viral recognition, their friendship is pushed to its very limits.

A funny and thought-provoking play, *Zombiegate* is a razor-sharp satire about the rise of internet trolls and the return of public shaming, exploring social media, mobs and toxic masculinity.

## Passing

by Indigo Griffiths & directed by Gemma Aked-Priestley

2:30pm, Friday 23 November

[Click here for tickets & more info](#)

Chicago. 1941. Joey, John and Eliza are siblings, but their lives are about to take different paths. Joey is embracing the New Negro Movement, John is breaking barriers at college and Eliza is preparing to pass as white. In a world where everything is determined by race, what can you gain by concealing who you are, and more importantly what can you lose?

*Passing* is a new play that exposes the controversial practice of "racial passing" – the use of skin colour as a form of social currency.

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This epic family drama provokes thought on identity, race and feminism through powerful language, live music and unforgettable characters. It is the only script of its kind that gives the mixed-race experience centre stage.

## Notes to Editors

A selection of **images and artwork** can be [found here](#)

A **filmed interview** with Pitch Your Play's 2015 playwright, Emma Whipday, can be [found here](#)

For more information on the Pitch Your Play scheme, please visit the [Masterclass website here](#)

## The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust

Now celebrating 20 years, Masterclass is the education charity based at the Theatre Royal Haymarket which offers free masterclasses by leading theatre professionals, careers advice sessions, apprenticeships and performance experiences. Masterclass is committed to advancing the education of young people aged 16-30 by promoting the study of drama and the craft of theatre. We hope to inspire and empower young people, the talent of the future. To date over 80,000 young people benefited from our programme. [www.masterclass.org.uk](http://www.masterclass.org.uk)

**The Noël Coward Foundation** was set up as a charitable Trust in 2000 by Graham Payn and Dany Dasto. Its aim is to award grants to educational and development projects across the Arts and to continue the keen interest Coward himself took in charitable work during his lifetime. The Foundation is proud to support a diverse range of outstanding organisations working in theatre, music, playwriting, academic research and many other areas. [www.noelcoward.org](http://www.noelcoward.org)



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