



**Wellspring Writers Showcase**  
**Wednesday 8 June 2022**



Image description: A composite photo of headshots of eight people. It is a diverse mix of people with various characteristics: short and long hair; dark, blonde and turquoise coloured hair; most of them face the camera and smile against a neutral background, trees, a brick wall or stage lighting.

A presentation of fresh, determined voices in theatre who are re-defining the 'mainstream' narrative with provocations for social justice, multi-layered identities and their own disabled-led storytelling.

The showcase event presented eight short films of script excerpts written by the first cohort of Writers of Wellspring 2021-2022. All films include BSL Interpretation and captions.

Wellspring, supported with funding from **City Bridge Trust**, has provided bespoke professional development support to London-based disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent playwrights. The 2021 - 2022 programme has been delivered in partnership with mentors from the **Bush Theatre, Hampstead Theatre, Paines Plough** and **Theatre503**.

[www.vitalxposure.co.uk/wellspring](http://www.vitalxposure.co.uk/wellspring)



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## THE WELLSRING SHORT FILMS

### 1. Excerpt from *Static*

#### Story background:

Jay Taylor reconnects with their Grandmother Eileen under the long shadow of Jay's late Grandfather. However, another shadowy figure begins to cause problems, bombarding Jay with terrifying texts, calls and emails, threatening to sabotage the fragile, newly healed relationship they built together.

Written by Paula Brett

Directed by Simon Startin

#### Content warning

Self-harm and suicide. Violence. Death or dying. Mental illness and ableism. Classism. Transphobia and trans misogyny. Homophobia and heterosexism

**Rehearsed reading performers:** Pete Hale, Michael Keane, Fiona Whitelaw.

### 2. Excerpt from *Merrineum*

#### Story background

The British Journal of Psychiatry states that, last year, by the age of 17, approximately 7% of the UK's children had attempted suicide, with 1 in 4 admitting to self-harm. Right now, many people are talking for them, but who is talking to them?

Written by Victoria Taylor-Roberts

Directed by Simon Startin

**Content warning:** Discussion of suicide, teen bullying and parental abuse.

**Rehearsed reading performers:** Eliz Avni, Ali Azhar.

### 3. Excerpt from *Rock the Casbah*

#### Story background

Rock the Casbah is a love story of twin brothers who joined Billy Smart Circus in 1966 from North Africa and became estranged. It explores themes of class, race and devotion. It's based on Fatima's personal family history.

Written by Fatima Serghini

Directed by Simon Startin

**Rehearsed reading performers:** Eliz Avni, Ali Azhar, Simon Ludders.

#### **4. Excerpt from *Kummerspeck or And She Reaches Towards Me***

##### **Story background**

A bilingual exploration of emotional eating as a response to crisis and loss, in British Sign Language and English. It was initially developed in collaboration with a Deaf and hearing ensemble and creative team.

Written by Lilac Yosiphon

Directed by Stephen Collins

**Content warning:** themes of grief

**Rehearsed reading performers:** Sapphire Joy, Erin Hutching, Phillipa Russell.

#### **5. Excerpt from *Us First***

##### **Story background**

After transatlantic couple Angus and Branwen are outed and criticised by their families at their engagement party for wanting a childfree marriage, is everything truly secure with their relationship?

Written by Robbie Curran

Directed by Simon Startin

**Content warning:** discussion of pregnancy and abortion

**Rehearsed reading performers:** Adam Fenton, Amy Trigg.

#### **6. Excerpt from *Choking Hazard***

##### **Story background**

Jade and Rich discover how much their past has shaped their present anxieties and toxic situations. Will rewriting their coming out stories help them to create a better future?

Written by Nicole Latchana

Directed by Kate Lovell

**Content warning:** references to homophobia and abuse.

**Rehearsed reading performers:** Luke Elliott, Tajá Lueguezor Christian.

## **7. Excerpt from *Fighting Bitch Me***

### **Story background**

Fighting Bitch Me follows Me's journey to understand and manage her anxiety which has been personified into Bitch Me and Catastrophe Me. Me's coping mechanisms see her trying to escape with the help of substances and turning the music up so loud she can't hear her own thoughts. We meet her on one of those nights she decided to continue the party on her own!

Written by Gabrielle MacPherson

Directed by Kate Lovell

**Content warning:** mentions of suicide, rape, assault, death, mental health crisis and body image.

**Rehearsed reading performers:** Nicole Botha, Michael Keane, Tajá Lueguezor Christian, Fiona Whitelaw.

## **8. Excerpt from *Vampires in South London***

### **Story background**

Selina meets Vincent in the most unusual therapy session of her career so far.

**Content warning:** references to themes of violence, vampires, therapy, kidnapping and narcissism.

Written by Carmen D' Cruz

Directed by Simon Startin

**Rehearsed reading performers:** Sapphire Joy, Michael Keane.

**The films were by Stephen Rudder, Quiet Voice.**

**The BSL interpretation was provided by Marcel Hirshman, WealdBSL Ltd**

## **WELLSPRING WRITERS**

### **Paula Brett**

Paula is an actor, writer and theatre maker. Their experience spans classical, contemporary and family work, including as a principal puppeteer on In the Night Garden Live and with Illyria Theatre's production of The Adventures of Doctor Dolittle. They make independent work about mental illness, queer identity and neurodivergence. They can also be heard delivering traffic reports for radio stations across the UK.

### **Victoria Taylor Roberts**

Victoria is a published writer who has created works for stage, screen and audio. Her stories focus on social issues told through a comedic lens. She is the winner of the EDALYA International Youth Theatre Playwright award (2019) and the Kenneth Branagh Drama Writing Award (2015).

### **Lilac Yosiphon**

A freelance writer-director and the artistic director of Althea Theatre. Lilac is passionate about interdisciplinary collaborations and exploring belonging, migration and our perception of home. Writing credits include Home Sweet Home, Stratford Circus, Jackson's Lane & ARC Stockton; Jericho's Rose, Hope Theatre and Theatre Deli, Sheffield); One Last Thing (For Now), Old Red Lion Theatre, nominated for an Off-West-End Award for Best Ensemble; and There's No Place, awarded Outstanding Site Specific, San Diego Fringe 2017.

### **Fatima Serghini**

Fatima is an emerging West London writer. She is interested in producing stories about human diversity and inviting audiences to see worlds not accessible to them. Her stories are funny, sexy, and direct.

### **Robbie Curran**

Robbie Curran is an actor/writer from Walthamstow, and was the first autistic performer to graduate from Oxford School of Drama. Robbie performed his writing debut Thomas at VAULT Festival 2019 (Evening Standard 'Must See' show). After Soho Theatre Writers Lab, his play Turnip reached the second round of Papatango 2020. On BBC Writersroom's 'Writers Access Group' 2020/21, Robbie's play Tuning In was shortlisted for Radio 3's The Verb, and recently wrote his first comedy-drama spec Aspirational.

### **Nicole Gem Amorette Latchana**

Nicole is a queer, neurodiverse, Indo-Guyanese playwright from London. Her plays have won competitions and have been on at several theatres including The Arcola, The Bunker and Southwark Playhouse. She wrote her latest play OCO-2, a dystopia about the climate crisis, on the Royal Court writer's group.

### **Gabrielle MacPherson**

Gabrielle is an actor and writer, proudly Northern, working class and Neurodiverse. Passionate about feminist driven art and working class stories Gabrielle also believes the best form of potato is chipped with cheese and gravy.

### **Carmen D'Cruz**

Carmen (she/her or they/them) is a writer, knitter and drag queen originally from Croydon. They are particularly interested in writing about the magic hidden in the everyday, the ways we step in and out of ourselves, and the liminal spaces of our minds.

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Visit our website to find out more about Wellspring:

[www.vitalxposure.co.uk/wellspring](http://www.vitalxposure.co.uk/wellspring)

If you would like to find out more about the programme and Vital Xposure's work, contact us on [intouch@vitalxposure.co.uk](mailto:intouch@vitalxposure.co.uk) / 020 8123 9945 / 07432421825 (voice / texts / WhatsApp).