

**FULL CAST ANNOUNCED FOR HANNAH LAVERY’S LAMENT FOR SHEKU BAYOH**

**WORLD PREMIERE**

A National Theatre of Scotland, Edinburgh International Festival and Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh co-production

***Lament for Sheku Bayoh***

Written and Directed by **Hannah Lavery**

Associate Director **Caitlin Skinner,** Designer **Kirsty Currie,** Composer **Beldina Odenyo,** Lighting Designer **Emma Jones,** Movement Director **Natali McCleary,** Video Designer **Ellie Thompson,** Creative Consultant **Fatima Uygun.**

Cast is **Saskia Ashdown, Patricia Panther,** and **Courtney Stoddart**

A young black man lost his life. In Scotland. Five years ago.

Soon after 7am, on a Sunday morning - May 3rd, 2015, Sheku Bayoh, a 31 year-old gas engineer, husband and father of two died in Police custody on the streets of his hometown, Kirkcaldy in Fife.

***Lament for Sheku Bayoh*** is an artistic response to this tragedy, an expression of grief for the loss of the human behind the headlines and a non-apologetic reflection on identity and racism in Scotland today.

Performed on the Lyceum theatre’s stage and streamed to audiences at home, ***Lament for Sheku Bayoh*** urgently questions, is Scotland really a safe place?

Written and Directed by acclaimed spoken word artist and theatre-maker Hannah Lavery, ***Lament for Sheku Bayoh*** was originally commissioned and presented as a rehearsed reading by the Lyceum Theatre, supported by the Edinburgh International Festival as part of the 2019 International Festival’s *You Are Here* strand.

***Lament for Sheku Bayoh*** will be performed by Saskia Ashdown, Patricia Panther, and Courtney Stoddart. The three cast members also performed as part of the original rehearsed reading at the 2019 Edinburgh International Festival. The production will also feature music from Beldina Odenyo, AKA Heir of the Cursed.

Three performances of ***Lament for Sheku Bayoh*** will be streamed on 20 and 21 November 2020 and made available to a paying audience. Viewers can buy tickets to watch performances from either the National Theatre of Scotland or the Lyceum Theatre’s website.

After Sheku Bayoh lost his life in 2015, his family launched a campaign seeking justice and answers about the manner of his death. In 2019 it was announced that a judge-led inquiry into the case would be held, with a view to establishing the circumstances behind the case. Earlier this year it was announced that the remit for the inquiry would include examining whether Mr Bayoh's "actual or perceived race" had played any part in his death.

**Writer & Director Hannah Lavery**

*"I hope that Lament for Sheku Bayoh will be the beginning of a journey for audiences; that it will leave them with questions that they want answered and that it will give them an energy to pursue a better Scotland. And for some of us it will be an opportunity to be seen and heard and to have an experience and a knowledge of this country shared.*

*I think it's important for us to be able to talk about Scotland in an honest way, and to not turn our head away from the things that might feel uncomfortable or challenge the idea we have of ourselves. It's important for us all to see Sheku Bayou as a human being- hugely loved, full of promise and with dreams for his future- and to take a moment to really mourn his loss."*

Hannah Lavery is an acclaimed spoken word artist and playwright. Most recently she created *Disco with Mum f*or the Company’s ***Scenes for Survival*** series and her acclaimed autobiographical solo show, T*he Drift* about identity, belonging and grief produced by the National Theatre of Scotland toured Scotland in 2019 and was featured as part of *Ghost Light,* for the Edinburgh International Festivals’ *My Light Shines On* programme in 2020.

*This is lovely, resonating writing, performed with an enthralling, warm confidence. Moving, charming, chastening, it is precisely the kind of work for which our National Theatre of Scotland was created.”* [Sunday Herald](https://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/17949807.mark-browns-theatre-scraping-bottom-beer-barrel/) on ***The Drift***

Available to view on 20 November (8pm) and 21 November (1pm & 8pm) nationaltheatrescotland.com and lyceum.org.uk

Tickets are available on a Pay What You Can scale from £5 to £25 -**Booking:** [nationaltheatrescotland.com/lamentforshekubayoh](http://nationaltheatrescotland.com/lamentforshekubayoh)

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**Press Images:** [**All images available via dropbox**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nqe753s3a6jkzqc/AABLhRsFijewEwTklR0iT-Rwa?dl=0)

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**ARTISTS BIOGS**

**Saskia Ashdown** grew up in Annan, Dumfries and Galloway. She joined the National Youth Theatre before completing an honours degree at the University of Edinburgh. Theatre work includes *Jack Absolute Flies Again* (National Theatre), *An Edinburgh Christmas Caro*l (Lyceum Theatre), *Lament for Sheku Bayoh* (Lyceum Theatre), *Horizontal Collaboration* (Fire Exit), *War in America* (Attic Collective). TV work includes *Trust Me* (Red Production Company), *Clique* (BBC). Film work includes *Falling for Figaro* (WestEnd Films), T*he Last Bus* (Hurricane Films), *Special Delivery* (Shudder Films), *Joytown* (The Comedy Unit). Radio work includes *alt-delete* (BBC Radio 3).

**Kirsty Currie** is a Scottish designer and model maker. She graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2018. Design credits include: *The Drift* (Scottish Tour, National Theatre of Scotland), *A State Electric* (Platform), *Propeller* (Pleasance Above, Edinburgh Festival Fringe), *The Angry Brigade* (Citizens Theatre, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), *Julius Caesar* (Chandler Studio, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), *A Tickle in My Mind* (New Athenaeum Theatre, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). Design Associate Credits include: *The Journey* (Scott Silven), *Peter Pan* (Stafford Gatehouse Theatre/ Prime Pantomimes), *Rapunzel* (Macrobert Arts Centre). Selected Design Assistant/ Modelmaking credits include: *Ragnarok* (Tortoise in a Nutshell/Norland Visual Theatre),T*he Children* (Vienna English Theatre), *Local Hero* (Edinburgh Lyceum/Old Vic), *Pride and Prejudice sort of* (UK Tour), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (UK Tour), *Elmer* (International Tour), *Avenue Q* (UK Tour), *The Snow Queen* (Dundee Rep), *Flight* (Vox Motus, International Tour), *Prime Pantomimes 2019 Season* (Various Venues). Website: [kirstycurrie.co.uk](http://kirstycurrie.co.uk/)

**Hannah Lavery** is a Scottish short story writer, poet, playwright and performer. Her poetry and prose has been published by Gutter Magazine, The Scotsman Newspaper, 404 Ink and others. Her poetry pamphlet, *Finding Seaglass: Poems from The Drift* was recently published by Stewed Rhubarb Press (May 2019). She has also been a featured poet at many spoken word and poetry nights including Neu! Reekie! Sonnet Youth and festivals including, Stanza Poetry Festival and Edinburgh International Book Festival. Hannah was awarded a Megaphone Residency for Artists of Colour by The Workers’ Theatre in 2016. *The Drift*, her autobiographical play, was produced by National Theatre of Scotland and went on tour in 2019. Her play, *Lament for Sheku Bayoh*, commissioned by the Royal Lyceum Theatre, was performed as a work in progress as part of the Edinburgh International Festival 2019. She received a Summerhall Lab 2019 for her play, *Three Pints on a Sunday*, written with Colin Bramwell. In November 2019, she was awarded a New Playwright Award from Playwrights Studio Scotland and was named in The List Magazine’s Scottish Theatre Hot List for 2019. In 2020, she was named as one on BBC Writers Room Scottish Voices of 2020, as well as being chosen by poet and playwright Owen Sheers as one of ten writers currently asking questions that will shape the UK’s future, as part of the British Council and National Centre for Writing’s International Literature Showcase. She has recently contributed to the BBC Radio 4 series *The Poet and the Echo*, and has been announced as one of Imaginate’s Accelerator artists, where she will work on a new piece of writing for ages 10+ called *The Protes*t. She is currently writing a new play for children commissioned by Hopscotch Theatre, and has been recently commissioned to write a short piece for Pitlochry Theatre’s Shades of Tay project.

**Beldina Odenyo AKA Heir of The Cursed** – songwriter, sound designer, theatre-maker. Heir of The Cursed is a caulbearer born of an apparition, a primordial memory, a penny drop. She makes songs influenced by the strange nuances of life, rooted in grief, Scottish weather, the constant and the inconstant. Beldina Odenyo is a vocalist, guitarist, poet and writer creating work between the fields of music and theatre. Her work attempts to explore the differences and kinship between her dual Kenyan and Scottish heritage through words, music and visual art.

**Patricia Panther** is an Actress, Composer and Sound Designer based in Glasgow. In her work as a sound Designer and Composer a variety of found sounds, electronic and acoustic instruments are used to create a fusion of varying musical styles for live performance, Film and Theatre Sound Design. Acting credits include; *The Last Bus* (Hurricane Films, Head Gear Films), *Trust Me* (BBC One), *Scot Squad* (BBC One), *Logan High* (BBC One), *First and Only* (Encaptivate Films), *Arabian Nights* (Lyceum Theatre), *A Pageant of Great Women* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). Composer credits include; Composition and Sound Design for *Fibres* (Stella Quines and Citizens Theatre), *Ghost Light* (Edinburgh International Festival, National Theatre of Scotland and BBC Scotland), *Future of Theatre Podcast* (Traverse Theatre), *Glasgow Girls* (National Theatre of Scotland and Raw Material), *The Last Queen of Scotland* (Dundee Rep, Stella Quines and National Theatre of Scotland), *Rites* (Contact Theatre and National Theatre of Scotland), ONCE YOU SEE THE SMOKE (Scottish Youth Theatre), SONIC SÉANCE (Project X, Tramway and CCA). Patricia also leads youth group workshops, introducing young creatives to theatre, music production and performance.

**Caitlin Skinner** is director with new writing theatre company Pearlfisher, Director of award-winning theatre company Jordan & Skinner and Associate Director at Pitlochry Festival Theatre. She is former Artistic Director of acclaimed new writing pub theatre company Village Pub Theatre. Her directing credits include *Alone* and *Alone Part II* (National Theatre of Scotland’s *Scenes for Survival)*, *Five from Inside* by Rona Munro (Traverse Theatre) *Move-Glassed* co-director (disaster plan) *Hope and Joy* (Pearlfisher/Stellar Quines) *A Brief History of the Fragile Male Ego, At A Stretch* and *Sanitise* (Jordan & Skinner) *Sunnyside Centre* (Village Pub Theatre), *Woke* (Apphia Campbell) and T*he Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde* (Lung Ha Theatre Company).

**Courtney Stoddart** is an acclaimed Scottish-Caribbean poet and performer, born and raised in Edinburgh. Her work focuses on racism, imperialism, womanhood and growing up in Scotland. She writes with the intention to challenge the dominant power structures of our times and intertwines social, political, and historical discussion into rhythm and rhyme. Having only started performing in April 2019, Courtney has had a meteoric rise, performing on both national and international stages within the last year. Including performances at venues such as the Traverse Theatre, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Leith Theatre and HOME Manchester. In June 2019, Courtney took part in the BBC Radio 1xtra and BBC Contains Strong Language Festival Word’s First Talent Scheme, making it to the final 12. She was selected to be published in an anthology by Own It! London and edited by Jude Yawson, co-writer of Stormzy’s *Rise Up: The Story So Far*. Courtney has featured in various theatrical productions, including *Lament For Sheku Bayoh* at the Lyceum Theatre during Edinburgh International Festival 2019 and *Memory is a Weapon*, directed by Firdoze Bulbulia. She was chosen to represent Scotland at Flup Festival in Rio de Janeiro in the October of 2019. Courtney currently runs a mentorship programme with Scottish BAME writers network. She has appeared on a panel at the Edinburgh International Book Festival and was recently interviewed on BBC Radio Scotland’s Afternoon show with Jess Brough.

**Ellie Thompson** studied at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London. After graduating she has worked in various video roles including video supervisor, associate designer and video designer for theatre productions. Since 2014 she has collaborated with Katie Mitchell on *Forbidden Zone* (Salzburg Festival, 2014) as Video Production Technician then as Associate Video Designer on *Reisende Auf Einem Bein* by Herta Müller (Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg 2015), *Schatten*, by Elfriede Jelinek (Schaubühne, Berlin 2016), *La Maladie de la Mort* by Marguerite Duras (Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, Paris 2017), *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf (Schaubühne, Berlin 2018) and finally as video designer for *Judith: Concerto for Orchestra / Bluebeard’s Castle* (Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich 2020). Also designing *The White Bike* by Tamara von Werthern, directed by Lily Mcleish (The Space, London 2017). Most recently she was Associate Projection Designer for *The Journey*, Written by Scott Silven and Rob Drummond, directed by Allie Butler (Virtual production, World tour 2020).

**Notes to Editors**

**Edinburgh International Festival** is the world’s leading performing arts festival, featuring the finest performers from the worlds of dance, opera, music and theatre. Created in 1947 to celebrate the enduring human spirit, the International Festival normally serves as an annual cultural exchange, every August, for an international audience exceeding 400,000 per year. The 2020 Edinburgh International Festival was cancelled for the first time in its history due to concerns around the Covid-19 pandemic, but remains actively engaged in Edinburgh’s community and in creating cultural content for both Scotland’s capital city and the world.

**The National Theatre of Scotland** is dedicated to playing the great stages, arts centres, village halls, schools and site-specific locations of Scotland, the UK and internationally. As well as creating ground-breaking productions and working with the most talented theatre-makers, the National Theatre of Scotland produces significant community engagement projects, innovates digitally and works constantly to develop new talent. Central to this is finding pioneering ways to reach current and new audiences and to encourage people’s full participation in the Company’s work. With no performance building of its own, the Company works with existing and new venues and companies to create and tour theatre of the highest quality. Founded in 2006, the Company, in its short life, has become a globally significant theatrical player, with an extensive repertoire of award-winning work. The National Theatre of Scotland is supported by the Scottish Government. [www.nationaltheatrescotland.com](http://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/)

**The Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh** is the leading producing theatre in Scotland and one of the United Kingdom’s most prolific theatre companies. Our beautiful, intimate Victorian theatre was built in 1883 and has played a significant role in the cultural and creative life of the city and surrounding area for over 130 years. Since 1965, the current Lyceum company has developed a reputation for innovative, high-quality theatre, drawing upon the considerable talent in Scotland as well as developing award winning work with partners across the globe to make theatre in Edinburgh, that can speak to the world. We believe that making and watching theatre together is life enhancing. We are committed to being a theatre rooted in our community, a truly civic theatre entertaining, challenging and inspiring all the people of Edinburgh. To reach the widest possible audience we find new ways to open our doors and our stage to the public, as well as reaching out into Edinburgh’s schools and neighbourhoods with a range of programmes taking place beyond our walls. Under Artistic Director David Greig, The Lyceum has continued to seek out new artistic partnerships, casting 100 local citizens in our main stage production of *The Hour We Knew Nothing of Each Other* and 50 more in *The Suppliant Wome*n, the acclaimed production that opened David’s first season. Since then we have made work with Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne; DOT Theatre, Istanbul; Bristol Old Vic; National Theatre of Scotland; Citizens Theatre; Scottish Dance Theatre; Stellar Quines; Lung Ha; and Fuel. For more information please visit lyceum.org.uk

