

Thank you for your interest in entering the 2021 Papatango New Writing Prize. We hope you find the answers to these frequently asked questions helpful.

### **Why has the Prize changed this year?**

Because everything's changed! The pandemic has impacted on Papatango just like everything else. With the 2020 Prize winner (Old Bridge by Igor Memic) postponed from autumn 2020 to a yet-to-be-confirmed date in 2021, we can't commit to produce another Prize winner on stage next year as well. It wouldn't do the writer any favours to be squeezed into a programme that's still very uncertain. Moreover, we pride ourselves on making a transparent and sincere commitment every time we run the Prize, and we won't run it unless we're certain we can meaningfully support writers and deliver on our promises.

So, instead of shelving this opportunity, we've remodelled it. We want to help as many people as we can at this vital time. Where previously only one winner has scooped a production, publication and commission, this time we'll pick three winners, each of whom will receive £2000 and have their script produced as an audio play. These three plays will then tour the UK in free listening stations. This means that we will be able to support more artists than ever before, showcasing them on our biggest ever tour and making their plays even more accessible to audiences.

### **What do you mean by audio plays?**

Scripts which are rehearsed as usual, but then read aloud and recorded in a studio rather than performed on a stage. They're stories which people will listen to rather than watch. We use the term 'audio play' because this encompasses a range of formats/styles - radio broadcasts, podcasts etc - and we're keen to encourage a corresponding range of work. Don't feel like you need to model your script on any particular audio format - we want you

to tell your story in the best way you can.

### **What will you look for in an audio play?**

The really exciting thing about audio plays is that they can be as big and bold as your imagination - constraints of staging, design and transitions etc need not apply - but also convey the purity of voice. This means that wild, extravagant, big-cast fantasias and quiet, understated monologues can be equally appealing and equally effective. We want you to write the story that matters to you, rather than trying to second-guess us (we can't even second-guess ourselves!).

That said, there are some simple principles to consider when writing an audio play. Remember that everything should be conveyed either by sound or by narration; so, for instance, if you need stage directions, these should either be possible through sound effects (e.g. a door opens) or by a narrator ("Then she walked in"). If you opt for a narrator, that needs to be justified within the story itself - we're unlikely to be engaged by a narrator who's there purely to read stage directions!

As long as you've thought carefully about how someone listening to your script, not reading it, can follow the story, you've done all you need to satisfy us that it's an audio play. We're really open to and excited by a range of stories and styles, and don't want to cramp you with any rigid rules about format.

### **How do audio plays tour?**

We'll reveal more details about the tour in 2021, but it's shaping up to be very exciting. In essence, free listening stations will spend a week at each venue, with audiences able to listen to any or all of the three plays. The recordings can't be downloaded, only listened to live, and it will be a theatrical event in the venue. We've some extra plans and razzamatazz to go into the tour, but that's to be

announced later!

The stations are socially distanced, sanitised and safe, and thus able to go ahead under most circumstances except a full lockdown.

### **Can I enter and only accept part of the Prize if I win?**

No. We're all about launching writers and new work with maximum impact, and we're firm believers that to do that requires a production, publication and cash injection - all together!

### **Why is the publication digital?**

You're right: usually our Prize-winners are published as physical playtexts. That's because we also stage them in full productions with long runs, which means it's financially viable for a publisher to make a book. Without a stage production, sadly, it's simply not viable for a publisher to incur the costs of a printed book. Our brilliant colleagues at Nick Hern Books, however, will put together a digital publication - an e-book - to record the audio plays forever and to ensure the script is available to others worldwide.

### **Should I bother to read the entry requirements?**

Yes. Every year, heartbreakingly, scripts are entered which simply don't conform to key principles such as anonymity or length. Given the sheer volume of submissions, we can't check entries when they come in or undertake to liaise with writers about any mistakes, and so if a script breaches a requirement this will only be discovered by its first reader, who will have no choice but to discard it. Please, please take 5 minutes to read our guidelines before you submit! Do so [HERE](#).

### **What makes a Prize winner?**

Fundamentally, our tastes won't change just because the format

has. As always, we'll be captivated by the unexpected - a voice or a story which really stands out but which we can't define until we see it. We honestly don't have any pre-conceptions or parameters about story, setting or style when we read - we just want sparkling dialogue and characters whose reality leaps off the page.

Think of previous Prize winners and you'll realise how eclectic they are: *Trestle* by Stewart Pringle is a delicate, bittersweet yet funny two-hander, whereas *Coolatully* by Fiona Doyle plunges us into a tense village community; *The Funeral Director* by Iman Qureshi tackles religion and sexuality in contemporary Britain, while *Foxfinder* by Dawn King is an unsettling dystopia in a parallel world. These and the other brilliant winners are all completely different from each other.

What does this mean? Just that we've no idea what our next winners will be. If you write a story set in a world that matters to you, chances are it will matter to one or more of our readers too.

### **Can co-writers or writing teams enter?**

Yes, as long as you're happy to share the Prize equally!

### **Can I stipulate who directs, performs in or otherwise contributes to the production of my play if I win?**

You can't stipulate it but you can ask. As producers, we always reserve the right to select the creative team and cast, subject to the writer's approval, but we're always happy to take suggestions. If we did agree that you or someone you know could direct/star in/design etc the play, then it would be because we believed you or they were genuinely the best person to do so. Our goal is simply to ensure the best artists make your script come alive.

### **How will entries be assessed?**

Entries are read anonymously throughout. We have three reading

rounds, which culminate with all readers voting in a blind ballot for the shortlist and winner. This ensures that a wide range of experiences, backgrounds and tastes inform our final decision, and that all readers have an equal say (we don't do celeb-heavy judging panels. We just don't.)

### **Who is on your reading team?**

Our reading team comprises practising theatre-makers - directors, writers, designers, producers, dramaturgs and actors. They all have to pass a rigorous reading assessment to join the team.

The team itself reflects our country and its diverse communities. At the time of writing, our team is: 53.8% female including transgender women; 46.2% male including transgender men; 46.2% LGBTQ+; 7.7% Asian; 15.4% Black; 7.7% Mixed Heritage; 69.2% white; aged from the 20s to the 50s and based across England, Ireland and Wales. As the reading team evolves we will update these statistics.

### **What goes into the feedback?**

With such a huge volume of entries, we can't provide in-depth analysis of each play. Instead, our feedback aims to give you a sense of the reader's thoughts on what worked or didn't work in the script and thus what influenced their decision (whatever it is). Of course, their response will inevitably be subjective, and you may not agree with it. We just hope that knowing how a professional script reader responded to your work, and what stood out to them, will prove useful.

### **Does it make a difference if I don't want feedback?**

No. We don't know whether you opted in or out of feedback when we read your play.

**When will I hear back?**

We'll keep all entrants informed throughout the process by email - expect general updates in February (after the deadline, when we know the number of entries), April (when we know how many scripts are through to the last round, though won't reveal the titles in the interests of anonymity) and June (when we announce a shortlist and winner). Individual feedback, for those who requested it, will be sent out in late summer 2021.