

THE SINGER

Music & Lyrics by
KT TUNSTALL

Book by
CORA BISSETT

Dundee Rep Theatre and Solar Bear, in collaboration with Aberdeen Performing Arts, present *The Singer*



WELCOME

There is a particular thrill in welcoming you, our audience, to the world premiere of a new show. It's an invitation to experience something for the very first time—to encounter a story that has never existed before in quite this form, and to become part of its journey from the very first performance.

The Singer embodies so much of what excites me about making theatre today. It is a new piece of Scottish gig-theatre born from collaboration, curiosity and ambition; a production that asks us to reconsider how stories can be told and who gets to tell them. At its heart is a celebration of creativity, identity and humanity, reminding us that there are countless ways to connect and communicate with each other, if we remain open.

As both writer and director, Cora has assembled an extraordinary company of artists, working with the incomparable songwriting of KT Tunstall, to create a piece that feels genuinely fresh, generous and joyful. Together they have crafted a musical language that belongs uniquely to this production.

We are especially proud to present *The Singer* in partnership with Solar Bear and Aberdeen Performing Arts, and continuing our relationship of world premieres at the Traverse as part of TravFest. New writing has always been at the heart of Scottish theatre, and partnerships like this ensure that bold new work can find the audiences it deserves. It is a privilege to share this production's first few steps with you before it continues its journey beyond tonight.

I hope *The Singer* surprises you, moves you and reminds us all that great theatre has the power not simply to reflect our world, but to expand our understanding of what it might become.

Andrew Panton,
Artistic Director, Dundee Rep Theatre

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I can trace *The Singer* back to a single moment.

I was watching Jamie Rea perform a song in British Sign Language at a showcase, and I found myself completely captivated. This wasn't sign language as interpretation. Jamie wasn't standing beside the music—he was the music. Every lyric, every emotion, every beat travelled through his body and into his hands. It was one of the most moving performances I'd ever seen, and it challenged everything I thought I knew about how music can be experienced.

I left knowing I wanted to create something with him. Joe is not Jamie, but Jamie was the inspiration for him. From the outset, we wanted to tell a story that felt different from so many depictions of deafness on stage and screen. Time and again, deafness is framed through the experience of a hearing person losing their hearing, with the story centred on grief, absence or tragedy. We wanted to begin somewhere else entirely.

Joe is a Deaf man whose life is full, creative and joyful. His challenge isn't that he is deaf; it's that the world doesn't always recognise the value of what he has to offer. His language—British Sign Language—is not a version of English. It is a beautiful language in its own right, with its own poetry, rhythm, humour and emotional depth. We wanted to place that language, and a Deaf artist, unapologetically at the heart of this production.

As the project grew from a short film into a stage production, Andrew Panton and I knew there was only one songwriter we wanted to approach. KT Tunstall felt like the perfect creative partner. Her brilliantly distinctive songwriting, her generosity as an artist and her own experience of navigating the music industry all spoke directly to the world we were creating. As fellow Fifers, I've admired Katie's extraordinary journey for years, watching her take Scottish talent onto the world stage without ever losing the authenticity at the heart of her work. Knowing too that she has experienced partial hearing loss, I hoped this story might resonate with her personally—and thankfully, it did. Her songs have become the emotional heartbeat of this production, bringing wit, vulnerability, hope and exhilaration in equal measure.

Throughout the making of *The Singer*, our Deaf and hearing cast and creative team have continually asked how we can build a piece that belongs equally to Deaf and hearing audiences. That question has shaped everything: from the music and sound design to the use of vibration, silence, visual storytelling and the choreography of communication itself. Working on *The Singer* has changed me. It has made me question assumptions I didn't even know I held, and it has shown me how much creativity, generosity and imagination can flourish when we stop expecting everyone to experience the world in the same way. I hope this production invites you to do the same.

Cora Bissett,
Director and Book Writer, *The Singer*

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CAST

JAMIE REA JOE
DYLAN WOOD ANDY
HANNAH JARRETT-SCOTT ORACLE
PETRE DOBRE ORACLE

CREATIVE TEAM

DIRECTOR & BOOK WRITER **CORA BISSETT**
MUSIC & LYRICS **KT TUNSTALL**
MUSICAL DIRECTOR & ARRANGER **MICHAEL JOHN MCCARTHY**
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER **JENNY BOOTH**
SOUND DESIGNER **GARRY BOYLE**
LIGHTING DESIGNER **EMMA JONES**
CREATIVE CAPTIONING **DANIEL HUGHES**
BSL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR **BENEDETTA ZANETTI**
DRAMATURG **DAVID GREIG**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **JESSIE WARD**
STAGE MANAGEMENT **ALEX TOSH, HEATHER WILSON, DEBBIE CAMPBELL**
WARDROBE SUPERVISOR **LARA BAUCHOP**
WARDROBE ASSISTANT **SOPHIE CHEN**
AV TECHNICIAN **NATALIE WELCH**
SOUND NO.1 **JED GILLIES**
LX PROGRAMMER **FEE DALGLEISH**
PRODUCTION LX (TOUR) **RORY KAY**
PRODUCTION SOUND (TOUR) **KEIR MARTEN**

PRODUCERS **JOANNE CLARK, ANNE MCCLUSKEY, ANGELA COATES**
BSL CONSULTANT **CLARE CANTON**

THE SINGER

PRESENTED BY

DUNDEE REP SCOTTISH DANCE THEATRE

SOLAR BEAR

ABERDEEN PERFORMING ARTS

Based on the short film *The Singer* by Cora Bissett and Jamie Rea
Based on the film *The Singer*, produced by Laura McBride, Lothian Films and James Heath, MTP, commissioned by Screen Scotland via Short Circuit

INTERPRETERS

YVONNE STRAIN, MEL TONER, JILL GALLACHER,
LOU HANSON, LUCY NIVEN, LINDA DUNCAN,
BETH MALCOLM, NATHAN IMESON, VICTORIA
PAULO, CLAIRE CAMERON, JANICE MURDOCH,
GEORGINA DONOHUE, SULA BROOKES,
RACHEL AMEY, HAMISH DENERLEY, ELLIOT
WEBSTER-MOCKETT, LISA LI, MARK SHERWIN

THANKS TO

IMPACT ARTS, LIAM CHAPMAN, TAYLOR GUITARS,
GUITAR GUITAR GLASGOW, INTER PERFORMING
ARTS, ACADEMY STUDENTS, BEA WEBSTER,
CAT MYERS, JENNIFER BATES, FELIX GILFEDDER-
CHESKIN, YUKI NEOH, AMY MURRAY, ALICE MUIR

Want to see *The Singer* again? Join us on tour!

Tue 4 - Sat 30 Aug - Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh **WORLD PREMIERE**

Wed 9 - Sat 12 Sept - The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen

Tue 15 - Sat 19 Sept - Citizens Theatre, Glasgow

Wed 23 - 26 Sept - Dundee Rep Theatre



**Tickets, learn BSL
and much more**

Want more *The Singer* content? Head to dundeerep.co.uk

