

**In Good Company is delighted to announce two commissions for mid-career artists to make new pieces of theatre to be made and premiered in 2018.**

In Good Company partners from Derby Theatre, Attenborough Arts Centre in Leicester, The Old Library in Mansfield and Drill Hall from Lincoln One Venues met 14 theatre-makers and companies over two days of interviews for two commissions, one to be given to artists based in the East Midlands and one from elsewhere in the UK. After hearing a range of interesting projects the successful artists were East Midlands based director Beth Schouler and independent producer Hannah Stone who will bring to production a new play *The Bear Hunt* by writer Tom Powell, and London based Dante or Die with their newest piece *User Not Found*.

In Good Company provides artist development, opportunities and support for exciting new performance in the East Midlands and was born out of a consultation with our community of artists in 2014. This commissioning opportunity was made in response to IGC current programme focusing on emerging artist and the need for us to widen our offer to mid-career theatre makers who also need support.

In Good Company's producer Emily Coleman said that *'it was great to meet so many inspiring artists who have been making and touring exciting theatre for the last 10 years and to hear about their plans for new productions. It was really clear that artistic ambition really does develop with experience and there is a real need for investment in artists at this stage of their career, financially but also with resources and expertise which genuinely support their creative process. It was a really difficult decision and we could've commissions many of the projects but we are really excited about working with Beth, Hannah and Dante or Die.*

Each commission comes with £5,500 investment, 2 weeks rehearsal space at one or two of the IGC partner venues, an opportunity to premier the final piece at Departure Lounge festival at Derby Theatre as well as mentorship and advocacy for the company along the way.

Dante or Die will create a new show called *User Not Found* about what happens to our digital lives after we die. It will take place in a café where each audience member will be given a smart phone which they will interact with to explore the complexities behind online personas. Co-artistic Directors Terry O'Donovan and Daphna Attias have been collaborating with the fantastic writer/performer Chris Goode who is writing the final script. They've also had many discussions with people of different ages about their experience or opinions on digital identity, and how that impacts potential or experienced grieving as the project progresses. Terry O'Donovan said this on hearing that they had been offered the commission.

*"We're absolutely delighted to be working with In Good Company on the development of User Not Found. We're really looking forward to collaborating with such a diverse team of people from amazing organisations and bringing our brand of site-specific storytelling to Midlands audiences for the first time."*

Beth Schouler and Hannah Stone will work with writer Tom Powell on a new play *The Bear Hunt*. Beth is an experienced director and writer and has been Staff Director at Theatre Royal Plymouth and Young Company Director for the Tricycle Theatre London and Lakeside Arts Centre in Nottingham. She was an Assistant Director at Nottingham Playhouse and Lakeside Arts Centre and having moved back to the East Midlands she is keen to establish her work in the region while continuing to make connections with London venues. Hannah is an actor and co-founder of midlands based The Gramophones Theatre Company who have toured extensively across the UK. Beth and Hannah have a long track record of making work with and for young adult audiences which is something they are keen to develop. They are interested in plays which have strong writing at their centre, are playful and beautiful with political bite. They want to make theatre which champions younger voices and are unafraid to explore challenging themes with nuance and artistic flair. Beth Schouler says this of their recent commission:

*We're thrilled to get this opportunity. This is opening a door for each of us to grow substantially as artists. I'm really excited about directing this extraordinary debut play from Tom Powell and Hannah and I can't wait to bring it to East Midlands and London audiences. We're passionate about New writing and making theatre that attracts millennial audiences. We want to see more new writing in this region. This play is dark, funny, provocative and gets uncomfortably under your skin. We're really looking forward to sharing it with an audience. We're so grateful for In Good Company and how it is changing and shaping the midlands theatre-making ecology. There are real challenges to being regionally based theatre makers (especially for writers and directors) so this is a real game changer for us. We hope to do the East Midlands proud!*

For more information about In Good Company, please see <https://www.derbytheatre.co.uk/artist-development/good-company>.

For more information on Dante or Die, please see

<http://danteordie.com/>

For more information on see

<http://bethshouler.wixsite.com/mysite>