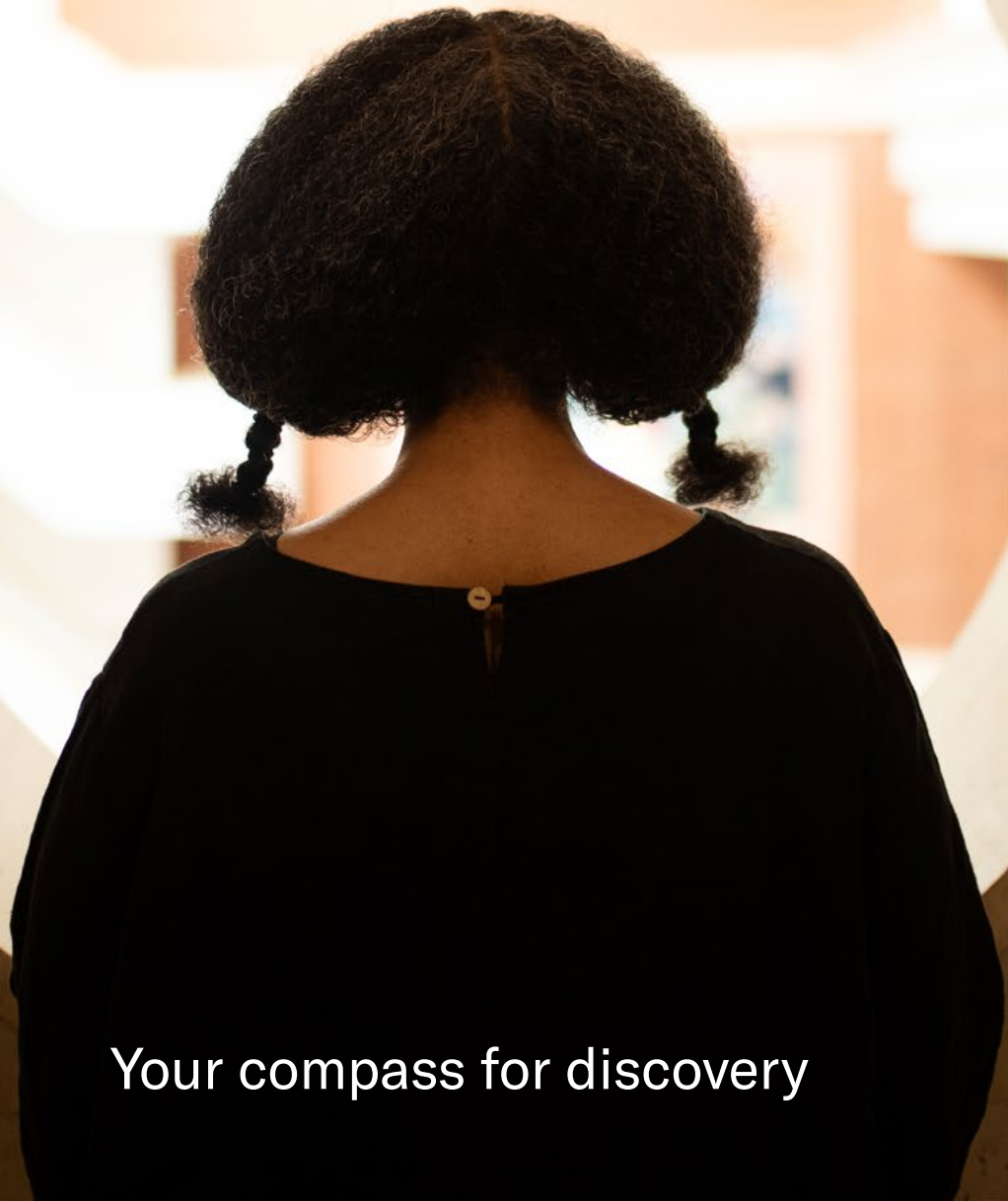




With Spice



Your compass for discovery

Black, Asian, Arab, Mixed Heritage, Indigenous
and ethnically diverse communities...

**Not a minority.
The Majority.**

The term "Global Majority" (coined by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE) is a term used to describe people who are not of white descent. It reframes discussions around race and demographics by pointing out that the groups frequently referred to as "ethnic minorities" in Western countries actually make up the vast majority (roughly 75% to 85%) of the world's population.



**300+
Global Majority shows
In the palm of your hand**



Order your guidebook now.

Volume 1, 2025 was distributed to over 400+ producers, programmers and curators. It's in the Scotland library and has been submitted to the British Library. Even my mother has a copy – a memento of my time out here :-)

oommoo.com



If your show was missed, list it yourself. All roads lead back to the website. Make sure you're included.

Issue no. 1
2026

With Spice is powered by OOMMOO
The connective tissue networking communities

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Portrait by Daniaal Khalid

P.S.
Sorry Adjoa. I didn't quite manage to add the book festival
this year. I promise I will next year. I just need a bit more
support. ☺
Lula-xyz

Dearest Reader,

Following the launch of last year's *With Spice* guidebook, I knew it wasn't enough when *Adjoa Andoh* asked me to include the book festival. And so the idea of this magazine was seeded.

It's funny, I'm a first gen immigrant, neurospicy and super dyslexic. I believe this to be my super power. Perhaps it wouldn't have been but my diagnosis came so late in the game it fortified that. When the world didn't make sense and nothing fit, I was forced to figure it out. I'm sharing this 'cause I came into publishing begrudgingly. Asking others to do more, as an artist I was feeling first hand how impossible this sector was to navigate. But my cry for help fell on deaf ears and so here we are. Necessity, the mother of invention.

Back in 2013, I met Writer Benedict Lombé, in the street of *Edinburgh*, flying for a two-hander she staged at theSpace and now, she's in NYC with *Shifters* Broadway debut. *Sabrina Ali* presented *Dugsi Dayz* in 2023, which has since toured and a pilot adaptation you can find on the BBC. A world of possibilities, I thought. We are here. All of us.

My community watches from the outside – told a hundred small ways that this space doesn't have much for them. My friends' successes present as anomalies. No clear pipeline. Just a lottery of hopefully. Most media works against us, constantly speaking to what's missing and ignoring what's here. Edinburgh is just a microcosm of the sector as a whole. Someone has to tell the WE ARE HERE story louder than the noise.

So, I paused my art practice this year to address this and build something that can have impact at scale and is sustainable.

I couldn't, with good faith, conceive a magazine that was only for the Edinburgh Fringe festival. This space is but A milestone in the journey, not the destination for our work. In honour of that, these pages are the beginnings of a treasure map, a compass if you will, for the beautiful works being done by us for us. Those who are creating a home for our stories, our history, our experiences - both on and off the stage. Use this magazine to help you hop around the UK and experience yourself in all your glory, beautiful, ugly... all the spectrum of our being. The Housemates Festival in September to The Love Book at The Wolverhampton Grand.

Navigate these pages with the same logic. Every word, be it text or illustration, has been penned by a person from the Global Majority. The idea was born with me and built with community.

So, here she is, beautiful, petite and full of Personality. Unapologetically innocent. A bit wonky at times.

As you read her young pages, treat her with the love and attention you would an actual baby. Consider who she is, why she is and the possibilities of who she is to become.

I trust, with time... she will be our widest dream. Trust and believe, this is not a disclaimer! It's an ethos. Change (at scale) is coming. I invite you to have a hand in it. This is an open invitation for next year's issue. We've already been having conversations.

Happy reading :-)

LULA.XYZ

“BOYS, ARE YOU FREE?”



I'd just finished my shift in Battersea and headed over to the Barbican a little early. I wanted to have a little scout around, in preparation for a conversation Lula dared me to capture.

I find myself looking up. Man. I've been here loads of times before, but there was just something about today.

The concrete. The dark browns. The rough textures. Moss growing where you wouldn't expect it. People describe it as brutalist architecture, right? Mixed with the heat that's still hanging in the air, the whole place felt strangely alive.

I found myself wondering who actually lives here. Were they looking down from one of these

flats? Could they see me, wandering around with a backpack full of microphones and a mind brimmed with thoughts.

My phone buzzed.

"We're here."

I looked up and saw Emmanuel. He'd accidentally eaten some mouldy potatoes earlier that day and his stomach was letting him know about it (I mean... shit happens).

Nnabiko joined us shortly after.

We found a spot and, like that, we were off.

"Did you lot watch the *England game*?"

Not exactly the profound opening question you'd imagined, right?



Sundown Kiki - Reloaded
Caleb Obediah - Bridgerton
Nnabiko Ejimofor - For Black Boys
Who Have Considered Suicide When
the Hue Gets Too Heavy

Stay with me. High-key, I think football is another religion. It gives people something to believe in. Something to gather around and reckon with.

So I asked: “What’s your football?”

Emmanuel spoke about ballroom. Nnabiko, movement. Me, music – songwriting specifically – but none of us said acting.

How did we get here?

Nnabiko: *Growing up, I wanted to be an athlete. Every year at school I’d wait for Sports Person of the Year, convinced my name was about to be called. Then... let’s call him “Michael”... would win.*

Emmanuel: *No way! What sport? 100 metres?*

Nnabiko: *Yeah, sprinting. But every year I’d end up getting Drama Person of the Year.*

Nnabiko: *Nonetheless, I enjoyed sports so much that I went on to study Sport Science at college. But on my way into class, I’d see the theatre lot, just doing their thing. Eventually, I thought, You know what... They were so free... I had to make the switch.*

So simple.

Somewhere along the way, though, that freedom quietly became something else. Auditions. Self-tapes. Waiting. Comparing. Trying to prove

that you’re enough. You arrive believing it’s a playground, and then slowly discover it’s actually a marketplace.

But I have to believe it’s more than that.

The craft doesn’t disappear, but the feeling that first brought you to it can slowly begin to flicker. Is our responsibility as artists not only to develop our craft, but to protect that light – that sense of play, wonder and freedom, however life changes around us?

If that’s what we’re trying to protect... then, what does success actually mean now?

Emmanuel’s answer wasn’t about booking jobs or finding an agent. Drama school had been intense. The years afterwards hadn’t always been easy either.

Emmanuel: *I’m not putting myself back into the industry just yet. I’ll go to classes. I’ll keep working. But before I put myself in the agent world and start going out for jobs, I just don’t think I have the spirit for it, yet.*

Nnabiko: *That awareness is amazing.*

Emmanuel wasn’t giving up. He was protecting the very thing Nnabiko had spoken of: that inner freedom.

Perhaps the bravest thing an artist can do isn’t to keep pushing. Sometimes, it’s to trust themselves enough to pause. To live. To build. To fall in love. To take the job that pays the rent. To collect experiences that will one day find their way back into the work.

Maybe that’s the real work.

I looked up. Somehow, we’d been talking for hours. The sun had quietly disappeared behind the buildings, the air felt different now. Earlier, I noticed everything. The concrete. The dark browns. The moss. The little details that only reveal themselves when you stop long enough to look. Now, in the dark, I couldn’t really see any of it.

Strangely, though, I appreciated the place more than when I’d arrived.

Maybe not everything has to be fully understood before it can be accepted. Maybe some things reveal themselves simply by spending time with them. With people. Places. Our own lives.

We packed up and walked towards the station. Honestly, it felt like we’d barely scratched the surface.

As Nnabiko’s train pulled into the platform, he turned back.

Nnabiko: *Bro... thank you for this. Such a good conversation... I needed that.*

He smiled and was gone.

I stood there for a moment thinking about something he’d said hours earlier.

“They were free.”

I couldn’t help but wonder whether that same flicker of freedom he’d seen all those years ago, watching those theatre kids from across the college courtyard...

...was this.

Maybe, without even realising it, we’d spent the last three hours becoming those theatre kids again.

Three friends. Three artists. Sitting together. Speaking our truths. Creasing, all the while sharing gems. Trying to understand ourselves a little better than we did that morning.

I know I did.

September 15th.

“Boys... are you free?”

ASIYA ELJAE

My mother my mother, deserves an effigy.

Here lies a lifetime’s worth of potential: bundled into memories
and clothes and bodies, made and worn and made again.
Cutting a figure, aloof and brooding at first; irreverent,
on closer inspection. She dabs a trickle of ochre here,
a droplet of violet there, an array of pearlescent
speckles throughout and anoints herself with a
luster of oil. The coating, a gift, sealing in the
depth and light of space: the wonder of
exploration . Instead, all I have is this
poem. These words and this screen.
The body and this voice. This life,
to gift the world - give her -
what she deserves.



Eljae. Poet. Cultural curator. Community organiser.
A hot chocolate specialist and a much loved member
of the Makrooh family.

Her writing explores different topics on loving
and building relationships, with ourselves and
each other.



Portrait by Daniaal Khalid

Having recently co programmed Sudan Series:
Neighbourhood Nights, she is now finalising her first
poetry pamphlet while working on new material.”

This piece, from her debut pamphlet “*Who’s looking for
us anyway*” marks Makroohs first step into publishing.
The pamphlet will be available soon via makrooh.co.uk

NADIA NADARAJAH



Nadia is the Artistic Director of The Deaf Festival. A visionary. Changing the game in how and what is being programmed. Everyone should take note! Born to Tamil heritage that stretches from Sri Lanka to Malaysia, a grandmother who carried the language across continents, a mother who played veena (an ancient, revered Indian stringed instrument), *'Art was not a dream'* it was in the fabric of the house. *'It was just there'* she tells me.



Like all wonders, in a quest for something more than the everyday of perceived norm, she left at twenty. America first, then Australia, then France. She learned languages the way some collect postcards. I confess my ignorance, I listen in awe as she confirms she speaks eight languages in total.

For most of us, there is always that one person that opens a door, a window or that whispers something that unlocked a world of possibilities.

For Nadia it was *Definitely Theatre*, a bilingual deaf-led company in London run by *Paula Garfield*. England 2009, Paula is looking for people of colour for a new production. *Nadia* put her name forward. No experience, *Paula* saw something anyway. That is how these things begin – ‘not with a plan, but with someone who sees you before you see yourself.’ That’s all it took!

Three years later she was at the *Globe Theatre* in London. The 2012 Olympics. Shakespeare had written 37 plays. The festival decided each one should be performed in a different language – one of them BSL. No English allowed. For the first time in her career, *Nadia* did not need to negotiate access. BSL was the language. The performance was the language. The audience came anyway, and they came in their hundreds, and the house was full on the first night, and she stood in the wings before the doors opened and thought: *this is it. This is my life.*

2015, she’s at Summerhall – Edinburgh Fringe, one of the most competitive venues on the circuit – with a two-woman show she had co-created with writer and interpreter *Sue Milan*.

Two women, total opposites on paper: *Nadia*, deaf, Black, signing; *Sue*, hearing, white, speaking. A show about abuse and discrimination, made before #MeToo had a name but landed right in its heart. They won the awards. The gatekeepers started paying attention. She smiles, ‘*they realised they might have been keeping the wrong people out*’.

Five years ago, a mutual friend introduced her to Philip Gerard, the man who had moved to Edinburgh and looked at the Fringe programme and said: where are the deaf people? He had a budget and no team. She had a vision and no budget. By August 2022 they had a festival.

“It is about building a world in which everybody already belongs - hearing people included, welcomed”

Edinburgh Deaf Festival is now in its fifth year. It runs for ten days across two weekends in August, taking over Deaf Action - a building in central Edinburgh that has belonged to the deaf community since 1889. Making it one of the oldest deaf organisations in the world, it is a home rather than a venue.

The programme this year includes theatre, comedy, dance, music, workshops, craft stalls and a scratch night for artists making their first tentative steps toward a stage. Its audiences are 50% deaf, 50% hearing. That is not an accident.

Here is what Nadia will tell you about the fringe festival: it is not about what is missing. It is not about access as an afterthought, bolted on at the end after the creative work is done. It is about building a world in which everybody already belongs - hearing people included, welcomed, given provision, held. A world where deaf children can look up at the stage and see someone like them doing the thing they thought was not for them.

She has been that person on stage. She knows what it means to see yourself somewhere you were told you could not go.

She is building the room so others do not have to wait as long.

Text by LULA.XYZ



Edinburgh Fringe launch, 1st time I’m attending. It’s whiter than white, I find myself playing whackemolt/spot the melanin. I’m losing, then I turn around, and in a heart beat, there is a force in the room and like a moth to a flame, we connect. There are translators decoding our conversation. I was completely ignorant to the fact that she was deaf at 1st but it doesn’t affect anything, my intuition leads to best practices, look at Nadia when you are talking to her or listening, the interpreter is a voiceover.

We met again a few more times, I confess that I don’t have anyone from the deaf community in my circle, no discrimination, it just so happens that’s how the cookie has crumbled. So she opened the door. I’m navigating the Launch of the Deaf festival weeks later, I feel more at home than the Fringe launch of hearing people. We have a meeting of minds but from our 1st hello, there is a sense of knowing. There is a Global Majority show I am eager to watch. They gave us a taste at the launch.



Illustratiob by WumZum

FROM SIDE HUSTLE TO WEST END

At the precipice of her next chapter, moving from subsidised theatre towards commercial work, I sat down with Suher Sofi. A young Somali producer who just went through Stage One's Bridge the gap programme – a year-long development for underrepresented theatre producers.



Our paths crossed long before today. As an artist in residence at the Pleasance, I curated a strand of new work under the brief “East African futurism.” I couldn’t find that exactly (besides my own work) but there were unapologetic East African stories. I programmed *Desperate Times*, a one-woman play by *Amal Abdi*, co-produced by *Suher Sofi*. 3 nights, Sold out. Young Somali, Muslim girls filled the house in the hundreds. I’d never seen the space look so exciting. I knew then: She is one to watch. A politics and international relations degree – first-gen Somali family, so you know that wasn’t a coincidence. A graduate scheme at *HarperCollins*, a stint in BBC comms, a commissioning role at *Channel 4*. None of it was enough. Hungry for the stories her older sister planted in her young, all roads led here – humble beginnings, next to no network, already making noise.

LULA: How did you even start?

SUHER: I love storytelling in all formats, so I’m always looking for opportunities to expand my experience. Growing up with older siblings, our TV was always on. We would gather round watching our favourite shows, some of my favourite childhood memories. So naturally, I just wanted to see how everything works. How ideas get generated and how shows get commissioned. Theatre found me on the side of that, really.

My first project was actually *Desperate Times*, which I co-produced with *Raha Mahamoud*. It was theatre in the evenings and weekends while I kept a full-time job in TV. Anyone who is a creative can

relate to that! You balance a full-time day job with your passion projects and side gigs until they reach a point where they can sustain you.

L: What informs the work you want to make and the audience you’re making it for?

S: People worry a wider audience won’t get it. But a good story is a good story.

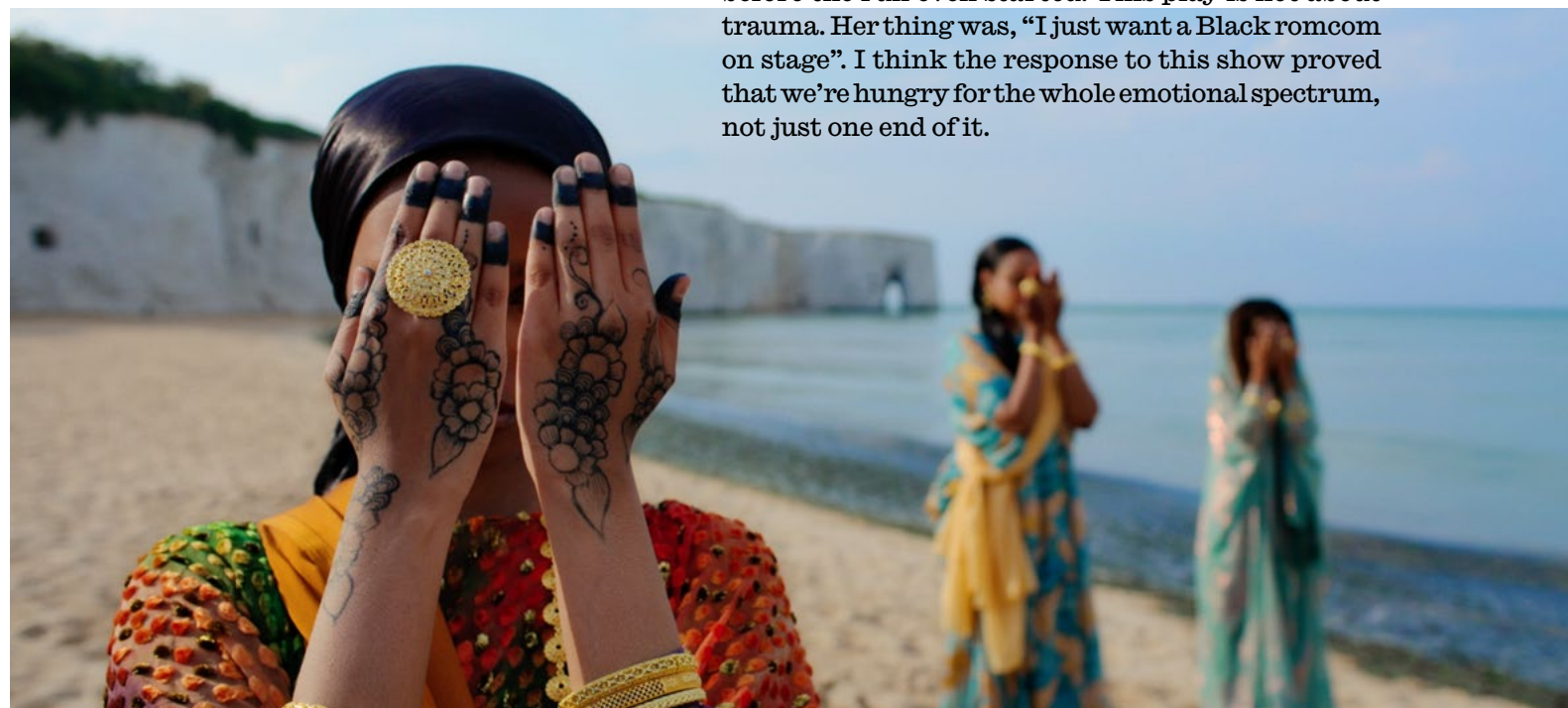
Growing up in the Somali community, I saw it first hand. We’ve got a broad cultural palette of K-dramas, period dramas, Bollywood, Hollywood, all of it.

If someone’s voice isn’t usually heard, or they’re struggling to get their work made: that’s who I want to champion. That’s how I founded *JanFirst Productions*, where I work with my incredible team - *Raha Mahamoud* and *Yasmin Moalin*. In our first year alone, we staged *Crush* by *Hadsan Mohamud* at *Somali Week Festival* and *Soho Theatre*. Produced *Untold Stories Part 2*, a documentary commissioned by *Kayd Somali Arts & Culture*. My directorial debut.

If it’s good work, the community will come, you just have to be authentic.

L: You’ve talked about wanting more range in the stories getting told.

S: Yeah. A lot of the stories we see, especially in commercial theatre, lean into Black trauma. And yes we do experience pain, but also joy. With *A to B – Tia-Renée Mullings’* play at *Soho Theatre* – sold out before the run even started. This play is not about trauma. Her thing was, “I just want a Black romcom on stage”. I think the response to this show proved that we’re hungry for the whole emotional spectrum, not just one end of it.



Untold Stories Part 2 documentary, Directed by Suher Sofi



'Crush' the play at Somali Week Festival 2025

L: What did Bridge the Gap actually give you?

S: Honestly, the biggest value was the cohort. The people I met on the programme. Producing can be a very lonely job. Speaking to other producers with similar backgrounds, realising we all have the same struggles, being able to put something in the group chat like “does anyone know a good production manager for this?” and having five people answer - that’s what I got from it. That’s where I met *Jasmyn Fisher-Ryner*, the producer of *A to B*, who brought me onto the project as an Associate Producer. It’s an amazing network of people who aren’t gatekeepers. Everyone’s like, “I went through this, I don’t want someone else to go through the same struggle - here’s what I know.”

The programme opened doors, connected us with brilliant people and insights we might not have found on our own. From workshops to the *Kickstart* grants, it gave us the tools and support to take our producing to the next level.

L: Who else came out of your cohort that we should be watching?

S: Off the top of my head, Jasmyn of course, who also produced *For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When the Hue Gets Too Heavy* by *Ryan Calais Cameron* and *Eat the Rich (but maybe not me mates x)* by *Jade Franks*. *Bobby Harding* has *Lover Girl* by *Temi Wilkey* running at *Soho Theatre* later this year. That’s just to name a few - our cohort this year is incredibly talented and everyone is working on some

amazing projects. None of us are precious about sharing what we know. There’s so much space for all of us - it shouldn’t be competitive. The more of us in the space, the better it is for what gets made.

L: What’s next for you?

S: I’m part of the producing team for the *Housemates Festival* at *Brixton House* this summer. A venue I love, properly rooted in its local community. Beyond that, I’m developing a couple of projects and taking my time with it, after a fairly full-on year.

L: Final Thoughts?

S: If you’re a producer, apply! *Bridge the Gap* has been a game changer for me.

Stage One is the UK charity for emerging theatre producers, supporting the industry for over 50 years. Bridge the Gap, its flagship year-long programme, gives each cohort mentors, coaching, workshops and access to commercial investors and West End producers.

“It is a much needed intervention to help remove some of the barriers and change the landscape of West End and commercial theatre.”

— Siobhan Walsh, Stage One

Applications open Spring 2027. stageone.uk.com

Brixton House present

Housemates Festival 2026

Part of Brixton House's deep commitment to investing in artists and developing their creative potential, this year's Housemates Festival invites seven writers to take over Brixton House in September.

1-19 Sept

Brixton House & Fruit Box Theatre present
SUGA
By Max Hyner

In a world that commodifies everything, even our connections, what is actually left for us? Drowning in debt, Harry signs up to a website connecting struggling individuals with wealthy 'sugar daddies' and begins a seemingly straightforward and initially transactional relationship with Daddy...

1-5 SEP 26 // 3pm & 8pm
£17 // Recommended age: 16+

Brixton House & Collective Productions present
Tube Chronicles
By Razak Osman

Join Razak Osman – actor by day, tube worker by night – for a night shift on the London Underground. Explore the microcosm of society that is the London Underground in this hilarious oand touching autobiographical play.

1-5 SEP 26 // 8.15pm
£17 // Recommended age: 13+

Brixton House & Nuu Theatre present
Pressure
By Danny Bailey

A pulsating journey through rebellion, revolution and Caribbean resistance. Driven by lovers rock, reggae, dub, sound-system culture and ritual, Pressure follows a Jamaican woman in Brixton living under the shadow of the barrel child and the revolutionary legacy of Jamaica's Blue Mountains.

8-12 SEP 26 // 2.30pm & 7.30pm
£17 // Recommended age: 13+

Brixton House present
We Can't Be Friends
By Abir Mohammad

As desire collides with devotion, two gay Muslim men are forced to choose: honour their vows to Allah or risk everything for each other. *We Can't Be Friends* is an intimate, urgent story about faith, Queerness, and the cost of living truthfully in a world that demands you choose.

8-12 SEP 26 // 3pm & 8pm
£17 // Recommended age: 12+

Brixton House & Umba Arts present
Goodbye
By Alejandra Chamorro Cuevas

In this tribute to friendship, connection and life in the face of suicide, William navigates his way through London's first assisted suicide clinic. A darkly comic play exploring survival, love and despair in an encounter between a patient who can't live, a receptionist who can't die and an AI that can't do either.

15-19 SEP 26 // 2.30pm & 7.30pm
£17 // Recommended age: 16+

Brixton House & Visual Sauce present
Runner Girl
By Lara Grace Ilori

Follow the one-woman rhythmic story of Anu, a heart-on-her-sleeve Yoruba South Londoner whose routine run takes a terrifying turn. *Runner Girl* is a raw and relentless rhythmic story full of poems and prayers, rhymes and rhythms, and music and movement.

15-19 SEP 26 // 3pm & 8pm
£17 // Recommended age: 16+

Brixton House present
Stomach
By Ariana Xeno

One's beaten. One's hollowing. One's filling with blood. *Stomach* follows three parallel lives, winding in and out of doctor's appointments, exploring girlhood and hope.

15-19 SEP 26 // 3.15pm & 8.15pm
£17 // Recommended age: 15+

brixtonhouse.co.uk



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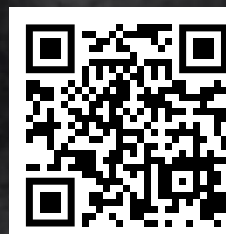
FRINGE
BISCUIT.

PRESENTS:

THRIVE

So... you just finish a festival, a tour, a something... Leverage your experience! Come and figure out how to make this art thing work. Join our incubator for candid conversations from strategy to markets, money and everything in between. The world is your playground.

Date: September
Signup to get exact details.



LULA.XYZ PRESENTS

I AM

ONE OF MANY

A Habesha–Futuristic Theatre series

“Lula’s voice opens an endless fractal... An ancestral energy, rooted in her Eritrean heritage, pulses through her performance, tempered by a rare tenderness and strength that speaks to anyone who has ever longed, remembered, or searched for home.”

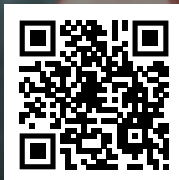
10 FEB – 26 FEB | 7:30 PM



EDFEST MAG



THE LIST



**BRIXTON
HOUSE**

385 Coldharbour Lane,
London SW9 8GL



Tonia Daley-Campbell and 101 year old RAF veteran Prince Albert Jacob

IT'S NOT ABOUT TICKET SALES

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's audience development work, led by Tonia Daley-Campbell has brought about monumental changes both on stage and off.

When opening up a 132-year-old theatre to an audience who have always been part of the community. It's about the people and how we can shine a spotlight on stories that rarely have the opportunity to be seen.

I've now been working with Wolverhampton Grand Theatre for over 5 years, my journey first started as a freelance Audience Development Consultant, specifically focusing on our Black African and Caribbean audiences. It was during this time I helped to form our Black African and Caribbean Ambassador Programme, rooted in the belief that theatre should be a place where everyone sees themselves reflected, heard, celebrated and welcomed. Not just occasionally. Consistently.

"The ambassadors are truly at the top of their game, hailing from business, education, the NHS, and the creative sectors. In my role, I chaired our monthly meetings, offered cultural consultancy, and helped curate events designed to welcome the Black diaspora into our building. I've worked hand-in-hand with programming and casting and have even had the joy of co-hosting the Grand's Spotlight Podcast!"



Junior Hemans Ambassador, Tonia Daley-Campbell, Sofie Anne performer and Ambassador, Nathan John Ambassador, and Vicky Price Director of Audiences and Communications

As the new *Head of Audiences and Creative*, a role created as part of *The Grand's* total commitment to inclusivity, my mission is to champion and strengthen our culture of belonging. It's my job to shape how we connect with people across the region. Now I have a firm seat at the leadership table, I will drive change from within the very heart of this theatre.

We are on the cusp of what I know are some very exciting projects, reflecting the diversity and the stories of the communities we serve. In our upcoming season we're delighted to be presenting a great evening of comedy from Global Majority voices, and two major-scale choreographic debuts from black choreographers including a Grand Theatre co-production with *Sadler's Wells*.

Theatre is the ultimate vehicle that can entertain and educate simultaneously. I want the future of UK theatre to be one where stories from working-class, Black and Asian communities aren't 'special features' but part of the fabric of our industry. The more diverse our stories are, the more interesting theatre becomes. That's how we ensure it truly belongs to everyone.

IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE

"I WANT
TO SEE MORE.
AN UNFORGETTABLE
PERFORMANCE"
- BACHTRACK

A SOUL & FUNK FUELED ADVENTURE

THE BROWN SUITE



PROMO CODE:
SPICETBS25
for £25 tickets



MON 5 - WED 7
OCTOBER 2026

WOLVERHAMPTON
GRAND
THEATRE



Jade Hackett and Omar The LOve Book



FRI 5 - SAT 6
MARCH 2027

WOLVERHAMPTON
GRAND
THEATRE

MEET THE EDGE

For many of our performers, the experience of the festival has been the beginning of reaching much wider international audiences' by Soho Theatre's Creative Associate Pooja Sivaraman.



Pooja Sivaraman by Ray Roberts.

I've been thinking about the Edge Effect. Ecologically, the edge effect describes what happens where two ecosystems meet—where a forest meets a meadow, where a river meets the sea, where woodland gives way to grassland. These porous boundaries make for the richest and most diverse places in nature, active and alive to the prospect of adaptation and unexpected life. In my more concrete world, the edge effect takes place at 21 Dean Street on a Tuesday evening at 6:45pm. The programming at Soho Theatre includes a comedian from India performing in Hindi, a queer pirate musical, and a devastatingly beautiful village drama about living history and the ability to forgive. It's right in that moment before the house opens where you'll find a beautiful confluence of very different people who find themselves in the Soho Theatre Bar for a shared experience of a great night out.

I've been a Creative Associate here for the past three years where my remit includes developing our relationships with artists from India as part of the *Soho Theatre India* project.

The thing one needs to understand about India is the sheer scale of the country. It is 28 different countries put into one, and a performer from Kolkata has an entirely different comedic twang than someone from New Delhi or Bengaluru. In 2023 we brought 7 comedians from India to the festival, each with very different perspectives of the South Asian experience. Their shows brought along homesick Indian students, fans from the British Asian diaspora, and audience members who came along to discover something they might never otherwise encounter. For many of our performers, the experience of the

festival has been the beginning of reaching much wider international audiences.

For me, it's been revelatory to see Indian talent thrive en masse and only continue to grow in its reach.

Soho Theatre India began 15 years ago, when our executive director *Mark Godfrey* travelled to Bangalore with his Anglo-Indian father, finding himself in the audience of a theatre show with a story he'd never heard before and connected with a comedy scene ready to burst at its seams onto a global platform.

The rest of this story hits many milestones - Bollywood actor and comedian *Vir Das* coming to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe for the first time in 2016 presenting *Zakir Khan* as the first Indian performing in Hindi at the Royal Albert Hall in 2023; *Urooj Ashfaq* being the first comedian from India to win Best Newcomer at the 2023 Edinburgh Comedy Awards.

We brought Edinburgh stars *Ahir Shah*, *Olga Koch*, and *Toussaint Douglass* (amongst others) to Indian audiences in Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore; the *Verity Bargate* Award-winning play *Little Brother* to India in 2026 and India's first drag king cabaret to our downstairs space in 2024.

It's around these momentous moments that a living ecosystem has begun to develop—one where artists from different parts of the world can leave traces onto each other's work. Stories deepen in their

specificity and gather new meaning in the company they keep. Light behaves differently. New species appear. The edge becomes more alive than either side on its own.

For over 35 years, the people working at Soho Theatre have strived to create these edges, and much like Edinburgh, bring a festival feel to the

“Global Majority artists are integral to this ecosystem, and the louder we are about celebrating their work, the greater the reverberations can be across the industry”

year-round programme. Soho has always seen itself as a London theatre, but a London that is international and outward-looking, globally connected, and shaped by its diasporic communities. “Rather than trying to work everywhere, we wanted to build deeper relationships in places where we felt a genuine

connection,” said *Mark Godfrey*, in a candid conversation we had with *With Spice*. “India became one of those places because there were extraordinary artists creating work that UK audiences weren't seeing enough of. And bringing them to Edinburgh because it's the biggest arts festival in the world, they're exceptional artists and they deserve to be there.”

Soho Theatre is built on the ethos of protecting creative risk and creating the conditions where artists and audiences can encounter one another in meaningful ways. Global Majority artists are integral to this ecosystem, and the louder we are about celebrating their work, the greater the reverberations can be across the industry.



Comedians from India and Soho Theatre team at Dishoom following Asian Media Awards 2024 win. Bhavita Bhatt - Anirban Dasgupta - Biswa Kaylan Rath - Sam Hansford - Kelly Fogarty - Farah Ahmad - Pooja Sivaraman - Mark Godfrey - Steve Lock. Photo credit Soho Theatre.

WAS IT ANY GOOD?

Depends who you ask!

No stars, no inherited scales – just conversation. We invited Aisha Josiah, Editor of Fringe Biscuit, to break down how to make quality arts criticism radically accessible.

Back in 2011/2012, our reviews (christened #Twittiques) were the length of a tweet – not because the thinking was small, but because the reader we cared about was not at home with a broadsheet.

But don't mistake brevity for lack of rigour. Distilling a show into 140 (now 280) characters that are fair, precise, useful and entertaining often takes longer than writing five hundred loose words. Add to that our commitment to reviewing as a group rather than a solo exercise, and brevity is not a shortcut around critical thinking. It is that same creative analysis, concentrated.

More importantly, it's arts criticism with an open door – a form that proves an interesting critical perspective isn't reserved for people with bylines. It's something any theatregoer or theatremaker can learn to do well, and rests on three questions.

1. What was the artist trying to do?

This is perhaps the most egregiously ignored – and misunderstood – question in how we talk about art. What sort of show was the artist intending to put on? Not the show you wanted to see. These are very often not the same thing – and recognising that is the difference between engaging with a piece of work and merely consuming it.

2. How did they do it?

This one asks you to be present. In what order did things happen? What triggered the senses? Where was the moment of highest tension? How did your body react? What memories and associations – individual or communal – were invoked? What emotions? What were you encouraged to imagine? What, exactly, happened between you and the work?

3. How successful were they at what they set out to do?

Traditionally, this third question might simply be: was it any good? That's certainly what I was taught when learning about criticism.

But “good” according to what scale? Who built it, and who was it calibrated for?

Because objective measures of worth, beauty or artistic merit don't exist in the wild. What we carry instead is inherited – absorbed early, rarely examined, and shaped almost entirely by Western canons of what art is for.

It's the scale on which work by glob-

al majority artists is so often weighed and found merely novel. The fact that a piece was made by Black or brown artists becomes the noteworthy aspect. Interpretation gets flattened into “the minority experience”: prejudice, racism, occasionally joy (but only in the face of trauma). The literary, mimetic or thematic skill goes unremarked. So do the influences that aren't Western. Rare is an appreciation untinged by polite condescension or fetishism.

The alternative is to judge a work on its own terms: to calibrate ourselves to the rules set by the work – its own standards, its own culture, its own history. That sort of theatregoing is not passive. Often, it is hard work.

Consider: if I wanted the perfect story for me – particularly in the age of AI – I could easily create it for an audience of one. To go to the theatre, to participate in a communal experience created by another person, by definition means looking for something outside of ourselves.

And criticism becomes infinitely more meaningful when the conversation begins with: *I understand – or I care enough to try to understand – where you're coming from. And based on that, here's what I think of what just happened onstage.*

Notice the word conversation.

A review – a twittique, an article, a thought offered to a stranger in the queue – is not a verdict handed down from above. It is a turn in a dialogue. And when audiences become literate, even eloquent, in arts criticism, when they ask these three questions and bring their answers into the open alongside traditional critics, that dialogue becomes electric.

Those conversations leave traces. What resonated, with whom, and why. Which rooms of twelve people held something extraordinary. Producers and programmers read them and increasingly gather them, turning scattered reactions into the signals that decide what gets made, staged and toured next. Every considered response feeds an ecosystem that would otherwise consist of marketers shouting on one side and consumers scrolling on the other.

That is what your reaction is worth. Not noise, not free publicity, but a tangible contribution to the shared work of deciding what our culture becomes.

Conversing is how we find our people – and how shows find the audiences who can meet them fully. We meet, not as marketers and consumers, but as makers and curators of culture, together.

BECOMING

A vignette of moments. by Kento Morita

JANUARY 2026

Tuesday morning. Day 2 of clown school. My roommate and I were running through the commune of Étampes, France. The cobblestone underneath our feet was wet, the air cold, and we were late. Very late. The school will lock the doors at 9:45 and it was 9:40. And we were more than five minutes away.

We dashed past a church built in 1210 and almost tripped over a duck. We muttered our “pardon”s and “bon jour”s as we ran around the residents, who have probably seen this scene play out many times over the years since École Philippe Gaulier moved to Étampes in 2011. Did I say a duck? There definitely was a duck. I ignored the thought and kept running, but then realized my roommate was no longer with me. I turned around. He was talking to the duck.

It was 9:43. We were still more than five minutes away.

Somehow, time works differently around clown school. We got to the school at exactly 9:45. We were out of breath, sweating through our coats, warmed up and ready for movement training.

We were at École Philippe Gaulier, a school that famously trained actors such as Sacha Baron Cohen, Helena Bonham Carter, Zach Zucker, Damien Warren-Smith, Elf Lyons, Julia Masli, and others. I was attending their short course that combines movement, Le Jeu, and Clown into a concentrated two-week program. . And I'm already having conversations with a duck.



OCTOBER 2025

For almost an hour, we shook our hips. Thrusting, twerking, grooving, letting it all go. Puddles of sweat covered the floor, and the air grew thick with heat. Dr. Budi Miller, the first African American ceremonial mask dancer of Bali was leading us through an exercise he called “decolonizing the hips.” No corrections of posture, no “proper” form, just a pure sensation of letting go.

My whole life, “good posture” meant a lifted chest, a controlled torso, a vertical line. The kind of “ideal” you might recognize from ballet. What I realized through that hour of shaking the hips was how much of my focus was spent maintaining that “correct” shape. After shaking my hips, my voice came out less strained. I felt relaxed, natural and present, in a way I hadn’t been on a stage before.

That afternoon, I performed a monologue I'd done many times for hundreds of people. I thought I had this monologue down. But I was wrong. There was more to the text. After more exercises, my body became a stronger conduit to the text than it had ever been. The room went electric. People cried and laughed. The text flowed through my looser and truer body. And it all started with shaking the hips.

The thing is, that “correct posture” I’d spent years trying to achieve didn’t come from nowhere. It was defined, quite literally, in the Renaissance courts of Europe. These are the same courts that were justifying colonization abroad by calling other cultures uncivilized. Ballet’s vertical line and the idea of “barbaric” bodies grew up together. (One of the most popular commedia dell’arte archetypes developed at this time was the “harlequin”, a black-masked and “hump-backed” character). Standing “correctly” has always been about control.

I've spent years training with wonderful teachers, but most of them are white. This is not to discredit them in any way, some of my most transformative work was done under their guidance. But when the person teaching you deeply understands your cultural background, or at least fundamentally can acknowledge where you stand might differ from the majority, their guidance can be mindblowing. Dr. Miller's workshop is a soul-healing example.



EDINBURGH



KIM LAM

OFF THE
TRODDEN
PATH



I used to live in Edinburgh and, even as a non-tourist, loved the Fringe experience every year that it arrived. But now, I’m in Aberdeen, three hours north of Edinburgh, as I’ve moved home due to respiratory health issues and am on supplementary oxygen as well as the lung transplant list.

So, as I reminisce on my time in Edinburgh with the hopes of visiting again with a new pair of lungs, I’ll be visiting my old Asian haunts and places that are simply life-giving. I’ll focus on primarily Chinese offerings, as my dad is from Hong Kong, and that’s what I’ll honour. And I want you to join me.

For an authentic experience, when it comes to Asian food, I must say, the marketplace and its offerings are striking, abundant and competitive in many ways. But for an experience only a local really knows about, hold my hand. I’m gonna help you find a cubby hole (or an expansive holy grail) that isn’t Instagram-worthy or inundated with so many people that it makes your little introverted soul vomit.

First stop – Imperial Palace. It’s a bit outside the city, so you have to get a taxi or bus there. But it’s worth the trip. They don’t really take bookings, so you have to chance it.

Usually when you walk in, it’s full of Chinese people, and that’s a good sign. They specialise in Cantonese and Dim Sum food. The literal translation of ‘Dim Sum’ means ‘Touch the Heart’. If you haven’t tried Dim Sum before – this is your sign.

It’s a no-frills place with plenty of space. Packed to the brim with round tables and a plate spinner on each table for all the Dim Sum plates to be shared and Chinese tea.

Think steaming hot Har Gau (prawn dumplings), Char Sui buns (sweet pork buns), Lo Bak Go (turnip cake), Beancurd Rolls (Tofu skin meat rolls) and many other mysterious, delightful little parcels that will tantalise all your senses!

Chinese people and Asians are well known for their love of food, valuing family and community – it’s a ritual and part of the beautiful tapestry of their culture. It’s life-affirming and a way to keep us all connected, enjoying the small moments of life. Touching the heart really is what it’s all about.

Next up – okay, okay, I lied a little bit about no frills and off the beaten path, but you want to try Tattu Edinburgh. It is a semi-chain in the UK with additional venues in Manchester, London and Leeds. They have modern Chinese cuisine, but the venue itself is upmarket with the most spectacular, dazzling interior design and ambience. Their dishes feel like they have a Michelin star signature: little but mighty, impressive and satiating, despite their small size. And their cocktails... Last time I was there, I think I had a fiery dragon one, and it was blowing smoke out of its nostrils.

Mind you, it’s not so kind to the wallet, but oh so worth the treat!

Last but not least is Lucky Yu. It’s in Leith, which is like the Shoreditch of London or Williamsburg in Brooklyn. And I used to live there, so I confirm its coolness: 8/10 score. They offer small plates. Think bao buns, dumplings, and karaage fried chicken. More like street food in a nice, vibrant, yet calm little place. It is an excellent place to pause and refuel. Plus, it’s easier on the pocket.

So here’s to life (really, don’t take the small moments for granted!). I hope you have a breathtaking experience at the Fringe and enjoy all that it has to offer. Wish me luck with my lungs ;) And maybe I’ll see you one day out there, in the beautiful kaos.



Kim is a member of ESEA Creatives – a Scotland based East Asian artists organisation that creates events from food tastings, showcases and exhibitions. Please let Kim Lam guide your tastebuds. Take a picture and tag @with_spice_oommoo @kimmyinrhapsody

To appease your other tastebuds, we have created a database of all the Global Majority cafes and restaurants in Edinburgh. Email if you want a copy: withspice@oommoo.com

EDINBURGH



Poppy Jay and Rubina Pabani

SURVIVE

Poppy Jay, one half of the hit podcast and show *Brown Girls Do It Too* breaks down her dos and don'ts of the Edinburgh Fringe.

Everyone will tell you Edinburgh Fringe is a marathon, not a sprint. They're right. Unfortunately, they're also lying.

Because for the first few days, you'll convince yourself you're doing it properly. You'll eat vegetables, you'll batch cook. You'll go to bed at a reasonable hour. Then everything falls apart.

Suddenly you're staying out until 3am, spending money like you're a baller, promising to see 47 shows, living off chilli chicken and chips, and convincing yourself that four hours of sleep is a perfectly reasonable life choice.

Having survived my first Fringe, and celebrated my 40th birthday in the process, largely through adrenaline, cigarettes and blind optimism, here are a few things I wish someone had told me.

1. Accept that you're not going to see everything

Don't over-promise and under-deliver like I did. It doesn't matter how organised you are or how many flyers you're carrying around in your little backpack. You are not going to see everything. I spent most of my time performing, flyering, drinking or trying to remember where I was supposed to be next.

Pick up the guides and earmark the shows you genuinely care about. Make a special effort to support performers from communities you want to champion. But

And while we're here, be sure to pick up *LULA. XYZ's 'With Spice'*, a pocket-sized guidebook to Global Majority shows at the Fringe. Some of the best things you'll see all month won't be plastered across giant billboards, it will be in this.

2. Flyering is a necessary evil

I hate that this is true. But if you're a new act without a huge profile behind you, you have to do it. The people standing next to you handing out flyers become your comrades. You'll spend hours together trying to persuade strangers to come and watch your mental breakdown disguised as comedy. Do it every day. Do it consistently. Help each other out.

If you're flyering alone:, Godspeed.

3. Ignore the stars. Follow the gossip.

One of the biggest surprises for me was how little I cared about reviews. The Fringe runs on word of mouth. Ask audience members what they've loved. Ask performers. Ask random people in queues.

Better yet, start a WhatsApp group with other performers in your venue and watch each other's shows.

One of my favourite shows was *Why I Stuck a Flare Up My Arse for England?* by *Alex Hill*, who was on just before us. We watched him, he watched us, and we spent most of the month telling our audiences to go and see each other's shows. You arrive thinking you're competing with everyone. You leave realising you're all part of the same ecosystem, desperately trying to help each other get bums on seats.

4. Edinburgh will financially ruin you

Nobody prepared me for how expensive it would be.

During my first Fringe, I spent £597.89 on booze and £686.74 on restaurant food.

I wish I were joking. Carry snacks. Carry water. Budget more than you think you'll need.

5. By week three, you'll want to quit

This is the bit nobody warns you about. The novelty wears off. Your body hurts. Your lungs have turned to ash, you need a kidney transplant. You can no longer remember the last vegetable you consumed. You'll find yourself standing in the rain, flyering, wondering what sequence of life choices led you here.

This is normal. Everybody is having the same crisis.

Keep going.

6. Let people visit

Some of my favourite Fringe memories were the gigs I saw with my best friends. Watching *Francisco de Nata* with my mates was an absolute highlight. Be prepared to see some brilliant shows and some absolutely shite ones. That's part of the fun. People travelling across the country, friends meeting other friends and grabbing a drink afterwards reminds you there's a world beyond ticket sales, reviews and audience numbers.

Make time for them.

7. Network if you want to. Don't if you don't.

There are parties every night. Industry events every night. Opportunities every night. Some people thrive on that. Personally, I was far more interested in watching shows with my mates, getting drunk with them than collecting business cards.

Could I have networked more? Probably. Do I regret spending those nights laughing with people I love? Absolutely not.

8. Ignore all of this

Honestly, the best advice might be to ignore everyone else's advice. Your Fringe won't look like anyone else's. You might have the best month of your career. You might have the worst financial week of your life. Most likely, you'll have both on the same day.

You'll lose your voice. You'll spend too much money. You'll make memories for life. You'll wonder why on earth anyone voluntarily puts themselves through this.

Then, sometime around July/September, you'll find yourself looking at next year's programme.

And that's when you'll know it's got you by the balls.

EDINBURGH INTERWAVES

25 August
1 – 3 pm

at
Dance
Base

Kakilang partners with:
New Earth Theatre
With Spice
ESEA Creatives Scotland
and more...

The Edinburgh Fringe is a relentless, high-pressure environment that often presents significant financial, logistical, and emotional barriers for ESEA and POC performance makers. Inter-Waves serves as an intentional, dedicated space—an antidote to the festival hustle. We offer a low-pressure environment for ESEA creative communities and our global majority allies to decompress, build genuine connections, and plant sustainable seeds for the future.

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MUSIC THEATRE OPERA DANCE

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A HIP HOP OPERA
BY RICKERBY HINDS

KEEP HEDZ RINGIN'

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15TH @ 22:00

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AUDIENCE THOUGHTS

Real reactions, left by real audiences, on OOMMOO

Legendary



5-31 AUG | 15:35
Underbelly, Bristo Square

“Truly original. What a stunning work of art in a moving story that truly immerses you in your own self discovery. Highly recommend! Cannot wait to see how far this show reaches.”

The Horse of Jenin



18-30AUG | 13:15
Pleasance Courtyard

“Saw this at Bush Theatre. Absolutely loved it. The physicality and mask work was incredible. So much heart. Also saw the documentary for Palestinian Comedy Club. Fantastic work bringing laughter to people and telling the truth.”

He's Six Years Older Than Me



7-22 AUG | 10:15
Greenside @ Riddles Court

“This intimate, metaphorically rich and provoking play stumbles toward the conclusion that desire does not amount to consent. The sweet and sour sensory juxtapositions and disorientating storytelling effectively plunges you into the romantic experiences of a young woman.”

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19 SHOWS
9 VENUES
EDINBURGH 2026

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NOMINEE: BEST NEWCOMER
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DEMI ADEJUYIGBE SELLS OUT

'I haven't laughed
more at anything
this year.'

★★★★
Times
★★★★
Guardian
★★★★
Scotsman

23
DOMESTIC
PLEASANCE ONE
18:45
5 - 30 AUG
QUEEN DOME



Edinburgh
Comedy
Awards
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

SOHO
THEATRE

19 SHOWS
9 VENUES
EDINBURGH 2026

Soho Theatre in association
with MTO37 presents

CONTRADICTIONS,
CULTURAL CHAOS,
AND A BRAIN THAT
WON'T SWITCH OFF.

TARANG HARDIKAR

IF I'M NOT WRONG

'A chronic
overthinker with
uniquely silly logic.'
Chortle

33
COUNTDOWN
PLEASANCE ONE
Scan for tickets
18:00
5 - 30 AUG
ATTIC



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ENGLAND

SOHO
THEATRE

19 SHOWS
9 VENUES
EDINBURGH 2026

Soho Theatre in association with UTA presents

KANAN GILL

ONE OF INDIA'S
BIGGEST
COMICS
IS BACK.

NOT THIS AGAIN

'Exceptional,
intelligent
comedy.'
★★★★
Skinny
★★★★
Scotsman
★★★★
List



fig.0
Kanan eyes



fig.1
Kanan doing
weird pose



fig.3
Kanan ear

33
COUNTDOWN
PLEASANCE ONE
21:10
18 - 30 AUG
PLEASANCE ONE

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

SOHO
THEATRE

19 SHOWS
9 VENUES
EDINBURGH 2026

'The perfect send-
up of the one-
woman show.'

★★★★
Guardian
★★★★★
Skinny
★★★★★
Diva Magazine

SEXY, SURREAL AND
GLORIOUSLY SELF-INDULGENT.
THIS ONE'S FOR THE LOVERS.

Soho Theatre in association with Bobby Harding presents

TEMI WILKEY

LOVER GIRL

DIRECTED BY
RAGEVAN VASAN

33
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14:40
5 - 30 AUG
UPSTAIRS



Bobby
Harding
ARTS COUNCIL
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