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ENGLAND**

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PW Productions announces UK Tour of award-winning play *Wonder Boy*

PW Productions is pleased to announce the UK Tour of *Wonder Boy* (*Writers' Guild Award for Best Play 2023*) written by **Ross Willis** (*Wolfie*) and directed by the Olivier-award winning **Sally Cookson** (*A Monster Calls*) following its triumphant 2022 premiere at **Bristol Old Vic**.

Wonder Boy will tour for 12 weeks to theatres in 2024 opening at **Bristol Old Vic** on **6 September** followed by **Liverpool Playhouse, Shrewsbury Theatre Severn, Wolverhampton Grand, Blackpool Grand, Stratford East, Derby Theatre, York Theatre Royal, Southampton MAST, The Lowry Salford and Northampton Royal & Derngate**.

Wonder Boy is a heart-warming and inspiring story about the power of communication told through the experiences of 12-year-old Sonny who lives with a stammer and has to find his way in a world ruled by vicious vowels, confusing consonants and the biggest beast of them all – small talk.

Packed with playful humour, dazzling visuals (set and costumes by Katie Sykes) and thrilling original music by Benji Bower, this innovative production includes live creative captioning on stage throughout, designed by award-winning Limbic Cinema.

Iain Gillie, CEO of PW Productions, best known for *The Woman in Black* and *An Inspector Calls* said “We are proud and excited to be producing **Ross Willis**’ marvellously imaginative *Wonder Boy* on its first UK tour. Sonny is a young hero for our times and his story is sure to captivate audiences across the country in a piece rich with theatricality, humour and emotion. *Wonder Boy* joins the **PW Productions** stable of brilliant plays, brought to life by the brightest and best creatives in our business. We are enormously grateful to **Arts Council England** for their substantial support of this project as we continue our tradition of touring high-quality drama to schools and family audiences across the UK.”

Catherine Woolley, Children and Families Programme Lead from **STAMMA** (the largest UK charity and membership organisation representing people who stammer)

said: "While the play tackles some complex and at times emotionally challenging concepts, it does so with a masterful blend of light and shade. **Wonder Boy** will make you laugh. It might make you cry. It will definitely make you think. Most importantly, it highlights that communicating confidently, not being fluent, is the real success."

Charlotte Geeves, Bristol Old Vic Executive Director said: "**Bristol Old Vic's** support of artists is a longstanding and crucial part of our work. Seeing **Wonder Boy**, which began life here in 2016, grow and ultimately garner audience and critical acclaim has been heartening. **Wonder Boy** went on to win Best Play at the **Writers' Guild of Great Britain Awards 2023** and was recently broadcast on **Sky Arts**; a testament to Ross' brilliant writing and the exceptional input of the creative team.

Thanks to support from **Arts Council England, PW Productions** is able to partner with **Bristol Old Vic** and bring the magic of **Wonder Boy** to audiences across the UK. The partnership is a great example of how the commercial and subsidised sectors can collaborate to bring the best new, exciting drama to a much wider audience."

Hannah Lake, Director of Touring, Arts Council England said: "We are immensely thrilled to be supporting **PW Productions** with their touring production of **Wonder Boy** through our **National Lottery Project Grants Programme**. This is a production that has inclusivity and relevance at its core and we can't wait to see it wowing audiences up and down the country."

For Images and further information please see: www.wonderboyplay.com and follow us on Twitter/Instagram/Facebook: [@wonderboyplay](https://www.instagram.com/wonderboyplay)

(Full cast details will be announced in 2024)

"an audaciously inventive, sparky yet sensitive, giddily enjoyable new play" **The Guardian *******

"Whatever your age, there is a rare sense of life and discovery to tap into here" **The Times ******

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITOR

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Bristol Old Vic Press Night: Wednesday 11 September, 2024

Stratford East Opening Night: Tuesday 15 October, 2024

Tour Dates

DATE	VENUE
6 Sep – 21 Sep	Bristol Old Vic
25 Sep – 28 Sep	Liverpool Playhouse
30 Sep – 2 Oct	Shrewsbury Theatre Severn
3 Oct – 5 Oct	Wolverhampton Grand
8 Oct – 12 Oct	Blackpool Grand
15 Oct – 19 Oct	Stratford East
22 Oct – 26 Oct	Derby Theatre
29 Oct – 2 Nov	York Theatre Royal
5 Nov – 9 Nov	Southampton MAST Mayflower Studios
12 Nov- 16 Nov	The Lowry, Salford
21 Nov -23 Nov	Northampton Royal & Derngate

PW Productions is one of the West End's most prolific and significant theatre producers, responsible for some of the most successful productions in British theatre since it was founded in 1983 by Peter Wilson MBE including *An Inspector Calls* and *The Woman in Black*: www.pwprods.co.uk

Ross Willis (Writer) is a playwright from Bristol. His debut play *Wolfie* premiered at Theatre503 to critical acclaim setting him out as “a fresh and fearless voice” in British theatre. The play won Best New Play at both the Writers’ Guild Awards and the Off-West End Awards 2020 and also earned him a nomination for Best Writer at the 2019 Stage Debut Awards and Most Promising Playwright in the Evening Standard Theatre Awards. His next play *Wonder Boy* premiered at the Bristol Old Vic and also won a Writers’ Guild Award for Best Play in 2023. Ross won the 2019 Royal Court and Kudos Fellowship, the 2019 Channel 4 Playwright Award and the 2020 Jerwood New Playwright Award. He took part in the writer’s room for *The Outlaws* created by Stephen Merchant and was an Associate

Artist at Pentabus Theatre Company. He is currently under commission to the Royal Court, Soho Theatre, Paines Plough, The Orange Tree Theatre, Francesca Moody Productions, English Touring Theatre, The Almeida Theatre, Sonia Friedman Productions and the National Theatre:

<https://www.berlinassociates.com/client-list/ross-willis>

Sally Cookson (Director) trained at LAMDA and worked as an actor for ten years before embarking on a freelance directing career. She has worked on productions for theatres including the Old Vic London, Bristol Old Vic, the National Theatre, the Duke of York and Rose Theatre Kingston. Most recently Sally has directed *Dracula: Mina's Reckoning* for National Theatre of Scotland, *Birthmarked* for Edinburgh Festival and *Wonder Boy* for Bristol Old Vic. She is an associate artist at Bristol Old Vic where productions include *Jane Eyre*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Peter Pan*, *Treasure Island*, *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, *Papa Please Get the Moon for Me*, *Clown*, *Strange Case*, *Pericles*, *Pains of Youth* and *The Visit*. Sally is also a Trustee for New Writing Theatre Company Papatango. She received an Olivier Award for *A Monster Calls* (Old Vic London) winning best family and entertainment in 2019, and three Olivier nominations for *Peter Pan* (National Theatre/Bristol Old Vic), *Hetty Feather* (Kenny Wax Productions), *Cinderella a Fairytale* (The Other Palace). Her productions of *Jane Eyre* and *Peter Pan* have been made into National Theatre Live films:

<https://www.curtisbrown.co.uk/client/sally-cookson>

Bristol Old Vic is the UK's longest continuously running theatre and has welcomed millions of people through its doors since opening nearly 260 years ago. Led by Executive Director Charlotte Geeves and Artistic Director Nancy Medina, the organisation is committed to platforming and creating opportunities for the multitude of stories that Bristol and the UK have to offer. From its extensively redeveloped building in the Old City, Bristol Old Vic offers a year round programme of inspiring, original new work; one of UK theatre's biggest learning and engagement programmes; and one of the UK's leading artist development programmes: www.bristololdvic.org.uk

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £467 million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk>

The UK tour of *Wonder Boy* has been supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England