

# DUN DEE REP

Dundee Rep Young Company presents the World Premiere of

## *OPTIMISM*

A show about being young and having hope

25 – 26 March at Dundee Rep

Tickets from £5 available here: <https://dundeerep.co.uk/whats-on/optimism/book>

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Dundee Rep Young Company is extremely excited to present its first live theatre production – *OPTIMISM*. Directed by **Jess Thorpe and Tashi Gore, Dundee Rep’s Associate Directors, the Young Company devised the show** based on the Company members’ personal experiences. Perfectly capturing the zeitgeist of the times and exploring themes such as **the global pandemic, Brexit, social media, financial crisis** – and their impact on **young people’s mental health** – *OPTIMISM* offers a different perspective on our collective future to the one dominating media, one that is full of hope, despite the odds. It is about young people refusing to accept the bleak status quo and their own ideas for how to improve it.

*OPTIMISM* is set to be not only an important contribution to the vibrant UK theatre scene but also a vital platform for young people in Scotland to express their ideas and preoccupations, being a voice of a generation – strong, creative, challenging and funny.

The show is also significant in that it is the first time that Jess Thorpe and Tashi Gore will present a live show since they joined the creative leadership at Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre two years ago. Prior to arriving at the Company, the pair were founders and co-directors of the award winning Scottish young company Junction 25 – winners of the acclaimed CATS Whiskers Award for an outstanding achievement in pioneering and high-quality work by young people.

*“Hailed as one of the finest in the UK, and it’s not difficult to see why”*  
– Joyce McMillan, The Scotsman, on Junction 25. We are excited to see what they bring to their collaboration with young people at Dundee Rep.

OPTIMISM has been devised and rehearsed over 20 weeks at Dundee Rep and will take over the venue’s main stage on 25 and 26 March, performed by the Rep Young Company which includes young people between 13 and 19 years old from all over Dundee: Katie Close, Sam Close, Ivor Morrison, Jacob Howett, Ben Watson, Sarah Gordon, Ella Matthews, Lilly Kerr, Travis Dempster, Poppy Paige, Milly Bairstow, Robin Van Der Kuyl, Rosina Hall, Belle Hunter, Alex Hancock, Arwen Starkey, Levana Starkey, Molly Scott, Liam Jones, Sophia Coffey Sylvester, Duncan Stewart.

**Jess Thorpe, Associate Director at Dundee Rep said:** *“We are delighted to be making live theatre again and to be working on what feels like such an important collaboration with young people in Dundee. The idea for the show came directly from their concerns, perspectives and their experiences of the world they are living it right now. We have really appreciated their bravery and bold approach to making new work and we can’t wait to see them share it with audiences in Dundee.”*

**Ella Matthews (16), Performer, said:** *“OPTIMISM is a show about what it’s like to be young from the perspective of the people living through it. But, instead of expressing only our frustrations and despair, it focuses on our hope for a better future and our desire to create a world where everyone can thrive. The show also reveals a certain vulnerability that many young people, including myself, feel. A vulnerability where you have a lot of questions that need answers and a lot of things you want to change, and even though you don’t necessarily know how to do it, you don’t want to give up trying.”*

**Belle Hunter (17), Performer, said:** *“This is a show about hope and about change - what we as a group and as individuals worry about. We want you to come and see it because it’s an opportunity to hear and see what young people think and feel and how big ideas like social media and climate change affect our lives everyday.”*

/ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

Dundee Rep Young Company

OPTIMISM

Tickets: <https://dundeerep.co.uk/whats-on/optimism/book>

Friday, 24 March at 7.30pm

Saturday, 25 March at 2.30pm (BSL-interpreted) & 7.30pm (audio description available)

**Image:** <https://www.dropbox.com/s/paac67mw3azcg3u/Optimisim%20Hi%20Res.jpg?dl=0>

CREATIVE TEAM

Created by **Dundee Rep Young Company**

Director **Jess Thorpe, Tashi Gore**

Set Designer **Leila Kalbassi**

Lighting Designer **Richard Abbey**

AV Designer **Jamie Wardrop**

Project Manager **Amanda Glover**

Associate Artist **Mikaela Aktag**

## **ABOUT DUNDEE REP THEATRE AND SCOTTISH DANCE THEATRE**

The story of Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre is one of its people: its artists, creatives, staff, participants and audiences.

Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre sits at the cultural heart of Dundee as a centre of creative excellence. The Organisation looks outwards, creating and delivering work for local, national and international audiences, with learning at the heart. “The Rep” recently celebrated its 80th anniversary and is home to the Dundee Rep Ensemble, the only permanent full-time company of its kind in Scotland. Scottish Dance Theatre is one of the few full-time companies in the UK and is made up of nine inquisitive and versatile dancers who have come from all over the world to work and create in our home at Dundee Rep. Together these twin ensembles have created a number of award-winning productions, made in Dundee that tour nationally and internationally; establishing a reputation as one of the UK’s leaders in theatre and dance production, carrying the Dundee brand far and wide.

Dundee Rep Ensemble has created a number of award-winning and award-nominated productions, including the world premiere of ‘Let the Right One In’, ‘The Cheviot, The Stag and The Black, Black Oil’, the Scottish premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winning ‘August: Osage County’, and the 80th Anniversary season world premiere of Peter Arnott’s ‘Tay Bridge’.

Working at the forefront of the art form, Scottish Dance Theatre collaborates with internationally acclaimed choreographers and artists, supports the development of emerging and home-grown talent and promotes a plurality of voices. With more than 30 years of history, the company has developed a distinctive identity that brings together artistic integrity and social commitment, reaching a wide range of audiences and communities locally, nationally and across the world. Scottish Dance Theatre has received multiple awards, including the Critics’ Circle National Dance Award for Outstanding Company Repertoire, and has built a strong international profile, becoming Scotland’s flagship contemporary dance company.

At the heart of the Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre vision is the belief that artistic and creative experience of the highest quality should be open and available to all. The Organisation has an extensive engagement programme working with people of all ages both within the building and in formal and informal learning contexts across Scotland and internationally.

Over the course of eight decades, Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre has been at the heart of performance in Scotland, and grown into a world-class organisation, with two artistic forces based in Dundee, travelling to and reaching the rest of the world.

For more information, please contact The Corner Shop PR Scotland:

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