

Citizens Theatre

Cast announced for landmark Citizens Theatre reopening production *Small Acts of Love*



The full cast for Small Acts of Love – Top (l to r): Ewan Donald, Simon Donaldson, Blythe Duff, Lewis Fleming, Holly Howden Gilchrist, Barrie Hunter, Robbie Jack

Bottom: Hilary MacLean, Beth Marshall, Nicholas Marshall, Jayne McKenna, Jo Servi, Naomi Stirrat, Mandy Symonds

**Free to use images of the Small Acts of Love creative team [available HERE](#).
Recent images from the Citizens Theatre redevelopment [available HERE](#)**

The Citizens Theatre has today revealed the full cast for *Small Acts of Love*, the first production to be performed on the theatre's home stage in more than seven years when it reopens later this year.

Small Acts of Love is a major new work about the bonds of friendship forged between the people of Lockerbie and the American relatives in the wake of the Pan Am 103 atrocity in December 1988. Commissioned by the Citizens Theatre's Artistic Director **Dominic Hill**, this new theatrical and musical collaboration between playwright **Frances Poet** and composer **Ricky Ross (Deacon Blue)** is presented in association with the National Theatre of Scotland, and will premiere on **Friday 12 September**.

Dominic Hill, Director, said: *To be announcing our cast for Small Acts of Love today is an exciting and pivotal moment in our journey home. Ranging from some of the most experienced and well-known actors in Scotland to newly graduated stars of the future, this cast and this production announce the ambition and quality of the new Citizens Theatre. And that quality is matched by the creative team who include Olivier Award winning lighting designer Bruno Poet and designer Tom Piper (who has recently revived his celebrated 'poppy installation' at the Tower of London). With only a few weeks to go until the start of rehearsals, the whole company is preparing to welcome artists and audiences to our fantastic new building for the first time in 7 years."*

Spanning thirty-six years, *Small Acts of Love* follows the journey of two communities brought together under extraordinary circumstances. What begins in grief blossoms into connection, as small gestures of kindness grow into lasting bonds of friendship, resilience, and love.

The project has been painstakingly researched and contains representations of real people built from an extensive series of interviews with families and individuals who were directly affected by the Lockerbie atrocity, both in Scotland and the USA.

A generation-spanning cast of 14 actors will bring to life the profound stories of these two communities -from established stars of stage and screen to emerging artists including **Ewan Donald, Simon Donaldson, Blythe Duff, Barrie Hunter, Robbie Jack, Beth Marshall, Hilary MacLean, Jayne McKenna, Jo Servi, Naomi Stirrat, Mandi Symonds, Lewis Fleming, Holly Howden Gilchrist**, and **Nicholas Marshall**.

Blythe Duff returns to the Citizens Theatre following standout performances in *Wild Rose* at the Lyceum and *Escaped Alone* at the Tron. **Robbie Jack** and **Beth Marshall** both recently appeared in *Lockerbie: The Bombing of Pan Am 103*, the powerful BBC drama exploring the same real-life events that inspired this new stage production.

Both **Holly Howden-Gilchrist** and **Nicholas Marshall** are the 2025 Citizens Theatre Graduate Actors, and will also appear in the venue's festive production of *Beauty and the Beast*, written by Lewis Hetherington, later this year.

Dominic Hill, Director, said: "We're pleased to continue supporting early-career artists through initiatives like our Graduate Actor roles and our partnership with Birkbeck's MA in Theatre Directing. These placements offer emerging talent the chance to gain experience within a professional producing theatre, and contribute fresh ideas and energy to our work."

Featuring an original score by Deacon Blue's **Ricky Ross**, *Small Acts of Love* is driven by a brand-new soundtrack performed live on stage by a five-piece roots band. **Gavin Whitworth**, Musical Director and arranger of the award-winning *No Love Songs* at Traverse Theatre; **Jessica Kerr**, whose expressive vocals have enlivened Glasgow's vibrant folk-scene; **Jill O'Sullivan**, celebrated for her bold collaborations and inventive song writing; **Cammy Maxwell**, a sought-after fiddler and multi-instrumentalist from Scotland's roots circuit; and **Louis Abbott**, frontman of Mercury Prize-nominated **Admiral Fallow** - collaborate to craft a dynamic score pulsing with warmth, grit and soul. Together they weave folk, acoustic, and contemporary textures that illuminate the heart of the story through the live soundtrack and lyrics.

The creative team also boasts a wealth of experience across previous hit Citizens Theatre productions, including set designer **Tom Piper** (*Nora: A Dolls House*; *Cyrano*; *Hamlet*), costume designer **Jessica Worrall** (*Red Riding Hood*; *The Comedy of Errors*), and movement director **Emma Jane Boyle** (*Nora: A Dolls House*; *Trainspotting*; *This Restless House*). The team will also include internationally-renowned, award-winning lighting designer **Bruno Poet**, whose recent projects have included *Macbeth* at Donmar Warehouse, *A Midsummer Nights Dream* at The Bridge Theatre, and the stage adaptation of Roald Dahl's *The Witches* at the National Theatre.

The production is set to open the first season of on-stage work at the Citizens Theatre following the highly anticipated completion of redevelopment works on the building. The company originally moved out of its historic Gorbals home in June 2018, as work began on the first major redevelopment of the Category B listed building since it began life as a working theatre in 1878.

After years of making work across Glasgow, the Citizens Theatre returns home. This autumn, a multi-day Homecoming festival will welcome audiences back celebrating the Citz's past, present and future. The celebrations culminate in *Small Acts of Love*—the first full production on the theatre's main stage.

- ENDS

Rehearsals begin on 28 July 2025 in Glasgow. If you are interested in interviewing cast or creatives involved in this production, attending the performances at the Citz, or have any other enquiries please get in touch.

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For background use only – not for publication – a 12min film from research and development weeks for the show in May 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaDKTqs0ocg>

NOTES TO EDITORS

This production is supported by The Hunter Foundation.

It is presented in association with the National Theatre of Scotland.

Small Acts of Love was developed with the support of the National Theatre's Generate programme.

Full biogs for cast and creative team available on request.

Full Cast

Ewan Donald

Simon Donaldson

Blythe Duff

Lewis Fleming

Holly Howden Gilchrist

Barrie Hunter

Robbie Jack

Hilary MacLean

Beth Marshall

Nicholas Marshall

Jayne McKenna

Jo Servi

Naomi Stirrat

Mandi Symonds

Live musicians

Louis Abbott
Jessica Kerr
Cammy Maxwell
Jill O'Sullivan
Gavin Whitworth

Creative Team

Written by **Frances Poet**
Songs and lyrics by **Ricky Ross**
Director **Dominic Hill**
Set Designer **Tom Piper**
Costume Design **Jessica Worrall**
Lighting Design **Bruno Poet**
Movement Director **Emily Jane Boyle**
Musical Director/Musician **Gavin Whitworth**
Dialect coach **Carol Ann Crawford**
Casting Director **Michael Howell**

Citizens Theatre

The Citizens Theatre is Glasgow's major producing theatre and one of the leading theatre companies in the UK. It is internationally renowned for ground-breaking theatre productions and a pioneering programme of participatory and community work. It is led by Artistic Director, Dominic Hill who is regarded as having "*a talent for classical drama which is genuinely world class.*" (Daily Telegraph) and Executive Director, Kate Denby. The theatre presents bold new interpretations of classic texts alongside new writing. It is firmly rooted in the Gorbals community at the heart of Glasgow's cultural and creative offering, while maintaining a national and international outlook.

Redevelopment Project

The Citizens Theatre moved out of its historic home in the Gorbals in June 2018, ahead of the first major redevelopment of the Category B listed building since it began life as a working theatre in 1878. The redeveloped building will transform the experiences of audiences, participants and performers and secure the future of one of Scotland's most iconic buildings and leading producing theatre companies.

Designed by Bennetts Associates, the extensive redevelopment has brought the iconic building into the 21st century. At its heart is a substantial restoration of the original sandstone Victorian auditorium, wrapped in an entirely new three storey building which crucially provides universal access for artists and audiences. It also delivers new rehearsal, participation, and studio spaces supporting expanded activities for the community and offering Scotland's rich ecology of theatre companies' new spaces to rehearse and perform in. This includes a new 150 seat Studio Theatre.

We are now in the final phase of internal fit-out to return the building to a working theatre. The Citizens Theatre will reopen in August 2025, with a full season programme launching in September 2025. Key funders of the project include Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Creative Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland in addition to a range of trusts and foundations and individual supporters.

National Theatre of Scotland

The National Theatre of Scotland is dedicated to playing the great stages, arts centres, village

halls, schools and site-specific locations of Scotland, the UK and internationally. As well as creating ground-breaking productions and working with the most talented theatre-makers, the National Theatre of Scotland produces significant community engagement projects, innovates digitally, and works constantly to develop new talent. Central to this is finding pioneering ways to reach current and new audiences and to encourage people's full participation in the Company's work. With no performance building of its own, the Company works with existing and new venues and companies to create and tour theatre of the highest quality. Founded in 2006, the Company, in its short life, has become a globally significant theatrical player, with an extensive repertoire of award-winning work. The National Theatre of Scotland is supported by the Scottish Government. www.nationaltheatrescotland.com

Dominic Hill – Artistic Director

Dominic has been Artistic Director and Joint CEO of the Citizens Theatre since 2011. During his tenure at the Citz, he has achieved an unrivalled reputation for presenting bold new interpretations of classic texts that are relevant to contemporary audiences. He has frequently directed co-productions with the National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Lyceum Theatre, Bristol Old Vic and many other partners across the UK as well as for Scottish Opera, Royal Shakespeare Company and Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. Before joining the Citizens Theatre, he was Artistic Director of the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh and Joint Artistic Director of Dundee Rep. He has directed in theatres in London and throughout the UK.

Frances Poet biography

Frances is a Glasgow based writer of stage, screen and radio with twenty years' experience working as a dramaturg for leading British theatres. Stage writing credits include: There Is No Room In Our Bathroom For Lewis Capaldi (PACE at Paisley Arts Centre); Sense and Sensibility (Pitlochry Festival Theatre/OVO); Maggie May - Susan Smith Blackburn Finalist (Leeds Playhouse/ Leicester Curve/ Queens Theatre, Hornchurch); Still (Traverse Theatre); Sophia (Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh/ Pitlochry Festival Theatre/Naked Productions); Fibres (Citizens Theatre/Stella Quines); Gut - Winner of Writers Guild Best Play Award (Traverse Theatre/National Theatre of Scotland); Adam - Winner of Fringe First, Herald Angel and Scottish Arts Club Awards (Traverse Theatre/MacRobert Arts Centre/Citizens Theatre); The Macbeths (Citizens Theatre); Dance of Death (Citizens Theatre); What Put The Blood (Abbey Theatre).

Frances is Reader in Playwriting and Screenwriting at the University of St Andrews.

Ricky Ross biography

Ricky Ross formed Deacon Blue in Glasgow in 1985. They went on to become one of Scotland's most successful bands. From debut album 'Raintown' and follow-up, the chart-topping 'When The World Knows Your Name', through to 2020's 'City of Love', Deacon Blue are one of the best loved bands of their generation. The band have recently announced the release of their 10th studio album 'The Great Western Road' and they continue to tour their celebrated live show around the world.

During the band's down time Ricky has established himself as a successful solo artist and songwriter releasing eight solo albums (his most recent the critically acclaimed 2022's Short Stories Vol. 2), as well as writing for and with artists including James Blunt, Ronan Keating, Jamie Cullum and Nanci Griffith, amongst many others. He has also composed music for a number of theatrical productions; at the Edinburgh Lyceum, the Dundee Rep and four major works at the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow.

Alongside this, he has an accomplished broadcasting career, Another Country, his BBC Radio Scotland show has won two Sony awards and Ricky has twice been the proud recipient of the CMA International Country Broadcaster Award, most recently in 2024.