

# The Woven Voices Prize

The Woven Voices Prize is an open invitation to all migrant writers in the UK and Ireland to share outstanding new work for the stage.

The aim of the prize is to celebrate and platform migrant writers, an underrepresented demographic on UK theatre stages. Around 14% of the UK population and 37% of London's population were born outside the UK. The Woven Voices Prize celebrates this rich source of creativity. It is a proclamation of a global, multicultural Britain and Ireland, and it opposes the 'Little England' mentality of isolationism.

Your play might be personal, political, funny, or serious. It might be set in the UK and Ireland or abroad. It might be set today or a thousand years in the past. It does not have to be about migrants or migration. All we ask is that it tells a story.

## The Prize

The winning writer will receive £2500. Their script will be produced by **Jermyn Street Theatre** for a run of at least one week in July as part of their *Footprints Festival*. It will be directed by Carne Deputy Director **Ebenezer Bamgboye**. The writer will receive a royalty of 8% of the net box office.

Up to three runner-up playwrights will receive dramaturgical support, will be named and featured publicly as runners-up, and be offered public readings of their plays at Jermyn Street Theatre.

## Deadline

*The Woven Voices Prize* will be open for entries until midnight on **28 January 2022**.

Please make sure you submit with some time to spare in case of any technical problems. No extension will be possible for any reason.

# Eligibility

The competition is open to those who primarily live and work in the UK or Ireland, who identify as a 'migrant'. This is a sometimes fluid category. For the purposes of the competition, we draw on the **Migrants in Theatre** definition of 'migrant'. This includes those who:

- do not hold a British or Irish passport but reside primarily in the UK or Ireland
- have moved to the UK or Ireland after spending formative years abroad
- have moved to the UK or Ireland as a child, is culturally British but is sometimes seen as a migrant or sees themselves as a migrant
- weren't born in the UK or Ireland and have English as a second language
- are an asylum seeker, a refugee or undocumented in the UK or Ireland

Ultimately, you are the best judge of whether you identify as a migrant.

There is no age limit, and no minimum or maximum level of experience to enter.

The script must be an original, unpublished and unproduced piece of work. 'Unproduced' is defined as having both (a) had no more than 6 performances for which people could buy tickets and (b) not having received a professional review. Any scripts that have been published or produced will be automatically disqualified.

Translations, children's plays, adaptations of other plays or other works in other media (e.g. novels, musicals, films) are not eligible. (The only exception might be a re-telling of an ancient story or myth where no direct use is made of another writer's work.)

Scripts may be written by more than one writer, but in this situation both writers must meet the definitions above.

You may submit only one script.

# Length, Scale and Focus

Given that this prize offers a production at **Jermyn Street Theatre**, we are looking for complete, full-length scripts.

Our understanding of 'full length' are scripts that have a running time of at least 60 minutes. Typically, this will be indicated by being of at least 8000 words OR being at least 45 pages in length, but your play might be written in a different form. There is no upper length limit.

The script should be performable with a maximum of six actors. The script may call for music or singing but it should not be a musical or a pantomime. There are no requirements for the focus or topic of the script.

# Language

The script must be written primarily in English, and accessible to an English-speaking audience. Where the script incorporates other languages, translations should be provided for the reader. We recognise that English is a language that takes many forms, variants and dialects. We also recognise that English proficiency can be a barrier to those writing in English for whom this may not be their first language, and the judging process will take account of this and seek not to discriminate on this basis.

## How to submit

Scripts should be submitted in Microsoft Word or PDF formats only.

As a separate attachment, you should include a cover letter including your professional name, the title of your play, your full contact details (email and telephone number) and a brief description of your migrant identity (e.g. where you were born / grew up).

Entry to the prize is anonymous. Please ensure that your script, including the file title, contains no mention of your name or email address.

Please do not include a synopsis or CV.

All entries should include page numbers on every page.

All entries & queries should be sent to [submissions@wovenoices.org](mailto:submissions@wovenoices.org)

## Rights

The entrant must exclusively own and control all copyright and all other related rights to the submitted script. It must be available for production and unattached to any other organization or individual.

Entrants grant **Jermyn Street Theatre** the right to produce their script on stage within the UK.

The winning script will be under exclusive option to **Jermyn Street Theatre** for a period of 12 months after the last date of the stage production at Jermyn Street Theatre. In the case of runners-up, no such option shall automatically apply.

## Assessment

Scripts will be read blind by a panel of readers. Each script will be read at least twice, including at least once by someone who is a migrant.

We will announce a shortlist around early March.

Shortlisted scripts will be read blind by a panel of expert judges, most of whom identify as coming from migrant backgrounds. Judges include: **Maria Aberg** (director and Artistic Director, **PROJEKT EUROPA**); **Arifa Akbar** (lead theatre critic, **The Guardian**); **Ebenezer Bamgboye** (Carne Deputy Director, **Jermyn Street Theatre**); **Ameera Conrad** (Associate Director, **Actors' Touring Company**); **Jatinder Verma** (director and writer, formerly of **Tara Arts**); **Timberlake Wertenbaker** (Playwright), and. The judging panel will select one winning play and up to three runners-up.

## Acceptance of Terms

Entry to the Prize constitutes an acceptance of these terms.

# About Jermyn Street Theatre

The logo for Jermyn Street Theatre, featuring the text "JERMYN STREET THEATRE" in white, uppercase letters on a purple rectangular background.

Winner of *Fringe Theatre of the Year 2021*, **Jermyn Street Theatre** is a unique theatre in the heart of the West End: a home to remarkable artists and plays, performed in the most intimate and welcoming of surroundings. World-class, household-name playwrights, directors and actors work here alongside people just taking their first steps in professional theatre. It is a crucible for multigenerational talent. We've premiered plays by **April De Angelis, Howard Brenton, Steven Berkoff, Timberlake Wertenbaker**, and countless others, and we've rediscovered work by **Terence Rattigan, Henrik Ibsen, Stephen Sondheim, Tennessee Williams and Noël Coward**. Emerging talents mingle with the likes of **Sir Trevor Nunn, Adjoa Andoh, Sinéad Cusack, Tuppence Middleton, David Threlfall, Dame Siân Phillips, Gemma Whelan, Olivia Williams, Rosalie Craig, Dame Eileen Atkins**, and our Patron, **Sir Michael Gambon**. In recent years, we have created hundreds of freelance jobs, premiered dozens of new plays, streamed our work worldwide, and championed the next generation of theatrical talent.

## About Woven Voices

**Woven Voices** is a London-based award-winning production company. As an international company, it seeks to weave together different voices, native and migrant, in order to champion cross-cultural work. Recent projects for stage include *SUBJECT MATER* (Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Fringe First Award), *BRUISES* (Tabard Theatre) and *TARTUFFE* (Theatre Royal Haymarket). In 2020, the company launched the podcast series *MIGREACTIVES*, featuring interviews with migrant creatives working in the UK.



## Our Partner Organisations

We're delighted to be working alongside four brilliant Partner Organisations on this competition, all of whom are champions for migrant voices in the theatre industry.

**Actors Touring Company** produces international contemporary theatre that travels – making the global, local and the local, global. They are one of the only British theatre companies committed to producing international plays; and to touring the work of those global voices throughout the UK (and beyond).

**PROJEKT EUROPA** is an international theatre company making new work by migrant theatre makers for local and global audiences. They make theatre from an international perspective, exploring new sustainable ways of collaborating across borders. They are resident company at The Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury, and from this base they originate, develop and produce their work.

**Migrants in Theatre** is a movement made up of first generation migrant theatre artists and theatre companies who joined efforts to campaign for more and better representation of UK based migrant theatre artists in British theatre.

**Phosphoros Theatre** is a charity that makes socially engaged performance with, for, and by refugees and asylum seekers. They make and hold space for those with forced migration backgrounds to voice, reflect on and respond to their lived experience, taking charge of the narratives that seldom include their perspective.