

Callout for Playwrights – Summer Term 2024

Strange Town offers opportunities in the performing arts to young people aged 5 to 25 in Edinburgh.

As a company, our aim at Strange Town is to enable young people to fulfil their creative potential. Whatever your background or experience, we believe everyone has creative and artistic abilities. We help young people to recognise and develop these abilities through peer and professional encouragement, participation, and example.

We are looking to commission up to **3** early-career playwrights to write short plays to be performed by our youth theatre groups.

These plays will be performed by our **8-10s** and two **11-14s** classes. Each class typically contains 20 members, and the plays would need to have at least one part for all of them.

For the 8-10s, we are looking for plays of between **30-45** minutes. For our 11-14s, we are looking for plays between **30-60** minutes long. Each would be shown for **2** performances in our **Summer Term** (May/June 2024) at the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

We vastly prefer our young people to play parts written for their age (e.g 11–14-year-olds playing characters suitable for those aged 11-14) rather than pretending to be adult humans.

There is some leeway here: panto scripts with characters like a King and Queen are fine. Likewise, scripts with non-human characters are also acceptable. For example, an 11-14 year old playing a multi-headed alien is completely fine for us (more acceptable than an adult human!)

For our **Summer 2024** plays, we would like our writers to base their ideas around the theme of **Fifteen**, as this coming year is Strange Town's 15th Anniversary, and we are seeking to put on a special set of shows to commemorate this.

Fifteen could mean a whole array of different things (not just the number/age) and we are excited to see what new and fresh ideas you present to us. We are particularly interested in ideas that are relevant to our young members today and which excite them, allowing them a sense of escape from their everyday lives.

We are also keen to see ideas that have **clearly considered the age group they are applying for**. Writing for 8-10s and writing for 11-14s are two vastly different prospects.

Playwrights must be available to attend at least 2 rehearsals in-person in Edinburgh:

- 1 rehearsal between **September – November 2023** for you to observe the group as they rehearse their Christmas show and to get feedback on your ideas for June 24
- 1 readthrough & feedback session for a draft of your script in **January 2024**

We would also highly recommend each playwright attend a performance of their group presenting their Christmas show in December 2023.

Each playwright will be paid a small fee for their writing. As a small charity, our resources are limited and unfortunately do not allow us to pay a fully professional rate.

However, we endeavour to help develop our writers fully and provide every assistance possible, particularly for those for whom this may be the first time they have ever been paid for their writing. We hope that by working with us, we can be the first step that helps writers go on to lead fully professional writing careers.

For more information about this and anything else you'd like to know before applying, please don't hesitate to get in touch using the details below.

If you are interested, please send us the following things:

- A short pitch (no more than 1 page) for a play for either the 8-10s or 11-14s. **Please specify which age group your pitch is for.**
- A writing sample of a stage play no more than 10 pages in length. Whilst we accept samples written for all audiences, we **strongly** recommend your sample demonstrates your ability to write for your chosen age group as **young performers**. The sample does not have to be a finished play or have had a previous performance of any kind. **It could even be a newly written sample of one of your pitches.**
- A short bio/CV detailing your writing experience to date (no more than 2 pages)

Please send these to James at james@strangetown.org.uk by no later than **9am on Monday 11th September**.

Interviews requests will be sent out to successful applicants for the week commencing **Monday 18th September**, which will be either online or in-person.

We strive to provide our young members with a variety of scripts and **avoid repetition**. Here is a brief description of recent commissions for these groups:

FRIDAY 8-10s

Dec 22: *Dungeons & Flagons* – a fantasy comedy about two storytellers trying to rewrite the story of grumpy King calling off the Midwinter Fair

Jun 23: *Lola Is Alone (And She Likes It)* – a family adventure about a fox refusing outside help to reconstruct her destroyed home

Dec 23: *Polar* – an environmental story about saving a grumpy polar bear.

WEDNESDAY 11-14s

Dec 22: *A Christmas Michael* – a farcical Nativity-gone-wrong where the teachers have left the kids in charge with an inexplicable George Michael theme.

Jun 23: *Wild Tides of Clíodhna* – a murder mystery drama about sea monsters and pollution.

Dec 23: *Tar-like* – a gothic, sci-fi adventure about family and home.

FRIDAY 11-14s

Dec 22: *Needles*: a Christmas horror play about the tormented ghosts of a dark Christmas long ago.

Jun 23: *I Was Here*: a historical drama about the sinking of an evacuee boat during WW2 and the discovery of its wreck by a modern group

Dec 23: *Last Christmas*: a farcical sci-fi comedy celebrating the last ever Christmas.