



The IdeasTap Underbelly Award returns for 2015

Once again, the IdeasTap Underbelly Award is back at the Edinburgh Fringe, bringing four brilliant shows from IdeasTap members. The Award offers funding and support from IdeasTap, a prime location at Underbelly Cowgate and mentoring from leading theatre practitioners as well as all the Underbelly staff.

The 2015 winning shows are **Ben Norris's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Family***, **Toby Peach's *The Eulogy of Toby Peach***, **Giles Roberts's *Much Further Out Than You Thought*** and **Izzy Tennyson's *Brute***. The shows all draw on the writers' personal experiences or issues that are important and resonant to them. Through the Award, these powerful pieces of new writing will have the opportunity to be staged on one of the greatest theatre platforms in the world.

The 2015 confirmed mentors are:

- Phoebe Waller-Bridge (actress and writer of the 2013 smash hit *Fleabag*) for *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Family*
- Holly Kendrick (Executive Director of HighTide Theatre Festival) for *Much Further Out Than You Thought*
- Rachel Tyson (Associate Producer at Old Vic Productions) for *The Eulogy of Toby Peach*
- and Vicky Graham (Producer, Out of Joint) for *Brute*.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Family is a one-man show about love, loss and motorways. Join writer-performer and UK poetry slam champion Ben Norris as he battles the country's most notorious service stations and the perils of lower-league football in search of his father's story. Hilarious and moving, the show explores the relative merits of Travelodge while asking searching questions about identity.

The Eulogy of Toby Peach is the story of Toby's journey with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a cancer of the lymph nodes that he faced at the age of 19 and again at 21. One in three of us will experience cancer first-hand and now Toby Peach brings this universal issue to the stage. Toby

didn't know what cancer was, what happens when it's treated and the effects it can have. A Eulogy is a celebration of life - we will all need one; Toby is just delivering his now. *The Eulogy of Toby Peach* is a discovery of self-mortality and this original piece explores a true story and an important and difficult subject in a refreshing, insightful and humorous way.

Much Further Out Than You Thought is a new one-man play which shines a different light on the very human cost of war. Lance Corporal James Randall left tours of duty in Helmand six years ago. But as he's about to discover, Helmand is still very far from leaving him. As we welcome back troops from Afghanistan, this is a timely reminder of a soldier's life after the battlefield.

Brute is an exciting piece of new writing based on the true story of a rather twisted, horrible schoolgirl. Set in a girls' school in a provincial English town far away from cosmopolitan and cultural influences, *Brute* explores memories of the protagonist's intensely passionate female friendships as they escalate into violence.

The IdeasTap Underbelly Award goes far beyond financing productions; it offers advice, mentoring, pre-Edinburgh boot camps, and regular expert sessions for the winners to attend. Sarah-Jane Leigh, producer of *Hiraeth*, one of the shows who won last year's Award says: *The IdeasTap Underbelly Award gave Hiraeth an international platform which has proved invaluable. The award allowed us to take our first production outside Wales, it gave us a brilliant mentor and gave us the confidence in Hiraeth we needed. It enabled us to get noticed and as such build relationships with industry professionals and audiences. Since Edinburgh we have toured Wales, had a London run at Soho Theatre and we won 'Best Production in the English Language' at the Wales Theatre Awards. The show is about to go on tour around the UK and we are also fundraising for a tour of New Zealand.*

Ed Bartlam, director of Underbelly says, *Underbelly is extremely excited about this year's award winning shows and delighted to be bringing them to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015 in partnership with IdeasTap. New writing and innovative theatre is at the heart of what we programme and we are pleased to be able to work in collaboration with IdeasTap on the award to help give a platform for emerging theatre practitioners to showcase their work at the world's largest arts festival. Underbelly has been involved with IdeasTap for the last six years and I have seen, first hand, the remarkable support that they have given to many young artists and the lasting effect that has had on their careers. The closure of this organisation deals a sizeable blow to the creative community in the UK.*

Amanda White, Strategic Partnerships Director at IdeasTap says, *We are thrilled to be bringing the winners of the IdeasTap Underbelly Award to the Edinburgh Fringe for the seventh year.*

More than 200 companies applied for the award, which recognises the UK's most innovative and exceptional new theatre. This year's four winning productions follow previous recipients such as Antler, Suba Das, Steven Atkinson, and Tortoise In A Nutshell, and shows such as One Hour Only, Bitch Boxer and Chapel Street. Past award winners have gone on to notch up further accolades, including Fringe Firsts, the Holden Street Theatres Award, Adelaide Fringe Awards, and have been nominated for The Stage Awards.

Judges – Ellie Browning (IdeasTap), Marina Dixon (Underbelly), Fi McCurdy (Underbelly), Chloé Nelkin (Chloé Nelkin Consulting), Rachel Tyson (Old Vic Productions), Rob Watt (National Theatre) and Amanda White (IdeasTap) – selected these four new theatre pieces to head up North.

Sadly, IdeasTap recently announced plans to close due to lack of confirmed future funding. IdeasTap has supported more than 190,000 young and emerging artists since its establishment by arts philanthropist Peter De Haan in 2008. Following the charity's planned closure in June, its website will showcase a selection of projects by its members and partners, as well as career guides and an archive of creative careers advice. A number of IdeasTap commitments – such as the IdeasTap Underbelly Award – will continue with the charity's support until the end of the year.

Notes to Editors

Title	<i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Family</i>
Performance Dates	Thursday 6 th – Sunday 30 th August (except 18 th), 4.40pm
Running time	65 minutes
Location	Underbelly Cowgate – Big Belly

Title	<i>The Eulogy of Toby Peach</i>
Performance Dates	Thursday 6 th – Sunday 30 th August (except 17 th), 2.50pm
Running time	1 hour
Location	Underbelly Cowgate – Iron Belly

Title	<i>Much Further Out Than You Thought</i>
Performance Dates	Thursday 6 th – Sunday 30 th August (except 17 th), 3.20pm
Running time	1 hour
Location	Underbelly Cowgate – Big Belly

Title	<i>Brute</i>
Performance Dates	Thursday 6 th – Monday 31 st August (except 17 th), 4.10pm
Running time	1 hour
Location	Underbelly Cowgate – Iron Belly
Twitter	#IUAward, @IdeasTap, @FollowTheCow

There will be a party for all award winners and press on Tuesday 11th August, 6-8pm – location to be confirmed. Please RSVP.

Mentors

Holly Kendrick

Holly is Executive Director of HighTide Theatre Festival before which she was CEO of the National Student Drama Festival, culminating in leading the International Student Drama Festival in 2012, part of the Cultural Olympiad, before NSDF she worked for Cameron Mackintosh, the National Theatre and founded and ran Caird Company. Holly sits of the board of: Sheffield Crucible Theatre, Curious Directive, Viviana Durante Company, Peggy Ramsay Foundation.

Rachel Tyson

Rachel Tyson currently works for Old Vic Productions as Associate Producer and General Manager; here she works on producing and managing shows in the West End. Prior to this she was producer at the Bush Theatre, working to open the new building in 2011 under the leadership of Josie Rourke. Rachel also worked as a producer in the Artistic Team at the Lyric Hammersmith. As a freelancer Rachel is Producer for Boomshakalaka Productions who currently producing *My Beautiful Black Dog* by Brigitte Aphrodite. She was producer for Comedy Duo Guilt & Shame. In 2014 Rachel was selected by the Clore Leadership Programme as an Emerging leader in the Arts. She has produced for the Old Vic New Voices UK/US Exchange in 2010, sits on the board of Scottee Inc and is a founding committee member of TOC arts centre in Hackney.

Phoebe Waller-Bridge

Phoebe is a multi-award winning writer and actor and the co-Artistic director of DryWrite Theatre Company. Her debut play *Fleabag* won a clutch of awards and a 2014 Olivier Award

Nomination and received a Special Commendation from the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize in 2013. Theatre credits include: *Fleabag* (Stage Award for Best Solo Performance, Off West End Award for Best Female), *The One* (Soho Theatre) Mydidae (Trafalgar Studios), *Hay Fever* (West End), *Tribes* (Royal Court), *Rope* (Almeida), *2nd May 1997* (Evening Standard Nomination, Best Newcomer), *Like a Fishbone* and *66 Books* (Bush Theatre), *Roaring Trade* (Soho Theatre). TV: *Broadchurch 2*, *Bad Education*, *Henry*, *London Irish*, *The Cafe*, *The Night Watch*. Film: *Man Up*, *The Iron Lady*, *Albert Nobbs*. Phoebe is currently writing *Crashing*, an original comedy series for E4.

More Info

IdeasTap

IdeasTap is an arts charity that helps creative people get where they want to be. The charity works with leading arts organisations to create industry opportunities for their members as well as providing access to funding, competitions, jobs, training and advice. Since launching in December 2008, IdeasTap has awarded more than £2.3 million worth of direct funding and accompanying expert mentoring to emerging artists. Its membership currently stands at 190,000+ and its partners include the BFI, mac birmingham, Magnum Photos, Mother London, NSDF, National Theatre, National Youth Theatre, the Royal Exchange and Sky Academy. For more information, see www.ideastap.com.

Underbelly

Underbelly was founded in 2000 by directors Ed Bartlam and Charlie Wood, as a single theatre space at the Edinburgh Festival to house five shows by young company Double Edge Drama. Underbelly has since grown to include the Udderbelly and London Wonderground festivals in London, The Comedy Hullabaloo in Stratford-Upon-Avon and Edinburgh's Christmas, as well as becoming one of the largest venues on the Edinburgh Fringe. To see Underbelly Edinburgh's line-up, visit www.underbellyedinburgh.co.uk.

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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