

# WRITING CV – THOMAS RYALLS

## THEATRE WRITING

My writing has always focused on play and how we might play with ideas that feel bigger than we are. Children aren't scared to do that and I attempt to allow an audience experience that childish energy again in storytelling. It allows me to create work which is challenging but also entertaining and a good night out.

### "How to be an astronaut" | Artsdepot | October 2020

"How to be an astronaut" is a show for young people about the ways in which families might have better conversations about the psychological impact of a young person living with a disability. It was commissioned by ArtsDepot and is currently in development. We completed an initial 2 week residency in October 2020, it has been shortlisted for the Unlimited Artist Award.

### "Blackpool Lights" | Theatre503 | October 2019

Josh and Rich are in a hotel room in Blackpool, it's the same room they've been meeting up in to have sex for 6 years. Tonight, for the first time, Josh will ask Rich to spend the night. Blackpool Lights explores the way in which gay men form attraction and the boundary between intimacy and violence.  
Dir. Max Elton.

### "Can you see in to a black hole?" | Shoreditch Town Hall | October 2018 | Camden People's Theatre + SlungLow Tour 2019

My parents and I had the conversations we never had during 10 years of me having epilepsy, I sound mix these interviews into an epic story about astronauts and black holes. Originally commissioned by Upstart Theatre for DARE Festival 2018. Arts Council England funded development in 2019 then UK tour with Slunglow. Sound by Christian Czornyj. Directed by Natasha Nixon.

### ORGREAVE 1984 | The Arcola | January 2019

Orgreave is a town near Rotherham, in 1984 it saw the biggest act of police violence in UK history, in the early 00s it was affected by a scandal with the Rotherham pedophile ring, now it is shaken by Brexit. The play explores the three civil wars that have torn about the town and the scars they have left. A small version of the play was workshopped at The Arcola in 2019.

## TRAINING

### MA Writing Musicals | Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts | Distinction

My focus on the programme was book writing and formal reinventions of biographical stories, specifically how you might use this to broach difficult topics with populist audiences. The MA focused on collaborative practice, formal innovation and ongoing development skills. I achieved the highest degree grade the school had ever given for the course.

### BA English and Related Literature | The University of York | 2:1

Dissertation on Angels in America and if Brechtian elements can successfully translate to TV. Modules includes American Literature 1910 – present, Modern adaptation of Ancient Greek Drama, The poetry and theatre of Lorca.

## TEACHING

In March 2018 I began delivering seminars at Portsmouth University about New Musical Theatre Writing for their undergraduate students in Musical Theatre.

### **Finding Simon | Pleasance Islington | September 2018**

I had a friend for 10 years who probably saved my life but there is a secret at the heart of our friendship. Part-theatre part-escape room, every night a guest performer tries to open a locked box filled with my secret with the help of the audience. Developed during a residency at Pleasance Islington.

### **Orpheus | TRSE | January 2018**

Orpheus explores the rise of post-truth politics across the first 15 years of the 21<sup>st</sup>C using a score of harp and live electronics. It was chosen for a first sharing as part of BEAM Festival 2018. Music by Dom James.

### **AUDREY: A NEW MUSICAL | The Tristan Bates / Above The Arts | 2018**

Audrey is a new musical using documentary footage of Audrey Hepburn to explore the gap between reality and the public construction of female fame. It received sharings at Above The Arts and The Tristan Bates theatre in 2018 as part of Prelude.

### **The Artificial Brain | Diorama Arts | 2017**

The Artificial Brain is a collaborative project between me and an autistic performer which explores the relationship between Autism and Artificial Intelligence. It is a play but simultaneously can be experienced as a video game for autistic audiences. It received an industry sharing at Diorama Arts in 2017.

### **BETH: A Slam Musical | Mosaic Festival | June 2016**

Beth resets the tension in Macbeth in a queer working-class space to explore if the addiction to power inherent in affluent masculinity can be escaped. It used slam poetry, found music and body percussion immersively to tell the story. It received a first sharing as part of Mosaic Festival in 2016.

### **What Becomes? | York Drama Barn | March 2015**

What Becomes? Is a play about the first ever Motown tour to come to the UK in 1965 and the affect it had on race and gender relations on small northern working-class communities. It received a workshop sharing and a week's run at York Drama Barn in 2015. It also won a nomination to be part of the festival company for The National Student Drama Festival in 2015.

### **The Fall of Fire: A New Musical | Upstage Theatre - York | June 2014**

The Fall of Fire was a new musical exploring the role of feminism in Ancient Rome amongst the Vestal Virgins. It was performed as part of the York New Musical Festival in 2014 in collaboration with composer Kristina Craven.

### **Saros 145 | York Drama Barn | Jan 2014**

Saros 145 juxtaposes a narrative of two brothers going through assisted suicide together with a narrative around the first ever DNAR order to be created in the 1970s. It received a workshop production at York Drama Barn in 2014.

### **OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Trustee of Unlimited Arts – an international disabled commissioning organization.
- Part of the School for Social Entrepreneurs Creative Leadership programme funded by Arts Council England's transforming leadership fund.
- Currently shortlisted for the Unlimited emerging artist award.
- One of the Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy Fellows 2020.