

Charlotte Square Gardens
Edinburgh
13 – 29 August 2016
www.edbookfest.co.uk

MEDIA RELEASE



Thursday 28 July

THE VIEW FROM CASTLE ROCK **CAST ANNOUNCED FOR WORLDWIDE THEATRE PREMIERE** **AT THE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL**

The Edinburgh International Book Festival and theatre company Stellar Quines today announced the cast of the world premiere of *The View from Castle Rock*, which is the first European theatre adaptation of Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro's moving and enigmatic short stories.

The production is presented in collaboration with Stellar Quines, an award winning theatre company which celebrates the energy, experience and perspective of women. Acclaimed director Marilyn Imrie and playwright Linda McLean will create, in this word-for-word adaptation from Alice Munro's text, a vibrant drama about the nineteenth century Scottish migrant experience.

Actors Simon Donaldson, Brian James O'Sullivan, Lewis Howden, Sally Reid and Nicola Jo Cully are the full cast for the Edinburgh performances and subsequent tour to the Scottish Borders. Marilyn Imrie, Director, said "Linda McLean and I have aimed to create an ensemble who will work together in a short space of time to bring this true story from Scotland nearly two hundred years ago to vivid life. We knew this company of actors would bring all their particular vocal, musical and storytelling skills and deft ability to capture and portray character to this Book Festival production, and do justice to the words of one of our greatest living writers. Every one of the five members of this ensemble are known and admired for the significant variety of great work they've done in theatre in Scotland and internationally.

"They are also well known names in television, radio, film and music. Two of the ensemble, Brian O'Sullivan and Sally Reid, have just completed an international tour of The National Theatre of Scotland's acclaimed James Plays, and Lewis Howden stars in the BBC TV series Shetland. Simon Donaldson stars in Radio 4's Fair Intellectual Club and Nicola Jo Cully has toured all over Scotland recently as the star of the acclaimed, much loved and magical *Too Many Penguins*.

"We are all currently rehearsing in a hot church hall, being seasick, heart sick and homesick, and, with the musical support of Edinburgh's inspiring Castle Chorus and our sound designer Pippa Murphy, learning to sing the greatest of the majestic old Scottish metrical psalms which echoed over the Ettrick Hills in 1818."

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT FRANCES SUTTON, PRESS MANAGER:

frances@edbookfest.co.uk / Tel: 0131 718 5654 / Mob: 07841 579481

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd is a Scottish charity (SC010120) and a limited company (registered in Scotland no 79939) and has its registered office at 5A Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, EH2 4DR.

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Nick Barley, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said “Alice Munro’s magisterial short stories in *The View from Castle Rock* are a powerful reminder that human migration is nothing new – especially to Scottish people whose ancestors took the decision to voyage across the world in the hope of a better life. For this stunning stage adaptation, Stellar Quines has selected a stellar cast to portray Munro’s own Scottish ancestors in this unforgettable Book Festival co-production.”

The View from Castle Rock is supported by the Scottish Government’s Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund and is also part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Following daily performances during the Book Festival at artSpace@StMarks in Castle Terrace, *The View from Castle Rock* will tour to the Borders including the Ettrick Valley, home of Munro’s ancestors who were related to James Hogg. The tour will take in Peebles, Hawick, Ettrickbridge and Galashiels from 31 August to 3 September as part of Booked!; Edinburgh International Book Festival on the road and the Borders Live Touring scheme.

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, said: “Alice Munro’s work has been admired and celebrated by readers across the globe since she first put pen to paper in the 1950s. *The View from Castle Rock*, which tells the story of James Laidlaw and his family, is a powerful and moving depiction of life in Scotland during the 19th century and a subsequent journey and settlement in Canada. I’m confident audiences will engage with Linda McLean’s theatrical adaptation presented by Stellar Quines.

“The Edinburgh International Book Festival is a highlight in the Edinburgh Festivals’ calendar. The Scottish Government is proud to support the festival via the Expo Fund and has provided £85,000 this year to bring this innovative piece of work to life, which continues to raise Scotland’s cultural profile on the international stage.”

The View from Castle Rock will be performed daily from Thursday 11 August (11 and 12 August Previews) to Monday 29 August (times vary) at artSpace@StMarks, 7 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh (Fringe Venue 125). Tickets can be booked through the Edinburgh Festival Fringe at www.edfringe.com, or through the Edinburgh International Book Festival Box Office, www.edbookfest.co.uk. Full price £15.00, Concessions £12.00, Previews £10.00. Tickets for the tour in the Scottish Borders vary in price.

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For further information please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Edinburgh

artSpace@St Marks, 7 Castle Terrace (Fringe Venue 125). Daily Thursday 11 August-Monday 29 August (11,12 previews). Times vary. Tickets £15/£12 conc/£10 Preview
0845 373 5888 or www.edbookfest.co.uk or www.edfringe.com

Borders Tour

Eastgate Theatre, Peebles. Wednesday 31 August, 19.30. Tickets £14/£12 conc/£6 under 16s
01721 725777. www.eastgatearts.com

Heart of Hawick, Hawick. Thursday 1 September, 19.30. Tickets £12
01450 360688. www.heartofhawick.co.uk

Kirkhope Parish Hall, Ettrickbridge. Friday 2 September, 19.30. Tickets £8. 01750 52257

MacArts, Galashiels. Saturday 3 September, 19.30. Tickets £12/10 conc.
01896 756852. www.macarts.scot

Alice Munro

Alice Munro has published thirteen collections of stories and a novel. During her distinguished career she has been the recipient of many awards, including two Giller Prizes, the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Man Booker International Prize. In 2013 she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Her stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The Paris Review*, *Granta* and countless other publications. Her collections have been translated into thirteen languages.

Stellar Quines

Established in 1993, Stellar Quines is an award winning Scottish theatre company that celebrates the energy, experience and perspective of women. Stellar Quines is proud to have provided a platform for women's stories and created live theatre driven by women and where female practitioners are at the forefront of all creative roles throughout this time. Stellar Quines has established a reputation for high quality, diverse work that reflects an eclectic range of theatrical styles and is underpinned by a commitment to pushing boundaries and challenging stereotypes. In May 2016 Stellar Quines welcomed a new Artistic Director: Jemima Levick, who joined the company from Dundee Rep. www.stellarquines.com

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Booked! is the Edinburgh International Book Festival on the road around Scotland, throughout the year. A celebration of words and ideas, Booked! blends the very best from groups and organisations across the country with the energy and excitement of the August Book Festival. Produced in collaboration with a variety of partners, this wide-ranging programme of events and activities brings authors, artists and audiences together to inspire each other and to be inspired, to share stories and experiences, and bring books to life for people of all ages in their own communities. Booked! is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

The View from Castle Rock Cast Biographies:

NICOLA JO CULLY – Mary and Ensemble

Trained at Queen Margaret University College

Recent theatre credits include: *Too Many Penguins?* (Frozen Charlotte), *Control Z* (Traverse), *Thread*, *Allotment* (Nutshell), *The Last Great Dictator* (Oran Mor), *The Dark Things* (Traverse Theatre), *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Northampton Royal and Dergate/Assembly), *Sunshine on Leith* (Dundee Rep Theatre), *The Wasp Factory* (Cumbernauld/Tron Theatre), *Translations* (Arches/Citizens Theatre), *The Journey of Jeannie Deans* (Rowantree), *My Dark Sky* (Reeling and Writhing), *Sinbad* (Eden Court Theatre/Team Entertainments), *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh).

Recent TV/Film credits include: *Waterloo Road* (BBC), *River City* (BBC Scotland), *Casualty* (BBC), *Taggart* (SMG), *'Till The Violets Come* (Mothcatcher Films), *Honour* (Pursuit Films Ltd), *The Space Between* (Lyre Productions), *Solid Air* (Elemental Films).

Recent radio credits include: *Rachel's Cousins*, *The Grapes of Wrath* (BBC Radio 4), Archive on 4 - *What Big Teeth You Have*, *McLevy* (BBC Radio 4), *On The Skids*, *Secrets - Part Two: The Escorts Tale*, *Striptease*, *Scottish Shorts - Matryoshka*, *Desperate Measures* (BBC Scotland).

SIMON DONALDSON – Andrew and Ensemble

Simon is from Bowden in The Scottish Borders. He trained at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Recent theatre credits include: *Lovesick Blues: The Hank Williams Story* (Oran Mor) *The Great Train Race* (Firebrand), *A Word with Dr Johnson*, *Thoughts Spoken Aloud from Above*, (Oran Mor), *Hello Dolly*, *Present Laughter*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *Lady Windemere's Fan* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre), *Tam O'Shanter*, *Zlata's Diary* (Communicado), *The Not So Fatal Death of Grandpa Fredo* (Vox Motus), *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *The Spokesman*, *Jason and the Argonauts*, *Big Baby*, *The Curse of the Demeter* (Visible Fictions), *Elf Analysis*, *Turbo Folk*, *200*, (Oran Mor) and *Fly* (Liverpool Everyman)

Recent radio credits include: *The Fair Intellectual Club*, *44 Scotland Street*, *A Sudden Surge*, *Life of Pies*, *A Lulu of a Kid*, *Paul Temple*, *Sullom Voe*, *McLevy*, *The Pearl*, *Rebus*, *Maigret*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Dr Korczak's Example*, *Westway*, *Book at Bedtime* and the I-dent for BBC Radio 4 extra.

Recent TV/Film credits include: *Andrew Marr's Great Scots: The Writers Who Shaped a Nation*, *Outpost 2*, *Scot Squad* and *No More Shall We Part*.

He has performed on Broadway and at The Sydney Opera House.

LEWIS HOWDEN – Old James and Ensemble

Recent theatre credits include: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The BFG* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh), *To Begin*, *Dunsinane* (National Theatre of Scotland), *The War Hasn't Started Yet*, *The Heart of Darby Park*, *Rolls in Their Pockets* (Oran Mor), *In My Father's Words* (Dundee Rep Theatre), *Found At Sea*, *The Artist Man & The Mother Woman*, *Any Given Day* (Traverse Theatre), Edwin Morgan's *Dreams and Other Nightmares* (Tron Theatre/Glasgay) and *A Slow Air* (Tron Theatre/East 59th St, New York), *Riddance* (Paines Plough) and *Word for Word* (Magnetic North).

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Recent TV credits include: *Shetland* (ITV), *Hope Springs* (Shed Productions) *Taggart* (SMG) & *The Conegatherers* (BBC).

BRIAN JAMES O’SULLIVAN – Walter and Ensemble

Brian works as an actor, writer and musician throughout the UK, USA and Australia.

Recent theatre work includes: *Keep Right On to the End of the Road* (tour), *To Hell and Back* (Oran Mor) and *The James Plays* (National Theatre of Scotland).

In 2015 Brian wrote and directed the musical *Newcomer* with Triple Threat Theatre Academy in Queensland, Australia and this year sees him returning to Australia to play music for the Australian National Irish Dancing Championships in Hobart, Tasmania. Brian is delighted to be working with Stellar Quines for the first time.

SALLY REID – Agnes and Ensemble

Recent theatre credits include: *The James Plays* (National Theatre of Scotland), *Great Expectations*, *Time and the Conways* (nominated for a TMA Award for her performance as Madge), (Dundee Rep Theatre), *Three Sisters* (Tron Theatre), *Blithe Spirit* (Perth Horsecross), *Guid Sisters*, *Union* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh), *Days of Wine and Roses* (nominated best actress Critics Awards for Theatre in Scotland, CATS awards 2012), *Doubt* (Theatre Jezebel), *Sunset Song* (His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen), *The Wall* (nominated best actress CATS awards 2008), *The Ducky*, *The Chooky Brae* (Borderline).

Recent TV credits include; *Only An Excuse*, *Scot Squad* (3 series for BBC Scotland. Sally attended the School at Steppenwolf in Chicago where she trained in Meisner, Viewpoints and improvisation with ensemble members.

CASTLE CHORUS

This Edinburgh local choir is led by Caroline Overy. Highly commended in the Original Music category at the 2016 Chorus Awards, they have a traditional and contemporary repertoire and work with singer-songwriters on original choral arrangements of their songs.

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