

SHOW WBA IT25

TEN NEW SHORT PLAYS
BY LOCAL WRITERS FROM CROWBAIT UK

**THURSDAY 24 &
FRIDAY 25 APRIL**

**GROUNDLINGS THEATRE,
PORTSMOUTH**



LOTTERY FUNDED



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

SHOWBAIT 2025

TEN NEW SHORT PLAYS BY LOCAL WRITERS FROM CROWBAIT UK

AGONY *Written by Kia Wilson*

**ACT
ONE**

BUTTONS *Written by Christine Lawrence*

AN INTERVIEW *Written by Sophie Nickerson*

ZERO ONE TWENTY THREE *Written by Iain Banachowicz*

SOUND TRACK *Written by Gail Oakley*

**ACT
TWO**

THE GREATEST GENERATION *Written by Graham Brown*

WHAT SHALL WE WATCH *Written by Elliot Sergejew*

CATCHING THE PLANE *Written by Margaret Jennings*

BODY *Written by Jessica Davis* Content warning: this play includes references to violence, sexual assault and abortion

COLD WATER THERAPY *Written by Graham Brown*

FROM PORT(LAND) TO PORT(SMOUTH)!

The Crowbait Club began in a small pub called Mama's Crowbar in Portland, Maine in 2011. It began with three people and now is an international organisation founded to cultivate the work of artists and new theatrical writing.

The Crowbait Club UK was founded by one of its original founders in 2022, and is now offering workshops, classes, and monthly meetings in order to celebrate the talent and voices of actors, theatremakers, and writers in Portsmouth.



CROWBAIT UK: HOW IT WORKS

STEP ONE: PLAYWRIGHTS WRITE!

We meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.30pm, with a pile of scripts and a bevy of actors (and usually a beer in hand). Anyone can bring in a script they've written which can be performed in eight minutes or less – if you're struggling for inspiration, check out our social media channels for that month's writing prompt.

STEP TWO: ACTORS ACT!

Performers are randomly selected from a hat.

STEP THREE: MAGIC!

After a couple of minutes with the playwright, the actors put the scene on its feet. We perform a total of nine scripts and take a break after every three performances.

STEP FOUR: THE PLAY IS THE THING: SHOWBAIT SHOWCASE!

Every month, attendees vote on a script that will be performed at the End of Year Showcase, where ten scripts will be fully rehearsed, teched, and staged.

It's open to all from all levels of experience so please join us at our next meeting on Tuesday 6 May at 7.30pm at Groundlings Theatre.

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US**



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CrowbaitClubUK***



***instagram.com/
Crowbait_UK***



PRODUCTION & CROWBAIT CREDITS

**Artistic Director and Founder
Project Manager and Producer**

APRIL SINGLEY

**Showbait Director
Marketing, Programme and Graphic Design**

BRADLEY BARLOW

**Stage Manager
REBECCA BANACHOWICZ**

**Lighting Design and Operation
IAIN BANACHOWICZ**

**Chaperone
KERRIE THIRLWELL**

**Website Designer
CHRISTIAN MASTERS**

**Writer's Workshop Leaders
JANET RAWSON & STEVE BLACKHAM**

**Trailer Crew
CHRISTIAN MASTERS,
MARTIN WILLOUGHBY & MATT PARSONS**

**Rehearsal photography
MARTIN WILLOUGHBY**

WE'D LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK!

Crowbait Club UK started in the snug of the Phoenix Pub in Southsea with a small handful of people and now we have over a hundred people coming to meetings, we help with local castings, provide workshops, community outreach, and development opportunities for theatremakers and writers. As we continue to grow, we want to ensure we have your feedback so that we can do our best for our local community – please spare a couple of minutes to answer the questions [**here**](#).

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

There's something really special about taking a new piece of writing and dedicating time to developing it for an audience to watch, teasing out the nuances and collaborating with a cast and creative team to bring it to life. It's easy to forget that you're watching the international premiere of these ten new plays – that may seem like an exaggeration but in an era of revivals and adaptations, new writing is becoming somewhat of a rarity.

Among the ten selected plays we have writing debuts, laugh out loud moments, heartbreaking tales and some deeply personal stories. I'm honoured and privileged to have been entrusted in directing them – thank you to the writers for letting me bring your words to life – I hope I've done them justice.

A huge thank you to the cast for your hard work in quite an intense rehearsal period – it's been a pleasure collaborating with you to explore the scripts and support you in delivering your knockout performances. Ditto to the excellent creative team for your much needed support to bring the production to life.

As well as writing myself, I've been helping to support new writers for almost ten years and I know the difference having a supportive network and funding can have, so a massive thank you has to go to April for bringing Crowbait to the UK and the amount of time and effort you've put in to securing our Arts Council England grant. It doesn't just pay for putting on Showbait but extends to outreach programmes, writing workshops and, of course, our monthly Tuesday night meetings.

Thank you for supporting the arts – I hope you enjoy the show.

Bradley Barlow

THANK YOU

As with everything, there are many overhead costs to running Crowbait and producing our showcase of new plays, Showbait. This year, we are pleased to announce we are supported by the **Arts Council England**. The generous grant allows us to literally put a roof over our heads to run our meetings, workshops, rehearsals, and performances. It means we can pay our workshops leaders and creative team for their artistry, time, and expertise. Thank you, Arts Council England.

We would also like to thank **Groundlings Theatre** for their support and hosting our workshops, rehearsals, meetings and performances.

And **thank you to all** who have also contributed through donations of their time and/or financial support. It all goes straight back to the arts!



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AGONY

BY KIA WILSON



Blake is struggling with writing his final chapter – can partner Alex help?

JORDAN HISCOTT as Blake

KYLE NEALE as Alex

AGONY was selected in March 2024.



KIA WILSON began writing scripts during Lockdown, having worked as a feature writer for books and magazines. Being part of a thriving and supportive community at Crowbait UK encouraged her to make scriptwriting a regular habit.

A number of her short plays have been performed in Portsmouth and London, and she has recently completed writing her first full length play, *The Oyster House*. However, like Blake in *Agony*, she is often found clad in a dressing gown, staring at a blank computer screen, unable to string a sentence together! The common curse of any writer.

BUTTONS

BY CHRISTINE LAWRENCE



An old woman reminisces.

SARA FAIRCLOUGH as Anna

BUTTONS was selected in June 2024.



CHRISTINE LAWRENCE is an author, playwright, spoken word performer, actor and director, whose fiction draws on real life experiences and local settings. She was one of the BookFest 2012 'Writers to Watch'. Since then, her shorter fiction has been featured in a variety of local anthologies and projects, including: *Portsmouth Fairy Tales for Grown Ups*, *Day of the Dead*, the Writing Edward King project, the trans media event *Cursed City Dark Tide* and *Pompey Writes*, the best of Star and Crescent. In 2021, she facilitated a series of writing workshops for the 'Libraries Connected: BBC Novels that shaped the world' project. Her first three novels *Caught in the Web*, *Payback* and *Don't Step on the Cracks* are all psychological thrillers which address issues of mental health, addictions and homelessness. Her latest two novels, *Emily* and *Grace* are stories set in the Portsmouth Borough Asylum during World War I.

AN INTERVIEW

BY SOPHIE NICKERSON



Jade utilises TWIN technology in an attempt to secure her dream job.

KATHERINE JOY EVANS as Jade

REBECCA GODDEN as TWIN

JOSEPH SCATLEY as Mr P

AN INTERVIEW was selected in July 2024.

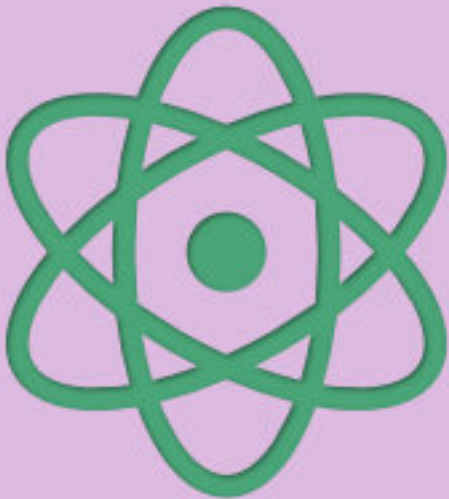


SOPHIE NICKERSON studied Theatre at the University of Chichester almost ten years ago. Her love for writing scripts started then devising pieces based on adaptations.

Sophie is vice chair at The Phoenix Players and believes strongly that theatre should be about community and inclusion. Sophie has been acting from a very young age and has always had the passion to perform. She is very excited to see what Showbait have created with the piece and would like to thank Bradley, April and team for all their hard work for putting this all together. Enjoy the show!

ZERO ONE TWENTY THREE

BY IAIN BANACHOWICZ



One man works to prevent a disaster from happening.

ALEC SLADE as Leonid
KYLE NEALE as Narrator

ZERO ONE TWENTY THREE was selected in October 2024.



IAIN BANACHOWICZ has worked as a Stage and Technical Manager for over 20 years working on various projects large and small, currently as Technical Manager at Groundlings Theatre.

Iain says: "I decided unexpectedly to showcase my work with others. Not often I would share my own work, but I just thought I would change that."

SOUND TRACK

BY GAIL OAKLEY



A personal reflection on a family affected by lockdown.

FRANCESCA McCROHON as Mum

JAGO CHUNG as Child

CHRISTINE ALLISON as Grandma

KATHERINE JOY EVANS as Key Worker

SARA FAIRCLOUGH as Sister

Thank you to the people who have allowed us to use their voices in this play.

SOUND TRACK was selected in August 2024.

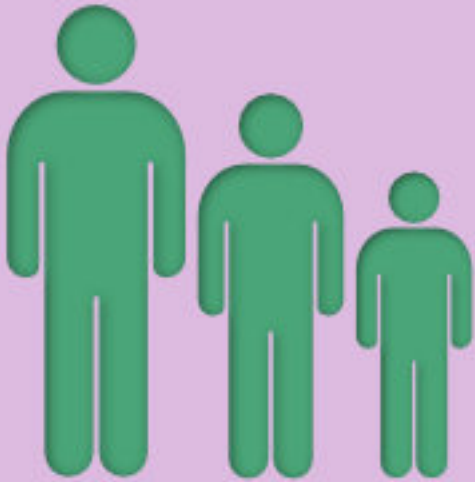


GAIL OAKLEY is a freelance theatre practitioner, working mostly with adults with SEND. She is a regular member of Crowbait. She often directs as well as performs locally for companies including Red Sauce Theatre and Crowbait.

This is the first time she has had any written work performed, and she's pretty excited about that.

THE GREATEST GENERATION

BY GRAHAM R BROWN



The generations explore how they behave with one another.

ALEC SLADE as Silent Generation

CHRISTINE ALLISON as Baby Boomer Generation

FRANCESCA McCROHON as Generation X

JOSEPH SCATLEY as Millennial

KATHERINE JOY EVANS as Generation Z

JAGO CHUNG as Generation Alpha

THE GREATEST GENERATION was selected in May 2024.



GRAHAM R BROWN A local writer, playwright, and actor, Graham is a long serving member of Goodwood Actors Guild, and immersive theatre company Torchlight Mysteries. TV/Film credits include *Les Misérables* and BBC's *A Murder Most South*.

Writing credits include *Smashed Avocado* of Six Untold Stories - writing showcase in February 2025, screenwriter for outreach film *M33: Destination Dardanelles*, and debut WWII novel *Vancouver Heart* currently awaiting publication. This marks his second year involved with Crowbait; having performed last year, he is excited to see his two new plays, *The Greatest Generation* and *Cold Water Therapy* be presented for Showbait 2025.

WHAT SHALL WE WATCH?

BY ELLIOT SERGEJEW



*Seen that.
Don't fancy that.
How about this one?*

JORDAN HISCOTT as Alfie
REBECCA GODDEN as Jess

WHAT SHALL WE WATCH? was selected
in September 2024.



ELLIOT SERGEJEW is a local writer and
actor with a love for the surreal and dark
comedy.

He joined Crowbait a couple of years ago
and has thoroughly enjoyed watching his
scripts come to life.

CATCHING THE PLANE

BY MARGARET JENNINGS



Bert and Susan's holiday getaway doesn't quite go to plan.

ALEC SLADE as Bert Wilmot

FRANCESCA McCROHON as Susan Wilmot

KYLE NEALE as Jack Wilmot

CATCHING THE PLANE was selected in February 2024.



MARGARET JENNINGS is a poet, novelist and short story writer. Her novel *The Worry List* was long listed in the Bridport first novel award. She has been published in many anthologies including *This Island City*, and in *The Lighthouse* literary magazine. Margaret enjoys being part of the thriving literary world in Portsmouth and runs a writing group, 'Springwood Writers'. Her first poetry book, *We Are The Lizards*, was published in 2020.

More recently, Margaret has delved into the world of playwriting and *Beatrice* and *Jelly Beans for Tea* have both had successful first appearances in Portsmouth.

BODY

BY JESSICA DAVIS



A young woman reflects on her relationship with her body.

KATHERINE JOY EVANS as Woman

BODY was selected in April 2024.

Content warning: this play includes references to violence, sexual assault and abortion



JESSICA DAVIS first joined Crowbait after some not so gentle nudging by her partner Bradley. Writing felt like something very scary but Crowbait continues to be an inspiration. She performed in her first play as various characters (and stepping into a main role five days before opening) in Bradley Barlow's *Dead Leaves* in 2024.

Jessica is excited and honoured to have her first short play feature in Crowbait 2025 and hopes the audience come away thinking about the themes explored: how does the perception of others affect how you view your own body? She has just embarked on her newest project, a novel! She'd like to thank Crowbait and Bradley for keeping her inspired.

COLD WATER THERAPY

BY GRAHAM R BROWN



Can Brooke convince her mother to embrace an unconventional activity?

REBECCA GODDEN as Brooke
SARA FAIRCLOUGH as Marion
JORDAN HISCOTT as Jazz

COLD WATER THERAPY was selected in January 2024.



GRAHAM R BROWN A local writer, playwright, and actor, Graham is a long serving member of Goodwood Actors Guild, and immersive theatre company Torchlight Mysteries. TV/Film credits include *Les Misérables* and BBC's *A Murder Most South*.

Writing credits include *Smashed Avocado* of Six Untold Stories - writing showcase in February 2025, screenwriter for outreach film *M33: Destination Dardanelles*, and debut WWII novel *Vancouver Heart* currently awaiting publication. This marks his second year involved with Crowbait; having performed last year, he is excited to see his two new plays, *The Greatest Generation* and *Cold Water Therapy* be presented for Showbait 2025.

ALEC SLADE



Alec trained at the Identity School of Acting. His first theatrical role was as the lead in a production of Simon Stephens' *Birdland*, which ran at the 2017 Edinburgh Fringe. Since then, other productions have included: *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. He has also collaborated with our director Bradley Barlow before, appearing in his original plays, *A Stranger in Our House*, and *Dead Leaves*.

He returned to the Edinburgh Fringe in 2023 for *The Misunderstanding*, and again in 2024 for *The Comings and Goings at No 10*, which enjoyed a sold-out run. Next month, his original play (and directorial debut) *Pro Patria* will be running at Titchfield Festival Theatre from Sunday 11 to Friday 16 May.

CHRIS ALLISON



Chris originally trained in Drama and English and spent many happy years teaching. Chris has always been involved in theatre in some way and has played everything from Antigone and Puck to a roll of wallpaper! Her most recent productions were as Mrs Micawber in *David Copperfield* and Mrs Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* although she enjoys whatever role she is given as for her it is all about the joy of connecting with an audience.

I was lucky enough to perform in last year's Showbait and feel privileged to perform this year again with such a talented group of actors and exciting selection of new plays. I would like to thank my husband Dave and my daughter Charlotte for their constant support with whatever project I am involved in.

FRANCESCA McCROHON



Francesca trained at East 15 Acting School.

She was seen last year at Groundlings as Jordan Baker in *Gatsby*. Other recent stage roles include Madame Arcarti in *Blithe Spirit*, Beverly in *Abigail's Party*, Sherlock in *Miss Sherlock Holmes* and Mrs Dolittle in *Pygmalion*.

She appeared in Turner prize-winning artist Laure Prouvost's feature film, *The Wanderer* and has also performed in her live art installations in London, Glasgow, Rotterdam and Brussels.

She is co-founder of Tormented Casserole, with whom she completed successful runs at London's Leicester Square Theatre and the Hope Theatre in her co-written piece, *Gilded Butterflies*.

JAGO CHUNG



Jago has appeared in a TV and internet commercial for Arla, as well as on stage performing as Wessleton in *Frozen Jr* at Hayling Island theatre, in the chorus of *Beauty and the Beast* at Petersfield Festival Hall, and as part of the concert *Swinging Through the Musicals* at Clanfield Memorial Hall. He also takes part in many productions with his theatre group after school.

JORDAN HISCOTT



Jordan Hiscott is an actor/presenter based in Hampshire, with this year marking a decade of working in the industry since graduating from GSA with a Masters in Acting.

Being versatile and a passionate storyteller, Jordan happily moves between theatre and screen work.

In addition to acting, he has made a name for himself as a TV presenter on TJC and works as a presenter/content creator for multiple clients.

If he's not in the spotlight then he's behind the camera, either filming theatre or for what he's most excited for, filming new showreels.

JOSEPH SCATLEY



Joseph Scatley trained at Rose Bruford College, where he received his MA in Actor Performer Training in 2021. He has been performing since he was a child, with experience working with the BBC, ITV, The Royal National theatre and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

Joseph appeared as Toby in Mary Rose Production's maiden production of *Amy's View*, as well as Jay Gatsby in Groundlings Theatre's production of *Gatsby*.

KATHERINE JOY EVANS



Katherine grew up in Southampton and from an early age has been involved in the theatrical life of the city, performing principal roles in a wide variety of plays, musicals and operettas, as well as directing. She has degrees in Classics (University of Reading) and English (University of London) and has more recently been undertaking acting training with ICAT (Independent Centre for Actor Training). She is a trained singer and is currently working on her own writing projects, both literary and musical.

KYLE NEALE



Kyle is excited for you all to be watching this show tonight. He feels that the intentions of the show are the main reason he wanted to take part, it's very important for our community to support upcoming talent and artists. He hopes you enjoy the show and would love to know what your favourite type of stir fry is? He's a curious fella.

REBECCA GODDEN



Rebecca Godden is a dynamic actor based in Hampshire, UK. She holds a First Class BA Honours in Contemporary Performance from the University of Winchester. Her theatre work includes Charlotte in *Ghost Stories by Candlelight*, The Great Hall Winchester (2024), Maleficent in *Halloween Ball*, Beckenham Mansion London (2021), and lead roles in London pantomimes such as *The Glass Slipper* and *Jack and The Beanstalk*. Rebecca is a regular actor and director at *Hat Fair* and performs Anglo-Saxon characters in *878AD*, Ubisoft/Hampshire Cultural Trust. Passionate about storytelling, she's equally at home writing, directing, and delivering workshops. Her work blends live theatre and immersive/site-specific performance.

Credits at rebeccagodden91.wixsite.com/portfolio/actor

SARA FAIRCLOUGH



Sara is a professional actor originally from Yorkshire. She trained at Manchester Met. Sara has worked with many professionals including playwright Iain Heggie, former theatre director Chris Honer and Niamh Dowling, Principal of RADA. After a long break from raising her children, Sara is slowly making her way back into the industry. She has performed in many plays and appeared in television roles for Sky and Channel 4. Sara's recent work includes Home Theatre Project with Kerry Kyriacos Michael, writing and performing her own material.

She is thrilled to be a part of this project with Crowbait performing a selection of new writing.



BRADLEY BARLOW

SHOWBAIT DIRECTOR

MARKETING, PROGRAMME AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

(he/him) Bradley trained at University of Chichester and is the former Artistic Director of Sussex-based Pitchy Breath Theatre Company (2016 – 2020).

Previous writing and directing credits include tours of *Monsters: A Modern Frankenstein Story* (2018), *The Last Time We Saw You* (2017), *Dead Leaves* (2014) and *143 Seconds* (2011), all for Pitchy Breath. His debut play *The Family* (2009) won a NODA Accolade of Excellence and was described by Surrey Mirror as “a gripping portrait of Britain”.

His play *The Legend of Grimms’ Tales* (2022, Groundlings) was performed by a cast of professional and local performers, while *A Stranger in our House* (2023, Titchfield Festival Theatre) was described as “an unforgettable evening of theatre” and “a brave vision of modern life”. He directed Groundlings Theatre’s professional pantomimes *Puss in Boots* (2023) and *Rapunzel* (2024), returning this year to write and direct *Cinderella*.

In 2024, Bradley directed four short plays for Crowbait’s annual *Showbait* showcase and returns this year to direct all ten plays. He also directed a ten-year anniversary revival of his 2014 play *Dead Leaves* and a new production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. Last month, he wrote and directed *Pompey Dogs*, an immersive cinema experience at Staggeringly Good Brewery.

Theatre performance credits include *Calendar Girls* (2023), *Gaslight* (2023), *Family Matters* (2023) and *Macabre: Tales from Edgar Allan Poe* (2021), all at Titchfield Festival Theatre, the Cheshire Cat in *Wonderland* (2021, Groundlings), *The Flats* (2019, Pitchy Breath), *Dinner* (2019, MADS Theatre), *Bouncers* (2018, DDOS), *Julius Caesar* (2017, Pitchy Breath), Trinculo in *The Tempest* (2015, Polesden Lacey Shakespeare), *Inheritance* (2015, Pitchy Breath), *Mokita* (2011, Pitchy Breath). **bradleybarlow.com**



APRIL SINGLEY
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & FOUNDER
PROJECT MANAGER & PRODUCER

April Singley is the Founder and Artistic Director of Crowbait Club and is acting as Producer and Project Manager for Showbait 2025. April founded the Crowbait Club US alongside two others from Portland, Maine. April is a professional actor, having trained at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and has worked on stage, film, and television. Her favourite genre to act is Shakespeare. Her upcoming role is in a play called *Cougar*, which is (obviously) about climate change with Mary Rose Productions. She loves her husband and her cats very much.



JANET RAWSON

WRITER'S WORKSHOP LEADER

Janet Rawson is an actor, published playwright and author. She has been involved in the recent (and ongoing) Crowbait Workshops for writers and actors. She currently runs Twisted Events Presents, a company that delivers events and role-play for the corporate market.



STEVE BLACKHAM

WRITER'S WORKSHOP LEADER

Steve is a writer, workshop leader and theatre director.

Before retiring he was Head of Performing Arts at a 6th form college where he developed a wide variety of work with students, including those with special educational needs, often in collaboration with dance and music.

He has directed shows at the Edinburgh Fringe as well with local Theatre companies, not just in theatres but in a range of venues such castles, an abbey and a wine bar! Always keen to see new work thrive he has twice worked with a local playwright from first draft to a full-scale production.



CHRISTIAN MASTERS

WEBSITE DESIGNER

TRAILER DIRECTOR

Christian Masters is a filmmaker, focused primarily in production design and directing. He is a primary member of Dark Tower Films (based in New York City) as their Actor, Stunt/Fight Choreographer, Production Designer, and Makeup designer. He has had the privilege of collaborating with independent companies and art houses across the US and UK, and is especially honoured by this opportunity to work with Crowbait UK - their voices and stories are a true inspiration that spark his creativity every month!