

# Caledonia

✘ The National Theatre of Scotland returns to the Edinburgh International Festival, following previous appearances with *Realism*, *The Bacchae* and *365*.

*CALEDONIA*, written by Alistair Beaton and directed by Anthony Neilson, will receive its world premiere at the Edinburgh International Festival on 21 August at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh, following preview performances at Eden Court, Inverness.

*CALEDONIA* is a story of greed, euphoria and mass delusion. It is the story of a small, poor country mistaking itself for a big, rich country. William Paterson was a financial adventurer who in the late 1600's planned to found a Scottish colony in Darien on the isthmus of Panama in Central America and turn Scotland, one of the poorest nations in Europe, into a prosperous colonial power. He invited the public to invest and within weeks a vast proportion of the nation's wealth had been subscribed. Distance, disease and a naive optimism all played their part in this ruinous episode. Within a few years, the Scots – demoralised and impoverished – gave up their nation's independent status and signed the 1707 Treaty of Union with England.

Inspired by documents, journals, letters, songs and poems of the period, celebrated playwright and satirist Alistair Beaton has created a work that is both a tribute to heroic ambition and a darkly witty take on the deceptions and self-deceptions of rich and poor alike. *CALEDONIA* is directed by Anthony Neilson, the writer and director whose award-winning work for the Edinburgh International Festival has included the National Theatre of Scotland's *Realism* and *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*.

Alistair Beaton's recent plays include *Follow My Leader* (Birmingham Rep and Hampstead Theatre) and *King of Hearts* (Hampstead Theatre). His political comedy *Feelgood* (Garrick Theatre) won the Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy as

well as an Olivier Award nomination.

Recent television films include *A Very Social Secretary* and *The Trial of Tony Blair* for Channel 4. He is also author of a number of best-selling books.

The play is directed by Anthony Neilson whose previous work as a director includes *The Big Lie*; *God In Ruins* and *The Drunks* for the Royal Shakespeare Company and *The Death of Klinghoffer* for Scottish Opera and the Edinburgh International Festival in 2005. Anthony is also an Artistic Associate of the National Theatre of Scotland for whom he directed *Home: Edinburgh* and wrote and directed *Realism*. The National Theatre of Scotland toured *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*, written and directed by Anthony Neilson in 2007, which won the 2007 TMA Award for Best Touring Production. Anthony's film and television credits include *The Debt Collecto*; *Spilsbury*; *Deeper Still* and *Spooks* which Anthony is the Serial Story Consultant for. Further projects for 2010 include directing a Christmas show for The Royal Court Theatre which Anthony will write and direct.

The full cast for CALEDONIA is Paul Blair, Tam Dean Burn, Cliff Burnett, David Carlyle, Alan Francis, Frances Grey, Paul Higgins, Neil McKinven, Robert Melling, Matthew Pidgeon and Morna Young.

Paul Higgins is taking on the role of William Paterson. Higgins is known for his role as Jamie in BBC TV's *The Thick of It* and Armando Iannucci's film *In the Loop*. His theatre work includes *Black Watch* (National Theatre Scotland); *The White Guard* (National Theatre); *The Tempest* (Tron Theatre Company); *Damascus* (Traverse Theatre/Tricycle Theatre/Middle East Tour); *Paul*, *An Enemy of the People* and *The Hare Trilogy* (National Theatre). The National Theatre of Scotland recently co-presented Higgins' debut play *Nobody Will Ever Forgive Us* (Traverse Theatre) and he is currently the Company's Pearson Playwright. Other recent film appearances include *Andrea*

Arnold's Red Road.

Paul Blair appeared in Anthony Neilson's 2008 Realism (National Theatre Scotland/Edinburgh International Festival) and has recently worked with Steven John Atkinson on Lidless (High Tide Festival) and Lorne Campbell in Carthage Must Be Destroyed (Theatre Royal Bath). Films include Clive Barker's Book of Blood, David Mackenzie's Hallam Foe and TV includes Dear Green Place (STV).

Tam Dean Burn's recent theatre work includes Year Of The Horse (Tron Theatre Company/Edinburgh Assembly); The Caretaker (Citizens Theatre) and Venus As A Boy (Burnt Goods/National Theatre of Scotland Workshop). Forthcoming TV and film includes Asylum (Channel 4) and David Mackenzie's The Last Word (Sigma Films).

Cliff Burnett's theatre work includes Peer Gynt (National Theatre Of Scotland/Dundee Rep Theatre/Barbican); Fall (Traverse Theatre); Romeo and Juliet, Hedda Gabbler, The Tempest, Moby Dick Rehearsed, Equus and The Cherry Orchard (Dundee Rep Theatre).

David Carlyle recently graduated from Rose Bruford College where he appeared in The Wonderful World of Dissocia.

Alan Francis has collaborated with Anthony Neilson on a number of stage works including The Wonderful World of Dissocia (National Theatre Scotland/ Edinburgh International Festival); Jeffrey Dahmer Is Unwell (Hampstead Theatre) and Penetrator (Traverse Theatre/The Royal Court Theatre). Francis is also a writer and comedian and regularly appears at the Edinburgh Festivals.

Frances Grey is known for her TV performances in Messiah I, II and III as DS Kate Beauchamp. Grey's most recent TV work includes playing Marianne Mckee in River City and Mary Pace in the BBC's Garrow's Law. She has previously appeared in Anthony Neilson's Relocated (The Royal Court Theatre).

Neil McKinven recently appeared in *The Last Witch* directed by Dominic Hill (Edinburgh International Festival/Traverse Theatre). Other theatre works include *Curse of the Starving Classes* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh); *Of Mice and Men* (Perth Theatre); *Rupture* (National Theatre of Scotland); *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night* (RSC). TV and film work includes *Rebus*, *Taggart* and *Hallam Foe*.

Robert Melling studied at RSAMD and has previously worked with National Theatre of Scotland on *The Wolves in the Walls* as Musical Director. As a musician he has performed throughout the UK and Europe including venues such as the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Auckland Palace Durham and extensively throughout Scotland. Robert has also worked with the Chamber group of Scotland, BT Scottish Ensemble, Paragon, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Cappella Nova and the John Currie Singers.

Matthew Pidgeon's stage experience includes recent appearances in *Midsummer* (Traverse Theatre/Soho Theatre); *The Cherry Orchard* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh) and *Kyoto* (Traverse Theatre/Oran Mor). His work with Anthony Neilson includes *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*; *Realism* (National Theatre Scotland/Edinburgh International Festival); *The Lying Kind* (The Royal Court Theatre) and *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats Of Loneliness*, (Plymouth Theatre Royal).

Morna Young is an associate artist of the Out of Darkness Theatre Company with credits including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *C.R.I.E Out* and *Kathakali*.

The Edinburgh International Festival received £200,000 from the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund to produce this collaboration between the National Theatre of Scotland and Alistair Beaton. The Expo Fund supports new work by Scottish-based talent at all the Edinburgh Festivals.

Now in its third year, the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund provides opportunities for exciting and

innovative programming, helping to showcase Scotland's creative talent by supporting ambitious projects at all of Edinburgh's Festivals.

#### Listings

Venue, date and time: King's Theatre, Edinburgh on 21 to 26 August 2010. Evening perfs at 7.30pm. Matinees on Sunday 22, Wednesday 25, Thursday 26 at 2.30pm. No show Monday 23rd

Ticket prices: £12 – £27

Box Office: 0131 473 2000

Online booking: [www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk)

Accessible Performances: Captioned perf – Tuesday 24 August 7.30pm □ BSL interpreted and audio described perf – Wed 25 August 7.30pm □ Touch tour – Wed 25 August 6.30pm

Events: Edinburgh International Festival Explorations – Alistair Beaton, Tom Devine (Professor of Scottish History at the University of Edinburgh), Dr Gary Shea (Economist at University of St Andrews) in discussion about Scotland's failed foray into Colonialism on Tuesday 24 August at 2.30pm Tickets: £6.50. In association with the British Council

Edinburgh International Festival Conversations – Alistair Beaton and Anthony Neilson on Tuesday 24 August at 5pm. Tickets: £6.50