

A new season at Bedlam Theatre

If you've ever walked past the corner of Forrest Road and Bristo Place, you may well have wondered what actually goes on inside the church behind the bright red door. The place is clearly no longer used for religious purposes – but it's equally clearly used for *something*. You may have even seen the sign, 'Bedlam Theatre' – but what's that?


The neo-Gothic New North Free Church – for this was the building's first incarnation – was erected in 1849 near the site of the Edinburgh Bedlam Mental Institute. In the 1970s, the Edinburgh University Student Association took over the building for its Chaplaincy – but in 1980 it was given to the **Edinburgh University Theatre Company** (EUTC), who named it **Bedlam Theatre**.


Bedlam is unique; it's an entirely student run and maintained 90-seater venue in which EUTC puts on 40+ shows a year, plus workshops and post-show discussions. And it's not just for actors – students are offered the chance to learn about all aspects of theatre, including lighting design, soundscaping, stage design, producing, directing and acting. EUTC also runs the **Bedlam Theatre Youth Project** for children and young people. Old Bedlamites include **Ian Charleson** (*Chariots of Fire*), **Hamish Clark** (*Monarch of the Glen*) and **Miles Jupp** (*Balamory, Rev, The Thick of It*). You can watch a short film all about Bedlam here:


This spring at Bedlam EUTC is offering a packed programme of shows, from an existentialist tragi-comedy to a poignant drama about one of the world's most famous diarists:

☒ ***The Diary of Anne Frank*** is showing 7-11th February. Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's stage adaptation of *The Diary*

of a Young Girl premièred at the Cort Theatre on Broadway in 1955; it received the Tony Award for Best Play and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The play takes the audience through two years of tense, fearful, heart-warming and sometimes amusing episodes in the Frank family's life in the secret annexe, hidden behind a bookcase in Otto Frank's place of work, during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

Cut Once, showing **15-16th February**, is an original play by  **Rob Younger**, seeking to explore what it's like for ordinary people to live through extraordinary change. It's a late spring evening in 1926 Prague when a director, a producer, a porter, an actress, a gambler and a pair of students gather together to discuss life, the Great War, Shakespeare, particle physics and, of course, alcohol. Some of the people know each other, some don't. Some experienced the war first hand, others didn't. Some will admit they're unhappy, others won't. Yet whether or not they like it, they can't hide from the world outside.

 From **28th February to 4th March**, EUTC presents **Tom Stoppard's** masterpiece ***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead***. This relentlessly funny and absurd subversion of the story of *Hamlet*, as told from the point of view of the titular minor characters, shows them attempting to navigate their way through a plot that uses them up and spits them out, all the while trying to grasp onto some form of meaning in their illogical situation.

Tom Wells' *Me. as A Penguin*, showing **8-9th March**, is  'a charmingly offbeat, surreal comedy of knitting, penguins and Battenberg.' Stitch is hitting the gay scene of Hull. Or at least dipping his toe in the water, while staying with his heavily pregnant sister Liz and her shabby sofa-loving partner Mark. But why won't Stitch let anyone into the bathroom even though Liz is dying for a pee? And who is the man in the giant penguin costume? *Me. as A Penguin*, was Wells' first play, and showcases his gift for warm-hearted and truthful comedy with a

distinctive Northern bent. The Yorkshire born playwright's other works include *Notes for First Time Astronauts*, *About a Goth* and *The Kitchen Sink*.

✘ Showing **14-18th March**, the final play of this semester is **Zinnie Harris's** modern classic ***Further than The Furthest Thing***, returning to Edinburgh for the first time since its première at the **Traverse** 17 years ago. On a remote island (the play's starting point was the story of the people of Tristan da Cunha) in the middle of the Atlantic secrets are buried. When the outside world comes calling, intent on manipulation for political and economic reasons, the islanders find their own world blown apart. 'A moving play that explores issues of identity, sin, redemption, murder, commitment, sex and love.' (*Culture Vulture*)

Tickets (average price £5-£6) for all shows may be obtained via Bedlam's website [here](#) or from the Box Office on 0131 629 0430 (open 45 minutes before each performance).

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