

James Tait Black Prize for Drama 2019 – the winner is...

This afternoon four playwrights were on tenterhooks, as one of their plays will be named the winner of the prestigious James Tait Black Prize for 2019 after a showcase at Traverse Theatre.

A raucous play charting the agonies and ecstasies of a young American dance group was crowned with the award.

Clare Barron's *Dance Nation* is the seventh play to win the £10,000 prize was announced at an award ceremony this evening in Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre, hosted by television and radio presenter Shereen Nanjiani.

Here we talked to the playwrights :

Clare Barron has written *Dance Nation*, an exhilarating tale following a dance troupe in their early teens trying to reach the national finals in Florida, under the guidance of a bullying dance teacher.

Subverting the modern teenage drama, Barron examines the inner lives of the dancers to capture the joy and despair experienced during adolescence.

Here they all are telling us about their work :

There are three plays shortlisted for the James Tait Black Prize for Drama and [@jeremyoharris](https://twitter.com/jeremyoharris) wrote one of them pic.twitter.com/zat9e58fXX

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [August 19, 2019](#)

And the third on the shortlist was written by Kaite O'Reilly and Phillip B Zarrilli... pic.twitter.com/qrXvj3FyaE

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [August 19, 2019](#)



Clare Barron

Kaite O'Reilly and Phillip B Zarrilli wrote *richard III redux [or] Sara Beer[is/not] Richard III*. O'Reilly and Zarrilli's thought-provoking, one-woman play highlights the limited opportunities available to disabled actors.

Playing a variety of characters, actress Sara Beer considers performing Shakespeare's Richard III – a figure who, like her, is disabled with scoliosis – a curvature of the spine.



Jeremy O. Harris' *Slave Play* explores themes of race, sex and power. Initially set on a plantation before the American Civil War, it focuses on relationships between slaves and their

owners, emphasising the oppression and violence African-Americans have faced.

The drama then shifts to contemporary America, with two therapists highlighting the lack of progress in race relations as they attempt to theorise it.



Jeremy O Harris

The award was launched in 2012, when Britain's oldest literary awards – the James Tait Black Prizes – were extended to

include a category that celebrates innovative playwriting.

Each year, the accolade is given to a new play in English, Scots or Gaelic, which demonstrates an original theatrical voice and makes a significant contribution to the art form.

Uniquely, the prize is judged by emerging artists and established theatre professionals, rather than critics.

The panel featured students and academics from the University of Edinburgh, representatives from the Traverse Theatre, Playwrights' Studio, Scotland, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Schaubuhne Theatre, Berlin and a freelance theatre director.