

Restless Natives – musical to be staged at Leith Theatre

The new musical version of Restless Natives will be held at Leith Theatre during a summer programme of theatre, music and film.

Original Restless Natives screenwriter and now lyricist, Ninian Dunnett, director Michael Hoffman and composer Tim Sutton, inspired by Big Country songs and themes, will open the season by delivering a not-to-be-missed full stage musical designed to delight devotees of the original movie and capture the hearts of a new generation.

A charming sense of national pride is built as intrepid underdogs Ronnie and Will become Highland Highwaymen, holding up buses and winning international renown, fleecing tourists with panache, with all the quirky idiosyncratic fun coming to Leith Theatre's raked stage in June 2025.

The three month long programme has been commissioned by the producers of the film, Andy Paterson and Wild Yak Productions, along with the Leith Theatre Trust team.



Courtesy of StudioCanal

Restless Natives producer Andy Paterson is thrilled to see the musical leading the summer programming for the venue: “We are so inspired by the Trust’s vision for this incredible building. Our memories of shooting key scenes from the film just a few hundred yards away on the Western Harbour make this new partnership all the more special. We can’t wait to bring the Clown and the Wolfman back to their actual and spiritual home in Edinburgh.”

Lynn Morrison, Chief Executive of Leith Theatre Trust, said: “We are absolutely delighted to announce Leith Theatre as the Edinburgh venue and to work in partnership to deliver this incredible three-month summer season, starting with *Restless Natives: The Musical*. Despite the challenges posed by our building’s health, we remain committed to being at the heart of cultural life in Leith. This theatre adaptation blends theatre, film and music which is everything we love, and we couldn’t be prouder to welcome this exciting crossover and summer opportunity to our venue.”

Producer, Andy Paterson, said: “The moment we walked into Leith Theatre we had a feeling that we’d come home. The unique atmosphere and personality of the venue chimed with Ninian’s story. Both embody the resilience, the spirit of Scottish community, a sense of perseverance and solidarity – and the belief that with the right values and serious ambition, you can make something great.” □

This is an important step for the theatre and the pop up summer season will give audiences a chance to take another look at the evolving restoration project. This will be the first theatre production in Leith Theatre since 2018.

The producers of *Restless Natives: The Musical* and the team at Leith Theatre are actively seeking additional programming for the venue’s iconic spaces from June through the end of the Edinburgh Festival in August. Both the Main Auditorium (1,600 seats) and the more intimate Thomas Morton Hall (180 seats) have availability. Interest is invited from artists and organisations working within a wide range of creative and cultural artforms. For summer programming opportunities in this historic and vibrant setting, email summer@leiththeatre.co.uk

Leith Theatre opened in 1932. The complex includes Leith Library, the Thomas Morton Hall and a gatehouse. It was hit by a bomb in 1941 and took 20 years to repair. It closed in the 1980s to save money and the Trust then took it over in 2016 with a desire to bring the cultural asset back to life. It has had many uses in recent years as a film set and also as home for food charity, Empty Kitchens who produced thousands of meals there during lockdown.





