

Writer

May Sumbwanyambe

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Bio

May Sumbwanyambe is a librettist, radio dramatist, academic and playwright from Edinburgh.

Previous productions include:

GHOST LIGHT, (Edinburgh International Festival and National Theatre of Scotland), JOSEPH KNIGHT, (BBC Scotland, National Theatre of Scotland), AFTER INDEPENDENCE (Arcola Theatre, Papatango Theatre), THE PARROT HOUSE (Guildhall School of Music and Drama), AFTER INDEPENDENCE and THE TRIAL OF JOSEPH KNIGHT (BBC Radio 4).

He is currently writing new stage plays for The National Theatre of Scotland and the Citizens Theatre, both about the historical visibility of Black peoples in Scotland. He is also developing a new TV Series for Two Rivers Media and the BBC. His last stage play, which the Evening standard called “A notable debut play” and the Times called “A debut of astonishing maturity” also saw him described by The Times as “a rare discovery” and The Telegraph as “a writer of terrific potential.”.

In 2016 May’s debut play was the winner of the Alfred Fagon Audience Award, he has also won the BBC PAF’s £10k Legacy Award. He was the inaugural Papatango Resident Playwright and winner of the £10k BBC Performing Arts Opera Fellowship. Other award recognition includes being shortlisted for the Channel 4/Oran Mor Comedy Drama Award (2012), the Papatango New Writing Prize (2012), the Alfred Fagon Award (2011, 2012, 2015), the BBC’S Alfred Bradley Award (2011) and OffWestEnd’s Adopt a Playwright Award (2010 and 2009), The Old Vic 12 award (2016) Perfect Pitch £12k musical award (2016), IASH/Traverse Fellowship (2017,2018), Live Theatre/Northumbria University Writer in Residence (2018) and The Dr Gavin Wallace Fellowship (2018). He also reached the final round of Soho Theatre’s Verity Bargate Award (2011) and won the BBC’s inaugural Scriptroom competition (2012).