

# Young Vic



Press Release – WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2025

[Images available here](#)

## TIM CROUCH'S *AN OAK TREE* TO BE STAGED AT THE YOUNG VIC IN THE PLAY'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

- Written, performed and co-directed by Tim Crouch, the play features a different guest artist in every performance, who has neither seen nor read the play before.
- Şopé Dirísù, Michelle Terry, Luke Thompson, Russell Tovey and Indira Varma are among the 15 different guest artists who will perform opposite Tim Crouch, who returns for the 20th anniversary of the production with further artists to be announced. Each guest artist will only be revealed to audiences live on the night, as they join Tim on stage
- *An Oak Tree* pioneered the idea of the theatrical 'cold-read' and has significantly influenced other artists that have gone on to explore this form.
- The play has been performed globally with over 350 different guest artists including Frances McDormand, Geoffrey Rush, Sharon D Clarke, Alanis Morissette, Sophie Okonedo and Peter Dinklage.
- Presented by Francesca Moody Productions in association with the Young Vic *An Oak Tree* runs at the Young Vic from 6 – 17 May 2025. Tickets are available at [www.youngvic.org](http://www.youngvic.org)

The Young Vic Theatre has today announced that **Francesca Moody Productions**, the Olivier Award-winning producers of *Fleabag* and *Baby Reindeer*, will present **Tim Crouch's *An Oak Tree***, in association with the **Young Vic** from **6 - 17 May 2025** in the groundbreaking play's 20th anniversary year. Tickets go on priority sale to members from 12pm today, public on sale is from 12pm on Monday 27 January.

Written, performed and co-directed by award-winning theatre maker, writer, actor and director **Tim Crouch**, this bold, absurdly comic, and profoundly moving story of loss, suggestion, and the power of the mind pioneered the idea of the theatrical 'cold-read' and has significantly influenced other artists that have gone on to explore this form. In every performance, a different guest artist steps into the unknown, having never seen, read or rehearsed the play before who will only perform it once during the run.

Since its premiere in 2005, over 350 different guest artists including **Frances McDormand, Geoffrey Rush, Sharon D Clarke, Alanis Morissette, Sophie Okonedo and Peter Dinklage** have appeared in the play in 19 different countries from Lithuania, Argentina and

the UK to Hong Kong, Australia and the USA. *An Oak Tree* is directed by Tim Crouch, Karl James and Andy Smith, the play also features music by Peter Gill.

*When I say sleep, you're free again.*

*A father loses his daughter in a car accident. The driver of the car that killed her is a stage hypnotist. The two men meet for the first time when the father volunteers for the hypnotist's act. What follows is a live theatrical experience like no other - a bold and absurdly comic story of loss, suggestion and the power of the mind.*

**Şopé Dirísù** (*Gangs of London, Slow Horses*), **Michelle Terry** (*Tribes, The Cafe*), **Luke Thompson** (*Bridgerton, A Little Life*), **Russell Tovey** (*Being Human, American Horror Story: NYC*) and **Indira Varma** (*Game of Thrones, Present Laughter*) are the first to be announced of 15 different guest artists who will each take to the Young Vic stage on a different date, to perform alongside Tim who returns to star in the production in its 20th anniversary year. Each guest artist will only be revealed to audiences live on the night, as they join Tim on stage. The remaining artists are to be announced in the coming weeks.

*An Oak Tree* will be presented at the Young Vic Theatre by **Francesca Moody Productions (FMP)** in association with the **Young Vic**. FMP's work in theatre has originated two of the most globally successful television shows of the last decade: *Fleabag* and *Baby Reindeer*. Upcoming and current projects include *Weather Girl* (opening at Soho Theatre in March), *Feeling Afraid As If Something Terrible is Going to Happen* (touring to Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Festival this winter) and *How to Win Against History* (opening at Bristol Old Vic in June).

**Tim Crouch** said, "*Exactly twenty years ago a laboratory was created in a small room above a pub in South London where an experiment took place. Actors were invited to try out a new play I'd written called An Oak Tree - like trying out a new drug formulation. Each time a different actor who knew nothing about the play they were going to be in - a blind test each time. For some of the actors the drug was euphoric. For some it was heartbreaking. For some it was riotous. For some it was hard work. But the experiment was never less than enthralling. Twenty years later and that experiment is still ongoing with 374 blind tests to date. 374 actors who have done the play with me. And the laboratory has moved on from London to New York to LA to Russia to South America to Australia to Asia. Each time an actor who doesn't know the play. Each time the same conditions. Each time a different result.*

*Twenty years since that room above a pub and the laboratory is the Young Vic, a theatre that has consistently proved its devotion to the new; a theatre that has developed an audience that is open and enquiring and engaged. I'm thrilled to see what happens to the experiment there. I'm thrilled to meet actors in the moment of performance. Actors I've never met in a play they've never met. Meeting an audience for one time only."*

**Luke Thompson** said, "*I'm very excited to join the Oak Tree family and be a part of a piece which I think takes the very best thing about going to the theatre, that is, something actually happening live in front of you rather than filtered through a screen. I'd say more but I have no clue what I'm in for..."*

*An Oak Tree* opens at the Young Vic on 6 May 2025. The Young Vic's 2025/26 Season, the inaugural programme under new **Artistic Director Nadia Fall**, will be announced later this Spring.

***An Oak Tree* goes on sale to Soul Mates today, and Friends on 24 January  
Public booking opens on 27 January**

Access performances

BSL Performance: Tue 13 May, 7.30pm

Captioned Performance: Wed 14 May, 7.30pm

Relaxed Performance: Sat 17 May, 2.30pm

BSL interpreter: Sue MacLaine, Captioner: Miranda Yates

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Tim Crouch

Tim Crouch is an Obie-award winning writer and theatre-maker. He was an actor before starting to write and he still performs in much of his work. His plays include *Toto Kerblammo!* (Unicorn Theatre); *Truth's a Dog Must to Kennel* (Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh and tour); *Are you a Robot?* (Wonder Fools); *Superglue* (NT Connections); *Total Immediate Collective Imminent Terrestrial Salvation* (NTS and Royal Court); *Beginners* (Unicorn Theatre); *Adler and Gibb* (Royal Court and tour); *what happens to the hope at the end of the evening* (Almeida); *I, Cinna (the poet)* (RSC and Unicorn Theatre); *I, Malvolio* (Brighton Festival and tour); *John, Antonio & Nancy* (Royal Court Rough Cuts); *The Author* (Royal Court and tour); *ENGLAND – a play for galleries* (Traverse Theatre, Fruitmarket Gallery and tour); *An Oak Tree* (Traverse Theatre and tour), *Shopping for Shoes* (National Theatre Education) and *My Arm* (Traverse Theatre and tour). Directing credits include *House Mother Normal* (New Perspectives and Brighton Festival); *I, Cinna (the poet)*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *King Lear* (RSC); *PEAT* (Ark, Dublin); *Jeramee, Hartleby and Oooglemore* and *Beginners* (Unicorn Theatre) and *The Complete Deaths* (Spymonkey). For radio, Tim's adaptation of Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveller* was given a special commendation at the BBC Audio Awards 2024. Tim created and co-wrote *Don't Forget the Driver*, a six-part series for BBC2 which won Best Comedy at the Venice TV awards, 2019.

Other awards include: Scotsman Fringe First (*Truth's a Dog Must to Kennel*), Off-West End Offie (*I, Cinna (the poet)*), Writers Guild of Great Britain, Best Play for Young Audiences (*Beginners*); John Whiting Award, Total Theatre Award (*The Author*); Scotsman Fringe First, Total Theatre & Herald Archangel Award (*ENGLAND*), Obie Special Citation, Herald Angel (*An Oak Tree*), Prix Italia for Best Adaptation in Radio Drama (*My Arm*).

Tim is published by Methuen Books.

[timcrouchtheatre.co.uk](http://timcrouchtheatre.co.uk)

@thistimcrouch

### Karl James

Karl has known Tim since they met at the National Youth Theatre in 1984. He has co-directed *My Arm*, *An Oak Tree*, *ENGLAND* (Traverse Theatre and tour); *The Author*, *Adler & Gibb* (Royal Court and tour); *What Happens To Hope At The End of The Evening* (Almeida); *Total Immediate Collective Imminent Terrestrial Salvation* (NTS and Royal Court); *Truth's a Dog Must to Kennel* (Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh and tour).

Most of Karl's time is spent as director of The Dialogue Project, enabling people to have conversations when the stakes are high.

Karl is passionate about audio; his podcast is called 2+2=5 and his work has featured on BBC Radio 4's series *Short Cuts* and in *A Different Kind of Justice*, at Latitude Festival and in Third Coast's Filmless Festival in Chicago.

Karl's first book on how to have better conversations 'Say It and Solve It' was published in 2013.

[thedialogueproject.com](http://thedialogueproject.com)  
[understandingdifference.blogspot.com](http://understandingdifference.blogspot.com)

### **Andy Smith**

Andy Smith is a theatre-maker who has collaborated closely with Tim Crouch since 2004, most recently co-directing (along with Karl James) *Truth's A Dog Must To Kennel* (2022); and *Total Immediate Collective Imminent Terrestrial Salvation* (2019).

Other recent works include *COMMONISM* (2018, in collaboration with Amund Sjølie Sveen); *SUMMIT* (2018); *The Preston Bill* (2015).

He is currently touring *A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY*, a work that invites the audience to think and talk about the climate emergency, and one of a series of plays designed for groups of people to meet, read together, and then discuss. He is a part-time Lecturer in Theatre Practice at The University of Manchester.

[andysmiththeatre.com](http://andysmiththeatre.com)

### **Creative credits**

Written by Tim Crouch

Performed by Tim Crouch and a different second actor at every performance

Directed by Tim Crouch, Karl James and Andy Smith

Music by Peter Gill

**-ENDS-**

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[Images: available here](#)

### **About the Young Vic Theatre**

Founded in 1970 as a space for world-premiere productions and unexpected takes on classic plays that speak urgently to our present, the Young Vic Theatre has been one of London's leading theatres for more than fifty years.

Welcoming more than 100,000 visitors a year to its London Waterloo location, the Young Vic stands out in the city's cultural landscape for balancing daring commercial drive, success and artistic flair with genuine grassroots social impact change in our neighbourhood. We forge deep connections in our neighbourhood through our Taking Part programme, where we engage with over 15,000 people every year via a wide range of projects, from skills-based workshops to on-stage performances. We give 10% of our tickets free to schools and neighbours, irrespective of box office demand, and we are committed to keeping ticket prices low.

The Young Vic's Creators Program is our space for multi- and anti-disciplinary artists, and is the only scheme of its kind. Launched in 2001, and formerly known as the Directors Program, we offer artists and producers a unique opportunity to develop their craft through opportunities that range from trainee and assistant director roles to a two-year residency through the Genesis Fellow/Associate Director position. The Genesis Network provides an online community to over 2,500 artists and producers. Each year, the recipient of the Genesis Future Directors Award directs a show in the Clare Theatre with full support from the Young Vic team.

Built upon the principles of access, innovation, and community, the Young Vic is deepening its roots nationally and internationally. Recent transfers include a *Death of a Salesman* and *The Collaboration* on Broadway, and *Best of Enemies* and Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* in the West End.

The Young Vic's founding spirit is iconoclastic and pushing at the forefront of possibility, bringing together artists and audiences on a global scale and using the power of stories to change our world.

**Artistic Director: Nadia Fall**

**Executive Director: Lucy Pattison**

[www.youngvic.org](http://www.youngvic.org)

**The Young Vic's annual activities are made possible with public funding from Arts Council England.**

**We thank Lambeth Council and Southwark Council for their ongoing support.**

**Additional support is provided by the Genesis Foundation.**

**We gratefully acknowledge Ian Burford and Alec Cannell for generously supporting the Young Vic's mission.**

**Thank you to all of our donors who make our work possible.**

### **About Francesca Moody Productions**

FMP is an Olivier Award-winning, Tony-nominated production company whose work in theatre has originated two of the most globally successful television shows of the last decade: *Fleabag* and *Baby Reindeer*.

We make original theatre, television, film and audio. We believe in finding the right home for the right story and growing it over time. From tiny fringe theatres to the West-End, to the next big Amazon television series and beyond.

We're serious about our work, but we don't take ourselves too seriously. We work with leading writers and nurture new talent to produce bold, award-winning shows with huge potential and something to say – be it drama, comedy, horror, or musicals. Our work is itch-scratching, big-swinging and full of heart.

Current and upcoming productions include: *Feeling Afraid As If Something Terrible is Going to Happen* (Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Festival); *Weather Girl* (Soho Theatre) and *How to Win Against History* (Bristol Old Vic).

Recent productions include: *I'm Almost There*, *Weather Girl* (Summerhall); *VL* (Roundabout at Summerhall); *Kathy and Stella Solve a Murder* (The Ambassadors Theatre, Underbelly Edinburgh, Bristol Old Vic, HOME Manchester, Roundabout); *An Oak Tree* (Bergen International Festival, Festival d'Avignon, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *Feeling Afraid As If Something Terrible is Going to Happen* (Bush Theatre, Roundabout); *Nutcracker* (Southbank Centre) *Never Have I Ever* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *School Girls*; *Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Lyric Hammersmith); *A Doll's House*

(Hudson Theatre, New York); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Phoenix Theatre); *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons* (Harold Pinter Theatre); *Berlusconi: A New Musical* (Southwark Playhouse Elephant); *Mum* (Soho Theatre); *Leopards* (Rose Theatre) and *Baby Reindeer* (Bush Theatre, Roundabout).

Executive Producer: Francesca Moody  
Development Producer: Christabel Holmes  
Project Producer: Darcy Dobson  
Production Assistant: Angel Mika Kemp  
Creative Associate: Jon Brittain  
Production Associate: Jack Boisseuix  
[www.francescamoody.com](http://www.francescamoody.com)