GRAEae BEYOND

SHOWCASE 2026

Friday 13 March

Hosted at Derby Theatre

DERBY THEATRE

SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

10:15 AM **Arrivals**

11:00 AM **Introduction: Jenny Sealey**, Artistic Director (Graeae), **Sarah Brigham**, Chief Executive & Artistic Director (Derby Theatre), **Cherylee Houston** (video welcome)

Scratch: *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight* by Oliver Cross

Reading: *Awareness* by Beth Westbrook

Presentation: Catherine Turner describes her work as a writer.

12:10 PM **Break**

12:30 PM **Reading: *Losers* by Douglas Couch**

Scratch: *In An Alternate Stratosphere* by Emily Oetegenn

Reading: *Notes of an Autistic Northern gay boy* by Thomas Norris

SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

	Presentation: Sam Prior poetically introduces us to their work.
	Pixie Styx presents their work through song.
2:00 PM	**Lunch:** A packed lunch is provided, feel free to eat anywhere in the building or outside.
	Networking: If you have a prearranged appointment with an artist, please make yourself known to them at the scheduled time. If you're looking for someone to speak to, Graeae staff will happily make an introduction.
3:50 PM	**Musical Performance by Crazy Able Band:** Takes place in the Upper foyer.
4:15 PM	**End of Event.**

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ACCESS INFORMATION

The event is BSL-interpreted.

There is one captioned film on loop at the event. This film introduces the Beyond artists.

All live performances are BSL-interpreted, include audio description and captioning, and will be presented in a relaxed environment.

There is a quiet area and a well-being support team on hand. If you would like access to the area or team, ask a member of Graeae staff.

We acknowledge that this is a busy event, and safe distances may not always be possible.

We ask that all attendees be respectful of the need for some people to wear face masks and to remain at a comfortable distance from others. Face masks and hand sanitiser are available at the access table.

Refreshments are available throughout the day.

Welcome to the Beyond Showcase 2026

Thank you for joining us today, bringing your industry expertise and showing a real commitment to furthering the careers of Deaf, Disabled, and neurodivergent creatives.

Beyond started life at the very beginning of the covid emergency, set up initially as a way to physically connect regional artists with our partner venues. On the surface, this appeared to be an impossible task. It turned out not to be, and 6 years on, at what is still a vulnerable time for our industry, this third cohort of Beyond artists and our partner venues have proved that creativity, tenacity, and shared ambitions can enable artists to expand their careers. These artists have, with an abundance of skill and creativity, explored untested ideas, channelled passions, written their first piece, directed, performed, and produced work that has the potential to excite and ignite audiences nationally.

I hope you enjoy meeting our third cohort of Beyond artists. This showcase is an opportunity for the artists to find out more about you, your organisations and venues, to see where their work and your ambitions might fit, and for you to connect with highly motivated and skilled creatives whose work you cannot afford to ignore.

Huge thanks to Derby Theatre for hosting this showcase and to all 8 of the Beyond partners who have remained connected and committed throughout the programme. But, most importantly, huge thanks to the 10 Beyond artists who you are about to meet.

Laura Guthrie
Artist Development Manager, Graeae

WHAT IS BEYOND?

Beyond has supported over 70 Deaf, Disabled, and neurodivergent artists in developing their careers, taking on new challenges & building successful connections.

Beyond helps to develop greater access to regional opportunities across England ensuring Deaf, Disabled and neurodivergent artists are at the forefront of new and emerging work. We recognise the immense value of our intersectionality across our communities, which includes Black, Asian, Global Majority, migrant, and LGBTQIA+ artists, which is why our approach is to be as bespoke as possible for each individual artist on the programme.

Graeae have teamed up with 8 leading venues across England; Octagon Theatre in Bolton, Nottingham Playhouse, Cast in Doncaster, Hull Truck Theatre, Shakespeare North Playhouse in Prescot, Everyman in Liverpool, Derby Theatre and Mercury Theatre in Colchester.

ABOUT GRAEAE

For over 45 years, Graeae has cultivated and championed the best in Deaf, Disabled and neurodivergent talent, locally, nationally and internationally.

Graeae is passionate about igniting artistic curiosity, championing accessibility, and providing a platform for new generations of artists through the creation of trailblazing theatre. It is also a human rights company, founded on the need to tackle social injustice, discrimination, and exclusion. Recent productions include *Bad Lads*, *Romeo and Juliet*, award winning *Self-Raising*, *High Times and Dirty Monsters*, UK Theatre Award winner *The Paradis Files*, *Kerbs*, Olivier Award nominated *10 Nights*, and two seasons of the digital new work programme *Crips without Constraints*. Since 1997, Graeae has been run by Jenny Sealey OBE, who also co-directed the London 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony.

Artistic Director and Joint CEO: Jenny Sealey OBE.
Executive Director and Joint CEO: Kevin Walsh.

Performances

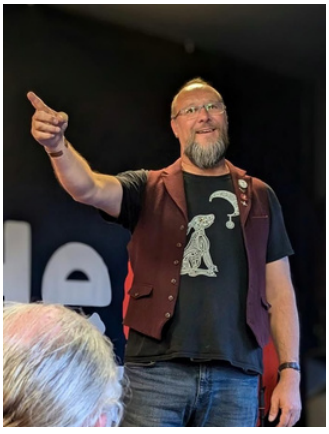
Sir Gawain & The Green Knight - Oliver Cross, Scratch

This bold, atmospheric retelling of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight fuses medieval myth with a striking contemporary soundscape. Folk artist and electronic musician Oliver Cross shapes a musical world with 1980s-inspired synths and resonant hurdy-gurdy, conjuring both ancient ritual and untamed wilderness. Alongside him, storyteller Jason Buck brings the tale vividly to life, his dynamic narration weaving seamlessly through shifting textures of sound. Premiered to sold-out audiences in December, this immersive production re-imagines a timeless Arthurian legend, summoning chivalry, peril, temptation, and enchantment for modern ears.

Content warning: references to physical violence and death.



Oliver Cross



Jason Buck

Performances

Awareness - Beth Westbrook, Reading

Awareness' challenges when raising awareness could be considered exploitation through a family vlog channel. The scene presented today takes place midway through the play after Aurora finds out her internet friend is actually her former bully, who got a late autism diagnosis. In the scene, instead of revising, Aurora challenges her mum, Emma, on the impact the channel has on her life.

Directed by Liam Rees.

Content warning: emotional abuse, child abuse, references to autistic meltdown, panic attack, and references to bullying.



Tionee Joseph



Alison Mitchell

Presentations

Catherine Turner

Describes her work as a writer for Theatre and Radio.

Sam Prior

Poetically introduces us to their work.
Content warning: References to death, ecological crisis, and social injustice.

Pixie Styx

Presents their work through song.
Content warning: swearing and suggestive content.

Performances

Losers - Douglas Couch, Reading

Losers is a two-hander about two autistic people reconnecting at a school reunion. It is about two lives half-lived, and the hopes for, and likely challenges of, the half yet to come.

The reading will be the first scene of the first act, Hiding. Sue has one last phone call with her mother, trying to steel herself to enter the hotel.

Directed by Jenny Sealey.



Alison Mitchell

Performances

In An Alternate Stratosphere - Emily Oetegenn, Scratch

Creative and loving Delilah has planned a treasure hunt around their flat for her love, Luna to propose some very important questions. People, the universe and her conditions seem to conspire against her.

Written by Emily Oetegenn

R&D stage Co - Directed by Emily Oetegenn & Tom Saunders

Content Warnings: In An Alternate Stratosphere explores disability, ableism, pregnancy journey (IVF) identity, sensuality, pride, choice, agency, love and self-discovery and empowerment. Use of strong language.



Esther Irving



Lara Wilson

Performances

Notes of an Autistic Northern gay boy - Thomas Norris, Reading

Set in the mind of Theo amidst an audition that could change his life, but lurking in the shadows is the embodiment of his own fear, self-hate, and doubt; will Theo understand who he is and accept himself?

Directed by Jenny Sealey.

Content warnings: swearing, fatphobia, homophobia (including use of slurs), physical violence, mental abuse, potential flashing lights, loud music.



Thomas Norris



Billy Pearson

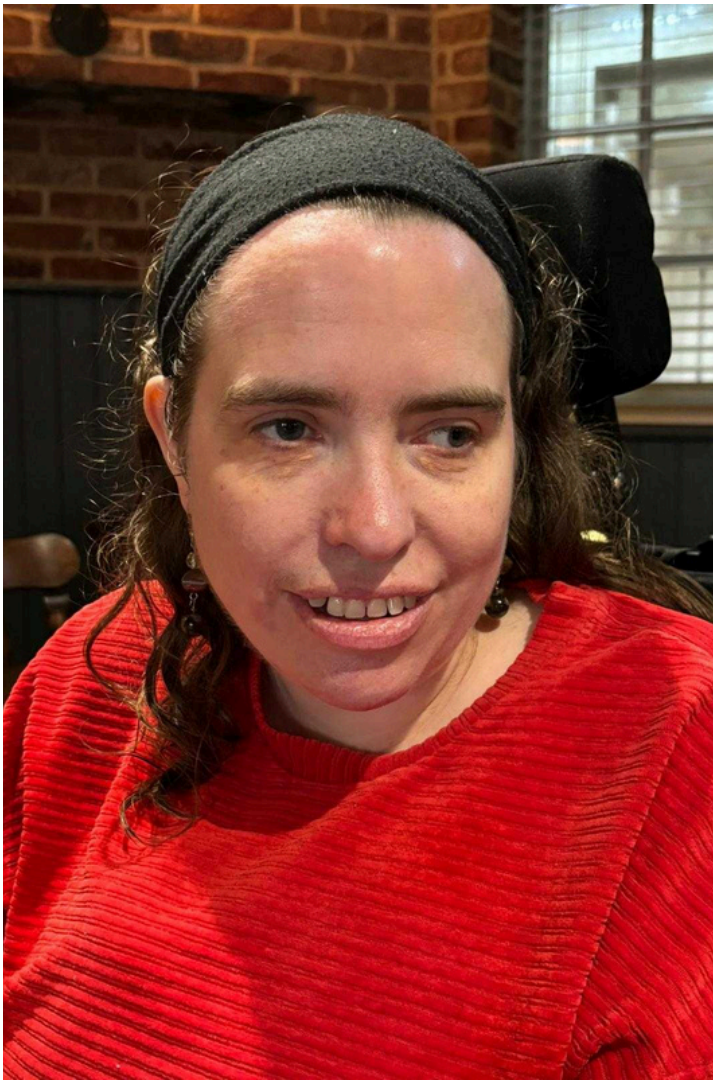
ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Beth Westbrook, she/her

Beth Westbrook is a neurodivergent writer, performer, facilitator, and newbie producer with chronic pain from the Wirral. She likes stories with a sense of humour and working with lovely people. She is represented by Maddie O'Dwyer at Berlin Associates.

Her social media handle is @bethbwestbrook



Catherine Turner, she/her

Catherine is a writer interested in dystopia, dilemmas and life between the cracks. She's collaborating on a Graeae-supported play about the joys and frustrations of three disabled female friends; and a surreal play exploring isolation and the desire for acceptance.

https://www.catherineturner.net



Douglas Couch, he/him

I am a writer, director, dramaturg and audio describer. I have an eclectic taste, but I'm particularly interested in realistic, non-didactic, character driven stories.



Emily Oetegenn, she/her

Emily Oetegenn is a neuro divergent disabled queer multi medium artist - Writer and Director she is the founder & creative director of Tales and Scales Productions.

Her multi medium work explores themes of disability women hood, sensuality, rage and her Aphrodite gaze validating their relationship to one another Her art plays a significant & vital role in her activism

talesandscalesproductions@outlook.com
@Tales and Scales Productions on Instagram



Nicole Hull, she/they

Nicole Hull is a working-class autistic writer based in Bolton. She enjoys writing about science fiction, horror, romance, and being LGBT+.

www.nicolehull.co.uk



Oliver Cross, he/him

Oliver Cross is a musician and composer who composes for ensembles and orchestras, and creates soundtracks for theatre. His practice is rooted in folk traditions, storytelling, and folklore, and spans both traditional and electronic instrumentation.

Weblinks: email: oliver.cross@rocketmail.com
Instagram @musicoligy and @thepatterers

Website https://olivercross.smugmug.com/



Pixie Styx, they/them

Pixie Styx is a multimedia storyteller based in Nottingham. Their work follows two main strands, the exploration of family and local history with a focus on working class heritage, and being a smutty, political trash goblin.

Rebecca Withey, she/her



I'm a writer, sign song performer and tutor based in the Midlands, and a native British Sign Language user. As a scriptwriter I have seen three of my own scripts developed and released as films for television. I am now turning towards my first love - musical theatre - to write and develop my own short musical play - Still Singing (working title.)

As a trained dancer with a BA hons in Professional Dance, I am fascinated by the theory of inner rhythm and how a musical can be created, developed and performed by deaf creatives. With years of experience as a television and theatre actress and BSL consultant, I aim to create new works for theatre that challenge stereotypes and offer leading opportunities for deaf professionals in musicals.

www.rawithey.com or email rebecca@rawithey.com



Sam Prior, they/them

Creative: Disabled and Queer,
Polyamorous with art-forms held dear,
A radical, animist,
Relationship Anarchist.
With skills quite diverse,
Not a single comes first.
Theatre, music, photography,
Sculpture, graphics, geometry...
I'll use them all for raising some cheer!
...(Based in Liverpool)

Website link: samcprior.org



Thomas Norris, he/him

I am Thomas Alexander Norris. I am 27 years old I am a gay, autistic and Northern Actor and writer from Doncaster. I am represented by Destiny Talent for my Acting.

The work I am doing for Graeae is writing a personal play called the Notes of an Autistic Northern gay boy.

https://app.spotlight.com/0616-6720-8177

Additional Performers



Alison Mitchell

Contact:

Alicat9826@gmail.com



Billy Pearson

Contact: Abi Darling

abi@brynmoor.co.uk (Agent)

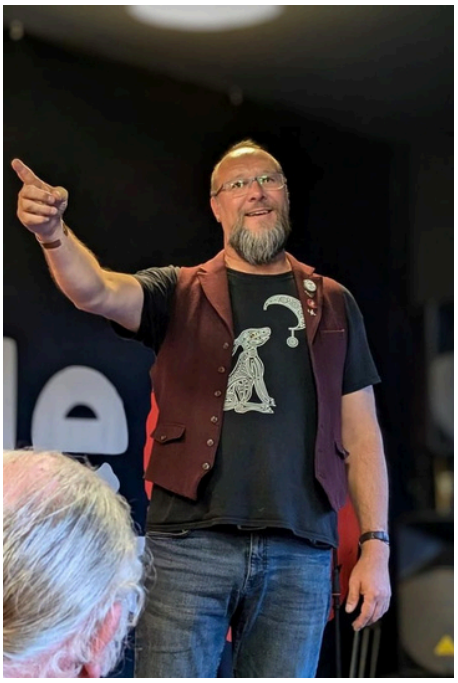
Additional Performers



Esther Irving

Contact:

irving.esther@googlemail.com



James Buck

Contact:

https://linktr.ee/jasonbuckstoryteller

Additional Performers



Lara Wilson

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Additional Performers



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Jayah Caine-Anthony

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Liam Rees

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liamr.96@hotmail.co.uk

Who I’ve met:

Contact details:

What we talked about:

What we will do next:

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