

Top new plays to see in 2024

New writing from across the land to look out for next year!

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Theatre wouldn't be able to thrive without new writing – so here are 20 new plays from across the land worth booking for in the new year!

1. The Hills of California

Jez Butterworth is back with a new play directed by Sam Mendes – which is probably enough to convince any savvy theatregoer that this is going to be a hot ticket. [Throw in some stellar casting](#), and 2024 already looks set to start with a bang. **Harold Pinter Theatre, from 27 January**

2. Minority Report

Philip K Dick's sci-fi detective short story (famously adapted into a film with Tom Cruise) is now brought to the stage by David Haig. With a wad of philosophical musing about the nature of free will and crime fighting, we can see why this one would be an appetising theatre offering. **Nottingham Playhouse, from 16 February, before stops at the Birmingham Rep and Lyric Hammersmith Theatre**

3. The Picture of Dorian Gray

In 2023 we had [Andrew Scott doing solo](#) *Vanya*, this year we've got *Succession* star Sarah Snook returning to the London stage to tackle every role in a new version of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, adapted for the stage by Kip Williams. The show was a major success in Melbourne, so we're excited to see what Snook does with the material now the show's in London. **Theatre Royal Haymarket, from 26 January**

4. Punch

After the success of his major National Theatre play *Dear England* (nominated for ten WhatsOnStage Awards, no less) and the stage version of hit TV series *Boys from the Blackstuff*, James Graham heads to Nottingham Playhouse for new play *Punch*, based on the book *Right from Wrong* by Jacob Dunne and concerning a young man whose life is changed following a physical altercation. **Nottingham Playhouse, from 4 May**

5. Nye

Rufus Norris is entering his final chapter as director of the National Theatre, and one of his final shows is the Wales Millennium Centre co-produced *Nye*, a fantasia-esque odyssey penned by Tim Price and based on the life of Aneurin “Nye” Bevan, long seen as the mastermind behind the founding of the NHS. Michael Sheen stars, returning to play one of the most significant Welshmen in the last century. **National Theatre, from 24 February, and Wales Millenium Centre, from 18 May**

6. Wish You Weren't Here

Katie Redford's new play looks to continue a fantastic streak of new writing programmed by Sheffield Theatres, co-producing with the Theatre Centre. It follows a mother and daughter, emotionally worlds away from one another as they embark on holiday together. The piece will then embark on a tour after its Sheffield spell. **Tanya Moiseiwitsch Playhouse from 24 January, before tour to Newcastle, London, Brighton and Guildford**

7. Shifters

As we often say here at WOS, the Bush Theatre is near unparalleled for producing amazing new work – it never seems to miss. The new year brings a variety of exciting pieces, including the return of Bijan Sheibani with *The Cord*, but we've decided to highlight rising star writer Benedict Lombe's new play *Shifters*, about two friends whose lives collide after many years apart. It

follows Lombe's wonderful play *Lava*, and promises to be something special. **Bush Theatre, from 16 February**

8. The Women of Llanrumney

The Sherman Theatre in Cardiff is one of the UK's finest producing houses, and next year it will host the world premiere of Azuka Oforka's *The Women of Llanrumney*, which is set on a Welsh family-owned plantation in Jamaica in the 18th century – confronting Wales' colonial past. **Sherman Theatre Studio, from 16 May**

9. Paranormal Activity: A New Haunting Live on Stage

We've had it with *Stranger Things* and *Harry Potter*, so it's no surprise that *Paranormal Activity* is now coming to the stage, ready to dish out thrills and chills in equal measure. Another intriguing offering here is the creative team – with Broadway playwright Levi Holloway teaming up with Punchdrunk's Felix Barrett. **Leeds Playhouse, from 4 July**

10. Spirited Away

It was a box office blockbuster when it went on sale at the London Coliseum earlier this year, so we're very excited to see the gargantuan stage version of *Spirited Away* brought to the UK capital. Performed in Japanese with surtitles, it's set to be a very different offering to the existing hit [*My Neighbour Totoro*](#), another stage show based on a film by Hayao Miyazaki, which has now enchanted twice at the Barbican. London clearly loves Studio Ghibli! **London Coliseum, from 30 April**

11. The Frogs

No, not the Sondheim musical of the same name, Spymonkey's latest piece takes Aristophanes' classic and promises a "delirious trip through Greek theatre, a monster-filled Underworld". Expect tap-dancing frogs. **Royal and Derngate, Northampton, from 19 January, and the Kiln Theatre, from 8 February**

12. Dr Strangelove

Stanley Kubrick's satirical Cold War film feels as demoralisingly pertinent today as it did when it was first released, so it's not a surprise to see it brought to the stage with Steve Coogan in a number of different roles (emulating the great Peter Sellers, who did the same in the original flick). Armando Iannucci is on adaptation duties, reuniting with collaborator Coogan for the West End production. **Noël Coward Theatre, from 8 October**

13. A Child of Science

Gareth Farr's new play, about the "birth" of IVF and the heroism of the army of women involved in making it happen, is a pertinent unearthing of a world-changing development in the scientific world. Tom Felton (*Harry Potter*, 2:22 *A Ghost Story*) stars, with Matthew Dunster in the director's chair. **Bristol Old Vic, from 5 June**

14. The Boy at the Back of the Class

Onjali Q. Raúf's bestselling text for children is one of the most vital new books written in the last decade, and seeing its important tale of refugeeism and kindness brought to the stage (adapted by Nick Ahad and directed by Monique Touko) is an exciting prospect. A further plus – it's got a whole load of tour dates lined up. **Rose Theatre Kingston from 3 February, then tour**

15. Shed: Exploded View

Phoebe Eclair-Powell won the Bruntwood Prize in 2019 for her new play *Shed: Exploded View*, and now, five years on, it's set to reach the stage at Manchester's Royal Exchange. Following three couples, it explores themes of love, violence and loss. **Royal Exchange, from 9 February**

16. The Human Body

[Michael Longhurst's final season at London's Donmar Warehouse](#) is bringing all manner of goodies, including the UK premiere of Eboni Booth's *Primary*

Trust. But we've selected a very exciting new play by Lucy Kirkwood, which is set during the creation of the NHS (recurring theme!) and follows an unexpected love affair. It's got premium grade casting too – Keeley Hawes and Jack Davenport. **Donmar Warehouse, from 16 February**

17. Maggie and Me

Damian Barr's award-winning memoir about growing up and surviving during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher is being brought to the stage by the National Theatre of Scotland. Adapted by Barr himself alongside James Ley, expect the top-tier quality that made the original text such a major success a decade ago. **Glasgow's Tron Theatre, from 8 May before touring**

18. Ben and Imo

Mark Ravenhill is returning to the RSC with a reimagined stage version of his radio play *Ben and Imo*, about the working relationship between Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst in the run-up to the Queen's coronation. Plays about 20th century creatives have been huge successes of late – take for example [*The Motive and the Cue*](#) – so we're excited for this one. **RSC's Swan Theatre, from 21 February**

19. Between Riverside and Crazy

Hampstead Theatre in north London also has a corker of a season on the cards next year – April de Angelis will premiere her new play about the life of famed 19th century actress Sarah Siddons, while we're very excited about Stephen Adly Guirgis' Pulitzer winner *Between Riverside and Crazy*, which makes its UK premiere. The piece follows an ex-cop who surrounds himself with an oddball extended family of petty criminals. **Hampstead Theatre, from 3 May**

20. Withnail and I

The cult classic 1987 film about two eccentrics who shack up in the middle of nowhere featured some career-best work from Paul McGann and Richard E

Grant, so we're very intrigued to see who brings the piece to life on stage at the Birmingham Rep next year. The film's original creator Bruce Robinson writes the script, so expect the same level of eccentric comedy. **Birmingham Rep, from 3 May**