

Unfolding
Theatre

NIGHT CLASSES



Booking now for Spring 2025

ABOUT THE SHOW



Welcome to Night Classes; a playful, eye-opening theatre experience set to spark your curiosity!

Night Classes is not just a show; it's a revelation. Delve into a world that dares to ask whether the grown-up goal of independence is all it's cracked up to be.

Inspired by profound insights from deaf and disabled people, Night Classes asks the game-changing question: What if we celebrated inter-dependence instead?

Unleash your curiosity with Unfolding Theatre, as we dive headfirst into joyous, immersive learning experiences with you and explore the realms of self-sufficiency and inter-dependence like never before.

Night Classes is your ticket to reconnection, revolution and reawakening. Watch as we transform from survival into something much more magical. #NightClassesMagic

Night Classes brings together an award-winning creative team of co-writers Lisette Auton and Becci Sharrock, director Annie Rigby, designer Lady Kitt and performers Alex Elliott, EJ Raymond and Harrison Rowley-Lynn.

Night Classes was originally co-commissioned by ARC Stockton and premieres in March 2024

Performance duration: approx. 80 mins

A BSL interpreted and relaxed performance, with breakout space available

Featuring 1 deaf performer and 2 hearing performers, Night Classes is performed in a mixture of BSL and spoken word. All content is interpreted

Everyone welcome, suitable for all.

AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

“We’re so pleased you found our invitation. We’re assuming you found our invitation?”

The audience enter a space lit with festoons of lightbulbs and surrounded by large-scale crumpled paper structures.

The Night Classes team of Alex, EJ and Harrison welcome this evening’s learners. Tonight you will learn the skills you need to be self-sufficient. This is a space where you can relax. You can make noise, take a break, say no, even eat a sweet in a very crinkly wrapper.

Ready to begin?

EJ leads the audience to make their own booklets, each folded and torn from a sheet of A4 paper. The audience then splits into smaller groups to journey around a sequence of hands-on learning experiences. This dynamic format keeps people engaged and offers moments of discovery.

Audiences help EJ build a shelter. Alex sets a challenge to choose the most useful objects to pack into a survival backpack. Harrison leads a laughter-inducing lesson on how to make your own entertainment. Mini lectures about the night sky introduce questions of how to navigate when we never return to the same place twice.



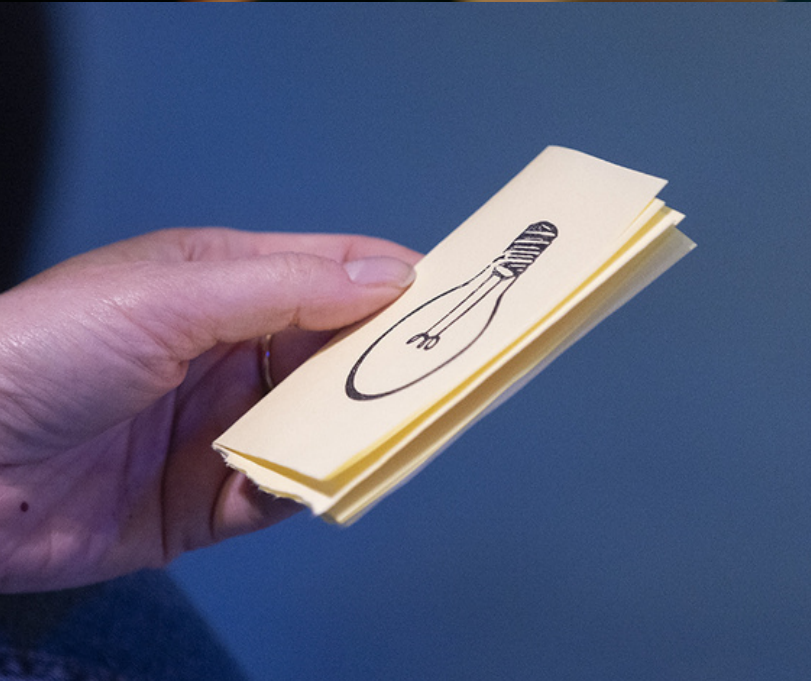


Our learning journey takes an unexpected turn. Alex is leaving. He is packing his bag. It is so heavy he can barely pick it up, although he won't accept any help. As things fall apart, EJ and Harrison are forced to ask whether self-sufficiency has been the wrong goal all along.

It's time for unlearning. From this place of failure, the crumpled paper that shapes the space is reconfigured and populated by the words and voices of all the learners who've come before. As the final act unfolds, Night Classes crescendos into a celebration of what we gain by needing each other.

Night Classes delivers rich storytelling for both hearing and non-hearing audiences. The fusion of spoken word with British Sign Language (BSL) creates a unique sensory experience that invites audiences to tune in, slow down, and pay attention in new and profound ways.

Night Classes is an extraordinary immersive theatrical experience that will leave audiences inspired, enlightened, and deeply moved.



TRAILER AND IMAGES

A trailer of Night Classes will be made available in late March 2024.

A full selection of photographs from our R&D sessions are available [here](#). A selection of production images will be available from early March 2024.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NIGHT CLASSES

by Artistic Director Annie Rigby



“Night Classes came from a conversation with Lisette Auton in 2022. Lisette talked about the high value that society places on independence – and how problematic this social goal is from a disabled perspective. She talked about the shame and guilt that comes with asking for help. She suggested that we’d all be a lot happier if we valued inter-dependence instead.

Lisette’s wise words resonated with me so strongly. I thought about the guilt I feel when I ask for help with childcare. I thought about the way we often live in separate little units – all trying to make it work – often disconnected and unaware of the people around us.

So much of Unfolding Theatre’s work is about bringing people together. We talk about making big-hearted theatre, and so much of that comes from the joyfulness of different people sharing a space. I am really excited to be creating a theatre experience that forges connections and celebrates inter-dependence. It feels like exactly what the world needs right now.

As with all Unfolding Theatre productions, Night Classes, has been crafted in collaboration with local people. A community group at ARC Stockton have shared insights into learning, asking for help and inter-dependence to shape what Night Classes has to say”.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PRODUCTION



Cast & Creative Team

Performers

Alex Elliott, EJ Raymond &
Harrison Rowley-Lynn

Director

Annie Rigby

Writers

Lisette Auton & Becci
Sharrock

Designer

Lady Kitt

Unfolding Theatre, based in Newcastle Upon Tyne and launched in 2010 creates big-hearted productions that revel in the joy of bringing communities together. Their inaugural production, the acclaimed Building Palaces, garnered praise as "one of the most magical, joyful things" witnessed by audiences.

Following this success, their debut touring production earned a Total Theatre Awards nomination for Best In The World, hailed as "Magic theatre" by The Guardian. The company's repertoire, including enchanting pieces like Lands of Glass and the Journal Culture Awards' Performance of the Year, Putting the Band Back Together, has captivated audiences with their charm and thoughtful storytelling.

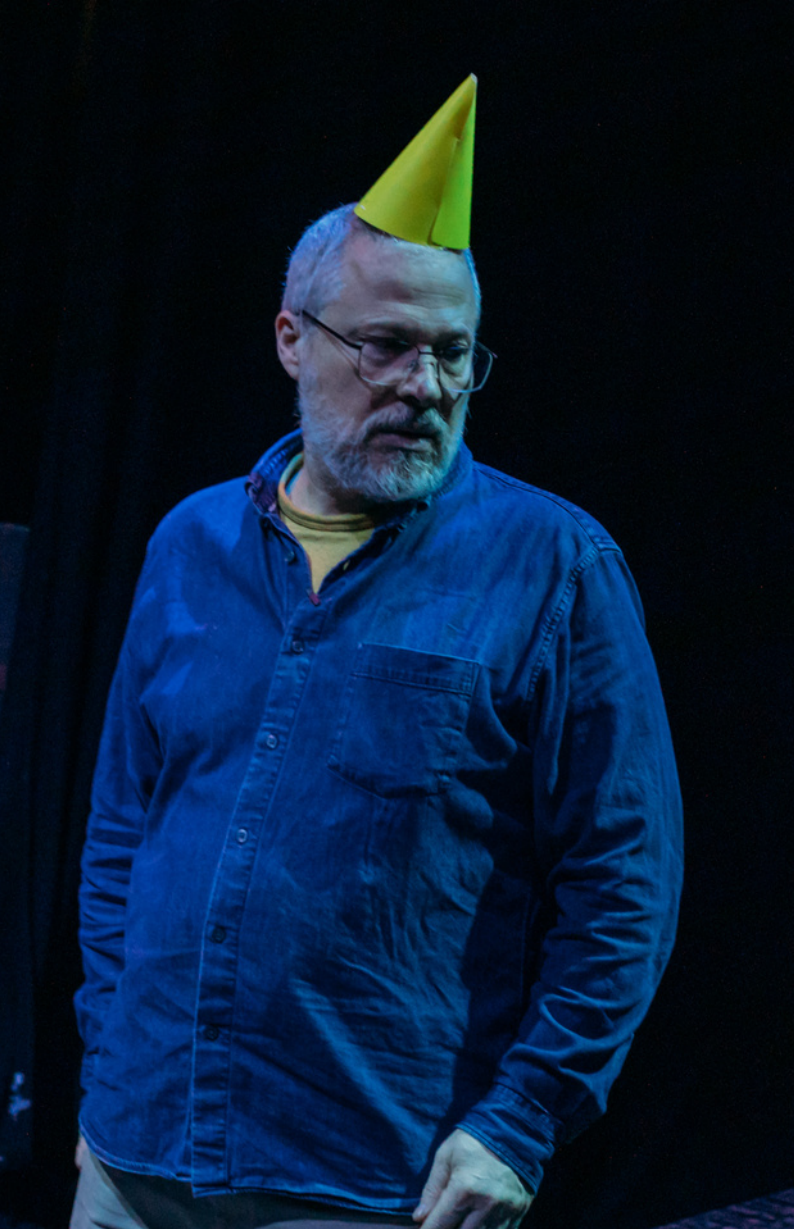
Welcomed into the Arts Council England's National Portfolio in 2018, Unfolding Theatre's creative processes and performances have earned them national recognition, with accolades such as Northern Stage's Title Pending Award for New Theatre and NCCPE's Engaging Young People 2014 Award, highlighting their commitment to inventive and participatory approaches.



Annie Rigby

Annie was Resident Director at Northern Stage (2003-08). Productions included *On Top of the Town*, performed at Noordenzon Festival, *Tattercoats*, *Thumbelina*, and *The Golden Bird*, devised work such as *From the Beginning* and returning in 2015 to to direct *Up & Out* *Christmas Sprout*. Annie was Northern Rock Foundation Fellow (2007/08) on the Clore Leadership Programme. Her fellowship included secondments to the V&A Museum, Edinburgh Festival Theatre and research into theatre made by non-professional performers.

Annie studied English at Downing College, Cambridge University. Directorial credits include *Hold On Let Go*, *Putting The Band Back Together*, *Lands of Glass*, *Best in the World*, *Building Palaces*, *Miracle!*, *Lord of the Flies* (Gala Theatre Durham).



Alex Elliott

Alex is a performer and filmmaker for Unfolding Theatre. He is a deviser and performer in *Hold On Let Go*, *Putting The Band Back Together*, solo show *Best in the World*, *What If?* and *Building Palaces*. He also produced visuals for *Let Me Tell You*.

Alex is Artistic Director of Operating Theatre, creating thought provoking theatre and film on health and social issues. He created *Squirrels*, a piece about Mental Health and *Making for the Light for CANDO*; a pioneering treatment for focal epilepsy. He was a founder member of Northern Stage Ensemble (1998-2005), playing major roles in productions including *Clockwork Orange*, *Edmond*, *Homage To Catalonia* and *Manifesto for a New City*. He also works with Leeds Playhouse Associate Artist, Alan Lyddiard (*Anniversary*, *The Bus Pass Project*).

EJ Raymond

EJ is a freelance actor, writer & author, BSL advertiser/promoter based in Newcastle upon Tyne. In 2018, they graduated from Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow. They have recently written and performed Lockdown Hairy, a short film as part of Deafinitely Theatre's Talking Hands series. EJ is also the founder of Turtléar, an organisation that supports the deaf community to have greater access to the arts. EJ is profoundly deaf, non-binary, gay.

Harrison Rowley-Lynn

Harrison Rowley-Lynn is a north-east based performer. Her acting credits include Soapbox Racer (Alphabetti Theatre), Big Girls Don't Cry ("Blowin' A Hooley and Nettles (SoreSlap).

Harrison's skills include comedy, story telling and Children's Theatre.





Lisette Auton

Lisette, a disabled multi-disciplinary artist, channels her creativity as an author, poet, activist, and performer. Represented by Molly Ker Hawn, Lisette won the 2019 Early Careers Fellowship for Literature at Cove Park and was recognised at The Journal Culture Awards 2021 for Performance of the Year for Writing The Missing – A River Cycle commissioned by Durham Book Festival. Lisette is also on the TSS Publishing list of Best British & Irish Flash Fiction.

Lisette's dynamic spoken-word performances have graced renowned venues like Northern Stage, ARC, Southbank Centre, and Sage, reflecting her passion for making words accessible and powerful. With a background in Devised Performance and qualifications in Community Development, Lisette uses her platform to champion disability positivity, fostering unity through shared strength.



Becci Sharrock

Becci is a writer, theatre maker, creative producer based in Gateshead. Her socially engaged practice has seen her create short stories and poetry inspired by living legends in Corby; develop nationally touring theatre show Letters to Myself through public engagement in Sunderland and South Shields; adapt and tour The Secret Garden, and run workshops with participants of all ages and backgrounds. She is Project Producer for New Writing North's Young Writers' City Gateshead and in her freelance work.

Writing credits include Christmas With the Hobs (Digital Christmas show, Queen's Hall Hexham, Alnwick Playhouse and The Maltings), Northern Pulse (Film Poem, N18 Programme, GEOTN), Living Legends: Hidden Histories (Published book & exhibition, Made In Corby), Night Trade (Alphabetti Theatre) and Letters to Myself (UK tour).



Lady Kitt

Lady Kitt is a disabled artist and drag king, describing their work as “Mess Making as Social Glue.”

Kitt works on long term, collaborative projects driven by insatiable curiosity about how art can be useful. Projects are usually punctuated by the creation of large-scale, vibrant installations / sites for exchange made from recycled paper, reused plastics and raw clay, which Kitt calls shrines.

Kitt is a trustee for Crafts Council and founding member of disabled artist led art rabble “kin collective” (North East Culture Awards “Newcomer of the Year” winner 2022).

Kitt’s work has been longlisted for the 2023 Aesthetica Art Prize, shown at Atlanta Contemporary (USA), Saatchi Gallery (UK), National Centre on Restorative Justice (USE) and commissioned by Craftspace (“Drag Declares Emergency” 2022-23), Arts&Heritage (“This, our hive of voices” 2020-22) and BALTIC (‘Open. Bloom. Flourish. Nourish. 2021).





WHO IS NIGHT CLASSES FOR?

Night Classes, an immersive theatre spectacle, invites diverse audiences to challenge societal norms surrounding independence and embrace the beauty of inter-dependence.

Contemporary Theatre Aficionados

Dive into a refreshing and unconventional experience that pushes the boundaries of traditional theatre, appealing to those seeking something daring and new.

Mixed Programme Venues

With a dynamic blend of creative disciplines, Night Classes fits into venues hosting diverse programmes, offering a unique addition to your cultural repertoire.

Lived Experience Advocates

The genesis of Night Classes resonates deeply with those who've navigated the nuances of disability, offering an authentic narrative that challenges perceptions and sparks conversation.

Local Communities Facing Isolation

Tailored for older groups experiencing isolation or a loss of independence, Night Classes delicately explores these issues, fostering a non-judgmental dialogue.

University and College Students

Ideal for those studying performance, social, and health care, Night Classes provides a thought-provoking lens on the complexities of independence and inter-dependence.



Selling Points

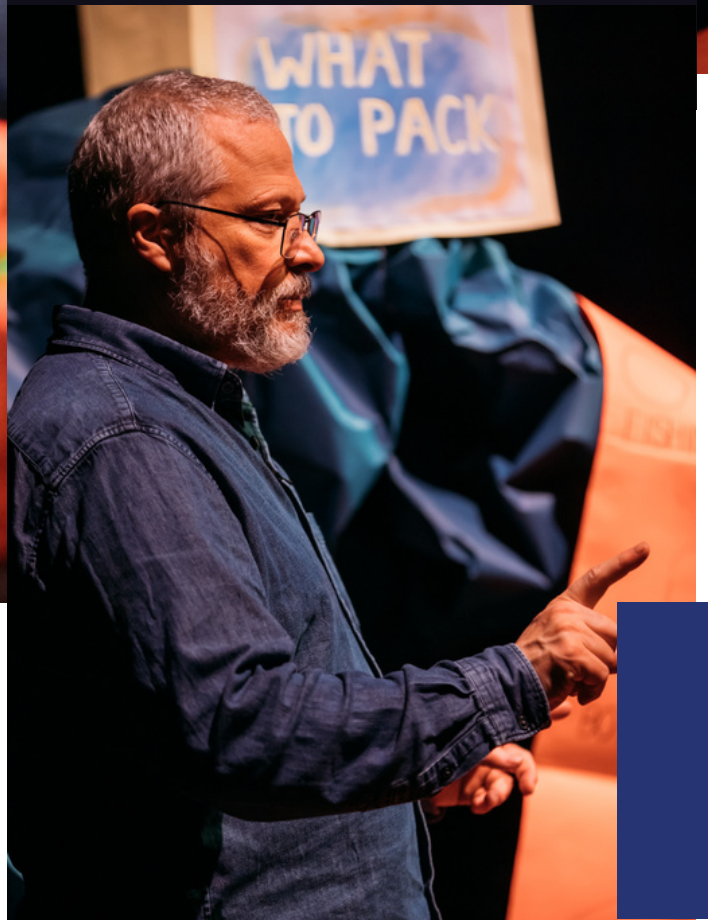
- Immersive and Experiential: Night Classes opens doors to new audiences with its unique immersive and multi-sensory format, creating memorable experiences in unexpected settings.
- Community Collaboration: Developed in partnership with Stockton's community groups, Night Classes weaves genuine lived experiences into its creative tapestry.
- Deaf Awareness at the Forefront: EJ Raymond's stellar performance brings deaf awareness to the centre stage, offering a fresh perspective on inclusivity.
- Unusual Development: The show's distinctiveness attracts PR interest, capturing the attention of national and regional press and disability advocacy groups.
- Press Coverage Potential: Night Classes taps into hot topics, reframing narratives around disability, social mobility, and equality, providing a unique angle for broader press coverage.
- Community Engagement: Leverage existing relationships with disabled/deaf publications and ongoing collaborations like the North East Deaf Youth Theatre.
- Widening Audience Reach: Touring into unconventional spaces and events, Night Classes extends its impact, attracting audiences beyond the cultural spectrum.

BOOK NOW



If you wish to book
Night Classes for your venues, please
contact Executive Producer Michael Barrass
to discuss dates and a financial package

michael@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk
0191 580 4901



TOURING INFORMATION

Set, Lighting and Sound

- Night Classes requires an open, flat performance space where the audience can move around the space. This could be a hall or a venue with bleacher seating retracted.
- The performance space must be wheelchair accessible. We require a small room that can act as a 'chill out' space for audience members who need quiet time.
- We require the use of a PA suitable for the venue. Sound run from company laptop.
- We tour all necessary colour. Please pre-rig lighting if possible.
- Get in/get out requires support of venue technician.
- Touring Stage Manager will operate lighting and sound during show.
- Full set design and technical information will be sent out when plans are finalized for the show's premiere (March 2024).

Company

- 3 performers on stage (1 deaf performer and 2 hearing performers, performed in a mixture of BSL and spoken word)
- 2 BSL Interpreters on/off-stage throughout production
- 1 Touring Stage Manager

Get in

- Minimum 6 hours

Get out

- 90 mins following final performance

Run Time

- 80 minutes no interval





Unfolding
Theatre



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unfoldingtheatre.co.uk

CONTACT

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