

LIFE BEFORE YOU

A new play by Eva Hudson
Directed by Roisin McCay-Hines



DIGITAL
PROGRAMME

ABOUT THE SHOW

"I can't care for you when you're like this — can't love you when you're like this — you need to be--- you need to be better."

Gráinne leaves Ardoyne, Belfast, for England, chasing the promise of a better life for her daughter. She scrubs, she bleaches, she sacrifices— and piece by piece, she begins to disappear.

Eimear grows up surrounded by privilege, stepping through doors her mother could never open. But with every step forward, she drifts further away — into another class, another name, another life. As they clash over diverging ideas of womanhood, what surfaces is complex and turbulent, straining their relationships — with themselves and with each other — to breaking point.

Life Before You, a fierce and unflinching new play by Eva Hudson, directed by Roisin McCay-Hines, starring Hayley-Marie Axe (*Mudtown*, *The Devil's Hour*, *Red Dwarf*) and Georgia Alexandra (*Call the Midwife*), lays bare the fault lines between mothers and daughters. Addressing women's healthcare, class, survival, and the erasure of aging women, it asks: what do we pass on, and how do we escape the lives written for us?



Original Production

Life Before You was developed in Bristol by writer Eva Hudson and director Roisin

McCay-Hines, originally seed-funded by a bursary from Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory. Inspired by their shared experiences of navigating medical misogyny, understandings of class and female identity, they also share the specific context of being daughters of Northern Irish mothers who moved to England and raised their children here.

Following a sold-out work-in-progress run at the Alma Theatre in 2023, the production received strong programming interest, leading to this UK tour with a newly developed script and expanded creative team.

The world premiere of *Life Before You* is presented by REMH Productions at Theatre Royal Bath on 12 February 2026, followed by a national tour. The production is visiting Exeter Northcott & Barnfield Theatres, Sterts Arts Centre, The Poly, The Acorn Theatre, Theatre Royal Plymouth, Mercury Theatre Colchester, The Corn Hall, Tobacco Factory Theatres and The Old Joint Stock.



Director & Producer's Note

Eva and I met during our respective training at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and quickly became collaborators and, more importantly, friends. From the moment I first read her work, I was struck by her precision and emotional acuity. Her writing is tenacious, intelligent, and profound — holding space for tenderness and tension, for what is spoken and what is left unsaid. Eva's work challenges its collaborators to be brave and to meet the provocations of the text with the same courage she brings to writing them. At the same time, it trusts its audience implicitly, inviting us to sit with complexity, contradiction, and the quiet fractures that shape relationships.

Working with Eva has been a journey of shared discovery. Our collaboration, rooted in our intertwined experiences of female identity, class, and Northern Irish heritage, has shaped the development process and informed every creative choice. Together, we have explored how Gráinne and Eimear's story — of love, sacrifice, and the pressures women inherit — can resonate authentically on stage, capturing both intimacy and universality.

Our rehearsal room has been guided by listening, trust, and collaboration, allowing the actors to inhabit the text fully while honoring its structure and rhythm. The production has grown from its seed-funded development in Bristol to, more than two years later, a UK tour with a new script and renewed energy behind it.

This tour marks an important milestone in the play's ongoing journey, and I look forward to all it is yet to become. I hope it challenges, unsettles, and moves you, as it has all of us who have been part of its creation.

Roisin x

Creative Team & Cast

Writer

Eva Hudson

Director & Producer

Roisin McCay-Hines

Designers

Jasmine Thompson & Abigail Manard

Producer Mentor

Emma Gibson

Dramaturgy Mentor

Sarah Dickenson

Technical Stage Manager

Louis Gulliver King

Assistant Director

Izzy Ponsford

Gráinne

Hayley-Marie Axe

Eimear (multirole)

Georgia Alexandra

Rehearsal Photographer & Videographer

Zoë Birkbeck

Production Photographer

Edward J Felton

Acknowledgments

Life Before You has been produced by REMH Productions Ltd, supported using public funding by Arts Council England, Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory Fund, and in-kind support by Shoreditch Town Hall. The production proudly supports The Menopause Charity.

With additional thanks to Lucy Mabbitt, Tom Clay, Helen Birchenough, Doric Bossom, Ben Kernow, Josh Pharo, Jasmine Cole, Emma Rice Company, Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and Hall for Cornwall for their generous support of the production, and the whole team behind it.

"There is a welcome freshness about Life Before You... reminiscent of Shirley Valentine, or even A Doll's House ... the writing may well come from feminist anger... but there is warmth and wit in abundance."

Stagetalk Magazine

"Life Before You highlights a vital and often under-discussed experience affecting many women. We're delighted to support REMH Productions in bringing this important story to a wider audience and look forward to raising awareness and increasing access to trusted information to those going through the menopause."

Jenny Haskey, Chief Executive, The Menopause Charity

CAST



**Grainne
Hayley-Marie Axe**

Hayley's Theatre credits include; Mrs Higgins in *Pygmalion*, Andy in *Stepping Out* (Frinton Summer Theatre), Linda in *Leave a Message* (The Vaults), Mary in *Baby Blues* (Cheltenham Everyman Theatre), Nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (Customs House Theatre), Hippolyta in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Theatre Royal Bath, Ustinov Studio), Eleanor Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* (UK tour), Lesley in *Talking Heads*, Marie D'Amour in *Paris Snow* the musical and Shelley in the comedy *Ladies Day* – for which she was awarded Broadway Baby's best supporting actress award.

TV credits include; Series regular 'Big Dan' in *Mudtown*, *Say Nothing*, *The Devil's Hour*, *Red Dwarf* TV special & series XII, *Silent Witness*, *Eastenders*, *Tricky TV*, *Vice Squad: NYC* and TV pilot *These Four Sides*.

Film credits; *The Gun Man* (award winning short), Feature films; *Dungeons and Dragons: Honour Amongst Thieves*, *Les Parfaits* (release 2026). Hayley also played the female lead Val Stone in the multi-award winning Brit comedy feature film *May I Kill U?* Written and directed by two-times BAFTA winner Stuart Urban.



**Eimear (multirole)
Georgia Alexandra**

Georgia trained at Arts University Bournemouth, graduating in 2022.

Her credits include *Call the Midwife* (BBC) for TV, and *A London Lark Rising* (Butterfly Theatre Company), a site specific production.

Life Before You is her professional stage debut and she is delighted to be a part of this moving and imperative story.

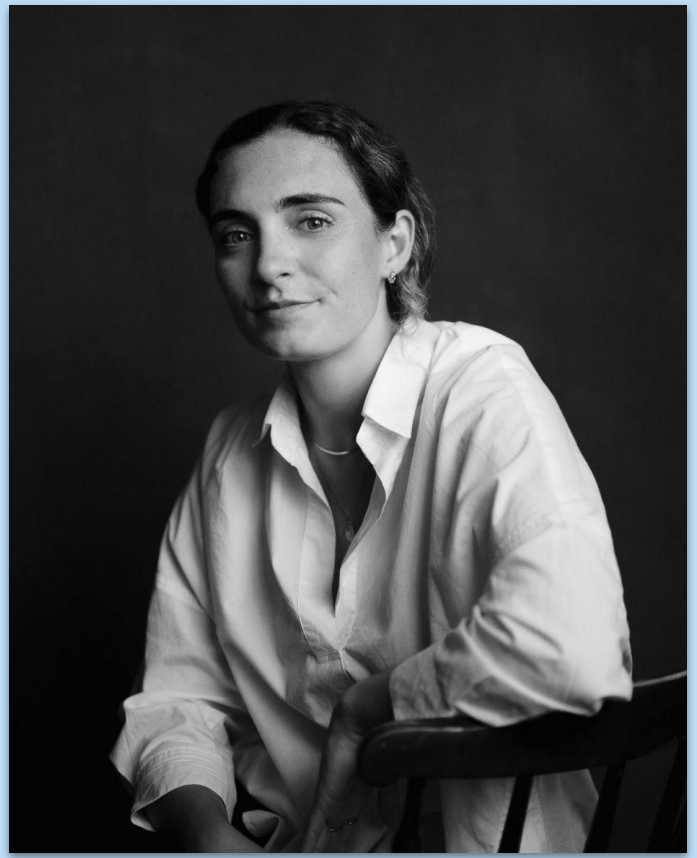
CREATIVES



Writer
Eva Hudson

Eva (b. 2001) is an English-Irish writer and director, who studied English Language and Literature at University College London, before training as a playwright at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Her recent work as playwright includes *855-FOR-TRUTH*, which played at The Bridge Theatre, Brussels in May/June 2025, after an initial run at The Hope Theatre, London in January 2025. Her writing has previously been staged at Bristol Old Vic, The Pleasance, London and at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and she has additionally directed projects at The Hope Theatre, Arcola Theatre and at The Edinburgh Fringe.

A writer/director for screen, Eva's award-winning short film, *'I Knew Her Before She Was A Virgin'*, played at eleven film festivals in 2024 and 2025. As co-founder and Artistic Director of theatre and film production company Gentlewomen Production House, Eva has also produced theatre and short films across the UK and Europe, and is particularly interested in creating work which centres young people's perspectives in a rapidly changing world, and amplifying voices of young women and marginalised gender identities.



Director & Producer
Roisin McCay-Hines

Roisin is a Cornish-Irish director and producer who studied at University of Exeter before training as a director at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. She is a recipient of the Michael Grandage Company Futures Award, Shakespeare at Tobacco Factory Bursary Award and was shortlisted for BBC New Creatives.

Directing credits include Kevrin: Out of Season (South West Tour, featured in The Guardian's top shows), Cold, Dark Matters (Theatre503, The Hope Theatre and Edinburgh Fringe), Mo Chara, Dia Duit (Theatre Royal Plymouth), The Fall of the House of Usher (Red Rope Theatre), A Summer of Birds (Exeter Northcott Theatre), The Hounds of the Baskervilles (Red Rope Theatre), Bar Tape (SW tour), No One Will Tell Me How to Start a Revolution (Wardrobe Theatre) and Pascoe's Pilchard Palace (Kneehigh).

As a producer, she leads REMH Productions, developing and touring new work across the UK. Former producing and artist development roles have included the Royal Shakespeare Company, Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and Wiltshire Creative.



Designer
Abigail Manard

Abigail is a UK based theatre & film designer. They studied at Baldwin Wallace University where they received two BA's in Design & Technical Theatre and Acting & Directing before coming over to the UK and graduating from Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in 2023 with a MA in Performance Design.

Recent productions include *Gurt Haunted* (Bristol Old Vic - Weston Studio and South West Tour), *The Rainbow Crossing Academy* (Slick Films), *Earthquakes in London*, *A Dream*, *Nell Gwynn*, *The Sweet Science of Bruising* (The Royal & Derngate), and *Hang* (London Independent Pictures).



Designer
Jasmine Thompson

Jasmine is a set and costume designer for live performance. She is heavily influenced by fine art references, distinct use of colour, and the natural world. Her primary experience is in outdoor theatre productions, including Pendley Open-Air Shakespeare Festival.

Jasmine holds a BA in Costume Production from Arts University Plymouth and an MA in Performance Design from Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.



Producer Mentor **Emma Gibson**

Emma is a people centred, values-driven producer with over 25 years' experience devising, marketing, developing and delivering cultural experiences, audiences and people.

Her work for WildWorks includes *Souterrain* (Dolocath Mine Cornwall), *The Beautiful Journey* (Devonport and Tynemouth Dockyards) and *The Enchanted Palace* (Kensington Palace). For Miracle Theatre 10 Years as Communications Director, productions include *Waiting for Godot* (Live and Digital) *The Third Policeman* and *Dr Livingston I Presume!*

Other roles and projects include Associate Director of the Minack Theatre; work with Kneehigh Theatre on *Blast!* and *Brief Encounter*; Director of the TipofyourTongue Poetry Festival; and Creative Mentor for The Writers Block, The Works (Dance Theatre Agency Cornwall) and Creative Skills. Most recently, she has been Head of Culture and Community for St Ives Town Council, instigating a new programme of live theatre and literary events, youth programme and revitalising the Guildhall venue.



Dramaturgical Mentor **Sarah Dickenson**

Brought up in North Cornwall, Sarah is a writer and dramaturg with over two decades of experience developing new plays nationally and internationally. As dramaturg she is currently working on projects with Paines Plough, Nottingham Playhouse, Chichester Festival Theatre, Jennifer Jackson and Tilted.

Her previous roles have included: Associate Dramaturg for Paines Plough, Associate Dramaturg for LAMDA, Associate Dramaturg for the RSC, Production Dramaturg for Shakespeare's Globe, Senior Reader at Soho Theatre, Literary Manager for Theatre503, New Writing Associate at The Red Room.

As playwright: *the Commotion Time* (Exeter Northcott), *From The Horses Mouth* (O-Region), *Come To Where I'm From* (Paines Plough), *North Ealing* (Theatre503/ Rose Bruford), *PowerPlay* (Hampton Court), *Everything's Fine* (co-writer book, Tilted Co).



Technical Stage Manager **Louis Gulliver King**

Louis Gulliver King is a Theatre Maker & Production Manager. He has toured extensively across the UK & internationally as both a performer and technician. Over the last 10 years he has been awarded several artist residencies, including a grant from the Artists International Development Fund to train alongside Polish theatre company, Gardzienice.

More recently he was involved in lighting the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury Festival for the 2025 opening ceremony, and was part of the team delivering Jordan Rakei's sell out shows at The Royal Albert Hall. He leads The Rat Affair and runs his own recording studio, The Calf House, in West Cornwall.



Assistant Director **Izzy Ponsford**

Izzy Ponsford (she/her) is a theatre director, assistant director and movement practitioner. She trained on the MA Contemporary Theatre Directing at Rose Bruford College. Her work centres physical storytelling and spans devised theatre, new writing and community work.

Izzy is particularly interested in interdisciplinary approaches to theatre-making, and her current research explores textiles and weaving as tools for storytelling, community and change. Investigating how we can use the storytelling practices of weaving and fabric work to inform storytelling in the theatre.

Alongside her creative practice, Izzy works extensively as a facilitator and educator, and has directed and assisted on projects with Lewisham Youth Theatre, Blue Elephant Theatre and Rose Bruford College.

The Menopause Charity

This production is proudly supporting **The Menopause Charity**, who have praised the project's contribution to visibility and awareness around women's health:

"Life Before You highlights a vital and often under-discussed experience affecting many women. We're delighted to support REMH Productions in bringing this important story to a wider audience and look forward to raising awareness and increasing access to trusted information to those going through the menopause."

— *Jenny Haskey, Chief Executive, The Menopause Charity*

The Menopause Charity provides trusted, evidence-based information and support to those experiencing menopause and perimenopause, as well as their families, friends and colleagues.

If you would like to:

- **Find out more about menopause and perimenopause**
- **Access support and resources**
- **Donate to support their work**

please visit themenopausecharity.org.

Support & Signposting

Life Before You touches on themes including women's health, family relationships, belief systems, sexual violence and emotional distress. If you have been affected by any of the themes in the play, you may wish to reach out to the following organisations:

The Menopause Charity

themenopausecharity.org

Samaritans

samaritans.org | Freephone: 116 123

Faith to Faithless

faithtofaithless.com

The Survivor's Trust

thesurvivorstrust.org/

Feedback

We would love to hear your thoughts on the production. Feedback is crucial for our funders and is invaluable for the future life of *Life Before You*.

The feedback form should take around five minutes to complete.

[Please click HERE.](#)

Thank you for being part of the journey of *Life Before You*.



R·E·M·H
P R O D U C T I O N S



Supported using public funding by
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