



## PRESS RELEASE

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### CLEAN BREAK ANNOUNCES NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM IN THE RUN UP TO ITS 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

**Award-winning women's theatre company Clean Break, announces a new leadership team to take the company into its fifth decade.**

**Róisín McBrinn and Anna Herrmann** take up new roles as the company's Joint Artistic Directors and the search is now underway for an experienced **Executive Director** to complete the three-women leadership team.

**The team will lead Clean Break into an exciting new chapter as the company celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019 with an ambitious year long programme of work. Programme announcements will be made later in the year.**

The Joint Artistic Directors, Róisín McBrinn and Anna Herrmann, will combine their extensive experience as a leading theatre director and a leading practitioner specialising in theatre and social change to expand the ways in which the Clean Break produces groundbreaking new work. Clean Break was set up in 1979 by two women who left prison determined to use theatre to tell their own stories and those of the women they met there. The new leadership team, inspired by the company's founding principles, will build a diverse community of women artists with lived experience of the criminal justice system (Clean Break Members) and leading and emerging theatre practitioners. Together, these women will create unforgettable theatre that speaks truth to power.

This inspiring new model has been developed by the company under the leadership of its current Chief Executive, **Lucy Perman MBE**. Lucy will be leaving Clean Break this summer, having led the award-winning organisation for 21 years. Earlier this year, she was presented with the Criminal Justice Alliance Lifetime Achievement Award for her outstanding contribution to the sector.

*Róisín McBrinn, Joint Artistic Director; "I'm over the moon to be appointed as Joint Artistic Director at Clean Break. I look forward to embracing Clean Break's extraordinary experience of changing women's lives through great theatre and its success at pioneering diverse women theatre-makers' voices, whilst ensuring the company's growth as a vital force for change, within the theatre sector and far beyond. I am hugely buoyed for what the future holds for our audiences, our*

*partners and our Members as we move into a vision combining brilliant women theatre artists with our Members in fresh and original ways.”*

*Anna Herrmann, Joint Artistic Director; “I am absolutely delighted to become Joint Artistic Director of Clean Break, a company I have cared passionately about over the past sixteen years, as its Head of Education. I am ready to embrace this new adventure, making bold and outstanding theatre that shines a light on women’s lives in prisons and beyond. With our Members at the company’s heart, I look forward to finding ways of telling stories that remain vital to share in light of the ongoing crisis for women in the criminal justice system. I want to thank Lucy and the Board for living the Company’s values of courage, compassion and collaboration so thoroughly. Let’s make it happen!”*

*Kim Evans OBE, Chair: “The Board is delighted to be working with Anna and Róisín and we look forward to recruiting a new Executive Director to complete the new leadership team. We are deeply grateful to our outgoing CEO, Lucy Perman, for the drive and vision she has brought to the company over the past 21 years. It is through her leadership that we have developed our new model for collaborating with some of our most exciting theatre makers to bring the voices of our Members to a wider audience in surprising and memorable ways.”*

*Lucy Perman MBE: “It has been a great privilege to lead Clean Break for the past 21 years and to work with my brilliant team and the Board to develop a model that will make the company a greater force for change on the cultural landscape. The new collaborative approach to leadership is, for me, one of the most exciting aspects of our new way of working. I know that under the leadership of Anna, Róisín and the incoming Executive Director, the company will be in the best possible place to take up new opportunities and to make its voice - and those of our Members - more widely heard. The company has great plans to celebrate how far it has come in the past 40 years and I know it will go on to achieve great things in the future.”*

Clean Break recently received a Tonic Award for its dedication to changing women’s lives through theatre and commitment to new writing. During 2018, activity includes: Alice Birch’s [BLANK] - a co-commission with National Theatre Connections (performed by young people around the UK and at the National Theatre); Katherine Chandler’s *Thick As Thieves* - co-produced by Theatr Clwyd (premiering at Theatr Clwyd in October then touring prisons and theatres around the UK); participating in Artichoke’s *Processions* project; and *Belong*, created by a group of young women with Natasha Marshall, Clean Break’s Channel 4 Playwright In Residence and winner of a Most Promising New Playwright Offie for *Half Breed*.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

Clean Break changes lives and changes minds through theatre – on stage, in prison and in the community.

Acclaimed theatre company Clean Break produces ground-breaking plays with women writers and actors at the heart of its work. Founded in 1979 by two women prisoners who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of imprisoned

women to a wider audience, it is still the only theatre company of its kind remaining true to these roots; inspiring playwrights and captivating audiences with the company's award winning plays on the complex theme of women and crime.

Its commissioned playwrights have included Zawe Ashton, Alice Birch, Lin Coghlan, E V Crowe, Vivienne Franzmann, Tanika Gupta, Katie Hims, Sam Holcroft, Lucy Kirkwood, Chloë Moss, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Winsome Pinnock and Rebecca Prichard.

Recent Clean Break successes have included *House/Amongst The Reeds* by Somalia Seaton & Chino Odimba (Edinburgh Fringe and Yard Theatre 2016), *Joanne* written by Deborah Bruce, Theresa Ikoko, Laura Lomas, Chino Odimba and Ursula Rani Sarma (Soho Theatre and Latitude Festival 2015, RSC Making Mischief Festival, August 2016), *Spent* by Katherine Chandler (touring conferences and Higher Education settings), Vivienne Franzmann's *Pests* (Royal Court Theatre, Royal Exchange Theatre + tour), *Sweatbox* by Chloë Moss (Latitude Festival 2015), *Fingertips* by Suhayla El-Bushra and *Meal Ticket*, a company-devised play (Latitude Festival 2014), Katie Hims' *Billy the Girl* (Soho Theatre), Roz Wyllie's *Stepping Off the Edge of the World* (Soho Theatre + tour), Rebecca Prichard's *Dream Pill* (Almeida Festival 2013, Latitude Festival 2012, Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2011), Sonya Hale's *Hours til Midnight* (Latitude Festival 2013, Southbank Centre + tour), Chloë Moss's *There Are Mountains* (HMP Askham Grange), Sam Holcroft's *Dancing Bears* and Chloë Moss's *Fatal Light* (Latitude Festival 2011), and *Charged*, written by six of the UK's foremost contemporary playwrights in 2010, revived as *Re-Charged* in 2011 (Soho Theatre).

**Róisín McBrinn** is a theatre director with over fifteen years experience working in the UK, Ireland and internationally. She has been with Clean Break since 2016 as the Head of Artistic Programme and during that time has directed *Joanne* (Soho Theatre and RSC) and *House/Amongst The Reeds* (Yard Theatre) for the company.

She was formerly Associate Director at Sherman Cymru where she oversaw the commissioning and developing of new Welsh writing. Róisín has directed for the Donmar Warehouse (*Novecento*), Sheffield Theatres (*Afterplay*), West Yorkshire Playhouse (*Yerma*), Prime Cut (*Villa/Discurso*), The Abbey Theatre (*No Escape, Perve, Heartbreak House*). She has developed new work for Soho Theatre, The National Theatre, The Bush, The Abbey and Sherman Theatre.

This summer she is directing a stage adaptation of Roddy Doyle's *The Snapper* for Dublin's Gate Theatre.

**Anna Herrmann** has been working in the field of theatre and social change for twenty seven years, specialising in theatre and education with marginalised groups in the UK and abroad. She has been with Clean Break since 2002 as the Head of Education, leading the company's award winning work with women in the criminal justice system and women at risk of entering it. Anna is co-author of *Making a Leap: Theatre of Empowerment: A Practical Handbook for Creative Drama Work with Young People* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers). She has an MA in Arts Education from Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and a PG Cert (Distinction) in Race and Ethnic relations. She is a regular visiting lecturer on Applied Theatre courses at

Universities across the Country and between 2006 and 2018 was a trustee of Leap Confronting Conflict; a UK based national charity specialising in youth and conflict. Anna sits on the Steering Group of the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance and is also a trained coach and regularly mentors artists in participatory settings.

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