



PRESS RELEASE

CLEAN BREAK ANNOUNCES FOUR NEW PATRONS AHEAD OF ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Clean Break is thrilled to announce that playwright Lucy Kirkwood and actors Zawe Ashton, Sharon Duncan-Brewster and Tanya Moodie join the company as Patrons with immediate effect.

The four women have all worked with Clean Break in the past. Lucy Kirkwood's work with the company has included her play *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it's alright now* at the Arcola Theatre. Zawe Ashton was writer in residence with Clean Break for two years and has also starred in the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize award winning *This Wide Night* at Soho Theatre. Sharon Duncan-Brewster was in the cast of Rebecca Prichard's *Yard Gal* at Royal Court Theatre and Linda Brogan's *Black Crows* at Arcola Theatre. Tanya Moodie starred in the one-woman, multi-authored *Joanne* at Soho Theatre and Latitude.

Anna Herrmann and Róisín McBrinn, Clean Break Co-Artistic Directors: *'We are delighted to welcome Lucy, Zawe, Sharon and Tanya as Clean Break Patrons. As we approach a 40th anniversary year full of incredible plays and activity, our Patrons are vital in supporting the company to make exciting new connections, place Clean Break at the heart of the theatre industry and ensure that the hidden stories of women are heard.'*

Lucy Kirkwood: *"It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve as a Trustee to Clean Break and I am delighted and grateful to be able to continue my relationship with this brilliant, vital, inspiring company as a Patron."*

Zawe Ashton: *"Working with Clean Break for two years as artist in residence as a writer and performing in their incredible work on stage as an actor has been one of the most life changing professional and personal experiences of my life. To see first-hand the positive changes in women's lives, whether in prison, as a prison leaver or someone at risk - is astonishing. Art therapy and drama therapy is real. The change they make is REAL. Society would benefit from a lot more Clean Breaks. They deserve support, they deserve visibility and the utmost respect. Deep thanks to the women I've worked with over the years who have overcome adversity and changed my life. Welcome, to the women we are yet to meet."*

Sharon Duncan-Brewster: *"Having worked with Clean Break and witnessing the positive influences that the company makes on women within the various realms of the criminal justice system, I am delighted to be continuing my near 20-year strong relationship by becoming a Clean Break Patron."*

Tanya Moodie: “We have families that we are born into, and families that we are fortunate enough to find through profound friendships and shared visions. Clean Break is that family to me. We first come into contact via audition workshops. I jumped at coming back on my degree placement. Then I was honoured to work with them in a performance capacity. Clean Break’s staff and Members have taught me that no one’s potential is ‘other’ than mine. I treasure them, and I am committed to championing Clean Break’s essential work on behalf of women whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system.”

The company’s other Patrons also include Dame Harriet Walter DBE, Dame Emma Thompson, Ann Mitchell and Baroness Helena Kennedy QC (full list in Notes to Editors).

Clean Break celebrates its 40th anniversary throughout 2019. Its Spring season includes *Inside Bitch*, conceived and co-directed by Stacey Gregg and Deborah Pearson, devised and performed by Lucy Edkins, Jennifer Joseph, Terri Ann Oudjar and Jade Small (at Royal Court Theatre from 27 February to 23 March); *Belong*, a new play by Brazen – Clean Break’s Young Artists – as part of Arcola Theatre’s Creative/Disruption Festival (24–25 February); a project in partnership with Cardboard Citizens; and *Clean Break: Rebel Voices*, an anthology of 40 monologues from 40 Clean Break voices published by Methuen.

NOTES TO EDITORS

BIOGRAPHIES:

Zawe Ashton is an actor, director, producer and playwright. Her portrayal of Vod in Channel 4’s *Fresh Meat* won her a cult following and the diversity of her work across television, film and stage has attracted numerous accolades. Recent credits include *Wanderlust* (BBC/Netflix) and the highly anticipated Dan Gilroy project *Velvet Buzzsaw* with Jake Gyllenhaal (Netflix). Her directorial debut *Happy Toys* was nominated for best British Short at Raindance Film Festival, and she continues to write, direct and produce film with her production company Asylum. Her first foray as an author is an unconventional memoir - ‘*Character Breakdown*’ - released in the Spring.

Lucy Kirkwood is a playwright and screenwriter. In 2009, her play *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it’s alright now* was produced by Clean Break at the Arcola Theatre. Nominated for an Evening Standard Award for Best Newcomer, it made Lucy joint winner of the John Whiting Award. *Chimerica* premiered at the Almeida Theatre in 2013 and transferred to the West End, earning Best New Play at the Olivier and Evening Standard Awards, as well as the Critics Circle and Susan Smith Blackburn Award. Recent work includes *Mosquitoes* at the National Theatre in 2017, and *The Children*, which premiered at the Royal Court in 2016, and opened on Broadway at Manhattan Theatre Club in 2017.

Sharon Duncan Brewster trained at The Anna Scher Children’s Theatre from childhood through to 1998 when she got her first role in a Clean Break production, the award-winning *Yard Gal* by Rebecca Pritchard. She followed her Clean Break debut by working with Vicky Featherstone and the late Sarah Kane in Sarah’s penultimate play *Crave*. Sharon has since performed on stage nationally and internationally, including her performance in Linda Brogan’s *Black Crows* for Clean Break. She has an extensive television career, notably as a series regular in the prison drama *Bad Girls* and the urban hit *Top Boy* as well as *EastEnders*. Her recent film credits have included in *Star Wars: Rogue One* and *The Intent 2: The Come Up* for which she has just won the MVISA Award for Best Actress.

Tanya Moodie trained at RADA. Her many stage roles have included Rose in *Fences* for which she was nominated for Best Actress in the 2014 WhatsOnStage Awards. For her performance as Esther in *Intimate Apparel* at Park Theatre, she was nominated for Best Actress at the 2014 London Evening Standard Theatre Awards, as well as a 2015 Olivier Award nomination for Outstanding Achievement In An Affiliate Theatre. That same year garnered her an additional Olivier nomination for Outstanding Achievement In An Affiliate Theatre for her performance as Makeda in *The House That Will Not Stand* at the Tricycle Theatre. In 2017 she earned a Best Actress nomination at the UK Theatre Awards for her portrayal of Willetta Mayer in *Trouble In Mind*. Television includes the role of Ella in two series of *Sherlock* and Agatha Wilson in the Sky One adaptation of *The All Souls Trilogy- A Discovery of Witches*.

CLEAN BREAK changes lives and changes minds through theatre – on stage, in prison and in the community. It 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, Katherine Chandler, Deborah Bruce, Lin Coghlan, E V Crowe, Vivienne Franzmann, Tanika Gupta, Katie Hims, Sam Holcroft, Theresa Ikoko, Lucy Kirkwood, Chloë Moss, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Winsome Pinnock and Rebecca Prichard.

Recent success for the company has included receiving a Tonic Award for its dedication to changing women's lives through theatre and commitment to new writing. *Thick as Thieves* by Katherine Chandler, the company's first co-production with Theatr Clwyd premiered on 17 October 2018, before a tour of UK theatre and prison tour. Other activity during 2018 has included Alice Birch's *[BLANK]* - a co-commission with National Theatre Connections (which was performed by young people around the UK and at the National Theatre); 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*.

The Company is led by a newly appointed three women leadership team; Joint Artistic Directors, **Anna Herrmann** and **Róisín McBrinn**, and Executive Director **Erin Gavaghan**.

PATRON LIST

Zawe Ashton
Lord Paul Boateng
Dame Carmen Callil DBE
Dame Judi Dench DBE
Sharon Duncan Brewster
Sir Richard Eyre CBE
Barbara Hosking CBE
Baroness Helena Kennedy QC
Lucy Kirkwood
Kevin McGrath OBE
Ann Mitchell, Hon.Doc.of Arts UEL

Tanya Moodie
Sonali Naik QC
Yve Newbold LLB
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Dr Joan Scanlon
Baroness Vivien Stern CBE
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