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For Immediate Release

Two Theatre Royal Plymouth co-productions win Fringe First Awards at Edinburgh

Two Theatre Royal Plymouth co-productions have been announced as winners of the prestigious Scotsman Fringe First Awards, recognising new writing at the Edinburgh Festival.

Laura Horton's ***Breathless*** and Tabby Lamb's ***Happy Meal*** are being presented with awards today (12 August).

The Fringe Firsts have been recognising outstanding new writing at the festival since 1973.

Breathless and *Happy Meal* are among just six shows to have been awarded this prize in the first week of this year's festival. More winners will be announced next Friday (19 August).

About *Breathless*, Sally Stott, one of the critics on the judging panel said: "*Laura Horton's sensitive and sharply observed script, based on her own experiences of hoarding clothes, is beautifully performed by Madeleine MacMahon, who embodies her character like a tailormade dress. The illusion of 'normality' that Sophie, sizzling with self-doubt, is desperately trying to maintain is coming apart at the seams – the irony being that she only feels 'in control' when she's out of control. Choosing to see the savings that come from buying designer second hand clothes, rather than the cost, she's a complicated, compulsive creation that it's a thrill and a horror to shop with. 'Haven't we all got a bit too much?' she at one point asks. Of course, for many of us the answer is yes.*"

On *Happy Meal*, Fringe First Awards judge Joyce McMillan said: "*Happy Meal tells the story of Bette and Alex, two transgender teenagers who find one another on the internet, become close friends, but then experience whole worlds of estrangement, as relatively middle-class Alex makes a transition to student life as Alec, while Bette struggles to come out as trans to anyone except her online best friend. Played out on a witty set by Ben Stones that fully captures the intensity of the online life of 21st century teenagers, Happy Meal features two gorgeous performance from Allie Daniel and Sam Crerar; in a simple one-hour tale of young love made complicated by society's attitudes to shifting gender, but now free enough to find a true happy ending, to the cheers of the Traverse audience.*"

James Mackenzie-Blackman, Chief Executive of Theatre Royal Plymouth, said: *“There are 3,171 shows at the Fringe this year and annually there are around 24 Fringe Firsts awarded so for us to get any, let alone, two is utterly fantastic.*

“These beautiful new plays that celebrate diverse, young, emerging talent are great examples of the future direction I want to take the theatre programme in The Drum.”

Both shows will be staged in The Drum at Theatre Royal Plymouth this Autumn, following their successes at Edinburgh.

ENDS

For further information please contact the Media and Communications team on public.relations@theatreroyal.com / 01752 230439

Theatre Royal Plymouth (TRP) is a registered charity providing art, education and community engagement in Plymouth and across the region. It engages and inspires with the aim of touching lives. Theatre Royal Plymouth presents a year-round programme of world class productions on all scales as the South West’s principal centre for performing arts.

Theatre Royal Plymouth works with partners to understand the challenges people face accessing the arts, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged people. It creates pathways that are genuinely accessible to those who might otherwise never get to engage with the arts. They collaborate to co-create and co-author work that represents the community, creating the space needed for people to tell their story in their own way.

Theatre Royal Plymouth is the UK’s largest regional producing theatre. With a focus on embracing the vitality of new talent and supporting emerging and established artists. It collaborates with a range of partners to provide dynamic cultural leadership for the city of Plymouth.