

TOGETHER WE ARE

# EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

## THE FIFTH STEP

AUDIO INTRODUCTION TRANSCRIPTION

**KATE MOLLESON:** Hello and welcome to The Warm Up, the all-you-need-to-know guide to this year's Edinburgh International Festival. I'm Kate Molleson. Along with the Festival Director Nicola Benedetti and special guests who were involved in the creation of the performance you're about to experience, I'm here to give you extra insights and context to help you enjoy it all the more.

This time, we look at the writer David Ireland's collaboration with the National Theatre of Scotland, *The Fifth Step*. It tells a complex story about men, intimacy and our belief systems. We'll hear from Festival Programmer Emma Hay. But before that, here's our Festival Director, Nicola Benedetti.

**NICOLA BENEDETTI:** So, we're thrilled to be working again this year with National Theatre of Scotland, and this is for a world premiere, which will be featuring on the stage BAFTA award-winning actor Jack Lowden and will be David Ireland's latest work.

Obviously, the collaboration for our festival with National Theatre of Scotland is vitally important. But even more so when it's a brand-new work, and we're very much a part of the creative process.

**EMMA HAY:** Who could say no to a new play by David Ireland? One of the most interesting, smart, funny writers based in Scotland.

David Ireland most recently has had massive success with *Ulster American* and *Cyprus Avenue*, which have really spoken, I think, to aspects of identity or shared identity that people really connect with. His work is very funny, and really excavates some of the uncomfortable parts for ourselves, and I think audiences really find a way into that work. Especially in Scotland, coming from a Northern Irish writer, there's a lot of sense of humour that we share.

*The Fifth Step* is David Ireland's newest work. The piece is about politics, religion, masculinity. It's about two people trying to find their way. A lot of the play references addiction, but beyond that it's really about recovery. It's about the ongoing journey that we have in life that is never a finished work.

Audiences can be very excited about the casting for this one. We have Scottish born Jack Lowden and Sean Gilder in this two-hander, so I think audiences are going to get a very special experience seeing them live onstage. And in the Lyceum Theatre, which is an intimate venue, is going to be pretty special.

I think this will be an easy and accessible play for a lot of people, because it speaks to bigger themes of humanity. So I don't think anyone needs to prepare anything in detail. What National Theatre of Scotland are very successful at doing are telling these contemporary stories that reflect modern life. And if you are someone who lives in Scotland, knows someone who lives in Scotland, has ever been to Scotland, has ever had a friend in trouble, has ever been in trouble themselves and tried to find a way out of that, then there'll be something in here you can connect to.

**KATE MOLLESON:** Festival Programmer Emma Hay there. *The Fifth Step* is on at The Lyceum 21–25 August. It lasts for one hour ten minutes with no interval. Go to [eif.co.uk](http://eif.co.uk) for more details.