

A St George's Theatre Production

# CROSSING THE LINE

Adapted from the novel by Tia Fisher

Our production of Tia Fisher's award-winning novel started life as a scratch performance at St George's Theatre in May last year, as part of Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Director Katie Thompson worked closely with Tia Fisher to develop an excerpt for performance, with input from a youth cohort and dramaturgy support from James McDermott.

The showing received a fantastic reception from an audience made up of young people, teachers, parents, youth workers, theatregoers and industry professionals, and we were able to apply for funding to develop the show that you will see tonight - which has been adapted for the stage by Helena McBurney.

The generous support of funders and donors has allowed us to also provide free school workshops across the tour.

County lines is a significant issue for many young people, particularly those like Erik who are made vulnerable through factors such as bereavement, socioeconomics and isolation. Tia Fisher's novel has been commended for its approach to this subject, and is a Key Stage 3/4 PHSE Curriculum text. We hope that our production further highlights these issues – and helps young people at risk, and those around them, find some hope. Overleaf you will find details of national and regional support networks.



With support from Red Socks Charitable Trust, Adam and Tracy Darling, Melanie Darling and Chadwicks.

## CAST

**Alex Hardie** Erik

**Shyam Patel** Ravi and other characters

**Rachael Cummins** Mum and other characters

**Ralph Prosser** Mr Robinson and other characters

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## PRODUCTION TEAM

**Set Design** Nick Murley

**Costumes** Jacqueline Rose Barker

**Production Manager** James Tully

**Lighting Design** Ollie Duncan

*With thanks to Norwich Theatre*

**Sound / AV** Ben Woods

*With thanks to Norwich Theatre*

**Scenic Artist / Set Build** Richard Matthews

**Staged with support from** Neil Paris and Helen Vine

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## CREATIVE TEAM

**Tia Fisher** Author

**Helena McBurney** Playwright

**Katie Thompson** Director

**Sonny Nwachukwu** Movement Director

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**Stage Management** Florence Mason

**Sound / AV Design** Tom Bryans

*With thanks to Sheringham Little Theatre*

**Producer** Debbie Thompson

**Youth Cohort Rep in the rehearsal room**

Brandon Smith

**Youth Cohort in Great Yarmouth and Sheringham**

20 young people aged 11-16 have co-designed this production.

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**ALEX HARDIE**  
(Erik)

Alex Hardie trained at The Urdang Academy. Recent projects include the BAC Beatbox Academy's award-winning show *Pied Piper: A Hip-hop Family Musical (UK Tour)* where he reprised his role from the 2023/24 tour. Other hip-hop theatre work includes *Frankenstein: How To Make A Monster (UK & ROI Tour, 2022)* and *Unexpected Twist (UK Tour, 2023)*.

Alex has also been part of the internationally acclaimed Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons tribute show 'Big Girls Don't Cry' since 2023. Additional performance credits include work with the Beatbox Academy, Get Gospel, The Gold Vocal Collective, and Folk Dance Remixed across corporate, private, and public events.

A skilled beatboxer, Alex has ranked in the UK's top 16. Other credits include The BRIT Awards (2019), a Baileys Christmas commercial (2023–2025) and *You Bet: On Tour – Christmas Special (2025)*.





**SHYAM PATEL**  
(Ravi and other characters)

Shyam Patel is an actor, writer and deviser who has been working/training as an actor for over 10 years. He has recently graduated from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama's Acting CDT course.

Shyam has had a long history in devising, working with the Ignite Theatre Company to create and perform two physical theatre plays that have toured from Walthamstow to Wales. He was a cast member for Car Crash Productions Saree Stories at Wandsworth Arts Fringe in Summer 2025.

Shyam recently provided dramaturgical support on a support for a short film produced by The Almeida Theatre's Home Stages programme and is currently partnering with other creatives to write and develop a short film alongside the Image of Christ community. With his love of comics and cartoons, Shyam is also developing his own portfolio of creations from superhero animated series to autobiographical theatre.



**RACHAEL CUMMINS**  
(Mum and other characters)

Rachael is originally from Norfolk. Her theatre credits include *Alligators* (Westacre Theatre Company) *The Case of The Three Eyed Elephant*, *Ding Dong*, *Absent Friends* and *It's Her Turn Now* (Sheringham Little Theatre), *Beauty and the Beast* (The Fisher Theatre), *Sharing is Caring* (Big Sister Theatre), *Animal Farm* (Worcester Swan Theatre), *Cinderella* (The Corn Hall Diss and St George's Theatre), *Airswimming* (Westacre Theatre Company), *Emma* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (The Pantaloons), *Elephant*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Dulcie and Walter* (fEAST Theatre), *Cranford* and *Wuthering Heights* (Chapterhouse Theatre).

Rachael is thrilled to be working on this project and is excited to bring it to audiences across East Anglia.





**RALPH PROSSER**  
(Mr Robinson and other characters)

After graduating from RADA in 2018, Ralph made his theatre debut at the Arcola in 2020 in *Gentlemen*. On film, he has co-starred as a gun-wielding villain in an episode of *Alex Rider* and in Oscar nominated Ari Folman's *Where is Anne Frank*. Earlier this year he also finished filming on an indie feature film directed by John Ferrer.



**TIA FISHER**  
(Author)

Tia Fisher writes books for the rebel teen trapped inside her. She spent her adolescence desperate to escape the confines of a tiny Norfolk village, reading indiscriminately through the shelves of the library where her mum worked; pouring out poems of unrequited love (which she kept private) and protest (which she pinned to the school noticeboard).

Tia writes from middle grade to YA in prose and verse and delivers realistic fiction for young people on important topics that open up big conversations.

*Crossing the Line* (Hot Key Books, 2023) was Tia's debut verse novel; it won the prestigious Carnegie Showers' Choice Medal, voted for by over 30,000 young readers. It also won the UK Literacy Association Award, described by the judges as a 'life-saving book' and is in the 2024 'Read for Empathy' Collection. Her latest book, *Not Going to Plan* (Hot Key Books, August 2025), is a powerful verse novel about sexual consent, unplanned pregnancy and the breaking of taboos.





**HELENA McBURNEY**  
(Playwright)

Helena is an Essex-based writer and dramaturg. She is a co-founder of the queer feminist theatre company, fish in a dress. Her most recent play, *The City for Incurable Women* (★★★★ *The Guardian*, *The Stage*, ★★★★★ *Theatre Weekly*), was about the history of hysteria and medical misogyny, subjects she has been interviewed about on BBC Radio Essex. Upcoming work includes: *The City for Incurable Women* spring tour to Exeter Phoenix, The Wardrobe Theatre, The Swallow Theatre, and HOME Manchester; *bush: a lesbian romcom for two people and a plant* (2026, devised by fish in a dress); and *Crossing the Line* (2026, directed by Katie Thompson, adapted from Tia Fisher's novel). In March 2026, Helena was named a Pleasance Associate Artist along with her fish in a dress co-founders.

Helena is also PhD researcher at King's College London, working on female opera singers who lose their voices in nineteenth century fiction. She teaches modules on Literary Theory and Reading Past, Reading Present. Her work has appeared in the feminist publication *Bluestocking* (2026), the *George Eliot Review* (2026, forthcoming), and in *Walking on the Grass*, *Dancing in the Corridors* (2021). She is a regular lecturer for the Feminist Lecture Program. In June 2026, she will take up a British Council fellowship in Venice researching a project titled *Voices from "Woman-Country"*.





**KATIE THOMPSON**  
(Director)

Katie is delighted to be directing the stage adaptation of Tia Fisher's *Crossing the Line*, following its R&D period last year. Katie is also premiering a site-specific, promenade, adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw* by Mike Poulton at Wolterton Hall for Summer 2026. Katie was an artist on the Mudlarks International Residency with *Complicité* and is currently being mentored by Colchester Mercury Theatre. She recently graduated with an MA in Directing from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Katie's directing credits include: *Forgotten in the Land of Egypt* (London tour), *Weeds* (Norwich Theatre), *Cinderella* (Diss Corn Hall), *Consent* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), *Here Is Home* (Love Light Festival), and *Before It Rains* (Stage@Leeds). Katie produced the project *Rewriting Rural Racism*. She has undertaken residencies at Shakespeare's Globe and *A Play, a Pie and a Pint*. For Sheringham Little Theatre, she has directed *Annie*, *Abigail's Party* and *Season's Greetings*. For St. George's Theatre, she has directed *Cinderella* and *Snow White*



**SONNY NWACHUKWU**  
(Movement Director)

Sonny is a multidisciplinary artist and the artistic director of Gateway Arts. Sonny creates socially relevant, innovative, and accessible work that blends movement, text, and immersive storytelling. His work explores themes of family relationships, identity, and life patterns.

Sonny wrote and directed *Saturn Returns* at the Unlimited Festival (Southbank Centre), which was nominated for a Black British Theatre Award in 2022 and has been the Assistant Director on *9-5 The Musical* (Regional Tour), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Globe Theatre) *Paradis Files* (Graeae), the latter winning an Offie Award for Access. His current project, *The Nursery*, explores fatherhood in the 21st century and the effects of parental neglect.



**IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU NEED SUPPORT AROUND COUNTY LINES, FOR YOURSELF OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, YOU CAN CONTACT THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS.**

**The Joe Dix Foundation is based in Norwich.**

They raise awareness and deepen understanding of the dangers of Child Criminal Exploitation, knife crime, and gang culture in the UK. They are committed to supporting all young people, helping them to make safer choices and lead positive, fulfilling lives. Through education, training, exhibitions, youth work and awareness campaigns, they work to inspire change, build resilience, and create safer communities where every young person can thrive.

[joedixfoundation.co.uk](http://joedixfoundation.co.uk)

**The Children's Society** is a national charity that supports children and young people at risk of exploitation, or who are being exploited, helping to protect them and then rebuild their lives. It works alongside the police, local authorities, the NHS, schools and other organisations to help them identify exploitation and improve their responses to children and young people. They provide advice for professionals working with young people.

[childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit](http://childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit)

**The NSPCC** provides information about what county lines is and how to recognise the signs of possible involvement.

[learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines](http://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines)

**The National Crime Agency** county lines page explains more about county lines and indicators of exploitation in your area, with further links to support agencies.

[www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines)

**Safe4me** has details about support services nationally for young people impacted by child criminal and sexual exploitation. It also has lots of information regarding specific forms of exploitation, understanding trauma, rights and the law and much more.

[safe4me.co.uk/support-services/](http://safe4me.co.uk/support-services/)

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