



THE 2025/26 DEREK JACOBI PLAY WRITING COMPETITION IS NOW OPEN

Win a publishing deal with Stagescripts and a cheque for £250

The prestigious Sir Derek Jacobi Award – named after the NDFFA Patron – is sponsored by Stagescripts (<http://shop.stagescripts.com/>), and is open to the writer of any unpublished, self-penned play that will have been performed in an NDFFA-affiliated festival between 17th May 2025 and 17th May 2026, and has been recommended for submission by the adjudicator.

What do we mean by 'recommended for submission by the adjudicator?'

If you're participating at an NDFFA-affiliated festival with a self-penned play, once the results have been announced, the festival organiser will privately ask the adjudicator which of the self-penned plays are worthy of being entered into the Derek Jacobi competition. At some point soon after, the festival organiser will let you know if yours is one of them. If it is, then please simply complete the entry form below.

COMPLETE THE ENTRY FORM
(<https://forms.gle/ZFhrGeF9ZCMnRrz88>)

The winner will receive:

- A cheque for £250 from Stagescripts
- A publishing deal with Stagescripts
- An engraved trophy
- The offer of doing a 'Rehearsed Reading' at the 2026 National Drama Festival.
- 2 Full Festival Passes for the 2026 National Drama Festival (worth at least £45 each)
- Bottle of champagne

Every other entrant will receive:

- 2 session tickets for the 2026 National Drama Festival

Dates you need to be aware of:

- 17th May 2025 – 17th May 2026: play to have been performed at an NDFA-affiliated festival
- 18th May 2026: submission deadline
- Mid June: winner and all entrants told whether or not they have won. Winner publicly announced.
- July: winner involved in the National Drama Festival

A few other things you need to know ...

- The cost per entry is £20, which must be returned with the Entry Form
- To be valid, the nomination must be recommended by the festival adjudicator, stating that in their view the play is worthy of consideration.
- For the avoidance of doubt, it is the play, not the production, which is being considered.
- Entries will then be considered by a three-person panel (not associated with the NDFA) with a wide experience of playwriting and drama festivals.



Jenny Derbyshire, winner of the 2024/5 Derek Jacobi Playwriting award with 'Shelter', performing the play with Simon Fletcher at the National Drama Festival Studio Spotlight session - July 2025



Jenny receiving her trophy from Chris Chambers of Stagescripts

Shelter is now published on the Stagescripts site
https://www.stagescripts.com/products/shelter?_pos=1&_psq=jenny+derbyshire&_ss=e&_v=1.0

Congratulations to Jenny Derbyshire who won last year's award.

'Shelter' is two-hander set in an Anderson Shelter in Manchester during World War Two. It focuses on a married couple who have sheltered each other from sharing their emotions about their own personal grief and loneliness.

The production won the Isle of Man Easter Festival of Plays (one-act competition). It was nominated for seven awards including Best Actor (which it won for Simon Fletcher), Best Actress, Best Director, Most Dramatic Moment, Best Costume and Make-Up and Outstanding Contribution for Jenny Derbyshire.

The play is the first written by Jenny and was inspired by her family's involvement in both World Wars, and the effect it had on them. Jenny was particularly moved by the 'White Feather' movement and how people with unseen disabilities were treated when turned away from fighting.

"This short play has a satisfying shape and gives a vivid picture of a couple battling their own individual hitherto unspoken conflicts." stated the judging panel.
"Their initial dialogue has the right taut and fractured edge ... the quite touching final moments just avoid teetering over the edge into sentimentality."

The beautifully drawn characters have an inner honesty and their strained relationship is so believable.



The Award Judging Panel
speaking about 'Shelter'.

Congratulations also to

Runner Up: Song Keeper by Jamie Lakritz (Woking)

Highly Commended: Wrong Seat by Adam Wakely (Oxford Drama Network 2024)

Commended: The Address: Google Fourteen by Phil Macken (Maidenhead and Henley Festivals)

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