

**Positive  
Stories  
For  
Negative  
Times**

**Season 2**  
2021/22

Presented by

**WONDER  
FOOLS**

In association with



**Thanks for Nothing**  
by The PappyShow  
with Lewis Hetherington



# THANKS FOR NOTHING

Created by The PappyShow with Lewis Hetherington

Hello there!

Before we begin...

This is a quick letter for you, the person (or people) who will be leading the process on **Thanks For Nothing**. Leading a creative process is such a wonderful job. It's such a difficult job. Thank you for taking it on and making this opportunity for your group!

Everything that follows is for you to use however you want. Read it through first, the whole thing. It will probably not make total sense at first - that's ok. It will probably never make TOTAL sense, as it's all about suggestions, nudges and paths for you to follow, however you want to follow.

We have included a whole process leading you all the way up to making a show. But if you don't have time or resources for that, you can do it your way, pick out some of the ideas that would work for your group and go from there.

Once you've read the whole thing, you can think about how you share it with your group. Perhaps you want to just give them everything as it is? Or perhaps you might choose to offer it bit by bit, if that would make it more accessible and fun? Perhaps you share this letter with them too? It's up to you!

We at The PappyShow are all about collaboration, creating a space where everyone can contribute the way they want to. Someone needs to make that happen though, and that's you!

This process, like any artistic process, will take people into surprising and unexpected corners of their internal emotional landscape, and it's your job to make sure everyone feels safe and secure.

People will be asked to share stories from their lives, but it's really important that people know there is no pressure to share anything they don't want to share. Everyone should only say things they are happy for the group to hear, and potentially include in the show.

Sometimes, when people are asked to share something personal in a rehearsal room they think they have to share something shocking, or surprising. Perhaps this is because people often fear that they are not enough, that they must give more, they must 'dig deep'.... But this is not the case. Everyone is enough, with what they have to give.

In our experience, it is often the little things, the details, the tiny quirks, the domestic rituals, that feel most interesting, surprising and nourishing for us as makers, and for our audiences. If we set an atmosphere of curiosity, of attention and interest, we can find magic in the everyday.

So remind people to take care of themselves and each other. We are not looking to empty people out, but to fill them up. This goes for you too of course! Make sure you take care of yourself! Be sure to think about the people you will go to, to share your thoughts and feelings. Who are the people around you who could be a mentor, a supporting hand, a brain to bounce ideas around with?

Allow yourself to remain open to surprises and discoveries along the way. Try to remember that what we have offered is a series of diving boards, it's up to you how you jump into the water. It is not a strict list which you must laboriously get through, it's an invitation, to create, to think, to play.

ALSO. Though we have not given you a *play*, we want you to **play!** If things feel difficult, how can you make it easier? You will all have to work hard, but never in a way that gets in the way of sparking joy.

We are so excited that you are joining The PappyShow team. We can't wait to see what you've made, to see all the things you're thankful for and how you celebrated that.

You're going to be amazing, we just know it.

The PappyShow.

## CONTENTS

1. A LETTER TO EVERYONE TAKING PART – p5
2. WHAT WE ARE OFFERING YOU - A SUMMARY – p7
3. CREATING – p8
4. SHAPING – p24
5. SHARING – p27
6. A PATH TO PERFORMANCE – p28
7. THINGS YOU'LL NEED – 30

# 1. A LETTER TO EVERYONE

Dear new friends,

Hello! Thanks so much for choosing to work on this piece!

First of all - congratulations! You already have everything you need to make this show! You, the people in this room, are enough. Your ideas, your bodies, and your hopes and fears are everything we need to make this happen.

We, The PappyShow, are always so delighted to welcome new people into the family! We think that the more people, the more ideas, the more energy in a room, means the more exciting, rewarding and eye opening working together will be.

We encourage you to think about that when you're putting together this piece - who else might be interesting to include? Who might bring something into the mix which isn't there at the moment? Who is not in the room who might have something to add? Who can you invite in to work with you?

It is hard to make a performance. It can feel overwhelming. But the thing to do is to trust the process you have here. Trust yourselves and each other. You've got this. Some of the things we ask you to do might seem strange at first, it might not be immediately clear how they are helping you make a show. But we PROMISE you, that getting to know each other, creating an atmosphere where everyone feels safe and happy, like they can be themselves, is VITAL. You can't do anything truly creative without taking care of that.

The show you make will contain only a glimmer of all you experience together, and that's ok! The thing to do is to listen, be kind, take care, and give whatever you can give. No more or less, make sure you look after yourself and contribute in the way that is right for you.

If you have a magical, brave and silly time as you are creating, then that will shine through in the performance, and the people in your audience will be held by that.

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This process is called **Thanks for Nothing**. It's our little joke because we haven't given you a script. But also it's because we wanted to encourage you to explore the notion of being thankful, being grateful.

We did some silly, moving and challenging sessions developing this piece. At first it seemed simple, asking what we are grateful for (puppies! Ice cream! Daffodils!), what we are not grateful for (smelly trains, wet feet, rude people), and how we show we are thankful (a smile, a card, a bunch of flowers).

But as time went on, as we waded out deeper into the water, it became increasingly complicated, and increasingly beautiful. Perhaps especially now, living through a global pandemic, a climate breakdown, with so many people suffering and struggling, it is a strange time to think about being thankful.

When you start to think of the things that you are *really, truly*, thankful for, the people, the family, the friends, the natural world - how do you begin to express that? How do you begin to describe that? It can feel massive....

As filmmaker David Lynch says, you have to wade out deep if you want to catch a big fish.

That's why this is a process, you won't find all the answers, and you're not supposed to. It's the journey to the depths of the ocean and back. It's about finding some ways to think about and feel gratitude, which will maybe stay with you a long time. Maybe when we are no longer in this room together, when we are miles apart, when our bodies have aged and the world has shifted under our feet, something of what we taught each other will stay with us.

So! Let's get going! Together! We can't wait to hear all about what you get up to!

Lots of love,

The PappyShow.



*Photo credits from L-R clockwise: Helen Murray, Alex Brenner, Cesar Mota*

## **2. WHAT WE ARE OFFERING YOU**

### **CREATING: 15 provocations**

These are a mix of questions and challenges and ideas to get you all creating things as a group. They are curious, playful, and most importantly very open in terms of how you can respond and react. We think each provocation should have its own session. You can do them in the order we have suggested or you can change to a different order. You can let the group make choices about the order if that feels right.

### **SHAPING: A toolkit**

These are a series of techniques to help you create a curious and productive space and then to help you shape and choose your material.

Some are big ideas that you will want to use all the time. Others are more of a one off to use occasionally....

### **SHARING: A Path to Performance.**

Each performance of Thanks For Nothing will be very different. It will be shaped and formed by YOUR company, by the stories and lives and hopes and fears of the people in the room who are making it.

But we have created a pathway which you can follow. To help you create material, to help you shape material, and to help you finalise the performance.

The path is there if you need it - but don't be afraid to wonder off, take a detour, change direction entirely. You can always return to the path when you need to.

This performance can be anything. You can use any form that fits your group. There are a few things that every show will include (more on that later), but other than that, follow your instincts. A film, a fashion show, a cabaret, an exhibition. Whatever works for you!



*Photo credit: Alessandra Davison*