

# James Ley Dialogue Trascription

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

youth theatre, lyceum, writer, playwright, feedback, lgbt history month, play, writing, work, commissions, amazing, bookshop, ode, learned, people, scottish, permission, brilliant, mccartney, remember

## SPEAKERS

James

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**J** James 00:01

I'm James Ley, I'm a playwright and living in Glasgow. I've written a number of plays, including a play called, 'WILF' that was at the Traverse a couple of years ago. And, 'Ode to Joy (How Gordon Got to Go to the Nasty Pig Party)', which was at Summerhall.

**J** James 00:16

Yeah, I actually got commissioned by LGBT History Month, actually, like in 2016, to write a play called, 'Love Song to Lavender Menace' about Scotland's first queer bookshop. That was like, huge for me to have that time, like I was able to give up the day job for a while, and focus on writing a play. And, it came with like permission from the organisation, and I remember the person Michael Lee Richardson, who gave me the opportunity was like, "there's permission to fail". And I think that was really important, and it's definitely - writers need that permission to fail. That's so important, as part of our practice. It was taken on by David Greig at the Lyceum and put in the Lyceum studio. So like, yeah, I have that kind of intense period of my life in about, I'm just gonna say about 2016, which was like totally transformative. When I went from having done like a couple of things, A Play, A Pie and A Pint, and stuff into getting more commissions and really launching as a playwright.

**J** James 00:16

Yeah, I think in line with the workshop I've been doing today, I've been like, I keep going on about it doesn't need to be good. And I think there's a long period of the writing process where it doesn't need to be good. And I think it's taken me a very long time to understand that like my playwriting- mentor, Nicola McCartney would always say, it's a drafting process, we work in this drafting process. And yeah, I think that's really important. When I'm assessing my own work, I really assess like, did I finish it? Is it finished? Do I have a whole thing that I can have some

thoughts on and pass to the next person to like, give me some feedback. I think you have to get used to, as a writer, to sharing this embryonic unfinished thing with the person who paid for it, and then you work out how to make it good together.

**J** James 02:08

Somebody that you think gives really brilliant feedback. I've worked with amazing like dramaturgs and script editors. And someone, yeah, that you trust, that you vibe with what they're saying about your work that you know, it's kind of fair. And definitely people that like, give hope and say good things - like people that kind of say, "Nah, you're not onto something there", they're not good at giving feedback. I think scratch nights can be brilliant. I, for a long time, worked with and was one of the like, main people running the Village Pub Theatre, and that was all about writer development. It was all about putting work on, in front of an audience and finding out how audiences felt about it. Then you get like, the best kind of feedback, which is like, if you want it to be funny, you'll know was it funny or not? Did it move people and you'll get that really nice, like unthreatening feedback over a drink afterwards, which is like, so valuable. You know, it's something that writers get much later in their careers. And yeah, scratch nights are a brilliant way to like, get there.

**J** James 03:14

I remember going, when I was a teenager in St. Andrews, doing youth theatre and I auditioned for SYT. Had an amazing time - it completely changed from something that was like, I was interested in doing am-dram and stuff that I was like, actually, I really want to do this. I learned so much from doing Scottish Youth Theatre and the people that I was working with. Amazing people, amazing tutors, amazing other participants. And yeah, it was just fantastic. It gave me confidence. I learned things that I still use, ways of focusing and ways of working. Yeah, and just the kind of energy and passion that you need to bring was all, the foundations of that was all from during Scottish Youth Theatre.