

Close Enough to Touch

Sound Designer

call out:

Writer: Henry Roberts

Directed by: Cheryl Martin

Dramaturgy: Alex Mitchell

Red Ladder and Silent Uproar would like to invite Sound design interest for our co-production touring in autumn 2026 and spring 2027.

The piece is called ***'Close Enough To Touch'***. We showcased the work as a rehearsed reading at Leeds Conservatoire in July 2025 as part of their Festival of Theatre, and the presentation went down a storm.

The play:

This young man is much like any other. He has a girlfriend, he's looking for work... Oh, and he spends his free time cruising in men's toilets.

Henry Roberts' one-person play is a funny, intimate and raw look at the pleasures and pains of desire. Exploring hidden longing and secret shames, this witty, intimate script asks how long we can keep a secret... before the world catches up. The play previously performed at Theatre 503 in London and the script was longlisted in the RSC's 37 Plays project.

A show about sex, heartbreak... and toilets.

"Roberts' writing is poetic, witty, and engaging ... a raw, empathetic, and intelligent piece on the challenges we still face with the ambiguity of our sexuality and the added complexity regarding our

*relationship to masculinity. I didn't want it to end; I wanted more." - A Youngish Perspective, ******

"The plot is carefully navigated, and Roberts' writing does an exceptional job of knowing exactly what the audience wants and when they want it ...

Close Enough to Touch unravels a world that most may not even know exists and delivers brilliantly.

We flowed with the emotions of the piece and were involved in Roberts' creation where the stakes felt almost as important to us as they were to him." -

Adventures in Theatreland

From Director Cheryl Martin:

The controlling words for me about how things should look and feel are from the writer, Henry Roberts: “filthy gorgeous”. To me it feels as if usual expectations of the different spaces are reversed: the toilets are a space charged with erotic possibility, filled with excitement and anticipation and the best kind of suspense – will they find someone and connect? The smells of stale male piss are enticing; the dark corners a playground.

It is in those toilets that M [the only character onstage] can be most truly himself. This is the most important world, the one in dreamscape technicolour. I don’t mean 50s widescreen movie Technicolor, I mean that this is the world that is most present for him. This is the world he yearns for. Other places, people, aren’t in such sharp focus – they’re secondary. He doesn’t feel them. He *tries* to feel them. But the playground is where

he really lives. And all the design should reflect that.

That said, I think this is more abstract than real. There might be flashes of reality, but I don't think we need a realistic men's toilet, for instance. It should feel organic, analogue: it works through the emotions; it's not mechanical. It's set right now, but there are some flashbacks in the monologue, say to when the speaker is seven years younger – when he meets his girlfriend or to earlier moments in the relationship. And if there is a fourth wall at all, it is porous.

From Executive Producer Chris Lloyd:

Sound – we are thinking that there will, quite possibly, be an underscore throughout the piece helping to transport our protagonist from setting to setting, along with light and visuals, constantly setting the tone to help create the atmospheres of the different locations.

Specifics:

It is a one person show

We're touring mid-October to early November 2026 and, also, for a short burst in February 2027

- Rehearsals start w/b 21 September 2026
- Production week will be w/b 12 October 2026
- Show opens at Waterside in Sale on Friday 16 October 2026
- The piece takes us in to a number of different locations.
- We will be touring in a medium wheelbase van with the actor and one technician and the majority of performances will be one or two nighters in studio theatres and non-traditional spaces so we are look for designs that are transformational but, at the same time, flexible and 'user friendly' enough to fit in to a range of venues. We will tour all set, props, costumes,

sound and LX equipment so designs need to have this in mind.

- We will also be aiming to hit AT LEAST basic – hopefully Intermediate - in the Theatre Green Book rating for the show.
- In addition we are looking at the positioning of a captions screen within/without the design so creative solutions are always welcome!
- It is always our intention to facilitate opportunities for students, and recent graduates and/or technical enthusiasts. With this in mind we may well link up the successful designer with an entry level creative to walk alongside them during the process. Quite how this works in practice is, most certainly, up for debate!

We are also holding an R & D week (w/b 22 June 2026) and are looking at a half day on Friday 26 June 2026 to which we'd like to invite

you for a short sharing of work in progress followed by a discussion on the design concepts and ideas with the team, writer and actor so it would be great if the selected designers can join us for that. Please let us know if you are available for this and, if not, is there another day that week where you can join us.

An additional day rate and travel will be paid for that session

Red Ladder will be the contracting party and we work under the ITC Fair Work Agreements and the associated rates including day rates, travel and subsistence

To express your interest please email chris@redladder.co.uk with links to your portfolio

and, also, use that address if you have any queries we haven't addressed in this call out.

**Deadline for interest/submissions Friday 29
May 2026.**

**We are hoping to arrange interviews early June
2026 on Zoom**

A copy of the script can be made available on
request