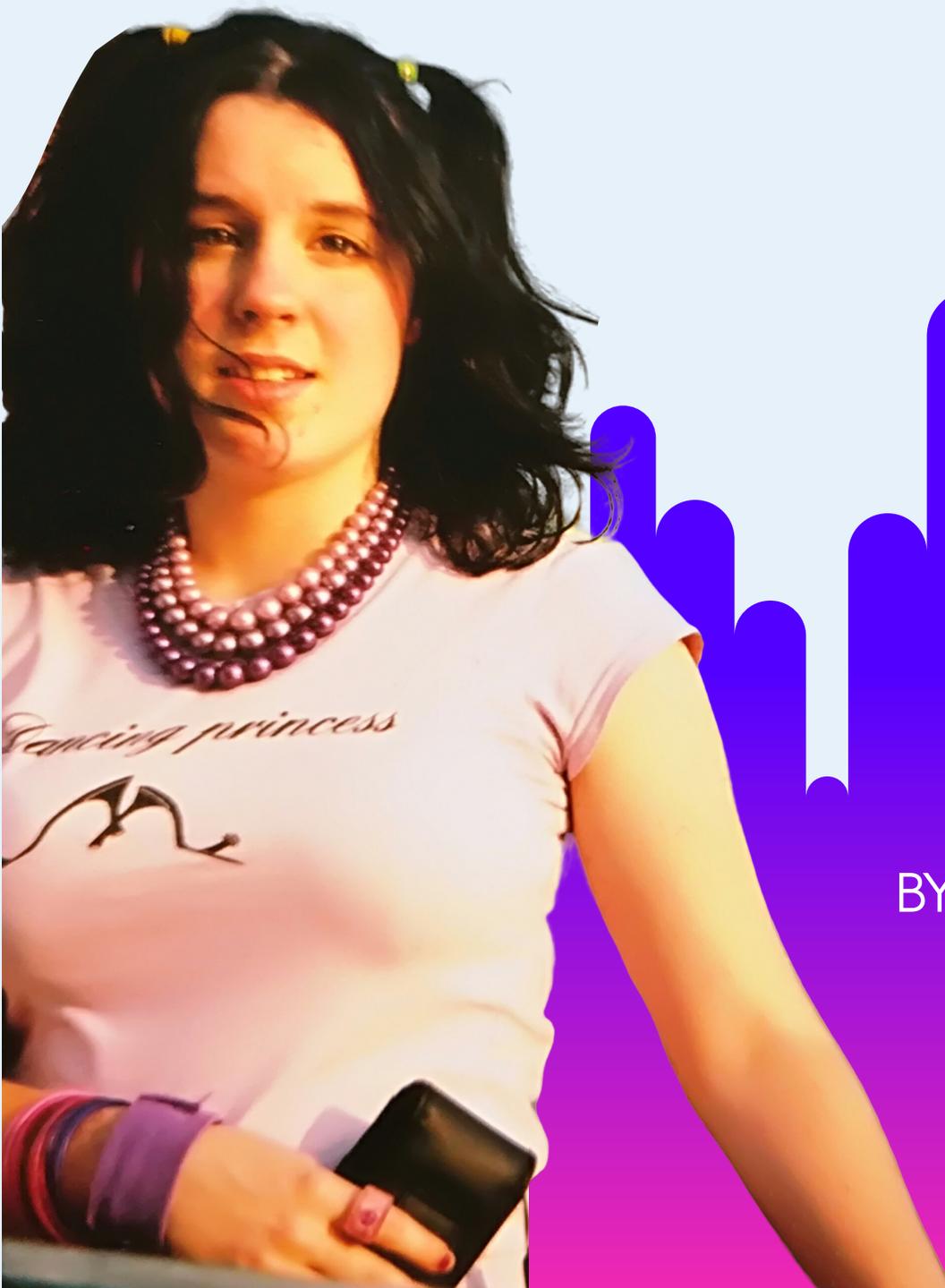


A GLIMPSE INSIDE...

# HASBIAN

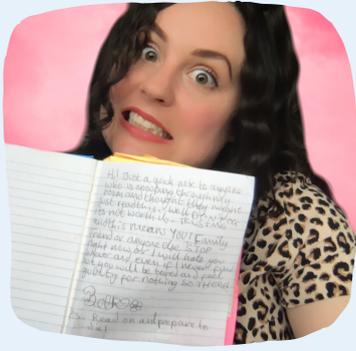
& *Queer Diary*



BY **BETH WATSON**

@hasbianshow  
#hasbian  
#QueerDiary

# About Me



I'm Beth, the writer/performer of *Hasbian* and host of *Queer Diary*. I'm a performer, deviser & facilitator with a special interest in gender & LGBTQ+ representation in performing arts.

I'm the founder and co-director of **Bechdel Theatre CIC**, and a founding member of **The Family Jewels** drag king collective. *Hasbian* is my first solo performance project.

I'm a collaborator by nature, so I'm thrilled to finally have funding to start bringing together a team to work on *Hasbian* and *Queer Diary* - a project I've mostly been working on by myself, entirely self-producing and self-funding until now.

## The Work So Far

In **2018** I took part in a night called *Dear Diary*, where people were invited to read their teenage diaries live on stage. I volunteered, thinking it might be a laugh. I had even more fun doing it than I expected, and was encouraged by audience responses to develop my diaries into a full-length show, which became *Hasbian*.

I spent **2019** working on the *Hasbian* script, scratching it at venues from fringe theatres to queer cabaret spaces, from comedy nights to storytelling afternoons. I tested a 45 minute version of the show at Omnibus Theatre, and had support from a dramaturg and director who helped me shape the script into an hour-long piece.

**I was booked to debut the show in Summer 2020** at Omnibus and Camden People's Theatre, and had not yet submitted my ACE application for those performances when they were cancelled in March.

While developing *Hasbian*, I was keen to create space for other LGBTQ+ people to feel the thrilling combination of adrenaline and nostalgia that comes with sharing something personal on stage. I wanted to give more queer people time to collectively reflect on and own their narratives.

Based on differing responses of queer and straight audience members to my own diary entries, I sensed it would be valuable to create a space that centred LGBTQ+ experiences. I also know my experience is not representative of the 'average' queer coming-of-age experience (there's no such thing as 'normal!'), so was eager to platform stories different from my own.

**In 2020 I started hosting online events called *Queer Diary*.** *QD* aims to replicate the experience I had in 2018, but with a queer focus. From April - September 2020 I hosted *Queer Diary* on a LGBTQ+ community Zoom channel called QAF Space, with participants and audience members covering a huge range of experiences, backgrounds, and ages, Zooming in from across the world.

*Queer Diary* events in 2020 raised money for LGBTQ+ run charities and organisations, with a focus on youth, community, and education.

**In 2021 I've been offered an ACE project grant to R&D this project.** I'm extremely excited that this funding will enable me to hire a producer at the exact point where I'm ready to hand over the role of producing to a more experienced producer than myself, so I can focus on my jobs as writer/performer of *Hasbian*, and host of *Queer Diary*.

# Aims of the R&D

## March - May 2021

**The main aim of this R&D is to build a team and develop a shared working language.**

Other key goals include:

- Developing **new design elements** of *Hasbian* (original animations and sound), experiment with how it might be adapted to be performed IRL under social-distancing, and consider how elements of the whole project might continue to exist and grow in online spaces.
- Generating **material to share** online and on stage: animations, original audio, and marketing imagery. We will aim to share something live for an invited audience at the end of the process: to test out new online ideas/socially distanced elements of in-person performance, or a combination of both.
- Making this work **more accessible and welcoming to more people**. We'll trial ways to make it more inclusive for audience members and participants with varying access requirements, and figure out how to create the most fun and supportive environment, especially for new audiences/participants.
- Continuing work that began in 2020, building and further **opening up a community around *Queer Diary***.
- Thinking about **how to integrate *Hasbian* and *Queer Diary*** as interconnected parts of a whole project, whilst clearly distinguishing between the different experiences of attending each of these events as an audience member.

# HASBIAN

**noun:**

**a former lesbian who has "become" heterosexual or bisexual;**

A new autobiographical comedy by Beth Watson, dripping in equal measures with heartfelt earnestness, sharp irony, and humour that bubbles up in the place between youthful confidence and pubescent self-doubt.

*Hasbian* uses real teenage diaries, early 00s music, and teen movie actors to tell a story of growing up in Brighton (the UK's Gay Capital) under Section 28 (the 1988 - 2003 law prohibiting the teaching of homosexuality as a "pretended family relationship").

May 13th 2002 11:06pm

I'm a bit confused about this whole lesbian thing (again) because as much as doing anything **rude** with a boy grosses me out, I am still attracted to some of them.

I dunno if it's just a fear of something I know nothing about.

I might even like boys once I get the chance.

**WATCH A VIDEO**

FROM EARLY

**HASBIAN 'SCRATCH'**

PERFORMANCES

# Feedback on 'Hasbian'

"Excellent, **genuine rapport with the audience**. Honest and highly personal experience of growing up LGBTQ+"

"Visually superb. A Pandora's box of **delightful personal gems**."

"There were **retro party snacks**. We were **a parade**. I remember everyone at school sucked except your besties."

"A **romp through complex sexuality**, music, desire and drama."

"A **celebration of bisexuality**, and a representation of how difficult it is to identify yourself as bi when **bi-erasure is real**."

"An **amazing** show about **self-discovery** and **sexual identity** recounted through **a real teenage diary** (with all names changed to 00's icons to protect the innocent)"

"A **bisexual Wizard of Oz** for the early internet generation."

"Beth is **brilliant with the audience**.

I learnt loads about 1990's/00's teen culture."

"I am straight but this brought up so many **teenage memories**."

"As a bisexual who grew up in a similar time period this felt **so relatable**, and brought up the same fear/insecurities as I had. However, growing up in London I did not have the same confidence; so I feel like **I experienced what it could have been like growing up with more confidence** in my non-straight sexuality"





Top Secret

# Queer Diary ♥

OMG

Would you read yours?



BRING YOUR TEENAGE DIARIES, POETRY, LOVELETTERS,  
FANFIC, SHORT STORIES, SONGS & DRAWINGS  
TO SHARE WITH A ROOM FULL OF FRIENDLY QUEERS

## QUEER DIARY

The evening where LGBTQIA+ folx look back on our teenage angst (and joy, dreams, follies, and fabulousness) in a nostalgic dreamworld, where adult troubles melt like lemon-drops as we remember what was obsessing us all those years ago.

A room of has-been goths, punks, emos, nerds, glee-clubbers (and possibly a few populars) unite as grown-ups, and escape cis-het-normativity by sharing our younger selves' innermost secrets in the form of...

- Cringy Diary Entries
- Embarrassing Poetry
- Angsty Songwriting
- Thirsty Fanfic
- GCSE Artwork
- Heartfelt Loveletters

**DOWNLOAD THE QUEER DIARY ZINE**

# Feedback from 'Queer Diary' Online



"A **fun, friendly** sharing where we can pretend to be shocked at everyone else's **adolescent high jinks**. Very welcoming to all identities."

"It'll prove that you weren't as weird as you thought you were - or that **we're all as weird as each other**."

"It's like the **'Mortified'** podcast, but **all queer!!**"

"**Funny, inclusive, involving**"

"SO GOOD! Nice variance in tone, very **heartwarming** and **relatable**."

"I liked the ease of the Zoom space and being able to see everyone's reactions to the readings... the **'MSN messenger' feel of the group chat was comfortable**."

"The zoom space was convenient and it **felt like everyone was really getting involved**. The way that everyone could comment live was great!"

"Not all of the readers were necessarily confident at public speaking but being on a webchat made it feel much more **supportive** and less intimidating, the **warmth** in sharing was lovely."

"I really appreciated the **accessibility** of the online space. Loved the **range** of readers"

"I loved getting the insight into other people's teenage lives, simultaneously **similar** and **different** to my own.... **the feeling of 'we're all in this together'**."