

# THIS IS CROYDON

## OUR STORIES

Photo: Chris O'Donovan for Croydon Council.

## ELGIN EDISON

### YOUNG PRODUCER, CROYDONITES

As part of *This is Croydon*, London Borough of Culture 2023, Croydon Music and Arts ran an open access **Young Producers** programme. Partnering with local arts organisations, it brought paid opportunities to 16–25 year-olds, opening pathways into the creative industries. On the back of its success, the programme continued, with eight paid traineeships in 2024-25.

#### IN NUMBERS

##### Young Producers programme

Croydon Music and Arts

During London Borough of Culture:

**16** young people were placed

**50%** were from the Global Majority

We caught up with **Elgin Edison**, who took part in the scheme during London Borough of Culture. He was placed with Croydonites, an annual theatre festival, run by Anna Arthur and Katie Hurley. Elgin shares his thoughts on the opportunity and how the placement boosted his confidence and connections.

##### Set the scene for us. What were you doing before joining Croydonites?

I graduated in July 2022. I worked in my Students' Union as Vice President for a year and was then in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe doing an improv comedy show. I did the application for Croydonites in September 2023.

### What prompted you to apply to work with Croydonites as a Young Producer?

I was really into the Croydon scene – I'd just joined Savvy, a community theatre company at Fairfield Halls, and that was my first time really engaging with the people of Croydon. So, I was looking up what else was going on and following all these pages on Instagram. I saw that Croydonites was looking for a Young Producer, and threw out an application, not expecting much. It was very spontaneous.

### What did you like about this role in particular?

I got to see every show for free! My exposure to theatre was previously all West End stuff. Outside of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, I didn't really go out and see different theatre. I got to see spoken word, short films, and real dramatic stuff that I wouldn't seek out otherwise. I was like "Whoa, there's actually more to theatre than musicals".



Croydonites Festival, SLIDE: Lukasz Izdebski

### How would you describe your relationship with the Croydonites team?

I really enjoyed working with Katie and Anna. I didn't know much going in, I had no clue what it would be like. They were so supportive and gave me confidence that I could do the role. They really wanted me to succeed.

### Tell us more about that confidence boost.

Having the support of the Croydonites team and being able to perform the job well taught me that I can do anything as long as I really give it a go and believe in myself. I could get very shy talking to people. After meeting business owners all over Croydon and talking to audiences during the festival, I realised how much my confidence had grown.



Croydonites Festival, Abandoman: Lukasz Izdebski

### What opportunities has the experience led to?

One of the Croydonites directors, Katie, was like, "Elgin, there's this opportunity at the National Theatre". It was a one-week 'How to Be a Producer' course where award-winning producer, Ellie Keel, teaches you what's involved - how to get funding, how to write applications, how to network, how to create a show. I found out later that 200 people applied and only 24 got in. So yeah, I was at the National Theatre and got to meet loads of creative people.

### Did you find Croydonites prepared you for that experience?

I was initially terrified as everyone seemed much more accomplished than me. Many were professional actors, directors and producers, and had worked on several shows. I felt a strong sense of imposter syndrome, but knew I was there for a reason. It was a nice way to connect with a different group of people. My background is clinical pharmacology, and then I worked in higher education. So, Croydonites has led to me making meaningful connections with lots of people in the arts.

### What's next?

The year inspired me to create more and perform where I can. Performing stand-up comedy and improv is one of the scariest things I have done, but I have become much more comfortable. I'm currently studying at UCL and, outside of my studies, I take part in an improv group with friends.

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