

Unfolding Theatre

Annual Report 2012



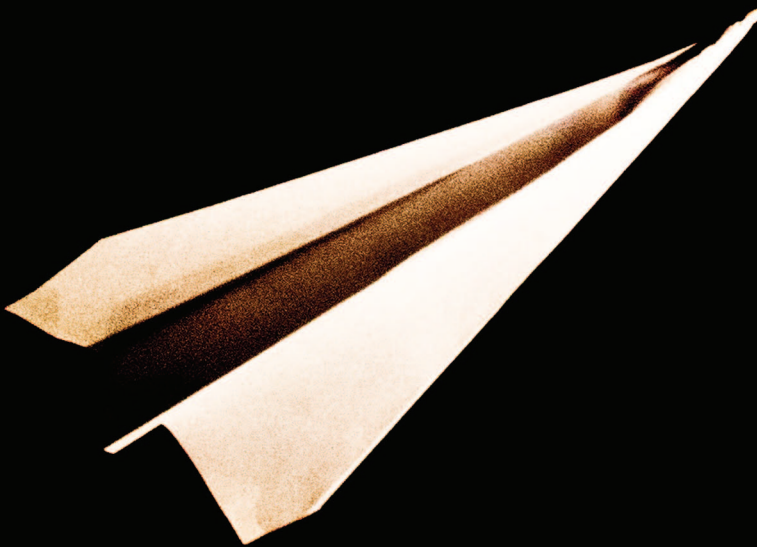
We make theatre with a wild sense of humour, strength of character and a delight in bringing people together.

We tour to theatres and festivals across the UK (and beyond) and create site-specific performances. Past productions include the award-winning *Building Palaces* and *Best in the World*.

An audience member recently said to us, "Seeing Unfolding Theatre isn't like seeing a normal show. It's like having an experience." We liked her description.

Inventive, ambitious participation projects fuel our creativity. We work with people of different ages and life experiences to create new performances, artworks and films. Many of these projects inspire the creative development of our touring shows.

Artistic Director, Annie Rigby, and Producer, Leyla Asadi founded Unfolding Theatre in 2008. We collaborate with some of the most talented and imaginative artists we know. We are based at Foundry Lane Studios in Ouseburn, Newcastle upon Tyne.



Artistic Director's report

2012 was a year full of firsts for Unfolding Theatre.

We toured nationally for the first time with *Best in the World*, presented in association with Northern Stage. We toured to venues and festivals known for presenting the best in new British theatre, including Battersea Arts Centre and Latitude Festival. The show received great national press and audience feedback, helping us achieve our goal of building a strong national reputation for Unfolding Theatre.

We presented *Best in the World* at our first ever Edinburgh Festival. We were selected to be part of Northern Stage's flagship venue, St Stephen's, showcasing the best new theatre from the North of England. The show was live-streamed as part of BBC and Arts Council's digital channel, The Space. We were proud to be named as Total Theatre Awards Best Emerging Company finalists.

2012 was a great year for strengthening creative relationships at home in the North East. We collaborated with Juice Festival for the second time to create *Dragons Parade*. We got romantic with Tyneside Cinema by turning High Friar Lane into a *Valentine's Ballroom*. We produced *Let Me Tell You* for the third time at Eldon Square, Newcastle. These projects helped us deepen our roots, and achieve our goal of being a well-loved company regionally.

The year was topped off when regular collaborator, xsite architecture's Tim Bailey, invited us to move into their building, Foundry Lane Studios. We love our new company home, surrounded by architects, coffee roasters and designers.

2012 was our biggest year yet. We shared 64 performances with 3,627 audience members, worked with 1,465 participants and employed 37 artists and technicians. Thank you to everyone who made this possible: our collaborators, commissioners, funders, the theatres and festivals where we performed, our advisory group, and most of all, our audiences and participants. You helped make 2012 a year of new adventures and growth for Unfolding Theatre.

Looking forward to 2013, we're re-touring *Best in the World*, creating a new show in Port Elizabeth, South Africa with Swallows Foundation and co-directing new show *Live Witness* for Live Theatre. We return to Battersea Arts Centre to begin work on our next production, an adaptation of Alessandro Baricco's novel, *Lands of Glass*.

Annie Rigby
Artistic Director



2012 projects

Best in the World

“A superbly poignant and introspective piece of theatre, a small gift to its audience that resounds with a gentle greatness.”

Total Theatre

Best Emerging Company Finalist

Performer, Alex Elliott took audiences on a hilarious, heart-warming and occasionally heroic journey. Through the noble sport of darts, he asked the unfathomable question, “What does it mean to be best in the world?”

Best in the World was our first national tour. We toured to Northern Stage, Battersea Arts Centre, Harrogate Theatre, The Pomegranate (Chesterfield), Rosehill Theatre (Whitehaven), Oxford Playhouse, Latitude Festival, ARC Stockton and Arts Centre Washington (who won the tour darts league with the highest audience 3-dart average).

“There can only be one word for it: magic theatre.”

★ ★ ★ ★

Guardian

Best in the World was selected by Northern Stage for their flagship Edinburgh Festival venue, St Stephen's. Performing at our first Edinburgh Fringe Festival was an incredible experience. It helped us grow as a company by sharing our show with new audiences, artists and promoters. We attracted bookings for a 2013 tour as well as great reviews and press coverage.

Participation projects ran alongside the show, giving disadvantaged young people space to consider their own achievements and aspirations. Kylee House Secure Children's Unit made a film for the Wonders of the North Festival a group of young people in care created a performance in Sunderland and we collaborated with writer Dave Chapple, on a piece by young people from Lakes College, Cumbria



Supported by ARC Stockton and Arts Centre Washington, The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation and The 43 Fund.





Let Me Tell You

"It made me look at me, for the first time in years."

Carer and project participant

Let Me Tell You explores the possibility of change, taking visitors on a journey from recovering addicts' past, through a precarious present, and into hopes for the future. We first developed the artwork with recovering addicts in Stockton in 2010. The experience was so powerful, we continued to develop *Let Me Tell You*, building new and long-term creative relationships over the last 3 years.

In 2012 we worked with The Cyrenians Recovery Centre, and carers of addicts through NERAF. We were proud to present their work in Eldon Square, Newcastle, to 865 visitors over 12 days.

Visitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with moving feedback from passers-by, some struggling with addiction themselves. We hosted two work placements to recovering addicts. We acted as a referee for one, and she is now in full-time employment.



LOTTERY FUNDED



northern rock foundation



FOUNDATION

Dragons Parade



"It's like they've unleashed some imagination in me, and it was like seeing your imagination come to life."

Pupil

Ryton Junior School

We were delighted to work with Juice Festival for the second time on their festival finale parade. Annie and designer, Molly Barrett, worked with Ryton Juniors and Wingrove Primary School to design large-scale puppets. Accompanied by young musicians led by Rob Kitchen and The Sage Gateshead, families followed the trail of three baby dragons in search of their mother. Found on the top deck of the River Escapes ferry, over 800 people waved the dragons goodbye as twilight fell and they sailed down the Tyne.



Valentine's Ballroom

"Sweet, lovely, original!"

Visitor

We had a lovely time collaborating with Tyneside Cinema to transform High Friar Lane into a *Valentine's Ballroom*. Passers-by picked their favourite love-song, stayed for a dance and then wandered back into the night. A gorgeous night had by all.

Other projects

"For something that must have been about eight minutes long, it's an incredibly powerful bit of work."

Andrew Haydon

Postcards From the Gods

Annie performed as part of Daniel Bye's *Six O'Clock News* at Edinburgh Festival. Her piece, based on her brother's holiday to Syria, was performed again at Live Theatre's Theatre Uncut event.

Annie collaborated with writer, Amy Mackelden on *8 Fatal Mistakes of Online Dating*. She was part of a team of computer programmers, musicians and young people who created new performance piece, *Triggershift*. She spoke at events, including a panel discussion on making theatre with non-professional performers at The Sage Gateshead with RSC Artistic Director, Michael Boyd and writer, Bonnie Greer.

Company development

Staff

Many of the delights of 2012 came about through the 37 talented artists and technicians we employed. We are proud of the positive feedback we received from them and of building a pool of such talented and trusted regular collaborators.

Advisory group

Our Advisory Group continues to be a source of ideas, wisdom and support. Susan Coffey was re-elected as a company director, alongside Annie Rigby and Anna Disley, at Unfolding Theatre's 2012 AGM.



Company base

We are very happy in our new company home at Foundry Lane Studios in Ouseburn, Newcastle upon Tyne, with a great set of architects, designers and coffee roasters as neighbours.

Our online presence has grown with increased website visitors, over 1,600 Twitter followers and *Best in the World* presented on the BBC and Arts Council's digital channel, The Space.

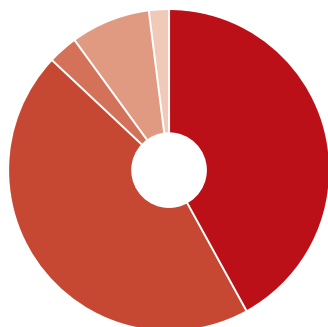
Supporters

We were successful in a bid to Arts Council's Catalyst strategic fund, as part of a consortium of touring companies led by The Empty Space. It enables us to develop our fundraising capacity. We kicked off our Catalyst programme with our first ever crowd-funding campaign, successfully supporting us to take *Best in the World* to Edinburgh. Thank you to everyone who supported us.

Thank you to the trusts and foundations who made amazing projects possible in 2012, including BIG Lottery Awards for All, Greggs Foundation, Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, The 43 Fund (via The Community Foundation) and Sir James Knott Trust. Thank you to Arts Council of England for supporting *Best in the World* through Grants for the Arts.

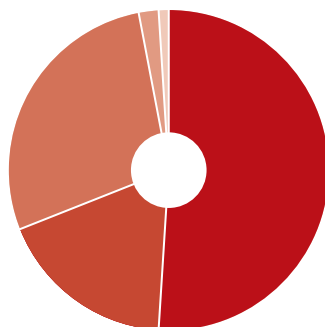
Finance

2012 Company income **£79,727**



- Earned Income **£33,647**
- Arts Council funding **£36,157**
- Other public funding **£2,500**
- Trusts & Foundation funding **£6,125**
- Individual Giving **£1,298**

2012 Company expenditure **£82,177**



- Artists & production staff **£41,641**
- Director's salary **£15,089**
- Project costs **£22,796**
- Running costs **£2,111**
- Training **£540**

Unfolding Theatre planned to invest £2,500 of 2011's surplus (£5,492) into taking *Best in the World* to Edinburgh Festival, raising national profile and generating future tour bookings. This investment represents the deficit of £2,450 made in 2012.

Unfolding Theatre's reserves now stand at £7,753



Audiences, participants & staff

In 2012 we presented 64 performances to 3,627 audience members and ran creative projects with 1,465 participants. We employed 37 artists and production staff. Here are some of the things they said:

“A truly “best in the world” experience. We loved it and are still talking about it. The dartboard has been set up again in the garage too!”

Audience member
Best in the World

“A hugely compelling piece of theatre, moving, funny, wise and warm”

Audience member
Best in the World

“My hands were shaky at first, but coming here every day and doing something new, I got my confidence back.”

Young participant
Best in the World

“I took two of my friends who are non-theatre goers and they’re now talking about us making theatre night a regular thing. I guess that must be the ultimate feedback!?”

Audience member
Best in the World

“I feel like now if I wanted to make something, I could just go and make it, because they’ve made me more into art.”

Pupil, Wingrove School
Juice Festival Dragons Parade

“Excellent, unexpected and inspiring.”

Visitor
Let Me Tell You

“It was an honour to be part of it. I looked forward to a Friday afternoon.”

Participant,
The Cyrenians Recovery Centre
Let Me Tell You

“Unfolding Theatre has provided me with brilliant experiences and has been invaluable in furthering my career. They are a supportive, understanding and welcoming company.”

Lucy Crimmens
Assistant Stage Manager

“I don’t get the chance to make theatre in the way I do with Unfolding Theatre anywhere else. They are open and work with integrity. They have helped me focus on the kind of work I want to make.”

Alex Elliott
Filmmaker and Performer

“I had a wonderful experience working on Best in the World. The company’s enthusiasm knows no bounds.”

Craig Davidson
Stage Manager

2013 plans and goals

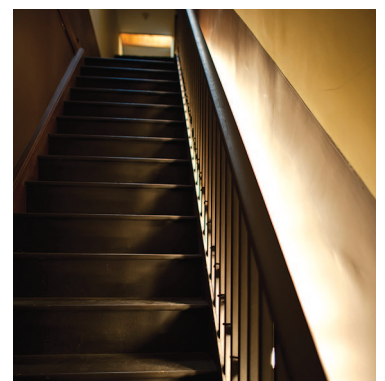
We plan to build on 2012’s achievements by touring productions and delivering projects that grow our national reputation and deepen our creative relationships at home.

We aim to build capacity and sustainability through increasing income streams, with a particular focus, supported by Arts Council’s Catalyst programme, on increasing fundraising from private sources.

To achieve these goals, we are re-touring *Best in the World* in Spring 2013 and returning to Battersea Arts Centre to begin work on our next touring production, *Lands of Glass*.

We are strengthening regional relationships and audiences through collaborating with Live Theatre to create *Live Witness*, and with Durham University and Greenfield School to develop a new performance made by and for young people.

We are collaborating with Swallows Foundation to create a new performance in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.



In 2013 all donations made to Unfolding Theatre are matched by Arts Council's Catalyst fund.

Unfolding Theatre is delighted to have been selected for Arts Council's Catalyst programme. It means that throughout 2013, your donation of £1 turns into £1.40, your £10 turns into £14, and your £100 turns into... exactly! You've got it.

Your donation will support the development of *Lands of Glass*. The show is an adaptation of Alessandro Baricco's remarkable novel, and is our most ambitious production yet.

Our early development work has already won Northern Stage's Title Pending award for new theatre. We are now in a fantastic position to take the next steps. Your support will help us bring together a team of talented musicians and actors to create the full production.

All donors will be invited to a special rehearsal session, getting a sneak preview of work-in-progress.

To make a donation, send a cheque made out to 'Unfolding Theatre' to the address below, or email annie@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk for details of how to make your donation online.

Work with us

If you would like to commission Unfolding Theatre to work with you, we'd love to hear more.

Since 2008, we have worked with theatres, schools, community groups, universities, businesses and festivals to deliver performances, creative projects and workshops.

We love meeting people, and working in places new to us, so drop us a line and let's start talking.

Train with us

Unfolding Theatre supports people to be creative, to learn and develop skills.

Since the company was founded, we have delivered training for young people, businesses, teachers and local authority teams. We offer training workshops on models for creative team-working, developing presentation skills and facilitation skills.

To find out more, email Annie at annie@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk.

Talk to us

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