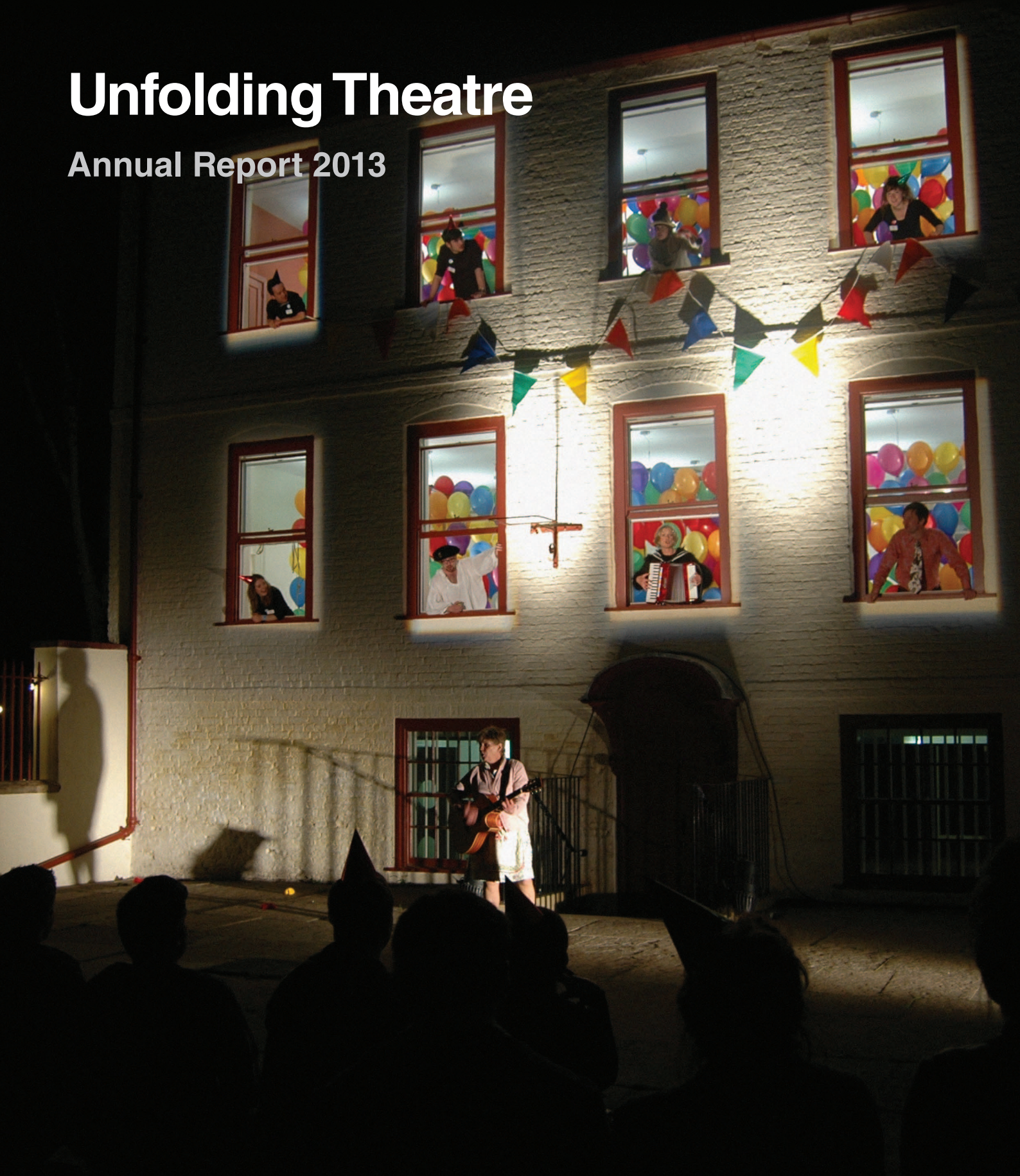


# Unfolding Theatre

Annual Report 2013



## Unfolding Theatre makes remarkable theatre with a wild sense of humour and a delight in bringing people together.

We create and tour our joyful, imaginative theatre productions across the UK and beyond. Past productions include the award-winning *Building Palaces* and *Best in the World*. Last year our new production, *Lands of Glass* won Title Pending, Northern Stage's award for new theatre.

Participation fuels our creativity. The creative teams for our projects often include community groups, children and young people. We are welcoming and curious, working with diverse people to generate remarkable, insightful theatre and artworks for public audiences.

We inspire and mentor emerging artists, from our position as an ambitious, imaginative young company, strengthening the North East's theatre ecology.

Artistic Director, Annie Rigby, founded Unfolding Theatre in 2008. She leads the company alongside producers, Dick Bonham and Gloria Lindh (LittleMighty). We collaborate with some of the most inventive and talented artists we know, including Associate Artist, Alex Elliott.

We are based at Foundry Lane Studios in Ouseburn, Newcastle upon Tyne.



# Artistic Director's report

## We celebrated Unfolding Theatre's 5th birthday with a year of performances, participation projects, a fond farewell and a welcome to new collaborators.

We began 2013 with *Best in the World's* second national tour, selling out shows at The Carriageworks, Leeds, Pulse Fringe Festival, Ipswich, and in village halls with Highlights Rural Touring. Hull Truck Theatre won our 2013 tour darts league with many audience members arriving with their own darts, ready to play. The tour's success contributed to our goal of building Unfolding Theatre's national audiences and profile.

We were delighted to return to Battersea Arts Centre in May to develop new show, *Lands of Glass*. We then saw it win Northern Stage's Title Pending prize for new theatre. It is our first literary adaptation, made with 5 incredibly talented performers and a specially created glass orchestra, demonstrating our continued commitment to taking risks and artistic ambition. We can't wait to present the show in Summer 2014.

A wonderful range of commissioned projects demonstrated our growing reputation as a well-loved company regionally. We collaborated with Sage Gateshead, Live Theatre, New Writing North, Northern Stage, Juice Festival, Seven Stories, Swallows Partnership, Festival of the North East, Durham University and Greenfield Arts College. We are proud of these partnerships, enabling us to offer

inspiring, inventive arts experiences to people across the North East, including those seldom reached by the arts.

In 2013 we waved goodbye to producer, Leyla Asadi, who set sail for Australia. We'd like to thank Leyla for 4 fantastic years, developing Unfolding Theatre from an idea into a thriving young company. Our next thank you goes to Fuel Theatre, who advised our recruitment process, resulting in us welcoming new producers, Dick Bonham and Gloria Lindh (LittleMighty). Their expertise in developing nationally emerging

companies is perfectly suited to nurture Unfolding Theatre's growth.

2013 saw us reach more people than ever, with 3,251 audience members attending 53 performances and 1,978 participants engaging in community projects. We inspired and nurtured local emerging artists, through workshops with Northern Stage's young company, North, and our volunteering programme, which saw Lewis Jobson and Zoe Murtagh, 2 of our 27 fantastic volunteers, go on to be employed on our projects.

Thank you to our collaborators, commissioners, funders, venue and festival hosts, our advisory group, volunteers and most of all, our audiences and participants. You've made our fifth year the best yet, and set the stage for 2014 to be smashing.

**Annie Rigby**  
Artistic Director



# 2013 projects



**Lands of Glass** Winner, Northern Stage's Title Pending award for new theatre 2013

**"An astonishing and amazing theatrical experience."**

**Audience feedback** BAC

In 2013 we embarked on creating our first literary adaptation. Just as adventurously, it is also our first show featuring live music played on an orchestra of glass musical instruments.

*Lands of Glass* brings best-selling Italian author Alessandro Baricco's wonderful and hilarious world of imagination to UK audiences for the first time. Set in the unforgettable town of Quinnipak, the show invites you to run away and meet the glassmaker dreaming of a crystal

palace, the musician searching for notes only he can hear, and the orphan trying not to grow into the coat that is his destiny.

Unfolding Theatre's artistic ambition is nurtured and fuelled by collaborations with the most imaginative and talented artists we know. This show is no exception. The creative team includes world percussionist and glass orchestra creator, Brendan Murphy, extraordinary singer, Beccy Owen, BBC Jazz Innovation Award winning composer and drummer, Tom Bancroft and devised theatre talents, Tom Walton and Hannah Boyde.

We were delighted to share work-in-progress with 2 packed audiences at Battersea Arts Centre in May. We were very proud to go onto win Northern Stage's Title Pending award. The award supports the next stages of developing the show, with a residency at Northern Stage in May 2014 and a showcase event at the Young Vic.

We can't wait to return to BAC in July 2014 to preview the show, before premiering it at National Glass Centre, as part of Sunderland Stages.

**BATTERSEA  
ARTS CENTRE**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**NORTHERN  
STAGE**



## Best in the World

**"There can only be one word for it: magic theatre."**

★★★★★ *Guardian*

Demand for our hilarious, heart-warming, occasionally heroic one-man show continued, with sell out performances in theatres and village halls. We forged special audience relationships, including Sheila, in her eighties, who won the post-show darts competition in Craster. Associated drama projects gave young people, including those with learning disabilities, the chance to celebrate what being best meant to them.

## Live Witness

**"Witty and charming... I felt energised, full of happy thoughts and memories."**

★★★★★ *WhatsOnStage.com*

In May we collaborated with Curious Monkey's Amy Golding and designer, Imogen Cloet to devise a promenade show to celebrate Live Theatre's 40th birthday. It became a wonderful (and often moving) opportunity to collect memories from Live's actors, audiences, youth theatre and staff. 20 performances saw actors Zoe Lambert, Jane Holman, Gary Kitching and Abby Moffatt, a chorus of young mischief makers, and Front of House Manager, Michael Davies, invite audiences into dressing rooms, onto stage and outdoors for a gorgeous musical finale, composed by Beccy Owen.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**LOTTERY FUNDED**



## It's Playtime

In June we donned official roles as the International Ministry of Play to undertake a survey of the region's playfulness for Festival of the North East. Aboard a specially fitted out double decker bus, armed with hoop-la, marbles and megaphones, this very scientific survey attracted 1,750 visitors. They played games and recorded memories of local play, in a bid to save the North East from a future as dull as a novelty tie. Congratulations to Woodhorn Museum, Ashington who won the title of North East play hotspot. Playfulness is safe in your hands!



## What If?

..... **"It's like from out of space."**  
..... **Audience member**

One of the most intriguing, fascinating projects of the year was our collaboration with young people at Greenfield Arts College and researchers at Durham University Earth Sciences department. Working together we created an interactive show, performed at 5 schools and Jabberwocky Market festival, Darlington, asking young audiences to see where their curiosity might lead them. From asking questions as varied as "Why does time exist?" to "How does love work?" and "Why is football so good?" the show sparked journeys of curiosity for the young people, artists and scientists involved.



## Juice Festival Finale: Catch Your Dreams Parade

..... **"Great theatre experiences for little folk – lovely!"**  
..... **Audience member**

In November we got all dreamy, with our third finale parade for Juice Festival. Alongside designer, Molly Barrett and young brass players, Brassy B, we invited co-director, Ruth Johnson to the team. Sharing our experience of creating large-scale outdoor family events with Ruth is an example of how we develop artists' skills locally. She worked with young people at Thomas Bewick School and Cedars Academy to create beautiful designs for the parade.

The team also collaborated with Seven Stories to develop the creative skills and confidence of Gateshead College childcare students through developing and performing their own story-time event for families, attended by 170 people.



## Paper Stages

..... **"A reconsideration of what audience participation might mean."**  
..... **Maddy Costa Guardian**

As admirers of Forest Fringe and the spaces they create for artists to experiment and take risks, we were delighted to be asked to write a piece for *Paper Stages*, a festival of performance contained within the pages of a book. Our piece, a duet for a reader and washing machine, invited people to reclaim the gifts of time our white goods keep trying to give us.

*Paper Stages* is available in exchange for an hour of your time at Arncliffe, Fierce Festival, BAC, National Theatre Wales, Northern Stage, Cambridge Junction and Forest Fringe, Edinburgh 2014.

## Other projects

2013 was so full of fantastic projects we barely have space to fit them all in. They also included directing *Honky Tonk Angels*, a celebration of women in country music at Sage Gateshead's SummerTyne Festival, directing Carina Rodney's adaptation of Val McDermid's children's book, *My Granny Is A Pirate* for New Writing North, and leading the creation of a new piece with 20 UK and South African emerging artists in South Africa's Eastern Cape with Swallows Partnership.

# Company development

## Staff

We waved goodbye to founding producer, Leyla Asadi, in June who left to move to Australia. We thank her for 4 fantastic years, producing Unfolding Theatre's launch production, first national tours and participation projects. We welcome new producers, LittleMighty, also known as Dick Bonham and Gloria Lindh. They specialise in producing for emerging companies, helping Unfolding Theatre continue to grow.



Ruth Johnson joined the team throughout the Autumn, doing a fantastic job co-directing Juice Festival parade and *My Granny Is A Pirate*, during Annie Rigby's maternity leave. She did such a fantastic job we have invited her to lead projects for us in 2014, increasing our organisational capacity.

We employed 39 artists and technicians in 2013. Their talents, skills and imagination fuelled our projects' success. We are proud that 73% of 2013 company expenditure went to artists (including the Artistic Director's salary of £13,837), offering them professional opportunities to experiment, collaborate and create new work.

## Advisory Group

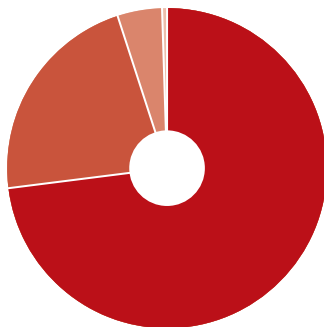
Our Advisory Group continues to be a rich source of ideas, wisdom and support. Anna Disley was re-elected as company director, alongside Annie Rigby, Susan Coffey and company member, Alex Elliott, at Unfolding Theatre's 2013 AGM.

## Supporters

Thank you to the funders who made our work possible in 2013: Arts Council Grants for the Arts, supporting *Lands of Glass* and BIG Lottery Awards for All, supporting young people's drama projects alongside *Best in the World*. We are also supported by Arts Council's Catalyst fund, as part of a consortium led by The Empty Space, investing in increasing our fundraising capacity.

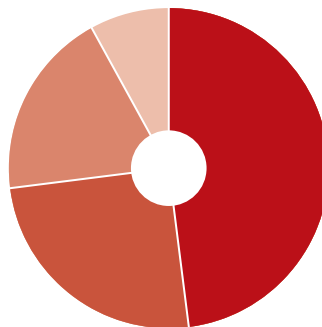
# Finances

2013 Company turnover **£56,134**



- Earned Income **£41,190**
- Arts Council funding **£12,324**
- Other public funding **£2,500**
- Individual giving **£120**

2013 Company expenditure **£55,170**



- Artists & production staff **£26,345**
- Director's salary **£13,837**
- Project costs **£10,313**
- Running costs **£4,675**

Unfolding Theatre made a surplus of £964. Unfolding Theatre's reserves now stand at £8,717

# Audiences, participants & staff

In 2013 we presented 53 performances to 3,251 audience members and ran creative projects with 1,978 participants. We employed 39 artists and production staff, including 2 young artists who first worked with us as 2 of our 27 fantastic project volunteers. Here are some of the things they said.

**“Some of the very best talent the North has to offer.”**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **WhatsOnStage.com**

*Live Witness*

**“Utterly spellbinding”**

**Audience member**

*Lands of Glass*

**“I leave with a blown mind and something new from this experience. Thank you.”**

**Participant**

*What If?*

**“A cracker from Unfolding Theatre. Fourth time I’ve seen it. It just gets better. ‘Go bananas’ is in my top 3 stand out theatre moments ever!”**

**Audience member**

*Best in the World*

**“I can’t believe what we did. It was the first time I’ve ever performed. My confidence has grown loads.”**

**Gateshead College  
childcare student**

*If Cats Could Fly at Seven Stories*

**“It’s brilliant to be part of [Lands of Glass], working with artists I admire and feel inspired by. The project has become the most exciting focus for the development of my glass instruments and music.”**

**Brendan Murphy**

*Musician*

**“An inventive and magical show”**

**Cuckoo Review**

*Live Witness*

**“Unfolding Theatre... are rising stars of the region”**

**Guardian**

*Live Witness*

**“Fantastic – really beautiful & haunting”**

**Audience feedback**

*Lands of Glass*

**“The confidence shown in me by Unfolding Theatre gave me confidence in myself. Consequently, my work is bolder and I am moving forward in a new way. I feel this is down to Annie’s ability in bringing out the best in people.”**

**Ruth Johnson**

*Artist*

# 2014 plans & goals



After winning Northern Stage’s Title Pending award for *Lands of Glass*, we are excited to present the show in Summer 2014, with previews at Battersea Arts Centre, National Glass Centre, Sunderland and an Edinburgh Festival run at Summerhall. This artistically ambitious production helps us to achieve our goal of growing regional and national profile and demand.

Collaborations with Greenfield Arts College, Kylloe House Secure Children’s Unit (supported by Community Foundation’s North East

Fund for the Arts) and Juice Festival in 2014 enable us to offer inspiring, inventive arts opportunities to young people, including those seldom reached by the arts.

Our work as part of Arts Council’s Catalyst programme enables us to continue to build capacity and sustainability through increasing income streams, with a particular focus on increasing fundraising from private sources.



## How you can support Unfolding Theatre.



### Work with us

If you would like to commission Unfolding Theatre, we would love to hear from you. Since 2008 we have delivered performances, projects and workshops for theatres, schools, community groups, universities, businesses and festivals.

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

### Talk to us

**Annie Rigby** Artistic Director  
E [annie@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk](mailto:annie@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk)

**General Enquiries**  
T 0191 265 4355 E [info@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk](mailto:info@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk)

**Unfolding Theatre**  
Foundry Lane Studios, Foundry Lane  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1LH

[www.unfoldingtheatre.co.uk](http://www.unfoldingtheatre.co.uk)

### Train with us

Unfolding Theatre supports staff teams to be creative and engage with the public more successfully. We have delivered training workshops on presentation skills, public engagement and creative team-working for businesses, schools and local authority teams.

To find out more, email Annie at [annie@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk](mailto:annie@unfoldingtheatre.co.uk)

### Make a donation

In 2014/15 all donations made to Unfolding Theatre are matched by Arts Council's Catalyst fund. This means your £1 turns into £1.40, your £10 turns into £14 and your £100 turns into... you get the idea. Your donation will support the development and touring of our new show, *Lands of Glass*.

To make a donation, send a cheque made out to 'Unfolding Theatre' to the address to the left, or email us for details of how to make your donation online.