

Unfolding Theatre

Annual Report 2016/17



Unfolding Theatre makes big-hearted theatre that delights in bringing people together.

We tour our shows to audiences across the UK and beyond. We are proud to have won awards and critical acclaim for our productions, *Putting The Band Back Together*, *Lands of Glass*, *What if?*, *Best in the World* and *Building Palaces*.

We are even more proud to have audiences describe their experiences as “absolutely perfect – left me speechless”, “incredible – filled with hope and screaming of happiness” and “one of the most magical and joyful things I’ve ever seen”.

Unfolding Theatre brings together surprising combinations of people to make remarkable theatre for national audiences. Participatory creative processes generate warm,

distinctive theatre, rich in ideas. By reflecting and celebrating diverse people’s stories, our projects have a positive, sometimes profound, impact on audiences, artists and those who take part. Long-term, we aim that:

- **More people are leading happier, more creatively fulfilled lives**
- **Mainstream theatre better reflects Britain’s diversity, driving artistic excellence**
- **People with different life experiences are better connected**

Artistic Director, Annie Rigby, founded Unfolding Theatre in 2008. She leads the company, alongside Company Producer, Morag Iles. Dick Bonham and Gloria Lindh (LittleMighty) produce our national touring. We collaborate with inventive, talented artists, including Associate Artist, Alex Elliott. Recent collaborators include writers Chloe Daykin (Northern Writers Award) and David Almond (Carnegie Medal), musicians Ross Millard (The Futureheads), Royal Northern Sinfonia and Tom Bancroft (BBC Jazz Innovation award winner) and designer Lily Arnold (Off-West-End award nominee).

We are based with xsite architecture at Arch 6 in Ouseburn, Newcastle upon Tyne.



Artistic Director's report

Unfolding Theatre has had an unforgettable year. We produced 3 major projects. They received incredible audience feedback and press. We reached more people than ever, touring to 6,678 audience members at 27 venues from Edinburgh to Poole. We engaged 1,169 people in our creative processes. We collaborated with talented artists, including those at the beginning of their careers.

In July we premiered *Putting The Band Back Together* at Summer Streets Festival, Sunderland. We were knocked out by the response to our invitation to audiences to join the house band. We've had players aged 8 to 80+, double basses to toy bells to guitars to flutes, 20+ people squeeze onstage and brave soloists. It has been a delight to see each band come together, form friendships and many continue playing together. Thank you to all of our 419 house band players.

Making *Putting The Band Back Together* with Mark and Kylie Lloyd has

been an extraordinary experience. Their creative input, right up until the end of Mark's life, was an enormous gift. The show continues to share their generosity and joyfulness with so many people.

Touring enables our audiences to experience joyful, uplifting theatre. *Putting The Band Back Together* was presented at Edinburgh Festival at Summerhall, before touring nationally. To date it has reached 3,291 audience members. *Best in the World*, now into its fourth year of touring, reached 120 new audiences through a pub tour of West Yorkshire with Creative Scene.

Commissioned projects enable us to engage diverse people in making theatre and reach new audiences. In November, 59 people performed *We, The Crowd* at St James' Park. This remarkable collaboration with Sage Gateshead and Newcastle United Foundation explored what music and football mean in people's lives.

The project brought together Royal Northern Sinfonia musicians, West End Voices, young people from CHAT Trust, In Harmony at Hawthorn Primary and New Writing North's Young Writers' City at Excelsior Academy. (Phew!) They had different musical tastes and life experiences, but they all talked about togetherness. Their stories told how music and football forge friendships and bring communities together. *We, The Crowd* was part of Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's programme, Sharing The Stage.

In December, bait and Woodhorn Museum commissioned us to create a family quest. *Frost of Forgetfulness*

invited people (and canaries), to save the museum's memories from a curious frost. 770 people helped create the quest, through workshops with Leading Link, Northern Recovery Partnership, Brownie and Guide groups and local families. The event surpassed our highest expectations, attracting 3,192 people over 7 days and receiving fantastic feedback.

We supported emerging artists through workshops for University of Northumbria BA and MA students. We were delighted to work with emerging artist, Kat Pierce. Kat was a volunteer for Northern Stage in Edinburgh, and sang in our house band. We asked her to understudy for Maria Crocker, who had a nasty roller-skating accident(!). Kat did such a brilliant job we went on to employ her as a performer in *We, The Crowd* and *Frost of Forgetfulness*.

Ongoing demand means *Putting The Band Back Together* continues touring in 2017/18. We will also begin research and development on new young people's show, *In Your Hands*. Inspired by a question asked to Eton pupils, *In Your Hands* asks young people, "What are you going to do when you're in charge?" It aims to create a mission-based digital and live experience for young audiences. We can't wait.

Finally, an enormous thank you to our 6,678 audience members, the 23,747 who tuned in on the radio or online, the 1,169 who've taken part, the 60 artists who worked with us and the funders and commissioners who made it possible. What a year! Bring on the next one!

Annie Rigby
Artistic Director



2016/17 projects



Putting The Band Back Together

“Fantastic – funny, big-hearted, moving and truthful”
Guardian

The Journal's
culture
AWARDS
2017
WINNER

This uplifting new show was inspired by our friend, Mark Lloyd. After receiving a terminal cancer diagnosis in 2014, Mark decided to put his old bands back together, and played a fantastic gig at Arts Centre Washington.

The show invites audiences to blow the dust off their instruments and join the house band. To date, 419 people have joined us onstage. We have been delighted by the impact it's had. People have gone home and written songs for the first time, set up their own bands and played in public.

The show was made with highly talented artists: performers, Ross Millard (The Futureheads), Alex Elliott, Maria Crocker and Kat Pierce, writer Chloe Daykin, designer Lily Arnold, production manager, Simon Henderson and collaborators, Mark

and Kylie Lloyd. Working with over 50 ex-players in Sunderland over 2 years inspired the show's songs and stories. It is a delight to be joined by 20+ of them every time we perform in the North East.

Putting The Band Back Together is our largest national tour to date. Commissioned by The Cultural Spring, and premiered at Summer Streets Festival, Sunderland, it went on to Edinburgh Festival, as part of Northern Stage's programme at Summerhall. It has toured to 20 UK venues, including West Yorkshire Playhouse, Battersea Arts Centre, Hat Factory Luton and ARC Stockton, reaching 3,291 audience members. It has received fantastic audience feedback and press. The show won 'Performance of the Year' in The Journal Culture Awards 2017.



BATTERSEA
ARTS CENTRE

LITTLE MIGHTY
— MAKE YOUR MARK —

The Cultural
Spring

f FOYLE FOUNDATION

W
Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

THE SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST

li

Community
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Yorkshire and North East
Working lives through effective giving

Supported using public funding by
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LOTTERY FUNDED



We, The Crowd

“It was raw, it was from the heart,
it was magic”

Audience member

We, The Crowd was a remarkable collaboration with Sage Gateshead and Newcastle United Foundation. It explored what football and music mean to people in Newcastle's West End. From children at In Harmony at



Hawthorn Primary, to older people at Walking Football in Benwell, everyone we met talked about togetherness. This led to the making of a performance celebrating how music and football forge friendships and bring communities together.

The performance featured 59 diverse performers from Royal Northern Sinfonia, Backyard Rhythm Section, West End Voices, young people from CHAT Trust, Hawthorn



Primary and New Writing North's Young Writers' City at Excelsior Academy. They collaborated with composer, Fred Phethean, to create new music that they performed live at St James' Park.

We, The Crowd was funded by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's programme, Sharing The Stage. It supports innovative collaborations between professional artists and non-professionals.

Sage
Gateshead

NEWCASTLE UNITED
FOUNDATION
Building a United Future

ROYAL
NORTHERN
SINFONIA

CALOUSTE
GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION

NEW WRITING
NORTH

CLICKOQ

YOUNG
WRITERS'
CITY



Frost of Forgetfulness

“We honestly had **THE** best afternoon”
North East Family Fun

The Journal of
culture
AWARDS
2017
FINALIST

In December, the Frost of Forgetfulness was creeping across Woodhorn. Pit canaries sensed the danger. However, thousands of children and their families joined forces and helped stop the museum’s memories being lost forever.

We had a fantastic time making this winter quest for families. Commissioned by bait and Woodhorn Museum, it was created with the help of 770 people in South East Northumberland. Local families, Woodhorn staff, Northern Recovery Partnership and young people from Leading Link, Seaton Sluice,

1st Seaton Hirst and 5th Ashington Brownies contributed ideas and memories.

Visitors, with a trusty canary by their sides, solved mysteries, uncovered clues and thawed frozen memories. We collaborated with visual artist, Bethan Maddocks, co-artistic director, Ruth Johnson and production manager, Jill Bennison on the project, culminating in a magical treat of stepping inside the Canary Keeper’s cottage.

The event attracted 3,192 people over 7 days. Their warm, new memories well and truly thawed the frost!



In It Together: a conversation about taking part and making theatre

“Thank you – it really helped me. I felt fully engaged and involved.”

Attendee & theatre participation practitioner

In March we ran a symposium at Battersea Arts Centre. It shared the success of our model of integrating participation into national touring. The panel included Annie Rigby, writer, Maddy Costa, hip hop musician and theatre-maker, Conrad Murray and Rachel Briscoe (fanSHEN Theatre).

The event explored the artistic impact of engaging people, not normally involved in professional theatre-making, in creative processes. It shared our house band members’ experiences and how they inspired our work. It built on our 2015 Artworks symposium at Northern Stage. It is part of our ongoing work to share best practice and encourage innovation in how theatre engages with communities.

Best in the World

We are incredibly proud that 4 years on from making *Best in the World*, it continues to tour. This demonstrates how, through ongoing demand, our projects lead the fullest lives possible and reach the widest audiences.

Best in the World explores ambition and aspiration through the noble sport of darts. Featuring tales of sporting success and motivational bananas, it creates a space for audiences to celebrate their own gold medal moments.

In May, we toured 5 performances in Kirklees with Creative Scene West Yorkshire. The tour brought high quality theatre into surprising settings, including pubs and village halls. In doing so, it reached audiences in areas of low arts engagement. Thanks to everyone who came along and threw some darts with us! The people of Roberttown Community Centre scored the highest audience 3-dart average on our 2016 tour. Magic darts!

Other projects

We ran 2 workshops at University of Northumbria with BA and MA Performing Arts students. This aims to help nurture the local theatre ecology and support emerging artists.

We ran workshops with ISIS Arts and sound artist, Dominic Smith, to create podcasts with young people at Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service.

We worked with Alnwick Playhouse, creatively engaging babies, their parents and young people at Duchess High School in the theatre’s redevelopment.

We worked with bait, musician, Chris Sharkey and local choirs for *Regatta Sessions*, performed at Blyth Tall Ships. We helped build their performance skills to stage this new music composition. Through all of these projects, we forged new partnerships and built diverse new audiences.

Company development

Staff

We employed 60 artists and technicians in 2016/17. Their talents, skills and imagination fuelled our projects' success. We are proud that 52% of 2016/17 expenditure went to artists (including 50% of the Artistic Director's salary). This offered professional opportunities to experiment, collaborate and develop skills.

In April 2016, Morag Iles joined our team as part time Company Producer. She has supported community groups and individuals to take part. Her fundraising success has supported touring and workshops to reach even more people.

Dick Bonham and Gloria Lindh (LittleMighty) continue to produce our national touring. They have successfully grown our touring network of venues and festivals.

Working alongside Artistic Director, Annie Rigby, Associate Artist, Alex Elliott, has enabled hundreds of people to input into creative processes through workshops and rehearsals.



Board

Our trustees are a source of wisdom, encouragement and advice. At this year's AGM, Anna Disley (New Writing North) was re-elected as a trustee and chair of the board. Mark Robinson (Thinking Practice) was elected as a new trustee. Tim Bailey (xsite architecture) and Wendy Smith (Sage Gateshead) continue as trustees.

Annie Rigby is Company Secretary and Alex Elliott is a company member.

We established this small, focused board of 4 trustees when Unfolding Theatre became a charity in January 2016. In the coming years, we seek to grow the board to 6 trustees, strengthening its skillset, diversity and sustainability.

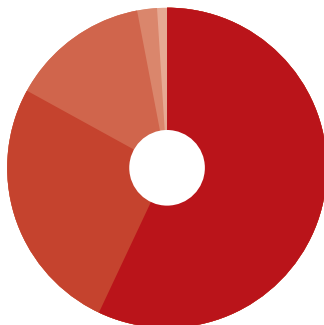
Supporters

Thank you to the funders and commissioners who made our work possible in 2016/17. *Putting The Band Back Together* was supported by Arts Council Grants for the Arts, Community Foundation (Sage UK Fund), Foyle Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Leeds Inspired, Sir James Knott Trust and Trusthouse Charitable Foundation. It was commissioned by The Cultural Spring. *We, The Crowd* was funded by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. *Frost of Forgetfulness* was commissioned by bait and Woodhorn Museum.

A very big thank you to all of our crowd-funders, who helped us take *Putting The Band Back Together* to Edinburgh Festival. They are Alan Lyddiard, Alan Parkinson, Amy Fawdington, Amy Golding, Andrew Latimer, Anna Disley, Ariane Baty, Becci Best, Beccy Owen, Caroline Murphy, Carolyn Clewlow, Catrina McHugh, Cinzia Hardy, Dan Barnard, Daniel Bye, Dave Ridley, David Almond, David Clouston, David Roberts, Debbie Beeks, Debbie Dedes, Dick Bonham, Emma Butchart, Emma McDowell, Frances Easter, Gez Casey, Gillian Firth, Gloria Lindh, Graeme Rigby, Hannah Boyde, Hannah Goudie, Harriet Walsh, Helen Cundy, Helen Green, Howard Gooding, Ian Fawdon, Jackie, Jamie Squire, Jean Crocker, Jenny Critchlow, Jenny Dewar, Jill Bennisson, Jo Cundall, Joanne McKenna, John Alder, John Spencer, John Taylor, Karen Traynor, Kate Denby, Kylie Lloyd, Laura Lindow, Leila Burrell-Davis, Lena Simic, Leyla Asadi, Linda Squire, Liz, Lorne Campbell, Louise Blackwell, Lowri Bond, Maddy Costa, Mariota Dunning, Mark Calvert, Mark Robinson, Mary Oswell, Matthew Peacock, Natalie Queral, Neringa Stonyte, Nick Jackson, Nicky Butler, Nicola Irvine, Paddy Toomey, Pat Muir, Rachel Adam, Rachel Briscoe, Rebecca Ball, Ros Rigby, Rose Walsh, Rosie Kellagher, Ruth Johnson, Sally Iles, Sally Whitehall, Sam Rigby, Sara Barnard, Sarah Rose Bird, Sharon Durant, Steve Drayton, Stevie Glover, Sue Stark, Susan Coffey, Susan Mulholland, Tassos Stevens, Teresa Kirby, Tim Bailey, Tim Linnell, Tom Harvey, Viv Peyton, Wayne Gamble, Wendy Smith, Zahra Zomorrodian.

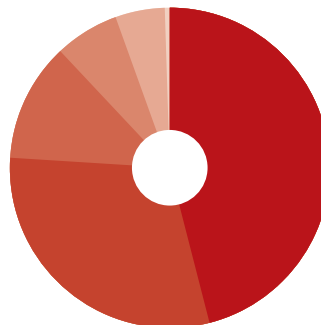
Finances

Company turnover in 2016/17
£198,995



- Earned income **£112,981**
- Arts Council funding **£51,787**
- Trusts and Foundations **£29,000**
- Individual giving/donations **£3,334**
- Other public funding **£1,893**

Company expenditure in 2016/17
£184,385



- Artists & Production staff **£84,961**
- Project costs **£54,864**
- Artistic Director **£22,419**
- Project Producer costs **£12,490**
- Core running costs **£8,331**
- Governance **£1,320**

Unfolding Theatre made a total surplus of £14,610, of which £9,683 represents Restricted Funds carried forward for activities in 2017/18. The remaining unrestricted surplus of £4,927 brings Unfolding Theatre's Unrestricted Reserves to £14,783.

Unfolding Theatre's accounts were independently examined by chartered accountant Pete O'Hara FCA. Full copies of the accounts are made publicly available via the Charity Commission and on request.

Audiences, participants & staff

In 2016/17 we presented 69 performances to 6,678 audience members. 23,747 people tuned into performances via BBC Radio 5Live, BBC Radio Scotland and online. 1,169 people took part in our creative processes through 123 workshops. We employed 60 artists and production staff. Here are some of the things they said.

“Empowering, generous, life-affirming”

Exeunt Magazine

Putting The Band Back Together

“As we play, the musicians smilingly catch each other’s eyes: we’re all clearly really enjoying ourselves.”

The Guardian’s Alexis Petridis on playing in the house band

Putting The Band Back Together



“One of the best and most meaningful pieces I’ve ever seen. It made me laugh. It made me cry. It touched me and it moved me.”

Audience

Putting The Band Back Together

“Fantastic experience. A few years ago this was a pipe dream, impossible to happen. Meeting you guys did change my life.”

House band player

Putting The Band Back Together

“It is difficult to say how much this means to me. My wife has MS which makes it hard to integrate fully. These events help to cement a feeling of inclusion and acceptance.”

Community performer

We, The Crowd

“A great night and atmosphere. Leaving with a smile and kept on singing ‘We, The Crowd’”

Audience

We, The Crowd

“Just wonderful. Really unexpected. The kids were enthralled.”

Audience

Frost of Forgetfulness

“10 out of 10. No, 12 out of 10!”

Young audience

Frost of Forgetfulness

“Working with Unfolding Theatre was a wonderful confidence boost at a time it felt very needed. Faith in my ability, and involving so many community members, was a total pleasure. It left me very moved.”

Kat Pierce

Emerging artist

“I have never felt so supported by a company both on stage and off. I have huge admiration for the way Annie has created such an ambitious, accessible project. Meeting house band members has been a big highlight. I really can’t put into words how much working on this show has furthered my development as a performer as well as a human being.”

Maria Crocker

Performer

Plans & goals for 2017/18

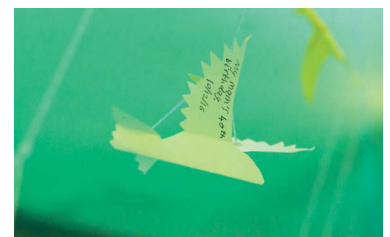
Putting The Band Back Together will continue to tour in 2017/18. We kick off in Bristol in April. Touring the show, featuring a different house band of local people in every venue, supports our goal of delivering joyful, rewarding theatre experiences that bring people together.

We are excited to begin work on our first major touring production for young audiences, *In Your Hands*. We will be running workshops with young people as part of the research and development. This supports our goal of making theatre that reflects



diverse communities. It ensures young people’s ideas are at the heart of our creative process.

Commissions from Sage Gateshead, Alnwick Playhouse and more help us reach new



audiences. These collaborations generate inventive new shows and participation projects. We look forward to welcoming you to performances and workshops in 2017/18.



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, participation projects, training 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.

Get involved

Come and see one of our shows. Take part in a workshop. We'd love to have you in the room.

You can find details of our upcoming performances and opportunities to take part on our website.

Make a donation

Your donation will support the development of our new young people's production, *In Your Hands*. It will go towards the costs of bringing together a talented team of artists to deliver workshops with young people's groups.

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

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