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<b>Report of:</b> Director of Arts <b>Report Author:</b> Toni Racklin Head of Theatre	<b>For Information</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summary</b></p> <p>This report provides an overview of the Theatre department's strategy and planning, in the context of the Barbican's vision and mission and Strategic Objectives.</p> <p>It examines our current developments and the challenges and opportunities that are facing our own work and how we strive to maintain our profile in an increasingly competitive landscape.</p> <p>Whilst the primary focus of this year's programme was on Shakespeare's 400th anniversary through large scale international productions and accessible events to suit a range of audiences, work continued on supporting emerging artists, introducing new voices into the programme, and collaborating with our Creative Learning colleagues on a variety of endeavours.</p> <p>We continued to develop our mixed income ecology of rentals, fundraising, invitations and shared risks, building on existing, loyal, relationships and forging new associations.</p> <p>The full scope of the strategic objectives have given a strong framework to the Theatre programme to build on, and we aim to contribute actively to cross art form initiatives both inside our own venues, in shared public spaces of the Barbican, as part of the Cultural Hub and within our community of east London.</p> <p>The report is divided into the following sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our current position</li> <li>2. Overview of the 16/17 Theatre and Dance Programme</li> <li>3. Conclusion</li> <li>4. Appendix 1</li> <li>5. Appendix 2 (non-public)</li> <li>6. Appendix 3 Financial summary and notes (non-public)</li> </ol> <p><b>Recommendation</b> Members are asked to note the report</p>	

## **Main Report**

*"A go-to destination for visiting international and British companies to call home. These have included Complicite (most recently with Simon McBurney's brilliant The Encounter) and Cheek by Jowl from the UK, and some amazing regular visitors from abroad, including Ivo van Hove's Toneelgroep Amsterdam and Japan's Ninagawa Company... The great thing about an integrated arts centre such as the Barbican is the opportunity it affords to cross-pollinate across art forms... The Barbican nowadays is one of the single most exciting venues to find theatre you just won't see anywhere else... an essential venue."*

**The Stage, Mark Shenton's top venues**

### **1. Our Current Position**

#### **1.1. 16/17 in numbers:**

- Number of companies performing on our stages: 30
- Number of countries represented: 13 - UK, Netherlands, Australia, Germany, France, Canada, India, Greece, Japan, Africa, Belgium, USA, Italy
- Number of own promotion weeks: 31
- Number of commercial rental weeks: 19
- Number of performances: 294
- Number of forecast attendees at end Nov 16 : 162,125 against annual target 166,849

#### **1.2 Background**

The Barbican Theatre and Dance programme seeks to respond to the organisational aims of:

- **Inspiring more people to discover and love the arts**
- **Creating an ambitious, international programme that crosses art forms with outstanding artists and partners**
- **Investing in the artists of today and tomorrow**

This report will consider how effectively this has been achieved. Across the past year we have presented a variety of large scale work by innovative directors, from across Europe and further afield, some making their Barbican debut, and a range of creative artists and companies in the Pit who all push the boundaries of their art forms to create highly impactful theatrical experiences for our audiences.

We bring world class work to our stages that probably wouldn't be seen otherwise on London, or indeed UK stages, that opens a window on to the world. Through repeat visits we build loyalty from well-loved artists and audiences, each time deepening the relationship a bit further and supporting the development of new work by co-commissioning future projects. At the same time, we are working in a variety of ways to support the next generation of artists who themselves are exploring new forms of theatre making. And every season, unfamiliar names and new work are injected into the programme to present fresh perspectives on classics and devised creations and to inspire new audiences to follow the journey with us.

An integral part of our programme is created through working with our cross-arts colleagues on interdisciplinary projects, contributing to thematic programming. In 2017 specifically we are:

- **Working closely with Visual Arts on our extensive season**
- **Working with Cinema contribution to the Film in Focus season with staged works inspired by iconic film directors such as Visconti and Bergman**
- **Working across all projects with our Creative Learning colleagues**

We are continuing to work to a mixed income ecology of part rentals, part shared risks and part own promotions, although the balance between these shifts from year to year. Our subsidy works as hard as possible to enable us to secure the best international work but it is also used as investment in research and development and workshop opportunities to help support the growth of new talent.

### 1.3 **Challenges**

Challenge and competition to our peers grows ever keener and we must remain on the front foot responding pro-actively in a positive spirit, not to be left behind. The new artistic directors at the NT, and the Old Vic, are settling in to post and setting out their visions for the future; all eyes will be on news emerging from the London Theatre Company, led by Sir Nicholas Hytner and Nick Starr, soon to open near Tower Bridge and which promises to provide a brand new destination for theatre goers; Sadler's Wells, Almeida, Young Vic, Royal Court, and the Kings Cross pop up theatre, surprise and excite audiences with new international choreography and re-interpretations of the classics and devised work, previously the domain of the Barbican theatre programme.

These key London venues challenge us to continually assess our position, making it harder than it was to remain unique. We also find ourselves increasingly competing for stellar international work with the new artistic directors at the Edinburgh International Festival, and the newly relaunched Manchester International Festival. It is of course important to work collaboratively with our regional partners but it becomes harder to offer Barbican audiences UK premieres and exclusive experiences.

Small vibrant venues - the Print Room, The Park, The Yard, Arcola, the Bush, Southwark Playhouse have made us examine our ambitions for the Pit theatre and how we want it to reflect our vision, in the light of our own strategic objectives, into the future, hence the development of the Pit Shakeup.

We must also recognise that it is a compliment to our endeavours, albeit a frustrating one, that our international directors, dance and theatre companies are now being invited to work at these other London theatres, but true to say that their presence in London is no longer a rarity, or bespoke to the Barbican stages. Despite the plaudits, awards and nominations we know we must regularly revisit the artistic vision, keeping it fresh and ahead of the game. Working across art forms on the strategic objectives and interdisciplinary projects ensure that jointly we can aim to present works of scale and depth under one roof. This helps retain our

sense of originality and experimentation, strengthening our brand and overarching arts messaging. However, the drive continues to find artists' who, through their own work and priorities, reflect our visions.

The arts sector are obviously concerned by the unexpected referendum result and the impact on our relationships in Europe won't be fully known for a while. Europe has always been so beneficial, not simply in financial terms, but artistically, culturally and ethically, forging artist exchange, touring and co-producing partnerships and opportunities and we have yet to work out if we will still have a place at the table.

#### 1.4 **Fundraising**

Theatre works closely with our **Development** department on applications to cultural institutions and Embassies to raise funds to support the programme and relieve subsidy and in 16/17 we raised approximately £160 k from the following:

- French Institute and Private support for Phaedra(s)
- Flemish Representation and the Netherlands Embassy for Kings of War
- Australia High Commission for The Shadow King
- 14-18 NOW and LIFT contributed as co-commissioning partners on The Forbidden Zone and Phaedra(s) respectively

We are constantly in the process of actively seeking out new commercial rental opportunities and as our body of commercial work grows we are able to initiate conversations with a range of eminent producers, agents and venues in the USA, UK, Russia and Japan.

#### 1.5 **Media Relations**

Our Theatre and Dance programme continued to receive a high level of exposure in the media. On BBC Radio 4 Kings of War and Needles and Opium were featured on Saturday Review, Isabelle Huppert and Aditi Mangaldas were interviewed by Jenni Murray for Woman's Hour and Split Britches appeared on Loose Ends whilst on BBC Radio 3 Ian Bostridge was interviewed for Music Matters. The television highlights of our 16/17 season were Michael Clark's interview on Channel 4 News and a programme about Ballet Black on the South Bank Show.

whatsonstage and the Financial Times are working with all arts organisations on creating audio-visual material for their websites, which research shows has consistently high levels of audience engagement. Traditional media has also realised it can reach new audiences through people's mobile devices and the possibilities are limitless. We will continue to work closely with our digital teams to mine these opportunities in the future as there is much interest from both whatsonstage and the FT in our own programme.

Digital performance capture is another, relatively new way of reaching a wider audience and this year Complicite's The Encounter was live-streamed on multiple platforms direct from our Theatre. There were 13,496 live views, and On Demand views the week following the live broadcast reached 67,532

The stream was available globally from about 30 different organisation's websites, including Complicite, the Barbican, the Guardian, Time Out, Financial Times and a number of other theatres and arts organisations both in the UK and internationally.

Although arts journalism favours celebrities, a positive evolution is an increase in the diversity of the artists and companies being profiled in the media which reflects the work that all arts organisations are now doing to diversify their boards, staff, audiences, performers and creative teams.

#### 1.6 **Marketing**

As the media landscape changes so our marketing campaign planning focuses more on digital opportunities. Responding to the decline in print media our spend on print press advertising has reduced from 38% of our total above-the-line spend in 13/14 to just 15% in the first part of this financial year. Outdoor advertising (London Underground, street level poster sites, etc.) where budgets allow still gets a good response for us in Theatre and constitutes a constant 38% of our total above-the-line spend. Digital advertising opportunities are increasingly effective and offer us the opportunity to target existing and totally new customers very effectively. Facebook advertising still takes the biggest share of our digital advertising budget, and by investing in good quality video content Theatre received 620,000 (58%) of video views, followed by programmatic and Google Display Network (including retargeting people who have visited Barbican web event pages previously). These digital tools allow us to be very targeted and totally responsive without advertising, to increase spend where it's working, and halt campaigns where it's not.

Our Theatre brochure is an important sales tool and, over time, delivers a high return on investment. 30,000 are mailed each year and 40,000 are picked up on the foyers. What is worth noting, and is consistent with late booking patterns across the industry, is that we do not necessarily see sales spikes immediately when brochures land, but monitoring our segment mailings shows that these customers do purchase as the season goes on. Where we do see immediate returns is with our fortnightly emails which always deliver a sales spike.

#### 1.7 **Ticket pricing**

The Ticket Pricing Group test and review pricing against the marketplace and there are comprehensive art form templates based on knowledge of the work, likely audience spend and the companies' profile and track records. We offer a range of prices to suit all pockets and we have maintained a low price ticket available in areas of the main house and in the Pit. We aim to set achievable targets but our box office team are skilled in the mechanics of yielding up or down according to demand. We discuss pricing in full with our commercial rental partners, advising them as part of the contract process on best house practice and our audience needs. Young Barbican are active theatre ticket buyers and accounted for buying 4,044 seats up to the end of October 16. (20% of total tickets are sold to Young Barbican members)

#### 1.8 **Customer Experience**

We seek to deepen the experiences of our audience through engagement with our building and journeys along different pathways into the programme. With new

improvements on our website, ticket buying is a much simpler task and there is an increasing amount of interesting content available about our shows. We also create bespoke benefits for Barbican Members and Young Barbican Members with access to behind the scenes events, special invitations to sharings, open rehearsals and artists' talks. Importantly, we are still able to offer a number of free events across any one season as accessible tasters, testing out and nurturing new ideas. Among the benefits of having all art forms under one roof we can constantly think about new ways to bring loyal, existing and future audiences into a varied range of activity.

#### 1.9 **Technical update**

The centre of the stage floor has been replaced; a new grid has been installed in the Pit and the air conditioning unit has been removed from the ceiling, giving an attractive clear space for designers to work with; the safety curtain winch has now had its replacement gearbox fitted; backstage areas and heritage furniture have been refreshed.

#### 1.10 **Theatre Staff**

The Theatre department benefits from a stable, passionate and committed staff team. We have built some bespoke developmental opportunities within our structure; designated members of our technical team form the international touring party for Dark Mirror; Assistant Producers are instrumental in programming events for Walthamstow Garden Party, Open Fest and Foyer projects as well as leading on the delivery of some Pit Shows. We have established a new Administrative Trainee position (replacing an Apprentice). The Technical department continue to work with two annual apprentices (past apprentices have gone straight on to work in professional theatre). We engage short term placements on research projects and these are covered in full by City University and we are developing new networking opportunities to widen the reach when appointing staff in order to increase diversity within our theatre department workforce. All staff enjoy working with colleagues across the Centre. Several of them have taken on mentoring roles with colleagues from other arts organisations, which is proving a very worthwhile and effective programme. We can offer expertise in all disciplines to support visiting companies and our programming advice is regularly sought by our international peers.

Those members of the technical team involved in the RSC Backstage event reported that they enjoyed the opportunity to work closely with students, and shared their expertise with much generosity.

#### 1.11 **Diversity and inclusion in programming**

*"As an event,[the 2016 debut season] it will be long remembered. There are arguments for and against the existence of a specifically non-white ballet company, but there can be no argument about **Ballet Black** director **Cassa Pancho's** achievement in filling a major London venue with what must be the most diverse audience in the history of British ballet. Last Friday felt different. It felt significant. It felt like change."* **The Observer, Luke Jennings**

Maintaining our world class, international programme is of primary strategic focus and ensuring that it is representative of a diverse range of artistic voices. We have presented the work of many women and ethnically diverse artists as lead decision

makers across our programme. There is new work currently coming to the fore which is focussing on gender issues and we presented a collaboration with transgender artists in the Pit last autumn, entitled **Transpose**, which we have committed to develop over the next two years.

*"From all of our performers, and from myself, I wanted to say an enormous thank you to the team at Barbican. As trans and queer performers - a number of whom are disabled - it's very rare to find the level of support, encouragement and understanding shown to us by everyone involved."*

**CN Lester, curator and performer**

We also present the work of disabled artists and there are projects in the pipeline with **Tourette's Hero**, **CandoCo**, **Access All Areas**, **Told by An Idiot** and **Storme Tools**, and we strive to ensure that our work is inclusive and accessible to disabled patrons. Across the seasons there are 'relaxed' performances for those audience members on the autistic spectrum, as well as those that are captioned, sign language interpreted and audio described. All members of the Theatre team have participated in a series of in-house diversity and equality workshops and we arranged workshops in Gender Awareness and Disability Training for Theatre, Marketing, Press and Customer Experience colleagues.

There are now gender neutral toilets available in the Centre and we are hoping to provide a disabled toilet in the backstage area. We are continually working together on achieving further additional 'reasonable adjustments' in our physical spaces and in our programme that have come out of our learnings from participating together in recent training.

## **2. Overview of the 16/17 Theatre and Dance Programme**

Responding to the Centre's five strategic goals in the areas of:

- Customer Experience
- Connecting Arts and Learning
- Mixed Income Generation
- Cultural Hub
- Audience Development

The Barbican Theatre messaging is detailed below with brief examples to show how it has been responded to within the programme.

***We showcase international theatre, dance and performance by leading companies, auteurs and emerging artists that challenge the idea of what theatre can be.***

- After a great start to the year with an Olivier Award nomination for best dance from **Yoann Bourgeois** as part of the **London International Mime Festival**, the unforgettable **Encounter**, our co-commission with **Simon McBurney** and **Complicite** (currently on Broadway), and the debut season from **Ballet Black** (with whom we have a 3 year collaboration) our 16/17

season continued with a series of strong international productions.

@ellenwiles Feb 24

#TheEncounter is flabbergastingly good - a kinetic fusion of sound art, theatrical storytelling & ethnography @Complicite @BarbicanCentre

@alexdeboo 23 Aug 2015

Just heard, Complicite's The Encounter. Simon McBurney is extraordinary and it's coming to the Barbican in Feb. You all must go.

- **Katie Mitchell** directed the **Schaubuhne Berlin** ensemble in **The Forbidden Zone**, offering a female perspective on the horrors of war. This provided us with another opportunity to work together with our commissioning partner **14-18 NOW**, with whom we had streamed this production originally from Salzburg Festival into our Cinema 1 in 2014.

*"This is Katie Mitchell at her very best... It is desolate and brilliantly executed... an overwhelming piece about the hideousness of war."* **Financial Times, Sarah Hemming, 5\* review**

- **Krzysztof Warlikowski**, the maverick Polish director, brought us the **Odeon-Paris** production of **Phaedra(s)** starring the iconic **Isabelle Huppert** as the tragic queen. A series of screen talks featuring the celebrated French actress took place in the Barbican cinema.

*"[Huppert] gives a mammoth performance... she is never anything other than mesmeric"*

**Metro, Claire Allfree, 4\* review**

- Sold out houses greeted **Robert Lepage's** iconic **Needles and Opium**, a work which he revisited after a 20 year hiatus.
- **Dark Mirror** was our 2016 home-grown production, directed and designed by **Netia Jones**, featuring **Ian Bostridge** and 24 members of the **Britten Sinfonia** in **Zender's** orchestrated interpretation of **Schubert's Winterreise**. It has recently completed the first leg of its tour to the **National Taichung Theater, Taiwan** and will then go on to **Perth International Arts Festival, Australia** in February and **Cal Performances** at the University of California, Berkeley (all co-producers) in 2018. Negotiations are currently under way with the **Lincoln Centre, New York**.

*"[A] meticulous and fearless staging of Hans Zender's version of Winterreise... It could not be done better."* **The Observer, Fiona Maddocks, 4\* review**

- **Our relationship with the Royal Shakespeare Company** 16/17 marked the fourth year of our RSC residency. Our plans together continue to strengthen and there are programme initiatives currently set out to the end of 2019. Our respective Creative Learning teams continue to create joint programmes enabling us to deepen our relationship on all levels.



Throughout this special anniversary year we were also treated to a range of work from the **RSC** including the ambitious **A Midsummer Night's Dream: a Play for the Nation**, featuring local school children as fairies and amateur actors playing the Rude Mechanicals followed later by the winter residency of **Cymbeline** and **King Lear** with its career-defining performance from **Anthony Sher**.

This year saw the **RSC** bringing productions from their Swan Theatre to the Barbican for the first time. **Dr Faustus** and **The Alchemist**, by playwrights that were contemporaries of Shakespeare, played an early autumn season and over the whole of their 2016 residency the company will have presented 5 different productions of which 4 will have had female directors at their helm. The RSC have worked closely with our Cinema team to bring a series of productions to the screen, either under the banner of Live from Stratford-upon-Avon or gems from their extensive and rich historical archives.

In November the Barbican partnered with the RSC on the event **Barbican Backstage**, programmed in response to King Lear. The day gave secondary school students aged 14-16 the opportunity to work practically behind the scenes with RSC and Barbican theatre technicians, and create their own moment from King Lear on the main stage. The day included a bespoke backstage tour, an automation demonstration, an onstage insight session on the storm scene, followed by practical workshops in lighting, sound, props and stage management. 87 students and 10 teachers participated from the Alyward Academy, which is in an area of Enfield with some of the highest deprivation indicators in London, the Lycée Français, and Sydney Russell School in Barking and Dagenham, one of the Barbican's new associate schools.

Some recent research indicated that 46% of attenders to the RSC in 15/16 were first time Barbican attenders (Barbican average is 40%). 54% of RSC attenders from 15/16 returned to the Barbican for a range of productions in 15/16 and 16/17. (Likewise, Hamlet attenders have so far returned to our productions at the rate of 37%, mainly to classical works)

**We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow through the commissioning of new work, showcasing emerging talent and collaborating with our Artistic Associates – Boy Blue Entertainment, Cheek by Jowl, Michael Clark Company and Deborah Warner.**

- The aim of empowering artists, participants and audiences to be ambitious and creative is central to the programme. Not just in the performances we put on our stages but in the research and development opportunities we are initiating to support emerging artists and grow new talent; the spring season will see the fruition of two such r&d periods in the public facing dance programme; the Labs which are led by our important international artists for practitioners at all skill levels help develop new perspectives on theatre practice; and our collaboration with the Creative Learning Open Labs programme is leading to some exciting initiatives in ways to present work in the Pit. Young people from school and colleges and the community are regularly in the audience, or participating in learning opportunities or making

work on our stages. As we work to widen access into our events we are helping to nurture future generations of audiences and theatremakers.

- We have built new relationships with a variety of companies which will continue to yield more work over the next few years: **sKaGen, Odeon-Paris, Transpose, Split Britches, nitrobeats, the Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet** (these two latter companies have turned to the Barbican for these particularly innovative projects due to their planned closure of the Linbury Studio).

- **Artistic Associates**

We have a number of very well established and long-term relationships with several international companies, but we have three artistic associate companies resident in the Centre. The companies came to us at a time of flux and uncertainty in their history, with an unsettled ACE status. Over the years our relationship together has enabled each of them to stabilise and flourish and we are now the beneficiaries of consistently high level work, on a regular annual basis, which is critically acclaimed and well supported by our audiences. Each company tours extensively throughout the UK and internationally and this also enables the Barbican brand to be seen further afield, which in turn attracts new presenters and festivals wishing to explore fruitful collaborations with us.

### **Michael Clark Company**

**Michael Clark** filled the theatre for 9 performances with a stunning mixed bill of work including the world premiere of a new piece paying tribute to the late David Bowie. Working with our Cinema colleagues an exciting programme of early films featuring Clark and his dancers responded to the work on stage.

*"Clark has always been a huge talent, but here his artistry reaches a zenith in which being chic and being smart are allied to a real passion for pure dance... a very special evening."* **The Times, Debra Craine, 5\* review**

**Michael Clark has explained this about being an Associate:** *"The staff, at every level - have truly made The Barbican feel like my company's home. Not only have they given, but continue to give me and my dance company stability and support in practical terms : with an office from which all my work is made possible, rehearsal space and production time but they also facilitate an exchange with other international co-producers I would not have otherwise come into contact with."*

### **Cheek by Jowl**

The company have been touring round the world with their latest, highly acclaimed, production of **The Winter's Tale** and it will land at Silk Street Theatre in April 2017. In June last year, **Declan Donnellan**, Artistic Director of the company, was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion of Venice for 'his profound faith in the text. For his ability to bring classic works to life for a contemporary audience, without ever losing the ability to 'read' them and for placing actors at the heart of his work and managing to get the very best out of them.'

*"Being a Barbican Associate is a true privilege, for it supports our work in countless ways. On a practical level space for our office, and a London home for our productions, is hugely appreciated. However, what is completely invaluable and irreplaceable is being part of an organisation that understands and supports the artistic work that we do, that thinks internationally and that works with us as a creative partner. It is the practical support multiplied by the humanity of the team that makes the Barbican essential for our existence."*

### **Boy Blue Entertainment**

We have co-commissioned and co-produced the company's new triple bill, **Blak, Whyte, Gray** which will have its world premiere on the Barbican stage in January. Also Boy Blue have been successful with a SPACE application to film their work **Emancipation Of Expression** - which is now part of the GCSE Dance syllabus and the celebrated film director **Danny Boyle** will film the piece in our theatre and it is likely that it will have a future life as a short documentary.

*"The support from the Barbican to Boy Blue Entertainment has been invaluable over the years. It not only provides a home for the company, but artistic and professional development, from commissions to, more importantly, relationships with key people within the building. We believe without this support we would not have been successful in our recent Arts Council Elevate grant. Moreover being homed by the Barbican is a large part of the company strategy for the next 4 years of our aim to build further sustainability into our company via an application to ACE NPO programme."*

**Through our activities we hope to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. We programme free offsite events in East London, offer reduced price tickets to 16-25 year olds for our shows through Young Barbican, present regular post-show talks and offer access to artists and directors, present an innovative offer for families and younger theatre-goers, and create online content for our special themed seasons.**

- **Beyond Barbican**, our offsite programme, saw another successful and very well attended summer **Walthamstow Garden Party**, where dance and theatre performances popped up all over Lloyd Park and for the first time last autumn, a new initiative was unveiled as **Open Fest** took over the Barbican foyers and venues with teams working together on another activity packed day.
- **Reduced price tickets** were actively taken up by Young Barbican Members and schools, college and Creative Learning groups enabling productions to have a wide range of audiences enjoying them.
- **Talks and Symposia** were set up to contextualise the themes arising out of the programme and the majority of shows in the season are followed by a post-show talk involving the artists and members of the creative team.
- **Access to artists** is provided through various routes - bespoke Barbican member events, post show Q&A's, open rehearsals and a range of learning opportunities give our audiences a variety of ways to connect with our artists.

- **Creative Learning** ran several **Weekend Labs** with the following artists and companies in 2016: two with the RSC, three with the International Mime Festival, three with director **Katie Mitchell**, with **Complicite**, **Michael Clark Company**, **Turned on It Head** for practitioners working with very young children and the **Toneelgroep Amsterdam** workshop led to the development of the 2017 Barbican Box.
- In autumn 2016, a **bursary award** system was introduced for Weekend Labs, which ensure that participants who would not otherwise be able to attend can access these world class opportunities.
- **Our Christmas family show** in 2016, **Sponge**, was designed specifically for those aged under 3 years old and we are going to continue to test and prioritise work for these early years in future festive seasons.
- **Our Weekenders** provide a wide range of participatory events for families with children of all ages to get involved in and these take place at regular points across each year. Workshops ranging from animation to dressing up, voice projection, singing and dancing along with exploratory trails through the Barbican itself are hugely enjoyed by large numbers.

### **Shakespeare 400**

Our participation in this major commemorative anniversary of 400 years since the death of Shakespeare underpinned all areas of our programme in 2016. We offered our audiences a wide range of different interpretations of the plays alongside a myriad of events inspired by the great playwright. Launched on the anniversary itself, **Kings of War**, directed by **Ivo van Hove** with his Dutch ensemble **Toneelgroep Amsterdam** gave our audiences a new perspective on the warring English kings;

*"What a wonderful study of power this is... Van Hove is showing us a new Shakespearean future."* **The Observer, Susannah Clapp, 4\* review**

*"Brutally brilliant... Shakespeare for the 21st century."* **The Times, Sam Marlowe, 4\* review**

- **Forced Entertainments' Complete Works** played out on a table top using everyday objects. All 37 plays were enacted throughout the week and enchanted audiences of all ages.
- Indigenous aboriginal actors from Melbourne's **Malthouse Company** brought their version of King Lear, entitled **The Shadow King**, played on the red earth of the Australian outback. Although the production was much feted across all the festivals in Australia, it failed to find its audience in London and poorly under performed at the Box Office. This may have been due to a combination of factors; the season coincided with the European referendum campaign and voting day; it was too long a run by an unknown company; and there was a surfeit of other Shakespeare productions on at the same time in strong competition. We have taken the learnings from this experience forward into our future planning.
- During our action packed Shakespeare Weekender, **Play On**, that launched our anniversary commemorations and welcomed 4,000 people to the Centre,

we worked closely with our **Cultural Hub** partners, the **Museum of London** on an object handling workshop, **LSO** and **Guildhall School** on a variety of activity and we initiated the installation of a blue plaque, working with the **City of London Corporation**, **St Vedast church**, actor **Fiona Shaw**, and children from **Beam Primary School** in Barking and Dagenham, to mark a spot near where Shakespeare had lived as our neighbour on Silver Street.

- Leading artists whose work has been presented at the Centre, including Benedict Cumberbatch, Ivo van Hove and Deborah Warner, contributed to our **Barbican Box**, helping schools to create their own Shakespeare-inspired theatre to perform on the Barbican stage.

### **Our Future Priorities**

- We are committed to ensuring that rising costs and the existing funding model do not impact the scale, quality and ambition of our Theatre and Dance programme. We strive for the best deals possible, work in partnership and in co-promotion and these models have become vital in enabling us to stretch our subsidy as far as possible.
- We will continue to prioritise time in each calendar year for seasons with our longstanding presenting partners, **the London International Mime Festival**, **Dance Umbrella**, **LIFT**, **14-18 NOW** ensuring that we can offer a wide range of innovative international work, share risks and allocate joint funding which relieves some of our own subsidy. Particularly valuable too is our joint marketing approach and the resultant double impact it makes. Finding new relationships to work to this model of co-curatorship eg; **Ballet Black**, **nitrobeats** and **Transpose**, broadens the exciting voices that shape the programme and provides a stable destination for loyal audiences.
- Added to the above is our need to seek out the contribution that **commercial rental** makes to the shape of any one year and the support it brings to our budget. The RSC is the backbone to this imperative and we are seeking out other commercial partnerships that can contribute equally positively. New relationships include the **Vakhtangov Theatre from Russia**, **the Royal Ballet** and **the Royal Opera** and there are others in the pipeline. Bringing these opportunities into the building is one of the most challenging and important things on our agenda.
- The work of the Theatre and Dance Department is both supported by and responds to the **Strategic Plan** and **Business Plan** objectives. Using these as our guiding framework we will build and grow our protocols and initiatives and work collegiately within them. Collaborative programming across the art forms with our peers is now an organic and continual process. Later in this report the **'Pit Shakeup'** is described (please see Appendix 2) and the research currently underway for this initiative will transform the way artists and audiences engage in the future with our small black box space and its foyer. It will further endorse our commitment to supporting emerging new talent and will offer these artists new platforms for showcasing and developing their work.

- Teams drawn across the Centre will also continue working on the planning and delivery of **interdisciplinary programmes** that underpin each year. The Theatre team are actively committed to contribute to the creation and delivery of **foyer events, family work for offsite- and in house weekenders**. Artistic and technical teams are working alongside their peers from other departments to extend skills and knowledge and provide a unique programme for the Barbican spaces, as we now work horizontally, spilling out of our designated spaces.
- We will work to strengthen our links within the **Cultural Hub**. We support endeavours through the **Common Platform** with the **Guildhall School** in whatever way we can. Currently this is primarily through technical course students but we are keen to widen the ways in which links can be made with our international artists and students from other disciplines. We have forged strong relationships with the **Museum of London** and will continue to seek out further opportunities to collaborate. We regularly liaise with our **City of London Corporation's** arts colleagues on sharing thematic and marketing opportunities. Theatre's close working relationship with Creative Learning cements our connections to the Hub.
- We will actively increase **diversity and disability** and underrepresented voices into the programme. We are supporting staff from a variety of departments to engage knowledgeably with this work and are setting up well-structured training sessions. To date admin, marketing, media relations, technical, customer experience and creative learning teams have all benefitted from gender and disability awareness training and it is evident how the positive effects of this shared knowledge informs the way we are working together on a practical level and how we welcome our companies. The scope of the work that we are presenting in this field is broadening and by consequence our audience base is widening as we become the home for several debut artists. In terms of workforce we are now recruiting through new network which is having positive outcomes and we are talking to our partners to ensure that diversity and equality is acknowledged through all the work we do together on our stages.
- We will strive to ensure that our front and back of house areas are properly accessible to a wide range of users and while we have been able to make some changes very quickly we know that others will take time and require more financial investment (a backstage disabled toilet) We are revisiting all our access engagement for audiences - BSL, captioned, audio described, relaxed performances etc - to make sure that our marketing networks are current and as far reaching as possible and we are also working on new initiatives as the digital platform becomes one of our main forms of communication.
- Improving and maintaining our theatre spaces and our health and safety procedures is another major priority. We want our venue to feel loved and looked after so that is a welcoming environment for our audiences and artists. There is a programme of work continually in motion for both cosmetic improvements and unseen essential infrastructure refurbishment. Major expenditure is included in our future capital works plans and one area of particular concern is the safety curtain in the main theatre. We have carried

out some essential urgent works this year and we will continually be planning for the next phase of improvements.

### 3. **Conclusion**

As shown above, the Theatre department ensures that its programme contributes to the delivery of the organisation's Strategic Plan.

As in every year, we have learned a great deal. The economics of the arts continues to be challenging and it's important that we continue to work to a flexible business model, remaining alert to opportunities for sharing risks, offering attractive rental seasons to commercial companies, and being fleet of foot in order to respond to late planning.

This year Theatre has managed to maintain a balanced, high profile programme against a landscape of uncertainty and reduced support from international governments to support companies' touring initiatives to the UK, at the same time as striving to keep the programme fresh and relevant and responsive to unpredictable trends in theatre-going.

The challenges and competition to us from our peers grows ever keener and we must remain on the front foot and respond, pro-actively and in a positive spirit, to not be left behind.

Our artistic vision is strengthened by our central mission statement and strategic objectives. Within this strong framework we can present a clear and coherent story. The work itself aims to be of a quality that can square up to any competition, and we are privileged to have formed close bonds with many pioneering theatre makers whose regular presence in the programme helps us grow and sustain a loyal, curious and hungry audience.

Around this stable core we are germinating the seeds of new talent, supporting emerging artists and theatre professionals and introducing into the programme exciting work by innovative and risk taking international artists.

*"Some people say theatre will not survive the 21st century, I say it will be the art form. Why? Because it is live. It is a world of magic. Theatre is a venue and we can do whatever we want in it. If you don't want to take risks, don't be in the theatre. The same, perhaps, is true of life." Ivo van Hove*

*"The Barbican... has set itself up as London's foremost home of international collaborations and co-productions, and is one of the most essential theatrical addresses in London these days..." The Stage*

### **Questions:**

- a) Does the balance between own promotions and rentals feel seamless?
- b) How does the Barbican maintain its position as leader in the field in the face of growing competition in the artistic landscape and how are we to deal with the impact of the changing world around us?
- c) What else could we be doing to support emerging artists?

## **Appendix 1 - Details of the Theatre and Dance programme outline for 2017 (already launched)**

*"First things first, there are unequivocally more than seven reasons to be excited about the Barbican Centre's theatrical offerings for early 2017. There are many. So many, in fact, that to try and list them for you would be pointless; your finger would seize up before you scrolled that far through the article."* **Theatre.London, Matthew Amer, Season announcement – 7 reasons to be excited about the Barbican's new season**

### **Creating an ambitious international programme**

- The year starts with the annual **London International Mime Festival** - our co-curated spotlight on object, visual and physical performance. This year we have a main stage show from Belgium and offerings in the Pit from Italy, France and Greece.
- Two eagerly anticipated productions follow; Shakespeare's **Richard III and Beware of Pity**, from the celebrated **Schaubuhne Berlin** ensemble which link their artistic director **Thomas Ostermeier** with one of the Barbican's most important regular artists **Simon McBurney**. The latter production will be co-presented by **14-18 Now**, continuing our relationship, as the play, based on the seminal novel by **Stefan Zweig**, looks at the reasons behind the start of WWI.
- The **RSC** will return for an 8 week season across Summer 17 with their groundbreaking, digitally enhanced **Tempest**, starring **Simon Russell Beale** in a 5 star performance as Prospero.
- **Cheek by Jowl** end their worldwide tour of **The Winter's Tale** with a season in Silk Street Theatre.
- Creative Learning has the following Weekend Labs planned for 2017: with **Boy Blue Entertainment, Ballet Black, Thomas Ostermeier, Cheek by Jowl** and a series of post and pre-show talks contextualising the productions.
- We are continuing to work in partnership with a wide variety of national and international theatres and producing companies. Annual partnerships with **LIFT, DU, Mime, 14-18 Now** bring new voices into the programme; inspiring conversations with **Bristol Old Vic, Warwick Arts Centre, Home and the International Festival in Manchester, the Playhouse and Unity theatres in Liverpool and Lowry Salford** and new leadership at **the National Theatres of Wales and Scotland and Dublin's Gate and Abbey Theatre** will provide us with new and varied opportunities.

### **Creating interdisciplinary programmes**

Interdisciplinary programmes are cross-arts programmes which make the most of our multiple art-forms and are a clear expression of our vision of arts without boundaries. They create a coherence across our programme and encourage audience to make journeys of exploration within the programme itself and they entice new audiences into the building. They ensure the distinctiveness of our



Barbican programme as we can work in a way and on such a scale, which very few other organisations can achieve.

The 2017 programme, across the art forms, focuses on the themes of **Film and Dance** through the eyes of experienced and emerging theatre makers and choreographers. The Theatre and Dance team is contributing to these interdisciplinary programmes with the following events:

### **Film**

A 4 production residency from **Toneelgroep Amsterdam**, a company who have a very strong cinematic aesthetic in their work, helmed by **Ivo van Hove**. The residency will include the revival of two Dutch language projects plus a new English language home-grown production, that are inspired by film or have film techniques at their heart;

In March, the return of **Roman Tragedies** based on Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Coriolanus and Antony & Cleopatra. It broke new ground with its innovative use of live filming and audience presence on stage.

*"The Barbican and Toneelgroep Amsterdam have proven to be a perfect match. Our relationship started in 2009 with the presentation of Roman Tragedies, a 6 hour Shakespeare-marathon in....dutch. We will present the same production again in 2017 because The Barbican believes in the development of repertory, as we do and in the artistic strength of a modern repertory company, which we try to be. The Barbican also believes in deepening relationships rather than presenting one trick ponies. We are proud to be part of the great international family of theatre companies from all over the world. It challenges us in the best way thinkable." Ivo van Hove*

In April, we will produce **Obsession** based on the first film by **Luchino Visconti**. Made in 1943 it started the new vogue of neo realism in cinema. This stage version will star **Jude Law** with two other British Actors and three actors from the Toneelgroep ensemble. It will premiere at the Barbican and then tour to **Wiener Festwochen, Le Carré in Amsterdam** as part of the Holland Festival, and **Les Théâtres de la Ville in Luxembourg**.

Finally in September the residency will close with a double bill of **After the Rehearsal/Persona** based on two films by **Ingmar Bergman** that examine the fine line between imagination and reality.

**Barbican Box 2017** will be delivered in partnership with **Ivo van Hove** and **Toneelgroep Amsterdam** and the design process will be led by Ivo, designer **Jan Versweyveld** and dramaturg **Peter van Kraaij**.

The theme of this year's Box is **Film**, and it will be the artistic starting point for the Box both in terms of content and form. The Box's main focus will show some of the key drivers, preoccupations and ideas that are central to Ivo's and the company's work, which will take the form of a number of objects from which students will be inspired to devise their own piece of theatre.

The Box is accompanied by a package of resources to support teachers and students through the devising process, including a weekend for teachers, learning resources, free theatre tickets, artist workshops in each school, and an opportunity to perform at the Barbican and see other participating schools' work. The project reaches over 25 secondary schools in east London, with 500 students aged 11-19, and 50 teachers participating each year.

### **Dance**

*"Dance is beyond words – you have to negotiate and co-operate through people's energies and bodies"* **Wayne McGregor, choreographer**

2017 will see a strong dance season launch the year, with companies from the UK, Spain, Japan, Italy, USA and Belgium all presenting fresh and vital choreography new to London. These innovative works intriguingly incorporate laser design, dancing robots, spoken word, contemporary and classical music and hand made instruments.

**Darren Johnston and Julie Cunningham** are emerging choreographers to whom we offered a week of r&d each in order for them to explore ideas for new choreography. Darren worked in the main theatre on **Zero Point** and Julie in the Pit on **To Be Me**. We offered access to end of the week sharings to Barbican Members and industry colleagues and the results from both dance makers was so exciting that we have co-commissioned each of them to present the final pieces of work in this Spring 17 season.

*"I approached the Barbican with an idea I had for a piece and asked if I could use the studio space. Instead, I was offered the use of the Pit Theatre for a week to do some R&D. It was an incredible opportunity as it gave me a focused time and space in which to create new work. The team were also really supportive. Having the chance to show the work to an invited audience of Barbican and Young Barbican members allowed us to get feedback that we could take to the next phase of making. Being programmed for the Spring season at the Barbican means so much to me as I am able to continue my relationship with this very special institution in my development as a choreographer. The work that the Barbican produces has always inspired me as an artist because of its originality and creativity. I am excited to be a part of its past, present, and future."* **Julie Cunningham, dancer and choreographer**

**Ballet Black** will return for the second year of a 3 year residency with a triple bill including a new work by award winning choreographer **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa** which we have co-commissioned.

*"Ballet Black made its debut at the Barbican in March 2016. Making the move to this main stage was a transformative event in BB's history, exposing us to a much wider audience and teaching us valuable lessons in preparing and marketing a season on a much larger scale than we had previously done. From my first meeting with the Barbican to opening night and our sell-out run, I and everyone in Ballet Black felt incredibly well supported by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic team. I am delighted that our relationship with the Barbican will continue in 2017, supported with a brand new commission by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and very much look*

*forward to finding new ways in which to work with the Barbican."* **Cassa Pancho MBE, Founder & Artistic Director, Ballet Black**

The Dance season will also include:

- A world premiere of a triple bill by our Artistic Associates **Boy Blue Entertainment**
- A first visit to the Barbican by **Royal Ballet** linking to our **Philip Glass** Birthday season with a dance opera piece created by **Javier de Frutos** based on Cocteau's **Les Enfants Terribles**.
- **Blanca Li's** mischievous **Robot**
- **Michèle Anne de Mey** and her company return with **Kiss and Cry** in which dancing hands and tiny objects result in a live film being made on stage.
- And our Visual Arts colleagues are extending the dance programme into Barbican gallery spaces, as a development of initiatives borne out of Station to Station, led by **Siobhan Davies** and **Trajal Harrell**.
- Celebrated Quebecois **Robert Lepage** makes a welcome return to our stage telling the touching tale of his early family life in **887**.
- **Chilly Gonzales** and **Jarvis Cocker** work together in the Theatre for the first time on **Room 29** that we are co-presenting with our Music department colleagues. We are in continual dialogue with our Music colleagues on several future projects which will include using the Pit theatre for the next iteration of **Sound Unbound**.

*"...It shows how much of a key, global player the Barbican has become for theatre.....the Barbican's position as a London theatre is just as impressive as its long-held status as a hub for international productions."* **The Stage Award nominees' announcement (nominated for Best London Theatre 2016)**

### **Transforming Public Spaces - Foyers**

The Incubator, working with Theatre colleagues, has commissioned and delivered two new installations for the foyers as part of the Transforming Public Space strategic project. They each have a strong Connecting Arts and Learning component: Seth Scott, the lead artist on Edgelands, is a recent graduate of GSMD, and let's take a walk involved 5 workshops with participants from East London.

- **Edgelands by Seth Scott with Hannah Bruce and Co**  
A composition of sound found from around the Barbican Estate and new writing. Using a newly installed iBeacon network – a series of sensors positioned across four levels of the Barbican's public spaces – soundscapes will be triggered directly from audiences' mobile devices that will allow them to explore the history of the site and its radical design. In the future we will be able to commission further artworks that engage with the new network, as well as using it for wayfinding, marketing and accessibility.

- **let's take a walk by non zero one**

An audio experience devised with members of the public that explores how strangers can connect with one another and how we form our points of view. Participants can select a story to follow from a screen (accompanied with headphones) placed outside the Fountain Room, and then explore the Centre through the storytelling.

Toni Racklin

Head of Theatre

T: 020 7382 7374

E: [toni.racklin@barbican.org.uk](mailto:toni.racklin@barbican.org.uk)