

<b>Committee(s):</b> Barbican Centre Board	<b>Date(s):</b> 23 January 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Theatre & Dance Annual Presentation	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Louise Jeffreys Artistic Director <b>Report Author:</b> Toni Racklin Head of Theatre & Dance	<b>For Information</b>

### Summary

This report provides an overview of the Theatre department's strategy and planning, in the context of the Barbican's Strategic Plan and the City of London Corporate plan.

It examines our current developments and the challenges and opportunities for the presentation of our programme and how we strive to maintain our profile in an increasingly competitive landscape.

The full scope of the Barbican Strategic Plan and the City of London Corporate Plan give a strong framework for 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 Culture Mile, and the Creative Alliance with the Guildhall School, and within our community of east London.

This public report is divided into the following sections:

- 1) Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives
- 2) 2018/19 season review and The Art of Change
- 3) 2019/20 programme plan and Life Rewired
- 4) Opportunities for emerging talent
- 5) Artistic Associates
- 6) Equality and Inclusion
- 7) Conclusions

### Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

## Main Report

*"The unexpected consequence of the digital revolution has been a new craving for live experiences. The live experience is irreducible and has not essentially changed for millennia. I think so much is available online now it's worth more being in the same room as someone, being in the real place at the real time, flesh and blood".*

**Sir Nicholas Hytner**

*"Racklin continues to oversee a fresh, impressive and eclectic programme that brings some of the world's finest theatremakers to the brutalist venue in the City of London"* **The Stage**

### 1. Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives

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

*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, and Michael Clark Company.*

*Through our activities we hope to inspire more people to discover and love the arts.*

*We work in collaboration with community organisations to contribute to the programming of 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, create online content and offer access to artists and directors.*

*We also present an innovative offer for families and younger theatre-goers, and respond in innovative ways to the Centre-wide special themed seasons and Culture Mile events.*

### 18/19 in numbers:

- Number of companies performing on our stages: 41
- Number of countries represented: 11 - UK, Netherlands, Australia, France, Burkino Faso, Belgium, Ireland, USA, Spain, Sweden and Russia.
- Number of own promotion weeks: 42 (active weeks in Main Theatre & Pit & Silk St)
- Number of commercial rental weeks: 32
- Number of own promotions: 32
- Number of own promotion performances: 186
- Number of rental productions: 9

- Number of rental performances: 145
- Attendance for our own promotions (Main Theatre and Pit) sold to date 48,435
- Attendance for rental shows (Main Theatre) sold to date 109,250

## a) How we programme

**City of London Corporate Plan : Contributing to a flourishing society**  
**Barbican Objective: Inspiring more people to discover and love the arts**

The Theatre and Dance programme plays an active role in delivering the strategic objectives of the Barbican as a whole. We also respond to the aims of the City of London Corporate plan. The following describes how we build our programme and support the day to day infrastructure that is required to deliver each season.

Revisiting last year's priorities for the future, this report gives us an opportunity to look at the progress we've made, take stock of the new challenges that have arisen in a changing landscape, and reflect on how we are performing against the Barbican and City of London objectives. We build the programme with these objectives in mind, as well as our strong desire to maintain our fruitful and important relationships with the Barbican's many visiting artists.

We are the leading home for foreign-language drama on an epic scale, as well as mid-scale contemporary opera, musical theatre and innovative dance. We are not tied to one art form and are available to welcome a variety of work to create an annual programme that has coherence. We can respond to opportunities and are flexible and welcoming, supported by a committed staff who relish the challenges that our programme demands.

We provide our audiences with regular appearances by their favourite visiting companies, building on recognition and loyalty. These are the building bricks of each season. As often as budget allows, we contribute financially to the creation of new work.

Each year, brand-new companies are introduced into the season to give fresh perspectives on their respective art forms. Their on-stage stories speak across the programme, as well as reflecting the world around us. We respond to unsolicited submissions, word-of-mouth recommendations, and travel to international festivals and venues, always with the aim of seeking out world-class theatre and building new partnerships.

The Pit is our space for developing emerging artists and experimental work. Its programme is at the heart of reflecting the 'here and now' of our priorities and thematic strands, showing what theatre can be. The new format and identity of Pit Parties provides room for new voices and new ways to curate work.

Our response to the cross-arts annual themes is presented on both our stages – on

the large scale by well-known artists, and equally, on the small scale in experimental forms. As the programme builds from one season to another, there is often a legacy from one annual theme into a subsequent year.

We create one home grown production approximately every other year, always in co-production with major international partners. This allows us to reverse the journey, thus profiling the Barbican abroad. We aim, where possible, to programme named actors, although it is becoming harder to get them to commit, as they prefer to wait for TV or film offers.

Our summer rental spot can offer a home to work that doesn't automatically fit into the mainstream of the West End. This offers the Centre important potential value on primary and secondary income strands and brings new audiences into the Barbican. We continue to broaden our search in order to build these new commercial relationships.

Our aim is to present the best theatre for our audience, retaining our loyal visitors, while developing and growing attendance year on year. We strive to respond to the interests of our audience and are working to improve their all-round experience of the Barbican and their journey through the programme, reaching out to them via our other platforms, such as Open Fest, Beyond Barbican, Culture Mile, and lunchtime performances.

We aim to create a distinctive rhythm to the year so that audiences come to know where to find their favourite artists and the important festivals we host each year – London International Mime Festival, LIFT, Dance Umbrella, and of course the RSC's winter residency.

## **b) Media Relations - overview of the arts press**

In print, the possibility for arts stories to make the national newspapers continues to be limited but there is an increasing number of niche websites that have the potential to reach our audiences, gaining visibility. Reader engagement with online content continues to be important and comments, shares, and likes are influencing the direction of journalism.

The Guardian, which continues to publish excellent arts coverage, has expanded its pool of critical voices over the past year to better reflect its range of readers and their geographical locations and our work is often featured in its pages. The recent Merce Cunningham article had 4.4k shares which resulted in a spike in bookings. The high number of shares encourages papers to publish similar articles in the future. Our productions also feature regularly in the weekly 'top picks' in the dailies, Sundays and Time Out.

In broadcasting, the BBC's continues its commitment to cover the arts with a number of significant dance documentaries last year, including the full length transmission of Michael Clark's **to a simple rock n'roll....song**.

## **c) Marketing**

### **i. Advertising**

In line with the lessening impact of print, and our move to being digital-first, our advertising spend continues to be mainly online, although we do use outdoor formats to support our big theatre projects to increase profile. We are also investing more time and money in creating digital content such as videos and articles which can then be distributed through online channels.

### **ii. Young Barbican and Membership**

Young Barbican accounted for 3,668 tickets bought for the theatre programme across the 18/19 year and Membership responded well to the launch of the new Spring 19 season last October with a spike of over 600 new memberships bought in the first two weeks.

### **iii. Ticket pricing**

We offer a range of prices to suit all pockets and we have maintained a low price ticket of £16 in areas of the main house, with a top price of £60 for some of our own promotions and under £20 in the Pit. For some shows audiences always seek out best seats and our box office team are skilled in the mechanics of yielding as evidenced by our box office success in this financial year. Over the past year we have increased our pricing and targets, wherever possible, to reflect both the status of the artists we are presenting and to help support the ever increasing cost of presenting the work. The Encounter, Town Hall Affair, Boy Blue, Maladie de la Mort and Ballet Black are all examples of shows where we managed the popularity of the production to maximise box office income opportunities through effective marketing campaigns and box office yielding.

### **iv. Audience Experience**

We seek to deepen the experiences of our audience through engagement with our building and new approaches into the programme which are supported by our very skilled staff. On a daily basis, staff members are working hard to combat the inappropriate use of mobile phones and cameras during performances; to encourage good behaviour by exuberant school parties and to support and improve access requirements for our audience.

## **c) Technical update.**

Since last year's report the works on our safety curtain and lorry lift has been carried out. Everything is working much more efficiently but continues to be closely monitored. We have a new Systems manager in place who works closely with the Centre's Project Team to keep our hardworking venue in good order, despite challenges from flooding and pest visits. We work across departments to share knowledge and expertise on H&S best practice in our technical areas.

## **d) Theatre Staff**

The Theatre department benefits from a stable, passionate and committed team of staff across all roles. We have built developmental opportunities within our structure; opportunities for more staff to contribute to the programme, to lead on the

delivery of shows, to work offsite and on international tours. We have established an Administrative Trainee position and use a variety of new networks to recruit this and other posts as diversely as possible. Past Trainees have gone to exciting full-time roles at Artichoke, the Young Vic and BAC.

We also continue to offer two annual technical full-time apprenticeships, attached to the Backstage Centre in Purfleet. The City of London Adult Skills and Apprenticeships help with recruitment and college checks. Past apprentices have gone on to professional full time jobs in commercial theatre, world-wide touring, the National Theatre, and roles within our own Systems and Lighting departments.

## **e) Finances**

**City of London Corporate Plan : Supporting a thriving economy - we are a global hub for innovation in finance and professional services, commerce and culture**

**Barbican Objective: Mixed Income Generation in order to create sustainable growth.**

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, the creation of new work, and workshop opportunities to help support the growth of new talent.

As the work on each season unfolds and schedules are firmed up, we interrogate costs and work hard to find possible savings on accommodation, per diems and technical costs. Flight costs are estimated at the outset, but can reduce significantly if deals are available. However we are noticing that the cost of hotels, flights and freight are on the increase, so where we have to accommodate a price hike on one show we aim to find additional savings elsewhere to balance the budget out. Similarly, we work continuously to find opportunities to increase income. This may come from box office income, grants, or partners who are prepared to share more of the risk with us.

Relationship building and nurturing are key to this process and we are developing some very strong and supportive partners year on year.

Theatre works closely with our Development department on direct applications to cultural institutions and Embassies to raise funds to support the programme and relieve subsidy and in 2018/19 we successfully raised funds from the following:

Australian High Commission for three projects

Culture Ireland for two projects

The Romilly Walton-Parkinson Memorial Fund for bold, innovative and challenging theatre donate annually for Lunchtime theatre and other free and accessible events. We also provide space each year in the Theatre for our colleagues in Visual Arts to present Architecture Talks, for Business Events to run corporate events and for the Music department to lead on those of their projects that require a more theatrical

setting. This space sharing allows each of us to generate income in our bespoke ways, to widen the audience visiting the Barbican, and is a demonstration of how we can work successfully, cross arts, under one roof

## 2. 2018/19 Season review and The Art of Change

**City of London Corporate Plan: Shape Outstanding Environments - inspiring enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration**

**Barbican Objective : Creating an ambitious, international programme that crosses art forms with outstanding artists and partners.**

The following are some of the productions that were delivered in this 2018/19 financial year and which performed particularly well against financial and audience targets. They provided opportunities for regular audiences to see much-loved directors and companies back at their Barbican 'home' and for us to nurture a generation of first-time visitors. First-time visits across the year were at a healthy 58%, which remains steady against last year.

We brought back two of our most popular titles from previous years for second runs. Repeat seasons wouldn't work for all shows but evidence pointed strongly to audiences having an appetite to revisit these two critically-acclaimed productions, or to come for the first time, based on the strength of reviews and peer word of mouth:

- **Complicité's The Encounter** directed and performed by **Simon McBurney**, inspired by **Petru Popescu's** novel **Amazon Beaming** and; **Boy Blue's** Olivier award nominated dance piece **Blak Whyte Gray** which recently returned from its highly anticipated and successful debut at New York City's Lincoln Center. (Both shows are Barbican co-commissions)
- During the Linbury Studio's refurbishment closure we welcomed the **Royal Opera** and the **Royal Ballet** for two annual seasons: They presented the world premiere of **Coraline**, an opera based on the story by **Neil Gaiman**, composed by **Mark-Anthony Turnage** and; **Elizabeth** starring its former Principal ballerina, **Zenaida Yanowsky**, choreographed by **Will Tuckett**. (Rental). This relationship has now sadly ended as the companies return to their new home, but the strong links we forged during that time has enabled us to plan for bespoke new collaborations in the future. The companies' regular audiences followed them loyally to the Barbican and were thus introduced to our programme, whilst we brought a new audience of Barbican patrons to the work of these two prestigious companies.
- The Barbican audiences' appetite for contemporary approaches to classical ballet is a strand we are developing further in our programme; **Cassa Pancho's Ballet Black** returned for their 4<sup>th</sup> visit with a **Double Bill** and their dancers also appeared in **Viviana Durante Company's** homage to **Kenneth MacMillan, Steps Back in Time**, accompanied by dancers from **The Royal Ballet** and **Scottish Ballet**.

Other key international productions on our stage which made their mark were: The UK premiere of **The Second Violinist**, a dazzling contemporary opera from Ireland's **Landmark Productions** and **Wide Open Opera** written and directed by **Enda Walsh** and composed by **Donnacha Dennehy**. This received the prestigious Fedora Generali Prize, it was also the winner of Best Opera at the Irish Times Awards. (Barbican co-commission);

- Our summer rental, **Weimar Cabaret**, was created by **Barry Humphries** working alongside **Meow Meow** and **The Aurora Orchestra**.
- Innovative director **Katie Mitchell** returned to the Barbican for her third visit, this time joining forces with, **Bouffes du Nord**, for a re-telling of **Marguerite Duras' La Maladie de la Mort** (Barbican co-commission);
- To commemorate the centenary of WW1 we presented **Memorial**, a large-scale music theatre project from Australia, based on the poem by **Alice Oswald**, with original music by **Jocelyn Pook**. The production was co-commissioned by **14-18 NOW**. (Barbican co-commission)

### **The Art of Change - the Barbican's cross arts annual theme for 2018**

Our cross-arts programmes, which make the most of our multiple art-forms, are a clear expression of our vision of arts without boundaries. They create coherence across our entire programme and encourage audiences to make journeys of exploration within it and also 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 and this central theme enables us to anchor our activity within a more compelling, overarching story and provides a curatorial thread and backbone to the programming year.

The Art of Change season explored how artists responded to, reflected and could potentially effect change in the social and political landscape. As a framework we used the following headings for our programme:

### **Changing times - these projects showed how artists bridged divides, shone a spotlight on issues and pioneered new ways of thinking.**

- New York's iconic theatre group **The Wooster Group** came to the Barbican for their very first visit with **The Town Hall Affair** based on the raucous 1971 debate on Women's Liberation featuring Germaine Greer, Jill Johnston, Diana Trilling and Norman Mailer.

*"...their Barbican debut, a deconstruction of the Town Hall debate directed by its co-founder, Elizabeth LeCompte, feels like a historic moment in its own right."* **The Guardian**

- **Taylor Mac's A 24-Decade History of Popular Music: The First Act**, reframed the social history of America through three decades of song. Co-presented with **LIFT**.



*"one of the most unforgettable shows I think I will encounter"* **LGBTQ+Arts**

*"Mac fosters togetherness like nothing I've ever known – and, boy, does the world need that right now"* **What's on Stage**

*"This production is the experience of a lifetime"* **A Younger Theatre**

### **Changing perceptions - work that celebrated our differences and provided a platform for voices from communities currently underrepresented in the arts.**

- Also from the US, **Split Britches' Unexploded Ordnances**, explored ageing and the unfulfilled potential in us all. (Barbican co-commission)
- **Let Me Play the Lion Too** from **Told by an Idiot**, used their trademark working practices to tackle the lack of diversity on stage in Britain today.
- The Australian theatre company **Back to Back Theatre** returned to the Barbican with **LIFT** for **Lady Eats Apple**, created and performed by the company's ensemble with perceived intellectual disabilities.
- Also from Australia artist **Jodee Mundy's** multi-sensory performance project, **Imagined Touch**, explored the fascinating world of Deafblind culture.

*"remarkable for its genuine immersion of the senses... Trust, vulnerability, connection, joy, intimacy, surprise, difficulty: Imagined Touch gives us a sort of user-friendly, encounter-driven taster of the daily lives of deafblind people".* **Exeunt**

**Transpose** featuring **C.N. Lester** and a host of artists celebrating queer and transgender culture returned for their annual residency;

*"The Barbican has become a space that lifts up trans art and brings the work to a wider audience - without asking artists to compromise, water it down, or box themselves into easy categories"* **Twitter**

- **Storme Toolis** and company brought **Redefining Juliet**, which asked challenging questions about perceptions of beauty and disability. We presented this in association with the **RSC**.

### **Changing society now - these projects sought to highlight contemporary issues, spark debate and ultimately effect societal change.**

- **Smack That (a conversation)** in which choreographer **Rhiannon Faith** shone a light on the complex subject of domestic abuse. In response to this season the Barbican became a J9 venue where our specially trained staff can provide first stop, practical information to victims of domestic abuse.

*"Bold, inventive and discomfiting, this is a work of urgent importance."* **The Stage**

- Finally **METIS'** presented their immersive experiment for the invention of the future, **We Know Not What We May Be**.

*“When it comes to the environment, time is fast running out. We have to accelerate our response to the threats. The arts has an important role in helping society to face up to the challenge of climate change and create a more sustainable future for us all.”* **Nicholas Serota Chair of ACE**

Our evaluation and research on the impact of our Art of Change season revealed a strong audience connection and the garnering of priceless column inches of coverage. We will take the learnings from this analysis and apply it to the shaping of our future annual themes but in itself it has had significant impact on our day to day approach to several areas within our own programme - we have made modifications to our accessible offer, our departmental sustainability by further recycling and repurposing used sets and equipment, and we now have a methodology for tackling abuse of power in our work place.

*“Are theatremakers kidding themselves when they talk of changing the world? Maybe a bit. It’s often said that no play ever changed the law of the land. But change needn’t be direct or even attributable……. If it changes the world, it does so by longshore drift. It changes minds. It changes lives. It changes people. Maybe then, we should talk in such terms - not of changing the world, but of making a difference”.* **Matt Trueman, Guardian**

### **3. 2019/20 Programme Plan and Life Rewired**

Our January to June 2019 season was launched on 27th September last year and sales to date are very encouraging. There are significant names in the season and powerful titles to draw in our regular audience as well as attracting newcomers.

- Cillian Murphy stars in Enda Walsh’s theatrical adaptation of Max Porter’s multi-award winning novel Grief is the Thing with Feathers. (Barbican co-commission)
- Also from Irish playwright and director Enda Walsh we present Rooms, an immersive installation of 5 interiors with stories narrated by a number of Ireland’s finest actors.
- We will bring the world-renowned Comédie-Française for their first appearance in the UK for nearly twenty years. Ivo van Hove, directs this stage adaptation of film-maker Luchino Visconti’s screenplay The Damned (Les Damnés) Our season will be generously supported by the French Institute, with whom we are working in close collaboration.
- Barbican regulars, Internationaal Theater Amsterdam (formerly known as Toneelgroep Amsterdam) will bring Medea, adapted and directed by award-winning Australian film and theatre director, writer and actor, Simon Stone.

*“This is world-class theatre. A first-rate adaptation, by a first-class director, powered by first-class performances. Exquisitely, brutally bold.”* **The Stage**

- On the day that the giant of US choreography, Merce Cunningham, would have turned 100, we will mark the event with the world premiere of Night of 100 Solos. 75 dancers in only three designated venues - the Barbican Theatre, BAM in New York and UCLA’s Center for the Art of Performance in Los Angeles - will perform a unique collection of 100 solos choreographed by

Cunningham over the course of his career, with live music and bespoke set design. (Barbican co-commission). There is considerable media interest in this unique anniversary.

- We introduce two new choreographers to our audiences this year: From the US **Pam Tanowitz** comes with her dance theatre work based on **TS Eliot's Four Quartets**. This will be the first time that the work, published 75 years ago, has been authorised for theatrical adaptation by the TS Eliot Estate. Tanowitz collaborates with Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho** and American visual artist **Brice Marden** in this union of dance, music and art. (Barbican co-commission) and;
- From Burkina Faso, choreographer **Serge Aimé Coulibaly** with **Kalakuta Republik** which examines the life of Nigerian activist, musical legend and political maverick, **Fela Kuti**.
- Rounding off our Spring dance season will be **Ballet Black** with two world premieres. (Barbican co-commission)
- **The Moscow Pushkin Drama Theatre**, will be making their first appearance at the Barbican in both the main theatre and the Pit, presenting a season of three productions; **The Cherry Orchard** directed by **Vladimir Mirzoyev**; **The Good Person of Szechwan** directed by **Yury Butusov**; and **Mother's Field**, directed by **Sergei Zemlyansky**. The season will be supported by Roman Abramovich. (Rental)
- The much anticipated annual **London International Mime Festival** will return with four shows; Olivier award-winning **Peeping Tom** ; UK favourites, physical theatre company **Gecko**; from France, **Le Théâtre de L'Entrouvert**, featuring a luminous ice puppet; and **Les Antliaclasses** a magical cabinet of curiosities.
- To close our season we have secured the Award winning musical by Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice, **Jesus Christ Superstar**, produced by **Regent's Park Open Air Theatre**. Running for eight weeks over the summer this will significantly contribute to both our primary and secondary income strands. (Rental)

### **Life Rewired - the Barbican cross-arts programme for 2019**

Life Rewired will interrogate how artists are responding to a time when technology is simultaneously enhancing our lives and challenging our identity by creating machines with human characteristics. It will explore how scientific breakthroughs can affect us at every stage of our life; from expert and first-person perspectives on IVF, to the personal and societal impact of lengthening life expectancy.

We are going to present projects which engage with the speed, scale, and complexity of 21st century scientific and technological change. As well as exploring specific examples of these changes, projects might also reflect on what these changes mean for the human condition, and on how artists can incorporate and respond to them in their work.

- We will present the European premiere of **Tesseract**, which uses technology to create a dance work which is part 3D and part live-filmed, choreographed by former Merce Cunningham Dance Company dancers, **Rashaun Mitchell** and **Silas Riener**, working with pioneering video artist **Charles Atlas**.
- **Ursula Martinez** returns to The Pit with **A Family Outing: 20 Years On**. In this wryly honest show with her mother, affected by early onset dementia, we see Mila and her daughter grapple with the march of time. (Barbican co-commission)
- **Marcus du Sautoy** and **Victoria Gould**, the creative research ensemble behind Complicité's sensational A Disappearing Number, perform **I is a strange loop**. This is part of a trilogy of work that Du Sautoy is presenting across Contemporary Music and Theatre.
- We are going to present **Fertility Fest** for the first time across multiple venues at the Barbican. It is the only arts festival devoted entirely to the subjects of modern families and the science of making babies. There will be performances and panel discussions with medical experts, artists and audiences looking at new models of family making and seeking to break taboos around IVF. Much of the above work will take place in the specially created **Life Rewired Hub** in the foyer and the season will include, on the main stage, our co-production with **Sydney Theatre Company**, **Avalanche** based on Australian author **Julia Leigh**'s memoir of her own experience of IVF. (Barbican co-commission)

#### 4. Opportunities for Emerging Talent

**City of London Corporate Plan: Contributing to a flourishing society - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.**

**Barbican objective: We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow through the commissioning of new work, showcasing emerging talent and collaborating with our Artistic Associates.**

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 Theatre team and the Creative Learning team work closely together on a variety of initiatives;

- **Weekend Labs**, intensive practical masterclasses, led by our leading international directors; **Post show talks** where audiences can get more of an insight into the work through open conversations between company members;
- **Open Labs**, where emerging artists can explore ideas during a supported week in the Pit Theatre. These are undergoing a period of research and re-

assessment so that we are clear about our direction to improve the experience of participants and the need to find pathways where work that comes out of this r&d process can secure funding to be finished and taken on tour, so that projects can be seen widely and artists can fruitfully develop. 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.

- **Barbican Box** is where school students work closely alongside leading theatre companies. This year Tamasha led on the Box creation and next year Slung Low, previous winners of our Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award and past contributors to our main programme, will lead on the initiative. Through this scheme the young people are empowered to make adventurous devised theatre, inspired by the contents of the box, culminating in a showcase back at the Barbican.
- **A Change is Gonna Come** was a night of electrifying poetry and spoken word presented by **Barbican Young Poets** working alongside young dancers from **Boy Blue**. We are considering our next steps for this work.

Together we are also working on presenting specially created performances that will work as successfully for families with very young children as for visiting school children with learning disabilities.

We contribute to our **Beyond Barbican** events, to **Open Fests** and we are exploring ideas for **Culture Mile** projects.

We have had first conversations with the newly appointed Director of Drama at the **Guildhall School of Music and Drama** about where our international programme could connect with the students, and have discussed opportunities where students could participate on some of our public facing performance platforms. We anticipate that further new opportunities will open up across our programmes and spaces and contribute greatly to the **Creative Alliance**.

### **The Pit Shakeup and the development of Pit Parties**

The research phase of the Pit Shake-up project was completed in mid-2017 and the first Pit Party took place that autumn, curated by Touretteshero. The Guardian described it as *'a salutary moment for the Barbican, but also for any big arts institution genuinely committed to diversity and inclusivity'*. Since then the Pit Party format has continued as a regular part of our programme. This year we welcomed the following artists to lead and curate the Party.

- **Transform from Leeds: Spirit of Change**
- **Studio 3 from Barking & Dagenham: Meat Raffle**
- **Playwright and poet Inua Ellams: Film and Poetry Hack**

Within completely individual frameworks each of these responded to our stated aims:

- To test the boundaries of the definition of theatre;

- Build new audiences by gaining a greater understanding of what they want and need from a theatrical experience;
- Take a leadership role in making the sector more diverse, bringing new voices into the programme;
- Meaningfully connect to other Barbican initiatives, such as the Open Lab, to the programme; create a clear vision for the Pit Theatre that is bespoke to the Barbican and adds to the theatre landscape.

## 5. Artistic Associates Update

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 but in each case this is now stabilised and they are all now NPO's. It is good for us to be closely connected to performance companies, whose expertise we can draw on, and who provide us with important content for our future programmes. Reciprocally we offer the stability of being the main commissioner of their new work. 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

This year saw our co-production of Michael Clark Company's latest work broadcast on BBC Four. We are currently in discussions with the BBC about future collaborations in 2019. Michael has started preliminary work on a new creation, which we will premiere in 2020. The company has been touring widely and Michael featured in a short film as part of the current Gucci advertising campaign.

### Cheek by Jowl

The company's Russian language **Measure for Measure** was presented at BAM in New York to a sold out run and strong critical acclaim. They presented their first Shakespeare production in the French language: **Périclès, Prince de Tyr** in April 18 and in June 2019 we will bring the company, this time working with the **Moscow Pushkin Drama Theatre**, with the UK premiere of Francis Beaumont's subversive comedy **The Knight of the Burning Pestle**. For the latter they will move back into the Barbican Theatre after their previous seasons in Silk Street Theatre (all of these productions are Barbican co-commissions). They will also return in 2020 with a vibrant co-production with the **Piccolo Theatre** of Milan.

**Declan Donnellan**, co-Artistic Director and founder of the company, was recently awarded the prestigious **Stanislavsky International Prize** for Outstanding Contribution to the Development of World Theatre.

### Boy Blue Entertainment

Last November, **Michael Asante** and **Kenrick Sandy** were awarded Honorary Fellowships from Guildhall School in recognition of their contribution to the school and their work in music and dance.

We successfully revived our co-commission of the Olivier nominated production, **Blak Whyte Gray** last autumn which then went on to tour Germany and the UK. The company made their US debut with this stunning work at Lincoln Center where the New York Times gave it a rave review and the venue has already invited them back for a return visit. We will also co-commission their new creation for autumn 2019.

*“There’s something cathartic when an entire theatre audience – of all ages, races, classes – erupts as one, clapping, whooping and sharing delighted ‘wows!’ with total strangers at the end of a show; and that’s what happened the moment Boy Blue’s Blak Whyte Gray came to an end on the Barbican stage. For what this truly extraordinary show did was create in that audience a commonality of admiration, awe and emotion that exploded in a spontaneous standing ovation.”* **Culture Whisper**

### **The Royal Shakespeare Company.**

We continue to enjoy our collaborative relationship with the **Royal Shakespeare Company** and 18/19 marked the fifth year of our annual RSC residency. Our plans together continue to strengthen and there are exciting future initiatives in the pipeline. Our respective Creative Learning teams continue to create joint programmes enabling us to deepen our relationship on all levels. This year will see another iteration of the popular **Barbican Backstage**, a full day which gives secondary school students aged 14-16 the opportunity to work practically behind the scenes with RSC and Barbican theatre technicians.

## **6. Our Equality and Inclusion plan – update**

**City of London Plan: Contributing to a flourishing society - People are safe and feel safe**

**Barbican Objective: Building a creative destination for our many audiences**

Equality and Inclusion is a regular agenda item at our weekly Theatre admin meetings and we have made the following progress on the Strategy that we implemented last year:

### **i. Artists**

We were aware that our commitment to Equality and Inclusion was not always the same as our international companies, whose own casts were not representative of their societies, but it is now evident that, responding to our influence, European companies like Schaubuhne and ITA are beginning to actively ensure their own companies are more diverse, as societies change and their drama schools are widening their intake.

We have included new clauses in our Visiting Company contracts advising on our procedures should we witness abuse of power, and we provide each visiting

company member with pocket information on what our procedures are should support be required.

We have made significant progress on redressing the gender balance across the programme, moving from 18 male-led companies and 9 female-led companies in 2017 to 15 male-led and 17 female-led companies in 2018, and growing the number of minority ethnic and/or disabled companies from 8 to 15. This significant shift is due, at least in part, to the *Art of Change* 2018 annual theme. LGBTQ+ artists are regularly represented across the programme. Our 2019/20 programme continues this pattern. And our diverse audiences continue to grow as the new work takes place on our stages.

*“a welcoming and very accessible venue”* **Lisa Hammond, actor and disability activist, Able Magazine**

## **ii. Audiences**

To ensure that our venues are as accessible and welcoming as possible, we have developed a list of ‘reasonable adjustments’, covering facilities such as accessible toilets, induction loops, companion tickets, more entry ramps and increased wheelchair spaces

Our foreign language shows are presented with English surtitles giving access to hearing impaired patrons, plus on average per season we include;

10 Live captioned performances

7 BSL Interpreted performances

For visually impaired patrons we aim for 10 Audio Described performances with pre-show Touch Tours

We are also working to include more Relaxed Performances in each season. These are specially adapted shows, modified for adults and children who might benefit from a more relaxed environment. Typically, they are for people who have autism, sensory communication disorders, learning difficulties and for people with dementia.

We create visual journeys of the venue and production in advance of visits, and we provide a break-out room near the Pit Theatre, where anyone who needs to can withdraw from the show for a while.

As a direct outcome from one of our *Art of Change* productions we have now received J9 status. This is a scheme to make arts venues a safe space for victims of domestic abuse.

## **iii. Workforce**

Our department regularly organises training in order to give our staff the necessary skills and confidence, and to help them understand the various underlying issues from different perspectives. We have implemented Disability and Gender Awareness training workshops from artists such as Touretteshero and CN Lester respectively, and this year we will be delivering further J9 training, as well as Dementia Awareness training to prepare for work we are presenting with and about elders. Receiving



training from theatre-makers has ensured that it is both engaging and practical for our staff.

Staff are also primed to respond to any occurrences of abuse of power they may experience amongst staff or visiting companies.

*"Major brands and companies in the UK should be at the forefront of empowering disabled people, and they are not. If the people on the ground fail to provide good customer service, we can try to get in touch with the big bosses, but who's to say they will listen? Positive action currently being developed, bridges the gap between inclusion and good customer service by empowering not only the disabled person, but the staff member assisting them".* **Sassy Wyatt, disability writer**

## 7. Conclusion

As demonstrated in this report, new insights have been gained into how we can best deliver the organisation's and City's strategic plan within the Theatre department.

With another year comes another set of challenges to the economic sustainability of the arts. As such, it is important that we maintain our agile and dynamic approach to the business, remaining open to new ways of taking risks and working with new collaborators. Our rental seasons have proved extremely attractive to commercial companies, and we have developed an adeptness at responding to late planning.

The Barbican theatre programme remains London's go-to destination for world-class work. Over the year we have been successful in offering a balanced, high-profile programme which has yielded healthy box office returns.

We have undertaken marketing strategies which have seen us build up trust with loyal audiences and also welcomed numerous new patrons.

Our artistic vision has been strengthened by our central mission statement and strategic goals, and we deliver work of a quality and calibre that is more than able to take on the competition. We are lucky enough to have made strong links with a myriad of pioneering theatre makers who regularly appear in our programme, helping us to maintain our coherence.

Equality and inclusion have become increasingly important and we are making continual improvements. The integration of Pit Parties has been hugely successful in giving a new identity to the Pit theatre, and we are hugely excited about the new relationship we are set to embark on with the Guildhall School.

We are committed to developing our contacts with the wider world, nurturing new talent, supporting emerging artists and theatre professionals, and introducing vibrant work into the programme by risk-taking artists reflecting our mission of arts without boundaries

While we await the impact of Brexit, we are focusing on our objectives and laying the groundwork for our 2020 season and annual theme, determined as ever to continue to lead in the market place in our own distinctive way.

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