

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Barbican Centre Board	17 January 2018
Subject: Theatre & Dance: Annual Presentation	Public
Report of: Director of Arts Toni Racklin – Head of Theatre	For Discussion

Summary

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.

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

The full scope of the Barbican Strategic Plan gives 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 Culture Mile, with the Alliance with the Guildhall School, and within our community of east London.

The report is divided into the following sections:

1. Our current position
2. Overview of the 17/18 Theatre and Dance Programme reflecting our brand messaging:
 - A) Toneelgroep Amsterdam Residency
 - B) Other key productions in 17/18 programme
 - C) The Pit
 - D) Lunchtime Theatre
 - E) RSC
 - F) Emerging Talent
 - G) Artistic Associates
 - H) Other activities
3. Our Future Priorities
4. Conclusion
5. PUBLIC Appendix 1 - Details of the Theatre and Dance programme 2018 already launched
6. NON-PUBLIC Appendix 2 - Details of the Theatre and Dance programme 2019 under embargo
7. NON-PUBLIC Appendix 3 - Theatre & Dance Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. NON-PUBLIC Appendix 4 - List of major preview arts coverage across 17/18 9. NON-PUBLIC Appendix 5 - Financial Summary and notes |
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Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

The Barbican is “A go-to destination for visiting international and British companies to call home. These have included Complicite 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

17/18 in numbers:

- Number of companies performing on our stages: 27
- Number of countries represented: 12 - UK, Netherlands, Australia, France, Canada, Japan, Belgium, USA, Italy, Ireland, Spain and Russia.
- Number of own promotion weeks: 34 (active weeks in Main Theatre & Pit)
- Number of commercial rental weeks: 27
- Number of our own promotion performances: 175
- Number of rental performances 128
- Attendance for our own promotions 76,767 sold to date
- Attendance for rental shows 94,078 sold to date

The Centre’s five strategic goals of **Customer Experience, Connecting Arts and Learning, Mixed Income Generation, Culture Mile, Audience Development** are reflected in the Barbican Theatre’s brand messaging:

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.

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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.

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:

- **Working closely with Visual Arts on dance companies and choreographers who we will support on their journey from gallery space into theatre space.**
- **Working with Cinema to make a contribution to the Film in Focus 2017 season with staged works inspired by iconic film directors such as Visconti and Bergman**
- **Working across all projects with our Creative Learning colleagues**
- **Working with BIE in supporting the presentation of aspects of their exhibitions in the Pit theatre every other year.**

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.

We have had the great good fortune to have been able to work with leading creative figures who are attracted to the Barbican by the quality of our programme and the level of expertise and technical support that they encounter here. Ivo van Hove, Simon McBurney, Robert Lepage, Katie Mitchell and others. But we are no longer alone in what we can offer them.

Context

The arts sector remains concerned by the uncertainties surrounding our departure from Europe and the impact on our wide ranging relationships. Europe has always been so beneficial, not simply in financial terms, but artistically and culturally, through ease of movement, forging artist exchange, touring and co-producing partnerships and new opportunities and we have yet to work out what our place at the table will look like. Sir Nicholas Hytner, in a recent interview, spoke forbodingly “*....if we have a collapsed economy, audiences will think twice, three times, before buying tickets in the new world.*” Sir Nicholas Serota in his summer speech said “*We need to be more open: and that means making the journey out to acquire more experiences, and to share our culture and our skills. Cultures that cut themselves off may become exquisite, like a rare breed of animal; but ultimately they stagnate and are irrelevant to the changing world.*” We feel more keenly than ever that our mission statement of Arts without Boundaries applies as our first priority and that our work in bringing international work to London is one of the strongest tools we have of maintaining our position.

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. New artistic directors move into Theatre Royal Stratford East, the Young Vic and the Globe in 2018 and there is keen interest in how they will change the offer. The directors at NT, and the Old Vic, are well into their strides now, setting out their visions for the future and we know where our challenges lie from those quarters; all eyes are now on the recently opened Bridge Theatre, led by Sir Nicholas Hytner and Nick Starr, which is the first newly built theatre in London for decades; Sadler’s Wells, Almeida and the Royal Court, surprise and excite audiences with new international choreography and re-interpretations of the classics and devised work, overlapping in several way with our own of theatre programme. The challenge for us is whether they may also draw away our audiences?

These key London venues challenge us to continually assess our position, making it harder to remain as distinctive as we have been in the past. It is clear we do not have one singular venue to which we are comparable. 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 and 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, which had its first public iteration in autumn 17. Here we aim to develop the talent of the future and to nurture it so that it continues to return to us and brings new work and new audiences.

We must also recognise that it is a compliment to our endeavours, that our international directors, dance and theatre companies are now being invited to work at these other London theatres. It is now 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 strength of our offer, 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.

We have recently been affected by the widespread allegations of sexual harassment across our industry. Here at the Barbican, our codes of behaviour are in place and reiterated to all our staff and, on a departmental level, we are working hard to ensure our theatre is a place where we can call out matters safely and address behaviour that is unacceptable.

As we move forward it important to note that our relationships beyond Europe continue to grow and develop and there are new links to South Africa, South America, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Canada and increasing bonds with Australia and the USA. To explore these fully requires time and financial investment so the results from these areas will take longer to come to fruition but it is an interesting path to be on. Out of this also comes a further awareness from commercial producers. They are interested in the opportunities our summer rental spot can offer to work that won't automatically fit into the mainstream of the West End. This is a strand of work we are actively nurturing, as it offers key potential value on primary and secondary income strands to the Centre and brings new audiences into the Barbican.

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 17/18 we raised approximately £100k from the following,

- Flemish Representation, the Netherlands Embassy in London and the Dutch Government for the Toneelgroep Residency
- Australian High Commission for Picnic at Hanging Rock this financial year (with a further commitment of support for three projects in 2018/19)
- Culture Ireland for Woyzeck in Winter (and a further commitment of support for two projects in 2018/19)
- Japan Foundation and GB Sasakawa Foundation for Ninagawa's Macbeth (and a further commitment for one project in 2019)

- The Romilly Walton-Parkinson Memorial Fund for bold, innovative and challenging theatre donate £5k annually in perpetuity which will be used for Lunchtime theatre and other free and accessible events.

Media Relations - an overview of the arts press

Traditional print media circulation continues to spiral downward, partly due to the internet giants (such as Facebook) siphoning off advertising. Print media is fighting back by making content available online however, increasingly, newspapers are following News UK's lead (which publishes the Times and the Sunday Times) by putting articles behind a paywall. The Financial Times and Telegraph provide free access to five articles per month but The Guardian continues to provide free access to its content whilst promoting its Supporter scheme.

Arts coverage in the newspapers continues to be squeezed and new websites are increasing filling this void, although writers can be transient due to the unavailability of remuneration. In this environment it is difficult to envisage from where the next generation of new critical writing talent will come. Theatres are increasing taking it upon themselves to set up their own young writers programmes, such as the Barbican's own Young Reviewers scheme mentored by a journalist from the Financial Times.

Opportunities for broadcast exposure are increasing with positive interest from BBC Arts and Sky Arts. This year, the popular Radio 4 daily arts programme Front Row received its inaugural television series with a second series being commissioned in the new year. Performance capture which is then live broadcast in cinemas and sometimes repeated continues to be extremely popular with the public and serves to support ticket sales for live. Our own production of Obsession was filmed by NT Live during the season here and broadcast very successfully across 2,000 cinemas in 60 countries.

Please see Appendix 4 for information on major arts coverage we have secured this year.

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. These digital tools allow us to be targeted and totally responsive without advertising, to increase spend where it's working, and halt campaigns where it's not.

Our Theatre brochure has always been an important sales tool as has our monthly Guide (now with an exciting redesign) both of which have delivered a high return on investment. 30,000 have been 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 the monthly Guide lands. But monitoring mailings show that the Guide recipients purchase consistently as the season goes on. Where we do see an instant reaction, is with our fortnightly emails which always deliver a sales spike.

Ticket pricing

The Ticket Pricing Group continually 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, as evidenced by our box office success in this financial year. 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. Over 17/18 and going forward, we have increased our top tiers of pricing to reflect both the status of the artists we are presenting and to help support the ever increasing cost of presenting the work.

Across the year we have seen an increase in Young Barbican Members. They are active theatre attenders and accounted for buying 2,805 seats between April to October last year.

A further 4,709 new full Barbican Members joined the scheme between April and October last year and 2,749 of them booked seats for the Theatre programme.

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 the stunning recent redesign of our website, ticket buying is a much simpler task combined with appealing visuals and informative background articles 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. Working together on our Open Fest weekenders and on our foyers throughout the year has opened up new platforms for discovery by our patrons.

Technical update

The Barbican's theatre thrills audiences each night with one of the most magical signals a performance is about to start: the simultaneous shutting of its self-closing doors.

Evening Standard, Jessie Thompson

A timetable of works is in place for the continuation of remedial work on our long-serving safety curtain.

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 formed the international touring party for Dark Mirror on its tour to Australia, Taiwan and most recently to the Lincoln Center in New York. Others formed the touring team for Obsession on its three European festival stops. Assistant Producers have been 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 through the Creative Access scheme and the Technical department continues to work with two annual apprentices (past apprentices have gone straight on to work in professional theatre including posts in the Barbican itself). We are able to provide expertise in all our disciplines to support visiting companies and our programming and technical advice is regularly sought by our international peers.

Diversity and inclusion in programming.

Please also see Appendix 3 for the Theatre and Dance Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

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 continue to present a collaboration with transgender artists, **Transpose**, curated by **C.N. Lester**, in the Pit for a three year series of work. Work by many leading and emerging LGBTQ artists has been a mainstay of our programme from the beginning.

We also present the work of several companies led by disabled artists including **Tourettes Hero**, **CandoCo**, **Back to Back**, **Told by An Idiot**, **Lisa Hammond**, **Jodee Myers** and **Storme Toolis**, 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, gender awareness and disability training workshops. A building survey is underway to examine whether a disabled toilet can be accommodated backstage for visiting artists and staff.

2. Overview of the 17/18 Theatre and Dance Programme reflecting our brand messaging

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

A) Toneelgroep Amsterdam Residency

Leading our Film in Focus year was a four-production residency from **Toneelgroep Amsterdam**, a company who have a very strong cinematic aesthetic in their work, helmed by **Ivo van Hove**.

March saw 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.

*One of the greatest theatre productions ever staged
Time Out, Andrzej Lukowski*

In April, we home-produced **Obsession** based on the first film by **Luchino Visconti**. Made in 1943 it started the new vogue of neo realism in cinema. Despite mixed reviews, the pre-sold-out stage version starred **Jude Law** with two other British Actors and three actors from the Toneelgroep ensemble. It premiered at the Barbican and then thence to **Wiener Festwochen, Le Carré in Amsterdam** as part of the Holland Festival, **and Les Théâtres de la Ville in Luxembourg**.

- 52 performances Barbican Theatre (audience attendance 34,508)
- 5 performance Vienna Festival, 10 performances Holland Festival,
- 4 performances Grand Theatre Luxembourg

Sky Arts South Bank Show made a bespoke documentary featuring rehearsals and interviews with Ivo van Hove and Jude Law. Viewing figures well exceeded the average.

NT Live transmitted a live broadcast of the play from the Barbican Theatre. This was an intense operation involving specially scheduled camera rehearsals over a number of days and the installation of cameras on tracks and cranes in the auditorium. Viewing figures were very satisfactory and the original broadcast and encores have been screened in over 2,000 cinemas in 60 countries.

Beautifully acted by all... it is imaginative, alienating and strangely compelling theatre

The Daily Express 4* review, Neil Norman

Finally in September the residency closed 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.

*One of the most visually brilliant pieces of theatre
Steve Dinneen, 5* review, City A.M.*

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

The theme of last year's Box was also **Film**, and it was the artistic starting point for the Box both in terms of content and form. The Box's main focus showed some of the key drivers, preoccupations and ideas that are central to Ivo's and the company's work to inspire students to devise their own piece of theatre. The project reached over 25 secondary schools in east London, with 700 students aged 11-19, and 50 teachers participating.

We are discussing future plans with the company for 2019 and are currently also in early talks with them as to the use of the Barbican Box with their partner schools in Amsterdam, which is in line with our intention to test the expansion of Barbican Box internationally.

B) Other key 2017 main stage international productions

Theatre magician, **Robert Lepage**, returned to perform his own autobiographical personal story about his relationship when a child with his father (the title of his show, **887**, was his childhood door number) that linked to a key period in Quebec's history.

It is magical... Lepage has you in the palm of his hand.

What's On Stage 5* review, Sarah Crompton

A very well received music theatre production from Ireland, **Woyzeck in Winter**, featuring **Patrick O'Kane** and **Camille O'Sullivan** that combines Buchner's play with Schubert's Winterreise.

it brilliantly unites two works that are masterpieces in their own right.

The Guardian 4* review, Michael Billington

The **Ninagawa Company** returned with the company's iconic production of **Macbeth** which was first seen in the UK in 1985. This was a moving and fitting tribute to director **Yukio Ninagawa** who died in 2016 and to a company that has visited us 14 times since the inception of our international programme.

The most beautiful Macbeth you will ever see

The Daily Telegraph 4* review, Dominic Cavendish

Rising Flamenco star, **Rocio Molina**, brought her own enthralling artistry and technical prowess back to our stage in her new show, **Fallen from Heaven**, collaborating this time with the four on stage musicians who combined the traditional sounds of flamenco with some phenomenal rock music!

Flamenco has always proposed a fierce and proud femininity, but as embodied by Molina in Fallen from Heaven (Caída del Cielo), it becomes a feminist scream, an elemental cri de cœur... It stops you dead, as the best art should

The Observer 5* review, Luke Jennings

We welcomed a return season of our latest co-commissioned project from the **Michael Clark Company**, **to a simple rock'n'roll....song** which received even

more praise than first time around. It was also filmed by the BBC to be screened later in the year as part of its arts strand.

What has always marked Clark's best work is its startling purism...a serene and airy solo is a think of absolute beauty...you go home with a five-star glow.

The Arts Desk, Jenny Gilbert

C) The Pit

The Pit theatre housed an exciting offer of small scale shows from corners of the world, but the main initiative, to now report on, is the outcome following the research into the Pit programming.

Touretteshero Pit Party: Brewing in the Basement

a participatory, fully inclusive, always relaxed celebration of difference...It was a salutary moment for the Barbican, but also for any big arts institution genuinely committed to diversity and inclusivity... Funny, utterly joyous, artful and political too.

The Guardian, Lyn Gardner

Project Outline

The Theatre team, working closely with colleagues from other departments, in particular Creative Learning, have been working to create a strategy for an aspect of the Pit programming that is true to the Barbican's vision of Arts Without Boundaries. Our five key ambitions are:

- 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;
- Meaningfully connect 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.

Reasons for the Project

The time feels right for a change. Initiatives such as the Open Lab are building new relationships with emerging artists, but without a clear next step for how we progress with their work. Meanwhile, by necessity of available resources, the number of Theatre and Dance programming weeks in the Pit has reduced and this has offered the opportunity of a radical rethink. It seems clear that connecting these work strands is a prudent step that will both create a coherent offer in the Pit and nurture these exciting new voices in a way that will benefit both the Barbican and the wider sector.

Research was undertaken with 5 small scale companies and the resulting format that our team devised to reflect this research is The Pit Party. This is a new model of programming we are experimenting with: two nights of activity in the Pit, curated by a guest artist/producer/organisation, sometimes to a theme. The structure is akin to a gig, with multiple artists performing short segments of work. Drinks are allowed in, and socialising time built into the structure both before, during (via intervals) and after the show, with artists sharing the same spaces as the public at these times.

Touretteshero, led by Jess Thom, were the chosen curators for this first trial run and they responded to the task thus:

"Touretteshero welcomes the aspiration, scale and flexibility of the key ambitions...[they] set a high standard for the Pit both within the wider operating context of the Barbican and the sector as a whole."

Here is marketing copy for the event which sold out for the whole weekend and exceeded financial target;

Touretteshero are going to mix things up in The Pit with an immersive theatrical event this Guy Fawkes weekend. Brewing in the Basement will be a catalyst for creativity; bringing everyone together to laugh, experiment and share ideas in a lively and collaborative environment.

The following are the access related adjustments/provisions that we made for the artists and audiences Touretteshero Pit Party: Brewing in the Basement:

1. BSL interpreted, live captioned, and audio described event.
2. The performances were all Relaxed
3. Social Stories created and made available to the public in advance
4. The number of wheelchair positions has been increased from the usual Pit set-up of 2 to 12
5. A break-out space was provided for patrons to relocate to a quiet area if needed
6. We worked directly with the schools attending the Friday sessions to tailor the events to the specific access needs of these attendees.
7. The pricing was reduced to a level in line with other Disability Arts events eg Heart 'n' Soul
8. All audience members entered via the same entrance i.e. the ramped doorway to make the experience of entering the space equal for everyone
9. There was a range of different seating available, so that audience members could move to where they felt most comfortable.

Activities over the weekend (in addition to the schools' sessions) included **Perky's** workshop to make your own wearables, **Kimatica's** interactive 'Magic Mirror' **Loki's** interactive maze, web installation and sensory tunnel, and **Sounds Like Chaos'** Clickbait Karaoke, Party Trick Stage and Make Your Own Emoji.

There were performances by **Touretteshero** – Hosts and curators led by **Jess Thom** a creative response to her experience of living with Tourettes Syndrome.

Sounds Like Chaos – Clickbait Karaoke

Amelia Cavallo – Audio-described burlesque (Amelia is a blind performer)

Captain Hotknives – Bradford's bipolar superstar musician

Donna Williams - deaf poet who uses English and British Sign Language. Working with such different languages has inspired a strong interest in translation and how her work can be made accessible to hearing and deaf audiences

The Fish Police – Band - Combining upbeat surreal pop imagery with glitchy beats.

Sufficiently Compact Mass – DJ



Touretteshero ✅ @tourettesher... 13h

As a child I went to the @BarbicanCentre's Children's Library every week with school. I don't think I'd ever have dreamed that when I grew up I'd dance through the Barbican's foyers with a load of kids and a brass band – as a job! tinyurl.com/ycq29vup



We are planning for future Pit Parties in 2018, working with a range of innovative curators. The model is flexible in that one Pit Party will work specifically with our 2018 annual theme, Art of Change and another will be a central feature in our forthcoming Open Fest weekend.

D) Lunchtime theatre in the Foyers - Transforming Public Spaces

The Incubator, working with Theatre colleagues, has commissioned and delivered a series of installations for the foyers as part of the Transforming Public Space strategic project. This year we were awarded a grant in memory of a longstanding producer colleague, and this gift in her name has enabled us to present a series of Lunchtime performances to animate the Foyers with live performance and tap into the work in our public spaces to date and also to link to the Pit Shakeup as it will provide another platform and stretch skills for the emerging artists working in the Open Lab programme.

The Preston Bill was performed by Andy Smith for two performances. A text based monologue, free for anyone in the foyers, for those who travelled especially for the performance, and those who 'dropped in'.

You and I Know performed by Candoco Dance Company for two performances. This was a short dance duet, performed by an able bodied dancer and a dance in a wheelchair with choreography by Arlene Phillips. Attended by approx. 150 audience including of families and under-5s.

We continue to plan for future Lunchtime activity, which will include international performances, artists' work in process, and work by Open Lab participants and Guildhall students.

E) The Royal Shakespeare Company

In addition to the key projects reported above, we continue to enjoy our collaborative relationship **with the Royal Shakespeare Company.** 2017/18

marked the fifth year of our RSC residency. Our plans together continue to strengthen and there are programme initiatives currently set out to the end of 2022. Our respective Creative Learning teams continue to create joint programmes enabling us to deepen our relationship on all levels.

The RSC have continued to work closely with our Cinema team to bring a series of productions to the screen under the banner of **Live from Stratford-upon-Avon**.

In January the Barbican partners with the RSC once more on the event **Barbican Backstage**, programmed in response to the plays in the season. The day gives 87 secondary school students aged 14-16 the opportunity to work practically behind the scenes with RSC and Barbican theatre technicians.

The company presented an additional summer season this year of the excellent **Tempest**, starring **Simon Russell Beale**, in a 5-star production that explored the innovative limits of digital design and technology.

The production was sold out for its 0 week season and the impact on our financial position was extremely positive.

The company's winter season of the four Roman plays; **Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, and Titus Andronicus**, sold considerably less well than previous winter seasons, which was disappointing.

In collaboration with our Creative Learning team, director **Iqbal Khan** ran a Weekend Lab in response to his production of Anthony and Cleopatra. The Lab sold out, with a long waiting list, and was a rigorous introduction for participants into the techniques used by the director in the rehearsal room.

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.

F) Opportunities for Emerging Talent

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 Weekend Labs which are led by our important international artists for practitioners help develop new perspectives on theatre practice; and our collaboration with the Creative Learning Open Labs is leading to some exciting initiatives for 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.

G) 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. 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 has now filled the theatre with two separate seasons of his stunning mixed bill of work with music by Eric Satie, Patti Smith and David Bowie. This year the company have taken the show to Luxembourg, Bern and will travel to the Perth Festival in 2018. We will co-commission their new work in 2019.

The company received an **Olivier Award** nomination for **Best Choreography** and there are nominations just received for the **National Dance Awards** in the categories of **Emerging Artist Award** for the company's principal male dancer, **Harry Alexander**, and also for **Best Modern Choreography**.

*"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***

Cheek by Jowl

The company continued an extensive world tour with their highly acclaimed, **The Winter's Tale**, and are shortly to present their French ensemble in Shakespeare's **Pericles**. This will be followed by a new work from their Russian Ensemble in 2019 which will be performed on the Barbican's main stage.

In conjunction with our Creative Learning team, Cheek by Jowl's Weekend Lab on **The Winter's Tale** attracted a broad range of local and international practitioners, 75% of them rated the Lab as "excellent", and 100% would recommend it to others.

Boy Blue Entertainment

Our co-commission of the company's triple bill, **Blak, Whyte, Gray** will return to us in autumn 2018 and from there will commence a wide reaching tour. Last summer, the show was invited to the Edinburgh International Festival to much acclaim. The company also curated a powerful young people's project in a local school, which the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon attended and thoroughly enjoyed! Their earlier work, **Emancipation Of Expression** has become part of the GCSE Dance syllabus and was filmed by celebrated director **Danny Boyle**. The work will shortly be screened on BBC. The company's artistic endeavour has gone from strength to strength in this past year and their work with young people continues to inspire. Invitations have been flooding in for **Mikey J Asante** and **Kenrick H2O Sandy** to work on outside projects as music director and choreographer respectively and last year they also completed a City of London commission, creating a music, dance and projection installation with students from Guildhall School, presented in the Guildhall Yard.

The company received an **Olivier Award** nomination for **Best Choreography** and there are nominations just received for the **National Dance Awards** in the categories of **Emerging Artist Award** and **Outstanding Male Performance**

(Modern) both for company dancer, **Dickson Mbi**, and also to BBE for **Best Modern Choreography**.

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.

H) Other Activities beyond our venues

- **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.
- **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 2017: **RSC**, **Turned on It Head** for practitioners working with very young children, the **Toneelgroep Amsterdam**, **Lauren Barri-Holstein** and **Cheek by Jowl**. Weekend Labs continue to provide practitioners from across London with unprecedented access to the world class artists and companies that visit the Barbican's stages. Through our bursary scheme, we are targeting practitioners who are:
 - from east London
 - from diverse backgrounds
 - at an early stage in their careers (16+)
 - working in a broad range of art forms and disciplines, often in a cross-arts, multidisciplinary way
 - working in participatory settings.
- **Tamasha R&D** In October 2017, Tamasha theatre company were provided with four days of R&D in the Pit theatre. The company worked with six young actors from inner city areas drawn from three companies who support the development of diverse young artists, including **Company Three**, **Generation Arts** and **Guildhall School of Music & Drama's BA in Performance and Creative Enterprise**, exploring creative responses to the seminal 1995 film La Haine and we aim to support their process with a second R&D in 2018.
- **Our Christmas family show** in 2017, **Snow Mouse**, 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. **Barbican Blocks** will run every day during the run of the show, providing visitors to the Barbican's Pit and their families the opportunity to engage in free creative play, and explore the architecture of the Barbican through a multi-textured adventure, fostering a sense of ownership over our spaces for our very youngest visitors.

- **Our Open Fest Weekenders** provide a wide range of participatory events for families with children of all ages to get involved in workshops, performances and access to behind the scenes.

3. Our Future Priorities

- We are committed to ensuring that rising costs and the existing funding model do not undermine 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, the RSC** and our **Artistic Associates** 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 a model of co-curatorship as we currently have in place with **Ballet Black, Pit Party, Transpose** and **Viviana Durante's** newly formed Ballet company, 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. Ongoing relationships include the **Vakhtangov Theatre from Russia, the Royal Ballet and the Royal Opera** while the Linbury Theatre refurbishment continues and **Fiery Angel** and there are several 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. Collaborative programming across the art forms with our peers is now an organic and continual process. The work on Pit Shakeup described in this report will transform the way artists and audiences engage in the future with our small black box space. 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**. The Theatre team are actively committed to contribute to the creation and delivery of **foyer events, family work for offsite- and in house Open Fest 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 newly launched

Culture Mile (our first project is described in the next section), with the extension of **Beyond Barbican** and we will support new initiatives endeavours through the **Alliance** with the **Guildhall School** and with the **Museum of London**.

- 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.

4. 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.

Over the course of this year we have managed to maintain a balanced, high profile programme, resulting in a healthy box office, against a landscape of uncertainty.

Our marketing strategies have helped us build up trust with our loyal audiences who are prepared to take risks on our programme.

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.

It has just been announced that the Barbican has received a nomination in the **Best London Theatre Category of The Stage Awards**. The ceremony to announce the winner will take place on 26 January. The supporting statement includes the following:

"The Barbican, London's multi-arts venue, has a commitment to international work that consistently makes it one of the most exciting spaces in London..... The venue's willingness to let work spill out of its spaces is also part of its appeal..... Yet again in 2017, the Barbican proved a real melting pot of some of the world's most exciting artists."

5. **Questions**

- a) With more rentals and co-curations in the programme, does the balance between own promotions and rentals still feel seamless?
- b) Is the Barbican maintaining its position as leader in the field in the face of growing competition in the artistic landscape, are we a strong brand and is our international remit clear enough?
- c) What else could we be doing to support emerging artists?

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APPENDIX 1 -Details of the programme outline for 2018, already launched.

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. Two cutting-edge companies from Belgium perform in the Theatre, **Peeping Tom**, winner of the Olivier Award two years ago, and **Toneelhuis/FCBergman**, and two French companies make their UK and Barbican debuts in The Pit. **Bêtes de foire - Petit Théâtre de Gestes** and **Lift Off (Je brasse de l'air)** is performed by **Magali Rousseau**. Also as part of LIMF 2018 is a screening of **Variety**, directed by **Karl Freund**, in Cinema 1, with live piano accompaniment by **Stephen Horne**.

From Australia, **Barry Humphries** presents his **Weimar Cabaret** - a risqué, sophisticated and seductive tribute to the jazz-infused music of the Weimar Republic featuring **Meow Meow** and **Aurora Orchestra**. (Rental)

The world premiere of **The Royal Opera's Coraline** based on the much-loved story by **Neil Gaiman** is composed by **Mark-Anthony Turnage**, directed by **Aletta Collins** with **Sian Edwards** conducting the Barbican Associate Ensemble, **Britten Sinfonia**. (Rental)

There is another chance to see the **The Royal Ballet's Elizabeth** starring its former Principal **Zenaida Yanowsky** (who has recently received a National Dance Award nomination for Best Female Dancer). Choreographed by **Will Tuckett** in partnership with playwright **Alasdair Middleton** this is a dynamic exploration of the monarch's life and loves. (Rental)

Eleven members of the internationally renowned string orchestra **Scottish Ensemble** collaborate with five contemporary dance artists from Sweden's **Andersson Dance** to reawaken Bach's timeless masterpiece, **Goldberg Variations - ternary patterns for insomnia**.

The UK premiere of **The Second Violinist** by Ireland's **Landmark Productions** and **Wide Open Opera** is a dazzling modern opera, written and directed by **Enda Walsh** and composed by **Donnacha Dennehy**, that tells the foreboding story of a life falling apart.

Cassa Pancho's Ballet Black appears twice in this season, with **Double Bill** which features **Cathy Marston** from the UK choreographing a stage version of **The Suit** (co-commissioned by the Barbican) inspired by **Can Themba's** novel and Portuguese choreographer **Arthur Pita** restages **A Dream Within a Midsummer Night's Dream**. Dancers from **Ballet Black** then appear in **Viviana Durante Company's** homage to **Kenneth MacMillan**, **Steps Back in Time**, accompanied by dancers from **The Royal Ballet** and **Scottish Ballet**.

Cheek by Jowl presents its first **Shakespeare** production in the French language: **Pericles (Périclès, Prince de Tyr)**. This Barbican co-production comes to London as part of a UK and international tour, directed by **Declan Donnellan**. During the run there is a Weekend Lab with Assistant Director **Marcus Roche**.

Picnic at Hanging Rock by **Tom Wright** is a retelling of **Joan Lindsay's** cult 1967 novel, which has haunted the Australian psyche for decades, directed by **Matthew Lutton** for Australia's **Malthouse Theatre** and **Black Swan State**

Theatre Company. The 1975 film version directed by Peter Weir was recently screened in Cinema 3.

Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, the celebrated choreographer from Belgium, makes his directorial debut with the **Bunkamura Theatre Cocoon Company** from Japan with the UK premiere of **Pluto** based on the iconic manga series **Astro Boy** by **Osamu Tezuka**.

We also welcome back **Vakhtangov State Academic Theatre of Russia** with **Smile Upon Us, Lord**, a UK premiere based on two novels by Lithuanian-born **Grigory Kanovich**. (Rental)

We welcome back the phenomenally successful production of **Complicité's The Encounter** directed and performed by **Simon McBurney** and inspired by **Petru Popescu's** novel **Amazon Beaming**. There is also a Weekend Lab led by Co-Director **Kirsty Housley** during the run.

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 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. Taking a coordinated and strategic approach to arts and learning activity that works towards a 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/ cycle.

A few individuals taking risks can change history.

Stephen Morewitz, PhD

The Art of Change season will explore how artists respond to, reflect and can potentially effect change in the social and political landscape and as a framing guide we have used the following headings:

A) Changing times - these projects show how artists have bridged divides, shone a spotlight on issues and pioneered new ways of thinking.

The UK premiere of **The Town Hall Affair** by New York's iconic theatre group **The Wooster Group**, based on the raucous 1971 debate on Women's Liberation featuring Germaine Greer, Jill Johnston, Diana Trilling and Norman Mailer.

Taylor Mac's A 24-Decade History of Popular Music: The First Act, reframes the social history of America through three decades of song. This European premiere is presented with **LIFT 2018**.

B) Changing perceptions - work that celebrates our difference and provides a platform for voices from communities currently underrepresented in the arts.

European premiere of US performance company **Split Britches' Unexploded Ordnances**, explores ageing and unexplored potential in us all.

Let Me Play the Lion Too sees acclaimed UK theatre-makers, **Told by an Idiot**, use their trademark working practices to tackle the lack of diversity on stage in Britain today.

UK premiere of a new production from Australian theatre company **Back to Back Theatre, Lady Eats Apple**, is created and performed by the company's ensemble of actors with perceived intellectual disabilities.

Also from Australia is artist **Jodee Mundy** whose multi-sensory performance project, **Imagined Touch**, explores the fascinating world of Deafblind culture. We will present this with **SPILL**.

A return of **Transpose** featuring **C.N. Lester** and a host of artists celebrating queer and transgender culture.

Storme Toolis will bring her company to the Pit with **Redefining Juliet**, which asks challenging questions about our perceptions of beauty and disability. We are presenting this with the **RSC**.

C) Changing society now - these projects seek to highlight contemporary issues, spark debate and ultimately effect societal change.

Smack That (a conversation) in which choreographer **Rhiannon Faith** shines a light on the complex subject of domestic abuse.

METIS' immersive experiment for the invention of the future **We Know Not What We May Be**.

A Change is Gonna Come is a night of electrifying poetry and spoken word presented by **Barbican Young Poets**.

Boy Blue Entertainment's Olivier award nominated dance piece **Blak Whyte Gray** examines themes of identity in contemporary society.