



# BACKSTAGE? ME?

**A one-day event looking at homelessness and theatre**

**Friday 11 April 2014, 10am – 5pm**

**Delivered in partnership by the Booth Centre and the Royal Exchange Theatre (Manchester), with contributions from Homeless Link, Streetwise Opera, Collective Encounters (Liverpool), Cardboard Citizens, The Performance Ensemble, Hidden Voices project (Wigan), Digital Sparks: Community Arts Northwest and Petrus (Rochdale), the Dukes Theatre (Lancaster) and Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service**

**Guest speakers Tony Lloyd (Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester) and Alan Lyddiard (The Performance Ensemble)**

This one-day event will explore the rich variety of conversations, progressions and reflections taking place with people living in poverty. Led by homeless participants – and the practitioners and organisations that work with them – the day will be made up of a mixture of practical workshops, group discussions, performances and short presentations. It will be a chance to listen, watch, debate and take part – a behind the scenes look at this area of arts practice. The outcomes of the event will form the basis of a good practice guide for organisations available later in the year.

#### The event will look at:

- How organisations can creatively support homeless people to rebuild their lives with a range of activity-based approaches
- The value of a partnership approach built on arts-based practice, as well as the challenges
- The benefits of offering progression opportunities, cultural attendance and participant led reflection as part of a partnership
- Providing a platform for participants and service users to have their say about theatre and the arts through theatre and the arts

#### The event is aimed at:

- Anyone working with adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, particularly organisations that are using or developing an activity-based approach to engagement
- Cultural organizations interested in working with excluded groups
- Local Authorities and Housing Associations who are looking for ways to engage with adults who have multiple and complex needs
- Individuals who are interested in theatre practice and professional development opportunities in this area
- Those currently working in the field of homelessness and theatre who feel they have something to offer to a discussion and debate
- People who are homeless, or at risk of / have experienced homelessness

The Royal Exchange Theatre and Booth Centre Community Leader Partnership is 3 year programme of work that started in September 2011. The theme of the third and final year is '**disseminate**', and *Backstage? Me?* will be followed in the Autumn by an online Good Practice Guide informed by the event.

*The Booth Centre / Royal Exchange Theatre partnership is supported by The Rayne Foundation and the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust.*

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## Full schedule

*Please note: User involvement will be present in all aspects of the day. The morning is being designed primarily with staff and workers in mind, and the afternoon with staff, workers, participants, clients and service users in mind.*

### 10 – 10.30am: Arrival and refreshments

#### 10.30 – 11.15am: Working in partnership isn't always partnership working

The day will start with a series of short presentations and films from The Booth Centre, Homeless Link and the Royal Exchange Theatre's Participation and Learning Team, as well as the Theatre's Directorate and the previous head of homelessness from Manchester City Council, providing a national, local, organizational and project perspective.

#### 11.15am – 12.15pm: Profiling practice 1 – The building blocks of the Royal Exchange Theatre / Booth Centre partnership

A chance to share, develop and focus on practice, including the activity based 'practice' of a non-arts partner (The Booth Centre). All workshops aim to present three distinct perspectives – the creative practitioner, the support worker, and the participant. Workshops A, B and C will be co-delivered with members of the Progression Group, a small group of more experienced Booth Centre participants who started working together in September 2012 and have engaged with a wide range of opportunities available at the Theatre as well as following a bespoke mentoring and creative development programme.

*Please specify which workshop you would like to attend when booking.*

- **Workshop A - Participant led reflection and evaluation:** Led by Ian Campbell (member of the Progression Group), Gerri Moriarty (evaluator for the partnership) and Kate Reynolds (Royal Exchange Theatre). We hope this session will enlighten you about the many ways in which we draw on the views of participants and professionals to find out how we're doing and what we might want to change. We hope you will contribute your ideas too! *Designed primarily with staff and workers in mind.*
- **Workshop B - Playing the game:** Led by Derek Smith (project worker from the Booth Centre) and Janine Waters (drama practitioner, who has worked with the Drama Group since 2008). Drama games are great at breaking the ice and encouraging people to work – and laugh – together. They're a useful first step to engaging with participants, and can also be used to focus performers before they go on stage. However they also serve a key function in identifying the personalities of those playing them as this session will demonstrate. *Designed primarily with staff and workers in mind.*
- **Workshop C - Coming to see plays:** Led by Andy Crossley and Steve Scallon (members of the Progression Group), Amanda Croome (The Booth Centre) and Ben Turner (Royal Exchange Theatre). This session will explore the benefits of and barriers to cultural attendance and offer some practical suggestions that organisations can take to make first time visitors feel welcome and want to come back. *Designed primarily with staff and workers in mind.*
- **Workshop D - Stand up:** Led by Kiri Pritchard Mclean. Comedy and storytelling was identified as an area of interest by both the Drama Group and the Progression Group as the partnership developed and this led to a number of stand-up sessions and some performances. Come and try your hand at sharing something funny – no experience necessary... but a sense of humour is useful! *Designed with staff, workers, participants and service users in mind; this session will run from 11.15am until lunch at 1.05pm.*

### 12.15 – 1.05pm: Over to you

These discussions have been designed primarily with staff and workers in mind. They will be captured visually and will also inform the development of a Good Practice Guide which will follow later in the year. The themes of the discussions are:

- **Discussion 1 - The quality of the art**
- **Discussion 2 - The quality of the experience**
- **Discussion 3 - Thinking beyond the project: visibility and integration**

*Please specify which session you would like to attend when booking.*

### 1.05 – 2.15pm: Lunch (to be provided for all delegates)

Including the opportunity to look round an exhibition showing the timeline of the partnership between the Royal Exchange Theatre and the Booth Centre.

### **2.15 – 3pm: Booth Centre drama group performance OR Over to you**

We would like to ensure that everyone attending BACKSTAGE? ME? watches the production by The Booth Centre drama group in The Studio. However, our capacity is limited (only 100 seats!) and so we are aware that not everyone can be accommodated for the 2.15pm performance. Some people may therefore be invited to attend the performance on Thursday evening (10<sup>th</sup> April) at 7.30pm instead – we will be back in touch with you about this after your booking has been received.

For delegates who have seen the Booth Centre drama group performance on the Thursday night there will be a discussion session which continues to explore themes raised in 'Over to you' earlier in the day (the quality of the art, the quality of the experience, thinking beyond the project: visibility and integration).

### **3 – 3.15pm: Tea and coffee**

#### **3.15 – 3.40pm: An outside eye**

Thoughts and reflections from Tony Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester and a personal perspective from Alan Lyddiard, The Performance Ensemble.

#### **3.40 – 4.40pm: Profiling practice 2 – Other approaches**

A chance to share, develop and focus on practice, including the practice of other arts organisations. All workshops aim to present three distinct perspectives – the creative practitioner, the support worker, and the participant. *Please specify which workshop you would like to attend when booking.*

- **WORKSHOP E - Find your voice (Streetwise Opera):** In this session Streetwise Opera will demonstrate how singing and acting leads to increased confidence and self-esteem. For people who've experienced homelessness, taking part in a new activity can be part of the process of facing and meeting small challenges; small steps that result in facing bigger challenges in their lives. This session will show how coming to a workshop, singing, tackling opera, and singing a solo are all small challenges that can ultimately result in showing people what they can achieve. [streetwiseopera.org](http://streetwiseopera.org)
- **WORKSHOP F - From the personal to the political (Collective Encounters):** Collective Encounters works extensively with homeless people in Liverpool using theatre as a tool for social change - taking homelessness and the effects of homelessness away from an individual's cause and effect perspective and placing it in a wider political and economic context. This workshop will introduce the theatre for social change approach, and will include a 50-minute practical workshop and a preview of the 10-minute animated opera *Poets of Loss*. [collective-encounters.org.uk](http://collective-encounters.org.uk)
- **WORKSHOP G - Theatre and Debate (Cardboard Citizens):** Cardboard Citizens have a long, proud history of making theatre with and for people with experience of homelessness. This workshop will tell the story of Cardboard Citizens as well as giving a brief practical demo of how our theatrical debate-style 'Forum Theatre' process works. This is a member-led workshop, facilitated by Kerry Norridge, a long-standing member of Cardboard Citizens. Kerry has been in training with the company over the past year, learning and developing his own facilitation skills, which he will be trying out with you, for the first time ever, flying solo. [cardboardcitizens.org.uk](http://cardboardcitizens.org.uk)
- **WORKSHOP H - I Am Here This Is Me and I Am Fine (Alan Lyddiard – The Performance Ensemble):** This workshop has been developed over 20 years by theatre director Alan Lyddiard with thousands of people from very different backgrounds - based on walking slowly. The workshop is about presenting yourself to the world in a simple but direct way. To sit, to stand, to walk, to speak as an complete person in front of an audience and to feel contentment, peace and a sense of authority in doing so. It is a ritual, and a way to express one-self authentically without doing anything. [communityartsinternational.com](http://communityartsinternational.com)
- **WORKSHOP J - The First Step:** If you're thinking the world of homelessness and theatre all sounds very exciting but where do you start then this workshop is for you. Three projects that are in their early stages – two digital and one drama based – explore the initial steps they took to engage with participants on a creative experience. Delivered by Digital Sparks: Petrus & Community Arts Northwest [digitalsparks13.wordpress.com](http://digitalsparks13.wordpress.com); Hidden Voices, Wigan (a partnership between Wigan Leisure and Community Trust, Curriculum Plus, the Brick, Riverside Housing and Co-ops Foyer) and The Dukes, Lancaster and Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service.

#### **4.40 – 5pm: Closing remarks and what next**

The event will end with the launch of Homeless Links Get Creative influencing paper.

Delegates are welcome to stay and watch the Theatre's free Special FX entertainment from 6 – 7pm and are also eligible for discounted tickets (at the special rate of £10) for the 7.30pm performance of *Much Ado About Nothing* (subject to availability).

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## Further information for delegates

### All those attending will receive...

- Lunch and refreshments throughout the day
- A conference pack
- Complimentary ticket for the Booth Centre drama group's performance (either on Friday 11 April @ 2.15pm or on Thursday 10 April @ 7.30pm)
- Access to an online Good Practice Guide that will be informed by the event and will be available from Autumn 2014

### Booking...

There is a small charge for the event to cover refreshments and catering costs:

- **£15 for workers and practitioners**
- **£1.50 for participants / service users / clients**

All bookings will need to be made via the Event Booking Form (see overleaf), which is designed to be used by any individual workers and/or practitioners wishing to book onto the BACKSTAGE? ME? event. Please ensure that you complete the full form.

If you would like to attend and hope to bring a group of participants / clients / service users from your organisation (see below) please contact us on [backstageme@royalexchange.co.uk](mailto:backstageme@royalexchange.co.uk) for further information re. group bookings.

### Additional information for groups...

We are aware that an all day event may not be appropriate for everyone, and have therefore designed the programme primarily with staff and workers in mind during the morning and staff, workers, participants, clients and service users in mind from 1.05pm onwards (arriving in time for lunch).

If you wish to bring a group, please discuss and promote this event with your participants, clients and service users, and prepare them for their attendance and involvement by explaining the theme of the event (homelessness and theatre) and discussing the schedule.

It would be great for any groups that are attending to come for an advance visit and/or to see a play, so if you are from an organization and are hoping to bring along participants / clients / service users to the event please contact us by **Friday 14 March** to arrange free tickets to see ORLANDO or MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING (subject to availability).

**If you have any questions relating to you or your group, or any general enquiries, please email [backstageme@royalexchange.co.uk](mailto:backstageme@royalexchange.co.uk)**