

Annual Report

2017/18



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS
1977 - 2017

m6
theatre company

Welcome

On behalf of M6's board of trustees, it is a real pleasure to welcome you to review another successful year for M6 Theatre.

I'd like to thank my fellow board members for successfully overseeing and championing the company's work and all our patrons, funders and collaborative partners for their invaluable input enabling M6 to continue to thrive and evolve in our 40th birthday year.

The company especially thanks the late Yasin Khan for his inspirational community cohesion work with M6. Yasin commissioned the pioneering peer led **Don't Hate Me** film project and nurtured the pilot **Linking Schools** initiative, leaving a rich and innovative creative legacy in Rochdale Borough.

Anyone who has attended an M6 performance or participatory drama session will know the positive and enriching effect that M6's work has on the lives of children and young people. This is due to M6's team of highly skilled and dedicated professionals whose energy, spirit and creativity are exemplary and admired by all those who work with them. I thank them for their hard work in making M6 a continued success.

Simon Whitehead
Chair

“M6 set the bar for continuous high standards...making a positive impact on the most vulnerable young people in society”



Barnardo's

Patrons



Sue Johnston OBE



Dot Wood MBE



Jane Cox



Anna Friel



Prof Tony Jackson



About M6

Debs Palmer, Managing Director and CEO
Gilly Baskeyfield, Artistic Director

Gilly and I are very proud to be holding the M6 baton in this record-breaking birthday year, leading and supported by an expanded team of skilled and committed TYA professionals and building on an exemplary track record, achieved over four decades. We are all driven by a passionate belief in the unique power of great theatre to enrich, inspire, challenge and even transform young lives.

Children and young people are the primary focus of M6's professional touring & participatory programmes and it is our passion, privilege and responsibility to ensure that EVERY child and young person's M6 experience is the BEST it can be, to encourage them to confidently embark on a lifelong journey enriched by cultural engagement.

Our mission, to use excellent theatre experiences as a positive, creative and active learning medium to aid understanding, nurture respect and empathy and develop emotional literacy, remains unchanged. However, M6 has evolved and this key milestone provides an opportunity to refresh and rearticulate our aims:

- 1.** Have a reputation as specialists in making theatre with, for and by children and young people that has depth, is multi-layered and nurtures empathy, respect and emotional literacy
- 2.** Offer original world class theatre, locally grown with universal resonance, appeal and longevity
- 3.** Prioritise and engage underrepresented community audiences, new to theatre, in areas of low arts engagement and multiple deprivations
- 4.** Unlock the potential of children and young people, using theatre as a tool for positive change and respond to the challenges of living in contemporary Britain
- 5.** Champion diversity, nurture underrepresented creative talent and new diverse voices in theatre
- 6.** Champion Theatre for Young Audiences, cultural education and Rochdale's Cultural Engagement offer

You will see from the following pages, that the creative ways we achieve these organisational aims has evolved and expanded, offering greater opportunity for engagement.

We hope this evolution continues through our World Of Difference Business Plan 2018-22 and beyond, supported by Arts Council England and developed in consultation with key collaborative partners, artists and most importantly the children and young people at the centre of our decision making. Here's to another 40 years of the M6 journey!



Highlights

This year we turned 40! We're incredibly proud of the following achievements during our record-breaking birthday year:



- ★ Created and toured our brand new show, **A Tiger's Tale**, to schools and packed national venues, gaining glowing reviews.
- ★ Showcased work to new international audiences at Edinburgh Fringe 2017 with rave reviews for **Mavis Sparkle**.
- ★ Hosted a 40th birthday party at M6 Studio with a special performance of **One Little Word** for key stakeholders and local underrepresented family audiences.
- ★ Collaborated with RMBC on a new **Linking Schools** project for Rochdale primary schools offering performances of **A Tiger's Tale** connecting children from culturally different backgrounds.
- ★ Toured **Hench**, a powerful single voice play and interactive workshop to eight Rochdale secondary schools and created a digital education resource, extending reach and impact.
- ★ Picked up three awards at the Rochdale Borough Sports & Culture Awards: **Facilitator of the Year** (Parvez Qadir), **the Culture and Health Award** (Clueless) and **the Community and Education Project Award** (Shine Youth Theatre in partnership with Barnardo's).
- ★ Provided a platform for 100 local young people to help create and take part in **five original productions**, all shared with local community audiences.
- ★ Expanded our outreach programme, culminating in the creation of three powerful new contemporary films (Unlocking Voices) made with young people and supported by professional artists: **Don't Hate Me, Just Someone I Know** and **New Girl**.
- ★ With **Speech Bubbles** we contributed to securing a nationwide EEF trial to find out if different cultural learning approaches can help boost primary pupils' achievement.
- ★ 100% of audience and participant feedback rated M6 Theatre as **'Excellent/Good'**.

Total workshops & showback events

538

Total audience

17,000

233

Total touring performances

Touring

A Tiger's Tale

National Tour • Ages 4-11 Years

A brand new show for our 40th birthday year written by the award-winning Mike Kenny.

Our "must-see" show (Kickback Times) toured for 10 weeks to national theatre venues and community settings including the egg, Nottingham Lakeside Arts, The Lowry and Lyric Hammersmith, engaging 8,000 audience members.

" A delightfully, beautifully judged entertainment. Extraordinary!

The Reviews Hub

" Leaders in their field... a sophisticated exploration of storytelling

Children's Theatre Reviews



One Little Word

National Tour • 3+ Years

Back by popular demand, the perennial favourite One Little Word toured to venues and festivals across the land!

" Whimsical, thoughtful, heartfelt and perfectly delivered... M6 never fails to deliver a memorable production!

Oonagh 5, Munley 3 and Mum + Dad



Mavis Sparkle

Edinburgh Fringe • 4+ Years

Mavis packed up her van and travelled north for a three week residency at The Pleasance in August.

" Mavis doesn't just sparkle, she dazzles



Fest Magazine

" A must-see this year



one4review



Primary Schools

One Little Word

Alongside a national tour, One Little Word transformed 20 local school halls, delighting thousands of children.

.....



A Tiger's Tale

A Tiger's Tale completed its pilot tour around local schools in Autumn 2017 prior to a jam packed national tour.

In partnership with RMBC, we also hosted special performances at M6 Studio for the first year of the Rochdale Linking Schools project, connecting children from culturally different backgrounds. 700 children from 12 schools across the Borough enjoyed special performances of A Tiger's Tale and then participated in a practical workshop exploring the themes in the play, championing equality and promoting community.

“ M6's team were awesome, it was a masterclass!

Erica Field, Linking Schools Lead

.....



Unlocking Voices Film

Unlocking Voices projects are creative interventions for diverse groups of local unrepresented young people. A film made by the children from St Luke's Primary explored the issue of hate crime in primary schools. Don't Hate Me was nominated for the Youth Leadership award at this year's Asian Image Fusion Awards.

“ This project has transformed the school

Kim Farrall, St Luke's Primary

.....

Anti Bullying Workshops

250 children accessed creative anti-bullying workshops at St Mary's RC Primary School.

“ The content of the workshops really made the children think about their actions and behaviour towards others both in and out of school

Teacher, St Mary's RC Primary School

Secondary Schools

Hench

Ages 13+

Hench is one of a series of short and powerful single voice plays by M6, aiming to raise awareness of and support for mental health issues.

The monologue and interactive workshop toured to 7 secondary schools in March, engaging over 1000 pupils across 33 performances. Facilitated workshops enabled young participants to explore what it means to be strong and how, for boys and young men, being strong may not always be the best way to stay well.

We also developed and launched a free education resource pack to share with schools beyond Rochdale. This is hosted on the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board website.

**“ Simply brilliant, engaging and unlocking important conversations
Healthy Young Minds**

**“ Before today I hadn't thought about other people having panic attacks
Audience member and workshop participant (13)**

Unlocking Voices Films

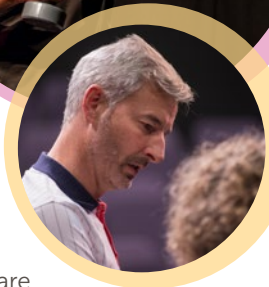
Just Someone I Know

Created with Kingsway Park High School, Just Someone I Know is a film and resource pack for schools focusing on children missing from education.

The film premiered at the Odeon in Rochdale where the young participants and other invited guests viewed the film on the big screen!

New Girl

Created with a group of Year 8 pupils from Falinge Park High School, New Girl confronts social media bullying and explores mental health consequences for young people.



Youth Theatre

M6's year round participatory programme engages and supports children and young people aged 8-18 from diverse backgrounds in Rochdale Borough to create and share their own theatre productions.



Performances

The Present Thief (8-12's Group)

The Present Thief took audiences on a journey through lost things and missing items, from being lost in a storm at sea to mislaying a lucky ballet slipper.

“ I enjoyed watching wonderfully talented children doing something they love.

Audience Member



The Factory (SHINE Youth Theatre)

SHINE Youth Theatre is an inclusive group for young people with disabilities and their siblings in partnership with Barnardo's. A new recruit arrives in The Factory, she's certainly not like everyone else. She dresses differently, she knocks things over and worst of all – she sings! The Factory explores what it means to be different.

“ I like M6 because I can come here and laugh.

SHINE YT member



When I'm Bored I Dream About Hamsters (12-14's Group)

Ever been so bored you've dreamt about hamsters? Can we ever escape it? What even is boredom? The 12-14's group have been exploring what boredom in the modern world means.



Growing Pains

(15-18's Group)

With improvisation, audience participation and some killer TV theme tunes, Growing Pains is a light hearted look back at playground antics and teenage angst.



“ Coming to M6 has developed my confidence and also made me into a kinder person.

YT Member

H is for Honey (8-11's Group)

Sam Honey and Daisy Swarm love to spell but will they do well in the annual Rochdale Spelling Bee?

An exciting and funny new play focusing on families, friendships and doing the right thing!



“ The best piece of 8-11's theatre I have seen to date.

Audience member

26 Arts Awards achieved



Community

40th Birthday Celebrations

Alongside a tea party and community performance of One Little Word, invited guests also enjoyed an evening celebration with a specially commissioned song performed by the youth theatre which completely stole the show!

“ Happy 40th Birthday M6! The jewel in Rochdale’s cultural crown

Cllr Janet Emsley

Rochdale Cares to Act

This 4-year participatory project in partnership with Rochdale Connections Trust works with targeted young people who participate in bespoke drama workshops, building confidence, communication and teamwork skills. This year’s groups explored improvisation, comedy writing, and character development. Some of these young people participated in consultation for M6’s new monologue Hench.

Play in a Week Monster on the Moors

Over the course of a week, young people aged 8-11 from Rochdale Borough created an original production featuring song, dance and comedy.

Rochdale Litfest Workshop

A fun, challenging, high energy workshop to get the artistic imagination flowing! Participants took part in games, improvisation, creative writing and physical theatre exercises.



M6 Community shows

Community performances of each touring show took place at M6 Studio before heading out to national venues and festivals. 400 local audience members enjoyed performances of **One Little Word**, **Mavis Sparkle** and **A Tiger's Tale**.



Speech Bubbles Programme



Originated by London Bubble

M6 continues to work in partnership with London Bubble to deliver workshops with small groups of KS1 children who have identified speech and language delay.

The programme has an increasingly strong evidence base to support its aim and we now run the programme in five schools, supporting 180 children in the Rochdale Borough.

Two new schools will also be taking part in a nationwide EEF research trial over the next year to find out if arts based interventions can help boost primary pupils' achievement.

Teachers noticed improvements back in class in 96% of Speech Bubbles children.



208
Workshops
per year



Sector & Talent Development

This year we:

- ★ Collaborated with 72 freelance emerging and established diverse artists.
- ★ Supported and mentored Parvez Qadir, M6's Associate Artist.
- ★ Helped form Rochdale's new Local Education Arts Partnership.
- ★ Offered seed funding and provided mentoring for emerging companies/artists: Eve Robertson and Luke Walker (Red Lolly).
- ★ Provided fundraising and marketing mentoring for Skylight Circus.
- ★ Provided a secondary school work placement for Lewis Lawlor.
- ★ Offered a young volunteer placement to Grace Russell as part of her Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- ★ Employed two young local artists for youth theatre production design and sound/LX.
- ★ Supported three youth theatre members in securing roles in BBC Three's Murdered for Being Different.
- ★ Assisted in the creation of the Rochdale Borough Culture Network to develop a cohesive local cultural offer for the borough.



Coming Soon

Little Gift

.....
A new play created in collaboration with Andy Manley
Ages 3+
Christmas 2018 residency at The Lowry and touring
January – March 2019
.....

Little
Gift

Mission...Save the World!

.....
Ages 5+
Linking Schools performances November 2018 and
touring Autumn 2019
.....



Curriculum for Life

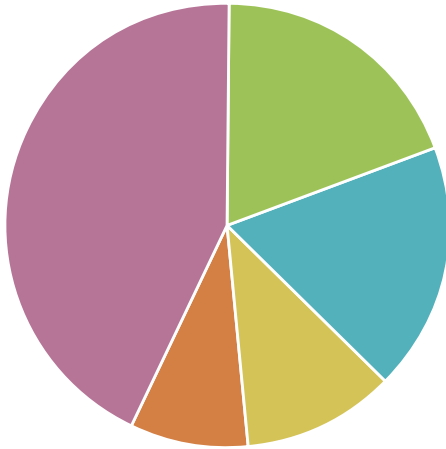
.....
A new single voice play written by Parvez Qadir
Touring to Rochdale Secondary Schools
Spring 2019
.....



Income and Expenditure

Income 2017 - 2018

Total: £503,774



Revenue Funding
£217,730

Project Funding
£96,408

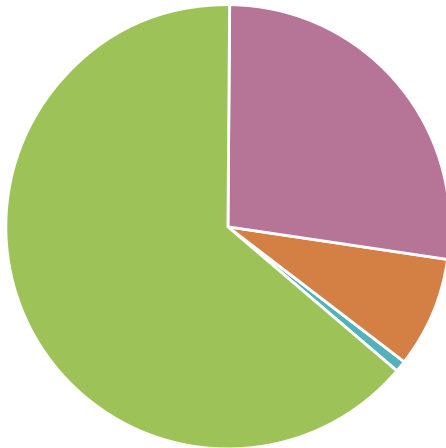
Box Office & Other Earned Income
£91,502

Theatre Tax Relief
£55,279

In Kind Support
£42,855

Expenditure 2017-2018

£531,186



Artistic Programme
£339,731

Core Costs
£145,162

In Kind Support
£42,855

Governance
£3,438

During 2017-18, to celebrate the key milestone, the organisation invested in organisational profile raising, expanded reach and engagement activities, talent development and access initiatives which resulted in a planned in-year deficit of £27,413.

Following a resilience audit, the Company has designated unrestricted reserves of £74,000 in respect of discretionary expenditure for asset replacement, employment and engagement which the Board has approved to be fully utilised in the forthcoming years.

Thanks to our revenue funders: Arts Council England, RMBC Link4Life & AGMA and project funders: Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund in partnership with RCT; BBC Children In Need in partnership with Barnardo's; The Tudor Trust; NHS CCG in partnership with Healthy Young Minds and RMBC Children's Services/Early Help & Schools.

Full audited accounts are available on request.

People

Patrons

Dot Wood MBE

Sue Johnston OBE

Jane Cox

Anna Friel

Prof Tony Jackson

Board Members

Simon Whitehead Chair

Muriel Gott Chair of Engagement Committee

Angela Jackson Chair of Personnel Committee

Nigel Gloudon Chair of Finance Committee

Katharine Rhodes

Robin Parker

Billy Cowan

Fiona Fogarty

Jillian Welsby

Board Observer

Penny Thomson Arts Council England North

Core Team

Deborah Palmer Managing Director and CEO

Gilly Baskeyfield Artistic Director

Joss Matzen Production and Touring Director

Jenni Morris Finance Officer

Lucy Cairns Office Administrator

Maria Major Marketing and Communications Officer

Caroline Kennedy Participation Programme Manager

Eleanor Samson Participation Projects Manager

Parvez Qadir Associate Artist

Creative Teams

One Little Word

Gilly Baskeyfield and Dot Wood Writers

Andy Manley Director

Gilly Baskeyfield Rehearsal Director

Tayo Akinbode Composer

Alison Heffernan Designer

Joss Matzen Production Manager

Adam Carrée Lighting Designer

Eve Robertson & Luke Walker Performers

Alyssa Watts Touring Stage Manager

Mavis Sparkle

Gilly Baskeyfield and Dot Wood Writers

Gilly Baskeyfield Director

Joss Matzen Designer/Production Manager

Tayo Akinbode Composer

Adam Carrée Lighting Designer

Eve Robertson Performer

A Tiger's Tale

Mike Kenny Writer

Gilly Baskeyfield Director

Joss Matzen Designer and Production Director

James Atherton Music

TC Howard Choreographer

Adam Carrée Lighting Designer

Alyssa Watts Touring Stage Manager

Owen Gaynor, Nicola Jayne Ingram, Sophia Hatfield Performers

Hench

Mary Cooper Writer

Olwen May Director

Levi Payne Performer

Carl Cockram Facilitator

Eve Salter Costume

Eloise Whitmore Sound

With special thanks to

Touring Programme

Andy Manley Little Gift R&D

Lewis Wileman Photography

Lighton Wise Filmmaker

Sharon McWilliams & Lesley Stinson Costume

John Matzen/Anita Smith Scenic Construction/Props

David Wheeler Design

Duncan Clarke Press and PR

Huw Jones & Mark Starbuck Design

Gareth Dennison Design

Rosamund Hiles Literary Executor

Steph Hollinshead Design

Mudasser Mahmood Consultant

Participatory Programme

Nathaniel Mason Technician /Workshop Assistant

Alice Bunker-Whitney Facilitator

Ella Craddock Facilitator

Shannon Wild Workshop Assistant

Jenny Harris Speech Bubbles Facilitator

Danny Markham Designer

Krista Clarke Intern

Lewis Lawlor Work Experience

Grace Russell/Cameron Williams Volunteers

Adam Davies Masterclass

James Atherton Masterclass

Tommy O'Connor Filmmaker

Unlocking Voices

Just Someone I Know

Regina Moriarty Writer

Ashley Pegg Filmmaker

Margaret Barbour Production Manager

Raffia Hussain Runner and Continuity

Humerah Ramzan Runner and Continuity

Don't Hate Me

Sean O'Hare/Ant Jones Mako Productions

Kim Farrall/ Francesca Fisher St Luke's Primary School

New Girl

Sean Lovell Sound Operator

Nick Farimmond Filmmaker

Mohammad Abdulaeem/ Janice Allen/Natalie Hallas Falinge Park High

Project Partners

SHINE: Barnardo's Rochdale

Linking Schools: Erica Field, Yassim Khan

Hench Billy Cooke, Rochdale Connections Trust, Vibe Rochdale, Rochdale and District Mind, Chapel FM Leeds, #Thrive, Jane Ward Hayes and Westward Care

Speech Bubbles: Adam Annand London Bubble





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With thanks to our Funders:



Supported using public funding by
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