

Annual Report

2018/19




theatre company

Welcome

On behalf of M6's Board of Trustees, it is a pleasure to share our review of 2018/19 with you.

Despite continuing to operate in a highly uncertain financial and political landscape, we have achieved our organisational aim of making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people. This was achieved, while ensuring organisational sustainability, by developing new products, services, markets, strategic partners, investment plans and funders. This activity in achieving our strategic aims ensures M6 remains relevant and continues to thrive in the years ahead.

If you have been lucky enough to experience an M6 show, drama workshop, film sharing or networking event first hand you will know the positive, enriching effect that M6's work has on the lives of children and young people and the hard work of the team here at M6. As Chair I once again thank the whole M6 team for their hard and inspirational work. We have shared feedback for the range of M6's projects throughout this report and perhaps the following opinion, shared by a local audience member about 'Little Gift', best captures the spirit of M6 and confirms to us that we continue to play a uniquely necessary role in contemporary Britain:

"At a time where life is running quicker, not many can stop for kindness. It means so much that you give children the opportunity to understand its importance and impact on those who need it the most. This is such an important show and message and you have delivered it brilliantly. I am sure this performance will stay with all of us for a long time. Thank you."

I thank my fellow Board Members for successfully overseeing and championing the company's work and our patrons, funders and collaborators for their valuable support.

The real thanks however goes to M6's leadership duo and team whose energy, spirit and creativity are admired by all those who collaborate with them. They are tenacious, highly skilled and hardworking and exemplars for the Theatre for Young Audiences sector.

I'm confident that the M6 team will continue to create locally grown, world class theatre experiences that ignite the imagination, nurture the heart & challenge the minds of children and young people for many years to come!

Chair of M6 Theatre Company

Patrons



About us

Everyone at M6 Theatre is driven by a passionate belief in the power of great theatre as a positive, creative and active learning medium to enrich, inspire, challenge and even transform young lives. The reputation M6 has achieved as specialists in making world class original theatre with, for and by children and young people, that has universal resonance, depth, is multi-layered and nurtures respect and empathy, has never felt more necessary.

We operate in an environment of overwhelmingly complex societal issues, but in our own small way, the M6 team creatively respond to the challenges of living in contemporary Britain and use theatre as a tool for positive change, unlocking the potential of children and young people through:

- ★ Theatre productions that demonstrate an alternative, more positive view of the world where difference is celebrated, kindness valued and hope for a better future is possible
- ★ Championing diversity in our creative teams and nurturing under-represented artistic talent to better represent the community in which we live
- ★ Collaborative ways of working as a team and with multi-agency partners and networks who share our ethos, values and embrace mutually respectful co-operative practice
- ★ Weekly youth theatres and outreach projects where local young individuals are encouraged to have a voice, agency, build team skills, resilience, discernment and broaden horizons
- ★ Multiple access and engagement incentives to include community members who are marginalised, under-represented and/or living in poverty

It is our passion, privilege and priority 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 and realise their full potential.

We are incredibly grateful to be supported by a team of skilled, committed theatre professionals and partners who continue to work together to help achieve this shared ambition and lead by example.

Debs Palmer Gilly Baskeyfield

“This innovative multi-agency partnership project, made in Rochdale, keeps the authentic voices of local young people centre stage. We do well to listen and learn from them.”

Gail Hopper, Director of Children's Services RMBC (on Crossing the Line)



Highlights

This year we are incredibly proud of:

- ★ Glowing reviews for our brand new show, **Little Gift**, enjoyed by nearly 8,000 children and their families, in schools and packed theatres including a Christmas residency at The Lowry.
- ★ Delighting local diverse intergenerational audiences in schools and at M6 Studio with performances of **Whatever the Weather**, alongside a national tour reaching 4,500 children and family members.
- ★ Sensitively supporting 1,500 local young people to explore the pressing issue of Child Criminal Exploitation with our **Crossing the Line** monologue and workshop tour to 10 secondary schools. We also developed an accompanying digital education resource to expand reach and impact.
- ★ Hosting M6 Associate Artist Parvez Qadir, supporting skills development and transition to his new freelance venture **Breaking Barriers**.
- ★ Expanding **Linking Schools**, collaborating with RMBC Equalities Team and over 20 Rochdale primary schools to enable local children to creatively connect and build new friendships.
- ★ Nurturing drama skills for over 90 young people to create and perform in **five original theatre productions**, sharing their achievements with local community audiences.
- ★ Broadening horizons through **National Theatre Connections** for 19 young people who performed **Chaos** at Sheffield Crucible Theatre.
- ★ Unlocking the creative potential of local young refugees and young travellers with **Our Story** and **Wherever the Road Takes Me**, two new films and resources shared with 25,000 peers and educationalists.
- ★ Supporting the communication skills of over 110 Key Stage 1 children with identified speech and language delay, in partnership with six primary schools & **London Bubble**.
- ★ Contributing to key nationwide research, supported by the Education Endowment Fund, on arts intervention and pupil achievement through two new **Speech Bubbles** partnerships.
- ★ Championing local community engagement through participating in a range of festivals, networks and celebration events including **RMBC Sports & Culture Awards 2018**.
- ★ Continuing to be rated **Excellent/Good** by 100% of our audience/participant feedback.

Touring Performances

228

Workshops and showback events

611

Touring Audience

13,000

Touring

Whatever the Weather

.....
National Tour • Ages 3+
.....

Back by popular demand, **Whatever the Weather** toured in Summer 2018 to national venues and community settings including The Hullabaloo, Polka Theatre and the egg. Every child received a beautifully illustrated storybook funded by The Co-op Community fund.

Alongside this national tour, the show transformed 12 local school halls into theatres, delighting thousands of children.

“Thank you so much for making such a wonderful, imaginative, touching play. I am so thrilled that my two daughters have experienced your wonder.”

Audience member

Crossing the Line

.....
Schools Tour • Ages 13+
.....

Crossing the Line is the third in a trilogy of short and powerful single voice plays, created to support young people’s mental health and wellbeing.

The monologue and accompanying workshop explored issues around identity, belonging and exploitation. It toured to 10 Rochdale Secondary schools, funded by Home Office Building Stronger Britain Together, and reached over 1,500 young people.

We also launched a film and accompanying education resource which will now enable thousands more young people across Rochdale and Greater Manchester to engage in the pressing issue of child criminal exploitation.

“I wouldn’t have thought about any of that before today – I might have fallen for it (grooming) before but not now!”

Audience member and workshop participant (13)



Little Gift

National Tour • Ages 3+

A brand new show created in collaboration with acclaimed theatre maker Andy Manley, **Little Gift** completed its pilot tour around local schools in autumn prior to a Christmas residency at The Lowry. This was followed by a national tour to venues including The Lyric, Lakeside and Birmingham Rep.



“A kindly and magical 50 minutes.”

The Scotsman

“I could watch it 1,000 times and not get bored.”

Audience member, Age 5

In partnership with RMBC, we also hosted special performances at M6 Studio for the second year of the **Rochdale Linking Schools project**, connecting children from culturally different backgrounds. Almost 800 children from schools across the Borough enjoyed special performances of **Little Gift** and then participated in drama workshops, exploring the themes in the play with their partnered school, championing equality and promoting community.



School's Projects

Unlocking Voices Films

(in partnership with RMBC)

Our Story

This animated film project and resource, created by young asylum seekers, has been shared widely across the globe! Schools are using the film and resource which offers simple but meaningful steps to make a new person feel welcome.

Our Story was shared with 25,000 children in Rochdale Borough assemblies during Hate Crime Awareness Week 2019



Wherever the Road

This film portrays the lives of six proud members of the Gypsy and Traveller community and challenges stereotypes through the telling of the young people's individual stories.



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 an identified speech and language delay. 120 referred young children across 6 schools participated in this evidence based story making project.

Speech Bubbles was chosen to be part of a nationwide RSA/EEF research trial to find out if different cultural learning approaches can help boost primary pupils achievement and results will be published in 2020.

Teachers noticed improvements back in class in 93% of Speech Bubbles children



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 unlock their creative potential and develop their own theatre productions.

Performances

The Staggering and Spectacular Summer Circus

(8-11's Group)

Using M6's production of A Tiger's Tale as inspiration, the 8-11's group created a colourful and energetic show set in a travelling circus where nothing was quite what it seemed!



What Would You Wish For

(8-12's Group)

What would you do if you were given one wish? From the sublime to the ridiculous, the 8-12's group opened up their imaginations and discovered that you should be careful what you wish for.



'Til Death Do Us Part

(12-14's Group)

Audiences were cordially invited to the wedding of Ben and Ava for a fun, interactive murder mystery that put them right at the heart of the action!

“You cannot put a price on the value of M6 in developing our children.”

Audience Member

“The great thing about M6 shows is that the children have complete ownership!”

Audience Member



Chaos (15-18's Group)

As part of National Theatre Connections, an annual celebration of young people and theatre-making, 19 young people and 72 tennis balls combined for performances at M6 Studio and Sheffield Crucible Theatre.

“Going to Sheffield Crucible was very fun. It was an interesting experience to do our play in a different theatre.”

Hamad, Youth Theatre Member

“M6 is just a unique group to express yourself and feel a part of something.”

Samer, Youth Theatre Member



Trouble in Town Town

(Act to Shine Youth Theatre)

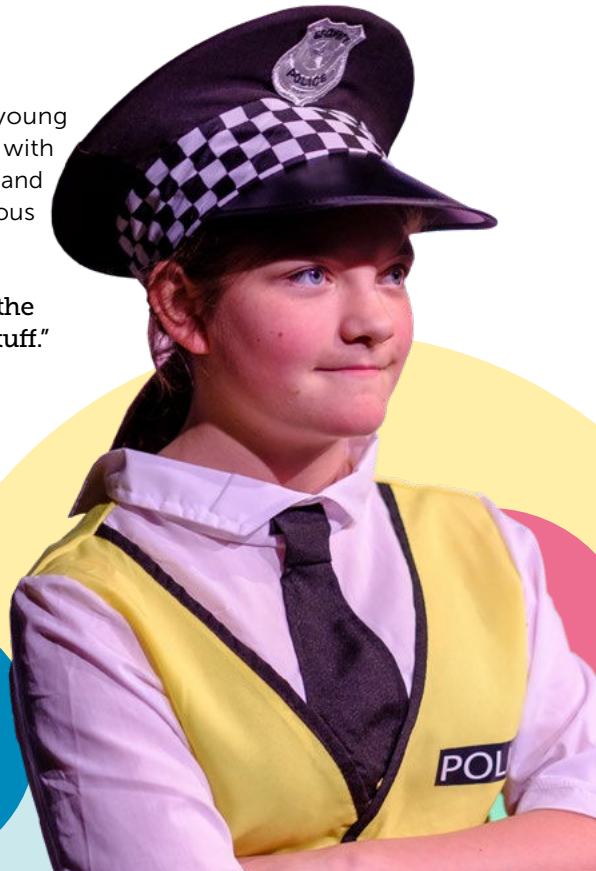
Act to Shine is an inclusive group for young people with disabilities in partnership with Barnardo's. Together they spread cheer and laughter in the audience with their riotous comedy!

“I liked that our play was funny - all the audience laughed at all the funny stuff.”

Laura, Act to Shine Member

“M6 help creatively unlock the potential of our young people.”

Barnardo's Staff Member



19

Arts Awards
Achieved

Community

Rochdale Cares to Act

In the third year of this participatory project, in partnership with Rochdale Connections Trust, targeted young people took part in bespoke drama workshops, building confidence, communication and teamwork skills. This year's groups explored improvisation, script writing and film making. The consultation with these young people informed the development of M6's latest monologue, **Crossing the Line**.

Participation
Audience

1,000

Youth Theatre &
Workshop Participants

1,200

Community Shows

Intergenerational community performances of each touring show took place at M6 Studio with 250 audience members enjoying productions of **Whatever the Weather** and **Little Gift**.

“Brilliant show. M6 plays are not just for children. Loved it.”

Audience Member

Children in Need

Our very own Caroline Kennedy featured in BBC Children in Need's surprise singalongs for project workers across the country. Here she is with Ollly Murs! Children in Need fund our inclusive Act to Shine group.



Rochdale Literature and Ideas Festival

M6 worked with Touchstones to support Rochdale Literature and Ideas Festival's playwriting competition for young people. Danny Lamb's winning entry, **Searching for the Secret**, was directed by Caroline Kennedy (M6's Participation Programme Manager) with performances in local schools and theatres.



Photo courtesy of Rochdale Borough Council

What Cannot Be Turned Aside Performance

Supported by M6, members of the Youth Theatre took part in a paid opportunity to perform collaboratively with students from Hopwood Hall and Manchester Theatre School. Working with Artist Maeve Rendle, **What Cannot Be Turned Aside** was performed at Touchstones Museum and explored human communication in relation to recent political events.

High Peak Writer's Camp

M6 delivery expanded to working in partnership with High Peak Community Arts to deliver creative workshops for young people living with learning disabilities. Participants have created a film which will be shared later on in 2019.



Sector and Talent Development

In order to champion diversity, nurture underrepresented creative talent and support new diverse voices in theatre, this year we:

- ★ Collaborated with 40 established and emerging freelance artists.
- ★ Supported and mentored Parvez Qadir, M6's Associate Artist, to become a freelance creative with an impressive portfolio of young people centred digital resources.
- ★ Provided work placements for Danielle Frame and Connor Thompson.
- ★ Mentored Participatory Technician Nathaniel Mason for the ASM role on Little Gift.
- ★ Delivered professional development workshops on the Applied Theatre/Community Drama course at LIPA.
- ★ Provided project planning mentoring support for Skylight Circus Arts.
- ★ Mentored former Youth Theatre member Lizzie Wilson to become a workshop assistant.
- ★ Collaborated with M6's young advisors on two key projects for the company.



Coming Soon

Mission...Save The World!

Autumn 2019 • Ages 5 +

A fun and energetic play about rivalry, strengths, weaknesses and superheroes.

Supporting the Linking Schools Project, touring to schools and national theatre venues including Attenborough Arts Centre, Waterside Arts Centre, Lyric, Hammersmith and The Carriageworks.



Little Gift

Christmas 2019 • Ages 3+

A beautiful and optimistic story about a friendship waiting to grow. Christmas Residency at The Tramshed, Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre.

Little Gift

New!

The Storm

Spring 2020 • Ages 8-12

In residency at Number 1 Riverside during Dippy the Dinosaur's visit, M6's new show, set in a future world, will confront the challenge of climate change and help students make connections between the past, the present and the future.

Written by Nicola Schofield and produced in partnership with RMBC.



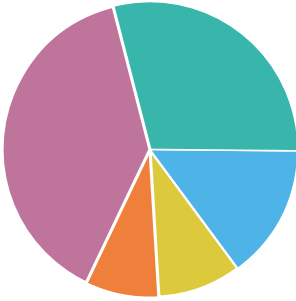
Funding and Funders

Income 2018-19

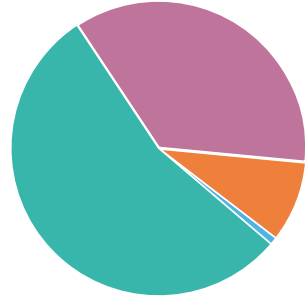
Total: £571,445

Expenditure 2018-19

Total: £511,480



Revenue Funding	£222,830
Project Funding	£167,589
Box Office & Other Earned Income	£83,362
Theatre Tax Relief	£52,696
In Kind Support	£44,968



Artistic Programme	£278,391
Core Costs	£183,958
In Kind Support	£44,968
Governance	£4,163

During 2018-19, the company maintained high touring production delivery levels and expanded the range of local live and digital creative engagement projects, whilst continuing to invest in key organisational development. Strong financial management, effective fundraising and partnership collaborations resulted in a surplus of £59,965.

The company has designated unrestricted reserves of £90,000 in respect of discretionary expenditure for resilience building activity including asset replacement, employment and engagement initiatives to achieve organisational reach and strategic development ambitions.

A full set of audited accounts are available on request.

Funding Partners

We are incredibly grateful to Arts Council England and RMBC for the revenue funding and in-kind support necessary for M6 to leverage continued and new project funding partnerships.

We thank our 2018-19 project funders: Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund in partnership with RCT; Arts Council England Small Capital Grants; Home Office BSBT; NHS Clinical Commissioning Group; BBC Children In Need in partnership with Barnardo's; Tudor Trust; RMBC Early Help & Schools and finally EEF, RSA, ACE, Paul Hamlyn and Foyle Foundations in partnership with London Bubble.



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 (Until March 2019)

Robin Parker

Billy Cowan (Until March 2019)

Fiona Fogarty

Jillian Welsby (Until December 2018)

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

Alice Bunker-Whitney Drama Practitioner

Parvez Qadir Associate Artist

Creative Teams

Whatever the Weather

Gilly Baskeyfield Director and Original Story

Joss Matzen Designer and Production Director

Jon Nicholls Composer

Adam Carrée Lighting and Video Designer

Josie Cerise and Carl Cockram Performers

Katie Bosomworth Touring Stage Manager

Little Gift

Andy Manley Co-creator and Director

Gilly Baskeyfield Co-creator

Joss Matzen Designer and Production Director

Mark Melville Composer

Adam Carrée Lighting Designer

Shona Reppe Puppet Maker

Guy Hargreaves Performer

Nathaniel Mason Assistant Stage Manager, School's Tour

Rick Conte Puppetry Consultant

Crossing the Line

Parvez Qadir Writer and Director

Shaban Dar Performer

Carl Cockram Facilitator

Alison Heffernan Costume and Set Design

Mary Cooper Script Consultant

Nick Farrimond Filming and Editing

With special thanks to:

Touring Programme
Caroline Kennedy Voiceover

Jo Belloli Creative Consultant

Sharon McWilliams and Lesley Stinson Costume

John Matzen and John Ashworth Scenic Construction/Props

Huw Jones and Mark Starbuck Design

Gareth Dennison Design

Steph Hollinshead Design

Lewis Wileman Photography

Leighton Wise Filmmaker

Aqib Khan Crossing the Line R&D

Umair Varsi Crossing the Line R&D

Luke Walker Tech Support

Nicola Ingram Tech Support

Participatory Programme

Nathaniel Mason Technician/Workshop Assistant

Jenny Harris Speech Bubbles Facilitator

Shannon Wild Workshop Assistant

Lizzie Wilson Workshop Assistant

David Haworth Designer

Danielle Frame/Connor Thompson Work experience

A Different Story of Rochdale

Danny Lamb Writer

Nicola Schofield Writer Mentor

Punam Ramchurn Rochdale Literature and Ideas Festival Director

Lisa O'Neill Rogan Programme Manager Link4Life

Robin Lyons Performer

Rachel Alcock Performer

Our Story

Erica Field RMBC

Nadia Malik RMBC

Emily Humphrey RMBC

Martha Mead Kingsway Park High School

Jon Turner Kilogramme Animation Studios

Wherever the Road Takes Me

Lauren Fielden RMBC

Tommy O'Connor Filmmaker

Debbie Ellidge St Cuthbert's RC High School

Project Partners

Act to Shine: Barnardo's Rochdale

Linking Schools: Erica Field, RMBC Early Help and Schools

Crossing the Line: Breaking Barriers, Oulder Hill Community School, Greater Manchester Police, RMBC Children's Services Team, Rochdale Complex Safeguarding Team, #Thrive, Healthy Young Minds Pennine NHS, Rochdale Connections Trust.

Speech Bubbles: London Bubble Theatre Company

What Cannot Be Turned Aside: Maeve Rendel

High Peak Writer's Camp: High Peak Community Arts





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With thanks to our core funders



Supported using public funding by
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Link4Life

With thanks to our project funders



**the
Tudor trust**



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Heywood, Middleton
and Rochdale
Clinical Commissioning Group

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**BUILDING
A STRONGER
BRITAIN
TOGETHER**