

MANCHESTER'S THEATRE FOR PARTICIPATION



IMPACT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2017 - AUGUST 2018



WELCOME

**“What a year for
The Edge and what a
time to be running a
cultural organisation!**

Arguably it's never been harder to sustain an Arts charity, certainly it's never been so important. This year we've worked with so many people who are struggling, people who are lonely or isolated, people who, by taking part in creative activities have been able to make real and positive changes in their lives. As Manchester's Award Winning Theatre for Participation, The Edge has become a go to destination for individuals, groups and referral agencies, providing a safe and welcoming space for people from all backgrounds to come together and enjoy the wonders that taking part – either as participant or spectator - in culture can bring.

Founded in 2011, The Edge is a thriving and accessible cultural hub, creating and presenting high-quality theatre and performance, and delivering a rich programme of meaningful and life changing participatory activities.

The Edge is Chorlton's first designated performing arts space and has successfully captured both its local community and a wider Greater Manchester audience in its reach.

The work of the company is informed by a simple principle: that everyone should have access to the Arts as a basic human right. We believe that the higher the quality of the work, the richer and more rewarding the experience, whether that's as spectator or participant.

The Edge produces theatre which is inclusive, inspiring, irreverent, joyful and full of hope. We engage babies to elders and everyone in between. We create opportunities for vulnerable adults and children to improve their life chances by becoming active creative citizens. We run classes and courses for Manchester's residents to develop their creative skills and improve their health and wellbeing along the way. We provide space for Manchester's creative professionals to develop their craft and to create new work.

The Edge is many different things to many different people, and we hope that this Impact Report gives you an insight into not only the range of work that we carry out, but also the effect that this work has had on people's lives. ”



Janine Waters
Artistic Director and CEO

What we did in 2017/18

The Edge is home to exciting world class theatre, new writing and musical journeys, stimulating and inclusive programming, inspiring and imaginative collaborations, and irreverent and hopeful stories.

We work with vulnerable adults, emerging artists and world class theatre practitioners to deliver this vision.

The Edge is many different things to many different people

- We run an award winning participatory programme for vulnerable adults and young people
- We programme some of the best touring theatre, comedy & events in the country
- We make theatre for people to watch and for people to take part in
- We are a hub for local people, running classes and courses and as a place to meet, work, be entertained and share enjoyment
- We run a thriving, award-winning café and training facility for adults with learning disabilities

“alongside the excellent work on stage, there’s good stuff happening throughout the organisation, with a participation programme as inclusive as it is ambitious”

ROB MARTIN, TIME OUT

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

FROM 1st September 2017
to 31st August 2018

15

VISITING

Theatre companies
welcomed into our theatre



61
SHOW

PERFORMANCES

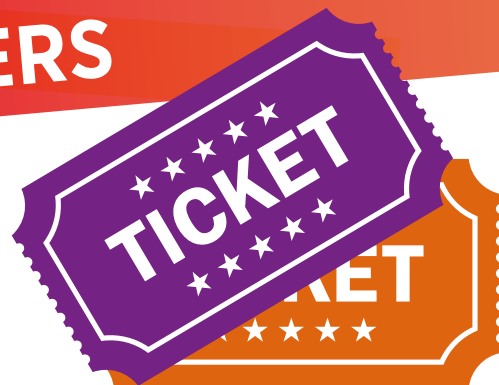


650
HOURS

completed by
volunteers

2843

TICKETS SOLD TO
SHOWS IN OUR THEATRE



245.5

DAYS

work created
for freelance
practitioners



11,232

COFFEES
SOLD

in
The Dressing
Room



1893 HOURS

our rooms were used
by outside organisations



ONE AWARD

won for Social Impact
Using The Arts



658 PEOPLE

took part in an arts activity
at **The Edge** each week

23

Adults with
learning disabilities
trained in catering
and hospitality in our
café **The Dressing
Room** for 552 hours
in total



2 Graduation
Ceremonies for
these trainees



40327
VISITS TO THE EDGE



423 hours

of creative activities
delivered to
vulnerable adults
and young people

10 PERFORMANCES
by our participatory groups



3 festivals
taken part in

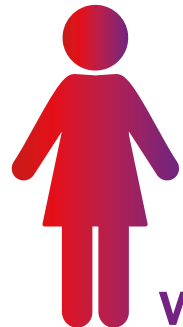
OUR PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMME WITH VULNERABLE **ADULTS** AND **YOUNG PEOPLE**

Through our participatory work with vulnerable adults and young people, we worked with **231 people**, delivering **423 hours** of creative activities



73%

were **MALE**



23%

were **FEMALE**

68%

were **homeless** or at risk of homelessness

53%

had **learning disabilities**

96%

had **mental health** issues

30% had a physical or long-term health issue

94%

reported feeling improved feelings of **happiness** and **self-worth**

39%

reported a reduced need for additional support

95%

reported an increased **sense of belonging**

18%

reported it has **helped to cope** with physical health problems

94%

demonstrated a **sense of pride** in their achievements after taking part in productions

66%

showed **improved communication skills**, including verbal and non-verbal communication skills and literacy skills

100%

demonstrated **IMPROVED** mental health and **GREATER** confidence

95%

reported it helped them to **feel more confident** in trying new things

93%

felt that they had developed **better relationships**

OUR PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMME

Our Partnership with The Booth Centre

The Edge runs regular drama and singing workshops at the Booth Centre for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Together we have created a unique company making high quality theatre.

We work with the Booth Centre to produce 2 shows a year which are performed at The Edge. The productions provide opportunities for friends, family, others with experience of homelessness and the staff that support them to see participants achieve. Our work profiles the impact of making theatre with vulnerable adults and challenges the public's perception of a person who has found themselves homeless. It proves that there is so much more to people than their current situation.



104 sessions



138 participants



2 shows

"The Edge in Chorlton have built up a huge and deserved reputation for working with people who are, for the want of a better phrase, on the 'edge' of society..."

To say this show was giving these citizens a meaning and a reason to stay alive perhaps sounds a little melodramatic and exaggerated; but after speaking with some of them after the show, that really was the case. I can only continue my own silent applause now as I type – not just to those who performed the show, but to all those who had the vision and dedication to see this project through and make it work so wonderfully."

**MATTHEW DOUGALL, REVIEW
NUMBER 9 (THEY CAN'T TAKE
THAT AWAY FROM ME - JULY 2018)**



"This show was an absolutely joyful experience, as community theatre can be at its best. It was clear that all the cast - each of whose voices was heard to great effect - all were totally invested in the work and all shared ownership. On top of this, there was skill displayed with a lovely lightness of touch, it was so well put together. And finally, it was very poignant. Glorious."

ADRIAN JACKSON, FOUNDER CARDBOARD CITIZENS

"This has given people the opportunity to develop and showcase their skills and talents. It is inspirational to watch."

AMANDA CROOME, MBE, CEO OF THE BOOTH CENTRE

"I love it basically. I think the people here are amazing. It's good for your self-confidence, belief, everything. I've never done acting before until I met up with Janine. What do I get out of it? I get more out of it than anything. I'm an ex-smack head, crack head, everything, and it gives me more of a buzz than any of that."

BILLY, BOOTH CENTRE PARTICIPANT

"I found myself homeless two years ago, whilst I was at university. I fell in with a bad crowd, and lost everything. I slept rough on doorsteps, in tents and under bridges. It felt awful, it was lonely. I had nobody and nothing. I heard about the Booth Centre, and eventually I knew I needed to make a change and I visited the Centre for some help."

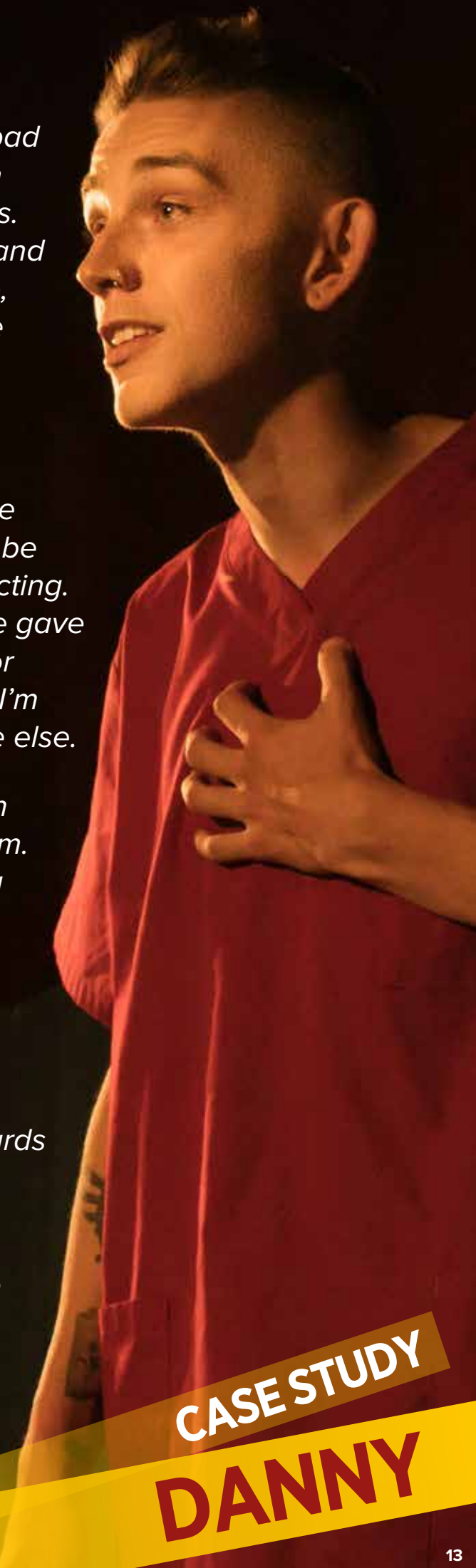
Soon I became involved in the weekly drama sessions. Drama is something I've done since school, so it was so good to be given the opportunity to get back into acting. The sessions with Janine from The Edge gave me the chance to forget my problems for a few hours, concentrate on something I'm good at, and the chance to be someone else.

My confidence has really improved. I am now going back to university to study film. I've got a bounce back in my step and a smile on my face, it feels like I've found myself again.

I've learnt a lot from being part of the Booth Centre and the drama project particularly. It's great to be in accommodation now, and working towards getting myself sorted.

I could complain about the things that have happened in my life, or I could see it as life's lessons and look to the future, which is what I'm doing. Thank you to everyone who has been there, because without them, I wouldn't be."

CASE STUDY
DANNY



EXPRESSIVE EDGE

Expressive Edge is our theatre company for adults with learning disabilities and has been running at The Edge since 2011. The company is led by Nikki Mailer, one of our drama specialists.

16 learning disabled actors attend weekly sessions at the Edge, topped and tailed with tea and biscuits. The sessions include: theatre games to develop speaking and listening, working as a group, concentration, focusing and fun; improvisation to develop creativity, spontaneity and imagination; devising to develop planning and thinking skills; and performances to develop presentation skills, confidence/self-esteem and to give our participants a platform to talk about what matters to them.

Since its inception, Expressive Edge has formed a core part of our activities at The Edge and most of the actors have been with us from the beginning. This has given us a chance to get to know them as individuals and for them to get to know us, feel safe and to achieve a real sense of ownership of The Edge.

The group work towards 2 shows a year and these productions give families an opportunity to see the actors achieving and flourishing in a way that other, more formal and less creative activities may not be able to do.



40 sessions



16 participants



2 shows

CASE STUDY JANE



Jane has Down's syndrome and has been coming to Expressive Edge since it began in 2011

"I like being here because I like being with my friends and doing what I love the most - acting."

"I would say that the drama group here is absolutely amazing. It's a group where you can make new friends and you can have fun and develop acting skills. When you do a show we put it on upstairs in the theatre, in the actual theatre with the stage lighting everywhere"

Jane, Expressive Edge Actor

"I think it is hugely important that [The Edge] is here. A lot of the activities and groups that are offered to the learning disability community fold very quickly, or the venue closes down, or you end up with a timeslot that is unsociable because it is filling a gap in there... but here at The Edge it is consistent, it is permanent, they have a base that doesn't change, that is familiar... It's so welcoming and inclusive and it's lovely that their voices are really listened to. They are not patronised. All their ideas are welcomed, it's totally inclusive and I think it gives them confidence that they are being listened to. It's so often that their voices just aren't heard. It's something that is theirs"

Jane's Mum

**"I feel happy and excited when I come to drama!
I meet a lot of nice people and they make me happy."**

*"I feel nervous but great. I feel good about myself
and I made lots of friends. I was nervous and
scared at first but now I feel happy"*

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAY ABOUT EXPRESSIVE EDGE

**"The Edge is a nice place, when you
are on stage it makes you happy.
It's good when the audience laugh."**

*"The people who do drama are our friends.
Being on stage makes you feel good and happy."*

**"I like making people laugh when I perform. When the
lights come on. Meeting people from the audience is fun.
When I perform I feel confident. When we do drama we
have to respect each other
and not cause trouble."**



ASPIRE

**"Great group
run by a
wonderful
team of staff"**

Aspire is our theatre project for young people with learning disabilities.

Each week they explore theatre and theatre techniques using games, drama, storytelling, music, movement to tell stories. The sessions provide the young actors with a chance to play, make friends, and build confidence through theatre.



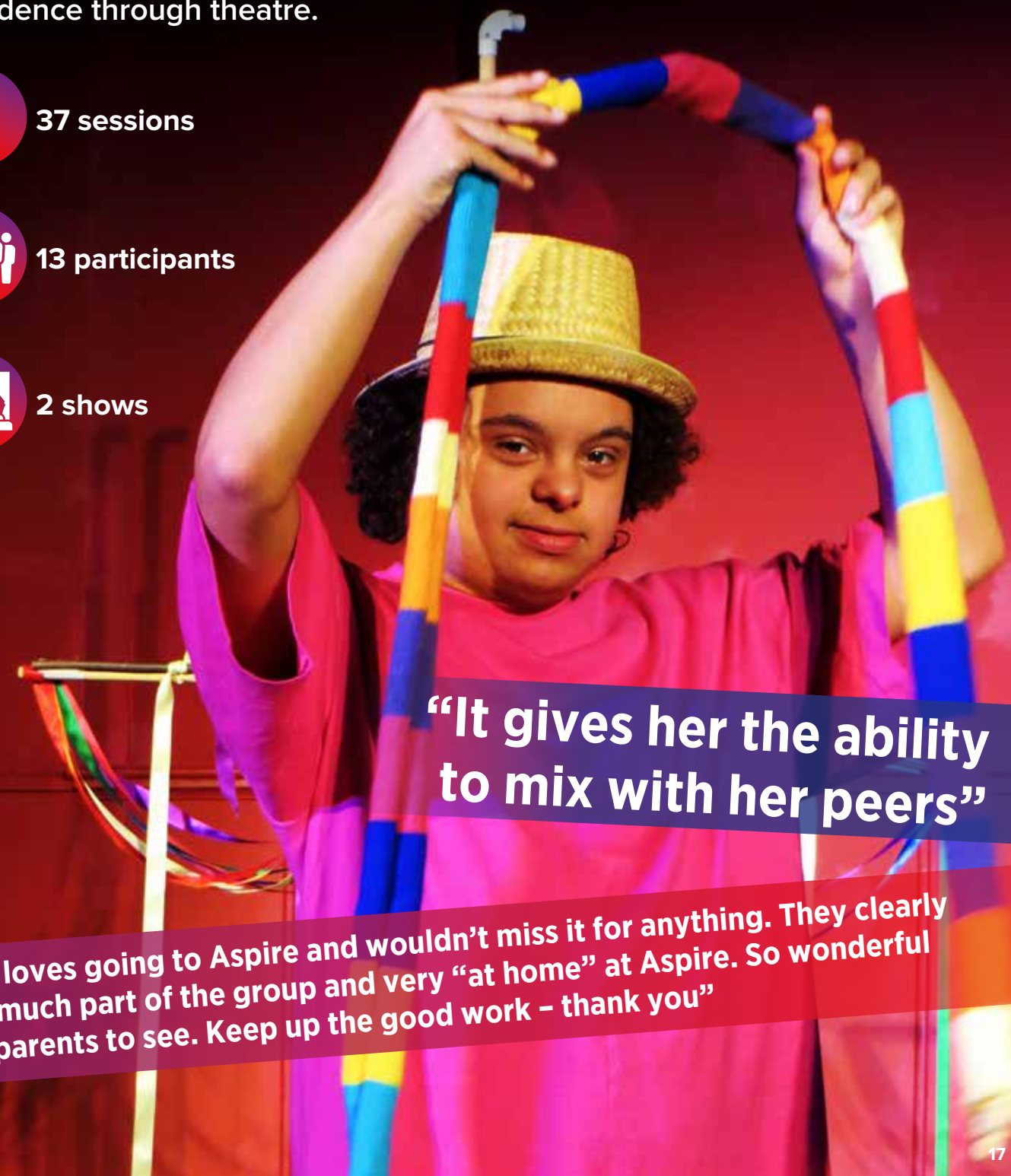
37 sessions



13 participants



2 shows



**"It gives her the ability
to mix with her peers"**

**"My child loves going to Aspire and wouldn't miss it for anything. They clearly
feel very much part of the group and very "at home" at Aspire. So wonderful
for us as parents to see. Keep up the good work – thank you"**

NEW PROGRAMMES THAT WE INTRODUCED THIS YEAR

As well as our established programme of activities, this year we introduced four new projects to our participatory programme

STEPPING OUT

Stepping Out is our new dance company for adults with learning disabilities which started in April 2018

Working with professional dancer and facilitator Susan Swanton, learning disabled adults attend regular weekly dance sessions to explore different dance styles, work as a group, devise different dances, improve focus, improve coordination, physical health and fitness, develop performance and presentation skills develop confidence and self-esteem.



EXPRESSIVE TOO

We set **Expressive Too** up in April 2018 in response to a growing waiting list for Expressive Edge. Every Monday learning disabled actors come together in a safe space to explore their creative potential, raising their confidence and self-esteem and creating friendships within the group. Using theatre techniques, they work on devising and performing in a setting where everyone is welcomed and valued for their efforts and achievements, giving the actors a real sense of achievement and a boost in confidence which can be applied to other areas of their lives.



THE LONGFORD CENTRE

The Longford Centre in Chorlton is a homeless prevention centre run by Manchester City Council. The Edge has developed a strong relationship with them, running a series of acting for confidence workshops with residents in the centre.

MY EDGE

My Edge is the new programme for residents in the Merseybank and Arrowfield areas in Chorlton. Working with local councillors and Barlow Moor Community Centre, this programme gives residents access to a range of creative activities, discounts to our theatre and special offers in our café.

OUR THEATRE

We make theatre for people to watch and for people to take part in.

We believe in the power of stories to provide hope, meaning and a compass to help navigate a way to a better life.

WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF STORIES TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

Our own productions are made by The Edge's creative team: writer and director Janine Waters and composer and musical director Simon Waters, working alongside performers from all backgrounds and integrating the worlds of participation and professional theatre.

The Edge is Manchester's Theatre for Participation and provides practice based training and creative professional development for actors, musicians, dancers and applied theatre practitioners to make high quality, entertaining and ethically sound theatre with vulnerable adults and young people.



Touring Theatre

Our Theatre is a unique space to see some of the best high-quality, small-scale, theatre from around the country.

In 2017/18 we welcomed 2843 people into the theatre to see some of the best new writing in the country including:

WHERE'S MY IGLOO GONE

by Bone Ensemble



FRANKIE VAH

by Luke Wright



GROWTH

by Paines Plough



TWO LITTLE DUCKS

by Matt Abbott



THE DREAM FACTORY

by House of Stray Cats



ALL THE THINGS I LIED ABOUT

by Katie Bonna and Paul Jellis



CHILD OF THE DIVIDE

by Sudha Bhuchar, presented
by Bhuchar Boulevard and
Polka Theatre

Touring Theatre

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

by Action Space Transport



RED RIDING HOOD AND THE WOLF

by Little Angel Theatre



LIBRARY LION

by Untied Artists



THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT

by Kitchen Zoo

CHIP SHOP CHIPS

by Box of Tricks



MARK THOMPSON'S SPECTACULAR SCIENCE SHOW



PETER AND THE WOLF

by Goblin Theatre

EVENTS

We also hosted a range of comedy and one-off performances over the year

MUM'S THE WORD

Hosted by Award Winning writer, comedian and Mum Katie Mulgrew, Mum's The Word is a monthly lunchtime comedy club for parents to bring their babies along to.

★★★★★ **'Laugh-Affirming Stuff'** FESTMAG

Each month some of the best acts on the circuit join consistently sold out audiences of parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles and friends, along with their babies, for this comedy gig with a difference!

"I nearly didn't come because I felt so exhausted... I am so glad I didn't cancel! It was so so good to laugh till I cried happy tears. Its a great thing you do organising it! We will definitely be back!"



9 performances



19 comedians



443 people attending

XMAS STORYTELLING

For 6 evenings in December The Dressing Room became a winter wonderland (complete with magical Gold Chair!) for some very special festive story telling for under 8 year olds

"Brilliant! So welcoming and my little one was totally engaged. And the hot chocolate went down pretty well too!"



6 performances



2 storytellers



96 people attending

AN AFTERNOON WITH...

In 2018 we built a relationship with RNCM, hosting small classical concerts in our cafe The Dressing Room. Complete with afternoon teas, these were welcoming and relaxing afternoon concerts where you were able to see some of the best emerging talent in classical music in Manchester.



"These events are fantastic, I've been bringing my family every month. We love classical music and we go to lunch time concerts at Bridgewater Hall, so to have something similar on our doorstep we can visit is just wonderful. We love supporting our local venue to and it's a great intimate atmosphere."



3 performances



6 classical musicians



50 people attending

ADRIFT SCREENING

Created by artist and filmmaker Clara Casian with Cracking Good Food and community members experiencing, or who have experience of homelessness, this short film was aimed to raise awareness of the complex issues surrounding homelessness.

The film was premiered at The Edge with two sold out screenings which were followed by a Q&A session with a guest panel featuring local councillors, organisations working with homelessness and members of the Manchester Homelessness Partnership

"Heartbreaking yet inspiring. A thoroughly necessary and relevant film which opened up a much needed discussion about homelessness following the screening"



2 shows



1 guest panel Q&A



140 people attending

CLASSES & COURSES FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Edge runs a full programme of creative classes and courses for the local community to get involved with. Each week 658 people take part in an arts activity at The Edge.

Each term we run a range of classes and courses for the local community, from ukulele to acting, tap to singing.

“Most uplifting singing group I’ve ever attended. The group is informal, friendly, welcoming, diverse and absolutely inclusive. I managed to keep involved during a long period of serious illness and I believe that this really benefited recovery and gave a really positive psychological boost at a difficult time.”

The Sing participant

“I’ve always loved dancing but what I get additionally from this course is the thrill of dancing the movie routines!”

Movie Moves participant

“When I joined the Sing, it was after a lot of difficult things had happened in my family. Singing with other people has helped me a lot to deal with depression and anxiety. When you have to concentrate on singing your part, there’s no space for the negative ideas that can dominate your thinking. Simon is so positive and accepting of everyone, regardless of ability. We start a new song and I think “I’ll never be able to do this” and after a few minutes, we’re singing it and sometimes we sing it well and that’s such a good feeling!”

The Sing participant

“The sessions are informal and fun and Phil is encouraging and supportive. The music Phil teaches us to play is varied and he encourages us to request pieces we’d like to learn. He drops in little pearls of musical wisdom for us to benefit from his own experience and skill. My “kids” are very impressed that I am being taught by a proper musician and band member!”

Beginners Ukulele participant

“Great fun, lovely people and something I’ve wanted to do since watching Singing In The Rain when I was a little girl!”

Tap Dancing for Adults participant

“He loves coming and I’ve watched his confidence grow since he started attending”

Edge Theatre Club parent

**EACH WEEK 658 PEOPLE
TAKE PART IN AN ARTS
ACTIVITY AT THE EDGE**



The
DRESSING ROOM
Cafe

The Dressing Room Cafe opened in April 2015 as a café and training facility for adults with learning disabilities

Trainees complete 12 week one to one personalised training from our learning mentor in hospitality and catering for 2 hours each week. Between September 2017 and August 2018, 23 participants completed the Dressing Room training, developing a range of skills including in safety in the workplace, health and safety, food hygiene, customer service and handling money.

61%
had mental
health issues

13%
went into a full time
volunteer role

48%
improved their
money handling

26%
went on to a
volunteer role

17%
had a job interview
following the training

22%
joined one of the
dance or drama
companies at
The Edge

4%
were homeless
or at risk of
becoming
homeless

100%
met the targets
set out in their
individual
learning plans

30%
came back to
The Edge to
volunteer after
their training


43%
improved their
knowledge of health
and nutrition

78%
developed their gross
and fine motor skills

87%
developed their
sense of belonging
and self-worth

39%
were able to make
coffees independently
by the end of the training

 **57%**
were FEMALE

 **43%**
were MALE

Our Patrons

Sir Mark Rylance

Julie Hesmondhalgh

Our Trustees

Professor Maggie Gale (Chair)

Amanda Croome MBE

Charlotte Platt

David Martin

Councillor Eve Holt

Wyllie Longmore

Professor James Thompson

Paula Rabbitt

Our Staff

Janine Waters, Artistic Director and CEO

Simon Waters, Musical Director

Dom Waters, Centre Manager

Dan Jones, Co-Business Development Manager

Emily Potter, Learning Mentor, The Dressing Room Cafe

Jim Turner, Cafe Manager and Chef

Hannah McAdam, Co-Business Development Manager

Samuel Rowe, Technical Manager and Sustainability Officer

And a wonderful team of freelance practitioners



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FIND OUT MORE edgetheatre.co.uk

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