

20 STORIES HIGH

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13



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1. Co-Artistic Directors' Introduction

2012/13 has been a very exciting year for 20 Stories High.

We had launched our Young Actors Company at the beginning of 2012, and this year saw their first ever production – *Tales from the MP3*. This verbatim theatre show was made entirely from interviews with the group who then played each other in this honest, funny and transformative show. Building on our partnerships, works in progress were shared at international festival 'Contacting the World', the Royal Exchange's 'Truth about Youth Festival' and the final production was created for the Bluecoat, Liverpool in December. We received incredibly positive feedback on the show, and are looking at it having a further life next year.

Tales from the MP3 was developed in parallel to our professional production *Whole* - a gritty, funny and uncompromising new play by Philip Osment. *Whole* was directly influenced by 20 SH Young people through a 'Dinner & Debate' and the interviews from *MP3*. *Whole* explored sexuality, love, death and religion, featuring live music and spoken word. It toured nationally to schools and small-scale venues and we were able to offer an exciting participation programme with discussions, workshops and 'post show jams' – club nights for young people in venues. *Whole* received outstanding responses from young people, teachers and audiences.

We have also been busy developing *Melody Loses Her Mojo*- Keith Saha's new show, which will tour in autumn 2013. Workshops and readings with artists and young people have supported the development of both the text and the visual aspects of the show. The play will be an incredible blend of hip-hop theatre, puppetry and dance - and will be created by an ensemble of seven amazing multi-skilled artists, actors, dancers, puppeteers and musicians and an exceptional creative team.

Our Youth Theatre created new show *The Universe and Me*, with Keith Saha, poet Martin Stannage and digital artist, Sam Meech, performed in Liverpool and Manchester, and a Young Digital Pilot Project premiered two short films at FACT.

As an organisation, we have further developed key partnerships this year. It was a very successful first year as part of the Arts Councils' National Portfolio, and we are also secured grants from the Paul Hamlyn and Esmée Fairbairn Foundations, all of which has secured some financial stability for the next 3 years. We also further developed relationships with national venue partners, including: Bolton Octagon, The Dukes, Lancaster; The Key, Peterborough, New Wolsey, Ipswich; Freedom Studios, Bradford; Redbridge Drama Centre; Contact Theatre, Manchester,

We would like to thank all our participants, audiences, artists, staff and funders for all that they have contributed to 20 Stories High and our ongoing development.

2. The Company: Mission, Vision, Values

Everybody has a story to tell and their own way of telling it...



20 Stories High was established in 2006, and is led by Co-Artistic Directors, Julia Samuels and Keith Saha. We create bold, contemporary and imaginative theatre with and for young people aged 13-30. Our home is in Toxteth, Liverpool, but our reach is regional, national and international. We are passionate about pushing the boundaries of what theatre is and what it means to young people.

We are committed to ensuring that marginalised young people have access to high quality, engaging and inspiring theatre as audiences – and that they have opportunities to develop their skills and talents through participatory projects. Our touring and participatory strands inter-connect, and feed into each other, artistically socially, politically – young people’s voices are at the heart of our work.

In terms of touring, we work with theatre venues nationally to develop young and diverse audiences, and we also tour to schools and youth clubs – meeting young people in their own communities and spaces. Our participatory work centres on our Liverpool-based Youth Theatre and Young Actors Company – who help us develop all of our work, but we also run an exciting diverse participatory programme in partnership with our national venues – creating opportunities for young people to get involved up and down the country.

We have won a number of prestigious awards. *Ghost Boy* (Keith Saha) won the 2011 Brian Way Award for the UK’s Best New Play for Young People and the 2010 Best Touring Production from the Liverpool Daily Post Awards. *Blackberry Trout Face* (Laurence Wilson) received the 2010 Brian Way Award for UK’s Best New Play for Young People and was short-listed as Best New Play by the Manchester Evening News in 2009.

20 Stories High value...Playfulness, Equality, Excellence, Honesty, Hope and being political.

3. Where We Work and Who We Work With

We engage with audiences and young people living in some of the most socially excluded areas of the country. We capture imaginations, raise aspirations and provide opportunities to debate the most urgent issues in young people's lives, through engagement with high quality, thought-provoking and entertaining live performance and participatory arts activities.

We work in partnership with local and national organisations, schools and youth centres to ensure we reach those who will most benefit. Across all projects, we work with inspirational, professional role models, who are reflective of the diversity of our audiences and participants in terms of culture, class, gender and artistic interests.

In 2012-13:

- We performed a total of **47** professional shows
- We performed **18** participatory shows
- We facilitated **181** workshops
- We performed at **5** festivals
- We showcased our first ever film screening.
- Over **6,900** audience members saw our work
- Over **5,500** young people connected with our programme
- **22** volunteers and **44** artists worked with 20SH

We also worked with many local and national partners...

Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse, The Bluecoat, DaDa Fest, MPAC, YEP, Merseyside Youth Theatre Forum, Knowsley Council, Young Identity, Toxteth TV, University Academy, Academy of St Francis of Assisi, LIPA, The Black-E, Unity Theatre, Z-Arts Centre, Chinese Arts Centre, Tmesis, LCVS, Tell Tale Theatre Company, Altru Drama, Suitcase Ensemble, Off The Ground Theatre, Curious Minds, Unity Youth & Community Centre, Young Addaction, Knowsley Youth Theatre, Unity Youth & Community Centre, GYRO (Gay Youth R Out), Catalyst Performing Arts, Liverpool Youth Service, Anfield Community Arts, COAP, Bolton Octagon, Half Moon Young People's Theatre, Cardboard Citizens, New Wolsey Theatre – Ipswich, The Garage - Norwich, Redbridge Drama Centre, Manchester Royal Exchange, The Dukes - Lancaster, Leicester Curve, The Key - Peterborough, Contact Theatre, Albert Kennedy Trust, Freedom Studios, The Red Room, NAYT.

And were active in key networks: COoL (Cultural Organisations of Liverpool), ENYAN, NAYT, Sustained Theatre (STUN), Merseyside Youth Theatre Forum, Merseyside Arts Awards Advisor Network, CING and the ITC.

4. Projects 2012-13

Whole

WHOLE by Philip Osment, was a new commission, which opened at the Unity Theatre, Liverpool, and then toured locally and nationally January-March 2013.

It was a very successful show and there was fabulous feedback from audiences, venue-partners, theatre professionals and the press. Some highlights include:

- Touring 21 shows to 15 schools in Merseyside, and taking 27 more shows to theatres nationally.
- Running an extensive participation programme alongside the performances, including a post show discussion after every performance, post-show jams (club nights) in venues, and workshops in schools and venues around spoken word, love, friendships and poetry.
- Running Whole as a partner-project to the Young Actors Company's show 'Tales from the MP3', and establishing an exemplary model in terms of creatively connecting our touring and participation projects
- Whole being published by Oberon in their 'Plays for Young People' collection
- Extensive press coverage and a huge amount of positive digital engagement with audiences and participants
- Successfully building on our national partnerships and relationships, and establishing new national partners off the back of 'Whole'
- Completing our first ever national schools tour to Peterborough and Bradford.

"This immaculately integrated four hander gives us a group of older teenagers acting out the story of their lost friend Holly and it is one of the most hard-hitting and moving pieces of theatre for young audiences I've ever seen.....a remarkable piece of startlingly good theatre. See it if you possibly can."

The Stage

"It is such a raw truthful production played magnificently by the cast and directed so delicately. I personally found it a real journey of emotion and reflection, the time just disappeared and during the production I was certainly taken to many different places with my emotions and my thoughts."

Darren Batey, Albert Kennedy Trust (Social Partner on Whole)

"Show 2nite was so breath taking... Was soo speechless... this makes me want to act more and in different places to show them what young people can do... 1 word AMAZING" **Odile Mukete, Young Audience member (via Facebook)**



Artistic Development of 'Melody Loses Her Mojo'

Through 2012-13, we were in pre-production for our forthcoming national tour, 'Melody Loses Her Mojo' by Keith Saha – a co-production between Liverpool Everyman Playhouse and Curve, Leicester. We spent 3 days workshopping the script in December, leading to a small sharing for young people and partners. In March, we also had a creative and exciting design Research and Development week bringing together designer Kate Unwin, Puppet Director Sue Buckmaster and Lighting Designer Doug Kuhrt. We are also developing an extensive Participation Programme alongside Melody, which is bespoke to each venue.

Participation Programme

Young people's quote

Our Participation Programme continues to engage with local young people, and has grown substantially over the past year, both on a local and national level. We are engaging more young audiences and offering further opportunities for participants involved with our programme. Some highlights include:

- 9 Youth Theatre and Young Actors Company members have been given professional acting work
- 1 young person has become a professional poetry workshop facilitator
- 5 young people have been offered paid work at 20 Stories High

Youth Theatre

- Created and performed *The Universe and Me* January-July 2012 at the Bluecoat and at the *Truth About Youth Festival* (Royal Exchange, Manchester)
- One of the older members of Youth Theatre has now become 20 Stories High Emerging Artist and will assistant direct the 2013 Youth Theatre production



Young Actors Company

- The first year of our Young Actors Company was highly successful, engaging 21 young adults throughout the process of creating two original shows
- Their first show *Tales from the MP3* was a verbatim theatre piece, exploring stories that made each member who they are today. YAC members played

each other and recounted the stories direct from MP3s live onstage, presenting a totally unique and mesmerising style of verbatim theatre.

- *Tales from the MP3* was shared at the International Festival *Contacting The World* (Contact Theatre), the *Truth About Youth Festival* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester). It opened in The Bluecoat, Liverpool in December 2012, followed by a sharing at Peterborough's Youth Theatre Conference, led by The Key Theatre (Peterborough) and New Wolsey Theatre (Ipswich).

“Honestly If I had not come on the last night I would come again tomorrow. I thought the performances were really generous, really honest and really funny. I now feel better about the world and I want to go home and ring my Mum, or my Sister actually. I always think that is the big thing whenever you leave a show and you actually want to go and ring someone you love and tell them all about it and give them a bit of a hug down the phone as well. I just thought it was fantastic and I want to see it again please. It is alive and full of heart.”

Lindsay Rodden, Literary Associate, Liverpool Everyman Playhouse

Youth Advisory Group

- YAG is made up of approx 10 young representatives, aged 13-21 from across 20 Stories High's participation programme. YAG meets on a monthly basis to explore ways of extending quality, creative and team building experiences for the young people. They are consulted about developments within the company, and are involved in progression and decision making.
- Youth Advisory Group successfully raised £800 in an ASDA Bag Pack, they are also self-led a 'Play in a day' event in April, which involved 11 hours of non-stop artistic development.

Open workshops

- Four open workshops were provided this year for young people who are interested in getting involved in the core programme, finding out more about 20 Stories High or for young people who simply want to participate in a one off workshop.

Training: accreditation/ placements/ volunteers

We are developing a long-term partnership with John Moores University and Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, and have offered 16 placement opportunities to second and third year degree students.

“Working with 20SH has really concreted my decision to further a career in making theatre accessible for young people. Every week the development of the young people, not just as a performer but as people, showed the fantastic work they do.” **Charli Parkin, Volunteer**

Creative Case

In Spring 2013, 20 Stories High were asked by Arts Council England North West to lead a series of seminars in the North West to progress the Creative Case for Diversity. We partnered with ACE North West; Octagon Theatre, Bolton; Contact Theatre, Manchester; STUN (Sustained Theatre North West); Homotopia, DaDa Fest; Fittings Multimedia and Vital Xposure to successfully deliver 3 seminars with senior management and young people of the leading regional theatres in the North West.

There was a very good response and attendance from all the theatres and key proposals and actions were put together in an evaluation meeting with the Arts Council, which went forward to the national debate.

5. Future Ambitions

Artistic Programming 2013 – 14

Melody Loses Her Mojo written and directed by Keith Saha - a co-production with Liverpool Everyman Playhouse and Leicester Curve, will tour to mid-scale national venues September – November 2013.



*Melody is in the care system and trying to keep hold of her mojo...
Blessing has come from Nigeria but longs to be back home...
Rizla is the world's worst drug dealer and his new friends might not be the
'family' he's looking for...*

This bold, gritty and challenging story follows the amazing journeys of three remarkable young people. Their stories intertwine in a world full of magical and surreal moments.

The story is told through an exciting, innovative and unique blend of Hip Hop Theatre, Dance, Puppetry, Mask, traditional text and song, with live beat boxing and cello. 20 Stories High have developed this ground breaking form with hit shows such as the award winning ***Ghost Boy*** (2010) and ***Babul and the Blue Bear*** (2008).

Tales from the MP3

We are excited to be taking our Young Actors Company on tour with their acclaimed verbatim show in summer 2014. We will open the show as part of Liverpool's first Young People's Arts Festival in July, before taking the show to the Edinburgh and on a very limited national tour to key venue partners.

Future Tours

We are also developing new work, which will tour 2014 - 16. This includes:

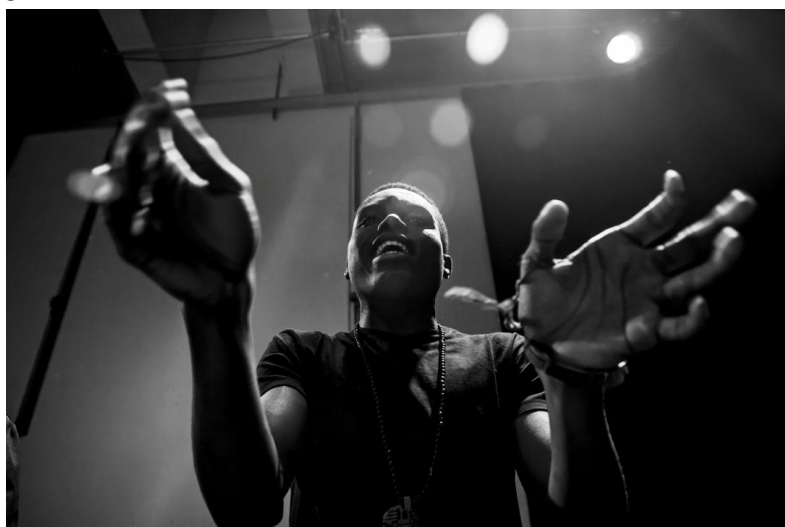
- ***Hidden*** – a new verbatim theatre show, exploring abortion, teenage pregnancy and motherhood
- ***Slammed*** - a new show about young people on the brink of adulthood co-authored by playwright Philip Osment and 3 spoken word artists.

Participation

Involving young people in our creative processes is central to what we do. As part of our all our touring and development work, there will be participation opportunities for young people, inviting their creative responses and ideas to inform the work. Our Liverpool-based core Participation Programme 2013–14 will include:

- **Youth Theatre:** working on creating a short performance piece, directed by Julia Samuels for the next phase of the *Truth About Youth* project at the Royal Exchange in November.
- **Young Actors Company:** taking part in Hip-Hop Theatre workshops, and creating their own new show, as a partnership project with Leicester Curve and YEP alongside *Melody*
- **Open and Outreach Workshops**
- **Youth Advisory Group**
- **Dinner'n'Debate, theatre trips, Arts Awards and other events**
- **Connecting with local, national and international festivals**, including Truth About Youth (Royal Exchange)

Working with our national theatre partners, we will also create bespoke participation projects, which interact with our national tours - ***Melody Loses her Mojo*** and ***Tales from the MP3***.



6. Summary Statement of Income & Expenditure

The results for the year and the charity's financial position at the end of the year are shown in the Annual Accounts 2012 – 13. Total incoming resources were £271,310 and total outgoing resources were £281,408 with net outgoing resources of £10,098 in total. At 31 March 2013 the balance on the unrestricted general funds carried forward was £14,711 and on restricted funds £2,356.

7. Thank You

Without the support of our funders, partners, young people, staff, board, volunteers, artists and freelancers we couldn't achieve our ambitions with such success and energy. So a huge thank-you to...

Our Funders and Donors

Arts Council England, Liverpool City Council, BBC Children in Need, Lloyds Banking Group Community Fund, Lankelly Chase, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, Garfield Weston, E.L. Rathbone Charitable Trust, Visiting Arts, Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust, Co-operative Community Fund, Co-operative Customer Donation, Money For Life and Kate Samuels

All our Partners...please see list on p. 6

All of the young people - past and present - involved in Youth Theatre, Young Actors Company, Young Digital, outreach workshops and our national programme

Staff

Julia Samuels, Keith Saha, Leanne Jones, Sarah Meath, Nathaniel Hall, Tessa Buddle and Isobel Hawson

Board

Rebecca Vipond, Kim Johnson, Lateefah Wainwright- Owoo, Trish Sangster, Anita Welsh, Curtis Watt, **Louie Ingham** and Jo Hemmant

Volunteers and Students

Lisa Davis, Becky Hopkins, Hannah Blamire, Paul Williams, Brett Cohen, Katie Scott, Onai Bikishoni, Snowzie, Anita Welsh, Ellie Potter, Sarah McDermott, Fiona Darling, Yvette Sedgley, Dominic Halliday, Shayan Hamzeh, Nicole May, Alex Herring, Brett Cohen, Ruth Samuels and the 'Evoke' Team.

Freelancers

Anita Welsh, Toyin Otubsin, Bradley Thompson, Sam Kent, Jennifer Nelson, Colin Warring, Yvette Sedgley, Helen Lainsbury, John Sims, Kate Benfield, Anne Marie Martin, Matthew Barnes, Geoff Owens, Julie Guinan, Ken Butterfield

Artists

Keith Saha, Julia Samuels, Martin Stannage, Sam Meech, Philip Osment, Vanessa Babirye, Gavin Wood, Curtis Watt, Paul Williams, Katie Scott, Onai Bikishoni, Eli

Randle, Rachel Farrell, Steph O'Driscoll, Topher Campbell, Ellie Potter, Tim
Lynskey, Anna-Marie Hainsworth, Joseph Adelakun, Leon Tagoe, Tara Hodge,
Modupe Adeyeye, Bradley Thompson, Keisha Thompson, Rachel Brogan, Matt
Rutter, Lin Coghlan, Laurence Clark, Graeme Lycett, Benji Reid, Grace Willis, Jacob
Beswick, Annabel Annan Jonathan, Sue Buckmaster, Joanne Sandi, Sarah
Amankwah, Danny Hayes, Anita Welsh, Doug Kuhrt, Sam Ikpeh, Julie McNamara,
Annie Mukete, Robert Day, Wes Storey, David 'Stickman' Higgins, Nicole May, Alex
Herring, Sarah Sayeed