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## Keynote Address

### Farah Karim-Cooper (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre)

*'Co-mates': Theatres and Universities*

This talk will explore how the partnerships between universities and theatre organisations have developed in recent years, addressing what motivates such partnerships, the types of collaborative models that work and how sustainable they are. Karim-Cooper will draw from her own experiences working at Shakespeare's Globe.

## Panellists' Abstracts

### Adel al-Salloum (The Spark Arts for Children)

*Digital Arts, Children's Theatre and a New Curriculum*

*Pop Up Play* is a new product developed in partnership between The Spark Arts for Children, De Montfort University and Dotlib. It is a mixed reality creative play system that enables the use of immersive digital technology to create learning opportunities for children and young people to enhance their creativity, language and communication skills. The product has been supported by the Digital R&D Fund for the Arts. *Pop Up Play* is part theatre, part film, part game, part playground. The PUP system takes images, live or recorded and projects them onto a screen. These images might relate to children's books, gallery or museum exhibitions, theatre productions or national curriculum topics. Video cameras with motion tracking then place participants into a projected world for exploration and open-ended learning. Pop up Play has created new practices. This augments and transforms existing practice, with its own signatures and proposition such that it represents a new ontology.

#### Key Issues:

- What role can arts organisations and HE providers play in cultivating the development of new ideas and practice that broaden opportunity for creative engagement?
- How is this best delivered and evaluated to deliver maximum benefits to the broader arts and cultural sector?

### **Catherine Alexander (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama)**

Devising Professional Productions with HE Students: Central School and Complicite

This year Complicite and Acting CDT at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama entered into a creative partnership to develop work together, share resources and create research and learning opportunities. We plan to co-produce public production and development work led and mentored by Complicite professionals that has the potential to be professionally presented by Complicite. BA (Hons) Acting CDT has a long history of working in collaboration with professional theatre companies including Complicite, Blind Summit, Scarlet theatre, Transport, Inspector Sands and Punchdrunk. The course is currently developing models of creating devised work in partnership and evolving IP / copyright agreements that incentive the creation of new work and provide benefits to both parties. We propose to outline this case study of a partnership between an HE institution and professional theatre company that specifically seeks to develop collaboratively devised productions with diverse student groups.

#### **Key Issues:**

- Creating work that is collaboratively devised - who owns what?
- How can you keep experimentation and risk alive in drama conservatoire productions?
- What can the HE institution offer the professional company?

### **Roger Apfelbaum and Kerry Irvine (Bath Spa University)**

*Professional Engagement and MAs in Theatre for Young Audiences and Performing Shakespeare: the egg and Shakespeare's Globe as Models for Diverse Theatre/HE Collaboration in Postgraduate Courses*

Focussing on the 'Performance Engagement' module shared between MAs in Theatre for Young Audiences (MATYA), Performing Shakespeare (MAPS), and Dance, the case study will consider various models of relationships between HE and theatres. Whereas the Performing Shakespeare students go for a two week residency at Shakespeare's Globe before students create their own professional projects for assessments once back at university, the MATYA students work in a variety of ways to create projects for assessment with 'the egg' (Theatre Royal Bath's dedicated space for young audiences and a major part of the formal 'Cultural Partnership' between the Theatre Royal and Bath Spa University). The different kinds of student experiences that constitute the module's professional engagement foster questions about the relationships between undergraduate and postgraduate students, and the range of involvement with theatre productions and

educational activities. We are especially interested in exploring ways to achieve shared goals.

**Key Issues**

- Two-way exchanges between HE and theatres: how is success defined in collaborations?
- Differing language and goals in performance and professionalism (students, lecturers, practitioners, and theatres): academic assessments and achievements in a professional environment; valuing professional experience in an academic context; marketing collaborations.
- Different models for exchanges: experiential (internships, productions) and dedicated educational programmes; curricular and extra-curricular activities.

**Dan Barnard (London South Bank University and fanSHEN Theatre Company)**

*Does Size Matter? A Case Study in Student Placements with Small Theatre Companies*

Dan will focus on the case study of fanSHEN theatre company and draw on interviews with those who have undertaken placements with fanSHEN. He will argue that a smaller theatre company can sometimes create a more bespoke and challenging placement for students in which they feel they are having real impact and that this tailoring benefits the company as well as the student. Dan will draw on his dual perspective as artistic director of a theatre company and as university lecturer and conclude with reflections on the practical implications of his findings for universities and small theatre companies.

**Key Issues**

- What are the benefits and disadvantages of students of doing placements in small theatre companies?
- What, if anything, makes such placements different from those in larger organisations?

**Caroline Barth and Darren Daly (Derby Theatre)**

*Engaging in Pedagogic and Artistic practice in a 'Learning Theatre'*

This is a co-presentation by the Head of Learning for Derby Theatre and a lecturer in Theatre Arts for the University of Derby. We describe Derby's approach to the notion of a 'Learning Theatre' and we share our progress in the context of Derby's community and in our relationship with the university. We explore some of the opportunities for learning for our undergraduates and graduates and also shine a light on some of the key tensions in the model. We then spend some time looking at a particular project called Company Aside, in which students are able to both shadow and perform key roles in the process of producing a professional show for the main house. This project exemplifies the question of how we strike a healthy balance in the relationship between artistic and pedagogic practice.

**Key Issues**

- How can we foster a culture of wider learning, where students are keen to learn for themselves and make the most of additional learning opportunities beyond the modular course structure?

- How can ensure that we achieve both excellent pedagogical experiences and great art?
- How can arts organisations ensure that learners are able to challenge and influence their artistic practice?

## **Jessica Bowles (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama)**

### *Collaborative Ecologies*

‘Culture is often discussed as an economy, but it is better to see it as an ecology. ‘(Holden ‘The Ecology of Culture’ AHRC report January 2015).

The project I’ll share is called ‘Cultural Camden’ (an HE Funding Council funded Leading Transformational Change initiative) that in 2009 brought together three neighbouring arts organisations with pre-existing but precarious connections: Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, The Roundhouse and Hampstead Theatre. All three share a mission to challenge, influence and shape the future of British theatre, and the project was an ambitious plan to do three things; develop shared services; co-produce new work; and develop training for producers. The funding ended in 2012 and one element is still going strong, the MA and now MFA in Creative Producing. Holden, in one of his models proposes that there are four essential roles that have to be undertaken within any cultural ecology: Guardians, Platforms, Connectors and Nomads. My mini case study will explore whether RCSSD acted as ‘connector’ and considers the role of placements and their impact on the practices and ecologies of all partners.

#### **Key Issues**

- Collaboration, partnership working and ethics / good practice of placements
- Purpose - starting to consider ‘not what we are good at, but what we are good for’
- Thinking of strategic, local and national implications for ACE and HE

## **Kate Burnett (Nottingham Trent University)**

### *Make/Believe, Fantasy or Model of Collaboration?*

My case study discusses the current Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD\*) exhibition *Make/Believe – UK Design for Performance 2011-15* which opened in January at Nottingham Trent University, was shown at the Prague Quadrennial in June and is resident at the V&A until 3 January 2016. The exhibition and its catalogue are the product of motivated individual designers and academics developing partnerships between professional but largely voluntary professional organisations, such as the SBTD, ALD, ASD, ABTT and ACTD\*, with HE institutions (including the V&A), key industry companies, some government (Arts Council) and Foundations’ support, but essentially self-funded and enabled by designers and students. The SBTD exhibitions and their catalogues have been significant in assembling bodies of professional work that in turn provide identity and reference points (shifting with contemporary trends) for both emerging and established practitioners. Exhibiting at the V&A and around the UK has vastly increased the visibility of

this subject area, but we are having to ask whether such networks and projects are sustainable

\* Society of British Theatre Designers, Association of Lighting Designers, Association of Sound Designers, Association of British Theatre Technicians, Association Courses in Theatre Design

**Key Issues**

- The sustainability of networks and projects
- The reliance upon voluntary work
- The alignment of HE research and career opportunities

## **Sophie Bush (Sheffield Hallam University)**

*be|spoke: Managing Creative Tensions in HEI/Professional Theatre Collaborations*

In June 2014, Sheffield Hallam University produced *be|spoke* as part of its sponsorship of the Tour de Yorkshire. An original play by Chris Bush, specially commissioned for the event, it incorporated the stories of university staff and students, and the general public, and was produced by the university in a public square outside its main entrance. The play was directed by Department of Humanities' lecturer Ashley Barnes and featured a cast of Performance for Stage and Screen students, a band of student musicians, and a team of student stage managers, but employed a professional Production Manager, Musical Director and Designer, as well as commissioning a professional playwright. This provided a unique learning opportunity for students, whilst also raising numerous tensions as the different working practices of a large university and free-lance theatre practitioners came into contact. This case study will explore the difficulties and rewards of such a project.

**Key Issues:**

- What are the key benefits to students of working alongside free-lance theatre professionals?
- Where are the most evident areas of friction when free-lance theatre professionals and large HEIs work in collaboration?
- What lessons can be learnt to smooth these processes in future collaborations?

## **Michaela Butter (Attenborough Arts Centre, University of Leicester)**

Attenborough Arts Centre is based in a university that does not offer formal theatre or drama courses. In recent years the centre has developed its role as an inclusive centre for experimental theatre and live art, offering opportunities for young companies to trial work and actively engage with the Centre's diverse audiences in gaining feedback. Partnerships are being brokered to connect companies to wider research projects in physics, psychology and medical science as well as more overtly connecting the work of the centre with the University's wider Corporate Social Responsibility agenda.

**Key issues:**

- developing student audiences;

- navigating the university labyrinth;
- better understanding how to create connections and opportunities between academic research and theatre practice

## **Tracy Cruickshank, Suba Das and Nicola Daniels (De Montfort University and Curve Theatre)**

*DMU and Curve Collaboration: Inside and Outside the Curriculum*

The collaboration between the Leicester Theatre Trust and DMU pre-dates the establishment of Curve, but it is with Curve that the collaboration has become, arguably, most rewarding. In addition to placements and internships, talks, workshops and exclusive behind the scenes access, students have the opportunity to audition, rehearse and perform at Curve in an annual production led by the theatre's artistic team. A unique 'selling point' of the Drama programme at DMU, this co-production, running since 2011, is at the heart of a far broader collaboration between the University and Curve. It is certainly its most public facing aspect and it poses a number of exciting and sometimes testing challenges.

### **Key Issues:**

- Professional and pedagogical practice
- Student experience and student expectation
- Shared and shifting agendas

## **Charlotte Jones (Independent Theatre Council)**

- How well does the HE sector understand the Independent sector?
- What are the barriers to constructive engagement and partnership?
- Where are the examples of excellent practice?
- How can the University Theatre sector become an active and essential part of a viable, integrated touring circuit?
- What are the challenges for University Theatre programmers?
- What about audiences?

## **Jacqui O'Hanlon and Taryn Storey (Royal Shakespeare Company)**

*Radical Mischief and Shakespeare's Biggest Classroom: The Royal Shakespeare Company's Collaborations with the Higher Education Sector*

In the last three years the RSC has been developing models of work with students in the Higher Education sector. In 2011, we embarked on a relationship with Ravensbourne College students to deliver Shakespeare's Biggest Classroom - an interactive platform in which to embed a Live Studio event as part of our Schools' Broadcasts. This year the RSC

begins a collaboration with the University of Birmingham based at The (new) Other Place, a 200 seat studio theatre which opens in 2016. The collaboration is rooted in the vision of TOP as a centre for creative and academic exchange. Students will also have access to creative and teaching spaces, with RSC artists and practitioners providing input to undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Theatre artists will work with scholars and students in creative experiments that stimulate connections between the arts, the academy, and society at large. The RSC is also in discussion with other universities in the UK about developing innovative ways in which the company can develop their relationships with the HE sector. This case study of the RSC's collaborations with Ravensbourne and the University of Birmingham, examines how we have approached the planning and development of these projects – and shares what we have learnt about balancing the opportunities and challenges.

**Key Issues**

- Risk Management
- Managing Expectations
- Business to Business Relationships

**Jo Robinson (University of Nottingham) and Sally Tye (New Perspectives)**

*The University of Nottingham and New Perspectives Theatre Company: Collaborating for Employability*

Since 2012, New Perspectives Theatre Company and the School of English at the University of Nottingham have worked collaboratively with the aim of enabling students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to access high quality work related learning and employability experience, initially as part of the HEA-funded project Embedding Employability in English (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/eeenglish/index.aspx>). Jo Robinson and Sally Anne Tye will outline the different collaborative projects undertaken and discuss the challenges encountered, lessons learned and benefits gained.