



**Dorset  
Community  
Foundation**

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*Raising funds for those most in need*

## **The Dorset Performing Arts Fund – Year 1 Impact report (April 2019 – March 2020)**

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## **Grant to the Arts Development Company**

**£15,000 to support local Performing Arts organisations**



### **Expenditure**

- 21 days of ADC staff time used for the delivery of the overall programme
- Delivery of training courses, mentoring, artistic development and business development sessions
- Commissioning of social impact films and social impact toolkit for creatives

### **Purpose of grant**

- Support organisations to make applications to the Dorset Performing Arts Fund
- Mentoring and training to increase organisations' knowledge and skills in diversifying their funding streams, exploring new business models, board development, and how to evidence social impact
- Connecting Performing Arts organisations and practitioners in Dorset with each other to share good practice and establish a connected and strong voice and profile for Dorset Performing Arts

### **Beneficiaries**

- 23 organisations supported to apply to Dorset Performing Arts Fund, plus additional services
- 14 organisations received Social Impact training\*
- Social impact films created for 6 organisations\*
- 5 performing artists received MH first aid training to aid projects with vulnerable beneficiaries\*
- 50 organisations received mentoring, training & support services\*
- 5 trainee trustees supported through Board Pool pilot programme\*
- 26 young artists age 18-30 attended training sessions to support career progression\*
- 9 young artists age 18-30 matched with professional organisation mentors\*
- 2 new peer support and best practice sharing networks set up - CLOUT and What Next?\*

\*Part funded by DCF grant and supported by other ADC income

### **Impact - Supporting groups to apply to the Dorset Performing Arts Fund**

ADC supported the Dorset Performing Arts Fund by seeking and supporting performing arts to apply to the Dorset Performing Arts Fund. 9 organisations were selected as applicants in year 1 and 14 in year 2.

A team of 4 Arts Development Company (ADC) staff approached directly Performing Arts Organisations who would meet the Main Grants criteria, particularly focussing on the quality of their track record in delivering socially engaged work and co-producing with communities. They gave individual advice and 1 to 1 support to the selected organisations in helping develop both their creative ideas and strengthening their written applications.

Additional support was provided to applicant organisation in line with ADCs core work. For example, Babigloo Music for Babies has received ongoing organisational development support from the ADC. Hannah Baker from the ADC has been working with them to secure funding through Youth Music – supporting their written applications and managing the collation of evaluation and social impact data from previous projects. ADC helped form Babigloo Music for Babies CIC in 2017, moving them from a sole trader into a CIC.

*Arts Council England are very interested in a Philanthropy driven model of arts funding so there is an opportunity in the future to promote the history of the fund as well as the groups and projects receiving funding, to attract other individual donors and businesses to grow and develop the Fund. ADC look forward to working with DCF in the continuing development of the Fund.*

## Impact - Mentoring and Training

**1)** We delivered social impact training for 14 Performing Arts organisations. The aims of these workshops were to understand the purpose, methods and techniques to assess, evaluate and measure social impact. This included how to apply social value calculators for mental health and wellbeing. We also produced a free Social Impact toolkit for organisations to use:

<https://theartsdevelopmentcompany.org.uk/resources/social-impact-toolkit-an-introduction/>

**2)** We have supported 6 Performing Arts Organisations to make the case, collect evidence and clearly demonstrate their social impact through the commissioning of 6 Social Impact films including 2 organisations funded through the main grants scheme – Babigloo and Fingerprint Dance (featuring No Limits project).

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLL5h3zpq5Ty0eZTVRNDPFwlKQ8fFhwBui>

**3)** In July 2019 we held a Mental Health First Aid Health Training course for artists including 5 Performing Artists, in partnership with charity MIND. This was aimed at socially engaged artists/small arts organisations who make a living delivering community-based arts workshops, particularly if interested in supporting young people overcome low level mental health issues. By participating in this course, this would then increase the likelihood of these artists and organisations in securing work in the future with young people experiencing mental health issues. *DCF funding helped to lever a grant from Valentine Trust to support this training and then pilot a wider project to support young people with poor mental health through arts activities.*

**4)** During 2019/20, ADC mentored, trained and supported 220 creatives with business planning, fundraising and developing new marketing and communication approaches; 50 of these were performing arts creatives and organisations. We also helped set up 8 new creative businesses and organisations during this year in Dorset, supporting the setting up of their governance and initial business planning.

**5)** ADC delivered a pilot programme – Board Pool – to build the capacity and skills of Boards of Performing Arts organisation, and to support emerging producers and performing artists in Dorset to progress their careers. The pilot programme matched 5 Boards with 5 trainee trustees who are currently under-represented at leadership level in the arts, including BAME individuals, disabled people, LGBTQ+ and individuals from low income backgrounds who are very rarely in arts leadership roles. Both Board and the individual have development opportunities to upskill them to actively sit on a Board and to help Boards set a development and diversity action plan for future governance.

**6)** Aged 18-30 Early Career Producers and Curators Network: 26 early career producers and curators have participated in 2 programmes of professional development managed by the ADC, providing peer learning sessions, mentoring and advice from invited sector experts. Participants learnt skills in enterprise development, business planning and strategy, budgeting, freelance tax & bookkeeping, marketing & evaluation. In addition, we have initiated a new Mentoring scheme to specifically match professional mentors working in the arts and culture sector in Dorset with emerging creatives looking for professional development, support, challenge and advice. Currently 9 leaders from 9 Performing Arts organisations are working with 9 mentees under age 30. Through this mentoring scheme, we want to support the next generation of creative practitioners and leaders.

*ADC had planned a Fundraising workshop (how to write good applications to Trusts and Foundations) on the 1 April 2020. This reflected changes in the Dorset Performing Arts Fund criteria for smaller organisations to apply for Research & Development grants and was aimed at organisations who may have limited capacity and expertise. It “sold out” within 24 hours with 8 organisations signed up but was cancelled due to the Coronavirus.*

## Impact - Connecting practitioners

We initiated and manage a new network – CLOUD – of socially engaged practitioners to share good practice and raise the profile of the performing arts. A regular gathering of mid-career female participatory performing arts creatives with many years' experience, working locally, nationally and internationally with artists and communities, wanting to do things differently in changing time. Together they are exploring ways to influence, to advocate and to demonstrate the impact of their work as a collective, including building their manifesto.

We also supported the development of new network - What Next? - established in January 2020 and part of the What Next? national movement. This is a forum for debate, networking with peers across the county, and engaging with a range of invited guests who join us to speak on issues facing the culture sector today. What Next Dorset is open to anyone working in or connected to the arts and culture sector in the county: we welcome individual practitioners, arts and culture organisation staff, local authority officers and educators. Five meetings have been held to date and attended by 10 performing arts organisations with over 40 organisations signed up to the Facebook page. Themes for the sessions have included Culture declares climate emergency, Arts Council England's new 10 -year strategy and surviving the Coronavirus.

## Case Study

Anna Golding has been working as a freelance community dance practitioner, performer and choreographer for more than 15 years in Dorset. She runs several dance groups with older people and adults with learning disabilities. Anna was supported in 2019 by ADC to bring together her various hats as a sole trader practitioner under one umbrella as Fingerprint Dance and established it as a community interest company (CIC). ADC supported Anna to develop a new business plan, 3 year financial forecast, sourcing Directors and developing a marketing and comms plan (including website development). The impact for Anna on setting up a CIC has meant attracting more funding including Arts Council grants and a grant through the Dorset Performing Arts Fund.

"Over the last year, ADC has given me the confidence and support to take a big step in growing my practice from project-based work into establishing an organisation, one I feel I would not have made alone with the mindset of a freelance artist. As a CIC, the opportunities to connect with other cultural enterprises and potential partners have opened up. We are now in a position to seek more extensive funding which will enable us to sustain delivery of high quality inclusive performing arts projects to the community of Dorset and the SW region."

## Long Term Impact

This is the first grant our organisation has received through the Dorset Community Foundation and it has been a pleasure working with DCF in shaping, managing and supporting the new Main Grants programme and artists CPD bursary. 3 Bridport based artists and producers were part of the founding group of the new Fund and through meetings and further conversations, the CEO has on a professional level cemented much more firmly those individual relationships.

The grant is raising awareness of the ADC as a sector support organisation and in particular with smaller, more community and grassroots organisations from across Dorset.

## **Grant to the Arts Development Company**

**£1500 to launch a bursary programme to support local performing artists in need**



### **Expenditure**

£450 used to fund 4 CPD bursaries for local performing artists (£1050 underspend)

*We hope to retain the underspent funding and be able to distribute to performing artists in Dorset in 2020/21.*

### **Developing the programme**

Criteria for distributing the CPD grants to performing artists (agreed with DCF): Artists must be professional, practicing artists and live/work in Dorset Council area – grants of up to £150 to enable them to take up an opportunity for CPD to support or progress their career e.g. attending a conference; travel; a piece of equipment; mentoring etc. A simple application process was developed answering 4 questions. Applications to be considered on a rolling basis until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020. It was agreed to target applicants through our extensive network rather than put out an open call on our website/social media as we didn't want to be inundated with requests for the small amount available.

We didn't give out as many CPD bursaries as we would have liked to. Three applicants were declined; two lived in BCP and one was for retrospective funding. Two more eligible applications were received in March but their CPD was cancelled due to the Coronavirus. In hindsight and going forward, a mixture of a targeted approach and open call via our website and social media channels could boost the number of applicants applying. Feedback from artists and creatives on why applications have been low is generally artists and creatives are struggling to find the time (not necessarily the money) to build CPD into their working lives. One idea might be to offer to backfill time – i.e. be paid a fee to attend a training session from the CPD Bursaries fund and then you are more likely to prioritise a day of training.

### **Beneficiaries**

4 direct beneficiaries

250 indirect beneficiaries (estimated number with whom the artist interacted with as a result)

### **Impact**

**1 & 2)** Grant to ANON1 and ANON2: to develop skills in physical comedy and clowning during 2 week intensive training in Italy with Teatro Schabernack, enabling the development of performances in Dorset and sharing the learning with young people

#### **ANON1**

"I've found an art form (clowning) that I'd really like to continue learning, developing and sharing. Myself and ANON2 have a 20 minute show that we're looking to develop and share, and have a whole wealth of skills and tasks that we can share in workshops. I'm really looking forward to sharing clowning wherever I go and allowing others the opportunity to play."

#### **ANON2**

"In the past 10 months ANON1 and I have created our two-hander clowning show, we've performed in a variety of settings including theatres, pubs and parties and developed our facilitation practise by providing workshops for young people and in relaxed settings including Festivals. This has helped us begin to understand the type of performance we are interested in making and begin to develop our creative practise. I have brought exercises I learnt in Italy into my existing work as a youth theatre director and it has given me more 'tools' in my bag."



"Clowning is often described as finding your inner child; a clown is in a constant state of wonder and amazement with the world around her, a clown believes that anything is possible and will always make attempts at them possible... One day we asked how the teacher had spent their day. He simply said, 'I walked through the town. I played some trumpet. I did a little writing. I cooked a meal.' There was something very alive about the way he said those words, describing a simpler but much richer version of life. We discovered he had begun playing the trumpet at age 30. I often tell myself that I did not have the opportunity to do something when I was younger and that is why I do not do this thing now. This is not the way of the clown... Since my time in Italy I have decided to take up violin, something I fantasized about since I was a child. This realization that I am a grown up is completely freeing. The only grown-ups that stop us from living how we want, is our own self."

- 3)** Grant to ANON3: to further aerial silks and cordelisse training in order to teach students more contemporary circus skills.



"I made invaluable use of my CPD bursary last weekend, when I was able to hire a space for the day and ask the counter weight duo, Pirates of the Carabina, to teach me how to be counterweighted, and how to counterweight! The training involves erecting a scaffold pillar and rigging the pulley system. I am then put in a harness and we practice initially, just the safety aspects of ascending and descending the pillar, and then adjusting to the weight of our partner. In the afternoon, having played with somersaults and a range of flying movements in the harness, I attached my aerial silks and was able to train spinning and 'flying' hanging from my equipment, rather than in a harness... As an aerial performer, the experience was so inspiring and educational. What I had thought would be easy, was in fact tricky and conversely, the tricky was actually simple. It has meant that I am now intending to use both counterweight in my forthcoming circus show in June, and also, pending funds, to use counterweight for my students when it comes to their end of year performance. All in all, many thanks for the bursary, I hope to make many people fly as a result of it!"

- 4)** Grant to ANON4: Online Podcast training in using the software needed to produce a high quality podcast (editing skills) in order to distribute performing arts workshop content and performances with vulnerable and socially isolated young people. *Training scheduled in March but postponed due to Coronavirus*

## **Main Grants Programme**

**Funding local organisations in the creation and performance of original productions that deliver social benefit to enrich community life & raise aspirations**



### **1) Babigloo Music for Babies CIC**

#### **Summary**

The organisation supports parents and babies under 12 months by delivering interactive music sessions that alleviate isolation, anxiety and poor mental health in vulnerable parents, and benefits child development.

#### **Grant**

£8000

#### **Expenditure**

Professional artist fees, including the CIC Directors, plus venue hire, marketing and prop/costume materials; to create the first Babigloo Show. A reduced award was given (application budget was £10,300) but in-kind support and borrowed items made sure the project was not impacted. Majority of grant used for

#### **Beneficiaries**

100 community participants/audience

#### **Video - <https://tinyurl.com/ycohit6l>**

#### **Project Delivery**

We made a 45 minute community classical music show ('Babigloo – The SHOW') for babies aged 0-24 months and their families and performed it in a community centre in Ferndown. We made the show with artists, musicians and local families in summer 2019. The SHOW was created in response to Children's Centre's expressing the need for high quality community support projects for new parents at a time when essential services are all being cut and more groups are led by less qualified volunteers. Also, we experience high demand from participants to extend our offer for 12-24 month old toddlers, to continue the benefits of classical music.

We created the SHOW by holding a planning day with artists and musicians and a musical director, then devising the show over 3 consecutive Thursdays, with an open invitation for parents and babies to come and devise with us in the afternoons. We were able to create a concert for and with the community with 3 classically trained musicians including Mark O'Brien from the City of Birmingham City Orchestra and 2 Dorset-based musicians - Jane Saunders and Rob Lee. Six families took part each day, contributing ideas, giving feedback on provocations and each group wrote a new song with us de-mystifying the creative process and giving them ownership of the SHOW. In total we had a 60% attendance from past participants of our programmes. A team of parents offered to run the tickets on the door and organise refreshments for after the show.

#### **Impact**

Our show was a non-verbal, music led performance that fully engaged parents and babies for 45 minutes. Our 3 professionals are multi-instrumentalists. We brought to life classical music using props, puppetry, fabric and theatrical elements. We include participatory elements with props and instruments as well as singing to create a beautiful, therapeutic and uplifting experience. Many families attended with the second parent, grandparent and/or older siblings for the first time. The nature of our work being non-verbal is very inclusive, so the project was also accessible to those with English as a second language.

The families we worked with are all targeted; 80% of our participants are families in crisis as recommended by Children Centre staff working in early years. This ensures that we are working with families who really need access to projects like Babigloo.

“Brilliant! My baby loved it. Perfectly aimed at the age group.”

“Blake enjoyed every minute. My son never stays still - he sat for the whole 45 minutes.”

“Amelia enjoyed the show, her confidence grew throughout and she enjoyed exploring the props and would always glance and concentrate looking where the music and sounds were coming from.”

“Really well planned. Good transitions and lovely resources as always. Love the choice of music. The time goes too quickly!”

“Loved it - we need more shows. The babies were all transfixed-all ages loved it.”

Our Babigloo Community has been strengthened in that we now have a greater following of families; these families recently returned to our February winter concert in 2020 with older siblings. So new audiences/families are continuing to access the arts and return to music events. This following have continued to keep in touch and provide feedback on our activities, acting as a focus group for our development.

#### **Long term Impact**

We have been able to offer further performances of the production throughout Dorset enabling us to grow and expand our offer. This has also enabled us to add an additional moderate income generating strand – delivering quarterly Sunday concerts for families in Dorset (priced low for families in crisis to afford). Before lockdown these concerts were raising £300. The grant helped us to leverage £14,600 from other sources.



## **2) Dorchester Arts**

### **Summary**

Contribution towards the 'Apollo - One Giant Leap' project, a local celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. The grant specifically supporting the outdoor performance event at Maumbury Rings, Dorchester.

### **Grant**

£15,000

*The grant directly leveraged a larger grant from Arts Council England towards the £50,000 project.*

### **Expenditure**

The grant supported the cost of professional artists' time dedicated to the performance event.

### **Beneficiaries**

370 Community participants

- 18 Samba musicians
- 4 Taiko drummers
- 250 children
- 85 community singers
- 13 musicians, narrator and conductor

2000+ Audience members

*The project as a whole delivered these additional activities:*

- 3,800 children from 17 schools took part in more than 170 music/science/art workshops and assemblies
- 4,500 attended the related Outdoor Cinema and Learn To Be An Astronaut days
- 70 school and community artworks were seen by 6,500 visitors
- 9,500 visited Luke Jerram's 'Museum of The Moon' at Dorchester Corn Exchange, adding an estimated £40,000 to the local economy in just 72 hours
- 583 people followed the project on Facebook, with a reach of 40,226 and 7,395 engagements
- 5,663 people visited the project website, generating 44,273 page views and 2,046 downloads

### **Video**

<https://vimeo.com/363316859>

password: apollo

### **Project Delivery and Impact**

A full Evaluation Report was produced and is attached as an appendix

### **3) Fingerprint Dance CIC**

#### **Summary**

Funded the development of The Shoe Chorus community street theatre group, through a programme of workshops and street theatre performances in and around Bridport.

#### **Grant**

£14,700

*Match funding sourced from West Dorset Mencap, Dorset Council, Bridport Town Council and Port East.*

#### **Expenditure**

The grant supported professional artist fees and Management costs

*Expenditure relating to the fourth and final phase of the programme is postponed due to Coronavirus*

#### **Beneficiaries**

45 community participants

450 audience members

#### **Videos**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4m2VjvWk2Ck>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWJbvpM8b-0>

<https://youtu.be/8ubCQKW8BfQ>

#### **Project Delivery**

The Shoe Chorus is an inclusive community street theatre project which is one of the key legacies of the Ukulele Opera production 'Flea' which took place in Bridport in 2017. Many of the Shoe Chorus team of artists also worked together on 'Flea'. The project involved working with a cast to create four pieces of original devised street theatre, taking a narrative through the different parts of the year, weaving in traditional and imagined folklore. In advance of each series of workshops. we created easy read fliers distributed through our networks, posted throughout the town centre and via email and social media. For our participants with learning disabilities, we work with respective care teams to ensure that information reaches as many people as possible.

Our first workshops took place at the end of the summer holidays 2019 in which we created the first show 'The Amazing Tree'. The story had an environmental theme and showed that we are stronger if we work together. It was performed at Bridport Hat Festival on September 7th to an enthusiastic audience of approx. 150 people.

We then went on to develop the story in a series of Autumn workshops, extending the story of the trees and sea spirits to involve some audience participation. The plan was to perform the second show at Apple Day in Bridport Community Orchard on 10th October but the weather was against us and forced all events inside. We performed instead in the Youth and Community Centre to another warm audience of approx. 100 people.

The third part of our story took us into the winter and The Shoe Chorus rehearsed weekly from September to December to create 'We Are Star stuff'. Once again, original music was composed and choreography created collaboratively between the performers and dance artists. We collaborated with the Lantern Procession commissioned by Bridport Town Council for the Christmas Cheer event. The Shoe Chorus performers and Lantern Procession ended their journey at Borough Gardens for the finale 'We Are Star stuff'; the lit lanterns creating a magical arc around the space in which the dancers performed the winter story in our cycle. We were delighted to have a large audience of around 200 people.

The fourth and final phase of the project was to take place at the end of March as part of the Port East Community Project. It was to involve a series of devising workshops and rehearsals leading up to a performance in St Mary's Church, Bridport on the 28th March. The story was to move onto the Spring focusing on returning migratory birds and there-greening of the landscape and was to be called 'Reverdie'. As part of the creative process, we planned to drone film some of our performers dancing in the Dorset landscape and project the resultant digital media in and around the space in which the live performance was taking place, which in itself was to involve puppetry, song and dance theatre. We are looking forward to working with the material already created for 'Reverdie' and adapting it for the change of season later in the year.

### **Impact**

Our participants included family groups with early years children, older children and young people, adults and older adults - and across all age groups, we have a mix of disabled and non-disabled. Before this project began, The Shoe Chorus had been running annual workshops and performances at the end of each summer holiday since 2017 and had begun to establish a unique opportunity for all ages and abilities to come together and create together in our community. This grant has allowed us to increase our offer to four projects across the year, and we have observed a palpable increase in group cohesion, growth of friendship and support networks and improvement in quality of life. Live performance which, whilst exciting, can also be a little intimidating for some participants and that this can lead to authentic friendly support and encouragement when the experience is shared between people who have never met before.

We have the highest respect for the care providers who support the young people and adults with different abilities who attend our projects and have worked hard to build trusted and respectful working relationships with them. This extends well beyond the timeframe of the workshops, rehearsals and performances.

During the project we have attracted new people to each performance, many of whom say that they have never seen anything like this before and that it has both moved and cheered them. High production values in design, performance and music have ensured that our reputation grows and we look forward to this continuing.

### **Case studies**

R is an adult with learning disabilities who is a confident performer but can find social interaction challenging. Last Autumn, he represented The Shoe Chorus at a local fundraising event run by Port East, speaking to over 100 people about our work, with the support of Fingerprint Dance CIC Co-Director Tom Jones with whom Robert has forged a friendship.

V is an adult with learning disabilities who, over the course of the three Shoe Chorus projects, has gone from needing 1:1 support due to a history of challenging behaviour, to now attending independently having built confidence and communication and social skills through her committed involvement with us (with careful monitoring by the Shoe Chorus team and V's care providers).

D and S are two older adults with mental health needs with experience of social isolation due to their roles as full-time carers to disabled partners at home. Both have shared with us that attending The Shoe Chorus projects has improved quality of life and allowed them to have fun and be distracted from the challenges faced at home.

"Anna and her colleagues accommodate our needs and idiosyncrasies and celebrate our abilities so naturally and intuitively in a way that I believe a more traditionally mainstream project would find challenging. For a child who struggles to be still and follow instruction for too long this is a very big deal. Projects like the Show Chorus should be at the heart of every community."

### **Long term Impact**

At the time of applying to DPAF, we were a very new organisation and were still putting into place our Board of Directors, constitutional documents, safeguarding policy and company bank account. Once we received the very welcome news that we were successful, the need to finalise the above accelerated and we were grateful for support on this from DCF, Arts Development Company and Dorset Community Action who we consulted on our safeguarding policy to ensure that it was thorough and workable. The grant offered us the stability we needed at a key stage in our development as an organisation as it allowed us to plan for the two years following the end of the project in a way which was ambitious but also realistic.

During the project, we have developed a strong relationship with The Arts Development Company and Activate Performing Arts, both of whom were actively engaged in helping me to write an extensive fundraising bid to Arts Council England to support the development, delivery and growth of Fingerprint Dance CIC. This application was successful and organisational development and project work will commence in September 2020 (postponed from the original start date of March 2020).

Throughout project I have also mentored a performing arts student who is working towards a career in community arts and she has been involved in all team meetings, workshop planning, delivery and performance since August 2019.



#### **4) Friends of The Lyric Theatre**

##### **Summary**

Supporting phase 1 (research and planning) of a two year project to create a collaborative community puppetry show involving Electric Palace and Stuff & Nonsense theatre company - to be performed in 2021

##### **Grant**

£5000

##### **Expenditure**

Staff and overheads to support the project plus materials, marketing and filming costs and venue hire

##### **Beneficiaries**

60 community participants

55 audience members

**Video** - <https://youtu.be/4JOTgGn8pX>

**More at** - <https://www.facebook.com/pplspuppetbrid/>

##### **Project Delivery**

Between January and March 2020, three creative organisations in Bridport delivered a Research & Development project in collaboration with 45 local participants called The People's Puppet Project (PPP). Three professional artists, highly skilled in puppetry, devising, performance and music, delivered seven workshops in local theatres and venues. The project resulted in a high quality and engaging sharing at the Electric Palace Theatre.

PPP successfully demonstrated a working collaboration between three cultural organisations in a small market town. Working with an independent and freelance project coordinator, each organisation contributed according to their skills, capacity and experience from mentoring support to marketing initiatives to physical office and rehearsal space. The project was broadly advertised through social media, local door drops, mailing lists, flyers and word of mouth.

This was a truly intergenerational project, with participants aged between 11 and over 70. As far as possible financial barriers were reduced to £2 per session which participants felt was achievable. People came together to share and learn new skills, build friendships and be part of a wider community agenda. The participants came with a level of ambition and investment, they wanted to develop their skills and see another side of theatre making. They came with a generosity of spirit, sharing ideas between individuals, groups and art forms - all scaffolded by highly experienced creative leads. Although short, the activity resulted in numerous ideas, songs, puppets and sketches. In addition to developing new skills, participants commented on the new friendships, increased confidence and a feeling of being part of a creative community, as a result of the project.

The sharing event acted as celebration of shorts sketches and ideas and was largely attended by friends and family, although this was also advertised via facebook and posters. Audiences were quick to recognise that projects like PPP and live theatre, were a vital part of a thriving community on a number of levels, from reducing isolation through to celebrating our built, cultural assets to the full.

With a focus on inclusion, de-mystifying processes and providing relevant platforms, these opportunities have built an appetite for participation across all ages. and there is a very clear appetite for participants, audiences and partners to continue to develop this project into phase 2. The lead creative team have taken these ideas forward and are now working with a writer to develop a full scale devised show.

## **Impact**

Exit Questionnaires indicated that respondents felt the project enabled them to

- Have the time, space and supporting expertise to be creative
- Work as a valued member of a creative team
- Increase their confidence in singing, music making, performance, devising and puppet making
- Meet new people – 80% of respondents stated they had made new friends as a result of the project
- Understand the devising process
- Enjoy themselves
- Improve other aspects of their lives for example in decision making and a more positive attitude towards risk taking

95% of participants felt very satisfied with the project.

“A rather special coming together of creativity, randomness and sharing of ideas and skills in a friendly environment open to all”

“After a few weeks of this I felt more creative in other areas of my life”

“Benefits the community hugely to share positively and in my own mental health issues and needs”

Audiences at the sharing event recognised the personal and collective outcomes of the project and how this related strongly to community cohesion:

“Community projects bring out hidden talents and enable all people the opportunity to participate and learn together”

“It involves lots of people in a creative project to which everyone contributes, building individual self-esteem, giving opportunities of self-expression and contributing to the sense of sharing and community”

By contracting a professional evaluator we were able to gain much insight from the subjective observations and evaluation feedback. All the evaluation material will be used to inform and improve the future planning, management and governance of PPP Phase 2.

## **Long term Impact**

The grant has enabled us to secure a grant of £12,388 from Arts Council England.

It also enabled us to form link with other organisations in the community; Bridport Unitarian Chapel, Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute, Bridport Arts Centre.

*It has been a pleasure and privilege to be one of the first beneficiaries of a DPAF grant. The handling of the application process has been good throughout and we all appreciated the flexibility shown given that this is the first round. Lessons have been learned on all sides and issues were addressed as they arose.*

## 5) Opera Circus

### Summary

This organisation is experienced in working with disadvantaged and hard to reach young people in the UK and beyond, bringing them together and helping them to find common ground and experiences. The grant funded a project creating a multi-discipline performance with a group of young people with complex needs, to explore community issues and rights and to share this with the local community in Bridport.

The funded project was originally planned as part of a larger piece of work to be funded by Erasmus but the organisation faced a number of challenges. A grant was offered with no pre-financing so it was not possible to accept (an issue with this particular funder). Several partner organisations who had planned to participate had problems with funding, change of management, regulations changes for travel with young refugees etc. As such, the work was scaled right back to focus on the smaller scale project funded by the DPAF grant

### Grant

£7470

### Expenditure

Professional artist fees, accommodation and food for the young participants, project management & overheads

### Beneficiaries

31 community participants (young people)

70 audience members

### Webpages

<http://thecompletefreedomoftruth.com/bridport>

<https://www.operacircusuk.com/blog/archives/10-2019>

### Project Delivery

We worked with a group of young people of mixed origins and backgrounds from across Dorset and from Plymouth (through the British Red Cross), Brighton and Croydon. We also had 3 young people with us from Bosnia, who were also participating in a complimenting Opera Circus project, Izazov! - creating documentary films of their own subject matter. These films were screened as part of the film festival and the young Bosnians travelled to Bridport to take part in the week's work (costs covered by the AHRC grant). Their contribution to the week's work was special and gave a wider cultural view.

With professional artists, we created an intense week-long programme of workshops, presentations, an international youth film festival at the Electric Palace and a presentation of the weeks creative work. All our young guests, artists, youth worker and carers stayed at Symonsbury Manor, which had been given to us at a much reduced rate of £16.24 per person per night. We catered ourselves, with the young people preparing meals with guidance. It created a really good space for conversation and relationship building.

Throughout the week we explored the idea of change in the way people in Dorset look at racism and those with difference. David Powell participated in the residence, who works with young people in Dorset around the Rights Respecting the Child Unicef process. David participated in the residency with several young people from Colfox School who came and presented the Rights Respecting work and then participated in some of the creative workshops, using forum theatre to explore the concepts. After this day on Human Rights we then spent 4 days creating new work. We spent an evening with the International Film Festival including the Bosnian Films, a film from Kosovo by a young film maker, and the US film Don't Look Nice about Slam.

Most of our week residencies (run annually since 2012) have shared the performance of work in a theatre performance. To enable the young people to express themselves more closely with the community we decided that instead of the traditional theatre show, we would create a community conversation through a cabaret style performance with supper at Bridport Town Hall. This gave the young people a less formal but more emotive and intense experience. All the work was original. All of it collaborative working with the professional artists and the young people concerned. The performance disciplines were centred around Forum Theatre, Poetry and Spoken Word, Music, instrumental and vocal, and the Films. The Cabaret Evening included

- A presentation by a Colfox student about Rights Respecting the Town; what it means and why it's important to young people
- Poetry and Spoken word performances by several young people including one by Shaniqua Benjamin, award winning young performance artist
- Forum Theatre scenes (during which audience can stop the characters and suggest changes)
- A presentation about the films and Bosnia by the young film makers
- A semi rehearsed improvised piece of music entitled Don't Judge Me by a mixed group of artists, professional and young
- A community conversation.

An additional opportunity through Izazov! Involved going to Kings College London for 2 days with 12 young people including the Bosnian's, several of the artists involved and the project management. This was to share the experience of the film making and the work in Bridport with a mixed audience of other young people, academics, NGO's and others.

### **Impact**

We would describe the project as having fostered artistic achievement rather than excellence. Some of the community who attended the evening said it was the best of all the events/performances we had ever organised, and they had been to them all. It was moving, intimate, caring and filled with honesty. We learned a great deal about what we would do in the future, what was important. Excellence isn't always about large numbers or great art but can also be about what seems like small achievements but to a young person from a tough background who is able to deliver their own poem to a mixed audience, or to muster the courage to deliver a devised piece of Forum Theatre for the first time, the experience can be life changing. After the residency and performance we received a message from a young poet from Weymouth, who has many challenges in his life and attended for the whole week. It was the first time he had felt mentally comfortable enough to stay away from his small bedsit for more than one night.

"TCFT means family. It means being heard. It means being wanted. It doesn't matter if you're female or Male, black or white, young or old. TCFT accepts you for who you are, the good, the bad, and the ugly. I was a shy transgender kid who couldn't leave the house because of anxiety, who didn't know what his self worth was, who didn't even know that he had a talent. Thanks to TCFT, I am able to help others who feel the same way that I did. I now feel pride with my art. Thanks to TCFT I finally understand what it is to feel accepted, to be heard and to feel safe. Whenever I'm at TCFT, I know that I'm home."

"TCFT breaks down those barriers of age, just like it breaks down barriers of race, nationality and religion, which I think is incredibly important, as we learn so much from each other. It is also done in a safe, respectable and non-perverse way, which fosters room for growth and acceptance, and if this was taken on board by wider society, we would likely live in a fairer and more balanced world"

One of the most important lessons we as an organisation have learnt is not to impose, not to assume, not to judge, listen from the outset, take time step by step to understand the need and then aim as best as possible to co-create alongside everyone involved. Do not consider anyone a “target group” or a “stakeholder” but look at the room on the first morning and all agree that in that space there is equality, no matter who is there, age, ability, gender, race and that we learn from each other. Projects are never long enough, never funded well enough, never inclusive enough nor the time needed for creative processes, they change as they develop and as needs/actions/learning is revealed.

### **Long term Impact**

Grants like this always create opportunities for working alongside other organisations. This was the first time we had worked with the Electric Palace under its new management which was a good experience. We work closely with a lot of partners and recently have become involved with the Dorset What's Next group, about 157 organisations and individual artists who are working together to support each other in this difficult time.

This project has helped us to think about the future planning of work such as this. As a result we have created a new project with Bournemouth University, Glyndebourne Opera. Department of Education, The Human Hive, Teater Mimart in Serbia and the Foundation Monte dei Paschi di Siena in Italy. BU will be leading on an Impact Study about 12 years of our working process using the arts to work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.



“I know that they're older and I ‘feel’ their experiences, but at the same time I know that they understand that we are in the same ‘moment’, in the same ‘place’. They don't feel me as someone who's less just because I have less experience, but because they understand that the kind of experience we have is different.....every person, every life, every story, deserves at least one read.. we have things to share: pieces of advice, feelings, support, intentions.”

## Dorset Performing Arts Bursary

Supporting young and talented performing artists from disadvantaged backgrounds with training, personal development and career progression



### Summary

The aim of the bursary is to help young people living in Dorset age 14-21 with an exceptional talent and future ambitions in performing arts, to achieve their full potential, where they are unable to progress or achieve their ambitions due to financial or other disadvantage. The application process includes providing letters of support and a short video entry; the applicant introduces themselves and performs a short excerpt/demonstration.

DCF contacted 20 organisations in Dorset who teach Performing Arts including dance, drama and theatre programmes. Most were spoken to or met in person and feedback was very positive, with teachers expressing a real need for this kind of help. 8 young people applied, which was less than anticipated but a reasonable selection for a pilot year, to test the application and panel process.

### Budget

£10,000, of which £4122 was distributed (underspend to be rolled into 2021 Main Grants Programme)

#### 1) ANON5 (actor), age 17 – bursary of £400

ANON5 lives with his Mum (single parent), who has health issues and works as a part time housekeeper. They live in the village of Halstock, on the Dorset border, 7 miles from Beaminster, where he attends Beaminster school. He has been student at Dorchester Youth Theatre for 10 years and has developed ambitions in acting and directing. In his video submission he shows confidence in speaking and acting, performing monologue 'Edgar's Soliloquy' taken from King Lear. In addition to drama classes Archie likes to take on other projects. For example, during his A-Levels he set up local theatre group OffPiste Theatre. <https://www.offpistetheatre.co.uk/> Due to so many activities outside school he finds it difficult to commit to part time work as well, although was able to save up money from summer jobs and money given as birthday/Christmas gifts, to help with the costs of drama school auditions, which he feels is his next step towards an acting career. The bursary supported him to attend additional drama school auditions as audition fees and travel costs were mounting, giving him the best chance of success and widening his audition experience.

"Raising around £1500 of crowdfunding for the post-production of the short film '+44' that we created in Dorset, it's enabled me to see what filming a motion picture is like, both in front of the camera and behind it. The difference between having to respond to an imaginary stimulus on camera was a challenge, but one that I relished and since have tried to get involved in as many filming projects as possible and a skill that I hope to improve during time on a BA Acting course. During my Year 12 work experience I was a production runner on set of the film 'Lawrence After Arabia', as well as playing the part of a pallbearer. Giving me an insight into the production of a budgeted film was interesting and helped me to broaden my knowledge on the industry outside the theatre world."

Being part of Dorchester Youth Theatre for the past ten years has genuinely helped me greatly, both in terms of my acting ability and how I perceive myself. We've tackled plays ranging from Rudyard Kipling's 'The Jungle Book' to the contemporary piece 'Second Person Narrative'... I can't see myself pursuing any other career than one within this industry, a place on a BA Acting course at drama school, I believe, is the best way to accomplish that."

## **2) ANON6 (dancer), age 18 – bursary of £200**

ANON6 lives in Swanage with her Mum who works as a shop assistant. Tragically her father died in September 2018, which has had a huge impact, including a financial impact as the household were already a low-income family. Her ambition is to develop a career in dance. She has achieved Primary Ballet exams to Grade 6 gaining Distinctions, and senior level Intermediate Foundation and Intermediate Ballet gaining Merits. She has been taught for over 10 years at the Ranger School of Dance and has performed in various local and professional productions, including performing in 'Fame' in London during the summer of 2019 and in Birmingham Royal Ballet's Swan Lake Dreams in February 2020. She has also performed alongside one of Matthew Bourne's principle dancers, James Lovell, in a celebratory production (he is also a former pupil at Ranger School of Dance in Swanage). The bursary will help her with the purchase of new pointe shoes and travel costs to attend scheduled auditions in London for west end productions and other work.

## **3) ANON7 (dancer), age 16 – bursary of £1000**

ANON7 lives in the West Dorset village of Thorncombe with her parents and two brothers. Mum works part time as an artist and Dad is a Joiner. She has an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) and has an alternative education provision, registered under Sir John Colfox Academy, Bridport; her education needs and challenges stem from the long term impact of a serious car accident, as described in her application (see below). She detailed an extensive list of activities and performances and productions in dance, with local schools and companies including Bridport Youth Dance, Lyme School of Ballet, No Limits and The Shoe Chorus. She has also achieved the Silver Arts Award in Dance and Community Arts (GCSE equivalent). Continuing this amount of extra-curricular activity is expensive for her family and the bursary will support the costs of classes at Bridport Youth Dance (including their Summer Dance Scene Workshops and Lyme School of Ballet Classes. It will also cover the cost of upcoming ballet exams and a small amount to enable her to attend local productions.

"After a car accident 8 years ago, I struggled greatly with my health and was diagnosed with PTSD resulting in extreme anxiety and separation anxiety. As a result of my struggles with ill health, I have discovered the power and positivity of dance and my inner strength. Since then, I have worked exceptionally hard to push myself out of my comfort zone and dance has been my healer. I found it very difficult to talk with anyone while I was so ill and dance became my voice."

"My mum has struggled with her own health for the past 15 years. She supports my learning full time, which requires lots of travelling to various academic lessons and tutors, which prevents her from working more. We have both had to fight incredibly hard to get any education provision at all for myself. The provision that I do get and the amount of GCSES that I have been able to study for is quite minimal and I feel I have to work extra hard now to move forward to fulfil my dreams of working in Dance & Community Dance."

This bursary would help tremendously towards my dance class fees overall. This year, my family will not be able to be in a financial position to enable me to continue with the dance sessions that I have worked so hard to be involved with, and that I enjoy and benefit from so much now... I need to do more training and workshops if I am to continue in a career in dance and be able to be accepted to study dance at FE college."

#### **4) ANON8 (Bassoonist), age 17 – bursary of £700**

ANON8 attends Thomas Hardye School (currently first year of A Levels) and lives in the village of West Knighton, 3 miles from Dorchester with his brother and Mum (single parent), who works as primary school supply teacher. He is a bassoon player and passed his Grade 8 with distinction. He also has a passion for singing, and especially opera, and is taking Grade 8 singing. He has taken part in a wide variety of performance opportunities, as described in his application (see below). Ongoing tuition can be difficult to afford, especially as Mums income varies. His ambitions are to take his Bassoon Performance Diploma and to be selected for music college following his final A-Level year, preferably the Royal Academy or Royal College of Music. The bursary will help him with the cost of taking his Bassoon Diploma, and travel costs to attend open days for music college. It will also cover a lesson with a Bassoon teacher 1 music college of his choice, which is highly recommended.

“I have done solo performances in both singing and bassoon for the Weymouth Choral Society and for the Barclays Choir in Poole (I have just been asked to play bassoon for them again this Christmas), including a performance of the Mozart bassoon concerto. I will be performing a movement of a Vivaldi bassoon concerto in a concert on the 16th November with school along with other musicians. I play for the Wessex Youth Orchestra and take part in all their concerts. I play in the school big band, orchestra, saxophone group and sing for the Thomas Hardye singers (we have sung in Bath Abbey, Westminster Abbey, St Paul’s Cathedral amongst other places). I went to a bassoon masterclass last week at the Royal College of Music in London held by Ole Kristian Dahl (as a spectator). I have taken part in events run by the Double Reed Society. I am also now a choral scholar for St Peter’s Church in Dorchester. I play bassoon with the Dorset group Collegium Musicum Dorset – we have two concerts coming up. ”

#### **5) ANON9 (dancer), age 18 – bursary of £400 + £500**

ANON9 lives in Portland and attends Weymouth College where he achieved distinction in his Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Performing Arts. He is now studying for the extended diplomas and is also working towards Level 2 functional skills in English to support progress at higher education, as English is his second language (the family moved to Dorset in 2010). His Mum recently moved to London so he is staying with his sister and Stepdad, who works as a welder. He has ambitions for a career in Street and Commercial Dance and has achieved several accolades, as he describes in his application (see below). His letters of support show clear belief in his potential for the future, also commented on by casting Director of hit West End show, Hamilton. He works part time in Prezzo restaurant and for dance school Razzamatazz to support his activities as the family have a low household income. The bursary supported him with new dance shoes and travel costs to attend auditions for dance/performing arts schools to continue his learning and development.

“I performed in the O2 in 2018, performing each of these with Razzamatazz. I have performed in Rock Challenge for many years, starting in 2013 and my final performance being in 2017. I am a dancer and choreographer for Stromatic Dance, a site specific dance company based in Portland. I was selected to be a young professional dancer for a Banksy inspired performance for Street in the Park event, taking on the lead role. I have been scouted for Hamilton... I also performed at the Library Opening in Weymouth for my college and at Borough Gardens in order to celebrate Banksy and his work.”

“I am currently working two jobs to try and pay through college, to cover costs such as my bus pass for the last few years. I was offered a scholarship for Razzamatazz throughout the years because they understood how I couldn’t afford the tuition. However, working two jobs in a way to try and save up for university, driving lessons and college necessities, is very difficult to sustain alongside a full time course.

I have a lot of ambitions, I first want to start off as a performer on the stage or in music videos. I would love to become a choreographer. Eventually I would like to open my own performing arts school, sharing my knowledge to younger people and inspiring a new generation of dancers."

He was offered places at 3 dance schools following auditions. He accepted a place at his preferred option, the London Studio Centre and was awarded a further £500 deposit to cover the deposit required to secure his place.

#### **6) ANON10 (dancer), age 18 – bursary of £425**

ANON10 lives in Bridport with his parents and sister and attends Weymouth college. He describes his parent's occupation as Bookbinder/Musician and Artist/Writer and with sessional work they experience financial challenges supporting their family. He is home educated and has developed ambitions in contemporary dance, both in choreography and performance. His talent and dedication have been recognised by Swindon Dance, who deliver the National CAT (Centre for Advanced Training) Scheme, and he lists several productions and performances he has taken part in over the years. The bursary will support him to cover the cost of classes at Bridport Youth Dance, including practice time for his audition piece for Exeter (see below).

"We are a low-income family. The bursary we have been relying on to cover some of my dance fees is no longer available. I have six lessons a week but it's important for me to have practice time, especially as I will be performing a solo at the CAT choreographic sharing in April. I want to apply to Exeter College next year and as I have been home educated, I will only have 3 GCSE equivalent qualifications when I apply. My dance teachers are supporting my application to this course as my skills are at the advanced level. I want to produce my best work to take to Exeter and would really benefit from practice time to choreograph my solo."

#### **7) ANON11 (Aerial Circus performer), age 15 – bursary of £997**

ANON11 lives in Weymouth and is home educated by his mum (Dad is retired). For three years he has received tuition from local artist Charlie Bicknell at her Silks School and has attended workshops with other circus performers. He has a particular passion for aerial circus performance and has performed in Temple Cloud Circus, Cave of Mystery, Bristol. He has now begun teaching silks classes himself locally. And recently collaborated with a singer/songwriter friend to create a video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/XlrKWN9q-XU>

Charlie believes that he has potential as a professional artist, as described in her letter of support. To progress his talent and ambitions in circus he needs as much rehearsal and training time as possible. As he is not taking GCSE's his future is focussed on performing arts and he is determined to succeed despite his non-traditional home circumstances.

"I will carry on my career path no matter what. My parents will help where they can. Getting £1,000 will make everything so much easier and quicker."

The grant requested would cover additional tutoring hours and training in London (travel included for both), which would offer time with other professionals. It will also cover the cost of some new aerial straps and rope.