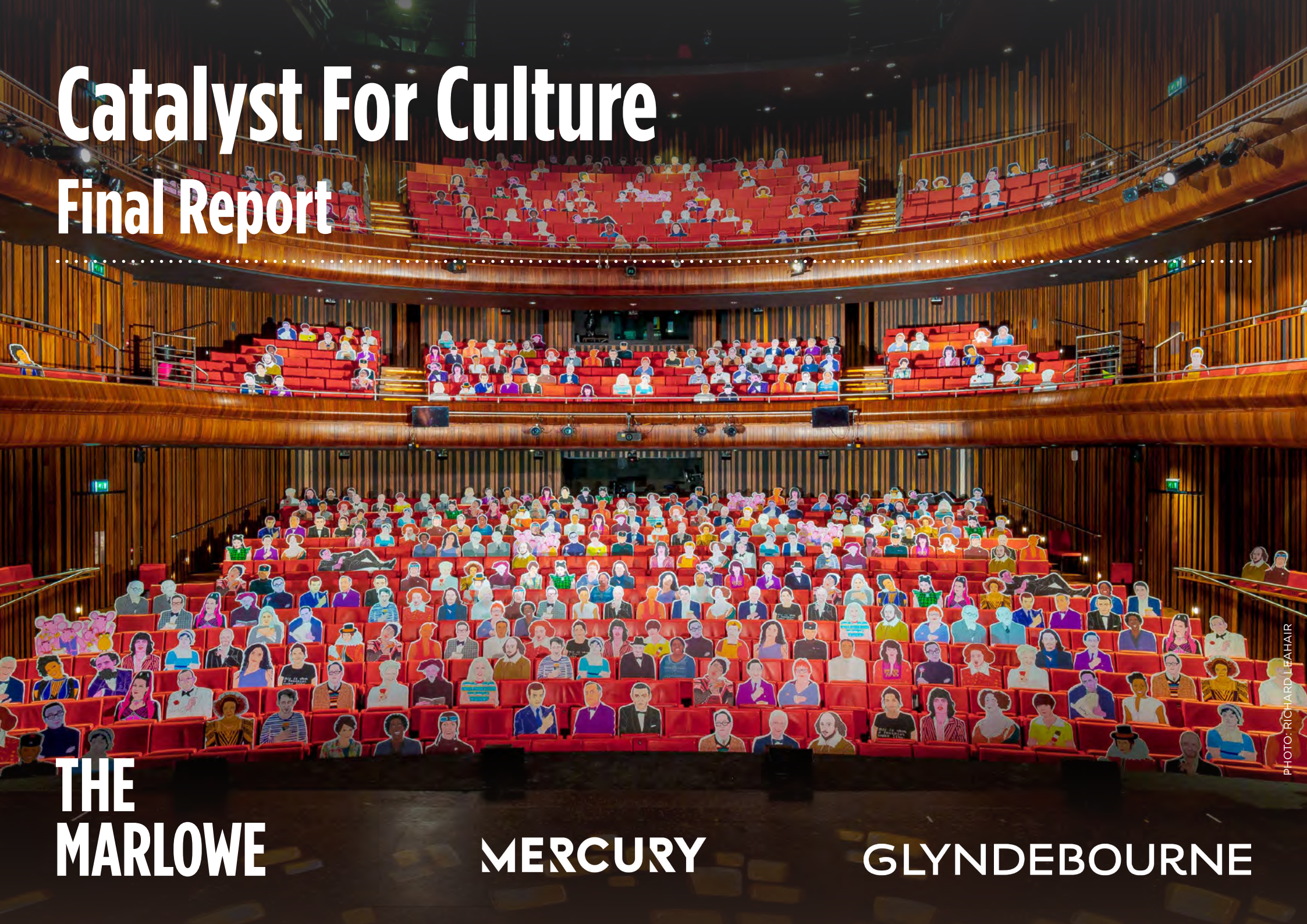


Catalyst For Culture

Final Report



**THE
MARLOWE**

MERCURY

GLYNDEBOURNE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Catalyst For Culture was a new partnership between three building-based performing arts organisations in Kent, East Sussex and Essex. Lead partner **The Marlowe Theatre** invited **Glyndebourne Opera** and the **Mercury Theatre**, Colchester, to join in the creation of a collaborative programme of live and on-line theatre experiences designed to encourage the early return of audiences after the Covid crisis and to support the region's employed and freelance creative, production and technical workforce in the creation and presentation of new work and digital innovation.

The partnership was the first of its kind in the SELEP region. Working together the three organisations were able to provide substantial in-kind support; attract, contract and administrate projects with a host of project partners at all scales; ensure quality; provide mentoring; generate substantial public profile for the projects; raise additional funding; initiate changes due to the extended lockdown period; and (in The Marlowe's case) use its own cashflow to enable projects to go ahead before funds could be drawn down.

Catalyst For Culture was a pilot for future development in the region for performing arts production, training and skills development and as the foundation for a wider regional touring circuit.

As a response to the Covid-19 crisis, Catalyst For Culture supported venues to re-open, adapt to Covid restrictions and retain their existing workforce, as well as providing much-needed new opportunities for regional freelancers and artists.

The programme developed industry knowledge in the creation, presentation and dissemination of socially distanced performances; invested in the future with talent development opportunities for young people and marginalised communities; encouraged innovation in new digital forms; and drove growth and productivity through a series of new regional productions.

Originally planned to run for 9 months from December 2020 to August 2021, the Catalyst For Culture programme was extended into January 2022, in response to the extended lockdown and later re-opening period. The partnership absorbed the extra management and administration costs of the extension and Catalyst For Culture came in on budget, whilst over-achieving against all of its original targets.

[Click HERE](#)
[or scan below](#)
[to watch the film](#)



KEY PARTNERS

THE MARLOWE

The Marlowe is Kent's major large-scale theatre and the biggest performing arts employer in Kent. It is a self-funding, independent charity that presents a year-round programme of theatre, dance, music, comedy and opera. The Marlowe's mission is to be Kent's engine house for the arts, shaping the spirit of its region.

MERCURY

The Mercury is an artistic powerhouse in the East. A vital, vibrant, welcoming centre of culture for the people of Colchester, Essex and beyond. Its theatre building re-opened in June 2021 after a major redevelopment.

GLYNDEBOURNE

Glyndebourne is an opera house in the heart of the Sussex countryside. It is one of the finest and most celebrated opera houses in the world delivering performances across a summer Festival and an autumn tour to Milton Keynes, Canterbury, Norwich and Liverpool, and a year-round Learning and Engagement programme.

MAP

The combined audience reach of the three main partners covers the whole SELEP region, with **The Marlowe** in Kent, **The Mercury** in Essex and **Glyndebourne** in East Sussex.



PROGRAMME

MARLOWE PROJECTS

Launched the first year of **Maria Aberg's PROJEKT EUROPA** as a resident company at The Marlowe, supporting the development of the company and ***We Are The Stories***, a trilogy of work created by migrant theatre makers with migrant communities in Kent, exploring the boundaries of co-creation, participation and performance:

In The Company Of Others an exploration of edges and our relationship to difference, ambiguity and change - created by Canadian-born, UK-based dance maker Laïla Diallo in collaboration with Venezuelan artist Ania Varez.

Feast: Ingredients Of Us an interactive, participatory event based around food, memories and connection - created by Polish director Agnieszka Blonska, together with video designer Gillian Tan and performer Tara Fatehi Irani.

Let Your Hands Sing In The Silence a performance by Robert Luckay, directed by Maria Aberg, using Luckay's reconstructed memories as a scaffold and inviting local migrant communities to share, develop and perform their own memories alongside his.

All three projects had a public sharing in The Marlowe's Studio.

Launched **Cygnets School** The Marlowe became the national home for Matthew Bourne's New Adventures' new year-long talent development programme for twelve 16-21 year-old dancers from disadvantaged backgrounds. Future years will see recruitment call-outs and workshops across the region, with places ring-fenced for young people from our region each year.



PHOTO: DAVID OXBERRY



PHOTO: DAVID OXBERRY



PHOTO: HANNA-KATRINA JEDROSZ

PROGRAMME

Whitstable-based artist **Ben Dickson** was commissioned to create an 'audience' of Kent characters from Christopher Marlowe to Malorie Blackman. The cut-outs filled alternate seats, enabling social distancing in the main auditorium for The Marlowe's re-opening season. The project received a **press, broadcast and social media** reach of **over 10 million**. The cut-outs were used for the opening six weeks of reduced capacity shows at The Marlowe. They were sold at the end of social distancing regulations.

.....

The Christmas Goblin Margate based theatre makers, Brigitte Aphrodite and Quiet Boy were commissioned to develop a gig-theatre piece for family audiences. *The Christmas Goblin* was subsequently developed to full production by The Marlowe with 1DegreeEast and performed to over 1,000 people in The Marlowe Studio at Christmas 2021.

.....

Game Theory A new musical for young audiences was developed at The Marlowe with Perfect Pitch, before then being presented at The Lowry in Greater Manchester in June 2021 (as part of the ReWrites Festival) and streamed on stream.theatre.

.....

Kent-based **Half a String** were commissioned to develop a new idea for a Christmas puppet show.

.....

Get Lost a new dance piece by queer outdoor dance theatre-maker **Joe Garbett**, was commissioned by **Applause Rural Touring** for the 2022 touring circuit. Applause also supported three regional artists from Kent, East Sussex and Essex, Francisca Stigel, Michaela Cisarikova & Charmaine Childs, to take part in the Rural Touring Lab, a two-day training and development programme produced in partnership with 101 Creation Space.



PHOTO: ALEX BRENNER

PROGRAMME

Summer At The Marlowe an outdoor festival of music, theatre and food enjoyed by over 53,000 people over three summer weekends in Canterbury presented in partnership with Applause Rural Touring, City Feast and City Sound Project. Artists included Matthew Bourne's New Adventures with *Doorstep Duets*; Dizee O'Dare; Michaela Cisarokova Dance Company; Rust & Startdust and Joe Garbett Dance.

The Hound Of The Baskervilles in Westgate Gardens: a summer season of theatre in the park, produced and presented by phil&ben Productions, an actor-led local company in Canterbury.

Nurse Nellie Saves Panto a Digital Pantomime created in partnership with Kent-based partners Evolution Productions and Spark films, which was distributed for free to 90,000 people during lockdown, including to 1,504 care home residents in Kent and Medway. The stream attracted a global audience, with viewers from Australia, Canada, France, Hong Kong, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Poland, New Zealand, Malaysia, Sweden, Turkey, USA and China.

10 seed commissions for regional artists in collaboration with the Mercury (see page 8).

Pilot participation projects with Glyndebourne (see page 9).



PHOTO: TIM STUBBINGS



PHOTO: DAVID OXBERRY

PROGRAMME

MERCURY PROJECTS

Launched the new **Mercury Originals** programme (presenting work made in Essex and the South East by writers from the East of England) with 11 performances of *Sirens* by Essex writer Kenny Emerson and early-stage development of Nicola Werenowska's play *Broken English*, based on the lived experience of the region's Polish community.

.....
Collaborated with The Marlowe on an open call for regional artists, offering **10 new seed commissions** of £1,000 each, to develop new ideas with time, space and mentoring from both theatres. Commissions were awarded to: Esohe Uwadiae, Faith Prendergast, Jodie Cole, Karl Fagerlund Brekke, Quiet Boy, George Rennie, Henry Madd, Mark Smith, Blouse and Skirt, Sharan Atwal, TalkShow and Sundeep Saini.



PHOTO: PAMELA RAITH



PROGRAMME

GLYNDEBOURNE PROJECTS

Launched a new digital platform, **Open House**, a subscription service showing films of Glyndebourne productions.

Offered four free streamed operas and a documentary to audiences from the SELEP region.

Created a pilot series of participation projects and seed commissions in partnership with The Marlowe:

Sing With Glyndebourne 125 primary school children from three schools - Pilgrim's Way Primary, Simon Langton Grammar and Aylesham Primary - worked with composer and conductor Howard Moody, musicians and the Glyndebourne Chorus to create their own original choral work around the themes of migration and belonging and learn Handel's Hallelujah Chorus from The Messiah. Both works were performed in Canterbury Cathedral to an invited audience.

glass human R&D work for a new chamber opera was undertaken, collecting verbatim stories about loneliness during lockdown from communities in East Sussex and Kent. *glass human*, by Samantha Fernando with words by Melanie Wilson will be performed at Glyndebourne, The Marlowe, in Norwich, Milton Keynes and Liverpool in Autumn 2022.

Good Company A pilot programme taking musicians into care homes in Kent to work with residents living with dementia.

Young musicians from Kent were given the opportunity to work with Glyndebourne creatives in the talent development programme, **Pit Perfect**, culminating in a performance at Colyer-Fergusson Hall, University of Kent.



PHOTO: RICHARD HUBERT SMITH

PROJECT PARTNERS



NEW/ADVENTURES



farnham maltings

ROYAL
DERNGATE &
NORTHAMPTON



1°E



CITY
FEAST



phil&ben
PRODUCTIONS

SPARK.

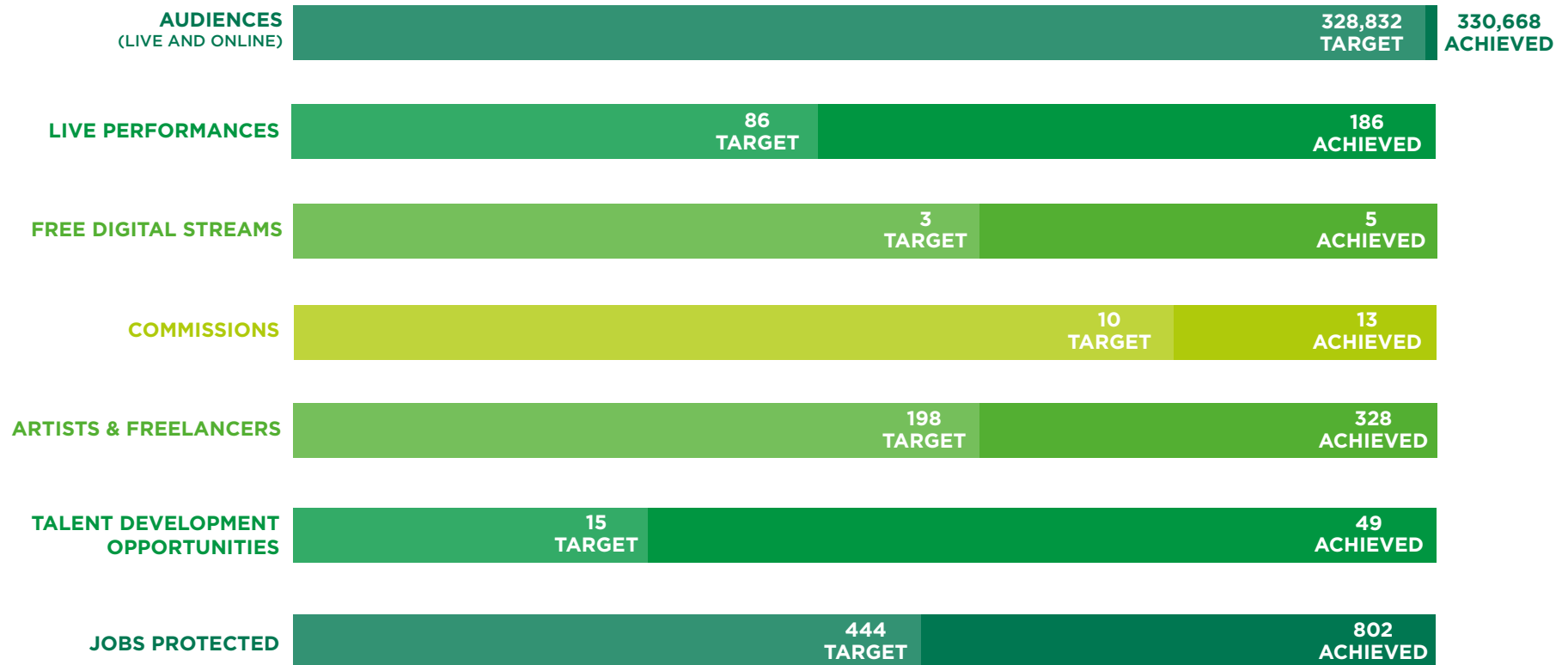
University of
Kent

WALKER
CONSTRUCTION



TARGETS

Catalyst For Culture over-achieved against all of its original targets.



FUNDING

SELEP Emergency Sector Support Fund £181,700

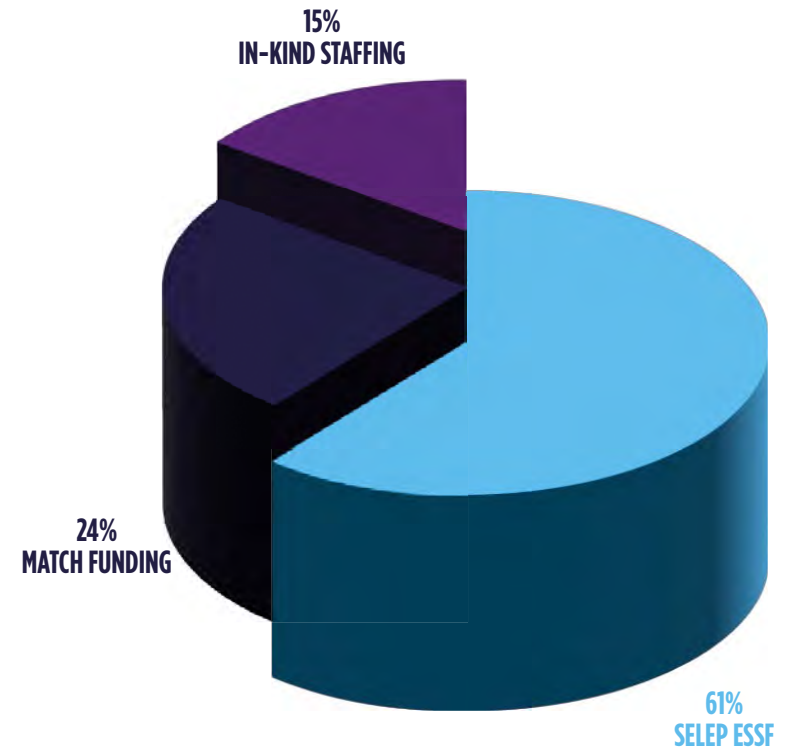
Match Funding

Arts Council England	£4,000
New Adventures	£25,000
Perfect Pitch	£6,000
Box Office Income	£20,892
Donations	£17,092

In-kind Staffing (Dec 2020-Aug 2021) £31,460

In-kind Staffing (Sep 2021-Jan 2022) £13,000

TOTAL £299,144



ECONOMIC IMPACT

The direct economic impact of Catalyst For Culture was over **£1.5 million** against SELEP's investment of £181,700, which is a return of £8.26 for every £1 invested.

This economic impact figure does not include the wider context of the project's value in supporting three key regional venues in their post-Covid recovery, enabling the continuation of cultural activity that inspires our communities and supports well-being, quality of life and place.

The programme focussed on encouraging audiences back to live performance, increasing access and building resilience.

The combined economic impact in the SELEP region of The Marlowe, The Mercury and Glyndebourne Opera in a normal year is **over £57 million pa.** This includes income generated for local businesses and suppliers, city centre restaurants and bars, carparks, retail etc.

In addition, retaining jobs and creating opportunities for freelancers contributes to the region as a great place to live, work and study.

DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT

£1.5 million

CONCLUSION

Catalyst For Culture succeeded in creating new collaborations between its three partners, the Mercury in Colchester, Glyndebourne in East Sussex and The Marlowe in Canterbury.

Taking place when the impact of the pandemic was at its height, the project enabled all three organisations to keep developing their role in the region at a point when many arts organisations were contracting their activity to mitigate the financial impact of Covid.

Rather than sustaining the status quo, the funding through SELEP enabled each of the three organisations to develop new programmes of work, that had a positive impact on artists, audiences and the wider creative ecology.

Catalyst For Culture demonstrated the strength of collaboration in the regional arts sector, with the three partners delivering projects that could not have been undertaken alone. Partners learnt from their different strengths and ways of working and those learnings continue to inform future work.

The Marlowe appointed an independent evaluator, Samina Zahir of Hybrid Consulting, to carry out audience research and evaluate the project. Her report is attached as an appendix.



PHOTO: DAVID OXBERRY

CATALYST FOR CULTURE: OUTCOMES AND IMPACT



Evaluation Report by Samina Zahir
Hybrid Consulting

CATALYST FOR CULTURE: OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

The Marlowe appointed an independent evaluator, Samina Zahir of Hybrid Consulting, to carry out a range of audience research and gather quantitative data throughout the programme. The summative evaluation commenced in Autumn 2021 with the production of a logic model and establishing the programme outcomes.

A number of outcomes were identified for the Catalyst For Culture programme, against which impact could be evaluated.

The outcomes identified were to: facilitate increased and deeper **(1) connections across the region**; **(2) support recovery from Covid**, offering resources to identify new ways of working; **(3) bring people into towns & placemaking**, driving urban identity and shaping places; **(4) supporting new ideas and enterprise** at a time when Covid required a different response from the creative sector; **(5) workforce development to support freelancers and small businesses**; and **(6) advocacy**, raising the profile of the creative sector in the South East region.

Surveys and questionnaires were produced and distributed to all stakeholders over Winter and Spring 2022.

Stakeholder groups consulted included:

- Core partners
- Organisations supporting delivery
- Commissioned artists (direct and indirect)
- Audiences



OUTCOME: CONNECTIONS

To facilitate increased connections across the region, with particular cross-pollination across the South East, Kent, Essex and East Sussex.

The programme sought to increase the depth of connections, building partnerships particularly across the South East.



PHOTO: PAMELA RAITH

OUTCOME: CONNECTIONS

The programme created new connections between artists and partners, providing the opportunity to create new relationships that are likely to continue after the project.

When asked about the longevity of these connections, the three partners gave the highest possible score for the likelihood of those relationships being maintained and developed in the future.

The project enabled the Mercury Theatre to build relationships with creatives that they hadn't previously worked with before, with around 25% of artists they worked with on Catalyst For Culture being new to them.

Glyndebourne found that the project gave them the opportunity to invest in up and coming talent across the region, creating platforms for young musicians and artists. It also provided investment that enabled them to connect with audiences, communities and participants that they would otherwise not have connected with. The findings from the project will help to inform Glyndebourne's future approach to touring.

For PROJEKT EUROPA, support through Catalyst For Culture meant that it was able to establish its residency at The Marlowe in Canterbury and make meaningful connections across the region, particularly with charities who work with first generation migrants (such as Kent Refugee Action Network). These connections are already being built upon as a legacy and have led to a 20 week engagement programme, called PROJEKT ENCOUNTER, taking place from April to July 2022 in Canterbury with first generation migrants.

Artists who performed as part of the Outdoor Theatre Programme gave the highest possible score for wanting to maintain their connections with The Marlowe in the future, with artists saying they saw their connection with the venue as having deepened.

“(We met) new, enthusiastic and engaged collaborators across the board.”

ARTIST



OUTCOME: CONNECTIONS

Connections between artists taking part in the Theatre Performance Programme were significant, with 50% making connections with other artists and organisations from across the LEP region and 100% making connections with new organisations.

86% of artists surveyed gave the highest score when asked whether they were likely to maintain these connections in the future.

The Marlowe made new connections with artists throughout the programme, with 85% of artists commissioned through the Theatre and Outdoor Theatre Commissions programme and 75% of artists from the Theatre and Outdoor Theatre Performance Programme, never having previously worked with The Marlowe before.

New connections, both on stage and behind it, had been made between a cross section of organisations and artists and the project's commissioned artists. When asked how likely they were to maintain these connections, 50% (10) said that they were very likely (giving 4, the highest score) to maintain these connections, 30% (6), gave the second highest score. 15% (2) gave the second lowest score and 5% the lowest score.

“We engaged with people that we hadn't engaged with before - we'd not had the opportunity before.”

GLYNDEBOURNE



“...a lot of artists were at the start of their ideas, [they] just needed space to think and breath.”

MERCURY THEATRE



OUTCOME: RECOVERY FROM COVID

The funding from SELEP was particularly focused on recovery from Covid. It offered the creative sector resources to identify new ways of working. The funding was to help artists recover from Covid, providing employment, opportunities and economic benefits – spearheading recovery from the impact of the pandemic.



PHOTO: ALEX BRENNER

OUTCOME: RECOVERY FROM COVID

Catalyst For Culture was created as a response to the pandemic and the devastating impact that it had upon the creative community. The programme made a significant impact on helping artists and performing artists during this hugely challenging period.

Catalyst For Culture support enabled the Mercury Theatre to invest in artists during the pandemic, something that would not have otherwise been possible at that time. This included the production of *Sirens*, a play by Essex based playwright Kenny Emson, that saw high levels of attendance (86%) and positive reviews in the national media. The success of this production has provided learnings for the future and will help inform ways to find audiences for new writing.

Catalyst For Culture enabled Glyndebourne to connect with different audiences and participants that they wouldn't have otherwise done and it also allowed them to pilot the launch of a digital subscription platform.

Glyndebourne felt that the funding opportunity allowed them to adapt to Covid and their inability to tour during the pandemic, creating new activities that were designed to break down barriers and bring audiences closer together.

“To have support and professional development over such a period of disconnect has been really helpful.”

ARTIST



OUTCOME: RECOVERY FROM COVID

Catalyst For Culture helped to provide work for artists who were struggling with the impact of the pandemic. Artists performing as part of the Theatre and Outdoor Theatre Performance programme acknowledged that the income was a huge support during that time, for some, providing up to 10% of their annual income.

The Marlowe and the Mercury Theatre collaborated on artist commissions as part of Catalyst For Culture, where 10 artists from across the region were awarded funding to develop new work and earn income at a challenging time.

For 7% of the artists that took part, the commission funding made up more than 91% of their annual income, for 50% of artists it made up between 11-25% of their annual income and for 43% it made up 0-10% of their annual income.

Without the support of The Mercury, The Marlowe or SELEP, 80% of the commissioned artists said they would not have been able to produce the work and 100% would not have been able to realise any production.

“It has been a huge emotional support to be able to make work during these challenging times.”

ARTIST



OUTCOME: BRINGING PEOPLE BACK INTO TOWNS AND PLACEMAKING

The cultural sector is often seen to drive urban identity, shape places and BRING PEOPLE INTO TOWNS and conurbations. Covid built significant barriers to people coming into public spaces, so an outcome for the programme was to build back trust in 'in-person' visits, subsequently re-building confidence through an offer that could be experienced on a socially distanced basis. Both The Marlowe and Mercury play the role of cultural hubs, as places to visit in their communities.



OUTCOME: BRINGING PEOPLE BACK INTO TOWNS AND PLACEMAKING

A key aim of the Theatre and Outdoor Theatre Performance programme was to encourage people back into Canterbury's city centre for cultural activity, shopping and tourism. Covid had built up barriers for people to attend events in person and the programme sought to entice people back at a time when restrictions had partly lifted.

Summer At The Marlowe took place in August 2021 and saw **three weekends** of free performances that included street theatre, children's shows, music, dance and pop-up food **and drink in partnership with Applause Rural Touring, City Sound Project and City Feast**. The event included 54 performances, featured 65 artists and **was enjoyed by 53,000 people**.

Summer At The Marlowe audiences, who were surveyed, enjoyed seeing work outdoors and found it an accessible way to experience performances, particularly for families with children. They felt that the event helped to facilitate time with family members and the experience was one that was shared with the wider community, something that was much appreciated following on from months of lockdown.

Catalyst For Culture sought to make a positive impact on the High Street, bringing people back into Canterbury to enjoy public spaces and spend money.

“...the live element of it all has been great fun, we are just so glad to be experiencing live performances again.”

SUMMER AT THE MARLOWE AUDIENCE MEMBER

OUTCOME: BRINGING PEOPLE BACK INTO TOWNS AND PLACEMAKING

Audiences were asked what they thought the impact of culture on the High Street might be in the long term – and what they would like to see more of in the City centre in the future. Respondents felt that outdoor performances brought people into the city, bridging retail and creativity, boosting tourism and therefore the local economy.

Summer At The Marlowe proved to be successful in providing The Marlowe with an opportunity to attract new audiences who hadn't previously engaged with what it does, with 34% of those surveyed who attended the event having never previously seen a show at The Marlowe before.

Audiences who attended the *Summer At The Marlowe* event, also spent money in the City during their visit. Of those surveyed, 31% had a drink in a café or pub, 31% had shopped on the High Street and 29% had a meal in a local restaurant.

Words used by audiences to describe *Summer At The Marlowe*.

UPLIFTING CALM CHEERFUL
INVITING CIVILISED **FRIENDLY** CREATIVE
PLEASANT **RELAXED** INCLUSIVE
LOVELY BUZZING **FUN** LIVELY
WELCOMING FAMILY FRIENDLY

DIGITAL PLACEMAKING

Catalyst For Culture allowed the partners to explore how they might connect with audiences and create a sense of place and community in a digital world, when live theatre wasn't possible.

Glyndebourne piloted a new streaming project as part of the project. Open House was developed when Covid restricted the company's seating capacities and their ability to tour to venues across the country. In 2021, the Open House streamed programme consisted of four operas and a documentary, *No Ordinary Summer*, that showed how the organisation had dealt with the pandemic.

The Marlowe explored how they might create a digital community around its pantomime, as part of the Digital Performance Programme. For this, a digital version of the Christmas Pantomime, *Nurse Nellie Saves Panto* was created. Initially filmed to stream to residents in care homes across the region, it was then later shared with all audiences when Kent was placed into lockdown.

This resulted in 1,504 residents viewing the stream in 91 care homes and then 88,500 members of the public watching it once lockdown meant that the production could no longer be performed in person.

The pantomime stream made a positive contribution to care homes at a difficult time (when relatives were mainly unable to visit) and for those homes who streamed the performance, 64% 'loved it' and 27% rated it 'good'.

“It really brought a little festivity to the Home and cheer... residents and staff loved it.”

CARE HOME MANAGER



DIGITAL PLACEMAKING

100% of care homes considered the streaming 'successful' in recreating the live experience on film.

There were some challenges to watching *Nurse Nellie Saves Panto* in care homes, with hardware and internet access the main issues. Of those who identified hardware/tech challenges, for 60% this was due to "technology", for 20% it was due to bandwidth since the show "kept buffering" and for 20% it wasn't "available to view for long enough".

The pantomime stream also had accessible versions available for those watching it, ensuring accessibility. Of those surveyed, 33% watched the captioned version, 8% watched the British Sign Language interpreted version and 58% didn't watch any of the accessible versions.

The stream to care homes also demonstrated the demand for streamed theatre to audiences who are normally not able to attend events in person. 86% of care homes were interested in presenting other recorded/streamed theatre experiences for residents in the future.

58% would be interested in having a recording of the pantomime made available to view in their care homes in future years - rather than seeing it live in a theatre, 8% probably would. However, 25% would rather see the live show and for 8%, it wasn't of interest.

“Some residents previously attended Marlowe pantos, so it was a nice reminiscence for them.”

CARE HOME MANAGER



“Our residents have been adapting to all different technologies during the pandemic and most of the residents appear to benefit and feel a sense of involvement from it.”

CARE HOME MANAGER



OUTCOME: SUPPORTING NEW IDEAS AND ENTERPRISE

Covid required a different response from the creative sector, creating or SUPPORTING NEW IDEAS AND ENTERPRISE was therefore crucial to the sector.



PHOTO: DAVID OXBERRY

OUTCOME: SUPPORTING NEW IDEAS AND ENTERPRISE

Catalyst For Culture aimed to support new ideas and enterprise within the region, enabling organisations and artists to develop new work and approaches during the pandemic.

The Mercury saw the programme as consolidating their position as being central to the cultural ecology in the region and, as a result of this, are launching local theatre companies and also looking to commission future projects.

For Glyndebourne, whilst they felt that the Catalyst For Culture programme was unlikely to have a big impact on the cultural ecology of East Sussex, it did provide them with the opportunity to pilot new offers in Canterbury, beyond the three shows that they normally stage. The learnings from this are now being used to inform future tours.

For PROJEJKT EUROPA, they described the funding they received through Catalyst For Culture as being transformative, enabling them to build a new partnership with The Marlowe and develop their organisational structure. It also allowed them to learn how to work with vulnerable and first generation migrant communities, learnings that are now informing other projects that they have since undertaken.

For the Theatre and Outdoor Theatre Performance Programmes, there was a demonstrable impact on the ability for artists to create new work, with 60% of survey respondents saying that they wouldn't have been able to produce or develop the work without the support of The Marlowe or SELEP (and where it was seen as being possible, this would have been at a very reduced scale).

“ It’s no exaggeration to say we wouldn’t have been able to create this show without the support of The Marlowe.”

ARTIST



OUTCOME: SUPPORTING NEW IDEAS AND ENTERPRISE

For the Theatre Commissions programme, the funding from SELEP also meant that it was possible for artists to create new work during the pandemic. 50% of the commissioned artists would not have been able to develop work without this funding support, 33% said 'maybe' and only 17% said that they would have been able to develop the work without funding.

Many of the artists had explored new or different ways to deliver or create performances. For some, this was focused upon their creative practice, whilst others were interested in audience engagement and co-design.

After producing the digital version of *Nurse Nellie Saves Panto*, the producers (Evolution Productions and The Marlowe) remained interested in how they might access and engage audiences online in the future.

“ It’s been transformative
- this was the first piece
of work we did as a
company.”

PROJEKT EUROPA



OUTCOME: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The outcome of **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**, explored how the workforce - largely made up of freelancers and small businesses - can be sustained. What employment opportunities can be created to offer financial and connective support. How is talent sustained and grown - at a time of minimal creative activity due to the pandemic.



PHOTO: CHRIS DUNCAN

OUTCOME: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Programme Learning was embedded into all of the activity that took place, with core partners benefitting from workforce development.

The Mercury Theatre felt there was a significant amount of learning between partners, including the sharing of The Marlowe's systems around commissioning of artists and its approach to evaluation.

There was also a legacy in terms of regional artists networks, with the Mercury Theatre now looking at how the work that is being developed by artists can be shared around the region and how artists can be given more opportunities in the South East to deliver work.

The Mercury Theatre has also used learnings to provide artists with a practical guide on how to pitch new work to venues and organisations. This training has been rolled out to twenty artists from the region, giving them skills in how to do an 'elevator pitch' and a better understanding of how to sell their work.

For Glyndebourne, the learning was in how it collaborated with The Marlowe on community activity, with plans now underway to roll out the approach that was piloted as part of Catalyst For Culture to three of its other touring venues.

“ I would like to learn new skills in performing and dancing... and make long lasting memories.”

ADRIJUS,
CYGNET SCHOOL MEMBER



“ ...we want to provide as many opportunities for South East based artists to deliver work. It's opened our eyes - helped us redefine strategy moving forwards.”

THE MERCURY



OUTCOME: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The project also gave artists an opportunity to gain experience and develop work, with a significant number being at an early stage of their careers. 67% of those given Theatre Commissions defined themselves as being at an 'early-stage' in their career. The remaining 33% said 'mid-career'. 25% rated their current level of experience in the creative sector at the second lowest score of 2, 55% at the second highest score of 3 and 20% the highest score of 4, only partly reflecting the split between early stage and mid-career.

Catalyst For Culture enabled New Adventures to launch Cygnet School at The Marlowe, a year-long programme for a cohort of up to 15 young dancers, between the ages of 12 - 21. The aim of this programme is to inspire young people from areas of low cultural engagement to make and experience dance, helping to diversify the future workforce in the cultural industries.

Learnings from the first year of Cygnet School will be used to inform the longer-term legacy of the programme. In particular, future Cygnet School cohorts will include ring-fenced places for young talent from across the South East, with recruitment workshops taking place in Kent and Essex with The Marlowe and Mercury Theatre.

“ ...what we did was put down a marker on what we'd like our tours to look like everywhere. The activity we delivered last year; we're rolling out in three other places.”

GLYNDEBOURNE



OUTCOME: ADVOCACY

The final outcome was advocacy, exploring how the South-East profile of the work taking place can be raised, creating greater ADVOCACY for the creative sector in the region, providing assets for sharing, encouraging a strong identity and putting the partners on a national platform, through press, social media and active comms.



Outdoor shows and decoy audiences herald return of live theatre this summer

Small, agile productions are preparing for a May start, as experts predict virtual events will outlast the pandemic



Matthew Bourne: dance isn't 'taken as seriously as I'd thought'

Freelance performers 'forgotten' during the pandemic says top choreographer as he launches Cygnet School training programme to diversify industry



'Solidarity in Europe': Maria Aberg's international theatre company looks ahead

The acclaimed Swedish director's Projekt Europa will have a UK residency in Kent and collaborate with migrant theatre-makers



© Maria Aberg in the south of Sweden where she grew up. Photograph: Hanna-Katrina Jedrosz

OUTCOME: ADVOCACY

Catalyst For Culture provided the opportunity to advocate for the partner organisations and the work they undertake in the region.

The Mercury Theatre's production of *Sirens* gained reviews and previews in the national media.

The announcement of key Catalyst For Culture projects – including the collaborations with PROJEKT EUROPA, the launch of Cygnet School with New Adventures, the artist commissions offered by the Mercury Theatre and The Marlowe and the Flatmates auditorium cut-outs – all attracted high profile national and industry media coverage.

This coverage helped to raise the profile of the partners, showing that innovative activity was taking place within the cultural sector - despite the pandemic.

PROJEKT EUROPA had also been able to position themselves on an international platform, despite not previously having had an international profile. “We were invited to participate in the Horizon Showcase (and we) were invited to go to the BALTIC (Centre For Contemporary Art) and spent a week there, working with migrant communities from Gateshead”.

THE MARLOWE'S PARTNERSHIP WITH PROJEKT EUROPA

PRESS AND BROADCAST

Reach: 337,899

(Stories in The Guardian & The Stage)

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

9.37 million

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CYGNET SCHOOL

PRESS AND BROADCAST

Reach: 6.6 million

(Stories in The Guardian & The Stage)

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

1.1 million

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ARTIST COMMISSIONS

PRESS AND BROADCAST

Reach: 440,000

(Story in The Stage)

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

276,618

STORIES ON MARLOWE CUT-OUTS

PRESS AND BROADCAST

Reach: 1.3 million

(Stories in The Observer, The Stage & Meridan TV)

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

9.34 million

PARTNER FEEDBACK AND LEARNINGS



PHOTO: DAVID OXBERRY

PARTNER FEEDBACK AND LEARNINGS

Catalyst For Culture was delivered by three core partners, The Marlowe Theatre, Mercury Theatre and Glyndebourne.

There were a number of learnings from the project for all of the partners involved.

The Mercury felt that the programme management was “exceptional from the get-go” and saw it as positive that The Marlowe came with a clearly planned out framework for the programme.

Glyndebourne felt that the later stage of the project was “great”, with staff at The Marlowe being responsive and flexible as the project was implemented. However, they felt that the early stages of project planning would have benefitted from greater clarity around the purpose of the programme and what each partner would contribute.

The Mercury and The Marlowe had intended to – physically – work together in shared spaces, but partly due to the restrictions forced upon them by Covid, this did not happen and partners mainly worked remotely in their own theatres.

Partners felt that the project would have benefitted from more cross-partner connectivity. The Mercury and Glyndebourne each commented that it would have been useful to have had more opportunities for the three partners to meet together, perhaps through a regular steering group.

Partners felt that the programme offered potential for future partnerships and that by working together they created projects that would not have otherwise taken place. Glyndebourne said that the project showed “the potential of a two-or-three-way partnership, pointing the way for the future” and The Mercury were inspired by “the ambition of the project (and) were excited about the opportunities.”

“[the project showed] the potential of a two-or-three-way partnership, pointing the way for the future.”

GLYNDEBOURNE



PARTNER FEEDBACK AND LEARNINGS

The partners worked with a number of organisations to deliver the Catalyst For Culture programme.

Applause Rural Touring hadn't previously worked with The Marlowe and that connection has opened discussions with other organisations, leading to follow on commissions and work opportunities.

As a result of co-delivering, The Marlowe and Applause's relationship developed and they were able to co-produce an outdoor programme of activity. Applause would like to continue this relationship, to look at other opportunities, including programming and artist development/CPD.

PROJEKT EUROPA felt that Catalyst For Culture enabled their relationship with The Marlowe to develop in a "significant way" as they became a resident company and were supported to make their first piece of work.

PROJEKT EUROPA felt positive about the engagement with The Marlowe team in their work and how "senior management invested in the work and wanted it to succeed" and that they "were well supported by marketing and press."

One area requiring on-going development from both The Marlowe and PROJEKT EUROPA were levels of engagement with first generation migrant communities, with PROJECT EUROPA feeling "that was our biggest learning curve." This learning has now led to the development of a new community and learning project called PROJEKT ENCOUNTER that is taking place in partnership with The Marlowe.

"[we were] inspired by the ambition of the project and excited about the opportunities."

THE MERCURY





PHOTO: TIM STUBBINGS