



Annual Report 2019/20



PRIME TIME at Birmingham Repertory Theatre – October 2019

Photographer: Graeme Braidwood

*"[The] show has plenty of dry humour but there are also some hard-hitting messages.....
Women & Theatre are never ones to shy away from the grit that makes up our real lives."*

Weekend Notes

WOMEN & THEATRE

2019/2020

HIGHLIGHTS



**NEW PODCASTS
PRODUCED**



**LIVE
PERFORMANCES**

58

**FREELANCE
ARTISTS
ENGAGED**



**2564 LIVE &
DIGITAL
AUDIENCE
MEMBERS**

101

**INDIVIDUAL
PROJECT
PARTICIPANTS**

1



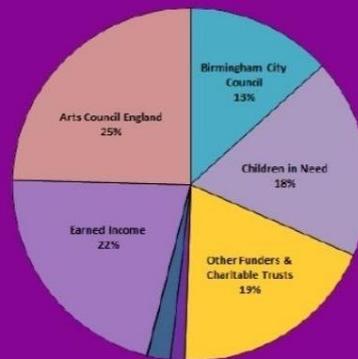
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157

**WORKSHOP AND
PROJECT
SESSIONS**

3963 ATTENDANCES

WHO FUNDED US?



Box Office and book sales Fundraiser, donations and Gift Aid

Highlights and Acknowledgements

Women & Theatre has had a successful year delivering a vast array of projects, performances and workshops, which have engaged people of all ages and backgrounds. Unfortunately due to COVID 19, some project and performance activity in March 2020 was cancelled or postponed.

An early highlight of the year was the culmination of our ***Into the Water*** project, delivered in partnership with Moseley Road Baths. Following an engaging research process with diverse groups, we produced an ambitious, site-specific community production that examined the role of water in women's lives. Performed in and around the pool by a community cast of local women, ***ITW*** captured the joy and diversity of 'women- only' sessions, whilst animating stories of memory & nature, swimming & play and birth & renewal.

We were thrilled to complete our trilogy of plays about women and work, with '**Prime Time**' at Birmingham Repertory Theatre in October 2019. Featuring 3 interwoven monologues written by Maeve Clarke, Rachael Mainwaring & Rochi Rampal, ***Prime Time*** presented diverse experiences of women of retirement age, performed by Janice Connolly, Souad Faress & Linda Hargreaves. Across our near sell-out run, audience feedback was brilliant and we had strong reviews.

We were also proud to bring together the '**Women & Work**' trilogy as a book and podcast series featuring monologues from *Prime Time* alongside 2014's *For the Past 30 Years*, about women working in different sectors for 3 decades, and 2016's *Starting Out*, about young women entering the world of work. These were launched at an International Women's Days event in March 2020.

We delivered the second year of **Word Lounge Theatre Company** for disadvantaged young people. Delivered in partnership with The REP, MAC and Birmingham Hippodrome, **WLTC** took place at a different venue each term, with weekly sessions culminating in new productions reflecting young people's creative ideas. Due to COVID 19, WLTC's final show, *The Differences Between Us*, was cancelled although a digital piece with poetry and songs from the show was produced for online audiences. The 2-year pilot has evaluated very strongly, evidencing the demonstrable impact made on the young people involved, in terms of their skills, self-belief, wellbeing and sense of belonging.

We have also embarked on a new Community Performance Club programme for older adults and carers which will run until autumn 2021, funded by Birmingham City Council. Following outreach workshops in autumn, we delivered a 12-week comedy course at The Brandwood Centre in Spring 2020 although missed out on the final performance event due to Covid-19. We have taken activity online however, with participants and artists enjoying much 'Laughter in Lockdown' over Zoom.

Our BSMHFT partnership continues to go from strength to strength with the impactful delivery of drama-based workshops in mental health in-patient settings and a successful tour of ***Looking Back, Moving Forwards*** – a collection of monologues about older LGBT experience. We also worked in partnership to create new theatre work for professional audiences; including with West Midlands Combined Authority, exploring mental health at work, and with Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust, about the experiences of Allied Health Professionals and Healthcare Support Workers.

We were thrilled to extend the reach of existing productions like ***Phyllis*** which presents the story of a woman and her family navigating the complex system of older people's care. Our autumn 2020 tour involved performances in Liverpool, Devon, Gloucester and Birmingham. ***Phyllis*** continues to make a significant impact wherever it is performed; stimulating discussions and affecting positive change.

Although the year ended with the world going into lockdown and much of our plans significantly affected, W&T continue to be creative and resilient, developing online project models and responding to changing circumstances; engaging with our participants and audiences in new and exciting ways.

We would like to thank our board and all the staff, freelance artists, students, volunteers, and partner organisations who have worked with us. Thanks for the hard work, compassion, energy and optimism.

Artistic Activities 2019/20

W&T delivered a wide range of projects and productions. We delivered a total of **194** practical sessions - in the form of performances, participatory workshops or training sessions. The total number of attendances was **3,604**. The following are some examples of our work throughout the year:

NEW THEATRE:

Into the Water

April 2019 saw the culmination of our *Into the Water* project with site-specific community performances at Moseley Rd Baths. The culmination of an extensive community engagement process, the piece shared stories of the role of water in women's lives and involved audiences watching live action performed in and around the pool by an intergenerational cast of local women, whilst listening to the show's soundscape on headphones.



The process enabled community groups and individuals to share their stories and inform the creation of an ambitious piece of theatre. Performing in an historical building, of much significance to the local community, who themselves had saved it from closure, was a powerful experience.

Audience Comments:

"Makes me want to go swimming. Mesmerising!"
"Loved it – I'm a new swimmer and it encapsulated all that I get from the water"

We reached 174 live audience members across our 4 sold out performances and continue to celebrate the project to online audiences, sharing the ITW soundtrack via our website.

Funded by Arts Council England, Birmingham City Council, The Roughley Trust & The Grimmitt Trust

Prime Time



Women & Theatre completed its *Women & Work* trilogy by producing **Prime Time** in association with Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Featuring 3 interwoven monologues developed from research by Maeve Clarke, Rachael Mainwaring & Rochi Rampal, *Prime Time* presented diverse experiences of women of retirement age; reflecting upon how women's professional and personal lives have impacted on their current choices or lack of them and the deep-rooted gender issues that this stage of our lives often exposes.

Prime Time was directed by Jo Gleave, working with Dramaturg Madeleine Kludje, Sound Artist Sam Frankie Fox, Lighting Designer Alex Boucher, and Stage Manager Amber Curtis.

Performed by Janice Connolly, Souad Faress & Linda Hargreaves, *Prime Time* reached 632 audience members over 5 shows in October 2019. We secured a near sell out run, with 4 of the 5 shows at maximum capacity & one at 82% full. Post-show discussions were very well received with most audience members returning to discuss the issues raised.

"Wonderful! Such tight, beautiful scripts and gorgeous performances. For a topic that never gets the coverage it dearly warrants."

Audience Member

Funded by Arts Council England, The Feeney Trust & the Cole Charitable Trust.

PODCAST & BOOK:



We were thrilled to bring together the 'Women & Work' trilogy as a book and podcast series featuring monologues from *Prime Time* alongside 2014's *For the Past 30 Years*, about women working in different sectors for 3 decades, and 2016's *Starting Out*, about young women entering the world of work. These were launched at an International Women's Days event in March 2020. To date we have had brilliant responses from digital audiences which we continue to grow. The podcast also received funding from The Space, who provided valuable support and consultancy to the company. Women & Theatre intend to build upon the strengths and learning of this project, ensuring podcasts are a regular output of our future work, increasing our audience reach. Details of the W&T podcast can be found on our website or by searching 'Women & Theatre' on most podcast platforms.

YOUNG PEOPLE:

Word Lounge Theatre Company

This year has seen the completion of our 2 year pilot project: *Word Lounge Theatre Company* – a youth theatre for looked after young people, young carers and young people with additional needs.

In summer 2019, WLTC developed *Blast off!* - a performance at MAC celebrating the 50th anniversary of the moon landings. Autumn saw WLTC create *What's Wrong in Neverland?* – a response to *Peter Pan* which explored the impact of being left out. Spring 2020 was at Birmingham Hippodrome. The group created *The Differences Between Us*, about people seeing past their differences and working together. Unfortunately due to COVID 19, the shows were cancelled, so we produced a 25minute audio piece for digital audiences.

Across the project, young people have developed wide ranging creative, performance and transferrable skills. They have devised scripts, written song lyrics, designed costumes, created movement, and more... An Independent Evaluation evidences the demonstrable impact that the project has made on the young people involved, in terms of their skills,

"The group makes our kids feel valued but it also makes them more sensitive to the needs of other people... the atmosphere is one of support."

Manager, Children's Home

self-belief, wellbeing and sense of belonging. We are hopeful of securing future funding to enable further WLTC activity.

Funded by Children in Need, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, Eveson Trust, Grantham Yorke Trust, The Patrick Trust, Edward & Dorothy Cadbury Trust, Baron Davenport's Charity & Tesco Bags for Life.



OLDER ADULTS:

Community Performance Club

In January, W&T launched its Community Performance Club project for older adults and carers, funded by Birmingham City Council.

Following outreach workshops in the autumn, we delivered a comedy course at The Brandwood Centre although missed out on the final performance event due to Covid-19. We have since taken activity online however, with participants and artists enjoying much 'Laughter in Lockdown' over Zoom. Aiming to promote health & wellbeing, strengthen community networks and combat social isolation, this project is funded until autumn 2021 and will involve different art forms and activities.



HEALTH:

Phyllis

Originally commissioned by Birmingham & Solihull Sustainability & Transformational Partnership and developed from research with patients, family members and health & social care professionals, *Phyllis* presents the story of a woman and her family navigating the complex system of older people's care.

In November 2019, performances of *Phyllis* were booked by Healthwatch Liverpool, Healthwatch Devon, Gloucestershire CCG and Birmingham City University. The play was performed by Janice Connolly, Alison Belbin, Graeme Rose and Adaya Henry. It was presented to health & social care professionals and students, followed by discussions with groups to collectively identify improvements to systems to better the experience for patients, families and health professionals alike.



Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust: Two Commissions

In 2019, we were commissioned by Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust to develop two different monologues-based pieces. The first, *Joining the Dots*, was about Allied Healthcare Professionals, raising awareness and celebrating the different disciplines that come under that label and highlighting the need for supported student placements. The piece was researched & written by Hannah Graham, and performed by Alison Belbin, Hema Mangoo and Keiren Hamilton-Amos at Workforce Development Days in June and December 2019.

The second piece, researched and written by Alison Belbin, shone a light on the experiences of Healthcare Support Workers. Entitled *What We Do*, it was presented in December 2019, with Dan Hagley and Ashleigh Aston performing alongside Alison, accompanied by a facilitated discussion.

Partnership with Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation NHS Trust

W&T had another successful year of partnership activity BSMHFT. We delivered courses of drama workshops with service users in in-patient settings – including at The Juniper Centre, Tamarind, Zinnia Centre, and Newbridge House. Service Users were responsive and positive about the courses, with workers regularly voicing their surprise at the levels of engagement. Delivery artists included Cheyanne Arnold, Jay Crutchley, Julie Baker, Emily Butler, Jo Gleave, Nyasha Gudo & Jack Trow.

In May 2019, we also toured *Looking Back, Moving Forwards*, performed by Janice, Bharti Patel and Dan Hagley. Commissioned earlier in the year by BSMHFT's LGBT Network, the piece presented diverse experiences of older LGBT people. Performances took place at Juniper Centre, Tamarind Centre and Beechcroft Day Centre and were very well received by staff and service users.

Permission to be Nosey – Health Visitor Monologues

Birmingham City University commissioned us to present our Health Visitor Monologues, *Permission to be Nosey* in January 2019, for their newly qualified cohort of Health Visitors. The piece was performed by Janice, Ali Henry and Rochi Rampal, with an accompanying discussion and was very well received.

One to One – West Midlands Combined Authority

W&T were commissioned by West Midlands Combined Authority to research and develop a theatre based training piece to promote awareness of mental health in diverse workplaces, challenge stigma and empower managers to be able to have effective and appropriate conversations with employees experiencing mental ill health. A preview performance was presented in early March but unfortunately the pilot week of programme delivery was cancelled due to Covid-19. We hope there will be the opportunity to remount the project for its pilot delivery and wider rollout in the future.

Financial Transactions 2019/20

Income

	2020 Total (£)	2019 Total (£)
Arts Council England	50,699	32,114
Birmingham City Council	27,299	26,007
Children in Need	37,712	25,882
Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation	10,000	10,100
The Space	9,500	
BSMHFT	3,184	5,058
Healthwatch	5,500	11,000
Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust	13,257	
West Midlands Combined Authority	9,999	
NHS Gloucestershire CCG	2,125	
Birmingham City University	7,308	2,478
Eveson Charitable Trust	3,000	3,000
Grantham Yorke Trust	2,000	2,000
The Roughley Trust	-	2,000
Fields Family Trust	1,250	1,750
The Cole Charitable Trust	1,000	1,000
Baron Davenport Charity	500	500
Tesco Bags of Help	2,000	-
Edward & Dorothy Cadbury Trust	750	-
The Patrick Trust	3,000	-
Sir Barry Jackson Trust	3,000	-
John Feeney Trust	3,000	-
Box office & Book Sales	4,310	3,078
Other project income	2,770	38,519
Donations & Appeals	2,723	1,654
Bank Interest	109	83
	205,995	166,223

Expenditure

	2020 Total (£)	2019 Total (£)
Core Staff Salaries including Employers NI and Pension Contributions	104,151	91,443
Project wages and fees	75,621	43,377
Project & core travel	4,396	5,507
Production costs	13,196	10,374
Marketing	6,071	7,596
Book costs	203	-
Training and miscellaneous	595	1,138
Premises costs & Insurance	7,157	6,548
Telephone, Broadband & Website	1,651	2,045
Office expenses, repairs and renewals	858	898
Subscriptions	698	611
Independent examination & Book-keeping	1,610	1,695
Bank charges and interest	96	275
Fundraising Costs	532	230
Depreciation of office equipment	110	1,096
	216,945	172,833

Company Members, Partners & Funders

Women & Theatre would like to thank all our staff & Board of Directors for their valuable contribution to our successful year.

Directors / Trustees

Amarjot Birdi
Andy Carpenter
Alison Finn
Rachel Gartside
Anna Gregory
Ellie Griffiths
Hayley Meachin
Rebecca Phillips
Alice Tomlinson

Company Members:

Janice Connolly – Artistic Director
Jess Williams – General Manager
Rosie Gunn – Project Manager
Jo Gleave – Lead Artist Practitioner
Matt Smith – Marketing & Fundraising Co-ordinator

Company Auditors:

Barry Matthews for Bissell & Brown (Birmingham) Ltd

Partners & Funders:

Thank you to our project funders and partners this year:

The Active Wellbeing Society, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, Arts Council England, Baron Davenport's Charity, Bichfield Harriers, Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Hippodrome, Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation NHS Trust, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University, Birmingham Voluntary Service Council, The Brandwood Centre, Brum Radio, Children in Need, Cole Charitable Trust, Digikicks, Edwards & Dorothy Cadbury Trust, Eveson Trust, The Feeney Trust, Fields Family Trust, Fox Hollies School, Grantham Yorke Trust, The Grimmitt Trust, Healthwatch Liverpool, Healthwatch Devon, The Hub Hazelwell, Kinmos, Midlands Arts Centre, Moseley Road Swimming Baths, NHS Gloucestershire CCG, The Patrick Trust, Pit Leasowe Close Community Centre, Selly Oak Trust School, Sir Barry Jackson Trust, The Space CIC, Springboard, Spurgeons, Swiis Foster Care, Tesco Bags of Help, Trinity College (Arts Awards), Uffculme School, Warwickshire County Council, WASPI (Birmingham group) and West Midlands Combined Authority .