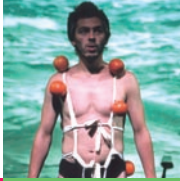


A GUIDE TO THE UK PERFORMING ARTS

WHAT IT IS
HOW IT WORKS
WHO'S INVOLVED

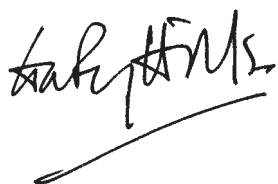


Most people's experience of the performing arts is as part of an audience. They could be watching a play, a musical, modern or classical dance, opera, street theatre, a puppet show or even a circus.

When audiences engage with the performing arts, they enter into a magical world where anything can happen; they can laugh, be moved to tears, astonished, surprised and entertained. What they see on stage though is an end product, a production that has been through a long development and rehearsal process involving a large team of hard-working, dedicated people and often a large amount of money.

The main aim of this guide then is to look beyond the spectacle and outline how the UK performing arts work, what and who makes them tick, how they are structured and how they function in a competitive world. Its style is clear and jargon free and should appeal as much to those who know little about the industry as to performing arts professionals who need a refresher of the industry in which they work.

So, hopefully, anyone who asks the question "what exactly *are* the performing arts?" should be able to find the answer in this guide.



Gary Hills
July 2006

The author would like to thank the Independent Theatre Council, the Theatrical Management Association and UK Trade & Investment for their valuable support in the writing and production of this guide.

Big thanks also to all the performing arts companies who provided information and photographs.



Cover photos: Hoipolloi's *Floating* / John Baucher; DV8's *Just For Show* / Jiri Volek; Oily Cart's *Hippity Hop* / Amanda Webb; English National Ballet / Hanson; Birmingham Opera Company's *He Had It Coming* / Roy Peters; Grid Iron's *Devil's Larder* / Richard Campbell

Photo (opposite page): StopGAP's *Corpus* / Hugo Glendinning

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In general, the performing arts can be summarised as those artistic activities which involve performers interpreting roles for an audience. This can be through the spoken word, music, movement, dance and even acrobatics. An essential ingredient is that the performance is live, even when elements such as film or recorded material are included.

"I'm going to the theatre" has become a generic term for "I'm going to see a performance". This is partly because of the building itself; 'theatre' evokes the image of red plush seats, a proscenium arch and heavy curtains going up on Act One. It's only in the last 50 years that all this began to change. Before then audiences *did* go to the theatre - they watched two-act plays in a traditional theatre which faithfully recreated a certain style of living in a certain style of living room. Or they saw great actors play the great roles in the great classical plays. And if audiences didn't go to the theatre, they went to the ballet or the opera.

We can still say we're going to the theatre, but it now means so much more than that. Theatres are spaces where anything can happen, they are spaces that can defy the traditional idea of what a theatre is. Theatres can be magnificent High Victorian palaces, a black box or a room above a pub. They can be beautiful historic buildings or strikingly modern architectural icons. But without a performance happening inside them, they are just buildings.

Performance is no longer just about theatre. Theatre now equates to spoken drama and is only one way of telling the story. As the living room gave way to the kitchen and realism became an abstract, the whole traditional world of theatre exploded with progressive and surprising ways of sharing experiences and exploring ideas. So, bringing art forms such as dance, mime, pantomime, opera and puppetry into the equation, the term 'theatre' is only one part of the performance whole, especially when performances can take place outside, as well as inside, a traditional theatre building (see Site Specific page 10).

True performance is now about bringing all those art forms together, sometimes cross-fertilising them, sometimes introducing visual art, musical performance and new technology. Through it all is an extraordinary range of people bound together by artistic, technical and managerial excellence. It is these people who help us understand the real meaning of the performing arts. Without them, it would all just be about buildings.



Tamasha: *Strictly Dandia*
Photo: Douglas Robertson

The performing arts in the UK is an energetic, enviable world-class industry. It is generally made up of a strong London-based commercial sector (mainly theatre and music theatre), and a large subsidised sector in both London and the regions.

There are also companies that receive no subsidy at all, or receive small amounts of financial support for one-off projects. An important characteristic of the performing arts industry is that it is about people and is led by people. This makes it a complex, fluid industry with ever varying inter-relationships between creative artists, technicians, administrators and audiences.

Venues and Building-based Companies

There are 541 venues in the UK (figure from Dominic Shellard: *Economic Impact Study of UK Theatre*, published by Arts Council England 2004). What is known as a receiving venue does not make its own productions but rents the space to visiting companies. Others have resident companies which use the venue as a home base. This means that the administrative as well as the artistic activities of the company take place under one roof. Historically, these were known as repertory theatres because they produced a series of rotating shows as part of each season's repertory. Some theatres – the Birmingham Rep for example – still reflect this in their names. Now, they're often referred to as producing houses, though the programme may well be a mix of home-grown and visiting productions.

The Traverse is Scotland's new writing theatre. Founded in 1963 by a group of maverick artists and enthusiasts, it began as an imaginative attempt to capture the spirit of adventure and experimentation of the Edinburgh Festival all year round. Throughout the decades, the Traverse has evolved and grown in artistic output and ambition. It has refined its mission by strengthening its commitment to producing new plays by Scottish and international playwrights and actively nurturing them throughout their careers. Traverse productions have been seen worldwide and tour regularly throughout the UK and overseas.

The Traverse's activities encompass every aspect of playwriting and production, providing and facilitating play-reading panels, script development workshops, rehearsed readings, public playwriting workshops, writers' groups, discussions and special events. It receives enormous critical and audience acclaim for its programming, as well as regularly winning awards.

The Traverse Theatre is supported by the British Council, City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Arts Council.



When the Bulbul Stopped Singing
Photo: Richard Campbell

Arts centres are multipurpose complexes offering a whole range of arts in a community context. Typically they comprise of large and small performance spaces, cinemas, galleries and food and drink outlets. Arts centres rarely produce their own work and as such are a staple of touring companies.

Some of the country's top venues have earned themselves international reputations as centres of excellence. Theatres such as the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Dundee Rep, Clwyd Theatr Cymru and the Sheffield Theatres are producing world-class drama, some of which transfer to London's commercial West End. New writing theatres such as the Traverse, the Royal Court and the Hampstead Theatre continue to identify and nurture a new generation of playwrights.

Touring Companies

By far the largest number of performing arts companies are touring companies, meaning they have no performance space of their own but take their work to receiving spaces. These can be anything from formal theatres and studios to open-air or found spaces such as industrial buildings. Other companies are community based and work in city and town centres or in rural locations.

These companies represent all the performing arts sectors, including theatre, dance, opera and circus. Within these generic forms there is further specialisation where organisations create and present work for specific audiences or in a specific performance style.

Some touring companies are publicly funded and perform either in a specific region or tour their work nationally. Some also tour internationally. Some aren't funded at all. Audiences who come to see a touring production will have no idea of the gruelling work involved in getting the



Warwick Arts Centre

show on the road. Artistic work apart, a tour needs to be built by contacting venues, persuading them that this particular show is worth presenting, organising the marketing, the transport of set and cast and crew, the get-in (where the set and technical elements such as lighting and sound need to be mounted) and the get-out, when the stage is cleared immediately after a performance. It's not difficult to imagine the stresses of one-night-one-venue touring.

There are also commercial tours which rely purely on ticket income to cover costs. To help cover this risk, big-name stars are employed as an audience draw. In 2005, David Pugh Ltd toured a version of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, written by Frank McGuinness, for 27 weeks. It starred Nigel Havers and brought in a gross box office total of over £4 million. Some West End productions start life on tour before arriving in London, while others go on tour after they have finished their London run.

Welsh National Opera (WNO) is Europe's busiest touring opera company and the largest provider of touring opera in the UK, serving a catchment area of over 12 million people. In 2006, WNO celebrated its 60th anniversary.

WNO has a permanent company of 250 people, made up of the orchestra, the chorus, principal singers and music, production, technical and administrative staff. Recent critical successes have included new productions of *Don Carlos* and *Wozzeck*, both premiered in the company's new home – Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff.

WNO now uses the Wales Millennium Centre as its administrative and rehearsal base. From there it tours over 120 main scale opera performances annually in cities such as London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Plymouth and Belfast.



Don Carlos Photo: Bill Cooper

Young People's Theatre (YPT)

YPT has finally taken its rightful place in the overall performing arts picture in recent years. For too long it was seen as almost subordinate to mainstream performance and suffered with an image problem, mainly from within the industry. YPT in the UK now leads the way and has developed an increasingly high profile. It creates serious work for young people, and is not afraid to deal with complex issues. An example of this is Action Transport Theatre's production of *The Bomb*, a story inspired by the relationship between Jo Berry, whose father was killed in the 1984 Brighton bombing, and Patrick Magee, the man who planted that bomb.

YPT is about theatre for young people, where the work is created specifically for them. This is different to youth theatre, where young people take part in a production as participants. YPT also includes what was known as 'theatre in education', a term rarely used these days. These companies tend to work in schools and can link their work to the National Curriculum.

The importance and increasing influence of theatre for young people cannot be underestimated. Not only are young audiences essential for the future of our performing arts, they are discerning and opinionated and can throw up a real challenge for the companies that create work for them.

YPT companies tour their work to theatres, schools, nurseries and community centres. There are few building-based companies in the UK, though some do have their own studios and are beginning to build these smaller spaces into touring schedules. YPT companies are also extending their reach internationally.

Since 1981, **Oily Cart** has presented more than 60 productions for children and young people. Its innovative work takes original scripts, precisely devised for specific audiences, and draws on a vast array of theatrical styles and multi-sensory techniques. Oily Cart fulfils a unique strategic need in the provision of theatre for two vital and often neglected audiences: the Very Young (6 months – 5 years) and Young People with Complex Disabilities (Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities and severe Autistic Spectrum Disorders).

All employees have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks and have signed acknowledgement and compliance of guidelines of working with children and vulnerable adults integral to employment contracts.

Approximately 45 per cent of Oily Cart's income comes from Arts Council England, 15 per cent is earned income while the remaining 40 per cent comes through fundraising, mainly trusts and foundations.

Oily Cart performs in venues, non-theatre spaces and schools to school/nursery and family audiences.



Waving Photo: Amanda Webb

The most established YPT venues are in London and include the Polka Theatre in Wimbledon and the new Unicorn Theatre close to London Bridge. The Unicorn Theatre is the first dedicated children's venue in the country.

The Contact Theatre, in Manchester specialises in work for young people of 14+ while the MacRobert Arts Centre at Stirling University is also focusing on young people's theatre. Other companies use one theatre as a home base; Pilot Theatre premieres the majority of its shows at the York Theatre Royal but also remains a touring company, both nationally and internationally.

Of the Independent Theatre Council's (ITC) members, 25 per cent reported that they work specifically in the YPT sector, with a further 10 per cent regularly including work for children and young people in their artistic programmes. In 2003, ITC appointed a YPT co-ordinator – largely funded by Arts Council England – whose

task is to raise the profile and status of the sector, and to assess training, management and development needs.

Rural Work

Not all audiences are urban, nor are they within easy reach of a theatre or arts centre. Companies who work in rural parts of the country take their productions to the people and, if there are no purpose-built spaces in reach, use village halls or community centres as their arena. Theatre Hebrides, based in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis off the west coast of Scotland, produces work for and involving the Western Isles communities. A group of established, locally based artists and writers creates innovative theatre performance and media work in Gaelic and English. The company aims to promote the unique history and contemporary culture of the Outer Hebrides, within an international framework.

Eastern Angles is the professional touring theatre company for East Anglia. The company is now in its 25th year and has developed an enviable reputation for providing high-quality theatre on a range of different scales.



A Dulditch Angel Photo: Mike Kwasniak

The company is mainly funded by Arts Council England, East, with support from the local authorities of Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex. More than 50 per cent of income comes from fees, box office, sponsorship and merchandising.

The core programme of new writing consists of a small-scale tour for village and town halls; a medium-scale tour for town halls, arts centres and theatres; and a Christmas show. The company has produced a summer site-specific show, *The Wuffings*, based on the story behind the Sutton Hoo ship burial and is keen to develop this strand of work, along with national and international touring.

Inclusion and Integration

UK performing arts are hugely successful in generating high-quality work that is committed to full accessibility and opportunity for both audiences and performers. These companies continually challenge the fact that people with disabilities are excluded from engaging in the arts as audience members and participating as performers.

One of the foremost theatre companies is Graeae, a disabled-led theatre company based in London that profiles the skills of actors, writers and directors with physical and sensory impairments. In Scotland, Birds of Paradise theatre company works particularly to develop the skills of young people with disabilities.

Companies such as these also offer training programmes to develop and improve the skills of disabled performers and technicians as well as look at innovative ways of using signing and audio description for audiences.

StopGAP is a vibrant integrated dance company based in Woking that includes dancers with and without disabilities. It challenges traditional notions about dance by using each dancer's physical and intellectual potential as a starting point for creating new work. It works from a philosophy of physical, psychological and social integration. In so doing, StopGAP recognises and celebrates individuality and the differences between people while continually seeking artistic and technical excellence in all that it does.



Corpus Photo: Hugo Glendinning



Mercy Fine Photo: Sarah Ainslie

Clean Break was founded by two women in prison in 1979. From its roots as a small-scale fringe theatre company, it has grown today to become a critically acclaimed new writing theatre company producing. It is committed to the empowerment of women who have experienced the criminal justice system.

Cultural and Gender Specific

The performing arts, by their very nature, reflect the way we live now. In a society that is an eclectic mix of race, culture, creed and social diversity, there are arts organisations whose core mission is to work with and on behalf of specific society groups.

Asian theatre and dance is well developed in the UK and attracts a wide audience demographic. Tamasha is a London-based company which aims to tell the untold stories of Asian communities. It presents classical, multi art form stories, adaptations of novels and also works in the community and schools. It is a new writing company and has nurtured groundbreaking productions such as *East is East* and *Balti Kings*.

Talawa was created in 1986. A London-based company, it aims to use black culture and experience to inform British theatre and to make work that helps to develop and enlarge audiences from the black community.

Site Specific

Site-specific work is a performance in a space used for its physical and atmospheric qualities. This can be an open space, a disused building, someone's living room or a shop window. Unusual locations can make unusual productions and challenge our notions of how an audience connects with the performers and the performance. Some companies have even found a permanent home in their found location; Shunt performs its cabaret-style productions in the railway arches under London Bridge Station.

The site itself is often the inspiration for making new work, the qualities of the space kick-starting the creative process.

Community based

Not all performing arts companies wish to work in a building with a seated audience. Working in the community means just that; going out to work with the audience in a less formal setting, often involving them with the performance itself.

Legal Considerations

Just like any other industry or business in the UK, the performing arts has to adhere to strict legal procedures in order to function appropriately, safely and in good order. Performing arts companies must also follow the same company formation rules as any other business, whether they are companies or registered charities. Most of these laws are generic and not specifically aimed at performing arts, though this doesn't lessen their impact on the industry.

By its very nature the performing arts industry works directly with the public. Whether it's in a theatre, a school or an open space, companies need to be aware of and abide by health and safety as well as public liability issues. This responsibility to audiences as well as to a company's

own staff and visitors adds an additional layer of legal liability. In keeping with UK law, a company must have a written health and safety policy if it employs five or more people.

All venues will have Public Liability Insurance which usually covers both the venue and any company working in it against any claim made by the public. However, this may still not be enough if a company's negligence causes an incident. In addition to this, a company must insure against liability for injury to all workers (employees, freelancers and volunteers) that arises from their work with them. It's not hard to imagine how diligent companies must be to ensure they are adequately covered when building sets, rigging lighting or when rehearsing demanding, physical work. These days, Romeo's leap from the balcony comes with legal implications.

Recent legislation regarding working with young and vulnerable people had real impact on performing arts organisations, particularly YPT companies and those who work in the community.

It is now compulsory for anyone working with these groups to be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (or Disclosure Scotland) to ensure they are suitable. These disclosures have knock-on effects such as equal opportunities and data protection issues.

Licensing is an issue that particularly impacts on the performing arts. Some examples of this are:

Premises: all performance spaces must have a licence. Some are just licensed for the performance and cannot, for example, sell alcohol, which is covered separately.

Public spaces: these must have a performance licence or a temporary event notice with provision for regulated entertainment.

Music: if a production uses recorded music, the company needs to cover its rights to use copyright work or to check that a venue has a Performing Right Society licence. Sometimes it's necessary to check whether rights are needed to record the music in the first place.

Equal opportunities laws do not only affect staffing, training, auditioning and casting. The subsidised sector in particular needs to ensure that its buildings and the work it presents is accessible to as many people as possible. It's fair to say that the performing arts have embraced equal opportunities in a practical, hands-on way, building awareness of accessibility, disability and cultural diversity into its everyday work.

It goes further. The industry actively pursues equality of opportunity in order to address imbalance and under-representation. As an example, Independent Theatre Council and Theatrical Management Association have run the Fast Track programme since 2003,

Birmingham Opera Company stages opera in unusual and unpredictable places in Birmingham city centre. It has no opera house and never works in a conventional theatre. What makes the company different is that it invites local people in to experience the work in progress and to contribute to it.



Women Beware Photo: Roy Peters

offering black, Asian and people from other minority ethnic groups, with transferable skills, a chance to train and consider a career in arts and theatre management. The 15-week training programme takes place in London and the other English regions each year and has so far involved 90 participants and more than 50 host organisations who offer hands-on work experience as part of the course.

Workforce

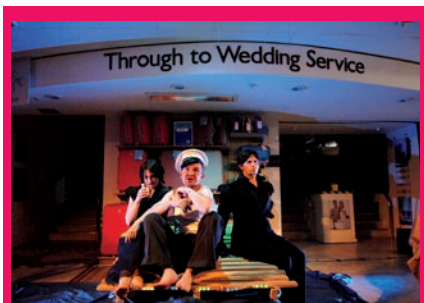
The performing arts is a labour-intensive industry relying on a skilled workforce, many of whom are self employed. Actors, dancers and singers only make up one small part of any production. The creative team involves directors, producers, set designers, lighting and sound designers, stage managers, choreographers and musicians. Behind the scenes are electricians, carpenters, scene hands, sound and lighting engineers as well as props and costume makers, wardrobe assistants, hairdressers, make-up artists and – in bigger companies – specialists such as armourers and fight directors.

This makes the big building-based companies such as the Royal National Theatre (RNT) and the Royal Shakespeare Company a vast workplace on an almost industrial scale. The RNT employs around 700 people, including a resident company of actors.

Even smaller touring companies rely on a minimum number of staff to make a production feasible. For a production with four performers on stage, there can often be the same number working backstage. Administratively, performing arts organisations need to be run like any other company, with a skilled administrative and management structure.

It is often said that the performing arts industry is subsidised by its workforce. This refers to comparatively low wages for performers and theatre staff as compared

to other white-collar workers. Some companies work on a profit-share basis which in reality means there is often no pay at all. In 2004/5, the Equity minimum weekly rate (eight performances) in the West End was around £350. In subsidised theatres the minimum was £309.



The Devil's Larder Photo: Richard Campbell

Grid Iron is a multi award-winning Edinburgh-based theatre company which, over the past ten years, has built a reputation for creating high-profile shows in the widest possible variety of places. Some of the more unusual locations have included a working cancer hospital in Jordan and Debenhams department store in Edinburgh. Grid Iron is currently project funded by the Scottish Arts Council and occasionally receives one off grants from the City of Edinburgh Council.

Some employment issues for performing arts companies

- Age discrimination
- Disability discrimination
- Equal opportunities
- Health and safety
- Code of conduct for auditions
- Dismissal
- Discipline and grievances
- Overseas workers
- Employing children

The Arts Councils



These were established in 1994 following the reorganisation of the Arts Council of Great Britain. There is now Arts Council England (ACE), the Scottish Arts Council, the Arts Council of Wales and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, each being independent of the others.

ACE is governed by a national council and also has nine regional offices which are responsible for the agreement of regional strategy, investment plans and annual budgets.

ACE funds all art forms such as theatre, dance, music, literature and visual arts. It distributes public funds from both government and the National Lottery.

In the period 1994-2004 the total Lottery spend on all arts was £1.8 billion. For the same period, theatre received awards worth £441 million, while dance received £156 million.

The Scottish Arts Council receives most of its funding from the Scottish Executive and also distributes National Lottery funds. In January 2006 it was announced that the Scottish Executive would take direct responsibility for the six main national performing arts companies such as Scottish Opera and that the Arts Council will be replaced by a new body called Creative Scotland.

The Arts Council of Wales is accountable to the Welsh Assembly which provides it with funds. It also distributes National Lottery funds. The Arts Council of Wales is managed by unpaid members appointed by the Welsh Assembly.

Based in Belfast, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland distributes funds to the arts in the Province through the Treasury and the National Lottery. In recent times the Arts Council has suffered from reductions in funding from central government. This is despite Northern Ireland already having the

Arts Council England Regions

East, East Midlands, London, North East North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire

Annual Theatre Funding in the UK 2004-05

Arts Council England	£100 million
Scottish Arts Council	£12.8 million
Arts Council of Wales	£6.4 million
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	£2.1 million

Source: Arts Council England



Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

DCMS is responsible for Government policy on arts, sport, the National Lottery, tourism, libraries, museums and galleries, broadcasting, creative industries including film and the music industry, press, licensing, gambling and the historic environment.

It distributes public and Lottery funds to over 60 public bodies, including Arts Councils. DCMS also works with the DTI, UK Trade & Investment and the British Council to raise the profile of the creative industries – which include performing arts – both nationally and internationally.

International Support Agencies

There are three agencies involved with the development of the import and export of performing arts: the British Council, Visiting Arts and UK Trade & Investment. More information about these can be found in the chapter International Work (see page 22).

The performing arts industry has a range of professional and management associations to oversee good practice and to represent the interests of their members. Between them they cover all performing art forms, all scales and the both the subsidised and the commercial sectors.

ABO Association of British Orchestras (ABO)

ABO exists to support, develop and advance the interests and activities of the orchestral profession in the UK. It is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras throughout the country.

dance UK Dance UK

Dance UK began in 1982 in response to demand from many parts of the sector for a unified voice to speak and take action on its behalf. The organisation provides information, publications, networks, forums for debate and conferences, and generally acts as an advocate for dance issues.

Dance UK has about 150 corporate members, including most of the major dance companies, venues, agencies, funders and educational institutions. Individual members include individual dance artists, choreographers, administrators, managers, technicians, teachers, students, writers and members of dance audiences.

Equity Equity

Equity is the trade union which represent artists across the performing arts. Its membership includes actors, singers, dancers, choreographers, stage managers, theatre directors and designers. Equity's primary function is to negotiate minimum terms and conditions of employment for its members and to ensure these take account of social and economic changes.



Madam Butterfly Photo: Brian Slater

Northern Ballet Theatre (NBT) tours to every country in the UK, including the capital cities of Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and London and almost every major city in between. It does not set out to be a 'traditional' ballet company and has developed a unique style of 'ballet-theatre', based on strong movement-based storytelling using popular tales from novels (*Wuthering Heights*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Three Musketeers*), plays (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*) and operas (*Madame Butterfly*, *La Traviata*).

NBT aims to reach as wide an audience as possible and won the Critics' Circle Audience Award in 2004 and 2005, an award voted for by the public. NBT believes strongly in bringing dance to people who would not usually feel it is for them as well as appealing to more traditional ballet audiences.

NBT is funded by Arts Council England, West Yorkshire Grants and Leeds City Council but also relies on sponsorship and support from businesses and individuals.

itc Independent Theatre Council (ITC)

ITC is the management association for 680 venues, companies and individuals in the fields of drama, dance, opera, music theatre, puppetry, mixed media, mime, physical theatre and circus. They are generally committed to new and innovative work, with a good number producing work for young people. International opportunities and overseas co-operation have recently increased in the sector as ITC has radically developed its own international profile.

ITC members:

- Receive £33 million per year in Arts Council revenue funding
- Receive around £3 million per year in ACE grants for the arts
- Have a joint annual turnover in excess of £75 million
- Reach audiences of around eight million per year
- Employ/engage over 8,000 creative personnel per year
- Employ around 2,500 administrative and management staff per year
- 30 per cent work with children and young people



Opera and Music Theatre Forum (OMTF)

OMTF is the representative body for opera and music theatre in the UK and is a network of companies working to create an environment in which opera and music theatre can flourish. Membership is open to professional opera and music theatre companies, educational organisations, promoters, festivals and individuals.



Society of London Theatre (SOLT)

Founded in 1908, SOLT is the trade association which represents the producers, owners and managers of the major commercial and subsidised theatres in

central London. West End theatre is largely commercial, with high production costs and equally big risks. In addition to the major commercial theatre, SOLT also represents key subsidised houses such as the Royal National Theatre. It combines its long-standing roles in such areas as industrial relations and legal advice for members with a campaigning role for the industry, together with audience-development programmes to promote theatre-going.



Theatrical Management Association (TMA)

TMA is a nationwide association whose members include repertory and producing theatres, arts centres and touring venues, major national companies and independent producers. In general, TMA represents the larger subsidised producing and presenting venues as well as established touring companies. Venues in this category can be found across the country and are typically the larger repertory or lyric theatres such as the Bristol Old Vic, The Grand Opera House Belfast and the Edinburgh Playhouse.

For July 2004-July 2005, TMA members reported:

- 18,702 performances
- 6,378,225 tickets sold
- £ 88,618,457 gross ticket sales



Writers' Guild of Great Britain

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain supports writers for TV, film, radio, theatre, books and computer games. It negotiates terms and agreements for its members with associations such as TMA and corporations such as the BBC.

Most performing arts companies are small to medium-sized enterprises and many depend on public subsidy to enable them to fulfil their artistic ambitions. In this industry the cost of the product is generally far greater than the income generated from its consumers, the audience. The national companies apart, the subsidised sector cannot depend on long runs or large venues to help recoup production costs, let alone make any profit.

Subsidy can come from the national Arts Councils and regional offices (see page 13 and page 26), either in the form of Project Funding, a one-off subsidy for one project, or Revenue Funding, which offers longer-term stability and the ability to plan and develop a company over a number of years.

Additionally, local authorities, Regional Development Agencies and city councils can offer performing arts funding as part of their regional economic plans. Local authorities are the second-largest funders of the arts after the Arts Councils, though their awards are hugely variable. They are also discretionary and often found from other budgets.



At Swim Two Boys Photo: Hugo Glendenning

No company is guaranteed subsidy and change of government, change of government policy or change of funding organisations' policies or structure can all affect the way in which a company can work. Occasionally this also means that some companies will fold. Arts Council England, for example, has announced that to maintain and develop its priorities it will reduce the number of its regularly funded organisations by 121 over the next two years. In contrast, the spend on theatre in 2007/8 will be £98.9 million, an increase of 6 per cent over 2005/6, and dance will be £37.3 million, an increase of 13 per cent (source: Arts Council England).

In addition, there are trusts, charities and foundations which can offer financial support to performing arts companies, usually for specific projects. These include the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Lloyds TSB.

Earthfall is a physical theatre/dance company based in Cardiff and performing throughout the UK. Its target audience is 18-35 year olds. Earthfall also tours extensively overseas.

In order to fulfil its work, Earthfall receives revenue funding from the Arts Council of Wales (including the Lottery Division) and occasional project funding from ACE touring unit, Wales Arts International, the British Council, the Foundation for Sports and the Arts as well as other foundations and trusts.

National Companies

National companies are those big subsidised organisations which have a countrywide remit, despite being building based.

The biggest in terms of public subsidy is the Royal Opera House which receives an annual Arts Council England (ACE) award of around £25 million. Also known as Covent Garden, it is home to the Royal Opera, the Royal Ballet and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House. It is regarded as one of the world's top venues for opera and ballet and seats over 2,000 people.

The Royal National Theatre (RNT) started life at the Old Vic theatre and finally moved into its new home on London's South Bank in 1976. It is in fact three theatres in one building. The largest is the open stage Olivier Theatre with over 1,000 seats, then the Lyttelton Theatre, a proscenium arch space with 890 seats and finally the Cottesloe Theatre, a black box studio space which can seat up to 300 people depending on layout.

In 2005/6, its funding from ACE was £17,261,000, which will rise to £18,223,400 in 2007/8. The subsidy covers around 40 per cent of the RNT's costs, with 6 per cent coming from donations and sponsorships. The rest is made up of box office, West End transfers and commercial front-of-house activities such as catering and a bookshop.

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is one of the world's best-known theatre companies and was created in its modern form by Peter Hall in 1960. It is situated in Stratford-Upon-Avon and also has bases in London and Newcastle upon Tyne. The RSC is well known for its mobile auditorium which tours classical drama throughout the UK to communities that have little access to professional companies. In the past 25 years, the tour has visited 120 different towns. The RSC also has a strong international reputation and tours regularly overseas.

The RSC's annual funding from ACE is around £14 million but 60 per cent of its income is self-generated by commercial ventures.



Home, Dundee Photo: Pete Dibdin

The National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) is a national performing arts organisation with a difference – it has no building. The plan is to make the NTS truly accessible to everyone, taking theatre all over Scotland, working with existing venues, touring and creating work within the theatre community. Theatre will take place in established spaces, such as Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum and Glasgow's Citizens Theatre, but also in site-specific locations, community halls and sports halls.

Having no ties to a building will offer the NTS an unparalleled freedom in reaching all communities and social groups in Scotland. For example, an ensemble of six actors will take up residence for a week at a time in the smallest venues and communities in Scotland, offering plays for adults, young adults and family theatre.

After more than 100 years of campaigning, the Scottish theatre community finally has its own National Theatre. The deal was made in an announcement by the Scottish Parliament in September 2003 and in February 2006 the launch of the new National Theatre – appropriately named *Home* – took place in ten venues across the country.

In the UK, the commercial sector is centred in London in the theatre district known as the West End or – as described by Westminster City Council – Theatreland. There are more than 40 privately owned theatres in the West End, many of them late Victorian or Edwardian. Most are owned by the three big West End players: the Ambassador Theatre Group, the Really Useful Group and Delfont Mackintosh Theatres.

Developing and presenting commercial theatre is a high-risk, big-money business. With no subsidy, the sector must finance its own operations and hope, in the long run, to make profit. The money comes via the producer of any production – an individual or company that raises the finances for a show. These finances can come from the producers themselves, from individual investors, venture capitalists

or other sponsors. Box office income and merchandising schemes provide the financial return. Understandably, profits can sometimes be slim, though long-running shows, especially the big musicals, can recoup millions of pounds.

Society of London Theatre (SOLT) figures show that in 2005 the capital's major theatres had a record attendance of 12,109,904.

A mixture of high-profile straight plays and big-budget musicals helped push total attendance up by 5.1 per cent for plays and 4.9 per cent for musicals on the previous year. The total attendance figure which includes all forms of entertainment on the London stage (comedy, performances, opera and dance as well as plays and musicals), represented an increase of 3.9 per cent on 2004.



Piccadilly Theatre

The Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG), co-founded by Howard Panter and Rosemary Squire in 1992, is currently the largest theatre group in the West End and, separately, the second largest in the UK regions, with a total of 24 venues.

ATG's impressive portfolio of West End theatres include high-profile and historic buildings such as the Comedy, Donmar Warehouse, Duke of York's, Fortune, New Ambassadors, Phoenix, Piccadilly, Savoy and the two new venues at Trafalgar Studios.

ATG's regional theatres include the Theatre Royal, Brighton; Milton Keynes Theatre; the Churchill Theatre in Bromley; Richmond Theatre, Surrey; the King's Theatre, Glasgow; and the Theatre Royal, Glasgow.



Record ticket receipts were an astonishing £375,163,339, which generated £56 million VAT receipts for HM Government. SOLT economic impact figures also suggest that West End audiences spent around £1.5 billion in 2002/3 in associated activities when visiting the theatre (taken from Dominic Shellard: *Economic Impact Study of UK Theatre*, published by Arts Council England, 2004).

Accessibility for those with mobility problems is variable in the West End. While newer venues have wheelchair access and appropriate toilet facilities, many of the older theatres still have small public areas, with many steps and stairs. Eighty per cent of them are listed buildings, which makes structural change difficult. SOLT does, however, offer full venue access information and there are regularly available assisted performances – audio described, signed and captioned.



As part of the West End's drive to make the theatre more accessible to youngsters and families, SOLT has introduced some child-friendly initiatives and marketing tactics. For example, Kids Week (actually two weeks) is an event

where children can see a show for free when accompanied by a paying adult. They also get a chance to see backstage and meet the performers and to take part in theatre workshops.

Crossover between commercial and subsidised

The two sectors do not always work in isolation. The subsidised sector often transfers successful productions to the West End when it's clear they have the potential to continue attracting audiences. *Jerry Springer – The Opera* is a good example of this, starting life at the Battersea Arts Centre, transferring to the Royal National Theatre (RNT), then to the West End and a commercial national tour.

Of course, both sectors share the same talent pool and workforce. The West End has an inherent interest in the professional development of performers and crew in the repertory system, and the subsidised theatres gain kudos from employing experienced or big-name commercial performers.

Commercial transfers can earn considerable income for organisations such as the RNT or Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), largely through extended royalties. *Les Misérables*, which opened at the RSC's Barbican base in 1985 is still running in the West End and is set to become London's longest-running musical in October 2006. The regions can benefit from this crossover too; the Sheffield Theatres' production of *Don Carlos* played a sell-out season in the West End and then moved on to Broadway. Productions from smaller theatres such as the Almeida and the Donmar Warehouse also transfer regularly.

fringe

The Edinburgh Festival

The most famous and internationally renowned of all the UK's arts festivals are those held each summer in Edinburgh. The Edinburgh Festival is a generic name which encompasses three important performing arts festivals: the Edinburgh International Festival, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (known as the Fringe) and the Children's International Theatre Festival.

The International Festival is the more formal part of the Edinburgh Festivals and companies are invited to perform by the artistic director. Preparation and negotiation for this can take place years in advance. The result is a rarefied festival of consistently high standards from top performing arts companies from the UK and overseas. The International Festival includes theatre, dance, opera and music.

The Fringe on the other hand is a freer, looser festival where anything can happen and often does. Basically, anyone can choose to take a show to the Fringe, but it's not for the faint hearted. From booking a performance space to preparing and marketing a show and arranging accommodation for the team, a stint at the Fringe can be stressful and financially precarious.

Fringe 2005 facts and figures

- 26,995 performances
- 1,799 shows in almost 250 venues
- An estimated 16,190 performers were on Fringe stages
- Theatre was the most popular art form (37%)
- Over a third of all shows were world premieres, 8% were UK premieres and 6% were European premieres
- 167 shows were absolutely free
- It would have taken you five years, three months and 25 days to see every performance back-to-back



Royal Mile, Edinburgh



Floating Photo: John Baucher

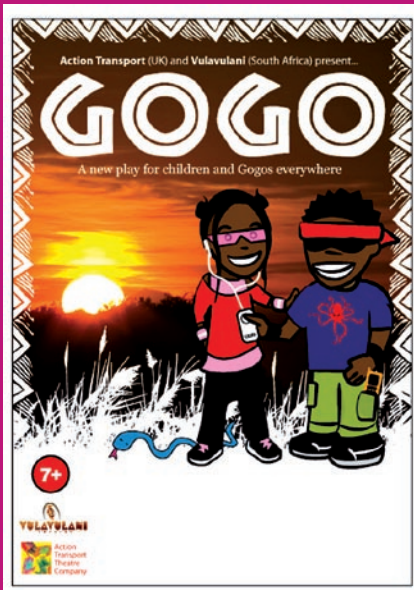
Hoipolloi is committed to creating new work for theatre that imaginatively engages its audience and makes them laugh. It is these two things, imagination and laughter, that drive the company. Since 1994, Hoipolloi has toured 14 new shows nationally and internationally to a variety of venues. This has included touring to the Edinburgh Fringe, which provided the company with opportunities to showcase its work and increase its profile to a number of different stakeholders.

Hoipolloi tours on both the small and middle scales, providing uniquely tailored productions for each circuit. The mid-scale work is more visual and imagistic, more movement based and works with ensemble casts. The studio work is more personal and intimate, telling stories simply and directly.

Hoipolloi currently receives core and project funding support from Arts Council England, East.

Every two years the British Council holds its Edinburgh Showcase event. In 2005, over 200 international theatre producers and promoters from more than 50 countries attended the showcase, where 29 companies performed their work. While the Fringe and Edinburgh Showcase are among the major international events for companies seeking to work overseas, new showcasing opportunities – supported by UK Trade & Investment – have been introduced to increase scope and accessibility (see page 25).

The Children's International Theatre Festival is a seven-day blast for young people aged 1-14 years. In 2006 13 national and international productions are set to tour Scotland after the Edinburgh week.



Gogo, Action Transport Theatre Company
Design: Sam Hutchinson

Action Transport, a young people's theatre company, applied for UK Trade & Investment support on the Passport to Export scheme in 2004. Action Transport already had contacts in South Africa and was exporting expertise on a co-production model with local theatre company Vulavulani. This resulted in a schools tour of Soweto with the production *Dumisani's Drum*. In order to develop this further, Action Transport was interested in touring a

The performing arts industry is capable of working almost anywhere in the world. From one-person shows and exciting new work from small companies to major dance, opera, music theatre and classical plays, UK companies are in high demand and highly

play development process, a unique approach to creating theatre. The research and development elements were in three parts:

A research trip to South Africa. This would involve working again with Vulavulani on its next production, *Tselane's Song*, again exporting expertise, but also to research the methodology in the play-making process.

Website development. A three-year business plan included objectives for the company's website to become its main communication tool.

Resource pack production. New resource packs would enable Action Transport not only to enhance its audience participation, but also act as a profile-raising, marketing tool to attract sponsors, funders and international bookers.

As a result of UK Trade & Investment's Passport to Export programme Action Transport has brought in investment to publicise and promote its ongoing partnership with Vulavulani nationally and internationally. The partnership has changed both companies almost beyond recognition. It has also changed the lives of the individuals who make up those companies.

Together the two companies are now creating a new production, *Gogo*, for national touring in Summer 2006.

regarded. It's not all about touring productions; companies are also seeking ongoing partnerships to develop ideas and share expertise.

Touring internationally is a big step for any company to make. It's not a quick fix and can take years to develop appropriate networks and make overseas contacts. It's

also important to realise that international work must be largely undertaken on a commercial basis. While public funding can be used to create work and tour it in the UK, it doesn't stretch to covering the costs of going abroad. All these costs must be met by international producers and promoters who buy the work for a fee. It is possible to work in partnership with the British Council but, like any government-funded organisation, the financial pot is not bottomless.

In recent years, the concept of touring abroad has reached many more companies, especially those who are small and medium-sized enterprises. Government support agencies and schemes (see below) have reached out more to the performing arts community, offering ways of developing their business in order to facilitate international work. In return, performing arts companies are great ambassadors for the country, exporting work of the highest quality and creating strong, lasting relationships. They really can show off the UK at its best.



The British Council is the UK's international organisation for scientific, educational and cultural relations. It has offices in 218 towns and cities in over 100 countries worldwide. The British Council is funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as well as receiving funding from other UK Government departments and agencies and the private sector. It supports work that includes UK artists as a strong element of activity in an international context – 99 per cent of the British Council's work is for overseas audiences. The British Council's Arts Group has 100 UK-based staff.



Signal by Henri Oguike Photo: Chris Nash

Phoenix Dance Theatre, based in Leeds, Yorkshire, tours nationally and internationally, fulfilling Phoenix's mission to bring inspiring and entertaining dance to the widest possible audience. As part of the company's commitment to access, a permanent outreach department provides creative dance activities year-round in Yorkshire and repertory-based workshops and residencies on tour.

Phoenix Dance Theatre's principal funding is from Arts Council England, Yorkshire, and Leeds City Council.

Over the past four years, Phoenix has worked with the British Council and UK Trade & Investment to develop the company's international touring. Following identification of the USA as a specific target market, the company attended the annual Arts Presenters conference in New York in January 2004. Funding from UK Trade & Investment enabled Phoenix to perform in showcase events, which led to the booking of a three-city tour of Germany in Autumn 2004 and a five-week, five-city US tour in Spring 2006.


Visiting Arts

Visiting Arts' purpose is to strengthen intercultural understanding through the arts. Its work links England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with prioritised countries around the world, supporting artists and arts organisations through advice; information; artist residencies; collaborations; presentations and exhibitions; presenter, promoter and curator development and professional development programmes for overseas arts managers and UK-based cultural attachés. Visiting Arts receives funding from the Arts Councils of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the British Council and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.


UK Trade & Investment

UK Trade & Investment is the lead Government organisation that provides integrated support services for UK companies engaged in overseas trade, and foreign businesses focused on the UK, as an inward investment location. It brings together the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). It has a presence in the 9 English regions and, via the FCO's overseas network, in more than 100 countries, so can offer an impressive network of international business contacts and local in-country knowledge. For more information contact Gwen Green on 020 7215 8327 or visit the web site at www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

Between 2002-2005, an Independent Theatre Council (ITC) consultancy team worked with UK Trade & Investment and the Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) through the PAID group (see below) to investigate ways for performing arts companies to better access various

government export schemes. In addition, alternative models for showcasing work to potential international buyers were explored, working in much the same way as an international trade fair would. The most recent of these events took place in March 2006 with *Scotland Live* and *4 Days in March - a Snapshot of Birmingham's Musical Life*. Both were supported by UK Trade & Investment and the Scotland event alone welcomed almost 30 international delegates.

The Performing Arts International Development group (PAID)

PAID is a performing arts representative body established by the Department of Culture, Media & Sport's Creative Industries Division and UK Trade & Investment's Creative Exports Group. The group works to address issues affecting the sector's work overseas. By developing international opportunities, PAID meets to make independent recommendations on how Government and the performing arts sector can work together to enhance export performance.

DV8 Physical Theatre's work is about taking risks, both physically and aesthetically, breaking down barriers between dance and theatre, dealing with personal politics and, above all, communicating ideas and feelings clearly and unpretentiously. It is determined to be radical yet accessible, and to take its work to as wide an audience as possible.

Formed in 1986 by an independent collective of dancers who had become frustrated and disillusioned with the preoccupations and direction of most dance, the company has now produced 15 highly acclaimed dance pieces which have toured internationally.

DV8's reputation relies on pushing its own boundaries and on the constant re-examination of the roles and relationships of men and women in our society. Its artistic policy underscores the importance of challenging preconceptions of what dance can, and should, address.

The company is core-funded by Arts Council England, and raises money to fund its work through co-production and performance fees. The British Council frequently supports its productions in a variety of ways, ranging from advice from London-based staff on suitable international partners and venues, to in-country financial support of touring productions, enabling work to be shown in regions the company might not otherwise reach.

As an example of DV8's extensive international touring schedule, the latest production, *Just for Show*, toured to the following cities in 2005-06:

- Prague, Czech Republic
- Seoul, South Korea
- Taipei, Taiwan
- Dublin, Ireland
- Geneva, Switzerland
- Belgrade, Serbia
- Brussels, Belgium
- Madrid, Spain
- Paris / Lyon, France
- Rome, Italy
- Berlin, Germany
- Budapest, Hungary



Matthew Morris in *Just for Show*
Photo: Jiri Volek

Publications

Arts Professional

www.artsprofessional.co.uk

The Stage

www.thestage.co.uk

Performing Arts Yearbook for Europe

www.api.co.uk

International Arts Manager magazine

www.api.co.uk

British Drama & Dance On Tour

www.britishcouncil.org/publications

Visiting Arts e-newsletter

www.visitingarts.org.uk/news/subscribe.html

Support Organisations

Arts Council England

www.artscouncil.org.uk

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

www.artscouncil-ni.org

Scottish Arts Council

www.scottisharts.org.uk

Arts Council of Wales

www.artswales.org.uk

British Council

www.britishcouncil.org

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

www.culture.gov.uk

UK Trade & Investment

www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

Wales Arts International

www.wai.org.uk

Professional Associations Nationwide

Association of British Orchestras

www.abo.org.uk

ASSITEJ UK (Young People's Theatre)

www.assitejuk.org

Dance UK

www.danceuk.org

Equity

www.equity.org.uk

Independent Street Arts Network

www.streetartsnetwork.org.uk

Independent Theatre Council

www.itc-arts.org

National Association of Youth Theatres

www.nayt.org.uk

Opera and Music Theatre Forum

www.omtf.org.uk

Puppeteers UK

www.puppeteersuk.com

Society of London Theatre

www.officallondontheatre.co.uk

Theatrical Management Association

www.tmauk.org

Writers' Guild of Great Britain

www.writersguild.org.uk

Wales

Wales Association for the Performing Arts

www.waparts.org.uk

Northern Ireland

The Theatre Producers Group

www.theatreproducersgroup.com

Scotland

Federation of Scottish Theatre

www.scottishtheatre.org

Companies featured in the guide

Action Transport

www.actiontransporttheatre.co.uk

Ambassador Theatre Group

www.theambassadors.com

Birmingham Opera Company

www.birminghamopera.org.uk

Clean Break

www.cleanbreak.org.uk

DV8 Physical Theatre

www.dv8.co.uk

Earthfall

www.earthfall.org.uk

Eastern Angles

www.easternangles.co.uk

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

www.edfringe.com

Edinburgh International Festival

www.eif.co.uk

Edinburgh Children's International Theatre Festival

www.imaginate.org.uk/festival/index.php

Grid Iron

www.gridiron.org.uk

Hoipolloi

www.hoipolloi.org.uk

National Theatre of Scotland

www.nationaltheatrescotland.com

Northern Ballet Theatre

www.northernballettheatre.co.uk

Oily Cart Company

www.oilycart.org.uk

Phoenix Dance Theatre

www.phoenixdancetheatre.co.uk

Royal National Theatre

www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

Royal Opera House

www.royalopera.org

Royal Shakespeare Company

www.rsc.org.uk

StopGAP Dance Company

www.stopgap.uk.com

Traverse Theatre

www.traverse.co.uk

Welsh National Opera

www.wno.org.uk

