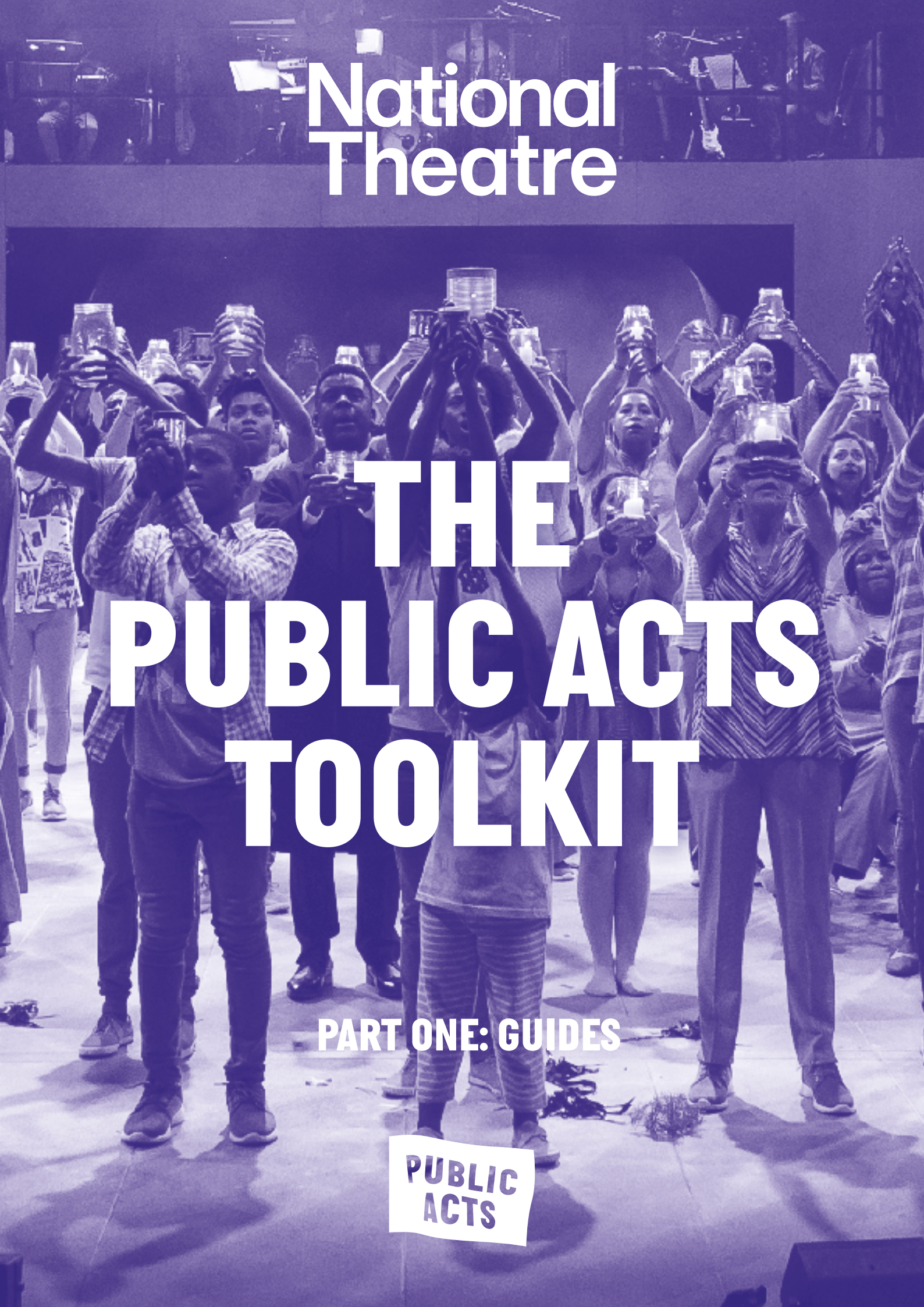
National Theatre



THE PUBLIC ACTS TOOLKIT

PART ONE: GUIDES

PUBLIC ACTS

WELCOME

The Public Acts Toolkit is a resources bank for anyone looking to create theatre with communities. Whether you're a theatre professional who's been doing it for years or a community organiser engaging with theatre for the first time, we hope there will be a gem or two here for you. Whoever you are, and whatever has brought you here - WELCOME!

Across eight years of Public Acts we have learned that putting community, care and radical joy at the centre of an artistic process makes great theatre, makes our organisations stronger and creates vital spaces for us to reimagine ourselves - to feel healthier and happier, more connected to our communities, more hopeful about our individual and collective potential, and prouder of who we are and where we live.

We have been humbled and excited to have been approached by many people over the years who have wanted to learn more about our practice and learnings. These documents and planning tools are a few of the things we have found ourselves coming back to time and time again across our ten productions. Small things which made very big things possible. They are designed to complement your own process, touching on the areas of our practice that we get asked about the most.

We know that any work rooted in communities needs to stay in constant dialogue with what's happening, and changing, in the world. Our ideas about best practice are always evolving, so it's been hard to choose what to include, and to commit things to writing in a way that feels definitive. We want you to know that each time we open these documents we want to re-write them straightaway in response to new things we've learned! So please take them for what they are - a snapshot in time, things we've found useful at the moment of their making, that we know will need updating and re-interrogation as time passes.

The resources are split into two categories: longer-form 'Guides' explaining some of the key phases of our process, and individual 'Resources' to be used as templates.

Before diving in, we suggest you read **Guide 1: Introduction** to understand the foundational blocks of Public Acts and get an 'at a glance' look at the project's values, typical timeline and mechanics.

A note on numbers – our productions have typically featured community companies of around 100 – 200 but we're confident that our methodology applies usefully to different contexts and the resources can be adapted for smaller productions.

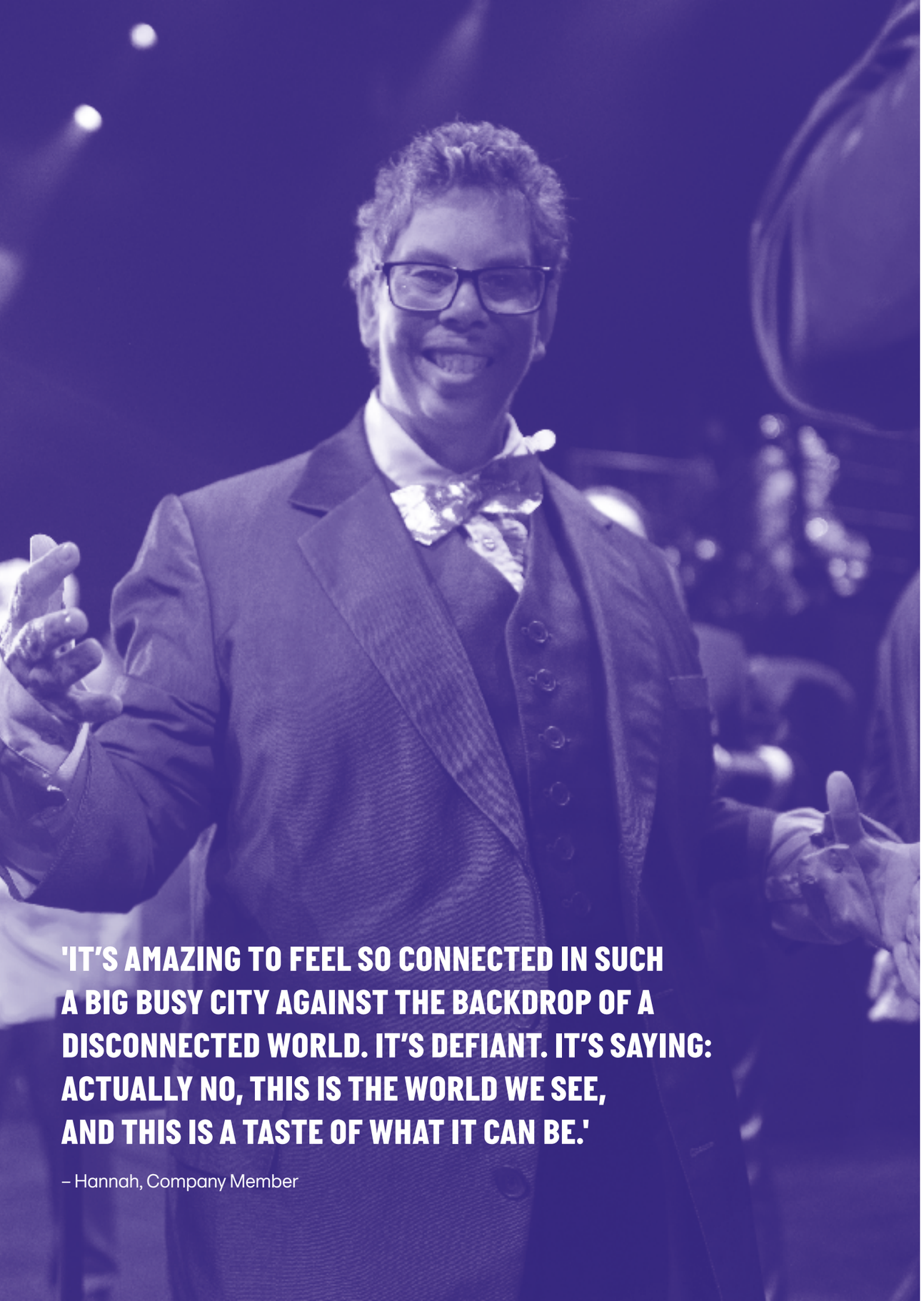
A note on tense - by the time you're reading this, Public Acts will have drawn to a close to make way for new projects to emerge under Indhu Rubasingham and Kate Varah's leadership at the National Theatre. We have chosen to keep our resources in the present tense as they were created while we were in the exciting heat of delivery mode! And, of course, because the values and principles of our work are still very much present in the work we and our partners continue to do across the country. You can read all about the shows we made, watch a documentary about our production of *The Odyssey* and explore other videos on the National Theatre's Public Acts webpage. On this page you will also find our research reports which articulate the impact of our work.

Finally, we want to make two important acknowledgements. Firstly, to the Public Works team past and present at the Public Theater in New York who were the key inspiration for Public Acts coming into being, and whose practice has heavily informed these resources. We are so grateful for their guidance and support throughout our journey. Secondly, to all the people we've had the gift of working with over the years - our partners, professional artists, NT colleagues and, of course, company members. Every person we've interacted with has shaped the contours of our work in some way. Like everything we make this Toolkit is very much a collective act, born from the ideas, hopes, expertise and generosity of a wide community of people. We hope that you feel all of us with you in these pages as you move forwards on your own adventure.

Whether you're here for a quick shot of inspiration or because you're building a full road map for your own epic project... we are with you in solidarity and we send you all our love and luck!

Emily, Lara, Ros and Amy
(The Public Acts Team, 2025)

The Public Acts Toolkit was written by Emily Lim (Director of Public Acts) and Lara Taylor (Producer, Public Acts)



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 06

An overview of the project as a whole: why we do what we do, and how we do it.

2. TIMELINE 14

A breakdown of a full programme cycle, beginning with partnership building and ending with show delivery and legacy work.

3. PEOPLE & PARTNERS 16

A deep dive into our staffing and team structures.

4. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS 22

Our approach to finding community partners and laying strong foundations.

5. THE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE 26

One of the hardest parts of our process! How we build the rehearsal schedule and structure company calls.

6. RECRUITMENT & CASTING 30

An insight into how we put the company together for our shows.

7. REHEARSALS 34

A look inside the rehearsal room and how we support our company to meet new challenges with joy and care.

1 INTRODUCTION

- About Public Acts
- Our purpose and values
- Three stages of a project
- Our companies
- Finding the right story

ABOUT PUBLIC ACTS

Public Acts was born from the belief that theatre making can be a powerful act of community building and a force for change. Conceived in 2016, at the start of Rufus Norris' tenure as Director of the National Theatre, the starting provocation was simple: how can participatory work become central to the bloodstream of the National Theatre? How can the work at the National Theatre be defined by its meaningful social impact aswell as its artistic quality? How can civic engagement and artistic excellence sit side by side on a national scale? How can our communities take centre stage?

Rufus gave us the keys to the Olivier Theatre, the National's biggest stage and one of the most iconic theatres in the country, ensuring the work would sit right at the heart of the building. We built a model with partnership at its core, trusting that long-term relationships with theatres and community organisations across the country would yield the most attuned, sustainable impact. We created a culture rooted in care and ambition, striving to bring out the best in people. Through the shared purpose of making shows together, we hoped to create extraordinary acts of community, building connections that would deepen and transform our sense of place, pride, belonging and joy.

In the eight years since we've created ten productions, including new musical adaptations of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, created with 225 community members in London, Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, created with 120 community members in Doncaster, and an epic five-part retelling of *The Odyssey*, where each episode was created in a different community across the country, culminating with a finale at the National Theatre, performed by 160 people drawn from across *The Odyssey* communities. Our most recent and final show, *Public Record*, was a musical portrait of Sunderland, devised with a company of 100 people from across the city. Our work has been recognised nationally and internationally, receiving critical acclaim and is regularly cited as a flagship example of best practice by practitioners and researchers in the UK and abroad.



OUR PURPOSE AND VALUES

Our work is defined by our core values of openness, generosity and bravery. Our companies are intergenerational and inclusive.

Our Values

Open
Generous
Brave

↑

Theatre making as community building

↙ ↘

We believe

Theatre-making is a powerful form of community building

A culture of care brings out the best in all of us

Ambition is a dignifying force, everyone is capable of amazing things

We do our best work when we learn from each other, as people and organisations

We hope

To give people the space to see ourselves and the world differently

To celebrate creativity, difference and joy

To build sense of place, pride, connection and belonging

To make brilliant theatre that shows what is possible when we come together

THREE STAGES OF A PROJECT

Here's a simple overview of how it all works before we get into the gritty detail! Each cycle of work begins with us finding a theatre partner. Led by their local knowledge and interest we then identify a group of community partners (see Guide's 3 and 4) and move through the following stages.

1 COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

We pair an Associate Artist with each community partner to deliver bespoke workshops over a few terms (a 'term' being a block of ten to twelve weeks), exploring theatre skills which support the mission of the organisation. We've delivered dance workshops for a community centre wanting to promote physical wellbeing; a play writing course for a multi-faith organisation dedicated to encouraging discussion and debate between members of different faiths, beliefs and identities; acting workshops for a homelessness charity wanting to improve the confidence of its members to present themselves in job interviews, and so on.

2 THE SHOW

We unite everyone from across our different community partners on the main stage of our theatre partner, together with professional artists: a full creative team, a small number of professional actors or dancers and a band. Everyone who takes part in our workshop programme is invited to put themselves forward to be part of the show. We also include 'cameo' groups who reflect the cultural breadth of wherever we are working such as a gospel choir, colliery band or specialist dance crew. See the next page for more information on cameo groups.

3 LEGACY WORK

Following the production we move into a legacy phase, supporting participants and partners to continue engaging with participatory theatre projects. This process is led by our theatre partner and takes many forms, from supporting the development of new long-term programmes, such as the Doncaster People's Theatre, to initiating connections with pre-existing groups in the region.





OUR COMPANIES

Large, intergenerational companies representing the communities we work in are the beating heart of all Public Acts shows. Our companies bring together performers of all experiences – people who have never been on stage before will be performing alongside people who've trained professionally and done it all their lives. In our experience this mix creates a powerful alchemy, allowing everyone to uplift and learn from one another through their difference.

CORE COMMUNITY COMPANY

Recruited through our community partners, the core company are all non-professional performers. The youngest performer we've ever worked with was four, and our oldest 93. The core company make up the majority of the whole company, they are the centrepiece of the show and are required to attend the most rehearsals.

CAMEO GROUPS

We include several cameo groups in each of our productions. These groups are highly skilled and community based (as opposed to professional) – local collectives who specialise in a performance skill which represents the cultural breadth of wherever we are working. They bring flashes of flair and brilliance and are always a highlight of any Public Acts show! Each group is written closely into the narrative so that they are essential to the story rather than additional – we've had the Ascension Eagles youth cheerleading squad perform as part of the parade in *Pericles*, the Lucha Britannia wrestlers fight in Duke Frederick's court in *As You Like It*, and local drag queen Miss Smoochie appear as Lord Azdak's secretary in *The Doncastrian Chalk Circle*.

PROFESSIONAL PERFORMERS

We usually work with three to six professional performers. We rely on these artists to work confidently, calmly and responsively in a busy, changeable environment, so take care to cast people with the right level of experience and approach. Our professionals are always key to anchoring our performances, leading the company from within and modelling our values.

BAND

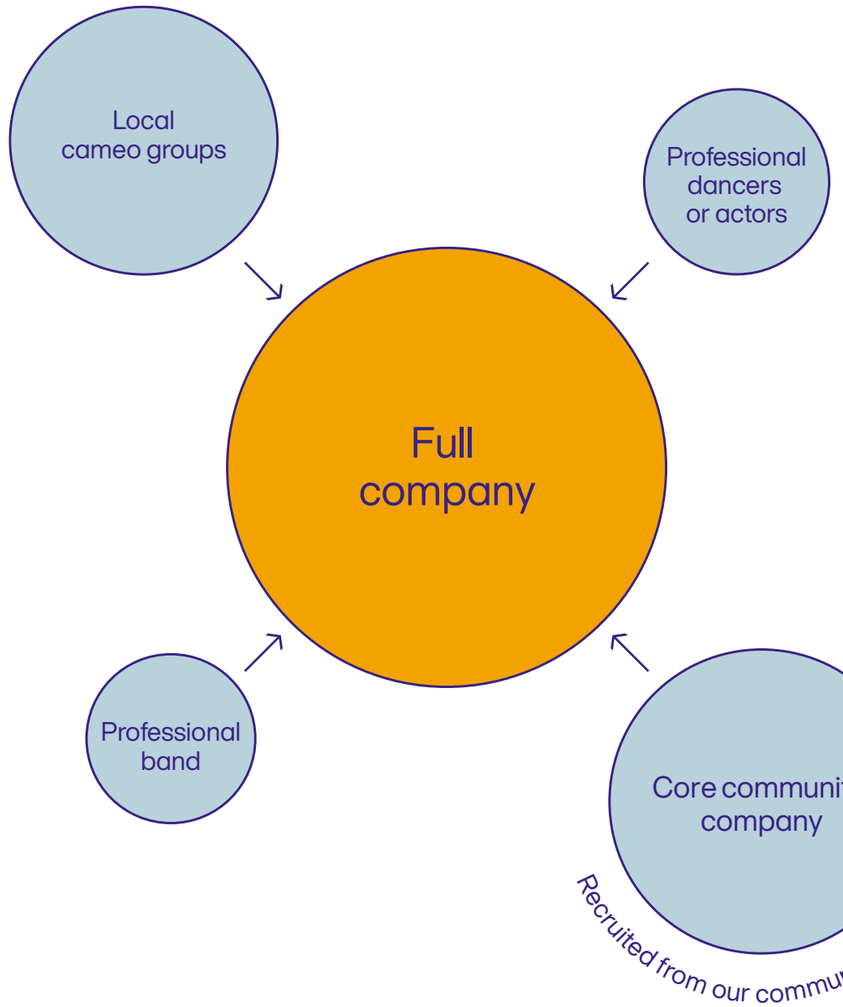
Where possible we work with a live band, ranging in size from two to six players. We seek out the most experienced musicians we can, knowing that the band will need to work efficiently and patiently in a process involving many people and moving parts.

Across all our teams and companies:

1. We prioritise representation because we know it makes the work better and it is essential that the company see themselves reflected in the people holding power in the room. This includes offering as many roles as we can to local artists.
2. We have conversations with every professional artist before rehearsals start, talking in detail about our values, what to expect in the room, how the creative process will work and how they will be supported throughout. It's crucial that everyone steps into the process knowing which aspects will feel different to a 'normal' professional show and being clear, and fully on board, with the wider purpose and mission of the project.
3. We create an inclusive and accessible environment, aiming to meet every person's access requirements so that no one is excluded from our work. Whether working on costume design or the rehearsal schedule, access is always front and centre of our decision-making process.

SHOW COMPANY STRUCTURE

A typical Public Acts company is made up of the following groups:



FINDING THE RIGHT STORY

As with any piece of theatre, the most important thing is to have cast-iron faith in the meaning and the significance of the story we're telling.

Here are some questions we ask when looking for source material, whether adapting an existing play or story, or creating original devised work rooted in a particular place.

- How will the company play a key role in the storytelling? Why is this story better told *because of* and not *in spite of* it being told by a community company?
- What are the universal themes that many different people (of various ages, identities and life experiences) can find connections with? How and where will the company find themselves within the material?
- What makes it 'of here' and 'of now'? What is the significance of telling this story, or these stories, today?
- How will our company be represented in the story? How can it honour, hold and celebrate their multiplicity?
- What opportunities are there for large-scale images, mass movement, communal singing, human spectacle?
- Are there any specialist skills or cultural practices within the community that the story should spotlight?

All of our productions have responded to these questions in different ways. In *Pericles* we found a story of home and belonging, in *The Doncastrian Chalk Circle* a story of found family and a revolution of care, and in *Public Record* we created a portrait of Sunderland, built from the music and memories of our community. The process of adapting existing stories or working with people's autobiographical stories hold different challenges but both have proved equally powerful as ways of expressing, and celebrating, each community's identity.

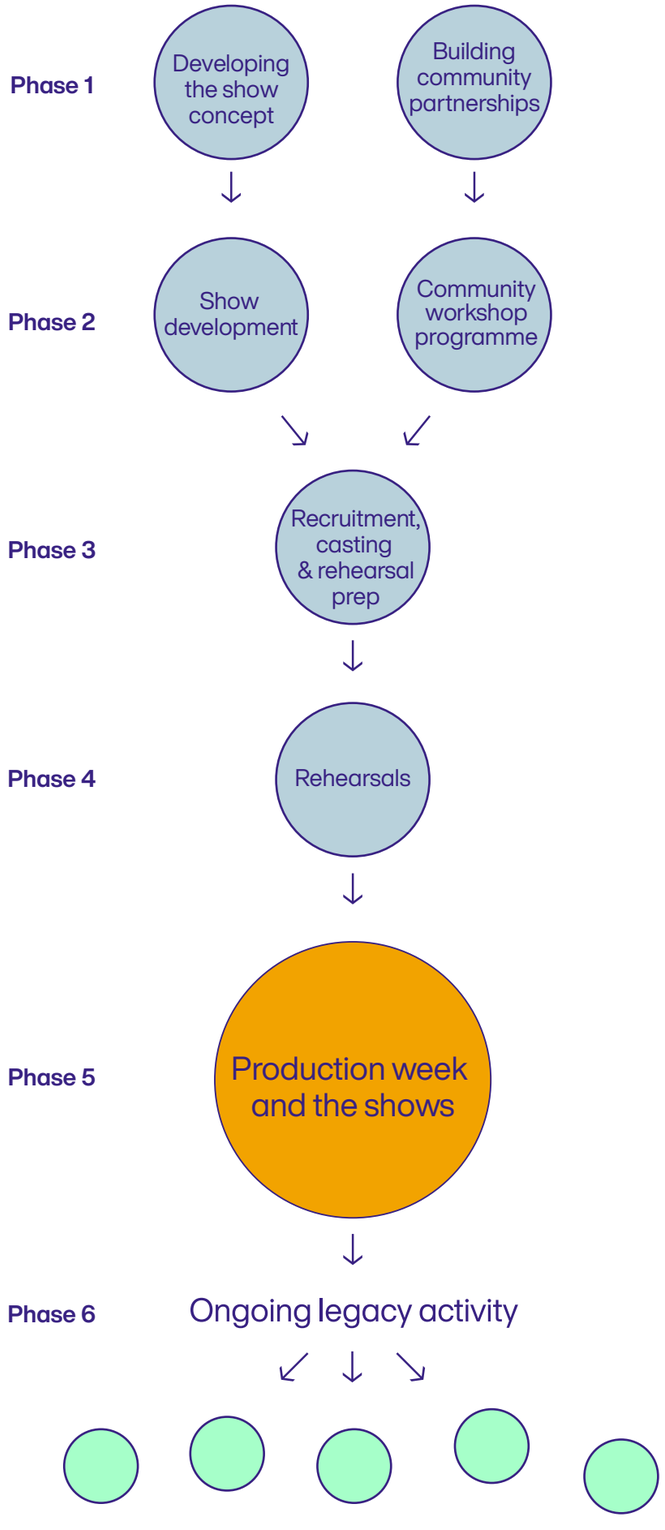


'WE'RE ALL HEROES ON OUR OWN EPIC JOURNEY'

- The Lotus Eaters, Restoke, 2024

2 TIMELINE

A typical Public Acts project runs across 18 to 24 months, with legacy work continuing after the final show. Here is a snapshot of the big picture.



Here is a sample timeline. Building our relationship with our theatre partner and researching community partners with them is a thoughtful process, which often takes many months and happens prior to phase one below.

Phase	Time	Steps
1 Building community partnerships and developing the show concept	Months 1 to 6 March to August	• Research and establish community partners (see Guide 4) • Co-design workshop programme with community partners and hire team of local Associate Artists (see Guide 3) • Assemble Creative team (see Guide 3) • Conceive and develop show creatively • Identify local cameo groups (see Guide 1).

2
Community workshop programme and show development
	Months 7 to 13
	
	September to March
		• Continue creative development of show
		• Delivery of workshop programme – one session per week led in each community partner location
		  • **Term One:** integrate the group, introduce the project and values, build confidence and performance skills
		  • **Term Two:** introduce material from the show – text, music, choreography, story beats, images, themes, etc. Invitation for key show creatives to visit.
		• End of term sharing for each group in their community partner location
		• End of term party! All groups come together for the first time for a creative workshop, food and celebration at the theatre
		• Invite all those from community workshops to put themselves forward for the show via recruitment workshops (see Resource 8)
		• Start building the rehearsal schedule (see Guide 5).

3 Recruitment, casting and rehearsal prep	Months 14 to 16 April to June	• Administrative gymnastics begin! Finalise the rehearsal schedule. • Hold recruitment workshops and confirm casting (see Resource 8) • Rehearsal logistics, preparation and team training • Final preparation of all show material including choreography day/s to test mass movement and finalising of entrance and exit master plan.
4 Rehearsals	Months 17 to 19 July to August	• Kick off with an essential Launch Day (see Resource 13) • Weekly rehearsals (see Guide 5).
5 Production week and the shows	Month 19 August	• Five to seven days of technical and dress rehearsals (see Resource 21) • Perform four to five shows across three to four days.
6 Wrap up and ongoing legacy activity	Month 20 onwards September onwards	• Company members supported with ongoing engagement in participatory projects, led by theatre partner • Post-show reunion and reflection two weeks after final performance • Evaluation process (and accompanying research) completed for community members and team • Seasonal *'Acts of Joy'* to keep the community connected.

3 PEOPLE & PARTNERS

- **Core staff**
- **Teams**
- **Partners**

The scale of our work is made possible not just by a team but a whole village of extraordinary people. A Public Acts show adapts conventional creative and producing roles and structures.

We are transparent with everyone from the get-go about how the different roles break down, ensuring that people know who to go to for what, and that everyone understands how the team structure will differ from a more traditional theatre-making process.

CORE STAFF

Within the core Public Acts team the strategic view of the programme as well as the executive and artistic leadership of all productions is led by our Director and our Senior Producer, who work closely with our Community Producer and Project Coordinator. Our Director Emily has directed three shows over the years with freelance directors working on the others.

The core team works symbiotically across all stages of each project, with a specific focus on the following areas:

DIRECTOR

- Leading creative development of the show
- Overseeing content and delivery of the community workshop programme
- Assembling and leading the Creative team
- Casting of the show, including professional performers
- Selecting and overseeing the cameo groups
- Directing and rehearsing the show.

SENIOR PRODUCER

- Managing theatre partner relationships
- Financial management
- Show producing, including contracting of creative and production teams and sales, press, and marketing
- Overseeing research.

COMMUNITY PRODUCER

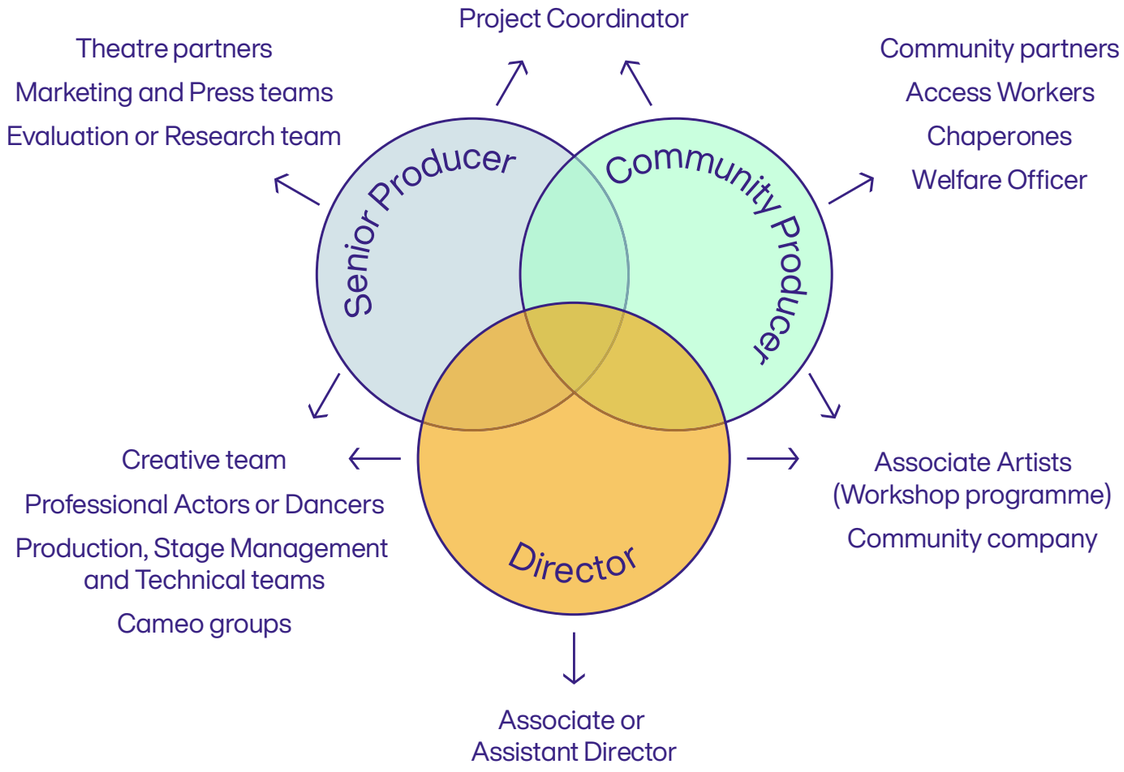
- Managing community partner relationships
- Managing Community team (see below)
- Managing delivery of the community workshop programme
- Care and delivery of all aspects of the community company experience, including scheduling, travel, food, access, welcome and pastoral care
- Key delivery role in: workshops, rehearsals and backstage running of shows.

PROJECT COORDINATOR

- Supporting the Community Producer, with additional general support to the whole team
- Project scheduling, financial processing and logistical delivery
- Communications with community company throughout the process
- Key delivery role in: workshops, rehearsals and backstage running of shows.

CORE STAFF

Our central team work together symbiotically.
See below for a breakdown of the lines of responsibility:



TEAMS

CREATIVE TEAM

An example of a Creative team for a full-scale Public Acts production of between 100–150 participants might look like:

- Director
- Writer
- Composer
- Choreographer
- Musical Supervisor/Director (acting as choir leader)
- Set & Costume Designer (on a costume-heavy show, and where resources allow, this role is split in two)
- Associate or Assistant Director
- Associate or Assistant Choreographer
- One to three Movement Associates (to support teaching of choreography)
- Lighting Designer
- Sound Designer
- Three to six professional actors or dancers
- Four to six band members

We work with two to four Associate Artists to deliver the community workshop programme prior to the show. Where possible these artists are also part of the Creative team, e.g. the Associate Artist is also the Associate Director or Associate Choreographer.

COMMUNITY TEAM

- Community Producer
- Project Coordinator (sits between Producing and Community team with focus on the latter)
- Community partner leads
- Project Assistants* (joining for final rehearsals and show delivery to support company and backstage running)
- Welfare Officer*
- Access Workers*
- Chaperones*

** Joins team for rehearsals*
We ask each of our community partners to provide a 'lead' staff member in-kind who works closely alongside our Community team throughout the process to guide decision-making and provide informed, specialist pastoral support for members. In many cases, this staff member has gone on to perform in the show as part of the company, to really positive effect.

PRODUCING, PRODUCTION AND STAGE MANAGEMENT TEAMS

- Senior Producer
- Show Producer from partner theatre
- Project Coordinator (sits between Producing and Community teams with focus on the latter)
- Production Manager
- Stage Manager
- Deputy Stage Manager
- Assistant Stage Managers
- Technical team and show running staff

A note on Stage Management and Community teams aka 'backstage heroes':

The complex nature of managing such large Public Acts companies backstage means we adapt the usual set up of the Stage Management team being the sole runners of the backstage area. Instead, the Community team work hand in hand with the Stage Management team:

- The Stage Manager manages the practical running of the show as they normally would, controlling the flow of action backstage including set, props and entrances and exits.

- The Community team focus on the smooth movement and pastoral care of community members. They are responsible for ensuring that everyone has what they need and are where they need to be when they need to be there, be it dressing room one, entrance G, in the stage-left wing behind Jan's balloon garland, etc! Many people will never have performed in a show before, so the extra support and care here is vital.



PARTNERS

THEATRE PARTNERS

Whenever we work outside of London (which is more often than not – only two of our ten productions were performed at the National Theatre), we anchor our work with a theatre partner, for example, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch or Cast in Doncaster. This theatre becomes the 'hub' in our 'hub and spoke' model. The team at this venue act as co-producers, lead on local community relationships, host the show at their venue and take responsibility for the project's legacy beyond the performances.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our community partners are the 'spokes' in our 'hub and spoke' model, branching out into the town or city of our theatre partner, and connecting us to community members. In response to local contexts, as well as our own budgets and timelines, we've had a different number of community partners on each cycle of work, ranging from three to eight.

To read more about how we work with our community partners, see Guide 4.





'IT'S ABOUT HAVING A VOICE. IT'S ABOUT GROWTH. GROWTH AS AN INDIVIDUAL, AS A COMMUNITY, AND AS A SOCIETY.'

– Alya, company member

4 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- **Finding community partners**
- **Criteria**
- **Laying partnership foundations**

FINDING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Like the start of any creative process, the beginning of a Public Acts journey is full of lots of hope and excitement, balanced with a healthy dose of mild to full-blown terror at the scale of the job ahead! But the first task is always, at its heart, very simple: we need to gather our community. Our community partnerships are the bedrock of the programme. By engaging with community leaders at a grassroots level, we trust that we will be able to reach people who might not ordinarily have had access to this sort of cultural opportunity or thought that theatre was 'for them'.

Led by the knowledge and aims of our theatre partner, we identify organisations with strong roots within their community and clear social missions in alignment with the values of the project. We seek out a wide range of partners, of varying scales and missions, who together represent the breadth of lived experience within the community. We stay responsive to local and national priorities in order to maximise the social impact and relevance of the work – during the post-Covid recovery period we sought out at least one partner with a specific focus on young people's mental health, for example. Our partners have ranged from hyper-local movements, such as the Sunderland Nigerian Families Group and Conversation Club in Doncaster, through to established national charities such as the Doncaster branch of Changing Lives and Coram.

We have worked with organisations delivering transformative work in fields including childhood trauma, social isolation, homelessness, domestic violence, and many others. We know that each context is different, and that the most important thing is that there is an open, robust, creative relationship with each partner.

CRITERIA

Here are some questions we ask ourselves when researching and meeting potential community partners:

- **Values and mission:** Is there clear values and mission alignment between our programme and the organisation? Will our programme complement their existing work and help to deliver on their social aims?

- **Readiness for long-term engagement:** Does the organisation have a consistent group of members for whom a long-term project would be beneficial?

When collaborating with organisations working with temporary and transient communities, such as asylum seekers, newly arrived refugees or people experiencing temporary homelessness, we ensure there will be a core group of individuals who partner staff are confident might be able to engage in the full scope of the programme, as well as those who might have a shorter-term engagement. In some cases, we have designed a shorter workshop programme that happens much closer to the start of rehearsals meaning that participants are more likely to be around to take part in the production.

- **Space for delivery:** Does the organisation have a space where creative sessions can be delivered? Does this come at a cost, or can it be given in-kind?

Where possible we lead workshops in the community settings. We want to build up to the point where participants feel confident and willing to come to the theatre, but some participants may never have left their postcode, let alone been to a theatre before, so we start by going to a space that is familiar to them. If a community partner does not have an appropriate space, we have sometimes held sessions at our theatre partner.

- **Regular programme activity:** Are there regular programmes run by the organisation with good attendance? Is there space in the organisation's weekly programme for a new session (or an existing session to be enhanced) without competing priorities?

- **Partnership history:** Does the organisation have experience of partnership work? Is there appetite for a new partnership?

- **Added value:** Will the project add value to their services, complementing existing work and appealing to those who access their services?

- **Member recruitment potential:** Does the organisation have an active group of participants who could be recruited for the project? Has there been good take-up in previous partnerships and in-house activity, with participants staying with projects? Do they have alumni or wider partners to reach out to?

Our work is at its best when our workshops are attended by lively, regular, full groups. We want as many people as possible to have a supported, positive experience. This is about breadth of representation and access, and us being responsible for how our resources are shared.

- **Organisational stability:** Is the organisation financially stable, with a balanced staff structure that isn't overly stretched?

- **Capacity for programme integration:** Does the organisation have the capacity to absorb the programme without staff feeling overly busy or distracted?

- **Leadership support:** Is the leadership team fully behind the programme and would they act as advocates? Does the head of the organisation understand the values of the project and seem excited by it? Does their ethos permeate through to the staff?

LAYING PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATIONS

Our compass points for building partnerships with strong foundations:

- **Start by listening** – take time to hang out with and get to know the organisation in a rounded way, attending groups, absorbing what they're about and how they work

- **Connect directly with the senior leadership** of each organisation – it makes a big difference when support comes from the top

- **Be transparent about the resources needed** to deliver the project from the get-go

- **Take a 360-degree approach** – the partnership doesn't just exist in meetings! Invite staff to take part in taster workshops, regular sessions and even the show itself, alongside the participants. **We have had a receptionist from one partner and the Executive Director from another perform in our shows!** Longitudinal engagement with the whole culture of an organisation can really affect how that organisation thinks and the legacy of the work after we leave

- **Be transparent about the desire to share resources** as widely and responsibly as possible. Ensure there is a shared responsibility for making sure groups are full and a thriving company is recruited. Set a clear goal for the minimum number of core participants

- **Stay mindful and compassionate about capacity**, understanding that staff are often working at a grassroots level in changeable and demanding environments

- **Ensure there is a shared understanding** of the purpose of the project and take time to collaboratively set aims and goals for the process

- **Identify one key person** within each organisation who will be the 'community partner lead', ensuring that they have the support of their line manager to commit to the project as part of their regular workstream. The work is always at its best when we have close collaboration and trust with a community leader who is deeply embedded in their community and able to signpost and support participants through the project.





5 THE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

- **Company structure**
- **How to start**
- **rehearsal process overview**
- **A note on systems**

The process of creating the rehearsal schedule is not to be underestimated! It's a complex piece of administrative gymnastics but a satisfying and important one. Putting in the hours to build a detailed schedule that we can trust is time well spent. It allows us to start rehearsals knowing that we won't run out of time and ensures we only calling people to rehearsals when they are needed and not wasting anyone's time. (see Resource 10).

Doing attentive work at this point in the process is a direct act of care for our community. If we want everyone to feel properly seen and valued then, as well as holding the big picture of the final show in mind and steering everyone towards that collective end, we need each individual to see that their small piece of the massive jigsaw really matters. We want them to know that their time is respected, and that their experience as a member of the company has been considered from all angles.

We build the schedule *before* recruiting community members so that people know what they are signing up for and so that we can cast according to people's availability (see Resource 8). The groundwork laid in this phase of planning is integral to the smooth running of the subsequent phases when space for slow work and reflection is harder to find.

COMPANY STRUCTURE

Everyone is part of the **'core community company'** (see Guide 1). There are usually four to five 'mega moments' in the show which feature the full community company. These are rehearsed during the full company rehearsal calls.

We then have a number of **'featured roles'** which involve extra movement, singing or acting, either in small groups or as solos. These require extra rehearsals in addition to the full company calls. Participants can put themselves forward for a featured role when they fill out their recruitment form (see Resource 8), and can specify if they would prefer a singing, dancing or acting specialism (or all three!). Featured roles vary in scale - it could mean taking the role of a main character with a lot of spoken text, like Celia in *As You Like It*, or singing one solo line of a song.

Our professional performers take on substantial parts within the show which anchor the story and the community company. The professionals join our process a few weeks in, giving the community company time to familiarise themselves with the material and build their performance confidence. While we are waiting for the professionals to join we rely on our Assistant Director to read in their lines.

HOW TO START

Typically, we rehearse over seven to eight weeks with the core community company attending three times per week: two evenings midweek and a full day on Saturday. For our *Public Record* 2025 show we adapted this pattern and rehearsed in a less intensive schedule over a longer period of 13 weeks, with one full company midweek evening rehearsal every week and one full day Saturday rehearsal every other weekend.

Our compass points for building the rehearsal schedule:

- **Consistent rehearsal patterns:** Call featured role rehearsals in the same weekly slot e.g. the pirates always rehearse on a Saturday, 4–6pm

- **Respect people's time:** If people are called make sure they are being used and minimise gaps in their schedule. Plan calls for featured roles should take place before or after calls for the full company, so that people can attend without extra travel

- **Allow some wiggle room so things don't feel rushed:** Optimal call times allow for an arrival buffer – 15 minutes before a call for featured roles and 30 minutes before a call for the full company. This will ensure they have time to have a snack, settle in and get comfortable and are ready to start promptly

- **Prioritise a stagger-through at the end of week three before the professional performers join:** This is the first time the company get to celebrate each other's work, and a great chance for everyone to get a sense of the whole. It might feel early in the process (and very scary..!) to be running sections together but it will definitely be worth it and always gives everyone a massive boost

- **Be realistic (things always take longer):** How long does it really take 80 people to have a cup of tea and get to and from the rehearsal room to the loo?! But really??!?!

- **There's a world outside the rehearsal room:** Is there a major shift in your company's availability partway through the process that you need to be alive to, e.g. school holidays, religious celebrations?

- **Build in flexibility:** Plan for early finishes for those who you know will need it, e.g. families with young children or older members of the company.

A note on cameo group rehearsals – our cameo groups (see Guide 1) rehearse their section of material in their own settings and on their own time, with members of the Creative team e.g. the Associate Director or Choreographer visiting them once or twice to check-in. Each group then has an 'integration session' built into the final weeks of rehearsals where they join the core community company in the rehearsal room and piece the whole sequence together. Each cameo group is responsible for one or more 'spotlight' moments during the show which celebrate their particular skill, for example a dance break within a particular song. In addition, all cameo groups perform as part of the finale.

REHEARSAL PROCESS OVERVIEW

The following example rehearsal schedule is built on a model of seven weeks' rehearsal plus one week of technical rehearsals (see Resource 21) and summarises the key stages. You can also have a look at the Individual Rehearsal Schedule (see Resource 10) to see how this schedule is presented to a community member.

Phase	Who	Focus	Activity
Weeks 1 to 3	Core community company only	Learning material	• Three full company rehearsals per week (Tuesday and Thursday evenings, Saturday daytime) • Additional calls for featured performers as needed (selected Tuesday and Thursday afternoons before full company rehearsals, Wednesday afternoons and evenings, Saturday 4–6pm) • **Stagger-through** of all material by the end of week three.
Week 4	Professional performers join community company	Learning material and integrating professionals with the community company	• Community company rehearsals continue as before, with **professionals joining those sessions** as needed • In addition, the **professionals rehearse separately** and with featured performers during daytime calls • **'Choreography catch up'** sessions begin (optional 30-minute drop-ins before full company rehearsals led by the Choreography team).
Weeks 5 to 6	Full company, cameo groups and band	Integration	• **Cameo integration sessions:** each cameo group meets the company and rehearses their section into the piece • **Band joins** rehearsals • Full company **run through with professionals.**
Final week	Full company	Final preparation and run through	• **'Spacing day':** community company steps through their tracks on stage and the Creative team problem-solves, making adjustments prior to tech rehearsals • **Sitzprobe**: a seated full play/sing-through of the music with band (led by the Musical Director) • **Final full company run-through** including all cameo groups, band and professional actors. This is usually the only time we run the show with absolutely everyone before the first dress rehearsal – it's a VERY exciting moment...!
Production week	Everyone (as needed)	Technical rehearsals	• (See Resource 21) • Before the tech begins, we run a **'familiarisation session'**, allowing all company members to familiarise themselves with the stage and set and to walk through their backstage routes • Week-long schedule with two to three sessions daily • One ring-fenced day off • Company members called for one to two sessions per day as needed • **One to two dress rehearsals** (ideally two) with the first one attended by friendly faces.
Performances	Everyone	Show time!	• (See Resource 21) • Four performances over three days • Includes one matinee on the final day, followed by a company picnic / barbecue / celebration

A NOTE ON SYSTEMS

By the time we were making our fifth show, we had discovered Airtable, an online platform which allowed us to (amongst a lot of other very clever things) run our schedules, database, entrance and exit tracker and mass personalised communications through a single platform. It has quickly become our most treasured and important producing tool for operating at scale efficiently.

There are of course other platforms available, but we have found Airtable to be the most user friendly. Some practical examples of how we use the software:

1. **Building the (very complicated!) rehearsal schedules:** Creating the rehearsal schedule within Airtable saves us weeks of time in the long run, as the platform automatically generates personalised rehearsal schedules for every community member (as well as call times for the professional team) from one original base. It eliminates the need to manually generate 100–200 personal rehearsal schedules whilst cross-referencing the casting and scene breakdowns (we used to do it the analogue way and trust us... it was painful!). Most recently, we moved to using Airtable to generate live rehearsal schedule links, so that company members were always notified and up to date with any small changes made to their call times (see Resource 10).

2. **Managing the database of community members:** Airtable will allows us to discreetly store community company member information, creating profiles of each person with personal information (such as costume preferences and access needs) as well as show notes (characters, scenes and each person's entrances and exits).

3. **Sending out mass, personalised communication:** Throughout rehearsals we regularly contact both whole companies as well as pinpoint messages to selected groups. Through Airtable we are able to quickly send an email to, for example, people in scenes four, seven and nine to let them know about a minor script change with an attachment.

We recommend building the Airtable subscription cost into your budget. Taking the time to establish your schedules and database within this system is something you will thank yourself for!



6 RECRUITMENT & CASTING

- **Recruiting the company**
- **A note on featured roles**
- **Recruitment workshops**
- **Casting**
- **Key stages of our casting process**

RECRUITING THE COMPANY

At the end of our second term of the community workshop programme we start the recruitment process for the show. Every community member who has taken part in the workshop programme is invited to attend a recruitment workshop (see Resource 8), run by the Director, Choreographer and Music Director of the show.

We refer to this process as 'recruitment' rather than 'auditions' to avoid connotations of pressure or competition. The workshop consists of three sections: movement, text work and singing.

Depending on the scale of the show and the number of people who put themselves forward we are clear that either everyone will be able to take part, or that there will need to be some selection. We are transparent with our members about what the selection criteria will be and are explicit in stating that it is not about 'talent'. Instead, our aim is to assemble a company who will collectively:

- Represent the breadth of our community, and of all our community partner groups
- Be able to commit fully to the rehearsal schedule
- Align well with the roles written into the piece

The recruitment process is conducted in close conversation with our community partner leads and decisions are guided by their knowledge of individuals.

A NOTE ON FEATURED ROLES

Everyone is given the chance to put themselves forward for a featured role via the recruitment form (see Resource 8). As well as the general recruitment workshops we hold one to two **featured recruitment workshops.** We run movement, acting and singing stations within this, rotating people according to which skill they've said they'd like to focus on. In the singing and acting stations, we make sure that everyone is given the chance to sing or speak solo. We also run callback sessions for any chunkier featured roles.

We are clear when talking about featured roles that it might not be possible for everyone who puts themselves forward to be cast in one, but we try to adapt the material to accommodate as many people as we can – increasing the number of Fisher People from ten to 12 is a quick job for a deft writer (and on more than one occasion in our shows the majority of the company have had a featured role). That said, we are very careful to emphasise throughout recruitment that the beating heart of any Public Acts show is the community ensemble, and that everyone will be kept very busy and have lots of stage time whether they have a featured role or not.

RECRUITMENT WORKSHOPS

Some things we do to make our recruitment process run smoothly:

- Make sure time has been allocated in the final term of the community workshop programme for the Community Producer to talk through the project information pack and recruitment form (see Resource 8) which includes an availability checker.
- Take a photo of everyone who attends a recruitment workshop, holding a board with their name on it, to be used in the casting process (see Resource 9)
- Be clear about the expectation that people must attend all rehearsals, and why this is important. We express that it's about showing up for each other, making the most of the experience and creating something of real quality that we can all be incredibly proud of
- Dedicate time in the last section of the recruitment workshop to help anyone fill out a form in person who hasn't been able to do it online.

CASTING

The knotty puzzle of casting a show with so many parts involves both the Creative and Community teams. We know that this is one of the most sensitive parts of our process and take care to hold our community properly throughout.

When matching people to parts, in addition to the usual creative task of matching someone to a character, we hold in balance several factors:

- **Suitability:** does this role give our community member space to shine and to grow? We don't want to expose or underestimate anyone. In our writer Chris Bush's words: 'Everyone should feel challenged but no-one should ever feel exposed by what they're being asked to do'
- **Availability:** can they attend all the rehearsals for their section? (see Resource 10)
- **Preferences:** have they put themselves forward for a featured role and can this request be met?

We also love finding ways to spotlight people's special skills and party tricks – in *Pericles* we turned one of our youngest members' flossing skills into a solo moment and in *The Odyssey* we had great fun casting Charis, a real life blacksmith, as the God of the Forge, and Raf, a real life chef, as our Chef to the Gods!



KEY STAGES OF OUR CASTING PROCESS

Stage	Activity
1	Build an 'availability overview' to create an easy-to-read overview of any requested absences logged via the recruitment forms (see Resource 8)
2	Create physical 'casting cards' (see Resource 9) displaying each person's photograph, name, age, community partner group and featured role preferences to help you lay the casting picture out in front of you during the 'casting roundtable.'
3	Host a 'casting roundtable' session with key creatives, Community Producer and Coordinator to allocate roles – this can take several goes to get right! Be careful to cross-check people's availability for additional featured rehearsals when allocating featured roles.
4	Once casting decisions have been made, send out offer emails with individual rehearsal schedules (see Resource 10).
5	Sensitively contact any members who haven't been given a part via email, offering follow-up support via phone calls and mentioning details of future opportunities to get involved including free tickets to see the show.
6	Call every company member individually to discuss their schedule (see Resource 10) in detail and ensure they understand the commitment they are making. It often takes a few weeks to reach everyone, so be sure to leave enough time.
7	Allow time for adjustments and schedule recalibration based on the information received e.g. if someone has changed their mind about wanting to sing and will need to have their part switched, or if someone's availability has changed.

'I'LL ALWAYS WANT MORE FROM MY LIFE BECAUSE I'LL ALWAYS KNOW THAT I'VE DONE THIS.'

– Layla, company member



7 REHEARSALS

- **Launch Day**
- **Public Acts rehearsal rooms**
- **Running the room**
- **Doing hard things!**
- **People care**
- **Hospitality**

LAUNCH DAY

To prepare everyone for rehearsals we host a Launch Day (see Resource 13) a few weeks before rehearsals kick off. This is a key moment where we bring the community company together for the first time to officially welcome them, inform and excite them about the production, and get through some key admin. We split the company into groups and schedule a carousel of activities:

1. Model box sharing and talk through of the show with the Director and designers so that everyone understands how they'll be involved

2. Individual costume measurement sessions and chats with the costume team about how preferences for costume and hair can amplify people's individuality and confidence on stage

3. Headshots taken by a professional photographer. These are used for the show cast sheet and sent to company members for their own use – it's often a highlight for people and makes them feel very special!

4. A talk through the Company Welcome Pack (see Toolkit website page to download) highlighting key information and expectations of the project. This is where everyone is asked to sign the Community Company Agreement (see Resource 14).

PUBLIC ACTS REHEARSAL ROOMS

Once we begin rehearsals the rehearsal room becomes the heart of our community – our community centre. We take care to ensure it's a space defined by warmth and welcome as well as hard work. Bunting and fairy lights are just as important as the props tables, the craft box for our youngest children (and emergency stash of sweets!) are just as important as the costume rails.

We want to create a room that everyone looks forward to coming into, that can hold both rigorous work and collective joy. Over the years we have celebrated everything in our rehearsals, from birthdays and GCSE results to the arrival of grandchildren and someone being given the all-clear from cancer, we've even staged a surprise wedding proposal! The way we live alongside each other while we're making the show defines the work, and is the work: to us, living our values as a community is an act of creativity in itself.

RUNNING THE ROOM

For obvious reasons, our rehearsal rooms are usually very busy places.

Some things we do to create a comfortable and focused working environment:

- **Rehearsal room guidelines:** Along with a Team Welcome Sheet (see Resource 15) these guidelines are shared and discussed in advance with all our staff who will be supporting or leading the room. These are shared and discussed in advance with all our staff who will be supporting or leading the room. They serve as an important yardstick for how we want to hold the company and create a caring, inclusive and calm space for everyone (see Resource 16)

- **Information sharing:** When working on something of such big scale, understanding your individual role and contribution clearly within the overall vision is essential to each person recognising their value. We think carefully about what practical information the company needs at their fingertips in order to understand the process and their place within it

- **We create accompanying resources, including:** a large visual synopsis (or 'map') of the whole show, scene-by-scene wall displays detailing all groupings, entrances and exits, headshots of our professional actors, a stage word glossary (see Resource 17), and so on

- **Who's who:** We create a clear visual distinction between different teams so that the company are clear about who to go to for what – different coloured high-vis jackets, pin buttons or bum bags have served us very well! And we have a photo sheet up on the wall for people to refer to names, roles and phonetic spellings

- **Lateness and absences:** We talk to the company from the recruitment stage and all the way through rehearsals about the importance of punctuality and not missing rehearsals (whilst understanding that of course life happens and things can arise unexpectedly). The phrase 'showing up for each other' is useful for us to express how valued and necessary their presence is at each and every rehearsal.

- **Bring the joy!** A bake-off part way through rehearsals, a 'super Saturday' potluck lunch, spontaneous ice cream deliveries, an Easter egg hunt – find ways to inject joy and fun throughout rehearsals. These shared communal experiences and acts of community are just as important as anything else happening in the room – they don't just keep spirits up and make the work better, they are the work.



DOING HARD THINGS

Many people in our community company will never have had the experience of learning material for a show – it's a hard thing! The new challenge of this, and our expectations that we can and will do hard things together, is a huge part of what makes the journey so satisfying and transformative for everyone. But only if we take care of people along the way and set everyone up to succeed. Some of the things we do to support people with their learning include:

- **Choreography catch ups:** optional sessions run by the Dance team half an hour before rehearsals start where people can go over material in detail in a smaller group
- **Track sheets:** we give everyone a small printed form to fill in and keep in their rehearsal lanyard as we move through rehearsals which details all their entrances, exits and any other key responsibilities (e.g. what prop they bring in) for each scene. We hold 'track sheet surgeries' throughout rehearsals where people can check-in with a team member about any questions or gaps they have in their track (see Resource 19).

Teaching materials which can be accessed from home. These include resources which can be:

- **Choreography teaching videos** including breakdowns of all the sequences
- **Music teaching tracks for all songs**, including audio breakdowns for each vocal part and talk-through with tips and notes from our Music Director
- **Tips sheets for learning lines and lyrics** (see Resource 18).

PEOPLE CARE

Rehearsals are very exciting but can also be overwhelming for both company and team, with lots of new experiences and a step up in pace. The Community Producer leads the Community team and takes responsibility for the experience of the community company, pastoral care and weaves core principles of accessibility and inclusion through the fabric of the project.

In our rehearsal room there are always at least two Community team members present to support the company and allow the creative and Stage Management team to keep rehearsals running.

During rehearsals the Community Producer oversees:

- **Project Coordinator**
- **Community partner leads**, who are present in rehearsals and often perform in the show, supporting their group from within the process
- **Welfare Officer**, who is embedded within the rehearsal room and is also available for one to one sessions outside of rehearsal times
- **Creative Access Workers** who work one to one with company members with more complex access needs and often perform in the show
- **Chaperones**

We have a separate welfare provision for all team members, who are overseen during the process by our Senior Producer.

HOSPITALITY

Great hospitality is a key principle of our work and preparing to host and meet the practical needs of 100 company members across several weeks is no small task. We want everyone to feel looked after and to minimise rehearsal room faff and wasted time.

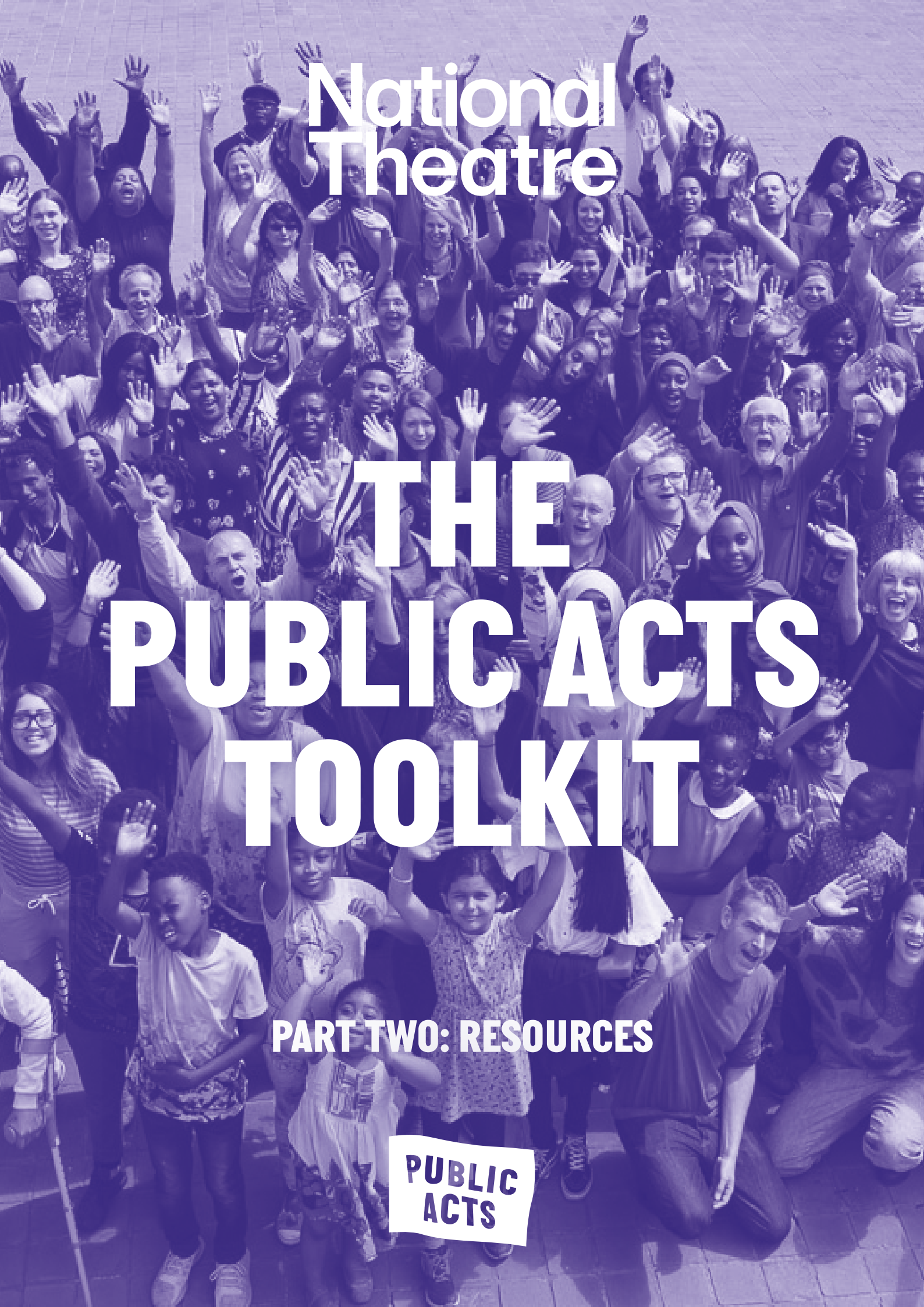
Our compass points for large scale hosting:

- **Good food!** Provide a tasty, culturally varied food offer, including three meals a day during long rehearsal days. Have tea and coffee available throughout rehearsals
- **Toiletography** (yes, we made a word for it!): Ignore toiletography at your peril. How are you going to get 100 people to the toilets and back during a 15-minute break? It's possible, but it takes planning!
- **Belongings:** Make sure everyone, including the team, has a dedicated space (a named peg, a box, a space on a rail) to safely store their belongings. We use a portable clothes rail of named pouches to store everyone's mobile phones and valuables
- **Space:** Organise the rehearsal space in detail, down to where scripts and water bottles can be placed within easy reach, putting name labels on water bottles and Creative team chairs, and having clear systems for storing coats and bags to keep the working space clear.
- **Life happens:** Note people's birthdays or key events (exam results day, religious festivals, and so on) on the rehearsal schedule so they don't get forgotten!

Extra thought is put into how **families** are best supported to take part. We create bespoke schedules allowing children to leave evening sessions early where needed, hold a welcome meeting and mid-way check-in between all chaperones and families, cast families in the same scenes where possible to simplify their rehearsal schedule, and so on. We write to each child's teachers to tell them about their involvement in the show, as we know that often our children might not feel confident enough to tell their teachers what they've been up to – but they always deserve enormous celebration and acknowledgement!

To read acknowledgements and photographer credits please refer to Toolkit Part Two: Resources.





National Theatre

THE PUBLIC ACTS TOOLKIT

PART TWO: RESOURCES

PUBLIC ACTS

CONTENTS

8. RECRUITMENT FORM 44

The form we ask all **participants** to fill in when putting themselves forward for the production, gathering extensive information to save time down the line. This is an example of a physical copy but, whenever possible, our paperwork is run through the online Airtable platform (see Guide 5).

9. COMMUNITY CASTING CARDS 53

A physical tool to help **the team** visualise the company whilst casting, ensuring we represent a cross-section of the company within scenes and meet as many people's featured role preferences as possible.

10. INDIVIDUAL REHEARSAL SCHEDULE 55

An example personalised rehearsal schedule which we would issue to a **company member** via Airtable (see Guide 5) once they have been cast in the show. It is accompanied by the Community Company Welcome Pack (see Toolkit webpage for download).

11. INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN 59

A plan which details agreed support provision for any company member with access requirements. This will be co-shaped by each member and shared with all **team members**. It forms part of the overarching 'Access Action Plan' for each new project.

12. BOUNDARIES POLICY 62

A policy issued to any **team member** working in our space along with a Team Welcome Sheet (see Resource 15). It works alongside our Safeguarding Policy and Public Acts Rehearsal Room Guidelines (see Resource 16).

13. LAUNCH DAY PLAN 65

A sample plan **our team** uses to run the Launch Day – the crucial moment before rehearsals where we bring the whole company together for the first time and kick off the process with some crucial admin including costume measurements and headshots (see Guide 7).

14. COMMUNITY COMPANY AGREEMENT 67

The agreement around values, behaviours and commitment to rehearsals which every **company member** is asked to sign at the Launch Day. This is included as a take-home reminder in the Community Company Welcome Pack (see Toolkit webpage for download) and is printed and displayed in rehearsals.

15. TEAM WELCOME SHEET 69

A document centralising all key information for **professionals** joining the process, from company photo sheet to policies.

16. REHEARSAL ROOM GUIDELINES 73

Guidelines issued to **staff** in delivery roles, such as our Associate Artists, outlining how we create welcoming and inclusive spaces for rehearsals.

17. STAGE GLOSSARY 77

A resource given out to **company members** during rehearsals, to help decode theatre jargon! We often enlarge and print sections of this and post them on rehearsal rooms walls (for example, the diagram showing the areas of the stage).

18. TIPS FOR LEARNING LINES & LYRICS 81

A collection of tips to help **company members** approach the (sometime dauting and often new) task of learning material. Complementing this sheet, the creative team will create teaching videos and audio tracks for all company numbers.

19. TRACK SHEET 84

A cheat-sheet given to **company members** to tuck into their rehearsal lanyards (along with a mini pencil!) which allows them to keep track of their entrance, exit and key responsibilities (e.g. what prop they're holding) for each scene.

20. TECH-SPECTATIONS 86

A handout for **company members** given out during a special meeting in rehearsals to ensure everyone is prepared for what to expect in technical rehearsals. This can be really helpful in smoothing the transition into the theatre – an exciting and delicate moment.

21. COMMUNITY PRODUCTION WEEK SCHEDULE 89

An example schedule showing community company calls throughout production week. This version is what **the team** would use internally. All community members would receive a personalised version of it.


National Theatre
RECRUITMENT FORM
Public Acts Toolkit
PUBLIC ACTS

8 RECRUITMENT FORM

We are so excited that you'd like to take part in *Pericles*. Please complete this form to sign up.

If you need support completing this form or would rather talk through your answers, please contact Philippa from the Public Acts team on [email address] or [phone number]

HOW WE PROTECT YOUR DATA

[National Theatre and theatre partner's data protection summary]

COMMUNITY GROUP

Please tick which community group you have been attending:

- ☐ Bromley by Bow Centre
- ☐ Body & Soul
- ☐ Havering Asian Social Welfare Association
- ☐ Open Age
- ☐ Thames Reach
- ☐ The Faith and Belief Forum

CONTACT DETAILS

Full name:

Address:

Phone number:

Email address:

Please tick your preferred way for us to contact you below:

- ☐ Phone call
- ☐ Text message of What's App
- ☐ Email

If you are under 18, please enter your parent, guardian or carer's name:

If you are under 18, please enter your parent, guardian or carer's phone number:

If you are under 18, please enter your parent, guardian or carer's email address:

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

This is the person who we should contact in case of an emergency.

Contact full name:

Your relationship to your contact:

Contact phone number:

MEDICAL INFORMATION & ALLERGIES

Please can you share with us any allergies (food, animals, medicine, fabrics etc) and any medical conditions which might affect you during rehearsals.

ACCESS

The following questions will help us understand how best we can support you at the recruitment workshop and if you go on to join the *Pericles* company. Please only fill in as much as you feel comfortable with or is appropriate for you.

What is your preferred format for scripts and written information?

- ☐ Standard print
- ☐ Large print
- ☐ Printed on coloured paper (please indicate your requirements)
- ☐ Audio file
- ☐ Other (please state)

Do you use:

- ☐ Spoken/Generated English
- ☐ BSL (British Sign Language)
- ☐ SSE (Sign Supported English)
- ☐ Other (please state)

Do you require step-free access?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you require any support from an access worker in workshops/rehearsals?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please indicate your requirements and a member of the team will be in touch to discuss how we can best support you:

Please use the space below tell us about any other access requirements that you would like us to be aware of or any other ways that we can support your experience:

TRAVEL TO THE RECRUITMENT WORKSHOP

Please let us know if you would like support with the cost of travel to the recruitment workshop:

- ☐ Yes, I would like support with the cost of my travel
- ☐ No, I would not want support with the cost of my travel

If yes, please let us know how you plan to travel to and from the event?

- ☐ Car or taxi
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Train
- ☐ Metro
- ☐ Other

FEATURED ROLES

Everyone in the show will have a role in the community ensemble, which is always the most important part (and the beating heart!) of any Public Acts show. In addition, there will be some 'featured roles'. These will involve some extra movement, singing or acting either in small groups or on your own and will require some extra rehearsals.

Featured rehearsals will take place on **Wednesday evenings** from **6-9pm** and **Saturday afternoons** from **4-6pm** and you will be required for ***some but not all*** of these sessions.

If you would like to put yourself forward for a featured role you must attend an extra recruitment workshop on **Saturday 30 April**.

Would you like to be considered for a featured role?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you would like to be considered, please tick the boxes which most interest you:

- ☐ Movement
- ☐ Singing
- ☐ Acting

CHOOSE A RECRUITMENT WORKSHOP

Recruitment workshops for *Pericles* will take place at your regular workshop location, see the schedule below.

If you cannot make your regular session time, you can attend the Open Session which will be run at the National Theatre. Let us know if you are attending at your regular location OR if you need to attend the Open Session by ticking the correct box below.

Group	Date	Time	Location	Tick
Bromley by Bow Centre	Monday 25 April	6–8pm	Bromley by Bow Centre	☐ Yes
Body & Soul	Tuesday 26 April	6–8pm	Body & Soul	☐ Yes
Havering Asian Social Welfare Association	Wednesday 27 April	4–6pm	Havering Asian Social Welfare Association	☐ Yes
Open Age	Wednesday 27 April	6.30–8.30pm	St Charles Centre	☐ Yes
Thames Reach	Thursday 28 April	4–6pm	Martha Jones Centre	☐ Yes
The Faith and Belief Forum	Thursday 28 April	6:30–8:30pm	The Faith and Belief Forum	☐ Yes
Open Session	Friday 29 April	5–7pm	National Theatre	☐ Yes

FEATURED ROLE WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

If you have put yourself forward for a featured role we ask that you come along to an additional recruitment session.

As well as coming along at your regular session time you will need to attend one of the following sessions. Let us know which slot suits you best by ticking the correct box below.

Group	Date	Time	Location	Tick
Featured role session 1	Saturday 30 April	10am-12.30pm	National Theatre	☐ Yes
Feature role session 2	Saturday 30 April	1.30-3pm	National Theatre	☐ Yes

REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES

We want our show to be as brilliant as possible and we want rehearsals to be as enjoyable as possible. It is therefore important that everyone commits to attending ALL rehearsals. We may be able to accommodate one or two non-availabilities, but these must be agreed in advance.

Rehearsals for the full company take place:

- Every Tuesday and Thursday evening (5.30–9.30pm)
- Every Saturday (9.30am–4pm)

Please see the full schedule at the bottom of this letter.

In addition, the Launch Day on **Saturday 30 May from 10am – 1pm** is a compulsory session to attend.

For health and safety reasons you will not be able to take part in the production if you cannot attend on any of the compulsory dates below:

- Monday 21 August, 5.30–8pm (on-stage rehearsal)
- Tuesday 22 August, 1–9pm (technical rehearsal)
- Thursday 24 August, 1–9pm (technical rehearsal)
- Friday 25 August, 1–9pm (dress rehearsal)
- Saturday 26 August, 1–9pm (performance 1)
- Sunday 27 August, 1–9pm (performance 2)
- Monday 28 August, 1–9pm (performance 3 & 4)

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Please look over the calendar and cross out any rehearsals you are unable to attend, including details of whether you are unavailable for the whole session or part of the session. Please list things that will create any regular clashes (like work shifts) as well as things that are a one-off event (like a wedding). Additional clashes that come up after casting may affect your ability to take part in the production so please list everything fully.

JULY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
3 July	4 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	5	6 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	7	8 9.30am – 4pm Full company rehearsal	9
10	11 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	12	13 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	14	15 9.30am – 4pm Full company rehearsal	16
17	18 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	19	20 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	21	22 9.30am – 4pm Full company rehearsal	23
24	25 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	26	27 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	28	29 9.30am – 4pm Full company rehearsal	30

AUGUST

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
31	1 August 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	2	3 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	4	5 9.30am – 4pm Full company rehearsal	6
7	8 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	9	10 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	11	12 9.30am – 4pm Full company rehearsal	13
14	15 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	16	17 5.30 – 9pm Full company rehearsal	18	19 9.30am – 4pm Full company rehearsal	20
21 5.30 – 8pm familiarisation session	22 1 – 9pm Tech rehearsal (incl. lunch & dinner)	23 **DAY OFF**	24 1 – 9pm Tech rehearsal (incl. lunch & dinner)	25 1 – 9pm Dress rehearsal (incl. lunch & dinner)	26 1 – 9pm Performance 1 (incl. lunch & dinner)	27 1 – 9pm Performance 2 (incl. lunch & dinner)
28 1 – 9pm Performance 3 & 4 (incl. lunch & dinner)	29	30				

Thank you for completing this form, we will be in touch soon. We look forward to seeing you at the recruitment workshop!



National Theatre

COMMUNITY CASTING CARDS

Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS

9 COMMUNITY CASTING CARDS

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For the team



Name: Lara Taylor
Age: 34
Location: London
Community Partner: Hammersmith Hub
Featured role preference: Dancing & Singing



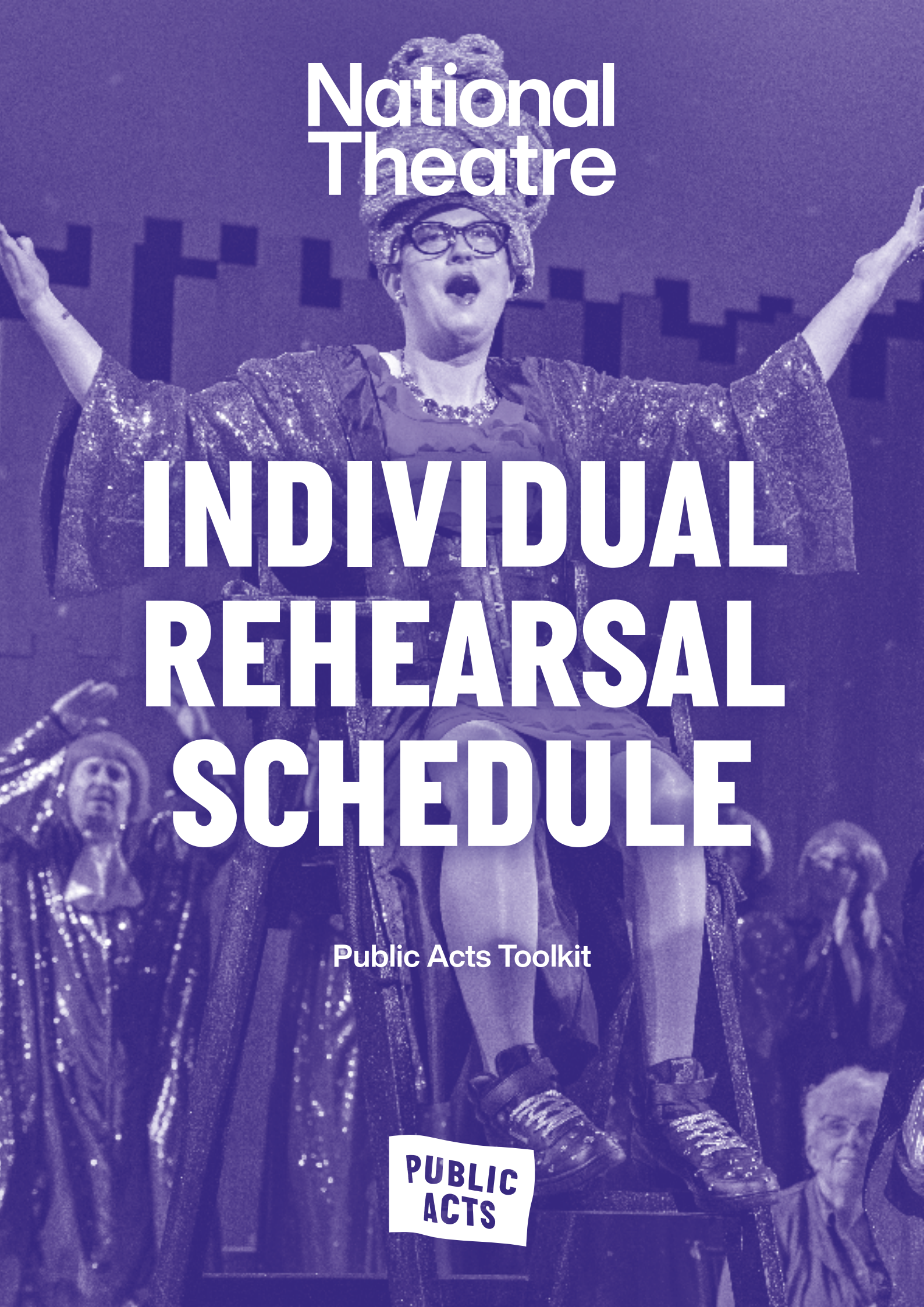
Name: Emily Lim
Age: 38
Location: London
Community Partner: AABC Centre
Featured role preference: Acting



Name: Amy Sutters
Age: 29
Location: London
Community Partner: Arrows Network
Featured role preference: Dancing

National Theatre

INDIVIDUAL REHEARSAL SCHEDULE



Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For community members

10 INDIVIDUAL REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Company Member Name:
Featured role:

Blue box: Full company rehearsal (all performers called to attend)
Green box: Featured performer rehearsal (smaller group rehearsals)
Orange box: Final technical and dress rehearsals and performances, these sessions cannot be missed

JULY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
3 July	4 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	5	6 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	7	8 **9:30am - 4pm** Full company rehearsal	9
10	11 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	12	13 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	14	15 **9:30am - 4pm** Full company rehearsal **4.30 - 5pm** Featured performers rehearsal Scene: Zeus' Birthday Party **5 - 5:30pm** Featured performers rehearsal Scene: Gods of Olympus	16

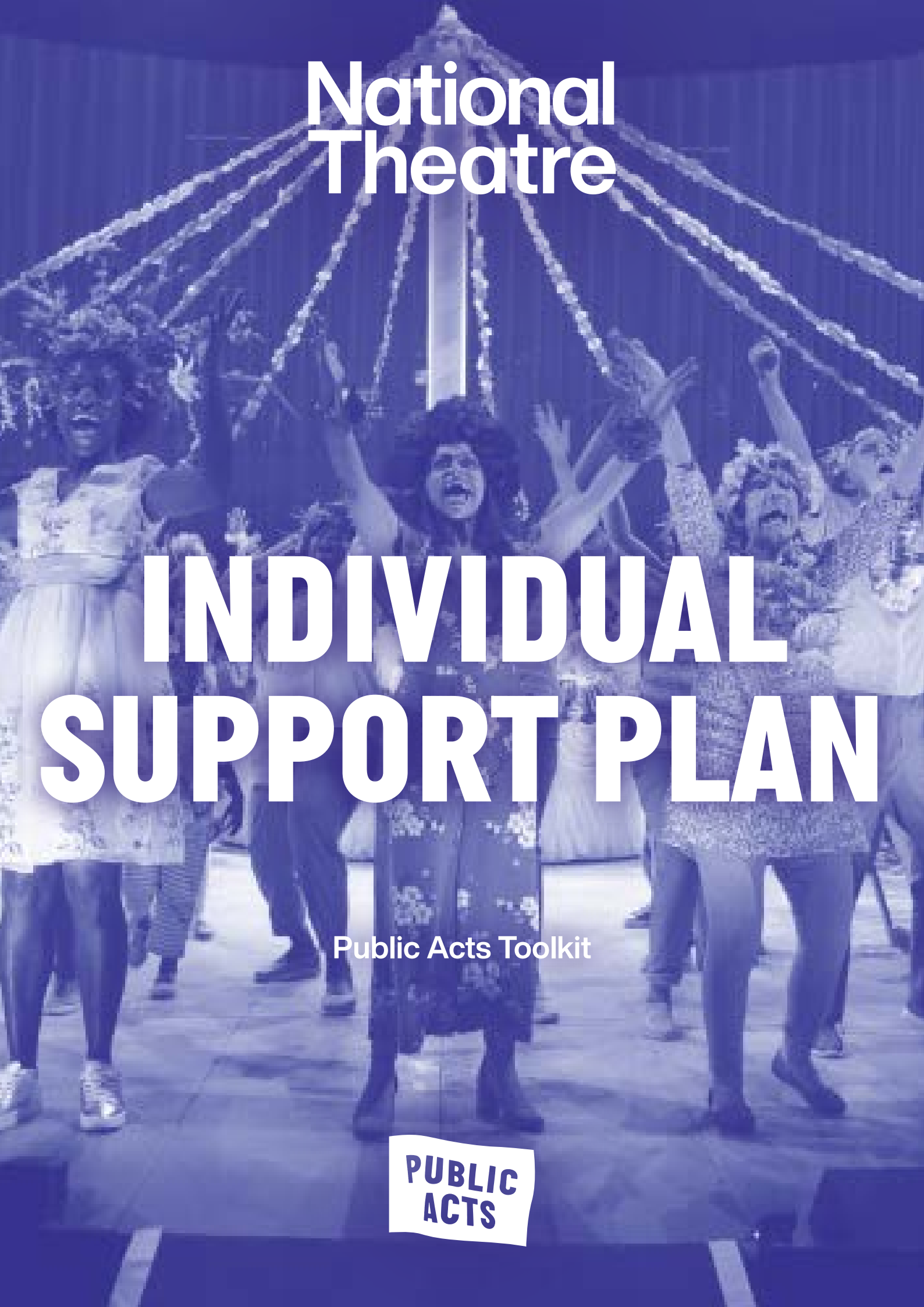
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
17	18 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	19	20 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	21	22 **9:30am - 4pm** Full company rehearsal	23
24	25 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	26	27 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	28	29 **9:30am - 4pm** Full company rehearsal **4:30 - 5pm** Featured performers rehearsal Scene: Gods of Olympus	30

AUGUST

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
31	1 August **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	2	3 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	4	5 **9:30am - 4pm** Full company rehearsal	6
7	8 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	9 **6 – 7 pm** Featured performers rehearsal Scene: Zeus' Birthday Party	10 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	11	12 **9:30am - 4pm** Full company rehearsal	13
14	15 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	16	17 **5.30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	18 **5:30 – 9pm** Full company rehearsal	19 **9:30am - 4pm** Full company rehearsal	20

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
21 **5.30 – 9pm** Backstage/ onstage orientation and health & safety induction	22 **1 – 9pm** Tech rehearsal (incl. lunch & dinner)	23 **DAY OFF**	24 **1 – 9pm** Tech rehearsal (incl. lunch & dinner)	25 **1 – 9pm** Dress rehearsal (incl. lunch & dinner)	26 **1 – 9pm** Performance 1 (incl. lunch & dinner)	27 **1 – 9pm** Performance 2 (incl. lunch & dinner)
28 **1 – 9pm** Performance 3 & Performance 4 (incl. lunch & dinner)	29	30				

National Theatre



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN

Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS

For the team

11 INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN

Full Name: Maya Sinnan *[Please note this name is fictitious]*

Community Partner Organisation: Arrows Network

ACCESS OVERVIEW

Access Need	Date
Mobility	Maya is a manual, attendant propelled wheelchair user
Vision	Maya is visually impaired
Medical condition	Maya can experience hot flashes. If Maya experiences this, she will need to move to a cool space, loosen clothes and have access to ice packs
Support required	Requires 1 to 1 onstage access worker (Alex)
Information format	Maya has requested to receive information via audio and SRF (screen reader friendly) documents via email

COMPANY MEMBER SUPPORT TEAM

Name	Role
Alex	Maya's 1 to 1 onstage access worker
Zara and Quinn	Maya's personal assistants who are organised independently by Maya and work on a rota pattern
Casey	Public Acts lead contact
Billie	Community partner lead contact

This planned provision will be reviewed at a meeting midway through rehearsals with Maya, Alex and Casey on 28 July.

PRE-REHEARSAL PROVISION

- Maya and Casey in regular communication
- Audio version of 'Welcome Pack' and script provided
- Alex will attend choreography sessions to learn choreography ahead of rehearsals
- Alex and Maya will have choreography lead-in sessions in the afternoons before full company rehearsals

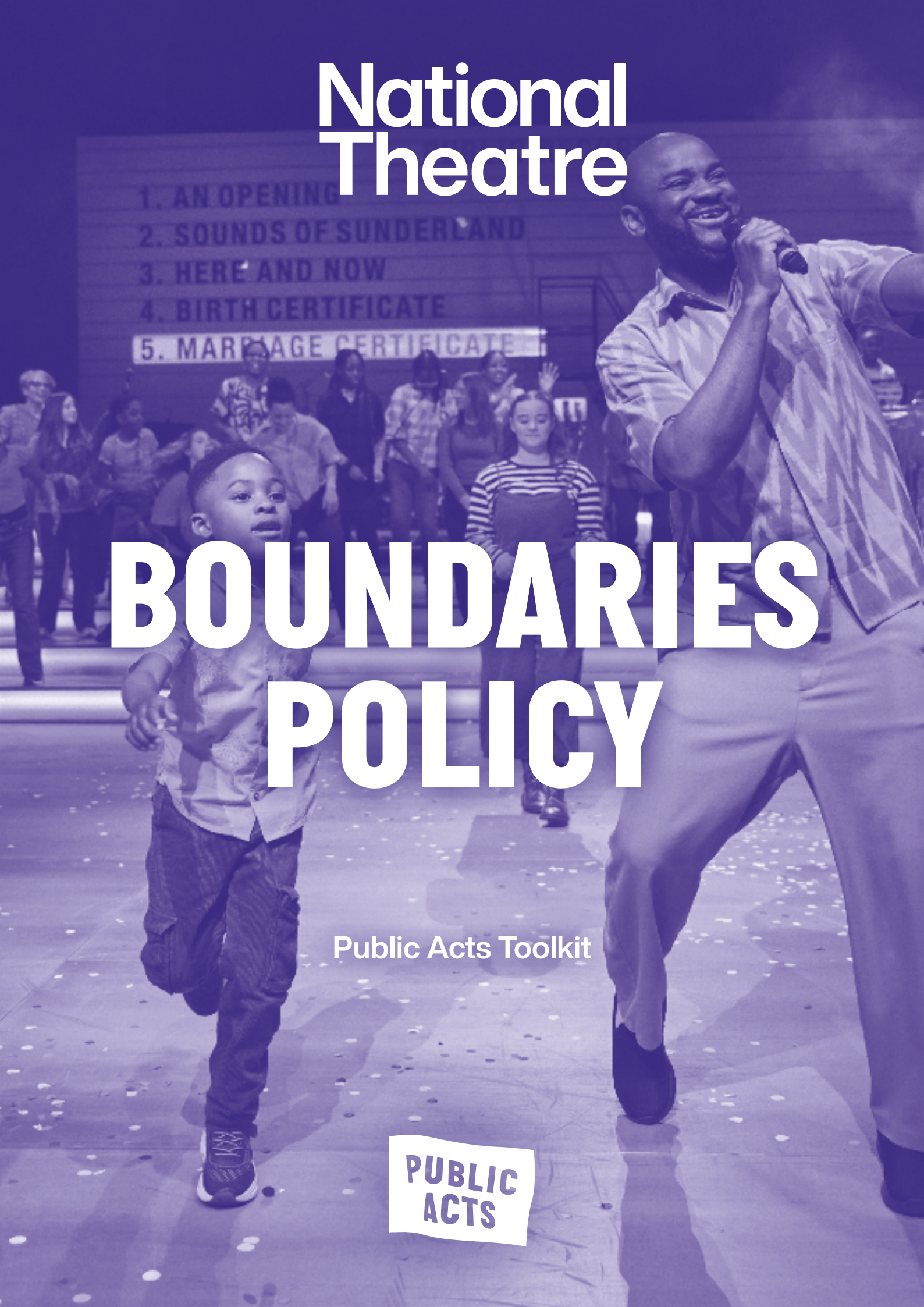
REHEARSAL PROVISION

- Alex will be in the rehearsal room supporting Maya 1 to 1
- Casey will act as a key contact for Alex and Maya
- Zara or Quinn will support Maya travelling to and from rehearsals and be on-site (outside of the rehearsal room) to support with personal care needs
- Maya will travel by taxi to and from the NT for all rehearsals with Zara or Quinn
- Alex will meet Maya from the taxi on arrival and inform Zara or Quinn about the time of the break and ask them to come to Stage Door ten minutes before the break to be ready to support Maya with personal care needs
- Maya will have a 1 to 1 orientation of rehearsal spaces with Alex and Casey on the first day of rehearsals before the full company arrive
- Maya has asked to speak directly to the company about her access needs as she finds this give her best agency, she will share access needs with the full company on the first day of full company rehearsals
- Screen reader friendly descriptions of the story (to include Maya's journey), set design and costume will be shared with Maya
- Maya, Alex and Casey will work closely with Robin (Movement Associate) to plot 1 to 1 movement sessions as needed

PRODUCTION WEEK PROVISION

- Maya and Alex will join a small group orientation of backstage/onstage before technical rehearsals begin
- Maya and Alex will join a touch tour
- Maya will be assigned a small group dressing room (access to a fan)
- Maya will be assigned additional female dresser support
- Alex will perform alongside Maya on stage through all shows in costume

National Theatre



BOUNDARIES POLICY

Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS

For the team

12 BOUNDARIES POLICY

The Public Acts team aims to build trusting relationships with Public Acts community members. It is important to put boundaries in place so it is clear that the team are always present in a professional capacity.

This document works alongside the Safeguarding Policy and the Public Acts Rehearsal Room Guidelines.

BOUNDARIES HELP THE PROFESSIONAL TEAM TO:

- Feel confident and safe in how they approach relationships with community members.
- Demonstrate consistent and appropriate behaviour in roles.
- Act as positive role models.

WE WILL:

- Take responsibility for maintaining professional boundaries.
- Treat people with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Listen, reassure, seek to support people to access and thrive in our sessions.
- Remain aware that many members experience significant challenges in their lives which mean they are likely to have varying support needs.
- Recognise the positions of power we hold in the spaces with community members and never abuse this position.
- Recognise our own positionality, bias and knowledge gaps about the barriers and challenges which exist for our members when they participate in our projects.
- Know the difference between being friendly and becoming someone's friend - for example, in conversation with a community member a team member would not seek out help from a community member with their own emotional concerns.
- Know our remit, and its limits - i.e. although we seek to be welcoming and compassionate, it is the job of the Public Acts and community partner pastoral leads and the Wellbeing Officer to support complex wellbeing concerns.
- Ensure all communication with community members outside of rehearsals is conducted via the central project email address and the project mobile (never personal emails or personal mobiles).
- Make line managers or Lead Safeguarding Officer aware of any personal relationships or previous knowledge of community members outside of Public Acts work.
- Hold our own physical boundaries – role modelling positive personal choice by explaining if our personal preference is not to hug.
- Ensure any touch, including hugging, is safe touch – necessary, consented, public and appropriate - in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.
- Seek immediate advice should we think there is a risk of a professional boundary being violated or if we sense a risk of special attachment or inappropriate behaviour.

- Model appropriate boundaries with gifts – only accepting one-off, appropriate (not overly expensive nor overly personal) gifts, such as small tokens, and always logging these with the Community Producer.

WE DO NOT:

- Give out personal contact information such as personal emails or mobile numbers. Communication with community members should go via the team's project emails and project mobile.
- Follow members on social media, nor accept 'friend requests' instead directing them to the project social media channels.
- For core staff members with project mobiles, we do not make ourselves contactable on work mobiles outside of office/rehearsal hours (work mobiles to be turned off with a clear voicemail message).
- Form relationships with community members outside of rehearsals.
- Accept social invitations nor spend time outside of professional spaces with members e.g. in their home, in a car.
- Enter into any sort of financial support or agreement with a community member.
- Give gifts as individual staff members – gifts given to groups by the organisation is welcome.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS:

As part of a Public Acts project there are sometimes occasions where staff interact with community members socially – after show parties, end of term celebrations, evening theatre trips, and so on.

During these occasions it is imperative that staff remain in their role, and remember that they are always acting as a professional representative of Public Acts.



National Theatre



LAUNCH DAY PLAN

Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For the team

13 LAUNCH DAY PLAN

Time	Space 1	Space 2	Space 3	Space 4	Space 5
8:00	Staff briefing and set up for model box, costume, photographs and food and drink.				
9:00					
10:00	Hello, welcomes and refreshments				
10:25	**Group 1:** Presentation about the show (with Director, Designer and model box)	**Group 2:** Costume measurements	**Group 3:** Headshots and tea	**Group 4:** Welcome Pack talk through (with Community team)	Breakout space
10:30					
10:35					
10:40					
10:45					
10:50					
10:55					
11:00	Journey between spaces				
11:05	**Group 4:** Presentation about the show (with Director, Designer and model box)	**Group 1:** Costume measurements	**Group 2:** Headshots and tea	**Group 3:** Welcome Pack talk through (with Community team)	
11:10					
11:15					
11:20					
11:25					
11:30					
11:35	Journey between spaces				
11:40	**Group 3:** Presentation about the show (with Director, Designer and model box)	**Group 4:** Costume measurements	**Group 1:** Headshots and tea	**Group 2:** Welcome Pack talk through (with Community team)	
11:45					
11:50					
11:55					
12:00					
12:05					
12:10	Journey between spaces				
12:15	**Group 2:** Presentation about the show (with Director, Designer and model box)	**Group 3:** Costume measurements	**Group 4:** Headshots and tea	**Group 1:** Welcome Pack talk through (with Community team)	
12:20					
12:25					
12:30					
12:35					
12:40					
12:45	Journey between spaces				
12:50	Checkout led by Director				
12:55					

National Theatre

COMMUNITY COMPANY AGREEMENT

Public Acts Toolkit



For community members

14 COMMUNITY COMPANY AGREEMENT

This letter serves as an agreement between you (company member) and Public Acts for the production of *Public Record*. It is designed to ensure that we keep each other safe and that everyone has the best possible experience.

- I have received the ***Public Record* Welcome Pack** and agree to follow the guidelines for rehearsals and performances at all times.
- I understand and commit to the values of Public Acts:
  - **Openness** - to each other, to new ideas and opinions
  - **Generosity** - looking after each other, and ourselves, with patience and kindness
  - **Bravery** - trying new things, pushing ourselves within safe limits
- I will ensure these values are upheld in rehearsals, performances and related events.
- I have read the Rehearsal Information in the Community Company Welcome Pack and agree to follow the guidelines for rehearsals.
- I have understood the social media guidelines in the Welcome Pak and agree to follow them. I will not take or post people's photos without their consent.
- If I am unsure or worried about anything during *Public Record* activity, I understand who to raise my concern to.
- I understand that repeated lateness to rehearsal and uninformed absences may affect my ability to participate in the show.
- I understand that absences from Monday 21 August to Sunday 27 August will not be approved.
- I will wear appropriate clothing and shoes to rehearsals.
- I understand that I will be provided with a costume that I will wear for the performances.
- I understand the intergenerational nature of this project and how to conduct myself appropriately when working with under 18s.
- I understand that Sunderland Culture, Sunderland Empire and the National Theatre operate a no drugs and alcohol policy across all in person and online activity. If a member of Public Acts staff is concerned that I am under the influence during any activity connected to *Public Record*, I will be asked to leave the activity and a key member of the team will be in contact to follow up.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

National Theatre

TEAM WELCOME SHEET

Public Acts Toolkit



PUBLIC ACTS

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For the team

15 THE UNDERWORLD TEAM WELCOME SHEET

This sheet will introduce you to the *The Odyssey: The Underworld* project and give you an idea of what to expect when working with Public Acts and our community company. We ask that all professional staff working on the project make themselves familiar with the below.

1. **Introduction to Public Acts**
2. **Get to know the Community Company**
3. **Welfare**
4. **Safeguarding**
5. **Boundaries Policy**
6. **Meet the team**

1. INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC ACTS

- Public Acts exists to create extraordinary acts of theatre and community
- Our values are **OPENNESS, GENEROSITY** and **BRAVERY**
- Our spaces are intergenerational and inclusive, defined by our core values. Everyone is welcome to take up space, everyone is necessary for the difference they bring, everyone is valued for who they are
- Please read our Rehearsal Room Guidelines **here.**

WE BELIEVE:

- Theatre-making is a powerful form of community building
- A culture of care brings out the best in all of us.
- Ambition is a dignifying force. Everyone is capable of amazing things
- We do our best work when we learn from each other, as people and organisations.

WE HOPE:

- To give people the space to see ourselves and the world differently
- To celebrate creativity, difference and joy
- To build sense of place, pride, connection and belonging
- To make brilliant theatre that shows what is possible when we come together.

2. GET TO KNOW THE COMMUNITY COMPANY

Public Acts works with large, intergenerational companies of non-professional performers of all ages and backgrounds. We treat everyone in our community company as a VIP and an expert in their own experience.

We ask that all staff learn the community company members' names, to ensure that everyone feels seen and valued as individuals.

See community company headshots and names **here.**

The full company will be made up of:

- A core community company of 90 members from London and our partner locations: Stoke-on-Trent, Doncaster, Trowbridge and Sunderland
- Performers from our cameo groups: The London Bodhrán Band, Haringey Vox Choir, Impact Dance Group, and South Wales Gay Men's Chorus
- A professional live band of five
- A cast of six professional actors.

3. WELFARE

FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TEAM

The National Theatre Welfare team is available to work with the professional team through online sessions. The team are experienced psychotherapeutic counsellors and therapeutic mentors, and we encourage everyone to book in for a session at any point in the process. You can email the team directly on [email].

FOR THE COMMUNITY COMPANY

The Community team are present in every rehearsal to support the community company. We will have a dedicated Welfare Officer, who will work with the community company through technical rehearsals and performances. If you think an individual would benefit from a support session, please speak with a member of the Community team (see below).

4. SAFEGUARDING: KEY INFORMATION

It is expected that all staff are familiar with the National Theatre safeguarding policy **here.**

SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

Ros Terry (Senior Producer) is the project Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer – contact her on [email]

Should you wish to talk to someone else on the team the project Safeguarding Group includes the following National Theatre staff:

Lara Taylor (Producer) contact her on [email]

Amy Sutters (Senior Coordinator) contact her on [email]

Alice King Farlow (Director of Learning) contact her [email]

SAFEGUARDING KEY HEADLINES

1. We are all responsible for the safeguarding of community members and staff throughout the project.

2. Should you notice anything at all which concerns you about a community member's behaviour, however small, speak with the Community team member as soon as possible.

3. Always work in public, avoid situations where you are alone or working in private with a company member.

4. Never share your personal details, such as your personal mobile number or personal email.

5. Do not 'friend' or 'follow' community members on social media.

6. Do not develop social relationships with company members outside of rehearsals

7. Let a member of the Safeguarding group know if you have received a gift from a community company member.

8. Any touch should be – SAFE TOUCH. Safe touch is necessary, consented, public and appropriate – an example of this might be guiding a child away from danger by holding their shoulders.

9. Adults in the community company can take toilet trips on their own, but their absence from the rehearsal room should be noted and monitored by Stage Management or the Community team.



WHAT DO I DO IF A SAFEGUARDING DISCLOSURE IS MADE?

DO:

- Ask neutral questions which encourage the individual to talk e.g.'can you tell me what happened?'
- Accept what the individual says and do not ask for further detail
- Acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing
- Explain whom you will have to tell (the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer) and why (i.e. to ensure everybody is safe and protected)
- Write a record of the conversation as soon as possible, using the individual's own words as far as possible
- Report the disclosure as soon as possible to a member of the Safeguarding Group (see above) who will guide you through the next steps and through the reporting form

DON'T:

- Worry the individual they have done something wrong such as 'why didn't you tell me/somebody before?'
- Interrogate or pressure the individual to provide further information
- Examine clothed parts of the individual's body
- Criticise the perpetrator
- Promise confidentiality or make promises outside of your control such as 'it will be alright now'

5. BOUNDARIES

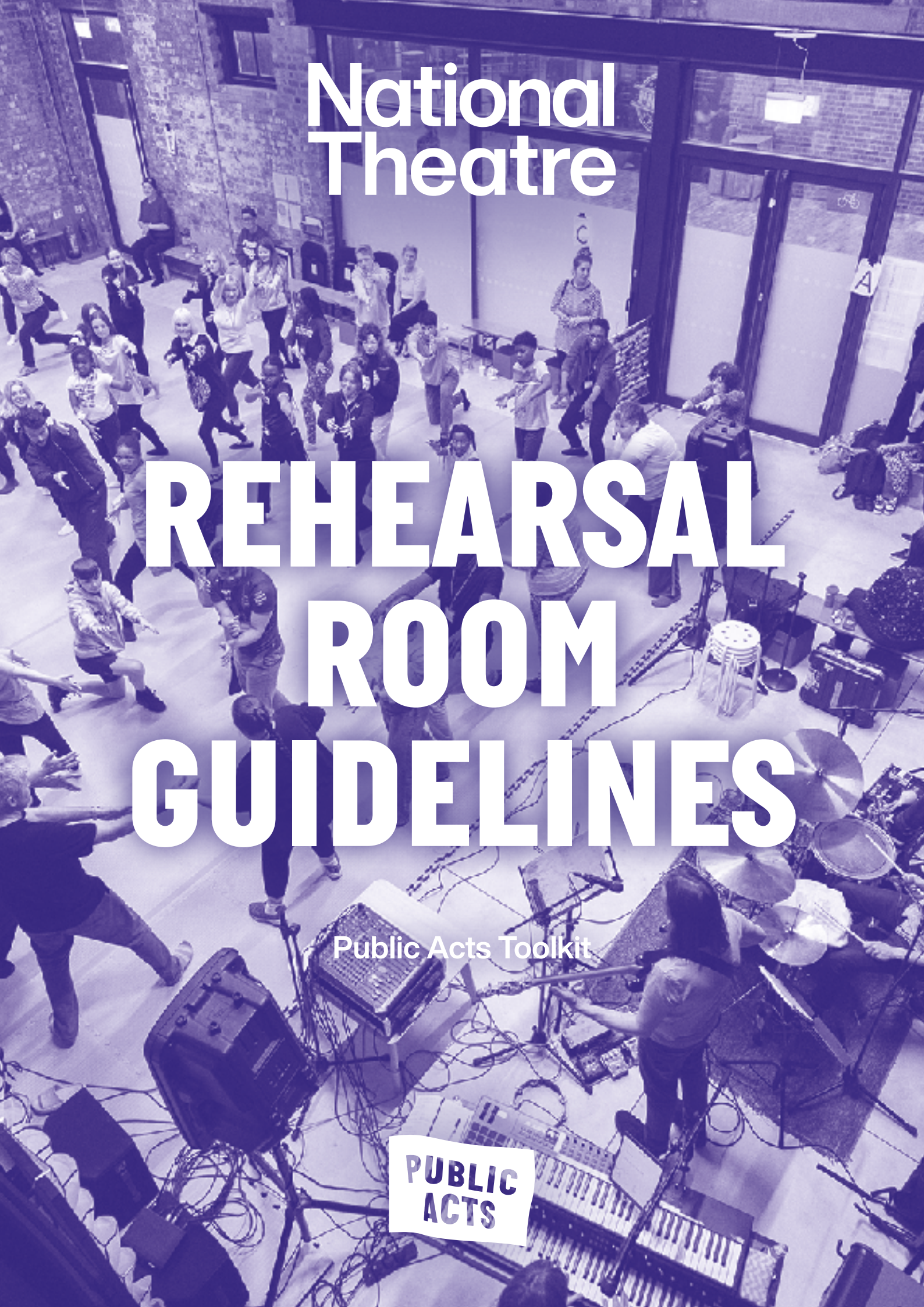
It is important that the entire professional team holds clear and consistent professional boundaries with the community company. Please read the Public Acts Boundaries Policy **here** which will help staff to feel safe and confident in how they approach professional relationships with community members.

6. MEET THE TEAM

See below for photos of some key members of staff. The Community team will be wearing pink bags in the rehearsal room. More photos of our Stage Management, technical and backstage staff to be added soon!

[Insert team photos and role titles here, e.g. Producer, Lighting Designer, Stage Manager, Welfare Office etc.]





National Theatre

REHEARSAL ROOM GUIDELINES

Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS

For the team

16 REHEARSAL ROOM GUIDELINES

These guidelines aim to support staff who are leading activity to ensure all Public Acts rehearsal rooms are well held and inclusive spaces. Based on our past learning, they are always evolving.

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

We ask that everyone in our rooms tries to be:

- **Open** (to each other, to new ideas and opinions)
- **Generous** (we look after each other, with patience and kindness)
- **Brave** (we try new things, push ourselves within safe limits)

In addition, as staff working on the project we aspire to:

- Bring joy!
- Make every participant feel **welcome, necessary,** and **powerful**
- **Assume** nothing, except that everyone is a VIP, and everyone is an **expert** in their own experience
- **Never underestimate!**
- Create a space where we can all be our **best** selves, recognising that this means something different for everyone
- **Look after ourselves** and look out for each other, understanding that a supported team makes for a supported community.

OUR REHEARSALS

INTERACTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

- Always define people as individuals, rather than according to the organisations through which they were originally recruited. Know everyone's name and pronunciation, gender pronouns and relevant history with Public Acts. Make frequent use of people's names and take the time to help the group learn each other's names
- Understand the history, values and mission statements of all community partner organisations you will be working with
- Promote a culture of care: everyone is equally important to this process
- Ask for consent when making physical contact with people. Each person's boundaries are different and may be informed by their personal experiences or cultural and/or religious practices
- Be mindful of how your own experiences and bias can influence your interactions. Always be aware of the power and privilege you hold as a member of staff and consider how you might use that to support the group
- Check in with company members regularly to ensure they are supported and use their insights to inform next steps, as they are the experts of their own experiences
- Take advantage of opportunities to nurture positive working relationships with people. Active and consistent engagement is essential to the success of the project and building trust with participants
- Talk to Public Acts staff about your experiences with individual community members, to ensure their expertise and history with the project can help inform positive outcomes.

TIME, SCHEDULING AND LOGISTICS

- Start on time, end on time. Starting and ending on time demonstrates that we honour people's time and commitment and encourages them to honour ours

- Maintain a feeling of calm, even when the pressure is on, so that people don't feel panicked, stressed, or anxious within rehearsals

- Give a brief summary of the plan at the start of each session so that people can feel involved and in control e.g. *Today we're working on piecing together the opening and then we're going to learn the final song*

- Use people when they're called to rehearse, to ensure people feel that their time is being valued. Unless in the context of a stagger through, try and avoid having anyone sitting around for long periods of time not working

- Have a Public Acts staff member present in every rehearsal room where community members are present: this is essential for everyone's safety and wellbeing

- Know each Public Acts staff member's role and who to direct questions to so that you can advise and signpost community members as necessary

- Model best practices to keep the room focused - limit personal use of technology and mobile phones, wear appropriate clothing

- Understand the welfare support that is offered to staff and to company members, for your own benefit and to signpost others when needed.

LEARNING & DELIVERY

- Familiarise yourself with the access needs of the group and plan bespoke delivery of all material as necessary

- Be aware of different learning and communication styles, access requirements, body types, and levels of experience and confidence. Remind everyone that there is no single way of interpreting the material and celebrate the fact that there are as many different ways of doing something as there are people in the room

- Emphasise adaptation and demonstrate options when teaching material e.g. when teaching a choreographic sequence offer a chair-based version as well as a standing version, giving this equal time and value in the delivery, so that people can see how they can adapt it for their own body. Adaptation and interpretation should never be seen as an 'add on', 'after thought' or 'second best', but given equal weight and teaching time

- Create an environment that gives space for questions, as well as modelling & anticipating questions which people may feel exposed asking

- Make instructions accessible for everyone: use clear, concise language. Plan and rehearse ahead of delivery, particularly when communicating complex ideas or story beats, to ensure you are as economical with your words and as clear as possible

- Be aware that many people won't have an in-depth understanding of theatre terminology or processes. Communicate in an inclusive way and explain initialisms and acronyms

- Maintain a collaborative, as opposed to a competitive, environment

- Be attentive to the room at all times, noting when people are struggling and responding accordingly. Create controlled opportunities for questions e.g. *The Movement Associates are going to come round for the next ten minutes to answer any questions*

- Break it down without watering it down: provide step-by-step instructions to make them achievable for everyone. Be mindful of tone, speed, and language, remembering that we often speak much faster than we realise

- Offer support around line learning, including our 'tips' sheets, creating clear learning milestones, and opportunities for people to run lines either with other company members or staff

- Ensure that only one person gives instructions at a time and keep 'lead' voices to a minimum. Use a microphone to ensure everyone can hear and be heard without needing to strain. Ask for quiet, but avoid 'shh'-ing the company, or using other approaches which could be conceived of as patronising

- Be mindful of who is positioned at the front of the stage and how to rotate this: our ambition is to provide everyone the opportunity to feel central to the art

- Practise patience when offering new information. Repeat the most important instructions at the start and the end of whatever you're saying

- Be conscious that dividing up the room by perceived identities (e.g. gender, experience or age) can expose our own assumptions.

LANGUAGE

- Be thoughtful of your language and the power it holds. The words and expressions we use reveal our beliefs and assumptions about the world. They can have a far greater impact on others than we intend

- Aspire to speak to and about everyone with the greatest respect and kindness possible

- Public Acts uses the language that people use to describe themselves. We do not impose labels, generalisations or perceived identities on individuals (e.g. 'at-risk', 'marginalised', 'inner-city', 'disadvantaged')

- Refer to the community company using theatre-based language e.g. 'company', 'cast'

- NB As staff and artists we do not use the term 'family' to refer to our community, as that word holds different meanings for different people. However, we do not edit community members who choose to do so

- Each role should be spoken about with dignity and importance. Celebrate and remind the company that the community ensemble is the beating heart of a Public Acts show

- Work to use language, analogies and metaphors that humanise and uplift:
  - Use gender-neutral words to address groups e.g. 'everyone', friends', 'team', as opposed to 'ladies and gents'
  - Avoid using racialised language
  - Keep your communication free of violent idioms or phrases i.e. 'whip into shape', 'you killed it!'
  - Avoid using ablest language e.g. 'crazy', 'insane', 'lame'

- Use inclusive language e.g. 'come to your working level' rather than, 'stand up if you can'

- Be specific with your praise, to allow people to know and take ownership over what they have achieved. Be honest about where we need to keep improving

- If inviting feedback from the group, ask specific questions and control the flow of voices. Give people the chance to share their ideas in a pair before opening up a whole group discussion (e.g. *'turn to the person next to you and share two things you enjoyed about today'*) – this allows everyone to have formed and voiced an opinion, even if they don't then share it with everyone.

START AND END OF SESSIONS

- Invite everyone in the rehearsal room to participate in the warm-up, including team members or visitors, to allow a sense of everyone being in this together, and to prevent the feeling of being 'observed'

- Warm-up should create space for people to shake off their day and bring themselves into the room, allowing us as one united company to focus on the positive things we are about to experience together

- There should be a moment for company notices at the start and end of sessions as appropriate. These should be kept to a minimum, and should always involve community members where possible (happy birthdays, sharing of good news and so on.) Hold a closing moment at the end of each session which allows people to centre themselves and feel connected and proud of what we have all achieved together.

National Theatre



STAGE GLOSSARY

Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS

17 STAGE GLOSSARY

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For community members

There are lots of words used in a theatre process! Below is a glossary to make sure everyone understands what is being said. There is no pressure to learn these, they are just here for you to refer here for you to refer to if/when useful.

A

- **Associate Choreographer**: Supports the work of the Choreographer to create and teach the dance/movement within the show.
- **Associate Director:** Supports the work of the Director, working with the company to build the structure and details of the show. They also act as a link between the Creative team and the Stage Management team.
- **Assistant Stage Manager:** Supports the Stage Manager backstage.
- **Auditorium:** The area of the theatre building where the seats and the stage are.

B

- **Backstage:** The area behind the stage, including the 'wings' area at the side of the stage, dressing rooms, and other areas not visible to the audience.
- **Black out:** When the lights on stage are turned off.
- **Blocking:** The planned movement and positioning of actors on stage during a performance. In rehearsals this will involve the Director working with the actor to decide how they will stand, sit or move around the stage for each of their lines.

C

- **Call:** The time an actor must be ready for a certain rehearsal or moment in the show.
- **Choreography:** Sequences of movement created by the Choreographer to tell parts of the story.
- **Chorus:** A group of actors who comment on the play's action
- **Costume:** The clothing worn by actors to represent their characters/who they are on stage.
- **Cue:** A signal (often verbal or visual) for an actor or technician to perform an action, such as entering, speaking a line, or starting a lighting change.
- **Curtain calls:** When the actors come back on stage at the end of the play to acknowledge the audience's applause.

D

- **Dialogue:** When two or more characters talk to each other.
- **Director:** Responsible for overseeing all aspects of thes how including the creative team, staging and overall vision.
- **Direct address:** When a performer speaks directly to the audience.
- **Deputy Stage Manager:** Responsible for ensuring the show runs smoothly and that all technical elements are co-ordinated during the performances.

- **Designer:** The creative lead responsible for the visual and physical world of the show.
- **Dress rehearsal:** A full rehearsal with costumes, lights, and other technical elements in place, simulating the actual performance.

E

- **Ensemble:** A group of actors who perform together as a group.

F

- **Fly system:** A system of ropes, pulleys, and counterweights used to raise and lower scenery, lighting, or other elements in a theatre.
- **Fourth wall:** The imaginary boundary between the actors and the audience; actors typically do not acknowledge the audience's presence. However, in some shows we will 'break' this fourth wall when the performers use direct address with the audience.
- **Freeze frame:** When actors create a frozen picture of action.

H

- **House:** The audience area of a theatre, including all seating and related spaces.
- **House lights:** The general lights that illuminate the audience before the performance begins and after it ends.

L

- **Lighting Designer:** Responsible for designing and controlling the lighting effects used during a performance.

M

- **Monologue:** A speech performed by only one actor.
- **Motivation:** The reason behind a character's actions or decisions in a scene or throughout the show.

N

- **Narrative:** A storyline or plot that runs throughout the show.

O

- **Offstage**: Any part of the theatre that is not visible to the audience, including backstage areas and wings.

P

- **Physical theatre:** When the story is told through movement and action.
- **Playwright:** The writer of a play or script.
- **Projecting:** When an actor expands their voice to fill the space of the venue so that the audience can hear every word.
- **Props:** Objects used by actors during a performance.

Q

- **Quick change:** A rapid costume change that happens during a performance, often between scenes.

R

- **Rig:** A structure for supporting and using anything that hangs over the stage, such as lighting or curtains.

S

- **Script:** The written text of the play.
- **Set Design:** The visual and physical onstage surroundings for a production.
- **Sound Designer:** Responsible for creating the sound world of the show, including recorded and live music.
- **Sound Engineer:** The person responsible for the production of sound effects, recorded field music and any live sound effects.
- **Stage Manager:** Responsible for organising and coordinating all aspects of the production during rehearsals and performances.
- **Staging:** The process of organising actors and design elements on stage to best present the story.
- **Subtext:** The underlying/indirect meaning behind spoken text.

U

- **Upstage:** The area of the stage furthest from the audience.

W

- **Wings:** The left and right sides of a stage that are unseen by the audience.
- **Warm-up:** Physical and vocal exercises performed by actors before rehearsals or performances.

AREAS OF THE STAGE:

Each area of the stage has a different name. The stage name always related to the actor, for example: stage right will be on the actor's right as they face the audience.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Upstage RIGHT	Upstage CENTRE	Upstage LEFT
Stage RIGHT	Stage CENTRE	Stage LEFT
Downstage RIGHT	Downstage CENTRE	Downstage LEFT

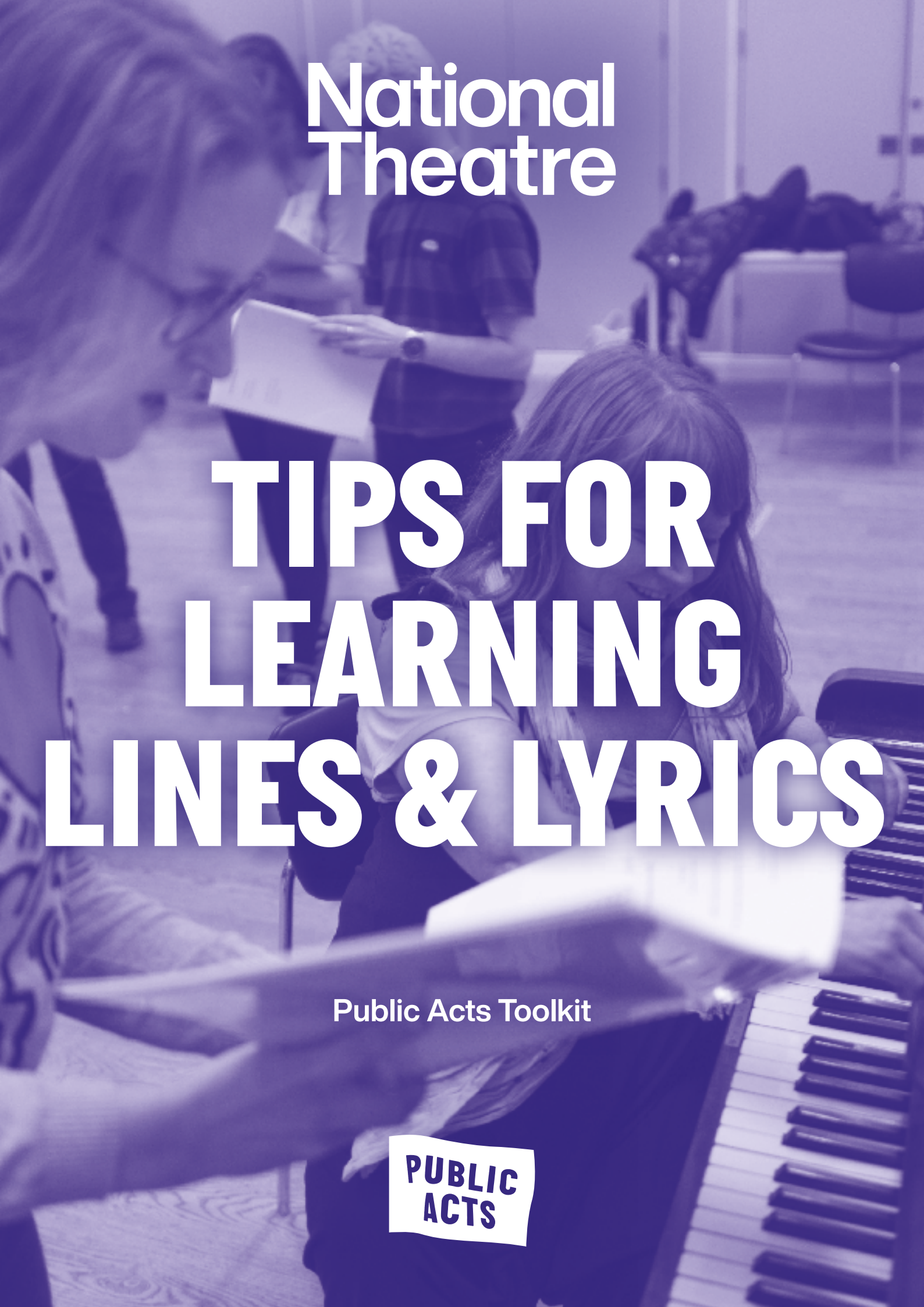
Audience

National Theatre

TIPS FOR LEARNING LINES & LYRICS

Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS



National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For community members

18 TIPS FOR LEARNING LINES AND LYRICS

Learning lines and lyrics can sometimes feel like a big and scary task! Here are a few tips to help with your learning process. Try out some different methods and see what works for you. And remember – you've got this!

1 START WITH STORY

If you know what the song or scene is about, you're more likely to remember the words. Before trying to memorise anything make sure you understand what your character is saying or singing at this point in the story and *why*. Understand the intention and emotion behind each moment.

2 BREAK IT DOWN

Instead of trying to memorise all the lines at once, break your script into smaller sections (sentences or paragraphs) and songs into 'chunks' or phrases. Focus on learning one chunk at a time. Once you've gone over one section move to the next, then go back and connect them.

With songs, the chorus is often repetitive and easier to remember. Learn this first to anchor you.

3 RECORD YOURSELF

Read your lines or sing your song out loud whilst recording yourself on your phone (or in rehearsals), then play the recording back to yourself while you are walking to work, sitting on the bus, cleaning the dishes...anything at all! Your brain will start to absorb the words without actively trying to memorise them.

4 WRITE THEM DOWN

Write your words out over and over again. Try speaking the words out loud as you do so.

5 MOVE AROUND

Move around while you're saying or singing your lines. Getting into your body will help your brain absorb the words.

6 CUES COUNT!

Always learn the line that is spoken or sung by someone else before your line. This means you will know when it is your turn to speak or sing, which is just as important as knowing what your line is!

7 ASK A FRIEND

Speak your words or lyrics out loud in front of a friend or company member while they read along with the script. They can correct you on any mistakes, give you your cue lines and go back over anything that you found hard to remember.

8 LOOK FOR THE RHYMES

Sometimes lyrics or spoken lines rhyme. When they do, use the rhymes to help remember the next lines.

9 BEFORE BED...

Studies show that learning before sleep helps with memory, so before you go to bed gently go over the lyrics or lines in your head – but be sure to then do something nice to decompress and switch off afterwards!

10 LITTLE AND OFTEN

Doing small amounts of learning regularly is much more effective than doing large chunks less regularly. Go over your words first thing in the morning, a few times during the day and last thing at night if you can. Start learning your lines as soon as you can to give them as much time as possible to sink in.

11 PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE

The more you practise, the more confident you will be. The key is patience and repetition. Try to make your practice sessions enjoyable rather than a chore, and give yourself lots of treats and rewards along the way!

12 USE THE TEACHING RESOURCES

Don't forget the handy videos and music tracks made for you by the Dance and Music teams which will guide you through practicing the big show numbers.

13 ABOVE ALL, BE KIND TO YOURSELF AND STICK WITH IT!

Learning any kind of new material takes time and can be frustrating. Even professional actors find learning lines difficult. It won't all go in straight away. Turn up for yourself, give yourself lots of grace, and be patient – you WILL get there! And remember that we are with you and here to support and champion you every step of the way!





National Theatre

TRACK SHEET

Public Acts Toolkit

PUBLIC ACTS

TRACK SHEET 19

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For community members

Name: Ros Terry
Staging colour group: Green
Name of show: *The Odyssey*

Scene	Entrance	Exit	Notes
Scene 1 (Ithaca)	A	D	Enter on 'She wouldn't let that happen'
Scene 2 (Home)	E	A	Second chorus entrances
Scene 3 (Ogygia)	A	Do not exit, stay on stage	
Scene 4 (Olympus)	At start of this scene move upstage	A	
Scene 5 (Storm)	B	C	Put on cape before entrance
Scene 6 (Sirens)	G	C	Take lantern off stage with you
Scene 7 (Hades)	D	D	Stay on stage for bows

National Theatre

TECH-SPECTATIONS

Public Acts Toolkit



20 TECH-SPECTATIONS

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For community members

Technical rehearsals (also known as 'the tech') are a really important, exciting part of our creation process. This is the time where we move the show into the theatre and all the different elements come together for the first time – music, sound, lighting, costume and set – to make our show as amazing as it can possibly be!

Over this week we will work through the entire show and end with a full run through.

LOOKING AFTER OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER

Tech can be tiring, but it is also the most magical part of the rehearsal journey in many ways! Make sure you look after yourself and allow yourself to enjoy it as much as possible by getting lots of rest, eating well, and remembering to be open, generous, brave and patient with yourselves and one another throughout the week.

CHANGING AREAS AND GETTING INTO COSTUME

You will all have an allocated changing area backstage. Changing areas will be divided into section: gender neutral, mens, womens, families and young people. People with access needs will be given extra space. We really welcome conversation about which dressing room space will make you feel the most comfortable.

This changing area is where all your costume changes will happen during the show.

You will each have an allocated chair and a box to keep all your clothes in. Your costumes will be ready for you at the start of each performance for you to get into. There will be limited space within the costume changing area so it's important you keep your clothes in your allocated box and keep the area tidy.

You must wear your correct costumes for every scene during tech. It will be hot working under the stage lights, but please be patient and remember that during the show itself you will not need to be onstage in your costumes for long periods of time.

RADIO MICS

Many of you will be required to wear a type of microphone called a 'radio mic' in the tech and performances, to make sure everyone in the audience can hear you! These will be fitted by a member of the Sound team. It is very important that you listen to instructions when you have the mic fitted and crucial that you do not fiddle with the mic or try to take it off yourself. If you find it comes loose or feels uncomfortable, please alert a member of the Sound team or Stage Management team who will be able to help.

IF YOU ARE LATE FOR A TECHNICAL REHEARSAL

We have a very limited amount of time to tech the whole show. For health and safety reasons if you have not been in the technical rehearsal for your scene you may not be able to perform in that scene in the show. Please therefore ensure you arrive on time for every technical rehearsal – we will not be able to wait for you if you are late.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are not allowed backstage during the technical rehearsals or performance because their frequency will disrupt the radio mics. We will be asking you to give your mobile phones (which we will label) to a dedicated member of the Stage Community team who will lock them in a secure space.

If anyone has any concerns about this, please speak to a member of the Public Acts team.

THE AUDITORIUM (WHERE THE AUDIENCE SIT)

There will be lots of people from the different departments sitting in the auditorium during the tech. The Lighting and Sound teams will have big desks set up with computer screens and equipment which will allow them to programme all the microphones, speakers and lights in the auditorium.

Sometimes you will be asked to sit in the auditorium – please make sure you have a cardigan or a sweatshirt with you as the air conditioning can make it a cooler space.

No food is allowed in the auditorium or backstage areas. You can bring in a bottle of water so long as it has a fixed top – your Public Acts water bottle will be perfect!

TAKING INSTRUCTIONS DURING THE TECH

Our Stage Manager will be coordinating everyone in the company and the team throughout the tech. They will always tell us where we are going from in the scene and when to start and stop, just as they have been doing in rehearsals. Please listen to them very carefully at all times.

You may be asked to repeat some parts of a scene or song several times before the Technical teams are happy that they have got everything in place. Please be patient and remember that they are working to make sure you look and sound as brilliant as you possibly can!

EXTRA STAFF BACKSTAGE

During the show our regular Stage Management team will be helping to coordinate all the props, entrances, exits and everything else. In addition, there will be a new team of additional stage managers and community staff helping manage everyone backstage. There will also be teams of people assisting with costumes, radio mics and the set. There will be a team of chaperones present to support our company's younger members.

KEEPING QUIET BACKSTAGE

It's important to keep focus throughout the tech rehearsals so that everyone has space to do their best work. Please show care and support for your fellow company members and the team by keeping conversations to a minimum. At times we will ask you to be absolutely silent and ask that you respect that request.

CHANGES AND BEING PERFORMANCE READY

There may be some changes that we need to make during the tech rehearsal. Please speak to our Stage Manager, one of our Movement Associates, or the Community Team if you are unsure or unhappy about anything at any point.

The team will be setting sound levels during the tech. It is therefore really important that you deliver all your lines and singing at performance level so that they get the level right.

BREAKS

There will be regular structured breaks during techincal rehearsals, including meal and comfort breaks. Please be aware that, for safety reasons, you cannot leave the backstage at any point during a tech session unless accompanied by a member of the Stage Management or the Backstage team.

REMEMBER – EVERYONE IS DOING THEIR BEST!

The Public Acts team will be there to guide you through the process and to answer any questions or concerns you have. Everyone will be very busy looking after you all and keeping everything on track. Please assume that everyone is doing their best and that we will respond to any requests you have as soon as we possibly can.

Thank you, and have a wonderful, memorable tech rehearsal!

National Theatre

COMMUNITY PRODUCTION WEEK SCHEDULE

Public Acts Toolkit



21

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For the team

COMMUNITY PRODUCTION WEEK SCHEDULE

This is not the full production week schedule. This is an example of what the Community team build to track the Community Company's experience. The Production Manager will weave this into the fuller production schedule which they hold.

To reduce demand on company member's time, once the detailed breakdown of each technical session has been established, individual calls can be issued to allow for as many later start times and earlier finish times as possible.

NOTES ON THE SCHEDULE

- **Full company:** In this schedule, the term 'Full company' refers to all performers i.e. the core community company, all cameo groups and professional performers
- **Cameo group and professional performer calls:** These groups are called as needed during specific tech sessions as well as for all dress rehearsals and shows
- **Children, young people and members with access or support requirements:** These participants will have schedules created separately, usually leaving early from evening sessions, in line with child performance licensing regulation
- **Ponchos:** Yes... We mean actual rain ponchos! To save precious time, company members wear ponchos over their costumes during meal breaks.

MONDAY		
17.30	**18.00**	Full company arrive and have **dinner**
18.00	**18.30**	Community company backstage orientation
18.30	**20.30**	Company members: 1) Familiarisation session on stage including theatre team introductions 2) Health and Safety briefing 3) Spacing of full company numbers on stage 4) Practice entrances and exits for full company sequences
20.30	**20.45**	Full company depart

TUESDAY		
12.00	**13.00**	Community company arrival window for optional **lunch**
13.00	**14.00**	Community company into costume (1 hour allowed as this is the first time)
14.00	**18.00**	Tech session 1 Tea break at mid-point (in ponchos)
18.00	**19.00**	Community company **dinner** (in ponchos)
19.00	**21.00**	Tech session 2 Break at mid-point
21.00	**21.15**	Community company out of costume and depart

WEDNESDAY
Day off for full company and team

THURSDAY		
12.00	**13.00**	Community company arrival window for optional **lunch**
13.00	**13.30**	Community company into costume (30 mins from this point on)
13.30	**17.30**	Tech session 3 Tea break at mid-point (in ponchos)
17.30	**18.30**	Community company **dinner** (in ponchos)
18.30	**21.00**	Tech session 4 Break at mid-point
21.00	**21.15**	Community company out of costume and depart

FRIDAY		
12.00	**13.00**	Community company arrival window for optional **lunch**
13.00	**13.30**	Community company into costume
13.30	**17.30**	Tech session 5 Tea break at mid-point (in ponchos)
17.30	**18.30**	Community company **dinner** (in ponchos)
18.30	**18.55**	Warm up on stage
18.55		The half
19.30	**21.00**	Dress rehearsal 1 (start with warm up, 90 minutes allows contingency time)
21.00	**21.15**	Community company out of costume and depart

SATURDAY		
12.00	**13.00**	Full company arrival window for optional early **lunch**
13.00	**13.30**	Full company into costume
13.30	**14.25**	Working notes and warm up
14.25		The half
15:00	**16.00**	Dress rehearsal 2
16.00	**16.30**	Full company break and out of costume
16.30	**17:00**	Working notes
17.00	**18.00**	Full company **dinner**
18.00	**18.30**	Full company into costume
18.30	**18.55**	Warm up on stage
18.55		The half
19.30	**20.30**	**Show 1**
20.30	**20.45**	Full company out of costume and depart

SUNDAY		
13.00	14.00	Arrival window for optional **lunch**
14.00	17.00	**Working notes as necessary** Tea break at mid-point (in ponchos) **Aim to call in as few people as possible**
17.00	18.00	Arrival window for optional **dinner**
18.00	18.30	Full company into costume (30 mins)
18.30	18.55	Warm up on stage
18.55		The half
19.30	20.30	**Show 2**
20.30	20.45	Full company out of costume and depart

MONDAY (BANK HOLIDAY)		
12.00	13.00	Full company arrival window for optional **lunch**
13.00	13.30	Full company into costume (30 mins)
13.30	13.55	Warm up on stage
13.55		The half
14.30	15.30	**Show 3**
15.30	16.00	Full company out of costume (30 mins)
16.00	18.00	**CELEBRATION dinner** for full company
18.00	18.30	Full company into costume (30 mins)
18.30	18.55	Warm up on stage
18.55		The half
19.30	20.30	**Show 4**
20.30	20.45	Out of costume and **AFTER SHOW PARTY** begins

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