

BIRDS OF PARADISE

Annual Report

2017-18

"Performed with a fabulously brazen swagger that dares to make the (usually) unspeakable into shockingly funny entertainment that ambushes your heart as well."



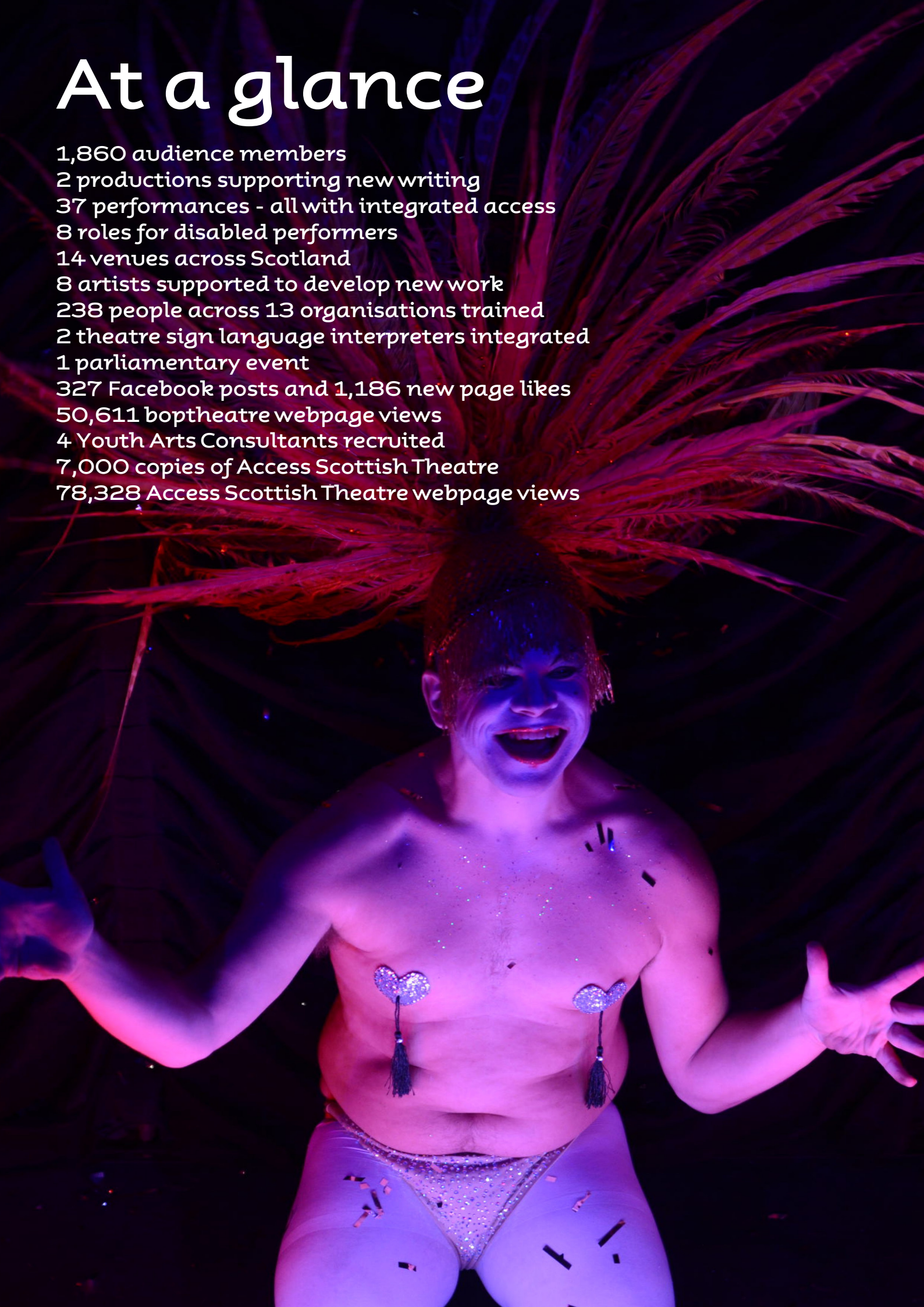
The Herald on Blanche & Butch 2017



BIRDS OF PARADISE
THEATRE COMPANY

At a glance

1,860 audience members
2 productions supporting new writing
37 performances - all with integrated access
8 roles for disabled performers
14 venues across Scotland
8 artists supported to develop new work
238 people across 13 organisations trained
2 theatre sign language interpreters integrated
1 parliamentary event
327 Facebook posts and 1,186 new page likes
50,611 boptheatre webpage views
4 Youth Arts Consultants recruited
7,000 copies of Access Scottish Theatre
78,328 Access Scottish Theatre webpage views



Foreward

I feel very fortunate to be involved with this marvellous organisation at this particular time. 2018 marks 25 years since Birds of Paradise was incorporated as a company and we take particular pride in reaching such a milestone: the impact we have as a small organisation in pushing boundaries in everything we do, is genuinely wonderful.

You can find details of all of our exciting activity within the pages of this report. We are grateful for our funding from Creative Scotland. I believe there is no greater justification for public funding than for the ground-breaking developmental work this company does. Simple market forces alone would not allow the important progress in this work for Scotland, and indeed the world. We look forward to continuing our work with our funders and the rest of our sector to continue to deliver crucial work for disabled artists and audiences in Scotland.

It has been a privilege and a joy to continue to serve on the board of Birds of Paradise and I'm sure the next year, indeed the next 25 years, will see this astounding company's continued success.

Chair of the Board, Miles Harrison

Organisational

Every year is busy at BOP but this year we took on the exceptional challenge of staging two major productions back-to-back while delivering on our development and strategic goals. In response we increased our producing capacity and sought partnerships. In January Artistic Director Garry Robson left Birds of Paradise to pursue his career as an actor and director. He remains a close friend and ally of BOP.

Our Parliamentary reception on 22nd March 2018, hosted by Patrick Harvie MSP, was a fantastic start to our celebrations in 2018. Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, gave a speech expressing the huge importance of the company's work to the Scottish arts sector and hoping that we continue to push boundaries and reach more audiences and artists - a hope that we all share.

Our board continued to steer the company through the beginning of our 25th anniversary year. Marianne Maxwell stood down as a board member in December 2017 and we received the extremely sad news of Sophie Partridge's death in June 2017. Both Marianne and Sophie had a tremendous impact on the company and were a great support to the staff and will be missed.

Blanche & Butch

by Robert Softley Gale

Directed by Kenny Miller

952 audience members

16 performances

13 venues

2 nipple tassels

Co-produced with Tron Theatre, 'Blanche & Butch' was a dazzling new production inspired by Noel Greig's 2006 play 'Heelz on Wheels'. Telling the witty and poignant story of the lives, loves and losses of the three disabled men, it was a performance of outrageous unPCness, high quality campness and deeply touching stories of men who span the generations.

Tron Theatre, Glasgow 14th - 16th Sept

2017 followed by Scottish tour and final performances at Summerhall, Edinburgh 13th - 14th Oct 2017

- ★ Challenged stereotypes of disability, sexuality & parenthood
- ★ New partnerships with venues & Luminare Festival
- ★ Audiences & participants empowered seeing lives reflected on stage

"Wonderful, really made me think. The characters were so normal and I felt involved in the show"

"Super-sexy, super-fun, super-super show! We Want more! We're hungry, we're proud, we're not scared, we want more! Thank you."

www.boptheatre.co.uk/blanche-butch



The Tin Soldier

by Mike Kenny

908 audience members

21 performances

59 cardboard boxes

30 helium balloons

5 outreach events

Directed by Garry Robson

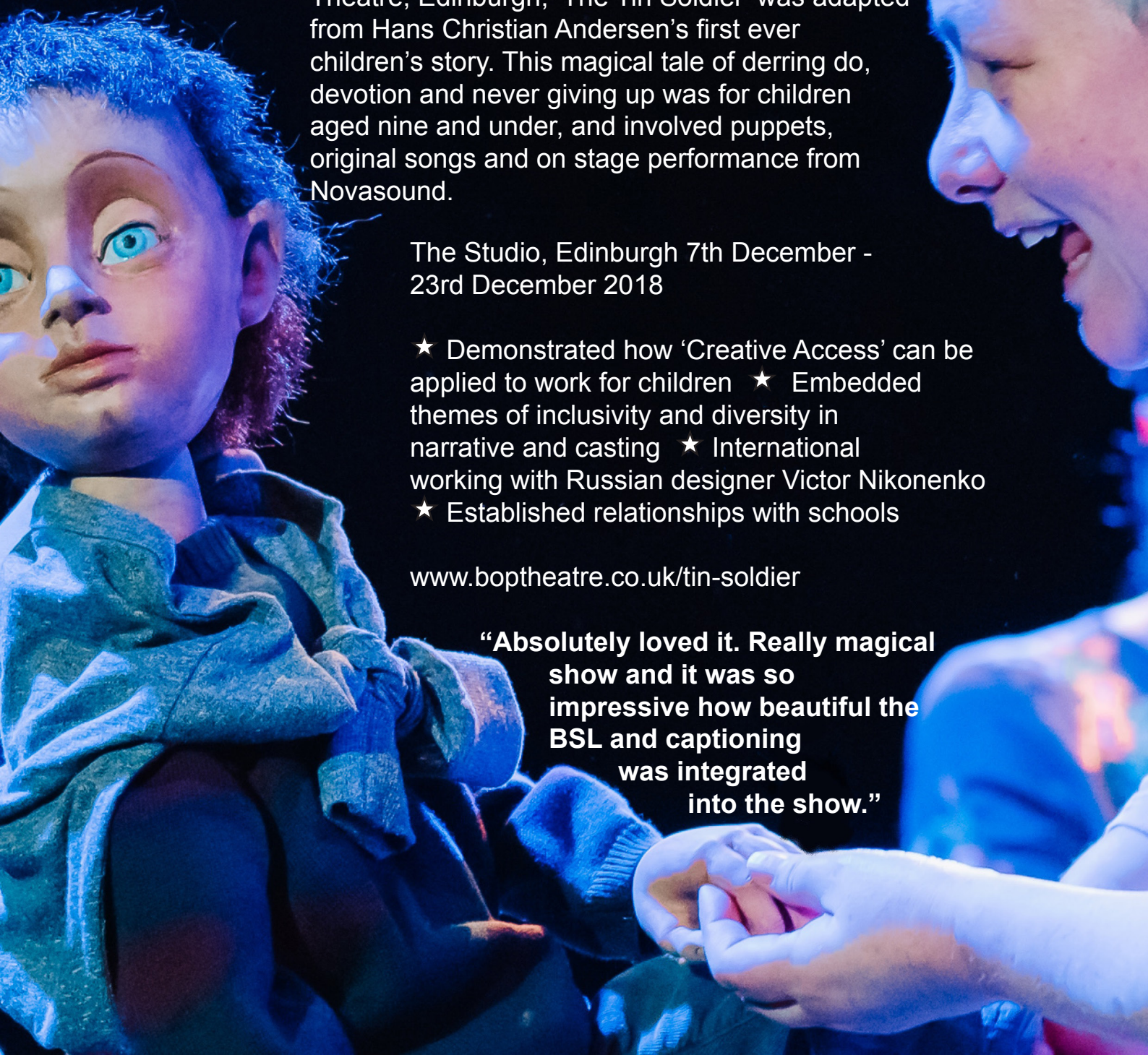
Created in association with Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, 'The Tin Soldier' was adapted from Hans Christian Andersen's first ever children's story. This magical tale of derring do, devotion and never giving up was for children aged nine and under, and involved puppets, original songs and on stage performance from Novasound.

The Studio, Edinburgh 7th December - 23rd December 2018

- ★ Demonstrated how 'Creative Access' can be applied to work for children
- ★ Embedded themes of inclusivity and diversity in narrative and casting
- ★ International working with Russian designer Victor Nikonenko
- ★ Established relationships with schools

www.boptheatre.co.uk/tin-soldier

"Absolutely loved it. Really magical show and it was so impressive how beautiful the BSL and captioning was integrated into the show."



INTERGENERATIONAL CABARET

with Luminate Festival and LGBT Age

14th October, Summerhall, Edinburgh

Working in partnership with Luminate and LGBT Age and as part of the Luminate Festival, BOP created an opportunity for developing artists to present work at the 'Blanche & Butch' closing cabaret. The artists had to be non-professional with a performance idea they wanted to develop for a cabaret performance celebrating older, disabled and/or LGBT people.

The artists received one to one development time and group workshops with professional artist and teacher Phillipa Clark.

This opportunity was developed as an outreach element of Blanche & Butch and the cabaret took place on the final night of the run.

"It was really great getting to work alongside the company and watch Blanche & Butch develop."

www.boptheatre.co.uk/intergenerational-cabaret

BOP Artists

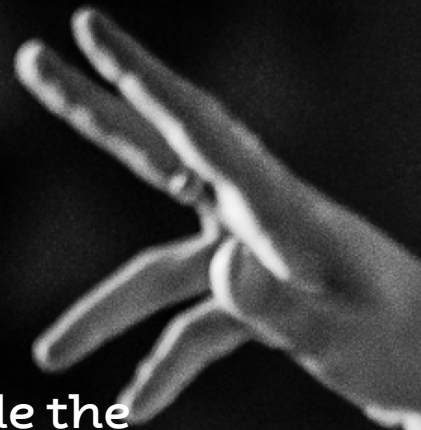
with National Theatre of Scotland

BOP Artists was a development residency for three emerging disabled artists in Scotland, with a specific creative idea they were seeking to develop. After a public call out three artists were selected - Aminder Virdee, Jen McGregor and Stuart Pyper.

The residency was split into two parts: Skills Week; Development Week, with each week taking place at National Theatre of Scotland's headquarters Rockvilla. The project concluded with a sharing at Rockvilla in November.

"Thank you to the BOP staff, and fellow artists, for such an incredible time during this residency. It has helped me in more ways that I can explain. As an artist / performer, the insight and resources BOP has shared has definitely aided to strengthen my practice."

www.boptheatre.co.uk/bop-artists





80 audience members
8 cabaret performers
2 younger artists
6 older artists
1 mirrorball

3 BOP Artists
7 skills sessions
14 artists employed
1 sharing event

BOP Development

International Working

Mexico

In January 2018 outgoing Artistic Director Garry Robson delivered training with Blanche & Butch actor Kinny Gardner across a range of arts organisations and British Council partners in Mexico City



Rwanda

In February BOP was privileged to be engaged by the British Council to deliver capacity building work in Kigali as part of the ongoing development work of East Africa Arts. Robert, Mairi and Rachel Drazek (freelance Movement Artist) devised and delivered three days of session that worked responsively to the group increasing skills and disability equality awareness.

"beauty; we see the diversity within all of us"

"This workshop has changed my previous ways of working"

www.boptheatre.co.uk/international

BOP Strategic

Training and Consultation

BOP provided training and consultancy services for organisations across Scotland, the UK and internationally (see opposite) growing our ability to generate income.

"It was incredibly practical, reasonable, and empowering giving confidence, insight and motivation to embed disability equality throughout our work."

**238 people
13 organisations**

www.boptheatre.co.uk/what-we-do/training

Youth Arts Consultants - YACS

At the launch event to our 2016 report Barriers to Access, the top priority for making the sector more accessible identified by attendees was:

Establish young person led resource to advise sector.

In response to this four disabled young people were recruited through a public call out. YACS are paid for their time undertaking consultation for the sector. In 2017/18 they consulted with Edinburgh Performing Arts Development and Youth Theatre Arts Scotland amongst others.

**£538 of paid work for YACs
£790 profit ringfenced for YACs development**

www.boptheatre.co.uk/barriers

www.boptheatre.co.uk/bop-youth-arts-consultants

Creative Licht

Partnership with Solar Bear, National Theatre of Scotland and SignArts supporting the professional development of sign language interpreters for theatre.

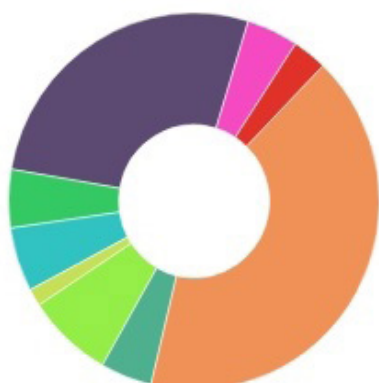
Access Scottish Theatre

**new design of print guide launched
2 x print runs of 3500 guides (Jan-Jul & Sep-Dec)
35 distribution points across Scotland
20 venues, 2 festivals, 3 national companies
448 subscribers to ebulletin
31,616 website users & 78,328 page views**

www.accessscottishtheatre.com

Finance

Income %



Creative Scotland	41.5%
Glasgow Life	4.5%
Access to Work	7.5%
Partners	1.5%
Access Scottish Theatre	5.5%
Other	5.0%
TS carried 16/17	27.0%
Box Office	4.5%
Training & Consultation	3.0%

Expenditure %



Tin Soldier	25.0%
Blanche & Butch	29.0%
YACs	0.5%
BOP Artists	3.0%
Training	1.0%
Access Scottish Theatre	2.5%
Core	39.0%

WHO we are

Staff 17/18

Robert Gale	Artistic Director
Garry Robson	Artistic Director (outgoing January 2018)
Mairi Taylor	Executive Producer
Callum Madge	Projects Officer
Michelle Rolfe	Assistant Producer

Board 17/18

Miles Harrison	Chair
Marianne Maxwell	outgoing Vice Chair
Graham Main	Vice Chair
Simon Hodgson	Treasurer
Michael Richardson	
Nazli Tabatabai Khatambaksh	
Sonali Shah	
Sophie Partridge who we and the world sadly lost in June 2017	

OUR audiences

"The first "all access" show I've seen. I loved it and perceived everything to work very well together."

"Bold, touching, completely hilarious and utterly enjoyable, Thank you for all the hard work and bravo!"

"I am a man with Asperger's and an avid actor. I used to be fearful of people's thoughts in ways that I heard spoken tonight. It is with such a delight to watch all of you mix satire with personal experience. It was very inspiring to me. You have joined the likes of Jim Henson and Dan Akroyd in expressing the gifts of the disabled world."

Blanche & Butch

"My favourite piece was the signing. I want to learn to sign now."

"My favourite bit was when they went in the fire and Kipper's silly dancing!"

"Beautiful, magical and very moving! Captivated the children and excellent non-threatening audience participation. I would love to see more of your productions."

The Tin Soldier



BOP Theatre

Compelling, engaging and accessible live performance available for touring

BOP Development

Opportunities for the next disabled artists and theatre professionals

BOP Strategic

Working with others to address disability equality in the arts

Contact

all@boptheatre.co.uk

+44 (0)141 552 1725

www.boptheatre.co.uk



BIRDS OF PARADISE
THEATRE COMPANY



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL



THE
studio

TRON
THEATRE

