



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

News from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries

Summer 2016

FOCUS

THE COHESION PROJECT

An exciting new partnership between the School of Dentistry, the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, and nationally acclaimed Theatre of Debate. After successfully securing funding through the Wellcome Trust ISSF and Research Council UK Catalyst Seed Fund (CSF), this innovative collaboration will generate a high quality theatre production to showcase the University's science research.

Recently described as 'one of the most successful and high quality projects in the Wellcome Trust's Engaging Science portfolio' by Lisa Jamieson, Head of Engaging Science, Theatre of Debate works by bringing thought-provoking questions around science and human health to schools across the UK. Selected students from the School of Dentistry and the School of Performance and Cultural Industries will be working alongside theatre director Nigel Townsend, award winning playwright Judith Johnson and world leading medical researchers to gain skills in collaborative interdisciplinary research and an insight into the world of professional scriptwriting.

Alice O'Grady, Head of the School of Performance and Cultural Industries said, "The Cohesion Project provides an innovative opportunity for our students to gain experience of working in an interdisciplinary context to generate high quality theatre and enhance cross faculty working across the University. It will lay the blueprint for future collaborations between academic units and external partners."

Rebecca Collins, Teaching Fellow in Contemporary Performance added, "This presents an excellent opportunity for our students to work with a professional theatre company and turn medical research into a dynamic and engaging performance."

An integral part of the project will involve touring to local primary schools and aims to foreground the importance of having a healthy smile alongside other oral health issues.

To date Theatre of Debate's unique model has involved over 60 scientists and 200 professionals, collaborating to create performance led engagement reaching over a million people.

"Being involved in the Cohesion Project has been a fantastic opportunity. I have been able to meet professionals from a broad range of disciplines and it has emphasised how brilliant work can be made when artists and scientists or other contrasting professions come together." Katie Mahon, a student involved in the project.

For further information visit www.theatreofdebate.co.uk



Image by Timothy Zoltie

STAGE@LEEDS WELCOMES THE RETURN OF RESTORED DALWOOD SCULPTURE

Untitled Bas-Relief, is a 6.4m by 6m sculpture in aluminium by Hubert Dalwood, one of Britain's leading post-war sculptors.

It was commissioned in 1961 and adorned the building of the University's Bodington Hall of residence – affectionately known by generations of students as 'Bod' – for more than 50 years. The sculpture was greeted with great critical acclaim from *The Guardian*, *The Times* and the *Yorkshire Post* following its unveiling. It features abstract shapes that flow across a grid of 36 rectangular sections and was Grade II listed by Historic England in 2012.

When Bodington Hall, in north Leeds, was demolished in 2013, the sculpture was carefully taken down, conserved and stored, awaiting a suitable new home on campus. It has now been installed on the stage@leeds building, the University's contemporary performance space.

Hubert 'Nibs' Dalwood was awarded a prestigious Gregory artist-in-residence Fellowship at the University of Leeds in 1955 and remained until 1959. It was during this period he first began to work in aluminium. The work at Bodington Hall was his first large-scale relief for a University building.

Eminent art historian Quentin Bell, who was the University's first Professor of Fine Art from 1959 to 1967, described it as "the largest and I think in every way the most important of Hubert Dalwood's sculptures", adding "The University may well be proud to possess such a work, and proud that it is the work of a Gregory Fellow."

The work will be included in a new version of the University's Public Art Trail, which guides visitors around its many important artworks. Free copies of the trail are available from The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery or can be downloaded online by visiting www.library.leeds.ac.uk/public-art-about



NEW OUTING FOR PHYSICAL THEATRE MOOC

A newly redesigned version of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was recently launched aimed at 16-19 year olds and their teachers. Now a two-week course, the MOOC aims to teach some of the practical skills of Russian actor training entirely online, using video tutorials and training exercises. So far the course has hosted over 7000 students studying in 90 countries and it is hoped that this shorter version of the course will be even more popular.

The course will run every four weeks, so if you miss it this time you can sign up again later. For further details visit:

www.futurelearn.com/courses/physical-theatre-exploring-the-slap

GRADUATE STARS IN COSTUME DRAMA

School of Performance and Cultural Industries graduate Lucy Telleck starred in Channel 5's *Henry VIII & Six Wives*. During her studies she appeared in *GINGERS the musical* which went to the 2009 Edinburgh Fringe Festival and was featured on the BBC's *The One Show*.



THE ERROR NETWORK

In early February, Professor Sita Popat (University of Leeds) and Professor Sarah Whatley (Coventry University) led the first meeting of the Error Network, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Researchers and practitioners from dance, theatre, art history, engineering, computational archaeology, digital design, psychology and medicine explored how error, ambiguity and glitches can be used productively to generate new work and ideas. The word 'error' has its roots in the Latin 'errare', which means 'to wander beyond the boundaries' - and the twelve Network participants wandered far beyond the comfort of their own disciplinary boundaries over the two days of the meeting. They took part in Skinner Releasing movement classes to experience how dance methods value contingency, the unexpected and the unplanned as creative tools. Discussions reflected upon body-storming, error tolerance, failure, and the importance of getting 'lost'. The Network will meet again in Sweden in September, when they will expand their practical experiences to include motion capture technologies, movement notation and rehabilitative physiotherapy, to consider what is lost and found in attempts to record and structure the moving body. The Network concludes with a public symposium in stage@leeds in December. For more information, join The Error Network group on Facebook or visit the project web site at www.errornetwork.com



CELEBRATING 400 YEARS OF SHAKESPEARE

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare. But in 1616, 5,000 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon, the great Ming Dynasty playwright Tang Xianzu also died.

The University of Leeds is organising a series of events to celebrate both anniversaries. William Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu: Celebrating a 400 Year Legacy, is a unique global collaboration to create a new stage production.

Working around the common theme of dreams, students in China and Yorkshire are simultaneously rehearsing on opposite sides of the globe, before coming together for back-to-back performances of *A Midsummer Night's DREAMING Under the Southern Bough* in Leeds (where it will premiere in late July), at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and several venues in China. Details for these performances will be published soon.

Steve Ansell is Artistic Director of the School of Performance and Cultural Industries stage@leeds theatre venue. He co-wrote the new production with colleague Dr Adam Strickson, Teaching Fellow in Theatre and Writing in the School, and is also directing it.

He said: "This is a groundbreaking project that will allow two groups, from two cultures, the opportunity to creatively explore, understand and appreciate each other's similarities and distinctions through the work of two great writers and the shared language of theatre."

The School also recently hosted performers from the city of Fuzhou, Tang Xianzu's birthplace, which the stage@leeds company will be visiting in September, when they are also touring to Beijing and Shanghai.

The Shakespeare-Tang research collaboration is among many public talks, academic lectures and an exhibition showcasing the expertise of Leeds academics during 2016, ranging from music in the Bard's work to his influence on Africa and the Middle East.

Ruru Li, Professor of Chinese Theatre Studies at Leeds, is one of those leading the Anglo-Chinese theatrical project. She said: "Shakespeare and his Chinese contemporary Tang Xianzu are the greatest playwrights of their respective theatres. Their plays make us weep, laugh and imagine; they also touch our hearts and souls.

"Our project, with Chinese students working on an English play and British students on a Chinese play, allows the two traditions to talk to each other and the two groups to commune with spirit, voice, body, and breath. It is a genuine intercultural practice, both thought-provoking and a great pleasure for everyone involved."

William Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu: Celebrating a 400 Year Legacy, is a partnership project between the University of Leeds' Staging China International Research Network, colleagues at stage@leeds; the Schools of Languages, Cultures and Societies; Performance and Cultural Industries, and English; Business Confucius Institute and Beijing's University of International Business and Economics (UIBE). The project was made possible by generous donations to the University's Footsteps Fund.



PARTNERSHIP AWARD NOMINATIONS

For the past four years the University of Leeds has lived by the terms outlined in The Partnership, an agreement setting out the mutual expectations that members of the University have of each other. The Partnership Awards recognise and celebrate the achievements, commitments and impact of students, staff, and postgraduate researchers here at Leeds.

The School has received 15 nominations shared between 9 members of staff, both from academic and Student Education Service staff members, with one member of staff gaining 5 nominations.

Categories across the nominations are Positive Impact, Inspirational Teaching, Innovation, Mentor and Supervisor. A full list of winners can be found at www.luu.org.uk/celebrate/partnership

BARBARIC AND WILD

Barbaric and Wild is a devised contemporary performance by final year BA Theatre and Performance students.

An immersive book of earth.

What do we know about the ground under our feet?

At the end of April twenty five third-year students supervised by Adam Strickson and David Shearing completely transformed Stage 1, taking near-capacity audiences on a dark and mysterious journey through a forest, to a lake and beyond. This year's immersive project was full of dancing (for performers and audience), singing and poetical images. Audiences were more than appreciative, enjoying this beautifully crafted and passionate experience. Perhaps they heard the song of the soil through the layers of concrete?



CULTURE FORUM NORTH LAUNCHES IN LEEDS

A new consortium of partnerships between higher education institutions and cultural organisations in the north of England launched in Leeds last month. Partnerships will focus on three key areas: research, cultural and creative careers, and public engagement.

The scheme will explore the possibilities of new professional development programmes in fundraising and theatre practice; collaborations that find inventive ways to share new research with the public; and professors-in-residence who can change the way an organisation thinks and acts. The Forum is free to join for cultural and HE institutions that share its values and ambitions. In joining the Forum, members commit to invest time, expertise and resource, including participating in project groups, creating new programmes and new material and advocacy. Opera North projects director Dominic Gray will be leading Culture Forum North's project group on research, and the company's DARE collaboration with the University of Leeds will be a case study for the foundation of the new consortium.

Dr George Rodosthenous, Associate Professor in Theatre Directing in the School added that 'collaborations like the DARE Partnership with arts organisations are at the heart of everything we do in PCI, so we are delighted to see the development of a new forum in the North of England which celebrates discussions between academics, students and the arts sector. This dialogue will lead to further opportunities for research, student education, employability and public engagement.'

Culture Forum North is chaired by Alistair Hudson, chief executive and director of Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.

www.cultureforumnorth.co.uk/

SPOKEN WORD PERFORMANCE AND COMEDY NIGHT PRODUCED IN ENTERPRISE PROJECT

Each year, student teams in the level 3 Enterprise Project module create, plan, and implement projects that challenge them, whether in the campus community or off-campus. Often these are events that showcase talent or raise funds for a cause, such as the following two projects that happened in Spring 2016.

Watch Your Mouth by Finn Dobson and Oliver Winnington

For our Enterprise project we formed the company, *Watch Your Mouth*, a spoken word team committed to exploring the power of performance poetry when combined with other art forms. Our debut event took place on 18 February at Holbeck Underground Ballroom, home to *Slunglow Theatre Company*, and with a community and artistic ethos that fitted well with our own. We put together an excellent team of poets, artists, performers and musicians, utilising our networking skills. We chose the theme of Home for our first event, since its broad scope of meanings has the potential to provoke a range of creative and emotive responses. The result was an impressive menagerie of poetic storytelling – humorous, political, and personal – backed by improvised music responding live to the mood. We also had an experimental piece of performance art investigating the concept of the womb as a home, and an artist who created a canvas piece depicting different themes in the poems. The night was a great success, with audience and performers coming from Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, London and Bristol, and clamours for another event before we'd even finished packing up the first. We look forward to progressing with *Watch Your Mouth* events into the future.

SoundMind by Kathleen Helm

We produced *SoundMind*, an evening of live music and comedy to celebrate matters of the mind on 9 March. *SoundMind* is passionate about battling the stigma surrounding mental health. Hosted at the prestigious Hifi Club Leeds, our debut night showcased the talents of three top comedians including the compère Harriet Dyer, Phil Ellis, and Daliso Chabonda alongside the soulful funk-rock sounds of SIFAKA (you will not find a better live band in Leeds). By bringing the community together in the company of superb artists, we hope to change the conversation about mental health to one of hope, love and understanding. All profits from the event went directly to the charity Leeds Mind and Inkwel, a unique community arts centre supporting those in need, providing a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment for a variety of arts and mindfulness events.



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