

**Workshop: How do we work better with Deaf and disabled artists and communities? 1.30pm – 3pm (1.5hours)**

Practical training opportunity for artists, practitioners, producers and cultural leaders, looking at models of integrated performance and participation.

The session **identifies barriers** to access and offers ideas for infusing programming, creative practice and project management with an understanding of the opportunities and issues.

This session aims to ensure that all artists and all participants - both disabled and non-disabled, Deaf and hearing - are welcomed equally into arts projects.

**David Ellington:** Bristol Born David is profoundly deaf and a British Sign language (BSL) User. David discovered his talent for acting in 1997 when he performed as part of the Deaf Festival at the Swan Theatre. He has worked with BBC Education and pursued a career in television film, and theatre. David has enjoyed being involved in acting and experimental film-making projects; he has been part of multiple productions with Graeae; he won Best Actor for DEF in the Deaf Oscars; and he was also part of the London 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony.

**Becky Chapman:** is Executive Producer for Diverse City. She has worked as a freelance Producer, project manager, workshop facilitator, actor and theatre director in the UK and Australia.

**1. Introduction who we are (see above).** Participants introduce themselves in pairs and share why people chose the session – why is it important to them to work better with Deaf and Disabled people: To learn new tools particularly in terms of communication; to find out what we can we do that is different; to get away from 'norms' on stage; to create 'relate-able' art; we have a feeling of missing out and of wasting talent, participants, audiences because we are not accessing these people; find out if what we programme is accessible and if we are offering the right ways of engaging; find out how to initiate first dialogues and to pursue aesthetic explorations.

**2. Why Diverse City wanted to run the session:** CPP areas seem like natural allies and our work with Left Coast and Appetite in 2015 confirmed this for us. We toured Extraordinary Bodies in 2015 to these two areas who took a risk on a new company and a new show.

**3. Extraordinary Bodies** in the UK's professional integrated circus company where disabled and non-disabled professional artists work together. It is a partnership between Cirque Bijou and Diverse City. Our first show was 'Weighting' and we are now developing our next work to tour in 2018/19.

---

**4. Why work with CPP areas?**

We feel that our work can support and extend the work of the CPPs to challenge

who has permission to 'hold the stage' in the arts and society.

Approximately 20% of the (working age) population is registered disabled. If you add to this percentage those who are not registered, those who are elderly (and those with other mobility challenges such as having young children) the % is higher. In disadvantaged communities incidents of disability and disabling illness - such as obesity and diabetes - are much higher. Possibly as high as 50%

In any cultural setting - in terms of audiences, communities, on stage - disabled people should be represented in this proportion as a matter of social equality. If we receive public money we are all responsible for ensuring that everyone in our community can benefit.

However, there are also structural reasons for these people don't appear – people have been marginalised, cannot access information, are isolated by social attitudes and policy. It is critical therefore that that the arts work actively to achieve this level of representation. We cannot be passive if we want to see social justice. We cannot be passive if want the work to be excellent.

In today's workshop we will explore the experience of deaf people. We will then consider practical actions we are taking or can take that include everyone. (Access is quite often focused on mobility impairments – wheelchair users make up less than 4% of disabled people)

---

## 5. David - brief intro to Deaf culture and intro to British Sign language

Hand warm up in circle – rubbing, wriggling, shaking etc Finger spelling A-Z In pairs spell your name.

**How do you manage an encounter with a deaf person?** David set up short role-play with Becky in 'box office' What did they notice? What worked? Practical suggestions from group about strategies for communication: Top tips: have pen and paper handy, have a brochure nearby, take time, have an usher on hand to offer support to ensure that they reach the right place in the building.

**Small change, Big Impact:** David explain changes that have happened through his work at Watershed as Agent for Change: BSL on website and on front of house screens, staff given basic BSL vocabulary to enable them to communicate with a deaf person.

---

6. Viewing of video of *Weighting* in Southwark 2015 to see how different elements came together in show *Weighting*. Questions and observations

Quote from Ayad demonstrating how the work is relate-able and understood by people who face other barriers, but who may not be disabled.

David Ellington and Becky Chapman Diverse City Sept 2016 Creative People and Places Conference Doncaster. B.chapman@diversecity.org.uk

*"The show was deep and meaning-Full! I felt sad, and little but ashamed on how people who think they are 'Normal' neglect the potentials of those called disabled... who happen to be abled...able to stand, able do, and able to make the leap... The last part of the show did turn my sadness into a grasped smile with contentedness ... the story was easily communicated. Jamie was the core of the show by challenging the gravity and standing up... passing the message that we all need to physically and emotionally stand up for a cause. Deb: she made me want to give her zero score in the safety measures as she swiftly did all the dangerous moves! She proved that her single hand can challenge the risk many hands and minds fear to encounter. Karina, with her lovely smile, communicated the message through her role very clearly... it was all about how you want to see things and not how they really look. All other stars were sparkling in a way that by observing one, I would miss the creativity of others. I am very much impressed by Helen's skillful and super control on the hoola hoop rims... She by herself can be a single show and I would love to see her under a spot light in a night show... this would reveal how she makes the rim looks standstill in the air."*

---

## **7. Small group discussion**

What are you already doing that is working and what could you do more of?  
Work with the right experts and partners – eg local organisations with useful knowledge and connections (non- arts) Doncaster Deaf College Doncaster Visually impaired Society; Talk about the elephants in the room – ask how we can support people; Make a checklist of potential barriers; Develop new audience who appreciate accessibility; outdoor work can work well; Find tools such as Makaton; co commission and collaborate; appoint disabled board members; 'Safe Place' scheme (eg Custom House); basic BSL training; work with local advisory groups to get feedback on accessible marketing and assistance in designing documents; Vocal-Eyes run training courses and design Audio Description; set up integrated work spaces; aesthetic exploration – eg deaf poetry; exploration of virtual headsets for care homes and people with dementia. Budget for Access (access budget for *Weighting* was over 40k, but depending on the project, you can argue that these fall outside the project budget and do not need to be part of the % match)  
Use the government scheme Access to Work: a disabled artist can claim back access costs from this scheme to enable them to access the workplace.

---

## **Offer from Diverse City**

Diverse City can do bespoke 'Agent for Change' work. We bring in artists to review what is happening in '360' way and develop a path forward to increase diversity and access. Previously Diverse City has worked for the ACE sponsored Agents for Change programme, working with venues Bristol Old Vic, Plymouth Theatre Royal. We can work with a team for anything from one day, to 10 days or to 6 months: Small investment for big return.

Handouts available on [www.doingthingsdifferently.org.uk](http://www.doingthingsdifferently.org.uk)

1. Actions to tackle inequality in employment
2. Language Guide - easy read print out
3. Guidelines\_for\_Touch\_Tours\_Sep\_2014 copy

David Ellington and Becky Chapman Diverse City Sept 2016 Creative People and Places Conference Doncaster. [B.chapman@diversecity.org.uk](mailto:B.chapman@diversecity.org.uk)

4. Access Budget example
5. How to reach deaf audiences