

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY
TO KILL A REVOLUTIONARY

RED ELLEN



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ENGLAND



Nottingham
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Introduction

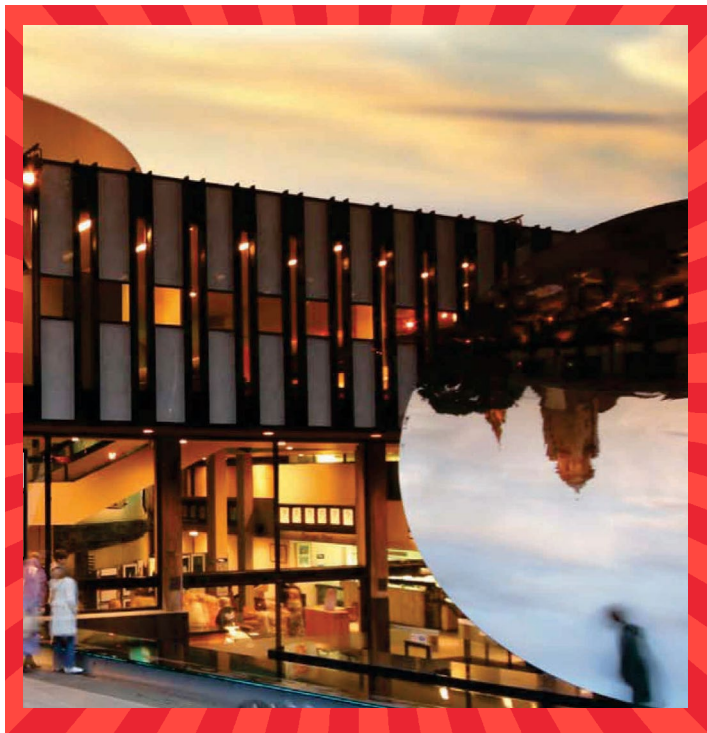


Photo: Drew Baumohl

We create theatre that's bold, thrilling and proudly made in Nottingham.

Awarded Regional Theatre of the Year 2019 by The Stage, Nottingham Playhouse is one of the country's leading producing theatres and creates a range of productions throughout the year, from timeless classics to innovative family shows and adventurous new commissions.

We want our theatre to be a space where everyone feels they belong, and we use our stage to tell diverse stories that reflect our city. Our wide-reaching participation programmes create life-changing experiences for our community and we also support the next generation of theatre-makers in the East Midlands through our extensive Amplify programme.

Nottingham Playhouse is also a registered charity (no. 1109342). All of the funds we raise help to ensure we're reaching as many people as possible to give them new opportunities and create lasting memories.

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Co-production

Northern Stage

Northern Stage is a registered charity. A theatre where ideas meet and futures change - where we reach beyond the ordinary every time.

Every year thousands come to create and share unique live experiences at Northern Stage. Our home in Newcastle is an inspirational and creative place (with a mean cafe/bar) that belongs to you.

Everyone is welcome.

Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh

The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company is Scotland's leading producing theatre. With a strong reputation for excellence in both classical and contemporary work The Lyceum is committed to developing Scotland's considerable indigenous talents while presenting the best of international drama. The Company rehearses in its own rooms opposite the theatre, and costumes and sets are designed and built at The Lyceum's workshops in Roseburn.

Cast and Creatives

Cast

Ellen - **Bettrys Jones**

Annie/Cast - **Helen Katamba**

David/Cast - **Jim Kitson**

Isabel/Cast - **Laura Evelyn**

Otto/Cast - **Sandy Batchelor**

Herbert/Cast - **TBC**

Mr Ansley/Cast - **TBC**

Creatives

Director - **Wils Wilson**

Writer - **Caroline Bird**

Set and Costume Designer - **Camilla Clarke**

Composer and Sound Designer - **Jasmin Kent Rodgman**

Lighting Designer - **Kai Fischer**

Wardrobe Supervisor - **Naomi Daley**

Assistant Director - **Bex Bowsher**

Production Manager - **Lesley Chenery**

Deputy Stage Manager - **Nichola Reilly**

Assistant Stage Manager - **Grace Branch**

Dresser - **Laura Jane Aitman**



Red Ellen

"I'm not a spy."

"A working class woman inside the walls of Westminster? If that is not espionage, I do not know what is."

This remarkable new play from Caroline Bird tells the inspiring and epic story of Ellen Wilkinson, Labour MP, who was forever on the right side of history, forever on the wrong side of life.

Caught between revolutionary and parliamentary politics, Ellen fights with an unstoppable, reckless energy for a better world. Running (quite literally in some cases) into the likes of Albert Einstein and Ernest Hemingway, she battles to save Jewish refugees in Nazi Germany; campaigns for Britain to aid the fight against Franco's Fascists in Spain; and leads 200 workers in the Jarrow Crusade, marching from Newcastle through Nottingham and the Midlands all the way to London, delivering a petition which aimed to end unemployment and poverty. She serves as a vital member of Churchill's cabinet, and has affairs with communist spies and government ministers. But, despite all of this, she still finds herself – somehow – on the outside looking in.

This is the story of Ellen Wilkinson.

There is more than one way to kill a revolutionary...



About The Author

Caroline Bird is a British poet, playwright and author. She was born in 1986 and grew up in Leeds before moving to London in 2001.

She has published six collections of poetry, one of which was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize and The Ted Hughes Award in 2017. Bird was one of the five official poets of the London 2012 Olympics and her poem, "The Fun Palace" is erected on the Olympic Site outside the main stadium.

Caroline Bird began writing plays as a teenager when she was the youngest ever member of the Royal Court Young Writer's Programme, tutored by Simon Stephens.

She is also an enthusiastic leader of poetry workshops. In addition to working in primary and secondary schools, she is also a regular teacher at the Arvon Foundation.



Jarrow March

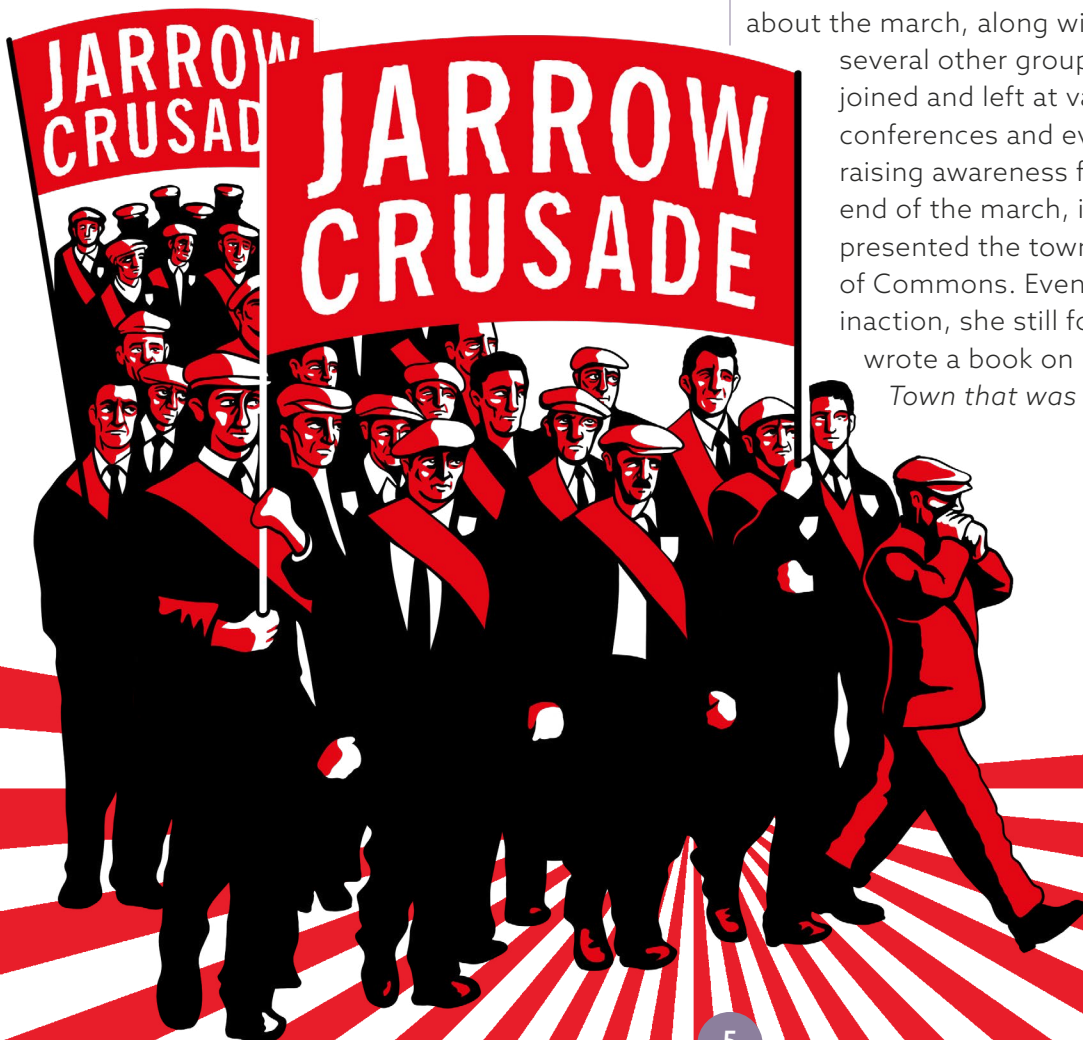
In Ellen Wilkinson's first term representing Jarrow in parliament, the working-class in the constituency were facing an unemployment and poverty crisis. The development of a shipyard in 1851 made shipbuilding a key part of Jarrow's economy and employment rates. However, due to increased ship production overseas and some company mismanagement, Jarrow's shipyard was closed by the National Shipbuilders Security Ltd in 1934, leaving thousands of people out of work. There were some plans to build a steelworks in the town to strengthen the economy, but these plans never came to fruition due to the opposition of the British Iron and Steel Federation. The failure of these plans added to the town's anger and contributed to their decision to march on London.

200 men were selected to march out of 1200 volunteers and in October of 1936 they set off, aiming to reach London in November. The

demonstrators walked a total of 291 miles over 26 days. After arriving in London, the marchers held public meetings and their petition for government intervention, which had over 11000 signatures, was presented to Parliament. However, after all their efforts, the Government was unmoved and suggested that there was some improvement in employment rates so refused to act. Still, the march inspired many and Sir John Jarvis announced plans to build new industries in Jarrow during the London visit, which brought some aid to their unemployment crisis.

Even before her election in 1935, Wilkinson was working to improve the situation in Jarrow, introducing the Prime Minister to unemployed constituents and applying to him for help. Immediately after she became the MP for Jarrow, she brought the constituents' plight to the House of Commons in the opening debate of the new parliamentary session. She was deeply enthusiastic about the march, along with the town's mayor and

several other groups. During the march she joined and left at various points to attend conferences and events around the country, raising awareness for their cause. At the end of the march, it was Wilkinson who presented the town's petition to the House of Commons. Even after the Government's inaction, she still fought for Jarrow and even wrote a book on its history entitled *The Town that was Murdered*.



Ellen Wilkinson

Ellen Wilkinson, nicknamed 'Red Ellen' for her red hair and socialist politics, was a British politician invested in socialism, women's suffrage, and workers' rights. She served as a Member of Parliament in the Labour Party for several years after multiple re-elections and is well known for the role she played in the Jarrow March (1936).

Timeline

1890s

★**1891:** Ellen Wilkinson was born in Manchester on 8 October

1900s

★**1906:** Wilkinson was awarded a bursary of £25 that she used to begin training as a teacher – she began attending the Manchester Day Training College whilst teaching part-time at an elementary school

★**Aged 16** Wilkinson joined the Independent Labour Party – a party that established itself in 1893 in response to a reluctance from the Liberal Party to support working-class candidates

1910s

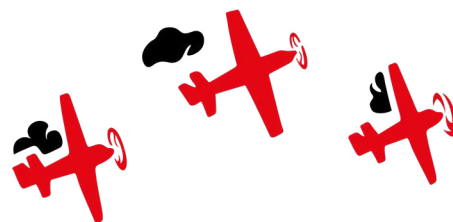
★**1910:** Wilkinson started studying at Manchester University after being awarded the Jones Open History Scholarship. Here, she became the joint secretary of the Fabian Society (a British socialist organisation that believes in advancing socialism through reformation), joined the Manchester Society for Women's Suffrage, and was elected to the executive committee of the University Socialist Federation

★**1913:** Wilkinson was employed by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies after leaving university and took part in organising the Great Pilgrimage in July (a march to a mass rally in London for women's suffrage)

★**1914:** After WW1 began, Wilkinson worked as the honorary secretary of the Women's Emergency Corps' Manchester branch

★**1915:** Wilkinson joined the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees as a national organiser and led strikes fighting for the rights of unskilled workers





1920s

★**1920:** Wilkinson, inspired by the Russian Revolution in 1917, became one of the founding members of the Communist Party of Great Britain

★**1923:** The National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (formed from the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees) sponsored Wilkinson as a parliamentary candidate and, although she unsuccessfully attempted to gain nomination from the Labour Party as the parliamentary candidate for Gorton, she was appointed to the Manchester City Council

★**1924:** Wilkinson was elected as the Labour MP for Middlesbrough East in a majority Conservative government

★**1927:** Wilkinson was elected to the Labour Party's National Executive, meaning she could help draft party policy

★**1929:** Wilkinson was re-elected as the Labour MP for Middlesbrough East, but in a majority Labour government and was appointed as Susan Lawrence's Parliamentary Private Secretary

1930s

★**1931:** Wilkinson was defeated in the general election by the National Government candidate

★**1932-33:** Wilkinson visited India and Germany and wrote on the conditions in each country

★**1935:** Wilkinson was elected as the Labour MP for Jarrow but in a National Government majority

★**1936:** Wilkinson took part in a march from Jarrow to London protesting the town's unemployment crisis, and at the end she presented the town's petition to the House of Commons

1940s

★ **1940:** Wilkinson became the Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Pensions in Churchill's all-party coalition and then transferred to the Ministry of Home Security

★**1943-44:** Wilkinson became the vice-chairman and then chairman of Labour's National Executive

★**1945:** Wilkinson became the third woman to be appointed Privy Counsellor (council advising the sovereign of the UK); Wilkinson was also appointed Minister of Education after Labour's general election win in this year

★**1945-47:** As Minister of Education, Wilkinson put great emphasis on implementing the 1944 Education Act, which made secondary education free and raised the minimum school leaving age

★**1946:** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation was created following an international conference Wilkinson chaired a year prior

★**6 February 1947:** Wilkinson died of heart failure from various illnesses



Socialism – key facts and definitions

Oxford English Dictionary:

Socialism

“A theory or system of social organisation based on state or collective ownership and regulation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange for the common benefit of all members of society”

- ★ All forms of socialism share the value of social ownership
- ★ Socialist politics have come to signify anti-capitalist beliefs
- ★ Socialism is an umbrella term that encompasses varied forms and systems such as communism, social democracy, and Marxism
- ★ The Soviet Union was the first self-declared socialist state in the world
- ★ The term ‘socialism’ was coined by Henri de Saint-Simon
- ★ Marxism is one of the most well-known strands of socialism and is a philosophy based on the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who wrote The Communist Manifesto in 1848
- ★ Socialism as a self-conscious movement was developed from the early 19th century onwards





Character breakdown

Ellen Wilkinson – The titular character, 'Red Ellen' is a British Member of Parliament born in 1891. In the play, Ellen Wilkinson spans the ages of 41 and 55 and we see her interests exploring unemployment issues, communism and anti-fascism.

Annie Wilkinson – Born in 1881, Annie is Ellen's older sister. Due to their different ages and outlooks, she often clashes with her sister.

Herbert Morrison – Herbert Morrison is a Labour politician and Leader of the London County Council. He is also the Labour party's leading anti-Communist.

Otto Katz – In a Communist hangout in London, Ellen meets Otto Katz, who hails from Czechoslovakia. He is a Soviet Propagandist and Comintern Agent.

Isabel Brown – Isabel is a friend and colleague of Ellen's. The two grow apart as their interests change over time. A prominent British Communist activist, Isabel is also the leader of the British Committee for Relief of the Victims of German Fascism – a group that often becomes entangled in Communist discourse.

David – A constituent of Ellen's, David is a local man from Jarrow. He worked as a sheet metal worker all of his life but now tackles unemployment during the unemployment crisis in Jarrow.

Lily – Lily is a young woman from the tenements in the East-end of London, with four children.

Mary – Lily's mother, Mary, is also a lifelong East-ender. She is in her early sixties and has six children.

Winston Churchill – Winston Churchill is a Conservative Party MP, who served as the British Prime Minister during World War 2.

Mr Ansley – Mr Ansley is a representative for the Jarrow Labour Exchange.

Albert Einstein – An acclaimed theoretical physicist, Albert Einstein is affected by Ellen's work in anti-fascism due to his status as a Jewish man in Germany.

Ernest Hemingway – Ernest Hemingway is a renowned American author.

John Dos Passos – John Dos Passos is another well-known American author.

Activities

Creative Writing Task: Political Address Pt 1

During *Red Ellen*, we see the titular character make political addresses to fundraising organisations, party conferences, and Parliament.

What topic would you address Parliament about? Choose a subject you're passionate about and write a political address to Parliament.



Think about: catering your tone to the audience; the formality of your address; literary techniques to make your point as powerful as possible.

Performance Task: Political Address Pt 2

Now that your speech is written, you need to practice performing it!

Experiment with different intonation, expression and tone of voice to see what makes your message most effective.

Analysis Task: Fact or Fiction – identifying elements of Propaganda

During the play, Ellen discusses the disjunction between truth and Propaganda.

Find a transcript of a political speech and annotate it identifying elements of truth or propaganda. Add comments explaining what ascribes it to either category.



Top tip: Transcripts of debates and speeches made in Parliament are available online at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>



Research Task: Political Marches

The Jarrow March was revolutionary in intention, and despite Government's inaction, many people credit the changing attitudes that led to social reform to marches like this.

Choose a political march from throughout history and research its causes, aims and effects. You can write this in basic bullet points or challenge yourself and develop it into a research essay.

Playwriting Task: Plan a Political Play

Red Ellen is a political drama, in that it portrays a politician and a series of political events.

Choose a moment in politics or a politician's life to turn into a political drama. Research your choice and plan how to turn it into a political play.



Think about: which characters would be protagonists or antagonists; which moments are important to include for either plot or meaning; the dialogue each character would use.

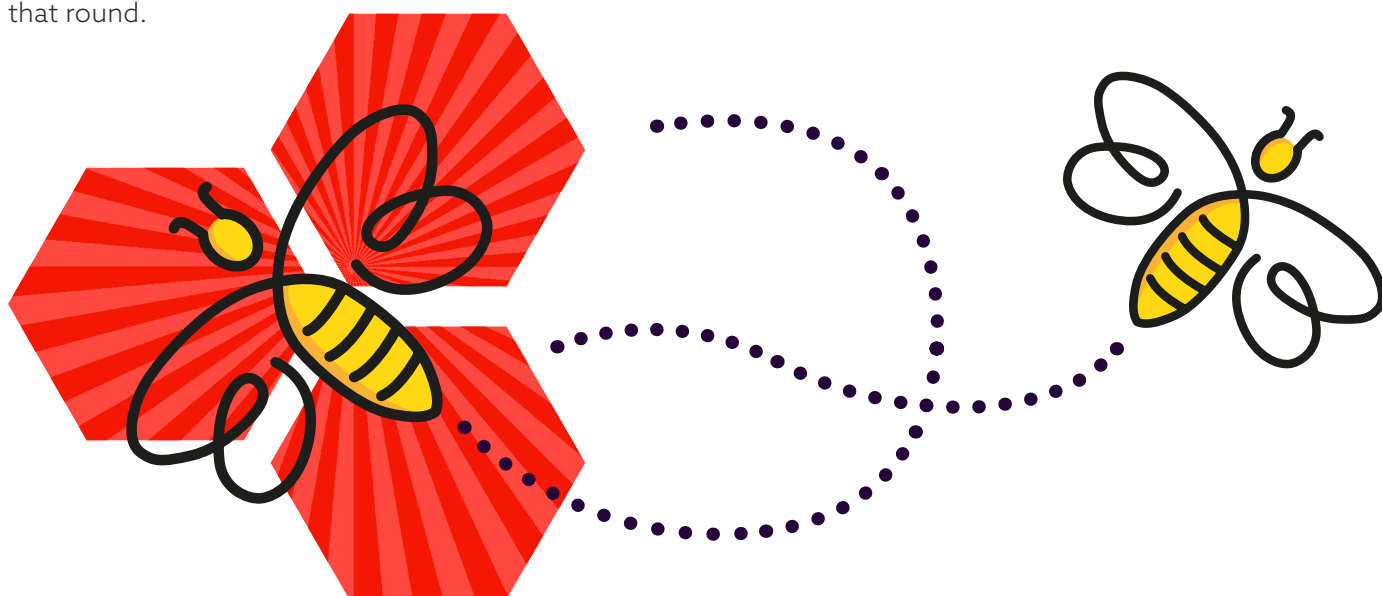
Rehearsal Techniques

Warm Up Games

• **Grandma's Footsteps** is a great one.

You can use it at every stage of rehearsal to build group co-hesion, play with character relationships, or build obstacles that they have to overcome. Fun and great for focus. Try changing the shape of the space, playing the game as characters or playing in pairs on piggyback!

• **Buzzy Bees:** Walk around the space, 'buzzing' like a bee and flapping your wings. On the call, get into groups (which can be determined at the beginning of the game). Once in the groups, form an image starting with a specific letter of the alphabet. This image could be random, or it could be something from the text they are working on. (eg: Create something beginning with the letter D that you might find in Romeo's bedroom!) The best image is deemed the winner by the facilitator, and if you create the same thing as another group, you lose that round.



Text

• **Facts and Assumptions:** Starting with your script, and working in groups if preferable, find out all the facts about a specific character. Once they've done that, assumptions can also be made based on these facts, building a set of Given Circumstances for each character in the play. This can then be shared with the group so that the Given Circumstances for the whole play can be set.

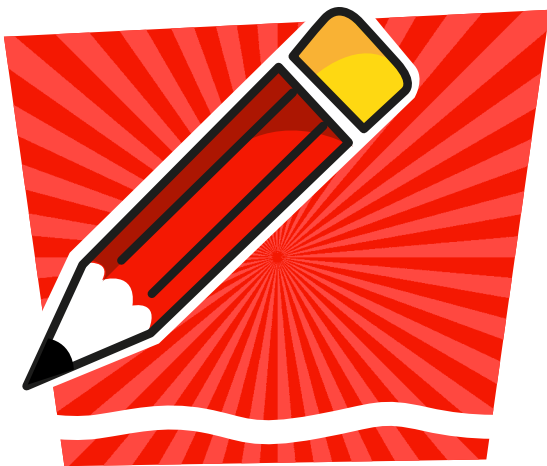
• **Bite Size Storytelling:** In groups, take a short scene from the play. The group have to tell the story of the scene in whatever way they feel fit. They can take key lines that highlight the main events, or they can create a series of freeze frames depending on the ability of the group. The scenes need to be kept short and the stories within the scene isolated. You can then stick the whole show (or chunks of it) together so that you create the whole thing in their own way.

Rehearsal Techniques

Devising

• **One Word Storytelling:** In a circle, a story is created using only one word each. You can give each story a theme or a stimulus, or you can see where the story goes and use that as an idea for devising. (Beware of rude stories!)

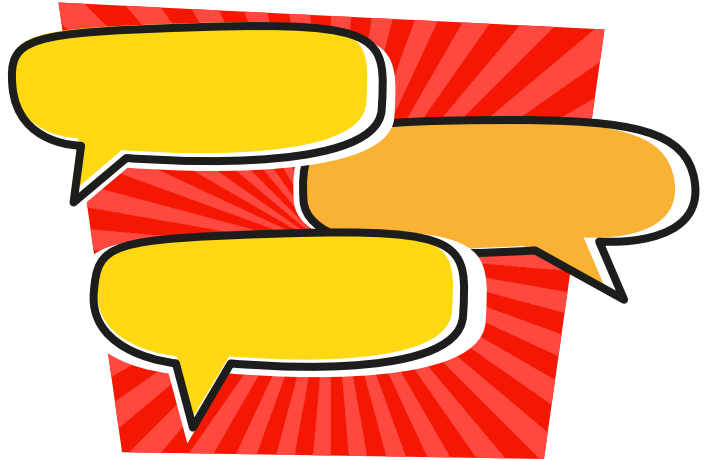
• **Improvisation With Object:** Each group is given an object. They have to create a short scene with the object as the central focus. You can do this in a couple of ways. First – they have to use the object as it actually is (a brush must be used as a brush) , or the object cannot be used literally (the brush becomes a microphone or a spade).



Character/Plot Development

• **Acting The Objectives:** Each actor plays a scene that they have rehearsed, but instead of speaking the dialogue, they state what they WANT to do to the other people in the scene, for example 'I want to make you jealous'. This is useful if you have been able to action the text first, and it also helps with the reactions of the other actors in the scene.

• **Warm Up Games in Character:** Playing warm up games such as Grandma's Footsteps or Name Volleyball can be really useful for character development to help explore attitude and relationships with other characters. Competition can help to highlight status of characters and can provide an interesting discussion when things don't follow the same outcomes as the play.



Polish/Final Stages

• **Line, Scene, Go:** The director shouts a random line to the company. They are instantly expected to get themselves into position and pick up the play at the point of the line. Run a couple of moments – then shout another line which they all then run to. Great for keeping things fun and fresh – and for highlighting points of confusion or those who are less sure of their lines.

• **Peer Note Taking:** Whilst the director is focusing on the overall vision of the piece, peer note taking can be a really useful tool for each actor. Pair people up with others who aren't in the scene. The actor can tell their note taker if there is any specific thing that they'd like their note taker to focus on (such as diction or intonation), or specifics can be stated by the director. Positive notes and room for improvement can be highlighted. You will generally find that they are really positive about each other's performance and it is a great way of developing self-reflection too.



Theatre Practitioners

Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1953)

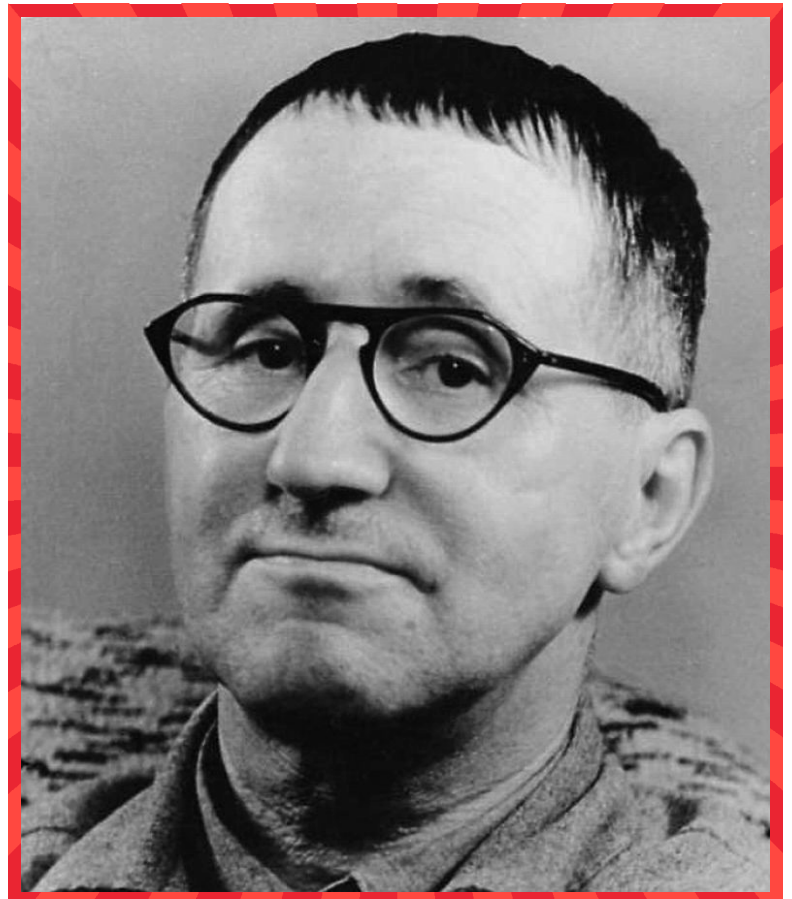
Born in 1898 in Augsburg Germany and sickened by the impact of the First World War, Bertolt Brecht began studying theatre in 1917, and wrote his first plays *Baal* and *Drums in the Night* in 1918. By 1921 he had arrived in Berlin where he soon became involved with a large number of Berlin's leading actors and directors.

When discussing Brechtian theatre, we are fundamentally examining **theatre of Politics**. Brecht was reacting directly against the Fascist regime and, following the teachings of Karl Marx, Brecht's writings were focused on a **Marxist ideology**.

Brecht was a Playwright, Director and Poet who created what we now know as Epic Theatre. Epic Theatre was a reaction against Naturalism, and aimed to provoke the audience into action. This was a theatre of change. He believed that theatre should not only reflect the world, but change it. After watching one of his plays, Brecht hoped that the audience would leave the theatre determined to take action against the unfair society they were living in. He did this through the development of the *Verfremdungseffekt* – or **Making Strange**.

The V effect is also known as the A effect, or **Alienation effect**, and is essentially a range of devices that Brecht used to prevent the audience becoming emotionally attached to the characters within the plays. He wanted them to maintain a '**distanced objectivity**' so that they could see things as they really were. An example of these techniques were: **Audience interaction (breaking the fourth wall)**, **Narration**, **Montage**, **Gestus (Gesture with attitude)**, **Spazz**, **Song**, **Mime** and **Third Person Dialogue**.

Brecht's impact was so pertinent that he had to flee from the Nazi regime in 1933, only to return to Germany in 1948 after the end of the Second World War. In 1949 Brecht created the **Berliner Ensemble** where he continued to develop his work until his death in 1956.



Notable Works

- **The Threepenny Opera**
- **Life of Galileo**
- **Mother Courage and Her Children**
- **The Good Person of Szechwan**
- **The Caucasian Chalk Circle**
- **Mr Puntilla and his Man Matti**
- **The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui**

Highlighted Information

- Fundamentally examining theatre of Politics
- Writings focused on a Marxist ideology
- Created what we now know as Epic Theatre
- A reaction against Naturalism
- Aimed to provoke the audience into action
- Not only reflect the world, but change it

Theatre Practitioners

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863 – 1937)

Konstantin Stanislavski, born to one of the richest families in Russia in 1863, is widely credited with the development of the first form of formal actor training in the modern world, most commonly referred to as his **System**. Set out across three major books, *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character* and *Creating a Role*, Stanislavski was the first to document a process which trainee actors could follow in order to create the image of **truth on stage**.

Stanislavski's privilege and wealth enabled him to create an alternative theatre to the melodramatic and declamatory style which was prevalent in Russia at the time. He dedicated his life to changing outmoded practice with a desire for perfection that led to international success. With barely any training, he embarked on a quest for truth in art and devoted his whole life to this journey. In 1897, he and **Nemirochov-Danchenko** created **The Moscow Art Theatre** to develop and shape his ideals.

The System that he developed aimed to be a systematic approach to lay down ground rules for approaching character, and for how an actor could use their voice and body effectively to **fully embody a character** on stage. Working closely with playwright **Anton Chekhov**, Stanislavski was able to experiment with text and actors in order to hone and develop his teachings.

Exercises that are included in The System and that are still widely used in actor training today include: **Emotion Memory**, **The Magic 'If'**, **Circles of Concentration**, **The Method of Physical Actions**, **Imagination**, **Relaxation** and **Action with a Purpose**.

These exercises still form the basis of most actor training in the western world which is a testament to how truly influential Stanislavski has been in the development of actor training.



Notable Works

- Founder of the MAT Stanislavski's 'system'
- *An Actor's Work*
- *An Actor's Work on a Role*
- *My Life in Art*

Highlighted Information

- The first form of formal actor training
- Create the image of truth on stage
- An alternative to the melodramatic and declamatory style
- Fully embody a character on stage
- A systematic approach

Theatre Practitioners

Steven Berkoff (1937 – present)

Steven Berkoff is a British Actor, Director and Playwright who was born in London in 1937. Berkoff trained as a mime artist at the **Lecoq School** in Paris before he began developing his own work. Alongside the many plays that he has written, Berkoff has also had a successful career in film; often playing the sinister 'bad guy' character.

Berkoff's approach to theatre is incredibly **physical and non-naturalistic**, often focusing on **movement rather than voice**. According to him, the only purpose of a script is to help '**minimalise and physicalise**' the story; stripping it down to its most basic components.

The theory of **Total Theatre** is key to Berkoff and stemmed from Artaud's theatre style. Total Theatre maintains that every aspect of theatre must have purpose: every movement, that is choreographed; to each line, that is learned perfectly; to each lighting effect, that is used to convey a mood or message; to each sound effect, that enhances the audience's experience; to each prop that has a use.

The aim of Total Theatre is to create extreme moods to give the audience an overwhelming experience and to shock, amuse, scare, or amaze them. Berkoff particularly embraced this in his **Kafka adaptations** such as Metamorphosis, The Trial and In the Penal Colony. Total Theatre performances are often stripped back and minimalist with bare stages and little language, so that the focus remains on the physical movement. This serves to detach the audience from the play and make them think about what was being said.

Berkoff likes to use **stereotype and cliché** in order to examine human behaviour. These stereotypes require the actor to demonstrate the character in a heightened manner, through **exaggerated physical movement** and often base, foul language.



Notable Works

- Sink the Belgrano!
- Shakespeare's Villains
- A Clockwork Orange
- Beverly Hills Cop
- War and Remembrance

Highlighted Information

- Physical and non-naturalistic
- Minimalise and physicalise the story
- Every aspect of Total Theatre must have purpose
- Create extreme moods
- To detach the audience from the play

Theatre Practitioners

Augusto Boal (1931-2009)

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1931, Boal is most renowned for creating the **Theatre of the Oppressed**, a form of interactive theatre intended to transform lives. Boal's theatre invited **spectators to become performers**, acting out solutions to their own social problems. Boal (like Brecht) believed that theatre should be a **vehicle for social change**, and his Theatre of the Oppressed aimed to show the people what was possible and give them a voice for action.

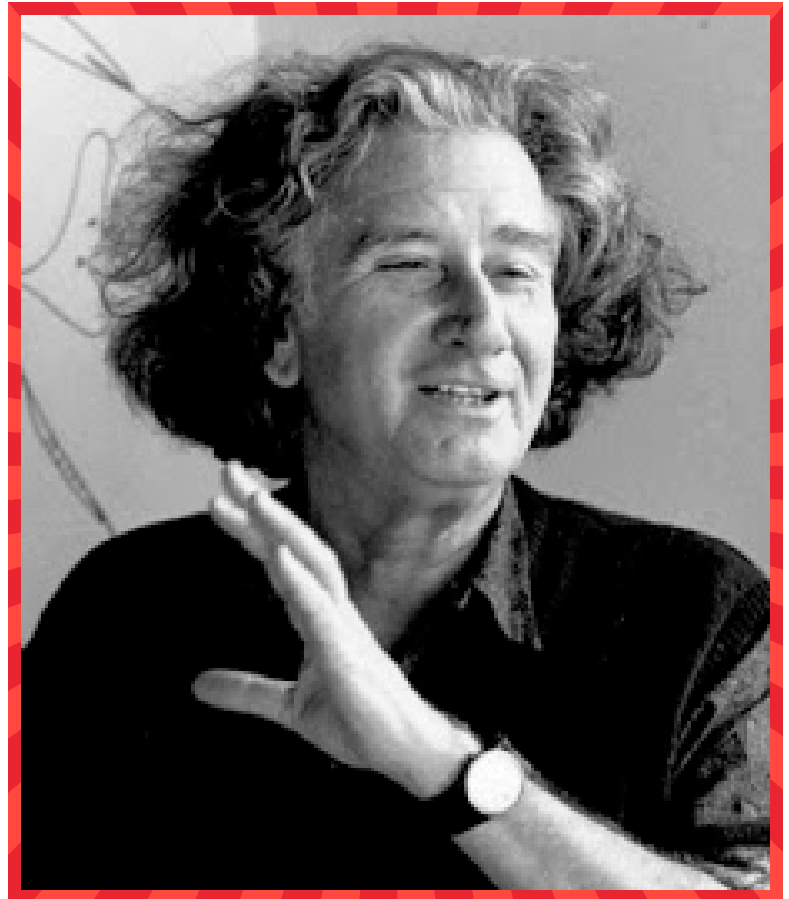
Theatre of the Oppressed begins with the idea that everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives; everybody is at once an actor and a spectator. Boal called his audience '**Spect-actors**'.

Theatre of the Oppressed encompasses three key forms:

Image Theatre invites spect-actors to form a tableau of frozen poses to capture a moment in time dramatising an oppressive situation. They are then asked to reflect critically on this situation before being asked to depict an ideal outcome, or to reshape an image to show different **perspectives**.

Forum Theatre is a short play that dramatises a situation, with an oppressive ending that spect-actors cannot be satisfied with. After an initial performance, it is shown again, however this time the spectators become spect-actors and can at any point yell 'freeze' and step on stage to replace the protagonist(s) and take the situation in different directions.

Invisible Theatre is public theatre that involves the public as participants in the action without their knowing about it. The objective is to unsettle passive social relations and spark critical dialogue among the spect-actors. Several actors rehearse a scene which they then play in an appropriate public space in order to provoke a reaction from the public who think they are watching a spontaneous event.



Notable Works

- Torquemada
- Theatre of the Oppressed
- Games For Actors and Non-Actors
- The Rainbow of Desire

Highlighted Information

- Interactive theatre intended to transform lives
- Acting out solutions to their own social problems
- Everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives
- Give people a voice for action

Theatre Practitioners

Frantic Assembly

Frantic Assembly are a **physical theatre company** who were formed in 1994 by Scott Graham, Steven Hoggett, and Vicki Middleton, who had all met whilst studying at Swansea University. They aimed to create physical theatre, using **dynamic and engaging movement** with storytelling at the heart of the work.

Scott Graham is still the Artistic Director of the company, who have developed and created a wide range of work. Notable productions include, *Pool (No Water)* by Mark Ravenhill, *Beautiful Burnout* by Bryony Lavery, *Things I Know To Be True* by Andrew Bovell and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Simon Stephens.

Frantic Assembly devise most of their work in **collaboration with a playwright**. Taking the movement as the basis for action, they use a series of exercises to develop physical theatre. Speech and dialogue is then added in order to **create a narrative structure**. The movement and the dialogue go hand in hand to create

visually dynamic and engaging theatre. It is essentially **directing through movement**.

Scott Graham describes their way of working as '**The Frantic Method**'. He says: 'The Frantic Method is approaching devising as a series of tasks, each broken down into building blocks. This is designed to establish progress from the **simplest discoveries**.

Performers are encouraged to **take a moment back to its simplest truth and build from there**. This places dancers, actors, students, teachers and all participants on the same starting point. Using these building blocks they are empowered to find and create complex work through a process that is safe, fun and constantly illuminating.'

Performers who work with Frantic Assembly have to have extremely high levels of physical fitness, as their work is very demanding. They do lots of outreach work with schools and colleges to share their methods and encourage participation in physical theatre.



Highlighted Information

- Dynamic and engaging movement with storytelling at the heart of the work.
- Devise most of their work in collaboration with a playwright
- Movement as the basis for action
- Visually dynamic and engaging theatre
- Progress from the simplest discoveries

Job Roles in Making Theatre

You may have heard the phrase 'get a proper job' in relation to working in theatre. But this is very out of date. There are many job roles with good salaries in theatre and culture. Nottingham Playhouse has over 100 permanent staff! Here are just a few...

Actor

Actors bring characters to life on stage with their performances, using speech, movement and expression to act a script or improvise their roles.

Administration

Administrators deal with customers, run offices, and take care of the day-to-day running of the business.

Agent

Agents are often the first point of contact for anyone looking to hire actors. Few actors work without the support of an agent. Agents can also supply artists for corporate and private events. Their clients may include actors, singers, dancers or supporting artists.

Artistic Director

The artistic director makes sure their theatre is putting on the kind of shows that fit with the artistic aims of the organisation.

Arts Journalist

Every show hopes for good reviews. Journalists get the word out about the show to the public. They make sure people know what shows are on offer and what is happening in the world of theatre.

Backstage Crew

Building sets, helping create props and operating equipment, the backstage crew support the designers and performers with the running of the show.

Box Office Staff

Box office staff work in cinemas, theatres and concert halls. They are responsible for taking bookings and payments for tickets. Box office staff also arrange for group visits and discounts. They may also advise on seating for people with disabilities or special needs.

Carpenter

Carpenters and joiners in the theatre and dance sector and crafts sector work with wood. They work in theatres or in workshops. In the theatre and dance sector, they specifically make, fit or repair scenery and props that are part of a play or show.

Choreographer

Choreographers create routines and movement sequences for singers and musicians to perform.

Costume Designer

The costume designer is responsible for designing all the costumes to be worn in a production. This can involve a mix of designing from scratch, and sourcing existing items of clothing.

Dance Teacher

Dance teachers educate and instruct on different forms of dance. They work with individuals and groups of all ages and abilities to help them learn dance practices.

Dancer

Dance is a term for describing ways of using the body to tell stories, interpret music and express emotion. Some dance forms require an intense training starting from an early age; others can be learned later.

Dialect Coach

Dialect coaches or voice coaches work with actors to develop and improve their vocal technique, and help them adopt convincing character accents.

Director

Theatre directors take responsibility for the overall creative production of plays.

Dramaturg

A dramaturg is a theatre practitioner who focuses on how to convey the particular message the director wants to highlight.

Events Staff

Events staff work with centre and gallery and theatre managers to deliver an event. They manage, organise and oversee the running of a venue or function. They are responsible for coordinating all the arrangements such as room bookings, catering and special effects or promotional items.

Finance Staff

Finance staff officers in the performing and visual arts sectors provide administrative support to organisations.

Front-of-House Staff

The 'front-of-house' of a theatre refers to all areas accessed by the public, including the auditorium. Front-of-house staff look after the public to make sure their visit is safe and enjoyable.

Hair, Makeup and Wigs

People that work in hair, makeup and wigs for the theatre and dance sector help to style performers. The style of makeup needed depends on the type of production. The hair, makeup and wigs may be contemporary and straightforward or require more creative approaches. Performers may need to appear as from a different nationality or from a different historical period. The makeup artist will also need to dress wigs and attach them correctly to the actor or performer.

Lighting Designer

Lighting designers work to ensure effective lighting for a commercial property. They aim to enhance a building's environment through lighting.

Lighting Technicians

Lighting technicians are vital to theatre. Their work may involve design, operating lighting rigs, and looking after equipment.

Marketing Officer

Marketing is about understanding what a customer wants and promoting this product, event or service. It is also making sure the public is talking about a brand, which for the arts sector could be a theatre, museum, art gallery or community arts project.

Participation and Education Staff

Arts education staff in the creative industries support teachers and development workers in cultural venues. They work in art centres, galleries, theatres and other venues to provide an educational experience. They may work with individual children or visitors, small groups or a whole class.

Playwright

The playwright or dramatist is the author of a production, the writer or adapter of the original play. Often they work alone, but sometimes they also collaborate with a director and the cast.

Producer (Live Events)

Producers of live events are responsible for running successful live spectacles. The producer works on live shows and events in the music industry such as concerts and music festivals. They must coordinate technical staff and performers to ensure everything runs smoothly. They have to have high-quality acts and performers for a successful event. Live events may be one-offs or regular annual events. They can be held in indoor and outdoor music venues of all sizes.

Props Manager

A props manager supervises the building, making and buying of the props needed for a production.

Puppeteer

Puppeteers animate and manipulate puppets as part of a theatre, television or film production. Puppetry is a performing art used to entertain adults or children.

Sound Designer

Sound design can involve making sure the mix of sounds is correct at a live event, designing the sound effects on a mobile phone, and many other things.

Sound Engineer

Sound engineers work in the theatre and dance sector to handle all aspects of a production's sound. They ensure that speech, music and sound effects can be heard to the best effect in a theatre production.

Sound Technician

Sound technicians ensure that the best sound possible is available in a variety of venues for performances. They prepare, operate and maintain technical equipment to amplify, enhance, mix or reproduce sound. They work in recording studios, films, radio and television programmes (on set or location) and live performances, including theatre, music and dance.

Special Effects

Special effects and pyrotechnics staff are responsible for special effects and pyrotechnics required as part of a production. In some shows, for example using magic, special effects may be an integral part of an act.

Stage Designer

Stage designers are responsible for designing stage settings for productions. This can range from single-scene dramas to complex scenery and scene changes required by major productions.

Stage Manager

Stage managers coordinate all aspects of a theatre production or event, including actors, technical staff, props, scenery and costumes. They make sure technicians and performers alike are in the right place at the right time and ready to meet their cues.

Stagehand

Stagehands in performing arts are the behind-scenes support staff for a production. They carry out a wide variety of jobs backstage to ensure a production is successful.

Technical Manager

A technical manager in the theatre and dance sector coordinates a production's technical staff. This could include the set-making staff, lighting staff and props-making staff.

Wardrobe Assistant

Wardrobe assistants work to provide support with costumes and accessories. Performances like plays and musicals rely on a strong wardrobe team to make the production look credible.

A Glimpse Into Theatre Careers

A chat with Jill Robertshaw

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER

Tell us about your role as Assistant Production Manager.

My role is to support the Head of Production and other Production Managers in the mounting of performances.

I typically run the office from an admin point of view, which involves a lot of paper work. This involves processing timesheets (hours worked by other members of the team), invoices, petty cash, credit card receipts, etc. I also minute meetings about shows.

I also production manage some shows. At the time of writing this, I am Production Manager of Little Red Riding Hood, which was on in the Neville Studio and now is visiting local primary schools and community settings. Over my time here I have Production Managed over thirty productions on different scales and in different locations, such as on a City Farm, in a bus garage, outside and on the Main Stage here at Nottingham Playhouse.



Jill Robertshaw

What does a day in the life of an Assistant Production Manager look like?

There is no typical day, which is why I like it. I do have some routine tasks but quite often, every day is different.

I spend time at my desk, but also in and around the theatre. I get to talk to a lot of people. I get to watch runs of shows in the rehearsal room and in the theatre.

I also help other production departments if they need me to. I have helped paint and put glitter on scenery, find props for shows and, most recently, I was on the stage crew for panto briefly making a spider dance!

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

Everything I do impacts on the shows. I am involved in the planning stages, the making stages and also the closing stages in some way.

My work isn't as visible as some peoples, as a lot of it is in the organisation, but still as important.

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

It's the people I meet. Most people are great, and have such brilliant stories to tell. I also like the fact I get paid to watch live theatre.

When you watch a show that you have been involved with since the beginning there is a real sense of satisfaction when you finally see it brought to life on-stage

A Glimpse Into Theatre Careers

A chat with Adam Collins PARTICIPATION PROJECT COORDINATOR

Tell us about your role as a Participation Project Coordinator.

I work in Nottingham Playhouse's Participation Department, and we run over 30 programmes to bring drama to the community. I coordinate the work we do with schools, which includes the provision for our five 'Primary Partner' schools who we are partnered with to integrate drama at all levels of the primary school curriculum.



Adam Collins

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

As part of our 'Primary Partners' programme, I arrange backstage tours and show tickets for our partner schools so that their students can come and see live theatre at Nottingham Playhouse. The practitioners I send into schools often deliver workshops on the themes of our shows, especially with texts such as 'Private Peaceful' which are taught in schools.

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

I enjoy how theatre brings people from all walks of life together, and I enjoy seeing our participants develop confidence and self-advocacy through theatre and performance.

A chat with Tom Heath PARTICIPATION ADMINISTRATOR

Tell us about your role as Participation Administrator.

I get to work with all our different artists and teachers to put on sessions each week. These range from Drawing and art classes to our choirs and acting groups. I deal with a lot of the paperwork and organising so the exciting stuff can happen!

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

I handle a lot of the bits and pieces for our touring shows like Story Explorers or Little Red Riding Hood. I work with schools and libraries to arrange for our shows to be able to travel across Nottinghamshire, so we can share our work with as many people as possible.



Tom Heath

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

I love being able to see all of the pieces of a show come together. All the sets and the rehearsals seem totally separate for a long time, but when they join to make a full show, it always feels really special to see.