

Orange Tree Theatre

Annual Review 2016/17



Orange Tree Theatre 2016/17 in numbers



BIGGEST AUDIENCE YET

72,894

56,717 IN RICHMOND

16,177 OT ELSEWHERE

32%

VISITED THE ORANGE TREE FOR THE 1ST TIME

4,196

UNDER 30
UP MORE THAN 50%



20,065

SAW NEW PLAYS
+934 ON TOUR

CO-PRODUCERS
5
VENUES OUTSIDE RICHMOND
21

Every show NOMINATED FOR AN AWARD

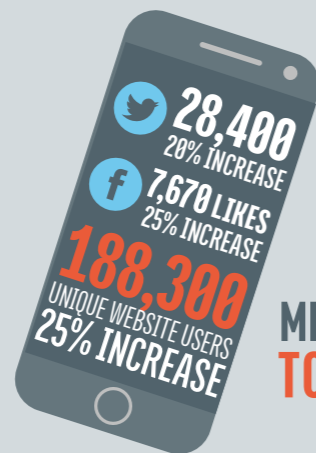


194

PERFORMERS EMPLOYED

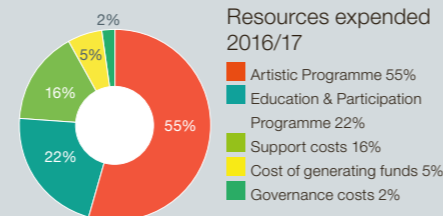
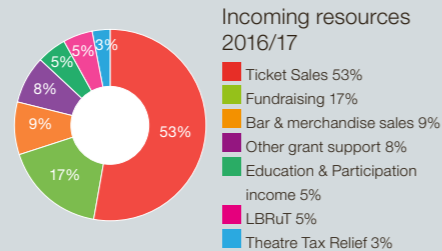
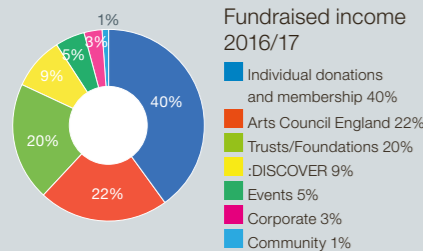
95

CREATIVES EMPLOYED



28,400
20% INCREASE
7,670 LIKES
25% INCREASE
188,300
UNIQUE WEBSITE USERS
25% INCREASE

MEMBERSHIP & FUNDRAISING
TOTAL £297,100
29% INCREASE ON 2015/16



Welcome

The 2016/17 Season marked our third at the helm of the Orange Tree Theatre (OT) since taking over in 2014. It was without question **the busiest, most ambitious and adventurous programme of work for the OT ever**, with many new initiatives and major successes. It was also the second full year operating without regular funding as part of the Arts Council's National Portfolio.

We were proud to offer a rich programme with our signature mix: rediscoveries like Somerset Maugham's final play *Sheppey* (unseen in 50 years) and the premiere of John Fowles' version of a Marivaux play, *The Lottery of Love*; the first major revivals in London of important contemporary plays like Caryl Churchill's *Blue Heart* and Clare McIntyre's *Low Level Panic*; and of course innovative new plays by Zoe Cooper, Elinor Cook, Roland Schimmelpfennig and Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. We've done all of this in partnership with wonderful companies like Farnham Maltings, Bristol's Tobacco Factory, Flute Theatre, English Touring Theatre and Actors Touring Company.

And we've been out in to the world more than ever in 2016/17. ETT took our production of *French Without Tears* on tour to nine towns; *Jess and Joe Forever*, co-produced with Farnham Maltings, toured to 11 UK venues after its run here and had a triumphant run at the Traverse Theatre as part of the Edinburgh Festival; *Winter Solstice*, co-produced with ATC, enjoyed a sold out run and will be remounted for a UK-wide tour early in 2018; *The End of Hope*, part of our Directors' Festival, has just transferred to the Soho Theatre to ecstatic reviews and *An Octoroon*, which stormed our stage in Ned Bennett's extraordinary production in summer 2017, will transfer to the National Theatre's Dorfman Theatre in summer 2018.

With Kelly Hunter's remarkable Flute Theatre, we launched a new kind of production here in 2016/17: interactive performances of Shakespeare for young people with autism. This collaboration extends our already extensive work with Shakespeare for schools audiences and the effect on the young people participating was utterly transformative.

Training and development is a core part of our mission at the OT. In the last year we launched a new MA in Theatre Directing with

St Mary's University. Five directors were in residence at the Theatre for the year, assisting on productions, working with professional actors and visiting tutors, and finally directing productions for our Directors' Festival in July.

The OT has long inhabited a much-valued position at the heart of the Richmond community. By broadening our programme, further extending our education and participation work and increasing access through activities like captioned performances and a new group for the over 60s, we now engage a broader cross-section of Borough residents than ever. You can read more about this on pages 10-15.

The amazing team who work behind the scenes to make all this happen are supported by so many new people we now work with: our individual Patrons, donors and Members; the imaginative leaders of Richmond council; and our wonderful volunteers and Front of House staff who make your visit special. All of us were thrilled therefore to be voted London's Most Welcoming Theatre for the second year running at this year's UK Theatre Awards.

And of course we're looking to the future. For the first time we have commissioned new plays with grants from Arts Council England and Cockayne, and through partnerships with Paines Plough, Theatre Clwyd and the RSC. These new plays will start to appear in 2018 and beyond.

We are proud to be a serious, entertaining, independent producing theatre, based in Richmond but speaking to the world. We are restless in seeking new ways to engage with new audiences and make our work as inclusive and accessible as possible. Our range of work sparks conversations between the old and the new in ways that we hope will challenge, stimulate and delight. And our space is unique: the OT experience is like no other.

We've come a long way since 2014. There've been many changes and new developments, alongside new challenges. What 2016/17 proved was that there are so many new possibilities in the future: we can't wait.

Paul Miller, *Artistic Director* and Sarah Nicholson, *Executive Director*

COVER: VIVIAN OPARAH IN AN OCTOFOON; PHOTO: THE OTHER RICHARD

Richmond's national theatre

David Lan, Artistic Director, Young Vic



PHOTOS THE OTHER RICHARD

PHOTO HELEN MURRAY

Artistic highlights



French Without Tears

Back by popular demand, Terence Rattigan's *French Without Tears* became the first production to be performed in July at the OT, a time of year when the Theatre is usually dark. Paul Miller directed again, following the show's sold out run in 2015. A co-production with English Touring Theatre, the play undertook a nine-venue national tour in autumn 2016.

Paul Miller's revival of the play is deliriously funny from beginning to end... It's staggeringly good. It's riotously funny. Eighty years later, Rattigan's first big hit is a hit again. Dan Rebellato



Jess and Joe Forever

In September we opened with *Jess and Joe Forever* by Zoe Cooper, a co-production with Farnham Maltings. Directed by Derek Bond, this new play explored the intricacies of young friendship through an unexpected coming of age story.

★★★★ ... pays dividends with a 'hell yeah' ending; the sort that sets tear ducts going and sends stomachs soaring. You'll want to punch the air. Matt Trueman, *WatsonStage*

WINNER: OFFIE for Most Promising Playwright – Zoe Cooper

2 OFFIE nominations:
Best Female Performance – Nicola Coughlan
Best Male Performance – Rhys Isaac-Jones



Blue Heart

Nearly 20 years after its Royal Court premiere, October brought the first major revival of two exhilarating one act plays by visionary playwright Caryl Churchill. In this co-production with Tobacco Factory Theatres, David Mercatali returned to direct following his 2015 OT debut production of Alice Birch's *Little Light*.

★★★★ It's dazzling, unapologetic stuff, another sign of how brave the Orange Tree has gotten these days. Andrzej Lukowski, *Time Out*

3 OFFIE nominations:
Best Production
Best Ensemble
Best Director – David Mercatali

Catches every narrative twist of the rarely seen Somerset Maugham play from 1933... one of the year's best theatrical reclamations

Matt Wolf, *New York Times* on *Sheppey*



PHOTOS HELEN MAYBANKS/ROBERT DAY/STEPHEN CUMMISKEY

PHOTO HELEN MAYBANKS



Sheppey

The first major production in over 50 years of Somerset Maugham's warm-hearted, beguiling last play about a philanthropic hairdresser was directed by Artistic Director Paul Miller over the festive season.

★★★★ **There's good work all around in Paul Miller's confident production, from Dickie Beau as down-on-her-luck prostitute Bessie and Katie Moore and Josh Dylan as Sheppey's social-climbing daughter and her smug schoolteacher fiancé. In today's scarred, angry world, this question of individual agency burns just as strongly, some 83 years after *Sheppey's* premiere.**

Fiona Mountford, *Evening Standard*

WINNER: OFFIE

Best Actor – John Ramm
Best Supporting Actor – Dickie Beau and Josh Dylan

3 OFFIE nominations:

Best Production
Best Director – Paul Miller
Best Designer – Simon Daw



Extra Yarn

For families over Christmas, we produced the world premiere of *Extra Yarn*, based on the hit US book by Mac Barnett, illustrated by Jon Klassen. Directed by OT Education Director Imogen Bond, Elinor Cook's enchanting adaptation featured live music composed by Tom Deering and performed by its four actor-musicians, and some never-ending knitting!

★★★★ **It's both wistful and evocative. *Extra Yarn* touches lightly and deftly on the importance of love and community. This production joyfully evokes that on stage – it's as warm as a hug.**

The Stage

Nominated for *The Stage* Debut Award:
Best Designer – Jessica Staton



Winter Solstice

The OT marked the new year with the UK premiere of Roland Schimmelpfennig's razor-sharp comedy about family, betrayal and the inescapable presence of the past. A co-production with Actors Touring Company, *Winter Solstice* was translated by David Tushingham and directed by Ramin Grey, and played to 99% capacity.

★★★★★ **The most exciting new play I've seen in years** *Sunday Express*

4 OFFIE nominations:

Best Production
Best New Play
Best Director – Ramin Grey
Best Actor – Dominic Rowan



Low Level Panic

A second contemporary revival followed, this time Clare McIntyre's *Low Level Panic*, not produced since its premiere in 1988 yet still painfully relevant. The play interrogated the effects of society's objectification of women with a vibrancy and stylistic freedom. Directed by JMK Award 2016 runner-up, Chelsea Walker.

★★★★ Chelsea Walker's beautifully judged production... McIntyre's writing is witty as well as unsettling... one of the most memorable bits of theatre I've seen this year.

Dominic Maxwell, *The Times*

4 OFFIE nominations:
Best Female – Sophie Melville
Best Female – Katherine Pearce
Best Director – Chelsea Walker
Best Designer – Rosanna Vize



The Lottery of Love

In April, Marivaux's greatest comedy, *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*, took to the stage in a previously unseen version by John Fowles, which translated the play to the Regency England of Jane Austen.

This sparkling translation by the author of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *The Collector* was directed by Artistic Director Paul Miller, following his sold-out productions of plays by DH Lawrence, Doris Lessing, Terence Rattigan and Bernard Shaw.

★★★★ Paul Miller's sparkling production... Dorothea Myer-Bennett is outstanding as Sylvia... Played at a brisk 90 minutes, Marivaux's marvellous play demonstrates that, in matters of love, there is no gain without pain. Michael Billington, *The Guardian*

OFFIE nomination:
Best Female – Dorothea Myer-Bennett



An Octoroon

The European premiere of *An Octoroon*, by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, quite literally stormed the OT's stage for the summer. Directed by Ned Bennett (*Pomona*, OT 2014), this OBIE Award-winning play uses Dion Boucicault's melodrama *The Octoroon* to explore race in America, whilst ripping up the theatrical rule book.

★★★★ *An Octoroon* is a cracking piece of writing... Ned Bennett achieves things you'd never expect, even from the Orange Tree's versatile space... an effervescent production of a richly imaginative play... vital drama, in every sense of the word. *The Arts Desk*

4 OFFIE nominations:
Best New Play
Best Director – Ned Bennett
Best Male – Ken Nwosu
Best Female – Vivian Oparah

PHOTOS HELEN MURRAY/HELEN MAYBANKS/THE OTHER RICHARD

This is an hour and a half of lust-at-first-sight, of pure infatuation, in all its knee-trembling, giddy glory. Chemistry smoulders in all four corners of the stage.

Holly Williams, *WhatsOnStage* on *The Lottery of Love*



PHOTO HELEN MAYBANKS

Orange Tree Theatre Education & Participation

PARTICIPANTS

5,349

RICHMOND RESIDENTS

..... including

4,067

in school

5,165

FROM BEYOND RICHMOND



PROJECT SATISFACTION

IN-SCHOOL SHAKESPEARE PROJECTS

97%

EXTREMELY SATISFIED

3%

SATISFIED

Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree.

An earlier study¹ also found that the education advantages to the students with high arts involvement appeared to increase over time, and 'arts-engaged low-income students tend to perform more like average higher-income students'². This suggests a role for the arts in schools as a way of combating inequality.

Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment.

The creative economy accounts for one in 11 jobs in the UK³. NESTA found in 2015 that 87% of highly creative jobs are at low or no risk of automation, compared with 40% of jobs in the UK workforce as a whole⁴.

Learning through arts and culture can improve attainment in Maths and English.

Teenagers and young adults of low socio-economic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement.¹

Learning through arts and culture develops skills and behaviour that lead children to do better in school.

A systematic review of international evidence found that participating in structured arts activities led to increases in transferable skills (including confidence and communication) of between 10–17%.

Participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%.

Improving children's cognitive skills makes them better learners, more able to apply the knowledge they acquire.

¹ Catterall, James S., Dumais, Susan A. and Hampden-Thompson, Gillian. *The arts and achievements in at-risk youth: findings from longitudinal studies*. (Washington: National Endowment for the Arts, 2012) Available at: www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf, Pg12.

² President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future through Creative Schools* (Washington DC: 2011, p.18)

³ Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). *Creative Industries Focus on Employment* (London: DCMS, 2016, p.5).

⁴ Bakshi, Hasan, Frey, Carl Benedikt and Osborne, Michael. *Creativity vs Robots: The Creative Economy and the Future of Employment* (London: Nesta, 2015) www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/creativity_vs._robots_wv.pdf

Education & Participation

This season has been Education & Participation's biggest and busiest to date. We've created brand new projects, taken established activities to new heights, strengthened ties with our local community and broadened our reach.

Each year around 10,000 people take part in our Education projects, which are directly linked to the school curriculum, and our wide-ranging Participation projects which offer opportunities to learn and be creative to people of all ages. The breadth of our Education & Participation Programme ensures that there is something for everyone, that we are inclusive and accessible. Everyone is welcome.

The experience of the individual is at the heart of everything we do; we want everyone to feel at home at the OT. We open our doors to anyone who is curious to find to more about what we do, and in doing so we encourage people to ask questions about the world around us. We aim to help everyone learn new skills, make new and lasting friends, increase their confidence and develop their talents.

Participating in arts activities has been proven to be beneficial to wellbeing and mental health, and so our Education & Participation Programme is designed to offer everyone a way into accessing the arts. We endeavour to create strong and lasting relationships with those that come through our doors, to inspire a life-long interest in the arts.

Education Projects

I admire greatly what you and your team are doing at the Orange Tree – it has been truly inspirational for the children in our school and I believe will send them off to secondary loving rather than dreading the idea of studying Shakespeare.

Teacher, St Luke's Primary

Much of our Education work focuses on presenting Shakespeare's plays to a younger audience. In doing so, we take a core element of the school English curriculum, that we know teachers can find hard to engage students with, and spark into life its essential humanity, making it feel contemporary and relevant. We aim to help younger audiences to find themselves in the plays, and connect them to a part of their cultural history that they may have felt shut out from.

In 2017, in addition to the continuation of our three main Shakespeare projects: Shakespeare Up Close, Primary Shakespeare and our Shakespeare Residencies, we added a new project aimed at making Shakespeare accessible and inclusive.

The Tempest for young people with autism and their families

Led by Kelly Hunter, Flute Theatre make work specifically aimed at young people with autism. Their participatory productions use the iambic heartbeat of the play to encourage those with autism to communicate more freely. Up to 15 young people on the spectrum join the 6 actors on stage, playing sensory games which help with elements of communication. Participants are able to work at their own pace and everyone is included.

In October, 117 people with autism, aspergers and other SEND came to take part in *The Tempest*. Of those that took part, 67% were entirely new to the OT.

We discovered that this project offered a chance not just for individual children to have a new experience, but for their families to connect with others in a similar situation, counteracting the isolation some families can feel. Some parents experienced seeing their children take part in new ways. One parent said: **After the performance, during tea, my child was unusually very confident**

and initiated an in-depth full-blown conversation with one of the actors in a way I've not seen before.

After the success of the 2016 production, in autumn 2017 we co-produced a version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Flute Theatre and ETT in order to continue offering this unique opportunity to even more people that would benefit from it.

My daughter loved it! She was apprehensive at first but over time, she became involved and her confidence grew. She is still talking about it and describes it as 'amazing' to people she meets.

Parent of participant, 2016



PHOTO TRISTRAM KENTON

Shakespeare Up Close: *Twelfth Night*

Building on the success of last year's new format for Shakespeare Up Close aimed at secondary schools, we presented a sparky *Twelfth Night*, fizzing with energy. Directed by Alex Thorpe, it played to nearly 3,000 students across Richmond and our surrounding boroughs. The project offers teachers access to high quality Shakespeare in performance with a flexibility that fits their curriculum objectives.

The joy and transformation live performance has can help students see that the theatre is for them, when previously they might not have thought this, particularly if they are not taken by their families. In addition, it helps break down the prejudices or fears some students have of Shakespeare's plays, especially when performed in such an accessible way.

Teacher, Dunraven School

Discover More

We offer pre-show workshops, included in the price of under 30s tickets, which introduce the themes of the play to students. Groups can also take part in a workshop on our stage, where they explore how we work in-the-round and the impact this has on audiences.

The workshops are active and fun, and help students who might be unfamiliar with theatregoing to settle in and feel at home. The aim is to encourage greater access to the OT for new audiences, and this year nearly 600 people have taken part.

We have a high proportion of EAL students, I really appreciated how accessible the workshop was to all of my students. Thank you!

Teacher, International School of London

Primary Shakespeare: *King Lear*

Our longest running Shakespeare project is for children aged 6–11 years old, and this year introduced 3,848 children to *King Lear*. The combination of an active drama workshop in school, followed by a visit to the OT to see an abridged performance with interactive elements, helps pupils to relate to the characters and encourages them to enjoy their first encounter with Shakespeare.

The liveliness and vitality of the play was infectious. The children and the teachers were amazed and captured by the performance; from the fights to the juggling to the deaths and disasters – we loved it.

Teacher, Hall School Wimbledon

Shakespeare Residencies

Each year we run week-long Residencies in primary schools that have been identified as most in need of access to cultural activities. This year 360 children from eight schools in Richmond and Hounslow have taken part entirely for free.

The schools offered the project have high numbers of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language; we ask the local council to help us identify the schools most in need.

Based around active drama workshops on *Macbeth*, teachers report that this project encourages more confident communication in their pupils, as well as promoting teamwork and an enthusiasm for Shakespeare's language and stories.

Working co-operatively with children from other year groups was a positive feature and these new friendships have been observed in school.

Buckingham Primary



Masters in Theatre Directing

This year we embarked on leading a brand-new training programme, the only one of its kind in the country being predominantly housed within a producing theatre. Working in partnership with our local university – St Mary's, Twickenham – this course strengthens our partnership with the drama department at St Mary's where we have previously led BA modules.

The MA has been designed to offer practical training for those wishing to pursue a career in theatre directing, and during the one year course the students are embedded in the life of the OT.

The backbone of the MA, and another element which makes it unique, is the emphasis placed on working with professional actors. On most courses, student directors work with their peers or acting students, here directors learn their craft by working with experienced professional actors every week and are encouraged to really get to grips with working collaboratively with actors in the rehearsal room.

The course culminates in each student directing their own choice of play on our stage. This year, we could not be prouder of our first cohort of directors. Kate Campbell, Hannah de Ville, Max Elton, Grace Vaughan and Jamie Woods produced work of the highest standard that promises great things to come.

Participation Projects

Youth Theatre, Young Technicians and Summer Schools

Our five popular weekly Youth Theatre groups stand at the heart of our Participation Programme. The sessions, which are split into age groups from 7–16 years, offer the chance to make friends, build skills and increase confidence.

We also took on five Young Technicians at the start of the season, who learnt from our professional stage managers in a series of workshops throughout the year, putting their skills to the test programming lighting and sound for the end of year Youth Theatre performances. With so few opportunities for young people to explore working backstage, this offers rare experience of career paths beyond performing.

We ran two week-long Summer Schools: one for 7-11 year olds and one for 12-16 year olds. Each group of 20 participants meets on Monday and by Saturday they perform a piece that they have created themselves, working with a professional theatre director.

We have many children who join us aged seven and stay with us throughout their education. Parents tell us of the positive impact being part of the Youth Theatre has on other areas of their children's development. The skills promoted by the groups of collaborative endeavour, of valuing others' views, and of bravery to challenge themselves, support them through their schooling, and beyond.

Photos: Top left: Orlando James and Georgina Campbell in *Even Stillness Breathes Softly Against a Brick Wall* by Brad Birch, directed by Hannah de Ville (photo by Robert Day). Bottom right: OT Connections Company in Alistair McDowall's *Zero for the Young Dudes*

Young Company, for ages 16–19 years

Young Company has pushed me out of my comfort zone every week *Participant 2016*

The Young Company is newly formed each year. Led by director Joe Barnes-Phillips, they created a scripted play based on their improvisations, tackling racism and attitudes to multiculturalism. The weekly sessions brought together a diverse group of young theatre makers who challenged each other to ask more questions and to overturn their expectations.



Having personal experience through our children, we believe the Orange Tree Youth Theatre is paramount in nurturing talent and giving young people the opportunity to build their confidence, work collaboratively, and challenge themselves and their view of the world. The gold standard of the ground-breaking work in the theatre, naturally pays dividends in the youth theatre. With plays like *Pomona* and *Jess and Joe Forever*, and performances that are consistently of such high quality, youngsters cannot fail to aspire to give the very best of themselves, in whatever field that might be.

Elizabeth Heery and Peter Davison, OT Ambassadors and parents to two Youth Theatre members



National Theatre Connections Company, for ages 15–19 years

We've taken part in the National Theatre's Connections Festival for the last five years; this year we were thrilled that our company of actors were invited to perform at the NT at the culmination of the Festival – one of just ten companies from the 250 groups that took part across the UK.

The group, led by Roberta Zuric and Izzy Cotterill, was made up of 12 young actors and a Young Technician. It was an enormous challenge for the company, who through determination and unending enthusiasm, created an outstanding ensemble performance.

I felt incredibly honoured to take part in this year's Connections Festival. The rehearsal process was exciting and challenging – and performing on the Olivier stage was something I never imagined I would be lucky enough to do. Acting in three very different theatres was an enlightening experience, revealing the complexities of back stage management and the amount of organisation and effort required to ensure a show runs smoothly. Everyone involved in our company was wonderful – I felt that our performance was heightened by the fact that we all became such great friends.

OT Connections Company member 2017

Over 60s Theatre Group

It lights my heart – it makes me want to sing and dance! 2017 group member

Another new project for 2016-17 was our Over 60s group. They met every Friday and worked with actors, directors and writers involved in our season. Feedback has been excellent, with many members commenting on what a positive impact the group has had on their wellbeing. One member told us that they most valued the *'variety, unpredictability and sociability'* and many commented on how much they enjoyed learning something new every week.

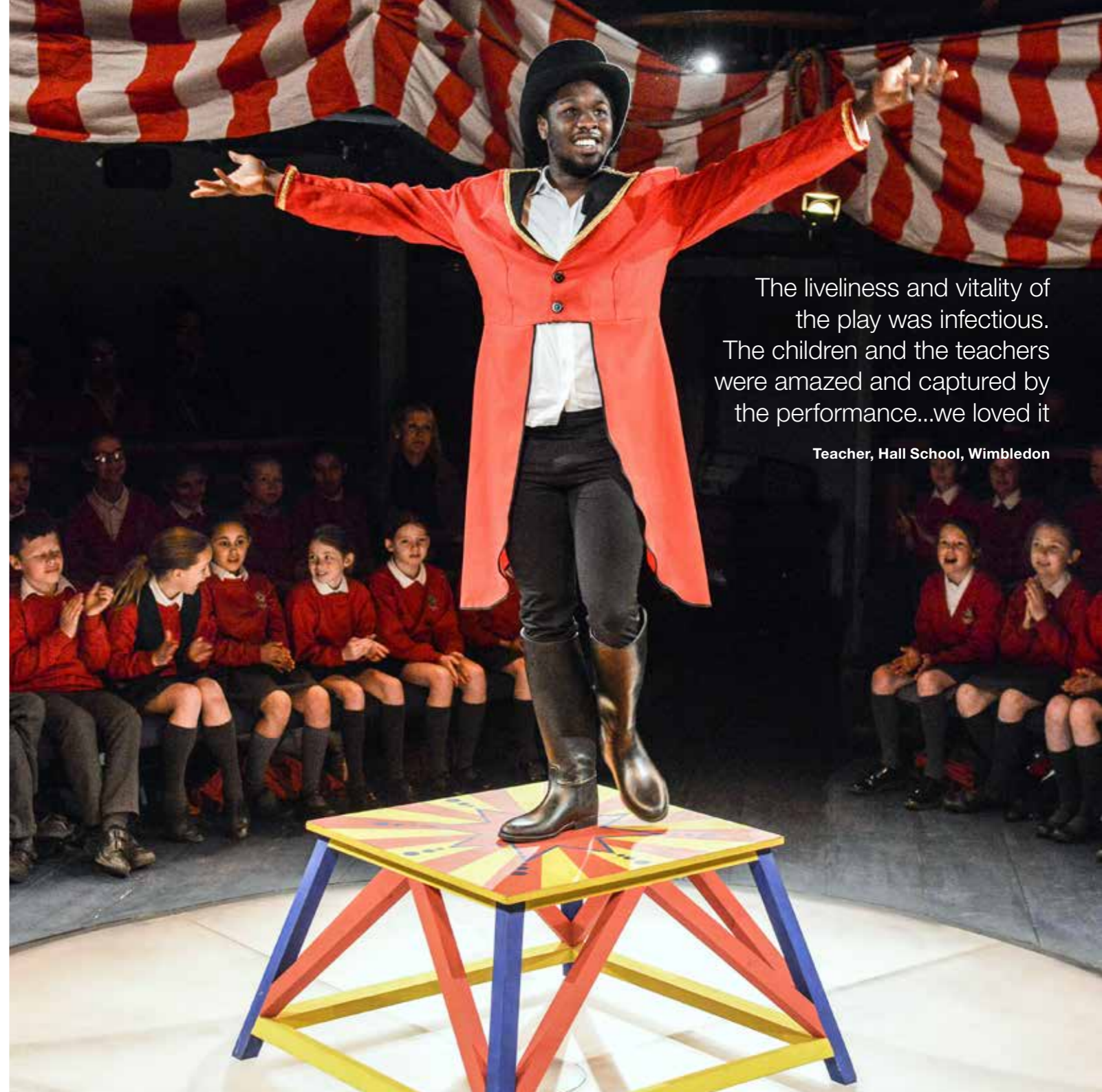
Yarn Birds

Over Christmas we joined forces with a local group of social knitters – The Yarnbirds, who contributed in numerous ways to our production of *Extra Yarn*. The group not only knitted hundreds of mini jumpers to decorate our foyer areas, but they also shared their skills with our young audiences, helping anyone who wanted to, to learn to knit. The squares knitted by our audiences were then stitched together into a beautiful blanket, which we presented to local charity SPEAR, who now keep it in one of their shelters for young homeless women.

Masterclasses

Masterclasses are a great way of opening up our work: demystifying the rehearsal process and encouraging curiosity about the play and the production. We initially planned to offer one masterclass led by Ned Bennett on *An Octoroon*, but due to demand, we actually ran three sessions over June and July, with around 60 people taking part.

PHOTO ROBERT DAY



The liveliness and vitality of the play was infectious. The children and the teachers were amazed and captured by the performance...we loved it

Teacher, Hall School, Wimbledon

Literary

We are hugely proud of our programme of new work and premieres at the Orange Tree. We continue to produce work by the most exciting contemporary playwrights, asking incisive questions about what it is to be alive today, at the same time as supporting establishing playwrights in the development of their crafts.

This season we presented new work including Zoe Cooper's *Jess and Joe Forever*, Elinor Cook's adaptation of *Extra Yarn* for families, and the European premiere of Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *An Octoroon* (which transfers to the National Theatre in 2018).



PHOTO THE OTHER RICHARD

Orange Tree New Artists

Supported by Arts Council England through Grants for the Arts, this year we were able to radically expand the way we work with playwrights and directors at early stages in the development of their ideas. Through OT New Artists, we curated workshops and private readings of the most promising work that had come our way, in order to widen the range of artists we were able to talk to, and plant seeds for future work.

The Orange Tree currently occupies unique space in the national and London theatre ecology, due to its commitment to establishing artists. Many of the theatre's ambitions for innovation and diversity have been achieved in New Artists through embedding principles of artistic excellence, innovation, equality and diversity within the programme the culture of the theatre.

Nic Wass, from OT New Artists:
Independent Evaluation Report, July 2017

The punchy Orange Tree proves itself once more to be one of the most risk-taking theatres in the capital

Evening Standard on *An Octoroon*

Workshops and readings

Deepa the Saint by Sonali Bhattacharyya, directed by Jennifer Bakst
13-year old Deepa has stopped eating and drinking. But curiously, instead of losing weight, Deepa thrives, dancing and holding her hand to flames without feeling pain. She becomes the talk of a desperate community, and their friends and neighbours start to find meaning in what appear to be Deepa's supernatural powers.

Mayfly by Joe White, directed by Guy Jones
Set in and around the Cleve Hills of Shropshire, a family coming to terms with the death of their son are brought back together by the visit of a stranger.

Italian Night by Ödön von Horváth, translated by Meredith Oakes, directed by Oscar Toeman
An investigation into this never-before performed translation of Horvath's play about the rise of Fascism

Monkey Work, Baboon Chop by Melissa Bubnic, directed by Gbolahan Obisesan
Outsiders have stolen from Nigeria for centuries. They took slaves, gold, palm oil, and crude. It's 2017. Has anything changed? Why is one of the richest nations also one of the poorest? Minister Bimpe Babatunde is determined to deliver real change and that starts with a fair deal on oil. But no one ever plays fair.

Lilting by Hong Khaou, directed by Guy Jones
An adaptation for the stage of Hong Khaou's film, in which Richard, in the wake of the loss of his partner Kai, reaches out to Kai's Cambodian-Chinese mother to try and forge a connection despite the barriers of culture and language.

Writers Collective

The Writers Collective is a group of eight playwrights, who meet throughout the season to share their passions, techniques and obsessions, connect with artists making work at the Theatre, and develop their own work.

The 2016/17 writers were Sonali Bhattacharyya, Chris Bush, Daniel Foxsmith, Christian Graham, Sarah Grochala, Eve Leigh, John O'Donovan and Joe White.

Uprising saw the Collective write short plays in response to our production of *An Octoroon*, which were performed at the theatre in June by a company of six actors. The plays were directed by Ola Ince and Guy Jones.

Then in July the National Theatre's New Work Department hosted these eight playwrights for a week's residency in which they worked on full-length plays which they had been developing over the course of the year.

The group has triggered quite a profound shift in my writing and I feel very lucky to have been part of it.

Writers Collective 2016/17 member

The Writers Collective proudly goes on my CV now. It's part of my training as a storyteller and testament to the work done at the Orange Tree that everyone I speak to across the country knows of it when I mention it.

Writers Collective 2016/17 member

Commissions

Through OT New Artists we are delighted to have been able to commission Chris Bush and, in collaboration with the RSC, Zoe Cooper, to write new plays for the OT.



Artistic Programme

The OT's first two productions of 2017/18 launched the Season to great success with *The March on Russia* achieving 96% capacity, and *Every Brilliant Thing* achieving 99% capacity.

Our 2017 MA Directors' Festival production of David Ireland's *The End of Hope* transferred with great success to the Soho Theatre, securing a Best New Play OFFIE nomination; and in October 2017 we announced the transfer of *An Octoroon*, by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, to the Dorfman stage at the National Theatre in summer 2018.

Through our co-production with Paines Plough and Theatr Clwyd, and by remounting *The End of Hope* and *An Octoroon*, we are set to achieve our largest OT ELSEWHERE audience to date, across 11 venues throughout the UK.

Education & Participation

A Midsummer Night's Dream

In a co-production with Flute Theatre and ETT, we were proud to produce a new show for young people with autism: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Using participatory games devised through years of research by Flute Artistic Director, Kelly Hunter, the production uses the rhythm of Shakespeare's language to help alleviate communication barriers in young people with autism spectrum conditions.

A genuinely transformative event. For the children and for the parents and carers... served to awaken something very deep in the children...astorishingly moving
Parent of participant

Under the Orange Tree

In 2017, together with OT Ambassador Gyles Brandreth, the Theatre launched a new series of talks with our most distinguished actors about people they've worked with, admired and learnt from. A celebration of British theatre's history and its especially collaborative nature, the series offers an unrivalled opportunity to see great artists talk up-close in the OT's unique in the round space, in conversation with Gyles Brandreth.

The events raise much-needed funds for the Orange Tree, which since 2015 operates without regular funding from Arts Council England.

We were thrilled to welcome Dame Judi Dench as the first Under the Orange Tree guest in June 2017. In November 2017, we welcome our second guest in the series: Academy, BAFTA, Golden Globe, Emmy, Tony and Olivier Award-winning actor, Dame Maggie Smith CH, DBE.

Both events thus far in the Under the Orange Tree series have sold out, raising more than £30,000 towards the OT's work.

PHOTOS ROBERT DAY/TRISTRAM KENTON

PHOTO HELEN MAYBANKS



★★★★ Alice Hamilton's well-judged revival... Storey, who died this year, had a natural ear for the rhythms of domestic bickering; Hamilton matches it with a knack for articulating emotion in the rituals of domestic life.

Kate Maltby, *The Times* on *The March on Russia*



:DISCOVER

In November 2016, following a successful application to Arts Council England for Catalyst: Evolve investment, the OT launched a new fundraising campaign, :DISCOVER.

:DISCOVER aims to raise £100,000 over three years, enabling the OT to embark on an ambitious programme of activity that wouldn't otherwise take place, including:

- Developing 36 new writers
- Producing 3 new plays you wouldn't see elsewhere
- Touring to 30 venues

Donations to **:DISCOVER** are matched by Arts Council England £1 for £1.

In its first year, audiences raised a fantastic £34,500 towards :DISCOVER. This support is helping the OT to develop an evolving programme; invest in new artists; and to take risks with new and lesser-known bodies of work, enabling audiences to **EXPERIENCE** the next generation of theatre talent, **EXPERIMENT** with ground-breaking new plays, and **EXPLORE** lesser-known contemporary plays that inspire theatre-makers today.

EXPERIENCE

Donations to :DISCOVER help us to identify and share with you the best new theatre talent at work. Whether writer, director, actor or designer, over the last year :DISCOVER supporters have helped us champion emerging talent, and continue to do so.

MA Director Max Elton's Festival production of David Ireland's *The End of Hope* has transferred to the Soho Theatre for a five-week run in its main space in October and November 2017.

For his stage debut as Ernest in our 2016 production of *Sheppey*, Josh Dylan's performance won him joint Best Supporting Male at 2016's Off West End Awards.

Vivian Oparah made her professional stage debut as Minnie in *An Octoroon*, and has been nominated for an Off West End award for Best Female.

Jessica Staton's first professional role as designer was for *Extra Yarn*, our show for families and young children, earning her a nomination for Best Designer at the inaugural Stage Debut Awards. Jessica went on to design the OT's primary education project in 2017, taking *King Lear* to the circus, and is one of the 2017 finalists for the prestigious Linbury Prize for Stage Design.

EXPERIMENT

Supporting writers and new work is an important part of the OT's history and with donations to :DISCOVER can remain a priority for our future. Together with a one-off grant from Arts Council England, we commissioned one, and co-commissioned four, new works in 2017. Commissions ensure we can produce plays that are responsive to the world around us and relevant to our audience. Commissioning new work is expensive, but vital for the OT to champion new talent at the beginning of their career as a commitment not only to our programming, but to the UK theatre landscape as a whole.

Commissions include:

- 2016/17 Writers Collective member, Chris Bush. Chris is a Sheffield-born playwright, lyricist and theatre-maker, splitting her time between writing musical and non-musical projects. Chris's adaption of *Pericles* will be produced for the Olivier stage at the NT in 2018.
- A co-commission by Zoe Cooper with the RSC. Zoe's play, *Jess & Joe Forever* premiered at the OT in September 2016 before embarking on a UK Tour, and was revived for Edinburgh Festival this year.
- Three co-commissions with Paines Plough and Theatr Clwyd: *Black Mountain* by Brad Birch, *Out of Love* by Elinor Cook and *How to be a Kid* by Sarah McDonald-Hughes.

EXPLORE

Revivals of lesser-known contemporary works could play a pivotal part in the OT's ongoing programme thanks to the :DISCOVER campaign. The OT is unique in reviving important plays from the last 40 years: Caryl Churchill's *Blue Heart* and Clare McIntyre's *Low Level Panic* hadn't been produced since their world premieres, and at the OT in 2016/17 they received critical acclaim and audiences of over 6,000 each. *The Lottery of Love*, translated by John Fowles in the 1990s from the Marivaux play, finally received its world premiere at the OT in April 2017.

TOUR

I want to get more of the world into the Orange Tree, and I want the Orange Tree to get out into the world.
Paul Miller, September 2016, in an interview with Maddy Costa

Through co-producing and investment from :DISCOVER, the OT has been able to tour beyond England for the first time in 2017.

2016's *Jess & Joe Forever* by Zoe Cooper was revived at the Edinburgh Festival this summer, with fantastic reviews and sold out performances.

Our three co-commissions with Paines Plough and Theatr Clwyd are playing in repertoire on a UK tour in Paines Plough's Roundabout venue. The tour concludes with a six-week run at the OT in January – March 2018.

PHOTO ROBERT DAY

Thank you to everyone who has supported :DISCOVER in its first year.

If you have any questions, or would like any more information about :DISCOVER, please contact Development Manager Rebecca Frater on 020 8940 0141 or at rebecca.frater@orangetreetheatre.co.uk

With thanks to the following for their support of the Orange Tree in 2016/17:



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With special thanks to

Dame Judi Dench, as our first
Under the Orange Tree guest;
Baroness Ronny van Dedem;
our 1,000 Members whose support collectively
contributes the running costs of an entire
production per Season; and everyone who works
and volunteers at the OT. Thank you.



BROCHURE DESIGN ANNE RUSHTON | PRINT IMPRESS

What a year it has been for the Orange Tree. It's the sort of year that would make any other theatre in the country – the National Theatre, even – jealous. Hell, it really must have made an impact with the National, as next year will see the South Bank playing host to a transfer of Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's clever and slippery race satire *An Octoroon*, one of the Orange Tree's very biggest hits in a year of very big hits.

Quietly, steadily but to a mounting chorus of acclaim from a growing spread of audience members and critics alike, Artistic Director Paul Miller and Executive Director Sarah Nicholson have turned this vibrant little in-the-round space in Richmond into one of London's go-to venues. Their programming has been so delightfully clever: a mix of canny revivals, often of neglected quality writing from the 1980s – *Low Level Panic* by Clare McIntyre, a play whose working onstage bath tub was a source of endless fascination to me, just as was its sharp and still scarily relevant dissection of sexual politics; *The March on Russia* by David Storey – and impeccably selected new writing – *Jess and Joe Forever* by Zoe Cooper, Roland Schimmelpfennig's chilling German teaser *Winter Solstice*. The hit rate has been astonishingly high; there has not been a single production in the 2016/17 Season that has done anything other than extremely well.