

The London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) in Context,  
1947-2016

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I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and has not been and will not be submitted, in whole or in part, to any other university for the award of any other degree.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis maps the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) in its social, political, economic and cultural contexts from its inception in 1981 until 2016.

Founded by Rose de Wend Fenton and Lucy Neal, LIFT established an innovative festival form that sought to create social, political and artistic change by presenting high-quality, avant-garde international theatre and performance throughout London. By locating the innovations of LIFT in the sociopolitical context of its creation and in direct relation to historical developments, it argues that international theatre festivals can act as catalysts for change through transforming ways of seeing and being, produced in and productive of the broader societal landscape.

Opening with a historical perspective on LIFT, this thesis first gives context to its emergence in the 1980s and the role of international theatre festivals as they were first introduced into the field of theatre. It then examines LIFT's development through four decades up to the present day, examining its shifting positions in the field. Methodologically rooted in the framework of the sociology of the theatre, the thesis interweaves archival research and primary observations with an exploration of the sociological, economic and political factors that have driven the creation and evolution of international theatre festivals in Britain. The thesis explores the dominant influence of neoliberal ideology in all contemporary areas of British life, arguing that their principles interpenetrate the field of cultural production to the extent that limits the possibilities of festivals achieving their full social purpose. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of culture and Maria Shevtsova's development of Bourdieu's theory in relation to theatre, provides the theoretical frame of the thesis.

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## **Introduction**

Whilst the global proliferation of festivals for a range of artistic and cultural forms since the mid-twentieth century has been well acknowledged, little attention has been given to the specific form of theatre festivals or their development in Britain.<sup>1</sup> This thesis charts the emergence and development of the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) as a case study in order to examine the vital importance of international theatre festivals in Britain in terms of their cultural, artistic, social and political impact. Created by Rose de Wend Fenton and Lucy Neal in 1979, with its first edition in 1981, LIFT pioneered a socially and politically engaged festival form which significantly developed the field of theatre festivals that had been established after the Second World War by the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) in Scotland and the Avignon Festival in France. In all cases, the international theatre festival was a model introduced as an event that could bring artists and audiences from various nationalities and sociocultural contexts together in a regularly recurring ephemeral chronotope.<sup>2</sup> Its purpose was to reaffirm collective strength, disseminate artistic ideas and exchange shared values through the experience of multiple theatrical performances. LIFT provides the central example for this study due to its unique long-running position in the field of British theatre, its dedication to experimentation with the festival model and theatrical form, and its antagonistic relationship with dominant theatre practice in London, which is the nexus of cultural production in Britain.

The chronological structure of this thesis demonstrates how the international theatre festival has been shaped by, and given shape to, British cultural, social and political fields throughout its various manifestations since 1947. The work charts how

the introduction of the welfare system of public subsidy in the post-war era gave way to the pervasive influence of neoliberal policies from the late 1970s onwards which remade the state in the service of a market ideology. The latter promoted individual achievement in a way that was antithetical to the collective and co-operative structure expected of a festival. The present study maps the field in order to examine how the dominant field of power increasingly encroached upon the logic of the field of cultural production, forcing theatre festivals to become more socially instrumental and economically profitable, as well as to reveal the prevailing hostile conservatism of dominant British culture that consistently dismisses 'foreign' theatre as inferior.

In positioning itself as antagonistic to the dominant agents in the field, the London International Festival of Theatre altered the perception of what an international theatre festival could be. It was at the forefront of theatrical innovations in Britain, introducing high-quality theatre from every continent around the world into the country for the first time in order to counter the deeply ingrained conventions of British theatre. LIFT disrupted expected modes of presentation, placing work in the public realm and in sites across the city. In the first two decades its regular programme included director's theatre, visual theatre, site-specific and responsive theatre, one-to-one theatre, immersive theatre, installation and durational performance, dance-theatre, political theatre, theatrical spectacle, socially engaged and participatory theatre within a convivial festival model which was unparalleled at the time. Moreover, every show was imaginatively engaged with contemporary social and political issues. From 1991, LIFT created a groundbreaking education programme that brought together international artists with local schools and other marginalised social groups to create professional performances for the Festival.

Once the success of the Festival had been established over eleven editions in twenty years, its original purpose was altered through significant changes in the field such as a multitude of festivals and venues welcoming innovative and international theatre performances. Thus, Fenton and Neal undertook ‘The LIFT Enquiry,’ a near-decade long investigation of the role of theatre and theatre festivals in London. These experiments with theatrical and festival form remain globally unique for an organisation of its standing. After the departure of its founder-directors, the organisation floundered in an attempt to re-discover its purpose in the altered field of British theatre. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, following a global economic crisis and under the artistic direction of Mark Ball, LIFT returned to a biennial festival model but was no longer able to oppose the domination of economic logic in a regime of austerity politics. As a consequence it was incapable of fulfilling its original ‘festive’ purpose of reaffirming collective strength or its artistic purpose of presenting high-quality theatre that would challenge the dominant theatrical modes of practice in Britain. Thus, this thesis is, in one sense, about the demise of LIFT. However, detailed analysis of the reasons for this demise aims to give significant insight into just how much LIFT had achieved and how great the potential contained in international theatre festivals was for social and cultural life in Britain. This serves to highlight how the domination of neoliberal policies that organise the field of power seeks to limit the production of this kind of event.

The ambitious scope of this subject is organised through separate chapters that map the chronological development of LIFT. Separating the chapters in this way allows a survey overview of the political circumstances of each period, combined with detailed analysis of festival editions and the individual productions that shape them. This analysis is inextricably linked to the emergence of the international theatre

festival, a model that was established in Britain by Edinburgh International Festival (EIF). The thesis, then, begins in 1947 with the first EIF edition, which I argue was the first example in Britain of a festival with a dedicated programme of theatre and an international scope, held in the same year that the Avignon Festival was established in France, both in a post-war ‘spirit of optimism,’ greater European integration and international co-operation. My analysis ends with the consideration of LIFT in June 2016, since this marks Ball’s final Festival before his departure from the organisation, coinciding with the result of a referendum in which the British public voted marginally to leave the European Union, thus marking a significant shift in the political field.

This thesis is the first full-length academic study of a theatre festival in Britain that focuses on this contemporary period, and the first that does not take the Edinburgh Festivals as its object of study. This examination of the international theatre festival model acknowledges its origin in the EIF. However, this is not a detailed study of this Festival as to attempt to do so would make its scope too broad and would involve repeating material already documented in the existing comprehensive analyses of the Festival, notably by Eileen Miller, Angela Bartie, and Jen Harvie.<sup>3</sup> This thesis focuses instead on the legacy of the EIF, and others that emerged in the early and mid-twentieth century, in order to chart how it was developed by LIFT from 1979 onwards. This is not to suggest that EIF and Avignon were the only influences on LIFT or on theatre festivals in general, nor that LIFT is the only inheritor of this model. The Malvern Festival, Brighton Festival and Norfolk and Norwich Festival, for example, were also influential British festivals that involved theatre and performance in the pre-1980 period. Perhaps even more significant was the influence of the student festivals organised by the Solidarity Movement in Poland,

which Fenton and Neal, as students at Warwick University, attended as participants. However, led by extensive empirical research, I determined that prior to LIFT, EIF was held as the most significant international festival in Britain, and, for most of its existence, LIFT was considered its key challenger in the field.

In addition, the contribution of fringe theatre festivals to the field has not been underestimated, nor has the interdependence between EIF and its fringe. The limitations of space imposed on this project have necessitated a narrowing of focus, and I have chosen to pursue festivals dedicated to the presentation of theatre, located in Britain, with an international scope and with a programme of work that is determined as part of a long-term strategy by artistic directors. It is also worth considering that LIFT itself, despite its significance, did not generate a fringe event, which is probably due to its location in London, where fringe theatre has many options for presentation, and also due to its consistent contemporary programming that itself incorporated a fringe-programme of street theatre, circus, comedy and cabaret performances.

My analysis of LIFT is informed by extensive archival research, predominantly the LIFT Living Archive (LLA) held at Goldsmiths, University of London, which holds near-comprehensive records of the Festival from 1981-2001 including funding files, financial accounts, correspondence, reports, press-releases, company files, administrative records, audio, diaries, notebooks, letters, programmes, videos, posters, and objects. This was an essential resource in order to ascertain the planning, production, reception and position of LIFT throughout its first two decades. The archival research was supplemented by several interviews with Fenton and Neal, as well as conversations with other members of the LIFT team. For the period 2010-2016, LIFT provided access to their internal servers and recent office documents

which allowed the viewing of reports, audience responses, programmes and some media material. Of course, being a working organisation, I could not consult comprehensive correspondence, commercially sensitive financial information or documents held under the current data protection act. However, my placement at LIFT during my Masters degree for three months in 2013, and my subsequent employment at LIFT for three months for the 2014 Festival gave me unique first-hand access into the planning, management and delivery of the Festival. Continued primary observations of LIFT events has significantly informed my research contained in the thesis.

Unfortunately, the organisation's archival material from 2002-2009 is extremely limited. This is due to the early migration to digital systems, and a subsequent update of these systems which saw all documents, videos and photos corrupted beyond repair. Despite acquiring the server which contains this information, and a dedicated attempt supported by digital archivists and technology specialists at the British Library, the vast majority of this information is permanently irretrievable. This experience serves as a reminder of the importance of dedicated archives to preserve this information, and the precarious nature and fallibility of digital storage systems. However, internal records were available direct from Arts Council England (ACE) through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, as well as newspaper reviews, and materials direct from theatre companies which were involved with the Festival during this time.

The sociology of theatre provides the methodological framework in which to interpret and analyse this primary evidence. Established by Maria Shevtsova, this perspective views the study of theatre as inseparable from the specific sociocultural contexts which theatre is a part of. The present work is situated in this field as it takes

the international theatre festival as a distinct object of study, requiring sociological explanation in order to establish how it has emerged, when, where and why, and, as well, to ascertain its impact (or lack of) and to understand its function, actual and projected, in the social structure in which it appears.<sup>4</sup> This thesis interweaves the archival material with an exploration of the social, cultural, economic and political context in which LIFT emerged in order to follow Shevtsova's fully interdisciplinary approach that 'moves back and forth across "spheres" so that what is "sociological" is "political" is whatever else collective human action makes it.'<sup>5</sup>

The very notion of a 'theatre festival' epitomises Shevtsova's declaration that 'the conventional dichotomies of theatre *and* society are inadequate from the perspective of the sociology of theatre whose premise of *in* society is irreducible: theatre is social through and through.'<sup>6</sup> Whilst the fully social character of theatre has to still be argued for, the festival is considered an irrefutably social phenomenon which can only be created through and for sociability. This thesis is the first attempt to take the theatre festival as a discrete object of study in the discipline of theatre studies and festival studies, arguing that it has a particular history, distinct symbolic characteristics and sociocultural roles that distinguish it from other modes of theatrical presentation and from other types of festivals such as music festivals, folk festivals, national celebrations, and a general notion of the 'festivalisation' of culture.<sup>7</sup> In general, the phenomenon of festivals has been studied since the nineteenth century by anthropologists and sociologists.<sup>8</sup> From the end of the twentieth century, contemporary festivals have been the focus of studies by researchers in event and tourism studies.<sup>9</sup> The theatre festival is of course held in relation to all of these, but also has its own distinct position in the field. Therefore this thesis offers theoretical adaptations and new insights for theatre studies and festival studies.

In order to establish the sociology of theatre and performance, Shevtsova built on a project initiated by Georges Gurvitch and Jean Duvignaud and primarily drew upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu, as well as the work of other sociologists Émile Durkheim and Antonio Gramsci, and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin.<sup>10</sup> Both Duvignaud and Durkheim pioneered the study of festivals in modern societies, and offer vital insights for this thesis, as does the corresponding scholarship of Victor Turner. This present work establishes the theatre festival within the classical discourse concerning the roles, meanings and impacts of festivals in society and culture following cultural anthropologists and sociologists after Durkheim, rather than the predominant paradigm in the field of festival studies to consider them in the instrumentalist discourse of festival tourism, which focuses on the production, marketing and management of festivals for training in event studies.

This thesis also offers the first effort to map the field of festivals as a subfield in the field of theatre. The topographical orientation of this research draws on key concepts from Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production, An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, and *The Rules of Art: The Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*.<sup>11</sup> Of particular relevance is Bourdieu's understanding of the field, or *champ*, as any area is constituted by a set of 'structural relations – invisible, or visible only through their effects – between social positions that are both occupied and manipulated by social agents who may be isolated individuals, or agents within groups or institutions.'<sup>12</sup> In this context, the social agent is the theatre festival as an organisation, whose position in the field will be identified, assessing how this position shaped the creation of the regular festival event and its ability to realise each edition. Identifying LIFT's position in the field reveals the antagonisms and struggles within the field, and the influence of the dominant field of power on the field of cultural production. This theoretical basis is laid out in

Chapter One, along with a number of Bourdieu's key principles in order to establish the methodological approach which is then developed in the subsequent chapters.

Bourdieu recognises the difficulty inherent in attempting a social history of any field since

It has to reconstruct these spaces of original possibles which, because they were part of the self-evident givens of the situation, remained unremarked and are therefore unlikely to be mentioned in contemporary accounts, chronicles or memoirs. It is difficult to conceive of the vast amount of information which is linked to membership of a field.<sup>13</sup>

This thesis proceeds, therefore, from the premise that the position of the agent in the field can only be effectively mapped if the landscape from which this agent emerged is first excavated and analysed. Accordingly, Chapter One establishes a sociology of theatre festivals using Shevtsova and Bourdieu's key theories. It then utilises this material to analyse the chronological development of international theatre festivals in their social, political and cultural context up until 1979. Chapter Two charts the founding and first ten years of LIFT, in opposition to Margaret Thatcher's neoliberal political policies. Chapter Three follows negotiations made by Fenton and Neal from 1991-2001 to position LIFT in relation to the multicultural and educational possibilities of theatre-making and presentation in London, anticipating the policies of Tony Blair's New Labour government from 1997. Chapter Four interrogates The LIFT Enquiry, which ran from 2001-2009, and saw the organisation dispense with the biannual festival model in order to focus primarily on long-term socially engaged and community theatre projects. Chapter Five examines the decision to resurrect the Festival by Mark Ball from 2010-2016, and how his directorship was influenced by the political and economic context of austerity policies spearheaded by prime minister David Cameron.

Each of these chapters contributes to a detailed understanding of how LIFT has held a distinct, but constantly changing, position in the field, shaped by social, political and economic contexts whilst simultaneously shaping the social world. The result shows the decreasing autonomy of the field over the past seventy years, where economic and state interests have made it impossible for theatre festivals to operate outside the dominant neoliberal economic paradigm. This is shown to be due to LIFT's need to assert itself as a necessary part of a collective social life, but also set apart from the usual strictures of everyday life. Finally it shows that the Festival was forced into a double bind, where to survive it had to follow the rules of the game, but to follow these rules ultimately prohibited the creation of a meaningful collective event in the way in which LIFT had originally been envisaged.

## **Chapter One: A Historical Perspective on the London International**

### **Festival of Theatre (LIFT)**

In order to establish the importance of the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT), its emergence has to be placed in relation to the history of international festivals of theatre in Europe and specifically in Britain. An international theatre festival is a specific kind of event that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. The theatre festival is a specific, socially produced conceptual structure, coordinated by specialists, through which audiences organise their perception and participation with theatre, the urban environment and their social relationships. The founding of LIFT in 1979 by Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal was made possible through the interrelationships that were established between theatre, festivals, politics and social life in the preceding decades.

The first festival in Britain to have a stated remit of programming international theatre productions was the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), established in 1947 during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Rudolf Bing, its founding Artistic Director, sought to create an occasion that would bring the international arts community together in the ‘spirit of peace and cooperation,’ through the presentation of the ‘very best’ of theatre, as well as opera, dance, visual arts and music in order to achieve ‘the light concord and goodwill in dark unsettled times.’<sup>14</sup> EIF established the international theatre festival in Britain and introduced the innovation of this model of presentation and engagement to a theatre-going public. Throughout the twentieth-century, this model would continue to grow and be shaped and contested.

Prior to the twentieth century, festivals involving locally produced theatrical presentations in various forms had existed in Britain since the rise of the ‘mystery plays’ in the Christian festivals of the Middle Ages alongside a tradition of carnivals, jubilees, passions, pageants and fairs.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, theatre and festivals have been connected in Europe since the ancient Greeks in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. In Athens, there would be a five- or six-day Dionysian Festival in spring, during which all other daily activities were suspended, while poets would present performances that combined dance, music, song and spoken drama to the gathered spectator-citizens.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the following centuries, festivals took on many different forms in Britain. Their most predominant cultural purpose was to transmit local folk traditions through seasonal events in towns and villages, but festivals were also used to strengthen oppositional politics (such as the annual Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival organised by trade unions since 1834 to celebrate labour politics) as well as to reinforce dominant political positions (for example colonial displays at The Great Exhibition in 1851).<sup>17</sup>

Distinct festivals dedicated to theatrical productions began to first emerge in Europe during the interwar period. Important innovations for the theatre festival model were pioneered during this era by the Salzburg Festival, founded by director Max Reinhardt and writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1920, and the Malvern Festival, established by director Barry Jackson in 1929. Both of these Festivals were influenced by the explosion of modernist dramaturgical ideas and avant-garde experimentations in theatrical form that characterised the era and used the festival form in order to reach a wider public. Reinhardt wished to move away from the ‘literary play’ in order to embrace a large-scale directors theatre that combined space, light, music, design, acting, mime and dance and could communicate beyond language barriers.<sup>18</sup> These productions were described as ‘community possessions for

the people', and shows were performed across Salzburg in theatres and non-theatre building as well as in the Cathedral square, where his renowned *Jedermann* [The Everyman] was staged yearly.<sup>19</sup> Whilst Jackson initially focused on the work of playwright George Bernard Shaw; the Malvern Festival quickly expanded to celebrate the best of 'innovation and experiment' in 'the whole range of English drama.'<sup>20</sup> In addition, festival visitors and residents of the idyllic spa town were offered an array of recreational, social and educational activities including academic lectures on playwrights, talks by visiting artists, dancing in the evenings, musical performances, exhibitions, an outdoor puppet theatre and film screenings.<sup>21</sup>

Subsequently, the festivals that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, principally the Edinburgh and Avignon Festival, followed the model pioneered by Reinhardt. In 1947, the French theatre director Jean Vilar created the Avignon Festival in order to give the people of France access to the theatre 'masterpieces' of the world.<sup>22</sup> In a society that had been traumatised by the horrors of the previous two World Wars, Vilar propagated '*le théâtre, service public,*' a democratised space where class barriers could be temporarily transcended, historical divisions forgotten, political differences set aside, and a new community celebrated around 'timeless' dramatic themes.<sup>23</sup> Vilar wished to ensure that the Festival 'palliated against the idea of theatre as privilege and coterie' by placing it in a regional town, providing low ticket prices and placing work in open-air venues that did not have hierarchical seating arrangements.<sup>24</sup> These combined factors were part of an effort to decentralise culture away from Paris and encourage people of all ages, occupations and class groups to attend the theatre together in the public space to create a 'spirit of conviviality.'<sup>25</sup>

As the Festival developed throughout the 1950s, growing from 4,800 visitors in 1947 to 11,600 in 1951, Vilar worked closely with the Centre d'Entrainement aux Methodes d'Education Active (CEMEA) to bring more young people to the Festival each year.<sup>26</sup> This was achieved through providing inexpensive tickets, lodging, food, workshops, lectures and contact with international artists. Maria Shevtsova wrote that this was

one of Vilar's greatest achievements, that of mobilising new audiences to become artistically sensitive, well-informed, alert and articulate – indispensable criteria, in his view, for what subsequent generations were to describe as 'empowerment.'<sup>27</sup>

The creation of a 'genuinely democratic' audience was essential to Avignon's continued success, and Vilar continued to attempt to break down social and educational barriers through new theatre practices in the following decades until his death in 1971.<sup>28</sup>

In 1947, the same year as the creation of the Avignon Festival, The Edinburgh International Festival of Music and the Arts (EIF) was founded in Britain, conceived by Bing, then general manager of Glyndebourne Festival Opera.<sup>29</sup> Before moving to Britain as a refugee from Nazi Germany, Bing had regularly attended the Salzburg Festival in the 1930s and sought to instigate a Festival of comparable standard in Britain.<sup>30</sup> Edinburgh was chosen as the site for the occasion partly due to practical considerations, such as that it had suffered little bomb damage throughout the war, it could accommodate up to one-hundred thousand visitors, had good rail connections and enough theatres. But it was also deemed suitable due to Bing's observation that the picturesque nature of the city meant it 'had a Salzburg flavour.'<sup>31</sup> His vision was that the EIF could bring the international arts community together in the spirit of

peace and cooperation, achieving ‘the light concord,’ whilst elevating the artistic quality of British theatre and music by introducing high-quality international arts into the country at a time when international touring work was scarce.<sup>32</sup>

The first half of the twentieth century had seen the innovation of the international theatre festival model, pioneered, shaped and developed through the work of visionary theatre directors in response to the shifting social, political and economic circumstances.<sup>33</sup> It is, of course, not possible to examine all of the various transformations that characterised this era. However, it is important to highlight some of the shifts that laid the foundations for the continued development of international theatre festivals throughout the following decades. These intersecting factors are the spread of the Labour movement and the creation of the welfare state, the ideals of international cooperation, and the avant-garde’s critical stance against the bourgeois theatre institutions.

The Labour Movement had grown in Britain, France, Germany and across Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century, bringing with it the organisation of waged workers and the staging of mass-movements. This movement, and the continued spread of Marxist ideas, led to a renewal of interest by artists, cultural workers and intellectuals in the festival form. In the first volume of Henri Lefebvre’s *Critique of Everyday Life*, published in 1947, he advocates for the re-introduction of festivals for workers as a modern form of Marxist praxis that could act as a re-appropriation of the public sphere, whilst also locating them firmly in the social world. The separation of humans from festivals was, according to Lefebvre, a significant contribution to alienation:

Certainly, right from the start, festivals contrasted violently with everyday life, *but they were not separate from it*. They were like everyday life, but more intense;

and the moments of that life – the practical community, food, the relation with nature – in other words, work – were reunited, amplified, magnified in the festival. Man, still immersed in an immediate natural life, lived, mimed, sang, danced his relation with nature and the cosmic order as his elementary and confused thoughts ‘represented’ it. On the same level as nature, man was also on the same level as himself, his thoughts, the forms of beauty, wisdom, madness, frenzy and tranquillity which were available to him. In his reality, he lived and achieved all his potential. [...] Perhaps he was basic and elementary, but at least he lived without being fundamentally ‘repressed’; and maybe he sometimes died appeased.<sup>34</sup>

This perception of the festival as a ‘pure’ folk form that should be rightfully considered as part of everyday life, and of peasant life in particular, was at the forefront of fellow Occitan Vilar’s project in Avignon, although it does also feature significantly for Reinhardt and Bing. However, all these directors would go beyond the folk form to create the theatre festival which could offer the participant communion with the canon of Western European theatre instead of nature or the cosmic order. They believed that by giving dominated class fractions access to high-brow theatre, through the folk form of a festival, would allow them to accrue the cultural capital they would need to become aware of their position as dominated, thus empowering them to change conditions.

This belief in the role of art and theatre in society was formed in opposition to theatre being considered as a profit-making entertainment or a cloistered bourgeois pastime. Vilar claimed he could not create ‘serious artistic’ theatre in Paris due to commercial pressures and the Avignon Festival fiercely advocated itself as a non-profit, publicly funded event. Bing and his co-conspirator, Sir John Falconer, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, continually emphasised that EIF was not a private enterprise but a public service. The Festival’s first programme introduction read this:

We wish to provide the world with a Centre where, year after year, all that is best in music, drama and the visual arts can be seen and heard amidst ideal surroundings [...]. I hope you will believe that in the organisation of the many

attractions, we have had ever before us the highest and purest ideals of art in its many and varied forms. May I assure you that this Festival is not a commercial undertaking in any way. It is an endeavour to provide stimulus to the establishing of a new way of life centred around the arts. [...] [Edinburgh] will surrender herself to the visitors and hopes that they will find in all the performances a sense of peace and inspiration with which to refresh their souls and reaffirm their belief in things other than material.<sup>35</sup>

In Britain and France, the position of theatre in society had changed with the intervention of the State through a system of public subsidy. Following the Second World War, the introduction of the welfare state from 1945 by Clement Atlee's Labour Government in Britain had included the creation of the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) in 1946, thus formalising the government's wartime support for the arts through the Council for Encouragement of Music and Art (CEMA). It was a new era for all of British society, including the working classes, to gain access to education and the arts.<sup>36</sup> Atlee's overwhelmingly popular reforms were heralded as the 'creation of equality among all people' that sought to eliminate the deep class divisions that characterised British society.<sup>37</sup> In 1949 the Edinburgh Festival Society's (EFS) first Chairman, Sir Andrew Murray, drew a direct comparison between the efforts of Atlee's Government and aims of the EIF, stating that the Festival would be a means of lifting the 'levels of human thought and welfare.'<sup>38</sup>

Thirdly, following the end of the Second World War, internationalism became an essential aspect of national and global governance. The first meeting of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly took place in London in 1946, a year after the intergovernmental organisation was founded in order to bring peace, protect fundamental human rights and work towards harmonious relationships around the world on equal terms. Theatre was considered a crucial part of this new era of internationalism and an International Theatre Institute was formed as part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in

1946. Before the Second World War, there had been a minimal presentation of international theatre in Britain, although there was a significant amount of export of British drama to its colonies.<sup>39</sup> International theatre festivals in Europe during this time were considered a vital part of a particular western European cooperation. In 1946, Winston Churchill had advocated for the emergence of a 'United States of Europe' in order to counteract the extreme nationalism that had led to the previous decades of war, an organisation that would be first founded as the Council of Europe in 1949 and become The European Union.<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, at their foundation these international theatre festivals, starting in Austria with the Salzburg Festival and in Britain with EIF, were antithetical to the mainstream, established theatre institutions which prioritised commercial interests, elite patrons and national culture. In doing so, they were part of the forefront of a Post-War 'spirit of optimism' that swept across western Europe, with state-funding introduced to allow theatre to be created beyond private enterprise, to encourage the development of experimental theatrical forms, to allow those of all class backgrounds to have access to high-brow cultural forms, and to embrace art beyond national boundaries.<sup>41</sup>

### **A Sociology of Theatre Festivals**

In order to continue to determine the shape, structure and conditions of international theatre festivals and their continued development in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it is useful to draw on Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical concept of *champ*, or field. In doing so, and to begin to establish a sociology of theatre festivals, this thesis builds explicitly on the sociology of theatre, the sociocultural methodology pioneered and developed by Maria Shevtsova, using her vital appropriation of Bourdieu's key concepts of the field, cultural capital and habitus for the study of

theatre.<sup>42</sup> This thesis both maps the field and identifies how theatre festivals are primarily social agents capable of action and intervention in social structures and systems. A sociology of theatre festivals is, therefore, a subset of the sociology of the theatre that defines theatre festivals as a distinct object of study, whilst recognising that they are fully embedded in the field of theatre and interconnected with other subsets identified by Shevtsova such as the sociology of stage productions, the sociology of spectators and spectatorship, and, perhaps most closely merged with, the sociology of institutions involved in the dissemination and distribution of performances.<sup>43</sup> However, although theatre festivals are most often presented by arts organisations that could be considered ‘institutions,’ the festival-as-event is not reducible to institutional analysis alone. The key factors of this irreducibility, argued for in detail below, are their ephemeral nature, their use of multiple institutional contexts simultaneously, and the specific function the festival has in social life.

In order to understand why theatre festivals are constituted in this fashion, it is first necessary to establish Bourdieu’s notion of *champ*. According to Bourdieu, society consists of a series of ‘fields’ in which various agents struggle for status and control through the acquisition or exchange of cultural, symbolic, social and economic capital.<sup>44</sup> In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* Bourdieu defines some of the key elements of the notion of field:

In analytical terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in their determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.).<sup>45</sup>

Each field is made up of multiple positions occupied by agents, and it is the objective relations between the positions that create the structure and shape of each field.

Consequently, social formations are structured by a series of fields, each structured within the wider 'field of power.'<sup>46</sup> Every field has a set of rules that appears self-evident and are generally followed by members of the field. Bourdieu calls these rules the 'doxa' of the field, and it is by adhering to these rules that the field is reproduced.<sup>47</sup> Fields can be overlapping, but they are also distinct due to their specific doxa, although different fields may be homologous (they have similar structures).

In her identification of 'the champ nexus',<sup>48</sup> Shevtsova develops Bourdieu's theories of the field in order to highlight how this concept does not lead to a structural constriction of artistic production (for 'culture is not a straightjacket')<sup>49</sup> or a limitation of the possibilities of social life. On the contrary, it offers a conceptual framework in which to understand the importance of the interrelationships between agents in the specific fields and of the fields themselves, which creates a richer and more detailed understanding of the conditions of production and reception.<sup>50</sup>

This present study focuses on the influence of the directors of international theatre festivals. Theatre festivals could not exist without their directors who principally determine the time and regularity of the festival, the content of the programme, the location, name, political stance and so on, as well as ensuring its delivery by financial management, recruitment of staff and volunteers, meeting technical requirements, and licensing as well as a myriad of other responsibilities. Therefore the festival is most heavily influenced by the specific position the director holds in the cultural field. The position held by the director subsequently, as Shevtsova explains 'virtually determines this holder's *disposition*.'<sup>51</sup> She defines this term according to Bourdieu's writings in *Distinction*:<sup>52</sup>

‘[D]isposition’ refers to outlook, expectation, selection, evaluation, and acquisition of knowledge and insight through exposure to art and culture generally, all of which goes by the name of ‘taste.’<sup>53</sup>

Both the position and disposition of the agent thus undersign the agent’s *prise de position*, or ‘taking position.’<sup>54</sup> This describes how the holder is required to adopt a position in respect of the field, such as a political or moral stance, in relation to how she has situated herself in it.<sup>55</sup> This forms the ‘champ nexus’ which Shevtsova identifies as the ‘position-disposition-taking position’ ternary, which ‘provides the *objective* conditions’ that

help to explain why, in the case of theatre, the profession is not uniform, and why theatre practitioners generate an immense variety of styles, approaches and attitudes over and above their differences as individuals. [...] This could be put very crudely by saying that how artists work and are distinguished from each other depends on their place in ‘the system’ of the field and how they define and view their place in it.<sup>56</sup>

Every director of a theatre festival can be located in terms of this nexus, which establishes what is objectively given. However, Shevtsova argues that this three-pronged schema does not dictate the creative act as it cannot fully account for the ‘act of interpretation’ when the ‘taker interprets *both* the field *and* the position that she/he is taking.’<sup>57</sup> Therefore ‘[d]irectors’ creative choices, intentions, pursuits and decisions may be reactive to the field to a certain degree, but are *proactive* above all else.’<sup>58</sup>

Festivals, fundamentally, are a complex interweaving of multiple agents from inside and outside the field. However, this complexity does not mean they lack a clear position-disposition-taking position in the field of theatre. In particular, the international theatre festival will seek to combine many agents such as artists, drama, critics, institutions and spectators from a globally interconnected system of fields. Even

so, it is the specific position-disposition-taking position, and proactive interpretation, of the directors of the festival organisation who determine the position of the festival in the field. Thus, the position of all those who participate in the festival is altered by their involvement in the festival, either temporarily, or more often (albeit subtly) permanently. In other words, the chronotopic particularity of the festival-event works to gather disparate agents together and exposes them to an intensive programme of theatrical productions and associated sociality (such as formal discussions, parties, or casual conversation). This exposure will inevitably lead to shifts in knowledge, beliefs and taste based on the position of the festival.

Whilst it is vital to recognise that the position of the theatre festival is heavily determined by the position-disposition-taking position of its directors, it must be considered that this cannot be the only factor. The position of other agents such as artists and companies, the wider festival team (including managers, producers, publicists), and spectators will determine the position of the festival. Additionally, economic provisions (such as sponsorship or public funding), political circumstance, geographical location, historical context and a myriad of other factors from external fields will continually shape its objective conditions.

A closer examination of geographical location reveals another important aspect of the study of international theatre festivals. Bourdieu deemed 'geographic origin' a further 'exterior indicator' that defines a position.<sup>59</sup> As his focus is on the national field in France, he refers directly to how agents located in, or originating from, the metropolitan centres of cultural production often occupy more prestigious positions in the field than those in the regions. As Shevtsova writes, the implications for this concept of a discrete 'field' is significant when it is opened up to a global context:

A field in world terms [...] is in constant flux, and relies on additional, transnational as well as transcultural, criteria for its dynamics. These factors necessarily complicate all fields that are hooked up globally in some way, as are artistic fields through personal and professional contacts and international markets. [...] With time, moreover, as the mechanisms of internationalization – not to mention globalization – become more tentacular *and* tighter, they are bound to alter radically the operations of discrete fields.<sup>60</sup>

This observation becomes particularly pertinent in a discussion of how the international theatre festival merges and interacts with both local and global fields. For example, companies which are seen as the most prestigious in their own national field of theatre, are often received as marginal or inferior when presented in Britain, which is evidenced in examples throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapter Two. This reveals that theatre is embedded in the globally interacting fields of power, often shaped by colonial histories of exploitation or international conflict. Notwithstanding, the physical geographical location of the theatre festival and the conditions of its discrete field is of absolute importance and cannot be nullified through an international scope.

Due to the inequalities of these global fields of power, the presentation of international companies at a theatre festival in Britain holds the potential to increase the cultural capital of these agents in the field through a redistribution of capital which challenges not only the doxa of the national field, but also the dominant global field of economics and politics. This is made possible due to the way cultural capital is accumulated and exchanged, which ‘must necessarily play a role in the nexus of “field.”’<sup>61</sup> Bourdieu defines capital as ‘the structure of the distribution of the species of power,’<sup>62</sup> writing that

Capital is accumulated labour (in its materialised form or its ‘incorporated’ embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis

by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour. It is a *vix insitia*, a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures, but it is also *lex insitia*, the principle underlying immanent regularities of the social world.<sup>63</sup>

The amount of various types of capital an agent has, such as symbolic, social, educational, economic and cultural capital, is determined, in part, by their position in the field. For example, those of a working-class background are disempowered in the social field due to being denied access to all forms of capital.<sup>64</sup> However, this is not entirely deterministic, as capital can be generated and exchanged through social practice in the field.<sup>65</sup>

Furthermore, it is the structure and distribution of capital, and the hierarchies of capital that exist in each field, which lend autonomy to the field and establish it as a field.<sup>66</sup> In the field of cultural production, cultural capital is valued most strongly.<sup>67</sup> This is the inverse of the field of power, which in capitalist economies is based on the accumulation of economic capital. Bourdieu defines three forms of cultural capital at play, which incorporate cultural knowledge and competence:

In the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods [...]; and in the *institutionalised* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because [...] it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee.<sup>68</sup>

The conferral of institutionalised cultural capital can also be understood in terms of its ‘consecrating’ power. For example, work presented as part of a festival organised by a prestigious organisation will be bestowed with a level of cultural capital. This is explored in detail throughout this thesis, with particular reference to how LIFT was able to consecrate marginalised artists and productions through its own consecrated status.

The ‘embodied’ state of capital forms the basis of what Bourdieu terms ‘*habitus*.’<sup>69</sup> Shevtsova defines the term as ‘the conceptual tool with which Bourdieu interlinks practices, fields and institutions,’ and outlines the basis of the concept thus:

People’s outlook, expectations, and so on, are not purely mental or intellectual. Their representation – how they conceive, perceive, think and express – is intertwined with how they act, and how they act – their action – is predicated on what they practice.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, ‘practice is the product of habitus,’ in which habitus gives structure to the field, it delineates ‘how things are done’ or ‘how things should be done.’<sup>71</sup> Habitus is often persistent across historical periods, but can also be altered according to new social conditions. Although interiorized and thus embodied, habitus is not purely personal, but often displayed through a group habitus, which when displayed with sufficient frequency is how practice becomes institutionalised, exerting real power and control in the field. The significance of the notion of habitus will be brought out through the extended discussion offered throughout this thesis, and in the first instance through an analysis of the simultaneous establishment of the EIF and ACGB in the present chapter.

Whilst Shevtsova’s explication and appropriation of Bourdieu’s key concepts provide the theoretical underpinning for this thesis, the full methodological scope of the sociology of theatre draws upon the work of a broader range of theorists. In order to reach a sociology of theatre festivals, it is necessary to consider the specific form of the festival as it appears in sociological and anthropological theory, to understand the distinct characteristics of festivals, embedded in the field of theatre, are manifest. As Shevtsova identifies, Jean Duvignaud’s work on ‘the sociology of the theatre’ was the first to attempt to look at theatre from a sociological and anthropological perspective,

rather than a traditional theatre studies framework.<sup>72</sup> This also included dedicated scholarship that pioneered a sociological approach to festivals.<sup>73</sup>

In laying out a sociological approach to festivals, Duvignaud warned against reducing the notion of festival to a set of general principles or common elements. He observed how festivals in a number of manifestations have different purposes in various sociohistorical cultural contexts, emphasising how festivals held in ‘technological societies’ drastically differ from those held in ‘archaic societies,’ with the latter studied most extensively by anthropologists such as Emile Durkheim at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> Duvignaud’s refusal to limit the definition of festival strengthens the present argument that theatre festivals, emerging as a specific mid-twentieth century model, require a separate topography that establishes them as a distinct phenomenon. In other words, they cannot be reduced to a universalised notion of ‘festival,’ or as Duvignaud states, ‘the festival is more than merely a festival.’<sup>75</sup> In terms of Duvignaud’s discussion of ‘types of festival,’ theatre festivals can be considered closest to a ‘festival of commemoration,’ which are defined as appearing when,

civilisations and societies are sufficiently established to recognise what they have acquired and how to define themselves in relation to the past. This is properly, the awareness of history. [...] All commemorations are a return to the source, to the origins: ‘uchronia’ gives life to history.<sup>76</sup>

Although pertinent, this is by no means sufficient to understand the complex position the theatre festival holds in the contemporary field, and many of Duvignaud’s other conceptualisations of the festivals will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the sociology of theatre festivals. However, it does offer a place of

departure from which to begin to analyse EIF's position in the sociohistorical context of Post-War Britain.

### **Edinburgh International Festival: 1947-1959**

The EIF was in many ways a uchronia. It sought to 'rebuild' and 'restore' an 'ideal' of a past European 'civilisation' that had never existed.<sup>77</sup> It did this through staging classical and canonical dramatic works, operas and concerts that were believed, from the position of its directors, to portray 'traditional civilised values' and return theatre to an essential social and 'spiritual' role in Britain, divested of private financial interests.<sup>78</sup> This was a serious undertaking, reflected in an ambitious proposal submitted by the Festival for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1949.<sup>79</sup> This proposal was made on the basis that EIF was

a constructive effort on behalf of European civilisation, for it was clear that should the traditional civilised values, already weakened by the war, be allowed to fail, hope of peace would surely fall with them. [EIF has made] a contribution to peace and understanding through the arts, a duty which can not be lightly put aside.<sup>80</sup>

The strength of its yearly ritual drew on the symbolic power of Edinburgh's historical architecture and of the church. This was displayed in the opening event of the first Festival, where an inaugural 'Service of Praise' was held in the grand St. Giles Cathedral, High Kirk of Edinburgh, attended by those involved in the festival as well as dignitaries of church and state.<sup>81</sup> Bing felt that the attempt to restore European culture looked backwards in an attempt to recover a shared humanitarian civilization which had been lost by the barbaric actions of the Second World War. He was intensified in his internationalist stance by his position as an Austrian-born man of Jewish descent, who had to leave his job in Berlin to move to Britain with his wife Nina Schelemskaya-Schlesnaya, a Russian ballet dancer, in order to escape

persecution by the Nazi regime. However, the EIF did not only seek to 'rebuild' but to also move forward in line with Britain's efforts to build new systems of governance that attempted to establish equality in society on a national scale that had not been ventured before.

The most significant and wide-reaching changes in British post-war society came from the introduction of the welfare state, and its associated benefits for all citizens. This included the ACGB, which, through its system of public subsidy, would permanently alter the field of theatre. In contrast to its predecessor CEMA, which offered financial support and encouragement of 'amateur creative expression,' the purpose of the newly formed ACGB was to 'increase the accessibility of the fine arts to the public throughout Our Realm, to improve the standard of execution of the fine arts.'<sup>82</sup> The exclusive focus on fine arts denoted what was considered 'high culture' – classical theatre, opera, classical music, ballet, and art museums. This focus had been introduced by the first Chairman of the ACGB, the influential economist John Maynard Keynes, an agent of the cultured elite, who was 'not a man for wandering minstrels and amateur theatricals. He believed in excellence.'<sup>83</sup>

Keynes was one of the leading economists of the era, and alongside William Beveridge, he is considered a principal architect of the post-war welfare state in Britain. As well as an emphasis on professional artistic standards, the second key characteristic of his policy model for cultural thinking was the notion of distance from the government, often called the 'arm's length' principle, in which arts funding was subject to as little interference from governments as possible.<sup>84</sup> This was done by the government's Treasury allocating funds to the Arts Council, which would decide how to spend them independently from the government. During a BBC broadcast 'The Arts Council: Its Policy and Hopes' in 1945, Keynes declared:

The task of an official body is not to teach or to censor, but to give courage, confidence and opportunity. [...] New work will spring up more abundantly in unexpected quarters and in unforeseen shapes when there is a universal opportunity for contact with traditional and contemporary arts in their noblest forms. [...] Do not think of the Arts Council as a schoolmaster [...] [T]he work of the artist in all its aspects is, of its nature, individual and free, undisciplined, unregimented, uncontrolled. The artist walks where the breath of the spirit blows him. [...] [H]e leads the rest of us into fresh pastures and teaches us to love and to enjoy what we often begin by rejecting, enlarging our sensibility and purifying our instincts.<sup>85</sup>

In Bourdieu's terms, this is one possible answer to how the field of cultural production can maintain its autonomy from interpenetration from heteronomous state and commercial influences, whilst avoiding poverty for those involved in creating and disseminating art. Keynes believed the welfare state could bring about full employment, and the ACGB provided a policy mechanism for state intervention that sheltered qualifying artists from the market economy.<sup>86</sup>

However, the question of who decides what is considered 'excellence' reveals a further problem examined by Bourdieu, that of social reproduction, where the elite control and gate-keep taste and distinction in a manner that reproduces existing domination. Keynes belongs to the dominant class fraction of the 'intellectual aristocracy,' a 'class' of nineteenth-century reformers who were middle class, educated and often followers of John Stuart Mill.<sup>87</sup> Keynes envisioned that like-minded individuals of his class would continue to administer ACGB funds. He wrote that although those who have interests of 'private advantage' from the distribution of arts funding should be excluded from gaining financially from their decisions, those from 'particular classes' should constitute the governing body.<sup>88</sup> A 1998 examination of the ACGB leadership since its founding discovered they had all been middle-aged, white, upper or middle-class men who had mostly attended private school and graduated from Oxford or Cambridge University.<sup>89</sup> Clive Gray, the study's author, concluded:

The idea that there was a self-replicating oligarchy within the arts was reinforced by the socially closed world that the membership of the Arts Council was drawn from and the fact that overlapping membership with other arts organisations cemented the values and views that the membership held.<sup>90</sup>

It is Keynes' notion of good culture that continued to predominate. Therefore these people in a particular class fraction, who make up the Arts Council's governance until the present day, wield enormous power through these institutions that continue to reproduce. This serves to impress upon the subaltern classes the view that the elites' own cultural tastes are the most valid tastes to be had, and consequently, to be desired above all others.<sup>91</sup> For example, Keynes' love for classical music (including opera and ballet) meant the budget allocation was over twice as much than for visual art and drama combined. Furthermore, literature and film were excluded completely.<sup>92</sup> Therefore the institutional channel of the ACGB began to be, and continued to be, monopolised by the ruling minority.

From the beginning, the ACGB carried tensions between support for an 'excellent' quality of art and an effort to disseminate art to people from different regions and socioeconomic backgrounds. This was often phrased as a debate between 'raising' (of standards) or 'spreading' (distributing works). These tensions were evident in EIF during this era. The folk form of a festival sought to distribute works in a more accessible way to a wider public, whilst the works presented at the Festival would be exclusively 'high-cultural' endeavours. The men that founded and led EIF, including Bing, Falconer and the first Chairman of the EFS, Murray, were of the same elite as Keynes and spoke of the Festival in bold paternal tones. Addressing the press in 1949, Murray, stated:

Aught that we can do to bring together men and women from all parts of the world; aught that we can do to assist them to find a common interest and mutual understanding in the revelation of the music and art of the great masters; aught that we can do to establish an incorruptible love of truth, to create a lofty spirit of freedom and to blend a moral and intellectual guiding force in the future of the world — aught that we can do in this respect will meet the greatest need of mankind and confer the greatest gift upon a wavering civilisation.<sup>93</sup>

The aims and language of the EIF management matched Keynes' closely, who also spoke of ACGB's purpose to create the conditions for 'civilised life'.<sup>94</sup> This is a clear example of a group habitus, which in its repeated practice, became an enduring institutional habitus which defined what constituted 'excellent' art, thereby maintaining and sustaining the position of power of these agents and their organisations.

The inaugural EIF was designed to utilise these codified cultural alliances and affinities of taste that appeared to symbolically transcend the nationalistic geographies of war through a 'superlative' artistic standard.<sup>95</sup> The plans for 'An Edinburgh Festival' were announced in *The Scotsman* on 24 November 1945:

It is on the outstanding excellence of its presentations that the success of an international festival must be founded [...]. [The Promoters] intend to secure the best that the world has to offer in music, drama, and ballet, and it is hoped that in addition to British orchestras, conductors, and dramatic companies, foreign organisations and world-famed artists will take part.<sup>96</sup>

The programme, consisting of canonical and classical performances, confirms its role as the commemoration and consolidation of what constitutes worthy high-brow cultural forms by the elite. The first Festival was seen as an essential symbol of the survival of British culture, and as such even welcomed King George VI and his daughter, the future Queen Elizabeth II, to several events, who used the opportunity to engage in diplomatic relations with foreign dignitaries, among the thousands of

visitors primarily from London, Paris and New York.<sup>97</sup> In total 180,000 tickets were sold at the first festival.<sup>98</sup>

In 1947, the EIF theatre programme featured Paris's Compagnie Jovet de theatre de l'Athénée with productions of Molière's *L'Ecole des femmes* and Giraudoux's *Ondine*, as well as the Old Vic's productions of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* and *King Richard II*. Speaking to the era, the Old Vic's *Richard II* exaggerated the enactment of power politics in a production starring Alec Guinness and directed by Ralph Richardson; the clash between a medieval and a modern political theory dramatised in the play, or between a theological and a pragmatic version of rule, might be seen to parallel questions about contemporary European governance.<sup>99</sup> The homologous positions in discrete national fields of the cultural elites is revealed by the fact that Vilar's first production at Avignon in 1947 was also *Richard II* performed outdoors in the Court of Honour of the Papal Palace.<sup>100</sup> Correspondingly, Shakespeare continued to be featured prominently in the first decade of the EIF, as well as at Avignon. As Dennis Kennedy has observed, 'after the war the theatre was seen as a site for the recovery of the past, Shakespeare provided an opportunity to preserve a dying European memory.'<sup>101</sup> The mythical past conjured in Shakespeare's history plays served the construction of the uchronic festival model.

A concert given by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra with the German-Jewish conductor Bruno Walter was taken as a symbolic gesture of the peace and reconciliation this cultural venture was intended to bring, and was received with great enthusiasm.<sup>102</sup> However, the tensions present in its arrangement reveal some of the antagonisms in negotiating political, historical, ethnic and personal conflicts in arts festival organisation. Under persecution, Walter had also fled Germany for New York.

Understandably, he was reluctant to return to Europe and made his conditions for his appearance in Edinburgh clear in a letter to Bing:

I do not want to come into contact with any Nazis or find myself 'in the same boat' with them. So I must know, who besides myself, will conduct concerts of the Vienna Philharmonic in Edinburgh [...] There was a rumour that Furtwängler would be invited. [...] I want you to know [...] that in this case, I would not conduct at the Festival. And, of course, my position would be the same if another conductor with Nazi affiliations would appear with the orchestra in England.<sup>103</sup>

While no Nazi-affiliated conductors would be present in 1947, nearly half of the orchestra itself had been members of the Party.<sup>104</sup> Thirteen Jewish members of the orchestra had been expelled upon the Anschluss, and of these seven were killed.<sup>105</sup> One of the survivors, solo cellist Friedrich Buxbaum, also travelled to Edinburgh to resume his position in the orchestra for the first time since he had been exiled.<sup>106</sup> The return of the two men did not come without anti-Semitic comment from other orchestra members and from the press, although in general the concerts were reportedly 'conciliatory' for all involved.<sup>107</sup> Poignantly for all present, Walter chose only to conduct work composed by Gustav Mahler, a composer whose work had been banned from performance by Adolf Hitler. *The Guardian* wrote that Walter reuniting with the Orchestra 'after years of separation that, not so very long ago, seemed beyond repair' had 'naturally been moving.'<sup>108</sup>

Bing and the ACGB's definition of what constituted the 'music and art of the great masters' to be included in the festival, created further antagonisms with the practice of the local Scottish field. The concept of culture that the Festival organisers espoused caused conflict from the very beginning as the question of what place Scottish folk culture should have in the programme was asked. From the first year of the Festival, Scottish arts practitioners rejected Bing's vision of exclusively presenting

high art in the classical European tradition. Instead, they promoted competing programmes featuring folk dance, theatre and music from the Scottish tradition. This challenge to the dominant state sanctioned Festival became the Edinburgh Fringe Festival from 1948. The Fringe opposed the EIF, albeit in a proven mutually beneficial way, by having no centralised governance and welcoming all those who wanted to present work to do so.

Although Bing continued to exclude Scottish folk music and dance from EIF defiantly, this was primarily due to his aversion to folk music in general rather than a disdain for its particular national manifestation. As Jen Harvie has documented, there were significant inclusions of Scottish theatre in its first decade. In 1948, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* by David Lyndsay was performed in the first staging of the play by a professional company since 1552.<sup>109</sup> Harvie wrote that programming the production ‘testified to the EIF’s commitment to Scottish culture’ and the festival organisers further demonstrated this by employing a Scottish director, designer and actors.<sup>110</sup> Subsequently, it was revived for the Festival three times in the next decade alone.<sup>111</sup> The following years saw premieres and adaptations of work written by Scottish playwrights and presented by companies such as Glasgow’s Citizen’s theatre. Harvie argued that in contrast to many accusations levelled at the EIF during this era

Scottish drama and theatre have been continuously – if not consistently – included and nurtured throughout the subsequent history of the Festival, explicitly ranking Scottish culture as international in stature, and functioning as an important site for the articulation of Scottish cultural strength and autonomy.<sup>112</sup>

Despite a stubborn predominance of English theatre in the EIF, in contrast to the mainly pan-European programme of concerts, opera and ballet, there are some key examples of international productions that altered the practice of British

theatre.<sup>113</sup> One key example is the French Louis Jouvet, who in 1948 caused a stir by illustrating the static nature of English actors who performed primarily with their voice whilst their French counterparts utilized their entire body.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, the following year there was a Brecht-inspired production of Goethe's *Faust* by the Düsseldorf Theatre Company, led by Gustaf Gründgens. The production emphasised what Bertolt Brecht termed *gestus* – a meticulously constructed, sparse language of gestures, posture, and speech patterns that presented the character as socially constructed. This was in contrast to the British theatre which predominantly used sentimental portrayals based on a character's private emotions. International contact began to break down British insularity and to highlight the technical deficiencies of the dominant practice of British acting and dramaturgical styles. Furthermore, the impact of influential European theatre movements was vital in the development of British theatre as it began to experiment with dramatic form through the 1950s.<sup>115</sup>

Bing departed as director in 1949, succeeded by his assistant Ian Hunter. He largely continued with the same programming principles as Bing but expanded the scope of the Festival by establishing the Military Tattoo in 1950. When he departed in 1956, he established several other festivals including the Brighton Festival (1967), the Commonwealth Arts Festival (1965) and the Hong Kong Festival (1973). He was succeeded by Ian Ponsonby, who had graduated from Oxford University into a job at Glyndebourne before becoming EIF director, and who, unsurprisingly, maintained the programme as it had been over the previous ten years. The defining features of his Festival were not cultural, but financial, as he struggled with raising enough money to cover the costs of productions, even calling the civic authorities 'hostile' to the EIF.<sup>116</sup>

The EIF operated in the post-war period to establish itself as a site for the exhibition and distribution of serious, high-cultural forms, perpetuating the

mainstream and hierarchical position of these forms in society. This was due to the position-disposition-position taking nexus of its directors, whose power was also perpetuated and maintained through their delivery of the Festival. This process established festivals for the subsequent decades as important sites of cultural power, with the ability to maintain or challenge the hierarchies of theatrical styles and artistic qualities in the wider cultural field. The EIF played a critical role in determining an international space of artistic exchange and influencing a global field of cultural prestige and power. Festival directors in this era, such as Bing and Vilar, were dedicated to theatre not as entertainment or as a commercial enterprise, but instead commissioned and programmed productions with great seriousness of consideration for its impact on the society in which it operated. Despite relying on a commemorative festival model that conjured an illusory history, they also took theatre to be a serious intervention into the post-war landscape that could inspire peace and empowerment.

### **Experimentation and Turbulence at the EIF: the 1960s**

EIF played a crucial part in the artistic and political shifts in the field of British theatre in the 1960s. This decade began an attempt to dispense with the structuration of disciplines and definitions, including a blurring of boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultural forms and artistic genres. Shevtsova’s description of the decade is useful:

A period whose economic growth and economic optimism freed up mental space, allowing energies to focus on political and sociocultural injustices and inequalities and thereby fermenting that ‘cultural revolution’ for which the 1960s are now most remembered in the affluent ‘western’ world.<sup>117</sup>

As theatre festivals had become intensified sites of cultural and social life, they could not avoid being contested sites throughout this period. The status quo of international theatre festivals, as well as the privileges of their directors, came into direct conflict

with the burgeoning alternative scenes which held different beliefs about how cultural capital could be distributed more equitably throughout society.<sup>118</sup>

This changing political, social and artistic context over the following decade marks a step change in the history of the Edinburgh Festivals. Bartie has argued that Edinburgh was a significant player during this time of cultural turbulence:

Together, the Edinburgh festivals and other cultural ventures located in Edinburgh provided an important nursery and laboratory for many of the individuals and ideas symbolic of ‘the sixties.’ A number of the links that formed that motif of ‘cultural revolution’ – and in particular the London based counterculture – were established in Edinburgh in the early years of the decade.<sup>119</sup>

The 1960s were a significant period for the development of performance in Britain, with festivals taking a central role as a place for experimentation and international collaboration. At EIF, a greater interest in cross-cultural collaboration is documented, predominantly the adaptation and utilisation of performance practices developed by practitioners from different sociocultural perspectives, although these exchanges are most often between European and North American practitioners during this period. This process would lay the foundations for more extensive intercultural dialogical exchanges in the following decades.

Duvignaud posited that festivals of commemoration, in which preservation of the established order is maintained, are dialectical to festivals that have a ‘destructive or subversive spirit’ involving a ‘real awakening of individual consciousness.’<sup>120</sup> Both Durkheim and, following him, Victor Turner have also written on how the role of rituals in social life, including festivals, can be one of maintenance but also of social creativity and change.<sup>121</sup> Through a combined analysis of festival theory in the field of sociology and anthropology, it can be established that cyclical, societal and personal

change or transformation play a vital role in all of these events.<sup>122</sup> However, as Bourdieu warns, change in the field does not always imply a redistribution of capital or the removal of dominant forces, as these agents are often able to reassert themselves. Therefore, flux in the field does not inevitably introduce lasting change in the hierarchies of power.

Turner developed a theory of rituals that included festivals as events in which social groups enacted in response to unexpected large-scale social crises, such as war, disease and natural disasters, as well as the anticipated seasonal and natural life cycle.<sup>123</sup> It can be quickly established that this is the case with theatre festivals, as their general pattern of emergence in Europe is responsive to social crises, primarily the World Wars, the cultural revolution of the 1960s, the rapid reorganisation of economic production processes of the 1970s and 1980s, and the digital technological revolution at the millennium turn, all of which led to ensuing large-scale changes in the organisation of social life which affected the life of every citizen irreversibly.

During these contested periods, one function of ritual identified by Turner is to encourage society's members to conform to the norms, values, and moral behaviour expected by the dominant class. He described ritual as 'precisely a mechanism that periodically converts the obligatory into the desirable.'<sup>124</sup> This can be achieved since the ritual, including the festival, can induce strong emotions. This is, of course, true of an experience of powerful theatre which is most often saturated with emotionally evocative qualities. According to Turner, a crucial property of ritual is its use of what he terms 'bipolar symbols' which link emotion to the moral and social order.<sup>125</sup> The symbols (those inherent in the experience of many types of festivals and theatre) bind strong emotional content with cultural ideals and values. As demonstrated in the first decade of the EIF, the festival-event as a ritual practice can perform a constraining

function for society. It did this by producing high-quality cultural experiences which were capable of inducing powerful emotions within a chronotope containing powerful symbols of the state (ancient architecture, the presence of the Queen and aristocracy) and codes of behaviour (dress codes, strict etiquette) that were explicitly linked to the values of post-war European society, thus making these desirable and normal social practice. This corresponds to Bourdieu's theory of habitus maintaining and reproducing power in the social field, highlighting the role theatre festivals, as a social ritual, have in solidifying this dominance.

However, Turner also recognised that this constriction could lead to an opposite function of festivals, expressed through his notion of 'communitas.' He was writing some of his most important work amid the turbulent social world of the 1960s, and his theories were reflexively in dialogue with the world around him. His key concept of 'communitas' therefore emerges from his fieldwork but also from the anti-authoritarian, anti-structural, and subversive sites of free expression and 'free love' that are emblematic of the era.<sup>126</sup> Communitas is used by Turner to describe an unstructured or loosely structured undifferentiated communion or community of equal individuals.<sup>127</sup> It is the essential and generic, egalitarian, direct, non-rational bonds between concrete, idiosyncratic individuals who are equal in terms of shared humanity.<sup>128</sup> In this way, it is opposed to existing social structures as a limiting and alienating force for individuals, but can only ever be a temporary state experienced within the 'liminal' state of ritual.<sup>129</sup> Turner gave counter-cultural 'happenings' as an example of communitas, from which those involved can undergo a transformative experience through finding something in it profoundly shared.<sup>130</sup> He believed that such breaks in the social order could subvert this structure by questioning its governance and legitimacy:

We find social relationships simplified, while myth and ritual are elaborated. That this is so is really quite simple to understand: if liminality is regarded as a time and place of withdrawal from nominal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinisation of the central values of the culture in which it occurs.<sup>131</sup>

It is clear that the 1960s spirit of *communitas* offered a direct challenge to the highly structured and coded space that EIF had established in the previous decades, and the ensuing struggle for the cultural field would be played out at the Festival from the very start of the decade.

George Lascelles, Lord Harewood, became director of EIF in 1961. He had a slightly different position to those who had come before as he was not middle or upper class but aristocracy, born sixth in line to the throne. By the time he became director of the Festival, he had taken his seat in the House of Lords, served twice as the Queen's Counsellor of State, fought in the Second World War and led the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. His almost uniquely elite disposition allowed him to take a more experimental and eccentric approach to the programme as he held such immense symbolic and economic capital in Britain that any risks he took were unlikely to affect his overall position of power in the field.

Lascelles wanted the Festival programme to be more adventurous and explore the new theatrical forms that were emerging in the United States and Continental Europe.<sup>132</sup> For the 1963 Festival, he invited John Calder to organise the 'Edinburgh Festival International Drama Conference' to discuss 'Theatre of the Future.'<sup>133</sup> This was to be an event that would investigate the developments in the international fields of theatre and performance in order to stimulate the British field. Calder brought together a mixture of figures from the theatrical establishment of the time including critic Kenneth Tynan, actor Laurence Olivier, playwrights John Arden, Arnold

Wesker, Harold Pinter, Max Frisch and Eugene Ionesco, and academic Martin Esslin. He also invited representatives of the burgeoning avant-garde scene, including artist Allan Kaprow, director Kenneth Dewey, and critic and playwright Charles Marowitz from the USA.<sup>134</sup>

Both Lascelles and Calder wanted the EIF to be a meeting point for a diversity of artistic expression and hybridity of form, in an effort to place it at the forefront of the permissive culture that would define the era. Kaprow had been invited due to the excitement that his creation of ‘Happenings’ had caused in America. Collaborating with Dewey, Kaprow was asked to give a demonstration of a ‘Happening’ to the conference delegates.<sup>135</sup> The planned actions included, in Dewey’s own words:

A platform speaker [Charles Marowitz] making a pseudo-serious proposal that the conference formally accept, as the definitive interpretation, his explanation of *Waiting For Godot*. An audience member [Charles Lewsen] attacking the speaker for being unclear and not heroic enough. [...] A [...] tape made from fragments of speeches at the conference. [...] An actress on the platform [Carroll Baker] beginning to stare at someone at the back of the hall [Allan Kaprow], eventually taking off a large fur coat and moving towards him across the tops of the audience seats. A nude model [Anne Kesselaar] being whisked across the organ loft on a spotlight stand. [...] A sheep skeleton hung on the giant flat with Cocteau's symbol of the conference. [...] A woman with a baby, and a boy with a radio entering the hall, mounting the platform, looking at everything as if in a museum, and leaving.<sup>136</sup>

Although the presence of a naked woman being wheeled across the gallery was the locus of much tabloid furore, and even a court trial for Kesselaar and Dewey, the Happening had much more profound effects of the field of British theatre.<sup>137</sup> Magnus Magnusson in *The Scotsman* wrote:

Much will, no doubt, be made of the brief appearance of a nude model being wheeled across a gallery above the platform of a literary debate – and in hallowed McEwan Hall last night – but out of context, reactions are synthetic. Because the nude, and the casual elaborate series of ‘Happenings’ that were

inflicted on the packed audience, were part of a fascinating illustration of futuristic experimental theatre.<sup>138</sup>

Magnusson reflects here how significant, in relation to the development of theatrical form, the Happening was, marking a distinction and conflict between the theatrical 'establishment' and the newly emerging experimental 'counterculture.'<sup>139</sup>

Calder and Harewood had introduced these radical agents into the field of British theatre, and the influence of this event caused a permanent expansion of the field. The boundaries between audience and performer were being broken down, as were the traditional boundaries between art forms. These American and continental European collaborative performance-based, event-structured art practices of the 1960s are now commonly regarded as performance art *avant la lettre* and are cited as milestones in most available historical accounts of the histories of performance art and live art.<sup>140</sup> By programming this performance, endowed with the cultural capital of EIF at an event titled 'Theatre of the Future,' Lascelles had determined it as such and changed the field of British theatre permanently. The event irreversibly shifted the conversations about where theatre might happen, or what constitutes performance, by blurring the lines between political activism, the performance of daily life, and what was considered 'legitimate' theatre.

Lascelles' short directorship also saw the Festival being importantly integrated into international politics. He invited companies from the Soviet Union to be involved in EIF in 1962, the year of the Cuban Missile Crisis, for the first time in its history, as part of cultural diplomacy initiatives between the two countries. Dubbed 'the Russian Invasion' by the press, the Festival's guest of honour was Dmitri Shostakovich, who had over twenty-five different works performed over the three weeks. The presentation of these works, state-sponsored by Britain and the USSR, resulted from

an agreement signed between them on 'Relations in the Scientific, Technological, Education and Cultural Fields' in 1959.<sup>141</sup> The programme was highly praised by the audiences who attended, but the EIF came under attack by many in the national media for allowing Nikita Khrushchev to have 'a propaganda cultural boost' with 'Stalinite work.'<sup>142</sup> Shostakovich was personally attacked as a 'petty abject creature' who lacked 'integrity,' with Colm Brogan protesting in the *Catholic Herald* that 'if he chooses to lick the tyrant's boots, he loses his honour.'<sup>143</sup> One of the EIF's founding principles that 'art should be above ideologies and political views,' had not been betrayed but finally proven impossible beyond all doubt.

For all his belief in the progressive political ideas emerging in the 1960s, Lascelles was ousted in 1964 by moral conservatism. This was not due to his artistic or political decisions (although they had made him unpopular in Scotland) but because of an extramarital affair and the fear of the EFS that press speculation around it would harm the Festival.<sup>144</sup> His programme had attempted to reflect the innovation and change of artistic movements of the period, as well as an intervention in the international politics of the era, but was constantly faced with criticism and outrage by the general public, the media and Edinburgh's local authorities. From 1963, *The Express* had launched a campaign against Lascelles under the headline 'Godlessness and Dirt,' which had been backed by the Church of Scotland and moral campaigners. When asked about this in an interview later in his life he had replied:

I don't think we were at all Godless, nor especially dirty. Although I'm not sure I wholly disapprove of either – though perhaps both of them together is pushing it a bit.<sup>145</sup>

His attempts to change the position of the EIF had not been successful and its established position was upheld by various conservative authorities, such as the church and media, who lent their power in maintaining its elite cultural authority.

Peter Diamand was appointed as director in 1965. His position was extraordinarily similar to Bing's, returning the Festival to its Post-War ideals despite the shifted cultural landscape. Diamand was also a Jewish Austrian who had escaped to Amsterdam, and following the war he had co-founded the Holland Festival in 1948, remaining its general manager until taking up the directorship of EIF. It was the same year Jennie Lee, arts minister in Harold Wilson's Labour Government, published *A Policy for the Arts – First Steps*, the first white paper on the arts and the only one that would be published until 2016. Lee, a Scottish socialist, followed Keynes in a desire for the arts to occupy a 'central place' in any 'civilised community.'<sup>146</sup> But importantly she wanted to introduce new policies to address the inequality that persisted in the distribution of the arts in Britain in a belief of its importance for the whole country, writing: 'the exclusion of so many for so long from the best of our cultural heritage can become as damaging to the privileged minority as to the underprivileged majority.'<sup>147</sup> This was to be done by trebling the budget for the ACGB, advocating for support for amateur and educative arts projects and generous funding for regional organisations and local arts centres.<sup>148</sup>

Diamand did not entirely share Lee's vision. He advocated predominantly for the EIF's existing elite audiences stating that the 'Festival is addressed to a limited audience,' of those who have 'knowledge about the contents of the festival.'<sup>149</sup> However, he was required to adapt somewhat to these new circumstances since the Festival was plagued with financial difficulties and funding was dependent on embracing the new policies of distribution. Diamand's shrewd response to this was to

offer the first ‘official recognition’ of the Fringe and in doing so being the first director show open support and encouragement of its activities. He understood that young people and experimentation had to be seen to be supported by EIF in order for it to maintain its position, but he had no desire to do this through his own artistic programming.<sup>150</sup> Subsequently, a case could be made for local authorities to support the EIF as part of a dynamic, intergenerational programme of international works.

With a focus on his primary passions of Opera and orchestral music, Diamand conceded to demands for engagement with contemporary practice to presentations of theatre. This was also due to a scarcity of theatres available during this period, which meant there was no space to present large, prestigious theatre companies without displacing Opera productions. Therefore in 1967, Diamand presented a drama programme made up of productions by theatre clubs from around the world, including groups such as La Mama Theatre Group, the Marionetteratern puppet theatre, Hampstead Theatre club, Close Theatre Club and the Traverse Theatre Club. The success of these productions led to the first presentation of Jerzy Grotowski’s Polish Laboratory Theatre performing *Akropolis* the following year to an enthusiastic reception and sold out auditorium.<sup>151</sup>

The student and workers uprisings of May 1968 had limited effect on the EIF, although the Festival did not avoid the spirit of protest entirely. These were centred on the performances of the USSR State Orchestra days following the invasion of Czechoslovakia. These tensions were controversially incorporated into The Citizens’ Theatre Company’s production of Brecht’s *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* who ‘included in their last caption slide not Hitler (as expected), but the Russians entering Czechoslovakia.’<sup>152</sup> These events, covered by the international media, were seen as important political statements, not just theatrical ones, demonstrating how the Festival

had been firmly established as a political site, strengthening the connection between theatrical presentations and moral, social and political values.

A brief counterpoint example, however, demonstrates how limited the influence of the ‘cultural revolution’ was on EIF. At the Avignon Festival, Vilar had transformed the programme from 1966 to make it ‘more resolutely contemporary, a place of invention and discovery.’<sup>153</sup> However, its relevance to the general cultural life in France also saw it become overwhelmed by protestors during its twentieth edition in 1968. The experimental Living Theatre from New York, invited by Vilar to present three works, were enthralled by the protestors and joined them in disrupting performances and leading chants of ‘The theatre is in the street! The street belongs to the people! Free the theatre! Free the street!’ This noise and chaos, which continued late into the night, caused the Mayor of Avignon to cancel the Living Theatre’s performances which, in turn, drew accusations of censorship.<sup>154</sup> Vilar was deeply distressed by this situation as he did not want to alienate residents or long-time Festival audiences, but he also supported the principles of the demonstration. As Wehle explains

He still believed that protest belonged in the theatre, not on the streets, that the only possible resistance is through art. The strongest arguments against injustice and censorship, he told the Living [Theatre], were to be found in the plays themselves.<sup>155</sup>

The Avignon Festival had consistently embodied the tensions of the paradox between dimensions of cultural democratisation and autonomous artistic expression, providing debate and experimentation as well as high-quality theatre, which in the volatility of the movement in 1968 had erupted to the extent that threatened the continued existence of the yearly event. In comparison, the EIF, albeit generally cached in the

more restrained sociocultural habitus of the British public, had not been placed at the nexus of such debates, with its intellectual audiences attending primarily to see ‘the best’ of the arts and not to engage in debate about the role of theatre in contemporary society.

In 1971, at the EIF’s twenty-fifth edition, the Lord Provost, Sir James W. McKay made the position of the official festival clear:

The Festival must remain true to the idealism of its founders. It must not be the instrument of ribald or derisive jests nor the vehicle of extreme experimental phenomena.<sup>156</sup>

However, despite this declaration, a consistency of approach was not as simple as it had been seen to be in 1948. Joseph Beuys made his first appearance in Britain in 1970 with a four-hour performance art action titled *Celtic (Kiloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony* in an event curated by the Traverse Theatre founder Richard Demarco at the Edinburgh College of Art. Whilst on the other end of the artistic spectrum at the same festival Diamand presented the multi-media rock musical *Stomp* in Haymarket Ice Rink. In his final Festival in 1978, he brought the work of Pina Bausch to British stages for the first time. Despite McKay’s plea to remain faithful to the idealism of the founders of the festival and to ‘acquire the patina of tradition,’ there was no denying that major changes had occurred in the intervening years.

Within individual performances at the EIF, there is some evidence of the production of *communitas*, the creation of direct, non-rational bonds of shared humanity that was felt by the audiences during a Shostakovich symphony, in the midst of *Akropolis* or in the wonder of witnessing Bausch’s Tanztheater. However, this does not extend to the festival as a whole and lacks the ‘anti-authoritarian’ element Turner stressed. Attempts by Lascelles to create a more subversive and

countercultural atmosphere had faced fierce opposition that ultimately led to a reassertion of its existing structure. The outburst at Avignon Festival, meanwhile, did create a genuine sense of *communitas* that 'scrutinised' the central values of the culture, although those involved were limited to a demographic of young, like-minded people with similar dispositions and did not include the wider festival audience or community.

This was the case for many of the festivals created during the 'cultural revolution' of the 1960s. Politically engaged festivals sprung up as part of an international, counter-cultural student movement notably in Nancy, Erlangen, Wroclaw and Zagreb. These Festivals captured the student movement's passion for theatre experimentation but also articulated generational social criticism and the politics of anti-authoritarian protest. However, those involved were a generally homogenous group of young, educated artists, focused on the exchange of ideas and any '*communitas*' manifested could not lead to a restructuring of the whole society. Whilst *communitas* was difficult to attain it remained a goal in the idealistic visions of those creating and sustaining theatre festivals.

It is undeniable that there were significant changes in power manifested in the field during this period. The artistic director as an authority of taste and knowledge, so prevalent in Keynes' era, had been partially disarmed by public, state and economic pressures that led to many of Diamand's concessions. Some of the major international developments in artistic experimentation at this time affected, and in turn were affected by, performance making at festivals in Britain, whether undertaken by artists resident here, or by those coming from abroad. While the works of artists from other countries were not 'British' by way of authorship, the conditions of their making were nonetheless often specific to Britain and its specific cultural, social and political

circumstances. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s festivals such as the EIF and the Fringe provided the 'melting pot' as well as the audiences necessary not only for the creation of new performance practices but also for the dissemination of these actions through the arts sector and academia, thereby inspiring further innovation. These experimental and marginalised theatre movements could survive due to the infrastructure that emerged in parallel which could sustain and empower alternative and radical performance companies.

### **Peter Daubeny's World Theatre Seasons**

In London, there had been no consistent presentations of international theatre until 1964, when the German-born Peter Daubeny created World Theatre Seasons at the Aldwych Theatre, which he produced until his death in 1975. Daubeny brought to London some of world's most respected theatre companies of the period including: the Comédie-Française, the Moscow Art Theatre, Dublin's Abbey, Israel's Habimah, Brecht's Berliner Ensemble, the Living Theatre of New York and the Nō Theatre of Japan, none of which were given contemporaneous presentations at the EIF.

The World Theatre Seasons are credited with being highly influential in the field of British theatre. In his afterword to Daubeny's *My World in Theatre*, Ronald Bryden credits the visits of the Comédie Française for reviving British theatre makers' interest in the 'possibility of farce as a form'; the Nō Theatre's 1967 visit for influencing Peter Brook and Edward Bond; Czech designer Josef Svoboda for developing theatre design in Britain; and generally for encouraging the National Theatre to expand its European repertoire. Through presenting these 'total integrated works of theatrical art' created by permanent repertory companies across Europe, Daubeny is credited with influencing the creation of permanent companies at the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company.<sup>157</sup>

The audiences for the World Theatre Seasons, the same audiences that frequented the Aldwych Theatre, were mostly the wealthy middle and upper classes, encouraged by formal dress codes and high ticket prices. Daubeny funded the World Theatre Season's through his private wealth, predominantly for his enjoyment and that of his peer group. Although the Seasons were highly influential on the artists, professionals and intellectuals who attended, the performances did not reach an audience outside of the professional London theatre enclave. Reaching wider and more diverse audiences is one of the key advancements made by LIFT at its founding several years later.

Although often compared to the World Theatre Seasons when first established, LIFT's approach was vastly different, focusing on a political and social engagement alongside an artistic one with the aim of creating a 'London Festival, happening all over London, serving and involving many parts of the London community,' outside of the artistic and intellectual elite.<sup>158</sup> The political and social aims set by Fenton and Neal were interrelated to the events in Britain of 1979 and the subsequent huge transformations undergone in British society in the 1980s. When LIFT was established in 1979, its influence on the field was such that it was seen by many as the replacement of this highly regarded season of international performances; in the 1983 LIFT brochure the director Ronald Eyre wrote that there was 'no other sustained commitment to international theatre in London since the World Theatre Seasons ended.'<sup>159</sup>

## **Chapter Two: LIFT 1979-1990, The Creation of a Socially and Politically Engaged International Theatre Festival**

LIFT is very much a London Festival, happening all over London, serving and involving many parts of the London community. It is the only event in Britain of its kind, bringing performers and artists from all over the world to share and participate in each other's work over a concentrated period of two weeks. It is a Festival with a high profile – locally, nationally and internationally and is, we believe, a vital part of London's cultural life. We also strongly believe that, in its way, LIFT can help promote the cause of international understanding and cooperation.

– Rose de Wend Fenton and Lucy Neal, LIFT 1983.<sup>160</sup>

In 1979 Rose de Wend Fenton and Lucy Neal were determined to establish a socially and politically engaged international theatre festival in London. It was the first time a regular platform in the capital city would be dedicated to contemporary theatre-makers from global and local fields. In what was a direct challenge to the existing field of theatre, they brought contemporary companies from all over the world to theatres and public spaces across the whole of the city. Performances presented at the festival were selected for their engagement with oppositional political movements and their experimentation with theatrical form. Furthermore, as young female left-wing university graduates, their position in the field was absolutely antithetical to both to that of Margaret Thatcher's new Conservative Government and to the arts establishment. As Fenton explained:

Consciously, we were absolutely against Thatcher and everything she stood for. In our work, we also found that we were against the kind of theatre establishment where there were hierarchies of male directors, and we were fighting against the entrenched patriarchy. We were against everything that entrenched this 'little Englander' idea.<sup>161</sup>

The strength of these beliefs led to the founding of the iconoclastic London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT), of which the first edition would be presented in 1981.

LIFT would subsequently be organised by Fenton and Neal from 1981 as a biennial Festival, occurring every two years for eleven editions spanning twenty-years. The first decade, from 1981-1989 will be discussed in the present chapter, with three editions analysed in-depth. The subsequent chapter continues to examine the Festivals from 1991 to 2001. These decades of Fenton and Neal's directorship of LIFT established the Festival as one of the most radical and influential theatre events in Britain. They took the model of the international festival in Britain that had been pioneered by EIF and reformed it to address urgent social issues and political phenomena, manifested through high-quality theatrical innovations by companies from diverse cultural contexts.

Antagonism, competition and struggle defined the first decade of LIFT as it fought for legitimate recognition in the field of theatre. The dominating elite of the field, 'whose strategy is tied to continuity, identity and reproduction,' was challenged by the newcomers to the field, 'whose interest is in discontinuity, rupture, difference and revolution.'<sup>162</sup> Fenton and Neal can be considered during this period as the 'champions of subversion,' since they are the producers of a new norm in a field who are therefore, according to Bourdieu, the strongest incarnation of change.<sup>163</sup> The innovators of the field 'can mobilise groups', even the dominated fractions in a field, 'who recognise [their] language because they already recognise themselves in it' and because it actualises social, political and artistic meanings that already existed there in latent or implicit forms.<sup>164</sup> In the case of LIFT, the dominated fractions mobilised primarily included theatre practitioners who had been marginalised in Britain due to

their artistic practice, cultural context, political stance, or other associated social identities such as race, class, gender or sexuality.

Fenton and Neal took the model of a theatre festival due to the opportunity it provided for sociality, discussion and debate for artists and audiences. For them, it offered a concentrated chronotopic environment that would recognise sociocultural differences and put them in relation to each other, whilst allowing for the possibility of equal intercultural exchange. As Neal explained in an interview:

We were absolutely heart and soul dedicated to building the human relationships that create the bonds, the trust, the empathy, the compassion, the affection, the understanding that is the nature of cultural exchange artists create. [...] Our activism was about the communal narrative, the shared narrative, the empathetic, the fostering of a world where people would give and gain from each other.<sup>165</sup>

Fenton and Neal were not advocating for a utopic or uchronic, ahistorical or asocial, construction of a theatre festival. Nor did they believe that cultural particularities or existing hierarchies could be forgotten during the festival. The reality of all theatre being 'socio-historically and culturally specific'<sup>166</sup> in a heterogeneous, culturally pluralistic society was embraced by Fenton and Neal to create a theatre festival that reaffirmed the value of diversity, challenged existing inequalities and created opportunities for direct intercultural exchanges. In this way, the realisation of LIFT as shared 'creative work,' in Shevtsova's terms, or 'symbolic practices,' in Bourdieu's, means the festival events are not 'mere receptacles of values' or 'conduits for social malaise,' but can 'construct and shape attitudes, and ways of looking and being.'<sup>167</sup>

Accordingly, there can be a refinement of Turner's notion of 'communitas' in a way appropriate to the contemporary theatre festival. Communitas is created in the theatre festival through the recognition of shared humanity, which expressed in

artistic practice is shared with the full appreciation of the idiosyncrasies of each individual.<sup>168</sup> The ‘potency’<sup>169</sup> of this recognition is in its ability to fully appreciate cultural particularities and perceive structural inequalities, not to deny or transcend them. This experience of *communitas* thus reveals the relative positions of agents and thus inspires them to alter their social practice in order to challenge the dominant hierarchies that seek to dehumanise, restrict or deny rights to dominated groups. This alteration does not aim for the obliteration of socio-historical or cultural particularities, or homogenisation, but seeks to level the playing field. As Fenton and Neal wrote in their account of LIFT, *The Turning World*:

What has struck us repeatedly is that these gatherings, while all rooted in the political, social or cultural specificities of particular times and places, have an essential commonality: [...] disrupting borders and questioning the status quo. In the process [...] people can fall out of their normal patterns of behaviour. [...] A festival’s social interactions and the shifts of perception these engender prove time and again ultimately to become its real subject matter. Mischief can be made, hierarchies can be inverted and social boundaries pushed.<sup>170</sup>

### **Neoliberalism and Symbolic Struggle**

Fenton and Neal were part of a broad social movement that rose to challenge the practices and policies of Thatcher when she became prime minister in 1979. Neal described LIFT’s relationship to the government throughout the 1980s:

We were having fun creating this celebration of cultural difference and exchange – so absolutely every single thing that Mrs Thatcher was doing felt totally, not just contrary to what we were doing, but it was shitting from a great height on what we were doing. And therefore we just had to do it more. We just had to get out there and work harder.<sup>171</sup>

Thatcher’s policies, driven by her belief in neoliberal capitalist market ideology, redefined the role of the state in every aspect of economic, social and cultural life

which led to massive transformations in British public life over the ten years of her office. Many public industries were privatised, the corporate sector was deregulated and public resources that remained funded by the state, such as the arts, were subjected to drastic public spending cuts. This produced what Stuart Hall termed a ‘crisis of hegemony’ that created a ‘profound rupture’ in society.<sup>172</sup>

Neoliberalism is a theory of political practices that, as David Harvey wrote,

proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade.<sup>173</sup>

It therefore ‘seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market.’<sup>174</sup>

Thatcher whole-heartedly believed this to be the case and set out to transform Britain into a country of self-reliant individuals who did not need support from a welfare state or each other. Famously, she declared there was ‘no such thing as society.’<sup>175</sup>

I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand “I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!” or “I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!” “I am homeless, the Government must house me!” and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first.<sup>176</sup>

Interviewed in *The Sunday Times* in 1981, Thatcher spoke of her ‘irritation’ with the ‘collectivist society.’<sup>177</sup> She laid out the key organising principle underpinning her government's implementation of neoliberal hegemony:

[...] I set out really to change the approach, and changing the economics is the means of changing that approach. If you change the approach you really are after the heart and soul of the nation. Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul.<sup>178</sup>

Thatcher's policies sought to shape underlying values and identities in Britain in order for individuals to accumulate greater private wealth.

Thatcher's efforts to 'change the heart and soul of the people' would see the logic of the neoliberal economic field begin to dominate and interpenetrate all other fields. Bourdieu's own analysis of neoliberalism states that it affects the nature of human sociality by taking for granted that 'maximum growth, and therefore productivity and competitiveness, are the ultimate and sole goal of human actions; or that economic forces cannot be resisted.'<sup>179</sup> These underlying assumptions prevent historically or socially-constituted logic or rationality being rejected as invalid by the neoliberal worldview. The notion that there 'is no society' but 'only individuals' lies at the heart of this since, as Bourdieu states, 'neo-classical economics recognizes only individuals, whether it is dealing with companies, trade unions or families.'<sup>180</sup> This is what allows neoliberal policies and practices to 'embark on a programme of methodological destruction of *collectives*.'<sup>181</sup>

Presently, it is useful to establish how Bourdieu's theory of the 'bureaucratic field'<sup>182</sup> can be used as a tool for understanding the remaking of the state, in the service of market ideology, as 'stratification and classification machine that drove the neoliberal revolution from above.'<sup>183</sup> Bourdieu proposes the bureaucratic field as a way to construe the state not as monolithic and coordinated, but as a splintered space of forces which compete over the distribution of public goods.<sup>184</sup> Loïc Wacquant has demonstrated how the bureaucratic field offers a 'flexible and powerful' model which established the distinct '*institutional core*' of neoliberalism which consists of an '*articulation of state, market and citizenship* that harnessed the first to impose the stamp of the second onto the third.'<sup>185</sup> Wacquant established that 'neoliberalism is not an economic but a

political project; it entails not the dismantling but the reengineering of the state.’<sup>186</sup>

This is to say that what is “*neo’ about neoliberalism’* is

the *remaking and redeployment of the state* as the core agency that actively fabricated the subjectivities, social relations and collective representations suited to making the fiction of markets real and consequential.<sup>187</sup>

Neoliberalism does not only oppose collectivist solutions to economic problems but also opposes the ‘minimalist’ vision of state espoused by classic liberalism.

Neoliberalism has concrete sociological characteristics, which Wacquant described as the ‘close articulation of four institutional logics:’

1. *Economic deregulation*, that is, reregulation aimed at promoting ‘the market’ or market-like mechanisms as the optimal device [...] for organising the gamut of human activities, including the private provision of core public goods, on putative grounds of efficiency (implying a deliberate disregard for distributive issues of justice and equality).
2. *Welfare state devolution, retraction and recomposition*. [...]
3. *An expansive, intrusive, and proactive penal apparatus*. [...]
4. *The cultural trope of individual responsibility*, which invades all spheres of life to provide a ‘vocabulary of motive,’ [...] for the construction of the self (on the model of the entrepreneur), the spread of markets and legitimisation for the widened competition it subtends, the counterpart of which is the evasion of corporate liability and the proclamation of state irresponsibility (or sharply reduced accountability in matters social and economic).<sup>188</sup>

The first and last of these logics particularly characterise the present discussion of Thatcher’s leadership, whilst the second and third are elaborated on in Chapter Five in relation to the Conservative-led coalition government formed in 2010, although it should be recognised they were also put into motion during the 1980s. Wacquant further defines the trope of individual responsibility as the ‘motivating discourse and cultural glue that pastes these various components of state activity together.’<sup>189</sup> It was the central tenet and driving belief for Thatcher who claimed that ‘the quality of our

lives will depend on how much each of us is prepared to take responsibility for ourselves.<sup>190</sup>

Thatcher's efforts in rebuilding the state in service of these logics can be understood through Bourdieu's concept of the bureaucratic field, a space of forces and struggles over the priorities of public authority, and in particular over 'what "social problems" deserve its attention and how they are to be treated.'<sup>191</sup> It is within the field of power but is not the same as the political field (with which it of course intersects) as it includes 'agents and categories of agents, governmental and non governmental.'<sup>192</sup> Wacquant suggests that the bureaucratic field is 'traversed by two intercene struggles.' These are firstly the vertical battle between the dominant 'higher-state nobility' determined to enact neoliberal reforms to public services and the dominated 'lower-state nobility' of 'executants' who are concerned with the 'protective missions' for the public good.<sup>193</sup> Secondly, the battle is between economic and cultural capital which entangles the 'Right hand' of the state, 'the economic wing that purports to impose fiscal constraints and market discipline,' and the 'Left hand' of the state, the 'social wing' which supports and protects the vulnerable or marginalised in society.<sup>194</sup> Using this schema, Wacquant diagrams neoliberalism as a 'systematic tilting' of state priorities and actions

from the Left hand to the Right hand, that is, *from the protective ([...] collectivising) pole to the disciplinary ([...] individualising) pole of the bureaucratic field.* [...] This double rightward skewing of the structure and policies of state is emphatically *not* the product of some mysterious systematic imperative or irresistible functional necessity; it is the structurally conditioned by historically contingent *outcome of material and symbolic struggles*, waged inside as well as from outside the bureaucratic field, over the responsibilities and modalities of operation of public authority.<sup>195</sup>

The influence of Thatcher's transformation of the political field, in collusion with the economic field and homologous dominant forces interested in generating private capital, caused drastic changes in the field of power that intensified from 1979 onwards, 'tilting' the entire bureaucratic field towards the Right.

This tilting meant that the introduction of neoliberal governance was not merely a monetarist turn that increased private economic gain, but an entire restructuring of social life in Britain which transformed the way public goods were distributed, how much and to whom.<sup>196</sup> The neoliberal state rewards those who behave as respectable neoliberal citizens (individualistic consumers or capitalist exploiters), whilst those who resist its demands, or are unable to meet them, are penalised. Wacquant characterised this as a '*Centaur-state that displays opposite visages at the two ends of the class structure*':

it is uplifting and 'liberating' at the top, where it acts to leverage the resources and expand the life options of the holders of economic [...] capital; but it is castigatory and restrictive at the bottom, when it comes to managing the populations destabilised by the deepening of inequality and the diffusion of work insecurity and ethnic anxiety. Actually existing neoliberalism extolls 'laissez faire et laissez passer' for the dominant, but it turns out to be paternalist and intrusive for the subaltern.<sup>197</sup>

This process sees the state working in the interest of the economic field to interpenetrate and control the logic of all other fields, including the field of cultural production, in order to make new markets, mould citizens who conform to them ('change the heart and soul') and assert the primacy of economic capital. In doing so the state is an agency that monopolises the use not only of material violence,<sup>198</sup> but symbolic violence, and shapes social space and strategies by setting the conversion rate between the various species of capital.<sup>199</sup>

Therefore symbolic practice, such as that enacted by Fenton and Neal through LIFT, is a practice of resistance as it engages in symbolic struggle with the dominant field. Symbolic struggle is, as Bourdieu states, 'over the power to produce and to impose the legitimate vision of the world.'<sup>200</sup> In being 'absolutely against Thatcher and everything she stood for' Fenton and Neal sought to create a co-operative egalitarian vision of society (enacted through the festival's *communitas*) that opposed the competitive, individualistic vision Thatcher imposed. This symbolic disruption, staged as an international theatre festival, engaged with the two forms of symbolic struggle identified by Bourdieu. Firstly, as 'objective' struggle the festival form is a collective action of representation which displays and throws into relief 'certain realities' by exhibiting in a chronotope a group of people who exhibit their 'strength' and 'cohesiveness' to make their opposition 'exist visibly.'<sup>201</sup> Secondly, theatre is 'subjective' struggle as

one may act by trying to transform categories of perception and appreciation of the social world, the cognitive and evaluative structures through which it is constructed. The categories of perception, the schemata of classification [...] which construct social reality as much as they express it, are the stake par excellence of political struggle, which is a struggle to impose the legitimate principle of vision and division.<sup>202</sup>

Bourdieu directly addresses this struggle as primarily performed through words, such as insults, gossip, rumours, slander and innuendoes, through the manipulation of texts, and through 'jettisoning the old political vocabulary.'<sup>203</sup> But also through 'constructing the future, by a creative prediction designed to limit the ever-open sense of the present.'<sup>204</sup> This can be seen as the process through which theatrical productions are created, the staging of words and images that aim, in some way, to present a stylised vision of reality through their perception. Theatre, through its

'*specific logic*' which endows it with 'real autonomy' from the structures in which it is rooted is able to disrupt the usual 'symbolic relations of power' which 'reinforce the power relations that constitute the structure of social space.'<sup>205</sup>

### **Thatcherism and British Theatre**

Bourdieu's theory is not one of revolution but instead demonstrates how symbolic struggle can bring incremental change and especially can guide social agents (theatre makers or audiences) towards a particular vision of the social world. Of course, the power and capital held by Thatcher far exceeded that held by Fenton and Neal, but it was bolstered by those in homologous positions in associated fields. Firstly, there was widespread resistance from the subsidised art sector in general, which had been subjected to one million pounds of funding reduction from the Conservative government's first budget in June 1979.<sup>206</sup> This was followed by further pronouncements and cuts throughout the decade which raised the spectre that arts subsidy itself might be ended.<sup>207</sup> The financial pressures on all arts organisations, established and emerging, became increasingly difficult to manage. ACGB responded by naming a swathe of arts companies it proposed to axe and there were mass demonstrations in July to 'save our stages.'<sup>208</sup> The reduction in funding to all public services and the privatisation of many sectors led to a shared sense of opposition by many who were affected by the increasing dominance of economic logic. Robert Hewison's call to arms highlights how these struggles were shared:

The project of the Conservative Government is to abolish the possibilities of a plural society by silencing all the alternative sources of authority: the church, the universities, the press and broadcasting, local government; so too the individual institutions of culture: the Arts Council, Regional Arts Associations, the British Council, the national museums and galleries and their regional equivalents. Only the *ersatz* voice of the market will be heard. In these circumstances, artists and the contemporary culture they practice must resist, as a source of alternative opinion and authority. In the cracks, if needs be.<sup>209</sup>

Theatre practice did oppose dominant culture 'in the cracks.' In 1979 alone alternative theatre in London was strengthened by the founding of the producing organisation ArtsAdmin by Judith Knight and Seonaid Stewart, which sought to support artists exploring new forms of performance practice. Val Bourne began Dance Umbrella, an experimental showcase for emerging choreographers; Steve Rogers founded the magazine *Performance* in the same year, which gave visibility to the most radical and innovatory artists working across Britain. In the 1980s theatre companies such as Theatre de Complicite (1983), Forced Entertainment (1984), Brith Gof (1981), Kick Theatre Company (1980) and Cheek by Jowl (1981) sought to experiment in the field of restricted production, to introduce new styles of performance and challenge audiences.

The severe decline in funding did also lead to many reductions and restrictions on companies. In the four years prior to the cuts, there were over sixteen thousand performances of drama, dance and opera in England funded by ACGB, this dropped to approximately ten thousand in the period 1981-1985.<sup>210</sup> Across Britain, theatres were forced to periodically close in order to avoid an economic deficit, such as The Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, which had to close for three months at the end of 1982. In the same year, EIF director John Drummond was summoned to the House of Commons to address the government about his concerns regarding Conservative policy. He stated:

The Edinburgh International Festival is the most important arts festival in Great Britain and among the top 5 or 6 in the world. Despite many problems, it has survived since 1947 and last year broke all records for the number of seats sold and the amount taken at Box Office. 1981 nevertheless also produced the largest ever deficit. [...] Today the Festival's capacity for survival is seriously in

jeopardy. None of its five sources of funds seems capable of yielding the amount necessary to keep pace with inflation, let alone expand and develop.<sup>211</sup>

A combination of District Council and ACGB cuts and saw Drummond facing serious funding deficits and his statement concludes with the plea that ‘something major must be done’ in order to stop the Festival being untenable in the immediate future.<sup>212</sup>

However, it was primarily through support from the Greater London Council (GLC) that arts and theatre were sustained and developed in the capital from 1981 until its abolition in 1986. This organisation was positioned significantly further on the left side of the bureaucratic field than the ACGB. The Labour Party had taken control of the GLC in the elections on 7 May 1981. Ken Livingstone had organised the campaign and had secured a Labour victory through developing a web of political alliances that connected traditional labour organisations, such as trade unions, with new political groups such as the women's and gay liberation movements. Feminist scholar Sheila Rowbotham worked for the GLC in this period and said it practised ‘libertarian but practical socialism’ that offered a chance ‘to resist Thatcherism on a wider, more organised basis [...] We tried to work with people on the ground, community organisers, local groups.’<sup>213</sup> Fenton described how politically, and literally, oppositional the GLC was in London from 1981:

Where we found a really strong ally was on the other end of the political spectrum to Thatcher, opposite the houses of parliament, with Ken Livingstone and the GLC. Everyday, on the south side of the river, they would put up a banner saying how many people were unemployed in this country, it rose up and up and it was a very powerful visual symbol. [...] Everyday the unemployment figures were going up. Therefore what we found was that we were naturally allied to London, to the GLC and Red Ken who said ‘London is a world city and we embrace your ideas,’ when Thatcher’s government was saying the opposite.<sup>214</sup>

‘Red Ken’ was the sobriquet given to Livingstone by his adversaries in the press and

government, due to his ‘revolutionary’ approach.<sup>215</sup> He was just thirty-six when he became the leader of the GLC, and his administration created an 18-member cabinet as a Policy Committee, two-thirds of its membership consisted of Livingstone’s young allies, with Tony Banks being the eldest at thirty-seven.<sup>216</sup>

Banks was the first chair of the new Arts and Recreation Committee (ARC). In establishing ARC as a central part of the GLC's governance, Livingstone broke away from the policies of all previous Labour administrations in the field of cultural policy.<sup>217</sup> The cultural and the political became equally important and inseparable dimensions of their action. As Neal recollected:

Tony [Banks] was maverick, enlightened to the diversity of people and voices and cultures in London and he wanted the GLC’s arts policy to absolutely be relishing in that diversity.<sup>218</sup>

This arts policy was designed to foster the GLC’s values of participatory citizenship in an attempt to build a local alternative to Thatcher’s promotion of individual economic agency. Banks and his policy advisor Alan Tomkins rejected the idea that the working classes in London were a ‘unified neighbourhood,’ emphasising instead the importance of endowing certain disadvantaged ‘communities of interest’ such as ‘black groups, Irish, Greek or Turkish communities, the unemployed, women’s groups,’ with an ‘independent cultural voice.’<sup>219</sup> The ARC also employed a much broader definition of ‘the arts’ than ACGB and prioritised contemporary cultural forms, including experimental performance, photography, video, electronic music and community radio.<sup>220</sup>

Policymaking and grant-allocating structures at the ARC were devolved to ‘communities of interest’ themselves, with Banks prioritising open meetings that all could attend. Fenton and Neal attended the first public gathering the ARC held in

1981:

There was a very important historical meeting at the Old Vic [...] when Tony Banks gave a callout to the arts community in London, asking them to come and tell him what they wanted from the GLC's arts policies and it was amazing. What happened is that people came out of the woodwork – not just the institutions, actually the institutions probably weren't there because they were getting lots of money from the Arts Council — but you had Tara Arts, the Black Theatre Co-operative, street theatre performers, women's groups, a whole range of radical voices coming together and asking for what they would like, directly informing policy. Tony Banks and the GLC were saying they wanted the arts to be a voice for London and the stories that are held within this world city. It was a key moment, and for us at LIFT it really informed our thinking about what LIFT as a London-based festival would be, that it wasn't just about us bringing in the international companies, but it was also about how we would engage with this world city and relating voices in London back to the companies we were bringing together.<sup>221</sup>

Banks, Fenton and Neal had been influenced by an important report commissioned by the Community Relations Commission, *The Arts Britain Ignores* (1976), in which Naseem Khan studied the wealth of artistic activity in 'diverse ethnic communities.'<sup>222</sup> As Fenton stated 'the report [came] at the time when we were beginning to get going looking at what are voices in London [...] because we were very much not there to give more platforms to the mainstream.'<sup>223</sup> Banks first created an Ethnic Arts Subcommittee (EAS), which consisted of entirely black cultural practitioners and activists, and then a Race Equality Unit (REU) which were tasked with developing the 'Black arts sector'<sup>224</sup> through directly distributing funding and wider campaigning that sought to forge:

New concepts and new traditions [...] which embrace both the Afro-Caribbean, Asian and other origins of the black experience and its present reality in 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain [...] This means developing a new aesthetics which is not 'traditional', 'ethnic', 'folk', 'exotica', but which is appropriate for what needs to be expressed here and now.<sup>225</sup>

The budget for the EAS and REU increased from £400,000 in 1982 to over £2 million in 1985.<sup>226</sup> This money was used to consolidate existing Black arts groups and encouraged the founding of new ones; it made The Roundhouse theatre a 'centre of excellence' for Black arts in Europe, and also supported media and arts training for young black people in London. This was the first large-scale bureaucratic effort to consistently and directly support racially marginalised artists in any part of Britain.

The GLC's cultural policies for black and Asian communities, as for those for other targeted social groups, were a vital part of its attempts at 'rooting itself in the everyday experience of popular urban life and culture.'<sup>227</sup> This social targeting was accompanied by a strategy aimed at revitalising the use of public spaces in the city. This strategy directly shaped and supported LIFT from its inception. Stuart Hall wrote that the GLC's policy was key in politicising the arts in London:

The subsidising of popular entertainment and public occasions on the open access principle: the use of [the GLC's] sites and hoardings in the city to publicise radical themes and demands [...] the use of the parks as active centres linked with the general renovation of cultural life, the free concerts, even the diversity of music sponsored [...] classical music, jazz, advanced rock, black gospel music – these and many other examples could be quoted of how cultural life can be reconstructed as a site of politics.<sup>228</sup>

Many festivals were supported by the GLC such as Thamesday, the South Bank Weekend, Londoner's May Festivals, and International Women's Day Festival, most involving free music and dance, arts and crafts exhibitions, theatre and puppet shows, children's shows and fireworks.<sup>229</sup> They also held festivals to celebrate their year-long initiatives such as Peace Year (1983), London Against Racism (1984) and Jobs Year (1985), for which they held a huge event in Battersea Park with four outdoor stages, cabaret, music, visual arts, poetry, sport and open forum discussions.<sup>230</sup> The GLC's

budget for ‘open-air entertainment’ quintupled from £280,000 in 1980 to £2,500,000 in 1985.

As part of its support for socially and politically engaged festival events, the ARC gave the first LIFT its largest grant of £10,000 in 1981 and continued to be the Festival’s biggest funder until the GLC’s abolition in 1986. However, as evidenced above, LIFT and the GLC shared many strategies and goals during this period.

Beatrix Campbell and Martin Jacques wrote:

One thing the GLC never did [...] was to play off [...] London as a capital and cosmopolitan centre, against the London of Londoners. Indeed, it did the opposite. It sought to make them work better together. This recognition of London as a capital was intimately linked to its recognition of London’s cosmopolitanism, one of the most ethnically diverse cities in Europe [...] it tried to profile London as it was, in all its diversity, new and old. This had another effect. It allowed the GLC to plug into the many powerful radical traditions that London has – be they associated with its ethnic communities or its position as a great artistic and cultural centre, or whatever. There is a *radical* London which the GLC explored and gave expression to in contrast to those London traditions which the Tories have traditionally profiled: the Queen, Buckingham Palace, the city, the Guards etc.<sup>231</sup>

In creating LIFT, Fenton and Neal also wanted to connect to the heterogeneous communities in the city and their radical histories:

We [wanted] to [be] proud of the history of London like radical socialism, or protesting, or the suffragettes [...] that went alongside as having a tradition of fighting for social justice as much as anything else. We became politically aware that the city was host and home to so many governments in exile. Whether it was the Polish government or the ANC [African National Congress], London held this sort of ferment of possibility and alternatives, so we just felt that LIFT was part of that alternative story trying to get out.<sup>232</sup>

The GLC saw the social, political and artistic benefits of such a Festival for London, whilst the ACGB felt it was not something they wished to support due to the money being spent on ‘foreign’ theatre. In a letter to LIFT the Chairman Kenneth Robinson

wrote:

We cannot allocate subsidy for a festival whose programme is composed predominantly of appearances by foreign theatre companies. [...] Of course such a festival can have a benefit to theatre in a broad sense: the Council, however, believes that the available subsidy produces a greater continuing benefit when given to companies resident in this country.<sup>233</sup>

Here, the thinking is reproduced that those outside of Britain do not make a significant positive contribution to British cultural life. This belief is further underlined by the sustained financial support of the British Council by the government, which facilitated and encouraged the international export of British theatre. This maintained the insularity of the field, and demonstrates how the bureaucratic field determines, through its distribution of resources, what is made, when and by whom in the cultural field.

### **LIFT '81**

The first leaflet printed for the inaugural Festival in August 1981 announced ‘a new major theatre festival in London:’

The London International Festival of Theatre presents [...] a new and exciting programme of international theatre in London, in the spirit of international theatre festivals around the world, renowned for their richness and vitality. [...] A spectacular programme of plays, dance, street shows, theatre workshops and open discussions as an invitation to all to participate in a new and exciting event. At all levels, LIFT aims to create opportunities for direct contact and exchange.<sup>234</sup>

Fenton and Neal had spent two years planning the LIFT whilst travelling on the international theatre circuit visiting many of the festivals in Europe that had emerged following the student movements of 1968 including Erlangen, Nancy, the Festival of Fools in the Netherlands and Konfrontacje Teatralne in Poland. This research shaped

their vision of LIFT and exposed them to the companies that they would programme for the 1981 edition. The quality of the work determined the international companies they chose to bring, the visual impact of the performances (in order to be understood without translation by London audiences), their lack of previous exposure to London audiences and their politically progressive standpoint. Other important determining factors included the economics of the production, for example, how many people were performing in it, the size of the stage needed and the amount of set design that needed to be transported. This was also important in relation to the financial support LIFT could get from different embassies and national arts bodies in order to fund the travel of theatre companies to London.

Fenton and Neal strove to create a programme that was representative of contemporary performance practice from across the globe. The press release for the 1981 Festival read:

Theatre companies will come from: Poland, Japan, Brazil, Peru, France, West Germany, Malaysia, Holland and England. These shows represent the very best of contemporary theatre—cosmopolitan, visually exciting and dramatically inventive.<sup>235</sup>

This international scope ensured that a multitude of culturally hybrid theatre styles would be present in the programme. The Festival provided a context for interplays and similarities between productions, as well as framing the cultural particularities they had in relation to each other.

The first Festival consisted of plays performed in conventional theatre spaces, street theatre, and a festival club in the Piccadilly Hotel that hosted cabaret performances and discussions. At the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith LIFT's largest show was *Macunaíma* from the Brazilian company Grupo Macunaíma, directed by

Antunes Filho who was considered at the time to be the ‘best director in the country.’<sup>236</sup> Fenton and Neal saw the production in Erlangen and wrote that they instantly ‘realised its South American sweep of sexy carnivalesque majesty could be a huge hit in London.’<sup>237</sup> The production was a costly logistical undertaking but proved successful with long queues and sold out auditoriums for this four-hour comic epic which used spectacle, music and parody to bring to the stage the influential Brazilian modernist novel which told of the journey of a folk hero from jungle to city, and back again.<sup>238</sup>

In 1981 Brazil was still under authoritarian rule by a military junta. However, the beginning of *abertura*, the policy of political liberalisation, in 1979 under the government of General João Batista Figueiredo had lifted oppressive censorship laws against the theatre, allowing many previously banned plays and performances to come to the stage for the first time since 1964.<sup>239</sup> The new limited freedoms allowed the company to stage the production and travel to Europe, but its anti-dictatorship stance had to be portrayed symbolically in the production since the Brazilian authorities would have still not permitted direct political satire. Hybrid theatrical influences drawn from local and international theatre practices were combined to gesture towards a new Brazil that could be more intercultural and outward facing. Although the production was rooted in a Brazilian cultural style, with physical movement sequences based on the carnival traditions, the production also drew from Western theatre and film styles. In his review for the *Financial Times*, Michael Coveney wrote, ‘it is as if the Third World has engaged in cultural collision with the European idiom of Max Ophüls, Fellini and (expanding the boundaries just slightly) Hal Prince.’<sup>240</sup> The images, symbols and techniques borrowed from other cultures, were adapted, interpreted and appropriated by Filho in order to create a rich portrait of a country that was ready to

embrace a globally interconnected world, whilst still rooted in a distinctive Brazilian culture.

Many productions in the first Festival proved that theatre from all continents was engaging in a dialogical intercultural practice and cross-cultural borrowings.<sup>241</sup> The use of traditional and classical performance styles adapted to contemporary circumstances was also present in two productions from Malaysia and Japan. The Suasana Dance Company performed the dance-drama *Jentayu* at the Shaw Theatre. The company was founded and led by director Datin Azanin Ezane Ahmad who created and performed in all of the works during this period.<sup>242</sup> Telling the story of a woman who is saved by a mystical *Jentayu* bird, the music was based on Malay gamelan, but with new twists, and the set was lavish. The Tokyo-based Tamagawa Dance and Drama Group presented a new play, *Bekkanko*, written as a script in the European tradition but based on a Japanese legend that was brought to life through elements taken from traditional Japanese theatrical styles—Noh, Kyogen and Kabuki.

Fenton and Neal brought three productions from Poland for the first LIFT, Teatr Provisorium with *It is Not For us to Fly to the Islands of Happiness*, presented at the ICA, and two performances from Theatre of the Eighth Day (Teatr Ósmego Dnia), *Oh, How Nobly we Lived* and *More Than Just One Life*, both at the New Half Moon Theatre. The exposure to these companies at the Lublin Festival in April 1980 had strongly inspired Fenton and Neal, and they wanted to bring their strong political styles to London. They wrote in *The Turning World*:

At the Lublin festival, new theatre forms were clearly being forged in response to the political climate and audiences were passionate to engage with the young independent companies that were raging against the system's destructive lies and propaganda in shows such as *More Than Just One Life* and *It is Not for Us to Fly to the Islands of Happiness*. [...] Our challenge to create LIFT

assumed a new dimension, and we returned with a sense of responsibility and urgency to communicate what was happening.<sup>243</sup>

The desire to speak to contemporary political circumstances referenced both a need to heighten awareness of the resistance movements in Poland, and theatre's role in it, which in turn could resonate with London audiences in order to create opposition to Thatcherism in Britain.

Despite the variation in the specific sociocultural and political circumstances in the different national fields of theatre, it is clear that Fenton and Neal's position in the field were homologous with those of the Polish companies. Halina Filipowicz characterised Polish theatre during this era as having a 'boundless capacity for challenging established aesthetic norms as well as the repressive political order.'<sup>244</sup> In *A History of Polish Theater*, Kazimierz Braun wrote that:

The Theater of the Eighth Day gradually emerged as a unique and authentic voice of the young generation of Polish intelligentsia who were fed up with the lies in public life, outraged by totalitarian methods of control, and impatiently striving for political change. [Lech] Raczak, along with his group, manifested personal courage and integrity, articulated a clear political stance, created expressive artistic productions that were also statements opposing the regime, and hastened the historical transformations in Poland.<sup>245</sup>

Ian Watson maintains that the company was following 'the model of a small community of artists aspiring to work for the betterment of society through their craft whilst remaining dedicated to creating and researching the art of theatre,' working as a

hive of activity predicated upon a deep understanding of the relationship between aesthetics and ideology. For the Eighth Day this ideology has the air of Orwell about it, of demanding to understand the relationship between each human being and his or her socio-political reality. [...] Confronting Poland's history as it is being written.<sup>246</sup>

Their director, Lech Raczak, outlined their mission as to deal ‘with the simple facts of political and social reality,’ creating bold critiques of contemporary social problems that came into direct opposition with the ruling Communist authorities and was closely aligned with trade union movements such as the Committee for the Defence of Workers (KOR) and Solidarity.<sup>247</sup> The company had been subjected to ‘minor and major harassment’ by the state authorities, and in the 1976-1979 period, the Eighth Day were not permitted to travel abroad or even perform in some Polish cities, especially Warsaw.<sup>248</sup> Kathleen Cioffi characterised Theatre of the Eighth Day

as a well-honed, physically precise, yet emotionally intense group of dedicated actors. The high aesthetic quality of their work coupled with their courageous decision not to compromise in the face of greater and greater oppression by the party-state apparatus made the Theatre of the Eighth Day the unofficial leaders of the alternative theatre movement.<sup>249</sup>

In the months prior to their invitation to LIFT, the company had been prevented, at the last minute, from travelling to the Theatre of Nations festival in Amsterdam.<sup>250</sup> Support for their travel to Britain, which also included a tour of festivals in Sweden, Italy and Mexico, came from the Solidarity movement which forced the authorities to allow Eighth Day to travel through threatening to call strikes.<sup>251</sup> Despite this support, company member Roman Radomski stressed that they wanted to find a specifically theatrical language to express the situation in Poland, but did not want to be seen solely as ‘Solidarity’s theatre,’ since he wanted their work to be ‘constructive in the long run, and this won’t be achieved by the short-lived high of agitprop.’<sup>252</sup>

*Oh, How Nobly we Lived* denounced the materialist propaganda of the years under the rule of Edward Gierek.<sup>253</sup> This reference to Polish politics, combined with the

complex symbolic imagery imbued with Catholic and Soviet references, led some to expect that British audiences would find the performance obtuse. Tony Howard described the production as a world:

[S]plit into two stages: on one, generations of revolutionaries marched to Mozart's *Requiem*: the other showed the fruits of self sacrifice, while a production line turned out toy cars and hawkers sold private Arcadias. A dazed philosopher trod a cruciform corpse underfoot at recited dreams of harmony from Hölderlin. Above, angels gave birth to plastic pigs; below, crowds and tattered processions began to rage.<sup>254</sup>

However, despite cultural barriers and differences in experience, the theatrical experience was profound and had a great impact on audiences, receiving positive reviews from critics. Claire Armitstead reported:

One of the most memorable [moments] involved a cascade of pink plastic piggy-banks fought over by the inhabitants of hell. Even those who were unaware of the precise symbolism of the pigs came away moved and amused by a symbolism that straddled the divides of language, politics and culture with a succinctness that text-based theatre would be pushed to match.<sup>255</sup>

The Eighth Day constructed their shows out of a montage of sources, creating powerful stage images. Inspired by Grotowski's work on fragmenting text, what Richard Schechner called 'bricolage,' the company had trained with the Theatre Laboratory to develop techniques and processes.<sup>256</sup>

*More Than One Life* was considered a significant development in the Eighth Day's work. Critic Grzegorz Kostrzewa-Zorba commented that 'in its previous productions the group always made use of pathos and mockery – now also a third tonation [sic] appeared, namely, lyricism.'<sup>257</sup> Considering the oppressive effects of history on the lives and hopes of everyday people, *More Than One Life* was based on the dramatisation of a real-life story where a child was so 'terrorised' by his history teacher

before his exams that he committed suicide.<sup>258</sup> The story combined depictions of episodes of history that might be taught in a classroom, including the French Communards and the Russian Decembrists.<sup>259</sup> In Poland critic Agnieszka Wójcik considered that Eighth Day's performance 'without discrediting the moral beauty of the struggle against war [...] stressed [...] the beauty of ordinary life in the name of which the struggle is undertaken.'<sup>260</sup>

Teatr Provisirum's *It is Not for Us to Fly to the Islands of Happiness*, was against the phenomenon of 'internal emigration,' which Cioffi describes as 'of living one's "real life" with one's family or friends and ignoring the outside world instead of fighting against the status quo.'<sup>261</sup> Director Janusz Opryński commented in an interview 'we still can't afford to fly off into that culture and ignore the concrete fact that so many personalities are broken.'<sup>262</sup> Jerzy Ossowski characterised this play as marked by 'illustrative power, emotional realism, hermetic allusive language full of new meanings, and above all the concept of an ever uncertain romantic freedom.'<sup>263</sup> One of the company, Andrzej Mathiasz, said their performance was 'about perseverance, adding to whatever strengths you have. About living among friends and not breaking.'<sup>264</sup> Tony Howard writes that the company's performance style

affirms that however history handles the defeated, and however this may poison our sense of ourselves, *groups* endure. The very tensions within a group generate the energy demanded for survival.<sup>265</sup>

*Islands* had an imprisonment motif where the characters are confined and tortured in an attempt to make them conform, politically and morally. The ambiguous, sparse, set that could be a prison, hospital or concentration camp is dominated by loudspeakers that 'blare out contradictory orders but alternate with the rhythmic chants of industrial protest.'<sup>266</sup> The stark set consisted of military beds beneath a crowned eagle,

a contentious symbol of Communist oppression, a reference to the politics of the Gdansk shipyard strike and the founding of Solidarity.<sup>267</sup>

The theatrical style and the political purpose of the performance were completely intertwined with the director of Provisorium stating that ‘there must be a strong link between *how* we do it and *why* we do it.’<sup>268</sup> Oprynski, speaking of the reception of the company’s work in Britain and his theatrical influences said:

So, at this moment for the English, we probably *are* exotics: I imagine it’s outside most English people’s experience for the doorbell in the morning to be the policeman instead of the milkman.<sup>269</sup>

Politically, new perspectives were introduced into the consciousness of audiences.

Tadeusz Janiszewski, a member of the company, said:

[T]he most important value of our performances in Europe is that the people can get closer to the truth, because we bring here a piece of our life. We want people who have no contact with our world to think about it, to consider these facts. It’s also important for us not to be forgotten.<sup>270</sup>

Several months after the Polish companies visited LIFT 1981, martial law was declared in Poland, and many of those involved in the productions shown were interned or imprisoned for several months: four actors from Teatr Provisorium and two from Theatre of the Eighth Day. Subsequently, the Eighth Day had twelve foreign trips cancelled and greater restrictions were placed on them until, in 1984, they had all of their funding cut and were refused licences to perform in any theatre venues, surviving through performing in churches. However, following their critical success at LIFT, EIF invited the company to perform in 1985. Half of the actors were granted permission to travel and their performance, *Auto de Fé*, was extremely well received. They received invitations to perform it all over western Europe and the

group decided to stay in exile from Poland for the rest of the 1980s. Ongoing international support for these companies had been built and sustained through the direct human bonds created at LIFT.

Despite the huge geographical and cultural divide between Poland and Peru, the company Cuatrotablas, based in Lima, had a practice that was also influenced by the teachings of Grotowski combined with a strong commitment to collective action and socialist politics. Due to financial considerations, Fenton and Neal could only support a solo show by one of the company, Lucho Ramirez, in *Caminatas e Insomnios* (Wandering and Sleeplessness), which was shown at the ICA. The programme described the performance as ‘a powerful statement about man’s ability to overcome destruction with nothing more than the life-forces of creativity and art within him.’<sup>271</sup> The German critic Georg Domin wrote for the premiere of the performance in Lima in 1979 that it ‘distanced itself from linguistic knowledge’ in the pursuit of ‘corporeal movement, a clear and direct influence from Jerzy Grotowski.’<sup>272</sup>

Cuatrotablas’ practice had been directly influenced by a visit from Eugenio Barba in Ayacucho in 1978. This meeting and extended interaction between Cuatrotablas and Barba manifested an ongoing cultural exchange, which resulted in the Peruvian company creating an ‘Ethno-Social-Anthropological Institute for Theatre Investigation’ in Lima.<sup>273</sup> The company saw this laboratory as creating ‘an atmosphere, a group and social conscience’ through

experiences during eight years; from the confrontation with the masters, with other groups; from the imperious necessity of producing in order to support themselves; from daily practice. [...] Theatre is a collective act. It is the integration of intelligence and creativity from all involved.<sup>274</sup>

Ian Watson writes of the impact of this ongoing interaction between Barba and

Cuatrotablas, where the Peruvian company adapted and disseminated what they had learnt:

[...] group theatre in Peru was dominated by young groups combining their Peruvian social and political concerns with forms bearing the clear hallmarks of the Odin's theatrical style [...]. Coincidentally, Barba's work [...] bears the hallmarks of his contact with Latin America.<sup>275</sup>

*Caminatas e Insomnios* drew influences from the Peruvian poet Cesar Vallejo, Shakespeare's 'tragic heroes' and several vignettes are taken directly from Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*.<sup>276</sup> This dynamic process of cultural exchange developed strategies for makers from both companies, which were then subsequently further disseminated through LIFT, of how to operate as marginalised groups and how this might work in opposition to dominant political and economic thinking.

Het Werkteater from the Netherlands were another young, politically minded, experimental theatre collective. They were invited to present *Zus of Zo* (One of Them) at the ICA. Focusing on identity politics, specifically homosexuality, this production introduced another important thread into the Festival. The acceptance and celebration of homosexuality in the Dutch company's 'honest, simplistic and humorous' production worked against the dominant view in Britain, half of whose adult population still considered homosexuality to be 'always wrong'; only 18% considered it 'not wrong at all.'<sup>277</sup> The first known case of AIDS had just been reported, and Thatcher's government had a distinctly negative view of same-sex relationships, which would result in Section 28 in 1988.

During the 1980s, intolerance to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights increased in Britain, peaking at 64% in 1987 with AIDS being described as a 'gay plague' and exacerbated by the moral conservatism of the

government and its policies.<sup>278</sup> This again, aligned LIFT with the mission of the GLC. Whilst Livingstone had pledged to fight anti-gay discrimination and made a commitment to LGBT rights that had not been seen in a high profile politician before, Thatcher rescinded gay rights through legislation such as Section 28 of the Local Government Act which forbade local authorities, including schools, from the ‘promotion’ of homosexuality.<sup>279</sup> Thatcher’s approach to gay minorities further highlights the hegemonic authoritarian populist formation of her government, as identified by Hall, in comparison to the pluralist politics of ‘Red Ken.’ Hall identified how sexual minorities were grouped among other ‘enemies within,’ victims of Thatcherism’s ‘constant attempts to expel symbolically one sector of society after another from the imaginary community of the nation.’<sup>280</sup>

Thatcherism [...] has used its moral agenda as one of the principal areas where [...] identities are defined – the respectable normal folk who people the fantasies of the new right in relation to current debates around abortion, child abuse, sex education, gay rights and AIDS. It is above all through this moral agenda that the new right has become a cultural force.<sup>281</sup>

This site of symbolic struggle was embraced by LIFT. Fenton and Neal thought it important to discuss ‘gay rights’ in LIFT to ensure it was seen as an ‘international issue’ that all countries, especially Britain, should be taking seriously:

Giving a voice to all those who were marginalised, due to their sexuality, gender, class, race, ethnicity, political position or background was of vital importance to LIFT from the beginning. We wanted to ensure that all these political conversations were held between wide ranges of people from a wide range of backgrounds that attended the Festival.<sup>282</sup>

The two other productions from Western European companies were *Glâces* by the French company Greta Chute Libre and Die Vaganten’s adaptation of *Faust*,

*Urfaust after Goethe* from West Germany. These productions were chosen for both their strong visual dramaturgy and contemporary resonance. *Glâces* was a series of theatrical images, presented without text or narrative but incorporating the contemporary music of Brian Eno and David Bowie. *Urfaust* was a ‘provocative’ staging of the European classic, set in ‘seedy bars, glittering disco palaces and brothels,’ which explored extreme sexual and violent behaviour.<sup>283</sup>

The international theatre productions presented in the inaugural LIFT were designed to open up the horizon of British theatre to the international political, social and artistic developments that were occurring elsewhere at this period. This effort can be seen in relation to Roland Roberston's formulation of globalisation as ‘the twofold process of the particularisation of the universal and the universalisation of the particular.’<sup>284</sup> This dynamic of globalisation offers a utopian vision of ‘globality,’ where it is possible that a ‘new global ethic and consciousness’ might emerge in the world.<sup>285</sup> Theatre, by its particular nature, could bring to a human (particular) level the seemingly abstract global issues. This process held the potential to reduce the psychological and emotional distance between people from various sociocultural backgrounds, in order to increase empathy and solidarity on a local and international level. At the same time, through the context of an international festival, local or particular experiences of human suffering can be put in relation to international struggles leading to an increased consciousness of commonalities and placing individual suffering in relation to wider systems of oppression. This process aims to strengthen the opposition to these systems of oppression through pulling together agents and generating a site of collective symbolic struggle.

Alongside the international productions in venues around London, Fenton and Neal programmed a series of street performance. LIFT’s street theatre programme was

part of a move to reach as wide an audience as possible, even those who would not usually seek out theatre, in order to democratise the Festival.<sup>286</sup> LIFT's 1981's small mobilisation of a number of street theatre companies proved to become a significant feature in the following Festivals. Led in 1981 by students Gub Neal and Jonathan Young, the programme included the Natural Theatre of Bath, The Beach Buoys (including Neil Bartlett and Simon McBurney) and other emerging experimental performance groups that took over Covent Garden, Trafalgar Square and the South Bank throughout the duration of the Festival. This strand of performances in public places proved to be one of LIFT's most popular events, reaching audiences who were not accustomed to experimental theatre. Its success led to performances designed for public spaces becoming a significant feature in the following Festivals.

In LIFT '81, Fenton and Neal had offered audiences two weeks of the opportunity to experience a range of international performances staged in theatres together with talks and socialising in the Festival Hub. Audiences were large and enthusiastic, proving that there was excitement and demand for international theatre in London. Over the subsequent editions the LIFT team would continue to adapt to the successes and failures of the organisation, attempting to make the Festival reach more areas of London, and encourage larger and more diverse audiences.

Fenton and Neal's first LIFT editions drew inspiration from companies and festivals with a shared purpose. This purpose was a commitment to community and to the profession of theatre that was part of a wider trend, one that Barba termed the 'Third Theatre,'<sup>287</sup> the idea of a collective of theatre makers for whom national borders are not barriers to exchange. They share a view of theatre as something more than an occupation, making a living or making a profit. Instead, they engaged the world through theatre, grappling with their particular society's boundaries and its

magnanimities in performances, supported by the opportunity that festivals provide to create dialogues with audiences and present workshops. These are what Barba terms the ‘floating islands;’ each group is separate and unique, but shares a geography of isolation, complete commitment and a desire to make theatre that links people together despite the distances between them— it is in this process that the festival provides a vital meeting point.<sup>288</sup>

The importance of LIFT as a meeting point is demonstrated in the responses of established international directors to participating in the first Festivals in 1981 and 1983. John Fox of Welfare State International, who performed a large-scale site-specific community production *Raising of The Titanic* in 1983, stated:

The LIFT festival seems to be one of the best festivals around, it is bringing a lot of new work into London, it is bringing a lot of folk theatre, a lot of popular theatre, a lot of much more direct performance work, and it is quite clearly a very positive counter to the dull established theatre that had been around in London for too long.<sup>289</sup>

The Tabule Theatre of Sierra Leone also played at the 1983 Festival, performing both free public shows in Covent Garden and their production *Bohboh Lef* (Boy! Be Careful!) in Battersea Arts Centre. The documentation of these performances shows an audience that is visibly diverse in terms of race, age, class and ability.<sup>290</sup> Dele Charley, Director of Tabule, discussed the opportunity LIFT had given his company:

I have always been dreaming of bringing my company out of the country, not just to show what we’ve got to offer, but to learn from what others have to offer. And in this case we have been able to see performances from India, from London itself, from Jamaica, through the individual things that have been performed and from things on television and I think that this broadened the experience of members of the cast. So it’s a two-way thing where we have shown a slice of our life with audiences at LIFT and we have been able to see how the rest of the world relates to theatre.<sup>291</sup>

The 'two-way' dynamic of intercultural exchange also challenged misconceptions of British superiority in theatre. Tony Howard, interviewed after watching the Italian La Compagnia del Collettivo perform *Henry IV* at Riverside Studios, commented that:

I think the thing about LIFT [...] is it has been working in the streets, you've had different kinds of companies that have been working with communities, and then you have something like this which in a way is much closer to mainstream avant-garde theatre. But it's all part of the process breaking down our insularity, which in this country is just extraordinary in the theatre, we assume we have the best theatre in the world but we've never had a way of even judging that.<sup>292</sup>

The 1983 Festival had opened with *Urban Sax*, a spectacular multimedia production led by musician Gilbert Artman that entirely took over Covent Garden with over five-thousand people climbing onto buildings in order to witness the event.<sup>293</sup> It was unlike anything theatre-goers in London had seen previously; in *The Times*, Miles Kington enthused it had been 'the most stunning theatrical experience in my life [...] it is ludicrous and impossible, and it works perfectly.'<sup>294</sup> In contrast, to the highly esteemed director of Naya Theatre, Habib Tanvir, it appeared familiar:

I come from the Indian People's Theatre Association, and this is [...] left-oriented, politically committed, anti-war and [Naya Theatre] is the product of that, I belong to that generation. On the first day we arrived the first event the company saw was *Urban Sax* at Covent Garden. That was a marvellous experience. But I think the parallel in [our] minds was the kinds of fairs we have in India where thousands of people gather together for the Ramila, and of course there are human beings who play the Ramila across all cities in India, and thousands would gather on that day and it would be quite a spectacle.<sup>295</sup>

The conversations facilitated at the Festival, such as those between Tanvir, Charley, Fox and their London audiences, in both formal and informal discussions, as well as placing their work in dialogical relationships with each other and with the city itself, revealed the sociocultural specificities of their various contexts, but also the similarities

in their positions. Fenton and Neal placed this exchange at the centre of LIFT from the first Festivals:

I think first and foremost we'd always hope that the artists would meet each other, and that was probably the hardest thing to hold onto, often just for financial reasons since actually keeping everyone here for a month was virtually impossible. But having a festival club, having dialogues, hosting them well, welcoming them, having those small moments where they were celebrated as visitors in London and participants in LIFT was at the core of the Festival. We always wanted that spirit of connection and exchange for artists and audiences.

## **LIFT '85**

LIFT's increasing reputation internationally led to Fenton and Neal being approached by companies, organisations and governments who wished them to attend theatre in their countries, with a view to being presented in London. In 1984, Neal was invited on a ten-day visit to China, sponsored by Visiting Arts and the British Council. Earlier the same year, eight years after Chairman Mao Zedong's death, a Sino-British Agreement was signed detailing plans for cultural reciprocity between the two countries. Although relations between China and Britain had improved, there were still many problems to overcome, considering that the Chinese government was still arresting 'counter-revolutionaries' from the Democracy Movement of 1978-9. The visit of a Chinese theatre company to Britain tested both the intentions contained in the international agreement and the existence of resources to back them up. The official state organised visit did not offer Neal the excitement of contemporary Chinese theatre that she was hoping to discover, and, instead, she made her own arrangements to meet with the playwright Wu Zuguang. Wu was known as a fierce defender of women's rights in China and the inspiration for his 1962 play *The Three Beatings of Tao San Chun*, a feminist retelling of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, was his wife of thirty-three years, Xin Fengxia: she was 'a much-loved celebrity of Peking opera before she

was permanently disabled by the severe beatings she received during the Cultural Revolution.’<sup>296</sup> Neal was drawn to *The Three Beatings of Tao San Chun* due to its combination of traditional Peking Opera performance with a contemporary playtext that celebrated the rarely recognised strength of women who had to endure difficult political circumstances as well as the important role they play in uprisings.

The 4th Beijing Opera Troupe presented *The Three Beatings of Tao San Chun* at the Royal Court for the third LIFT edition in 1985. It was the first Chinese play to be brought to Britain following Chairman Mao Zedong’s ‘Proletarian Cultural Revolution’ movement of 1966. Fenton and Neal had defied cultural stereotypes, providing London with a theatrical experience of extraordinarily high quality that showed the strength and power of Chinese women, and how their struggle for equality resonated with feminist struggles in Britain and foregrounded the role women play in revolutionary efforts. However, it was also the first time LIFT was directly implicated, through direct advocacy work initiated by the British government, in official cultural diplomacy due to the importance of the visit.

Strong visual productions also came from the Italian company La Gaia Scienza with *The Thief of Souls*; Els Comediants with a stage production of *Alé (Breath)*; and the Polish group Teatr Nowy with *End of Europe*, a performance that foretold the total annihilation of European culture. A review from the *Theatre des Nations* described it as ‘a nightmare of a Europe declining into a black farce, with white-faced refugees fleeing from strutting dictators and their puppet soldiers.’<sup>297</sup> The stylised political satire was programmed to draw attention to the lack of compassion of the British government to refugees. The Yugoslavian Mladinsko Theatre presented *Mass in A Minor*, the first ‘immersive’ production to feature in LIFT’s programme, where the audience sat on low stools while the action engulfed them. Andrej Inkret, the Slovenian theatre critic,

described it as ‘total theatre,’ due to it being

extremely lucid in its dissection of the Stalinist phenomena, of the Revolution and of nihilism [...] a grand spectacle, magic, intense and radical. It touches us to the core, it talks about key political problems of our age.<sup>298</sup>

Theatrical form and the use of space was also experimented within Alberto Vidal’s *Urban Man*, where Vidal was exhibited as *homo sapien* in an enclosure at London Zoo for the duration of the Festival.

Pressing social justice concerns were present across the Festival. Ku Oku Jin from South Korea performed in a traditional Pansoli style, which incorporated dance, music and storytelling, combining this style with direct verbatim theatre that told the lives of destitute and disabled people who lived on the streets following the Korean War, along with other social outcasts. This resonated with London audiences, Fenton and Neal believed, due to the lack of support for Falklands veterans following the conflict in 1982. The invasion of Argentina, which saw 255 British dead and 775 physically wounded, had left many veterans unsupported with over three quarters suffering with long term symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>299</sup> These untreated difficulties left many veterans disabled, imprisoned and impoverished, while others took their own lives.<sup>300</sup>

The Pelican Players from Toronto presented two productions that explored race relations and cultural dislocation, *Dear Cherry*, *Remember the Ginger Wine* told a compelling story of a new immigrant to Canada from Jamaica; *Martha and Elvira* was set in 1870 and followed two elderly women who escaped from slavery to Canada. A double bill of plays exploring Apartheid came from the South African Maishe Maponya, presented by the Market Theatre of Johannesburg, and performed at both the Lyric in Hammersmith and the Albany in Deptford. Maponya described the theatre he was

making as focusing on ‘facts, knowledge and the raising of consciousness,’ challenging the political dispensation and insisting that his work was ‘socially and politically informed without fear or favour.’<sup>301</sup> Even in the *Daily Mail* the plays were described as ‘painfully pertinent.’<sup>302</sup>

For the launch of LIFT '85, the Catalonian Els Comediants were invited to create *The Devils (a night in hell)*, a pyrotechnic extravaganza in Battersea Park, which Neal likened to ‘standing in a box of fireworks and watching them go off.’<sup>303</sup> The show was rooted in pagan Catalonian carnival traditions, designed to ‘get people to participate in Hell on the streets of London.’<sup>304</sup> It was described by ‘Megga’ from the company in an interview with *Performance* magazine as ‘a contemporary ritual made for and by the audience.’<sup>305</sup> In total ten thousand people attended the ritualistic exorcism of *The Devils*, described by Claire Armitstead as masses of audience members ‘running and shouting in a participatory frenzy as the sparks rained down on them in a magnificent, orgiastic release from the normal restraints of life, expression and imagination.’<sup>306</sup> The theatre critic Lyn Gardner reflected on the opening of the 1985 Festival saying that it was ‘much more than a mere performance,’ it was ‘an artistic occupation of the city in which the lines between performance and life and art and everyday activity, between the play and playing, were increasingly blurred.’<sup>307</sup>

For the first time, LIFT erected their own Festival Club in a circus tent, suspended above Camden Lock. *De Spiegeltent* was the meeting point for the Festival, provided food and drinks throughout the day, and was open to the public. There were daily lunchtime music events, children’s theatre and late night cabaret, which included live performances from the popular political satire television show *Spitting Image* and over thirty-five other companies. There were ‘LIFT discussions’ held during the Festival under the titles: ‘Britain and the world of theatre’: ‘Splendid isolation or

cultural vacuum?'; 'The identity of Chinese theatre today'; 'The role of theatre in Eastern European society'; and 'Theatre and the state.' Additionally, workshops were held with several of the companies for British theatre-makers.

With powerful feminist, anti-apartheid, anti-war theatre productions combined with the popular offerings of *The Devils* and *De Spiegelent*, LIFT '85 reached a wider audience and more diverse audience in London than ever before. The combination of circus alongside avant-garde performance, classical dance next to puppetry, made the hybridity of the Festival difficult to categorise for many in the field of theatre, especially those who were invested in the traditional distinctions between high and low cultural forms. Neal recollected:

There were moments when [...] you just knew that that play or that show or those artists they were just totally putting their finger on something profoundly important that was happening historically, whether it was in Beirut, or Beijing or Berlin, and I suppose in saying [LIFT can help promote the cause of international understanding and cooperation] we were saying, these theatre artists are giving us space around how things can shift and change, or must shift and change, and that grows our understanding and awareness.<sup>308</sup>

At the following Festival in 1987, this eclecticism only increased with forty-five companies presenting circus, cabaret and comedy at the 'Festival Club,' based at the Almeida Theatre, including a dedicated children's programme, beside Anatoli Vassiliev's theatre company and three performances by Ethyl Eichelberger. The common thread through all these productions, despite their various theatrical strategies, was their engagement with the contemporary social and political landscape.

Despite significant protest, the GLC was abolished in 1986. Some remaining GLC funding was allocated to LIFT during the final year of its operations which supported LIFT '87, but left the organisation with an uncertain future. Other funding options were limited, as Fenton explained in a letter to Banks:

The Visiting Arts Unit of Great Britain which was set up specifically to fund international work in this country is only able to give us £5,000 instead of the £10,000 they had intended. The government places a very low priority on international work and the Visiting Arts Unit [...] is severely underfunded.

Charitable and private donations are hard to raise in the current climate and corporate sponsorship has been a very hard nut to crack, particularly in view of the nature of the Festival, e.g., it is not the prestigious, 'glossy' event to which sponsors are attracted. Whilst many of our sponsorship negotiations have gone well, the last stage is never reached due to, in the sponsors eyes, the 'high risk' element involved in the 'outspoken' nature of the Festival events.<sup>309</sup>

Fortunately, ACGB had begun to give LIFT limited project-based funding in recognition of their support of British artists but it would be challenging to raise the adequate amount of money to produce the Festival. Compromises had to be made constantly on the basis of finances. For example, Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata* was planned for 1987 but LIFT could not afford the venue costs, fees or staff costs to stage it in London. Thus, despite extensively touring the world, it would never be produced in the city.

There were other impacts from the loss of the GLC as a representative body for those who lived in London. As services were devolved to local councils, it became more difficult to work across London's boroughs as they each had specific protocols for events. As Neal explained:

LIFT had part of a really vital role as part of a mosaic of different institutions and organisations and individuals across the city to be bridge builders, to catalyse relationships between boroughs, or this institution and that individual and so on. I think the story of the Ken Livingstone era, the abolition of the GLC and what happened in London through to 2000, when it was announced the Greater London Assembly (GLA) would re-constitute itself with a Mayor was a sculpting thread that ran through LIFT and had an impact on our operations. Sometimes those impacts were on ground level, for example after the abolition of the GLC every one of the thirty-three boroughs had their own systems, fire regulations, education policies. We literally had to go from borough to borough to borough and know if we were working in Wandsworth in a Tory borough it would have different regulations to Camden with a

Labour administration. It was a key thread to our development, for better and for worse.<sup>310</sup>

LIFT was also affected by the increased privatisation that these councils were subjected to as the bureaucratic field tipped to the right. The GLC had defended and supported public spaces as sites of community gathering and activism, but, after its abolition, each council was expected to make economic profit from its assets. Fenton remembered the disintegration from 1986 onwards in this way:

What happened with those events, post-GLC, was that initially when we turned up at Islington Council they would say that they would love to support Cirque Plume from France and they would give us a grant to help towards it and give us the grounds for free. And then the next time we went, they would say that they would love to present them but they're afraid they can't give us a grant but we can have the park for free, and the third time we would go back after a few years later and they would say yes they would love to present them but we would have to pay for all the services. There was a complete shift in the support available from councils who became increasingly hard-pressed to monetise their public space. With no city governance there was no over-arching cultural vision for the city, and it was a real shift into a kind of privatisation of public space and commercialisation of the arts.<sup>311</sup>

## **LIFT '89**

Notwithstanding the difficulties noted above, 1989 was LIFT's most prolific year to date. Firmly established as a dominant force in the field, LIFT had a high degree of consecration, but still retained a 'charismatic' position due to its oppositional position to the traditional institutional structures. It did not have a 'mass' audience, but it had a large and dedicated intellectual following of artists, scholars, critics, and enthusiasts from all demographic backgrounds. Economically, the organisation was in an extremely precarious position, making no profit and barely raising enough funds to produce the Festival programme. The final grants from the GLC had been spent on LIFT '87, and ACGB remained reluctant to seriously fund LIFT as a regularly funded organisation (RFO). The artistic output was excellent, with world-famous directors

tackling Western classics, popular theatre that extended folk-theatre into new forms and experimental avant-garde performance artists. Billington wrote at the opening of the Festival: 'we are used to living off scraps of foreign theatre, [LIFT] is providing us with a banquet.'<sup>312</sup>

The positions and dispositions of theatre critics in the press are revealing throughout the coverage of the Festival in 1989. At the end of a decade that brought about neoliberalism, reintroducing rampant xenophobia, the right and left wings of the field became distinct in their theatre coverage. In his preview for the Festival in *The Daily Telegraph*, Charles Spencer appeases the disdain for the 'foreign' that is expected of their readers, writing:

It would be dishonest to pretend that the heart lifts at the prospect of the LIFT festival. With a budget of more than £500,000, the fifth [LIFT] is threatening no fewer than 153 events from 14 companies in theatres and open-air locations throughout the capital between now and the end of the month. We all know, because we so often have been told, that British theatre is far too blinkered and insular in its outlook and that a strong dose of foreign drama is A Good Thing, a vital tonic. Well, up to a point, Lord Copper. Foreign theatre is fine provided you understand the language concerned. If you don't, it frequently proves to be a dismaying and depressing experience.<sup>313</sup>

Spencer continues to describe attending LIFT events as 'awful,' 'panic' inducing, 'a blur of resentment and incomprehension,' 'theatrical bafflement,' and 'hideously embarrassing.'<sup>314</sup> Despite his concession that in the programme there 'really does seem to be something for even the most xenophobic of theatregoers,' he also revealed his prejudice:

Simultaneous translation might seem to provide an answer. Reassuringly English tones come through the earpiece, providing an instant gloss on all that extravagant foreign emotion.<sup>315</sup>

Spencer's self-aware, humorous tone was not sufficient to conceal the belief in his superiority, not only in his theatrical tastes, rooted in conservative traditionalism, but also in the cultural superiority of Britishness. Adrian Dannett in *The Sunday Times* displayed a similar level of condescension in his article 'Close Encounters of the Weird Kind.' The target of this misogynistic article was Fenton and Neal, whom he referred to as 'the ever-vigilant gals at LIFT' despite the fact that both were internationally respected artistic directors of a major theatre festival in their thirties.<sup>316</sup> And whilst the article was broadly positive, the productions were posited as 'thrill[s] legitimate theatre rarely engenders,' deliberately demarcating the programme as 'illegitimate' theatre.<sup>317</sup>

As a retort to the xenophobic fear and patronising sexism exhibited by the right-wing broadsheets, critic Betty Caplan wrote in *The Guardian*:

[S]eeing a play in a language you don't understand can be highly liberating. [...] Foreignness can free performer and spectator to concentrate on the essence of theatre. [...] Our main crutch in life – language – has been taken away from us. We are beginning to feel what English speakers are generally cushioned from: a certain vulnerability, even perhaps a little stupidity at being unable to comprehend. [...] Excellent. [...] The challenge of LIFT and other such festivals is that we cannot fall back on our usual reference points and are forced to judge the work on its own merits. Mostly, we take the easy way out and resort to intellectual analysis, but if we are courageous enough to tackle our emotional responses head on, we will have been truer to both ourselves and to the work on offer.<sup>318</sup>

Caplan's, and by extension the *The Guardian's* as well as its readers' view on the theatre, the role of culture and the embrace of the international perfectly corresponded to that of LIFT, the evidence of a 'harmony of orchestrated habitus.'<sup>319</sup> The *Financial Times'* theatre critic Michael Coveney also wholeheartedly advocated for LIFT. This position reveals the complexities and contradictions between the notions of international solidarity, cosmopolitanism and neoliberal free-market globalization. Driven by an excitement at the fall of the Soviet Union, and the opening up of new markets, the

*Financial Times* supported the new influx of international work into London, with Coveney writing that the 'biennial effort' was 'one of the great joys of London cultural life.'<sup>320</sup> Furthermore, whereas Spencer had written 'more than £500,000,' Coveney phrased it as 'just £500,000,' these different qualifiers reveal a position on the value of theatre in society, and to public funding.

Meanwhile, the populist Patrick Marmion writing in the weekly listings magazine *What's on and Where to Go*, revealed his position through his criticism of LIFT's audience:

LIFT [...] comes but once every two years, and neither hell or high water will stop theatre buffs gorging themselves on its goodies. LIFT goers tend to be far gone theatre victims, people who's nearest social relative is the dope fiend. These people will seemingly stop at nothing to get their fix. [...] To a great extent its audiences are guaranteed: the theatrical faithful flock to cross-fertilise their work with that from overseas and vice versa. What other kind of event could have the nerve to announce in its programme 'enjoy what you see but remember how lucky you are to be seeing it'? [*sic*]<sup>321</sup>

Both the publication and Marmion were situated at the very outer fringes of the intellectual field, evidenced in the way he situated himself and the readers as an outsider to the 'LIFT goers.' The effect of his mock-anthropological analysis of the festival audience brought into play the structure of the field of criticism. He was brought into an immediate alliance with the public he presupposed he was addressing, based on homology of position.

Bourdieu explains how, by viewing a production through the lens of a range of criticism, the position of the subject (LIFT) and its audiences can be determined, but also the position of the critic, their publication and readership

Through the logic of homologies, the practices and works of the agents in a specialised, relatively autonomous field of production are necessarily

*overdetermined*; the functions they fulfill in the internal struggles are inevitably accompanied by external functions, which are conferred on them in the symbolic struggles among the fractions of the dominant class and, in the long run at least, among the classes.<sup>322</sup>

In the same way, critics can serve their readership so well because the homology between their position in the 'intellectual field' and their readership's position in the 'dominant-class field' is aligned in order to create an 'object connivance.'<sup>323</sup> Therefore, the principle of connivance can also reveal the homologies between the organisation and its directors, its audiences, and its artists. LIFT, therefore, with its high accumulated cultural capital, risky economic state, unconventional shows and relatively low prices attracted an audience who were almost entirely congruent in terms of their social characteristics.

Therefore, this 'connivance' of the Festival organized and galvanised groups of likeminded people around similar principles, not only of artistic tastes, but of intellectual beliefs, political principles and a rejection of economic-based commerce systems. This is what lent LIFT its artistic, social and cultural power in the local and international fields, despite its relatively small size. The 'sincerity,' or integrity with which Fenton and Neal presented their position and dispositions in the Festival produced and strengthened 'belief' in LIFT and its core principles which strengthened the logic of the field of cultural production *in its entirety*, bolstering it against the dominant field of power during an era when economics was seeking to consume it. The artists who were presented in LIFT '89, including Vassiliev, Bow Gamelan Ensemble, Chevolek, as well as nearly all the artists involved in previous LIFT editions, believed in the principles of an international movement of people and ideas, of real democracy, of the redistribution of economic capital through education and culture. Each company was involved in these struggles, and in struggles for recognition, in their

own specific cultural contexts, but each also believed in LIFT as a site to galvanise these principles.

The most anticipated production in the 1989 Festival was the return of Vassiliev with *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Luigi Pirandello, performed by his Moscow School of Dramatic Art. At LIFT two years previously, Vassiliev had presented *Cerceau* which had astonished the London audience with its remarkable beauty and vivid staging that left them ‘nailed to their seats.’<sup>324</sup> There was much excitement about his return, written about in the press as the ‘most significant event of the Festival,’<sup>325</sup> with interviews with Vassiliev and discussions of his directing style appearing in nearly every major national newspaper. After the international tour of *Cerceau* in 1987, Vassiliev had left the Taganka Theatre and formed his own Studio with an ensemble of established ‘master actors,’ who had worked on *Six Characters in Search of an Author* for two years in a rigorous research process.<sup>326</sup>

Fenton and Neal had struggled to find a suitable theatre in London that was within budget and could permit the construction of Vassiliev’s set which consisted of a theatre built into the stage that could accommodate both actors and directors. They had settled on Brixton Academy, having to start the get in, and clean up, with LIFT’s technical team at the same time as a concert by The Damned finished in order to ensure it was suitably prepared for the company’s arrival. Vassiliev expressed disappointment at not being presented on a stage in the centre of the city, as this was where his work was presented when it toured to every other western European capital. The venue, and the fact that the production could not be found another home, speaks to both the continued marginalisation of high-quality international theatre in London and the relative impoverishment of LIFT in comparison to its peers in other countries.

To provide a counterpoint that highlights the condition of the field of theatre at

the time, and the Festival's position in it, LIFT opened at the same time as a revival of *Anything Goes* at the Prince Edward Theatre, a feel-good musical with mass appeal that was a very different type of international theatre. This assured commercial success attracted substantial financial support, as Robert Hewison noted in the *Sunday Times*: 'to put LIFT on cost £500,000 – which means you could have three LIFTs for the price of *Anything Goes*.'<sup>327</sup> Moreover, of course, the budget for *Six Characters in Search of an Author* was still only a fraction of this overall cost, despite its assurance to be fully booked and to be of immense theatrical importance, revealing the value system at play at this time. This demonstrated what Fenton had observed as the shift into the 'commercialisation of the arts' in London during this period.<sup>328</sup>

Each performance in LIFT '89 attempted to overcome the 'problem' of translation in different ways, but Vassiliev's was the most innovative and sardonic. There was an assumption that audiences would be vaguely familiar with Pirandello's famous text, but he also, very quickly, integrated an English actor, Emil Wolk, into the cast. Wolk acted as a mediating and explanatory presence who embodied a very British 'resistance' to the complexity of the avant-garde Italian source text and the intellectual experimentations by the Russian company. He muttered lines such as 'you've got to be a bloody genius to understand this in the first place,'<sup>329</sup> and protested that the performance was 'too puzzling,'<sup>330</sup> in a solution that Coveney commented 'worked brilliantly.'<sup>331</sup>

Vassiliev was greeted with awe and fascination by the British press who called him, in turn, an 'iconoclast,' a 'madman,' a 'genius,' 'frightening,' 'fierce,' and frequently 'Anthony.' In an interview in *Time Out*, Vassiliev revealed his reservation about the era of perestroika<sup>332</sup> and the opening up of an artistic dialogue between Western Europe and Russia:

On the surface it's the best result Soviet politics has ever had. But internally things are heavier. My theatre lives with difficulty within the country and for this reason it's impossible to say 'Ah, how much better for us.' You can't judge from the face what is going on in the gut.<sup>333</sup>

*Six Characters in Search of an Author* speaks to this political context directly, one of its key lines being from the Producer who says 'truths are all very well, but only up to a point.'

Jeremy Kingston wrote in *The Times*:

The remarkable Gorbachov lookalike who finally plays the Director presides over the disasters of the last act in a state of benign torpor. So it could well be that all the repetitions and revisions are a parable of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russia struggling to be true to itself. [sic]<sup>334</sup>

This interpretation of the production is supported by Michael Goldfarb's visit to the rehearsal room in Moscow shortly before the company departed for London, reported in *Time Out*. He had arrived after midnight and observed it was

unlike any rehearsal you've ever seen: the actors are not standing up running through scenes and there isn't a script in sight. Sitting in this long room [...] they talk about truth – truth of the play, truth of the theatre, truth of life. [...] In Britain actors talk of 'playing' but in Vasiliev's theatre they talk about 'existing' on the stage.[sic]<sup>335</sup>

In Goldfarb's interview, he asked the director: 'Was all this intellectual group therapy an attempt to find a new form of theatre?' Vassiliev 'emphatically' replies, 'No. [...] It's all part of the Russian tradition of bringing the role up from the soul.'<sup>336</sup> This is consistent with the director's roots in Stanislavskian practice, although his elaboration of these techniques through his rigorous research practice led him to new theatrical innovations.

The confusion of the categories of 'actor,' 'character,' 'author,' and 'director,'

and their claims to authenticity and truth are at the centre of Pirandello's play. Vassiliev and his ensemble exacerbate this confusion by constantly exchanging actors between the roles, as well as having several actors play one role, often simultaneously. Additionally, by placing the audience inside the same space as the actors with some actors sitting among spectators or standing behind them, the sense of ambiguity was heightened, which drew the audience into the action. Billington observed how this highlighted the 'tension between art and life, truth and fiction:'

[Vassiliev] daringly, exaggerates Pirandello's idea that personality is not unitary but multiple: that each of us is not one person but a hundred, thousand or more. We seem, in fact, to be in a dizzying hall of mirrors where several actors take on the key roles of director, father, and step-daughter. [...] [This] takes the play's comedy and tragedy to their furthest extremes.<sup>337</sup>

Coveney remarked that this constant switching, exacerbated by the actors speaking in a mix of Italian and Russian, was Vassiliev playing a 'whole new game with illusion' which produced 'theatre as it should be, moving, truthful, profound, physical, jocose, serious, witty, disturbing, unforgettable.'<sup>338</sup>

Vassiliev may have been cynical about the effect of perestroika on theatre in Russia, but in London there was excitement about the freedom for several previously underground and restricted theatre companies from the USSR and Eastern Bloc countries to be presented in the Festival. Fenton and Neal invited two such companies from Russia, Teatr Chelovek from Moscow and Derevo from Leningrad, alongside the prestigious Katona József theatre from Budapest, Hungary. These companies were all on their first tour to Britain, and their combined appearance made a significant impression on British theatre.

Chelovek presented the first production of *Cinzano* by Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, written in 1973. Both the company and the play text had been able to make

themselves public in Moscow for the first time due to the ‘era of glasnost.’ The play is a spectacular drunken binge by three friends, whose shop below the derelict apartment only has Cinzano, vividly recording the messiness, incoherence and ultimate futility of all three lives leading to a ‘bold and startling acknowledgement of personal despair,’ performed with ‘comic finesse.’<sup>339</sup> In her review Caplan admitted she was

not prepared for the frenzied performances, which rose at times to the level of hysteria. [...] This kind of mania can only be experienced by those who have suffered long years of repression; now, having been released from prison, their energy has a wild and uncontrollable quality, though this is in fact the result of highly disciplined training.<sup>340</sup>

Billington reported that the playwright had claimed the work was not overtly political, although Petrushevskaya had been aware it would not have been approved by the authorities when it was written. He wrote: ‘I don't see how it could say more clearly than it does that Communism has no answer to the problems of everyday despair.’<sup>341</sup>

Derevo, an ensemble company led by Anton Adasinsky, presented *Krasnoe* (The Red Zone). Based in Leningrad, Adasinsky had left his role as the frontman of the punk rock band АВИА, who had developed an international cult following, to create Derevo in 1988. The company fused established Russian theatre laboratory methods with those of rock bands and drew from traditional clowning techniques, Adasinsky trained with Slava Polunin, and in Japanese Butoh, working with Kazuo Ohno. John Connor’s review in *The Guardian* described the group as:

Slapbang in the middle of the new theatre movement in Europe – yet they’ve developed their style in complete isolation. Imagine Beckett *Zombies*, choreographed by somebody from the school of Japanese buto movement and performed by clowns.<sup>342</sup>

Adasinsky termed his work ‘clowning of opposition,’ or ‘intellectual clowning.’<sup>343</sup> All

five performers were uniform with shaven heads, naked lithe slender white bodies and bony faces gave the impression of ‘inhabitants of some distant civilisation.’<sup>344</sup> *Krasnoe* included sinister scenes where the company failed to juggle with lethal objects and long slow sections where they curled up into foetal positions creating, what Gardner called, a ‘meditation on a world in which tiny, clownish figures are locked in an unending struggle with monolithic forces that threaten to crush them.’<sup>345</sup> Their intense action informed by their strange combination of theatrical approaches created, what Caplan described as, ‘some of the most haunting images I have ever seen in a theatre.’<sup>346</sup> She further reported that ‘many of those who stayed behind after the performance by Derevo [...] found themselves struggling to put words to what they’d just witnessed.’<sup>347</sup>

The ‘Iron Curtain’ had already been symbolically disassembled in Hungary, as in May 1989 soldiers had begun to cut down the 165 miles of electric fence that ran between its border with Austria. The Katona József company was based in the chamber theatre of the National Theatre of Hungary. Its co-directors, Gábor Zsámbéki and Gábor Székely, had been invited to run the National Theatre but clashed with the expectations of theatrical conservatism that had been placed on them so instead they became a, closely monitored, associated company where they dedicated themselves to producing contemporary productions of classical texts. Upon the announcement of their inclusion in LIFT '89, Coveney commented in the *Financial Times*:

Thanks to LIFT (not, you will note the Edinburgh Festival or National Theatre), London will soon know what is known in Paris, Berlin, Brussels, Parma, Vienna, Moscow and Chicago. That the Katona Jozsef is indisputably one of the great classical companies of the world.<sup>348</sup>

They brought two classics of Russian theatre to LIFT: Anton Chekhov’s *Three Sisters*

and Nikolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, both performed at the Old Vic Theatre. Hungary's position as a satellite of the Soviet Union recontextualises the cultural poverty of provincialism that both plays portray, one tragically and the other comically.

Both plays gained high praise. In *The Guardian* Nicholas de Jongh wrote:

*Three Sisters* left me shell-shocked. It is nothing less than the most emotionally devastating account of the play I have ever seen – and the most stylistically daring.<sup>349</sup>

There were reports of five-minute standing ovations after performances, with Matt Wolf for *The New York Times* commenting that 'it can't be common for four hours of Chekhov in Hungarian to bring Western audiences to its feet, but such was the case.'<sup>350</sup> He observed it had a 'rare emotional richness and psychological ruthlessness.'<sup>351</sup> An example of this, mentioned in every review of the production, was the final moment when the optimistic defiance of Chekhov's play is jettisoned:

[As] Olga begins her famous speech prophesying a future of peace, the soldiers are seen marching across the rear of the stage. And as Olga speaks, the music begins to drown her out, however desperately she tries to rise above its martial triumphalism. Her hands flail in the air as the light goes down, blacking her out in mid-speech.<sup>352</sup>

The hope held in the line where Olga declares 'our sufferings may mean happiness for the people who come after us,' is obliterated by the threat of a new militaristic regime, a bold statement to make in the midst of Hungary's first year of a democratisation process.

Zsámbéki and Székely gave Gogol's *The Government Inspector* similar treatment. As Billington observed:

What makes this Hungarian version exceptional is that it treats the play [...] not as an historic comment on the oppressive autocracy of Tsar Nicholas I but as an excavation of contemporary communism. [...]

We seem to be less in provincial Russia than in some mildewed modern satellite and the stage is putrescent with images of decay: a grey canvas roof poked with holes, a line of rusting metal lockers that serve for exits and entrances, a batch of pigeon holes obviously filled with dead letters, a skew-whiff baroque lift apparently stuck for eternity between two floors.<sup>353</sup>

As with the set, the corrupted officials in the play are not dressed in finery, but in ‘shabby’ costumes, displaying the economic impoverishment of the town and its people. Coveney discerned that ‘the place, not unlike Hungary itself, is an economic disaster area,’ adding that ‘I have never experienced so hilarious and chilling a revival as this one.’<sup>354</sup>

However, Charles Osborne in *The Daily Telegraph* missed this point entirely:

[The production] removes the action from the 1830s to the present. No harm in that, since I dare say there’s as much corruption now as then. It would, however, have been wittier and braver of the director to relocate the play in his own country.<sup>355</sup>

This inobservance may have something to do with Osborne’s claim that he goes to the theatre to ‘listen, rather than look.’<sup>356</sup> Although he was not the only one, with Irving Wardle in *The Times*, despite identifying all the elements of the production, concluding: ‘Hungary-watchers on the outlook for coded comments on the crumbling Kadar regime will scan this production in vain.’<sup>357</sup> Wardle further commented that ‘it does not offer the portrait of a coherent society.’ These critics both failed to take in the visual and sociocultural signs (noted by most London critics) throughout the production that point to the play as a comment on the incoherency of contemporary Hungary. As Caplan highlights:

The pathos of Gogol's play lies in the fact that these people stand to lose what little they have. The Government Inspector lives inside their heads, a personification of the all seeing eye. If you add to this the irony of a major Hungarian company choosing to show two classics from a country which was recently its own Government Inspector you have an acute political commentary which immeasurably enhances the play.<sup>358</sup>

As with *Three Sisters*, there is an unexpected ending to the play that enhances the political commentary on current affairs. When the real inspector arrives at the end of the play, the townsfolk murder him *en masse*.

Matthias Langhoff, a former member of the Berliner Ensemble who had defected from East Germany to form the Compagnie Matthias Langhoff in Lausanne, presented a further classic of the theatre canon. His production of August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* at the Lyric Hammersmith prompted Irving Wardle of *The Times* to state that 'LIFT introduces another master director to England.'<sup>359</sup> Meanwhile, Charles Spencer praised it as a: 'fascinatingly nasty production of a fascinatingly nasty play.'<sup>360</sup> Robert Hewison also held the piece in high esteem, writing that '[*Miss Julie*] is typical of the heady blast of sheer theatricality with which LIFT has disturbed the torpid summer seasons.'<sup>361</sup> In *The Listener*, Gavin Millar was even more enthralled:

Langhoff's production carries the play on all fronts into an area beyond strife and fashion, especially in a final *coup de theatre*, which expands Strindberg's hint of a catastrophe into something close to *l'éternel retour*—the perennial condition of men and women. If justification were needed, this single LIFT production validates the festival. It could not be *imagined* in Britain, in every sense of the word.<sup>362</sup>

Langhoff had deconstructed and reconstructed the text in a way that had never been seen on British stages. His irreverence for the established tropes of the play served to relocate its meaning to be a humorous attack on the ridiculous nature of bourgeois sensibilities and their eternal entrapment thus:

Exiting to cut her throat, Julie clammers through the auditorium, standing on the back of seats and clutching people's shoulders. Simultaneously – to illustrate Langhoff's view that the character is a 'psychogram of bourgeois sexuality,' – a second balloon garnished Julie appears and the play seems set to begin again.<sup>363</sup>

The adaptation first introduced Julie at her entrance 'sporting a cluster of nearly 20 bright gas-filled balloons.'<sup>364</sup> Later she appeared in a blood-splattered white tutu after the beheading of the greenfinch, and finally in a comic 'flesh pink body stocking with appliqué nipples and a crotch covered in black wool.'<sup>365</sup> Jean was presented as a bespectacled Strindberg look-alike with a large belly and in yellow plastic shoes. In contrast, the constant domestic labour of Christine was foregrounded:

All evening we watch Christine clean, prepare, cook, husband, organise, control her empire. At the same time, we watch Miss Julie dirty, eat, consume, waste, disrupt and finally destroy hers.<sup>366</sup>

As Peter Kemp in *The Independent* argued, 'this is *Miss Julie*, not as naturalistic tragedy, but synthetic farce.'<sup>367</sup>

Langhoff's East German origins were foregrounded by several critics, despite the company being comprised of Swiss actors performing in French. A protectionist attitude was displayed by Kemp who declared it was 'yet another exhibition of the hackneyed eccentricity of so much East-European theatre' to Britain,<sup>368</sup> with Spencer calling it an 'Eastern-bloc assault' on a 'great West European drama.'<sup>369</sup> The production was targeted as an example of a 'growing army of East German directors invading the West'<sup>370</sup> and 'ravishing,' or even 'raping,' the text with his 'perverse designs.'<sup>371</sup> Similar accusations, by the same journalists, were not made against the other productions in the Festival programme, all presented earlier the same month. It could be argued that they do not feel protective over Pirandello in the way they do

about Strindberg. However, it is more likely that, when confronted with something they dislike but cannot understand, their disposition inclined them to resort to indolent xenophobic indictments.

A revival of the contemporary classic *A Whistle In the Dark* by Tom Murphy and directed by Garry Hynes stormed the stage at the Royal Court with its 'raw, shocking, visceral impact.'<sup>372</sup> The play, first debuted in 1961 to great critical acclaim, traces the struggle of an Irish immigrant family, at war with itself, as well as the English culture in which the families now live. Hynes explained that it was a work that

examines the Irish psyche in a social and political context. It's literally set in the front room of a Coventry council house, but I've used a degree of heightened naturalism in the actual staging as we felt it was important to avoid making it seem like social documentary.<sup>373</sup>

Hynes was described as 'part of the generation of highly talented and distinctive women directors who are now making a powerful, long-overdue impact on the big subsidised companies.'<sup>374</sup> Her work was praised by Billington as a

smashing (in every sense) production [that] not only realises the play's stark, primitive power but also allows time to savour Mr Murphy's social and psychological accuracy. [...] an urgent, prophetic play.<sup>375</sup>

And by Coveney who wrote: 'Hynes judges to perfection the oscillations between shocking realism and over-heated theatricality.'<sup>376</sup> Whilst Michael Ratcliffe in *The Observer* declared:

Its virtues are enormous: complete emotional conviction, wit that spares nothing, and language that rings from the stage with an understanding that the way men speak is the way they define their lives.<sup>377</sup>

Hynes' skill as a director was undeniable and the following year she became the first woman to be the artistic director of the Abbey Theatre.

Whilst Fenton and Neal did not need to declare a feminist agenda publicly it is clear from their Festival programming throughout the decade they wished to support other talented women from across the globe, giving them opportunities they rarely received from other, male, artistic directors. This was most present in ongoing friendships and relationships with such women theatre-makers across the globe as Carol Lawes and Honor Ford-Smith of the Jamaican Groundwork Theatre Company who presented *Fallen Angel and the Devil Concubine* at the Almeida Theatre. A devised, two-person show which explored race, class and sexual oppression through a struggle about the rightful inheritor of a mansion in the wake of the end of colonial control.<sup>378</sup> It was also present in *Song of Lawino* by New York's Reduta Deux company, which was 'a buoyant piece of feminist and cultural affirmation by Ugandan poet, Okot p'Bitek.'<sup>379</sup> These works lacked the support of international infrastructures for the development of their work, compared to their male counterparts, and contemporary productions devised by women, especially women of colour, were given scant attention by the press.

LIFT also invited other communities struggling to gain recognition of their cultural identities and to present their social, political and cultural diversity. These included Roadside Theatre with their *Pine Mountain Trilogy*, three two-hour shows, at the Albany Empire. The stereotypes faced by the community-based company from the Appalachian Mountains persisted despite their attempts to dispel them. The reaction to their appearance demonstrated the ignorance of some critics who were in disbelief that 'real' Appalachians would be on a stage in a London theatre, let alone in the 'badlands of Deptford,' with Renton in *The Independent* writing that the two male actors seemed like 'theme-park hillbillies.'<sup>380</sup>

The choice to stage the company from rural Appalachia, where the population

in 1989 was 98% white, in the racially diverse urban area of Deptford might have seemed incongruous. However, both communities shared conditions of economic deprivation. In Appalachia, for instance, adult literacy was just forty-two per cent with twenty-nine per cent of households earning less than \$10,000 per year.<sup>381</sup> Based in Whitesburg, Kentucky, the company had started life as part of a government-funded initiative in areas of extreme poverty and worked with the community to explore the ‘rich, undervalued tradition of the mountains.’<sup>382</sup> One of the company explained their political position, deeply in opposition to neoliberalism and Nixon’s administration:

We get this notion that progress is always good. Yet the people who were being called backward were doing things we valued the most: non-competitive existence, raising families, mutual aid and support, caring for the land. The people who were supposed to be progressive were pulling our mountains down, polluting our streams and tearing families apart to the point where grandparents and children weren’t talking to each other. We got to thinking: well people, if this is progress then we’d rather be backward!<sup>383</sup>

*Dancing Deer of Manipur* by Keibul Lamjo, produced by Jawaharial Nehru

Manipur Dance Academy, was performed for five nights at The Place. It was also concerned with the threat to distinct folk-forms that so-called economic progress had created. Described as ‘hauntingly beautiful’ this ‘dance-drama’ dealt with the ‘plight of the dancing deer of Manipur who live on a floating sanctuary in the middle of the *Lok-Tak* lake and is faced with extinction.’<sup>384</sup> The drama was a parable for the oppression faced by the North-Western state of Manipur, where ongoing insurgencies for Sovereignty of the region from the Indian Government had led to violent, authoritarian measures being placed on the population that threatened their traditions.

A popular, folk-theatre based extravaganza was presented by Chile’s El Gran Circo Teatro with *Le Negra Ester*, directed by Andrés Pérez and regarded as the country’s most important play of the period.<sup>385</sup> The show was a musical, a ‘robust,

colourful piece of popular theatre' that was based on the poems of Roberto Parra, recording his traumatic love affair with a prostitute whom he worked with in a portside brothel.<sup>386</sup> Billington summarised the work thus:

With any foreign import, one inevitably looks for its cultural significance; and *La Negra Ester*, with its spiritedly evoked Forties setting, is clearly a hymn to Chile's pre-militaristic, non-repressive past. But any hint of woozy nostalgia is offset [...] by the show's broad-bottomed humour [...] By its very avoidance of politics, it says a lot about the Chilean hunger for a freer, blither, less-regimented future.<sup>387</sup>

The play had shown to huge audiences in open, public spaces in Chile, in the year that Augusto Pinochet had been voted out of power and is reflected a collective, popular and anti-establishment national imaginary.

Whilst *La Negra Ester* had been relocated to the inside theatre space of Riverside Studios for its presentation in London, several productions were performed in public spaces. *The Navigators*, for example, by Bow Gamelan Ensemble was performed to an audience of hundreds on the River Thames below Richmond Bridge. The review in the *The Sunday Times* recorded the following:

Bow Gamelan Ensemble was the highlight of LIFT's first week [...] What they do successfully evades categorisation and amusingly blurs the highbrow-lowbrow distinction which dogs most performances. The sheer scale of the thing is a delight to behold, the unexpected explosions a regular cause of spontaneous laughter. The smoke and light constantly create a strange beauty where you would never have expected to find it.<sup>388</sup>

Creating work from the repurposed detritus of modern industrial society, the Bow Gamelan Ensemble merged public spectacle with performance art and percussion-based musical improvisation. *Gallery Magazine's* review said the work traversed disciplines with ease and was of 'great elegance and originality that is accessible without being compromised.'<sup>389</sup>

Another performance that took the urban environment as its stage, although in a very different manner, was Fiona Templeton's *YOU—The City*. This was the first instance of an interactive one-to-one performance set (partly) in public space to be presented in Britain – at least as part of a high-profile theatre or festival. It consisted of a relay of fourteen ten-minute solo performances initiated by the individual audience member, referred to as the 'client,' 'checking in' with the receptionist at the Chartered Accountants' Hall in the City of London, using the password 'I'm looking for you.' An actor (in character) would then come to 'escort' the 'client' out of the building and ask them to follow through the streets for ten minutes, after which another escort would emerge to continue the journey with the client who would be interviewed, taken into a church, taken into houses and driven in a taxi, moving from the City through Brick Lane and Spitalfields Market. As the performance developed, the client was implicated as an escort for other clients, manipulating the previously established rules of the game and attempting to blur the lines between spectator, actor and passerby.

*YOU—The City* was not, however, about 'everyday performance,' but distinctly theatrical. It was a play performed in the midst of 'real life' in order to give a 'hyper-realist' cinematic effect to the audience. Every interaction was entirely scripted by Templeton, 'made from phrases from the world of public notices, adverts, blackmail, conspiracy, [...] all very pointedly concerning you.'<sup>390</sup> This included streams of rhetorical questions such as, 'Are you now, or have you ever been?' 'Can you act?' 'What is this making of you?' The surrealistic nature of the language contrasted with the setting of 'real life' in order to create a dislocation from, and therefore greater attention to, the 'situation' of everyday activities and the cityscape. As Vicki Jung observed in *Performance* magazine:

This is a disorienting experience that breaks down the usual conventions of theatre, whereby artifice is constructed as a representation of reality. Here, reality on the streets replaces the proscenium arch and makes everything seem strange and unreal.<sup>391</sup>

Gregg Ward in *Spectrum Arts* called it ‘one of the most unusual theatre experiences you may ever encounter:’

It grabs you, whether you like it or not, and shakes you inside out. It challenges you to look at the city and yourself in ways no conventional theatre piece can only ever hope to achieve. And it demands that you participate with your mind and body. It is an extremely intriguing, puzzling and troubling personal journey.<sup>392</sup>

Those in the mainstream national press, meanwhile, were fascinated but cynical. Every single mention of *YOU—The City* was accompanied by a bewildered comment about why anyone would want to pay £15 for such an experience and treated it largely as a novelty, whilst the reviews reluctantly acknowledged that it effectively ‘disturbed’ and ‘challenged’ the audience and did speak to theatrical traditions.<sup>393</sup> Lyn Gardner stated that it ‘defies conventional precepts of Western theatre and yet is grounded in them’ as it returned the theatre to the *polis*,<sup>394</sup> adding:

For all its bold experimentation with form and its liberation of the drama from the confines of a theatre, *YOU- The City* remains very much in the tradition of modern drama, the eternal quest for ‘self.’<sup>395</sup>

In this way, Templeton's work can be seen in relation to Vassiliev's exploration of truth, character and the nature of reality in the theatre. Both are engaging with concerns about the self and the theatre that flourished throughout the 1980s due to rampant neoliberal development that saw steep increases of public marketing and advertising, media distortions and technological innovations. Their vastly different positions, sociocultural conditions and social practice led them to manifest these

explorations in entirely different theatrical presentations, based in the traditions of American performance art and Russian ensemble companies respectively, but brought together in dialogue through their presentation in the Festival.

Finally, Station House Opera occupied the public space outside the National Theatre with their epic *The Bastille Dances*. For five days, eight thousand breezeblocks were installed on the riverside in constant manipulation by a large group of performers who constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed them into various sculptural representations. The durational activity was punctuated by a high-energy two-hour performance at dusk each evening, combining lighting and music with choreographic set pieces that created images reminiscent of the French Revolution on the bicentennial of the storming of The Bastille. Billington wrote that the performance was a ‘metaphor,’

Of the process of the French Revolution, a coherent structure is knocked down and then re-assembled into a variety of shapes – ranging from sky-aspiring triumphal arches to domestic tables and chairs – in a manner that may seem either a model of social engineering or a piece of fruitless labour according to taste.<sup>396</sup>

The futility of the work carried out by performers was the predominant reading by Tim Etchells in his review for *Performance* magazine:

*The Bastille Dances* places little value on the actions and inventiveness of individuals, showing a world in which no character or performer has lasting power or influence. The bulk of this feeling comes from scale; participants are dwarfed by the structure they build and demolish and no matter how impressive their creations, they always tumble or mutate, swallowed up in the continuum of change. Next to the breeze blocks that are thrown, dropped, piled and smashed, the soft tones of the performers’ skin seem especially vulnerable and weak. Human detail and motive all but disappear, since high on the three-levelled structure people are visible only in terms of their labour and the structures they build.

The formal elements of the piece engaged with the ideas of historical and cultural

revolution portrayed not in terms of individual great figures or coherent narrative but in terms of complex and contradictory realities, where efforts towards change are lost, taken apart or repurposed before they can be finished. This bleakness of outlook speaks to the *détournement* in the final moments of *Three Sisters*, where suffering is likely to be multiplied by an invasion, and the eternal repetitions of *Miss Julie*, stuck without conclusion or escape in a strange world.

These works all respond to the feeling that Francis Fukuyama declared was ‘The End of History’ the same summer.<sup>397</sup> This is not to suggest that these artists agreed with Fukuyama’s conclusion, but that there were few signs of optimism in the works presented and a significant amount of distrust of the larger processes at work, the ‘unabashed victory of economic and political liberalisation,’ or more specifically, neoliberalisation.<sup>398</sup> Fukuyama wrote:

The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one’s life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history.<sup>399</sup>

The fear that the relative autonomy of art practice could not survive the domination of economic logic was one shared by all of those whose work was presented in the Festival: from the community projects in Appalachia and Jamaica, to Vassiliev’s concerns about the impact of financial pressures on Russian practice, to Manipur’s threat of its cultural extinction, to the overwhelming confusion induced in Templeton’s work. As Hewison observed of *The Bastille Dances*, the work spoke to, if not the end of history, then at least a new era of incoherence:

Now building, now destroying, their myriad activities were not comprehensible as a whole, so the idea of drama as narrative disappeared. Instead, each area of the stage became its own narrative, to hypnotic effect. Only at the end, when a breeze-block guillotine was constructed and pillars of blocks tumbled into flames, was it possible to appreciate the totality of an event as being incomprehensible.<sup>400</sup>

As the dominant forces in the fields of global politics undertook immense, fast-paced changes that were bewildering to all, LIFT demonstrated how these concerns were shared but manifested in a vast diversity of sociocultural and artistic manifestations.

In terms of the state of the field of theatre in Britain, significant changes had occurred through the challenge LIFT posed to established conditions. The National Theatre held its second annual International Series in 1989, bringing Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Moscow Art Theatre and Japan's Ninagawa Company to the capital. Furthermore, headlines had appeared throughout the year that claimed 'London Festival Rivals Edinburgh,' as LIFT's culturally and politically engaged contemporary programme proved critically successful compared with EIF director Frank Dunlop's repetition of the phrase heard so many times in years before that 'the festival [...] is going to have to re-establish its founding credentials.'<sup>401</sup> Wolf wrote that LIFT was a 'brilliantly stimulating, invaluable display of cultural cross-fertilisation that puts Edinburgh's equivalent to shame.'<sup>402</sup> Whilst Alex Renton in *The Independent* observed that LIFT had upset the country's most prestigious festival to the extent that its very existence was in jeopardy: 'Edinburgh as a playground will survive – but as an international forum for excellence is under serious challenge.'<sup>403</sup> Despite his initiation of a dedicated world theatre programme at the EIF and a budget of £3 million (six times that of LIFT's) Dunlop acknowledged he could not keep up with Fenton and Neal: 'LIFT [...] have a wonderful season this year, so we're beginning to look a bit old-fashioned[...]. I don't know which way we'll be going.'

LIFT '89 had been the biggest critical, artistic, logistical and financial success the

organisation had achieved thus far. Its position in the field was firmly established and it had internationally, as was reported in the *New York Times*, ‘consolidated its eclectic reputation.’<sup>404</sup> Just as some agents, such as Dunlop, lagged behind change in the social world, so others initiated it. Fenton and Neal can be considered during this period as the ‘champions of subversion,’ since they were the producers of a new norm in a field and thus, according to Bourdieu, are the strongest incarnation of change.<sup>405</sup> The first five editions were able to mobilise the field due to the homologous positions of marginalised groups and dominated art forms in their relative fields. The struggle in the field faced by LIFT during this decade was to impose a definition of legitimate recognition of the artists and communities it represented. This struggle for legitimisation can be seen in the many critical reviews documented throughout the chapter, in which the interpretation of practices and representations rationalise practices, systematising them in the form of accepted norms – or else declaring it irrational and valueless to the field. This can be evidenced by Hewison's statement in *The Sunday Times* that:

It is to be hoped that by the time LIFT returns in 1991 (if it finds the money), the examples of adventurousness and inventiveness it has brought to London will have influenced the banal naturalism much favoured on the British scene.<sup>406</sup>

As Hewison hinted, its success in gaining recognition, cultural and symbolic capital in the field of theatre did not offer assured financial security.

LIFT faced a dire financial position, one eased, in part, by the inventiveness of their fundraiser Julia Rowntree who raised £150,000 of the budget through sponsorship.<sup>407</sup> The two productions by the Katona Jozsef company, for example, cost £50,000 to bring to London, including travel, accommodation and expenses for their sixty cast and crew. £17,000 was paid directly by the Ministry of Culture in the

Hungarian government. The rest was raised through sponsorship attracted through Rowntree's 'International Dinner Series,' in which philanthropists were invited to a 'Hungarian feast' at Sotheby's, in which all costs were donated in-kind (the food, wine, labour and venue) so all profit could be directly given to the production. For *The Bastille Dances*, Rowntree sold off the breeze blocks as 'souvenirs' where you would pay £1000 to be an 'aristocrat,' £100 to be a 'bourgeoisie,' and £10 as a 'sans-culotte.' This raised over £80,000 in total.

However, even including these unconventional (but lucrative) strategies, LIFT's continued survival was in question. In an article in the *Evening Standard* titled 'The Last-lift off?' Fenton warned that LIFT's 'credibility was in jeopardy.' Since:

Abroad, the festival is recognised as a major international showcase for innovative work but at home [...] it is regarded as very much a fringe event despite considerate success. We're marginalised here but elsewhere we're respected and treated as equals by the major international festivals.<sup>408</sup>

The article details how Moscow's Theatre Union were 'so appalled' by LIFT's rates offered to Teatr Chevolek that it 'urged the company to give Britain a miss.' Prior to their London opening, Chevolek played in New York where they received \$2500 per performance, yet LIFT could only afford £150. Fenton commented:

It's embarrassing [...] British artists are constantly invited abroad but Britain rarely reciprocates. [...] We've managed to negotiate good deals so far but [...] we can't continue to capitalise on personal goodwill for much longer. It won't last for ever.<sup>409</sup>

The company had been so impressed by Fenton and Neal personally that Chevolek had insisted on coming despite the low wages, but without significant long-term investment in the organisation this situation was not sustainable. Such high cultural

and symbolic capital had been accrued, but not transformed into the ‘hard cash’ the directors needed. Fenton bemoaned their treatment by the government:

Every so often we’re trundled out by the Foreign Office or someone to show that Britain’s doing something about cultural diplomacy [...] But it’s bullshit. If that’s what they want then they should pay for it.<sup>410</sup>

### Chapter Three: LIFT, Arts and Education, 1991-2000

In the early 1990s we realised there was other work that LIFT could be doing in between the Festival. It was one thing to research and invite and have a Festival every two years but we then became interested in what LIFT represented as a resource for the city. We piloted the idea of having an education programme and that found its feet in 1991, with Tony Fegan coming to work with us. From then on LIFT had much more presence in London. We hosted visitors but also facilitated programmes that addressed continuing issues around social equality, creative equality, and access to the arts. The learning programme became absolutely key for LIFT [...] and a lot of work went into connecting artists with communities. It was a move from [...] tumbling into situations through the purely pragmatic logistics of organising things to being conscious that what we were doing offered opportunities for everybody to learn, including ourselves. I think that did begin to equalise the role of any single person engaged in the Festival whether they were a child of six or an artist from Russia aged seventy-three.

– Lucy Neal.<sup>411</sup>

The 1990s marked a distinct shift in LIFT as an organisation, shaping significant changes in the artistic and cultural fields, as well as in the British political field. At the beginning of the decade, Margaret Thatcher was forced to resign by her cabinet ministers and replaced by her Chancellor John Major who continued her core policies and espoused arts funding under ‘heritage’ planning. By the end of the decade, Tony Blair had been prime minister for three years and his New Labour government had set in motion huge increases in arts funding for the ‘creative industries,’ part of their ‘third way’ agenda that combined a neoliberal economic approach with significant investment in the public services. Blair also sought to encourage the instrumentalisation of the arts in Britain, strengthening the bureaucratic procedures of the Arts Council in order to make arts practice meet social objectives. This was shaped by, and shaped, the general trend in Western European and North American theatre and performing arts towards the expanding field of ‘engaged practices,’ such as socially-engaged theatre, community theatre and participatory theatre, which in the arts field was first identified as ‘new genre public art’ by Suzanne Lacy in 1991<sup>412</sup> and later ‘the social turn’ by Claire Bishop.<sup>413</sup>

LIFT anticipated this shift from the very first Festival of the decade in 1991, introducing an innovative education programme that began to rethink how artists were commissioned and how London communities might engage with the festival. As Rose Fenton stated in a television interview in 1991:

Festivals have a responsibility to invest in the creative process, to invest in the work of artists. They do not exist to simply present the best of international contemporary theatre around the world but also to commission and make projects happen. [...] The performances are just the tip of the iceberg, what goes on underneath in preparation, and what it leaves behind in terms of experiences for those who participated in the festival is just as important.<sup>414</sup>

The education programme was first intended to increase access to LIFT's programme of international theatre and to enhance the understanding of performances for audiences with less experience of theatre attendance. This is an important difference to the educational aspect of the 'social turn' in the arts that is described by Bishop, which is when an educational project becomes the art itself. This does begin to happen in the 1997 Festival, with Phakama, but is much more central to the LIFT programme from the Enquiry period, discussed in the subsequent chapter.

As explained by Neal in the opening quote, Tony Fegan led the education programme to become Director of Learning from 1993-2005, assisted by Anna Ledgard; both had previously been teachers. In 1991 the Festival first ran an 'access scheme' which aimed to 'communicate the transforming power of theatre to entertain and inspire.'<sup>415</sup> The success of this saw the continuation of artistic collaborations with school pupils, through sustained year-long projects, and with teachers through the LIFT Teacher Forum and Teacher Artist Partnership scheme which sought to develop long-term benefits for the education system in general through cross-cultural and cross-sectoral learning programmes.

The learning programme had a significant impact on other arts organisations and the way they interacted with schools. The International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts (IETM) newsletter commented in 1996:

Festivals are ultimately about meeting. In cities their presence and effect on the population and local infrastructure is crucial. LIFT's successful integrated education, commissioning and presentation policy exemplifies that the 'cargo-cult', highly exclusive approach to programming is a thing of the past.<sup>416</sup>

The integration of the programme was important. Throughout the 1990s the learning programme influenced the main programme by requiring the inclusion of works made for, by and with school pupils. Discounted tickets for young people and an advisory group of teachers set up from 1991-1994, grew into training, education packs and discounted tickets for all schools in London. By 1995, over one thousand school pupils and more than one hundred teachers attended LIFT events through their education scheme, taking advantage of workshops and discussions to enhance their pedagogical impact. In 1996, the Arts Council funded LIFT to be part of a yearlong study to determine models of good practice regarding the integration of education within arts organisations. From 1997 the education schemes were so prominent in the LIFT's programme it was seen as a 'completely new era' for the organisation.<sup>417</sup> The learning programmes became central to the Festival, rather than peripheral as in most arts organisations, modeling a political commitment to participant-centered education, critical investigation with an aesthetic vision.

This chapter will begin by considering LIFT '91, with reference to the beginning of the LIFT Learning Programme and its interaction with other aspects of the Festival programme. This examines how an intercultural and specifically multicultural agenda for the organisation was formed in this Festival edition, which

was then enacted through various developments and projects throughout the decade. The widespread changes in the social field are then examined against this, in order to understand how significant Blair's New Labour policies were in shaping the theatre festival in Britain and the implications of these changes on the field of cultural production. This is evidenced through an analysis of the organisation's commitment to intercultural arts education projects in 1997, in order to expose how these changes conflicted with LIFT's practice – leading to Fenton and Neal's decision to cease the biennial festival model following LIFT '99.

### **LIFT '91**

After the success of the first five LIFT editions, Fenton and Neal felt it was time for the organisation to progress:

We decided in 1989 that our role should not be only to present international theatre, but to create a legacy to the British cultural landscape. The only way, practically, to do that was to make the festival a creative meeting place, so we decided to commission a significant part of the programme.<sup>418</sup>

Jim Hiley, in his preview of the Festival wrote:

The scope of LIFT '91 is breathtaking. So, too, is the irony that the organisers of a 'world theatre' festival have been quicker to recognise innovation in Britain than our critics, managements and funding authorities. Britain's 'mainstream' theatre often resembles a ruin that can barely manage to smoulder. It recycles tired production ideas in exhausted sagas of kings and queens, vicars and estate agents. From these ashes, the phoenix of LIFT '91 rises.<sup>419</sup>

Despite its shift towards educational initiatives, LIFT remained committed to the prioritisation of presenting high-quality theatre in the capital. Furthermore, it sought to make its learning programme produce shows that could be considered of equally high-quality. As well as six new commissions, the contextual programme of the Festival

increased as part of a commitment to audience development. Alongside masterclasses, workshops, a conference and talks, the organisation tested a pilot LIFT Education and Access Programme curated by Michael MacMillan and Polona Baloh Brown. Fenton and Neal wrote in the brochure that

LIFT's impact is manifold. [...] The Festival's character raises many critical issues. It also illustrates international innovative work. By developing a long term strategy and offering a rich array of supporting public events [...] we hope to place LIFT at the forefront of educational debate and practice.<sup>420</sup>

This approach was heavily influenced by that of Peter Sellars to the Los Angeles Festival in 1990. As artistic director of the Festival, Sellars made a commitment to the Los Angeles Festival as being a '10-year long project to introduce Los Angeles to itself and to reintroduce the world to Los Angeles.'<sup>421</sup> Sellars presented about 2,900 artists in seventy venues all over the Greater Los Angeles area during the Festival, with a total budget of approximately six million dollars (a figure LIFT would never get close to). His purpose was to challenge the audience 'out of their ordinary ways of seeing their city' and into a new way of 'experiencing the diverse communities' of Los Angeles through their encounter with the festival.<sup>422</sup> A staunch believer in interculturalism, Sellars invited participation from artists who were associated with the cultures of the marginal communities of the city, which included the Hispanic, Korean, Japanese, Jewish and Native American communities. Artists and representatives from these communities were invited to be involved in the decision-making of the festival in addition to performing. Under Sellars' direction, the Los Angeles Festival as an institution changed its organisational structure, curatorial process, and artistic vision, experimented with the international arts festival as a form in its own right, and redefined the Festival's relationship to the city.

Sellars' interrogation of the festival model was made clear in his welcome address to the 1990 Los Angeles Festival:

[A] festival is a gathering of that which has been scattered, a moment to pause, a reason to notice what has been moving just below the surface or hovering just overhead, or in any case what has been living just outside the narrow field of vision that has been established by our daily routine. [...] It is a moment in which the world is turned upside down and we can rethink which end is up. And it is an occasion for people to meet and talk, for stars to be made, for points to be made, and for the creation of a context.<sup>423</sup>

Sellars wanted the Los Angeles Festival to enhance and resonate with people's experiences and to inspire them to create change, hoping that 'after looking there [would] be talk and after listening, there would be action.'<sup>424</sup> This democratisation and expansion of festival culture was partially influenced by, and in turn influenced, LIFT's experiments with London's diasporic communities. Neal wrote of her experience:

In [...] LA [...] I saw the transformations that occur when people are given public space to tell new stories of the past – to break free from the old stories that suffocate descendants of oppressors and oppressed alike. [The] festival gave glimpses of how our cities can be crucibles for the reconciliation of histories of cultural imperialism and conquest. [...] [The] Festival [...] created major shifts in the thinking of how future international festivals could be shaped – LIFT included.<sup>425</sup>

Fenton and Neal also wanted to reclaim the deeply social and human purpose in a manifestation intent on salvaging culture from commerce, communion from consumption and necessity from industry; creating a political festival environment that comes from grassroots action of celebrating communities and overcoming boundaries between individuals in urban environments.

LIFT, looking to ‘champion’ the city and, inspired by Sellars, commissioned six shows in a series titled ‘LIFTing London.’<sup>426</sup> These programmes engaged with diverse communities in terms of their ethnicity, culture, socio-economic background, age and gender. Each production and process was hugely different, with three British theatre-makers, Keith Khan, Welfare State International (WSI) and Bobby Baker, and three international companies, The Market Theatre (South Africa), Battimamzel Productions (Trinidad) and the Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD). Despite the variation in their performance styles and sociocultural perspective, all those commissioned shared LIFT’s commitment to engage with marginalised groups and contemporary ‘critical issues.’

Director Keith Khan created *Flying Costumes, Flying Tombs* a large-scale outdoor carnival parade in Paddington Basin. Drawing on influences from Pakistani, Indian, British and his native Trinidadian performance traditions, Khan combined influences from the Trinidadian carnival and festival of Mosay as well as the Muslim festival of Muharram. The performance celebrated the transformation of cultures as individuals and communities across continents, epitomising what Homi Bhabha characterised in 1994 as the ‘hybrid cosmopolitanism’ of world cities.<sup>427</sup> The performance involved over two hundred African and Asian dancers, drummers, steel-pan players, deaf signing choirs, and performers from local community groups and schools. Two women — one of African and one of Indian ethnicity — processed along the waterway, pulling behind them two white ‘colonial’ children entangled in their long, braided hair. For the thousands who came to witness the procession the performance was entertaining, spectacular and staunchly political.

Across the city in East London, WSI performed *Lord Dynamite*, a spectacular outdoor show based on the life of Alfred Nobel. WSI partnered with local groups

including African drummers, Indian dancers, gospel choirs, shadow puppeteers and carnival bands to collaborate and perform in the show. The performance was located in waste ground at Three Mills, and the show reacted directly to the rich history of the site. It had been where gunpowder was first created in Elizabethan times, then a rocket factory was built in the eighteenth century after which it became a match manufacturer, and then a sulphuric acid factory for explosives in the First World War. *Lord Dynamite* was an epic carnival, with a cast of over one hundred people and huge machines that rumbled over the landscape, spitting fire and letting off fireworks. The culmination of the evening saw the audience joining the cast to dance with them under the pyrotechnic displays. Director John Fox called in the programme for ‘world peace’ and asked his audience to be aware of campaigns against the British Government’s profiteering from the global arms trade. Jeremy Kingston in *The Times* applauded the performance as a ‘timely attack on arms dealers.’<sup>428</sup>

In contrast to Khan and WSI, Bobby Baker’s *Kitchen Show* was defiantly domestic, performed in her own home in Holloway. In the performance Baker carried out thirteen (a ‘baker’s dozen’) actions which humorously reframed the banal daily labour of women in British households as skilful artistic displays. Baker stated

The idea for this show was initiated while I was peeling carrots. I admired my technique enormously. I spent a great deal of time doing mundane tasks and I entertained myself while doing them by having imaginary conversations with famous men where I described my skill, dexterity and endurance.<sup>429</sup>

Twenty audience members at a time would crowd into Baker’s house, hospitably given tea and biscuits, and arrange themselves around the kitchen and at the end of show was a piano recital by her daughter. This would be the first of five LIFT commissions of Baker’s work, one for every festival throughout the decade, called ‘The Daily Life

Series.’ The work espoused Marxist-feminist ideas of the value of domestic labour and provided an important counterpoint to the large-scale outdoor spectacles in the programme.

In juxtaposition to the middle-class homely comforts of Baker’s show was the gritty socially engaged production by the Los Angeles Poverty Department at Abbey Community Centre in Kilburn. *LAPD inspects London* was a pioneering collaboration with a group of London-based homeless people and the American company, who were comprised primarily of homeless and formerly homeless people.<sup>430</sup> The company’s artistic director had first been supported to make the work in LA for Sellars’ 1990 Festival and Fenton and Neal had subsequently invited them to replicate their process in London. Malpede was dedicated to ‘connecting the experience of people living in poverty to the social forces that shape their lives and communities.’<sup>431</sup> In order to do this, LAPD worked with homeless people to develop their personal stories into theatrical scenes, drawing on the history of socialist and community theatre and making visible the often dire circumstances of living in abject poverty. One London performer described the difficult process as ‘playing with fire’ but he thought that it was ‘good to be listened to.’<sup>432</sup> In his review of *LAPD inspects London*, Robert Hewison wrote in *The Sunday Times* that ‘homelessness seems a particularly London problem’ before noting that ‘the existence of the Los Angeles Poverty Department reminds us otherwise.’<sup>433</sup> Furthermore, he noted the uniqueness of such a project: ‘the homeless have a right to be heard, and only LIFT would give them such a platform.’<sup>434</sup> This performance created the circumstances for Cardboard Citizens to be established in London, which continued to use Theatre of the Oppressed methodology to create theatre with homeless people.

The most theatrically conventional but politically controversial of the six

commissions was *Starbrites* by the Market Theatre Company of Johannesburg, presented at the Tricycle Theatre. The show told a comic contemporary tale of the optimism of people amid the hardships of life in South Africa, following the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990. In Johannesburg *The Star* hailed the performance as ‘a beginning of the theatre of the new South Africa with its humour and message of hope, and a departure from the protest, agitprop theatre which has dominated our stages for so long.’ However, on its production in London *The Guardian* stated it was ‘reckless optimism’ since ‘the violence that has followed the release of Mandela, especially the violence of blacks against blacks, makes the show’s euphoric, upbeat message seem alarmingly facile.’<sup>435</sup> Director Barney Simon defended the production, in an interview also published in *The Guardian*, with the anti-apartheid campaigner Mary Benson, in which he stated:

At all times we live the dichotomy of what we expect and what we hope. What can we do but find the courage and energy to remember that human beings cannot live in anticipation of disaster.<sup>436</sup>

Fenton and Neal commented on this incident as an example that highlighted the responsibility of international theatre festivals to allow international artists to ‘tell their own stories,’ even when this was challenged by what audiences in London wanted:

Immediately after Apartheid was ended, artists such as Barney Simon were saying ‘at last! We don’t just have to engage with issues we can tell our stories as human beings. But a lot of the press and audiences were saying to us ‘we want to hear about Apartheid!’ And at that moment you have to consider whose agenda you are presenting? For whom? And who is your duty of care to in a wider context?’<sup>437</sup>

Interrelationships between identity, race, violence and hope were also explored in several other works made by the Black diaspora. The sixth commission, *The Man*

*Who Lit Up the World: a celebration of black invention*, was performed by a Trinidadian company at the Hackney Empire. Whilst *Spunk*, created by Joseph Papp and performed at the Royal Court Theatre, was an astute observation of Afro-American culture. These productions challenged dominant stereotypes of race and identity, playing to diverse London audiences they offered their audiences an opportunity to engage with a variety of perspectives on the experience of black individuals and groups in different cultural contexts.

Fenton and Neal also co-commissioned two smaller programmes, for presentation within the Festival, which supported new and experimental practice. The first of these was 'Cross-References' created with the National Theatre Studio and the Royal Court to showcase, in English, international playwrights. The purpose of these commissions was to give writers from different continents a chance to stage the issues that are most important to them at that moment in time in order to create a 'dramatic snapshot.'<sup>438</sup> The most celebrated of these was Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*. Dorfman was a former political exile from Chile, but set his play in 'any country which has recently emerged from a dictatorship.'<sup>439</sup> The play posed important and highly topical political questions, identified by Paul Taylor in his review for *The Independent*:

Can there be reconciliation without retribution in a post-totalitarian state? Is it possible for the victims of the old regime to put the past behind them and live in harmony with their erstwhile oppressors?<sup>440</sup>

It was a huge critical success and the play transferred to the main stage of the Royal Court, then onto Broadway in 1992, and was subsequently made into a film directed by Roman Polanski in 1994.

The second programme was called 'Live Art UK,' curated by Deborah Chadbourn from ArtsAdmin, which aimed to represent contemporary international

live art practice. The Polish artist Jerzy Kalina created an installation space on the Serpentine lawn consisting of fifty burned tree-trunks around a baptismal font; Konic Theatre from Spain created a rotting banquet installation to explore death, decay, beauty and obscenity. The British company The Damned Lovely performed the ‘flawed but amusingly prankish’ *Neglected English Moments* and in *The Divine Ecstasy of Destruction*, Michael Mayhew and Becky Edmunds excavated the writings of the Marquis de Sade ‘brutally’ and ‘cackhandedly.’<sup>441</sup> *Assume the Position*, led by the Wooster Group’s Nancy Reilly, brought together four British performance artists (Anne Bean, Anne Seagrave, Stephen Taylor-Woodrow and Robin Whitmore), in order to attempt to ‘sell’ their work to an audience by ‘locating it in the discourse of the market place,’ in order to demonstrate how it was, in fact, not saleable. In addition to this curated series, live art was also presented by LIFT in association with Barclays New Stages at the Royal Court Theatre in *The Double Wedding* by Rose English, a performance in which she dressed up as a drag queen to interrogate gender and sexuality. As Betty Caplan asserted:

In this arena then, with gay theatre so obsessed by pastiche, Rose English emerges as undisputed queen, a larger than life figure dressed in the manner of a latter day Danny La Rue and prowling around a stage she cannot help dominating by her sheer presence.[sic]<sup>442</sup>

Two, very different, versions of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* were presented. The first was by the self-proclaimed ‘intercultural’ Footsbarn Travelling Theatre in a circus tent on Highbury Fields, their first performance in London for over a decade after leaving their British base for France after Thatcher’s election. It was generally badly received with Michael Coveney in the *The Observer* calling it ‘appallingly spoken, dull and conventional, in spite of the Chinese gongs, the Irish fiddles and the tacked-on

Kathakali processions and masks.<sup>443</sup> Charles Spencer in *The Daily Telegraph* called it an ‘ill conceived mess.’<sup>444</sup>

The second production was at the Lyric Hammersmith by the Comedy Theatre of Bucharest. The director, Alexandru Darie, was extremely excited to be presenting work in London after the extreme repression and theatre censorship Romania had suffered under Nicolae Ceaușescu. Darie explained:

The whole play is about manipulation, about being manipulated, that feeling of constantly being surveilled, of being guided and of being controlled. These are of course the characteristics of a totalitarian society.<sup>445</sup>

Peter Holland remarked that it was ‘the best *Dream* I have seen since Peter Brook’s:’

Both productions shared a celebration of acting skills and theatrical invention of an order English companies rarely aspire to; both freshly liberated their plays, making things work that had seemed almost impossible before.<sup>446</sup>

For the first time, LIFT received support from the ACGB to tour this work to other venues in the UK. Andrew Kyle, the council’s director of touring, stated: ‘the case of international work in regional venues was considerably advanced by successful performances of the Romanian production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.’<sup>447</sup>

Notwithstanding the success of Darie’s production, it was the Maly Drama Theatre’s two productions, *Brothers and Sisters* and *Gaudeamus*, directed by Lev Dodin that were the jewels in the crown of LIFT '91. The two productions were universally well received, with Coveney in the *The Observer* calling the visit ‘already entrenched as the high spot in the theatre year.’<sup>448</sup> *Gaudeamus* was a collaborative work conceived and devised by Dodin together with his students and performed by these students. The performance was about conscription into military service, with nineteen individual

improvised scenes, based on Sergei Kaledin's story of life in a Soviet construction battalion. As with the previous visit in 1988 by the company to Mayfest in Glasgow, the British press was enamoured with the theatrical style and artistic accomplishment of the Russian company.<sup>449</sup> Maria Shevtsova, in her extensive study of Dodin and the Maly Drama Theatre, wrote that in *Gaudeamus*, Dodin wished to

Capture the mood of a culture synchronised at so many points with an anti-establishment youth culture with which his young students did not necessarily empathise, but which they could well understand. Fear of conscription to the army, with a war in Afghanistan, was part of this culture of the negative. It was a youth culture that went for broke – drugs, sex, brutality among its paraphernalia – and, while it was at it, derided its own antics because the young either saw no future or had none, and because derision, the psycho-emotional flipside of stylistic reflexivity, was the defence of the disempowered.<sup>450</sup>

Coveney called it 'unrivalled theatrical artistry'<sup>451</sup> whilst Billington compared it favourably to being 'pelted with pearls',<sup>452</sup> and described the production as

an extraordinary spectacle, alternatively bizarre and comic, that reminds us how these confused conscripts escape into a world of dreams whether it be Russian romanticism (Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*) or Western pop (the Beatles' *Girl*). You come out a bit pulverised but impressed by the company's ensemble attack and Soviet theatre's capacity to act as a scourge to society's ills.<sup>453</sup>

In *The Telegraph* Robert Gore-Langton hailed it as 'funny and desolate' locating it as 'theatre of biting irony and national grievance, a sort of *Oh What a Lovely Warsaw Pact*. A mix of the erotic, the grotesque and the beautiful.'<sup>454</sup> Benedict Nightingale in *The Times* also claimed it was similar in anti-establishment spirit to Joan Littlewood's 1963 epic musical and delighted in its 'deliciously iconoclastic' performances, claiming it was 'a non-stop provocation to the military' of any country.<sup>455</sup> He wrote that the production is 'very Russian, and pretty anti-Soviet,' and in crude terms stated, 'it says

much for glasnost that the cast has remained unshot.<sup>456</sup> The sexual violence and brutality depicted in *Gaudeamus* was also commented upon, although only by the female critic Claire Armitstead in the *Financial Times*:

The representation of sex as an overwhelming preoccupation of the conscripts' life has its problematic side. While it might seem precious, in context, to complain about the portrayal of women as tarts and nymphomaniacs, the light-hearted treatment of a gang rape by a group of drugged soldiers is hard to take. One can only assume there is a satirical thrust to the scene which is lost on an English audience.<sup>457</sup>

Shevtsova commented that Armitstead did not lack comprehension on a cultural level, but it was a stylistic misunderstanding and that 'it is meant to be hard to take,' given that the performance is preoccupied with depictions of the brutish nature of the young soldiers.<sup>458</sup>

*Brothers and Sisters* was the epic narrative of the collective history of Soviet rural life based on the novels by Fyodor Abramov, staged at the Lyric Theatre. The six-hour long trilogy had an ensemble cast of forty and followed the impact of great historical events on the lives of ordinary people. It received a standing ovation for every performance. Billington, in *The Guardian*, described the moment the 'audience rose spontaneously to its feet, moved, I suspect, not just by the virtuosity of Lev Dodin's staging but by the work's ability to confront the bitter truth about life under Stalin.'<sup>459</sup>

Coveney wrote in admiration that:

Not until the very end [...] did we appreciate the evening's vast majestic range, its generous sweep and its glorious detail, the full theatrical poetry with which personal tales of lust, greed and deprivation had been counterpointed against the accumulating evidence of Stalin's disastrous 'New Lift' policies.<sup>460</sup>

Abramov's novels, written between 1958 and 1978, were a protest against what he referred to as the Stalinist 'varnishing of realities.'<sup>461</sup> Shevtsova argued that the

duration, like other theatrical epics created in the 1980s such as Brook's *The Mahabharata* and Ariane Mnouchkine's *L'Histoire terrible et inachevée de Norodom Sihanouk, Roi de Cambodge*, had an important basis in asking audiences to commit to their length.

She explained that the

purpose was to counteract, by taking one's time to perform and to absorb the spectator in the performance, the materially driven, fast pace of market economics and, for Dodin, the no less materially driven hard slog of a command economy under communism<sup>462</sup>.

The Maly Drama Theatre had first been introduced to the west in 1988 through presenting the celebrated *Stars in the Morning Sky* at Mayfest in Glasgow. By 1991 Fenton and Neal were eager to premiere the work of Dodin's company to London audiences as they returned for their second visit to Mayfest. It is notable that there were no other efforts by any other English theatre organisations to bring the Maly Drama Theatre to London during this intervening period, despite its hugely enthusiastic response in Glasgow, demonstrating how unique LIFT remained in the London theatre landscape.<sup>463</sup>

In addition to the vast and wide-ranging core theatre and performance programme, there were two important and formative LIFT projects driven by educational and socially engaged motives. The first of these were events by the Handspring Puppet Company and the Market Theatre Laboratory of Johannesburg (who presented *Starbrites*). They offered artists, teachers, young people and audiences workshops and training sessions throughout their stay in London. One particular sustained project was between a local school and Handspring, in which they co-created a production called *The Life of Themba*, based on the story of Stompie Moeketsi, the child murdered by Winnie Mandela's bodyguard. This was subsequently performed on

the main stage of the Tricycle prior to the performances of *Starbrites*. As Julia Rowntree remembered, following the productions:

Students had left with a sense of achievement, the school and teachers were satisfied, but the artists remained frustrated, feeling they had gained little in the exchange of creative ideas. [...] Much of LIFT's work over the next decade concentrated on finding a methodology enabling artists and schools to work together in a way that did not compromise their respective principles, priorities or cultural perspectives.<sup>464</sup>

These principles went on to shape the learning programme for the following decade, and catalysed LIFT into hiring Fegan as a Director of Education for future festivals in order to ensure shared commitments to artistic rigour were matched with thoughtful pedagogical methodologies.

The final event in LIFT '91 was a community festival, held in Angell Town council estate in Brixton. The estate had previously been left to fall into disrepair by local authorities, and lacked communal spaces or local infrastructure. In 1990, the tenants, led by resident Dora Boatemah, had self-organised the community to transform two-hundred unused garages into shop units for businesses such as a laundrette, crèche and, most importantly to its ongoing renewal, a recording studio. Boatemah had placed young people's creativity at the centre of her renovation plans and these efforts changed national policy on the approach to the refurbishment of council properties.<sup>465</sup> Boatemah had initiated a biennial Angell Town Festival in 1989, and, in 1991, LIFT contributed to the celebrations through bringing national and international artists in to perform in sites across the estate including Khan, the Market Theatre Company, Bobby Baker and Welfare State International. The community Festival was designed to, as Boatemah stated, demonstrate the 'power in getting people together' and to promote the user-positive changes they had initiated.<sup>466</sup>

The performances, especially the LIFTing London commissions, in LIFT '91 helped define the form and content of a civic conference held in March 1992. Led by Rowntree, the goal was to 'make the link between policy and practice.'<sup>467</sup> For the event, they brought together local initiatives that had 'tackled seemingly intractable challenges in unusual ways.'<sup>468</sup> Rowntree explained their motivation:

At LIFT, we began to perceive our role in a civic sense beyond the theatre world. We realised the art we staged was a way of bringing people together across all sorts of levels of London life. Rather than see ourselves as a small organisation simply putting on shows and constantly frustrated by civic inadequacies, we audaciously began to see ourselves as a larger catalyst with a wide embrace and a special role to play, based on celebration rather than complaint.<sup>469</sup>

The conference was supported by the *Financial Times* and held in Cabot Hall at Canary Wharf. It sought to convince those with power in local government, education and business that they should listen to those they do not usually meet, including Boatemah and Islington school pupils, since making a difference 'was frequently made in unconventional ways and often from the margins.'<sup>470</sup> LIFT's role was in bringing people together to listen to each other, in order to empower those who were dominated due to socio-economic status, age and race. As Dragan Klaic observed, this event epitomised LIFT's relationship with the corporate world which turned the relationship between arts and business 'upside down.'<sup>471</sup> Instead of LIFT chasing business sponsorship, businesses paid LIFT 'for the privilege' of having Festival artists and participants 'teach *them*.'<sup>472</sup>

LIFT '91 had been the most ambitious edition to date. Pioneering the education programme, large commissions and a touring programme, alongside presentations of high-quality international theatre. Built upon by the conference in 1992, LIFT had begun to think of their work in terms of social activism and civic responsibility,

directing their status and combined skills, and those of the artists they worked with, into building connections between grassroots organisations and those in power in order to challenge the dominant practices of business and government that exploited those marginalised across all fields. The Festival had included a conference titled ‘Festivals – Who Needs Them?’ Fenton explained that ‘festival is a much-abused word. It can mean anything from an occasion for civic pride to a marketing exercise. We want LIFT to become much more a part of existing cultural activities across the city.’<sup>473</sup>

### **LIFT 1993-1996**

Due to further arts funding cuts brought in by John Major’s government in 1991, LIFT’s budget was significantly reduced. For LIFT '93 and LIFT '95 Fenton and Neal continued their focus on an education programme and commissions, but could not afford to bring as much large-scale international theatre into London. In 1993 and 1995 they continued to commission British artists, including Bow Gamelan Ensemble, Bobby Baker, Keith Khan, Platform, The Costume Designers Club, the Black Theatre Co-op, Deborah Warner and Gary Stevens. But they could only commission two international companies, En Garde Arts (USA) and Gabriel Villa (Brazil) in 1993, and there were no international commissions in 1995.

The first education programme led by Fegan encompassed the largest project in LIFT '93, an unprecedented project that responded to the presentation of the Hanoi Water Puppets in the Festival programme, created with local schools and Vietnam’s diasporic community in Greenwich.<sup>474</sup> *Sang Song—River Crossing* was performed by two hundred and fifty local school children, many of Vietnamese origin, in the grounds of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich Park. The performance charted the contemporary experiences of the Vietnamese community in Greenwich and their personal journeys to London, and was built from a year-long engagement with pupils

who learnt about Vietnamese culture and theatre traditions, made their own puppets and devised performances from their own stories and those of their families.

In LIFT '95 there were five such educational projects, devised with students in long-term collaboration with professional artists, all of which culminated in productions shown in LIFT's main programme. This corresponded to Fenton and Neal's dedication to democratising the Festival, ensuring that a diverse range of Londoners had ways to participate with the event. As asserted by Rowntree, 'public performance [was] vital to ensure the rigour, excitement and authenticity of creative cultural exchange for everyone involved.'<sup>475</sup> This led to a more intensive period of experimentation titled OUT of LIFT '96, 'a season of theatre for, with and by young people.' There were six productions created with more than ten different theatre companies and artists across eight schools, each performed in a public area or professional theatre. The programme was its own small Festival, with 'Daily Dialogues' held at the Young Vic and a conference on 'Shared Values' organised by young people for theatre professionals. The largest of these productions was *The Factory of Dreams*, performed in Brockwell Park. The public performance, for an audience of over five-thousand people, was the culmination of a six month long project created by an entire year group of pupils aged 13-15 from Stockwell Park School, which had been labelled as a failing 'sink' school by London authorities. LIFT brought French theatre director Christophe Berthonneau to direct the project, assisted by Tony Fegan and four London-based artists, Sofie Leyton, Ali Zaidi, Gavin O'Shea and Dominic Campbell.

The participating teenagers were given six months off usual lessons to develop the project with LIFT, having had no previous access to a drama or dance curriculum. Berthonneau asked the pupils 'What are your dreams?' and 'What do you dream to be?' encouraging them to create giant figures from steel to symbolise these

dreams.<sup>476</sup> These figures were made from beaten metal inspired by Pakistani tin art, batik lanterns, tissue paper and fibreglass, transformed into icons that represented dream images of footballers, houses, globes, rockets, angels and horses. The extensive evaluation process with the pupils following the event detail the many qualitative benefits *Factory of Dreams* brought to its participants. The responses from the teenagers demonstrated that among the achievements of the projects were, confidence and skills, their new friendships, and social opportunities; they experienced co-operation; affirmation of identity; strengthened commitment to place; a creation of intercultural links; positive risk-taking – all of major social significance in so far as they are crucial in fighting for social inclusion and encouraging involvement in democratic processes.<sup>477</sup>

Praising LIFT in *The Telegraph* following the 1995 festival, Hewison wrote

The eighth LIFT has not only brought performers from just about every cultural frontier in the world. By doing so, it has stretched the boundaries of theatre as far as they can go. [...] LIFT is a reminder that so called ‘experimental theatre’ means something more than questioning the ways of doing things. The avant-garde has a political purpose.<sup>478</sup>

The achievement of LIFT’s participatory projects with diverse communities was to begin to tackle serious social problems and the disempowerment that results from them. What is particularly important is that these projects did this without compromising their dedication to high-quality theatrical productions and the creative autonomy of artists. The learning programme demonstrated to participants their own innate creative resources, which could be developed through innovative and co-operative intercultural practices that worked from the ground upwards. From 1990-1996, thousands of pupils in London had been supported to make experimental theatre and had been given access to wider cultural and civic discourses through the

facilitation of LIFT.

### **LIFT and New Labour**

When New Labour came to power, a party with a strong utilitarian agenda, these previously effective grassroots approaches that had enabled collaboration between artists and educators began to be co-opted into the field of power and subsequently implemented from the top-down. Although this meant there was more financial support, the bureaucratic field, which remained ‘tipped to the right,’ enforced terms on this funding that sought to quantify all outcomes of cultural practice in order to ensure it met the social or economic aims of the government and thus instrumentalise it. From a historical perspective, the most radical structural change implemented by the, newly re-named, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), was to co-opt the interests of the cultural field into New Labour’s political mission by contract.<sup>479</sup> This action ran directly counter to the tradition of an ‘arm’s length’ principle which had been sustained since the formation of ACGB by John Maynard Keynes. This was implicated through a Public Service Agreement (PSA) that set out how all activities of the DCMS, and by extension the Arts Council, ‘will deliver Government objectives alongside increased efficiency and improved effectiveness.’<sup>480</sup>

From this point onwards, the Arts Council’s funding, in all areas of the United Kingdom,<sup>481</sup> would be ‘conditional on quantified improvements in outputs – efficiency, access, quality, and income generation/private sector funding.’<sup>482</sup> This continuation of neoliberal ideals between Thatcherism and Blairism were such that political scientist Colin Hay wrote that Blair’s election was a return to consensus politics in Britain; the consensus that there was ‘simply no alternative to neoliberalism in an era of heightened capital mobility and financial liberalisation — in short, in an

era of globalisation.<sup>483</sup> Blair's new 'Third Way' politics sought to go, as suggested by the title of a book by Blair's policy advisor and director of the London School of Economics Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right*. In 1998 Blair wrote in the pamphlet *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century*:

It is a third way because it moves decisively beyond an Old Left preoccupied by state control, high taxation and producer interests; and a New Right treating public investment, and often the very notion of "society" and collective endeavour, as evils to be undone.<sup>484</sup>

The state's leverage, not its size, was important. The state could work with the market to deliver a better country: 'With the right policies, market mechanisms are critical to meeting social objectives, entrepreneurial zeal can promote social justice.'<sup>485</sup> Blair believed this would lead to a 'dynamic knowledge-based economy founded on individual empowerment and opportunity, where governments enable, not command, and the power of the market is harnessed to serve the public interest.'<sup>486</sup> This led to a situation where participation in the arts formed part of the populist agenda of Blair's government.

Despite this, 'public investment' in the arts was broadly welcomed since, by 1997, the British cultural sector had been starved of public funding. In his election manifesto, Blair had stated that: 'for too long, arts and culture have stood outside the mainstream, their potential unrecognised in government. That has to change and under Labour it will.'<sup>487</sup> His Government immediately increased public funds for the arts from £198 million in 1998 to £411 million the following year.<sup>488</sup> Blair's intention was to increase investment in the arts, not directly to see economic returns, but to contribute to his social policies; the arts were to be integrated in the system of

government more closely than ever before and used instrumentally to aid both urban and social regeneration.

Chris Smith, the new Secretary for State for the DCMS, stated that his work would place ‘the Department at the centre of the country’s economic life and regeneration.’<sup>489</sup> This was an ambitious statement for a small department which had previously had a marginal relationship with economic policy. To achieve this ‘culture’ had to be redefined as a collective, ideological, expression which supported Blair’s ‘new relationship’ between the citizen and the state. This would be practically achieved through financial, legal and welfare reformations that coerced changes in social relations, or, as the New Labour think tank *Demos* wrote, it was ‘governing by culture.’<sup>490</sup> In the DCMS’s first Annual Report, in 1999, Smith asserted that

money spent on culture, in its widest sense, can play an important part in achieving Government objectives [...] The DCMS is first and foremost about improving the quality of people’s lives. But in doing that we shall also help improve education; to promote social inclusion; to improve economic performance; and to promote equal opportunities and access for all to the high quality public services.<sup>491</sup>

It was adamantly believed that culture could be used to revive the depleted economies of post-industrial cities and to address issues of deprivation, educational dysfunction, community disintegration, and even crime.<sup>492</sup> Cultural production was to generate employment and deprived communities would be transformed. The capital needed to fund the project was cultural and while dividend would be social, the ultimate aim was economic prosperity.<sup>493</sup>

This approach was strongly supported by a large-scale study, commissioned by the Gulbenkian Foundation, into the social benefits of taking part in the arts. Intended to be a response to and criticism of, Myerscough’s *The Economic Importance of the Arts*,

the publication *Use, or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts* was published in the month New Labour came to power.<sup>494</sup> Written by the community artist François Matarasso, the report stressed the importance of participation in the arts over simply ‘attending’ arts events. The value of the arts was expressed in terms of personal growth and social cohesion, participation had environmental and health benefits and contributed to social change:

Individual benefits [of participation in the arts] translate into wider social impact by building the confidence of minority and marginalised groups, promoting contact and contributing to social cohesion. [...] Arts projects can strengthen people’s commitment to places and their engagement in tackling problems, especially in the context of urban regeneration. [...] They have the capacity to contribute to health and social support of vulnerable people, and to education.<sup>495</sup>

The report additionally recognised the unique intervention theatre can make into the lives of people: ‘although all forms of artistic experience result in social outcomes—how else can a thousand people collectively engage with feelings and ideas about human experience than in a theatre?’<sup>496</sup>

Although to the general public this social agenda was most often promoted as the central purpose of the DCMS, its own Select Committee argued in internal policy documents that it was an ‘avowedly an economic Department.’<sup>497</sup> These documents also included a statement by Smith that ‘at its heart are a series of powerful economic sectors: the creative industries [...] media, tourism and sport.’<sup>498</sup> Although the phrase ‘cultural industries’ was rife throughout the 1980s, the scale of New Labour’s promotion and incorporation of all sectors of the arts into the ‘creative industries’ model was new, especially for many smaller and experimental companies who had been staunchly oppositional under Thatcher.<sup>499</sup> Jen Harvie observed that the semantic

move itself from the Thatcherite term ‘cultural industries’ to the Blairite ‘creative industries,’ had damaging implications:

While New Labour presumably wants to invoke such ‘creative’ connotations as dynamism, the contemporary and inventiveness over the potential associations of ‘culture’ with heritage and conservatism, its choice of term also prioritises the *individual* creative act over *social* cultural activity. The term potentially disempowers people by transforming them from collective audiences and makers into individual and alienated consumers. It celebrates anti-social capitalist commodity fetishism at the expense of social practice.<sup>500</sup>

New Labour encouraged the ‘selling’ of culture by subjecting the arts to the market and its language, implemented and enforced through the conditions attached to publically administered arts funding. The words ‘creative’ and ‘industries’ combined met precisely with the aspirations of the Third Way’s socially-democratic neoliberal vision, whilst proffering social reform as an outcome of new economic policies which therefore appealed to the socially and artistically principled left. The ambiguity of the rhetoric employed by both Smith and Blair meant their ideas could be interpreted in two directions.<sup>501</sup> On one hand, many believed that cultural democratisation, of both art form and access, would undermine the dominant ruling class which was supposedly defined by its ‘elitist’ artistic tastes. On the other, there was a belief that the creative industries would create jobs, employment and economic development.

Smith’s own book *Creative Britain*, of 1998, first attempted to unify the arts with creativity in industry, science and technology.<sup>502</sup> The list of ‘business areas’ to be defined as the creative industries was submitted by Smith in 1998 to the Office of National Statistics and the Standard Industrial Classification as:

Film; music; architecture; publishing (including electronic publishing); computer games; radio and television; the content industries (for example,

museum collections on CD); software; advertising; crafts; visual and performing arts; designer fashion and art/antiques trade.<sup>503</sup>

Astonishingly, theatre, opera, ballet and fine art, which had historically been the primary recipients of all public arts funding, were now bundled together as one broad, fractional category that came after the commercial ‘advertising’ sector in this expansive list. Smith claimed that the total turnover of these creative industries was ‘of the order of £50 billion a year,’ although this figure lacks any citation or accompanying quantitative evidence.<sup>504</sup> In a 1998 speech Smith asserted ‘culture also has a hard commercial edge. The creative industries are big business [...]’ Smith’s rhetoric was perfectly aligned with Blair’s Third Way approach, where investment in human capital, innovation and knowledge (shaped by ‘endogenous growth theory’) was prioritised.<sup>505</sup> This is how and why all areas that fell under the ‘creative industries,’ including theatre, were brought into the centre of government policy.

The consequence of introducing a neoliberal market-driven approach to Britain’s public services caused a fundamental change, from the creeping privatisation that invaded the National Health Service to the commodification of English universities—a process that began with the introduction of student fees in 1998. David Marquand, a past Labour Party Member of Parliament, wrote critically of the New Labour government in 1999:

[T]he public domain of citizenship and service should be safeguarded from incursions by the market domain of buying and selling [...] The goods of the public domain [...] should not be treated as commodities or proxy commodities. The language of buyer and seller, producer and customer, does not belong in the public domain; nor do the relationships which that language implies. Doctors and nurses do not ‘sell’ medical services, students are not ‘customers’ of their teachers; policemen and policewomen do not ‘produce’ public order. The attempt to force these relationships into a market mould undermines the service ethic, degrades the institutions that embody it and robs the notion of common citizenship of part of its meaning.<sup>506</sup>

The British theatre ecology faced serious consequences from the intervention of market ideology. As theatre, and in particular festivals, are founded on the notion of celebrating, demonstrating and building the notion of common citizenship, as well as exploring what this might mean, the encroachment of the market into the public domain directly threatens the foundational purpose of festivals.

New Labour's 'creative' policies focused on 'culture' and rarely discussed 'the arts' as a distinct category. They introduced a regime of targets, funding agreements and measurements intended to make the social and economic outcomes of 'investment' predictable.<sup>507</sup> All art forms were required to demonstrate their social worth through popularity and impact, their economic impact and arts organisations had to prove they were attempting 'outreach' to audiences by recording who was attending their performances, and in what number.

### **LIFT '97: Phakama and Intercultural Exchange**

Identity was also co-opted by New Labour to further their agenda. Ben Pitcher notes how central the notion of race was to the success of Blair's 'Cool Britannia' project in his examination of the 1997 Demos pamphlet, *Britain<sup>TM</sup>: Renewing our identity*, written by Mark Leonard.<sup>508</sup> The pamphlet proposes the slogan 'United Colours of Britain,' after the famous Benetton advertisement campaign. Pitcher argues that the pamphlet

weaves the nation's brand identity of a multicultural loom: both 'edgy' and 'contemporary,' the 'United Colours of Britain' perfectly articulates a pluralist approach to national identity as refracted through the imagery of the advertising world.<sup>509</sup>

Here, even diversity and national identity become fashionable products to be consumed. This new promotion of national identity, Pitcher argues, was required to distinguish multiculturalism from outmoded nationalism, in order that Blair could reclaim 'One Nation Britain' from right-wing politics, known for its implicit racism and essentialism. To this end, the subject of race could be approached in a new register that claimed an 'ethos of cultural, religious and racial pluralism as its own.'<sup>510</sup> Thus, the pluralism that had previously stood outside or in opposition to the state was, under Blair, articulated as one of its core principles— a further example of the absorption of all social relationships into the general system of commodity production

More than anywhere else in Britain, London's character became increasingly shaped during this period by a sharp increase in immigration to the capital.<sup>511</sup> In 2001, the Greater London Authority titled its Census 'World One City,' a document that examined the presence of people from 179 nations in the capital. During the 1990s there had been a marked rise in net immigration to Britain and a diversification of countries of origin. From 1994, Britain began to be characterised by net inflows of people, whereas, before this time, it had been consistently marked by net outflows.<sup>512</sup> In 2004 there were an estimated 2,857,000 people who were foreign born and without British citizenship living in Britain, comprising 4.9 per cent of the total population.<sup>513</sup> This was an increase of over forty per cent since 1993.<sup>514</sup> Much of the increase during this period was from those seeking asylum, demonstrated to be directly linked with forced migration factors and various conflict situations during this time.<sup>515</sup> Forty-five per cent of foreign people in London in 2001 had arrived since 1990.<sup>516</sup> The character of this period of immigration was different to previous eras, with people coming from a wide range of countries and ethnicities, and settling across localities in London, not

in particular areas in ethnically determined groups, as migrant communities had historically done.

One consequence of this was that LIFT's way of previously engaging with minority communities as distinct cultural groups determined by geographical area, as with *Sang Song* in Greenwich, was no longer as relevant a model for the organisation's socially engaged theatre projects. Instead, the organisation had to find new approaches to multicultural communities with intercultural theatrical approaches. From 2001, a central thread of the LIFT Enquiry would be dedicated to determining what form theatrical interventions into London's diverse communities should take. During this period there was a significant increase in the funding and production of applied and socially engaged theatre practice in Britain, most of which can be attributed to the encouragement of instrumentalised art projects through New Labour's cultural policies. There was also a renewed interest in intercultural performance, with the arguments that dominated the political discourse around integration, assimilation, cultural appropriation, heterogeneity and homogeneity being reflected in concerns regarding theatrical production.

In contrast with the 2001 Cattle report, which suggested that minority groups live 'parallel lives' without meaningful exchanges, sociologists found that in daily lives there were 'daily habits of perhaps quite banal intercultural interaction' across London.<sup>517</sup> However Ash Amin argued that 'habitual contact in itself is no guarantee for cultural exchange.'<sup>518</sup> Here, interventions by those, including theatre makers, who create new experiences of space and 'contact,' can prove effective in providing local communities the opportunity to develop what Jacobs and Fincher describe as 'a complex entanglement between identity, power and place' in order to mutually

reduce prejudice and increase respect between those of different cultural backgrounds.<sup>519</sup>

LIFT's Project Phakama, which had begun in South Africa in 1996, was at this time an effort to engage in an intercultural exchange that brought together young people from Black British and other ethnic minority backgrounds in London with other young people from South Africa. The first month-long residency, connecting artists and educators in July 1996 had been held in Benoni, near Johannesburg and was co-supported by LIFT and Sibikwa Community Theatre. Caoimhe McAvinchey observed that:

Two years after the end of apartheid and the first free elections in South Africa, this residency modelled a practical political commitment to international collaboration and the sharing of theatre-making skills that could be adapted and employed across South Africa. 'Phakama,' a Xhosa and Zulu word for 'rise up, elevate, empower yourself,' was both an articulation of the imperative for this work and what could be achieved together: it was a statement of intent, of *why* this approach to participatory performance matters.<sup>520</sup>

Fenton and Neal had consistently supported anti-Apartheid theatre companies when they could since the beginning of LIFT, but they had also supported the cultural boycott meaning that sustained collaboration between Britain and South Africa had not been possible until this period. Throughout this period when LIFT supported Phakama, the work was always made and presented in non-theatre spaces in order to directly oppose the assimilation of these practices into the economies of the theatre and New Labour's sanctioned arts education programmes.<sup>521</sup>

In the 1997 Festival, Phakama presented their first London performance as the culmination of a month-long workshop that brought together twenty young South Africans with the Lewisham Youth Theatre for *Izimbada: If I Were in Your Shoes*. At this time, the project was only planned until the following year with what was supposed

to be the final performance, *Met'n Sak Onner die Blad* in Cape Town. However, it had been such a success in artistic and social terms that the project continued to run, with several more performances at LIFT, in 1999, 2003 and 2004, until Fenton and Neal's departure. It then became an independent organisation, expanding its programme to young people across the world and continues to the present day.<sup>522</sup>

Fegan, Fenton and Neal also commissioned and developed two other performances made in collaboration with international artists and young people for LIFT '97. *Utshob*, performed at Trinity Buoy Wharf in East India Dock, was a large scale immersive event created through a two-year collaboration between four leading artists from India and Bangladesh alongside London-based artists of Indian and Bangladeshi heritage and two-hundred young people aged from 8 to 20 from Tower Hamlets, Newham and Hounslow – London boroughs with large south-Asian communities. The production commemorated fifty years of independence on the Indian Subcontinent and considered the deliverance of India from British colonial rule and the subsequent tragedies of Partition. Indhu Rubasingham, a British Asian Theatre Director, wrote in the LIFT '97 *Real Time* publication:

What was special about *Utshob* was the feeling of unselfconscious celebration of multiculturalism, the joy and unmanipulated interaction between young people all looking at what freedom meant to them, personally and globally. [...] I wondered what my forbears would have made of their grandchildren celebrating their efforts and victory in the country they were fighting and striving for independence from – the irony of the largest temple outside India being built in London, the huge community of Asian people settled in the UK in the last 50 years, the influence that this community has had on contemporary British culture, and the trend-factor of ethnicity in the 1990s.<sup>523</sup>

*Utshob* foregrounded the various immigrant communities, in order to, as Shevtsova has written of multicultural theatre, 'make them visible, viable, recognised and accepted as part of the social fabric.'<sup>524</sup> The theatrical mode of the final production,

concentrated on procession, music, sculpture, dance in the celebratory style of a traditional Indian 'mela' in an environment festooned with batik decorations.

*Invisible Room*, at the ICA, was also the result of a long-term internationally cooperative residency programme. The project had begun when leading Japanese choreographer Saburo Teshigawara had performed at LIFT '95. Fenton and Neal proposed that Teshigawara and his company Karas collaborate with dancers who were part of The Place's youth education project, including many physically disabled teenagers. The company worked on a programme of exchanges for more than a year, with Karas establishing STEP, the Saburo Teshigawara Education Project.

Teshigawara reflected:

I wanted the young people to discover that they could achieve something by doing dance. [...] Dancing may have not been something that they needed to do, but once they got together and began practicing, that gradually changed. There were suicidal children, there were children who were getting into fist fights backstage. It was children in their most difficult stage of adolescence and there were children with bad home environments, which meant that we had to deal with their personal problems, and that made it even more interesting for me.<sup>525</sup>

Like Phakama, this was the beginning of longer term intercultural exchange between STEP and London's young people with the company retuning to create work with the new Stratford Circus venue in 1999.

Gardner in *The Guardian* described the performances of the 1997 Festival:

Young and old, rich and poor, white and black, we became as one, all with an equal stake in a shared experience, no longer divided in the way the Victorian playhouse isolated audience from action through its segregation of playing and passive space, segregating the audience from each other.<sup>526</sup>

The optimistic tone of Gardner was not wholly reflective of Fegan, Fenton and Neal's concerns in this period. The LIFT team were aware of the careful planning it took to create intercultural projects that genuinely created equal cultural exchange, rather than processes that were mediated by the mechanisms of the state and the neoliberal global market. Their efforts to support BAME artists, from Britain and around the world, in self-directing projects that were then embedded in schools and communities over long periods created many meaningful relationships. The impact of these are evidenced by their continued commitment to marginalised practices and young people.

### **LIFT '99**

Speaking in 1999, Fenton and Neal admitted that 'programming LIFT has become a more complex and more challenging venture,' given the difficulties of confronting 'today's world of shifting borders, migrant communities and the political and social realities of the fast-looming 21<sup>st</sup> century.'<sup>527</sup> David Benedict wrote in *The Observer* that, 'over the past 20 years LIFT has radically- and occasionally roguishly – redefined what we define as theatre and much of the experimentation in this country can be traced to its influence.'<sup>528</sup> But reactions to the 1999 Festival from the critics were mixed, although Susannah Clapp, in the same paper, wrote admiringly of the festival's move towards less conventional theatre:

No Festival could have a more appropriate acronym than the London International Festival of Theatre. Lift has a quickening effect on the capital's stage: it raises its temperature and widens its horizons; it brings performers and audiences into startling relationships, so you can't always tell which is which. The huge inventiveness of the current theatre has spilt off the stage and on to the street.<sup>529</sup>

Charles Spencer in the *The Daily Telegraph* gave the Festival the first positive review from him in twenty years, reflecting on its ongoing interrogation of theatrical form, even when it is not to his taste:

Every two years [LIFT] arrives to stir things up with shows that are usually weird, sometimes wonderful and occasionally downright incomprehensible. I always grumble about LIFT [...], for it usually involves trekking off to unfamiliar venues in grotty parts of town and enduring mind-numbing productions you can't understand a word of. There is no doubt, however, that LIFT has played a major and healthy role in British theatre.

In particular it has opened our eyes to the possibilities of non-text-based theatre, and discovered some amazing shows of sheer spectacle. Whether it be anarchic Catalan firework displays, mind-expanding Colombian labyrinths, or De La Guarda's amazing bungee stunts [...], the best LIFT shows remain in the memory for years and prove that the avant-garde can be fun. In fact after LIFT, the Edinburgh Festival often seems unforgivably stodgy.<sup>530</sup>

The reflective tone of the press reports is due to this edition being the tenth Fenton and Neal had produced and the last before the new millennium, as well as the first since the arts had increased its funding and visibility under the New Labour government. Negative criticisms began to question LIFT's role in this new British theatre landscape. Joyce McMillan wrote in the *The Scotsman*:

When [LIFT] first burst onto the scene in 1981, its two founders [...] aimed to challenge the notorious insularity and text-based tunnel vision of the British theatre scene by bringing some of the most exciting theatre in the world straight into the heart of the capital. Eighteen years on, though, things are different. International drama festivals are far less rare, a new generation of British theatre workers knows as much about Robert Lepage and Peter Stein as it does about Peter Hall and Trevor Nunn: and the task of a festival like LIFT is no longer to bridge obvious gaps in London's theatre experience but to find international theatre that will speak to its audience and to the times we live in.<sup>531</sup>

Many of LIFT's strengths in political consciousness-raising remained.

Phakama presented *Be Yourself*, based on the racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence in Eltham. His death, and the subsequent mishandling of it by the police, had become representative of pervasive institutionalised racism in Britain. Gardner wrote it was 'like one of the airline maps in which you see lines interconnecting all across the world. It is also most specifically about the city. Our city. [...] it gives an outsider's and an insider's view of London.'<sup>532</sup>

LIFT presented *Be Yourself* alongside two other South African productions that dealt with the legacies of apartheid. *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, conceived by the artist William Kentridge with Handspring Puppet Company at the Tricycle Theatre, highlighted the contradictions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Kentridge spoke of his feelings about the TRC:

The TRC raises the question of truth versus justice. Ideally you would have both. This way you try to find out all the truth at the price of prosecution. [...] As people give more and more evidence of the things they have done, they get closer to amnesty and it gets more and more intolerable that these people be given amnesty.<sup>533</sup>

In his multimedia production of *Ubu*, the medieval Polish dictator of Alfred Jarry's absurdist play *Ubu Roi* became a government torturer in apartheid South Africa. Reviews of the production complain that the multimedia and puppetry techniques obscured the content of the performance. Billington wrote: 'Which comes first? Style or content? Theatrical ingenuity or moral message? [...] I found the astonishingly resourceful means somewhat obscured the political ends.'<sup>534</sup>

*The Story I'm About To Tell*, by the Mehlo Players, featured six performers on a bare stage — three professional actors, together with three members of the Khulumani Support Group for survivors of human-rights abuses. Fenton and Neal recall their experience of the piece:

One mother tells us how she was witness to her son's assassination by a bomb; another activist describes how she was repeatedly raped in police detention. At the end of each performance the audience entered into a discussion with the company. The desire to exchange experiences, to know more, was intense, the quality of the exchanges raw and honest. "How can there be grand catharsis when you are sifting through remnants of the brutality the people have suffered?" asked one member of the audience with incredulity.<sup>535</sup>

Though this production formed, as Ian Herbert wrote, a 'valuable part of the consciousness-raising that makes LIFT different from other festivals,' he thought that they fell 'more into the category of political statement than theatre art,' with 'the rawness of its performance making it both immediately moving and, at a greater remove of time, spiritually unsatisfying.'<sup>536</sup>

However, Societas Raffaello Sanzio, with *Giulio Cesare*, presented high-quality theatre art. The production, directed by Romeo Castellucci, had acquired a reputation for being 'hugely controversial' in the European festival circuit before it arrived in London. Joe Kelleher 'attempted' an account of the production:

It felt like an encounter with something alien, unlike any theatre I had ever witnessed before. The obvious explanation for this might be offered in terms of the real, live horse, the emaciated bodies of the two women playing Brutus and Cassius, the visceral impact of an actor playing Mark Anthony without a larynx, the sheer volume of the wrestler in the role of Cicero, not to mention the extraordinary experience of being shown another person's vocal cords.<sup>537</sup>

Audiences and critics were divided, with Hettie Judah asking in *The Times*, 'to what extent is the play intentionally bad?'<sup>538</sup> Nick Curtis in the *Evening Standard* wrote:

although I can't deny the shocking power of his visuals and his freakshow attitude to casting, Castellucci's stage-event is an arid and autocratic exercise: a wilfully obscure game of hunt-the-symbol. [...] I reckon the [...] Italian enfant terrible has got his own theatrical endoscope lodged not in his throat, but in another part of his anatomy.<sup>539</sup>

In a significantly more nuanced and considered review Rachel Halliburton in the *Independent* described the production as having an ‘earth-tilting impact,’ recognising its exploration of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* as,

a play obsessed by physicality, and Castellucci has delved deep into its metaphors to produce a nightmarish vision of the forces released when political order is threatened. The production ambushes the audience, constantly challenging concepts of the body’s boundaries.<sup>540</sup>

Gardner in *The Guardian* similarly engaged with the politics of the aesthetics of the performance:

It begins with a swinging hammer behind a dirty white curtain, ends with a human cry so etched with despair it feels like a sharp cut, and in between offers you an apocalyptic vision of a world torn apart by civil war that is unremittingly inhumane, callous and chaotic. [...] This production may seem very distant from Shakespeare’s drama, but more than any production of the play I have ever seen it conveys the sense of the unceasing, cyclical nature of civil war. The suffering just goes on and on, stretching into the future with no relief.<sup>541</sup>

McMillian in the *Scotsman* also saw the contemporary resonances for the discussion of war and ‘honourable violence,’ drawing a connection between the production and current British affairs. ‘Castellucci rages against “just war” liberals like Brutus (and perhaps Tony Blair),’ making the link due to their ‘joint fascination’ with ‘the stench of blood’ that is ‘piously shed.’<sup>542</sup> In his first six years in office Blair had ordered British troops into battle five times, more than any other prime minister in British history.<sup>543</sup> At the time LIFT 1999 was in London, the majority of the British army had been deployed for a ground offensive in Kosovo after controversial sustained NATO air strikes in which civilians were frequently killed. Castellucci’s *Giulio Cesare* had not been created in response to British political circumstances, however the power of his

symbols, images and themes created theatre that resonated with the audiences in London on a particular level, asking complex and pertinent moral questions of them.

Ensemble Modern created a similar effect with their production of Heiner Goebbels' *Black on White*. Co-presented with Barbican's International Theatre Event (BITE), Nightingale in *The Times* declared it a 'zeitgeist':

There are many moments when *Black on White* catches the feel of our dodgy, screwy era. A musician winds up an air raid siren, and its despairing wail joins the jazzy brass abrasively pulsating behind it. A violinist hares up to a microphone, repeating "that corpse we planted last year in your garden, has it begun to sprout?", and the twang of Balkan folk music joins the hubbub. [...] If I'll remember anything from this performance, it's the ragtag orchestra silently sitting while a pendulum delicately skims across the strings of a Japanese koto. If you want an image of the fragility of our world, there it is.<sup>544</sup>

In the *Independent*, Paul Taylor wrote this final moment had a 'disconcerting beauty—at once intensely human and apparently independent of human agency a mechanical timepiece and an emblem of immemorial ghostly grieving.'<sup>545</sup> The musical performance captured audiences due to its expression of Europe on the cusp of the millennium, where it was feared that technology might fail due to the much-publicised threat of the 'millennium bug.'<sup>546</sup>

An immersive spectacle was provided by *Variations on a Concerto Barroco* by Opera Transatlantica from Venezuela. Ian Herbert wrote in *Theatre Record* that *Concerto Barroco* was 'another typical LIFT evening' which was 'all very well as play, less satisfying as A Play.'<sup>547</sup> Ian Shuttleworth also observed that 'every [LIFT] seems to include one show that contrives to feed its audience.'<sup>548</sup> David Benedict wrote in the *The Independent*: 'the term "extravaganza" is overworked, but if any show earns the epithet, it's Concerto Barroco [...] one of the most ludicrously enjoyable romps to hit LIFT in years.'<sup>549</sup> And Gardner described it as 'more of an escapade than traditional

theatre, it is one of those evenings that makes you want to wear fewer clothes and dance more often.<sup>550</sup> She praised its shamelessly populist appeal:

Beauty and power reside in the sensual caress of velvet or glitter on a cheekbone, the wild music of a saucepan lid, or a tower of flame, all driven by a heartfelt belief in a popular, all-embracing theatre cobbled together from bits of wood and scaffolding, old sheets, and a basic human need to sing, dance, tell stories and eat.<sup>551</sup>

Jane Edwards in *Time Out*, noted that it was ‘a celebration of multiculturalism that could not be more pertinent for London today’ and that ‘from the moment Jennie Rodriguez individually welcomes each member of the audience, there is that authentic LIFT thrill that what follows will be very different from anything in England.’<sup>552</sup> Theatrical productions that moved beyond scripted plays and between singular cultural expressions continued to divide London critics who disagreed regarding their validity to be considered as legitimate theatre.

Theatrical encounters were placed in locations across the city. Theatre Rites created *Cellarworks*, an ‘experience’ for young people created with local school children. Based in a Camden primary school, but created for adults, Bobby Baker’s *Grown up School* transported groups back to a fetishised version of their schooldays. On Clapham High Street four men created *Urban Dream Capsule* in the window of Arding and Hobbs department store. Living for fourteen days in the shop window, their every movement was on display for passing audiences to observe. This was a comedic precursor to reality television shows Big Brother which would dominate the following decade, with large crowds becoming obsessed with the different characters and enjoying their constant dance routines, mimes, clowning and singing. Deborah Warner’s *The Tower Project* took over the 32<sup>nd</sup> floor of Euston Tower with a visual installation that people experienced alone at their leisure. Forced Entertainment

performed *Who Can Sing a Song to Unfrighten Me?*, a series of fragmented texts spoken by the company for twenty-four hours.

At the end of the 1999 Festival, Hewison in *The Sunday Times* wrote a review that questioned the very foundations and aims of LIFT, demanding Fenton and Neal ‘ask some hard questions about LIFT itself:’

LIFT means London, certainly, and its founder directors [...] have done much to enliven the capital’s creative culture. International it also is. Jordan, Venezuela, India, South Africa, Israel, France and Germany have artists here this year. A festival it is, in that it is only on for three weeks and most of the shows have short runs. Theatre it has almost ceased to be. [...]

LIFT has grown tired, and “festivals” have become an exhausted marketing device. London is not the avant-garde-free zone it was 20 years ago, and there are organisations such as Artangel doing similar work all the year round. Nor are foreign companies quite so foreign. That this is so is indeed thanks to LIFT. But the uniqueness has gone. When – on the whole – the work is weaker than before, and repeats itself, it is time to take a rest.<sup>553</sup>

The Festival relied on being politically engaged, but also on the potency that is created by high-quality theatrical experiences, an aspect of LIFT that had been significantly diminished at the end of the 1990s. Neal reflected on how ‘growing tired’ was not personal (although both directors admit to being exhausted by LIFT at this point), but also politically induced:

I think after 1997 there had initially been a real hope among our colleagues in the arts. There was a very significant report that Blair’s government commissioned about the arts and education which produced Ken Robinson’s *All Our Futures*.<sup>554</sup> There was a momentary giddiness that the New Labour government was about to herald a really different era of how central creativity was to everybody’s learning and education. It was pretty short-lived. Robinson left the country when he realised none of his suggestions would be picked up. And Blair [...] really showed that it was going to instead be about how the arts were essentially about people becoming economically productive and it was absolutely rooted in the market. [...] So it was very depressing that this was the policy that lay behind it all, forcing us to be productive economic units. [...] They wanted to capitalise on creativity rather than value it for its own sake in human terms.<sup>555</sup>

It was after the LIFT '99 that Fenton and Neal decided they could no longer continue to create a biennial Festival. The intensification of neoliberalism and the co-option of their pioneering intercultural education schemes into economic policy had reduced the autonomy of their practice to such an extent that they felt the Festival could no longer claim any agency from the state, nor support oppositional practice with any integrity. They had one final Festival planned for 2001, but by this point Fenton and Neal had already sought to reimagine the Festival frame, leading the organisation into a period of 'enquiry' at the start of the new millennium.

## Chapter Four: The LIFT Enquiry, 2001-2009

*So, after 20 years, LIFT is dead. Long live LIFT!*

– Robert Hewison, *The Sunday Times*, 24 June 2001<sup>556</sup>

At the start of the new millennium, in response to significant changes in the artistic, social and political landscape, LIFT began a new phase in its existence as an organisation. The LIFT Enquiry must be understood as proceeding from the evolving social, political and cultural contexts in Britain, as discussed in the previous chapter. It was conceived as an experimental period for the organisation in that there was a move away from creating a biennial Festival and the beginning of an explorative process of reflection, discussion and education, where the chronotopically particular Festival was replaced by seasons of programmes, conferences, workshops and long-term site specific projects. The founding principles of LIFT, to challenge conceptions of what theatre might be and to harness its potential for shaping social consciousness, remained at the core of the organisation. However, Fenton and Neal no longer felt the biennial festival model was necessarily the most effective way for LIFT to achieve these aims. During the Enquiry, LIFT would attempt to discover what the role of theatre was for those who lived in London and what LIFT's position in this role might be.

The LIFT Enquiry started in 2001 and encompassed all the work the organisation produced from 2002-2006, with the majority of public-facing activities concentrated in 2004. Fenton and Neal created the Enquiry to be a process that could open up the possible future development of the organisation, as well as taking stock, reflecting on the theatrical, cultural, social and political changes that had occurred in

London during LIFT's existence. It marked the final years of Fenton and Neal as artistic directors of LIFT. Angharad Wynne-Jones was appointed in 2006 to continue the work of the Enquiry and to evolve the vision of the organisation but departed two years later after a series of unsuccessful events. This period is distinctive in LIFT's history as a sustained, thorough and self-reflexive consideration of its own purpose and possibilities. The implications of this research process had an impact on the London theatre ecology through questioning the role of arts organisations in the city and giving opportunities for open-ended experimentation and collaboration between artists, academics, audiences and local communities across the capital.

The LIFT Enquiry was an experiment to see whether removing the frame of the biennial festival from LIFT's activities as an organisation would be a more effective way to foster more meaningful relationships between London's communities and theatre. Fenton and Neal began to consider whether the Festival, as a chronotopically particular celebratory event, was serving an increasingly prevalent neoliberal economic agenda that they disagreed with—most significantly due to its entrenching of social and economic inequalities in the local and global fields. This four-year period can be seen as a process undertaken by Fenton and Neal to attempt to resist the assimilation of their vanguardist, socially conscious and politically committed theatre practice into the dominant culture.

This chapter considers the many interconnecting contexts that prompted this change and created the conditions for the LIFT Enquiry, as well as shaping its form, which included: the changing nature of international relations, New Labour and its cultural programmes, the changes in London due to development and migration, and the global increase in the number and size of theatre festivals. It outlines what the impacts of these conditions were in practical terms, taking an in depth look at the

seasons presented by LIFT during this period to critically evaluate through interdisciplinary analysis the opportunities and disadvantages of abandoning or altering the biennial festival frame.

### **The LIFT Manifesto**

As argued in previous chapters, Fenton and Neal believed in the potential of the theatre to create a space of international and intercultural exchange for those of all backgrounds. The LIFT Manifesto document from 2001 begins with a quotation attributed to Walter Benjamin: ‘In every era there is a need to pull tradition away from the conformity that seeks to suffocate it.’<sup>557</sup> This quotation from ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History,’ is usually translated as: ‘every age must strive anew to wrest tradition away from the conformism that is working to overpower it.’<sup>558</sup> The ‘tradition’ becomes then a ‘tool of the ruling classes’ if it is abandoned to ‘conformism,’ since under neoliberal capitalism social relations are determined in the same way as commodities.<sup>559</sup> Therefore, a central aim of the LIFT Enquiry was to update, qualify and nuance the ideas and the debate about what role theatre was playing in an increasingly multicultural, intercultural and globally connected London.

As demonstrated in Chapter Three, the changes implemented by Tony Blair’s New Labour government provide an important context to understand why Fenton and Neal felt there was an urgent need to reassess the social efficacy of the Festival. The Enquiry process sought to place their conception of the social and artistic purpose of theatre at the centre of LIFT, resisting the increased pressure from the government to consider theatre in more economic or instrumental terms. Since the start of Blair’s leadership, the government had tried to impose an instrumental agenda for the arts through prescriptive targets and an expectation that cultural organisations would contribute to the delivery of their own social and economic agendas. This had led to

organisations also working to demonstrate how useful and productive they were in socio-economic terms to secure funding.<sup>560</sup> As noted by Eleonora Belfiore, Clive Grey and Frank Fischer, these clear targets, alongside other performance measurements enforced on the arts, were a substitute by New Labour to legitimise their cultural policy in place of constructive articulation of artistic values and beliefs.<sup>561</sup> As Belfiore stated:

[I]n the case of cultural policy, with regards to the question of instrumentalism, the exquisitely ideological question of making the (political) case for the arts has been translated in the rather more technical (and therefore apparently neutral) issue of arts impact assessment, with the focus firmly on the methodological problems of evaluation rather than on the thorny questions of cultural value, and the *political* problem of how to address the as of yet unresolved issue of widening access and participation to the publicly supported arts.<sup>562</sup>

The LIFT Enquiry was an attempt to enter the vacuum created by New Labour's reluctance to assert the value of the arts in society. This meant discovering what the core purpose of theatre was to people in London by asking them directly 'what is theatre to you?' Throughout the Enquiry, Fenton and Neal received thousands of answers to their question, from school children to celebrated artists, and not one of those identified economic ends as a reason to value theatre in their lives.<sup>563</sup>

Nevertheless, the international theatre festival, now established as a specific cultural form with a clear history, was in danger of being obscured by the domination of the economic field. In *The Turning World*, Dragan Klaic wrote in anticipation of the LIFT Enquiry:

[LIFT's] radical reformulation will act as a signpost in the continuing evolution of festivals in the twenty-first century, where they urgently need to reassert themselves as zones of creativity and sociability against the proprietary

claims of the tourist industry and the representational needs of public authorities and commercial sponsors.<sup>564</sup>

Fenton and Neal wanted to take a stance against the intrusion of neoliberal market-led ideology into the cultural sphere through experimentation with the established frame of the festival, aiming to put the social and artistic purpose of the organisation at the forefront during a time when, more than ever, policy makers were discouraging social integrity in favour of instrumentalism.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the cultural policies of the New Labour administration led to the arts being more closely integrated into the system of government, to be used instrumentally to aid both urban and social regeneration. Culture was fashioned into an essential political instrument for the advancement of social objectives, economic prosperity and national prestige. During the end of the first term of New Labour and with a landslide re-election in 2001, there was an intensification of Blair's 'Third Way' approaches to social, economic and cultural policy. The government publication, *Culture and Creativity: The next ten years* (2001), began with a statement by Tony Blair which acknowledges a connection between creativity and production and makes an economic justification for his government's investment in supporting creativity in the broadest sense. Blair, referring to the arts, wrote, 'they also matter because creative talent will be crucial to our individual and national economic success in the economy of the future.'<sup>565</sup>

Blair's economic approach continued to be led by a neoliberal capitalist model.<sup>566</sup> In 2001, Colin Leys, in his book *Market-Driven Politics: Neoliberal Democracy and the Public Interest*, asserted that it was not that the state had become impotent in the face of globalised market-driven politics, but that 'it is constrained to use its power to advance the process of commodification.'<sup>567</sup> This recognised what Wacquant

identified as neoliberalism being a political project that reengineered the state to impose the market on all social relations, as outlined in Chapter Two.<sup>568</sup> Leys warned that the most significant cultural consequence of the intrusion of the marketplace into previously non-market spheres would be the risk that it threatened ‘the destruction of non-market spheres of life on which social solidarity and active democracy have always depended.’<sup>569</sup> Reflecting on New Labour’s approach, Eric Shaw wrote that education and cultural activities, alongside health and welfare benefits, had historically (under ‘ethical socialist thinking’) been considered to be public goods which should be ‘contrasted with commodities in that they were defined by their intrinsic value: they were particularly “human” in that they were essential to human well-being and fulfilment.’<sup>570</sup> As such, they represented vital non-market spheres from which, in Shaw’s words, ‘market exchange and the commercial ethos should be barred *as a matter of principle*.’<sup>571</sup>

In 2004 Michael McKinnie argued that policy since 1997 had already cemented the notion of ‘culture’ and the ‘arts’ were to be captured within a market sector so as to subdue its potential to oppose market structures, or function beyond them.<sup>572</sup> There had been coercive policies that forced all subsidised theatre organisations to be run like small businesses, with entrepreneurial leadership, mission statements, ‘diverse’ income streams, and ‘sustainable strategies’ for growth.<sup>573</sup> The increase in cultural support had been accompanied by the establishment of a new watchdog committee (QUEST—Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team) which focused on economic performance indicators. The members of this committee were all civil servants, who were not required to consider artistic judgements in the monitoring process. Chris Smith, then Secretary of State for Culture, announced QUEST by saying:

We will give direction; we will set targets and chase progress, and, where appropriate, we will take direct action to make sure that our objectives are achieved.<sup>574</sup>

Here, the government is unequivocally clear that the transaction between the government and the arts sector is about the artists pursuing the government's objectives in return for the arts organisations receiving the money they need. Furthermore, McKinnie suggested that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) relentless promotion of this new bureaucratic discourse, and obdurate insistence on setting and fulfilling targets, revealed an anxiety that the arts were not meeting their expectations in terms of the instrumentalised social and economic impacts such as combatting issues of deprivation, failing educational systems, community dysfunction and crime whilst promoting urban regeneration and making profit.<sup>575</sup>

However, New Labour's arts policy also directly facilitated and encouraged the LIFT Enquiry process, most evidently by its significant increase in funding available to the arts, which enabled the Arts Council to support the LIFT Enquiry for five years with £500,000 through its Lottery funded 'stabilisation' funding stream.<sup>576</sup> Stabilisation funding was introduced in order to support the 'development of long-term strategies for change, addressing artistic as well as organisational and financial issues.'<sup>577</sup> Organisations that went into the programme were seen as artistically strong, but not financially viable. With the assistance of the additional funding, there was an expectation that these organisations would be able to reorganise their administration in order to become financially sustainable. Although it is clear that this extra funding was given to assist arts organisations to assimilate into New Labour's business-led model of the 'creative industries,' in practice, and regardless of the ideological

language of the administration, this funding could be used by arts organisations to support their real cultural practice. However, this was not a sustainable solution as assimilating into neoliberal practice quickly became an espousal of this political system. For example, Fenton and Neal's ability to retain an oppositional position in the field whilst receiving this support could only be upheld for a few years before it became impossible for them to reconcile the contradiction between the two.

### **A Proliferation of Festivals**

In contrast to the traditional, isolationist and conservative theatrical landscape which LIFT had established itself in, the turn of the twenty-first century was characterised by a proliferation of international theatre festivals, altering the field significantly. This rise contributed to LIFT's crisis of identity as a festival as it struggled for visibility in increasingly crowded national and international festival fields. The LIFT Enquiry was designed to be a direct response to this change in the character of festivals. Fenton remembered the situation:

At the end of the 1990s everybody was doing festivals and it was kitsched up, with many of them bringing international work over. And actually, how much deeper could LIFT go? What more was there? How could it be more meaningful? What was our place in this new situation? It was this just absolutely terrific- every single place had a festival!<sup>578</sup>

Neal also said at this time that 'saturation' and 'bombardment' were the enemies of the 'kind of care and attention to the theatre' that LIFT sought to 'evade or confront.'<sup>579</sup> There was a recurring criticism of festivals by academics, researchers and art critics at this time, arguing that originality was being replaced by imitation.<sup>580</sup> Far from being distinctive, the proliferation of festivals during this period is at least partially explained by a formulaic approach to duplicating festivals found to have previously been successful in particular city contexts; the replication of a general

festival model, adapted to any given urban locale— leading to a fear from arts commentators about the dilution of quality, originality and difference in the festival field.

In Britain, many festivals were borrowing and adapting LIFT's festival model, among them: Queer Up North (1992) in Manchester, BITE at the Barbican (1998), QueerFest [Fierce Festival] (1998) in Birmingham, DeepROOT (1999) in Hull, You are Here (1999) in Liverpool, New Territories (2000) in Glasgow, In Between Time (2001) in Bristol, and SPAN<sup>2</sup> (2001) in London. These festivals, among many other smaller organisations and festivals that venues produced in-house, were establishing themselves across the country in the millennial period, bringing their version of what was considered by their directors to be 'innovative' and 'experimental' international performance to audiences. Meanwhile, the larger Edinburgh Festivals and Brighton Festival expanded their international programming, bringing performances specifically made for the global festival circuit by theatre makers such as Robert Lepage.<sup>581</sup>

Another type of festival, without the artistic focus of those mentioned above, had also proliferated. Rebecca Finkel presented an extensive survey-based research paper in 2004 titled 'McFestivalisation? The Role of Combined Arts Festivals in the UK Cultural Economy,' drawing on several years of survey-based research.<sup>582</sup> Finkel concluded:

A new 'type' of combined arts festival is emerging that is more standardised and commercialised. This 'type' is partially a result of entrepreneurial local authorities attempting to capitalise on culture and broaden audience inclusion and partly due to combined arts festivals having to conform to consumer demands or funding body regulations to secure capital. These sanitised, more homogenised versions could be detrimental to traditional local festivals, [...] potentially leading to a loss of place-based individuality for combined arts festivals and the uniformity of cultural forms presented.<sup>583</sup>

The 'type' of 'combined arts festival' that Finkel was primarily concerned with were those that aimed for a broad appeal through programming different popular cultural forms (music, theatre, film, exhibitions etc.), although music is at the centre of nearly all the festivals her research takes into account. In his account of the present 'self-conscious frenzy of cultural events,' Graeme Evans distinguished between festivals that have retained their original sacred or profane principles and those festivals which are more commercially tied to tourism and economic development.<sup>584</sup> These commercially-minded combined arts festivals, most with a distinctly local focus, are outside the scope of this thesis but it is important to recognise the way their popularity impacted on the festival field.

The sharp increase in these combined arts festivals in Britain, identified by Finkel, was directly linked to the significant cultural policy changes of the New Labour government. There are several factors that link New Labour and the rise of arts festivals in Britain. Firstly, the festival model established by LIFT appeared to lend itself easily to satisfying the priorities of New Labour's administration because of the learning programme, publically sited work and the reach of its socially engaged projects. Secondly, New Labour was highly supportive of festivals due to their 'mass' appeal of the form, which was able to blend high and low cultural forms into an experience that could be 'accessible' to a wide range of demographics.<sup>585</sup> Thirdly, New Labour's devolution of power in Britain to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as to regional authorities, led to an increase in local support for arts festivals as these authorities recognised the benefits festivals could contribute in terms of 'branding' and 'place marketing' of towns and cities which was fast becoming the

central feature of the political economy of tourism, urban regeneration, and gentrification projects.<sup>586</sup>

Festivals served discourses of ‘place image’ and ‘city branding’ in competitive national and global context, where ‘culture’ provided the discursive linchpin linking creative artistic practice with economic-led, post-industrial, globalised urban localities.<sup>587</sup> Although these newly devolved authorities recognised how festivals may improve a place (predominately in economic terms) they often overlooked the artistic value of festivals. In the same way that the cultural field was being reconfigured according to economic and managerialist logic, festivals were increasingly written into civic cultural policies as both product and framework, designed to attract a wealthy target market and furnish the city with a competitive image.<sup>588</sup> In a report for the DCMS in 2004, Graeme Evans and Phyllida Shaw reviewed the current evidence on the predominance of culture-led regeneration.<sup>589</sup> The document established that ‘impact’ measurement for culture was particularly focused on the impact of the environment (the physical change in the landscape of the city) and economic assessment, whilst noting there was little evidence and limited understanding of social impact (measured as cohesion, inclusion and well-being) and artistic quality was not considered at all.<sup>590</sup>

In practice, this prioritisation of the economic sphere is evident in Edinburgh’s investment in ‘rebranding’ as a ‘Festival City.’<sup>591</sup> When the devolved Scottish Parliament was re-established in 1999 Edinburgh City Council and public agency partners began to develop a ‘strategic approach’ to increase the number of festivals in the city outside of the EIF and Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August in order to ‘maximise usage of the tourism and event infrastructure of the city.’<sup>592</sup> This strategy took into consideration ‘image,’ ‘marketing,’ ‘brand awareness,’ ‘commercial

partnerships,' and 'stakeholder legitimacy,' all terms taken from business vocabularies and noticeably absent of any category that considers artistic or social value.<sup>593</sup> From 1999 to 2000 Edinburgh City Council invested an additional £5.5 million in supporting over fifty major events in addition to the August Festivals, which it claimed had an estimated economic impact of approximately £119 million.<sup>594</sup> Edinburgh City Council did not just wish to increase economic contribution made through visitor spending, but also believed that investment in festivals cognitively effected changes in the image of the city which encouraged private sector investment in the city in the long-term.<sup>595</sup> Therefore 'place image' was not incidental to overall development, it was seen as a catalyst for other changes, which is to say that cities wanted to create an attractive civic image as it is seen as necessary for public and corporate investment.

Many other Councils in regional towns and cities across Britain also took this course of action including Ulverston, York, Liverpool, North Shields and Glasgow.<sup>596</sup> As a number of researchers argued during this period, while city authorities used festivals with the intention of marketing themselves and creating place distinctiveness, it was often a counter-productive strategy as these events were serially reproduced, formulaic and therefore devoid of any meaningful connection with place and the communities that lived there.<sup>597</sup> Creating festivals to attract tourism and investment had several implications for what is included in the festival. If the event is to attract visitors and positive attention, the festival must emphasise the attractive elements of place while simultaneously downplaying or diverting attention from less salubrious features. For the city marketers, the festival must be built around easy sociability, playfulness and joviality that does not acknowledge contradictions, local tensions or political grievances within its programme. The artistic content in these festivals is therefore required to create a series of positive images that are then available for

manipulating according to the positioning requirements of the city.<sup>598</sup> This is what Michel de Certeau characterised as a ‘concept city’ that simplifies the contingencies and multiplicities of daily life in order to convey an appealing unified impression.<sup>599</sup>

This complicity between festivals and consumerism did not go unnoticed by theatre critics and cultural theorists with the rise of festivals in Britain during this period being referred to pejoratively as marketplaces, supermarkets and even hypermarkets— evoking a homogenous space filled with large amounts of mass-produced and poorly made wares, designed only for easy consumption without criticality. In his review for the 2002 Edinburgh Festivals, Billington railed against the commercialisation of the Fringe Festival, ‘It is increasingly like shopping in a cultural hypermarket. [...] [It] has turned into a monstrous mixture of trade fair, rat-race, audition centre and showcase for sensation-seekers out to catch the gullible media.’<sup>600</sup>

In 2003, Michael Bernheimer wrote disparagingly in the *Financial Times*:

Now it’s festivals, festivals everywhere. Big ones, small ones, wild ones, silly ones, dutiful ones, pretentious ones, phony ones. Many have lost purpose and direction, not to mention individual profile. Place a potted plant near the box office, double the ticket prices and – whoopee—we have a festival.<sup>601</sup>

The proliferation of festivals had begun to contribute to a perception that they were meaningless as a model, nothing more than a marketing strategy for organisations.

The comparison to marketplaces was not only a reference to volume, but also a comment on how rapid globalisation and its perceived processes of cultural homogenisation shaped the curation and reception of festivals. Andrew Clark wrote in the *Financial Times* that festivals used to be ‘something special’ since

[t]hey offered things that weren’t otherwise available. They were a way of connecting people – before the fall of the Iron Curtain, before budget flights

put countries such as Estonia, Slovakia and Croatia within easy reach. Festivals are now commonplace [...] Culture has become an industry, a commodity to be sold. [...] The modern festival takes the process to its extreme: it is a sort of supermarket, where the paying public is persuaded to bulk-buy processed culture.<sup>602</sup>

Clark points to the fact that festivals were no longer needed as a place for international exchange, a purpose that had been so vital for Fenton and Neal when they founded LIFT.<sup>603</sup> In this new era, cultural exchange was often seen as only another mode of generating economic capital or functioning as ‘soft power’ between governments of nations around the world. Ric Knowles firmly argues that festivals were part of this manifestation of neoliberal capitalist globalisation that acted mainly as a locus for the exchange and facilitation of economic capital:

[F]estivals increasingly function as National showplaces, in which the ‘Culture’ of nations, with financial support from national governments and within the context of various diplomatic interventions from foreign offices and embassies, is on display for a world and audience that is thereby constructed as an international market for cultural and other ‘industries.’<sup>604</sup>

The disdain for culture as a puppet of the state, to be serially reproduced, wheeled out and traded for capital on the world markets is reflective of other concerns in this period about rapid globalisation and new technologies, with all fields of social practice being interpenetrated by the logic of the economic field.

The cultural meaning of globalisation is connected to the media re-embedding social relations across temporal and spatial distances, in which knowledge of global events became an everyday matter. The changes that would propel the World Wide Web into its place in social interactions took place during a relatively short period in the new millennium, accelerated by so-called ‘Web 2.0’ which allowed the uploading and hosting of user-generated content on sites such as: MySpace (2003), Facebook

(2004), YouTube (2005), and Twitter (2006). This access to global resources increased the spectator's capacity and interest to navigate, handle and interact directly with culture from all over the globe. The LIFT Enquiry sought to investigate how these changes would impact on the role of theatre in the lives of London's citizens, and how it might alter their mode of engagement with the theatre.

### **LIFT in the Multicultural City**

The increase in interconnectivity saw Fenton and Neal move even more towards focusing on local, intercultural and multicultural politics instead of international political situations. In a document titled 'A Proposal for Change,' Fenton and Neal wrote that the Enquiry would 'map the fast changing socio-cultural landscape of London and its relationships with the rest of the world and raise essential questions about the role of the artist and creativity in society today.'<sup>605</sup> This involved an interrogation of the 'politics of context, place and space, allegiance, identity and belonging' and the role of theatre in creating and shaping these communities and identities.<sup>606</sup> At the start of the New Labour administration, the British population had been encouraged to see the increasing multi-ethnicity of urban populations as a source of cultural vitality and economic renewal.<sup>607</sup> It was considered that the 'diversity' afforded by multiple cultural practices and value systems could be construed as a series of opportunities that could be 'cultivated' to strengthen the city's overall appeal and nourish the social fabric through cultural exchange.<sup>608</sup> However, this celebration of multiculturalism did not last.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, in the aftermath of the 1997 election victory, New Labour had celebrated multicultural Britain and made several key policy moves to ease immigration legislation.<sup>609</sup> However, civil unrest in the summer of 2001, with extensive rioting in Bradford, as well as in Oldham, Leeds and Burnley,

marked the beginning of a move away from the government's open celebration of diversity.<sup>610</sup> In the wake of these disturbances, there was a series of official reports that raised questions about citizenship and ideas of reasserting national identity over and above ethnic identity.<sup>611</sup> The reports held minority ethnic communities responsible for inner-city problems. At this time, David Blunkett was appointed as Home Secretary after New Labour's second electoral victory, signalling a change in terms of public debate through his controversial comments about the need for immigrants to learn English as a test for citizenship, and his denouncement of 'forced marriages' and 'female circumcision,' all targeted at British-Muslim communities.<sup>612</sup>

New Labour's multicultural discourse was rewritten by casting Islam as a 'problem' for British society that needed 'solving', with the focus of political policy agendas turning to the 'self-segregation' of Muslim communities, rather than making attempts to address the well-documented discrimination and disadvantages such communities were facing.<sup>613</sup> Les Back *et al.* outlined how these calls for individual responsibility to integrate oneself into British society were intrinsically connected to Blair's 'Third Way' politics of self-government. This rested on making visible the responsibility that is devolved to individuals, leading to debates on citizenship that concentrated more on 'contractual obligations and participating individuals.'<sup>614</sup> The responsibility for integration was firmly placed with minority communities. The government demanded local partnerships work on community cohesion, social capital and civic responsibility.<sup>615</sup>

Less than two months after Blunkett's comments were made, a greater threat to race relations in Britain arose with the 11 September 2001 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City, commonly referred to as '9/11.' A crisis point for multiculturalism, this act of violence set in motion a series of events across the globe,

each with major implications for Muslim communities in London, and across Britain. The distinctive mark of the attacks on the Twin Towers was that they were designed to be highly visible— to be, as Jean Baudrillard wrote, ‘spectacular.’<sup>616</sup> The attacks were deliberately orchestrated as a global spectacle, with images of the event broadcast instantaneously and repeatedly to millions across the world, in order to cause epistemological havoc for those in, what the perpetrators characterised as, the ‘West.’<sup>617</sup> Although the death and injury caused to thousands in the attacks cannot be dismissed, it is evident that the main purpose of the attack was the symbolic destruction of the Towers of the World Trade Centre— an act of real and symbolic violence. Those responsible for the attacks were aware that the destruction of the buildings would not destroy the actual circuits of capital that they represented. However, the visual representation of the burning, collapse and ruins of the Towers on television screens codified perceptions of the terrorist threat and American vulnerability. The interruption of the social imaginary created a destabilising crisis, one which then continued to reproduce terror and paranoia with long-term political implications ranging from the US-led invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan to failing community relations between Muslims and their neighbours.<sup>618</sup> For example there was a dramatic rise in anti-Muslim hate crime in the decade following the attack on the Twin Towers with studies showing that between 40% and 60% of all the mosques and Islamic centres in Britain had suffered at least one attack in this period including petrol bombs, serious physical assaults on staff and worshippers, bricks thrown through windows, pigs heads being fixed to entrances and minarets, death threats as well as many other acts of vandalism and intimidation.<sup>619</sup>

Following 9/11, and reinforced by the subsequent attacks in London on 7 July 2005 where fifty-six people were killed and several hundred injured by a group of

British-born Muslims, the figure of the terrorist, in the British popular imagination, became increasingly synonymous with Muslim identity. This conflation was supported by the media, the security forces and the government to the significant detriment of community relations and the multicultural project across Britain.<sup>620</sup> Blair's cultural project took on a renewed interest in British cultural imperialism. In a speech to the Labour Party Conference in October 2001, Blair identified how this was a 'moment to seize' for Britain:

The kaleidoscope has been shaken. The pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle again. Before they do, let us re-order the world around us. Today, humankind has the science and the technology to destroy itself or provide prosperity to all. Yet science can't make that choice for us. Only the moral power of a world, acting as a community, can. By the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more together than we can alone.<sup>621</sup>

As Blair repeated his plea for the world to act as a 'community' (a word he uses twenty times in this speech) it is apparent he saw himself and Britain as vital leaders of this community. He outlined his plan for the 'war on terror' to be a 'fight for freedom and justice' by spreading the British and American form of democracy around the world— with the implication of forcing all countries to surrender to a neoliberal market-led ideology.<sup>622</sup> It is clear that this 'community' is not a friendly or equal one when Blair says that it should be 'asserting itself' in transnational conflicts, citing financial markets, climate change, international terrorism, nuclear proliferation and world trade as examples where nations' mutual interests are woven together and therefore they have to become 'community' to combine globalisation with 'global justice'.<sup>623</sup>

In 2007 Blair wrote an article that claimed that justice 'cannot be achieved without a strong alliance, with the United States and Europe at its core' who can enforce the 'universal application of global values.'<sup>624</sup> These values are set out as

‘religious tolerance,’ ‘openness to others,’ ‘democracy,’ ‘liberty,’ and ‘human rights administered by secular courts.’<sup>625</sup> Blair characterised both specifically the war in Afghanistan and, more generally, the ‘war on terror’ as being between ‘progress and reaction,’ between ‘those who embrace the modern world and those who reject its existence.’<sup>626</sup> He claimed that he wanted to defeat the ideas of the Taliban with British ideas which are ‘stronger, better, and more than just the alternative.’<sup>627</sup> In this article Blair connected terrorism and the ‘war on terror’ exclusively to the history and development of Islam, and to the wider Muslim community claiming ‘although the active cadres of terrorists are fairly small, they exploit a far wider sense of alienation in the Arab and Muslim world.’<sup>628</sup> In both the local and global field, it was viewed that ‘Britishness’ and ‘British ideas’ were only ever defined against the perceived fundamentalist intolerance of the (mostly Muslim) ‘other,’ and were a ‘civilising force’ at home and abroad.<sup>629</sup> Government investment and support of new cultural projects to promote ‘British ideas’ went alongside the invasions by the British armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Fenton and Neal felt strongly against these invasions, with Neal stating that

The Enquiry was a genuinely deep line of questioning about theatre and its place and possibility. [...] It seemed to us what the Iraq War was doing was absolutely setting a new era and culture of binary. ‘You’re wrong because I’m right.’ We knew that the Enquiry was about us going back to having the greatest number of voices which was ultimately about justice.<sup>630</sup>

A relationship between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power was made evident through the increased rhetoric around how Britain’s ‘creative industries’ should be promoting Blair’s ‘British ideas’ globally, in a move to encourage the economic export of cultural goods as well as reinforce Britain’s political power. In 2002, Peter Hewitt, then Chief

Executive of the Arts Council of England, gave a speech titled ‘Beyond Boundaries: the arts after the events of 2001:’

The more the economic forces of globalisation bring down boundaries and borders, the more we will need bases for co-operation that go deeper than just mutually beneficial trade in commodities. As our mutual dependence becomes global, so does our need for moral responsibility to one another, across large differences and quite different cultures, and for people who may well reject aspects of our values and lifestyles. And as we grow, art can help provide us with a sense of identity and a medium for a global exchange of ideas. Pictures and music, performance and dance travel more easily than speeches.<sup>631</sup>

This period of ‘flux’ left a multitude of questions for the leaders of arts organisations, especially those with international scope, about how best to navigate this new landscape. For the first time Britain’s artistic community was not only being incorporated into the market-driven economic field by the government, but also explicitly being internationally deployed to serve Blair’s unpopular ‘war on terror.’

These political circumstances shaped the LIFT Enquiry throughout this period, where ‘process, dissent, discussion and debate’ were ‘sought, fostered and encouraged’ by Fenton and Neal as a direct response to the vacuous and oversimplified platitudes of ‘global community’ and ‘British ideas’ espoused by Blair:

How could the multiplicity of languages (both verbal and non-verbal) implied by international theatre exist within the new global order? This was inevitably a politically charged question if, as Jacques Derrida [...] put it in his Frankfurt Speech on 22 September 2001 [...]: *we find ourselves on the brink of wars which are more than ever sure of their language, of their sense and their name.*<sup>632</sup>

The LIFT Enquiry ‘Manifesto’ was written in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and is shaped significantly by the prevalent discourses of the time. Neal notes on the document ‘Sept 11<sup>th</sup> is a watermark for an increased imperative to show what you stand for.’<sup>633</sup> Fenton and Neal recognised that the political context they operated in

had shifted significantly, but that they still held the conviction that ‘anything is possible in a world seen as a whole, a world which isn’t broken up into bits, or seen as fragments.’<sup>634</sup> The phrase ‘one world’ is repeated throughout the manifesto, a principle repeated by the liberal media in the days following the attacks. Martin Woollacott wrote in *The Guardian* on 12 September 2001: ‘we live in one world. There are moments when we know this is so for the best reasons and moments when we know it for the worst of reasons.’<sup>635</sup> The multicultural positivity of the ‘World One City’ census was already falling apart as the excitement about the positive possibilities of encounters between cultures became imbued with a newly stoked fear of the dangerous foreign ‘Other’.

Blair had joined an American coalition to invade Afghanistan, a mission that President George W. Bush had characterised as a ‘crusade,’ that led to a war that would last over a decade and see hundreds of Afghan civilians and British soldiers dead.<sup>636</sup> Blair then took Britain into the US-led Iraq invasion in 2003, on the false accusation that the Iraqi government, led by Saddam Hussein, held ‘weapons of mass destruction.’ This elaborate deception that attempted to justify a war that was against international law was a defining moment for Britain in regards to its domestic and foreign affairs.<sup>637</sup> Estimates suggest two million people attended protests against Blair’s Iraq invasion, the largest ever seen on the streets of London.<sup>638</sup> Blair refused to abide by international law or listen to those who protested, whilst using the justification of a now indisputably false narrative in order to support his actions.<sup>639</sup>

After the London bombings of July 2005, Trevor Phillips, then head of the Commission for Racial Equality, made a high-profile speech titled ‘Sleepwalking to Segregation,’ which reinforced the idea that multiculturalism had failed in Britain. Phillips claimed that ‘crime, no-go areas and chronic cultural conflict’ were outcomes

of ‘marooned communities’ and that we had, ‘allowed tolerance of diversity to harden into the effective isolation of communities.’<sup>640</sup> He claimed this had led to a ‘fragmentation of society’ that endangered ‘key British values’ such as ‘respect for individuality, free speech, equality, democracy and freedom.’<sup>641</sup> In an editorial for the *News of the World*, Lord Stevens, the former head of London’s Metropolitan Police force, and advisor to the Prime Minister, demanded that ‘the Muslim community in this country accept an absolute and undeniable, total truth: that Islamic terrorism is their problem.’<sup>642</sup> This thinking bears little trace of the New Labour philosophies of equality, celebration of diversity and multiculturalism espoused by the party less than a decade previously and which LIFT had wholeheartedly embraced. Ideas of social cohesion through addressing systematic social and economic inequalities were abandoned in favour of demanding minorities assimilate their behaviours into British society.

### **Festival: a restricting factor or liberating frame?**

LIFT’s position in the field of festivals had become increasingly uncomfortable for Fenton and Neal. As an institution, it had gained cultural and symbolic significance, becoming increasingly well funded and bound to expectations from funders, audiences, artists and critics about the style, scale, quality and volume of productions it should present in each Festival. Announcing the LIFT Enquiry in *The Guardian*, Fenton claimed they had ‘found that we were beginning to service the institution rather than our ideas about art and artists. The festival became a restricting factor as opposed to a liberating frame.’<sup>643</sup> The importance of maintaining LIFT as a brand was surpassing its artistic, social and political mission as these expectations did not allow for the risk-taking and artistic experimentation that had been founding principles of the festival. Therefore, the LIFT Enquiry was also an effort by Fenton

and Neal to return to emphasising the playful ‘spirit’ of the festival, in an attempt to resist stagnation and to subvert their established positions of authority in the field.

As organisations take an increasingly dominant position in the field, and their directors begin to dominate the social order, there is often a tendency to formalise that dominance in order to sustain and legitimise it. Fenton and Neal did not want to lose the power and influence the organisation had accrued by ending LIFT, nor did they want to take the other option of reinforcing, legitimising and growing the festival on a model in line of a festival such as the Edinburgh International Festival. In *The Guardian*, in response to the announcement of the LIFT Enquiry, Billington reiterated his disdain for festivals that ‘start as a celebration and carry on as an institution’ as many of them are ‘resurrected simply out of habit.’<sup>644</sup> He concluded the article in support of LIFT’s decision to move away from the festival model:

Glamorous and exotic imports are all very well, but if a festival doesn’t contribute something to the ongoing life of the artistic community than it is just a glittering cul-de-sac. The word “festival” itself derives from feast-day. But if the annual banquet is followed by starvation, isn’t it all an expensive waste?<sup>645</sup>

In creating opportunities for social interactions, festivals constitute arenas where local knowledge is produced and reproduced, where the history, cultural inheritance and social structures, which distinguish one place from another, are revised, rejected or recreated. Ridout’s assertion in *TheatreForum* in 2003 that there is ‘nothing festive about the festival,’ further demonstrates the lack of what Victor Turner emphasised as the ‘anti’ or ‘meta-structural’ character of festivity, which is its proclivity to transform and transcend the structural arrangements, behavioural requisites, and normative principles that prevail in everyday life.<sup>646</sup> Therefore, if festivals begin to mimic the dominant societal structures they lose their ability to offer a space of transformation.

Since the festival is a dynamic, instigative force in the field of action, one that articulates and modifies power relations, then the festival also has the ability to accelerate the dominant mode of consumer behaviour designed to serve a neoliberal agenda. LIFT's first press release outlining the Enquiry period directly addressed this concern, stating that they were attempting to 'work away from a model of consumption and towards one of engagement.'<sup>647</sup> Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd characterise the rapid rise of capitalism as an opportunity for cultural resistance. They contend

that transnational or *neo-colonial* capitalism, like colonialist capitalism before it, continues to produce sites of contradiction that are effects of its always uneven expansion but that cannot be subsumed by the logic of commodification. We suggest that 'culture' obtains a 'political' force when culture comes into contradiction with economic or political logics that try to refunction it for exploitation or domination.<sup>648</sup>

The festival, if it is able to resist this logic, is therefore still able to produce a site of political resistance to these processes of commodification. However, in order to remain 'relatively autonomous', they must 'have the potential to rework the conception of politics in the era of transnational capital.'<sup>649</sup>

LIFT at this time, as part of the establishment and with corporate interests, had begun to reflect and certify key aspects of corporate socioeconomic power relations. From a sociological perspective, Jean Duvignaud identifies 'transgression and consummation' as the vital elements of the festival. In his terms, 'transgression' is not simply forgetting existing social codes but is a wilful refusal to abide by the rules of expected behaviour, especially through defying existing hierarchical structures and violating socially enforced segregations—intensifying social relations.<sup>650</sup> On the other hand, 'consummation' is the reinforcement of the relationship between the individual

and the social order. A strengthening that may make participants feel more deeply connected to society but also can assimilate individuals into the hierarchical structures of that society if there is not adequate transgression also present: the festival is both an authentic experience of social reality as well as a deliberate disfigurement of it. In Duvignaud's terms, we can see that by 2001, the experience of LIFT was predominately a consummatory one, lacking the necessary transgressions of its early history.<sup>651</sup>

The dramatisation of 'transgression and consummation,' was explicitly recast by Don Handelman under the headings 'play' and 'ritual.'<sup>652</sup> Play, he contends, bears the message 'let us make believe,' delivering an 'amoral' commentary on society, creating a shared understanding of what might be. Ritual is epistemologically opposite, carrying the message, 'let us believe,' and delivering a moral critique of society, creating an understanding of what ought to be.<sup>653</sup> Handelman contends that play and ritual are the principle modes of liminality in 'traditional' cultures and serve as a performative counterpoint to the contradiction between society's actualities and its ideals.<sup>654</sup>

Turner, through his anthropological studies, also recognises the importance of the careful balance of these two elements of play and ritual in the festival. In 'The Celebration of Society', Turner writes that to retain their active social role, the 'carnival' or festival must always retain some 'ambiguity' in relation to the hegemonies and expected patterns of behaviour in society:

Once carnivals become clearly defined [...] they cease to be true to themselves, to be true to the bared human condition they so signally express and enigmatically represent. The politicisation of the festive spirit of ambiguity and its channelling toward goals approved of by power hierarchies, secular or sacred, destroys these fecund ambiguities and makes of carnivals its own sanctimonious ghost.<sup>655</sup>

In order for LIFT to not become merely a ‘sanctimonious ghost’ for Blair’s policies, Fenton and Neal had to accentuate play in the festival, which inverts the social order and gives space for social license to behave, think and interact in ways that are not permitted in the regulated social spheres of the everyday. Therefore play is a vital component of the festival in order to resist serving the dominant structure, however the festival also needs structure in order for social efficacy.<sup>656</sup>

Duvignaud, Handelman and Turner all identify two poles to be held in careful tension in order for the festival to be a meaningful social experience, respectively identified as: transgression and consummation, play and ritual, *communitas* and structure. As explored in Chapter One, *communitas* is an ideal status that can be achieved, albeit temporarily, by celebrating together. Playful festive celebrations liberate participants from the strictures of structure, with all its limitations of hierarchy and oppressions.<sup>657</sup> However, in order to recreate this liberation, it is necessary for a group to agree and to develop rules to order the events. Consequently, a transformation takes place from the playful *communitas* to a more structured happening and from an experimental form full of risk-taking artistic ideas, to a known formula with distinct objectives and instrumentalised aims.<sup>658</sup> In the course of time, the increase in rules and hierarchies of the new celebration can become so oppressive that people search for new ways of achieving *communitas*. Thus, a cyclical change occurs. In the words of Edith Turner and Turner:

There may be a continuous cycle of *communitas*/structure/*communitas*, etc. For example, religious vision becomes a sect, then church, then prop for a dominant political system, until *communitas* resurges once more from the liminal spaces. These processes can coexist and modify one another continuously over time in the same ritual field.<sup>659</sup>

It is by means of improvisation and play that people can react to and oppose or escape the regimentation and ritualised behaviour that characterises structure, and so achieve the freedom of *communitas*. Turner suggests that it is through activity in this liminal chronotope that people can play with words, meanings and desires. It is by these means that new models, ideas and behaviour are sometimes generated that are then able to bring about social change.<sup>660</sup>

The collapse between work and leisure imposed by neoliberalism, where even areas that were previously independent from profit-making logic became monetised, additionally undermined the separate, but interdependent, practices of play and ritual. Consequently, ludic behaviours, with their uncertain and unpredictable outcomes, were viewed increasingly as an impediment to economic growth. The absorption of the field of festivals into the economic sphere, motivated by a belief in neoliberalism and actualised by the New Labour administration, had stifled the ability of festivals to embrace the non-productivity of play and transgression. Furthermore, as LIFT's position in the field was established, it was unable to escape the strictures imposed on it without radically altering its structure. The LIFT Enquiry was a clear attempt by Fenton and Neal to increase the social and artistic efficacy of the organisation by prioritising play as non-functionality in order to defy the instrumentalisation of both the festival and theatre fields in this era. To do this they removed the festival frame from the activities. However, this also moved away from the structure (or ritual) that is also essential for *communitas*. They replaced the festival with distinct 'seasons' surrounded by several longer term projects— each containing thematically connected presentations.

### **2002-2003: The Landscape of Childhood**

The move to reposition ‘play’ at the centre of LIFT’s activities was so prevalent that the practice of play was explored in the first LIFT Enquiry season in 2002-2003, titled ‘The Landscape of Childhood.’ In the LIFT Manifesto, Fenton and Neal had identified the first principle of the Enquiry as bringing play back into work through ‘mischief making,’ the ‘emancipatory power of the imagination,’ and the ‘revolutionary strength of children.’<sup>661</sup> It signalled the beginning of a new era for LIFT and the theme of childhood was appropriate for considering the conditions for being ‘reborn’ as an organisation. The season was not targeted at children, but was, instead, an exploration of the potential of ‘play’ as a space for imagination, where ambiguity and make-believe are prioritised in opposition to instrumentalised product-based outcomes. The series of events presented by LIFT sought to offer opportunities to open up an ‘experimental zone of sociability’ that encouraged ‘unconventional’ thinking through engaging with the way children view the world, interact and respond to it.<sup>662</sup> It was also an effort to respond to the state of public impasse experienced by and over children. Fenton and Neal believed this impasse was representative of the feelings of disempowerment experienced by adults faced with the overwhelming processes of globalisation.

In 2002 and 2003, LIFT programmed performances by many companies who had been involved with the Festival previously such as: al-Kasaba Theatre (Palestine), Anne Bean (UK), The Wooster Group (US), Heather Ackroyd, Dan Harvey and Graeme Miller (UK), and Phakama (UK). These were joined by companies who were programmed for the first time including: Acrobat (Australia), Claire Patey with Cathy Wren and Mark Storer (UK), Teatr Rozmaitości (Poland), Victoria (Belgium), Back to Back (Australia), Fevered Sleep (UK), Gruppe 38 (Denmark), Inad (Palestine), MoMo (Australia), Oškaras Korsunovas Theatre Company (Lithuania), Sovanna Phum

(Cambodia), TAG (UK) and Theatre Rites (UK). Additionally, there was a symposium on the Wooster Group; a conference titled ‘Why do we play?’, a research programme at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, a ‘debate’ on the ‘Rights and Roles of Young People and Arts Makers,’ a symposium at Battersea Arts Centre, and a lecture series at the Natural History Museum.

The starting point for the ‘Landscape of Childhood’ theme came from the experience of programming and watching Societas Raffaello Sanzio’s *Genesis: From the Museum of Sleep*, at LIFT 2001. In *The Turning World*, Neal quotes the company’s director, Romeo Castellucci:

Our work is closely related to childhood. Childhood is a radical thinking process, childhood does not trust words, it chooses other forms of expression to reach its aims. It trusts what one can feel with one’s body.

*Genesis* featured Castellucci’s six children and explored the phenomena of creation in myth and science. He wrote in the programme notes to *Genesis*, ‘Genesis scares me more than the Apocalypse. Here it’s the terror of sheer possibility.’<sup>663</sup> The performance offered a vision of the world where each creative action necessarily held a ruinous possibility. In Act I, the work abstractly represented Madame Curie’s discovery of radium, Eve’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden and in Act III, the story of Cain and Abel. In Act II, titled ‘Auschwitz,’ images and symbols of the Holocaust were used, such as a train, yellow stars and showers. However, the entire act was performed by children, whose actions belie the horror of the reality they represent. Castellucci’s use of children in simple and calm play within an entirely white stage is designed to ‘disguise the horror with a lamb’s skin.’<sup>664</sup> A young girl dressed as a white rabbit demands the audience “Pay Attention!” to her, a phrase taken as the ‘slogan’ for the LIFT Enquiry. Neal, herself a mother to four young

children, took her two youngest to see Act II of the performance and found the experience of her 7 year old daughter profound:

Through Madeleine's eyes I see the stage transformed as a big playroom. It's a revelation for me at that moment to understand that the theatre, without contradiction, can be a place of play at the same time as a place for disturbing realities. 'Alienation is the perfect word,' says Castellucci, 'for the only thing that matters in the theatre: *surprise*, or to find oneself outside yourself.'

Andrew Quick outlined the potential of adult audiences paying attention to the actions of children in his contribution to LIFT's 'Why Do We Play?' conference in 2003. He quoted from Benjamin's essay 'Program for a Proletarian Children's Theatre':

What is truly revolutionary is not the propaganda of ideas which leads here and there to impracticable actions and vanishes in a puff of smoke upon the first sober reflection at the theatre exit. What is truly revolutionary is the *secret signal* of what is to come that speaks from the gesture of the child.<sup>665</sup>

Earlier in the same essay, Benjamin elaborated on his concept of the child's gesture, the secret 'gestic impulse' that for him resonated with revolutionary potential. These gestures are not signals of unconscious desire, they are signals, he writes, that arrive 'from another world, in which the child lives and commands.'<sup>666</sup> This '*secret signal*' helps to illustrate the way in which the child in contemporary performance practice is often figured through her capacity to generate something new through unexpected and unanticipated actions, and her appearance as a subject in formation who speaks and acts amongst others in a public environment.

This investigation was evident in *Übung* [Exercise] presented by the Flemish company Victoria, in 2002. In the performance a video of a group of bourgeois characters, played by foremost Flemish actors, was projected on a large screen. In the

film the characters meet in a country house for a weekend, engage in frivolous conversation, consume a lavish dinner and a large amount of alcohol, then slide into 'erotic escapades,' followed by a fistfight. The next morning they eat breakfast and go for a slow walk through a snowy landscape.<sup>667</sup> In front of the screen children, aged eleven to fourteen, stood and repeated the dialogue and mimicked the gestures of the film actors. The children delivered the same lines as the video dialogue, in a 'childish' way, without the actors' articulation, and it is their voices which dominate the performance. The effect of this live mirroring of the video's action produced an 'uncanny' effect.<sup>668</sup> Klaic, in his review of the performance saw it as 'systematic dismantling of the adults' credibility, through an accentuation of the vacuity, absurdity and inanity of the adult world.'<sup>669</sup> The recognition of the potential of children to begin something unprecedented, to make a revolutionary gesture, pointed towards maintaining an openness to the political and ethical contribution that theatre and performance might make more generally. The uncertainty of children's performances creates an uncertainty about the surety of their adult future, about society as it exists, without determining what shape that future might take.

A different approach to theatrical 'playfulness' was taken by the Wooster Group in *To You, The Birdie!*, presented at Riverside Studios in May 2002. This adaptation of Racine's *Phèdre* was an investigation of the complexities of gender through layers of technology. The Wooster Group approaches cultural representations of identity as material to be taken, reworked and staged. The company's theatricality consciously referenced popular culture, new technology and multiculturalism through the performance of stereotyped identities, a collage of live performance and film, visual projections and media arts, as an effective dramaturgical

device in order to interrogate female sexuality and the contemporary obsession with image, body and celebrity.<sup>670</sup>

The cultural mobility of the Wooster Group's work related to this playful movement between aesthetic categories. Their confrontational and controversial mediation of identity through theatricality implied, as Shevtsova argued, representation through 'producing [...] the repressive and confining images of gender.'<sup>671</sup> Shevtsova described how the objectification of the female body was foregrounded in *To You, The Birdie!*:

Both Valk as Phèdre and Frances McDormand as Oenone wore distressed seventeenth-century style corsets, but their elbows were tied to their corsets, giving them limited movement in their upper body. Valk's corset had two metal hoops on its back which her servants used to move her while on stage, place her in various positions and sit her into a bath chair, whereupon they attended to her with enemas and colostomy bags, helping her to defecate and urinate. [...] The use of video continued the production's link between entrapment and spectacle by visually splicing performers' bodies in half on the screens, forcing the actors to mimic film of their own body parts. Valk's body became a spectacle to herself as she mimed to video footage of her feet, which corresponded with Phèdre's body as a spectacle of tragedy and femininity, incapable of any greater physical action than being looked upon.<sup>672</sup>

The LIFT brochure stated that this 'story of sexual obsession provides an insight into the human psyche which remains uncomfortably universal.'<sup>673</sup> The universal claim made on this work was drawn from the convergence of people's experience as the users of commodities in a media-dominated reality and the representation of female identity in that constructed reality.

LIFT also held a symposium with the Wooster Group that sought to engage in issues of mutual interest and concern to artists, academics and arts administrators. The aim was for the event to be more than a routine and 'additional' event to the presentation of *To You, The Birdie!* in London, instead designed to create a new context

for the work through the connections and responses provoked in conversation, and in the artists' engagement with the city, its cultural landscape, its social habitus and its political life. Although LIFT had always presented artist talks, the extensive two-day symposium showed a much greater concern with creating a context for the work for London audiences. The event demonstrated a desire to explore experimental theatre in a more in depth way than the previous Festival structure had practically been able to support.

It was clear that without the festival frame, this context was a necessary requirement for contemporary experimental theatre, such as that by the Wooster Group. Far from being au fait with contemporary performance practices, the press demonstrated that such work as *To You, the Birdie!* was still distinctly outside what is expected on London's stages. Billington, in *The Guardian*, gave it two stars due to the 'endless battery of aural and visual effects.'<sup>674</sup> He claimed that it was both 'elitist' and 'more notable for its self-delighting, hi tech cleverness than for anything it has to say about art or life.'<sup>675</sup> In a predictably reactionary manner, Charles Spencer in *The Telegraph* went so far as to say the Wooster Group were 'firm favourites of [LIFT], which will go to the ends of the earth to bring pretentious rubbish to our shores.'<sup>676</sup> He continued:

*To You, the Birdie!* is a dreadful show, brimming with self-regard and modish technique, entirely devoid of content and heart. It takes one of the world's greatest plays [...] and turns it into a charmless, passion-free adventure playground for the company's inflated egos.<sup>677</sup>

Both the reviews from Billington and Spencer, as well as those from Paul Taylor in the *Independent* and Ian Shuttleworth in the *Financial Times*, disparagingly use the term 'avant-garde' to describe the Wooster Group and Elisabeth Le Compte's direction of

the performance. This reaction from the London theatre press demonstrates how little the conservatism of the British theatre establishment had changed in the two decades since LIFT had begun and how the organisation still clearly had an important role in bringing ambitious and challenging experimental work to Britain.

### **2004: Fenton and Neal's Final Year**

Throughout 2004, LIFT programmed several seasons of work and ongoing events, designed to mark the 'midpoint' of the Enquiry. It was defined by the organisation as

a year round, [...] exuberant experiment and public exploration of theatre worldwide: theatre as ritual, theatre as fire, theatre as ceremony, theatre as trespass, theatre's community and theatre simply as story telling from the heart.<sup>678</sup>

There were a series of performances and theatre-events programmed by LIFT throughout the year. Neal remarked in a 2003 board meeting that

many people will say that a lot of the theatre presented [by LIFT next year] is not theatre. This may be true. The reason we have chosen the work is for its searing brilliance—we believe these works are pressing examples of theatre today.<sup>679</sup>

The LIFT Enquiry marked a shift from theatre placed in relation to site, or theatre performed as site-specific works, as the Festival had pioneered over twenty-five years, to theatre that had a relational, ongoing negotiation with its chosen site.<sup>680</sup> Embracing the understanding of site as transient, under construction, and mutable, the LIFT Enquiry sought to understand how Londoners' identities may be constituted discursively through collective practices.

There were two mini-festivals of experimental theatre and performance practices. At the Bargehouse and ICA, there were nine performances by theatre-makers from Lebanon, a country that was at the beginning of a political upheaval after decades of Syrian occupation. The choice to create an event by Lebanese artists was due to the urgent political content of their work that spoke against military occupancy by a foreign government. Neal stated that:

I don't think we would have done that in an ordinary Festival, as it was a complete programme of work that was coming from a whole range of different interdisciplinary group of artists. In a sense that encapsulated what the Enquiry could go deeper into in that phase.<sup>681</sup>

These artists included: Rabih Mroué, Lina Senah, Nadine Touma, Marwan Rechmaoui, Lamia Joreige, Joana Hadjithomas, Khalil Joreige, Akram Zaatari and the Atlas Group, alongside a programme of performances, installations and videos curated by Ashkal Alwan.

The second Festival was 'Indoor Fireworks,' a fortnight of events at Riverside Studios. The programme was curated with, and in celebration of, the twenty-year existence of British theatre company Forced Entertainment. The brochure states that the events attempted to answer the question: 'What kind of stories are possible now and what forms do they take?' inviting the audience to 'come, play and make mischief.'<sup>682</sup> Fenton and Neal described the works in the two-week programme as

not just reflecting contemporary reality, but producing it as well. They oscillate between extreme states, creating a safe place to navigate a dangerous, often nonsensical, world in all its ugliness and beauty. The street comes into the theatre, the theatre traverses the world through cyberspace, and traditional forms meet new technologies.<sup>683</sup>

This exploration of contemporary hybridity included performances by Forced Entertainment, *Super Night Shot* by Gob Squad (German/Britain), *The Loudest Muttering is Over* by the Atlas Group (Lebanon), *Reflection* a collaboration between Davis Freeman (USA) and Random Scream (Belgium), *Or Press Escape* by Edit Kaldor and Cecilia Vallejos (Hungary), and *Death is Certain* by Eva Meyer-Keller (Germany). There was also a series of curated 'Dialogues' on 'Contemporary Performance and Visual Culture' by Adrian Heathfield and a lecture by Peggy Phelan.

There was an analogous relationship between the theatrical exploration of Forced Entertainment during this period and LIFT's own approach to the Enquiry period. Fenton said in a 2004 interview that 'Forced Entertainment has a questioning spirit and a playful engagement with the world in trying to speak clearly and truthfully about the times we live in.'<sup>684</sup> There was an emphasis on the play that is at work in theatrical labour, experimenting with creating liminal space that facilitates a change in perception. The *Indoor Fireworks* fortnight had many of the characteristics of LIFT's biennial festival, with a talk programme and parties alongside the performances. However, the events evidently had a clear, near exclusive, interest to those working in and studying theatre, but little interest to those outside this, since seventy-five per cent of audiences surveyed signalled that their professional occupation was in the theatre or they were a theatre student. Due to its containment in the Riverside Studios, many perceived the performances as part of the venue's usual programming. Over half of the audience members surveyed at *Indoor Fireworks* events said they had not, and were not going to, attend other events in the programme.

As well as these concentrated periods, there were individual shows presented as stand-alone events. For example, at the Laban in Deptford, Societas Raffaello

Sanzio presented *L.#09 London*, the London ‘episode’ of the *Tragedia Endogonia* series and Groupe F returned to perform *Joueurs de Lumières* in Victoria Park.

Longer-term, socially engaged projects were developed under the series title ‘Urban Poetics.’ All events in this series were inspired by Nicolas Bourriaud’s assertion that ‘art is the place that produces a specific sociability.’<sup>685</sup> Although LIFT had worked frequently outside of institutional buildings since the first festival, the Enquiry period sought to put greater emphasis on exploring modes of site-specific practice where transitivity—the prompting of inter-human relations in given social contexts—is central to or *is* the performance itself.<sup>686</sup> The transitivity that was sought in this series of events introduced a process that denied ‘the existence of any specific place of art, in favour of a forever unfinished discursiveness.’<sup>687</sup> These were works that did not aim for a ‘performance,’ a show that had been rehearsed and designed to be received by an audience. Instead, the discursive processes of theatre making were utilised to create project-based experiences in specific locations across London. Roma Patel, Trudi Entwistle and Graham Nicholls presented *Living Image (P)*, an interactive virtual reality installation at the Science Museum. Clare Patey and Cathy Wren created *Feast*.

*Feast* was a yearlong project about food that was created on two adjacent allotments in south London with allotment users, the local community and local schools. Activities over the year included planting seeds, making pottery plates, baking bread, collating and archiving recipes, harvesting, cooking, decorating the site and preparing food for invited guests. Four specific events were celebrated during the project: the launch, the spring equinox, summer solstice, and, as a ‘finale,’ the autumn equinox, when, over two nights, the allotments became a site for four hundred people to eat together.

*Feast* was designed to create what Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja refer to as ‘lived/thirdspace’ where the producers of place are those who performatively engage with it as part of their daily lives. The project can be seen as what Lefebvre described as ‘*praxis* and *poiesis* on a social scale: the art of living in the city as a work of art.’<sup>688</sup> In creating this ‘lived/thirdspace,’ those invested in the project are artist, performer and audience, and as a community they are thought to gain from a thorough engagement with place through the process. These projects in the LIFT Enquiry were set against the idea that in much site-specific theatre, especially when performed by an international company who is ‘just visiting’ for the duration of the festival, a disjunction developed between the touring performers and the longer-term inhabitants of the site—those who use, or live in or on the site as part of their daily lives.

Those who experienced *Feast* as a profound event were those involved in the process, the participants who were inhabiting the site on a daily basis and whose involvement led to a subsequent reframing of a familiar site. The project offered little to an external audience who was not involved in the project. However, *Feast* was considered an ‘empowering’ experience by those who had participated in it, with one participant in a retrospective interview describing how the project had made her ‘re-view’ the allotments, providing her with a differently felt relationship to, and awareness of that place.<sup>689</sup> It was only for a limited number of people that *Feast* was able to have any impact.

*Feast* was discussed as theatre (when it was) because it had been commissioned and supported by LIFT, a well-established theatre organisation with a firm reputation in the field. Although some aspects of the events presented as part of *Feast* included theatre elements such as one-on-one performances, dancing, singing, ceremonies and

guided tours, there was hesitancy about accepting *Feast* as a legitimate part of a theatre programme— a criticism aimed at many of the LIFT Enquiry’s activities. In a national radio item on BBC Radio 4’s *Woman’s Hour*, there was coverage of the preparation and cooking of the food, interviews with the children and some recording of the final banquet, but no reference to the project as theatre.<sup>690</sup> And Lyn Gardner’s report on *Feast* appeared in the ‘Education’ section of *The Guardian*, not in the theatre section.<sup>691</sup> Fenton and Neal were evidently prepared for these projects to fall outside what theatre was considered to be by the mainstream, although they had also hoped to be able to broaden the ideas of what theatre might be through the Urban Poetics projects more than they achieved.<sup>692</sup> Its limited impact was not felt to be negligible but, as discussed in the previous chapter, it was impossible to clearly quantify what the impact of this project was for participants.

Although it was not considered as important by the Arts Council in terms of the evaluation they demanded from the organisation, Fenton and Neal wanted The Enquiry to have many reflections and critical engagements from academics, specialists, journalists and artists. Throughout the year there were regular lectures, discussion events and forums including: Jeremy Rifkin at the London School of Economics lecturing on *The Hydrogen Economy*; Lawrence Lessig at the Royal Geographical Society lecturing on *Creative Commons in a Connected World*; the LIFT ‘Evidence’ events which including presentations from Angad Chowdhry, Cris Bevir, Jenny Sealey, Mark Lythgoe and Pamela Carter and the LIFT Learning Symposium.

The centre of discussion and debate was held at The Bargehouse, situated behind the OXO Tower on the Southbank, which was the continuous hub for the LIFT Enquiry during the year. Fenton and Neal had asked one hundred people involved in theatre— as performers, directors, makers, academics and journalists— to

be 'LIFT Enquirers.' These individuals were asked to give 'public testimony' in response to the question: 'What is theatre to you? And if it wasn't there what would be missing from your life?' Their responses took the form of presentations, performances, videos, workshops, installations, talks, lectures and creative writing, shown in the Bargehouse throughout the year, under the title 'The House of Enquiry.'<sup>693</sup> The press release for these events claimed that it would 'allow people of different ages, cultural backgrounds, professional interests and social classes' to interact with each other in 'an atmosphere of surprise, celebration, fun, seriousness and intimacy.'<sup>694</sup> The series would draw together 'a programme combining performances, lectures, gatherings, symposiums and moments of autobiographical revelation,' offering a space 'for artists and audiences to meet, relax, eat and party.'<sup>695</sup>

Fenton and Neal stated that the aim was to create a shared sense of 'responsibility' for the Enquiry and to 'produce a sense of collective ownership and deconstruct cultural and physical barriers to the enjoyment of artistic works.'<sup>696</sup> It is evident that the aims of the 2004 programme of work remain consistent with those of the Festival, however the different curatorial strategy produced a different artistic content and a different experience for audiences. Furthermore, the expanded time frame allowed Fenton and Neal to explore each of these aspects in more depth and take a more experimental approach to these strands.

2004 marked the last year of activity for Fenton and Neal at LIFT. The successes and failures of their experimentation in the Enquiry period became increasingly evident, especially through the events discussed above. It became apparent that *Feast* was too local, lacking the international scope and high-quality theatrical performance that was expected of LIFT. The ambitious international performances of The Wooster Group and Societas Raffaello Sanzio, when presented

in isolation, were vulnerable to attacks from the British theatre press, with their distrust of 'avant-garde' theatre and experimental performance, demonstrating that there was still a need for context to be given for productions that go beyond what is considered as conventional theatre in Britain. *Indoor Fireworks* as a programme was too specialist. Many of the Enquiry events, such as those held in the Bargehouse, were again attended by an 'expert' audience, creating an insular experience and lacking an artistic output.

Each of these events in isolation, as contained programmes or seasons, was unable to reach the audiences that each Festival edition had previously reached. In LIFT's own evaluation document, it was noted that this separation of seasons meant people only attended ones that felt particularly relevant to their interests or location and there was very little crossover between audiences for events.<sup>697</sup> Many subsequently referred to The LIFT Enquiry as the organisation's period of 'introspection,' with this perception leading to the organisation losing its broader public profile and identity.<sup>698</sup>

However, there were some communities who were able to experience LIFT in ways they had never done before, opening up new social and artistic possibilities for these small, but by no means insignificant, groups that did experience projects such as those involved with *Feast*. But this learning was not just limited to external participants. Neal said that at the end of the Enquiry:

I felt that at the end of those four years I had learnt more about the theatre in those months of the Enquiry than I had in the twenty years beforehand. [...] It was so rich in knowing the theatre, in learning, in terms of seeing it from all these different people's perspective and realising each one was a truth. [...] I think renewal is important [...] It was an uncertain time, [...] but we stayed with the uncertainty and brought people into that. It was an uncomfortable time but it was so rich.<sup>699</sup>

Many more artists and commentators from around the world were brought into dialogue to discuss the fundamental role of theatre in London and to broaden the idea of what theatre might be and to reinforce its potential for political resistance, reenergising many of those in British theatre to push their practice in new interdisciplinary ways. For example, the theatre director Katie Mitchell met the neuroscientist Mark Lythgoe, who was researching the brain and the theatre, when they were both giving testimonies at the Enquiry event at The Bargehouse. Mitchell commented:

Working with Mark Lythgoe on the LIFT Enquiry allowed me the rare privilege to put on a different pair of glasses with which to look at the world and my work [...] understanding how the brain works gave me new insights into how audiences watch performances [...] This valuable dialogue will continue for years.<sup>700</sup>

Lythgoe subsequently became a key collaborator on Mitchell's production of August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* at the National Theatre in 2005.

Each activity that had been created as part of The LIFT Enquiry in 2004 had stretched the organisation in a new direction, bringing something new to LIFT, and deepening its exploration of the practices and possibilities of theatre and theatre making. The impact of this may have been less obvious from the outside, and was significantly less sensational, but nonetheless created an immeasurable amount of shifts in perspectives, new modes of artistic experimentation and emphasised theatre as a social, political and cultural activity that should be supported for its intrinsic value.

At the start of 2004, Fenton and Neal announced they would resign from the organisation the following year. Gardner wrote in *The Guardian* that it was the end of 'an era in British theatre.'<sup>701</sup> There was an uncertainty from those both inside and

outside the organisation about whether the festival could continue without its founders. However, Fenton and Neal were confident the organisation could thrive without them. Neal said on the occasion of their resignation:

Change always brings risk and vulnerability. But it can also be exciting and electric. First and foremost we have always been collaborators and this offers the opportunity for new collaborations between new people. Right from the very start we wanted to create a series of shared encounters that came under the umbrella of theatre. LIFT is an idea, and Rose and I can't see why others can't participate in that idea and move it on. It is up to them to reinvent and reimagine it. Although, of course, it does feel as if we're giving up our baby.<sup>702</sup>

Fenton also reflected that:

I certainly felt after twenty-five years, that the last five years I wanted to open the door to other ideas. We worked very collaboratively as a team which enabled us to continue to open up and experiment, but even so by the time we got to the end of the Enquiry it was definitely a bridge to handing over. It was time to bring in another set of people into that space.<sup>703</sup>

Both Fenton and Neal wished to pursue new projects. It is notable that both Fenton and Neal continued to work as social activists and campaigners, who incorporated art into their projects but prioritised their desire for social change over that of continuing to work in the theatre sector. Subsequently, Neal continued to focus on community projects in her local area with the aim of drawing attention to the critical state of the global environmental crisis. Fenton took the directorship of Free Word, an activist, publishing and human rights organisation. They were both awarded the OBE for services to drama in 2005.

In their last newsletter as directors of the Festival, Fenton and Neal announced the launch of the LIFT Living Archive. The Archive was designed to form part of the

Enquiry, material that demonstrated the complex interrelationship between theatre, politics and society:

In 1980 back when LIFT started, Nelson Mandela was in Prison, Pinochet in power in Chile and the Berlin Wall stood firm. International artists at LIFT have demonstrated how their theatre can suggest other worlds, making possible with poetry what politics has yet to achieve. With this in mind, we acknowledge the importance not only of encouraging artists [...] to experiment, but also the imperative to track and disseminate evidence of their experimentation. Thus a new initiative at LIFT gets underway: the LIFT Living Archive. Maintaining a dynamic connection between past, present and future, the project in its early stages combines the organisation of LIFT's physical archive [...] with Learning programmes for artists and participants – young and old alike – to explore LIFT's archive as a catalyst for future creative work. The long-term plan is for an interactive website to open these possibilities out for users all over the world interested in how the 'now' can be understood through the 'then.'<sup>704</sup>

Over the following four years the archive became a collection of over three-hundred boxes of documents, four-thousand photographs, one-hundred Festival programmes and leaflets, seven hundred hours of video documentation and sixty hours of audio recordings. The archive also reflects the process of producing LIFT and includes the correspondence, budgets, administrative and marketing materials of the twelve previous festivals. The Living Archive is held in Special Collections at Goldsmiths library, and continues to be publicly accessible as an educational and artistic resource.

Fenton and Neal also published *The Turning World: Stories from the London International Festival of Theatre*, a book they had co-edited and co-written to document the first twenty years of LIFT, comprised of anecdotes and short critical analyses from scholars and journalists. Reflecting on the Enquiry, Fenton and Neal were proud of what it had achieved. They wrote

Away from the demands of a biennial LIFT, the LIFT Enquiry was able to initiate research and evidence-gathering around performance and learning, in

addition to commissioning new theatre work. We could investigate, year round, the creative processes of both artists *and* audiences, triggering growing circles of conversations between them and including teachers, children, business people, community activists, scientists, anthropologists, journalists, international barristers and economists.<sup>705</sup>

The LIFT Enquiry was a remarkable experimental process undertaken by Fenton and Neal to attempt to resist the assimilation of their vanguardist, socially conscious and politically committed theatre practice into the dominant culture. They recognised that the LIFT Enquiry was an attempt to return the organisation to celebrating the unexpected elements of ‘play’ in society, characterising the Enquiry as a ‘collective act of faith,’ where the ‘process of engaging with the unknown’ proved ‘reminiscent in many ways of the spirit of those first days of LIFT.’<sup>706</sup> There were some successes and several failures, but this only serves to prove that it was a genuine process of experimentation that did not predict its own outcomes. The LIFT Enquiry opened up an internationally recognised exploration of the festival form itself, bringing into focus the purpose and role of festivals within cities all around the world, encouraging organisations to consider moving away from models of theatre presentation that prioritise engagement over investment.<sup>707</sup>

### **2006-2009: Angharad Wynne-Jones and LIFT**

Angharad Wynne-Jones became the Artistic Director of LIFT in March 2005. Wynne-Jones had built her career in Australia working as an Associate Director on the Adelaide Festival. LIFT’s board had conducted an extensive international recruitment process. Amelia Fawcett, chair of the board, said:

After a search process that left no stone unturned, interviewing applicants from as far afield as Bosnia, Brazil, Hong Kong and Australia, we have found in Angharad an individual of bold artistic leadership, which the board felt was so essential for the future of LIFT. Her spirit of innovation will be critical to

re-enforcing and reinventing the organisation's role in London and internationally.<sup>708</sup>

Wynne-Jones spoke of 'transforming' the experience of 'international cultural engagement' and hoped that the organisation would 'continue to concentrate on collaborating on projects to take artists out into communities.'<sup>709</sup> Her approach appeared to suit the position the organisation was in during the midst of the Enquiry and she spoke enthusiastically of the opportunity LIFT presented:

Organisationally the Enquiry enabled a culture of questioning existing structures, models of presenting and selection and a robust attitude to risk, which directly facilitated my appointment and the organisation to move through a challenging tradition of artistic leadership and direction after twenty-five years.<sup>710</sup>

Wynne-Jones had worked with Sellars on the 2002 Adelaide Festival, in which he had expanded on his approach to the Los Angeles Festival discussed above, and his way of working had been highly influential on her. Wynne-Jones believed that 'play' or 'chaos' were the vital elements in a creative organisation, and far more important than making rules or establishing structures. The book *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, by Margaret Wheatley, had been particularly influential on the approach taken by Sellars and Wynne-Jones. Wheatley suggested that

The things we fear most in organisations—disruption, confusion, chaos—need not be interpreted as signs that we are about to be destroyed. Instead, these conditions are necessary to awaken creativity.<sup>711</sup>

This approach accepted that in the process of bringing about change, disruption and conflict may also be brought to an organisation, but this change could also be seen as a necessary catalyst for creativity. Wheatley advised that the leader of an organisation could create an inspirational and transformational strategy that can persuade others to believe in a different or changed reality. However, the success of this strategic vision depended on a realistic assessment of the organisation's capabilities and sensitivities to the needs of those whom it serves, as ambitious changes to an organisation can lead to the alienation of its core audiences, peers and supporters.

The 2002 Adelaide Festival had become infamous in the festival field. Sellars came to Adelaide with a desire to create an 'entirely new and different model of a festival.'<sup>712</sup> He also wanted to make the Festival from work that was made in Adelaide, instead of presenting international work to Adelaide. The festival was to move from a curated, popular festival of renowned international theatre productions to embracing indigenous work and community arts. Central to Sellars' vision was a process of power sharing or collaboration.<sup>713</sup> The team comprised of nine associate directors (including Wynne-Jones), plus various advisory committees, in addition to the administrative staff already employed by the festival. This approach cost an estimated additional AUS \$1.8 million in staff costs to the organisation, funds that were subsequently unavailable for programming.<sup>714</sup> Sellars believed that these associate directors would bring to the table a broader range of expertise and knowledge than he could provide alone. Sellars also believed, as a visiting American, employing a large team of Australian associates would provide the festival with greater credibility and make it more 'authentically Australian.'<sup>715</sup> Sellars had not only wanted to create something unique in artistic terms, but he also wanted to create something new by

democratising the administration of the Festival. These were two ambitious goals that Wynne-Jones subsequently emulated at LIFT.<sup>716</sup>

As a member of the leadership team of the Adelaide Festival, Wynne-Jones believed in the vision Sellars had for the Festival, but was also acutely aware of the furore that surrounded Sellars' directorship, and was determined not to repeat this in London. Sellars strove for a free, community-based festival, celebrating Adelaide as an 'Aboriginal landmark,' whilst Adelaide Festival sponsors, board members, local and national newspaper editors, and other influential people wanted their international, spectacle-guaranteed and box-office-oriented event.<sup>717</sup> The 2002 Adelaide Festival was widely described as a 'disaster,' and its downfall, in which Sellars had resigned from four months before it was due to open, was due to this interplay between power, finances and politics.<sup>718</sup> However, this 'disaster' remained predominately a financial one, as well as a personal one for Sellars. Under replacement director Sue Natrass, with minor programming changes, the content of the Festival, especially the celebration of indigenous culture, was largely celebrated.<sup>719</sup>

Wynne-Jones' directorship at LIFT can be seen as a continuation of the vision of the Adelaide Festival, albeit partially adapted for the particular cultural conditions of London. Wynne-Jones wanted to bring to attention London's history as 'a colonial power' and how confronting that might help plan for a future that included, in her words, 'the imminent collapse of the global eco-system.'<sup>720</sup> Wynne-Jones outlined her vision in her festival proposal 'Moving Towards a New LIFT':

The new LIFT is born from a radical, graceful gesture— a transfer and extension of the authority implicit in this cultural organisation, to those who historically have been viewed from the perspective of the coloniser, seen from the boat not from the land. This is a gesture that cannot be made by the colonised. This act creates a place, without a sovereign, without a name, in the seat of power. London has a history in the handing over of power and has a commitment to

the possibilities of a different future. A place in which power can shift, and without that, what hope can we have for the future?<sup>721</sup>

Where Sellars had used the Adelaide Festival to bring to attention the injustices suffered by indigenous Australian communities, Wynne-Jones chose to focus on Britain's colonial legacies. This was an attempt to bring attention to, and empower, those in London who came from, or descended from those who came from, Britain's former colonies, as well as giving a platform for artists from countries that used to be under the control of the British Empire. This approach, although highly admirable, did not account for London's rapidly changing and expanding migrant communities, who had moved to the city from all over the world for a multitude of reasons that were due to complex neo-colonial, economic or conflict-driven circumstances.<sup>722</sup>

Wynne-Jones changed the format of LIFT to be three separate weeklong festival events that acted as the 'culmination' of other, local art events in London. Alongside this, there were 'seasonal community events,' talks programmes, events at the LIFT Living Archive and touring exhibitions.<sup>723</sup> Theatre was to be conceived of 'in its deepest and widest meaning,' with a focus on 'time-based art, immersive installation, ritual, ceremony, celebration and debate.'<sup>724</sup>

For Wynne-Jones the 'key element of the process' of this 'new LIFT,' taken from her experience of the Adelaide Festival, was the 'sharing and devolving of the power of selection and curating'— something that she believed would 'enable other voices to be heard' and 'engender a wider public participation.'<sup>725</sup> Wynne-Jones's 'ultimate goal' was to have LIFT 'owned by the community' by 2012.<sup>726</sup> In practical terms this meant the recruitment of 'seekers' who looked for existing work in response to a brief set by LIFT and in relation to a budget, a venue and a target audience. These seekers were based in regions around the world, specialists who were 'rooted' in

a place and would understand the cultural specificity of the work they were exploring. For many, including some of those in the LIFT team, the specific role of the seekers was not clearly defined in relation to the Festival. This lack of clarity can be seen in Wynne-Jones' description of the seekers as 'artists, initiators and creators to prospectors, prophets, transformers and revolutionaries to messengers and catalysts.'<sup>727</sup> The seekers met twice before the 2008 festival, aiming to discover if there might be 'a sense of identity that is common to all, irrespective of context or geography.' Besides being an extraordinarily difficult goal which was beyond the possibility of two meetings, the phrase conveys the hopeful, universalist thinking that characterised Wynne-Jones' directorship.<sup>728</sup>

For Wynne-Jones, participation was always placed at 'the heart of the process.'<sup>729</sup> The first event the new director invited was *The Sultan's Elephant*, a large-scale outdoor free spectacle created by French company Royal de Luxe and produced in association with Artichoke. In a carnivalesque procession, a giant mechanical elephant, the size of a three-storey building, searches for a little girl, who is a puppet the size of a house, through the streets of London. Gardner, in a five star review in *The Guardian*, wrote:

This is a show that disrupts the spectacle of everyday life and transforms the city from an impersonal place of work and business into a place of play and community. It does something very simple and important: it makes you feel incredibly happy and it gives you permission to let your imagination take flight. [...] What the Sultan's Elephant represents is nothing less than an artistic occupation of the city and reclamation of the streets for the people.<sup>730</sup>

The giant puppets stopped traffic, squirted onlookers with water, gave children opportunities to climb on them in St James' Park and even disrupted the Changing of the Guards— actions that interrupted people's lives and transformed the perception of

many of those who witnessed them. This experience could be recognised as an example of Turner's *communitas*. Tessa Jowell, then Culture Secretary observed:

In London, over a million people were captivated by the story of a little girl and a time-travelling elephant. Even now it seems incredible, but the spell that *The Sultan's Elephant* cast on those who saw it meant that for those few precious hours, everyone involved felt a sense of kinship and connectedness. Part of a single life-changing experience. And all in a single city.<sup>731</sup>

The performance was able to create this response not just due to the fact of its intervention in the city, but also due to its extraordinary artistry. The artistry and technical skills of those who created the puppets and their adventures around London engaged the public both physically and emotionally. The huge numbers of spectators who interacted with the puppets constructed a temporary community, whilst the impossibility of witnessing all the puppet-characters at all times meant people created their own individual narratives out of their encounters.

*The Sultan's Elephant* succeeded in using what Claire Bishop described as 'the medium of participation to articulate a contradictory pull between autonomy and social intervention.'<sup>732</sup> Furthermore, the communal outpouring of affection for the giants created, what Lefebvre described as, a 'moment' for London. David Harvey's 'Afterword' to Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, clarifies the concept of 'moment' as

fleeting but decisive sensations (of delight, surrender, disgust, surprise, horror, or outrage) which were somehow revelatory of the totality of possibilities contained in daily existence. Such movements were ephemeral and would pass instantly into oblivion, but during their passage all manner of possibilities—often decisive and revolutionary—stood to be uncovered and achieved. 'Moments' were conceived of as points of rupture, of radical recognition of possibilities and intense euphoria.<sup>733</sup>

The city held the liminal space of the theatrical event, becoming both the stage for the imaginary encounter between the puppet characters and the real space in which

people gathered together to witness the puppets and to encounter each other. The spectators were therefore given an opportunity to experience, both imaginatively and physically, the city temporarily transformed from a place of routine and isolation to one of surprise and interaction.

Additionally, Wynne-Jones involved primary and secondary school students in the event, asking them to contribute objects, letters, drawings and photographs about their particular part of London. These were then given to Royal de Luxe to travel with *The Sultan's Elephant* as it toured internationally. There was a symposium, held at the Southbank Centre, called 'How Many Elephants Does it Take?' that brought together arts administrators, artists and civil servants to explore how creative people and city infrastructures can collaborate to make the city better for its inhabitants. For Wynne-Jones the estimated one million people who turned out to see the elephant confirmed the need for a 'new public space.'<sup>734</sup> At the time she said:

Almost a year on from the bombings of July 7 2005, the people of London came together to celebrate and share an experience, eager to interact with each other and to be in public space together. We saw a different London and were filled with a great sense of ownership which enabled a generosity between us. The sheer joy and enthusiasm with which the elephant [was] greeted suggests a tremendous need for a space that allows us this freedom to come together more often. One of those spaces is the Lift New Parliament.<sup>735</sup>

In this statement, Wynne-Jones demonstrated a misunderstanding of how the performance created an interruption into the city, and why this made *The Sultan's Elephant* such a potent experience. As such this is suggestive of the beginning of some of the problems faced by LIFT over the following two years.

Following this production, Wynne-Jones commissioned a movable structure, which she believed could operate as both the hub of the festival and as 'public space,' with the aim of engendering 'wider public participation.'<sup>736</sup> Wynne-Jones' statement

that a temporary, movable structure could bring people together and capture their imaginations in the same way as *The Sultan's Elephant* ignored the role the city streets themselves had and the artistry of the highly skilled Royal de Luxe group. The 'New Parliament' was to be a 'house, a table to meet at'.<sup>737</sup> The aim, said Wynne-Jones, was to 'place the structure near the centres of power, like the British Parliament in London, where its very presence will say "art is important." And it can travel the country and the world.'<sup>738</sup> LIFT launched an architectural competition for a design for a mobile structure that could be used as a public forum in which 'different cultures can communicate in their mother tongues to meditate, reflect on, discuss and progress the urgent social, political and cultural issues of our times'.<sup>739</sup> The architects AOC were selected through a process that included an online public vote, creating a portable tent-like performance space, a four-storey temporary structure wrapped in brightly patterned fabric.

The 'Lift New Parliament' faced criticism from its conception. Wynne-Jones revealed the name itself became a barrier to engagement:

New Parliament is proving very unpopular with all the collaborators in East London, testament to disappointment with New Labour and indicative of voter disengagement—in the UK you don't have to vote, so most people don't.<sup>740</sup> [...] It will be a physical embodiment and tangible experience of people's desire and capacity to engage with each other, with theatre—in its broadest sense—and with the things that matter to us most, locally and globally.<sup>741</sup>

It was subsequently renamed 'The Lift,' and the organisation was also renamed as 'Lift' in order to abolish the acronym— although the structure continued to cause many problems for the Festival.

After six years of Enquiry, Wynne-Jones produced a 'Lift' festival edition in 2008. Prior to the Festival, Lift presented several 'trailblazer' events which were

generally well-received including *Eat London*, a collaboration with Alicia Rios where a model of London was made from food to be eaten by the public. The dance company Mau performed *Requiem*, created by Pacific islanders from traditional rites of their culture (which had been originally commissioned by Peter Sellars for the 2006 New Crowned Hope Festival in Vienna) at the Southbank Centre. And the British company Stan's Cafe presented *Of All the People in All the World*, a celebrated installation where statistics of the global population are represented through piles of rice grains.

The 2008 Festival occupied two sites in London over twenty-one days in June. Firstly the 'The Lift,' was constructed in Stratford in East London and was then packed up and transported along the river by boat and placed outside the Southbank Centre. The Festival comprised of six international performances, four British commissions, several performances by local artists and community theatre groups, and an opening and closing ceremony at Stratford and the Southbank. There were also daily meetings, discussions, workshops, screenings, activities and debates housed in The Lift.

The reviews of the 2008 festival were overwhelmingly critical of the new format. In the *New Statesman* Dominic Cavendish said Lift 2008 had a 'pretty thin' artistic programme. Cavendish was particularly unimpressed with 'The Lift':

The Lift parliament, along with many parliaments one could mention, seems to have an instinctive love of hard-to-apprehend hot air. Maybe I'll be proved wrong when I step inside this strange vertical portable venue, when it pitches up at the Southbank - and get stuck into meaningful discourse with another dropper-by. But to pretend that dialogue around art can be as transformative as art itself and as empowering as political enfranchisement strikes me as a kind of evasive piety. To change the world you need to engage with the political system not hang out in a surrogate hive.<sup>742</sup>

Graham Hassell in the *Financial Times* disparagingly called the 2008 Festival a, ‘ragbag of productions, taking in workshops and debates, dance and multi-lingual karaoke, in tongues you don’t understand and all with a local community-concerned agenda’ and bemoaning the lack of performances in the midst of ‘all those discussions’.<sup>743</sup>

A consistent supporter of the organisation, Gardner in *The Guardian* referred to the 2008 festival as ‘LIFT’s near-demise’, referencing that one performance during the festival ‘had to be cancelled due to a complete lack of interest’.<sup>744</sup> A further controversy was caused by Lift producing two brochures for the programme for the 2008 festival. One detailed the body of work and events taking place in Stratford and other detailed the performances taking place at the Southbank Centre. Gardner wrote:

[...] it looks like two entirely separate festivals with quite distinct programmes of work and seems to be suggesting that art can’t talk to everyone, that some art is for some people and some is for others, and that what matters for one community may not interest another in the slightest.<sup>745</sup>

In creating work that was meant to be ‘specifically geared’ towards a particular community and focusing on participation, Wynne-Jones was accused of ‘cultural ghettoisation’.<sup>746</sup> Here, Lift under its new directorship had misunderstood the importance of multiculturalism to London’s communities and the arts press, despite predominant political narratives.

Fenton and Neal’s founding motive to bring the most challenging and innovative international theatre to London, and to reach all Londoners through theatre, was not evident at the 2008 Festival, which instead mostly featured community-led productions and conventional theatre shows from foreign companies presented in a programme that segregated audiences through geographical and ethnic stereotyping. In the same year the global financial crisis began to hit the British

economy and the sense of emergency and distress was not reflected in the programme of the Festival, which had focused on much older forms of global movement and did not engage with the contemporary landscape of London.

ACE were unimpressed by Lift's 2008 output and lacked confidence in its ability to meet any of its policies. It reduced the organisation's funding by fifty per cent, with 'The Lift' being referred to as 'a costly failure' and the organisation being referred to as having a 'crisis of identity'.<sup>747</sup> Less than a month after the end of the 2008 Festival, Wynne-Jones quit Lift and returned to Australia due to family reasons.<sup>748</sup>

Wynne-Jones brought with her significant change to the organisation. However, her continued experimentation with the Festival form— creating a temporary venue, removing the 'LIFT' acronym and focusing all the activities on community participation did not achieve her democratising aim, as she had misunderstood the key factors that had made LIFT's reputation and had continued to sustain it. The first of these was the presentation of high-quality theatre from international and British-based artists and companies. Although the amount of and scale of productions present in LIFT and The LIFT Enquiry had varied over the years, Fenton and Neal had always ensured that their activities had involved some highly accomplished work from the world's most celebrated theatre makers— such as The Wooster Group and Societas Raffaello Sanzio being presented in The Enquiry seasons. A dedication to finding, engaging with, and presenting the work of the most urgent and exciting theatre makers from around the world had always been at the forefront of LIFT, with all other activities being created in response to these crucial pillars. Without high-quality international, politically engaged, theatre Wynne-Jones was not able to attract the audiences or maintain their interest in the contextual programme.

The second factor that had sustained LIFT through the previous decades was the way that the Festival had used performance as a powerful way to interrupt the rhythms of daily life and urban space across London in order to bring diverse communities together. From their staging of pioneering street performances in the 1980s, Fenton and Neal had always found ways of siting performance in the city in exciting and unexpected ways, pushing artists to find new ways to present their work and encouraging engagement from many who would not usually go to the theatre. This had been evident in *The Sultan's Elephant*, however, 'The Lift' building was a flawed project from the beginning. It served as an insular space, cutting off the activity inside from the location where it was placed. As it was a new and temporary space, it did not function as a welcoming environment that people wished to engage with. It failed as it was unable to capture the public's imagination in the way that performance sited in public space, interacting with and of the landscape, was able to. Nor could it develop the meaningful relationships with local communities that made theatres in London thrive, and which had shaped the majority of LIFT's programming decisions since its beginning.

The balance of ritual and play during this LIFT era tipped too far towards play, lacking a structure which could effectively distribute cultural capital and provide a context for the experience of the festival— a vital factor in order to galvanise and produce ulterior visions of society. To play necessitates a lack of restrictions from the self and the environment, but the freedom to play is dependent upon rules that establish the illusion of trust and power between players.<sup>749</sup> For both the concept of play as well as in festivals, the relations and regulations of time and space differentiate embodied meanings from other 'realities' in order to secure a safe temporal space. As in theatrical performance itself, the particular restrictions of time and space are vital in

order to communicate effectively a message to the audience. These structures are vital for other possibilities, freedoms and explorations to happen in both theatrical performance, and in the experience of the festival. The chronotopic concentration is vital to realise this, as is the option for everyone to be invited into the same space, regardless of background. The festival is a model that suggests the elusion of the responsibilities of everyday life and, instead, is full of playful subjectivity and the suggestion that it is a possibility that our shared imagined worlds could shape a liberated reality.<sup>750</sup>

In experimenting with the festival form in the *The Enquiry*, LIFT had attempted to develop a strategic practice that could effectively oppose the instrumentalism and oppression of the neoliberal regime, that had only been exacerbated through the continued activities of the New Labour government under both Blair and Brown. In a decade that began with the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which had instigated two extremely unpopular wars, and that ended with a global financial crisis, the optimism that had shaped the artistic field in the final years of the 1990s had been replaced by insecurity and fear. The extent of the interpenetration of the neoliberal state in the field of cultural production, shaping every aspect of production and reception, had made it impossible for Fenton and Neal to find an effective way to oppose this system, which they had always attempted to stand against. This had led to their departure from, not only LIFT, but from the part-subsidised theatre field in order to pursue new activist practices. Wynne-Jones's vision for the Festival had attempted to find new practices to promote democracy and access to 'Lift,' but through a series of internal misconceptions and external pressures, this had been extremely unsuccessful. The future of LIFT appeared extremely uncertain.

## Chapter Five: Mark Ball's LIFT, 2010-2016

Between 2010 and 2016 the drastic changes of the political and economic landscape in Britain and in the interconnected global field in general led to pronounced changes to LIFT's position in the Festival field. LIFT had to respond to these changing conditions artistically, socially and financially throughout its 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016 editions. The Conservative-led Coalition government elected in 2010 introduced a programme of austerity that reshaped British social life, whilst the promise and subsequent implementation of a referendum of the country's membership of the European Union (EU), held in 2016, created seismic shifts that resulted in a vote to exit the EU and a corresponding crisis in British parliamentary democracy. These conditions had significant impact on LIFT's ability to retain its agency in the field and led to the organisation being thoroughly subsumed by the logic of the dominant field of power.

As discussed in the previous chapter, LIFT's national and international profile as an influential arts organisation had fallen since Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal's departure and subsequently Arts Council England (ACE) had reduced the funding of the organisation by fifty per cent in 2008. Mark Ball, appointed as Artistic Director by the LIFT board in 2009, returned the Festival back to a delineated, one-month event that occurred biannually thus ending the experimentation with the festival frame that had characterised The LIFT Enquiry period. Ball felt, when he arrived, that LIFT was at 'a point of crisis' and, under his direction, it became a financially resilient organisation, in spite of the strained economic circumstances.<sup>751</sup> He achieved this by appealing to the popular market through fully assimilating the organisation into the neoliberal capitalist 'experience economy.'<sup>752</sup> Therefore his pragmatic, business-

mindful approach to the Festival involved dynamism and inventiveness that ensured LIFT's survival through a period in which international theatre became incredibly difficult to fund and produce in Britain and festivals with an international remit, such as BITE, ceased to exist. However, the methods that were used to thrive forced a compromise of LIFT's founding principles, including artistic quality and cultural democracy as well as its autonomy in the field.

### **'We're All in This Together': Austerity Britain**

The socio-political climate in 2010 bore stark similarities to the landscape in which LIFT had been created thirty-years previously. Under a newly elected Conservative Prime Minister, unemployment figures were high and rising, with 2.57 million unemployed people and youth unemployment at over twenty-one per cent, the highest rates since 1988.<sup>753</sup> In 2011, there were riots in cities across England sparked by racial injustices perpetrated by the police force, whilst the welfare system was further dismantled and public services rapidly privatised. Far from being coincidental, these similarities were a deliberate radical resurrection of the Thatcherite agenda as austerity was designed to advance a larger programme of shifting the political economy of Britain towards a more radical, competitive and individualistic neoliberal society. Furthermore, the concerns that Fenton and Neal had outlined at the start of the millennium regarding the corporatisation, bureaucratisation and neoliberalisation of festivals, as discussed in the previous chapter, were still prevalent a decade later, with many of these processes intensified through various changes in the global economic landscape.

In 2010, the Conservative party, led by David Cameron, was forced to form a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats, led by Nick Clegg. Using the economic instability caused by the global financial crisis in 2007-8, this government

unleashed an unprecedented austerity drive under the auspices of ‘deficit reduction.’<sup>754</sup> Cameron had promised the electorate that he would build ‘the Big Society’ which promised ‘fairness’ and a dedication to protecting ‘the vulnerable [and] the poorest in our society.’<sup>755</sup> These claims appeared to suggest a ‘New Conservatism’ that had made a break with the materially driven, morally authoritarian and economically libertarian Thatcherite characteristics that defined Conservative Party since 1979. However, the Coalition’s post-election direction was in practice directly counter to these election promises of protection and fairness. Alongside the renewed privatisation and marketisation of public services, including the National Health Service and the Royal Mail, the onslaught of public spending and welfare cuts was described by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) in 2010 as ‘clearly regressive’ as their research demonstrated that, on average, the cuts hit the poorest households more than those in the upper-middle of the income distribution in both cash and percentage terms.<sup>756</sup>

This initial phase of ‘cuts’ to public spending saw local authority and local government funding severely reduced, the withdrawal of government subsidy for university fees, sweeping cuts to welfare and disability benefits and a significant reduction in the Arts Council budget, among many other reductions. These policies caused an increase of many social problems including higher levels of unemployment, escalating violent crime, homelessness and social disorder.<sup>757</sup> The persistence and popularity of the Government’s anti-welfare rhetoric was mediated, reproduced and legitimated by the media including tabloid and broadsheet press, radio and television programmes.<sup>758</sup> The consistency of negative representations in the media enabled those on benefits, unemployed people, migrants and asylum seekers, to function as ‘national objects,’ stigmatised figures that serve as ‘ideological conductors mobilised to

do the dirty work of neoliberal governmentality.<sup>759</sup> The role of the national abject significantly shaped the role of socially engaged theatre practice during this period and is discussed later in this chapter in relation to LIFT 2010.

For the scope of this thesis, it is not possible to discuss in-depth the impact on the social sphere of the many facets of the reduction of public spending made by the Conservative-led coalition government, although all of these have varying degrees of influence in shaping LIFT over this period due to its position in the social, economic and political landscape of the capital.<sup>760</sup> However, by analysing the approach and reactions to the reductions in spending for Arts Council England (ACE), as well as the consequences for the localised field of cultural production, it is possible to glean a picture of the large-scale radical transformation these policies induced in British society.

### **Arts Council Funding Cuts**

The Conservative-led government led an attack on what they considered to be the negative impact of the public sphere on the quality of all areas of British life, including the field of cultural production. This marked a trend that continued through the six years of Cameron's leadership. On the 18 June 2010, ACE announced it would be required to make £19 million of cuts to expenditure which amounted to a 0.5% cut to all 880 RFO's (Regularly Funded Organisations) such as LIFT.<sup>761</sup> In October, Chancellor George Osborne released his Comprehensive Spending Review which would cut the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) budget by twenty-four per cent, leading to a further thirty per cent reduction in the budget for ACE. This meant a fifteen per cent cut to RFOs which led to over one hundred arts organisations losing their funding. A further blow would be struck by Osborne in the Autumn Statement, released in December 2010, which removed another £11.6

million from ACE. Local authority budgets were simultaneously reduced. In 2008-9, the peak of local government funding, the amount invested per person was £9.59. By 2015-16, with adjustment for inflation, this had dropped by 39% to £5.87.<sup>762</sup> This reduction led to many difficult decisions made by organisations to shrink their overheads, including reducing or removing their artistic output.<sup>763</sup>

Into this fraught climate the Arts Council released *Achieving Great Art For Everyone* in November 2010, a ten-year strategic framework for the public arts sector. Its focus was on financial resilience for arts and culture, allowing ACE to centralise and reinforce its power to regulate the field. Led by the Arts Council's Chief Executive, Alan Davey, the organisation released its new 'five aims:'

1. Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated.
2. More people experience and are inspired by the arts.
3. The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative.
4. The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled.
5. Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts.<sup>764</sup>

Every arts organisation that applied for funding from ACE would be expected to fulfil at least two of these aims in order to qualify. Organisations, such as LIFT, which had been supported as 'Regularly Funded Organisations' (RFOs) would be required to apply to become National Portfolio Organisations (NPO). This shift from organisations being regarded as 'regularly funded,' implying stability and continued support, to 'national portfolio', with its reference to investment portfolios, revealed a shift in priorities that forced the artistic sector into finding and stating purely economic justifications for their continued existence.<sup>765</sup> Furthermore, NPOs would have to consistently fulfil at least four of ACE's new aims. This marked a significant shift in power relations between arts organisations and ACE as previously the state

funding body had sought to support organisations to achieve their own aims as set out in applications. However, with the new framework, arts organisations were explicitly pitted against each other to establish who could best deliver ACE's own objectives.<sup>766</sup>

Economic value of the arts was asserted as the only frame that mattered.

Maria Miller, Secretary of State for Media, Culture and Sport, demanded that the whole arts sector 'help [...] reframe the argument [for public funding]: to hammer home the value of culture to our economy.'<sup>767</sup> Miller justified this since, 'in an age of austerity, when times are tough and money is tight, our focus must be on culture's economic impact.'<sup>768</sup> Every organisation, artist and company in the sector were expected to fervently justify economic impact to government as a defensive strategy in rationalising arts funding as a principle. Arts organisations such as LIFT, who were attempting to continue as large organisations with a high-profile or international remit, were left with no other option but to embrace this precedence of economic impact, attempting to fit artistic programmes around fiscal gain and relying on commercial tactics such as high-profile marketing strategies and high ticket prices.

LIFT was shaped by these financial conditions. Its efficient adaptation saw it grow in size and wealth despite the reduction in arts funding by adapting effectively to these new financial conditions, although this naturalised the logic of neoliberal principles into the organisation. Funding from private enterprise, individual donors and charitable trusts had first been encouraged as a replacement for public funding by Thatcher's government, as discussed in Chapter Two. However, following the Coalition Government's spending cuts in 2010 it was made obligatory for organisations in England to pursue this funding in order to receive ACE subsidy. LIFT's report to its board for 2011 stated:

The current executive is focused on realistic budget preparation, better financial expertise and management and increased capacity in fundraising. It has revised its business model going forward with a more diverse funding base, greater financial partnerships with other organisations, reducing its core reliance on Arts Council England and significantly increasing earned income.<sup>769</sup>

A key element of LIFT's success during this period of austerity was due to it being able to attract alternate income streams. For the 2010 Festival, LIFT received a total of £23,487 from donations, sponsorship, trusts and foundations. In 2012, this rose to £113,320 and for the 2014 Festival it had increased again to £259,136.<sup>770</sup> In 2014 this included donations of £50,000 from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, £175,000 from the Dr. Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, £20,998 from various national embassies and £25,136 from individual donations. This formed a significant part of LIFT's budget, since its Arts Council funding for 2014 was £491,965. The increased private funding had directly led to increased public subsidy.

The Coalition announced in 2011 that, as part of its plan for the Big Society, they would 'renew Britain's culture of philanthropy' in the *Giving White Paper*.<sup>771</sup> 'Philanthropy' is a misleading term as it implies disinterested giving, whereas what is being encouraged is sponsorship, a strategic business partnership where both donor and recipient benefit from the relationship.<sup>772</sup> It was claimed that the arts could receive the funding they needed, without the state interference through a regime of targets, whilst large corporations could enhance the legitimacy of the firm among its stakeholders and customers and develop positive social responsibility images through increased 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) payments.<sup>773</sup> In a speech in 2014 Chair of ACE, Sir Peter Bazalgette, enthused about the 'opportunities' for business to 'invest' in the arts:

We are also looking to the financial sector to help develop innovative funding methods. Arts organisations are responding vigorously to reduced public funding by growing commercial revenues, providing business opportunities.<sup>774</sup>

However, funding from the private sector inevitably compromised the field of cultural production and exacerbated structural inequality as it benefitted larger, more established organisations that were based in large cities and produced more conventional work that did not directly oppose or impede the private sector's interests.<sup>775</sup> Furthermore it compounded a system of unaccountability where corporations and other financial elites determine what can be created, when, where and by whom.<sup>776</sup>

For example, LIFT received indirect funding from BP in this period as it sponsored the World Shakespeare Festival (WSF) at the Globe in 2012 and the Russia-UK Year of Culture in 2014. As a multinational multimillion corporation, BP was aware that their logo across the buildings, printed materials and digital platforms of large London arts organisations, including Tate Britain, Tate Modern, the Royal Opera House, the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the Globe Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, could aid the image of their company, helping to obscure their more nefarious actions in return for a relatively minuscule investment.<sup>777</sup> BP was one of the most contested and controversial funders of the arts in Britain during this period, largely due to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010 — the largest marine oil spill in history — for which BP was found legally responsible due to gross negligence and reckless conduct.<sup>778</sup> Through its sponsorship, BP was able to acquire an association with art and theatre which helped to 'cleanse' them of their image problems, whilst they continue to operate unethically and dangerously.

LIFT also received yearly funding of tens of thousands of pounds in the 2010-2016 period from the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation. The Sackler

family are one of America's wealthiest, embroiled in controversies over their ownership of Purdue Pharma that produces the opioid OxyContin. The company had fraudulently claimed the drug had a low addiction rate, leading to more than 200,000 deaths in the USA since 1999.<sup>779</sup> The Sackler Foundation have been generous funders of the arts in London, with the Royal Academy of Arts, the Royal College of Arts, the Old Vic theatre, the Royal Opera House and the Globe also receiving large donations in this period, totalling over £21 million in 2016, whilst they had not given either compensation nor aid to communities suffering due to the source of their wealth.<sup>780</sup>

It is evident that BP and The Sackler Foundation gave their money to the arts in order to accrue symbolic capital that reinforced their position of power in the global economic field and opened up the possibility of transferring that symbolic capital into political power. Therefore the sponsorship of arts by business is of greatest benefit to the donor, placing arts organisations in a compromised ethical position and potentially censoring their practice in order to survive during times of reduced state funding.<sup>781</sup> Arts organisations are therefore no longer able to claim artistic autonomy from the machinations of the financial industries, proving how culture in the second decade of the twenty-first century was, more than ever, deeply and profoundly integrated into both global financial flows and their ever-present social channels

LIFT's location in London was also an important factor in its ability to maintain and increase its funding during this period of austerity with 82% of private sector funding of the arts in England being given to London-based organisations.<sup>782</sup> The capital's largest theatre institutions had their budgets relatively protected in comparison with the rest of Britain, and many of these such as the Southbank Centre and the Young Vic were important partners for LIFT. The *Rebalancing our Cultural Capital* Report estimated that by October 2013, seventy five per cent of decisions

made in England on public funding for culture were heavily biased towards London with arts spending at £68.99 per head of population in London and £4.58 in the rest of England.<sup>783</sup> The continuation of a skewed funding system which benefitted the largest metropolitan institutions led to these organisations reinforcing their dominance of the cultural field, limiting the ability of smaller, more experimental and resistant practices that challenged the economic doxa to emerge during this period. For theatre, this meant mid-size theatres and companies were forced to create economically profitable productions, which combined with a need to prove instrumentality, led many to making work that could form part of the fast-accelerating ‘experience economy.’

### **LIFT and the Experience Economy**

As discussed in the previous chapter, during the approach to the millennium theatre festivals proliferated in Britain. Many of these were created for, or became part of, the growing ‘experience economy,’ a system that created and marketed cultural experiences catering to individual consumers in order to generate economic gain. The ‘experience economy’ was brought to popular attention in 1999 when Joseph Pine and James Gilmore published *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business is a Stage*.<sup>784</sup> It outlined a socioeconomic system where aesthetic experiences, rather than goods or services, formed the basis for the field of economic production. Pine and Gilmore put forward the theory that the commodification of an experience, defined as the ‘feeling’ that is created when experiencing a staged memorable event, was the next evolution of the service economy that had dominated the previous decades, flourishing after the decline of industrial economy.<sup>785</sup> According to Pine and Gilmore the beginning of the ‘experience expansion’ began with the ‘thrilling ride’ of Walt Disney’s theme parks and resorts, starting with Disneyland in

California which opened in 1955. In these parks, which have continued to be built and developed worldwide, the Disney brand is 'spatialised' into an immersive environment that people are willing to pay significant amounts of money to enter in order to have memorable experiences.<sup>786</sup> Experience products are considered luxury items that are consumed for a 'thrilling' or 'pleasurable' purpose.<sup>787</sup> The festival as an experience product is counter to the conception of it being a place for the enactment of autonomous cultural democracy, social engagement or political activism which had driven the creation of LIFT. In London, festivals were particularly instrumentalised as a marketing tool in order to increase tourism and international trade in the year of events surrounding the 2012 London Olympics, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Throughout the LIFT Enquiry, the organisation had attempted to resist the domination of the economic field by experimenting with its modes of practice in order to prioritise creating educational, social and cultural capital for communities in London rather than generating economic capital for the organisation or for the city. However, by 2010 the survival of the organisation was in jeopardy due to its failure to build or retain cultural capital during the previous decade due to falling artistic standards. LIFT's loss of its accrued capital, and therefore dominant position in the field, led to reduced funding from ACE as well as a cessation of relationships with institutional cultural partners across London and renowned international theatre companies. The organisation was required to make changes and act in the field in order to re-gain its volume of capital, or risk ceasing to exist.

The LIFT board chose to embrace heteronomous interests, moving the organisation towards the economic pole in the field in order to accrue economic capital and retrieve their dominant position. Those on the LIFT board were

themselves wealthy, powerful actors with homologous dominant positions in other fields such as museums, education, banking and advertising. The discourse on the necessity of change for the organisation was propagated by these economically dominant actors as a means of weakening the relative autonomy of the field of theatre as heteronomising the field places it at the service of external economic ends. This external control therefore conserved the established order across all fields, directly benefitting the board members and their private interests.<sup>788</sup>

Due to the financial success of the experience economy, especially in the field of tourism, it was appealing for LIFT to embrace this model in order to gain economic capital within the field. In order to achieve this, the board appointed Mark Ball who had established Fierce Festival in Birmingham. For his final edition of Fierce in 2008, Ball had transformed the city through ‘engaging artistic experiences’ that ‘popped up’ across the city.<sup>789</sup> Through adopting an experience economy model, Ball had increased the economic capital of Fierce, as well as its admiration by those in dominant positions in the field of power, media and politics such as local politicians, councillors, newspaper journalists and arts council representatives, demonstrating its heteronomous appeal.

As director of LIFT, Ball sought to change the organisation’s administration programming in order to place the Festival at the service of external economic (and political) ends. This heteronomous change is presented as a necessity imposed ‘from outside.’ It therefore differs radically from the theory of cultural change LIFT had initiated previously, which made autonomy the key to and source of change in the field.<sup>790</sup> This altered LIFT’s previous position in the consecrated (and consecrating) avant-garde – when it appealed to both the homologous actors in other fields in dominated positions (marginalised communities) and specialist audiences with high

cultural and educational capital in the theatre field (artists, students and other theatre specialists) in order to create a subversive practice – and instead opened LIFT up to heteronomous influences. This shifted the audience to predominantly agents in homologous fields with high economic capital but low cultural capital who were seeking experiences as a luxury lifestyle product. Therefore, the focus of LIFT moved from bringing international works to London in order to invite audiences to engage with theatre, to theatre being provided for individual experience.

LIFT had been defined under Fenton and Neal's leadership by a focus on what role theatre played in the artistic, social, cultural and political landscape. When it was absorbed into the experience economy, the discourse shifted to the individual as cultural consumer, on her expectations and involvement with theatre as an experience product. This is evident not only in the types of theatre performances that were presented in LIFT, predominantly immersive, gaming or participatory theatre, but also in the way the Festival communicated with audiences. In the 2010 introduction to the Festival programme, Ball promises that 'you'll encounter some memorable experiences,' that LIFT is 'a festival that's all about bringing experiences.' Throughout the brochure the description of nearly every show offered the audience an experience including: 'playful experience,' 'transporting experience,' 'dining experience,' 'beguiling experience,' 'reflecting experience' and then invited audiences to 'share your experience' on social media or to visit the website for a 'richer [...] experience.'<sup>791</sup> Furthermore, in the introduction to the LIFT 2012 programme, Ball states:

At the heart of the festival is a commitment to participation and involvement, creating new theatrical experiences that place you [...] at the centre of things. [...] LIFT 2012 will be a thrilling theatrical ride.

The Festival seeks to attract the individual consumer by creating an ‘effective experience product’ that promises good ‘feelings’ in return for parting with their money.<sup>792</sup> Pine and Gilmore state that this is essential to generating profit through experiences, which must be managed to ensure the satisfaction and entertainment of each customer. This appeal to the individual of course directly counters the conception of a festival as a place of egalitarian social engagement that might create *communitas* and therefore this approach nullifies the festival’s promise of the possibility of emancipatory transformation or subversion.

Furthermore, the repetition of ‘experience’ demonstrates how arts organisations had absorbed the language of business. This had been encouraged in their internal communications, especially with private and public funders, since the 1980s but by 2010 was also used in marketing materials to audiences.<sup>793</sup> Using certain terms or ‘buzz words’ does not seem to change or influence the content of performances themselves. The use of this language, therefore, appears superficial and not connected to the core practice of an organisation. However, neoliberal interests penetrate organisations through these practices, and particularly through language, as Bourdieu observed. Terminology concentrates, totalises, objectivises, classifies and codifies through language in order to impose a particular view of the world<sup>794</sup> as a ‘linguistic Trojan horse.’<sup>795</sup> Embracing the language of neoliberalism demonstrates an acceptance of it as a practice that showcases and legitimises this belief system.

The repetition of ‘experience’ and an adoption of the experience economy, therefore, is representative of the privatisation of human experience itself. Although this is part of a general process of neoliberal market ideology absorbing all fields and practices into its own logic, the privatisation of human experience, emotion and behaviour has marked a new frontier of encroachment by the economically-driven

field of power. This has been characterised by Shoshana Zuboff as ‘Surveillance Capitalism,’ where users are provided with a service or an experience which seems positive, but which seeks to observe, influence and ultimately modify their behaviour (in the service of greater profit).<sup>796</sup> These contemporary processes which allow the neoliberal field of power to control the field of cultural production directly lead to the disempowerment and exploitation of artists, audiences and all those agents in dominated positions.

The experience economy offers theatrical production the possibility to go beyond heteronomous interests into ‘massification,’ where the conditions of its production create a socially neutralised product that can send a homogenous message, therefore producing a homogenised public for the work.<sup>797</sup> Bourdieu states that it is necessary to

see an undifferentiated message produced for a socially undifferentiated public at the cost of a methodical self-censorship leading to the abolition of all signs and factors of differentiation.<sup>798</sup>

The ‘bespoke experience’ that is offered to the consumer is illusory and is produced through approaching the ‘individual’ as an undifferentiated consumer. This consumer is then flattered via an undifferentiated message, which rewards the consumer with ‘pleasant feelings’ to ensure compliance to a process of exploitation that conserves the established order.

This relationship between the experience economy, exploitation and contemporary immersive theatre is documented in Jen Harvie’s *Fair Play* and Adam Alston’s *Beyond Immersive Theatre*. Both have argued that there has been an unprecedented popularity in the production and consumption of immersive theatre since the millennium and that this trend provides ‘an almost text-book example’ of the

experience economy put forward by Pine and Gilmore.<sup>799</sup> Using the example of the popular company Punchdrunk, Alston argues that audiences are turned into ‘producing consumers,’ whose ‘bodies, thoughts and desires are utilised in schemes of production and consumption,’ since

immersive theatre performances [...] posit the human body as a possibility for consumption. For this reason, immersive theatre chimes with the experience economy to an even greater extent than the theatre and performance that places less emphasis on this possibility for consumption. Commodity culture today is no longer resisted so easily by the supposed ‘non-reproducibility’ of performance, because the experience economy has absorbed memorable experiences (always fleeting) as the ultimate commodity.<sup>800</sup>

As human experience itself is commodified, people attending a Punchdrunk performance or having a day out in Disneyland are simultaneously consuming the product and producing it, carrying out physical and creative labour for the company and paying them for the privilege of contributing to an experience that is falsely presented as ‘unique.’

This promise of a ‘thrilling experience’ and being marketed as a ‘luxury product’ consumed for pleasure allowed LIFT to increase its profit through high ticket prices.<sup>801</sup> This increase had a significant effect in shifting the audience demographic and their motivations for attending events. The cost of tickets from 2010-2016 consistently excluded a large proportion of audiences in London, disproportionately those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups as well as immigrant groups, students, those from lower socio-economic groups as well as relatively low-paid artists and cultural workers. Ball had abolished the Festival passes that had previously offered an affordable way to access the majority of the programme. Therefore, audiences were required to buy tickets to each show individually.

For example, tickets for every show in the 2014 Festival cost a total of £407.94 full price.<sup>802</sup> The average annual earnings for 18-60 year olds in Britain in 2014 was £20,162, making attending the whole of LIFT financially preventative for the average earner as it would cost nearly a quarter of an entire month's earnings.<sup>803</sup> For 18-21 year olds, tickets at concession price would have totalled £323.94, which was seventy-two per cent of their average monthly earnings in 2014.<sup>804</sup> The average income for artists is much lower, for example in 2014 it was discovered the average income for theatre directors was £10,759, making LIFT tickets nearly fifty per cent of a month's wage.<sup>805</sup> Of course, these costs do not account for the added booking fees (averaging £1.50 per ticket), transport costs in London and food or drinks. It is clear that only those on very high incomes were able to experience multiple shows within the Festival, and although each Festival included a number of free shows, this created a two-tier system with outdoor spectacles deemed suitable for those without adequate disposable income but these people could not continue to attend the majority of the Festival.

In order to convince people to spend this money on theatre shows, LIFT had to present each production as a unique experience which was guaranteed to produce the desired effect for the audience. However, this re-framing is not limited to the marketing materials of the Festival. The requirement to deliver a unique 'experience' for each consumer means the Festival programming is required to include productions that are as unambiguous as possible in their presentation, therefore reducing the resources available for the inclusion of shows which are of a high artistic quality as these are typically characterised by their complex or challenging nature. Thus, it is not possible to retain the artistic quality of the work presented and increase the

cultural capital of an organisation whilst appealing to heteronomous interests dictated by the dominant, economically driven fields of power, politics and economics.

### **LIFT 2010: Immersion and Participation**

Mark Ball's first Festival as artistic director was held in June 2010. Of the nineteen programmed productions, only four did not involve any direct audience participation. The remaining fifteen were all 'experiences,' combining interactive, immersive, gaming and social participatory elements. After the programme announcement, Lyn Gardner commented on LIFT's new direction:

So what is it that makes a festival the genuine article [...]? [...] With LIFT, Ball believes he's found the answer in a programme of national and international work with strong participatory elements and an emphasis on digital technologies and gaming.<sup>806</sup>

As discussed in the previous section, Ball took this position to appeal to heteronomous economic interests, due to LIFT's 'near demise' the previous year. This was because immersive and participatory shows were more marketable in the experience economy and because Ball wanted the Festival to stand out in the crowded festival field. In 2009-2010 British arts festivals had reached their height of popularity with approximately sixty-five theatre and performance festivals happening all over the country throughout the year.

Participation is often an illusion of action that obfuscates the structural inequality and social hierarchies that are present within both the artistic and political fields and therefore cannot directly change the position of those who dominate the field. Whilst Ball was inviting the audience to 'play their part' by participating in performances, Cameron had used the identical tactic in the general election the previous month. The dark blue Conservative manifesto booklet was gilded with

*Invitation to Join the Government of Britain* on the cover. Inside, Cameron wrote in his introduction:

Some politicians say: 'give us your vote and we will sort out all your problems.' We say: real change comes not from the government alone. Real change comes when the people are inspired and mobilised, when millions of us are fired up to play a part in the nation's future.<sup>807</sup>

Both these 'invitations' to participate in the theatre and in the government are based on the neoliberal subject's perceived need for a direct and individualised engagement within an eternal and unchangeable structure of power, in contrast to recognising society as co-dependent groupings of individuals who are educated and trained in order to fulfil different roles on behalf of society within a system of power that is constantly shifting.

The LIFT 2010 brochure boasts repeatedly of bringing the 'artists and audiences together,' 'actors and audiences making work together,' 'audiences and actors join together,' in their description of shows, whilst 'pulling together,' 'getting involved,' and 'working together,' are phrases that emerge throughout the reviews of the festival's performances. Through this position, in both the political and artistic fields, participation is expected and even demanded: if you want to experience theatre you are expected to be willing to make it (and pay for the opportunity), and if you want a library in your community you are expected to volunteer to run it.<sup>808</sup> The demand for participation, far from eliminating the antagonism between hierarchy and cooperation, between autonomy and command, actually reposes the antagonism at a higher level. This process is clearly demonstrated in the participatory shows included in LIFT 2010 such as *Revolution Now!* by Gob Squad.

Performed at the Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA), *Revolution Now!* explored the limits and potentialities of collective action in a technologically centred contemporary society through staging a ‘televised’ revolution (an inverse of Gill Scott Heron’s famous slogan). This work is co-produced not only with the audience in the theatre space, but out on the street as those passing by are ‘recruited’ to become ‘the people’ and lead the ticket-buying audience in an imagined revolution. The search for ‘the people’ on the Mall outside the ICA was fed back live onto screens inside the theatre, whilst live footage of the audience in the theatre was also shown on the screen on-stage and projected onto the outside of the building. Therefore audiences were constantly watching themselves whilst they carried out clichéd revolutionary actions (such as creating the tableaux depicted in *Liberty Leading the Revolution*, reading out the Communist Manifesto, chanting slogans and singing Bob Dylan songs) as instructed by the company, whilst also being aware their actions were being broadcast into the street for others to witness.

Gob Squad has written that their work reframes the mediatised interactions of a technological and digital age, which are usually perceived to foreclose and prohibit genuine interaction, in a theatrical context in which they hope will enable a heterotopic event for their audience:

In the realm of our immediate neighbourhood we stand ready to do battle, equipped merely with Gob Squad’s means: video cameras, fantasy, charm, irony and above all [...] naïve blind faith in a better world. [F]aith makes it possible to take a stranger by the hand, see a hero in a passerby and ultimately in doing so, make a utopia possible, if only for a split second.<sup>809</sup>

Gob Squad created the temporary illusion of collectivity in the theatre auditorium, generated through participation of the audience and those who happen to be in the vicinity of the performance. The moment of naïve faith, which may lead to a second

of hope, is soon overshadowed by the cynical reality of a 'consumerist world where everything gets immediately incorporated into the market.'<sup>810</sup> In *Revolution Now!* the staging of images, gestures and actions associated with a pop-culture idea of social revolution revealed how absurd, ineffectual and empty of meaning these symbols are within a mediatised postmodern environment which trivialises political processes.<sup>811</sup>

Analysis of *Revolution Now!* reveals several key ways to problematise the concept that participatory performance (or 'experience') is emancipatory or empowering for its audiences. First and foremost, the discourse is authoritarian: the audience member is forced to express herself; she is absolutely required to speak, communicate, cooperate, and perform. It may have been said the audience were 'invited' to physically participate, but this is required in order for the show to happen. If everyone had refused to participate (a revolution against the Gob Squad) the performance could have not continued as planned.

Secondly, the terms of participation are entirely pre-determined by the company. Even as the entire audience physically contributes their labour to the work and are informed they are all equal, the company is only concealing their own authority, which can be revealed the moment an audience member participates in a way which was deemed unacceptable. The illusion of free action can be undermined at any moment an audience member does not obey rules (which are often implicit) as the disciplinary authority of the venue or producer will be called-upon to eject or regulate those who contravene the legitimated power of the company.

Thirdly, whilst the passer-by in the performance is required to volunteer their time and labour for the (paid) theatre company, the audience who have bought a ticket are in fact paying the company for the 'privilege' to perform the labour which is necessary to create the theatrical experience. Both the experience economy and

Cameron's 'Big Society' generate private economic profit from the donation of physical and creative labour by unpaid (or paying) participants. This shared exploitative 'outsourcing' is not a matter of coincidence but rather points to the ways that artistic production participates in the global arena of neoliberal capitalist production processes.

Finally, *Revolution Now!* does not state any particular political objectives beyond a desire for people to 'get involved.' In doing so, it reveals the lack of political objectives in participatory theatre where the conditions of apathy and cynical detachment (that are perceived to characterise political disengagement by the general population) are supposedly counteracted by a physical engagement with a series of actions. However, audiences are not given any frame in which to interpret those actions or the issues, nor space to think critically about them, as they are too distracted during the performance by watching themselves on the screens or playing the guitar. Therefore, theatre risks becoming another entertaining form of distraction and exploitation of individuals in a disjointed society, where disengagement is encouraged in order to conserve the established order that facilitates domination by neoliberal market forces.

Although *Revolution Now!* provides a straightforward, and somewhat self-aware, example of central critiques of 'participation' within theatre and politics, the above critiques can be applied, to varying extents, to the majority of the LIFT 2010 programme, as well as the overall 'experience' of the Festival itself.

Some productions, such as the Builders Association's *Continuous City*, offered a limited opportunity for audiences to participate prior to the theatrical event, but took the subject of participation in contemporary society as its subject matter. Director Marianne Weems had trained with the Wooster Group and her work developed the

integration of technology into productions by working closely with commercial digital designers. Many of the extensive videos, projections and digital interfaces that appeared throughout the performance were pre-recorded and carefully layered to create the action of the piece, but it also incorporated messages, photos and videos that audiences and the general public had uploaded to a dedicated social media platform before each show.

LIFT's brochure promised the audience that this platform provided a 'unique opportunity to feed into the performance and inform its content.'<sup>812</sup> For Weems the incorporation of this material was proposed as a theatrical device that sought to expose the sense of dislocation and homogenisation of place within a world linked together by digital communication, but this was conveyed much more effectively by the messages, photos and videos created by the cast throughout the show. The participation of the audience was revealed throughout the performance to not be meaningful as it was entirely superfluous to the action. Furthermore, there was very little uptake from the audience in London to contribute to this platform and none of the reviews remarked upon this element, giving the impression it was not known about or seen as entirely unnecessary. The ability for the audience to contribute material in advance was therefore a way for LIFT to incorporate the show into an experience economy paradigm, since it sought to entice and flatter individuals through appealing to a narcissistic impulse.

Participation could not be avoided when entering *Life Streaming* by Dries Verhoeven. In this experience, audience members entered a trailer outside the National Theatre on the South Bank with a row of twenty computers. Each were asked to remove their shoes and socks and sit down individually at a computer. On the screen a 'live chat' on webcam was set up with an (amateur) performer in Sri

Lanka. After establishing a rapport, the performer in Sri Lanka would detail their experience of the Tsunami on 26 December 2004 and then walk away into the ocean. At the same time, in London, the glass fronted room closed, the room temperature increased and a few inches of water poured into the room. Being trapped in a flooding room was designed to partially simulate the experience of the Sri Lankan performer and temporarily collapse the physical space between the two individuals. It is not clear to what extent Verhoeven was successful. On the one hand, the limit of digital communication in bringing people together is made evident, with the illusory aspect of the flood potentially bringing attention to the distance between the two people in terms of their environment, their life experiences and the systems of inequality at play which are perpetuated by economic and geopolitical forces. On the other hand, the reviews and academic responses to the show nearly exclusively focus solely on the show's ability to be 'moving'<sup>813</sup> and establish 'genuine intimacy' and 'trust',<sup>814</sup> celebrating its effectiveness as an exciting experience rather than critically engaging with the complexities and contradictions of the exchange and mode of presentation.<sup>815</sup>

In *Hotel Medea* by the Brazilian Zecura Ura and Para Active, the revenge tragedy was adapted as an 'immersive' trilogy of events that audiences could experience overnight. Invited as guests to Jason and Medea's wedding, the audience-participants travelled to a site at Trinity Buoy Wharf by boat from Greenwich where upon arrival they were expected to dance and dress the naked bride and groom. Later in the night, they were put to bed, becoming infants, before being required to flee Medea's murderous rage and hide in the docklands area. At dawn, the performers, cast, crew and participants all share a breakfast.

The main criticisms outlined above can all be applied to this production, but it additionally clearly exposes how the desire to create an 'experience' can erase

meaningful theatrical and artistic content. The experience of being immersed in a theatrical environment overnight is the primary purpose of *Hotel Medea*, which is vastly different to an engagement with the drama of *Medea* as a play, as the co-director Jorge Lopes Ramos explains:

We work with a ‘dramaturgy of perception’, in which the point isn’t to get the story across, but at which stage you’re offering which kind of participation. [...] We chose the title very early on: ‘Hotel’ was the closest thing we could think of where you might give yourself over, and expect to be looked after. [...] *Medea* becomes secondary to the experience.<sup>816</sup>

The ‘thrill’ and novelty of being held in an overnight show is highlighted by many reviews. However, most also note that *Medea* is not explored as a text, with the motivations or emotions of characters not focused upon. The requirement to participate demands time, energy and labour, whilst limiting the ability of the audience to critically engage with the content of the work.

In *The Daily Telegraph*, Daisy Bowie-Sell wrote that the ‘experience’ does not allow space to explore ‘how and why Medea is driven to commit filicide in order to punish her wayward husband,’ whilst Howard Loxton wrote in the *British Theatre Guide* that the performance was ‘strong on involvement and participation but weak on narrative information’ and furthermore that the participatory form and setting ‘plays no obvious part in telling the story [...] its major purpose seems to be to mark this out as something different.’<sup>817</sup> It appeared that, as with Disneyland’s rollercoasters, *Medea* is the theme given to a theatrical ride that offers audience an ‘unforgettable’, but ultimately meaningless, experience.<sup>818</sup>

*Home Sweet Home* by British collective Subject to\_ Change demanded audiences take part in an ‘experience-led installation’ where each participant was given a kit to build their own cardboard house and then expected to interact effectively with their

fabricated neighbourhood.<sup>819</sup> The LIFT brochure had even spuriously invited people to ‘make your property owning dreams a glorious cardboard reality!’ The installation made evident the precariousness of contemporary London living, where rent was exploitatively expensive and home-ownership made unaffordable by an inflated housing market that put property outside of the affordability of the majority of wage earners. Based inside ‘The Lift’ tent in the socio-economically deprived area of Canning Town this invitation seemed highly insensitive and focused on the ‘fun’ of the experience rather than highlighting social struggles for housing. The ease of building a house and participating in a community offered in *Home Sweet Home* was an illusion of action that only concealed the systems of power which restrict individual’s ability to live affordably in London and create genuine community, as it did not offer a frame to consider how this inequality might be transformed.

There were several other performances in the Festival that blurred the line between installation and gaming through a frame of participation. Critic Jana Perkovic noted that LIFT ‘dedicated the lion’s share of its program to events that could have just as easily been termed mass gaming, collective skypping or scavenger hunts.’<sup>820</sup> *We Built This City* was another installation based around erecting a more simple cardboard city in a ‘free play area’ for ‘children of all ages’ and *Hide and Seek Weekender*, where ‘grown ups’ were invited to participate in ‘social games’ were both located on the South Bank. Whilst *Beloved*, a one-to-one performance that utilised a ‘gaming avatar’ format by Nicole Blackman was at the National Trust’s Rainham Hall. Rimini Protokoll’s *Best Before* was a video game that was played on a screen by every audience member with an individual joystick controller. *Music for Seven Ice Cream Vans* was a publicly sited work aimed at reaching marginalised communities in East London housing estates. The mobile composition by Dan Jones was played through

seven customised vintage ice cream vans which were manipulated as they drove separate routes through the streets. The audience were supposed to follow the vans, creating their own version of the composition, although this was unsuccessful as people were not interested in engaging in a work that invaded their community without meaningful context, whilst demanding their labour in order to create the experience.<sup>821</sup>

Whilst the above works focus on participation by a ticket-buying audience coerced by theatre-makers, other works were socially engaged in their approach, created in collaboration with groups that are considered marginalised in society. In *Haircuts by Children*, facilitated by intergenerational Toronto-based company Mammalian Diving Reflex (MDR), adults participated in the performance by volunteering to have their hair cut, dyed and styled in a hair salon that was run by children aged eight to ten. Director Daniel O'Donnell described *Haircuts by Children* as 'a whimsical relational performance that playfully engages with the empowerment of children, trust in the younger generation and the thrills and chills of vanity.'<sup>822</sup> The work engaged with exploitation of labour in relational performance practice. Nicholas Ridout wrote that the performance was 'service economy performance,' arguing that instead of engaging in the representational labour of playing a character, the children were actually performing the labour of a hairstylist.<sup>823</sup> This is accurate, but is a deliberate choice made by O'Donnell in order to provoke both children and adults into considering what (economic or social) values are attached to labour and intimacy in society. This was evidenced by gestures such as paying the children a standard hairdressing wage for their labour. Although there remained an element of play acting by the children, for example adopting a formal 'grown up' manner in addressing the clients as 'sir' or 'madam,' it is accurate to say that the labour of the performance was

real, but framed as an aesthetic experience. This work provoked participating adults to consider when labour is exploitative, when it might be empowering, and why it is that we want to protect or remove children from a labour market.<sup>824</sup>

The engagement of children in making and performing *Haircuts by Children* undermines the authoritarian and pre-determined terms of participatory performance, since children occupy dominated positions in terms of power relations in the social field and are rarely given agency over their own lives. The transformation was always tangible, as the adults' hair was cut into asymmetrical shapes, dyed bright colours and styled with large accessories. Ultimately, it was an awkward, frightening and unflattering experience that requires a genuine exchange and therefore on its own terms it resists incorporation into the experience economy. However, the production's individual ability to resist this absorption was overridden by the Festival frame. As LIFT in 2010 firmly positioned itself as an 'experience,' this overdetermined the positions of all the productions in the festival, forcing them into an experience logic.

This overdetermination was also evidenced in the reception of *Not by Bread Alone* devised and performed by Nalaga'at Theatre, a professional company with eleven deaf-blind performers led by the sighted and hearing director Adina Tal. The process of making bread framed the piece, which audience members were invited to eat at the end of the production. This invitation was genuine, not coercive, whilst the labour of baking served to explore collaborative possibilities and non-normative interaction that demonstrated ability and empowerment for those who are often neglected by society. Primarily as a marketing ploy, LIFT chose to accompany the show at Arts Depot in North London with a 'Blackout Restaurant' that invited people to have the experience of eating in the dark. This induced temporary blindness was intended to develop empathy and encourage a greater investment in the other senses.

However, this intention was clearly lost on customers as the restaurant was so popular during its run it inspired several more 'dark' novelty restaurant businesses in London, none of which sought to engage with ideas of visual impairment and is ultimately demeaning of and for those who are blind.<sup>825</sup>

The programme of LIFT in 2010 clearly evidenced Ball's enthusiasm for socially engaged, interactive and immersive theatre practices. The range of companies and methods of working demonstrates that not all the shows can be reduced to an 'experience' for a paying audience on an individual basis. However, it is clear that, as a festival, LIFT is positioned to appeal to the experience economy. Socially engaged practices of theatre making become further complicated when held in a festival frame that is absorbed into the experience economy. The position-taking of performances that emerged from dedicated processes with marginalised communities therefore had their positions altered in the field by the movement of LIFT, limiting their ability to transform power relations and affect social change. As the Festival was absorbed into the language, framing and techniques of the experience economy it lost its own avant-garde artistic and antagonistic position in the field. But, on the other hand, Ball's playing of the game increased LIFT's economic capital and ensured its financial security, as it grew in revenue from 2010 despite continued austerity measures. This economic success came at the expense of the organisation's integrity, capitalising on creativity rather than the Festival being an exercise in solidarity and liberation.

## **LIFT 2012**

The influence of the experience economy model on the cultural field intensified sharply in Britain in 2012. Fiscal austerity had cast a shadow across all aspects of social, political and cultural life during the first years of the Cameron government, but the 2012 London Olympic Games provided a temporary economic

and cultural boost. London not only hosted the Games but the Cultural Olympiad, a series of events, festivals and performances designed to ‘highlight diversity,’ ‘raise cultural aspirations’ and ‘reinforce the UK’s reputation as a world leader.’<sup>826</sup> Since 2008 over £1.6 billion of arts funding had been diverted from ACE and the National Lottery towards the Cultural Olympiad.<sup>827</sup> Arts organisations could apply for this specific fund in order to support projects that would happen during 2012 but, in order to qualify, these projects would be required to match the vision of the Olympiad.<sup>828</sup> LIFT was successful in gaining funding for ten shows, half of its programme, enabling them to stage ambitious works and placing the organisation in a global spotlight as the June Festival overlapped with the Games held in the east end of London.

The 2012 Olympics and Cultural Olympiad was an exemplary event for the convergence of two colluding fields of power: the economic and the state. In London, local authorities enabled private companies to enact rapid ‘regeneration’ projects in East London during the lead up to the Olympics that demolished social housing and erected ‘luxury’ apartments, transformed and gentrified local communal spaces, and decimated long-standing communities. This process, promoted as ‘urban renewal’<sup>829</sup> and decried as ‘social cleansing,’<sup>830</sup> was done to generate enormous private profit, whilst government bodies not only allowed it to happen but also contributed public funds towards it.<sup>831</sup> Arts organisations were embedded into this process, receiving significant amounts of funding in order to create work that would help to obscure the damaging impacts of gentrification, predominantly in working class and immigrant areas.<sup>832</sup> For example, the largest grants LIFT received from 2009-2011 were from the Thames Gateway development scheme, which transformed forty miles of land in anticipation for the Olympic year. This money enabled LIFT to produce many of its socially engaged projects based in east London, whilst housing was built in the area

that was unaffordable to residents and community infrastructure replaced with ‘a few retail parks’ and ‘very poor collective facilities.’<sup>833</sup> In this process of gentrification, state power was deployed to increase economic power, which therefore seeks to reinforce its position by increasing state power, thus creating a closed loop where homologous dominant forces constantly conserve and perpetuate the established order. The field of cultural production is coerced into serving both state and economic agendas as it is resource dependent on state and corporate money. Therefore, the Cultural Olympiad became an event in which the arts would serve the neoliberal agenda of government.

Since its creation by Pierre de Coubertin in the 1890s, the modern Olympic Games had become a powerful international stage where the sovereignty of the nation could be exhibited through sport, culture and economic displays. De Coubertin had conceived of the Games as a resurrection of what he had interpreted as the spirit of the ancient Greek ‘festive assembly in which the entire people came together to participate in religious rites, sporting competitions and artistic performance.’<sup>834</sup> In its first three decades, the modern Games included arts competitions alongside the sporting ones. However, deciding the winners of these became increasingly difficult as what was considered ‘the best’ art was highly contested.<sup>835</sup> A more companionable partnership appeared possible between ‘culture’ and sport, where the former was taken to mean the ‘whole way of life’ of the host nation, rather than the ‘high arts’ alone.<sup>836</sup> This approach was epitomised in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, created by the Nazi Party coordination who used the event as an international platform to demonstrate the power of the German state. In the first Cultural Olympiad of its kind, it included populist displays of nationalist propaganda, mass participation, spectacle and scale of ‘state elite manipulation.’<sup>837</sup> Even though the content of this event was

decried after 1945, the cultural aspect of the Games would be used henceforth to demonstrate the aims and ambitions of the host nation through participation and spectacle.<sup>838</sup> For the London Games in 2012, the world witnessed an opening ceremony directed by Danny Boyle who staged a huge spectacle that told a version of British history which accentuated the perceived superiority of Britain in industry, healthcare, entertainment, gay rights and so on, and included mass participation from non-actors such as healthcare workers.<sup>839</sup>

Half of the shows in LIFT 2012 were presented as part of the Cultural Olympiad's 'London 2012' programme. Funded with over £1.3 million from the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOGOC), the most expensive and pioneering of these productions was *Surprises: STREB – One Extraordinary Day*, a spectacle that aimed to rival the opening ceremony in its scale, ambition and popular appeal.<sup>840</sup> Working with over thirty dancers called the 'Streb Extreme Action Company,' Streb designed seven daredevil displays on iconic landmarks along the Southbank including: the London Eye (*Human Eye*), the Millennium Bridge (*Waterfall*), City Hall (*Skywalk*), outside the National Theatre (*Speed Angels*), in Paternoster Square (*Turn*) and Trafalgar Square (*Ascension* and *Human Fountain*).<sup>841</sup> In each of these locations, a group of the dancers would appear without prior warning to perform daredevil stunts and display their athletic skills.

*STREB* was produced by LIFT as part of London's 'Look and Feel' programmes supported by The Greater London Authority and LOCOG, in order to make the 'Games experience an unforgettable memory' for all visitors to London.<sup>842</sup> As a 'Spectaculars' project, it was supported to be one of the 'wow moments' which were to be 'visual postcards that will be forever burned into people's memory as one of their key London 2012 Games experiences,' in order to draw attention to London's

tourist attractions.<sup>843</sup> Prior to the event Jeremy Hunt said: ‘*STREB* [...] will promote London’s iconic landmarks to the world by showing them off in a completely new light.’<sup>844</sup> To this end it was successful as LIFT estimated 18,000 people watched these events throughout Sunday 15 July in person with many thousands more seeing online and national media coverage.<sup>845</sup> Many of the audience responses, taken as surveys by volunteers immediately after each performance, commented that the shows were ‘inspiring,’ ‘breath taking,’ ‘shocking.’ However, others recorded that they had hoped there would be ‘more artistic events and not just spectacle.’ These comments echoed a review written by Jonathan Jones in *The Guardian* that called the day ‘all show and no brains,’ accusing LIFT of confusing ‘art with hype and show,’ and the whole Cultural Olympiad of having ‘no cultural depth at all.’<sup>846</sup>

*100% London* by Rimini Protokoll was over-determined by its presentation as part of the London 2012 Festival. The position-taking of LIFT and the Cultural Olympiad meant this cosmopolitan celebration had an uncritical attachment to the government’s strategic frameworks of participation promoted throughout 2012. Named *100% City* by the company, the production used a structure that the company reproduced across the globe with minimal adjustments for different cities such as *100% Cork*, *100% Melbourne*, *100% Lisbon*, *100% Montréal*, *100% Penang* and so on. In each version Rimini Protokoll recruit one hundred participant performers based on the specific categories of ‘age, gender, ethnic background, household status and region.’<sup>847</sup> The main purpose of the production is to ‘humanise statistics,’ by showing how these ‘real people’ of London are ‘not just numbers’ but ‘people with power to make [their] own decisions.’<sup>848</sup>

In the programme for *100% London*, Ball wrote how the performance matched the Cultural Olympiad’s key aim of celebrating ‘cultural diversity’ by promising to

fulfil a fascination with ‘the communities and cultures nestled alongside each other,’ a saccharine description of the complexities of the multicultural city.<sup>849</sup> The winning bid for the London 2012 Olympics had been sold on London’s ethnic and cultural diversity, a self-congratulatory evasion of the tensions of multicultural Britain. The opening claim made in the bid submitted to the IOC claimed ‘London’s diversity and creativity would contribute to the Games [...] guaranteeing a warm welcome for all.’<sup>850</sup> Whilst Mayor of London Ken Livingstone claimed that ‘if one city encapsulates the human race it is London. Every athlete [...] would find a community from their home country to welcome them, receive them and cheer them on.’<sup>851</sup> At the time critics saw this as blatant opportunism as it negated any critical engagement with the systematic issues of racism and prejudice that still proliferated in the capital.<sup>852</sup> This point was underscored following 7 July 2005 attacks, occurring less than twenty-four hours after the success of the Olympic bid was announced, in which three of the four suicide bombers were young, middle class, British citizens. Following this, Brown had highlighted the need for greater ‘integration’ and even proposed a national holiday to celebrate ‘Britishness.’<sup>853</sup>

*100% London*’s diverse city chorus fuelled London’s perception as a cosmopolitan city, whilst exoticising difference and creating a strict theatrical frame for the behaviour and expression of participants. For example, Fragkou and Hager observed how in the performance some performers were ‘asked to dance briefly to a piece of music that represented their culture as a way of illustrating the range of ethnic backgrounds in London.’<sup>854</sup> This performance of ‘the ethnic’ rehearsed what Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo have referred to as a ‘thin cosmopolitanism’ which ‘lacks due to consideration of either the hierarchies of power subtending cross-cultural engagement or the economic and material conditions that enable it.’<sup>855</sup> Similarly, in

the Olympic bid, Black-British and Asian-British athletes (such as Denise Lewis, Kelly Holmes, Amir Khan and Ade Adepitan) were featured prominently throughout in an attempt to assert ‘multiculturalist nationalism’ in which such figures are integral to the self-image of the nation as ‘tolerant.’<sup>856</sup> Critically, their role remained contingent on them presenting as ‘appropriate’ national subjects by conforming to corporate, nationalist, conservative and gendered expectations.<sup>857</sup> As Harvie has written, whilst cultural differences are purported to be protected, the state has in fact ‘assimilated them to serve its own imperial purposes, such as the cultivation of a self-promoting and self-interested narrative of the metropolis as benignly tolerant of difference.’<sup>858</sup>

A large section of the show involved a question being asked, and all participants moving to the left or right side of the green circle labelled ‘me’ and ‘not me.’ These questions ranged from enquiries about personal experience, ‘have you survived cancer?’ and ‘have you ever contemplated suicide,’ to political positions such as ‘do you want to ban the burqa in public space?’ and ‘do you think gay marriage should be allowed?’ Although these questions highlighted a diversity of opinions on contentious subjects (albeit restricted to a yes or no answer), there was no discussion, no critical analysis of how these questions were answered and the structure of the show had ensured no disagreements would be played out on stage. This negotiation of ‘diversity’ painted an ideal, positivistic image of London’s ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural composition, reinforcing official national narratives about a harmonious co-existence of different cultures. *100% London* rendered invisible the ethnic fissures of the city’s demographics, thus filling the state’s aspirations for managing diversity and difference. The way in which Rimini Protokoll’s show had already demonstrated it could do this in previous *100% City* manifestations was the reason it was programmed by Ball to be part of LIFT’s Olympiad offerings.

This fissure was evidenced in pre-production, as each of the one hundred participant-performers were required to nominate the next, in the hope of creating a continuous chain. However, often those chosen would not know anyone outside of their age or ethnic group to nominate. When there were thirty-seven recruits, there was nobody of Pakistani heritage, a significant ethnic group in the capital. Furthermore none of the thirty-seven individuals knew anybody to ask who was Pakistani. The LIFT team was required to recruit through newspaper adverts and personal enquiries, demonstrating how minimal intercultural or multicultural interaction occurred within the city's highly diverse populations. Therefore the performance of an unbroken chain, presented as 'documentary theatre,' obscured the more fractured reality.

*Unfinished Dream* created by the Iranian director Hamid Pourazari was also funded as part of the Cultural Olympiad to create community spirit in Croydon. Pourazari collaborated with a local theatre project, Perpanata, to bring fifty residents and refugees together to create a devised show based on the images in their dreams. The performance proved exemplary as a community project for those who took part in the three-month process, and produced greater multicultural understanding in the social fabric of the area, with one participant explaining the impact of the show on their life:

Not only has [*Unfinished Dream*] changed peoples lives but it has helped people to change their mind set about certain things, that you can do all things, regardless, whether its hard or not hard, so that's the way I see it. Because I didn't I could act and now I know I can act.<sup>859</sup>

As with *100% London*, participants who said they had found the show important as they were able to make friends with 'different' people, the biggest impact for those

who participated in *Unfinished Dream* was in their own personal development. Although this is not negligible as an outcome, it was complicit with the government's programme of 'improving' the Croydon area in order to attract property developers and investors to this part of London.

*Gatz*, by the New York-based company Elevator Repair Service was a different kind of spectacle. It was an eight-hour performance of the full text of *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald, which ran for six weeks at the Noël Coward Theatre in London's West End theatre district. Set in a dilapidated office, a worker at his desk, played by Wooster Group actor Scott Shepherd, picked up a copy of the book and began to read out loud, becoming Nick, the narrator of the story. As he then made his way through the text, co-workers became characters in the book, using their banal surroundings to conjure the extravagant world of excessive wealth depicted in the text. Ball felt it was compelling to present an adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*, set just before the financial crash of 1929, following the crash of 2008:

Here was a guy [...] writing about power without responsibility, people living this privileged life with a sense that everything's about to fall off the precipice, and it just seemed so timely. As a piece for our times, with all that narrative about the responsibility that should come with wealth and the recklessness of the world of bankers and high finance, for me it was a very powerful, political piece.<sup>860</sup>

Theatre critic Dominic Cavendish called the production a 'landmark theatrical event' and agreed with Ball that:

As the credit crunch rumbles on, and the gap between boom-year fantasies and harsh economic realities becomes ever plainer for millions, it wouldn't be surprising if Collins's interpretation, digging to the heart of Fitzgerald's ambiguous attitudes to the super-rich, strikes a chord.<sup>861</sup>

The eight hours of the production itself reflected the typical length of a working day, and its relationship to the aspirational notions of wealth gain in capitalist societies was summarised by critic Matt Trueman who wrote: ‘The American Dream has brought the American Drudge.’<sup>862</sup>

However, the production itself had another relationship to the creation and loss of capital. This was the first ever production by LIFT that was presented in this commercial theatre context. Although it was funded by the Cultural Olympiad, it also made significant profit through selling tickets throughout its run, the majority of which went to the private company of commercial theatre producer Cameron Mackintosh. Ball stated that this production was a political act for LIFT since

It disrupted the established way in which the mainstream thought theatre could be made and appreciated. What seemed to be an impossible project to deliver – a durational performance by a company no-one’s ever heard of [...] and to make that effectively a commercial success in a Cameron Mackintosh theatre, has caused a level of disruption in the West End that has allowed projects that wouldn’t have happened to happen [...] it’s challenging the status quo.<sup>863</sup>

Effectively, the production primarily benefitted the commercial theatre sector. Firstly by creating personal economic profit for Mackintosh, made possible through the investment of public subsidy but without return for the public sphere. Secondly, the risk managed by LIFT in staging *Gatz* proved to commercial theatre producers they could financially profit from more experimental theatre forms, benefitting the field of economic power, but decreasing the autonomy of the field of cultural production as it co-opts avant-garde artistic practices and therefore reducing their agency and effectiveness in opposing systems of domination.

The other eight works in LIFT 2012 that were part of the Cultural Olympiad were more conventional theatre productions. There were two new commissions from

British companies Forced Entertainment and Gob Squad, both returning to LIFT with *The Coming Storm* and *Before Your Very Eyes*, respectively.

There were also four productions of plays by William Shakespeare in LIFT 2012 that formed part of the ‘World Shakespeare Festival 2012’ (WSF), another Festival funded and presented as part of London 2012. These shows are therefore determined by being part of four overlapping festivals: LIFT, WSF, London 2012 and the Cultural Olympiad. Hence, these individual works were so compromised by the agendas of these different organisations it becomes difficult to determine whether any of these festive frames can allow for meaningful reception of these theatre works, or whether they are revealed as nothing more than a marketing ploy.

The WSF was organised by the Royal Shakespeare Company, which facilitated over sixty theatre companies from Britain and all over the world to perform Shakespeare’s plays, including responses and adaptations.<sup>864</sup> Two of these productions were supported by LIFT and came from the Middle East: *Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad* by the Iraqi Theatre Company and *Macbeth: Leila and Ben* by the returning Tunisian company Artistes Producteurs Associes both presented at Riverside Studios. Potently, *Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad* was the first production by Iraq’s National Theatre since the official end of combat in the country starting from the American-led and British supported invasion in 2003. The political importance and symbolic vitality of this landmark production was nearly impenetrable for an audience to access through the bumb of multiple festival materials and its strong message against British neo-colonialist interventionism was neutralised through the powerful nationalistic imagery that proliferated in the capital during its run.

Other Shakespeare productions were commissioned as part of a temporary ‘Cool-Britannia’ revival, in order to demonstrate the innovative and forward-thinking

nature of British theatre to an international audience and global marketplace. Adding another Festival into the mix, *The Rest is Silence* by dreamthinkspeak was co-commissioned by WSF, LIFT and the Brighton Festival. The company ‘reworked and remixed’ *Hamlet* in order to surround an audience with the action at Riverside Studios, with the actors behind windows that doubled as video screens and mirrors on all four sides. *The Dark Side of Love* was directed by Brazilian Renato Rocha with a company of British teenagers in the tunnels under the Roundhouse. An immersive physical production, the teenage performers created sequences based around young lovers in Shakespeare’s plays. Both these shows were deemed by critics to be ‘impressive,’ ‘atmospheric,’ and ‘memorable.’ However, all reviews (positive and negative) for each of these shows commented on the lack of artistic quality or substantive content. One typical example is found in a three-star review of *The Dark Side of Love* in *The Guardian*: ‘But, for all its strengths and visual swagger, this frustratingly disjointed piece never quite delivers.’<sup>865</sup>

The remaining ten productions in the Festival that were not directly funded by London 2012 still indirectly benefitted from the money invested in the arts in London during the Olympic year. There were several more immersive and site specific productions: British companies Coney and Magic Me gave audiences *An Adventure Map* and *Where the Heart is*, both guided tours that took individuals on journeys around the city; Look Left Look Right staged *You Once Said Yes*, a one-to-one that took individual audience members on a series of guided encounters around Camden; Syrian director Lucien Bourjelly presented *66 Minutes in Damascus* in which audiences were bundled into the back of a van and then held in faux-imprisonment in an attempt to convey the horrors of the Syrian war; *Motor Show* by Requardt and Rosenberg was a much-acclaimed site specific production on a stretch of wasteland by Greenwich; and a ‘Rio

Artists Occupation' was staged at Battersea Arts Centre, to look forward towards the subsequent Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

LIFT 2012 was one of the largest, most ambitious and most expensive Festival editions in the organisation's history. It embraced the nationalist spirit of the London 2012 Olympics that created a bonanza across the capital to draw attention to Britain on the international stage as a country that was wealthy, contemporary and rich in multicultural diversity. This carnivalesque period served as a temporary interruption of the prevailing values that the traditionalist policies of Cameron's austerity government had been enacting — and would return to — after the event was over. Despite the significant public investment in the arts leading to a huge financial return, as well as exceeding expectations in terms of domestic and international engagement with the arts, the government continued to reduce public subsidy to the sector.<sup>866</sup>

In 2012, London experienced an overwhelming amount of nationalistic British events, all distributed through media to an international audience in an attempt to demonstrate its global power in a post-imperial era. The popular Royal Wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton, Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee celebrations and the Olympic Games all contributed to a 'feel good' factor for a nation reeling from massive cuts in public expenditure. Although those agents most dominant in the political and economic fields had pursued and encouraged these bonanzas for financial profit to conserve the established order, these displays had a less predictable social and cultural impact. As one journalist wrote after the 2016 referendum decision to leave the European Union: 'the flags went up in 2012 and never really came down.'<sup>867</sup>

As discussed in Chapter One, festivals play a major role in constructing, (re)producing, and reinforcing uchronic narratives and images, which communicate

shared meanings, understandings and values which include national identity.

Returning to Émile Durkheim's theory of 'collective effervescence,' he argued that through social gatherings 'individuals imagine the society of which they are members and the obscure and yet intimate relations they have with it.'<sup>868</sup> In his authoritative study of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, John Hargreaves built on Durkheim's assertions to create an assessment of the powerful impact that symbols (which accrue meaning through ritual) can have on emotions related to national or global cultures involved in the Olympic Games and Cultural Olympiad.<sup>869</sup> The symbols which decorated London and were transmitted across the globe through media coverage, overtly conveyed British nationalism. The British Union flag appeared ubiquitous throughout the Games: flying from official buildings, draped over athletes, waved at the Olympic torch relay, projected across buildings and repeated thousands of times on bunting. Paul Gilroy wrote that these British celebrations were always:

[...] dream worlds revisited compulsively. They saturate the cultural landscape of contemporary Britain. The distinctive mix of revisionist history and moral superiority offers pleasures and distractions that defer a reckoning with contemporary multiculturalism and postpone the inevitable issue of imperial reparation.<sup>870</sup>

Gilroy revealed the extent to which 'postcolonial melancholia' permeated all areas of British life, an inability of the nation to process its loss of empire and position in the global standing it endowed. Thus, these 'nation-making' events did not seek to address systematic imbalances in power inside the national field, or in relation to global fields of power. Nor do they construct more convivial futures or ease multicultural tensions. Instead, their repetitions conceal these inequalities in order to conserve existing power structures.

From the outset, London's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games had aimed to strengthen British national identity, making it an odd bedfellow for LIFT which had a profound history of fighting parochial and imperialist thinking.<sup>871</sup> Although individual international companies who were presented in the Festival had still remained mostly independent from (or resistant to) state control and participated with a cosmopolitan spirit, as they had done for over three decades, LIFT had strongly aligned itself with a furtively jingoistic Olympic project. Although this collusion between the state and economic fields led this revived nationalism, in order to be successful it had to be enacted through the agents in the field of cultural production, as national identity is a product of narratives constructed and disseminated through culture.<sup>872</sup> As Britain saw a revival of the parochial attitudes (the flags going up) that for so long LIFT had stood in opposition to, it had almost entirely become co-opted by those fields external to the cultural field losing its autonomy and therefore ability to critically engage with the fields of power through high-quality artistic events.

#### **LIFT 2014**

LIFT 2014 was celebrated as the twentieth Festival. In the introduction to the Festival brochure, Ball wrote:

LIFT 2014 platforms a gorgeous diversity of work that wouldn't otherwise be seen in London. Without sounding overzealous, we believe that much of this work is political and engages with the big ideas of our time: freedom, justice and environmental and technological change. [...] The work is eye opening, witty and entertaining, with dollops of music, visual culture and animated debate thrown into the mix.<sup>873</sup>

Whilst it was accurate that there were more diverse theatre productions than in the previous two editions, the 2014 Festival's programme lacked coherency. As the author was working as a festival and producing assistant for the planning of the Festival in

2013 and its delivery in June 2014, this thesis benefits from direct observation of the backstage processes of the event as well as all performances being witnessed first hand. The programme for the Festival was predominantly created and shaped by economic factors. Individual shows were selected or dropped according to the availability of additional funding sources through private donors, trusts, foundations, awards or sponsorships: those productions that could attract adequate funding were given priority over ones which may have been preferred on artistic quality. This process is a clear example of a further eradication of the autonomy of arts organisations when subject to the interpellation of the economic field.

Although the large investment for events as part of the Cultural Olympiad was no longer available, a further substantial additional source of funding had become available for arts organisations from the British Government for another project with a nationalist agenda. This was '14-18 NOW,' which sought to commemorate and explore the centenary years of World War I. LIFT seized this opportunity to be able to commission and support productions from British and international artists. However receiving this funding was dependent on a number of criteria that the project must have met including: marking a national moment; increasing the number of volunteers; diversification of funding streams; giving the public a greater knowledge of the First World War; increasing 'social capital' for those who attend the event; and connecting contemporary art with heritage in order to boost the British heritage industry.<sup>874</sup> These restrictions placed on the organisation, artists and theatre companies constricted their autonomous creative freedom and determined the conditions of reception of the works.

The first part of LIFT's 14-18 NOW funded *After a War* programme began with two shows presented at the South Bank centre. *The Great War* by Hotel Modern

and Arthur Sauer was commissioned by LIFT in service of the brief provided by the funders in order to meet the requirement that work shown primarily explore World War One. The action of the show was played out as a re-enactment of trench warfare on a miniature film set of the Western Front, created with household paraphernalia, which was live animated and filmed on handheld cameras by performers to be relayed in real time through a large screen at the rear of the stage. Meanwhile, a Foley artist created a live score in view, creating the sound of explosions and horses hooves between a pre-recorded track of edited letters speaking of longing and love that soldiers had sent home. Although the novelty of everyday objects being transformed held some interest, the layers of technology in the large auditorium of the Queen Elizabeth Hall put the audience at a distance from witnessing the detail of the miniature world and puppetry used by the company, resulting in an experience more akin to watching an animated film that could not convey the emotional depth or empathetic clout that the material was appropriating.

The second production the following week in the Queen Elizabeth Hall was much more lively, gregarious and politically potent. *El Año en Que Nací/The Year I Was Born* was written and directed by Argentinean Lola Arias, who had previously co-created several productions in Europe with Stefan Kaegi from Rimini Protokoll. This was a pre-existing show which had been commissioned by and premiered at Festival Teatro a Mil in Santiago in 2012. Ball had wanted to bring the production to LIFT, and was able to leverage the funding from 14-18 NOW in order to do so. Despite *The Year I Was Born* not being specifically about war, its presentation alongside *The Great War* at the Southbank Centre and under the *After a War* umbrella in the Festival meant it was accepted as part of the funding bid.

On stage Arias had eleven performers born in Pinochet's Chile in the 1970s who each in turn re-created their parents' lives with photographs and other archival material such as letters, music and clothing. The previous edition, which had premiered in Buenos Aires in 2009 had used the same structure, comprising performers born in Argentina during Jorge Rafael Videla's dictatorship from 1976 to 1981. Arias used many of the established conventions of documentary theatre in this work such as the use of verbatim reading of letters, tape recordings of radio bulletins, projections of real family photos, artefacts and newspaper clippings within a presentational direct address delivered by a mix of professional and amateur performers.

Some of the performers in *El año en que nací* had parents who were among the 3,200 murdered, some 38,000 tortured or approximately hundred of thousands who had to leave Chile in exile, whilst others grew up with parents in Pinochet-supporting military and police families. The performance revealed the inherited tension between young Chileans, who were struggling to break free from the historical divisions and a traumatic legacy. However, it also sought to offer future reconciliation of this difficult past by bringing these performers together to tell their shared history and develop empathy for each other's positions. It did this through offering a fluid, interpretive treatment of history and identity that undermined any alleged objectivity, thus avoiding any claims to the 'truth' that can be detrimental to many documentary theatre pieces.

The second part of the *After a War* programme at the end of LIFT 2014, was a 'micro festival within a festival' at Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) which had invited twenty-five international and British artists to 'reflect on the legacy of a conflict that defined Europe and the Middle East and was a catalyst for the African independence

movement.<sup>2875</sup> It was co-curated with director of Forced Entertainment Tim Etchells and sought to reflect on conflict across Europe and the Middle East, expanding on experiences of war based in North Western Europe. There was further poignancy since BAC's building had been used from 1916-1918 for the trials of many of London's conscientious objectors. The programme consisted of almost entirely new work that had been commissioned by LIFT, and this led to a great variation in quality.

Theatrical presentations included: Stan's Cafe (UK) with *Finger, Trigger, Bullet, Gun*, a tediously dull play presenting the imagined dialogue of the meetings that led to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand with 19,000 dominoes that were 'triggered' to fall around the space being the only point of interest; Vlatka Horvat (Croatia) brought together seven artists from different republics of the former Yugoslavia to present different perspectives on the country, its dissolution and the subsequent war during a cerebral four-hour durational performance titled *15<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Congress*; Egyptian artist Laila Soliman staged *Hawa El Horreya (Winds of Freedom)*, an interesting documentary performance that pieced together stories of Egypt's 1919 revolution in order to draw parallels to the Egyptian revolution in 2011 that had ignited the Arab Spring; Congolese dancer and choreographer Faustin Linyekula performed *Statue of Loss*, an abstract piece which aimed to bring attention to the memory of Congolese soldiers who had fought and died in the First World War and those who had attempted to build monuments to the dead that had never been realised; Forced Entertainment performed a condensed reading of Ágota Kristóf's dark and powerful novel *The Notebook*, with two performers reading and moving in unison to give voice to the protagonist child twin brothers who experience first-hand the daily horrors, ethical violations and societal dysfunctions of life in a small village in

Hungary during the Second World War; in *Landscape with Skiproads*, Belgian artist Pieter De Buysser created a somatic poetic performance with objects that revealed the complexity of twentieth-century Western European philosophical responses to war; Iranian playwright Nassim Soleimanpour presented a very rough scratch of an ‘interactive theatrical game’ called *Blind Hamlet* which sought to demonstrate how, in wartime, it is difficult to ascertain whether someone is an ally or an enemy and how arbitrary those categories are; British-Nigerian playwright Inua Ellams wrote and performed a conventional spoken word piece, *The Long Song Goodbye*, which imagined an experience of a Nigerian soldier fighting for the British Army in the First World War.

The ‘dollops of music’ included the German and company&Co, comprised of theatre-makers and musicians, who held a ‘lecture-concert’ (*Sounds like War: Kriegserklärung*) in the member’s bar which examined, to a limited extent, the ways war is declared to begin and end in the contemporary era; and popular vaudeville-inspired musical group The Tiger Lillies created *A Dream Turns Sour*. This was a theatrical concert of original songs based on the writings of poets who had died in the First World War. The building also housed several sound, video and visual art installations including *Non Correspondence*, a collaboration between British war correspondent Lara Pawson and Tim Etchells that drew on Pawson’s personal experiences of the horror and banality of war reporting in Angola; Etchells also created a neon text that read ‘a small group of us scattered motionless over the huge parade ground,’ which was a fragment of an Alfred Evans poem about a group of conscientious objectors; Arias presented her moving video installation, *Veterans*, which followed the experiences of men who had fought as eighteen-year-olds in the Falklands/Malvinas war in 1982. *The Listening Post*, a local-interest sound installation created by Tom Chivers and James

Wilkes which assembled archival material about the history and lives of Battersea residents during the First World War, softly played through fourteen speakers spread throughout the Council Chamber; James Bridle marked out a *Drone Shadow* on the pavement outside BAC, a reminder of the oft-hidden technology of deadly contemporary warfare.

Finally, *Wars During My Lifetime* proved to be the most powerful performance of the weekend in which visual artist Martin John Callanan printed a litany of the names and dates of over two-hundred wars and conflicts that had existed since Callanan's birth in 1982 to the present day. The full list was read twice per day by a town crier in the foyer of BAC, taking over half an hour. Stopping to listen to the declaration, the audience would notice that thirty-seven wars listed had started before 1982, and were ongoing until after 1982 or until the present day, and that the War in Donbass had only been added in March, whilst one conflict had to be added during the weekend as American and Iranian troops began a military invasion against the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) in June 2014.

The weekend had offered a plethora of perspectives and performance experiences. However, few of these were of the production quality that was expected from LIFT. Many of the works seemed to be works in progress, although they were not described as such in the brochure, and this was not reflected in the comparatively high-ticket price. This was predominately the result of the constrictions placed on the artists and the Festival from the funding requirements to make mostly new work directly about conflict. Furthermore, adequate resources for development could not be provided for the high number of participating artists and the organisation was stretched thin due to having to promise to meet these pre-requisites. Although there were some interesting moments in some of the works, the most powerful works were

those that had longer gestation periods, like *The Listening Post*, or were pre-existing like *Wars During My Lifetime* or Arias' *Veterans*, which worked as a further exploration of the themes presented in her theatre production.

Overall, the weekend at BAC had a reflective and respectful tone, with careful contemplation and a gentle pacifist leaning. It did not seek to directly challenge existing ideas of nationalistic British superiority that is expounded through official memorials, although works such as *The Long Song Goodbye* sought to expand these narratives. This was due to the reliance on the state funding of 14-18 NOW, which required appeasement from LIFT and a navigation of arts position in British political order to further 'soft power' that allows the country to continue international trading activities (including the international arms trade), in order to receive future grants for desired projects in the 2016 and 2018 Festivals. Furthermore, *After a War* revealed the shallow emotional impact of many interactive, immersive and gimmick-based theatre experiments that had been prevalent in previous LIFT editions as these works were shown not to be able to move audiences or convey the emotional depth of experiences of war and conflict.

As with Arias' *El año en que nací*, many of the works selected by Ball for 2014 were documentary style 'new drama'. This style of production was more appealing to funders, especially those based in Europe, due to their perceived relevance to contemporary issues and the involvement of non-professional actors. This included the German company She She Pop with their fathers in *Testament*, based on King Lear, at the Barbican; CAMPO's return to the Unicorn Theatre in Southwark with *Next Day* staging the viewpoints of thirteen children aged eight to eleven; a group of African migrant footballers told their stories of being trafficked to Europe with the promise of joining European teams in *Michael Essien, I want to play as you...* directed by

Ahilan Ratnamohan at Stratford Circus; and *Turfed*, directed by Renato Rocha, in which a group of first and second generation migrant teenagers to London also used football as a way to tell the ‘true stories’ of youth homelessness.

These productions all saw marginalised individuals – by race, migration status or age – placed by theatre directors hoping to reveal the oppressed political position of these group identities in Western European and North American societies. The ‘Otherness’ of these bodies was routinely highlighted in these shows. In *Testament*, the intimacy of the company and their fathers allowed extraordinary vulnerability to be portrayed through dramaturgical devices that heightened the fragility of the father’s physical bodies. For example, they were made to wear increasingly burdensome costumes and then strip to partial nudity. Throughout, the performance laid bare the efforts of care in long-term familial connections that took place between them off-stage. The enthusiasm of the septuagenarians to be subject to such a public reckoning was uncertain. There is some discussion of the ethics of the fathers’ involvement in the performance, but it is ultimately seen to serve the ‘realistic’ presentation of these relationships on stage. In its final moments *Testament* ironically called for ‘rigorous communication, forgiveness, collective responsibility, and care.’<sup>876</sup>

There was significantly less interactive and immersive work in the 2014 Festival than in the previous two editions: *Symphony of a Missing Room* by Swedish company Lundahl & Seidl was a solo experience of sensory deprivation whilst being taken through the back-rooms of the Royal Academy. The French company Rara Woulib appropriated Haitian funeral traditions to take (ticketed) audiences on a noisy procession along closed streets from Greenwich to Deptford. *The Roof* was an underwhelming commissioned work by Requardt & Rosenberg performed on a specially made 360 degree set in an area of wasteland at the back of the National

Theatre in which the audience experienced dancers acting as avatars of a platform video game, performing parkour and with a soundtrack played through headphones. And *Longitude* was a failed attempt at creating an ‘international and interactive performance via the widely available, free-to-access networks and social media platforms’ of the internet, as due to multiple failures in the digital software and connective technologies it was unsuccessful in reaching audiences or creating compelling content.

Despite Ball writing in his Festival introduction that ‘theatre [...] isn’t just sitting passively in the dark for three hours,’ the most successful shows of LIFT 2014, in terms of being theatrically innovative, politically potent and emotionally engaging, did take this more conventional form.<sup>877</sup> There were three widely acclaimed productions which had toured internationally for several years but not in Britain. The first of them was *Super Premium Soft Double Vanilla Rich* by chelfitsch, the company of Japanese theatre director Toshiki Okada, at artsdepot – a long-overdue debut of his work in London.<sup>878</sup> Japanese theatre scholar Kyoko Iwaki describes Okada as ‘one of the leading theatre artists in Japan, [...] receiving acclaim for matching so called “super-real” colloquial Japanese with ungainly yet eloquent body movements.’<sup>879</sup>

The performance, set in a twenty-four hour city supermarket, was initially striking for its stark, crisp and garish colour palette comprised of rows of unmarked consumer items, falsely cheery staff uniforms and strip lighting. However it is how the actors moved through this eerie landscape that was mesmerising to observe, as they navigated banal everyday tasks through delicate and poised movements set to a piped, sterile rendition of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. The characters felt suspended in the no-place glow of the shop in which small-scale wars are fought and people fall in love but all in the context of an obsession with the demands of

profitability and surrounded by an endless flow of superfluous products which place them all under pressure. As they repeated their routines, the enforced politeness of the staff, required by both management and the conventions of Japanese society, becomes a form of alienation that distances everyone from each other, but also prevents people from embracing the depth of their own emotions. Instead, they are physically stuck in their strange puppet-like choreographic routines.

The second of these was Young Jean Lee's *THE SHIPMENT* at the Barbican, which had first premiered in The Kitchen in New York in 2009 in the immediate aftermath of Barack Obama's first election. Lee was an associate director of The Wooster Group and brought her identity as a Korean-American woman in order to examine race in the United States from her own perspective as a woman of colour. Lee's work is clearly directly inspired by LeCompte's 'interest in the political effects of theatrical representation', exploring an 'uneasy awareness of the ways in which the performance of identity on stage can shape spectators' attitudes towards hierarchies of race, gender and sexuality.'<sup>880</sup>

*THE SHIPMENT* could be considered a direct response to The Wooster Group's version of Eugene O'Neill's play *The Emperor Jones*, a piece that was first performed in 1992 and toured extensively until 2009, infamous for its controversial use of blackface in performance. This device, and the continual references to minstrel performance, were used by LeCompte in order to highlight how racial identity was a social and theatrical performance that was constructed from a series of gestural and cultural signs, rather than being innate.<sup>881</sup> Through extensively working with a cast of African-American actors over a three-year rehearsal process, Lee takes this proposition from LeCompte and dissects how black actors are expected to produce their blackness in a theatrical context through 'acting black.'

The first part of the production is structured in reference to the blackface minstrel show, featuring an energetic dance, a comedy stand up routine, a series of comic sketches and a song.<sup>882</sup> The familiarity of a London audience with American television comedy and the history of minstrelsy elicited the desired response, with audience members laughing uncomfortably and sporadically at the sold-out performances. The second half of the show was a performance of ‘white face,’ where each of the actors devised a character who arrives at a dysfunctional middle-class dinner party and subsequently quarrel in the style of a naturalistic drawing-room comedy. The audience laughed along to this familiar farce played out by the all-black cast for forty-five minutes. Later, after the scene has taken a turn for the worst, a racist joke is made and one character complains: “I just don’t think we’d be doing this if there were a black person in the room.” To which another guest responds with the final line of the play: “I guess that would depend on what kind of black person it was.” After this the lights immediately cut to darkness. Here, the unlikable characters are revealed to have been ‘white’ all along which creates immediate doubt in the audience about why they were read as black previously, posing the uncomfortable question of how individual audience members read race as a skin colour, social construction or theatrical performance.

The third production, also at the Barbican, was *Opus No. 7* by Russian Director Dmitry Krymov. The presentation was financially supported by both the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the British Council as an ‘Official UK-Russia Year of Culture 2014 event,’ sponsored by BP. It was hoped that this year-long programme of events would ease cultural relations between the two countries which had been fractured since 2008 when Stephen Kinnock, director of the British Council’s St Petersburg office had been arrested and all staff interrogated by Russia’s

Federal Security Service (FSB), in retaliation for the British expulsion of four Russian diplomats in connection with the murder of Alexander Litvinenko in London in November 2006. Further tensions emerged prior to the Festival in spring 2014 when the Russian Government annexed Crimea, with many projects being dropped from British and Russian institutions throughout the year in response to the political situation.<sup>883</sup> Both Ball and Krymov were personally invested in the presentation of *Opus No.7* for artistic, not diplomatic, reasons and LIFT sought to highlight the work's 'opposition' to the oppression and censorship of artists by the Soviet State: drawing parallels to contemporary Russia, such as the arrest of Pussy Riot in 2012, without openly challenging the financial involvement of the Russian state in the Festival.

*Opus No.7* had two distinct halves, the first, titled 'Genealogy' was a visual cartography of the Holocaust, culminating in thousands of pieces of newsprint blowing over the audience from holes in cardboard. The second concerns the biography of Dmitri Shostakovich with a giant puppet of Mother Russia haunting the stage which sheltered then tormented the Russian composer. The production was entirely held on the main stage of the Barbican, with audience members sat on chairs at the rear of the stage facing in towards the auditorium. This was a reversal of the usual spatial arrangement that allowed the giant 'iron curtain' of the Barbican which was opened during the second act revealing the enormous puppet which moved over the empty seats of the stalls towards the audience seated on the stage. *Opus No.7* was visually stunning, its predominant strength being the ever shifting stage-scape created through roughly constructed props that suggested rather than depicted: paint was splashed from a bucket in regular intervals along a white cardboard wall to create shadows that were animated by arms which emerged behind them. Three oversized papier-mâché pianos spin onto the stage in a clumsy ballet as the sound of crunching

metal is sent through the space, four walls of a white cardboard room is built by the performers, rotates and is set on fire on the inside whilst the fans are framed through cut out windows. The spectacle amazed and overwhelmed the audience who were placed inside the stage but also inside the action, though without interaction, with each image-sequence seemingly tangential to the next that denied any clear narrative but encouraged the spectator to absorb the emotion and tremendous energy throughout.

*Opus No.7* had premiered in Moscow in 2008 as part of the Third Annual Territory Festival of Contemporary Art and was part of the prestigious Golden Mask Festival's Russian Case the following year where it won two awards. Subsequently it toured Europe extensively throughout 2009-2010 and was performed in New York in January 2013 before being brought to Britain by LIFT in 2014, and to the Brighton and Norfolk and Norwich Festivals. Despite being highly acclaimed and winning multiple awards, *Opus No.7*, along with *THE SHIPMENT*, had been touring the European and international festival circuits for more than five years before LIFT was able to bring them to London, as no other organisation had attempted to do so; whilst it was the first time Krymov and Okada had been brought to England. This demonstrated the extraordinary lack of international productions being brought to Britain in the second decade of the century, compared to its European neighbours. EIF and Brighton Festival remained significant yearly events for international work. However, following the demise of BITE after its 2010 season there was no regular effort to programme high-quality international work in London.

LIFT 2014 was characterised by inconsistency, predominantly created through the requirement to meet funding expectations rather than an artistic, cultural, political or social agenda leading the programme. The logic of neoliberalism prevailed over

institutional logic due to a resource dependency that created coercive pressures in determining what work could be staged in LIFT.<sup>884</sup>

## **LIFT 2016**

The absence of high-quality international theatre productions in London during this period could have been an opportunity for LIFT to return to its original purpose of bringing exceptional work to the capital's audiences. However, the desire for a broad populist presence in the capital shaped Ball's programming for his final Festival. The public reception of LIFT 2016 was significantly shaped by being concurrent with the final weeks of campaigning, the day of voting and immediate aftermath of the highly contentious and internationally divisive British European Union membership referendum, which resulted in a decision for 'leave' with 51.89% of the overall votes. Across Britain in June 2016, the culmination of years of austerity, the erosion of social democracy, global neoliberal capitalism, multiculturalism and nationalism were played out tumultuously through antagonisms in the economic, educational, political, media and cultural fields.

Due to the shifting relations in the field over the previous six years, LIFT had been so co-opted by the dominant political and economic spheres that it did not have the autonomy to resist them. In a newsletter sent by email on 20 June with the subject 'The EU Referendum – a note from LIFT,' three days before the vote, the organisation made an unattributed statement:

On Thursday the UK makes a momentous political decision about our membership of the European Union. Whilst LIFT is not taking a position one way or the other about the Referendum the festival is a recipient of funding from the European Union's Creative Europe programme. This year's festival, which is currently in full flow, has seen a variety of new commissions and presentations funded by the Creative Europe programme, many of which have played to capacity audiences.<sup>885</sup>

Despite the significant impact leaving the EU would have on the arts sector in Britain and the LIFT team unanimously supporting ‘remain’ as individuals, the organisation did not take any official position for fear of financial retribution, loss of private sponsorship and public backlash. Official guidelines for registered charities in Britain advised them to stay politically neutral in campaigns, except when the ‘outcome of a referendum is likely to directly affect [...] the delivery of their charitable objects.’<sup>886</sup> To take a position would have been to compromise the broad populist appeal that Ball was aiming for.

Populism is a loose set of ideas that share three core features: authoritarianism, anti-establishmentarianism and nativism.<sup>887</sup> Firstly, as seen with the below examples, leaders are often charismatic with authoritarian leanings. Populists favour direct forms of majority democracy for the expression of the voice of the people through opinion polls, referenda and plebiscites rather than the institutional checks and balances and protection of minority rights that are built into processes of representative democracy.<sup>888</sup> Secondly, populist leaders emphasise a supposed faith in the virtue of ‘the people’ over an allegedly ‘corrupt’ establishment. These ordinary people are regarded as a homogenous group that is inherently good and ‘hard working’, unlike dishonest elites. Finally, the spectre of ‘the people’ is usually a coded term used to signify xenophobic nationalism, which assumes that the ‘the people’ are a uniform whole in terms of race, beliefs, income, sexuality and so on.

Populism can be seen as directly antithetical to the beliefs in which LIFT was established. Populism is in opposition to cosmopolitanism, the belief in which post-Second World War international theatre festivals were established where all humans were considered as part of a single global community, not simply within a single polity.<sup>889</sup> As well as emphasising the values of open borders, shared multicultural

values and diversity of peoples and lifestyles in inclusive societies, cosmopolitanism also challenges the authoritarian component of populism, emphasising the protection of minority rights, participation through elections, tolerance of social, intellectual and political diversity, the contribution of scientific expertise for rational policymaking, and post-war policy, such as the EU, promoting international cooperation.

Rising inequality in developed nations following the acceleration of neoliberal capitalism, which had followed the 2008 financial crisis, led to populist leaders such as Marine Le Pen, Norbert Hoffer, Geert Wilders, Donald Trump and Nigel Farage becoming prominent in their respective countries from 2015 onwards. The parties of these leaders gained votes and seats and entered government coalitions in eleven western democracies including Austria, Italy and Switzerland, with Trump winning the American presidential vote in November 2016.<sup>890</sup> In Britain, Farage's United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) won only one seat in the May 2015 general election. Nevertheless, the populist rhetoric introduced by Farage into the electoral campaigns through mainstream media had fuelled rabid anti-European and anti-immigration sentiments across the country, pressuring prime minister David Cameron to call a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union.

During the EU membership referendum campaign, Farage and his supporters in the media sought to stir up a potent mix of racial resentment, intolerance of multiculturalism, nationalistic isolationism, nostalgia for past glories, mistrust of outsiders, misogyny and anti-Muslim animus – which are defining characteristics of right-wing populism. These characteristics are in conflict with the Festival which prioritised multiculturalism over monoculturalism, international cooperation over national self-interest, free flows of people, ideas and labour over closed borders and progressive social values over traditionalism.

As populism is conceptualised as a loose political ideology emphasising faith in the ‘ordinary’ people over the corrupt establishment, its influence in the field of theatre can be seen in the moves to denigrate the ‘elite’ of professional actors whilst shifting emphasis onto the contribution of ‘ordinary’ people, whether they are non-professional performers or audience-participants with the belief that this leads to a more ‘authentic’ experience. However, theatre professionals do not hold the socially conservative views typical of populists. Most contemporary theatre and all of the work presented at LIFT claim to present some version of liberal and cosmopolitan social attitudes. The misalignment between the viewpoints claimed and the denigration of ‘elites,’ creates hypocrisy which leads to a political and social ineffectiveness and artistic inconsistency.

A successful Festival articulates its social values and invites as wide-as-possible groupings of people to share these values and to grow together in them. They are often heterotopic in principle, but do not have to display a truly *diverse* range of opinions (hence there has never been a show advocating fascism or racism in the history of LIFT). There is a small chance that people are converted through the festival. However, people attend festivals with whose beliefs – political, religious, artistic or otherwise – they already broadly identify. Therefore, in order to broaden horizons or deepen experience the festival has to have a clear sense of itself and its aims, even as it contains contradictory strategies or tactics.

The conditions that set the stage for the referendum had therefore been at play for many years before David Cameron pledged in 2013 that he would hold a referendum if the Conservative Party was elected in 2015. He stated:

It is time for the British people to have their say. It is time to settle this European question in British politics. I say to the British people: this will be your decision.

And when that choice comes, you will have an important choice to make about our country's destiny.<sup>891</sup>

The invitation from Cameron for the British public to 'get involved' is repeated here. It is no longer the expectation that elected members of parliament, with specialist knowledge, make informed decisions on behalf of their constituents but that everyone is expected to directly participate in international decision making regardless of their ability to do so. After Cameron's election with a Conservative majority in 2015, he was required to maintain this promise announcing a referendum on Britain's EU membership on 23 June 2016. LIFT's programme for the same month had already been launched by February, but the political landscape of rising xenophobic nationalism that had emerged since Cameron's pledge, with the increased power of UKIP, led to greater scepticism about international movement and cooperation, inevitably informing the curation of the Festival.

Only three works in LIFT 2016 demanded the direct participation ('get involved!') of a paying audience: *Everything by my Side* at the Southbank, *Calling Tree* and *The Empathy Museum*. However, the positioning of LIFT in the experience economy model had only been intensified, with the entire Festival being presented as an exciting experience for individual audience members. In the short introductory quotation printed on the simple fold-out brochure, Ball had written: 'We've travelled the world to curate a very special playlist of performances, politics and pop-culture for London, so go on – Press Play.'<sup>892</sup> The language suggests that each audience member is interacting with the Festival in an individual way and presents it as a 'Spotify' playlist. There is no mention of theatre. The promise is 'very special' experiences.

*The Empathy Museum* by Clare Patey was designed to ameliorate the increasingly divisive social landscape in Britain, encouraging individuals to listen to other people in

an experience that aimed to create ‘pleasant feelings’ about strangers. Each ‘exhibit’ of the *Museum* was inside a ‘pop up’ in a shipping container that purposefully mimicked the modish shopping ‘pop ups’ of the ‘BoxParks’ in Shoreditch and Croydon. In *Fair Play*, Harvie wrote:

Pop-ups hold out a socially micro-utopian potential, making creative interventions that are temporary, tactical, multiple and dispersed—and often deliberately social—in ways that might intervene politically in how people see and experience the world.<sup>893</sup>

These pop-up empathy experiences aimed to disrupt the capitalist flow of consumerism. Those who entered the museum anticipating the purchase of items were offered a different kind of transaction. For example, one of the ‘exhibits’ was *A Mile In My Shoes*, housed in a giant shoebox that appeared as a shoe shop. When someone entered, instead of browsing shoes to purchase, the ‘shop assistant’ would find you a pair of shoes that would fit, as well as a pair of headphones and an MP3 player, and you would be asked to walk for a mile in the shoes whilst listening to the story of the owner of those shoes. The other exhibits were *Human Library*, where instead of borrowing a book you borrowed a person for a conversation and *A Thousand and One Books* where you could choose one book from the recommendation that had been written for it by the person who had donated it.

Through these interventions, *The Empathy Museum* sought to connect individuals and make them consider their relationship with others, and perhaps with the process of consumerism, through a pop-up shop model and therefore could be considered as a ‘micro-utopian intervention.’ However, Harvie also describes how

London Mayor Boris Johnson advocated for pop-ups as they offered a ‘virtually investment-free way *to be seen* to support culture,’ without having to make ‘*actual* finance-demanding investments in state infrastructure.’<sup>894</sup> What these pop-ups offer is the pretence of an engagement with a community, whilst contributing to financial and social precarity through insecure employment and a lack of long-term commitment to an area. The experiences offered by *The Empathy Museum* were also subject to this critique. Each one offered a temporary feeling of engaging with compassion for another human, but participants were not required by the work or moved by artistic content to make any long-term commitment to change their behaviours or practices.

Another effort in developing empathy was present in *On the Move*, an all-day programme of installations, performances and exchanges at The Royal Court Theatre in response to the European ‘refugee crisis.’ Since 2015 Europe had seen a substantial increase in migration with millions of people moving to the continent, predominately refugees fleeing the ongoing war in Syria.<sup>895</sup> Alongside one-on-one performances, the most substantial piece presented was *The Milk of Human Kindness* by Chris Thorpe, a six-hour durational show throughout the day in the main house. In the performance, Thorpe sat at a table reading out the comments sections of UK newspapers (predominately from *Mail Online*, *Daily Express* and the *Sun*), whilst the news story headline was projected behind him.

As discussed above, populist leaders such as Farage inflamed xenophobic nationalism in Britain against migrants and refugees in order to increase support for the ‘Leave’ campaign in the upcoming EU referendum, substantially supported by some tabloid and broadsheet newspapers.<sup>896</sup> This included Farage linking displaced Syrian refugees directly to terrorist attacks in France and Belgium in order to make the argument that ‘EU’s open borders make us less safe.’<sup>897</sup> There was also a

billboard, which pictured Middle Eastern refugees queuing at Europe's borders with a subheading that read: 'we must break free of the EU and take back control.'<sup>898</sup>

This performance aimed to expose these views to the supposed liberal arts audience in the Royal Court theatre. The (incredulous) laughter that continued throughout the performance demonstrated that this audience were in opposition to such views and that, being predominantly white, they could listen to the racist, xenophobic and dehumanising abuse in these comments knowing they were not directed at them. In doing so, it reaffirmed the division in British society, one that had been characterised by the populist right as between 'the people' and the 'liberal metropolitan elite.' Although it did nothing to address this division, and in some ways re-inscribed it by re-affirming the stereotyped caricatures that (predominately) white middle class Londoners hold about (predominately) regional working class people. This show did not reach out to marginalised groups in London (such as people of colour, migrants and working class communities) but instead aimed to reach the Royal Court's wealthy audience and encouraged them to attend expensive LIFT shows.

On 16 June, one week before the referendum vote and at the height of the referendum campaigning, the Labour MP Jo Cox was brutally murdered outside her constituency office by Nazi-sympathising white supremacist terrorist Thomas Mair. The 'Leave' campaign had been claiming that a remain vote would result in 'swarms' of immigrants entering Britain, that it could trigger mass sexual attacks on women and Farage had unveiled the 'breaking point' billboard hours before the murder.<sup>899</sup> Cox had been a passionate defender of migration and a parliamentary activist on behalf of Syrian refugees— beliefs which had made her the target of the far-right Nationalist who shot her twice in the head, once in the chest and stabbed her over fifteen times

whilst she fought to defend herself and protect her assistants. Eyewitnesses testified that during the attack he had yelled: 'Britain First, keep Britain independent, Britain will always come first,' and 'this is for Britain.'<sup>900</sup>

Such a significant and violent event inevitably had an impact on the public consciousness, including on the reception of theatre. The murder was on the same day that *En Avant Marche* opened at Sadler's Wells. The show, at the prestigious dance house, had been strategic programming by Ball in order to create a stronger partnership between LIFT and Sadler's Wells. The absurdist performance followed an elderly musician who loses the ability to play the trumpet and his disappointment. It included a local brass band and many traditional national marching band songs. At the end of the performance, the performers and musicians invited the audience to stand in a moving rendition of *I Vow to Thee My Country* to an entirely white audience. The nationalistic overtones of the song and its position in popular culture presented on a day that had seen British nationalism lead to the murder of a young female MP seemed only to reaffirm, uncritically, that very nationalism, inappropriate for the internationalist aims of LIFT. Of course, Ball could not have foreseen the specific circumstances of the political situation, nor predict the escalation of events throughout June. However, this situation demonstrates the risks of compromising artistic integrity to gain strategic advantage. Furthermore, the overall low attendance at the show meant no partnership continued between LIFT and Sadler's Wells for the following Festival in 2018.

In general the Festival lacked a coherent vision that could bring people together collectively. Every individual production was targeted towards different audience demographics and each show felt divorced from each other in a way that did not enable interdisciplinary or intercultural dialogue. Instead, each was alienating and

disengaging. Many productions were reduced to a ‘gimmick’ by LIFT to attract an audience. Such was the case in *YOUARENOWHERE* by Andrew Schneider, which was sold on its pop culture content and ‘thrilling’ twist which revealed a phantom audience of volunteers at the climax of the show, and of *Meeting*, where an orchestra of small robots conducts two dancers. This approach was epitomised in an email communication on the day following the referendum vote with the subject ‘The most WTF show of the year:’

[A] moment of pure escapism may be the much-needed antidote to today's political hangover and the '45-minute plunge into *Japanese celebrity mania*' (Guardian) that is *Miss Revolutionary Idol Berserker* is perfect for that. [...] [T]here's plenty more on offer to distract and entertain next week too.<sup>901</sup>

The show itself, *Miss Revolutionary Idol Berserker*, by Japanese director Toco Nikaido was an exploration of Tokyo-based subcultures, feminism, pop-culture and capitalist excess. As Gardner noted in her review:

[I]t simultaneously celebrates the aspirations of Japanese pop-idol culture and mercilessly sends up its vacant heart. [...] This short, sharp theatrical shock cleverly tries to make us confirm, even as it smilingly reminds that an audience being sold manufactured idols and dreams is an audience who will never rebel.<sup>902</sup>

Despite these layered meanings, LIFT had deliberately reduced the meaning of the show in order to frame it as diverting entertainment from the reality of the social and political situation. This wilful divorce of theatre from its political, cultural and social role betrayed the core principles that the Festival had held since its inception.

In the short term, the so-called ‘Brexit’ vote was not an abstracted poll on international bureaucratic organisations but became a poll on cultural values and domestic realities in Britain. Following the referendum there was a sudden upsurge in

racist and xenophobic hate crimes across the country, with one Polish man beaten to death in Harlow by a gang of teenagers in the immediate wake of the result.<sup>903</sup> These events called into question Britain's claim to be a liberal and inclusive multicultural society, exposing tensions and divisions that many had sought to ignore or obscure over the preceding decades. The neoliberalisation of Britain had found itself articulated on the terrain of a 'national question,' a deeply unsettled political and cultural domain where what Antonio Gramsci had called the 'national-popular' was contested.<sup>904</sup>

The 'Leave' campaigns had articulated a profound vision of the People, one that a diffusion of vision in the cultural field had not been able to address whilst it was distracted by meeting targets and competing for funding. The public were told that the 'People' had been betrayed not just by the 'Elite' but by a combination of groups: the metropolitan cosmopolitan liberal elite (out of touch Europhiles, the architects of political correctness, insulated by social position from the effects of Europeanization); secondly, the European elite; and finally, the migrants, enabled by Europe's free movement rules to consume scarce resources (jobs, housing, welfare and other public services). LIFT, like most London-based cultural organisations, was firmly positioned in the first group, although to some extent it did incorporate and support the other two groups as well.

The consensus within the arts and cultural sector was that the impact of leaving the EU would have severe adverse effects on all areas of practice. Organisations were concerned about being able to work abroad in the EU for short periods, losing EU funding, and barriers being created that would impact artists from the EU travelling to Britain. The Arts Council's report 'Impact of Brexit on the Arts and Cultural Sector' stated:

If the costs of any particular international activity were to increase substantially following Brexit, organisations are generally more likely to reduce the amount of that activity, rather than cut elsewhere or being confident in their ability to secure additional funding to maintain the level of activity.<sup>905</sup>

Thirty per cent of the subsidised arts sector relied on EU funding to support their activities before the referendum, and this money would be unavailable from 2017 onwards.<sup>906</sup> Considering that domestic funding cuts had already caused a significant reduction in organisations presenting international work, the exit from the EU could prove devastating to the sector.

Ball had ensured the survival of LIFT as an organisation, whilst sacrificing many of its artistic and political principles which had become incompatible with the funding that was available under an austerity-driven Conservative government. This is a position all society is placed in under neoliberal market economics, as Bourdieu observed: '[Neoliberal policies aim to] *call into question any and all collective structures* that could serve as an obstacle to the logic of the pure market.'<sup>907</sup> As Festivals, and of course theatre itself, is a fundamentally collective structure, a space to come together, create, change history and generate *communitas*, the question remains whether they can retain this social value under the regime of an individualistic neoliberal ideology that prioritises vacuous 'experiences' over enlightenment or empowerment. As soon as this economic system, which so firmly shapes every aspect of life, is absorbed into the way artistic practice and production is carried out, it begins methodically to destroy the ability of those involved in functioning as a collective, which in turn destroys any possibility of collective action such as protest or high-quality theatrical experiences.<sup>908</sup>

Political action during the EU referendum revealed how the social distribution of attitudes and what Raymond Williams called 'structures of feeling,' came to centre on

the issue of ‘consent.’<sup>909</sup> Consent underpins possibilities of political rule and domination in which subordinate groups do not oppose or dissent from the political-cultural leadership that is imposed from those who dominate the field. Jeremy Gilbert described how the long period of neoliberal rule in Britain had led to the conditional consent given by the popular classes to become ‘disaffected.’ Political disenfranchisement was traded for the rewards of economic consumerism. Gilbert pointed to

the very real sense of democratic and political disenfranchisement. [...] Hostility to the EU, and to patterns of migration which appear to transform their communities and localities without any consultation with them, can also be understood as, in part, expressions of frustration with the lack of meaningful democratic participation.<sup>910</sup>

Gilbert’s analysis correctly identifies *meaningful* participation to be vital in allowing communities to feel enfranchised within society. Festivals also rely on this meaningful participation in order to transform ‘whole societies.’ As Gilbert acknowledges, during the EU referendum campaign ‘no other compensation for the negative consequences of neo-liberalisation could be viably offered by any government.’<sup>911</sup> And within theatre, any participation that does not offer *meaningful* transformation, or prolonged consultation within a community, cannot generate anything but frustration and rejection.

As evidenced in every chapter of this thesis, the everyday workings of a theatre festival practice highlights the pressures and interpolating deployments of flexible labour, artistic creation, authority, and other kinds of resource managements in which those with the most (economic) capital within the field closely monitor and control not only what is produced, but also the apparatus that regulate them. From 1945-2016, the cultural, artistic, political, technological and social developments have been

formed and altered by heterogeneous and contradictory forces. Analysis of these trajectories and projects through LIFT reveals these forces and the influence they have had on a local and global field, whilst also acknowledging the impact of the Festival itself on social, cultural, artistic, technological and political life.

Since the end of the Second World War, class recomposition, postcolonial melancholia, technological advancement, globalisation, neoliberal capitalism, cosmopolitanism and theatrical innovations have formed intersecting lines of force that have interpolated with the fracturing of apparently established governmental, social, political and artistic formations. Throughout this period international festivals of theatre in Britain emerged, formed and reformed new articulations that promised to overcome divisions of race, class, gender and cultural backgrounds, whilst transforming the theatrical landscape through hybrid intercultural exchange and innovative practice. However, the increased domination of the economic field enforced through neoliberal logic during this period could not have been predicted and its far-reaching effects on the practices of agents in the field of cultural production have seen a co-option and coercion of processes that are constantly being revealed and demonstrated. As Britain enters a new era of isolationist politics, it remains to be seen whether festivals can be recovered from the market as a collective social, political and artistic endeavour.

## Conclusion

The founding, development and growth of international theatre festivals in Britain over more than seventy years demonstrates the sustained interest there has been in these events. LIFT was vital in establishing a particular kind of theatre festival that has become prevalent since 1981, and set the expectation of what an international theatre festival should offer to a city, theatre-makers and audiences. At the same time, this thesis has examined how a neoliberal reengineering of the state since the 1980s foregrounded the economic motives for supporting the arts, which has led to organisations having to prioritise financial targets over a cultural, artistic and social purpose. This present study has demonstrated how the dominant field of power increasingly encroached upon the logic of the field of cultural production, forcing LIFT to become more socially instrumental and economically profitable. These factors have decreased LIFT's ability to create meaningful social bonds or develop a real, oppositional cultural practice. Mapping this field has further revealed the prevailing hostile conservatism of a dominant isolationist British culture that continues to dismiss 'foreign' theatre as inferior.

The analysis of LIFT through the framework of the sociology of the theatre identified that neoliberal capitalist political doxa is the primary factor that has shaped (and continues to shape) the field of British theatre and international theatre festivals in Britain. This primary factor can be opposed or embraced by the director of a theatre festival organisation, although, as Shevtsova warned, it has become 'more tentacular *and* tighter' in restricting the agency of discrete fields.<sup>912</sup> As demonstrated in this thesis, the prioritisation of the artistic integrity of the festival, placing emphasis on high-quality work, most often places the organisation in a precarious financial position. Alternatively, the logic of the dominant field of power can be embraced,

which leads to more economic resources for the organisation but compromises the artistic and social value. Either way, the effort to harness cultural practice by the field of power, and the field of cultural production as an ongoing site of contestation ultimately demonstrates the continued importance and relevance of arts and culture to contemporary British society.

In the post-war period, the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) first established international theatre festivals in Britain. EIF set the example of this kind of an event as a site for the exhibition and distribution of serious, high-cultural forms which further aimed to support an international effort of reconciliation and peace between nation-states. The position-disposition-position taking nexus of its directors, whose power was also perpetuated and maintained through their delivery of the Festival, established theatre festivals as important sites of cultural power with the ability to maintain or challenge the positions of others in the wider cultural field. EIF established a role in social life, supported in part by new public subsidies administered through the Arts Council of Great Britain, which meant it quickly became contested site in the 'cultural revolution' of the 1960s and 1970s. From this time onwards, multiple agents in the field of festivals vied for control over the distribution of power and the right to articulate cultural value.

From 1979, when Margaret Thatcher began to reengineer the priorities of the state to serve a neoliberal capitalist agenda, Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal established LIFT in order to be 'absolutely against' the prime minister and 'everything she stood for.'<sup>913</sup> Positioned as 'champions of subversion' the artistic directors brought together artists who occupied similarly oppositional positions from countries all over the world, in alliance with (and directly supported by) the oppositional bureaucratic practices of the Greater London Council (GLC).<sup>914</sup> This solidarity facilitated and strengthened

LIFT's resistant practices for several years before Thatcher abolished the GLC. In this first decade, Fenton and Neal pioneered the model of a socially and politically engaged international theatre festival as an event that could mobilise dominated fractions. They did this by combining high-quality established international theatre productions with innovative work from around the world that engaged directly with contemporary political issues and experimented with site-specific, publically sited and interactive theatre forms.

In the 1990s LIFT attempted to create a new practice of resistance by developing a Learning Programme that used grassroots education initiatives and long-term socially engaged projects to assert and articulate the value of theatre beyond dominant economic assertions regarding its value to the British economy. During this decade, Fenton and Neal, supported by Tony Fegan and Julia Rowntree, found ways to develop intercultural engagement guided by artists which focused on the empowerment of marginalised groups. However, this approach was then appropriated by the neoliberal New Labour Government, led by Tony Blair, which offered greater 'investment' for arts education projects as part of the 'cultural industries,' whilst demanding that comprehensive targets were met. This served to bring all fields, even those who had previously retained their oppositional autonomy, in line with the logic of the dominant field of power.

In this continued climate of funding arts for instrumental purposes, Fenton and Neal instigated 'The LIFT Enquiry' in order to move away from the biennial festival model. At this point, they believed the event had been too co-opted into a commercial framework that required a consistent 'product,' and conversely wanted to focus on process-based practice. However, the Enquiry demonstrated that it was not just festivals that were subject to this co-option, but the field of theatre itself. In

handing over the festival to Angharad Wynne-Jones, it became apparent that any resistance to the dominant field's expectations would be met with punitive measures. With the departure of Fenton and Neal from LIFT, the organisation had lost its distinct identity and much of its symbolic capital. It was uncertain whether the organisation would continue into the second decade of the twenty-first century.

The resurrection of LIFT by Mark Ball documents how the Festival aligned itself with the 'experience economy' in order to embrace a neoliberal approach to the creation of the theatre festival. This was done in the context of extensive cuts in arts funding carried out by the Conservative-led Coalition government, alongside a significant reduction in public subsidy and welfare provision. The festivity of LIFT was lost as social bonds became absorbed into economic relations and the selection of works displayed was determined by profit-motives, prohibiting collective endeavour.

LIFT thus far continues as a biennial Festival. The 2018 edition was led by commercial theatre producer David Binder, an enthusiastic promoter of participatory performance and, what he termed, 'the twenty-first century arts festival revolution' which made 'cities better places to live.'<sup>915</sup> In the same year, the permanent new artistic director was announced as Kris Nelson, a Canadian theatre producer who had run Dublin Fringe Festival for four years and was chosen due to his ability to make 'experimental work become popular.'<sup>916</sup> As would be expected, there are presently no plans in place to overhaul the model Ball had established, and continued partnerships with venues such as the Barbican and Royal Court are secured for the next Festival in 2020. For all arts organisations in Britain with an international scope, the biggest obstacle to taking any organisational and artistic risks in the present climate is the ongoing uncertainty of Britain's relationship with the European Union, following the referendum vote in 2016. Pragmatically, LIFT is having to budget for several different

possibilities since costs such as those of visas for EU artists to work in Britain is still unknown.

In their various forms, festivals are more popular in Britain in their commercial form than ever before. It was widely reported that more than a thousand 'festival events' had taken place in Britain in 2016, double that of ten years previously.<sup>917</sup> However, festivals of theatre and performance, with their reliance on subsidised funding and international cooperation, are in turbulence. In 2019, at the time of submission, nearly all regular international theatre festivals dedicated to experimental and activist performance are under serious threat. Perhaps most starkly, AV Festival in Newcastle, who had received regular funding since 2007, had this entirely removed in reaction to their 2016 edition which asked, 'What About Socialism?' and attempted to 'think about alternative futures to neoliberalism.'<sup>918</sup> SPILL Festival has ceased its internationally focused London edition to focus on a local arts festival in Ipswich. From 2015, Fierce Festival in Birmingham reduced its output from annually, to biennially. In Between Time (IBT) in Bristol, held their final biennial edition in February 2017 and currently have no plans for another. Buzzcut in Glasgow, which held an annual performance festival from 2012 to 2017, has an uncertain future. BITE no longer exists, and the Barbican has limited its international theatre programme significantly as a consequence.

In Edinburgh, the EIF has become mostly irrelevant to contemporary international practice and faces annual accusations of elitism. The Fringe Festival is under scrutiny due to several campaigns against the exploitation of those working during the Festivals. Forest Fringe, a dedicated space since 2006 for international experimental performance during the Fringe, had its final Festival edition in August 2017. Since 2016, Brighton Festival and Norfolk and Norwich Festival have

drastically reduced their contemporary theatre presentations and commissions and focused instead on more box-office assured pop music shows, circus and comedy. In the absence of these festivals, there have been some shorter, irregular festivals that are created by informal groups of artists such as Steakhouse Live in London. However, such festivals do not have the funds or infrastructure to support a programme of international theatre.

The scope of this thesis and the material studied has revealed that international theatre festivals have had a significant long-term impact in the field of theatre in Britain. There is a large area of study that will grow from this examination, studying other theatre and performance festivals. The turbulence in the field of international theatre festivals at the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, despite hostile circumstances, corroborates my conclusion that state-led neoliberal arts policy is detrimental to the production of meaningful theatre festivals, as exemplified by the shifting position of LIFT in the field. The field itself is not deterministic; as Shevtsova has argued, ‘culture is not a straightjacket.’<sup>919</sup> However, it is vital that those political and economic practices which attempt to force artistic practice into such restrictions are challenged in order to retain agency in the field of cultural production. This thesis recognises, in an adaptation of Shevtsova’s work, that academic scholars, in solidarity with those in homologous positions in associated fields, must use their ‘creative choices, intentions, pursuits and decisions’ not only in reaction to the circumstances in which they find themselves but to be ‘*proactive* above all else.’<sup>920</sup> Above all, this thesis argues for the value and significance of mounting a sociology of theatre festivals, of which this thesis is the first contribution.

## Endnotes

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### Introduction

<sup>1</sup> See the special festival issue of *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol.13, No.4 (2003), in particular David Bradby and Maria Delgado, 'Editorial,' pp.1-4; Temple Hauptfleisch, Shulamith Lev-Aladegm, Jacqueline Martin, Willmar Sauter, Henri Schoenmakers, eds., *Festivalising! Theatrical Events, Politics and Culture* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007); Bernadette Quinn, 'Arts Festivals and the City,' *Urban Studies*, Vol.42, No.5-6 (2005), p.931; Richard Prentice and Vivien Anderson, 'Festival as Creative Destination,' *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 30, No.1 (2003), p.7-8; Stanley Waterman, 'Carnivals for Elites? The Cultural Politics of Arts Festivals,' Vol.22, No.1 (1998), p.65.

<sup>2</sup> Chronotope is used throughout in Shevtsova's definition, drawn from Mikhail Bakhtin, to mean 'the particular sociohistorical time-place that engenders a particular kind of sign-making which cannot be confused with any other time and place.' See: Maria Shevtosva, 'Sociocultural Analysis: National and Cross-cultural Performance,' *Theatre Research International*, Vol.22, No.1 (1997), p.6.

<sup>3</sup> Eileen Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival, 1947-1996* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996); Angela Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Post-War Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Jen Harvie, 'The Edinburgh Festivals: Globalisation and Democracy,' *Staging the UK* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005), pp.74-110.

<sup>4</sup> Maria Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre and Performance* (Verona: QuiEdit, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre and Performance*, p.32.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.22. [Emphasis in original]

<sup>7</sup> See Hauptfleisch, et al. eds., *Festivalising!*

<sup>8</sup> Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika Vizedom and Gabrielle Caffee, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977) [1909]; Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969); Victor Turner, 'Liminal to Liminoid in Play, Flow and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology,' in *The Anthropological Study of Human Play*, ed. Edward Norbeck (Houston: William Marsh Rice University, 1974), pp.53-92; Victor Turner, ed., *Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982); Frank Manning, ed., *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performance* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983); Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Alessandro Falassi, *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

<sup>9</sup> Philip Long and Mike Robinson, eds., *Festivals and Tourism: Marketing, Management and Evaluation* (Sunderland: Business Education Publishers, 2004); David Picard and Mike Robinson, eds., *Festivals, Tourism and Social Change: Remaking Worlds* (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2006); Falassi, *Time Out of Time*.

<sup>10</sup> For a full discussion of the theoretical foundations and methodology of the sociology of theatre, see essays I-IV in Shevtsova's *Sociology of Theatre and Performance*.

<sup>11</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: The Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emmanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996); Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.29.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

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## Chapter One

<sup>14</sup> Edinburgh Festival Society, 'Submission on Behalf of Edinburgh Festival Society for Nobel Peace Prize,' 1949, National Library of Scotland; for a comprehensive history of the emergence and development of the Edinburgh International Festivals, and the Edinburgh Festivals in more general terms see Eileen Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival 1946-1996* (Edinburgh: Scholar Press, 1996); Angela Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Glynne Wickham, *The Medieval Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 28-40.

<sup>16</sup> See Peter Wilson, *The Greek Theatre and Festivals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> See Hilda Kean, 'Tolpuddle, Burston and Levellers: The Making of Radical and National Heritages at English Labour Movement Festivals,' in Laura Jane Smith, Paul Shackel and Gary Campbell eds., *Heritage, Labour and the Working Classes* (London: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> John L. Styan, *Directors in Perspective: Max Reinhardt* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.1.

<sup>19</sup> Oliver Sayler, ed., *Max Reinhardt and His Theatre*, trans. Mariele S. Gudernatsch (New York: Bretano's, 1923), p.200. The German-Jewish director Max Reinhardt was a socialist and progenitor of an epic theatre that anticipated and influenced Ewin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht. Early in his career, Reinhardt was known for directing provocative political works: for instance the German premieres of Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths* in 1903 and August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* in 1904, which led the Kaiser to reject Reinhardt as associated with 'dangerous socialist propaganda.' Reinhardt's *Jedermann* was a re-working by von Hoffmannsthal of the medieval English morality play which was staged in the Cathedral Square in order to be enjoyed by all of the city's inhabitants. The production was staged so that the city became theatre: when Death called Everyman during the banquet scene, his voice was heard coming from high above the city, spoken from the medieval fortress; various actors emerged from the audience to take part in the play; the sounds of organ and chorus emanated from the Cathedral; doves were released, and church bells tolled when Everyman was saved. The play began in the late afternoon and was designed to finish in the last rays of dusk, the conveying an allegory of day into night, life into death. See Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, trans. Anthea Bell, (London: Pushkin, 2009); Gottfried Reinhardt, *The Genius*, (New York: Knopf, 1979); Stephen Gallup, *A History of the Salzburg Festival* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> Leonard W. Conolly ed., *Bernard Shaw and Barry Jackson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), p.xxviii.

<sup>21</sup> Gerald Morice, *A Brief History of the Malvern Festival Theatre* (Malvern: Malvern Festival, 1979).

<sup>22</sup> Philippa Wehle, 'Avignon, Everybody's Dream,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol.13, No.4 (2003), p.28.

<sup>23</sup> Maria Shetsova, 'Jean Vilar,' Shomit Mitter and Maria Shevtsova, eds., *Fifty Key Theatre Directors* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.62.

<sup>24</sup> Shevtsova, 'Jean Vilar,' p.63.

<sup>25</sup> Sue Harris, 'Festivals and *Fêtes Populaires*,' in William Kidd and Siân Reynolds, eds., *Contemporary French Cultural Studies* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p.227-8.

<sup>26</sup> Philippa Wehle, 'A History of the Avignon Festival,' *The Drama Review: TDR*, Vol. 28, No.1 (1984), p.55.

<sup>27</sup> Wehle, 'A History of the Avignon Festival,' p. 63.

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- <sup>28</sup> Wehle, 'Avignon, Everybody's Dream,' p.30.
- <sup>29</sup> Rudolf Bing's career had taken several turns in Britain. He had first founded the Glyndebourne Festival in 1934, becoming its general manager in 1935. However, Glyndebourne ceased its standard seasons of opera during World War II and did not resume them until 1951 (by which time Bing had moved to New York). During the war years, Bing had worked for the John Lewis and Peter Jones department stores. From 1944 he ran children's theatre at Glyndebourne until becoming EIF's artistic director in 1946.
- <sup>30</sup> Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p.5, p.1; Bing had been assistant administrator of the Charlottenburg Opera House in Germany until he had been dismissed by the Nazi Party due to being of Jewish descent, See Elizabeth Forbes, 'Bing, Sir Rudolf Franz Joseph (1902-1997),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [online].
- <sup>31</sup> Rudolf Bing, *5,000 Nights at the Opera* (London: Hamilton, 1972), p.79.
- <sup>32</sup> Edinburgh Festival Society, 'Submission on Behalf of Edinburgh Festival Society for Nobel Peace Prize.'
- <sup>33</sup> Following Avignon Festival and EIF, Aldeburgh (1948), Swansea (1948), Cheltenham (1945) and Bath (1948) flourished in Britain whilst across Europe the Holland Festival (1948), Dubrovnik Festival (1949) and Bergen International Festival (1953) were also founded in this period of optimism and artistic endeavour, although their level of international engagement and programming of non-musical performance was minimal, with grand classical orchestral performances forming the main attraction each year, at least into the early 1960s.
- <sup>34</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (London: Verso, 2002), pp.591-2.
- <sup>35</sup> John Falconer, 'Foreword,' Festival Programme, *The Edinburgh International Festival of Music and the Arts*, 1947, n.p.
- <sup>36</sup> Robert Pearce, *Attlee's Labour Governments 1945-51* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.4; Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: the Birth of the Industrial Revolution* (New York: The New Press, 1968), p.265.
- <sup>37</sup> Pearce, *Attlee's Labour Governments*, p.15.
- <sup>38</sup> Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Postwar*, p.50.
- <sup>39</sup> Post-1945 also marked a new era of the way British theatre dealt with its empire, which was quickly declining. See Dan Rebellato, 'Look Back at Empire: British Theatre and Imperial Decline,' in Stuart Ward, ed. *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp.73-90; in addition, before the First World War there were very few migration controls in Britain allowing travelling artists and companies to come and go freely. However, after the 1919 Aliens Restriction Act passports and visas became necessary and restrictions were increased after the Second World War. This meant that those wanting to perform in Britain from other countries needed some level of administrative and professional assistance in order to gain official permissions, necessitating a professionalisation of organisations supporting international artists.
- <sup>40</sup> Allen Packwood, 'Churchill and the United States of Europe, 1904-1948,' *Comillas Journal of International Relations*, No.7 (2016), pp.1-9.
- <sup>41</sup> See Becky Conekin, *'The Autobiography of a Nation' The 1951 Festival of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp.13-14; Stanley Henig, *The Uniting of Europe: From Discord to Concord* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.17.
- <sup>42</sup> Maria Shevtsova, 'Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu's Champ and Habitus for a Sociology of Stage Productions', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol.12, No.3 (2002), pp.35-66.
- <sup>43</sup> Shevtsova further notes: 'All these research areas, although delineated by the problematics peculiar to them, are intertwined at some point in a methodological discourse. Indeed, they

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cannot escape connection since theatre practice constitutes a whole network of creative-artistic and technical activities, as well as of societal and infrastructural ones (spectatorial, administrative managerial, publicist, and so on) that define the field and distinguish it from any other, irrespective of whatever points in common may exist between identifiable fields.’ See: Shevtsova, ‘Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu’s Champ and Habitus for a Sociology of Stage Productions,’ p.35.

<sup>44</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993).

<sup>45</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p.97.

<sup>46</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p.98.

<sup>47</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: The Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emmanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p.167.

<sup>48</sup> Shevtsova, ‘Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu’s Champ and Habitus for a Sociology of Stage Productions.’

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44. [Emphasis in original]

<sup>52</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1983).

<sup>53</sup> Shevtsova, ‘Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu’s Champ and Habitus for a Sociology of Stage Productions,’ p.44.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44.

<sup>55</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Social Space and Genesis of Groups,’ *Theory and Society*, Vol.14, No.6 (1985), p.725.

<sup>56</sup> Shevtsova, ‘Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu’s Champ and Habitus for a Sociology of Stage Productions,’ p.44-45.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p.48.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50. [Emphasis in Original]

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.56.

<sup>62</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p.97.

<sup>63</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital,’ in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Greenwood, 1986), p.246.

<sup>64</sup> Conversely, those of the upper classes who inherit wealth (economic capital) also most likely inherit other privileges that are a product of cultural, social, symbolic and educational capital.

<sup>65</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.119.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.115.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29-73; Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p.97; Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p.81-84.

<sup>68</sup> Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital,’ p.242.

<sup>69</sup> See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp.52-65.

<sup>70</sup> Shevtsova, ‘Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu’s Champ and Habitus for a Sociology of Stage Productions,’ p.56.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>72</sup> Maria Shevtsova, 'Social Practice, Interdisciplinary Perspective,' *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.2 (2001), p.130.
- <sup>73</sup> Jean Duvignaud, 'Festivals: A Sociological Approach,' *Cultures*, Vol.3, No.1 (1976), pp.14-25.
- <sup>74</sup> Duvignaud, 'Festivals: A Sociological Approach,' p.24.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.
- <sup>77</sup> Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals*, pp.42-55.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50.
- <sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>80</sup> Edinburgh Festival Society, 'Submission on Behalf of Edinburgh Festival Society for Nobel Peace Prize.'
- <sup>81</sup> Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals*, p.50.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p.61.
- <sup>83</sup> Quoted in Chin-tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s* (London: Verso, 2002), p.34.
- <sup>84</sup> Christopher Madden, 'The Independence of Government Arts Funding: A Review,' *D'Art Topics in Art Policy*, No.9 (2009), p.13.
- <sup>85</sup> John Maynard Keynes, 'The Arts Council: Its Policy and Hopes,' *The Listener*, 12 July 1945, reprinted in Donald Moggridge, ed., *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, Vol.28 (London: Macmillan for the Royal Economic Society, 1982), p.368.
- <sup>86</sup> John Maynard Keynes, 'Art and the State,' *Listener*, 26 August, 1936, p.344-45.
- <sup>87</sup> Noel Annan, 'The Intellectual Aristocracy,' in John H. Plumb, ed., *Studies in Social History* (London: Green Longmans, 1955), pp.241-287.
- <sup>88</sup> John Maynard Keynes in *Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, Vol.9, Donald Moggridge, ed. (London: Macmillan, 1972), p.88.
- <sup>89</sup> The exceptions are Arnold Goodman who went to a comprehensive school, and Kenneth Robinson who received no formal education. Clive Gray, 'Oligarchy by Patronage: the membership of the Arts Council,' [unpublished] (1998), Clive Gray, *The Politics of the Arts in Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp.127-129. After 1998, New Labour appointed Gerry Robinson (1998-2004), an Irish television executive with no university degree, then Christopher Grayling (2005-9), and Liz Forgan (2009-13) (the first woman to be chair.) David Cameron first appointed the upper class Conservative supporter Peter Bazalgette (2013-16), and then Nicolas Serota (2016-present). All chairs have been white, middle or upper class and, except for Robinson, attended private schools and Oxford or Cambridge University.
- <sup>90</sup> Clive Gray, 'Oligarchy by Patronage: the membership of the Arts Council,' p.11.
- <sup>91</sup> Maria Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre and Performance* (Verona: QuiEdit, 2009), p.227.
- <sup>92</sup> Donald E. Moggridge, 'Keynes, Arts and the State,' *History of Political Economy*, Vol.37, No.3 (2005), p.552.
- <sup>93</sup> Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals*, p.50.
- <sup>94</sup> John Maynard Keynes, in *Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, Vol.27, Donald Moggridge, ed. (London: Macmillan, 1982), p.372; Here, civilisation infers more than an ordered way of life, or as a general and improving social conditions. Dating from the late eighteenth century, this second sense of the word is advocating a society that values reason, tolerance, knowledge, and art, above wealth, power, and commerce.
- <sup>95</sup> Edinburgh Festival Society Report, 1948, quoted in Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals*, p.31.
- <sup>96</sup> *The Scotsman*, 24 November, 1945.

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- <sup>97</sup> Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p.12.
- <sup>98</sup> Iain Crawford, *Banquo on Thursdays: The Inside Story of 50 Years of the Edinburgh Festival* (Edinburgh: Goblinshead, 1997), p.14.
- <sup>99</sup> Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p.14.
- <sup>100</sup> *Richard II* reappeared every year at the Avignon Festival through to 1953 and was performed by Vilar's Le Théâtre National Populaire at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1953.
- <sup>101</sup> Dennis Kennedy, 'The Language of the Spectator,' *Shakespeare Survey*, Vol.50 (1997), p.29.
- <sup>102</sup> Kennedy, 'The Language of the Spectator,' p.13.
- <sup>103</sup> Bruno Walter to Rudolf Bing, Edinburgh Festival, 26 March 1946. Quoted in Sam Shirakawa, *The Devil's Music Master: The Controversial Life and Career of Wilhelm Furtwängler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.306; After his 'denazification trial,' Wilhelm Furtwängler conducted at the festival the following year.
- <sup>104</sup> See Fritz Trümper, *The Political Orchestra: The Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics During the Third Reich*, trans. Kenneth Kronenberg (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016), p.78. Trümper notes that this percentage is much higher in the Vienna Philharmonic than the Berlin Philharmonic, in which only twenty per cent entered the party ranks and is much higher than the Austrian national average for membership.
- <sup>105</sup> Fritz Trümper, *The Political Orchestra*, p.101.
- <sup>106</sup> Erik Ryding and Rebecca Pechefsky, *Bruno Walter: A World Elsewhere* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p.312.
- <sup>107</sup> The orchestra later published a pamphlet on the Edinburgh Festival, noting Walter's conciliatory attitude; see *Die Wiener Philharmoniker: ein Stück Welt-geschichte* (Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Philharmoniker, 1947), p.8; According to another account, Buxbaum's return to his place in the orchestra was accompanied by a barbed comment on the sound of the orchestra as "ganz judenrein" (a pun that could mean "completely free of Jews" or "quite in tune in the Jewish manner"); see Richard Newman and Kitty Kirtley, *Alma Rosé: Vienna to Auschwitz* (Portland, Ore.: Amadeus, 2000), p.322.
- <sup>108</sup> Neville Cardus, 'Bruno Walter Conducts Mahler,' *The Guardian*, 13 September, 1947.
- <sup>109</sup> Jen Harvie, 'Cultural Effects of the Edinburgh International Festival: Elitism, Identities, Industries,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol.13, No.4 (2003), p.17.
- <sup>110</sup> Harvie, 'Cultural Effects of the Edinburgh International Festival,' p.17.
- <sup>111</sup> Bill Findlay, *A History of Scottish Theatre* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998), p.24.
- <sup>112</sup> Harvie, 'Cultural Effects of the Edinburgh International Festival,' p.18.
- <sup>113</sup> This lack of international theatre productions may have been strongly influenced by Bing's financial strategy of relying on support from governments abroad to subsidise the international programme. Across Europe, orchestras, opera houses and ballets were better funded (often by private patrons as well as governments) than theatre companies and so could be sponsored to appear at EIF.
- <sup>114</sup> Harold Hobson, 'A French Actor,' *The Sunday Times*, 12 October, 1948.
- <sup>115</sup> See Dominic Shellard, *British Theatre in the 1950s* (Sheffield: Continuum, 2000).
- <sup>116</sup> Robert Ponsonby, *Musical Heroes: A Personal View of Music and the Musical World Over Sixty Years* (London: Giles de la Mere Publishers Ltd., 2009), p.2.
- <sup>117</sup> Shevtsova, 'Social Practice, Interdisciplinary Perspective,' p.129.
- <sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>119</sup> Angela Bartie, 'A 'bubbling volcano': Edinburgh, the Festivals, and a Cultural Explosion,' in *New World Coming: the sixties and the shaping of global consciousness*, ed. Karen Dubinsky (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), p.209.

<sup>120</sup> Duvignaud, 'Festivals: A Sociological Approach,' p.18.

<sup>121</sup> Tim Olaveson has established the link between Durkheim and Turner. See: 'Collective Effervescence and Communitas: Processual Models of Society in Emile Durkheim and Victor Turner,' *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol.26 (2001), pp.89.

<sup>122</sup> For Arnold van Gennep, writing in 1909, these concern a rite of passage where individuals or groups are taken 'from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another.' This passage takes the participant through separation (preliminal) from a fixed state into the margin or *limen* (liminal), where usual codes of behaviour are suspended, returning transformed through reaggregation (postliminal). See van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, pp.10-11; Early twentieth-century anthropologists such as Robert Hertz and Claude Lévi-Strauss observed that across different cultures, rituals and festivals commonly accompanied life events such as birth, coming of age, marriage and death. Lévi-Strauss noted that festive ritual practices assisted a society to 'neutralise' the foreign 'Other' by integrating their uneasy strangeness either symbolically through initiation or literally through destruction and digestion. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Savage Mind* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1966) [1962]; On the other hand, the festival may maintain or nurture the ontological distance of the 'Other,' as Marshall Sahlins describes in his study of practices that elevate and venerate stranger-gods. See Marshall Sahlins, 'The Stranger-King or, Elementary Forms of the Politics of Life,' *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol.36, No.105 (2008), pp.177-199.

<sup>123</sup> Victor Turner, 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage,' in *Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Feminine Initiation*, eds. Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster and Meridith Lite (Chicago: Open Court, 1987), p.5.

<sup>124</sup> Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p.30.

<sup>125</sup> Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, pp. 28-29, 39; Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), pp. 52-53; Victor Turner, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage: A Study in Comparative Symbolology* (New Dehli: Concept Publishing Company, 1979), p. 15; Victor Turner, *Blazing the Trail: Way Marks in the Exploration of Symbols* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), p.156.

<sup>126</sup> Turner often demonstrated his awareness of current pop-cultural themes including references to figures including Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan and Malcolm X as well as including terms for new countercultural groups such as 'hippies.' See Turner, *The Ritual Process*; Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

<sup>127</sup> Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, p.99; Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p.96; Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: the Human Seriousness of Play*, (New York: PAJ, 1982), p.47.

<sup>128</sup> Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p.131, 177.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p.132.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128, 138.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p.167.

<sup>132</sup> Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p.185-191.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p.200.

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- <sup>134</sup> Heike Roms and Rebecca Edwards, 'Toward a Prehistory of Live Art in the UK,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol.22, No.1 (2012), p.19.
- <sup>135</sup> Ken Dewey, 'X-ings,' *Tulane Drama Review*, Vol.10, No.2 (1965), p.222.
- <sup>136</sup> Ken Dewey quoted in Charles Marowitz, *Burnt Bridges: A Souvenir of the Swinging Sixties and Beyond* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990), p.59-60.
- <sup>137</sup> To read in detail about the fallout from the event see Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p.190-192. Some of this scandal was exacerbated directly because of Lascelles' membership of the Royal Family.
- <sup>138</sup> *The Scotsman*, 8 September, 1963.
- <sup>139</sup> Beth Hoffmann, 'Radicalism and the Theatre in Genealogies of Live Art,' *Performance Research*, Vol.14, No.1 (2009), p.96.
- <sup>140</sup> Roms and Edwards, 'Toward a Prehistory of Live Art in the UK,' p.18.
- <sup>141</sup> This agreement stated, 'Both parties express the desire to promote in every possible way the increase in tours of theatre artists, choregraphical groups, orchestras and soloists from one country to the other;' Agreement Between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Relations in the Scientific, Technological, Educational and Cultural Fields, 1959-61, January 9, 1959, *Treatise II*, 1281, Article VII.
- <sup>142</sup> Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p.61.
- <sup>143</sup> Colm Brogan, 'Dishonour at Edinburgh,' *Catholic Herald*, 24 August, 1962.
- <sup>144</sup> Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p.63.
- <sup>145</sup> George Lascelles speaking on Roy Plomley, BBC Radio, 'Earl of Harewood,' *Desert Island Discs*, 1981, Radio Broadcast.
- <sup>146</sup> Jennie Lee, *A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps* (London: HMSO, 1965), p.5.
- <sup>147</sup> Lee, *A Policy for the Arts*, p.3.
- <sup>148</sup> Patricia Hollis, *Jennie Lee: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.251.
- <sup>149</sup> Peter Diamand quoted in Richard Demarco, 'Obituary: Peter Diamand,' *The Independent*, 21 January, 1998.
- <sup>150</sup> Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals* p.160.
- <sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190.
- <sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p.200.
- <sup>153</sup> Wehle, 'Avignon, Everyones' Dream.' p.32.
- <sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p.34.
- <sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p.34.
- <sup>156</sup> Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals*, p.1.
- <sup>157</sup> Ronald Bryden, 'Foreword,' in Peter Daubeny, *My World of Theatre* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), p.192. See also Philippa Burt, *The Ideal in Ensemble Practice in Twentieth-Century British Theatre, 1900-1968*, [Unpublished Thesis] (2015).
- <sup>158</sup> Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal, Interview with Author, 1 February, 2015.
- <sup>159</sup> Ronald Eyre, 'Introduction to LIFT,' *LIFT* '83, 1983, n.p.

## Chapter Two

- <sup>160</sup> Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal, *LIFT to GLC*, Letter, 24 June, 1983.
- <sup>161</sup> Rose Fenton, Interview with Author, London, 15 February, 2018.
- <sup>162</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: The Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.157.

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- <sup>163</sup> The ‘champion of subversion’ is the figure of the Messiah or the nomothete. In Bourdieu, ‘Le Champ Littéraire,’ *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, Vol.89, No.3 (1991), pp.3-46, he describes this ‘champion’ as Flaubert, and as Manet in *Manet, Une Révolution Symbolique: Cours au Collège de France* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2013). See also Mathieu Hilgers and Eric Mangez, ‘Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu’s Social Fields,’ *Bourdieu’s Theory of Social Fields: Concepts and Applications* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p.17.
- <sup>164</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field,’ *Comparative Social Research*, Vol.13, No.1 (1991), p.35.
- <sup>165</sup> Lucy Neal, Interview with Author, London, 15 February, 2018.
- <sup>166</sup> Maria Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre and Performance* (Verona: QuiEdit, 2009).
- <sup>167</sup> Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre and Performance*, p.257.
- <sup>168</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), p.131, p.177.
- <sup>169</sup> Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p.128.
- <sup>170</sup> Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal, *The Turning World: Stories From the International Festival of Theatre* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2005).
- <sup>171</sup> Neal, Interview with Author, 15 February, 2018.
- <sup>172</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘The Great Moving Right Show,’ *Marxism Today* (January 1979), p.56, p.48.
- <sup>173</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.1.
- <sup>174</sup> Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, p.4.
- <sup>175</sup> Douglas Keay, ‘Margaret Thatcher,’ interview, *Woman’s Own* (31 October, 1987), p.10.
- <sup>176</sup> Thatcher quoted in Keay, ‘Margaret Thatcher,’ pp. 8-9.
- <sup>177</sup> Ronald Butt, ‘Mrs Thatcher: The First Two Years,’ *The Sunday Times*, 3 May, 1981.
- <sup>178</sup> Butt, ‘Mrs Thatcher.’
- <sup>179</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York: The New Press, 1998), p.30.
- <sup>180</sup> Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance*, p.96.
- <sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p.95-96 [original emphasis].
- <sup>182</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Rethinking the State: On the Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field,’ *Sociological Theory*, Vol.12, No.1 (1994), pp.1-19.
- <sup>183</sup> Loïc Wacquant, ‘Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism,’ *Social Anthropology*, Vol.20, No.1 (2012), p.71.
- <sup>184</sup> Bourdieu, ‘Rethinking the State,’; Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Abdication of the State,’ in *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp.181-188; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Social Structures of the Economy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).
- <sup>185</sup> Wacquant, ‘Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism,’ p.71. [Emphasis in Original]
- <sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71.
- <sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.
- <sup>188</sup> Loïc Wacquant, ‘Crafting the Neoliberal State: Workfare, Prisonfare, and Social Insecurity,’ *Sociological Forum*, Vol.25, No.2 (2010), pp.213-4.
- <sup>189</sup> Wacquant, ‘Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism,’ p.72.
- <sup>190</sup> Margaret Thatcher in Keay, ‘Margaret Thatcher,’ p.10.
- <sup>191</sup> Wacquant, ‘Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism,’ p.73.

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- <sup>192</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p.111.
- <sup>193</sup> Wacquant, 'Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism,' p.73.
- <sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p.73.
- <sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p.73-74. See also Loïc Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp.xix-xxx, 67-9, 108-9, 312-13.
- <sup>196</sup> Ronald Regan, who held a homologous position to Thatcher in the political field in the USA, implemented the same neoliberal policies in his own national field during his presidency from 1981. The combined economic, cultural and symbolic power of the British and American fields led to a shift in global power field dynamics that would ultimately institute a globalised neoliberal system.
- <sup>197</sup> Wacquant, 'Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism,' p.74.
- <sup>198</sup> The state's monopoly on material violence is asserted by Max Weber's influential lecture in 1919, 'Politics as a Vocation:' 'The state is the form of human community that (successfully) lays claim to the *monopoly of legitimate physical violence* within a particular territory.' [Emphasis in original]. Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation,' in David Owen and Tracy Strong, eds., Rodney Livingstone, trans., *The Vocation Lectures* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), p.33.
- <sup>199</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'Social Space and Symbolic Power,' *Sociological Theory*, Vol.7, No.1 (1989), p.21.
- <sup>200</sup> Bourdieu, 'Space and Symbolic Power,' p.20.
- <sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.
- <sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20-21.
- <sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.
- <sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>206</sup> Andrew Feist and Robert Hutchison, eds., *Cultural Trends in the Eighties* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1990).
- <sup>207</sup> Kingsley Amis wrote a pamphlet for the Conservative think tank Centre for Policy Studies, calling for the Arts Council's abolition because it subsidised the middle classes, Kingsley Amis, *An arts policy?* (London: Centre for Policy Studies, 1979); Paul Johnson called the Arts Council a 'baroque institution' in the *Evening Standard*, 26 June, 1979; also see Jim McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.64.
- <sup>208</sup> Catherine Itzin, *British Alternative Theatre Directory* (Eastbourne: John Offord, 1980), p.15.
- <sup>209</sup> Robert Hewison, *Future Tense: A New Art For The Nineties* (London: Methuen, 1990), p.181.
- <sup>210</sup> Arts Council Great Britain, *A Great British Success Story: an invitation to the nation to invest in the arts* (London: Arts Council Great Britain, 1985), p.4.
- <sup>211</sup> House of Commons, *Education, Science and Arts Committee: Public and Private Funding of the Arts*, Debate, London, Vol. 49, 29 March, 1982.
- <sup>212</sup> House of Commons, *Education, Science and Arts Committee: Public and Private Funding of the Arts*.
- <sup>213</sup> Sheila Rowbotham quoted in Melissa Benn, 'Trailblazer of Feminism,' *The Guardian*, 22 July, 2000.
- <sup>214</sup> Fenton and Neal, Interview with Author, 15 February, 2018.
- <sup>215</sup> 'London's New Chief Cuts Fares, Boosts IRA and Outrages Establishment,' *The Associated Press*, 13 September, 1981.

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- <sup>216</sup> Franco Bianchini 'Cultural Policy and Urban Social Movements: the Response of the 'New Left' in Rome (1976-85) and London (1981-1986)' *Leisure and Urban Processes: Critical Studies of Leisure Policy in Western European Cities*, Peter Bramham et al., ed. (London: Routledge, 1989), p.35.
- <sup>217</sup> Before 1981, the arts was remarkably noncontroversial and unimportant with a Recreation and Community Services Policy Committee which had no arts policy for the capital past supplementing ACGB funding to the 'Big Four' in London (the National Theatre, ENO, the London Orchestral Concert Board, and the London Festival Ballet), maintaining and managing the Concert Halls on the South Bank, and providing brass bands as summer entertainment; Bianchini, 'Cultural Policy and Urban Social Movements,' p.35.
- <sup>218</sup> Neal, Interview with Author, 15 February, 2018.
- <sup>219</sup> Bianchini 'Cultural Policy and Urban Social Movements,' p.6.
- <sup>220</sup> Franco Bianchini, *Urban Cultural Policy* (London: National Media Strategy Unit, 1991), p.6.
- <sup>221</sup> Fenton and Neal, Interview with Author, 14 March, 2018.
- <sup>222</sup> Naseem Khan, *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (London: Community Relations Commission, 1976).
- <sup>223</sup> Fenton, Interview with Author, 15 February, 2018.
- <sup>224</sup> The favoured term at the GLC became Black arts, capitalized to stress that it is a specific political and cultural identity that is at issue.
- <sup>225</sup> GLC (Greater London Council), 'London Against Racism in Mainstream Arts Policies and Programming,' C/AR 258, 16 March, 1984, p.2.
- <sup>226</sup> Bianchini, 'Cultural Policy and Urban Social Movements,' p.36.
- <sup>227</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Face the Future,' *New Socialist* (September, 1984), p.39.
- <sup>228</sup> Hall, 'Face the Future,' pp.37-9.
- <sup>229</sup> Franco Bianchini, 'GLC R.I.P.: Cultural Policies in London, 1981-1986,' *New Formations* No.1 (1987), p.104.
- <sup>230</sup> Bianchini, 'GLC R.I.P.,' p.105.
- <sup>231</sup> Beatrix Campbell and Martin Jacques, 'Goodbye to the GLC,' *Marxism Today*, April 1986, p.7-8. [Emphasis in Original]
- <sup>232</sup> Fenton and Neal, Interview with Author, 15 February, 2018.
- <sup>233</sup> *Arts Council of Great Britain*, Arts Council of Great Britain to LIFT, Letter, 30 August, 1981.
- <sup>234</sup> LIFT, 'LIFT '81,' Festival Programme, London, 1981.
- <sup>235</sup> LIFT '81, press release, n.d.
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- <sup>295</sup> Habib Tanvir, interview in, *LIFT ‘83*, VHS; Ramila is literally “Rama’s play”, is a performance of then Ramayana epic in a series of scenes that include song, narration, recital and dialogue. It is performed across northern India during the festival of Dussehra, held each year according to the ritual calendar in autumn.
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- <sup>329</sup> Billington, 'Six of the Best.'
- <sup>330</sup> Hewison, 'Voyages into Strange Worlds.'
- <sup>331</sup> Michael Coveney, 'A Whistle in the Dark,' *Financial Times*, 10 July, 1989.
- <sup>332</sup> For a full discussion on perestroika and its influence on Russian theatre see: Maria Shevtsova, *Dodin and the Maly Drama Theatre: Process to Performance* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.3-35; for more on how it shaped Vassiliev's practice, see Shevtsova, 'Studio Theatre, Laboratory Theatre.'
- <sup>333</sup> In another Vassiliev expressed an annoyance in being constantly asked about the 'relief' of glasnost and perestroika by westerners: 'These words are constantly buzzing around our heads like flies, which actually we would like to swat. [...] Some things are good, like the co-operative restaurants. There is somewhere to eat. But most of the rest is bad. People will think I'm crazy, but it's better to worry about your soul than your food.' Quoted in Christopher, 'Anthony Vasiliev.'
- <sup>334</sup> Jeremy Kingston, 'True to nuance,' *The Times*, 20 July, 1989.
- <sup>335</sup> Michael Goldfarb, 'Antoli Vasiliev: Russian Around,' *20-20*, July 1989, p.137; The director's intensive rehearsal process, that frequently lasted up to fifteen hours a day and inspired his company to dedicate their lives to him, perplexed and disturbed British sensibilities

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with many reports noting his ‘obsessiveness,’ despite this being consistent with Russian Laboratory and Studio theatre practice. Vasiliev responded ‘They say I am a madman because I work like that. [...] But I say that’s normal. If you care about culture and believe it is essential to people – and in my country culture is absolutely essential to our people – you simply cannot afford to do quick, superficial things.’ In Kenneth Rea, ‘Tsars of a democratic stage,’ *The Guardian*, 25 July, 1989.

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<sup>339</sup> Michael Billington, ‘Cinzano,’ *The Guardian*, n.d.

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### Chapter Three

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## **Chapter Five**

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<sup>759</sup> Imogen Tyler, *Revolting Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain* (London: Zed Books, 2013), p.9.

<sup>760</sup> For example, the impact of austerity on social and private housing, homelessness, child poverty, child malnutrition, the marketisation of higher education, the privatization of the NHS, social cleansing, the forced deportation of migrants, the closure of women's refuges, deaths in custody and psychiatric hospitals due to financially induced neglect, NHS wait times, the rise in hate crimes, increased class sizes, reduction in the schools budget, the abolition of legal aid, rising tuition fees, the fall in social care provision, and so on.

<sup>761</sup> Adrian Harvey, *Funding Arts and Culture in a Time of Austerity* (London: Arts Council England; NLGN, 2016).

<sup>762</sup> National Campaign for the Arts, *Arts Index: England 2007-2016* (London: National Campaign for the Arts, 2017), p.22; for comparison, Treasury funding to Arts Council England that year amounted to £5.26 per person.

<sup>763</sup> Harvey, *Funding Arts and Culture in a Time of Austerity*, p.5; there is not specific data available on the way arts organisations had to adapt to these new funding conditions by reducing their staff, output or shrinking in size. However, to give an indication of how widely these cuts affected the cultural sector: by 2016 one-in-five regional museums had either closed, or planned to close, a part or branch of their museum, and one-in-ten was considering introducing entry charges.

<sup>764</sup> Arts Council England, *Achieving Great Art for Everyone: a Strategic Framework for the Arts*, (London: Arts Council England, 2010), p.5.

<sup>765</sup> Harvey, *Funding Arts and Culture in a Time of Austerity*.

<sup>766</sup> Arts Council England, *The National Portfolio Funding Programme: Guidance for Applicants* (London: Arts Council England, 2010), p.9, p.7.

<sup>767</sup> Maria Miller, *Testing Times: Fighting Culture's Corner in an Age of Austerity*, Keynote Speech, 24 April, 2013.

<sup>768</sup> Miller, *Testing Times: Fighting Culture's Corner in an Age of Austerity*.

<sup>769</sup> LIFT, LIFT 2012 Financial Report, London, 2012.

<sup>770</sup> The accounts for the 2016-2017 Tax Year are not yet available.

<sup>771</sup> Francis Maude, *Giving: White Paper* (London: Cabinet Office, 2011).

<sup>772</sup> Even individuals giving through donations or crowd funders are offered 'rewards', with large donations or sponsorships trusts, foundations and businesses expect to receive branding, naming rights or social media exposure from the arts organisation. See: Bernadette McNicholas, 'Arts, Culture and Business: A Relationship Transformation, a Nascent Field,' *International Journal of Arts Management*, Vol.7, No.1 (2004), p.59.

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<sup>774</sup> Peter Balzagate, 'Three Compelling Reasons Why Businesses Should get Behind British Arts and Culture,' *City A.M.*, 16 September, 2014.

<sup>775</sup> Jen Harvie, 'Funding, Philanthropy, Structural Inequality and Decline in England's Theatre Ecology,' *Cultural Trends*, Vol.24, No.1 (2015), p.56.

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<sup>778</sup> Clifford Krauss and Campbell Robertson, 'BP May be Fined Up to \$18 Billion for Spill in Gulf,' *The New York Times*, 4 September, 2014.

<sup>779</sup> Georgie Keate, 'Arts Donors Made Fortune from Drug behind US Opiate Addiction Crisis,' *The Times*, 11 November, 2017.

<sup>780</sup> Keate, 'Arts Donors Made Fortune from Drug behind US Opiate Addiction Crisis.'

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<sup>782</sup> The Culture Media and Sport Committee, *Work of Arts Council England: Third Report of Session 2014-15* (London: The House of Commons, 2014), <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcmucmeds/279/279.pdf>.

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<sup>784</sup> Pine and Gilmore, *The Experience Economy*.

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- <sup>789</sup> Mark Ball, Interview with Author, Manchester, 11 August, 2017.
- <sup>790</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993), p.37.
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- <sup>793</sup> Robert Hewison, *Culture and Consensus* (London: Methuen, 1995).
- <sup>794</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).
- <sup>795</sup> Michael Grenfell, ed., *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2014) [Second Edition], p.251.
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- <sup>806</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'Open Season for the Arts Festival,' *The Guardian*, 18 April, 2010.
- <sup>807</sup> The Conservative Party, *Invitation to Join the Government of Britain* (London: The Conservative Party, 2010), p.iii.
- <sup>808</sup> Patrick Wintour, 'Oxfordshire cuts test 'big society' as librarians are replaced with volunteers,' *The Guardian*, 2 June, 2011.
- <sup>809</sup> Gob Squad, *Gob Squad Reader: And the Impossible Attempt to Make Sense of it All* (Berlin: Gob Squad, 2010), p.112.
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- <sup>815</sup> Susan C. Haedicke, *Contemporary Street Arts in Europe: Aesthetics and Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.181-2.
- <sup>816</sup> Charlie Kenber, 'Interview with Jorge Lopes Ramos, co-director of Hotel Medea,' *London Calling* (2012), <https://www.londoncalling.com/features/interview-with-jorge-lopes-ramos-co-director-of-hotel-medea>.
- <sup>817</sup> Howard Loxton, 'Hotel Medea,' *British Theatre Guide*, 1 July 2010, <http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/hotelmedea-rev>.
- <sup>818</sup> 'LIFT 2010,' Festival Programme, London, 2010.
- <sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*, n.p.
- <sup>820</sup> Perkovic, 'Shopping for Experience,' p.10.
- <sup>821</sup> 'Music for Seven Ice Cream Vans,' *Diamond Geezer*, 10 July, 2010, <https://diamondgeezer.blogspot.com/2010/07/music-for-seven-ice-cream-vans.html>.
- <sup>822</sup> 'LIFT 2010,' Festival Programme, London, 2010.
- <sup>823</sup> Nicholas Ridout, 'Performance in the Service Economy: Outsourcing and Delegation,' in *Double Agent*, Claire Bishop and Silvia Tramontana, ed. (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2009).

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<sup>824</sup> Two other socially engaged productions in the Festival also worked with non-professional young people to create participatory performances. Belgian director Pol Heyvaert made *FML – Fuck My Life* in collaboration with twenty teenagers that explored their experiences with suicide, self-harm and mental health. *Gloves On!* by the British Ragroof Players created a site-specific show in a boxing gym with young people who were classified as NEEETs (Not in Education Employment or Training) by the government.

<sup>825</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'Nalaga'at Theatre: Blind Man's Loaf,' *The Guardian*, 21 June, 2010; Matt Trueman, 'Not by Bread Alone: Review,' *Matt Trueman*, 7 July, 2010, <http://matttrueman.co.uk/2010/07/review-not-by-bread-alone-arts-depot.html>; Daisy Bowie-Sell, 'Review: Not by Bread Alone at the ArtsDepot,' *The Telegraph*, 7 July, 2010; Sam Marlowe, 'Review: Not by Bread Alone,' *The Times*, 8 July, 2010.

<sup>826</sup> Arts Council England, *2012 Games – Our Vision* (London: Arts Council England, 2008), p.3, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160204122523/http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/2012-games-our-vision>.

<sup>827</sup> Arts Council England, *2012 Games – Our Vision*, p.2.

<sup>828</sup> John Hughson, 'Sport and Cultural Policy in the Re-Imaged City,' *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol.14, No.4 (2008), pp.355-360.

<sup>829</sup> See Gavin Poynter, Valerie Viehoff and Yang Li, eds., *The London Olympics and Urban Development: The Mega-Event City* (London: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>830</sup> Loretta Lees explained: 'Social mix policies [...] socially construct the middle class or middle-income groups as a natural category in contrast to a demonised working class or low-income groups (and this is done spatially). They push the idea that we should somehow be/become middle class and that we all want to be middle class. They are about social engineering (social cleansing) and all the problematic connotations that go with that.' In 'Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards an Inclusive Urban Renaissance?' *Urban Studies* Vol.45, No.12 (2008), pp.2449-70. See also, Paul Watt, 'Housing Stock Transfers, Regeneration and State-led Gentrification in London,' *Urban Policy and Research*, Vol.27, No.3 (2009), p.229-242; Paul Watt, 'It's Not For Us,' Regeneration, the 2012 Olympics and the gentrification of East London,' *City*, Vol.17, No.1 (2013), pp.99-118; Paul Watt and Anna Minton, 'London's Housing Crisis and its Activisms,' *City*, Vol.20, No.2 (2016), pp.204-221.

<sup>831</sup> Pete Fussey, Jon Coaffee, Gary Armstrong and Dick Hobbs, 'The Regeneration Games: Purity and Security in the Olympic City,' *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.63, No.2 (2012), p.260; Michael J. Rustin, *London's Turning: The Making of the Thames Gateway* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>832</sup> Martha Rosler, 'The Artistic Mode of Revolution: from gentrification to occupation' *E-flux Journal*, Issue.33 (2012), pp.177-198; Daniel Makagon, 'Bring on the Shock Troops: Artists and Gentrification in the Popular Press,' *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, Vol.7, No.1 (2010), p.26-52.

<sup>833</sup> Edward Platt, 'The Cockney Siberia,' *New Statesman*, 5 March, 2010, <https://www.newstatesman.com/environment/2010/03/thames-gateway-london-area>.

<sup>834</sup> Margaret Gold and George Revill, 'The Cultural Olympiads: Reviving the Panegyris,' in *Olympic Cities: city agendas, planning and the world's games 1896 to 2016*, John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, eds. (London: Routledge, 2007), p.59.

<sup>835</sup> The competition model was dropped after 1948 due to a series of complex antagonisms between sport and arts such as the developing avant-garde which rejected the 'bourgeois' standards of the event's judging criteria, as well as the changing values attached to arts and sports in relation to amateurism and professionalism. See David Inglis, 'Culture Agonistes:

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social differentiation, cultural policy and Cultural Olympiads,' *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol.14, No.4 (2008), pp.463-477.

<sup>836</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>837</sup> Inglis, 'Culture Agonistes,' p.467.

<sup>838</sup> The tensions of the Cold War were explicit in the 1980 Games in Moscow and in Los Angeles in 1984. See Abigail Gilmore, 'Counting Eyeballs, soundbites and 'plings:' arts participation, strategic instrumentalism and the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad,' *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol.18, No.2 (2012), p.154.

<sup>839</sup> In addition to the opening ceremony, campaigns for nationalist support of 'GREAT' Britain from the global public was rolled out across the world in order to boost tourism and investment. In the lead up to the Olympics, Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport, led a global campaign titled 'GREAT' which promoted Britain across the globe. Neo-colonialist interventions included: draping New Delhi taxis in British flags; stopping traffic in Tokyo with a 'GREAT' branded double decker bus; lighting up Shanghai with 'GREAT' projections on buildings; and sending David Beckham and Prince Harry to Sugarloaf Mountain in Rio, requesting that thousands of journalists cover the event. See Jeremy Hunt, '2012 – Our Best Ever Tourism Year,' speech at Tate Modern, 14 August, 2012.

<sup>840</sup> This was from a budget of £32 million funded from a rate precept on London residential council-taxpayers as part of the Olympic public sector funding package. See Ozlem Edizel, Graeme Evans and Hua Dong, 'Dressing up London,' in Vassil Girginov, ed., *The Handbook of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.19.

<sup>841</sup> The performances were done suspended from the London Eye, Millennium Eye and abseiling from City Hall. There were special gantries erected outside the National Theatre and in Trafalgar Square, whilst a large aluminum wheel was installed in Paternoster Square.

<sup>842</sup> Kika Dabbs, Amanda Kiely and Giles Stanford, *Learning Legacy: Lessons learned from planning and staging the London 2012 Games* (London: LOCOG, 2012).

<sup>843</sup> Greater London Authority, *LOOK & FEEL Budget* [Request for Mayoral Decision No. MD696] (London: Greater London Authority, 2012).

<sup>844</sup> Greater London Authority, 'Surprises: Streb – One Extraordinary Day of Unforgettable Action,' *Mayor of London / London Assembly*, 5 July, 2012, <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases-4738>.

<sup>845</sup> LIFT, 'Surprises: Streb – One Extraordinary Day,' Report, London, n.d.

<sup>846</sup> Jonathan Jones, 'The Cultural Olympiad: where's the culture?' *The Guardian*, 18 July, 2012.

<sup>847</sup> Rimini Protokoll, *100% London*, Theatre Programme, London, 2012, p.21.

<sup>848</sup> Rimini Protokoll, *100% London*, Performance at Hackney Empire, June 2012.

<sup>849</sup> Mark Ball 'Welcome to *100% London*, a unique production that puts faces to the stories and statistics of our city,' in Rimini Protokoll, *100% London*, Theatre Programme, p.7.

<sup>850</sup> London 2012, Candidate File, London, 2004, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080107210715/http://www.london2012.com/news/publications/candidate-file.php>, p.1.

<sup>851</sup> London 2012, media release, 'Business Leaders Urged to Back the Bid,' 6 October, 2004.

<sup>852</sup> See Daniel Burdsey, 'The Technicolour Olympics? Race, Representation and the 2012 London Games,' in *Watching the Olympics: Politics, Power and Representation*, John Sudgen and Alan Tomlinson, ed. (London: Routledge, 2012), p.70.

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- <sup>853</sup> Gordon Brown, 'The Future of Britishness,' Speech at the Fabian New Year Conference 'Who do We Want To be? The Future of Britishness,' Imperial College London, 14 January, 2006.
- <sup>854</sup> Marissia Fragkou and Philip Hager, 'Staging London: Participation and Citizenship on the Way to the 2012 Olympic Games,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol.23, No.4 (2013), p.535.
- <sup>855</sup> Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo, *Performance and Cosmopolitics: Cross-Cultural Transactions in Australasia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), p.9.
- <sup>856</sup> Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Pride Politics and Multiculturalist Citizenship,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.28, No.3 (2005), p.560.
- <sup>857</sup> To understand how black Britons have been 'allowed' to signify the dominant white, conservative sporting national culture, and the limitations placed on them and furthermore, how this point is underscored by the absence in the Olympic bid of high-profile black Britons who had criticised the white dominance of sport such as Ian Wright and Chris Eubank. see Ben Carrington, 'Postmodern Blackness and the Celebrity Sports Star: Ian Wright, "Race" and English Identity,' in *Sport Stars: The Cultural Politics of Sporting Celebrity*, eds., David Andrews and Steven Jackson (London: Routledge, 2001); 'Fear of a Black Athlete: Masculinity, Politics and the Body,' *New Formations*, Vol.45 (2002), pp.91-110. Amir Khan in particular was mobilised in media discourses after the 7 July 2005 attacks as the archetypal 'good' British-Asian, see Daniel Burdsey, 'Role with the Punches: The Construction and Representation of Amir Khan as a Role Model for Multiethnic Britain,' *The Sociological Review*, Vol.55, No.3 (2008), pp.611-631.
- <sup>858</sup> Jen Harvie, *Staging the UK* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.193.
- <sup>859</sup> LIFT, 'Unfinished Dream Participant Feedback,' Festival Participant Questionnaires, LIFT 2012.
- <sup>860</sup> Mark Ball, 'A Powerful Political Piece,' in LIFT, Gatz, Theatre Programme, London, 2012.
- <sup>861</sup> Dominic Cavendish, 'Show of Strength,' in Gatz, Theatre Programme, 2012.
- <sup>862</sup> Matt Trueman, 'Review: Gatz, Public Theatre, New York,' *Matt Trueman*, 23 June, 2012, <http://matttrueman.co.uk/2010/11/review-2gatz-public-theatre-new-york.html>.
- <sup>863</sup> Ball, Interview with Author, 11 August, 2017.
- <sup>864</sup> Within the WSF, there was yet another 'festival' called Globe to Globe, held at the Globe Theatre, where all thirty-seven of Shakespeare's plays, and the epic poem *Venus and Adonis*, were performed by a theatre company from a different country including: Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, China, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Kenya, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Macedonia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, South Sudan, Spain, Turkey, United States of America, Zimbabwe, as well as one production in British Sign Language and as well as a British production by the Globe Theatre.
- <sup>865</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'The Dark Side of Love – Review,' *The Guardian*, 2 July, 2012.
- <sup>866</sup> Beatriz Garcia, *Final Report: London 2012 Cultural Olympiad Evaluation* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool and Institute of Cultural Capital, 2013), [http://iccliverpool.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/London\\_2012\\_Cultural\\_Olympiad\\_Evaluation\\_ICC.pdf](http://iccliverpool.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/London_2012_Cultural_Olympiad_Evaluation_ICC.pdf).
- <sup>867</sup> Dan Hancox, 'A Tale of Two Nations: From the London 2012 Olympics to Brexit,' *The National: Arts and Culture*, 10 August, 2016, <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/a-tale-of-two-nations-from-the-london-2012-olympics-to-brexit-1.145350>.
- <sup>868</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1912), p.227.

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- <sup>869</sup> John Hargreaves, *Freedom for Catalonia: Catalan Nationalism, Spanish Identity and the Barcelona Olympic Games* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.15, p.56.
- <sup>870</sup> Paul Gilroy, 'Why Harry's Disoriented About Empire,' *The Guardian*, 18 January, 2005.
- <sup>871</sup> Tessa Jowell, Keynote Speech, 'Capturing the Public Value of Heritage,' London, 2006.
- <sup>872</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *Narrating the Nation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), pp.1-7; Stuart Hall, 'Modernity: an Introduction to Modern Societies,' in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay eds., *The Questions of Cultural Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp.596-632.
- <sup>873</sup> Mark Ball, 'Where the City Meets the Stage,' Festival Programme, London, 2014, p.1.
- <sup>874</sup> LIFT, 'After a War,' funding proposal, 2013.
- <sup>875</sup> LIFT, 'Where the City Meets the Stage.'
- <sup>876</sup> Kate Bredeson, 'The Sum of *Testament* is Love,' *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, Vol.36, No.1 (2014), p.52.
- <sup>877</sup> Ball, 'Where the City Meets the Stage,' p.1.
- <sup>878</sup> Toshiki Okada had previously been programmed in Britain once before, in 2010, at Cardiff's Chapter Arts Centre.
- <sup>879</sup> Kyoko Iwaki, 'Japanese Theatre after Fukushima: Okada Toshiki's *Current Location*,' *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol.31, No.1 (2015), p.71.
- <sup>880</sup> Maria Shevtsova, *Fifty Key Theatre Directors*, p.207.
- <sup>881</sup> *Ibid.*, p.209.
- <sup>882</sup> Young Jean Lee, *The Shipment/LEAR* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2010), p.5.
- <sup>883</sup> By July 2014, events in the UK-Russia year of culture had started to be cancelled by host organisations, such as The Royal Academy of Arts in London cancelling an exhibition by Russian art group AES+F due to 'strained relations' between the UK and Russia following the annexation of Crimea in March. A planned retrospective of Young British Artists at the Pushkin Museum and a Banksy retrospective at the Moscow Manege exhibition hall were also cancelled by Russian partners. Ursula Woolley, director of Pushkin House, a Russian culture institution in London, told The Calvert Journal that a breakdown of cultural events was an inevitable consequence of the situation in Ukraine. She said: 'The Ukraine crisis has affected the year of culture, which you'd expect because it was an official diplomatic initiative. The trouble with that is that when diplomatic relations are going well, official cultural events thrive, but when they aren't these events are often the first casualty.'
- <sup>884</sup> See Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, 'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organisational Fields,' *American Sociological Review* Vol.48, No.147 (1983), p.60.
- <sup>885</sup> LIFT, 'The EU Referendum – a note from LIFT,' [Email] 20 June, 2016.
- <sup>886</sup> Charity Commission for England and Wales, *Guidance: Charities, Elections and Referendums* (London: The Electoral Commission, 2014).
- <sup>887</sup> Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- <sup>888</sup> Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, eds., *Twenty-first century populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Yves Mény, and Y. Surel, *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Andrej Zaslove, 'Here to stay? Populism as a new party type,' *European Review*, Vol.16, (2008), pp.319-336.
- <sup>889</sup> For useful discussions of the concept, see Ulf Hannerz, 'Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture,' *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, Mike Featherstone, ed.

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- (London: Sage, 1990); John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, eds., *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- <sup>890</sup> Sarah de Lange, 'New Alliances: Why Mainstream Parties Govern with Radical Right-wing Populist Parties,' *Political Studies*, Vol.60 (2012), pp.899-918.
- <sup>891</sup> David Cameron, 'EU speech at Bloomberg,' 23 January, 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg>.
- <sup>892</sup> 'Press Play, LIFT 2016,' Festival Programme, London, 2016.
- <sup>893</sup> Harvie, *Fair Play*, p.123.
- <sup>894</sup> *Ibid.*, p.125.
- <sup>895</sup> Although the number of refugees coming to Europe had fallen in 2016, from over a million to approximately 365,000, people drowning whilst crossing the Mediterranean sea saw a sharp increase from 3,771 (one person in every two hundred and sixty-nine) to 5,096 (one in every seventy-one) a trend that was to continue to rise with one in every eighteen people making a crossing over the Mediterranean dying in 2018.
- <sup>896</sup> See Satnam Virdee and Brendan McGeever, 'Racism, Crisis, Brexit,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.41, No.10 (2018), pp.1802-1819.
- <sup>897</sup> Nigel Farage, *The Express*, April 22, 2016.
- <sup>898</sup> In October 2016, a report by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) found that British newspapers the *Sun* and *Daily Mail* had fuelled prejudice throughout the previous year including 'hate speech' against minority ethnic groups. See The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, *ECRI Report on the United Kingdom*, (Brussels: Council of Europe, 2016), p.9.
- <sup>899</sup> Jessica Elgot and Rowena Mason, 'Nigel Farage: migrant sex attacks to be "nuclear bomb" of EU referendum,' *The Guardian*, 5 June, 2016; Martin Moore and Gordan Ramsey, *UK Media Coverage of the 2016 EU Referendum Campaign* (London: Centre for the Study of Media, Communication and Power, 2017).
- <sup>900</sup> Ian Cobain, Nazia Parveen and Matthew Taylor, 'The Slow-Burning Hatred that Led Thomas Mair to Murder Jo Cox,' *The Guardian*, 23 November, 2016.
- <sup>901</sup> LIFT, 'The most WTF show of the year,' [Email] 24 June, 2016.
- <sup>902</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'Miss Revolutionary Idol Berserker review – Merciless Japanese Pop-Culture Sendup,' *The Guardian*, 23 June, 2016.
- <sup>903</sup> Daniel Devine, 'Hate Crime did Spike after the Referendum Even Allowing for Other Factors,' London School of Economics, Brexit Blog, 19 March, 2018.
- <sup>904</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, David Forgacs, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p.363-370.
- <sup>905</sup> Arts Council England, 'Impact of Brexit on the Arts and Culture Sector' (London: Unlimited House, 2017), p.3.
- <sup>906</sup> Arts Council England, 'Impact of Brexit on the Arts and Culture Sector,' p.5.
- <sup>907</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Essence of Neoliberalism,' *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 8 December, 1998, <https://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu>.
- <sup>908</sup> Bourdieu, 'The Essence of Neoliberalism.'
- <sup>909</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Stuart Hall, Doreen Massey and Michael Rustin, *After Neoliberalism? The Kilburn Manifesto* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2013).
- <sup>910</sup> Jeremy Gilbert, 'Disaffected Consent: That Post-Democratic Feeling,' *Soundings*, No.60 (2015), pp.39-40.

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<sup>911</sup> Gilbert, 'Disaffected Consent,' p.41.

### **Conclusion**

<sup>912</sup> Shevtsova, 'Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu's Champ and Habitus for a Sociology of Stage Productions,' p.50 [Emphasis in Original]

<sup>913</sup> Rose Fenton, Interview with Author, London, 15 February, 2018.

<sup>914</sup> Bourdieu, 'Le Champ Littéraire,' p.5.

<sup>915</sup> David Binder, 'The Arts Festival Revolution,' *TED Talk*, June, 2012.

<sup>916</sup> LIFT announcement, 'Kris Nelson announced as LIFT's new Artistic Director and Joint CEO,' LIFT Festival website, 5 July, 2017, <https://www.liftfestival.com/kris-nelson/>.

<sup>917</sup> Bernadette McNulty, 'Has the UKs Festival Scene Reached Saturation Point?,' *Financial Times*, 7 April, 2017. This report had primarily focused on music-based festivals but also included many combined arts festivals and is indicative of a wider trend across the festival field.

<sup>918</sup> AV Festival, 'Meanwhile What About Socialism?,' Festival Programme, 2016. ACE has not explicitly stated that the content of the programme was their reason for removing funding. However, the Festival's evaluation was used as an example of good practice by ACE and it had been impeccable in meeting (and even exceeding) every target that was set for it. The loss of all the funding for the Festival (£370,482 per year) came at the same time as the North East received £21 million more in ACE funding. These circumstances led to accusations that the funding had been removed on ideological grounds.

<sup>919</sup> Shevtsova, 'Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu's Champ and Habitus for a Sociology of Stage Productions,' p.48.

<sup>920</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55.

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