

BEVERLEY PUPPET FESTIVAL

ADAPTING TO THE CURRENT SITUATION

Due to the current situation concerning the coronavirus outbreak we are faced with two options of how to move forward.

1. Cancel the festival and give unspent costs (including artist fees) back to ACE
2. Adapt to the situation and deliver a very different version of the festival

For both our artists, team, partners and audiences we would like to press ahead with option 2 and see this change as an opportunity to deliver something creative and exciting.

CORE AIMS GOING FORWARD

- Commission 25 tutorial videos from our existing programmed artists that will instruct and engage audiences in puppetry making and performance activities. Videos and activities will be themed around our festival theme of 'Back to Nature'.
- Publish videos in instalments online over 'two months of puppetry' between May – July 2020 to keep arts engagement going for audiences, most of whom will be in isolation.
- All activities will be made as accessible as possible and use only materials that could be found around the house or at the supermarket. Different activities will be tailored to different ages, including care home residents. Audiences will send in footage to us of them participating with our online activities which will feature in our summary video.
- Focus on developing our immediate geographical audience by ensuring all households in Beverley and surrounding villages receive an A5 leaflet signposting them to our online activity programme.
- Remove ticket sales from our budget and instead ask for online donations via a Crowdfunder to support the festival, as well as team members / partners who have lost out on work due to the changes in the delivery of the event.
- Still deliver the Scratch Space, except that participating puppeteers perform their work-in-progress pieces via live social media videos to collect feedback.
- Still deliver an Education Project but through online means.

‘TWO MONTHS OF PUPPETRY’

As our programmed artists will no longer be able to perform as planned, we want to commission all 25 companies to design and present an instructional video that engages audiences about puppetry making and performance. Artists will be able to get creative during this uncertain time and our audiences will be able to access arts stimulation during isolation.

Over two months between May – July 2020 we will release 3 videos per week via our website and social media channels. Our release schedule will be printed in our hard-copy and online brochure. Once published, videos will remain online as an archive.

Artists will provide a diverse range of activities that are tailored to different age groups between ages 3 – 100. The activities will span many genres of puppet theatre and all activities will be possible to complete using materials found around the home. We will ensure that local care homes and day centres are made aware of our programme and be mentored in how to access it.

We will employ a Digital Specialist who will have good experience of reaching and engaging audiences online and who has a knowledge of the East Yorkshire area. They will work with our Videographer to ensure videos are edited and presented to a high-quality and streaming is made easy and accessible.

Audiences will be encouraged to send us videos and photos of them participating in activities. Following the festival, a summary video will be edited together that features a mixture of artist and audience responses.



DEVELOPING OUR AUDIENCES IN BEVERLEY

We want to turn the circumstances into an opportunity to develop our immediate local audience. In previous years we always distributed brochures regionally, but for this special edition of the festival we want to focus on every household in Beverley and the surrounding villages. To minimise environmental impact and to allow distribution to more people we will change our brochure from a 24-page booklet into a double-sided sheet that folds-out from A5 to A2.

Audiences from out of the region and internationally, including many puppeteers, will be able to access content online and we will invest in our social media marketing to promote this.



During these challenging times we think that it is very important to push ahead with the festival in this format for the sake of our audiences. Delivering accessible activities for audiences to do in their own homes will provide much-needed entertainment and creative enrichment.

TICKETING AND MATCH FUNDING

We do not think it wise to charge tickets for audiences to view online content if we want to engage as many people as possible, so will instead opt for a donation system. If able, audiences will donate via a Crowdfunder if they participate in an activity or want to support the festival. £1000 will first go to festival running costs and after that point donations will be distributed to help East Riding Theatre and other stakeholders in our project who we can no longer include in our budget. In our new budget, match funding to our Arts Council England bid is 20.24% of the total.

25 NEW ARTIST COMMISSIONS AND ARCHIVE

The new programme will include all pre-existing contracted artists, unless some are no longer able to commit in which case we will seek replacements. 25 puppetry companies will be commissioned to design, present and video an original online puppetry resource to stimulate puppetry workshop activity at home. These resources will be curated to ensure diversity in content and age specification. Once posted, these 25 videos will remain available on our website as an archive so that audiences can access them anytime.

ARTIST PAYMENTS

As artists will no longer be performing in the same context, we are viewing the changes in the project as a new commission to artists, enabling us to still involve them in the festival. Therefore we feel the fairest way to go forward is to divide up equally the total cost of artists' fees by the number of individual artists involved.

OTHER BUDGET / PROJECT CHANGES

We still plan to run an Education Project with Millers Day Centre in some capacity but are still working out if this is possible to do online. If not, then we will seek another organisation that supports marginalised communities to run the project with.

We do not think we are able to support a Production Intern in this edition of the festival so will put this money towards the Digital Specialist fee.

We will no longer need to pay for site infrastructure, venue hire (apart from previously paid deposits), artist accommodation or artist food, among other items. This is the only reason we are able to deliver the new version of the festival after losing our ticket sales income.

We will be investing more money in printing and distribution costs to make sure we can reach every household in the immediate geographical area.

