

## **Slap Haddock**

### Wood Street Project Proposal

#### **The Project**

Slap Haddock is a theatre company that aims to make work for and with communities in non-traditional spaces; allowing them to fully engage with the arts in an unexpected and exciting way.

For this project we want to draw from the local history and collective knowledge of the residents and business owners to create free arts and educational events within Waltham Forest. We will provide opportunities for people across all age ranges, abilities, social, economic or cultural barriers to come together and to feel more connected with where they live, allowing for more community cohesion and enriching the local cultural landscape.

As a company we have successfully fundraised and created a show inspired by the Walthamstow Dog Track and performed within the Wood Street Indoor Market as part of its rejuvenation scheme in 2012. This interactive piece took audiences back to the 'Dogs' for one night only. Using madcap characters, puppetry and live music, we transformed a tiny glass shop unit within the market into a buzzing and fun-filled event for audiences of all ages, gaining good local following and with the full support of the market and its traders.

Following on from the success of *A Night at the Dogs*, we want to develop our existing links with the area and create an event which has more opportunities for community engagement and cohesion.

From 1912-1955 the Wood Street Indoor Market used to be a popular cinema. Using this as our starting point, the project will have three key outcomes:

- Professional workshops for local community groups and schools
- An interactive community film installation
- Free family-friendly live performances entitled *A Night at the Pictures*

The project will inform those who live and work in the borough of its history and encourage them to come together through their collective experiences. The Indoor Market is an ideal venue for *A Night at the Pictures* as it is a shared space for all residents of Wood Street and it has a unique background. The opportunity to explore links between the community and the area are invaluable tools to our creative process as a company.

#### **Workshops**

Our aim is to engage and build a strong community investment with this project. To achieve this, we will run workshops with professional practitioners exploring elements of the piece with local community groups from all ages and backgrounds. Participants will get the chance to learn and explore performance techniques, playwriting and storytelling skills, set design and puppetry. Tied in with these workshops will be the opportunity to explore their own relationship with the Wood Street area and its cultural history; collecting stories and influences which will feed into the content of the show and the ongoing community installation.

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The workshops will create an opportunity for connections within the community to be strengthened and developed. The content developed within these workshops will bring a richness and authenticity to the live performance event and the participants will gain a real sense of ownership over the project as it will utilise their local knowledge and input.

#### **Live Performance**

Working alongside the existing market stall holders and local businesses, our performance will take place during the Easter half term from Thursday 17th - Sunday 20th April 2014. The front of the market will be re-dressed back to its former cinematic glory of the 1930's complete with mock ticket booth and cinema usher.

Under the premise of a 'night at the pictures' the general public will be greeted at the entrance of the 'cinema' by the central character, a Charlie Chaplin-esque mime from the silent movie era. Audiences will then be ushered through the market and into our bespoke vintage auditorium. This space will also be used for our community film installation during non-performance days. Once seated, audiences will be presented with a short comical infomercial on the history of the Wood Street Cinema before being interrupted and ushered towards the next performance area. Working in conjunction with the market traders and venue owner, we will populate the immediate area with characters from easily recognisable film genres that would have been shown in the cinema's heyday.

The overarching storyline for the performance will stem from a fictional famous film director, a character derived from the local historic figure Alfred Hitchcock. The Director's aim is to decide which film will be the last to be screened in the Wood Street Cinema before its final closure. The performers throughout the market will each have their own local story to tell and vie for the attention from audiences and the Director to screen their 'Big Picture.'

The show will be made accessible to all age ranges and incorporate live music, film, puppetry, physical theatre, mime and street performance techniques, embodying fun and silliness throughout. Audience members will be given the opportunity to step into the limelight and play extras in the 'Big Picture,' culminating in a final live action silent movie.

We will develop strong working connections with local businesses and market traders in order to utilise the whole street and plaza area throughout the promenade performance. By creating varying cinematic scene locations around these areas, this brings a level of historic richness to the narration when performed against a local and familiar setting. It also allows audiences and residents to develop a sense of ownership and connection to the performance and the area itself. We will provide local businesses with opportunities to create events or promotions linked to the production, to build on the local and national interest in this project and the borough.

We are keen to keep this event firmly rooted within Walthamstow so tying it all together with the local history and geography will be keys elements of the performance.

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Our free promenade performance, *A Night at the Pictures*, will be highly interactive and family-friendly. We will have several different performance slots during the April school half term to ensure it remains accessible to everyone. We will work with professional practitioners and seek local volunteers and interns to assist in the whole production. The volunteer and internship programmes will provide an opportunity for people to learn more about how to run a theatre company and to develop or learn existing skills in Producing/Stage Management/Assistant Directing/Set Design for a professional production.

### **Installation**

We will utilise an empty market unit into a community film installation space, creating the opportunity to learn something immediate and easily recognisable about the people around you.

The shop unit will be transformed into a miniature vintage cinema auditorium, where a short documentary of the history of the Indoor Market will be played followed by video clips of local people describing scenes from their favourite films. The projected video will be an ongoing catalogue of people's answers which they can contribute either in-person through our workshops, street interviews or via online uploads. The aim of the installation is to generate dialogue around a common interest amongst the community, film, and how it links to local history.

### **Our Aims**

Our overall aim for this project is to create something really fun and memorable for the community of Wood Street and Walthamstow by providing them with an opportunity to further engage with the arts and be inspired as well as strengthening the existing community network and relationship with the area and its history.

We really value the opportunity for arts to be accessible to everyone so we will always try to keep events and workshops free, so gaining local support and sufficient funding is paramount to our project.

As a theatre company, we want to use this as an existing model to transfer and create work for other areas within the UK. The process of engaging with non-traditional theatre spaces in terms of its history, what it is now and what it means to a community, is one which can achieve community cohesion. We want to create work with residents that they can be proud of and furthermore will make them inspired about where they live and who they live with in a highly entertaining manner. Using a mixture of local participants and theatre professionals we aim to create high quality work that pushes the boundaries and further engages people into the arts.

### **Co-Artistic Director: Nick Cassenbaum**

Nick Cassenbaum a theatre maker and writer. He has an MA from Goldsmiths in writing for performance and has recently graduated from the Royal Court young writers programme. He has worked with some of the country's most exciting street and community theatre companies

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including *The Bureau of Silly Ideas* and has just been invited to be a workshop leader for *Spare Tyre*. He is also one half of *Take Stock Exchange* a theatre company that focuses on making community cohesion work for the London borough of Redbridge and is locally funded there.

### **Co-Artistic Director: Emily Harwood**     [www.emilyharwood.com](http://www.emilyharwood.com)

Emily is a freelance scenographer and theatre maker having graduated from The University of Kent with a Masters in Theatre & Drama Studies.

Previous designs for theatre and opera include: *The Fastest Clock in the Universe* (Tremors, Old Red Lion), *The Bridge* (Page One, Chelsea Theatre), *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* (Troupel, The Courtyard), *Belvedere* (Gunpowder Theatre, The White Bear & Upstairs at Three & Ten), *The Lady of Satis House* (Riverside Studios), *A Night at The Dogs* (Slap Haddock, Walthamstow Indoor Market), *The Perils of Love & Gravity* (Michael Keane, Bedlam & New Wimbledon Theatre), *Rooted* (The Albany), *In Care* (NYT, Southwark Playhouse), *The Block* (NYT, Southwark Playhouse), *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Write By Numbers, Brixton Market), *Everchanging Butterfly* (UKC), *Tissue* (UKC).

Assistant Design credits include: *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (The Albany), *Feeble Minds* (Spare Tyre, The Albany & Rich Mix), *It Felt Like a Kiss* (Punchdrunk, Manchester International Festival), *T[r]apped* (Tilted Productions, Laban)

Film Production/Costume Design: *Job's Dinner* (due for release 2014), *Tongue Tied* (2014), *Verity* (2014).

Emily is also co-founder of *Dandelion Clock Shop*; an emerging children's theatre company aimed at creating fun and heart-warming stories and crafts for those young at heart.

### **Marketing Manager: Josh McNorton**     [www.joshmcnorton.com](http://www.joshmcnorton.com)

Josh McNorton is a Canadian-born, UK-based cultural event producer, brand consultant, curator and artist/tour manager. His work has taken him to the 2010 Vancouver Olympics and 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics, cultural and academic institutions, international festivals and tours. He specializes in working with artists of all disciplines and career levels to realize multifaceted creative projects and live performances.

Josh is currently the Head of Event Production and Artist Services for Sound Diplomacy, an independent creative industries consultancy with offices in London, Barcelona and Berlin. He is also the Co-Founder and Creative Producer of *Relative Motion*, a new London-based theatre company.

As an artist, Josh writes, produces and performs music, writes, directs and produces theatre, and occasionally writes about theatre, music and travel. He studied Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia and was a four-time recipient of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation's National Excellence Award scholarship.