

The Company

Hijinx Theatre was founded in 1981, and is a professional touring theatre company with a growing portfolio of other activities. Our mission statement is: *to create high quality, inclusive theatre that is innovative, empowering and thought provoking while ensuring that our audiences enjoy a good night out. Hijinx is committed to pioneering and promoting the inclusion of people with learning disabilities and to creating a diversity of opportunities for participation.*

Hijinx has a commitment to working inclusively believing that everyone has something of value to offer regardless of ability. We operate an inclusive approach to managing the Company supporting a collaborative way of working within a framework of individual responsibilities. Whilst the Director will lead the Company and ultimately have responsibility for delivering the Business Plan it will be their role to support and enable the individual team members leading on specific strands of activity.

Hijinx's Activity

Between 1990 and 2010 Hijinx operated a pattern of performance activity which was repeated annually. We produced two professional touring shows each year; in the spring a show for adults with learning disabilities and in the autumn for the general public in community venues. Both shows toured throughout Wales and England for approx 10 weeks each, giving up to 40 performances per tour.

Following the Arts Council of Wales' Investment Review decisions in June 2010, there has been a significant shift in activity. ACW no longer support our tour for community audiences and now focus the funding on our work for and with adults with learning disabilities.

2011/12 has been an interim year during which the company has restructured and activity re-scoped. Change will continue into 2012-13 as we undertake new activity and find a new direction while remaining true to our mission statement. The Company will now place greater emphasis on supporting the performance potential of people with learning disabilities with the Academy programme focussing on training for professional performance.

In 2012/13 we will produce **one new professional touring show**, *The Adventures of Sancho Panza*. This will have a split tour with performances from 2nd October – 10th November 2012 and 13th May – 29th June 2013. This will have an inclusive cast of five.

In the autumn of 2013 we will tour a new production, with the split tour pattern of the previous year.

Training for talented actors with learning disabilities.

We have been striving to include actors with learning disabilities in professional touring productions in recent years. While we have achieved this in five productions to date, it has become very clear that there are very few opportunities in the UK for professional drama training for talented actors with learning disabilities, and none at all within easy reach of Cardiff. In November '11 we started delivering basic workshops in drama skills one day per

week, working on confidence building and communication, as part of Vision 21's Creative Choices programme. In February 2012 we will launch the Hijinx Academy offering more focussed training in different performance genres. Creative Choices will continue and both projects will run throughout the year. An inclusive residency programme will run from March – December 2012, whereby world-renowned companies will run short residencies with the group and, others in the profession without learning disabilities. The residency project is supported by an ACW Training grant.

Hijinx **Outreach** was set up in April 2005. This offers workshops and longer projects, which focus mainly on people within the learning-disabled community including carers. Forum Theatre has been developing over the past 3 years for conferences and other events. Learning Disabled workshop assistants help to deliver projects alongside the Outreach Manager. Hijinx has developed an expertise in inclusive performance practice and this is an area we will seek to develop over the next three years.

Odyssey is a performance project for members of the community including people with learning disabilities. It was set up in 1999 and was project funded by the ACW Lottery route until March 2011. From April 2011 it has been included in our core activity and part of our revenue funding from ACW. There are weekly workshops each Monday evening working on drama skills. Usually there is a Christmas production at the Weston Studio, Wales Millennium Centre, but there will not be one in 2011. Odyssey is currently undergoing a review in how it operates and moving to charging members basic fees.

Hijinx Pods are an offshoot of Odyssey. These are smaller, mixed ability groups of between 2 – 7 people who work on much shorter pieces that are performed at festivals and other events. They cover a wide variety of genres, including a circus pod, a mask piece, a rock band and a silent interactive piece. Two Pods went to the Escena Mobile Festival in Seville during March 2011 to much acclaim. The Hijinx Pods provide an additional performance platform for the performers from both Odyssey and the Academy programme.

Unity Festival is held in the summer. It is an arts festival, which showcases work created by people of all abilities working together. The first one took place in 2008, funded on a wing and a prayer. The 4th Unity Festival in summer 2011 was funded by the ACW Festivals Fund; the Festival has a developed strong links with international companies and a high profile reputation world wide.

Premises

Hijinx is based in the **Wales Millennium Centre** in Cardiff Bay, and while this enhances our status and offers opportunities for creative interchange with the Centre and other residents, our commitment to touring professional theatre to small venues throughout the UK remains unchanged. We have no rehearsal space at the WMC, this has to be booked for every rehearsal / development period.

Legal status

The Company became a registered company, limited by guarantee in 1987, and a registered Charity in November 1999. The overall responsibility for Hijinx lies with the Board of Directors, who are also Trustees of the Charity, to whom staff report regularly. There are 6 Board meetings per year plus and Annual General Meeting.