

Institution: Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance		
Unit of Assessment 33 - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Creating new models of practice for artists and educators working with Theatre for Young Audiences		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Jeremy Harrison	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Postgraduate Programme Director & Head of Theatre for Young Audiences Centre	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2001 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Established in 2011, the Theatre for Young Audiences Centre (TYA) has generated research in the under-investigated area of actor-training for artists creating work specifically for young audiences. Led by Jeremy Harrison, the centre's research has had impact locally and internationally on arts organisations and theatre companies, as well as on the young people and communities they serve. In Kent and Greater London, it has directly impacted upon over 12,000 young people and changed teaching and training practices through the region. The cascading of the centre's methodologies amongst international practitioners, including world-leading companies such as Punchdrunk (UK), Helios (Germany) and Al Vaccio (Mexico), has led to continued impact on thousands of children worldwide as well as arts professionals and practitioners in those countries.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The Theatre for Young Audiences sector, often seen as the poor relation of 'adult' theatre, receives relatively little attention from critics or the academy. Jeremy Harrison's body of research addresses this deficit through approaches and methodologies that support the training of artists and the creation of new work in relation to the Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA). His unique action-research residency model combines research, community engagement and industry partnership with a variety of world-leading arts organisations and theatre companies.</p> <p>Harrison has identified core characteristics and themes in the production and reception of theatre for young audiences [3.1-3.3]. He situates TYA as an arts practice distinct from, but alongside, the more dominant discourse around Applied Theatre, and calls for a radical re-thinking of traditional conservatoire models. He has developed a specific methodology for actor training that draws on the artist-teacher paradigm prevalent in practice in the United States and applies it to participatory theatre models prevalent in youth-theatre and educational settings in the UK [3.1, 3.2]. This includes a hybrid method that balances the</p>		

sensibilities and skills of the adult-artist, with the perspective and creative voice of the young audience [3.1]. His approach is child-centred and aims to make culturally visible the contributions of children's lived experience. He frames this as a world where 'babies become co-collaborators' and outcomes are shaped in the space between audience and artist. Additionally, it focuses on creating multi-sensory experiences to create inclusive and accessible theatre [3.4].

Key to Harrison's approach is his concept of musicality. In his chapter 'A Young Theatre' from his book *Actor-Musicianship*, Harrison identifies the integration of live music and music-making as a core characteristic of TYA. He outlines the relationship between actor-musicianship and theatre for young audiences and provides specific methods for training/facilitation practices for actors working with young people [3.2].

In collaboration with Half Moon Theatre, London, and the Artrix Arts Centre, Bromsgrove, the Theatre for Young Audience's research project, **On the Edge of Training** (2016), explored and identified how artists are prepared, supported and trained for work directed at children and young people [3.3]. The researchers conducted an online survey for all participating artists and delegates attending the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People's 'On The Edge International Artistic Gathering', in Birmingham (2016). The survey provided qualitative and quantitative data about current actor-training practice through a snapshot of international training experience in the sector. Additionally, a series of interviews and panel discussion with a range of artists attending the festival provided narrative and ethnographic evidence of contemporary international experiences from a range of makers and performers. The researchers then identified and defined best practice internationally for TYA actor-training based on the data [3.3].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- [3.1] **Harrison, Jeremy**. 'When Acting Like Children Becomes Acting for Children', Conference Paper, NYU Steinhardt *Which Way TYA?*, 2012, subsequently published on the Rose Bruford College repository. bruford.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/id/eprint/6/ .
- [3.2] **Harrison, Jeremy**. *Actor-Musicianship*. London: Methuen Drama, 2016.
- [3.3] **Harrison, Jeremy**. 'On the Edge of Training Final Report', 2016, subsequently published on the Rose Bruford College repository. bruford.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/id/eprint/7/
- [3.4] **Harrison, Jeremy**. 'Dream: the Joy of Creating' – legacy projects 'Creating with the Cart' and 'Sensory LAB', 2014 – 2020.

Funding totalling £106,220 has been raised to support activity from sources including local authorities, charitable trusts and foundations and Arts Council England.

Details of the impact

Harrison's research on the creation and performance of theatre made for children and young people has enhanced the practice of artists, educators, students and organisations working in the field of theatre for young audiences. The TYA Centre's unique research-residency model has facilitated research impact through collaborations with world-leading companies and practitioners, in conjunction with community-facing organisations.

Research-led events at the TYA Centre, such as 'Dream: the Joy of Creating' (2012-ongoing) and 'Creating with the Cart' (2015-19) have impacted upon both local and international

practitioners. Together they have provided 139 early-career and mid-career artists from countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America a space to share, document and develop their practice. The events introduced new training methods and modes of practice for artists working with young people, parents and carers in community settings.

Overall, Harrison's research, and its dissemination through residencies and workshops, has supported the development of new theatre companies, training and educational programmes, and new modes of practice for existing international companies. This has further cascaded to the communities served by these practitioners.

Increasing Arts Provision for Young People in Kent and Greater London

The annual curated action-research event 'Dream: the Joy of Creating' has largely taken place in East Kent, an area identified by Arts Council England as being of strategic importance owing to the community's lack of arts infrastructure and a resulting lack of arts engagement. Harrison's research has transformed practice in Kent through workshops with local arts organisations, colleges and primary schools. Through workshops featuring a variety of world-leading practitioners and companies, the research has had a direct impact on participating community organisations, as well as on over 12,000 children and young people in Kent and Greater London.

The Artistic Director of the local arts organisation Confidance confirmed the impact of Harrison's research on the wider artistic community in Kent since 2014: 'It strengthens the artistic community in East Kent and more broadly, and in Sidcup as well. The experience is richer for everybody being involved, for the students at Rose Bruford, for the students at Wyvern, for Confidance dance artists. These relationships enable more artistic happenings and involve a larger spectrum of people which can only serve to strengthen and grow inclusive arts, and influence non-disabled artists to be more inclusive. Everyone benefits.' [5.1(a)].

Schools in Kent and Greater London have adopted strategies from Harrison's research. The Headteacher from Hamstreet Primary Academy states that prior to Harrison's workshops, staff training in music, drama and creative methods was 'often woeful'. Harrison's workshops 'influenced everyone who came into contact with it', and increased staff confidence to use creative and drama-based strategies 'that are so simple and easy to include in everyday teaching. It is very practical, although obviously, he also gives you the theory behind it'. They also stated that 'teachers could see how the children reacted and the benefits to themselves professionally' [5.1(b)].

The Drama Programme Manager at London's Morley College 'integrate[d] a devising unit into our HNC Performing Arts course [...] with a focus on creating work for early years' [5.1(c)], which includes student-led workshops in local schools.

Harrison has acted as advisor and creative lead for Primary Shakespeare Company (PSC), a company that brings theatre to schools in Kent and Greater London. Harrison's research has supported the creation of multi-sensory and immersive work in special schools in Kent with PSC. They have established Wyvern School in East Kent as a 'training ground to develop the model and share it as best practice with other schools' and have developed plans to roll this out in other local schools [5.1(e)]. The director of PSC has noted that their research with

Harrison, while focused on children with special needs, has also been applicable to their 'sessions with mainstream children in terms of movement, motifs and learning' [5.1(d)].

Enhancing the youth-centred practices of international theatre companies

The research has been instrumental in creating international communities of practice, and companies worldwide have applied the centre's methodologies in a variety of contexts. This has extended the impact of the research to practitioner and hence thousands of children and young people in Europe, North America, Africa and Asia.

United Kingdom

Harrison's work with the world-leading immersive theatre company Punchdrunk changed the company's enrichment practices in relation to youth theatre. According to the CEO of Punchdrunk Enrichment, Harrison introduced 'a new and unusual way of working for us' that put children at the centre of the process. While previously their 'creative practice was quite bound up in installation and transformation of space' the project encouraged new modes of 'enrichment practice in schools' that works directly with students, teachers, and practitioners in the creation of an event. He has testified that he 'really wanted to use that model again' and it has informed the development of 'the Punchdrunk Teacher Collective – where we will take teachers on a creative 'boot camp' residency' [5.1(e)]. Overall, he saw 'a huge value in doing and supporting this work as it was about the intersection between our work with others, with different and unique spaces or communities. That is where really interesting things develop' [5.1(e)].

Sweden

The Director of Sweden's Scen:se testified that participating in Creating with the Cart 'changed [her] life'. The workshop inspired her to successfully apply for funding for a pilot project in 9 local special schools. She received substantial follow-on funding from the Swedish Lottery and Swedish Arts Council, which resulted in a national programme of productions and exhibitions that has toured to over 10 cities with over 30 performances across Sweden. She testified that 'It was because of 'Creating With the Cart' that I'm doing [Scen:se] now' [5.1(f)].

Mexico

Mexican company Al Vacio created work for rural toddlers and their families in a remote village hall. The directors of the company stated that Harrison's research and workshops 'nurtured the way [they] consider the stage and its relation to children in their early years' and was one of their 'greatest learning experiences'. The community workshops in Kent made them 'deeply value the exchange and collaboration between all those who concern [themselves] with theatre and early years audiences' and it has had a profound impact on their continuing practice in Mexico [5.1(g)].

South Africa

The founder of Storywood Theatre in Cape Town, South Africa participated in 'Creating With the Cart' events in 2016 and 2018 and testified that they were 'life changing', taking her work 'in a direction that [she] never planned or anticipated'. This included the development of new actor-training programme focused on the creation of work for children on the autism spectrum. She also established a two-year foundation course at the University of Cape Town. As she has explained, the methods outlined by the research are 'largely unknown in South Africa and the actor training programme she devised 'was absolutely based on the training which I had

received' through the workshops. This training programme and production helped Storywood Theatre to achieve registered non-profit status, further increasing their capacity to create new work. 'Storywood' also created a new devised work drawing on the research, 'Sail Away' (2019), which toured South Africa for a total of 66 performances [5.1(h)].

Singapore

After attending courses inspired by the research, the Co-Artistic Director of Five Stones Theatre Company was inspired 'to create the collective in 2018'. The company focuses on interdisciplinary collaborative work for young people, and their production based on the methods outlined in the research, 'Heartstrings' (2019), 'had a real impact on the local audience' [5.1(i)].

Creating New Models of Access and Inclusion for Partner Organisations

Harrison's research around inclusion and accessibility has created new resources for accessible theatre approaches for children and young people with disabilities and complex needs. His research with longstanding inclusive and accessible theatre companies such as Oily Cart and GRAEAE has resulted in a wider partnership with the International Inclusive Arts Network (IIAN). Through the creation of a IIAN Champions project, IIAN and Harrison have brought practitioners from 77 countries together in online exchanges, which, in August 2020, resulted in the creation of a world-map of inclusion [5.2]. Additionally, Harrison established the International Sensory LAB with theatre company Oily Cart in 2020, which has introduced sensory theatre methods to over 100 artists from around the world. Together, this network has started to develop resources to increase the prevalence of inclusive, accessible theatre worldwide.

Overall, the Centre's research, and the training methods and approaches it has developed in relation to Theatre for Young Audiences, have had a wide-reaching impact on educators and professional practitioners globally. Harrison's work with community-facing organisations has supported further community engagement through inclusive and accessible theatrical practice, expanding the impact of his work not only to professional practitioners, but to thousands of children worldwide who have attended performances based on the principles of his research.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] Corroborating statements from:

- (a) Artistic Director of the arts organisation 'Confidance'.
- (b) The Headteacher from Hamstreet Primary Academy.
- (c) Drama Programme Manager at Morley College, London.
- (d) Director of the 'Primary Shakespeare Company'.
- (e) Director of Enrichment for 'Punchdrunk'.
- (f) Director of 'Scen:se'.
- (g) Directors of Mexican company 'Al Vacio'.
- (h) Founder of 'Storywood' Theatre in Cape Town, South Africa.
- (i) Co-Artistic Director of 'Five Stones Theatre Company'.

[5.2] International Inclusive Arts Network. 'ASSITEJ IIAN Map of Inclusivity,' October 2020. iianonline.wordpress.com/assitej-iian-map-of-inclusivity/.