



théâtre sans
frontières

WORLD THEATRE

ANNUAL REPORT

2013 – 2014

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Théâtre Sans Frontières' annual report for 2013-14. This has undoubtedly been one of the busiest years ever for the company and I would like to draw your attention to just some of the year's highlights.

The year began with our international production **Canary Gold** touring Tenerife, where our co-producers, Teatro Tamaska, are based. Following the UK tour earlier in 2013, the company now had the opportunity to prepare the show for its appearance at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August.

The summer term saw our ever-popular French show for 8-12 year olds, **Contes Dorés**, making a short tour in response to requests from schools around the country, including some schools TSF had not previously visited. We followed this in autumn with a re-working of our delightful theatre production for children, **Le Moulin Magique**. I would like to thank Routes into Languages North East for their support of this production.

Our brand new French show for 12-15 year olds, **Le Mystère de St Denis**, undertook a pilot tour of schools in the North East in early spring 2014. This is an age group we have not previously made much work for and we were delighted that it was well received and that the students found it interesting and engaging. We hope to retour the show further afield in the future.

We have made significant new funding and stakeholder partners in the past year, diversifying our audience and funding base. We have been involved in an Arts Council Catalyst funded partnership which provide new online opportunities for our friends and supporters to donate to TSF; we have also actively sought new funding through individual, trust and foundation philanthropy seeking to develop our work and increase the proportion of our funding coming from traditional sources.

A funding award from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation allowed us to complete the development of a major e-learning project through the digitisation of one of our most successful productions, **Le Tour de France**, ready for launch in April 2014. We look forward to developing other programmes to add to this platform. Thanks to a grant from The Wellcome Trust, our new cross-curricular science, drama and French project, **Louis Pasteur and the Devastating Germs**, took place in collaboration with the Centre for Life, Newcastle, and was also presented at the Glasgow Science Centre.

I would like to thank all those who have worked for and with TSF in making this year so successful. We thank our funding partners Arts Council England and Northumberland County Council for their essential continued support and the trusts and foundations that have supported our work, as well as all the schools and venues who continue to present our work to audiences across England.

I hope you enjoy the more detailed account that follows.

Brian Debnam
Chair

THÉÂTRE SANS FRONTIÈRES' ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

2013-4 has, without doubt, been one of our busiest years ever. We created a new schools' touring show *Le Mystère de St Denis*, a new participatory project for teenagers *Louis Pasteur and the Devastating Germs*, a new online web platform featuring *Le Tour de France* and toured a new production of *Le Moulin Magique*. In addition, we toured *Canary Gold* to Tenerife and *Contes Dorés* into schools. We started work on a new English/Swedish production *Heaven Eyes*, collaborated with Skimstone Arts on their dementia show (*Jack and Jill and the Red Postbox*) and took both this show and *Canary Gold* to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Alongside this wealth of creative work, a significant amount of time was spent developing the Goods Shed plans and also re-applying for NPO status with Arts Council England.

Productions

Canary Gold

We started the year with *Canary Gold*, our collaboration with Teatro Tamaska, touring in Tenerife. Following the UK tour earlier in 2013, we had some time to re-rehearse the show in Tenerife. This meant that we could tighten up certain scenes, re-shape the ending and overall shorten the show so that it would be suitable for school audiences in Tenerife and also fit into our allocated time slot at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The show was performed in Tenerife to a total audience of 1,795. In August, we then took the production to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe for 13 days. It was extremely hard work as competition for audiences and reviews is always very tough. We realised that arriving part way through the Festival, when most companies have already had their reviews, put us at quite a disadvantage. However, everyone worked very hard to spread the word - office staff, performers, friends and family - and in the end we attracted reasonable audience sizes.



Photoshoot for *Canary Gold* in Edinburgh

“fun and adventurous... I’d sail with them again”
Fringe Guru

“An original, brilliant play and wonderful performances”
Audience member

Contes Dorés

In the summer term, we were pleased to present a short tour of our popular show *Contes Dorés*. This was in response to a number of requests we had received from schools around the country. We were delighted to work again with Mariae Smiarowska and Elena Miller who had been part of the original production. They performed alongside John Cobb, Paddy Burton and Emily Grant. We performed to 1,822 children in schools as far apart as Kent and Yorkshire. Five of the schools visited were new to TSF.

In addition to the schools tour, we were delighted to be able to perform an extract from the show at our Catalyst dinner with other members of the TWINE consortium (Touring Works in The North East) which took place at the Assembly Rooms in Newcastle upon Tyne.

“Thank you all, once again, for your hard work and enthusiasm. As before, if you are doing a new show next year - we are ready to book it now!” Teacher



Contes Dorés

Le Moulin Magique

Our main Autumn show was a re-working of our production *Le Moulin Magique* which was first staged in 1996. John Cobb, who was part of the original production, performed alongside Jack Burton and newcomers to TSF, Aron De Casmaker (Canada) and Isabelle Schoelcher (France/Iran). The team was supported by stage manager Shona Wright, mask maker Joff Chafer and costume designer Alison Ashton. The show opened at Queen's Hall Arts Centre, Hexham as part of the Hexham Abbey Festival, celebrating European Day of Languages. It then toured to theatres around the country, performing mostly to school audiences, but also families and adult groups. We were very grateful for Routes into Languages for both promoting the show and supporting a performance in Newcastle at the Mill Volvo Tyne Theatre. Over 20 performances, 1,773 people saw the show.



"I was delighted with the participation of the children. I thought it was wonderful way to make French alive."

Audience member, Hexham

"Charming, imaginative, most enjoyable - very talented cast, loved it."

Audience member,
Stamford Arts Centre

Madame La Pluie, *Le Moulin Magique*

Le Mystère de St. Denis

In Spring 2014, we turned our energy into creating a new French show to tour schools that was specifically aimed at 12-15 year olds. This is a group that we do not usually make work for and it was certainly a challenge to create a piece of foreign language theatre that students would find fun and engaging and of interest content-wise to their age group. We had carried out some research with year 8 and 9 students in Hexham the previous year and in the Autumn of 2013 followed this up with a showing of work in progress to two classes of year 9 students in Queen Elizabeth High School. This was extremely useful for finding what worked and what needed changing. The cast encompassed Rebecca Jameson, Aron De Casmaker, Emily Grant and Jeremy Bradfield. It was co-directed by John Cobb and Sarah Kemp with music by Jeremy, set and costumes by Alison Ashton and stage management by Jack Burton. Jack was helped by our apprentice James Anderson, who did much of the AV work.



Baron Samedi, *Le Mystère de Saint Denis*

Thanks also to cameraman Christo Wallers who filmed a short advert as a prologue to the show with one of our apprentices Nassy Konan Maureen and volunteers Theo Hornsey, Hattie Speed and Eleanor Cobb. We were very pleased to work with such a dedicated, talented and creative team who worked flat out developing characters, writing script and music, making zombie masks and filming in order to get the show on the road. The result was warmly welcomed by schools we visited in the North East and well received by students. We hope that there will be an opportunity in the future to take the show out again further afield. For this pilot tour, we performed in 11 schools to a total of 1,927 students.

“Thank you! I thought it was very entertaining and the costumes were great! I also loved watching my classmates participate in the production.”

Student, St Bede’s, Lanchester

“This was a fabulous play. I have never seen so much focus from the entire year group at once!” Teacher, Hexham Middle School

Other productions

Jack and Jill and the Red Postbox

During the year Sarah Kemp and John Cobb continued to work with Skimstone Arts on their show *Jack and Jill and the Red Postbox* about the impact of early onset of dementia on a family. The production was performed for a week at Edinburgh Festival Fringe and then toured health and social conferences in Newcastle upon Tyne, Falkirk, Edinburgh and Stockton-on-Tees.

“The performances are quite lovely, gentle and very honest; particularly by Sarah Kemp as Jill, whose bafflement at her changing perception of the world is superbly understated.”

Three Weeks

Heaven Eyes

We continued with our plans for the stage adaptation of David Almond’s beautiful, eerie story *Heaven Eyes*. This involved John Cobb and Jack Burton work-shopping some scenes from the play with GEST (Gothenburg English Studio Theatre) and students from an international school in Gothenburg. We then auditioned in Newcastle and Gothenburg for a cast from North East England and Sweden and commissioned Ken Patterson to write the music and Alison Ashton to do the set design. We have partnered up with Alnwick Playhouse to tech and open the show there and with the Juice Festival (Newcastle/Gateshead) for it to be presented as part of their October half term activities. We are very excited about making the show in Autumn.

Hearts

John Cobb was invited to work again with Robert Lepage, this time on his new production *Hearts* which played to packed houses for two weeks in February in Montreal, Canada and one week in Châlons-en-Champagne, France.

Videos of TSF’s work can be viewed on our website: <http://www.tsf.org.uk> and on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheatreSF>

Digital Development

We were very excited to finally complete the editing of all the film and resources for our *Le Tour de France* e-learning project. In the summer of 2013, we were able to give schools a taster of the final product. Following a presentation to local teachers in North Tyneside, 23 North and South Tyneside schools then bought the DVD of the adventure story: the children and teachers were delighted with it! Ken Patterson worked with one group of children to create their own music video loosely based on our storyline.

“The children absolutely loved it. It was great for them to see that it was actually filmed in France.” Teacher, Jarrow

We launched the project publicly at Hexham’s Forum Cinema, where, on a very rainy Saturday in May, we welcomed cast, crew, teachers, town twinning visitors from Noyon and children, who appeared in the resources pack, to a sneaky full screen preview of some excerpts from the project. This was followed by the opportunity to try out some of the digital games and enjoy bicycle themed cake and biscuits in the cinema’s cafe.



The following months were then spent completing the build of the e-learning web platform, as well as uploading all the content, with a view to launching the whole site publicly at the start of the new financial year. Many thanks to Patricia Goh from Newcastle University for all the fantastic work she did to help Alison with this. Thanks also to St Joseph’s Middle School, Hexham for letting us test the site on their smart board.

In the meantime, the new TSF website, launched in 2012, continues to serve the company well, allowing more interaction with audiences and also enabling more streaming of video clips from YouTube and Vimeo.

Learning, Participation and Engagement

Louis Pasteur and the Devastating Germs

After nearly a year of preparation, we were very excited to finally run our new participatory drama, science and French project for teenagers, *Louis Pasteur and the Devastating Germs* at the Centre For Life, Newcastle. It was great to be back with Noel and his team at LIFE and to work with such enthusiastic teachers and students from: Hexham Middle School; Corbridge Middle School; St Thomas More; and Whitley Bay High School. We were also pleased to work with Caroline Murphy and Bridge North

East on an in-depth evaluation of the project and we valued the extra help from school students Molly Agar and Jonty Rhodes on work experience with us. Tom Paterson came to film two days of the project, assisted by Imogen Paterson.

“I felt like when we did the bit of drama and we watched each other’s performances it really helped me understand what Pasteur achieved, how important he was for science, because it illustrated different key moments in his life.” (Y9 pupil)

“Some children that never say anything in the science class have been answering questions because they’ve done the drama, they understood things because they’ve acted it out, it’s stuck with them, and it’s just given them that extra confidence to speak up.” (Science teacher, Hexham Middle School)



“I think it’s because you’re using different parts of your brain, like for languages, for drama, then the science side, and you’re bringing that together so I imagine your brain is working harder and you remember it better.” (Year 8 pupil)

Louis Pasteur and Monsieur Bigot in Pasteur’s laboratory

Following the two weeks in Newcastle, we reviewed the success of different aspects of the project. Together with the science staff, Katy Mold and Aileen Bradley from Glasgow Science Centre (GSC), we made a number of changes to the science experiment part of the project to make it clearer and create conditions for a better outcome for the students. We then ran the project at GSC in December.

John Cobb played the role of Joseph Lister and Mark Hanly (Newcastle) and Chris Craig (Glasgow) took on the role of Louis Pasteur. Sarah Kemp facilitated the drama part of the project. The teachers from the schools compiled resources to trial with students both before and after the science centre day.

Many thanks to The Wellcome Trust for funding this fabulous project.

Other participatory projects

We were very pleased to have Nassy Konan Maureen with us for three months as an apprentice whilst we toured *Le Moulin Magique*. With the help of Board member Pascale Konyn, Nassy prepared a workshop on the show that she took to school children attending performances in the North East. She ran ten workshops in total for 270 pupils. The workshops prepared and enriched their experience of seeing the production. In addition, we commissioned a comprehensive new education resources pack, written by Maria Frazer, for which we received funding from the Ernest Cook Trust.



We worked with year 9 students from Queen Elizabeth High School Hexham on the development of *Le Mystère de St Denis*. We also welcomed a large group of MA cultural management students from Newcastle University into one of our rehearsals.

John Cobb and Jack Burton ran a workshop in Gothenburg with GEST and international school students on *Heaven Eyes*. Their visit was supported by the Swedish Embassy and also TYA UK (Theatre For Young Audiences).

Alison Maw contributed to the Routes Into Languages' *Beat the Rat Race* day, at Newcastle University, on careers with languages.

Nassy Konan Maureen helped with the running of Drama workshops at St Joseph's Middle School throughout the Autumn term.

Sarah Kemp led participatory workshops with:

- Hexham Middle School students – making a play about the French Revolution
- Newcastle University Chinese Drama in Translation MA students on words and images
- Newcastle University post-graduate Modern Languages students in presentation skills

Reach

As always, TSF sought throughout the year to maintain and build relationships with audiences in venues and schools we have visited often and, at the same time, extend our reach to new audiences in parts of the country not previously visited.

- *Contes Dorés* visited five schools new to TSF and *Le Mystère de St Denis* went to four new secondary schools. *Le Moulin Magique* brought in another crop of schools new to our work as we played to packed audiences in theatres in Hartlepool, Blyth, Barrow-in-Furness and Frome, amongst others.
- In addition to our national touring programme, *Canary Gold* travelled to Tenerife, as well as to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, playing to many people who had not seen the company before. John Cobb and Jack Burton visited the Göteborgs

Dans & Teater Festival and ran a workshop on *Heaven Eyes* with international school students.

- Our *Louis Pasteur* project took us out of the North East to wonderful hosts at Glasgow Science Centre where we worked with students and teachers from four Strathclyde secondary schools. The planned digitisation of resources from this project along with *Le Tour de France* digital project will enable us, in the future, to reach even further afield.
- Over the year we worked with artists from UK, Spain, France, Poland, Canada and Iran.
- We performed to a total audience of 8,125 of whom 5,615 were children and young people.
- We continued to publish and mail out a newsletter to our mailing list of over 4,500 individuals and schools, as well as sending out regular ebulletins. We engaged audiences through social media and our new website which encourages more interactivity from audiences.

Staffing

Our core office staff has remained constant throughout the year: Sue Maltby, Alison Maw and Gabby Keaveny. They bring a wealth of expertise and knowledge to TSF and are a dedicated support to artistic directors John Cobb and Sarah Kemp. We were pleased to appoint this year a freelance fundraiser Peter Kavanagh and two apprentices Nassy Konan Maureen (three months) and James Anderson (four months). Our fabulous Newcastle University undergraduate, Patrica Goh from Singapore, who had started with us the previous year, stayed on for another three months to help with the *Tour de France* digitisation.

We also welcomed school students Jonty Rhodes and Molly Agar on one-week work placements and Eleanor Cobb who assisted Gabby on finance.

In addition, we are grateful to the following people who volunteered with us during the year: Theo Hornsey (props and filming); Hattie Speed (filming); Lisa Petrie (props); Margaret Turner (education resources); Benoit Goffin (stage management); Jess Maltby (publicity).

The Board

We have sadly lost a number of Board members this year: Graham Darbourne and Richard Berg-Rust, who both moved out of the region to new jobs, and Stan Abbott, our longest serving Board member. We are very grateful for all the support they have given the company and wish them well in the future. We welcomed Morag Iles and Helen Green as new Board members and look forward to Chris Black taking over Graham Darbourne's finance role in the new financial year.

The Goods Shed

With support from Network Rail, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Railway Heritage Trust, we have been able to commission _space Architects to develop the project to RIBA Stage D, and PPIY Ltd to begin work on the conservation management plan. Alongside the architectural and conservation plans, Jane Brantom started work on a comprehensive activity and volunteer plan, setting up meetings with a variety of groups and individuals from across the local and regional community.

Organisational Relationships

TSF continues to be based at Queen's Hall, Hexham and we very much appreciate the ongoing support we receive from Geof Keys and all his staff, as well as our local audiences.

As well as aiming to sustain good relationships with all venues and schools we visit, we have also established relationships with a variety of organisations.

Local and regional level

- We have continued to work closely with Jane Dawson, school improvement officer for North and South Tyneside, who has been particularly supportive with both the *Louis Pasteur* and *Tour de France* projects.
- We have strong links with Newcastle University through the Modern Languages Department and Routes Into Languages (including supporting the Beat The Rat Race careers seminar for schools) and also with the Cultural Management MA.
- With a second grant from the Wellcome Trust we were able to work with the Centre for Life, Newcastle and four North East schools on *Louis Pasteur*.
- We are actively involved with Bridge North East; Cultural Ambassadors' Network; and Creative Links (Gothenburg) project.
- We are part of a successful Catalyst Consortium bid with the Empty Space, NTC, Theatre Hullabaloo and Unfolding Theatre Company.
- In Hexham, we are involved with and support: the Arts Forum; the Community Partnership; the Tourism Forum; the Forum Cinema; and the Hexham Book Festival. This year we were involved with the Arts Forum and the conclusion of Newcastle University's Inbetween project which explored the role of the arts in the regeneration of market towns.
- Sarah and John worked with Skimstone Arts on *Jack and Jill and the Red Postbox*.
- Our apprentice Nassy Konan Maureen volunteered as a young reviewer for The Juice Festival and as a steward at The Take Off Festival. She also worked as a drama facilitator with the St Joseph's Middle School drama group.
- We have supported local companies through performance, direction and the loan of equipment, including: Skimstone Arts; St Joseph's Middle School youth drama group; Tyne Valley Youth Theatre; and Miscreations Theatre Company.

National and international level

- We have developed a relationship with Glasgow Science Centre and Glasgow schools for the *Louis Pasteur* project.
- We are members of both local and national ALL (Association for Language Learning).
- Sarah Kemp has become North East Rep for ITC.
- In partnership with Teatro Tamaska, Tenerife we took *Canary Gold* to Tenerife and to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.
- We continued to develop our relationship with GEST in Gothenburg, Sweden.
- John Cobb performed with Robert Lepage in *Hearts* in Canada and France.

Training courses, conferences and meetings

Staff attended the following training courses, conferences and meetings:

Alison Maw: AMA Conference, Sheffield; IOF bi-monthly meetings, Newcastle; ITC Touring Symposium, Manchester; Catalyst meetings and capacity building training seminars, Newcastle; Beat the Rat Race careers seminar, Routes into Languages, Newcastle University

Sue Maltby: Creative Case North Seeding Event, Newcastle; Environmental Reporting Workshop, Newcastle

Gabby Keaveny: Catalyst meetings and capacity building seminars (Sales training; Action Learning; Friends schemes), Newcastle; Developing strong individual donor relationships, Newcastle; Beyond Grants Funding – online accredited course QCF Level 3

Peter Kavanagh: Connexus, European funding conference; Philanthropy Impact; New Philanthropy Capital; International Newcastle

John Cobb: completed his third year of professional Feldenkrais training, undertaking classes in London and Biel, Switzerland (part funded by Skimstone Arts); masterclass week long training with Monica Pagneux, Barcelona

Sarah Kemp: Masterclass week long training with Monika Pagneux, Barcelona; Creative Links meetings; Hexham Arts Forum meetings; Devoted and Disgruntled NE3; Catalyst sales training seminar; Thinking digital Anglo-Swedish arts and culture round table

Performance Summary

Productions

Production	No. of performances in the UK 2013/14	No. of international performances 2013/14	Audience figures 2013/14
Canary Gold - Tenerife		8	1795
Canary Gold - Edinburgh	13		344
Contes Dorés	18		1822
Le Mystère de St. Denis	16		1927
Le Moulin Magique	20		1828
Total	67	8	7716

Workshops/Post and Pre-show discussions

Production	No. of workshops/discussions	No. of participants
Le Moulin Magique	10	299
Contes Dorés	7	132
Total	17	431

Learning & Participation

Activity	No. of sessions	No. of participants
French Revolution (HMS)	3	90
Louis Pasteur	12	1040
Le Mystère de St. Denis (QEHS)	2	90
Heaven Eyes - Gothenburg		30
Drama in Translation (Newcastle University)	2	34
Presentation skills - Modern Languages students (Newcastle University)	1	4
Total	20	1288

Personnel TSF has worked with

No. of actors and creatives	27
No. of student placements/interns	6
No. of volunteers	6

TSF People

Board of Trustees

Brian Debnam	- Chair
June Abbott	
Stan Abbott	- until 30 October 2013
Jane Brantom	
Holly Clay	
Graham Darbourne	- until 13 December 2013
Helen Green	- from 12 February 2014
Rhiannon Griffiths	
Bob Hull	
Morag Iles	- from February 2014
Pascale Konyn	
Richard Berg-Rust	- until 17 September 2014

Company Secretary

Holly Clay

Staff

John Cobb	Joint Artistic Director
Sarah Kemp	Joint Artistic Director/Chief Executive
Alison Maw	Marketing & Communications Manager
Sue Maltby	Administrator
Gabby Keaveny	Finance Officer
Peter Kavanagh	Fundraising and Development Consultant

Creative and Production Staff

Alison Ashton	Sophie Millon
Carlos Belda	Katy Mold
Jeremy Bradfield	Ken Patterson
Aileen Bradley	Tom Paterson
Jack Burton	Imogen Paterson
Paddy Burton	Isabelle Schoelcher
Dimas Cedre	Mariae Smiarowska
Aron De Casmaker	Josefa Suárez
Joff Chafer	Katie Tranter
Chris Craig	Christo Wallers
Maria Frazer	Shona Wright
Emily Jane Grant	
Mark Hanly	
Kevin James	
Becky Jameson	
Elena Miller	



Canary Gold