



SHINE A LIGHT ON

35 YEARS OF CENTRAL YOUTH THEATRE

Artistic History



Registered Charity No. 6264703

www.centralyouththeatre.org



THE HISTORY of Central Youth Theatre (CYT)

CYT was established by its founding Director Jane Ward MBE.

From humble beginnings in September 1983, the Youth Theatre has thrived and grown to become one of Wolverhampton's best loved theatre groups.



Co-Director Holly Parry and member Adam Halcro at Buckingham Palace with UK Youth Patron, HRH Princess Anne

Over the last thirty-five years CYT has worked with more than 2,500 young people on over 220 productions.

Jane was awarded a MBE in 2013 for her services to drama and the community of Wolverhampton.

In 2017 she was also named a 100 Master by Creative Black Country in a scheme to identify 100 skilled people from the Black Country who have helped inspire future talent.

In 2016 CYT celebrated becoming a top-three finalist in the UK Youth Awards for Best UK Youth Organisation

In 2017 former member, Holly Parry joined Jane as Co-Director.

Jane Ward receiving her MBE from Her Majesty the Queen in 2013



Our Artistic Work and Access Principles

CYT has always forged a unique artistic path. Each academic year has a different structure and focus, engaging our members in very contrasting and different productions and projects, with the aim of inspiring young people in varying ways.

Our central ethos is accessibility for all, including integrating young people with disabilities into our work - whatever the barriers to participation are. We are the only youth theatre group in Wolverhampton pursuing this policy.

We also offer a weekly group called Acting Up which engages with young people with special needs and disabilities.

Production work ranges from devised, modern, international, heritage and classical work to new writing commissions and film-based projects. The focus can also be around particular performance styles, such as commedia dell' arte, mime or absurd theatre.

This helps ensure young people feel part of a high-achieving organisation that has a strong sense of its own

local identity and artistic purpose, but with a unique outward-facing perspective of the value of working internationally and across cultures.

"Because of CYT I've met tons of interesting people; had my teenage years lifted out of total monotony; seen more of Hungary than your average gap year backpacker ever would; learned bits of Hungarian, Russian, Italian and Lithuanian; seen Dublin as a local; learned (with actual blood, sweat and tears) to Viennese Waltz.

I made great friends, really great friends – most of whom were probably more like me than anyone I went to school with.

In a way I think CYT kept me wanting to KNOW things I'd learn a bit and want to keep on going. I was exposed to more; Central Youth Theatre gave me a lot of "bits."

Anna Fielding, Journalist

Matter of Stuff – based on the book 'Stuffocation'

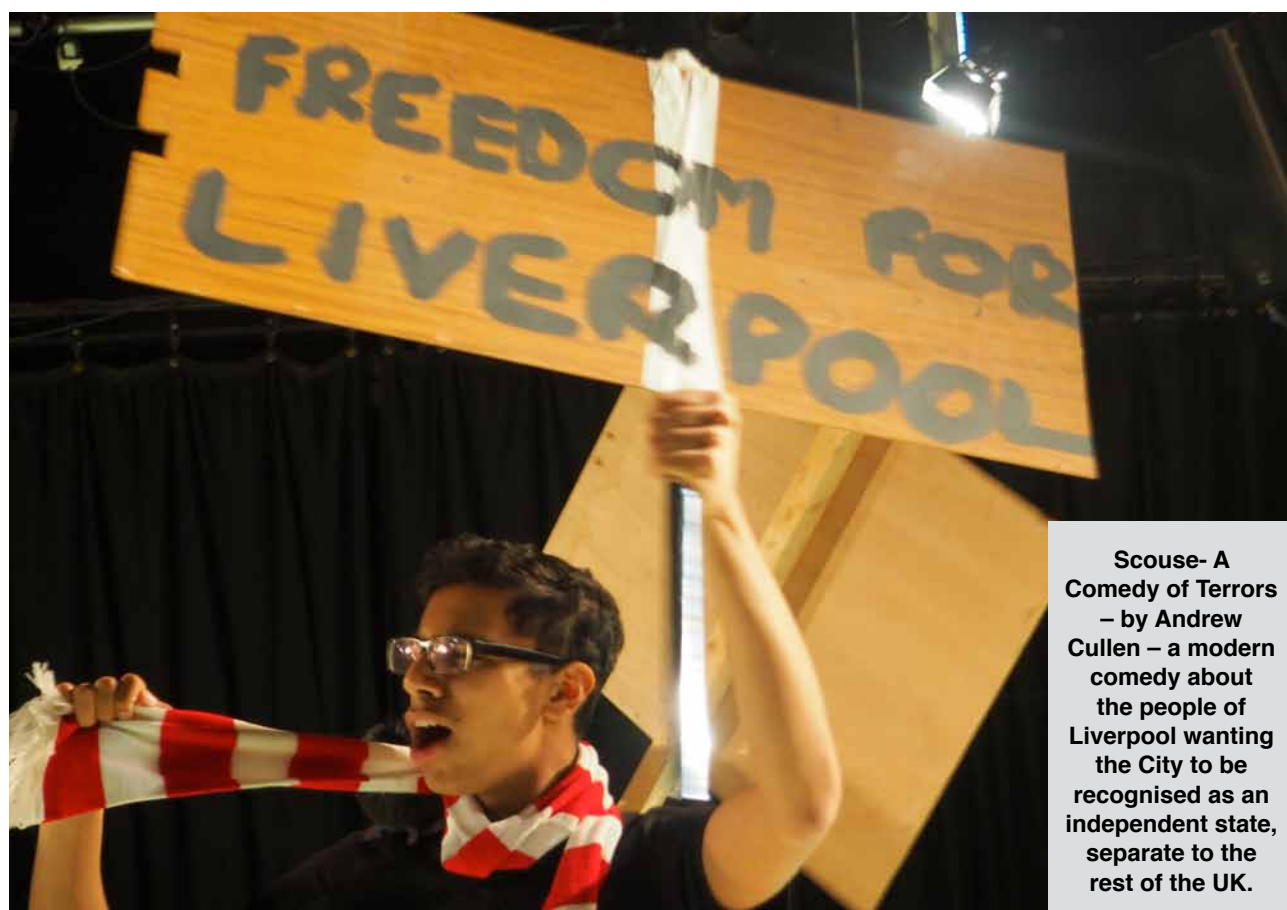




Rubble - a play by former member Arzhang Pezhman, focused on the dilemmas faced by young people in the Middle East.



The Glass Menagerie – by Tennessee Williams
– staged with an all Asian cast



Scouse- A Comedy of Terrors
– by Andrew Cullen – a modern comedy about the people of Liverpool wanting the City to be recognised as an independent state, separate to the rest of the UK.



Marriage – A new adaptation of Gogol's play, written by CYT Patron Tom Parry

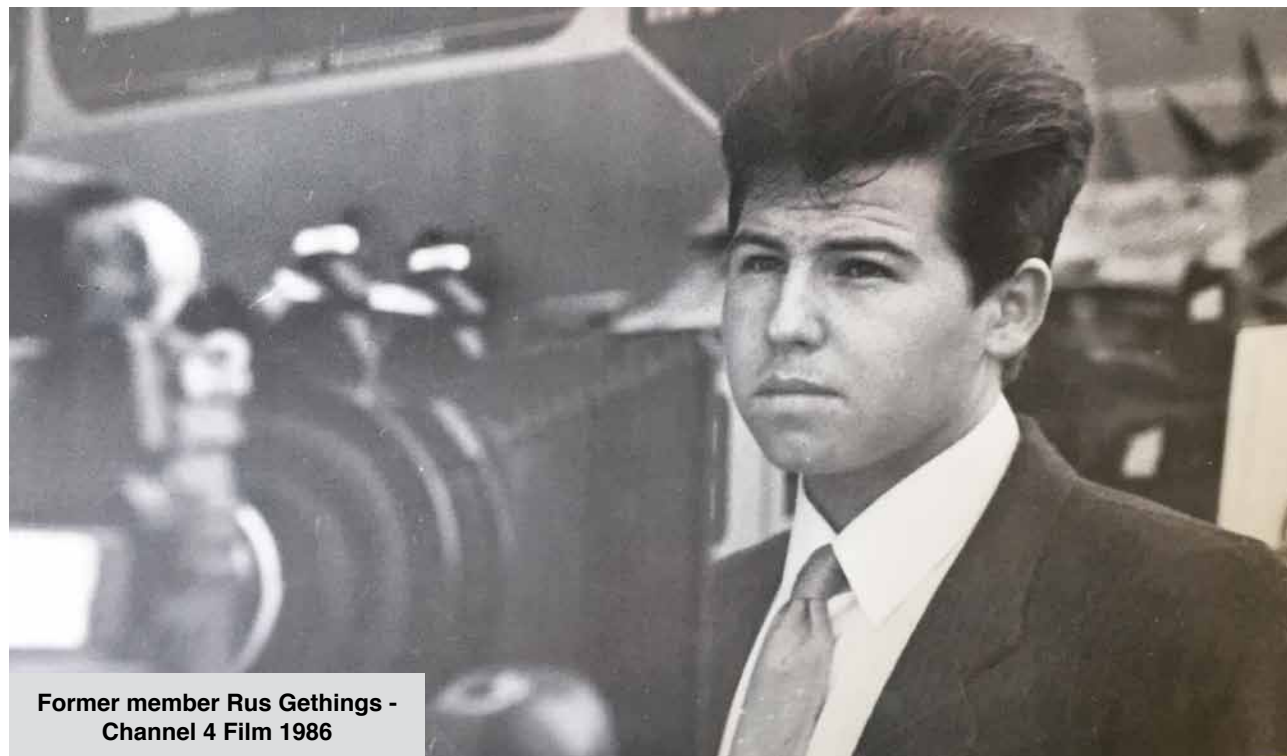
The impact on the lives of young people

CYT works with young people aged 8-25, and it's our members – past and present- who best define what CYT offers and means to them:

- A sense of belonging and a place where they can be themselves and also receive support and direction.
- Life-time friendships and memories of good times and fun,
- The opportunity to be part of a group that embraces all young people regardless of social circumstances or abilities.
- Pride in being part of a youth theatre that reflects Wolverhampton's cultural identity, locally and internationally.

- The excitement of travelling abroad and learning about different cultures, meeting people from around Europe, and forming friendship,
- A widening of artistic knowledge and appreciation of the arts (particularly theatre and film).
- The chance to take part in artistically different projects which aren't offered in schools or elsewhere and to influence the direction of CYT.
- Increased self-confidence and personal skills that can be used in any working environment.

At whatever point young people pass through CYT, these are universally shared experiences and we strive to bring together current and past members to sustain this legacy.



Former member Rus Gethings - Channel 4 Film 1986

The CYT experience was a defining experience for me, and I am sure it has been for the hundreds of young people that have passed through it - who like me still feel it is part of them. That strong sense of place created in all of our hearts.

Former member Rus Gethings



Robin Hood: Men in Tights, at Held in Tyrol, International Festival, Austria 2009



Sarah Collings in Robin Hood, Austria 2009

The cost of running CYT is actually incredibly low, especially when you take into account the fact that what it delivers is truly priceless. The lasting effect of Youth Theatre on individuals and communities goes far beyond churning out future West End stars. I don't work in theatre but I use the experiences and skills I gained at

CYT every day. Youth theatre teaches teamwork, trust, communication skills and empathy. Wolverhampton boasts one of the best youth theatres in the country. For me, CYT made me proud of my city.

Former Member Sarah Collings

Engagement with young people in all areas of the creative process

CYT has never been just about teaching young people acting, as our offer includes much more besides. Over the years young people have learnt skills in:

- Technical Theatre
- Stage-management
- Script-writing
- Arts administration and project management
- Financial management, writing funding applications and fundraising
- Arts marketing
- Directing
- Costume and Set Design
- Workshop leadership

Many young people have gone on to pursue careers in these fields.

the actor's wardrobe

Costume hire for stage, film, TV and events

Actors Wardrobe - Costume Hire

Over three decades, we have built up an enormous set of resources, in particular an extensive theatre wardrobe of more than ten thousand costumes, enabling young people to train in costume design.

We have called our costume collection The Actor's Wardrobe and we hire out our costumes to other theatre groups, schools and individuals.
www.theactorswardrobe.co.uk



Actors Wardrobe



Prop Making for Everybody
Dance Now Shows



Scouse Floorcloth Painting



Special Effect Make Up
Workshops

Aspects of our work that make us unique!

International Work

Over the decades we have taken hundreds of young people to more than 50 international festivals in 18 different countries to experience the joy of not only performing but also taking part in workshops and social activities in an international arena.

We are one of the most travelled youth theatres in the UK, raising the standing of British youth theatre abroad, instilling in young people the pride of acting as ambassadors for the City of Wolverhampton,

We reached the pinnacle of our international achievements in 2013 when we represented the UK at the World Festival of Amateur Theatre in Monaco. Members performed in the spectacular Salle Garnier Opera House in Monte Carlo and took part in workshops and festival activities alongside 24 selected companies from around the World.

With CYT I took part in European theatre festivals in Hungary, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia and the Czech Republic. I performed alongside some of the best Youth Theatre groups in Europe and forged great friendships and connections with people from many cultures, often returning the favours and hosting those groups on their return visits to Wolverhampton. By the time I went on to study Drama and English at university, I not only had an understanding and appreciation of European Theatre, but also a very real experience of directing, performing and devising, that became the foundation for my career as a writer and performer.

Tom Parry (Former Member & Patron)



The Kiss, Belgium, 2003



Tom Parry in Under the Apple Tree
Commedia D'ell Arte Show Italy 2000



Burnt by the Sun, Monaco, 2013



Waiting for.....Lithuania, 2016

Hosting International Theatre in Wolverhampton

Besides travelling abroad we also host international residencies, exchanges and festivals in Wolverhampton.

A particular highlight of this work occurred in 2011 when we were able to secure significant funding via the Cultural Olympiad – and use this as a prestigious and inspiring springboard to ambitiously showcase young people's creativity through a project called *Everybody Dance Now*.

Through this we challenged our young people to put together a multi-faceted project, highlighting the history of social dance in Wolverhampton.

Using oral research the young people created theatrical performances and a site-specific transformation of the Low Level Railway Station into a ballroom. We also hosted six partner European youth theatres from Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and Bulgaria, during a nine-day festival.

More than 100 young people were involved in every aspect of the project with more than 40 placements, internships and apprentice positions for young people to work alongside professional artists over its year long realisation. Roles included project management, marketing, design, technical co-ordination and performing.

The values of 2012 were embedded in every aspect of the project, and we were awarded not only the Inspire Mark but also a special commendation from the Chair of the 2012 West Midlands Leadership Group, David Moorcroft OBE, who opened our festival.



Everybody Dance Now Flash Mob, 2011



Wolverhampton Youth Theatre Festival, 2001



Bosnian Exchange, 2006

Heritage Work - enabling young people to understand their past

We pride ourselves on the delivery of projects that reflect the past and present of our City of Wolverhampton, and its rich cultural diversity, enabling young people to understand their local history and have an increased sense of their own identity.

Many of our projects have been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, who uphold our work as an example of good practice to others. In 2017 Our Director Jane Ward was made a Lottery Legend by the Lottery Good Causes for her inspirational work in this field.

From the industrial factories of Sunbeamland, where they made bicycles, motorbikes and World Land Speed

Record-breaking motor cars, to covering aspects of the history of WW1 & WW2; and highlighting the social history of shops, dance halls, green spaces and allotments, we have covered many varied aspects of our city's rich history.

Our heritage work has been presented in a range of different genres including stage plays, films, exhibitions and site-specific performances. In recent years we have also formed an important relationship with the National Memorial Arboretum and have created bespoke performance work for large-scale public events.



The Spring Offensive, 2015



Regeneration at the National Memorial Arboretum, 2017

"People are often taken aback at my fierce civic pride. Now I know the history of my city. Wolverhampton's industrial achievements we should be proud of; it's important, as everyone has the right to be proud of where they come from".

Sarah Collings – Former Member

"My time at CYT not only fuelled my passion for theatre but also left me with a huge sense of pride in my local community"

Rosie Baggott, Former Member



Sunbeam 2007

Film-making

We have produced more than 12 short documentaries, dramas and heritage films, some commissioned by Into Film (Formerly First Light). The young people work alongside experienced industry professionals, gaining a complete range of skills including pre-and post-production, writing, directing and editing. Our films have been shown at festivals in the UK and abroad.

In 2014 two of our members travelled to Canada to the *Young Cuts Film Festival* for our first ever international screening of our comedy short film *Salt 'n Malt*.

A selection of our films can be viewed on our Central Youth Theatre YouTube Channel

A landmark film made early in our history in 1985, came about when the youth theatre was selected from more than 500 groups to be the English Film in an international film series called *It's Our World* commissioned by Channel 4 TV to celebrate the International Year of Youth. Our members wrote a half hour drama, called *It's Good 'Ere Innit* based on their experiences of growing up in Wolverhampton. Directed by Ken Howard, from Landseer Films, the film was broadcast on TV stations around the world.



Goodnight My Boys, 2016



Channel 4 Film, 1986



Travels with Morris, 2012



After Dawn 2014

Championing our Alumni

Facilitating collaborative work with our former members is a key part of our aim to inspire young people. To this end we:

- Frequently engage former members as directors, designers, writers etc on many of our projects.
- Celebrate their achievements in our newsletter and through social media and through a 25th Anniversary Photographic exhibition.
- Encourage them to visit and provide support for productions and projects

Our freelance tutors are predominately former members and, where possible, we provide internships, apprenticeships and work experience.

The Support our Alumni Give Us Patronage

Former member Tom Parry who has gone on to successes as a TV and stage comedian, writer and director became our patron in 2015. Since 2013, Tom has organised The Hilarity Charity Gala, an annual

fundraising night with leading TV comedians at the Grand Theatre, raising thousands of pounds a year to help the youth theatre to keep membership fees low and accessible for all young people.

Fundraising & Sponsorship

Many former members regularly attend our fundraising events or initiate their own individual activities such as running marathons etc. or donate goods or services in kind. We hold an annual awards night for our current members to recognise their acting achievements and the trophies are sponsored by former members.



Patron - Tom Parry



London Olympics – 2012

Helping us overcome challenges

Throughout our 35 years of operation we have frequently experienced many challenges such as:

- Moving from temporary premises (14 times), relocating thousands of costumes, sets and props from one building to another, always doing this on a shoestring budget.
- Mounting frequent campaigns to fight for our modest annual city council grant until we lost this completely in 2013

Former members will tell you there has almost never been a time when there hasn't been a survival campaign of one sort or another running Go back through our archives and the story is there to be seen.

Where other local theatre groups have succumbed to the loss of funding and folded, our dogged history of survival has engendered such tenacious passion and devotion from our membership we have not only been sustained through periods of turbulence, but continued to thrive artistically.

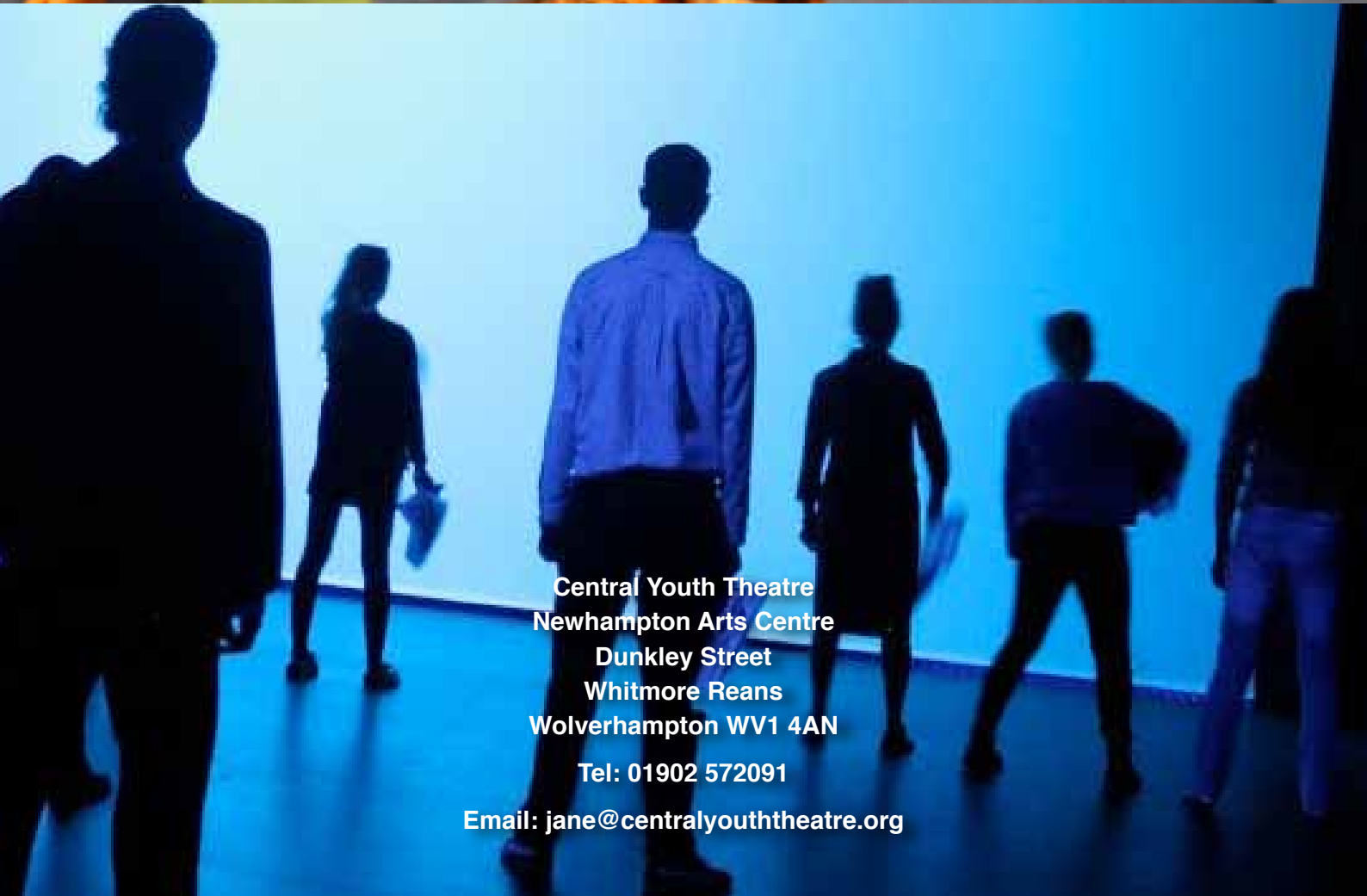
Our most recent challenge was in 2015 when we had to hand back nearly £400,000 of funding to the Arts Council, after having to withdraw from our planned re-development of the former Cooperative building in Lichfield Street. After more than two years working up this scheme, it was devastating to find the developer was selling the building freehold to another organisation, meaning our scheme could no longer progress. However, our Alumni once again rallied round and created a "capital fund" to put towards a future development once another suitable building has been identified.



Tim Routledge, Lighting Designer



Protest 1988



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