

PRESS RELEASE: Tuesday 4th December 2018

**Out of Joint, Hackney Empire and COMMON announce ROUTES IN, an event which aims to increase accessibility for people from working-class backgrounds to build sustainable careers in UK theatre.**

Out of Joint, Hackney Empire and COMMON are inviting decision-makers in the theatre industry and young people from working-class backgrounds to an event taking place on 4th February 2019 at Hackney Empire.

Artistic directors, senior management teams, board members, representatives of unions and more will be invited to discuss with young people and social mobility specialists how organisations can change their practice to ensure that socio-economic background is not a barrier to people considering, entering and progressing careers in the theatre industry.

Class is one of the most poorly represented areas of diversity in UK theatre; an issue worsening as cuts to arts funding increase and the troubling impact of austerity on economically disadvantaged communities significantly rises.

‘The proportion of young cultural workers from upper-middle class backgrounds more than doubled between 1981 and 2011, from 15% to 33%, whereas those from working-class origins dropped from 22% to 13% over the same period.’ ‘Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries’ Research Study, Create London, 2018

Guest speakers at the event will include representatives from organisations who have succeeded in actively supporting more people from working-class backgrounds into sustainable careers in other industries, such as Citizens UK, who ran a successful apprenticeship campaign as part of the 2012 London Olympics.

Cultural leaders and influencers in the theatre industry who work to diversify theatre will also lead sessions on the day. Confirmed speakers include Lucy Kerbel, whose organisation Tonic Theatre has been a leader within the theatre industry, examining its lack of gender diversity, plus Creative Access, who work with organisations to

Pincrease the number of BAME employees. Also speaking will be Kate Danielson, Director of Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries, with more to be announced.

Out of Joint, Hackney Empire and COMMON are also delighted that members of Hackney Empire’s Youth Forum will be in attendance, taking part in discussions and giving their testimonies on entering careers in the arts when coming from a working-class background.

Kate Wasserberg, Artistic Director of Out of Joint, commented:

*“We all know that theatre needs to work hard to represent the society it springs from, but the scale of the challenge can sometimes feel overwhelming. ROUTES IN is a positive, practical event that aims to develop a toolkit of solutions to the inequalities in our industry. We want to get together with our colleagues and commit to real, lasting change.”*

Yamin Choudury, Director of Artistic Programme at Hackney Empire, commented:

*“It’s great to be partnering with Out of Joint and COMMON and to begin driving into reality our shared aspirations for systemic change in our industry. We support change that is geared towards a more representative future, and will champion the next generation of diverse and emerging creatives and artists, whoever they are and wherever they come from.”*

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NOTES:

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**OUT OF JOINT**

Dauntless, political, joyous: Out of Joint develops, produces and tours political, humane and socially engaged shows of outstanding quality, that spark and enrich conversations at kitchen tables around the UK. Passionate about playwrights, we believe that artists should be at the frontier of new ideas, and invest substantially in the development of writers, directors, actors and audiences to ensure that new plays are thriving, presenting them alongside timely revivals and adaptations that offer an exciting lens through which to view the world.

Over 24 years we have premiered plays by such writers as Richard Bean, Caryl Churchill, David Hare, Mark Ravenhill and Timberlake Wertenbaker, and performed our shows on six continents.

Out of Joint co-produces with some of the country’s most exciting theatres: Our recent revival of Andrea Dunbar’s *Rita, Sue and Bob Too*, directed by Artistic Director Kate Wasserberg and co-produced with Octagon Theatre Bolton and the Royal Court, played to 36,000 people on tour, and will go out on tour again in Spring 2019. And next year we present the world premiere of Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day*, adapted by Barney Norris, in a co-production with Northampton Theatres in association with Oxford Playhouse.

**HACKNEY EMPIRE**

Hackney Empire is a special building in a special place - a unique variety theatre for the 21st century. Built in 1901 by the great theatre architect Frank Matcham, Hackney Empire embraces both local and global communities of artists and audiences. It is determined to nurture and present work that is at once extraordinary, inclusive, inspirational and transformative. Musical theatre and opera, family shows, music and comedy together with local events and an extensive and inclusive programme of workshops and courses, form the heart of Hackney Empire’s work.

Hackney Empire: Creative Futures is our extended programme of Creative Arts provision and training for young people aged 8-25 years old.

At Hackney Empire we believe that we have a responsibility to nurture and provide

support to both the next generation of artists and young people who may have no

existing access to the arts.

We have built a reputation for being one of the leading providers of the arts for

young people in East London and continue to programme and plan in order to

constantly create new, exciting, innovative and relevant work both by and for young people.

**COMMON**

COMMON is a nationwide arts organisation which exists to support the UK theatre industry in achieving greater socio-economic diversity, and to make theatre more accessible to the working-class; whether they be artists, audiences or communities.

We work as expert consultants in socio-economic diversity with theatres and arts organisations across the UK to increase the accessibility of their artistic programmes; outreach and community engagement work; schools and education programmes; artist development programmes and audience development initiatives.

COMMON specifically focus on supporting ‘off-stage creatives’, including theatre directors, producers, movement directors, stage management, costume supervisors, composers and lighting designers, to ensure that artists from working-class backgrounds have equal ability to gain the skills, experience and opportunities needed to build a sustainable career in theatre.

We are proud to be supported by Patrons including the Olivier Award-winning playwright James Graham, and esteemed theatre directors such as Matthew Xia, Stef O’Driscoll, Chris Sonnex and Matthew Dunster.

**OUT OF JOINT**

[https://www.outofjoint.co.uk](https://www.outofjoint.co.uk )

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**HACKNEY EMPIRE**

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**COMMON**

[www.commontheatre.co.uk](http://www.commontheatre.co.uk)

Twitter: @theatrecommon

**CITIZENS UK**

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