

# Flood Part 2 Abundance

By James Phillips

Presented by  
Hull UK City of Culture 2017  
and  
Slung Low



# Flood Part 2 Interim Evaluation Report

May 2017

There are a number of really useful lessons learnt during April 2017 that will change how we revisit Part 2 in autumn. Some of it practical about light levels and the size of follow spots. Some of it mundane about how we use our back stage spaces to ensure we can store those larger follow spots. Some of it to do with audience and developing further viewing platforms so that the last 50 or so members of the audience get the same quality of view as the first. And some of it about how we talk about the project in public and with the press; moving from an emphasis on spectacle and community engagement to bring more attention to the endeavour as an act of political discussion.

All those lessons seen with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight but welcome realisations nonetheless.

It's rare in our form of theatre to have the chance to revisit a singular piece, building upon those lessons learnt and having another crack at it. It's one of the real benefits of working with Hull 2017. The warm development of our relationship with Hull's producing team another benefit of the April shows.

This document collects a sense of the feedback we have had from various areas; the public, participants, residents and critics.

Public response was overwhelmingly positive, one of our best received shows.

The journey we went on with the residents is particularly satisfying; moving from open animosity to relatively warm acceptance in the space of 6 weeks a result of serious, determined, daily engagement and cheerfulness. It was not always easy, and a hard task to justify in the face of a gruelling rehearsal schedule but one that was, in the final reckoning, worth it.

The general treatment of the project by the press was strong; substantial support from the local Hull Daily Mail and wide reaching television pieces on both national and local news programmes. Critical coverage was sparser- a reflection of both a strategic press decision taken and a sign of the times. This is certainly an area of development for Part 4.

It has always been important that Slung Low achieve what they can in the right way, working in and around people's homes and families in the right manner. Producing pieces of political theatre with spectacle at their heart in public spaces but in a manner that can also be exciting to the local primary school kids. This is our aim. This document demonstrates that we got close enough to our aim to be proud of our efforts.

On to Part 3!



**I THINK IT WAS BEAUTIFUL,  
VISUALLY WITH THE EFFECTS  
AND THE FIRE AND EXPLOSIONS  
AND SUCH A GREAT STORY**

Charlotte, Audience member

# Audience feedback

A small selection of social media responses April 2017

**Kudos to everyone involved in Flood and the team who reminded me how daring live theatre can be,**

Roger Crow

**Wowers! That was MAHOOSIVE theatre. Flood by Slung Low and Hull2017 fabulous story, fabulous presentation. Thank you!**

Jerome Whittingham

**Flood is of course extraordinary. Moved, troubled, enthralled and amazed.**

Erica Whyman



**Flood by Slung Low and Hull 2017 has got magic in it- epic, elemental, full of poetry, like the sea.**

Tom Wells

**Slung Low performance of flood last night was amazing!**

Kirsty Leake

**Technically brilliant, super well acted, intensely moving, but above all thought-provoking. An incredible experience.**

Miranda van Rossum

**Thank you for bringing Flood to Hull. An amazing addition to an incredible year so far. Thanks also to Hull 2017 volunteers.**

Sarah Rowland

**Flood was spectacular. Intimate theatre on a biblical scale. Well done Slung Low and all involved.**

Ben Horrigan

**I've never seen anything like it. I don't think I breathed the entire way through.**

audience member

**I am still trying to digest what happened. I think it had themes really relevant to today and it was quite an experience.**

Gavin, audience member

**There aren't enough superlatives for Flood  
Stunning, thought provoking, haunting.  
Brilliant**

Ian Lancaster

**Thank you Slung Low and Producer Jim :-)  
My love affair with Hull began with 'Mapping  
The City' and it continues with Flood**

Jacqui Wicks



# Residents' feedback

Residents' Performance 10th April 2017

The long-term engagement with Victoria Dock Residents was a key priority in this project. The early stages were not successful with the police being called within 20 minutes of our arrival on site on Day One despite various community meetings and correspondents in preparation.

We learnt quickly to communicate with precision and to keep up a regular flow of information to the residents about our activity. Working in the rain with a smile along with decision to listen to all complaints (no matter how disconnected they were with our project) won round the vast majority of our neighbours.

Along with workshops for young residents a private dress rehearsal for residents was performed. This proved to be very popular with all 400 tickets going in a few days.

In a relatively short amount of time the residents have become our neighbours. They ring when they think the set is sinking, text when they see people loitering around our store. We are moving towards being accepted as their 2017 theatre company in residence.



**Just an email to say thank you to the Slung Low Team for the Flood performance last night which we thought was brilliant! The water projection was awesome. Thanks again for the tickets and coming to Victoria Dock.**

Paul Nicolini

**We just wanted to write, and let you know how much we enjoyed the production on Monday evening. It was clear that the cast & crew had given 100% to the production, and the result was spectacular, from the lighting & special effects, to the performance itself.**

**The support from everyone was amazing, and it was an absolute pleasure to see the result of so much hard work & planning.**

John Morgan & Karen Brown

**Last night Slung Low! I'll be watching from the box seats again with friends what an awesome show thanks for being great neighbours**

Louise Geeson

# Young People Engagement

One of the engagement challenges was how to properly recognise the interest shown by the hundreds of local primary school children who passed the site twice a day given the adult themes of the show. Following suggestions from Hull City of Culture 2017 board member Sameerea Anwar-West we gave an assembly to the full school at Victoria Dock Primary School. The full company teaching 140 children the theme song of the show was a real highlight of our time in rehearsals.

There are few things more joyous than being greeted by dozens of children on their way to school as you work away on the water. Out of this chorus came one individual, Jim. With his parents Jim became a reliably punctual twice daily visitor and took on the important role of honorary Executive Producer; complete with his own personal high visibility jacket. His excitement at our activity caught the attention of local media and Jim appeared on local radio, television and national breakfast news.

We also held a free workshop for Victoria Dock residents aged below 12 who would not be able to see the show because of age restrictions and a session at Victoria House respite centre at their invitation.



# Flood at 5

Honorary Executive Producer Jim's artistic response to having a company in residence at Victoria Dock

James Munro, aged 5, passed the site everyday on the way to and from school. Each visit he asked for an update and a member of the team would let him know what we were up to that day.

Jim became so important to the team's morale in those difficult early weeks of fit-up that he soon took on a honorary role of Executive Producer and was presented with his own personal Flood high-visibility jacket.

With his mother Ruth, Jim would go on to a number of television and radio interviews, with photos of his appearance being watched as far afield as Malaysia appearing on social media.

On the event of his 5th birthday Jim, with his parents, wrote and presented the company with a poetic response to our time making Part 2.

**World book day, I was Fantastic Mr Fox  
I caught a glimpse of Jessica swinging into the Dock  
The hydraulic piston lowered her in  
Why is she there? What's about to begin?**

**Hundreds of barrels began to arrive,  
Artic trucks and blue high viz guys  
What's that Van Mummy? The Silver Caravan Mummy?  
Can we go and see? They've got a JCB!**

**A flat floating platform, black with white strips  
Accessible only by rubber boat trips  
Tethered underwater with super heavy weights  
That's so it doesn't float away.**

**A high viz guy told me the plan  
I think he might live in that silver caravan  
He's called Alan and he keeps me informed  
Now my daily visits have become quite the norm.**

**Morning and night on route passed the Dock,  
Alan updates me, what's good and what's not,  
Broken drill bits, stage concerns,  
Successes and triumphs, I love to learn.**

**The high viz army are a well-oiled machine  
They all know me as one of the team  
Clapping and cheering my own Exec jacket  
Made my day, no one else can have it!**

**The platform is now a 3D stage  
"You're doing a good job" well I had to say!  
A rubber boat Birthday trip arranged just for me  
It took four meetings to allow me at Sea.**

**I am 'Jim' Executive Producer of Flood  
Hope you have a ticket it's going to be good!**







# Participants' feedback

At the heart of Flood Part 2 was a chorus of 50 volunteers from Hull 2017's volunteer pool. The role of these citizen performers was to animate the city, amplify moments of emotion and represent citizens and immigrants at various moments of crisis.

With the company of 50 self-selecting volunteers we were blessed. Determined, cheerful, patient, committed and enthusiastic. They were a great contribution to the project reflecting the very best values of the city and its year of culture.

We cannot imagine restaging Part 2 in October without them and they will all be invited to rejoin us in autumn. Their feedback has been overwhelming, and often touching. A small selection of it is included here.

**The performance of Flood was incredible. Loved every minute and it was wonderful to see the Hull 2017 volunteers take part, thanks Slung Low**

Harriet Johnson (volunteer co-ordinator)

**Being part of the chorus was really good for me because my husband of 45 years passed away last year and this is the first thing that has made me feel reasonably confident socially since his passing, I am sure he won't have minded that I lost his hat in the water when it blew off one night.**

Stella McKendry

**Feeling very privileged to see how such an amazing production works from the inside and be made to feel part of it. Last... but not least... having the (unusual) chance to spend a lot of time with the same group of other volunteers so you actually got to know people well and have a special bond for the rest of the 2017 experience...Priceless!!**

Sue Jarrel

**I thought the whole experience was amazing. I always wanted to act and at 63 Hull City of Culture and Slung Low gave me the opportunity to fulfil my dream. What an awesome thing to do. I will never forget it! Everything was organised, professional and well thought out. The staff we're so friendly and supportive.**

**It wasn't just a dream it was my dream job!!!**  
Carol Baldry

**It was such an exciting thing to be involved with, particularly as it was so ground breaking and innovative in both its design and concept. It was a great privilege to work with lovely group of people, actors, production team and cast community. I think everyone really appreciated that they had achieved something, at least I think that is why everyone was smiling or laughing after each performance.**

Paul Benson

# Critics' Coverage

The show was reviewed warmly in The Stage, Hull Daily Mail, The Guardian and by Hull's tele-communications company KCom.

**A visually stunning, and deeply moving, drama about belonging... Slung Low impresses with their technical mastery \*\*\*\***

The Stage

**It's a piece of theatre that grabs you by the throat. \*\*\*\***

Hull Daily Mail



**This thrilling odyssey played out on water looks likely to be a highlight of Hull's year as UK City of Culture... you have to admire the almost megalomaniacal desire to control the weather."**

The Guardian

**Certainly a brave and ambitious project the like of which has never been seen in Hull – or anywhere else for that matter – before. Those who will get the chance to see it during its week-long run in Victoria Dock will know they have witnessed something impressive.**

KCOM Home

# Flood Part 2: Abundance



# Get in touch

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