**HULL 2017: DEPART AND A LEGACY OF CITY YOUTH CIRCUS**

Having successfully run the London Youth Circus since 2005 we are now looking to extend the offer and ensure that young people from other parts of the country can access training of the highest quality. We are delighted to be working in partnership with Lift and Circa on Depart and see this as an opportunity to raise the profile of circus and act as a catalyst to establish youth circus provision in Hull.

**This project proposal outlines**

1. The background to the project and the ambitions of the National Centre for Circus Arts
2. A phased proposal for establishing youth circus in Hull
3. Proposed timeframe
4. Possible Circus Champions
5. Possible classes
6. Job Description Circus Champions



Korri, class of 2012, graduating from Montreal Circus School

Nathan, class of 2010, contracted to 7 fingers

**BACKGROUND**

Having seen firsthand the transformative effect, and knowing our geographical limitations, we now want to help other groups incorporate circus in their offer. It is our ambition to create a culture of circus in the UK, so as like dance and theatre it can be enjoyed as both participants and as audience members.

Our ambition and high expectations have begun to reposition circus as more than a ‘have a go’ activity. Within 2 years of launching the London Youth Circus we saw an increase in successful applications from the UK into our internationally recognised BA course (affiliated to the Conservatoire of Dance and Drama). In 2010 we were invited to join the DFES Centre of advanced training scheme and (with our partners at London Contemporary Dance School) now support 28 young people (8 from outside of London). 2012 was when we launched the BTEC Performing Arts Circus with our local Community College (Hackney) to bridge the gap between the provisions offered by LYC/ CAT activities (up to 9 hours a week) to Degree training (full time).

The success of our own work has been in establishing a clear pathway for young artists. We now support 9 students outside of London via our CAT programme. This has created an aspirational model meaning that young people can connect with the profession and be inspired. This year we celebrate 10 years of the London youth circus and are delighted that 3 of our alumni who now work around the globe as circus artists have returned to perform alongside our LYC and CAT students. We have had year on year track record with applicants from our feeder programmes making up almost a quarter of the BA course. It’s amazing to have such genuinely inspiring stories – showing that dreams of being a circus artist are an achievable reality.

We recognise that for every successful alumni now touring the world as an artist, countless others have benefited from participating in a physical, challenging fun activity. Circus is a physical participatory activity that engages young people who may not take part in traditional sports activities. This year we launch our alumni scheme so as we can better demonstrate these wider impacts.

By its nature it is collaborative rather than competitive – the best circus needs different types of people to thrive. The anarchic, dangerous image of circus gives it natural appeal to risk takers, and the inherent progression lends itself to developing personal responsibility.

**HULL 2017**

As Hull currently has very limited circus activity, Phase 1 (June 16 – October 16) will be to Inspire local arts practitioners, sports coaches and youth workers to become ‘Circus Champions’. Phase 2 (October 16 – May 17) will be to immerse these practitioners and their participant groups in Circus through professional development opportunities directly connected to Depart. In May 2017 the groups will perform alongside Circa, students from Northern School of Contemporary Dance and our own graduating Students. Phase 3 - Post Depart we will work with ‘Circus Champions’ to establish a legacy of youth circus in Hull. This will be individually tailored support and mentoring based on the needs of each participant (some possible scenarios are included below).

**PHASE 1 – Inspire**

Up to 5 potential circus leaders will be recruited in Hull. It is expected that these are people with existing experience in gymnastics, dance, theatre or teaching artists/ educators. They will be identified by Hull 2017 team (with support from NCCA as required). It is important that they are excited by the professional development opportunities offered and see ways they could use circus in their practice.

**POSSIBLE PARTNERS**

* Hull University
* Hull High Fliers Gymnastic Club
* West Hull Gymnastic Club
* Aspire Gymnastic Club Hull
* The Northern Academy of Performing Arts
* The Dance Space

This group will be invited to London for a week long introduction to circus. The programme will include accredited courses in acro and aerial skills as well as an over view of teaching circus. We will use this as an opportunity to inspire group leaders and open up circus as a participatory activity. Further we will introduce them to Depart. This will include seeing video/ photos of the production, looking at reviews and meeting some of the artists who were involved.

The National Centre for Circus Arts offers this training as in kind support. Group Leaders will need to fund their own accommodation and expenses for their time in London.

With these Circus Champions we will set the timetable for the next phase, which will include 2 x weekend workshops in Hull.

**PHASE 2 – Immerse**

The trained Circus Champions will work alongside professional circus artists and tutors to run weekend workshops. They will be asked to recruit participants from their groups and support them on their journey to and during the production. This could be viewed as a promotional opportunity for their activities and we want to support and encourage these individuals to be entrepreneurial and use this opportunity to grow their offer.

This second phase will allow practitioners to learn more about the possibilities of circus and contribute to an exciting professional show presented as part of the Hull 2017 programme.

**PHASE 3 – Emerge**

Following DEPART we hope there will be a raised awareness of circus in Hull and an appetite from the young participants to do more. We will work with group leaders to establish individually focused next steps for them and their offer. The focus will be on establishing youth circus activity in their area and we will use our contacts and experience to assist with this. As well as individual support, we plan to facilitate regular meetings with the group to ensure cohesion.

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**TIMEFRAME**

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| Launch project/ recruit partners | Write JD/ partner agreement (see draft as appendix 1) - An exciting CPD opportunity for local practitioners to work with leading artists and circus tutors.  Recruitment via Hull 2017 recommendations/ NCCA BG contacts  Adverts in local press to raise profile? Recruitment panel made up of NCCA and City of Culture Team | August/ Sept |
| Deliver teacher training in London to interested partners for Hull | Using our accredited courses we will upskill teaching dance artists, gym coaches and others in circus arts. In addition to the training this will be opportunity to introduce the group to Circa and Depart through video resources and discussion.  These tutors will then be invited to work alongside NCCA/ Circa artists to support the rehearsals. | Sept/Oct |
| Recruit participants for DEPART (using trained partners as ambassadors) | Opportunity to participate in Depart promoted to participants from partner groups.  Selection process/ audition – some sort of buy in. Check availability and commitment | Nov, Dec, Jan |
| NCCA/ CIRCA tutors run 2 x weekend workshops for participants for DEPART | Show creation/ rehearsal | March – April |
| DEPART | Performance in Hull | May |
| Feedback and next Steps | Feedback session with all circus champions  Launch of Hull Associates Network | June |
| Mentoring | Individual mentoring plans established | July – September |
| Legacy | Up to 2 days mentoring for each Circus Champion  Second Associates network meeting | Sept – Dec |

**POSSIBLE CIRCUS CHAMPIONS**

**CASE A**

Participant A runs a successful Gymnastic club in Hull. They have found it hard to motivate older young people (16+) who are beyond the age of gymnastic competitions and want to find an alternative pathway for them. They want to develop their skills and are looking for ‘something extra’ to add to their offer.

They operate within British Gymnastics and have a space suitable for acrobatics and other gymnastic disciplines (including some suspended apparatus). We are working closely with BG to establish circus teacher training for gymnastic coaches and they are keen to find possible partners to roll this out to. Hull has already been discussed as a potential location.

A will not need technique, but may need support on moving from a sport to a creative discipline. We have found that the gymnastic and arts world do not (generally) cross and would help A make connections with local arts providers. Further we may think A would benefit from further immersion in our activities – for example visiting when we are in production mode and bringing together high level technical skill with a creative vision.

**CASE B**

Participant B is a dance graduate. They have done a small amount of circus on their BA and are open to learning more to add to their own CV. They want to run classes and courses for children and young people to supplement their income from performing.

B is running 6 classes a week in 3 different venues – schools and community centres. They have ambition to grow this offer but cannot make the business plan work – once they have taken out the cost of the space hire they are not generating enough to make it sustainable. They are also a professional dancer so cannot commit to teaching regular classes.

B needs help in developing a business plan and incorporating circus could really give them the edge. Space is notoriously a problem for circus and many would argue that this conundrum is why circus is not everywhere. We are experienced at supporting small start ups. B would benefit from our existing opportunities to meet and share learning with others, such as our Road Trip Project which will establish local Associate Networks across the UK and the National Youth Circus Event.

**CASE C**

C works for the University Dance department. They are experienced and passionate about getting young people on the right pathway. They are feeling frustrated with the growing pressures on creative subjects in education and want to be inspired.

C would benefit from the skills development opportunities and focus on performance outcome with a globally renowned company. As a HEI we know full well the challenges of making great art while meeting assessment outcomes. Post Depart we would look to support the university incorporate circus into their performing arts programme.

There are pretty much unlimited models of youth circus delivery but the table below gives a snapshot of our most popular classes and how these could be replicated in Hull.

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| Class Type |  | Group | Staffing | Equipment (economy version) | Equipment  (Deluxe)  IN ADDITION | COST |
| Family Circus  ages 3 – 8 divided into age groups (3 – 5, 6 – 8)  45 minute class | working with parents and carers to develop dexterity, flexibility, coordination and confidence | 14 parent/ carer and child pairs | 2 tutors (one could be an assistant or volunteer) | balls, scarves, hula hoops, peacock feathers.  Floor mats? | Silks/ cocoon, static trapeze, soft foam shapes. | Sold as 12 week course @ £130  Scholarships available |
| Junior Circus  ages 6 – 11 divided by age groups (6 – 8, 8 – 11)  1 hour class | Working independently to learn circus skills – students take part in 4 rotations of aerial, acrobatics, balance and juggling. | Varies depending on space – up to 40 | Varies – for 40 participants we would have 5/6 staff (1/2 could be assistant or volunteer) | Floor mats, rope/ other aerial (e.g. parallel bars or gymnastic rings), juggling equipment, hula hoops, skipping ropes, trampolines? | Crash Mats, static trapezes, Chinese pole? Tightwire? | Sold as 12 week course @ 130  Scholarships available |
| City Youth Circus ages 11 – 18 divided by skill level/ experience  1 hour skills class, supporting class access varies depending on level | Auditioned programme. Students choose to specialize in a discipline but take core classes in acrobatics, conditioning, movement and theatre. | Varies depending on discipline/ equipment – aerial approx. 8 to a class, acro up to 14 to a class. | Varies – generally we have 1:8 teacher: student ratio | As above  May include performance opportunity | As above | Sold as 12 week course but commitment for 1 year – between £160 - £300 depending on level  Scholarships available |

**CIRCUS CHAMPIONS JOB DESCRIPTION (volunteer opportunity)**

Bring the circus to your space with this continuing professional development opportunity for youth arts/ sports practitioners in Hull. The National Centre for Circus Arts is looking for Circus Champions in Hull to support our upcoming show Depart (in partnership with LIFT and CIRCA) and leave a legacy of youth circus in the city of culture post 2017.

Successful applications will receive accredited Circus Teacher Training at the National Centre for Circus Arts in London (1 week). With participants from their groups they would then join the professional company to rehearse and perform in DEPART in Hull 2017.

Post production Circus Champions will benefit from individual mentoring from National Centre staff to ensure they can grow their circus offer.

**Person Specification**

* A minimum of 3 years experience running activities for children and young people
* An interest in performing arts and the creative sector
* A commitment to their own professional development

**To Apply**

Please send your CV along with a short proposal (max 500 words) outlining why you are interested in the opportunity and what impact you think it could have on your professional development.

**NB this is a volunteer opportunity. Applicants need to be able to fund their own travel to London and any expenses (including accommodation).**