CBeebies, Northern Ballet and Hull2017 are collaborating to create a new theatrical production for live performance in Hull for the City of Culture celebrations in August 2017. This would also be filmed for broadcast on CBeebies.

The aim of the collaboration is to create a live theatrical experience for the preschool audience in an area that is identified as difficult to engage in the arts.

We are looking for an original story, which can be inspired by traditional folk tales and legends from around the globe.

The performance will be 45 minutes long, and will combine the mediums of ballet storytelling and spoken word to work seamlessly for stage and television, and most importantly for the preschool audience.

The theme is colour and diversity, especially how colour can be used to enrich lives and impact on different levels.

The story will be brought to life through dance, music, costume, set – all the elements that make a live theatre experience fantastic.

As well as Northern Ballet performers, there are opportunities to engage with a small number of familiar CBeebies talent making it relatable to many children and their families.

The production also aims to film around Hull to engage the local community in creating backdrops for the performance through projection.

The orchestral score will be recorded by the BBC Philharmonic.

The proposed venue for the show is the Airco Arena – a venue not normally identified as an arts performance space. This gives every opportunity to bring a new excited audience into a world designed just for this occasion. This opens up the possibilities for performing space and audience interaction.

From CBeebies work with Northern Ballet, research has shown that the target audience identify readily with animal characters in dance and recognise movement, emotions, feelings and journeys that those characters take.

CBeebies is the multi platform brand used by the BBC for content aimed at encouraging "learning through play in a consistently safe environment for children aged 6 or under" and providing "high quality, mostly UK-produced content". CBeebies is the most-watched children's channel in the UK.

Northern Ballet is a powerhouse of inventive dance. Bold and confident in approach, it engages, involves and moves audiences. It reaches a diverse range of people through passionate story-telling, a mastery of classical dance technique and an absolute commitment its leading role as an international ambassador for world-class dance.

Over the past four years Northern Ballet have produced ballets specifically for children of pre-school age – Ugly Duckling; Three Little Pigs; The Elves and the Shoemaker; Tortoise and the Hare; Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Each of these has been filmed and broadcast on CBeebies creating dance events for the Channel, with the Ugly Duckling winning the Children’s BAFTA for Best Pre-School Live Action Programme.

Hull was announced the winner of UK City of Culture 2017 in 2013. The award is given every four years to a city that demonstrates the belief in the transformational power of culture.

The arts and cultural programme for the year celebrates the unique character of the city, its people, history and geography. In 2017, the programme runs from 1 Jan to 31 Dec and is split into four seasons, each with something distinctive and intriguing to say, and each created to challenge and thrill.

Writing Timeline:

Production Brief sent out Monday 13th February

Story outlines to be delivered by Monday 20th February

Commissioned treatment to be delivered by Monday 27th February

Script writing and work with the Northern Ballet choreographer in March

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