**Ballad of Big Lil  
30.11.16**

Notes from SF & HD Meeting at RET

**Capacity / Venue**   
Review of scale of audience noted the practicalities of the safe and timely movement of a number of audience. SF comfortable with a target of 200 total capacity, with the possibility of adding more if and when we know this is feasible in the venue and in the running of the show.

This figure may need review when we have been able to assess how many wheelchair audience members we can accommodate per performance.

To note, with this capacity being slightly lower than the 250 – 280 capacity of the Banqueting Room or Reception Room, which was the budget guide, we are fine to proceed with the preferred capacity as long as we have at least 14 paid public performances.

NB: the chamber (88 include mayoral seating), bench (16) and lower gallery (106) which further confirms the 200 target.

**Schedule**There is a draft schedule with headline details for:

* Community Casting recruitment
* Community Cast rehearsals structure – pre full company rehearsals – see notes on Comm Cast below
* Full Company Rehearsals
* Band Calls
* Technical Period
* Performance Schedule – for which note numbers of performances – all performance times are to be discussed and there is a desire to explore different opportunities for audience experiences, as well as making performance times work for community cast.

**Creative Team**    
Movement Director – we confirmed Imogen Knight role to cover casting workshop days;

Sound – to progress offer to Peter Malkin. SF recommendation for Peter M to share with Adrian McN with aim for Adrian & Peter to talk if Adrian is free and able (AM is currently in New York). Awareness that strong live sound production person useful to complement Peter.

Fight – we did not discuss this point. There is currently a very modest sum in the budget to allow for a couple of fight calls if necessary.   
  
Casting – see below – availability check for Polly Gerald req.

**Casting**  
SF confirmed, there is no capacity at RET and SF preference would be to work with ex RET casting director, Polly Gerald, who has recently been working with Truck and is strong on all northern actors and particularly Hull. To note, casting will be focused on skill, movement and the spirit of the characters and not impersonating physical type; casting will be diverse.

Casting process discussed, re-iterating previous notes with LA, that the form of casting to take place in a workshop model over two/three days, with the design team of the creative team ideally being able to join the process to update on script, storyboard, general production planning. Running order for casting workshop days could be as follows:

Day 1 Casting Session x 1 Sarah – Imogen & Casting Director   
Day 2 AM session SF & IK & Design team inc Adrian if possible  
 Casting Session x 2 – some sharing of process / ideas with full creative team  
Day 3 Casting session x 3   
 Full Creative Team story boards shared  
  
We need to clarify process with Casting Director, in respect of calls for actors over the workshop. Budget does not provide for accommodation / travel for casting.  
  
Casting to take place end of May to secure performers (noted that July would be too late). Dates to be checked with Michelle for Sarah’s diary then to move on to Casting Director & Imogen; then to work to fold in design team & Adrian.  
  
Casting to take place in the North (nb most creative team are northern based so their attendance more possible). This could be in Manchester or Hull.   
  
Casting breakdown, may become 5 women and 3 men with the male members also performing and giving leadership to the community cast.  
  
Company Wage buyout approach confirmed, budget provisions for Ballad similar to RET.   
  
NB need to check if we want to issue actor/musician contracts to cover possibility of any member of company joining the band or playing at any point. This is currently not budgeted either for enhanced rates or for instrument provision.  
  
Early Lil ideas – Sharon Rooney.  
  
Possibility of one cast role budget being redirected to record one or a number of actors for V/O. Tom Courtney discussed.   
  
HD to share Hull Actors list with SF and Max for ref.

**Crediting**  
SF keen to go with a collaboration approach to crediting the creation of the work – SF leading this approach with roles detailed in alphabetical form, after the writer. Following form to be agreed by SF then taken to all creative team to agree, and supercede existing traditional form crediting.

FORMAT A  
**Ballad of Big Lil**  
by Maxine Peake  
Music & Lyrics by Adrian McNally & the Unthanks   
  
Lighting Designer - Chris Davey  
Director - Sarah Frankcom  
Choreographer - Imogen Knight  
Sound Designer - Peter Malkin  
Musical Director - Adrian McNally   
Set & Costume Designer - Amanda Stoodley

FORMAT B  
**Ballad of Big Lil**  
by Maxine Peake  
Music & Lyrics by Adrian McNally & the Unthanks  
  
Chris Davey – Lighting  
Sarah Frankcom – Direction  
Imogen Knight – Choreography & Direction  
Peter Malkin – Sound  
Adrian McNally – Composition & Musical Direction

Need to confirm how Associate Movement/Choreographer would be included.  
SF to confirm preference for either A or B.

**Music/Unthanks/Sound**

Review of Adrian / Unthanks negotiation. SF confirmed happy to have Adrian & Unthanks contracted ‘as a buyout’ with Adrian delivering a band to serve the piece as described below. Noting that this approach avoids issues with difference in subs/company wage etc. For ref, this total is calculated to be offered at £32k.  
  
SF needs recorded music through main rehearsal – rough cuts on piano, not full arrangements. SF needs to be able to share all rehearsal process efficiently on dropbox. To be able to video rehearsals and share these ‘rushes’ with Adrian. And vice versa, Adrian to be able to record and upload and share new edits, pieces, etc in return.   
  
SF confirmed the following roles covered Adrian & the bands responsibilities (apart from the addition of the online liaison during rehearsals, these points are as previously detailed to Adrian):

* composition and licence of all original music and lyrics for the Work provisionally entitled The Ballad of Big Lil, with the exception of lyrics which the Writer will write in collaboration with the Composer
* arrangements of existing and traditional music (assume royalty free), inc setting and production of vocal and band parts
* underscoring as required
* performance in the production, throughout the run.
* Use of (AM & Band) instruments and equipment.
* facilitation of the Unthanks performing in the production with a band size of 6 inc Composer
* managing the recording of music as required for rehearsals and production
* reviewing rehearsal footage and notes & uploading new / edited recordings for rehearsal
* musical direction for rehearsals, production & performance periods (inc community cast)
* attending pre-production meetings, casting and R&D as required, subject to availability
* liaison with Sound Designer and Production Manager to deliver production within production budget
* ALL travel, accommodation and other expenses for all band members for duration of contract

Time Requirements for Adrian & Unthanks for attendance:  
w/c 2 Oct Reh Wk 1 Adrian for 1st day of rehearsal + 1 other day  
w/c 9 Oct Reh Wk 2 Adrian for 1-2 days.

w/c 16 Oct Reh Wk 3 Adrian 2 full days  
w/c 23 Oct Reh Wk 4 Adrian 1 full day; plus full band for 2 days inc 1 x Sitzprobe  
w/c 30 Oct Tech Wk Adrian for full week; full band min call for 3 days – 1 x Dress Rehearsal, 2 x previews,   
w/c 6 Nov Perf Wk 1 Adrian call for Tues; Full Band Wed – Sat  
w/c 13 Nov Perf Wk 2 Full Band Wed – Sat.

To note, Band may have set up in Banqueting & Reception Room, TBC. Acknowledgement that this double set up may be costly; options to be explored. Sound Designer to provide soundscape to other parts of the journey. Band could play acoustically in some areas of the Guildhall.

Sourcing Music – we did not discuss the potential list of extant music, not the traditional which the Unthanks will take a lead on and which do not have copyright requirements, but the 1960s music which will require publisher’s permissions. Note to follow up with SF and AM and MP for potential list to start research to inform choices.

**Design Approach / Physical Production**  
Short discussion; we agreed that Sound is a main priority for the production budget. How the audience travels through the space.  
Confidence that Amanda is focusing on small interventions to effect big transformations, rather than constructions and physical installations.  
  
There may be some capacity at RET for discussions re making.  
There is possibility of access to stores re set/costumes and SF noted that AS knows the stores well.  
And rehearsal space at RET.  
All RET points need confirmation with Mark D at RET – HD to pick up conversation.

**Rehearsal Space**  
SF has pencilled the RET Swan St rehearsal space for the first two weeks of rehearsal in Manchester.  
  
For rehearsal space for Community Cast sessions in advance of Full Company rehearsals, need to confirm type of space appropriate. Dance space?

**Community Cast**    
Casting process to be confirmed for early July, so that people can know full commitment of the autumn sufficiently in advance and make the commitment before summer break.   
Community casting process to take place in Hull.  
Imogen Knight, the Associate to lead casting process.   
Aim to recruit a pool of 30; Requirement per performance to be 14.  
Discussion to be had re best process to work through – two teams? Sign up for performances? TBC  
Co-ordination of Community Cast during ‘bootcamp’ period by Associate Choreographer & Assistant Producer   
Co-ordination of Community Cast for full rehearsals & performances with 1 ASM

Structure of rehearsals  
4 ‘bootcamp’ weekends to up skill over Aug/Sep  
3 x sessions per week during full rehearsals  
5 x sessions during tech week  
Performance calls

Note to follow up discussion re community casts and Equity; check RET and Truck approach for context.

Note to confirm brief for community cast recruitment – level of ability for movement, for singing?

**Children’s Silver Band**  
As people are leaving, led out by Lil, they may be played out by Junior Brass Band - playing a version of Big Lil’s ballad.   
SF ok to go with the idea if the band can be secured on a ‘self-sufficient model’ particularly in terms of supervision and safeguarding.  
Inclusion to review if this proves not possible.   
Contact with Hull Music Centre to be made to scope.

**Project Management**   
SF keen to discuss proposals to plan and deliver management of site specific venue, volunteers, community cast. For the overall experience to be carefully planned to enhance and reflect the production.

**Capturing the Production – Filming**    
SF very open to explore filming options. Can we fix an open discussion with BBC?

Agreed to aim for discussion in January – next possible meeting for Sarah & Max in Hull to be confirmed, but pencil in SF diary for Friday 13 Jan.