**Raucous**

**ICE ROAD**

**October/December 2017**

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**CASE FOR SUPPORT**

**The Company**

Raucous is an ever evolving collective of theatre makers, scientists and technologists who investigate how theatre stories can be made more immediate, urgent and immersive for an audience. Working in a network of collaboration we explore how to harness different creative cultures and practices to build and tell stories that are vibrant, vital and visceral. To this end we create theatre stories that have digital technology sewn into their very narrative fabric, underscored by original music, film and performance. Then we invite our audience into an unexpected, surprising space...

The company is resident at Watershed’s internationally acclaimed Pervasive Media Studio.

**The Production**

Theatre company Raucous is seeking funding to produce a new theatre show in October/November 2017, **Ice Road.**

After the success of our first show, **The Stick House,** we will further develop the use of technology and theatre to truly engage audiences. Fusing the Story of King Lear and historical witness accounts, **Ice Road** uses live performance, creative technology, original music, film, smell and robotics to tell an immersive story of the children war leaves behind.

*1942.*

*Leningrad.*

*The enemy is at the gate.*

*The wind howls. The snow falls.*

*The winter of starvation has begun...*

The German army has besieged the Russian city of Leningrad and the citizens trapped inside struggle to survive the constant bombing and rampant food shortages. In the ruins of an old orphanage three feral young strangers are compelled to join forces with Leah in order to survive. For them the ice road, that zig zags across the frozen Lake Ladoga, is the closest thing to a heaven and the brooding ominous munitions factory, with the rumours of a child-catcher close to a hell. And then children start to go missing….

**Ice Road** tells the story of these young people as they face a long cruel winter during the Siege of Leningrad but it is also a story of the part that culture plays when a society is breaking down. In Leningrad, in that terrible year, the only institution that kept functioning, that people flocked to, was the theatre. Even though hope was scarce and people were dying of hunger, music and theatre was more urgent than ever. A country on its knees still needs to remember what keeps it human.

 We feel that the story of Leningrad echoes loudly with contemporary conflict riven cities such as Aleppo and the stories of children who have lost their parents in the refugee camps.

The story will weave together historical accounts of the siege of Leningrad and elements of King Lear. 1942 saw the first Russian translation of the Shakespeare play by Boris Pasternak.

The music/score for the show will be influenced by the work of Shostakovich, who wrote his *Symphony No 7 in C major* in honour of the bravery shown during Leningrad’s siege.

**Ice Road** will have an eight-week run in October/November of 2017 and be performed in disused Victorian swimming baths in the centre of Bristol.

2017 is the centenary of the Russian Revolution. Our ambition is to live stream the final performance to a theatre in St Petersburg.

**Aims of the show**

We have identified five key objectives that we want to achieve as part of the development of this show:

**To articulate:** a story that blends both history and folk tales which also has a modern day relevance, echoing the current refugee crisis and the devastating effect on children who are left to fend for themselves.

**To build:** on the learning we have already accumulatedso that the process and quality of the show can be developed further, both artistically and practically.

**To develop:** the audiences who are already interested in the type of work we produce and to encourage new audiences to engage with it.

**To explore:** how we can advance our theatre making process so that it continues to have an immediate, emotional and immersive experience for an audience.

**To nurture:** artists and technologists we work with as well as peers within the theatre sector by pushing our own individual practice in a sustained programme of skills exchange and knowledge transfer. We are learning by doing.

**To articulate:**

We have chosen to set this show within the historical setting of the siege of Leningrad, for several reasons. Despite a third of the pre-war population dying, many due to starvation, the theatre remained open. Shostakovich wrote his Symphony no 7 in honour of his home city. Against all adversity, it was performed in Leningrad by starving musicians almost too weak to play. This brought humanity and hope to the people who struggled to survive. Many historians point out that this was an important morale booster that helped the remaining citizens and soldiers triumph over adversity leading to the seige finally being broken. Could there be a better case for the importance of the arts and what it can do for the human spirit?

Our story also has modern day significance through its depiction of what happens when war destroys families, leaving children to fend for themselves in stressful and traumatic environments. Sadly, the current crisis in Syria and the seige of Aleppo shows history repeating itself with many conflicts having taken place in between. We want to show the human story behind the headlines, how arts, tradition and folklore can help people make sense of the world.

**To build:**

We documented the process of creating **The Stick House** and the subsequent evaluation with the creative team and advisers, sector peers and audience members gave us rich feedback that has provided a comprehensive list of lessons learnt that we will reflect on and take forward.

There are key artistic and practical decisions to be made when producing cross-form collaborative work. It is through a period of research and development that we can experiment with the different elements involved to find the best way to drive the story and engage the audience. For example, considering how an audience will move and react at any one time in the performance is crucial in building the narrative and deciding on the artistic vision.

As part of our lessons learnt we realised that the space where the show will take place needs to be identified and committed as early as possible in order for the team to construct their creative contribution. Using the tunnels at Temple Meads was inspirational but presented huge challenges to the creative process and the budget. We have already identified a space in the centre of Bristol for **Ice Road** – the disused Jacobs Wells swimming baths.

**To develop:**

**The Stick House** demonstrated that there is an audience for the type of work we are creating. Out of the 66 performances of the show, 39 were completely sold out. All of the shows in the final three weeks sold out indicating that word of mouth and personal recommendation was effective. The show also broke the Box Office target of 62% capacity by achieving 93%, a major achievement for a new company with a new show. We now have a new audience database, a major asset for the company that will be used to reach audiences as part of our marketing strategy.

Our partnership with the Watershed had a mutually beneficial outcome with audiences crossing from film to theatre and the reverse. There is potential to work in partnership with music organisations for a similar cross over.

We aim to give audiences the opportunity to engage with something that is very different from a traditional piece of theatre. As we did with **The Stick House**, we will involve different sets of audience members in the R&D process. This is an important part of creating work that audience members can become fully engaged with. We are thinking about the audience right from the start of the making process.

To make the work more accessible to a wider audience we will film the process and final production so that we can select specific sections that are disseminated through social media and online platforms.

**To explore:**

We worked incredibly diligently to interrogate our process and research when we were creating **The Stick House**. We strongly believe that experiences should not be lost and should be shared with other practitioners and artists who are interested in exploring this area of work. We will continue to do this with **Ice Road**.

Part of the vision for **Ice Road** is that we capture our audience’s experience by engaging with them on-line as to their experiences of the show. They can upload their comments to our website: whether written or filmed.

This online presence will be augmented by interviews with the creative team as the process of making Ice Road gathers momentum, sharing their own professional experiences of working on the piece

We will also hold a series of post-show discussions with differing members of the creative team, alongside social commentators and historians in the field of Russian politics and history.

The process will be documented and findings disseminated through online content and press and media as well as workshops and seminars to be held at key venues in Bristol and beyond.

We would hope that artists and technologists who engage with this discourse will be inspired to investigate it further for themselves. This might lead to new ways of working, it could lead to Raucous developing new relationships with artists as well as new collaborations and other opportunities that dialogue of this nature can open up. Raucous’ Creative Director has spoken at several conferences and given academic papers on the making of the project and its impact and outcomes on both the team and the audiences – skills exchange and knowledge transfer alongside raising the profile of the company.

**To nurture:**

The experimental nature of Raucous’ work - creative technologists working in theatre or theatre makers working with technology - means that we are challenging individual artists to explore how our cross-form process of collaboration can work effectively. We learnt from **The Stick House** that in order to work together, to deliver the vision of the show, it is important that as much care is taken with selecting the production team as the care taken with the creative team. Therefore, once selected and brought on board, we will take care to nurture these artists and technologists, by encouraging skills exchange and peer-to-peer learning. We will also document and evaluate the process with the team so that we can continue to improve our process and practice.

The Stick House was our first step into building, exploring and maintaining a loose collective of creative people who share the same compulsion to explore working in different ways. We want our work to be rigorous, vital and innovative - an unspoken commitment we made when working on The Stick House. We all are dedicated to working in a culture of curiosity.

The benefits identified by these individuals has been:

* The ability to collaborate with people from different disciplines.
* Engagement in peer to peer learning – how to explain their own practice to someone who has no previous experience of their particular area of work e.g. designer and creative technologist working on directional sound.
* Becoming part of a bigger network of practitioners with the potential to open new doors.
* Being challenged creatively by working in a multi-disciplinary team.
* Learning how to solve problems creatively, evolve a shared language, realize a creative vision in new spaces and negotiate with other members of the team.

# The Creative Team

**Sharon Clark: Writer/Creative Director**

Sharon, co-founder of Raucous, is a playwright and dramaturg who has worked with Bristol Old Vic, the Arcola, Sherman Cymru, Theatre 503, the National Theatre, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cheltenham Everyman, Theatre West and the John Caird Company. She is also lecturer in writing for theatre at Bath Spa University and Associate Artist at the egg, Bath Theatre Royal.the egg, Bath Theatre Royal.

**Angie Bual : Producer**

Angie is a producer and artistic director of Trigger, and a freelance independent producer. She is a Clore Fellow (Theatre), and has produced for organisations including Fuel, National Theatre of Scotland, Edinburgh Art Festival and the Science Museum. She is on the board for Mayfest in Bristol, and is a member of the London Area Council of Arts Council England. Angie won the Creative Producer Arts Foundation Award last year.

**Claire Skelcey : Communications Director**

Claire has worked in Communications with Bristol Old Vic, ICIA, Mercurial Wrestler and The Invisible Circus. She is currently Marketing and Sales Manager at Mayfest and Marketing Consultant for Theatre Royal Plymouth.

**Tom Metcalfe**

Digital creative technologist and product designer, resident at Pervasive Media Studio.

<http://tommetcalfe.eu>

**Conor Murphy**

Award winning setand costume designer for opera, theatre, ballet and film.

http://www.conormurphy.com

**Limbic Cinema**

Increasing renowned projection mapping collective who work internationally.

https://limbiccinema.com

**Dave Wilkie**

Production Manager for Glastonbury and Sanctum

**Tanuja Amarasuriya**

Co-founder of theatre company Sleepdogs – director, producer and dramaturg

http://sleepdogs.org

**Tim X Atack**

Co-founder of theatre company Sleepdogs - Writer, musician, sound designer and composer

http://sleepdogs.org

**Jack Offord**

Filmmaker, theatre photographer and director of photography

http://www.jackofford.co.uk

**Ben Pacey**

Lighting designer

http://www.benpacey.co.uk

**Lizzie Johnson**

Model maker

<http://elizabeth3johnson.weebly.com>

**Creative Advisors:**

**Tom Morris** : Bristol Old Vic

**Laura Marshall** : Icon Films

**David Sproxton** : Aardman Animations

**The Board**

**Emma Alesworth** : Charity Director

**Nigel Greenhalgh** : Director of coporate business, elev8

**Tom Burton** : BBC Head of Virtual Reality

**Emma Bettridge** : Producer, Bristol Old Vic

**David Fairclough** : Finance Director

**Louise Gardner** : Head of Communication & Development, Watershed

**Partner Organisations**

**Bristol Old Vic** : data sharing and communications support in kind

**Watershed** : support in kind

**Pervasive Media Studio** : resident

**Icon Films** : support in kind

**University of the West of England** : research into musicology and PTSD

**Bath Spa University** : research into theatre in times of conflict

**Arts Council of England** : funding partner

**Audiences**

We have identified these key audience segments that we will be targeting for the production:

* **Stick House** attenders – 38% of the audience for our last show had not been to the theatre for five years,
* Theatre attenders – Bristol Old Vic audience
* Film attenders – Watershed audience
* Students – A level plus in History, Theatre, Technology and Music via our relationships with secondary schools and universities
* Young people 18 – 26
* Local community groups to the venue
* Classical music attenders through a series of talks at Colston Hall on Shostakovich
* Technology interest groups
* Remembrance / History specialist interest groups - Second World War
* People who do not normally attend cultural events

**Communications Strategy**

Marketing and press was a vital part of **The Stick House** as it introduced Raucous as a company as well as promoting the show. We identified that this activity could have happened earlier but was held up by finding a suitable performance space. As we have already identified a performance space, this is no longer an issue. We will make use of the Research and Development period for the development of a marketing strategy as we need the activity to reflect the production itself. As we are using technology within the shows we will also harness technological platforms creatively to market our work.

Communications tactics includes:

* Teasers and trailers several weeks before the production’s first night to infiltrate the consciousness of audiences in Bristol.
* Traditional forms of marketing such as flyers and print.
* Press and media articles
* Digital platforms - SMS, Facebook, Twitter
* Website and those of our partner organisations: Bristol Old Vic, Watershed, Pervasive Media Studio,
* Advertising through partner organisations such as Watershed, Pervasive Media Studios, University of the West of England, Bath Spa University and Bristol Old Vic.
* Building our database of supporters for emailing purposes.
* Film trailer shown on all three of Watershed screens for a nth before opening night.
* Augmented reality posters at Bristol Temple Meads and Bath Spa train stations.
* Email campaigns through the database of partner pirganisations

**Risk Management**

RISK Fundraising target is not achieved

MITIGATION Plan B budget is actioned until the full income target is achieved

RISK: Venue is revoked

MITIGATION In partnership with a found space organization who will aid in finding a suitable replacement

RISK Show cancelled due to sickness

MITIGATION Build extra shows into the schedule to be put on on Saturdays in this eventuality. We will reflect this in staff and production staff contracts

RISK Show unable to open due to technical errors

MITIGATION Long get in and tech week. Test and integrate the tech throughout the rehearsal process.

RISK: Unforeseen spend

MITIGATION: 5% contingency in all budgets

RISK: Box Office Target not met
MITIGATION: Budgeted at a conservative 50% of box office

RISK: Quality of show and story isn't good

MITIGATION: Research and Development period early on, so that ideas can be tried and tested without pressure. Period of reflection between this stage and the final production. Use of dramaturg and text director to bring in outside support and stage craft to the piece. Working with the very best creatives and paying them accordingly.

RISK: Hired equipment / venue damaged
MITIGATION: Insurance

RISK: Totems/ digital props lost / damage

MITIGATION: Spares are made. Technicians sign them in and out, and test them before each show.

RISK: Venue/ production is unsafe
MITIGATION: Risk Assess venue / create fire evacuation procedures

**Testimonials/Reviews**

*The Stick House evokes the fear of the outsider whilst challenging the outsider to think and act differently.  A definition for the modern age with a very pertinent lens on the role of technology today.  In this site specific production, Sharon Clark’s rich and beautifully constructed narrative moves its audiences through the story with traditional stage craft, new technologies and carefully curated direction.  She blends the collective and individual theatrical experience resulting in a superb use and integration of technology which supports a narrative and allows the audience to hold the story.*

 **Sarah Ellis, Digital Producer at the RSC**

*We were contacted by Raucous to share their view of theatre re-imagined. We were really impressed by their intention to push the boundaries of live performance for audiences, and spent some time with them exploring the potential of digital and creative technology in theatre... they have a compelling story and the ambition to create something truly new.*

**Google Creative Lab – Steve Vranakis, Executive Creative Director**

*… the production piles on atmosphere, and the mingling of performance with technology is brilliantly unobtrusive and effective. Cleverly conceived; distinctively different.* **The Guardian**

*Raucous applies irresistible energy to genuinely groundbreaking ideas.  It's a pleasure and a thrill to be one of their advisors because you feel as if you're in an environment where an unexpected breakthrough might happen at any moment.  Being near it is exciting and being able to support it hugely rewarding.* **Tom Morris, Artistic Director, Bristol Old Vic**