



Introduction

The Space is a unique performance venue located on the Isle of Dogs providing for the diverse communities of Tower Hamlets and attracting audiences from all over London.

History

The Space is owned and managed by St Paul's Arts Trust, a registered charity (no 801587). The Space building, formerly St Paul's church, was abandoned in 1972 following the decline of the London Docks and by the late 1980's was in a poor structural condition. In 1989 a locally based group of individuals, led by Robert Richardson, created the St Paul's Arts Trust with a view to taking responsibility for the building, restoring it and creating a venue for the arts.

Robert enlisted Sir Ian McKellen and Marie McLaughlin as patrons for the venue. Ian's current nationwide 80 venue tour was launched at the Space in January 2019.

The Space opened in 1996 and has been providing creative opportunities for the local community and support for a wide range of artists over the last 23 years.

Arts Programme

The arts programme is scheduled by the Director, Adam Hemming, supported by the Space Arts Committee. Our programming is heavily theatre-based but music, comedy and dance events are occasionally featured. Our future growth will focus strongly on audience development.

The Space is a producing, co-producing and receiving house and hosts performances from new, emerging and established theatre companies/artists. In selecting productions, we seek to ensure a high level of quality and social relevance to our audiences.

The Space invites theatre companies to submit proposals for performance slots every 4 months. Companies that come through this process are offered box office splits, rehearsal space and marketing/production support.

We currently have two associate theatre companies, Bric a Brac and Wonderbox, and deliver ScriptSpace, a development programme for new writing.

Space Productions

Our in house professional theatre company, Space Productions, has staged 26 productions and received 6 Off-West End award nominations to date. Four productions received support from the Arts Council and the company has received numerous positive reviews, including praise from playwright, David Eldridge. Space Productions have staged modern classics such as A Doll's House and Caucasian Chalk Circle, successful revivals of The Graduate, Festen and Vernon God Little and new writing. Our most recent productions were The Castle by Howard Barker, Bluebird by Simon Stephens and a new adaptation of Little Women. In 2019, we produced the Foreword Festival, staging 4 debut plays, which came through our ScriptSpace development programme.

SpaceWorks

Established in 2009, our community theatre project, SpaceWorks, provides workshops and performance opportunities for local residents. SpaceWorks attracts a diverse range of participants and enables them to build their confidence and communication skills whilst demonstrating the values of co-operation and inclusivity. Members of the SpaceWorks company have cited improved mental and physical well-being, reduced levels of isolation and increased knowledge as benefits to participating. Supplementary SpaceWorks activities have seen us work with the elderly on a local reminiscence project, provide workshops for special needs students at George Green's School and deliver technical theatre training to both young people and adults. We are currently only working with local adults but will be re-launching our youth activities once funding has been secured.

Crossrail Place Roof Garden

In 2015, we were asked by the Canary Wharf Group Ltd to launch a new outdoor performance space in the Crossrail Place Roof Garden. Our successful management and programming of this unique performance space resulted in the renewal of our contract for four further years.

We programme community arts festivals and special guest performances from May to September each year. All activities at the Roof Garden are free to the public and we facilitate the use of the venue by local community groups, schools and performers. The first four years of the Roof Garden have proven hugely popular with around 3,000 people attending free events each year.

Management Structure

The Space has been managed by a full-time Director, who reports to a board of trustees, two part-time Theatre Managers and a team of volunteers. The Deputy Director will replace one of the Theatre Managers.

Our volunteers are a mixture of local residents, student placements and those seeking work experience to help move them into employment.

Freelance/project staff are recruited for Space Productions and SpaceWorks activities.

Staff are joined on a number of planning and steering committees by artists, members of the community and trustees. Our inclusive approach to planning our activities and programmes helps us to ensure we continue to serve the needs of our beneficiaries.

Hire

The Space hosts wedding receptions, birthday parties, rehearsals, meetings and conferences.

Maintenance

The renovation of the Space took place 23 years ago and we are regularly required to undertake work to maintain the building. We are currently raising funds to replace our passenger lift.

Hubbub

Our café/bar is managed by Hubbub café/bar. Hubbub provides a warm and cosy environment for our patrons to enjoy a meal and a drink. Hubbub is open 7 days a week. All staff receive a 50% discount on food during their shifts.

Press/Feedback

“Those who live around it are very, very lucky. There are enough people in this area who, whether they know it or not, need The Space.” - Sir Ian McKellen, October 2016

“Productions like The Lighthouse are the reason The Space is one of the most exciting fringe venues in London. Almost every show there has utilised the space in a different and often jaw-dropping configuration to the last.” – Grumpy Gay Critic

“The Space is a fantastic, quirky little venue, which we know provides companies with the support and tools to do well.” – Views from the Gods

“There are some plays you enjoy and there are some you’ll never forget. Festen is certainly one which had me gripped and will be remembered for years to come. It’s another notch to The Space Theatre’s brilliant production list.” – Frost Magazine review of Festen

“The Space is a very exciting performing arts centre... Its attraction and dedication to the community is clear... this is a piece of theatre that is full of character and intrigue and succeeds in arousing opinions and beliefs in its audience. A promising and engaging

production for an innovative space that certainly has some bright years ahead.” -
Curtain Up review of the Caucasian Chalk Circle

“Regarding the former church that is The Space, I loved it. It’s one of those intimate venues where you feel that anything could happen.” –Everything Theatre

“In terms of developing a community, The Space is the best thing that I’ve found on The Island.” - SpaceWorks participant

“SpaceWorks is such a great opportunity for the children of this area to work together and develop skills & confidence.” - SpaceWorks Youth member’s parent

“I think what you guys are doing with limited funds and space is great. It was refreshing to see a production containing people from a variety of different backgrounds.” -
Audience member

“We have recently moved to E14 and are hugely impressed by The Space with its wide range of performances.” - Audience member

“One of the few, pure, intimate and genuine shows I have ever seen in London. Finally some real and uncompromised culture in town.” - Audience Member

“I love this venue! I've only been for a few shows, but it has been great each time. The intimacy really adds to the whole experience.” - Audience member