

THE OCCASION

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



The Occasion is the trading name for The Occasional Cabaret Ltd.

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www.theoccasiontheatre.com



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Occasion's annual look back on the past year; 2020 – a year like no other!

Along with pretty well the whole performing arts sector we have had to adapt and change.

The year started with our setting up **The Southside Group**, an initiative designed to provide opportunities for learning disabled adults to become actively involved in creating theatre. The group ran for four weeks, hosted by Queen's Park Bowling Club, and was going from strength to strength.

And then came lockdown.

As well as disrupting our plans for **The Southside Group**, all our future touring plans – principally, to produce a major new production of Boris Vian's **The Empire Builders** and to re-tour **The Monster and Mary Shelley** – collapsed overnight.

At which point, we had to re-invent.

We moved **The Southside Group** on-line; and set-up an innovative Research & Development programme, **This Fire**, featuring five new digital works by a mix of international collaborators and new, emerging artists.

It's been, undeniably, a difficult year. One full of challenges and uncertainties.

But, equally, one that we are immensely proud of. The achievements of both **The Southside Group** and the **This Fire** initiative have been enormous and we look forward to 2021 with optimism.

The Occasion would like to thank all those who have supported our work, either by promoting our performances, by enjoying as audience or by directly engaging with as participants.

We'd, also, like to thank all our funders for their support in this past year; without them our work could not have been achieved.

Films of all The Occasion's work can be seen on our YouTube account. The site can be accessed by following the links on our website: www.theoccasiontheatre.com

Onwards, to 2021!

THE SOUTHSIDE GROUP

The Southside Group project began in January 2020 as weekly live drama workshops particularly aimed at adults with learning disabilities.

The sessions took place at Queens Park Bowling Club, Glasgow and membership was steadily growing when the Covid-19 pandemic struck. Workshops were sadly cancelled as lockdown began.

In order to stay in touch with members The Occasion set up a private Facebook group sharing warm up exercises and info sheets, and then in April, with support from Foundation Scotland, we were able to start weekly sessions on Zoom.

Since then **The Southside Group** has created two on-line performances, **The Peabody Chronicles** and **The Night Before Christmas**.

In 2021 we hope to be able to move sessions back on to a face-to-face basis. But, if need be, we'll continue to have a lot of fun with the online programme.

THE PEABODY CHRONICLES

A melodramatic feast full of villainy, tragedy and heroic deeds.

The year is 1917. With Philip Snr. away, fighting in the war, his penniless family confront their avaricious landlord, Lord Stroke. Suspicion, sensation, intrigue and humour combine.

Part of the overall **This Fire** programme, with support from Creative Scotland, **The Southside Group** plan to develop this into a full length performance in 2021.

To watch The Peabody Chronicles, please [click here](#).

“Well done everybody. Drama, intrigue, humour - you had it all! Looking forward to Part Two!”

“We both just plain loved it! That was brilliant theatre.”

“The Peabody Chronicles are great fun. Very inventive, credible and involving, laced throughout with humour, plus great music and clever titles.”

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

An online Christmas card to everyone.

Based on Clement C. Moore's iconic poem... featuring night caps, reindeer and beards, one Glasgow street waits excitedly for Christmas Day...

To watch The Night Before Christmas, please [click here](#).

“This was truly delightful, heartening and playfully and artfully played by the Southside Group! Nice going with these elegant boxes of sweet delights - better than Cadbury's! Really fine job of direction, fitting all the individuals and the poem together. Loved it!”

“Just wanted to write and thank you for all your work with the Southside Group this year. I think what you have produced in both films has been brilliantly creative and great fun, especially given the challenges we've faced this year”.

THIS FIRE

Working with an exciting selection of national and international artists, **This Fire** explored themes of isolation, communication and inevitably, mis-communication; tales of trauma, unease and joy in these strange and altered days.

The project culminated in the production of five short, digitally produced works that feature theatre, dance, movement, photography and music. All the works have the potential to be developed into full-length live performances in the future and are available to watch below.

All the **This Fire** projects were developed during August, September & October 2020 with each of the short (5-10 minute) R&D films being released throughout October.

As well as **The Peabody Chronicles** the **This Fire** programme featured:



WHOOSH

Written by Pete Livingstone of Livingstone's Kabinet, an international performing arts ensemble based in Denmark whose work is characterised by an absurd, black-humorous and skewed worldview. Music by Pete Livingstone. Performed by Peter Clerke and Catherine Gillard of The Occasion.

- Isolated in a surreal, absurdist world a couple who used to 'swing' are, somehow, unable to 'swing' any more. Questions are raised but the answers just raise more questions.



INSTAMATIC

Written by Stewart Ennis, a Glasgow based writer/performer/photographer in collaboration with young Delhi based performer, Khursheed Ali.

- A story told primarily through a photo-dialogue. Two individuals in lock-down – for whatever reason – in two very different parts of the world, and how their isolation within their own cities brings them into communication with each other, across continents.



BOOK & SHRUB

Written by Michael Duke. Directed by Peter Clerke. Performed by Claire Lamont and Catherine Gillard.

- Two shops rolled into one and run by two sisters-in-law. Apart from a few skeletons in the cellar the business has been successful enough. But now, in these troubled times, the sisters-in-law are forced to apply for a Government grant. Meanwhile, outside, a riotous apocalypse is brewing...



THE SAME ROUTINE

Devised by Petre Dobre, a newly emerging Deaf performer based in Glasgow. Petre graduated from the RCS, Glasgow in 2018 with a BA in BSL & English Performance.

- A short, non-verbal exploration of routine, our need for it and the consequences that ensue when it unexpectedly goes wrong.

All films are available to watch, free, at www.theoccasiontheatre.com

THE FUTURE

The Occasion is determined to maintain and further develop The Southside Group. So much work has been developed in such a short period of time, with an amazing group of people. We very much look forward to the future.

We also remain committed to exploring all opportunities for making and touring work within the UK and internationally, when such time allows.

With optimism and best wishes for 2021.

FOR THE OCCASION

Co-Artistic Directors:

Peter Clerke
Catherine Gillard

Board of Trustees:

Gillian Shaw (Chair)
Ben Walmsley
Rebecca Robinson
Alison Musset
Peter Clerke
Catherine Gillard

The Occasion gratefully acknowledges support from:



The Occasion are full members of **The Federation of Scottish Theatre**



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