

RESTOKE
.ORG.UK

ANNUAL REPORT - 2019



RESTOKE .ORG.UK

Co-Artistic Director - Clare Reynolds

Co-Artistic Director - Paul Rogerson

Company Manager - Sarah Richardson

Marketing Manager - Sarah Nadin

Restoke, ACAVA Studios, Spode Works, Elenora
Street. Stoke-on-Trent. ST4 1QQ

CIC No: 10791456

info@restoke.org.uk
www.restoke.org.uk

Restoke is an arts organisation who put the
people of Stoke-on-Trent at the
heart of artistic adventures.

We produce performances in surprising locations,
from pottery factories to disused chapels, from swimming
pools to a working mens club...

We work with people of Stoke-on-Trent and
professional artists in dance, music and
spoken-word to co-create our performances and
programmes, driven by the stories, talents and
commitment of those who take part.

2019 marked 10 years since Restoke first formed! And while we never got round to throwing ourselves a birthday party we did take time to reflect on what we've achieved in the last decade... whilst planning for what's still to be done! We're proud and very lucky to still be making shows and hosting creative adventures here in Stoke-on-Trent. A lot has changed in the past decade, there are many challenges facing us the world over. But with greater awareness comes greater opportunity... so let's power on!

For Restoke, 2019 was about the vital legacy of past projects and sowing the seeds of new ones. Thanks to new funders our core activity now includes free workshops for children in Stoke-on-Trent to work alongside professional artists and build skills in dance and performance with a focus on creativity and self-expression. We have built a core group of committed young dancers and we're so excited for these companies in 2020!

We've had challenges when it comes to finding and sustaining use of workshop venues which means the vision of us finding our own Restoke workspace is a couple of small steps closer to becoming reality. We are furiously fundraising and seeking out connections to make this possible in the near future.

We started research for a new performance project, MOTHER, working with 15 mother artists for a week in April and making new connections with groups in the city. And the Up Men program got off to a great start in June with 20 men singing together every other Tuesday evening and some exciting guest workshops too.

A HUGE thank you as always to all our supporters, artist team, directors and funders for helping us make all this happen.

Happy New Year!

Clare & Paul
Artistic Directors





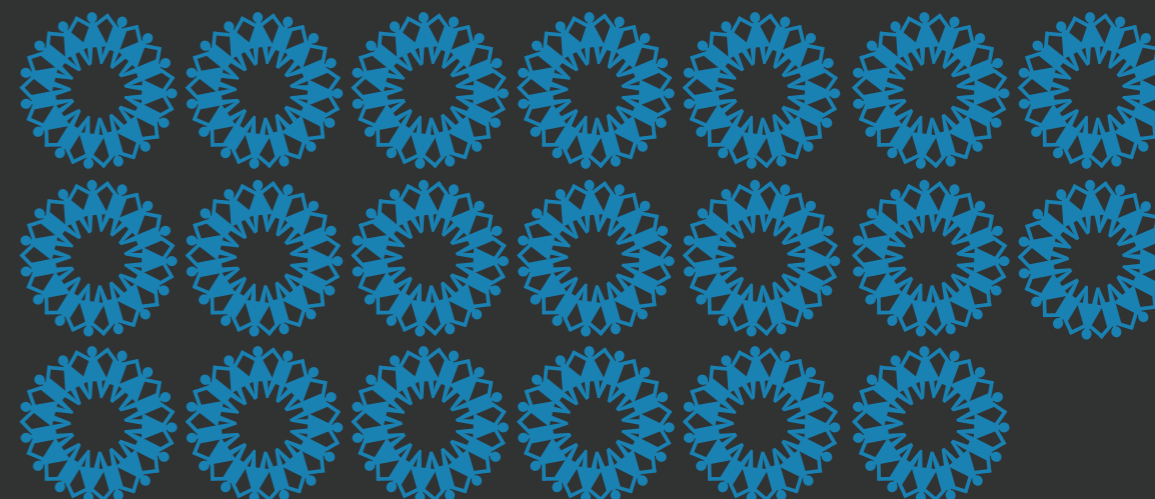
CONTEMPORARY & CREATIVE WORKSHOPS FOR YOUNG DANCERS

In 2019 we initiated workshops in creative dance for children aged 5-11 and young people aged 11-17 through forming two youth companies Restoke Small Folk and Restoke Youth. Thanks to some brilliant funders we have been able to make these workshops FREE and they aim to reach children and young people who may not usually have the opportunity to take part. Sessions have been held at All Saints Church hall but will be relocating in 2020 due to problems the building is facing.

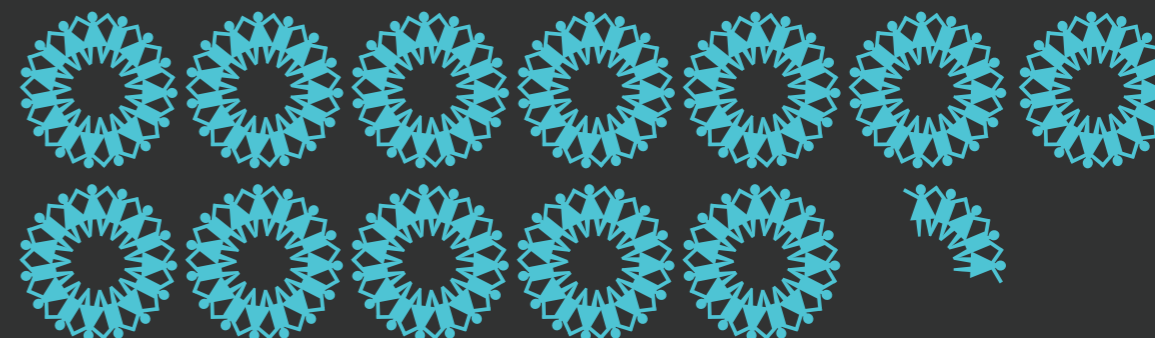
Restoke Small Folk is led by artistic director Clare Reynolds and associate artist Georgina Clare meeting every Saturday 10-11am during term time. Every half term we welcome guest artists which see activities like poetry, singing, painting and well as a trip to World of Wedgwood to explore creating with clay in all its forms! In August 2019 Restoke Small Folk performed for the first time as part of the Forest Worlds Festival by Urban Wilderness.

Restoke Youth is led by associate artist Anna Belyavin and meets once a month - building skills in technique, creativity, improvisation and choreography.

300 Audience - Forest World's Festival



200 children participated in taster workshops



45 children participated in workshops



15 children participate in weekly workshops





up men

“the best bit is that participating has nothing to do with how ‘good’ any of us are individually as singers. It’s about the collective power of a group of voices working together to create an amazing-sounding whole”
Paul F.

Following the success of our 2018 show MAN UP it felt vital for both the men involved and our audiences that this conversation didn’t end on the dance floor of Goldenhill Working Men’s Club on those balmy August evenings! So, we stayed connected and formed the Up Men to share the experiences of MAN UP with more men in Stoke-on-Trent.

The Up Men program aims to promote positive mental health through creativity & connection - bringing people together without fear of judgement. Up Men stands for openness, acceptance, fresh perspectives and positive expression. Between 2019-2021, steered by Restoke and group of men involved in MAN UP, we are hosting a number of one-off creative events across Stoke-on-Trent.

Up Men launched in June 2019 and the program so far has included:

Up Men Sing – a male voice choir open to anyone who wants to experience the therapeutic benefits that singing as part of a team brings us. Led by artistic director Paul Rogerson the group currently has over 20 members. Up Men Sing have performed at ‘Together We’re Better’ – Suicide Prevention Conference and The Staffordshire Business Awards at Keele in 2019 to over 500 people.

Up Men Haka – In August our first one-off event was a Haka with Sol Cooper from TOA Haka. Sol shared concepts of masculinity in Maori culture and united our voices and bodies through learning a traditional haka.

Living Library – As part of Stoking Curiosity Festival at Spode we held a Living Library. 12 human books offered their titles to be read by the public and joined for a conversation. The aim of Living Libraries is to challenge stereotypes and stigma and encourage open conversations in a safe environment.

Comedy Improv – With dancer/comedian Tom Roden from New Art Club we explored Improv Comedy and its potential benefits for social anxiety. 20 men took part in this 3-hour workshop delving into the world of improvisation, physical movement and comedy.

At the end of December 2019 we held a workshop with ceramic artist Alice Thatcher and a community of people who have been affected by suicide, to play with clay and discuss how creativity and togetherness can support bereavement and prevention. We plan to develop this work in 2020.

MOTHER

We received funding from Arts Council England to begin research for our new performance project MOTHER. In April 2019 we brought together 7 dance artists from across the UK, singers from Laboratorium Piesni (Poland) and poet Gabriella Gay who are all mothers. We spent a week together talking, moving, singing, writing and creating to explore motherhood as a starting point for creativity. As well as being a springboard for creative explorations the residency proved timely and nourishing for all the artists involved:

“It was a unique opportunity to revisit myself and remind myself of who I was and who I’ve now become since having my boys. We know our children change us fundamentally, we say and hear this all the time but do we ever get to feel it. This week I did.” Patsy Browne-Hope
Dance Artist

During our research and development we also made connections with groups in Stoke-on-Trent who support mothers and who may not usually have the opportunity to be involved in creative projects. Most notably was a partnership with the Gingerbread Centre, a residential service for homeless families and pregnant women, where we have been delivering creative writing workshops which will continue throughout 2020.

Thanks to further grants from Arts Council England and Awards for All in 2020 we will be creating a show about motherhood, co-created with mothers in Stoke-on-Trent.

“There was a felt sense of necessity to be with other mothers, giving us all the opportunity to share motherhood through conversation, laughter, tears and deep listening. Some mothers were tired, vulnerable, and emotional. However here, in this held space, each mother was valid as an artist: worthy, important.” Vicci Riley, Dance Artist



Other happenings in 2019...

We delivered creative workshops and guest talks for:

Red Rua Arts Centre, Dublin -
Men, Movement and Mental Health

Staffordshire University – Psychology
department

Keele University – Psychology
department

Together We're Better – Suicide
Prevention Conference

Yorkshire Dance

Art City Conference – B Arts

A-N Assembly – Airspace Gallery

Awards

We won two awards for MAN UP:

Saboteur Awards –
Best Collaborative Work

Epic Awards – Peer Award
for Excellence

Mental Health First Aid Training

Over half our team of artists and trustees underwent Mental Health First Aid training with MHFA England and are now qualified mental health first aiders!

Other projects

In 2019 Paul worked with New Vic Borderlines as Musical Director on 'High Flyers', a verbatim musical made with young people which was performed on the main stage of the New Vic Theatre in July 2019.

Clare and Paul worked with Terrestrial and Ania Varez in Weston-Super-Mare creating a show, 'Abandon', made with people with experience of addiction. Performed in an empty shop in November 2019.

Thank You!



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



YMCA GO!

Activities for young people aged 10 - 18

Thomas Deane TRUST
Doing a little good with even less money

NEW VIC THEATRE

AZIZ FOUNDATION
BUILDING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER