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Young Vic  
Theatre  
Company



Two Boroughs

### **Two Boroughs Strategy**

*The Two Boroughs project offers a single free ticket to every resident of Lambeth and Southwark over the next five years. The project is open to all residents regardless of background.*

### **Aim**

To ensure that the Young Vic is accessible to the people of Lambeth and Southwark

### **Objectives**

To remove the practical barriers that prevent people from attending both theatre in general, and the Young Vic in particular.

To challenge the perception that "theatre is not for me"

To lay the foundations for a sustained relationship between residents of Lambeth and Southwark, and the Young Vic.

### **Background**

The Young Vic has a long tradition of working with the local community; the Funded Ticket Scheme for local schools has been established since 1994, and allows over 6,000 young people a year to experience the magic of live theatre. From 1998 until last year, an Arts For Everyone lottery grant allowed us to extend this scheme to groups and individuals from across London who had no previous history of theatre-going. The scheme, which included services such as tours, visits by production crew and actors to groups, and free interval ice creams, was an immense success, and many participants went on to become regular attenders through special funded ticket evenings.

The Two Boroughs project continues our commitment to developing audiences, returns the focus to local people, and seeks to engage with individuals from across the boroughs. Piloted during the immensely successful *A Raisin in the Sun* when almost 1000 people living in Lambeth and Southwark saw the show free of charge, over 3 weeks of performances, the project will aim to build on this success.



## Strategy

The Two Boroughs project is to be inclusive, exciting, and dynamic. Above all it is designed to reinforce the view that the Young Vic is a theatre for all people who love a good time. This strategy for implementing the project is essentially a consideration of the practical issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve that goal. Appendices are available containing a more detailed examination of some of the issues behind the strategy, the relationship with funders, and also detail of specifics relating to the programme for the first few months of the project, and logistical information regarding booking processes.

### 1. Access – *Recognising that barriers to attending the theatre are not all addressed by issuing a free ticket. Being sensitive to the needs of participants.*

- Where budget allows support services such as childcare will be put in place to make it easier for all residents to make use of the tickets offered
- These support services will be identified following consultation with residents of Lambeth and Southwark, both individually, and through Two Boroughs Evenings - open to interested residents, and local, voluntary sector, business, and council staff
- These measures are in addition to the Young Vic's ongoing commitment to accessibility which encompasses disabled access provision, signed performances etc
- All information about the project, and all forms to be completed will follow a clear and simple design
- To enable the participation of all residents, areas of social and economic need will be targeted to receive information about the project
- To reassure and inform new attendees, a leaflet of theatre myths dispelled will be distributed to all who sign up, effectively explaining what is and what is not allowed
- Behaviour at the Young Vic is only censored where it disrupts the actors work, thus new audiences reactions are welcomed and encouraged

### 2. Sustainability – *Making a commitment to allowing local residents who get the theatre bug to enjoy continued access to the Young Vic*

- Everyone who takes up the offer of a free ticket will be informed of future follow up offers – initially on a production by production basis
- In the long term, the intent is that these offers will be replaced or supplemented by a standing arrangement which allows all Lambeth and Southwark residents, regardless of financial means, to attend performances at the Young Vic regularly
- Building on contacts already made with a geographical group of Nearest Neighbours, through previous ticket offers, additional offers will be made available to this group, to move quickly towards a sustained relationship



3. Information – *Tackling the issues which prevent all residents from finding out about the existence of the project. Recognising the importance of word of mouth communications and local networks.*

- Distribution of information will be evenly spread across the two boroughs, however within each borough a greater number of outlets will be sought in priority areas of social and economic need.
- Outlets for printed material will be sought outside of the traditional channels of cultural sites these are likely to include such locations as housing offices, advice centres, take away food shops.
- Links will be forged with distribution outlets, in order that their staff may act as ambassadors for the project.
- Local press, local radio and both council and voluntary sector newsletters will be used as key methods of information distribution.
- Dedicated phone line to the Community Co-ordinator has been put in place
- Innovative non-text based approaches will be implemented reaching the heart of the community
- Participants feedback during the early months of the project will be key to later marketing initiatives – positive use of peer pressure.
- Further information on precise methods to be used can be found in the Year 1 appendix.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation – *To assess both qualitatively and quantitatively the success of the scheme, in terms of participation, equality, and valued experience.*

Four measurable targets will be set for the first year of the project:

- 6,000 individuals to sign up to the project
- 4,000 individuals to take up a Two Boroughs ticket
- 75% of residents who use a Two Boroughs ticket find the tickets easy to access and are glad they came.
- A small number of individuals form links with the Young Vic leading to volunteering associated with the project.

The following quantitative research will be carried out, with the intention of adding further targets in subsequent years:

- The effectiveness of different information distribution methods against sign ups to the project
- Geographical spread of sign ups paying particular attention to rates in targeted versus untargeted areas.
- The take up of tickets in terms of age, ethnicity, economic power in comparison with the population demographic.
- The take up of tickets by new visitors to the Young Vic



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- The % of attenders on the Two Boroughs project a) taking up a future ticket offer b) paying to attend a performance c) signing up as Friends of the Young Vic

Meanwhile a qualitative study of the project will include:

- Participants critical response to the productions
- Unsolicited feedback by mail, email and phone
- Participants comments regarding the atmosphere and service provided by the Young Vic

Additionally we will monitor the logistics of the project and make changes where necessary.

### Mechanisms

- Datacapture for monitoring purposes by form completion at the point of booking a ticket
- Leaflet coding
- Evaluation by postcard feedback (scribble panel and specific questions) during or post show
- Two Boroughs Evenings
- Vox Pops
- Video Feedback
- Individual Conversations with Young Vic staff building up a picture of the participants

## Appendix A

### Logistics – Two Boroughs Project

- In order to take part in the project, Lambeth and Southwark residents must send (by letter or form) or phone in their contact details. Alternatively a group may nominate one person to be the contact for receiving this information. Date of Birth (particularly for under 16's) and special needs are also requested at this stage, so that we can contact people with relevant information such as dates of crèche nights.
- The project entitles every resident to 1 free ticket to a production at the Young Vic over the next five years. They can then expect to receive further information regarding follow up offers for other productions. Participants should understand that sometimes these offers will be made to specific groups, which may be geographically determined. (see section on Nearest Neighbours)
- Once registered, participants will be sent a brief information sheet explaining the project, and a list of theatre myths exploded, as well as information about the next known productions and the availability of tickets.
- For each Young Vic Theatre Company production an allocation of tickets is held for people attending as part of the Two Boroughs project - this ticket allocation varies. The information will make explicit to the participants which days tickets are available, and include a form for booking tickets for a specified evening.
- Tickets can be booked by post or through a designated phone line, which will include a 24hr ansaphone and a call waiting service. (Booking tickets at Box Office will be discouraged although they will be able to supply ticket booking forms)
- These forms are essential as they contain most of the monitoring information.
- Tickets will be collected from the theatre on the evening of the performance, suggested between 6.30 and 7pm. This will be from a separate desk manned by the Community Co-ordinator and/or volunteer staff (two staff CC or other designated responsible who may be a long term volunteer plus other volunteers). Ice Cream vouchers, Synopsis, Photo pages and feedback postcards will be handed out at this point.
- Two Boroughs staff will explain that they will not be around at the interval, and explain procedure for ice creams and flag up the location of the box for leaving feedback cards in before participants enter the theatre.

- Following attendance, participants will begin to receive special offer mailings rather than Two Boroughs mailings. These may be administrated through the Two Boroughs line, or through Box Office depending on the type of offer.

## Appendix B

### Social Inclusion

The Two Boroughs project seeks to make the Young Vic accessible to all residents of Lambeth and Southwark. It seeks therefore to be socially inclusive. It does not, in and of itself, seek to combat social inclusion.

Nevertheless it can be said that the Two Boroughs project, in combination with work done by other groups in the area, fulfils five of the six action points from the PAT 10 report regarding the use of arts in combatting social exclusion.

- Valuing diversity
- Promoting equity
- Sustainability
- Pursuing quality of experience
- Connecting to the mainstream

The strategy identifies the need to target areas of social and economic need.

Consultation with the local councils suggest this means targeting all of Southwark from the Peckham Wards north, and most of the north of Lambeth plus a particular ward in Streatham. Additionally we can target specific estates, as indicated by individual council officers and other workers.

Studies conducted by Elephant Links over 3000 inhabitants of Elephant and Castle have revealed that Arts are low priority for residents, that word of mouth, and newsletters are the key means of information dissemination, and that only 20% of residents belong to community groups of any kind. We have therefore identified a need to target individuals through novel mechanisms, as well as working with existing groups, in order to break down barriers and ensure that this project is socially inclusive.