



Cutting Edge Theatre - Vital Stories

CHAIR - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Information Pack



White Pariahs R&D 2019 - Photo by Rehan Jamil

Image description: Photo of a blonde white woman and a dark haired black man, holding each other tenderly against a black background. The woman's face does not show.

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“Vital Xposure brings stories from the shadows and puts them centre stage so that we can tell the truth about who we have been, who we are, and who we can become as a nation. Never was there such a perfect name for a company - it's work is vital, pivotal and exposes hidden voices.”

Mentor / Theatre Director

“It is rare for me to work in an environment in which I feel so safe, where there is an awareness of discrimination and a commitment to working inclusively.”

Vital Xposure Actor

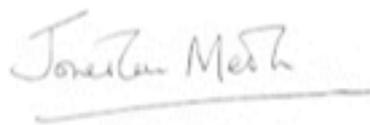
MESSAGE FROM VITAL XPOSURE'S CHAIR, JONATHAN METH

Vital Xposure (VX) is a UK touring theatre company operating under the creative leadership of disabled artist, Simon Startin. Building on the decade-long legacy of VX's founder, Julie McNamara, the company promotes hidden voices with extraordinary stories to tell. Our mission is to create exciting, innovative theatrical experiences for audiences, artists and communities alike. All our work presents an inclusive experience where access is sewn into the aesthetic of the productions.

Simon's vision for the company is that we place disability centre stage. After a year of learning to live with pandemic, the substance of many disabled people's lived experience has become a little clearer to many more people. We have all had to adapt to new ways. This ability to adapt is what disabled people require from a society which disables them. It also means that disabled people have to be highly skilled in navigating these adaptations. As live performance looks to gradually recover from the severity of the past 12 months, there is a strong desire to build back differently. VX believes that disabled artists can and should be in the vanguard of this rebuild, as innovators and creative problem solvers.

As Simon gets his feet under the metaphorical table, VX is looking for a new Chair to support the next, crucial phase of the company's journey. Simon is very well supported by a small, but excellent staff team and an engaged, committed and diverse board. VX is also supported, as a National Portfolio Organisation, by Arts Council England - and the City Bridge Trust. VX works through a range of key partnerships, which Simon and the team are already busy further developing.

While we remain in challenging times, this is a tremendously exciting moment to be joining the company. We hope you will consider applying - and if not for the role of Chair, you may just be interested in joining the Board. We'd love to hear from you.



Jonathan Meth
Chair - Vital Xposure

JOB DESCRIPTION

Vital Xposure's Board of Trustees has the ultimate responsibility for the affairs of the Company, ensuring it is solvent, well run and that it delivers the company's charitable objectives, for the benefit of the public.

The Chair has the following responsibilities:

- To lead the Board of Trustees, making sure the Board fulfils its responsibilities in governing Vital Xposure
- To lead and liaise with the Board of Trustees in setting, agreeing and monitoring strategy and policy
- With the Artistic Director and Executive Director, plan and set agendas for the annual cycle of Board meetings
- To liaise with the Board and work with the Artistic and Executive Directors on Board recruitment, development and retention.
- To chair Board meetings or, if not available, to delegate responsibility to another Trustee
- To ensure that the Board's agreed decisions are actioned
- To hold the casting vote, for or against a proposal, should the votes of Board members be equal
- To support the Artistic Director and Executive Director, either in person or via delegated responsibility, scheduling 1:1s and monitoring progress through annual appraisals
- To agree the brief for Board sub committees / working parties, set up to carry out company business
- To sit on and lead appointment and disciplinary panels.
- To represent Vital Xposure at functions, in meetings, by letter or electronically, as appropriate.

The Chair should be able to evidence some or all of the following qualities:

- strategic vision
- good, independent judgement
- the ability to think creatively
- a willingness to speak their mind
- an understanding of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- leadership skills
- experience of committee work and corporate decision making
- tact and diplomacy
- impartiality and fairness
- the ability to respect confidences.

APPLYING FOR THE ROLE OF CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

We are interested in hearing from individuals from diverse backgrounds who wish to play an important and supportive role in defining Vital Xposure's future direction and who will lead the Board of Trustees to deliver the plans of the new artistic leader, Simon Startin.

For further information or, to have an informal conversation about Vital Xposure and the company's plans, please contact:

Isobel Hawson, Consultant Producer: isobelhawson@me.com

Access

We wish to ensure our recruitment processes are transparent and accessible. If you require this information pack in an alternative format, please contact us on:

intouch@vitalxposure.co.uk / 020 8123 9945 / 07432 421825 (voice/texts/WhatsApp)

Please note that some formats will only be available upon request to ensure these are suitably tailored to support the applicant's access requirements.

We welcome applications in different formats that are accessible for you e.g. audio or video (in British Sign Language, Spoken English or other). We would expect an audio or video submission to be up to 5 minutes long to include information below.

HOW TO APPLY

Please send:

- a covering letter (no more than 2 sides of A4) briefly sharing your interest in Vital Xposure and the role of Chair, referencing your skills in taking on this role and how they would benefit Vital Xposure
- a completed Equality and Diversity Monitoring form, which will be separated out from your covering letter

Please email this information to: **isobelhawson@me.com**

Please title your email: Vital Xposure - Chair

Deadline: Wednesday 2 June 2021

Interviews: on or around Wednesday 21 July 2021

Due to current circumstances our Team is working remotely. Interviews may be on Zoom. If you need to send us your application in the post, please contact us **beforehand**.

VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND AIMS

Vision

To share previously hidden stories with new audiences informed by a creative and inclusive aesthetic through showcasing the talent of disabled artists

Mission

To create exciting, innovative theatrical experiences for audiences, artists and communities alike. All work presents an inclusive experience where creative tools will both illuminate its meaning and serve the access needs of our audiences and artists.

Values

- Social justice
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Inclusive practices
- Creative collaborations

Aims

- To engage hidden voices with extraordinary stories to tell, often existing on the periphery of our communities
- To create highly visual new work, blending strong imagery with a provocative literary narrative
- To produce work that challenges common assumptions and inequality
- To place access at the heart of our work
- To push boundaries, opening new ways of engagement with the arts
- To collaborate with partners nationally and internationally, as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

“A very caring and thoughtful company that I believe really does want to change the world for the better.”

Theatre Production Manager

After more than five years of service on the Vital Xposure Board, three of them as Chair, Jonathan Meth will step aside in September 2021, as he relocates abroad.

We are seeking an interested and motivated individual to become Chair of Trustees. Together with the Board, the Chair will support the Team and new Artistic Director, Simon Startin who, in January 2021, took over the artistic leadership from Vital Xposure’s founder, Julie McNamara.

The new Chair will lead and guide the Board of five fellow directors through the Company’s next phase of development, overseeing the work of the company as articulated in the Business Plan 2021 - 22, the next NPO application to Arts Council England and the 2023 - 2026 Business Plan.

Based in London, Vital Xposure is a disabled-led national touring theatre company. Building on Julie McNamara’s 10 years of artistic leadership, Simon has outlined exciting, ambitious and strategic plans, lifting the lid on vital social issues, uncovering new voices as a new writing company and raising awareness.

As we emerge out of the lockdown and COVID-19 restrictions, Simon’s new vision is set out in the attached Business Plan 2021 - 22, and lays the foundation and direction he wishes to take the Company over the next five years to:

- be the home of political theatre, led by disabled people, but for everyone
- have roots within London and Hackney communities, making work based around theatre activism and participant story gathering
- undertake sector, community and artist development, joining them up cohesively to create a bigger company impact
- find new partners to increase the scale and frequency of our productions;
- through a network of regional theatre partnerships develop disabled artists to their full potential such that they can build sustainable careers
- continue to diversify the heritage of the artists we work with, improving participation in our work, particularly among those who are disadvantaged.
- develop new audiences to maximise the exposure of our artists
- seek to expand our funding base

In 2021 - 22 Vital Xposure will focus on 5 strands of development:

- New Leadership – Support the ‘bedding in’ of our new Artistic Director, Simon Startin and to clearly articulate his vision and raise his profile and that of Vital Xposure.
- New Partnerships – build strategic partnerships with selected regional venues with the aim of developing disabled artists.
- New Methods – expand our participatory offer by building a cohort of disabled Citizen Investigative Journalists to interrogate how social justice issues can be used in making theatre, collaborating with various participatory groups.
- New Work – White Pariahs: Quiet Rebels with Dervish Productions re-tells the hidden stories of white working-class women who crossed the colour line to forge relationships with men and women of the Windrush generation.
- Build on innovation – exploration of how we bring diverse communities together through form and content, debate and collaboration, to bring about social justice and community cohesion.

Vital Xposure is an Arts Council NPO, committed to inclusion in all its forms to present high quality work and inclusive experiences where access is integral to the aesthetic of productions. Currently, Vital Xposure receives funding to deliver a tour-ready production across a minimum of three regions every 18 months, whilst seeding new work and developing stories for the company’s portfolio.

Arts Council England application and reporting procedures:

September 2021: 2022 - 23 Extension: submission of Business Plan

December 2021: 2020 - 21 ACE Annual Survey submission

January 2022: 2023 - 26 ACE NPO submission

February 2022: 2022 - 23 Extension: submission of final business plan/budget

We promote the full participation into the arts of deaf and disabled artists, and people excluded from mainstream society because of race, gender, sexual orientation or social status.

Our registered office is currently based on the ground floor of Empire 2, behind Hackney Empire in East London. The nearest station is Hackney Central (Overground). The building has level access from entrance through to the office:

<https://hackneyempire.co.uk/your-visit/getting-here/>

Vital Xposure is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation and currently receives funding from City Bridge Trust, is a registered charity (No 1161464), a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (No: 07488858) and a member of the Independent Theatre Council and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

STAFF

Vital Xposure comprises a team of three part-time staff members: the Artistic Director, Executive Director and General Manager, supported by an associate freelance consultant. Each member of the team has a strong background and professional knowledge in theatre, disability arts and the charity sectors.

THE BOARD

The Board of Trustees is Vital Xposure's governing body, who also act as Company Directors, legally accountable for the company. The six Trustees act as ambassadors for Vital Xposure and are committed to upholding the company's values. They reflect the diversity of our society with regard to gender, experience of disability, ethnic, cultural and/or socio-economic background. There are currently no Board sub-committees.

VITAL XPOSURE'S PREVIOUS WORK

Under the leadership of founding Artistic Director, Julie McNamara:

Let Me Stay: a tender and unique exploration of the impact of Alzheimer's on family relations. 2 UK national tours, New Zealand, Brazil.

Pullen's Party: the story of James Henry Pullen, long term resident of Earlswood Asylum. Outdoors/Liberty Festival.

Medicine's Monstrous Daughters: two plays, inspired by real life events about the treatment of women inside the mental health system. National Tour, Spring 2020 suspended due to Covid-19. **Medicine** explored contemporary experiences of the mental health system by women of African heritage together with **Monstrous Daughter**, commissioned by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries for Exceptional and Extraordinary.

This is How It Happens: Poet, playwright and performer, Tanaka Mhishi explored the impact of sexual assault on young men.

The Trouble with Access explored the layering of access in theatre-making with a group of international artists,

Digital material, created from the Company's theatre work, providing wider distribution includes: **Blue Pen / (The Disappearance of Dorothy Lawrence); Voices from the Knitting Circle / (The Knitting Circle).**

For full information on Vital Xposure's activity please visit our website:

www.vitalxposure.co.uk/about-us