



Issue 66 Festivals

- Passion, Provision, Participation
- bOing!
- Sadler's Wells at Latitude
- Marketing multi-location festivals
- Evaluating festivals
- Festival rebrand



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Write for JAM

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Something for everyone

Festivals have always played an important role in bringing people together and are key part of the cultural landscape. In this issue of *JAM* we look at the different ways festivals support the work of the arts, cultural and heritage sector in growing and engaging with audiences.

Mel Larsen reflects on the benefits of festivals developing new and diverse audiences; putting a diverse range of cultures, issues and faces on the map.

Over the past three years the Gulbenkian's bOing! International Family Festival has grown its audience from 2,500 to 11,000. David Yard shares an insight into bOing's success.

Sadler's Wells has been headlining the Waterfront stage at Latitude Festival since 2008. Lucy White

explains how taking contemporary dance direct to festival goers has helped the theatre grow new audiences.

Coordinating a multi-location festival is challenging and complex. Sarah Burry-Hayes and Rosie Clarke discuss their experiences of working respectively on the Festival of Museums and Museums at Night.

A collaborative approach to the research and evaluation of the British Ceramics Biennial has played an important part in the planning of future festivals. Helen Palmer and Vishalakshi Roy describe how this is achieved.

Rachael Biggs explains how the rebrand of the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival has created an accessible and engaging brand that's helped to reinvigorate the festival.

We take a glimpse into the AMA conference 2017 with Jane Cordell, put the spotlight on the AMA's Senior Finance Manager, Elza Cloete, and celebrate the AMA Member Rep scheme with Bea Udeh, AMA's Programme Producer. ▶

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spotlight

Creative accounting

I've almost always had a room with a view: vineyards, mountains, oceans, the River Cam, an English meadow.

As a South African, I was raised to not only appreciate the view from afar, but to get involved and try my hand at everything. A typical week of after-school activities could include ballet, art, swimming, netball, a maths Olympiad, a school rally, piano and choir. In Paarl Girls High School we did everything on a grand scale: inter-schools sports, drama, musicals, talent shows, fundraising events.

South Africa went through many positive changes during my childhood. The world was opening up to us. I wanted to see it, and chartered accountancy was my ticket. Studying accounting at the University of Stellenbosch, the usual perks of student life were enriched

by mountainside walks, wine tours and seaside escapes. I continued with informal contemporary dance, ballet and drawing classes; and, during my first years of work, pottery at the studio of Debbie de Beer.

On my first day of articles at PricewaterhouseCoopers, I met my husband to be. After studying together, our paths never crossing, the heavens finally decided our eyes would meet, sparks would fly, butterflies would sing — we all know this story.

The ink was barely dry on my final qualifying exam paper, when I was seconded to Miami, Florida for Sarbanes-Oxley work. From the US, Cambridge was the next base for further travels.

Ten years later — a good run as senior accountant in technology

research; two mini Cloetes in tow — my role as Senior Finance Manager at the AMA is a prayer answered. Supporting the team, and indirectly our members, I can be part of a sector I love. Bringing arts, heritage and culture to wider audiences, I have found a very homely room, with a wonderful view. ▶

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PASSION, PROVISION, PARTICIPATION

festivals engaging with new
and diverse audiences

Festivals are a great way of bringing diverse groups of people together. Having founded three festivals and led the Streatham Festival for five years, AMA Board member **Mel Larsen** reflects on the benefits of festivals in developing new and diverse audiences.

From the earliest harvest gatherings, festivals have served to bring folk together to celebrate seasons, culture and community. For every activity you can think of, there's probably a festival dedicated to it somewhere. Cheese rolling, fireball whirling and gurning are just for starters. We're spoilt for choice by the thousands of festivals available in the UK. They vary enormously in scale and focus across many genres including music, performance, literature, film and science.

A festival can be niche or broad, one-off or lasting, mammoth or micro. They are flexible tools to address the multiple demands of audience engagement in a world of super-diversity. Festivals can shine a spotlight on an issue, location, audience or all of the above.

I've founded three small festivals in Streatham, South London focusing on respectively, arts, food and peace. Once I discovered that a festival is a powerful way to bring a diverse group of people together around a core theme I was hooked. The Streatham Festival, which I led for five years, was founded on a shoestring in 2002 and is now in its fifteenth year. The catalyst for me was reading an *Evening Standard* article which claimed that the Streatham postcode was high on a list of "least desirable places to live in London". I wanted to disprove this notion and show what was great about the people in this highly ethnically diverse area.

During my five year directorship, along with a dedicated team of volunteers, we created an annual programme of activities in response to what the local community wanted to produce or see. It was an interesting approach that led to many great moments, and only a handful of creative disasters. Setting up and running these demanding annual events showed me the power and challenge of teamwork, diversity, community and most of all, of vision.

Visionaires

While some major arts festivals still seem oblivious to the notion of diversity, many others have emerged as the brainchild of a savvy producer who saw an eager but untapped market.

A visionary festival director I admire greatly is Mark Ball who has championed value and respect for the marginalized since the days back in 1998 when he founded the groundbreaking Queerfest, later to become Fierce!. In an interview with Performing Arts Network Japan last year he said: "part of the job of being a Festival Director, is that you have to be a futurologist". Formerly Artistic Director and CEO of LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre), where he championed artists from Middle Eastern Arabic countries to showcase exciting new work and to challenge Islamophobia, Ball has just become Associate Artistic Director at Manchester International Festival. I'm looking forward to seeing what he creates next.

The Women of the World (WOW) festival founded by Jude Kelly also springs to mind, tackling as it does the massive contribution and potential of women and girls globally. I have been a 'speed mentor' several times at this excellent week-long event held at the South Bank Centre as well as four other countries and counting. Last year I attended their programme development meeting and enjoyed the open and consultative approach where around 50 women from a wide range of backgrounds spoke about what they would like to see at future WOW festivals.

Another visionary is Ajay Chhabra, founder of The London Mela in 2002, which has attracted 92,000 people at its peak. Chhabra is also founder of The Mela Partnership of seven melas around Britain, which together last year entertained a total of 286,000 audience members across six melas, of which an estimated 65% were BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic). He says mela has a long history in the UK which has gone largely unrecognized:

"Festivals are at the heart of our [South Asian] culture. The reality is that those that are charged with gathering audience evidence have ignored the Mela sector. They are now coming to realise it and it's a great big statistics hole! And of course there is the view that festivals are connected with a certain type of 'Britishness' which Mela doesn't belong to."



Nutkhut/Cirque Bijou performing *Khoj* at Sandwell Mela, June 2016. Image courtesy of Nutkhut. Photo Dee Patel, Outroslide.

→ Festival figures

Festivals are generally thought to be good for the reputation of the host location, boosting community cohesion and tourism. The economic impact of Manchester International Festival on the city was estimated at £38.8m in 2015 and Liverpool's DaDaFest reports that it brought £5m into the economy in 2012. The biggest festivals can be extremely influential: broadcast audiences for the Edinburgh International Book Festival in 2014 for example, exceeded 60 million. So any large festival that takes the effort to champion diversity has the power to make a significant difference.

Setting up and sustaining a festival year after year is not for the faint-hearted. It's hard work to get one off the ground, it requires intense focus building up to just one big day or week of the year and its costly to keep it going. Inclement weather is a particular issue for outdoor events. Famously, the summer of 2012 was particularly rainy resulting in the cancellation of a whopping 57 live music festivals. Add in the effort to maintain a relationship with an audience you may only be able to programme for once a year and the challenge increases.

Diversity stars

Creating an annual mass gathering may not be the easiest route to ensuring diversity in the arts but it is one powerful, agile solution to making sure certain issues are heard and certain faces are seen by many. Here's my salute to just a handful of the hundreds of festivals that have had the foresight to put a diverse range of cultures, issues and faces on the map. Support them and learn from them:

— Unlimited Festival

Celebrating the artistic vision and originality of disabled artists.

— DaDaFest

Promotes high quality disability and deaf arts working to the Social Model of Disability.

— WOW festival

A global festival celebrating women and girls.

— AfroPunk Fest

Champions "the other Black experience, the one we don't see in our media."

— London Mela

Europe's largest mela.

— Africa Oyé, Liverpool

The largest festival of African and Caribbean music in Britain.

— Notting Hill Carnival

The largest street festival in Europe and part of the cultural landscape for over half a century.

— SHOUT

Birmingham's LGBT History festival.

— GFEST

London's leading LGBTQI cross-arts festival.

— SICK! Festival

An international arts and health programme.

— Bestival

Award-winning family-friendly festival. ✓

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bOing!

nurturing a family audience
in the Garden of England

Since bOing! International Family Festival was born in 2014 it has seen its audience grow from 2,500 to 11,000. Managed by the Gulbenkian, the festival takes place every year in Canterbury on the last weekend of August. AMA member **David Yard** shares an insight into bOing!'s success.

The Gulbenkian started bOing! as a way to showcase some of the great companies out there who are creating imaginative work for families. We programme family theatre year-round, but the festival format is really accessible and attracts thousands of people who would not think of themselves as 'theatre goers'.

As a free to enter festival there are challenges in data collection, but since launching bOing!, audiences to our family programme have doubled, and we see bOing! as a vital profile raiser regionally, nationally and within the industry internationally.

Funded by Arts Council England, University of Kent and Kent County Council, bOing! aims to present international work of the highest quality alongside the best UK companies and artists. The festival has engaged families with artists from Finland, Spain, France, Norway, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Austria and the UK.

We include work not only created for young audiences but work that is engaging for all such as Willi Dorner's (Austria) *fitting* in 2015. The same year, in partnership with Conflux in Glasgow, we commissioned a large scale outdoor show with Motionhouse — *Fragile*.

bOing! has had a direct impact on the creation of work for families. In 2016 we commissioned Jasmin Vardimon to create her first show — *Pinocchio* — for younger audiences prior to a national tour

and an international tour planned for 2017/18. *Pinocchio* sparked a debate about what we show to children and who decides age suitability. We aim to further develop bOing! as a space for international debate, for professional practitioners to share and discuss issues.

Each year, we programme elements of bOing! offsite, reaching thousands of people and promoting the main festival content to new audiences. We deliver targeted lead-in activity with local partners, using bOing! to promote arts across Kent to new and diverse audiences. Last year this included a *Home* project in partnership with a local museum responding to local and global issues around displacement. A photography project also took place with Kent Refugee Action Network giving young refugees the opportunity to share their impressions of Kent.

Engaging with the local community and offering young people opportunities through the festival is key to our ambitions. Our pioneering youth leadership project, ART31, gives young people a central role in planning, promoting and delivering key elements of the festival. Young people programme, manage and perform on their own stage at bOing!

Hedley Swain, Area Director South East, Arts Council England said: "Led by Gulbenkian, which is run by the University of Kent, bOing! has an important role in establishing Canterbury — and more widely

Kent — as a cultural destination that attracts some of the world's leading artists."

Professor Siri Dybwik, Artistic Director, Dybwikdansen (Norway) said: "Compared with a lot of other festivals in Norway and Europe we find bOing! very special. The artistic programme is of high quality, the hospitality is great. The most important observation we did under our visit, was about how the festival managed to create a total experience for the whole family. Our producer became so inspired after this visit that she has applied for funding in Norway to make something similar happen in Stavanger."

Audiences love bOing! too. "Brilliant performances and selection of events for families and adults, bOing! is unbelievably great" was a comment from last year, but we know that this is shared widely.

Audiences appreciate the fact that bOing! is free to enter and has lots of free content, making it very accessible. It also means that families plan to spend the day with us combining a couple of ticketed shows with time outside, picnicking, playing and catching the free performances. It is a lovely atmosphere that many families comment on.

From a marketing perspective, bOing! is packed with potential. There is plenty to excite the press, and to build campaigns around, and for a venue used to promoting →



Image courtesy of bOing! International Family Festival. The Dancing Diggers of Motion House's Fragile in 2015. © Manu Palomeque.



Left: *The Princess and the Pea* by Dybwikdans (Norway) in 2016. Right: *Phone Box* by Corey Baker Dance in 2016 © Manu Palomeque. Images courtesy of bOing! International Family Festival.

→ individual shows, it's refreshing for us to be able to promote a festival and grow the 'brand of bOing!'. Even so, it takes time to get a new festival onto people's radars and we have seen audiences grow from 2,500 in 2014, to 6,000 in 2015 and 11,000 last year.

There are some key marketing lessons we have learned along the way.

Different marketing content works for different audiences. While some of our audience are attracted to the beautiful performance imagery in our festival guide, there is also the need for a flyer, which focuses more on images of sunshine, outdoors, and festival crowds having fun. We tested this in 2015 with a series of Facebook adverts in which the little boy with a bOing! balloon outperformed all the acts, including the Dancing Diggers.

Taking the festival off campus works. Last year we took Protein's *(In)visible Dancing* into Canterbury city centre for a week of flashmob-style dances along the high street. This was seen by over 3,500 people — a brilliant marketing opportunity in addition to being an amazing cultural event for the city in itself.

People share the strangest things. In 2015 we had a focus on digital promotion of bOing! and joined the AMA's Digital Marketing Academy. Working with mentor Ron Evans, we launched bOing!'s own website — boingfestival.com, and trailed a range of tactics across social media.

Bears With Brochures was a surprise hit, we had performers choosing their favourite superpowers, and we put in place a dedicated member of staff to run social media across the festival itself (essential). We also found that Facebook adverts work for family audiences.

Running social media channels for the festival does lead to extra work, but it allows bOing! to have its own voice, separate to Gulbenkian, helping us not to flood our own channels with bOing! focused material — annoying our non-family audiences.

Our relationship with the press has been key. We have a great media partnership with a regional news group that spans print, radio and digital platforms, and we get valuable coverage from BBC South East.

We need to talk about data. We attract thousands of new families to bOing!, but given the open nature of the site we have had limited success in collecting data on who they are. bOing! forms only part of our family offer through the year, and we need to work harder to get our bOing! visitors to come back to us. For that reason a key focus in 2017 is to find new ways to entice bOing! visitors to leave their details with us and stay in touch. (All suggestions from JAM readers welcome).

Given the great audiences at bOing! 2016 the pressure is on for 2017, but we are excited and confident that we can grow our new family arts festival even further. ♡

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Key takeaways

- Different marketing content works for different audiences.
- Taking the festival off campus with flashmob-style events works.
- Advertising on Facebook works for family audiences.
- Running separate social media channels for bOing! gives the festival its own voice separate to Gulbenkian.
- A good relationship with the press is key.

Sadler's Wells at Latitude

Since 2008, Sadler's Wells has been headlining the Waterfront stage at Latitude festival. AMA member **Lucy White** explains how taking contemporary dance out of the theatre and direct to festival goers has helped grow new audiences.

Set in the heart of Suffolk, Festival Republic's Latitude festival, which started in 2006, is renowned for combining a main stage line-up of exciting music with an eclectic array of additional stages presenting everything from poetry to puppetry, comedy to cabaret and even contemporary dance.

We are always looking for new ways to demystify dance by challenging expectations and taking dance to unexpected environments.

Conjure up an image in your head of the average festival goer and you'll be forgiven for thinking that they might not be the prime target audience for a contemporary dance theatre based miles away in Angel, central London. Latitude audiences tend to come mainly from outside London, so why did we get involved? As the largest dedicated venue for dance in the UK, Sadler's Wells is strongly committed to growing dance audiences in the regions and beyond, and we have been touring our own productions in the UK and abroad since 2007.

We are always looking for new ways to demystify dance by challenging expectations and taking dance to unexpected environments. The Waterfront stage is an open, accessible space positioned on a lake and visible from multiple vantage points. When the sun is shining and the music is turned up loud, it attracts large audiences, many on their way to another stage, and the setting makes it a beautiful, unique experience. Those people who thought 'dance isn't for them' have their prejudices challenged, and often fall under the spell of the magic combination of dance in a stunning outdoor setting.

How do you programme a dance stage for audiences with potentially limited dance experience? The primary focus is work that doesn't require big production values, and whether it involves a simple duet or a large ensemble piece, the work ultimately has to embody the spirit of the

festival. We programme work that is dynamic, engaging, and will translate well to an open stage with simple technical facilities. As well as big name touring companies, it's been important for us to include in the mix choreographers, companies and performers they were unlikely to come across in their local theatres.

Our programming team work with Festival Republic to carefully select companies and artists who are presenting some of the most exciting dance at the time, which gives audiences a good snapshot of dance today in all its forms. This makes the programme very eclectic as we are able to present everything from salsa to street dance, flamenco to tango, ballet, b-boying and more. Over the last few years we've programmed BalletBoyz, Rambert, National Youth Dance Company, New Adventures, Vamos Cuba!, Boy Blue, Gauri Sharma Tripathi, ZooNation, English National Ballet and the finalists of the BBC Young Dancer competition among others. This broad range of styles means that audiences are exposed to performances they may never have thought to try and access before.



Sadler's Wells present BBC Young Dancer 2015 at Latitude Festival. Image courtesy of Latitude Festival © Carys Lavin.

For Sadler's Wells, getting our brand in front of an average audience of approximately 8,000 a year (that's 80,000 since we first presented work at the festival) is really important for us. To maximize our brand awareness we hand out fan-shaped flyers enabling spectators to cool down in the summer heat — and of course include a hashtag. We also generate social media content with a member of the marketing team on-site, who can photograph and film the events, and post live from the heart of the action.

As a brand building and audience development exercise, programming dance out of our traditional venues is a really important way for us to find future audiences and develop dance companies' profiles.

So what's next? This year will be our tenth Latitude festival and we are looking forward to presenting some really exciting companies again including Boy Blue, National Youth Dance Company, New Adventures, Sisters Grimm and the finalists of BBC Young Dancer. We will also be going back to Wilderness festival for the second time after a successful trial last year.

As a brand building and audience development exercise, programming dance out of our traditional venues is a really important way for us to find future audiences and develop dance companies' profiles. We know people are responding warmly to what we are doing, as we monitor the positive responses the dance performances get on social media from people live posting.

If you've only ever seen dance in a darkened theatre, we thoroughly recommend you get your wellies on and get out of the city to enjoy it in the open air, in a beautiful setting, with the sun going down, and a pint of cider in your hand. ♡

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Key takeaways

- Joining forces with Latitude has taken dance out of the theatre and brought it to new audiences.
- The festival has given Sadler's Wells an additional audience of 80,000 over the last 10 years.
- Live social media posting and fan-shaped flyers has maximised exposure at the festival.

AMA member reps

Over the past 11 years Member Reps have been assigned to share the ethos of the AMA and be the local contact in their region. AMA's Programme Producer **Bea Udeh** celebrates the work of Member Reps and reflects on the shape and future direction of the Member Rep scheme.

The most exciting element about my job at the AMA — is all of it. It's the liaising with the members, organising development events for them and sharing ideas across the different arts, cultural and heritage sectors. I have witnessed AMA members giving blood to the organisation with not a hint of apathy. This is a big deal that is reflected in the AMA Member Reps who are the conduits that pass the ethos, information and skills sharing from the AMA's humble operation in Cambridge to members on the ground across the various regions of the UK.

In December 2016, the AMA introduced the development of our 360° Diversity Strategy, a working plan to increase the ways that people across the whole of society engage with the arts. This was an appropriate time to look at the shape and direction of the Member Rep scheme. Our annual evaluation of the scheme points to having a variety of themes, topics and speakers at the Networking Meetings that the Member Reps organise. They also point to a need to address how the protected characteristics inform our thinking and activities when we're engaging with our members, our audiences and artists.

The privilege of being a Member Rep is embedded in a two-year role in which time they attend a Member Rep training day and receive either a free AMA membership or conference place. A Member Rep is then expected to pass on their baton to the next member who wishes to be an AMA 'vein' or anchor or tree root.

Yes, there is more work to do. We want to continue to help Member Reps widen their pool of contacts and venues, to engage with members and non-members beyond their network. My job is to help Member Reps eliminate that feeling of challenge when their role is applied in this way.

I am inspired by our members in cities and rural areas across UK's many regions and I want to share an appreciation of how we talk to a broader range of members. As we increase cross-cultural understanding, awareness of our intersectionality and appreciate different experiences then this should result in an increase in the access to members and the diversity of the types of members. ♡

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"I think what all of the Member Reps have achieved since the inception of the scheme just over a decade ago is brilliant. Their contribution to the AMA is invaluable and I'm excited to see how the work of the Member Reps continues to empower, widen and grow our membership."

Cath Hume
CEO
AMA



Esther Blaine
Eastern England



Karen Goddard
Eastern England



Sam Morton
London



Felix Mussell
London



Monique Baptiste-Brown
London



Sanjit Chudha
London



Ellie Puckering
North East



Anna Kelner
Yorkshire & Humberside



Afshan D'souza-Lodhi
North West



Lauren Davies
South East



Andy Sheppard
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Beckie Smith
South West



Suzanne Bull
South West



Helga Brandt
South West



Ray Clenshaw
West Midlands



Sairah Rehman
West Midlands



Tom Jeavons
East Midlands



Una Casement
Northern Ireland



Lucy Liddell
Northern Ireland



Rebecca Davis
East Scotland



Sarah Burry-Hayes
East Scotland



Catriona McQuiggan
West Scotland



Andrew Raffan
Northern Scotland



Jodi Bennett
South Wales



Siobhan Neil
South Wales

Marketing multi-location festivals

Running any festival is challenging, but coordinating a multi-location festival is even more complex. **Sarah Burry-Hayes** and **Rosie Clarke** discuss their respective experiences of working on the Festival of Museums and Museums at Night.

Sum up your festivals for us.

S: Festival of Museums runs in multiple museum venues across Scotland, offering a packed programme of activities over one weekend in May (this year 19–21 May). It encourages museums to stage exciting and unusual events while benefiting from national publicity under the festival banner.

R: The twice-yearly Museums at Night festival is an opportunity for all of the UK's cultural and heritage organisations to do something different and throw their doors open after hours to attract new audiences.

Both festivals' May dates coincide with *Nuit des Musées* across Europe and International Museums Day on 18 May, while Museums at Night returns at the end of October, coinciding with Halloween.

Who comes to your festivals?

S & R: The Festival of Museums mostly attracts families, while Museums at Night also has a lot of evening events that delight the 'Fun, Fashion and Friends' audience segment.

What's your role in the events?

R: We don't actually programme the events ourselves — that's completely up to the participating venues, though we share guidance to help them plan creative events that will attract their target audiences.

We don't have official themes for our festivals other than to give visitors the chance to do something different (although many October Museums at Night events are spooky, to coincide with Halloween.)

S: This year we're encouraging museums to be more financially sustainable in the ways they run their events, promoting sponsorship, ticket sales and other income generation to mainstream running events into their year-round activity.

Both festivals also offer help with copywriting; describing the events and venues so they sound more attractive to prospective visitors. Our overall role is to build brand recognition and raise the public's awareness of our festivals, running a national marketing, PR and social media campaign to drive people to the festival websites to find out what they can visit in their area. Although advertising is great for brand recognition, PR supports trust and engagement with local audiences.

How do you support participating organisations?

S: Each of our festivals involve a hugely diverse range of cultural and heritage organisations, large and small, some with existing marketing officers but others needing more support. We give them the tools to market and promote their events individually, raising event management and marketing skills across the sector while ensuring that each venue's event is promoted based on their own target audiences and budgets.

R: Museums at Night shares years of case studies, resources and training through workshops and one-on-one event marketing surgery sessions over the phone. Our most popular resource is our Big List of Event Ideas*, and we provide logos, poster and flyer templates as free downloads, which individual venues can customise to promote their events, giving a unified feel to the branding.

We don't know everything ourselves, but we help make connections — for instance, a mining museum was keen to take part but had never held an after-hours event before, so we connected them with another participating mining museum for informal mentorship.

How do you communicate with the museums?

S: Working with a large number of museums, many of whom are short-staffed or volunteer-run, can be a challenge. We use a multi-pronged approach, communicating with the sector primarily via email, social media, and sharing calls to action via umbrella bodies who also regularly communicate with these organisations.

Direct phone calls usually get the best response, but they're very time-consuming and we have tiny teams. The Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) team has two to four people who work on Festival of Museums year-round but not exclusively, while Culture24 has just one and a half people delivering Museums at Night.

Both your festivals are growing — how are you scaling up the support you provide?

R: We've installed live chat on the Museums at Night website to help us handle the volume of incoming enquiries and answer questions more quickly.

S: The Festival of Museums team has just done our first webinar on the subject of 'perfect PR', which reached →



Twilight at the Roman Baths in Bath. Image courtesy of Museums at Night © Bath & North East Somerset Council.

→ the same number of people that used to attend two of our physical training courses, all from the comfort of our own offices.

How important is social media?

R: It's really helpful both as a communication channel with participants and as a promotional tool. Twitter is great for answering questions and retweeting museums' own publicity, and tweets shared by happy visitors at events; Facebook helps us raise awareness of what's happening and target specific audience segments with boosted posts; and the Festival of Museums also uses Instagram to regram images from participating museums.

S: Social media also means we can be playful, using gifs and images to capture attention. Buffer's a godsend: we find a mix of programmed and live tweets work before the festival, but primarily rely on live tweets over the weekend.

What are your main challenges, and how do you overcome them?

R: Marketing scheduling is an issue: although we've shared all the Museums at Night festival dates up until 2019 to help venues plan, the sooner they register their event listings on our database the more publicity opportunities they get. We share listings data with other partners to maximise exposure opportunities, and run competitions in magazines and newsletters to raise awareness of the festival.

S: We use our campaign milestones to both generate activity from the press and public, but also as incentives for our museums to register their events. Festival of Museums generally hold a press launch photo opportunity at one participating venue, and regional photo calls as a hook for local press. If events aren't registered by our deadline, the organisers won't be considered as launch venues.

R: Both festivals find that getting great publicity photos can be a challenge — we recommend to every museum and gallery that when they're holding events, they take high-res photos showing visitors having a great time and getting involved in their activities which they can use for publicity in future. ✓

To find out more about festival events in your area, go to museumsatnight.org.uk and festivalofmuseums.co.uk.

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*<http://museumsatnight.org.uk/festival-resources/resources-and-downloads/successful-museums-at-night-event-ideas-big-list/>

Key takeaways

- Help participating venues to do their own local marketing and promotion.
- Create publicity resources that are available online or free to download, in response to demand.
- Plan how you'll handle rapid growth without getting overwhelmed.
- Collaborate with partners as much as possible.
- Use marketing deadlines as a carrot and stick.

A glimpse into AMA conference 2017

How do you inspire 600+ people in just eight minutes? **Jane Cordell**, Director at social enterprise Result CIC, is up for the challenge. Jane is one of five prominent thought leaders to feature in a quick-fire keynote at **AMA conference 2017 — The Value of Everything**. In this one-to-one she gives us the lowdown of her session.



Jane Cordell giving the Corporate Wisdom speech at Leeds Business School in January 2017. Images courtesy of Leeds University Business School © Anthony Glossop

Tell us your story in under 50 words.

I am a musician who became deaf as an adult, a coach and social entrepreneur. I chaired DaDaFest 2012-17. I campaign for greater equality and access because it makes society happier and healthier.

How does this year's AMA conference theme — The Value of Everything — speak to you?

I smiled at its allusion to Oscar Wilde's line for Lord Darlington defining a cynic: someone "who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing". This is partly because as a deaf professional I regularly feel that I am not given the opportunity to obtain the full value that the arts has to offer. I am intrigued by what this conference, at a time of ever great cuts to budgets, will make of this.

What are you most looking forward to about AMA conference 2017?

The opportunity to meet new people with varied experience and share ideas. When a group like this gets together, magical things can happen.

What are the key trends and ideas that you are thinking about at the moment?

- The rebirth of grassroots activism.
- The growth of the social enterprise sector.
- The alarming increase in UK inequality and poverty.
- The need for new ways to understand the bewildering new political order.
- The likelihood that real life experiences (not virtual) will become even more prized.

How will you decide what to share in just eight minutes?

- By considering:
- Who are you and what is likely to be on your minds?
 - Which new perspectives will excite and challenge you most?
 - What questions can help you open new ways of thinking?

What are the three key things delegates will take away from your session?

- New ways to look at people who are not (yet) your customers.
- The perspective of an arts 'insider-outsider'.
- Self-coaching as a way to keep exploring. ✓

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Evaluating festivals

Understanding the social and economic impact of a festival and its key areas of success and development is important to the planning of future festivals. AMA members **Helen Palmer** and **Vishalakshi Roy** describe the collaborative approach to the research and evaluation of the British Ceramics Biennial.

This year will see the fifth iteration of the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) in Stoke-on-Trent — a city often billed as the world capital of ceramics and the heart of The Potteries. Contrary to popular belief ceramics are still produced in the city, with approximately 10,000 people working in the local ceramics industry.

The festival was originally established in response to a call-out by the city for creative ways to contribute towards its regeneration plans. BCB celebrates the best of contemporary ceramics by emerging and established artists working with clay through exhibitions, artist commissions, artist residencies and hands-on activities. This year, as the city bids to win the designation of UK City of Culture 2021, we are expanding the reach of the festival working with over 100 artists across multiple traditional and non-traditional spaces and locations throughout the city. In addition to the biannual festival, BCB now creates and delivers a year-round programme of engagement with schoolchildren, teachers and community groups.

The voices of various stakeholders and their feedback through the evaluation process have been critical to inform the future planning of each festival.

The team at BCB is committed to using the festival to explore how clay can play a central role in the changing identity of the city — and how it can be interacted with to improve well-being, place-making and pride. With such ambitious objectives at heart, the team took a conscious decision to build in a simple yet effective evaluation mechanism right from the inception of the festival. Since 2009 the festival team has consistently worked with the same team of researchers to understand the social and economic impact of the festival and its key areas of success and development. Earthen Lamp, a specialist consultancy with a core strength in devising tailored evaluation frameworks for festivals and events, is the research partner for BCB and has worked with the team in devising and interpreting information to help the festival grow over the last eight years.

The festival overall thrives on a partnership approach: civic, education, arts and culture, community, museums and business. To generate demonstrable evidence that such an approach works, the bespoke research framework has included consultation with residents, visitors, participants, artists, makers, local businesses and funders. Having a consistent research partner agency and known faces has ensured both a level of objectivity to the process, and at the same time a sense of trust that these diverse voices will be heard. The voices of various stakeholders and their feedback through the evaluation process have been critical to inform the future planning of each festival. In addition, the extensive year-round programme of community and education work is also evaluated using the same ethos. This mix of formative and summative evaluation helps to shape the delivery of the programme year-on-year.

One of the misconceptions that BCB has to deal with is that some local stakeholders and local residents assume that the festival is just for visitors. What the evaluation shows is that the festival is attracting significant

numbers of local residents from across the six towns that make up the city, and nearby areas. It has always been important to BCB that local residents feel that the festival is for them as much as it is for visitors, and not just those with a historic or current connection to the ceramics industry. The evaluation shows that local residents' attendance is growing and in 2015 it achieved a fifty-fifty, local/non-local attendance.

A key benefit of having a consistent approach has been the ability to demonstrate the growing economic impact of the festival. This is incredibly valuable in making the case with funders, especially with the local authority at a time of increased pressure on limited resources. It's been surprising and rewarding for the team and local stakeholders to witness the positive change in perception of the city by both locals and visitors, as a direct result of their festival experience. This along with the social impacts generated by the programme of education and community projects continues to support fundraising, board development and the ongoing collaborative approach to partner relationships.

A crucial part of any festival's successful delivery is volunteers and BCB is no exception. While the city has limited volunteering schemes and opportunities, BCB attracts students, former ceramics industry workers and local residents to volunteer. They provide a vital service in ensuring a quality visitor welcome, invigilation, visitor information and navigation and providing the team with valuable on-the-ground feedback, both informally and formally through the evaluation programme. The BCB team has been overwhelmed by



Left: The Hub at British Ceramics Biennial 2015. Image courtesy of British Ceramics Biennial © Chris Pointon.



Right: Nao Matsunaga at British Ceramics Biennial 2015. Image courtesy of British Ceramics Biennial © Joel Chester Filides.

the positive feedback received from volunteers about their experiences, particularly relating to improving their personal health and wellbeing including self-confidence, learning new skills and contributing towards their pride in the city.

What would the team miss out on if it did not take this consistent approach to its evaluation activities? BCB would certainly not be able to show progression in more ways than simply quantitative measures; it would not be able to attract the funders, partners or visitors as effectively, and overall it would not have had the rate of growth it has enjoyed over the last eight years.

We take great pride in inviting you to the festival this year — launching on 23 September. Look out for the programme announcement in May, and while you are here, please do not forget to leave us some feedback. ♡

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Key takeaways

- Building a core research framework to assess the impact of the festival and areas of development at the start is invaluable to understand how the festival needs to grow.
- Impact on and perceptions of place is a crucial measure for festivals.
- Consistency is key to understanding how the festival is developing and highlighting the important areas for further development.
- You will never please everyone — there is always someone that will complain about signage, toilets and the food. Aim to ensure that your core target audience is happy.

Festival rebrand

Liverpool Arab Arts Festival (LAAF) is the UK's longest running and biggest annual celebration of Arab arts and culture. AMA member **Rachael Biggs** explains how the rebrand of LAAF has reinvigorated its identity to reflect both traditional and contemporary Arab culture, creating an accessible and engaging brand for all audiences.

Founded in 1998, Liverpool Arab Arts Festival (LAAF) is a registered charity delivering arts and community programmes that bring diverse cultures together; increasing appreciation and awareness of Arab culture and arts at a local, national and international level.

A year-round programme of events and community projects is built around the focal point for the year — LAAF's annual summer festival. Now in its sixteenth year, the festival brings a series of around 35 events to multiple venues, over a packed 10-day period, including over 140 UK and international artists and performers.

Background

Since the first festival in 2002, LAAF has made it part of its core business to be an inclusive festival and introduce both Arab and non-Arab UK audiences to the extraordinarily rich cultural heritage and expressions from the Arab world and its diaspora.

By 2015, the award-winning Liverpool Arab Arts Festival (LAAF) had established itself as an excellent model of how the celebration of Arab arts and culture challenges prejudice and fosters understanding between people.

But the festival's scope and ambition had also grown significantly in recent years. In order to build on past successes and respond to current and future challenges, the LAAF board and executive team recognised that Liverpool Arab Arts Festival needed to strengthen and reposition its status in the marketplace.

As the festival grew year-on-year, there were some interesting tensions emerging within LAAF's identity as both an organisation rooted in the community, but with an internationally significant impact. Expressing this dual identity successfully was a key driver for the repositioning of the LAAF brand, the challenge being to strengthen the hugely valuable and valued existing relationships with audiences, artists, funders and partners, while also attracting the new.

Another factor in the drive to strengthen and reposition the brand was the external environment. With news from Arab countries continuing to dominate media, understanding of the region and its people is invariably framed by images of war and conflict; yet, it is a region extraordinarily rich in music, dance, literature, film and other cultural expressions. The festival serves as a celebratory, joyous and inclusive event that welcomes everybody, and positively promotes Arab culture and people, while presenting challenging and thought-provoking work by contemporary artists responding to the circumstances they experience or observe.

Objectives

- Increase audience numbers, reflecting LAAF's ambition to ensure as many people as possible are engaged with Arab arts and culture.
- Increase a sustained positive image of Arab arts.
- Improve the perception of Arab people and culture within other communities in the UK.
- Increase brand awareness at a

local, national and international level.

- Create a brand that is engaging for multiple audiences, especially young people.
- Improve the dialogue between the festival and the different Arabic communities that exist both within Liverpool and further afield.

Target audience

Although we want to attract a broad range of audiences, we also have some very specific audience development targets. We aim to increase the number of women from Arab/Muslim ethnicity and faith, and to increase the number of audience members identifying as disabled — Deaf, and also the percentage of younger audience members.

Marketing audit, streamlining operations and removing silos

The LAAF board and executive team recognised the need to streamline strategic and operational marketing, PR and design activities. In order to achieve this LAAF commissioned Nonconform, who had previously provided some graphic design services, as a full-service marketing and PR provider — an extension of the in-house team, acting as an outsourced marketing department.

This meant that the small LAAF team were less burdened with the task of managing multiple relationships with various agencies and freelancers, each working within their own silos.

The advantage of this was that the campaign was creative and coherent, and pulled together key messages, strands and themes, to →



A performer entertains crowds with traditional Yemeni dancing during LAAF Big Sunday at Bluecoat — Liverpool's centre for contemporary arts. Image courtesy of Liverpool Arab Arts Festival © AB Photography.



Performer and audience member dance at LAAF Family Day, a long-standing highlight of Liverpool Arab Arts Festival, which brings up to 3,000 people to see international acts perform at Sefton Park Palm House. Image courtesy of Liverpool Arab Arts Festival © AB Photography.

→ tell a high impact story for LAAF 2015 and beyond.

Nonconform were tasked with performing a full marketing audit, and given the power to question and challenge previous decisions. We wanted to discover where there were opportunities to improve. The idea was that LAAF would not undertake any activities just because 'that is what we've always done'.

Brand redevelopment

We decided to retain the name of the festival, but we wanted to go for a completely new look. One of the first things we worked on was the visual identity. The challenge was to create a brand that reflected both the contemporary and traditional nature of the festival. We wanted to have something that you could look at and immediately know what the festival was all about. We also wanted it to reflect a new exciting era for the festival. We completed a brand overhaul, including corporate logo redesign. The logo was designed using the grid in arabesque geometric patterns. This grid was used as the basis for all the festival's collateral.

We also brought the artists and performers to the fore, rather than relying heavily on a graphic theme for all collateral. For example, we created 'performer led' ladder-style flyers and double sided posters, traditionally used for music festivals and gig venues, rather than a generic 'festival graphic' flyer.

Audience-led PR strategy

We developed a completely revamped PR strategy, designed around the audience development plan. Publications were targeted on the basis of the kinds of audiences they service, as much as for their potential reach, creating opportunities for in-depth artist profiles and interviews with members of the LAAF team. This resulted in unprecedented levels of coverage locally, nationally and internationally and extremely high quality.

Digital focus

We wanted a much stronger digital presence. We focused on

integrated press, social media and email campaigns, rather than on high print and distribution runs. Our aim was to create opportunities for partners to share information within their large networks, providing endorsement for the festival and its events. Rich content such as images, image galleries, articles and animations were used to enhance this engagement.

Brand alignment and unexpected partnerships

Part of the repositioning of the brand was about expanding collaborations with key partners and making bold collaborative programming decisions. For example, in 2016 we partnered with Liverpool International Music Festival, one of Europe's biggest free music festivals (attended by over 30,000 people over one weekend), programming our finale event on the same date and in the same venue (Liverpool's iconic Sefton Park), with the aim of both festivals engaging with each other's audiences and creating crossover brand opportunities.

Benefits

- We provide a platform for emerging new talent and create PR, marketing and press coverage that they wouldn't normally receive.
- Enable up-and-coming artists to build upon career opportunities.
- Increase positive news stories of Arab people reducing negative attitudes.
- Generate international coverage attracting some of the Arab community's most celebrated artists, which has also been instrumental in bringing communities together.
- Contribute to building a sense of belonging among Arab communities and generated unity with diverse ethnic groups.
- Enable young people and members of Arab communities to work through and overcome barriers to participation in the arts and increase their confidence in reaching outside their communities and cultural groups.

Results

The biggest result for us is that we have exceeded our targets for

audience growth year-on-year. We've also increased both the amount of press coverage and the quality of coverage on a local, national and international basis.

Key takeaways

- LAAF is all about working in partnership and collaboration.
- LAAF remains authentic to its roots, while growing and branching out further each year.
- Rigorous monitoring of social media platforms and having a senior management team ready to respond and advise ensures we can manage the unexpected.
- Audience data is central to LAAF increasing reach, maintaining existing audience and reaching those who are under-represented.

We've had many challenges along the way. Particularly about some perceptions of Arab culture that exist. But that just makes the festival even more important. It is both a challenge and an opportunity to make a genuine change. ♣

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The full version of this case study can be read on culturehive.co.uk

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*Madam Butterfly / Welsh National Opera / Image: Welsh National Opera

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