

Student Pack

Creation, Inspiration, Participation

This pack has been compiled to assist students studying Motionhouse's work, including those studying for GCSE, BTEC and A Level Dance and Performance Studies courses. It provides information on the structure of Motionhouse and on all of our current and previous theatre performances as well as our shorter festival pieces. Contained in this resource is information on:

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Motionhouse's latest theatre piece, *Scattered* featuring Laura Peña Nuñez, Philipp Stummer & Olivia Quayle

Our Values

Motionhouse champions equality and aims to create a culture that respects and values diversity

Motionhouse believes that dance is an innate and eloquent means of physical, spiritual and emotional human expression; and that every individual has the potential and the right to access and develop this expression in and for themselves. Driving the company's operation and programme of work are two key aims:

- ✈ To break the artistic and socio-cultural limitations currently defining dance
- ✦ To stimulate greater awareness, appreciation and involvement in dance.

The company addresses these aims through:

- ✚ Making original new dance works
- ✚ Teaching and training others
- ⚡ Learning and exploration
- ✈ Collaborating with other artists and organisations who share the company's vision.

The principles underpinning the company's operation and programme of work are:

- ✦ Respect for each individual's identity and personality
- ✚ The best use of resources
- ✚ The aspiration to be at the forefront of our field
- ⚡ A commitment to equal opportunities.

Motionhouse

A Brief History of Motionhouse



Louise Richards & Kevin Finnan | Motionhouse founders

Motionhouse was founded in 1988 by Kevin Finnan and Louise Richards (pictured) to realise their shared vision to create and perform work that explored the links between dance and visual/physical theatre. The company rapidly established a reputation for exploring new ground with its presentation of innovative and superbly crafted dance theatre productions and was soon credited for "doing much to jolt new dance out of familiar ruts of unaccountability and laziness" (*Dancing Times*, February 1993). Equally pioneering in its education work as in its performance programme, Motionhouse was the first model of a performing company in which the performers and choreographers also teach.

Through the creation and touring of original full-length theatre performances, shorter festival pieces and the development of ground-breaking site specific performance work, the undertaking of commissions for other companies, and the initiation and running of a comprehensive participatory programme, Motionhouse has consolidated its role as a leading force in British dance. Growing from the original two founder members to a performing core company of seven – eight performers, the company has shown parallel growth in the breadth of its touring, the calibre of its collaborators, its funding infrastructure and the extent of its market; touring throughout Europe and beyond.



A Curious Day | 1989 | Kevin Finnan & Louise Richards

Since its launch Motionhouse has toured eighteen full-length dance theatre productions as well as several outdoor festival pieces, built up a formidable educational programme for schools and colleges across the UK, trained dozens of dancers, pushed contemporary dance into the aerial arena by combining choreography with sling and bungee skills, and developed large-scale site-specific dance spectacles with increasing ambition.

"Delivering excellent education and participatory work has earned the company an enviable reputation... A buzz of ideas, a whirlwind of performance, a catch of imagination, a bait of the breath, a widening of the eye, Amazing!"

Dance Dynamic, March 2010



The Road to The Beach: The Edge | 2004 | Vanessa Cook & Junior Cunningham

Motionhouse

Motionhouse's Productions

Motionhouse has always been at the forefront of creativity and imagination; performing nationally and internationally at theatres and festivals, as well as performing in various public spaces and in one-time-only collaborative ventures on the large scale. Here is a brief listing of Motionhouse's productions and performances since the foundation of the company:

<i>Cascade</i>	2010-11	Created for festival touring in 2010, <i>Cascade</i> is set on a submerged house amidst rising waters, four dancers balance, slide and tumble their way upwards as they scramble to get ahead of the flood. <i>Cascade</i> was co-commissioned by Without Walls, mac and the University of Surrey.
<i>Scattered</i>	2009-11	<i>Scattered</i> premiered at Warwick Arts Centre on 2 October 2009. <i>Scattered</i> combines highly physical dance theatre and aerial imagery with film and graphics, examining the human relationship with water to astounding critical acclaim. <i>Scattered</i> was made in collaboration with Logela Multimedia, digital innovators from the Basque region of Spain, to create a unique visual performance. <i>Scattered</i> was commissioned by Warwick Arts Centre, in association with Playbox Theatre, Warwick.
<i>Run!</i>	2008	<i>Run!</i> was an incredible outdoor spectacle, which Kevin Finnan created for the Greenwich+Docklands International Festival. <i>Run!</i> looked at the relationship between sport and life – why we run, what we run to and from; love and fear. Performed through startling visual imagery, mass choreography, music, image projection and a hot air balloon.
<i>Underground</i>	2008-11	Motionhouse's festival performance <i>Underground</i> is performed extensively at festivals in the UK and Europe. <i>Underground</i> explores the modern realities of train travel, and won the Audience Prize at the MiramirO Festival in Ghent, Belgium in 2009. <i>Underground</i> was commissioned by Fierce Festival, Birmingham Hippodrome and Without Walls.
<i>Driven</i>	2007-08	<i>Driven</i> took the audience on a roller coaster journey of colliding social themes; love and loss, jealousy and desire, ambition, longing, socialising and isolation. <i>Driven</i> attracted over 10,000 people and received consistently excellent feedback. <i>Driven</i> was commissioned by Warwick Arts Centre, Corn Exchange and Wycombe Swan and is on the A level Performance Studies syllabus in England and Wales.
Critics Circle National Dance Awards	January 2006	Motionhouse's <i>Perfect</i> won the Audience Prize at the Critics Circle National Dance Awards in 2006.
<i>Chaser</i>	2005-11	The company's festival piece examining social interaction has been staged at outdoor platforms all over the international festival circuit. <i>Chaser</i> was created with the support of Lichfield Garrick, mac, Solihull Arts Complex and Birmingham Hippodrome.
<i>Perfect</i>	2005-06	The award-winning and critically acclaimed third in the trilogy (after <i>Fearless</i> and <i>Volatile</i>) was a daring, emotionally charged piece of dance theatre laced with breathtaking aerial and filmic images. Danced on a bed of sand, <i>Perfect</i> was about our relationship with time. <i>Perfect</i> received unanimously excellent reviews and won the Audience Award at the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards in 2006. <i>Perfect</i> has been

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on the GCSE Dance syllabus in England and Wales since 2009.

<i>Renaissance</i>	2005	With <i>Machine Dance</i> at its heart, <i>Renaissance</i> was an extraordinary dance spectacle performed on waste land in London's East End and featured cranes, pyrotechnics, unbelievable aerial work and Motionhouse's trademark physical dance imagery.
<i>Dreams and Ruin</i>	2005	A stunning promenade performance, <i>Dreams and Ruin</i> was staged at Witley Court in Worcestershire with 250 local performers and the Motionhouse team. <i>Dreams and Ruin</i> was developed in partnership with DanceFest, Worcester Arts Workshop, ACE Dance and Music and Angela Woodhouse.
<i>Road to the Beach: The Edge</i>	2004	A large scale production combining visual performance, giant sand castles, dancing diggers and extreme sports performed on the beach at Watergate Bay, Cornwall in June 2004 by Motionhouse together with 1,000 children and adults from local schools and the Cornish community. This landmark project was created in collaboration with The Works, Creative Partnerships Cornwall and The Extreme Academy. This production included the first incarnation of our acclaimed <i>Machine Dance</i> performed by four dancers and four JCB diggers.
<i>Dancing Inside</i>	2004	A ground breaking dance project designed and run by Motionhouse with nine residents of the country's first purpose-built therapeutic community at HMP Dovegate in Staffordshire. After twenty months of periodic engagement, the men and the company performed to the prison community.
<i>Volatile</i>	2002-03	<i>Volatile</i> explored the mystery and struggle involved in trying to communicate truthfully to someone else and took place on another gigantic steel set. Original music by Sophy Smith and Tim Dickinson, <i>Volatile</i> witnessed a triumphant return to London's South Bank.
<i>Fearless</i>	2001	<i>Fearless</i> explored our phobias – fear of falling and flying, of open or closed spaces and took place in, on and around a massive tubular steel framework by Simon Dormon. The piece opened Moving Parts 2001, Birmingham's Festival of Contemporary Dance and Physical Theatre and toured extensively thereafter.
<i>Atomic</i>	2000	A piece about tiny worlds and shared spaces which toured to over one hundred and thirty venues and spaces, both indoor and outside. <i>Atomic</i> marked a new era for the company as it heralded the realisation of the multi scale touring for which the company is still acclaimed.
<i>Twisted</i>	1999	<i>Twisted</i> explored the possibility of news that something has been released into the atmosphere – since it cannot be seen or smelt how do we know it's there?
<i>Faking It</i>	1998	<i>Faking It</i> was Motionhouse's tenth anniversary piece about power games and theatrical illusion.
<i>Delicate</i>	1996	<i>Delicate</i> plundered the dark underbelly of human need and desire with a script by A.L Kennedy and a score composed by Howard Skempton, played live by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.
<i>Geisha</i>	1995	<i>Geisha</i> was one of a series of commissions by Warwick Arts Centre in celebration of its 20 th anniversary, choreographed by Kevin Finnan and

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Louise Richards. *Geisha* was about role play and identity, and featured a giant fridge and chaise longue.

<i>Flying</i>	1994	<i>Flying</i> was performed on, in and around a giant steel set created by long term collaborator Simon Dormon and steel artist Davey Boyle. Flying portrayed a series of fairytale characters each trapped in their individual 'cages' and trying to escape in their dreams.
<i>Punch</i>	1994	Three men struggle on a totem of male imagery choreographed by Kevin Finnan and the company and featuring music by <i>Jesus Jones</i> , <i>Kronos Quartet</i> , <i>Curve</i> and <i>Sundial</i> .
<i>Arcadio / Déjà vu</i>	1993	<i>Arcadio</i> was inspired by <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> by Gabriel García Márquez and featured a set by Spanish installation artist Rosa Sanchez. <i>Deja Vu</i> was a one-off partner project – an installation created by Rosa Sanchez at Ikon, Birmingham with performance excerpts created by Motionhouse and inspired by the same source.
<i>The Curtsy Play</i>	1992	<i>The Curtsy Play</i> was inspired by a chapter from the book <i>The Female Malady</i> by Elaine Showalter describing the plight of the female psychiatric patients in Paris in the early twentieth century. The piece, choreographed by Louise Richards, was created with a Bonnie Bird British Choreography Award.
<i>Speed and Light</i>	1992	<i>Speed and Light</i> was an explosive dance theatre and film experience collaborating with filmmaker Christophe Gowans and composers Ray Lee and Harry Dawes.
<i>The House of Bones</i>	1991	After a study of victims of ancient and modern plague, <i>The House of Bones</i> examined our social attitudes towards disease. A mesmerising vocal score was provided by Paul Newham.
<i>The Ticking Man</i>	1990	<i>The Ticking Man</i> explored the mechanics of deception and the nature of truth and lies. The company's research took it to HMP Grendon Underwood near Aylesbury to work with staff and inmates. Simon Dormon created his first set for the company and music was composed by Harry Dawes and Ray Lee.
<i>A Curious Day</i>	1989	Motionhouse's first major project was also the Southern Arts Board's first dance and education project. <i>A Curious Day</i> toured initially to schools, before being invited to London and the Far East. The first of much collaboration with musicians Harry Dawes and Simon Prince.
The Founding of Motionhouse	1988	Motionhouse Dance Theatre was founded by Louise Richards and Kevin Finnan, May 1988.



Déjà Vu | 1993 | Kathy Crick & Louise Richards

Motionhouse

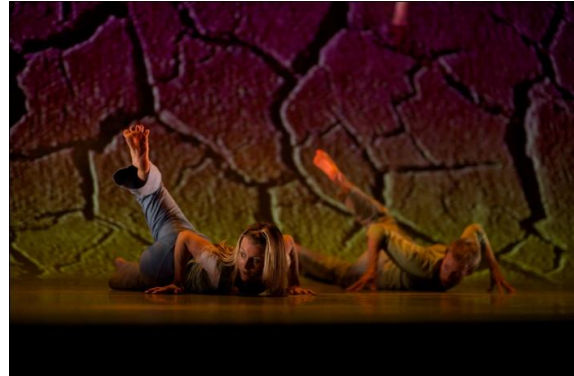
What We Do

A company of "memorable excellence." *The Stage*

Consistently producing critically acclaimed, physically and visually stunning dance theatre since 1988

Under the strong direction of Kevin Finnan and Louise Richards Motionhouse has acquired a considerable reputation for innovative collaboration with other artists, conceptual boldness, artistic rigour and the high calibre of its performance work.

Over the years our performance work has become recognised and acclaimed for its trademark highly physical dance theatre and mesmerizing imagery. This recognition has grown internationally, with our summer festival touring travelling to more and more countries each year; and our theatre piece *Scattered* touring throughout the UK and as far afield as Romania and China.



Scattered | 2009 | Olivia Quayle & Alasdair Stewart

In addition to extensive touring, we are constantly experimenting with the performance environment and presenting dance in unusual contexts, creating work for parks, beaches, shopping centres, car parks and stately homes alongside more traditional venues. Our unwavering commitment to creating work that appeals to all sorts of people has resulted in a loyal and consistently growing following.

Touring

Some frequently asked touring questions...

How long do you tour for?

We generally tour each theatre production for around a year and a half; whereas we don't tend to set a time limit on our festival performances.

How much does a show cost to make?

Making the kind of shows that we make which feature large sets and have a strong visual element including, in the case of *Scattered*, film, is very expensive. Not including the dancers' wages, *Scattered* cost Motionhouse over £121,000 to create. We then have to hire warehouse space to create and rehearse, pay our dancers, director and production manager for that period, bring in extra technical help as and when we need it, buy or hire specialist equipment for the production and, of course, still pay our admin and management team, produce all marketing tools and pay general bills for the office and warehouse!

How do you get venues to programme you?

Motionhouse have built a solid reputation for producing exciting work that attracts large audiences. We try to send a DVD of the show to potential programmers and encourage them to come and see the show in another venue so that they can see the piece for themselves. We create a tour selling pack, which is visually exciting, has quotations from venue programmers and information about the production like marketing copy and technical information. We have been and still are proactive in building a relationship with venues; we keep venues on our mailing lists and telephone way in advance of the tour that we are selling. For instance, a spring tour will be sold the spring of the year before. We also try to make it as easy as possible for a venue to programme us offering full marketing support, meetings and all the information that they need straight away.

How do you get paid by venues?

Venues buy the show generally for one night and sometimes for two. They contract us to come in, set up, and perform bringing our whole set and touring equipment with us. The venue usually then

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takes responsibility for their own sales (taking all the profit or loss from ticket sales). Areas of responsibility are drawn up in the contract, for example how many technical staff will be provided and how much marketing the show will receive. The venue buys packages of educational work, residencies and satellite performances at the same time to assist in the development of their audiences.

How many people on average come to see a touring production?

The number of people coming to see a Motionhouse production is always increasing, so giving an average for our latest shows would be an inaccurate reflection of the company's work. 11,834 people have seen *Scattered* so far, and this is set to increase as the show continues to tour during 2011; performing again throughout the UK and moving on to perform in China and then in Romania. To put this in perspective, 10,862 people came to see *Driven*, 10,054 saw *Perfect* and 8,011 saw *Volatile*. This shows a constant and continuing growth in people coming to see Motionhouse's work.

Our festival performances and outdoor spectacles tend to attract more viewers due to the more 'open' nature of a festival. Between April 2008 and October 2010, Motionhouse's outdoor spectacles and festival shows were performed 269 times in nine countries throughout Europe, being seen by 94,607 people; an increase on 2005-08 of 372% (seen by 20,025 people).



Cascade at the Greenwich+Docklands International Festival | 2010
Wayne Parsons, Alastair Stewart,
Giorgio de Carolis & Laura Peña Nuñez



Underground at Tarrega | 2009
Olivia Quayle



Chaser at the National Theatre | 2008
Fernando Pasquini & Claire Benson



Run! | 2008 | Olivia Quayle

Organisational Structure

Motionhouse was co-founded by Kevin Finnan and Louise Richards in 1988. Kevin Finnan is Artistic Director and works with our seven/eight full-time dancers, associate dancers, collaborators and partners to create and tour new Motionhouse productions.

Louise Richards is Executive Director and she is responsible for all strategic and business management plus developing partnerships and producing all aspects of our programme including large-scale performance events.

Jo Valentine is Motionhouse's Programme Manager and her area of responsibility lies in booking tours, company activity, contracts and project planning with Louise.

Justine Watkins is Marketing Manager and deals with Motionhouse's marketing strategy; corporate sponsorship, print, press, media opportunities, images and venue marketing support.

Mary Kalunga-Eade is the company's Administrator and is the main contact for logistics including studio hire, classes and workshops as well as for people who wish to receive company information.

Liz Matthews is the Finance Officer and deals with all invoices, payments and other financial issues.

Motionhouse is a registered charity and has a Board of Directors who actively guide and support the company.

Funding | Income

We receive funding/income from different areas:

- 1) Arts Council funding
- 2) Local authority funding for educational activity & specific projects
- 3) Venues commission the creation of our productions
- 4) Venues and agencies buy the performances and residency work
- 5) Schools and other institutions buy education activity
- 6) Studio Hire
- 7) Merchandise sales
- 8) Sponsorship and fundraising where possible.

Artistic Vision

Artistic Statement



Dreams and Ruin | 2005
Vanessa Cook & Junior Cunningham

We create new work of outstanding quality that is accessible and in demand for middle scale theatre and festival performances both for national and international touring. We also create shorter dance pieces and large-scale dance spectacles and site-specific events.

Underpinning the work is a long standing and continuing intention to balance a commitment to artistic adventure with the company's desire to always be exciting, appealing and stimulating to the broadest audience. The company draws on myriad sources to develop its choreography, collaborates with other artists and art forms to enhance its artistic vocabulary and

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presents a vibrant education programme. Each of these elements contributes to the overall aim of realising a total performance experience with which the audience can engage at any level: from the strength of the visual imagery; through to the physicality, formal qualities and technical skill of the dancing; to the ideas, narratives and human concerns that inform and inspire the work.



Perfect | 2005
Junior Cunningham & Wendy Hesketh

Dancers

Motionhouse dancers tend to have had a professional training at a registered dance school although this does not mean that we only recruit people who have taken this route. Dancers normally become involved in the work through an advertised audition process. There is no particular tick list or format that we use when we look for dancers although Motionhouse dancers tend to have very individual personalities and strengths, have an exciting stage presence, are courageous and determined, are great people and are committed to Motionhouse's work.

Our dancers are employed for most of the year and not only perform in a busy theatre tour but also tour our work to festivals in the UK and abroad; as well as delivering a range of participatory work including teaching and leading creative projects.

Audience Development

Motionhouse is committed to developing a diverse audience for our shows and activities. We do this by:

Increasing Exposure to Dance

Our festival performances are short sharp injections of dance designed to be performed in the public arena rather than in the confines of a theatre. In enormous demand on the European festival circuit, they are also used strategically as an opportunity to get a taste of our style and play a vital part in our audience development and outreach activity. We have taken our short festival pieces to shopping centres, leisure centres, schools, parks and outdoor festivals and have also used them both to promote our touring work and as the hub of a workshop residency.

We actively encourage venues to book education workshops as part of the workshop package and engage our dancers in a broad range of participatory activity throughout the year.

In addition to this, we frequently collaborate with other companies and organisations to provide one-off large scale performances designed to act as a spectacle. These are especially effective at attracting wide public attention and are crucial to completing Motionhouse's goal of making dance more exciting and more accessible.



Motionhouse aims to have a wide-ranging appeal to audiences.

Motionhouse

Appealing to a Broad Range of People

Motionhouse's work is appealing to both regular dance attendees and newcomers to dance. The work is visually driven and often features projections, film and visual references. The pieces portray clearly understandable situations that are relevant to everyday life and events; and are fast paced and exciting to watch. To mirror the accessibility of the productions we tend to describe the dance using language that tells people what it is about and what to expect if they come and see a Motionhouse production. We use descriptive, succinct and personal copy in flyers and try not to confuse people with unnecessary jargon.

Understanding our Audiences Better through Market Research

Over the years we have obtained a clear understanding of who makes up our audiences; how far they tend to travel to see our work, how old they are and other questions concerning their background. We have done this through carrying out audience questionnaires at performances and analysing the data. We then use this data to inform venues about the audiences that we bring with us when they book us and this in turn helps us plan our marketing campaigns by using methods tailored to our viewers.



Audiences are at the centre of all our work

There appears to be no real socio-demographic skew in the profile of a Motionhouse dance attendee, although research reveals that they are more likely to have completed, or be completing, tertiary (degree level) education and be arts literate. They do not, however, like flowery, over-superlative, or elite dance language within promotional copy.

Keeping Our Audiences in the Loop



We use different marketing tools to keep our audiences involved in our work and continue to encourage them to see our productions.

One of our primary methods of communication is via the internet – through our website and various social media; Motionhouse can be found on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr through which we keep constant contact with our fans. In addition to this, Motionhouse also has a blog that is updated constantly to give more in-depth information about the day-to-day events of the company. These tools are analysed regularly and used to inform our marketing strategy. Regular analysis of the website has revealed that:

- ✦ Between 01 April 2009 and 31 March 2010 the Motionhouse website had 38,065 unique visitors, which represents a 75% increase on 2008–2009's traffic (25,372)
- ✦ 31,970 of these visitors (84%) were first time visitors to the site, with 6,095 returning on more than one occasion (16%)
- ✦ Since installing Google Analytics to analyse the Motionhouse website's footfall (following developments to our digital marketing strategy), we found that between 01 April 2010 and 31 December 2010 the website has been accessed by viewers in 116 countries, with the site witnessing an increasing number of hits in countries following its festival performances and shows.
- ✦ Also since adding Google Analytics, we have found that Motionhouse has loyal fans, 7% of the total number of people visiting the Motionhouse website last year (since April 2010) have done so more than 201 times.
- ✦ Motionhouse currently has 525 followers on Twitter (as of 31 December 2010).
- ✦ Motionhouse's followers on Facebook total 1,214 71% are female (as of 31 December 2010)

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- ✦ Since launching the Motionhouse YouTube site in January 2009 the channel has witnessed 4,428 views and 39,172 uploads of the film (as of 31 December 2010)

We have a large contact database and regularly send out Motionhouse branded e-flyers and direct mails to both audiences and promoters, which are intended to maintain awareness about our work and provide information about all of our upcoming company activities from our teaching to our performances. In periods of less frequent activity between tours we also send out e-newsletters to keep our fans up-to-date and engaged with our work.

Furthermore, we continue to produce more traditional print-based material for venues and festivals to use when promoting our shows. These include posters, flyers and multilingual feedback forms which are handed out at theatres and festivals so that people can tell us how effective our performances are, as well as having the option to join our database in order to be kept up-to-date on all of our activities and learn more about our work.

Making sure that venues' Marketing Departments, Box Offices and Festival Promoters are Informed about us in order to Sell Our Shows Correctly

Motionhouse is recognised by venues and festivals as offering excellent marketing support. The venues' and festivals' marketing departments are normally responsible for developing their own audiences within their locality and ensuring that enough people attend to make Motionhouse shows



cost-effective. It makes their jobs so much easier if they know plenty of information about the show that they are receiving so that they know how to sell it effectively. Where possible, we provide all venues with DVDs of our shows to assist them in understanding the nature of our current productions. We offer marketing meetings with venues to present information about the production and discuss the venue's marketing campaign. We also provide a wealth of marketing materials, research, images, copy and imaginative print so that they are not stuck for ideas. Furthermore, we provide the venues with film clips appropriate to the show being performed which may be added to their website or displayed on plasma screens around the venue in the months prior to the show; as well as providing any bespoke e-marketing materials that the venues may require.



Postcard advertising *Scattered*
Laura Peña Nuñez & Alasdair Stewart

Before each show, we email all of our fans to tell them where we will be; as well as informing people through our website, Facebook, Twitter and blog to be sure that as many people as possible know about our performances and activities.

It's also our responsibility to ensure that Motionhouse's work appears in the press, whether they are in local newspapers, national reviews or dance magazines so that industry professionals can get an impression of the work of our company.

We email various media outlets and distribute press releases to make sure that national and local press close to the venues that we tour to are made aware of what we do. It is important to

build a good relationship with arts editors in national and local press so that shows are previewed and reviewed. It is important to think about what editors want to hear about the company and who they are writing for.

Creation, Inspiration, Participation