

Now and Then

An Evaluation Report



1 A Summary

Now and Then was a partnership project between Collective Encounters, a professional arts organisation specialising in theatre for social change and PSS, a dynamic social enterprise providing social and health care services. It aimed to:

use theatre to explore and platform the experiences of people with dementia and those who care for them.

It resulted in a 40-minute piece of forum theatre which told the story of one woman's journey through the stages of dementia and the experience of her daughter, who became her carer.

The piece was created and performed in 2010 by members of Collective Encounters' Third Age Theatre group and one carer. It reached over 400 people, playing at conferences, training sessions and health care events. 96% of audience members considered it to be a high quality piece of theatre, 81% said it helped them to understand the situation differently and 100% felt the subject matter was well handled.

Now and Then was recognised by health care professionals and professional trainers in the north west as offering an innovative dementia training model, which should be built upon. PSS plans to extend and develop its creative approach to training as a result.

The performance context enabled Collective Encounters to meet its core company objectives of reaching new audiences (73% of the audience either rarely or never attends the theatre) and contributing to positive social change: through informing discussions which fed into the development of Liverpool City Council's Carer's Strategy.

All stakeholders have recognised the project as containing several elements of good practice, particularly in relation to:

- **the partnership model**, which brought together two organisations with very different expertise and skill-sets but a shared ethos and value system
- **the research and development process**, which was extensive, shaped by both organisations and underpinned by Collective Encounters' Ethical Research Policy
- **the drama/devising process**, which integrated third age theatre participants (with no prior knowledge of dementia) with people in the early stages of dementia and their carers (with no prior experience of drama)
- **the production process**, which integrated professional artists and non-professional performers and carefully accommodated the needs of third-age actors

PSS and Collective Encounters hope to secure funding to extend and develop *Now and Then* in the future.

“An emotional and thought provoking show, which encourages you to think, and understand the challenges of the dementia journey”

audience member, *Now and Then*

This evaluation report has been written by Collective Encounters following evaluation with all stakeholders.

2 Context

Collective Encounters

Collective Encounters is a small professional arts organisation based in north Liverpool specialising in theatre for social change. Since 2005 our professional artists have been working with people of the third age, using drama as a tool to develop new skills, explore ideas and enable participants to create their own work that platforms their experiences and concerns. Our third age participants have been involved in several inter-generational projects, have performed locally, regionally and nationally and have made work tackling issues from the pensions crisis to regeneration; from the NHS to the economic meltdown; from stereotypes to ageism. Health related issues have arisen in several of their productions and a particular resonance has been found with audiences when the actors have explored the challenges facing older people dealing with health care professionals.

PSS

PSS is a dynamic social enterprise providing community social and health care services across England, central Scotland and North Wales. PSS is a regional leader in addressing issues related to dementia, winning two national awards for dementia training and services in 2009. The work is continuing to meet the growing and constant demand for services to support people with dementia and their carers within the community. It has made a valuable contribution to local care services and PSS is now included in consultations, responding to training opportunities and is frequently approached for consultancy and further information. PSS is interested in creative ways of working and Pam Stopforth (PSS's Dementia Development Coordinator) was interested in the possibility of using forum theatre as a training and awareness raising tool. Forum Theatre is an interactive theatre process where the audience have the opportunity to influence the outcome of the piece and explore a range of choices.



Margaret Marriette, Ann Gorton, Joan Pennington, Alma Brown: members of Collective Encounters' 3AT

The rationale behind the work

PSS approached Collective Encounters to explore this idea, and following a series of discussions a commission was agreed. An aim, objectives and outcomes were negotiated, which were discussed and further developed by Collective Encounters' Third Age Theatre group. It was agreed that Collective Encounters and PSS would work in partnership to deliver *Now and Then*, a project that would *use theatre to explore and platform the experiences of people with dementia and those who care for them*. Its aim was to produce a 40-minute piece of forum theatre which highlighted the experiences of people with dementia and their carers; to promote a greater understanding amongst health care professionals, people with dementia and a wider public.

Objectives and Outputs

The objectives of the project were:

- **Drama process:** to provide a high quality drama process for a mixed group of long-term and new participants; meeting the needs of both regular and occasional attendees; accommodating both those who's primary interest was drama and those who's primary interest was the chance to explore/articulate their experience of dementia or caring.
- **Theatrical product:** to produce a high-quality piece of new work, which experiments with forum theatre, engages the audience in the drama and honestly articulates the dementia experience.
- **Social Change (impact on individuals):** to affect the ways in which audiences think about people with dementia and their carers; to stimulate health care professionals to be open to the issues and responsive to training.
- **Social Change (wider impact):** to explore and identify ways through this project and partnership in which theatre might impact on policy and provision.

The outputs would include:

- **30 – 36 workshops** to be delivered to a core group of **10 participants**
- **1 x 40 minute performance** to be created based on the principles of forum theatre
- **10 x performances** to be given to audiences of health care professionals, people with dementia and their carers, and older people.

The timeframe for the project was to be:

Research and development (desk and workshop)	end Jan – mid April 2010
Devising/Scripting/rehearsal	mid April – end May 2010
Tour	end May/June 2010

The project was to be funded by PSS with some additional contribution from Collective Encounters' core funding.

Evaluation

An evaluation plan was drawn up to ensure that all stakeholders would be involved in measuring the success of the project; and Collective Encounters' quality indicators, which clearly define what the company understands by a high quality drama process and a high quality theatrical product, were employed.

3 The Project

Who was involved

At the heart of the project were 6 of Collective Encounters' Third Age Theatre (3AT) participants who have worked with the company for between three and six years, and have been instrumental in shaping the company's 3AT programme. These were: Alma Brown, Joan Davidson, Barbara Davies, Ann Gorton, Margaret Marriette, and Ann Roberts. The project was a significant step forward for them: until this point they had made work only about their own and their shared concerns, but had not made work on behalf of others.

17 new participants were involved in the workshop process: these were carers and people in the early stages of dementia with no prior drama experience. These new participants were recruited through PSS and Collective Encounters' extensive third age networks.

Professional support

The project was led, and the piece directed, by Abi Horsfield, who has worked with Collective Encounters' 3AT group for the past three years. Abi has delivered several research-led participatory drama projects for the company. Abi was supported by Sarah Thornton, Collective Encounters' Artistic Director. Sarah informed the shape of the project, gave dramaturgical support to the development of the script, and led the evaluation. Steve Denton, a professional theatre designer and Patrick Dineen, composer, completed the professional creative team.

Pam Stopforth and her team provided information, advice and support to ensure the company had a full and rounded understanding of dementia.



Members of Collective Encounters' Third Age Theatre group

The research process

The Research and Development process was extensive. Twice weekly workshops were held four months with the 24 participants to gather stories and experiences from those with dementia and those who care for them. Abi attended several dementia support group meetings as well as PSS dementia training sessions, conferences and advocacy events. Abi also undertook desk research to ensure she was familiar with current policy, provision and problems. This information was fed back to the group and explored through the workshop process.

Developing the piece

R&D workshops moved smoothly into devising. Stories and factual material gathered through the research were used as a springboard for devising and improvisation. Composite characters, that incorporated many peoples' experience into one fictional character, were created; storylines were explored and gradually a script took shape. A 40 minute piece could never hope to reflect the many experiences or the diversity of the research, but the devising group sought to identify and represent the most common experiences.

**The strongest voice to have come out of the process was that of the
(often unheard) carers, and there was a real sense of urgency
to have those stories told.**

It was also important to chart the dementia journey, and again, although this can take many forms, much common ground and common experience had emerged.

The final piece grew out of scenes, which were set up and improvised by participants then draft-scripted. It revolved around one woman's journey through dementia, from onset to quite an advanced state; and the experience of her daughter, who became her carer. Abi and Sarah honed the dialogue and structure; then the script was brought back into the group for the actors to re-work as required.

The performances

10 performances of *Now and Then* were given: 7 of which were performed as a starting point for training sessions for students and/or health care professionals. One was a public performance at the National Pensioners Convention. The remaining two were at conferences: PSS's Carers' Conference and a Liverpool City Council's Health Care conference. The tour was organised by PSS who were ensured the piece reached the people they particularly wanted to benefit from it.

402 people saw the show, and 250 of them completed audience feedback forms. From this we know that 73% of the audience rarely or never go to the theatre, and 99% had never seen Collective Encounters' work before.

4 Project Outcomes

The participants

None of the 3AT participants had experience of dementia prior to this project and they were concerned about if and how they could represent the truth of the situation: they felt tremendous pressure not to misrepresent people who were not able to speak on their own behalf. As they progressed through the workshops, however, and they met more people, heard more stories and came to understand the situation more fully their confidence increased. They felt that the research and collaborative workshops helped them to find their way; and that research across the sectors (with people from all aspects of the dementia journey) was important.

They had also been concerned that they found the subject matter very depressing at first, but many of the carers helped them to find humour in situations and this helped to inform their understanding, and later the piece of theatre. The 3AT participants felt that the most important aspect of the research and development was having a mixed group in the devising process. While only one non 3AT participant ended up performing in the final piece (due to time commitments and other restraints) her presence was very important for the 3AT performers; and she felt that talking about her situation with the group had not only helped inform the research but had also helped her:

“its made me feel quite empowered, and I enjoyed it.” (Gill)

Like Gill, others who came to the workshops felt able to share their experiences. There was a real sense of mutual respect and understanding: the 3AT participants had no experience of dementia and most of the other participants had no experience of drama/devising/performance, which led to everyone feeling like an expert in their field. Participants were remarkably open and were able to step outside their comfort zones. For many of the carers this was the first opportunity they had had to talk openly about their experiences, and for many it was quite an emotional experience. Opportunities for follow on-support were highlighted to all participants.



Joan, Ann and Gill O'Rourke performing in *Now and Then*

The participants involved in evaluating the process all felt that they had experienced a high quality drama process in line with Collective Encounters' quality indicators

This process ensured a strong sense of ownership of the final product, not only by the performers, but also by other group members, who were reluctant or unable to commit to the performance schedule, but had been instrumental in the research and development processes. Participants were happy with the dramaturgical input feeling that it strengthened their own work without diluting their ownership.

The choice was made to have two casts performing the same piece, so that actor/participants didn't have to commit to the whole performance run.

There was some anxiety about the time for rehearsal, which decreased due to a slightly extended workshop period and slightly earlier than planned first performance date. This made the first performance very nerve wracking for the group; and a recommendation is to have a longer rehearsal period for future work. In retrospect, however, participants did feel that their confidence in their ability to create a piece in such a short space of time had significantly increased; and that their general confidence in relation to devising and improvisation had increased. The actors enjoyed having a professional composer and designer work with them on the piece, and this was highlighted as a point of good practice by Abi.

The new experience of representing other people's voices and the weight of the subject matter took its toll on the actors. Several of the group members found the performance process more stressful than usual; and the actors felt exhausted after each show (especially the actors performing the caring role): this, they said, made them realise how exhausting the real experience of caring must be. They felt they carried a huge responsibility to 'get it right'; but as the run progressed and they had overwhelmingly positive feedback from audiences their confidence grew and they felt less anxious. The group echoed Barbara's sentiment that:

"it was the most important and the hardest thing I've ever done."

Gill, the only actual carer to perform and the only non-third-ager, had been very wary about it but thoroughly enjoyed both the devising and performing processes, saying that the experience had "far exceeded expectations".

The group felt that their technical acting skills had improved and that they'd created a carefully drawn, powerful piece of theatre. They were proud of the subtlety; of the comic moments which lifted the serious subject matter, and the characters; feeling that it "got the best out of us". They felt that they had achieved a high quality piece of work in keeping with Collective Encounters' quality indicators

Audiences

The overwhelmingly positive response of actors and stakeholders to *Now and Then* was borne out by feedback from audience members. Through the audience feedback forms, 92% of people said that they had enjoyed show *very much*, 86% were *very engaged* by it and 96% considered it

to be of a *high quality*. Words like “brilliant”, “unique”, “excellent”, “emotional”, “mind blowing”, “entertaining”, “moving”, “powerful” and “thought provoking” were frequently used in audience feedback, with many comments about the quality of the performances and the “innovative” nature of the piece and the experience. Many people commented that it was an engaging way to learn: “much more relevant than seeing the information on power point”; and people enjoyed “the end, where everyone discussed the play”. Some were surprised by “how theatre really helps understanding”, and liked the theatricality of the piece. Many commented on enjoying the song, *The Dementia Carers’ Blues*, for instance, although a few felt that it made the piece “less true to life”.

Many of the respondents commented on how “accurate” and “truthful” the piece was. 97% of audience members thought the subject matter was handled either *well or very well* and 98% *sympathised* with the characters. “The subject was handled sensitively and was true to life”;

“the performance clearly demonstrated sound research and had gathered material from people who experience or care for people with dementia”

“as a carer I felt that many issues raised were very accurate”. There were a handful of respondents, however, who raised concern about some aspects of the portrayal of the person with dementia: feeling that the piece “painted a negative experience of people with dementia” and/or that a line by the carer/daughter that her mother had become “a stranger” was inaccurate and gave a negative perception. It’s worth mentioning, however, that another audience member fed back that this was a particularly perceptive line.

There was agreement that the piece raised important issues: particularly in relation to the carers experience, the experience that many carers/people in the early stages of dementia have with their GPs and of the stages of the dementia journey. One audience member summed up many of the responses by saying that it was “challenging and thought provoking, a show that gets to heart of the issues surrounding dementia and demands we look at our own attitudes”. Others commented that: “it made me realize how frustrating it is for carers/family members when they are initially trying to get diagnosis and feel isolated”; “It highlighted how vulnerable people are”; “I didn’t realise the difficulties that the carers were experiencing”;

“I really was unaware there were so little facilities for dementia patients and carers, although I have previously worked as a support worker”.

Some audience members would have liked the piece to focus more on the person with dementia, than on the carer’s experience; but others felt that the choice was right: “this show reminded me of how hard it is for carers because it is easy to forget in my profession”; “It helped me to understand how dementia has an effect on relatives”. And carers were very pleased to see their experiences reflected back: it “made me realise we are not on our own”; “it was raw for me but I loved it”; “it was nice to see you were in the same boat as the characters and could identify with them”; “it made me realise I wasn’t the only one going through it”;

“the feeling of guilt I carried with me has gone a little thanks x”.

While some audience members felt it reinforced what they already knew, 81% of audience members who completed feedback sheets said it helped them to *understand something differently* and 82% of people said it made them *think or feel differently*. “It gave a brief but important insight into the condition”. Since many of the audience were existing or trainee health care professionals this is a particularly important finding and reinforces PSS’s concern that both dementia and the plight of unpaid carers is little understood.

Other positive feedback was that the piece was accessible: “it was put in a way that was easy to understand and to empathise with”; and that the context had been important. While there were not great sight lines in all venues, most people who mentioned the space spoke positively of it:

“the venue created more intimate engagement and involvement and inclusion”.

90% of audience members who were watching the piece as part of a training session said it helped them in the subsequent training session, by giving “a greater understanding”; setting “out an understanding of what would be discussed throughout the session”; “it broke the ice and opened up interaction”; and

“it helped me see someone else’s point of view”.

Some people planned concrete actions as a result of seeing the piece: it “made me think how I need to change my practice to have a better understanding”; “it made me feel I need to read further and look more deeply at the subject”; “to pay more attention to the carers and to spend more time with the patient”; “to remember to treat the person and not the disease”;

“it reinforced that we need to work in a more family centered way”

and “influenced how I am thinking about training needed by all involved”. One person said that the piece had made her want to undertake a dementia placement and another said she “found it very emotional and I am going to speak with Wingate Medical Centre as we have many patients suffering with dementia so we need to research and promote available facilities in Knowsely”.

Two months after the performance Collective Encounters staff called back 51 audience members who had given their permission and contact details. 100% of respondents remembered the show and 96% of them on reflection considered it to have been high quality; they were all able to recall specific moments in the piece that had been meaningful to them or had had an impact on them.

The Partners

PSS

PSS were very pleased with the project, considering that it had “exceeded expectations” (Pam Stopforth). They were pleased that a high quality product had been produced, that found the right balance between theatrical invention and ‘low tech’ accessibility. PSS considered that the

“simple set and un-intrusive, but high quality, music hit just the right note” to support the piece in the settings in which it was played (Pam); that the balance between comedy and seriousness was gauged correctly, and they were pleased that

“the response we’ve had far exceeded our expectations” (Pam)

PSS had very positive feedback from diverse stakeholder groups: “the Carers Day was absolutely fantastic...the Carers really felt listened to and like it was really talking about their lives” (Pam); and in relation to training, one of their key contacts (Hugh Norman, who’s leading on Workforce Development for Dementia in the North West) told PSS “this is how we have to train people.” Pam felt that “the performance really enhanced the discussion” and feedback from audiences who saw the piece as part of their training told PSS that the piece has a measurable effect on the quality of the training that followed; and PSS trainers experienced increased understanding and receptivity from trainees.



Barbara Davies in *Now and Then*

Collective Encounters

Like PSS, Collective Encounters was very pleased with the project: with the opportunities it afforded existing participants and the professional artists, the opportunity it offered the company to work towards its social change objectives, and the way in which it enabled the company to reach new audiences. Collective Encounters was happy that it’s quality standards of both process and performance had been achieved.

Everyone involved felt that the post-show discussions had been very important; and feedback suggested that it had helped the students to learn in a different way. It was clear that the forum

theatre model was successful as a provocation to deeper understanding and exploration; with the actors suggesting that people who undertook interventions achieved 'some kind of release'. Although the piece was designed so that all the scenes could be 'forumed' in the event, the post show experience was often more focussed on discussion with few actual forum interventions. While these discussions were interesting and engaging, they were less dynamic than a forum experience and were very dependent on an experienced facilitator (Abi) managing the process. It seemed that the audiences felt more comfortable talking than getting on their feet, and possibly time was a factor: if longer had been allocated for post-show, pre-training the audiences may have become more comfortable with the forum idea. Collective Encounters is keen to explore if the theatrical model could have been more encouraging towards intervention should the project continue.

The experience of partnership working

All parties felt that the project had been a major success and it was considered to have been a very positive experience, with remarkably few problems. The shared ethos of the organisations which underpinned the partnership was considered to be very important, and enabled genuine collaboration where both partners were working towards the same goals and 'coming from the same place'.

Communication between organisations was, on the whole, good and enabled the project to run smoothly. In future PSS thought that they should have one nominated contact from their organisation rather than two, with clearly defined roles for other staff members. Occasionally there was some delay in Collective Encounters staff getting necessary information from PSS, because it is such a busy organisation, and possibly one point of contact could have helped this.

A major challenge for Collective Encounters was handing over responsibility for tour booking to PSS. The reasons for this were sound and the outcomes good: PSS were able to reach audiences that Collective Encounters would not have had access to, and ensure that the piece was embedded in relevant training programmes. PSS commissioned the work and knew who they wanted to reach and how. PSS, however, had no prior experience of tour booking, and the result was that the tour dates and venues weren't confirmed until quite late in the day, which caused some stress for the actor/participants. There was also a hiccup with a minibus not being booked (which would have been solved by one person in PSS being responsible for the project), which while it was a minor problem in an overall extremely successful project, did cause stress to participants.

The only other difficulty that arose in the partnership revolved around ownership. Collective Encounters was invited to perform *Now and Then* at an Arts and Health conference in Bolton as a model of good practice: it was a last minute opportunity, and one which Collective Encounters was confident would be very beneficial for the profile of the work and both organisations. Although Collective Encounters tried to discuss this with PSS they were unable to make contact before the deadline for agreeing to participate. PSS were very unhappy that Collective Encounters had gone ahead with the event without discussing it with them: PSS paid the bulk of costs of *Now and Then* and were unhappy with The University of Bolton getting the show for free. This raised the issue of ownership: Collective Encounters had never created work 'for'

another organisation before – the ownership of their work had always rested with the participants who had created it or, in the case of its professional work, with the organisation. Collective Encounters hadn't thought this through fully before agreeing to the performance. The problem was, however, fully discussed and resolved, and was a useful point of learning.

The partnership was a strong one and, both organisations hope, the beginning of a much longer term relationship.



Ann, Joan and Alma Brown in *Now and Then*

5 Conclusions

Meeting the objectives

To provide a high quality drama process for a mixed group of long-term and new participants

Collective Encounters quality indicators state that a high quality drama process should be: *inclusive, creative, challenging, empowering, responsive and developmental.*

In line with this, the **Now and Then** drama workshops were considered, by all stakeholders, to be of a high quality. It was considered to have integrated diverse participants very well and to have managed both on-going and 'drop-in' participants.

The piece was considered to be extremely well researched and to show a depth that arose out of a well developed drama process.

In future a little longer should be devoted to rehearsal once the script is in place, and this would give more confidence to the performers. Perhaps also an open dress rehearsal for an invited audience across the target spectrum would help.

To produce a high-quality piece of new work, which experiments with forum theatre, engages the audience in the drama and honestly articulates the dementia experience.

Collective Encounters quality indicators state that a high quality theatre product should be: *exciting, provocative, technically accomplished and important.*

With the support, and under the commission of, PSS Collective Encounters successfully produced a 40-minute piece of forum theatre which highlighted the experiences of people with dementia and their carers. It was considered by all stakeholders to be a high-quality piece of theatre that "exceeded expectations" and achieved its aim of promoting a greater understanding amongst audiences of health care professionals, and a wider public.

Collective Encounters is keen to experiment with how the form of the piece could more effectively engage the audience in the forum theatre process; and the partners have discussed how the piece could further develop dramatically to achieve this end, and also to enable an enhanced focus on the experience of the person with dementia, as well as the carer. These are not considered to be failings, but opportunities for further development.

To affect the ways in which audiences think about people with dementia and their carers

Its success in terms of social change is more difficult to assess. While 81% of audience members who completed audience feedback sheets immediately post performance said that the show had changed their understanding and 82% said it had made them think or feel differently. When we questioned people two months after the performance only 12% said that it had altered their understanding of the key issues but we did not gather sufficient data to enable us to understand whether this was because they had a strong understanding of the situation in the first place: this is a useful point of learning in terms of data gathering.

To stimulate health care professionals to be open to the issues and responsive to training

Both PSS, professional stakeholders and audience members in training sessions considered that the performance had significantly enhanced the training experience; enabling new insights, increased openness, and greater understanding. It was considered to offer an innovative model for quality training.

To explore and identify ways through this project and this partnership in which theatre might have the opportunity to impact on policy and provision

In the short term, several key policy makers and providers saw the piece and had an overwhelmingly positive response, feeding back to PSS that it had informed the way they were thinking about providing dementia training in the region. PSS believe that the performance at the Carers Day directly informed Liverpool City Council's Carers' Strategy, in that the performance opened participants up and helped them to focus their thinking about the issues before contributing to the strategy development.

It is planned to revive the show to perform to wider audiences, reaching policy makers and providers nationally; as well as to more extensive networks of health care professionals and carers.

Collective Encounters and PSS plan to continue working together to develop innovative models of creative engagement for people with dementia in care homes and in own-home settings, which will be developed locally and disseminated nationally; and to involve partners from Liverpool Hope University in research around these practices.



Lessons and recommendations

Plans to further develop *Now and Then*

PSS will try to secure funding to extend and further develop *Now and Then*. This would enable further creative development of the piece and an extension of its reach.

Creative development

- It was considered to have been important to include humour in the piece, and the right balance was struck between humour and serious content. There was a recognition, however, that while the carers in the audiences felt comfortable laughing at the humour, the professionals didn't. One idea for development was to write a big laugh into the opening sketch to give audiences the 'permission' to laugh.
- The forum model should be further explored to promote greater practical audience interaction
- A new scene will be created which will offer greater insight into the experience of the character with dementia and offer further exploration of her journey
- We will look at developing a sketch from 3 different perspectives (person with dementia, health care professional, carers) to allow exploration in more depth of one incident

Extending reach

- Extend the tour to reach more staff on ground-level; and include a major show-case performance to which we should invite policy makers, representatives of the 800 Group (7 charities working together) and other decision makers; as well as an open public performance for the actors and others to invite family and friends. This might include a performance at a dementia conference at Liverpool Hope in December 2010.
- PSS has filmed the piece and plans to edit a short clip for PSS/CE websites.
- PSS has also been approached by Dignity who would like an article about the show for their website.
- Collective Encounters will aim to place an article about the project in a relevant trade paper.

Learning to be embedded into future work

- Embed in the partnership agreement **clear channels of communications**, one named contact within each organisation and a timetable for communication updates (once a week or once a fortnight)
- Discuss and agree issues around **ownership** and include this in partnership agreement
- Greater collaboration on **tour booking**

PSS to increase their creative approach to work

- "The key learning from the project has been that we need to do more of this" (Pam): PSS expected it to have an impact but could not have anticipated the extent of the impact it has had, and are very keen to do more of it and keep finding innovative ways.
- PSS plans to budget for awareness raising through this kind of work.
- Keen to look at younger peoples' understanding of dementia - and how we explain dementia to our children and how to attract school leavers into the caring profession.

The work could extend to include adult protection work; and involve people across the 800 group with diverse needs.

- PSS and Collective Encounters will write a collaborative bid to Baring to support the development of the work over the next 3 years.

Collective Encounters to increase commissioned/partnership work

- This has been a very positive experience that has taught Collective Encounters the value of working in this collaborative way. Collective Encounters will actively seek new partnerships with non-arts organisations over the next 12 months.

Collective Encounters' commitment to rigorous evaluation

- The process of drawing up a detailed evaluation plan with varied evaluation methods targeted to capture diverse and useful data has been invaluable and is a process Collective Encounters will continue. In future though we will ensure that follow-up audience conversations are more detailed to enable the data gathered to be more useful.

The experience of participant actors

- Participant/actors value getting expenses to cover their costs, as in this project, is important
- Participant/actors don't want to receive any 'pay' (as it would interfere with their allowances) but enjoy treats such as theatre trips and occasional meals out
- Some participants would like accreditation and others don't want it, so we should offer flexible accreditation opportunities in future
- It's very important to build an open public performance into the tour schedule so participants family and friends can see their work.

Elements of Good Practice

- **The partnership model:** the synergy between organisations and shared ethos; and the creative, collaborative potential of a specialist arts organisation working with non-arts specialists
- **The workshop process,** which allowed people to come together from diverse backgrounds, and share real experiences and expertise and to participate at their own level
- **Extensive research,** which included meeting with and interviewing carers and people with dementia and participating in the PSS training before embarking on the project, ensuring that the piece was underpinned by a solid and ethical base
- Enabling the group to **share performing characters** so that energy could be conserved through a long tour
- Resourcing the piece with a **professional design/production team** which contributed to the high quality of the final product.

"This has been a great project. It's really changed the way we think about commissioned projects and partnership working. It's opened new doors and presented new challenges. We very much look forward to working with PSS in the future to develop new, creative models of practice."

Sarah Thornton (Collective Encounters)

6 Appendix One: Statistical Data

Total audience over 10 performances: 402 of whom 250 completed feedback forms. Maximum Respondents 62%

	not at all	not very	somewhat	quite a bit	very good/very much	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
How much did you enjoy the show?	0	0	2	18	228	248
% of total respondents	0	0	1	7	92	
How engaged were you by the show?	0	0	4	32	213	249
% of total respondents	0	0	2	13	86	
How well did you think the subject matter was handled	0	0	7	34	205	246
% of total respondents	0	0	3	14	83	
How much did you sympathise with the characters	0	4	5	26	215	250
% of total respondents	0	2	2	10	86	
Did you think the show was high quality?	0	0	8	28	189	225
% of total respondents	0	0	4	12	84	
Did it help you to understand anything differently?	13	19	34	36	75	177
% of total respondents	7	11	19	20	42	
Did it make you feel or think differently?	16	17	42	43	57	175
% of total respondents	9	10	24	25	33	
Did seeing the show help you in the training session	1	5	16	21	53	96
% of total respondents	1	5	17	22	55	

	Never	1 – 2 times per year	3 - 6 times per year	7+ times per year +	TOTAL RESPOND.
How often do you go to the theatre in a year	68	105	41	23	237
% of total respondents	29	44	17	10	
	Never	1 – 2 times	3 - 6 times	7+ times	
How often have you seen CE before?	179	29	2	1	211
% of total respondents	85	14	1	0	

Two months after seeing the performance 51 people were called to discuss their experience of the show retrospectively. NB These people had all given their consent to the phone calls on audience feedback forms and supplied contact details for this purpose.

	Yes	No	TOTAL RESPOND.
Do you remember the show?	51	0	51
% of total respondents	100	0	
On consideration, do you think it was a high quality production?	49	2	51
% of total respondents	96	4	
Has your understanding of the dementia/the role of unpaid carers changed as a result of seeing the show?	6	45	51
	12	88	
Did seeing the show prompt any changes in your actions?	1	50	51
% of total respondents	2	98	

Appendix Two: Acknowledgements

Collective Encounters would like to thank all the participants, staff and stakeholders who have supported and enabled the successful realisation of this exciting project. In particular:

For PSS: Pam Stopforth, Carolyn Goble, Steve Murray

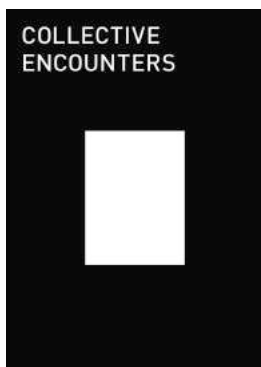
The Actors: Alma Brown, Joan Davidson, Barbara Davies, Ann Gorton, Margaret Marriette, Gill O'Rourke, Ann Roberts

For Collective Encounters: Abi Horsfield, Anna Jones, Annette Burghes

This evaluation has been written by Sarah Thornton, Artistic Director with Collective Encounters, and draws on evaluations conducted with participants, audiences, project partners and staff. Sarah would like to thank everyone who gave their valuable time and thoughts to this process.

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All the photographs in this report were taken by Pete Carr (www.petecarr.net), with the exception of the image on page 5, which was taken by Mark Loudon.



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