

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

Tangle absolutely gets it. They listen, they engage, they focus on the reality and they absolutely do everything in their power to make a lasting impact. Tangle for me is a community, a family and a movement!

Alexander Mushore, Tangle Company Manager, 2018

DOCTOR FAUSTUS was a 'smash hit'. There were full houses and audiences were diverse. It was great to have so many people from so many different backgrounds watching a 'classic' play at the Arcola. A really good thing!

Leyla Nazli, Executive Producer, Arcola Theatre



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www.tangletheatre.co.uk

TANGLE
**THEATRE
COMPANY**



Photograph courtesy of The Royal Academy of Arts, photographer Marcus Leith 2014

INTRODUCTION

from Tangle's Patron, Yinka Shonibare CBE (RA)

Tangle is an African and Caribbean theatre company with a special focus in South West England. Created in response to a national challenge – how to successfully promote African Caribbean work in remote areas and how to develop African Caribbean talent beyond the UK's main urban centres – we make international theatre that champions artistic excellence from across the Diaspora.

Inviting cross-community involvement across the board, Tangle's work is changing the landscape of theatre making. A bridge for engagement, the company builds understanding of different cultures within diverse, and often remote communities. In an increasingly challenging climate this work is becoming more important than ever. I am proud to be Patron of Tangle as they enter their 10th Anniversary Year.

Patron, Yinka Shonibare CBE (RA)



THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

Tangle's touring theatre productions are international in ambition, looking to influences from Africa, the Caribbean and Europe.

The work is created with a distinctive aesthetic. Combining Southern African township theatre approaches with some Western techniques, productions re-imagine classic texts, using multiple languages with freshly commissioned music and song. As actors perform as a tight ensemble, an incredible dynamism is established in the relationship between these performers and their audiences.

Tangle's work is flexible, designed to present in a vast range of settings – from traditional venues to schools and community centres, maximising engagement in remote areas. Productions are illuminated using only practical lighting sources, fully integrated into visually powerful set designs.



THEATRE PRODUCTIONS CONTINUED

WORKSHOP NEGATIVE (2016, Gate Theatre, Notting Hill, London) marked the English premiere for Zimbabwe's leading writer and activist Cont Mhlanga. Performed in multiple languages to ensure accessibility, this controversial production was presented in traditional collective theatre form, mixing dramatic dialogue with physical theatre, combat sequences, poetry and song.

Audience feedback:

Wow. It was not just a terrific play but the direction seemed faultless. So fast paced yet absolutely clear, and covering so many critical themes. It was absolutely gripping. All our party was amazed.

Powerful, fast paced, taut, vibrant, sombre, bleak, direct. A brilliant production – top rate acting and extraordinary, skilled fight scenes. Contemporary political theatre at its best.



DOCTOR FAUSTUS (2018, South West England and Arcola Theatre, London) was an African-influenced re-imagining of Marlowe's classic, performed by three actors in five languages, with the text linked by original music and song.

Audience feedback:

Masterfully acted and directed. The atmosphere was breath taking, engrossing and thrilling. Pure enchantment. To re-create Faustus with three actors requires outstanding performances and characterisation. A truly great acting achievement – well done!

I cannot actually describe how amazing this was. As an A Level English Lit student, I honestly thought your production was better than that of the RSC. The use of staging was fabulously mind blowing. Honestly incredible. Thank you.

WATER BREAD AND SALT (2018, touring South West England) was a township theatre styled piece celebrating Nelson Mandela's centenary. A poetic reflection of Mandela's original writings, it was accompanied by specially arranged South African A capella songs.

Audience feedback:

Absolutely wonderful. Very emotional. Beautiful voices, brilliantly performed. Inspiring and so important to bring this to the rural villages of Worcestershire where people benefit so much from a greater awareness.

So many aspects brought into focus by such an economy of words. It was a privilege to see this production. What a fantastic performance. Voices were amazing – they should be at the Albert Hall. Better than the London shows I've seen recently.





NURTURING TALENT

Since founding Tangle has commissioned over 40 writers, visual artists and musicians, and supported the career development of more than 300 professional artists. By building their skills we are increasing the visibility of the sector and growing South West England's talent pool.

Our **Educator Training Programme**, delivered in partnership with Prime Theatre, gives emerging professionals the chance to train as practitioners. Participants then progress to deliver workshops in schools and communities throughout the year.

Our **Resident Artist Scheme** supports emerging directors, musicians, sound and lighting designers. Beneficiaries receive a cash bursary to develop skills in collaboration with our creative team.

Our **Tangle Company** touring project is a vital training ground for actors and singers to develop virtuoso skills. They learn to work as a tight ensemble, gaining valuable experience at an early career stage.

Tangle Café, our annual networking night, brings artists of all kinds together to meet, share ideas and experiences, and gain support.

Our **Artist Support Network** is a regular meeting point for those from across the live performance disciplines to discuss important issues, develop support strategies and collectively problem solve.



My time at Tangle has had kindness and professionalism throughout – it is such an open place and everyone embraced me, helping me grow in understanding and skills. Everyone got to learn in their own way to execute the best possible vision. Thank you!

Taoana Tsiki, Resident Director 2018

Working as an actor on my first tour, the personal development you helped me achieve during rehearsals were invaluable. I really feel like I've grown as an actor thanks to the nurturing spirit, consideration and compassion.

Hannah Sinclair Robinson, Tangle Company actor 2018

Thank you for the trust you showed on the project – my first professional job. You allowed us a space that was ego and status free. I've overcome so many things that have held me back for a very long time. There's so much I've learnt from Tangle that has enriched me as an actor.

Marshall Defender Nyanhete, Tangle Company actor 2018



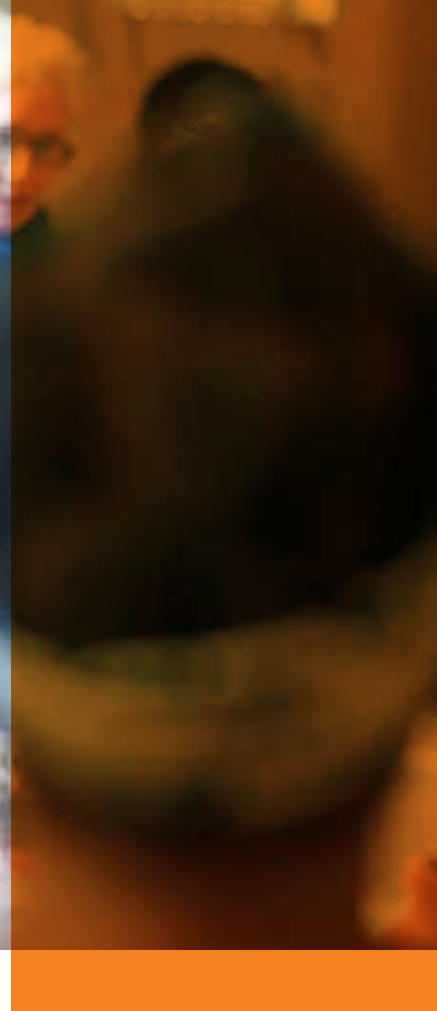
DEVELOPING THE SECTOR

Our 2013 investigative research project EVERYTHING MATTERS uncovered some of the blocks in nurturing African and Caribbean talent in South West England. The project launched a powerful network of organisations and galvanised a change in attitude. 2018 sees the launch of a new, four year project, EVERYONE COUNTS, exploring the barriers faced by emerging African and Caribbean theatre makers in off-stage roles. This aims to shift the landscape for good practice in participation and recruitment, delivering practical outcomes in collaboration with arts organisations nationally.

***Associate Sound and Lighting Designer Positions** offered to emerging professionals in 2019, paid posts attached to Tangle's next touring production*

***A Tangle Support Network**, delivered using Open Space technology, enabling artists to come together regularly to share problems and find solutions*

***A Tangle Artist Support Strategy** publicising our commitment to good recruitment practice*



EVERYTHING MATTERS really helped generate discussion, build partnerships and influence Tangle's direction of travel in parts of South West England where these conversations hadn't taken place before. The impact five years on is still strong and it's fantastic Tangle are continuing the journey with a new project.

Mark Helyar, Co-Director of Theatre, Take Art

Everyone Counts is exactly the ethos that Stage Sight supports. What is particularly brilliant about it is that Tangle are working with others in the sector (such as the Association of Lighting Designers) to ensure they maximise the opportunity to reach out to emerging sound and lighting designers and help create a renewed workforce in our industry.

Prema Mehta, Lighting Designer and founder, Stage Sight

As a young theatre artist, the plans for a support network are so exciting. Built on the Ubuntu value, so vital in our industry, Tangle is a safe space where we can engage and empower each other. It's a fantastic resource.

Munashe Chirisa, Tangle actor 2018



CONCLUSION

Tangle is considered to be a key asset in developing African and Caribbean creativity across South West England and beyond it. At the heart of our programme is a commitment to building skills, encouraging talent, and increasing employment prospects. The making of global theatre accessible to all, requires genuine artistic collaboration and meaningful cultural exchange. Consequently, all Tangle's work puts the artists and their audiences at the centre of the action, starting conversations, building relationships and delivering inspiring theatre that combines a range of global approaches and ideas.

Tangle has an aura of accessibility and generosity which has come about by artists committing whole heartedly to the vision and ideals of the company, rather than simply doing the bare minimum to earn our keep. People pick up on that. An honest approach such as this is the only way to engage the region's communities. It is immensely rewarding as a human being to see grand concepts which are based on awakening and nurturing positive attitudes across the colour bar come into fruition so triumphantly.

Msimisi Dlamini, Actor and workshop practitioner, 2017



OUR REACH ACROSS SOUTH WEST ENGLAND



Tangle's activities have also been delivered in Nottinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and London

It's testament to how expertly this version has been cut and considered that afterwards, it seems obvious that you'd only do Doctor Faustus with three performers. Why wouldn't you? That's all you need! There are moments that will be burned into my mind for a long time to come.

Exeunt magazine on DOCTOR FAUSTUS, 2018

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