

# Jonathan Chadwick

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**Jonathan Chadwick is a theatre director, writer and teacher who concentrates on the exploration of theatre and drama as tool of human communication. This search for means of expression and methods of work has taken him beyond the safe confines of both the established theatre and the fringe to work which has crossed borders and frontiers, and has been characterised by risky and radical departures.**

**He has also created and directed theatre and arts companies, and has worked in film and television. He has worked in the UK and internationally. Az Theatre, which he founded in 2004, is an expression of this investigative mission creating projects based on international and community partnership, elaborating programmes of productions and participatory drama which explore the theatre's capacity to participate in change.**

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## Theatre Director

Jonathan has participated in both mainstream and innovative theatre environments: directing classical plays in diverse venues, producing new work about contemporary issues for new audiences, and creating work for UK and international communities.

He started as an Assistant Director at the **Royal Court Theatre London** working on the season that produced *LEAR* by Edward Bond, *WEST OF SUEZ* by John Osborne and *THE CHANGING ROOM* by David Storey. He went on to direct at the **Northcott Theatre** (*MISS JULIE* by Strindberg, *THE LESSON* by Ionesco), **Glasgow Citizens Theatre** (*CORIOLANUS* by Shakespeare), **Watford Palace** (*THE TEMPEST* by Shakespeare) and directed the UK premiere of *THE MOTHER* by Bertold Brecht at **The Half Moon** and **The Roundhouse, London**.

He was involved in the radical theatre movement of the 70s and co-wrote (with John Hoyland) and directed for **Foco Novo** (*THE NINE DAYS AND SALTLEY GATES* and *TIGHTEN YOUR BELT*), **7:84** (*OUR LAND, OUR LIVES* by Steve Gooch), **Avon Touring** (*ERNIE BEVIN'S WORKERS' PLAYTIME* by David Illingworth) and **Grand Union Music Theatre Company** (*THE LIGHTNING AND THE RAINBOW* and *SONGLINES*).

In the early 80s he joined the **Theatre Royal Stratford East** as an Associate Director and directed world premieres by Rony Robinson (*SNAPSHOTS* and *ALL OUR LOVING*) as well as an award-winning production of Brecht's *CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE* with Deborah Findlay and Tom Wilkinson. He directed the Vanguard Company at the **Crucible Theatre Sheffield**, directing world premieres of plays by Karim Alrawi (*IN SELF DEFENCE*), David Sheasby (*POEM FOR WEDNESDAY*), Stephen Lowe (*STRIVE*) and Rony Robinson (*SEE YOU NEXT TUESDAY*). As a freelance he worked as the UK director on 42<sup>nd</sup> STREET at the

**Theatre Royal Drury Lane** and directed the UK premiere of Trish Johnstone's THE ART OF SELF DEFENCE.

He directed THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL and MACBETH for **Theatre Foundry** in the early 90s. At **Arts Threshold London** he directed Calderon's THE PHANTOM LADY, Weiss' THE INVESTIGATION and HEROINES, devised by the company.

His production of CUM VA PLACE (AS YOU LIKE IT) with the **Anton Pann Theatre** in Rimnicu Valcea Romania was his first work in a foreign language. For **Meeting Ground Theatre Company** he directed the epic music theatre piece TRANSPLANT by Jeremy Seabrook and Michael O'Neill with music by Douglas Finch. Again working with Finch, he directed the contemporary Bulgarian classic NIRVANA by Konstantin Iliev at the **Riverside Studios**.

With **Az Theatre** he produced and directed a season of short plays about war which included the Noh Classic, ATSUMORI by Zeami and the UK premiere of WOMAN IN WAR by the celebrated Iraqi writer/director Jawad Al Asadi.

In the following year, 2005, he worked on two major theatre initiatives with the **United Nations Office of Missing Persons and Forensics in Kosovo** directing THE LONGEST WINTER and VOICES, work produced for and with the families and communities of the missing. He directed the award-winning musical SARDINES for Islington Music Forum at **Sadler's Wells**, working with the community of mental health service users in North London. In 2007 he directed Hoshiar's poetic and graphic account of statelessness LIFE ON THE BORDERLINE for Az Theatre.

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## Director in actor training and teacher

His work in Drama Schools started at the **Royal Academy of Dramatic Art** working with writer Steve Gooch. He continued to work there on both the classical and contemporary repertoire. In the early 80s he began his long association with the **London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art** giving classes, presenting workshops on the Jacobean, Restoration and Shakespeare repertoire and directing contemporary classics (VICTORY by Howard Barker, TRANSLATIONS by Brian Friel, WHALE MUSIC by Anthony Minghella, LIVE LIKE PIGS by John Arden and many more). He returned to RADA to direct WAR AND PEACE (Piscator's version of Tolstoy's novel) and worked as a visiting director at other drama schools **Rose Bruford, Welsh College** and **Mountview**.

In the late 80s he was a Visiting Professor at **Rice University in Huston Texas** where he directed KING LEAR. With the **University College in Toronto, Canada**, as a contribution to the Festival *Brecht:30 Years After*, he directed DRUMS IN THE NIGHT by Brecht in collaboration with the translator and dramaturg, John Willett. He directed THE BACCHAE at the **Flinders University of South Australia** in a visit there supported by the British Council.

In the 90s he was director of the Post Graduate Acting and Musical Theatre course at **Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts**. With Robert Macdonald and the **Actors Centre London** he has developed a short course for professional actors

called **THE INNER SPACE** which brings together the study of yoga meditation, the Alexander Technique and the work of Zeami, the founding genius of Noh Theatre. He currently runs a course on directing at the **London Film School**.

With Az Theatre he has recently worked on developing projects with **Trinity Laban** and the **Central School of Speech and Drama**.

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## Writer

At Cambridge University he wrote and directed **THE PERFORMANCE** about Jan Palach's suicide and the Warsaw Pact countries' invasion of Czechoslovakia which was presented at the **Edinburgh Festival**. He co-directed a film about this production, **REHEARSALS FOR THE PERFORMANCE** which won an Award of Outstanding Merit at the **International Film Festival in Chicago**. He co-wrote (with John Hoyland) and directed two plays (**THE NINE DAYS AND SALTLEY GATES** and **TIGHTEN YOUR BELT**) for **Foco Novo Theatre Company** and was on the board of directors. He has more recently written a musical theatre piece about the last days of Orpheus, **ORPHEUS COMES BACK FROM HELL**, for the **Rhodope Drama Theatre in Smolyan Bulgaria**. He has also written film scripts.

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## Creator and Leader of Companies

After being a key creative participant in, and Board member of, **Foco Novo** and working as an **Associate Director of the Theatre Royal Stratford East**, he became **Artistic Director of the Vanguard Company** at the Crucible in Sheffield, where he developed a varied and dynamic programme of studio, schools and local touring work focused on new plays on contemporary issues.

A similar policy was pursued as **Artistic Director of Theatre Foundry** based in the West Midlands, taking on large-scale collaborative community plays designed to give people theatre as a communicative tool.

He co-founded **Paddington Arts**, a company designed to use arts to break down social and cultural prejudices, which after the production of two six part TV series **RUNNING LOOSE** continues its work as a youth arts and media centre in North Westminster. As well as directing projects, he was Chair of the Board of Management for many years.

His **co-Artistic Directorship of Meeting Ground Theatre Company** (with Stephen Lowe and Tanya Myers) was the basis for the founding of **Az Theatre** in 2004. This production and development company, created around a group of associates, advances theatre projects which are based on international and community partnerships working to root theatre in a spirit of change and investigation. It has produced the **WAR STORIES** project, involving an international workshop and production programme.

Another aspect of Az's work is company development and Az is currently working with a group of British Bangladeshis in London's East End to develop the first theatre company to emerge from this community, **Soulfire Theatre**.

Az has just completed the preliminary work on a long-term theatre project MILLITH KARAV in Kashmir, in partnership with Mask Players from Delhi, a development of the WAR STORIES project.

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## **Work in film and TV**

Jonathan started work in this field when he directed a course in acting at the **Institut de Formations Cinematographiques in Paris** working alongside Noel Burch. In the early 70s he joined the **Berwick Street Film Collective** and contributed to their documentary work in Northern Ireland. Later he produced Maria Oshodi's **SPRING SEVENTEEN** (video drama) and directed her **ROCKINGHAM HOUSE** (video drama), after working as a drama director on **RUNNING LOOSE** (two six part TV series with TVS). More recently he was commissioned by **Zephyr Films** to write a film script, **THINKING ABOUT YOU**.

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## **Education and training**

He was educated at **Midhurst Grammar School** and **Cambridge University**. Apart from his apprenticeship as an Assistant Director at the Royal Court he has from time to time undertaken training courses including in basic computer skills, in **Le Jeu** with Phillipe Gaulier and in **Siddha Yoga** with Christine Levy. He has a working knowledge of French and Italian and a familiarity with other European languages. He has completed the first part of a Beginners course in Chinese at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

6<sup>th</sup> February 2009