



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

*The MBE for volunteer groups*



Accessible Music Theatre

Reg Charity No: 1129614

## **St Hugh's Foundation Arts Award 2012: Castaway Goole Engine Room EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Engine Room** theatre is an advanced training company for adults with learning disabilities and autism conditions, directed by choreographer **Anna Webb**, and company in residence at Junction, Goole. It meets a desperate need for high quality, semi-professional opportunities for disabled actors from Humberside to develop skills and experience, whilst offering excellent and innovative theatre to audiences in the region. The company's first production **For Spring** (Junction, 2012) brought considerable acclaim for the seven company members and the artists who work with them.

The St Hugh's Foundation Arts Award to **Engine Room Theatre** has made an enormous impact on the company, contributing to funding a period of creative and strategic Research and Development for artists **Anna Webb**, **Emily Crossland** (composer) and **Sarah Davies** (theatre practitioner and director of Park Bench Theatre, Hull) and a residency for Sarah additionally to develop innovative theatre work based in Engine Room's aesthetic with Castaway's youth and access groups.



Through this period Engine Room's creative team and actors have taken their style of multi-sensory, immersive, physical theatre into new territory, particularly through the use of digital technology bringing interactive potential in both sound and visual environments. St Hugh's funding of artists' time enabled Engine Room Theatre's core creative team to receive mentoring from Halifax based **IOU Theatre** through their Space, Time, Tools, Advice programme, including technical training in digital arts technology from **Dan Powers**.

The R & D inspired new uses of audience space, multi-media collaborations, live music and a geometric set with moveable planes for 3D video mapping as the stage environment for the devised multi-media piece **The Many Coloured Days** (Junction, July 2013, 3 performances). Audience responses were positive and thoughtful: 'A staggeringly moving collaboration; the level of effort and energy is superb.' 'Truly sincerely inspirational. Thoughts crystallized as I watched.' 'Beautiful! Wonderful images, incredible sounds, great journey. Didn't break my heart – made me certain it was working!'

A final period of consultancy on strategic development from executive producer **Richard Sobey** brings Engine Room to the point of launching as an independent company with hugely increased audience and artistic support and an 'excellent company who have fascinating stories and perspectives.'

Our sincerest thanks to St Hugh's, and to mentors Katie Green and Phil Cosker, for this outstanding opportunity and supportive interest, strengthening our confidence to take innovative work forward.