

Random Line Performance Company

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Barry Davies

Case Study May 2009

Background

Barry Davies is the rehearsal director for Random Line performance Company in addition to acting as a lead workshop leader, member of the digital media group and performer within the company.

He has a history of mental health problems which manifest themselves within the broad spectrum of learning disability. Barry finds sequencing information difficult, in certain contexts, and has spent large parts of his life supported by care organisations and living within supported housing schemes (including residential care). He leads an active life, taking part in college courses, support groups, social groups and community programmes covering a variety of subjects. Barry receives considerable support to be able live independently and has the ability to organise all aspects of his life.

Much of his weekly timetable comprises a series of short courses. Each of these is valuable in its own right, but the whole programme does not easily provide a platform for progression. Approaching his mid 40's Barry needed to find environment where he could achieve, develop and forge a direction for life.

First Involvement in an arts based project.

Barry attended the Watering Seeds programme developed by Nottinghamshire County Council, Next stage. This comprised a series of workshops covering drama, music and movement for adults with learning disabilities. He quickly recognised that he had found a medium through which he could explore a creative drive and be a part of developing a new company tailored around the ambitions of its members. Confidence grew as he realised that he had leadership skills and that artistic material could be created and developed using a personalised process. This process gives value to the individuals within an

artistic team. New work grows from the ideas and specific abilities of each member. It does not require a traditional skill, but rather that performers develop their own techniques and artistic language to achieve a high standard of performance, based upon their unique talents. This process provided Barry with the chance to create his own artistic world and feel valued as a part of a team.

Random Line Performance Company grew from the Watering Seeds programme using this process to create new work and develop a workshop programme for other groups and individuals. Barry was a fundamental part of this development and a part of the core team who created the new company in 2005.

Development

Random Line provided exactly the platform and structure Barry needed to develop. His confidence increased and he realised that he had a strong artistic voice – not only as a performer, using movement, voice and physical theatre, but also that he was able to take a leadership role within the company and become a part of planning future activities and directions.

The Random Line programme involves working with people with a broad spectrum of disability and Barry's approach to leading activities and workshops has been very successful. This is based upon the fact that Barry has created his own artistic language and has discovered that he can demonstrate ideas to others without the need to use spoken word as the main communication tool. He has the ability to involve others by simply performing with them and encouraging people to get involved in a non threatening, gentle manner. As a result, he runs most of the workshop programme which has included projects in Derby, Mansfield, Northampton, Nottingham and London. Barry receives personalised support to continue to develop as a performer and facilitator. He feels that the work is stimulating and brings him into contact with ideas and practice he would not otherwise have had the opportunity to experience and benefit from. It has provided development based upon a personal agenda and given the opportunity to prove to himself and others that he has a real value.

Achievement

Barry is now a member of the Random Line Board and is able to take part in shaping the future of the organisation as well as being involved in its day to day management. The company has the ambition to perform at a national level and take its philosophy to as many groups/organisations as possible.

Random Line tours to Nottingham, Leicester, Sheffield, London, Derby, Northampton and Birmingham. Workshops take place nationally, and the company is perceived as a national flagship arts organisation. This has been achieved within four years and Barry has something to be very proud of.