

<b>Institution: University of Exeter</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: UoA33</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p>The University of Exeter Drama Department, which celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> year in 2018, is an internationally renowned centre for theatre and performance research. As one of the first to support practice research, we have developed demonstrable strengths in transcultural performance practice; innovation in socially-engaged work; and acknowledged excellence in theatre and performance historiography. Committed to social justice, collaboration and interdisciplinarity, our impactful research clusters around novel international performance practices (<b>Brown, Hodge, Loukes, Thomaidis</b>), radical new understandings of inclusive, international, popular, grassroots and experimental theatre histories (<b>Beswick, Curtin, Daboo, Milling, Newey, O'Malley, Pearce, Reilly, Roms, Turner</b>) and leading socially-engaged change in wellbeing and community (<b>Beswick, Daboo, Goldingay, Hillman, Schaefer</b>).</p> <p>Achievements this REF cycle include: 11 books and 5 practice outputs submitted to REF21, delivered across all career stages; increased internationalisation of research; strategic strength-building in environmental humanities; consistent PGR numbers, funded from diverse sources with increased completions; increased capacity to achieve funding targets developed from seed projects; vibrant contributions to local, national and international performance industries; and demonstrable impact on understanding marginalised UK practices.</p> <p><b>Strategic Aims 2014-2021:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>decolonising the intellectual frameworks within which we work</li> <li>developing research capacity in early-mid career staff</li> <li>expanding our strengths in theatre and performance history and historiography</li> <li>building on and further internationalising research in contemporary performance (as strategised in REF2014)</li> <li>developing socially-engaged and interdisciplinary performance (REF2014)</li> </ol> <p>Our unit-level strategy is developed in reference to College of Humanities and University strategies, and informed by the annual research monitoring process, which identifies strengths and weaknesses of the unit and areas of focus for development. The University's Innovation, Impact and Business (IIB) team works closely with us to identify key strategic goals in external engagement (cf. Institutional-Level Environment Statement (ILES) 4.6-4.13), and the College employs a specialist researcher to assist in developing the impact of Humanities research.</p> <p>We have established two Research Centres to support our strategic aims. While related to areas of strength (Performance Histories and Cultures; Contemporary Performance Practice), they each welcome all interested staff and postgraduate researchers (University data show an increase in PGR satisfaction with the research environment during the period). In addition, the Colloquium for Interdisciplinary Research and Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE) has been set up to support our interdisciplinary portfolio. In order to facilitate more focused collaboration, we have also identified nine themes around which our research clusters: Creative Industries; Class and Labour; International Pedagogies; Visual Culture and Popular Performance;</p>

Environments, Ecologies and Cities; South Asian Performance and Diasporic Practices; Race and Ethnicity; Cultural Participation and Wellbeing; Voice, Sound and Music.

#### Strategic aims a-c: Centre for Performance Histories and Cultures

Delivering on strategic aim (c), this Centre builds on our strength in performance history and historiography, while its overarching scope admits participation from all researchers. The Centre has a particular focus on historiography, with seminars and subsequent publications and grant applications setting agendas for investigating the significance of popular and visual performance cultures (**Newey, Roms**) and class representation (**Beswick, Hillman, Milling**). Contributing to strategic aim (a), this Centre drives Departmental discussions of 'de-colonising' research, building on **Daboo's** research and her work on the teaching curriculum (externally funded by SCUDD). In 2019, the Centre hosted an international delegation to discuss building resilient networks with South East Asian institutions concerning intercultural exchange in theatre pedagogy. The Centre operates as the main forum for sharing research process through both public seminars and closed discussion. A programme of researcher development for writing research funding applications has led to awards, following peer review from this group (**Curtin, Daboo, Newey**). Contributing to strategic aim (b), the Centre has been pro-active in the development of PGRs and ECRs, reviewing papers towards publication.

#### Strategic aim d: Centre for Contemporary Performance Practice

This Centre meets regularly to discuss practical projects and shared approaches to articulating practice research both within performance process and to external audiences, facilitating decision-making and presentation. Contributing to strategic aim (d), it has built on, and added to, long-term, rich international research relationships. These include international partnerships in intercultural performer training (see REF2014) and in site-based performance, including methodological exchanges with researchers in China and India. The Centre organised an international panel on 'Working between Cultures'; an interdisciplinary discussion on practice research; and hosted interactive seminars by practitioners including US director, Anne Bogart. Seeking new creative industry partnerships, an important international exchange has developed with the acclaimed Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, USA, supported through Exeter's internal 'Global Intersections' funding.

CCPP currently hosts four staff-led companies (RedCape, ARTEL, Adrift Performance Makers, Wrights & Sites). In the period of assessment, RedCape mounted two newly-devised works, touring the UK; Wrights & Sites produced a joint practice-research publication, and two practice-research projects by individual members; ARTEL has been developing a collaboration with Animal Cracker Conspiracy and an internet-based art project; and as Artistic Director of AdriftPM, **Thomaidis** has collaborated with Virginie Magnat (University of British Columbia) in drawing from creative training, mindfulness and cultural practices towards improved wellbeing. A joint initial symposium (2018) became a research cluster funded by a UBC Eminence Grant and the Wellcome Centre for the Cultures and Environments of Health (WCCEH), furthering our work in the medical humanities as well as our international reach (REF2014).

#### Strategic aim e: Colloquium for Interdisciplinary Research and Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE)

Leading on Strategic Aim (e), this Colloquium replaced the Centre for Performance, Sciences and Community to enable a focus on our approach to interdisciplinary collaboration and socially-engaged work. The group has developed a strategy for interdisciplinary research for the unit,

and draws on connections with film studies, the medical school and the Met Office in considering modes of cross/inter/trans/anti-disciplinary research. During this REF period, it supported applied and medical humanities work, including **Goldingay's** collaboration with the Institute for Integrative Health on healing, funded by the BIAL foundation, and **Schaefer's** work on rurality and everyday participation, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). It supports interdisciplinary research into environmental humanities from scholars including **O'Malley** and **Pearce**, with **O'Malley** gaining AHRC and NERC funding for her work with the Met Office and a range of open-air theatres. Concluding this REF period, the group has laid the groundwork for a new research centre in Performance and the Natural World, facing a post-COVID theatre industry and supported by newly awarded funding (AHRC).

The Research Centres are not the only mechanisms for supporting our strategic aims. For instance, our commitment to decolonisation (a) has been the subject of regular meetings involving all staff, informing our research ethics and supervision of overseas PGRs. We are also concerned with discussions of ethics and equality in wider research contexts: for example, **Daboo** is a member of the advisory board for the AHRC's Common Cause project, which looks at the representation of global majority interests in research collaborations. Race and Ethnicity is one of our identified research themes, with demonstrable impact on creative industries.

We support early career researchers and others through (b) individually-focused support and development offered by Academic Leads and the Director of Research (detailed in S.2), with staff encouraged to feed into Exeter's ECR Liaison Forum. Staff also make use of other university-wide support structures, such as the AHRC Strategy Group's research hustings, which offer robust and multi-disciplinary feedback on funding bids (currently chaired by **Newey**).

Our international initiatives are vital to all researchers. We have been committed to developing transnational Europe-wide networks to consider theatre and performance historiography (**Newey, Roms**); and we anticipate that in a post-Brexit era, EU researchers will remain significant partners. Other links are significant in extending our interdisciplinarity (e), for example, our collaborations with scientists at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore. Much international work is supported by external funding (AHRC, Wellcome) and by Exeter's outward mobility grants (for instance facilitating **Loukes'** work in China (d)). A department Director of Global contributes to the Global Strategy Group, supported by the University Global Partnerships team (cf. ILES 1.9,4.9).

Some of our cultural industry and practice partnerships are mentioned above. Drama's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated with an event to revitalise links with our alumni working in the cultural industries. Engagement with diverse communities beyond the academy is at the core of Exeter's Drama Department. The centrality of our unit's expertise to the University's public engagement in the arts is recognised through our participation in strategy groups and institutes across the University. The range of our involvement across colleges also represents our strategy (outlined in REF2014) to become actively involved in interdisciplinary exchange (e) and to advocate for the role of the arts and humanities in responding to international and climate crises, cultural understanding and exchange. By addressing urgent societal challenges in collaboration with other disciplines we will increase the impact of our research.

Our commitment to public engagement drives our culture of Open Access to research, including training workshops. We go beyond basic UKRI Open Access requirements and seek new

avenues for sharing our research, through online blogs, print journalism and radio and television broadcasts (**Beswick, Goldingay, Newey, Pearce**). A redesign of our research web pages was directed towards making our expertise more publicly visible, including highlighting areas of impact and project partners.

Projects with significant public impact have received targeted support. Two of these are represented in our impact case studies (**Daboo** and **Pearce**), but they sit alongside impactful research in medical humanities (**Goldingay**), politics and performances of organised labour (**Hillman**), performer training (**Loukes**) and urbanization (**Hodge, Turner**). The department has engaged with IIB and the College of Humanities in identifying opportunities and resources to support this work.

Our process for ethical approval, including data security and protection, through the Department Ethics Officer working with the College's Ethics Committee is part of our commitment to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, which underpins all our work (in line with the institutional commitment (ILES 2.09)). **Beswick** is currently Co-Chair of the Committee.

Staff in our unit are leaders in the discipline. **Newey** is chair of the national subject association, the Standing Conference of University Drama Departments (SCUDD). Both **Newey** and **Roms** were founding members of disciplinary associations (TaPRA and Performance Studies International). In 2019 we moved quickly to provide a venue for TAPRA's annual conference, following its necessary relocation, and **Beswick**, supported by the unit, ensured a well-run context for 400 papers and vital discussions about the future of performance research.

In the coming REF cycle, we will increase the reach and impact of our work by:

- a) Contributing to climate responsibility through the research theme 'Environments, Ecologies and Cities' (**Hodge, O'Malley, Pearce, Turner**), establishing a new research centre for Performance and the Natural World, to host new funding initiatives, symposia and interdisciplinary exchange (for example in collaboration with Exeter's Environment and Sustainability Institute) and drawing on the particularities of the SW region to specialise in coastal and rural locations.
- b) Developing international dialogues in performer training and pedagogy, supported by external grant applications and existing networks of researchers (**Daboo, Loukes, Milling, Roms**), especially in Asia. For instance, by developing **Loukes'** research with ArtsCross, and by securing funding for a network on international performance pedagogies.
- c) Consolidating creative research collaboration at Exeter and our own intermedial research (**Hodge, Roms**), by increasing our engagement with colleagues in TV and film studies across the University, and by developing shared postgraduate provision and dialogue within research centre symposia.
- d) Drawing on our engagement with cultural industries in contributing to ambitious regional projects, while extending our industry exchanges internationally and being supported by a new advisory board of cultural industry representatives.
- e) As a vital response to current inequalities, use processes of recruitment, representation and advocacy (building on initiatives led by **Daboo**) to increase staffing diversity, consolidate our inclusive environment for diverse research students, and support research initiatives in cultural activism.

## 2. People

### Staffing Strategy and Development

We pride ourselves on the unit's caring and supportive sense of teamwork and foster a sense of community in work and play, resulting in a deep knowledge of each other's work and practice. Consequently, there are a number of informal writing groups and sustained research collaborations (e.g., **Milling** and **Schaefer**; **Daboo** and **Turner**; **Hodge** and **Turner**). We aim to be ethical in all research practices and to challenge ourselves to acknowledge existing inequities or omissions: to this end, we place inclusivity and diversity at the top of every departmental meeting agenda.

The department has undergone a period of transition, with new research leadership reflecting an investment in mid-career researchers, recognised as a need in REF 2014. We have supported staff with regular research leave (4-5 per annum), internal funding opportunities, away days to facilitate funding applications, peer review of applications and outputs, immediate and highly-skilled technical support from in-house technicians and world-class facilities. We have made use of opportunities such as the University's Aurora programme offering leadership training for female staff (**Beswick**, **Kreider**) and its mentoring programme, One Step Beyond. As a consequence, the period has seen four members of Cat A staff promoted to full Professor (**Daboo**, **Hodge**, **Milling**, **Turner**), two Senior Lecturers promoted to Associate Professor (**Loukes**, **Schaefer**) and seven Lecturers promoted to Senior Lecturer (**Beswick**, **Brown**, **Curtin**, **Goldingay**, **Hillman**, **O'Malley**, **Pearce**). Following retirements, we dropped to two professors mid-REF cycle: the department ends the period with six full professors; and all members of Education and Research (E&R) staff at senior lecturer or above. All Cat A staff are on permanent contracts.

These promotions also reflect prioritisation of early career researchers. Within the framework of 'the Exeter Academic' (cf. ILES 3.3) staff are supported by a personal development programme (PDP) (mapped against the Concordat) and an Academic Lead, who discusses training, targets and progression in regular meetings. One Academic Lead is responsible solely for members of staff on probation until promotion to senior lecturer. An annual review prompts a dialogue to acknowledge achievements, ambitions, training needs and wellbeing. Clear targets are set for progression through probation and for promotion. Where additional mentoring is needed, this is offered by the Academic Lead and Director of Research. As a result, our early career staff are achieving promotion and designing ambitious research programmes. (For instance, **O'Malley** received early promotion and is engaged on a number of grants concerning environmental humanities.)

We have one AHRC-funded postdoctoral researcher (**Holmes**), who is mentored by **Newey**, participates fully in research centre activities and has provided research-led teaching. The publication of her first monograph (forthcoming, Routledge 2021) has been supported through the Centre for Performance Histories and Cultures and through the annual review process. A previous postdoctoral researcher, **Walcon**, gained National Portfolio status for her community arts organisation in 2017 (the first in Torbay to do so), and we were able to appoint her to a permanent, part-time 'Education & Scholarship' (E&S) contract through which she shares this industry expertise. E&S staff often bring significant industry skills and knowledge, benefiting the research environment. Two were promoted to Senior Lecturer through this period (**Macbeth** and **Kreider**), demonstrating our commitment to career progression in all roles.

We have made use of new appointments to strengthen our research into performance histories following **Wiles'** retirement (**Roms**); practice, following **Zarrilli's** retirement (**Brown, Thomaidis**) and socially-engaged practice, broadening the range of approaches to this area and bringing numbers back to previous levels following staff departures (**Beswick, Hillman, O'Malley, Pearce**).

We have a high proportion of female members of staff, including five professors (in a professoriate across UK HE which underrepresents women). An aim in further recruitment processes will be to increase the number of staff of the global majority (BIPOC) at all levels. We currently employ three, one professor, **Daboo**, and two E&S lecturers, **Harris** and **Abdulla**. **Harris** also runs theatre company Beyond Face, which is committed to raising the profile and visibility of people of colour (working with some of our postgraduate students in 2020). **Abdulla** is attached to us through the University's Project Enhance, which is helping to create a digitally-enhanced teaching portfolio.

### Research Students

Starting the REF period with 24 research students, we now have 35 research students: 28 are enrolled towards PhD (having successfully upgraded), and 7 are currently enrolled at MPhil level and will upgrade to PhD (see below). 44 research students have successfully completed since 2014, averaging 6 per annum, and exceeding the total of the previous REF period.

During the current REF period, 7 students (one still enrolled) were supported through the collaborative supervisory project linking us to the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, funded by Exeter, with staff exchange initially facilitated by the UK-India Education Research Initiative (ending in 2014), and subsequently by research networking grants. This has enabled cross-disciplinary projects, focused on Indian performance cultures and their contexts, as well as staff exchange. As this collaboration has developed, PhD students at both institutions have been involved as research collaborators and assistants, working with staff in the UK and India (Mahiyaria; Savory Fuller). 4 of these students currently hold academic positions and another is employed as editor for the Indian Cultural Forum, which supports discussion concerning the politics of culture in contemporary India (Mahiyaria).

We have supported 6 students (4 as lead supervisor) through the AHRC South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership (SWW1 & 2), a consortium of 10 institutions, which has sustained 270 students over 5 cohorts 2014-19 and 200 studentships with 3 cohorts, 2019-2021. The DTP has allowed us to co-supervise with, for example, Cardiff University School of Music, to support interdisciplinarity within and across institutions, and to foster deeper regional research connections with cultural institutions and social organisations. It also offers a suite of events and training to complement those offered by the unit and by Exeter's Doctoral College, and funding to support student leadership.

5 students were funded by AHRC, including through a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) with Theatre Alibi. We have 2 students (one first and one second supervised in the unit) funded by WCCEH, with transdisciplinary supervisory teams. College studentships have also supported international scholars, including students from the US, Pakistan (Jubilee Scholarship) and Syria (Sanctuary Scholarship). Others have been funded by their own governments (China, Iraq,

Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Syria) or institutions such as the China Scholarship Council. Our strengths in performance practice and social justice research have led to approaches from prospective students in the Middle East and South East Asia.

All PhD students initially register as MPhil and transition to PhD through our upgrade process, prepared by regular supervisory meetings and tri-annual review by the full supervisory team. These meetings also identify training needs. These needs are met through the Doctoral College's central training and development programme (mapped against the Concordat), where students from across the disciplines explore research methods and training more widely; through regular College of Humanities training seminars, which bring the drama cohort together with other humanities students; and bespoke departmental training covering more drama-specific research methods (details below). Supported by the College, we have also joined with other creative-based disciplines (Film, Creative Writing) to address questions in practice research – involving guest speakers/keynotes; student presentations; and intensive feedback sessions.

All research students are invited to affiliate to one of our Research Centres and to attend meetings and share work where appropriate. Each year begins with a 'Pre-Sessional' event, which combines inductions for new research students with sharing of papers from research students at later stages, as well as staff members. There are also seminars specifically for research students, organised by the student body, and contributed to by staff ('PG Tips' and 'PG Blips'). In their first term, all students are offered a series of staff-led discipline-specific training events for new PhD students; in their second term, all research students are enrolled in the Departmentally-hosted 'Research Project Development' module, where they develop their research projects via peer and academic feedback. All PhD students are also given the opportunity of training in teaching and supported experience.

Many students have been successful in obtaining bursaries to attend conferences, from SWW1 and 2 or internal funding. Drama staff, the Department Ethics Officer and the institution's central Research Ethics and Governance office also mentor students in putting together complex ethics applications. Bradwell, for instance, has submitted two successful Social Care REC applications to research arts programmes with older adults living with dementia.

All students are allocated a mentor outside the research supervisory team. Students are able to interrupt their studies should the occasion arise, or to transition to part time and/or distance learning (for example, if this is desirable following maternity leave). The Doctoral College offers support in careers, health and well-being, and other general support.

Many of our students have gone on to success in both research and cultural industries professions. In the current REF period, our doctoral graduates achieved academic appointments both with us (**Holmes, O'Malley, Pearce**), elsewhere in the UK and at universities in South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, Thailand, Korea, India and the US.

Strategies towards future PGR recruitment include:

- a) Diversification of funding streams, through cross-disciplinary collaboration, e.g., collaborating with WCCEH, building on current supervisory collaboration

- b) Diversification of funding streams through systematic identification of open calls, maintaining existing prompt support for students who apply with research from international governments or other sources
- c) Applying for postgraduate funding in conjunction with research bids, where applicable - e.g., currently in conjunction with ERC Advanced grant applications
- d) Developing a second cohort of students from Middle Eastern countries, making use of available funding mechanisms but also raising awareness through staff exchange and publication
- e) New MA programmes, such as the MA Creativity: Innovation and Business Strategy, and an Applied route within the MA Theatre Practice, have been designed with a view to providing a route to PhD research
- f) Continuing to offer flexible research programme opportunities including part-time and distance learning
- g) Developing an attractive, inclusive research community through anti-racism initiatives; for instance, an online resource pack was developed in 2020 by the Department Director of Postgraduate Research in conjunction with current students

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

We embed equality, diversity and inclusivity in every aspect of our research environment, and it drives our research in class, labour, cultural participation, race, ethnicity and diasporic practices. The department has taken a leading role in initiatives to address issues of EDI across the University, with an initial focus on teaching, but extending also to research processes. Our current research strategy includes an initiative to increase our number of speakers from the global majority in our department seminars, alongside a recruitment strategy to increase representation on staff at all levels.

Reflecting the needs of our own ODA-funded research, we have been particularly concerned with the ethics of international research. For instance, **Turner** and honorary research fellow/National Institute of Advanced Studies researcher Smriti Haricharan contributed to a symposium led by the University of Leeds on the ethics of heritage research, with **Turner** cited in the resulting report. **Daboo** led a workshop for the EU-India Platform for Social Sciences and Humanities (EqUIP) in Gurgaon, India, in 2016, which generated discussions of creativity, inclusivity and diversity as research themes. **Daboo** has led an internally-funded, intra-institutional project, 'Decolonising the Curriculum/Diversifying the University' which, while it has an education focus, also asks questions of academic research, touching on methodologies and partnerships. Responding to **Daboo's** initiative, we are mindful of how this relates to and informs our research. In developing the range of PhD projects, we have actively supported research that international students would find difficult to do in their home countries, for instance studies of Dalit activism in India; women in theatre in Saudi Arabia; and political theatre in Pakistan.

As detailed in section 4, we are aware of exclusions within the performing arts more widely, and our research and engagement aim to mitigate that, as our two submitted impact case studies demonstrate. For example, **Pearce** co-organised an interdisciplinary symposium (with Goddard, Royal Holloway) on 'Representing Race and Black Britain in Theatre, Film, Television and Digital Media' at the National Theatre, London in 2015. **Daboo** collaborated with Voluntary Arts to conduct a year-long project on global majority involvement in participatory arts across the UK, resulting in the production of a report, 'Open Conversations', in 2017 directed towards change in



that organisation. Following her 2019 book on social housing in performance, **Beswick** has spoken on class and performance in numerous contexts (including internationally) and organised conferences and events on art and class in 2016 and 2017, including with Phoenix Arts Centre, Exeter, and at The Museum of the Home, London. **Curtin's** AHRC-funded research network on representations of classical music involved commissioning a creative artist of the global majority to create a play about a Black composer excluded from the canon.

The University is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and aims to provide a working, learning and social environment that is free from unfair discrimination. It aims to ensure that staff, students, visitors and all others associated with the University are treated with dignity, respect, and equity, regardless of inappropriate distinctions, such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (identified under the Equality Act 2010 as 'protected characteristics').

Consequently, all staff are required to complete the online Equality and Diversity training as part of their induction. All those involved in decision-making for REF have completed mandatory training in recognising bias in decision making, and REF selection was made with reference to representation across career stages and protected characteristics. The College Inclusivity Group (including Drama staff **Woods** and **Newey**) meets termly to identify areas for review.

Department members are involved with the cross-college Equality and Diversity Network. Research proposals are approved by the College Ethics Committee, including a review of equality and diversity in relation to appointments as well as fieldwork. Support is given to staff on short-term and/or E&S contracts to build research capacity through the development of funding applications and outputs.

Recruitment for research-related leadership roles is open to application from those at senior levels. Within the Department, research administrative roles are allocated with a view to supporting career trajectory, as well as to serve the needs of the unit.

Research leave applications are considered with no detriment to staff applying as a result of maternity leave, paternity leave or sickness, thus ensuring equality of opportunity. Teaching allocation takes note of the needs of staff returning from periods of leave (parental leave), ill health, management of long-term illness, or those with caring responsibilities. Reasonable requests for flexibility in timetabling or remote working are facilitated.

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Research funding awards have enabled research into grassroots and popular performance; research and impact on diasporic cultural heritage; and supported practice, interdisciplinarity and research leadership. We leave the REF period with a significant upturn in funding, with over £100k annual income already secured for three years (2021-24).

#### Grassroots and popular performance

We began this REF period with high levels of research income in this area, with senior staff completing large-scale projects on Amateur Drama, Everyday Participation, and Pantomime. These are reflected in the research outputs and impact submitted to this REF, including the award-winning *The Ecologies of Amateur Theatre* (**Milling** with Helen Nicholson (Royal Holloway) and Nadine Holdsworth (Warwick)). **Milling** won AHRC funding in 2014 for an 'Expert

Workshop' on Amateur Voluntary Arts' (£7,851), while **Schaefer's** AHRC Follow-On Research Grant (2015) 'Re-vitalising Critical Dialogues on Community Theatre' comprised a seminar series and national festival (£23,976), match-funded by Acta Theatre. **Schaefer** also extended the international reach of this work through a British Academy (BA) Small Grant, 'Sojourn Theater's "Islands of Milwaukee": a critical analysis of performance connecting communities in a structurally segregated city' (2014, £4,250) and through funding of SD17,000 from the National Arts Council, Singapore, to work with Dramabox (2014). Focusing on popular performance, **Newey** commenced a major new research project funded by AHRC, 'Theatre and Visual Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century' with Jim Davies (PI), Warwick (2018, £690,309; Exeter portion £320,480); and just post-REF census, she facilitated a Marie Skłodowska-Curie post-doctoral fellowship (Mello).

#### Diasporic cultural heritage

Having concluded her AHRC-funded project, 'The Southall Story', **Daboo's** resulting research is reflected in one of our impact case studies. Building on her collaboration with Kuljit Bhamra, the development of the electronic tabla and related research were supported by funding from AHRC/REACT (Research and Enterprise in Arts and Creative Technology), 2014 (£11,892) and 2016 (£3,600). In collaboration with Smriti Haricharan (India lead), **Daboo** leads an AHRC/ICHR (Indian Council of Historical Research) funded network to consider 'Cultural Heritage Transformations of Weddings and Marriage among Women in the Tamil and Parsi diaspora communities in India and the UK' (2019, £27,637).

#### Supporting performance practice

Support from a BA Small Grant in 2019 enabled **Brown** to develop new networks and investigations into resistant curatorial practices ('Staging Other Russias: an investigation of contemporary Russian theatre in the age of Gayropa', £9,900). A further ~£145k of non-HESA funding was awarded directly, or indirectly, to many members of staff, reflecting the vibrancy of our practice-as-research and our industry engagement. For instance, **Loukes**, with her company RedCape theatre, received Arts Council England (ACE) funding (2015-17, £40,000) and REACH funding (2015, £35,000) for *Be Brave*; ACE funding for *Thunder Road* (2018-19, £30,000); as well as ACE funding for Research and Development (2018, £5,000). **Loukes** also received funding for travel to China to collaborate in an international exchange, via the Middlesex University AHRC ArtsCross network, visiting Beijing Dance Academy (2014, £2,000; 2016, £2,000; 2018, £2,500; 2019, £2,500) and via a related British Academy grant to visit Taipei University of the Arts (2015, £2,000) to research exchanges in performer training.

Another practice researcher, **Hodge's** artwork *Where to build the walls that protect us*, initially supported by Kaleider, using public funding by the National Lottery through ACE and Exeter City Council (2014, £18,600), was reiterated and commissioned for Compass Festival, Leeds (2016, £3,500); the output has been submitted to REF.

Others received awards for contributing to practice networks; for instance, **Brown** received funding from a travel grant from the Network of Ensemble Theatres and from the Henson foundation, USA for his work with ARTEL (2017-18, \$10,000).

#### Supporting interdisciplinarity

Both **Curtin** and **Turner** established AHRC-funded interdisciplinary networks. Curtin leads the AHRC-funded network, 'Representing 'Classical Music' in the Twenty-First Century' (2019,

£37,454) in collaboration with musicologists. **Turner's** AHRC/GCRF (Global Challenges Research Fund) Grant built on our collaborations with archaeologists and animal behaviour researchers in South India for 'The Politics Of Performance On The Urban Periphery in South India' (2018, £51,719). **Goldingay** has received a range of funding to support her work on healing, including from the BIAL Foundation for 'Healing Rituals In Lourdes' (2016, £33,987) and from The Institute for Integrative Health, Baltimore, US, to work with the Institute, two hospitals and Exeter prison on projects under the heading 'How are you healing?' (2017-19, £16,000); by WCCEH to create an intervention at the Green Man Festival (2018); and by private donors and sponsors to develop the Healing Matters Network and website (2016-19, £2,000). **Thomaidis** was supported by WCCEH and UBC, Canada, to participate in a network, PI Virginie Magnat (UBC): 'Culture, Creativity, Health and Wellbeing' (Thomaidis received travel expenses plus a direct sub-grant, 2018, £6,605).

#### Development of research leadership

Sustained support (see below) and an extension of funding sources developed funding capacity for ECR staff, and enabled others to enter new research fields. ECR researchers have moved from CI to PI, with related research income increasing 90% since 2016 (when previous large grants concluded). For example, **O'Malley** was CI on NERC-funded 'Climate Stories' with Peter Stott, Engineering, Exeter (2018, £79,312); and on AHRC-funded 'Atmospheric Theatre: Open Air Performance and the Environment', with PI Chloe Preedy, English, Exeter (2018, £159,768) and commences the next REF period as PI on 'Outside the Box', considering sustainable and secure performance, supported by AHRC's Covid-19 Rapid Response funding, working with **Turner** and Tim Coles, Business School, Exeter (post-census award).

#### **Organisational infrastructure supporting research and impact**

Recognising the need to support capacity at the beginning of this REF cycle, we developed a culture of informed and generous support for staff grant applications, particularly for early career research. We regularly identify recurrent funding schemes and note which colleagues might be potential applicants, and disseminate information on new calls, alerting those best placed to respond. Initial and developing ideas are discussed at funding 'away days'. A twice-yearly programme of training events based on Parker Derrington's 'Ten Key Sentences' for grant writing began in 2019-20. Feedback is available to staff on drafts from the Director of Research, with support from appropriate colleagues. Assistance is also offered by Research Services, including the preparation of budgets and advice on contracts. All final drafts are peer reviewed, and larger grants are reviewed by researchers from across the College. Successful bids are supported by Research Services, and training for Principal Investigators includes skills in managing a team.

The College Impact Researcher and Impact Leads from the University's Innovation, Impact and Business (IIB) team have contributed to ongoing assessment of impact and have helped to identify ways of supporting and maximising the positive impact of our research. They have supported the Department's Director of Impact, offering advice, funding, event management and information gathering. For instance, they supported **Brown's** collaboration with the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center.

Participation in university centres and networks has enabled interdisciplinary work: for instance, **Daboo** co-founded and remains a member of the South Asia Research Centre, as is **Turner**;

this led to the Department hosting a symposium led by archaeologists to look at guided walks in South Asia. The Department is engaged with Exeter's International Institute for Cultural Enquiry (IICE), and **Pearce** obtained IICE seed funding for a cross-disciplinary international project on South African tourism in 2020 – an example of the Institute's investment in interdisciplinary research facing development and cultural industries (cf. ILES 1.3).

Since 2016/17, the University's '21st Century Library' initiative has made an additional investment of £1.6 million (in addition to routine spend) to enhance digital research resources, special collections and links to local archives, for instance offering access to archival collections such as British Library Newspapers, Eighteenth Century Drama and State Papers Online. The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum continues to be a resource for work into popular performance culture and is a project partner for **Newey's** AHRC-funded project 'Theatre and Visual Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century'.

The Department maintains an exceptional set of facilities, supporting both scholarly and practice research. We have the sole use of 6 fully equipped, large drama studios and 9 rehearsal spaces, two recording studios and workshop. All staff have individual office spaces, and postgraduate researchers have a 24-hour accessible IT suite with hot desks available for PGRs who teach as graduate assistants. There is a bookable library/meeting room for staff, equipped with specialist books donated by Emeritus Professors Thomson and Zarrilli. A broad range of technical equipment is available for practice research, including VR, 360-degree video and locative technologies (currently used in developing research by **Hodge**), as well as audio & video documentation kits. Four dedicated technical staff with specialisms in lighting and sound design, video production, editing, and costume, support all aspects of our research. They offer training in website design and multimedia editing of performance documentation in all forms, for research purposes and for publication online or as media.

The College's strategic investment in its Digital Humanities Lab (£1.2M) enhances access to our research data and findings. **Newey**, for example, has drawn on the Lab in designing historical databases, while **Daboo** received assistance in redesigning an exhibition for a digital platform in response to pandemic restrictions.

#### 4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

##### Working with/in the Creative Industries

We used our 50th anniversary celebrations to stimulate contacts across the creative industries, and are now working with a wider range of cultural organisations including Punchdrunk, the National Theatre, Sadler's Wells, The Place, Step Out Arts, Theatre Alibi, ACTA Theatre, The Northcott Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre, In Between Time, Chapter (Cardiff), Eugene O'Neill Theater Center (US), Gogol Center (Moscow), International Community Arts Festival (Rotterdam) and Hong Kong Drama/Theatre and Education Forum (TEFO). In order to extend our work to new contexts, we have been involved in the University's Creative Industries Strategy (**Brown, Hodge, Loukes**); and the Arts and Culture Strategy, an institution-wide initiative, which from 2017 was developed and led by **Hodge** (see below). Drama researchers are also active in WCCEH, the Global Systems Institute Community and the newly-established IICE (**Turner** was an Associate Director for the pilot year, 2020).

We have been involved with creative industries in large-scale and smaller initiatives. Awarded at the end of the previous REF cycle but continuing to 2016, **Hodge** was the Co-Director of REACT (Research and Enterprise in Arts and Creative Technology), a £4m Knowledge Exchange Hub for the Creative Economy (2012-2016), funded by the AHRC as a collaboration between Watershed (Bristol), UWE (PI), and the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter. REACT facilitated 53 collaborations between 73 academics and 53 businesses. It helped these teams make products for sectors such as heritage, publishing, documentaries and children's products. **Hodge** has also been a 'resident' of Kaleider since 2013. Kaleider is an ACE National Portfolio Organisation and is a production studio in Exeter that plays at the edges of installation, live performance and digital arts. His project, *Where to build the walls that protect us*, was funded and hosted there, involving climate scientists, before going on to Leeds Compass Live Art Festival in 2016. **Hodge** is a trustee of In Between Time, Bristol, another National Portfolio Organisation and a critically acclaimed and globally respected producer of live art.

As this demonstrates, we have made important contributions to the cultural life of our own city. **Hodge** is Director of Arts and Culture for the University and works to integrate university-based arts and culture activities with those of Exeter and the county of Devon. This has resulted in collaborations and commissions across the region, including the placement of artists in research contexts across diverse disciplines. Following the closure of the fringe Bike Shed Theatre, **Brown** has supported the development of a new city centre performance incubation house and social innovation hub, Maketank, by mentoring and supporting grant writing with Exeter City Council (2019, £3270) and ACE (2020, £19,000), which facilitated artists (Evans, Petrakova) to reactivate this disused building with performance interactions, artistic and community forums, and international performance incubation. Maketank has also worked with other Exeter-based small arts organizations, Scare the Horses and Topos, to stage performances and presentations. The delivery of our MA Creativity has drawn extensively on Maketank as a resource, developing innovative ideas that in turn benefit local arts businesses.

Our expertise in theatre and performance history also informs our work with the creative industries. **Roms** is a National Advisor/ Arts Associate to the Arts Council of Wales. She serves on the Board of Directors of Cardiff Dance Festival, and on the Aberystwyth Arts Centre Advisory Group. She regularly collaborates with Chapter, Cardiff, to identify histories of that venue and has supervised an AHRC CDA with that institution (2013-2016). She was on the project team as research advisor for Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales's 2015-2016 exhibition, *Silent Explosion: Ivor Davies and Destruction in Art*, the largest solo exhibition of a contemporary artist by the museum to date (attracting over 45,000 visitors) and supported by another AHRC CDA.

#### Expanding our international collaborations

An important aspect of our strategy has been developing collaborations in China and other parts of East Asia. Building on **Loukes'** research into training methods and practice with RedCape theatre, she contributed to the international research network ArtsCross (led by ResCen, Middlesex) in 2014, and is now one of the leading researchers for that project, sharing research and practice in training between Exeter, Middlesex, Queen Mary, The Place and Step Out Arts in the UK, and with international partners Beijing Dance Academy, Taipei University of the Arts, European Dancehouse Network, Penghao Theatre (Beijing) and Ping Pong Productions (US). Performances developed during the project have led to further commissions around the world.

Techniques developed during the collaboration are now used within the curriculum at Beijing Dance Academy. **Beswick** has also begun a research partnership through the British Academy and UK-China Humanities alliance. **Roms** is collaborating with scholars in Singapore, Australia, Netherlands, UK, Malta, Norway and United States on 21<sup>st</sup>-Century performance pedagogies, while **Turner** was awarded internal 'outward mobility' funding to establish links in Japan (in recent months these activities have been delayed by the pandemic). In all these examples facilitation of equal dialogue and exchange of ideas is the core objective.

The department's relationship with the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), India, which was formally established via an MoU in 2017, has continued to develop, via our joint supervisory programme, and through research collaborations between **Daboo**, **Turner** and NIAS researchers Srinivasan, Sinha (AHRC funded) and Haricharan (Newton Fund). **Daboo** and **Turner** are both adjunct faculty members at NIAS, while there is a reciprocal arrangement for NIAS staff. These collaborations are interdisciplinary, linking archaeology, animal biology and drama; and the work of Sinha and his biologist PhD students has led **Daboo** and **Turner** to consider the role of the temple elephant as performer. This has resulted in emerging projects to support public understanding of the elephant and mahout relationship, expanding the focus of the biologists' research in turn. **Turner's** AHRC/GCRF project (see above) commissioned nine Indian artists to produce public work responding to their cities, with four performances in Bengaluru, exhibitions and presentation at NIAS, Bengaluru, and an artists' publication centred on Kochi. Two of the art commissions have been developed further, including one for Goa's Serendipity Festival 2019.

Other international collaboration includes a network of training institutions between Exeter, the Gogol Center in Moscow and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, USA. **Brown's** work in Moscow particularly engages with the Gogol's Center's ground-breaking curation of LGBTQ+ work. A collaboration agreement between the O'Neill Theater Center and Exeter has enabled researchers (from Exeter: **Brown**, **Milling**, **Newey**) to make reciprocal visits in 2017-18. **Brown's** work with 'The Black Hen Society' was an exchange with puppeteers and designers, presented at the O'Neill.

In line with our continuing commitment to collaboration with researchers in Europe, **Roms** co-founded (with Dr Dror Harari, Tel Aviv University) an international research network on the histories and historiographies of performance art, comprising 20 members from 10 European countries. **Roms** is also on the Academic Advisory Board (Beirat) for the Centre of Competence for Theatre, University of Leipzig (Germany); and on the Advisory Board for the Finland-Academy-funded 'How to do things with Performance' at the Theatre Academy Helsinki.

#### Contributing to health and wellbeing

Our researchers have been influencing the discussion and practice of health and wellbeing, drawing on their understanding of the significance of environment, collaboration, connection and holistic training. **Goldingay's** collaboration with the Institute for Health Research at Exeter Medical School has challenged the dominant linear and individualistic biomedical paradigm of healing, empowering people to consider the control they have over their own health and healing. This has been achieved through working with the Healing Matters network and with the Institute for Integrative Health, Baltimore (TIH), to reassess medical approaches to healing, for instance through the exhibition 'How are you healing?' (Musgrove Park and Southmead Hospitals, 2017-

18). Her series of 7 half-hour Radio 4 programmes concerned a range of subjects connected with holistic wellbeing. **Goldingay's** 'The Problem of Pain' (Radio 4, July 2015) was repeated in 2016 and selected for the BBC's '4 in 4' strand. She has run workshops for medical staff at Blackthorn Medical Centre, Maidstone, Farleigh Hospice, Chelmsford, Southmead Hospital and for Exeter Prison staff on wellbeing through creativity. We also have a Statement of Co-Operation with the University of British Columbia, where **Thomaidis** contributes to a network looking at 'Culture, Creativity, Health and Wellbeing' in another approach to a more holistic understanding of health.

#### Working for social justice

Reflecting our commitment to inclusivity, politics and social justice, the Department has contributed to raising the status and understanding of amateur, participatory and community arts. **Schaefer's** work with ACTA, Appalshop, Dramabox, MED Theatre, Big hART, Sojourn Theatre and others has helped to establish an international network of community performance organisations, exchanging best practice in symposia and in a national festival of community theatre in the UK, which attracted hundreds of participants and involved policy actors such as ACE. **Schaefer** was also invited to the International Community Arts Festival (ICAF) as academic-in-residence in 2014 and 2020. This work has underpinned grant successes for MED Theatre (£207,000) and conference/festival, workshop and seminar activities for ACTA. Research from the policy-facing report *Understanding Cultural Value: The Amateur and Voluntary Arts* (2015) (**Milling** and McCabe), which arose from the AHRC project 'Expert Workshop: Amateur Arts and Voluntary Arts,' is widely referenced in cultural policy documents. **Milling's** work has helped to foreground the significance of amateur theatre within the wider theatre economy, and research by **Schaefer** and **Milling** into grassroots participation has informed ACE's rural arts policy and the AHRC's 'Understanding the Value of Arts and Culture' (2016).

Reflecting our ethical and political commitment, **Hillman's** work with the National Federation of Trade Unions, Banner Theatre, Townsend Productions and Reel News (2015-17) resulted in two well-attended events building links between artists and unions, the larger of which, 'Liberating Arts', was held in the Drama Department in November 2017 (the other was held in the London area). **Hillman's** research was fundamental to bridging the gap between political theatre companies and trade unions, which was a feature of both events. **Beswick** is a board member of COMMON, committed to equality in the performing arts, and conceived an outreach literacy project with the company Phakama in 2015, working with over 40 families on a council estate in Bethnal Green to enhance critical literacy in under-5s. **Hillman** is a trustee for the Future's Venture Foundation, which supports the work of radical artists making ethical work.

#### Contributing to the discipline

Our contributions to research have been recognised through prizes and awards shortlists (**Daboo, Milling, Turner**). **Beswick, Brown, Pearce** and **Thomaidis** were all nominated for TAPRA Early Career Awards in 2019, with **Beswick** and **Thomaidis** shortlisted. Numerous keynotes and guest lectures are testament to the influence of our work, often taking place in interdisciplinary contexts: for instance, **Pearce's** contribution to a conference on Diversity in Domestic African Wildlife Tourism, Rwanda; **Roms'** lecture to Danish museums and galleries; and **Goldingay's** address to the Royal College of Chiropractors, UK.

We have contributed to our discipline through hosting a major conference (TAPRA 2019), and **Newey** also co-convened the Victorian Studies Conference at Exeter (2018). Staff serve on the editorial boards of fourteen journals, and conduct peer review for many more in our discipline and beyond. We edit six book series (**Loukes, Milling, Reilly, Roms, Thomaidis, Turner**). **Thomaidis** received an honourable mention at the ATHE Awards for Excellence in Editing 2020. Six members of staff are members of the AHRC peer review college (**Daboo, Milling, Newey, Pearce, Roms, Schaefer**). **Newey** and **Roms** regularly review for nine further national and international funding bodies. **Newey** is chair of the national subject association (SCUDD); and both **Newey** and **Roms** were founding members of disciplinary associations (TaPRA and Performance Studies International), with **Roms** serving for the second time on PSI's Board 2013-2018. These activities and others (such as convening working groups) reflect our commitment to serving disciplinary research.

By 2026 we plan to connect our creative industries work into a regionally-inspired approach to environmental humanities (kick-started by, but not confined to, **O'Malley's** AHRC Covid-19 Rapid Response grant). We will expand our work with international networks toward shared outputs, contributing to transcultural innovation in performance, curation and pedagogy. Social justice remains at the forefront of our concerns, with growing capacity to address social inequality in terms of race and ethnicity, class and labour, through research teams working collaboratively with external partners. In this way, the next five years will see the unit making an ambitious contribution to challenge-led research, leading initiatives towards positive societal change.