

MORTAL FOOLS

2021- 2022

“Mortal Fools Youth Theatre has become such an important part of my daughter’s life. She has been struggling for a while with anxiety and feeling like she didn’t fit in. At Youth Theatre, the support she has received, the freedom to express herself and use her creative side has helped to overcome a number of life challenges and feel safe to be whoever she wants to be. The opportunities Mortal Fools enable children to experience is fantastic and has opened her up to a new world of possibility.”

Youth Theatre Parent

YEAR IN REVIEW

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A YEAR OF GROWTH,
CREATIVE EXPERIMENTS,
COMING TOGETHER,
ENGAGING, ENABLING
AND EMPOWERING
YOUNG PEOPLE AT A
CRITICAL TIME & EXCITING
NEW PARTNERSHIPS
AND EXPANSION IN
NORTHUMBERLAND...

Kiz Crosbie,
Mortal Fools' Artistic Director
& CEO



“Against the backdrop of a pandemic and upsetting world events, Mortal Fools, like so many other charities, has been working hard to make a positive difference to our communities and the children, young people and families we work with.

2022 brings us to the **10th birthday of the organisation** and while we have certainly grown considerably in size, scope and reach since our inception, there are many of our original values which remain in our DNA. We remain committed working with young people as artists, prioritising those in under-served locations and circumstances and providing opportunities to collaborate with professional artists to make theatre which is relevant to their lives and of such quality that it delights, entertains, and challenges audiences.

Establishing a **second base with YMCA Northumberland in Ashington** late last year marked the start of the next exciting and ambitious 10 years for us. It promises to be one of new partnerships, new innovations and possibilities, new scope and reach and a new community to meaningfully connect with and enable.”



Mortal Fools' Ensemble Young Company
show *Flux* – during a performance in 2022



“Being involved has done wonders for their confidence and they bubble with enthusiasm. They’ve made new friends and through the workshops gained a better understanding of their identity and other people. One of the best things they’ve shared is that the Mortal Fools’ staff team treat them like people and not just teenagers.”

Youth Theatre Parent

YOUNG PEOPLE’S WORK

Youth Theatre session in action

FROM 1ST APRIL 2021
- 1ST APRIL 2022,
MORTAL FOOLS HAS...

Delivered **343** sessions
for young people

Worked regularly with
a core **61** young people

Run **8** regular youth
theatre groups across
Northumberland & online

Worked in partnership
with **Highfield Middle
School** and **The Duchess
Community High
School** running **2**
creative intervention
projects

Secured **2** one off
commissions from **Christ's
College, Sunderland** and
Walkergate Primary School

Hosted **2** Mortal
Fools Youth Theatre
community events

Established a **second base
in Ashington** and began a
strategic partnership with
YMCA Northumberland

Developed new
engagement partnerships
with **Birkheads Wild**
and **NE Youth**.

Filming day
for Flux



"Mortal Fools helped me feel
meaningfully connected to
others and take up space in
my own life; I think that's
something we all covet."

Eliza
Mortal Fools' Ensemble
Young Company Alumni

PROJECTS



**Mortal Fools' Youth
Theatre performing
When This Is Over 2022**

"Without Mortal Fools, the young
people of Northumberland they
co-create their productions with,
would not be the confident and
inspiring people they are.
Mortal Fools are a vital arts
organisation that have
understood what young people
need to thrive.
Their impact is enormous."

Wendy Scott
Cultural Development Manager
at Northumberland County Council

DIGITAL INTERLUDES



CO-CREATED 5 YOUNG PEOPLE'S
LARGE SCALE CREATIVE PROJECTS

LET US
TELL YOU



WHEN THIS
is OVER

MY
PEOPLE

flux

“I have been lucky enough to experience a couple of productions by Mortal Fools over the years and I always leave feeling inspired, thoughtful and incredibly proud of the talent in our region.

What really stands out in their productions is how the voices of local young people, and the issues they face/would like to share, are at the very heart of every production.”

North East Family Fun



Filming a performance of *Flux 2022*



AUDIENCES

Audience watching *When This is Over 2022*

4 performances to 310 people

Shared our first live streamed performance to 393 viewers

Created 36 short films and animations

2,900 views & 195 hours watched on our YouTube Channel

Contributed to 1 film festival

251 listeners (2124 in total since August 2020) of our audio theatre experience, *When The World Is Loud*.

MORTAL FOOLS' YOUNG LEADERS

Performed to **1000+** people at Northumberland Pride and connected with **100+** young people with pop up socially engaged creative activities

Created **1** sound installation and audio poem

Led **2** digital events on youth activism

Led **2** Mortal Fools' social media take overs

Recruited **1 Peer Facilitator** conducting research as part of a National Youth Violence Project – Peer Action Collective – with Youth Focus North East

Young Leaders, **Mark & Maisie**, became Peer Facilitators, trained in Mortal Fools practice delivery, worked towards **Gold Arts Award** and **co-created a film series** sharing co-creation from a young person's perspective.

“Being a part of Mortal Fools over the past year has been a year of exciting new experiences for me. From gaining confidence, to being back on stage in ‘Flux’, learning how to facilitate sessions with young people, and learning what it’s like to make a short film in ‘My People’; the projects I’ve done this year are ones that have inspired me to and have given me memories I will never forget.”

Mark
Mortal Fools Young Leaders and Ensemble Young Company Member



A scene from My People 2022

This strand of our work focused on allyship and creative sector change through listening & learning pathways and career progression in the creative industries.

“Mortal Fools challenge me as a practitioner to do my best work and grow in my skill as a facilitator and artist. They have supported me as an early-career practitioner and continue to do so as I become more established and grow my practice.”

Mortal Fools' Practitioner

CREATIVE CATALYST

First small business to be awarded to be awarded **North of Tyne Combined Authority Good Work Pledge at Advanced Level** in recognition of our commitment to looking after people and social responsibility.

Joined **North East Initiative on Business Ethics (NIBE)**, a membership organisation that celebrates ethical, trustworthy, honest and transparent businesses.

Worked with to **34** freelance artists and small creative companies on the co-creation of our work.

Worked with **8** Northumberland organisations on a research project to understand audiences and cultural participation now and in the future.

Invested into inclusive audience development and developing practices and **participant and audience resources** that **foster brave, safe spaces** enabling folks to engage with Mortal Fools on their terms.

Provided training opportunities for our staff and freelance artists with **Little Cog, Paper Birds, Company Three** and **Ubiquitous Arts**.

5 critical friends supported us & kept us accountable.

Held a week-long company development week, team away days and practice development sessions focusing on business development, sharing learning and EDI work

Dance teacher, charity Founder, disability activist, model, and PR manager **Kate Stanforth**, Executive Producer at Curious Arts **Phil Douglas** and creative facilitator and practice development consultant, **Sue Spencer** all joined our Mortal Fools' board.

Contributed to **7** creative careers events and projects including **BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art Schools' programme** and **NARC music academy**.

MELVA

A fun and accessible creative intervention, supporting children (aged 7-11) and the adults in their lives to talk openly about – and better understand – their mental health, emotions and wellbeing.



"I love Melva. It shows how to solve problems you're having. It gives you solutions that help almost any problem. It helps you understand mental health, realise that you can face your fears and when to tell someone that you are worried."

Lily, aged 10



A Primary School using Melva Digital

National launch event for Melva Digital Programme at Gosforth Civic Theatre

Purchased by 27 schools

Featured in National publications Headteacher Update, School's Week and Teach Primary

Recommended by children's mental health charity, Beyond

Journal Culture Award winner 2021 in Best Arts and Business Partnership category with Vida Creative

Hosted 3 digital showcase events engaging 91 schools & education professionals

Worked with 2 schools to develop and test Melva Digital ahead of launch

Continued partnership with Children North East

Hosted 2 public Melva screenings for families

Led 1 Melva day as part of YMCA Northumberland Holiday Hunger Programme

"I really enjoyed going through this with Lily; it brought up things we hadn't talked about before like what is happening when you feel emotions in your body and how to tell if something has become a 'bad' worrit"

Founder at Yorkshire Tots & Teens, Mum of Lily and ex-teacher



A scene from Melva The Feature Film

CONNECT

Training and professional development programme for organisations, teams, and individuals.

“Our experience with Mortal Fools has been amazing! They definitely deliver leadership training with a difference; it’s fun, impactful and delivers meaningful learning experiences in a very memorable way. We’ve never laughed and learnt so much at the same time”

Nicola Leyden
Director of HR – Muckle LLP

Delivered **69** CONNECT training sessions and **8** open public workshops

1566 training participants

Engaged **126** Regional, National & International organisations

Contributed to **3** conferences

Hosted **3** digital showcases

Featured in **BDaily**

“Extremely interactive and engaging – every exercise seemed to be thought out to metaphorically represent a point that the facilitators were trying to introduce the audience to. I’ve definitely learned a lot about myself, which I think is the most valuable part of this experience.”

Ryder Training Participant 2022



Participants at a Mortal Fools' facilitated session



Supporting us at Mortal Fools, means you are directly investing into young people and their wellbeing during a crucial time when the demand for our work is increasing. As a charity, with mental health as a core objective, you can help us continue our growth by donating to us – you can make a one-off donation or set up a monthly donation.

We know growing up is hard but growing up right now in the contemporary landscape and navigating that whilst struggling with your mental health is very VERY hard. Like many folks working with young people, we've seen our groups go from a significant sized minority experiencing mental health issues to now, where it is leaning towards the majority.

We work with young people who are often struggling in some way – struggling with their mental health, at school or home, with their identity, with what's going on in their life, with confidence or to make sense of the world around them. Some of the young people we work with have a mental health diagnosis, some are on long waiting lists, others are having very natural responses to their complicated lives and others are having a wellbeing dip due to the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic.

Our work at Mortal Fools is about people and enabling them through drama and our creative projects, to grow and evolve into a version of themselves that they want to be whilst supporting their wellbeing. Our work is an early intervention that provides a safe space to be themselves, vulnerable and scaffold towards good mental health.

You can find out more and donate via:
www.mortalfools.org.uk/support-us

**SUPPORT
OUR
WORK**

**MORTAL
FOOLS**

#ItsWhatWeDo

**UNTIL OCTOBER 2022,
YOU COULD SUPPORT
OUR YOUNG PEOPLE
EVERY TIME YOU
SHOP IN CO-OP**

Select Mortal Fools as your cause via:
www.coop.co.uk/membership
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**co
op**



**Thank you to our kind funders –
without whom this work would
not have been possible:**



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