

**School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies
and
Banner Theatre**

**ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL
COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL AWARD**

**Glocal Stories: Investigating the Impact of Participation in Banner
Theatre's Performance-Based Projects**

This AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award offers an exciting opportunity to pursue a fully-funded PhD with a one of Britain's leading Theatre and Performance Studies departments and one of Britain's longest established community theatre companies, with over thirty years experience working with marginalized and disadvantaged communities.

About the Project

The student will refine the research and research methods according to her or his own experience and interests in collaboration with the project supervisors. However, the project has been conceived in relation to the key issues outlined below:

Banner Theatre generate a distinct form of creative, cultural and community intervention that involves documentary-based shows that use a range of multi-media techniques, drama, folk music, slides, oral testimony and video recordings. The company specialises in creating issue-led productions and educational packages to raise awareness of social issues. They are closely allied to the Labour Movement and perform nationally to community and trade union audiences in pubs, clubs and community centres and at rallies, festivals and conferences. Over recent years, they have developed a national and international profile for their work related to the impact of globalization. Recent shows such as *Migrant Voices* (2003), *Wild Geese* (2004) and *They Get Free Mobiles, Don't They?* (2007) have been developed with asylum-seekers, refugees and host communities in Birmingham and surrounding areas to create pieces that explore issues of globalisation, migration, cross-cultural relations, social justice and human rights.

The lead question for the research is: Can processes involved in creating, participating in and viewing Banner Theatre's performance-based and creative educational projects influence a dynamic interaction between perceptions of and the economic, social and political realities of migration, multiculturalism and globalisation in order to enhance social awareness and community cohesion in local and regional communities. During the research, there will be three main target groups for analysis: (a) collaborative partners and bookers (b) participants and (c) audiences. Banner Theatre are booked by a wide range of organisations including Racial Equality Councils; schools, colleges and universities; trade unions; local authorities; festivals; community groups and arts venues. Questionnaires and interviews will investigate the various reasons why these organisations commission Banner, what they hope to achieve by doing so and how they measure success or

failure. Banner Theatre's working method, and performance aesthetic, relies on a commitment to record and show footage of people talking about their experiences, as well as experiments with how to fuse different performance techniques drawn from indigenous and various refugee and asylum-seeker communities. A key concern of this research is to question how and why participants become involved and what experiences they have contributing to projects. Through interviews at the time of recording material, the 'show and tell' performances and after, the project will interrogate the potentially personally therapeutic benefits of participation and the socially beneficial aspects of working in this way. Audience reception research will produce focussed qualitative data for analysis of how people relate and respond to Banner's performance-based work. This will focus on five specific groups: (a) groups of interviewees seeing their stories of migration and asylum told in the performances, (b) families and friends of the interviewees, (c) members of the local host community (d) other audience members (e) people who have organised and booked the event.

This research is likely to focus on the forthcoming piece *The Globalised Workplace* that will be in development from late 2008/09 and will tour during 2009-10. The piece will build on contacts with refugees, workers and trade unionists in the UK to build a new documentary production in the Banner tradition. The creative process will be closely tracked by the research student who will have access to research strategies, information gathering, recording of interviews with participants, the rehearsal period and administrative processes designed to promote the show and secure bookings, as well as performances of the show at a variety of venues in the West Midlands and beyond. A second area for investigation will entail analysis of at least one collaborative partnership within the adult education sector.

This project will make extensive use of the Banner Theatre archive collated and catalogued as one of the eight collections chosen for the Connecting Histories project at Birmingham Central Library.

The School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies

The successful applicant will join a vibrant postgraduate community that includes other AHRC CDA students working in collaboration with Warwick Arts Centre and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. The award holder will be registered for a PhD in Theatre at the University of Warwick and will be supervised jointly by Dr Nadine Holdsworth (Associate Professor in Theatre) and Dave Rogers (Artistic Director of Banner Theatre). The award holder will join an active group of academics and postgraduates engaged in international performance research. The School places a strong emphasis on engagement with the public sphere, internationalism, collaborative and interdisciplinary research, new directions in historical studies and innovation in the dissemination of research. The School is committed to theoretically informed research that looks outward into the public arena in ways that may influence - or intervene in - public perception or public policy. It has identified three major (but not exclusive) strands running through its research programmes.

Research Through Historical Analysis

The School is deeply involved in scholarship derived from new developments in the study of theatrical and performance histories, especially with regard to materials previously considered marginal and to novel approaches to questions of context. This historiographic emphasis brings in issues of theory and theoretical knowledge, demonstrating a richly dynamic engagement across the School in the problematics of historical research in relation to contemporary theory.

Research That Engages Contemporary Publics and Events

A large portion of the School's research is deeply involved in the contemporary moment, as most colleagues pursue an active agenda of engagement in the public spheres of arts, education and the wider culture. The research this generates involves strong socio-political concerns, including theoretical and practical work on ethics, social justice and human rights. It also includes analytical and empirical investigations of cultural movements, policy developments and the uses of creativity, as well as practical collaborations with, and action-based study of, artists and arts groups active in a wide range of public arenas.

International and Global Research

The School is dedicated to international performance and cultural policy research that problematises the concepts of globalization, transnationalism, and internationalism, and seeks to find new research paradigms appropriate to performance and cultural policy world-wide. The staff itself is highly international in character, coming from a number of countries and embracing research specialities that reach across the globe. The international postgraduate community within the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies brings together students from every continent and around 20 countries.

Each term the School holds a series of staff/postgraduate seminars at which staff, postgraduates and visiting speakers give papers. These are co-organised by staff members and postgraduate research students. A regular reading group enables academic staff and research postgraduates to discuss new and exciting critical texts. Each summer term the School holds a postgraduate day at which we encourage all postgraduates to give short presentations on their work or papers that they are due to present at conferences. The School encourages postgraduates to attend and give papers at national and international conferences. Postgraduate research students have in recent years presented at International Federation for Theatre Research Conferences (Maryland, Helsinki, Stellenbosch), the American Society for Theatre Research, Performance Studies International and the Theatre and Performance Research Association Conferences in the UK.

The School has dedicated space in the School for postgraduates to work and study on campus.

Amount of Award

The award holder's tuition fees will be paid by the AHRC up to the standard amount. The award holder will also receive a maintenance grant of £12,940, supplemented by a travel and expenses contribution of £500 from Banner Theatre and a further payment of £500 from the AHRC. The standard length of the award is three years of full time study.

The award will commence on 1 October 2008

Eligibility

Applicants will normally hold, or be studying for, a Masters degree in a relevant subject such as Theatre Studies, Applied/Community Theatre, Drama, Performance Studies, Cultural Policy and Cultural Studies. Given the nature of the project, applications are also invited from those who possess appropriate backgrounds and experience in the social sciences.

All applicants must meet the AHRC's academic criteria and residency requirements, and there are different eligibility criteria for UK and EU residents. Please see:

http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/apply/postgrad/postgrad_details_d/eligibility.asp

How to Apply

Applicants must complete a University of Warwick postgraduate application form, which is available online at:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/apply>

If you require a printed copy of the postgraduate application form please e-mail pg.prospectus@warwick.ac.uk remembering to include your postal address or telephone the Graduate Office on +44 (0) 24 7652 3648.

As part of their research proposal, applicants should indicate why this research project is of specific interest to them and how their prior educational or professional experience would enable them to develop and refine the project as it is currently envisaged.

The application form should be marked clearly with AHRC CDA Application Theatre Studies/Banner Theatre.

Application Deadline

The deadline for receipt of applications is 30 May 2008

Interviews

Interviews for shortlisted candidates will be held towards the end of June. The successful candidate will be required to complete the relevant part of the student nomination form for forwarding to the AHRC by 11 July 2008. Nominations are subject to final approval by the AHRC.

Further Information

Applicants are welcome to seek further information on the research studentship by contacting Dr Nadine Holdsworth directly at n.holdsworth@warwick.ac.uk

About the School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies at Warwick: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/theatre_s/

About Banner Theatre: www.bannertheatre.co.uk

About the Arts and Humanities Research Council: www.ahrc.ac.uk