

IATL Performance Festival Bursary. NSDF Final Report.

Cast and Crew

Ben Kulvichit- Performer/maker
Clara Potter-Sweet- Performer/maker
Emily Davis- Producer
Ciara Shrager- Technical Designer
Nat Norland- Composer



'Let's all celebrate and have a good time' - Kool and the Gang

The world's been getting us down lately. It feels like everything is slowly unravelling, a ball of string hurtling down a hill in painful slow-motion, everyone clutching the frayed end of the roll as if that were helping. The future is murky and uncertain.

Amidst global crises and 24-hour rolling news, we're taking Kool and the Gang's advice. Part-theatre, part-dance party, part-funeral, CELEBRATION aims to give anyone who can't quite believe the world they live in, something to believe in.

Celebration was first performed in the Humanities studio in December 2016, with the support of IATL's student as producer fund.

This show was devised with the aim of creating an hour of joy, influenced by politically unstable times. It is a multimedia, devised two-hander, which takes influence from artworks, games, stories about monsters and made-up folk songs.

On the second night of our performances in December, director Christopher Haydon came from NSDF to judge the show. We received valuable feedback from him, and were lucky enough to be selected from almost 200 entries to perform in Hull at the festival.



Emily was working at the festival on the Management Team, so the IATL bursary paid for Nat, Ben, Ciara and Clara's tickets to the festival.

We crowdfunded on Indiegogo to cover the rest of the costs, such as accommodation and food for the week. For this we offered 'perks' such as personalized poetry, postcards from Hull and homemade 'Zines'.

The National Student Drama Festival was an extraordinary experience. We performed the show twice in one day, in a 300 capacity theatre. We were bowled over by receiving two standing ovations. Celebration won the Festgoer's Award, the Freckle Family Show Award and the Sunday Times Playwriting Award, with Clara also receiving a commendation for best actress.



Praise we received:

"The whole show is a bit like a massive party... a deeply personal, heartfelt and honest piece of performance art." - Joseph Winer, Noises Off Magazine

"A unique and mesmerising cocktail of stand-up, dance, poetry and song" The Sunday Times .

"Ben Kulvichit and Clara Potter-Sweet are like two genius twins that have grown up in an attic full of art history books, *Vogue* magazines and crafting supplies." - Lily James, Noises Off Magazine

The Aftermath

After these performances, we received a message invited to perform at New Diorama Theatre's Incoming Festival in June. We performed on the 11th of June, and sold out the theatre. We'll be taking Celebration back to New Diorama in September for a three-night run.

The chair of judges, Tamara Harvey, also invited the company to perform at Theatr Clwyd for their Family arts weekend at the end of July.

Our next big project, something which has been our aim since the beginning of the show's life, is performing Celebration at the Edinburgh Festival fringe.

At Edinburgh, we have a 17:45 performance slot at ZOO Venues from the 15th-28th August.

In no small part thanks to IATL enabling us to go to NSDF, we have formed a theatre company named Emergency Chorus and intend to continue creating work together, with Ben and Clara as co- devisers and makers, Emily as producer, and Ciara as technical manager.



Thank You

The support of IATL has hugely relieved the financial burden of attending the festival, and allowed us to enjoy the experience of the week without having to worry about the financial burden. The whole experience has kick started what will hopefully be our graduate project. Both the department's initial support for developing the show, and its help showcasing it to a wider audience, has been absolutely invaluable.

We all hope that student companies bound for NSDF continue to apply for the IATL Festival Bursary.

