

Maria Bota OBE Curriculum Vitae

30+ years' experience in the arts, encompassing artistic director, creative producer, chief executive and marketing roles. Experienced within international arts companies, festivals and venues in subsidised and commercial environments. Commissioned, programmed and presented work indoors, outdoors and online, responding to contemporary and heritage settings. Bid consultant.

EMPLOYMENT - Consultant – clients in the past eight years:

- Light Up The North (Strategic Lead)
- Durham County Council (creative programming for City of Culture 2025 bid)
- Wakefield District Council (Year of Culture 2024 cultural programme scoping)
- Oxford Road Corridor (Artistic Director, new Corridor of Light, October 2021)
- Robert F Kennedy Human Rights UK (Director, Artistic Programme, new Ripples of Hope Festival, September 2021)
- Waddesdon Manor (Creative Consultant for new Feast festival, 2015-2020)
- NewcastleGateshead Initiative (bid consultant for The Great Exhibition of the North)
- Morecambe Bay Partnership (Artistic Adviser for public art commissions)
- Sage Gateshead (digital strategy)
- The Space (Associate Producer)
- Milton Keynes International Festival (Creative Producer 2014-2016)
- Birmingham Arts Partnership (Weekender Festival visioning for members and funders)
- Macclesfield Barnaby Festival (facilitation of strategy)
- Glowlife and Ironbridge Museum (artistic mentoring)

Previous employment and development summary:

- Creative Producer (2017-2018) **Great Exhibition of the North**
- Festival Director (Aug-Dec 2013) **Yorkshire Festival**
- Festival Director (2008-2013) **Ageas Salisbury International Arts Festival**
- Transition Consultant for **The Society for the Promotion of New Music** 2007-2008
- Feasibility study for **Newcastle Gateshead Initiative's** Children's Festival (Juice) 2007
- Project start up (Jan-Aug 2007) **Kings Place Music Foundation**
- Fellow (2005-2006) **Clore Leadership Programme**
- Marketing Director/Deputy Chief Executive (1999-2005) **The Bridgewater Hall**
- General Manager (maternity cover, 1999) **Salisbury Arts Festival**
- General Manager (1997-1999) **Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival**
- Head of Marketing, entered as Marketing Assistant (1991-1997) **London Symphony Orchestra**

EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Creative Producer, Great Exhibition of the North 2017-2018

The 80-day exhibition took place across NewcastleGateshead between June and September 2018 coupled with an Inspired By programme across the North. The role led the creative content development of the exhibition over an intensive 12-month period between appointment and programme announcement, working with partners at Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, Sage Gateshead and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. The role oversaw programme delivery across the exhibition.

Achievements

- Co-ordinated the creation of a programme from every county in the North of England with over 10,000 contributors including artists, scientists and innovators.
- Directed the opening event and curated and produced with our team, major commissions in the public realm and three walking trail programmes celebrating Northern Art, Design and Innovation at 30 locations across the city.
- Contributed to fundraising from arms-length bodies and major sponsors, including the securing of creative content from partners LNER and Cisco.
- Managed the team that welcomed 21,000 schoolchildren to the Exhibition.
- Commissioned and directed the opening event, featuring Lemn Sissay, Maximo Park, Kate Rusby, Royal Northern Sinfonia and Darkstar, and the UK's first illuminated drone swarm performance from NEWSUBSTANCE streamed to an audience of tens of thousands through a partnership I negotiated with BBC Live.
- Created a talent development programme called N18 with BBC R&D to enable emerging Northern artists to develop their practice using digital technology.
- We operated an 80-day Event Control throughout the Exhibition to ensure smooth-running exhibits and a consistent, strong offer to visitors.

Developing the vision and curating the programme for the Yorkshire Festival, Aug-Dec 2013

The 100-day festival took place across Yorkshire. Commissions included all art forms with investment across a range of £300,000- £10,000 and an artistic budget of £1.1 million.

Achievements

- Developed and shared an ambitious vision, inspired, initiated and shaped proposals, selected from c400 submissions and ensured buy in from local authorities across Yorkshire.
- Confirmed 26 commissions, including Thomas Housego sculptures, NVA/Phoenix Dance's choreographic/illuminated spectacle Ghost Peloton, Sheffield Doc/Fest's film Velorama directed by Daisy Asquith, music, theatre, dance, land art, community projects and linked resources for schools.
- The programme unlocked match funds of c£525,000 from local authorities and c£500,000 match/in kind support from other sources, taking the overall value to c£2.25 million.
- Worked closely with the Festival's principal sponsor, capitalizing upon employee engagement.
- We commissioned the Festival brand identity and secured a balanced budget.
- Effective handover of projects to the Festival's Executive Producer who led project delivery.

Festival Director (CEO and Artistic Director), Ageas Salisbury International Arts Festival 2008-2013

An annual festival in an historic, rural setting, across 16 days, featuring 150 events, turning over £1.3 million by 2013. The company commissioned artists, presents international, national and local work and a thriving participation programme. The role reported to the Trustees. The Festival included music, theatre, dance, installations, film, major outdoor spectacles, literature, exhibitions, comedy and street theatre.

Achievements

- We re-visioned and re-imagined the Festival, with a focus on transformation of people and places through inspirational work outdoors and major participation work.
- I directed and programmed five multi-arts festivals with an international focus (India, Russia, China, Brazil, Catalonia), each performing better than budget. We increased audiences by over 100% and grew turnover by 50%.
- International visiting companies included Nederlands Dans Theater, Beijing Modern Dance Company, Carles Santos and Cabo San Roque (Spain), Benjamim Taubkin and Morena Nascimento (Brazil), Abhinava Dance Company (India), Orto-Da Theatre Company (Israel), Roger Bernat (Spain), Circa (Australia), Les Commandos Percu (France), Jordi Savall (Spain), the Russian Patriarchate Choir, and Mikhail Rudy.
- Developed a programme of outdoor work including Carabosse's Fire Garden at Stonehenge, and secured membership of the Without Walls consortium.
- Commissioned and produced world premieres, including Jonathan Dove's opera *The Walk from the Garden* in Salisbury Cathedral, Vikram Seth/Alec Roth song cycles, Helen Chadwick/Howard Moody's choral *Where Two Worlds Touch* which set Rumi and other sacred texts by Eastern and Western poets, new exhibitions of Chinese calligraphy and Brazilian street art, poetry from Carol Ann Duffy and outdoor arts such as David Bruce/Vikram Seth's *Fire*.
- Brought sculpture, installations and performances into Salisbury Cathedral that were resonant of the stories and the spirit of the building: Stan's Cafe's *Of all the People in all the World*; IOU's *Long Division*; Ana Maria Pacheco's *The Longest Journey*, Monteverdi's *Vespers* presented liturgically; Chinese shadow theatre in Ted Heath's gardens.
- Introduced a learning and participation function, raising major funds from Natural England, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (for a 3-year residency by AfroReggae) and others to sustain work for and with children and young people, particularly gifted and talented, excluded young people and young carers.
- We secured a new principal sponsor, Ageas, media partner, The Telegraph Media Group, and increased funds from trusts, foundations and individuals by over 300% from 2008 to 2012.
- Worked with arts partners to advocate and ensure sustained local authority support through transition to a unitary council. I retained Arts Council grants, secured Catalyst funds (£120,000) and through the step change in outdoor work, we become part of the Without Walls consortium.
- We launched a legacy campaign and a Festival at Fifty scheme to unlock long-term philanthropic giving towards three strands of the Festival's work over the next decade: *Art to Live On*, *Transforming People and Places*, and *Global Connections*. Within 18 months, we achieved the target, unlocking ACE's contribution for the first three years of the programme.

Project start up for Kings Place Music Foundation Jan-Aug 2007

The role reported to the Chair and the Trustees, with accountability for developing start up artistic, education, business, finance and operational planning. I articulated an artistic mission, opening up local, national and international partnerships; created a business and operational strategy including financial, scenario, project and recruitment plans; drew together the music, sculpture and media partners onsite in a collaborative approach to outreach; developed links with local communities; and instigated market and pricing research.

Clore Leadership Fellow 2005-2006

My secondments focused on creative production and programming, extending my experience of art forms, networks and commissioning: I worked with Artangel on the ground-breaking C4 film and live event in Margate, *Exodus*. I was Associate Producer with Artichoke (Helen Marriage and Nicky Webb) on Royal de Luxe's *The Sultan's Elephant*. I supported Stella Hall at culture¹⁰ on the cultural programme for the World Arts Summit in NewcastleGateshead.

Marketing Director/Deputy Chief Executive, The Bridgewater Hall 1999-2005

We diversified the programme from almost entirely classical music to embrace rock and pop, world and jazz music. The role was across the entire operation of this international concert and conference venue which was operated by Hallogen Limited with a turnover of £7 million and 70 full time and 110 part time employees. Line managed Marketing, Box Office and IT, achieving 365,000 concert attendances a year. Led the programming team from 2004 and participated in the four-strong senior management team. Devised 'Manchester Welcomes' campaigns to leverage sponsorship and profile for international artists including the Israel Philharmonic and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Launched a collaborative marketing approach with resident orchestras which lifted retention of new attenders by 17% and secured City Council investment for a new ticketing system, to enable the Hall to capitalise upon online opportunities.

General Manager, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival 1997-1999

I managed two festivals featuring many world premieres, increased box office income by 40% and attendances by 19%, and we secured £140,000 of Arts for Every One funds to commission and develop audiences. The role reported to Artistic Director and Board, and oversaw delivery of the programme, finance, funding and education activity, line managing a talented team of freelancers.

Head of Marketing (entered as Marketing Assistant, promoted four times) London Symphony Orchestra 1991-1997

The role reported to the Managing Director, Clive Gillinson. Responsible for selling 85 concerts a year, an average attendance of 86% and income of £1.5 million. I introduced Discovery Days, enabling audiences to explore the music, meet the players and hear their stories.

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS National Arts Fundraising School 2022 **Fundraising Programme**; MAST 2021 **Carbon Literacy**; Knowledge Train 2021 **Prince2 Practitioner and Foundation**; ICA:UK 2014 **Participatory Strategic Planning and Group Facilitation Methods**; Cultural Leadership Programme 2008 **Foundation, Dynamics of Leadership Coaching**; London College of Printing 1993-1995 **Chartered Institute of Marketing Diploma**; Goldsmiths' College, London 1986-1989 **BMus (Hons) 2:1**

BOARD MEMBERSHIP The Sunday Boys (2022-); HOME (2015-2019); Without Walls (2012-2013); Quest Ltd (2011-2013); Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (2005-2007); Arts About Manchester (2003-2005).

Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Awarded an OBE in 2019 for Services to the Arts and the Institute Ramon Llull prize in 2013 for the promotion of Catalan culture.