

Application Form for The Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award

Return via email to OSBTTA@barbican.org.uk

Before you apply

In order to prepare your application, please make sure you are eligible. It is very important that you have read the additional information including the eligibility guidelines before completing this application. This preparation will also help you find out what we are looking for, and how to make the best case. Ask yourself the following questions:

Have you read all the additional information?

Do you and your work fit our eligibility criteria?

Does your application fit the guidelines for what kind of work the Award is seeking?

Key Applicant Details

Artist or Company Name
Channing Tatum and Andy Edwards

Project Name
Two Hander

Is proposal for Pit Theatre or offsite?
Pit Theatre

Name of Main Contact
Rohanne Udall

Contact Phone
07913555364

Contact Email
rohanneudall@me.com

How did you hear about the Award?
Artsadmin E-digest

**Have you applied for the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award before?
If so which year and with which piece?**

No

You & Your Proposal

Please provide a brief biography for yourself or your company. You may wish to tell us more about the history of you or your company's work, the kind of work you make, the different art forms your work encompasses, any significant previous work, or any relevant awards and achievements. You may also like to tell us why you or your company specifically are well placed to make the performance that you are proposing. (250 words please do not exceed word limit)

Channing Tatum is the collaboration of Rohanne Udall (London, b. 1990) and Paul Hughes (Nottingham, b. 1991). Trained in fine art, philosophy and dance, they work across visual arts, academia, choreography and performance.

Recent projects:

- *This*, a choreography of slapstick and thought for exhibition spaces, premiered at Rich Mix (May 2018) and more recently performed at Nottdance festival (October 2019).
- Stage performance *Can You Feel It?* – developed with lighting designer Alex Fernandes at PACT Zollverein and DanceXchange, premiering at Rich Mix (October 2019) – that exploits gestures of sensation to question society's desperation for and policing of 'authentic feeling.'
- *Ghosting*, a research project commissioned by LADA at Artsadmin, in which participants transformed themselves into ghosts to haunt institutional spaces (studios, offices, public areas and store-rooms).

Andy Edwards is a Glasgow-based playwright and dramaturg.

His work includes:

- *Let The Music Go On And On And On And On...* Dramaturgy for Carrie Skinner's work about ghosts and disco, presented at Glasgow CCA (July 2019).
- *Tomorrow, Under Snow*, a play about contemporary anti-semitism and holocaust remembrance. Script developed through FIRE EXIT's PYROMANIA Bursary for experimental playwriting and presented as a rehearsed reading at Glasgow's Tron Theatre (May 2019).
- *Arketype*, a retelling of Noah's Ark about patriarchy and climate change, written as Tron Theatre's Mayfesto Writer-in-Residence (May 2019).
- *In Burrows*, an improvised duet with Amy Cheskin about language, description and access, performed in English and BSL. (Assembly Roxy, Edinburgh, March 2019).

Edwards, Udall and Hughes have been friends and colleagues for over five years.

Description of proposed project. You may wish to include information about the narrative, source materials, themes or ideas that are being explored; the staging, design or size of cast; the art forms that are included; any collaborators that you are working or researching with; what the experience will be for the audience or what you think will actually happen during the performance; your development of this work so far. (650 words please do not exceed word limit)

ABOUT

Two Hander sees choreographers and visual artists Channing Tatum (Udall and Hughes) performing every role in the original ten-character play *Swan Song*, written by Andy Edwards. Interrogating the 'script reading', this project seeks to question and innovate a performance form often dismissed as a mere substitute for the 'real thing.'

This project embraces the traditions and clichés of Western playwriting – the bourgeois household, mistaken identity and social revolution – alongside their potential for a choreographic mishandling, replete with tables, scripts and water bottles.

Swansong is:

- a five-act play with interval.
- a drama set in during the 1904 Russo-Japanese war which details the narcissism and fear at the heart of empire politics, and the pre-conditions for revolutionary social change.
- a reframing of Chekhovian drama - the static misery of bourgeois classes - within the threat of catastrophic environmental change.
- a play about how we deal with death (our own, the colonial 'other', and the non-human) when we struggle to look beyond the end of our noses.
- about our desperation to feel important in the face of our increasing irrelevance.

Two Hander is:

- a two-person choreographic mishandling of the play *Swan Song*.
- an exploration of the script-reading as a form of theatrical presentation
- in love with the script-reading's speculative and pedestrian aesthetic; a cluttered set design of paper, tables, chairs, jugs of water; a choreography of chair-swapping, unstaged stage directions, awkward elbows and lamps.
- an exploitation of our (self-)perceived limits of scale. This is a naïve reclamation of the main stage, invoking huge casts and unstageable set pieces far outside the domain of contemporary experimental dance/theatre production.
- a performance that pursues techniques of acting, in/sincerity, gesture and voice in cross-disciplinary exchange that goes beyond the established (or clichéd) forms of 'dance-theatre'.

PROCESS

Edwards and Channing Tatum began this collaborative project in January 2019, using in-kind space from Playwrights' Studio, Scotland. We are committed to further R&D for two weeks in early 2020, at Nottingham Playhouse and Wainsgate Dances, and invite-only readings with Playwrights' Studio Scotland at CCA and Siobhan Davies Dance. This second stage of the project will concretize the form that *Two Hander* will take.

This award take *Two Hander* from R&D to fully realised production: supporting its rehearsal and collaborations with lighting / set designers, musical directors and dramaturgs. This ambitious project addresses notions of scarcity and limitation – but requires the unique support of the OSBTTA in order to meet the challenges it sets out for itself.

THE WORK

Two Hander is a substitute performance and summoning of the unstageable *Swan Song*. It will veer from a 'straight' reading to the increasingly slapstick, as these two performers

attempt to navigate the increasingly ambitious script. Within the overwhelming chaos, moments of beauty, tenderness and clarity will emerge. The performers struggle to transform themselves and their surroundings to match the script's ambition, that seeks to manifest the urgent yet inconceivable realities of colonial reparations and mass climate breakdown.

By opening this process to a network of diverse and expert collaborators, this work will develop and strengthen Udall and Hughes' performance skills in order to fully explore its textural and slapstick possibilities. The resulting work, *Two Hander*, will present an innocuous script-reading that unfolds into a finely-tuned synthesis of voice, song, light, music, gesture, narrative, substitution, articulate confusion, desperation, dance and prayer.

Our projects involve significant research, with audiences responding enthusiastically that it is fun, exciting, and unlike much else they see. We envisage *Two Hander* as being dramatic, hilarious, unexpected and thought-provoking. It will challenge perceived practical, formal and aesthetic limits, and innovate the possibilities of the 'script-reading' for diverse audiences and practitioners. By democratizing the authoritative cultural institution of the play script, and introducing an anarchic challenge to what can take its place on our main stages, this project will foster new processes and understandings for artists working across disciplinary and geographical contexts.

If your proposal is for an offsite location then please tell us what site/type of site you propose and why

N/A

The purpose of the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award is to support the development of practitioners engaged in bold, challenging and innovative performance. How do you think your proposal responds to this brief? (200 words please do not exceed word limit)

Two Hander challenges the traditions of the western canon, alongside wider societal understandings of class and empire, addressing:

- environmental crisis that demands urgent reformulation of modes of production, governance, and our cultural and social relations to global and non-human worlds.
- a much delayed reckoning of the dependance of European 'high-art' – alongside 'more democratic' welfare-state arts funding – on 500 years of European colonial extraction and theft.

Our dissatisfaction with the marginalisation of 'experimental' practice to studio or independent spaces leads us to question how these artists can insist on the presence of their work in major institutions. By working with 'script reading', we are able to engage a playtext and performance ideas that vastly outstrip the practical limitations of most independent performance work. We are interested in the audiences and aesthetic authority of main-stage theatres and the proscenium arch. This project strategically stakes a claim in these aesthetic traditions through the one-step-remove of the script-reading. This unique award would make a strong case for our practices to be directly presented in these spaces; a playful, innovative, and irreverent precedent that opens a crack for other 'experimental' practitioners to enter into those routes of commissioning, production and presentation.

This award is designed to help artists move on to the next level in their artistic practice, by enabling them to be ambitious, challenge themselves and experiment with form and/or scale in a way that has not previously been possible. In what ways

would your proposal achieve this for you or your company? (200 words please do not exceed word limit)

Drawing from our different backgrounds, our process has been characterised by fluidity, experimentation and rigour.

As an early-career professional playwright, much of Edwards' work has been presented to audiences through script-in-hand development performances. Through creative exploration, this project reclaims this form as a rich context in and of itself. *Two Hander* will provide strategies for Edwards' own future practice, and for the wider industries of playwriting and script-development.

Channing Tatum are known for their riotous and critical projects that test the spatial and conceptual limits of materials, contexts and bodies. This project is their first performance addressing text and narrative drama. Working with Edwards will be invaluable in opening this new dimension to their practice, providing a new vocabulary and tools for future contexts and collaboration.

This project represents a significant step-change for Edwards & Channing Tatum; a strategic move to create for mid-scale theatres, while retaining a critical challenge to the canon and its economies. Over the last five years, both artists have produced award-winning projects in response to diverse briefs. We will draw from and develop our unique set of skills, as we take on a scale and context that will shift our practice into new realms.

Have you already carried out any R&D on the proposed project?

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

If yes please give brief details below of when and where this took place.

In 2019:

- One week unfunded work in January 2019 at Playwrights' Studio, Scotland at CCA, Glasgow.
- One week script-writing Autumn 2019
- Half-week unfunded studio practice Winter 2019

Planned for early 2020:

- One week studio practice at Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham (January)
- One week studio practice at Wainsgate Dances, Hebden Bridge (March)
- Invite-only readings at Playwrights' Studio Scotland at CCA (February) and Siobhan Davies Dance, London (April)

Is the show already attached to or associated with another venue, organisation or funder?

No

Learning More About You

As well as reading this application we will do some more research into you and your company. Please use this section to provide us with any links, attachments or details that will aid us in this research.

It's important that we see a CV and/or production history (if different) for the artist(s) or company members – please make sure to attach this when submitting your application

Website/ Facebook Page/ Other Social Media Contacts if applicable

<https://www.channingtatum.info/>
<https://www.andynedwards.com/>

Web links to any show footage or trailers of previous work that would be useful for us to watch in order to familiarise ourselves with your practice

Channing Tatum:

Can You Feel It?, show footage: <https://vimeo.com/377427250>. Password: CYFI?

This, show footage:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=108svth2H6YBw_yRHl0scHSe_D_DzFf5n.

It's Out of Our Hands, video work of 1m29s: <https://vimeo.com/217874112>

Andy Edwards:

In Burrows, show footage: <https://youtu.be/XsY4VC7TpcA>.

Are there any upcoming opportunities to see a live performance or R&D sharing by you or your company? If so, please provide details

15 February 2020: *Two Handers*, invite-only reading at Playwrights' Studio, Scotland at CCA, Glasgow.

Have you received any grants or funding over £1,000 for previous projects? If so, please outline the project, source of funding and approximate amounts

Project: Can You Feel It? (Channing Tatum), June – December 2019

The creation of Channing Tatum's stage performance *Can You Feel It?*, developed at PACT, Zollverein, DanceXchange and Rich Mix. Premiering at Rich Mix.

- Source: PACT, Zollverein (Germany)
Amount: £1600 residency stipend (+ accommodation and travel expenses)
- Source: Project Grants, Arts Council England (UK)
Amount: £14,962

Project: Ghosting (Channing Tatum), October 2019

A DIY commissioned by LADA taking place at Artsadmin, London.

- Source: Live Art Development Agency (London, UK)
Amount: £1600

Project: Here's to... (Channing Tatum), October 2018

A commission from David Roberts Art Foundation for a new work to be performance at An Evening of Performances, Frieze Week, O2 Forum Kentish Town (London).

- Source: DRAF (London, UK)
Amount: £2500

Project: Arketype (Andy Edwards) May 2019

A first draft commission as Writer-in-Residence for Tron Theatre (Glasgow). Presented across two work-in-progress performances during Mayfest 2019.

- Source: Tron Theatre (Glasgow, Scotland)
Amount: £4000 (+residency fee with Archipelago Folk School)

Project: Tomorrow, Under Snow (Andy Edwards) May 2019

A bursary to write a new piece of experimental playwriting, presented at Tron Theatre.

- Source: FIRE EXIT (Glasgow, Scotland)
Amount: £1000

Project: In Burrows (Andy Edwards), March 2018

A project experimenting with the integration of BSL performance onstage, culminating in two performances at Tron Theatre (March 2018)

- Source: GCAN (Glasgow, Scotland)
Amount: £2500