

## Ideas to help deliver the Strategy

Responding to the brief you sent me and our conversation in Stratford, below are 14 ideas that may be of interest.

### **Embedding a sense of ownership**

Promoting a sense of ownership, members of the local population will be invited to help construct the building. Their jobs could be as minimal as laying a brick or they could be given more complex tasks.

RSC would invite people from:

- Local schools & colleges,
- Community groups and residents
- RSC employees
- Local businesses.

As a part of their visit people could also take a tour of the building site and look at plans.

If it's not too late, young people could also be invited in to help destroy the old building. It could be fun and would probably make a nice PR story.





In addition to this involvement members of the community could embed objects, letters, and artworks in the walls of the building in special cavities. A sheet of glass or discrete door viewer embedded in the wall could be used to allow visitors to see the contents when they visit. In many years to come an old lady might say, come and see the hidden drawing I made when I was 10. An artist could work with these groups to make and help select what goes in.

The benefits of both of these ideas would be to:

- Instil a sense of ownership in the local population.
- A chance for RSC to meet and connect with young people– potential new audiences.
- Connect the onsite builders with RSC employees and local population
- Revealing the process of construction to everyone.
- Possibly dispelling any tension that may have arisen between local businesses and residents disturbed by the noise of construction.
- People can say 'I helped build that – I put that brick in'. Again this would be used to help instil a sense of ownership in the building.

### **Creation of a new website RSC-Digital.** . [www.RSCD.org.uk](http://www.RSCD.org.uk)

Reaching new audiences around the world RSCD would be the global centre for international study and appreciation of Shakespearian theatre.

Having a separate site to the current RSC website would limit any confusion for visitors who just want to look at the diary of events or buy a ticket. It also means the site can be phased. A prominent link between sites would be made.

With a new website the RSC may engage larger and more diverse audiences.

The new website would do the following.....

1. It would be a vast recourse of materials for the general population and anyone who wants to stage a play – text, directions, props and clothing requirements, lighting suggestions. This may replace any sense of elitism or valued hidden knowledge the public may have about of the RSC, with a feeling of openness and sharing.

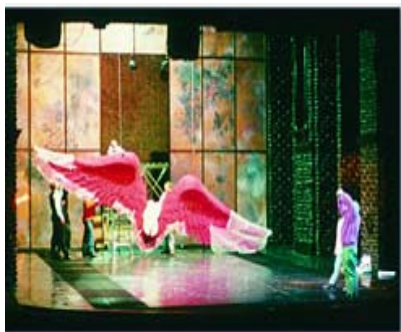
2. This website would connect and promote all the Shakespearian theatres and festivals around the world. Links to other sites could be here together with small description of the major theatres and festivals occurring around the globe. This online connection may be used to strengthen the links between the RSC and other theatres and festivals around the world. It may help to breakdown some of the barriers 'of them and us' between the RSC and smaller theatres and festivals. (If this feeling exists)

3. Footage of plays would be uploaded by companies from around the world. It would be freely accessible to anyone to watch (A kind of You-tube for theatre). RSCD would be the central online location to watch this footage. It might be interesting to search and observe the differences between different productions of Hamlet for instance.

In this way a sense of connectedness and shared international vision could be promoted.

4. IPod Downloads of plays and interviews.

5. Webcams



Live webcams could be installed in the theatre to reveal the backstage workings of the RSC. Views of hair & makeup being done, clothing being made, main stage, could all be made publically accessible. Certain views of plays being rehearsed could be shown to act as teasers to a play

## **Use of local Television**

RSC may consider putting footage and plays on local digital television. With a digi-box there is a community TV Channel – 301. These programmes may be used to promote the latest season of performances.

## **Younger Actors = Younger Audiences?**

Regional and national theatre companies (run by young people) could be invited to use the theatre to present their own shows. The RSC could support them to make their productions, enabling the company members to grow and learn from their experience.

The RSC could also make stronger connections with regional and national drama colleges. Whilst connecting with these young acting communities, new younger audiences would likely attend these performances

## **New Summer School**

A new range of summer schools would be set up for young people during the school summer holiday. Different schools could be run for different age ranges. 7- 15yrs. 16-25yrs 26- 44yrs

The summer school would be promoted in specific local community groups/schools & colleges to match the preferred new audiences.

The school would involve

- Producing plays.
- Attending an RSC production with their parents.
- Workshops in costume, prop making, set design etc.
- Talks by young actors.
- Accommodation supplied- this may be easier for parents from Birmingham.

## **RSC goes Local**

To attract a broader spectrum of the population, a number of small productions would be delivered to the public's door.

These small productions would tour to the usual schools and colleges but could also be held outdoors performances in public parks of the city.

Locations would be selected according to the BME groups it would like to visit the theatre. With this in mind performing in Birmingham would be a good idea.

The visits could also advertise the new website and new summer schools.

The RSC would also work with local immigrant workers in local farms to stage their own play which could be performed in the theatre.

Alternatively an RSC production could be performed at one of the farms or the workers could be brought in on coaches to see a production?

### **Mobile Phone Acting Competition.**

A few thousand beer mats are to be printed and distributed to pubs and bars across the country. One side of the mat will be the competition details, the other will be an excerpt from a well known play. There may be 7 different plays presented on seven different beer mats. The context for the excerpts will also be described on this side of the mat.



Using their mobile phones the public will be asked to film themselves and their friends delivering the script as best as they can. They can spend as little or as much time as they like making their film.

They can then upload their short films onto the RSCD website where they can watch other people's acting attempts.

The public can then vote for their favourite film by viewing films online and the winner will receive a prize.

Project would be kickstarted by promoting the project in a few Drama school student bars, local schools etc.

### **Overheard conversations**

100 performances like this could take place on trains and buses, in the supermarket, laundrettes, in nightclubs and pubs across the region.

Trying to be discrete, a conversation between two people would take place that the members of the public sitting nearby would overhear. The conversation spoken in contemporary language would be based on a Shakespearian play.

It would be the sort of conversation that would be impossible not to want to overhear.

***"I realise I shouldn't have but he kept whispering to me telling me how beautiful and clever I was. I couldn't resist, and you should have seen her eyes..."***

The conversation could alternatively be performed by one actor having a phone call with someone at the other end of the line.

***"Calm down.... you didn't mean to do it.... I'll get off at the next station and get the next train back. Don't what ever you do phone the police..."***



At the end of the train journey or performance, the actors could behave like anyone else in the space, or they could come clean and thank the audience for their kind attention!

These performances could be used to promote the latest RSC production with actors handing out fliers after their public performance.

### **Benefits.**

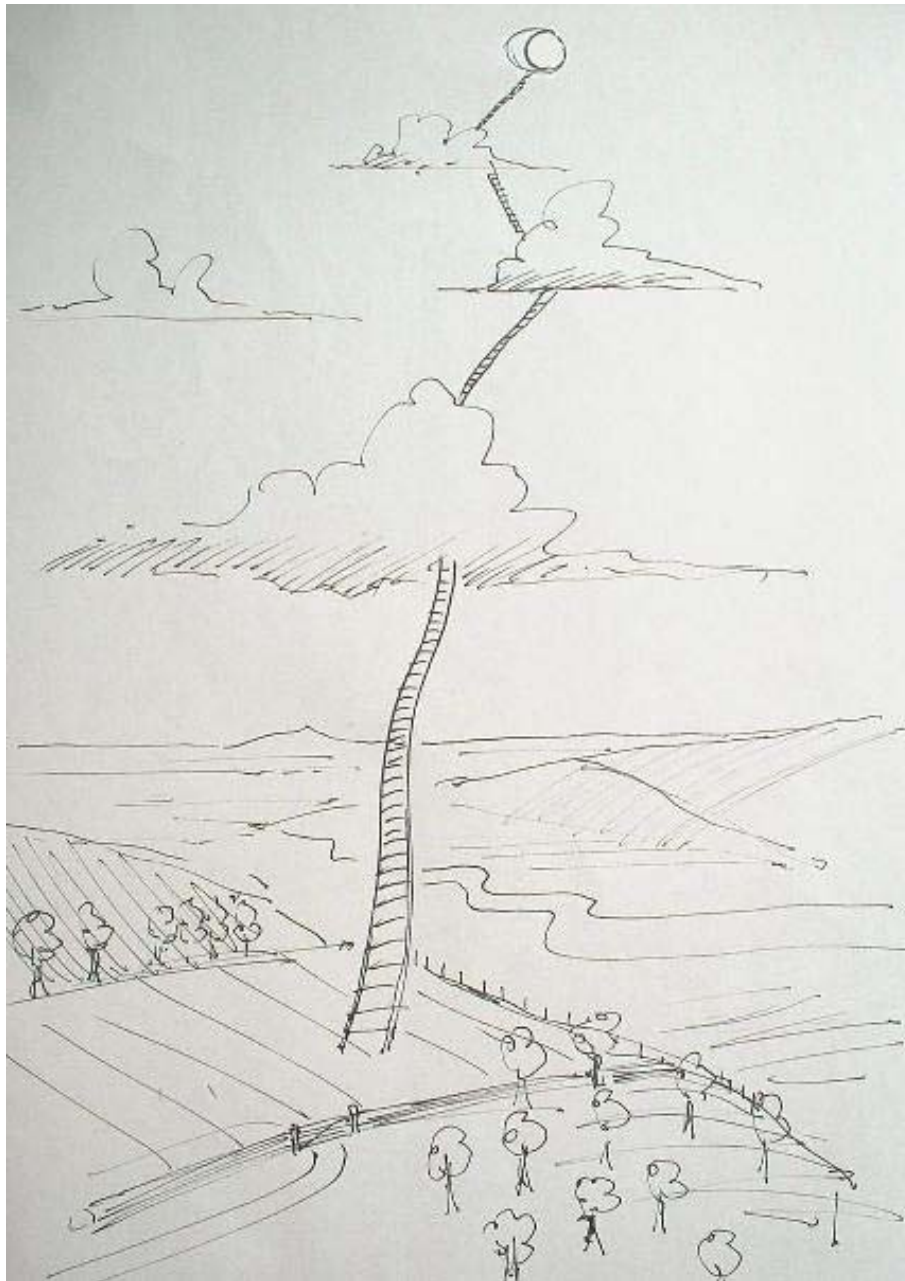
- In the public domain so can choose your audience
- Only involving 1-2 actors.

- Used to promote the latest RSC production

## Ladders of Shakespeare

There are few references to ladders in Shakespeare's work during some of the war scene. The ladder can also be considered metaphorically within his works. Characters are commonly battling against and scaling social hierarchies.

This is a large scale ladder that's designed to stretch from the ground to the sky.



The ladder is made of inflatable fabric and filled with helium.

## Prospero's Library

This library is embedded in an overgrown garden as though it's been lost in time.



The bookshelves and books are all made of colour impregnated cast concrete. From a distance they look real. Books similar to those that Prospero would have in his library, will make up the collection. Cast to reveal all the embossed details of the books they will weather well with moss and Ivy growing over them.

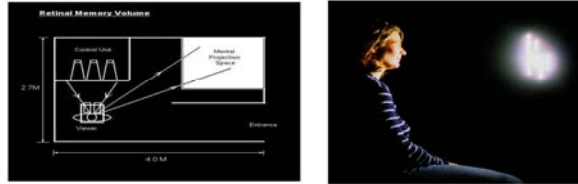
### **3D Immersive theatre lighting - Collaboration.**

To date, the patented retinal after-image lighting I've developed has only been used in an installation context creating a three dimensional multicoloured chair. Since its creation in 1997 the artwork has been seen by 1/2million people in 11 different festivals around the world. People find the experience exhilarating, visually very beautiful and technologically interesting.

Flash guns pass light through a stencil to create a series of after-images that fit together like a jigsaw on the viewer's retina. Strobe

lights come on in the room and the image is then solidified and is seen externally to the viewer's body. The chair floats life-size in the corner of the room.

*Retinal Memory Volume 1997*



*Building virtual sculpture within the mind of a viewer using retinal after-image technology.*



But any object can be built. Vast landscapes that are larger than the stage can be created out of light that only exist in the viewer's vision.

By making hand held lighting units, light from photographic flash guns can be used to create virtual after-image forms. (As below) This drawing below shows a basic circle being made in parts. Once created the circle would change colour from blue, to orange, to green and would move on stage where ever the audience were to look.



In 2006 this special light suit was made for Electric Pavilion. Similar suits or clothing could be made for an RSC production.



## Collaborations

- The lighting could be developed for an RSC production that is already in the pipeline.
- Work with a contemporary theatre company like sound and fury' (Dan's company) who stage productions in pitch darkness.
- Work with the Dancers Akram Khan and Sidi Larbi. I met them and saw their production Zero Degrees at the Sydney Festival. <http://www.akramkhancompany.net/>

The performance was both stunningly complex and controlled yet simply presented. The way in which they worked with and integrated the sculptural work of Antony Gormley and music Nitin Sawhney was inspiring.

Watch this film..... <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jKpVKJdWyI>



**Stages of the projects development.**

At each stage, there would be no obligation to take the development further.

1. Show you and some of your colleagues a fold up working version of the lighting I use for lectures.
2. Two weeks R&D to develop a prototype with lighting team at RSC.
3. demonstration
4. R&D with the lighting for a production
5. production.

### **Through Shakespeare's Eyes**

A series of undervalued parks or gardens in the area will be transformed to visualise Shakespeare's poems. The gardens will try to replicate each detail of the poem, allowing visitors to see the landscape as Shakespeare may have done. In this way the public may get closer to his work.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:  
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight.  
***A Midsummer Night's Dream (2.1.255-60)***



### **Sky Orchestra Grounded - Use of RSC Composition**

After we flew over Stratford, Ontario in 2007 the following day we held another event for the public to enable them to listen to the composition in full.

We set up the Sky Orchestra kit and spread it around the edges of the lake. At 5pm the sound track began and a large audience gathered on an island in the centre of the lake to be bathed in Dan's surround sound composition. It worked very well and the acoustics were amazingly immersive.

The event was advertised locally as being a chance to listen to the Sky Orchestra composition in full. We'd do the same in Stratford, UK.

A few hundred people attended. Some brought chairs, picnics and a few came by boat. Everyone fell silent as the music began and were kept spellbound for an hour by Dan's music.



The event could be a one off or could run every evening for a week.

### **Benefits.**

- The composition is written and recorded
- We have all the kit we need.
- Easy and inexpensive to make happen.
- Reminder of Sky Orchestra in 2006.

**Gateway to Shakespeare Country.**

Throughout Shakespeare's plays and sonnets there are many references to the flowers native to Stratford and Warwickshire.

This large scale public artwork creates a number of gateways to Shakespeare country by planting these flowers along the major roads into the area.



Here's flowers for you;  
Hot lavender, mints, savoury, marjoram;  
The marigold, that goes to bed wi' the sun  
And with him rises weeping: these are flowers  
Of middle summer, and I think they are given  
To men of middle age.  
***The Winter's Tale (4.4.122-7)***

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:  
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight.  
***A Midsummer Night's Dream (2.1.255-60)***

When daffodils begin to peer,  
With heigh! the doxy over the dale,  
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;  
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

***The Winter's Tale (4.3.1-4)***

Sir, the year growing ancient,  
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth  
Of trembling winter, the fairest  
flowers o' the season  
Are our carnations and streak'd gillyvors,  
Which some call nature's bastards: of that kind  
Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not  
To get slips of them.

***The Winter's Tale (4.4.92-9)***



Each major road into the county could have an gateway or

alternatively just one major road could be transformed, creating a 5 mile long gateway. Drivers would pass a mile of lavender, a mile of daffodils, a mile of poppies etc. Species will be chosen to create an ever changing vibrant landscape that alters over the course of the year.



Winding down a window, visitors will be able to appreciate the smell of the flowers as they pass.

The stretch of road would become iconic in the same way other public artworks along the motorway have become.



**Partners in the project would be:**

- Halcrow & Highways agency– delivery of artwork
- Horticulturalist – use and type of species
- Luke Jerram – lead artist
- RSC – advise about the text
- RSC - project management

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