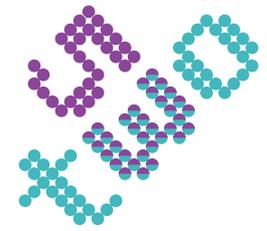


Cherylee Houston
Actor

I have been an actor based in Manchester for over twenty years, I've observed and been part of the Fringe Theatre scene for all that time, because of my disability I have often found venues are either physically or metaphorically inaccessible to actors with disabilities.

53two is neither of those, they have welcomed us and incorporated us into their work, this is making a massive cultural shift in the Manchester Fringe scene. They have kindly hosted our Disabled Artists Networking Community for free, making strong connections for our many members to enable them with the possibility of producing their own work and a venue to house it - something which hasn't previously been possible in Manchester. They have also hosted our Manchester Mental Health Choir, Bee Vocal when we have been at a loss for a rehearsal space, this grass roots community work is fantastic as it's also connecting people from Manchester who wouldn't usually visit the theatre and showing them there's different work out there that is much more applicable to their own experiences.

Disability aside Manchester Fringe has been desperate for a venue like 53two to come along, it brings Fringe to the heart of the city, it also provides a venue which bridges the much needed gap between the main producing houses and the Artists who are creating their own work.



OLDHAM
Coliseum
THEATRE

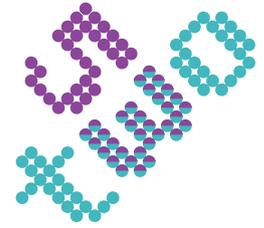


As Associate Director of Oldham Coliseum I am continually looking for ways to expand our reach and capture new audiences with innovative and extraordinary productions and ideas. Since their opening, Oldham Coliseum have forged an incredibly strong relationship with 53two, often using them as a springboard for some of their smaller productions to make their way to our bigger house, whilst also using their network to extend our reach to Manchester city centre with workshops and classes for their captive audience.

53two have made a huge difference to the fringe scene and have begun to bridge the gap between the main producing houses and the smaller, less recognised theatres, producing quality theatre with professional actors at a level that is demanding respect - forging new pathways between larger theatres like ourselves and those houses that previously struggled to connect to a mainstream audience. Their motivation to include minority groups, engage and interact with patrons outside of the perceived 'theatre audience' is admirable and making for real changes in the independent theatre scene in Manchester.

Chris Lawson

Associate Director of
The Oldham Coliseum Theatre



ITALIA CONTI ACTING

AVONDALE, 72 LANDOR ROAD, CLAPHAM NORTH, LONDON SW9 9PH
Tel: 020 7733 3210 • Email: acting@italiaconti.co.uk • www.italiaconti-acting.co.uk

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing from the Italia Conti BA (Hons) Acting Course, London.

We have forged fantastic connections with 53two since its beginnings some 2 years ago. In their initial set-up plans, Simon contacted us to offer us a space in which to hold auditions for a new intake. We have now used 53two for 2 intakes and doing so has allowed us to open the doors to a plethora of different potential students from the North of the UK, who may not have otherwise been able to afford the cost of travelling and staying in London to audition. Providing this is an invaluable resource for us in extending our reach and managing our accessibility and diversity criteria.

On top of this, each year 53two have offered a small £250 bursary for a student that successfully auditioned in Manchester, to be given to them upon entering their 3rd year of training to support them financially with headshots and Professional Preparation costs.

Their support of us, and in particular, opening doors to potential students outside of our catchment; both financially and geographically, is second-to-none.

As a presence in the industry and certainly to our training programme, 53two is a vital asset in continuing to grow a more diverse training culture and accessible platform in the arts.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry Beverstock
Head of Student Services and Programmes Co-ordinator
Italia Conti Academy
BA (Hons) acting and CertHE Intro to Acting

Avondale
72 Landor Road
London
SW9 9PH

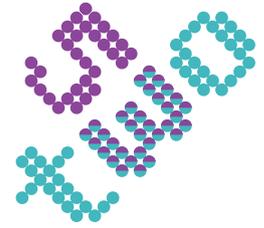
BA (Hons) Acting
Certificate of Higher Education – Introduction to Acting
Programmes validated by The University of East London



HEAD OFFICE : ITALIA CONTI HOUSE, 23 GOSWELL ROAD, LONDON EC1M 7AJ
DIRECTORS A.M. Sheward, G.J. Sheward, S.L. Newton PRINCIPAL S.L. Newton

Reg. in England No. 415672 Registered Office: 45 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JG

An offer in this letter does not constitute a contract



As a disabled person I find access to venues - and theatres particularly - difficult in my City of Manchester. To find somewhere that I can access so easily and am welcomed so equally is almost unique. I wrote this to express my feelings.

“Life’s just tea and beer.”

I could die peacefully if I could fall in her arms tonight.

**Mr. Ben Jangles is a cripple who dances to discorded tunes,
53two flashes in rainy night neon.**

There’s a pretty woman; she exclaimed “Life’s just tea and beer baby,” to Ben.

He could die peacefully if he could fall in her arms tonight.

There’s another disabled guy who society defines disabled, so he hops from one chair to the next in order to show he’s not.

Mr. Ben Jangles is a cripple who wears baggy pants and worn out shoes. Why? Because life has worn them shoes down and hip hop made his pants baggie.

53two flashes in rainy night neon.

**He’s the flyest bar-fly there is - he’s always on trial for being born,
except when he’s wearing out his shoe leather inside these 53two walls.**

**He met a pretty blond who looked him in the eyes and said, “Life’s just
tea an’ beer - some get more beer than tea - that’s just life baby.”**

**Mr. Ben Jangles walks the streets alone, he sees the lovers kissing, knowing he’s doomed to
always be the watcher, never one of the lovers in this scene that was written in his
contract way back when the Rubiks cube was king.**

Nevertheless he has most able feelings in his veins and emotions in his eyes.

He could die peacefully tonight if he could just fall into her arms.

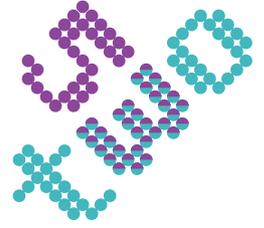
**He sees 53two flashing in rainy night neon. They’ve got many chairs for him to try - it’s like
the three bears all over again, and they’ve also got a groovy yellow ramp. “The sun made it
so, baby,” said the pretty blonde.**

Life’s just tea some days an’ beer on others.

“You can get it all under the 53two roof,” she happily exclaimed to Mr. Ben Jangles.

Peter Keeley. Poet.





When both sides surrender.

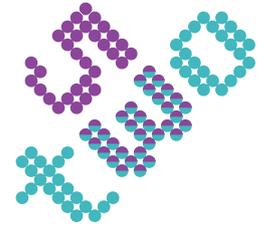
I'm not going to beat about the bush. This play is a masterpiece. The way the spoken word arrives in your ears is Shakespeare I can understand. I was left with incredible clarification on what we need to do to have peace and kindness come into our human condition.

The writing is superb. No. Sorry. The writing is genius. Of course new writer Scott Devon was given the opportunity by 53two. The acting is superb and the director has managed to mine every truth, no matter how hard to swallow, out of the piece. Add that to the actual space it is performed in makes me think I was at the birth of a new beginning. I missed the 60s. My mam and dad had me in 67. Earlier copulation would have me experiencing the swinging sixties cultural revolution and England winning something at football. Well, apart from Andy Warhol walking into tonight's performance and chatting in the bar.

I think I've just experienced the new cultural revolution and it looks and sounds bloody great. It started in Peters Field at 53two.



Steve Garti, Actor & Critic



53Two has quickly become a vital component in the arts ecology and economy of Manchester and I was saddened to hear of its need to vacate its current home in the arches. It has provided a high quality and supportive platform for both local and touring productions as well as being a home for important fringe-level, cabaret, poetry and musical performances and artists.

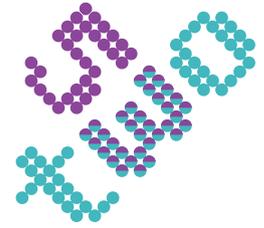
This is a level, scene and network that is vital for emerging artists, for sustaining established artists, and one for which audiences are not hugely well served elsewhere in the city centre. It is in such venues that the skills are gained, the ideas are developed and the relationships are built that makes Manchester the world renowned centre for the arts that we must remain.

I'm happy for my name to be added to the call for all possible support to be co-ordinated for 53Two to find a new city centre home from which to thrive. These are good people doing good things for the city and the arts and I wish them every success.



Tony Walsh, Poet & Performer

D.Litt (Hon), FRSA Winner: Performance of the Year, Manchester Culture Awards 2018.



For the last 14 months I've been Resident Assistant Director at The Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, part of the Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme (RTYDS). It's providing me with many opportunities to assist directors on some big shows such as *Guys and Dolls* and *Mother Courage*. I've also worked with the theatre's young company directing *The Tempest*, a summer, site-specific production, which I also adapted. And recently, I directed Contact Theatre's Christmas show *The Forest of Forgotten Discos*. So, you may be thinking: what are you complaining about?

I am a director in training and eventually my RTYDS placement will be over. I still have things to learn, and I want access to opportunities to do that. Let's start with the lack of access into theatres, particularly pub and fringe venues. These are spaces where, if I was able to see work as my non-disabled peers do, I could absorb new ideas, put work on and learn my craft.

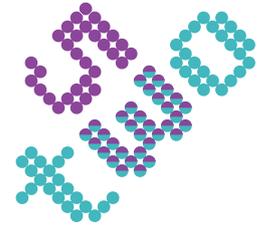
There are some accessible spaces, some making an attempt to be, such as 53two in Manchester, Trinity Centre in Bristol and Oran Mor in Glasgow, but very few. As frustrating as this is, what is more shocking is that it doesn't stop there. I can't access some of the finest theatres in the West End and elsewhere in the country. Or if I can, then the wheelchair spaces are so high up in the theatre I miss a lot of the action.

On a more positive note, by working with various deaf and disabled creatives we are developing unique skillsets and leading the way in combining creativity with access.

Today, using everything at my disposal and standing on the shoulders of giants, I can work towards shaping the cultural landscape, help to wedge open doors, start to change perspectives and provide the next generation of deaf and disabled theatre-makers with the world as their stage. You can too.



Nicola Miles-Wilden



“ This space is vital to the theatre scene in Manchester. It’s helped so many people be creative, put on their work, work in general!! It’s not just a ‘space’ it’s a community building with many relationships being formed whether it be friendships or work related. We need this place to continue in Manchester as so much exciting, new, emerging theatre is created here and it has a home to show to the public!

Anyone investing, sponsoring, funding this building are doing so in the knowledge it’s going to thrive, hundreds and thousands of people will be walking through that door and opportunities given to many who wouldn’t get it.

I could literally go on forever about all the positives this place has and gives to so many. As someone who puts on a regular show here (MonologueslamUK) I love the fact it’s in a place like this and not a main stream theatre that all the other uk shows are in. The atmosphere, the organisation, the welcoming are second to none! I hope their work continues as I will for sure be booking our Autumn show here once it’s up and running in its new home!! ”

Vicky Connett-Philips

“ 53Two provides opportunities for new actors, writers and directors to develop and practice their craft. It is a melting pot of creatives from around the North West. It provides an essential space for new voices to try new works and develop them. I believe the work of 53Two is essential to support new up and coming talent and on a personal level it provided the opportunity for my son (19yrs) to perform in a short play that has the potential to open up his career, an opportunity that without 53Two just wasn’t there. ”

Allen Thomasson

“ Been to 53two on a number of occasions and found it to be a great experience. The productions were superbly performed and directed. The atmosphere is like sitting in your own front room and a travelling theatre group perform for you. It’s a place that people who have never seen a show on the big stage can go and experience it close up. It’s a place that’s needed in Manchester to give would be actors a chance to show what they can do. Simon Naylor and 53two bring shows to people who would not normally go to a big theatre. It’s a small and intimate place with big productions. ”

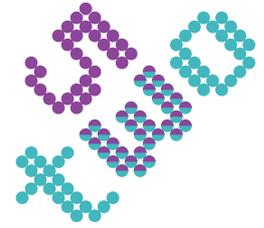
Arnie McNally

“ I have watched Pinter and a couple of newly penned pieces at 53two which says it all about what you want from a theatre. A good mix. The immediacy of the plays to the audience also gives 53two an unrivalled uniqueness. ”

Charlie Parker

“ Innovative, challenging, an important part of Manchester’s improving cultural scene. ”

Robert Howell



“53Two has been fundamental in my development as an actor and writer. I've attended training courses (screen acting, improvisation and Meisner), I've delivered audition pieces for Monologue-SLAM and, most importantly, I've seen a lot of great plays under the arches. As a venue for the Manchester Fringe and JB Shorts I've seen ground-breaking, cutting-edge, culturally relevant theatre on both of its stages. I am not aware of another theatre in the country that provides the range and depth of theatrical performance offered by 53Two.”

Johnny Temple

“I have attended many courses at 53Two as well as been able to perform there. Their courses are great value for money, easy accessible and well run. The support you get from the venue and staff when performing there or putting your own production on is flawless. They are committed and helpful and most importantly approachable. They give a performance space to people to showcase their work, and a relaxed atmosphere to network with other creatives.”

JP Smith

“I particularly like the intimate feel of this venue which allows lower budget productions to come alive. JB Shorts is a favourite which really benefits from this environment. I strongly support the continuation of such a venue.”

Paul Brown

“Having visited 53Two on a number of occasions, it is clear to every theatre goer that this venue is a cut above the rest. The passion, dedication and professionalism that goes into every event is second to none.”

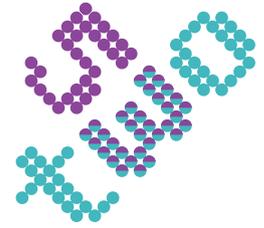
Lauren Tritton

“53 Two provides a wonderful opportunity for writers and actors alike to show off their skills. Also, for the patron, it offers a homely personal experience not found at the mainstream large theatres. The Manchester art scene would be much poorer if 53Two wasn't in existence!”

Raymond Floyd

“I rate 53two above many other venues - it's small, quirky and friendly and can be relied on to present a wide range of events. I'm not aware of anywhere else in Manchester that offers so many nights of short plays and new material, and if 53two were unable to secure new premises it would leave a severe hole in my social/cultural life!”

Susan Barker



“53two has added to my development as an actor and as a person. The facility it provides for both education and entertainment of the people of Manchester is second to none and is done with none of the elitism that can be a problem in the arts. It must not be lost.”

John Jones

“I associate the start of my relationship with this theatre space around the same time as I set up my own actors agency and because of that it will always have a special place in my heart! I have never had a close knit relationship with a theatre space before, I suppose when I think about it that's quite an unusual thing to have but this company has without a doubt helped to not only support, encourage and stabilise my business but also it has allowed me as a person to grow in confidence knowing they are always there as a family, it is my Manchester home and will always be somewhere I treasure going to and for that I feel extremely lucky!”

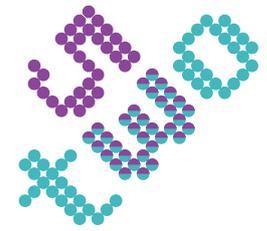
Alex Priestley

“As a producer I know that 53two is meeting a need. Before it existed there were very limited options for producing affordable theatre in Manchester. Hire costs were just too high. A lot of new shows have been made that wouldn't have been made. And these have reached new audiences with their affordable ticket prices. 53two is also a hub for creative talent to get support and a sense of community. On a personal note, I've also been able to develop and practice my skills as an actor. This has both been through training provided there and through performing on the 53two stage. They were able to offer training at an accessible affordable rate, presumably in part due to having their own venue. I would not have been able to afford the alternative training options available in Manchester. This training has meant so much to me and has transformed my life. Thank you for the incredible support of Simon, Alex and every member of the 53two team.”

Diana Atkins

“Since I have been going to 53two, it has changed a part of my life in a special way. Apart from seeing some truly amazing plays there, my social network of people, I have met in the industry I choose as my career, has grown. I feel 53two has become a comfortable, friendly venue I can visit, even at times alone, yet feel safe and secure to enjoy an evening out which is affordable and in atmosphere which I feel is a perfect environment. 53two is a versatile venue. It can hold theatre, film evenings, parties and celebrations. I have been visiting 53two for the past couple of years and I have had the honour of being involved in the film challenges there. The staff and management of the venue have worked hard to make it what it has become, and we appreciate all the hard work that has gone on behind the scenes to make 53two what it has become. I for one, would be sorry to see 53two go. It brings too much fulfilment to many people's lives, on many levels.”

Joanne Venet



“ I have regularly attended a number of events at 53Two since it opened. I have always found the welcome to be incredibly warm and friendly and the atmosphere vibrant. As a writer I have had the privilege to have some of my work staged here. If it wasn't for 53Two and the encouragement they provide I would struggle to find similar venues where my work could be staged. Venues like 53Two are part of the backbone of Fringe Theatre in Manchester, encouraging under represented groups and individuals to be able to access theatre and develop their skills as creatives and performers. 53Two has continued to push the boundaries and raise the standards of theatre in Manchester. They have given opportunities to so many people of all ages and different ethnic, cultural and class backgrounds, who otherwise would have difficulty in finding outlets for their creativity. Audiences love the venue and have responded to the preparedness of 53Two to present plays and events at affordable prices which are difficult to access elsewhere in the city. It is vitally important that 53Two finds another venue to continue this brilliant work. ”

David Jones

“ 53Two is essential to Manchester theatre as an accessible, supportive and welcoming venue. Speaking from my own experience, 53Two nurtures early-career artists giving them a wealth of opportunities to explore every avenue of their creativity. It's a safe space to try out new work, make mistakes, have triumphs and champions a sense of community. Personally benefitting from their support in helping me put on my first show outside of training, 53Two have helped me to grow in confidence. Thanks to their support I've been able to write another play and have a scratch showing and grown in confidence enough to send my work elsewhere as well as to festivals and competitions and take part in response nights. 53Two is truly for artists. ”

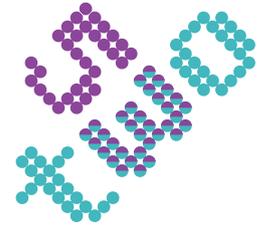
Chloe McLaughlin

“ As a newcomer to Manchester in late 2016, it was immediately apparent that 53Two was an essential part of the theatre scene in the city. Without it, I feel like a good third of what the city has to offer on the fringe would immediately disappear. It has become a hub and a home for many, and more importantly a place that graduates and young/new theatre-makers can use as a spring board and a place to grow. They consistently try new things and launch new initiatives to help those that need it and make theatre more accessible, and are respected as a venue by the industry on all levels. ”

Gareth Bennett-Ryan

“ Well, where do I start? As well as being lovely people, they are supportive of so many types of performance. The Arches are always busy entertaining Manchester. They have been so supportive of my writing and the writing of many emerging playwrights. Many thanks to them and I think it is such a shame that they are losing the Arches... I hope 53two continues in its next manifestation! ”

Aisling Caffrey



“ It’s thoroughly important to have such a central collective hub where creatives alike can produce next generation theatre to the public. We are aviators and pioneers of this age taking to the skies by opening people’s imagination. To think and do right by each other. This theatre holds everything that’s true to survive in these times and breaking this would be a great shame for Manchester. Never has theatre been so important to people and these stories need telling to better ourselves not to carpet it under rumbles and build a hotel. ”

Jack Bell

“ Finding 53Two has been somewhat life changing and life enhancing for me. Having come into the acting industry late in life to find a place such as this is incredible. I have performed there twice and the encouragement, professionalism and welcome given by Simon and Alex is second to none. I have also attended excellent classes there. And last but not least found a theatre to visit as an audience member on so many occasions to watch theatre at its best. It’s an amazing place to be able to go with friends or alone as there will always be a friendly and familiar face there whenever you go. Manchester needs and loves 53Two. ”

Lynda Arron

“ The owners of 53Two are passionate about what they do, the industry in which they participate and the people who frequent all of it. They promote an inclusive environment with a non-elitist attitude. From theatre, film, weddings, functions, gigs and many corporate and yummy food events, there is so much on offer, it’s mind-boggling. 53Two helps local talent flourish by directly supporting artists and local businesses through special events (such as the MancMade festivals), sponsorship of theatre productions through discounted venue prices, their very own Foundation scheme etc. I have directly benefited from the support of 53Two, who allowed my theatre production to conduct a table reading of a play within the arches for NO COST (other than munchies). This kind of benevolence is why I keep going back to 53Two as one of my preferred venues in the great city of Manchester. The team is awesome, they run on a shoestring and give all of their soul to us... the punters! Oh... did I mention that they also employ people to help run the place? It may be small potatoes to hand bar-staff a few quid for a night serving thirsty punters, but it shares the love and passion of everything that makes the team brilliant! Long live 53Two. ”

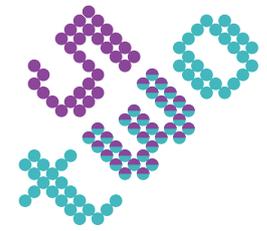
David Chriscole

“ I love this theatre it feels like a welcoming family, putting on a show to entertain friends. ”

Woody Smith

“ For the excellent plays, they put on. Supporting up and coming artists, producers and writers. ”

Gill Simpson



“ Being involved with 53two has changed my life. Without the support of 53two and Simon Naylor I would still not have told my story on a stage. My story, of domestic abuse, is one that affects millions of people in this country and my speaking out has already inspired others to start telling their stories too. I am currently involved with a charity who support women to leave and/or recover from domestic abuse and together we are working towards getting my story heard on bigger stages, in colleges and universities and in front of the people who have the power to change legislation and distribute the funding that is needed to begin the eradication of domestic abuse. ”

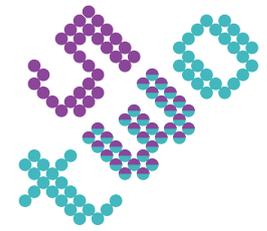
Ann Brown

“ I have never loved an organisation as much as I love 53two. Their continuous support for emerging artists is remarkable and has provided me personally with opportunities that have significantly enhanced my own career; from hosting monologue slam which allowed me to showcase both my writing and acting, to producing shows such as the MancMade Christmas festival and Offcut Manchester which have allowed my writing and acting to be seen by industry professionals, 53two have helped me no end. Without these opportunities that 53two have provided I would not have had the vital ‘credits’ that are required for meaningful participation in the arts. As a disabled artist, barriers to accessing careers in the arts are rife and as such, there is a significant lack of representation, but 53two have demonstrated their relentless commitment to ensuring inclusion and equal access to these opportunities and in doing so have built a ramp to the stage- something which has not been done for me anywhere else. 53two have also hosted the Disabled Artists Networking Community (DANC) and have remained in conversation with the Disabled artists community to ensure best practice. It is not only physical inclusion that has been championed by 53two but, in aiming to make theatre accessible for all, they now also offer Unwaged tickets. For an independent theatre this is incredible and sets the standard for all. In such uncertain times, with job and employment precarity growing, this is such an important part of making leisure and cultural activities available to all, not just those with large disposable incomes. I myself have experienced homelessness and abject poverty and should this sort of initiative have been available to me then I would have certainly felt more valued and included in the arts community and society more generally. I want to thank 53two for their passion and commitment and hope they can continue their vital work. The most sincere, welcoming and supportive team! ”

Steph Lacey

“ 53two is vital to the fringe theatre landscape of Manchester. It presents work of the highest quality and gives a platform for artists who would otherwise feel lost in what can be a daunting city. Through schemes such as FOUNDation, they support emerging artists and their help was so important to our production Flushed and our company Theatre Unlocked. They nurtured us, guided us and enabled us to showcase our work in places and to audiences we otherwise wouldn't have been able to. Without this amazing theatre, the Manchester theatre scene would lose an important hub. ”

Elis Shotton



“ 53Two positioned itself as an integral part of the Manchester theatre soon as soon as it opened. It continually offers incredible and much needed platforms to showcase Northern artists and their work. I know of no other venue in Manchester providing the opportunities, development, learning, entertainment and offering engaging, thought provoking necessary theatre. They work tirelessly there to ensure Manchester has a platform and hub for theatrical expression. It's established itself as vital for the growth of our city's culture. ”

Victoria Tunnah

“ It is a focus for people who want to showcase their drama skills, it is a centre for alternative drama and a venue for drama courses since the closure of The Green Room, it is run by professionally qualified people who exude dynamism and a passion for drama. ”

William Susol

“ I have attended inspirational acting weekend workshops run by Simon Naylor and Karen Henthorn. Have also attended various gigs there. It has a great vibe and atmosphere and serves the community well, providing education, entertainment and a performance platform. ”

Brigid Hemingway

“ Recently I moved to Manchester from London. Theatre 53two has been the only theatrical link I have had since moving up here. Not only have I seen some fantastic shows but I have also had help getting my first audition in Manchester. It has been such a help. ”

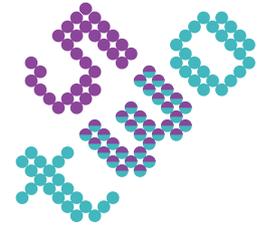
James Tweedy

“ I support the continuous work of 53two after moving from the wonderful, authentic space in the arches where 'true art' of any form could be performed. Their work adds so much value to the city of Manchester. I personally have learnt so much about the craft of acting from the team at 53two (specifically Simon Naylor) as I have undertaken training as well as being part of the great production 'The Newspaper Boy' in 2018. There is something so specific and wonderful being in a 'real' space that truly represents the city and the work of 53two has been of high quality run by people with a certain gravitas. I wish them all the best in obtaining a new space and will carry on support their future projects. ”

Yasemin Kafali

“ 53two is a fantastic venue for all talent, especially new and upcoming talent. The work that everyone @ 53two has done is incredible! Special shoutout to Simon Naylor and Alexandra Maxwell for creating a special place. I'm lucky enough to have been able to perform there. I hope I get the chance again. ”

Steven Gidwaney



“ 53Two is a creative hub which is fizzing with talent and enthusiasm. They help facilitate artists develop and nurture the talent. Before their incarnation - I simply defined myself as an actor musician. Through participation on their 3 Month Acting intensive- I developed my skills as a writer, penning a showcase scene as well as two short plays. Equally they have encouraged me to continue to take risks and I have now branched out to directing, taking part in MAP 48 hr film competition and more recently during the Offcut Festival season in which the play I directed got to the final industry selection stage. Their ethos and community is an integral part of the Manchester Theatre Scene. ”

Paul Worrall

“ When I came to 53two I didn't know anybody - I left with friends and a place to call home. The theater scene can be clicky - and 53two isn't... Or it is - and you're in the click from the outset. I couldn't have achieved the success I've had without the help, support and encouragement of Simon and his team. 53two is the beating heart of ground zero - grass roots theater in Manchester - MancMade and proud to be so... If this venue and what it stands for and what it believes in ever disappeared God only knows what would happen to the vast creative talent it embraces and nurtures. ”

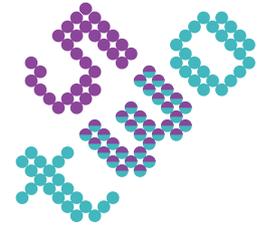
Nick Maynard

“ I think it is genuinely my favourite space in the UK. It is such a hub of important creativity and important subject matter. Having just moved to Manchester I have been so impressed with the level of work and diversity of work that is shown. As a company director myself my dream is to have a show put on there too. Simon is a true hero in the arts world and all of the team that help support this iconic venue are amazing. I cannot wait for what the future holds for this awesome venue! It is so important this continues as we raise important subject matter in a community that makes it very accessible and also raises important voices that aren't usually heard! This platform is the main body of how our society can develop and have the important conversations that must be had! Keep it up ! ”

Matt Harwood

“ The minute I found the arches I felt like I had found a family that I knew would support me and have my back. The communal creative feeling you get at 53Two is wonderful. It provides so many opportunities for artists and is doing some amazing work towards making theatre accessible to all. I always leave feeling refreshed, inspired and driven to continue forwards. ”

Natalie Ciufu



“ 53two has been a hot bed of talent, with new writing being explored it's amazing to see them take on work from writers and theatre companies who are just making their way in the world. A lot of theatres in Manchester feel impossible to get into, especially as a creative. I was hoping to work with 53two in the future, it doesn't seem impossible to be able to stage some work or be involved in a performance. Ticket prices aren't extortionate but you are seeing quality theatre. It's a supportive place that offers diverse theatre, and with subject matters that mean something. They are constantly coming up with different events and nights to showcase topics and skills. The new performers, the emerging talent in Manchester have somewhere they can access, to put on their work and be recognised. I can't wait to see what else they come up with. ”

Kailey McGowan

“ At 53two I have been a writer as part of Pensive Federation and a director twice, once for the straight acting theatre company and once for Offcut Mcr. It is a hub for independent theatre in Manchester as venues close and companies struggle. It is open, supportive and inclusive, pushing for diversity. I am saddened to hear it may close. Despite probably not having a huge income it supports artists like myself providing free rehearsal space, which is so special and generous. There's no standoffishness which you can get with other more mainstream venues. They also do so much for charity including events. Which main house is providing such cheap tickets for jobseekers? I hope they have the support needed to grow and develop further. ”

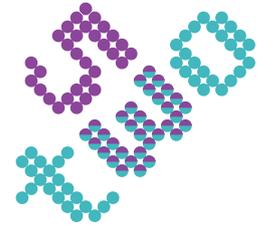
John Klark

“ How do I as an individual as an Actor view 53two?...here's but a few “labels” I would attach to them...Creative Innovative Diverse Professional Welcoming Affordable Appealing Inspiring Belief Passionate Driven Quality Empowering Consistent Integrity Efficiency Focused Transparent Developers Leaders Optimistic Service oriented, Positive Collaborative - a breath of fresh air to Manchester, for a small company it's name is prevalent in any conversations reference theatre in the North West given the length of time established and it's brilliant team that go all out to give their audience and actors nothing but a positive experience that in itself deserves recognition! ”

Trevor Dwyer/Lynch

“ I'd go so far as to say 53Two have been pivotal in the development of my Voice/Accent Coaching business. From the get go, they've been open to discussion, inclusive of me in their training provision and supportive by way of knockdown space hire rates to name but one. Their entire ethos is to make the theatre industry here thrive from the bottom up, helping the new artists, under represented artists, unwaged and anyone who needs some guidance and help. They are an integral part of the Manchester arts scene and a 100% necessary entity. And ruddy lovely people to boot. All hail 53Two. ”

Nic Redman



“ 53two gave my company, Elysium TC, its first show in Manchester, Owen MacCafferty’s ‘Days Of Wine And Roses’. Without that offer, we would never have started. Just over a year later Elysium has staged four productions and is touring the North East with a main stage production of ‘Miss Julie’. 53two made all of that possible. Their continued support and passion since that first production has been overwhelming, and I have watched Simon, Alex and David turn their company into a powerhouse on the Manchester scene, producing or playing host to great theatre, providing opportunities for writers, directors, actors and designers and inspiring everyone by proving that passion and commitment can work wonders. 53two is a Manchester treasure and a vital part of the city’s theatre ecology. Its achieved wonders already and will go on to achieve even greater wonders. It must go on. I take great pleasure in endorsing it and urge anyone who cares about the arts and theatre’s power to make a difference to get behind it. ”

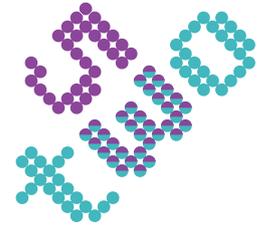
Jake Murray

“ 53Two is a fantastic space for creatives in Manchester to network, showcase incredible work and it’s accessible for all. One of the most moving pieces of work I’ve ever experienced in theatre was ‘The Glasshouse’, I was lucky enough to have my writing performed as part of the wonderful and empowering ‘Celebrating Women In The Arts’ event here and I brought my now boyfriend to see Jb Shorts here on our second date and we have since had several date nights in the arches experiencing wonderful theatre together. Simon and Alex are such warm, welcoming people and they show endless encouragement and support to the Manchester Theatre scene and I think that they deserve nothing more than to receive the same encouragement and support they give so selflessly. ”

Hannah MacDonald

“ This is a theatre space that has welcomed me as a new writer—a woman over forty - and encouraged me to develop my work and ideas. Creatives are encouraged to learn and develop their craft here. As a result I have recently had my first play staged at Offcut Manchester. This is a place where new theatre for all—not just for an elite- is developed, nurtured and brought to life in outstanding performance. This is a venue where the unwaged can see a performance for two pounds. My son has a muscle wasting condition and uses a wheelchair. He cannot transfer. Whilst he studied theatre and performance at University, he was able to access all productions without problems, as there is a ramp and accesible toilets. In contrast, many theatres are inaccessible. When he graduated with a First class degree and began to perform, reaching the final of the monologue slam, Simon Naylor built him a ramp so he could easily access the stage. He has since performed on stage in in play for Offcut, again using the ramp which is a permanent part of the staging. This is a friendly welcoming space which offers theatre for all and has changed the face of theatre in Manchester. Simon Naylor and Alexandra Maxwell’s passion for theatre and people shines through everything they do. ”

Anne Duffy

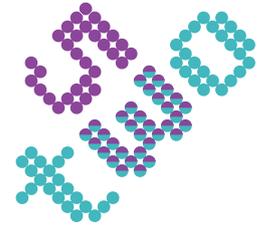


“As an all too infrequent visitor to Manchester I don't know if my voice carries any weight, but every time I have visited over the past few years I have seen 53two grow in ways I could not have predicted. Yes, the work they do has grown in scope, ambition, and quality. Yes, their facilities have been upgraded to make the theatre more accessible and welcoming. But mostly impressive, and important I think, is their outreach into the community. 53two has brought together so many people, instilled so much passion, taught so much craft, and meant so much to people in a short space of time I think it would be criminal if this brand and this exceptional group were not allowed to continue to change and inspire in a new, permanent venue.”

Anthony Cozens

“Although I am offering this testimonial about the 'Building' described simply as 5two it is impossible, for me, not to chronicle my thoughts without referring to 53two as a new 'WAY-OF-LIFE', unique to MANCHESTER. Allow me to explain. Before 53two there was a vibrant Mancunian Theatre Community, BUT it was clearly split, between 'Amateur' and 'Professional'. Likemost conurbations, these two passionate communities did not recognise, let alone, show any respect for each other, so they never, creatively, had any chance of ever combining to generate a NEW community of Actors. The arrival of 53two almost immediately ended this division and created this NEW community. In my case, I had been a successful professional Television Producer/Director for over 50 years. Due to life threatening illness (contacted whilst directing the 'International Indian Film & Television Award' Show in Mauritius), I was forced to retire from the career that I had enjoyed so much. To begin again, at the age of 75, would normally be unthinkable and certainly to find a route to that end, virtually impossible. Then along came 53two initially, in the form of the MANCHESTER ACTORS PLATFORM (MAP). To my utter amazement and delight I found that the unique philosophy, (formulated by SIMON NAYLOR), facilitated a situation in which I could mix with both the amateur and the professional, whilst learning the skills required by many other facets of my previously long career. Because SIMON NAYLOR decided that the interior layout of 53(2) would be sectioned off to produce a working bar, a working Theatre, numerous areas designated for teaching, dressing rooms and meeting rooms. It meant that whenever I visited 53(2) I was guaranteed to meet and talk to a fellow enthusiasts whilst learning about genuine opportunities within 53two. So far I have completed THREE Acting courses plus introductions to both the Stanislavsky and Meisner acting methods, Welcomed into the NORTH WEST WONDERS festival (where I received very positive Critical Acclaim) and more recently in the new OFF-CUTS Festival. None of this would have been possible without the uniqueness of 53two. 53two has changed my life from a potential sedentary and most unsatisfactory enforced retirement into a critically acclaimed actor (making my theatrical debut at the age of 78). I cannot express my gratitude enough to 53(2) for giving me a brand new lease of life which has also impacted on my entire family (visiting my performances in 53two from as far afield as Hong Kong, Bermuda, Berlin and London.) There ARE other venues for amateur and/ or professional theatricals to gather (Royal Exchange, HOME, Hope theatre) but NONE with anywhere near the warmth, non-judgmental, welcoming, inclusive atmosphere that can ONLY be found in 53(2). I am NOT referring to a building called 53two, but the philosophy that has turned a building called 53two into a WAY OF LIFE that just did not exist before.”

Royston Mayoh



“ 2 and a half years ago I was signed off from the fire service suffering from PTSD. They were very dark times and I had a long struggle ahead of me. I was receiving counselling from the service in Manchester and I used to pass 53two every Monday. I popped in one day to see how they were doing and have a chat and the rest is history. I found people who were there as a community and not a business and they invited me to be a part of it. I was given free courses, as the fire service stopped my pay. I readily helped when I could and they understood if I let them down on occasions as some days it was hard to leave the house, but they were always there for me as friends and I was always welcome. Eventually I turned my life around and feel more confident in dealing with things. I've even been in plays and on tv. I can honestly say that Simon and Alex have helped me more than they will ever know and I am forever grateful. ”

Dave Howell

“ This theatre space is vital to the many, MANY, actors, writers, poets, musicians, comedians and theatre lovers of Manchester. It's more than a space, it's a mentality. It's a community for people to network, create and achieve. I personally feel like 53two is the only space in Manchester I can experience my writing actually being performed to an audience. It's achievable. Without it there would be no realistic space for new and upcoming writers to see their work on stage. It needs to exist. It's vital. ”

Martin Cooper

“ 53two gave me so much experience at such a young stage in my career in the form of JB Shorts and for that I'll be forever grateful that I got the opportunity to perform under the arches. It champions the untold stories, the fresh talent, the voices that might not be heard. All this is shown by the amount of new writing that is presented consistently there. The team genuinely care about theatre and producing good theatre that is accessible to all. 53two is not just a theatre, it's a community built around the people of Manchester and one that encourages and welcomes everyone to have their own special experience. ”

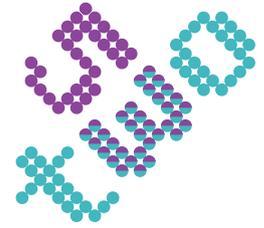
Duncan Butcher

“ Amazing venue, I have watched and been lucky enough to perform also. The staff that work there are so helpful and polite. ”

Muhib Parwez

“ I've seen several brilliant productions there and have been able to do so as they focussed on inclusion and affordability. ”

Karen Clarke



“ I have lost count as to the number of times I have visited 53two to experience the varied programme of live theatre. Part of the attraction is the quirky venue. 53two has kept the cost of tickets very affordable and is a great platform for both actors and writers. Following JB Shorts to 53two was how I first discovered the venue. ”

Sarah Davidson

“ This theatre space is one of a kind. Offering more opportunities than any other that I know of. I am the co founder of TripleC which creates projects to break down barriers to up inclusion and representation of disability in the arts. We created the Disabled Artists Networking community (DANC) which is hosted by different theatre's or arts venues every 6-8 weeks. 53TWO was one of our strongest DANC events yet. Simon and his team listened to everything we said/suggested and made 53TWO accessible to all disabled artists!! And that was just the start. Since then, they have given so many opportunities to professional disabled actors and writers and quite honestly changed their lives. If every arts venue/organisation/theatre had the same values and passion for change as 53TWO and the team, the arts industry would be more inclusive, more accessible, more representative and even more life changing. LONG LIVE 53TWO. ”

Melissa Johns

“ There is so much talent in this team, the productions they stage are varied and thought provoking. Their production of “The Glass House” was superb, great directing and wonderful acting, it deserves to get awards!!!! Love coming to this theatre..... always a warm welcome awaiting too! Best wishes for future ventures. ”

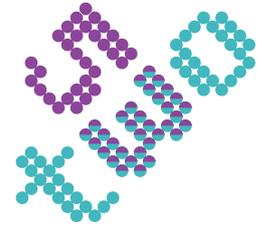
Wendy Waind

“ What I love about 53two is the effort it puts in to giving opportunities to emerging artists. Personally, I've not been lucky enough to go straight in to a graduate job after leaving drama school which I've felt disheartened by. At one time I doubted my ability and lost a lot of confidence. But the Off Cut festival, in partnership with 53two, has completely changed my outlook! It's given me the chance to meet other creatives and I've regained all of my confidence (and it's added even more). 53two unites actors, writers and directors and encourages us to create and share our own work with each others support. In my opinion, it's the most accessible theatre for not only artists but theatre goers too as the work put on show is always current and relevant. It's such an important place to me because it gave me a space to develop. I don't know of any other theatres in the area which offer that to the extent of 53two. 53two is a unique, warm and welcoming hub and Manchester wouldn't be the same without it! ”

Beth Nolan

“ 53two has opened up many opportunities for me and I am so grateful. It also delivers a high standard of Professional acting classes. My absolute highlight was taking part in Map Rep and 48 hour film change. ”

Parisa Nikkhah-Eshghi



“ An important addition to the local theatre scene. Democratic, approachable. Has helped fill the void that followed the collapse of organizations like North West Playwrights and the 24:7 theatre festival. A place where entry level theatremakers can learn their craft and gain confidence. A supportive and vital part of the local theatre ecology. ”

Kevin Cuffe

“ As a theatre blogger, 53two provides a crucial service to Manchester’s theatre scene. Making the arts accessible and affordable to all. It plays a pivotal part in promoting emerging creative talent. Nothing shows this more than Switch Mcr. ”

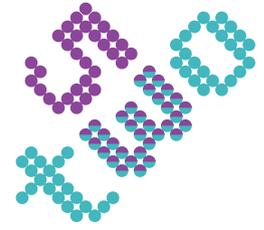
Nicola Brierley

“ Since the creation of 53two my enjoyment of live theatre has been rekindled. I have attended many productions, both in the main theatre and the pod, from Macbeth to Take That. Every visit has been a joy, not only in the Theatre, but the relaxing atmosphere in the whole arches have become a vital part of my life. the opportunities this small theatre offers to amateurs and professionals alike would be greatly missed in Manchester and deserves all our backing. Long live 53two. ”

Sheila Fallon

“ There is no other venue in Manchester which strikes the balance between selective (producing a constant high caliber of work & promoting conversation on essential/unspoken about issues), and approachable (friendly & encouraging of new/unheard of artists, and artists from all backgrounds). It’s a place where you can constantly find exciting new work, feel part of a real community, or even just grab a pint. Simon, Alex, Dave, and the whole team at 53Two work continuously to help artists who otherwise would have no means, or nowhere, to share their work. And when I say work - I mean work bloody hard! I was lucky enough to receive the first ever ‘FOUNDATION’ award for my play ‘Flushed’. I had just come out of university and had no money, and no idea of how to get my work seen. I sent my play into 53Two - best thing I’ve ever done! I was very quickly invited in for a coffee and a chat. Where I was told that based on the quality of the writing, the initiative I had shown, and the subject matter I was working to promote, 53Two wanted to award Theatre Unlocked (the company I run with my friend Elis) the first ever ‘FOUNDATION’ award. This meant that they would work with us to produce the play, and work with us they did! They helped us with set (even sourcing toilets and glueing tiles to the floor!), significantly discounted venue hire, promotion for the play, free rehearsal space, and were a general helping hand throughout; Everything was done with a smile. I have since managed to take the play to Underbelly at the Edinburgh Fringe, and to the Barbican in London this coming April and I owe MASSES of this to 53Two; there is no other scheme like this in Manchester. 53Two are the heartbeat of the Manchester theatre scene. ”

Kate Cranfield



“ I have visited 53two a number of times and have been very impressed with the shows and the venue. The staff are always welcoming. The venue is so unusual with the wonderful arches. 53two gives the people of Manchester theatre experiences at affordable prices. ”

Jane Chadwick

“ Where do I start?! From working in collaboration with 53two to promote the incredible talent of actors, writers and directors that have produced shows at 53two, via my chat show on local Manchester TV, to being an audience member at these incredible shows, to being a guest at organised events there, to being on stage there as an actor at 53two; this venue means the world to me as a creative in Manchester. The support and unity of the theatre community here in Manchester is vital, and this venue has given us the space and facilities to bring that community together. 53two promotes, produces, houses and celebrates what new theatre in Manchester is all about. Us Manchester creatives would be lost without this venue! It's a big part of the theatre community family. The productions I see, and work with, at 53two continues to inspire me in my own work, and it's a wonderful hub for us creatives to meet and support each other. ”

Gemma Hepworth

“ As an observer 53 two has been at the fore front of the Manchester theatre scene in many ways, I have watched them support and nurture new talent, give opportunities to individuals as well as organisations, all with out any help from backers. I have also witnessed some of the best theatrical experiences there. Their version of #glass house was probably one of the best pieces I've seen in any theatre. I hope they get the support they need to continue to champion the theatre community. ”

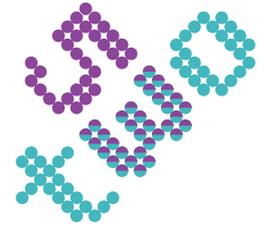
James Schofield

“ I have seen many excellent productions at 53two and they have all been of very high quality. I also had my 50th birthday party at the venue and the staff went above and beyond to make sure that the party was a success,they are wonderful! ”

Jonathan King

“ 53two has been a wonderful addition to Manchester's arts scene. It should be supported in its search for a new home as it provides a valued facility for theatre. ”

Steven Lindsay



“ Since graduating from drama school in 2016 and deciding to pursue a career in other elements of theatre, other than performing, I’ve become familiar with a variety of fringe theatres. Whether it be working in a box office/marketing capacity, working as a creative on a play, or as an audience member - 53two is the best fringe theatre I’ve ever encountered. Their team is endlessly dedicated to the productions they invite to play in their arches, and in their own fine productions. They’ve become an indispensable arts hub in Manchester, evidenced by established production companies wanting to become part of the 53two family. Their professionalism in delivering the highest standard of entertainment is second to none. There is no ask too much for them to accommodate. I’ve seen a diverse array of material being presented at the theatre, and it has all been of the highest standard. Beyond that, programs such as their FOUNDation, MAP Rep Company and on-site acting classes are doubtless of the best professional standard. Their chief executive has said in the past that “fringe” does not have to mean lacking in values. That just because the theatre that is presented away from the commercial sector, the kind of theatre that does not share the same advantages of funds and resources as you might find in publicly subsidised arts organisations, or those with rich benefactors, that does not mean that fringe theatre has to be any the less in quality. That thought pervades every inch of 53two. The quality, the care, the attention, the blood, sweat and tears of the people who run this venue is evident in their output. It would not be an exaggeration to say that if 53two were to cease their operations, then Manchester would lose it’s finest arts venue. I cannot recommend this team enough. ”

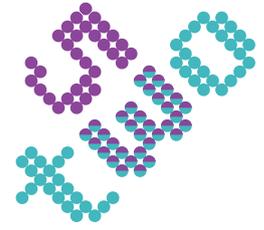
Alex Knott

“ As someone who relocated to the North recently. 53Two gave me my first job back up here as a director. I’m eternally grateful to Simon, Alex and the team for taking chances on new artists and providing platforms for people who are trying to make a living in this overly saturated industry. Their training program MAPplatform is a credit to the amazing tutors they bring in and I have had the pleasure of directing some of these members proving to me the training is current and demanding. Their own in house productions have also set a benchmark for theatre makers on the fringe circuit. If Hope Mill has musicals covered then 53Two has the straight drama box ticked. The recent production of The Glasshouse was outstanding and happily competed with other theatres who are an NPO. I hope 53Two gets the funding it so richly deserves to grow and prosper. This place and the people who run it are making important changes and advancements. ”

David Whitney

“ A recent convert to the arches means I have enjoyed a wide variety of shows and open events. The environment is friendly and welcoming. The use of the space is original and surprising. The overall factor about 53Two and the residents is the bringing together of many local artists and their enthusiastic audience. In a time of measured funds this company has given a great arena for those wanting to share and develop their pieces for future consideration. I have especially enjoyed resident shows such as The Glasshouse and returning groups such as JB Shorts and Manc Made Official. The company richly deserves acknowledgement for their championing of local artists, creative teams and Northern stories. If you’re looking for the Northern Powerhouse - it’s 53Two and those performing within it’s walls. ”

Jamie Byron



“Great arts space with a lovely vibe. Seem some great theatre here with a varied and imaginative use of the space. A lot of opportunity for new writing and chance to hear a wide range of voices portrayed. A really valuable asset to the vibrant hub that is the current Manchester Theatre scene.”

Amanda Dunlop

“I think that it is important to support the performing arts and I consider 53two to be a place that does so.”

Paul Pallister

“I’ve been writing down south for a good few years, but when I moved back up to Manchester it was like starting again. I am SO grateful I found 53two. They really do feel like the beating heart of the indie theatre scene here and through their warmth and encouragement I now feel very much a part of the creative community in this incredible city. The greatest thing though, is that 53Two truly believe theatre is for everyone. Both in the creating and watching. (Their £2 ticket scheme for the unemployed is an awesome idea - one that should be adopted nationwide.) Completely and absolutely. This is a place where all are welcome.”

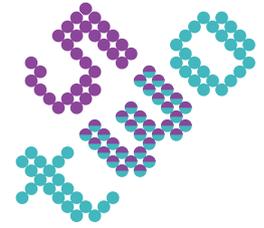
Gemma Langford

“This is an incredible venue, ran by amazing people. The events they put on have helped bring otherwise ‘buried’ stories and perspectives to light for the people of Manchester to not only enjoy, but engage in. I won the award for Best Actor, during their most recent M.A.P 48hr film contest, this allowed me to meet with casting directors and many other people within the entertainment industry. It also gave me a very slick short film to show to potential jobs. The work they do within the city is second to none, I struggle to think of other theatres that have set such a strong precedent of community engagement and enrichment.”

Luke Seddon

“53Two gave me the confidence that I can be an actor. It opened up new friendships and a whole new community of theatre and the people within it which is now solidly part of my life and my identity. The staff are so supportive, the audiences are so loyal and the whole place is such a brilliant, forward-thinking venue which makes you feel part of something bigger and like you can have an impact.”

Amy Webber



“ All productions I have seen at 53two have been original and thought/discussion provoking. 53 two enhances the range of arts on offer in Manchester and we would all be culturally the poorer without it. Productions are reasonably priced and therefore within reach of all. ”

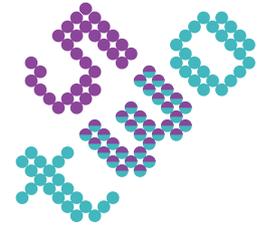
Col McG

“ This is an amazing small theatre for the people and is affordable for all. 53two put on amazing productions and because it is affordable, attracts those people who normally can't afford to visit the theatre. The staff are professional and always make everyone welcome. Brilliant night out. Love it. ”

Shirley McNally

“ 53Two, to but it simplily has changed my life. I originally fell through the doors of the arches after tracking down a wonderful teacher I had once seen work, and wanted to be taught by her, 53two were able to make this possible, as she teaches an acting for screen course there, which is of a VERY high industry standard. I am midway through, having just started the 2nd level of 3, but have also been given the chance to repeat the fist level, FOR FREE. You don't get those chances anywhere... as well as this training pushing my career and giving me the fundamental tools I need to make it in the crazy industry, I've also made a wonderful life long friend, who has changed my life. Along with connecting with friends mostly new, but one or two old that are doing the course - or that are connected to 53Two in some way. This aside, my eyes have seen one or two fantastic productions, and my ears have heard of many money either by people that have watched, or people that have performed. I was only talking yesterday to a friend about how accessible the ticket prices are, against other theatres in the city centre or even outside the city centre and the quality you get is just second to non. I am yet to take part in a production, but I hope the opportunity will arise soon. And like for like with the courses that are offered, some of them you just can't get anywhere else - and even the ones you can.. the cost and quality for what you get are just miles ahead anything I've come accross, anywhere else before - and I'm not new to this crazy game! And then, there is the social events!!! Back in November I attended a 'Lady's night' organised by Alex, I had the time of my life, such a good vibe, great entertainment, brilliant nextworking opportunities if you seek them and lots of laughs with one, what felt like one big group of friends, or one big family. And that's what we are, a tribe of like minded people, that are also open to everyone else - far and wide. I think the word I used most in this, is opportunity- and that's what 53Two is, a wonderful bundle of opportunity to a whole range of people, a safe space to play, learn and enjoy without fear of judgment. 53Two, thank you for opening not only your doors, but your heart to me, wherever you go and whatever the next stage of the journey will be, I back you, and I will follow. ”

Danielle Chester



“ 53Two puts on some amazing productions for affordable prices, meaning more people are able to experience theatre. The Glasshouse is one of the most insane, heartbreakingly beautiful pieces of theatre I have ever had the pleasure to see and 53Two was the perfect place to have it as they understand that theatre doesn't have to be on a massive stage, sometimes it can be intimate with a small audience and that can make you feel part of something special. ”

Jodie Gall

“ I believe they are doing their best in every can ask for more. My best wishes to them. ”

Bruce Wheeldon

“ 53two is a place that has nurtured and encouraged creativity, championed talent and promoted inclusion for all. I have had the pleasure of seeing many plays and events there and the privilege of performing there myself. It has been so great to see more and more new faces as their reach extends further and people who may not usually access theatre are tempted through the door. Expertly and professionally led by Simon Naylor and Alexandra Maxwell, this hub of industry and innovation cannot be without a physical home, so I would support any initiative that enables this creative force to continue. ”

Deborah Sekibo

“ 53two is an open, welcoming and warm environment that nurtures creativity which is extremely important in allowing new talent to enter the scene. They are so kind and helpful, offering so much to everyone, building a close community of creative's who thrive on creating and collaborating on many new pieces of work. ”

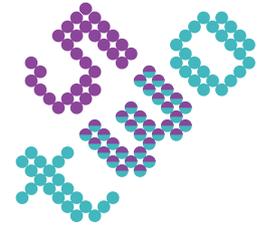
Brittina Leigh-Pettengell

“ 53two has literally changed the way I view acting and performing, and I do mean literally as I now enjoy being behind the camera. Directing is something I'd never in a million years have even considered. However, the fab folk have not only changed my mind but also help me set my mind on where I want to go. In the future. I still enjoy being in front of the camera to and love the in depth classes they teach and the perspectives they share. They are so active within the Manchester community and should be number 1 on anyone's list for those wanting to get involved. ”

J-Jay Rocket

“ Following the loss of the 24:7 Festival a few years ago, Manchester's Theatre scene saw a real drop in the support to new writing initiatives which are the lifeblood of the theatre scene. 53Two has been instrumental in helping to grow and develop the new writing scene and their support has been invaluable. Manchester can not afford to lose them. ”

Mick Cooper



“ 53 Two is setting the standard for Fringe Theatre all around the country, by inspiring new talent, encouraging and supporting local theatre companies, and by establishing affordable access for those on a low income. Fringe Theatre had become an umbrella term used to describe amateur theatre, or theatre that wasn't quite as good as the stuff we were seeing in the larger, more established theatre venues. 53Two has reclaimed Fringe Theatre, given it a much needed defibrillation, and dragged it back into life, with standards that surpass all expectation. ”

Paul Dorsey

“ Lovely and welcoming place - offers so much support for actors and productions. A community asset for Deansgate. ”

Kal Withana

“ Over the past 18months 53two has helped me network, make new friends, meet other creatives, watch shows at an affordable price. 53two has helped me by being involved in their partnerships (MAP48.4 & OffCut) which have led on to other work. They support and aim to please everyone no matter what your background, ethnicity or disability is. Thank you! ”

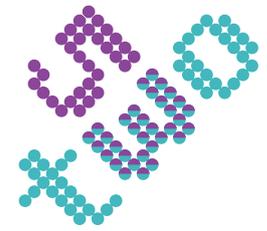
Liamn Burke

“ I have been to 53two as an auditionee and an audience member and have never had a bad experience. It's definitely a home away from home environment, with friendly, welcoming staff who are so passionate about what they do. The support that Alexandra, Simon and the entire 53two team give creatives, writers, directors, actors and facilitators is clear to see. Their enthusiasm to offer this platform to artists is infectious and it is why so many are itching at a chance to work alongside them, myself included. ”

Roisin Howells

“ I cannot praise the 53Two team and the work they do enough. They have brought life and soul to a part of Manchester that needed it and to the people of Manchester who needed it too. It is my pleasure to have got to know the team and work with them closely over the last few years. Not only have they brought life and soul to 'the arches' but that have done it with the same level of professionalism, honesty and passion that is present in every class they have run, every production they have produced and every show they have hosted. The community they have created is one of the warmest, most supportive and most respected I have ever known and I have built both friendships and professional relationships that will last forever. Anyone who has walked through the doors, will be desperately sad to lose the arches when they do go. Anyone who has been privileged to perform there will have very fond and long-lasting memories, myself included. It's a wonderful place filled with equally wonderful people and it's a gem we can't lose. ”

Rob Mitchell-James



“ 53Two is the most friendly, welcoming & non-judgemental theatre space I’ve ever had the pleasure of working in. It feels like a family, and supports creatives of all kinds - helping them to make connections and build their careers (something very few other theatres offers) which is integral in such a ruthless and difficult industry. It is not elitist or subjective - and, most fantastically, it supports absolutely anyone and everyone with no discriminations. It’s diverse and celebratory and for people like myself who aren’t economically ‘well-off’ it is a fantastic platform to get involved in work & keeping skills up & being able to go and watch professional, amazing pieces of theatre without breaking the bank. 53Two is what theatre is all about - inclusion, support, equality, telling brave & current stories, and, ultimately, giving the audience a safe & accessible place to escape reality and be entertained, if only for an hour or two. ”

Emma Haworth

“ 53two is a priceless asset to the city and community. A wonderful venue in which to enjoy theatre, it has done so much to make the arts accessible and available to all and to develop talent. ”

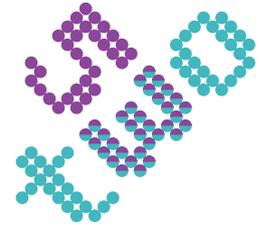
Kevin McMahon

“ A beautiful venue, which supports artists from the ground up, with classes, showcase, training courses etc. It plays an important part of the Manchester theatre community, hosting numerous festivals and new writing. ”

Naomi Albans

“ I moved to Manchester from Teesside two years ago and 53two has given me my first opportunities in the city. I’ve been acting professionally for six years now and Simon and Alexandra have created the most welcoming theatre I’ve come in contact with. The industry can feel impossible to break into, and a million miles away for some who are new to it or have had little opportunity to explore what it has to offer. 53two sets it itself apart through it’s willingness to take chances on people, to encourage artists to throw themselves into new experiences and the results of that approach are truly special. For all the first time directors, writers and performers they have brought to the forefront what’s really testament to Simon and Alex’s talent and eye for potential is that the quality of the work is never less than top class! Manchester hands down needs a place like this and if they keep going the way they are they will be instrumental in making Manchester the UK’s absolute best city for new talent. And, for creating a theatre scene that is not only accessible and welcoming but actually gets the most diverse audiences in their theatre time and time again. They’re already showing everyone how it’s done! Thank you for welcoming me, its genuinely meant the world! I can’t wait to see what you guys do next! ”

Gemma Whiteley



“ The work you do is amazing to keep theatre accessible to people. I've been following you guys for a while on social media, and finally got the chance to come see you at the OffCut Final and my expectations were massively exceeded. The space, the atmosphere, the love, the people, everything coming together gives you an amazing experience and makes you feel part of this amazing city. No matter your background (and I'm not from these parts), you feel that you belong to this great community, and you never get this from a big theatre. Please keep doing what you are doing, I hope you find an equally amazing space like the arches so that you can continue making a huge difference to the cultural space of Manchester, and its lovely people! ”

Irina Dimitrade

“ Have visited many times but over the last few weeks had the pleasure of rehearsing and performing as part of OffCutManc. Everyone who manages/works at 53Two have been very welcoming and supportive, just what us creatives need!! Long may 53Two reign! ”

Anne Baron

“ 53Two positioned itself as an integral part of the Manchester theatre soon as soon as it opened. It continually offers incredible and much needed platforms to showcase Northern artists and their work. I know of no other venue in Manchester providing the opportunities, development, learning, entertainment and offering engaging, thought provoking necessary theatre. They work tirelessly there to ensure Manchester has a platform and hub for theatrical expression. It's established itself as vital for the growth of our city's culture. ”

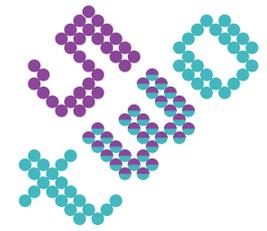
Victoria Tunnah

“ What a fantastic opportunity to watch some brilliantly performed productions up close and personal. The venue was fantastic and I have never felt so emotional when watching a play than when I watched one by 53two. The work they do as a charity opens up opportunities for young people that they wouldn't have had and I'm all for that! Great work 53two, keep it up! ”

Julie Mulholland

“ 53two has changed my life in so many ways. 53two is a theatre which embraces and encourages the work of northern writers, actors and directors. Whether experienced or new to producing work, 53two has created numerous opportunities for it to be seen by audiences. I have also benefitted from the excellent acting classes on offer. Simon Naylor and Karen Henthorn are inspirational teachers who believe in constructive criticism and not vacuous praise. I am also grateful for the opportunity to film self tapes with the benefit of direction. In addition 53two is a community where northern creatives can meet and support each other. I can't imagine Manchester without Simon and Alex at 53two. ”

Julie Root



“ I have watched you grow into the talented company you are today. Your amazing talent and dedication takes my breath away! Your incredible stage performance needs to be seen to be believed. 53two are the number of times you have made me, laugh, cry, gasp and puff out my chest in pride. You are all an inspiration and have made me realise, I too can realise my dreams and reach for the stars. Thank you from my heart! ”

Brenda Hickey

“ 53two is the very heart of Manchester’s community of those who love theatre, acting and the arts. Those wanting to see great theatre are never stuck for choice and it’s a wonderful platform for up and coming talent : writers, actors , Directors to show their work . The actor training I have taken part in through MapPlatform at 53two has been of the very highest standard. For those who are serious about getting a foothold in the industry it’s an absolute must. The extremely reasonable prices to attend their workshops means they are accessible to most and reflect the aims of those involved to help and support those in the industry. Any funding to help 53two move to a new venue, would be a very worthwhile investment into Manchester’s cultural offering, the alternative of them not being able to continue to operate as they do now, would be a sad loss to the city! ”

Stephanie Powner

“ Having been to a number of JB Shorts evenings I’d like to recommend both them and the amazing set up within the arches to all seeking that “something a bit different”. Excellent plays in wonderful settings. A bit special, a bit pop-up style, a bit punk do-it-yourself feel to it all. Wonderful wonderful wonderful. More! ”

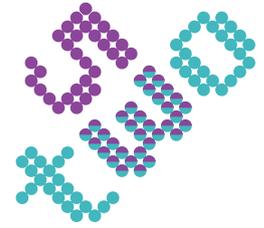
John Hyde

“ 53Two has not only given me numerous opportunities of work, a place to meet with other creatives, watch theatre but mainly to learn. The people behind 53Two are warm, loving and above all a force that is strengthening the creative work that is hitting Manchester, whether that is within 53Two or just generally across Manchester by the people that they help and support. They have a grit and determination to improve the creative business in Manchester to a global scale that no other venue has in Manchester. They are home in Manchester for the many. ”

Rachel Hartley

“ I was introduced to the group by a friend who performs. I was really impressed by the professionalism and and commitment. My particularly favourites are the short videos that showcase the talent in both acting, writing, direction and production because they give such a broad view of how the group is developing. I love the inclusivity. ”

Melody Susan Peters

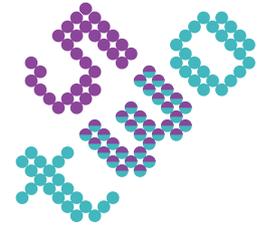


“ As a company I put on my 2nd ever professional piece on at 53two for the Manchester fringe festival in 2017. We were supported whole heartedly by Simon and the team with means to communication and help with practical elements such as the tech requirements and basic how to use the lights. We were treated like our show was valued equally with the others on the bill in a hectic time for the venue. Simon particularly made time to show us the ropes and answer any queries we had. It was a great professional environment for us to work in and we felt incredibly supported. I know of other artists and companies who have also had shows put on at all stages of their career and all of them have said what a welcoming and friendly venue it is to visiting companies. 53two.as a venue drives new talent while keeping standards high with connections to actor training, young company development, national competitions such as Monologue Slam and just recently encouraging new writing with OffCut - which I was involved directing a piece. Again my experience was a warm welcome and professional space to work in. The thing that I find most important is the development of diverse accessible theatre for all. It actively encourages and supports BAME LGBTQ and Disabled Artists as well as introducing projects like FOUNDation NEWvember and Unwaged. Also Simon arranged a conversation about the direction of independent theatre in Manchester triggering a higher standard and aim for the community. Personally I've had meetings with Simon about the development of my personal career, ideas for new initiatives and the development of new projects. For someone who runs this venue with a small dedicated team to be so generous with his time to develop artists is a wonderful thing that very few offer. As a venue it has a very good reputation and audience numbers when I have attended shows have always seemed very high. My own shows were very close to full houses. I think that for creatives at early stages of their careers there isn't a venue in Manchester that is as accessible, and as supportive as 53two is. In comparison to other venues it fills the gap between low level or amateur and the bigger houses like Royal Exchange and the Opera House. Its drive to push theatre forward and increase standards of inclusion, training, and engagement with audiences to create a diverse level of programming and opportunities for developing artists is a vital thing for a city of creative talent who may not be able to showcase their work elsewhere. I can't recommend the venue and the team highly enough both as a professional that has produced shows there and as an audience member out for a great night of entertainment. In my opinion it is an essential venue for independent theatre in the North. ”

Matt Fox

“ 53two is the home of one massive slightly dysfunctional but incredibly warm family with loads of extended family. I have worked with tech, directed and been as an audience member and each time I have created some of the best memories ever. The venue alone is so unique and homey and then add in the family that work there and it literally can feel like you're going to see your family. Everyone says hello to anyone and everyone, you're encouraged to push yourself out your comfort zone and to explore your creative interests and ideas. I've worked in a couple of big theatres so obviously they're more corporate but considering I've only been at 53two since around Oct/Nov 2018 and have made some life long friends but been in a large theatre working for almost 2 years and hardly know anyone, I think that speaks for itself. The support the staff at 53two offer is incredible. Simon Naylor is a powerhouse, I honestly don't know how he does all that he does but he is magic and makes magic happen. Thanks to all at 53two you are my fave mad family! ”

Mims Jedall



“ 53two is an amazing platform for actors and performers of all ages to do what they love doing best! I’ve seen several plays there, and even participated in the Monologue Slam myself. The staff are always super friendly and helpful. Excellent all round! Keep up the good work and best of luck in the future! ”

Stewart Mathers

“ A writer of mainly TV, I have been inspired by the fantastic productions I have seen, amateur and professional, to try my hand at theatre writing. Great community spirit and had a blast on the 24 hour film challenge. ”

Alex Walker

“ 53two and everyone involved in it is such an amazing place for new actors like me it’s given me my confidence back working there. Getting to perform there as part of off cut was the cherry on top of the cake. Simon and Alex and such great supporters of new artists and without them and 53two many would have found it hard to get the chance they needed. Every event put on there is full of so much life, love and support so it would be fantastic to see it grow. A more permanent home for 53two could only be a great thing for artist, audience members and Manchester. ”

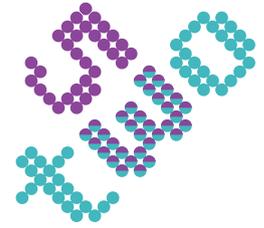
Daisy Moston

“ An absolute ecosystem for all types of creatives in Manchester. I cannot think of another organisation that supports emerging writers, directors, producers, technicians and actors in the very same way. After a number of years away from the industry in the North, 53two was instrumental in getting me back on my feet, and introduced me to the industry in Manchester surrounded by genuine and approachable people. If you’re emerging or aiming to work as a creative in the Manchester area but not sure where to begin, 53two is the only place to start. The loss of 53two and its team would be absolutely devastating to the Manchester Arts scene. ”

Darren Jeffries

“ 53two is such a special place because of the passion and commitment of the wonderful people who run it and make it a home away from home for me personally. What Simon, Alex and the rest of the team have done in such a short time is extraordinary and a testament to their talents and hard work. On the surface, it may seem like another venue to add to Manchester’s ever growing list of arts spaces but it’s done so much more than that. It’s given people a platform to try out new ideas, to learn new skills and make new friends all whilst doing what they love. It’s a space that allows you try something out without judgement and if the idea doesn’t work, there’s a helping hand and a cup of coffee waiting for you to help fix what might not be working. I cannot wait to see what is next for MAPlatform and 53two as they deserve all the best! ”

Francesca Fenech



“ 53two set a precedent when it opened its doors a couple of years ago and is now strongly established as the heart of the fringe theatre community and without it, the Manchester ‘scene’ would undoubtedly splutter and ultimately come to a grinding halt again. 53two has opened its door to countless actors, writers, directors and producers offering them their first professional credit or helping them with their continued success as so many shows have graced the main stage there. As actors we are also offered a wealth of training with the aims to nurture, to think outside the box and to be the absolute best you can. On a personal level, 53Two and Manchester Actors Platform have offered me so much. There is a lot of choice in Manchester and the North West when it comes to actors training - many classes can be vague, crammed with people and very expensive but the training I have received here has far surpassed that of my university drama degree and any other further training I have participated in. I am forever grateful for the tools that are now in my possession and the confidence that has grown in me. It must be noted that there is an unbridled passion, an ethos and drive from Simon and Alex and the 53two/MAP family that is unique and truly is at the core as to why 53two is the success it has been. We mustn’t lose that, we are very, very lucky to have it- they are a beautiful team; intelligent, quick and strive continuously for excellence. This place and the people in it are dear to my heart and I am under no illusion that Manchester and the acting community of the North West would be dented irrevocably without them. ”

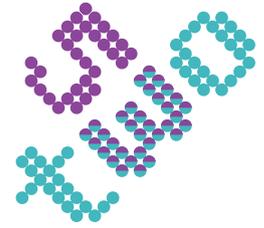
Sophie Lund

“ I attended the MancMade event at 53two and loved everything about it. Rarely do you enter a place and feel so much of a connection to a place and it’s people. 53two typifies Manchester and what it is built upon. Raw, hard working, communal but with a poetic undertone that differentiates it from the mundane. ”

Mark Forster

“ Words cannot really express how great the team at 53Two are, but I’ll have a go. From the moment they opened, ‘The Arches’ have been a breath of fresh air on the Manchester theatre scene. From original plays, to theatre festivals, to film festivals, to the classes that they run, they quickly became my number one place to go to to see theatre. Have never seen a sad face when you walk through the door, either from those who run it to the people who attend it. I have been lucky enough to appear in a couple of pieces at 53Two and have never felt anything other than supported by the team there. Simon, Alex, Dave and the rest of the team there are faultless in their professionalism and incredibly hard working. But, to paraphrase the beginning of ‘Cheers’, they know everybody’s name. Long may the ethos of 53Two continue, wherever it lands. But it must land somewhere. ”

Steve Connolly

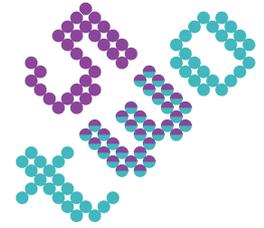


“ I discovered 53two by a happy chance in 2018, and it had a big impact on my life. I live in Sheffield, so don't (or didn't) know the Manchester theatre scene very well. But I was invited by a Yorkshire connection to come and see JB Shorts in April. The evening completely blew me away. Such a welcoming, exciting venue, and one which seemed to have an electric atmosphere bubbling away as people socialised in the bar area before the show. Then two hours of brilliant, varied and engaging theatre followed, including one of the best pieces I've seen anywhere – The Stretch, which I'm really excited to see is being extended and staged again at 53two this year. And then, afterwards – mixing with all the audience, artists and directors, everyone animatedly discussing what the experience they'd just shared. And discovering that the guy serving at the bar was the director of one of the Shorts – it felt like such a wonderful place to be at that moment in time. My friend and I caught the train back to Sheffield, and both wished we had that venue, that opportunity, in our town. And then... roll on four months and I found myself playing a part in a show in that very theatre. Sharing the stage with the people I had enjoyed watching so much. And pinching myself – doing something, at 42, that I thought had passed me by a long time ago. Who knows what the future holds, but as I'm thinking about it now, I guess I see 53Two (the venue and the people) as a new friend you made, out of the blue, that brightened up your life in an unexpected way for a short period of time. And now, as life carries on, you hope – no, you know – that now you've met them, there will be more uplifting moments shared with them in the years ahead. And you're very glad of that. ”

Tom Jordan

“ I went there for the first time pretty much as it opened and quite honestly thought they'd be gone in a matter of months. But that was before I got to know the people behind it. Looking back now there was never, ever a chance it wouldn't work...because it had to. Manchester needed 53two and now they need Manchester. Working with them MancMade has put on 3 arts festivals, a film festival and spoken word events. Together, we've brought over 15 brand new, World Premiere plays to Manchester, offering opportunities to local writers, actors, directors, performers, musicians. Absolutely inclusive always professional and striving to be the best it can be. No short cuts, no compromises. 53two has never acted its age, it competes with the big boys of local theatre and in many, many ways leads the way. It takes chances on talent. Without 53two our local talent would go elsewhere, or even worse, we would never get to see it in the first place. Personally, 53two and the people behind it, my friends, has become as important to me personally as it has to the continued success of the (@) MancMade community. I've laughed there, cried there, bloody hell I actually danced there once, but more importantly I've developed a love (and need) for the arts that has had a huge positive impact on me personally and has been one of the main reasons for me setting up a charity, MancSpirit, that will use the creative arts to tackle mental wellbeing in and around Greater Manchester. ”

Paul Ludden



“53two is one of the most welcoming community spaces I have visited. I’ve never been anywhere quite like it. It’s contemporary, welcoming and an incredibly diverse range of projects are successfully achieved through limited means. Run the sort of that so many venues are crying out for; Enthusiastic, kind and knowledgeable and vitally, working professionals. The fact that these people work so hard to plough that passion and energy back into their community is an absolute credit to their area and the fabric of Manchester. It is beautiful to see not only the creation of productions, but the investment in education and support of actors who many not be able or want to access traditional drama school training. They have created projects that would appeal to every kind of person. From hard hitting new writing, to tribute concerts and small touring cabaret productions. It is very tough for a venue to honestly say they cater to almost everyone at some point during the year. I am so excited to see the future of this venue. It’s a testament to its quality that it’s community have funded it so far. If this level of excellence is what they have achieved with that modest means. Imagine what could be created with solid funding.”

Emma Hook

“You guys and the things you do for actors is amazing! I had an amazing time performing at 53two last year, everyone is a team and is so so lovely! The best theatre community in Manchester.”

Sofiya Haq

“The Manchester Society of Architects have had some absolutely amazing nights in the arches, from learned lectures, cultured exhibitions and extremely raucous awards evenings. The team there led by the wonderful Simon and Alex are all such brilliant people. As President of the society I’ve developed a great relationship with them all and long may that continue. Love you all!!!!”

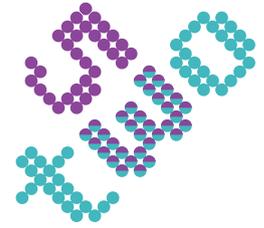
Ged Couser

“I have 2 children that have had the pleasure of performing at 53two in Stay Happy Keep Smiling and Macbeth, the theatre has given them more than they’ll ever know in terms of confidence and belief that the acting world is a warm and fun place to be. It’s been, without a doubt, one of the most incredible foundations for them as young performers (as well as the more experienced professionals) 53two is a family and we feel blessed to be part of it. We have never been to such a positive and loving theatre.”

Melanie Robinson

“We had the pleasure of using 53Two as the venue for our live band burlesque show and it was fantastic. The staff were amazing and helpful. They got what we were doing and were supportive in every way. Even to the extent of being really sound and understanding when one of our performers broke the toilet.... I would recommend working with this team to everyone.”

Simon Rushton



“ I absolutely love 53Two. My first time there was when I was given the great opportunity of being in JB Shorts. 53Two is a credit to Manchester’s theatre scene with its quirky decor and excellent bar serving the most amazing pie n peas not to mention hosting some of the best theatre up North! Everyone from the bar staff through your management is fabulous and they make everyone who walks through their doors feel welcome :) 53Two are doing amazing things and I hope they continue to flourish providing us with great theatre, cheap beer and fab pies! They are the ultimate dream team and I hope they stay going for long time as they deserve to!! ”

Martelle Edinborough

“ You will have heard amazing things about 53:two from so many....it’s all true. Simon Naylor, Mr Balls Of Steel himself and Alexander Maxwell provide the most wonderful opportunities, encouragement and support in the most beautiful and eclectic venue to young and old, experienced and inexperienced artistes. But you know all this. What you don’t know is that last Summer as we were enjoying a bevvy in the beer garden opposite, a young homeless man read us out a couple of his poems in exchange for some cash. They weren’t half bad. And immediately, Simon offered this man and his poetry a slot at the 53two festival the following week. And would pay him! That’s the Moz Man! ”

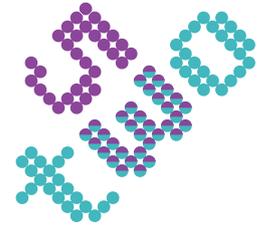
Karen Henthorn

“ It’s true what they say, it’s not the building that makes a theatre; it’s the folk who run it. (Do they say that? If not, they should.) But a building helps. And these guys should definitely get help to get a new building. I’m lucky enough to have experienced some of what 53Two is all about from both on and off the stage and it’s obvious that those at its engine, care as much about facilitating quality theatre for the community of actors it works alongside, as for audiences also. This is why they stand out. They don’t just want to fill their venue, they want to invest in those who use it. They aren’t just kind and friendly, but are supportive, outward looking, not afraid of reviewing or change and are active in doing all they can to make Greater Manchester theatre even greater. Thanks. ”

Morag Peacock

“ I love 53two because it feels like the one of the few places in Manchester that seems to care about growing new works and talent from within the Manchester area. It’s run well and with kindness for all under its roof. I am a wheelchair user and I am always made to feel at HOME there Sadly this outlook even in 2019 isn’t across the board despite what some may think. ”

Peter Keeley



“ I discovered 53Two last May when my daughter, a drama A Level student told me about JB Shorts. She had been with college and enthused about how she mingled with actors afterwards. In the last few years I'd been enjoying the Royal Exchange, frees my my children getting older enabling us to get our more, and we'd been enjoying it immensely. In trying 53Two I found something completely different and possibly even more enjoyable. You might think that 53Two would be just another theatre given the RE, Home, the palace, the Opera House are all within a KM, but it has its own identity. It allows people to 'try' stuff. New and locally based playwrights and actors test their skills at 53two, whereas all the aforementioned host touring and bigger ticket shows. I've seen plays tested, comedians testing, smaller shows touring (there were maybe 30 people when The Cause arrived for 1 night only, but it was terrific). The space it gives for young people to perform is it's best feature though. Shows are filled with youth and energy. It's inspiring. Finally, I am a person who keeps himself to himself. I'm shy, and so I come in, buy a drink and generally sit alone. Every time I've been someone has at least said hello. Friendliness matters too. It adds a personal glow to an already fun afternoon or evening. ”

Jonathan Haggart

“ If there was ever a venue that understood the importance of live performance - the good it does; the positive difference it makes in the lives of people it reaches - 53Two is it. It welcomes everyone with down-to-earth, honest, open arms. Without prejudice. It offers opportunities to creatives who might otherwise never have their work seen, and it makes the precious effort needed to get people who might never have experienced theatre through the doors. It is run with love, dedication and genuine social purpose. Manchester is all the richer for it. ”

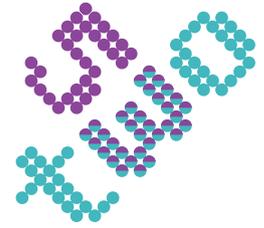
Daniel Brennan

“ 53two has played a massive part in my acting life over the past two and a half years. During this time I have appeared in seven different productions at this wonderful venue. Simon, Alex and the rest of the team there are extremely professional and go to great lengths to make sure every production goes as smoothly as possible. The fantastic thing about 53two is how welcoming it is to everyone, making non theatre goers as well as theatre regulars feel as comfortable as possible. I can't praise the place enough! Career wise it has opened a lot of doors for myself as an actor. It is the one place that you are guaranteed career changing industry people to come and watch you. I have had many an audition from being seen in different productions at 53two. If you want a theatre to go from strength to strength then the team at 53two are the people you need to do it! ”

Victoria Scowcroft

“ The outstanding thoughtfulness of 53two, allowed me to enter the monologue slam. This didn't mean anything to most, but as a wheelchair user They went out of their way to build a ramp making it an all inclusive event. I cannot thank the staff enough. I wish others would see what they have done & follow suit. Leading the way for disability inclusion. Well done! ”

Caron Rae-Brand



“53two is, in my opinion, an essential hub for actors across the Manchester region. As a northern actor who moved over from Yorkshire a couple of years ago, finding the opportunity to network and meet like-minded people in the industry would have been really difficult, if it was not for 53two. Through working behind the bar and attending various events, I have met a host of new people, which has allowed me to develop really good industry ties, but also close friendships too. From a non-personal point of view, I have witnessed excellent theatre in the space, including loads of new writing and opportunities for actors, writers and crew just starting out. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, the new scheme to give unemployed people £2 tickets really underlines 53two's ethos and importance. This scheme will give access to theatre to people who probably would not have that access anywhere else. The importance of this cannot be underestimated, and was highlighted by the winner of 53two's most recent project, 'Offcuts'. Overall, 53two is a place of diversity, acceptance and opportunity. I, personally, would not be where I am without it, and I'm sure the same could be said for a lot more people involved in the Manchester scene.”

Lottie Jones

“I was introduced to 53two by a friend and have never looked back! I was welcome, encouraged and supported instantly. The entire team at 53two are some of the hardest working people I have ever met who are constantly striving to create work that is of the absolute, highest quality. I've taken advantage of almost everything 53two has to offer. I have seen as much I can at the theatre, 'Glasshouse' being one of the most incredible, heartbreaking, beautiful pieces of theatre I have ever seen, ever! I've taken advantage of their self tape services for auditions, headshots and Scene Study classes (still one the best scene study classes I have attended, giving me the tools I needed to be able to approach text, tools which I have used many times since, both in work and auditions) the list goes on. Their constant work to support emerging artists, to engage with the community and to just give a huge amount of people a safe, supportive space to create their work is unending. Manchester is very, very lucky to have 53two and their team and long may it last.”

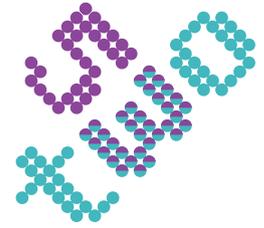
Angela Hazeldine

“I took part in a play underneath the arches and it was a fabulous experience. It was such a warm, welcoming venue and well run. Great beer, great music, great poetry, great plays (especially ours To Be Perfectly Frank). It's a place that puts heart into a city and that's to be commended and supported. Get behind it. Manchester needs it.”

Dave Dutton

“53two is an invaluable hub for the Manchester creative scene. From new writing scratch nights, to community and charity events, to fully realised and powerful theatrical productions, it has a varied and exciting programme and gives artists the opportunity to showcase their work at whatever stage it is at. This is so important for nurturing the next generation of theatre makers and creatives. It has a strong presence and reputation, and so much potential for furthering the arts community in Manchester - it simply cannot end here!”

Cat Morefield



“Bringing a wide range of affordable live theatre to a wider public.”

Geoff Baron

“Coming to acting later in life there were two things I needed. The first were the skills and knowledge, the toolkit if you like, of acting. The second was the opportunity to use this toolkit in a performance. 53two has provided both, as well as the self belief that I could perform on stage. I was recently selected to be part of Offcut, an initiative where 15 new plays were written, directors and actors chosen and the plays then performed. This experience was invaluable for me and such a fantastic thing to be part of! 53two is a unique and integral part of the independent theatre scene. I cannot imagine Manchester without it!”

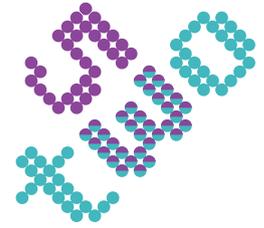
Margaret Carr

“53Two were instrumental in moving my theatre company forward. They supported us as we performed at their venue at GMF. It gave us a platform to show others our work, and start to build relationships and networks to move our company forward. Following a successful run at 53Two, our show was picked up by a regional theatre at which we are now associate artists. 53two gave us that platform to continue to grow our company. More importantly than that, 53two is a safe community for artists from all backgrounds. It is a place which genuinely believes in the nourishment of artists. Other venues in the north can feel inaccessible for emerging artists. Whereas 53two welcomes them with open arms and supports them in being the best they can be. The Manchester theatre scene would not be what it is without 53two!”

Rachel McMurray

“Having worked in the industry as a performer, producer, stage manager & theatre manager I feel I understand and appreciate the important role Fringe Theatre plays. And the guys at 53two in my humble opinion have nailed it. Their energy, passion and foresight is bursting out of every production I've seen over the years or been involved in. To build a credible platform for emerging artists to show their wares & a creative hub that truly nurtures and guides everyone who crosses its path is an immensely impressive feat that 53two have achieved over a really short space of time. Their potential to continue to support & develop this awesome artistic community knows no bounds and I am truly excited to see what else they bring to the mix. It's amazing to know that Simon has a voice and is unafraid to use it when fighting for the rights of us actors, theatre goers and all of the many roles that make this industry what it is. I'm proud and privileged to have access to their venue and their invaluable support in my hometown and will continue to utilise their venue wherever they may roam. Good luck guys.”

Maria O'Hare



“ I took part in a project supported by 53two and in doing so learnt about their philosophy and approach to work and art. I found them to be the most inclusive, thoughtful, kind, generous, driven, confident and nurturing venue I have ever worked in. And the quality of the art produced was a reflection of the effort, love and joy they put into it. They are collectors of unsung greatness, the helping hand at the start of the journey, the safe and warm homecoming in the middle and the comfort at the end. In a world and an industry that can be hard and cold, it seems they always leave the light on for anyone and everyone who might need them. The world and the industry needs their influence. ”

Liz Webster

“ Really have loved the shows put on especially JB Shorts twice a year. I also benefitted from performing twice at the venue both as part of the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival and was gutted when I heard that it would not be an option this year. They were really helpful and supportive and I really hope that they get the funding and support to get a new more permanent home. In the meantime wishing them all the best and massive thanks to all they have provided me with the last few years. ”

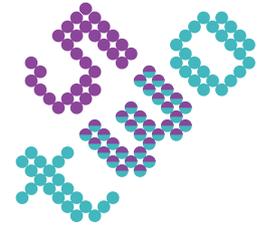
Ali Kahn

“ As a young theatre director who moved to the city 2 years ago, I feel that 53two is a very important part of the Manchester theatre scene and really fills a gap for artists not being supported by the more established buildings in Manchester. Venues like the Royal Exchange and HOME could not possibly support all the artists that want to make work and 53two creates a space that is unthreatening with staff that are very approachable. There is a can-do attitude about the venue and opportunities are there for those who want them. In addition, when I launched Manchester's Big Theatre Podcast, Simon was one of the first people to embrace the idea, while others weren't interested or didn't reply to emails - and I think that demonstrates why 53two is not only important as a physical space but also as an attitude and approach. The team work extremely hard and frequently go above and beyond to help artists. It is definitely time to support them to find a secure and permanent home. ”

Joseph Gimour-Rees

“ I love visiting 53Two because it's not like any other theatre. Everyone is very welcoming and it feels like a second home. “The Glasshouse” was one of favourite ever theatre shows, and they always put on exciting new work which inspires me to produce and watch more theatre myself. 53Two has also supported me personally. They brought writing to life during the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival, offering me heaps of support and encouragement as this was my first ever full length play. 53Two provides a platform for new emerging talent in Manchester, showcasing the most exciting and often untold stories. Without a doubt, they make a significant contribution to the Manchester theatre scene. ”

Tiffany Bowman



“ Well wow. This work must go on, I insist. 53two is a magical space, all the stuff about supporting new writers, directors, theatremakers, actors is obvious but what about scratching the skin so to speak. This space, this family, this unit is about far more, valuable and flexible employment, a safe space to learn and network. There’s this awful growing concern about social isolation and loneliness in this country, how many people come through the doors of 53two on their own? Many but all are welcomed with a smile and a “hi” from Simon, Alex and the team. Personally I love the place, this little community where I’ve been welcomed with open, supportive and safe arms. From the day I walked through the door as a stranger in the newspaper boy ensemble, I think I was a stranger for about ten minutes. To now having just finished 3M. The training is brilliant and individualised Simon has a great way of teasing your objectives out of you even if you aren’t quite sure of them yourself and Alex looks after everyone with a genuine concern for the happiness of all. Me, I know the Manchester acting scene needs 53two, I also think the community needs 53two and GP’s/mental health professionals should make referrals to this happiness hub. ”

Michelle Parker

“ 53TWO is nothing short of incredible! It gives so many opportunities to performers and supports them at whatever stage they are at in their career. I graduated in 2017 in Acting, Comedy Writing and Performance and during my time as a student I was able to see many outstanding performances at the venue. That in itself is good, but the truth is, I can’t always get into a venue because I use a wheelchair. This place is accessible, has a ramp, disabled loo and staff who care about getting me in and ensuring I have a decent seat. After graduation, when I started to perform—the first time was at Monologue slam— they built a ramp so I could get myself on stage in my wheelchair. I can’t begin to say how good that is - in other places I’ve wavered precariously in makeshift ramps, had to perform in a small space in front of the stage, gone up on a lift used by musical instruments, or been turned away. They have also allowed me to rehearse work in their space. They have hosted meetings for DANC - the disabled artists networking community. Words to sum them up? Welcoming, inclusive, positive, innovative. Top place and top people. ”

Andy Duffy

“ 53two has been my go to venue in Manchester, I have watched a range of theatre here and the whole place is always pushing to help genuine and any theatre makers. My highlight of the venue would be sitting front row to watch The GlassHouse which I thought was just brilliant! This venue is really helping local artists and pushing boundaries like no other! ”

Shaban Dar

“ In the nearly nine years I have lived in Manchester, there hasn’t been a creative venue quite like 53Two. I have been a part of some fabulous events there including hosting my own event as well as going for social reasons such as New Year’s Eve or to support fellow thespians in plays. There’s no ego at 53Two; Simon, Alex, Dave & all the other staff are warm, friendly, supportive & work hard. It’s a place that unites lots of actors together to catch up & meet & work together. Long may it reign! ”

Mia Vore