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## The future of fringe

Research exploring the future of fringe theatre will be presented at a symposium at Northumbria University, Newcastle next month.

Marking the culmination of a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the symposium will unveil findings about the role of independent theatre in Newcastle and Gateshead.

A partnership between Northumbria and the Clore Leadership Programme and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the research was carried out by Amy Golding, Northumbria graduate and Clore Fellow, under the supervision of Performing Arts lecturer Kay Hepplewhite.

Amy said: “As Artistic Director of Curious Monkey, a Newcastle-based theatre company with a remit to support emerging artists in the region, I want to be more informed about what theatre-makers need to thrive and how we can create a vibrant fringe theatre scene in Newcastle/Gateshead. I am interested to research the role of independent theatre in other cities where it thrives in order to identify what we can learn from other models”

Over the last six months, Amy has been carrying out research looking at the independent theatre scene in Newcastle/Gateshead and the variables that make a vibrant theatre ecology using Leeds and Bristol as regional city case studies. Working with Kay Hepplewhite, Senior Lecturer in Performance at Northumbria University, Amy is exploring how her findings can be shared to support the development of the growing and bubbling independent theatre scene in the North East.

Kay Hepplewhite said: ‘This is a significant research project investigating up and coming theatre making in the region, and how it is best supported. At Northumbria Performing Arts, we prioritise real connections with what is happening in performance for research informed teaching. The report draws on fascinating findings which Amy has gathered from her conversations in Leeds and Bristol as well as locally. We are looking forward to the event.’

The symposium will include a presentation of the interim findings by Amy and a discussion about how to move forward. There will also be a panel discussion on independent theatre with guest speakers Kate Craddock (Northumbria Performance Lecturer and Director of Gateshead International Director of Theatre), Matthew Austin (Artistic Director of Mayfest in Bristol), Alan Lane (Artistic Director of Slunglow in Leeds) and Jonluke McKie (Artistic Director of Precious Cargo in Newcastle). The event will be opened by Northumbria’s Kay Hepplewhite and Professor Chris Dorsett and will offer anyone with an interest in theatre the opportunity to network and take part in discussion groups with representatives from the industry.

The symposium will take place on Wednesday 4 February from 15:00 to 18:00 at The Basement Studio Theatre, on Northumbria’s City Campus.

Tickets are free but must be booked in advance: <http://bit.ly/1xjSNI5>

To find out more about Performing Arts at Northumbria visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/arts](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/arts)

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