

PRESS RELEASE – 2 November

Complicité

After three years as Executive Director of Complicité, Amber Massie-Blomfield will leave her post in Spring 2024, moving into freelance ventures

Taking up the role in April 2021, Amber’s co-leadership with Artistic Director Simon McBurney has seen the company emerge from the challenges of the pandemic, returning to an ambitious and critically-acclaimed programme of major new works. *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* - a dramatisation of Nobel Laureate, Olga Tokarczuk’s eco-thriller - has been seen by more than 80,000 audiences across the UK and Europe, and *The Dark is Rising*, an innovative binaural audio adaptation of Susan Cooper’s cult fantasy novel for the BBC World Service, topped the Apple fiction podcast charts in 26 countries around the world.

Figures in Extinction [1.0], a new dance work by Crystal Pite with Simon McBurney (co-produced with Nederlands Dans Theater), received the prestigious Swan Award for Most Impressive Dance Production. Fehinti Balogun’s *Can I Live?*, a filmed performance about the intersection of climate and social justice with spoken word, music and CGI, has toured to more than 35 grassroots community screening events, as well as appearing in contexts like COP26 and at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Leading the company’s successful bid for ongoing Arts Council England funding as an NPO in the current round, Amber has overseen a revitalised education and creative engagement programme, focussing on deep, longer-term projects in partnership with the communities for whom they are most relevant - from the creation of *Grief Chorus*, sharing rituals of mourning across cultures in the wake of the pandemic, to *Rebel Voices*, a creative group for older women exploring themes of invisibility and rebellion. The ideas development strand of Complicité’s activity has supported artists including Paula Varjack, Kandinsky, Dickson Mbi and Dead Centre.

She has placed a strong emphasis on environmentalism, collaborating on new schemes such as the Mudlarks international residency for artists and environmental activists, a ‘climate leave’ programme for staff and chairing the working group responsible for Theatre Green Book’s international touring guidance.

Amber commented: “*It has been one of the privileges of my life to play a role with the best theatre company in the world, working with the most wonderful colleagues, and I’m grateful to Simon and the board for inviting me to be part of the adventure. As I move into freelance life, I’m looking forward to exploring new opportunities that allow me to centre my commitment to taking action on the climate and ecological emergency.*”

Complicité Artistic Director, Simon McBurney said: *“Over the last three years, Amber has, brilliantly, guided Complicité with huge energy, creativity and care. Writer, producer, activist... with her multi-disciplinary talents, as Executive Director, she has overseen the development of major new projects in very different forms - radio, film, education, theatre and dance - as well as fostering an inclusive and nurturing space for us all. We are deeply grateful for all she has seeded, and realised, not only adding to the creative canon of the company, but also pointing the way in addressing the immense challenges that surround us in this world. I know we will be leaning on her talents in a different way, as she pursues her new path, but thank you, Amber, for all you give and have given.”*

Chair of the board, Tom Morris said: *“Amber Massie-Blomfield has made a significant and lasting contribution to Complicité, leading the company with enormous skill during the very difficult journey out of the pandemic. It is a tribute to her, to Simon McBurney, and to the entire staff, that this period has been one of such creative success. Amber is rare, too, in combining the public intellectual role manifest in her books with powerful skills in organisational leadership. All at the company express our sincere thanks to her for all she has done in the last three years and look forward eagerly to the extraordinary things she will achieve in the future.”*

[Link for image](#)

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Biographies:

Complicité

Complicité is an international touring theatre company based in London led by Artistic Director and co-founder, Simon McBurney. Complicité creates work that strengthens human interconnection, using the complicity between performer and audience that is at the heart of the theatrical experience. Complicité works across art forms, believing theatre, opera, film, radio, installation, publication and participatory arts can all be sites for the collective act of imagination.

Complicité’s recent work includes *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, *Figures in Extinction [1.0]*, *Can I Live?*, *The Encounter*, *The Master and Margarita*, *Shun-kin* and *A Disappearing Number*, as well as *The Dark is Rising*, a new audio drama for BBC World Service and BBC Sounds based on Susan Cooper’s cult novel. Founded in 1983, the Company has won over 50 major theatre awards worldwide, and played in more than 40 countries.

The company is committed to responding to the climate and ecological emergency. It is a founder member of Culture Declares Emergency and co-chairs a working group of UK Touring Theatre Companies to share best sustainable practice and to develop the Theatre Green Book Touring Guidance.

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