HEROICA
THEATRE COMPANY

maverick women unsung lives

Annual Report for 2025

In accordance with our Constitution and our obligations as a CIO, Heroica Theatre Company's Trustees met at four Board meetings and an AGM across 2025, and accurate Minutes were kept. Accounts and reports will be submitted to The Charity Commission in October 2026.

1.To begin 2025

1.1 We continued with the successful touring production of 2024: *Pat Douthwaite: Alive and Kicking,* written by Anna Carlisle and performed by Alexandra Mathie, and with five performances already behind us: one performance each at the Hawthornden Lecture Theatre (NGS), Edinburgh, Glasgow Women's Library (September) and three performances at The Space, Hebden Bridge Town Hall (August and November).

1.2 Also by the end of 2024, we had in place:

- confirmation of one performance (performance no. 6) at Lyon & Turnbull auction houses, Edinburgh negotiated and agreed: January 16th 2025.
- pencilled performances at both Glasgow School of Art and The Lillie Gallery, Milngavie (see details below: 2.3)

Both invitations came as a result of an adult student and gallery personnel respectively attending our September 19th performance at the Glasgow Women's Library and responding positively to the play and the idea of hosting it at their own venues.

1.3 We ended 2024 very gratified by the responses so far to this challenging production, and looked forward to further interesting venues hosting the production in 2025.

2. Public performances, beginning January 2025

2.1 In the early months of the year, we arranged performances for later in the year at Scarborough Fringe part of the Scarborough Fair 2025 (two performances), and for the Kirkcudbright Fringe festival 2025 (one performance). The DACS licensing agreement (on the images for back-projection during the performance and for continued use of '*Rage* 1960' for promotional material) was due to expire in early September 2025, so we requested from DACS a special short-term extension so that we could give this latter performance.

3. Sixth performance

January 16th, Lyon & Turnbull auction house, Edinburgh:
We were welcomed warmly by our contact Carly Shearer who had also facilitated a performance there of *Joan Eardley: A Private View* in 2017. We performed on their low auctioneer's stage, theatre-style as closely as possible. The space was challenging with some in-built screens and wall panels which located our images presentation further away from the stage than we would have liked.

We were able to invite a small number of our own contacts and supporters to attend and we were also pleased to see representation from those who had known and/or dealt with Pat in her lifetime. In the Q&A one of these (Andrew Brown, former curator of the 369 Gallery who had given Pat one of her few solo shows) publicly congratulated us on our interpretation of her works and her personality. Privately, but in writing, the current director of The Scottish Gallery Tommy Zyw called the play 'a triumph'.

4. Adjustments to the performance schedule

4.1 Planned performances at the Glasgow School of Art for 12th March and The Lillie Gallery, Milngavie for 14th March had to be cancelled/postponed due to both AC and AM having Covid. The GSA had been expecting to provide us with an audience of c200 students, with a £1000 fee to Heroica for the production, with a non-paying audience, whilst The Lillie was offering an 80/20 split for a paying audience of 45-50.

4.2 During this time of illness, AC and AM received an unexpected phone call from Toby Hogarth (Pat Douthwaite's son) in Mallorca: he said he was very supportive of the production in principle and expressed interest in coming to one of the forthcoming performances.

5. Seventh performance

June 9th Community Hall, Isle of Berneray:
A 'holiday' to the Outer Hebrides island of Berneray in early June offered AC and AM an opportunity to give an 'impromptu' public rehearsal of the play at their delightful Community Hall. We offered a free performance, with donations invited.

Two or three days in advance, we notified people we knew on the island of the event, and we 'advertised' in the bus shelters, the local shop and bunkhouse, the information/historical society centre et al. Twenty people attended: including a fine arts professor, an artist and a glass-maker – plus the island postman/manager of the bunkhouse, and our 'next-door neighbour'. We welcomed the arriving audience with tea and coffee and conversation.

We received a standing and ongoing ovation. The Q&A was our liveliest and most interesting thus far. Donations raised totalled £120 which we split: £60 going to the Community Hall, the remainder towards AC and AM's travel and accommodation.
One abiding comment (from the neighbour) was that we had 'gifted something very precious to the island'.

What had begun as a casual idea that might not work or even be attended in fact ended as a most rewarding and happy experience and airing of the show!

6. Eighth and ninth performances

June 17th and 18th, the Old Parcels Office at the Scarborough railway station:
Two performances were included in the events of the Scarborough Fringe, part of the annual 'Scarborough Fair' festival. We were charged £20 to register our event in the Festival listings. We were then to pay £150 per show for the venue: tickets £16 and £13, anticipated audiences of around 80, and we were to have all the takings after the booking commission fees. AM was regularly in communication with the press officer at the Stephen Joseph Theatre who agreed to promote the show through their channels/newsletter, BBC Radio York et al.

Despite what we hoped/were assured would be widespread promotion from the Festival organisers (through their own channels/newsletter, BBC Radio York et al), advance ticket sales were very poor and AM made a marketing trip to Scarborough to spread leaflets and prompt the organisers into action. Actual publicity was virtually non-existent bar some last-minute social media. We erected our own A2 'sandwich board' poster outside the venue. The ticket link was not operative until very late in the run-up, well after it was declared open. In town, there were virtually no visual signs of a festival going on at all.

The performance space, however, was lovely and light, we were welcomed and treated very well and there were apologies abounding for the deficient pre-promotion. As an act of

goodwill, the charge of £300 for hire was reduced to £100 by the venue as a generous acknowledgement on their part that Scarborough Fair had mismanaged marketing and box-office sales. (We were not the only visiting company affected by poor promotion and negligible audience-numbers.)

Sadly, as anticipated, our audiences numbered only 17 and 20 respectively each evening, but they were appreciative and knowledgeable. We were surprised at the Q&A to be talking with an old confrere of Pat Douthwaite's – who loved the show and was great to get to know.

For some months we remained unpaid by the Scarborough Council for our booked box-office takings of £350.40, due on Friday 1st August and AM had to chase this up.

In the future, whilst we would be reluctant to perform at the Scarborough Fair festival specifically, generally we need to remain alert to the different reasons why bookings at various venues may be slow and ideally intervene at an earlier stage, where appropriate and possible.

7. Tenth performance

August 15th, The Lillie Gallery, Milngavie:
This followed cancellation of a projected April booking because of AC and AM having Covid, but swift renegotiation of a summer performance date followed. The Lillie offered an 80/20 split for a paying audience of 45-50 and agreed to give us access to a large (3' X 4') Douthwaite painting *The Bridegroom* as a backdrop to the performance.)

At the gallery, we were met and facilitated by their friendly staff (led by Andrea O'Neill whom we had dealt with during *Joan Eardley: A Private View* in 2017) who made car-parking, overall access, green-room space et al available to us. We accommodated ourselves at the Kirkhouse Inn, Strathblane, 12 miles north of Milngavie, for two nights.

As a real bonus and privilege for us, the gallery staff put their Douthwaite painting 'The Bridegroom' on display as our backdrop for the performance and it looked fabulous.

The Lillie had pre-sold tickets via East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture ticketing page and we had an audience of 31 (cut-off was to be 40). £465 was taken by box office and our 80% share came to £372 (received). There was a very interesting Q&A.

Toby Hogarth, son of Pat Douthwaite, flew in from Mallorca and attended this performance with a friend from Glasgow. He remained unidentified and unobtrusive throughout the Q&A but spoke warmly with us afterwards, though clearly the whole experience of witnessing a play about his mother was considerably traumatic for him. He was of course unable to be objective in any way about the production and talked only – and very honestly – about his mother afterwards. Happily for us, he made no actual objections to either our content or our interpretation.

Also in the audience was an art lecturer with links to the Edinburgh College of Art who assured us she would send back her recommendations about the production.

8. Eleventh performance

August 21st, The Space, Hebden Bridge Town Hall
This 'by public demand' performance was our fourth in Hebden Bridge. Three weeks in

advance, bookings were already healthy (22 for a 50-seat capacity), with a lot of our own promotion being also in place well in advance.

Pre-bookings via TicketTailor finally reached capacity at 50. We had expected it to be popular but once again it was over-prescribed and yet we managed to fit in more than the billed capacity of The Space. Some people were returning to see it a second time and/or bring friends along with them. Box office received was £716 (to include donations) from an audience of 61 (55 paying plus six volunteers).

All trustees plus two partners supported us very valuably on the night with volunteer assistance. The Q&A was lively, positive and rewarding.

9. Twelfth performance

September 6th, Kirkcudbright Art Gallery

We were to give one performance as part of the events of the Kirkcudbright Fringe festival 2025. We would receive a guaranteed fee of £400 plus one night's accommodation and breakfast at the Selkirk Arms Hotel. 35-40 was capacity audience for the space: the Mezzanine within the Kirkcudbright Art Gallery. (Our costs would be only travel, meals and one night's accommodation.)

Ticket sales were open when billed, and we were clearly featured in the festival literature. We visited the venue in advance and met with the organiser, Chris Walker (also chef-patron at the Selkirk Arms Hotel where we were to be accommodated). The event was well organised and supported. For our part, we promoted the event on our own website as a great autumn day out.

The audience comprised, amongst others, friends and Heroica associates from both Hebden Bridge and Edinburgh, plus a couple who had met Toby Hogarth in Milngavie on 15th August. The Q&A was well attended, lively and interesting. The Fringe convenor, Chris Walker, was not present at the performance but he congratulated us warmly as we left, having heard very positive reports from others (associated with the Fringe) who had attended, and he invited us to come again.

It was a very happy final performance.

10. Responses and feedback, strengths and challenges

10.1 The public responses to *Pat Douthwaite: Alive and Kicking* were overwhelmingly positive. In addition to the many sell-out performances, many people travelled long distances and reported feeling greatly rewarded for their efforts. Venue personnel (on the ground) were without exception hugely supportive and welcoming and most of them efficiently promoted the event locally; we also benefited from word-of-mouth from previous venues and our own ongoing marketing.

10.2 We canvassed our Hebden Bridge audience (November 2024) for their responses to the production they had seen, and we were delighted to have responses from over 35 of the 50 attenders, all of which were positive, thought-provoking and valuable.

11. What we did well

11.1 We successfully met our stated Heroica aim to continue to use non-traditional spaces for performance and explore the possibilities for staging theatre in unexpected ways, specifically to re-imagine the appearance and function of a gallery space, or to create from a featureless public space (e.g. a town/village hall meeting room) the entire world of the subject: in this case, Pat Douthwaite's

home and her studio and the room in which she was last alive.

11.2 We succeeded in our aim of creating a dynamic new piece of theatre which illuminated, in this case, Pat Douthwaite's life, and highlighted the elements of her nature and the passions that drove her work. It profiled the issues of equality and marginalization – for women in general and for women artists in particular - in the workplace and society. It was relevant and holistically reflective of the issues which continue to face us in present-day society.

11.3 We had learned very powerfully from director Marilyn Imrie in *Joan Eardley: A Private View* 2017 the importance of any production music being 'made' rather than recorded. It was created, in the case of *Pat Douthwaite: Alive and Kicking,* by piano underscoring (from AC) of the various phases of Pat's life and using the music about which she was passionate: Dave Brubeck's jazz pieces. We further honed the piano contributions so that they intervened when another 'voice', either of conscience or outside reaction, was able to help heighten the mood of the particular moment of the play.

11.4 During *Joan Eardley: A Private View* 2017, we learned from the success of the only formalised post-show Q&A we held (following the performance at Huddersfield Art Gallery) the potential wisdom of scheduling more Q&As in the future. For *Pat Douthwaite: Alive and Kicking,* a Q&A was held with the playwright and actor at the end of every performance and a majority of the audience remained for this each time. Q&As offer opportunities for the audiences to respond and react from their heart and 'gut', to learn more, for them to feel a part of what they have seen and heard, and for the creators to provide some accountability for many of the choices and processes they have made. In 2024-25, the Q&A served as the 'immersive related activity' which we have always tried to incorporate within our productions.

11.5 Behind the scenes, all went smoothly and efficiently. AC and AM travelled the show fairly effortlessly (especially to Scotland), managing to fit the set and all equipment into our car. There were no mishaps or conflicts, despite AC and AM doing all their own lifting, loading and stage management. (However, no offer of helping with packing up and getting out was ever refused – and there were many, especially at the Hawthornden and The Space at HB Town Hall.)

11.6 No venue received a performance of varying quality or energy from any other. With their consistency of performance and production work, the 'team of two' honoured both the subject of the play and the audiences, and were rewarded by people's audible appreciation and generous feedback - in some cases, standing ovations.

12. Challenges that we dealt/are dealing with, and how

12.1 Following *Joan Eardley: A Private View* 2017, we reviewed our customary 'promenade' style. Whilst relished by many, we discovered that it did not suit all: for our key audience age-group of 65+, it did not ensure everyone's comfort and visibility, despite our suggestion and/or provision of 'light seating'. For this production (2024-25), we seated audiences at every venue.

12.2 Achieving diversity of audiences remains a challenge for Heroica. Our audiences were, once again, chiefly female 45 - 75+ who had heard of the event via word-of-mouth and/or venue promotion. Though this pattern reflects national trends of theatre-going, we need to look carefully at future subject matter and its specific appeal.

12.3 At Scarborough (June 2025) in particular and to a lesser extent at The Lillie Gallery (August 2025), we became aware that we were not experiencing high ticket bookings, and The Lillie Gallery by contrast (a small venue) attracts an elderly and middle-class audience who may not have

responded positively to the idea of a play about Pat Douthwaite. Enhanced and timely communication with venues will be required in the future to ensure that we have optimal audience numbers.

12.4 We need also to examine the frequency with which Heroica Theatre Company performs in Scotland. Whilst we have a strong and supportive home-base, England as a whole is not as receptive in general to hosting our work as our tried-and-tested venues in Scotland. We need to evaluate the nature and recurrence of our subject matter (i.e. Scottish women artists) and be brave enough to pit what patently has worked in the past with what might be riskier but equally successful in the future *and* at the same time appeal to a geographically wider set of new audiences and venues.

13. Outcomes

13.1 At our October 2025 trustees meeting, whilst it was agreed that the Pat Douthwaite project had been a major critical and landmark success in Heroica's history, issues had nonetheless arisen which continue to need addressing:

13.2 The financial model was agreed as being non-sustainable: working off capital funds and being unable to remunerate either AC or AM for their endeavours. To this end, it was agreed that where a pre-agreed fee from a venue did not apply, raising the ticket price to £15 across the board would be advisable.

13.3 AC agreed, on the suggestion of AD, to produce an Evaluation report on *Pat Douthwaite: Alive and Kicking,* along the lines of what is produced for funders such as ACE. As a starter, did we meet our CIO Aims and Objectives? Was our strapline 'maverick women, unsung lives' met?

13.4 Other sub-issues that came up for discussion at this point:

- New subject-matter might examine women whose male counterparts garnered the credit for their works (e.g. Colette)
- Is it time to explore scientists? Someone whose life story is as interesting as their work story? Someone also with a 'sexy' back-story?
- We must not get stuck in old ruts. It is no doubt time to move away from artists. Is it time to return to the site-specific? At least, if not that, to give greater thought to our partner/venue organisations and their *raison d'être/modus vivendi.* Can we select our heroine according to a 'market-gap' in their outreach? Also should we not work alongside people whose infrastructure is already there and can help support us (e.g. ticketing and publicity)? Not a garden or an art gallery, say, but a small theatre or other tourist venue that also needs to prosper?

13.5 It was agreed by all that *Pat Douthwaite: Alive and Kicking* would now go into a rest phase, pending any lucrative call for the re-mounting of the show which we would always consider. As above (11.2) consideration and development of new subject matter for a future production would continue.

14. The Heroica website

14.1 Across 2025, the Heroica website was regularly updated in accordance with all the aforegoing information, developments and changes. New performance image material has been uploaded to the dedicated *Pat Douthwaite: Alive and Kicking* page. We have lively contact with our supporters through our social media pages.

Thus all Heroica Theatre Company work in 2025 was devoted to the development and continuation of the Pat Douthwaite Project, in line with our CIO aims and objectives and secure in the support and guidance we were receiving from Heroica Trustees, from audiences and from the various potential partners in and supporters of the project.

Report written and compiled by
Angela Cairns, for Heroica Theatre Company
2nd October 2026

Heroica Theatre Company

Total Receipts & Payments Account for the year ended 31-12-25

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Previous year
Receipts				
Fundraising Income	-	-	-	-
Donations	*563.06*	*260.00*	*823.06*	-
Grants	-	-	-	-
HMRC - Gift Aid	*123.88*	-	*123.88*	-
Interest	*6.74*	-	*6.74*	-
Sales	-	-	-	-
Easy Fundraising	-	-	-	-
Paypal	-	-	-	-
Ticket Sales	-	*2,781.41*	*2,781.41*	-
Maverick Monologues	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	**693.68**	**3,041.41**	**3,735.09**	**-**
Payments				
Room Hire	-	-	-	-
IT - Domain and Hosting	*365.92*	-	*365.92*	
Miscellaneous	*13.98*	*58.75*	*72.73*	-
Insurance	-	*94.00*	*94.00*	-
HTC Office	*92.56*	-	*92.56*	
Project Appraisal	-	-	-	-
Consultancy	-	-	-	-
Marketing	-	*207.60*	*207.60*	-
Accommodation	-	*654.45*	*654.45*	
Salaries	-	-	-	-
Fees	-	*1,051.63*	*1,051.63*	-
Rehearsal	-	-	-	-
Sets and Props	-	-	-	-
Costume	-	-	-	-
Equipment and Hire	-	-	-	-
Venue Management	-	-	-	-
Licensing	-	-	-	-
Transport	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	-	-
Venue Hire	-	*270.00*	*270.00*	-
Hospitality	-	-	-	-
Subs	-	-	-	-
Conference Expenses	-	-	-	-
Travel & Subsistence	-	*1,529.34*	*1,529.34*	-
Total payments	**472.46**	**3,865.77**	**4,338.23**	**-**
Net receipts / (payments)	**221.22**	**(824.36)**	**(603.14)**	**-**
Transfer	-	-	-	-
Balance brought forward	3,317.81	-	3,317.81	
Balance carried forward	**3,539.03**	**(824.36)**	**2,714.67**	**-**

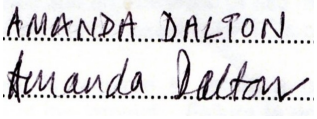
Made up of:	
Lloyds TSB Current Account	1,828.01
Lloyds Deposit account	853.14
Cash float	33.52
	-
	2,714.67

Checks - this should equal zero *0.00*

Approval of the accounts

The financial statements were approved at a meeting of the management committee and signed on its behalf by:

Name: AMANDA DALTON Chair

Signed: 

19 10 2026