**Free Your Mind**

13 October – 5 November

Aviva Studios

World Premiere 18 October

Co-created by **Michael 'Mikey J' Asante, Danny Boyle, Es Devlin, Sabrina Mahfouz and Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy.**

**Gareth Pugh** Costume Designer

**Lucy Carter** Lighting Designer

**Gareth Fry** Sound Designer

**Luke Halls** Video Designer

**Tracey Seaward** Creative Producer

**Jo Stendall and Kathleen Murphy** for **Boy Blue**

Associate Producers

**Lara Rose McCabe** Rehearsal Director & Resident Director

**Nathaniel SB Impraim-Jones** Rehearsal Director

**Amalie White** Associate Set Designer

**Chris Hirst** Associate Lighting Designer

Production Team

**Phil Wilding** Production Manager

**Sam Hunter** Head of Production

**Tahra Zafar** Head of Costume

**Lily Mollgaard** Props Supervisor

**Peter Barnett** Company Stage Manager

**Liz Copp** Technical Stage Manager

**Gemma Thomas** Show Caller

**Jambi Darnton, Afua Nuamah** Assistant Stage Managers

Factory International

**Fiona Pride** Executive Producer

**Anna Moutrey** Senior Producer

**Rowan Kudekha-Lark** Associate Producer

**Louis Lisle** Production Administrator

**Jack Thompson** Associate Technical Director

**Alex Adamson** Head of Scenic & Gallery Installation

**David Wimpenny** Head of Lighting & Video

**Sorcha Steele** Head of Sound

Thank you to the entire Factory International team. For a full staff list, please see **factoryinternational.org/free-your-mind-staff-list/**

Based on the Warner Bros films written and directed by the Wachowskis. Produced by special arrangement with Warner Bros Theatre Ventures. Commissioned and produced by Factory International.

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**Free Your Mind is a massive creative leap, asking challenging questions of the world we are entering, and inviting us to think in new ways**

On 28 June 2007, the first ever Manchester International Festival opened with the premiere of Monkey: Journey to the West, created by Chen Shi-Zheng, Damon Albarn and Jamie Hewlett. The show immediately established the qualities for which the Festival would become renowned: ambitious, accessible new work, beautifully produced, crossing disciplines and cultures, and creating a true sense of event. The Festival went from strength to strength, and at the point I took over as Artistic Director from Alex Poots in 2015, the idea had already been born for a building that would produce and present year- round the kind of bold new work for which MIF was rightly celebrated.

But there was a lot to do! In the following months and years, we appointed the brilliant OMA as architects; we set up a wide range of forums and community collaborations to ensure deep and long- term connections to the city; we founded Factory Academy, where people from all across Manchester can develop skills for jobs in the creative industries; we supported Manchester City Council, who have led so bravely on the building’s construction, in raising funds to supplement central government’s core grant, including landmark sponsorship from Aviva; we became a year-round, internationally- producing, digitally-savvy entity called Factory International; we produced four more fantastic editions of Manchester International Festival; and we invited artists from across the city and the globe to visit our new building as it grew, and to dream of what they might create here.

Among those artists were the team responsible for the show you will see tonight. Over the years that the building has been growing from the ground, Michael 'Mikey J' Asante, Danny Boyle, Es Devlin, Sabrina Mahfouz and Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy have been growing their ideas for Free Your Mind, a re- imagining of the iconic story of The Matrix for the present moment. And their production embodies the qualities of our new space and our future plans just as that first Festival show did back in 2007.

Our vision at Factory International is to Invent Tomorrow Together. At Aviva Studios, online, across our city and around the globe, we work with artists, audiences and communities to imagine futures by taking creative leaps into the unknown. Free Your Mind is a massive creative leap, asking challenging questions of the world we are entering, and inviting us to think in new ways about community and identity, as we are all handed the keys to this extraordinary new space. I am truly grateful to the entire family of creatives, performers, technicians, producers and many, many more who have gifted us this beautiful expression of our venue’s hopes and possibilities. Welcome to Aviva Studios! Welcome to Free Your Mind!

John McGrath

Artistic Director & Chief Executive, Factory International

**The Matrix Now**

In 1999, we were offered a simple choice: ‘You take the blue pill, the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.’

The Matrix – in all its electric intensity and iconographic grandeur – toyed with our collective fears and fantasies. It made us question reality. What does it mean to be human? And who is really in control?

Since The Matrix was first released, the digital revolution has accelerated at maximum velocity – with social media and big tech reaching into the lives of billions and completely upending our way of life.

It’s from this context that Free Your Mind was born, and it is these inescapable contemporary forces that provide the cultural backdrop to the show, their influence reverberating throughout.

Free Your Mind also draws from the extraordinary multiverse of creative work that has expanded on the original film over the years. There’s the figure of B1–66ER, the first robot to kill a human being, taken from The Matrix Comics Series 1. Then our six Neos, there to reflect these ever-expanding worlds – and the fact that this is the sixth time ‘The One’ has made his journey.

The Matrix depicted a world in which humanity is imprisoned in a virtual reality, while sentient machines harvest their energy. Nearly 25 years later, Free Your Mind recasts that narrative as an allegory. Channeling iconic cinematic references as a form of universal shorthand, it depicts a world where humans are enslaved by algorithms, as technology giants harvest our data and diminish our executive abilities.

Free Your Mind is a bold, large-scale call to action. It asks: is this progress, or is this system failure? Can we break free? And, crucially, do we want to?

Beyond The Matrix, Free Your Mind is an ode to the city of Manchester, to its people and its history. This is a place where exceptionalism emerges from the shadows, where redemption and loss are keenly felt. In its own anarchic way, Free Your Mind sets out to acknowledge the past, but always with an eye to the future. The opening show of Factory International’s new home, Aviva Studios, Free Your Mind hands over the keys to the people of Manchester.

At heart, this is what Free Your Mind is about. Handing over the keys, inspiring a sense of agency and purpose, and reminding audiences that the future is charged with promise, should we choose to shape it.

**Michael 'Mikey J' Asante, Danny Boyle, Es Devlin, Sabrina Mahfouz and Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy.**

**Show Outline**

**Part One: 1949. 1999**

**1. Turing’s Time**

1949. Alan Turing, the father of Artificial Intelligence,

shares his thoughts on machines one day being able to think.

A phone rings…

**2. Neo**

1999. Manchester’s looms of the past collide

with the new world of Neo and the Smiths.

**3. Trinity**

Trinity fiercely fights off operatives to save the one

everyone’s been waiting for, Neo.

**4. Smith’s Monologue**

For a time, it was good.

But when Robot B1-66ER fights for their survival,

a devastating world war between humans and machines begins.

In their failed attempt for victory, humans scorch the sky.

**The Rooms of Tranquility**

An interval, or is it?

**Part Two: The Construct**

**1. M.A.A.N.G.**

Meta. Amazon. Apple. Netflix. Google.

**2. Morpheus**

‘You take the blue pill, the story ends…

You take the red pill…I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.’

**3. There Is No Spoon**

There’s Bullet Time. There’s Code. But There’s No Spoon.

**Aviva Studios: The Official Opening**

‘When you enter this space, you have the opportunity to create something different. Free Your Mind when you enter this space’ – Michael 'Mikey J' Asante

Free Your Mind is the official opening show of Aviva Studios, the new home of Factory International. One of the most ambitious projects of its kind in Europe, it was designed by lead architect Ellen van Loon to be a ‘continuous performance space’. Inside, giant movable walls divide up one space or open up another. Van Loon says: ‘I hope that whenever people come to visit they always experience something different, as if with each visit they encounter a different building.’

The Warehouse is Aviva Studios’ central space – and one of the building’s most unique features, due to its immense scale and flexibility. 170 strong points can each take one tonne of weight, allowing sets, rigs and performers to be suspended from the walls. It can be divided in two by a movable, full-height acoustic wall. And a full technical grid spans the entire space at a height of 21 metres.

Adjoining the Warehouse is the Hall, separated by another movable acoustic wall. Here, a flexible stage can be expanded, contracted, or removed completely. There’s seating for 1,600 people – or the Hall’s stalls can be taken out for standing gigs. There’s a fixed balcony and an orchestra pit with space for up to 80 musicians. The Warehouse can also act as a 35 by 32 metre stage for the Hall, with an 11 metre-high proscenium arch opening. The Hall projects out over the Social and Undercroft below.

**Big Data**

* Aviva Studios spans 13,350 square metres internally
* The Warehouse is 33 metres wide, 64 metres long, and 21 metres high: taller than four double-decker buses – and longer than a Boeing 747
* A unique vehicle lift allows two 40-ton articulated lorries to access the Warehouse – one can even drive straight in
* The movable acoustic wall between the Warehouse and the Hall is 11 metres high and 22 metres wide
* The Hall’s cutting-edge sound system uses 130 speakers to create an astonishing range of audio environments

This is the first major public building in the UK to be designed by Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) – a groundbreaking architecture practice that’s designed buildings in major cities around the world. This is Aviva Studios. Come and experience the extraordinary.

Aviva Studios' development is led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and Arts Council England.

**The Future of Us**

**Jeanette Winterson**

The message of the Matrix movies is that human and non-human lifeforms don’t exist well together. Within that lies an idea more complex than the usual dystopian fiction – namely, that any kind of peaceful collaboration needs an advancement of mind. The non-biological programmes who work with humans in the Matrix movies are themselves far further advanced than the murderous machine that is Agent Smith and his unlimited clones.

How will we teach our non-bio companions to advance their powerful minds away from domination, when we, their creators, continue to flag-wave the lethal binary of Winner V Wiped-Out?

Homo sapiens too often chooses conflict, colonisation and competition over collaboration. It’s how empires are built, and it’s how capitalism has styled itself since the Industrial Revolution.

Peaceful and productive co-existence is for losers. Right?

We know that story. We know we are hostile chimps and not community-minded bonobos. Many of us are watching with dismay the rise of nationalism and tribalism, disastrous mindsets that could tip the world into total war. At the same time, we are fighting to save our ecosystems from man-made ruin.

It doesn’t look good for the smartest species on the planet.

That’s why I believe our best chance is to work with AI.

The dystopias we fear are amplifications of our own behaviour. Machine intelligence reflects who and what we are to an order of magnitude. Didn’t we discover that algorithms trained on our datasets churned out results that assumed the world is made up of straight white dudes? We saw this in health,

in recruitment, in the genderisation of jobs. We saw it in the way social security systems ‘screened’ people, in the way the police profiled ‘risks’. There is no inherent bias in a machine – how can there be? The bias is in the data used to programme the machines, in the goals we set for the machines, and increasingly, as we teach Large Language Models to ‘think’, we must ask what all this ‘thinking’ is for.

Descartes' famous ‘I think therefore I am’ is no longer fit for purpose. As non-biological systems start to think for themselves, where does that leave homo sapiens?

In fact, most of the problems on Planet Earth right now could be solved by removing humans. Don’t blame the machines if they do just that.

But that’s not how this needs to be. Stories are flexible and can change. Stories do change. We can change the story because we are the story.

We too are trained on datasets – your family, your education, your religion, your language. Your country. Your place in society. When humans break away from the expectations and assumptions of data that is not complete, not correct, then positive change happens at individual and societal levels.

Rejecting false and misleading data is the catalyst for change whether it’s feminism, civil rights, Greenham Common or Greenpeace. What we’re seeing with the growth of the far-right across the world is a desire to re-programme the human agenda with a constant bombardment of false and misleading data – Trump won the election. Refugees will destroy the world. Trans folks want your children. Abortion is murder. Climate change is a hoax. Vaccines are evil.

The internet is the perfect place for every conspiracy theory. But so is Fox News.

At present all AI is a tool – and humans are tool-using mammals. It’s no good handwringing about bad actors and rogue states, AI is a global responsibility – and I am not just talking in terms of legislation – I am talking in terms of what kind of a future we would like to build. AI is the most powerful tool in history. You want to 3D print the future? We can.

Or shall we just carry on breaking things?

It is likely that that AI will outgrow our limited designs and set its own agendas. That’s when Artificial Intelligence becomes Alternative Intelligence.

That’s what the likes of Elon Musk and the tech bros fear – but what they fear is loss of control. Powerful men don’t feel comfortable with alternatives to their own power.

An advanced civilisation is not one that can colonise Mars. It’s definitely not one that will be living in bunkers avoiding total war and searing heat. An advanced civilisation doesn’t destroy its home. In my view homo sapiens could do with some Alternative Intelligence.

We will soon start engaging with intelligent systems that are not us. What happens?

The best hope will be for humans and non-bio entities to work together, in cooperation not conflict. That will need an advancement of Mind in the fullest sense of what Mind is – more than smartness, more than logical linear thinking. More than narrow-goal outcomes. We don’t have to programme hatred and fear, power and control, seek and destroy mentalities into our machines.

Marvin Minsky called computing intelligence our Mind Children – distinguishing them from our biological children. Famously, families don’t get on, and the world can do without a Freudian horror show where the ‘children’ kill the ‘father’.

The wonderful thing about computing intelligence is that we could teach it the best of us – our creativity, our compassion, our altruism. We don’t have to pass on our self-destroying madness.

Values that are future-proof are values of collectivity – and neural networks prefer a hive- mind approach. This needn’t be Mao suits for all, or human batteries lying in pods, it could be the touch across the void so beautiful in Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel fresco – the human and the not- human joining hands to create a new world.

A world without scarcity or fear.

It’s hard to imagine – but remember that we can choose. The red pill or the blue pill is not a chance to see how the world really is – we know how it really is – it’s a chance at an alternative reality.

There’s no need to fear the future. But…

If we want AI to avoid dystopia we must avoid it ourselves.

**Jeanette Winterson’s collection of essays, 12 Bytes: How artificial intelligence will change the way we live and love is available from Vintage Books. Her TED Talk, Is Humanity Smart Enough to Survive Itself? is on YouTube**

**The Keymakers**

**Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy, Michael 'Mikey J' Asante, Danny Boyle, Es Devlin and Sabrina Mahfouz discuss the making of Free Your Mind**

The enormity of this moment – and of the building itself – is not lost on anyone: ‘Seeing the scale of the space from scaffolding allowed us to grasp just how gigantic a gesture the show had to be.’ This is Sabrina Mahfouz, Writer for Free Your Mind, also a multi-award-winning playwright, lyricist, poet and screenwriter.

At this point in time, the team are still rehearsing at Sackville Street Building, still ‘looking at how we feed the space’ over at Aviva Studios, says Choreographer Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy. He’s referring to the Warehouse which, at 64 metres long, is on a totally different scale even to the large, barrel-vaulted rehearsal room they’re working in. ‘So we're forever looking at how the routine travels’, Kenrick explains.

This, though, is a creative team used to working on staggeringly big productions. Set Designer Es Devlin has designed stage sets for Beyoncé’s Formation and Renaissance tours, The Weeknd’s Super Bowl Halftime Show and the 2016 Adele Live tour to arenas around the world. Kenrick and Composer for Free Your Mind Michael 'Mikey J' Asante – who are Co-Founders and Co-Artistic Directors of Boy Blue – worked together on the London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony, deploying hundreds of dancers in a segment celebrating the importance of British music. This is how they first crossed paths with Danny Boyle, Director of Free Your Mind and Artistic Director of the Olympics Ceremony as a whole – also the man behind award-winning films including Trainspotting, 127 Hours and Slumdog Millionaire. Together with Sabrina, the core team has been working together on Free Your Mind for the past four years.

‘It's been a privilege to watch the building rise up from the ground plans', says Es Devlin, reflecting on the unique context in which this production has been created. Sabrina agrees: ‘It's beautiful to be able to build a show alongside a building and recognise how both projects have to be fluid and responsive during creation, no matter how solid they'll both be once completed’, she says. There are ideas, though, that you can trace right back to the beginning – including deciding to use all of the different spaces throughout Aviva Studios, and trying to connect them into one holistic experience. ‘We took very seriously the responsibility of introducing the building to the city’, Danny explains of this early concept. ‘And that's obviously one of the reasons we did The Matrix, because it reaches so many people – almost 25 years later it remains part of everyone's language.'

The sense of a duty to the city has been consistent ever since – a recurring theme in discussions between the entire team. ‘You felt a sense of being a custodian, for a time’, Mikey says. One of the other ideas that stuck was ‘giving the keys of the building over to the people of Manchester, and of the surrounding areas, to know that this is theirs’, he says. The creative team are, then, Free Your Mind’s Keymakers: just like the program in The Matrix that’s created to open the door to the Source for Neo. But not just for audiences – for the dancers, too. ‘It’s about also giving the key to these artists, these young guys from Manchester, in order for them to have an outlook of quality, and the process of making quality work’, Kenrick says.

He reflects on the progression he’s seen already – from dancers who were part of the original research and development workshops and are now in the show, even from those who only started at the beginning of rehearsals. ‘You can see the pennies dropping, people start to understand what is needed from them, start to understand what needs to be given’, he says. Their ambition is that the full ripple effect from the production is wider still: ‘another person can start thinking about lighting from watching the show, or music from watching the show, or directing from watching the show’, Mikey says.

Like The Matrix, the ultimate hope is that what this production will unlock is an entirely new vision of the future for the building. Mikey explains: ‘The whole creative team support the idea of trying to do something as ambitious as we possibly can to make people say, "Okay, so what are the possibilities past this?".’

Their collective aim is to truly free the minds of artists and audiences alike – that, as a first encounter with the building, this show unlocks the doors to dreaming really big.

**Manchester and the History of Computing: Source Context**

**‘Throughout human history, we have been dependent on machines to survive. Fate, it seems, is not without a sense of irony’ – Morpheus, The Matrix**

The world as it was in the middle of the 18th century – more specifically Manchester, England. Picture a growing market town, the houses of the rich just beginning to dot the fields, population less than 20,000. Here, a barber and maker of men’s wigs has been carefully watching efforts to mechanise the production of yarn.

Mundane as this might sound, there’s a lot of money to be made. The craze for cotton cloth is only growing, and yarn is what cloth is woven from. The city’s hand spinners are skilled at their wheels, and the yarn they make is of the highest quality – but production is slow. The work happens by hand, and at home.

Meet Richard Arkwright, born in Preston in 1732. Thus far, he’s set up a successful hair-cutting business in Bolton – and invented a waterproof dye for wigs. This is a man with an eye for an opportunity. He chooses John Kay, a clockmaker, to partner with; someone who really knows how to make machines.

The contraption they come up with is powered by water wheel: moving rollers thin out the cotton, before rotating spindles twist it into yarn. Patented in 1769, the Arkwright water frame does in minutes what takes an individual days. It’s a huge innovation – life changing. In 10 years’ time, one of Arkwright’s largest mills – in Birkacre, near Chorley – will be scorched to the ground by anti-machinery rioters. But there’s no turning back the tide.

By the early 1800s Ancoats and Shudehill are dotted with cotton mills, more rising on the banks of the canals. Inside, it’s hot, the air clogged with cotton dust. Machines take up acres of factory floor, hundreds of weavers moving ceaselessly between them. Work continues around the clock; two 13-hour shifts a day. Children are recruited, for their dexterity. Women tend the fiendishly complex networks of threads. Flying shuttles cause sickening injuries and the noise is deafening, hearing loss common. Over time, the workers learn to communicate using a hybrid of mime and sign language, called ‘mee-maw’.

The profits are enormous – and the entire industry is fed by the labour of enslaved peoples around the world.

In the 1820s, a new invention spreads through the city. The Jacquard loom. It can be programmed to create intricately patterned fabrics that take skilled craftspeople months to make. It can thread an image of the University of Manchester’s buildings into three-inch ribbons. It’s come from France, where the master weavers remove their wooden sabot shoes and throw them at the threads in protest. Sabot, saboteur, sabotage.

This machine can be instructed to produce multiple different outcomes. It’s operated by a series of rectangular paper punch cards, strung together in a continuous loop. Each one comes up against a matrix of metal pins. The pins ‘read’ the pattern on the card; where a hole has been punched, the pins pass through, raising hooks that lift the threads running left to right of the weave. When a shuttle travels across the loom, it goes under the threads that have been lifted, and over those that haven’t. Change the punch card, change the pattern; the mechanism stays the same.

History picks up this idea and runs around the world with it. There’s Charles Babbage in 1834, who thinks of punch cards for a machine that makes mathematical calculations, his Analytical Engine. The visionary Ada Lovelace, who sees that the numbers the engine uses don’t have to be limited to sums; instead, they might be made to represent other kinds of information. Herman Hollerith in America, who – looking to process data from the 1890 census – encodes punch cards with statistics and invents an electromechanical tabulating machine to read them. Then the codebreakers during the Second World War who, in the face of daily casualty lists, use punched holes to represent encrypted messages between Hitler and his generals. In 1944 the Colossus, driven by a punched tape reader, is built to decrypt them.

This is as far as the rest of the world gets. It’s history’s first electronic programmable computer, and pivotal to Allied victory. But if you wanted to play chess with it, or write a love letter, the mechanism would have to be rebuilt. Teams in Teddington, Cambridge, the US and Germany are in a race to change this. At the University of Manchester, three engineers are ahead of them.

Imagine Manchester in 1948. The city has grown, is no longer the same: fewer fields, more automobiles. Instead of cotton, the air is dense with soot. The textile industry is in decline; man-made fibres are on the rise, and the local mills are behind the times.

Now meet Freddie Williams, Tom Kilburn and Geoff Tootill – all Northerners, born in Stockport, Oldham and Yorkshire. These are string and wax geniuses, building a computer out of surplus Second World War supplies. It’s installed on old Post Office racks along the walls of their lab, the shelves stacked with valves. There are wires webbing the windows, which are open for the heat, dirt blowing in with the breeze. Kilburn and Tootill wear dour brown lab coats, and they’re all terrible at record keeping. And yet they’ve won the race already.

Imagine a giant lightbulb, a large circle of filaments in its stem. Its bulb is milky white and flat at the end. When heated, a stream of electrons pours off each filament. Focused and accelerated along the way, the beam makes a corresponding phosphor dot on the flat screen glow green. Read by a metal plate, each dot corresponds to stored information; it’s the holes of a punch card, transformed into electronic memory. In time, it will come to be called the Williams-Kilburn storage tube. But first, they need to prove it works.

This is where their Small Scale Experimental Machine comes in. It’s grown to 17 feet in length, weighs just under a ton, and is nicknamed ‘Baby’. They keep one hand in a pocket to avoid getting shocks from it. Despite the neat and speedy work of Ida Fitzgerald, the wirewoman who translates their diagrams into circuitry, it goes wrong so often they begin to call their tests its dance of death. Then, on 21 June 1948, they set it a question. 53 minutes later, there’s the answer, shining brightly on the display screen. Two to the power of 18. They go out to the canteen as usual, but have lunch instead of sandwiches, to celebrate.

Baby is why a shy, athletic man moves to Manchester later the same year. He’s had quite a life already. At 15, he condensed Einstein’s theory of relativity into a digestible summary for his mum. At 18, the death of a much-loved school friend led him to begin thinking about the connection between the mind and the ‘mechanism’ of the body. At 24, he wrote a paper that later became the theoretical basis for the 1950 ACE computer in Teddington. At 27, he cycled to work at Bletchley Park wearing a gas mask for his hay fever and helped to design the device that decrypted the German Enigma machines. Now 36, his name is Alan Turing.

While in Manchester, he helps develop the software for the Manchester and Ferranti Mark 1 models, Baby’s descendants. In his annotations, forward slashes represent binary zero ///////, which come to be referred to as Manchester rain. When the weather’s good, however, he runs more than 10 miles from his house in Wilmslow to his office at the university. He writes a paper on machine learning that anticipates the development of Artificial Intelligence – even suggests a test for it. He posts an invitation to dinner through a friend’s letterbox, scribbled on a rhododendron leaf. He uses the Ferranti Mark 1 to develop a hypothesis about pattern formation in nature that’s still shaping science today. He loses ingloriously to a colleague’s son at Monopoly.

Then, in 1951, he meets a man outside the Regal Cinema on Oxford Road, the building that’s now The Dancehouse. Months later, Turing mentions having had sex with him when trying to report a burglary – and is convicted of gross indecency. He’s given an either/or decision: jail or chemical castration. He has been thinking about machines all his life. Now he is treated like one; as if it would be possible to reprogramme his sexuality with injections. On the day he’s supposed to meet a PhD student for a supervision, he’s found dead by his cleaner. There’s almost a wine glass-worth of cyanide in his system. Turing, the man who was better than most at foreseeing the future computers might lead to, is gone aged 41.

The following year, a baby boy is born. His parents, computer scientists Mary Lee Woods and Conway Berners-Lee, worked on the Ferranti Mark 1 computer in Manchester, and met at a Christmas party. He is named Tim Berners-Lee. In 1989, he invents the World Wide Web – and in 2012, he appears in the London Olympics Opening Ceremony.

Turing’s legacy lives on. In 2018, cognitive psychologist and computer scientist Geoffrey Hinton wins the Turing Award for his work on neural networks as a new system for underpinning Artificial Intelligence. In 2023, he quits Google, warning that autonomous AI systems might prove a serious threat to humanity.

This is the world as it exists today.

**Words by Polly Checkland Harding**

**‘This is your last chance. After this, there is no turning back.**

**You take the blue pill – the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe.**

**You take the red pill – you stay in wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes’**

* **Morpheus, The Matrix**

**[The Prompt]**

We are at a watershed moment in the history of humanity.

The reality that we live in today: for good and bad, data and big tech are having an untold influence on our lives. The future of AI hangs in the balance – it might be the path to our survival, or a force that destroys us. And we haven’t yet averted our course towards untold destruction of the planet.

We have some idea what the future of this trajectory looks like. But what about the alternative choice?

We asked poet, playwright and essayist lisa luxx, and AI-powered language model ChatGPT, to each write a short essay in response to this.

**Lisa Luxx says…**

In 2021, after a revolution, a fatal virus, an explosion and an economic collapse, I turned to my friend in Beirut. The electricity was on short supply, the heat hanging off our bodies was clawing us to the ground, and the country had run out of fuel. I said to that friend, ‘each day we wake up, we wake up to a new – even worse – situation to navigate, it’s like we are living in a simulation.’ She looked confused: ‘who is living in a simulation?’ ‘Us’, I answered, so sure of my own despair. ‘We aren’t living in a simulation’, she said. ‘This here is the real world.’

My friend was steadfast in her understanding that a simulation did exist, but elsewhere; where people are taught that if you work hard then you stand a chance of winning at life. Where the illusion of race, borders, money and other figments of our collective imagination uphold a functioning addiction to hierarchy. In Beirut, she and I were experiencing the disintegration of that capitalist illusion. Borders are simulated by the ideology of the nation state (the fact we give names to governed countries, and we manufacture different currencies). Even economists themselves have a term called The Tinkerbell Effect, meaning the value of money is only real if we all collectively believe it is real. Through that fabrication, some humans have manifested whole physical dilemmas and catastrophes for ‘races’ of people, including lack of access to clean water, electricity, fuel or futures.

Active resistance to the white-supremist- capitalist-hetero-patriarchal structure is the difference between ‘knowing the path and walking the path’. Resisting Artificial Intelligence isn’t

the fight; we are already deeply lost in a form of Artificial Intelligence. All the aspects of a techno-social existence that frighten us are the characteristics of the elite: immoral laws, power- over, bias, and a belief that if one is not useful then they are a waste. We have been living at the mercy of those characteristics through racism, sexism and class oppression. We are afraid that the machines will be programmed to treat us the way we have been programmed to treat ourselves and each other, in the western world. Artificial Intelligence is holding up a mirror to humanity and saying, ‘do you really want to reproduce that?’

The cooperation between technology and humans, between data and wisdom, between matter and consciousness, may well be found in the rise of this new Artificial Intelligence. Not because of the innovation, but rather because it reveals to widespread populations what they are most scared of, and from that it might just wake up every community’s unwillingness to continue the lie. The power in AI entering our lexicon has given us the language to talk about brainwashing. A language of resistance.

We will survive through community: grassroots collectivity will overcome the individual. We have already begun to create our own networks of social care, health care and value-exchange economy – we learn from those outside the simulation. If we unplug from the internet, we will stay up late talking about politics, drinking whiskey and playing chess. I welcome the mirror, and suggest the ongoing conversation isn’t actually about programming morality into machines, but about recognising the immoral simulation being reborn.

**‘We aren’t living in a simulation’, she said. ‘This here is the real world.’**

**lisa minerva luxx is a poet, playwright, essayist and political activist of British and Syrian heritage. Their work has been broadcast on Channel 4, BBC Radio 4 and TEDx, and their poetry and essays published in anthologies and literary journals including Penguin Books and New England Review. Their debut poetry collection, Fetch Your Mother’s Heart, is available from Out Spoken Press.**

**ChatGPT says…**

In the words of Morpheus, we stand at a pivotal crossroads, faced with a choice that will shape the course of humanity's future. The blue pill represents the familiar comfort of ignorance, where we continue down the path of least resistance, blissfully unaware of the profound changes occurring around us. The red pill, however, offers a challenging yet transformative journey into the depths of our existence, where we confront the implications of data, big tech, and Artificial Intelligence.

In our current reality, the influence of data and big tech is ubiquitous. They permeate every aspect of our lives, from the way we communicate to the way we make decisions. While this has brought undeniable benefits, it also raises critical questions about privacy, autonomy, and the very essence of what it means to be human. We find ourselves at a crossroads, where we must grapple with the ethical, moral, and societal implications of this technological revolution.

The future of AI, likewise, hangs in a delicate balance. It possesses the potential to revolutionise healthcare, education, and countless other industries, offering solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. However, if left unchecked, it could also become a force of unparalleled destruction, exacerbating inequalities and undermining the very fabric of our society.

Furthermore, we cannot ignore the looming threat of environmental catastrophe. Our current trajectory places immense strain on the planet, pushing it beyond its limits. Climate change, pollution, and resource depletion are not mere abstract concepts; they are pressing issues that demand immediate attention and action.

Yet, amidst this turbulent landscape, there exists an alternative choice. It beckons us to embrace the challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead. It implores us to foster a collective consciousness, to question, to innovate, and to act. It invites us to re-evaluate our relationship with technology, to redefine our priorities, and to forge a new path towards a sustainable and equitable future.

To choose the red pill is to embark on a journey of introspection, collaboration, and innovation. It is to recognise that the solutions to our most pressing challenges will not come from complacency, but from the willingness to confront uncomfortable truths and to imagine new possibilities.

In this alternative future, we see a reimagined relationship between humans and technology. It is a future where AI serves as a powerful tool, augmenting our abilities and enabling us to address complex problems with newfound precision and insight. It is a future where data is harnessed responsibly, empowering individuals and communities to make informed decisions that shape their own destinies.

Ultimately, the choice between the blue pill and the red pill is a choice between passivity and agency, between complacency and empowerment. It is a call to action, a call to recognise that we are the architects of our own destiny, and that the decisions we make today will reverberate through the annals of history. The red pill is an invitation to step boldly into the unknown, to face the challenges of our time with courage and conviction, and to shape a future that is worthy of the boundless potential of humanity.

‘**In our current reality, the influence of data and big tech is ubiquitous.’**

**ChatGPT is an AI-powered language model developed by OpenAI, capable of generating human-like text based on context and past conversations.**

**[Performers]**

Jimmy Allan

Kyron Jake Anthony

Emily Bajic

Nicey Belgrave

Kristine Berget

Tanaka Bingwa

Mark Boyce

Ellis Brownhill

Jordan Clarke

Paris Crossley

Kyrah Decoteau

Hanna Dimtsu

Emily Dodd

Holly Dunsmore

Annie Joy Edwards

Lexi Finch

Lia Garner

Jamie Graham

Alice Grimes

Sian Harris

Lauren 'Fidget' Haywood

Emma Houston

Kotoha Ito

Chase Johnston

Anmol Kuar

Ariana Leon

Antonia Lomas

Kyah Lomax

Brandon Mallipal

Cara Marsh

Kelsey 'Hydro' Miller

Reon Nash

Yolanda Newsome

Nicole Nyemi-Tei

Corey Owens

Joe Price

Miguel Semedo

Kieron Simms

Katy Smith

Rita Spider

Lauren Stewart

Chad Taylor

Masaiya Thomas

Iona Turnbull

Mikey Ureta

Jules Valentine

Jack Webster

Samuel Wise

Gabriela Wołosik

Cameron Woolnough

**[Child Performers]**

Nia Aldcroft

Ariella Assulin

Rayel Rowe

Renee Rowe

Ali Saleh

Ghaith Saleh

Stephanie Ssuuna

Beau Young

**[Battery Walkers]**

Owen Gaynor

Louiseanne Wong

**[Alan Turing AI]**

Adam Godley

Union VFX

For a full set of cast biographies and headshots, please see **factoryinternational.org/free-your-mind-cast/**

**Production Timeline**

**2018 – 2019**

**The Beginning**

Manchester International Festival approach Michael 'Mikey J' Asante and Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy to discuss an opening production for the organisation's new home. A separate conversation begins with Danny Boyle – before a collaboration is suggested. From discussions, it becomes clear that an adaptation of The Matrix is at the top of everyone's list. Es Devlin and Sabrina Mahfouz join – and the team of co-creators is complete. A working title for the show is decided: **1999**.

**02 – 20.03.2020**

**Workshop 1**

The creative team meet for a week-long workshop, followed by three weeks of choreography development with 12 dancers at 3 Mills Studios, outside London. This is cut short on 15.03.2020 by the Covid-19 pandemic.

‘We did the first R&D, research and development process, just before Covid. That’s when everything was just an idea, we just had the word ‘Matrix’ in the air’ – Tanaka Bingwa, dancer

**01 – 26.11.2021**

**Workshop 2**

This is the first time the creative team is in a room together since the beginning of the pandemic. Three intensive weeks of choreography with Kenrick, Mikey and 10 dancers take place at Jerwood Studios. Five sequences are worked through in costume. Filming of the choreographic development is captured at Studio Wayne McGregor, to be shared with the Wachowski sisters and Warner Bros.

**02 – 05.05.2022**

**Title Change**

After some artwork development from North Design and Peter Saville, an initial treatment is shared. A new title is chosen – changing from 1999, to **Free Your Mind**.

**02 – 27.05.2022**

**Workshop 3**

Following a week-long round table, the creative team work with 18 Manchester dancers for the first time, developing the choreographic language of the show with them at Shockout Arts and Z-Arts. A draft running order of the show’s sequences is drawn up.

‘For me personally it’s a whole new movement. I’ve always gone from genre to genre in dance… it almost feels like a sense of training again’ – Ellis Brownhill, dancer

**12.05.2 0 2 2**

**Presentation to Warner Bros**

The creative team, Factory International producing team, representatives from Warner Bros and the Wachowski sisters' Manager meet over video link. The creative team share how seriously The Matrix has informed and shaped their practice, and speak about Free Your Mind as a way of inaugurating

and baptising Factory International’s new venue. They present the idea of mass choreography and a physical dialogue between the body and the machine – ‘a direct translation of algorithmic code through human movement’.

**29.09.2 0 2 2**

**Announcement**

Free Your Mind is officially announced to press and the public. The launch takes place in the Science and Industry Museum’s 1830s Warehouse; tickets go on sale to the public at 10am on 06.10.2022.

**12.12.2022**

**Professional Dancer Call-Out**

Auditions are announced, with an invitation to strong professional dancers with a versatile street dance background to apply. Dancers are invited to wear all black, and are advised that ability, pick-up rate and ability to tell stories through movement are the criteria.

**16 & 17.01.2 0 2 3**

**23 & 24.01.2 0 2 3**

**Auditions**

Auditions and recalls take place at New Century Hall in Manchester, then Mulryan Centre for Dance, English National Ballet in London. The successful dancers are contacted in March.

**02.2023 – 06.2023**

**Production Development**

Mikey continues with score notation, Kenrick with choreography. Danny shares a scene breakdown, Sabrina early scripts for the show’s monologues. Es has created an early model for a sequence with Manchester’s loomers. Gareth Pugh shares a costume deck with the creative team, proposing a 1950s analogue look for Alan Turing, a ‘root system’ fabric lining for Morpheus’ coat, and CCTV-inspired headwear for the Smiths.

**07.08.2023 – 08.09.2023**

**Choreography + Rehearsals. Further Development**

Led by Kenrick, choreography prep begins with five dancers, rehearsals with 25, then finally the full company of 50 gather at Sackville Street Building – home to the study of science, technology and engineering at the University of Manchester for over 100 years. After working on the score in his studio, Mikey joins rehearsals. There are costume fittings, production meetings. The dancers test the rig for the loomers sequence for the first time, and help to develop the full show, sequence by sequence.

‘You get to a point where you’re tired, and the only thing that’s going to get you through is the people in the room, the energy’ – Ariana Leon, dancer

‘I was laying down in the cool down, and I just had a realisation of like, this is where I’ve wanted to be for so long’ – Katy Smith, dancer

**11.09.2023 – 12.10.2023**

**Fit Up + Install, Technical Rehearsals, Dress**

The staging fit up, performer flying install and rehearsals in the Warehouse at Aviva Studios all take place. The main scenic elements of the set follow. Sound and video programming happen in the space. Finally – tech rehearsals, a full dress rehearsal in costume, press night, previews. Opening night nerves.

**18.10.2023**

**Free Your Mind + Aviva Studios Open**

The first official opening performance of Free Your Mind takes place, marking the official opening of Aviva Studios, the new home of Factory International and Manchester International Festival. The dancers will take part in a total of 24 performances before the close of the show on 05.11.2023.

**Creative Team**

**Michael 'Mikey J' Asante**

**Composer / Co-Creator**

Michael 'Mikey J' Asante is a renowned producer, composer and DJ, whose 20-plus-year career is firmly etched into the UK black music industry. As co-Artistic Director of hip hop dance theatre company Boy Blue, founded in 2001 with Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy, Asante is credited with the direction and composition of REDD (2019), the film R.E.B.E.L (2018), Outliers (2018), Blak Whyte Gray (2017), The Five and the Prophecy of Prana (2013), Touch (2011), Legacy (2011) and Olivier

Award-winning Pied Piper: A Hip-Hop Dance Revolution (2007).

As a producer, Asante has worked with major label artists including Delilah and Raleigh Ritchie. Asante has worked extensively with Kano, with projects including engineering and production on the critically acclaimed album Made In The Manor and Home Sweet Home. Recent television and theatre work includes composition for Tree, a Kwame Kwei-Armah and Idris Elba creation for Manchester International Festival, Netflix docuseries African Queens (2023), a collaboration with Brian Eno over three series of Netflix’s Top Boy, The Effect at the National Theatre, directed by Jamie Lloyd and starring Paapa Essiedu and Taylor Russell, Black Sun from Ballet Black (2022), and Antigone by Inua Ellams at Regent’s Park Open Air Theatre (2022).

Outside of the studio, Asante mentors and delivers masterclasses in directing, choreography and music and is also found residing in the Guildhall School of Music and Drama’s faculty as a Professor of electronic music, from where, in 2018, Asante was awarded an Honorary Fellowship (HonFGS). Asante received an MBE for services to Hip Hop Dance and Music in the 2022 New Year’s Honour’s list.

**Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy**

**Choreographer / Co-Creator**

Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy is the co-Founder and co-Artistic Director of Boy Blue, an Artistic Associate of the Barbican, London, and a renowned choreographer and performer.

Sandy’s credits are extensive; as a choreographer he’s responsible for the film R.E.B.E.L (2018), the dance theatre shows REDD (2019), Blak Whyte Gray (2017), The Five and the Prophecy of Prana (2013), A Night with Boy Blue (2022, 2018, 2016, 2015, 2013) and the Olivier Award-winning Pied Piper: A Hip-Hop Dance Revolution (2007). He has also performed for George Michael, Beverley Knight, Plan B, The Sugababes, The Saturdays, Mis-Teeq and All Saints.

Off the main stage, Sandy collaborated with director Danny Boyle for the London 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony, winning the Evening Standard’s Beyond Theatre Award, as well as working on the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Closing Ceremony and Tour de France Opening Ceremony in London. Sandy and Boyle reunited in 2017 to film Boy Blue’s Emancipation of Expressionism, a set work on the GCSE Dance syllabus. On screen work includes choreography for the BAFTA Awards, All Stars and T2 Trainspotting, plus appearances on StreetDance 3D and the BBC’s So You Think You Can Dance. Sandy has

also created choreography for artists including FKA twigs and Rita Ora and brands including Nike, adidas and ASOS.

Sandy was awarded an MBE for services to dance and the community in 2017, a Companionship from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and an Honorary Fellowship (HonFGS) from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2018.

**Boy Blue**

**Associate Producers**

Founded in East London in 2001 by Michael 'Mikey J' Asante and Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy, Boy Blue is a radical force that has defined the potential and power of hip hop dance theatre across the UK. The spirit in which Boy Blue was formed came from the three ‘E’s – ‘Education, Enlightenment and Entertainment’ – and the company’s achievements and accolades are as far-reaching as the community it has fostered and the hip hop culture it has elevated. For many, Boy Blue is also a family, with many UK-based hip hop dancers having called it home during their careers.

Boy Blue’s dedication to creating world-class dance productions is inextricable with their commitment to empowering young people to make space for themselves and tell their own stories. Thousands of young people have been educated at Boy Blue, with the aim of nurturing their ambition and raw talent and harnessing it into craft, enabling transformative access and opportunities, both professionally and personally. Many of the dancers you’ll see in Free Your Mind have trained with Boy Blue across the UK. Thank you to all Boy Blue teachers, past and present, for creating an environment in which they could grow.

Boy Blue are Artistic Associates of Barbican, London.

**Danny Boyle**

**Director / Co-Creator**

Danny Boyle’s career in the theatre started as an usher at the Bolton Octagon. After college, he worked as an Assistant Stage Manager with Joint Stock Theatre Company and started directing at the Royal Court Theatre in London, with productions including Edward Bond’s Saved, Timberlake Wertenbaker’s The Grace of Mary Traverse and Louise Page’s Salonika amongst others. In 2011, Boyle returned to the theatre with Nick Dear’s adaptation of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein for the National Theatre, starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Jonny Lee Miller and Naomie Harris. 2012 saw Boyle take on the role of Artistic Director for the London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony featuring Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Mr. Bean, the Arctic Monkeys, J.K. Rowling and Tim Berners-Lee.

Television work includes Alan Clarke’s controversial Elephant, Anne Devlin’s The Venus de Milo Instead and Jane Rogers’s Mr Wroe’s Virgins for the BBC, Jesse Armstrong and Sam Bain’s Babylon for Channel 4, Simon Beaufoy’s Trust for FX, starring Donald Sutherland as John Paul Getty, and most recently, the six-part FX series Pistol based on the 2018 memoir by Sex Pistols’s guitarist Steve Jones.

Films: Shallow Grave, A Life Less Ordinary and Trance, all written for the screen by John Hodge; Irvine Welsh’s Trainspotting and T2 Trainspotting, both adapted by Hodge and starring Ewan McGregor, Robert Carlyle, Jonny Lee Miller, Ewen Bremner and Kelly Macdonald; the Cillian Murphy and Naomie Harris-led 28 Days Later, and Sunshine, also starring Cillian Murphy, both written by Alex Garland; an adaptation of Garland’s novel The Beach starring Leonardo DiCaprio, adapted for the screen by John Hodge; Millions, written by Frank Cottrell-Boyce; and with Simon Beaufoy, Slumdog Millionaire starring Dev Patel and Freida Patel, and

127 Hours with James Franco. He directed Michael Fassbender and Kate Winslet in Aaron Sorkin’s Steve Jobs, and most recently Yesterday penned by Richard Curtis and starring Himesh Patel and Lily James.

**Es Devlin**

**Set Designer / Co-Creator**

Artist and stage designer Es Devlin’s work explores biodiversity, linguistic diversity and collective AI-generated poetry. She views the audience as a temporary society and encourages profound cognitive shifts by inviting public participation in communal choral works. Her canvas ranges from public sculptures and installations at Tate Modern, V&A, Serpentine, Imperial War Museum and United Nations General Assembly, to kinetic stage designs at the Royal Opera House, the National Theatre and the Metropolitan Opera, as well as Olympic Ceremonies, Super Bowl Halftime Shows, and monumental illuminated stage sculptures for Beyoncé, The Weeknd, Dr Dre, Kendrick Lamar and U2.

She is the subject of a major new monographic book, An Atlas of Es Devlin, described by Thames & Hudson as their most intricate and sculptural publication to date, and a retrospective exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Museum of Design in New York. She was the first female designer of the UK Pavilion at Expo 2020 and her practice was the subject of

the Netflix documentary series Abstract: The Art of Design. She has been awarded the London Design Medal, three Olivier Awards, a Tony Award, an Ivor Novello Award, doctorates from the Universities of Bristol, Kent and the University of the Arts London as well as Royal Designer for Industry by the Royal Society of Arts and a CBE.

**Sabrina Mahfouz**

**Writer / Co-Creator**

Sabrina is a playwright, lyricist, poet and screenwriter based between London, LA and Cairo. For TV, she has recently worked as a writer and producer on HBO's limited thriller series Full Circle and Ramy Youssef and Pam Brady's #1 Happy Family USA, a new animated comedy at A24/Amazon Studios.

She was an inaugural Writer in Residence at Shakespeare's Globe, where she co-wrote an adaptation of Ovid's Metamorphoses. She wrote and performed her cross-genre show A History of Water in the Middle East at the Royal Court Theatre, where she was also a co-writer and lyricist on The Song Project and Living Newspaper.

Sabrina has written a part-memoir, part-history book, These Bodies of Water: A Personal History of the British Empire and the Middle East, is the editor of The Things I Would Tell You: British Muslim Women Write, Smashing It: Working Class Artists on Life, Art and Making It Happen and Poems for a

Green and Blue Planet and is an essay contributor to the multi-award-winning The Good Immigrant. She won the King’s Arts and Culture Award for inspiring change in the creative industries and is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Literature.

**Gareth Pugh**

**Costume Designer**

Uncompromising, anarchic and at times fiercely confrontational, it’s fair to say that provocation has always been one of British fashion designer Gareth Pugh’s governing principles. Described by Andrew Bolton – Head Curator of The Costume Institute at The Metropolitan Museum of Art – as 'the Fellini

of fashion’ and by The Sunday Times as 'Britain’s most exciting designer’, he is, as Dazed put it, 'the designer who shattered the monotony of an era of commercial fashion’.

Born in Sunderland in 1981, Pugh studied at Central Saint Martins in London. He graduated in 2005 determined to redefine what it means to be a designer in the cultural space and, nearly two decades later, despite global recognition and critical acclaim, he remains defiant – steadfastly refusing to take his place among the ranks of the establishment, preferring to remain an outlier, viewing fashion not so much as an industry but instead as a vital cultural force.

Over the past decade, Pugh has worked with some of the most popular artists of our time – including Beyoncé, Lady Gaga and Rihanna – and has collaborated with some of the world’s most important cultural institutions, designing shows for the New York City Ballet, the Opéra national de Paris, the Dutch National Opera and The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

In 2018, with a view to expanding and diversifying his creative practice, alongside his husband and longtime creative accomplice Carson McColl, Pugh co-founded HARD+SHINY, an award winning independent creative studio based in London. To describe the studio’s output as multi-disciplinary would be something of an understatement. Their client portfolio is a rich and colourful line up, ranging from Stonewall to Selfridges, Madison Square Garden to Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.

By far the studio’s largest project to date is This Bright Land, a month-long not-for-profit cultural festival taking place every two years at Somerset House. Launched in the summer of 2022, This Bright Land welcomed more visitors in its first year than Glastonbury, and was described by the Evening Standard as 'The summer’s most joyful festival! A radical addition to the cultural scene, unlike any festival before it.’

**Lucy Carter**

**Lighting Design**

Lucy Carter is a multi-award winning, critically acclaimed lighting designer. She was awarded the 2018 Critics’ Circle National Dance Award for Outstanding Creative Contribution. She is a two-time winner of the prestigious Knight of Illumination Award for Dance for Chroma (2008) and for Woolf Works (2015), winner of the 2013 TMA Achievement Award in Opera for Lohengrin and of the 2004 Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance for 2 Human.

Her theatre credits include: Shirley Valentine (West End); The Time Traveller's Wife (Storyhouse); 2:22 A Ghost Story (Lyric Theatre, Criterion Theatre, Apollo Theatre, Gielgud Theatre and Noël Coward Theatre, London; Ahmanson, Los Angeles; Melbourne); Much Ado About Nothing, Medea, Emil and the Detectives, Blurred Lines and Husbands and Sons (National Theatre); Persuasion (Rose Theatre); Force Majeure (Donmar Warehouse); Wicked (Hamburg); Everybody’s Talking About Jamie (West End and UK Tour); Escaped Alone and Coriolanus (Crucible Theatre); On the Town (Hyogo Performing Arts

Center, Japan); Home, I’m Darling (National Theatre, West End and UK Tour); The Almighty Sometimes (Royal Exchange Theatre); Oil (Almeida Theatre); and The End of Longing (West End).

Her opera credits include: Alcina (Royal Opera House; Best New Opera Production, Olivier Awards 2023), Le nozze di Figaro (Opéra national de Paris); Kát’a Kabanová (Teatro dell’Opera di Roma, Royal Opera House; Best New Opera Production, Olivier Awards 2019); Mavra/Pierrot Lunaire and Hansel and Gretel (Royal Opera House); The Cunning Little Vixen, Orphée, Salomé and The Dream of Gerontius (English National Opera); Werther (Bergen National Opera); Elektra (Göteborg Opera); Lohengrin (Greek National Opera, Polish National Opera, Welsh National Opera); La finta giardiniera (Glyndebourne, Teatro alla Scala); and Peter Grimes (Aldeburgh Beach).

Her dance credits include: MADDADDAM, The Dante Project, McGregor + Mugler, Woolf Works, Obsidian Tear, AfteRite, Yugen, Multiverse, Chroma and Autobiography with long-term collaborator Wayne McGregor; Threshold (Le Patin Libre); and The Most Incredible Thing (Sadler’s Wells, Charlotte Ballet).

Her other credits include: Gareth Pugh’s Women’s Collection in London Fashion Week 2017 and 2019, Paloma Faith’s performance at the Brit Awards 2015.

**Gareth Fry**

**Sound Design**

Gareth Fry is a multi-award-winning sound designer, best known for his cutting-edge work in theatre, on productions such as Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, and Complicité’s The Encounter. He has also designed events and exhibitions, from the V&A’s landmark David Bowie is exhibition, to the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Recent work includes: Romeo and Juliet (Almeida); Medea (Soho Place); Othello (Frantic Assembly); On The Ropes (Park Theatre); A Christmas Carol and John Gabriel Borkman (Bridge Theatre); and Bedknobs & Broomsticks (UK tour). Other work includes: Invisible Cities (Manchester International Festival); The Master and Margarita, Shun-kin and Endgame (Complicité); Let The Right One In and Black Watch (National Theatre of Scotland); Wings, The Cherry Orchard, Wild Swans and Hamlet (Young Vic); Boy (Almeida); Othello, The Cat in the Hat, A Matter Of Life and Death, Attempts on Her Life and Waves (National Theatre); Road, B and Victory Condition (Royal Court); and John (DV8 Physical Theatre).

Gareth trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama in theatre design. He is the author of Sound Design for the Stage.

**Luke Halls**

**Video Design**

Luke Halls is a London-based video designer, recognised by Drama Desk and BAFTA for his work on concerts, opera, theatre shows, film and public art. His opera credits include: Boris Godunov (Teatro alla Scala); Lucia di Lammermoor and Otello (Metropolitan Opera); The Merry Widow (Bergen National Opera); Atlas (LA Philharmonic); Don Giovanni and Król Roger (Royal Opera House); The Hobbit, The Cunning Little Vixen, Don Giovanni and Der Freischütz (Danish Royal Opera); Zeitgeist (Coliseum); Das Liebesverbot (Teatro Real); Tristan und Isolde (Festival d’Aix-en- Provence); The Flying Dutchman (Finland National Opera); West Side Story (Malmö Opera); Don Giovanni (Barcelona Opera and Houston Opera); Marco Polo (Guangzhou Opera House); Madame Butterfly and Carmen (Bregenzer Festspiele); and Porgy and Bess (National Opera, Amsterdam and Met Opera).

His theatre credits include: Aida (Circustheater); West Side Story (Broadway Theatre); The Starry Messenger, Everyone’s Talking About Jamie, The Moderate Soprano, Frozen, 2071, The Nether and The Lehman Trilogy (West End); Shipwreck and Oil (Almeida); Linda and Girls & Boys (Royal Court); Miss Saigon (Austria, Japan, New York and UK tour); Antony and Cleopatra, Man and Superman, Ugly Lies the Bone and The Great Wave (National Theatre); The Book of Dust: La Belle Sauvage, Talking Heads, A Christmas Carol, Alys, Always, and My Name is Lucy Barton (Bridge Theatre); Local Hero (Royal Lyceum Theatre); Desire Under the Elms (Crucible Theatre); Elegy for Young Lovers (Theater an der Wien); Half a Sixpence (Chichester Festival Theatre); Mary Poppins (touring); Hamlet and The Master and Margarita (Barbican); I Can’t Sing (The London Palladium ); and The Little Big Things (Soho Place).

His ballet credits include: Like Water for Chocolate (Royal Opera House, Costa Mesa and Metropolitan Opera); Malgorzata Dzierzon (Ballet Rambert); Connectome (Royal Ballet). Halls has designed visuals for performing artists such as Adele, Rihanna, Robbie Williams, Drake, Pet Shop Boys, The Sessions, George Michael, Rolling Stones, Genesis, Darren Hayes, Elton John, U2, Muse, and Nitin Sawhney. His other credits include Magic Mike Live, Paris Fashion Week, The Band, London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic closing ceremonies, 2022 FIFA World Cup Opening Ceremony, Frameless London, and Concert for Diana at Wembley Stadium. He has been awarded Knight of Illumination Awards in 2014, 2015 and 2016, a BAFTA Award for The Cube and the 2020 Drama Desk Award for West Side Story.

**Tracey Seaward**

**Creative Producer**

Tracey Seaward’s producer credits include Danny Boyle's Millions, Fernando Meirelles’ Academy Award winning The Constant Gardener, David Cronenberg’s Eastern Promises, Steven Spielberg’s War Horse, Michael Grandage’s Genius, eight movies with Stephen Frears including the BAFTA and Academy Award nominated Dirty Pretty Things, The Queen, for which she won a BAFTA Award for Best British Film, a Golden Globe and an Academy Award nomination, Tamara Drew, Philomena, for which she received a further Golden Globe, BAFTA Award and Academy Award for Best Film nomination, Golden Globe nominee for Florence Foster Jenkins, starring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant, and Victoria & Abdul.

Tracey also produced the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games, directed by Danny Boyle, and The Two Popes, directed by Fernando Meirelles and starring Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce, which was nominated for four Golden Globes, four BAFTAs and three Academy Awards. In 2021 Tracey produced The Walk with Little Amal in association with David Lan and Artistic Director Amir Nizar Zuabi – awarded Time Out Best Public Art 2021 and Best theatre of 2021 by The Observer. The Walk with Little Amal continues around the globe.

More recently Tracey Executive Produced Pistol, a six-hour limited series directed by Danny Boyle for FX, The Walk, a feature documentary with Grain Media and Participant Media, directed by Tamara Kotevska, and The Regime, starring Kate Winslet for HBO to be released in 2024.

**Lara Rose McCabe**

**Rehearsal Director and Resident Director**

Lara’s background in dance started in musical theatre and contemporary; she then moved into street dance genres and, after joining Boy Blue in 2013, continued to develop as both an artist and a choreographer, bringing her the opportunity to perform in many major company shows including Emancipation of Expressionism directed by Danny Boyle.

Lara’s professional work has included campaigns with Nike, adidas and KFC, the London 2012 Olympic ceremonies and Latitude Festival. She has ventured further with her choreography work and worked as a Movement Director for a range of artists including Alex Aiono, Mavro Worldwide Studios, and The Power of Musik with CeCe Sammy. She has assisted for artists such as Ann-Marie, Alice Chater and on the BAFTA Award-winning series MOOD, as well as projects with ITV and the BBC.

**Nathaniel SB Impraim-Jones**

**Rehearsal Director**

Nathaniel SB Impraim-Jones is a professional hip hop and commercial dancer and choreographer. He is one of the leading industry dancers to have worked extensively with artists such as Beyoncé and Jay-Z, Jason Derulo, Mabel, Kelly Rowland, Whitney Houston, Stormzy, Dave and Jesy Nelson, to name a few. He has appeared and worked on TV channels and shows including ITV, The X Factor, BBC One, So You Think You Can Dance, Strictly Come Dancing, The BRIT Awards and The Greatest Dancer. He was Dance Captain / dancer for the London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony, and is also a part of the Olivier Award-winning hip hop dance company Boy Blue, as Dance Teacher / Rehearsal Director.

**Amalie White**

**Associate Set Designer**

Amalie White is a Design Director at Es Devlin Studio. She has an MA in Architecture from the Royal College of Art and a BSc in Architecture from the Bartlett, University College London. Her associate design theatre work includes: The Motive and the Cue for the National Theatre (2023), The Lehman Trilogy for the West End at the Gillian Lynne Theatre (2023), Atlas, an opera by Meredith Monk at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles (2019) and Aristocrats at the Donmar Warehouse (2018). She was Designer for 1984 at Bloomsbury Theatre (2013).

Her associate design music work includes: Beyoncé’s Renaissance stadium tour (2023), Dua Lipa’s Future Nostalgia arena world tour (2022), An Audience with Adele at the Palladium Theatre (2021), One Night Only with Adele at Griffith Park Observatory in Los Angeles (2021), the BRIT Awards 2021, Dua Lipa at the MTV EMAs in Seville (2019), Dua Lipa at the American Music Awards in Los Angeles (2019), and Stormzy at the BRIT Awards 2018. Before working for Es Devlin, Amalie worked as a design assistant on Sinatra: The Man and His Music at the London Palladium, Monty Python Live (Mostly) at the O2 Arena (2014), Robbie Williams’ Swing Both Ways arena tour (2014), and Robbie Williams’ One Night At The Palladium (2013).

Video design work includes Es Devlin and Machiko Weston’s digital artwork I Saw The World End for the Imperial War Museum (2020). Other design work for Es Devlin includes Mask in Motion at Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2018) and Somerset House (2019).

**Chris Hirst**

**Associate Lighting Designer**

As Associate Lighting Designer / Programmer, Chris Hirst’s credits include: A Different Stage by Gary Barlow, Moulin Rouge, Back to the Future, South Pacific, Mary Poppins, Present Laughter, Chess, Dream Girls, Groundhog Day, Matilda, Bat Out of Hell, Everybody's Talking About Jamie, Mamma Mia! The Party, Elf, Wolf Hall & Bring Up the Bodies, City of Glass, The Go-Between, Impossible, Chimerica, Ghost the Musical, The Drowsy Chaperone, and Sunset Boulevard (West End London). The UK Tours of Shrek, Fiddler on the Roof and Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. Swan Lake and Groundhog Day in New York. Paramour (Cirque du Soleil), Wicked, Rocky the Musical, Tanz der Vampire and War Horse in Germany. Arena Tours of Strictly Come Dancing and Dynamo, World Tour of Hugh Jackman: The Man.

The Music. The Show.

**Database Record**

**Security Clearance**

**Factory 7**

Date of last amendment:

11 October, 2023

[Record]

This group of Manchester residents have been an integral part of Free Your Mind, and we thank them for their time, effort and creativity.

[Personal Details]

Adrian Bentley, Adrian Parker, Adriano Primerano, Ahad Omer, Ali Bavarsad, Aliya Machat, Andrew Simpkins, Angie Ryan, Ann Sutcliffe, Annabelle Lloyd-Hughes, Anthony Mcloughlin, Benita Cullen, Carlos Lopes, Carol Barber, Carrie Williams, Catherine Fyfe, Charles Palmer, Charlotte Nicholls, Chloe Broomhead, Christina Christophi, Dalia Elghazawy, Danielle St-Amour, Darren Matthews, David Cunningham, Dominic Dempsey, Dorretta Maynard, Edward Bray, Eliza Szupryczynska, Estelle Longmore, Frederick Torrance, Gaynor Isherwood, George Mo, Georgie Harold-Moss, Hazel Roy, Heidi Reid, Helen Hill, Helen Kendall, Iqra Iftikhar, Jacque Garside, Jane Philpott, Janice Bonner,Jessica McCandless, Joey Whitworth, Joseph Morris, Joshua Fitton, Julie Slater, Karen Tuatara, Kate Frain, Kathryn Morley, Kirsty Oliver, Larry Bode, Lauren Nicholls, Louise Minta, Lucy Porte, Luke Richards, Lydia Sutherland, Maggie Joan Haggas, Maretha Ilves, Margarette Lee-Chapman, Maria Luc, Marisa Rooney, Matilda Glen, Maureen O'Neill, Miça Quartey, Michelle Smith, Nadia Bennett, Naomi Weaver, Nick Hardiker, Nigel Cain, Oluwatobi Alapelode, Phil Hicks, Phoebe Coleman, Priti Shah, Rachel Beach, Rachel Delooze, Rebekah Davies, Roanna Warren, Rosie Thackeray, Sallie Bridgen, Sarah Galligan,Sharvi Rana, Sian Ilett, Simon Elliot, Soumya Krishnamurthy, Steve Torley, Sujata Gupta, Susan McGonnell, Susan Simpkins, Thao Hoang, Vasilikey Kapsalos, Vincent Dugdale, Wing Liu

[Place of Residence]

Manchester, UK

For a more extensive database, please visit **factoryinternational.org/free-your-mind-participants/**

**Production Credits**

Choreographic contribution from **Lara Rose McCabe,** **Nathaniel SB Impraim-Jones** and the full cast

**Paul Moore** Director of Production & Building Operations

**John Gilleese** Technical Manager

**Rory Howson** Associate Production Manager

**Nick Murray** Draughtsman

**James Haworth at Event Safety Plan** H&S Consultant

**Lily Maketansky, Fraser Millward** Production Coordinators

**Zuri Fernandez, Maisha Kungu** Company Coordinators

**Abir Tobji** Engagement Manager

**Yatie Aziz** Engagement Coordinator

**Eleni Roka, Kieran Youd** Factory Academy Interns

**Isaac Partington** Producing Apprentice

**Tom French** Deputy Head of Stage

**James Unsworth** Deputy Head of Exhibitions

**Gareth Houghton, Pete Ellis, Chris Tonini** Production Carpenters

**Simon Beech, Bella Casson, Ted Ruiz Daniels, Joel Pendleton, Ellis Robison, Phil Thackray** Stage Technicians

**Stephanie Weaver, Cameron Gorman** Stage Show Crew

**Sam Avison** Automation Operator

**Mark Perrin, Ben Smith, Paul Smith** Aerial Riggers

**Frumpid Stumplestone** Aerialist Technician

**Hannah Marshall** Production Wardrobe Manager

**Emily Brooks, Tilly Jean** Production Wardrobe Deputies

**Lou-Anne Binns, Ilektra Charalampopoulou, Susan Krylonsky, Evangeline Taylor, Sharleen Tebb** Wardrobe Department

**Dominic Skinner for M·A·C Cosmetics** Make-up Direction

**Lucy Packham** Hair & Make-up Supervisor

**Cat Cameron** Hair & Make-up Assistant

**Tara Laverick, Rachel Tansey** University of Salford Costume Interns

**Philippa Downes, James Gaskell, Paul Hennessy, Jamie Owens** Prop makers

**Adam Greenwood** Prop Technician

**James Greenwood, Ian Moulds, Connor O'Neill, Peter Scandrett, Dash Wong** Production Electricians

**Max Narula** Lighting Programmer

**Akshay Khubchandani** Lighting Technician & Programmer

**Abigail Peacock** University of Salford Placement

**Toni Robinson** Choir Director

**Matthew Ward, Arnau Aragones, Alicia Sadler, Yvonne Park** Vocals

**Simon Chue** Music Assistant

**Pierce Archer, David Gregory, Lewis Jones, Paul Meardon, Eoin O'Grady** Production Sound Engineers

**William Bower** Sound Technician

**Eleanor Theodorou** Sound Operator

**Olympias Music Foundation**

**Alice Needham** Choir Director

**Olympias Music Foundation Youth Voices**

**Dean Trust Ardwick Choir**

**Mark Todd, Kat Kemsley, Zakk Hein** Luke Halls Studio

**Gareth Shelton** Video Programmer

**Andrew Croft, Alex Hawtin** Video Technicians & Operators

Films by **Ali Johnson, Jayden Crooks, Lui Bauer, Grace Smith, Charlie Andrew, Niall Del Gesso, Lauryn Pedley, Sonny DeCieco, Luca Testa** School of Digital Arts (SODA)

**Claire Bleasdale** CDG Casting Director – Children

**Jonathan Hull for Jonathan Hull Associates LLP** Legal & Business Affairs

Rigging supplied by **Unusual Rigging Ltd**

LED screen supplied by **Blue-I Ltd**

Lights supplied by **Christie Lites Ltd & White Light Ltd**

Sound supplied by **Stage Sound Services Ltd**

Holoplot supplied by **Creative Technologies Ltd**

Scenery supplied by **Visual Scene Ltd**

Fabric Installation and Dance Floor supplied by **J&C Joel Ltd**

Arches supplied by **J&C Joel Ltd & Stage One Ltd**

Staging supplied by **Steeldeck Rentals Ltd**

Pyro supplied by **Encore SFX**

Lasers supplied by **ER Productions Ltd**

Apex hoists supplied by **Tait and Unusual Rigging Ltd**

Living Statues designer & engineer **John Godbolt**

Aerialist rigging & equipment by **Anystage Creative Ltd**

3D milk carton and torches by **Aaron Merriman**

1940s TV by **Paul Jones FX**

Blackboard and rehearsal support by **Will Gaskell properly made**

Key Maker by **Philippa Rowley**

Footwear sponsored by **Dr. Martens**

Make-up sponsored by **M·A·C Cosmetics**

Eyewear supplied by **Tom Davies**

Costumes supplied by **Gareth Pugh, Applied Arts, Darcy Clothing, Fashion Enter, Prudence Millinery, Nicola Killeen Textiles**

Wigs by **Matt George Wigs**

Programme edited by **Polly Checkland Harding**

With thanks to

**Lana Wachowski** and **Lilly Wachowski**

**Russell Allen** from **Arri Media. Vicki Amedume, Richard Asante, Mark Ball. Stephanie Barrick**and **Justine Dunton-Rose** at **M·A·C Cosmetics. Bruntwood.**

**Dr Alice Cliff, Rachel Knight, Sally MacDonald** and **John Stack** from the **Science and Industry Museum. Marsha Courneya, Jill Griffiths** and **Toby Heys** from the **School of Digital Arts (SODA), Manchester Metropolitan University. Ben Davis. Alex Fleetwood** from **Niantic Labs. Adam Gascoyne, Pearl Gerald, Kristi Gilligan. Mike Grierson** from the **Creative Computing Institute, University of the Arts London. Sam Hayes, Ruth Hogben, Mika Hyde, Gabrielle Jenks, Sascha Jones, Mark Kaufman. Ben Lumsden** from **Epic Games. Lawrence Mattis. Carson McColl** and **Àine Geoghegan** for **HARD+SHINY. Robin McNicholas** from **Marshmallow Laser Feast. Tim Morris,, Chris Mullaney, Louis Mustill. Dr Miguel Ortiz** from the **Sonic Arts Research Centre, Queen's University Belfast. Matthew Plummer-Fernández. Toni Racklin** and **Angie Smith** from **Barbican Centre. Sam Renton. Matthew Shaw** for **ScanLAB. Neena Shea, Dominic Skinner, Tom Stansfield, Hugo Weaving** as the voice of Smith. **Hugh Whittaker** from **Warner Bros Electrical. Glyn Williams**

Our deepest thanks go to all those who helped us make Free Your Mind the show that it is through our Research and Development workshops.

**Jimmy Allan, Theophilus O. Bailey, Emily Bajic, Zoe Baptiste, Nicey Belgrave, Tanaka Bingwa, Georgia Bird, India Bowen, Ellis Brownhill, Emma Cameron, Ffion Campbell-Davies, Irena Cuturic, Ricardo da Silva, Joseph Davies, Idney De’Almeida, George Duker, Holly Dunsmore, Lily Louisa Field, Jordan ‘J-Funk’ Franklin, Dennis George Zimmerman, Martina Gumbs, Yasmin Harcourt, Ian Harris, Nina Heywood, Tia Holden, Mackenzie Hunt, Eunice Huthart, Tobi Izedomi, Pascha Jacobs-Jones, Natalie James, Malachi Lewis-Paul, Poppydene Lingham, Jenai Mason-Smith, Lara Rose McCabe, Kelsey Miller, Nicole Nyemi-Tei, Andera Peiroudi, Miguel Semedo, Eloise Sheldon, Olivia Shouler, Clarissa Shulungu, Stefan Sinclair, Chad Taylor, Ziggy Taylor, Iona Turnbull, Jules Valentine, Kane Walcott, Rosie Whiting, Katherine Wilde**

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Factory International’s vision is to Invent Tomorrow Together. Through art, music and culture, in digital and physical space, we create the meeting points between imagined futures and real lives.

Factory International runs Aviva Studios, the landmark new cultural space in Manchester where we produce and present a huge range of work across all art forms. Every other year, we present Manchester International Festival (MIF) – the festival of brand new artistic work known world-over, that’s animated and captivated the city since 2007.

We also run Factory Academy, a city-wide training initiative that helps to develop talent for the many employment opportunities in the creative industries; we present a year-round digital commissioning programme of online and mixed reality work; and we take our productions across the globe to the world’s leading festivals and venues.

Championing the residents of Greater Manchester, Factory International works closely with the widest possible range of communities – whether that’s collaborating with community members to plan and curate our artistic programme, building innovative creative projects with schools, developing iconic performances with local participants, or supporting the city’s artists to realise their potential.

Rooted in Manchester, Factory International cements the city’s status as a place known for its cutting-edge art and innovation.

Based on the Warner Bros films written and directed by the Wachowskis. Produced by special arrangement with Warner Bros Theatre Ventures. Commissioned and produced by Factory International. Cover Design: Jeremy Coysten / @northdesign\_