

HUG – overview for promoters



HUG is a choral piece, in which each audience member is blindfolded and hugged by a singer. We've often struggled to find words to describe the experience – as we don't like to give too much away. But you can take a look at a couple of helpful reviews [here](#) and [here](#), and this is a description in the words of critic Maddy Costa:

Enter the room with a blindfold and sit down. Sound follows you into the room, carried by bodies, emerging from mouths. One of those bodies comes and places a hand on your arm, gently lifts you to your feet and, still singing, hugs you. Sound becomes feeling: the feeling of a note moving through the chest to the throat, the feeling of volume rising like wings beating against your skin. The feeling of a melody feather-soft, embers-warm, the feeling of a rhythm like the pounding of your lover's heart. It's like the sound itself is holding you, suspended inside itself; it becomes a part of you, and so you become part of it.

Have you ever sat in a dark room listening to a song, a piece of music, thinking: this is the safest place I know? For the time-stretching minutes of being inside it, being held by it, Verity Standen's Hug was the safest place I knew.

- Taken from an essay on Verity's work in the collection 'Criticism & Love'

It is a powerful and intimate experience – for audiences, but also for the local community singers who perform it. Wherever the piece is performed, Verity travels with a small team of professional singers, who work with her over the course of a few days to teach the composition and choreography to local performers. In recent years

we have performed HUG in China, Belgium, Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as across the UK.

The show is technically very simple – it just needs a quiet room with a good acoustic. But it relies on a strong and caring relationship with the host producer. We look for partners who are excited to recruit and look after a choir of volunteer performers, as well offer a unique experience for their audiences.

Each version of the show is different. In some places Verity has worked with an existing choir, and rehearsed very quickly in a couple of days for one-off performances. In Shanghai we worked with more than 50 local performers and ran the show for a month. Please get in touch if you'd like to find out more.

For more information and all enquiries, please contact producer Tom Spencer
veritystandenprojects@gmail.com