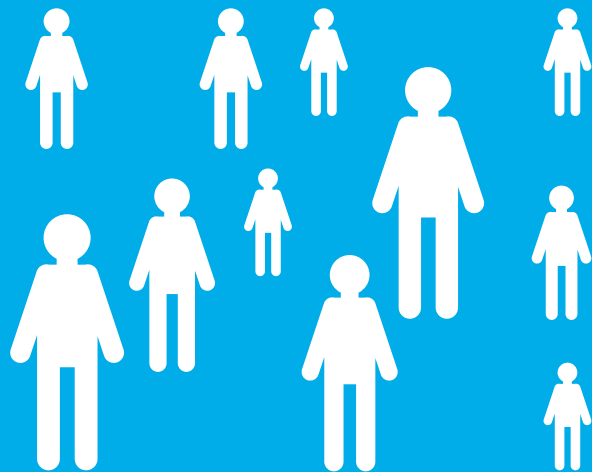




Annual Report 2023

Charity No. 232488

AUDIENCE



59,416 visitors to in-person shows

54% of these were children (31,925)

10% of these were through our Puppets for All scheme (5,939)

23% came with a school or nursery (13,900)

26% of family visitors were from Islington

80,519 people saw our shows on tour

DIGITAL



261K

YouTube views with 16K subscribers
35 videos released
7k watch hours
1.7m reach
74 countries

3 digital pay-per-view production films

PRODUCTIONS

10

in-house productions

825

performances of
in-house productions

8

touring productions

655

performances of
shows on tour

5

visiting companies

41

performances of
visiting shows

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE



15K

Facebook followers
Reach 91K



21K

Twitter followers



15K

Reach 98K

179K hits at

littleangeltheatre.com

WELCOME

Delivering a full season of work, both at our home venues in Islington, and through our touring programme across the UK, has been a fantastic achievement this year. We have welcomed audiences back to our building to engage with our artistic and participatory programme, as well as taking the magic of puppetry across the country, from Devon to Scotland and everywhere in between.

We were incredibly excited to bring the live version of the lockdown hit – *I Want My Hat Back* – to our stages, as well as developing relationships with co-producers both for our in-house programme and out on tour. Welcoming back some of our classic productions for new audiences has also been fantastic, particularly alongside the growth in the reach of our 'Puppets for All' programme, which has seen even more people access our work. Our digital programme is evolving as it responds to a changing environment, becoming more closely linked to our onsite programme.

Our work with schools continues in our eight local partner schools, with after-school puppet clubs, show-related workshops, and free show tickets for all children in the schools. We are now working with the council to extend this throughout the borough with their 11 by 11 scheme. We have lots of exciting partnerships

with local organisations as part of the community programme, and have tripled our engagement with nearby residents, working with them to curate a programme of relevant and impactful activity.

Our operations have not only been focused on supporting our full programme of activity again, but also on achieving this in a more environmentally responsible manner, through advocacy, training, reflection and positive action. Looking forward, we are adapting our operations to create a sustainable model for the charity; making ground-breaking puppetry shows and providing engaging participatory activities for children and their families. Putting play at the heart of everything we do, to ignite the imagination and give every child the opportunity to be creative.



S Lane

Samantha Lane
Artistic Director



P Swindall

Peta Swindall
Executive Director

Little Angel Theatre continues to meet ongoing challenges faced by the cultural sector as a strong and resilient organisation. We have stayed true to our core values whilst ensuring that all aspects of our work reach or exceed the scale of output from previous years. It has been wonderful for these achievements to be externally recognised thanks to awards for individual shows and artists within the programme (Offies and Oliviers), as well as for the organisation itself (The Stage Awards).

We are committed to using puppetry to engage with audiences, schools, community groups and emerging artists to deliver a diverse and inspiring range of shows

and participation opportunities. Puppetry is an extraordinarily versatile and impactful artform; we are proud, 61 years on, to still be here as one of only three permanent puppet theatres in the UK.



Katie Owen

Katie Owen
Chair of the Board

On Stage

It's been fantastic to deliver a full season of shows to our audiences this year, welcoming back much loved classics, working with exciting co-producers and creating fresh productions for our audiences.

A particular highlight was bringing the Offie winning show, *I Want My Hat Back Trilogy*, on to our stage. This began life during the initial 2020 Covid-19 Lockdown, and was then featured on the BBC ("the little theatre with the big lockdown following") and so to see this project come full circle, culminating in a live, upscaled version was incredibly exciting. The show received rave reviews from both audiences and critics, and went on to complete a national tour. It was also exciting to co-produce brand-new show *The Instrumentals*, inspired by the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, that explored grief and sadness through seventies soul and funk. This show has also been Offie nominated.

Our puppets have been out and about across the country - visiting everywhere from Totnes in Devon to Alnwick on the Scottish border! We have also been working to increase the scale of our touring programme, including a West End transfer for *The Smartest Giant in Town* to St Martin's Theatre, and receiving an Olivier Award nomination.

Our digital programme continues to reach our audiences from across the UK and the world! A key focus for this year was moving towards making a series of shows rather than just one-off shorts. This included a series

called *Make Your Worries Away*, designed to support children with craft makes that can go some way to dealing with anxiety.

We are thrilled with the growth in our 'Puppets for All' programme, giving access to our programme to those that might otherwise not be able to participate. It is a concerning reflection of the current cost of living crisis that we now have a record number of families on this distribution list, and we desperately need more funds to allow us to increase the scope of this programme.

10 in-house productions with
825 performances
5 visiting productions with
41 performances
59,416 total visitors
31,447 theatre / 27,696 studios
65%* first time visitors
5,939 Total PFA / 10% PFA
12 Relaxed/BSL performances
8 shows on tour with 1,015 performances /
89,819 audiences
111 viewers for our first digital
pay-per view**
6 digital shorts releases
2 digital series launched
261K viewers on our YouTube channel

* % of individual bookers booking for the first time. This figure does not include schools or other organisational bookings

** average viewing numbers based on survey response

IN HOUSE

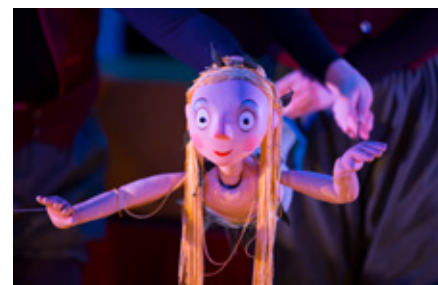


Handa's Surprise

Studios / 9 Feb–16 Apr 2022 / Age 2–5 /
108 performances / 4,274 people /
97% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre production
Based on the bestselling book by
Eileen Browne

Handa has seven delicious fruits but
seven mischievous animals want a bite too.

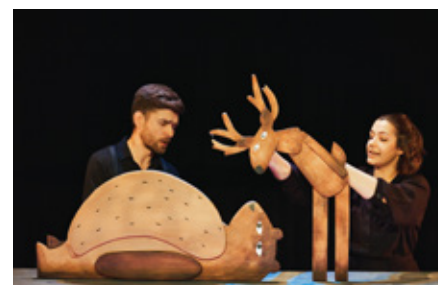


The Singing Mermaid

Theatre / 25 Feb–24 Apr 2022 /
Age 3–8 / 96 performances / 7,329 people /
95% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre and Royal & Derngate
Co-Produced revival, in association with
Watershed Productions

One day, the singing mermaid is tempted
away from all of her sea creature friends and
her peaceful home at Silversands to join a
travelling circus.



I Want My Hat Back

Studio / 21 May–31 July 2022 / Age 3–6 /
116 performances / 7,300 people /
95% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre new production,
in Association with Ian Nicholson and
Sam Wilde

This play is based on the original book
The Singing Mermaid. Text copyright © Julia
Donaldson 2012. Illustrations copyright ©
Lydia Monks 2012. Published by Macmillan
Children's Books.

"Hysterically funny and stunningly imaginative. Even with its
Peaky Blinders moments this amazing show will have you laughing
all the way home, discussing its topics and creating things from
cardboard long afterwards." *I Want My Hat Back Trilogy* reviewed
in *Everything Theatre* ★★★★★

Top two images Ellie Kurtz; bottom image Suzi Corker



King Of Nothing

Theatre / 29 Sept–20 Nov 2022 /
Age 5–11 / 79 performances / 6,003
people / 79% capacity

**A Little Angel Theatre and Monstro Theatre
new co-production**

King Reginald is a ruler who likes to keep in style. But the fashions change so fast, he's afraid he can't keep up...

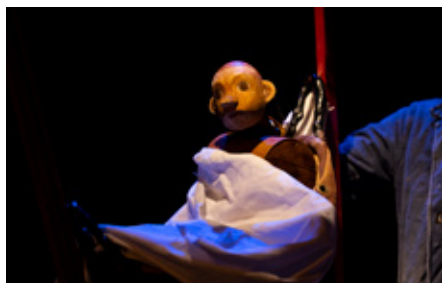


Little Angel Theatre's Miniature Travelling Circus

Studio / 16 Sept–13 Nov 2022 / Age 3–6 /
102 performances / 4,952 people /
93% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre new production

George the ringmaster has quite the challenge on their hands. The circus isn't quite what it once was but George has curated a programme of acts more bedazzling than ever.



Pinnochio

Theatre / 29 Apr–26 Jun / Age 5–11 /
71 performances / 5,436 people /
87% capacity

**An Indefinite Articles production, in
association with Little Angel Theatre**

Step inside Geppetto's workshop and hear the tale of a puppet that wants to be a real boy, and a puppet maker who wants to be a real father.

"A perfectly pitched delight that keeps its audience, adults included, rapt from start to finish. (...) the production shows a real skill and deep understanding of storytelling for children." *Little Angel Theatre's Miniature Travelling Circus* reviewed in *The Stage* ★★★★★

PUPPETS FOR ALL

- 6,263 tickets for shows and workshops distributed, with a value equating to over £49,000
- 75% of these were for pupils attending with school groups
- Grants and donations only cover around 60% of the cost of the tickets, not to mention cost to administer scheme and support access needs
- Currently we have a record number of over 350 families on our list, with each offering oversubscribed

Photos by Ellie Kurtz, Alex Harvey-Brown (*The Instrumentals*) and Steve Gregson (*The Flying Bath*)



We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Theatre / 25 Nov 2022–29 Jan 2023 /
Age 3–8 / 112 performances /
10,268 people / 100% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre revival

Based on the original book *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Helen Oxenbury. Illustrations from the book copyright © 1989 Helen Oxenbury. By permission of Walker Books Ltd, London.



The Pixie and the Pudding

Studio / 18 Nov 2022–29 Jan 2023 /
Age 4–11 / 120 performances /
7,333 people / 100% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre revival

When Charlie and her dad move to the farm from the city, everything seems to go wrong. If only they'd paid attention to the mysterious note left on their windowsill about a curious pixie and the pudding she likes to eat on Christmas Eve...



The Instrumentals

Theatre / 10 Feb–16 April 2023 / Age 4–11 /
106 performances / 7,568 people /
77% capacity

**A Little Angel Theatre, Goblin Theatre,
Mercury Theatre and Blouse & Skirt new
co-production**

At her Grandfather's wake, Belle is feeling down so she slips into the basement and discovers his old dusty instruments. The Instrumentals are pure funk, and teach Belle to 'get down' in a whole new way.



The Flying Bath

Studio / 10 Feb–23 April 2023 / Age 2–5 /
123 performances / 8,435 people /
98% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre revival

When everyone has left the house in the morning, the bath toys spring into action and head off on exciting adventures in their magical flying bath!

VISITING COMPANIES

This year we welcomed five brilliant productions into our spaces to showcase some of the exciting work from artists and companies from across the UK. We began the year with scientist Jina on her adventure home, empowered by some of history's super-STEM women in *Jina and the Stem Sisters* produced by HDMT Music, we then escaped on a Kindertransport train, in *Kinder*, where one small Czech-Jewish girl embarks on a mighty adventure. Travelling across Europe she discovers how tiny acts of kindness can change a person's life in this immersive production from Smoking Apples.

In the summer we donned our white coats with Coppice Theatre in *Science Adventure: The Power Pickle* where Professor McGuffin's ground-breaking Sub-Nuclear Optical Transmitter (S.N.O.T.) has stopped working, and it's jeopardising the whole mission! Then we were mesmerised by Swallow's Wings Puppetry in *Anansi Brings Back the Day*, a funny, irreverent and inspiring West African tale told with puppetry, spoken word and traditional African music. Finally, String Theatre brought us *A Water Journey* which took us to a remote and tranquil land, an unusual community of adventurous animals and one wise old man live in harmony with nature. But suddenly one day, a flood overwhelms them...



5 companies **41** performances
2,225 people

Following its run at Little Angel Studios, *Kinder* was awarded two *Offies* – *Theatre for Young Audiences Awards* – Original Music/Sound and Production and won the *Etties* award for Best Theatre for Young Audiences Production. This show was supported by LAT's artist development programme and we are so thrilled to see its successes.

Moving forward we are planning to condense our visiting company work into one summer season, and the inaugural Children's Puppetry Festival takes place in August 2023. It features around 13 productions which expands our platform for external work and will become a key part of our artist development programme.



"Kinder delivers a brilliant blend of clever storytelling and smart theatre which is suitable for children and essential for adults."
Broadway World *****

Photos by Tiddly Films (*A Water Journey*) and The Other Richard (*Kinder*)

ON TOUR

HANDA'S SUPRISE

24 Apr – 3 Jul 2022

Age group: 2–5

10 week tour

112 performances

Attendance: 6,043

WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT

21 Sept – 20 Nov 2022

Age group: 2–5

9 week tour

78 performances

Attendance: 12,156

THERE'S A RANG-TAN IN MY BEDROOM

15 Oct – 23 Dec 2022

Age group: 5–11

11 week tour

67 performances

Attendance: 5,702

ME

14–31 Dec 2022

Age group: 2–5

3 week tour

34 performances

Attendance: 1,498

I WANT MY HAT BACK

4 Feb – 16 Apr 2023

Age group: 3–6

10 week tour

78 performances

Attendance: 8,845

THE KING OF NOTHING

Monstro

14 Feb – 15 Apr 2022

Age group: 5–11

8 week tour

24 performances

THE SINGING MERMAID

Watershed

8 Dec 2022 – 8 Apr 2023

Age group: 3–8

7 week tour

94 performances

Attendance: 4,841

THE SMARTEST GIANT IN TOWN

Firelight

7 Feb – 4 May 2022

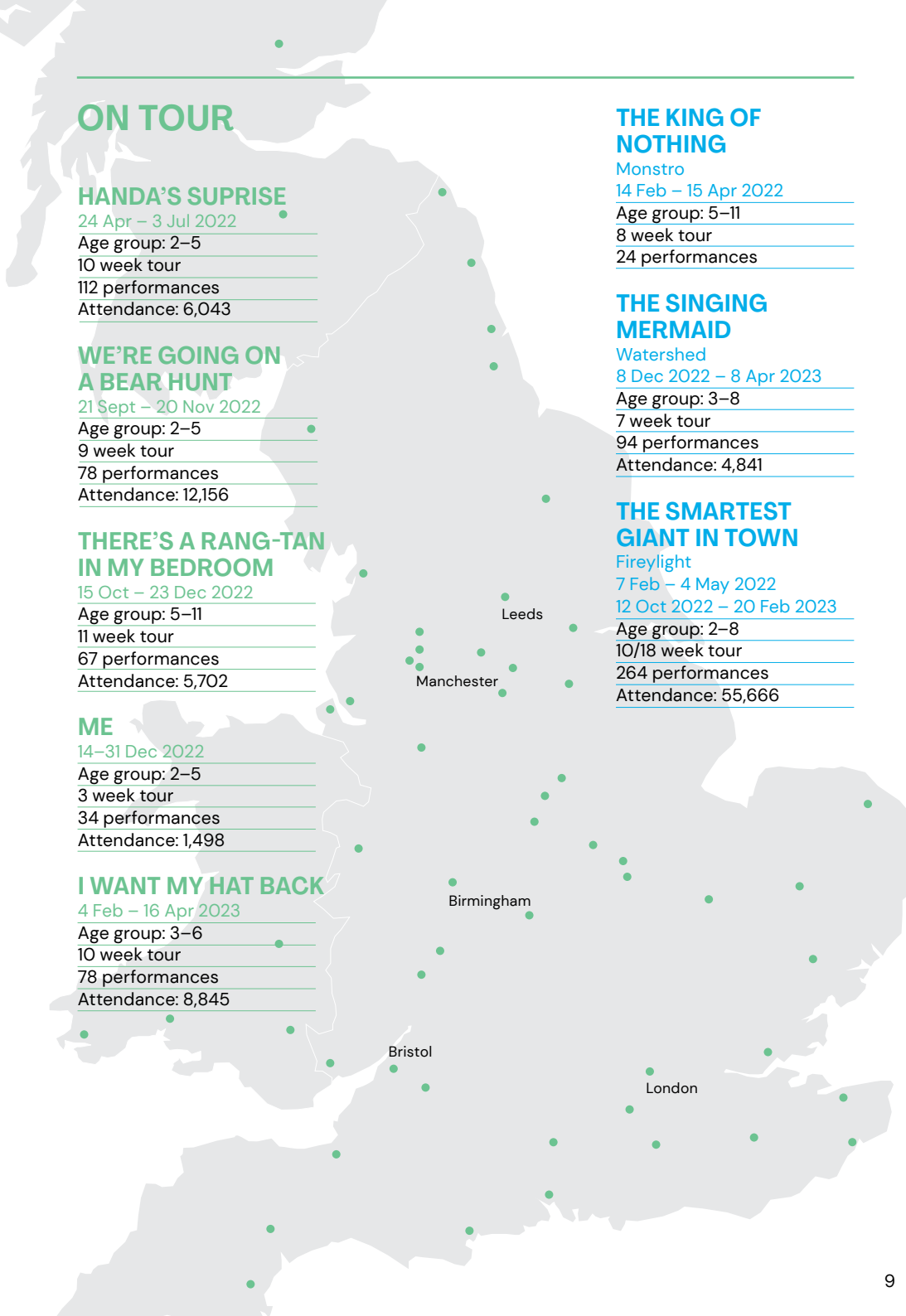
12 Oct 2022 – 20 Feb 2023

Age group: 2–8

10/18 week tour

264 performances

Attendance: 55,666



ON SCREEN

WATCH our digital puppetry shows and stories for inspiration...

MAKE using our guides, craft-making videos – or your own ideas – with what you have at home...

SHARE your home-made creations with each other and with us. We believe that everyone is an artist and we want to see your work!

2.2 MILLION
views on our YouTube channel

15.5K subscribers

118 countries

3 craft videos

261K views this year

35 total videos released this year

7.1K hours of watch time this year

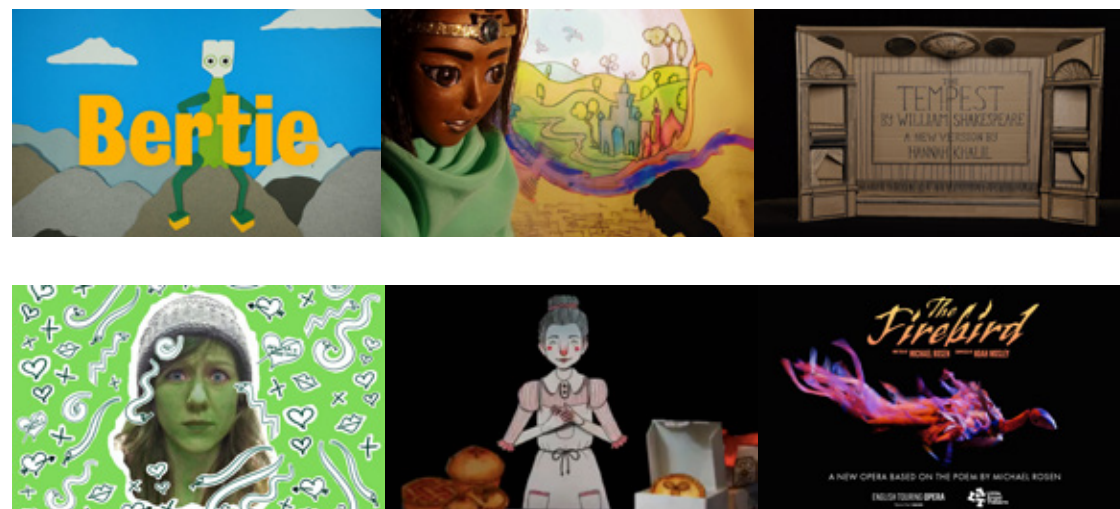
We released 6 new innovative digital short commissions on our YouTube channel:

- **Priya and the Twirling Wind** by Raven Kaliana (featured on BBC India and included in the UK Asian Film Festival). India's first female superhero shows a poorly little girl the environmental sources impacting her health, inspiring her to take action when she returns home.
- **Super Speedy Star Baby** by Louisa Ashton (also audio described) a bizarre and bonkers musical journey through space
- Our favourite cardboard heroes (Ian Nicholson & Sam Wilde) brought us **The Card Bard: The Tempest**, an adaptation of the classic Shakespearian tale by Hannah Khalil.
- **Medusa's First Kiss** is a riotous and joyful punk musical retelling of the Medusa myth, for anyone who's ever felt different, from P Burton-Morgan and Holly Mallett.
- Based on a poem by Michael Rosen, **The Firebird** is a new puppet opera

composed by Noah Mosley and co-produced by English Touring Opera – the film was nominated for YAM Awards for Best Opera and Best Digital Project.

- **Sy The Fly**, by Melinda Burton, a short puppetry film about Sy, the speedy, greedy fly!

We also launched two new series this year, with the aim to develop a longer relationship with some of our viewers. **Bertie** is an environmental entertainment and education series (7 episodes) for children aged 3 to 8. Lilly meets a different animal in a different place in the world in each episode, and children will learn about different environmental issues and consider how they can take their own steps to help combat climate change. **Make Your Worries Away** is a series designed and performed by Joni-Rae Carrick, of 7 make-along videos, each with a different worry and different craft activity, to help children find coping mechanisms for dealing with the things that make them anxious.



In December 2022, we launched our first ever Digital Pay-Per-View film with **The Pixie and the Pudding**. Internationally, we reached places as far as the USA and Israel and we had a strong uptake from our PFA scheme (with 32 households accessing the film for free). This is the start of a strand of work, unlocking access to our productions for those who otherwise experience barriers to see our shows, whether geographical, socio-economic or disability based. Going forwards, we aim to offer this alongside all of the shows that feature on our stages.

We continue to create digital output with our partner schools, artist development programme and community groups to share the culmination of projects with their classes, friends, family and other stakeholders. Highlights this year include:

- **Wishing on a Star** by Spectrum Youth Theatre. Led by the award-winning Smoking Apples, our group of young people created a science-fiction adventure film, exploring the power of

wishes and how we can make them a reality. Working over a term participants created characters, imagined scenarios and designed and built puppets to make a wonderful short film imagining what would happen if there was a way that, if you wished hard enough, you could bring back things that aren't here anymore.

- **The Bridge School Film Project**, working with young people with special educational needs. This project was part of the 'Let's Talk Islington' initiative, to give a voice to all Islington residents about the borough that they live in and how they think life in Islington could be improved. This was an extremely effective, accessible and engaging way to give the young people a reason to talk about their lives, and they all thoroughly enjoyed being part of the creative process of making the film.

Awards

This year we were thrilled to be able to celebrate the achievements of the organisation, and all of those who have worked with and for Little Angel Theatre, at awards events throughout the year.

In December 2022 we were nominated as Fringe Venue of the Year 2023 at The Stage Awards – being shortlisted in the top three in a sector where there is such a wide range of bold, ambitious companies delivering brilliant work and punching well above their weight was truly humbling.

In January / February 2023 the Offies and Etties were announced – we were delighted to be a part of 13 nominations over six shows for the new TYA categories at the Offies, representative of our work as a producer, co-producer and the support we give to other independent companies working in our sector. The Etties are a new set of awards by Everything Theatre, with a dedicated category for Best Theatre for Young Audiences.

Two fabulous productions stood out across these awards:

Kinder – Smoking Apples, developed with support from LAT

- Winner TYA Production – Offies 2023
- Winner TYA Music / Sound Design – Offies 2023
- Finalist TYA Writing – Offies 2023
- Winner Theatre for Young Audiences – Etties 2022

I Want My Hat Back – LAT Production, in association with Ian Nicholson & Sam Wilde

- Winner TYA Design – Offies 2023
- Finalist TYA Writing – Offies 2023
- Finalist TYA Production – Offies 2023
- Nomination TYA Music / Sound Design – Offies 2023
- Nomination TYA Performance – Offies 2023
- Shortlist Theatre for Young Audiences – Etties 2022

We're Going on a Bear Hunt, Pixie and the Pudding, The Singing Mermaid and Paper Dolls (co-production with Polka Theatre) also all received Offies nominations across various categories.

We've been on an incredible journey with *The Smartest Giant in Town* (see opposite) – when we reopened following the Covid lockdowns this was our first production, playing to audiences of just 32 in a socially distanced auditorium. The run sold out, and we set out on a nationwide tour across the UK as the restrictions eased. The show has been seen by over **60,000 people in 400 performances** to date, and is set to return for another run at Christmas 2023 in the West End!

"The achievements and importance of children's theatre often fly under the radar in the UK, but Little Angel has consistently overperformed, and during the past year has shown a remarkable commitment to producing new and exciting work for children that surpasses its size and scale." #TheStageAwards

In February 2023 we were nominated for an **Olivier** award, for Best Family Show, alongside our co-producers Fierylight, for the Christmas run of our production of *The Smartest Giant in Town* at St Martin's Theatre.



Photo by Ellie Kurtz

Artist Development

Last year, we continued to support individual artists and companies in a variety of ways, including a targeted internship, providing free space for development, mentoring (incl through 'Developing Your Creative Practice' ACE applications) and ongoing courses and classes for all abilities to learn about puppetry or expand their skills.

Our internship gives an opportunity to work in an industry that can be difficult to break into. Providing paid opportunities promotes inclusivity and diversity, both within our organisation and the wider industry, ensuring the future of puppetry by training up the next generation of makers and designers. Our Professional Development programme consists of both termly and one-off short courses with participants including teachers, performers, creatives and hobbyists.

With marionette making now added to the Heritage Crafts Red List of endangered crafts, support and investment in puppet making and performance has never been more critical. Over the next year, we intend to develop our offer, specifically nurturing four artists or companies to develop puppetry shows for children, with the opportunity to present their work at our Children's Puppetry Festival in summer 2024. Each artist/company will receive targeted training, mentorship, space and a platform to share their work.

Artists supported: Sam Wilde, Lori Hopkins, Rachel Warr, Charlie Mafham and Tessa Bide

Companies supported: Smoking Apples, Puppet Opera, Goodie and Storey and Monstro.

70 hours of FREE space for R&D, auditions and rehearsals.

Nearly 200 applications for our internship

6 termly courses delivered

13 short courses delivered

231 participants

"The traineeship has been filled with amazing opportunities and experiences. From building puppets for a production of *Goodnight Mr Tom* to getting to develop my own show, I've been learning more and more every day. I have been provided with all the tools to continue expressing my creativity and begin my journey in the puppet industry as a well-rounded maker with the mentoring and support from the team around me." Ash Appadu, Puppetry Design Intern



Internship

This position is the cornerstone of our artist development programme, providing embedded long-term support for an emerging artist. During recruitment we worked very closely with Theatre People, to make applications as accessible as possible. We received almost 200 applications, with five very strong candidates progressing to an in-person interview. Ash stood out as someone at the beginning of their career with a real passion for puppetry and a raw making ability.

They started with a skills evaluation to highlight gaps in knowledge and inform the direction of the training and have ring-fenced professional development time to cover skills that aren't being honed in the day-to-day work and to equip Ash with other soft skills that they will need once they leave. They are also studying the Open University course 'Working as a Creative Freelancer' to widen their sector knowledge.

Almost as soon as they started Ash was assisting on LAT productions, learning the intricate details of building puppet mechanisms and utilising their excellent digital design skills. They are now starting to plan their production, which will be performed as part of the Children's Puppetry Festival in summer 2023.

Artist Support & Development Case Studies

Smoking Apples is a company who strives to develop and deliver innovative puppetry and visual theatre, including working with neuro diverse young people.

"A huge and continuous thank you for the endless support you've given us over the years. We really just wouldn't be able to do what we do without the Little Angel and the brilliant team of people that work there"

Charlie Mafham was previously a performer and puppeteer, and undertook a period of training supported by Little Angel Theatre to move into creative producing. *"The support we received from LAT was*

hugely beneficial. At a time when all our costs were going up – but our funding wasn't – we were able to redistribute funds we might have had to spend on space in better supporting our disabled and neurodiverse led company."

Professional Development

Foundation & Intermediate Termly Courses – 6 courses, 80 participants

The Foundation Course focuses on introducing making and performance, and continues to be hugely popular and successful. This year, the intermediate course welcomed back Iestyn Evans as a guest tutor to teach on TV puppetry, alongside lead tutor, Oliver Hymans, LAT Associate Artist.

"I loved it. Every single part of your setup is impressive, inclusive and exciting."

One-off courses – 13 courses, 151 participants

We successfully launched Hands On, an introduction series for puppet performance, as an entry point to trying out puppetry. We were also excited to welcome back our four-day making courses for the first time since the pandemic, with Peter O'Rourke leading a course on making Table Top Puppets.

"This course was so inspiring and I feel it gave me the confidence I was looking for."

HE Collaborations

We worked again with various HE providers delivering course content:

- **Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Applied Theatre MA** – students were introduced to Theatre for Young Audiences – experiencing a range of work incorporating different age ranges, scales, styles and subject matter and taking part in workshops.
- **Guildhall School, Collaborative Production and Design MA** – students created a small scale puppet show, which toured to our partner schools and the Barbican Library.
- **East 15, BA Stage and Production Management** – students developed their puppetry knowledge

Schools

One in three children in Islington lives in an income-deprived household, with young people in disadvantaged areas least likely to be able to access cultural activity, even through school. This inequality reinforces cycles of exclusion and deprivation. Access to the arts in schools nationally is becoming harder, more so in recent years, and our work with local schools is a vital part of our aim to address this inequality.

Our current School Partnership Programme provides regular access to shows and creative activities and experiences for approx. 3,000 primary aged children in Islington across eight schools. Beyond this, our work with Islington Council via their 11by11 scheme (delivering 11 cultural experiences to all local children by year 11) further ensures that all Islington schools are given access to our productions and are able to experience the magic and wonder of puppetry and live theatre.

8 partner schools

3,176 instances of engagement at partner schools (children)

2,726 tickets to shows for partner schools

50% of partner schools pupils eligible for pupil premium / free school meals

10% of partner schools pupils with Special Educational Needs

2,023 further tickets given to schools through 11by11 and other outreach

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

Our Partnership Programme guarantees pupils at least one theatre visit per year, plus additional opportunities like after school clubs and workshops in the classroom, shows visiting school and staff professional development. Information about 3 of the projects we have worked on with local schools are detailed below.

After School Puppet Clubs

After School Puppet Clubs are a popular element of our school partnership programme. Children who take part have often been selected by the schools as they would benefit the most from the experience, or would face barriers to access this sort of creative activity outside of school. Many of the schools focus on offering places to children with speech and



language or Special Educational Needs, or who are lacking in confidence. Puppet club members work together to make their own puppets and create a performance that they share with friends and family at the end of term. This year we have been using shadow puppetry to explore fears and worries and celebrating our passions, interests and future aspirations. Pupils made not only their own puppets, but also small scale screens that they were able to take away and continue to explore, create and play with at home.

"Puppet Club is my ideal place, because I get to come up with new ideas and it's fun." Sacred Heart School Puppet Club member with SEND

"Some children struggled with low confidence to start with, however, they found their courage and were proudly performing with their puppets at the end. Even two girls who were extra shy, ended up adding more lines for their characters and improvising with wording while performing, which was wonderful to see." After School Puppet Club tutor

William Tyndale School Digital Warriors

In January a group of 15 targeted pupils from William Tyndale School came to see The Pixie and the Pudding as part of the Partnership Programme. The 'Digital Warriors' are a group of year 6 students passionate about technology and STEM and who support other students and staff around the school with assemblies and technical needs.

The group came with the focus of watching the show from a technical point of view and after the performance they spent some time with our Technical Stage Manager, who answered their questions and explained

how the tech they had seen in the show worked. The pupils had a chance to explore the set and look at how the sound and light programming worked. A follow up session with Little Angel staff in the school allowed them to share ideas with professionals and look at what might be possible in their own performance space and with the resources they had available. The group have taken what they learnt and were responsible for the technical and stage managing aspects of their own end of year leaving show.

Partner Schools: St Mary's / William Tyndale / Laycock / St John the Evangelist / Winton / Hugh Myddleton / New North Academy / Scared Heart

The Bridge School Film Project

In the summer term of 2022 we worked with pupils from The Bridge Secondary School, which caters for young people with special educational needs. This project was part of the 'Let's Talk Islington' initiative, to give a voice to all Islington residents about the borough that they live in and how they think life in Islington could be improved.

Working in a class of 14 pupils, a Little Angel Theatre puppetry artist and film-maker recorded conversations discussing pupils' thoughts and observations about life in Islington. The class then made puppets to represent themselves and used green screen technology to bring those words to life with puppetry and film. This was an extremely effective, accessible and engaging way to give the young people a reason to talk about their lives, and they all thoroughly enjoyed being part of the creative film-making process.

"I was doing drawing. And I was fixing the puppet and I was acting the puppet – like moving the mouth and such. It was very good, yeah very good. I had a fantastic time." Bridge School project participant

Community & Outreach

Islington is one of the most unequal places in the UK. It has the 4th highest rate of children living in poverty, after housing costs, in the country. Our Community Engagement Programme exists to ensure Little Angel Theatre is accessible to everyone, from our most local residents to those who wouldn't otherwise be able to visit us, due to social, economic or health barriers. All our community programmes are offered for free, which is made possible by generous funding and support from trusts, foundations and some wonderful individuals.

We run activities for all ages, including local residents who may face isolation or who want an opportunity to meet their neighbours and learn a new creative skill at the same time. Our programme of work for local residents is very much led by them, and themes for workshops or specific activities we deliver are often suggested by the participants themselves. This year we have more than tripled the opportunities for engagement for our local community, and were thrilled to have over 100 new people joining in.

We also deliver activities and offer free tickets to families across the borough who face barriers accessing our work via our Puppets For All scheme, and through partnership projects with other local organisations including food banks, charities supporting women who face domestic abuse and Islington Council teams. Our aim is to make our work as accessible and inclusive as possible so that everyone in the local and wider community can engage with us and enjoy the benefits of arts engagement with friends and family.

3,348 opportunities for engagement

17 partner organisations

57 new families (119 people) joining in with community activities from across Islington

PUPPETS FOR ALL SCHEME – FAMILIES

All our tickets are subsidised and despite our efforts to keep prices down, we appreciate that the cost of our tickets is still a barrier to some. We feel passionately that theatre should be accessible to everyone, so we offer free tickets to anyone who receives state benefits and otherwise wouldn't be able to afford to come.

1,492 tickets given out to families for shows, workshops and classes, with a value of £18,700.

Over **350** households are signed up to our scheme, with others accessing through partner organisations and the council. Our current fundraising does not cover the costs to deliver the scheme and our list is oversubscribed.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES

Crafternoon

917 instances of engagement over 34 sessions over the year with an average of 26 participants per workshop

Crafternoon is our weekly after school arts and crafts club for children aged 4-11 and their grown ups. Crafternoon is open to families from our very local community to come together each week, create together and get to know their neighbours. This year we've seen the introduction of 'Kid-Led Crafternoon' where children work with our Engagement team to design and deliver their very own craft, developing leadership skills, creativity and teamwork.

Free Family Funday

601 instances of engagement over 9 sessions with an average of 67 participants per workshop day

Our Free Family Fundays are monthly events for our wider Islington Community. Families are able to take part in a free workshop on the last Sunday of the month. These are varied workshops and could see families making a craft, watching a miniature puppet show, and having their face painted. It's always a fun filled day, brimming with community spirit!



"It is amazing to be able to enjoy these activities locally. The Little Angel team is fantastic! Our leader Katherine is extremely competent and gets on really well with the kids. The fact that the team is so inclusive makes a huge difference. It looks like The Little Angel Team promotes fair and equal opportunities to all. Everyone feels valued and "part of the show"! As a mother, I cannot thank you enough!" Parent of child with additional needs attending Free Family Funday

Gardening Club

105 instances of engagement over 6 sessions

Wednesday Garden Club sees us joined by 12 to 14 children each week (ages 2-8) to learn all about gardening in small spaces. These dynamic sessions have seen the participants rehome 100 worms into the pots around the garden. The children learnt about how worms help plants grow and what else plants need to thrive over the weeks. They developed garden based skills including planting seasonal flowers and maintenance, and then shared what they had learnt in dramatic presentations at the end of term.

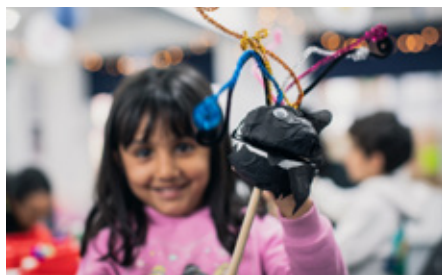
Little Wings Drama

12 children attended 30 sessions over 3 terms (360 instances of engagement)

A free drama and puppetry programme run in partnership with the Arc Foodbank. Weekly drama classes are open to children whose families access the foodbank and families on the Sebbon Street estates. It is aimed at children aged 4-8 years old. Their winter sharing on the theme of 'self' was a really beautiful moment where all the children worked together on a puppet performance.

“It’s fantastic to spend time with the kids away from home and being creative. I don’t usually get the opportunity to do so as my flat is very cramped.”

Parent attending Free Family Funday



Holiday Activity Fund

Over 61 children supported in partnership with Islington Council

Islington’s HAF (Holiday Activity Fund) programme provides free activities and food in school holiday time for children who are eligible for free school meals or who have a special education, health or care plan. In July we welcomed 27 children as part of this programme who came to see *I Want my Hat Back* and made their own puppet inspired by the show. In December, 34 local families were able to come and enjoy a festive treat together and were given the opportunity to book tickets to come and see *The Pixie and the Pudding* via the HAF programme.

Community Partners

The Arc / Islington Centre for Migrant and Refugees / The Maya Centre / Nia – Ending Domestic Violence / HMP Wandsworth Prison Reading Group / Give a Book / St Luke’s Community Centre / St Mary’s Community Centre / Remark / Central Library / North Library / Islington Libraries / Whitecross Street Party / Solace Women’s Aid / Theatre Sign / Islington Council / Holiday Activity Fund

REGULAR ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS

Arts and Chat

48 instances of engagement over 8 workshops

Arts and Chat is a monthly evening workshop where an invited artist teaches adult members of the community their craft. This has also been an opportunity to support members of the community with teaching their own crafts. We’ve had lessons from community members teaching jewellery, wreath making and knitting. These community members have gone on to take part in arts and crafts fairs, selling their makes, and onto other creative courses to develop the skill.

Knit and Natter

129 instances of engagement over 27 sessions

Each week community members join us on a Thursday morning to knit together and chat to their neighbours, attendance is growing each term and we’ve been joined by a range of ages from 6 to over 76!

Women’s Project

12 women took part in two 6 week workshop series

Our work with Nia (a charity working to end domestic violence) has grown thanks to a partnership with the Maya centre. The most recent term welcomed 12 women each week to a shadow puppetry course entitled ‘Making Me’ where the women worked with facilitators from Little Angel, Nia and the Maya Centre to explore identity through shadow puppetry. The course was an excellent boost to mental health and wellbeing, and helped the women to form a network with those who have been through similar situations.

“I’m so, so excited for next week. I just wanted to say a thank you because today really, really helped me and made me feel good which otherwise I wouldn’t have stopped crying all the time” Participant on the ‘Making Me’ course with Nia & the Maya Centre

ONE-OFF EVENTS



Street Party

243 attendees from our most local community

Saturday 25th March saw us take over Sebbon Street in Islington, creating a new pedestrian only zone for the day and filling the street with crafts, bubbles, games, cakes, candy floss, live music and – of course – giant puppets. We were even joined by the local Fire Brigade for a few hours. Plus we offered free performances of *Masterchef Mo* and *the Missing Cake* and *The Flying Bath*. It was a friendly, free event that attracted over 200 people from our local community and everyone had a magical time.

HMP Wandsworth Family Days

32 children and 25 adults over 4 days

The team attended four family days at HMP Wandsworth, two in December and two in March. The first session saw the families enjoy a performance of ‘Masterchef Mo’

and a series of puppet making workshops for world book day. Feedback from this visit showed that the opportunity to watch our show together or to take part in an arts and crafts activity together enhanced the quality of family time. Our aim is to develop our work in prisons nationally, supporting children visiting parents in prisons by offering creative opportunities to engage with their parents. We look forward to developing this work with the Prison Reading Group and Give a Book, who have supported this work so far, and to connecting with other arts organisations working in prisons.

Other one off events that the community team has supported include:

- Jubilee celebrations creating Queen & Corgi puppets at St Luke’s, The Arc and St Mary’s Community Centres.
- Remark (charity for d/ Deaf children & adults) visits to Pinocchio & King of Nothing and puppetry workshops.
- Library work featuring ‘the Kind Peacock’ that visited libraries across Islington and a weaving workshop for refugee week.
- Whitecross Street Party Parade with a giant dragon puppet & Arts and Crafts drop in workshop.



Take Part

Take Part enables individuals to immerse themselves in our organization by learning new skills, exploring their creativity, and taking a piece of Little Angel home with them. People can engage with us through various activities such as performances, creative workshops and sensory play. This year has been remarkable in terms of increased engagement, with over seven times as many participants compared to our pre-pandemic numbers.

In the next year we will continue to increase the range and volume of workshops we provide. Due to the ongoing demands on our spaces, we are seeking to find new partners to work with to diversify our offer, taking the magic of Little Angel beyond our walls!

We're developing our pedagogy to make sure these events are fun, impactful and continue to bring families together.



"I just wanted to write and say just how incredible the show was yesterday! The kids and parents absolutely loved it and just reconfirmed to me how best in class the Little Angel Theatre is in the realm of kids entertainment and theatre. There really is no other comparison out there for quality and creativity."



"I can't express the happiness the group brings my son. He is quite shy and week by week it has given him the chance to grow in confidence and be around different children in a supported environment."

2,188 places on our
Funday and Family workshops

630 Babies and Toddlers
explored with LAT

Well over **750** children
engaged with us at off site
workshops

53 birthdays made extra
special

PARTICIPATION

Fun Days / Holiday Clubs

11 fundays / 175 children

Including making Mindful Marionettes, Bug Hotels and Carnival Floats. This is a great return to pre-pandemic numbers with the majority of these events selling out.

Internal Workshops

115 workshops / 2,013 children

A wide range of workshops, delivering over 1,900 places to children, parents and their carers. Some highlights include, exciting show related workshops, making dancing elves and telling the stories of female scientists through messy sensory play.

Angels Little Explorers

93 sessions / 1,270 participants

This year we re-branded our baby and toddler activities to align them to our LAT identity. *Angel Sing's* became *Angel's Little Explorers* - a 45 minute sensory play session, which focuses around songs and exploring the senses.

LAT Out and About: External Workshops

We continue our relationship with Angel Central, running workshops with them every school holiday this year, making crafts and engaging with a large number of children and families over the year.

We also ran 3 Jubilee activities, including one in Islington Square. We took part in 3 separate Christmas light "switch on" events, collaborating in a space with Sadler's Wells, and doing a puppet walk around alongside "The Snowman". Consistently providing high quality events for local partners has been a real highlight of this year.

We worked closely with Islington Council's Bright Start scheme, which delivered 12

babies and toddlers' classes for free in the Mildmay Community Centre.

Schools Workshops & Drama Schools

We ran 15 full day workshops, 22 half day workshops and 3 specialist Early Years workshops. This equates to nearly 200 hours of delivery in schools this year. Highlights included offering a range of workshops relating to *Handa's Surprise* during its school tour and 7 days of puppet making over the week of "World Book Day".

We partnered with the Pauline Quirke Academy, producing a scheme of work which allows tutors to teach PQA participants puppetry. We are currently working on a project to build the puppets for their next West End show.

Birthday Parties

Following success at birthday's across London, our **Miniature Travelling Circus** offer was upscaled to deliver a run as part of our main programme. So, we developed a new show - **Masterchef Mo**, directed by Artistic Associate Oliver Hymans, created by our Designer Ellie Mills and made totally in-house. We performed 53 birthday party shows last year.

Audience Feedback

"The Little Angel Theatre is a jewel box of invention, imagination and artistry. A magical way to introduce children to the power of puppetry, storytelling and theatre."
Benedict Cumberbatch

"I'm always so impressed by everything I see at the Little Angel; productions are reliably excellent. You are one of the most uniquely special theatres in the country. Thank you." *The Instrumentals*

"Great fun for my 2 year old grandson! His first ever theatre trip and he enjoyed every moment, was entranced throughout and spontaneously burst into applause at the end."
The Flying Bath

"I'm always so impressed by everything I see at the Little Angel; productions are reliably excellent. You are one of the most uniquely special theatres in the country. Thank you."

"I love bringing my daughter to Little Angel Theatre. We travel in from Hertfordshire because every time we've brought her, it's been worth it. Keep up the good work."

"Thank you so much for making it possible for us to take our children to live theatre through the Puppets for All scheme! I cannot tell you how happy it makes me and I'm very grateful."

"The show was fantastic. Wonderful puppets, props and performers! We loved the sensory elements like the bubbles, lights and leaves, and joining in with our puppets. My 5 year old said it was the best theatre show he has ever been to, and that he would like to be a puppeteer when he grows up. Lovely Cosy atmosphere too"
I Want My Hat Back Trilogy

"It was wonderful. The combination of a great story, brilliant puppetry that really brought the characters to life, gorgeous songs and superb actors was a joy to behold! Normally my mind wanders while my daughter is entranced but this time I enjoyed it as much as her!" **We're Going on a Bear Hunt**

PEOPLE

This year was again very different for our staff team, bringing all our activities back to pre-pandemic levels of output – the resilience, energy and enthusiasm shown by our whole team has been remarkable. Like most in our industry we continue to be impacted by staff turnover, with individuals reviewing their life and career choices coming out of the pandemic. With a growth in output, we have been in a busy period of recruitment, particularly towards the end of the year.

We continue to employ our fantastic network of freelance creatives, performers, technicians and casuals alongside our staff team and it's been brilliant to welcome them back to our buildings with our output at more normal levels. We continue to engage with freelance networks to understand how we can support positive working practices. Highlights this year have included the conclusion of the Mayor of London's Creative Freelancers scheme (working with freelancers to evaluate how the sector can deliver best practice), starting work on a project to review how the sector supports freelancers with caring responsibilities, and employing a new Artistic Associate onto our senior management team with experience of working in the freelance sector and a focus on strategically leading our artist development area of work.

Looking forward, LAT will be trialling a 4-day week from September for six months. As far as possible, this will extend to all areas of operation. Our aims are to give all employees (core, casual and freelance) greater flexibility and to support a better work-life balance, ultimately enhancing wellbeing. We hope that a rest period may help employees feel energised and more focussed, and ultimately increase

24 core members of staff, both full time and part time

62 freelance creatives

51 workshop leaders and facilitators

36 technicians

30 box office and visitor experience assistants

productivity. We are also aware of the challenges of sector pay, and keen to look to offer other benefits to our employees where we can.

Trustees

Lydia Cotton
Lauren LaRocque
Ele Lewis
Chris Lowry
Katie Owen (Chair)
Linda Stanfield
Sarah Wright
Sharon Zhu

Patrons

Dame Judi Dench DBE
Clive Owen & Sarah-Jane Fenton
Michael Pennington
Baroness Pitkeathley OBE
Sir Simon Rattle CBE
Michael Rosen
Gregory Doran (Honorary)

Honorary Associates

Ronnie Le Drew – Honorary Associate
Lyndie Wright MBE – Honorary Associate

FINANCES

It has been fantastic to navigate through a full year of productions, tours, schools visits and community events, seeing even more of our audiences back in the building enjoying our shows and taking part in our workshops. This would not be possible without support from our generous funders, building partnerships with co-producers and local organisations, and our ambitious but agile financial management.

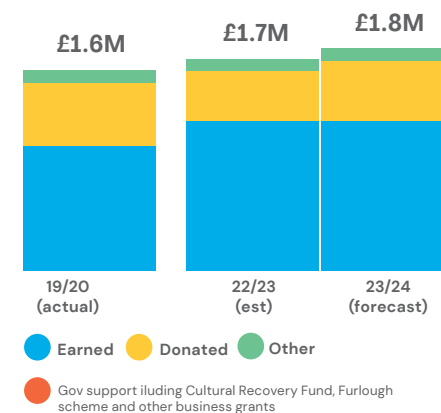
Looking forward to the 2023/24 financial year, we will still rely on income from philanthropic sources, in particular for our community and outreach work. We are opening the year having secured nearly 50% of our fundraising target, and we are moving back to a bigger reliance on our earned income (box office, touring, enterprise etc.)

We continue to adapt our model in response to the ever changing economic environment by:

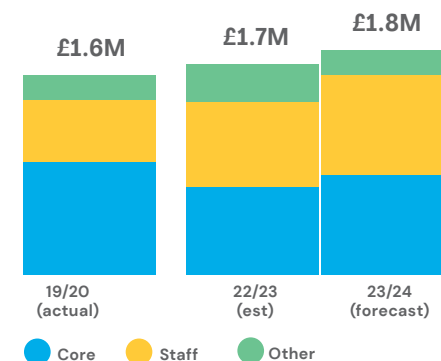
- diversifying our fundraised and enterprise income streams to subsidise our schools and community engagement programme, as well as our digital output;
- keeping our admissions prices accessible, offering discounted and free tickets to those who would not otherwise be able to afford it;
- expanding the scope of our touring programme – working with 3rd party producers and broadening our own operation;
- honoring at least living wage salaries throughout our staff and creative teams, to go some way to tackle cost of living challenges;

- reducing our environmental impact, whilst protecting and maintaining our cherished buildings;
- committing to allocate budget to activity that adds ethnic and/ or disability diversity to our work and operations

Income



Expenditure

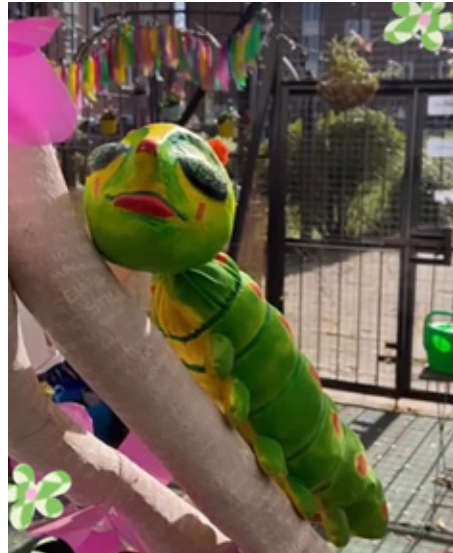


ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Combatting the climate crisis and protecting our creative future requires sustained action from individuals, organisations, nations and collective international efforts. We believe it is the responsibility of everyone we work with to act in the environment's best interest, and as an organisation we work collectively to shape workable policies and facilitate environmentally responsible actions throughout all of our work – this is led by our Environmental Responsibility Group. We believe tackling the climate crisis is imperative, urgent and an organisational priority.

At Little Angel our core audience is families. It is our responsibility to encourage the next generation to think sustainably and make informed and educated decisions – our advocacy and ability to influence creates our biggest impact.

We continue to be committed to local advocacy and are members of the Islington Sustainability Network, work with Angel.Bid's sustainable business group, as well as spreading our message to our local community. We are also in a position to



deliver a national impact through our shows on tour, as highlighted by the tour of ***There is a Rang-Tang in My Bedroom and Other Stories***, which spread an influential message to partner venues and audiences throughout the UK.



Photo by Ellie Kurtz

Key achievements during this year:

- Moving to 100% renewable energy contracts to eliminate carbon costs of our energy use
- Taking part in the Business Climate Challenge with an aim to reduce our energy usage by 10%
- Completing three waste audits to identify major contributors to our non-recyclable waste, which we are now targeting to reduce through changed processes or advocacy
- Launching a gardening project as part of our Community Engagement programme, refreshing our outdoor spaces and teaching children and families about biodiversity
- Achieving at least the basic Theatre Green Book standard for all LAT productions, with this commitment now written into co-production contracts
- Delivering 52 eco positive actions throughout the year (one per week) across our day to day activities and programme

This year we established our Carbon Baseline (using 2019-2020, as pre-Covid operation):

- Emissions estimated at 105.35 Tonnes of Carbon.
- Largest Carbon output – audience travel at 69 Tonnes of Carbon
- 58k visitors to our venues, 97k audiences reached overall.
- 14 in-house productions, 4 visiting companies
- 5 national and 1 international tour.

Using this data to inform our decision making, our cross organisational Environmental Working Group has launched several project strands:

- Installing solar panels on our roofs.
- Switching our production lighting to LED lanterns.
- Securing a vehicle to tour with.
- Improve our advocacy both internally and externally.
- Delivering carbon literacy training across the organisation.

This will allow us to make significant strides in our journey to carbon neutrality.

WE ARE FUNDRAISING

We are seeking funding to install a solar installation on the roof of both our buildings. This will allow us to harness the sun's energy to offset some of our costs. To do this we will need to remove a large amount of old asbestos tile on our theatre roof. We estimate this will cost around £115,000.

We are also seeking funding to switch our elderly discharge lanterns to modern LEDs. This will reduce their power usage by around 5 times. To replace 1/6th of our kit we estimate this will need around £20,000 of investment.

THANK YOU

Little Angel Theatre is pleased to be supported by a wide range of organisations and individuals. We are also proud to work closely with a number of businesses in mutually beneficial sponsorship arrangements. If you are interested in developing a deeper relationship with Little Angel Theatre please contact development@littleangeltheatre.com.

Public Funders



Principal Funders: Trusts & Foundations



Significant Funders: Trusts & Foundations

Maria Marina Foundation
The Old Possum's Practical Trust
The Ironmongers Company
Three Monkeys Trust
D'Oyly Carte Trust
The Weinstock Fund
Fenton Arts Trust
Hodge Foundation
Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation
Arts Society
Radcliffe Trust
Molecule
Sandra Foundation
Arnold Clark
The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation
National Lottery Community Fund
The Casey Trust
Chapman Charitable Trust
Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust
Fresh Leaf Foundation
The Forrester Family Trust
Cockayne
Lucille Graham Charitable Trust
Sobell Foundation
Central District Alliance
1772 Charity
John Horniman's Children's Trust

Partnerships Corporate partners



Significant in-kind support



Company of Angels

Little Angel Theatre is a charity – we need regular support to ensure that we can continue to thrive and grow. We believe that puppetry and live performance have the power to be transformative and that everyone deserves to have access to these benefits. We put play at the heart of everything we do to ignite the imagination and give every child the opportunity to be creative.

The Company of Angels are philanthropic friends who donate regularly. We couldn't do the work that we do without their generous support. Some examples of the work that a regular gift could support include:

- £5 per month helps pay for materials for our ongoing free workshops in the community
- £25 per month helps pay for performances of our suitcase show to isolated children in hospital or a refugee family in a bridging hotel
- £50 per month helps pay for tickets for local school children to attend our shows
- £100 per month helps to support our artist development work, creating the puppeteers and puppet makers of the future

Guardian Angels

John Duffy
Rebecca Glassberg
Jill Nicholls
Katie Owen
Anonymous

Platinum Angels

Ben and Ann Davison
Dr Helen Munn

Golden Angels

Peter Ball
Marcus & Caroline Jones
Andreia Jurquete
Alison Macdonald
Roger Mears
Dr Felix von Reiswitz
Jack Thorne
Sharon White

Silver Angels

Frances Barry
James Bierman
Philip and Natasha Broke
Ana Cascon and Bill Shadwick
Peter Charlton
Elizabeth Comstock-Smith
Neil Gaiman
Roanne Insley
Charles Ledigo
Martin Ledigo
Selina Macnair
Ann Marshall
CT Smith

Thank you also to our wonderful 73 Bronze Angels.

Significant Funders: Individuals & Generous Friends

Anonymous
Anthony Conway
Sarah-Jane Fenton
Diana Hiddleston
Ian McVeigh
James Neilson
Clive Owen
Sue Owen
Rob Owen
Carolyn Ward
Sharon Zhu

Legacy Gifts

We are grateful and humbled by those who choose to put Little Angel Theatre in their will. Such gifts enable you to share the joy of puppetry with children and families for many years to come.

“Fuelling the imagination through puppetry”

Charity No. 232488

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