



Little
Angel
Theatre



Annual Report 2024

Charity No. 232488

AUDIENCE



57,419 audience members at LAT

51% were children (29,331)

9% were through our Puppets for All scheme (5,375)

19% came with a school or nursery (11,081)

26% of family visitors were from Islington

76,247 people saw our shows on tour

DIGITAL

205.8K YouTube views

15.8K subscribers
35 videos released
5.5k watch hours
1.9m reach
57 countries

9 digital pay-per-view production films
527 families watched a production online

PRODUCTIONS

9
in-house productions

862
performances of
in-house productions

13
touring productions

592
performances of
shows on tour

12
visiting companies

75
performances from
visiting companies

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE

f 14K
Facebook followers

X 21K
X followers

17.5K
Instagram followers

209K hits at
littleangeltheatre.com
(+14% on last year)

Welcome

We are thrilled to lead such a bold, dynamic, and ambitious organisation. The scale of our output and the positivity within our team have been phenomenal. Our recent recognition as The Stage Fringe Theatre of the Year 2024 is a testament to these achievements and underscores the importance of our work.

Our productions continue to ignite the imaginations of children across the country, blending bold new shows with beloved family favourites. A highlight has been the launch of Charlie Cook's Favourite Book in our studio space at Christmas, followed by our largest nationwide tour to date. With over 70 venues programmed, and an accompanying literacy workshop project coming to schools in 24/25, this endeavour has been incredibly rewarding.

Our commitment to deepening engagement in the arts and creativity is stronger than ever. From our baby classes, which have welcomed over 600 infants, to our collaborations with local schools, involving over 4,000 students, we are making a significant impact. Additionally, 250 adults have participated in our diverse professional development opportunities.

Our community work also continues to flourish. This year, we toured with The Welcome Project, a show supporting children and families with refugee and migrant status, and we are also developing a new production,

in partnership with a number of prisons, to support incarcerated adults and their children and families.

We are constantly exploring innovative ways to operate, adapting to the needs of our evolving workforce. This year, we began to trial a four day working week to support our staff's development and well-being, ensuring a positive work-life balance in an increasingly complex environment.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our mission. Together, we are making a profound difference in the lives of many.



S Lane
Samantha Lane
Artistic Director



P Swindall
Peta Swindall
Executive Director

This past year has been an exceptional one for Little Angel Theatre. Highlights include: winning The Stage's Fringe Theatre of the Year 2024; recognition by the OFFIE's for our Children's Puppetry Festival; embarking on our first mid-scale UK-wide tour with *Charlie Cook's Favourite Book*; and our wonderful joint CEOs – Samantha Lane and Peta Swindall – being named as two of The Stage's 100 Most Influential People in Theatre.

After nearly a decade on the Board, I stepped down in April. It has been a privilege and a pleasure working with my fellow trustees as well as LAT's dedicated and inspiring staff. Whilst I will miss being so closely involved with the theatre, I am delighted to introduce my successor, Lydia Cotton. Lydia brings

to the chair role a great deal of professional experience, wisdom and integrity.

I can't wait to see what the next year has in store for the much-loved Little Angel Theatre!



Katie Owen
Katie Owen, Chair of the Board

Awards



Little Angel Theatre is very proud to have been named Fringe Theatre of the Year at The Stage Awards 2024.

We are truly honoured to have been recognised in this way, after incredible dedication from everyone who works here and supports us. This award celebrates all of the shows that have appeared at our home in Islington, on the West End stage, and those that have been packed up into suitcases and presented in hospitals, prison visiting rooms, refugee accommodation and schools across the country. Most importantly, this award emphasises the power of puppetry, and shines a light on the impact of theatre for young audiences.



“Inclusivity and a passionate belief in the importance of stories for everyone are at the heart of this theatre’s ethos.”
The Stage Awards

“Children’s work doesn’t always get the attention it deserves; the Little Angel is tirelessly inventive, offering an unbeatable experience” *The Stage Awards*

“Little Angel has always contributed something unique and special to the theatre ecology... This intimate theatre has an essential role to play in nurturing fresh puppetry talent and introducing children and young people to stories that are told in ingenious theatrical ways – work that is particularly important at a time when all of us consume many of our narratives via screens... Operating without regular funding, it also has a reach far beyond the cobbled alleyway from which it operates, with a national touring programme and digital work that is seen internationally.”
The Stage Awards judges’ comments



Photos: David Monteith-Hodge (p4 left) / Alex Brenner (p4 right, p5 top)

The Stage 100

Samantha Lane and Peta Swindall were named among The Stage 100 for 2024 (a list consisting of the 100 most influential people in theatre). The panel noted that under Samantha and Peta’s leadership LAT “has long punched above its weight” and commended both The Welcome Project Suitcase Show and “an extraordinarily busy Christmas season” of 2023, alongside the production of our first mid-scale tour.



Finalist – Heritage Craft & Axminster Tools’ Woodworker of the Year 2023: Oliver Hymans

This award celebrates a heritage craftsman who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of woodworking over the past year. It recognises a contribution that is far beyond the ordinary, based on a proven dedication to a particular woodworking skill. Congratulations to Oliver on his nomination for his work championing the endangered craft of marionette carving.

The Offies 2024

Congratulations to the finalists and winners from Little Angel Theatre at The Offies 2024!

TYA Design Winner
Wolves in the Walls
A Little Angel Theatre, Bristol Old Vic and York Theatre Royal co-production
Designers: Toby Olié & Daisy Beattie

TYA Performance Finalist
Wolves in the Walls
A Little Angel Theatre, Bristol Old Vic and York Theatre Royal co-production

TYA Music/Sound Finalist
Breathe
A Half a String production at Little Angel Theatre
Musicians: Emily Essery & Darcey O’Rourke
Drum & Bass: Suitman Jungle
Songwriter: Avi Simmons

ONEOFF Award
Children’s Puppetry Festival 2023
Little Angel Theatre, curated by Associate Director, Oliver Hymans



On Stage

This year, Little Angel Theatre's productions have gone from strength to strength. We have mounted four new shows and brought five others back to life, catering for audiences as young as six months (*The Bed* and *Persephone*) all the way through to those over 10 (*Medusa's First Kiss*). *Charlie Cook's Favourite Book* (adapted from the book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffer) became our first solo-produced, mid-scale show and headed out on tour across the country, after its run at the Studios over Christmas. In December 2023, we had a record seven shows performing across London and the country, including *The Smartest Giant in Town* (co-produced with FieryLight) returning to the West End.

Our Puppets for All scheme has continued to grow, and this year we gave out 5,375 tickets to families, school children and their teachers who wouldn't otherwise be able to visit us. It is thanks to the hard work of all the staff and freelancers that we work with that Little Angel continues to create and perform shows at the highest level, and we are delighted that this dedication has led to LAT being named Fringe Theatre of the Year at the Stage Awards 2023.

"filled with music, dance and wonderfully creative puppet magic" *Time Well Spent Magazine* (*Charlie Cook's Favourite Book*)



"Amazing performance, we all really enjoyed it, both the little one and the not so little ones" Audience member of *The Everywhere Bear*

In House



9 in-house shows
862 performances
57,419 audience members
66% of family visitors came for the first time
5,375 PFA tickets
16 accessible performances
12 shows on tour, with 519 performances and 76,247 audience members
3,696 audience members for the Children's Puppetry Festival with 13 productions

"Absolutely wonderful! Haven't been to a performance here since I was a child and it went above and beyond my expectations!"
 Audience member of *Wolves in the Walls*

"Sophistication of the cyclical story structure, the wit of the wordplay and, above all, the ingenuity and art of the puppetry" *The Stage* (*Charlie Cook's Favourite Book*) ★★★★★



The Wolves in the Walls

Theatre / 12 May–23 Jul 2023 /
 For everyone over 6 / 104 performances /
 5,505 audience members / 51% capacity
 A Little Angel Theatre, Bristol Old Vic and
 York Theatre Royal co-production
 When Lucy hears noises from behind the
 walls, she tries to warn her family that there
 are wolves lurking inside their house. But her
 family don't listen.



Wow! Said the Owl

Studios / 19 May–20 Jul 2023 / Ages 2–5 /
 138 performances / 8,758 audience members /
 90% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre production, based
 on the book written and illustrated by
 Tim Hopgood

Explore the wonderful world of colours with
 a curious little owl, who is determined to stay
 awake and see what daylight brings.



Big Bad Me

Theatre / 23 Sept–19 Nov 2023 / For everyone
 over 6 / 76 performances / 4,404 audience
 members / 61% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre production, an
 alternative spin on a classic fairytale

Think you know the story of Red Riding Hood?
 Think again! Here is where our story starts
 A gentle wolf with a broken heart...



The Bed

Studios / 30 Sept–4 Nov 2023 / Ages 6 months
 – 3 years / 72 performances / 2,598 audience
 members / 77% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre production, based
 on the poem written by Sylvia Plath and
 illustrated by Quentin Blake

Curl up and get comfy for a bedtime story like
 no other. This enchanting poem by Sylvia Plath,
 written for her own children, is brought to life in
 a special show for babies and toddlers.



Wow! It's Night-time

Theatre / 16 Sept–13 Nov 2022 / Ages 2–5 /
 102 performances / 4,952 audience members /
 93% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre production, based
 on the book written and illustrated by
 Tim Hopgood

Discover the magic of the twilight hour in this
 beautiful stage adaptation of Tim Hopgood's
 book *Wow! It's Night-time*.



Charlie Cook's Favourite Book

Studios / 18 Nov 2023–4 Feb 2024 / Ages 3–8 / 128 performances / 9,190 audience members / 102% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre, The Lowry and Rose Theatre co-production, based on the book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

Charlie loves reading. Especially books about pirates. But his sister hates it – it's boring! Can Charlie convince her that reading is fun?



The Everywhere Bear

Theatre / 3 Feb–1 Apr 2024 / Ages 2–5 / 106 performances / 9,436 audience members / 101% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre, Polka Theatre and Royal & Derngate, Northampton co-production, based on the book by Julia Donaldson and Rebecca Cobb

The Everywhere Bear has a wonderful time with the children in Class One, but one day he gets more than he bargained for when he falls unnoticed from a backpack and embarks on his own big adventure!



Medusa's First Kiss

Studios / 10 Feb–21 Apr 2024 / For everyone over 10 / 55 performances / 1,353 audience members / 31% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre and Cuckoo Bang Theatre co-production

Medusa has just started at Olympus High. But soon enough she's out with the gods, as mean girl Athena writes a load of nasty words on her locker. Will she ever find friends, let alone love? And who will help her along the way?



Persephone

Studios / 1 Mar–20 Apr 2024 / Ages 6 months – 3 years / 85 performances / 2,701 audience members / 83% capacity

A Little Angel Theatre production

Join Persephone and her animal friends as they guide you and your babies through the changes in nature, collecting things on their way... A gentle sensory exploration of the seasons, perfect for babies and toddlers.

On Tour

The Instrumentals

Goblin Theatre

23 Apr – 11 Jun 2023

7 week tour

31 performances

2,140 audience members

The Slightly Annoying Elephant

2–28 Aug 2023

3 week tour

25 performances

2,330 audience members

The King Of Nothing

Monstro Theatre

23 Sept – 12 Nov 2023

8 week tour

42 performances

2,226 audience members

Wow! Said the Owl

28 Sept – 3 Dec 2023

10 week tour

71 performances

5,237 audience members

Little Angel's Miniature Travelling Circus

15 Oct – 5 Nov 2023

3 week tour

31 performances

1,143 audience members

The Singing Mermaid

Watershed

31 Mar – 1 Nov 2023

8 week tour

56 performances

11,082 audience members

Finding Santa

8–24 Dec 2023

3 week tour

33 performances

6,449 audience members

The Pixie and The Pudding

6 Dec 2023 – 3 Jan 2024

4 week tour

31 performances

2,605 audience members

I Want My Hat Back Trilogy

13–31 Dec 2023

2 week tour

30 performances

2,289 audience members

Me...

13 Dec 2023 – 7 Jan 2024

4 week tour

35 performances

3,305 audience members

The Smartest Giant In Town

Fiery Light

27 Nov 2023 – 7 Jan 2024

6 week tour

55 performances

19,086 audience members

Dogs Don't Do Ballet

3 Feb–14 Apr 2024

12 week tour

79 performances

6,529 audience members

Charlie Cook's Favourite Book is currently on its year-long adventure around the country. Find out where your nearest venue is at charliecookonstage.co.uk

Producer: Little Angel Theatre, The Lowry and Rose Theatre
73 performances
11,826 audience members*

* These statistics are for performances up to the end of March 2024. The show is still out on its mid-scale tour. Full details will be able to be given in the 2024/2025 report.

Children's Puppetry Festival

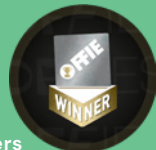


Our first-ever Children's Puppetry Festival took place across both LAT venues from 6th August – 3rd September 2023. The vibrant programme showcased a broad range of puppetry by the most exciting UK and international companies currently making theatre for young audiences. We were delighted that our inaugural puppetry festival won a one-off Offie Award at this year's Off West End Awards.

"Although one of London's smallest theatres, the Little Angel Theatre repeatedly punches above its weight, and this Puppet Festival was a triumph of inventive, creative thinking that brings positivity, enlightenment and genuine impact in every area it encounters: truly to be celebrated." *The Offies, One Off Award*

"We've loved every performance we've come to at the LAT. Honestly, I couldn't be more grateful for the magic you bring to us."
Audience Member

13 productions
79 performances
3,696 audience members
74 artists involved
6 award nominations in total



Photos: Light Tone Studios (Breathe), Ellie Kurtz (Where the Water Falls), Von Fox Promotions (Tortoise and the Hare)

The Great Big Story Mix Up
A Roustabout Theatre production
Watch as your wild and wonderful ideas are brought to life by our troupe of storytellers in an hour of never-before-seen fairy tales and other nonsense.



Breathe
A Half a String production
An extraordinary journey through a busy forest. Experience a story told from the perspective of an acorn, through a combination of puppetry, detailed sets, and live camera work.

Egg and Spoon
A Lyngo Theatre production
Egg and Spoon is an interactive romp through the seasons where you come in and out of our magic circle and get to open all the gifts of nature.



Where the Water Falls
A Little Angel Theatre production
Created by Ash Appadu
A timid monster named Moss embarks on a journey of self-discovery after an eerie dream left them feeling restless.

Suitcase Circus
A Folded Feather production
Our marvellous, miniature circus has for decades exposed to audiences everywhere the

most talented and skilful objects ever to be found anywhere!

toooB
An Angel Exit Theatre production
Introducing toooB, a curious and friendly shape-shifting creature who is not quite sure where she's landed or who she is.



The Tortoise and the Hare
A Kitchen Zoo production
On your marks, get set...GO! An interactive story with live music, puppetry and a tale you thought you knew.



To Have or Not to Have
A TAMTAM objektentheatre production
A rusty fairytale full of beautiful images with undeniable elements of the spaghetti western, a shot of Shakespeare and a generous dose of subtle humour.



Boxville
A Cardboard Adventures production
Work with the BOXVILLE engineers to craft-a-long with the story and build your own

way through the tasks and trials of BOXVILLE, earning everything you need to become a fully-fledged cardboard engineer!



The Fox Poet and the Fisherman
A ShadowSong production
A fisherman meets a singing fox on the shore of a lake and together they discover the power of song and imagination to conjure up their favourite animals and transport them to worlds they have never seen.



Oldilocks and the Three Bears
A Garlic Theatre production
One winter, Oldilocks finds a teddy bear in the park and remembers a delicious bowl of porridge she tasted years ago in the woods.

Anansi and the Lost Sun
A Swallow's Wings production
A funny, irreverent and inspiring West African Tale told with puppetry, spoken word and traditional live West African music.

Kinder
A Smoking Apples Theatre production
Escaping on a Kindertransport train, one small Czech-Jewish girl embarks on a mighty adventure.

On Screen

Today's children are digital natives and they engage with the world differently. At LAT we are always exploring digital strands of work and trying new things, to make sure we stay with our audience – and they stay with us! This year we have continued to produce and commission online content showcasing the best digital makers of puppetry, and have brought creativity into people's homes. Our online content has allowed people from 57 countries to engage with LAT and our 6 digital commissions this year have been watched by over 2,500 people. The aim for the next year is to increase the volume of free online content on our YouTube channel, including a brand new series of puppet-making activities, as well as continuing the commissioning model to engage artists working in the digital sphere.



205.8K YouTube views
15.8K YouTube subscribers
35 videos released
5.5K hours watched this year
 Watched from **57** countries
12 show trailers
10 behind the scenes videos
6 digital commissions

Pay-Per-View

9 digital pay-per-view production films

527 families watched a production on online

40% of these (211 families) watched through our Puppets for All scheme

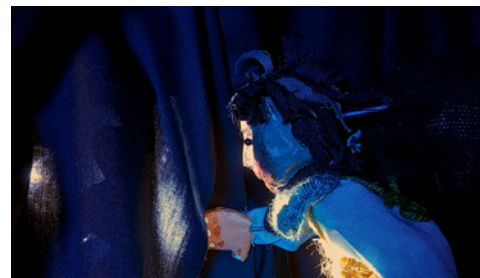
This year we have been able to increase our Pay-per-View option, which now offers a digital version of all of our shows for a limited time. This enables us to reach those who might face barriers to accessing our venues – these could be geographical, physical or socio-economic.

We run a 'pay it forward' scheme which allows you to make a donation, at the point of purchasing a ticket yourself, to give another family the opportunity to experience the performance. This could be a subscriber to our Puppets For All scheme, a child who is in hospital or long term care and their family, or a beneficiary from a local community partner organisation (for example Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants).



Welcome Project Commissions

This year, Little Angel Theatre commissioned six short films from refugee, asylum seeker and/or migrant artists. This innovative digital element of The Welcome Project (one of our Suitcase Theatre shows) allowed us to reach out and connect with young children and families who have lived experience of migration, as well as financially support adult artists from these backgrounds who may face barriers in the arts sector. Responding to the theme of 'Welcome', the films were created to be accessible to non-English speaking families and incorporated a range of digital puppetry styles. These films are all still available on our [YouTube channel](#) and allowed The Welcome Project to transcend geographical restrictions.



Welcome Project Digital Shorts

River's World by Chicken Shop Hermits

Baggage by Aqiong Zhang and Caitlin Strongarm

Home is Where the Food is by Mikayla Teodoro

The Little Seed's Journey by Adi Detemo

Noise by Timo Quarz

Grandpa Schmol's Black Leather Boots by Bee in my Beanie

You can read more about The Welcome Project further on in this report.

"I was able to work with professionals of all different backgrounds and I am extremely grateful for everyone's help in creating this film!" *Welcome Project Filmmaker*

"One thing I learnt in this process is, every story matters." *Welcome Project Filmmaker*

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

All our digital work requires fundraising to pay the artists for their time and expertise.

- £147 pays for puppeteer costs for a 'Make With' Behind-the Scenes video episode (part of a new series on our youtube channel).
- £800 allows us to create a crafting video for a schools pack
- £2,000 covers the cost of one digital short commission, paying for production costs and artist fees

Creative Engagement

605 babies

came to explore in our
Angel's Little Explorers
Baby Classes

252 children

joined us for a holiday
playcation day

We facilitated

72 After School Puppet
Club sessions in our
8 Partner Schools

23 local children and parents

(on average) attended

35 crafternoon sessions, totalling
792 instances of engagement

444
people

watched one of
12 performances
at a prison
family day

We ran

44 craft
sessions
which were
attended
214 times
by adult local
residents

We produced

83 workshops
in schools

We helped
57 children

celebrate their
birthdays

Community
members
participated

222 times
in the
development
of our garden
space through
17 sessions

100

children with
refugee status
engaged with
The Welcome
Project our
suitcase show
project

159

people attended
15 professional
development
workshops

19

students at
Higher Education
Institutions learnt
from Little Angel
Theatre staff
as part of their
course

14

young people visited
our venue for a whole
day's workshop, as part of
the BBC Bring the Drama
Festival, exploring careers
in the arts

We

supported
7
placement
students

We trained

78
students on
our termly
puppetry
courses

We worked
with

70
freelance
facilitators

We gave away

10
bursary places
to people
who couldn't
otherwise
attend our
workshops

Our design
trainee
made

17
puppets
during their
year with us

Artist Development

In the last year, LAT has continued to be at the forefront of puppetry artist development in the UK. We delivered a year-long fully-funded traineeship to an emerging designer, providing them with the necessary skills and tools to enter the industry as an up-and-coming maker. We continued to run a series of successful adult professional development courses for practitioners at different stages of their puppetry journey. Additionally, we are re-starting a Marionette-Carving Course and will continue to run this into the future, with the ultimate goal of removing marionette making from the Red-List of Endangered Crafts. We continue to provide bursaries on all our courses to give access to individuals who might face barriers accessing these opportunities.

Moving forward we are looking to implement plans for a wider Artist Development programme which, if successfully funded, will provide a comprehensive platform for both emerging and established puppetry talents to hone their skills, explore new techniques, and contribute to the evolution of puppetry as an art form.

"The traineeship was a great crash course in working in a theatre. I got to do what I love: make puppets for a year. I enjoyed the support I was given and the increased responsibility – starting as an assistant and moving towards autonomy of projects. I worked with lots of interesting and creative people and have started to build an amazing network." Ash Appadu, Puppetry Trainee

THE
LINBURY
TRUST



Photo: Ellie Kurtz (left)

15 short professional development
courses

6 termly puppetry courses

237 adult course attendances

10 bursary places given away

19 students at Higher Education
Institutions engaged with us



The total cost of delivering the
puppetry traineeship this year was
£45,526

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

LAT are fundraising for an innovative artist development programme to help train the next generation of puppeteers.

- £265 covers one bursary place for a 10 week termly puppetry course, allowing one aspiring puppeteer from a low income background the opportunity to train with us.
- £2,500 pays for an Artist Bursary giving an aspiring puppetry company time and space to develop innovative new work.

Schools

Through our School Partnership Programme, we work closely with eight local primary schools, where pupils have a higher than average level of need. The value of puppetry as a cross-curriculum teaching tool, to raise literacy levels, confidence and communication skills, is well recognised. Our partnerships allow over 3,000 primary aged children to engage with LAT, who wouldn't normally have the opportunity to visit a theatre or take part in supplementary creative activities. The schools also have access to resources to support teachers in enlivening and enhancing the curriculum. These opportunities are vital at a time when arts provision is becoming more difficult and unaffordable. Little Angel Theatre works hard to allow children in our local area to feel connected to a creative community.

In the 24/25 academic year, we aim to roll our School Partnership Programme out across the country to enable us to give hundreds more children in targeted areas of low engagement, access to our shows and curriculum enhancing activities both live and digitally.

LAT at your School

In addition to our subsidised, targeted School Partnership Programme, we offer workshops to all other schools. **Indeed, LAT could bring the magic of puppetry to YOUR child's school.** Our school workshops are a fun and creative way for students to explore the curriculum, and provide a high-quality creative learning experience. We have specialist workshops designed for students of all ages (from Early Years right up to Key Stage 3+), and take enquiries about bespoke workshops if you have particular ideas in mind. Full details can be found on our website, and we would love to hear from your child's teachers via email at hires@littleangeltheatre.com

This year, **The Welcome Project** also toured to 5 primary schools as part of **A New Direction's Primary In-Schools Touring Programme.**

2,445 tickets given away to partner schools

72 After School Puppet Club sessions run, which 105 children attended

3,302 instances of engagement within our partner schools

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

10% of partner school pupils with special educational needs*

83 schools workshops facilitated in addition to our partner school scheme

763 tickets given away to Islington Schools as part of the 11 by 11 scheme**

*On average across the 8 schools

**an Islington Council scheme to give children 11 cultural experiences by year 11

Partner Schools

Hugh Middleton School • Laycock School •
New North Academy • Sacred Heart School •
St John and the Evangelist School • St
Mary's School • William Tyndale School •
Winton School



Photo: Ellie Kurtz

What do our Partner Teachers Say?

We're Winton Primary School and we're one of eight Little Angel Theatre Partner Schools. We're a 1-form entry, mixed community school based in Kings Cross, Islington. We are a school with 58% Free School Meals and 20% SEND pupils. We've been involved with the Little Angel Theatre for around 5 years through a variety of projects.

Winton Primary have a curriculum that values creativity and accessing a breadth of life experiences – and our link with Little Angel Theatre (LAT) forms a significant part of that offer.

Through the partner schools programmes, we run a Puppet Club, access workshops (for children and staff) and make regular visits to see puppet shows at LAT. We receive a significant amount of tickets from LAT, which are allocated to us through the 'Puppets for All' scheme. This allows us to send whole year-groups to see these curricular enhancing performances, which are inspiring, engaging and transformative for our pupils. This is particularly valuable to us and our community, because our children fall under the top 5% most disadvantaged pupils in the country, yet, through enriching opportunities and a high quality curriculum, regularly feature in the top 100 schools in the country for attainment. This is no small achievement, and is only possible through our work with high quality, professional organisations such as the Little Angel Theatre. **Deputy Head for KS2 and Inclusion at Winton Primary School**

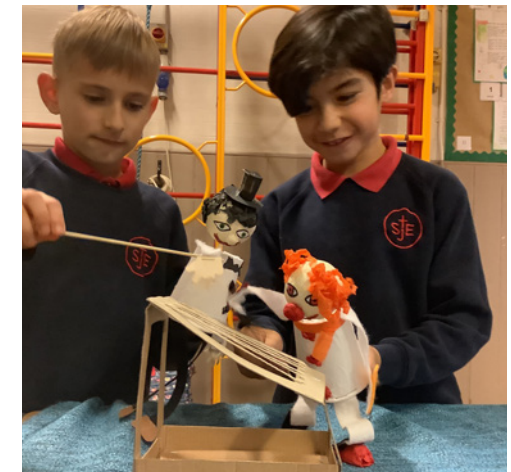


"This relationship has not only entered but transcended the curriculum – everyone involved with our school benefits in some way! It is an amazing partnership as its benefits have filtered through to teachers and parents outside and beyond the school."

Head Teacher at a Partner School

"Our geographical proximity to the LAT means it is very much part of our community. Our children grow up knowing that a theatre is part of their local space and it encourages a connection with our families."

Head Teacher at a Partner School



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you sit on a PTA and could help us with fundraising for the partnership programme, email development@littleangeltheatre.com. Our scheme simply could not happen without the support of trusts and foundations or individual donations.

- £245 pays for a whole class to visit the theatre
- £450 pays for a bespoke creative workshop for an entire class
- £7,500 covers the costs of the partnership for an entire school

Community

We are located in Islington, which has the fourth highest rate of child poverty in the country after housing costs, and Sebbon Street, where our studios sit, ranks in the top 20% most deprived areas in the UK (2019 indices of multiple deprivation). Our community programme is completely free for those getting involved and consists of a wide range of fun activities for residents of all ages and backgrounds. This year, we provided 3,500 opportunities for local residents to experience the arts without financial barriers, something that would otherwise be unavailable and is often their only chance to engage with the arts.

3,511 instances of engagement with our local community across 127 sessions

16 community partners (including 8 prisons)

Crafternoons, our longest-running project, has seen families get stuck into an exciting new craft project each week. Last term, the crafting theme was colour, chosen each week by our "Crafternoon Spinning Colour Wheel" giving Crafternoon participants a voice in the sessions. The after-school club is consistently oversubscribed, so we are looking to pilot an additional club to allow older Crafternooners to continue engaging in the sessions.

This year, we also ran 17 **Garden Club** sessions, where families have come together to help tend to the community garden at our studios, and 25 **Little Wings** after school drama club sessions for children in Islington. Our adult programme has gained in strength and numbers through 31 **Knit&Natter** sessions, which provide a welcoming space for residents to socialise with neighbours while working on their projects, and 13 evening **Arts and Chats** sessions, exploring a range of artistic practices. These sessions all play a vital role in the well-being of LAT's community.

ERNEST HECHT
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



"I must say that as a mother of two SEN and autistic children, I am delighted by the way yourself and all your staff at Little Angel Theatre have accommodated our needs as a family. We feel really comfortable taking part in activities and Little Angel Theatre has proven to be an inclusive place where everyone can be respected, valued and enjoy themselves." *Community Member*

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The funding landscape is challenging at the moment, making our wide-reaching programme all the more important. We need your help to allow our projects to fulfill their potential and reach as many people as possible.

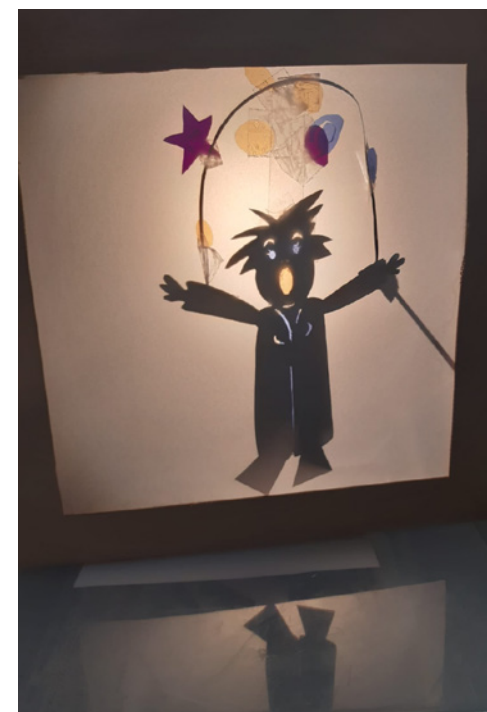
- £60 pays for 4 children to attend a Crafternoon session
- £600 covers material costs for all the Arts and Chats sessions for a year
- £4,500 covers the cost of our annual Street Party – free to attend for our community on Sebbon Street

The Women's Project

The Women's Project 'Making Me', run in partnership with local women's refuge The Nia Project, provides a safe space for women, who have been the victims of male violence, to explore their creative expression through shadow puppetry alongside others who share their experiences. The women created a performance inspired by their discussion, and presented this to a small, selected, invited audience at the end of the course. Looking to the future, we are considering the possibilities of a Suitcase Theatre project, which would create a show for and with women who have been victims of domestic abuse, building on the work of 'Making Me'. You can find out more about our Suitcase strand of work on the next page.

"It was a liberating, almost transformative experience connecting with feelings, identifying emotions that I find terribly difficult to acknowledge in a supportive, encouraging environment where I felt safe... I bonded with other women who I never met with before. It was joyous and facilitators were outstanding" *'Making Me' Attendee*

"Both as a survivor of male violence myself and a feminist activist, I have experienced the healing power of women-only spaces and of making art together. I regularly go back to watch the films if I need a bit of cheer or hope...and I am not ashamed to say that I cried when I had to part from these amazing women." *Women's Project Facilitator*



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We would love to continue to provide this space for vulnerable women, but we need your support to do so.

- £100 pays for the materials costs for half a term of 'Making Me'
- £3,750 covers the costs of 1 term of 9 sessions working with vulnerable women

Community Partners

Nia: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (Women's Project) / **Thornhill Gardens** (outreach*) / **Popham and Cumming's Community Centre** (Little Wings) / **YMCA London and North** (outreach*) / **Whittington Health Trust** (Spectrum Summer School) / **St Luke's Community Centre** (outreach*) / **Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration** (Arts and Chat, Street Party) / **Global Generation Story Garden** (Garden Club) / **Prisons: HMP Pentonville, HMP Foston Hall, HMP Gartree, HMP Lindholme, HMP Guys Marsh, HMP Moorland, HMP Hatfield, HMP Wandsworth**

*Outreach partners are those we have worked alongside to co-create activities for local residents in Islington.

Suitcase Theatre

Suitcase Theatre is a central aspect of LAT's charitable efforts. These small-scale, co-created theatre shows are easily portable and specifically designed to reach audiences who struggle to visit a traditional theatre setting. The shows are developed collaboratively with participants and artists from the targeted audience to ensure that they are authentic and effectively meet their needs.

The Welcome Project

We created The Welcome Project in collaboration with Phosphorus Theatre Company with the aim of supporting children who have experience of migrant and refugee status in Islington and the UK. The thirty minute participatory performance follows a young wizard, Eli, as he gets ready for school, until a new friend Effy is found in his laundry basket. The piece was designed without any verbal language so that we could perform the show in any setting, to almost any group of children no matter their understanding of the English language. The show was developed with people with lived experience of having refugee status and then toured, with everything in a suitcase, to community centres and bridging hotels – bringing the show to those it was made to help. ► [Watch the video](#)



12 performances of The Welcome Project

325 audience members

100 children with refugee status were involved in creating or watching the show

In May 2023, we performed our hospital Suitcase Theatre show 'If not here... where?' to children in long-term care in 7 hospitals. The piece aimed to combat feelings of loneliness, raise morale and create a moment of connection for these isolated children. You can read much more about this project in our 2022 report.



This year we also hosted creative workshops in schools, as part of **A New Direction's Primary In-Schools Touring Programme**, where we discussed ideas around how children can make refugees feel welcomed and safe in their school or local area through a butterfly puppet-make. A further **540 school children** participated in this branch of the project.

Prison Project

Our next Suitcase Show will be The Prison Project, which enables children and their incarcerated parent to share a memorable day together, watching a tailor-made puppet show and taking part in a bespoke craft workshop that engages them creatively and speaks of their distinct experiences. Our performance-workshop structure offers families an opportunity to both watch and make together, creating a space to express themselves and connect through the arts. Moments for connection are incredibly important for the wellbeing of both children and adults in these settings, who get so little time to spend together. In fact, in many cases these prisons are limited to only one family day per year, so we want to ensure that they count.

The first phase of this project involved taking an existing Birthday Party show into prisons to determine interest. Demand was high and the prisons really valued our engagement. We are now moving onto the next phase where we will visit eight prison family days with a bespoke workshop that encourages attendees to contribute their thoughts on characters, themes and stories for a new show. We will then tour this show, designed for children and their incarcerated parents, directly to them in prisons.



"It's amazing to have my children have quality time with Dad. The activities help bonds and create relationships." Participant at HMP Lindholme

12 performances at family days in 8 different prisons

444 audience members across all visits to prisons



"Family days are really important to enjoy – doing activities other than just sitting and talking is great as children need bonding times and to create memories and happy times together." Participant at HMP Hatfield

It costs us **£12,000** to tour a Suitcase Show for 3 weeks performing at least **25 times** – we raise these funds on a project by project basis.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Every donation to The Prison Project allows us to create magical moments for more children.

- £320 covers materials costs for a tour of 8 prison family days
- £1,070 covers the whole workshop delivery costs for a prison family day

Birthday Parties

Little Angel Theatre takes birthday magic beyond its stage with our three party options. Delivering a professional puppetry experience, crafted by the teams behind the theatre's acclaimed productions, this is more than a party – it's an extension of LAT's child-centred ethos, promoting play, creativity and inclusivity. This year, we developed birthday parties for our very youngest birthday children, as well as for the older 7-9 age bracket, so that more children could celebrate with their friends through puppetry.

This work not only makes a birthday a theatrical experience, but it underpins our charitable and community led work, alongside support from trusts and foundations. In fact, our very own Masterchef Mo, went into prison family days 12 times last year, connecting children with their incarcerated parent and encouraging creativity among the participants, as part of the development of our latest Suitcase Show.

You Can Help – Book a Birthday Party now!

Choose the right party for the age of your child. Find the booking form on our website and fill in the details. We'll get back to you to book everything in. www.littleangeltheatre.com/hire-us/birthday-parties

We have facilitated
57
birthday parties this year.



The Imagination Train

For ages 1-3 and their grown ups

All aboard, the train is about to depart! Join Connie the Conductor on this fun-filled, sensory journey to discover what makes a party special.



Masterchef Mo

For ages 3-6

On your mark, get set, BAKE! World-famous chef Mo has lost the recipe for their most scrumptious cake. Join us on this adventure to help find the missing ingredients.



Puppets in Peril

For ages 7-9

Calling all brave and brilliant adventurers, the fate of Fire Isle rests in your hands! Join the Game Masters on an epic quest to save the fantastical Fire Isle from certain danger.

Heritage Craft: Marionette Making

This year, the skill of marionette making was added to the Heritage Crafts' Red List of Endangered Crafts for the first time ever. The artform has fallen out of fashion with theatre makers, and there are only a handful of practitioners left in the UK who hold the skills and knowledge necessary to keep this tradition alive (many are nearing or in retirement).

Associate Director, Oliver Hymans, has been working hard to ensure the future of marionette making. In the last year he has trained with some of the best remaining marionette practitioners in the UK, including John Roberts, Lyndie Wright and Stephen Mottram. Oliver was also nominated as finalist for Heritage Craft and Axminster Tools' Woodworker of the Year 2023. He is now working to provide the next generation of puppeteers with the skills necessary to incorporate this unique and endangered artform into their creative practice. This makes Little Angel Theatre the only place in London (and most of the UK) providing training to makers and keeping the heritage craft of marionette making alive.



"It would be such a shame if this tradition died out and members of the puppetry sector lost the skills needed to keep it going. String puppetry offers so much to theatremakers – the extent to what you can do with puppets to tell magical and inspiring stories is really endless." *Oliver Hymans, LAT Associate Director*

"We are simultaneously pleased and sad that marionette making has made it onto the endangered craft red list. ... Little Angel has one of only three long-string marionette bridges in the country, but it is an underutilised resource due to the cost of running a marionette show and the lack of skilled makers and performers. Oliver Hymans has been working tirelessly to bring this art form back into the public sphere." *Samantha Lane, LAT Artistic Director*



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Your donation will help to keep marionette making alive.

- £293 pays for an Intensive Puppetry Training Course for Cross-Discipline artists
- £2,000 pays for tutor costs for a Marionette-Carving Course, covering 5 days delivery and 3 days planning

Audience Feedback



"We've loved every performance we've come to at the LAT. Honestly, I couldn't be more grateful for the magic you bring to us."
Audience member



"It was actually my 7-year-old daughter who introduced me to the theatre. She has been on a school trip before. So intimate, it makes it great for kids to immerse in the story. What a little gem hidden away in Angel."
Audience member of *Wolves in the Walls*



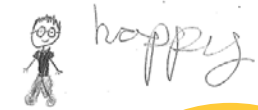
"Made me feel like a rocket ship blasting to the moon"
Audience member of *The Welcome Project*

"Our 5-year-old grandson asked if he could see it again as soon as we got home. It was just lovely. Thanks so much."
Audience member of *The Everywhere Bear*



"The staff at the theatre were extremely welcoming and informative. The show itself was fantastic! Extremely engaging and fun for the adults as well as the kids. Me and my daughter thoroughly enjoyed it and will definitely be back again in the future!" **Audience member of *Charlie Cook's Favourite Book***

"The theatre is immediately very welcoming. It was lovely to be offered the booster seat for our just three-year-old. It was a very gentle and sensitive experience, just what I wanted for helping introduce our grandson to the wonder of theatre"
Audience member of *Wow! It's Night-time*



"Happy because I loved making the puppets and watching the show and the magic, it's funny and if I could rate it it would be 5 stars :)" **Audience member of *The Welcome Project***

"I love The Little Angel! I visited when I was a child and it's lovely to be able to bring my son now." **Audience member**



"We loved the performance!... Our little one, who is normally rather reserved, was very interactive and enjoyed getting stuck in. A testament to the welcoming environment!"
Audience member of *The Bed*

"Worked really well for our SEND students and the performer made sure all the audience had a chance to interact. For our students, this is their first experience of going to a theatre, but not their last." **Audience member of *The Bed***



Puppets for All

Our Puppets For All scheme enables us to offer tickets completely free of charge to those who might otherwise miss out. The theatre is situated in Islington, one of the most unequal boroughs in the country, where some of the wealthiest families live alongside the poorest families – 28% of children in our borough live in an income deprived household. We know that the cost of tickets just isn't feasible for everyone, so we work very hard to make sure that the magic and wonder of puppetry is accessible to all, regardless of financial constraints.

In the coming year, we aim to:

- Provide 1,000 free tickets to families on state benefits.
- Provide 3,840 free tickets to pupils of our 8 partner schools (a minimum of one performance for each class at every partner school).
- Provide 480 free tickets to school pupils in Islington through the 11by11 Islington council scheme
- Provide 30 bursary places for our holiday playcations for children and their families.
- Provide 6 bursary places for our baby classes (Angel's Little Explorers).

"I just wanted to say thank you so much for the opportunity!!!! I think that it's brilliant that you offer tickets to those who can't afford it! I am financially struggling and hate to see it affect my son's ability to be included." PFA Beneficiary



"If I could afford to pay, I wish I could go to everything, it is really helping with my children's brain development as it is fun at the same time. I witness it all, it is amazing. They bring home their ideas and we call their grandma in Yorkshire and they say 'Look what we made! We made this! We saw this! A puppet did this!' They love it so much."

PFA Beneficiary

This year we gave out **5,413** tickets to our shows to families and school visitors through the scheme, with a value equating to over **£50,000**, plus additional tickets for workshop places.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Support for our Puppets for All scheme helps us to bring the magic of puppetry into more children's lives:

- £55 pays for 5 bursary places to Angel's Little Explorers – our weekly playtime for our smallest theatre goers
- £240 pays for 5 children to take part in an all-day Puppet Playcation
- £3,120 pays for 16 classes of Islington school children to come and see a show for free*

* through the 11by11 Islington council scheme

Photos: Ellie Kurtz (left) and Suzi Corker (right)

Environmental Responsibility

Combatting the climate crisis and protecting a creative future requires sustained action from individuals, organisations, nations and collective international efforts. Here at LAT, we must not only do everything possible to reduce our environmental impact but also set a good example, inform and educate young people in their responsibility to the environment. We are excited about the recent release of the Theatre Green Book 2.0 (providing updated guidelines and benchmarks for sustainable theatre making) and will be working to these standards in the coming year.

Our aims

- **Reduce:** We are working to decrease our energy use, reduce the waste we send to landfill and decrease the carbon cost of our productions both in-house and on tour.
- **Understand:** We will collect data from our organisation to understand our environmental impact. We will create Carbon Literacy Training to share that knowledge with everyone we work with.
- **Advocate:** We will continue to programme work which educates children around the ongoing climate crisis, and use our position to encourage environmentally responsible behavior within our audiences.

Little Angel Theatre is a **Crisp Packet Recycling Hub**. Collect your crisp packets together at home and bring them along to our venue. We can then recycle them in bulk.

From February 2023–2024, we were taking part in the Mayor's Business Climate Challenge with the goal of reducing our building's energy consumption by 10%. With small changes on-site, we are delighted that we have managed to do this, reducing our energy consumption by 10.7%.

SOLAR PANEL FUNDRAISING

As an organisation, we aim to reduce our carbon output by 30% each year through commitments to sustainable production, touring, workshops and building operations. However, we are in a position where we require capital investment to make further headway in reducing our carbon output. 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. Including some retiling of the roof, we estimate that this will cost around £115,000.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are fundraising to help cover the costs of this installation

- £4,000 pays for an electrician to work on the installation of solar panels on our theatre roof
- £8,000 covers the material cost of a solar power system on our theatre roof
- £15,000 pays for us to remove the Asbestos tiling from our theatre, which has to be the first step in the project

People

Four Day Week Trial

This year we have been trialing a four day working week across as much of our activity as possible. The trial came about in order to try and reduce our carbon footprint, by closing our buildings one day per week, and to improve staff wellbeing. 31% of our workforce have caring responsibilities outside of work, and 15% identify as disabled (with almost half of those people stating mental health as a condition impacting their work life), so LAT wanted to make steps to support their staff as much as possible.

After an overwhelmingly positive response, and the majority of staff being able to find efficient ways of working to bring their roles into the four day pattern, we extended the trial for a further 6 months in February. There were some teething problems, particularly in delivery focused roles, where we have had to make adjustments to the model in order to support staff in the change. But these plans are being implemented during the second phase, and we will be continuing the conversations with all who work for us about their experience through to the end of the trial in August.

Board

Katie Owen
(Chair, outgoing)
Lydia Cotton
(Chair, incoming)
Gregory Gray
Monique Johnson
Jayda Khatun
Lauren LaRocque
Ele Lewis (outgoing)
Chris Lowry
Matt Parritt
Bonnie Royal
Linda Stanfield
Sarah Wright
Sharon Zhu
(outgoing)

Patrons

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

Honorary Associates

Ronnie Le Drew
Lyndie Wright MBE

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

75 freelance creatives

70 workshop leaders and facilitators

6 freelance technicians

25 box office and visitor experience assistants

78.5% of our managers and directors identify as female, compared with a 30% industry standard*

* Data from the Creative Industry Policy and Evidence Centre report published May 2024 'UK Arts, Culture and Heritage Audiences and Workforce'

"It's nice for me to have an extra day where I am definitely at home when my son comes home from college." LAT Staff Member

"I feel more relaxed heading into the week and like I am ready to be super focused for the week ahead. I'm getting more 'me' time than I ever have had before!" LAT Staff Member



Finances

It has been a fantastic year for LAT, celebrating awards and delivering a range of exciting projects. This would not be possible without support from our generous funders, partnerships with co-producers and local organisations, and our ambitious, yet agile, financial management. Looking forward to the 2024/25 financial year, we will still rely on income from philanthropic sources, in particular for our community and outreach work, and the landscape continues to present challenges, with rising costs and inflationary pressures. We are opening the year having secured over 50% of our fundraising target, and continue to diversify and grow 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.

22/23 Actual 23/24 Estimate 24/25 Forecast

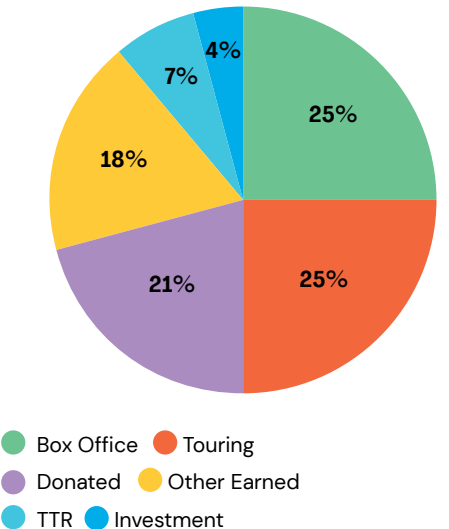
Income (£000s)

| | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Earned | 1,230 | 1,380 | 1,590 |
| Donated | 270 | 400 | 450 |
| Other | 70 | 70 | 70 |
| | 1,570 | 1,850 | 2,110 |

Expenditure (£000s)

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Direct Activity | 640 | 710 | 900 |
| Staff | 720 | 850 | 890 |
| Other | 310 | 310 | 320 |
| | 1,670 | 1,870 | 2,110 |

23/24 Income



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. Thank you to the following people who have supported us in the past year.

Public Funders



Principal Funders: Trusts & Foundations



Significant Funders: Trusts & Foundations

The Weinstock Fund
Sobell Foundation
Maria Björnson Memorial Fund
Sandra Foundation
Ironmongers
Fenton Arts Trust
Mo Siewcharran Fund
Garrick Club
Chapman Charitable Trust
Boris Karloff Charitable Foundation
Inner London Magistrates' Court's Poor Box Charity & Feeder Trust
The Belacqua Charitable Trust
City and Metropolitan Welfare Charity
Islington Giving
City Bridge Trust
Heritage Trust
Central District Alliance
Charles S French

Corporate Partners



ISLINGTON SQUARE.



Frederick's



Little Angel Theatre would also like to thank the following people for their in-kind support:

Michael Estorick
Julia and Malcolm Donaldson
Axel Scheffler
MC Grammar

How to Donate

As a charity, Little Angel Theatre needs regular support to continue to have a magical impact on young audiences and families. We rely on donations to support our community work in schools, to make sure our shows are open to everyone, to help our shows visit hard-to-reach spaces like hospitals and prisons, and to look after our cherished buildings.

A regular donation gives us a stable income and confidence to plan for the future. If you are an individual who is able to make a regular donation to LAT, please head to our website www.littleangeltheatre.com/support-us.

- **£25 per month** helps to ensure that our shows are accessible to families who might otherwise miss out
- **£50 per month** helps pay for bursary places for specialist creative workshops
- **£100 per month** helps pay for school children to visit the theatre with their peers, enriching the school curriculum
- **£200 per month** helps pay for performer costs for our suitcase shows, ensuring our work is accessible to those who cannot access our spaces
- **£500 per month** helps pay for our rolling community program, supporting families on our doorstep
- **£1,000 per month** helps us to maintain our traineeship program and the future of puppetry

Company of Angels

Thank you to the philanthropic individuals who regularly support Little Angel. We could not do our work without your generous regular gifts

Platinum Angels

Ben & Ann Davison

Golden Angels

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

Silver Angels

Frances Barry
James Bierman
Philip & Natasha Broke
Ana Cascon & Bill Shadwick
Peter Charlton
Elizabeth Comstock-Smith
Neil Gaiman
D R Hall
Roanne Insley
Charles Ledigo
Martin Ledigo
Selina Macnair
Ann Marshall
C T Smith

Thank you also to our 61 lovely Bronze Angels.

Significant Funders: Individuals & Generous Friends

Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Mary Buckley
Anthony Conway
Rebecca Glassberg
Rosemary Hanson
Ian Mcveigh
Dr Helen Munn
Sarah Nabarro
James Neilson
Jill Nicholls
Katie Owen
Sue Owen

Little Angel Theatre is a charity, and we receive no regular core funding to support our work. Support from Trusts and Foundations forms a large part of the funds that allow our projects happen. A generous donation to any of the projects mentioned in this report will enable us to ensure that the cost of living crisis doesn't impact our ability to fuel the imagination of children across the country. If you are part of a Trust or Foundation who would like to support our work, please get in touch at development@littleangeltheatre.com

“Fuelling the imagination through puppetry”

Charity No. 232488

Cover photo Ellie Kurtz
Registered Charity no: 232488 Company no: 668339
VAT Registration no: 233867152 Design: Hyperkit