

NEW INTERNATIONAL ENCOUNTER

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2023/24



## **Photo Credits**

Claire Haigh Photography;

Alex Byrne, Hansel and Gretel, Legends of the Fen, Macbeth,

NIE UK Team,

Anita Murphy;

Grand Soft Day

# LETTER FROM THE CEO

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**ALEX  
BYRNE**

Artistic Director & CEO

Hello and welcome to our review of 2023-2024. This was a year of development here at NIE UK, as we welcomed two new core team members and continued to pick up the main threads of our artistic programme post pandemic. The current economic landscape, coupled with the lasting impact of Covid on venues and audiences, played a significant role in our planning. However, we happily returned to more international touring and created new productions.

This year our key achievements included:

- Developing our large-scale family show, Hansel & Gretel.
- Creating and touring Macbeth, a new Shakespeare in a Suitcase production suitable for audiences age 8+.
- International touring of Grand Soft Day, in co-production with Branar.
- Extending our annual co-creation project into Fenland, with the support of an Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant, helping 250 Children experience story writing and live theatre.
- Providing significant talent development opportunities including our Board Bursary scheme and support for the ASSITEJ Babel Project.

We hope you enjoy reading more about these over the next few pages and we look forward to sharing more of our work with you in 2024 and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex'.



# OUR VISION

## *Playful Stories* THAT CONNECT US ALL

We deliver this through:

- Shows - Creating excellent high quality performances and projects
- Creative Learning Projects - inspiring young people as co-creators through place-making
- Talent Development - sharing our expertise and providing training in the sector

# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

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**5** TOURING PRODUCTIONS

**3** NEW SHOWS DEVELOPED

**1** CREATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

**101** PERFORMANCES

**2** NEW TEAM MEMBERS

## OUR WORK REACHED...



**LOCAL AUDIENCES**

**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

**RURAL COMMUNITIES**

**SCHOOLS**

**INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES**

## **WE WORKED WITH....**

**65 FREELANCE  
ARTISTS**

**4 VENUES IN  
ENGLAND**

**7 INTERNATIONAL  
PARTNERS**

**10 SCHOOLS**



## **IN THE FOLLOWING PLACES....**



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**LONDON**

**NEW YORK**

**OKINAWA**

**WIESBADEN**

**AND MORE....**

# SHOWS

8608

TOTAL LIVE  
AUDIENCE

101

LIVE  
PERFORMANCES

## Grand Soft Day

A show all about the weather, for 2-6 year olds, which toured to Galway, New York and Belfast during the year. This, primarily non verbal show, is an international co-production with Branar, a key partner based in Ireland.

Performing as part of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals conference in New York provided a significant international showcase for this strand of early years work, and further UK touring is planned for 2024-25.

3 COUNTRIES

48 PERFORMANCES

OVER 2500 LIVE  
AUDIENCE  
MEMBERS

**“GORGEOUS, MAGICAL SHOW. SMALLIES KEPT  
ENGAGED THROUGHOUT. LOVED THE  
TRI-LINGUAL ASPECT. THANKS!”  
- AUDIENCE MEMBER**



# Hansel and Gretel

**'IT WAS FANTASTIC! IT HAD SUCH A BEAUTIFUL JOY AND LEVEL OF FUN THAT ONLY LIVE THEATRE CAN CREATE AND I LEFT FEELING HEARTENED AND FESTIVE.'**

**- AUDIENCE MEMBER**

We returned to Cambridge Junction for Christmas 2023, and co-produced our fourth successful large scale family show with their support.

We presented three weeks of live shows across the 2023 festive period, and reached over 5000 audience members. We were excited to offer touch tours, dedicated schools performances, relaxed performances and a BSL interpreted show, Hansel and Gretel will now tour to Bristol for Christmas 2024.

**35 TOTAL  
PERFORMANCES**

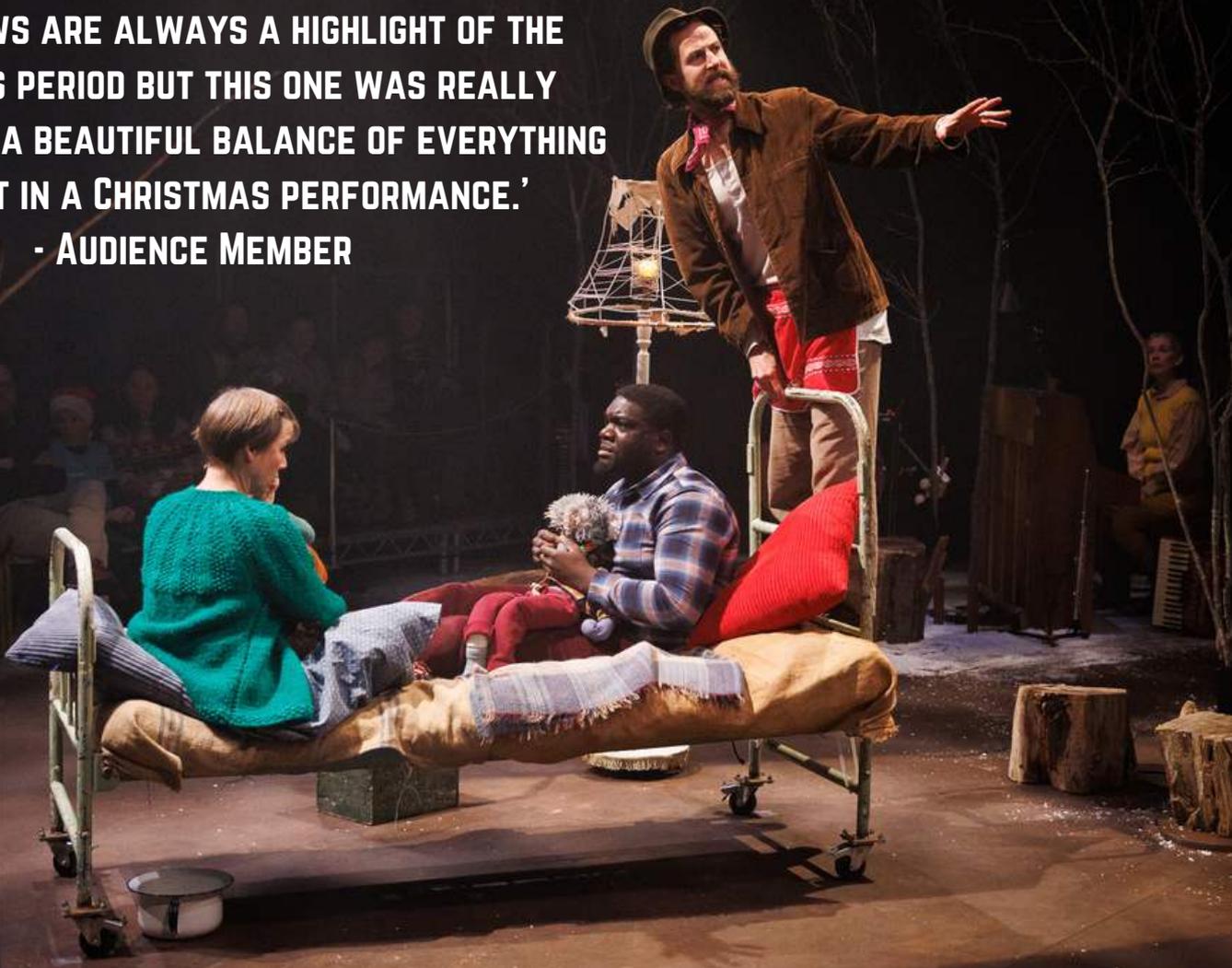
**9 SCHOOLS ONLY  
PERFORMANCES**

**12 RELAXED  
PERFORMANCES**

**5128 LIVE AUDIENCE  
MEMBERS**

**'NIE'S SHOWS ARE ALWAYS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD BUT THIS ONE WAS REALLY EXCEPTIONAL A BEAUTIFUL BALANCE OF EVERYTHING YOU WANT IN A CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE.'**

**- AUDIENCE MEMBER**

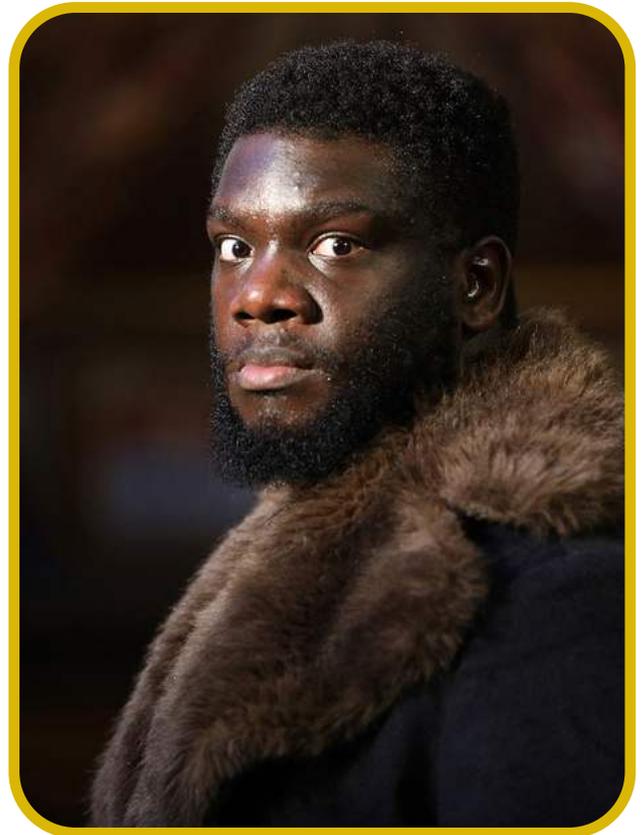


# Hamlet

In May 2023 this 45 minute production toured to the Internationale Maifestspiele Wiesbaden, and reached an international audience through performances and school workshops.

**320 LIVE AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

**4 PERFORMANCES**



# Macbeth



Macbeth is a new Shakespeare in a Suitcase production, suitable for audiences age 8+.

Following a period of research and development, this 55 minute production toured to schools, studio theatres and libraries in Autumn 2023.

International and UK touring of Macbeth is planned for 2024.

**“IT WAS PHENOMENAL! IT WAS SO INVENTIVELY STAGED AND PERFORMED. A COMPLEX STORY WAS MADE ACCESSIBLE AND GRIPPING FOR CHILDREN. WE WILL DEFINITELY BE INVITING NIE BACK TO PERFORM NEXT YEAR.”**

**- DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER**

**10 PERFORMANCES**

**500 LIVE AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

# CREATIVE LEARNING

**250** CHILDREN  
WROTE STORIES  
INSPIRED BY  
THE FENS

**160** PEOPLE  
WATCHED LIVE  
PERFORMANCES

## Legends of the Fen

Thanks to National Lottery Project Grant funding from Arts Council England, we worked with young people in Cambridge and across Fenland to develop a new co-created show, Legends of the Fen. 250 children participated in creative writing workshops, inspired by objects from the Wisbech and Fenland Museum. The stories they wrote were then transformed into a performance with live music, presented back to the pupils, their peers and families in our yurt at The Galfrid School, Cambridge. This project continues in 2024.



**"[THE PUPILS] REALLY ENGAGED WITH THIS EXPERIENCE, NOT ONLY TO BE ABLE TO SEE INTIMATE THEATRE AND LIVE THEATRE, BUT TO HAVE ALSO CREATED THE STORIES THAT ARE BROUGHT TO LIFE ON STAGE THAT'S JUST BEEN PHENOMENAL."**

- HEAD TEACHER

**4 PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
PARTICIPATING**

**6 WEEKLY ART CLUB  
SESSIONS**

**4 PARTNER  
ORGANISATIONS**

# TALENT DEVELOPMENT

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1

**FULLY FUNDED  
BURSARY**

2

**PAID TRAINING  
ROLES**

1

**INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME**

This year we provided three talent development opportunities. Offering a fully funded bursary position on our board and two paid training roles; working with a Design Assistant on Hansel and Gretel, and with an emerging Producer on a variety of our projects during the start of the year.

## **Board Bursary**

One of the core offers in our talent development strand. This is a programme created to provide leadership development and capacity building opportunities across the arts sector, whilst supporting development for groups under-represented in the arts sector at board level.

During 2023-24 the position was occupied by David Gilbert, a Director and theatre maker with particular expertise in working with physical theatre and young actors.

## **ASSITEJ Babel Project**

Artistic Director Alex Byrne is commissioned as one of the two leaders of the ASSITEJ managed, EU funded, BABEL project – a series of international talent development workshops held at children's theatre festivals across Europe.

This year Alex, assisted in workshops by Greg Hall, supported 25 artists from across Europe and beyond to develop their artistic practice in theatre for young audiences.

# FINANCES

## WHERE OUR MONEY CAME FROM...

Income Source	2024/2023
Arts Council NPO Grant	£156,144
Other Grants	£53,673
Performance/Workshop Fees	£22,036
Co-Production Income	£53,235
Donations/Fundraising	£7369
Theatre Tax Relief	£94,675
Bank Interest	£914
In-Kind Support	£10,120

## AND HOW IT WAS SPENT...

Expenditure	2024/2023
Projects	£168,648
Staffing*	£157,847
Accountancy & Legal Fees	£13,693
Overhead Costs (office, storage etc)	£19,008

\* c. 80% of core staff time is spent on direct activity for projects including artistic & producing roles. A copy of our full annual accounts will be available on the [charity commission website](#).

# OUR PEOPLE

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## STAFF

**Alex Byrne**  
Artistic Director/CEO

**Lisa Elmer**  
Executive Director

**Michael Judge**  
Associate Director

**Ruth Carter-Moore**  
Producer

**Paul Bogen**  
Finance Manager

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Claire Hardy**  
Chair (from August 2024)

**Gwen Hanauer**  
**Deborah Hayman-Nkhoma**  
**Brigita Petrova**  
**Sarbjit Rana**  
**Rowena Russell**

**Sara Garnham**  
Stepped down August 2024  
**Jay Zorenti-Nakhid**  
Stepped down August 2024

**David Gilbert**  
Co-opted Member and Board  
Bursary Recipient 23/24

## SUPPORTERS

**Jim Byrne**  
**Sara Garnham**  
**Rowena Russell**  
**Helen Tovey**  
**David Webster**



## SUPPORT US

We need your help to ensure as many young people as possible access high-quality Creative Learning. NIE projects in the UK work with children experiencing barriers to accessing creative and cultural opportunities.

Our Creative learning work is proven to:

- Improve children's creativity
- Improve children's confidence
- Improve children's attainment across the curriculum

You can support us by

- Joining our Friends Scheme
- Making a one-off donation
- Supporting us when you shop online via [easy fundraising](#)
- Promoting our work to make sure as many people as possible know about it

For more information please visit the support us pages on our website: [www.nie-theatre.com/support-us/](http://www.nie-theatre.com/support-us/)



# **NEW INTERNATIONAL ENCOUNTER**

**WWW.NIE-THEATRE.COM  
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Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**