



SOUTH LONDON THEATRE CENTRE LTD

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR
2024

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Introduction by the Chair

This has been another successful year. Although it has been a transitional year in terms of our governance and structures, making sure we are operating within the requirements of the Charity Commission and other legislation, everything about the theatre continued as usual: Works for the building have been prioritized and implemented; we have enjoyed 22 varied productions, a thriving Youth Theatre with a long waiting list, membership, totally around 400, and audience numbers maintained. Interestingly an incredible 78% were non-members, which indicates our reach is broader than what we thought. Our financial position remains healthy but we cannot be complacent and need to continually fundraise to supplement any other income raising activities we have in place.

The new Board of Trustees elected in September 2024 are now responsible for both the South London Theatre Company and The Buildings Preservation Trust. Trustees have held 7 Trustee Board meetings, attended 5 sessions, one with members of the Executive, Committee, with a consultant offered free by the Architectural Heritage Foundation to help us work on our 5- year strategic plan, which will be completed in the next few months. Alongside this, the Commercial and Theatre Directors have established the structures, process and systems to run the theatre. We have been ably assisted through secretarial support by Lorna Felix and Sarah Farage.

Recognising that we are a theatre based in a diverse community and that we wish to improve our practice in ensuring there is no discrimination in the way we operate, we chose to prioritise the review of our Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Policy, and appointed Marysia Skwarka as the lead trustee to work with us all to develop a working plan to deliver and monitor the impact of this policy. We updated our Safeguarding Policy and procedures also.

We were delighted to grant an Honorary membership to Jeanette Hoile, a member since 1976. Jeanette has made an enormous contribution to the theatre, acting, directing, helping backstage in shows, and supporting in many other ways. To mention a few: helping with the Front of House, delivering leaflets, instigating and maintaining a very successful raffle which has been an ongoing source of revenue.

I would also like to say thank you to all the members who volunteer: Front of House, Box Office, the Raffle, all the Bar volunteers, our Wardrobe and Props teams, everyone who works backstage, on lighting and sound, building sets and all the many parts of putting on a production, as well as the directors and casts; the Executive team; Bex, David, Teresa and the Youth Theatre staff and chaperones.

In sadder news, 2024 saw us lose Jenny Gammon, a much-loved and long-standing member of SLT. Jenny brought her huge creativity in many ways to many productions over her twenty-year membership. We also lost Marian Buss, another busy member from the turn of the century.

Finally, we are looking forward to our 60th Anniversary in 2027 and with the lead from Charlotte Benstead and other volunteers, we are going to make it a spectacular year. We have much to celebrate!

Gerri McAndrew, Chair

Report from the Treasurer

The audited accounts, for the year ended 31 December 2024, of SLT and its subsidiary, SLT Building Preservation Trust Limited (BPT), have been completed and signed by the auditors, Begbies. The two companies are now run in an entirely integrated manner with the same board of trustees/directors so it is helpful to review the results of both together.

I have summarized the figures on the next page and they illustrate a good financial position for the past year. In particular, all of the main activities of SLT have achieved growth in income with ticket sales growing by 19%, youth classes income by 43% (although some of this growth may be affected by the phasing of receipt of fees), membership by 3% and costume hire by 6%. Room hire is slightly lower but still a significant contributor. Donations are less predictable but, between the two charities, these have also grown and include amounts from members and other theatre groups.

Importantly, at 31 December 2024, our total assets, mainly cash balances, exceeded total liabilities by almost £3,000 – the first time this has been the case since the redevelopment of the Old Fire Station. The management accounts of both companies have been prepared up to 30 June 2025 and these show a further

improved net asset position with an overall excess of assets over liabilities of approximately £14,000 – so the financial situation remains sound.

Summary of audited accounts for SLT and BPT for 2024

	2024	2024		2023	2023
	SLT	BPT		SLT	BPT
	£	£		£	£
Ticket sales	80,100			67,042	
Youth classes income	51,248			35,649	
Membership subscriptions	15,276			14,800	
Room hire income		95,265			105,541
Costume hire income	4,705			4,445	
Donations	12,503	29,294		1,436	38,765
Other income	18,396	1,674		13,275	717
Total income	182,228	126,333		136,647	145,023
Net income	22,500	28,090		(28,855)	69,271
Total assets	99,063	122,372		76,563	101,568
Long term liabilities	-	(218,547)		-	(225,833)
Net assets	99,063	(96,175)		76,563	(124,265)

That said, members can see that we have long term liabilities, which are a loan from London Borough of Lambeth, of more than £200,000. It remains most important that all of our activities at least break even and we are careful to invest in areas which will show a long term benefit for our theatre related activities, and for our building.

I would like to particularly thank Lisa Thomas and Noah Wright who have worked hard in support of the finances of SLT – between them Lisa and Noah manage all of our payments in a thorough and diligent manner.

The Audited accounts are available to members on the website. I recommend the reappointment of the auditors.

Chris Stooke, Treasurer

2024 Productions and their net contribution

Production	Ticket Sales	Royalties	Other costs	Net Contribution
	£	£	£	£
Arturo Ui	4,334	(345)	(471)	3,518
Jekyll & Hyde	3,891	(510)	(294)	3,087
Midsummer Night's Dream	4,158		(56)	4,102
Orca	3,063	(425)		2,638
Copenhagen	3,242	(345)	(48)	2,849
Mayfly	2,529	(425)	(164)	1,940
One for Sorrow	2,732	(425)	(155)	2,152
Jerusalem	4,270	(425)	(360)	3,485
The Liar	3,440	(445)	(217)	2,778
Two	2,263	(345)	(22)	1,896
Who's Life Is It Anyway	3,483	(345)	(447)	2,691
Gundog	2,164	(500)	(109)	1,555
Queers	3,953	(425)	(68)	3,460
Hound of the Baskervilles	4,659	(765)		3,894
Summer Shorts	4,470		(187)	4,283
Kitchen Sink	2,881	(425)	(216)	2,240
Linck and Mulhahn	2,505	(510)	(294)	1,701
Mother Courage	3,372	(350)	(15)	3,007
Bleak Expectations	3,819	(425)	(146)	3,248
Four Old Broads	3,048	(425)	(207)	2,416
View From The Bridge	4,186	(400)	(217)	3,569
Lion Witch Wardrobe	7,638	(1,603)	(210)	5,825
2023 productions			(148)	(148)
TOTAL 2024	80,100	(9,863)	(4,051)	66,186
TOTAL 2023	67,042	(9,063)	(6,211)	51,768

Report of the Commercial Director

House Teams Report:

Front of House

During 2024, the Front of House team supported SLT at 126 performances. This consisted of 119 SLT productions plus 4 Good Ship Comedy evenings and 3 other performances. Each performance has two volunteer members on duty (Front of House 'Lead' and 'Support') so this meant 252 volunteer slots were filled during the year.

A total of 32 members volunteered: 15 different members acted as Front of House Lead and 28 as Front of House Support with a few doing both Lead and Support throughout the year and it was pleasing to see that there have been a number of regular Supports who made the move to Lead this year. 32 members across 252 slots means that Front of House team members each volunteered on an average of nearly 8 occasions during 2024.

Demand for FOH slots from members continues to be high and there is often a waiting list for training. The team communicates through the regular monthly house meetings, the notes compiled for each show and the active WhatsApp Group with the FOH Co-ordinator reporting to the House Manager (subsequently the Commercial Director).

Raffle

Another good year for raffle under Jeanette Hoile's stewardship. Very pleased to say that, despite both wine and chocolate prices increasing, Raffle has still made a larger profit than ever before. Jeanette is always on the look out for supermarket special weeks for chocolates. Ditto the "25% off for 6 bottles" offers are still available for wine, and save a lot of money. With the bottom line for the year being INCOME £3,446.00, less EXPENDITURE £565.67 resulting in a PROFIT of £2,880.33

Box Office

121 Box Office shifts were completed during 2024, with an average of 6.03% of tickets being sold on the door, which doesn't seem a lot, but actually represents more than £6000 collected on the door.

Building Report (as part of the SLT Building Preservation Trust Charity)

The new Commercial Director role on the Board has a focus on the building maintenance and development. This role started in September 2024. The key focus was to work with the Building Manager and a small but dedicated team of volunteers to bring some clarity and steer to the long list of things to do in the building. We also benefited from a Re-purpose Grant from Lambeth in the last part of the year, but this also had some challenges as the timescales were quite tight.

Working with the team we set the budgets for 2025 using the actuals that were being recorded in 2024 plus an estimate of costs for a combined list of things that needed to be done at that time. It was recognised that this list changes frequently, but a snapshot of the current state was enough to set a budget, it was recognised that during the coming year priorities might change on the list. A contractor for the Re-purpose grant was identified, quotes obtained, contracts signed and work was scheduled for 2025.

In addition to the work being undertaken on the maintenance side of things, we continue to hire out rooms for use by the community. We are lucky that we have a number of regular hirers which provide much needed income, reducing the overhead costs that would otherwise be borne by South London Theatre and the SLT Members Club.

Breakdown of income from room hires in 2024:

Hirer	Net of VAT total
Reboot Fitness (Rachel Raphael)	£8,180.00
Kate Meadowcroft	£6,119.00
Nutty's Children's Parties	£6,045.00
Westwood Health Ltd	£5,820.00
Helen Cordery	£2,494.00
Hannah Horsfall	£2,370.00
Faye Winter	£1,798.00
Southside Players	£1,650.00
University of the Third Age	£1,391.25
Little Theatre on the Hill	£1,199.05
Precise Pilates	£1,173.00
L'Arche London	£1,131.50
Rose Christopher	£1,087.50

In addition to these top hirers, we also had other ad hoc hirers that brought in an additional circa £8,800 during the year.

Gareth Milton, Commercial Director

Report from the Theatre Director

I'd like to thank everyone in our community who contributed to such a successful 2024 season. We had 22 fantastic productions, running the gamut from Shakespeare to contemporary, tragedy to comedy, classics to lesser-known works. We even had two Brechts. And we brought in plenty of audiences to see them. Over the course of the year we had 8,293 bums on seats. Some of those would have been the same bums - members coming to see more than one production. But an incredible 78% were non-members, which just goes to show how broad our reach - and audience - actually is.

So I'd like to thank everyone who made those productions possible - including the Theatre Committee, the directors and their creative teams, the backstage and technical teams (and especially the Sunday Crews who turn up week in and week out to help with get-ins and get-outs), the wardrobe team (who also provide a much-needed income from hires), our props team, publicity, marketing and Youth Theatre. Without whom we wouldn't be able to produce the vibrant and exciting theatre that we do.

Simon Gleisner, Theatre Director

Our 2024 Season

2024 started big and carried on with a packed schedule throughout a year that had room for a long-awaited Jerusalem and two Brecht plays!

JANUARY

***The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* by Bertolt Brecht adapted by George Tabori**

Bertolt Brecht's reimagining of the rise of Hitler as told through the tale of a bunch of gangsters was a brave choice for new director Penelope Lipsham. A cast of 22, fully kitted out in 1930s gangster style, made the first show of the year a complete sell out and brought clarity to Brecht's sometimes tortuous prose.

FEBRUARY

***Jekyll And Hyde* by Evan Placey adapted from Robert Louis Stevenson**

The Youth team tackled Evan Placey's quirky adaptation of Jekyll and Hyde in Victorian style but with 21st century accoutrements as the action appeared on a

multitude of screens simultaneously. Some great performances from a very strong ensemble.

***A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare**

Miriam Nice brought the beloved *A Midsummer Night's Dream* bang up to date with the initial action reimagined in the lighting emporium where the lovers work, and the Mechanicals planning their initial rehearsals over Zoom. Another sold out show that showed innovation and imagination.

MARCH

***Orca* by Matt Grinter**

An atmospheric tale of life for young women in a patriarchal whaling community, *Orca* by Matt Grinter, was directed with great sensitivity by Sarah Pearcey. The beautiful set had a quay that reached out into the auditorium and brought some dramatic action very close to the audience.

***Copenhagen* by Michael Frayn**

Who would imagine that a discussion centred around theories of atomic physics could be so enthralling? In Peter Stevens' production of Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* about the meeting in Copenhagen between Nils Bohr and Werner Heisenberg was beautifully played by the cast of three and completely riveting.

APRIL

***Mayfly* by Joe White**

A sense of dislocation and loss penetrates *Mayfly*, Joe White's first play, set in a farming village where the family we meet have suffered a great loss. James Jackson directed with strong attention to detail and the cast brought great delicacy to their interactions.

***One For Sorrow* by Cordelia Lynn**

If a stranger needs a safe place in a dangerous world, should you offer sanctuary, even when you know nothing about them? Directed by James Tibbles, *One for Sorrow* by Cordelia Lynn shows a middle-class family under pressure with some of them revealing the unsavoury beliefs they hold at their core.

***Jerusalem* by Jez Butterworth**

Well, she finally managed it! Charlotte Benstead directed Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem* with great aplomb, wrangling a large and unruly cast of characters, a marvellous, atmospheric set and plenty of emotion. Chaz Doyle was a surprisingly vulnerable Rooster. Pushing three hours in length it was packed every night.

MAY

***The Liar* by David Ives adapted from the comedy by Pierre Corneille**

Mark Ireson has wanted to direct Pierre Corneille's verse comedy, adapted by and translated by David Ives, for years. He did it in a production that used 18th century costume but with a modern twist. A cast of actors almost entirely new to SLT brought the plays ridiculous situations to joyful life.

***Two* by Jim Cartwright**

Jim Cartwright's 1989 play *Two*, set in a northern pub, follows an evening's activity, performed by just two actors, Chris Bennett and Polly Sands. Directed by Jess Osorio, the actors play a range of characters in different situations, from the difficult to the funny and moving.

JUNE

***Whose Life Is It Anyway?* by Brian Clark**

Brian Clark's *Whose Life is it Anyway?* directed by Lily Ann Green proved a fascinating meditation on the importance of letting an individual choose how their life goes. Kelly Kim Clements was fantastic as the musician paralysed from the neck down and desperately seeking a way out.

***Gundog* by Simon Longman**

A truly bleak glimpse at the life of a sheep farmer, full of mud, death and sheer hard work, *Gundog* by Simon Longman and directed by Yohann Philip is a tough story. It was brought to life by some compelling performances from a young cast and live music that echoed the tone of the story.

JULY

***Queers* by various authors, curated by Mark Gatiss**

Queers is a wonderful collection of monologues about gay life in the 20th century and beyond, curated by Mark Gatiss and directed by Jack King. From the melancholic sergeant reminiscing about a wartime love to the bridegroom preparing for his wedding, all had something profound to say about the queer life.

***The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, adapted by Steven Canny & John Nicholson**

All you need are three energetic actors, a fantastic backstage crew and some fabulous backdrops – and you have a show, albeit a very silly one. Lisa Thomas directed *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in a madcap adaptation by Steven Canny and John Nicholson, that takes Sherlock Holmes and Watson from London to Dartmoor.

AUGUST

***Summer Shorts* by Various (Theme 'Storm')**

This year's Summer Shorts theme was 'Storm' and it produced a raft of imaginative work. Curated by Guy Jones, Anna Callender and Cal Beckett, the plays followed storm hunters, Scott of the Antarctic and most memorably in Rob Tavernier's winning Thursday a family dealing with the pain (and hilarity) of ageing parents

SEPTEMBER

***The Kitchen Sink* by Tom Wells**

A fun and affectionate family drama, *The Kitchen Sink*, an early play by Tom Wells, directed by David Chappell, was yet unexpected in its tone and outcome. While the eccentricities are played up – the wannabe ju-jitsu teacher, the art student hoping that Dolly Parton au naturel may get him into college, it's the bonds that hold them together that make the play.

***Linck & Mülhahn* by Ruby Thomas**

Ruby Thomas's moving *Linck and Mülhahn*, directed by Jo Boniface, looked at a relationship that defied gender norms in the 18th century. A soldier falls in love with a woman in the town where the unit is stationed. Though their love is steadfast, the couple are torn apart by the rigid expectations of society.

OCTOBER

***Mother Courage & Her Children* by Bertolt Brecht**

The second Brecht play this year; Tom Melly's production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* had a timeless feel with its cast of soldiers and hangers on who could have come from many wars. The set, dominated by Mother Courage's wagon was, along with Ingrid Miller's MC, perhaps the star of the show.

***Bleak Expectations* by Mark Evans**

Mark Evans' *Bleak Expectations* is Dickens as you've never seen him before but would probably love to see again. Tom Mathias directorial debut at SLT was packed with Dickensian silliness, innocent heroes and despicable villains and played with panache by the cast.

NOVEMBER

***Four Old Broads* by Leslie Kimbell**

What do you do if you're still full of life but stuck, in an old people's home with a bossy new chief nurse and nothing to do? In Leslie Kimbell's *Four Old Broads* directed by Barry Heselden and Lily Ann Green, you plan a cruise and try to have some fun. As the audience did too.

***A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller**

Following *True West* last year, director Janine Wunsch took on another American classic, Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge* with echoes of the New York waterside in the stylish set. Impeccable US accents and strong, emotional performances brought this modern classic to compelling life.

DECEMBER

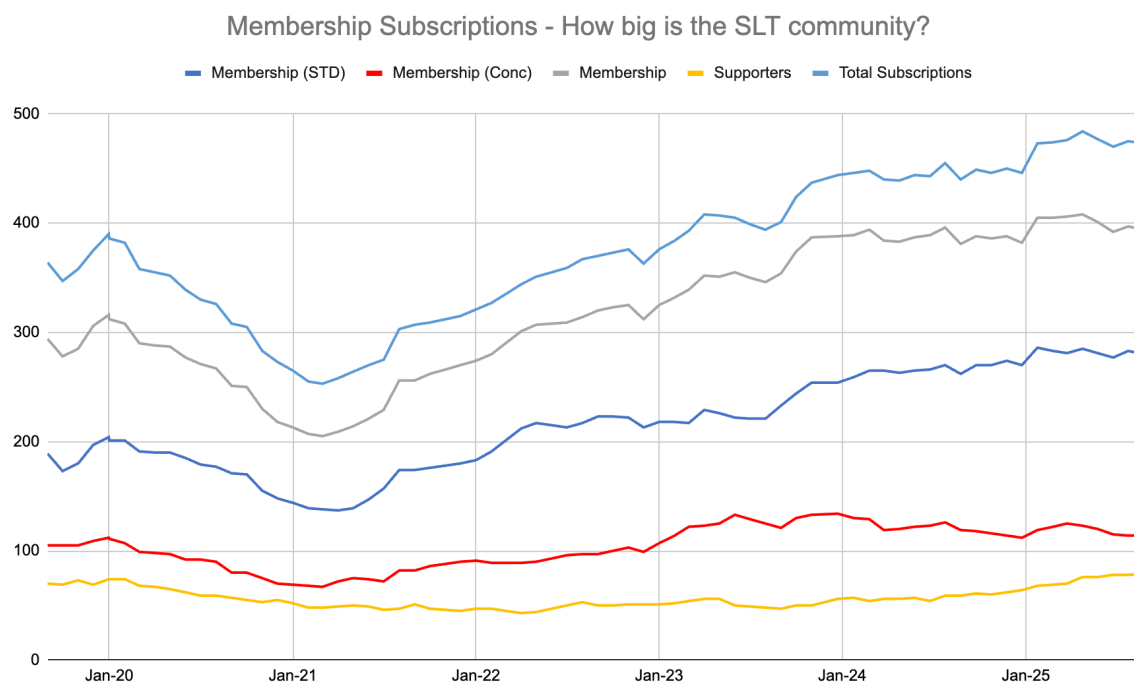
***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C S Lewis, dramatised by Adrian Mitchell, music by Shaun Davey**

A magical version of C.S. Lewis's much-loved story of the Pevensey children's first encounter with Narnia was our Christmas show, directed by Sally Toynton. With lions, beavers and fauns amidst the humans, this delightful show proved a hot ticket, selling out weeks beforehand.

Lisa Thomas, Stephen Hayward, Jess Osorio, Theatre Committee

Subscriptions since 2020

These graphs show how subscriptions – both members and supporters – have grown since the dramatic fall we saw after the Covid pandemic and lockdown. Member sits at about 400 with about 80 supporters.



Wardrobe Report

We continued to open every week to hirers.

Hires

We welcomed over 65 visitors during the 12 months of regular opening. We often host multiple visits from the same hirer since they usually come for a recce and post fittings return to agree their final hire. 54 hires across the year generated £8196.70 of income.

As usual, hirers included regular freelance designers, local amateur groups and students, schools and event organisers and attendees.

We have established a good reputation with several schools and word of mouth amongst the school community is generating repeat visitors. Our most lucrative months are May/June which correspond to school summer productions. The

second most lucrative month tends to be November as groups prepare for Christmas productions.

We have also hired out props and Carole and Kay supported in sourcing props.

Resources

The Collection

Sewing Bees to make running repairs to the collection continued most months and a selection of Puritan men's collars were created.

We have continued to showcase costumes on a different theme in the foyer each month.

As planned, we rationalised some of the fur collection by donating to PETA. This has reduced the risk of moth infestations, and we were finding the fur collection was rarely utilised due to actors' reservations. We have retained a lot of good quality/characterful ones.

A local knowledgeable individual helped us identify and catalogue the Military collection and the Sewing Bee applied labels accordingly. Two summer volunteers measured and labelled the tailcoats.

Staff

The staff during 2024 comprised of Jess Osorio, Jenny Bennett and Lorraine Spencely, Lynsey Davies and latterly Alicia Oke, Cara Rodway and Faith Powlatt. By increasing the staff team to the core of Jess, Jenny, Lorraine and Lynsey and everyone's willingness to pitch in with all the varied roles within Wardrobe (repairs and adaptations, learning the collection, helping hirers, providing quotes, overseeing costumes for entire SLT productions) means that we are able to spread the load across the team.

Plans for 2025

Explore whether an increase in the team size can mean we can offer more than one evening a week and concentrate on either Hire or Collection Organisation. Either formally or on an ad hoc basis depending on supply and demand.

Jenny Bennett, Wardrobe

Publicity Report

Cal Beckett took over publicity tasks from Simon Gleisner in February last year, becoming Publicity Lead in September, and is responsible for organising the printing and distribution of flyers, posters and programmes for the 20+ shows we put on annually. She also works closely with Guy Jones, Gareth Milton and Simon Gleisner on regular website content updates and producing our fortnightly newsletter.

For advance publicity print production, we try to work at least two months ahead of a show's opening, ensuring programmes are delivered well ahead of opening night. In May we switched suppliers and our print orders now go to SRA Copy Shop, a local charity assisting the rehabilitation of people with mental health issues. They're roughly equivalent in terms of price, but their service is brilliant. Nevertheless, printing is expensive, so at all times we're seeking to avoid waste by only producing as many copies of posters, programmes and flyers as we need to promote a show effectively, allowing for souvenir copies for cast and crew.

We introduced an illuminated A1 poster frame into the window space to the left of the main doors, and we're looking to improve show publicity at street level in the coming year. Cal is also looking out for ways of developing programme content. Our thanks also go to Jeanette Hoile, Eleanor de Souza, Hayley Thomas and Phil Gammon (our go-to show photographer) for their help with publicity.

Cal Beckett, Publicity Lead

Youth Theatre Report

Class sizes/Waiting lists

The Youth Theatre classes continue to be very popular with almost all classes being full all year. Early in the year, the Intermediate, 10 to 12 year old class, had such a long waiting list that we introduced an additional class. Also, due to requests from parents, we introduced a new class for 6 to 7 year olds. This class is smaller than the others due to the age of the children. The class has proved very popular with a permanent waiting list.

Staffing

We have a wonderful team of experienced drama practitioners who work really well as a team. They are responsive and flexible in order to meet the needs of the 130 plus youngsters who attend classes each week. As always, we had some staff leave and new staff joined the team to support the 'core staff team'. We were delighted to offer 'Duke of Edinburgh' experience to two youngsters from our classes.

Curriculum

This year the youngsters studied a wide range of subjects as usual including: acting terminology, character development, blocking, stagecraft and improvisation. Scripts including Greek Myths, Sleepy Hollow, Jekyll and Hyde. They enjoyed making stage props including puppets and masks.

Youth Production

In February, the Annual Youth Production took place. 'Jekyll and Hyde' turned the tables on the traditional story with women playing centre stage. It was a challenging play but the youngsters were interested in the themes raised by the play. 65 youngsters acted in six performances, all of which sold out.

Children and Young People in main productions

This year SLT Youth Theatre youngsters had the opportunity to be involved in several main productions. This gave them valuable experience and further developed their acting skills.

These included Jerusalem, The History Boys and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Chaperones

We signed up for chaperone training from the NSPCC and 10 Youth Theatre staff completed the training and received certificates.

Feedback from parents

'My daughter _____ is loving her Saturday SLT class! Her favourite day of the week :)'

'These past few months have made such a difference! I am forever grateful 🧡.'

'_____ really enjoys the lessons. At the beginning he was a little bit nervous and sometimes not confident. But I believe these courses help him to gain more confidence and express himself well.'

'Well done to you and the team this year - all the parents say how amazing and wonderfully creative SLT is so keep up the good work! '

Other

Holiday workshops including 'Play in a Week', 'Rebel Fairytales' and 'From Script to Stage' proved popular. And most of the new youngsters went on to join our classes.

As we have several youngsters who are neurodiverse, the staff team received professional training on working with youngsters with neurodiversity.

Plans for the future

After the intensity of the youth Production this year, we will be looking to choose something a little lighter next year.

We will explore the possibility of taking some of the youngsters on an outing to a large theatre production.

Teresa Donohue, Youth Theatre Manager