

**Kendal Community Theatre: reports and feedback on activities
1/10/2022-30/9/23**

**'A Midsummer Day's Dream' Saturday June 24th 2023
Kendal Town Centre Production Report**

This was an improvised production based very loosely around the theme of Midsummer Night's Dream Mechanicals putting on a play.

In a week of intensive rehearsal with Director Emma Rucastle, the cast put together a hugely entertaining half hour piece of Street Theatre, complete with songs, music and costumes. This was performed three times, twice by the Birdcage and once at the back of the market.

The show was great fun, with fairies galore and a particularly good sketch 'dreamt' by Bottom, of Fairy Wimbledon.

Having the Unitarian Chapel as the base for final rehearsals worked particularly well, being handy to the performance venues.

A strong ensemble cast did a brilliant job. Fairies constantly on the move and playing tricks, firefly buzzing in and out. The 'journey' of Bottom from pretentious know-it-all to humbled community team player was particularly interesting.

Audience was much better than last year, plenty of people around stopping to look and even in the most difficult space in the Market Place everyone joining in with the songs, in particular the finale song 'Summer Holiday' which has stuck in my mind ever since. We had three young 'extras' who came in on the day and added to the family feel.

Unfortunately, our Crier was unable to join us for health reasons. It would have been good to have him or perhaps a drum to call people in and announce the start of each show.

I was so impressed by the way the cast got together and created imaginative pieces for this show. More to the point, they thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were full of enthusiasm throughout. They really learnt a lot from Emma as Director who did a really clever job in pulling it all together in a very short time.

Collections raised £97.99 plus gift aid.

Well Done All.

Anne Banks (Production Manager)

Written Feedback:

Well done to you & KCT.

A great production and team effort
that the crowd (esp in the am) seemed to enjoy and appreciate. Emily Reed

Barbara and I enjoyed the Dream on Saturday, thanks to the fine performances and the fun yesterday; in my case thanks especially to my daughter Isobel in her role as wheelchair pusher (she loved the performance too!). David Hales

I absolutely loved the whole week and always enjoy working with Emma- she's lovely and such a talent. Improv is my very favourite theatrical genre so I was in heaven all week. Would def do it again but an intensive week was long enough.
Thanks to everyone involved. Kathy Talbot (cast)

Director's notes - Emma Rucastle

I had great fun during the week and was proud of what we managed to produce. It was lovely to see the cast grow in confidence through the process and enjoy themselves in front of the various audiences on Saturday 24th.

From my side, all organisation worked well - the variety of rehearsal venues was absolutely fine and simple costumes/props - much self-sourced by cast - were effective and easy to co-ordinate. The Birdcage outdoor space was great to perform in. The back of Market Square was a bit more difficult, with audiences quite spread and all around (seated in cafes as well as standing). A friend of mine, who I didn't know was coming, was seated in one of the cafes, though, and said she really enjoyed the performance in that space.

A Christmas Carol for Kendal
Charles Dickens, adapted by Ginny Moss & Chris Taylor
Kendal Town Hall; 7-10 December 2022.

Kendal Community Theatre's 10th anniversary production was a brand-new version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol for Kendal*, written by co-directors Chris Taylor & Ginny Moss. It incorporated material from *Bygone Cumberland & Westmorland* (Daniel Scott 1899)¹ to localise the action.

KCT is wholly open-access and welcomes all abilities. There are no auditions so all members can take part. We have blind, hearing-impaired, ADHD and autistic members who regularly perform. As part of this production, KCT secured funding from the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and the Stevenson Trust to support a project with Sandgate School and 3 Sedbergh Drive. Members of KCT went into school for weekly sessions for most of the autumn term leading up to the show. Students attended Sunday afternoon rehearsals along with other young people. For the performances, KCT was able to reimburse school staff and carers who accompanied the students. The opportunity to work with around 10 SEN students, and vulnerable young people further broadened our inclusivity. The project was overwhelmingly successful

We are delighted the recent production of *A Christmas Carol* was a great success; congratulations one and all.

I am contacting you however, to thank you and the team for involving our son Leo in the production. Whilst his part was not huge, it meant a great deal to Leo and he thoroughly enjoyed it.
(parent)

We've never experienced such a wholesome, inclusive production before. We particularly liked how the performance came into the audience and the audience participation. Fantastic
(audience member, with a disabled family member)

I was especially moved by the way that people with additional needs were right at the centre of the production. Absolutely brilliant.

¹ in Proud, K; *Great Northern Christmas* (Middleton -in-Teesdale; Discovery Guides, 1983)

Thank you,
(audience member)

She had never been to a performance where there was such diversity with regard to Age, Ability, Disability which worked so well resulting in such a great show.
(audience member)

...the play was fantastic. You should be very proud
(deputy head, Sandgate School)

KCT's intentionally broad approach to inclusivity reflects what is becoming increasingly prevalent, visible and important in the professional theatre and media. Our funding meant we were also able to offer heavily subsidised tickets through local schools and a Pay What You Can Afford performance (PWYCA) for those suffering economic hardship. This produced some audiences for whom live theatre was a new, and exciting experience. The age-range was much wider than has often been the case. It will be important to build on this trend, perhaps with a regular PWYCA.

In line with past practice, we offered paid internships/placements to young creatives – either at college or recent graduates. This year it was a student from Kendal College who may continue to work with the company.

KCT partnered with Brewery Youth Dance (from the Brewery Arts Centre. This was a new and welcome addition, especially to ghost sequences. We also invited local performance groups to 'busk' before the performance. This proved popular with performers and audiences, and may bear repetition or development. The total cast was around 50, including professional musicians. There were many new members across a wide age spectrum. Younger members are essential and must be made consistently welcome.

Some of the grants were for technical development so we were able to hire equipment and train a Year 9 student to run the snow, mist and smoke effects for the entire show.

The production sold out completely 2 weeks before opening. This is unheard of, and, for some, caused disappointment and frustration, leading to a waiting list of over 100.

lockdown-weary crowds eager to be entertained - and happy to just be out of the house - flocked to the Town Hall to watch Ebenezer Scrooge's magical transformation from a miserable miser at the hands of four spirits
(cast member)

Factors in the success of the production include: choice of play; inclusion across a wide range of people and organisations; quality and consistency of performances over time; seasonal and strange circumstances – pandemic, cost of living, war in Ukraine. Some of these may recur, but KCT must learn and grow, as it has for the last 10 years. The generosity of statutory bodies and local businesses in grant support also shows the cultural value KCT provides for the community. Our Artistic Director ran the London Marathon and received sponsorship of over £1300; another demonstration of community support for KCT

A Christmas Carol for Kendal was an enormously exciting and rewarding project. There was not a weak performance and its success was wholly deserved.

Chris Taylor, PhD,
Artistic Director

Appendix

Kendal Community Theatre A Christmas Carol for Kendal

1 Report from Sandgate School, Kendal

Eight Sandgate Students were involved in the Kendal Theatre Production, A Christmas Carol for Kendal. They all got a good deal out of it. Two of the students sadly didn't feel able to join in the final production due to the sensory and social challenges the situation presented, but they still both shared that they thoroughly enjoyed being part of the process.

The Theatre group really was wholly inclusive, enabling everyone, whatever their capacity and need, to get involved in whatever way they could. The team had a unique view of automatically seeing a situation from our student's perspective and deferring to 'how we can we work with this individual' rather than putting up blockers to their involvement. They needed minimal coaching on how to support our students.

Our students benefitted in so many ways from their involvement in this project, including socially through the connections they made with others, but most significantly it had a really positive impact on self-esteem. Our students felt a great sense of community involvement, they felt great about the achievement of actually getting to the end and performing to others, and they felt valued and recognised as an individual who can be included. All our students really looked forward to the weekly practice sessions and they all talk about their performance now, and have aspirations for being involved in future productions

We really do appreciate all the efforts that the team went to to enable this to happen and look forward to working with them again in the future.

Julia McDonald
Deputy Headteacher
Sandgate School

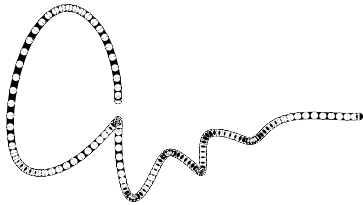
2 Report from Cumbria Edge of Care Sedbergh Drive

YP = Young Person

Before starting the theatre group the YP I am working with has struggled with relationships with her peers and has had very little experience of interacting with people outside her social and age group. Being part of this production gave the YP an opportunity to build positive relationships with other YP's which have been sustained after the production ended. Our YP has also had an opportunity to learn and discover about the lives of people outside her age cohort and social background.

Being part of the theatre group provided our YP with a structured activity that taught her the importance of completing commitments and working as part of a group. Being on stage taught our YP that being anxious is a normal part of life and provided an opportunity for her to work through anxieties within a controlled environment. We have watched our YP's confidence grow in leaps and bounds and it is doubtful this would have occurred without this experience.

The Theatre group has been an immensely positive experience and we are so grateful to Kendal Community theatre for helping with the growth and development of the YP in our care.



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Kendal Community Theatre Final Accounts 01/10/22-30/09/23

Kendal Community Theatre Income & Expenditure 01.10.22-30.09.23

	INCOME	EXPENDITURE
Membership	1033.00	
Donations	173.00	Storage 600.00
		Insurance
		adjustment 17.40
		annual 280.07
		Ionos Webmail
		Nov-Apr 7x2.40 16.80
		May-Oct 5x3.60 18.00
Miscellaneous		Miscellaneous
AGM	26.00	AGM 22.56
HMRC GIFT AID REFUND	407.83	CVS DBS 45.00
Total Annual	1639.83	999.83
<i>Balance: income over exp - profit (loss)</i>	640.00	
PRODUCTIONS		
ACCK	9746.41	7126.11
MSDD (donation)	101.19	1359.60
Total productions	9847.60	8485.71
<i>Balance: income over exp - profit (loss)</i>	1361.89	
Snow Queen		
INCOME		EXPENDITURE
Grants		Publicity 67.96
Town Council	500.00	Costume
Stephenson Trust	500.00	Props puppets 70.83
SQ Workshop	60.00	Scripts 108.37
SQ Workshop donation	20.00	
Fairy Tale Marathon		Room Hire 177.60
Just Giving	664.07	Workshop fee 150.00
FMM donations	135.01	W/shop Rm hire 37.50
Total Snow Queen	1879.08	612.26
TOTAL INCOME	13366.51	TOTAL EXPENDITURE 10097.80

BANK BALANCES Opening 01.10.22

Account 1	817.69
Account 2	11314.93
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BANK BALANCES Closing 30.09.23

Account 1	666.40
Account 2	11920.00
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Kendal Community Theatre Final Accounts 01/10/22-30/09/23

KCT's accounting year runs from 1st Oct - 30th Sept.

Accounts for Snow Queen will show 23-24