



The Difference We Made

Keeping each other safe, sharing and surviving have been paramount priorities for the M6 team during the past year.

We responded with agility to lockdowns and last minute covid cancellations whilst nurturing the first shoots of recovery post pandemic wholeheartedly.

We were vigilant and took the extra care necessary to keep our teams and audiences safe physically and emotionally. The additional time, resource and cost has paid huge dividends in terms of flourishing relationships with artists, partners and audiences.

We recommitted to prioritising children, young people and families living in Rochdale and playing a key role developing a local cultural community with our partners, alongside maintaining our national profile and vital place in the Theatre for Young Audiences ecology.

Our heart-warming productions have been enthusiastically applauded in local schools by teachers and children who have missed out on critical shared experiences, a beautiful silver lining in these uncertain times.

Our key theatre venue partners valued our work that moved, inspired and rewarded audiences of all ages for their commitment to the live theatre experience, encouraging the tentative steps of theatregoers, re-emerging to public performances.

We welcomed children back to our Studio Theatre and the building once again buzzed with the energy of our youth theatre groups as friends were reunited and new stories created. Our amazing, vibrant young people bravely stepped back in the studio to reconnect after months of isolation, much to the delight of their parents and carers.

A truly exceptional organisation"

PYA UK

We worked hard to achieve our aims:

1. Making ambitious, original theatre with for and by children and young people that is engaging, multi-layered, and nurtures empathy, respect and emotional literacy.
2. Ensuring our work reaches and is relevant to our local community and under-served audiences in areas of low arts engagement and multiple deprivations.
3. Building on our 45 year track record, using theatre as a tool for positive change that unlocks the potential of children and young people and responds to the challenges of living in contemporary Britain and the modern world.
4. Championing diversity and nurturing creative talent, especially under-represented artists and diverse new voices.
5. Expanding our reach and impact by listening to and respectfully learning from a range of collaborative partners, children and adult experts.
6. Using our position to address the biggest challenges of our time; environmental responsibility, cultural education and equality.

This report captures and shares the output and impact of the past year but none of this could have been achieved without the amazing, people we work with. We thank our dedicated and highly skilled freelance artists, core staff, board members, partners and funders for their resilience, adaptability and commitment.

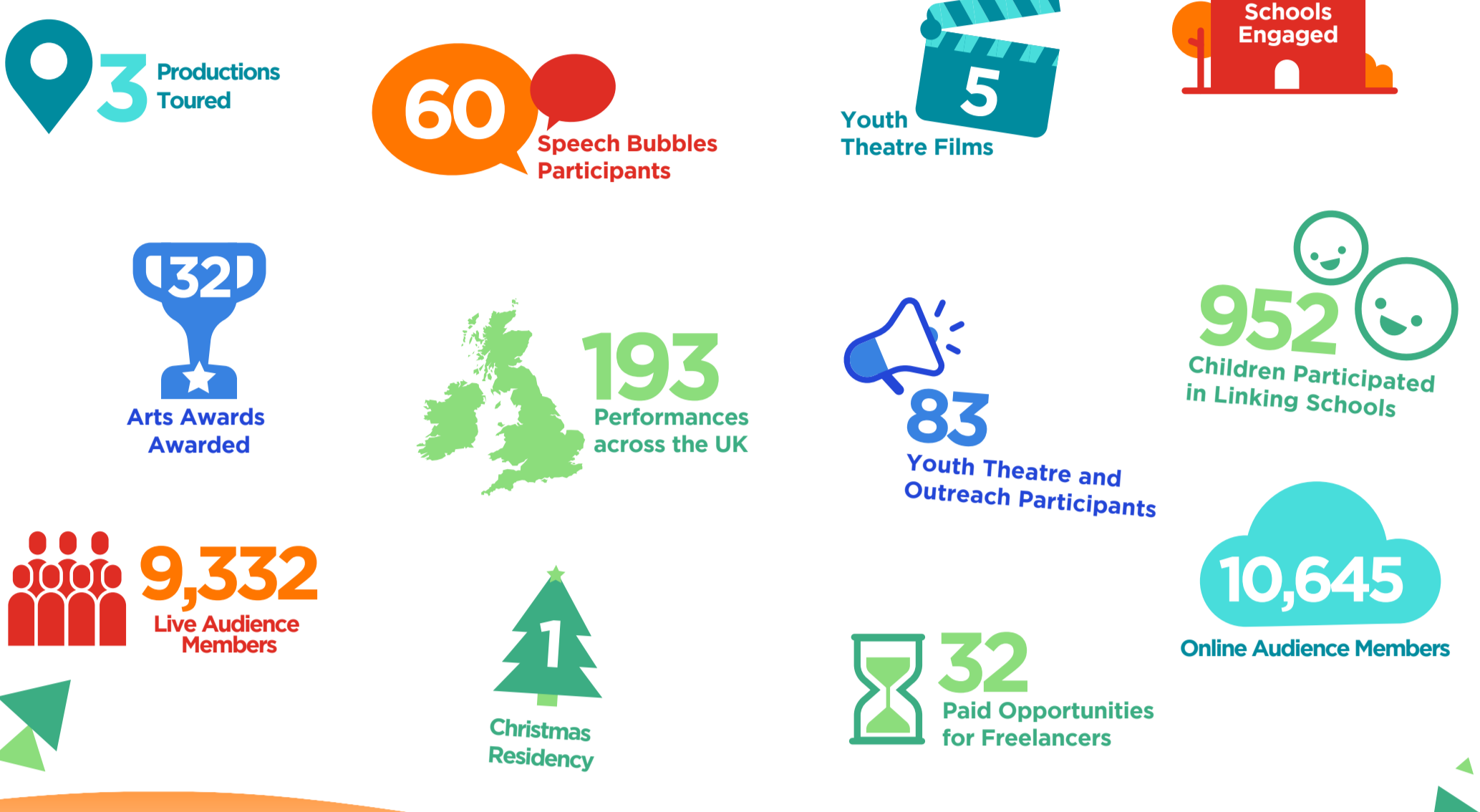
As we move forward in Rochdale Borough, at a time of enormous economic challenges for local families, we pledge to play our part in maximising the potential of Priority Place investment and partnerships to collectively make a positive difference to the lives of local children and young people through excellent creative engagement.

Deborah Palmer
Managing Director/CEO

Gilly Baskyfield
Artistic Director/CEO

Simon Whitehead
Chair

Our Year in Numbers



Highlights

- Despite uncertainty around Covid and lockdowns, we managed to safely tour **Pebble on the Beach** (in association with The North Wall), transporting audiences to an unforgettable day at the seaside. Our pilot toured into schools during spring 2021, followed by a national tour in the autumn. Venues included The Egg, Theatre Royal Bath, The Lowry and Octagon Theatre Bolton. We also hosted community performances at M6 Studio including shows for Cared For children and foster families.
- Our magical **Mavis Sparkle** took to the road once again for a national tour followed by a 2 1/2 week Christmas residency at The Hullabaloo, Darlington (including two BSL interpreted performances). Mavis performed under Luke Jerram's moon at Grimsby Cathedral and under the earth as part of the Gala events at Number One Riverside. A truly cosmic tour!
- Children from culturally different backgrounds in 20 Rochdale primary schools came to M6 Studio to watch **Mavis Sparkle** and take part in workshops as part of the **Linking Schools** project. Working hard to safely mitigate covid risks, Rochdale was the only place in the country to hold face to face neutral venue visits during 2021.
- We launched a brand-new film version of **The Storm** with accompanying educational resource for Years 7/8 across Greater Manchester. A live performance was remounted as part of Gaia and although the Youth Climate Summit unfortunately had to be cancelled, we were able to embark on a 2-week tour of local schools. This single voice play confronts issues surrounding climate change.

- Using **The Storm** as a creative starting point to discuss environmental issues, a group of young people took part in **Everything is Connected**, a climate action and wellbeing project for ages 13+. In partnership with Healthy Young Minds, the group produced two pieces of creative work.
- Women of Rochdale** took part in a summer workshop project in partnership with Community Arts North West and Kashmiri Youth Project. These leadership and empowerment sessions encouraged local young women to use their voices to affect positive change.
- Our participatory team worked with Alice Ingham RC Primary School Year 4s on their **Discover Arts Awards**, learning about life backstage in the theatre. This included two workshops at M6 Studio.
- We continued to **support other artists/companies and talent** including Parvez Qadir and the Crossing the Line project. We provided in kind support to Ergon Theatre and Beggar's Belief and provided a member of our Barnardo's Act to Shine group with work experience at M6. She is now going on to study drama at college.

M6 have a wonderful way of making the children feel seen and heard"

Erica Field, Early Help in Schools, Rochdale

- The **National Linking Network** offered the **Bird Behaviour** film, one of the winning entries in M6's lockdown monologue writing competition, to schools in 28 geographic areas.
- We continued to deliver **Speech Bubbles** in three local primary schools. This drama-based programme supports children in KS1 to develop their communication skills. Teachers noticed improvements back in class in 90% of the children.
- Working in partnership with **Barnardo's**, we supported young people living with a disability label to participate in our **Act to Shine** youth theatre group. Working with professional filmmakers, a short film about understanding difference was created and shared with friends and family. This project was granted a further three years of Children in Need funding.
- Four local **Youth Theatre groups** continued to work in person at M6, devising original films which were shared online with friends and family. The groups later started developing three new live productions alongside a show for NT Connections.
- We continued to work with Proud and Loud Arts and Chrissy Jones, an emerging learning disabled artist, to develop **Shadow Girl**, touring in 2022.

Genius! Truly magical"

Audience Member (Mavis Sparkle)

Money



Future Plans

- Nest**
Ages 3+
A bird's eye view of the things that matter. Touring to schools in summer 2022 and to national venues in the autumn.
- Street Where I Live**
Ages 4+
Granny Bradshaw shares the warmth and friendship of the street where she lives. Touring to Rochdale schools and community settings in spring 2023.
- The Incident**
A new Curriculum for Life piece for secondary aged pupils looking at themes of consent and misogyny.

Always such a pleasure to have M6 in the building. We had lots of families in today who have never been to The North Wall and the response has been wonderfully positive."

Ria Parry, Co-Director, The North Wall

Our children have never encountered live theatre and to watch their faces and hear their laughter was fantastic! Thank you for keeping your prices low so that we can access these amazing performances"

Lisa Subachus, Crumpsall Lane Primary School

People and Partners Who Made Our Year

Aaron Cork Adam Carree Aleesha Neill Alice Bunker-Whitney Angela Jackson Anna Friel Arif Javid Caroline Kennedy Chrissy Jones Courtney Hayes Danielle Frame David Haworth Deborah Palmer Dot Wood MBE Eleanor Samson Emily Spowage Fiona Fogarty Gareth Dennison Gil Graystone Katherine Vernez-Gray Gilly Baskyfield Guy Hargreaves Hannah Murray Huw James James Cunliffe Jane Cox Jen Harris Jenni Morris Jill Welsby John Farinworth John Matzen Guss Matzen Kirsty Johnson Lauren Dixon Leighton Wise Lewis Wileman Liam Smith Luke Walker Maria Major Mark Melville Mark Starbuck Mitch Oldham Muhammad Abdulaleem Muriel Gott Nasrine Akhtar Nathaniel Mason Nicola Schofield Nigel Gloudon Professor Jenny Hughes Rachel McBride Robin Parker Shannon Wild Sharon McWilliams Simon DeCourcy Simon Whitehead Sophie Parkes Stephanie Hollinshead Sue Johnstone OBE Tayo Akinbode TC Howard Tony Jackson Action Together Alice Ingham Primary School Al Saints C of E Primary School Arts Council England artsdepot Ashfield Valley Primary School BBC Children In Need Beeston Primary School Bolton Octagon Broadfield Primary School Brownhill School Cardinal Langley Secondary School Claremont Primary School Primary Academy Crumpsall Lane Academy English FolkExpo Ergon Theatre The Culture House Guildhall Arts Centre Healthy Young Minds Holy Family RC & I-thrive KYP Made by Mortals Marland Technology High School Midlands Art Primary School NHS CCG Number One Riverside Oldham Schools Linking Our Lady and St. Paul's RC Primary School Parkfield Primary School Proud and Loud Rochdale Borough Council Rochdale Borough Culture Network Rochdale Libraries Rochdale Schools Linking Skylight Circus Smithy Bridge Primary School Speech Bubbles Springside School St. John's Thornham Primary School St. Joseph's RC Primary School St. Luke C of E Primary School St. Mary's RC Primary School (Littleborough) St. Mary's RC Primary School St. Thomas C of E Primary School St. Michael's Primary School St. Peter's C of E Primary School St. Peter's Church Hall, Culture House St. Middleton C of E Primary School St. Thomas Newhey Primary School Stamford Arts Centre Stute Theatre Tarvin Community Centre The Dukes The egg, Theatre Royal Bath The Lowry The North Wall Arts Centre The Old Town Hall The Spring Heritage and Arts Centre Theatre Hullabaloo Touchstones Waterside Arts West Bridgford Library Woodland Community Primary School Woodland Primary School Workshop Library Your Trust/Link4Life

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With thanks to our funders:

