

Review of the Year 2023-24



 **Theatre
Royal**
Newcastle upon Tyne



Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story



Our Vision

A love of theatre for everyone, that lasts a lifetime.

Our Mission

Create moments of magic on and off stage, through an ambitious creative programme for audiences and communities across the North East. Our landmark theatre in the heart of Newcastle is a place where everyone is welcome and a space for all to enjoy.

Our Values

Ambitious

We are ambitious in all that we do; excellence and quality are pre-requisites and we endeavour to be the best that we can be.

Inclusive

We celebrate diversity; we welcome and respect different voices and perspectives knowing that together we can achieve more.

Collaborative

We value trust; we embrace partnership working to achieve and celebrate shared success.

Creative

We nurture creativity; we recognise and celebrate imagination and originality in everyone.

Progressive

We are forward thinking; we look to the future and embrace change.

A Very Warm Welcome

**Our vision is clear;
a love of theatre for
everyone, that lasts
a lifetime.**

We know the impact a connection with arts, culture and theatre has on our communities and are committed to creating opportunities for as many people as possible to experience the passion, joy and emotion that only live performances can deliver.

And we wouldn't be able to create moments of magic on and off-stage without the hard work and dedication of the people who make up the Theatre Royal team.



Marianne Locatori, Chief Executive and
Nick Swales, Chair of the Board of Trustees



*Fantastically Great Women
Who Changed The World*

Our fantastic people are very much a key focus for the coming 12 months as we evolve our People Plan to ensure that Newcastle Theatre Royal is a place where everyone thrives and theatre flourishes.

Very much at the centre of our ambition to create a love of theatre that lasts a lifetime is our Creative Engagement programme, developed to provide creative pathways and nurture the abundance of talent and the industry's future workforce that's right here on our doorstep.

By leveraging partnerships with visiting companies such as New Adventures and the Royal Shakespeare Company, we have been able to develop brilliant community programmes over the last year. We will continue this important work through further collaboration with organisations representing under-served groups and fostering relationships with schools in economically deprived areas.

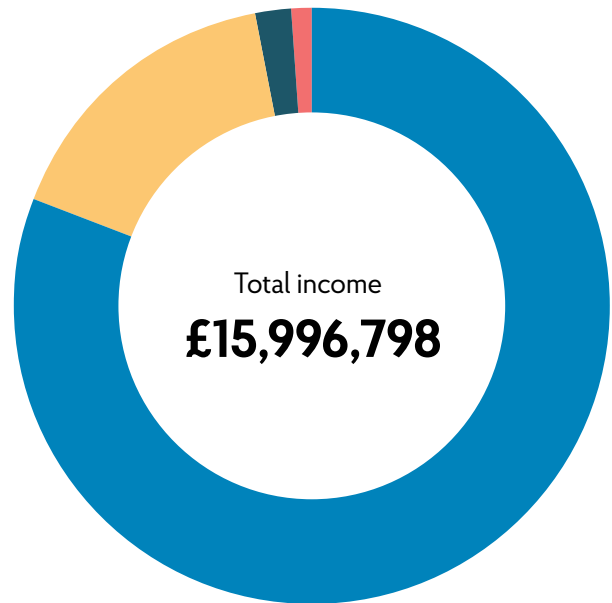
Newcastle is a wonderful city with a rich creative landscape and we recognise the important role



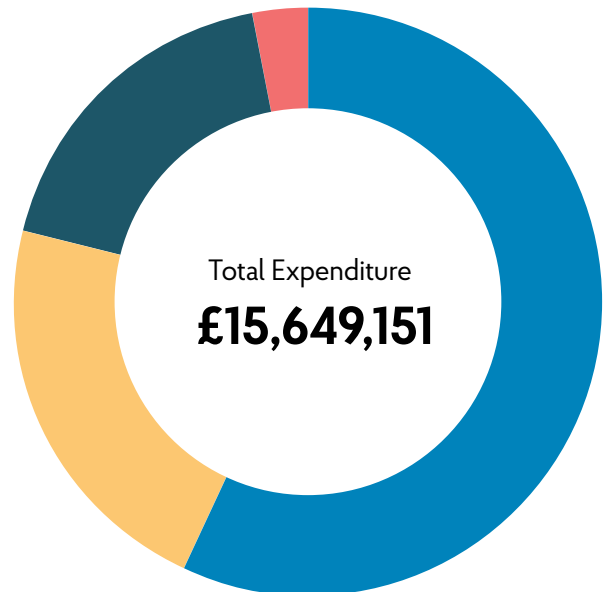
that we play in contributing to its economic success. We are proud to be part of an ecology of superb cultural institutions and, as custodians of one of the most iconic buildings in the city, we have bold aspirations to ensure that our beautiful venue is open and accessible for everyone to enjoy more of the time.

Our impressive creative programme has seen us welcome almost 330,000 audience members through our doors to enjoy 410 performances. Alongside world-class musicals, exquisite dance, powerful dramas and (we think!) the best pantomime in the country, we have worked closely with talented writers and producers in our region to showcase stories rooted in the North East on our stage.

Thanks must once again go to our loyal team of staff, our Board of Trustees, members, volunteers and supporters and of course our wonderful audiences. Together we will continue to ensure our landmark theatre is a place for all to enjoy.



- Creative programme income
- Other income
- Membership income
- Grants and donations income



- Creative programme payments and costs
- Staff costs
- Overheads
- Retail and commercial operations costs

Our economic impact

£39,267,510

On Stage Highlights

We welcomed 327,703 people during 2023/24; presenting 61 productions over the course of the year – from the very best West End musicals to gripping dramas which had audiences on their edge of their seat, mesmerising world class dance to fun-filled family shows.

Dance was a key part of our creative programme. Our partnership with Dance Consortium saw us welcome award-winning South African choreographer Dada Masilo with two stunning performances of *The Sacrifice*, *Ailey 2* – Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's second company – celebrating its 50th anniversary with its first UK performances in more than a decade and *São Paulo Dance Company*, who showcased the work of three choreographers



7,536

First time attenders

410

Number of performances

117,618

Individual ticket buyers

2.9



Average number of tickets purchased per buyer

42nd Street

whose inspiration is deeply rooted in Latin American and Spanish culture as part of their premiere UK tour.

Matthew Bourne's New Adventures made a welcome return, presenting the gothic romance ***Sleeping Beauty***, audience favourites Northern Ballet enchanted with their critically acclaimed production of ***Beauty & the Beast***, Scottish Ballet presented a new twist on a beautiful classic with ***Cinders!*** and TV dancing sensation Johannes Radebe brought a carnival atmosphere to the stage in ***Freedom Unleashed***.

Musicals once again took centre stage with the all-singing all-tapping ***42nd Street*** bringing the razzle dazzle alongside crowd-pleasing show-stoppers ***Sister Act***, ***SIX***, ***Jesus Christ Superstar***,



£93.36

Average purchase value

2.27

Average number of visits per year

£32.20

Average ticket price

71%

Occupancy





Julius Caesar



The Drifters Girl



Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty



Johannes Radebe: Freedom

The Drifters Girl, ***Everybody's Talking About Jamie*** and ***The Bodyguard***, starring home town favourite Zoe Birkett.

Making their first appearance at Newcastle Theatre Royal since 2020, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) performed a visceral new production of ***Julius Caesar***. A summer of mesmerising drama continued with a spell-binding two week run of National Theatre's highly acclaimed ***The Ocean at the End of the Lane***.

The supernatural phenomenon ***2:22 – A Ghost Story***, penned by Newcastle-born award-winning writer Danny Robins, sent chills throughout the audience on its North East stage debut and James Graham's thrilling and provocative drama ***Quiz*** explored the real-life story of Charles Ingram, aka the Coughing Major, who conned the world's most popular TV quiz show, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, out of £1,000,000.

61

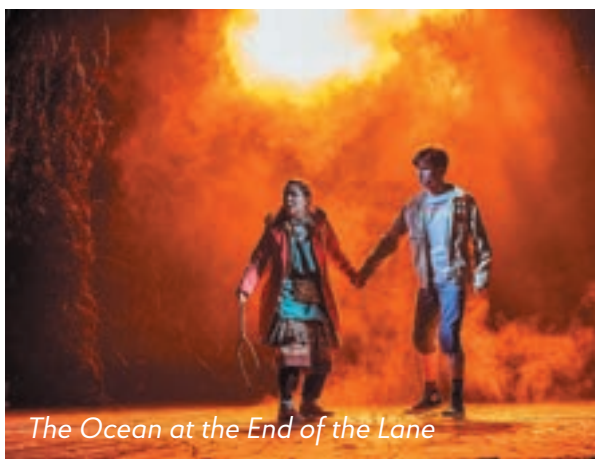
Number of productions

327,703

Total tickets sold



The festive season saw panto superstar Danny Adams enthral audiences alongside Clive Webb, Chris Hayward and Joe McElderry in a brand new production – ***Pinocchio*** – created especially for Newcastle Theatre Royal by Michael Harrison and Crossroads Pantomimes. Spectacular choreography, glittering sets, breathtaking special effects and a wonderful musical score formed the backdrop to a tale full of adventure and hilarious slapstick, proving once again that we are home to the North East’s biggest panto – 85,000 audience members can’t be wrong!



What our audience came to see

39%

Musical

22%

Panto

15%

Dance

9%

Family shows

7%

Drama

5%

Comedy

3%

Opera

Creative Engagement

Our weekly adult acting courses and Centre Stage programme, which offers daytime drama-based activities for over 25s, has continued to go from strength to strength. Young people have once again benefited from our on-going programme of creative workshops which offer opportunities to develop performance skills, build confidence and meet new friends in a safe and nurturing environment.

In 2023/24, we worked directly with over 1,300 individuals through practical workshop activities within Newcastle Theatre Royal, a further 327 school age pupils in their school settings and over 130 adult participants in community settings.



8

Pre & post show talks

84

Centre Stage events

33

Adult acting events

12

School Insight visits

286

Number of summer school attendees

6

Project A Studio performances

We also opened the doors to our backstage areas and welcomed 178 people to participate in Insight visits which enabled them to get a glimpse into how the theatre works.

We have been fortunate to continue our long-term relationships with both Twisting Ducks, a North East charity that aims to change the lives of people with learning difficulties and autism, and Newcastle College, working with neurodivergent young adults and those with additional learning needs, supporting 53 individuals develop confidence, social and performance skills.

On stage, we developed two large scale main auditorium productions, eight full scale Studio productions and a further 27 show back and sharing events across our Studio and Rehearsal Room spaces, welcoming 1,480 audience members.

We have further supported enrichment around our programme of dance and opera.



572

Youth Theatre attendees

863

Visitors for the Children's Bookshow

9,979

School group attendees

36

Twisting
Ducks
events





Project A



Summer School

We welcomed over 900 people to pre and post-show talks, enabled audience members to observe dance open rehearsals and provided the opportunity for five adult dancers in training to participate in a masterclass with Ailey 2, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's second company.

Youth Theatre

Our Youth Theatre continues to grow and develop and offered 576 young people a platform from where they developed performance skills and created small scale devised projects. Working in collaboration, the six Youth Theatre groups came together to upscale their work and present it to an audience of friends and family in our main auditorium.

Summer School

Our popular Summer School programme saw 286 young people from across the region

participate in a number of week-long, performing arts projects including creating a play in a week, exploring backstage roles, a five-day film challenge and musical theatre showcase. Showback opportunities saw 60 budding filmmakers create nine short films which were presented in our Studio theatre and 40 talented performers take to the stage in the main auditorium to present a celebration of choreography and songs from West End favourites.

Project A – Actor Training Programme

We welcomed 18 young people from across the North East to our flagship year-long actor-training programme. We worked with visiting Directors to develop our Create Season in Rep, creating two new pieces of work. With the permission of the Julia Darling estate, one of the pieces was further developed and performed as an epilogue to a sell-out, week-long run of Darling's A

97

Newcastle College
SEN enrichment events

4,901

Young people participating in a
Creative Engagement activity



Creative Engagement



Youth Theatre

Manifesto for a New City. Over 90% of the graduates have gone on to continue their training in drama school settings or have received professional representation, working in the industry from graduation.



Youth Theatre



15

Youth Theatre & Summer School performances



Project A

Working in Partnership

We have continued to foster and develop creative and innovative partnerships. Over the past 12 months we have deepened our relationships with visiting companies including the Royal Shakespeare Company, New Adventures and Dance Consortium to meaningfully support our outreach work in schools and the community and ensure a legacy that extends beyond on-stage performances.

Royal Shakespeare Company

We were delighted to welcome the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) back to our stage for a week-long run of *Julius Caesar*. We engaged a small cohort of six female identifying members of the community to develop their vocal and performance skills and participate in a series of workshops with the RSC before performing on stage in a Community Chorus. Chosen for their outstanding contributions and work in the community in and around Newcastle, the members of the chorus represented the depth and diversity of our city.



Ailey 2

With our Chief Executive, Marianne Locatori as its co-chair, we have been delighted to present world-renowned dance on our stage through Dance Consortium, an Arts Council England (ACE) funded organisation that brings large scale, international contemporary dance to the UK.

As part of our presentation of Ailey 2 and commitment to dance talent development in the region, we hosted a Summer Intensive in partnership with Ailey Project UK. The full day workshop for pre-professional dancers aged 14-20 years of age from across the North was led by former Ailey dancer Marcus J Willis and Ailey school staff and students live from New York City.

Children's Theatre Partnership

The Children's Theatre Partnership (CTP) was established to produce and tour bold, ambitious and imaginative theatre for young people to engage new and diverse audiences, often introducing them to theatre for the first time. Having previously presented the stunning CTP on-stage productions *Animal Farm*, *Holes* and *Unexpected Twist*, we embarked on a school enrichment programme that explored the themes featured in the award-winning novel *The Boy at the Back of the Class* prior to its week-long run in Summer 2024.



Isobel McArthur,
writer and director
of *Pride & Prejudice**
(*sort of)

Pride & Prejudice* (*sort of)

In February 2024, we announced our first co-production in more than a decade. Working in partnership with celebrated West End producer David Pugh, the Oliver Award-winning *Pride & Prejudice** (*sort of) will embark on a 35-date nationwide tour in 2024/25.

Auditions took place at the theatre in March 2024 – one of the few castings to be held outside of London for a large scale commercial theatre tour – and gave local North East talent the opportunity to audition in front of a West End producer and writer on their doorstep.

EVERY Newcastle

We have continued to support Newcastle City Council's EVERY strategy, a transformative eight-year plan to ensure that every baby, child and young person in the city can benefit from fantastic experiences that help shape a path to a successful future. More than 800 young people and their families who identify as experiencing poverty or socio-economic disadvantage attended a dedicated performance of our show-stopping pantomime *Pinocchio* as well as benefiting from other opportunities to enjoy performances throughout the year.

Bristol Street Motors

Our valuable partnership with Bristol Street Motors continued in 2023/24, with sponsorship from the Gateshead-based dealership network supporting our broad programme of on and off-stage work.

With six dealerships in and around Newcastle, Bristol Street Motors has provided a range of hybrid and electric vehicles which have been parked on the terrace outside the theatre's portico to highlight upcoming performances.



Partnership with
Bristol Street Motors

914 | 164 | 24

Number of EVERY
attendees

Literacy project
participants

RSC Community Choir
rehearsals

Supporting Our Future

Why Fundraising Matters

As a charity, our ability to fulfil our vision is rooted in the support and generosity of our community. Unlike many organisations, we receive no statutory or regular funding and we are completely independent, making the funds we raise essential to our success.

To maintain our full programme, connect with local communities and preserve our Grade I listed building, we need to raise additional funds beyond ticket sales. Fundraising, membership and commercial activity are critical to closing the gap, ensuring that we can continue our community outreach, keep the building in good repair and offer enriching cultural experiences for our audiences.

The Importance of Fundraising

Sustaining Our Programme: Fundraising supports us to offer a quality, diverse programme enriching our community and inspiring creativity. We bring national and West End shows to Newcastle, allowing local audiences to engage on their home ground.

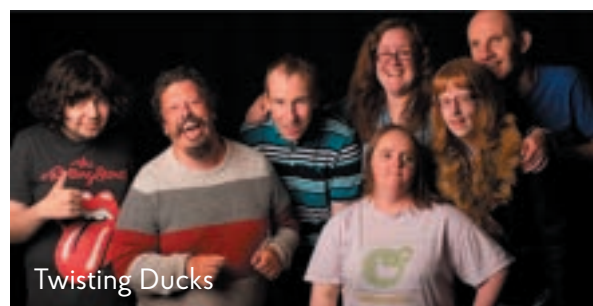
Community Engagement: Through the funds we raise, we can deliver creative engagement programmes that connect with local schools, community groups and individuals, fostering a sense of belonging and well-being.

Preserving Heritage: Our Grade 1 listed building is a historic gem that requires ongoing

maintenance. The support we receive ensures this cultural landmark remains a vibrant part of our community for generations to come.

Support and Success

Our supporters are the driving force behind everything we do. We couldn't achieve our objectives without the generosity of Friends Members, Sponsors, Business Members and Trusts and Foundations. Their contributions enable us to continue our exceptional work on stage, deliver transformative programmes and provide enriching experiences for our local communities. In the coming year, we are excited to be able to expand the ways individuals, businesses and Trusts and Foundations can support our work. This will open new opportunities for more people to contribute and make a meaningful impact through our initiatives. Whether through new membership options or innovative fundraising activities and projects, there will be more ways than ever to get involved!



6,673

Friends of the Theatre Royal

13

Business Members

17

Friends events



Youth Theatre

A Newcastle Theatre Royal for Tomorrow

We are committed to ensuring that accessibility is at the heart of everything that we do. Our theatre is an inclusive place to create, to connect, to feel safe in, to inspire and a place to have fun.

In the last year we have:

- Engaged with Tonic, a leading voice in the arts and culture sector committed to driving change within the industry to make it more equitable, diverse and inclusive
- Implemented a robust review into three key areas – audience access, our teams and programming – which included on-site visits, staff 1-2-1 and organisation-wide workshops, the results of which will shape and focus our Inclusion Strategy
- Became members of Tonic Changemakers, a community of likeminded people who are committed to driving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) related change in the arts and culture sector
- Members of our team completed Proud Allies LGBTQIA+ training with Curious Arts with further training scheduled as part of our People Plan
- A number of our team took part in Northern Pride in July 2023; participation included joining the city centre march and a presence in the Rainbow Village over the course of Pride weekend



14

Audience Described
Performances

11

Captioned
Performances

9

British Sign Language
(BSL) Performances

10

Touch Tours

We want more people to enjoy our building more of the time and we have implemented projects which embed environmental sustainability into our on-going plans to improve audience experience and ensure that our beautiful, iconic venue is a welcoming and open place for the coming years.

- A refurbishment of our Studio theatre saw the installation of a LED lighting rig, upgraded sound and masking and flexible seating options to develop our aspiration that the space can be used to support the work of our Creative Engagement team as well as provide a creative hub in the city to learn, create and explore ideas
- Main stage lighting has been updated to LED with 50x 750w tungsten lighting units now replaced with 150w of LED output per unit
- Conducted a M&E and Thermal Survey to create a full asset register of our M&E systems,

highlighting age and condition as well as a thermal model of the building which will feed into our Sustainability Strategy

- Upgrades to our fire alarm system, which included replacement of all detection equipment, control panels and visual aids, as well as the replacement of auditorium exit signage to a dimmable LED system
- Extensive redecoration and recarpeting works in the front and back of house areas
- We have established a cross-departmental Health & Safety working group which embeds accountability and responsibility for improvements throughout the organisation
- Continued to monitor our paper consumption by implementing additional digital communications and reducing our print requirements by expanding distribution of the pocket-sized version of our season brochure



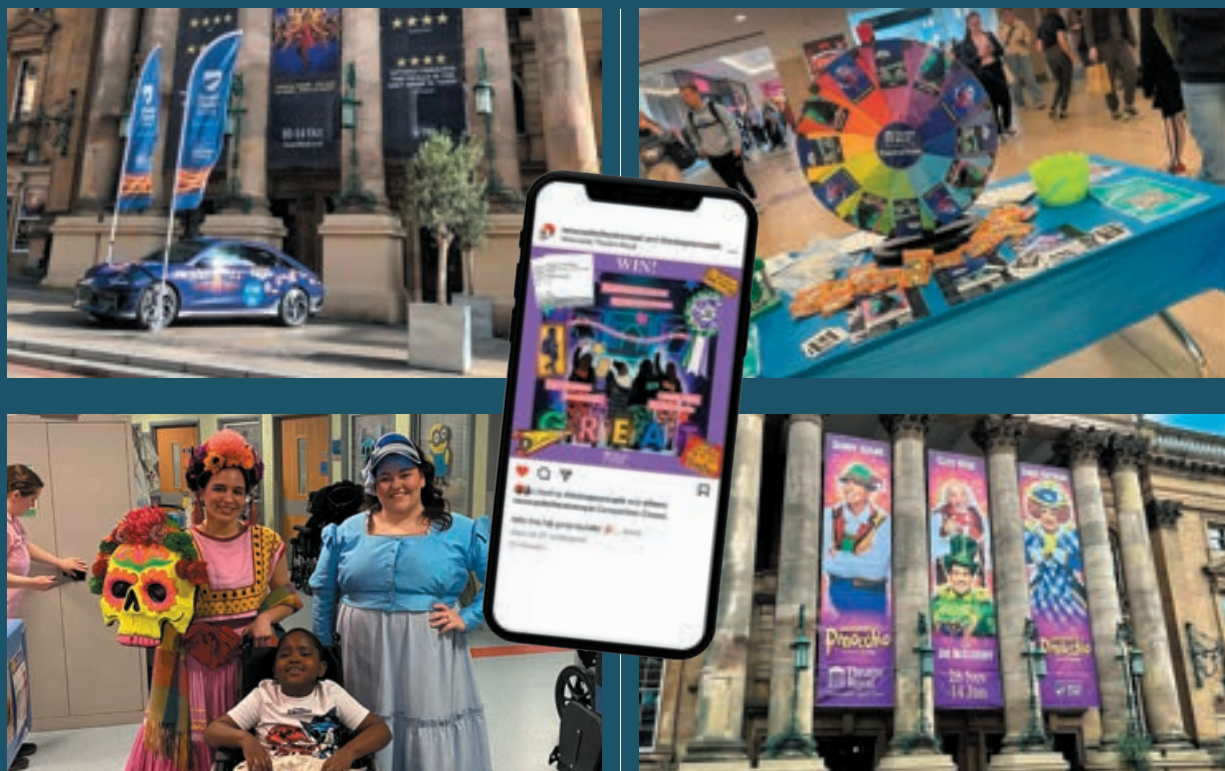
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Relaxed
Performances

36,500

Units of energy saved by upgrade to LED lights

Events & Media Moments



1.2m

Total website visitors

550

Number of press articles

124,696

Combined followers on social media





Celebrating Our People

Our success is driven by our people and they remain at the very heart of everything that we do. We continually look at how we support and develop our teams to be a talented and diverse workforce, empowered and appropriately skilled to deliver our creative programme, community outreach activities and commercial operations.

This year we welcomed the new role of Head of People to create an employee-centric people plan that makes Newcastle Theatre Royal a place where people thrive and our theatre prospers.

We have invested in a new HR Information System to streamline operations and give more worklife ownership to our employees as well as the introduction of an improved internal communications platform that promotes peer-to-peer recognition and houses dedicated areas focused upon People and Wellbeing.

Our annual staff Summer Party brought together colleagues from all departments in the theatre for a fun and social afternoon.

We are committed to ensuring that Newcastle Theatre Royal is a great place to work with a renewed focus upon culture evolution, leadership and management development and implementing a values and behaviour framework.

Over the course of the year, 47 volunteers undertook a variety of roles – from supporting



the Host team to revitalising our props and costume store – as part of Volunteer Here, a Newcastle Gateshead Culture Venues initiative, equipping them with valuable social, enrichment and employability skills.

Volunteers engaged

47

Artists and
freelancers engaged

37

People employed

260

People recruited

29

Thank You

Trustees:

Julie Blackie, John Carver, Lorna Edwards,
Dr Ben Fletcher-Watson, Scott Holland,
Alison Jones, Ray Mills, Andrew Roberts,
Nick Swales OBE DL

Our Team:

Thank you to each and every member of our
dedicated team of employees and freelancers for
all your hard work, dedication and the warm
welcome that you give to all our visitors.

Friends of the Theatre Royal Committee:

Mark Sugden, Clive Freemantle, Pam Clarke,
Yvonne Richardson, June Svenson, Sue Jenkins,
Karin Dyke, Carol Ainslie, Ruth Barber, Eve
Purvis, Melanie Howie, Christine Holmes-
Franklin, Gillian Wingfield

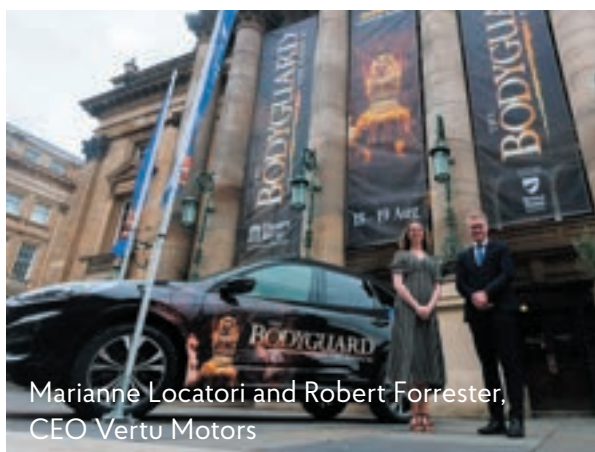
Donors & Supporters:

Thank you to our supporters and donors who
share our love for theatre and whose generous
contributions will help keep the magic alive and
maintain the great tradition that is Newcastle
Theatre Royal.

Season Sponsor:



Business Members:



Marianne Locatori and Robert Forrester,
CEO Vertu Motors



