

STRATEGIC REPORT 2023/24



**FOR THE YEAR END
31 MARCH 2024**

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Kidnapped, photography by Mihaela Bodlovic





REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

For the year ended
31 March 2024

As I write the introduction to our Strategic Report, I am conscious of the precarious landscape the cultural sector in Scotland is operating in and the ongoing impact on our partners and collaborators without whom there is no National Theatre of Scotland. Our plans were created in the context of the challenges faced by our entire sector, and we continue to vigorously make the case for culture in all our lives.

It has been validating this year to see how the scale, diversity and reach of our productions reflect the ambitions of our strategic framework. In this current year our work reached an in-person audience of 79,360, toured the length and breadth of Scotland and the UK from the Orkney Islands to Brighton and was seen in seven countries.

Our belief in new ideas and new writing was reflected in productions like *Protest*, our co-commission with Fuel, Imagine and Northern Stage, written by former Edinburgh Makar Hannah Lavery, and *Thrown*, Nat McCleary's first stage play directed by Johnny McKnight which was staged at the Traverse Theatre as part of the Edinburgh International Festival. Both productions explored modern identity, injustice, the power of friendship, and toured extensively.

Dracula, written by Morna Pearson and directed by Sally Cookson was a co-production with Aberdeen Performing Arts in association with the Belgrade Theatre Coventry. It fulfilled our ambition to produce large scale work for number one theatres, touring on from Aberdeen to Glasgow, Stirling, Inverness, Dundee, Edinburgh, Coventry and Liverpool.

Dear Billy – A love letter to the Big Yin from the people of Scotland written and performed by Gary

McNair and directed by Joe Douglas, was a unique experiment for NTS as it saw the company take the same show on the same tour from Scotland's smallest most rural venues into one of its largest, Glasgow's King's Theatre, a venue with a long and happy association with Billy Connolly.

Kidnapped, co-directed by Isobel McArthur and Gareth Nicholls was a new interpretation of the Robert Louis Stevenson classic novel given a contemporary spin by co-writers Isobel McArthur with Michael John McCarthy. It was a landmark piece that captured the hearts of audiences across the country.

Our ambitions to present work internationally saw renowned choreographer Claire Cunningham's *Thank You Very Much* tour to Brussels, Hanover, Poznan and Oslo. *An Accident/ a Life*, A Marc Brew Company and Eastman co-production in association with National Theatre Scotland, toured to The Hague, Sierre, Bulle and Basel.

Our season closed with sell out shows for *Moorcroft*, written and directed by Eilidh Loan, our in-association tour of the Tron Theatre's production. It was an absolute joy for NTS to support colleagues at the Tron take this gem of a show on tour and to be able to amplify this great work. We received 12 CATS nominations for three of our productions, *Medea*, *Kidnapped* and *Enough of Him* which came away with three wins for best production, best new play and best director.

Access to creativity is a fundamental right, regardless of background or geography and the NTS' Creative Engagement team was back on the road again this year with Theatre in Schools Scotland and three shows for primary schools, *Mess*, *The Last Forecast* and *Cloud Man* with 96 performances experienced by 6,435 young people. *Thank U, Next* exploring teenage identities through dance performance was piloted at Bellahouston Academy with 21Common. Our hugely popular series of Creative Careers sessions for pupils continued, and our annual Teacher's Day had 80 teachers joining us from across Scotland, offering networking, discussion, inspiration and access to industry professionals.

The Neighbourhood Project continued with artist in residence, Kevin P Gilday, setting up the Bank of Springburn in Springburn Shopping centre with live performances from local artists and workshops for community and college groups.



Dracula, photography by Mihaela Bodlovic

We made positive strides with our access ambitions this year. It has been particularly pleasing to see our work toured extensively in villages and towns throughout Scotland. New access initiatives included extending our *Theatre for A Fiver* offer for ages 14-26 to encompass anyone receiving low-income benefits recognising that there are many people affected by financial hardship. We consolidated our learning from discussions with the South Asian Steering Group and are now working on an action plan. We offered three Chilled Performances across the *Dracula* tour for the first time with positive feedback.

The collective challenge and responsibility we face for placing the green agenda at the heart of our creative and production processes this year saw us co-host the Making Theatre in a Time of Climate Crisis Conference, with our colleagues at National Theatre of Great Britain and National Theatre of Wales, attended by 300 theatre makers. Thanks to the determined and supportive efforts of our Technical Team, we continue to meet our Theatre Green Book intermediate standards with all our sets. We are one of the only companies in the UK who are committing to Intermediate Standard for every show. We could not make this happen without our freelancers who share our values and work with us to meet our targets.

The fundraising climate remains challenging, but our dedicated Development Team continues unabashedly to make the most of every opportunity to identify new supporters and income strands. We remain extremely grateful to all our public funders, donors, sponsors, corporate supporters, trusts and foundations and friends. Your belief in us and generosity has enabled us to achieve our ambitions. The uplift we received from the Scottish Government this year was also greatly appreciated.

I am in awe of our trustees who freely give up their valuable time to offer their expertise in support of our work. I am grateful to all of them for the various roles they fulfil and immensely so this year to Mukesh Moorjani, our new Senior Independent Director, to Catherine Holden, our new Chair of People and Performance Committee and Sheelagh Duffield our new Board Advocate for Children and Adults Protection. This year we welcomed two new Board members Kully Thiarai and Kirin Saeed and we waved goodbye to Paul McKelvie who made a full and welcome contribution over two terms of office. We mourned the passing of the much loved and respected Sir Michael Boyd whose contribution to the sector was vast, not least the part he played as an NTS Board member and his influence on Scottish theatre.

Another year beckons and there is much to do. No doubt there will be ups and downs given the turbulence of the times. As I reflect on how our organisation will navigate this environment, what stands out for me is our people. I would also like to express my thanks to the NTS team and all the freelancers who have worked incredibly hard to deliver a strong programme. Whatever the future holds, we will remain inventive, collaborative, ambitious and continue to champion theatre making, culture and creativity in all our lives.

Jane Spiers
Chair



DIRECTORS' REPORT

The National Theatre of Scotland has the pleasure to present the Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2024.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

National Theatre of Scotland is dedicated to playing the great stages, arts centres, village halls, schools and site-specific locations of Scotland, the UK and internationally. As well as creating ground-breaking productions and working with the most talented theatre-makers, National Theatre of Scotland produces significant community engagement projects, innovates digitally and works constantly to develop new talent. Central to this is finding pioneering ways to reach current and new audiences and to encourage people's full participation in the Company's work. With no performance building of its own, the Company works with existing and new venues and companies to create and tour theatre of the highest quality. Founded in 2006, the Company has, in its short life, become a globally significant theatrical player, with an extensive repertoire of award-winning work.

National Theatre of Scotland is core funded by the Scottish Government.



VISION

A theatre without walls, for everyone, that sparks connection between people, between communities, and between Scotland and the world.

MISSION

To make extraordinary, relevant theatre by, with and for contemporary Scotland.

VALUES

Collaborative

We recognise our roles as both collaborators and leaders in the culture sector, the richness of collaborative working, and our responsibilities to individuals and companies working across Scotland and around the world.

Ambitious

We want to make a positive difference with everything we do, setting high standards for the work we create. We will make bold choices and seek constantly to evolve and adapt our working practices to meet the needs of artists, audiences and communities.

THIS YEAR IN SUMMARY

AUDIENCE

79,360

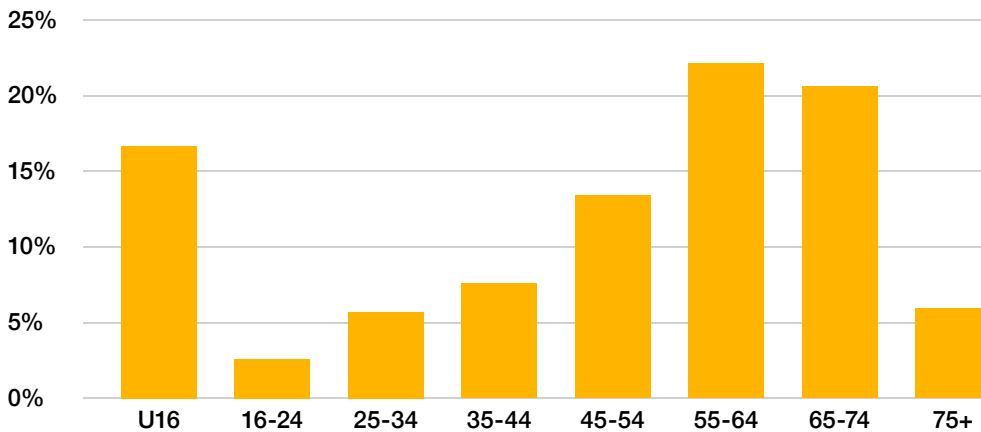
79,360 people attended our productions and events.

943,495

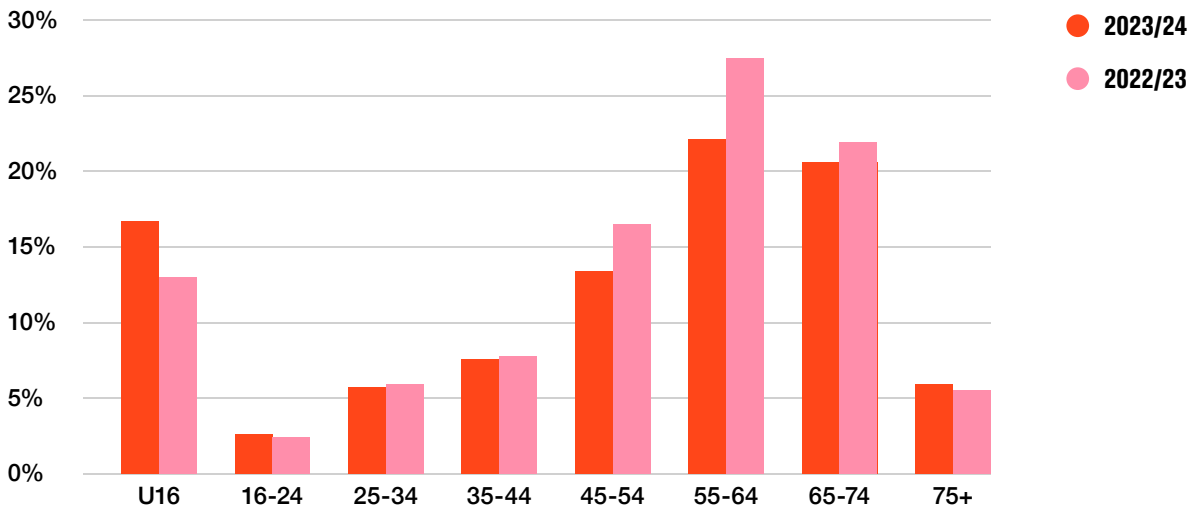
Our digital artworks, streams and films gathered 943,495 viewers and listeners – online, on TV and at cinemas.

AUDIENCE AGE 2023/24

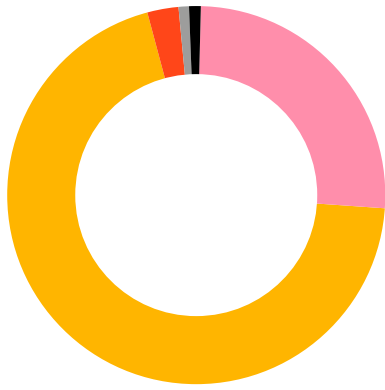
Statistics (based on audience survey responses and postcode analysis)



NTS AUDIENCE AGES 2023/24 & 2022/23



AUDIENCE GENDER 2023/24



- MALE 26.21%
- FEMALE 69.33%
- NON-BINARY 2.66%
- OTHER 0.85%
- PREFER NOT TO SAY 0.95%

LANGUAGE USED/UNDERSTOOD 2023/24

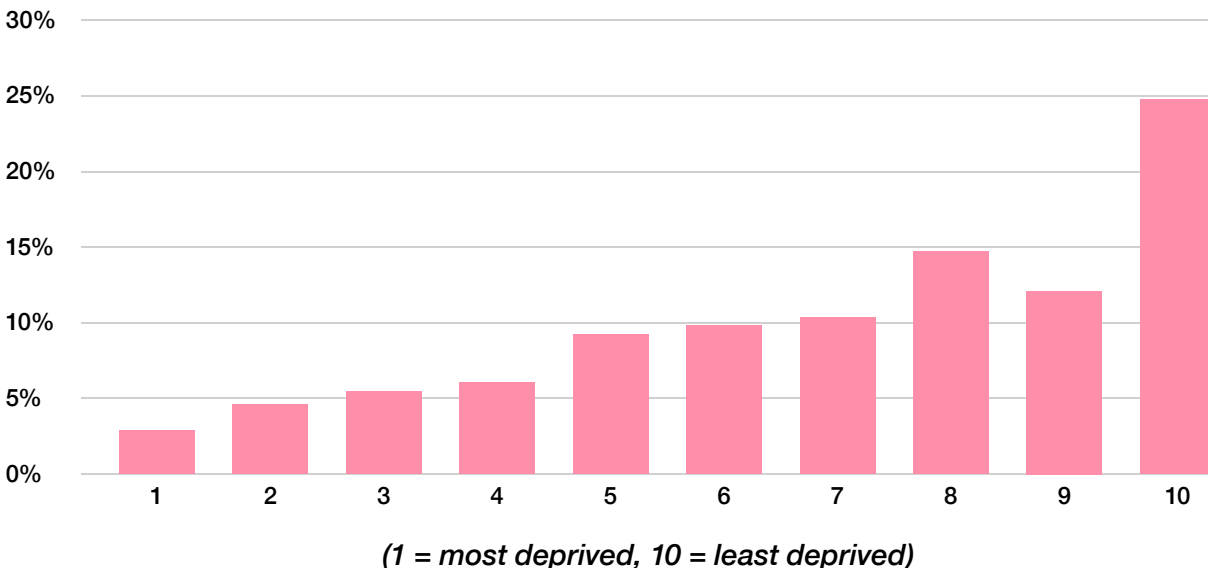
3.29%
BSL

3.97%
GAELIC

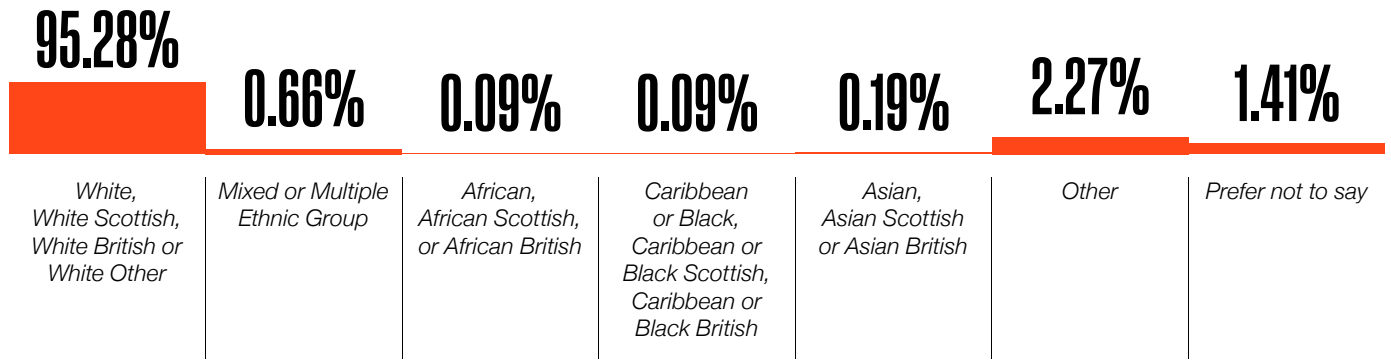
46.23%
SCOTS

AUDIENCE LOCATION 2023/24*

**Based on Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation*



ETHNICITY 2023/24



PHYSICAL PRODUCTIONS, EVENTS AND DIGITAL ARTWORKS

15

Productions and events

6

World Premieres

382

Performances and events

1

Festive short film created

1

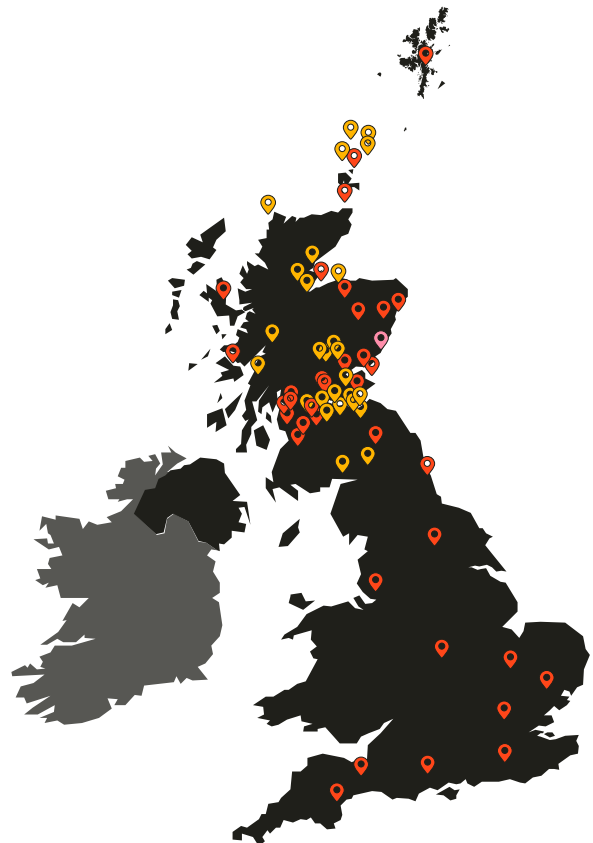
Radio drama created for BBC Radio 3

NTS TOURING 2023/24

- Creative Engagement
- Theatres in Schools Scotland
- Shows

SHOWS OUTWITH UK

- Oslo
- Poznan
- Hannover
- The Hague
- Brussels
- New York
- Berkley



371

We contracted a total of **371 people** in 2023/24, **102 (28%)** of which were new to NTS.

58

We visited **58 venues** nationwide, with **64%** of them being unique visits.

169

We employed **169 performers**, stage management and production staff (**40%**) of which were new to NTS

WRITERS

27 writers contracted
26% new to NTS

DIRECTORS

23 directors contracted
22% new to NTS

PERFORMERS

87 performers employed
51% new to NTS

AWARDS 2023/24

CRITICS' AWARDS FOR THEATRE IN SCOTLAND 2023

BEST DIRECTOR

Orla O'Loughlin for *Enough of Him*

BEST NEW PLAY

May Sumbwanyambe for *Enough of Him*

BEST PRODUCTION

Enough of Him

UK THEATRE AWARDS 2023

BEST NEW PLAY

Enough of Him

GREEN PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

- All productions ran to Theatre Green Book Intermediate standards – **80%** achieved over the last three years
- Buildings and operations ran to Theatre Green Book Baseline standards with a view to reaching intermediate by the end of 2024.
- Baseline 2019 CO2 footprint established for the Rockvilla building and already showing a **15-25% reduction** in electricity use.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2023/24 we commissioned **four new plays** and **one new musical**.
- We ran **14 development workshops** of new plays/projects, contracting **136 artists**, 46 of whom were new to the organisation including one recent graduate.
- We ran **five free events** for artists across *Dracula*, *Kidnapped* and *Thrown*, including conversations between directors, movement directors, set designers and writers adapting works for the stage.
- We offered up our rehearsal facilities to **50+ artists projects and companies**, as well as hosting many sector events e.g. with Creative Carbon Scotland, Glasgow Life and Scottish Acting Workshop and opening our doors for BBC's Bring the Drama festival.
- Associate Artists supporting the Company artistically in 2023 were Debbie Hannan, Finn Den Hertog, Johnny McKnight and Hannah Lavery.
- We received and considered ideas for commissions and productions from **42 artists/companies** through our open New Ideas portal.
- We received, read and provided reports on **47 plays submitted** to our open Script Reading Programme.
- We found creative ways of significantly supporting artists to create new work through our open call Discover and Develop Residencies and through artists commissions for Push The Boat Out Festival.
- Our Portraits of an LGBT+ Generation continued to make an impact with a residency at the Great Western Hospital in Edinburgh with NHS Lothian: Tonic Arts



Thrown, photography by Mihaela Bodlovic



Moorcroft, photography by Mihaela Bodlovic

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

2023/24 was the first year of our Strategic Framework (2023-26), and our work over the period of this Strategic Plan was guided by five principles:

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

- We understand that if we are to be fully national, we must involve more people across the nation.
- We continue to see a broader range of views as we develop our programmes.
- We are expanding who influences our artistic decision-making, our knowledge and our sources of inspiration by continuing to build new dialogues.
- We include more diverse voices to influence what we programme, by whom and where it plays.

EQUITY, IDENTITY AND ACCESS

Our Vision and Mission encapsulate our commitment to equity, identity and access through our drive 'to be a theatre for everyone' that makes work that reflects the 'complexity of modern Scotland'.

Artists

In 2023/24 we supported the development of eight projects by global majority artists through our R&D process. We also selected a further two ideas for large-scale stage projects by South Asian Artists and two short films by Black artists and artists from the African and/or Caribbean diaspora, all through open call, with selection panels made up of the core team and paid freelance artist consultants. This enabled us to exceed our anti-racism target of a minimum of four projects by global majority artists.

To expand the diversity of our development slate to ensure we are supporting work by artists from all our priority groups, over the last year we delivered a programme of three artist residencies, available through open call, to artists we have not worked with before, prioritising artists from historically excluded communities.

In 2023/24, 84% of all applicants to these residencies were from minoritised groups with 100% of artists selected identifying as from one or more of these communities.

Audiences

We remain committed to ensuring access to as wide a range of audience members as possible, working hard with venue and co-producing partners to offer tailored access for:

- Blind and visually impaired people
- BSL users / deaf/ hard of hearing people
- Autistic and neurodiverse people
- People with a physical disability
- Trans and non-binary people
- Parents and carers
- People from low socio-economic backgrounds

Through the offer on all productions of:

- 16 audio described performances with Touch Tours and Audio flyers for Blind and Visually impaired audiences.
- 19 captioned performances for deaf/hard of hearing audiences (also useful for people who have English as a second language)
- 22 embedded BSL Interpretation, BSL Front of House Support and BSL trailers and/or introductory videos for deaf/BSL using audiences
- 6 relaxed or chilled performances including provision of visual guides, orientation tours, chill out spaces for neurodivergent people, people with a learning disability, parents with very young children or those suffering dementia
- Gender neutral toilets
- Wheelchair access, ramble tags and other physical adaptations for those with mobility challenges
- Theatre for a Fiver aged 14-26 or receiving income benefits of any kind, pay what you can models and free tickets for companions

We continued to run our First Night's programme, giving people who face multiple barriers a safe and supportive start to theatre attendance. In 2023/24 we took 478 people to the theatre, over the course of 34 first nights events around *Kidnapped*, *Protest*,

Dear Billy, *Thrown*, *Dracula*, and *Moorcroft*, engaging with 22 community groups, 20 of which were first timers to our First Nights program. Participants included people who were experiencing loneliness, recovering from drugs and alcohol addiction, or were care experienced.

Staff & Teams

NTS provides anti-racism training for upcoming productions before rehearsals are due to start and has partnered with an anti-racism educator who delivers all freelancer training sessions.

NTS has also partnered with Serenity Consultancy Limited, whose team provide both staff and freelancers with therapists based across the UK.

In 2023/24, all NTS staff undertook neurodiversity training, and intensive anti-racism training for staff who had recently joined us. We provided all show teams with anti-oppression training on day one of rehearsals and trialled Trauma Informed Training around an upcoming production.

In 2023/24, we commissioned scenic artists Frike Limited to build us a bespoke Quiet Space, prioritised for neurodiverse people, breastfeeding mothers, and people observing daily prayers. The space was made of 100% recycled materials, taken from old stage sets, and designed in consultation with disabled and neurodiverse paid artistic consultants.

We also commissioned a third access audit of Rockvilla, conducted by BOP, and we ensure we are aware of new access legislation and best practice so we can plan future upgrades.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Our partners and collaborators are venues, communities, freelancers, artists and companies.

We continue to recognise the challenging economic climate facing our entire sector and are committed to ensure that we forge partnerships that support our aim of expanding who feels that theatre practice in Scotland is relevant to them.

We are working collaboratively with organisations and communities to develop diverse talent across all aspects of theatre making, providing employment opportunities from early career to established artists.



Dear Billy, photography by Sally Jubb

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

We aim to help support a healthy and sustainable environment that supports adaptation, regeneration and a better, caring and more collaborative world.

We have taken a leading role in the performing arts sector promoting and supporting environmental sustainability throughout Scotland and the UK. We set ourselves ambitious targets and objectives in our productions and projects and strive to bring genuine change to the way we work, and by implementing a circular economy ethos throughout our production process.

In 2023/24, NTS carried out the following work:

- successfully developed a 2019 baseline for energy consumption and a clear system for data gathering so we can effectively monitor our energy use and reduction
- trained 85% of all core NTS staff in Carbon Literacy, as well as several freelancers
- continued to reduce building energy efficiency including removing physical IT servers and working with a new sustainable facilities management company
- moved to sustainable web providers and reduced our digital footprint
- continued our commitment to make all our productions and events compliant with Intermediate Green Book standards. These standards ensure that at least 75% or all materials used in our productions are from pre-used sources and 80% of all materials are disposed of sustainably
- reviewed our procurement policies with an emphasis on tackling our scope three emissions.
- scoped options for grants to fund additional solar panels, heat source pumps and electric vehicle charging points
- together with a range of other organisations – including the National Theatres of Great Britain and Wales, ABTT, SOLT and UK Theatres, Renew Culture and Buro Happold – we are part of the steering group supporting the future of the Theatre Green Book to ensure we continue to support theatres across the UK towards a carbon-neutral future



How the Earth Must See Itself, photography by Beth Chalmers

SCOPE AND SCALE

We continue to use our resources to amplify what Scotland can achieve in its theatre culture: the scale of productions, the scope and reach of tours and the number of freelance, artists, creatives and workers employed.

We continue to reach more people through our live, digital and pioneering hybrid work to ensure we maximise our impact through use of our resources.

National Theatre of Scotland's **382 productions, events and digital projects** were viewed or attended by a combined total of **1,022,855 people** during **2023/24**

PRODUCTIONS & EVENTS

371

NO. OF PERFORMANCES

79,360

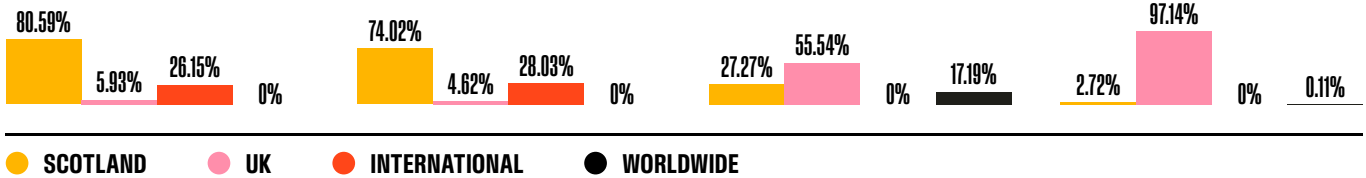
AUDIENCES

11

NO OF SCREENINGS / PROJECTS

943,495

NO OF VIEWS / ATTENDEES



The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, photography by Jenny Home



SCOPE AND SCALE [CONT.]

In line with our long-established “theatre without walls” model, 2023/24 saw National Theatre of Scotland present and perform a truly diverse programme of work on stage, online, at home and abroad.

We were also highly visible on screen, the airwaves and in the digital world. Highlights included the World Premiere of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and its subsequent broadcast on Sky Arts where it can now be viewed free of charge by anyone in the UK. NTS was also present in the world of radio drama, co-producing Hannah Lavery’s new work *Finding Seaglass* with *Almost Tangible* for BBC Radio 4.

At Christmas time, we premiered a festive themed short film *Christmas at Cunninghams* for viewers to enjoy free of charge and we added a further four productions and accompanying resources (*Thrown*, *Kidnapped*, *Dracula* and *Protest*) to our online Education Portal which is free to access for teachers, schools and students.

Lastly, a filmed extract from NTS’ acclaimed production of *Black Watch* was seen by almost **25k people** as part of the V&A Dundee’s hugely popular Tartan exhibition.

We continued our commitment to make our work as accessible as possible across the board with the majority of our productions, events and digital projects offering BSL, audio-described and captioned versions of performances.

As ever, we were mindful of our commitment to the audiences of the future and we’re proud that this year our work was seen by **6,435 primary school children** as part of Theatre in Schools Scotland, our ambitious and creative partnership with Imagineate.

Protest, photography by Oluwatosin Daniju

FINANCIAL REVIEW

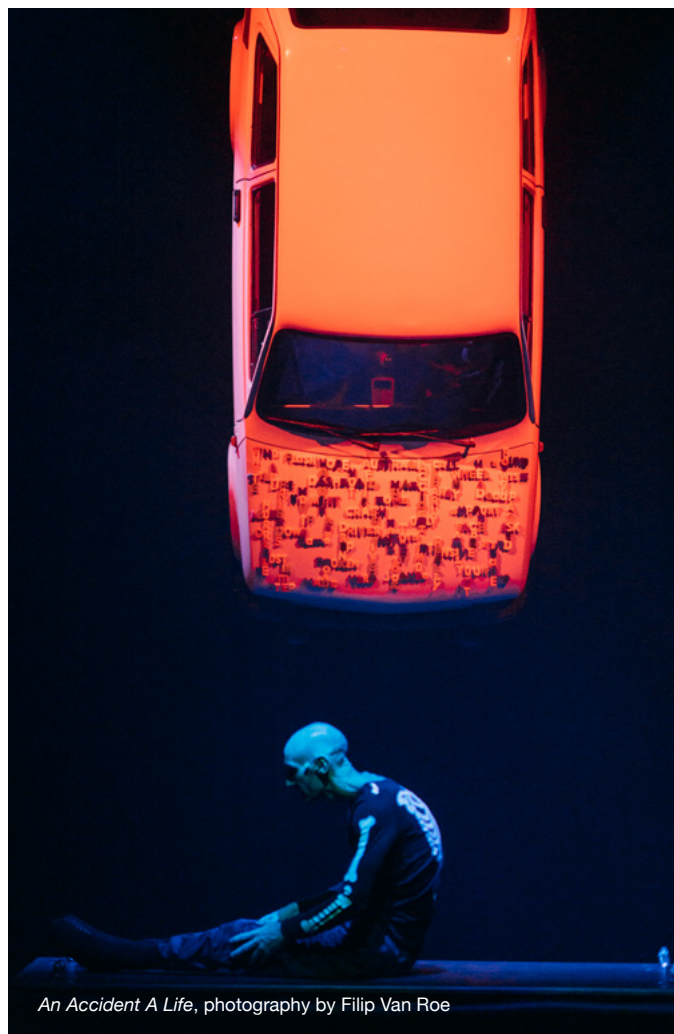
At 31 March 2024, the NTS group accounts reported a planned deficit across all funds of **£878,644** which was met from designated funds brought forward.

Income increased by **£780,732** compared to the previous year, from **£5,479,217** to **£6,259,949**. The largest element of income for the year was our Scottish Government core grant of **£4,174,000**.

NTS is grateful to receive generous donations from its various donors. Other income throughout 2023/24 came from other grants, trusts and other various trading activities.

Expenditure rose from **£7,260,209** in 2022-23 to **£7,997,437** in 2023-24, an increase of **£737,228**. The cost-of-living crisis continues to have an ongoing impact on NTS running costs, with our property costs increasing to levels never experienced before. We saw productions touring across Scotland, Europe and in the USA.

Compared to recent years, Theatre Tax Relief has increased back to previous levels.



An Accident A Life, photography by Filip Van Roe

Income	2023/24	2022/23
Donations and legacies	£4,974,863	£4,583,641
Income from charitable activities	£1,255,695	£871,627
Other trading activities	£18,282	£18,249
Income from investments	£11,109	£5,700
Total income	£6,259,949	£5,479,217

Expenditure	2023/24	2022/23
Raising funds	£158,394	£195,548
Charitable activities	£7,839,043	£7,064,661
Total expenditure	£7,997,437	£7,260,209

	2023/24	2022/23
Net (losses) / gains on investments	–	(£1,951)
Net income/ (expenditure) before TTR	(£1,737,488)	(£1,782,943)
Theatre and film tax credit	£858,844	£739,861
Net movement in funds	(£878,644)	(£1,043,082)
Total funds brought forward	£6,080,650	£7,123,732
Total funds carried forward	£5,202,006	£6,080,650



THANK YOU