



Wandsworth Arts Fringe 2025

# Welcome to our 2025 impact and learning report!

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

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The Dragon Wagon:  
Ewan Michael Riley

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# Welcome!

**Wandsworth Arts Fringe (WAF) 2025 launched on 6 June with a vibrant evening at Sambrook's Brewery in Wandsworth Town, marking the start of a 17-day borough-wide celebration of creativity and heritage as part of Wandsworth's tenure as London Borough of Culture (LBOC) 2025.**

The launch was opened with speeches from the Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor of Wandsworth, bringing together WAF creatives, producers, partners, and community representatives, along with performances and activities by those involved in this year's festival. Guests were treated to Parade – The Giant Wheel by Autin Dance Theatre, featuring a twelve-foot wooden wheel powered by six dancers, symbolising the energy and collaboration at the heart of the festival.

This was WAF's most ambitious year yet for LBOC, showcasing more than **150 events** across **65 local venues**. It was led by **125 lead creatives and producers**, with **767 creatives** in total, and reached an audience of **24,842 people**.

Running alongside the Wandsworth Heritage Festival, WAF 2025 combined arts and heritage programmes and provided opportunities for children and young people through the LBOC School showcases and the Young Producers, Young Reporters and Young Reviewers programmes.

A total of **1,176 children and young people** participated in the LBOC School showcases for Dance, Music, Theatre, and Collaging.

Events took place in theatres, libraries, community spaces, parks and high streets across the borough, including hub venues such as the National Opera Studio in Wandsworth Town, the Royal Academy of Dance in Battersea, The Arches in Putney and The Bedford in Balham. The programme featured theatre, dance, live music, cabaret, comedy, visual art, workshops and family-friendly activities, with over **60 free events** and £3 tickets available for Wandsworth Access for All cardholders.



The Dragon Wagon:  
Ewan Michael Riley

**Wandsworth is a vibrant inner city borough in south London, with a population of 327,500, covering the areas of Battersea, Balham, Earlsfield, Putney, Roehampton, Southfields, Tooting, and Wandsworth Town.**

Wandsworth was selected as the Mayor of London's London Borough of Culture for 2025, receiving support and a spotlight to deliver a year-long programme of cultural, artistic and community activity across the borough. The Borough of Culture initiative is driven by the guiding themes: culture connects, unites, heals, nourishes and activates.



# WAF 2025

## At a glance

### 17 days

of brand-new theatre, experimental dance, live music, art, cabaret, comedy, community events and celebrations, and family-friendly activities.

### 154 events

across all of Wandsworth's 22 wards in 65 local venues, including in parks, streets, churches, residential estates, libraries, pubs and theatres.

### 125 lead creatives and producers

involved in hosting and leading events. The majority worked in new and different ways and involved local residents.

### 767 creatives involved

### 24,842 people

attended WAF 2025, a 43% increase from 2024 (17,434). 97% audience members rated the event they attended as very good or good.

### Almost a third

of creatives (31%) involved in WAF identify as being from the Global Majority or from culturally diverse backgrounds, a quarter (26%) identify as disabled, 20% as LGBTQIA+ and 16% as having been eligible for free school meals.

### 82% of audience participants and 74% of creatives

travelled to events using sustainable transport (bike, foot and public transport).

### WAF was good for people's wellbeing

83% agreed that the event they attended enhanced their sense of community, and 76% agreed that it helped them feel connected to people in the community.

### 30

WAF grants awarded £56,479 to local artists (up to £2,000 per project) for work presented across this year's festival.

### £279,548

local economic value generated

### 1,176 children and young people

participated in the LBOC School showcases for Dance, Music, Theatre and Collaging.



**“Having grown up in Wandsworth, it’s great to see cultural events and activities being promoted.”**

**“Great initiative and really important to have events like this in accessible spaces for the entire community.**

**Also really valuable for organising groups, performers, etc, to have financial assistance, which allows them to raise their profile and supports them to host accessible events more widely too.”**

Comments from the WAF 2025 visitors and creatives surveys

# Creatives' stories and experiences

Meet some of the creatives behind WAF. Click the videos below to hear their stories in their own words.



Secret Squirters:  
Ewan Michael Riley

# Just Press

# PLAY



Click [here](#) to see all of our creatives' interviews, or simply click on an image to play



**Asma Choudhury** -  
Producer, Roehampton  
wellbeing for women  
and children and Happy  
Homes Women's



**George Grant** -  
Operation Blank



**Casper Dillen** -  
Producer, Choreographer  
/Creative, Small Sample  
Size Theatre



**Adam Stanovic and  
Daria Balocchi**, The  
Clockwork Underpass



**Saqib Deshmukh** -  
Creative, Tales of the  
Iron Lane



**Poppy Conway** -  
Associate Producer,  
Car Crash Productions



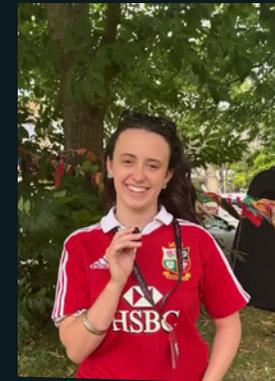
**Fozia Riaz** -  
Producer, Roehampton  
wellbeing for women  
and children and Happy  
Homes Women's



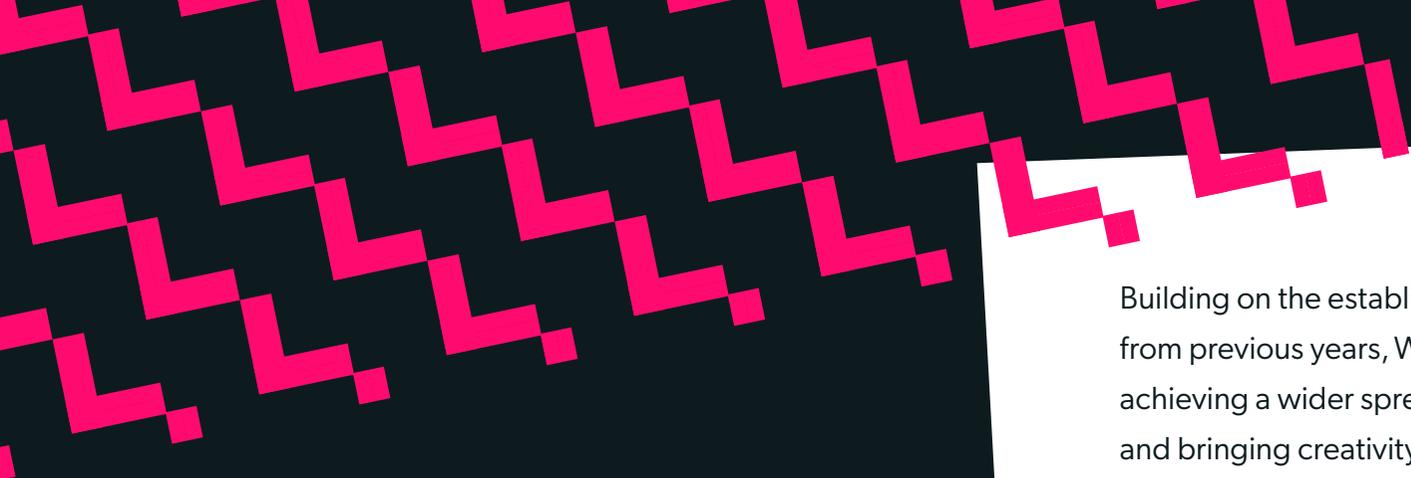
**Sarah Archdeacon  
and Hannah Lane**,  
Washing Machine  
Vortex



**Hyelim Kim** -  
Hyelim Kim's  
Celadon Club



**Anna Nicholls** -  
Founder and Artistic  
Director, Hallomai  
Dance



# Our most ambitious festival yet...

Building on the established hub-venue model and learning from previous years, WAF 2025 delivered events in every ward, achieving a wider spread of cultural activity across the borough and bringing creativity into everyday spaces. The programme balanced scale with intimacy, featuring even more family shows, visual and sound installations, and music events that responded to gaps identified in previous years, alongside larger neighbourhood commissions and an expanded offer of school programmes and showcases across dance, theatre, and music.

Hub venues such as The Arches in Putney, the Royal Academy of Dance in Battersea, the Alton Arts Hub in Roehampton, and The Bedford and The Exhibit in Balham continued to anchor the festival. New community spaces and outdoor sites enabled WAF to reach local audiences where they are. The festival continued to provide opportunities for artists and producers to connect and collaborate through the creative network, WAF grants, and the Associate Producers programme.

**This report highlights key moments from this year's Fringe and shares the voices of those who made it possible.**

# WAF Associate Producers Programme 2025

**The Wandsworth Arts Fringe (WAF) Associate Producers Programme continued to nurture and support independent producers, helping them develop their companies and practices while creating new opportunities for artists and audiences.**

The Associate Producers play a key role in shaping WAF. They use their own work and networks to bring new artists and performance work to the festival, helping to diversify the programme and attract new audiences from both within and outside the borough. They also support and mentor emerging talent, creating space for new and early-career artists to grow within the Fringe framework. They help build lasting relationships among artists, venues, and local communities, strengthening Wandsworth's creative scene and ensuring the festival continues to feel open, inclusive, and locally rooted.

Three Associate Production companies – Car Crash Productions led by returning producer Tom Sergeant, Objectively Funny led by returning producer Martin Willis, and Pride Punx led by new producer Tali Clark – were selected this year to produce programmes for WAF at hub venues The Arches at St Mary's Church in Putney, The Ram in Balham, and The Magic Garden in Battersea.

The programme as a whole featured over 70 events, involving around 75 creatives and attracting an audience of more than 550 people across Wandsworth. The programmes spanned comedy, theatre, cabaret, music and live art. The diversity of the activity showed how the Associate Producers Programme continues to grow as a platform for collaboration and creative development.

# WAF Associate Producers Programme 2025

## Highlights Included:

### Jazz After Dusk

A relaxed rooftop evening of live jazz, smooth melodies and soulful rhythms for audience members under the summer sky.



Jazz After Dusk:  
Tasha Best

## **.eve**

A thought-provoking new work exploring confinement, resilience and the search for hope within invisible systems of control.

## **Operation Blank**

A darkly comic play by up-and-coming Scottish writer George Grant. Set entirely on a fictional Microsoft Teams call, it explored themes of unfulfillment and existentialism, blending surreal humour with sharp observations about modern online life.

## **Saree Stories**

A performance exploring the cultural history, symbolism and meaning of the saree through storytelling and theatre.

**“We’ve had a great time. It’s my first show. Yeah, really, really enjoyed it. It’s been great. To have an audience like that was fantastic. Really receptive crowd as well. [...]**

**This script helped me transition away from my life in a corporate job that was boring me to the extent that I wrote the show in the first place. It feels quite full circle to be performing that now, and that being my first step into becoming hopefully a creator full-time, and that is now my goal. Writing in particular is the thing I really love, and that’s what I want to do full-time. It’s something that I’m happy to do just to get the material out there and hopefully viewed as best I can.”**

**George Grant, Operation Blank**



**“[I felt] a sense of camaraderie [at these events]. And also being able to say you’re not alone, and not stuck in the shell you think you are. There are other people feeling the same. And it was amazing as I expected. The band were great, the staff were great.”**

**Audience member, Pride Punx Presents,  
Tali Clarke**



Queercore Cabaret:  
Ewan Michael Riley

## Rosie Jones & Toussaint Douglass

A standout night of sharp, mischievous comedy that featured Taskmaster and Live at the Apollo favourite Rosie Jones, alongside South London's own Toussaint Douglass (Late Night Mash, Outsiders).

Their double bill mixed cheeky humour with sharp social insight — culminating in a unique moment when Rosie's new Channel 4 sitcom premiered on the big screen immediately after her set, with the audience and Rosie watching together.

"Rosie Jones' night really felt quite special. It was also Toussaint Douglass, who was the first act that day, and he was excellent as well.

As it happened, Rosie had a Channel 4 sitcom that began that night at ten o'clock. She finished at 9:58 or 9:59, and there was this massive TV behind her on the stage. I gave her a big hug and then turned the TV on, and it was starting.

Some audience members stuck around, and she did too, and we all watched that with her. That was quite a special moment for everyone in the room. I also had Sophie Duker, whose show was brilliant, and Chloe Petts, who did a really good show.

Everyone was good, but those three stood out as really exciting shows. Access needs were completely met at the venue. They went above and beyond, really welcomed me, and I felt like part of the team.

It's important to me to have opportunities to offer artists I admire and to work with people whose work I think is excellent.

I ultimately just wanted the shows I wanted to see. I built a relationship with a new venue, and I'm sure I could return. There were loads of positives I took from it."

Martin Willis, Objectively Funny



Midsummer Nights Rave:  
Ewan Michael Riley

**MINCE, presented by  
Sophie Chapman &  
Moa Johansson**

A “queers to the front”  
experimental work-in-progress  
night where musicians, filmmakers,  
poets, comedians and performers  
tested new ideas in a supportive,  
open environment.



MINCE:  
Ewan Michael Riley

# Creativity and connection in local spaces and neighbourhoods



The Wandsworth Masquerade:  
Ewan Michael Riley

# Creativity & Connection

## The Highlights

WAF's programme brought people together and created shared experiences in parks, neighbourhoods, libraries, high streets, community centres and other everyday public spaces across Wandsworth.

From bold performances, outdoor processions and immersive installations to hands-on workshops, tastings, family shows, and neighbourhood celebrations, creative activity encouraged residents to see their local areas in new ways and contributed positively to local pride.

**"I love these kinds of events [that celebrate community and heritage] where we get together and have fun, enjoy. It was lovely. Instead I sit at home and bored, I came here and I enjoy with the kids and we have a chance to meet other families and I really enjoyed. [...]"**

**Yeah, it was really good event. We really enjoy the food and I had a chance to speak to other people and get different knowledge and about different topics. It was lovely."**

**Audience member, Celebrating Eid: Then and Now (family and friends together), Fozia Riaz**



## **Secret Squirters, Bureau of Silly Ideas**

A playful outdoor installation at Pennethorne invited passers-by to water squirt a friend.

## **Parade – The Giant Wheel, presented by Autin Dance Theatre**

A moving performance celebrating the beauty, power and solidarity of diverse individuals coming together. The 50-minute procession travelled through Downshire Field (Bull Green) and York Gardens, with eight performances attracting over 450 local people and involving seven creatives

"I just loved it [Parade – The Giant Wheel]. I mean, it was totally unexpected. The music is fantastic, and it was just fluid in action. And yeah, it was just really enjoyable. [...] I didn't know it was really happening.

I work as a ranger in the park. I came back earlier, saw them setting up, and thought I'd come down. Yeah, loved it. You can just see there's a real mix of people. I just think all the performances were fantastic. All of them. Yeah. Just enjoyed them.

You can just see the mix of people who have come along. It's great. I just think this is a great space for it. I mean, it's a very underutilised space here. I think you could do more here."

Audience member, Parade - The Giant Wheel, Downshire Field (Bull Green), Autin Dance Theatre

"It's very cool, I think. It's very nice. It's a bit like a hamster wheel, and the dancers were amazing. They made it look so easy, but I'm sure that takes hours of practice. It's very tricky, but yeah, it's amazing.

Probably we'll hang out for the next show at 4:00. [...] We would love anything more art, theatre, and dancing. We would love to see more things like that in the area."

Audience member 1, Parade - The Giant Wheel, Downshire Field (Bull Green), Autin Dance Theatre



The Dragon Wagon:  
Ewan Michael Riley

## The Dragon Wagon, presented by Jellyfish Theatre

A joyful outdoor family show where audiences met the Dragon Whisperer and his magical dragons in a tale of friendship, food and courage. Mixing puppetry, live music and laughter, the show toured Ashburton and Alton estates with eight relaxed, accessible performances for 270 children and adults.

## The Lighterman, G23 Lab

A striking light sculpture at Putney Wharf celebrating the borough's maritime heritage, built from acrylic and steel and interacting with daylight and reflections from the river. On 19 June, a dance performance by Hallomai Dance brought the piece to life for large riverside crowds, with around 2,000 audience members.

**"I love, I love performing for kids and families. I love how much interaction there is. It always feels really good as well to bring art to community spaces specifically. I think it's such a great thing to get kids involved. I know when I was a young kid as well, stuff like this, like really inspired me to get into the arts as well.**

**Yeah, I mean, it's accessible. It's really easy to just... All you need is a patch of grass. We bring our stuff up, and we can kind of set up shop wherever we want. All these people just come outside, and now there's a whole show in their backyard. So I just think it's really accessible and dynamic and can be moulded to fit wherever we want to go.."**

**Creatives, The Dragon Wagon, Jellyfish Theatre**

## **Hazelfest 2025, Hazelhurst Estate Community**

**Hazelfest returned as part of WAF with its community-powered festival with food, arts and crafts, live music, storytelling and dance, culminating in a drumming finale by Generate. All materials were upcycled, creating a joyful celebration of sustainability and community spirit that attracted over 400 local people.**



**“I think events like this are really important because they bring people together who wouldn’t normally socialise, and then you start to meet people, and people say “I live in the same sort of block as you.” And that just helps to build a community, and people then go on to start thinking, “Well, we could do other things possibly together as well.”**

**Councillor Paul White, Hazelfest 2025**

## The Wandsworth Masquerade 2025, Dendê Collective

A colourful street procession through Tooting Broadway, where residents of all ages created papier-mâché masks and joined in performances and playful encounters. The high street takeover attracted around 1,200 audience members and involved 12 creatives.

## People Show 150: SHOP, People Show

A shopper-stopping site-specific theatre production in Southside Shopping Centre devised with local artists from the University of Roehampton Dance. The show drew 290 audience members across three performances.



The Wandsworth Masquerade:  
Ewan Michael Riley



## Hyelim Kim's Celadon Club

A cross-cultural concert at Holy Trinity Church blending traditional instruments, folk melodies and expressive dance from South Korea, Japan, China and Indonesia.

Hyelim Kims Celadon Club:  
Ewan Michael Riley

## **Sound Pavilion, presented by Amy Crankshaw, Kritiy Gera, Jaspar Joseph-Lester, Ben Judd, Asher Levitas and Amy Blier-Carruthers**

The sound piece transformed the underpass beneath Falcon Road Bridge into a contemplative listening space. QR-activated soundscapes, co-created with local youth clubs and schools, layered field recordings, train rhythms and spoken reflections to capture the pulse of the neighbourhood. The work engaged an estimated 250 listeners and six creatives.

## **Celebrating South Asian Heritage and Community, presented by Fozia Riaz, Asma Choudhury, and Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Children**

Events at York Gardens Library and Alton Community Hall celebrated South Asian culture through storytelling, sports, art, and shared experiences. Together, these events involved almost 200 local people and brought different generations together through creativity and shared heritage.

# Culture and heritage at WAF 2025



Railway 200:  
Rebecca Cresta

# Culture & Heritage

## The Highlights

**Wandsworth's cultural heritage was celebrated throughout WAF 2025, with the Fringe running alongside the Wandsworth Heritage Festival.**

Together, the programmes brought to life walks, performances, installations and community-led events rooted in local stories. These events and experiences helped more people to connect with and appreciate Wandsworth's rich histories, places and communities, and to meet others with shared interests, supporting belonging and wellbeing.

**"I think the most exciting thing was hearing people's stories about Wandsworth. It really seemed to provide an opportunity for people to see the work and then discuss their life in this borough and their connection with it.**

**There was one man who came along who said that he had lived here for 30 years, and this was only the second time in the last 20 years that he had walked through this underpass. He recollected a time at which this was perhaps not a safe place to walk, and that there was a degree of insecurity about it. But then, looking ahead, he said, "Look, it looks like a park now. This looks like a really nice place to be." You sort of think of that idea of the generations changing, and the space changing, and its meaning changing. What once perhaps for Kubrick represented dystopian Britain, perhaps did at that point, and now is sort of transformed into something else.**

**Hearing those kinds of stories from people was really, I think, made the whole thing for me worthwhile because it wasn't just us giving our kind of take on the cinematic history, but it was actually interacting with other people and their stories and their background and their experiences."**

**Adam Stanovic and Daria Baiocchi, Creatives, speaking at The Clockwork Underpass**

## The Clockwork Underpass, presented by Adam Stanovic and Daria Baiocch

An audio-visual installation paying tribute to Wandsworth's cinematic heritage and the Trinity Road Underpass, where scenes from Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* were filmed. Installed at the underpass on 20 - 21 June 2025, the piece attracted 250 engaged audience members, many more passers-by, and involved three creatives.



The Clockwork Underpass:  
Chris Hayes

## **Home is Where the Art Is, presented by Hilaire x History Speak CIC**

A creative heritage walk and workshop exploring the life and legacy of Kenyan-born writer and artist Khadambi Asalache, whose home at 575 Wandsworth Road is cared for by the National Trust.

Beginning at the R.O.S.E Community Clubroom, participants took part in craft and writing activities, followed a local heritage map, and ended with a guided home tour and poetry workshop. The experience invited reflection on how creativity, heritage and home can intertwine

## **Afternoon Tea at the Fringe, presented by Dance Diversion**

Set within the late-Victorian surroundings of the National Opera Studio, this fantastical and sensory theatrical experience invited audiences to immerse themselves in a magical world of dance, music, poetry and heritage.

Spread across three rooms, the event layered the past, present and imagined through performance, conversation and interactive art, connecting audiences to Wandsworth's cultural heritage in playful, unexpected ways. 45 people attended, supported by a team of 12 creatives.

## Tales of the Iron Lane, presented by Saqib Deshmukh

An interactive guided walk tracing the route of the historic Surrey Iron Railway from Summerstown to the Thames, exploring the borough's industrial past through the lens of migration. The walk shared stories of early French, Dutch and Huguenot settlers alongside more recent communities who helped shape Wandsworth's identity.

"What's so important for me is that I found out new things that I hadn't noticed before. It's been a labour of love, I grew up and was born in the area. So it's been really interesting for me to think about where this has all come from. How we got to this stage in 2025 in terms of redevelopment, what was there before in Wandsworth Town in particular. So yeah, it's been fascinating."

Saqib Deshmukh, Creative, speaking at Tales of the Iron Lane



Tales of the Iron Lane:  
Chris Hayes

# Health and wellbeing



Hyelim Kims Celadon Club:  
Ewan Michael Riley

# Health & Wellbeing

## The Highlights

A wide range of WAF-commissioned and creative-led projects supported quality of life, belonging, health and wellbeing across the borough. Through music, movement, storytelling and visual art, artists and community groups created welcoming spaces for relaxation, expression and connection. These activities made culture part of everyday wellbeing in Wandsworth, offering moments of joy, reflection and care in places familiar to local residents.

### Spreading the Joy, presented by Group 64 Theatre for Young People

A lively, interactive theatre show co-created with over 200 local children, exploring happiness, connection and positive mental health. The performance took young audiences on an imaginative journey through space to discover what makes us happy and how joy can be shared. Presented at Roehampton Library, York Gardens Library and Putney Arts Theatre across three performances, it reached 68 audience members and involved 12 participants and three creatives.

## **Life of I, presented by The Baked Bean Charity.**

**A powerful devised theatre production giving voice to ten actors with learning disabilities, sharing their lived experiences through ten short scenes.**

**The work challenged stigma and offered audiences an honest and creative window into different perspectives on identity and community. Staged at the Wilditch Community Centre with two performances, the show reached 72 audience members, included 20 participants, and involved nine creatives.**

## **Arts of Sanctuary, presented by All Saints Tooting**

**A vibrant two-week programme transforming All Saints Church into a creative and wellbeing hub for Wandsworth Arts Fringe. Centred on the exhibition Arts for Sanctuary – which explored ideas of refuge, belonging and safety through visual art, installation and craft – the wider programme featured sound baths, open-mic poetry, theatre, and live jazz concerts.**

**Artists, musicians and community partners including The Furzedown Project, Wandsworth Welcomes Refugees, and local schools contributed to a rich and inclusive line-up that celebrated creativity as a source of connection, wellbeing and renewal. Audiences described feeling welcomed, relaxed and inspired by the variety of events, with feedback highlighting the quality of the music, the healing atmosphere of the sound bath, and the joy of discovering local talent. The festival within a festival drew an estimated 500 visitors, engaged 35 active participants and involved 20 creatives, supported by a volunteer team of 10.**

**"It is wonderful that you are holding such events. It is incredibly useful overall for health and wellbeing. [...] Powerful, moving, creative, informative, spiritually fulfilling. [...] Ultimate relaxation. [...] Beautiful having the healing sound journey in the church 'peace within'. [...] So privileged and fortunate to enjoy local talent in a superb venue with fantastic acoustics, many thanks. [...] Not my usual cup of tea, but a very welcome change of scene. [...] Great entertainment all round. Gorgeous acoustic in the church, lovely for the audience and a confidence raiser for the artists."**

**Audience feedback, Arts of Sanctuary**

**"People were able to gain a sense of calmness and mindfulness. [...] The installation is in such a sacred space that was built for bringing communities together. What we're bringing to the church is a contemporary way of returning to that same idea. We're all sharing the experience."**

**Andy Harper & Kulvir Bhambra, Creatives, Clouds: Elevated**

## **Clouds: Elevated, presented by Andy Harper and Kulvir Bhambra**

**An immersive audio-visual installation transforming sound into light, form and motion. Installed within Holy Trinity Church, the piece reimagined Bhambra's Clouds EP as a living, three-dimensional environment where suspended fabric forms and melodic kalimba tones interacted with the church's architecture. The installation invited audiences to experience the interplay of sound, shadow and sacred space, drawing 21 visitors and involving 3 creatives.**

## **Creatively Empowered, presented by The Emerging Artists**

An inclusive art exhibition and workshop hosted by the Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability, showcasing mixed-media artworks by patients using adaptive wheelchair equipment developed with Enayball and the in-house Specialist Wheelchair Team. The event highlighted art's therapeutic and empowering role in rehabilitation, while inviting the public to experience accessible creative tools firsthand. Held over two days at the hospital's Art Room, it involved six creatives.

## **Fabric of Freedom, presented by Sound Minds**

A collaborative textile exhibition created with members of the Bridging Minds BAME service user group, reflecting on the meaning of freedom through colour, texture and print. Developed through a series of printing workshops, the work celebrated creativity as a route to identity, wellbeing and recovery. The exhibition ran for seven days at Sound Minds' Bloom Gallery, engaging around 150 audience members, 20 participants and six creatives.

# Schools Engagement at WAF 2025

"This co-creation with schools is super exciting. We'd done small workshops before, but this showed that repeated visits give more benefit. Not just a one-off that disappears – you create a lasting inspirational effect, and you see progress. And children come to the show because they know you.

We'll keep doing this, at Christmas, on estates, and in other boroughs, not only circus tasters but creative, accessible workshops that feed our practice. A producer role is important, you need someone to liaise, set up, keep communication clear. [...] It was a really supportive and fruitful partnership.

Without WAF we couldn't have run workshops and a show this year. Visiting schools, then performing, let children and young people meet the real people behind the act. It helped engagement and it was rewarding for us too."

Toffy Paulweber, Creative Producer and Co-Founder, and Rika Fujimoto, Creative, BrainFools

# Schools Engagement At WAF 2025

WAF 2025 showcased an extensive programme of work developed with schools across the borough as part of Wandsworth's Borough of Culture tenure.

Pupils across the borough participated in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts projects led by professional artists and companies, developing new skills, confidence, and sharing their creativity through public performances and exhibitions. There were pathways, experiences and collaborative projects to cater for all interests. A total of 1,176 children and young people participated in the LBOC School showcases for Dance, Music, Theatre and Collaging.

The programme was made possible through collaborative partnerships between schools and local and national cultural organisations, including London Children's Ballet, Pointe Black, Group 64, Bounce Theatre, Wandsworth Music, the Royal College of Art, and BrainFools.



Lucky Pigeons:  
Ewan Michael Riley



## LBOC Schools Dance Showcase

Held at the Royal Academy of Dance, this joyful celebration brought together primary schools from across Wandsworth for two dazzling performances of movement and creativity.

Pupils performed original dance works created with London Children's Ballet and Pointe Black, celebrating expression, confidence and wellbeing through movement. For many children, it was their first time performing in a professional venue. Across two performances, the showcase attracted 378 audience members, involved 98 young participants, and was supported by five creative practitioners.

"Totally loved the performance [LBOC Schools Dance Showcase]. It was so beautiful to see all the children together from different schools, different cultures all coming together to celebrate live and celebrate Wandsworth.

There are so many reasons [why dance is good for people]. My daughters, they both dance here already, and they are dancers. What my daughter says all the time is the fact that she can express herself through music and dancing. For her, it's the most important thing she gets out of it. But for them it's just the community, they're dancing together, they're learning a routine together. And you need music and dance in life.

Same. To me, it's amazing to inspire kids because everyone can dance anytime, and it's so good for this period, the brain, the mind, the friendship is amazing. So keep dancing. [Laughs]

It makes you happy, it makes you coordinated, it makes you talk or socialize with other people. It's a social thing, dancing, so all very good.

I just like the diversity, the fact that we are different dances from different classes and schools. It was really good. And it was so multicultural, so beautiful. It was joyful, so I really love watching them. Thank you."

Audience members, LBOC Schools Dance Showcase



RAD Community Day:  
Tasha Best

## **LBOC Schools Music Showcase**

A life-affirming evening of performance at the Wandsworth Civic Suite, uniting primary and secondary schools in a borough-wide celebration of musical talent.

Choirs, bands, and ensembles showcased the diversity of Wandsworth's young musicians, including Goldfinch Primary Choir, Ashcroft Technology Academy MTT, the Malteesers Jazz Group from Graveney School, and the Wandsworth Youth Choir. The showcase embodied the power of music to connect, uplift and inspire, engaging an audience of 368, with 1,172 young performers and five creative practitioners.

## **LBOC Schools Theatre Showcase**

Bringing together six primary schools at Putney Arts Theatre, this vibrant event celebrated storytelling, performance and imagination.

Partnering with local theatre companies Group 64 and Bounce Theatre, pupils created and performed original plays, spoken-word pieces, and musical theatre exploring themes of identity, belonging, and wellbeing. For many children, it marked their first experience of performing on stage. The showcase drew an audience of 272, featured 298 young participants, and was supported by four creative practitioners.

## Lucky Pigeons, presented by BrainFools

A joyful outdoor circus spectacular at Penwortham Primary School, combining acrobatics, storytelling and hands-on workshops for local families. The event followed a short programme of circus skills workshops in the school in the weeks beforehand. This built familiarity and excitement.

Pupils learnt juggling, balance and movement, and met the performers they later saw on stage. The workshops also offered an alternative route to participation for pupils who might not usually take part in creative activities. On the day, children and adults joined juggling and aerial hoop workshops between shows, transforming the playground into a space of movement and play. The circus day attracted 469 parents and children and showed how lead-in time and school-based engagement can deepen audience participation.



Lucky Pigeons:  
Ewan Michael Riley



**“Love it! Thank you for bringing it to the local area, and for offering a show and a circus skills workshop.”**

**Audience member, audience survey, Lucky Pigeons, BrainFools.**

# Conversation and changemaking



The Dragon Wagon:  
Ewan Michael Riley

# Conversation & Changemaking

WAF 2025 events created spaces for conversation, reflection and collective imagination.

Projects explored themes of sustainability, identity, and our shared environment, using creativity as a catalyst for people to come together, ask questions, and consider new possibilities for how we live, connect, and care for one another and the planet.

## Planet Harmony, presented by World Heart Beat at Embassy Garden

Explored connections between music, nature and sustainability through a dynamic concert, hands-on workshops and new technologies. Audiences experienced how energy, sound and the natural world intertwine, from acoustic levitation and solar-powered instruments to global rhythms performed by emerging musicians.

The project was shaped with Ziggazah, World Heart Beat's youth board. Blending artistry with environmental awareness, Planet Harmony encouraged new thinking around creativity and climate action, engaging 50 audience members, 24 creative participants and five practitioners.

"It means a lot to be involved because this is the first time I'm doing this. It means that I have been able to showcase local people with their creative upcycling and mending and repair skills.

The fast fashion industry has such a loud voice. I just feel that the little person who's doing their bit, mending, upcycling, keeping clothes away from landfill, they are not talked about. This is something that I really wanted to address and bring to not just the Fringe but also to the local community to shout out about it and show what's happening right here. [...] I didn't expect this show to be so popular. I didn't expect the engagement that I've had from the local community or the volunteers. It's almost like the stars are aligning.

If you collaborate with the community, they will collaborate with you. That, for me, is the key to the success of this show. [...] I think this event has opened up people's eyes to the upcycling recycling aspect of fashion."

Malsara Thorne, Remyakit, Malsara Thorne

## Remyakit, presented by Malsara Thorne

A joyful, community-powered fashion show celebrating upcycling, repair and imagination. Makers and models of all ages showcased re-worked garments, highlighting how fashion can support sustainability and wellbeing. For many, it was a first experience of modelling or presenting work publicly, offering a confidence-building, celebratory moment. With live music, dance and a lively atmosphere, Remyakit drew an audience of 242, involved 45 participants and four practitioners.

## Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren, presented by Casper Dillen and Christy Taylor / Small Sample Size Theatre

Staged at Holy Trinity Church, Roehampton, this interdisciplinary performance combined music, movement and ritual to explore national identity, imagination and shared aspirations.

Blending humour, domestic gesture and historical echoes, it invited audiences to reflect on patriotism, culture and collective wellbeing. Created by a team of seven, the performance attracted 60 audience members.

Observers described it as “incredible... jarring work that stays with you long after the Fringe.”



Economic Possibilities  
for our Grandchildren

"For me, this has really been a really nice opportunity because to show [Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren] in this space and to bring together local audiences, not local audiences, young audiences, older audiences, everything, it's a great opportunity.

Yeah. I mean, we feel like performing is like doing a pull-up. We go full out, our legs are shaking and there is no room for faking it. There is no room for pretending. I think in daily life, a lot of the time there is a lot of performance and expression, but in performance, there is a little vacation that we can take from ourselves and become abstract shapes."

Casper Dillen, Producer-Choreographer/Creative,  
Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren, Casper

"[I enjoyed/appreciated] Getting out to explore parts of the borough I have not visited before, and the content of the piece was light hearted, innovative and amusing. Residents will venture to different areas of the borough and try out different activities."

Audience members, Economic Possibilities for our  
Grandchildren, Casper

## Two experimental films by Tony Fisher and Hing Tsang

were presented in an intimate screening and discussion. Why is there Something rather than Nothing? responded to Heidegger's 1955 lecture on existence in the atomic age, while Città Reale combined performance, puppetry and moving cardboard insects to symbolise the shifting life of human communities.

Together, they offered a poetic reflection on vulnerability, interconnection and resilience. Audience members stayed for a Q&A and drinks and described the evening as enchanting and unique, with a strong interest in the creative processes behind the work.



## Talkaoke, presented by The People Speak and Live Projects

transformed a public space on the Alton Estate into an open forum for discussion and connection. Residents and artists gathered around the Talkaoke table of chat to share perspectives on art, community, politics, daily life and more. Watch through and listen to the conversation as it unfolded here with pictures of the day [here](#).

# Audience Experience at WAF 2025



Sophie Ducker:  
Ewan Michael Riley

**Audience members commonly described the enjoyment, buzz and sense of togetherness they felt at WAF 2025.**

People shared about the joy of being with peers, friends, family and neighbours, supporting local talent and discovering arts and culture on their doorstep. For some, WAF offered a welcome break from daily pressures and a chance to feel part of their community.

**97% of audiences rated the event they attended as very good (83%) or good (13%), and 93% of attendees said their access needs were met.**

Audiences often described a sense of discovery, with one event leading them to explore other parts of the programme.

Audiences appreciated the diversity of people, venues and art forms, particularly at outdoor parades and LGBTQIA+ events that created relaxed and welcoming spaces where people felt they could be themselves. Some shared how WAF made them feel moved, connected and proud of Wandsworth's creative energy.

Some audience members reflected on how events can bridge differences and encourage dialogue, helping people meet others with different perspectives or life stories.

WAF was good for people's wellbeing. **83% agreed that the event enhanced their sense of community, and 76% said it helped them feel connected to others. Some shared how attending WAF events gave them a reason to get out, meet others and support creatives.**

Community-based projects were acknowledged for bringing neighbours together through shared experiences and storytelling.

Families appreciated the opportunities for children and young people to take part, with parents expressing pride in seeing young performers centred within WAF 2025 and the Borough of Culture celebrations.

There was also appreciation for how easy it was to access many events and for the welcoming atmosphere. A few constructive comments were made regarding the cost and quality of lower-attended events and work-in-progress events.

**"It was just so good. I love it when bands are fresh. [...] So when I come to all of these events and I see all the young people there, and I see them growing up with this and getting so influenced and bringing it into their life, it's so cool. It's so cool. I see people younger than me, and they're like, "Oh, I'm doing this, I'm doing this. Oh, I'm doing this stall at this place. Oh, I'm performing a little gig at this place."**

**It's amazing. Especially in music places, it's a lot easier. I feel like it's a more calm and chill vibe. You're there for a communal reason. Everyone's brought together just to listen."**

**Audience member 1, Pride Punx Presents, Tali Clarke**

**"It is wonderful that you are holding such events. It is incredibly useful overall for health and wellbeing. [...] Powerful, moving, creative, informative, spiritually fulfilling. [...] Ultimate relaxation. [...] Beautiful having the healing sound journey in the church 'peace within'. [...]"**

**So privileged and fortunate to enjoy local talent in a superb venue with fantastic acoustics, many thanks. [...] Not my usual cup of tea but a very welcome change of scene. [...] Great entertainment all round. Gorgeous acoustic in the church, lovely for the audience and a confidence raiser for the artists."**

**Audience feedback, Arts of Sanctuary**

# Creatives experiences at WAF 2025



Moving Viewpoints:  
Rebecca Cresta



Pride, purpose and joy in performing to live audiences were consistent themes in creatives' feedback. For many, WAF was an opportunity to share their work, tell stories, and connect directly with their audiences. Others were motivated by the chance to explore social issues, respond to local needs or bring creativity into community spaces.

Many spoke of the buzz of performing to live audiences, the energy it gave them, and the confidence it inspired to keep creating. This pride and joy was often expressed in relation to testing and showcasing new work, expressing creative identity, and a validating artistic/creative approach through a venue collaboration.

96% rated their experience of the event as very good (79%) or good (16%).

WAF continues to be recognised as a vital platform for trying out new ideas and developing work. Creatives valued the freedom to take risks, refine their approach and learn about what connects with different audiences. Around 63% of artists reported working

in new and different ways, while 25% expected their collaboration or partnership to continue beyond the event, and 22% had developed or created new partnerships.

Creatives valued and appreciated the venue environments they worked in and felt supported. There were a couple of instances where venues were less accessible for creatives and audiences; solutions are being looked at ahead of next year.

Some creatives shared how taking part in a series of events helped them grow in confidence and stay involved. Support from the fringe enabled some creatives to run linked and multiple events. Others spoke about staying on as audience members or planning future projects after seeing how the fringe worked. At venue hub The Arches, there was a good cross-mix of creative support and activity, with creatives performing, supporting peers, and attending others' events.

Creatives spoke warmly about the diversity and inclusivity of the Fringe, its eclectic mix of art forms

talents, and disciplines. They appreciated seeing diverse audiences come together – families, older residents, refugees, queer artists, disabled and neurodivergent performers, and people from varied cultural backgrounds. For some, being part of such an inclusive space gave a sense of belonging and pride. Others said it contributed to new friendships and collaborations, giving them the confidence to share their work and helping them feel part of a wider creative community.

95% of creatives said their access needs were met, reflecting WAF's open and supportive platform for artists of all backgrounds.

Some creatives shared how the festival helped them build confidence and develop new skills. Some creatives stepped into production roles, valuing the experience gained in cultural production and organising artistic collaborations. They saw it as a step towards paid work and broader opportunities. Some felt taking part supported their wellbeing as well as their careers. 18% believed they had developed their career in the cultural sector as a result of their involvement.

Creatives reflected on practical challenges that affected attendance and delivery. Hot weather, the trend towards last-minute bookings, and difficulties with the new website and booking system made it harder to share events and reach audiences. Creatives said listings needed to be easier to edit and to share quickly, even at short notice.

Some felt their events could have reached more people with additional local signage, posters and promotion by host venues. Others noted the importance of having clear points of contact and decision-makers at community venues who understand the collaborative nature of the Fringe, to support operations and on-the-day delivery.

**"We've had a great time. It's my first show. Yeah, really, really enjoyed it. It's been great. To have an audience like that was fantastic. Really receptive crowd as well. [...] This script helped me transition away from my life in a corporate job that was boring me to the extent that I wrote the show in the first place.**

**It feels quite full circle to be performing that now, and that being my first step into becoming hopefully a creator full-time, and that is now my goal. Writing in particular is the thing I really love, and that's what I want to do full-time. It's something that I'm happy to do just to get the material out there and hopefully viewed as best I can."**

**George Grant, Operation Blank**

**"It's been great, actually. It's nice to have people that are actually sitting and listening and watching. Yeah, it's just nice to have people here listening to music. It's such a collaborative music isn't it. So just the people who respond because part of it is you're bouncing off each other when you're playing. I think people do respond to that.**

**You're not just going through the motions playing a set path. You're sort of responding to what the other is doing, and I think people like to see that."**

**Creatives, Jazz After Dusk - Our Jazz Night,  
Car Crash Productions**



# Learning and reflection

# Learning and reflection

**1.**

The talents and efforts of the arts and culture team (with new roles to support marketing and estate-based work) and all involved enabled WAF to deliver its most ambitious year yet, delighting audiences, supporting creatives and creative collaboration, and expanding its reach and awareness.

**2.**

There is an established awareness, recognition and appreciation of WAF as an inclusive, diverse and supportive platform where creatives can experiment with and showcase bold and boundary-pushing work, be themselves amongst peers, and develop links and collaborations with the creative and community sectors.

**3.**

WAF continues to demonstrate its potential as a development platform, supporting creatives' pathways and professional growth. The team reflected on how many creative producers have grown through WAF, moving from training into funded projects, and then into wider opportunities. The festival has a role not just as a showcase but as a pipeline for artist development.

**4.**

The supportive relationships and brokerage role of council colleagues in helping creatives connect with venues, local partners and community audiences. Early planning conversations with community leaders, regeneration teams, and neighbourhood managers are vital.

# Learning and reflection

**5.**

Commissioning and grants should be balanced, with clear timelines. There's value in both. Open grants are transparent, defensible under scrutiny, and support grassroots ideas. Direct commissioning is sometimes more efficient, especially with experienced artists who already have strong local links. The team favour a mixed model.

**6.**

Community-powered events are a vital part of an arts and culture events-based programme. Faith and cultural venues can work as powerful hubs of creativity, connection and wellbeing. Free, family-friendly and neighbourhood-based events in libraries, estates and community centres created safe, welcoming routes into culture and wellbeing

**7.**

Pre-event workshops on estates and school visits ahead of events strengthened and deepened participation at key events.

**8.**

Creativity and installations in everyday spaces created new ways to experience place and provided anchors for personal story-sharing and reminiscence.

**9.**

There is an appetite for exchange between artists, communities and climate-focused initiatives. Many creatives valued opportunities to meet peers, share learning and build momentum for future collaboration.

**10.**

Reflect on guidance for creatives on content boundaries and political messaging

# Learning and reflection

**11.**

Several connected factors impacted audience attendance: hot weather, the trend to last-minute booking, a new website and booking system that made it harder to share events and for audiences to book onto, the competition/range of other events, and local visibility of some events. The team recognise the need to make it as easy as possible for creatives to share/amend events and for audiences to book.

**12.**

The team reflected that marketing needs clearer estate-specific communication. While overall branding was strong, there were gaps on the ground. Direct outreach (flyers at schools, door-knocking, handing out materials on the day) can be effective but resource-heavy. WAF audiences are most effectively reached through personal relationships and community-based communication, supported by targeted digital and traditional marketing. Early publicity through local schools, faith and community channels is key.

**13.**

Some creatives experienced challenges in attracting an audience in cold spots. Reaching local residents and communities required more time and tailored communication. WAF's audience mapping highlighted some cold spots and underrepresented outer-edge areas within the borough where engagement remains lower.

**14.**

Some creatives experienced communication and operational challenges: a decision-maker and point of contact at community venues who understands the collaborative nature of the Fringe is important for on-the-day operations, supporting timely publicity and consistent messaging and avoiding over-reliance on email chains; some venues didn't promote events as much as creatives had hoped. Community venues should help creatives connect with local networks and audiences.

# Learning and reflection

**15.**

Venue conditions and accessibility at some venues. The Arches is a much-loved venue but needs maintenance work to make it suitable for audiences. Creatives working outdoors or on estates should have more timely access to local facilities.

**16.**

School engagement needs lead-in time.

**17.**

Increase awareness and take-up of training for creatives (Mental health awareness training, Dementia Awareness training, Gender and Sexuality Awareness training).

**18.**

Evaluation. Earlier sign-off of audience surveys and in-fringe evaluation materials. Simplify/reduce the evaluation asks on creatives and producers post-WAF. Increase response rate from creatives.



# Thank You!

Thank you to all the creatives, partners, volunteers, staff and communities whose creativity, energy and collaboration brought this year's WAF to life.

We hope you will join us again,

**Wandsworth Arts Fringe Team**

**WAF Producer - Cath Mattos**

**Arts Programme & Partnerships Manager  
Lucy Murray**

Evaluation and impact report by [Live Projects](#)