



Youth
Theatre
Arts
Scotland

**Youth Theatre: A collision of
wellbeing and creativity**

***'I went to the youth theatre at 12
and it changed my life.'***

Bernadine Evaristo (2019 Booker Prize Winner)

Outline

1. Introduction and hello
2. What is youth theatre?
3. The intrinsic value of youth theatre
4. Targeted health and wellbeing projects
5. The dream



YTAS considers a youth theatre as:

A group or organisation which engages young people as active participants in the performing arts and where their participation is central to the motivation of the creative process.

Youth Theatres

- **217** venues
- **99** organisations
- **1,087** staff

engaged **21,641** participants

Youth theatre across Scotland

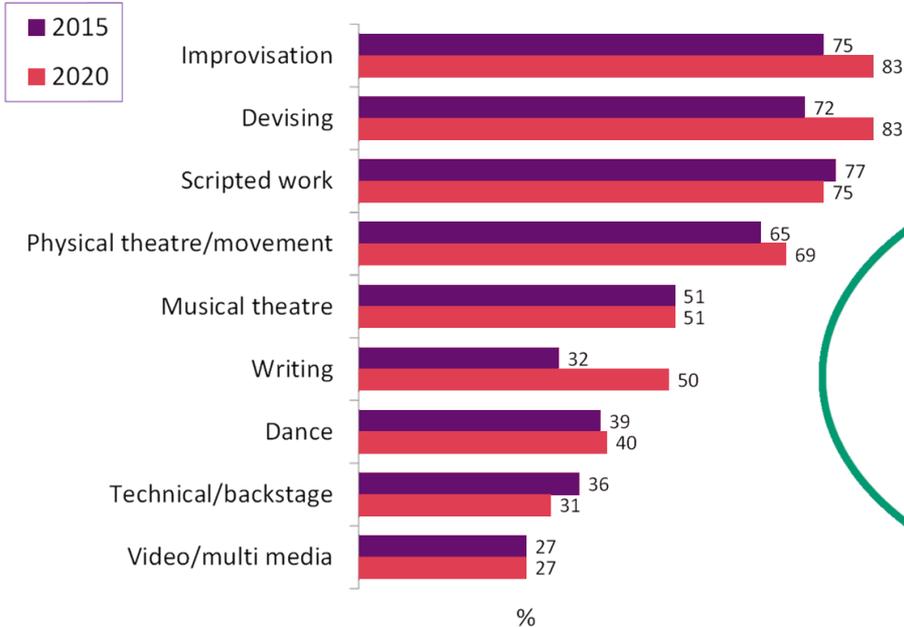
The greatest proportion of groups (**32%**) ran between two and five separate classes, but **8%** ran more than 21...
Pheh!



Youth Theatres' Activities

What groups got up to...

- 85% hosted skills classes
- 89% rehearsed for a show
- 79% put on public performances
- 8% undertook international projects
- 55% did school holiday projects
- 35% performed at festivals
- 17% went on tour



Main Artforms

- 35% Devising
- 24% Musical Theatre
- 12% Scripted Work
- 14% Other
- 9% Improvisation
- 4% Not specified
- 2% Dance and Physical Theatre



Devising, Writing, and Improv activity all rose since 2015

***'It would give me a chance to just exist as myself,
which I feel I don't get the chance to do
much in everyday life.'***



Some fun stats

New Territory (768 participants)

- **100%** of participants felt they '**participated in positive activity**'
- **85%** of participants have reported their **confidence increasing**
- **86%** of participants reported **increased aspirations**
- **84%** of participants reported **positive changes in their behaviour**
- **81%** of participants reported 'increases in feeling **safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible** and **included**' (SHANARRI)
- **90%** of participants are becoming increasingly **confident, resilient**
- and **adventurous**



'I chose to do youth theatre because I always felt like the 'odd one out' in my friend group and like I wasn't fully understood by others, however in youth theatre I felt like I was valued. That my contribution and opinion mattered.'



There is a Light: Brightlight

- Brightlight was a national evaluation of cancer services for young people aged 13-24 years in England
- Collaboration with Contact Young Company to create a theatrical interpretation of the results.
- Using theatre to present research enabled BRIGHTLIGHT results to be accessible to a larger, more diverse audience.



***'I get to meet people from all backgrounds,
people from all over the world which makes my
life all the richer for having met...***

***I have been greatly aware from a very young
age of the real life struggles of people who have
come to our beautiful country as refugees from
war torn countries seeking asylum. I am sure
I have learned so much from all the people I have
met in that situation... and above all else it had
taught me great humility.'***

Wellbeing Partnerships

- **Sanctuary Queer Arts**, established in 2020 to provide a space for young queer artists to develop their practice.
- Placing mental health at the heart of the creative process, through a partnership with **Pure Potential Scotland**
- Partnership involves **one-to-one support** as well as workshops for participants and leaders

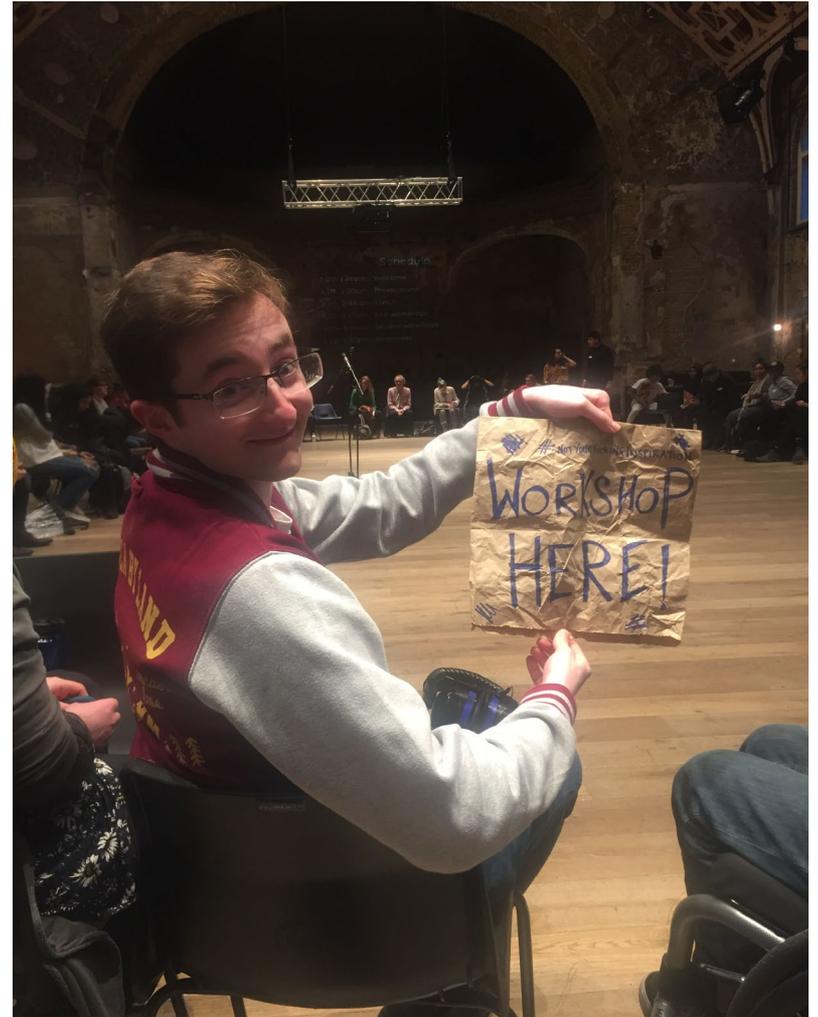


- **Scottish Youth Theatre** has a well-established wellbeing model, with support for all projects with an autobiographical focus

'I'm on the autistic spectrum and youth theatre has been somewhere I feel less like the odd one out. It's a safe space, even sometimes unintentionally, which is a testament to how much it works. I feel like more of a person within/because of youth theatre. I've found friends for life.'

Access Statements

- **Birds of Paradise Theatre Company** – Scotland's first touring theatre company for disabled and non-disabled artists.
- **Young Artists** and **Young Consultants**
- **Access Statements** used to achieve a fully inclusive environment and to understand experiences and preferences of participants.
- Acknowledges the **nuances** of diagnosed health conditions



'Experiencing youth theatre and working with youth theatre leaders has been inspiring, empowering, and pivotal. Transitioning from accepting the narrative written about me by other people and conforming to it, to taking agency of my own life.'



***#YouthTheatreMakesMe feel important,
picked me up when I was at my lowest and gave
me the confidence to be where I am now and I
wouldn't be the person I am today without it***



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