

Mapping Family Theatre in Europe

A report on the current situation, the key questions
and artistic and logistical aspects of developing
theatre that addresses intergenerational families



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Project partners



Introduction

The Family Theatre Project aims to explore and develop the forms of theatre that engage different generations within a family. This document offers insight into the first step of this process. Using desk research, interviews with practitioners, families and other stakeholders as well as the examination of existing best practice, this document is the starting point for the whole project. It will enable us to find the gaps in practice that can be explored over the course of the project to set the directions that need to be explored further through practice. It also offers policy makers some pointers concerning the complexities of access to theatre for families; artistic density of creating productions that offer engaging theatre to different generations of audiences and the social and educational importance of offering these possibilities to family units.

Following an introduction to the project the reader will find the products of our desk research and empirical engagement with the stakeholders. Later we share some of the Best Practices identified by partners, though the list is far from exhaustive as we see that there is much valuable work in the field. We also share summaries of some of the useful documents, including articles connected to different aspects of this topic.

The Family Theatre Project

Theatre, with its transformative and inclusive nature, emerges as a powerful tool for counterbalancing educational and cultural poverty while fostering social inclusion and participation¹. Through the medium of theatre, individuals, particularly those facing economic or cultural disadvantages, gain access to a dynamic platform for self-expression and creative exploration. The immersive nature of theatrical experiences transcends traditional educational boundaries, offering a unique space for learning and personal development. Furthermore, theatre serves as a catalyst for cultural enrichment, providing diverse narratives and perspectives that contribute to a more inclusive societal tapestry. In this

¹ European Theatre Convention. (2023). The Opole Recommendations.

way, theatre emerges not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a vehicle for social change and empowerment, making it a vital component in the fight against educational and cultural poverty.

In the framework of theatre formats dedicated to young generations, Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People refers to performances specifically created for children and youth in school settings. Some of these productions are developed with minimal budgets and, due to the widespread belief that theatre for young audiences is an easy entry point, they are sometimes produced at an amateur level. In some cases, young people are involved in the theatre-making process, though generally families are not part of this involvement, except as audience members at the final performance. Many of these forms have been well explored in the past decades, and are well-developed fields at EU level, as demonstrated by studies and initiatives held by the *European Theatre Convention* and *Assitej (International Association of Theatre and Performing Arts For Children and Young People)*. In some European countries overarching surveys have also been conducted of the wider *Educational Theatre* field² (professional, interactive theatre with strong educational aims, that does not engage families) and the robust DICE research also proves the educational impact of various theatre practices³.

On the other hand, family theatre, which aims to engage and entertain the full and diverse families composed of different generations with entertainment but also cultural and educational purposes, with a professional approach in all the production aspects, is an area that has seen varying levels of research and development across Europe. While there are successful initiatives, there is a prevailing observation that family theatre is not as well-established as it could and would need to be.

The significance of access to live cultural activities for families has greatly grown in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Europe faces significant challenges related to cultural and educational poverty.

The disruptions caused by the pandemic have exacerbated existing disparities, leaving vulnerable communities with limited access to cultural resources and educational opportunities, thus widening gaps in

accessibility and participation. The need is urgent for targeted interventions and collaborative efforts at local, national, and international levels to address and alleviate the enduring effects of cultural and educational poverty post-COVID, with a specific focus on young generations⁴.

Starting from these problems, challenges and opportunities, the Family Theatre project intends to explore the potentiality of the family theatre at EU level, developing and testing a format able to reach out a relatively unreached audience target, the family, through the combination of the most effective practices and artistic languages available at EU and international level, where theatre becomes the tool to enhance dialogue, reflection and growth possibilities for children and the family as a whole.

The Family Theatre project intends to promote the research, debate and sharing of practices about the Family Theatre to define it as a proper and self-standing format specifically addressed for families and to develop and experiment with different plays created on the methodology of the Family Theatre Format, thus testing its potential at EU level before further disseminating it.

In detail, the project intends to reach the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the Family Theatre format in European theatres and professionals. Associated Partners and stakeholders from the four European Countries involve explore and collect data and practices implemented at national and EU levels on the Family Theatre themes. This publication is the product of the research activity.
- Following this report our partnership aims to investigate and define the main features and the quality standards of the Family Theatre format, to facilitate its recognition and circulation at EU level. We will aim to define a format with clear guiding principles and values, quality standards and operational guidelines. To make sure it will resemble as much as possible the needs of the different national contexts, the format will be shared with relevant stakeholders at EU level for their review and assessment.

² Cziboly, Á., & Bethlenfalvy, Á. (2024). The big picture: Objectives, strategies, attributes, financing, participants, leaders and the significance of educational theatre programmes in Hungary. *Applied Theatre Research*, 12(1), 29–45.

³ Cziboly, A. (2010). The DICE has been cast; Research findings and recommendations on educational theatre and drama. DICE Consortium

⁴ European Council resolution on the EU work plan for Culture 2023-2026.

Tormen, E. (2023). *Guaranteeing Children's Future: How COVID-19, cost-of-living and climate crises affect children in poverty and what governments in Europe need to do*. Save the Children.

- Following this each partner will test the Family Theatre Format, developing a show according to the specific features of the Family Theatre defined in the Format. This action aims at testing the effectiveness and adaptability of the Format in different contexts, and its findings will be useful to assess the Format in its final version before sharing it outside the consortium.
- Our project also aims to create an EU community of theatres and theatre professionals committing themselves to further explore the project themes and practices after the project ends at both national and international level, through a series of networking events, workshops and study visits addressed to external national and international stakeholders.



Key concepts of the project

Our project relies on a broadly inclusive definition of family which defines it as “any combination of two or more persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth, and/or adoption or placement, and who, together, assume responsibilities for various combinations of some of the following:

- Physical maintenance and care of family members
- Addition of new members
- Socialization of children
- Guiding social behaviour
- Producing, consuming, and distributing goods and services
- Love and emotional nurturance”⁵

This definition is used for both our research stakeholder group and also as the perceived, possible target audience group of the Family Theatre format.

The project partnership started out with the following definition of the Family Theatre concept as a hypothesis, which could be modified and reworked based on the findings of the research:

- Family Theatre can be any genre of theatre created for diverse, intergenerational family units.

- The content explored in the production should be interesting for children, teenagers and adults alike.
- The chosen topic/material should not be “dumbed-down”, but should work at multiple levels of understanding.
- The language and artistic forms used in the production should be accessible and engaging for different age audiences.
- The environment of the production should be friendly to all members of families (children and teenagers alike).
- We are aware that the term is used in different forms in various cultures and contexts, but we will be referring to it as Family Theatre in this document for the sake of consistency.

The context of Family Theatre

As part of our research, we conducted research of various documents, articles and surveys that connect with issues related to the concept of Family Theatre. You will find a detailed summary of these documents in the final section of this paper.

The following main issues stand out and portray the context of our work when researching these documents:

Looking through artistic manifestos and documents connected to creativity and culture it was striking that families as complex units to be engaged in rarely get mentioned. There is both research and reflection on practice concerning specific age-groups within theatre audiences, children or young people for example, but families containing contrasting aesthetic and social needs seem to be left off the map. The few references to intergenerational cultural events that we found (all extremely useful) stayed independent of family units, they were organised through homogenous institutions.

A large body of research states that there are serious inequalities, serious financial or geographical boundaries in access to culture. Even in countries where there is some state programme to ease financial constraints (e.g. free school visits to theatres in Hungary) families rarely have a chance to experience cultural events as a group. Our survey with



⁵ The Vanier Institute of the Family. (2024). Definition of family.

families reinforced the findings of other research, financial factors are a huge constraint for families in organising visits to theatre performances, besides ticket prices other costs (travel, food, etc) also add up and keep families out of the theatre.

We did find a wide range of examples of theatres communicating with families. While some of these documents seem a bit prescriptive at times (describing how children should be “good” audiences), many others offer very useful and practical advice to parents and grandparents about how to ease and enjoy the theatre as a family event or offer preliminary insight into what space and facilities families should expect on their theatre visit.

There is much, well-grounded literature concerning the positive educational and social impact of theatre on various age-groups. We have not found research exploring families from this aspect, however we maintain our hypothesis, that has been reinforced through our survey, that meaningful theatre experiences can strengthen family connections.

Family Theatre Survey Report

Executive summary

This report discusses the concept of Family Theatre based on data collected through questionnaires and interviews from 155 respondents in four different countries. Families, social and cultural organisation and theatre-makers were asked a variety of questions. Theatre practitioners state that there is no specific theatre genre that can be labelled as Family Theatre, as a number of different types of theatre can engage multigenerational families. While this report does not offer a clear-cut methodology for creating such performances, it offers a variety of counterposed arguments and important points of reference for a process of theatre productions for families.

Methodology

This small-scale research was based on a qualitative research design. The project partners collected data between December 2024 and March 2025 through anonymous online questionnaires (see at the end of the report) and also targeted interviews (verbal and written) with specific stakeholders identified by the project partners in their countries.

The three stakeholder groups (theatre staff, including marketing and technical specialist besides artistic collaborators and critics, civic and cultural organisation working with families, families with different age children) were identified by the consortium partnership and the questions were designed to cover territories that could influence the family theatre products piloted in this project, but also relevant to a wider field. The **Ethical Protocol** was available to all contributors. The findings of the report are based on the following data collected:



	Croatia	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Total
Theatre professionals					
Questionnaires	11	19	8	8	46
Interviews		6	12	14	32
Cultural and civic organisations					
Questionnaires	1	7	4	4	16
Interviews		5	4		9
Families					
Questionnaires	17	15	12	13	47
Interviews		5			5
TOTAL RESPONSES					155

While there is an evident geographical spread of responses based on the partnership countries there is also clearly a higher number of responses from theatre professionals (78 responses) and families (52 responses), the two stakeholder groups that have a direct investment in the project. While the consortium was specifically interested in identifying cultural and civic partners as stakeholders in the project, data collection was more difficult than expected. Possible reasons for this will be discussed together with the analysis of the data collected from the organisations that could be reached, however the project partnership has identified communicating with this sector of stakeholders as one of the important aims of this project.

Findings

Based on data collected from families:

A key target group of Family Theatre performances are family units, so we considered it important to create opportunities to gain information from families anonymously through questionnaires but also through targeted interviews to have diverse feedback. As referred to above, we have used a highly inclusive definition which defines family as “any combination of two or more persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth, and/or adoption or placement, and who,

together, assume responsibilities for various combinations of some of the following: Physical maintenance and care of family members / Addition of new members / Socialization of children / Guiding social behaviour / Producing, consuming, and distributing goods and services / Love and emotional nurturance.”

In our interviews we contacted families that go to theatre but also those that do not, while the findings are useful and offer plenty of reference points that can be discussed further, they cannot be considered representative.

There were great differences in data collected by different partners in the ratio of theatre-going families and those who do not go. However, there is clear feedback on the factors that hold families back from attending performances. A recurring theme is the cost of theatre tickets, which adds up significantly for a 3-6 member family. But also theatre schedules – specifically starting times – and proximity to theatres were mentioned factors in all countries. Some people also mention a lack of information and access to information.

The age of the children impacts on theatre attendance habits of families. The collected data suggests that families go to the theatre together after the children turn 4-5 years old and mostly until they reach their teen years, around the age of 12. There were other examples too, but the main age-range of families going to theatre as a unit is while the children are between these ages.

“Cost - it’s more expensive than seeing a movie”
Response from Irish family

Stories that appeal to families are known stories such as fairy tales or classics, something that is already known and easy to follow. Many of the specific examples mentioned by respondents include either narratives familiar from the literary canon, or popular reads, or stories known from classic musical movies, etc.

The theatre adaptation of Ferenc Molnár's *The Paul Street Boys* about a gang of teenagers, directed by György Vidovszky was a refreshing example of parents going to theatre with their teenage children. This professional production had teenage actors within the professional cast.

"We love adventure stories, things that make you think. Don't like stories that are too obviously preachy about issues but like really strong storytelling that carries you on a journey"

Response from Ireland

A relatively fresh example for this is the performance 'Pet nula', (A+), a theatre performance about an obsession with best grades among young people in Croatia, produced by 'Žar ptica' Municipal theatre in Zagreb, first performed in March 2025.

Parents often like to take their children to theatre to performance based on narratives they remember from their own childhood, from the Croatian context plays such as 'The enchanted forest', 'Smogovci', or 'Who has this child got into' are relevant examples of this (for details see Best practices section). The genres that were mentioned the most in the questionnaire include comedy, musicals and adventures. The easing impact of humour and music is mentioned in several responses and some mention interaction as an important element of performances for families.

We asked the responding family members about the themes, topics that could interest different generations within the family. Themes that interest families include familial themes, overcoming difficulties, coming-of-age stories and narratives that reflect the critical turning points in life (often labelled as the normative crisis in psychology). These appear to be themes that would spark conversation within the family, questions that can be taken away and engage family members in conversation after the theatre visit too. However, it is useful to note that participants highlighted the

importance of not being preachy and obvious when exploring educational themes.

Theatre experience for families could be improved through seating that is better thought for families – this feedback was mentioned in all countries – many families feel that the traditional theatre seats do not allow the physical proximity many crave for in a family experience. Also, themes that are appealing for older generations and not only small children are important, and schedules that are better fitted to family life and school schedules.

The ideal length, timing for a family theatre show should be 90 minutes or shorter according to most of our responders.

Most of the other activities that families partake in include a lot of outdoor activities and sports, which involve active participation of the whole family and movement and as such differ greatly. The only activity that could be compared to theatre visits is going to the cinema, which was mentioned a few times.

Based on data collected from cultural and social organisations:

We set up a questionnaire and also approached different civic/social and cultural organisations to map whether this sector benefits from family theatre performances. As can be seen from the numbers in the table above we received the least responses from this sector. The targeted interviews helped in widening the scope. However, we found that most organisations don't have direct and long-term collaborations with theatres. While some organise theatre performances at their venues, these are mostly linked to the specific themes of that organisation and are rarely intergenerational. In other cases the programs realised by theatres in collaboration with these organisations were interactive, specifically designed programs, rather than performances. Other organisations say they see the possible benefits of theatre, but the complexities and costs related to organising theatre experiences for their family clients outweigh the advantages.

Some organisations working with large or deprived families reported on receiving complementary or low-price tickets for their clients. Unfortunately, often these tickets were to productions that did not reach

a high standard and the tickets could not be sold in other ways. This practice is reported to be counterproductive for the families, as a possible bad experience creates distrust towards theatre in general.

Based on data collected from theatre makers:

Theatre-makers working in different roles were targeted by the third questionnaire. Besides the anonymous survey we also contacted and interviewed a large number of theatre practitioners who the partners considered important contributors to performances created for families. These specialists define Family Theatre as a theatre that engages all members of the family through relevant storyline that all generations can identify with. It is a theatre that doesn't dumb ideas down for the sake of the youngest but doesn't alienate them either. It subtly caters for all generations while engaging them as a group and creating space for conversation. All these features connect with the hypothetical definition drafted by project members. One interviewee states that "Family Theatre is like making two or three shows within the one show at the same time. A show for young children, older children and adults. That's a Family Show. It is also extremely difficult to create." While the quote is from Ireland, we find very similar thoughts expressed in documents of the Croatian Mala Scena Theatre, talking about creating two or three shows – for the different generations - within one performance.

This timeless musical tragi-comedy written by Carmel Winters and directed by Muireann Ahern and Stephen Warbeck has a full original score by Academy Award winner Stephen Warbeck (Shakespeare in Love, Captain Corelli's Mandolin) with a stand out performance from Louis Lovett, one of Ireland's best loved physical theatre actors for all ages. This big-hearted show follows an artist's journey from innocence to corruption, delight to downfall - and back again.

About Theatre Lovett's *The Maestro and the Mosquita*

Engaging performances tend to integrate interaction, strong storytelling and character-driver plots. This includes known stories such as fairy tales or well-known literary pieces, iconic books or movies. Some practitioners specifically reflect on the significance of the familiarity of the title/narrative for parents as it offers them a sense of safety, they believe they know what to expect from the performance. Other companies specifically play with these expectations and aim to subvert the audience's expectations.

While some argue that themes that seem to engage families could be centred around narratives engaging in child carers, dementia, bullying, unresolved trauma or fantasy. There seems to be agreement in the field that it is important to work with significant stories, not shying away from challenging narratives. Others add that it is the multilayered dramaturgy of opening up the narrative that is central in engaging several generations at the same time. One interviewee explains that the while smaller children require black and white characters, at least as protagonists, older audiences need more multidimensional, complex characters. This contradiction can be resolved with playing with differences between central and smaller roles in a play.

A variety of different genres were mentioned by the interviewed practitioners. While many consider musicals and pantomimes as the most well-known Family Theatre genres, they also point out that the size of the auditorium and stage have a large impact on what genre of theatre is used. In some countries there is a strong tradition of studio spaces putting on performances for families and these spaces allow a different kind of intimacy and more subtle theatre genres, like **puppetry or dance**. Others mention classical street theatre genres that often include puppets or masks and include powerful humour and often some interaction with the audience.

The role of language was questioned by some contributors, who argued that the most suitable performances (especially for families with small children) is non-verbal. These theatre-makers claimed that these performances work well with multigenerational audiences, because the lack of language and cognitive explanation allows a more associative response from the audience and also enhances that different age-groups

understand the performance on different levels. Others argue that it is the energy between the performer, the adult and the child that creates the engagement.

Other practitioners maintain the improvised performances with a high level of audience engagement can become extremely powerful family theatre experience. While the actors improvising need to keep in mind a set of rules that help keep different age-groups engaged, the tasks set up in the cocreation of these performances by the actors can be addressed to different age-groups present. Other artists are critical with improvised performances because they lack clear storyline and argue that powerful and well-developed stories are central in engaging different generations at the same time.

As can be seen from the responses, there is no specific theatre genre that can be labelled as Family Theatre, it is clear that a number of different types of theatre can engage multigenerational families.

Aesthetically, to engage families with theatre, theatre-makers recommend the use of scale and colours, techniques such as puppetry, masks, stage design that integrated the audience and in general big and bold design.

In terms of quality, they advise for top class dialogue-acting-design, strong characters that drive the story and strong actors that have the ability to improvise with the audience and engage their whole skillset in the performance. Some examples mentioned in interviews were professional performances alongside the professional actors, also included teenaged performers – to portray the adolescence centred narrative suitably – this factor also contributed to the performance becoming a family favourite according to its director.

While a few interviewees suggest longer two act performances, most practitioners claim that the ideal duration for a family production is 60 to 80 minutes without interval across the board.

Not only was the size of the venue mentioned as an important factor in the questionnaires and interviews, but also the facilities offered to make it family friendly. Responses placed the accessibility and a friendly/warm atmosphere of the venue as a factor that makes families feel at

ease. One example offered by the director of a small venue was that the performers mingled with the audience before the improvisation-based show, to create accessibility. Other theatres share videos on their website of the venue to make it familiar to those coming for the first time, or adapt the space to connect with the world of the performance.

Some practitioners emphasize the importance of communicating and preparing the audience in advance, as this can also help in creating a lens for the audience through which they can focus on specific elements. The strategies to engage families in the theatre include using social media and online spaces to help set clear expectations. Online resources and information packs can also be used for these aims.

Similarly, theatre-makers report on a variety of strategies used for post-show engagement with the audience. Besides offering resource materials, Q&A with actors or characters or workshops centred around the themes engaged in can also be realised.

To help in defining Family Theatre and also identifying its special traits, we asked our responders

FidgetFeet company – “Strange Feathers” ariel, costumes, relaxing, live music, non-verbal, accessible to neurodivergent audiences. Aimed at children up to 7 years of age but was mentioned as suitable for all ages by one interviewee.

Baboró Theatre Festival volunteers really help to encourage the adults to sit with the children during a show, to spend time together, make it communal, creating memories together.

The Bendeguz Project is an extreme example of an experimental interactive performance from Hungary in which the actor involved his own child (Bendegúz) in the performance. The audience was invited to join this family event that mostly developed into a family story.

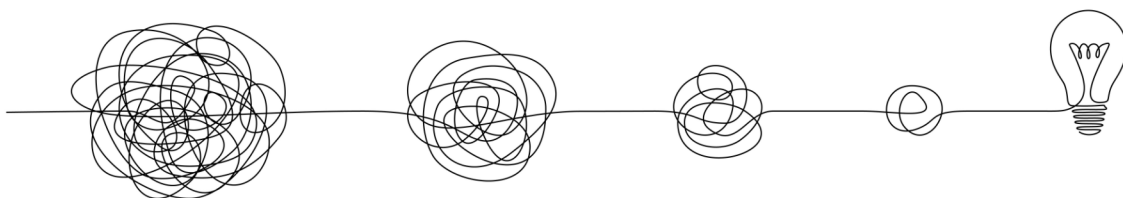
about the difference between Children's Theatre and Family Theatre. Practitioners agree that a Family Theatre performance needs to offer a theatre experience that resonates with all different age-groups, while this is not a prerequisite for Children's Theatre. Though, often in the case of a high quality production, it contains a universal element that can appeal to all generations.

Finally, we asked all responders filling in the questionnaire to give feedback on the quality of the process and activity of filling in the questionnaires. In this quality assurance section of the questionnaires, we received 120 responses altogether.

Responses were gathered on a 10 point Likert scale, where 1 meant strongly disagree at 10 meant strongly agree. We received the following average responses:

- 1) I received clear and comprehensive initial information about the objectives of the actions in which I would be involved. **Response: 7,6**
- 2) The organizers clearly communicated how the contribution I provided would be used. **Response: 7,7**
- 3) I believe my input will contribute meaningfully to the final outputs of the project. **Response: 7,24**
- 4) The final output will be valuable to the field of family theatre. **Response: 8,1**

While the questionnaires spread online allowed only a short introduction to the project and its aims, those who participated in the interviews received a much longer, detailed account of the project and its aims. All interviewees expressed the importance of the project in thematising this important topic, alongside with the hope that reflection and discussion of this kind of work will create opportunities for discussion and development in the field.



Best practices of Theatre for Families

This section offers examples of performances that are suitable for intergenerational family audiences according to the project partners. While there are clearly many more such performances in Europe the partners could primarily locate such performances in their own countries. It is important to highlight that this selection does not offer a European overview, but aims to offer some examples of family shows and their short analysis.

Details of the productions:	Title: They Called her Vivaldi by Louis Lovett Cie: Theatre Lovett Dir.: Muireann Ahern and Carl Kennedy Cast: Louis Lovett, Genevieve Hulme-Beaman Multiple performances around Ireland, notably in the Peacock Theatre. and extensive US touring
Summary of the productions:	Mr. E. Haberdasher has crafted very peculiar earmuffs for his very particular daughter Cecilia Maria. Don't shout about it but Cecilia Maria thinks they make her look fascinating and has whispered her thanks. They Called her Vivaldi is an upbeat comedy-adventure about a sensitive musical-prodigy making a quiet name for herself in a cacophonous world. As our young heroine journeys over cobblestones and canals, we learn about love, loss, the place of salt in our diet and the courage to lose our footing without losing our way.
Links to documentation:	https://theatrelovett.com/shows/they-called-her-vivaldi
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.theartsreview.com/single-post/2017/12/02/They-Called-Her-Vivaldi 'Family audiences, Theatre Lovett understands, are sophisticated enough to deserve better. It's a pure delight to share, and easily the best family entertainment onstage right now; a show that whips the charming jangle of its imagination into a rich, rewarding symphony.' - The Irish Times https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/they-called-her-vivaldi-review-a-rich-and-charming-symphony-1.3321810

What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	<i>They Called her Vivaldi</i> is written in rhymes but with very accessible language. It mixes poetry with strong visuals and storytelling is strongly supported by the actors' craft, including multiple characters, voice work, mime and movement, as well as impactful visuals which include a transforming set, music and light. The writing is clever, yet accessible by all and offers its audience the opportunity to use their imagination throughout the whole show.
What is transferable from this example:	This production relies on a high level of production and highly skilled performers, directors and designers all the while relying on simple yet effective techniques. This show offers its audience a new story that builds upon storytelling techniques and mechanisms known by all, therefore making it new but accessible.
Project partner offering it:	GSA

Details of the productions:	Title: A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings Cie: Collapsing Horse Dir.: Dan Colley Cast: Genevieve Hulme-Beaman, Manus Halligan / different cast depending on the production Multiple performances around Ireland, notoriously in Dublin Fringe Festival 2019 and in the Peacock Theatre 2019. Touring since 2019 with an international tour in 2024 (UK, New Zealand, Canada, Sweden)
Summary of the productions:	In a kitchen, in a theatre, two storytellers and their audience find something remarkable; a very old man with enormous wings.
Links to documentation:	https://www.dancolley.com/theatre/averyoldmanwithenormouswings
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/a-very-old-man-with-enormous-wings-magic-in-the-mundane-1.4118116 https://www.theartsreview.com/single-post/2019/12/12/a-very-old-man-with-enormous-wings

What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice (<i>analysis</i>):	This performance used different storytelling techniques, some traditional and other drawing from our current multimedia world, these include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral storytelling • Puppetry • Live video projection Using a mix of media to communicate the story, this production offers its audience different ways and perspectives to engage with the complex themes of the play. It engages audience members of all ages through clever devices which includes voice work and facial expressions appealing to younger audience members, to tiny puppetry paired with live video.
What is transferable from this example:	The use of mixed media can engage audiences with different ways of communicating and helps with retaining attention of less experienced audiences. Paired with more traditional theatre techniques, it can be a great way to introduce new audiences to theatre.
Project partner offering it:	GSA

Details of the productions:	Title: An Ant called Amy Dir.: Raymond Keane Cast: Julie Sharkey Venue: The Ark, for Dublin Theatre Festival 2024
Summary of the productions:	This is a story about an ant called Amy (an award-winning ant one might add), her brother Andy and a Brown Spider. Amy the ant works very hard. When she wins the Employee of the Month Award, Amy feels a happiness that drives her to work even harder. But is she truly content? With the help of the Brown Spider, Amy learns to find true happiness by appreciating the world around her and celebrating her brother's memory everyday.
Links to documentation:	https://ark.ie/events/view/an-ant-called-amy
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.theartsreview.com/single-post/dublin-theatre-festival-2024-an-ant-called-amy



What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	<p>This show deals with a very deep theme in a gentle, nudging way: grief. It explores the theme through a non-human character (an ant) all the while reminding its audience of very human-like reactions and mechanisms such as avoidance and over-compensation.</p> <p>The show uses subtle devices with a very simple set that is used cleverly. It heavily relies on the actors' capacity to engage with its audience and the director's mastery in physical theatre to make the most subtle movement precise and decisive.</p> <p>The story, while seemingly simple, deals with a vast theme which leaves the audience with opportunities for further discussion at the end of the show.</p>
What is transferable from this example:	<p>The show's simplicity in set and story makes it very transferable and tourable while its themes are universal and transferable to many countries and cultures. All the while, the writing of the story is very personal and gives great insight into dealing with grief.</p> <p>The theme is contemporary and the subtle writing allows for an enjoyable production that opens doors to further conversation post-show.</p>
Project partner offering it:	GSA

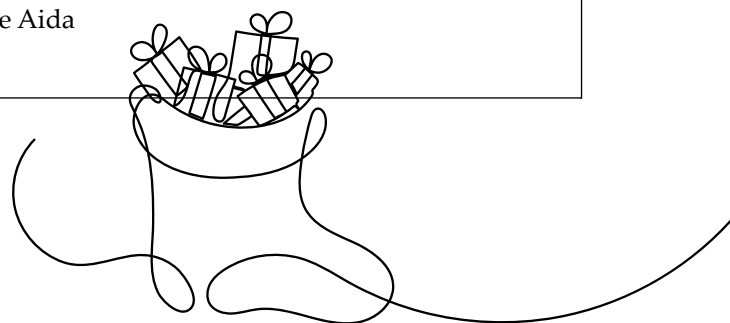
Details of the productions:	<p>Title: <i>War Horse</i></p> <p>Cie: National Theatre</p> <p>Dir.: Tom Morris</p> <p>Cast: Multiple Cast</p> <p>Touring since 2007 around the world - UK / Irish Tour 2024-25</p>
Summary of the productions:	<p>War Horse is an unforgettable theatrical experience which takes audiences on an extraordinary journey from the fields of rural Devon to the trenches of First World War France. Based on the beloved novel by Michael Morpurgo, this powerfully moving and imaginative drama, filled with stirring music and songs, is a show of phenomenal inventiveness. At its heart are astonishing life-sized horses by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, who bring breathing, galloping, charging horses to thrilling life on stage.</p> <p>At the outbreak of World War One, Joey, young Albert's beloved horse, is sold to the Cavalry and shipped to France. He's soon caught up in enemy fire, and fate takes him on an extraordinary journey, serving on both sides before finding himself alone in No Man's Land. Albert, who remained on his parents' Devon farm, cannot forget Joey. Though still not old enough to enlist, he embarks on a treacherous mission to find Joey and bring him home.</p>
Links to documentation	<p>https://www.warhorseonstage.com/</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wujNwkObgN4</p>
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	<p>https://www.thetimes.com/article/review-war-horse-at-the-lyttelton-national-theatre-zdqmbr32p</p> <p>https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/theatre/review-war-horse-1.1740398</p> <p>https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2024/sep/22/war-horse-review-the-lowry-salford</p>
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	<p>This production is ensemble work and puppetry at its best. It truly uses all that theatre has to offer to create magic on stage. This production showcases the craft of the puppeteers and the puppet maker and how theatrical tricks can create magic and wonder.</p> <p>War Horse is the adaptation of a famous 1980's novel written and recounts the story of a horse and his 15-year-old owner during WWI. The background of the war and the life-size puppet offer a real spectacle for the audience and gives all generations something to look for and identify with.</p>

What is transferable from this example:	The sheer scale of this production might not be transferable what the production relies on is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• strong ensemble work by highly skilled actors• specific skills such as giant puppeteering• high quality and level design• precision in movement and design
Project partner offering it:	GSA

Details of the productions:	Title: <i>The Borrowers</i> Cie: The Gate Theatre Dir.: Róisín McBrinn Cast: Claire O’Leary, David Rawle, Ruth McGill, Martin Beanz Warde, Aoife Mulholland, Ben Morris Dates: 11th Nov 2024 - 12th January 2025
Summary of the productions:	Based on Mary Norton’s beloved adventure novels, THE BORROWERS follows the fortunes of the tiny Clock Family. The Clocks live secretly in the walls and floors of a country house and “borrow” from the big people in order to survive. Their lives are plunged into chaos one day when the family’s youngest member, independent 11-year-old Arrietty, is seen by a ‘human bean’, a boy who is visiting the house. To survive, the Clocks must spread their wings and take a perilous and adventure-filled journey into the outside world to find a new home and search out their long-lost family members.
Links to documentation:	https://www.gatetheatre.ie/production/the-borrowers/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.independent.ie/entertainment/theatre-arts/the-borrowers-family-show-about-little-people-has-a-huge-heart-and-big-vision/a1474810905.html https://nomoreworkhorse.com/2024/11/18/the-borrowers-gate-theatre-review/

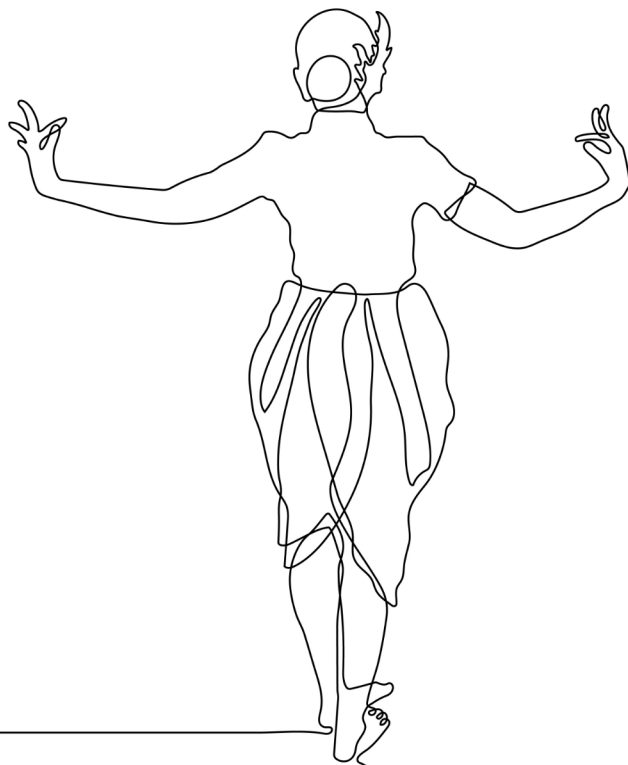
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice (<i>analysis</i>):	<p><i>The Borrowers</i> is the theatrical adaptation from the famous story by Mary Norton, as such audiences are drawn to the theatre to see a beloved story live, attracting a wide-range of audiences including some that may not be used to going to the theatre.</p> <p>The direction follows codes from classic tales such as dark and gloomy atmosphere for the human world where the main villain resides and colourful, energetic atmosphere for the Borrower’s world. It plays as well with scale in order to give the impression that the actors are really small creatures compared to the world around them. It also uses projection and puppetry as clever devices to play around with scale when a human speaks with a Borrower.</p> <p>So many devices that invite the audience to enter the world of the story.</p> <p>In addition, the production is a musical with original music by Fionn Foley which moves the story along smoothly. The music also follows classic codes and offers satisfying moments for the audience such as a villain song or a satisfying ensemble number at the end of the production.</p> <p>While the Gate Theatre doesn’t offer a family discount per se for this production, it does offer a %10 discount for groups of 6+ people.</p>
What is transferable from this example:	<p>This production is a great example of the adaptation of a known story, known by different generations (<i>The Borrowers</i> was originally published in 1952).</p> <p>It gives the audience the satisfaction of seeing a classic tale on stage by using the codes that are already known by all. Through strong design choices and different devices, it allows the spectator to dive into the world of the story and find comfort in understanding the mechanism of the classic tale making it accessible for all.</p> <p>The musical aspect of the production gives energy to the whole production and moves the story along in a smooth way making its run time of 2h15 (including interval) seem to go by much faster.</p>
Project partner offering it:	GSA

Details of the productions:	Title: Merry Christmas, Santa Claus! Production: Fondazione Aida, Alce Nero, Municipality of Verona Direction: Raffaele Latagliata Cast: Pino Costalunga, Greta Magnani, Matteo Ferrari, Justine Caenazzo Music: Laura Facci
Summary of the productions:	Merry Christmas, Santa Claus! is a Christmas musical comedy that combines tradition and modernity. On stage, an unusual Santa Claus who can no longer fit through chimneys to deliver presents to children on Christmas Eve: with the help of the elves Ortica and Castagna and, above all, Federico and Chiara, the two child protagonists, Santa Claus will manage to overcome the traps set by the wicked Wizard Bisesto in time and save Christmas.
Links to documentation:	https://www.fondazioneaida.it/produzione/buon-natale-babbo-natale/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.larena.it/argomenti/spettacoli/spettacoli/babbo-natale-ha-esagerato-a-rischio-i-regali-1.3132491
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	The invented story of <i>Merry Christmas, Santa Claus!</i> draws from elements recognizable by all generations and mixes music, dance, and humor in an original way. Additionally, it focuses on healthy eating, respect for the environment, and the integration of diversity, all current and relevant topics. Finally, the Christmas theme and the evocative settings created through scenes and costumes contribute to creating an engaging experience for children and the entire family.
What is transferable from this example:	The intergenerational base of the narrative; the care in scenes and costumes; the blend of prose, music, singing, dance, and comedy.
Project partner offering it:	Fondazione Aida



Details of the productions:	Title: How Giacomino del Lago Saved Maestro Puccini's Piano (and Many Other Things) Production: Fondazione Festival Pucciniano, Torre del Lago Puccini (LU) Playwriting: Simone Dini Gandini Direction: Manuel Renga Cast: Sara Dho, Diego Becce, Cristiano Parolin, Andrea Delfino/Chiara Serangeli, Katerina Kotsou, Tiziano Barontini Music: Giacomo Puccini Orchestra: I Piccoli Pomeriggi Musical
Summary of the productions:	Torre del Lago Puccini, September 1944. While the local population is evacuated in the swamp around Lake Massaciuccoli, the Nazi command is preparing to retreat north. Before leaving, the Feldmarshal orders soldier Fritz to steal the piano of Maestro Giacomo Puccini, who passed away 20 years earlier, from the nearby villa on the lake. However, something unexpectedly goes wrong: thanks to the intervention of little Giacomino, the lake spirit, and the entire nature of Massaciuccoli, the piano is saved. Why is it so important that the piano stays in Torre del Lago? Simply because every night, the spirit of Giacomo Puccini and the characters from his operas take shape to help the Maestro complete the writing of <i>Turandot</i> (left unfinished after the composer's death in 1924).
Links to documentation:	https://www.puccinifestival.it/programma-mese-pucciniano-2018/ https://www.puccinifestival.it/2018/12/16/mese-pucciniano-2018-19/ https://www.ipomeriggi.it/eventi/xiia-stagione-orchestra-i-piccoli-pomeriggi-musicali-3/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.luccaindiretta.it/cultura-e-spettacoli/2018/12/19/puccini-day-a-torre-del-lago-in-scena-il-tabarro/134436/ https://vivimilano.corriere.it/concerti-e-spettacoli/musica-classica/come-giacomino-del-lago-salvo-il-pianoforte-del-maestro-giacomo-puccini/

What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	The show blends the highest culture (Giacomo Puccini and his music in the places where he was inspired) with popular culture (spirits and legendary creatures from the folklore of northern Tuscany), history, and comedy. Moments of prose, music, and opera singing flow harmoniously within an eco-friendly set made of natural elements from the lake's wetland area. Symphonic moments taken from Giacomo Puccini's works enrich the show with additional emotional depth.
What is transferable from this example:	An original story that, through the format (and rhythm) of a fairytale, starts from major historical events and touches on many themes: Giacomo Puccini and his music in the places where he lived, local history and folklore, and an introductory approach for younger generations to opera singing. Every generation can find something of interest in these topics, turning this performance into a truly intergenerational and family experience. Moreover, connections were established with schools and associations in the area since the central theme of the show draws inspiration from the local territory (history, folklore, and culture).
Project partner offering it:	Fondazione Aida



Details of the productions:	Title: Mortina - A Musical That Will Make You Die Laughing Production: Compagnia delle Formiche Direction: Andrea Cecchi Cast: Irene Focardi/Chiara Materassi, Cristina Rabatti/Elena Mancuso/Camilla Gai, Simone Marzola, Giorgio Lumia, Giulia Paoletti, Simone Fisti, Benedetta Boschi, Antonio Lanza Music: Simone Fisti and Alessio Fusi
Summary of the productions:	The show is based on the bestselling book series <i>Mortina</i> (Barbara Cantini, Mondadori). The protagonist is Mortina, a zombie girl who lives in Villa Decadente with her Aunt Dipartita and an albino greyhound named Mesto. Mortina would love to have human friends but cannot reveal herself to them. Until one Halloween day, she decides to leave the villa and join a group of children going door-to-door for the traditional "Trick or Treat." Even when Mortina reveals herself to be a zombie, the children decide to remain her friends.
Links to documentation:	https://www.compagniadelleformiche.it/spettacoli/mortina/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://teatro.ilfilo.net/mortina-da-applausi-il-nuovo-musical-della-compagnia-delle-formiche/ https://www.okmugello.it/articolo/72631
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	<i>Mortina - A Musical That Will Make You Die Laughing</i> is a musical with a small cast where acting, singing, and dancing blend harmoniously. The story is set in the evocative world of Halloween, full of funny monsters who behave just like living beings. Well-designed scenes, costumes, and makeup create a timeless, fantastical world that the audience can easily empathize with. While the focus remains on a child (Mortina, who is bored and looking for friends), each character has a specific role and evolution leading to a positive ending (the integration of the living and the non-living is an easy metaphor for the integration of diversity).

What is transferable from this example:	The blend of acting, singing, and dancing; the design of exaggerated and evocative scenes, costumes, and makeup; the captivating premise of the story; the theme of integrating differences; the child protagonist, ensuring immediate identification, alongside adult characters who bring sensible ideas but are ready to change their minds in light of positive developments.
Project partner offering it:	Fondazione Aida

Details of the productions:	Title: Please Right Back Production: 1927 Direction: Suzanne Andrade Animation: Paul Barritt Cast: Chardae Phillips, Jenny Wills, Lara Cowin, Stefan Davis, Patrick Copley
Summary of the productions:	Combining handcrafted animation and bold storytelling, <i>Please Right Back</i> immerses audiences in a magical, mischievous world, inspired by the writer-director's childhood. When Kim and Davey's dad, Mr. E, disappears, letters become his only means of communication. Imagination takes over as Mr. E writes to his children to tell a creative version of traumatic events. Reality collides with fantasy as we travel on a fast-paced journey through his wild adventure stories. Mr. E's letters are staged using song, dance, and absurd, subversive animations, turning his stories into a game between him and his children – a cathartic release in the face of distress.
Links to documentation:	https://www.19-27.co.uk/prb1927 https://www.eif.co.uk/archive/please-right-back
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	"Please Right Back is a genuinely masterful and unique theatrical experience for the whole family" - British Theatre Guide - https://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/please-right-ba-the-studio-23499 "Few companies do sights for sore eyes better than 1927" - The Telegraph - https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/edinburgh-fringe-theatre-reviews-best-shows-of-20241/

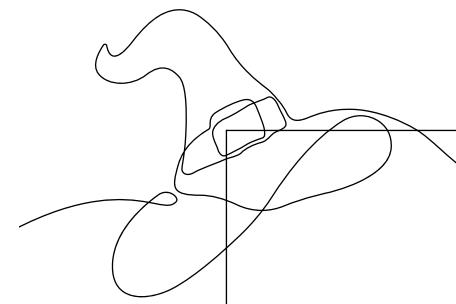
	"A poetic, visually stunning, and surprising evening" - Kleine Zeitung - https://www.eif.co.uk/archive/please-right-back
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	The show moves at an engaging pace and blends acting, dance, and animation in innovative ways. <i>Please Right Back</i> explores the difficulties children face when a parent leaves the family, while celebrating the power of imagination to overcome hardship.
What is transferable from this example:	The innovative use of technology and the continuous relationship between theatre and animation; the fast pace; the core story, which presents a coming-of-age theme in the relationship between a child and the adult world.
Project partner offering it:	Fondazione Aida

Details of the productions:	Title: Room on the Broom Production: Tall Stories Direction: Olivia Jacobs Playwriting: Toby Mitchell Music: Jon Fiber, Andy Shaw Puppets: Yvonne Stone Cast: Dan Armstrong, Amy Harris, Joe Lindley, Nadia Shash
Summary of the productions:	The show is an adaptation of the bestselling book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. A witch, her cat, and their cauldron fly on the magic broom, picking up new friends during the journey: a dog, a green bird, and a frog. Only then does the broom break, and the witch is in danger of being eaten by a terrible dragon: her new friends unite to save the kind witch by scaring away the dragon. In the end, the witch magically creates a new, comfortable flying broom, and they continue their flight.
Links to documentation:	https://tallstories.org.uk/room-on-the-broom/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJmaOMQ1vIM
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	"A magical tale of friendship, flight, fight, and delight... high energy and joy" - Broadway World - https://www.broadwayworld.com/westend/article/Review-ROOM-ON-THE-BROOM-Lyric-Theatre-20241125



	<p>"A brilliant outing for all" - Curtain Call Reviews - https://tallstories.org.uk/reviews/room-on-the-broom/</p> <p>"A truly theatrical feast" - The List - https://thelyrictheatre.co.uk/tickets/room-on-the-broom/</p> <p>"Leaves both adults and children fully entertained" - The List - https://www.drccc.com.au/season-program/room-on-the-broom</p> <p>"Children's theatre doesn't come much better than this" - The Stage - https://theatrealibi.co.uk/production/a-flying-visit/</p>
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	The show moves at a great pace, blending puppetry, acting, music, choreography, and catchy songs. The simple plot allows even the youngest children to follow the story, which, beyond its simplicity, reveals a very important moral: overcoming differences, kindness, friendship, and how friends can be vital in difficult moments. The rhyming script, echoing that of the book, also allows for easy memorization by younger audiences.
What is transferable from this example:	The rhythm; the mix of acting, puppetry, and catchy songs.
Project partner offering it:	Fondazione Aida

Details of the productions:	<p>Title: Il Magico Zecchino d'Oro</p> <p>Production: Antoniano di Bologna, Fondazione Aida, Centro Servizi Culturali Santa Chiara</p> <p>Direction: Raffaele Latagliata</p> <p>Writers: Pino Costalunga, Raffaele Latagliata</p> <p>Cast: Gennaro Cataldo, Stefano Colli, Danny Bignotti, Maddalena Luppi, Francesca Marsi, Rebecca Pecoriello</p> <p>Music: Simone Fisti and Alessio Fusi</p> <p>Music: Original Zecchino d'Oro songs rearranged by Patrizio Maria D'Artista</p>
Summary of the productions:	<p>This musical celebrates the 60th anniversary of Zecchino d'Oro, Italy's most beloved children's song festival. The protagonist is Alice, a little girl who is afraid of the dark. With her is the Moon Man, who sends dreams to children through the magical chime of the Zecchino d'Oro. However, the Witch Obscura wants to steal this powerful object.</p>



	<p>Throughout the story, Alice meets iconic characters from Zecchino d'Oro songs, turning the show into a magical and imaginative journey. The songs, familiar to many generations, are integrated into the plot as an emotional and narrative soundtrack.</p>
Links to documentation:	https://www.fondazioneaida.it/produzione/il-magico-zecchino-doro/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.culturabologna.it/events/il-magico-zecchino-d-oro https://www.teatrionline.it/2017/10/il-magico-zecchino-doro/ https://www.radiopico.it/arriva-il-musical-il-magico-zecchino-doro/ https://www.veronasera.it/eventi/teatro-nuovo-magico-zecchino-d-oro-5-gennaio-2018-.html
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	<p><i>Il Magico Zecchino d'Oro</i> stands out as an excellent example of how musical theatre can successfully combine childhood storytelling with cultural heritage. One of its strengths lies in the use of well-known and beloved songs from the Zecchino d'Oro repertoire, which serve as a bridge between generations, allowing children, parents, and grandparents to connect through shared memories and emotions. The production features imaginative set design, evocative costumes, puppetry, and refined choreography, all of which contribute to the creation of a rich and fantastical world. At the heart of the show is a fantasy-driven narrative that enables young audiences to identify with the protagonist and explore their own emotions, offering a gentle way to understand and express feelings. Moreover, the production revitalizes and reinterprets the Zecchino d'Oro's musical legacy, transforming it into a theatrical experience while staying true to the original spirit of the songs.</p>
What is transferable from this example:	<p>What is transferable from <i>Il Magico Zecchino d'Oro</i> is its effective use of a popular and shared musical heritage to create original dramatic content. The production skillfully balances imagination, emotional education, and entertainment, offering a model that can engage young audiences on multiple levels. It also demonstrates how familiar cultural elements can foster meaningful intergenerational connections, encouraging shared experiences among children, parents, and grandparents.</p>

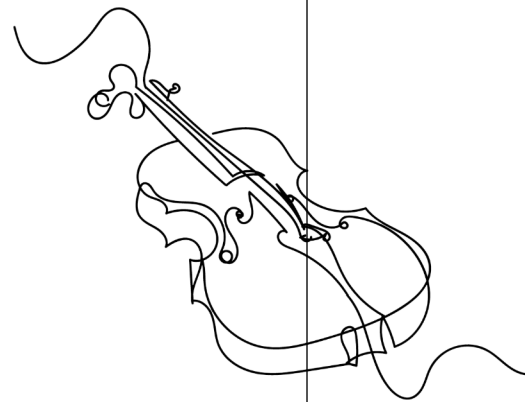
	Lastly, the show highlights the power of theatre and music as universal languages capable of teaching emotional intelligence and resilience in a way that is accessible and impactful for audiences of all ages.
Project partner offering it:	Fondazione Aida

Details of the productions:	<p>Title: Mala Frida/Little Frida</p> <p>Gradsko kazalište 'Žar ptica' / 'The Firebird' municipal theatre</p> <p>An author project by Anica Tomić i Jelena Kovačić</p> <p>Text and dramaturgy: Jelena Kovačić</p> <p>Director: Anica Tomić</p> <p>Performed at 'Žar ptica' municipal theatre</p> <p>Performers: Amanda Prenkaj, Bogdan Ilić, Gorana Marin, Marko Hergešić, Petar Atanasoski, Domagoj Ivanković</p> <p>For children aged 6 and older.</p>
Summary of the productions:	<p>The author's project 'Little Frida' was inspired by the childhood of the Mexican painter and one of the most fascinating artists of the 20th century, Frida Kahlo, who suffered from polio at the age of six and felt what it means to be different even as a girl.</p> <p>Our seven-year-old Frida takes us to Mexico, to Casa Azul - the Kahlo family house. The year is 1914. Within the blue walls of Casa Azul, Frida tries to strengthen her sick leg, which is why her peers avoid her and call her Frida the Wooden Leg. She spends her days hanging out with her parents and animal friends the monkey Fulang Chang and the black cat Perdita, and her only human friend is the fictional girl Brisa. But Frida also fantasizes about real friends, but those who will not mock her and see in her only her illness. And then one day, a real boy Pablo enters her life, who will only know what it means to be a friend with Frida.</p> <p>Little Frida is a story about friendship that makes us better, determination that makes us fearless and imagination that makes everything possible. But above all, Little Frida is a story about acceptance, of oneself and others. We hope that she will show how one girl, regardless of all the obstacles that life brings her, decided to step into it without fear and how precisely because of her courage she became the inimitable Frida Kahlo.</p>

Links to documentation:	https://zar-ptica.hr/predstava/predstave/mala-frida/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://kritikaz.com/vijesti/Kritike/52476/Va%C5%BEni-su-pamet-i-srce-a-ne-noga https://www.kazaliste.hr/index.php?p=article&id=3043 https://www.nshronika.rs/gradske-teme/mala-frida-najbolja-predstava-na-novosadskim-pozorisnim-igramama/
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	Little Frida's story is created both for grownups and for children. Her story of being different, and yet brave and determinant can learn a lot the parents, but also children. Parents can teach them about all the advantages of being as brave and as different as Frida. This definitely is a story created for family theatre.
What is transferable from this example:	A kind of story that is addressed primarily to children aged 6 and older, but also to parents as theatre audience.
Project partner offering it:	Dubrovnik Summer Festival

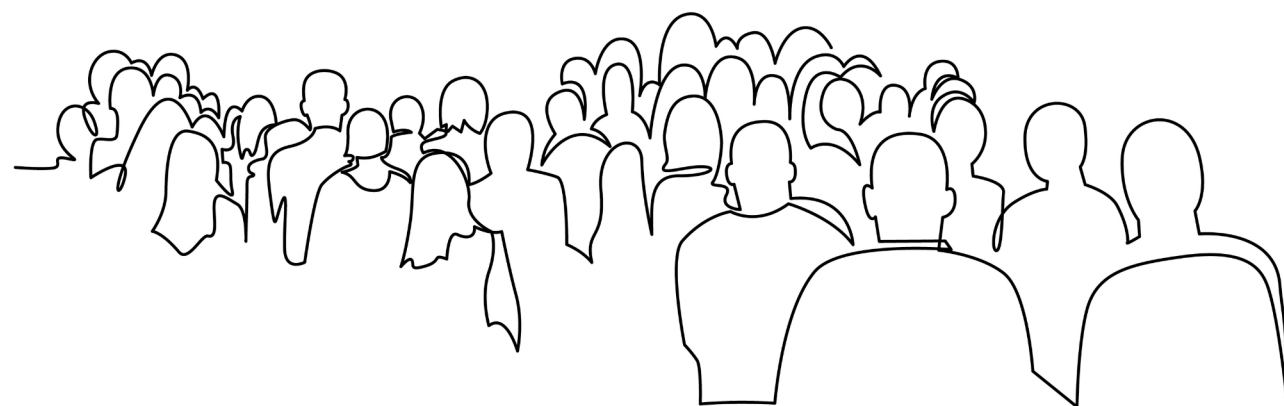
Details of the productions:	<p>Title: Sunčana Škrinjarić: The enchanted forest (Čudesna šuma)</p> <p>Produced by Dubrovačke ljetne igre/Dubrovnik summer festival and Caboga Stiftung Foundation</p> <p>Directed by Lea Anastazija Fleger</p> <p>Composer: Frano Đurovoić</p> <p>Conductor: Mateo Narančić</p> <p>Performed at Lovrjenac Fortress, on 73 th Dubrovnik Summer Festival. Premiered on 12th of August 2022.</p> <p>For children aged 5 and older.</p> <p>Performers: Romano Nikolić, Jelena Miholjević, Matija Gašpari, Vini Jurčić, Igor Jurinić, Melody Martišković, Ružica Maurus</p> <p>Musicians: Vanda Danić, Đive Fanetović Kušelj, Karmen Pervitić, Denis Ajduković, Stijepo Medo, Matija Novaković</p>
Summary of the productions:	The 'Enchanted Forest' by Sunčana Škrinjarić is a novel that marked an entire generation, and it continues to do so with its freshness and actuality. The novel was first published in 1985 under the title 'Painter in the Forest', and a year later the first Croatian feature-length cartoon based on it was released, under its present title.

	<p>It is considered one of the most popular cartoons in the former Yugoslavia and in Croatia nowadays. That domain of the novel is slowly layered- the inevitable idea of community, cooperation and care for the environment, as well as the weight of loneliness that is the main trigger of the Cactus Emperor's ill will.</p> <p>This musical drama brings to the fore a thought that perhaps more than ever we need to hear - nature is a place that unites, supports diversity and brings us back in touch with ourselves, thus enabling us to be in harmony with everyone around us. And again, it unites generations-both of the parents and their children, since the parents themselves saw the cartoon 'The Enchanted forest' when they were their children's age.</p>
Links to documentation:	https://www.dubrovnik-festival.hr/program/suncana-skrinjaric-cudesna-suma/85
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.jutarnji.hr/kultura/kazaliste/redateljica-je-kao-pocetnica-klasicni-roman-cudesna-suma-rezirala-solidno-cak-odlicno-15235479 https://www.dubrovniknet.hr/kazalisna-kritika-premijera-cudesne-sume-osvjezila-je-dramski-program-igara/
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	Children come with their parents to the performance. As usual, they share what they saw together, especially in case of this production, whose content is very familiar to the parents so they can share it with their children and teach them about environmental problems, and about our present need in common- to preserve the nature and forests. Also, parents can discuss with their children on what is good or bad in the story, and in the world in general, and on negative effects of greed, especially greed for money (The Cactus Emperor).
What is transferable from this example:	The educative element of the staged story, and transgenerational element-parents (most of them) know that same story of the 'Enchanted forest' that they see now with their children, so it's easier for them to talk with their children about it after the performance. And maybe they will want to go again together to the theatre to see something similar.
Project partner offering it:	Dubrovnik Summer Festival



Details of the productions:	<p>Title: 'Opera rosa'</p> <p>Opera for little babies</p> <p>for opera voice, two violins, small percussion and electronics</p> <p>For children aged 1 to 3</p> <p>Authors: Ivana Đula (dramaturgy), Selena Gazda (scene and costumes), Tena Novak Vincek (music), Lucija Stanojević, Irma Unušić</p> <p>Produced by Croatian national theatre in Zagreb</p> <p>Performed at Croatian national theatre in Zagreb, in acoustic studio (small scene of Croatian national theatre)</p> <p>First performance at 32. Music Biennale Zagreb in coproduction with Croatian national theatre</p> <p>Performers: Ivana Lazar / Mima Karaula, soprano</p> <p>Lucija Stanojević, violin and other instruments</p> <p>Tena Novak Vincek, violin and other instruments</p> <p>Irma Unušić, dance performance</p>
Summary of the productions:	<p>Opera for babies is conceived as a joint interactive journey for big little ones and their little big ones. Set up as a living installation, in a pleasant, safe and soft space, it invites children to move freely and explore the world of music, sound and movement, created for them. Taking the classic three-part structure, we start from night, musically and in every way calm, gentle and warm, continue with morning, awakening and the birth of light, and end with day, celebration and play. We use the well-known routine of the day for babies, in order to introduce them to a new world. Four performers, each through their own medium (voice, movement, instrument), lead us on a journey from dream to dance, from dark to light, from abstract to concrete, from voice to words. With this approach, we want to introduce young and old to a new world of art that is close to them, while simultaneously opening this world to them as a space for play and interaction, as a space for freedom and exploration with all the senses.</p>
Links to documentation:	https://www.hnk.hr/hr/opera/predstave/opera-rosa/https://www.mbz.hr/hr/program-2023/22-04/mbz-festival-za-velike-malene-opera-rosa https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yh5xJbl0tWs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rojLzdeX2OE

Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://glazba.hr/event/opera-rosa-regalerija-zabok-12-10-2024/ https://www.jutarnji.hr/tag/opera-rosa https://www.novolist.hr/ostalo/kultura/kazaliste/uz-premijeru-predstave-opera-rosa-dijete-kao-kormilar-scenskog-uzitka/ https://zadovoljna.dnevnik.hr/clanak/opera-za-bebe-po-prvi-puta-u-zagrebackom-hnk-u---777052.html https://glazba.hr/event/opera-rosa-opera-za-bebe-ink-9-10-11-23/ https://www.gloria.hr/gl/kultura/vodici/opera-za-bebe-namijenjena-najmladima-stize-na-medunarodni-djecji-festival-u-sibenik-15351630 https://www.vecernji.hr/kultura/opera-za-bebe-opera-rosa-1672940 https://slobodnadalmacija.hr/tag/opera-rosa
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	<p>Parents follow the opera performance together with their babies and together they can learn a lot about their baby interests and behaviours. So it makes it a true example of Family theatre.</p> <p>It is the first example of opera for babies aged 1 to 3 in Croatia, that's why the interest is large in reception and reviews.</p>
What is transferable from this example:	<p>Learning things about your own children you don't know yet. All together, everyone will grow better as a family. Parents will know more about their children's needs of all kinds, which is very useful in further education, while little children aged 1 to 3 years will have better understanding of their personalities.</p>
Project partner offering it:	Dubrovnik Summer Festival



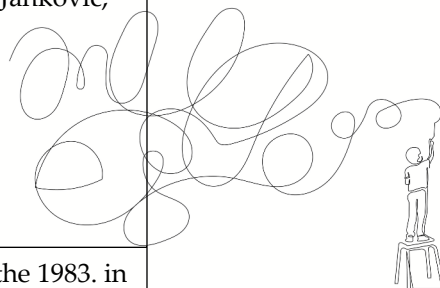
Details of the productions:	<p>Title: 'Drvo koje je pjevalo' / 'The tree that sang'</p> <p>Produced by Radioteatar</p> <p>Performed at Voćarska street local comitee</p> <p>Creative team: Nina Bajsić, Hrvoje Korbar, Jasmina Bojić, Marija Šegvić and Stanislav Kovačić</p> <p>For children aged 5-10.</p> <p>Performers: Jasmina Bojić, Stanislav Kovačić, Marija Šegvić/Maja Katić</p>
Summary of the productions:	<p>'The tree that sang' is a play about violin and cello, the friendship between man and instrument, classical and innovative, old and new, as well as the freedom and responsibility that music brings. Based on the research experiences in the domain of radiophony of the young author's team in collaboration with renowned cellist Stanislav Kovačić, we will try to tell children the story of two instruments primarily through sound, music, acting and author's text, directing children to the skill of listening, which at the time of the rise of visual communication makes it a bit forgotten. It can be listened to anytime and anywhere, the hustle and bustle of the city and the silence of the forest can be equally interesting and inspiring.</p>
Links to documentation:	https://radioteatar.hr/drvo-koje-je-pjevalo/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://kritikaz.com/vijesti/Kritike/42893/A_%C4%8Duj_ovo https://magazin.hrt.hr/mladi/premijera-predstave-drvo-koje-je-pjevalo-875044
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	<p>Children aged 5 to 10 go to the theatre with their parents. In this case, they get familiar with the world of sound, which is a kind of content they both can follow together, parents and their children. They can go and listen to that music and performance together, as a group, parents can talk about the performance topics with their children, educate them, but they can also talk about it as equal partners, they can exchange impressions, comments, new ideas and new facts that they possibly learned together at the performance, as a group, as a family.</p>

What is transferable from this example:	New content that parents and children see together. Of course, it is less new for the parents, but they can look at it as relatively new and try to educate their children through conversation and a possible discussion. They will also learn a lot about their children through this conversation and discussion, new things they didn't know about them yet.
Project partner offering it:	Dubrovnik Summer Festival

Details of the productions:	<p>Title: Dražen (first name of the late, very famous Croatian basketball player)</p> <p>Produced by and performed at Trešnja municipal theatre in Zagreb</p> <p>Directed by Paško Vukasović</p> <p>Written by Paško Vukasović and Ivana Vuković</p> <p>Performed by Toni Kukuljica, Matija Čigir, Silvio Mumelaš, Daria Knez Rukavina, Krunoslav Klabučar, Kruno Bakota, Tvrtko Jurić, Dubravka Lelas, Ana Perković, Lucija Rukavina, Janja Avdagić, Luka Bulović</p> <p>For children aged 9 and older.</p>
Summary of the productions:	<p>The text was based on the motives of real events and people from the late childhood and adolescence of our best basketball player - Dražen Petrović. Each of the scenes in the play has a real foundation, background story and historical truth as a basis for its creation.</p> <p>The play 'Dražen' is intended for children and young people, and through the story of Dražen Petrović, we motivate the audience to think about the importance of persistence, perseverance and the constant striving for progress as a fundamental driver in all fields of human activity. We determine precisely persistence and hard work as a crucial criterion for success in any field, be it music, natural sciences, sports or something else.</p> <p>Collaterally, the play deals with the popularization of basketball and sports in general, conveying through sports the basic human values of helping and protecting the weak, love, honesty, togetherness and acceptance of diversity.</p>

	Dražen is an "ordinary" boy who grows up with all the usual problems that accompany his peers. His role model is his older brother Aco, whom he follows in his footsteps, copies and absorbs from him like a sponge. Although their parents sent them to a music school, one entry into the basketball hall changed everything.
Links to documentation:	https://www.kazaliste-tresnja.hr/predstave/drazen/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	<p>There are no classical reviews but many Croatian newspapers reported about the show, because of its significance for our basketball and our culture in general.</p> <p>https://www.gloria.hr/gl/scena/price/roditelji-nisu-bili-odusevljeni-odabirom-glume-a-on-danas-glumi-drazena-petrovica-15384336</p> <p>https://www.gloria.hr/gl/scena/eventi/brojni-poznati-stigli-na-premijeru-predstave-posvecene-drazenu-petrovicu-15387021</p> <p>https://www.tportal.hr/kultura/clanak/predstava-o-drazenu-petrovicu-premijerno-u-kazalistu-tresnja-20231012</p> <p>https://www.tportal.hr/kultura/clanak/predstava-o-drazenu-petrovicu-premijerno-u-kazalistu-tresnja-20231012</p>
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	Children, especially those loving basketball, surely heard about Dražen Petrović and his sport achievements. Story about his childhood and growing up can inspire them and they can learn how to achieve their own goals, in sports and others. Their parents also, and they can share afterwards their impressions and conclusions. This is a kind of performance that is really created for family audience, for both parents and children.
What is transferable from this example:	One story that can be followed by both children and their parents about a known and famous personality that is very transferable to our lives-in very various examples.
Project partner offering it:	Dubrovnik Summer Festival

Details of the productions:	<p>Title: 'U koga se uvrlo ovo dijete?'(Where did this child get it from/'Who did this child get into/'Who has this child got into')?</p> <p>Musical performance produced by and performed at: Zagreb youth theatre</p> <p>Authors: Eva Janikovszky - Zvezdana Ladika - Ladislav Tulač</p> <p>Directors: Ivan Đuričić, Mario Mirković, Grozdana Lajić Horvat</p> <p>For children aged 10 and older.</p> <p>Premiered on 6th of December 2024.</p> <p>Performers: Filip Bielen, Jan Nikola Baš, Marina Mirković, Luna Culjak, Ana Paula Divić, Dori Sušan, Bruno Mašić, Noa Klarić, Vida Tunguz, Veronika Močan, Karlo Bender, Rafael Ahmetašević, Ena Šojat, Petra Novalija, Marin Radi- lović, Tomislav Rumbak Ana Ugrina, Elena Cićak, Marijeta Ugrina, Lea Mezdjić, Dino Nikolić, Jakov Novokmet, Tia Bistrovic – Darvaš, Tamara Šišak, Eva Markulin, Lucija Parunov, Irena Iveković, Franka Marović, Luka Janković, Teo Marjanović, Juran Oharek, Tin Boršić</p> <p>Band: Guitar: Luka Kramar, Šimun Šušak</p> <p>Bass guitar: Antonio Deltin, Nika Pisk</p> <p>Drums: Jan Diklić, Rita Budak,</p> <p>Keyboards: Andrej Rukavina, Matija Marinić</p> <p>Accordion: Juran Oharek</p>
Summary of the productions:	<p>Musical performance made for the first time in the 1983. in Zagreb, in 2024. restaged by young directors.</p> <p>Zvezdana Ladika-director and Ladislav Tulač-composer, the two people who, along with Slavica Jukić-actress, are most responsible for the career paths of many generations, took Eva Janikovszky's picture book in their hands and the rock musical came to life. The musical talks about the only constant in the life of teenagers, regardless of culture and geographical location: conflict with parents. Everyone can be familiar with the musical: teenagers who today grow up in a significantly different world than their parents, parents who may have forgotten what it's like to be a teenager, but also other adults whom the play will remind of growing up, a period when we know a lot, and we still have a lot to learn. "Who did this child get into" is one of the most performed plays in the history of the Zagreb youth Theatre, and the ZKM* School is now named the School of ZKM 'Zvezdana Ladika'.</p>



Links to documentation:	https://www.zekaem.hr/predstave/u-koga-se-uvrglo-ovo-dijete/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	<p>https://magazin.hrt.hr/kultura/u-koga-se-uvrglo-ovo-dijete-ponovno-na-repertoaru-zkm-a-11889465</p> <p>Except some interviews with the authors of the play (link above, in Croatian) , there are no official reviews, since it's a student performance of Zagreb Youth Theatre School</p>
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	Audiences are made of teenagers who can go to see the play alone, with their friends, but also with their parents or teachers. It is not classical performance for teenagers because their parents probably saw the same musical 40 years ago that has been restaged now. So, it's perfectly effective for the family theatre concept-it brings together teenagers with their parents- teenagers can remind themselves that their parents also used to be teenagers, Moreover, they saw that same musical 'once upon a time', in the 80's, and parents at the same time can remind themselves through this family theatre example what it was like for them (back then) to be teenagers.
What is transferable from this example:	The example of the same performance that both parents and their teenage children have seen, restaged or in some similar performative model (adaptation, new version, etc.)
Project partner offering it:	Dubrovnik Summer Festival

Details of the productions:	<p>Title: <i>The Jungle Book</i></p> <p>Cie: Vígszínház – Pesti Színház, Budapest</p> <p>Dir.: Géza Hegedűs D.</p> <p>More than 1400 performances in 25 years.</p>
Summary of the productions:	It is probably impossible to summarize this miraculous story of Mowgli, Bagheera who escaped from the cage of the human society, the wise Baloo, the mysterious Kaa or the vengeful Shere Khan. The Jungle Book is about birth and death, solitude and partnership, about the magic of youth – so everything which can happen with a kid who had grown up with wolves.

Links to documentation:	https://www.vigszinhaz.hu/english/repertoar/program.php?mid=5jiMsVGc7uebX6
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://szinhazkritikak.blog.hu/2018/11/25/a_dzsungel_konyve_pesti_szinhaz_163 https://24.hu/kultura/2021/01/28/a-dzsungel-konyve-musical-vigszinhaz-des-laszlo-geszti-peter-hegedus-d-geza-pesti-szinhaz-25-eves/#google_vignette https://revizoronline.com/bekes-palgeszti-peterdes-laszlo-a-dzsungel-konyve-vigszinhaz/ https://szinhaz.net/2021/02/19/csaki-judit-jol-oregszik/
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well-written storyline and characters • there is no happy end (I think it is an important conclusion) • well written lyrics and songs
What is transferable from this example:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well-written storyline and characters • there is no happy end (I think it is an important conclusion) • well written lyrics and songs
Project partner offering it:	Insite Drama

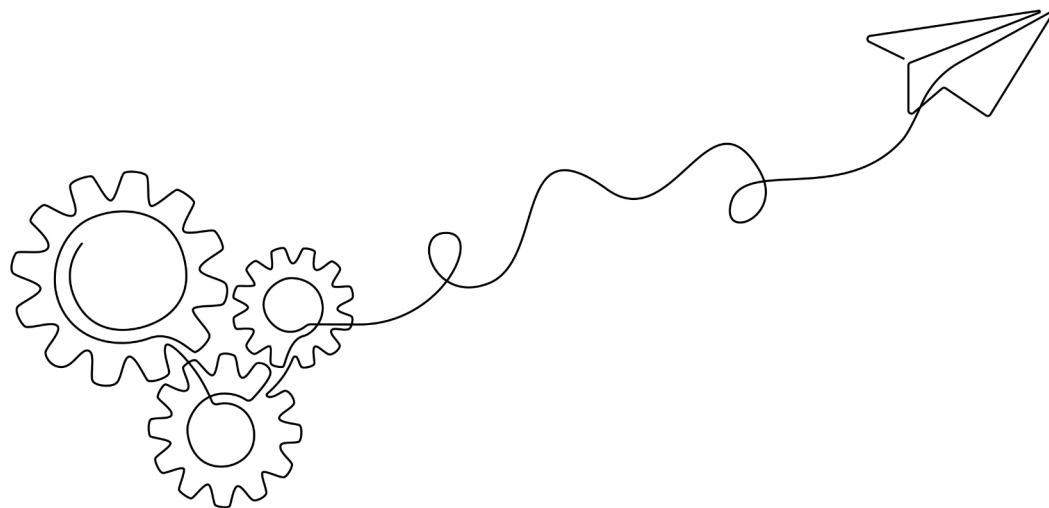
Details of the productions:	Title: Bendeguz project Cie: Jurányi House Dir.: Péter Kárpáti Cast: Atilla Farkas, Bendegúz Farkas, Ignác Ábel Farkas, Liza Kárpáti, Mátyás Simon
Summary of the productions:	In the Bendeguz project there are three actors and two kids. They are not actors, they just simply present in their usual context. In the spirit of accessibility, the performance undertakes everything that a child does in a shared space: total randomness with all its consequences in a performance recorded in an otherwise unrecorded manner.
Links to documentation:	https://horizontalkotocsoport.wordpress.com/bendeguz-projekt/



Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://www.prae.hu/article/12090-kiserletek-tarsadalmi-celu-szinhazra/ https://kortaronline.hu/aktual/karpati-peter.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawHyKPJleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHSuK4D5rrFaVR4i4pRih8WO84P9N0r2n3n3-OMjhaUgWw2iEIsAgKZ6F4g_aem_-EsD9O7-L00GZq-heTEVNA http://tranzitblog.hu/ok-tanitanak-lassulni-hozzad-szinhazi-anyasagnaplo-a-csaladbarat-magyarorszagrol-2/?fbclid=IwY2xjawHyKJpleHRuA2FlbQlXMAABHZAJEfQ_XBPt0GatB6SciLVV7u2GPx57393mEOcX5HOgSU_CrQSnNLqlw_aem_hBi0z-GJpFcie2DyC1O32A
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	Unique, experimental nature of the performance allows a connection to an unrecorded/undocumented personal space. The performance is by a family, also for families, adults.
What is transferable from this example:	Experimenting with unusual settings. Including multiple generations in performances. Audience participation
Any further comments:	Questions about ethical aspects of the performance
Project partner offering it:	Insite Drama

Details of the productions:	Title: Máté and I Cie: Trafó Dir.: Máté Mészáros Cast: Máté Mészáros
Summary of the productions:	"Máté wants to think about what he does together with audiences who love theatre and dance, so we are looking for applications from non-professionals, choreographers and dance colleagues - those who have not been there yet."
Links to documentation:	https://sinarts.org/mate-es-en-2023/

Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://szinhaz.net/2023/05/19/a-nyomtalan-alkotas-kozos-orome/?fbclid=IwAR1zA091UcGt-rWPVPYyaxjgZBIRb4PTt2LzNGREf77AO1prPIL8TQLO6o http://tranzitblog.hu/ok-tanitanak-lassulni-hozzad-szinhazi-anyasagnaplo-a-csaladbarat-magyarorszagrol-2/?fbclid=IwY2xjawHyKJpleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHZAJEfQ_XBPt0GatB6SciLVV7u2GPx57393mEOcX5HOgSU_CrQSnNLqlw_aem_hBi0z-GIpFcie2DyC1O32A
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	The dancer invites outsiders to the rehearsals so he creates a community event with this invitation. He has questions and asks for help – so the audience will be co-creator in the project. As he says, he wants to break the relationship between the passive spectator and the active performer, and he is interested in what the participants think and feel while they think about the movement material being prepared with him.
What is transferable from this example:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - he creates a new dynamic of his work with inviting non-professionals - he creates a community event around his theatre work - engages - he gives new tasks to the audience by taking them out of the passive viewer role
Project partner offering it:	Insite Drama



Details of the productions:	Title: <i>MarkusZinhaz: The history of aviation</i> Cie: MárkuSzínház, Pécs, Perczel Miklós Street 23. Cast and crew: Mihály Buzás, Gábor Pilári, Lili Eszter Pilári, Zsuzsanna Polgár, Zsuzsanna Vajda
Summary of the productions:	The story is brought to life by a non-verbal tabletop puppet play, with some objects occasionally flying into and through the audience. Featuring various musical instruments, natural human impulses and gestures, even when all falls silent and only movement remains, you will be guided through this unique world beyond words.
Links to documentation:	https://markuszhaz.hu/repules-tortenete/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://jezsuitakiado.hu/cikkek/ket-szarnnyal-a-fold-felett/ https://www.pulzart.ro/hu/performers/markuszhaz-a-repules-tortenete-hu/
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	This nonverbal performance in 60 minutes they summarize and commemorate mythological and real-life figures who are present in human memory with their experimental and inventive dreams of flight. They use objects to tell a story, because no words need if a story is strong enough and let speak for itself.
What is transferable from this example:	Effective storytelling goes beyond words; it is a symphony of verbal content and non-verbal cues that captivates the audience, immerses them in a narrative, and leaves a lasting impression. By non-verbal storytelling they create memorable experience.
Project partner offering it:	Insite Drama

Details of the productions:	Title: <i>Vitéz László in England</i> Cie: Budapest Puppet Theatre Dir.: Zsombor Barna Cast: Zsombor Barna Multiple performances around Hungary since 2020. Ireland, notoriously in Dublin Fringe Festival 2019 and in the Peacock Theatre 2019. Touring since 2020.
Summary of the productions:	The performance is based on the stories of a folk puppet figure who can be known in more cultures. In Hungary he resembles an older puppet figure, Paprika Jancsi. His clothes are red, his hat is pointed, he has boots on his feet, and he often carries a tool suitable for fighting. In this story László decides to visit his English friend, Mr. Punch, but on the way he meets Death who wants to take revenge on László, so he kidnaps the child. Thus László must once again prove his resourcefulness.
Links to documentation:	https://barnazsombor.hu/vitez-laszlo/
Links to reviews and reception of the performance:	https://barnazsombor.hu/kritikak/
What are the elements of this productions that make it a best practice:	The performance uses different kind of storytelling structures: puppetry, oral storytelling, music. The actor uses different kind of puppetry methods; he starts with interaction and he goes behind the screen only when the audience is connected enough for the story. Using and developing traditional street theatre / puppetry formats, narrative structures and audience engagement elements.
What is transferable from this example:	The use of oral storytelling is like “back to the roots”. He can engage smaller and older audiences with different types of humor, so audiences from different ages can connect to the performance. It is a great way to introduce theatre to younger audiences, to reach them without any multimedia, and feel connected with each other and with a story in a traditional way. The performer interacts with her/his audience directly, engages and tunes humour to different audience registers.
Project partner offering it:	Insite Drama

Some key documents

Project partners have collected some documents that connect with the concept of Family Theatre from varying aspects. The following documents touch on artistic, educational sociological and legal elements that all relate to different issues of the stakeholders.

1) Farnè, R. (2021). *Theatre, Childhood, Education*. *ENCYCLOPAIDEIA*, 25(61), 67–79.

The article *Theatre, Childhood, Education* by Roberto Farnè, published in *Encyclopaideia*, explores the connection between theatre, education, and childhood, highlighting theatre's role as both a pedagogical and cultural device. Farnè emphasizes how theatre, by leveraging children's natural inclination for play, can become a powerful tool to develop communication, imagination, and relational skills. He notes the continuity between children's play and theatre as a cultural and educational form.

Theatre provides a unique educational experience that actively engages children through body, voice, and imagination. Farnè identifies two fundamental approaches: doing theatre with children, involving them in creative workshops, and doing theatre for children, producing performances that enrich their imagination and emotions. Theatre emerges as a medium to stimulate critical thinking and self-awareness.

Key Findings

- **Continuity between play and theatre:** Children's play is inherently theatrical; they create roles and scenarios through spontaneous actions. Theatre for children enhances this natural tendency by providing an aesthetic and educational experience.
- **Theatre and learning:** Theatre supports active learning, helping children develop social and intellectual skills. It acts as a form of “augmented education,” stimulating imagination and creativity.
- **Theatre as an exceptional event:** Theatre's transient nature makes it a unique experience capable of leaving a lasting emotional and cognitive impact.



Relevance to the Family Theatre Project

The *Family Theatre* project can draw inspiration from Farnè's insights to create a theatrical format that engages entire families in a shared and meaningful experience.

- **Leveraging natural inclination:** The project can build on the idea that theatre is a natural extension of children's play, making it easier to engage children and, in turn, their parents.
- **Fostering family dialogue:** Theatre, through performances and workshops, can become a tool to facilitate intergenerational communication, sparking discussions on important themes.
- **Shared and unique experiences:** The concept of theatre as an "exceptional event" can be central to *Family Theatre*, creating memorable moments that strengthen family bonds.
- **Participatory workshops:** Creating spaces where children and parents can explore theatre together, both as spectators and performers, can encourage shared growth, reinforcing theatre's educational and cultural role.

Farnè's reflections are particularly relevant for the Family Theatre project, as they highlight how theatre can become a privileged space for involving entire families. The focus on inclusion, dialogue and active participation aligns perfectly with the project's objectives: to create an innovative format that combines the educational and artistic aspects, promoting shared and meaningful experiences for all ages.

2) Il Teatro per la gioventù e l'infanzia: *eTinforma*, Mensile di informazione dello Spettacolo, 1998

The article published in the *eTinforma* magazine in 1998 is a fundamental resource for understanding the dynamics of children's theatre in Italy, a highly relevant cultural and educational sector. Despite being over two decades old, it provides a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the characteristics, challenges, and opportunities within this field. Its contemporary relevance is amplified by the scarcity of documents that address the Italian landscape with such systematic detail, making it a valuable reference for practitioners and researchers.

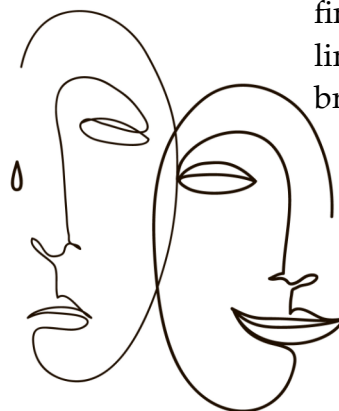
Children's theatre remains an extraordinarily valuable tool for:

- **Cultivating artistic sensitivity:** Experiencing theatre from a young age contributes to the cultural development of children, introducing them to the performing arts.
- **Creating unique educational experiences:** Using specific theatrical languages, theatre offers learning opportunities that transcend traditional educational boundaries.
- **Promoting social cohesion:** Through performances that engage families, schools, and communities, intergenerational dialogue and social awareness are strengthened.
- **Stimulating critical thinking:** High-quality content and meaningful messages foster reflective and analytical skills in young audiences.

Despite its potential, children's theatre often remains on the margins of cultural policies, requiring greater recognition of its artistic and educational value.

Key Findings

1. **Innovation in theatrical languages:** Children's theatre has adapted to new cultural and social sensitivities, experimenting with innovative forms of expression and cutting-edge stage techniques, making it a continuously evolving educational tool.
2. **Collaboration with the educational system:** The article highlights the value of synergy between schools and theatre, emphasizing how educational theatre projects can enhance curricular learning pathways.
3. **Social and cultural inclusion:** Productions increasingly embrace themes related to diversity and inclusion, providing a platform to address complex issues such as interculturality and integration.
4. **Economic and organizational challenges:** One of the main obstacles to the full development of children's theatre is the lack of financial and logistical resources. The article highlights how these limitations reduce the possibility of expanding the offer and reaching a broader audience.



Relevance to the Family Theatre Project

Despite its age, this article offers numerous insights applicable to the *Family Theatre* project, particularly in defining innovative and sustainable strategies for family theatre.

- **Intergenerational perspective:** The article underscores the importance of creating performances that engage not only children but also parents, promoting a shared theatrical experience. This aligns closely with the *Family Theatre* project's goal of uniting entire families in an artistic and educational journey.

- **Fusion of education and art:** The combination of artistic and educational goals, extensively discussed in the article, serves as a useful model for developing theatrical formats that blend entertainment and learning.

- **Innovation in theatrical languages:** The experiments in children's theatre with innovative stage techniques provide a framework for creating performances that attract and engage a diverse audience.

- **Addressing economic challenges:** Reflection on the managerial and financial difficulties highlighted in the article can help the *Family Theatre* project identify sustainable strategies, such as collaboration with institutional and private partners or adopting more efficient operational models.

3) Michele Losi: Il Teatro Ragazzi, luogo di creatività e immaginazione

The article "Il Teatro Ragazzi, luogo di creatività e immaginazione" by Michele Losi, published on Sanoma Italia, explores the pivotal role of children's theatre as a space for artistic expression and educational growth. It emphasizes how Teatro Ragazzi acts as a tool to stimulate the imagination and critical thinking of young audiences, serving as a universal language that bridges generational gaps.

Children's theatre stands out for its ability to engage directly with young audiences through a holistic and inclusive approach. As a popular art form, it integrates all theatrical dimensions—acting, movement, text, sound, and scenography—to create immersive experiences. It not only entertains but educates, providing a safe context for children to explore

complex themes, develop creativity, and enhance social and emotional skills. Additionally, it fosters dialogue between schools, families, and communities, functioning as a vital educational tool.

Key Findings

1. **Creativity and Imagination:** Teatro Ragazzi is described as a privileged space for nurturing children's imagination and creative thinking, essential for their development.

2. **Immersive Experience:** By combining various theatrical languages, it offers a multisensory experience that encourages profound reflection on the world and human relationships.

3. **Educational Role:** Theatre becomes a means of exploring educational and moral themes, turning children into active participants rather than passive spectators.

4. **Social Impact:** It serves as a meeting place for different generations and cultures, promoting mutual respect and shared experiences.

Relevance to the Family Theatre Project

The article provides valuable insights for the Family Theatre project by highlighting the potential of theatre as a space for families to engage in a shared artistic and educational experience. The emphasis on integrating diverse theatrical languages and the importance of a participatory approach aligns with the project's objectives. Furthermore, the described role of Teatro Ragazzi in fostering intergenerational dialogue directly supports the idea of placing families at the center of the theatrical experience. Developing an innovative format that blends creativity, education, and participation offers an opportunity to reach a broader and more diverse audience, emphasizing the family as a unique and central target group.

4) Teatro: i giovani ci vanno più spesso degli adulti. Indietro il Sud” Osservatorio #Conibambini, 2022

The article “Teatro: i giovani ci vanno più spesso degli adulti. Indietro il Sud” by Osservatorio #Conibambini uses authoritative sources, such as ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics), SIAE (Italian Society of Authors and Publishers), and the CRC group (Convention on the Rights of the Child), to analyze children and teenagers' participation in theatre performances in Italy. It focuses on territorial disparities and the pandemic's impact on cultural engagement among young people, offering a detailed, evidence-based perspective.

The article highlights the role of theatre as a cultural and educational tool, particularly for young audiences. Despite the pandemic-induced decline, data shows that children and teenagers remain the most engaged demographic in theatre. Furthermore, significant disparities in theatre access across different regions underline the urgency of implementing measures to ensure more equitable access. The reliance on data from ISTAT, SIAE, and the CRC group adds credibility and depth to the analysis, providing a robust foundation for future actions.

Key Findings

1. **Youth Engagement:** ISTAT data indicates that children and teenagers under 18 maintained participation rates exceeding 20% in 2020, despite an overall decline.
2. **Regional Disparities:** Analyses based on ISTAT and CRC data reveal that central and northern regions, such as Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli Venezia Giulia, offer greater cultural opportunities than the south, where only Puglia exceeds the national average.
3. **Limited Offerings in the South:** SIAE data highlights that southern Italy has fewer theatre performances per child than central and northern regions, with an average of 299 performances per 100,000 minors compared to 671 in the northeast.
4. **Density of Theatre Venues:** ISTAT data shows that southern regions, such as Calabria and Molise, have far fewer theatre venues per capita than the national average, limiting access for young residents.

Relevance to the Family Theatre Project

The Family Theatre project can draw significant insights from the article, emphasizing the need for more inclusive and geographically equitable access to theatre performances. Data from ISTAT (on statistical participation trends), SIAE (on the density of performances), and the CRC group (on children's rights and accessibility) highlight the necessity of targeted investment in cultural infrastructure in southern Italy. The project can leverage these findings to develop a theatre format that not only appeals to children but also engages families in a shared educational and cultural experience. Incorporating this empirical data into planning ensures the format is both impactful and rooted in measurable evidence.

5) Anna Fascendini: Il teatro come strumento di cura: alcuni progetti intergenerazionali di comunità



The analyzed text is based on the article *Theatre as a Tool for Care: Some Intergenerational Community Projects*, written by Anna Fascendini and published in *I Luoghi della Cura*. The article explores the role of theatre as a tool to foster intergenerational relationships, enhance social cohesion, and stimulate both individual and collective expression. Through practical projects, it demonstrates how theatre can transform community contexts by breaking down barriers of age, illness, and isolation.

Intergenerational theatre is described as an inclusive practice that promotes the physical and emotional well-being of children and the elderly. These projects help create meaningful connections, boost self-esteem, stimulate mutual learning, and strengthen social bonds. The model is particularly relevant in care settings, such as nursing homes or dementia-friendly communities.

Key Findings

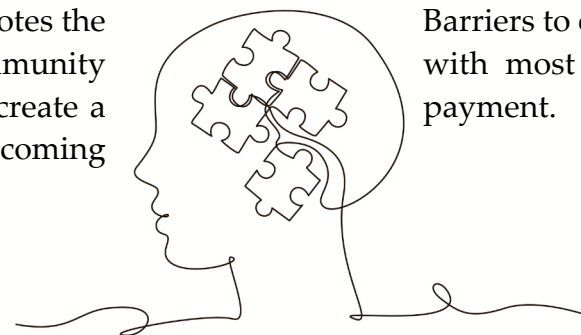
1. Intergenerational Workshops: “Per terra il cielo”: A series of theatre workshops involving children, adolescents and the elderly, including Alzheimer's patients. Through creative activities such as dances, songs and symbolic games, the project broke down barriers related to age and illness, creating a sense of community and mutual exchange. “Il cielo per terra”: During the COVID-19 pandemic, theatre activities were transformed into long-distance events, with children performing shows under the windows of nursing homes. This initiative kept a sense of connection alive and highlighted the importance of theatre in reducing social isolation. “Tiritempo”: Implemented in Sardinia, this project explored the theme of time through workshops that united children and the elderly in creative activities. The project included a week-long celebration and an exhibition that combined photographs and sound recordings to chronicle the experience. Projects such as “Per terra il cielo” and “Il cielo per terra” demonstrate how theatre can break down barriers of age and illness, generating encounters charged with excitement, play and mutual learning.

2. Intergenerational Pedagogy: Rooted in the principle that one is never too old to learn or too young to teach, this pedagogy boosts self-esteem and confidence in participants, fostering cross-generational dialogue.

3. Contextual Adaptations: During the pandemic, theatrical projects innovated by creating socially distanced events, showcasing theatre's resilience in maintaining community bonds.

Relevance to the Family Theatre Project:

The *Family Theatre* project can draw inspiration from these initiatives to develop a European format that bridges generations through theatre. The described methods showcase how theatre can be used to strengthen family dialogue, promote emotional well-being, and foster collective growth. The described projects show that theatre not only promotes the well-being of individual participants but also strengthens community cohesion. Applied to *Family Theatre*, this approach could help create a network of families who, through theatre, develop new ways of coming together and growing as a community.



6) Arts and Cultural Participation among Children and Young People: Insights from the Growing Up in Ireland Study - Dr EMER SMYTH



This report was commissioned by the Arts Council to improve their knowledge and understanding of children's participation in cultural life and the arts in Ireland. It was considered an essential first step in addressing their commitment to plan and provide for children and young people as part of Making Great Art Work, Arts Council Strategy (2016–2025).

A really good overview of the participation levels of Irish children in the arts in Ireland - Interesting points to consider when developing family theatre events about where children already access the arts and what are the barriers

Key findings:

The highly gendered nature of children's participation in arts and culture is striking, with girls much more likely to participate than boys from as young an age as three. The report underlines the importance of ensuring that children's participation in arts and culture is understood as part of a quality preschool experience.

Children who have exposure to arts and culture during school time are more likely to engage in out-of-school cultural activities.

children in smaller schools currently have fewer opportunities to engage in these activities, prompting us to consider the need for linking school and community arts initiatives in these areas.

The high level of library use by families with young children across the country provides confirmation that libraries are an important community resource and suggests possibilities in terms of diversifying the cultural experiences available to families there.

Barriers to engagement are identified. These include household income, with most structured cultural activities outside of school requiring payment.

7) Susanne Barregren: Theatre & Performing Arts for Young Audiences: Building Collective Resilience (TPAYABCR) Voices of Children Year 1

The following report is written by the local Swedish project coordinator with feedback from ASSITEJ International. It describes how 27 local students (page 7) saw three performances during the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2022 & Bibu Biennial (page 6) and engaged in a facilitated workshop with their teacher (chapter 3). This workshop significantly deepened their engagement with the performances and provided an opportunity to listen to their thoughts and reflections about the performances based on their own personal experiences.

A good resource about what students think about performances and allows their thoughts to be fed back to artists.

Key Findings from the teacher involved

Identity building, reflection and collaboration was something my students greatly needed, and this end of the year project gave us an added opportunity to do this through the performing arts experiences.

The performances were of high quality in terms of professionalism. They allowed for humour, playfulness, dance, music, and foreign spoken languages. The performances provided a prerequisite for different discussions and values without any given answers, instead from personal imagination and creative solutions.

Arts experiences give students the possibility to process impressions, test different identities and develop their creativity and ability to collaborate and communicate.

My advice to you: pause the timetable, work interdisciplinary across subject areas, and give the students reflection time and post-processing time. We do not lose time – we gain the overall development of the individual.



8) TYAI Membership & Sector Survey 2023

This report sought to proactively engage underrepresented artists in the Theatre for Young Artists sector, and to more deeply understand the lived experience of current members. This was the second annual members survey.

A really good overview of who works in the sector already creating work for young audiences in Ireland (Not necessarily family theatre as per our understanding) It shows the issues facing the sector

93 people responded to the survey, an increase of 12 from 2022, of which 76 filled it out in an individual capacity and 17 on behalf of their organisation. Over half, 51.6%, identify primarily as a 'freelance arts worker', 1 in 5, 20.4% were employed by or Director of a company that is fully focused on making work for young people, with a further 6.5% of respondents working for venues that include work for young people.

Approximately half have worked in the sector for less than 5 years and half for 5+ years. (Unchanged since 2022). The vast majority of respondents, 88.5%, live mainly in the Republic of Ireland.

Key Findings

Barriers to making work

Thirty-one people responded to the question 'what were the barriers you faced in sustaining a living making work for young audiences?' Again, the issue of financial pressure, opportunities, and sometimes also coupled with administrative work including grant applications, and the precarious nature of the work significantly impacting on people's creative output and ability to continue to make work:

77.8% of respondents to the survey said their income impacted on where they could afford to live and 65.1% said their income impacted on other life choices they had made. Forty respondents offered examples of how their income has impacted on their life choices. Among the key themes to emerge (note these were not prompted) were decisions about whether or not to have a family, the lack of housing security / choice and the workload stress / not being able to afford time for creative work.

9) Making Great Art Work Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland Arts Council Strategy (2016–2025)

Making Great Art Work establishes the coordinates by which the Arts Council will lead the development of the arts in the decade 2016–2025. As expert body, strategic partner, statutory adviser and advocate for the arts, we are clear about the need for change and renewal, realistic about the many challenges we face, and confident about the strengths of the arts. No talk about families enjoying the arts together.

Key Findings

When talking about - More people will enjoy high-quality arts experiences - there is talk about Create opportunities for increased engagement in the arts by particular communities but no mention of families

When they talk about - Plan and provide for children and young people, the focus is on:

- The school environment
- Youth arts
- No mention of intergenerational activities

10) Intergenerational Learning Article

Very hard to find any research in intergenerational theatre/arts practices that has been devised in Ireland for families to take part in.

In general when we talk about intergenerational it is about connecting older people with younger people to address issues such as loneliness etc.

This article encapsulates that idea.

11) What Is a 'Family' in EU Law?

This chapter looks at how law in the EU follows the sociological tendencies in the diversification of families.

"Nonetheless, in recent years there is growing evidence of diversity in family forms. Moreover, there is an increasing departure from the traditional sexual division of labour. Although many EU Member States are already acknowledging this changing landscape of family life in their law and policy, the important question is whether the EU has been

influenced by this: does EU law now sufficiently address family diversity and its consequences?"

The chapter incorporates very useful explanation of family concepts and also summarizes legislation in the area.

Tryfonidou, A. (2024). What Is a 'Family' in EU Law?: Do EU Policies Sufficiently Address Family Diversity and Its Consequences? In M.-L. Öberg & A. Tryfonidou (Eds.), *The Family in EU Law* (pp. 19–36). chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

12) A Family Strategy for the European Union An encouragement to make the family an EU priority

This document was created in 2004 and contains some elements that have lost relevance since then. But it still contains very specific proposed actions to prioritise families in the EU that can be referred to in our analysis.

13) Anneke Meyer and Katie Milestone: The Lonely Cloud: Intensive Parenting and Social Media in Neoliberal Times

This chapter discusses the impact of social media on parenting and families, and the connects this has with the neoliberal economic structure we live in. The chapter itself does not relate directly to theatre, but offers extremely useful analysis of the current situation. We need to understand the role and growing impact of social media on all members of the family and how this connects with the values and decision made. "This chapter examines how British mother-focused social media platforms like Mumsnet and Facebook shape and fuel practices of intensive parenting within the contexts of neoliberalism and postfeminism. The authors argue that neoliberalism favors individual provision, self-reliance, and responsibility over state intervention and collectivism, while postfeminism promotes empowerment through individual choice and consumer freedom. Social media offers a cultural space for digital motherhood that aligns with these neoliberal and postfeminist values, encouraging mothers to engage in competitive and intensive parenting. Meyer and Milestone explore how these platforms both reinforce nuclear familial ideology and expose the contradictions between intensive parenting and neoliberal values."

14) Natalie Bau, Raquel Fernández: Culture and the family

This chapter looks at the relationship of culture, economics and family. Although the research and the analysis looks far beyond the scope of our project, it is important because it puts emphasis on the importance of culture in how families can face economic or social adversities. But looking at a wide range of contexts the chapter also reflects to some degree on what is the connection between differing family structures and values.

Natalie Bau, Raquel Fernández: Culture and the family. In: Editor(s): Shelly Lundberg, Alessandra Voena: Handbook of the Economics of the Family, North-Holland, Volume 1, Issue 1, 2023, Pages 1-48.

15) Dániel Halasi: Artistic Statement for the position of the Director at Pesti Magyar Színház – in Hungarian

This document is the artistic vision of a three person team applying to lead a theatre that is called children's and family theatre in Budapest. The document is useful because it articulates clearly the artistic difficulties and possibilities (and responsibilities) of creating theatre for families.

Excerpts in English:

"the FAMILY label represents a noble goal, but it can easily lead one into the dead end of poor taste. In our opinion, a performance that invites families to the theatre is not the same as a musical, nor is it a meaningless "here's nothing, hold on tight" experience that advertises itself as offering entertainment for both children and adults. A good children's performance is universal. In its execution, aesthetics, and content, it provides an experience, which is why adults, parents, and educators also enjoy it. They too are captivated by the playfulness, humour, craftsmanship, emotions, and the truth of the ideas. A good children's performance is valid. It leads to catharsis."

„The most important, fundamental difference between adult and child audiences lies in the fact that while one chooses to go to the theatre, the other is taken there. Consequently, children cannot be expected to adopt the basic convention that assumes the audience is curious about the performance, as that is why they are present.



An adult, too, might not be enthusiastic if they were required to attend a performance at a time not of their choosing, in a theatre not of their choosing, and to see a play they did not select. Therefore, creators must structure the production in a way that makes the child audience feel they are being addressed, and that the performance will discuss matters important to them."

16) Theatre etiquette – document from Croatia

"Instructions for parents

Choose shows that are adapted to the child's age. Before buying tickets, find out what age the play is intended for.

Before the play, talk to your child about what you will see and how you should behave in the theatre.

Never be late for a theatre performance! Come 20-30 minutes early to prepare your child for the show, leave things in the wardrobe (it's free) and take your seats quietly. After the start of the performance, it is not possible to enter the hall, nor to get a refund for purchased tickets.

The child should be full and rested before the performance.

If necessary, take the child to the toilet before the start of the performance.

During the show, do not eat, drink, take photos/record or use a cell phone.

Watch the show together with your child, don't leave your child in the hall and go to a nearby cafe.

Wait for the performance to end with applause and a bow from the actors, and only then leave the hall.

After the show, talk to your child about what you saw.

Important: The seats are not numbered at the plays from the "Story about..." series, because we receive a total of 50 spectators and the children themselves choose where to sit and feel the safest.

At other shows for children, only children sit in the first three rows, and adults with children who cannot sit alone sit from the 4th row upwards. Respect these rules and experience the theatre in the most beautiful way!"

17) For parent – document from Croatia
Your child doesn't need to be "good"

We do not expect your child to be "good" at the theater.
 We don't expect him to sit still.
 We don't expect him to be silent.

This Christmas, a mother wrote to us to ask us what would happen if her child was lively in the theatre.

And...

Nothing, we say, children are exploring the world.

Why then, in the theatre, a place of freedom and expression, would a child sit chained to a chair and silent?

Let him come, let him experience, let him clap, let him laugh. Let him meet the world with us! We live with this mission, with this mission we do plays for babies from the age of three months.

You don't have to worry. Our shows are made with the intention and understanding of the child's developmental path.

At performances for babies, we do not expect children to sit still, we have a designated place and protocols for walking, going out and returning to the hall and all other possible situations.

You don't have to be uncomfortable, nor do we recommend that you avoid coming to the theatre if your child is restless, in fact. We are ready for all situations and our plays are not only made for calm children but for every child.

Relax, trust us and you might be surprised!

Don't worry, Mom, for us there is no criterion or label "good".

Come and... let's explore the world.

18) Frequently asked questions – Mala Scena, Croatia

Does the child have to have his own ticket even if he sits on my lap?

In the 'Mala scena' theatre, all performances have an indicated age. If the child belongs to the age group for which the play is intended or if the child is older - it must have its own ticket. At shows for babies, we assume that children will walk, stand, move, and we do not charge for the use of seats, but for "product consumption". If the child is younger

than the recommended age, it does not have to have a ticket, since we assume that the "product" cannot be "consumed".

Why are the seats not numbered for the plays in the series "The Story of...", "Ninabu", "How the World Sings" and "There is no winter for fairy tales"?

The performances in this cycle are very specific in form. The three plays in the cycle are not played on stage but in a completely different configuration of the hall, which makes numbering impossible. Also, for all plays in the cycle, the number of seats is limited, not because of epidemiological measures, but to ensure the best experience for every viewer, for every child, which would be impossible if we filled the hall. Because of this, it is possible for each family to be placed where it suits them best, to be able to walk, to be separated from other people if the child has such a need, or to sit in the first row. Considering that many children come to the theatre for the first time with us, sometimes sitting in the first row is not the best choice, so we leave the option to observe your child's needs so that it will have the most comfortable experience in its first encounter with the theater. And wherever you sit, we guarantee that you will have a good experience and access to the show.

What if it's our first time and our child is very "alive"?

You don't have to worry. Our shows are created with the intention and understanding of the child's developmental path. At performances for babies, we do not expect children to sit still, we have a designated place and protocols for walking, going out and returning to the hall and all other possible situations. You don't have to be uncomfortable, nor do we recommend that you avoid coming to the theatre if your child is restless, in fact. We are ready for all situations and our plays are not only made for calm children but for every child. Relax, trust us and you might be surprised!



Appendix

Questionnaires

Questions asked as the part of the questionnaire and also in the interviews:

1) Families

- How often do you go to the theatre?
- Do you bring your children with you? (Till what age?)
- Why do you bring them or why don't you bring them?
- What other experiences do you have together as a family?
- Do you remember one specific example that stuck with you from a family theatre experience?
- What stories/themes/subjects bond you together as a family?
- How do you decide what to see? Who takes part in deciding?
- What makes you satisfied with a family theatre experience?
- What would you like to see in the theatre?
- What would make the theatre experience more family friendly?
- What is the ideal duration of a show?

 *Google form questionnaire for families*

2) Theatre practitioners – working both in artistic and managerial roles (director, producer, marketing, etc)


- What sort of theatre engages full families?
 - What is the difference between family theatre and children/youngsters-related theatre in your interpretation?
 - How do you choose material for a theatre production for families?
 - What are the production requirements of a family theatre production?
 - What are the quality requirements of a family theatre production?
 - What are the aesthetic aspects of a family theatre production?
 - What kind of audience engagement strategies are for families?
- Do you have pre- or post-performance workshops, materials, activities for families linked to the performances?
- What kind of pedagogical framework does family theatre have?
 - Do you have any specific price for the family ticketing?

- What is the ideal duration of a show?

 *Google form questionnaire for theatre professionals*

3) Cultural and social organisations (eg. organisations looking into local heritage, libraries, organisation working with social inclusion, schools, family support organisations, research centres, etc) (questionnaire needs to have info on the profile of the organisations)

- Do you work closely with theatres? Why?
- What is that theatres can/could offer to your clients/families that you work with?
- What could be the benefits for the families and the theatre to engage with you clients?
- What is the ideal duration of a show?

 *Google form questionnaire for organisations*

