

Birmingham Rep

Little Red Riding Hood

Could you tell us a little bit of background to your decision to make a sustainable production?

Following The Rep's declaration of Climate Emergency a year ago, and in line with the investment principle of environmental responsibility, our Executive Team were very keen to promote Theatre Green Book work. The values of the Theatre Green Book tie in with the sustainability work happening throughout the building.

Did you have any particular moments during the design and planning stages where you were able to use the TGB to implement sustainable decisions?

The Theatre Green Book was used at all stages and the design process was heavily influenced by it. It had a large impact on design decisions made, such as the choice to use a rug that could be sourced and then amended and to have a backdrop made of umbrellas, which could be sourced.



Photography: Graeme Braidwood

What have been the biggest challenges about making the production sustainable?

Once the Christmas run had finished, the production was going out on a community tour and we were lucky that we were able to secure an electric van for the tour, within budget, and that we have the ability to charge this at our storage facility.

Sourcing items second hand also presented challenges, particularly the rug, as you aren't able to guarantee the quality or cleanliness.



Photography: Graeme Braidwood

Working with new materials presented several challenges; for example, the design featured trees made of bamboo, which we found split when it was exposed to warm rehearsal rooms. We then had to come up with a solution for this that not only didn't impact the design but that also didn't undo the positive environmental decision we had made by using bamboo in the first place.

The sourcing and disposal of second-hand material is one of the main challenges, due to the time that it takes, and is only really possible at The Rep because of the Production Assistant role, who can provide additional support and time to each department.

What were some actions you took/processes you changed towards sustainability?

We made sure that our first point of call for props and costume sourcing was our own stock! Both departments also made a conscious effort to make any items that had to be made (such as the Wolf costume or the insect puppets) from leftover materials that we already had in stock

We made a conscious effort to track decisions that were made, and these were discussed at production meetings. We also worked to a longer pre-production and design timeline, which gave us additional time to source appropriate items.

We also interrogated materials used at the costing stage and started discussions about what the future life of an item would be at the start of the process.

What were the most positives outcomes for the production?

So many!

- Our Paintshop team are now using plastic free paints and washing brushes using a different method to avoid micro plastics going into the sink

- We have changed to a water based filler in our workshops
- We now have proof of concept of touring an electric vehicle
- We've created a culture of discussion and questioning, where members of all departments feel confident to interrogate decisions made
- We've started to create a wider organisational culture of supporting the Green Book shows – staff from across the building got involved in the great umbrella source!
- We've made really useful contacts for rehoming items, such as local community groups and schools
- We've reduced unnecessary laundry

Do you have any advice for organisations looking to make similar steps?

Don't worry about getting it wrong; every positive decision, no matter how small, you make is a win!

Don't aim for perfection, just give it a go

Make sure you are tracking decisions made and sharing these with the whole team. This gives everyone a sense of ownership over the process and allows opportunity for discussion and celebration of wins.

We've also found it important to debrief on the process so that we can take the things we've learnt and apply them to other productions.



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Theatre Green Book