

Environmental Impact Report

Ballet Shoes

Olivier Theatre

Press night: 5th December 2024



Image from Final Design Presentation

Introduction

At the end of 2023 and early 2024 the National theatre began contracting their Artists to commit to deliver a show that meets the Theatre Greenbook baseline standard. These reports are intended to capture anecdotal data that will feed into future practice and process when making large scale theatre to eventually deliver Advanced Greenbook standard as common practice. These reports are a documentation of both successes and challenges and are to be used as a tool for organisational learning and change – most importantly it will reflect the shared sense of environmental responsibility.

Principal Artistic and Production Team

Director -	Katy Rudd
Writer -	Noel Streatfield, adapted by Kendall Feaver
Set Designer -	Frankie Bradshaw
Costume Designer -	Samuel Wyer
Lighting Designer -	Paule Constable
Sound Designer -	Ian Dickinson for Autograph
Composer -	Asaf Zohar
Producer -	Harriet Mackie
Production Manager -	Mekel Edwards

Show Summary

In a crumbling house full of dinosaur bones and fossils, three adopted sisters – Pauline, Petrova and Posy – are learning who they are and what they want to be.

Under the watchful eyes and guidance of their guardian Sylvia, Nana, and some unlikely lodgers, they fight to pursue their individual passions. But in a world that wasn't built for women with big ambitions, can they forge a future, keep their family together, and even learn a dance or two along the way?

Data from Material Trackers

Department	Actual Reuse	Future Life	TGB Standard Attained
Scenery	42%		None
Props	79%		Intermediate
Costume	57%	98%	Basic
Armoury	12%	85%	None

**We are unable to put an exact percentage to scenic items and props kept for future use, however, we can say with certainty that at least 70% of the items from this show was stored for use on future productions.*

Scenery

For this production, we didn't have as much reusable material in stock as was needed for the build, which impacted the possibility of meeting 50% reuse for scenery. Also, the floor for this show was planked, sprung and required in the rehearsal room, which ultimately was too many variables to achieve this from reused material on this occasion.

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We re-used a timber flattage from the carpentry office. Frankie's intent was there from the start and she wanted to collaborate with us. She had reached out early on to request the modular flat drawings, sadly they weren't used, but her head was in the right space.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear the trucks were over-engineered for this production and in the end, didn't require friction drives as it would have been sufficient to have them moved by crew members. However, as with all shows, it's impossible to know exactly how each element of scenery will be used ahead of rehearsals and tech.

For this production, a lot of second hand furniture was purchased by the props department to ensure as much reuse as possible, however, a lot of the items needed work to improve their structural integrity and in some cases, it may have been more efficient to build the items from scratch in-house. The learning here was that more collaboration between Props and Construction at the buying phase would have been useful.

Props

This production really highlighted the 'future life' aspect of props and furniture, and the need to view them as assets and a resource that goes two ways, both in and out of the stores. A lot of the furniture on this production were period pieces that were painted – in most cases it is possible to remove the finish and restore the furniture back, however, it will never go back to its exact original condition and the process of restoring it will take time and money that hasn't been factored. Props did say no to one request on this show, which was to add castors to some period chairs – this would have required lowering them by three inches and this wouldn't have been repairable.

This has been useful learning as it has prompted conversations at the NT Green Store about our assets and how we wish for them to be treated moving forward, as well as conversations about how we might budget and schedule for restoration.

Costume Production

From initial design to creation, Costume felt that Ballet Shoes really used & celebrated every element of the costume department, with wonderful costume makes, costume props, beautiful work from the textiles studio and lots stock used from the hire department.

One of the key factors for Costume was how early they were able to start, having designs delivered at the same time as the final model, giving them the space to plan and not rush into any decisions. Creating prototypes and really workshoping the designs, Costume were able to make informed choices, meaning there was generally very little wastage on the show.

Costume learnt that there are some costume items necessary for a dance show that (currently) cannot be supplied or made sustainably, and these are unavoidable.

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For example, dance shoes (of which we required three pairs per week, per dancer), dance tights, leotards and underwear. This did put pressure on Costume, with other costume sourcing needing to be as green as possible.

Using external hires felt like a good way of sourcing costume sustainably, however the vigorous nature of the show and the length of the run has meant a lot of the vintage and second-hand clothing was not sturdy enough to survive the run, so other items then had to be purchased.

Due to working within budget restrictions, our Understudies were not as fully costumed as we had planned for and a lot of items had to be shared, this made running wardrobes job harder when it came to cast sickness, and as swings were added mid-run.

There are certainly areas that could be improved upon, however, delivering a large-scale dance show within green book requirements, coming in at 57% reused and recycled, felt like a huge success for Costume.

Wigs, Hair and Make Up

Twenty-one wigs were pulled and adjusted from a stock of wigs used for previous shows which were adjusted using hair left over from purchases made for past productions.

Ten wigs were made from new due to needing wigs for textured hair as current stock is limited. Wigs, Hair and Make Up now have ten new textured hair wigs which will be used for future shows, so will have plenty of future life.

This was a big show for Wigs, Hair and Make Up, but 1/3 was new build wigs and 2/3 were from existing stock. Everything will have a future life.