

kalasangam

Annual Review

2021/22



Our Vision

Kala Sangam is an intercultural arts hub which aims to reflect the diversity of contemporary Britain through the work we present, the artists we support and the communities we engage.

Specialising in South Asian arts and culture, most of our work takes place in our Arts Centre in the heart of Bradford (between Bradford Cathedral and The Broadway Shopping Centre) with our outreach activities extending regionally and nationally.

In Sanskrit, 'Kala' means arts and 'Sangam' means a meeting point.

Kala Sangam aims to bring people and communities together to create and experience high-quality, diverse art, to increase understanding and awareness of different cultures, and to provide talent development pathways for young people and emerging artists into a career in the arts.

Focussing primarily on music and dance, all artistic, education and outreach activity delivered by Kala Sangam aligns with at least one of our programming strands:

This Is Bradford

Putting Kala Sangam at the heart of arts delivery in the city, we offer rehearsal space, development support and performance opportunities to local artists and companies. We also bring work to Bradford which addresses societal issues for the city or is relevant to one of its many communities.

South Asia Now

We programme work by South Asian artists/organisations or that showcases art forms from South Asia. A priority is placed on presenting work which develops the art form and/or is created by British people of South Asian descent.

British Diversity

To ensure we are at the forefront of what it means to live in modern Britain, we support the creation of work which looks at cultural heritage in the context of modern Britain or is actively diversity focussed. This strand also covers work that fuses together different artforms, styles and cultures.

**ACROSS THE ARTS
ACROSS CULTURES**

**AT THE HEART
OF BRADFORD**





“ I am very proud to present Kala Sangam's 2021/22 Annual Review.

Despite the continued presence of Covid, lockdowns and social distancing there has been much to celebrate at Kala Sangam this year, including the return of live performances and audiences after fourteen dark months.

Seeing artists and audiences connect again in our space was joyous and a reminder of the power of the arts to inspire, unite and heal.

As ever, we are incredibly grateful to both Arts Council England and Bradford Metropolitan District Council for their ongoing, regular funding which underpins everything we do here at Kala Sangam. The Government's Culture Recovery Fund also provided invaluable support this year, without which we would not have been able to engage with so many artists or safely welcome audiences and bookers back to the building. We would also like to thank Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Amal, for their support for projects including Bradford Producing Hub and *Bird in the Window*, and Exa Networks for their continued in-kind support.

Finally, we must thank everyone who has returned to Kala Sangam to see a performance or exhibition, for a conference or meeting, to visit the Rooftop Café or for any other reason. We're so happy to be able to welcome you all back into the building.

”

Jasbir Athwal DL
Chair of the Board



“ I really enjoy the variety of work Kala Sangam is involved in - it opens new worlds for the audience ”

– Audience Feedback

Artistic Programme

In 2021/22 we presented 43 performances and 3 exhibitions. Every performance aligned with at least one of our programming strands (This Is Bradford, South Asia Now and British Diversity).

In May 2021, following fourteen months of lockdowns, live performances returned to Kala Sangam with socially distanced performances of Möbius Dance's new work, *Curious Playground*. This was followed by the premiere of Bent Architect's *Full English*. Supported by Bradford Producing Hub and written by Bradfordian Natalie Davies, *Full English* tells her story of growing up in a mixed-race family. It went on to win Best Stage Production at the Asian Media Awards.

September saw a first for Kala Sangam, as we turned our car park into a performance space. Kapow Dance brought their spectacular show, *Mayfly*, which fused dance, music and water using a special set with built-in fountains.

60% of work presented this year featured South Asian Artists and/or South Asian Artforms.

Throughout the autumn we presented our first full season of shows since 2019, including two poetry nights and premieres of Bobak Champion's *I'm Muslimic Don't Panik* (an exploration of his Iranian heritage told through Break Dance and spoken word) and Manoranjan's *Sue and Sita* (a magical retelling of a classic Indian tale for children and families).

Balbir Singh Dance Company's new show, *The Wise Ones*, premiered at Kala Sangam in December. An extract from the piece – which featured legendary dancers Bisakha Sarker MBE, Villmore James and Guru Pratap Pawar MBE alongside three younger dancers – was featured in BBC 4's *Dance Passion*.

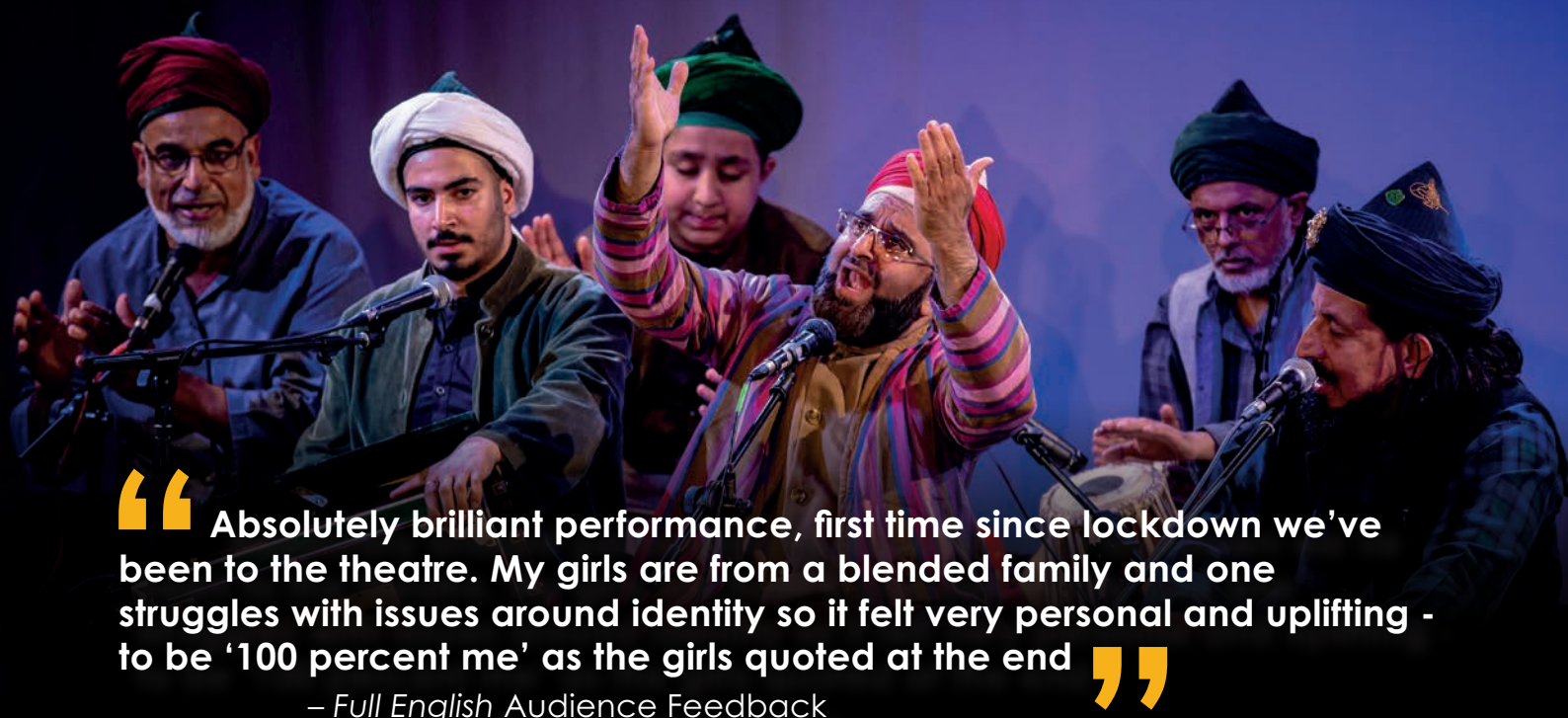
Funded by Amal, Jameela Khan's *Bird in the Window* premiered in October. Using rap, physical theatre and lots of comedy, *Bird in the Window* gently explores grief and the loss of a loved one through Raheem's friendship with feathery friend, Stevie B. This was followed in February by *Jabala and the Jinn*, written

by Bradford born Asif Khan. Including performances for schools, 587 children and adults experienced these high quality theatre pieces, which featured positive representations of British Muslims.

The spring saw us welcome Divya Kasturi for a personal exploration of the Varnam, a core part of the Bharatanatayam repertoire. Buglight Theatre's *Jane Hair*, written by Bradford-based Kirsty Smith and Kat Rose-Martin, saw the Brontë sisters running a hairdressers in modern day Haworth. Combining live performance with digital technologies, *From Zoom to Room* by Cloth Ears opened up new ways of bringing classical music to life.

Exhibitions

We partnered with our neighbours, Bradford Cathedral, to host a joint exhibition for the first time, featuring the work of Aire Valley Artists. Zareena Bano brought a vibrant pop of colour to the winter months with her exhibition of intricate Mandalas, including a stunning bespoke mural. We also looked back at the support we gave to artists throughout lockdown with Karol Wyszynski's exhibition of Back to the Studio photography.



“ Absolutely brilliant performance, first time since lockdown we've been to the theatre. My girls are from a blended family and one struggles with issues around identity so it felt very personal and uplifting - to be '100 percent me' as the girls quoted at the end ”

– Full English Audience Feedback



Artist Support

We provided 239 days of free studio time to 40 different artists, of which 51% was for South Asian artists and artforms.

New shows by artists including Bent Architect, Möbius Dance, Jaivant Patel Dance Company, Jameela Khan and Balbir Singh Dance Company were rehearsed and developed at Kala Sangam this year.

As well as providing studio space to artists to research and develop new projects, we also hosted several sharing events for artists to get critical feedback on their works-in-progress, including Debbie Bandara, Erica Mulkern and Jenn Kay.

Our support even extended to the streets of Bradford, with our Facilities Manager and lifelong Bradfordian, Iffy, acting as a guide and event support for Keira Martin and Sonia Sabri as their *Horse and Cart* project toured the city.

Support for Funding Applications

We supported 12 artists to unlock more than £250,000 of Arts Council grants for their projects. With our help, Devika Rao, Mansi Dabral, Vince Virr, Sharena Lee Satti and Tricia Arthur Stubbs all received Developing Your Creative Practice grants.

As a consortium member, we continue to play a key role in Bradford Producing Hub's work to build a more representative and diverse community of organisations and individuals working across the arts in Bradford. On behalf of BPH we made a successful application to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for £200,000 to support its work over the next four years.

“ Thank you Kala Sangam for always encouraging and supporting artists; being truly inclusive ”

– Mansi Dabral

“ As always, I feel very supported by Kala Sangam and this support has really boosted the last year or two for me ”

– Bobak Champion

Associate Companies

In January 2022 we announced our first Associate Companies – Company of Others, Jaivant Patel Dance and Möbius Dance.

These three diverse, emerging companies create innovative and exciting dance and performance work across a spectrum of styles. Their position as Associate Companies will see each of them returning regularly to Kala Sangam to engage communities and to create and present work.

Recognising the need to provide more than just financial support to help create change and diversify the arts sector, we will work with the Associate Companies in a more holistic way. As well as a commitment to programming their work, each company will be provided with practical support in the form of regular rehearsal space, organisational development support and access to training opportunities. These companies will also be given the space and support necessary to build relationships with each other as well as with other creative individuals and organisations across Bradford district.

Audiences

Despite social distancing and other Covid-related factors throughout the year, more than 2500 people saw performances at Kala Sangam in 2021/22, with an average of 52% capacity.

52% of our audience are non-White British, with 32% identifying as Asian/Asian British. According to Audience Finder statistics, nationally only 15% of audiences for arts events are non-White British.

67% of our audience come from Bradford (up from 60% in 2019/20) and 39% come from areas with low levels of arts engagement.

The largest group in our audience (21.1%) comes from the Kaleidoscope Creativity segment, which is ranked 9th lowest out of the 10 segments that make up the Audience Agency Audience Spectrum tool for measuring engagement levels with the arts.

Audience feedback remains extremely positive, with more than 95% rating us Good or Very Good for Quality of Performance/Event, Value for Money, and the Whole Experience of visiting Kala Sangam.

Our digital reach continues to grow, with Twitter, Facebook and Instagram followers increasing by around 10% each year. Subscribers to our newsletter have more than doubled since 2020, with open and click-through rates staying high.

“ I brought my daughter to her first event here today. We really enjoyed it. It's not something we would have been to, but with Pay What You Decide we can afford it ”
– Audience Feedback

“ Love this regional venue which is doing great service to dance as an artform. Thank you ”
– Audience Feedback



Education & Outreach

In 2021/2022 we engaged with 1900 Children and Young People, our highest ever number and double our pre-pandemic levels.

Schools

Our first ever School's Takeover week at Kala Sangam saw 840 children and young people from 12 schools in BD3 participate in a week's worth of activities including break dancing, poetry and Kathak dance.

We hosted our first Arts Award Discover Days, with 140 students from 7 schools taking part in workshops and watching performances of *Bird in the Window* (October 2021) or *Jabala and the Jinn* (February 2022) to earn their Awards.

“ **Just wanted to say thank you so much for Wednesday. It was AWESOME! The children just loved every minute, as did the staff! ... Really looking forward to more collaborations in the future** ”

– Teacher, Lady Lane Park School

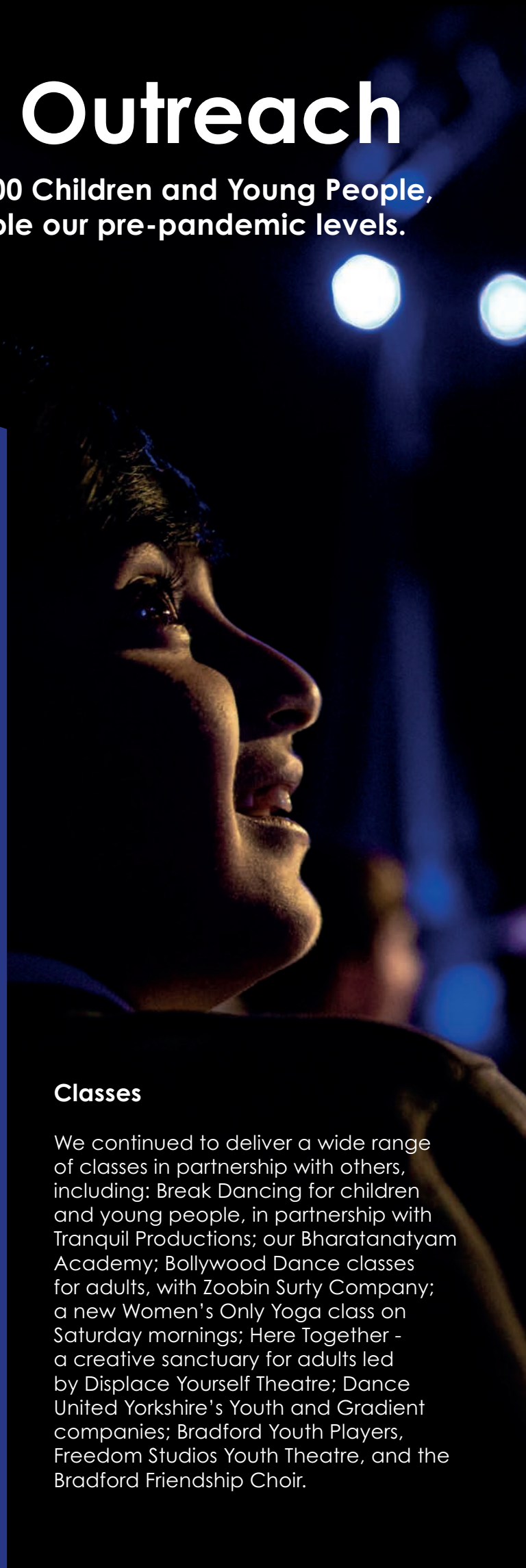
In partnership with Immanuel College and Go Higher Yorkshire, we hosted an event for young girls to help build their confidence. Several schools took part in a range of arts activities throughout the day, including Spoken Word and Drama.

We offered other, high quality creative workshops for schools, including a Bhangra and Dhol celebration event at Dixons Allerton Academy, Break Dancing for a summer school activity at Shirley Manor Primary, a Yoga and Drama after school club at Thornbury Primary Leadership Academy, as well as after school clubs at Dixons March Bank & St Mary's and St Peter's Catholic Primary School.

We also helped 4 schools work towards their Artsmark.

Classes

We continued to deliver a wide range of classes in partnership with others, including: Break Dancing for children and young people, in partnership with Tranquil Productions; our Bharatanatyam Academy; Bollywood Dance classes for adults, with Zoobin Surty Company; a new Women's Only Yoga class on Saturday mornings; Here Together - a creative sanctuary for adults led by Displace Yourself Theatre; Dance United Yorkshire's Youth and Gradient companies; Bradford Youth Players, Freedom Studios Youth Theatre, and the Bradford Friendship Choir.



Outreach

Working in partnership with the One in a Million charity, this year we delivered several drama taster sessions at community centres across the Bradford district for groups of children and young people - many of whom had little or no previous engagement with the arts. As part of our ongoing work with One in a Million, we have begun work on a drama development programme for those children and young people with a passion for the arts. We have also delivered workshops as part of their community day at One in a Million Free School.

As part of the lead up to the performances of *Jabala and the Jinn*, we supported Turtle Key arts to deliver community workshops for children and young people at Community Works centre, Refugee Action and Shine West Bowling.

“ All of the workshops were absolutely fantastic, the engagement within every workshop was outstanding, each leader was amazing and I loved every session as did the students ”

- One in a Million



Our People 2021/22

Our Board:

Jasbir Athwal DL
Sufyan Abid Dogra
Amrit Gata-Aura
Caroline Harrison
Sameena Hussain
Jenny Jowle
Paul Nash
Marie O'Reilly
Rashmi Sudhir
James Wilson

Chair
Trustee (appointed Nov 2021)
Trustee
Treasurer
Trustee (appointed Nov 2021)
Trustee
Trustee and Company Secretary
Vice Chair
Trustee
Trustee

Our Patrons:

David Lascelles Earl of Harwood
Lord Patel of Bradford OBE

Honourary Lifetime President:

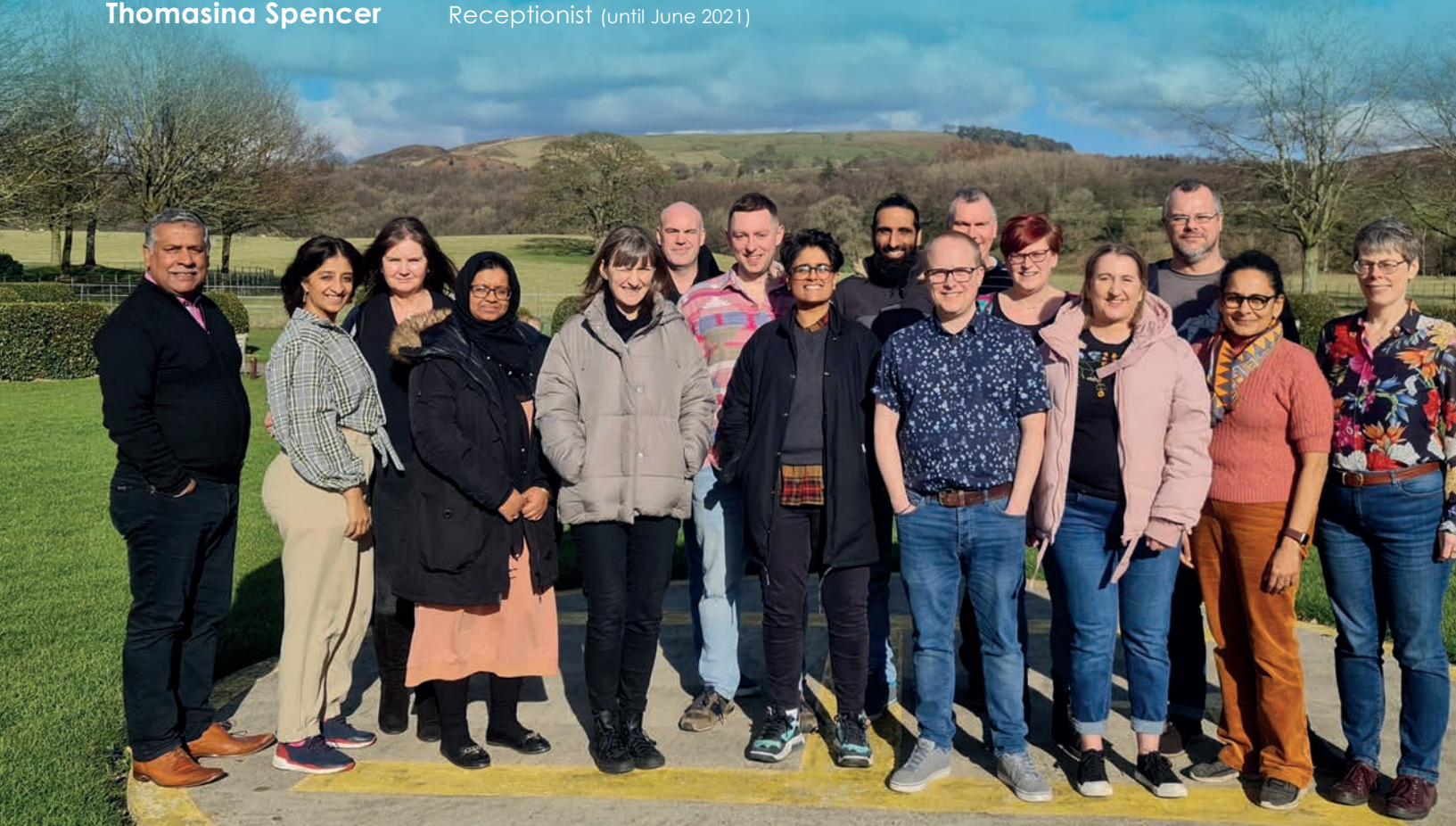
Dr Geetha Upadhyaya OBE

Our Staff:

Jez Arrow
Fay Beesley
Sidra Bi
Bradley Cook-Pattison
Alex Corwin
Alex Croft
David Dearlove
Caitlin Grime
Philip Henegan
Mohammed Iftikar
Mo Khan
Haider Mahboob
Steve O'Connell
Dave Searle
Thomasina Spencer

Head of Finance
Education & Outreach Officer
Bookkeeper
Technical Assistant
Marketing & Programme Manager
Creative Director
Facilities Assistant & Caretaker
Facilities Assistant
Facilities Assistant
Facilities Manager
Facilities Assistant
Arts Admin Assistant (since Dec 2021)
Head of Commercial
Theatre Technician (freelance)
Receptionist (until June 2021)

Over the year staff have taken part in Carbon Literacy Training, LGBTQIA+ Training, Safe Space Training and an introduction to British Sign Language.



Staff Highlights



Alex Corwin

Marketing and Programme Manager

I really loved *SEVENS*, by Nina Rajarani – a exploration of the seven deadly sins and the seven Hindu marriage vows through stunning Bharatanatyam dance. It was both accessible and thought provoking with a beautiful live music soundtrack.

Bird in the Window was also a high point of the year for me. I have been humming the song on and off ever since and it was great watching the kids in the audience connect with the characters of Raheem and Stevie B.



Bradley Cook-Pattison

Technical Assistant

My highlight would have to be working the smaller events such as Dance/Drama school's end of year shows. It's so nice to see the younger generation really express themselves through the arts. It's also nice seeing the proud looks on the parents' faces when they see their children perform.



Haider Mahboob

Arts Admin Assistant (Kickstart Placement)

My favourite performance this year was Buglight Theatre's *Jane Hair*. The show had a good balance of comedy and drama, and the actors were all fantastic.



James Wilson

Trustee

It was fantastic to be back at Kala Sangam for a socially distanced performance of Bent Architect's *Full English* – a powerful piece of theatre that was both captivating and thought-provoking – what a return to live performances!

Another that portrayed the many facets of modern Britain was *I'm Muslimic Don't Panik*, a tour de force from Bobak Champion featuring music, dance, spoken word and comedic audience participation.

This was all made possible due to the team's hard work and determination to safely re-open the building to artists and audiences alike.



Commercial and Sustainability

Our Building

Following two years of Covid-related restrictions, our commercial bookings have now returned to more than 80% of pre-2020 levels, with a mix of bookers including Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Screen Yorkshire, DSL Training, Pennine Prospects, Empowering Minds and CapUK.

More than 24,000 people visited Kala Sangam in 2021/22. Over 200 different groups and organisations used our spaces, and 75% of them were artistic, cultural, 3rd sector or work with young people.



“ The recommendation of Kala Sangam for our events was the best thing that anyone could have done for us. The service, the facilities and the support that the entire team provides to all events is exemplary and I would encourage everyone planning any event to consider this venue before seeking elsewhere. Staff are always at hand to help with any last minute changes and no idea is ever too challenging for the events team at Kala Sangam. Professional, Reliable and Trustworthy ”

– Room Booker 2021

Tenants

We are delighted that Mencap have made Kala Sangam the permanent base for their work in Bradford, taking over an office as well as Meeting Room 4 for their Work Skills programme. We have also continued to provide office space for fellow NPOs Dance United Yorkshire and Freedom Studios, as well as a number of artists and creatives using our basement offices and spaces.

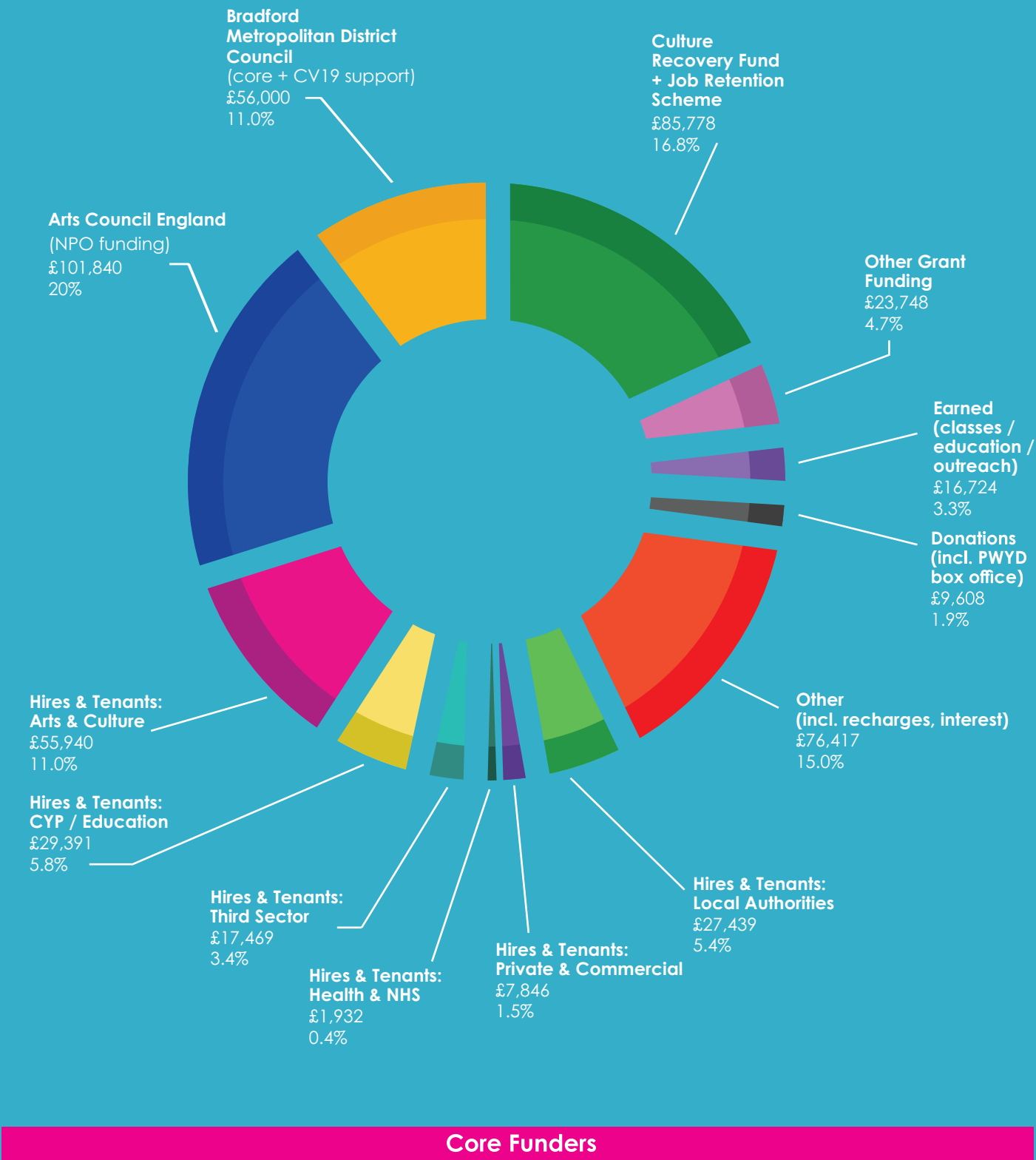
Environmental Sustainability

We have strengthened our commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability. All staff have now undertaken Carbon Literacy training (through SAIL), and we have also implemented a number of other changes, including:

- Developing an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan to explore opportunities and improvements that can be made across all areas of work.
- Steve O'Connell (Head of Commercial) and James Wilson (Trustee) meet regularly to monitor, progress and further develop the action plan.
- Adding Environmental Responsibility - as a core Arts Council Investment Principal - as a standing item on the agenda for all Board meetings.
- Producing a reduced size brochure for our events programme, printed on recycled paper and with carbon offset delivery.
- Encouraging artists and touring productions to send a reduced number of flyers and posters.
- Upgrading lights in the Ganges Theatre to LED bulbs.
- Eliminating reliance on single-use plastic solutions wherever possible throughout the building.
- Encouraging use of virtual meetings, especially with people based outside Bradford.
- Supporting staff, particularly those who live outside of Bradford, to work from home whenever possible.
- As part of this, transitioning to laptop clients for staff and cloud-based working/ filing solutions, recycling all old IT equipment via UCAN recycling.

Total Income

£510,132



Core Funders



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

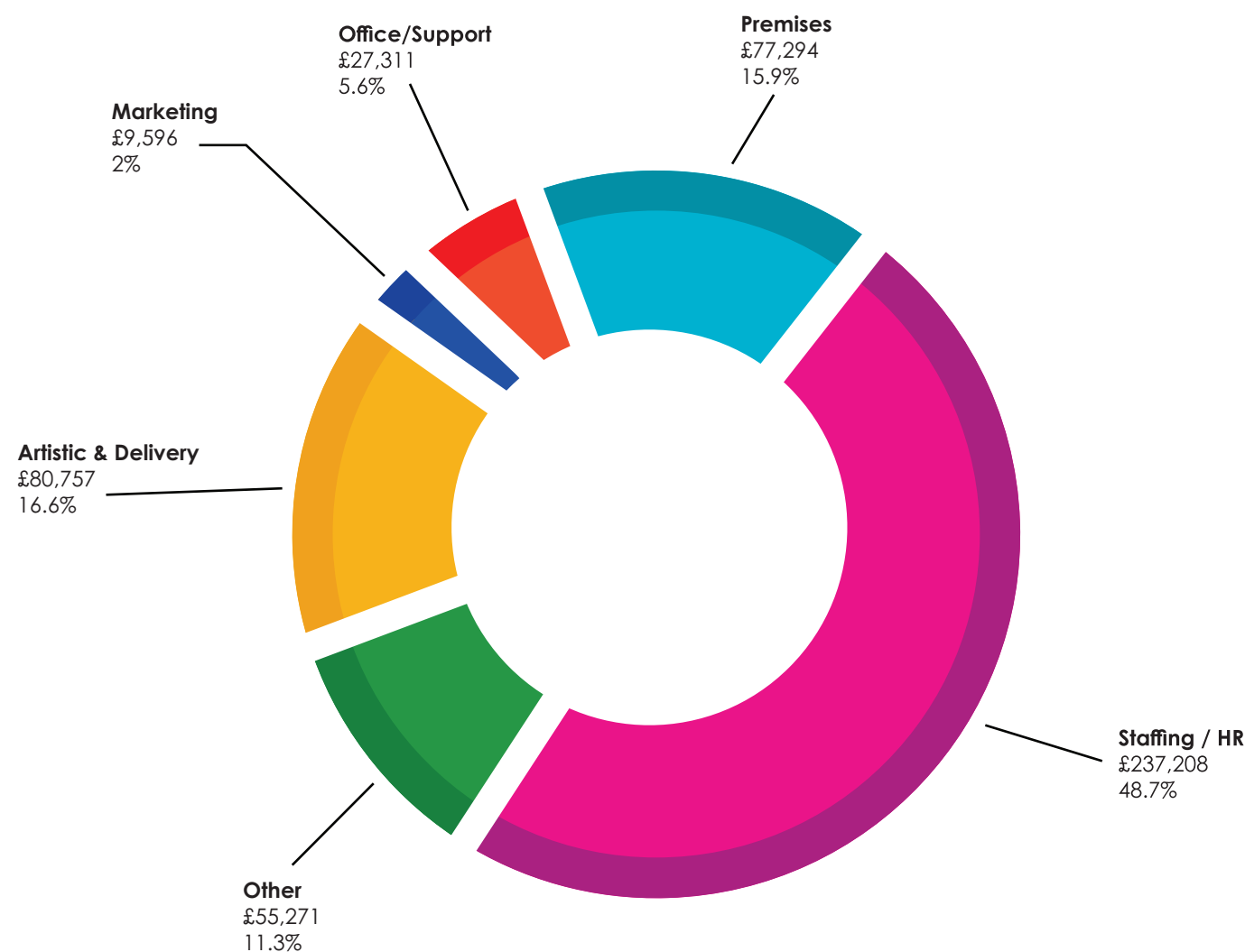


City of
BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Total Expenditure

£487,437

Excludes Capital Building Depreciation of £91,517



Financial Overview

Supported by



Supporter of




Kala Sangam
1 Forster Square
Bradford
BD1 4TY


Kala Sangam is just a 5-minute walk from both Bradford Interchange and Bradford Forster Square train stations.
Find us between Bradford Cathedral and The Broadway Shopping Centre.

Our building is accessible by a lift to all floors.
Disabled parking is available in our staff car park.

For more information:
www.kalasangam.org
01274 303340
info@kalasangam.org

 @Kala_Sangam

 /kala.sangam

 @kalasangam_arts_centre

 /thekalasangam

All photos by Karol Wyszynski except:
p.10 Haider Mahboob, p.12 Oli Bentley, Back cover: Abby Clarke

Company no. 03195878 | Registered Charity no. 1055488 | VAT No: 890506024