

NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS

DICK WHITTINGTON



**ROSANNA
BATES**
as Alice Fitzwarren

**LISA
AMBALAVANAR**
as Dick Whittington

DANNY HENDRIX
as Silly Billy

**JOHN
ELKINGTON**
as Sarah the Cook

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Introduction

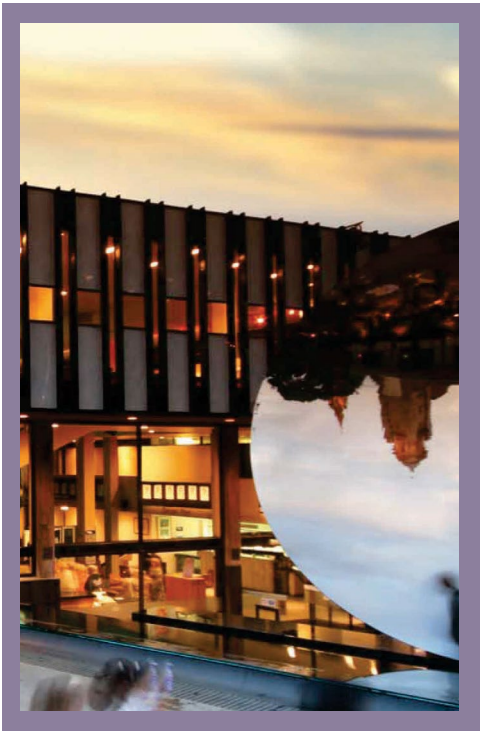


Photo: Drew Baumohl

The Nottingham Playhouse makes bold and thrilling theatre. It is world-class, made in Nottingham and as diverse as our community.

Situated in Nottingham city centre, Nottingham Playhouse puts on a wide variety of drama, music, dance, comedy and of course, the legendary Nottingham Playhouse pantomime.

Nottingham Playhouse has been one of the United Kingdom's leading producing theatres since its foundation in 1948. Touring work nationally and internationally, the Playhouse remains firmly rooted in its vibrant home city, where its spacious modernist building – fronted by Anish Kapoor's Sky Mirror – is one of the region's most popular landmarks.

Within these walls we create productions large and small: timeless classics, enthralling family shows and adventurous new commissions.

We are currently The Stage Regional Theatre of the Year – an award made in large part in recognition of our uniquely ambitious and meaningful engagement with our many diverse communities.

Full of pantomime fun, read on to learn more about the characters and world of Nottingham Playhouse's production of *Beauty and the Beast*. We have lots of information, not only about the classic fairy tale, but also about the history of pantomime itself and the history of pantomime at the Playhouse.

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Dick Whittington: Plot

A terrific tale full of tricks, triumph and tomfoolery this year's panto is bound to make you titter.

We join Dick Whittington and his companion Tom the Cat, on their way to London where 'the streets are paved with gold' to find his fame and fortune. Waiting for them is struggling Fitzwarren's Emporium and King Rat with his plan for his army of rats to rule the roost. When a shipwreck leaves everyone stranded and King Rat's plan nearly complete, can Dick Whittington save the day?

Packed with songs, spectacular sets and classic panto silliness this is just the ticket to get you in the festive mood. Remember, keep an eye out for those pesky rats and don't forget to shout if you see one!

Cast and Creatives

Cast

Sarah the Cook John Elkington

Dick Whittington Lisa Ambalavanar

Alice Fitzwarren Rosanna Bates

King Rat Christopher Chandler

Silly Billy Danny Hendrix

Tome the Cat Ewan Ling

Alderman Fitzwarren TJ Lloyd

Fairy Bowbells Natalie Winsor

Creatives

Writer and Director Adam Penford

Set and Costume Designer Mark Walters

Musical Director John Morton

Lighting Designer Sally Ferguson

Sound Designer Adam Fisher

Choreographer Donna Berlin

Fight Director Jonathan Holby

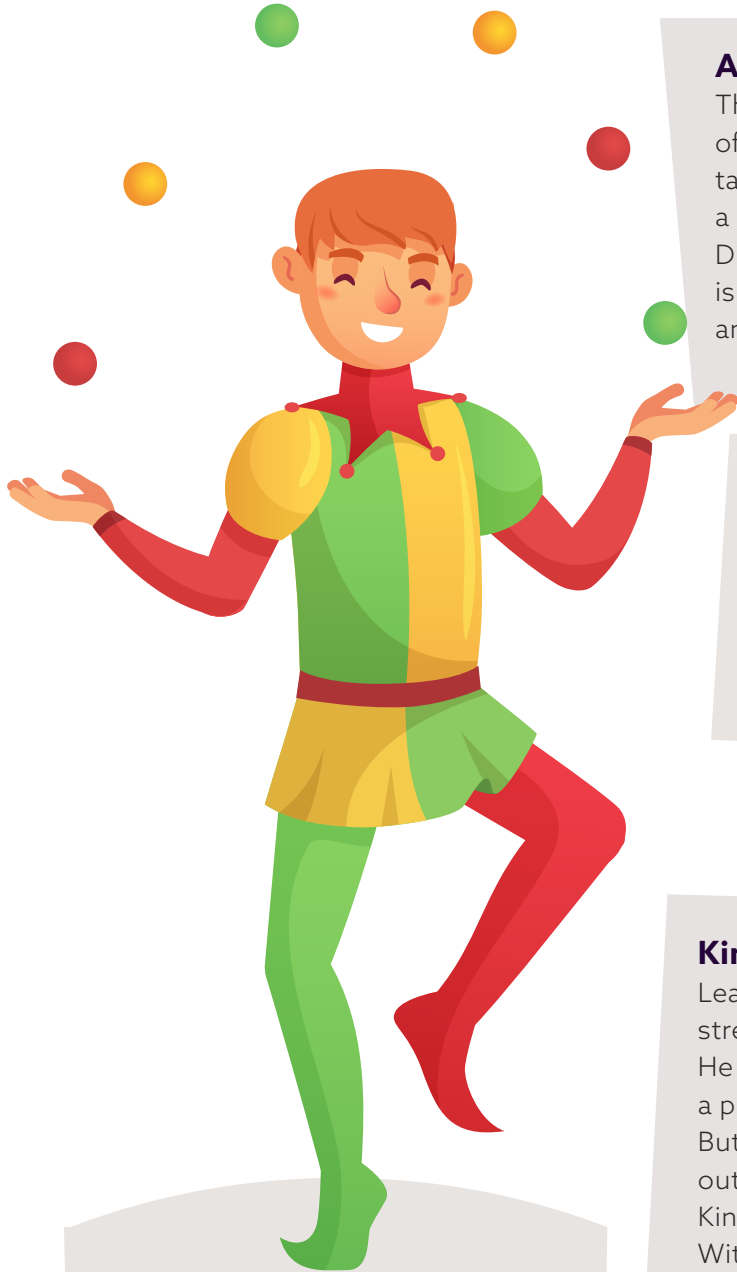
Video Designer Raphael Achache

Assistant Director Evangeline Osbon

Deputy Stage Manager Jordan Shingleton

Assistant Stage Manager Frances Ashton

Character Breakdown



Silly Billy

Silly Billy is just that, a bit of a Silly Billy, he is very funny and tells lots of jokes. He works at Fitzwarren's Emporium and is secretly in love with Alice Fitzwarren. Although Silly Billy has good intentions and will do anything to help Alice his soft spot for her leads him to do something out of character.

Alice Fitzwarren

The manager at Fitzwarren's Emporium and daughter of Alderman Fitzwarren, Alice is a pretty and kind and talks the bank into loaning her the money to pay for a ship for the voyage to find new stock. Alice gives Dick and Tom a job when they arrive in London and it is clear to see that there is a connection between her and Dick, much to the annoyance of Silly Billy.

Alderman Fitzwarren

Alderman Fitzwarren is the owner of Fitzwarren's Emporium, the poshest shop in London, which is filled with treasures from far and wide. His soft spot for Sarah the Cook is revealed when they are on the voyage across the sea to find new luxury goods to sell to boost business.

King Rat

Leader of the army of rats terrorising the streets of London and Fitzwarren's Emporium. He is mean and nasty to everyone and has a plan to rule London with his rat empire. But things aren't all what they seem, it turns out that people haven't always been kind to King Rat and that he hasn't always been a rat. With the help of Fairy Bowbells he is able to become his former self again.



Sarah the Cook

Sarah the Cook also works at Fitzwarren's Emporium in the café. Like her son Silly Billy, she is very funny and they both end up in some hilarious situations. Sarah appreciates a bit of eye candy and is on the lookout for her next husband.



Dick Whittington

Coming from humble beginnings, Dick Whittington ventures to London to find his fame and fortune on the streets paved with gold but ends up banished less than 24 hours later! Dick struggles with his confidence, but with the help of Fairy Bowbells and Tom the Cat he builds the courage to return to London to put things right, winning the heart of Alice Fitzwarren in the process.

Ruler

Speaking only in cat and therefore only able to communicate with Tom the Cat, Ruler rules the island where everyone ends up shipwrecked. Ruler is very generous giving supplies for the shop and a ship to get home after Dick and Tom rid the island of rats.

Fairy Bowbells

Using her magic, Fairy Bowbells works hard to protect the people of London from King Rat, the only problem is her magic is weaker the further from London she travels. She is fair and does good with her magic, even helping King Rat lift his curse.



Tom the Cat

A born performer destined for the stage. Tom the Cat is the ultimate showboat; he can sing, dance, act and catch rats! Companion of Dick Whittington, Tom the Cat travels to London to follow his dream of performing on the West End but ends up heroically challenging King Rat to save everyone, despite having already used eight of his nine lives!

Panto Games

Catch-a-Rat

Select one person to be Tom the Cat, they must stand at one end of the room facing away from everyone. Everyone else must take up their positions as one of King Rat's army. When Tom the Cat's back is turned the rats can sneak up towards them but when Tom the Cat turns around the rats have to freeze, anyone that Tom the Cat spots moving have to go back to where they started. If a rat reaches Tom the Cat and taps them they take over the Tom the Cat role and the game starts again. To make the game more challenging add obstacles in the rats way.



In my shop...

Choose someone to be Alderman Fitzwarren, they are going to think of a secret rule for stock they will allow in Fitzwarren's Emporium, for instance this could be 'only items that begin with the letter D' or 'only red items' or 'any item as long as you whisper it'. Alderman Fitzwarren begins the game by saying 'In my shop I stock (give an example that follows the secret rule)', in turn everyone has a go at guessing an item for the shop, Alderman Fitzwarren either allows or refuses it. Once everyone has had a go, the group tries to guess what the secret rule was.

Final Fight

In pairs, one person is Dick Whittington, the other King Rat. Place one hand behind you on your back palm facing outwards, using the other hand create a finger sword with your index finger. Now its showdown time! The objective is to tap the hand your opponent is hiding behind their back with your finger sword, each tap equals a point - first to 3 points wins!

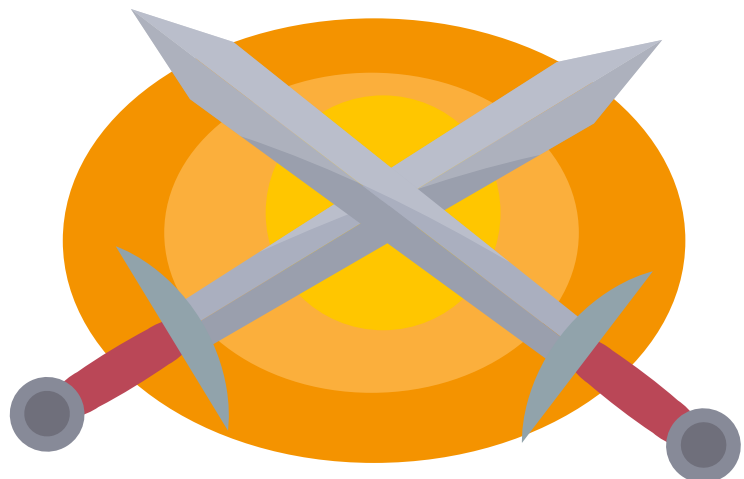




Photo: Pamela Raith

History of Panto

Pantomime comes from the Middle Ages, originating in the Royal Courts of the Kings and Queens. During the Tudor age, there would be a series of performances around Christmas leading up to Twelfth Night on the 6th of January in which an atmosphere of "misrule" would take over and social and gender norms would be inverted. Until the 1930s, pantomime would also include an alternative storyline called the Harlequinade which would also follow the same characters of Harlequin, Columbine, and Pierrot. This was very popular through the 1800s and is where the modern appearance of clowns comes from.

There are several features that are very important to the genre of Pantomime. Pantomimes generally revolve around a traditional folk tale, such as Jack And The Beanstalk, Cinderella, or Puss In Boots. The narrative is adapted to incorporate some of the essential pantomime moments. These include

the characters resting on a log and being picked off one by one by a monster, to which the audience is encouraged to shout "Its behind you", as well as other moments of interaction such as the main villain arguing with the audience.

One of the most unique aspects of Pantomime is its emphasis on cross-gender casting. This is traditionally called Travesti, which means disguised in French. The central male character is often played by a woman, and this is known as a 'Breeches role', which comes from a time when laws restricted the use of child actors. One of the most famous Breeches roles is the role of Peter Pan on the stage. Pantomime also features the older woman character being played by a man, which is called a 'Pantomime Dame.' This can be dated back to the 1500s when women were not allowed on stage and therefore all female characters were played by men. Nowadays, cross-gender casting is called "Cross-casting."



Photo: Pamela Raith

The Making of Panto

Panto and Christmas go together like the holly and the ivy but most people don't know that we have a team of designers, painters, prop-makers, costumiers, set builders and lighting specialists who are busily working on the show all year round to get it ready in time for the festive season.

At the beginning of this year, as the glitter had barely settled from last year's panto *Sleeping Beauty*, our Designer Morgan Large set about creating the vision for this year's show. The first stage of the process is to present the Playhouse team with a white card model of the set – this is a complete to-scale replica and usually has various pieces of furniture and backdrops to build up a picture of what everything is going to look like. It is useful to do this as early as possible so that our team can make use of quieter periods in the theatre's schedule to start sourcing materials and do vital prep work.

In June, there is another meeting to showcase final designs for the show and this is where our production team can really start to get excited for the show...

Our Wardrobe department will begin to source fabrics for costumes and, once casting is confirmed, each actor visits us to be measured up. From this, paper patterns are created of each costume and worked up in fabric, ready for an exciting first fitting. Some of the most elaborate individual costumes can take a week or longer to construct and it's always important for our actors to feel comfortable, as well as being able to bust those all-important dance moves! Our Wardrobe team, therefore, have to ensure that all costumes are as light and flexible as possible which can be a tricky task, especially with some of our Dame's fancy frocks which often have a circumference of up to 3.5 metres and use between 15 to 20 metres of fabric.

Meanwhile, our Props and Stage Management team will be making a list of everything they need to either make from scratch, buy new for the show or find in our existing stores of useful props which can be re-painted and re-purposed for this year's show. As the rehearsal process begins, there can



Photo: Fraser Youngson

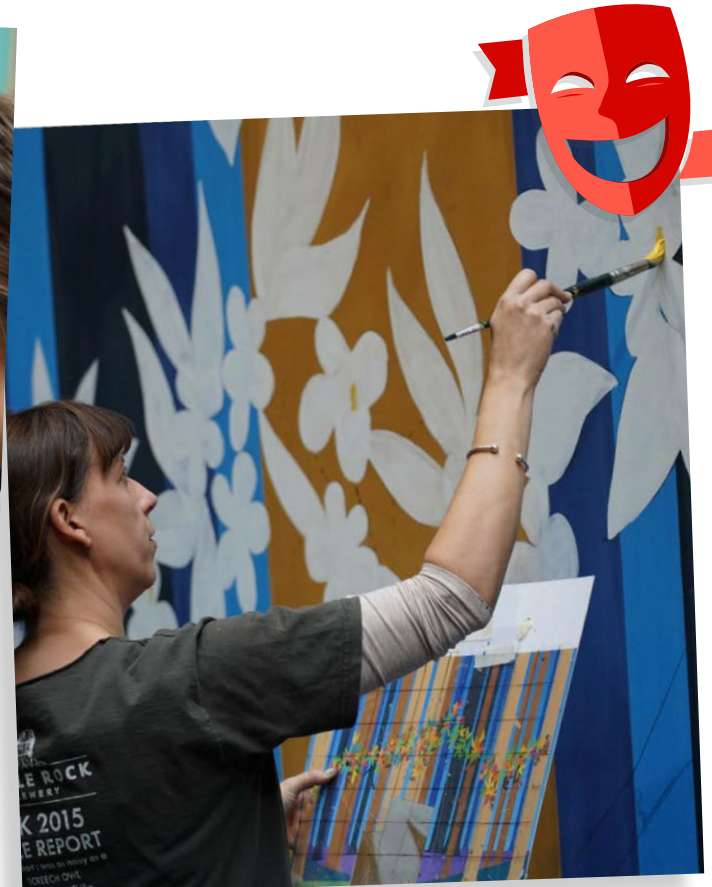


Photo: Fraser Youngson

also be some last minute additions when new jokes and lines are written into the script - as happened, in recent years, during the rise to fame of The X Factor's Honey G where the team had to quickly source her trademark cap and glasses for a gag!

As well as our on-site workshop and Wardrobe department, we have our wonderful Paint Shop which is situated just behind the stage. Here our team of painters beaver away painting every piece of scenery you'll see on the stage today. Our lovely 'front cloth', which you'll see at the beginning of the show, can take up to three weeks alone to paint. If there's one motto our Paint Shop team live by it's 'add more glitter' and a fun, lesser known fact is that Kenneth, the Writer, paints his own small section of one of the cloths each year as a fun, annual tradition.

Throughout the autumn, work on the production really begins in earnest and, following three to four weeks of rehearsal, it's then time for Tech Week! This is where all aspects of the production come together

- our actors get to run through the show on the stage for the first time and all our production teams get to see their props, costumes and paintwork in all their glory, glistening underneath the stage lights. But work doesn't stop there, as tweaks will be made throughout the week and, once the show opens, our teams have to maintain their handiwork. Our Wardrobe team, for example, can use up to 100 pairs of shoes, 60-80 pairs of tights and around 500 hair grips throughout the festive season. Not to mention the daily laundry run and our two Dressers who are on hand for every show - especially to help with those quick costume changes!

We're incredibly lucky at the Playhouse to have such a dedicated and creative production team and army of technicians who work hard to create the magic you see on stage. Many of them agree that Panto is always the most special time of the year; it's exciting to see their designs and creations brought to life onstage and the pleasure it brings to you, our wonderful audiences.

Interview with Adam Penford

What are the magic ingredients for creating a great Playhouse panto?

The Playhouse panto prides itself on being for everyone. It doesn't matter how old you are, where you come from, or how often you come to the theatre. It's always funny, energetic and spontaneous. Some pantos just skip through the story to the next song, but we think it's a key part of the show, just as important as the jokes and dances. One of the main things that sticks out in a Playhouse panto is just how much the actors, backstage team and everyone who work for the theatre care about the audience having the best possible time.

How have you balanced panto traditions whilst making the show feel new and exciting?

Pantos are all about tradition. It's been around for centuries and one of the things that audiences love is how familiar it is. Some of the routines, such as "It's behind you!", or "Oh no, he isn't!", have been going for decades. However, as with anything, if it gets stuck in a rut, it can quite quickly become stale and unexciting. The panto needs to reflect the world we live in today and celebrate Nottingham. We do this by ensuring that the song choices, choreography and casting feel relevant to the Nottingham we live in, and the references are up-to-date. We've also recently opened up how we do the auditions for our amazing Youth Chorus, who all live nearby, and nearly 200 young people auditioned, for only 14 roles!

Which Dick Whittington character have you enjoyed writing for most?

Argh! Tricky one. I love them all. Plus, the actors might read this, and it's like having children, you can't admit to having a favourite. The Dame is probably the most fun to write jokes for, but that's mostly because the fantastic actor, John Elkington, has been our Dame for 24 years, and I can imagine him saying them. Although I don't know why I bother, he'll change them when he gets in front of the audience anyway!

What is your favourite panto tradition?

I love the Dames costumes. We have nine this year – that's a lot of quick costume changes. They take hours and hours to make, but are completely worth it. It's so much fun working with the costume designer to think of ambitious and silly ideas, and then to watch the audience reaction when each one comes on stage, bigger and dafter than the last.

In what ways are design elements like set, costume and props important to pantomime?

They are so important. We make all our own sets, costumes and props at the Playhouse. As soon as one panto ends in January, we start working on the next one. We have lots of very talented people who make them and they always look stunning – magical and fun. We get through so much glitter and sequins!



Adam Penford

Is it true that you once appeared in a Nottingham Playhouse panto?

Each performance, we bring some children up on stage from the audience. I've been coming to the Playhouse panto since I was a little boy, and one year, they asked if I'd like to come onstage. But I was too shy, and said 'no'. I always regretted it, but was never asked again. Jump forward 30 years and it was my first day as Artistic Director of the Playhouse, and I was sat in the audience, watching the panto. Suddenly, John, the Dame, pulled something out from his pocket, and said "I've got a letter here from a little boy who was once desperate to get onstage, but it didn't happen, and now we can make his wish come true", and they pulled me up on stage in front of everyone. It was so embarrassing. I still haven't forgiven him.

Job Roles in Making Theatre

You may have heard the phrase 'get a proper job' in relation to working in theatre. But this is very out of date. There are many job roles with good salaries in theatre and culture. Nottingham Playhouse has over 100 permanent staff! Here are just a few...

Actor

Actors bring characters to life on stage with their performances, using speech, movement and expression to act a script or improvise their roles.

Administration

Administrators deal with customers, run offices, and take care of the day-to-day running of the business.

Agent

Agents are often the first point of contact for anyone looking to hire actors. Few actors work without the support of an agent. Agents can also supply artists for corporate and private events. Their clients may include actors, singers, dancers or supporting artists.

Artistic Director

The artistic director makes sure their theatre is putting on the kind of shows that fit with the artistic aims of the organisation.

Arts Journalist

Every show hopes for good reviews. Journalists get the word out about the show to the public. They make sure people know what shows are on offer and what is happening in the world of theatre.

Backstage Crew

Building sets, helping create props and operating equipment, the backstage crew support the designers and performers with the running of the show.

Box Office Staff

Box office staff work in cinemas, theatres and concert halls. They are responsible for taking bookings and payments for tickets. Box office staff also arrange for group visits and discounts. They may also advise on seating for people with disabilities or special needs.

Carpenter

Carpenters and joiners in the theatre and dance sector and crafts sector work with wood. They work in theatres or in workshops. In the theatre and dance sector, they specifically make, fit or repair scenery and props that are part of a play or show.

Choreographer

Choreographers create routines and movement sequences for singers and musicians to perform.

Costume Designer

The costume designer is responsible for designing all the costumes to be worn in a production. This can involve a mix of designing from scratch, and sourcing existing items of clothing.

Dance Teacher

Dance teachers educate and instruct on different forms of dance. They work with individuals and groups of all ages and abilities to help them learn dance practices.

Dancer

Dance is a term for describing ways of using the body to tell stories, interpret music and express emotion. Some dance forms require an intense training starting from an early age; others can be learned later.

Dialect Coach

Dialect coaches or voice coaches work with actors to develop and improve their vocal technique, and help them adopt convincing character accents.

Director

Theatre directors take responsibility for the overall creative production of plays.

Dramaturg

A dramaturg is a theatre practitioner who focuses on how to convey the particular message the director wants to highlight.

Events Staff

Events staff work with centre and gallery and theatre managers to deliver an event. They manage, organise and oversee the running of a venue or function. They are responsible for coordinating all the arrangements such as room bookings, catering and special effects or promotional items.

Finance Staff

Finance staff officers in the performing and visual arts sectors provide administrative support to organisations.

Front-of-House Staff

The 'front-of-house' of a theatre refers to all areas accessed by the public, including the auditorium. Front-of-house staff look after the public to make sure their visit is safe and enjoyable.

Hair, Makeup and Wigs

People that work in hair, makeup and wigs for the theatre and dance sector help to style performers. The style of makeup needed depends on the type of production. The hair, makeup and wigs may be contemporary and straightforward or require more creative approaches. Performers may need to appear as from a different nationality or from a different historical period. The makeup artist will also need to dress wigs and attach them correctly to the actor or performer.

Lighting Designer

Lighting designers work to ensure effective lighting for a commercial property. They aim to enhance a building's environment through lighting.

Lighting Technicians

Lighting technicians are vital to theatre. Their work may involve design, operating lighting rigs, and looking after equipment.

Marketing Officer

Marketing is about understanding what a customer wants and promoting this product, event or service. It is also making sure the public is talking about a brand, which for the arts sector could be a theatre, museum, art gallery or community arts project.

Participation and Education Staff

Arts education staff in the creative industries support teachers and development workers in cultural venues. They work in art centres, galleries, theatres and other venues to provide an educational experience. They may work with individual children or visitors, small groups or a whole class.

Playwright

The playwright or dramatist is the author of a production, the writer or adapter of the original play. Often they work alone, but sometimes they also collaborate with a director and the cast.

Producer (Live Events)

Producers of live events are responsible for running successful live spectacles. The producer works on live shows and events in the music industry such as concerts and music festivals. They must coordinate technical staff and performers to ensure everything runs smoothly. They have to have high-quality acts and performers for a successful event. Live events may be one-offs or regular annual events. They can be held in indoor and outdoor music venues of all sizes.

Props Manager

A props manager supervises the building, making and buying of the props needed for a production.

Puppeteer

Puppeteers animate and manipulate puppets as part of a theatre, television or film production. Puppetry is a performing art used to entertain adults or children.

Sound Designer

Sound design can involve making sure the mix of sounds is correct at a live event, designing the sound effects on a mobile phone, and many other things.

Sound Engineer

Sound engineers work in the theatre and dance sector to handle all aspects of a production's sound. They ensure that speech, music and sound effects can be heard to the best effect in a theatre production.

Sound Technician

Sound technicians ensure that the best sound possible is available in a variety of venues for performances. They prepare, operate and maintain technical equipment to amplify, enhance, mix or reproduce sound. They work in recording studios, films, radio and television programmes (on set or location) and live performances, including theatre, music and dance.

Special Effects

Special effects and pyrotechnics staff are responsible for special effects and pyrotechnics required as part of a production. In some shows, for example using magic, special effects may be an integral part of an act.

Stage Designer

Stage designers are responsible for designing stage settings for productions. This can range from single-scene dramas to complex scenery and scene changes required by major productions.

Stage Manager

Stage managers coordinate all aspects of a theatre production or event, including actors, technical staff, props, scenery and costumes. They make sure technicians and performers alike are in the right place at the right time and ready to meet their cues.

Stagehand

Stagehands in performing arts are the behind-scenes support staff for a production. They carry out a wide variety of jobs backstage to ensure a production is successful.

Technical Manager

A technical manager in the theatre and dance sector coordinates a production's technical staff. This could include the set-making staff, lighting staff and props-making staff.

Wardrobe Assistant

Wardrobe assistants work to provide support with costumes and accessories. Performances like plays and musicals rely on a strong wardrobe team to make the production look credible.