



Year In Review

Society of London Theatre 2023
working in partnership with UK Theatre

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Timeline

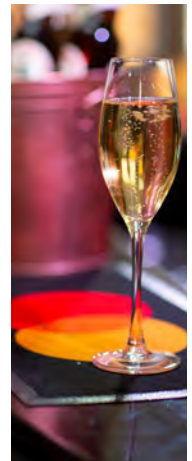
Jan

A **Rising Energy Costs Roundtable** was convened to demonstrate to government the theatre industry's unique vulnerabilities to rising energy costs and its challenges regarding energy efficiency.

Our **Olivier Awards Launch Event** was held at the Edwardian Hampshire Hotel, attended by sponsors and members of the SOLT Board and Olivier Awards Committee.

Our contract with **Mastercard** was renewed, with them committing to another three years of support on the Olivier Awards and Priceless Theatre Events. This year we've delivered 15 Priceless Events in London for over 500 guests and held an additional four events across the UK.

Our **Nominee Announcement** for the Olivier Awards 2023 with Mastercard reached 3.3m (+11% YOY) people on social media, and 71.4k (+18% YOY) accounts engaged.



Feb

Official London Theatre's annual **New Year Sale** campaign came to a close. 68 shows participated, selling 86k tickets and generating over £3m in tickets sales for the industry.

Our annual **Training Programme** commenced with the first IOSH course of the year, qualifying member staff to manage health and safety issues within their organisation.

Following a sector-wide campaign, **Theatre Tax Relief** was maintained at the higher rate until 2025, providing producers with greater incentives to secure investment, develop new productions, employ more workers and bring more live shows to audiences.

Love Your Local Theatre was relaunched, providing £1m to audiences in £25 Theatre Tokens vouchers funded by the National Lottery. 230 theatres benefitted and accepted these vouchers, up from 97 in 2022.

“

“Following the success of last year, we were delighted to see the Love Your Local Theatre campaign run again in 2023. This national campaign not only champions and shines a spotlight on our industry, but more importantly, it encourages and financially supports individuals to attend their local theatre.

To take part this year, Curve joined the Theatre Tokens scheme for the very first time. This was an extremely positive experience, with the team on hand throughout the process to support and anticipate all our needs. We also know our audiences have benefitted greatly by being able to purchase and use Theatre Tokens for shows at Curve.”

**Claire Ward, Executive Director
(Audiences and Commercial Operations) at Curve**

We welcomed Aidan Grounds, Ameena Hamid, Charlotte Holder, Chuchu Nwagu, Fiona Steed and Sarah Jordan Verghese as **Associate Members**, as part of a pilot programme seeking to support future industry leaders. This is part of our vision to ensure the membership becomes more inclusive and representative of society.

“

“Being part of the SOLT Associate Member program has been truly wonderful. It has opened doors to higher-level industry conversations, providing invaluable insights as I continue to develop my producing career. The warm welcome from the membership and the SOLT team has made this journey even more fulfilling. I'm genuinely excited to continue my membership this year and hopefully beyond.”

**Ameena Hamid,
Current Associate Member**

Apr

The **Olivier Awards 2023 with Mastercard** saw the highest audience share to date for the ceremony highlights on ITV, with viewing figures on the night at just over 1m. Whilst the viewership for other awards shows is dwindling, audience demand for the Olivier Awards is higher than ever.



- Key attendees from government included Lord Parkinson (Arts & Heritage Minister), Baroness Deborah Bull (Chair of Expert Advisory Panel for the Cultural Education Plan), Justine Simons (Deputy Mayor of London) and the Mayors of Camden and Westminster.
- 2.7k pieces of press coverage were generated across broadcast, print and digital (+214% YOY), including front page covers on 6 major national newspapers, interviews with hosts & nominees on major UK & US TV shows and full feature interview in YOU Magazine with Hannah Waddingham.
- Social media activity reached 29.3m accounts, engaged over 2.2m accounts and brought in 11.4m video views.
- Our partnership with TikTok resulted in their best performing red carpet live stream this year, bringing in 35.1k views. TikTok was one of seven new partnerships for 2023, alongside 15 returning sponsors.



May

Union negotiations with Equity concluded with 3-year deals.

A **Martyn's Law Member Forum** was held to provide an update on the proposed legislation with perspectives from lawyers, police and member insights.

A **Brits on Broadway** event was hosted in partnership with the British Consulate in New York, celebrating the British talent currently involved in productions on and off Broadway.

Our Co-CEOs attended the **Tony Awards**, cementing relationships with a wide variety of Broadway colleagues at The Broadway League, American Theatre Wing and Theatre Development Fund.

West End LIVE drew an estimated audience of 65-70k people and featured 6 touring shows alongside West End long-runners. We are grateful to the producers and theatre owners who came on board as sponsors this year for the first time: ATG, Delfont Mackintosh Theatres, Disney Theatrical Group, LW Theatres, Nimax Theatres, Theatre Royal Haymarket and Trafalgar Entertainment.



- Social media coverage reached 11.1m accounts with 120k of them engaging with our content.
- The hashtag was used over 2k times.
- The performances on YouTube have reached 1.8m views so far.



Jun (cont.)

The biggest **Theatre & Touring Summit** to date brought together over 400 members and industry leaders, with a keynote address from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lucy Frazer.



Jul

Our Co-CEOs attended **Downing Street's Celebration of British Theatre** with the National Theatre.

Aug

Over 60 West End shows participated in the return of our much-loved **Kids Week** campaign, with 54% of attendees being first-time Kids Week bookers.



- 199k tickets were sold, generating over £5.7m for the industry.
- Across our social channels, Kids Week reached 5.8m accounts.
- An out-of-home campaign included underground and roadside advertising supported by Global.



Aug (cont.)

Our **Audience Behaviour Toolkit** was launched, providing control measures and solutions to assist venue staff in managing difficult audience situations.

Our contribution to London's **Local Skills Improvement Plan** resulted in the theatre industry's skills shortages in operational, technical and craft disciplines being referenced in the final report to the Secretary of State for Education.

Sep

Our series of **HR Forums** designed specifically for Producers and General Managers concluded for the year with a forum on Managing Company Expectations. HR Forums were introduced this year to provide an open space for members to discuss good practice, share experiences and support each other.



Oct

Our Co-CEOs represented the theatre industry at the Conservative and Labour **Party Political Conferences** in Manchester and Liverpool respectively, alongside partners from elsewhere in the creative industries.

Oct
(cont.)

Our **Theatre for Every Child Campaign** was launched at an event on stage at the London Palladium, attended by ambassadors and supporters from across the political and theatre sectors. Across social media, the hashtag #TheatreForEveryChild has received over 800 uses so far and has had a potential reach of over 1.25m.



Nov

Official London Theatre's annual **New Year Sale** was launched in partnership with Mastercard. 50 productions are giving theatregoers the opportunity to see theatre for less in January & February 2024.

A **Dealing With Protestors Member Forum** was held to raise the profile of this ongoing challenge facing venue operators, with real life examples from affected theatres.

TheatreCraft careers fair took over the West End for the first time, with activities happening across seven venues attracting over 1.2k young people.



Our **Revenue Generation Conference** brought together over 40 members and member staff at Rose Street, facilitating insightful discussions around generating income for theatres.

Nov
(cont.)

Following continued campaigning, potential changes to legislation that could have had a detrimental effect on the value and effectiveness of **Theatre Tax Relief** were crucially amended in the Autumn Finance Bill published by HM Treasury.

The **Global Investment Summit** was attended by member Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber who used the opportunity to highlight the economic impact of the theatre industry. Our 'Greening Theatres' capital grant scheme proposal, in partnership with Theatres Trust, was featured in the event brochure to attract investment in the UK's creative industries.

Dec

Our annual **Training Programme** was rounded off with a sold-out course on Mental Health First Aid in the Performing Arts, qualifying 16 new MHFAiders® from organisations across the UK.

Negotiations on touring allowances for Opera & Ballet were settled, and Creatives agreements concluded.

A **Roundtable** for commercial theatre industry leaders was attended by the Shadow Chancellor and Shadow Culture Secretary, focusing on the economic value of the theatre sector and how an incoming Labour government could stimulate growth and investment.

Read on for more on what we've achieved this year...

OLIVIER AWARDS



Audience



Marketing highlights across the year include our biggest Mother's Day campaign to date, a partnership with HOLBA promoting TKTS deals to local workers, a Virgin Atlantic In-Flight Entertainment pre-roll campaign, a partnership with Transport for London and New Year Sale advertising across titles including The Times+, Time Out, Radio Times, Daily Telegraph and BBC Lifestyle.



Our B2C **Social Media** following has grown by over 151.5k followers this year, bringing our total to 1,215,004 (+15% YOY). Our reach has increased by 14% and we have seen 250k new users visit our website from our owned social channels alone.



We secured 3.7k pieces of **Press Coverage**. This includes key campaigns and events like the Olivier Awards, West End LIVE, Kids Week and Theatre for Every Child, our responses to prominent issues facing the sector, and dimming the lights of West End theatres in tribute to industry titans who have passed on.



Theatre Tokens expanded to over 4k retail outlets, with Asda, Co-op and Argos online new for 2023. As of November, Theatre Tokens are now available to purchase on Amazon, showcasing UK theatre on the world's largest online retailer.



Official London Theatre & TKTS exhibited growth this year with a 20% increase in ticket sales compared with both 2019 and 2022. We've run over 30 competitions on Official London Theatre, partnering with 16 local restaurants and hotels.

THEATRE FOR
EVERY CHILD

Our aim

Every child

SOCIETY
LONDON
THEATRE

Advocacy



Following the year's successes in maintaining and protecting the effectiveness of **Theatre Tax Relief**, we continue to work with HM Treasury and HMRC to improve legislation and provide clear guidance for members as we campaign to see the higher rate retained in perpetuity.



We are proud to have launched our national advocacy campaign, **Theatre for Every Child**, which aims to secure political commitment and funding to ensure that every child in the UK goes to the theatre by the time they leave secondary school.



We continue to build our **Evidence Centre** in partnership with Baker Richards, to gather robust data to help us campaign for the sector and raise the profile of theatre.



With members' support, we persuaded the Department for Education to include theatre in the latest round of **Skills Bootcamps** funding, which opened up £15m in funding for the creative sectors to train and upskill workers.



In partnership with the Theatres Trust, we developed a **Theatre Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme** to provide theatres with the capital needed to make immediate energy efficiency adaptations and adopt practices outlined in the Theatre Green Book.



Membership



We were involved in the development of the **Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA)**, a new organisation formed to prevent and tackle bullying and harassment in the theatre sector and across the wider creative industries.



Our **Training Programme** upskilled over 240 people in areas ranging from management skills and governance, to finance and disability equality.



In addition to work on union negotiations throughout the year, we have processed over 600 **Employment Relations** queries and digitised the UK Theatre Equity agreements, reformatting the PDF versions to make them more user-friendly.



We financially committed to the creation of a new **Theatre Green Book** Coordinator role, in conjunction with the Theatres Trust & ABTT, to deliver the next stage of its development.