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The Met

Annual Report 2023 / 2024



f metbury @ metbury

The Met Annual Report 2023/24

The Met demonstrated resilience in 2023/2024 and saw growth across our programme and audiences despite a challenging economic climate. We sadly saw the closure of our much-loved restaurant partner Automatic and had to quickly take ownership of managing our own bars. While a steep learning curve, this is now proving a valuable income stream for The Met. We also saw the return of Burrs Live, a 5-day programme of outdoor music events at Burrs Country Park which included two days of the much-loved Head for the Hills Festival.

Our pantomime and relationship with The Big Tiny entered its second year and saw a significant increase in audiences across the run. Aladdin welcomed an impressive 5654 excited panto goers across 34 performances.

Continued support from Bury Council, Arts Council England, and GMCA, with a fifth of income derived from public funding, remains invaluable. We extend gratitude to corporate and private funders whose contributions remain vital in supporting artists, our community and our talent development initiatives.

Our Values

To be **Inclusive** and to stay **Relevant**:
A 'safe space,' with strong values, a culture of transparency, collaboration, and openness to make space for everyone supporting the wellbeing of staff, artists, audiences, participants, and our local communities.

To be **Ambitious** and deliver **Quality** experiences:
We aim to inspire, aiming for excellence in everything we do from presentation to the overall experience and engagement of community. Aiding artists to discover and develop their talent, providing experiences and opportunities to learn, network and perform. We develop staff, partners, artists, and collaborators.

To embrace **Dynamism**:
Innovative, sustainable, quality approaches in all our work that is responsive to opportunity and collaboration.

To conduct our work in consideration of our **Environmental Responsibility**: Conducting our business practices and events sustainably, respecting the environment, reducing the environmental impact of The Met, our audiences, and associated partners.

What we have achieved

1540

participants took part in workshop activity at The Met across 414 individual workshops including 10 regular 'in-house' workshops

We generated

£635,607

of income through ticket sales

Sold a total of

38,794

tickets

We delivered

14

days of holiday club activity for children and young people, of which 8 of these were part of the Holiday Activity and Food programme plus an additional 5 community projects

Our Vision

The Met will be a nationally recognised cultural organisation, accessible to all, combining our international reach with our local economic and social impact to make Bury a cultural leader within Greater Manchester.

Our Mission

The Met inspires excellence in music and creativity, it is about quality, openness, and passion. We improve lives by enabling access to high quality stimulating performance and participation opportunities which celebrate diversity, wellbeing, and local pride.

Audiences

Despite a small fall in audiences due to the challenging economic climate, we still saw growth in both ticket income and yield throughout the year. Implementation of more strategic pricing and a higher ticket price for Burrs live contributed to this, allowing us to achieve targets and remain financially flexible. Our annual pantomime continues to grow and saw a significant increase in audiences this year. Additionally, first time family attendees of last year's pantomime are returning and trying other family product.

Our yearly Beer Festival was another success seeing a packed venue for 2 days, and our core music programme continues to attract a wide and diverse audience. We have implemented a flexible pricing model on some performances, alongside pay what you feel offers on some new programme, which has been successful in encouraging audiences to book and try something new, despite audiences being cautious with lesser-known artists.

Our digital engagement

Facebook followers:

13,000

X followers:

8251

Instagram followers:

3962

YouTube subscribers:

165

Annual website visits:

240,000

% of sales through the website:

75%



Audiences for 23/24

Total bookers (excl workshops):

12,717

Average number of tickets per booking:

2.65

Total tickets:

38,794

Total ticket income:

£635,607

First timers:

55.6%

Average Ticket Yield:

£17.98

“

“Fantastic Venue”

- Audience member

”

“

“Best night out in ages”

- Audience member

”

Environment and Sustainability

We have continued to implement our Environmental and Sustainability policy and make progress towards our ambition of net zero. Like everything in this world, The Met has a carbon footprint and creates a negative impact upon the planet. The arts industry is a resource intensive industry both in terms of energy but also resources and materials. We must change this and become more sustainable. Our 8 commitments which we will evaluate on a yearly basis are.

These Commitments are:

- 1

Improving and encouraging energy efficiency across our site
- 2

Commit to purchasing renewable energy
- 3

Reducing our consumption of resources
- 4

Embedding the waste hierarchy principle of prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery, disposal into policies
- 5

Monitoring our environmental impact through annual reporting of greenhouse gas emissions via Julie’s Bicycle and in our annual report
- 6

Encouraging staff, volunteers, and visitors to adopt sustainable modes of transportation
- 7

Encourage audiences to use public transport
- 8

Actively monitor our consumption and waste levels and set relevant reduction targets from our baseline



Some progress we have made:

- Installed solar panels on the roof in August 2023 to generate renewable energy
- Increased buildings energy certificate from D to C rating
- Energy usage has been decreased by installing switch off routines
- All heating and cooling is now controlled by timers
- All waste recycled where possible
- Single use plastic banned throughout the building

Our Energy Consumption:

23/24

Electric: 183,591 kWh
Gas: 229,625 kWh

24/25

Electric: 152,148 kWh
Gas: 177,070 kWh

In the last 12 months, our solar panels produced 7298 kWh of electricity which was contributed back to the national grid

Programme Highlights

The 23/24 season saw a full and varied programme across the year where our diversity audit made a real impact. Overall, we hosted 197 live performance events across the year.

This year saw our diversity audit implemented across the year in full. This allows us to measure our programme against our audience and talent development criteria, and further our commitment to support artists with protected characteristics. Our focus is on a transparent, welcoming and fair programme for artists and audiences, which has progressed significantly this year.

Highlights from this year include Gasper Nali, Malin Lewis, John Kelly, NQ Legacy Emerging Showcase Takeover and Yolanda Brown. Our digital programme – Front Row – successfully amplifies our work with emerging artists beyond the physical audiences within the building.

The programme audit for the year shows significant growth in our talent development objectives. We also hosted two creatives open mornings resulting in new co-curated project work as part of our core programme.

The programme continues to undergo a diversity audit each season, ensuring we're showcasing and supporting, underrepresented artists, local communities and audiences.

Our Pantomime Aladdin

Tickets Sold:

5654

First-time Met attendees:

52%

Engaging schools:

8

Some Highlights

Participants of our **No Barriers** programme, which supports learning disabled, neurodivergent and chronically ill young people, recorded a demo track in The Met's recording studio with the help of our Recording Studio Manager, for local emerging instrumentalist Corby Charlesworth.

We partnered with Bury Art Museum on **Rooms To Live**, which provided paid residency opportunities to band and musicians to create music.

Working with Bury Business Improvement District, we delivered Bury's very own **Lantern Parade** which took place on Sunday 26th November. This special event saw families and school children parading through the streets showcasing special lanterns they'd made in facilitated workshops at school and at The Met. The event ran from 3pm – 6pm and included live music, a fire display and street entertainment and saw their spectacular creations light up the town centre.



Education and Learning

Workshop Groups and Youth Engagement

The Met's youth programmes flourished with new productions from Bury Youth Theatre, Aiming High, and Met Express. Metro Jazz delivered termly showcases, while the popular Harmonica workshop expanded to three weekly sessions. The new Movers and Shakers program for ages 0-5 launched successfully in May 2023, funded by Bury Council Health Improvement Fund, quickly followed by Leaps and Bounds, our new youth dance provision.

Community Outreach

Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) workshops brought multi-artform experiences to community settings. Over 75 free pantomime tickets were provided to diverse young people, including those with SEND needs and from refugee families. Meet Me at The Met continued serving over-50s with varied artistic experiences from photography to pantomime.

Partnerships and Inclusion

Bury's Local Cultural Education Partnership strengthened its strategic focus. The Creative Case for Diversity Steering Group expanded its Hate Crime event series, reaching students from multiple high schools. Work experience opportunities were developed with local schools and colleges, including supported placements for SEND students.

Special Projects

The Youth Music-funded No Barriers programme began in 2023, supporting learning disabled, neurodivergent and chronically ill young people to access creative arts and music pathways. We hosted a range of careers and employability opportunities from young people across our partners and also delivered engagement activity as part of 2023's Burrs Live Festival.



Burrs Live

In September 2023 we delivered 5 days of outdoor music at Burrs Country Park. Burrs Live included tribute act The Bootleg Beatles, two days of Head for the Hills festival, an evening with Bury Hospice and The Untold Orchestra, and a wide offer of community and engagements events across the week.

The event covered three fields and featured two stages and featured acts such as The Lottery Winners, The Slow Readers Club, Huw and The Greater Good, The Deep Blue, Gentlemen of Few, The Selector, Seb Lowe, Dutch Uncles, Denova, Urban Theory and many, many more.

The week also hosted a comprehensive family programme including Animal themed yoga/dance, Arts and Crafts with Bury Art Museum, Bhangra Workshop with Sohan Kailey, Nature Crafts with Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Seed Planting with Incredible Edible Brandlesholme and The School of Curiosity Campfire Tales.

The festival also provided opportunities for local food vendors and offered a discount to local residents.

Despite a tough economic climate, Burrs Live saw strong audiences over the 5 days.

Audience breakdown is as follows:

The Bootleg Beatles:

470

Head for the Hills:

1472

Proms in the Park:

655

Tickets sold:

2597

Net income generated across the 5 days was:

£72,763

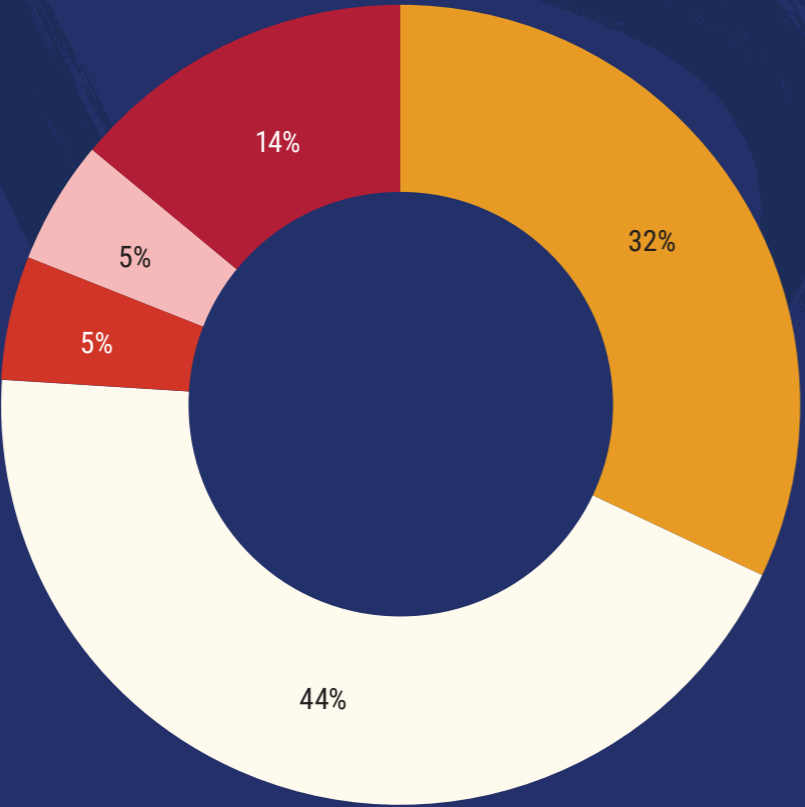
% of audiences that rated experience of Burrs Live as either Good or Very Good:

78%

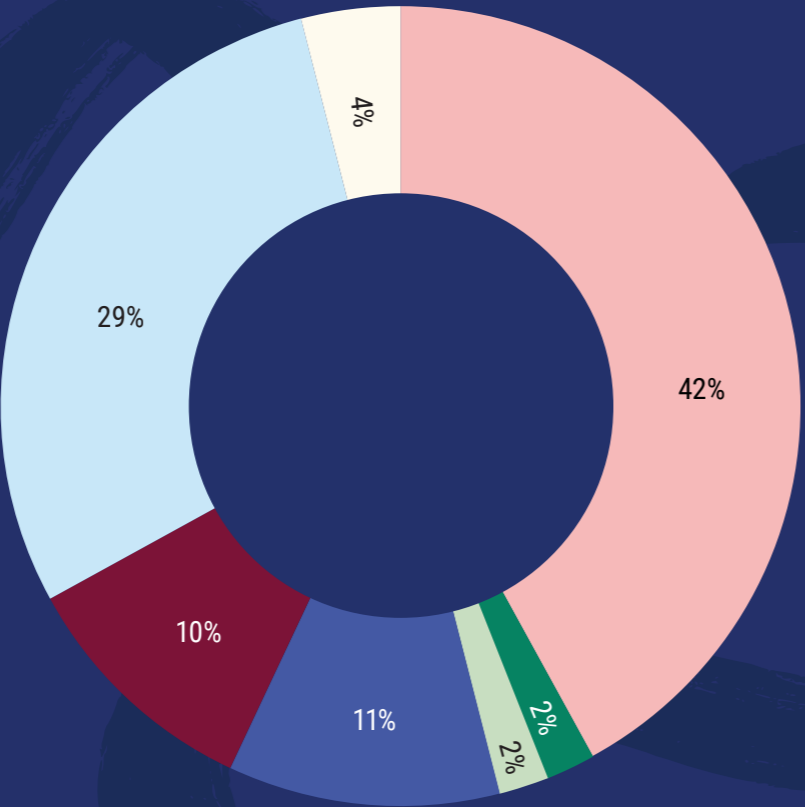


Statistics

Expenditure Sources

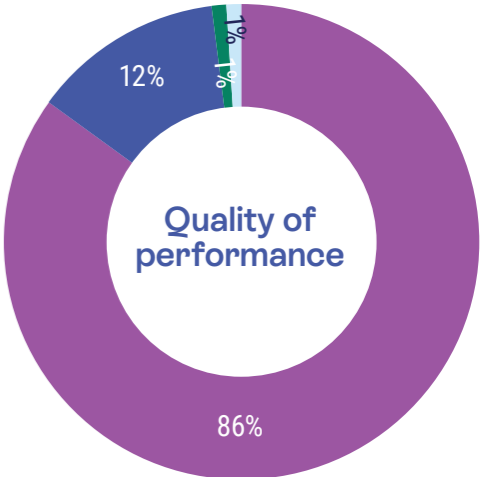
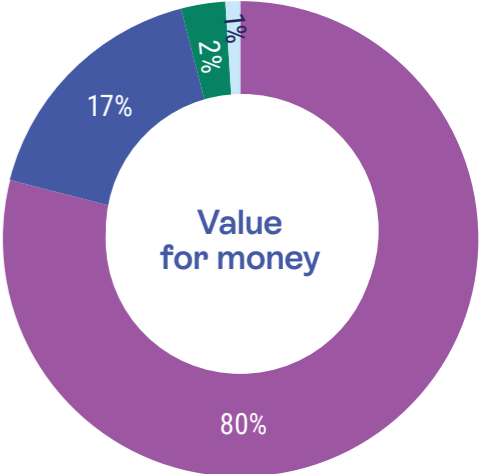
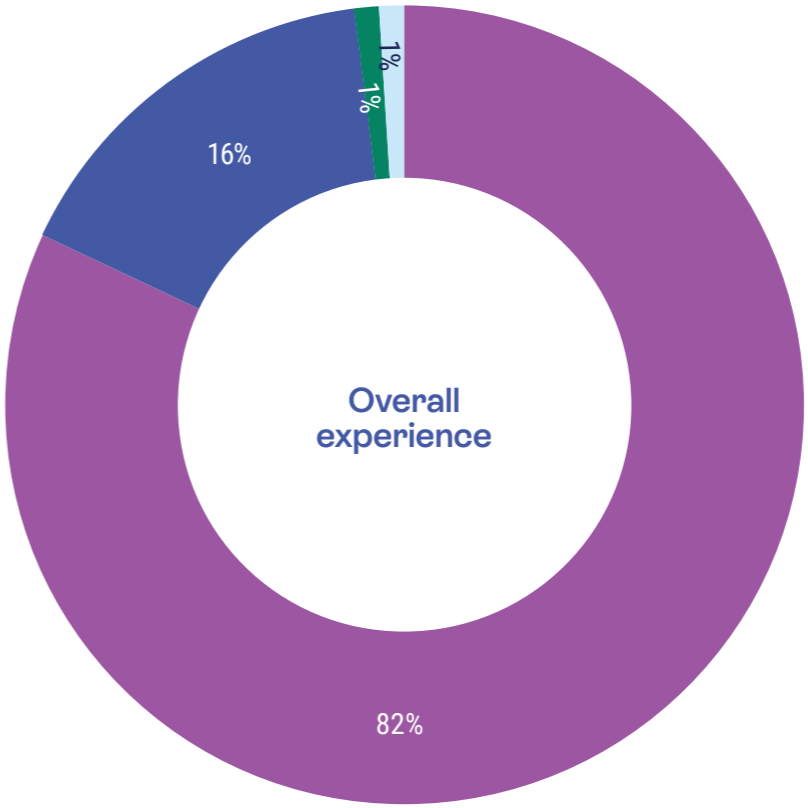


Income Sources

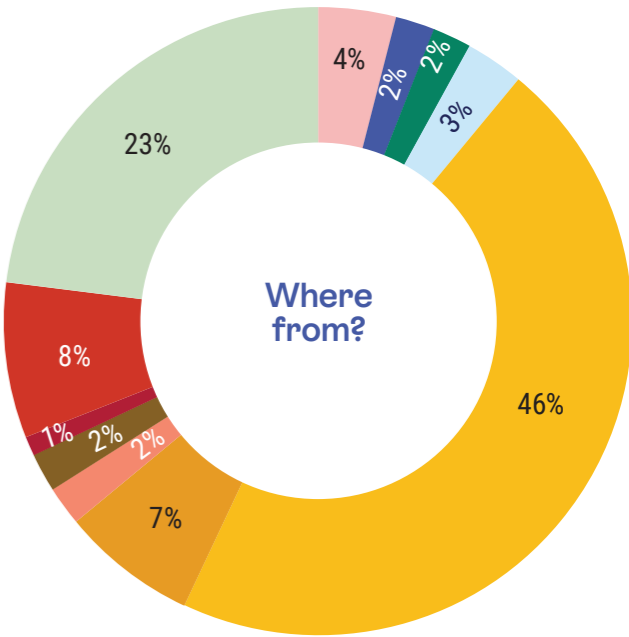
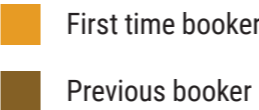
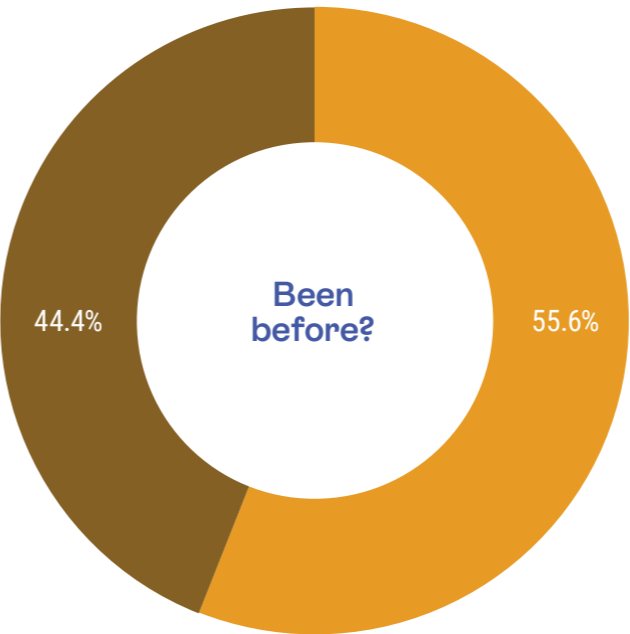


All percentages are approximate.
Source: Audience Finder Survey report,
The Met Box Office data.

Audience Experience



Who booked tickets?



With thanks to our key funders, Bury Council, Arts Council England and GMCA for their core funding support.

Major Donors:

Ian Warburton, Nick Halstead

Patrons:

Noreen Kershaw, Mark Potter, Ian Warburton, Sasha Lord, Tony Walsh, John Banbury, Craig Potter

Headline Members:

Jean Tarry, Julie Halliwell, Mr & Mrs Neil Kirby, Jim Hurst, Ken Punshon, Jacqueline Halstead, Nick Halstead, Yael Eardley-Dutton, Shefali Henry, Lawrence Johnson

Our Funders



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