

2019/20

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# The Met

## Annual Report 2019/20





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Despite the start of the global pandemic, our year to the end of March 2020 allowed us to programme a fantastic programme and welcome increased audiences into the venue and online.

## Our Vision

We believe that The Met should be a nationally recognised venue of arts and culture, accessible to all, combining international reach with local impact to contribute towards Bury's aspiration to be a cultural leader in the region.

## Our Mission

The Met exists to inspire excellence in music and creativity. We enhance the quality of living and working in Bury by engaging local communities with brilliant live experiences and creative opportunities. We prioritise enhancing the wellbeing of our diverse communities, and strive to strengthen their sense of social cohesion and local pride, with the overall aim of making Greater Manchester a better place to live.

## Our Values

### Diversity, Accessibility and Community

Consistent, shared awareness and understanding of what each of us do, what we do well and the difference we make.

Committed to creativity, relevance, inclusion, responsiveness, transparency, wellbeing and being a 'safe space' so people feel special and we can create, grow challenge audiences.

**Excellence:** Inspire people and aim for excellence in everything we do, from presentation to the overall experience and engagement of audiences.

**Resilience:** Consistent, collaborative, creative, sustainable, quality approaches (including digital) that practice what we preach.

**Artistic Development:** We want artists to discover and develop their talent, providing new experiences and opportunities to learn, network and perform.

**Respect:** Nurturing and developing staff, partners, artists and collaborators.

## What we have achieved

We attracted

# 34,167

audience members from across the country,  
4736 of who were new audiences.

# 251

individuals participated in our workshop  
programme over the year, attending an average  
of 26 sessions per person.

# 34

volunteers gave 396  
hours of volunteering  
time to the organisation.

# 96%

of audiences rated their  
experience at The Met as  
'good' or 'very good'.

We generated

# £506,524.00

of income through ticket sales.

## Audiences

2019/ 2020 was a record year for audience attendance. Sales tracked through the box office for events at The Met between April 2019 and March 2020 exceeded £500k for the first time. Recent years have seen The Met build loyalty and affection from returning audiences, and increased reach and profile with new audiences from local communities and growing profile through digital engagement.

## Programme Highlights

There was strong performance from events for family audiences, including 2019's Christmas show, The Big Snowy Christmas, which did well financially and brought new, first time family visitor to the venue. New provision including 'summer school' tasters for Bury Youth Theatre have helped make The Met a regular part of more families' lives.

The year witnessed an incredible touring programme, in addition to commissioned work and local partnerships. This was the result of a well networked team, our talent development programme and a strong understanding of audience development and marketing by the organisation.

First time visits to the venue included Grace Petrie, Duncan Chisholm, Sharon Shannon and Seckou Keita, Gryphon, Arcade, Joshua Burnside, Mama's Broke, Ye Vagabonds, Coig and Skippinish, Yorkstone, Thorne and Khan.

Arts Council England supported theatre performances including Fell, which deal with resilience and mental health in boys. The programme was culturally diverse and featured artists including: Lemn Sissay, Seckou Keita, The Immigrant, Joshua Burnside and Hot Club of Cowtown.

Other programme highlights include combined artforms including theatre and spoken word: Blue Rose Code, Lip Service, Andy Fairweather Low, Liam Frost, Tony Walsh, Stephen James Smith, Brace of Spades, 9Bach, Ben Cox Band and Pitman Poets.

In May we created an original show Victoria Wood: A Celebration to coincide with the statue unveiling in the town. Selling out in just 10 minutes, an extra date was added.

Showcasing performers from Syria, China, South Africa and the UK, Kaleidoscope – Music Memes saw four musicians from different cultures collaborate on a concert to physical and digital audience.

Big Whistle Festival enjoyed its 12th and final year in its current form, with a mix of concerts, learning opportunities and participatory sessions attracting international audiences and amateur musicians from throughout the UK.



Independent Venue Week in January 2020 saw two more sold out nights with Richard Hawley and Turin Brakes, an upgraded Della Mae show and early evening gigs from Chloe Foy and Anna McLuckie in The Box. The continuing relationship with Independent Venue Week has continued to diversify our programme and audiences, and raise our profile nationally.

Since December 2019, The Met has been an advocate and active partner in the Bury Town of Culture project.

## Outreach and support

Throughout the summer of 2019, we ran free family activity every Saturday. This was funded by Bury Council, through the Radcliffe Regeneration Strategy.

Our pop-up culture shop proved particularly successful in engaging with family audiences through play, and gathered detailed community feedback for Bury Council.

We presented outdoor play with professional theatre companies to animate and engage audiences in Radcliffe. The audience development in Radcliffe continued with ticketed events in the Market Hall, including cabaret nights and international touring artists.

Through various points of entry into the organisation we worked with a number of artists and producers to provide support to create work, industry progression and business development including:

Oliver Bishop - Yan Tan Tethera, storytelling

Jen Harris - Tickle Your Fancy cabaret, producer

Suzanna Law - Pop up Play Adventure, workshop/ play

Stephen Nuttall - Gang of Five, visual arts

Jennie Fairclough - WonderIF Theatre, producer

## Volunteering

Volunteers continue to be an integral part of the organisation and crucial to our success. Despite there being no Head for the Hills festival in this year, 34 volunteers helped us to run events and gave 396 hours to the organisation.







## Accessibility

At the start of 2019/20, we were awarded Silver by Attitude is Everything, the UK's leading organisation to improve access to live music for deaf and disabled audiences.

In 2019/20, our workshops focused on supporting segments of our community in need, including children with autism and adults with disabilities. We aim to promote understanding of marginalised groups, and work hard to integrate these groups into our organisation.

## Workshops

**Met Express** is a workshop for adults with disabilities, focussing on developing key skills for life outside of the group. In 2019 we worked with Proud and Loud, a wider network of disability artists, to develop workshops for adults with disabilities to become artists in their own right.

**Aiming High** is funded by Children in Need, and helps children with autism to develop skills for life. Older members of the group were given additional personal development opportunities and trained as mentors, helping to lead the workshops.

**Engage2stage** is a multi-generational group of adults with visual impairments, who work on drama shows to present to live audiences. This group ran a training session for Met staff focussing on working with VI audiences.

The group were shortlisted for an RNIB award for their work with The Met, and the Chair of Bury Blind Society now sits on our board.

**Uniquely Us** is a group for women over 18 with autism. The group meets weekly and works to build confidence.

**Alfa Education** run a number of workshops, including two choirs and a ukulele group. They perform to a high standard, and tour on a regular basis.

The Met runs three music workshops. They meet weekly to learn harmonica, guitar and rehearse as jazz band Metrojazz. All groups focus on developing talent, increasing confidence and encouraging team work.

We also ran training workshop on Pro Tools three times a year from Edwin Street Creative Hub, developing production and recording skills for all ages.

93%

of members say that they felt they had learnt something new during their latest term at Aiming High.

When asked how much participants enjoyed coming to Aiming High, 100% responded either 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5.

100%

of participant in Aiming High felt confident in their sessions.



## Case Study

### Keiren, Aiming High

Keiren (not real name) has attended Aiming High for a few years. This time last year, after the Christmas show, we asked him to move up to the Seniors group, but we worried that he might not be ready.

He has always struggled to focus on the task in hand, and wants to chat about what's on his mind. When he moved up, he was unable to perform in a scene without one-to-one help and support. He needed reminding about what we were doing and he didn't have the patience to rehearse for very long. He also needed to be reminded of the rules around personal space on a regular basis.

When Keiren moved up to the Seniors group he was slightly unsettled, but then started to relax. He adapted to working with the older members in the Seniors and was able to take part in the show. Keiren did have support in the July show, but managed with less in the Christmas show.

The challenge of being in an older group has been great for him, and he has learnt new skills by watching and following

other members of the group. When activities have been explained to the group, Keiren has understood the task and done a good job. Although we expected him to struggle with some aspects of the Seniors group and not fully understand the task without further help and support, he has adapted extremely well.

Keiren now fits into the older group well and when prompted, will deliver his lines, and carry out the actions for his part of the show, without extra support. This has been a big change and improvement for him. His communication skills have improved greatly and we're impressed with the confidence and independence that he's developed.

He has made small, steady improvements over the years, but this year his improvements have been much greater. We are thrilled at this and will encourage him to keep developing.



## Recording and digital projects

Edwin Street Recording Studio delivered a range of work across the year, including:

- In partnership with Chant Productions and Calderdale Trust - Panic At Johns Smith's Disco. A project getting school children singing a Medley at John Smith Stadium for Huddersfield Giants VS Wigan Warriors.
- Arranged, produced and recorded the music for choirs on location.
- With Chant Productions - Liverpool Vs Man City, Community Shield, Wembley Stadium. Arranged and produced versions of 'You'll Never Walk Alone' & 'Blue Moon' for on pitch, pre-match choirs.
- With Chant Productions - Liverpool Vs Chelsea, UEFA Super Cup Final, Vodafone park, Istanbul. Arranged, produced a version and recorded choir for 'Three Little Birds' for pre-match choirs.
- Edwin Street's highest charting success with Slow Readers Club 'The Joy of the Return' album, mixed at Edwin St, reaching no.9 in the album charts.
- Everything Everything - Mercury Prize and Ivor Novello nominated artist. 'Live With the No.6 Ensemble'. Mixed at Edwin St
- Jamie Lawson - No1, Gold selling, Ed Sheeran supporting artist. Recorded string quartet for Moving Images EP.
- Minds Eye - Recorded Audio Description for the Royal Albert Hall, 'The Gruffalo' and 'The Snail and the Whale'.
- Lucy Thomas – Recorded her encore album. Rosie has been coming to The Met since she was in early teens and now has millions of hits on YouTube.

In a first for The Met, Edwin Street worked collaboratively across the organisation to successfully record a Nell Brydon session. This approach continued into 2020 and has been especially helpful in defining our offer for musicians during Covid-19.

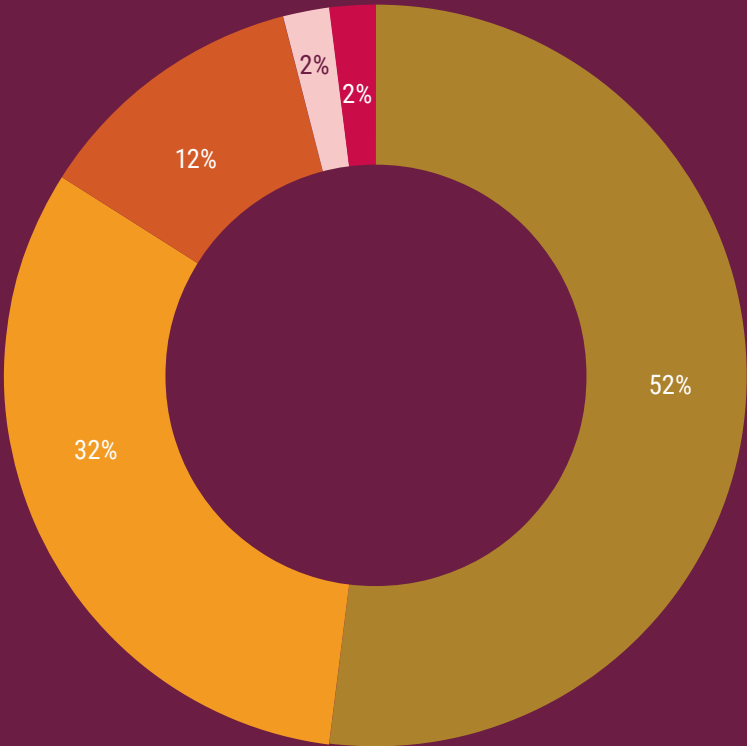




# The Met 2019/20 Statistics

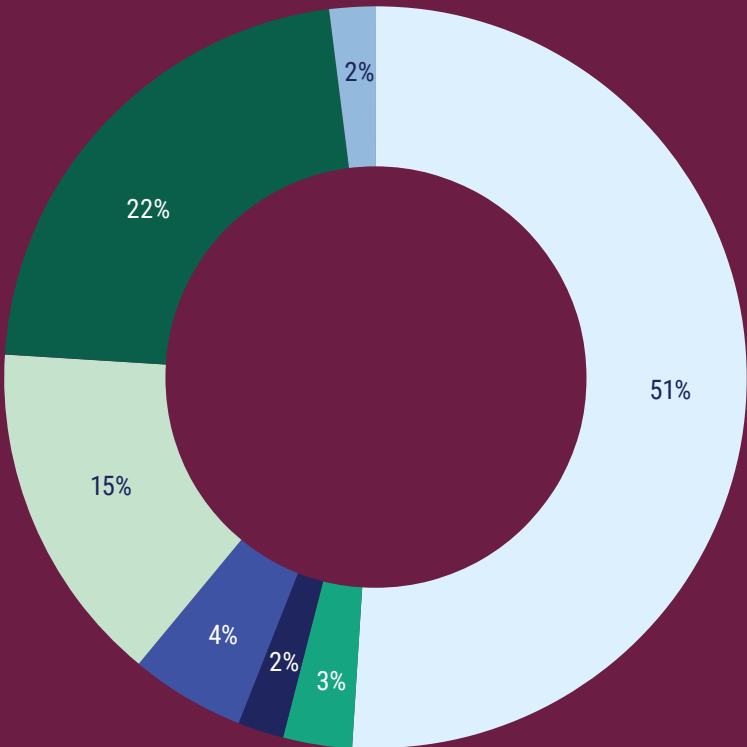
## Expenditure Sources

- Artist costs
- Staff costs
- Head for the Hills
- Outreach and education
- Refurbishment



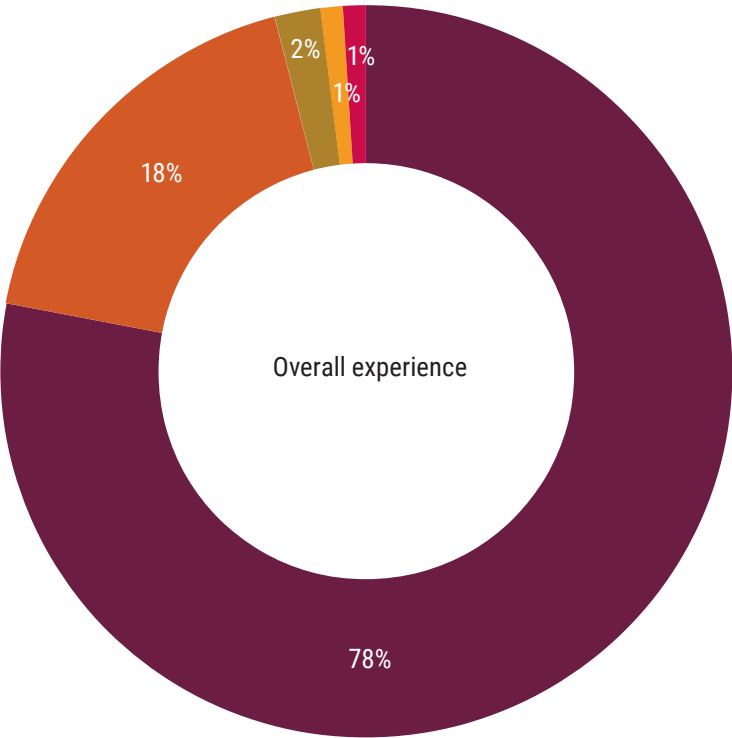
## Income Sources

- Ticket and income hires
- Donations
- Sponsorship
- Catering
- Outreach and education
- Grants
- Other

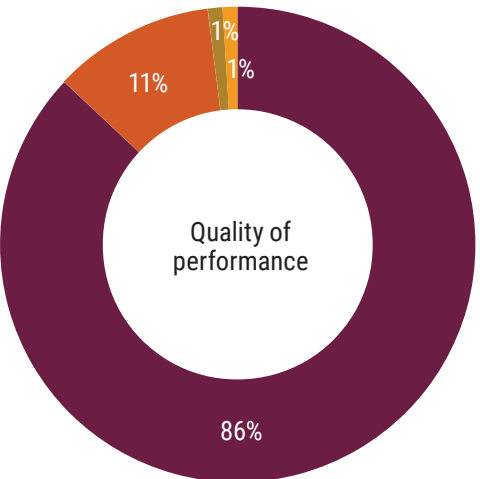
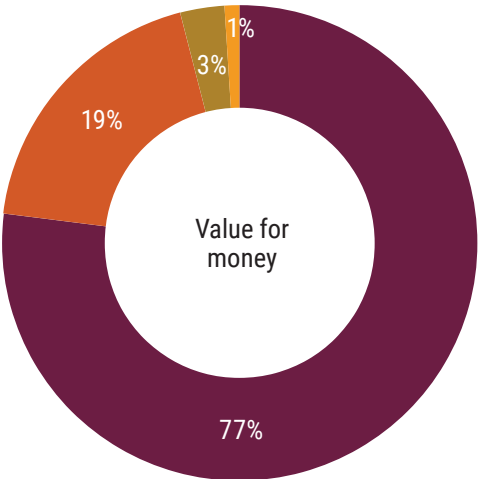


All percentages are approximate.  
Source: Audience Finder 2018/19 audience survey report, The Met box office data.  
Includes Head For the Hills bookers

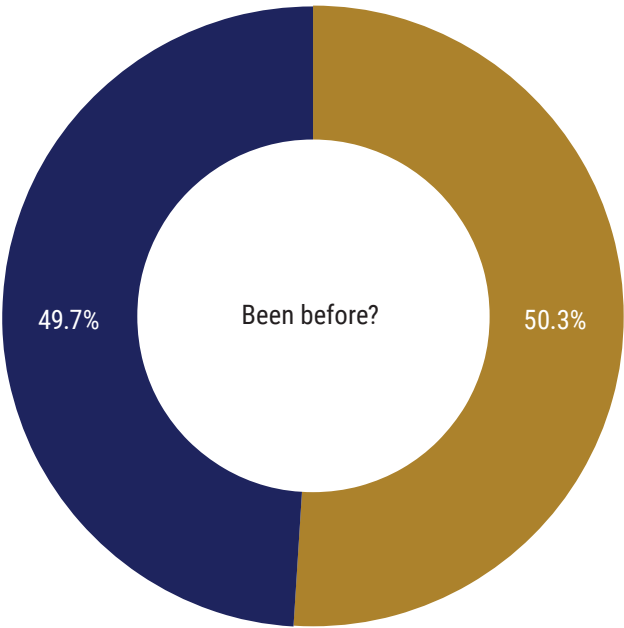
## Audience Experience



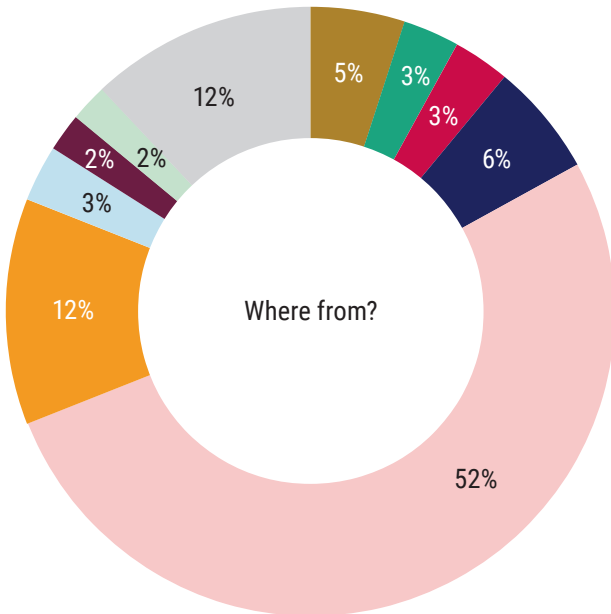
- Very Good
- Good
- Neither good nor poor
- Poor
- Very poor



## Who booked tickets?



- First time booker
- Previous booker



- Manchester
- Trafford
- Salford
- Stockport
- Bury
- Bolton
- Oldham
- Wigan
- Tameside
- Rochdale

With thanks to our key funders, Arts Council England and Bury Council for their core funding support. In 2019/20 we also welcomed support from Children in Need and The Oglesby Charitable Trust in support of our outreach and participation programmes.

Thanks to The Garfield Weston Foundation who granted funds to help us develop the overall organisation in this year, and also thanks to our Corporate Members and Patrons.

**Major Donors:** Nick Halstead, Ian Warburton, David Fox, Jean Tarry

**Patrons:** Noreen Kershaw, Mark Potter, Ian Warburton, Tony Walsh, John Banbury

#### Our Funders



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



#### Principal sponsor



#### Gold sponsors



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#### Bronze sponsors



#### Learning programme funders



#### Learning programme partners



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