

IMPACT 2025/26

Credit: Nicola Young Photography



Credit: Simon Vail Photography

THE
BELGRADE
THEATRE
COVENTRY

OUR IMPACT IN 2025/26



The **Belgrade Theatre** is more than a theatre. It is a **cultural landmark** that brings Coventry's communities together through storytelling, creativity and shared cultural experiences. As a civic theatre, we exist not only to present great work on our stages, but to create opportunities for people to **connect, learn, develop and contribute** to the cultural life of our city.

Throughout **2025/26**, we worked with **audiences, artists, participants, schools, community groups and partners** to create experiences that enriched lives, strengthened communities and opened new opportunities. Together, we supported wellbeing, nurtured creativity, developed talent and helped people see themselves reflected in the stories we share.

Despite ongoing cost-of-living pressures and a challenging environment for cultural organisations, the Belgrade **reached people across every Coventry electoral ward**, welcomed visitors from beyond the city and shared work made in Coventry with audiences across the UK and Ireland.



Together, this work created

130,113 opportunities

for people to watch, make, learn about and participate in theatre.

121,238

tickets issued across **434** performances and **134** productions and events.

1,300

audience members attended unticketed performances and events.

6,711

people participated in community and education activity.

864

artists and creatives engaged in talent development opportunities.

School Engagement

49

schools and educational settings worked with us.

Talent Development

83%

of talent development participants reported stronger skills, employability or interest in a creative career.

Supporting Coventry's Economy

£2.3 million

of additional spending was generated in the local economy.

Belgrade On Tour

26,480

people experienced Belgrade work on tour.

Accessibility

84

accessible performances were delivered.

Visitors

59%

of ticket buyers travelled from outside Coventry.

Voice & Agency

90%

of respondents on key programmes reported feeling they had a voice.

Social Value

£1.3 million

of estimated wellbeing value was generated through audience engagement.





Credit: Nicola Young Photography

The Belgrade brings people together through stories that entertain, challenge and inspire. Our programme combined **major touring productions, new writing, family work, home-produced productions and opportunities for local and emerging artists.**

Programming was led by our commitment to ensuring more people can see their lives, experiences and communities represented in the stories we tell. **25% of our programme explored themes relevant to children and young people**, while **24% reflected the experiences of Black, South Asian, Irish and working-class communities** connected to Coventry's rich and evolving identity.

Being a theatre for the whole city means working to remove barriers to participation. We delivered **relaxed, captioned, BSL-interpreted and BSL-integrated performances**, including **Well Done, Mummy Penguin**, where **captioning and British Sign Language** were fully embedded as part of the artistic experience.

Working with **Coventry City Council**, we will continue to **break down barriers to attendance, build lasting relationships and create clearer routes for engagement with arts and culture** for all.



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Throughout the year, thousands of people took part in drama, dance, music, film and performance. Working with children and young people, older adults, migrant communities, LGBTQ+ communities and many others, we created opportunities to develop skills, form friendships and strengthen belonging.

Our education work continued the Belgrade's long-standing commitment to learning through creativity. Working with **49 schools and educational settings**, including our Associate Schools programme, **Big School** and the **Royal Shakespeare Company's Associate Schools Network**, we helped young people explore their own creativity, build confidence and raise aspirations.

Nearly a quarter of participating schools were in the city's **highest-priority communities for deprivation**, while **39% were in areas of lower cultural engagement**. For many young people, these programmes provide a first meaningful experience of theatre, opening up new possibilities for learning, self-expression and creative careers.

PARTICIPATION & COMMUNITY



Credit: Nicola Young Photography

Creative participation also plays an important role in health and wellbeing. Activities such as our annual **Creative Wellbeing Day** brought people together through drama, dance, singing and sensory arts. Participants reported improved **wellbeing and stronger community connections**, highlighting the contribution the arts can make to **healthier and more connected communities.**

TALENT

DEVELOPMENT



The Belgrade remains a vital part of **Coventry's creative infrastructure**. Our role is to nurture talent, helping emerging creatives take the next steps in their careers.

Throughout 2025/26, we supported artists and creatives through training, mentoring, commissions, networking and professional development.

Programmes including **Ensemble, Media Academy, Springboard, Creative Associates** and our **Artist Network** enabled participants to strengthen their creative practice and build professional relationships.

Across our talent development programmes, **83% of participants** reported **increased skills, improved employability** or a greater interest in **pursuing a career in the arts**. From first experiences of theatre to professional opportunities, our ambition is to create clear pathways that enable artists and creatives to develop, make work and sustain careers in the West Midlands and beyond.

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The Belgrade plays an important role in Coventry's **cultural, social and economic life**. In 2025/26, visitors attending performances and events at the Belgrade generated an estimated **£2.3 million in additional spending across the local economy**. Restaurants, cafés, hotels, shops and transport providers benefited from this activity, supporting a vibrant city centre and night-time economy.

More than **26,000 people** experienced **Belgrade-produced work** outside the city, with productions including **Romeo and Juliet, Two Pints, Consumed, After Sunday** and **Poor**, reaching audiences in **London, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Guildford, Leeds** and **Dublin**.

These productions extended the reach of our work while showcasing Coventry's creativity, talent and ambition to audiences across the UK and Ireland.

Recognition through national awards and industry partnerships continued to highlight the quality of work created with and through the Belgrade. Our **Royal Television Society Midlands Diversity Champion Award** for **Turn+Draw** and **OffWestEnd Award** for **After Sunday** recognised **artistic excellence** and our commitment to supporting underrepresented voices and experiences.



SHOWCASING

COVENTRY

Credit: Nicola Young Photography



This year demonstrated what can happen when communities, artists, audiences and partners work together. It reinforced our belief that arts can help people connect, learn, imagine and shape their city.

While we are proud of what has been achieved, our work continues. We want to **deepen relationships with communities that have traditionally faced barriers to engaging with culture**, nurture local artists and creatives, and continue building a theatre that reflects the diversity and creativity of contemporary Coventry.

As we develop our co-creation model, we will place even greater emphasis on listening and collaboration. We want more people to help create the stories we tell, influence the work we make and feel a genuine sense of ownership over the Belgrade's future.

Alongside growing participation and artistic ambition, we remain focused on **strengthening financial resilience, developing partnerships** and ensuring the Belgrade continues to serve as a **creative and civic asset** for future generations.

Looking forward, we will continue to be guided by the same belief that has driven the Belgrade throughout its history: **theatre is at its most powerful when it is created with people, not simply for them.**

We are grateful for our funders, without whom none of this would be possible.



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