

SOUND SYMPHONY by Ellie Griffiths  
TOUR INFORMATION PACK



# Sound Symphony



**Touring Scotland 2<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

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**Touring England and Wales – 30<sup>th</sup> May – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

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## **A co-production between Independent Arts Projects and Oily Cart Theatre**

**Sound Symphony** is a new, highly interactive, sensory performance by Ellie Griffiths, made especially for autistic young people.

The performance is a playful journey through music, sound and silence. The show provides a sensory rich environment, where you feel music through your whole body. It celebrates making music your own way, weaving together live classical instruments, singing and a wide range of weird and wonderful sounds.

The performance is low capacity to be able to accommodate and engage young people who experience the most barriers to access, who may find even a relaxed performance artistically inaccessible.

### **Media response to SOUND SYMPHONY**

#### **★★★★ Mark Brown, The Herald on Sunday/The Sunday National**

"Sublime... Ellie Griffiths' entirely beautiful Sound Symphony... delightfully interactive... As beautifully conceived in its visual and tactile dimensions as in its music and sound, Sound Symphony is a brilliantly crafted, wonderfully benign, deeply moving piece of theatre." ([Read the full review](#))

#### **★★★★ Mary Brennan, The Herald**

"Hugely sophisticated... ..it's an inspirational piece of merry, joyous, interactive music-making that Ellie Griffiths and her team have fashioned with the spectrum of diverse sensory issues in mind..." ([Read the full review](#))

#### **92% Brian Tyrell, The Fountain**

"I was compelled to review this show because of my own diagnosis... At this performance, I felt welcomed and comfortable. There was no dread of doing the wrong thing or interrupting. In this space, it was okay to be autistic, and stim, to laugh and squeal with joy, to clap whenever you were pleased or just watch and smile... thinking back, I tear up over the air of inclusivity and receptiveness in the room." ([Read the full review](#))

#### **★★★★, Dominic Corr, The Skinny**

"Paying tribute to the sculpture of music, Sound Symphony has a keen interest in involving its audience in the sights, feels and environment of creating music through their own bodies, and the show accommodates a variety of senses for the whole audience." ([Read the full review](#))

#### **★★★★ Joyce McMillan, The Scotsman**

"A joyful and exquisite piece of work, beautifully designed by Katy Wilson and lit by Colin Grenfell, and composed and performed with terrific sensitivity and exuberance by three musician-theatre makers, Greg Sinclair, Sonia Allori and Shiori Usui." ([Read the full review](#))

## **Audience response to SOUND SYMPHONY**

"Seldom have I been so moved by a performance in a theatre let alone one for autistic young people. Tears trickled down my cheeks as among others, 3 of our students from Linn Moor Residential School sat bewitched and enthralled for 50 minutes, glued to their seats as they listened to/participated in a musical performance like no other I have ever witnessed. Wow, wow and triple wow!!! They absolutely loved what they were watching and involved in. An absolute must for anyone to enjoy let alone autistic young people."



"He absolutely loved it – perfect."

"The fact that the show began in a relaxed way, gradually drawing the audience into the theatre, helped to break down the barriers of formality normally associated with a theatre performance. The sensory aspects of the show were perfect for [my son], just the sort of thing that really captivate him. The actors were warm and engaging and clearly understood the needs and interests of their audience."

"We loved it and wanted to come again."

"I thought it was incredible. Every child engaged and participated in their own way. The children were encouraged to be themselves through the whole performance, it was very emotional at times."

"We would definitely recommend it to other autistic young people."

"(My son) really loved it...calling it a magic show...thanks so much to all involved"

"My daughter and I had the most fabulous afternoon at this show today. Conventional instruments played softly but close enough to feel the vibrations, singing echoing the vocalisations of the audience members, a wheelchair running over bubble wrap with satisfying little pops, an amazing shimmering, rattling spoon cape, crinkly paper to pull and rip and, my favourite, shoes attached to staplers which click, click, clicked around the stage. Add in some amazing surround sound effects and fans blowing hundreds of rose petals like tiny butterflies and it all adds up to an amazing, immersive piece of theatre."

Please note: Originally produced Sound Symphony is made for and with Autistic young people, a second version of Sound Symphony will be available for audiences with young people who experience the most barriers to access, from 2020.

## The creative idea

"The audience take their seats, the musicians start to play, the symphony begins..."

Bit by bit disruption creeps into this comically pompous concert hall. The world maestro musicians warm up their instruments, and the symphony begins. Bit by bit disruption creeps into this perfectly coiffured world... the wrong notes start to feel right, objects inject intriguing new sounds into the arrangement. As each musician is gradually tempted away from the score, they become explorers in a world of noises and surprising new ways of making music. By the end of the symphony it is not even clear who are the musicians and who are the audience. This show is totally responsive to the preferences and needs of each audience member. The performers balance highly choreographed content with improvised sequences so that no two performances are the same.

"This is a show for the sound seekers"

This idea originally came from Ellie's observations of how many autistic young people relate to sound. Even when music was underscoring the main action, she would repeatedly see many audience members fixated on the sound source, be it instrument, object or human. This was then further informed by the PhD of collaborator Joe Wright whose research focused on autism and sonic play. The piece is structured to gently tip the natural hierarchy so that the audience is given greater control of the content, becoming co-composers of their own distinct symphony, where every sound is celebrated.

Marketing & audience development: Independent Arts Projects works with Marketing and audience specialist Sally Wilson, who has completed research into the barriers to access for autistic young people attending live performance. This research was undertaken during the development period for Sound Symphony with families, venues, and charities and educators that focus on working with young people who experience the most barriers to access.

Each venue that books the performance will be provided with box office guidance, a sensory audit, front of house training and pre-show support materials. The company will also advise marketing departments on reaching this target audience to make sure all the spaces are filled.

Resources (from 2019 tour)

Sound Symphony - visual story: <https://bit.ly/2tYmMRO>

Venue support pack: <https://bit.ly/2vrKer2>

Sample Audience Pack: <https://bit.ly/2RCa2cU>

Shorter trailer (1m 14s): <https://vimeo.com/334939840>

Longer trailer (2m 32s): <https://vimeo.com/345311544>

## About the Team

**Ellie Griffiths** makes sensory shows for and with young people who experience the most barriers to access. She is passionate about creating work that is both high quality and fully accessible for families and young people who have additional support needs. In 2019 she became Artistic Director of Oily Cart Theatre, who tour across the UK and internationally with their fully accessible multi-sensory theatre shows.



(2019 team, 2022 credits to be announced soon)

Director and Lead Artist **Ellie Griffiths**

Performers/Composer **Sonia Allori, Greg Sinclair, & Shiori Usui**

Musical Director & Lead Composer **Greg Sinclair**

Designer **Katy Wilson**

Sound Designer **Matt Padden**

Lighting Designer **Colin Grenfell**

Movement Director **Natasha Gilmore**

Dramaturg **Naomi O Kelly**

Producer **Mhari Robinson of Independent Arts Projects**

More at: <http://www.soundsymphony.co.uk/team/>

Originally produced by Independent Arts Projects in association with Capital Theatres, Edinburgh with support from Creative Scotland and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

## **Venue requirements**

### Space

Suitable for: Studios. A black box set-up is required. Full overhead grid required.  
Minimum footprint (includes playing area & audience): 10m (W) x 10m (D) x 4m (H)

This show is designed to be performed on the flat floor audience seating is incorporated into the design to create a truly immersive experience, one where the audience can choose how they want to experience the show. There should be a quiet or ideally private anti-chamber just outside the performance space for the audience to use pre and post show or during as a quiet space.

Lighting: Full Black out required. The production tours with eight (8) small moving lights and requires an additional nine (9) wide angle profile spots, four (4) fresnels, and two (2) flood units. The show requires an ETC Ion (or similar ETC EOS Family) control console. The show requires approx. 16 dimmer channels, plus power for the touring moving lights.

Sound: N/A. The show is run from 4 performer-operated minirig Bluetooth speakers.

Running time: 45 minutes with no interval.

Scheduling: 1 day get-in (2 or 3 sessions) with performances on day 2.  
Access to venue required 90 minutes prior to each show for resetting.  
Shows from day 2 at 10.30am & 1.30pm (schools) or 11am & 2pm (public).

Staffing: 2 crew required for get-in, fit-up & load out.

Touring company on the road:

6 (3 Performers, 2 Technical, 1 Access) - 1 wheelchair user who uses hearing aids.

### Documentation

Full length video documentation: available on request

Full Technical Specification: available on request.

### Audience

Audience guidance: Autistic young people

Age recommendation: 8 and over

Maximum audience size: 8 plus family/carers (up to 2/3 per young person)

Access: Stage, back stage, front of house, dressing rooms and toilets must be accessible by wheelchair.

For more information and a full tech spec, please contact:

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