

### Latest news...

We held our AGM in September 2023, celebrating our first full year since being established. It was a great opportunity to look back at what we have achieved, and where we need to go in the future.

First and foremost we would like to send our **huge thanks** to all those that have supported us by becoming members, donating funds, giving up their time, and by supporting events with donations and/or by attending and buying tickets.

BLAST will continue in it's current structure going forward. Separate, but intrinsically linked to BIGLITTLE it is a membership based organisation, made up of a **board of trustees** who raise funds from external sources, and from a series of events open to the general public, alumni students and current BIGLITTLE students and their families. Under the umbrella of BLAST, are the Alumni Sub Committee and the Hospitality Sub Committee.

The **Alumni Sub Committee** maintains the alumni network and shares their successes, particularly to current students in order to inspire them in their future careers, and to encourage them to share their own stories when they leave BIGLITTLE. We are delighted that Michelle Guy, former Principal of BIGLITTLE is the Alumni Ambassador.

The **Hospitality Sub Committee** organises and provides support to events for both BLAST and BIGLITTLE Theatre School. It has a fantastic group of willing volunteers on the 'Hospitality Helper List', who give up their time to provide catering at events.

If you are interested in being involved in any elements of BLAST—the main committee or either of the sub-committees please don't hesitate to get in touch via [info@blast-artstrust.org](mailto:info@blast-artstrust.org) or speak to one of the trustees. Thank you.

### We are delighted to have supported two great causes last summer - thanks to all of our supporters!

As you will know from our last newsletter, the BLAST trustees voted to fund a live orchestra, made up of top professional musicians, to support the BIGLITTLE Youth Theatre students performing in Broadway Showtunes 2023. And what a show it was! Congratulations to the cast and the crew for such a spectacular show, and a particular thank you to the musicians that travelled from near and far who filled the auditorium with spectacular music!



**BROADWAY**  
Showtunes

The trust also offered local schools the opportunity to nominate pupils who have a love of performing, but cannot access performing arts training outside of school to be sponsored onto a **BIGLITTLE summer school**.

It was fabulous to watch two students perform in the junior summer school, Frozen Jr, and two more in the senior summer school production of 9 to 5. They all showed incredible talent and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



## Celebrating our Alumni...

We are so blessed that the BIGLITTLE Alumni keep in touch and share their onward journeys. Since our last newsletter we have shared so many great news stories on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) including:

**Weddings:** *Sophie Jenner, Jodie Doddington, Sarah Davis, Lucy Adeney, David Cox-Kelly, Hollie Crisp*

**Engagements:** *James Gibbs, Taylor Cane-Richardson*

**Graduations from Theatre School:** *Katherine Douglas, Harrison MacDonald Taylor*

**Book Releases:** *David Fenne*

**Single / Album releases and live performances:** *Mathilda Mae, Reid Hillwood, David Baker, Dylan Ross* (Jazz Collective)

**Castings in shows:** *Dylan Mason* in The Sound of Music, *Charlotte Clitherow* in My Fair Lady and Fury and Elysium, *Piers Bate* in Rebecca, *Georgie Hendry* in Elephant and Piggies, *Kat Douglas* and *Harrison Macdonald-Taylor* in Soma, *Tom Saunders* in Old Bridge, *Dan Forrester* in Ain't too Proud, *Dan Partridge* in Grease and Evita, *David Fenne* in Locomotive for Murder, *Alida Scheepers* in multiple productions with Cape Town Opera including Cinderella, *Alfie Doohan* in Stranger Sings, *Evie James* in Miss Poppywells Garden, *Ed Beeston* in Oliver Twist, *Mark O'Keeffe* as Noblin at the Edinburgh Fringe, *Nick Hayes* in Groundhog Day, *James Hilton-Foster* in Madagascar, *Connor Keetley* in Madagascar, *Inez Budd* in Six, *Beth Dawson* in Godspell, *Natasha Barnes* in Billie the Kid, *Mathilda Mae* in Roles We Will Never Play, *Georgia Silver* in The House of Bernarda Alba, *Anna Yeadon* in Cinderella and *Katherine Douglas* in Exorcist (Fear Scare attraction).

**Castings in Films:** *Richard Womersley* in Barbie.

**New Job Roles:** *Ella Thomas* as an agents assistant.

**Support Communities:** *Helena Yasmin* founder of Healing with Artists.

**Award Nominations:** *Karl Harry Winson* nominated for 'Best Worldwide Instructor' in the Line Dancing Association Worldwide Hall of Fame 2023.

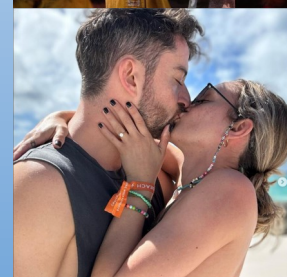
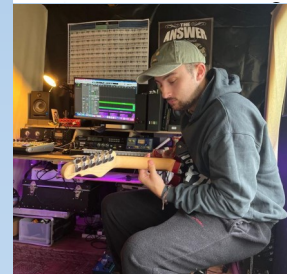
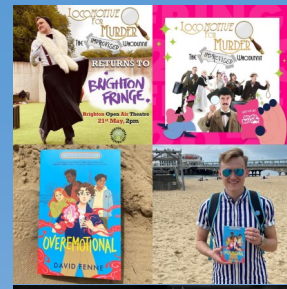
**Starting drama school training:** *Theo Bracey, Eloise Briscoe, Rebecca Caslake, Ruby Douglass, Cara Jenkins, Tom Jocham, Jack Kiteley, Piers Middleton, Kirstie Morgan, Millie Nicholson, Lucy Pinder, Sam Trotman, Megan Shaw, Jacob Skipper.*

**Returning to teach current students:** *Ryan Gover, Nick Hayes, Natasha Barnes.*

In May, we saw BIGLITTLE students on stage along side Alumni students and BIGLITTLE staff in 'Shrek the Musical' at the Regent Centre in Christchurch. A couple of weeks ago we saw BIGLITTLE Alumni *Nick Hayes, Natasha Barnes, Kat Douglas* and *Harrison Macdonald – Taylor* performing alongside West End Stars in the fabulous *West End and Broadway Songbook* evening at the Regent Centre in Christchurch.

Improving Comms....a few of our member have told us that they do not partake in Social Media and have been missing all this wonderful news that we have been sharing. We are working on a way to resolve this, and currently are looking at putting all posts onto our 'News pages' on our website.

We would love to hear from all of our Alumni including those pursuing careers outside of performing arts....please keep sharing all of your



## Bringing the BIGLITTLE family back together...

July 2023 saw the first BIGLITTLE Alumni reunion hosted at the Marsham Court Hotel in Bournemouth, with the amazing Alumni Ambassador Michelle Guy there to welcome past students.

Thank you to BIGLITTLE Alumni James Dixon-Box's team for looking after us so well, and for hosting a Broadway Showtunes 2023 'After Party' where the cast, crew and their families met the alumni.

It truly was a magnificent evening, and the date for next years has already been set as 12 Jul 24!

#inspiringthenextgenerationatbiglittle



## The Hospitality Crew

Nearly every month has been an event for the hospitality crew to get together and have a bit of fun whilst providing refreshments.

**BLAST events** have included the 2022 Christmas Party, the Summer Soiree, the BIGLITTLE Alumni Reunion, Broadway Showtunes 2023 Premier Night, and various coffee mornings and cake sales.

**BIGLITTLE events** have included the PDP show 'A Chorus Line', Artsfest 2023 and three summer schools, Bring It On, Frozen Jr and 9-to-5.

The wonderful bars, food and drink do not 'just happen', and certainly this year so many people have contributed by purchasing and transporting supplies, preparing food, setting up tables and decorations, being Front of House with a friendly smile and of course doing the washing up and clearing up (the worst bit!).

Thank you to all of those involved (too many to mention) but please know that every contribution, however big or small is very much appreciated. Without you all we could not have raised the wonderful amount that we did to support such important projects.



## What next?

Going forward, we are looking forward to a full set of events planned, and are applying to become a charity which will mean that we can benefit from gift aid. We hope that our members will all renew their subscriptions and continue to benefit from 'membership perks'.

We move into 2023/2024 with funds available to support some more worthwhile projects, and hope to match our 2022-2023 fundraising efforts, or indeed exceed them during the forthcoming year.

**Thank you all for your ongoing support.**

**From Debs, James, Jen, Jane and Lottie - your BLAST Trustees.**