

Make a Song & Dance About It



The ONS reports 50% of children develop Mental health related issues by age 14, proving societies need for earlier prevention and intervention..

Expressing yourself through artistic and creative activities is like a prescription for your mental health. Turning to creativity has been proven in extensive research to relieve both stress and anxiety. Creativity also helps lessen the shame, anger, and depression felt by those who have experienced trauma

"By exploring imagination and creativity through art, storytelling, interactive games, music, and all kinds of play, children learn lifelong skills... how to express themselves, communicate with others, problem solve, develop self-confidence, appreciate diverse ideas and cultures, and find things that make them feel fulfilled and happy."

Make a song & dance about it! (MASADAI!) is a unique series of workshops using music and movement to encourage creativity in all ages and abilities.

We have designed time-flexible creative workshops involving the following:

- Creative writing: by drawing on personal experiences, participants will explore their chosen themes through fun and engaging writing tasks for all levels and abilities. The group will be introduced to some of the company's methods of devising scripts for performance.**
- Voice and sound: Using the work from the creative writing session, participants will be led through a playful exploration of making sound and music from their words by operatic soprano Donna Lennard. With the help of sound equipment such as a loop station, the group will be guided in making songs and soundscapes that reflect their thoughts and feelings.**
- Movement and dance: All movement sessions begin with a fun, gentle warm-up that uses visual, somatic and creative image-based movement accessible to all levels of ability. Using both the creative writing and music created through earlier sessions, participants will be led by dancer Andy Gardiner to explore movement in relation to their themes**
- Acting: The group will be led through a variety of exercises focusing on group cohesion, confidence-building, vocal delivery and delivering text, and finding and displaying emotion to enable them to learn and recite text in an imagined scenario. The texts written in the Creative Writing session will form the basis of such scenarios and give the participants another creative avenue of expression.**

Participants will be encouraged to focus on how to combine the skills they have learned to create a short sharing of work they've made.

MASADAI! has been particularly effective for those from backgrounds who are less likely to engage in the arts unless specifically targeted, hence missing out on the health and well-being benefits of participation. MASADAI! will offer a framework for overcoming inequalities and play a significant role in supporting young people by providing meaningful and effective ways to participate.

We are passionate about creating memorable experiences for those who engage with our work, thus leaving a lasting impact. Aside from this, we aim to support participants to develop their own creativity, to learn together and build confidence:

- **By working with new people in creative ways**
- **By establishing trust and friendship with fellow participants**
- **By coming together to form a supportive framework that promotes respect and expression**
- **By building on existing skills and interests**



Watch a short documentary created by Matt Jamie for SoS using the Dance City Early-Stage Commission about MASADAI! workshop pilot - <https://vimeo.com/689614054>

Selected quotes:

Carolyn George: “Well, it’s been really wonderful. I love the sense of humour of the company, and one thing that’s very clear is we’re so welcome. Even though we’re not professional dancers, we’re seen as an integral part of the cast and not just wallpaper.”

Liz Highmore: “Being able to do your own creativity and own choreography rather than being told what to do has been very refreshing... It’s given me a lot more confidence.”

David Klotz: “We’ve always been supportive and we’ve always worked together. It’s only when you’ve finished and you look back, in a way, what you’ve achieved and how much you’ve enjoyed it. This is the second time I’ve worked with Society of Strays and they’ve both been hilarious but at the same time challenging and fun... I’d definitely recommend it to people. I’d say the reason why is ...life’s too short - until you’ve tried it you really don’t know what you’re missing.”