

Post-pandemic turbulence can't stop Pleasance from presenting exciting Fringe programme

Thanks to the unwavering support of its audiences, the Pleasance Theatre Trust returned to its Edinburgh home this summer, presenting a defiant programme of exciting newcomers, thought-provoking artists and much-loved Fringe stalwarts.

With 662 performances of 82 shows in four live venues and online, the programme was enjoyed by just over 36,000 ticket holders. This is in comparison to 5,534 performances of 277 productions in 2019 when Pleasance welcomed over 560,000 festival goers through its doors.

Whilst 2021's festival has included sell-out runs and acclaimed socially distanced performances, the total box office for this year's festival will represent just 6.5% of the Pleasance's 2019 tickets and revenue.



Notwithstanding a smaller festival, the Pleasance's commitment to supporting innovative emerging artists through their development schemes is paramount. £20,000 was invested in Screen 9, recipient of Pleasance's Charlie Hartill Theatre Reserve, and 'Patricia Gets Ready (for a date with the man that used to hit her)' – the inaugural recipient of the

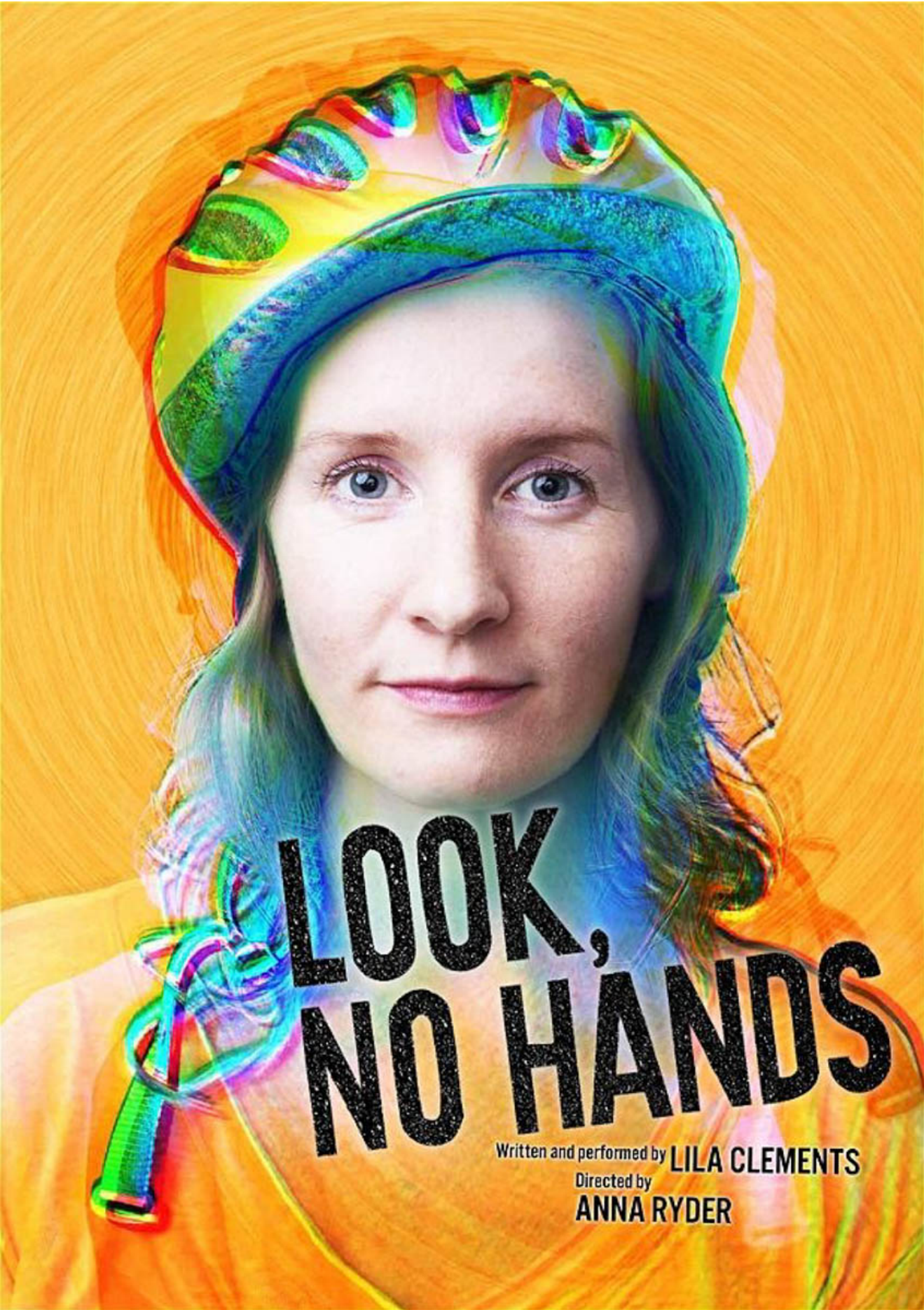
Charlie Hartill Development Fund for Artists of Colour.

Although the Pleasance was unable to host its family-friendly hub the Kidzone, the venue still funded experiences for young festival-goers with over £4,500 of support provided to children's shows 'Roald Dahl's The Twits', 'Meet Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking' and 'Community Clay Time'.

Partnerships are always key to the Pleasance's presence in Edinburgh, but particularly in this challenging year. The iconic Pleasance Courtyard was able to reopen with the support of the Edinburgh University Students' Association, whilst vital funding from the Scottish Government enabled its new outdoor performance space to come to life.

Work also continued with the Edinburgh International Conference Centre which saw one of the city's largest performance hubs run side-by-side with its biggest vaccination centre.

The Pleasance's online programme was supported through the launch of the Pleasance Player with online platform LIVR and an exciting new collaboration with the Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) at Falmouth University, saw nine new shows broadcast live online from Cornwall as part of The Edinburgh Fringe Digital Showcase.

A woman with light-colored hair and eyes is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored climbing helmet. A colorful climbing rope is draped over her shoulder. The background is a warm, orange-toned circular pattern.

LOOK, NO HANDS

Written and performed by **LILA CLEMENTS**

Directed by
ANNA RYDER







And that wasn't all – 'Eugene' was supported by John Ellerman Foundation, along with four other productions in the London and online season which also played online. The William Syson Foundation supported new Scottish artists, including 'LANDING' and 'Look, No Hands'.

Anthony Alderson, Director of the Pleasance, said, "We couldn't have mounted any festival this year without the hundreds of people who supported our Crowdfunder in 2020 – we are forever grateful to them. Only eight weeks before the festival was due to start did we get the go ahead from the Scottish Government and some extremely welcome support from Event Scotland, which enabled us to create a distanced, safe and covered outdoor space at the Pleasance Courtyard.

"In many ways it has felt a little like festivals of old, with a small number of venues and a special programme of handpicked shows. With a desire to present as much of a festival as we could, we also took our Fringe programme on tour with a full line-up of shows at the Pleasance in London and a sizable number online, including nine live streamed productions in partnership with Falmouth University. The programme may be smaller than ever, but its heart and soul is as gigantic as

ever.”

The Pleasance continued to work in partnership with HIV and Hepatitis C charity Waverley Care for the 29th year to raise awareness and funds for their vital services, which have been severely affected during the pandemic. Approximately £3,000 has been raised for this important charity, with the Pleasance donating 100% of its share of ticket revenue from its online programme alongside proceeds from the one-off spectacular Tartan Ribbon Comedy Benefit and text donations.



With festival donations having topped £65,000 at the 2019 Fringe, the Pleasance continue to encourage audiences to show their support beyond August.

The Pleasance’s operation was only made possible through the efforts of its dedicated festival team, which was scaled back from some 220 people in 2019 to just 28. Normally the Pleasance would complete a Fringe with a dazzling trophy cabinet but with few of those taking place this year, the Pleasance still celebrates the achievements of artists and venues at the 2021 festival.

The Pleasance continues to rebuild from the devastating effects of the pandemic and work towards the return of a sustainable Fringe in 2022.