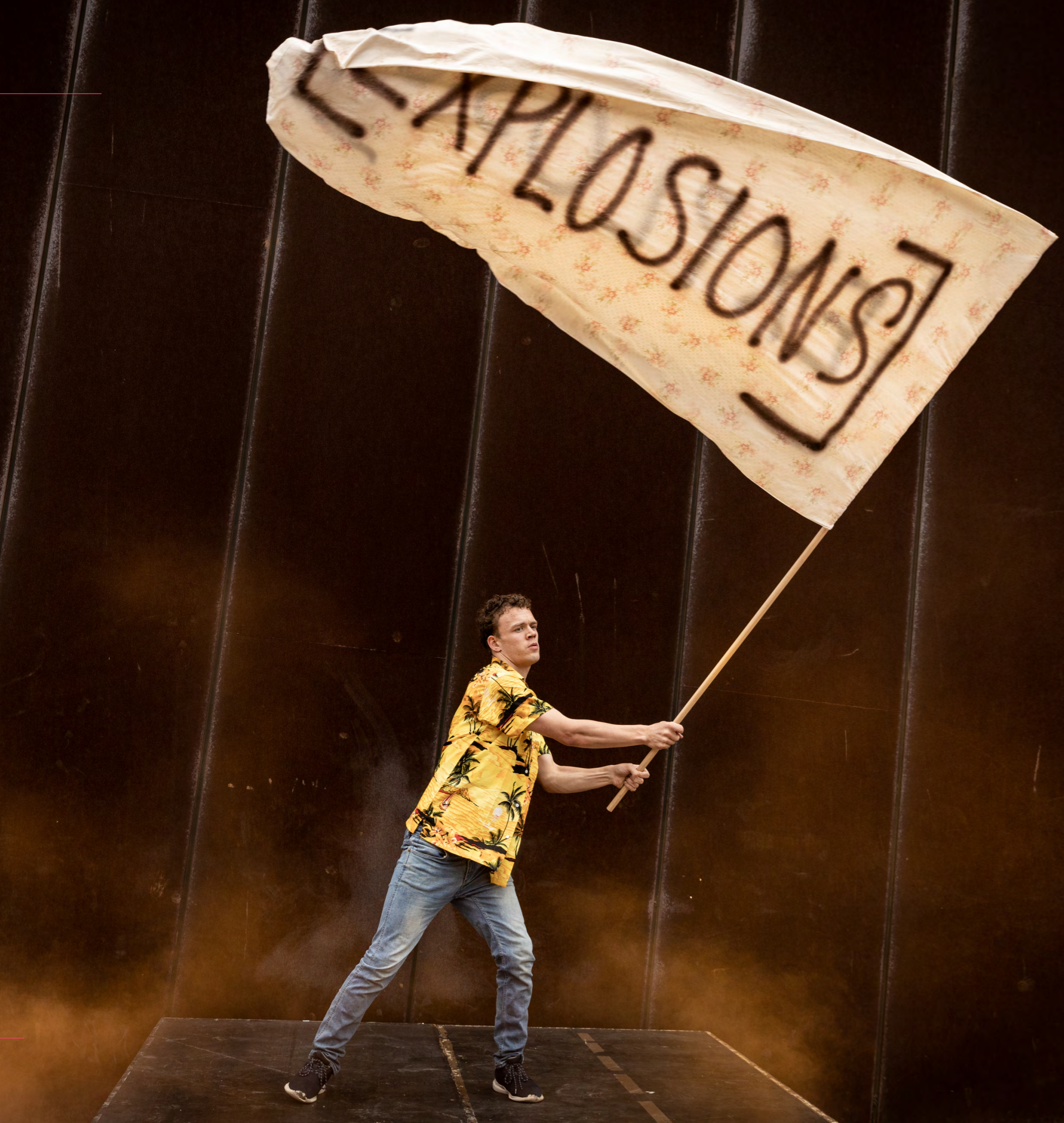


'22

ST MARTINS YOUTH

ARTS CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT



ST MARTINS

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St Martins acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we work and live, the Bunurong Peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging as well as all First Nations Peoples of Australia and Torres Strait Islands.

We acknowledge that Sovereignty was never ceded and stand in solidarity with the First Peoples.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



ST MARTINS

COMPANY VISION

Established in 1980, our mission is to invest in artists, new ideas and beautiful artistic outcomes created in collaboration with children, through the presentation of a rich and diverse program of performance works, the delivery of inclusive workshops for young people, and by providing an exciting place to explore creativity for young people, presenters and audiences.

We offer the following programs and services:

- Creative Program: Making exceptional artworks in a collaboration between young people and professional artists for adult and intergenerational audiences.
- Workshops Program: Providing inspirational creative workshops for 5–18-year-old young people across multiple sites in Melbourne that offer them a safe, inclusive place from which to imagine, grow, make art, and perform.
- Participation and Performance Hub: Operating an economically sustainable hub for independent arts and community with our gathering, rehearsal and performance spaces.

We strive to be inclusive, civically minded and socially engaged, and to embody these tenets through all the actions of our company.

Across the entire organisation we are driven by the values of:

- Children's Agency: Children are equal owners of the creative process and are recognised as artists in their own right.
- Questioning of Hierarchies: Our work examines power structures and turns them on their head.
- Inquiry: Our work exposes and challenges social assumptions, hypocrisies, taboos and inequalities.
- Quality: Our work is of world class standard and professionalism.



ARTISTIC VISION

St Martins is one of Australia's leading companies working with young people, producing bold and disruptive performances made with children and teenagers for intergenerational audiences. St Martins exists as a beacon for children and teenagers via our workshops which nurture young artists and via our artworks which foreground young people as cultural agents of change, hope and action. Our rich and diverse program is universal in scope and invests in local stories and talent, all the while ensuring that children are equal owners of the creative process and are recognised as artists in their own right.

Over the past eight years, St Martins has implemented an ambitious artistic production strategy producing two or more new works per year that have achieved public and critical acclaim, garnering a number of significant industry awards. Within a disrupted and uncertain world, as we lean into our artistry and bravery, we are mindful of sustainability within our small yet mighty team. While we are yet to secure federal government support for our core operations, we choose to pull back on the quantity of our productions and public presentations while maintaining and even raising the bar on the quality of what we present.

St Martins continues to reach out to diverse collaborators and partners, and is open to new ideas and dialogues that offer our young people unique experiences. Our celebrated works have been presented in collaboration with Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Festival, Melbourne Fringe, Arts House, THE RABBLE, Abbotsford Convent, The Substation, Dark MoFo, Darwin Festival, Dance Massive, Junction Arts Festival, BIFEM, Minus18, Worawa Aboriginal College, TheatreWorks, Castlemaine State Festival and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

St Martins' *For The Ones Who Walk Away* was the winner of the **2017 Melbourne Fringe Best Live Art Award** and **2018 Green Room Award for Design** across four disciplines: lighting, set and costume, sound and video in the Contemporary and Experimental Category. Our 2019 production *Balit Liwurruk: Strong Girl* received six Green Room Award nominations in the Independent Theatre Category, winning for **Ensemble and Direction**. This year's *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* has been nominated for three Green Room Awards in the Independent Category: **Best Composition, Best Ensemble** and **Best Production**.

ST MARTINS

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Elise Margow

It was an absolute delight in 2022 to leave behind the stormy seas of COVID lockdowns and embrace the wonders of face-to-face interactions while welcoming our workshop participants, hirers, audiences and supporters back into our venues.

That said St Martins was not exempt from COVID aftereffects including exhaustion and mental weariness on the part of the St Martins team, our workshop participants and venue hirers.

It is therefore a tribute to the resilience of the St Martins team that despite this they managed to produce a bumper artistic year for the company.

Art

This resilience is exemplified by St Martins' production of *Gene Tree. Listen. Now. Again*, which after 3 years and numerous COVID disruptions, finally premiered at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. It was well worth the wait. This gentle, music-filled gem experience combined the talents of children and teenagers from diverse backgrounds and capabilities with a stellar professional team. Audience members were enthralled by the performances while the production has garnered three Green Room Award Nominations including a nomination for **Best Ensemble** in the Independent Theatre Award category. Thanks to Nadja Kostich, Elissa Goodrich and the St Martins production team for staying the course to produce this beautiful work.

Workshops

The success of St Martins artistic productions is underpinned by our world class workshop programmes that welcomes children and teenagers from diverse backgrounds. In 2022 the number of workshop participants increased. Thanks to Hayley Haynes and Katrina Cornwell for ensuring the growth and development of these workshops.

Venues

Our venues, expertly managed by Julie Blyth, exceeded projections when it came to venue hire. Over 18,000 people came through our doors during 2022. We secured investment for new equipment for the Irene Mitchell studio which will be installed in 2023.

Funding

Unfortunately, despite St Martins exceptional work and outcomes we are battling financially without Federal Arts funding. While we are very grateful to Creative Victoria to have been included in the 2022-2025 Creative Enterprises Funding Program, this cannot make up the gap left by the lack of Federal funding.

St Martins has been working round the clock trying to make up this gap and has introduced new and innovative ways of fundraising. This has already resulted in a major increase in donor giving over 2022. We are grateful to our long-term donors who have stepped up to the plate as well as newly loyal members to our donor family. While we had budgeted for a deficit for 2022, thanks to the stellar work of Nadja Kostich and Thomas Caldwell with the assistance of Kirsty Ellem, the deficit was much less than projected and was adequately covered by our reserves.

Youth Arts Sector Solidarity

It is tremendously disappointing that Youth Arts has been seen as an afterthought by the previous Federal government. While it is a consolation that St Martins is part of the majority of youth arts organisations that has been abandoned when it comes to Federal funding, it does not make the gigantic task of making up deficits any easier especially given diminished resources as a result of diminished funding. That said, our team is working together with Youth Arts organisations across Australia to try to change the perceptions around youth arts generally. This includes highlighting not only artistic merit but also the long-term benefits that participants experience being part of the sector and the extraordinary contribution of our sector to Australia as a whole.

Hellos, Goodbyes and Thanks

In 2022 we bid farewell to board members Anna Pidgeon, Nicole Butler, Robynne Berg and Daniel Tobias and welcomed new board members Arjun Ravi and Kudzai Mhishi.

From a staff perspective we farewellled Artistic Associate Katrina Cornwell and Marketing Coordinator Jason Cheetham, welcoming Alice Qin as the new Artistic Associate and Agnieszka Majer in the re-imagined role of Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator. Another freshly created role in our Venues team saw James Dipnall appointed as Presenter Services Coordinator. We sincerely thank the outgoing staff and warmly welcome the new, who have made their mark already.

We thank Kirsty Ellem for continuing to assist both the team and the Board to reshape our strategy going forward and a special thanks to Lawrence Jackson who has provided invaluable insights into improving our fundraising capabilities.

A special note of thanks goes to Nadja Kostich for her continued exemplary leadership, loyalty, focus and willingness to take on so many responsibilities not usually associated with Artistic Directors.

Looking Forward

While times are financially tough, St Martins has the spirit, resilience and focus to overcome the financial hardships that we currently face. We are positive that we can progress towards our financial targets with our new fundraising strategies. We ask you to join us on the journey as your continued loyalty and belief in us motivates the team to move onwards and upwards.



ELISE MARGOW
Chair

EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT

FROM THE CEO AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

St Martins is a beloved place. It's also an ethos that can be taken anywhere. And, to many, it's a home. People are welcome here. Younger and older. Art and ideas are thought up, tested, explored and made here, but so are friends, life experiences, and communities. We are so happy to be getting to know our community. And we are excited to be growing that community. Audiences, neighbours, parents, partner organisations, collaborating artists as well as philanthropic and government funders have been rallying around St Martins throughout 2022 and we are basking in their support. It matters to us. Support can look like contributing time, skills, donations, advocating for us and working with us to grow our capacity. The support of our stakeholders matters to us and to the young people we work with.

Hundreds of children and teenagers who come to our workshops say we make a significant and positive difference in their lives. That means everything to us. We are so proud of our achievements with them over the past years; we have made beautiful and award-winning work together. Our creative endurance in the three year-long development of *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* came to fruition in our presentation of the public season in November, in collaboration with our partners, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Dandenong Primary School. Celebrated by audiences, partners and St Martins stakeholders, the production has been honoured with three Green Room Award nominations. No matter if we receive any awards or not, we are over the moon for our young people to be recognised as artists that can hold their own amongst the best of Victoria's talent.

Our dedicated core team and workshop artists continue to excel, raising the bar each year with our ability to be inclusive and continuing to learn and grow. I am in admiration and deep gratitude of their ongoing contribution to St Martins. Collectively, we are incredibly focused on reaching out to diverse kids and young people across Melbourne who may not have access to the arts and hold these programs close to

our hearts. We have re-imagined and re-named this our **Young Changemakers Program** after the shining young humans who have literally changed all of us who work with them. In the words of one of our *Gene Tree* audience members: 'If this is the generation leading us forward, then we are in safe hands.'

Alongside our programs, we continued to open our doors and rehearsal spaces and our Irene Mitchell Studio to companies, artists and hirers who love being here and love being hosted by us. We are proud of our deep and long-lasting relationships. For example, Miss Penelope Nunn-Guinet has been running her dance school in the St Martins Hall for 38 years and by association we are connected to those children and parents over the years.

There is a lot of love here for St Martins, for the arts, for making sure kids can grow up immersed in the arts, so we can nurture the next strong generation of alumni. So many amazing Australian artists, arts workers and arts lovers had their start here, and more personally they may have met their best friend, or collaborator, or even their life partner here. They belong here. We belong here.

And because we cherish this so much, the next few years are really critical for St Martins. We are determined to build St Martins' capacity. To reach more young people when they need it most, to make even more beautiful and relevant artworks with them, to be a place where artists can learn, to be the engine room for the next 40 years of creatives in the world.

And so, we are gathering our nearest and dearest together to launch a legion of champions into the greater community who can be advocates for us. Who can speak our names to those that make decisions. And put us in the minds of those that can support us ongoingly. In celebrating 2022, we must look beyond it to ensure we are a strong presence for young people in the decades to come. Please join us in this quest.

NADJA KOSTICH
CEO and Artistic Director



ST MARTINS PEOPLE

St Martins acknowledges its bold, talented, dedicated team and thanks all of them for their contribution to the company.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELISE MARGOW

Chairperson

ROBYNNE BERG

*Chair, Marketing and Fundraising
Committee (outgoing December 2022)*

DANIEL TOBIAS

(outgoing December 2022)

STEVE BRADBY

*Chair, Finance, Audit and Risk
Committee*

KATH PAPAS

ARJUN RAVI

(incoming October 2022)

NICOLE BUTLER

*Chair, Governance and Nominations
Committee (outgoing June 2022)*

ANNA PIDGEON

(outgoing June 2022)

KUDZAI MHISHI

(incoming December 2022)

STAFF

NADJA KOSTICH

Artistic Director / CEO

KIRSTY ELLEM

*Consulting Executive Director and
Leadership Strategy*

THOMAS CALDWELL

General Manager

JULIE BLYTH

Venue and Operations Manager

HAYLEY HAYNES

Workshop & Office Coordinator

KATRINA CORNWELL

*Associate Director (outgoing December
2022)*

ALICE QIN

*Artistic Associate (incoming January
2023)*

JASON CHEETHAM

*Marketing Coordinator (outgoing July
2022)*

AGNIESZKA MAJER

*Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator
(incoming June 2022)*

JAMES DIPNALL

*Presenter Services Coordinator (incoming
May 2022)*

AIDA INNOCENTE

Finance Officer

ST MARTINS PEOPLE

WORKSHOP ARTISTS

FABIO MOTTA

JOANA PIRES

NICOLETTE FORTE

PHILIP PANDONGAN

RICHIE HALLAL

SEBASTIAN FOWLER

AMELIA DUCKER

ALICE QIN

DANIEL NEWELL

AHMARNYA PRICE

BROOKE MURRAY

OLIVIA BISHOP

MARIA THEODORAKIS

MIRANDA MIDDLETON

CASSIE KAUSTOS

IBO HALIL HALOCOGLU

BEN GOSS

ST MARTINS PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORTERS

Philanthropy and Support

St Martins is a small organisation with a giant complex mission and your help is fundamental in allowing any of it to happen.

We cannot do it without you.

Thank you to our long-standing partners in government and philanthropy, and the extraordinary people who have responded to our giving request. To the artists, young people and community who say yes when we ask you to follow an idea, our most heartfelt thanks.

Your support allows for 15 scholarships for young people to participate equally in workshop programs in South Yarra and Northcote.

Allows for 2428 attendances by young people in our Young Changemakers Program in Prahran, St Albans and Dandenong.

Generates 15,216 Creative participants at our South Yarra Site.

Supports St Martins creative spaces to welcome over 18,000 people to participate in a creative activity or see a show, that has been made by the incredible creative community of Melbourne's independent sector.

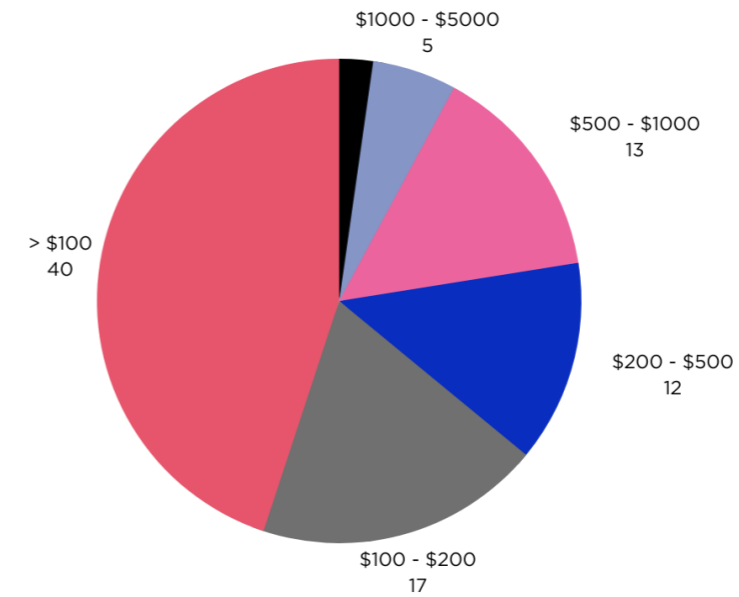
Supports the leadership and creative voice of young people.

And of course, at the heart of this, your support makes possible the work of the St Martin's Artistic leadership and team to create award-winning work with young people.

Thank you.

ST MARTINS PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORTERS

Philanthropy and Support (contd.)



No. of donations \$5000 or over = 2
 No. of donations \$1000 - \$5000 = 5
 No. of donations \$500 - \$1000 = 13
 No. of donations \$200 - \$500 = 12
 No. of donations \$100 - \$200 = 17
 No. of donations under \$100 = 40

Total Amount Raised in online giving campaign = \$44,084.22

Total Number of Donations = 89

Average Amount of Donation = \$499.26

S Silvana Maim... donated to **\$100**
Its time for young people to 1 mth ago

St Martins was fundamental and instrumental in my development as a performer, an arts practitioner and most importantly a human being. I made life long friendships during my time there that hold strong to this day. Every young person should have access to such a unique and inspiring place, where being yourself is the best thing you can be

A Anonymous donated to **\$50**
Its time for young people to 13 days ago

Our 1.5yo son has been with St Martins Northcote for about 5 years. His core group of friends comes from St Martins. He has had the rather unique opportunity of developing his friendships, particularly in the older teen stage, with the guidance of a positivity-influenced male adult. We can't thank you enough, St Martins. Oh, & did we mention the drama skills developed?

K Karin McLean donated to **\$50**
Its time for young people to 19 days ago

My child spent nine months in silence during lockdowns. St Martins Youth Theatre was the perfect forum for their emerging creative voice to shine.

H Heather Howa... donated to **\$100**
Its time for young people to 1 mth ago

In a world where the arts are being pushed aside St Martins is a shining light. It must be sustained to continue supporting our youth in the becoming their best possible selves.



ACTIVITIES

ST MARTINS ARTWORKS

St Martins committed whole-heartedly to our collaborations with diverse young people throughout 2022, placing them in rehearsal rooms with professional artists to create robust, dynamic and forward-thinking artworks. As we collectively recover from the lockdown years and start to realise the full impact of that experience on the mental health of young people, our creative practice remained a guiding light for the organisation, galvanising the company's energy around the stories and irrepressible creativity of children, young people and their families.

Across 2022 St Martins presented the live production, *A Resourceful Hero Struggling Against Incredible Odds*, in partnership with Midsumma and Rawcus, at the Malthouse Forecourt. And, after a one-year lockdown-related delay, finally presented our large-scale immersive and site-specific work *Gene Tree. Listen. Now. Again.* in partnership with Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and Dandenong Primary School. We also began the early stages of development for *The Word*, our next large-scale production to be performed in early 2024 at the Abbotsford Convent.





ST MARTINS ARTWORKS

PRODUCTION – A RESOURCEFUL HERO STRUGGLING AGAINST INCREDIBLE ODDS



St Martins was so excited to partner with Rawcus to create *A Resourceful Hero Struggling Against Incredible Odds* as part of the 2022 Midsumma Festival. Using verbatim text from 1990s action films, *A Resourceful Hero Struggling Against Incredible Odds* was a simultaneous homage to and lambasting of Hollywood blockbusters. The performers inhabited the personae of iconic Hollywood action heroes to figure out who gets to be heroes, and why do we love watching them so much?

The cast of 19 included five Rawcus members (with and without a disability), St Martins artist Alice Qin, a team of 4 Auslan interpreters, including deaf performer Danni Wright, and nine LGBTQI+ young people aged 13 – 24, including two gender fluid teens, four young people with additional access needs, and a young deaf performer.



The Rawcus ensemble's methodology of practice was inspiring to the entire team and set the tone for a vigorous collaboration across a diverse range of access needs. The involvement of the team of Auslan interpreters from the outset through to their integration in the final performance demonstrated the level of artistry that is possible when access is prioritised. It highlighted what equitable participation really means, and the levels of support required, from conception to production, which allow for true equity.

A Resourceful Hero performed to sold out audiences over two weekends in February to a total of 480 patrons. Every performance welcomed multiple tables of Deaf audiences at each performance and was received overwhelmingly positively by the Deaf community (and broader audiences). Two performances were conducted with visual description by Rawcus ensemble member Nilgun Guven. Tactile tours were also conducted by Nilgun with members of the cast guiding blind and vision impaired audience members through the space before the show.

Rawcus, Midsumma and Malthouse all gave feedback that they were thrilled to present the work, noting the joy of watching such a diverse cast with intersectional identities perform together and the artistic activation of Malthouse Outdoor Stage.

Survey responses from the cast revealed how transformative the process was for the young people involved. A sample from one parent:

"They just loved developing and performing the show. As you know, they have had a very difficult time at high school over the last two years, being bullied and excluded by their year group. This experience taught them that they have value as a person that others (outside their family!) can recognise, and that they have something to offer others. They told me that being with the group made them realise that not everyone is like the kids at school, and that there was a level of honesty and openness in the cast and crew that is lacking in their school peer group."

PRODUCTION – GENE TREE: LISTEN. NOW. AGAIN



After many years of development, rehearsals and delays (the COVID-lockdowns resulted in a major rescheduling), *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* was finally realised with great success in November 2022. Presented in partnership with Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and Dandenong Primary School, the premiere season was an intimate experience of evolutionary biology fuelled by music and rhythm. Leading audiences on an interactive performance adventure through Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (RBG), children and teenagers asked 'impossible questions' about evolution, adaptation and hope. An ode to the planet, *Gene Tree* invited audiences into small moments: feet on the grass, back against a tree, face in the wind. Music, rhythm and projections interlaced with children's stories of change and connection to nature. Part living sculpture, part call to attention, *Gene Tree* immersed audiences inside a chorus of children's voices, dreaming futures together within the nooks and crannies of the Gardens.

The *Gene Tree* cast comprised 14 young people from Congress, St Martins's creative ensemble, ages 11-18, and 14 young people from St Martins's Dandenong Primary School Program, ages 9-12. More than 10 creative artists and a 10 crew production team completed the team. Alongside the participants of previous developments, this totalled well over 100 adults and children across 2018-2022 collaboratively creating *Gene Tree*, a colossal achievement. St Martins presented six performances of *Gene Tree* over two weekends, with an additional preview for parents, teachers and invited community only.

The show was an immersive, deeply hopeful interactive performance installation, blurring divisions between music, art, science, nature, performers and audiences. The audience experiences of *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* were overwhelmingly positive, describing the work as artistically and aesthetically beautiful, profoundly moving and personally transformational. All elements of the performance, from children's engagement, originality, design, script, music and immersion in nature were highlighted.

The young cast members thrived creatively, demonstrating wholehearted ownership of their work and ideas, and celebrating their long-term commitment coming to fruition. They delighted in their relationship with the audience, expressing a deep pride and sense of achievement, with a clear sense of belonging and community. Collaboration and friendships between children from different parts of the city, age groups, as well as socio-economic and cultural backgrounds was a major success of the process and experience. Self-reporting by the young people, along with parent, teacher and artist observations revealed significant improvements in performance skills, confidence, belonging, self-image, purpose, hope and connection with community and nature.

The young people acknowledged those children, in earlier developments, who had contributed to the making of *Gene Tree*.

Families and teachers described the positive impacts they were witnessing in the young people, because of their participation and observed the development of essential life skills. A sample of feedback from one teacher:

"The empowerment with all the students involved in Gene Tree has been amazing to witness. Students who were once reluctant to speak, communicating with older students and the general public, now feeling confident and comfortable. This has had a huge impact on the students' self-esteem, which has already increased their confidence in their academic ability. One powerful example of the change that has occurred participating in Gene Tree is with a student who has a complex trauma background. The student previously had difficulty controlling their emotions and connecting with other students. The student now engages with other students, demonstrating improved self-confidence and ability to self-regulate his emotions. His classroom teacher reports that there have been no further issues with the student in the classroom and his concentration has also improved. He is so proud of what he achieved, and we are too!"

Looking ahead, *Gene Tree* has been presented in a model that can be replicated nationally and all over the world. The natural nooks and crannies of the presenting community's public gardens will become the set for *Gene Tree*. The outcome can scale up or down, and adapt according to the local gardens, engagement with local theatre companies for young people, and school children from diverse backgrounds in a residency or concept touring model. St Martins is currently in dialogue with other arts organisation to present the work in 2024 onwards and is seeking other presenters Australia wide in preparation for a larger national tour.





"I have never been more moved by a performance, let alone a youth performance. It honestly felt like a privilege to be there. The performers blew my mind. I felt connected, I felt challenged, I felt grateful, I felt hope. Honestly, if this is the generation leading us forward, then we are in safe hands.

- Kate, Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again audience member

ACTIVITIES



DEVELOPMENT – THE WORD

In 2022, St Martins also began developing and producing a significant new work for its 2024 program. *The Word* is a site-specific, immersive performance, fusing vocal, physical and video scores with text, inside the imposing architecture and symbology of the Abbotsford Convent. The collaboration between diverse young people and established artists climbs inside words – written, spoken and dreamt – as vessels for the human urge to know, name, possess, proclaim and control. Anchored by technologies through time, of sounds, languages, pen, printing press, wire, TV and digitisation, *The Word* erupts from the seam between inner (personal) and outer (political) words and worlds, where young people have been quietly waiting behind masks, walls, and doonas.

An ensemble of around 14-16 performers and 4-6 creative interns from the many diverse communities that St Martins' creative projects have traversed will form a new, next generation cohort. They will be joined by a creative team comprised of exceptional established adult artists who will support the interns to step into assistant roles and mentorships, firmly placing young people's voices in decision-making departments. Together they will make an original work to be performed at Abbotsford Convent, focusing on languages and words as vessels of power, magic, truth and lies, and the way they have been used and misused to invoke people to feel, think, believe and act. Depending on religions and political systems, prohibitions and inquisitions, love potions and mass hypnosis, the young people in *The Word* will shake up hierarchies and old systems to recover multiplicity, their own power and future trajectories.



“

It's lovely to hear she has made friends and feels St Martins is a safe place to express herself. It's taken some time but it's been worth it; she finally has an area in her life she looks forward to without anything negative in the way.

- Workshop Participant's Parent

WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOPS PROGRAM

Our inclusive workshop program continues to attract and invigorate young people across the state.

In a 2022 survey of workshop participants 100% of young people stated that attending St Martins lifts their mood!

And what a buzz it was to host an entire year of workshops on site in 2022 at South Yarra and Northcote as well as the Horace Petty Housing Estate, Dandenong Primary School and St Albans North Primary School.

Our theme for the year was The Word, The Body, Truth & Lies. In a continuation of our company exploration of systems, guided by our workshop artists, our young people contemplated the complexity, totality and nuance of vessels for communication focusing on the way language and absence of language shape our daily experience. From the micro, our personal relationship to words and self-expression, to the macro, the use of language by political figures, celebrities and big media.

We kicked off each term with a one-hour free trial session for each age group during the school holidays. Led by artists Fabio Motta and Joana Vicente Pires at our South Yarra home, these workshops offered a perfect introduction to drama at St Martins for those wanting to know more. Across the year, we saw a steady increase in the number of attendees, with a conversion rate of between 50% and 80%. This greatly contributed to an increase in overall enrolments of on average 10% per term.

As a result, we were delighted to re-instate our 5-8s workshop at Northcote which continues to grow from strength to strength. And so too continued the expansion of our team of inspiring and dedicated professionally practicing workshop artists -

- We welcomed Cassie Kaoustos in Term 1 and Ibo Halil Halocoglu in Term 2
- We welcomed back Nicolette Forte in Term 3
- Ben Goss joined us as a Trainee Workshop Artist in Term 4
- We took our first steps towards the fostering of an ongoing 'Artists Pathways Program' for young people aged 18-25 through our trial Inclusion Traineeship with Escape Velocity young artist, Quinn Jones. In addition, St Martins hosted the residency of emerging artist, Todd Kingston, who rehearsed the creation of his solo show, I'm Still Here for La Mama Explorations, supported by our Associate Director, Katrina Cornwell.

As always, we are so grateful to be working with a team of such talented and supportive artists whose incredible and unwavering care for all our young people is like no other -

"Most of all the willingness of everybody on staff to be inclusive and accepting of where each child is at individually, and to support their progress at a pace the kids feel comfortable with has been incredibly helpful."
(Tam Drury, Workshop Parent)

In Term 2 we introduced a fee increase of 10% which did not appear to impact the steady rate of growth. This was a positive step towards making the overall program more sustainable into the future.

In Term 3 several of our young people were invited to share their beliefs in Adriano Cortese's participatory project, *Belief Systems*. This was a fantastic opportunity for them to not only be part of the development of a unique public artwork, but also an opportunity to practice voice work, reflect upon their place in the world and be heard. This immersive installation work will be presented in May 2023 at The Substation.

At St Martins, 100% of young people believe that their contribution matters.

WORKSHOPS PROGRAM

Theatre Workshops by St Martins

HATCHED - END OF YEAR OUTCOME FOR TEENS

We welcomed *Hatched* back into the Irene Mitchell Studio in Term 4 where we hosted two sell out showcases presented by our Teens, Cross-Age and Congress Ensembles. After 2020, in which *Hatched* was replaced by our *40:40 Birthday Digital Gala celebration*, and 2021 in which *Hatched* was performed outdoors at various sites, being on our stage with professional lights again was a special moment, and for many of our young people, their first taste of a theatre performance.

From interactive theatre and comedy to drama and mystery – our young people presented their original devised works inspired by the theme of 'The Word'. In a tight 60-minute presentation, we travelled through worlds and spanned genres. From slapstick comedy with classic clowning, to moments of true pathos, the lived experiences of young people in this hybrid world of "post-pandemic" was revealed in its full spectrum.

The 2022 end-of-year showcase was a particularly momentous occasion as we farewelled our much-loved Associate Director and Congress Lead Artist, Katrina Cornwell.

As our Teens cohorts continue to grow, and too our audience numbers, we may need to look into hosting additional performance sessions in the future.

CONGRESS

Congress is a very special program inside St Martins. It involves a select group of young people who attend various workshops across all our sites, assembled to help us investigate, deepen, and create our artistic outcomes. In 2022, Congress was engrossed in the development of *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again.* Followed by an intensive rehearsal period, and the eventual production where they made up half of the cast.

Throughout the rehearsal process, when they were joined by the young people from Dandenong Primary, they also became role models for their younger co-stars and were integral in creating the welcoming atmosphere that allowed all the young people to flourish.

In Term 4, this extraordinary group of young people very quickly pivoted from the monumental task of performing a big production, straight into developing a new piece for the *Hatched* performance. Under the artistic leadership of Katrina Cornwell, they executed a beautiful piece of theatre at the Irene Mitchell Studio. Being consummate professionals, many of the young people had two pieces to create and perform during *Hatched*, due to their involvement in another workshop within St Martins.



YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS PROGRAM

Dandenong Primary School

Our program at Dandenong Primary School is designed to support children who face barriers to accessing the arts due to cultural, ability or socio/economic reasons. Aged 8-11 years old, many of our participants come from migrant and refugee communities, and most are from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

At the end of each semester, the young people present a short performance, providing an important moment for the community to come together in support and celebration of their children.

Further to this, in 2022, 14 of the children from Dandenong were also involved in the ensemble of our major work, *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again.*, presented at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne in November. The commitment of the children throughout the rehearsal process and performances demonstrated significant growth in their abilities to work with others and perform in public with confidence and enthusiasm. Feedback from teachers included:

"This student was someone who until recently would sit out of any kind of group sport, games or drama activities. Having the opportunity to witness him perform, not only in a performance of this scale, but to be performing in a strange environment with other students he had never met before, in front of many different audiences that were complete strangers to him, is an amazing achievement. I know his family are so grateful for the opportunity, as I am too. We are all so very proud of him. Thank you."

Throughout the year we saw increased attendance and retention numbers at the workshops. We also saw a growth in the confidence of the children due to feeling protected and nurtured in the workshops, which allowed them to express themselves more freely, both creatively and socially.

Feedback from participants at Dandenong Primary School include:

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity and making me feel like myself. I will miss you to the edge of my heart."
- Jayden, Dandenong

"You all have helped me gain confidence as well as talk to a big crowd of strangers and I can't thank you guys enough."
- Izzy, Dandenong

"Thank you for an opportunity to express ourselves, to express our feelings. For that I'm grateful."
- Sri, Dandenong



St Albans North Primary School

In 2022 we were thrilled to return in person to our workshops at St Albans North Primary School where we could provide consistent engagement with the young participants to best support their development. Our program, which includes an end-of-year showing for the local community, provides children aged 9-12 with skills in respectful listening, improves participants' self-confidence and literacy, and encourages their divergent thinking. The workshops support at-risk children to build self-esteem and skills, which will contribute to early intervention strategies to develop healthy mental and physical habits. Positively engaging young people in this way also builds connected and respectful relationships with local community.

The success of the end of year showing was testament to a year's work of engaging the young people's imaginations and creativity through drama in a safe, supportive space. Due to consistent engagement, artists Richie and Seb were able to build a strong rapport with the group, reporting significant achievements, across the year, including:

- A child who initially did not speak or join in performing scenes, by the end of the year, performing in front of everyone, offering intelligent, brilliant and engaging contributions. His mum was extremely grateful for the program and described to the artists in detail the changes she had observed in him at home with his family due to his workshop participation.
- Another child took on a leadership role within the workshop space. This was someone who would not speak on stage at the start of the year.

It excites us to see the positive impacts of this program ripple out through the school community as the children begin to build and sustain better relationships with parents, teachers, siblings and friends.

St Martins at The Hub

The Hub continues to be a beloved program at St Martins that supports young people 5-15 years old to reclaim and reimagine their space, step into the unknown with growing confidence, try something creative and learn to work together in groups.

Every Tuesday afternoon at the Horace Petty Housing Estate in Prahran, St Martins artists lead fun and creative workshops exploring a variety of artforms including theatre, music, dance, visual arts, puppet-making, body percussion, beatboxing, writing and storytelling.

St Martins at The Hub is a safe space for young people from the Stonnington Housing Estate to express themselves, make friends and develop their confidence through collaboration and positive feedback.

Throughout 2022 as the in-person workshops became a reliably consistent part of the children's lives again, we saw increased attendance and retention numbers.

Led by workshop artists Phily and Ritchie, the team delivered a special one-off performance at Chapel off Chapel in June 2022. Complete with giant taco, panda bears, video reportage, rapping, dancing and even a sloth, 'Taco Tuesday' was the culmination of months of creativity, presented to friends, family and other members of the Estate community to share in celebrating.

Feedback from the 'Taco Tuesday performance in June 2022:

"A wonderful show filled with smiles, laughter and so many young people giving things a go. Congratulations, amazing work everyone "
- Staff Member, The Prahran Child and Youth Community Wellbeing Hub



"Thank you for an opportunity to express ourselves, to express our feelings"

- Young Changemakers Program Participant

INCLUSION AND ACCESS PROGRAM

St Martins aims for access and inclusivity in all our programs, by the broadest reach of young people possible. In 2022, we continued to strive to dissolve the barriers to accessing the arts that exist for many children due to disability, neurodivergence, learning challenges, cultural and linguistic difference, economic difficulty, gender diversity and sexual identity.

In our 2022 workshop evaluation:

- 100% of young people (aged 9+) stated that they feel that everyone is welcome and included at St Martins
- 93% of young people (aged 9+) feel like they belong at St Martins
- 100% of young people feel connected to other young people at St Martins

Our ongoing Inclusion Scholarship program is central to this sense of belonging and connection, offering young people aged 5-18 the opportunity to participate in our weekly workshops at Northcote and South Yarra. In 2022, 15 young people from a variety of circumstances were supported each term.

We are thrilled to have received support for our Inclusion Scholarship program from The Crawley Clinic, a local family-owned private mental health practice.

As was the case in 2021, increased levels of anxiety continued to be observed across our cohort in 2022. The heightened needs of our young people resulted in the lowering of our maximum capacity per workshop, to ensure that all participants are appropriately catered for, whilst maintaining a high-quality experience, and a safe, inclusive environment for all. This was also necessary to support our artists.

Whilst we have not been in a financial position to recruit a new Inclusion Coordinator yet, we have been fortunate to be able to draw on the expertise of Lead Inclusion Workshop Artist Joana Vicente Pires at the start of each term to onboard new participants, create inclusion plans and assist throughout each term as required. Parents and workshop artists alike have been extremely grateful for the care and attention taken by Joana to prepare tailored inclusion plans which have resulted in the thoughtful integration of new participants.

Further demonstration of our commitment to inclusion can be seen within our **Young Changemakers Program** (see **Workshop** section).

In addition, each production is individually assessed by an access consultant to ensure accessibility for audiences. *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* was no exception, offering an accessible pathway for wheelchair users, two Auslan interpreted performances, a 42 page relaxed performance guide and a quiet space for audiences.

Recent feedback from parents:

"I just wanted to say thank you so much to St Martins. My daughter is in the Saturday afternoon teen group at South Yarra, and Wow she has grown in confidence, and this has translated into other areas of her life. She has really found her voice and is exploring her identity as a proud autistic young woman."
- Workshop Parent of Teen

"The classes have been so exciting for him and have opened up a whole world of potential friendship and possibilities. The facilitation has been so impressive to us; the level of skill is so superior to what we have accessed before. My son's confidence has increased hugely; his willingness to be courageous and brave in situations where he might have held back.... for example, sleepovers, sports groups, peer relationships. Thank you so much"
- Workshop Parent of Scholarship Participant, from Regional Victoria, 9-12s



ST MARTINS THE VENUE

Venue Hire and Usage

VENUE

While operating and managing the venue spaces at St Martins continued to be a challenge in 2022, it was not without reward and overall, the year was successful in terms of an increase in hirers and income, not to mention the successful application of a grant to do major upgrades on our most popular space in 2023, our beloved Irene Mitchell Studio.

Part of the company's commitment to investing in staff and resources for new growth, was the ongoing causal hire of James Dipnall in May to perform the role of Presenter Services Coordinator. James was able to overhaul and manage systems concerned with taking venue booking and enquiries, which freed up Venue and Operations Manager Julie Blyth to focus on the many operational and maintenance challenges of running multipurpose theatre spaces. The growth in bookings, and therefore revenue, for venues throughout 2022 owes a significant amount to this allocation of resources.

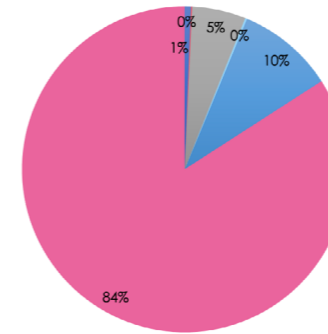
COVID-19 continued to impact bookings, with a number of rehearsal and performance bookings being cancelled due to illness within the companies, also affecting attendance at some performances and workshops. However, we welcomed numerous new hirers to the various spaces, and hosted JMC Academy in the Rehearsal Room, The Gallery and St Martins Hall for much of Term 4. This major hire then extended to performances in the Irene Mitchell Studio at the end of the year and is expected to create new relationships leading to multiple hires in the future.

Major ongoing challenges include ensuring the spaces are properly maintained and made safe, and unfortunately, St Martins had to completely shut down all usages of the Randall Theatre (350 seats) due to safety concerns. The Randall Theatre was already running at a reduced capacity as a rehearsal space only, as it requires significant investment to operate fully. Not being able to use it at all for a sizable portion of the year was a setback; however, we are working closely with Creative Victoria to rectify all issues and are on track to reopen the Randall as a rehearsal space in the first half of 2023.

One of the more exciting developments was being awarded a Creative Neighbourhood Infrastructure Support Program grant from Creative Victoria to cover a major upgrade of the facilities and equipment in the Irene Mitchell Studio, one of our most popular and loved performance and rehearsal spaces. This upgrade is scheduled to happen in the first half of 2023 and will significantly improve the space and attract even more interest from potential hirers.

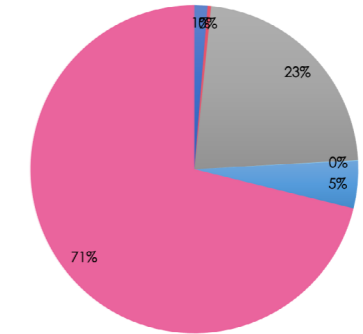
MARKETING

Events by Category



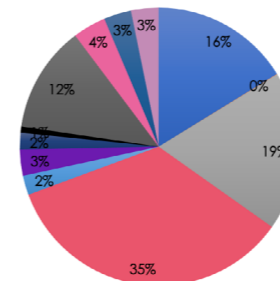
■ Birthday Party ■ Community Meeting ■ Performance
■ Photo/Film Shoot ■ Rehearsal ■ Workshop

Attendance & Participation by Category



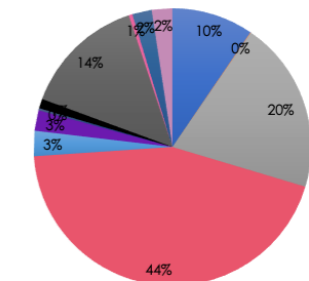
■ Birthday Party ■ Community Meeting ■ Performance
■ Photo/Film Shoot ■ Rehearsal ■ Workshop

Attendance & Participation by Venue



■ Irene Mitchell Studio ■ Randall Stage ■ Rehearsal Room
■ St Martins Hall ■ The Gallery ■ Dandenong
■ Mallhouse ■ Montessori Caulfield ■ Northcote
■ Royal Botanic Gardens ■ St Albans ■ Stonnington

Events by Venue



■ Irene Mitchell Studio ■ Randall Stage ■ Rehearsal Room
■ St Martins Hall ■ The Gallery ■ Dandenong
■ Mallhouse ■ Montessori Caulfield ■ Northcote
■ Royal Botanic Gardens ■ St Albans ■ Stonnington



ST MARTINS MARKETING

In 2022, we continued on the path outlined in the previous year's report and focused on balancing our messaging across Artworks, Workshops and Venues.

We decided to dedicate more time and resources to provide marketing support for our venue hirers – to support independent theatre makers but also to investigate the possibility of developing a marketing support model that we could offer as a paid service in the future.

For our 2022 major production, *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again.*, we joined our marketing and PR efforts together with the marketing team of our partner, the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. This provided great support to our small team and was an amazing opportunity to gain insight into how other organisations work in this area, whilst growing our local and professional network.



ST MARTINS FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

St Martins is currently focused on investing in staff, resources and opportunities to generate new sources of revenue in the future. This, combined with the lack of federal core funding and the overall difficulties faced by the arts sector – especially the youth arts sector – in terms of slow post-COVID recovery, means that we recorded a deficit in 2022, as we also did in 2021 and are budgeted to do so again for 2023.

The good news is that our 2022 deficit was significantly lower than what we had budgeted for, and with carefully controlled expenditure, strategic investments in staff and resources in key areas, close monitoring of cash flow and new approaches to philanthropy, fundraising and individual giving, we are cautiously confident that the company will continue to forge ahead in this difficult period.

**STATEMENT OF SURPLUS OR DEFICIT AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	2022 \$	2021 \$
REVENUE		
Grant Income:		
Government	381,046	577,397
Philanthropic Trusts	112,145	47,750
Private Donations	37,098	5,032
Total Grant Income	<u>530,289</u>	<u>630,179</u>
Other Income	353,831	234,166
Maintenance Subsidy – Creative Victoria	69,985	56,110
Total Revenue	<u>954,105</u>	<u>920,455</u>
EXPENSES		
Administration	566,196	557,377
Production	403,303	250,480
Marketing and Sponsorship	16,156	24,292
Venue Expenses	34,674	43,648
Maintenance Expenses	35,983	94,667
	<u>1,056,312</u>	<u>970,464</u>
Surplus (deficit) for the year	<u>(102,207)</u>	<u>(50,009)</u>
Other comprehensive income:		
Net gain on revaluation of financial assets	-	-
Other comprehensive income for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>(102,207)</u>	<u>(50,009)</u>
Total comprehensive income attributable to the members of the entity	<u>(102,207)</u>	<u>(50,009)</u>

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	2022 \$	2021 \$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	225,393	414,654
Trade and Receivables	123,561	19,325
Other Current Assets	18,090	22,254
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>367,044</u>	<u>456,233</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	35,043	44,901
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	<u>35,043</u>	<u>44,901</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>402,087</u>	<u>501,134</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	59,909	100,904
Provisions	29,574	28,151
Other Liabilities	208,630	168,612
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>298,113</u>	<u>297,667</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	10,429	7,715
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>10,429</u>	<u>7,715</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>308,542</u>	<u>305,382</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>93,545</u>	<u>195,752</u>
EQUITY		
Retained earnings	93,545	195,752
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>93,545</u>	<u>195,752</u>

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	Retained earnings \$	Total \$
Balance as at 1 January 2021	245,761	245,761
Plus surplus attributable to members	(50,009)	(50,009)
Balance as at 31 December 2021	195,752	195,752
Less deficit attributable to members	(102,207)	(102,207)
Balance as at 31 December 2022	93,545	93,545

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	2022 \$	2021 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from customers	965,490	946,731
Payment to suppliers and employees	(1,155,423)	(1,028,454)
Interest received	672	537
Net cash provided for operating activities	(189,261)	(81,186)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payment for plant and equipment	-	(22,768)
Net cash provided for investing activities	-	(22,768)
Net increase (decrease) in cash held	(189,261)	(103,954)
Cash at beginning of financial year	414,654	518,608
Cash at end of financial year	225,393	414,654

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**ST MARTINS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

CORE FUNDING PARTNERS



Creative Victoria

PROJECT PARTNERS

A Resourceful Hero Struggling Against Incredible Odds



rawcus



Midsumma Festival

Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again



Australia Council for the Arts



JumpStart! (VicHealth)



City of Melbourne



Thyne Reid Foundation



Besen Family Foundation



The Robert Salzer Foundation



Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria



Dandenong Primary School

ST MARTINS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Partners and Funders

OUTREACH WORKSHOPS PROGRAM FUNDERS

Horace Petty Housing Estate:



Community Bank Windsor



Artists for Kids Culture

Dandenong & St Albans:



Dandenong:



ST MARTINS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Partners and Funders

DONORS

Many generous individuals supported us during 2022 with donations. Their names are:

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 THE CRAWLEY CLINIC
 MELBOURNE SOUTH YARRA RESIDENTS
 JOHN AND JANET CALVERT-JONES
 ELISE MARGOW
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 JANET WHITING AM AND PHILIP LUKIES
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 MARIKA STEWART
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 SIMON BEDFORD



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