

Big Imaginations presents



Marketing Pack

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Brochure copy

Long version (124 words)

Running Time: 45 – 50 mins

A performance for babies aged 4 months – children under 4 and their grown ups

Commissioned and produced by Big Imaginations. Co-commissioned by Spark Arts for children.

Sponge

Watch the trailer

#SPONGETHESHOW

Roll, squeeze and pop yourself through a new malleable kind of family dance show, set to a 1970s-influenced score, perfect for babies, young children and families. *Sponge* is about all things spongy, a child's ability to soak information up like a sponge and the squishy, squashy texture that fascinates children and adults alike.

Dance company Turned On Its Head makes exciting participatory theatre for early years, taking children on a creative journey, engaging audiences throughout its performances and encouraging lots of family interaction. Everything in *Sponge* can be made with simple materials at home so there's plenty more fun to be had after leaving the theatre.

Performance for babies aged from 4 months to children under 4 and their grown-ups.

Co-produced in association with The Spark Arts for Children.

Produced with thanks to Attenborough Arts, Curve and Sydney Heath.

Short version (90 words):

Running Time: 45 – 50 mins

A performance for babies aged 4 months – children under 4 and their grown ups

Commissioned and produced by Big Imaginations. Co-commissioned by Spark Arts for children.

Sponge

Watch the trailer

#SPONGETHESHOW

Sponge is about all things spongy: a child's ability to soak things up like a sponge, a nice piece of cake or the squishy, squishy texture that fascinates children and adults alike. *Sponge* is a fabulously kitsch adventure into the 1970's set to a score with interludes from composers such as Henry Mancini. The show will embrace Turned on its Heads love of performance infused with audience participation and improvisation, multi-sensory experiences and happy hearted inclusivity.

Performance for babies aged from 6 months to children under 4 and their grown-ups.

Show Photos

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/n86ydgjwjp2e53/AADz1mk-hWOztzhNHbvXSalga?dl=0>

Audience quotes from Shiny!

"Excellent show. Perfect for both our 2 and 4 1/2 yr. old. Engaging, interactive and perfectly paced. Thanks so much" - Arts Depot

"Absolutely brilliant! It is so good for children to get up and get involved. This is how they like to learn to love the theatre for the rest of their lives. Thank you so much!" - Arts Depot

"Fabulous show! Wonderful to see the delight on the children's face!" - Stratford Circus

"Utterly charming, delightful and captivated the children and families. So deceptively simple and beautifully crafted!" - Polka Theatre

"Brilliant! A show that really sparkled! The children absolutely loved it and they were completely enthralled - they spun and danced and shone. Thank you!" - Watermans

"We would like to have you as our permanent babysitters! Really thoroughly enjoyable - the kids loved it. I'm not sure how I'm going to convince them to leave today." - Arts Depot

"Amazing how you introduced real theatre to babies in such an accessible way. Loved it! So did my 10 month old" - Arts Depot

"A spectacular performance 'Shiny' today! Luca (8 months) loved it and was entranced from start to finish. Sensitive and engaging performance - thank you x" - Polka Theatre

"WOW! My daughter wasn't sure what to make of "Shiny" at the start but by the end we were both utterly engaged and entranced. We're leaving with lovely memories and huge smiles on our faces. Magical. Thank you" - Polka Theatre

"Shiny is a delight! It is fun, joyful, and beautiful. I left the performance feeling stupidly happy, and my baby girl obviously enjoyed it too!" - Polka Theatre

"AMAZING, can't stop smiling. My baby experienced something new and magical and so did I. Costumes, music, dance, props... everything was so special. I'll recommend it to all my friends THANK YOU" - Polka Theatre

Audience quotes from Sponge R&D week!

Family comments

"Fascinating and amazing, I loved all the colours and the dancing, I couldn't get my children to leave. More sponge please!" – Rada, mum to Jugjeet and Juspeet aged 14 months

"Engaging and exciting"

"We loved it, please come back"

"Awesome! My 11 month old lit up when he saw the sponges, a big hit, thank you"

"That's brilliant for my child, she enjoyed herself"

"Fab! Both children were very eager to get involved"

So much FUN! Given us loads of ideas for playtime and home. Thank you!

It was brilliant. My friend said it was the best thing Z Arts have shown! Asnd for FREE too!

Thoroughly enjoyable. Great fun for the toddler and baby. Particular highlights were the 'sponge feet' and 'sponge cannon'. Thank you

Really enjoyed watching the kids slowly break the barrier and rebel against the parents

Loved the concept, never seen kids so entertained by sponges

Lovely! Always great to have an interactive element

Really enjoyed it. Suggestions – children could throw sponges back to duo to increase tactile participation. Could we kneel on a large piece of sponge?

Children loved the big dancing feet, the sponge martian and they loved tidying up the sponges!

Amazing! Elliot (16 months) loved it. Perhaps get kids on stage 5 minutes earlier? The couldn't wait to touch the sponge!

Professional Early Years Practitioner comments

"It was a fantastic multi-sensory experience that allowed the children to learn, play and explore"

It was lovely to see some beautiful parent-child interactions throughout the workshop" - Kingscliffe Nursery

"Loved the sponges come out of the brain.... Proper belly laughing."

"Loved it, it was playful, simple, great interaction that allows for everyone to respond in their own way." - EYP New Parks CC

"Authentically interactive – seeing the children take part was a great joy" - EYP Braunstone CC

"It was excellent, I enjoyed it and my son was laughing and laughing" - Kaya mums to Hanifer aged 18 months

"Fascinating and amazing, I loved all the colours. Can I take some home for them to play with?" - Rada mum to Jugjeet and Juspeet aged 14 months

"It was lovely to see that you didn't have to use words... just the movement, they all joined in, it was so nice to see" - Geeta grandma to Loel aged 3. Brauntson Childrens Centre

"It was amazing. We have had so many families comment on how much they enjoyed it and it was so lovely to see the parents involved with their children, and the children just blossomed. We would recommend it and would love you to come back again if ever you can!" - Vienna. Early Years Practitioner, Penn Green Childrens

Centre.

Social media and links

Twitter: @BImaginations @TurnedOnItshead #Spongetheshow

Facebook: facebook.com/bigimagination
facebook.com/spongetheshow

Videos: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH_HXL1ww_JqN-lqBNiJ7xq

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSEKVabrI2A>

Blog: <http://blog.turnedonitshead.org>

Suggested Tweets and Posts

- Squashing, building and giggling with #SPONGETHESHOW today! @BImaginations
- Bring on the 70's with today's show for children and families, inspired by all things spongey! #SPONGETHESHOW @BImaginations
- We'll be going on a spongey adventure this season with a brand-new early years performance from the makers of Shiny! #SPONGETHESHOW @BImaginations
- Join us for a weekend of making, playing and finding out with #SPONGETHESHOW
- Live in London? The brand new @BImaginations commission #SPONGETHESHOW
- Will be at The Barbican this Christmas. <http://www.barbican.org.uk/theatre/event-detail.asp?ID=19633>

Key Selling Points/Messages

- researched and developed with audiences in the East Midlands and North West
- fully inclusive and accessible to all children under 5 & their families
- accessible for older children with PMLD
- engages and delights children under 5 & their families
- participatory and fuses interaction with performance
- multi-sensory and immersive
- engaging for adults, grandparents and carers too
- Dance show created especially for very young audiences and their families
- Show that encourages family interaction during the show and after
- Sponge will be performed at twenty venues across the country
- Relaxed performances
- Liz has created the Inspire Me film for Akram Khan's Big Dance pledge
- perfect for babies, young children and families.
- Sponge is about all things spongy, a child's ability to soak information up like a sponge and the squishy, squashy texture that fascinates children and adults alike.
- exciting participatory theatre for early years,
- taking children on a creative journey, engaging audiences throughout its performances and encouraging lots of family interaction.

- Everything in *Sponge* can be made with simple materials at home so there's plenty more fun to be had after leaving the theatre.

Tour Dates

(Updated as of 3rd August 2016)

Tour Schedule for Sponge October/November 2016

Friday	19th	August	Preview Shows	Just So Festival
Saturday	20th	August	Preview Shows	Just So Festival
Sunday	21st	August	Preview Shows	Just So Festival

Thursday	29th	September	PREMIERE	Z-arts
Saturday	1st	October	Shows	The Egg
Sunday	2nd	October	Shows	The Egg
Monday	3rd	October	Shows	Lincoln Drill Hall
Tuesday	4th	October	Shows	Louth Playgoers - Riverhead Theatre
Wednesday	5th	October	Shows	South Holland Centre
Friday	7th	October	Shows	Curve
Saturday	8th	October	Shows	Curve
Monday	10th	October	Shows	Corby Cube
Thursday	13th	October	Shows	Lakeside Arts Centre
Friday	14th	October	Shows	Leigh Library
Saturday	15 th	October	Shows	Wigan Library (TBC)
Sunday	16th	October	Shows	Barnsley Civic - Roundabout
Wednesday	19th	October	Shows	Blackwood Miners, Caerphilly
Thursday	20th	October	Shows	Spot On Lancashire (TBC)
Friday	21st	October	Shows	Widnes, Brookfields Special School
Saturday	22nd	October	Shows	North Wall, Oxford
Tuesday	25 th	October	Shows	Sunderland City Library
Wednesday	26th	October	Shows	Atkinson
Thursday	27th	October	Shows	Waterside Arts Centre
Friday	28th	October	Shows	Cheshire Rural Touring Arts - St Mary's Creative Space
Tuesday	1 st	November	Shows	The Kirkgate
Wednesday	2nd	November	Shows	Whitby Hall
Thursday	3rd	November	Shows	Burnley Arts Centre
Friday	4th	November	Shows	Citadel
Saturday	5th	November	Shows	Citadel
Sunday	6th	November	Shows	The Boo

Saturday	10th	December	Shows	Lancaster Arts
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Tuesday		13th	December	Performance 1, 2	Barbican
Wednesday	14th		December	Performance 3, 4	Barbican
Thurs	15th		December	Performance 5, 6	Barbican
Saturday	17th		December	Performance 7,8, 9	Barbican
Sunday	18th		December	Performance 10, 11, 12	Barbican
Monday		19th	December	performance 13, 14	Barbican
Tuesday		20th	December	Performance 15, 16	Barbican
Wednesday	21st		December	Performance 17, 18	Barbican

Launch Information

September 29th 12pm-2pm, Z-arts Manchester

Please email laura@z-arts.org for further details

About Big Imaginations

- Big Imaginations is a region-wide group of venues and promoters dedicated to bringing brilliant children's theatre to the North West. From grand auditoriums to rural village halls and everything in between, our mission is to spark the imagination of children aged 0-12 with the wonder of theatre.
- Big Imaginations headed up by Z-arts has brought together 15 venues to make the North West's children's theatre offer bigger, better and more affordable. For a full list of venues involved and work programmed visit www.bigimagination.co.uk
- Big Imaginations is supported by Arts Council England through a 3 year Strategic Touring Grant. Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

About Turned On its Head

Turned on Its Head is based in the East Midlands and was created to push the boundaries of performance for children under 5 and their families. The company's work is co-created with audiences with the moment of performance fused with the spontaneous reaction of the children (and parents). In the work children become immersed in the theatrical experience on their own terms; and the performance gives space for engaging and respecting each child's response. Performances are characterised by high and inclusive levels of authentic participation, incorporating improvisation with the children and their families as active participants in telling the story whilst also telling *their* story in that moment. As a result, audiences have a strong sense of ownership and belonging in the performance space, are actively involved and can continue with aspects of the performance at home.

Turned On Its Head first work was co-commissioned by Curve Theatre, their second by The Spark Arts. Turned On Its Head is an Affiliate Company at Curve, Leicester where Liz Clark runs Little Movers, child-led creative dance with children under 4 and their parents.

<http://blog.turnedonitshead.org>

Artist Biographies



Liz Clark is Artistic Director Turned On Its Head as well as an independent dancer, choreographer and creative practitioner. Collaborating with Associate Artist Oksana Tyminska and other East Midlands based artists, the company has been in existence since 2010 but both Liz and Oksana has 40 collective years of creating work for under 4's.

Liz Clark's improvisatory dance work with families is featured in the 'Inspire Me' films of Akram Khans Big Dance Pledge 2016.



Oksana Tyminska is also an independent dance artist, creative practitioner and is Turned On Its Head's Associate Artist. She has been involved in performing and touring dance for young children including 'Telling Tales' (East Midlands Children's Theatre Consortium 2006-2008) and 'Cosmos' (2009) with Dragon Breath Theatre Company.



Louise Gibbons is an independent dance artist based in the NW. After graduating from MMU Cheshire in 2010, she has gone on to perform works by; James Wilton, Lea Anderson and Filip Van Huffel (12 Degrees North) Gary Clarke and Spilt Milk Dance. In between performing, Louise facilitates dance in early years, youth, health and community settings as a freelance artist for various companies including Ludus Dance and Small Things.



Shane Shambhu is a *Complicite Associate, Associate Artist at Lakeside Theatre* and an award-winning artist initially trained in the South Indian dance form of bharatanatyam. He works as a performer and creative collaborator with companies whose creative visions inspire him and also as a director and choreographer. His extensive performance career includes Complicite's *A Disappearing Number* (BBC Radio 3 and National Theatre Live), Icon Theatre's *Release*, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company, *inDance* (Canada), Menagerie Theatre, Theatre Ad Infinitum, New Art Club, Royal Opera House and London Youth Circus to name a few.

In his own works, Shane creates to seamlessly integrate differing artistic languages and practices through collaboration, constantly defying any categorisation. His creative visioning is driven by a passion to inform and shift notions and perceptions of race, language, identity and the classical Indian Performing Arts. www.shaneshambhu.com

Box Office Notes

Production: Sponge

Company: Commissioned and produced by Big Imaginations. Co-commissioned by Spark Arts for children.

Dates:

Times: Usually 11am (with a 3 hour get in) and 1.30pm

Ticket prices: £8/£6

Running time: 45- 50 minutes

Age suitability: 4 months – under 4s

Artforms: Dance, theatre. Please note that the performance is interactive – children will be drawn into the action on stage. For this reason we only allow audience into the space 5 minutes before the full show starts and we don't provide seating for the adults unless they have a mobility issue.

Selling points:

- researched and developed with a audiences in the East Midlands and North West
- fully inclusive and accessible to all children under 5 & their families
- accessible for older children with PMLD
- engages and delights children under 5 & their families
- participatory and fuses interaction with performance
- multi-sensory and immersive
- engaging for adults, grandparents and carers too

Any other notes:

The show is designed for children under 4 and we would prefer that older children (unless they have a developmental delay/disability) are not able to enter the performance space.

It is likely that there will be three versions of the show:

- babies/toddlers up to 14 months
- toddlers/children 14 months – 4 years
- for all ages

The show will vary of each type of performance.

Accessibility:

The show is accessible to children with mild-moderate learning and physical disabilities.

It is also suitable for children with PMLD.

It's suitability for children with ASD is TBC.

Because of the tactile nature of the show it is suitable for children with hearing impairments.

Sample direct mail letter

Dear XXXX,

A spongy new adventure for early years children and their families with live performance to make you squash, roll, pop and squeeze

We wanted to let you know about an exciting new family show, Sponge, coming to venue name) on (date).

INSERT VENUE TEXT

Tickets are INSERT PRICE and available online at [INSERT](#) WEB ADDRESS or by calling our friendly box office on INSERT BOX OFFICE ADDRESS.

In the meantime, why not find out a bit more about the spongey new adventure on Twitter @BImaginations or search 'Big Imaginations' on Facebook.

We hope you can make it!

Sample Press Release

<VENUE LOGO>

<BIG IMAGINATIONS >LOGO

PRESS RELEASE

A spongy new adventure for Big Imaginations audiences across the North West

A brand new commission for Early Years children sees Big Imaginations pushing the boundaries of creative play.

<VENUE ADDRESS>

Big Imaginations is continuing its wonderful obsession with bringing brilliant children's theatre to the North West with a brand new commission for 2016! This time it's an adventure with *Sponge*.

Who remembers the gorgeous early years show "Shiny" that Turned on its Head brought to Big Imaginations in 2014 or 2015? We're bloomin' delighted that they're back in 2016 with a new, squishy, spongy kind of a show, commissioned by Big Imaginations especially for early years.

Sponge embraces all things spongy. Alluding to a child's ability to soak things up 'like a sponge', a lovely piece of cake, or simply the springy, squashy, malleable, texture which fascinates us and children alike. Set to an original score fused with 1970s interludes by composers such as Henry Mancini, the performers will reveal and explore small and large scale sponge environments and props for children to squash, roll, pop and squeeze.

Liz O'Neill CEO of Z-arts in Manchester who head up the Big Imaginations consortium said: "We're so excited to be able to bring Turned on Its Head back for a brand-new special adventure to delight Big Imaginations audiences across the North West. It's so important to give babies and toddlers the chance for creative play with something so visually spectacular to inspire and entrance them."

Sponge will premiere at Just So Festival in August before travelling the country before ending its tour in 2016 at The Barbican in London for a series of Christmas performances before continuing to delight and entertain early years children and their grown-ups in 2017.

Turned on its Head is led by dance artists Liz Clark and Oksana Tyminska, based in the East Midlands. Through the success of "Shiny" the company is now acknowledged to be creating great theatre for children aged 6 months to 4 years (enjoyed by parents also!) and pushing the boundaries of participatory theatre.

Artistic Director Liz Clark says: "We want to make theatre that places experiences of the child at the heart of it. For me, making this work was a response to the frustrations of taking my own non-hearing son to theatre performances and him not understanding that he couldn't get on stage on touch the magical world that was being presented. Oksana and I wanted to create theatre that was close up, personal, invitational and above all, inclusive. Why shouldn't a child's first experience of theatre be about being so close to the performer they can touch them?"

We also want to co-create our theatre with our audience. What you'll find when you come to see our work is that the children become immersed in the theatrical experience on their own terms and our performances give space for engaging and respecting each child's response. We incorporate improvisation with the children and their families as active participants in telling the story. The result is beautifully moving theatre which is about each child's own journey."

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- For further information, images, or for interview / press review ticket requests, please contact Laura Stevens at laura@z-arts.org or 0161 226 1912.
- Big Imaginations is a region-wide group of venues and promoters dedicated to bringing brilliant children's theatre to the North West. From grand auditoriums to rural village halls and everything in between, our mission is to spark the imagination of children aged 0-12 with the wonder of theatre.
- Big Imaginations headed up by Z-arts has brought together 15 venues to make the North West's children's theatre offer bigger, better and more affordable. For a full list of venues involved and work programmed visit: [www. bigimagination.co.uk](http://www.bigimagination.co.uk)
- Big Imaginations is supported by Arts Council England through a 3 year Strategic Touring Grant. Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.
- Turned on Its Head was created to push the boundaries of performance for children under 5 and their families. Creating the company was also a direct response to my many frustrations of taking my own non-hearing son to theatre performances for young children and him not understanding that he couldn't access the performance in a kinaesthetic way. For him, and for most children, I felt that theatre needed to be a close up, personal, invitational and above all, inclusive.
- Liz Clark is a shortlisted artist for the 2016 Arts Foundation Fellowship, a national award which supports artists who are considered to be making new and innovative work before they reach the stage of being well established.
- Co-produced in association with The Spark Arts for Children.
- Produced with thanks to Attenborough Arts, Curve and Sydney Heath.

Further images

You should have received the images below, if not please email laura@z-arts.org

Further images can be downloaded via the Dropbox

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/94uqgnlzkioxta/AAC2g7nR-ZvyWX39ZIZuf6Baa?dl=0>



Marketing extras

The company will be developing a website where there will be creative activities for families to explore before and/or after a show. Examples of extension work for Shiny please see www.turnedonitshead.org/shiny.