

Our Global Majority Puppetry Intensive has begun



Our Global Majority Puppetry Intensive has kicked off to a great start. Ten brilliant participants are learning from some of the industry's best puppetry directors, designers and manipulators.

This brand-new programme, produced by Fuel in partnership with Little Angel Theatre, and funded by Arts Council England, was initiated in direct response to the lack of diversity in the puppetry sector. With puppetry becoming ever more popular, with hugely successful shows from *War Horse* to *Spirited Away* and *My Neighbour Totoro* and many more besides, this vital programme offers training for Global Majority performers and is fast creating an exciting new creative community of puppeteers. Alongside this, Saturday masterclasses for young people have been successfully running in partnership with drama school Mountview.

In a process led by Fred Davis, a group of 10 performers have already enjoyed workshops from Aya Nakamura, Rachael Nanyonjo, and Toby Olié, and the intensive will go on to feature workshops from Haruka Kuroda, Nick Barnes, Mervyn Millar, Tobi Poster-Su, and Little Angel's Samantha Lane.

Fred Davis, who is leading the programme, said: *“It’s wonderful watching 10 people approach situations and problem solve them together through puppetry. We’re only a little way into the workshop and the changes people have gone through are vast. Everyone is sharing revelations they’ve had in the room or titbits they’ve picked up on the performing road, and it’s beautiful to see. One of my favourite things about the arts in general, but the puppetry world in particular, is seeing people supporting and championing each other. I can’t wait to see the growth of this group by the end of the course.”*

Kate McGrath, Artistic Director & CEO at Fuel, said: *“Fred is an exceptional talent and it’s great to see him offering his expertise to others and holding a space for learning together, with the help of a brilliant roster of visiting workshop leaders. Learning is a core value for Fuel and we hope this Intensive will be of great benefit to the participants, the artists teaching on it, and ultimately the wider industry. In times of constrained resources, it’s vital to find ways to continue to invest in development for artists, especially where we can make a positive change in terms equity and inclusion in our sector. I can’t wait to see what they all do next with these new skills.”*

Participants in the course are **Aki Nakagawa, Annakanako Mohri, Ashton Owen, Brian Maitland, Eric Mok, Feeya Asmal, Mei Alozie, Priya Uddin, Rianna Kellman, and Shaofan Wilson.**

Participants and Programme Lead Biographies

Aki Nakagawa

Aki Nakagawa trained at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (CDT BA Acting) and UPS Academy in Tokyo, Japan. Theatre credits include: *My Neighbour Totoro* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Lord of the Flies* (Leeds Playhouse), *Garden of Words* (Park Theatre), *Tattooer* (Charring Cross Theatre x Umeda Arts Theatre). TV credits include: *Boarders* (BBC3).



Annakanako Mohri

Annakanako is a Japanese artist, whose credits include *The Lion King*, *Message in A Bottle/Zoonation*, *Spirited Away*.

Ashton Owen

Ashton is an Actor, Puppeteer and Writer, who trained at East 15 Acting School. Some recent theatre credits include; Twirlywoos/Chef in Twirlywoos Live (MEI Theatrical LTD) Giant in Smartest Giant in Town (Little Angel Theatre and Fierylight Co-Production) Writer and Performer in debut play Outskirts (Sheringham Little Theatre), Dr Watson in Sherlock Holmes Online Experience (Les Enfants Terribles), Mr Bump, Mr Happy, Mr Tickle and Mr Small (Selleadoor Worldwide), Plant Protector in Siyanda Protector of Plants (Theatre-Rites), Atir in Zeraffa Giraffa (Little Angel Theatre and Omnibus Theatre Co- Production). Ashton is currently Polka Theatre Caltapult Artist where he is creating a play about the life of Pablo Fanque; the first black circus owner in the Victorian Era.



Brian Maitland

Brian is an Indonesian/Scottish performer and graduate of The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. His recent credits include Calamity Jane (Titchfield Festival Theatre), Nazrul (Surbandhan), Beauty and The Beast (Anton Benson Productions) and Beetlejuice Beetlejuice (Warner Brothers). His puppetry inspiration originates from Lazytown, Spitting Image and Avenue Q. With his skills in Musical Theatre, he hopes to be able to combine them with puppetry to make a real impact on the industry.

Eric Mok

Eric Mok is an actor and writer who trained at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. His acting work in theatre includes London Tide for the National Theatre, King Lear for the RSC; Sky Comedy Rep Scratch Night and Park Bench Plays at Birmingham Rep. TV includes Call the Midwife and Hollyoaks. Film includes Meet the Lees and Walls. As a writer, his credits include British Born Chinese which had a rehearsed reading and his short films Hamster and The Last Slice which have been selected/nominated at several film festivals. He is currently developing a new play with support from the Birmingham Rep.



Feeya Asmal



Feeya Asmal is a South African theatre-maker, writer, and actor. Feeya received her bachelor's degree in Dramatic Arts (Hons) from the University of the Witwatersrand in 2015. She worked as a Stage manager and director in South Africa's fringe theatre scene between 2012 and 2017. She then took a break from theatre to move to Kobe Japan, where she taught English for several years, before moving to London to complete her master's degree in Creative Performance Practice at London South Bank University under the supervision of Georgina Sowerby in 2023. Feeya is interested in multidisciplinary theatre-making, involving puppetry and other visual elements, and her focus is centred on women's issues in society, but particularly within South Asian diasporic communities.

Mei Alozie

Mei's career in theatre began at Cambridge University where her performances in award winning new writing (Great Mother Iya Ayaba by Mojola Akinyemi and Heroes by Chakira Alin) would lead to an appraisal of her 'standout performance' of Heroes lead, Jonno, by The Stage. She balanced this with more classical roles, (Benedick in Much Ado About Nothing, Tybalt in Romeo and Juliet in a US Tour), and ensemble devised projects. Her first film credit was Sir Ridley Scott's 'Behold' in which she contributed original poetry material. Her interest in puppetry stems from her passion for afro-futurist stories, which she hopes to explore further with the skills learnt from this course.



Priya Uddin

Priya Uddin trained with Chichester Festival Youth Theatre and National Youth Theatre. She most recently performed in The House party at Chichester Festival Theatre in a coproduction with Headlong and Frantic Assembly. Other credits include *The Jungle Book*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Wind in the willows* and *Pinocchio* (Chichester Festival Theatre).



Rianna Kellman

Rianna is a story teller who uses different mediums to portray a world of emotions and narratives. She is an Actor, DJ and facilitator, who uses everything she knows to aid others in their story telling. Other theatre credits include: 'Shut Up I'm Dreaming' (The National Theatre). TV Credits include: Malice 2025.

Shaofan Wilson

Shaofan Wilson (She/Her) grew up in Leicestershire and trained at the Oxford School of Drama. As part of her graduate showcase season, she performed in Mark Ravenhill's 'Pool No Water' (The Royal Court), and 'Wonder Winterland' by Sami Ibrahim (Soho Theatre). Her stage credits include: 'The Hatchling' (Trigger Stuff 2024); 'My Neighbour Totoro' (Royal Shakespeare Company 2023); 'The PappyShow Cabaret' and 'GIRLS' (The PappyShow); 'My Neighbour Totoro' (Royal Shakespeare Company 2022); 'The Welkin', 'All Of Us', and 'The Ocean at the End of the Lane' (National Theatre); 'The Secret Love Life of Ophelia' (Greenwich Theatre); 'Oh for F*ck's Sake (I'm in Love with You)' (Nottingham Playhouse).



And finally, the Intensive is led by **Fred Davis**.



Fred Davis is also associate artist with Gyre and Gimble.

His theatre credits include: Life of Pi (Schoenfeld Theatre); Life of Pi (A.R.T); Life of Pi [Olivier award, Best supporting actor] (Wyndham's Theatre); Ocean at the end of the Lane (National Theatre); Dido and Aeneas (Bodø Concert Hall, Norway); The Life of Pi (The Sheffield Crucible Theatre); Peter Pan and Running Wild (Regents Park Open Air Theatre); The Hartlepool Monkey (UK Tour); Running Wild (UK Tour); The Tempest (Petersfield Shakespeare Fes/val Open Air); Peter Pan, A Christmas Carol, Running Wild, The Hundred and One DalmaCans, The Witches, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, Noah, The Firework Makers Daughter and The Snow Queen (Chichester Festival Youth Theatre); Experiment scratch performance (Nuffield Theatre Southampton); Pass it on Renew Project and RaLgan's Nijinsky (Chichester Festival Theatre) and Much Ado About Nothing (Shakespeare Schools Festival).

His TV credits include: Don't Hug Me I'm Scared, Jurassic World: Dominion, The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance, Gyre & Gimble Puppet making tutorial, The Hartlepool Monkey and Running Wild.

Other credits include: Chichester Festival Theatre, Butterfly Lion by Michael Morpurgo, Self Help, Scratch event for new playwrights, Animalian and Scratch event for new playwrights.

Fred Davis photo credit: Ben Wolfe