

Annual Report for (NI) Sightlines 2022-2023

Sightlines is a registered charity, run by volunteers, that makes theatre accessible to blind people by describing the visual element of theatre, including costumes, sets and props, to blind and visually impaired audience members. The process entails preparing programme notes which describe the set and scenery of the play, the characters' physical attributes and their costumes. These notes are provided in advance, in the chosen accessible format, to blind audience members. Meantime, the describers prepare a script which details the physical element of the production, including such essentials as arrivals on and off the stage, the visual component of humour, the major moves and actions. This has to be delivered between the lines of dialogue so that the blind people do not miss any of the spoken lines. It is delivered remotely, via a headset, into the ear of the blind person and enables them to respond to visual information at the same time as the mainstream audience. If a laugh is dependent on physical gestures or facial expressions the blind people laugh at the same time as the rest of the audience. Sightlines also describes exhibitions, art works, carnivals and tours for blind people, translating visual significance into verbal impressions.

2022 proved to be a very busy year for Sightlines. We audio described 11 shows at the

Grand Opera House. They were

The Rocky Horror Show: The Osmonds: Bed Knobs and Broomsticks: Jersey Boys:

Bat Out of Hell: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat:

Mamma Mia: Sister Act: Girl from The North Country: The Ocean at the End of the Lane:

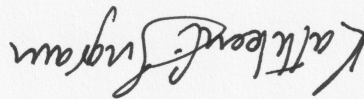
Additionally we also described five shows at the Lyric, Translations by Brian Friel:

Gap Year: The Snow Queen: Grimes and McKee and Romeo and Juliet. We described the

Mac's Christmas show, Cinderella, at two performances.

Tuesday 30th August 2022 saw a lot of activity at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast. N.I. Sightlines, thanks to a generous donation from the Deans Sit Out (Black Santa), invited a group of blind and visually impaired people to attend the Lyric to familiarise themselves with the new audio description technology. After a sandwich lunch everyone moved to the auditorium where Julie McKeegney, head of Customer Services at the Lyric, together with a host of helpers, talked people through the new system which involves patrons bringing their own phone or tablet and their own headphones and connecting these to the internet via a QR code. The system is far more reliable than the old one an ultimately will be much easier to operate.

Signed:



Volunteer Co-ordinator

Date:

26/01/24