



KOOK
ENSEMBLE

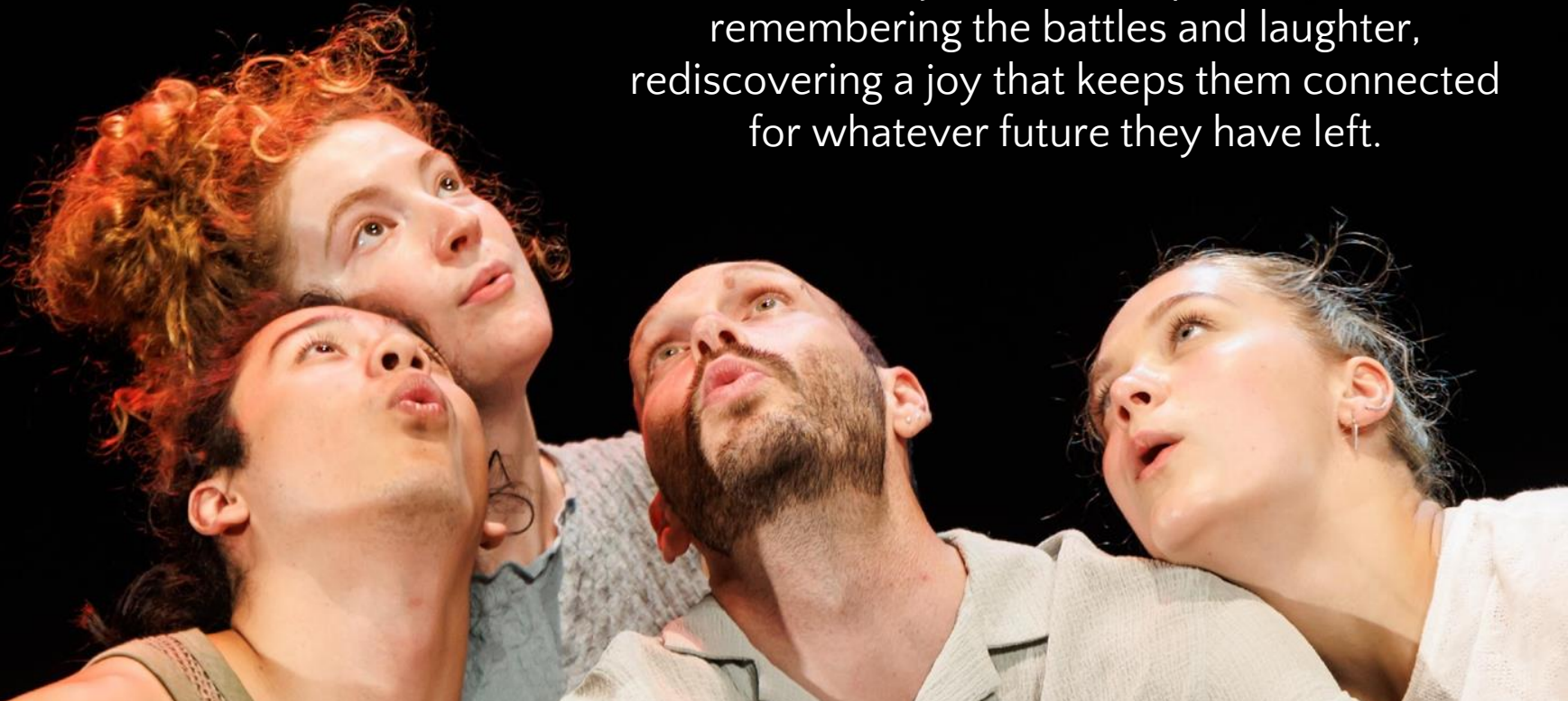
SAND

Spring 2025 Tour Pack

SAND

Myles has dementia. Dilly must watch the love of her life drift away and battle with the erosion of his memories...but Dilly is not going to let Myles go easily!

Instead, they revisit their past together, remembering the battles and laughter, rediscovering a joy that keeps them connected for whatever future they have left.



About Kook Ensemble

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Kook Ensemble circus theatre brings together a team of world class theatre makers who create original and playful stories. We delight in blending the very best of circus and theatre arts, to create compelling non-verbal and highly visual theatre. Formed in 2023 and based in North Devon, we bring our unique voice in circus and skilled acrobatics to create characters and stories that fulfil our mission to bring connection, joy and open-hearted discovery to our audiences.



We are driven to create experiences that connect our audience to the environment and each other. We are committed to bringing the invisible into focus, to give voice to stories that go unheard and create ways for new friendships and communities to play, share, discover and build together.



SAND's Journey So Far...

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In August 2023, Kook launched its first activity, an ACE funded R & D on a new show using circus arts and theatre to explore the topic of Dementia against the backdrop of coastal erosion at the Landmark Theatre, North Devon.

This culminated in a sharing of the WIP 'SAND' at the Landmark and at the Memory cafes in Barnstaple. SAND follows Kook's first fully ACE funded show Filibuster, which premieres at the Landmark Theatre, before a short tour.



SAND plays with comedy and tenderness, discovery and loss, laughter and adventure. It is a playful story of love and loyalty, against the backdrop of erosion, of both our landscape and sometimes our identities.

Meet Our Team

Michaela O'Connor

Co-Director

Michaela is a trained physical actor, aerialist and director, whose work has taken her from the Royal Albert Hall and West End to Broadway. She has worked as a performer for Cirque Du Soleil, Dragone and Cameron Mackintosh, as well as a score of other leading companies internationally. Michaela specialises in highly physical ensemble circus work, having developed three major pieces in recent years for various venues in London. Michaela is also a core member of the National Centre for Circus Arts, where she is a leading member of the teaching faculty.

Sean Kempton

Co-Director

Sean is a hugely successful performer and director in circus and theatre. He continues to perform and develop work for Cirque Du Soleil and was an original cast member and comedy creator for Franco Dragones iconic Le Reve in Las Vegas. Most recent directorial work includes Underbelly's summer headline show at the South Bank London, National Romanian Circus' national tour, rewriting the clown content for the relaunch of Cirque Du Soleil's Kooza, and a co-commission by London Mime and Vamos theatre. Sean is currently working as a freelance director and creative artist on a number of projects across the UK.

Tracey-Anne Cutbush

Creative Producer

Tracey-Anne is a freelance director, producer and teacher, with a passion for building creative communities and advocating for the power of the arts. She has worked extensively across the industry, from Fringe to West End to the Royal National Theatre, driven by the challenge of breaking new ground and building new partnerships. Tracey-Anne is a highly experienced facilitator and arts education specialist leading co-creative projects that focus on building new work, artists and audiences. Most recently she has led the National Theatre's Schools Speak Up project for young people in North Devon.



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How Could We Help You Engage Your Community?

Alongside Sand's R and D, we kick started a mission to embed ourselves as facilitating artists working within the community in North Devon, with the collaboration and support of other Devon made arts organisations. We worked closely with the Memory Café, a dementia focussed charity and organisation that supports families and other members of the community affected by this cruel disease. We are planning to build on this relationship and create an adapted version of SAND that is suitable for those affected by dementia, and that can be performed anywhere!



Our love of making work means we welcome a conversation about what wraparound experiences we could offer your community. We are experienced facilitators and practitioners with lots of ideas to support your engagement programme.

Open Door collaboration is a guiding principle for us. Inspired by the exposed backstage and scenery workshops at the National Theatre, we mirror this approach in the way we work. Our rehearsals and workshops are open to the public, inviting observation, curiosity and engagement, and striving to open hearts and minds to creativity, community and play.

In the last 12 months, we have delivered...

Arts Award sessions & Q&A.

3 Workshops with young circus performers and acrobats.

1-2-1 masterclass offering access to career progression and professional pathways.

2-hour workshop with local youth theatre.

Memory Café showing followed by company Meet and Greet.

8 Workshops for local artists.

Running a continuing programme of workshops for theatre artists in Devon

2 days of Circus theatre skills at Landmark Theatres

Training Circus Arts teachers across 5 regional UK circus schools

Engagement Feedback

"A fresh perspective on making work and ideas for how to develop our creative practice."

"...my heart felt every emotion, every piece of empathy I have for people living with dementia who are living or have died that I have cared for came back... you couldn't have got this any more perfect. Astonishing piece of art and movement. This needs to be shown to more people"
 Kerri Turton
 (Dementia Health Care Professional)

"The absolute highlight was the slow-motion juggling with feathers, which had everyone mesmerised and holding their collective breath! It was moving to see the man with blowing the feather back to the juggler - he was totally caught up in that moment and was delighted to join in. Your performance was totally engaging for the people with their carers and they have already asked me when you are coming back!"
 Anne McKiernan (Dementia Expert /Manager of Barnstaple Memory Café)

"...it felt like a breath of fresh air, and a great opportunity to explore creative play in an open and non-judgmental space. The experience made my week!"

"I am always looking for the opportunity to stretch myself. When I started acting about ten years ago, I was living away and joined a lot of courses and acting groups. I was always discovering new disciplines. When I returned to North Devon, I really felt the lack of classes such as the great one you offered us today. Long may it continue."

"It was an honour to see what you guys are doing first hand, keep up the good work"
 Mayor of Ilfracombe

"Having such a great session available on my doorstep was honestly amazing."

"I can't believe how lucky we are to have these workshops."

"The workshop came at the perfect time for me ...very affirming, joyous and liberating. Loved it, thank you"

"An outstanding workshop. Sean's expertise and experience really shines through. A playful and creative workshop that will definitely help my creative practice in the future."



PERFORMANCE INFO

RUNNING TIME:
60-70 min

LANGUAGE:
Non-verbal

RECOMMENDED AUDIENCE:
From 8 years

TRIGGER WARNINGS:
Death, dementia, grief.



CAST: 4 artists

TOUR TEAM: 1 technician, 1 stage manager/engagement facilitator, 1 director/producer.

TRANSPORT: 1 Van

FIT UP/GET OUT: Sand will take approximately 6 hours to Fit Up and 1.5 hours to Get Out. The show can be performed twice a day with a 2-hour break.

PLAYING SPACE:
Floor – 8m x 5m. Height – 3.5m.

We are also committed to offering a wrap-around learning package to meet the needs of your community and venue. We are able to offer experiences from an open Q & A to CPD or bespoke workshops for target groups. Please enquire for more details.

SAND Credits:

Concept and Direction:

Sean Kempton
Michaela O'Connor

Sound Designer:

Peter Buffery

Designer:

Adrian Linfood

Composer:

Tayo Akinbode

Photography:

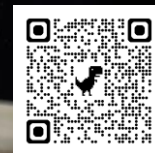
Roy Riley

For booking inquiries and further information, please contact:

Tracey-Anne Cutbush
Creative Producer
t-a@kookensemble.com

A reel of the show in progress is available on request.

www.kookensemble.com



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