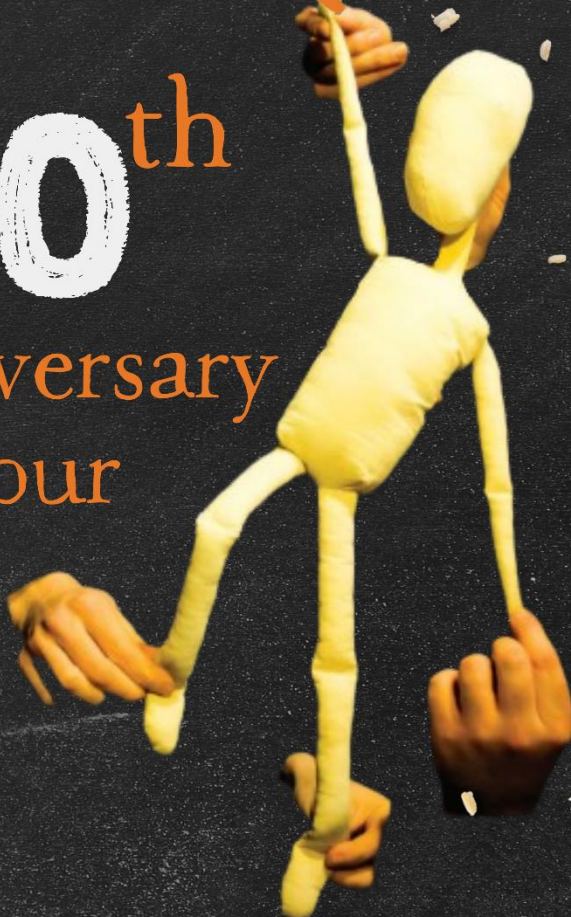


# Meet Freq

  
**Hijinx**  
in association with  
**BLindSumMiT**

**10<sup>th</sup>**  
Anniversary  
Tour



## Venue Pack

For more information about this production or to book please contact Ellis Wrightbrook on  
+44 (0)2920 300331 or email [ellis.wrightbrook@hijinx.org.uk](mailto:ellis.wrightbrook@hijinx.org.uk)



## MEET THE TEAM

### CURRENT TOURING CAST

<b>The Director</b>	Gareth Clark (or Ben Pettitt-Wade)
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Gareth John (or Ffion Gwyther)
<b>Puppeteer &amp; Voice of 'Fred'</b>	Nick Halliwell
<b>Puppeteers</b>	Llŷr Williams Jennie Rawling
<b>Lucille/ The Maker</b>	Lindsay Spellman
<b>Jack Johnson</b>	Iwan Jones

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### CREATIVE TEAM

<b>Director</b>	Ben Pettitt-Wade
<b>Senior Producer</b>	Ellis Wrightbrook
<b>Production Manager</b>	Tom Ayres
<b>Lighting Designer</b>	Ceri James
<b>Original 'Fred Theme Tune'</b>	Jonathan Dunn
<b>Puppetry Dramaturgs</b>	Tom Espiner & Giulia Innocenti (for Blind Summit)

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### WITH THANKS TO

<b>Original Devising Cast</b>	Lindsay Foster, Dan McGowan, Richard Newnham, Craig Quat, Morgan Thomas & Martin Vick
<b>R&amp;D Devisors</b>	Jon Dafydd-Kidd, Denni Dennis, Ellen Groves & Hijinx South Academy 1
<b>Puppet Design</b>	Mark Down at Blind Summit
<b>Puppet Build</b>	Russell Dean at Strangeface Theatre Co.



*The original cast pictured in 2016. (Credit: Tom Beardshaw)*

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## **BIOS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **HIJINX**

Hijinx is an award-winning, inclusive theatre company based in Cardiff, creating bold, high-quality productions. We believe in breaking down barriers in the arts, and all our productions feature learning disabled and autistic performers alongside neurotypical performers. To support this work, we run a network of Academies across Wales, offering professional performance training to neurodivergent actors—many of whom face significant barriers to accessing traditional drama schools. In 2024, we established The Ensemble, a selection of Academy members that research and develop future production concepts and potentially go on to bring these ideas to life, ensuring that every show is built on genuine talent, collaboration, and equality.

Since its premiere in 2016, Meet Fred has toured extensively across the UK and internationally, performing in over 20 countries across Europe, Asia, and North America. The show has captivated audiences worldwide with its sharp humour and powerful message about control, independence, and what it means to be human. Meet Fred features three exceptional learning disabled performers, all of whom played a key role in devising the production. As we celebrate its 10th anniversary tour, we remain as committed as ever to challenging perceptions and championing truly inclusive theatre on a global scale.

### **BLIND SUMMIT**

Based in London, Blind Summit is recognised as one of the UK's most exciting companies working with puppetry. They have had huge success with productions such as *The Table* and *Citizen Puppet*, and often work with companies such as Complicite and ENO. Hijinx came into contact with Blind Summit in April 2014 when we invited them to run a week's training in puppetry for our Academy students in Cardiff. We were joined by three of their artists, including Artistic Director Mark Down, it was during this week that the seed for making an inclusive production with a puppet was sown. Blind Summit have supported us throughout the process, from their designers making a set of puppets for us to train and explore with, and providing associate artists Tom Espiner and Giulia Innocenti to work with us during the research and development stage for the project and rehearsals.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION: CREATING 'MEET FRED'**

As we explored the idea of creating an inclusive show with a puppet, the parallels between life for a puppet and the experiences of the learning disabled artists we work with quickly became clear. Just as many of the people we collaborate with rely on support to live independently, Fred depends entirely on his three puppeteers simply to exist. This relationship of dependence and interdependence mirrors the reality faced by many learning disabled and disabled people in everyday life.

In any devised process, the people in the room shape the direction a piece takes, influenced by their lived experiences at that moment. As we were making this show, our learning disabled performers were navigating the upheaval caused by sweeping changes to the benefits system. We asked ourselves: what would life be like for Fred in this environment? What if he were threatened with losing his Puppetry Living Allowance? Without his puppeteers, could he survive at all?

Suddenly, what began as a whimsical puppet show took on a serious political edge. Yet, rather than losing its humour, the absurdity of the situation only heightened when seen through the eyes of our puppet hero. The result is a show that is both hilarious and sharply satirical, holding a mirror to the real-world struggles of those who rely on support to live with dignity.

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*Iwan Jones as 'Jack Johnson'. (Credit: Jorge Lizalde)*

## MARKETING INFORMATION

The production should be billed as: **“Hijinx, in association with Blind Summit, present Meet Fred”**

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### SHORT FORM COPY (For print, social media etc. – 60 words)

Ten years, 20+ countries, and countless laughs later, *Meet Fred* is back!

This darkly funny, internationally acclaimed satire follows Fred, a puppet fighting for his independence as his Puppetry Living Allowance is under threat. A hilariously subversive take on bureaucracy, disability rights, and what it means to be human. **Contains strong language and puppet nudity.**

*"Sharp, funny and vastly entertaining" – Lyn Gardner, for the Guardian ★★★★★*

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### LONG FORM COPY (For website etc. – 200 words)

A decade ago, a two-foot-tall puppet took on the world—and he’s still fighting.

After touring 20+ countries and delighting thousands of audiences, *Meet Fred* returns to the UK for its 10th anniversary tour. This darkly hilarious, critically acclaimed production follows Fred, a cloth puppet just trying to live an ordinary life—get a job, find love, be part of society. But with his Puppetry Living Allowance under threat, Fred’s world spirals out of control. How do you hold on to independence when *the system* is designed to pull the strings?

With biting wit, razor-sharp political satire, and moments of unexpected tenderness, *Meet Fred* is an unmissable comedy that has resonated with audiences across the globe. Created by award-winning inclusive theatre company Hijinx, the show features a stellar cast of performers with and without learning disabilities (and/or Autism), whose lived experiences bring depth and authenticity to Fred’s struggle.

Celebrating 10 years of making audiences laugh, gasp, and rethink the world around them, *Meet Fred* is as urgent and relevant today as ever. **Contains strong language and puppet nudity.**

*"A real marvel... essential viewing for humans and puppets everywhere" – Total Theatre ★★★★★*

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This is the copy we feel best captures the spirit of the show, but if you'd like to tweak the wording to suit your audience, that’s no problem! Just pop it over to [ellis.wrightbrook@hijinx.org.uk](mailto:ellis.wrightbrook@hijinx.org.uk) for approval first.

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Original puppeteers Morgan Thomas (L) and Dan McGowan (R). (Credit: Holger Rudolph)

## QUOTES AND REVIEWS

Sharp, funny and vastly entertaining – *Lyn Gardner for The Guardian*.

★★★★★ Packed full of first-rate theatrical invention, irreverent revelling, and with an urgent human story at its heart, Meet Fred is a real marvel. Essential viewing for humans and puppets everywhere. – *Total Theatre*.

★★★★★ The humour here is brilliantly black with mordant social and political relevance. – *The Herald*.

★★★★★ Meet Fred is an ingeniously conceived, hilarious and truly unmissable piece of theatre. – *Broadway Baby*.

★★★★★ Every moment of this show is captivating. – *To Do List*.

★★★★★ Prepare to be tickled and devastated in equal measure. – *The Upcoming*.

★★★★★ A prime example of emotional manipulation, in all the best ways! – *The List*.

★★★★★ A celebration of cooperation and collaboration, of people combining their strengths to create something joyous. – *The Stage*.

...and perhaps most importantly, here's what audiences are saying about Meet Fred:

<https://www.hijinx.org.uk/meet-fred-programme/> (scroll to the bottom to reach the comments box)

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*Puppeteer Jennie Rawling. (Credit: Kirsten McTernan)*

## SUPPORTING MATERIALS

### VIDEOS

**Trailer** - <https://youtu.be/Ua56ND58xGc> (updated version to follow)

**Meet The Creators** - <https://vimeo.com/603859428?share=copy#t=0> (Facebook Live Q&A, hosted during lockdown with Ben Pettitt-Wade, Mark Down and guests. BSL by Tony Evans)

**Full Performance** - <https://youtu.be/vZ-ntCQVnnoo?feature=shared&t=586>

(Recorded at Beverley Puppet Festival (East Riding Theatre) on 17/07/2022).

Please do not share this link wider, it is only intended for potential venue/bookers to view.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

**Production Photographs** - [View and download current production photos](#)

Note: email [ellis.wrightbrook@hijinx.org.uk](mailto:ellis.wrightbrook@hijinx.org.uk) for access if this link has expired.

### ACCESS

#### British Sign Language (BSL)

We can supply the script and a full recording of the show to help with preparations.

#### Audio Description (AD)

As above, but also the AD script – compiled by Audio Describer Alastair Sill.

We have BSL & AD contacts that have supported Meet Fred in the past, and *may* be willing to travel. Let Ellis know if you'd like an introduction made.



*Fred drinking at the bar. (Credit: Holger Rudolph)*

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## BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

**Age Guidance:** Recommended 14+ contains strong language, adult themes and puppet nudity.  
**Running time:** 80 minutes with no interval.

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

**General:** Meet Fred travels with 7 performers, 1 technician and 1 creative enabler. Sometimes we need to bring 2 creative enablers, if members of the cast require extra support.

**Get-In Time Needed:** 3 hours

**Get-Out Time Needed:** 1 hour

**Touring Set:** Five 6x8ft flats and two flight cases (both fitted with batteries and supply 12v power for birdies), two chairs, a wooden ladder and various props. Picture below.

**Venue requirements:** Most suited to studio spaces, with tiered seating, of capacity 80-200.  
 Minimum playing space: 6m wide / 4.5m deep / 3m high.  
 A "Black Box" style space is ideal, with a black stage surface preferred. The stage should be surrounded by black or similarly dark-coloured walls or drapes, and there should be at least one entrance/exit to the backstage area.  
 We need x1 seat reserved in the auditorium for 'The Director' character to be positioned pre-show.

**Sound:** All sound playback is cued from a laptop /iPad at the lighting op position. There is no live sound in the production and no fallback is required on stage.

**LX:** Please see LX plan below. We will bring our own LX desk and all fixtures on the floor/booms. Where possible, we prefer the venue to pre-rig the FOH and side bars.  
 This plan can be adapted to suit your venue, contact our production manager [tom.ayres@hijinx.org.uk](mailto:tom.ayres@hijinx.org.uk) to discuss.

**Misc.:** A smoke machine (that we provide) will be used twice during the performance. There is no strobe lighting. The show will be captioned in English, with over 10 other translations available. Let us know if you'd like a different language.

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**Meet Fred**

Venue: Generic

Designer: Tom Ayres

02/10/18

**Light Plot**

- LED Parcans, Smoke machine and Birdie are on the floor and provided by Hijinx.
- Fixtures on FOH bar to be provided by the venue
- Fresnels on FOH can be replaced with PC or Profile where necessary

**Key**

Color	Channel	Profile	M16 Parcan Birdie	RGB LED parcan

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## COSTS AND TOURING INFORMATION

Currently taking bookings for: **January – March 2026**  
**However, please still enquire if you are interested other dates.**

**Performance Fee:**

- 1 day** booking **£2,000** = Get in + 1 (evening) performance.
- 2 day** booking **£3,800** = Max 3 shows. Two evenings and/or matinees.
- 3 day** booking **£5,400** = Max 5 shows. Popular for festivals or weekend runs.
- 4 day** booking **£6,000** = Max 6 shows. Best for community/school matinees.
- 5 day** booking **£6,250** = Max 7 shows. Full week offer, maximum value.

NOTE: The above rates are subsidised, and therefore dependant on a successful funding application to ACW & ACE. The rates include all associated travel, accommodation, per diems and access costs for the touring company, plus a contribution to venue marketing (inc delivered print if required).  
Hijinx will invoice in GBP and are not VAT registered.

**Touring Party:** 9 adults (7 Performers, 1 Technician, 1 Creative Enabler).  
Sometimes we need 2 Creative Enablers, and will confirm this asap after any booking.

**Dressing Rooms:** Two private and secure dressing rooms are required, each comfortably accommodating up to six people.

### Contact

Hijinx Office:  
+44 (0)2920 300331

For Bookings & Administration:

**Ellis Wrightbrook**  
[ellis.wrightbrook@hijinx.org.uk](mailto:ellis.wrightbrook@hijinx.org.uk)  
+44 (0)75210 51417

For Technical:

**Tom Ayres**  
[tom.ayres@hijinx.org.uk](mailto:tom.ayres@hijinx.org.uk)  
+44 (0)75844 17998



*Gareth Clark as 'The Director'. (Credit: Jorge Lizalde)*

### Social Media

Website: [www.hijinx.org.uk/meet-fred](http://www.hijinx.org.uk/meet-fred)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/hijinxtheatre](https://www.facebook.com/hijinxtheatre)  
Instagram: @hijinxtheatre

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