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TRP Press Contact: Chris Baker, [chris.baker@theatreroyal.com](mailto:chris.baker@theatreroyal.com)

**For Immediate Release**

## **TRP STORIES: Ally Bryan**

***“Funky Llama has given me so much. I’m a whole new person.”***



**WATCH – Interview with Ally: [youtu.be/eqxhhtmBh60](https://youtu.be/eqxhhtmBh60)**

Musician Ally Bryan says she is a “whole new person” since she has been part of Theatre Royal Plymouth’s engagement and learning project Funky Llama, having gained confidence, opportunities and friendships.

Ally’s journey into theatre started when she was attending digital orchestra sessions at Plymouth Music Zone.

*“After college, I was really isolated so my social worker thought it would be a good place for me to go. Funky Llama came in and did a group session and I was invited to come along and be a participant.*

*“I’d gone to see shows at the theatre growing up and my primary school offered free trips here, so I saw a lot as a child and was quite familiar with the theatre. I quite liked musicals, but when I came to see Woman in Black, that was my favourite, still to this day.”*

Ally recalls attending her first Funky Llama session.

*"I was just beginning to gain more confidence through Plymouth Music Zone and at Funky Llama, I was thrown in the deep end. I was asked to sit at the piano and come up with some chords for everyone to play to.*

*"It was nerve-wracking, but it was good and it's given me so much confidence."*

One element of Funky Llama which Ally enjoys the most is working with such a friendly group of people.

*"There's no judgement and I can be who I am, whereas in other settings I can't.*

*"I love seeing how these strangers at some point can come together and create music, dance and singing.*

*"Funky Llama has given me so much and without it, I wouldn't have the opportunities that I've had, and I know that they're there for me if I need anything."*

Ally believes attending Plymouth Music Zone and Funky Llama helped her to begin a new chapter of her life.

*"Before that, I was quite sad, and I'd been through quite a lot of trauma. Then this whole new person came out. I was running groups, telling people what to do, sharing my ideas and creativity. I'm a whole new person."*

During lockdown, Ally became part of the Funky Llama steering group, a team of around 15 people, leading the direction of Funky Llama. The team create new ideas for social events and provide insight into improving accessibility at TRP.

*"I started the group over Zoom, so I hadn't met most of the people in person until quite recently. I love being able to see the nitty gritty of all the events we put on and how we can help with accessibility inside and outside the theatre."*

Ally's biggest passion is music. She started playing the piano in her bedroom around 10 years ago.

*"It wasn't until I was in college that I started writing music. I really loved it and continued down that path."*

Ally's talents didn't go unnoticed and in early 2022, she was asked to compose the music for the regional Green Space, Dark Skies project on Dartmoor.

This special outdoor event involved performers, circus specialists and choirs exploring the preciousness and power of water in the beautiful landscape at Meldon Dam.

The event celebrated nature, our responsibility to protect it and everyone's right to explore the countryside, whilst creating a memorable and magical piece of artwork together. [You can watch the final piece here.](#)

*“I wrote the original piece mid-lockdown and it was about this big crash into the earth and that’s what I felt Covid had done to us and because it was filmed in a dam, it just fitted together nicely.*

*“I loved every minute and learned so much. There were so many people involved. I want to do the project all over again!*

*“I really struggled with Covid lockdowns but when I started working on these projects and then the steering group came along, that set off a whole new me.”*

## ENDS

For further information please contact the Media and Communications team on [public.relations@theatreroyal.com](mailto:public.relations@theatreroyal.com) / 01752 230439

**Theatre Royal Plymouth (TRP)** is a registered charity providing art, education and community engagement in Plymouth and across the region. It engages and inspires with the aim of touching lives. Theatre Royal Plymouth presents a year-round programme of world class productions on all scales as the South West’s principal centre for performing arts.

Theatre Royal Plymouth works with partners to understand the challenges people face accessing the arts, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged people. It creates pathways that are genuinely accessible to those who might otherwise never get to engage with the arts. They collaborate to co-create and co-author work that represents the community, creating the space needed for people to tell their story in their own way.

Theatre Royal Plymouth is the UK’s largest regional producing theatre. With a focus on embracing the vitality of new talent and supporting emerging and established artists. It collaborates with a range of partners to provide dynamic cultural leadership for the city of Plymouth.