

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Octagon Theatre have fun for all the family this summer!

Free three-day Family Festival returns this August bank holiday.

Families can enjoy an 'Around the World' extravaganza at this year's third annual **Family Festival** from the **Octagon Theatre**.

The Octagon is partnering with **Bolton Council** to make the Family Festival integral to the Bolton Food & Drink Festival, with grant funding from **Arts Council England**.

This free event, which takes place across the bank holiday weekend, from **Fri 25 – Sun 27 August** will include a jam-packed programme across the three days, both inside the Octagon as well as an array of outdoor activities in Bolton town centre – in what is guaranteed to be the biggest and best Family Festival to date.

Promising fun for all ages, visitors can enjoy interactive storytelling and workshops, arts and crafts, puppetry performances, family disco, live outdoor performances and parades, and much more.

To tie into the Octagon's festive show, which this year is a brand-new musical adaptation of the classic adventure book **Around the World in 80 Days**, the theme of this year's festival is 'Around the World', with all activities taking inspiration from this theme.

Eye of Newt Theatre Company will be entertaining audiences in the main auditorium with their **interactive sessions** including elements of storytelling, music and comical puppet characters.

Venture through the forest to explore the enchanting story of Hansel and Gretel, told by a professional actor with an Octagon twist!

Pop on the dancing shoes and get ready for a magical underwater adventure in the Under the Sea inspired **Family Disco** in the Octagon Studio. Participants of all ages can showcase their best grooves and learn all the moves from the fabulous dance artist leading the sessions.

Get creative in a series of **arts and crafts workshops** inspired by the theme of travel led by professional artists.

There will also be a dedicated **Sanctuary Space** where families can unwind and get creative with a hive of fun and creative crafts to enjoy, as well as an array of sensory activities.

In its biggest ever programme, the Octagon's Family Festival will also be spilling out across the town centre with a variety of outdoor performances, which will include puppetry, circus skills, magical bubbles, family theatre and parades.

Taylor Barnes, Family Engagement Lead at the Octagon said: *“Bolton Food and Drink Festival is one of the biggest events in Bolton’s calendar, with thousands of families visiting the town centre to enjoy the fantastic atmosphere. We know how important it is for families to be able to access free, creative activities throughout the weekend and we’re pleased to be able to offer even more for families this year. We can’t wait to welcome everyone into Bolton and into the Octagon Theatre and are looking forward to seeing lots of happy faces enjoying performances, storytelling and much more!”*

Bolton Council’s Executive Cabinet Member for Culture, Cllr Nadeem Ayub, said: *“I am proud of our partnership working with The Octagon Theatre and delighted that they are delivering this free, family focused event as part of the festival weekend.*

“Working together with partners enables us to raise the profile of Bolton’s cultural offer, boost footfall and enhance the visitor experience.

“Bringing people into the town is a priority and events like this are a key driver.”

There will be free bookable slots for the indoor activities each day of the festival, 10am – 12:30pm and 1pm – 3pm.

All activities at the Octagon Family Festival are free but activities in the Octagon building require a wristband and must be booked in advance. Free wristbands can be booked now via the Octagon’s website octagonbolton.co.uk or by calling the Box Office on **01204 520 661**.

As well as the Family Festival, there’s lots more going on at Bolton Food and Drink Festival for all the family. From celebrity chef demos with Gok Wan, Nisha Katona and James Martin to bottomless brunch, comedy dining experiences and The Afterparty with Gok Wan & Co. All this fun is topped off with lots of artisan stalls, live music stages, bars, children’s activities and regional chef demos. Visit www.boltonfoodanddrinkfestival.com for more info.

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octagonbolton.co.uk
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Also coming up for families this summer, the Octagon will be taking storytelling on tour with free family storytelling and craft sessions at libraries across Bolton, as part of their **Sharing Stories** community project. Libraries on the tour include: **Central Library (Sat 22 July)**; **Farnworth Library (Fri 28 July)**; **Brightmet Library (Tue 1 August)**; **Horwich Library (Fri 11 August)**; **High Street Library (Thu 17 August)**; **Westhoughton Library (Mon 21 August)**. Full info can be found on the Octagon website.

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For interview and other press requests please contact Dan Hicklin on
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Octagon Theatre Bolton

Octagon Theatre Bolton is a regional producing theatre that makes bold, adventurous and popular theatre of the highest quality that is seen locally and nationally. We believe theatre matters because everyone's story matters. The Octagon inspires engages and entertains thousands every year through theatre and creative activities, contributing to a healthier and happier community. The Octagon reopened in May 2021, following a major redevelopment funded by Bolton Council and Arts Council England and many others. The Octagon receives public funding through Arts Council England, Bolton Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Principal Sponsorship from the University of Bolton. The Octagon was shortlisted for Theatre of the Year at the 2023 The Stage Awards.

