

Puppet State Theatre Company

JRR Tolkien's

Leaf by  
Niggle

Tour and  
Made in Scotland showcase  
report 2016



1 little gem of a story

9 collaborative artists

41 performances

3,164 people attended



Presented at:

- The Studio, Festival and Kings Theatres, Edinburgh
- Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling
- Tron Theatre, Glasgow
- Howden Park Centre, Livingston
- The Kirkgate, Cockermouth
- Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal
- Druimfin, Tobermory
- Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline
- Theatre Royal, Dumfries
- The CatStrand, New Galloway
- Eden Court, Inverness
- Woodend Barn, Banchory
- Eastgate Theatre, Peebles
- Universal Hall, Findhorn
- Scottish Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh
- Tolkien Society Conference, Oxford

Artists:

Richard Medrington	Performer
Elsbeth Murray	Company & Stage Manager
Andy Cannon	Director
Karine Polwart & Michael John McCarthy	Composers & Sound Designers
Ailie Cohen	Design Support
Janice Parker	Movement Support
Gerron Stewart	Lighting & Production Management
Alice McGrath	Producer

“ If you had to mention the greatest writers about journeys, Tolkien would be up there with Homer and John Bunyan. For me bringing *Leaf by Niggle* to the stage has already been a fairly epic journey, spanning 23 years.

I first applied to the Tolkien Trust for permission to stage the story in 1993, and in 2013 they granted it. Now it is 2016 and since April we have premiered the show at the Festival Theatre Studio, toured Scotland and the North of England, had a run at the Edinburgh Fringe as part of the Made in Scotland Showcase and performed for 267 members of the Tolkien Society at St Antony's College, Oxford and received a full standing ovation.

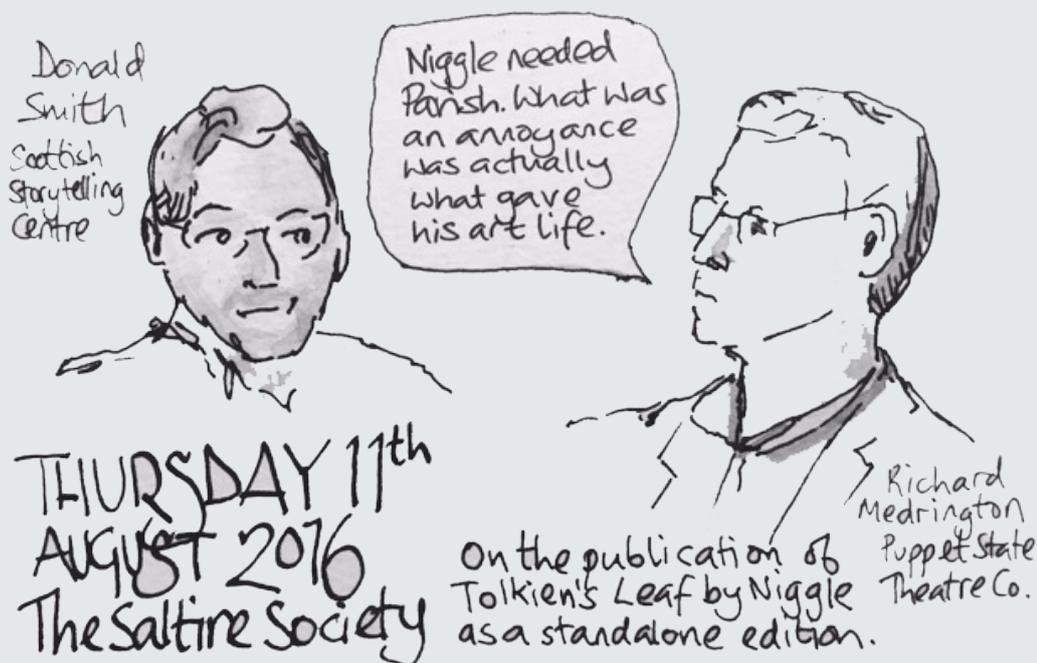
In July HarperCollins published a new edition of *Leaf by Niggle* to coincide with the production, using our artwork and crediting us on the back cover.

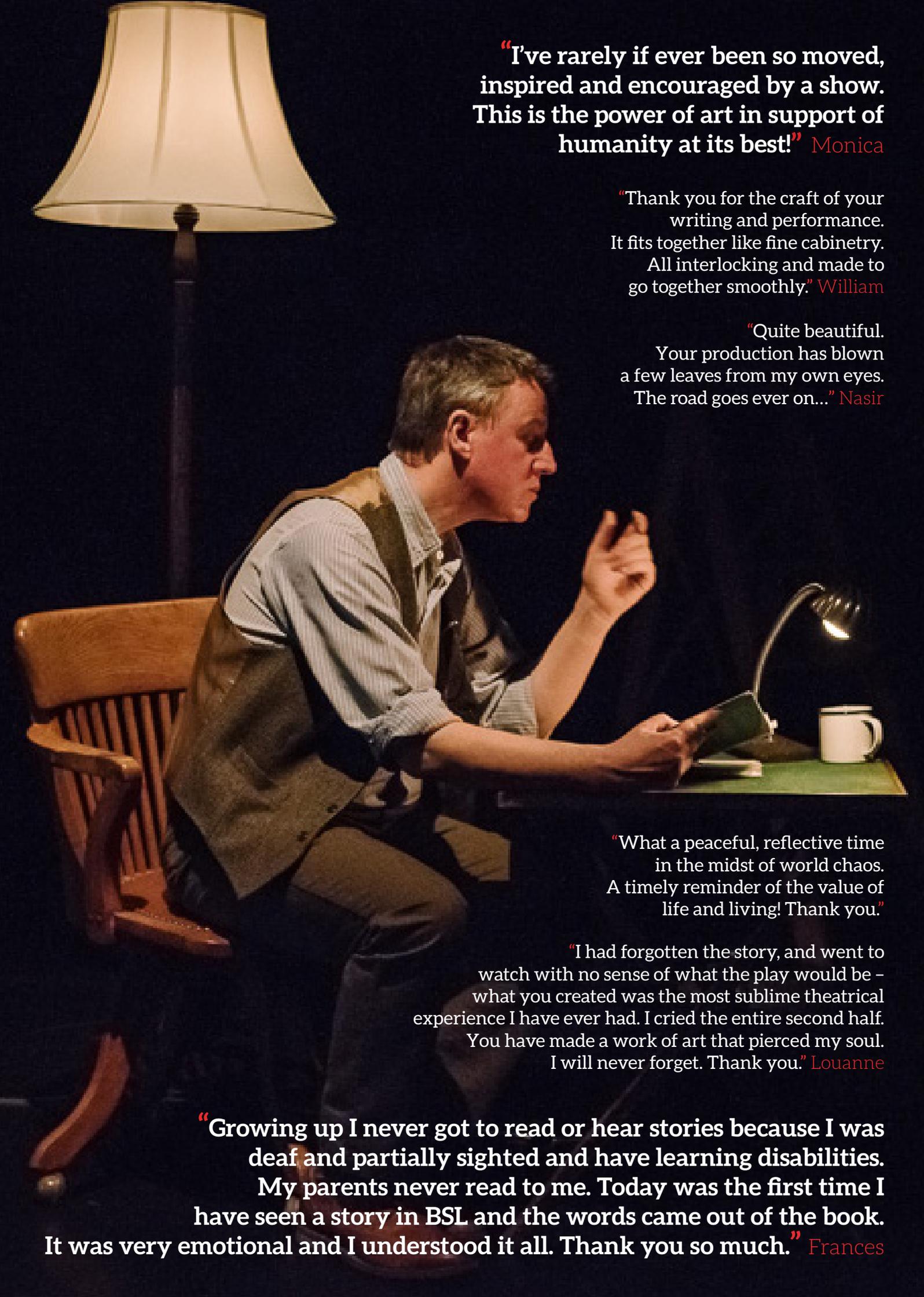
It is the first time the story has ever been published on its own, and hundreds of copies have already been sold.

Of course none of this would have been possible without tremendous support - from the Tolkien Trust, from Creative Scotland and from a wonderful team of people including Karine Polwart, MJ McCarthy, Andy Cannon, Ailie Cohen, Janice Parker, Gerron Stewart, Alice McGrath and Elspeth Murray (to name but a few!)

I have been telling stories since 1984 and I have never known such a positive response from audiences to a show. The contents of our guest book are testimony to the power of the story. It is very gratifying to think that our production has helped to bring this forgotten masterpiece by one of our greatest writers into the daylight where it belongs. ”

Richard Medrington





**“I’ve rarely if ever been so moved, inspired and encouraged by a show. This is the power of art in support of humanity at its best!”** *Monica*

“Thank you for the craft of your writing and performance. It fits together like fine cabinetry. All interlocking and made to go together smoothly.” *William*

“Quite beautiful. Your production has blown a few leaves from my own eyes. The road goes ever on...” *Nasir*

“What a peaceful, reflective time in the midst of world chaos. A timely reminder of the value of life and living! Thank you.”

“I had forgotten the story, and went to watch with no sense of what the play would be – what you created was the most sublime theatrical experience I have ever had. I cried the entire second half. You have made a work of art that pierced my soul. I will never forget. Thank you.” *Louanne*

**“Growing up I never got to read or hear stories because I was deaf and partially sighted and have learning disabilities. My parents never read to me. Today was the first time I have seen a story in BSL and the words came out of the book. It was very emotional and I understood it all. Thank you so much.”** *Frances*

**“Thank you.  
A lovely story about all of us.  
We are all important and at  
the same time, little people.”** David

From Puppet State's  
Leaf By Niggle  
Guest Book 2016

“We are very grateful we could be here. 18 Hobbits,  
Elves, Dwarves and Men of the Polish Tolkien Society.”

“Absolutely loved it. Thank you so much for a  
wonderful hour and for inspiring me to read.  
You must show this to schools. It will start  
a revolution of reading.” Florence

“After listening to Leaf by Niggle I just took  
a giant deep breath. I've read Lord of the Rings  
but to see another piece by Tolkien it's awe  
inspiring and it puts life in perspective  
especially for a kid like me.”

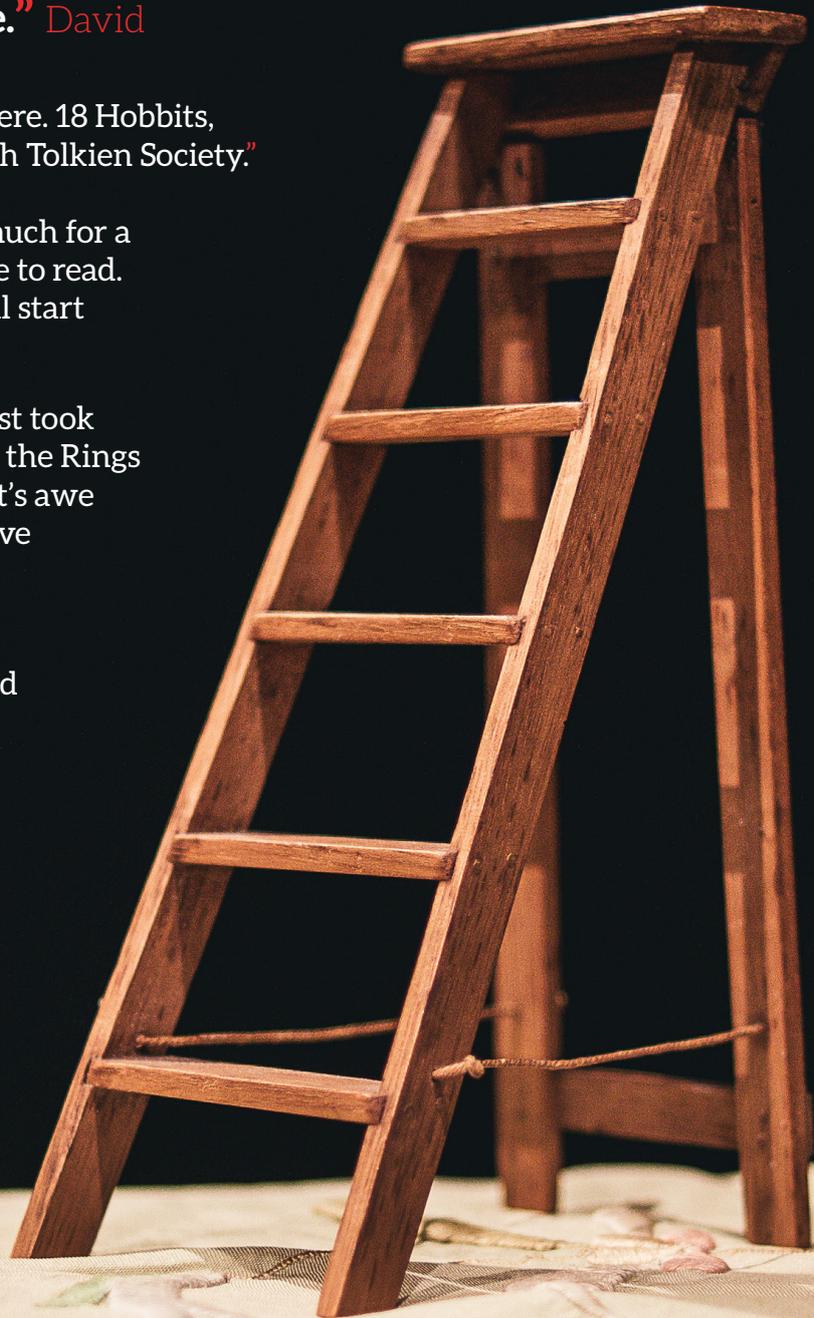
Ben (11 years old)

“Thank you for such a wonderful and  
unique show. This is the best, most  
original thing I've seen in years.  
The words 'pure' and 'honest'  
spring to mind.” Christine

“Enchanting story, captivating and  
very majestic. Almost angelic.”

Megan, age 13

“I thought I was too young to  
like it because I'm only 8  
but I loved it.” Gregory



**“I’ve never been involved in a creative process of quite the kind I witnessed this week with Tree And Leaf. What a breath of fresh air to discuss actual meaning in such a deep and meaningful way. It was inspiring and challenging on an intellectual, emotional and creative level... This might actually transform the way I work myself and how I value the skills and ideas I have and identify in others.”**

**Karine Polwart**



## Press

“Exquisite ... so beautifully told ... completely seductive” ★★★★★ The Scotsman

“intricately layered telling of Tolkien's short story” ★★★★★ The Stage

“As with all good short stories, this one expands in the imagination.  
Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow, indeed” ★★★★★ The Times.

“If you use even a tiny amount of your imagination, a picture forms in your head  
and then, a story starts forming too. I really really loved it.”

★★★★★ All Edinburgh Theatre, Junior Review

“an exceptional story teller ... difficult to fault” ★★★★★ Young Perspectives

“a simple but charming theatrical experience” ★★★★★ The Reviews Hub

“rich and complex ... universal and timeless” ★★★★★ TV Bomb

“shines with style” ★★★★★ Edinburgh Guide

“unhurried story-telling that brings a wistful charm to complex issues”

★★★★★ The Herald

“a salve on the soul” ★★★★★ The List

“Tolkien’s lord of small things...enchanted one-man show” ★★★★★ The Guardian



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Jo Lennie, Maria Macdonald, Maggie Mckeown,  
EJ Medrington, Paradise Green, Judith Procter,  
Puppet Animation Scotland, Valerie Reid, Cerin Richardson,  
Scottish Storytelling Centre, Donald Smith, Phyllis Steel,  
Geoffrey Stevenson, Tolkien Society, Jennifer Williams, Emma Young



### About Puppet State

Puppet State Theatre Company, based in Edinburgh, was founded by Richard Medrington. After performing his one-man puppet shows for 20 years he joined forces with puppeteer Rick Conte and puppeteer and maker Ailie Cohen in 2006 to create *The Man Who Planted Trees*.

Since 2009 Puppet State Theatre Company has been a registered charity (OSCR charity number SC040201) and a company limited by guarantee (company number 353435).

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