

Sing hello to the Sun

Project Report

May 2026

THE CIVIC





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Background and Intro

'Sing hello to the Sun', is a new show designed for Babies and Toddlers 0-3years, created and presented by Rachel Drew, Associate Artist, and produced by The Civic, as part of our Education programme 2026.

Rachel Drew, commenced work as an Artist making wonderful new work for Babies and Early Years, as part of The Civic Education programme in January 2025. She is well known and has a great following for her regular sing-a-long sessions for babies and toddlers in South Dublin Libraries.

With the support of The Arts Council Rachel has been appointed as an Associate Artist of The Civic to develop her work and style as an Artist, to incubate her ideas, design and shape memorable live shows for babies and toddlers to enjoy and experience and gain feedback from the grown ups!

'Sing hello to The Sun' follows on from the success of Rachel's work in progress show "Soothing Songs" on 27th and 28th May 2025 with four performances and Singing in the Rain show, as part of the Cruinniú na nÓg festival 2025. In 2025 these Babies and Early Years shows engaged with a total of 46 Children 0-3yrs and 37 Adults (parents/guardians).

Rachel believes that experiencing live singing can help babies and young children develop non-musical skills such as language and speech development, numeracy, motor coordination, and social interaction. Rachel aims to empower and enable parents and guardians to enjoy and utilise the benefits of singing such as improving the bond with their child and supporting their child's development in a high-quality and relaxed setting.



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Artist Bio

Tallaght native **Rachel Drew** (née O'Brien) is an early years artist, singer-songwriter and performer who creates original musical and theatrical experiences for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups. As **Associate Artist at the Civic Theatre**, she develops work that explores the relationship between live singing, storytelling, theatre and early childhood, with a particular focus on connection, curiosity and shared participation.



Rachel is an accomplished singer and songwriter and plays guitar and ukulele. She released an EP of original songs to critical acclaim in 2006 which Hotpress magazine described as “An impressive debut which augurs well for the future.” (2007)

She returned to higher education in 2010 to further her knowledge of music. Graduating in 2014 with a first-class honours in Applied Music at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Rachel was then awarded a scholarship from DkIT and completed a Masters in Music by research in 2017 (DCU).

In 2018, Rachel developed a business and musical experience with a foundation in performance, academic research and practical experience. This innovative community music enterprise, **“Let’s Sing!”** intrinsically links singing and development and aims to improve social development and interaction through singing in a fun, creative and active music-making environment.

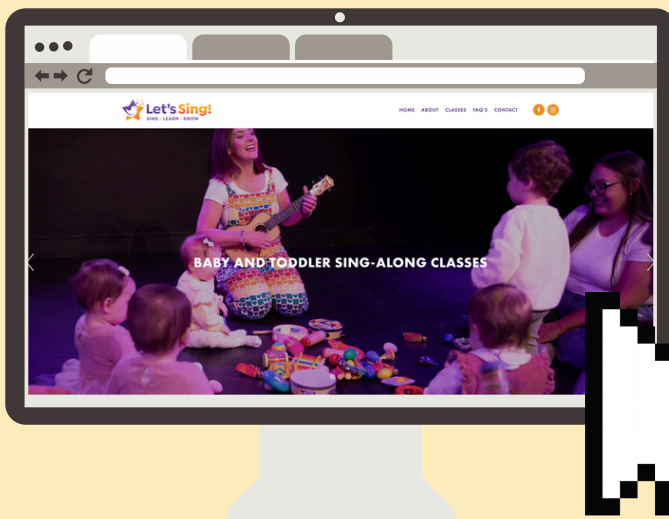
Alongside leading her community music initiative Let's Sing!, Rachel's artistic practice has increasingly focused on creating immersive theatre for very young audiences. Through original songs, live music, movement and carefully crafted theatrical environments, she creates shared experiences that invite children and their grown-ups into moments of wonder, play and connection.

Her work is informed by many years of experience as a music facilitator, working with babies, preschool children, families, older adults and people with additional needs across community, educational and cultural settings. This breadth of experience has shaped her belief in the power of live singing to foster connection, communication and wellbeing.

As Associate Artist at the Civic Theatre, Rachel has created and developed a growing body of original work for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups, including:

- **Soothing Songs** – a work-in-progress performance for babies and early years audiences (May 2025).
- **Singing in the Rain** – an interactive early years performance presented as part of **Cruinniú na nÓg South Dublin 2025**.
- **Sing Hello to the Sun** – an original early years music theatre production featuring five original songs, presented across six performances in May 2026.

Through her work at the Civic Theatre, Rachel continues to develop her artistic practice by creating original music and theatre that places live singing, shared musical experiences and imaginative theatrical environments at the heart of early years arts.





4 Production Design

Sing Hello to the Sun was designed specifically for a black box theatre, with simplicity, flexibility, and ease of touring at the heart of the production. The show can be easily adapted and scaled for different venues while maintaining the intimacy and quality of the audience experience.



Created for small audiences of up to ten babies and their caregivers, the performance offers a calm, immersive environment where live music, gentle melodies, soft lighting, and sensory elements combine to create a welcoming theatrical experience. The intimate setting allows each child to engage with the music, instruments, and performer in a way that feels natural and playful.

Participation is always child-led. Babies are free to explore, move, observe, or simply relax and absorb the performance at their own pace. This responsive approach respects each child's individual stage of development while encouraging curiosity, interaction, and shared moments of connection between children, caregivers, and Rachel, the Performance Artist.



Rachel Drew's cheerful and soothing new songs incorporated in her warm style of dramatic storytelling was so well performed with ukulele, tambourine and harmonies. While introducing the Babies and Early years audience to engage with musical instruments and interact with tactile props in a welcoming and safe show space.



The Production:

Sing hello to the Sun, presented by Rachel Drew, Civic Associated Artist, new show for Babies + Toddlers 0-3yrs, directed and produced by Mary Sheehan on 19th-20th May 2026 for three performances per day. An uplifting and interactive musical show for babies (0-12 months), toddlers (1-3 years) and their grown-ups.

Sing Hello to the Sun is a gentle, magical live performance by Rachel Drew that follows the journey of the sun as it rises, shines and slowly sets at the end of the day. Through soothing original songs, simple melodies and playful musical moments, children are invited on a sensory journey from sunrise to sunset. Families sit together in a relaxed circle for this new babies and early years show. Rachel guides the audience through new songs with interactive movement, soft lights and sound exploration using props, and percussion instruments. With **60 Babies and Early Years participants and accompanied by 60 adults.**





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Audience experience

60 Babies and their accompanying adults from Dublin and surrounding counties (Kildare & Wicklow)

“ It was a wonderful performance. My 15 month old was fully engaged throughout and loved it. All of the babies were. The music, props, resources and singing were wonderful. “



Audience Feedback

**Wonderful words
from some of the
amazing families**

It was a wonderful performance. My 15 month old was fully engaged throughout and loved it. All of the babies were. The music, props, resources and singing were wonderful.

Genuinely amazed how she kept babies enthralled. It was a beautiful performance. Hope more families can enjoy it

Good length, nice balance to calm and stimulating activities, paced really well for age-group

I truly cannot express how good today was. My daughter Aniyah is so shy around adults normally and even though after the show she'd hardly look at you, during it she was having the most fun she could have and loved every moment. She always enjoys seeing you in the library but today was on another level. The small group, the instruments the kids used and just the general flow of the show, honestly everything was great. Thank you so much for putting on something that was clearly very well thought out and prepared - the fact that it was such good value just makes it even better.

THANK YOU! For the best morning, we LOVED the show! The set up was incredible. I know so much work went into the planning and creative process and it really shone through. Congratulations and well done X

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Show Highlights



Thanks and Credits

Sing Hello to The Sun

Music & Composition

Rachel Drew (Associate Artist – The Civic)

Performed by

Rachel Drew

Creative Team

Stage Manager Ruby Collin

Lighting Design Tara Perry

Tech Manager Dermot Marrey

Tech Operator Dan Barry

Director & Producer Mary Sheehan

Photos + Video Kristian Mantalvanos

Illustrated Portrait Pollock on Paper

The Civic

CEO/Artistic Director Donal Shiels

General Manager Sandra Doyle

Marketing & Audience Dev. Niamh Honer

Marketing & Report Design Aisling McDunphy

Tech Manager Paddy Keating

Box Office Louise Larkin

Financial Controller Nicola Corrigan

Show created by Civic Associate Artist: Rachel Drew
Produced by The Civic as part of our 2026 Education programme
Kindly Supported by Arts Council Ireland

Partners

