

ANNUAL REPORT

2014/15

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"The future of theatre lies in places like this."
Jonathan Miller

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Patron HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bristol, Mrs Mary Prior MBE JP

Trustees Sarah Smith (Chair), Andrew Allan-Jones, David Fairclough, Bertel Martin
Kate McGrath, Mark Panay, John Retallack, Chris Sims, Anna Southall, Martin Wright
Company no. 04536120 / Charity no. 1097542



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2014/15 was an excellent year for Tobacco Factory Theatres. We continued our move toward a mixed model of producing and receiving shows; expanded the diversity of people that we work with; and confirmed ongoing support from some significant stakeholders while engaging with new supporters. It was the last year of our 2012-15 business plan. Looking back we have achieved a more than adequate amount of what we set out to do and we can take pride in how far we have come over the last few years. We are embarking on a new three year plan and we look forward without complacency – we have some challenges ahead – but with the knowledge that we have the foundations to move ahead confidently. Most significantly in this year:

1. Our production portfolio was exceptionally strong. Aided by a very generous group of private individuals who support our work through the Production Donor Fund, which invested in the portfolio for the first time this year, we produced or co-produced ten shows including: working internationally for the first time (*Outpost*); working closely with Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory for the first time on *Romeo and Juliet*, enabling them to hire Polina Kalinina as their first guest director since 2007; scoring a sensational success with *101 Dalmatians* as a Christmas show; commissioning new work and touring *Dracula*, our co-production with the Mark Bruce Company, nationally, winning three National Dance Awards on the way.
2. We were invited into the National Portfolio of Organisations supported by the Arts Council England (ACE) for a second three year period. Although the level of support was below what we had hoped for, ACE is an important stakeholder. We were the only arts organisation in Bristol to receive the increased support they asked for from Bristol City Council, who confirmed they wished us to remain Key Arts Providers for another three year term. We received significant support from the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.
3. We appointed a Children and Young People Director for the first time. This year's activities have laid solid foundations for us to meaningfully increase the ways we work with Children and Young People from 2015 onwards.

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ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

Over recent years we have programmed fewer shows and given them longer runs in our theatres. This strategy is working well, with audiences up substantially and certain shows that might have been overlooked gaining real traction in the city. Coupling it with increasing the number of our in-house productions (see P06), has allowed us to be particularly discerning over the visiting shows we programme in our theatres: there may be fewer of them but they will be of even higher quality than hitherto.

We took more of a hand in our annual Shakespeare season created by Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory and our annual visit from Opera Project than previously, as well as producing a massive hit at Christmas with *101 Dalmatians*: all details for these can be found in In-house productions (P06). In our Brewery Theatre, Pickled Image produced *Santa's Little Trolls* at Christmas, a delightful show for younger children that sold out over 50 performances. In the summer we programmed one of Bristol's most successful shows of recent decades. *Private Peaceful* (by Michael Morpurgo, adapted by Simon Reade), which first played Bristol Old Vic ten years ago and has toured the world for most of the intervening period, including a West End run. We invited the production to return to Bristol to commemorate the centenary of the First World War and it found a substantial audience, featuring a notable proportion of teenagers, enraptured by the stunning performance of William Troughton. Also over the summer we hosted Bristol Old Vic Theatre School who asked Donnacadh O'Briain to direct Jessica Swale's *Bluestockings* and brought us the strongest theatre school show in years. Summer in the Brewery Theatre included Le Navet Bete's very funny *Extravaganza*; Nunkie's excellent take on H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*; Paul Merton in *My Obsession* and a big local hit from Blue Brook with the true story of *Stalin's Daughter*.

Some Autumn highlights in the Factory Theatre included the first visit to this theatre of Told by an Idiot with the brilliant *My Perfect Mind* (made and performed by Paul Hunter and Edward Petherbridge, this show deservedly featured on several end of year highlights); Simon Callow with *The Man Jesus* (the hottest ticket of the year) and giant of the puppetry world Neville Tranter with *Punch and Judy in Afghanistan*.

Brewery Theatre highlights in this season included adored local company Living Spit with the very silly *Elizabeth I: Virgin on the Ridiculous* and Saikat Ahamed's lovely cross-cultural coming of age story *Strictly Balti*. We scored a big hit with Verity Standen's *Mmm Hmmm*, a 45 minute collection of a capella songs on matters both huge and tiny. This unique show was sung and choreographed beautifully and although we feared it might struggle to find an audience, it deservedly sold out a long run.

In Spring we confirmed that the audience for contemporary fringe shows is larger than hitherto suspected. Phoebe Waller Bridge's shockingly honest and funny *Fleabag* sold out a three-week run and we received large audiences for an excellent Brewery Theatre season including Flintlock's *The Government Inspector*; the world première of Philip Ridley's *Radiant Vermin*; Move to Stand's *Fat Man* and Bucket Club's *Lorraine and Alan*. The Factory Theatre season was dominated by our co-production of *Romeo and Juliet* with Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory but we were delighted to find room for Kate Dimpleby's *Who Is Dory Previn?* and a return from The Devil's Violin with *The Forbidden Door*.

Our children's programme continued from strength to strength, including work from Norwich Puppet Theatre, Bristol-based Shoofly, The Amazing Bubble Man and vocal artist and beatboxer Shlomo.

As ever we were delighted to host top-class comedians this year including Tim Key, Russell Howard, Josie Long, Henning Wehn, Mark Thomas and Mark Watson.

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IN-HOUSE AND CO- PRODUCTIONS

Following on from our previous year's success in developing our range of in-house produced work, we have continued to grow this area of the business. To support this, we are in the process of developing relationships with other key theatre venues around the country who receive work, setting out our expanding producing portfolio and raising our profile as a high-quality producing house. As well as our producing work directly contributing to the health of independent production companies in the region, the contribution that our producing work makes to our financial health is critical, so success in this area is extremely important.

One of our most successful in-house productions of the year was our Christmas Factory Theatre show, which saw nationally acclaimed Sally Cookson and her team adapt the joyful *101 Dalmatians* in all its spotty glory. The response from audiences, press and industry alike, was universally positive. Box office sales reflected this with a record 16,537 people seeing the show. "A puppy dog tale to make you woof with joy" (5 stars) *The Times*. Our previous co-production of Sally's work (in association with Travelling Light): *Cinderella: A Fairytale* will continue to reach national audiences, with a future Christmas run being booked by mac Birmingham for 2015.

We worked more closely with two of our most important visiting companies for the first time this year. In October we co-produced *Madam Butterfly* with Opera Project, investing substantially more funds and personnel than previously into the production. The opera was as well-acted and sung as we have come to expect from this company but the production values were markedly better and the three week run (longer than previously) was greeted strongly by sold-out audiences. In February we took the huge step of co-producing *Romeo and Juliet* with Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory. We proposed young director Polina Kalinina, who made a vigorous, exciting production, full of youthful dynamism ("masterful"; "nothing short of stunning"; "passionate, energetic, sexy and loud"; "so majestically good"; "utterly breathtaking"; "sensational"). Although the title wasn't 100% attractive to some traditional Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory audiences, the show found a new, younger audience than we have previously reached and was seen by a larger audience than any previous Shakespeare production here. The Bristol run was followed by a very successful tour, both nationally and to Germany.

Our co-production of *Dracula* with Mark Bruce Company continued to excel, with a 10 week national tour in November and December playing to a huge number of sell-out crowds. The show was seen by nearly 8,000 people (many new to dance) and as a result Mark's work is gathering national and international pace with the company winning three awards at the National Dance Awards including Best Independent Company. We are proud to have provided the company with a stable base to start their new independently-managed status and look forward to presenting more of their work in the future.

Other returning shows included *Banksy: The Room in the Elephant*, *Blast-Off* and *Mimic*. *Banksy*, originally a 45 minute a Play, a Pie and a Pint show, was twinned with a documentary film (on Tachowa Covington, the subject of the play) and toured the country, including a four week run at the Arcola Theatre. *Blast-Off* finished its national tour and we enabled *Mimic*, which we originally produced in Ireland in 2008, to come to UK for the first time to play a one-off performance as part of Bristol Proms at Bristol Old Vic.

We worked with the internationally renowned Filter to co-produce a radical version of *Macbeth*, which played three weeks in Bristol before touring nationally, including a run at London's Vault Festival. We also commissioned Thomas Eccleshare to write *Helen*, which we produced in Bristol and Glasgow as part of a Play, a Pie and a Pint. The

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play was small but brilliant (“A searingly fine production” The Herald; “A thrilling exploration of evil, identity and creativity, performed with terrific power and concentration” The Scotsman) and we hope to remount it in the future. Finally, we have been having a very exciting time working with Green Ginger through the development of their new show *Outpost*. Working as co-producers with Norway’s Nordland Visual Theatre, we have supported this internationally-acclaimed puppet theatre company in the development of the piece to a full show. As a result, we have been invited to the prestigious World Puppet Theatre Festival in Charleville-Mezieres, France in Sept 2015 and will be touring the work that autumn.

EDUCATION. PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

This last year has seen significant changes in this area with the appointment of our first Children and Young People Director, Bryony Roberts. The aim of this role is to ensure that there is a consistent programme of activity for children and young people to access independently, through their schools and educational establishments and through other organisations. The CYP Director is also the main liaison to build relationships and contacts with other organisations that offer similar activity, ensuring inclusive access to activity.

In 2014/15 we offered a series of free workshops to key local primary schools linked with our Christmas show *101 Dalmatians*. 120 children participated in pre and post-show workshops in their schools exploring the plot, characters and style of the show in order to enhance their enjoyment of the performance. We also began engaging with 14-19 year olds through PILOT, free workshops which covered a variety of theatre skills including devising, costume design and mask work. These were offered at the theatre and at other venues in South Bristol in order to promote our new CYP programme, in particular the launch of our new youth theatre, Young Theatre Makers, before its launch in April 2015.

In addition, we delivered career talks to young people at the theatre and at schools, supported the delivery of Arts Awards by other organisations through staff interviews and show tickets, and forged strong partnerships with local primary and secondary schools through our CYP Director joining the board of the South West Bristol Cooperative Learning Trust.

Our CYP Director undertook research and planning; putting in place a substantial and exciting plan of activity for children and young people in 2015/16.

We also donated over 400 complimentary tickets to events last year to community groups and charities, a value of £5,000.

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CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Tobacco Factory Theatres plays a pivotal role for the city in developing artistic talent and supporting the flourishing community of artists that make Bristol the best place to create work outside of London.

In 2014/15 we hosted five associate artists who all received creative residences at the theatre and an injection of £1500 to support and guide them in the making of new work. These included Filter Theatre, who created our contemporary co-production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (see P06). Paper Cinema (of *The Odyssey*) spent a week with us developing a new show *The Keys of Tobias Brown*. Wattle & Daub were provided space and producer support in their development of *The Depraved Appetite of Tarrare the Freak*, which will première as part of Bristol Festival of Puppetry here in 2015. Joel Daniel (choreographer for *Cinderella: A Fairytale*) has been provided with ongoing producer support in the research and development of his show *Burden*, his first show as a lead artist. Finally, the Jennifer Bell Company was supported in the development of their show *Bread & Butter* which was performed at the Royal West of England Academy. Jennifer is continuing her development of her next show *Mouthpiece* with us, for performance at the Houses of Parliament in 2015.

We have developed our relationships further with the very talented Verity Standen, through providing space, producer and marketing support for the development of *Mmm Hmmm*; credited in association with Tobacco Factory Theatres. Verity, who we consider to be a talent of note, continues to have a full involvement with the theatre, being appointed as musical director for our 2015 Christmas show, *The Light Princess*.

We also offered bespoke short-term residencies, providing free-of-charge space for artists to develop work. There were nine of these residencies in total over 2014/15, with companies and artists such as: Bea Roberts, Fellswoop, Rider Shafique, Publick Transport, Adam Fuller/Jessica Macdonald and Bucket Club using our space to develop work. These residences brought us into contact with 75 artists, with a further 105 having the opportunity to see the work through sharings.

Our Director-in-Residence, Nik Partridge, worked with Bea Roberts and Rider Shafique to help them develop *Infinity Pool*, including performances at Tobacco Factory Theatres in 2015.

Script Space, our open application new writing competition, received a huge amount of submissions yet again, totalling 416. All of these scripts were double-read by our volunteer team of readers. The winning writer, Niki Orfanou, was given four days research and development with creative team and technical support, to realise and explore an early version of the play, culminating in industry professionals attending a 'sharing' of the work.

We continue to run *Prototype*, our regular scratch evening for the development of new work in its early stages, now in its sixth year. To date in 2014/15 there have been four *Prototype* events, with 20 companies/artists taking part and another two events scheduled for 2015.

We have run a number of workshops for artists by companies such as Filter Theatre and Frantic Assembly and we ran a series of workshops for our production of *Banksy: The Room in the Elephant*, which took place here at the theatre and also at Sherman Cymru, Cardiff and the Traverse, Edinburgh. The workshops have brought us into contact with 80 artists.

As we move ahead in 2015/16 we are restructuring the way we work with artists. Sadly this meant us making the post of Artist Development Producer redundant but we have created a significant commissioning fund for

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emerging artists and companies to support them in developing work towards full production. The first recipients of the Artist Development Fund will be Fellswoop Theatre Company, who will receive £5,000, as well as support and advice, for their production of *Ghost Opera* opening at Tobacco Factory Theatres in September 2015.

PROFILE AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

We have continued to use Spektrix and its latest features to interrogate audience data including information on customer booking behaviours, email marketing statistics and ROI reporting. This has allowed us to segment data in a more targeted way for marketing specific productions and strands of work and for development purposes including a targeted membership telephone campaign.

We have used this insight to look at detailed audience development plans for the period 2015-2018, both in terms of retaining existing customers, but particularly in relation to targeting new audiences in areas of Bristol (BS4 and BS5), where currently there is less engagement with Tobacco Factory Theatres and the arts in general. Plans include programming appropriately for Bristol's diverse communities and taking work to new, unengaged audiences through off-site performances and our DNA scheme. We are also committed to building partnerships with community and sports organisations and key employers, to build awareness and opportunities to engage with Tobacco Factory Theatres.

We continue to be a partner in the Audience Agency's Audience Focus project, a cluster group for Bristol to bring together the marketing teams to share data and knowledge and survey audiences.

Our engagement through digital and social media increased sizeably in 2014/15 with website visitors increasing by nearly 20% during the course of the year and our growing email list now up to 31,000. 'Likes' of our Facebook page are up some 40% and Twitter followers have increased by over 50%. We have also extended our social media profiles to include an Instagram account and online ticket sales have increased from 41% in 2013/14 to 55% in 2014/15.

Following a full visual re-brand, we started work on our new and improved website in March 2015 and it is due for completion in August 2015. The new website will improve the booking process and ability to sell merchandise and memberships, it will better represent all aspects of the organisation including our Children and Young People work and in-house productions, and it will engage both existing and new customers with high quality digital content, particularly content created alongside our in-house productions.

This year we increased the number of performances for which we have a British Sign Language interpreter, committing to allow better access to hard-of-hearing and Deaf audiences for three shows per season, a total of nine during the year. We have also offered a regular baby friendly performance for guardians of children under the age of one, recognising that it's more difficult for people to get to the theatre when they have a small child. During these performances the lights are on and audience members can walk around during the show.

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STAFFING

Although we bade a farewell to trustees Annie Menter, Nicky Rylance and Kate Yedigaroff we were delighted to welcome Mark Panay, Chris Sims and Martin Wright onto the board this year.

At the start of the year we created the position of Operations Manager, to take over the duties of Box-Office Manager and Front of House Manager and Katy Wilkes (previously Box Office Manager) stepped up to take the role with Jonny Mauchline (previously FOH Manager) leaving the theatre. Matt Smee left the post of Brewery Theatre Technician and we appointed two theatre technicians, Keegan Curran and Jen Sherlock, to work across the theatres. Fran Ewins joined us in marketing and we expanded the role to be a Marketing Officer. Carrie Rhys Davies left us after several years when the position of Artist Development Producer was made redundant and Bryony Roberts joined us in the newly created post of Children and Young People Director. Lauren Scholey went on maternity leave in March to be covered by Kate Rowland and Holly Foulds left the development department to be replaced by Anne Marie Lo. Melanie Zaalof left us as producer and we recruited Kerrie Avery into the role. We also expanded the producing department, taking on Jojo Townsend as part-time assistant producer.

We continued to receive crucial support from our team of volunteers, who contributed a total of 563 hours across the year.

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FUNDRAISING

2014/15 was a very successful year for fundraising. We raised a total of £359,000 – a 48% increase on the previous year. This is largely due to launching a major donor campaign and establishing a more robust trust fundraising programme, whilst maintaining a strong focus on our membership and corporate giving schemes. This growth would not have been realised without the increased capacity and experience in our Development team, made possible through the Arts Council England's Catalyst fund over the last three years.

In 2014/15, we again applied to become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and were successfully accepted as part of their portfolio for the next three years from 2015/16. We also successfully renewed our Bristol City Council Key Arts Provider (KAP) status and associated funding. Our total public subsidy now stands at 4.5% of turnover, illustrating a healthy low reliance on such sources – a rarity for the sector.

Launched in the final quarter of 2013, our major donor programme, the Production Fund, aimed to raise £250,000 of capital over five years to support the expansion of our production portfolio. By the end of 2014/15, almost £190,000 had been successfully raised/pledged.

We established our new trust fundraising programme and had a successful first year, making strong partnerships with several trusts and foundations (see P12). In particular, The Foyle Foundation supported our visual rebrand at the end of 2014/15 and our forthcoming website re-development in 2015/16. We are particularly grateful to The West of England Local Enterprise Partnership for supporting us this year.

Both our individual membership scheme and our Business Club continued to thrive, with individual members up by 55% from 258 to 400 and Business Club members increasing from 30 to 34. Particular partnerships with leading corporate organisations were successfully cultivated with Whistl, The Mall at Cribbs Causeway, Bond Dickinson, Budvar, The Better Food Company, Rathbones International and Good Energy (see P12).

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Many of the achievements outlined in this report would not have been possible without the generous support of numerous individuals, grant-making trusts and companies.

PRODUCTION FUND DONORS

We are extremely grateful to all those individuals in our Production Fund, who have enabled the fantastic progress made by in-house productions in the first year of the fund.

FOUNDER BENEFACTORS

Ken Edis

John and Susan Hart

Simon Inch

Ros and Cameron Kennedy

FOUNDER PATRONS

Michael and Lynne Bothamley

PLATINUM PATRONS

Martin and Mary Bailey

Geoff Clements

Anna Southall

Helen and Peter Wilde

GOLD PATRONS

John and Sue Cottrell

Vivien Kies

Tim and Judith Lockwood Jones

Christopher and Sarah Sharp

P K Stemberidge

SILVER PATRONS

Judy Carver

Roger Corral

Alec Ewens

Unsal and Diana Hassan

Ruth and Stephen Illingworth

Jo Luscombe McDonald

Alan Moore

Chris Sims

MEMBERS

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We continue to be immensely grateful for the loyal support of our growing number of Friends, Champions, Patrons and Benefactors during the year.

BENEFACTORS

Geoff Clements

Betty Cook

Alec Ewens

Vivien Kies

Tim & Judith Lockwood Jones

Peter & Helen Wilde

PATRONS

Martin and Mary Bailey

John Bedford

Neville Boundy

Rebecca Channack

David Croom

Ann Eggers

Jack and Rosemary House

Ruth Illston

Tim and Liz Robertson

Tony Rowlands

Andrew and Decia Smith

Julian Thomas

Andrew Whitelaw

BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS

During the year we enjoyed the support of many leading Bristol-based and national companies.

We are very grateful to the following businesses that sponsored Tobacco Factory Theatres as we staged world-class productions:

The Mall at Cribbs Causeway as we staged *101 Dalmatians*

Bond Dickinson as we staged *Madam Butterfly*

The Better Food Company as we staged *Macbeth*

Budvar logo as we staged BrouHaHa Comedy Week

We are also grateful to the following companies for their sponsorship of other activities:

Rathbones Investment Management for sponsoring the Emerging Director's Prize

Whistl for sponsoring the Brewery Theatre

Good Energy for sponsoring our green energy promotion

Continued overleaf

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Thanks, too, to all our Business Club members:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 33 | Thali Café |
| Aardman | Bath Ales |
| Ashgrove Pharmacy | Whistl |
| DAC Beachcroft | Elev8 |
| Jordans | GWS |
| Austen Lloyd | IOP Publishing |
| Bailey | Corrigan Associates |
| Brunel One | Zurich |
| Burges Salmon | Papadeli |
| Theraposture | Graphic Science |
| TLT | Bellwind-Edis |
| Bristol Beer Factory | KPMG |
| Bond Dickinson | Clarke Willmott |
| Good Energy | Osborne Clarke |
| The Better Food Company | Nisbets |
| Hallgarten Druitt | The Mall Cribbs Causeway |
| Rathbones | Living Learning English |

Thank you to the following statutory, trust & foundation organisations for their support of all our work throughout the year:

Arts Council England, Bristol City Council, Garfield Weston Foundation

Thank you to the following organisations, who supported particular areas of our work:

Foyle Foundation for their support of our visual rebrand and new website

The John Thaw Foundation logo, Veronica Awdry Charitable Trust for supporting our Children and Young People Programme

Thank you to the BBC Performing Arts Fund for their support of Theatre Fellow Nik Partridge and for granting us a new fellow for 2015/16, Nel Crouch.

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FINANCE

Income increased by over 15% to £2.22 million. The lion's share came from Box Office sales, which turned over £1.29 million (with a further £160,000 on the bar during shows) and we also earned £110,000 from non-Box Office production income (largely tour income / management fees). We increased our direct artistic spend to £1.18 million, either to visiting companies or on our own productions, and spent a further £160,000 on direct costs supporting other activities in the theatre.

Our overhead increased by 5% to £890,000 and our annual deficit was £10,000, almost exactly as projected. It should be noted that this was in a year where our four major shows sold astoundingly (*Arcadia* – 99%; *Madam Butterfly* – 99%; *101 Dalmatians* – 98%; *Romeo and Juliet* – 87%). We carry forward negligible free reserves but significant restricted reserves, primarily through our Production Donor Fund (balance of £110,000).

(These figures are pre-audit and subject to change.)

THE NUMBERS

Tobacco Factory Theatres continues to further increase its reach and engagement this year:

- 92,609 people attended one of our 628 performances with a further 48,173 attending a community class or performance, amounting to 140,782 people through the doors (up 4% from 135,437 in 2013/14)
- 22,866 people engaged through national or international touring
- 1,024 people engaged in high quality participatory activities including 890 children and young people
- 86% average audience attendance achieved across both theatre spaces
- Earned income as a % of turnover = 75%

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