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**TOBACCO
FACTORY
THEATRE**

Tobacco Factory Theatre, Raleigh Road, Southville, Bristol BS3 1TF

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

Trustees Jonathan Benn, Alan Boldon, Mike Bothamley, Geoff Clements (Chairman), David Fairclough, Peter Lord, Annie Menter, Nicky Rylance, Sarah Smith

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A successful year artistically and financially for the theatre and a year of significant growth. Most significantly:

1. In August we opened a second performance space - the 90 seat Brewery Theatre in North Street, 150 metres from the main TF. This building also has a superb rehearsal studio with fully sprung floor and the launch of these spaces has allowed us to increase the number of people we work with and the range of styles offered to our audiences.
2. We hosted the first *Bristol Festival of Puppetry* with a series of performances and workshops in both of our spaces. The festival was a great success, selling almost every ticket and seeing an enormous puppet parade, created largely by local children, through Southville.
3. We installed ventilation in the theatre, not before time, which has had a massive impact upon audience comfort. We also started to raise funds to install photo voltaic panels on the TF roof to power the system, working towards our aim of becoming carbon neutral within 5 years.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

The year saw an expansion in the range of our programming, especially once the Brewery came on stream. Bristol is a vibrant and culturally rich city, so vital to the success of the Tobacco Factory Theatre is our ability to present a programme reflecting this diversity and responding to the needs of our local community.

Brewery

We experimented with a wide range of shows in the new space, with a programme that included puppetry, circus, new writing, revivals and a magic show structured around A Christmas Carol! We found that the Brewery can sustain significant runs of shows; good shows that ran for two to three weeks tend to build up audiences over the run. We don't think that there is any other venue in the region that regularly allows for this length of run, which is hugely important for the development of new work, and we see this being a great advantage of the new space.

Families and young people

The promotion of quality productions for families and young people continues to be an important priority for us. In this year we programmed 22 productions specifically for families and young people; including productions by Unpacked Theatre, Jumping Mouse, Indefinitearticles, Travelling Light and Angel Heart Theatre.

Touring Productions

We have established an audience for touring work and continue to programme a significant number of touring productions from national and international artists and companies. The majority of this work is theatrical, but we continue to increase the range of art-forms presented. Touring work is concentrated in the autumn season from September to December and during this period in 2009 we welcomed, amongst others, En Masse Theatre, Trestle, NIE, Gonzo Moose, Forkbeard Fantasy and Schtanhaus. In July 2009 we employed an Associate Director to research and advise on the programming of touring productions. This post was made possible with funding from the Garrick Trust.

Comedy Programme

Comedy at the Tobacco Factory Theatre has always proved hugely popular, with the intimate nature of the theatre space lending itself perfectly to live comedy performance. Over the course of 2009/10 our comedy programme has developed to such a point that we now host around 25 stand up-nights per year. In partnership with The Comedy Box we welcomed, amongst others, Russell Howard, Marcus Brigstocke, Reginald D Hunter,

Mark Watson, Mark Thomas, Rhod Gilbert and Milton Jones, as well as launching a brand new 9 day comedy festival the Bristol BrouHaHa.

Dance and Physical Theatre

Recognising the under-provision of dance and physical work in Bristol, in June 2009 we presented 'Bodyworks 2' building on the success of 'Bodyworks' in Autumn 2008. This 4-day celebration of multi-cultural dance and physical performance featured local, national and international dance performers and a series of dance workshops. A particular highlight was a double-bill of the Mark Bruce company (now our Associate Dance Artists) and The Dark Angels, a hip-hop dance troupe from Knowle West.

Music

During this year we continued to include an assorted range of music as part of our programme of events, enhancing the diversity of our overall artistic programme. This included The Devil's Violin Company, Sheelanagig, the Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers and Batanai and World Muzik Makers.

IN-HOUSE PRODUCTIONS

In 2007 we successfully collaborated with local company Travelling Light to present a brand new adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's famous story *The Ugly Duckling*. In June 2009 the production came back to the Factory to play the final dates of a six-month national tour, during which it was seen by over 34,000 people.

We joined with Travelling Light again in 2009 for our Christmas family show *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, directed by Sally Cookson and designed by Katie Sykes with music from Benji Bower and dramaturgy from Sudha Buchar. We felt that the title was comparatively risky (having had the banker title of Christmas Carol the year before) but the show was a huge success with massive word of mouth, considerable press and industry praise and an attendance of well over 12,000. Our Christmas liaison with schools was continued this year with three schools seeing dress rehearsals and two schools contributing to decoration of the foyer for the run.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Under the banner Tobacco Factory Plus (TF+), our training, education and participation programme continued to develop with the aim of offering as wide a range of people as possible the opportunity to engage with the Tobacco Factory Theatre in as many different ways as possible.

TF+ successfully introduced new initiatives such as Generator (see Creative Development), TF+ Projects (which aims to work with a range of community-based groups on participation activities), and Suck it and See! (see Audience Development), as well as continuing to run an already established raft of activities, including Director Lunchtime Talks, holiday courses for young people and practitioner masterclasses.

In 2009 TF+ ran 9 workshops and 1 week-long course for young people, 9 adult workshops, 8 performance-related Q&As / talks, 7 schools' tours and 1 month-long puppetry and film project with at-risk young people from south Bristol.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The fostering of creative ambition in performers and theatre makers is a cornerstone of our activity, and this year saw a consolidation of two existing creative support initiatives and the introduction of a further one.

Prototype was already firmly established as part of our core activity at the beginning of the year and during the course of 2009 we were able to gain some funding from BOV to support further development of promising ideas. Partially as a result of this a large number of shows first seen at Prototype moved to full production at TF or elsewhere.

Script Space, introduced in 2008, is an annual series of script-in-hand performances through which we aim to nurture writing talent and help with the leap from script to stage. In 2009 the first script developed through Script Space came to full development and the annual series was considerably strengthened with a portfolio of excellent directors working on four new scripts.

Finally we introduced to our development portfolio Generator, a regular skills-sharing forum for theatre-makers. Generator supports Bristol's theatre-makers with opportunities to share processes used to develop content when creating devised work.

During this year these 3 strands featured more than 10 events as part of our core activity. Companies and artists worked with include Fairground, Tom Wainwright, Trestle and Publick Transport.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Recognising the range of shows on offer at the Tobacco Factory Theatre can sometimes seem a little overwhelming, we introduced *Suck it and See!* – Audience Exchange Programme in October 2009. The exchange programme works by linking up contrasting shows and offering ticket discounts, making it easier – and cheaper – for our audiences to see productions they would not normally see. During this year 156 people took advantage of these tickets.

One of our core aims is to “seek as wide an audience for our work as possible”. This implies that we must be accessible to all areas of the community and with this in mind we introduced a significant number of BSL signed performances into our programme in 2009. This ensures accessibility to our programme for the Deaf and hard of hearing community. We are fully accessible to both artist and audiences at the Tobacco Factory Theatre, are fully accessible to audiences at the Brewery Theatre and will take steps in 2010 to address identified limitations for actors with physical impairments at The Brewery Theatre.

FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Development Department is now vital to the theatre, responsible for generating 5% of our turnover. The Department this year saw income double from the previous year to around £55,000, benefitting both from the recruitment of a permanent Development Manager and a clear defining of the role of the Development Board, which met quarterly throughout the year to support the advancement of the fundraising strategy.

Despite the current economic climate, Business Club membership more than doubled, rising from 7 at the beginning of the financial year to 15 by the close. Corporate support increased as a whole, with companies using the hospitality opportunities at the Theatre for entertaining. Existing relationships continued to grow with the production co-sponsorship of Opera Project confirmed for 2010/11. Looking forward we will continue, with the support of the Development Board, to raise an awareness of other corporate sponsorship opportunities at the Theatre, including the comedy series and family Christmas show.

£16,500 was secured in small scale grants from Trusts and Foundations in response to applications for specific areas of our core activity, such as our Education and Community initiatives and BSL signed performances. An annual rolling re-appeals programme has been established, allowing future attention to be focussed on securing major tranches of core funding from larger trusts and foundations, such as the Esmée Fairbairn and Garfield Weston Foundations over the course of 2010 / 11.

The Fans scheme saw no overall growth in membership, ending the year with 150 members. The support of our Fans is crucial in allowing us to operate year on year, so we are continuing to look to build on membership levels. The ability to accept membership payments by Direct Debit instruction was introduced in March 2010, and a re-launch of the scheme is planned for 2010 / 11, with the focus on recruiting members at all levels and the ultimate aim to set year on year new membership targets.

In September 2009 we hosted a comedy evening with Russell Howard as part of a fundraising campaign towards the installation of the ventilation system in the auditorium. This event raised £5,000 towards an overall target of £25,000, a target successfully achieved by the calendar year end. The fundraising event proved so worthwhile that we hope to continue to host one fundraising event per year as part of our autumn programme.

STAFFING

We expanded our staff this year.

In May we recruited a Development Manager, Caroline Green, to push forward our Fundraising Strategy. This is a 4-day week post directly replacing the consultant we previously worked with.

In July we appointed a new Associate Director, Tom Creed, to work closely with Director Ali Robertson, to advise on and to assist with the Theatre's programming. This is a new, very part-time post.

In September we appointed a technician, Frazer Riches, with specific responsibility for The Brewery Theatre. This is a new, full-time post.

Our staffing was stable. The box-office manager left in November and was replaced by Lucy Mayo, previously box-office assistant. Our pool of casual workers was fairly constant and our end-of-year appraisals were positive.

FINANCE

We had a year-end surplus of around £15,000, against a forecast of break-even and we have eliminated most of our deficit. However we are still in the precarious position of having no reserves as insurance against any downturn, and we aim to build up reserves of 3% of turnover over the next 3 years. Our overall income was £175,000 ahead of target with the majority of this surplus being from box-office, although most departments achieved surpluses. Our expenditure was £160,000 over target but 90% of this was directly attributable to box-office increases (payments to companies on splits plus box-office charges).

Our turnover was £1,190,000 and we directly earned 84% of this from Box Office, Bar Sales, Room Hire and Workshops. We received 8% from public sources (Bristol City Council and Arts Council England South West) and fundraised 8% (including the theatre space gift from George Ferguson, which is not included in financial development).

N.B. 1. These figures are pre-audit and subject to change.

N.B. 2. These figures do not include any Brewery Theatre financials as we are still negotiating the lease.

THE NUMBERS

We recorded around 80,000 ticketed entries to 467 performances of 124 different shows.

Our average ticket price was £10.93

We gave away 700 complimentary tickets to underprivileged or community groups – a value of £7,500.

We ran 9 workshops and 1 week-long course for young people, 9 adult workshops, 8 Q&A sessions, 7 schools' tours, and 1 month-long animation and film project with at-risk young people

Over the course of 2009 our rehearsal spaces were used for an estimated 9,700 person-sessions.