

ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2010 / 11 was a very successful year artistically for the theatre and a year of physical and organisational achievement. Most significantly:

1. Our second performance space - the 90 seat Brewery Theatre – operated for its first full year. It became indubitably established as a critical part of Bristol's cultural infrastructure with a rich, well-attended programme (70% capacity throughout the year). Rather astonishingly, four consecutive shows in the Autumn season were nationally reviewed within a period of just eight weeks.
2. We installed a 25kW photo-voltaic energy system on the roof of the Tobacco Factory. The system is the second largest renewable energy system of any arts organisation in the country and at a stroke it permanently reduced our energy consumption by 35%. Although we had to take out a loan to complete the installation, successful fundraising means that we will be able to repay the entire cost of installation within 18 months and will gain significant financial benefit for over 20 years thereafter.
3. We were invited to join the National Portfolio of organisations supported by the Arts Council, with effect from 2012/13. This is the first time that the theatre has ever been offered ongoing, guaranteed support from the Arts Council and is a significant achievement. Only 100 organisations nationally, across all art-forms, were invited into the portfolio for the first time and although the level of support will be slightly lower than we have received since 2006 it is a huge step in our dialogue with the Arts Council, increases our ability to both negotiate and fundraise from other sources and allows us to plan for the future with greater confidence.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

This year saw a continued broad range of quality programming for a wide range of audiences. We had enough trust in our audiences to programme some bigger, riskier shows than ever before and this faith was rewarded: in particular we invested heavily in full week runs from *Filter* and *Northern Broadsides* and both companies played to full houses in our main space.

Our four annual mainstays (Xmas, Opera and two Shakespeares) all had excellent years. *The Adventures of Pinocchio* was a great success (further details in in-house productions), *La Traviata* was an excellent production from *Opera Project* and Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory's double-bill of *Richard II* and *Comedy of Errors* was one of their finest seasons in years.

We also saw an increasing number of shows coming through our development streams to be realised as full productions in one or other of our spaces. For example, both The Idle Dream's *The Station* and Publick Transport's *Very Hard Times* started as germs of an idea in Prototype and both then played The Brewery within a year of their Prototype appearance.

The Brewery

The Brewery had a good year with a very wide range of programming including Circus (Pan Gottic), Dance (Vex and Neshima), Performance / Live Art (Sedated by a Brick) and Family Work (Travelling Light, Stuff and Nonsense and others) alongside its main programme of theatre. We invested heavily into the fabric of the building to ensure that it is accessible for both artists and audiences and marked this by hosting a number of disability-led companies and artists, including Graeae.

The space had a particularly good run in the Autumn / Winter with highlights including Company Boudin's *Henry V*, Fairground's *Bonnie and Clyde*, Little Bulb's *Crocospia* and Spice's reworked *Under Milk Wood*.

We hosted a Christmas show in The Brewery for the first time. *The Elves and the Shoemakers* (Pins and Needles), aimed at children of 3+, was a triumph, selling 100% of tickets over 40 performances and gaining widespread industry recognition.

This year saw the first transfer of a show to the main theatre from The Brewery. *Up, Down Boy* (Myrtle Theatre Company) had played The Brewery in early 2010. Responding to huge demand it played the main house for two sold out performances in October 2010 at the start of an international tour.

Families and Young People

We programmed a smaller number of productions specifically for families and young people than hitherto (11 this year), but concentrated on longer runs, including establishing week long runs of family productions at The Brewery during half terms. This proved very rewarding with very good attendance and reaction for companies including Travelling Light, Stuff and Nonsense, Angel Heart, Tall Stories and others.

Touring Productions

We continued to concentrate our presentation of touring work in the Autumn season. As already mentioned, we hosted Filter and Northern BroadSides during this season. Other notable companies hosted included Action Hero, Tinkerting, People Show, Trestle and Stan's Café. A couple of highlights were *Nursing Lives*, the first production from very promising mask company Vamos, and *The Beckett Trilogy*, a wonderful 3 hour tour de force from the magisterial Conor Lovett.

This year we significantly strengthened the touring work programmed during the spring/summer season, programming John Moran, Daniel Kitson, Quarantine and the *Bush Theatre*, among others.

Comedy Programme

Comedy continues to be a mainstay of our programme and we were very pleased that the recently inaugurated summer comedy festival *Bristol Brouhaha* continues to thrive. Outside of this extravaganza we hosted Stewart Francis, Lucy Porter, Jon Richardson, Sarah Millican, John Shuttleworth, Jeremy Hardy, John Hegley, Chris Addison, Russell Kane and Milton Jones for one or more nights. A faintly worrying phenomenon is that a steadily increasing number of comedians play here and 'graduate' more quickly than hitherto to the 1,000 / 2,000 seat venues. However, thus far we have had a steady stream of talented newcomers filling the gap.

Dance and Physical Theatre

Most significantly we were heavily involved in the premiere of The Mark Bruce Company's *Love and War* (see in-house productions for further details). Apart from this we were very pleased to host Vex and Neshima in The Brewery and DanceMakers and Hyb in the main theatre. We also hosted Quarantine in the main theatre with *Susan and Darren*: a show that has been going for a few years but is still quite wonderful.

IN-HOUSE PRODUCTIONS

In Xmas 2010 we produced *The Adventures of Pinocchio* in a new version written by Toby Farrow and directed by Andy Burden. The show was very well reviewed, including a five star review from the Guardian, and played to almost 12,000 people (87% capacity). Our Christmas liaison continued successfully with good schools attendance including a number of Q&A sessions from local schools.

Although this was our only in-house production this year we also worked very closely with our associate dance artists, The Mark Bruce Company. They spent the majority of the rehearsal and creation period for their new production *Love and War* in the Tobacco Factory and the show premiered here in May. It was an excellent show that was rapturously received by full houses and successfully toured nationally thereafter. We also offered financial guarantees to two proposed shows in the Brewery Theatre. The relevant companies were then able to use the guarantee to leverage further support to ensure that the shows were produced. These two productions were *Bonnie and Clyde*, produced by Fairground, which also played a small regional tour and had a London run and a stripped back *Henry V*, produced by Company Boudin, which will tour widely in 2011.

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

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.

Our Directors' Talks, post-show events and holiday activities for children and young people continued to be popular and successful, as did the newly introduced 'Suck it and See!' scheme. We introduced a Lunchtime Talk to accompany the annual visit for *Opera Project* and were pleased to be able to work with our Associate Dance Artists *The Mark Bruce Company* on offering regular classes and open rehearsals for Bristol's professional dance community.

Alongside these activities in summer 2010 we worked with the *Asian Arts Agency* on a month-long cultural cohesion project for local school children. Internationally-renowned bharatanatyam dancer Seeta Patel worked with a group of 60 Year 3 pupils from Ashton Gate and Easton to create a showcase that was performed for an invited audience of family and friends on our main stage.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

During 2010 – 2011 we consolidated our reputation as a hub for a significant number of established and emerging theatre artists and companies. Our existing creative development strands continued to go from strength to strength and we were able to go some way nearer to meeting the demand for more and enhanced development opportunities through the introduction of new schemes.

Our thrice-yearly Prototype events continued to provide an audience for brand new ideas from Bristol's theatre-makers. Companies or artists whose work went on to see full production in Bristol (including at The Brewery) and/or further afield included Tom Wainwright, *Publick Transport*, *Sedated by a Brick*, *Vex Dance Theatre*, *Neshima Dance Company* and *The Idle Dream*.

In 2010 we presented script-in-hand readings of 7 new plays through our Script Space new writing initiative. We also launched Script Space V in collaboration with *The Bristol Festival of Ideas*, a partnership that will allow us to realise an increased potential for the bespoke development of promising young writers and their work in 2011.

Our Generator programme continued to offer a range of workshops and events to support theatre-makers in maintaining and developing their creative practice, including Resolution – a daylong

networking, information-sharing event that aimed to provide a framework in which local artists might think ambitiously about what they wanted to achieve in the year ahead.

Finally, we added a fourth strand to our development portfolio. Developed and co-ordinated in association with Theatre Bristol, our SITE Residency Programme supports mid-career artists/companies in the development of a new idea through the provision of Space, Ideas, Time and Expertise. In 2009-2010 we worked with 3 Bristol-based artists/companies (Full Beam Visual Theatre, Ed Patrick and Toby Hulse) and 1 from further afield (Dancing Brick). Dancing Brick's *Captain Ko and the Planet of Rice* will move to full production in late 2012, Ed Patrick's *Kid Carpet and the Noisy Animals* will tour widely, including at The Brewery, in early 2012 and Toby Hulse's *My Secret Garden* has toured festivals nationally over summer 2011.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

As well as developing our audience within the building we also worked elsewhere in the city this year. In Autumn 2010 we instituted the DNA (Developing New Audiences) scheme, with the aim of breaking down the barriers that make it less likely that certain communities in Bristol attend theatre performances. After a 3-week run at The Brewery, FairGround's acclaimed production of *Bonnie & Clyde* toured to 4 school/community venues around the city, giving 175 people aged 8 - 78 a high quality experience of live performance they would otherwise been unlikely to access. It is anticipated that DNA will run twice yearly henceforth.

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 continued to provide a number of BSL signed performances into our programme. Physically we have been fully accessible to both artists and audiences at the Tobacco Factory Theatre for some while. We made a significant capital investment into The Brewery this year to ensure that we are also fully accessible to both artists and audiences there and we welcomed the country's leading disability theatre company Graeae for a week long run in May.

We developed relationships with University Student Unions to develop our student audience attendance: in 2010 student attendance rose to almost 4,000.

We're proud of our high quality and expanding programme of work for young audiences and we're delighted that theatre companies increasingly look to us when seeking to develop new shows for children. A really important way of finding out whether an in-development piece of theatre is working is having the opportunity to try it out in front of a real live family audience. So, in order to help us give the best possible support for the creation of new shows, we created The Family Forum. The Family Forum encourages open dialogue and feedback from some of our core family attenders to build the education programme, inform the family show programming and also communicate with that section of our audience more effectively. Members of The Family Forum receive invitations to free work-in-progress showings of new work for young audiences and be asked to take part in feedback sessions with the companies after the shows, playing an invaluable role in ensuring that the children's theatre of tomorrow is as good as it can be. We currently have 15 families involved in the Family Forum.

We built on the success of the audience exchange programme 'Suck it and See!' in 2009, which 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. In 2010/2011 we expanded the amount and breadth of shows available and saw an increased uptake with over 200 people seeing a show via this method.

FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Development Department built on previous relationships, introduced new ones and saw another significant income increase this year, from £55,000 in 2009/10 to over £90,000 this year. The department now generates 8% of turnover. This period included handover to a new full time Development Director and ongoing support from the now seven-strong Development Board, which met quarterly throughout the year to support fundraising activity.

The Business Club continued to flourish with a healthy turnover of renewals and new recruits and a steady membership of 17 at the close of the financial year. Members took advantage of hospitality opportunities at the Theatre for entertaining as well as ticket offers and news announcements for their staff as well as enjoying social and networking opportunities. Existing relationships developed included co-sponsorship for Opera Project from Zurich Insurance PLC and Beachcroft LLP and this has been confirmed again for 2011/12. Advertising saw a significant increase in revenue from the previous year (by nearly five times as much to over £8,000) benefiting from greater commitment to this area, clearer structuring of rates and the introduction of longer term contracts for multiple brochures while still maintaining a good mixture of advertisers.

Nearly £25,000 was secured in grants from Trusts and Foundations in response to applications for specific areas of our core activity, representing a small increase on the year before. This included support from larger bodies such as the *Foyle Foundation* and the *Garfield Weston Foundation*. A further £10,000 grant from the Arts Council's *Grants for Arts* programme was also secured specifically to support our artist residency programme SITE. The rolling re-appeals programme will be continued from 2011/12 onwards, allowing approaches to a greater number of trusts and foundations regarding core funding to form a more significant part of future focus for the Development Department.

Further to contributions to core costs the Development Department also secured funding in the region of £90,000 during this period (which will be accounted for over a period of five years) awarded by the *BRE Low Carbon Buildings Programme* and *Biffaward's* grant scheme specifically to allow us to install PV panels on the roof of the Tobacco Factory (as detailed elsewhere in this report).

The support of our Fans remains crucial in allowing us to operate year on year and in the interest of building supporter levels a re-launch of the scheme took place in November, shifting focus more clearly onto regularly supporting the Theatre (via our newly introduced Direct Debit facility), providing clear levels of engagement appropriate to our current status and position as an organisation and encouraging a longer-term commitment to being a part of the Theatre's activity in this way. We celebrated the re-launch with a matched-giving initiative backed by a small number of the Theatre's greatest individual supporters who pledged funds to encourage new Fans and Fanbassadors (the new upper tier support level). At the close of the financial year income from individuals had reached over £21,000 – a notable increase from the year before.

STAFFING

Our staffing was fairly stable this year, with an increase in capacity at the end of the year. Our Development Director left in June and we replaced her with Anna Charlett. We took the opportunity to increase this to a full-time post. Our Marketing Manager left in January. We appointed Jo Richardson to the position and, again, increased this to a full-time post.

At the very end of the year we created two new part-time positions. Sophie Jerrold joined us as co-Development Director and Rusti Macapagal joined us as Assistant Administrator. Sophie was a direct addition to the development department whereas Rusti took over some of Carrie Rhys Davies' duties, freeing Carrie up to increase her work on training, education and creative development. Our pool of casual workers was fairly constant and our end-of-year appraisals were uniformly positive.

FINANCE

We had a year-end deficit of around £8,000, against a forecast of break-even and will carry forward a small debt. Our overall income was an enormous £238,000 ahead of target and £192,000 of this surplus came from better than expected box-office, of which a substantial proportion came from The Brewery massively exceeding projections. Our direct expenditure and overheads were £236,000 over target (the majority of direct expenditure is artistic spend directly linked to box-office income). Depreciation was greater than budgeted as a result of substantial capital investment (predominantly on PV power).

Our turnover was £1.44 million and we directly earned 84% of this from Box Office, Bar Sales, Room Hire and Workshops. We received 6% from public sources (Bristol City Council and Arts Council England South West) and fundraised 10% (including the theatre space gift from George Ferguson, which is not included in financial development).

The debt does not currently cause us any operational difficulties but the fact that we made a loss in a year when we performed so impressively at the box-office and elsewhere indicates that it will be difficult in the short-term to build up reserves as insurance against any downturn.

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

THE NUMBERS

We recorded around 82,400 ticketed entries to 621 performances of 127 different shows.

Over 2,600 people participated in or benefited from our TF+ programme of events to inspire, engage, develop and educate, which included 10 workshops for theatre professionals, 10 talks or post-show Q&As, 7 school tours, 6 sessions for young people, and a month-long cultural cohesion project with children from Ashton Gate and Easton primary schools.

Our rehearsal spaces were used for around 14,000 person-sessions.

Our average ticket price was £10.74

We gave away 900 complimentary tickets to underprivileged or community groups – a value of £9,600.