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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, Sarah Smith (Chairman),
David Fairclough, Peter Lord, Annie Menter, Nicky Rylance, Kate Yedigiaroff, Anna Southall

**TOBACCO
FACTORY
THEATRE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2011 / 12 was a highly successful year artistically for the theatre, with a series of wonderful shows appealing to a variety of audiences. These included the most successful in-house production in the theatre's history, sold-out visits from a greater range of major theatre companies than ever before, the second Bristol Festival of Puppetry, which featured companies from across the globe, and a better balanced programme across both spaces than ever before. The overall level of activity increased by a little and significant building blocks were put in place for expansion and improvement of activity in the future, in particular with an increase in our production and artistic development activity. Most significantly:

1. We created a full-time post of TF+ officer. This post is responsible for a growing range of artistic development activity in the theatre and produces/oversees events to inspire, engage, develop and educate our audiences.
2. We agreed to act as management company for the Mark Bruce Company, made it our associate dance company and employed a Producer to produce and manage their affairs until at least May 2013, including a national tour in summer 2012.
3. We agreed that we would take over a lease on the whole of the first floor of the theatre from 2012/13, giving us a greater level of security and allowing us to work with more people than ever before.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

This year saw a consolidation of previous programming strategies in the Factory Theatre and a new programming philosophy in the Brewery Theatre that brought great success.

In the Factory Theatre we continued to programme our four annual mainstays (Xmas, Opera and two Shakespeares) and each of these had excellent years. *Cinderella: A Fairytale* was by many measurements the most successful inhouse production in the theatre's history (further details in in-house productions), *La Boheme* was an excellent and very popular production from *Opera Project*. Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory produced a strong *King Lear*, with John Shrapnel playing Lear, which sold out a week longer run than normal plus a wonderful production of *The Cherry Orchard*, which also toured to London.

Alongside these shows we programmed a mixture of week and split week theatre shows, with notable visits from high profile companies including Northern Broadsides, Filter and Volcano and emerging companies including Little Bulb, Idle Motion, The Invisible Circus and Jammy Voo.

We hosted the second Bristol Festival of Puppetry, with an excellent line-up that included Wakka Wakka, Ulrike Quade, Jo Stromgren and others. This festival also saw our bar packed out nightly for The Smoking Puppet Cabaret, which saw terrifically accomplished turns from a range of artists.

We had a typically strong comedy programme, including a sold-out week from Mark Thomas with a thought-provoking comedy show about Palestine, and programmed comedy in the Brewery for the first time – this was mostly improv and featured The Suggestibles and the Noise Next Door as well as several appearances from local troupe Instant Wit.

In the Brewery we invested more heavily in shows from a wider range of more developed companies than hitherto, running these alongside the more normal programming of local emerging companies. Companies thereby programmed included Paines Plough, Blind Summit, Show and Tell and Hull Truck. We financed the extra investment purely through ticket sales – all of these companies sold out.

We continued to programme week long runs of family productions at The Brewery during half terms, and they continued to be very popular. Particularly rewarding for us in this strand was *Kid Carpet and the Noisy Animals*, a show that was originally developed at the Tobacco Factory through SITE. We joined forces with a new initiative, World Stage, to try and develop other family programming but although the quality of shows that World Stage brought us was strong we struggled to find big audiences for these works.

Finally, we hosted one of the most ambitious seasons that BOVTS has ever attempted. Over the course of four weeks around 70 students produced four of John Godber's shows in rep across our two venues. John Godber significantly rewrote one of them for the theatre, directed another and was generally whole-heartedly involved and the month worked wonderfully well.

IN-HOUSE PRODUCTIONS

In Xmas 2011 we co-produced *Cinderella: A Fairytale* with Travelling Light. The show was directed by Sally Cookson, designed by Katie Sykes and devised by the ensemble (scripted by Adam Peck). Benji Bower was Musical Director. From early on it looked likely to be a bit special, and that certainly turned out to be the case - it played to over 14,300 people, the largest ever audience for a show at the theatre, was rapturously reviewed locally and nationally and was invited to play a significant London run in Xmas 2013 by the St James Theatre.

We co-produced an ambitious tour of a new dance theatre piece *Made In Heaven* with our associate company The Mark Bruce Company. The show played three dates in Bristol, three in London (Wilton's Music Hall – a uniquely

lovely venue) and a further eleven around the country in Exeter, Newcastle, Salisbury and elsewhere. The show was reviewed very widely, and very well, the relationship with Wilton's looks set to continue, to the benefit of all, and the company found a far wider audience than they had done previously.

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

Under the banner Tobacco Factory Plus (TF+), our training, education and participation programme developed apace as a result of the TF+ Officer's increased capacity.

In August 2011 in collaboration with top Bristol-based companies Fairground Theatre and Kompany Malakhi, and with support from the Creative Youth Network, we ran our first ever Summer School. Over one week we worked with twenty 13 – 18 year olds on performance making skills, creating a video documentary as we went along. We were pleased to be able to offer a small number of bursary places on the Summer School thanks to the Denman Family Trust.

Also in the summer we were delighted to welcome the return of the Moveable Feast to run youth and community puppet-making workshops as part of the Bristol Festival of Puppetry.

In October 2011 we launched the first term of a programme of regular training opportunities for professional theatre-makers. Combining weekly skill-based classes with one-off masterclasses with visiting companies, this programme engaged a wide range of Bristol-based performers, supporting them in the development and maintenance of their craft and technique, and inspiring them through access to top level artists. A second term started in February 2012, a particular highlight which was our first weekend-long masterclass, which was led by Punchdrunk associate director and choreographer Maxine Doyle and saw 20 local artists working across the TFT's Brewery spaces to explore processes for creating site-specific movement work.

Alongside our Christmas co-production, *Cinderella*, we ran two in-school workshops with pupils at next door local Ashton Gate Primary School and devised an innovative post-show workshop and tour experience for ages 6+. Also during the year, we continued to offer regular post-show talks for our audiences, including with Les Dennis (*Jigsy*) and Kate Tempest (writer, *Wasted*), and Lunch with Opera Project returned, as did the ever popular Lunchtime Talks to accompany the Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory season.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The artist development strands of TF+ saw a particular increase in activity over this period.

Our new writing competition, Script Space, this year delivered in association with the Bristol Festival of Ideas, saw a significant shift in emphasis, with us offering development opportunities to the two winning writers. In October 2011 director Lee Lyford and students at City of Bristol College worked with playwright Martin Lytton on the development of his play *The Girl from Sparta Road*, and in November 2011 we produced a short lunchtime run of Tamsin Walker's

play, *Digits*. Also during this period, we launched Script Space V, administered with support from the Writers' Forum at the Tobacco Factory, and received a record 600 submissions.

The second incarnation of our residency programme, SITE, delivered in collaboration with Theatre Bristol, saw us working with artists Sarah Fielding and Holly Stoppit on their idea for a site-specific performance at the old Bridewell police cells. Through *Behind Closed Doors* also worked with and trained a group of performers through their activity, sharing their practice for making bespoke interactive performance pieces. They also presented two work-in-progress showings of the piece.

The number of Prototype events a year was reduced from three to two (one each in the autumn and the spring), in order to better complement the activity of Bristol Old Vic's Ferment programme. The October instalment of our Prototype scratch event saw performances from several artists new to the TFT, including Stand + Stare's *The Walk* and Bea Roberts' *The Chocolate Plant*, which were picked up for further development through TF+'s mini residency programme later in the year. In addition, we hosted 3 further work-in-progress events, two of which were in collaboration with the Writers' Forum at the Tobacco Factory, and new dance piece from Neshima. Our Creative Credit scheme continued to offer heavily subsidised space for local artists to develop their shows, with local companies Idiot Child, Darkstuff, Roughhouse and Pins & Needles among the beneficiaries.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

We continued to work with local schools and communities through our DNA (Developing New Audiences) initiative. In autumn 2011, Pins & Needles' production *Flies* toured to three schools (Bridge Learning Campus, Merchants' Academy and Fairfield High School) and achieved the initiative's best audiences to date, with over 200 people seeing the show across the three venues. In spring 2012, Fellswoop toured their acclaimed adaptation of the film *Belle* to the same schools – a great opportunity for a company at the start of their career, which enabled them to develop their in-school education provision alongside performing the show.

FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Development Department expanded this year by recruiting Sophie Jerrold, formerly of SATTF, to work specifically with the corporate sector. The department saw a massive income rise from £90,000 to over £140,000 (net £120,000), over 9% of the theatre's turnover.

Huge advances were made in our relationships with the corporate sector, with our business club growing to 26 members, and a 49% increase in the income derived from them. The most significant sponsorship deal for several years was agreed with IOP, who sponsored *Cinderella*, and the theatre proved itself capable of delivering great value for money in a number of areas that corporations might be interested in, including CSR but also advertising, hospitality etc.

STAFFING

We made a change in the staffing structure on the operations side, amalgamating the two positions of Box-Office Manager and Front of House Manager and replacing them with the one position of Operations Co-ordinator. Financially this worked well but it did place quite a strain upon the department.

As mentioned elsewhere we recruited Sophie Jerrold in the development department and Melanie Zaalof as producer. We also recruited Rusti Macapagal as administrator and at the end of the year recruited a part-time marketing assistant, Joe Roberts.

Frazer Riches left as technician to join Colston Hall and was replaced by Luke Peck.

Our pool of casual workers was fairly constant and our end-of-year appraisals were uniformly positive.

FINANCE

We had a year-end surplus of a rather astonishing £34,000, against a forecast of break-even and will carry forward a small surplus. Around half of this surplus came from the Brewery Theatre, mostly because it sold over 95% from mid-November to the beginning of April. Our overall income was an enormous £233,000 ahead of target with £144,000 of this surplus coming from better than expected box-office – for the first time our total box-office transactions exceeded £1,000,000. Our direct expenditure and overheads were also over target but the majority of direct expenditure is artistic spend directly linked to box-office income.

Our turnover was £1.54 million and we directly earned 81% 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 13% (including the theatre space gift from George Ferguson, which is not included in financial development).

Although this outcome is of course extremely pleasing it should be noted that it happened largely because all of our four recurring programme strands (opera, Xmas, SATTF) sold 100% of tickets and is not expected in future years. N.B. These figures are pre-audit and subject to change.

THE NUMBERS

We recorded around 86,000 ticketed entries to 676 performances of 134 different shows and over 2,000 people participated in or benefited from our TF+ programme of events to inspire, engage, develop and educate, plus .

Our rehearsal spaces were used for around 15,000 person-sessions.

Our average ticket price was £10.96

We gave away 202 complimentary tickets to underprivileged or community groups – a value of £2,200.