

YORK THEATRE ROYAL
REPORT TO EMAP 22nd January 2007

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On behalf of the Trustees of York Citizens' Theatre Trust Ltd we are delighted to be able to update Members on the progress that York Theatre Royal has made under the current SLA that runs until March 2008.
- 1.2 York Theatre Royal is a producing theatre, creating work on both its stages in the Main House (860 seats) and in the Studio (100 seats). The Main Theatre building is leased from CYC, and we also have other leases on property in Walmgate, the Red House and the De Grey Rooms.
- 1.3 Significant targets in terms of visitor numbers and outreach work have been achieved over the last three years, and the following report concentrates on our main activities.

2 THE PROGRAMME

- 2.1 It has been a good year for the Theatre in both the Main House and the Studio. From acclaimed new plays to work for young audiences, the Theatre has gained a reputation on a national and regional scale for being one of the best repertory producing Theatres in the region.
- 2.2 A major key to the Theatre's success over the last year has been a strong run of new plays and co-productions, as well as working in partnership with several of the country's leading playwrights and Theatre companies.
- 2.3 As well as performing in York, we have extended the life of our productions and have toured internationally to Japan (twice), and taken the Youth Theatre to Pakistan. Over the last three years, with our partners we have toured nationally with the work produced in York, and with commercial partners we have toured with *Steptoe and Son*, and more recently with *Terms of Endearment*, starring Linda Gray. With *Steptoe and Son* we also achieved the long term ambition of a West End transfer at the Comedy Theatre, a success achieved again more recently with *African Snow* at the Trafalgar Studios.

- 2.4 We have continued our strong relationship with resident Pilot Theatre Company, co-producing Roy Williams' *SING YER HEART OUT FOR THE LADS*, which toured nationally and received much acclaim from the national and regional press, and more recently co-produced *LOOKING FOR JJ*.
- 2.5 The development of the Theatre's programming policy in the Studio has seen some of the most critically acclaimed pieces of work being showcased in the region, and has allowed a new strand of work with students from York St John University and University of York performing in the studio.
- 2.6 Our annual programme of work is supported by our Christmas productions and the staging of the legendary pantomimes. Last year, *CINDERELLA*, attracted over 50,000 people. The production was praised by the media as being the most successful traditional pantomime in the region and continues to attract people from all around the country and abroad year on year. At the time of writing, this year's *SINDBAD THE SAILOR* looks to be an even greater artistic and commercial success.
- 2.7 Another important aspect of the Theatre's programming has been to stage the very best in dance, touring theatre, music and one-night events into the Main House, including Phoenix Dance, English Touring Theatre, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the Dune Jazz Festival and one nights from Stacey Kent. The Jazz Festival and Dance programmes are supported through CYC's festival programme.
- 2.8 We work very closely with the Amateur Societies in the City offering space in the Main House and Studio by developing good working relationships with as many non professional companies as possible.
- 2.9 Partnerships over the year have:
- enabled us to develop projects that we could not support on our own, share production costs (to sometimes save or sometimes grow a budget), develop new work and to challenge our audience.
 - helped raise our profile on the touring circuit, as York Theatre Royal is now firmly established as a prolific producer of work across the country, and as a consequence more partners are being developed.
- 2.10 We have ensured we have allowed for flexibility in our Artistic Programme and planning through the year and were able to react to financial pressures and fluctuating attendances.

3 LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

3.1 PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION & THEATRE - PET

The PET project is a three way partnership between York Theatre Royal, City of York Council, Arts and Culture and individual schools.

- 3.2 York Theatre Royal employs two Education Associates who carry out the main body of the Project work both in the school and at the theatre as appropriate.
- 3.3 The PET Project combines a broad range of the Council's, Theatre's and the Schools' aims and objectives which in summary are to provide creative teaching and learning opportunities across the whole curriculum in both the theatre and school settings.
- 3.4 We work with schools to exploit the role of the arts in the school improvement agenda, to provide quality and sustained professional development opportunities for teachers in the partnership schools (both specialists and non-specialists) in arts delivery.
- 3.5 We encourage young people, their parents and school staff to attend the theatre as a recreational activity, by offering discounts and regular updates.
- 3.6 This year we are working with Five Schools -
- Clifton with the Rawcliffe Federation
 - St. Wilfred's Primary School
 - Acomb Primary School
 - Knavesmire Primary School
 - Canon Lee Secondary
- 3.7 CYC provide us with £15,000 a year, and each school pays £3,000 to join the scheme. Recruitment begins after Christmas for the PET schools, and the choices are made in conjunction with Arts and Culture and YTR.
- 3.8 The PET scheme is used as an excellence case study by the DfES, and the model is being duplicated in other parts of the UK.
- 3.9 We can see the direct benefit of PET with schools, as improved the academic results of schools and Knavesmire is an excellent recent example. PET works with schools across all areas of the curriculum and schools have evaluated the input as making significant improvements in outcomes for pupils.

3.10 The Youth Theatre

Our Youth Theatre currently has an active membership of 350 young people aged between 5 and 25 years who are interested in and committed to making, seeing and performing pieces of theatre.

- 3.11 There are 12 weekly workshop groups which meet for a twelve week term, three times per year between September and July. There are waiting lists for most of the groups, currently outnumbering the existing Membership which is at full capacity.
- 3.12 There is a three tier fee paying system in operation, with discounts for families in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit and Means Tested Benefits.
- 3.13 The Youth Theatre rehearses in the Ballroom at the De Grey Rooms which is located next door to the theatre. Presentations to invited audiences also take place there. There are opportunities for public performances in The Studio each term, and every two years in the Main House. In February 2008, the Youth Theatre will be performing a new adaption of *1984*.
- 3.14 The Youth Theatre has a Young People's Forum which meets regularly and represents the views of the members - two of the Forum also sit on the Board.
- 3.15 Very many of the older Youth Theatre members are continuing their drama training in formal education at university and drama schools and we hope to participate in the Arts Award Scheme.

4 Performance Related

- 4.1 Each production we produce is complemented with an After Show discussion (talk-back) where the director, author and cast can be questioned about the production.
- 4.2 For the last two years we hosted an Open Day - when over 600 people have come along for a back stage tour, try on costumes and find out more about the work we do. This year we will participate in Residents First weekend.
- 4.3 We have recently completed a 'Masterclass' which we ran in conjunction with the University of York for six weeks that covered a number of topics

and allowed the participants to engage with a debate on theatre past, present and future. Over 60 people attended for each event over these six weeks.

- 4.4 For all Main House productions we provide a Signed performance, an audio described performance and a Captioned performance. With the help of the Theatre Club we have been able to improve on the equipment for hearing and visually impaired patrons as put an infra red system into the Studio Theatre.

5 Management Capability

- 5.1 The financial management and overall understanding of the organisation has significantly improved over the course of the year.
- 5.2 There have been changes in the Production, Education and Marketing departments and we employ on average 93 people through out the year, although this significantly increases during the Christmas period.
- 5.3 We recently achieved the Investors in People Standard for the Theatre.
- 5.4 Over the course of the year we have undertaken a review of the Board of Trustees and have appointed seven new members- bringing more business, educational and financial skills to the Company.
- 5.5 We continue to develop links with the City of York and the Arts Industry and all the Management team are involved with business networks, Board Memberships and outside bodies including locally with PLAY (Performing and Live Arts York), York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, York St John University, Women Without Walls, regionally with Audiences Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Six Producing Theatres, and nationally with the Theatre Management Association, Arts Marketing Association and the Arts Council.

6 Marketing and audience development

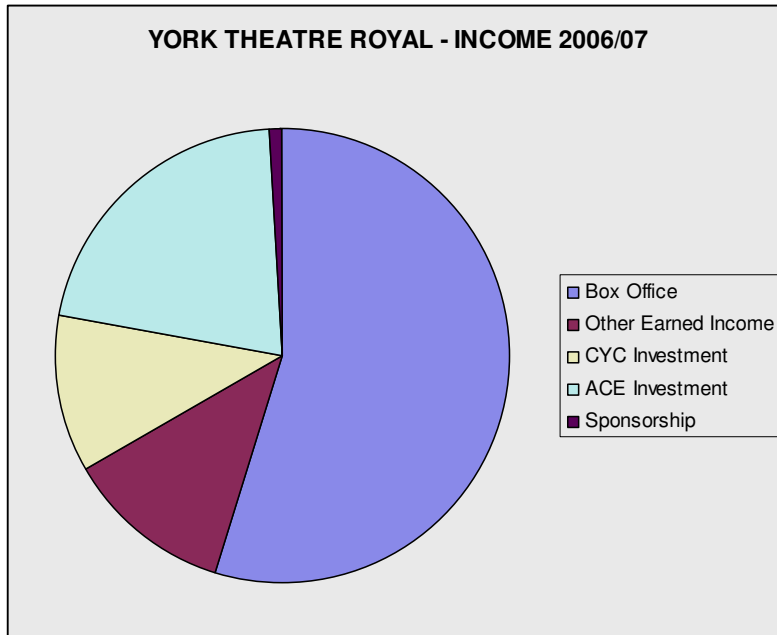
- 6.1 Much of York Theatre Royal's audience lives within the City of York itself:
 - 47% of YTR's bookers live within 15 minutes' drive of the theatre
 - 75% live within 45 minutes' drive
 - 84% live within an hour of the theatre.

- 6.2 Last year we sold 131,000 tickets at the Theatre Royal, 26,000 of which were to people under 26. This has grown from 15,000 in 2003 - a growth of 57%.
- 6.3 We offer 45% of our tickets at a concession/discounted rate.
- 6.4 The Communications Department is currently engaged in a campaign to increase the frequency of attendance of the existing audience, and to attract new audiences from within the City itself. One of the key strategies in the campaign is the new **Membership** of York Theatre Royal, launched on Mon 3 Dec 2007.
- 6.5 We also continue to develop our local audience through **Stage Partners** - a corporate sponsorship programme which enables local businesses to bring large numbers of their staff and clients, who might otherwise not consider themselves theatre-goers, to a variety of productions every year.

7 Financial

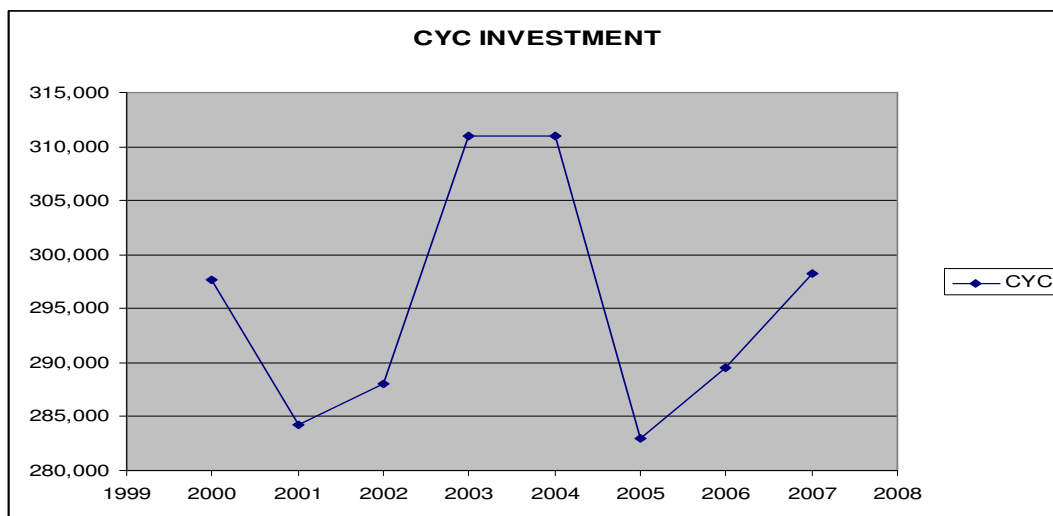
- 7.1 We have significantly reduced deficits over the last three years, and ended the financial year 2006/07 with a deficit of funds of £68K, on a turn over of £2.6M
- 7.2 The areas of concern are in our ability to earn enough box office and trading income, against the costs of the staff. We have reached an equilibrium with staff costs and programme activity - and will need to reduce activity in the Main House and Studio, if further funding is not available.
- 7.3 We are awaiting the results of both the Arts Council funding and City of York funding for next year, 2008/09.
- 7.4 We create a large amount of our own income - ourselves with Box office, ancillary sales, trading income, and costume hire.
- 7.5 We contribute £11.3m to York's Evening Economy, and employ a large number of Actors and freelance staff who all need accommodation, and use the City's facilities
- 7.6 We currently bring in around £20,000 a year through sponsorship and corporate entertaining, and are currently creating a strategy for fundraising, to help develop our capital needs.

7.7 The following tables represent how funds are raised by York Theatre Royal.

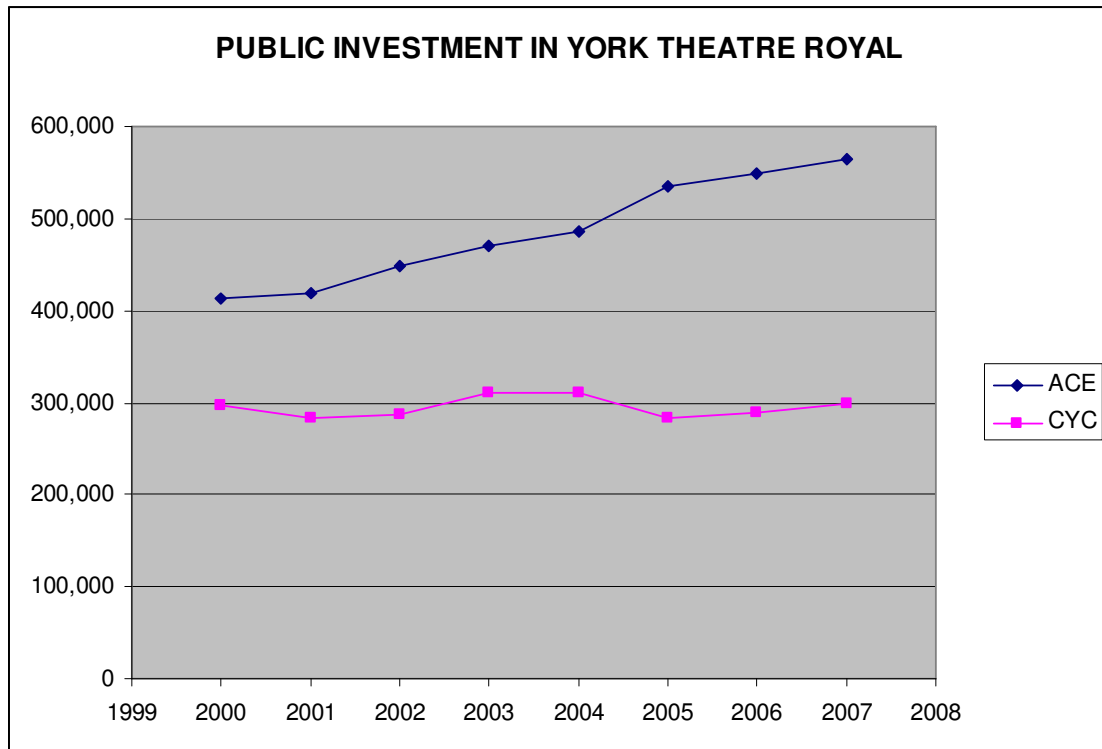


7.8 Our Public Investment makes up 34% of our overall income - therefore York Theatre Royal generates 66% of own income.

In 2003, this was 39% grants, and 61% self generated. At our last 3 year SLA negotiation we agreed that we would seek to increase the proportion of self generated income and although progress has been variable the direction of travel has always been right and we are increasingly achieving this goal.



- 7.9 We have requested an inflationary increase to CYC for our next SLA bringing funds for next year to £305,000 - which is still a lower investment than in 2003/04.



8 THE FUTURE

- 8.1 We remain committed to the develop of our buildings and spaces - allowing enough budgets for repairs and maintenance of the current building, and how our plans develop for the Colonnade and the De Grey Rooms linkage.
- 8.2 We continue to develop the principle of a CULTURAL QUARTER with the city, and have deliberately programmed events now in Museum Gardens and the National Railway Museum, working closely with York Museum Trust, the NRM and other visitor attractions.
- 8.3 We plan to grow our activity this Summer following the EDU Evening Economy research and support the Tourism and the Summer Evening economy by producing a 'site specific' production of THE RAILWAY CHILDREN at the National Railway Museum in Summer 2008.

9 SUMMARY

- 9.1 We remain a very open and accessible building, offering opportunities for audiences to see high quality work that will enthral, challenge and excite.
- 9.2 We continue to develop links with the City of York and the Arts Industry and all the Mgt team are involved with Networks, Board Memberships and outside bodies.
- 9.3 In the last five years we have
- Increased turnover by 22%
 - Reduced by 5% our reliance on public investment
 - Increased our Box office earnings by 26%
- 9.4 We want to ensure that York Theatre Royal continues to grow and develop, and a cut in CYC investment at this stage of our cultural life, would be detrimental to the work we deliver for the City, our audience and our community.

Daniel Bates
Chief Executive
11 December 2007