

York Theatre Royal: Update Report

June 2018

State of play

2017 was a year of transition for the theatre, as it was led by three different chief executives during the calendar year. Following the departure of Liz Wilson, Simon Glinn took on the role of Interim Chief Executive, before Tom Bird joined the organization as Executive Director (CEO) in December 2017.

In 2017/18, York Theatre Royal:

- Had a turnover of £4.14m
- Sold 119,452 tickets (125,756 in 2016-17)
- Worked with 4320 community participants via Youth Theatre etc.
- Employed 55 people on a permanent basis, with many more joining for specific projects

Recent highlights of the theatre's work include:

COMMUNITY	MAKING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The establishment of the Visionari, a community programming group. The group has been meeting since late 2017 and will programme a festival in the Studio in autumn 2018.• The influential Takeover Festival continues in 2018, in collaboration with York Mediale, a major new media arts festival in the city. Takeover allows young people in York to programme and run a week-long festival every year; a number of its alumni already hold influential positions in arts organisations across the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alongside Pilot Theatre, Mercury Theatre Colchester, Belgrade Theatre Coventry and Derby Theatre, York Theatre Royal established the Young Person's Theatre consortium, that will see four titles co-produced over four years. This is a fantastic opportunity for us to further diversify our main stage programme.• A major new large-scale production of Brighton Rock, adapted by Bryony Lavery, was co-produced with Pilot Theatre and played in February and March in York before embarking on a national tour.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy by Paul Birch was a production of a newly-commissioned dystopian play, performed by an intergenerational community cast of youth theatre members and over-65s. • The biennial Little Feet Festival of Children's Theatre took place again in June 2018 in collaboration with Tutti Frutti, providing a vibrant programme for 0-12 year olds in many spaces on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Be All and End All by Jonathan Lewis saw the world première of a new play to 2998 people in the main house, to very good national reviews. • A partnership was established with Theatre by the Lake that saw the theatres co-produce <i>Hymn to Love</i>; York Theatre Royal reviving the Theatre by the Lake production of <i>The Secret Garden</i>; and the Lakes' rep season running for two weeks in York with <i>Sense & Sensibility</i>, <i>Jeeves & Wooster</i>, Alan Bennett's <i>Single Spies</i>, Simon Longman's <i>Rails</i> and Rona Munro's <i>Bold Girls</i>. • York Theatre Royal's first ever Studio winter production, <i>The Book of Dragons</i>, adapted by Juliet Forster, played in December 2017. It was designed for ages 3 to 8, played to good houses and received positive reviews. • Due to promising advance sales, 2018-19 looks likely to be the theatre's busiest ever winter, with sales for Berwick Kaler's 40th York Theatre Royal pantomime, <i>The Grand Old Dame of York</i>, reaching £506,000 at the time of writing - £93,000 ahead of last year's pantomime. In addition, Juliet Forster's production of <i>The Elves and the Shoemaker</i>, adapted by
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	<p>Mike Kenny, will play for 30 performances in December 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new co-producing relationship was established with Emma Rice's Wise Children, which sees York Theatre Royal co-produce that company's first show, <i>Wise Children</i>, alongside the Old Vic, Oxford Playhouse and the Belgrade Theatre Coventry.
<p>OUR TEAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A grant of just under £80,000 was secured from the Patricia and Donald Shepherd Charitable Trust to support the crucial role of Outreach Director for three years. The role underpins our community engagement work in the city. • The organisation undertook a staff survey and Senior Management team-building exercises in conjunction with Pro-Development, a local business-development company. 	<p>OUR SPACES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theatre completed a £100,000 project to renovate, refurbish and redecorate the De Grey Rooms with a view to a highly improved revenue stream from the Events side of the organisation. • The theatre launched a new c. £50,000 project to renovate the patio / garden between the 1967 Patrick Gwynne foyer and De Grey House. It is envisaged that this can become an outdoor community space for the city.

Strategic Direction

The key strategy to maintain and develop the theatre's identity as a producing house, by producing as much work as possible in, with and for York. We are looking at a scenario where every production involves the community in some way (whether it be choirs, actors, costume-makers, props, brass bands...). This would be as well as professional performers etc and is not a cost-cutting

measure. We would commit to employing the same number of professional performers.

Our aims are:

- to grow and diversify our audience;
- to make as much theatre as possible, here, with our community;
- to uncover new revenue streams by doing what we're good at;
- to reverse negative perceptions of the organisation, internally and externally;
- to work with more people.

We will finalise a business plan in July 2018, which has a detailed list of SMART objectives in order to fulfil the above.

Major upcoming productions include *The Secret Garden* in summer 2018 and *The Grand Old Dame of York* in winter 2018-19.

A key objective for the theatre that I would like to bring to the attention of the Council is to locate a permanent new rehearsal/creation space in the city.

Tom Bird

Executive Director (CEO)

York Citizens Theatre Trust

1st June 2018