

Annex 1

York Theatre Royal: Service Level Agreement report

January 2013

This report will give an update of delivery against the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the City of York Council and York Citizens' Theatre Trust Ltd. The report covers the period from July 2013 to December 2013 with cumulative quantitative measures from April 2013 to December 2013.

The total audience attendance from April to December 2013 was 85,166.

PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY 2012/2018

SLA conditions are noted in bold with the details of how the theatre has been working to achieve them underneath.

- 1. Provide a year round programme of work which shall include in-house productions, including a pantomime, youth theatre productions, touring drama productions, and hires to local amateur companies**

Over the period from July 2013 to December 2013 York Theatre Royal has presented 232 performances in its Main Theatre and Studio of 42 different productions.

York Theatre Royal produced eight new productions over this period including **The Legend of King Arthur, See How They Run, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, Can't Stand Up for Falling Down, Cinderella, Richard III** and **Aladdin & the Twankeys**. York Theatre Royal also worked with Pilot Theatre to present a very successful community production of **Blood & Chocolate** that toured the streets of York.

This season also included another TakeOver Festival week which was programmed and managed by a team of under 25 years olds. **The TakeOver Vision and Mission** is to programme top quality national touring work and showcase talent from young aspiring professionals, giving young people a chance to develop their skills and discover their talents by having a variety of opportunities to take part in the organisation and running of the festival.

The programme included a newly commissioned play and production called **The Only Way is Chelsea's**. This was written in conjunction with young people in the city of York with the majority based at a York High School and the play was set in Acomb. It attracted an audience of young

people from across the city including all of the young people who had contributed to the script storyline. It also toured to Live Theatre in Newcastle and Soho Theatre in London. This work has been funded by two national Foundations: Paul Hamlyn and Esmée Fairbairn who provide the theatre with the financial support to give young people the opportunity to manage a substantial programme of performance and participatory work and a budget of £50,000.

The **TakeOver** Board of young people have the ambition to work with other organisations in the city of York to introduce the idea of York being the first **TakeOver** city. The Board is currently conducting an evaluation with a professional research company to agree the hallmarks of a **TakeOver** organisation. They met Cllr Sonia Crisp to discuss the idea and interest her in the City of York Council considering becoming part of **TakeOver** York.

National visiting companies added to the theatre programme giving high quality variety to the performance programme in York. This included **The Private Ear**, **The Public Eye**, English Touring Theatre with **Ghosts** and Phoenix Dance Theatre amongst a full and varied programme of small scale theatre in the Studio Theatre. York Opera were also part of the season with an outstanding production of Verdi's **Nabucco**.

2. Provide sign language interpreted and audio described performances and touch tours

All of the York Theatre Royal productions in the main theatre have both sign interpreted and audio-described performances. In addition the theatre also offers captioned performances. All theatre productions that tour to the theatre for a week in the main theatre offer audio-described performances. The theatre has a pool of dog sitters for guide dogs.

3. Provide a regular Youth Theatre for at least 250 young people annually

Across the Autumn term over 300 young people took part in the Youth Theatre in 14 different youth theatre groups from the ages of 5 to 18. They attended weekly classes, extra rehearsals and Youth Forum sessions.

5-8 year olds

The youngest members of the theatre do not work towards a production in this season but they will be performing in February. They are working towards a production about Bees called What's the Buzz?

8-10 year olds

The 8-10's have spent this term working on building their performance skills to work towards a new production in June 2014 of a newly commissioned play.

11-14 year olds

These groups performed at the Arts Award Conference in York in November. It was a very interesting and challenging commission for the young people and our youth theatre directors but it was a successful expression of the imagination of the young people and entertained delegates at the conference.

14-16 year olds

These groups have been working with Shakespeare's plays as part of the range of Shakespeare productions at the theatre. They are working towards three Shakespeare productions in March of **The Tempest**, **Julius Caesar** and **Macbeth**.

16+

During this period the 16+ groups produced a production of **Twice Upon a Time** by Neil Duffield which played in the Studio Theatre for a week.

4. Provide educational activities related to each main house production, including special matinees, talks, teachers' packs, workshops and visits to schools

Early Years

Early Years work also goes from strength to strength, and we are now offering regular weekly activities with **Storymakers** for 3-5 years olds, **Singamajigs** for 1 – 4 year olds and **Sing and Sign** for babies from 6 months old.

Schools

We are working with schools on many different projects.

We continue to have long-term, cross-curricula relationships with York schools including, Knavesmire, Joseph Rowntree and St Olave's.

As part of the Learning and Performance Network run in conjunction with the Royal Shakespeare Company and York High School as the Hub school we are working with seven cluster schools: Acomb primary, St.Barnabas CE primary, Poppleton Road primary, Woodthorpe primary,

Westfield primary, Applefields School (specialist school for cognition and learning) and Joseph Rowntree school. We will work alongside these schools for the next 18 months, running training, which will culminate in a schools festival at York Theatre Royal in 2015.

We held our inaugural secondary schools festival, the *ReAct festival* during November with four York secondary schools performing a response to Richard III on the set of the production. The four schools were Manor Academy, Huntington, Joseph Rowntree and York High School.

Our Playhouse Festival of new theatre especially written for 8 -10 year olds to perform took place at the end of the Summer term with teachers and pupils from Park Grove, Archbishop of York Junior School, Sand Hutton, Clifton Green and Knavesmire Primary directing and performing in the Studio Theatre.

Our production of **The Boy Who Cried Wolf** was accompanied by a series of Theatre Days with primary schools throughout September and October.

Higher Education partnership with schools

The Associate Director at York Theatre Royal continues to teach the York St John performance students on their Acting to Performance module.

We secured an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award fund for a PhD studentship on Storytelling and Adolescence with York St John University and together we appointed a storyteller who will be working in the city with students for the next three years.

This practice-based studentship will explore storytelling with and for adolescent participants. It sets out to develop and evaluate practice that utilises storytelling as an empowering medium through which young people can take control of actively constructing their sense of self and their place in the world and their community.

This has also launched the new International Centre for Arts & Narrative and we will be working with schools through this joint initiative with York St John University in the new year.

5. Provide a range of activities to engage older people in activities connected with the Theatre

The new initiatives for older people that we introduced in the last six months continue and include Spotlight talks and a Playreading Group. The Friends of York Theatre Royal continue to offer opportunities for older people to volunteer to support the work of the theatre.

Other work with older adults includes a project with Out of Character Theatre Company for adults who access mental health services, a new piece of theatre was directed and produced with the Company in November.

We also ran a new programme of adult education classes as part of the CYC's Inspire programme.

In addition, we have been working with Creative Personalities, who are a visual art group, for people diagnosed with Personality Disorders. The group was based at York Art Gallery, but we have been housing them since the closure of the Art Gallery.

We continue to offer two Adult Acting classes on a termly basis that are consistently over-subscribed.

6. Develop The Studio programme promoting new and culturally diverse work: using the space to provide opportunities for local voluntary arts organisations and to develop the creative infrastructure of the city.

The Studio Theatre programme between July and December included 22 different productions.

This included York Theatre Royal productions of **The Boy Who Cried Wolf** and **Can't Stand Up for Falling Down**. One a new version of the classic fable for 3-8 year olds that then went on a national tour of theatre venues and was the Christmas show for Sheffield Theatres. The other a contemporary piece of theatre, set in Yorkshire, of the effects of domestic abuse. Both pieces of theatre received attention and reviews from national theatre critics. Both were praised for the quality of the productions.

15 different national touring companies performed in the Studio across this period. The variety included a production about the life of **George Formby**, a theatrical performance lecture about value called **The Price**

of Everything and a children's show **Sita's Story** from south Asian company Tara Arts.

We also held a **Family Arts Festival** in the Ballroom of the De Grey Rooms during half term as part of a national Family Arts week with a range of workshops and performances.

7. Provide student placements and careers advice to support the development of a strong local creative sector

We have had a range of placements across this period.

We continue to offer creative and artistic placements on our productions with Assistant Director roles on *See How They Run* and *Can't Stand Up For Falling Down* and through the TakeOver Festival week in October on the newly commissioned piece *The Only Way is Chelsea's* we offered assistant director and designer roles. In addition during the week more young people joined the core TakeOver team to play host to the audiences at the theatre and at other sites in the city. Roles for placements attached to the TakeOver Festival include Festival Producer, Artistic Director, Head of Communication, Press officer, Production Manager and Head of Creative Creative Engagement.

We continue to offer short placements for school-age children throughout the year. These are always over-subscribed.

We worked with lots of new young volunteers in the Production and Hospitality teams as part of *The Legend of King Arthur*. They supported work with delivering workshops for young people throughout the summer and supporting our craft departments in making and painting sets and props as well as welcoming and looking after audiences who came to the theatre for an all-day Arthurian experience.

We continue to offer the normal carousel placements.

8. Develop the De Grey Complex, along with the Theatre, as a creative production hub for the city

The range of activity in the De Grey Complex is constantly changing as we add new public activities and create new education partnerships.

In this last period we reached an agreement with York College to use the Rooms for the teaching of their performing arts students. The students are now in the De Grey Rooms for three days of the week. Also during this period we launched the first schools workshops of the International Centre for Arts and Narrative with York St John University.

The De Grey Rooms and House continue to offer creative production facilities for both the professional and voluntary arts.

Companies using the spaces included tutti frutti, Flying Cloud Theatre, The Flanagan Collective, Telling Tales Theatre Company, Pilot Theatre, Slung Low, TongueTied, Mud Pie Arts, The Eboracum Quartet, Ensemble Theatre Company and Bad Apple Theatre Company.

The De Grey Complex continues to host events and functions and houses 4 creative organisations alongside York Theatre Royal.

9. Work with key stakeholders on the Cultural Quarter developments as well as other developments as appropriate

Following a successful bid to the Arts Council for Development Funds to support the theatre in making progress on its Capital Re-Furbishment, York Theatre Royal appointed an Architectural Design Team in September. The London-based architects De Matos Ryan have since been working with the theatre on a full masterplan of capital investment to improve all areas of the main theatre building. The theatre is on track to conclude its designs up to RIBA stage D by the beginning of March. This will form the basis of a further application to the Arts Council for £2.9 million and the theatre will make applications for Planning permission and Listed Building Consent in March. The theatre has been successful with a number of Fundraising bids to match this corner stone funding and has a further £650,000 to raise in the next 18 months.

The theatre is on track to commence work at the theatre in March 2015.

Liz Wilson Chief Executive

York Theatre Royal 12 January 2013.