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Patron HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bristol, Mrs Mary Prior MBE JP

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David Fairclough, Annie Menter, Nicky Rylance, Kate Yedigaroff, Anna Southall

**TOBACCO
FACTORY
THEATRE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2012/13 was a successful year for Tobacco Factory Theatre – we enjoyed sold-out visits from a huge variety of major theatre companies, had our widest range of audiences ever and had a better balanced programme across both spaces. Most significantly:

1. Having transferred to London's St James Theatre, our memorable 2011 Christmas show *Cinderella: A Fairytale* (co-produced with Travelling Light), had the remarkable honour of being nominated for an Olivier Award in the 'Best Entertainment & Family' category. The show looks set to continue delighting audiences as it will transfer to The Unicorn in London for Christmas 2013. Closer to home our 2012 Christmas show *Hansel & Gretel* (co-produced with New International Encounter) was a record-breaking success, with more people watching it than any other show in the theatre's history.
2. We developed our provision of production and management support for a range of projects. We built upon our relationship with Mark Bruce Company and agreed that we would act as the company's sole producer up to March 2014, facilitating their successful national tour with *Made In Heaven* and securing funding for their latest production, *Dracula*, due to debut at the theatre in September 2013. We also took on producing and management responsibilities for Kristin & Davy McGuire and Kid Carpet, providing them with R&D space, mentoring support, fundraising and production management for their latest projects, *The Paper Architect* and *Blast Off*.
3. The overall level of activity in the theatre increased thanks to a large organisational restructuring and securing of a Catalyst grant from ACE. We were able to bring in Lauren Scholey as Deputy Director and she had an immediate impact, securing funding to upgrade all the seating in the Factory Theatre auditorium (to be installed August 2013), guaranteeing the long-term comfort of our audiences' backs and bums.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

This year in the Factory Theatre a broad variety of quality programming for a wide range of audiences, built around our annual mainstays of Christmas, Opera and Shakespeare, continued to be a recipe for success. The outstanding *Hansel & Gretel* proved to be the most popular show in the theatre's history (full details under In-House Productions), Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* was an excellent and very popular production from Opera Project, and

The Tobacco Factory has become an essential theatre.
Susannah Clapp, *The Observer*



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Company no. 04536120
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Shakespeare At The Tobacco Factory produced a wonderful *Richard III* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (featuring a hilarious cameo from a live dog onstage) followed by their largest national tour to date. Also this year and for the first time we were able to produce an in-house Christmas show at the Brewery for younger audiences (full details under In-House Productions).

Throughout the year we programmed a diverse range of high quality international, national and local works including several shows from Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, *L.O.V.E.* by Volcano, Opera Up Close's *La Boheme*, Les Dennis as *Jigsy* and another mesmeric production from The Paper Cinema. Mayfest also once again delivered an exciting programme of contemporary theatre during their city-wide festival, most notably a very powerful piece by Belarus Free Theatre about social and cultural censorship. We also loved Miriam Margolyes coming here with *Dickens' Women*, which delighted a massively enthusiastic audience.

In the Brewery, our programming philosophy of investing heavily in a wide range of developed companies alongside local emerging artists continued to great success with increased audiences at the venue for the 3rd year running. The venue saw the first visits from well-known companies and artists including Hull Truck (*DNA*), Gonzo Moose (*I'm An Aristocrat*, *Get Me Out of Here*), Unlimited and The Bush Theatre (*Money*) alongside newer companies including Idle Motion, Neshima and the Bike Shed. Notably, the venue played host to a short series of shows curated by Bristol-based performance art pioneers, Action Hero. We worked closely with Bristol Storytelling Festival to programme a series of monthly Storytelling Sunday nights throughout the year and were also pleased to increase the presence of local work that had been supported at a development stage via Prototype or Bristol Old Vic Ferment, such as *The Tiger and the Moustache* by Saikat Ahamed.

Families and young people continued to be a key demographic for the Brewery especially during the school holidays and we had very popular visits from Shoofly Theatre, Hiccup Theatre and another bombastic week from *Kid Carpet & The Noisy Animals* (a show that was originally developed at Tobacco Factory Theatre through SITE). Meanwhile at the Factory Theatre, families enjoyed another Travelling Light debut with *The Mysterious Vanishment of Pobby and Dingam*. Tobacco Factory Theatre continues to be at the forefront of creating work for young people in the South West of England and our critically acclaimed partnerships with Travelling Light and Polka Theatre have set high benchmarks for the provision of opportunities for children and young people nationally.

They say stand-up comedy always does well during a recession and true to form, we had another very strong comedy programme this year with performances from some very well-known acts including Isy Suttie, Josh Widdicombe and Mark Thomas. Brouhaha 2012 was another success with shows from Lloyd Langford, Richard Herring and Lucy Porter.

IN-HOUSE PRODUCTIONS

During Christmas 2012 we co-produced *Hansel & Gretel* with New International Encounter to staggeringly positive audience and press reactions. The company are a brilliant group of international artists that have been received

wonderfully during all their previous visits to the theatre and it was a pleasure to work with them on *Hansel & Gretel*, a show that proved to be the most successful in our history with over 14,800 people in attendance. We also produced our first every family Christmas show in the Brewery. *The Lost Present* (directed by Emma Williams with live music from Kid Carpet), aimed at ages 3+, proved to be a festive hit, playing to over 3,000 people.

Simultaneously we produced *Cinderella: A Fairytale* at the newly opened St James Theatre in London, a 320 seat venue next to Buckingham Palace. Although the venue's lack of established audience led to a real struggle for numbers early on in the run, the show was generally agreed to be an artistic triumph, gaining excellent reviews and eventually securing an Olivier nomination.

Associate artists Mark Bruce Company premiered *Made In Heaven* at the Factory Theatre in May 2012 before we co-produced their successful national tour visiting the beautiful Wilton's Music Hall in London and nine regional venues. Finally, we co-produced two pieces of new writing with Glasgow-based Òran Mór under the A Play, A Pie & A Pint banner: Tom Wainwright's *The Room in the Elephant* and Frances Poet's *Faith Fall*. The shows played lunchtimes at the Brewery and each ticket got an audience member a complimentary pint of ale brewed at Bristol Beer Factory and a pie from the scrumptious Pie Minister. This experimental initiative was a wonderful merging of local businesses and audiences responded to it very well. The new plays proved hits with *Elephant* scheduled to make the trip to Edinburgh Fringe 2013.

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

Under the banner of Tobacco Factory Plus (TF+), our training, education and participation programme again made huge advances this year. TF+ was able to work with over 1,600 people through its targeted high quality participatory activities, including the annual summer school, creative workshops led by visiting companies and the DNA programme (full details in Audience Development). Highlights included Kid Carpet inspiring young theatre goers to write and play a song of their very own and workshops to recruit a chorus of young clubbers for Splice Theatre's *The Dug Out*.

Our programming of regular training opportunities for professional theatre-makers also continued to do well. Combining weekly skill-based classes with one-off masterclasses from visiting companies (including The Paper Cinema, New International Encounter and Complicite), this programme engaged a wide range of Bristol-based performers, supporting them in the development and maintenance of their craft and technique, inspiring them through access to top level artists.

During the year, 10 post-show and lunchtime talks were held for audiences, offering them the chance to deepen their engagement with the work of the visiting and in-house theatre companies. Notable examples included open rehearsals with Mark Bruce Company's *Made In Heaven* and the 2012 Christmas show *Hansel & Gretel*, offering audiences a rare glimpse into the rehearsal room to see how shows are made.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Tobacco Factory Theatre makes a major contribution to the development of artistic talent in the South West and we increasingly act as a cultural driver within the region and as part of the national framework. Our TF+ programme provides opportunities for artists at different stages in their career and development to access support from experienced facilitators and mentors.

In 2012/13 TF+ was able to provide opportunities to a large number of theatre-makers including: 11 artists residencies involving over 40 artists working in dance, theatre, new writing and work for children; *Prototype*, in partnership with Theatre Bristol, continued into its 5th year providing an evening of new work-in-progress performance for sharing and constructive feedback; *Devoted & Disgruntled* stopped off at the theatre on its national tour, facilitating a weekend of discussion around the future of theatre; and TF+ facilitated another successful Script Space (an open application competition to identify new writing talent) with over 600 applications received, demonstrating the huge interest and demand in this area. Three of these scripts were developed and presented as rehearsed readings with feedback from experienced professionals. Attendance at scratch nights and mentoring conversations with artists by the TF+ Officer and Producer ensured the identification and nurturing of talent in the region.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

One of the important ways Tobacco Factory Theatre interacts directly with our audience is through the box office and so this year we prioritised the selection and installation of a new box office system to transform our audience data collection and analysis capability. Research undertaken throughout 2012/13 led to a new contract with leading market provider Spektrix and a full installation date is set for July 2013. The theatre is also a partner in Audience Focus, a cluster group for Bristol organised by the Audience Agency to bring together the marketing teams and data of arts organisations across Bristol.

Increasing the theatre's presence on social media websites to improve the way we communicate with our audience was a priority for 2012/13 and we succeeded, with Facebook followers increasing by 50% and Twitter followers up by 90% during the year.

The theatre undertook an audience survey in January 2013 and the findings led to us working proactively to target the student audience in Bristol to broaden our age demographic further, and to look at the Creative Case in 2013/14 as an approach to tackling the under-represented ethnic mix of our audiences.

Launched in November 2010, the theatre's pioneering initiative DNA (Developing New Audiences) takes high quality theatre out into Bristol's local communities, aiming to develop new audiences in areas of the city where cultural resources are limited. By addressing some of the main practical reasons why people in certain areas are less likely to attend (awareness, location and ticket price), DNA aims to break down barriers surrounding going to the theatre. In 2012/13 DNA visited 5 schools, performed to 325 people and facilitated 3 workshops and 5 post-show discussions. In

doing so, DNA also gave an emerging company, Idle Motion, valuable experience of this type of work and established a useful partnership with nationally regarded Polka Theatre. 60% of the people attending DNA performances filled out feedback postcards and of these, 22% had never been to the theatre and 74% said that they would go to the theatre again as a result of seeing one of the shows. TF+ plans to consolidate this project in 2013/14, believing it to be an essential part of the mix for the theatre audience development and outreach work in the future.

STAFFING

A number of significant changes which have had a demonstrably positive impact on the organisation occurred this year beginning with the appointment of a new Chair of Board of Trustees, Sarah Smith. Following the appointment of Lauren Scholey as Deputy Director of the theatre we promoted David Dewhurst to the newly created role Director of Operations and restructured at a senior level to create a senior management team of Director, Deputy Director and Director of Operations. Alongside this a new programming team was created of the TF+ Officer, Producer and Director, to broaden the artistic input and to join up artist development with programming.

We took on Becky Lane, who had been working with us as maternity cover for a year, as permanent Marketing Manager and we took on Katy Wilkes as Box Office Manager. We were also able to create the new role of Development Officer, into which position we attracted Holly Foulds. Our Brewery technician, Luke Peck, left to tour the world with *The Lion King* and in his stead we hired the experienced Chris Swain.

As well as hosting three weeks of work experience for three Year 9 students, the theatre invited two interns during the year as part of our on-going partnership with HE provider Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. The interns worked part-time with the Marketing Department for four months as part of their one-year Theatre Arts Management Course (PG DIP).

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

FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Development Department continued its successful growth in 2012/13, raising a total of £83,825 in contributed income and a further £165,000 in public subsidy and grants; 18% of the theatre's total turnover.

This year we were successful in the receipt of an Arts Council Capital award of £122,000 for the replacement and upgrade of the seating in the Factory Theatre auditorium and we began a major fundraising campaign to generate the further £180,000 needed for the project.

Although secured in 2010/11, 2012/13 was the first full year that Tobacco Factory Theatre's position in the National Portfolio of Organisations supported by Arts Council England came into effect. This meant the theatre was offered ongoing, guaranteed support from the Arts Council, which increases our ability to negotiate and to fundraise from other sources and allows us to plan for the future with greater confidence.

Advances were made in our relationships with the corporate sector with our Business Club growing from 26 in 2011/12 to 30 in 2012/13. Members took advantage of hospitality opportunities at the theatre for entertaining as well as ticket offers and enjoyed social and networking opportunities.

In September 2012, TFT took over the lease of whole first floor of the Tobacco Factory building and from September 2012 we have been operating all hires in the Dance Studio, Blue Room, Strong Room and offices. The theatre earned £82,733 in income from hires of these spaces across the year (hires income introduced in last 7 months of the year only) and it demonstrates a successfully seized opportunity for the theatre to diversify our earned income streams.

FINANCE

It was a mixed year financially. We were able to break even against a forecast deficit of around £26,000 mostly due to shows selling extremely well: our total box-office exceeded forecast by £146,000. The majority of this surplus was paid to companies and artists – we were delighted to contribute more than expected to the artistic ecology but the impact upon our finances was more modest. We forecast at 75% sales so this is a very pleasing outcome.

Our turnover was £1.8m and we directly earned 82% of this from Box Office, Bar Sales, Production Income, Room Hire and Workshops. We carried forward a surplus of £53,000.

THE NUMBERS

We recorded around 80,000 ticketed entries to 645 performances of 126 different shows at one of our two theatres. We also recorded around 10,000 ticketed entries to our touring productions / co-productions in other cities.

Over 2,300 people participated in or benefited from our TF+ programme of events to inspire, engage, develop and educate.

A further 30,500 people engaged with the theatre through attendance at community classes and performances.

Audience attendance over the year was 83% of capacity.

TF+ worked with 363 artists and theatre makers across the year through its residency programme, and over 600 theatre practitioners across the year in all artist development activity.

Our average ticket price was £12.31.

We gave away 400 complimentary tickets to underprivileged or community groups – a value of £5000.