

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE – 2018/19 Season**

**INTRODUCTION**

Chichester Festival Theatre (CFT) operates as a registered charity and is managed by a Board of voluntary Trustees, including a CDC nominated Trustee, under the Chairmanship of Sir William Castell. This report reflects on the financial year April 2018 to March 2019 (2018/19).

The Chairman's, Trustee's and Strategic Reports within the attached Statutory Accounts (Appendix 1) give a comprehensive overview of the 2018/19 financial year at CFT. This report gives a summary of such.

**APPENDICIES**

Appendix 1 – Statutory Accounts for the Financial Year 2018/19.

Appendix 2 – Arts Council England feedback to CFT reflecting on 2018/19.

Appendix 3 – Statistical analysis of sales from within the Chichester District

Appendix 4 – Estimate of CFT's Economic Impact on the District, April 2018-March 2019.

Appendix 5 – Chichester Festival Theatre Annual Review 2018/19, which can be accessed at:  
<https://www.cft.org.uk/annual-reviews>

**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND FUNDING**

2018/19 was the first year of a four-year cycle of National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding from Arts Council England (ACE) and the first governed by CFT's 2018-2022 business plan. ACE NPO funding of CFT remains at the previously reported level of £1,740.214 per annum.

In June 2019 CFT completed ACE's Annual Survey, this is now structured in two parts – a Business Plan Review, reviewing CFT's progress in the context of ACE's goals and core strategic objectives and CFT's business plan objectives; and an Annual Survey, reporting statistical, financial and workforce data. ACE provided feedback on the Business Plan Review, this feedback can be found at Appendix 2.

**THEATRE PROGRAMME**

**Festival 2018** ran from 20 April to 3 November in the Festival Theatre and to 1 December in the Minerva Theatre and saw 223,784 people attending the 12 CFT produced productions. Building on the foundations of a record-breaking Festival 2017, the work extended its reach both in terms of repertoire and audiences and further supported our objective to appeal to as wide a demographic as possible, nurturing the health of both the theatre industry and our community.

The season included three world premieres, all written by women; two musicals, the classic *Me & My Girl* and new British musical *Flowers for Mrs Harris*; revivals of classic plays including Penelope Keith in *The Chalk Garden* and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary production of Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen*; contemporary plays including debbie tucker green's *random/generations* and *Cock* by Mike Bartlett; and the first family-audience focused production in a Festival season, a musical adaptation of David Walliams' *The Midnight Gang*.

*The Midnight Gang* achieved the highest ever school's interaction of a production in CFT's history – 3,341 tickets engaging 56 local schools; 378 tickets (11%) were given free to 13 schools in deprived areas locally. Having piloted live-streaming to local hospitals in 2017, this production was live-streamed to the children's wards of St Richard's and Worthing Hospital, Chestnut Tree House children's hospice near Arundel and to all bedside televisions and public spaces at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital as part of their Arts Week programme. The production supported the development of LEAP director Dale Rooks, directing her first professional production. CFYT's Xmas production, *Sleeping Beauty*, was directed by Lucy Betts, a CFYT Alumni directing at CFT for the first time.

Productions with contemporary themes saw a new and younger audience engage with the theatre and 25% of audiences in 2018-19 were first-time bookers. 32% of actors were from a BAME background and 57% were female. All CFT staff received basic sign-language training to ensure a welcoming environment for deaf cast and creative team members, as well as audiences.

**The Winter Season** offered a diverse programme for our audiences. 32 productions and events saw 115,799 tickets sold for work that ranged from well-known plays such as *Art* and *Shakespeare in Love* to new work from physical theatre company Frantic Assembly and work aimed at encouraging least-engaged audiences including Flute Theatre presenting Shakespeare for young people with autism and Stopgap Dance, an integrated company of disabled and non-disabled performers.

Three of CFT's 2017 productions transferred to the West End in 2018: *Quiz*; *Caroline, or Change* and *King Lear*. *King Lear* was broadcast by NT Live and was seen by 125,742 people in 49 territories. CFT received eight Olivier Award nominations in 2018 with Sharon D. Clarke being awarded Best Actress in a Musical for *Caroline or Change*. CFT's 2014 production, *Pressure*, also enjoyed a West End transfer.

2018/19 was not without its challenges – some productions early in the Festival season, and in some instances in the Winter programme, did not meet with the universal critical acclaim we had hoped for, and in some areas this reflected at the Box Office. However, the second half of the season and the vast majority of productions and events in the Winter season were well-received and supported an excellent overall performance and meeting of the annual financial target. While income was lower than in 2017/18, it should be noted that 2017/18 was a record-breaking year for CFT, with an additional production in the Festival programme. It would therefore be misplaced to compare year-to-year too significantly. The theatre's continued success remains hugely supported by the residents of the District - 2018/19 saw 25% of CFT's total sales coming from Chichester district residents. Page 1 of Appendix 3 reflects a detailed geographical analysis of where sales came from within the district.

Details of the full Festival 2018 season are included in the CFT Annual Review which can be viewed at the link below, printed copies have been delivered to CDC for committee members:  
<https://www.cft.org.uk/annual-reviews>

## **LEARNING EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION (LEAP)**

The LEAP department's youth and community programme continues to be at the very heart of all we do at CFT. 2018/19 saw the department continue to expand its programme and outreach in order to engage with more young and isolated people within the district and local community.

A recent article written by the Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, cited CFT's Youth Theatre as one of the most impressive examples of how the arts enriches life in Chichester and throughout West Sussex. He considers this socially diverse grouping of young people demonstrate the 'very best' of what this rising generation is capable of:

“The benefits go deeper than entertainment and applause. CFYT (Chichester Festival Youth Theatre) promotes a sense of belonging and responsibility. It works imaginatively to combat social isolation among young people, especially those who are already carers for a dependent parent or sibling. These young people are aspiring stars. They already shine because they show us something exceptional about being human”.

In March, Susan Elkin also wrote in Ink Pellet magazine:

“I have long opined that Chichester’s LEAP is one of the best theatre education programmes in the country, with an institutional commitment to education which includes county-wide youth theatre, mental health and dementia friendly initiatives, talks, discussions and much more”.

Highlights of LEAP’s 2018/19 programme include:

### Children and Young People

- CFYT’s fully Inclusive youth theatre company was selected to perform in the final showcase of NT Connections at the prestigious National Theatre, London - one of ten groups from over 260 youth companies nationally.
- 1,286 youth theatre sessions were delivered, reaching 800 children and young people weekly at CFT and at 8 satellite locations across the county.
- Youth theatre bursaries increased from 11 to 12.5% of CFYT membership reaching more vulnerable young people.
- A highly successful pilot project with Asphaleia training, working with 11 unaccompanied young asylum seekers based in Worthing promoting creative expression, teamwork and identity.
- 14 older CFYT members participated in a week-long residency working in collaboration with the Paper Birds Theatre Company, followed by a devised sharing inspired by the theme of the current housing crisis.
- A cast of 64 CFYT members, combined with 28 young people backstage, were involved in *Sleeping Beauty*, our main-stage youth theatre Christmas production.
- A live stream of *The Midnight Gang* reached the children’s wards of St. Richards and Worthing Hospital, Chestnut Tree children’s hospice and all bedside and public televisions across Great Ormond Street Hospital.
- 7,512 students engaged with participatory activities at CFT or in school settings: including an anti-bullying project, theatre activity days/tours, playwriting projects, CPD teacher training sessions and partnership projects with the cinema and local museums.
- CFT hosted a week of music events in the Festival Theatre, including a BBC Concert Orchestra Family Concert. Over 3,000 children attended from 42 primary schools, plus 803 family members (66 complementary tickets were issued).
- CFT hosted 59 work experience placements for students.
- LEAP celebrated 122 passes in Arts Award including 3 Gold, 10 Silver, 23 Explore, 62 Discover.
- A digital open-air promenade project was delivered by one of our apprentice’s as part of his Gold Arts Award. This was written, devised, directed, filmed and performed exclusively by local young people.

### Adult Community Programme

- LEAP practitioners continued to deliver weekly sessions for 10 participants from the Chichester Centre, a low-secure mental health in-patient facility.
- LEAP facilitated weekly sessions of Mind, Body, Sing, a programme of activities specifically for residents living with dementia in 5 local care homes.

- A five-week introduction to Bharatanatyam, a classical Indian Dance genre was hosted at CFT.
- An Intergenerational project was led by one of LEAP apprentices, connecting residents from a local Dementia Support Hub and CFYT members.
- LEAP hosted an annual festival, FestivALL, specifically aimed at celebrating the achievements of 60 talented local young people with a range of additional needs; partnering with 5 other performing arts organisations.
- In partnership with Bognor Regis Autism & SEND Support (BRASS), LEAP delivered taster sessions for children with autism or other additional needs, leading to fortnightly family meetings in CFT's foyer space.
- CFT's Ageless campaign exceeded its target, raising over £100,000 to support specific areas of work including dementia friendly, adult classes, CFT's Buddies programme, relaxed performances, signed and captioned performances, infra-red headsets and the sustainability of these projects for future years.
- 500 people, primarily families, participated in a range of FREE activities and events as part of the international Fun Palace weekend hosted by CFT staff.
- 22 volunteers attend CFT weekly to support the digitisation of CFT's archive and other heritage activities.
- 27 individuals had the opportunity to attend a Festival performance with the support of a Buddy, an individual trained in the skills needed to become companions for those who might need additional support to access a performance. The Southbank Centre, The RSC and Bradford City of Film are all now looking to set up similar schemes.
- CFT has developed a partnership with The Sanctuary Chichester – supporting Syrian families to integrate with the local communities. Families have benefited from theatre tours and visits to see CFT productions.

Appendix 3 details the share of total sales associated with LEAP's youth and community events from within the district, along with the geographical spread of Chichester Festival Youth Theatre (CFYT) members.

## **BUILDINGS**

During the first half of 2018, CFT completely replaced the concrete on the front beam of the Festival Theatre. This side of the building had been the most adversely affected by the weather over the 55 years of the theatre's existence and the repairs undertaken during the RENEW project had not proved adequate. In order to ensure that the character and heritage of the building were retained, nine months' research was undertaken into the methodology and techniques used to build the theatre in 1961. These findings were used in successfully delivering a new concrete front beam, retaining the iconic look and feel of the Festival building.

The weather damage to the remaining sides of the Festival Theatre, whilst less severe, still needed repair work. This was undertaken during the dark period at the start of 2019. Due to the age of the building, the concrete will continue to need to be monitored and it is expected that further repair work will be needed to maintain the integrity of the building approximately every 5 to 10 years.

In March 2019, CFT replaced the Minerva theatre scenery lift, which had been in place since 1989. This investment has greatly enhanced the ability to move productions in and out, and ensure a much more reliable operation in this space.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL**

Reducing our environmental impact and improving the sustainable nature of CFTs work continues to be central to our operations.

- 2018/19 saw our energy use reduced by 7% against the previous year, exceeding our target of 5% reduction annually.
- A growing 'green thinking' culture recognises the importance of recycling and whole-life environmental impact of productions. Disposal of a show set is now considered within the design realisation; 22% of physical production items were recycled in 2018/19, significantly exceeding our target of 10%. There has been on-going investment in new LED based low-energy stage lighting equipment.
- A new Euro 6 engine-based Luton van replaced our previous CFT van, this meets the requirements of the new Ultra Low Emission zone in London where it regularly operates, and has a larger load space capacity reducing additional vehicle hires.
- Adoption of paperless contracting and document sharing systems has significantly reduced our paper usage, paper purchasing reduced by 25% in the first 6-month period.
- All packaging used in our food outlets, managed by our catering partner Caper & Berry, is now compostable or biodegradable.
- All left-over food from our catering outlets is distributed to local homeless people via partnerships with the charities UK Harvest and Chichester-based Stonepillow.
- A cross-departmental 'green-committee' has been established to generate ideas and support implementing further environmentally positive programmes.

## **FINANCE**

Statutory accounts for 2018/19 are attached at Appendix 1.

In 2015/16 Reading University undertook an Economic Impact Study of CFT. Appendix 4 uses the same model to estimate the economic impact of CFT in 2018/19 (it should be noted that this assumes a 2% per annum inflationary increase to visitor spending). The Net impact generated for the district is calculated to be £22,704,639, reflecting an increase of 0.6% from 2017/18. CFT intends to undertake a full Economic Impact Study in 2021.

## **CONCLUSION**

There were many great successes to celebrate during 2018/19. The theatre continues to thrive, hugely supported by its local audiences and the support of ACE and CDC. We were heartened by the positive feedback received from ACE, celebrating the significant achievements of 2018/19, aligned with the aims and objectives of our new business plan.

Kathy Bourne re-joined CFT in May 2019 as Executive Director. Kathy was senior Festival Producer at CFT until 2016 and worked in London in the commercial theatre sector alongside Jonathan Church in the years since. Together we look forward to continuing to lead CFT, creating work that inspires and engages audiences from within the District and beyond and allowing LEAP's programme to continue to grow and enrich our local communities.

**Daniel Evans**  
**24 October 2019**