

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL April 2017

CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE - 2016/17 Season

INTRODUCTION

Chichester Festival Theatre (CFT/the Company) operates as a registered charity and is managed by a Board of voluntary Trustees under the Chairmanship of Sir William Castell. This report deals with the financial year April 2016 to March 2017 and includes the results of Festival 2016 - the final festival/Winter season delivered by Jonathan Church (Artistic Director) and Alan Finch (Executive Director) before stepping down in September 2016.

The appointment of Daniel Evans as Artistic Director designate was announced on 2 December 2015 and Rachel Tackley as Executive Director designate was announced in March 2016 – joining CFT in July and September 2016 respectively.

FESTIVAL 2016

Festival 2016 ran from 18 April until 29 October 2016, playing to 82.2% capacity. Overall, it was a positive year with 214,259 people enjoying work on our stages. Our commitment to developing and engaging with younger audiences from our community is ongoing and the new Executive Team is continuing this commitment to accessibility for Festival 2017. In Festival 2016 we kept our Prologue tickets (available to audiences aged 16-25) at £8.50 and sold 1,028. At the end of March 2017 membership stood at 5,236, a 43% increase on 2016. In Festival 2017 we have reduced the ticket price to just £5.

As part of our commitment to developing audiences from low socio-economic backgrounds, we continued to keep 10,000 tickets available at our lowest adult ticket price of £10.

WINTER SEASON: The Winter bought-in season was a great success at the box office, though finding good quality shows that are adaptable to our thrust stage is always tricky. Whilst hugely popular with audiences, *Stepping Out*, *A Room With A View* and *The Dresser* were challenging productions practically and we felt were not up to the same production standards as our Festival season, despite extra technical rehearsal time and months of planning.

The Minerva shows were extremely well-received, including our popular extended Family programme, especially our first show for audiences of 18 months-3 years – *Sensacional*, and *Mr Popper's Penguins* for ages 3+ which attracted new families to CFT, some for the first time. *Peter Pan*, our now much-awaited Christmas production from our Youth Theatre, was a thrilling success playing to a total of 25,289 people. The relaxed performance on 30 December 2016 was attended by a remarkable 728 people (compared to 270 at 2016's relaxed performance of *A Christmas Carol*).

BUILDINGS

Frustratingly, there have been intermittent failures of our ground source heat pump system, but we finally have some baseline data for the year 2016/17 (para 5.1 in SLA 2016/17 refers). We have seen a reduction in heating energy and our EPC rating has dropped from category C to B. The Minerva refurbishment completed in April 2016 gives us a BMS control system for better energy management. We have undertaken a significant project to enable our stores of props and furniture to be more accessible and create an electronic catalogue. This enables us to be more proactive in ensuring props, furniture and costume are recycled between shows and allows promotion of it to creative teams and outside borrowers in the community.

LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION

CFT's Learning, Education & Participation (LEAP) department has continued to develop its year-round programme of participatory activities, projects and events to connect and engage annually with 62,000 people of all ages (0-92 years), abilities and cultures within the local community. The social impact is significant,

particularly in relation to the enhancement of individuals' health and well-being, self-esteem, identity and image.

- Youth theatre with 9 satellite locations
- Youth Musical Theatre
- Youth Technical
- Theatre workshops for young people with disabilities and more complex needs
- Wheelchair Dance
- Early Years workshops
- Playwriting workshops for schools
- Adult workshops in dance, singing, playwriting and devising
- Interactive storytelling workshops for families with young children
- Workshops for people living with dementia
- Workshops for people with mental health conditions

Aligned to CFT's mission, LEAP's ambition is to promote inclusivity, accessibility and diversity, ensuring rich opportunities for all individuals, regardless of age, culture and social background to feel inspired, challenged and excited by the arts.

Integrated into the weekly activities are individuals with protected characteristics, including those living with dementia or low level mental health conditions, young carers, underachievers, young people not in education, employment or training, young refugees and those experiencing financial hardship.

Celebrating Arts award Good Practice Centre

LEAP has taken a prominent lead in Arts Award Accreditation opportunities for young people across the region by hosting and coordinating forums, training events, surgeries and platforms, collaborating with the Cultural Learning Partnership.

In January 2017, CFT was successfully awarded Arts Award Good Practice Centre 2017/18 status by ACE for championing opportunities for children and young people ("CYP") to be inspired in their creative journey as artists, arts leaders and theatre-makers through the achievement of Arts Award qualifications. During the past year, LEAP has exceeded its target of progressing CYP to receive an Arts Award from an estimated 119 to a total of 135. The most recent Assessor reported:

'A monumental achievement - the portfolios document extensive opportunities and reflection is entrenched throughout. These are possibly the most thorough, comprehensive portfolios I have ever moderated.'

60% of the LEAP team are Arts Award Advisor trained; a further 3 practitioners trained to Silver/Gold.

Advocacy and Networking

Since January 2017, LEAP has hosted and presented a number of local, regional and national networking events and forums including:

- hosting a Chichester in Partnership showcase – a symposium to celebrate partnership-working and strategic leaders in community engagement programmes - for example, CFT's work with Dementia Alliance and The Chichester Centre;
- representation at a National Theatre Education Forum – LEAP's Director and Community Partnerships Manager delivered a presentation focusing on 'how youth and community engagement is integrated into CFT's artistic vision and practice';
- hosting a regional ARTS CONNECT Festival for people with learning disabilities, which showcased work whilst bringing together carers, support workers, service providers and families to signpost them to the range of arts facilities in their communities.

During the past year, LEAP has been delivering weekly theatre-skills workshops in partnership with The Chichester Centre, a low secure and mental health facility. Participants benefit immensely from the

opportunity to develop communication and team-building skills as well as an appreciation of a space where their imagination and creativity is respected. The group has written scripts inspired by plays within CFT's summer festival which will culminate in a public performance sharing by participants from both the Chichester Centre and CFT's Devised Theatre community group for adults.

'It is a unique opportunity for our clients to engage in a world that many may not have experienced before, to look at opportunities for developing confidence and for gradually working together to enable a sense of social inclusion in the immediate area.'

Occupational Therapist, The Chichester Centre

Throughout 2016, CFT's Community Partnerships Manager and CDC's Partnerships Officer have met regularly to identify key target areas and priorities within the local community. This has instigated a number of wider community outreach projects in specific areas such as Chichester East, Tangmere and Selsey [See SLA 3.2.3]

There are active strategies for widening the reach to more vulnerable and disadvantaged young people through partnerships with local organisations such as Outset Youth Action, West Sussex Young Carers, The Chichester Information Shop for Young People, Southern Domestic Abuse, Anti-bullying works; St Anthony's and Fordwater Special schools.

PUBLIC FUNDING (ACE AND CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL)

2016/17 was the second year of CFT's three-year NPO Funding from ACE (£1.74m pa), with no in-year cuts to date. CFT has applied for the next round of NPO funding from ACE covering a period of 4 years 2018/19 to 2021/22. The announcement from ACE of all NPO grants is scheduled for 1 July 2017.

2016/17 was the penultimate year of the current funding agreement with CDC. The new four-year funding for CFT was announced in February 2017 at £185k per annum. CDC's funding is contingent upon four-year funding from ACE.

CFT's core model remains critically dependent on sustained public investment to defend creative risk and extend social and cultural impact.

CONCLUSION

In 2016, a new chapter in CFT's history began with the appointment of its new executive team. Rachel Tackley (Executive Director) and Daniel Evans (Artistic Director) bring their experience of touring, not-for-profit theatre buildings and diversity to CFT. The new Executive is determined to stamp their values on the organisation and this change is already signified in Festival 2017.

The new Executive team has no desire to alter the current programming format and will continue:

to produce 10-12 excellent productions in its Festival season, including plays, musicals and Youth Theatre productions by world class artists and creative teams;

to collaborate with partners to ensure its work reaches as wide an audience as possible by transferring its productions to London and throughout the UK, curate a diverse range of visiting work during the Winter season, including ballet, opera, concerts, comedy and contemporary music.

CFT's work is already synonymous with excellence and ambition; the new Executive will build on this reputation ensuring that CFT remains 'the jewel in the crown of regional theatres'.

The new Executive also recognises, however, that CFT faces significant challenges, particularly in the areas of diversity, inclusivity and modernity.

Rachel Tackley
31 March 2017