



 CAPITAL
THEATRES

ANNUAL REVIEW

2017/18



p2 A YEAR IN REVIEW

It has been another exciting year with much to celebrate in what has been a challenging environment. One of the many notable events came towards the end of the year when the Board took the important decision to change the name of the Trust from Festival City Theatres Trust to Capital Theatres.

This change, and the rebranding of the organisation and its venues, will raise the profile of the Trust in the build up to a public campaign to raise £25m to completely transform the King's Theatre. This project will bring the building into the 21st century whilst retaining the heritage features that make the Edwardian theatre so dear to everyone's hearts.

We have made significant progress over the last six months, with £5m pledged from the Trust's own resources and £4m committed from City of Edinburgh Council's capital expenditure budget. An application to the Heritage Lottery Fund will be submitted shortly and a public funding campaign will be launched in the autumn of 2018. We expect the construction work to start in the autumn of 2021 and be completed in the spring of 2023.

On our stages the artistic programme continued to blossom across all three venues, and we attracted over 430,000 customers through our doors during the year. The visit of Cameron Mackintosh's *Miss Saigon* in January contributed over 50,000 to this total and the Festival Theatre is now the venue of choice in Scotland for the Cameron Mackintosh organisation. Our ability to

attract the UK's leading producers of large-scale touring work is transforming our business. Regular visits from Cameron Mackintosh and the Royal National Theatre, combined with a strong Christmas season that offers Scottish Ballet at the Festival and panto at the King's, create stability for us in a sometimes unstable industry.

For the seventh year in a row we have recorded a surplus. We're particularly proud to have done so against a landscape of reducing subsidy from the City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland, in a year when we've invested in our staff by introducing the living wage, and our buildings by refurbishing the seats at the Festival Theatre.

We are one of the largest performing arts organisations in Scotland, proud to employ over 200 staff and present over 700 performances each year. Our finances remain in rude health and allow us to plan for our future, and the 25th anniversary of the Trust in July 2019, with great confidence.

Professor Dame Joan Stringer DBE FRSE, Chair

Duncan Hendry, Chief Executive



p3 2017/18 FACTS AND FIGURES

£10,300,294 in ticket income

Our ticket income is up 4% from last financial year.

431,073 visitors

Our attendance is down 6% as we've had 9 fewer shows.

741 performances

We had 741 performances of 146 shows across comedy, drama, music, musicals, screenings, virtual reality theatre 'experiences', family shows, dance and pantomime. Drama made up 28% of the programme, panto 11% and dance 11%.

40% of our programme was exclusive to our venues in Scotland

Miss Saigon was an exclusive to us in Scotland, as was half of our drama programme including the only dates in Scotland of the Olivier award-winning comedy *Nell Gwynn*, the UK Theatre award-winning adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's *Running Wild* and James Graham's critically acclaimed political drama *This House*.

53% of tickets sold online

The amount of tickets sold online remains steady, up 1% from the previous year.

Les Mis smashed sales records

We celebrated our biggest ever show 'on sale' day with *Les Misérables* on 12 March 2018. We sold nearly twelve thousand tickets, well over 4 times our previous record set when *Miss Saigon* went on general sale on 7 November 2016.

Nearly 50% of our audience was new

48% of our bookers were new to our theatres (41,516 new bookers out of total 86,192). 57% of the audience for *Miss Saigon* were first time attenders.

1 in 5 visitors were repeat attenders

21% of visitors booked for more than one show.

39% of our audience was from outside Edinburgh

34% attending from the rest of Scotland and 5% from outside Scotland.

215 Staff

Capital Theatres provided employment for 215 staff, including a full-time, permanent staff of 60 (up 5.3%) and 155 part-time (full-time equivalent 63).

48,332 Followers

Our combined Facebook and Twitter followers grew by 13% from the previous year, thanks to an increased focus on our digital marketing. We expanded our presence on Instagram, entertaining 2,726 followers with the on and off-stage antics of our visiting companies.

329 Learning & Participation events

Events were down from last year, but participations (no of people joining in on one or more occasion) were up by 28%.

26,295 Child tickets sold

The number of Child (under16) tickets sold was up 8%.

65 Continuing Professional Development events

for teachers, professional practitioners and workshop leaders ranging from workshops, talks and training sessions, providing opportunities to develop teaching and artistic practice.

47 Schools events

Including performances, workshops and bespoke tours. 6,958 Schools tickets were sold.

88 Public Engagement events

Our 'Discover' courses for the Festival and King's theatres continue to be popular, covering everything about the business including programming, technical, marketing, sales, customer service, development and learning & participation. Within the 88 public engagement events, 33 were meetings of the Capital Theatres' choir, The Vintage Chorus.

118 Dementia Friendly events

Including dementia friendly performances, tea dances, drop-in coffee mornings, storytelling sessions, art exhibitions, backstage tours, creative workshops and film screenings.

These are just some of the things that happened in an eventful year when we staged 741 performances of 146 shows in our three theatres spaces and our site-specific adventure at the former Royal High School.



We opened the musical comedy *The Addams Family*, co-produced by Capital Theatres at the Festival Theatre in April 2017. A huge hit in Edinburgh on its UK premiere, the show starred musical theatre and social media star **Carrie Hope Fletcher** and stage door was mobbed every single night with eager fans desperate to meet her.



We welcomed a colony of nearly **50,000 honey bees** to the Festival Theatre roof in Spring 2017. Doing our bit to help address the declining bee population, we worked with urban beekeepers **Plan Bee** to install our first beehive, and will soon be installing our second as our bees are thriving.



We were saddened to hear about the death of British actor **Tim Piggott-Smith, OBE** who died at the age of 70 on 7 April 2017. Tim was cast as the lead, Willy Loman, in Royal & Derngate's production of *Death of a Salesman*, touring to the King's Theatre in June 2017. The tour went ahead with **Nicholas Woodeson** playing Willy Loman who was praised in *The Herald's* 4 star review of opening night at the King's as giving 'a mighty performance of a man out of time'.

Spring 2018 saw another strong season from the capital's amateur companies. **Southern Light Opera, The Bohemians Lyric Opera Company, Edinburgh Gilbert & Sullivan Society** and **Edinburgh Music Theatre** provide a great opportunity for local stars to shine on the King's Theatre stage.



We brought together five of Edinburgh's High Schools in a collaborative approach to one of Shakespeare's most enchanting comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. **Shakedown**, devised by Capital Theatres' staff member **Pab Roberts**, saw over 200 11-17 year-olds audition for 38 parts in a gender-blind, multiple cross-cast production that revelled in the richness of Shakespeare's prose. Staged at the King's Theatre, *Edinburgh Guide* described it as being 'as full of spirit as the month of May, and gorgeous as the sun in Midsummer'.

The Capital Theatres' choir, The Vintage Chorus, went from strength to strength with numbers swelling at the weekly Tuesday morning meet-up. Founded in 2015 for older singers with 'time on their hands and a song in their hearts', the choir performed at a number of events across the city.

We made our first foray into the world of virtual reality with **WHIST** at the Festival Theatre in July. Creators **AΦE** took individual audience members wearing VR headsets on a journey into the unconscious mind. A new experience for theatre-goers and a new challenge for our customer service team.



We took the management of the **Festival Theatre Café** back in-house after over eight years of outsourcing the business. Selling nearly 7,000 sandwiches and over 600 litres of soup, the café made a small profit in its first year of trading and we're terrifically proud of its success.



We hosted the 15th annual **Critics' Awards for Theatre in Scotland** at the Festival Theatre on 11 June 2017. Hosted by Still Game actor **Gavin Mitchell**, Dundee Rep and the Royal Lyceum Edinburgh emerged as the biggest victors with Dundee Rep's *Death of a Salesman* winning the most awards.



British choreographer **Richard Alston** chose the Festival Theatre to premiere his new work **Carnaval**. As part of an ongoing relationship between Capital Theatres and Richard Alston Dance Company, the world premiere performance on Fri 22 September was complemented by a programme of education activity including an open rehearsal, a pre-show talk and An Audience With... Richard Alston and Associate Choreographer **Martin Lawrance** for schools and colleges.

We refurbished all of the seats at the Festival Theatre. Every single seat – 1,908 seats in total – was removed and upholstery either restored or replaced, making for a comfier experience all round.



Titan of America literature **Paul Auster** was on the King's stage in August, in a collaborative event between the International Book Festival and Edinburgh International Festival in both Auster's and EIF's 70th year.



Acosta Danza, the brand new Cuban dance company founded by Royal Ballet star **Carlos Acosta**, staged their only dates in Scotland at the Festival Theatre with exclusive performances of their first showcase on 10 & 11 November. Acosta himself performed in *Mermaid*, a mesmerising new work by Belgian choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui.



We staged an intimate gig at Leith Dockers Club with multi-millionaire musician **Sting** to promote his musical *The Last Ship*. Our Chief Executive had the honour of sharing a pretty small stage with the Geordie legend, but left the singing to Sting.



We paid tribute to the Festival Theatre's rich and dramatic history as the oldest continuous theatre site in Scotland in **The Great Lafayette**, a performance piece devised by **Andy Cannon** and **Wendy Weatherby** staged in-house and in care homes in Edinburgh in the lead up to Christmas. Featuring tributes to Harry Lauder, Laurel & Hardy, Roy Rogers and the illusionist The Great Lafayette who tragically died in the fire at the then Empire Palace Theatre in 1911, the show brought the past vividly and hilariously back to life.



The King's panto was once again the biggest in Scotland. **Cinderella** was seen by nearly 95,000 theatregoers and was one of the highest grossing pantomimes in the UK.



Eighteen young actors were chosen from over 400 hopefuls to be part of **The Attic Collective**, a year of training and development supported by Capital Theatres from October 2016 to October 2017. When the year of development came to an end, the actors had performed to thousands of people in three productions directed by **Susan Worsfold**, including the world premiere of Jo Clifford's *War in America* at the former Royal High School and a much-lauded production of *The Threepenny Opera* at the King's.

p6&7 LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION AND AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

We encourage everyone to join in at Capital Theatres. Whether it's attending a free pre-show talk, taking part in a dance workshop, trying your hand to a new skill, meeting up with old friends or making new friends at a tea dance or having a close encounter with a T-rex.

We do our best to make a visit to the theatre as accessible as possible. In the course of the year we had 126 accessible performances, including 25 relaxed performances, 25 dementia friendly performances, 27 BSL interpreted performances, 32 audio described performances (all AD performances include pre-show touch tours), and 17 captioned performances.

And when audiences can't make it to us, we take the show to them. Our extensive outreach programme involves projects in schools, hospitals, care homes and community centres.

'Bravo! I loved the ginormous T-rex!' ★★★★★

James, 6, who met the dinosaurs after a performance of *Dinosaur World* at the Festival Theatre, April 2017

"Panto Presents was a truly wonderful project to be a part of, and getting to meet all the children, parents and staff at the hospital as well as those involved with the charity was the absolute best part. They were a pleasure to work with and perform for!!"

Imogen Reiter, 25, actor, theatre maker and Cinderella in the Panto Presents project, taking the magic of panto into the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, December 2017

"It was really fun, hard at first but once I got it I really enjoyed myself. The two guys who ran it were really good and had a lot of experience. It makes me want to be a DJ."

Rory, 9, participant on the DJ workshop programmed as part of *Breakin' Convention* at the Festival Theatre in May 2017

'Mum is a wheelchair transfer, and as soon as we walked in, they escorted us to our seats and whisked the wheelchair away and brought back a ticket for collecting it, they were so on it. It's possibly the best and slickest Front of House experience we've ever had.'

Audience member at *Miss Saigon*, February 2018

'100% worth it. This initiative has been the springboard to my whole career. I literally had no career a year ago and now I have an agent and I'm about to tour Scotland with Fire Exit.'


Saskia Ashdown, 22, member of The Attic Collective, 2016/17

'The show was an amazing bonus but I was totally blown away by how glorious this building was, not to mention how friendly the staff were.'

Audience member at *Trainspotting* at the King's, November 2017

'Goodness me I don't know how many years it is since I had a pair of tap shoes on my feet. Must be about twenty years or something... And I must admit, I do feel quite comfortable. I think I'm back home somehow.'

Marie Duthie, 95, dancer with *An Audience With...* Janice Parker Projects, a long-term inter-generational dance project, working with professional dancers from the variety era, based at the Festival Theatre



Main photo: Costume workshop at The King's; Top right down: Marie Duthie, *Dinosaur World* at the Festival Theatre, Saskia Ashdown, Rory (centre), Imogen Reiter (right).



“It was great to explore the workshops and try on a vast array of items”

Participant on the Careers in Theatre workshops for Edinburgh high schools, November 2017





TICKETS SOLD

92,665 Cinderella

7 week run at the King's Theatre

'Panto legends reigning supreme' ★★★★★ Edinburgh Evening News

51,778 Miss Saigon

4 and a half week run at the Festival Theatre

'A brilliant musical for our time.' ★★★★★ The Scotsman

34,862 Scottish Ballet's The Nutcracker

3 week run at the Festival Theatre

'Scottish Ballet's latest stars shine in this revival' ★★★★★ The Stage

12,358 Matthew Bourne's The Red Shoes

1 week run at the Festival Theatre

'This is a thrilling evening, wonderfully imagined' ★★★★★ The Wee Review

10,296 The Addams Family

1 and a half week run at the Festival Theatre

'A side splitting, musical marvel' ★★★★★ Edinburgh Guide

9,185 The Play That Goes Wrong

1 week run at the Festival Theatre

'A comedy tour de force!!' ★★★★★ ScotsGay Arts

7,407 The Steamie

1 week run at the King's Theatre

'Simply unmissable' ★★★★★ The Public Reviews

6,291 Legally Blonde

1 week run at the Festival Theatre

'One for all to catch - especially students!' ★★★★★ Young Perspective

6,086 Scottish Opera's La Bohème

1 and a half week run at the Festival Theatre

'Beautiful and gloriously over-the-top' ★★★★★ The Guardian

5,928 Jane Eyre

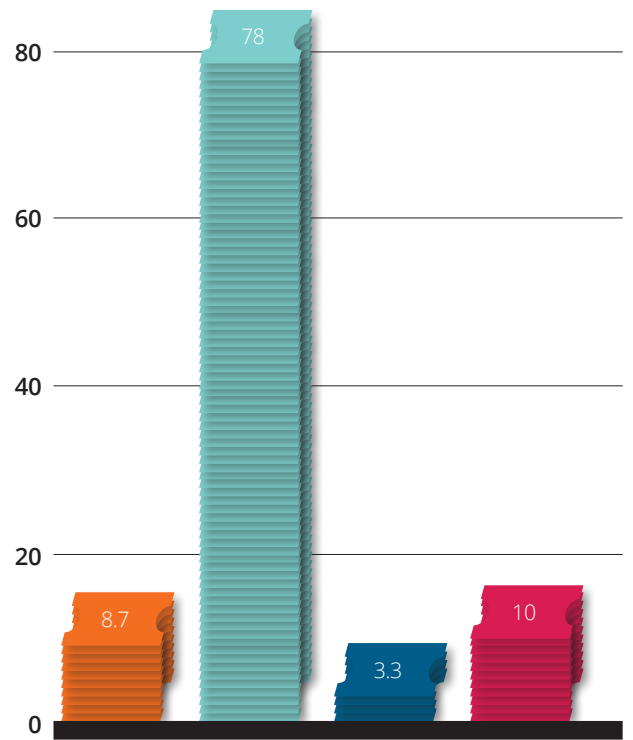
1 week run at the Festival Theatre

'A fearless and unmissable whirlwind of a show' ★★★★★ The Herald

INCOME

£'000s

Grants, donations, Friends and patrons	1,222	8.7%
Box office and rentals	10,896	78.0%
Other theatre income	467	3.3%
Commercial trading	1,406	10.0%
Total	13,991	100.0%



p9 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

EXPENDITURE

£'000s

Backstage and production	9,628	68.7%
Marketing and Learning & Participation	756	5.4%
Box office	456	3.3%
Rents, insurance, utilities	721	5.2%
Premises and other	822	5.9%
Commercial trading	1,087	7.8%
Irrecoverable VAT	423	3.0%
Theatres Development Fund transfer	95	0.7%
Total	13,988	100.0%



p10 MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

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Our thanks and appreciation to the staff who left us during this financial year

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Vanda de Luca

Kitty Malcolm

Cerin Richardson

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Annual Review cover image of Molly-Mae Brissett-Haigh by Innes Graham

Panto photography

Douglas Robertson and Lloyd Smith

Year round photography and filming

Greg Macvean and Phil Wilkinson

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