

BUDGET & PERFORMANCE PANEL

25th November 2008

Dukes Theatre

Report of the Head of Cultural Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Panel with a monitoring and evaluation of the demographic data of the users of the Dukes Theatre.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That the Panel note the report.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At the meeting of the Budget and Performance Panel, held on the 24th April 2008, Members requested:

“That monitoring and evaluation of the demographic data of the users of the Dukes Theatre be produced and forwarded for the Panel's consideration in 6 months time”.

Minute 61/2 [08/09] refers.

1.2 As requested, that information is contained within Appendix A of this report. Both the Head of Cultural Services, and Mr Joe Sumsion, the Chief Executive of the Dukes Theatre, will be in attendance.

Report on Dukes Audiences and Activity for Lancaster City Council Budget and Performance Panel

Overview/Context

The Dukes is a producing theatre and venue specialising in original work. It houses three performance spaces – The Rake (end on, 313 capacity), The Round (newly opened auditoria, in the round, 230 capacity), DT3 (dedicated young people’s space, flexible seating, capacity of 120). The home-produced work includes 4 annual productions in the venue and a summer promenade show in Williamson Park.

The Dukes also presents a programme of touring drama, dance, family events, comedy, music and independent cinema and a wide range of participatory projects and events through the Creative Learning department. The Dukes has a strong working relationship with Lancashire County Council Young People’s Service, allowing the company to connect and work with large numbers of young people.

In the 2007-2008 financial year (which had a reduced output due to the major organisational change which took place at the Dukes) the company delivered the following audiences and participants:

Audience for live performances:	40,206
Cinema audience:	26,504
Total audiences:	66,710

Participants

Formal education:	2,333
Informal education activity:	10,385
Total participants:	12,718

Core funding for the year 2008-2009 comprises the following grants:

Arts Council England, North West	£260,700
Lancaster City Council	£151,800 + £13,500 in lieu of rent
Lancashire County Council	£175,563 (July 2008 – June 2009)
UK Film Council	£18,000

Who are our audiences and participants?

In addition to the number of people we work with, we want to give a snapshot of the range of audiences, participants and partners connecting with the Dukes, also feedback from others, during the period November 2007 – October 2008.

Full professional productions

The Twits (Christmas 2007)

- Christmas productions at The Dukes usually see the highest family attendance – The Twits was suitable for ages 4 plus which added an extra level of accessibility. The Twits surpassed expectation with 3,050 children’s tickets sold (excluding schools’ tickets).
- We sold 4,837 tickets to schools, this represents around 38% of overall sales;

- A large portion of bookers were from within Lancaster (35.2%) and Morecambe (11.5%)

Beauty and the Beast (summer 2008)

- 16% (1,670) of bookers visited from outside the Lancashire and South Cumbria region. These included large numbers of foreign visitors and UK visitors travelling great distances (from England's South Coast to the north of Scotland)
- 34% of the audience came from within the Lancaster and Morecambe area, a further 50% from the rest of the Lancashire and South Cumbria region
- The production received significant regional and national press coverage with excellent reviews in *The Guardian* and *The Observer*.

The Bomb

- 333 school parties and students attended, 24% of overall sales
- 4 school and university parties (from Lancaster and Heysham) took part in full day page-to-stage workshops in association with *The Bomb*
- The production attracted other groups, including church groups and older people
- The production was critically well received, including an excellent review in *The Daily Telegraph*, and went on to tour the UK (with our co-producing partner) including performances in London, Belfast and Keswick.

DT3/Creative Learning Projects

Within this period there was a wide range of projects delivered at DT3, our dedicated young people's space. These projects encouraged local young people to express themselves through the arts, and included:

- Youth Theatre Groups. 110 young people meeting weekly across five groups, including 2 full productions and a number of 'try-out' events
- The Fallout Project. A large scale urban music and film project delivered with Lancashire County Council Young People's Service, the police and youth offending teams. Fallout encouraged some of the most hard-to-reach young people from the district (including groups from Slyne, The Marsh, Morecambe West End and Heysham) to engage with issues of peace and restorative justice. The young people worked with skilled arts practitioners and created short films, rap songs and a final celebration 'club night', attended by over 150 young people
- Beaumont College Film Festival. Offering students with complex needs from Beaumont college the opportunity to present and view their films in a professional venue
- Barnbox Musicians Collective. Offering support, career advice and opportunities to young musicians connected to Lancaster University looking to 'break through' into the music business.

Cinema

In addition to our regular programme of screenings we have worked with a range of partners including:

- Lancaster University American Studies Department: *Gangsters in Film*
- Storey Gallery: *Storeys About Lancaster*
As part of INSIDE OUT, a series of Storey projects taking place outside the gallery, the Dukes screened films set in Lancaster, including *Ambrosia*

Connection, created by Storey Artist in Residence Jane Chavez Dawson, and Colonial Amusements, with post film talk by the director.

- Institute for Advanced Studies, Lancaster University. Public Film Discussions
- Lancaster Holocaust Memorial Week. Representations of the Holocaust
- University of Cumbria Film Season
- Warwick University: Iranian Cinema Season
- Carnforth Station: David Lean Centenary Celebrations

Artists' Exhibitions

The Dukes gallery was used to display the work of a range of local artists:

- Nov/Dec 07 Dukes rehearsal photographs – George Coupe
- Jan/Feb 08 University of Cumbria Fine Arts Students
- March/Apr 08 Graham Lowe pastel paintings
- April/May 08 LitFest Midland book exhibition
- May/June 08 'Trailblazer' – work by the artists of the Lunesdale Studio Trail
- June/July 08 'I am an American' - Video Portraits of Post 9-11 US citizens
- July/Aug 08 Leon Gurevitch photography
- Aug/Sept 08 'The Jazz Festival' – David Herrod's photographs
- Sept/Oct 08 'North from South' - Simon Nixon's paintings
- Oct/Nov 08 'Past the Bubble Line' - Jon Nixon's photographs

Music/Chill Out Tuesdays.

From September 2008 we have hosted free gigs on a Tuesday evening in the bar. The artists have all been locally based but have covered a range of ages and have performed in a variety of styles, from the pop of Lytham's 17 year old Joni Fuller to the folk/rock of The Hampton Attic Band, with their "150 years of gig experience". The success of the project is spreading by word of mouth with musicians contacting us directly to play here through our dedicated myspace site www.myspace.com/dukesmusiclancaster.

We have also programmed paying gigs in The Round by local bands Lava and Heroes of She, bringing new audiences to the venue.

Partnership working

The Dukes has a number of longstanding relationships with local organisations who used the Dukes facilities within this period to deliver their work, including:

- Litfest – Lancaster's Literature Festival, which this year included a performance from Poet Laureate Andrew Motion
- More Music in Morecambe – delivering projects such as Clapping Song for the very young
- University of Cumbria – using The Round for two weeks, offering their 3rd Year Drama students the opportunity to work and present productions in a professional theatre context

A large number of local organisations made use of our spaces, either hiring or using the spaces for free, including:

- Lancaster Writers Group
- Storey Institute
- Folly

- North West Film Exhibitors Consortium
- Audience Alliance
- Grow Creative
- Lanternhouse
- North West Development Agency
- One Planet Festival
- University of Lancaster
- Lancaster Play Reading Group
- Lancaster and Morecambe University of the Third Age
- Lancashire County Council
- LEBP Teachers Forum
- Lancaster City Council Key Cultural Partners Meeting

New Partnership working

During this period the Dukes has begun the process of developing more formal partnership working with a number of organisations, including:

- Ludus Dance. Working together and combining our skills and assets, we plan to develop Lancaster as a nationally recognised centre for Dance Theatre, to include working with young dancers from across Lancashire
- Williamson Park. A planned formal partnership which strengthens the annual promenade productions and explores joint working on promoting the Dukes, the Park and Lancaster's cultural offer
- Lanternhouse International, Ulverston. Working with colleagues to provide exhibition and performance opportunities for companies creating new work at Lanterhouse's Creation Centre
- The Nuffield Theatre. We are currently working with the Nuffield on a bid to attract new DCMS funding to the region to encourage under 26s to visit our two theatres free of charge
- Lancaster and Morecambe University of the 3rd Age. Hosting this group's monthly meetings with the aim of encouraging this group to become regular audiences and contributors to Dukes activities.

Ambitions

Building on past successes, our aim is to be recognised as Lancashire's premier theatre and cultural centre. We aim to produce extraordinary theatre and act as a leading resource for film and digital arts, dance, music and the performing arts.

We aim to be inclusive in our outlook; we understand the power of the arts to engage and reflect the wide range of communities we serve. At its best, we believe that theatre, film and the performing arts have the power to change people's lives for the better.

*Joe Sumsion,
Director,
November 2008*