

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leisure, Arts and Communities Committee - 25 April 2011

REPORT ON: Dundee Repertory Theatre, Main House - Revenue Support 2011-2012

REPORT BY: Director of Leisure and Communities

REPORT NO: 99-2011

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To submit to the Committee a request for renewal of revenue funding to Dundee Repertory Theatre, Main House for 2011-2012.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 remits the Director of Leisure & Communities, on behalf of Dundee City Council, to enter into a one year Service Level Agreement with Dundee Repertory Theatre, subject to on-going monitoring and evaluation as to its efficiency, economy and effectiveness
- 2.2 remits the Director of Leisure and Communities to keep these arrangements under review and amend as appropriate.
- 2.3 approved the grant funding amounting to £359,282 per the period 1 April 2011 - 31 March 2012.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The funding recommended is £359,282 which sum is provided from the Leisure and Communities Department's Revenue Budget for 2011-2012 as shown in the budget at Appendix 1.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 In 2010-2011 Dundee Rep Theatre continued to build its audiences, extend its community outreach programme and enhance its critical reputation both locally and nationally.

4.2 Review of the year 2010-2011

April 2010 - *The Elves and the Shoemakers* (family show) by Mike Kenny, directed by Jemima Levick, designed by Francis O'Connor.

Building on the success of the previous year's production of *The Little Mermaid* this production was aimed at schools and families prior to and during the Easter holidays. Programming theatre of this kind demonstrates the Reps commitment to developing quality work for family audience's out with the Christmas period and also allows them to develop close partner working between Dundee Rep Ensemble, Rep Creative Learning and Dundee City Council. Three of the Rep's most experienced performers featured in this show plus one visiting actor which included puppetry and live music. The production was supported by an extensive education programme of participation workshops and projects working with the Education Department in schools leading up to the production. During the production workshops were held in the theatres front of

house areas after each matinee where children created drawings and paintings inspired by the performance they had just seen. Over the 21 performances 4,500 young people and their families from Dundee attended this production.

May- June 2010 - *Sweeney Todd* (Classic Musical) by Stephen Sondheim, directed by James Brining, designed by Colin Richmond, Musical Director Hilary Brooks.

Building on the success of a range of musicals at the Rep in recent years including Cabaret, Gypsy, Flora the Red Menace and Sunshine on Leith (TMA Best musical 2007), Sweeney Todd represents another progression for the Rep and its audience. Sondheim's masterpiece raised the bar for the Ensemble Company supplemented by visiting actors and musicians to create a vivid, contemporary and exciting version of one of the greatest examples of musical theatre. This was the most ambitious production produced by the Rep in recent years, the critics raved about it giving it five star reviews and it won the most prestigious Theatre Management Association (TMA) Best Musical of the Year 2010 award. The TMA awards celebrate the very best in UK theatre outside of the West End and this is the second TMA Best Musical Award presented to the Rep for productions directed by James Brining.

September 2010 - *Sunshine on Leith* (Scottish Musical) by Stephen Greenhorn, directed by James Brining.

A revival of this highly successful musical which Dundee Rep first produced in 2007 opened at the Rep at the beginning of September for a three week run. The show starred Billy Boyd with a company of 14 actors and 9 musicians. Following its sold out run at the Rep the production embarked on an ambitious UK 9 week tour to Inverness, Glasgow, Belfast, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Southampton, Dartford, Northampton and Windsor. The show was enthusiastically enjoyed by audiences in every theatre receiving 5 star reviews in the local and national press. The UK wide media coverage generated through Sunshine on Leith has further enhanced the company, the Rep and Dundee's reputation as being the place for producing the very best in theatre. Although critically acclaimed it was not a financial success.

October 2010 - *The Talking Heads* project was another experiment for the Rep and involved close partnership working with DCC. The idea for the project came from the actors in the Ensemble who were keen to direct each other in a series of monologues and they wanted to build on the Cultural Pathfinders project by taking the piece into community venues in Dundee. Community Ambassadors from each community centre worked with the Rep's marketing and Community Learning departments on the best way to sell the show and support the project. The Community Ambassadors have since remained involved with the Rep and have worked on a number of new audience development initiatives. Talking Heads was a great success with excellent feedback from all of the centres as well as the audiences who attended at the Rep. They hope to repeat the project next year.

November 2010 - *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, a version by Samuel Adamson, directed by Jemima Levick.

This production of Ibsen's best known drama met with an excellent response from critics and audiences alike and exceeded box office targets. It was especially pleasing that younger audiences hugely enjoyed the show which was set in a very stylish contemporary design which was immediate and very direct.

December 2010 - *Sleeping Beauty* by Charles Way, directed by Jemima Levick.

Continuing on the Rep's success and established reputation for producing the best in traditional Christmas family entertainment this production was met with a positive audience response. Critical response was generally positive but a little more mixed.

March 2011 - *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* by Jim Cartwright, directed by Jemima Levick – a new production of this modern classic which examines poverty and showbiz in an accessible and entertaining show.

Throughout the Year - Over 95,000 people came through the doors of the theatre, with more than 22,000 participants enjoying over 1145 workshops.

In June Dundee Rep was deemed the most successful theatre in the history of the Critics Awards for Theatre in Scotland (CATS) after winning in all nominated categories for the Ensemble production of *The Elephant Man*. Jemima Levick took home Best Director, Kevin Lennon Best Actor and Alex Lowde won for Best Design. The Rep has won 8 awards and received 27 nominations in the last 3 years.

November brought the Theatre Management Awards (TMA's) and the news that the Rep was just one of 2 Scottish theatres to be nominated plus winning the award for Best Musical Production 2010 for the Ensemble's *Sweeney Todd*, other nominations included Best Performance for David Birrell's portrayal of *Sweeney Todd* and Best Design for Alex Lowde's work on *The Elephant Man*.

Programming - The Rep continued to programme an eclectic mix of visiting companies aimed at developing and uplifting its diverse local audience by providing dance, drama, comedy, music and work for young people, families and children.

Support for artists/artistic development/professional training - This element has been a longstanding part of the Rep Ensemble's activity. Ongoing training opportunities for the actors in the company are part of our programme of work. This work also involves associate artists and other actors with a connection to the Rep to participate. These activities include:

- Voice workshops.
- Intensive and ongoing singing lessons.
- Movement classes.
- Puppetry and mask work.
- Playtime for Actors.

Centre for Creative Development - Building on the success of the Rep acting apprentice scheme, they have piloted a Technical Apprenticeship scheme, funded by Creative and Cultural Skills and Creative Scotland and they hope to develop this further. The Rep were also successful in an application to Creative Scotland to develop the Rep in terms of the embedding of skills development and training opportunities for staff at the theatre as well as opening the theatre up to local schools and colleges.

4.3 **Major Plans for 2011-2012**

Overview - The principle challenge facing the Rep in 2011/12 is the tough financial climate. The Company has adopted a twin approach to this, reducing expenditure wherever possible whilst seeking to maximize income through increased ticket sales. Their aim is to keep the theatre as busy as possible, with a diverse, ambitious programme providing audiences and artists with new challenges, both in terms of the types of work the Company creates and the contexts in which they are performed. It is vital for the Rep that it remains a busy, vibrant, exciting environment in which to make work and where a broad cross section of people are drawn to experience great art as audience members and participants.

The Company will also seek to co-produce with other leading arts organisations from Scotland and further afield in order to maximise its public profile across the UK and to share the costs without reducing ambition or the quality of its work.

Proposed Programme of work

Dundee Rep Ensemble - The programme of work outlined below is diverse, ambitious and aims to appeal to a wide range of tastes. As with previous years, it offers audiences and stakeholders much more than the normal pattern of 6 shows a year. The Ensemble model enables and indeed requires the Rep to adapt and change its pattern of creating work so that it remains creatively engaged and revitalized by new challenges. To this end, the programme for 2011/12 includes two new plays, a new artistic partnership, two short tours, a classical drama, a modern classic, contemporary writing performed in a found space and a popular local play.

NB The autumn 2011/spring 2012 programme is still in the process of being finalized and is therefore still subject to further revision.

April 2011 - *The Firebird* by Neil Duffield, directed by James Brining.

Building on the successful programming strand of the last two years, the Rep will create a piece of work for children and families which straddles the school term and holidays. *The Firebird* is the re-telling of a classic quest story which will involve live music, puppetry and imaginative storytelling. *The Firebird* will also have an extensive wrap-around education programme including:

- In-school pre-show workshops involving members of the Ensemble.
- Pre-show family workshops in the theatre and post show interactive tours.
- City-wide writing activities helping to develop young people's literacy skills taking *The Firebird* as its focus.

A Play, a Peh and a Pint - Two new plays by Linda McLean and Michael Marra.

Developed in association with Oran Mor, the Rep will commission and perform these two new plays in the evenings when *The Firebird* is performing during the day and it will also tour them to Oran Mor in Glasgow.

What Love Is by Linda McLean – Gene and Jean won't tell you their age. They won't tell you where they live. They've forgotten what's outside but they remember what love is. Linda McLean is a leading Scottish playwright and the Rep are delighted to be able to give their audience the opportunity to experience the world premiere of her latest play.

St Catherine's Day by Michael Marra – This tells the story of different generations of romantic Irish balladeers and how they view their occupation. Glib, shallow professionalism has replaced their originally noble purpose as singers. A remarkable thing happens during a moment of musical truth which throws them all into confusion.

May/June 2011 - *Anna Karenina* by Jo Clifford, directed by Jemima Levick.

This revival of Jo Clifford's acclaimed version of Tolstoy's masterpiece enables the whole of the Ensemble to work together bringing the story of idealism, passion and deceit to life with the theatrical flair and energy for which the company has become renowned.

June 2011 - *After the End* by Dennis Kelly, directed by James Brining.

Dennis Kelly is one of the UK's leading theatre writers and this is an exciting opportunity to bring his work to audiences in Dundee for the first time. *After the End* is a disturbing tale of obsession and twisted desire. Featuring the Rep's two acting apprentices, the production offers a great opportunity for these 2 young actors to work in an intense and powerfully naturalistic way as a finale to their varied year at the Rep. This production will take place in a found space near the Rep which will enhance the impact of the event still further.

August 2011 (tbc) - Future Proof by Lynda Radley.

The Rep is developing a collaboration with Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre involving half the Ensemble in Lynda Radley's extraordinary new play. Directed by Dominic Hill the production should create an excellent reaction as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and will return to play in Dundee in early September. The project offers the opportunity to develop a high quality artistic product as well as furthering the reputation of the Ensemble and Dundee at the biggest arts festival in the world.

September 2011 (tbc) - The Mill Lavvies by Chris Rattray, directed by James Brining.

A classic play from the Rep's back catalogue set in the toilets of a Jute Mill in the 1960's. Last produced at the Rep in 2002, the play speaks warmly and powerfully to a Dundee audience about the city's heritage, the desire to make something more of your life and the harsh realities of life in the mills. With live music and songs the show is a popular, feel-good piece of modern Scottish writing.

Community Tour – The Mill Lavvies Building on the success of last year's community centres tour of *Talking Heads* the Rep will be touring a shortened "Cabaret version" of *The Mill Lavvies* to local community centres prior to the full main stage production. This project is a key element in their strategy of developing local audiences in areas of the city that are physically distanced from the theatre. It will also help promote the show in advance of its run at the Rep.

October 2011 - Top Girls by Carol Churchill, directed by Jemima Levick.

Carol Churchill's modern classic explores the role of women as leaders throughout history. Churchill's writing is adventurous, provocative and exhilarating as she throws a whole assortment of powerful and extraordinary women together at an unforgettable dinner party. Plays which examine women's' experiences are popular in Dundee and with a production of this complex and political play the Rep hopes to develop their audience's taste for this type of work.

December 2011 - Cinderella directed by Jemima Levick.

The Reps production for Christmas 2011 will feature festive family entertainment with live music and the visual flair which has won them best design award at the CATS Awards for the last 4 years.

February 2012 - Classic Play - planning the production of a classic play for spring 2012.

Other activities

Talent Development

- Playtime - the on-going training programme for the Ensemble continues as part of the Company's commitment to investing in artist development. Work covered during the year will include voice development, puppetry, singing and yoga.
- Trainee Director – the Company will continue to host a trainee director under the Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme in association with the Young Vic.
- Research and Development – two weeks in June will be spent developing new projects, working on commissioned work and reading plays with a view to future production.

New opportunities to support and further develop:

- Engagement and Creativity.
- Workshop Theatre – research the feasibility of a second space, dedicated to training, teaching and skills development; with the capacity to programme small-scale performances of children’s work, new writing, youth theatre and creative learning performances.
- Centre for Creative Development – develop further training opportunities for actors, staff, teachers, freelance artists seeking to integrate further learning approaches into the Reps practice. This will mean the pursuit of partnerships across sectors particularly University of Dundee, Creative and Cultural Skills, Dundee College and RSAMD.
- Develop further national and international opportunities for Dundee Rep Ensemble, to tour and to co-produce with other organisations. Including the development of a new co-production with Graeae Theatre Company, one of the UK’s leading disabled led arts organisations.
- Organisational Development – review the organisation’s vision, mission, objectives and strategies.

Additional Activity throughout the Year

- The Company will explore the possibilities of platform performances with the Ensemble.
- Dundee Rep Ensemble support activities – a series of projects and events to support the audience’s interpretation of the work.
- Development workshops with Graeae Theatre Company to develop and identify a suitable project to take into a mixed ability co-production.

New Writing

- A series of writing development projects for young and emerging writers supported by the Ensemble and working with Rep Creative Learning.
- In addition to this the Company has recently begun a dialogue with the National Theatre of Scotland literary dept regarding the possibility of a long term collaborative writing project, sharing the expertise of the Ensemble actors with new and emergent writers.

Support for artists/artistic development/professional training

Ongoing training opportunities for the actors in the company will include the following activities:

- Voice workshops.
- Intensive and ongoing singing lessons.
- Puppetry workshop.
- Frantic Assembly masterclass.
- Fight classes.
- Yoga.

4.4 Dundee Rep Theatre sustained 69 full time job equivalents in Dundee during 2010/11 and is projected to achieve 80% of income from non City Council sources in 2011/12.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Finance have been consulted on this report and are in agreement with its content.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

**STEWART MURDOCH
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES
11 APRIL 2011**

**DUNDEE REPERTORY THEATRE - MAIN HOUSE
DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

Appendix 1

	Projected Outcome 2010/2011	Projected Budget 2011/2012
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	1,108,158	1,082,847
Production Costs	1,194,126	580,496
Marketing Costs	121,766	115,400
General Overheads	403,162	358,600
Total Expenditure	2,827,212	2,137,343
Income		
Main House Income - Self generated	1,120,955	619,000
Trading & Front of House Income	24,187	41,226
General Income	75,281	101,000
Miscellaneous Income	59,901	62,500
Sub Total Income	1,280,324	823,726
Grants		
Creative Scotland	905,245	956,025
DCC Annual Revenue Support	359,282	359,282
Other Grants	64,090	10,000
Sub Total Grants	1,328,617	1,325,307
Total Income	2,608,941	2,149,033
Proposed use of reserves	61,000	
Surplus/(Deficit)	(157,271)	11,690