

MAIDEN VOYAGE (NI) LTD

DIRECTORS' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Directors present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Results

The directors are pleased to present the results for 2023-24. There was a net surplus for the year of £5,119 attributable to unrestricted reserves. Unrestricted reserves now stand at £43,438.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016).

Structure, Governance and Management

Maiden Voyage (NI) Limited is a company limited by guarantee, registration number NI041616. The company is recognised by HM Revenue and Customs as having charitable status, reference number XR63074.

Maiden Voyage (NI) Limited's conduct is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Board of Directors are responsible for the policy and strategy of the company along with the financial and legal probity of the organisation and the appointment of directors. The Board of Directors meet on a quarterly basis and receive management and financial reports from the Management. The Management implement policy and strategy, which have been approved by the directors, progressing organisational objectives and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organisation. The Management consists of Artistic Director Nicola Curry and Company Manager Nuala McGreevy.

Directors are recruited to ensure that representative skills and experiences are in place to deliver the company's vision and that the mission and objectives are achieved. The Board considers potential directors of the company. Applicants considered suitable are then invited by the Chair to join the Board. Primarily this review considers whether, in the opinion of the board, the prospective member will help the company meet its aims and objectives. Directors undertake governance training with appropriate training organisations.

Objectives and activities

The Company's objects are specifically restricted to the advancement, improvement, production, performance and promotion of dance, arts and culture, the advancement of education and training in dance and related subjects and the promotion of the benefit of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland in particular:

(a) to foster, promote and advance the education of the public in the knowledge, understanding and practice of dance, music and the visual arts in all their aspects and the training of dancers and choreographers through the management of a dance theatre production company for public performance and the showcasing of dance and visual arts.

(b) to advance the education and training of young artists, and in particular but not exclusively, dancers, choreographers, musicians, composers, designers and visual artists through the performance of dance and the production of professional stage shows.

(c) to foster, promote and advance the education of the public in the art of dance and to encourage appreciation for and participation in dance by the provision of educational dance projects, information and training, classes, workshops, arts facilities and equipment, support and instruction and the organisation of exhibitions of works and events as the directors shall in their absolute discretion determine.

(d) to promote and foster learning about the creative processes involved in dance and in this respect, to promote mentoring and work experience for school pupils, graduates and postgraduate artists for the benefit of their education.

(e) to advance and raise the profile of dance as an art form through the promotion of artistic collaborations and the fostering of partnerships with similar artistic organisations.

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DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Achievements and performance

Maiden Voyage offers discoveries in dance with by and for artists, audiences and participants through commissioning and touring new dance work, providing professional development and training opportunities for performers and opportunities for participation and learning across the cultural, educational and health sectors.

The focus of 2023-24 was live performances, both on stage and outdoors; maximising showcasing opportunities nationally and internationally; and creating opportunities for artist development and continued participatory engagement for all ages.

Maiden Voyage is immensely proud of our staff team, freelance artist collaborators, dance sector, partner organisations, board of directors and funders in the management planning and delivery of our programmes.

Contracts

- 26 artists on 46 paid contracts across the artistic programme.

Commissions & Performances

- *Good Times Never Seemed* at Belfast International Arts Festival (12 performances)

- *Haiku* (1 performance)

- *Call To Mind* at Belfast Children's Festival (6 performances)

Showcases

Homegrown Belfast Children's Festival

Professional Development

240 artist development hours

Reached

- 1510 live audiences

- 96 workshop sessions delivered with 373 direct participants totalling 2776 contact hours.

Commissions

Good Times Never Seemed was an initial SEED commission from 2021/22 for dance/visual artist Vasiliki Stasinaki and writer/performer Sarah Gordon. It was developed into a durational installation in 2023. The partnership originated from Maiden Voyage's 2020 Match Make short film collaborations during Covid and we were delighted to support the further working partnership and artistic collaboration of the two artists. *Good Times Never Seemed* was performed as a 5-hour duration installation each day for 4 days at QSS Gallery in Belfast during Belfast International Arts Festival in November 2023.

Call to Mind was created by London-based choreographer Sarah Golding and NI musician Steve Davis for teenage audiences. Initial creation was supported by ACNI Commission Fund allowing the collaborators to work for four weeks in May/June 2023 with three dancers and three live musicians. *Call to Mind* premiered at Belfast Children's Festival 2024 with 6 performances.

Haiku is a short dance for public space work commissioned from Erik Kaiel (NL) which premiered at Belfast Children's Festival in March 2023 and was adapted for invitational performance from Newry Mourne and Down District Council for opening of a light installation outside Newry Town Hall in February 2024. We combined this opportunity with mentoring and skill building in making dance for public spaces with the *Haiku* performers.

Showcasing

Call to Mind was part of the *homegrown* showcase at Belfast Children's Festival. Homegrown is a well-established industry showcase for theatre and dance for young audiences during Belfast Children's Festival. Thirty national and international delegates attended the showcase in Belfast during the first weekend of the festival. This showcase is an important point of connection to national and international colleagues, producers, programmer and festivals.

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DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Professional Development

We offered a focused programme of professional development and artist support during 2023/24 with mentoring for NI artists in making work for public spaces, open class when the company was in production and masterclasses with visiting artists.

Outreach

A series of **repertoire-based** workshops were delivered in schools and colleges from Armagh to Bangor and across Belfast. Funding for this was through our annual funding from ACNI and Belfast City Council. Workshops were based on *Call to Mind* themes of memory and seeing others' perspectives and were delivered by the cast and supporting artists. Multiple workshops were delivered to various classes in each school in the hall followed by a sharing of the show. This was, for some, a first-time experience and for others it was closely linked to their college studies (BTEC, HND in SERC, NRC, SRC) or dance studies (High Points).

Belfast Movement Group is the continuation of the original Belfast Movement Choir project. The April-June 2023 term was supported by Bank of Ireland Begin Together funding for a women's group in south Belfast and a young girl's group in East Belfast. This term concluded that part of the project. September 2023 - March 2024 saw a further two terms offered for women aged 50-85 and, as funding had come to an end, participants now pay on a termly basis towards the cost of space hire and tutor fees.

April - June 2023 saw the conclusion of **Move Fit** a multi-year dance and wellbeing programme in Lowwood and Holy Cross Boys' Primary Schools in North Belfast. The programme was successful in encouraging better attitudes to taking part in physical activity amongst staff, pupils and parents, the benefits and enjoyment inherent in physical activity and in skill building through bespoke training for staff to be able to continue legacy sessions in school.

We completed a third year of **Seasonal Somatics** regular outdoor workshops themed on our relationship with the natural world. Sessions were delivered across a range of parks in greater Belfast by Sandy Cuthbert. A group of 24 people from diverse backgrounds signed up during the year. Some came with no dance experience discovering the benefits of this collective experience and some have been taking part regularly since the programme started three years ago. Audiences are made up of passers-by in each of the parks in the duration of the sessions.

Conclusion

In keeping with our strategic plan, we delivered in three key areas: new work commissions, artist development and participatory activity. Resourcing each of these aspects of the programme in full has become increasingly challenging due to over ten years of standstill funding and the ongoing threat of further cuts to arts funding.

2023-24 was a year of beginnings and endings. We saw the conclusion of longstanding participatory programmes Move Fit and Belfast Movement Choir and the beginnings of new and old partnerships and approaches to ongoing and future programme development.

An opportunity arose in year to contribute to a bid process for a new dance company with an all-island remit initiated by Arts Council Ireland. The bid, led by Liz Roche Company Dublin with Maiden Voyage as a foundational and strategic partner, was successful following the competitive bid and interview process. 2024 will see the establishment of this new company and, in 2025 the delivery of an ambitious programme of work. Maiden Voyage's partnership with Luail will open opportunities for measured and careful growth of our repertoire, of new co-commissions and co-productions, of touring within Northern Ireland, and artist development here in Northern Ireland.

In 2023-24 we continued involvement in BLUEPRINT the Arts & Business NI initiative to support research and development of new avenues for income generation. This supported full-time working for Company Manager in year.

We are grateful to our annual funders and programme funders for their generous assistance throughout the year.

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DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

FINANCIAL REVIEW

In 2023-24 we were fortunate to maintain annual funding from principal funder Arts Council of Northern Ireland and other funders for core and project costs as below.

The Directors would like to thank the company's principal funders:-

- Arts Council of Northern Ireland
- Belfast City Council

Move Fit funders:-

- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Victoria Homes

Belfast Movement Group:-

- Bank of Ireland Begin Together

Blueprint:-

- Arts & Business NI

FUNDS HELD AS CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

The charity does not hold any funds as custodian for any other trustee body.

RESERVES POLICY

The company's policy is to maintain reserves at a level which ensures that the company's core administrative activities are able to continue in the immediate future, for a period deemed appropriate by the Board; currently a minimum of 3 months. The directors will however consider on an ongoing basis the level of reserves that is prudent for the charity to have in line with known future developments, liabilities and uncertainties.

STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the trust and of the surplus or deficit of the trust for that period.

In preparing these financial statements the directors are required to: -

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

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DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The directors are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The above report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Statement of Recommended Practice (Accounting and Reporting by Charities) 2015.

By order of the Board



JD Burke

Secretary

Dated: 26.11.24.