



Annual Report & Accounts for year ended 30th April 2023

Website: www.southbankplayhouse.com

Facebook: @southbankplayhouse

Company Limited by Guarantee Company No: NI035043

Charity Registration No: NIC 102831

South Bank Playhouse Ltd

Trustees/Directors (at 1st July 2023)

Katherine Beggs (Chair)

David Fullerton

Gillian Grattan

John Grattan (Treasurer)

Jenny Groves

Heather Johnson (Secretary)

Eamon Jones

Katherine Weir

Joseph Wildy

Miriam Witts

Registered Office

1A Kimberley Drive

Belfast BT7 3EE

Company number

NI035043

Charity number

NIC 102831

Bankers

Danske Bank, Donegall Square West, Belfast BT1 6JS

Trustees' Report for year ended 30th April 2023

Introduction

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and in line with the guidance produced by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. It also represents the Directors' report for the purposes of company legislation.

Constitution and governance

South Bank Playhouse Ltd, also known as Southbank Players, is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 20th October 1998. The objects of the company were amended by special resolution passed on 15th August 2011. The company was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 14th August 2015.

The Trustees constitute the directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006 and trustees of the charity for the purposes of charity legislation.

The Trustees, of whom there should be not less than three, are appointed by members of the company at the Annual General Meeting and form the management committee of the company. They are appointed for a period of five years and are eligible for re-appointment for a second term. Trustees who served during the year ending 30th April 2023 were as follows:

Katherine Beggs
David Fullerton
Gillian Grattan
John Grattan (Treasurer)
Heather Johnson (Secretary)
Eamon Jones
Philip McDonagh (Chair)
Jonathan McGurgan
Katherine Weir
Miriam Witts

The Trustees are responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They met as the management committee eight times during the year ended 30th April 2023 to plan and manage the activities of the charity and to take appropriate decisions. No Trustee received any remuneration for services as a member of the Board of Trustees and the charity has no employees.

The Trustees have put in place an equal opportunities policy, a GDPR policy, financial procedures, and a safeguarding policy, all of which are reviewed regularly.

Purposes of the charity

We are an amateur theatre company drawing our members from a wide range of backgrounds producing quality drama that enhances and contributes to the cultural life of Belfast and on tour across N Ireland since 1998. We produce drama from a variety of genres that is accessible to members of the public of all ages. This is in the form of formal productions and rehearsed readings as well as

providing space for members to write and produce original works. Additionally, we open our doors to other companies and charities to use our space to carry out their charitable activities and enhance the quality of their members' lives.

We are based in leased premises in a former Scout Hall off Sunnyside Street in the Ormeau Road area of Southeast Belfast. The facilities include a large performance space which has bleacher seating with an audience capacity of 65 people, a lighting rig and sound and lighting decks. Back stage we have a costume store and other storage rooms, and a set store located outside the back of the hall.

The purposes of our charity as set out in our governing document are as follows:

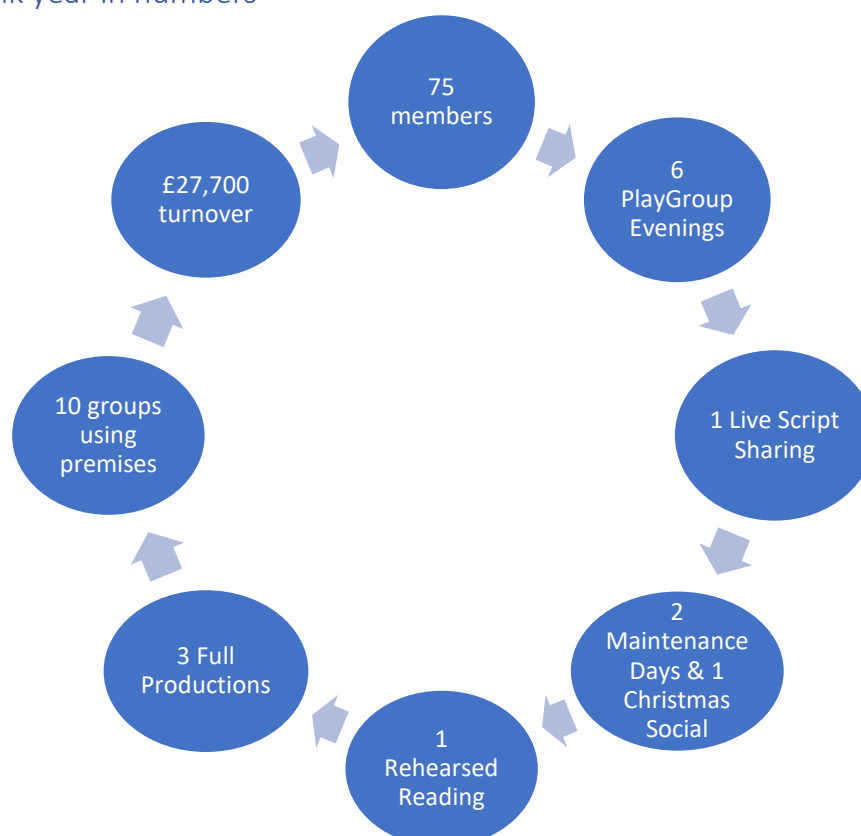
- a) To enhance & contribute to the cultural life of Belfast and the surrounding area;
- b) To present, promote, organize, manage & produce quality plays and events of cultural value;
- c) To encourage appreciation for, and participation in, performing arts activities;
- d) To offer opportunities for all to become involved in performing arts activities through the cultural activities we engage in;
- e) To promote and develop performing arts for the public in the area of benefit

Our membership

At 30th April 2023 we had a total of 75 subscribed members as well as a number of other supporters and participants in the company. The Trustees can confirm that this is the same total as the previous year, although we did have 3 new members join and three leave throughout the year.

Our AGM on 15th June 2022 was well attended, with 18 members of the company. Michele Marken completed her second term as Trustee, and stepped down from the Committee. Katherine Beggs was duly elected by the membership to join the Committee.

The South Bank year in numbers



South Bank productions

Our main activity during a normal year is the auditioning, rehearsal and performance of three productions in the summer, spring and autumn. In 2022, we were able to return to our normal schedule without Covid restrictions. Nevertheless, we maintained health and safety procedures that included the provisions of hand sanitizer, cleaning of the Hall, and reminders to all those attending the theatre space to be vigilant with any illness.

The Summer production in 2022 was *Murdered to Death*, by Peter Gordon. A oft-times farcical murder mystery, the show was co-directed by Min Witts and Penny Beggs. The cast of nine included both new and returning members. Performances began on July 19th and continued for five sold-out nights, in an exciting and light-hearted return to summer theatre for the Company.

The Autumn 2022 production was *The Weir*, by Conor McPherson. Directed by Michele Marken, the atmospheric production featured fairy roads, ghost stories, and deeply emotional revelations in a rural Irish pub in a story about connections between both friends and strangers in a rural Irish pub. Beginning on November 22, the show was again sold-out and received excellent audience feedback.

Our third annual production for 2022-23 took place in the Spring. We remained in Ireland and turned to John B Keane's play, *Sive*. Directed by David Fullerton and first-time director Margaret Leonard, the play is an exploration of a poor family living amongst the peat bogs in the mid-century. A cast and crew of new and old members produced an unrelenting, intense, and so very well received show with vivid characters not easily forgotten.

Other South Bank shows and events

An ongoing contribution of the Company to the community, alongside our major productions, has always been other shows and events for both our members and the wider public. These were particularly important during the pandemic, when we developed a series of 'Script Sharing' events that took place online. In 2022, with the return to in-person events, we were excited to reformat script readings into **PlayGroup**. PlayGroup is a monthly event which is open to all our members, when we collectively read a full script that has been chosen by one of the participants. Monthly attendance varied from 10 to 18 members, and we explored a wide range of scripts – from classic shows such as *What the Butler Saw* (Joe Orton), *Ghost Train* (Arnold Ridley), and *12 Angry Men* (Reginald Rose) – and more unusual choices, such as *Pravda* (David Hare and Howard Brenton), and *Jenny's House of Joy* (Norm Foster). We also had a 'live', in-person version of a script sharing in January 2023.

The year 2022-23 also saw a return of **Rehearsed Readings** to South Bank. On February 17 2023, Joe Wildy was joined by Stephen Beggs in a reading of *Address Unknown* (Kathrine Taylor). Two long-time friends correspond between the US and Germany during the rise of the Nazis in this sobering piece that was wonderfully produced with multimedia and a split-screen set.

Finally, each year we welcome our members into the Hall for group events. In the summer of 2022, we initiated a program of annual 'maintenance days' during which members pitched in to clean, maintain, and improve the theatre space. Every December, we also welcome our members for an annual Christmas party featuring food, entertainment, and holiday cheer.

Other uses of the South Bank Hall

We actively encourage use of our facilities by other arts groups and charities to ensure that the facilities are well utilised and enjoyed by others. Particularly in the ongoing difficult circumstances that were presented by Covid-19, and in difficult financial times for the arts sector, we have prioritised

ongoing support of the local theatre community while also ensuring that the Hall is available to company members in their endeavours.

In 2022-23, 10 groups used the facilities, primarily for rehearsals, workshops, and filming.

We are grateful to our members Kate Beggs and Penny Beggs who manage the subletting of the hall.

Marketing and promotion of our activities

Throughout this year, our focus has been to continue to engage with and connect to our members and to contribute to the rich cultural life of the community. We continue to maintain our public-facing website, which highlights both our current productions and the broader and historic activities of the Company. Regular Members Bulletins continue to be shared across our mailing list, which we have updated and renewed this year. We have also further developed both a public and a members-only Facebook page, as well as our Instagram account.

Improvements to the premises

Although we do not own the premises, we nevertheless continue to both maintain and improve the Hall in order to enhance the experience for our visitors, and to keep the facilities in good order. We have created a Maintenance Folder to keep track of necessary checks and reviews of the facilities, including fire inspections, and to ensure that all necessary information is in one place. In 2022-23, we refreshed the paint, updated the toilet facilities, and replaced the front windows. We also obtained a removable ramp to enhance the accessibility of the premises. Finally, we upgraded some of our technology with new computer monitors and cameras.

Looking forward

Southbank Players has a number of plans for the coming 2023/2024 year. We will continue our efforts to engage with our members, and to grow the company. We will also continue to engage with and support the local community, and particularly the arts community in Belfast. We have returned to our normal production schedule, and we look forward to developing more rehearsed readings and company events. Planned projects include a review of our Governance structure as well as developing the skills – such as direction, set building, lights, and sound – of our members.

Public benefit

The trustees of South Bank Playhouse are pleased to confirm that they have complied with their duty to have regard to the public benefit requirement statutory guidance of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Our public benefit is demonstrated in a number of ways:

- We provide a positive cultural experience by providing high quality drama for the audiences who attend our productions in our hall and elsewhere. This is evidenced by the feedback we receive from audiences, and from managers of other venues where we perform;
- We also provide a positive cultural experience for all those who participate in our activities. Our activities are open to anyone, as evidenced by the extensive involvement of people of all ages and from a wide variety of community and cultural backgrounds;
- Our company's ethos is to create an informal, friendly environment, welcoming and supporting everybody's participation in an enjoyable and social atmosphere. We have over 70 members, but we have many more who participate for one or two events over the year, or who support us regularly as audience members;

- We seek to engage with the local community in the Ormeau Road area and we are keen to increase the benefit we provide to local community groups by bringing an event out to their venues.

Financial Review

Our financial statement for the period 1st May 2022 to 30th April 2023 is attached to this report and shows that we had a surplus of income over expenditure of £3,018.53 for the period in question. As a result, our total funds at 30th April 2023 were £29,430.23 compared with £26,411.70 at 30th April 2022. Our total income in the year was £27,707.69 compared with £17,913.39 in the previous financial year. Our income ordinarily comes from three main sources, membership subscriptions, performance revenues and donations from other groups for use of our premises. Breakdown of revenue streams was as follows:

- Membership subscriptions amounted to £10,183.13 including projected Gift Aid to be claimed – this was a small decrease on than the total of £10,621.88 for the previous year;
- Donations for performances in Southbank – we were able to return to full capacity shows this year, with donations from audience members totalling £8,392.16 over three shows.
- Donations by other groups for use of the premises which came to £3,755.00 compared with £3,837.00 in the previous year.

Our total expenditure in the year came to £24,689.16 compared with £17,388.13 in the previous financial year. Our main expenditure is the rent that we pay to our landlords, The Scout Association. Total rent paid in the accounting period is £9,143.72. This is lower than the previous period's total of £9,905.70 however we extended our financial year end from 31st March to 30th April in the previous period, so it covered 13 months' rent rather than 12. We currently hold a 10-year lease for the premises which is due for renewal on 1st May 2028.

Other significant expenditures include:

- Production expenses totalling £2,429.92. These relate to three performances, as we returned to our pre-pandemic schedule
- Heating and lighting costs of £2,823.42 which were more than in the previous year due to increased usage as a result of more activity taking place in the building after the pandemic; and
- Repairs and renewals totalling £1,835.95. This represented a significant increase over the previous year (£405.99) as we resumed a full production schedule and were able to have more time in the hall to carry out necessary repairs and improvements.

Declaration

This report was approved by a meeting of the management committee on January 15 2024 and is signed on behalf of trustees.

Katherine Beggs
Chair