

DUMBWORLD LTD
(COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

DIRECTORS' REPORT

The directors present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Directors

The following directors held office during the whole of the period:

Mr Mark Glazier

Mr Steven Hadley

Mr Graham Morton (*Resigned 6th April 2023*)

Ms Aimee Consiglia Conway

Mr Aidan Geary (*appointed 23rd May 2023*)

Miss Rachel Kennedy (*resigned on 7 February 2023*).

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the report and accounts in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the directors to prepare accounts for each financial year. Under that law, the directors have elected to prepare the accounts in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the accounts unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing these accounts, 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 accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business. 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 accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Objectives and Activities

Our Vision is to create extraordinary arts experiences of the highest quality.

Our Mission is to explore the intersection of music, image and words with artists and communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

Our Values are:

- **Innovative:** We are experimenters, discoverers, inventors of new ways of telling new stories.
- **World class:** We are ambitious and aspire to the highest standards in everything we do.
- **Collaborative:** We work as a team with individuals, communities, artists, funders, and others.
- **Grounded:** We find humour, passion & meaning in the ordinary, and strive to make it extraordinary.
- **Diverse:** We are welcoming, inclusive, and accessible, making work for, and with, everyone in mind.
- **Impactful:** We use the power of art to encourage positive change for individuals, communities, and societies.

Our Strategic Aims / Goals are:

- **New Work:** To develop new artistic work that excites and inspires audiences
- **Innovation:** To explore the potential of new & emerging technologies to create and present new work.
- **Performance & Touring:** To develop artistic work and networks for in-person and digital performance that can tour, earn revenue, and reach new audiences.

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- **Audience:** To develop new audiences for contemporary performance art.
- **Participation:** To provide opportunities for people to take part in arts activities of the highest quality
- **Organisation:** To govern and manage a dynamic, progressive organisation in line with best practice
- **Sustainability:** To ensure that Dumbworld strives for financial and environmental sustainability

In shaping our activities for the year, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance regarding public benefit. Dumbworld's activities consist of three main areas of activity and ambition. Each have certain crossovers, and can be broadly broken down as follows:

(i) Engagement & Participation:

We provide emerging musicians and composers with mentoring and invaluable hand-on experience that helps establish their reputations as professional artists working at the highest level in classical music.

We combine highly skilled creatives with individuals who have little or no performance experience, and our artistic work is an invitation for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to use their own personal and emotional vocabularies / experiences in the creative process.

(ii) Original New Works

We produce / co-produce original new work in partnership with leading arts organisations and create powerful sonic and visual experiences.

(iii) Digital Technology & Film

We explore how new digital technologies can create new and innovative arts experiences.

Achievements and Performance

During financial year 2023, Dumbworld 45 performances or events attended by an estimated 5,838 people, 187 engagement and participation events for an estimated 987 participants and 7 exhibitions attended by an estimated 13,454 people.

Highlights included:

SCORCHED EARTH TRILOGY: Co-produced with Irish National Opera, the *Scorched Earth Trilogy* are three short Street Art Operas which explore the impact of climate change through the eyes of polar bears, children & world leaders. Projected onto the sides of buildings, with wireless headphones for audience members, these Street Art Operas were described by The Sunday Times as "*Anarchic & funny...satirical & bang up to date...short, sharp, sardonic commentaries on the climate crisis*". We screened the operas on the side of Belfast's Ulster Museum as part of Belfast International Arts Festival and presented them, for the first time indoors, at Rotterdam's Brutus Art Centre as part of O Festival. As an adjunct, we also collaborated with Irish National Opera on the development of their audio application *Isolde*, which will enable audience members to use their own mobile devices and headphones to sync with and listen to our Street Art Operas.

CULTURE NIGHT LETTERKENNY: Invited by Letterkenny's Regional Cultural centre to present digital work for their Culture Night programming, we screened two Street Art Operas, *Two Angels Play I Spy* and *Drive By Shooting* and launched our newly developed animated video-game opera experience, *A New Topography of Love Part II*. Played on a bespoke, vintage arcade console the installation using video gaming and an operatic soundtrack to tell a tale of environmental destruction - imagine Super Mario Brothers meets Mario Lanza, Mickey Mouse, whales, bats, birds, and Jeff Bezos, all battling it out for the future of our very own planet earth.

A NEW TOPOGRAPHY OF LOVE PART III - THE SINGING STOPPED: We presented the world premiere of new piece of choral music for orchestra and community choirs at the City of Derry International Choir Festival in the Millennium Forum. Performed by the Ulster Orchestra and the Festival Singers & Chorus, *A New Topography of Love Part III - The Singing Stopped* is the third part of a mixed media trilogy that explores aspects of human connectivity, environment, and shared worlds.

SONGBOOK: We co-created new songs with a variety of groups who are campaigning for socio-political change and/or are representing people who are marginalised or under-represented. Participating groups were Tools for Solidarity (Belfast) who repurpose unwanted sewing machines and tools for re-use in sub-Saharan Africa, Forthspring Inter Community Group (Belfast) who provide support for residents at an interface area, Pink Ladies (Derry) who are a choir of cancer survivors, PPR / MAC (Belfast) who campaign to support the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, and Rice College (Ennis, County Clare) who campaign for greater environmental sustainability. The artwork we are co-creating with each group will enable their messages of hope, solidarity & positive change to reach a wider audience.

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IF WE COULD SEE OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US: Commissioned by Meta/Facebook & Navan's Solstice Arts Centre, we created a series of new sound, video & photography works, co-created with people and communities throughout County Meath. Inspired by moments of assembly across Meath - choirs coming together to sing, swimmers taking the cold plunge together, trees connecting under the earth in a network of support – the sound/video/living installation was exhibited in Solstice Arts Centre, Navan & toured to Kells and Ashbourne in County Meath.

UNBOXED OUR PLACE IN SPACE – CONSTELLATIONS OF NOISE: We were commissioned by the Nerve Centre to provide community music activity as part of their *Our Place In Space* project which was one of 10 national projects funded by the Unboxed: Creativity in the UK initiative. *Constellations of Noise* paired eight nationally / internationally renowned musician with community participants from all six counties of Northern Ireland to create new music. Featuring school children, care home residents, brass band players, refugees and asylum seekers, young musicians, and community members of all ages, eight unique and immersive audio-visual installations/live performances were presented during a showcase weekend in Bangor, County Down. We also delivered *The Engaged Composer Symposium* in which, over two days, eight of the UK and Ireland's most experienced and inspirational composers/practitioners share their insights and experience in collaborating and co-creating work with new and emerging composers. A series of workshops and seminars illuminated the depth, energy, colour, and brilliance of their practice as they shared personal methodologies, specialisms, structures, artistic objectives, and techniques to enable exhilarating and fresh contemporary music to be formed.

A CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO ANARCHY: This was a co-production with Scotland's Red Note Ensemble. We delivered workshops with schools and community groups in Easterhouse, Glasgow to create the narrative storyline and new music for a re-interpretation of by the 1931 Spanish publication 'La Anarquía Explicada a Los Niños' - a guidebook for children explaining the ideas and practises of anarchy. The finished piece will be performed during 23/24.

CÁ NDEACHAIG MÉ: We created an audio-visual installation which explored the morphing of identity through the Gaeilge and Scottish Gaelic language in parallel with the emigration process through a process of co-creation workshops in Belfast, Co. Donegal, and Scotland. The finished piece will be performed during 23/24.

BOXED IN: We delivered pre-production planning developed concepts, storyline, composition, and designs for original operatic installations. Inspired by the dioramas often seen in natural history museums these pieces will find form through video, mechanical and sound technology within a constructed model environment. The piece will be developed during 23/24 and performed during 24/25.

STOP THESE GAMES: We delivered post-production of filming and music for a multi-media project undertaken with young people in Nairobi exploring their reactions to climate change.

RIVERBOX: We presented the audio-visual installation *All the Things We Are* at Riverbox in Titanic Quarter, Belfast.

SHEE: A commission from BFI as part of their *More Films for Freedom* programme, we completed filming in Nairobi, Kenya for a short film exploring LGBTQ+ issues in Kenya. The film will be completed during 23/24 and submitted to national and international film festivals.

Financial Review

The results for the year are set out on page 8.

Total income for the year was £461,610, of which 99.9% was from contracts for charitable activities and 0.1% from other trading activities. Turnover for the year increased by £142,542 from the prior year, primarily due to a substantial one-off contract to deliver work for the Unboxed: Creativity in the UK initiative.

Total expenditure for the year was £366,746 of which 100% was expended on direct charitable activities.

The balance on total funds at the year end was £116,768 of which £74,662 was unrestricted and £42,106 was restricted.

The Directors are satisfied with the results for the year.

Going Concern

Having reviewed the Charity's forecasts, the directors have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for at least a period of 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements. The principal factors underlying this judgement include:

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- Current levels of financial performance by comparison with budgeted expectations.
- Expected revenue and cash flows from the Charity's business planning.
- Continuing support from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Accordingly, the Charity continues to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the annual financial statements.

Reserves Policy

Dumbworld aims to maintain reserves in unrestricted funds at a level equivalent to approximately six months of core operating costs. These reserves are a contingency which aim to:

- Protect the future operation of Dumbworld from the effects of any unforeseen variations in income and expenditure.
- Provide cash flow for grants and contracts that are paid in arrears.
- Facilitate an orderly winding-down of operations in the event of a significant adverse event that is outside the control of Dumbworld

Should the minimum of six months unrestricted reserves be reached, then the charity will establish a separate unrestricted reserve for future artistic development activities which advance the charities objectives. The reserves policy and the levels of reserves required are reviewed yearly as part of the annual budgetary process.

Plans for the Future

Dumbworld will continue to develop and grow creative partnerships, programmes, and projects, while also devising new, innovative initiatives that explore the intersection of music, image, and words. Future plans are to establish co-producing partnerships that enable larger, more ambitious projects, with longer lead in times to be realised, while also remaining committed to delivering engagement projects which democratise arts provision and which can impact with people and communities at a local level. We will continue to use arts processes as a tool to explore complex issues such as climate change, political/social governance and mutual aid...in ways which are quirky, innovative and fun.

Signed on behalf of the board of directors.



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Mr Mark Glazier
Director
Approved by the board on