

# **Birds of Paradise Theatre Company**



BIRDS OF PARADISE  
THEATRE COMPANY

**Annual Report 2016 - 2017**

# Foreword

Welcome to the annual report of Birds of Paradise 2016/17. This report includes a record of the work of the company during that period.

It's been a fascinating and enjoyable year for me with Birds of Paradise following my appointment in June 2016 as Chair of the Board of Directors for the only professional, disability-led theatre company in Scotland. I can genuinely say I'm proud of, and grateful for the work of my fellow board members, and more importantly the staff of the company during my first year in post.

We spent some time as a board and staff team clarifying what Birds of Paradise is all about and what impact we'd like to have in Scotland and beyond. To this end we agreed that:

Birds of Paradise Theatre's artistic vision is of a culture where disabled artists are recognised for the excellence of their work, celebrated for the stories that they bring to the stage and are a vital part of the artistic landscape of Scotland.

Our purpose is to be an accessible arts company producing world-class productions and projects that place disabled artists centre stage and to develop future generations of disabled artists to fulfil our vision. BOP believes that disabled people continue to experience lack of equality and considerable barriers within society, including the arts. Our work exists in part to challenge and address these.

I believe the company's theatre performances and projects have a valuable impact beyond the audiences of the shows and beneficiaries of the projects

Birds of Paradise will be celebrating its 25th year of producing quality work in 2018. It's an organisation that deserves at least another 25 years of producing fantastic and stimulating work for the people of Scotland and beyond.

**Miles Harrison**  
**Chair**

# Organisational

## Staffing

In late 2016 we welcomed two new staff to the team: part time Executive Producer, Mairi Taylor and part time Projects Officer, Callum Madge.

## Rotation of Board Members

In September, we were delighted to appoint a new chairperson and welcome four new directors to our board;

- **Miles Harrison** (new Chairperson), Self Employed Leadership & Governance Trainer
- **Michael Richardson**, PhD Student
- **Sophie Partridge**, Freelance Writer/Performer
- **Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh**, Artistic Director - ZendeH Theatre Company
- **Sonali Shah**, Writer and Academic.

## Board Away Day.

The Board met on the 1<sup>st</sup> September to introduce the new directors, meet with staff and undertake governance and board training. This was held at Arts and Business Scotland, Edinburgh and co-facilitated by Chairperson Miles Harrison and Catriona Reynolds. It is imperative to the company to have a well-resourced and supported Board that can have strong oversight of the activities of the company. This was particularly relevant at this time as new directors came to the Board, staff structures were altered and the company entered business planning processes relating to its application to Creative Scotland for regular funding for the period 2018 – 2021.

*“The board agreed this was a useful and productive day – exploring strategic issues in the morning and board roles and responsibilities in the afternoon.”*

## Role Shift

By Lesley Hart, made in coproduction with Òran Mór: A Play, A Pie and A Pint  
Directed by Garry Robson

Òran Mór, Glasgow: 16 – 21 May

Ayr Gaiety, Ayr: 24 – 26 May

*Inspired by the principle of “role shift” in British Sign Language, Role Shift is a slightly naughty but honest look at the role of a sign language interpreter and what happens when separate worlds collide in a fascinating new way. Carrie is dutifully doing her job as a sign language interpreter but when she gets drawn into the action she disrupts the world of the play from a boy meets girl love story into something very different, magical and strange.*



This production was a great success with audiences and critics alike. Alongside the production we developed an outreach programme and staged a very well attended open rehearsal session during the first week to disseminate ideas about creative access. A QnA session was held after the last performance at the Ayr Gaiety. Also working on the show was a trainee Director from the Conservatoire and a trainee access worker from the Netherlands.

*“Garry Robson’s already done a cracking job of balancing the frisky humour and sensitive issues of gender, sexuality and disability while giving his tremendous cast room to be mischievous”*

★★★★★ The Herald



*“Garry Robson has created a sparkling diamond of a show that’s as bold and brash as it needs to be”*

★★★★★ Broadway Baby

*“Role Shift was by turns, a hilarious rollicking comedy, a comment on sexual mores and how the world views the disabled”*

★★★★★

Mumble Theatre

## Wendy Hoose

by Johnny McKnight

Directed by Johnny McKnight and Robert Softley Gale

Soho Theatre, London:

11 April - 7 May

Teatro Valle Inclán, Madrid:

20 - 21 May

Teatre El Musical, Valencia:

28 May

After successful runs in 2014 and 2015  
*Wendy Hoose* was once again revived to  
tour more dates in 2016.



## The Last Show

by KultProekt

Directed by Garry Robson

Made in association with Skomorokh State Puppet Theatre and  
Indigo Deaf Theatre

Skomorokh State Puppet Theatre, Tomsk: 31 Mar - 24 Apr



Garry was invited by Moscow based company KultProekt to direct a new version of the play “*The Last Show of Superheroes*”. This was the first integrated production to be performed on a main stage in Russia and created a huge amount of media and industry interest in Russia with Garry appearing twice on national TV. The show was a big success with audiences, played for three sold out nights, was seen by over 1125 people over its nine-night run and has now entered the



repertoire of The Skomorokh. The production was also nominated for a Golden Mask (Russian BAFTA) for ‘Outstanding Production’.

# Miranda and Caliban: The Making of a Monster

by Jennifer Dick and Garry Robson  
inspired by The Tempest by William Shakespeare

Directed by Garry Robson (Hong Kong) and Robert Softley Gale (Glasgow)  
Music by Hector Bizerk

Part of the New Visions Festival Kwai Tsing Theatre Hong Kong  
Supported by New Visions, The British Council and Shakespeare Lives 2016

Kwai Tsing Theatre, Hong Kong: 1 - 2 Nov  
CCA, Glasgow: 1 - 2 Nov

**"Thou liest, malignant thing!"**

*The People's Court is now in session. All rise. So what really happened when Miranda met Caliban and Caliban met Miranda and her dad didn't approve. Visit the island – hear the testimonies – explore the evidence. TV Judge Ariel gives Caliban a chance to give his side of the story. A tale that led him to be branded throughout history as some kind of monster. Guilty or Not Guilty. You decide!*

Part of the British Council's Shakespeare Lives and inspired by The Tempest, Birds of Paradise Theatre Company have been working with deaf and disabled artists in Hong Kong and the UK to create a thrilling courtroom drama. Miranda and Caliban: The Making of a Monster explores the meaning of "home" and our relationship with "the others". Live, linked simultaneous performances in Hong Kong and Glasgow.

*"The Making of a Monster highlights contemporary social issues in the way we show and talk about disability and has created a space where the voice of these actors can be heard and expressed."* **The Hong Kong Tatler**

*"Miranda and Caliban: The Making of a Monster cuts through the idea that Shakespeare speaks for all people and nations. Yet, in doing so, it successfully shifts the focus to how Shakespeare's work can be used. A use for different people, in different nations, speaking about differences. This is Shakespeare, living on after 400 years."* **The Theatre Times**

GLASGOW  
HONG KONG



- 1 show performed with cast split between Hong Kong and Glasgow, 2 or 3 actors in each
- 4 languages; English, Cantonese, BSL & HKSL Subtitles in 2 languages
- 2 Deaf performers kept connected to the show's progress
- 4 sign language interpreters, 2 live in HK, 1 in GLA and 1 in pre-records
- 8 hours' time difference
- 421 people used voting poll on mobile devices via web or text
- 70 Online Viewers from across UK, France, Germany, Spain, Hong Kong
- 601 Audience members
- 2 live linked performances
- No wired internet connections; wifi or 4G at each end
- Only 1 full dress rehearsal in performance spaces
- 4 Public talks in Hong Kong



## **Barriers to Access**

**A report on the barriers faced by young disabled and D/deaf people in accessing youth arts provision in Scotland**

**Written by Dr Matson Lawrence**

**Commissioned by Birds of Paradise Theatre Company**

**Funded by Time to Shine**

Our Time to Shine research reached its conclusion with a written report by Dr Matson Lawrence that includes the clear identification of barriers to access and recommendations for ways forward. BOP launched the report at a sector event on the December 1<sup>st</sup> at Scottish Youth Theatre, Glasgow. The event brought young disabled people and representatives from the youth arts sector together to examine the findings of the report and to work together to identify actions to move forward.

The event was fully booked and over the course of the day 8 actions were identified and then prioritised. The event was also an opportunity for BOP to clearly communicate its capacity to deliver facilitated events such as this. Once prioritised, BOP committed to lead on the first three actions and began planning this in early 2017, with more consultation, the sharing of resources from the day and one to one meetings. BOP continues to centre the work in the area around the barriers that young disabled people face and building capacity and confidence within the sector to mitigate these.

*“An inspiring and motivating day”*

**Kenny McGlashan – CEO, Youth Theatre Arts Scotland**

*“...a fantastic event that was incredibly well organised and led by Birds of Paradise. I think all those that attended felt like their time had been well spent and that they were part of something bigger that will go on to change the artistic landscape in Scotland even further.”*

**Caroline Bowditch – Disabled Artist and External Evaluator**

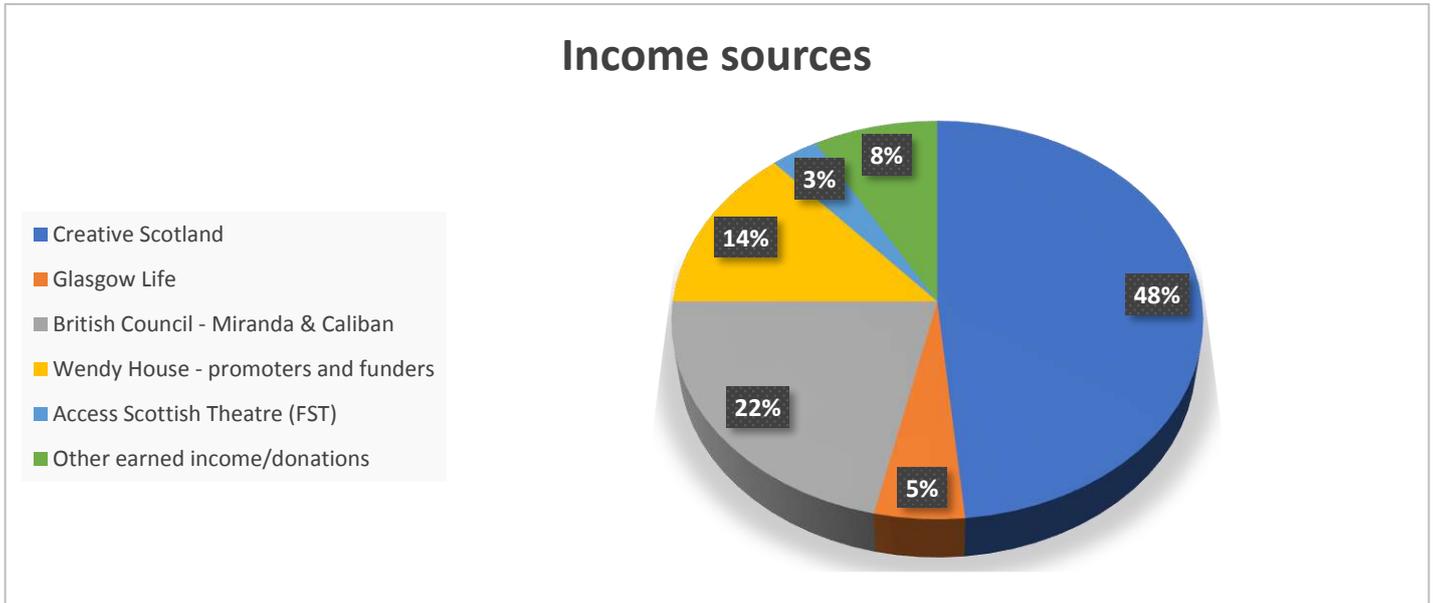
## **Training and Consultation**

With increased staff capacity and resources, BOP began to offer training and consultation services to the sector in 2016 which includes at its core Disability Equality Training (DET) with an arts focus. In this period, work has been undertaken with:

- National Theatre of Scotland – building audit of Rockvilla
- Edinburgh International Festival – review and audit of access marketing materials
- East Lothian Youth Theatre – DET training

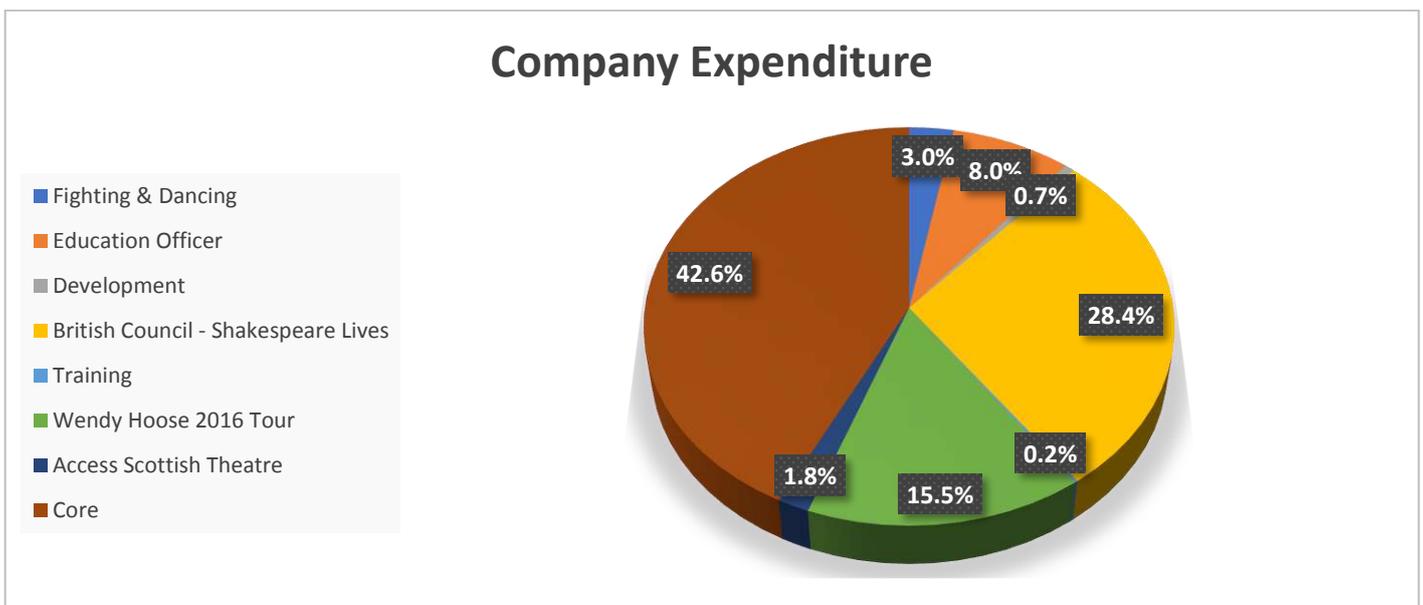
# Financial Summary

During 2016/2017 we generated a total income of £309,418.57 and expended £214,807.35. Our income sources are as indicated below –



We would like to give particular thanks to our funders – Creative Scotland, Glasgow Life, the British Council, Arts Council England, the Federation of Scottish Theatre and to the individuals who donated to us throughout the year.

Our expenditure was broken down in to the following projects. Please note that staff salaries, as well as general operating costs, are included in our Core expenditure.



The difference between our income and expenditure – £94,611.22 – is being transferred to the following financial year to fund Tin Soldier, our coproduction with Festival Theatre, Edinburgh.