

Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts

Response from Wales Millennium Centre

INTRODUCTION

As Wales' national centre for the performing arts we welcome this opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee's Inquiry. Attached with this document is a copy of our last Annual Review 2010-2011 and the Annual Review of Free and Participative Activity 2010-2011, both of which highlight how the Centre is extending people's horizons, and enriching lives through participation in arts activity. These publications form part of our submitted evidence.

In this submission we wish to demonstrate how we deliver against one of our key founding objectives, which forms part of our Strategic Plan 2010-2015, approved by Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales, which is to be

A place for people of all ages, background and experience to learn about and participate in the arts.

This objective also mirrors the strategic priority of the Welsh Government, as outlined in '*One Wales*,' which is to ensure that 'high-quality cultural experiences are available to all people, irrespective of where they live or their background.' It also reflects the ambitions of the Arts Council of Wales through its draft Strategic Equality Plan.

From the outset the vision for the Centre was that it was to be more than a place for people who could afford to buy a ticket. As the inscription on the front of the building states so eloquently *In these stones horizons sing*; in other words it is place where people's horizons are extended through the arts, and that means **participating and engaging** in arts activity as well as watching a performance.

BACKGROUND:

Wales Millennium Centre is Wales' national centre for the performing arts. It is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Its strategic objectives for the public benefit are to be:

- A world class theatre and arts centre, promoting, creating and presenting the best international, national and local events across a wide arts spectrum.
- A creative, high quality production base and home for the Centre's residents – Welsh National Opera, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Tŷ Cerdd, Llên Cymru/ Literature Wales, National Dance Company Wales, Hijinx Theatre Company and Touch Trust.
- A dynamic cultural destination, attracting local, national and international visitors.
- A sustainable, financially viable operation.
- A first-rate customer experience.
- A place for people of all ages, background and experience to learn about and participate in the arts.

- A building and a working environment recognised for its architecture, its facilities as well as its cultural activity.

The Centre, opened in November 2004 and cost £106m, funded by Welsh Government (£37m), Millennium Commission (£31m) The National Lottery through the Arts Council of Wales (£10m), private donor Sir Donald Gordon (£10m). the Weston family (£2m), HSBC Bank (£1m). The shortfall was met from an ambitious fundraising programme, targeted at a range of sources, individual donors, corporate business, trust and foundations.

CURRENT REVENUE FUNDING

The Centre's current annual revenue funding of £3.7m, representing 19% of our total income, forms part of a three year funding agreement with the Arts Council of Wales until 31 March 2014, approved by Welsh Government. This annual public subsidy has remained at the same level since 2007, yet the Centre has remained committed to its objective of being 'a place for people of all ages, background and experience to learn about and *participate* in the arts'.

For every £1 of public subsidy each year the Centre earns another £4.00, which represents excellent value for money to the public purse. The Centre is punching well above its weight in comparison with comparable centres, eg London's Southbank and Barbican both of which receive more than 50% of their income as public subsidy. Cardiff Business School estimates that the Centre contributes some £40m into the economy every year.

SECURING OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

The Centre's business model also requires that it raises up to £1m every year through a programme of fundraising and sponsorship. Whilst the current economic climate has proved challenging in this area, the Centre has still exceeded its annual target of £640,000. The public subsidy and fundraising combined help the Centre to realise its Learning and Participation objectives. Without this funding the Centre could not achieve its vision of extending horizons through participation in the arts.

Despite the standstill budget, through careful financial management and efficiency savings, as well as a creative approach to fundraising, the Centre has been able to increase resources, both financial and human, into this very important part of the Centre's work, which is often overlooked by the media. The additional resources have enabled the Centre to undertake even more activity over the past 12 months. An independent review and evaluation of this programme of learning and participation is currently being undertaken to assess how we can make even greater impact across Wales, whilst achieving best value for the investment.

COLLABORATION WITH RESIDENT COMPANIES

Wales Millennium Centre is also home to eight creative resident organisations : Welsh National Opera, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Literature Wales, National Dance Company Wales, Hijinx Theatre, Touch Trust, Ty Cerdd and Urdd Gobaith Cymru. Each resident company runs participative arts activity at The Centre, and increasingly are collaborating with each other and with the Centre to create greater impact as well as adding value to the public investment in each individually. The 2010/11 Annual Review, mentioned above, illustrates several examples of

collaborative projects undertaken in partnership with one or more of its resident companies.

http://www.wmc.org.uk/content/Site/Education/54301/F_P_Report_English.pdf

Wales Millennium Centre believes that such collaboration is an extremely effective and efficient way of making greater use of public funds for participatory activities, especially at a time of budgetary restraint. Importantly, we believe that by working together we can have more impact, creating a lasting legacy for participants and communities.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES 2010/11

- Total income £19.8m (projected to be similar out-turn figure for 2011/2)
- Revenue funding from Arts Council of Wales: £3.7m
- 14% of income is raised through commercial activities, such as catering, hospitality and events. This income is ploughed back into the business to support the artistic and learning and participation programme.
- £640,000 raised through sponsorship and fundraising, supporting participatory activity
- 2,915 emerging young artists performed on the Centre's Glanfa Stage
- 88 Lifelong Learning projects were undertaken
- 6,000 children participated in a workshop or an arts tour
- 9,970 young people from South Wales, including the Valleys, came to participate in the Centre's Breakin' the Bay urban arts festival over one weekend
- 280 young people from all over Wales have participated in the Centre's London 2012 Inspire Mark project Criw Cymru – this has been held annually since 2008 in the run up to 2012
- 450 free performances were held at the Centre
- Accessible performances (BSL signed, captioned, audio described), in the Donald Gordon Theatre almost tripled, from 11 in 2009/10 to 30 in 2010/11
- 16,115 people have participated in arts activity arranged by the Centre

To date, since opening, 9.8 million people have come through the Centre's doors, over 7 million of whom have not bought a theatre ticket.

The Centre's operates within the principles of sustainability and is an Signatory of Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Charter. It work with the local community and its programme of Learning and Participation form part of the Centre's commitment to the Charter, as well as it exemplary work in carbon reduction and local sourcing.

OVERVIEW

In 2010/11 a total of 16,115 people took part in learning and participation activity arranged by the Centre during the year. Almost 8,000 school children from 203 different schools from across Wales attended performances in the Centre's theatres, with a further 6,000 coming for a tour, a talk, or a specific schools workshop. A total of 80 schools across West Wales, Cardiff and the Valleys sent teachers to take part in teacher training days facilitated at the Centre. More than 4,800 members of the public took part in participatory activity, which included opportunities for all ages, from tea dances to rock and roll, family days to talks and lectures. On average, the Centre staged one participatory activity each week which *directly related* to a theatre

performance (66 across 2010). Lifelong learning forms an important part of the Centre's Make it Yours programme, and during the year 88 lifelong learning opportunities were created at the Centre, around Wales and online. Wales Millennium Centre works on outreach projects in some of the most socially deprived communities in Wales.

ARTS ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN IN AREAS OF HIGH POVERTY

CASE STUDY 1: PROJECT 21

To mark its 5th birthday in 2009 the Centre embarked on an ambitious arts project involving 200 children from seven schools in Communities First wards in Bangor, Barmouth, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Townhill in Swansea, Merthyr Tydfil, Ystradgynlais, and Tremorfa. The children worked in their schools with artist Ann Catrin Evans to produce the sculpture *Siwrnai*, (journey), which now hangs in the Centre's foyer. All the children were all invited to Cardiff for the unveiling, and parents also came for what was an extraordinary experience for them all. The Centre is now on a journey with these children and committed to working with them until they are 21 years of age. Each year a new arts project is devised for the children with a different artist. Last year textiles artist Cefyn Burgess led workshops in each school to produce a Welsh tapestry inspired by the children's local area. Every child designed and made a postcard-sized individual tapestry using Welsh materials and different sewing and embellishing machines. Cefyn sewed each tapestry onto a Welsh blanket to create an overall piece of art that was unveiled at school assemblies, exhibited in the Centre for six weeks then returned to each school where they will be permanently housed. This project fits in with one of the key aims of the Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy 2011 which is "To reduce inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and between parents of children (so far as necessary to ensure the well-being of their children)".

Wales Millennium Centre secured funding for his project from Gwynedd Welsh Church Fund and Thomas Howell's Education Fund for North Wales.

WORKING IN MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Wales Millennium Centre is located in one of the most deprived and most culturally diverse communities in Wales, where it has been identified that 51% of children live in poverty (Source: Campaign to End Child Poverty). For several years the Centre has engaged in outreach arts activities with local schools, taking artists into the classroom, and often culminating in a performance in front of their families at the Centre. Every year the Centre also works with the local Butetown community to stage the free Butetown Bay Jazz Heritage Festival, in the Glanfa, which provides a platform for the children from the local schools as well as young people from Butetown to learn about jazz and to perform on the Glanfa Stage. Last year several thousand visitors attended the Festival, encouraging local people of all ages from the community to join in the celebrations.

We believe that many parts of our artistic programme, such as Cape Town Opera's *Porgy and Bess* and the forthcoming Mandela Trilogy, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater and the *Breakin' the Bay* Hip-Hop events, along with their associated participatory activity, significantly increase the level of engagement with the Centre amongst BME groups.

A demographic survey carried out with the *Breakin' the Bay* participants in 2009 indicated 36% of total attendees at the weekend-long event were from an ethnic minority (BME) group. This shows that in our experience, the key driving factor for attracting ethnic minorities to the arts is the product and there is no natural barrier for this group to engage with the Centre. Butetown Bay Jazz is a partnership with the local community in the Bay, designed to bring live jazz back into the Bay. It is also aimed at increasing capacity and encouraging participation in Butetown's jazz heritage amongst young people in the community

CASE STUDY 2: BUTETOWN BAY JAZZ HERITAGE FESTIVAL

For the past three years Wales Millennium Centre has worked with the local community to host an annual jazz festival, which is aimed at bringing the jazz vibe back into Tiger Bay, to encourage participation by children and young people as well as to showcase the best local talent alongside international names. The day runs from 11am to 11pm, and includes workshops on writing for jazz and, for the first time in 2011, a Masterclass with one of the UK's top trumpeters, Abram Wilson, an eminent educationist and a member of Tomorrow's Jazz Warriors. Members of Wales' National Youth Jazz Ensemble were joined by young musicians from Butetown, who had not had the same opportunities to audition through their schools. Many of the young people said: "This has been the best day of my life." As a direct result of this Masterclass the young musicians from Butetown are now being mentored in London by professional jazz musicians, with a view to developing a career in music. It is very important to emphasise that this festival has been developed from the bottom up; the Centre facilitates allowing the community to keep ownership.

Wales Millennium Centre provides some funding, but there is need for more public support for events such as this, for what is local community regeneration through the arts. Ease of access to funding – small grants - is crucial, as the people who are behind this event are doing it on a voluntary basis.

The Centre supports Black History Month every year. In 2011 the event attracted over 6,500 participants over the month, with a varied programme of talks, dance, live music and workshops as well as performances by local artists and school groups. Other events involving the participation of the local Afro-Caribbean community in Cardiff Bay include an annual celebration of the role of women in the community on International Women's Day. This year 80 women will participate, lead by singer and writer Ms Patti Flynn. In association with National Theatre Wales the Centre has been involved with the Butetown Assembly which is aimed at encouraging more participation in the arts by other diverse communities in and around Butetown, including the Somali and Yemeni communities. More funding would be required to make a difference in these communities. This year a local cultural centre will open in Loudon Square. However the Centre believes it could still do more with the various local communities in Butetown if it had more space for community use on site.

Currently there is physically no space available within the development to be made available for such purposes.

Other ethnic communities also have opportunities to participate in arts activities at the Centre, as well as sharing their cultural traditions with others e.g. Chinese community, with events around Chinese New Year, and the Japanese community through origami and storytelling workshops, as well as musical offerings.

CASE STUDY 3: 1mile² CARDIFF 2011

1mile² ran for a period of five months from June to October in the Adamsdown, Butetown, Grangetown and Splott areas of Cardiff. The project encouraged local people to explore the people, places, environments and cultures of their neighbourhoods through creative practice. Visiting Arts and Wales Millennium Centre hosted public events to celebrate the achievements of 1mile² Cardiff. Performances, activities and workshops took place in October with newly commissioned dance works from India Dance Wales, Jukebox, National Dance Company Wales Associates, Nubrico, Shapez with Ballet Nimba, and Chloe Loftus with Planet Gymnastics Parkour Group. Free dance performances and workshops were held with Jukebox, India Dance Wales, Kurdi Cymru and Electro Swing Hop. Participants could also get involved in Stitch Your Trip! - a textile project commissioned by Sustrans and led by local artists Milkwood, and spontaneous chance poetry with writer Catriona Ryan and Cardiff University.

1mile² Cardiff was delivered by Visiting Arts in partnership with Wales Millennium Centre. The project was supported by Cardiff Council and Arts Council of Wales.

EMERGING ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE

Criw Cymru, the Centre's Cultural Olympiad project, which was the first to achieve the Inspire Mark, has been running for four years with 280 young people participating in workshops and performances in various locations across Wales as well as at the Centre, where residential courses have been held.

In association with the Urdd and WNO Wales Millennium Centre hosted another residential arts summer school over a two week period in August, with separate for Welsh and non Welsh speaking participants.

Every Saturday the Centre also hosts performing arts workshops for children and Young People, with Ffwrnais Awen catering for Welsh speakers, operated by the Urdd and the Young Company for non Welsh speakers.

The Glanfa is the lifeblood of the Centre and provides a platform for the emerging talent of the future as well as opportunities for people of all ages to participate in performances, whether it be singing or playing music, performing readings of their own poetry, or dancing. Based around four Make it Yours strands (Hanfod, Curiad, AnturCelf and Dan y Pared), performances have ranged from male voice choirs and brass bands to solo acoustic performers, harpists, opera groups, classical ensembles, rock bands and Celtic roots music. 40,000 people attended 441 performances on this stage in 2010.

The Glanfa Stage is one of the strands of programming which allows the Centre to support emerging artists on a weekly basis. In 2010/11 around 2,915 emerging artists performed on the Glanfa Stage, with regular contributions from Cardiff University, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and Junior Guildhall (London) as well as many school groups using the performance platform. Free performances on the Glanfa Stage are an integral part of the Centre's artistic provision

As a stage for the nation our overarching aim is to enable anybody who aspires to perform on this platform to have the opportunity to do so.

CASE STUDY 4: ONLY KIDS ALOUD/WALES MILLENNIUM CENTRE CHORUS

Wales Millennium Centre has a five year strategic partnership with the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, which is one of the world's most renowned ballet and opera companies, directed by the distinguished Valery Gergiev. In 2006 the opera company presented Wagner's *Ring Cycle* over four consecutive days. At that time the Centre secured funding from Cardiff Wales Airport to undertake an educational project with schools in the Cardiff and Barry areas on the themes of the opera. With the return of the Mariinsky Opera to the Centre at the end of March this year, an even more ambitious project has been undertaken: to establish a children's chorus assembled from across Wales to perform with the Mariinsky Opera Company in their production of Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*. Over 400 children aged 9-13 from across Wales were auditioned in the autumn, by Tim Rhys Evans, of Only Men Aloud, and 84 children were selected. The choir, also known as Only Kids Aloud, will perform with the Mariinsky Theatre's Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Valery Gergiev, at the Centre on April 1. The Centre's ambition to get the children to St Petersburg has also been realised, when the Maestro agreed to put on an extra performance of Mahler's *Symphony* for a thousand voices in the Mariinsky Theatre's prestigious new concert hall on March 23 this year. This has presented an unforgettable opportunity of a lifetime for these children and the Centre has moved mountains to make it happen.

Wales Millennium Centre has funded this activity. For the trip to St Petersburg the Centre is subsidising each child, securing private sector funding and individual donations to offset costs, with very special support for those children from low income families.

When the Centre opened in 2004 there was an agreement with the Urdd that the Urdd National Eisteddfod would return to the Centre every four years. Two eisteddfodau have been held, in 2005 and 2009 respectively. However with the new funding agreement for the Urdd National Eisteddfod through the WLGA, this objective can no longer be realised. The Centre would still wish to see every school child in Wales have the opportunity to aspire to perform on the Donald Gordon stage at least once during their school life. Wales Millennium Centre would therefore wish to see the Urdd National Eisteddfod return to the in the foreseeable future.

PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

In association with Age Cymru Wales Millennium Centre provides participatory activity for older people as part of the Gwanwyn Festival. This is a month-long national festival held across Wales in May each year celebrating creativity in older age. Gwanwyn, which means 'spring' in Welsh, celebrates older age as a time of opportunity for renewal growth and creativity. The aim is to offer opportunities for greater participation by older people in the arts, whether visual arts, drama, storytelling, music, literature, photography, dance or film. The Centre's very first tea dance for older people was established through the Gwanwyn Festival, attracting 300 participants. As a result of the success of this event the Centre now regularly hosts tea dances for older people and has introduced rock and roll and tango sessions for the baby boomer retirees. Other participatory events for older people have included storytelling, poetry reading, choral performances as well as art workshops and exhibitions.

PARTICIPATORY ARTS ACTIVITY FOR DISABILITY GROUPS

Wales Millennium centre is totally inclusive and is home to two companies who specialise in participatory activity for people with learning difficulties as well as more profound disabilities, namely Hijinx Theatre and the Touch Trust. Through its *Make it Yours* programme the Centre regularly stages performances in the Glanfa for participants in Touch Trust's pioneering arts programme.

Touch Trust offers unique and creative movement education for individuals with profound learning disabilities, affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorder, complex needs and challenging behaviour, and other vulnerable groups in the community.

It also aims to aid self-development and active lifelong learning within a social, creative and nurturing environment. It promotes the development of an inclusive society through the provision of creative movement opportunities for those often denied access to the therapeutic arts.

The programme values service and celebrates diversity, gender differences and other divisive issues, which can limit society from being caring, efficient, educated and ethical. Touch Trust celebrates the integration of disabled and non-disabled communities, particularly through its prestigious and state of the art facilities based at the Wales Millennium Centre, which have helped to make Touch Trust a unique and innovative model of excellence for the 21st Century.

"Touch Trust brought hope, a new-found joy and peace into our lives. It helped us realise that there are people who don't see Owen as being different. They see him for who he is, a delightful, cheeky, flirtatious and extremely happy little boy. They saw him as Owen, not as a little boy with the challenges that Down's Syndrome can bring. In turn, that helped us, as a family, to begin to view our situation differently, with more hope than fear". Mother of Owen

Wales Millennium Centre provides, at no cost, continuing professional support and advice to Touch Trust, the smallest of the arts organisations within the Centre, to assist them in expanding their much needed services. Since opening the Centre has also provided expanded floor space to Touch Trust, to enable the charity to meet with the ever growing demand from clients and families, as well as social care and special needs professionals. Other resident companies collaborate with Touch Trust at no cost, an added benefit from being part of the Wales Millennium Centre 'family'. The Centre also occasionally offers advice and assistance to the Trust in terms of fundraising and special event management.

CASE STUDY 5: UNODD/UNITY INCLUSIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

The Undod / Unity Festival is a joint venture between resident company Hijinx Theatre and Wales Millennium Centre in collaboration with Mencap Cymru, Disability Arts Cymru, Touch Trust and Community Music Wales. This unique week-long festival showcases the best in integrated inclusive performances from artists based in Wales, the UK and overseas. Whilst Hijinx Theatre saw a reduction in their revenue funding from the Arts Council of Wales last year, they have since received additional funding from the Council's Festivals budget for 2012. This is welcomed by Wales Millennium Centre, ensuring continuity of this very important, much anticipated festival in our annual calendar. It is a celebration of arts entertainment created by *all* to be enjoyed by *all*, and includes an extensive programme of theatre performances, workshops, debates and other free performances around the Centre. Hijinx Theatre's own Odyssey Theatre and the Odyssey Pods always play an integral part in the Unity Festival every year.

In 2010 there were 343 workshop participants and 85 performers.

In summary, Wales Millennium Centre has demonstrated that it is committed to delivering its founding vision of extending people's horizons through active participation in the arts – whatever their age, their background and experience. Much has been achieved despite a standstill budget and the acute fundraising challenges in this current economic climate. Through efficiency savings and an entrepreneurial approach the Centre has continued to realise one of its founding ambitions. The Centre's management team hopes that from reading this evidence and the supporting documentation Members will have a greater understanding of the Centre's wider role, which runs in parallel with its hugely successful Donald Gordon Theatre.