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**ISSUES IN THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT:  
REPERTORY THEATRES,  
THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY, EDINBURGH  
AND  
THE REPERCUSSIONS OF ARTS ADMINISTRATION**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the degree of  
Master of Letters  
In the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies  
Faculty of Arts

© Paul Iles, MPhil FRSA 2001

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW  
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## **ABSTRACT**

A history of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh from its founding in 1965 until 2000. The thesis describes and evaluates this civic repertory theatre as a business enterprise and public institution.

The study is structured in two parts. A two-chapter prolegomena places the company in its historical context from the 1890s, marshalling concepts of management and organisation for a non-profit theatre industry, including the interaction of mission, patronage, acting ensembles, artistic directors, boards of directors, play selection procedures, theatregoers, theatre buildings and competition. A stratification of the repertory system is discussed, focusing on the different sensibilities of non-profit and profit-seeking companies whilst identifying the similarity of their staffing structures and expenditure profiles in a pre-subsidy era.

Part Two considers the progress of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company in the light of the organisational traditions of the repertory theatre system. After discussing the onset and rationales for municipal and state subsidy in Scotland, a narrative account is informed by the continuity of these experiences. Qualitative and quantitative techniques are applied to a financial analysis of the business, its repertoire and politics. A number of influences are explored, including the changing impact of the Scottish Arts Council and local government on company production, a push for expansion, and the variations of company structure. The study explains how the company was, for its first twenty years and like its predecessors, efficiently managed. It argues that when a decline in the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company's fortunes occurred, this was caused not only by internal inefficiencies but also external influences such as new obligations to the funding bodies and the emergence of a profession of arts administration. These factors conspired to overburden the company's artistic mission and accomplishments.

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to provide an account of one of the leading Scottish repertory theatres, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh, which was founded in 1965. To date, there has been no single full-length investigation, whereas historians or theatre managements themselves have subjected most other large theatre companies in the British Isles to enquiry by celebration. Whilst this company has played an important role in Scottish theatrical life, the only significant study has been two chapters in Donald Campbell's *A Brighter Sunshine*.<sup>1</sup> This was written by the company's then playwright-in-residence and published in 1983 as a salute to one hundred years' progress of the theatre, concentrating principally on the management of Howard and Wyndham, the actor-managers who built the theatre and whose company ran it – first and foremost as a touring house – until 1960. There has been no attempt to recount its history since Campbell. This lacuna is even more striking considering that large numbers of theatregoers attend a wide variety of classical and contemporary plays in productions which the company expects to achieve the standards of quality that it associates with a world-class national theatre in Scotland's capital city. Another reason to redress the absence of later enquiry into the Royal Lyceum emanates from its receipt of significant municipal and state subsidies, the combination of which has usually surpassed the amounts awarded to other drama theatres in Scotland.

There are many established ways to describe a theatre company. Some, like Campbell's study, are rooted in discussion of the plays and acting and others in the many strands of backstage activity; direction, design and the intricate processes of production analysis. This study does not lean on production re-creations to tell the history of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company; as such there are no evaluations of individual scripts and shows. Rather, it is a history of one repertory theatre as a business enterprise and public institution. However, like all methodologies in theatre studies, the company's artistic work must be placed centre-stage; accordingly, this study does not treat management as a subject in itself but simply as an efficient – and, I will argue, latterly inefficient – supportive system for making the company's productions attractive and available to the public.

The Lyceum is the lineal descendant of non-profit repertory at the Gateway Theatre in Edinburgh, and the profit-seeking Wilson Barrett Company that preceded it, periodically,



at the same theatre. The Lyceum was a latecomer in the repertory movement: other companies, founded by theatre-makers, led the way in Scotland and have been ongoing at St Andrews since 1933, Perth since 1935, Dundee since 1939, Glasgow since 1943 and Pitlochry from 1951. Even so, the history of this first civic repertory theatre in Scotland is, as with the other companies, not exclusively local, nor is the system for repertory theatre exclusively Scottish, although the non-profit variety began in Britain with the short-lived Glasgow Repertory Theatre in 1909. A study of any *one* repertory theatre is useful only as a representation of a dynamic system of intertwined relations, for otherwise an enquiry into the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company alone would, like some theatre histories, be a fragmented vision. Therefore, as a representative case study, I will place the company in the context of the theatre industry, firstly by locating its provenance within the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century stock company system, followed by the London stage societies and then in the practices and century-long traditions for the repertory movement nationwide. My intention is to identify – in a prolegomena to the case study – some of the organisational and financial rationales for a once robust system for theatre-making and delivery, to demonstrate how the continuity of these experiences contributed to the formulation, evolution and modification of the Edinburgh company today.

During its first twenty years, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, like the other repertory theatres, played a leadership role in Scottish theatre, underpinned by an infrastructure for public subsidy that mirrored its internal management in supporting the process of creative theatre-making. However, in recent years the aspiration and number of the company's productions has markedly diminished. In contrast, the number of other presenters such as competing touring houses, new Scottish touring companies, festivals and arts centres has grown. The reasons for this are numerous and they include artistic and cultural changes, and other historical, economic, political and social factors. Like other repertories, the Royal Lyceum is now barely recognisable as its former self. Once perceived as special for the prominence given to Scottish writers, as well as for its studio theatre programmes and a theatre-in-education team working in schools, it was entrepreneurially successful within and without the main building. In itself, this decline is not without precedent; audiences have multiplied and dwindled, theatres have prospered and gone bankrupt, burnt down and rebuilt or changed managements with astounding frequency for 400 years. However, and this factor underpins this thesis, the repertory movement sought and acquired an institutionalism for theatre as a civic undertaking and in this system the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company would be a permanent organisation in which the careers of theatre artists would prosper in a resident ensemble.

When off-stage troubles arise, as they always have done and frequently do at the Royal Lyceum, the customary explanation today differs from before; managements and many critics blame the emergencies on an insufficiency of public subsidy. This is quickly followed by media probing and a mountain of supposedly 'independent' management consultancy reports and business plans. All this sours a company's reputation with its audiences, but at the eleventh-hour more subsidy is found, in return for management 'economies' and a rededication to the theatre's artistic mission. Proverbially, 'the dog barks but the caravan moves on'; until the next showdown. In the event, the need for more subsidy is scarcely contested within the theatre profession, although its disposal has been questioned by theatre historians and cultural commentators, especially by John Pick, whose several studies of the theatre have investigated its business dynamics, particularly from the nineteenth century up to the first years of the Thatcher government's 'monetarist planning' in 1985. Then, his *The Theatre Industry: subsidy, profit and the search for new audiences*, suggested that the beneficial effects of subsidy might almost be counteracted by the high costs of managing the grants. He demonstrated that the proportion of expenditure in the theatre paid to the artists has declined over time, in the commercial theatre as well as in the subsidised companies.<sup>2</sup>

The unifying principle of this study is to interrogate the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company's business progress, by means of Pick's and other methodologies such as those of the United States' cultural economists William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, to research what has happened at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company in particular and, by implication, to other Scottish theatres in general. As a progress report to Pick's research, I hope to demonstrate that the repertory movement was, for its first 75 years, exempted from the growth of disproportionately inflated bureaucracy; the paralysis did indeed occur at Edinburgh, but not until after 1985. In that year, the company and its funding bodies should have considered Pick's perceptive evidence as a timely notice for the forthcoming indignities that accompanied new accountabilities to the funding bodies and the rise of a new profession of arts administration.

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Campbell, *A Brighter Sunshine: A Hundred Years of the Edinburgh Royal Lyceum Theatre*, Edinburgh, Polygon, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> John Pick, *The Theatre Industry: subsidy, profit and the search for new audiences*, London, Comedia, 1985. See in particular 'Inflated Administrative Costs', Chapter Two, 2.1, pp.19-24.

## **TWO**

### **THE POLICY AND GENESIS OF REPERTORY THEATRE**

This chapter is arranged in two sections. Part one is a discussion of the founding artistic ethos and organisational characteristics of the repertory movement. Part two is an examination of how the repertory movement took shape between the 1890s and 1910s in the exploratory work of several pugnacious London stage societies. These societies were prototypes for the return of play production in the provinces. For this study, they serve as a fountainhead for many of the artistic traditions and business customs that characterised the enterprising first years in the life of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company.

#### **The artistic policies and precedents for repertory organisation**

Repertory was conceived as an artistic ideal, dedicated to the creative staging of important plays, to art, to experiment and to the new. Some of the repertory movement's original purposes were literary, educational and recreational. In its serious application, repertory denoted a new attempt to aspire to permanence and to understand the potential of social organisation in the theatre's relationship with its audience. At root, repertory understood that it could be a cultural, economic and social institution, not only a theatre building. Within the repertory model, a theatre would be a permanent resource: a theatre building that might facilitate and cultivate a tradition, defining innovation through a stable environment dedicated not only to high-quality productions but also to the training of new writing, acting, directing and design talents. However, it might be other things too. Many theatre-makers believed that the repertory model of theatre-as-institution could provide more than the business driven world of profit-seeking, 'commercial' theatre. In the 'business' theatre, competition was often deemed 'the mortal enemy of art'.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, supporters of the repertory model, which was predicated on a broader social and cultural role, looked for a way to improve creative talents in a systematic way. The new model supposed that penetrating scripts, an accomplished acting ensemble and new ideas of direction and scenography would excite audiences. A company of mostly resident artists,

and the staffs who supported them, would be stimulated by the sum of these parts and, in turn, they would share their dedication and understanding with theatregoers who would be pleased to attend every production.

However, the setting up of a repertory theatre was expensive: the word also connotes organisational factors. Ambition, skill, talent, recruitment, planning and selling are all inextricably entangled with, and often compromised by, various legislative and economic exigencies; by the pressures of competition, cooperation, rivalry and marketing, by unpredictable audience tastes and modish interests and, after 1945, other factors such as changeable government policy and fluctuations in subsidy.

The aims of the first British repertory theatres were artistic rather than political. Artists and producers created them organically. This points to an intriguing contrast with the continental national theatres that were founded, usually, by central governments or monarchies, sometimes as part of a national arts strategy. Nevertheless, and largely because of their pursuit of private endowments and, progressively, a quest for local and central government subsidy, many of the British theatres were to bring about a new politics of theatre organisation. The early companies sought to justify their survival on artistic grounds, but soon became dependent on the measurable impacts of their financial or economic success which were, after 1945, conditioned by subsidy and then, from the 1970s, by the rise of a new profession of arts administration.

As for all theatre systems, definitions of 'repertory' – a word that stems from the Latin *repertorium* (an inventory), via the Italian *repertorio* (a collection of short speeches created by a *commedia dell'arte* performer)<sup>2</sup> – are often narrow or one sided. Repertory, with its intricate and wide horizons, has often been treated as if it is composed simply of one of its constituent parts. In defining the nature of this system and discussing the emergence of the movement, a drama critic might have in mind the playwrights, directors, designers and the *mis-en-scène*, another the location of the company and its theatre's architecture, and a theatre manager might discuss the economics and business management. Alternatively, the subjects of a board of directors and the political organisation of the company, its audiences, marketing, publicity and advertising might be the purview of an arts council today. Repertory is an association of all these ideas, described by many of its champions as the 'ideal' of theatre-as-public-service, transforming a theatre of commerce into a theatre of art. In it, the processes of production would be, to theatre-makers but not necessarily to the audience, as important as a finished production.

Repertory is, of course, all these things at once, 'even though it means one thing to one person, something quite different to another'.<sup>3</sup> None of these elements alone is repertory and, therefore, notwithstanding this study's emphasis on the many strategic components – some, such as artistic policy, organisation, finance and tactics in more detail than others – it is important to perceive them as an ecosystem, not only as fragments. It is equally important to distinguish the purpose of repertory from the companies' functional management because the two are not the same thing. Reading plays, balanced teamwork, casting, conducting rehearsals, budgeting and accounting, production management, stage management, producing, touring, education and outreach work, access, catering, spending, selling, box-office, fundraising, corporate sponsorship, supporters' groups, enthusing and training staff, wage negotiations, working with boards of directors and responding to criticism: all these are part of repertory theatre management. Of course, repertory organisation is also about emotions, ego, temper, resignations and sackings. From 1945, but more especially after 1965, it was also about making grant applications, appeasing arts councils and making friends with local authorities whilst attempting to influence their political agendas. Therefore, only by taking *all* these factors into consideration – the strategic and functional and pragmatic circumstances of 'producing' – is it possible to analyse the aspirations, achievements and failures that make up a company such as at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh.

In the first British repertory theatres, a play was produced for a run of one, two or, exceptionally, three weeks. Many of the first repertory theatres performed twice-nightly, staging a new production each week. Such a company is essentially different to the touring theatre system, for most repertory theatres usually had, until the 1980s, a resident company of actors engaged for a season, often of eleven months' duration from September each year. From the theatregoers' perspective, a repertory theatre implied an established playhouse, where a spectator could go with the assurance of seeing a digest of good plays of the past and present, well acted and adequately staged. From the viewpoint of theatre-makers, a repertory theatre was a place where the arts of the theatre would be practised creatively. Further, such theatre-making would be free from the ambitions of business managers who, it was alleged by many repertorists, staged plays of whatever artistic merit in the hope of a financial profit. Repertory theatre would be liberated from the demands of the mass audience who supported music halls, variety, touring drama and, increasingly, the cinema. Further, the repertory pioneers sought to create institutions where the several contributing arts of the playwright, the actor and the designer were brought together in a union or synthesis. In the final results, they were stamped with a style, brilliance or quality of a director's mind and imagination: this implied an aesthetic or

artistic policy – now dubbed a ‘house style’ – and a lasting association of creative theatre-makers under the direction of artists and not business managers. Nevertheless, whatever their achievements, these were bound to be determined by the synthesis of staging and scripts with organisation and finance.<sup>4</sup> In practice, this process – that was known as the repertory ‘ideal’ – was further characterised by youthful ambition and idealism: many of the foundation companies were led by people in their early-twenties.

This repertory ‘ideal’ emerged in the late nineteenth-century as a professional response to dissatisfactions with the profit-seeking theatre and, outwith London, the touring system. Repertory in the provinces arose as an expression of distaste on the part of the public with large numbers of forced-fed, pre-digested attractions that went on tour ‘Direct from the West End’. Although London was the stimulant to most professional theatrical activity in the provinces, too often its managers sent shoddy duplicate performances, with tatty scenery and lethargic production standards. Coupled with these productions, the managers used the provinces for ‘try-outs’ that were (and often still are) promoted as being ‘Prior to the West End’ and which were used as opportunities to observe the reaction of audiences, and then to whip the production into shape before London. These productions could be sub-standard and were, in effect, touring dress rehearsals, frequently having little hope of reaching London.<sup>5</sup> Repertory was often regarded, therefore, as the creative ‘salvation’ of the British theatre. In 1913 the critic and novelist John (Leslie) Palmer (1885-1944), considered that:

Repertory is the only system whereby the theatre can be continuously kept in a healthy condition of experiment, discovery and honest work. It is the only salvation for the art of the player, for the conscience of the manager, for the encouragement of the dramatic author.<sup>6</sup>

Even so, the cliché ‘there’s nothing new in this business’ has a ring of truth about it, because repertory theatre had a forerunner in the ‘stock’ company system. ‘Stock’ was a resident or permanent theatre company, from which nightly programmes were cast and which played a supporting role when star actors were engaged. These companies were functionally autonomous, each being a self-contained, self-sufficient, independent producing unit, connected to their communities through continuity of personnel and artists, but disconnected from stock companies in other cities. Most members of these companies would sing and dance as well as act, and with some, their versatility extended to the playing of musical instruments and scene painting. The actors were hired, not for runs of a single play, but like repertory theatres, for the season, and often longer. They might lead, therefore, relatively settled lives, because a season could last between three and six

months. Being local companies where actors dominated the business of the theatre, they developed a claim on local audience loyalty and affection: they were masters of 'audience development', as this quest is excruciatingly termed today. Between seasons the whole company 'rested', was unemployed and unpaid or, occasionally, went on tour. The stock companies' created small provincial circuits, making it possible for theatre to thrive in towns that would be unable to maintain a full-time company of their own, but which might welcome an annual residency of actors that audiences could regard, however intangibly, as their own ensemble or 'brand'. Sometimes, their actors spent whole working lives in the same region. Unlike today, many actors neither hoped to work in London nor treated the provinces as a second-best sanctuary from London. Their managers kept an eye on developments in the London theatres whilst being in touch with the local audience. The stock company was an essential component of the standardised eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theatre, in which there was also 'stock' scenery – generic backdrops for chamber, hall and prison for instance, with wings to match – and more or less stock characters performing 'lines of business' in drama and comedy alike.<sup>7</sup>

The independence and extensive geographical spread of the stock companies were two organisational characteristics that might be seen to prefigure the ethos and organisation of the repertory movement. Indeed, a leading idea of repertory is that the best theatre is not only a perquisite of big cities and towns; a person in small centres and even villages having an equal right to its enjoyment. Another characteristic of stock was the interaction between the management of the theatre itself and the stock company that occupied it. The theatre's resident management either owned the theatre or leased it outright. In either case, it exercised complete control of both the theatre and the company and ran the two together. If the manager was the lessee, a fixed rent was paid to the owner for the exclusive use of the theatre, in the manner of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company tenancy today. Unlike the operation of the provincial touring system, there was no question of a division either of the box-office receipts or of the expenditure, and therefore no conflict of authority. The theatre owner, when not the manager, leased the theatre to the stock company, generally for a season or longer and, thereafter, did not interfere with its policy and operation, other than to protect the building and collect the rent; at Edinburgh, for instance, the arrangement at The Theatre Royal when built in 1769 was that of combined proprietor and lessee, with manager David Ross raising the capital costs of the building by mortgage and then running his theatre and his stock company as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

Later, the end of the stock system was brought about by the change from three- and four-part programmes of mixed-bills to one play a night, the rise of the actor-managers and, in

the provinces, their national touring companies. With the development of the nationwide touring system, the two fundamental characteristics of stock – independence and the integration of producing with theatre management – were uprooted. Two competing and complementary strands of business replaced them: play producing and theatre ownership-management. Later, the survey of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company in Chapter Six will demonstrate that this division between producer and building has been the cause of much trouble for modern repertory, and that a reunification of the systems is now underway through co-productions and partnerships, even though many arts administrators deem this reform as their new laid, creative ‘salvation’ for theatre organisation at the start of the twenty-first century.

However, unlike many future repertory theatres, the stock companies were not concerned with experiment, discovery or the frequent production of new plays. During the early years of the touring system, the managers of provincial theatres continued to maintain stock companies that performed in the intervals between the visits of the tours, and which sometimes would continue to tour to adjacent, smaller towns while London tours were occupying their own theatres. Public support increasingly withdrew from local stock companies that offered decreasing variety in scenography. Also contributing to their demise, in the auditorium, was the steady encroachment by stalls seats on pit space, the consequent movement of the noisier pit occupants to the cheaper gallery benches and, from the stage, the withdrawal to music halls and variety theatres of the vocal, musical, comic, and acrobatic acts that had performed between the plays. In the new ‘divided’ theatre system, stock companies could not compete with the London touring productions, which performed from the mid-nineteenth century in the provincial circuits of large, new theatres that they could reach rapidly through the railway networks. These touring companies also took advantage of the accompanying development of popular national newspapers which reported in detail on the lives of actors and the reinforcement offered by high-circulating theatre advertising. Further, mass-theatre-going in the big industrial cities was facilitated by new systems of urban transport and the growth of street lighting that made it safer to go out at night and for larger numbers of people to travel to the theatre cheaply and conveniently. Gradually, the stock companies faded. Their demise accompanied the theatre’s entry to the modern, industrialised world. In many aspects of their organisation and decline, such as through changing leisure habits, they cast light on what could be the destiny of repertory theatres at the very end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century.



The sea-change from stock to touring was effected, most of all, by the actor-managers who, in complicity with theatregoers, sponsored and encouraged the rise of the star system with its big salaries. Most actor-managers were not, of course, obsessed with financial returns only. Although they chose and financed their plays, most were genuinely motivated by the art of acting and many liked to tour the provinces. The problem was that they could be tempted to make their roles greater than the whole experience of the production and to select plays as opportunities for their individual prominence, in preference to a play's dramatic merit and content. Moreover, the subject matter of their plays was compressed and receded by the audience perception of an individual star. It followed that audience recognition of actors-as-great-people might not transgress their appreciation of the art of acting but the public went to the theatre in order to revere the charisma and prestige of their idol, in preference to discussing and understanding a play. Merely advertising an actor as a star on the posters often led audiences to accept the actor as such. Thus, with star after star offered in top billing larger than the play title, the public might easily regard any play as inferior that did not include a star in the production. Inside the companies, the result was that the actor-managers, bucked up by the audience support of their publicly exaggerated status, would sidetrack other theatre talents – playwrights as well as other actors. In turn, however gifted these other theatre people were, they might be inclined to feel inadequate unless they were the star. In this paternalist structure, it was not good for a supporting actor to shine too brightly. In passing, it is notable that the main features of this touring-star system, that is an extension of the London theatre, have continued to the present day, despite being, from the 1920s, undermined by the cinema: where it was possible to see galaxies of even better known stars in films that could be exhibited at a much lower ticket price. Indeed, audience reaction in the touring houses is still often more concerned with the presentation than with the play itself. In their preference for repertory, many critics do exactly the same thing, although this is the reaction of the connoisseur, the initiated and, perhaps, a root of perceptions of 'elitism' in the theatre.

In part, the purpose of repertory was therefore a desire to encourage audiences to respond intellectually and emotionally to plays with a feeling for the whole production. However, most companies have always faced considerable obstacles from the star system as well as competition from those touring houses that promote the antithetical philosophy. There was, frequently and understandably, mistrust and competition between repertories and touring – between 'originating' theatres and 'receiving' theatres – sometimes polarised by repertorists and critics as a tension between elitism and populism. One of the significant features of the serious repertory theatres has been their response to competition: often a passionate rejection of popular mass audience forms, the star system and 'the market'.

They have always shown a determination to fix their own objectives, principles and standards, in some companies to experiment deliberately with new modes of expression and organisation whilst attempting to convert, attract or 'develop' a 'new' and 'intelligent' audience. Even so, the public has often remained unwilling to attend plays without foreknowledge or to watch actors unless they are celebrities.

In some respects, therefore, because of the high artistic ideals of repertory, pre-1900 stock might not be such a substantive counterpart, except in its organisation and structure. But alongside its creative ambitions, repertory has often been associated with derision or pity for 'ham' acting by the 'rep player', performing domestic comedies and thrillers in a 'fit-up' company with 'three raps and a blackout'.<sup>9</sup> The word 'amateur' was often applied to early repertory theatres, used sometimes as a derogatory term, associated wrongfully with a lack of seriousness. Nevertheless, many amateurs were torchbearers of theatre idealism, founding 'Little Theatres', that sometimes influenced the professional companies in their choice of plays or functioned as training grounds for actors and other personnel. Many of these amateur groups, or societies, used the word repertory to describe their activities, although critics often complained that they had no right to use the title.<sup>10</sup> Because of these associations – the professionals' frequent disdain for volunteers and the need to distinguish the movement from 'stock' – the term repertory has often been an uncomfortable description for its promoters and critics, as the critic Frank Vernon wrote in 1924:

It is no doubt a misnomer, but some word must be used to indicate the difference between those stock companies, which regularly produced new plays in addition to reviving old ones, and the ordinary stock company that uses old plays only. There was a difference, too, in the kind of play, and the word 'repertory' has established itself as the name of the permanent local theatre with a permanent company reviving good plays and producing new plays with a little more regard for their artistic values than for their immediate drawing power.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, some distinguishing title was necessary to promote the notion of resident artists playing in several productions for a long season rather than in a long run. Recycling the term 'stock' would have been redolent of an old-fashioned, routine professionalism with visiting stars to top the bill, although, interestingly, this has been retained in many summer repertory theatres in the United States of America. Repertory aimed higher than British stock, for as Vernon noted, it is commonly understood that a 'genuine' repertory theatre is one where a certain number of plays are always ready for presentation, so that as many as five or six may be given in the course of one week, and which is frequently adding new plays to its *repertoire*.

A great advantage of rotating productions from night to night (and sometimes from matinee to evening if the stage was large enough to accommodate multiple sets) would be the protection given actors from the lethargy of performing the same lines repeatedly. Thus, the practice of casting one play several times over and switching actors off from night to night would intensify the spontaneity of performances and, further, stimulate versatility, in contrast to the long run which was often damned as deleterious for the development of actor training. Repertoire, which in the British system adopted the epithet of 'true' repertory, would also keep new plays alive for longer periods than the straight run, where plays were often forgotten forever against the chance of another company reviving them in the future, hopefully 'kindling the smoking flax of dramatic genius into a national conflagration'.<sup>12</sup> It is, of course, the case that opera and ballet companies had been performing in repertoire from the eighteenth-century and many continental European drama theatres carried this system successfully. However, in the London free market, the stage societies were to prove that no theatre could maintain such a pattern. In 1910, the critic, actor, dramatist and director Harley Granville Barker (1877-1946) offered a repertory creed, based upon German theatres' repertoire practice:

A repertory theatre is not an institution for producing plays successfully and removing them from the bill as soon as the public manifests a wish to see them. Nor is it a theatre for producing plays foredoomed to failure, though some do maintain there is evidence in support of this definition. Repertory is not the production of one play a week or fortnight or a month. It is not the putting on of the 'new' drama; or the 'uncommercial, or 'intellectual' or even the 'serious' play. Nor has it anything particular to do with Socialism. It is not necessarily a philanthropic enterprise nor is it the idea of the lunatic.<sup>13</sup>

Strictly speaking in practice, and as suggested by his inverted exposition, the repertory movement in Britain was incapable of precise definition. As Granville Barker noted, a bona fide repertory theatre is one with a more or less resident company of actors and several productions always in readiness so that a different one can be presented each night if necessary. He went on to compare 'true' repertory with a library:

It is the putting of plays in a theatre as books are put in a well-stocked library. A book must be upon the shelves that one man may take it down. Plays are hardly as portable as that. But a theatre so organised that, having produced a play and justified its production, it can keep the play reasonably ready for use while it is likely that five or six hundred people at a time will want to see it, is a repertory theatre.<sup>14</sup>

It might be argued that this concept of permanence, especially to the extent of repertory having a home in its own theatre, had been attempted in London by the actress Marie Wilton (1839-1917), who leased a worn-out playhouse north of theatre-land in Tottenham Court Road and, with a clear sense of its importance, renamed it the Prince of Wales Theatre. Between 1865 and 1872, she ran a resident acting company of even talent, where no actor was permitted star rank.<sup>15</sup> This model was developed by Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905), who managed to run a classical repertoire company for 25 years at the Lyceum Theatre (after which the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh was named). Irving was, unlike many leaders in subsidised theatre today, a manager who regarded himself as both an artist and business person, feeling no need to distinguish between the artistic, commercial and social mission of his company. In his biography of Irving, the author and theatrical manager Austin Brereton (1862-1922) submitted that:

Irving made the Lyceum Theatre a national institution, not by vote granted by Act of Parliament, but by the consensus of opinion amongst those take most interest in our acted drama. The Lyceum, under his management, was a national theatre.<sup>16</sup>

However, because Irving's repertoire also included popular melodrama, it could be argued that his theatre was also pure recreation.

Meanwhile, a veritable national theatre – the Comédie Française – founded in 1680 by royal decree – toured to London in 1879.<sup>17</sup> Upon seeing its productions, the eminent essayist and theatre enthusiast Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), who was concerned to moderate the artless materialism of the industrial revolution, argued that the theatre was, possibly, the most forcible instrument for the cultural education of the masses. He argued that if the theatre could be reformed and organised, this would enthuse his many mistrusting supporters to re-examine their anti-theatrical prejudice. What had been achieved in France could be achieved in Britain, but not in the profit-seeking theatre. In his 1891 essay comparing English with French theatre, Arnold foresaw the establishment of an authentic National Theatre in London, but he also expected it to be part of a publicly financed, integrated civic theatre stratagem for the *whole* nation:

I see the whole community turning to the theatre with eagerness, and finding the English theatre without organisation or purpose or dignity, and no English drama at all except a fantastical one. And then I see the French Company [*The Comédie Française*] showing themselves in London [*at the Gaiety Theatre*] – a society of actors admirable in organisation, purpose and dignity....the performances show us plainly not only what is gained by organising the theatre but what is meant by organising it: simple and rational. We have a society of good actors, with a grant from the State on condition of their giving with frequency the famous and classic

stage plays of their nation; and with it a commissioner of the State attached to the society and taking part in council with it. But the Society is to all intents and purposes self-governing.... The pleasure we had in the visit of the French company is barren unless it leaves us with the impulse to mend the condition our theatre.... Forget your clap-trap, and believe the State, the nation in its collective and corporate character, does well to concern itself about an influence so important to national life, education and manners as the theatre.... The people *will* have a theatre; then make it a good one. Let your two or three chief provincial towns institute, with municipal subsidy and co-operation, theatres such as your institute in the metropolis. So you will restore the English theatre. And then a modern drama of your own will also, probably, spring up amongst you, and you will not have to come to us for pieces like *Pink Dominoes*<sup>18</sup>.... And still now that the French Company are gone, when I pass along the Strand and come across the Gaiety Theatre, I see a fugitive vision of delicate features under a shower of hair and a cloud of lace, and hear the voice of Mdlle Sarah Bernhardt saying in its most caressing tones to the Londoners: '*The theatre is irresistible; organize the theatre!*'<sup>19</sup>

Being a public figure outwith the flawed London theatre world, Arnold's ideas were discussed by an expanded audience, reached by the contemporary growth of popular journalism and reputable criticism. His final, commanding plea led to decades of debate about theatre as a cultural institution, as well as becoming a famous, but truncated, quotation. Plans to shake up the commercial theatre system gathered momentum from his essay. The Paris model, particularly with its structure and state subsidy, was nowhere entirely demonstrated in any one London theatre; even when Irving staged several plays from the classical heritage at the Lyceum, he operated the star system and he was the star.

Critics such as Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) protested that Irving did nothing to advance new plays because his priorities were stardom and management. Repertory was, from Irving's practice, not a new development in the history of the theatre but another means whereby he might show *his* versatility in a number of star roles during one week. Shaw was, perhaps, overly churlish.<sup>20</sup> Irving's company toured the provinces and abroad, especially after his Lyceum Theatre operation went bankrupt in 1902. During these tours he campaigned for the spirit of repertory, which he systematically argued in several intricate speeches on the arts in general and municipal theatres in particular.<sup>21</sup> These claimed that the theatre need not be part of a commercial production industry, but could be run by artistic and social dictates, financed by local authority subsidies (as was already the case with pleasure grounds, art galleries, libraries, museums, some provincial orchestras and general purpose city halls) and could perform to intelligent, cultivated theatregoers. Most people had relatively little to say about the philosophy of theatre but Irving, like Arnold, did. Most especially, after he was knighted in 1895, an honour he accepted on behalf of the art of the theatre, he became the first actor to infiltrate the Establishment of his era. He was able, through this new respectability, to argue forcefully for a revolution in

theatre, to be raised from mere entertainment because, like other cultural institutions, it had roots in the social environment and hence could be a means of social and educational activism.

Although there were touring repertory companies other than Irving's precursor, these have been described as 'examples of what repertory nearly is and characteristically is not'.<sup>22</sup> A touring repertory company, like the profit-seeking touring system, would be disconnected from a particular community. However, it might share the characteristics of ensemble with a resident company and therefore offer a high quality of acting. The advantages of ensemble acting – like the hyped up 'new ways of working' instigated in the 'permanent companies' at Dundee Rep and the Northern Stage Company of Newcastle upon Tyne in the 1990s – were a goal of most early repertory theatres and were described by the playwright Henry Arthur Jones (1851-1929) as unquestionable, because:

By constantly playing together, actors learn to give and take, and to help each other. Half the effect of any single performance in any play is due to the fit and nice responses the actor gets from his brother actors. Constant association enables actors to play up to each other. In a repertory company the actors learn each other's play, and it is each member's interest to serve his fellow in certain situations, in order that he himself may be served in other situations. And further, it is to each member's interest that the organisation should score as a whole. When an actor is only occasionally engaged for the run of play he is naturally tempted to force his part into unfair prominence, and to play for himself, seeing that unless he manages somehow to score in this one part it may be long before he gets another engagement. It is from these considerations that repertory companies always seem to attain a very high level. Each individual actor gets infinitely more and better chances of showing what he can do.<sup>23</sup>

Since Henry Arthur Jones' statement, the debate about ensemble has ebbed and flowed through almost a century of the repertory movement. In theory, and as discussed, the principle holds well, and is essential when productions are performed in repertoire, so that they can be easily revived in practice, with original casts. To give big parts to guest actors would hinder the progress, in technique and range, of rising members of an ensemble, as well as demoralise them and tend to cause theatregoers to rate the permanent actors less highly than guest actors. However, these suppositions of ensemble do not always hold good in practice and several things are likely to interfere with its easy working. It was argued that theatregoers' familiarity with actors could breed contempt: ensemble might just as easily lack quality or surprise. In the London system of long runs an actor seldom appeared as more than two characters annually, but a company member in a provincial repertory theatre might appear in 30 to 40 roles in one season.<sup>24</sup> In these circumstances, even if actors were never more important than their roles, the audiences would not long

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continue to regard them as characters in a play, but would regard the actors as personalities in a production and, as in the actor-manager system, often that same person throughout the season. With only one, or at best two weeks' rehearsal, there would be little time to develop new characterisation, and the theatregoer would become disillusioned with broad-stroke characterisations. Such over-familiarity, where the actors were 'type-cast', 'behaving' rather than 'acting', was an argument for actors not remaining in any a single repertory theatre for more than a year or two. Even so, the term and purpose of repertory arose, largely, to denote this feature of an ensemble, with actors working together for long periods. The acting 'company' would be the organised public face of the theatre.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, it is notable that the word is still used today to denote ensemble or distinguish a producing theatre, as opposed to the more widespread meaning of a formal business association.

Concepts of ensemble also comprised other elements within the company, including democracy. Because everyone – actors, designers, stage managers, technicians, publicists, office staff, front of house attendants and cleaners – was part of a 'company', it was presumed that everyone was interested in, or even obsessed with, 'the company'. The dedication of every person employed had to be encouraged to extend beyond the respective duty of each staff member, often for an entire career in one theatre. Until the onset of preposterously numerous administrative staff in many subsidised theatres, this was a workable aspiration providing the staff remained responsive to the theatre's objectives and were long-standing supporters of its familial values. Thus, even without an exclusively resident *acting* company, this broader application of ensemble could permeate the rest of the institution – including the board of volunteer directors. Frequently, however, and as will be demonstrated, pressures from external modes of management led many theatres to compartmentalise their hierarchies. Later, as at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh, low wages and the ensuing gravitation of staffs to better paid jobs in the arts funding system or other cultural industries, led to a decomposition of ensemble off stage, with repertory seeming to be an effort-wasting theatre career for young people today. The spirit of camaraderie deteriorated over a number of years so that by the 1980s, when the employment of short-serving and higher paid administrators in a company such as the Royal Lyceum Theatre outnumbered the artists and production staffs, the spirit of equal, devoted and excited contribution became a disappearing act, with employees disinclined to revere their leadership.

For management matters, this private face of repertory-as-ensemble amounted to a shift from the pattern of nineteenth-century actor-manager as proprietor of a business, towards a non-profit organisation established and governed by citizen shareholders. The stress

between the private organisational forces of the theatre and the public art of the theatre is significant. It had, as observed, been exacerbated in the provinces by the new touring system. However, in view of the prominence of the economic influences in all theatre, it follows that the non-profit repertory movement, even with professional expertise and ideological values, could never escape being commercial. It had to sell tickets. The strength or weakness of a profit incentive does not challenge the fact that the theatre is always commercial, because there are always costs involved in the production of a play or the operation of a theatre. These costs must be met. The business aspects of repertory are not accessories to the creation of theatre. The dominance of an artistic motivation in the repertory movement does not alter this speculative and uncertain characteristic, despite the arrival of public subsidy from 1945. It merely shifts the incidence of the financial burden within the general influences of supply and demand. In all theatre what can be presented is dependent on what the public is prepared to see. The new artistic aspirations of repertory could never free the organisations from this concern: the short lifespan of many of the early companies, and the difficulties of maintaining acting ensembles, underscores this fact. Nor did the general attitude of the repertory pioneers imply a conviction that the system of the profit-seeking touring theatre had to be destroyed. Yet many people in repertory, particularly when state subsidy surged in the 1960s, regarded the profit-seeking theatre as calculating because London producers chose plays only by criteria of whether they thought they could make money, rather than because they were artistic, bore some relation to contemporary culture or, especially, because they served some reform purpose.

Although new working methods may have been different in aspiration they were, in practice, complementary and the two systems have always worked side by side. They often had to collaborate, as when a repertory company went on tour through the commercial circuits or when, before it owned or leased its own theatre, it rented a touring house in its home city on a short and insecure play-by-play or seasonal basis. There are many examples of profit-seeking theatres and non-profit repertories working arm in arm: it has been incumbent on most repertory theatres to extract the best from the commercial theatre, to avoid artistic iconoclasm as much as blatant commercialism, and to strive for artistic goals while keeping a wary eye on the box-office. It is in this interface of the two systems that definitions of repertory always require qualification because distinctions between art and commerce are always blurred. Thus it is that repertory theatres were destined, despite their ambitions for permanence, to be as precarious and insecure as the preceding and accompanying system of profit-seeking theatre.



Of course, most commercial managers cared about theatrical art, and *most* repertory companies have *always* cared about making money, even in the 1960s when new subsidy served a prevailing doctrine of the 'right to fail' in many subsidised theatres. Naturally enough, actor-managers worried about their artistic reputations and many were positively committed to their art.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the business aspects of the commercial and touring system were dominated by publicity, advertising, hectic and long, possibly nine-month itineraries of one week visits, the bolstering of the star system and, after the actor-managers, the power of the business managers, such as Sir Oswald Stoll (1866-1942), Richard Thornton (1839-1922) and Sir Edward Moss (1854-1937). These potentates were focused on commercial success, which in their work militated against artistic seriousness more had been the case with the preceding actor-managers. To these London managers, performers may have been 'commodities' to be exploited for commercial ends but, in a pre-subsidy era, their theatres reverberated with an enviable entrepreneurial vigour and flair and they did so through the box-office, not through government grants and the grip of arts administration. The London managers, with their stars, local theatre manager-representatives and circuits, were intimately in touch with a wide social range of theatregoers through the common touch of unmediated management techniques. They proved remarkably resilient through good times and bad but, for repertory, they represented a vigorous, businesslike system to react against.

### **Repertory prototypes: the stage societies**

Latterly, critics and the organisers of subsidised drama have often regarded repertory theatres as *better* theatres than the London ones – wherein new working methods were possible – whereas, at first, the instigators merely regarded them as *different* theatres:

We admit that the stage owes much, in many ways to the actor-manager and the long run. Both of these institutions have their merits.... What is harmful is the commercial theatre's present predominance over the whole field of theatrical enterprise. In the interests both of authorship and of acting, repertory theatres ought to co-exist with the actor-managed, long run theatres.<sup>27</sup>

Undoubtedly, an economic motive can be assigned to the long run and touring systems, just as the emergence of the repertory movement found credence in artistic impulse. The critic P.P. (Percival Presland) Howe, after recapitulating a definition of repertory, described the disjunction of the repertory system as:

The idea of a theatre which shall make itself the home of a number of plays, providing for each the environment which shall enable it to retain its freshness and be always at its best, as an alternative to the system of devoting itself to one play after another and giving each the longest possible run that is consistent with popular support – this idea has brought the two forces in the theatre to a point of cleavage which is sharp and distinct. That is the significance of the repertory idea.<sup>28</sup>

Howe's well-aimed statement is still admissible but it could also summarise the policy of a succession of significant but intermittent London repertory experiments. These were organised by progressive managers from 1871, when John Hollingshead (1827-1904), playwright, journalist and manager of the Gaiety Theatre, presented 'Experimental and Miscellaneous Morning Performances' staged 'to invite trials of actors, actresses, authors, and pieces, without much regard for the old restrictive practices of management'.<sup>29</sup> In 1881 Edward Compton (1854-1918) established the Comedy Company, specialising in eighteenth-century plays and, in 1883, Frank Benson (1858-1939) established his first Shakespeare company. In 1886 Ben Greet (1858-1936) ran a season of outdoor productions and, in 1889, the actress-manager of the Novelty Theatre, Janet Achurch (1864-1916), staged matinees of serious plays from the profits of evening performances of long runs. More experiments followed when the manager of the Haymarket Theatre, Herbert Beerbohm Tree (1854-1917), interspersed long runs with 'plays that were generally above the average playgoer's intelligence'.<sup>30</sup> Although Tree was aware of European national theatres, such as the Comédie-Française, he shared the opinion of many actor-managers that their performances were over-institutionalised and dull, and that, unlike most commentators today, state subsidy was wrong for the theatre:

A manager is, alas, bound to keep one eye on his exchequer, and the exchequer demands that a successful play runs its course. It sometimes happens that, in his attempt to evade the quicksands of the Bankruptcy Court, the manager perishes in the stagnant waters of commercialism. It is obvious that a manager should be freed from these sordid considerations and I believe that in almost every country but England the theatres are state-subsventioned. It is an open question, however, in a country in which individualism in all departments is looked upon askance – whether a national or subsidised theatre would be for the ultimate benefit of the community. Other countries do not tend to show that the State-subsidised theatres are in touch with the age.<sup>31</sup>

A more full-hearted experiment before 1900 was that pioneered by the Dutch manager-critic J.T. (Jacob Thomas) Grein (1863-1935), whose Independent Theatre ran Sunday and Monday matinees of twenty-eight productions from 1891 to 1898, presenting more foreign plays than English: and a repertoire that included *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck* by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906). In 1892 it introduced Bernard Shaw as a playwright, with the premiere of *Widower's Houses*.<sup>32</sup> Two years later, *Arms and the Man* (Bernard Shaw, 1894) was

presented at the Avenue Theatre in a production financed by Annie (Elizabeth Frederika) Horniman (1860-1937) who, as will be discussed, became a key figure in the development of the repertory movement. These first steps in repertory confirm their assertion of the pioneers' independence from the constrictions of the London West End establishment.

At this time, the West End was in thrall to the import of American plays and musical comedies more than to new British plays. This was a matter of marketing rather than quality, for plays that had reaped box-office success in New York were attractive to London managers. Even so, The Independent Theatre was not entirely a British product: Grein also had detailed knowledge of similar currents in continental theatres.<sup>33</sup> From an administrative standpoint, it was created as a joint-stock limited company with a group of directors drawn from the society membership. They participated with shared interests even though their background was outside the theatre, 'preferring legal responsibility for the funds entrusted to them to the old system of moral responsibility only, the discharge of which left them heavily out of pocket.'<sup>34</sup> But although the directors' services were 'voluntary' to the extent they earned no fees or dividends from their shares, this company did not, formally, adopt the legal personality already obtainable by incorporation as a non-profit distributing organisation. Formally the Companies Act 1862 had conceived the non-profit company apparatus, with its notion of a 'disinterested' and unremunerated board of directors. But no stage society or repertory theatre used this altruistic structure until 1926; the form being associated with more manifest social causes such as philanthropy for the relief of poverty, or the advancement of self-helping education and religious organisations in which the state had been reluctant to intervene.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, because The Independent Theatre continued parallel constitution as a club it was, like other stage societies, exempt from the Lord Chamberlain's censorship and some other licensing regulations, helping to make its choice of plays more enterprising.

Another important landmark for new ideas was the organisation of the Incorporated Stage Society in London in 1899. The Society, which included in its membership both amateurs and professionals, also gave performances on Sunday nights and occasional matinees and continued into the 1930s.<sup>36</sup> It staged Shaw's early plays and introduced many foreign playwrights to London, such as Gerhardt Hauptmann (1862-1946), Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), L.N.Tolstoi (1828-1910), Georg Kaiser (1878-1945) and Frank Wedekind (1864-1918).<sup>37</sup> However, the most influential experiment was that of Harley Granville Barker and John Eugene Vedrenne (1867-1930) at the intimate 614-seat Court Theatre from 1904 to 1907.<sup>38</sup> Then, as now, this tightly focused auditorium was the single most successful playhouse for original drama. In three years, eleven plays by Shaw were presented, six for

the first time. Although Shaw dominated the Court seasons, the Court also introduced plays by John Galsworthy (1867-1933) and John Masefield (1878-1967), as well as enabling Granville Barker to stage *The Voysey Inheritance* (1905).<sup>39</sup> The enterprise was repeated at the Savoy Theatre in 1908, although the results were less successful because of the difficulties of filling its larger 1,100 seating capacity. The Court was another model for future repertory theatres, as well as for a national theatre, for it nurtured new plays without subjecting them to the raw criteria of market forces.<sup>40</sup> In passing, the organisational difference between repertory and a national theatre was that whereas repertory was locally financed but privately controlled, a national theatre would be financed by the state, though not in Britain run directly by the government. Both were imbued with doctrines of national significance and public service.

The stage societies were influenced by the 'art theatres' in continental Europe, but in practice they could not afford to resemble their organisation, even though they aspired to emulate their ideologies and spirit.<sup>41</sup> Within the British context, it was the stage societies that first employed a 'director' to orchestrate a concept into a mosaic of all stage functions. Directors impressed their personal interpretation on a play. These new gurus were generally considered not to be originating artists but were nevertheless masters of interpreting their material. They were known successively as stage managers, artist-directors, resident producers, staff directors, directors of productions, artistic directors and even, in the 1990s, chief executives. They became the technocracy of the repertory movement. The stage societies brought them to power as the new managers of theatre companies. For repertory, they were important for making the playwright more prominent than before, although despite their importance, dramatists have – after Granville Barker, W. B. Yeats of the Abbey Theatre, the founders of the Ulster Literary Theatre and James Bridie (1888-1951) of the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow – rarely run a theatre. Indeed, Sir Alan Ayckbourn (1939- ) of the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough (that he has led since 1970) and John Godber (1953- ) of the Hull Truck Theatre (since 1984) are the exceptions that prove the rule today.

The successful project of the Stage Society at the Court Theatre was followed by Charles Frohman's (1860-1915)<sup>42</sup> seminal seventeen-week repertory season at the 1,100-seat Duke of York's Theatre in 1910. Granville Barker directed many of the productions and was, effectively, the artistic director.<sup>43</sup> This was the first British experiment in 'true' repertory since the era of stock: by the third week, for instance, four separate productions were given in rotation. Unlike the Court Theatre, it made a heavy loss, perhaps because of the expense of repertoire, compounded by the strain of technically limited backstage conditions for

quick turnarounds of settings. Moreover, theatregoers were unacquainted with the nightly, juggling changes of repertoire and a wide-ranging – and therefore confusing – choice of plays. The management was criticised for ‘lacking a single mind quite clearly made up as to what public it was going to serve, and at what it was aiming’.<sup>44</sup> Doubtless, the venture did not employ today’s scientific niche marketing techniques. Nevertheless, it did have popular successes, including the opening production of the premiere of John Galsworthy’s *Justice* – that was rescheduled throughout the season for a total of 26 performances and quickly given subsequent productions in provincial companies – and a revival of Arthur Wing Pinero’s Court Theatre success, *Trelawney of the Wells* (1898). This was given for all it was worth in order to recoup the losses on other productions, with 42 performances. The season offered inspiration and caution to other repertory pioneers, highlighting, in particular, the need for lasting subsidy with the protection and stability that might offer to develop identity and theatregoer loyalty, something which could not be achieved in only four months.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, through the practice of combining the repertory ideal with the benevolence of an astute West End commercial manager, it was also a precursor of subsidised theatres’ exploiting their most popular productions by transfer to the West End, today.<sup>46</sup>

Being preoccupied with experiment, something generally impossible in the commercial theatre of this time, these London stage societies, and particularly the Frohman repertoire gambit, often produced plays that the public were not likely to want. In contrast, the repertory ideal had, seriatim, to offer a balance of popularity and experiment.

### Summary

This chapter has explained the emergence of the repertory ‘ideal’ as a desire for ensemble acting in short runs of high quality plays, whether classical or new, to be staged by locally owned and managed theatre institutions, thereby fuelling a renaissance of theatre-making in the provinces. The notion of repertory was, partly, a reaction against the London West End theatre system with its long runs and accompanying provincial touring. In its practical application, the new system was the counterpart to provincial stock companies that had occupied a theatre for a whole season or longer and which often scheduled their productions in repertoire.

The first manifestation of repertory was in the London stage societies. In their independence, transience and preference for new plays, these societies might also be seen as the forerunners of the London ‘fringe’ and, in Scotland, club theatres such as the

Traverse and Pool theatres, Edinburgh and the Close Theatre, Glasgow. They also influenced, but did not destroy, the commercial theatre, by offering opportunities for theatregoers to appreciate the merits of plays through attention to detail, good casting and teamwork, rather than through the talents of a leading performer or star who might prejudice the playwright's material. The societies also interested theatregoers in the other theatre arts of costume and scenic design and, in time, provided the London and foreign commercial theatre with new plays and playwrights. For instance, plays by Bernard Shaw, first staged by the Incorporated Stage Society, the Court Theatre and at the Duke of York's Theatre, were subsequently revived throughout the English-speaking world.

For business matters, the societies represent the beginnings of subsidised theatre, with their small endowments from patrons, such as Annie Horniman. Particularly at the Court Theatre, the societies showed a preference for seasons of short-runs, scheduled for a fixed term of one, two, and three or four weeks – or for 'rehearsed readings' in single performances. A production was taken off at the end to be followed by another, however successful it might have been. In this system, the societies therefore denied themselves the possibility of a profit but they gave themselves, and their small audiences, variety in new methods of production.

In their distinctive artistic policies, but not yet in management practices such as the adoption of a non-profit company limited by guarantee, they offered the provinces a repertory prototype. Indeed, many of the directors, actors and writers from these Court Theatre and Duke of York's repertory seasons worked in the first provincial repertory theatres. Many of the stage societies' new plays were given subsequent productions in the provinces. In the next chapter, an examination of the history of management practices in several provincial repertory companies will offer more perspectives for the evaluation of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company.

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<sup>1</sup> William Archer, *The Old Drama and the New*, London, William Heinemann, 1923, p.369.

<sup>2</sup> Joel Trapido, (ed.), *An International Dictionary of Theatre Language*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1985, p.719.

<sup>3</sup> Allardyce Nicoll, *English Drama 1900-1930, The Beginnings of the Modern Period*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973, p.56. Nicoll says that some influential companies 'deliberately refused to apply the term to [their] company; some enthusiasts preferred to speak of 'Endowed Theatre', or 'Artistic Theatre', or 'Organised Theatre', noting that the difficulty of treating repertory as an independent unit, because 'their activities cannot fully be appreciated without considering the associated work of scores upon scores of dramatic and theatrical societies established' during this period.

<sup>4</sup> This concept of artistic *synthesis* is debated in Harley Granville Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1922, pp. 59-63.

<sup>5</sup> The 'try-out' system, in particular, gave the provinces an inferior deal to post-London tours and, for a regional city and its theatre, premiering productions was not the measure of artistic kudos or programming originality that it is today. Prodigious lists of new plays premiered on tour in the provinces were listed periodically in Clement Scott, (ed.), *The Theatre, A Monthly Review of the Drama, Music and the Fine Arts*, London, Strand Publishing, from January 1888, [fourth series – extensive, variant citations in Lowe, Arnott and Robinson, *English Theatrical Literature*, London, Society for Theatre Research, 1979, p.410, entry 4240]. For instance, in the two weeks to 2 July 1888, [issue of 1 August, 1888, p.112] there were six 'world-premieres' opening, respectively, at the Theatres Royal Newcastle, Dewsbury, Preston and Brighton, the Comedy Theatre Manchester and the Prince's Theatre Bradford, described successively as 'original comedietta', 'romantic comic opera', 'farcical comedy', 'new musical absurdity', 'revised drama' and, more frenziedly, 'newly revised but original modern domestic drama'. In the winter months, when more touring was undertaken, there were often twenty 'try-out' provincial premieres in a month. None of the titles from this sample is mentioned in corresponding or later lists of London-seasons of notable productions or revivals. In addition to using the 'try-out' to make radical changes, the problem of finding a London theatre was a factor in the profusion of 'try-outs', for a manager often had to orbit the provinces until the London theatre with whom he had negotiated was ready to receive the play, at the unforeseeable termination of a preceding production's long run: often this would not be known until a few days beforehand. Managers probably over-emphasised the value of these hurriedly altered productions, for the reaction of an audience, even in a big city such as Glasgow or Manchester, would have been a misleading barometer of the response of a London audience, just as the responsiveness of a London audience would not always accurately indicate the reception a production would receive when toured to the provinces *after* London. The 'try-out' system was more disdainful to the provinces than post-London tours and was, undeniably, an influencing factor on the start of repertory.

<sup>6</sup> John Palmer, 'The Future of Repertory', in *The Future of the Theatre*, London, G. Bell & Sons, 1912, Chapter VI, pp. 74-91, p.75.

<sup>7</sup> The vintage description of stock companies' management is Tate Wilkinson, *The Wandering Patentee; or, A History of the Yorkshire Theatres, from 1770 to the Present Time*, York, For the author, 1795, Four Vols. For discussion of Wilkinson's business affairs, artistic policies and further description of how the stock system worked, see Charles Beecher Hogan, 'One of God Almighty's Unaccountables: Tate Wilkinson of York', in Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., *The Theatrical Manager in England and America: Player of a Perilous Game*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971, pp. 63-86.

<sup>8</sup> James C. Dibdin, *Annals of the Edinburgh Stage*, Edinburgh, Richard Cameron, 1888, pp.151-153.

<sup>9</sup> Kate Dunn in her gossip, anecdotal *Exit Through The Fireplace: The Great Days of Rep*, London, John Murray, 1998, has chronicled the lighter and hysterical side of the repertory movement. Although entertaining, it contains, unhappily, innumerable errors and is prone to uncritical reportage and the notorious tendency of theatre people telling a good story by spicing up a routine or ordinary event. Richard A. Jerrams', *Weekly Rep: A Theatrical Phenomenon*, Droitwich, Peter Andrew Publishing Company, 1991, is, like Dunn, a haphazard history of the commercial centres of repertory and which, in this book, observes fourteen companies, including the Wilson Barrett company at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, from 1940 to 1955 and Perth Theatre from 1935 to 1936. Exceptionally, these hand-to-mouth daily repertory company customs may be better observed in a novel set in Liverpool Playhouse in 1950: Beryl Bainbridge, *An Awfully Big Adventure*, London, Duckworth, 1989. This novel builds upon uninvented work as an assistant stage manager in this company, recalled in her 'First Night in the Theatre', Ronald Harwood, (ed.), *A Night at the Theatre*, London, Methuen, 1982, pp. 15-20. For unexpected plain truth about repertory practice, see or read the hilariously effective farce by Michael Frayn, *Noises Off* (1982), about a repertory company rehearsing a farce, *Nothing On*, revised and revived at the National Theatre in 1999. For discussion of the allied phenomenon of seaside repertory, see Peter Hepple, 'Summer Rep', *Theatrephile. Popular Theatre Research*, London, D.F. Cheshire and Sean McCarthy, 1984, Vol. 1. No.3, pp. 44-46.

The era of 'fit-up' companies from the late nineteenth-century should also be noted as a legitimate category of repertory theatre. Scores of these companies toured until after the Second World War, including the Lauderdale Repertory Company (1892-1935), The Charles Edwards Players (1910-1935) and, in Scotland, one of the last, The Kinloch Players (1939-1963), that performed throughout Grampian, Fife and Ayrshire on a circuit that makes today's honourable, subsidised 'access' and 'outreach' efforts appear decidedly languid. These companies may have been in a class by themselves, but gave vintage training for actors' progression to weekly rep. They usually toured a repertoire of seven distinct productions, performing one-week stands with no subsidy. They were often family based, had their origins in the strolling players of medieval times and the fairground booths of the eighteenth-century that saw the start of Victorian 'portable theatres'. Fit-up theatre may be the lowest order of twentieth-century repertory, but as the novelist Berta Ruck wrote to the Earl Armstrong Repertory Company in 1945:

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It is astonishing how versatile you all are and yet the work in each play seems as finished as that of a CEMA company who were here lately and giving the same play!

Her praise of 'fit-up', together with a fuller analysis of its accomplishments and shortcomings, is given in a belated account by Fern Bevan, *Twentieth Century Fit-Up Theatre: An Oral and Documentary History*, Droitwich, Peter Andrew Publishing, 1999. For an actress's observation of management in makeshift travelling repertory – including old-style but successful audience development accomplishments in Aberdeenshire in the 1940s – see Lorna M. Pobjoy, *Over The Footlights and Far Away. A Farewell to the 'Fit-ups'*, London, Tiptol, 1998, pp. 23-28.

<sup>10</sup> Sometimes, smaller professional repertory companies used the term 'Little Theatre', as at The Little Theatre, Bristol, founded in 1923. Although terminology is a difficulty in any description of the repertory movement, of more consequence is the notorious tendency for many theatre professionals to regard amateur theatre as déclassé, distinguishing between the repertory and amateur movements as a barrier between good and bad. Nevertheless, amateur theatres constitute the largest group of theatre organisations in Britain. Non-professional drama goes back to the beginnings of theatre, when amateur artists performed the Mystery plays in Guilds, Court Masques in Stuart England and, later, is witnessed by the abundance of home theatricals in the nineteenth-century. They have more lineal ancestry than any repertory theatre: for instance, the still functioning Canterbury Old Stagers was founded in 1842 or, in Glasgow, 'The Shakespeare' club from 1845. Present organisation of self-owned and managed amateur theatre societies, which developed in parallel to the repertory movement, now totals over 900 groups. They often afforded scope for experiment impossible in the repertory theatres. A model example of an amateur theatre was the Norwich Players at the Maddermarket Theatre, begun in 1911 by (Walter) Nugent Monck (1878-1958) to perform plays of literary merit in a recreation of an Elizabethan playhouse that opened in 1921. This volunteer theatre endures today, with a paid artistic director. Its success is one reason why professional, resident repertory has never settled in Norwich. See Andrew Stephenson, *The Maddermarket Theatre Norwich*, Norwich, The Norwich Players, 1971 and, for an update, Clare Goddard, (ed.), *Eighty Years of the Maddermarket 1921-2001*, Norwich, Maddermarket Theatre Trust Limited, 2001. For an oracular enquiry about the amateur, see Bonamy Dobrée's lecture, *The Amateur and the Theatre*, London, Hogarth Press, 1947.

<sup>11</sup> Frank Vernon, 'Queen Horniman', in *The Twentieth-century Theatre*, London, George G. Harrap, 1924, p.80.

<sup>12</sup> John Palmer, *The Future of the Theatre*, op.cit, p.78.

<sup>13</sup> Harley Granville Barker, 'Two German Theatres' in *The Fortnightly Review*, London, Fortnightly Review, 1910, quoted in Anna Irene Miller, *The Independent Theatre in Europe, 1887 to the Present*, New York, Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, 1931, New York and London, Benjamin Blom, 1966, p. 141.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p.141.

<sup>15</sup> Marie Wilton described these seasons with her husband, Squire Bancroft (1841-1926), in *Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, On and Off the Stage*, London, Bentley and Son, 1891, pp. 83-184. Perhaps because of her absorption with burlesque – she staged many new comedies by T.W. Robertson (1829-1871) – and location in an over-ornamental theatre, commentators do not usually describe this company as repertory incarnate. Even so, except for ignoring classical plays, its 'behind-the-curtain' organisation corresponded to many aspects the eventual system, including its small resident company of well-treated actors in short runs, where productions were often suspended at the height of fashion, in order to exploit box-office demand for revivals. A censorious response is offered by John Pick, 'The Refinement of the Bancrofts, 1865-1885', in *The West End, Mismanagement and Snobbery*, Eastbourne, John Offord, 1983, p. 46, arguing that they 'significantly formed the [exclusive] character of the West End theatre' by 'relying on a regular attendance of privileged theatregoers able to pay higher admission prices', thereby discouraging other managers in the following decades from building and running larger popular theatres. Pick uses 'refinement' as a diminutive for their class prejudice, which has also been a trait in the social practices of some repertory managements.

<sup>16</sup> Austin Brereton, *The Life of Henry Irving*, London, Longmans Green, 1908, Vol. I., p.297.

<sup>17</sup> In itself, the visit of the French company was not as exceptional an event in Victorian and Edwardian London theatre as overseas' appearances in London are today. For instance, in 1906, when the New Royalty Theatre was styled the French Theatre, it presented 21 French productions (performed in that language) between 8 January and 3 March. Likewise, 46 German plays were produced at the Queen Street Theatre in late 1904. The international outlook of this period is staggering, making subsequent efforts by the British Council, The World Theatre Seasons of the Royal Shakespeare Company, The Barbican Centre and London International Festival of Theatre seem meagre. See Bampton Hunt, (ed.), *The Green Room Book or Who's Who on the Stage*, London, T. Sealey Clark, 1906, pp.404-405.



<sup>18</sup> *Pink Dominoes* was a farcical comedy by James Albery (1838-1889), staged at the Criterion Theatre, London in 1887. It ran for 555 performances in its first production, was revived in 1889 for a further 144 performances and then toured the provinces for four years. The long run, and the persiflage of this play in particular, was a target for theatre reformers. John Parker, in 'Long Runs on the London Stage', observed that the concept was of comparatively modern growth. Before 1822, no play had ever obtained the coveted season of 100 continuous performances, and it was not until the start of the comic drama *Tom and Jerry* that any play achieved what was to be this industry definition of a long run. See *Who's Who in the Theatre*, Ninth Edition, London, Pitman, 1939, p.1846.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew Arnold, 'The French Play in London', in *Irish Essays*, London, Smith, Elder, 1891, pp. 87-88. This reproduced his essay from *The Nineteenth Century*, August 1879, pp.242-243.

<sup>20</sup> For an example of Shaw's taunts at Irving, see H.A. Saintsbury and Ceil Palmer, (eds.), *We Saw Him Act: A Symposium on the Art of Sir Henry Irving*, London, Hurst & Blackett, 1939, pp.401-402. 'My own art', wrote the playwright, 'the art of literature, is left shabby and ashamed amid the triumph of the actor'. However, Irving had rejected a play by Shaw.

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, Irving's claims for the theatre 'that it may be, and is, a potent means of teaching great truths and furthering the spread of education of a higher kind – the knowledge of the scope and working of the human character', given in an address to the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution in 1881, reproduced in Jeffrey Richards, (ed.), *Sir Henry Irving, Theatre Culture and Society*, Keele, Ryburn Publishing and Keele University Press, 1994, pp.181-191.

<sup>22</sup> J.W. Marriott, *The Theatre*, London, George Harrap, 1931, p.136.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Arthur Jones, *The Foundations of a National Drama*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1913, pp. 244-245. This is a collection of lectures on the abstractions of an English national drama, by one of the unflagging advocates of subsidised theatre.

<sup>24</sup> A record for ensemble casting, and a signpost to the way in which resident companies forced beginner actors to learn about acting on the job by playing *everything*, may be that of the young Henry Irving who played in the first two years and six months of his career (1857-1859), at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, no less than 428 *different* roles. See 'Parts Played by Henry Irving', Austin Brereton, *The Life of Henry Irving*, op.cit., Vol. II., pp.337-343.

<sup>25</sup> Members of a *skilful* acting ensemble might also require serious training and it is noteworthy that the beginnings of repertory were coincident with the growth of professional acting schools. Hitherto there had been, apart from the vanishing training ground of stock companies, a haphazard tradition of private tuition that amounted to little more than elocution lessons. Such casual methods were hardly an endorsement of organised professionalism. In its need for actors who could meet the requirements of the new dramatists, the repertory movement was underpinned by the formation by Herbert Beerbohm Tree of the Academy of Dramatic Art in 1905 (later to be RADA) and by Elsie Fogarty of the Central School of Speech and Drama in 1906. See 'The Edwardian Theatre and the Establishment of Professional Training' in Adrian Cairns, *The Making of the Professional Actor*, London, Peter Owen, 1996, pp. 69-75.

<sup>26</sup> Another actor-manager who was conspicuously dedicated to the 'art theatre' was John Martin Harvey (1863-1944), one the last of the last of his sort. See R.N.G.-A., (ed.), *The Book of Martin Harvey*, London, Henry Walker, 1928, p. 79, for a convincing example of his magnanimous approach to the educational functions of theatre and its relationship to individual, private enterprise. Diverging from some actor-managers, Martin Harvey, like Irving for whom he had worked as an actor at the Lyceum Theatre, was one of the first to believe that the work of commercial theatre would benefit by sharpened competition from a subsidised theatre. He was galled that the public frequently attended 'works of little merit if not actual rubbish' and held that the 'the higher the pitch to which the taste of the theatregoing population can be educated, the better it will be for the actor-manager, who will then be encouraged to produce plays of a type which it would be impossible for him to consider in a period when taste has deteriorated for lack of standards.'

<sup>27</sup> William Archer and H. Granville Barker, *A National Theatre: Scheme & Estimates*, London, Duckworth & Co., 1907, pp. xvi-xvii. This was the published version of a 1904 draft, which had been privately circulated: 'On no account to be communicated to, or criticised or mentioned in the public press'. Their study applied the benefits of the repertory ideal to the proposed National Theatre, offering an early example of a theatre business plan, in which the authors 'hope and believe that our Scheme and Estimates will prove helpful to the organisers of Repertory Theatres of whatever scale', p. xvii. This sound antecedent of contemporary theatre enquiries offers a probing organisational analysis, containing perspicuous arguments about the theory of subsidy. It was updated in a shorter version, by Granville Barker alone, *A National Theatre*, London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1930. In the 1910s, the subject of a National Theatre was also debated by, for example,

Walter Stephens, *A Plea for a National Repertory Theatre*, London, For the author, 1905. Unlike Henry Arthur Jones' *The Foundations of a National Drama*, op.cit. or R.N.G.-A., (ed.), *The Book of Martin Harvey*, op.cit., the *Scheme & Estimates* concentrates on organisational details.

<sup>28</sup> P.P.Howe, *The Repertory Theatre: A Record and a Criticism*, London, Martin Secker, 1910. p.18

<sup>29</sup> John Hollingshead, *Gaiety Chronicles*, London, Archibald Constable & Co, 1898, p.179.

<sup>30</sup> Hesketh Pearson, *The Last Actor-Managers*, London, Methuen, 1950, White Lion edition, 1974, p.12. Pearson suggests, in *Beerbohm Tree, His Life and Laughter*, London, Methuen, 1956, p.60, that Tree was the father of the repertory movement because he was the first prominent commercial manager to stage an Ibsen drama in Britain. This reputation may also have been perpetuated because of a famous riddle. When asked, 'When is a repertory theatre not a repertory theatre?' Tree returned the answer, 'When it is a success'. The anecdote had much significance because in Tree's day a repertory theatre was often associated with failure and a short life.

<sup>31</sup> Herbert Beerbohm Tree, *Some Interesting Fallacies of the Modern Stage: An Address Delivered to the Playgoers' Club at St. James Hall, on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1891*, London, William Heinemann, 1891, reprinted in Herbert Beerbohm Tree, *Thoughts and After-Thoughts*, London, Cassell, 1913, p.185.

<sup>32</sup> The principal studies of The Independent Theatre are N.H.G. Schoonderwoerd, *J.T.Grein, Ambassador of the Theatre, 1862-1935: A Study in Anglo-Continental Theatrical Relations*, Assen, Van Gorcum, 1963 and that of Grein's wife, Michael Orme [pseudonym of Alix Grein], *J.T.Grein, The Story of a Pioneer 1862-1935*, London, John Murray, 1936.

<sup>33</sup> Grein, et al were influenced by The Free Theatre, established by André Antoine (1858-1943) in Paris in 1887. This has been described as the cradle of the repertory movement, 'an essentially fighting theatre, not a commercial theatre'. See Samuel Montefiore Waxman, *Antoine and The Théâtre Libre*, Harvard University Press, 1926, reissued New York, Benjamin Blom, 1964, p.195. Then came the Théâtre de L'Oeuvre, also in Paris. From these, parallel movements spread to Germany with the founding of the Berlin Freie Bühne in 1889. Shortly thereafter came the Art Theatre in Cracow, Poland, created by Stanislaw Wyspiański and, in 1898, Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) opened the Moscow Art Theatre. Max Reinhardt (1873-1943) propagated the movement in Germany, at the Deutsches and the Kammerspiele: these theatres staged twenty productions per season, in repertoire, prompting Granville Barker to state that they offered, 'in one week a greater variety of good drama than any two London theatres will give in a year'. Grein also modelled The Independent Theatre on the Royal Netherlands Stage Society. The work of these theatres, and the influence of other continental companies on the British theatre, is discussed by the Glasgow scholar Alasdair F. Cameron, in *The Repertory Theatre Movement, 1907-1917*, Ph.D thesis, Warwick, Warwick University, 1983.

John Stokes' case study 'A Literary Theatre: The Lessons of The Independent Theatre' in his *Resistible Theatres: Enterprise and experiment in the late nineteenth-century*, London, Paul Elek Books, 1972, pp. 111-180, considers the relationship of Antoine to the foundation of The Independent Theatre, notes that an appeal was made to novelists to write for the Society but failed and suggests that, other than Shaw and Ibsen (such as productions of *The Master Builder* and *The Wild Duck*), it never attracted distinguished playwrights. This leads Stokes to a detailed consideration of the theory of symbolism, whilst emphasising the concurrent primacy of the actor-manager in the frivolity of the commercial theatre.

<sup>34</sup> Dorothy Leighton, 'Short Summary of the Position and Prospects of the Independent Theatre' (1896), quoted in N.H.G. Schoonderwoerd, *J.T.Grein, Ambassador of the Theatre, 1862-1935: A Study in Anglo-Continental Theatrical Relations*, op.cit, p.111.

<sup>35</sup> There were two kinds of non-profit company. One had a share capital and the other, which was limited by guarantee of the members for any sum from £1, had no share capital. In Gordon Sanderson, *Theatre Ownership in Britain: A Report Prepared for the Federation of Theatre Unions*, London, Federation of Theatre Unions, 1953, the earliest registration of a non-profit theatre company limited by guarantee (without a share capital) is that of Northampton Repertory Players Limited, registered on 30 January 1926 and which began production in the season of 1926-1927, p.240. This is the form prevailing in repertory today. Until 1945, most other repertories listed are proprietary companies limited by shares. The hybrid form of a non-profit company limited by shares was discontinued by The Companies Act 1980, by which time most repertories had converted.

<sup>36</sup> Dennis Kennedy, in an essay scrutinising assumptions about the commercial viability of the stage societies, 'The New Drama and the new audience' in Michael R. Booth and Joel H. Kaplan (eds), *The Edwardian Theatre, Essays on performance and the stage*, op.cit., pp. 130-147, notes that The Independent Theatre Society never had more than 175 members, the Stage Society's maximum membership was 1,200 (Bernard Shaw described them as a congregation, not an audience) and that 'no matter how committed and

vocal', this 'was not large enough to support an art theatre that was self-sustaining'. In a high-brow, low-brow summary, he suggests that the avant-garde, art theatre's suspicion of popular, commercial success, combined with a defensive 'loathing for the audience', eventually divided twentieth-century art into two parts. The bigger world of commercial theatre sold the tickets but received little critical attention. The smaller part, playing to a charmed circle of 'intellectual would-be playgoers', received the critical and historical applause. Kennedy also discusses this issue in 'The Transformations of Granville Barker', in Jan McDonald and Leslie Hill, (eds.), *Harley Granville Barker, An Edinburgh Retrospective 1992*, Glasgow, Theatre Studies Publications, 1992, p.25, admitting that although it is a limited view of the artist's relationship to theatregoers:

Wave after wave of reforming movements actively scorned or reviled their audiences or potential audiences. Since theatre depends upon audiences, this was a curious position for theatre practitioners to take. Indeed, a powerful notion in the twentieth-century has been that artists of high seriousness should NOT be popular or financially successful.

The shunning of mainstream theatregoers by some of the stage societies, although an extension of the general stress between art and the box-office, is a foretaste of the instances of overindulgent programming by some self-absorbed artistic directors in provincial repertory theatres. This has frequently been demonstrated when they moved from a small theatre in London, which might without difficulty perform to a cultured minority of self-recognising theatregoers, to a larger provincial theatre in a smaller city. Here, public interests might be less cosmopolitan, at least in the eyes of an artistic director from London. Moreover, the general public would normally outnumber the knowledgeable theatregoers who might never have seen a play before. Thus, some artistic directors, after failing to select plays to suit their new audiences, became ambivalent about the local culture, heaping abuse on the public (and the board of directors), at their peril.

<sup>37</sup> *The Incorporated Stage Society, Founded 1899, Incorporated 1904: Ten Years, 1899-1909*, London, For the Society, 1909, is a chronology of playbills for all productions in its first decade. It performed on Sunday evenings and Monday afternoons, using professional actors from the West End theatres on their night off, operating with an increasing cult-subscription-membership of between 500 and 1,200. Marion O'Connor, in Claude Schumacher (ed.), *Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre, 1850-1918*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.334, suggests that these ephemeral societies initially made little difference to the mainstream theatre, which exploited their theatres commercially by society performances on dark nights during long runs. The achievement of 100 performances was an industry definition of a long run. Her observation is similar to Allardyce Nicoll, in *English Drama, 1900-1930: The Beginnings of The Modern Period*, op.cit., p.54, who argues that these early repertory companies were, for the most part, important for what they aimed to achieve and were 'remedial' in that they 'aimed principally to correct defects in the current theatrical regime rather than to inaugurate something new...and that not one of them gained any large body of support even among the more intellectual group of playgoers'. More recent discussion of these societies, and other contemporary London repertory experiments, appears in Dennis Kennedy, 'The New Drama and the new audience', in Michael R. Booth and Joel H. Kaplan (eds.), *The Edwardian Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.134, who summarises their characteristics:

they eluded the censor's power and other licensing restrictions; they ensured a small but determined audience at each event, already committed financially to the season; they enabled the events to be mounted on an irregular basis; they freed themselves from audience repudiation of unconventional plays; and they validated their own advanced status by controlling the admission of the general public.

<sup>38</sup> Desmond McCarthy, in *The Court Theatre, 1904-1907: A Commentary and a Criticism*, London, A.H.Bullen, 1907, pp.2-3, describes their aim as being truth as opposed to effect, to get the public to appreciate a more natural style of acting, by getting away from 'artificial and theatrical in methods and traditions' as a practical protest against the tyrant of the 'well-made play', to produce plays for short runs and to foster a new school of young playwrights.

<sup>39</sup> 32 plays by 17 playwrights were produced, and 946 performances were given. McCarthy, *The Court Theatre, 1904-1907: A Commentary and a Criticism*, op.cit, contains reprints of most programmes from these seasons, pp. 125-169. A further measure of the seasons' vitality is in the number and choice of international authors, including Euripides (7485/4-407/6 BC), Arthur Schizler (1862-1931), Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) and Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946).

<sup>40</sup> This chapter does not offer a discrete discussion of the well-charted campaign for a British National Theatre, which began in 1848 with the London publisher Effingham Wilson's *Proposition for a National Theatre*. Although using Shakespeare as the cornerstone for artistic policy, this short manifesto includes several aims resembling those of the repertory movement, such as reasonable ticket prices to keep it within the reach of all, and a resident acting company. The *Proposition* is reproduced in Geoffrey Whitworth, *The Making of a National Theatre*, London, Faber and Faber, 1948, pp. 28-29. The National Theatre was not

realised until 1963 when it opened at the Old Vic Theatre, *after* incubating in a repertory theatre: the Chichester Festival Theatre. It was the repertory movement which, latterly, paved its foundation: a National Theatre's classical artistic ideals and non-profit organisational characteristics were, like the various theatres at Stratford upon Avon before the Royal Shakespeare Company's founding in 1960, representative of the repertory ideal. Commentators have frequently stated that these *two* national theatres have, with substantial subsidy, been the only two companies in Britain to maintain resident companies with a true rotating repertory schedule. In fact, the Chichester Festival Theatre (built 1962) and Pitlochry Festival Theatre (founded in 1951) have *always* performed in repertoire, albeit for long summer seasons, as has (from 1999) the Lakeside Theatre, Keswick.

<sup>41</sup> A touchstone for the stage societies was the radical impulses of theatre theorists such as Adolph Appia (1862-1928) Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and the symbolists, who proposed alternatives to the mainstream of realism and naturalism. See, for instance, Claude Schumacher's 'General introduction' to *Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre*, op.cit, pp. 1-9. Then, as often today, theatre in Britain was generally isolated from these trends, such as the practical work of the composer-librettist, designer and manager George II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen (1826-1914) who had overthrown the star system in Germany with an ensemble that toured Europe for fifteen years from 1874, even though they visited London in 1878. Although the designer, director and teacher (Edward) Sir Gordon Craig (1872-1966) – who, like Granville Barker, argued that the theatre could be respected as an absolute art and craft – was English, the British theatre failed to recognise him and he became an essentially continental figure. Craig recommended deposing the actor-managers in favour of a more organic concept: light and sound, colour and movement would flow together, suggesting to the theatregoer profound and universal images. The person who would superintend these productions would be neither an actor nor manager nor dramatist but a stage *director*. He argued for a new craft within the theatre and his new ideas called for new leaders. There were no 'directors' in mainstream British theatre when Craig wrote *The Art of the Theatre* in 1905. (———, London and Edinburgh, T.N.Foulis, 1905. This book was revised and expanded as *On the Art of the Theatre*, London, William Heinemann, 1911). Actor-managers produced plays, but what passed as directing would be unacceptable today, because provocative plays with a balance of characters rather than one dominant role for an actor-manager would need someone to 'shape' the production.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Frohman was a leading theatrical manager in America and, after 1897, also in London, where he was lessee and manager of the Duke of York's Theatre, presenting the first productions of *The Admirable Crichton* (1903) and *Peter Pan* (1904). He was also the first to realise the possibility of an extensive interchange of New York and London productions. See John Parker, (ed.), *The Green Room Book, or Who's Who on The Stage*, London, T. Sealey Clark, 1909, p.195.

<sup>43</sup> 128 performances were given of eight productions, which included one triple bill. A summary calendar of performances, scheduled mainly in repertoire and indicating their order of popularity (but not comparative attendances) is given in P.P.Howe, *The Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, p.221.

<sup>44</sup> P.P.Howe, *The Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, p.159.

<sup>45</sup> See Dennis Kennedy, *Granville Barker and The Dream of Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 195-199, where 'The value of repertory', concludes that the Duke of York's season was 'a working example of the freshness and value of repertory acting, even if it did not draw the necessary houses'. P.P.Howe, *The Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, Appendix One, pp.207-227, describes this season in detail. Jan McDonald, in *The 'New Drama' 1900-1914*, London, Macmillan, 1986, p.45, also emphasises the impact of these first London repertories on the provinces, especially the Court Theatre, 'as their inspiration and their model', not only on organisation, but as a catalyst 'to create a regional school of 'new dramatists'.

<sup>46</sup> The relationship of producer (Frohman) to artistic director (Granville Barker) is, in all likelihood, open to more than one interpretation. Eric Salmon, *Granville Barker, A Secret Life*, London, Heinemann, 1983, p.129 suggests, reproachfully, that Frohman was

a commercial manager who spent a whole lifetime being dazzled by the theatre's glamour', that 'his vocabulary consisted, really, of a single word, 'star'. Though he respected the repertory idea in theory, he did not really understand it or its aims, much less its plays: what he understood was the glitter of big, public personalities.

No doubt, Granville Barker was the mainspring of the season, choosing the plays, planning the calendar and selecting actors. Moreover, he had concocted the British version of repertoire, but Salmon, in his otherwise judicial chapter 'Director of Repertory', appears, almost at random, to resent business managers more than do artists. In an appreciation of Frohman, written by J. M. Barrie in the foreword to Isaac F. Marcossan and Daniel Frohman, *Charles Frohman, Manager and Man*, London, John Lane, 1916, the playwright, who had helped to convince Frohman about the worth of the Duke of York's experiment, emphasises that Frohman kept to his financial promise of underwriting the losses, had a love of dramatic art and did not exploit it as

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mere commercial enterprise, saying that 'as a theatre manager he was as proportionately honest, able, sensitive and idealistic as those in any other of its departments' and that 'he was much needed'. Friction between business manager and artistic director is, at any rate, a theme explored in Chapter Seven of this study.

# THREE

## MANAGEMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF REPERTORY

This chapter examines the defining organisational aspects and policies of pre-1945 repertory companies. In sum, these issues are the adoption and modification of the limited company apparatus for repertory governance and the conduct of proprietor–management relations, the development of artistic policy, the insecurities of renting a theatre and the benefits of theatre ownership, and the relationship of the company to its community and home city. These aspects are discussed through the examples of six companies: Dublin’s Abbey Theatre, the Ulster Literary Theatre, Manchester’s Gaiety Theatre, the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, Liverpool Playhouse and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. A stratification of the repertory movement is discussed, focusing on the differences between these theatres – which aimed to public service – and a larger number of commercial repertories with different sensibilities, particularly The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, that were formed to replace commercial touring when cinema challenged the live theatre. A comparison of play-choices in these non-profit and profit-seeking repertory types is presented. This is followed by financial profiles that examine the similarity of budgets and expenditure proportionalities in all repertory theatres in this pre-subsidy era. Each type of repertory theatre is discussed, partly, as a reaction away from or towards the competitive stimulus of London’s West End and commercial touring theatre while maintaining, from 1944, a national angle to artistic mission and cooperation through a management association of non-profit repertory theatres. Direction is given to the study by seeking to address an underlying question: ‘how were the artistic policies, management and financial systems constructed in early repertory practice and how do these practices connect to the organisation of one specific repertory theatre, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh, today?’

### **Repertory begins in the provinces**

The repertory ideal took hold at the Old Vic Theatre, London and, more especially for this study, in the provinces, where the lodestar of theatre-as-public-service, including the ambition of strengthening communities through locally written drama, was nurtured. The years from 1904 to 1913 witnessed a rapid expansion of the movement throughout the British Isles. Hitherto, London represented a permanent ‘brain drain’ for the provinces,

attracting potential playwrights who might otherwise have remained at home to transform a local reputation into a national one. As the Scottish critic William Archer (1856-1924) wrote in 1923:

Down to the beginning of the present century, I can think of only one play of the slightest note that was not produced in London. That was Home's *The Douglas*, which, rejected by Garrick, first saw the light in Edinburgh in 1756...The glory of *The Douglas* has not seriously dimmed Shakespeare's fame; and I do not remember any other play produced in the provinces which has left any mark in history, except one or two which, like Robertson's *Society*, were given a trial trip, a sort of dress-rehearsal, in the country before being brought to town.<sup>1</sup>

With few exceptions, therefore, it took time for the provincial theatre to acquire copies of the latest 'London hit', and more time for local actors to rehearse and produce it. Whilst London dominated, it was therefore always several steps ahead of the provincials, and the system tended to reinforce a theatrical inferiority complex in theatre-makers, whose best career opportunities were in the capital. For a playwright with serious aspirations, it was, as Archer implied, in London that he or she would succeed or fail. As the tours moved out, so the provincial theatrical talent moved in. London was 'the very pulse of the machine'.<sup>2</sup>

London was also the capital of the British Empire and the English-speaking world, exporting many productions on tour to, or by licensing facsimile productions in the United States of America, Canada, Australia, India, New Zealand and South Africa -- although rarely to continental Europe. This touring hegemony, with London at the centre of a vast international theatre industry, might be compared with the power of globalisation today, when duplicate productions and 'branded' British musicals are staged not only in New York, Toronto, Sydney, Wellington or Johannesburg, but also in Japan and continental Europe. Then, as now, the system retarded theatrical initiative in the British provinces. Theatres in the provinces would not be in a position to help themselves if and when things went wrong with the touring system; unless they established a repertory company. The emasculating effect of this centralised system on the theatre life of the provinces became an impetus to return, in part, to independent local production and thereby resist the power of London.

The leaders' backgrounds were, even so, mostly grounded in an apprenticeship in the London theatre.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes, because of individualistic talent or because they had struggled hard to succeed in the competitive maelstrom of the capital, their London inurement manifested itself as superiority or a condescending approach towards their new provincial public. Even so, it is significant that most early provincial repertory theatres

were founded and operated by a single, if not singular, personality who, notwithstanding their early experience in London as director, actor or manager, and their recognition of the need to build creative teams, could easily be regarded as dynamic entrepreneurs.

### **Anticipating repertory governance today: The Abbey Theatre, Dublin**

The first repertory company in the British Isles and outwith London was the Irish Literary Theatre in Dublin, begun in 1899 by W.B. (William Butler) Yeats (1865-1939) and Lady (Augusta Isabella) Gregory (1852-1932). The Irish Literary Theatre produced their and other Irish poetic plays, acted by visiting English companies until it joined forces with a small amateur group, the Ormond Dramatic Society, whose leaders were the brothers Frank Fay (1870-1931) and Willie Fay (1872-1947).

The propagation of the Irish Literary Theatre, which existed for three years, was akin to the arrival of the National Stage in Bergen, Den Nationale Scene, in 1876.<sup>4</sup> The Norwegian theatre was epiphanous for the brothers Fay, who read an account of it – *Ibsen's Apprenticeship* (William Archer, 1901) – giving them the idea that a company of Irish actors might be able to do similar work in Dublin, motivated by anti-colonial values. Their company was reorganised as the Irish National Theatre Society in 1902.<sup>5</sup> However, without subsidy, the ambitions of the Dublin theatre-makers could not progress and, during a tour to London in 1903, the company impressed the English patroness and practical idealist, Annie Horniman.<sup>6</sup> She purchased the Mechanics' Institute in Lower Abbey Street and the adjacent Penny Bank, subsequently re-modelling the buildings at a cost of £7,000, re-naming it the Abbey Theatre in 1904 and granting a rent-free lease for six years. Thereafter it progressed to being a fully professional company.<sup>7</sup> The magnitude of Horniman's donation was the equivalent of a £450,000 capital grant today.<sup>8</sup>

The Abbey was the first endowed theatre in any English-speaking country. However, the company differed from later repertory theatres because of its strong political convictions that informed and motivated the productions and organisation, giving Ireland a positive image of itself that reflected its history and aspirations for independence. After its pre-Horniman three years, during which time London actors had often been engaged, it became one of only two repertory theatres *consistently* to achieve an ambition of independence from London – in its play choices as well as a new policy of employing Irish actors.

Horniman's money included an additional annual subsidy of £6,000. This was the equivalent of £80,000 today, an enormous sum that equates to £320,000 over her four



years' commitment to operations between 1904 and 1907. This was not awarded unconditionally and, in any case, represented the majority of her wealth. She was determined that the Abbey should be a literary theatre without political engagement, and her closely worded contract with the Society attempted to confine the company to dramatic activities, in which she had a governing interest. However, she was not a working director of the Society. For the purposes of this study and later discussion of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company's management relationships with boards of directors and funding bodies, the rather informal lease and its application is worth considering as an early, key example of the inherent difficulties of theatre-makers making their objectives congruent with those of a patron. In Dublin, the playwrights and the actors were mobilised by the National Theatre Society but the patron had the subsidy. For Horniman, the new theatre was not an open-handed, generous gift and, for this study, her offer serves as an important document:

**BOX 3.1 THE REPERTORY PATRON AS FACILITATOR:  
ANNIE HORNIMAN'S TERMS AND CONDITIONS  
FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY, DUBLIN 1904**

- The Company can have the building rent-free whenever they want it, for rehearsals and performances, except when it is let. They must pay for their own electric light and gas, as well as for the remainder of damages done during their occupation. The building will be insured, and any additions to the lighting for special occasions or plays must be permitted by the Insurance Company formally in writing.
- If any President, Vice-President or member of the Company wants the Hall for a lecture, concert, or entertainment, rent must be paid to me as an ordinary person. If a lecture be given on a dramatic or theatrical subject, and the gross receipts go to the Irish National Theatre, the President, Vice-President, or member of the Company can have the hall for nothing. But it must be advertised clearly as being for the benefit of the Irish National Theatre, pecuniarily, as well as in aid of its artistic objects.
- The price of the seats can be raised, of course, but not lowered, neither by the Irish National Theatre, nor by anyone who will hire the Hall.
- This is to prevent cheap entertainments from being given, which would lower the letting value of the Hall. I hope to be able to arrange to number most of the seats and to sell the tickets beforehand, with a small fee for booking.
- ... I can only afford to make a very little theatre, and it must be quite simple. You must do all the rest to make a powerful and prosperous theatre, with a high artistic ideal.<sup>9</sup>

In the commercial theatre, observed previously when considering the decline of stock companies, ownership and operation of a theatre building had become a discrete business enterprise in itself – distinct from play producing. Most theatre producers were now theatre-less, paying a guaranteed rent or a percentage of the receipts to the proprietor or lessee in respect of the venue costs, such as heating, lighting, cleaning and maintaining the premises, paying for the licence, tickets, sellers and front-of-house staff, thereby protecting the theatre against loss. These were, in effect, one-sided arrangements, and the Horniman agreement exemplifies this disunity between theatre owner and company, whilst attempting, through the security of a long-term residency, to insulate it from the worst effects of conventional landlord-tenant conditions. However, the upshot of her terms and conditions was to give control of the new theatre to the Society whilst she became a watchful ‘stakeholder’.<sup>10</sup> She was not a member of the Abbey’s creative team or management and, in its operations, they might treat her patronage insensitively. The lease assumed reasonable behaviour from the Society and Horniman, but the parties, like most theatre-makers, entrepreneurs and backers, often acted with individualism, hunch and intuition, rather than with stolid, unsentimental reason. In order not to detract the Society from its central mission of producing its own plays and to deter it from political meetings, as well as possibly to recover some of her grant, Horniman retained income from some ancillary uses of the theatre. In practice therefore, the agreement had inherent structural weaknesses and was bound to lead to a confusing rivalry between the parties, such as with her clause about not reducing ticket prices. Horniman never sought to influence the choice of plays but clashes of personalities and opinions soon manifested themselves, as for example when, eccentrically, she earmarked her operating subsidy to her special interests and projects, such as the payment of actors’ wages, production expenses and the retention of publication rights to the plays. This authority gave her considerable power over what happened in the theatre, which she monitored by personally signing the cheques for day-to-day payments, as well as being occasional wardrobe mistress. Even though Yeats often thanked her publicly for her generosity, she harried the management constantly, often criticising productions as, for instance, when the company was on tour in Scotland:

At Edinburgh the slovenly appearance of the performances had not improved and, with the exception of Miss Allgood, no one took the trouble to act at all. I was present on the Monday and Wednesday evenings, and Wednesday was, if anything, worse than Monday. Two performances I saw in Glasgow after my painful interview with her were as good as those earlier in the week. I have come to the conclusion that I cannot ask the paying public to come to see performances which are liable to become at any moment like those I saw in Edinburgh. I do not advise you.... to think of appearing before the general public until the whole company are competent and the management adequate...I shall not interfere with the Abbey Theatre except at

the request of the Directors in future, and I decline to have anything more to do with the Company until they have all learned to be worthy of my troubling about them.<sup>11</sup>

There were many more contentions during the relationship. For all her contract said about the right of management to make the theatre a prosperous one with a high artistic ideal, Horniman had in mind, like future state and local government patronage, the right of a backer to influence the company through her building and subsidy. In 1907 she insisted that a knowledgeable director be engaged. As a result Ben Iden Payne (1888-1976) was hired from England at the age of only nineteen.<sup>12</sup> He directed only two plays but was to have been Horniman's emissary as a delegated authority within the Abbey and even a member of its board of authors, as the management committee was becomingly styled. Perhaps because of inexperience and because he was English, the Dublin directors soon forced his resignation and a succession of Irish producers took the task. However, Payne's departure lost the Abbey the prospect of a further £25,000 subsidy (worth around £1,350,000 today).

More significantly, in 1910, nine months before Horniman's original subsidy was due to end, she unsuccessfully demanded the dismissal of the director-playwright Lennox Robinson (1886-1958) for his refusal to cancel a performance on the day of the funeral of King Edward VII. This dispute was arbitrated in the Society's favour, whereupon Horniman's involvement with the Abbey Theatre ceased.

The divide between The Irish National Theatre Society and its patron led it to search for a different kind of organisation to the loosely knit, largely co-operative association of founders, so as to reduce the number of collaborators at the apex of a workable new hierarchy. Therefore, it reformulated the joint-stock limited company status under which it had been registered in 1905. After getting the actors and playwrights to agree that the theatre should be reconstituted in order to raise further working capital, Yeats registered the Abbey under the Friendly and Industrial Societies Act, according to which no member could hold more than 200 shares, and members had one vote for each share held. They reduced the number of directors to three – Yeats, Lady Gregory and, for a short period before his death, the playwright John Millington Synge (1871-1909) – their intention being to exert a more efficient and total control over the policy and operations.<sup>13</sup> They had more votes between them than all the other shareholders and could appoint any committees themselves. This had the effect of reducing democracy in the company even further, for hitherto the choice of plays had been made by general vote of the company members. In

its governance, therefore, this new company bore more similarities than the previous stage societies to the form used in non-profit repertory theatres today, although strictly speaking by 2000, only the Perth Theatre, Derby Playhouse and the amateur People's Theatre in Newcastle upon Tyne continued to be registered under equivalent British legislation for friendly, industrial and provident societies. Other non-profit theatres today, although additionally registered as charities, use the Companies Acts alone.<sup>14</sup>

Upon Horniman's departure, which was possible because her investment was no longer contractually tied to the Abbey, they struggled to raise replacement capital with new shares, profits from occasional tours and income from lectures given by Yeats in London. In this period, the Abbey was sustained by the well-supported plays of Seán O'Casey (1880-1964). Even so, it lost £4,000<sup>15</sup> in twelve years – equivalent to an accumulated deficit of £87,500 today – during which time the directors anticipated replacement of her grant with annual subsidy from the new Irish Free State. This was given in 1924, when no producing theatre in Britain or any other English-speaking country was, yet, receiving direct state assistance. It was the token sum of £850, equivalent to £18,500 today, and it remained insubstantial but significantly symbolic, until a new Abbey Theatre was built in 1966.<sup>16</sup>



1. *The device of the Abbey Theatre, Queen Maeve with wolfhound, by Elinor Monsell, woodcut 1904. In use on company publicity ever since, its application symbolises how the past has been described as acting as a 'living stakeholder' for this historically conscious company.*

Horniman's beneficence points to a recurrent management aspect in later serious repertory companies: that subsidy would be necessary for artistic freedom, ambition and continuity, but that, in return, there would of course be conditions attached to that subsidy. For this study, Horniman's patronage of the Abbey serves as an early example of the patron, whether individual, local or state government, as facilitator. And, as these relationships progressed, it also prefigures, in the Abbey management's responses, many aspects of the

contemporary, strained dealings between the arts funding system and irrepressible theatre-makers.

### **The hazards of renting a theatre: The Ulster Literary Theatre**

The Abbey's creative self-sufficiency and independence from London, in its choice of plays, actors and directors, has continued to the present day. Another company unwedded to London (or Dublin) for its choice of plays was the Ulster Literary Theatre, which operated from 1902 to 1934 in Belfast, presenting 51 productions, all of which were of Irish plays and only four of which were first presented at the Abbey Theatre.<sup>17</sup> Its aims were stated in its house magazine:

This Ulster has its own way of things...We have not striven to erect a barrier between Ulster and the rest of Ireland: but we aim at building a citadel in Ulster for Irish thought and art achievements, such as exists in Dublin. If the result is provincial rather than national it will not be our fault, but due to local influences over which we have no control, but which we shall not deliberately nourish and cultivate.<sup>18</sup>

These aims accentuate the determination to develop the company independently of theatre in the Irish Free State (after 1948 the Republic of Ireland). This company not only addressed the language and life of the Ulster scene, but also attempted to handle some of the themes and conflicts that have troubled the people of this Province. Although scholars of Irish theatre and the repertory movement in general, all discuss the Abbey Theatre, they have often ignored the probability that the Ulster Literary Theatre, in parallel with the Abbey, did as much or more to assist original drama and to create a school of playwrights as any company on the mainland of the British Isles.<sup>19</sup> Seasons were often given in repertoire and the company also toured to Dublin, other centres in Ireland, London and New York, where it generated much enthusiasm. In its choice of plays, the Ulster Literary Theatre drew inspiration from Dublin's Irish Literary Theatre but, whilst the Abbey was frequently entangled with internal conflicts over artistic mission, this company challenged the other's authority to call itself the National Theatre. Although there were no other jealousies, the Abbey Theatre–Ulster Literary Theatre axis might serve as a first example of repertory's propensity to spur artistic competition from a younger company with alternative energies. At any rate, when visiting Dublin, it often performed at the 'establishment' company's theatre, not by receiving a guaranteed fee from the National Theatre Society, but as another nationalistic theatre that rented the theatre.

In Belfast in its early years, from 1904 to 1907, it performed first at the Ulster Minor Hall and Clarence Place Hall and it was notable among early repertory companies for surviving the First World War. For this study, the company is also managerially significant because it was the first repertory to move its base from a small venue to a very large theatre: the Grand Opera House, which then had a 3,500 seating capacity, being four times the size of the Abbey Theatre.<sup>20</sup> The ambition and high risk of performing in a big theatre were exacerbated because, unlike the Abbey, it operated without either private patronage or government subsidy. The Ulster Literary Theatre's fundamental problem was that in renting the Grand Opera House, it had no permanent theatre of its own and, occupying the theatre between visits of touring companies, found continuity and a lack of continuous corporate identity to be insuperable. Although performing in such a capacious theatre (that is intimate for drama) would have been very ambitious, the company only lost money there after a lengthy period of moderate success. Two consecutively poorly attended productions in the 1934 season, *The Schemer* (Thomas Kelly, 1934) and *A Majority of One* (William Liddell, 1934), precipitated its liquidation.

### **Organisation for the first English repertory: The Gaiety Theatre, Manchester**

Not dissuaded by her turbulent Dublin experiences, Annie Horniman took her money, and her knowledge, to Manchester, where she started a trial repertory with the name of Playgoers' Theatre Company, at the Midland Hotel Theatre in 1907. In this small 531-seat theatre (that had once doubled as a chamber concert hall), she evaluated the opportunity for starting the first provincial repertory theatre in England. There were already eight other Manchester touring theatres competing with each other for business, as well as several suburban theatres. There were competitive uncertainties of 32,000 seats being on sale nightly in other theatres, and an enormous 50,000 if twice-nightly performances are taken into consideration. Manchester, whose population was then 714,000, offered only a potential audience of fourteen people for each available seat.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, the city was attractive to Horniman's entrepreneurial instincts because of its long record of support for the arts, especially from local government, industrial and philanthropic sponsorship. For example, it built the first rate-supported, free public library in 1852, to be accessible to persons of all classes, without distinction. Its Free Trade Hall had opened in 1856 where the city's Hallé Orchestra that grew from an exclusive society of 'Gentlemen's Concerts' had given its first subsidised concert in 1858. Like the repertory

‘ideal’, this orchestra had a policy of progressive musical education through cheap seats, proceeding to be socially inclusive through tours to many working class suburbs and the Lancashire towns of Bury, Bolton, Blackpool, Blackburn and Burnley.<sup>22</sup> For Horniman, the organisation of the Hallé might personify the resident ensemble ideal, because it created for the first time in British history a symphony orchestra with musicians and personnel that remained comparatively unchanged. This was unlike the London musical system, where the capital’s orchestras in the nineteenth-century were, until the formation of the Queen’s Hall Orchestra in 1895, mainly impromptu bands, although sharing many of the same musicians. Had there been a ‘crossover’ audience between drama and music in Manchester, therefore, theatregoers would easily recognise the advantage of higher quality performances that, like the Hallé concerts, were well prepared by an ensemble being in constant rehearsal. Further, Manchester was also attractive because it had been the only provincial city to form a branch of J.T. Grein’s Independent Theatre Society, in 1893.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike Dublin, Horniman could now choose her collaborators. She hired a management team, with assistance from the amateur theatre, notably the Garrick Society in Stockport, whose secretary, Edwin T. Hays, became her manager.<sup>24</sup> Horniman was also advised by her producer, Ben Iden Payne, who became her first resident director and who said about the choice of Manchester:

From the first, there was no doubt in Miss Horniman’s mind or mine that our aim should be to build some kind of repertory company. It would be senseless to undertake repertory in London. A London venture would compete with what appeared to be the well-established work of Granville Barker at the Royal Court Theatre. Miss Horniman, who spoke often of her Scottish grandfather, suggested trying to found a Scottish national theatre. Glasgow and Edinburgh were talked of as possible homes for our undertaking. I maintained, however, that the Scots themselves should be the prime movers in any national venture. In view of Miss Horniman’s Dublin experience, I argued, she should be leery of any enterprise that bore a nationalistic tag.<sup>25</sup>

In 1908, Horniman bought the freehold of the Comedy Theatre near to the Midland Hotel, renaming it the Gaiety Theatre, reducing its seating capacity from 1,500 to 1,009 whilst leaving ‘plenty of standing room’ for promenading patrons.<sup>26</sup> Payne and Horniman’s emphasis on locating the company outwith London, and their desire to discover new playwrights, succeeded in stimulating a ‘school’ of North West dramatists, which included local topics and characters in the work of Stanley Houghton (1881-1913) and Harold Brighouse (1882-1958). Houghton’s *Hindle Wakes* (1912) and Brighouse’s *Hobson’s Choice* (1915) were the enduring successes. The plays of John Galsworthy (1867-1933) were regularly performed.<sup>27</sup> The reforming director of the Elizabethan Stage Society,



William Poel (1852-1934), staged *Measure for Measure* (William Shakespeare, 1604) in the opening season, setting an early dedication to psychological productions of Shakespeare on Elizabethan lines, at this time poles asunder from the illusionary adaptations of the actor-managers visiting the city.<sup>28</sup> A resident acting team was maintained and thus the cohesion of managers, plays, directors and performers quickly built the Gaiety a good reputation amongst theatregoers. Favourable reviews and word of mouth commendations gradually widened the audience to include more than simply 'those intellectuals from the University, vegetarians, nature-lovers, weekend hikers in the Derbyshire hills and general marchers in the advanced guard of public opinion',<sup>29</sup> who were said, by the critic James Agate (1877-1947), to have been dominant among the Gaiety's theatregoers.

Like most early repertory companies, the Gaiety was also pledged to touring. Although it could be inferred that their country-hopping was a negation of the residing, Mancunian-rooted character of the company, it promoted the repertory 'ideal' by influencing other cities to start companies, as well as helping the Gaiety to define a sense of itself by promoting the 'Manchester School' of playwrights to new theatregoers and, later, to other producers.<sup>30</sup> The problem was that of establishing the machinery geared to the task, so that tours could bring in sufficient profits to make the ventures practical, without disturbing the schedule in Manchester. The dubiety of touring and partnerships with other theatres and communities – that concerns many repertory companies today, as will be demonstrated in the case study of the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh – remains to be solved. For the Gaiety, the experience and exchange of ideas would have been refreshing and invaluable to actors and technicians alike: playing before all kinds of audiences in small and large towns. For any company, its future growth is dependent on its contact with changing audiences. New publics, unexpected reactions and the criticism and enthusiasm of unprejudiced theatregoers, challenges the skill of actors and directors, as well as building the morale and prestige of the company as a whole. Although it toured frequently, the Gaiety did not develop a regular circuit like the stock companies or some subsidised companies today. Nevertheless, their tours may be seen to have prefigured the later stimulation by the repertory movement to bring the 'receiving' theatres in other towns and cities up to the technically sophisticated level of their own new or remodelled theatres.

Touring notwithstanding, the real inheritance of the Gaiety and its 'Lancashire Drama' was the large number of plays that were revived by, or whose playwrights were later premiered in other theatres.<sup>31</sup> At a time when new plays and ensemble acting were scarcely to be



seen in the provinces, the Gaiety decade was an extraordinary achievement, and remains so today.<sup>32</sup>

The effects of the First World War, together with incremental, external factors, forced Horniman to disband repertory in 1917 – the final company performance occurred on tour at the Grand Theatre, Blackpool – whereupon Horniman continued to run the Gaiety as a ‘lodging-house theatre’ until 1920.<sup>33</sup> She had been placed at a continuing disadvantage in competing with the many other Manchester theatres by a condition of the theatre licence which, unlike other theatres, forbade the sale of liquor at the Gaiety.<sup>34</sup> Although receipts from bars would have contributed much less to income than ticket sales, the profits would have been high, being the only significant source of income other than her own subsidy. Additionally, the Gaiety, like all theatres, was penalised by the introduction of Entertainments Duty in 1916 that began as a wartime measure but continued to disadvantage theatres until its abolition in 1957. Despite these unrelated influences and controls, that made it increasingly hard to operate and were not in Horniman’s or her supporters’ best interests, the Gaiety’s ten-year survival was longer than the insecure life-cycle of most small single-proprietor businesses in Edwardian Britain, because over half of them disappeared in less than three years and fewer than one-in-ten persevered for a decade. After appealing unsuccessfully to the Manchester *public* for an endowment of £40,000 (£872,400 today), she sold the theatre for £52,500 (£1,145,000) and it became a cinema.<sup>35</sup> Horniman retired to London, and when created Companion of Honour in 1933, she became the second of only two repertory crusaders to receive the distinction.<sup>36</sup>

Another Gaiety legacy was the example of a fruitful partnership between its leaders, whose harmonious working practices contributed to training a specialised repertory cadre, who developed new systems of theatre management. They emerged from the company to apply this knowledge in other theatres. In Dublin, Horniman had been a financier and patron, but in Manchester she was, additionally, its ‘producer’ and spokesperson, ultimately responsible for everything, but less active in performance control. Her artistic director and manager supported her and she supported them. In later repertory theatres, her function was, largely, replaced by that of a board of directors with whom the two senior management figures interacted, with varying degrees of adjustment and success. Nevertheless, Payne and Hays worked with Horniman in the same way, creating a smoother collaboration than the previous clashes between Horniman and the artistic directorate in Dublin. Even if her artistic director suppressed feelings of discord because of his youth, Payne had few doubts about her authority:

With her unusual personality, her rather eccentric dress, and the strikingly authoritative manner in which she spoke in public, it is not surprising that she soon became a prominent figure in the city. This I could understand, because I was very young for such a responsible position and had no knowledge of life beyond the limited experiences of a touring company, I could not help resenting the way in which she received all the credit for our artistic activities, although she had no share whatsoever in them. That the whole enterprise would have had no existence without her financial support seemed to me in my ignorance to be of little importance.<sup>37</sup>

Today there are supposedly clearer separations and less resentment but Payne and other directors who worked with Horniman were rarely embroiled in bad relationships with the boards of their future theatres. Horniman's second artistic director was the actor and director Lewis Casson (1875-1969), who had been an actor with Granville Barker at the Court Theatre and who left Manchester to join the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, briefly, as its second artistic director. Another emerging leader was the actor Basil Dean (1888-1978) who left in 1910 to become the first artistic director at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre. Another Horniman associate was Alfred Wareing (1898-1942), who, after starting his career as an advance-manager with the Shakespearean actor-manager Frank Benson, had been production manager at the Abbey Theatre. During a tour to Glasgow, he saw the potential for that city to start a similar theatre and he became the first artistic director of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. These people, together with other directors from the stage societies, became a national repertory oligopoly, helping to establish the movement in many more cities and towns.

## **Repertory-as-public-service: the Glasgow Repertory Theatre**

Importantly, the structure of the Gaiety Theatre symbolized a contradiction in the conception of early repertory: that whilst its resident acting ensemble and a number of local playwrights might anchor a company to its home city, most leaders and actors had come from London to create and be employed by an essentially private company. The Gaiety owed its founding and durability primarily to an inner-directed, resolute and wealthy owner and not to community ownership. An embedded cultural and social empathy with Manchester might be missing. At Manchester, it might be argued that the proprietor and her theatre professionals were only tenuously rooted in the community. In contrast, at the Hallé Orchestra, even though the founder-conductor was Italian, the majority of its musicians were Mancunian. Like the city's literary and philosophical societies, this locally organised institution helped to reinforce the culture of the city by bringing together a network of influential industrial, professional and political leaders. For repertory, a more democratic mode of management enriched by local business people and artists might give it the same, tighter bond with the home city, if it substantively participated in the development of a common set of values, including its artistic principles and management obligations. This would prevent a company from being subject to the interests of one person who might tire of it – often because of personal ambition and material advancement – or suddenly change its policy or even die in harness. It might also be supposed that the integration of a resident repertory company with local ownership and control might keep the interests of the wider theatregoing public to the fore.

To achieve this deeper understanding before public subsidy, a large number of local shareholders would be required. Through the structure of the limited company, a membership and a volunteer board of directors – representing diverse interests and taking an active interest in its activities – the community would support the repertory 'ideal' and make critical judgements via regular contact with the artists. They would become the core of an informed audience over a long time. In this scenario, a leadership from London would no longer necessarily determine the choice of plays but, in exchange, professional theatre-makers and a board of directors would be loyal to each other; both sides would gain new respectability in the community, sharing their belief in the civilising influence of good theatre. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suppose that this community involvement in professional theatre management was entirely new. By no means were all touring theatres owned and operated by the London actor-managers or the conglomerate chains of business managers, and not all of the others were concentrated in family or private management. During the nineteenth-century and outwith the West End, the construction and operation of

many touring and stock-company theatres had been financed and often led by locally residing people from other professions. In the North West, for instance, the Macclesfield Theatre had been built and run by textile manufacturers, physicians and brewers from 1811.<sup>38</sup> At the Lancashire cotton town of Rochdale, another ‘theatre for everybody’ was built and inspired by a joint-stock company comprising trades people such as a bookseller, soda water manufacturer, grocer, draper, joiner, confectioner, general dealer, shoemaker, innkeeper, plumber, mechanic and landlady. They were the owners of Rochdale Theatre Company Limited (from 1865), and they worked to make their theatre as ‘demystified’ and socially inclusive as any government funded progeny today.<sup>39</sup>

Notwithstanding these precedents, the next repertory theatre, in Glasgow, demonstrated similar local initiative for five years and, albeit with a cross-section of middle-class backers, was the next stepping-stone towards the form of non-profit theatre governance operating today. Like Manchester, Glasgow was an appropriate location, being one of the few British cities that could look London squarely in the face, not only vying with it as a big city, but also offering a metropolitan outlook with strong business, industrial and professional communities.

Glasgow Repertory Company was formed in 1909, being incorporated as the Scottish Playgoers Limited, and promoted as ‘Glasgow’s own theatre, financed by Glasgow money, managed by Glasgow men’ and established ‘to make Glasgow independent of London for its Dramatic Supplies’. It was, said the programmes, ‘a Citizens’ Theatre in the fullest sense of the term’.<sup>40</sup> A small board of seven directors comprised business persons, journalists and academics (including the playwright Neil Munro), plus a company secretary, the solicitor James Winning, who acted as the business manager. They supplemented each other’s talents and were closely involved, together with other shareholders, in the details of management, as witnessed by a voting system designed to enable the audience to nominate favoured plays for revival (*Illustration 2*). Another innovation, which surprisingly has rarely been repeated in later companies, was an advisory committee of young people, ‘chosen as a healthy counterpoise to any tendency there might be to let the box-office returns influence too much the selection of plays’.<sup>41</sup> In passing, it may be noted that the directors did not, unlike the nascent Scottish National Orchestra and other musical ensembles, enjoy elected employee representation on the board. Furthermore, unlike the Rochdale Theatre precedent, there were no blue-collar workers on the board to represent potential working class audiences. As if to foreshadow local government subsidy – councils being legally forbidden at this time from spending money on drama – productions were conspicuously advertised as being ‘Under the

‘Under the Patronage of the Right Honourable the Lord Provost, the Magistrates, and the Council of the City of Glasgow’. But although the shareholder board members and their youth committee may have been competent judges of a play, good, bad or indifferent, only one of them had worked on the stage and most would have known little of the workings of the theatre industry: the ‘grease paint, glue, canvas, and all that goes into a production’ as the Scottish theatre manager Robert Arthur (1856-1929) pointedly described it.<sup>42</sup> Instead, Wareing was the artistic director and driving force and, unlike the genesis of the Abbey and Gaiety companies, was confident enough to recommend that the board begin production without a trial season.

They appealed for working capital by public subscription, an approach used by Glasgow’s performing arts when the Scottish National Orchestra began concerts in 1893. This method sought to sell shares for the theatre company worth £2,000 (approximately £100,000 today), half of which would be called up, but unlike the orchestra – that had a particularly large capital gift of £20,000 (£1,000,000) from the rich ship-owner James Allen<sup>43</sup> – the theatre company struggled to attract any large investments or donations. Perhaps the board were also excited by the possibility of other industrialists who might have followed the philanthropy of Stephen Mitchell, who in 1874 had bequeathed £67,000 (£3,350,000) of his tobacco fortune for the establishment and future endowment of a public library in Glasgow. In any case, their appeal would have been in competition with a larger, concurrent subscription scheme to set up a guarantee fund of £140,000 (£7,150,000) to mount the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry in Glasgow in 1911. After realising that the theatre company’s targeted capital would be insufficient, the board of directors appealed for £3,000 (£150,000) in £1 shares, £2,000 being allotted to subscription.<sup>44</sup> But when the first production opened, *You Never Can Tell* (Bernard Shaw, 1897), only 1,000 shares had been sold and within seven weeks the working capital was practically spent.<sup>45</sup> Of course, the shareholders were protected from having to meet losses beyond the amount of their stake and although they now knew for certain that there was little hope of earning cash dividends, they managed to stage nine plays in this short season. Indeed, ‘so undoubted had been the artistic success achieved that the enthusiastic shareholders more than doubled their holding, and a further season of twelve weeks was entered upon’.<sup>46</sup>

Unlike Horniman’s company in Manchester, Glasgow’s first citizens’ repertory did not own or control a theatre, and this was, in addition to the shortage of working capital, a significant obstacle. Instead, like the Ulster Literary Theatre, it had to deal with the touring system from which it preferred to be distant. It hired the Royalty Theatre from Howard and

Wyndham Limited, the long-term owners and lessees of a profitable chain of Scottish and English theatres. Unlike Charles Frohman's arrangements at the Duke of York's repertory season, Howard and Wyndham did not carry any overheads for the Glasgow company – perhaps they were not as confident as Frohman or the Glasgow board of directors that a commercial audience existed for the 'new drama', at least not in their 1,287-seat theatre.

Commentators state the arrangement as a weekly rental of £80, which had to be paid in advance, with the proprietors retaining ancillary income from catering and programmes, although the company, long-sightedly, ran an interval bookstall 'where all published plays as well a large selection of relevant works' were on sale.<sup>47</sup> This weekly agreement confirms that the company was not, formally, a lessee; renting and leasing are not synonymous, because a lease would imply a long tenancy at the theatre, which the company might then operate in its entirety. This delineates another limitation on them: by guaranteeing the proprietors' weekly rental, they took risk additional to the prevailing touring companies' arrangements, which performed at the Royalty Theatre (Sauchiehall Street, b.1879, dem.1960) in between their own seasons on a box-office 'sharing' basis.

The rent was equivalent to a weekly £4,400 today, so the theatre could scarcely lose money, and even if Howard and Wyndham were not rapacious landlords, the practice of requiring a company to agree a guaranteed rent for the theatre was exceptional outwith London. The Glasgow rent was approximately 40 per cent of the sum paid by a producing company in London's West End at this time.<sup>48</sup> Even so, a fixed rent is surprising, because the likelihood of a Glasgow theatre going bankrupt in the absence of a guarantee would have been unlikely in the prosperous sphere of theatre ownership and construction in the 1910s but, on the other side, the arrangement gave the company a degree of artistic independence from Howard and Wyndham who, when box-office receipts were low, might have easily abused them by terminating a sharing contract. Rent was a considerable proportion of the company's overall expenditure – which averaged £350 (£20,000) annually – on top of which the theatre's resident stage staff had to be paid, and was, for Glasgow, additional to the similar causes of the Manchester Gaiety's later closure. Glasgow Repertory had to wind-up in 1914, when Howard and Wyndham refused to renew their agreement, preferring to house middling but profitable tours during the First World War.<sup>49</sup>

The company made losses in the first four years and, after Wareing left because of ill health in 1913 (a shortened season during which, because of accumulated but decreasing losses, only one-act plays were staged at the Alhambra Music Hall), it made lucrative gains

during the brief artistic directorship of Lewis Casson in 1914. Even so, the cumulative deficit at the end was 20 per cent of one year's turnover.<sup>50</sup> These are the year-end results:

<b>BOX 3.2 GLASGOW REPERTORY THEATRE FIVE YEAR END NET FINANCIAL RESULTS, 1910-1914</b>				
	Surplus/ (Deficit) <sup>51</sup>	Today's Value	Cumulative	Cumulative Today's Value
1909–1910	£(3,019)	£(150,950)	£(3,019)	£(150,950)
1910–1911	£(1,539)	£(76,950)	£(4,558)	£(227,900)
1911–1912	£(322)	£(16,100)	£(4,880)	£(244,000)
1912–1913	£(125)	£(6,250)	£(5,005)	£(250,250)
1913–1914	£790	£39,500	£(4,215)	£(210,750)

Like Manchester or indeed the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company in Edinburgh, the company faced competition from many other theatres, although because it performed in an existing theatre, it did not necessarily have to draw people away from other theatres or increase the total potential theatregoing audience, which would be the case in a company occupying a purpose-built or rehabilitated theatre. Nevertheless, there were nineteen theatres in Glasgow, of which five were music halls, and whose nightly total capacity was 42,775, and probably 65,000 when twice-nightly music hall performances are included. For Glasgow's population of 776,967, this represented an audience of only twelve potential theatregoers per seat per day. There had been a particular surge in theatre construction, with five new theatres opening the decade preceding the formation of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. To an observer today, this seems an extraordinarily high level of supply, but in terms of demand in an unsubsidised theatre market, theatregoing was, demonstrably, a majority pastime, not then regarded as a preserve of wealthy, educated or privileged people. There was, unlike today, no controversy of Glasgow being overbuilt with theatres, when there is now a larger market potential of 229 people per seat, for a lower citywide seating capacity of 13,541.<sup>52</sup> From this angle of demography and theatre-supply, it is little wonder that Glasgow Repertory productions had to stagger under the frighteningly rapid and laborious strain of a weekly change of play.

The formidable task was to attract an 'intelligent' but mainstream audience to support



penetrating drama in a big theatre. In its choice of plays there were clear parallels with the Court Theatre and Manchester Gaiety programme, including nine plays by Shaw, and several by Ibsen, Granville Barker, Brighouse, and Galsworthy.<sup>53</sup> One third of all productions were of new plays, a remarkable accomplishment when compared with mainstream Scottish repertory theatres today. In its first season, it had the accolade of presenting the first play by Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) in Britain: *The Seagull*. The company aspired, ultimately, to be a national theatre like the Abbey and had, like the Gaiety, ambitions to establish a 'school' of playwrights – attested by its name change to The *Scottish* Repertory Theatre in 1913. However, there was, with the exception of J.M. Barrie (1860-1937) – who had one new play staged, *The Twelve Pound Look* (1910) and a revival of *The Admirable Chrichton* (1902) – no new wave comparable to the Irish surge in this period. Few of the company's Scottish plays matched the masterworks of the Court or foreign playwrights and, despite their efforts and encouragement of other dramatists, most new plays perished after a first production.

These first repertory theatres in Manchester and Glasgow were, as discussed, great in vision. Though sometimes outrunning their achievements, their mission statements (Box 3.3) state the multiple reasons for their existence publicly, helping their organisers to emphasise policy with a certain singularity or distinctiveness, which was important at this time because their work was largely unrelated to other theatres in these cities. Neither statement, though challenging and similar to the other, is especially explicit. For instance, in view of the number of tours undertaken, it is notable that this prolific aspect of their work was excluded. Nevertheless, the statements offered a sense of direction for formulating the companies' plans, and would have given theatregoers, critics, journalists, artistic directors, artists and staff an understanding of the nature and structural coherence of the company. This was especially important in Glasgow that was, unlike Manchester and as discussed, founded on new democratic principles of local ownership with citizen shareholders. Of course, success for any company is really dependent on the brilliance and synergy of its playwrights, directors and actors. It can only be realised by an intricate infusion of mission with day-to-day decisions and response to crises, for, however carefully prepared a business plan may be, success can never be preordained. Even so, each statement realistically reflects and confirms adherence to the repertory 'ideal', without itemising the aims as an impossible dream, except that in Glasgow, which was additionally motivated towards being a Scottish national theatre, realising 'a purely Scottish drama' proved, in the main, elusive.



**BOX 3.3 PERSPICUOUS MISSION STATEMENTS  
FOR PROTOTYPAL REPERTORY COMPANIES**

<b>GAIETY THEATRE, MANCHESTER<sup>54</sup></b>	<b>GLASGOW REPERTORY THEATRE<sup>55</sup></b>
<p>(a) A repertory theatre with regular change of programmes, not wedded to any one school of dramatists, but thoroughly catholic, embracing the finest writing by the best authors of all ages, and with an especially widely open door to the present-day British writers, who will not now need to sigh in vain for a hearing, provided only that they have something to say worth listening to, and say it in an interesting and original manner. Comedy and tragedy will both be given, but in the former the humour will be clean and hearty; it will not be fatuous, nor with the double entendre characteristic of so much "comedy".</p> <p>(b) A permanent Manchester stock company of picked front rank talent.</p> <p>(c) Efficient production.</p> <p>(d) Popular prices.</p>	<p>(a) To establish in Glasgow a Repertory Theatre which will afford playgoers and those interested in the drama an opportunity of witnessing such plays as are rarely presented under the Touring Company system.</p> <p>(b) To organise a Stock Company of first-class actors and actresses for the adequate representation of such plays.</p> <p>(c) To conduct the business of Theatrical Managers and play producers in Glasgow and other places, so as to stimulate a popular interest in the more cultured, important and permanent forms of dramatic art.</p> <p>(d) To encourage the initiation and development of a purely Scottish drama by providing a stage and an acting company which will peculiarly adapted for the production of plays national in character, written by Scottish men and women of letters.</p> <p>(e) To render to the drama the same kind of service as the Scottish Orchestra Concerts have rendered to music.</p>

Neither company went on to detail its aims in today's unattractive and platitudinous terminology of rigid 'targets', 'best value' or money-related 'performance indicators', when monitoring success in the era of arts administration and companies' accountabilities to external stakeholders are a necessary ingredient of achieving that success. Nevertheless, the statements enabled Horniman and the Glasgow board to declare that they pursued communitarian and educational goals. These became increasingly critical to repertory theatres. Since the objectives were generalised enough to accommodate a range of contrasting purposes and oblique ends, they have often been repeated, expanded and

redefined by later companies, confirming them as admirable yardsticks by which the whole repertory movement can be judged today.

An equivocal objective in the Manchester aims is that of 'Popular prices'. At the Gaiety these were, in 1912, 5s, 4s, 3s, 2s, 1s 6d, 1s and 6d.<sup>56</sup> Although pricing policy is excluded from the Glasgow mission statement, admissions at the Royalty Theatre were, in practice, also advertised as being at 'Popular prices' – a customary Edwardian marketing soubriquet – and in this sample year they were an identical range to those charged at the Manchester Gaiety Theatre, with the exception of a small number of boxes on sale for 25s and 16s.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, these prices were the *same* as those charged by commercial touring companies at the large commercial theatres Manchester and Glasgow.<sup>58</sup> This would seem surprising to modern theatre management. Repertory theatres, which went on to use welfare arguments about the social accessibility of theatre through pricing, invariably apply lower-price ticket policies than do commercial theatres, in the hope of shaping a new audience for adventurous and little-known plays. Because pricing is a vital element of marketing, it warrants discussion on its own. An explanation may lie in setting prices to reflect the costs of the production – without subsidy, they might have been unable to do otherwise – although costs are often a poor guide to what theatregoers will pay. In Glasgow, the theatre management Howard and Wyndham may have determined the Repertory Theatre's prices as part of its hiring contract, although because the Royalty Theatre was utilised at a fixed rental the proprietors' income was, as noted, guaranteed. This explanation would not apply in Manchester, because the Horniman's company controlled the theatre. Socially, of course, the theatre as a whole did not have so many effective competitors and there was not such a wide choice of entertainment as today. Freedom of choice was less, but the plays and styles offered by these two companies were, as discussed, more radical, enquiring and venturesome than most on offer in the commercial theatre.

In order to grapple with their minority interest, the companies remoulded the membership schemes of the London stage societies' into a theatre subscription, which was described by P.P. Howe as:

An essential part of any vigorous experiment in repertory, providing as it does the best of all tests of the steady existence of public demand, and of the strength of its conviction.<sup>59</sup>

Subscription originated in German theatres, where it was known as 'abonnement'. Theatregoers bought a certain seat for a fixed sequence of performances. In Glasgow, coupons in books of six tickets were designed to enable the company to drawback a

regular, committed audience by offering an innovative discounting scheme, based on the principle of a reduction for buying a quantity, as demonstrated here:

<b>BOX 3.4 GLASGOW REPERTORY THEATRE LOYALTY MARKETING BY SUBSCRIPTION SELLING</b>					
<i>For ease of interpretation, prices have been converted from shillings and pence as a rounded decimal of £</i>	Cost of 6 plays to subscribers	(Casual Full Price per play)	Subscriber Price per play	Subscriber Discount per play	% Discount
6 Stalls Coupons	£1.25	£0.25	£0.21	£0.04	16%
6 Dress Circle Coupons	£1.00	£0.20	£0.17	£0.03	15%
6 Back Stalls Coupons	£0.75	£0.15	£0.13	£0.02	13%
6 Family Circle Coupons	£0.75	£0.15	£0.13	£0.02	13%
6 Reserved Pit Coupons	£0.38	£0.08	£0.06	£0.02	25%
6 Ordinary Pit Coupons	£0.25	£0.05	£0.04	£0.01	25%
6 Amphitheatre Coupons	£0.25	£0.05	£0.04	£0.01	25%
6 Gallery Coupons	£0.13	£0.03	£0.02	£0.01	33%

Subscription had to be an ‘open’ scheme, because play selection was not made far in advance, at best scheduled in rapid cycles of up to fourteen productions in only three months, as confirmed by this programme editorial:

Many requests are received at the Theatre for information as to future arrangements – the Plays selected for production and the dates on which they will be produced. It is not desirable however to define particulars of the programme for more than three weeks or a month in advance. A number of new and interesting plays have been selected provisionally for production, but the possibility of securing other attractive work has not yet been exhausted. Indeed since the opening of the Season, several most promising plays have been submitted, including one or two striking examples of work in the modern school of playwrights.<sup>60</sup>

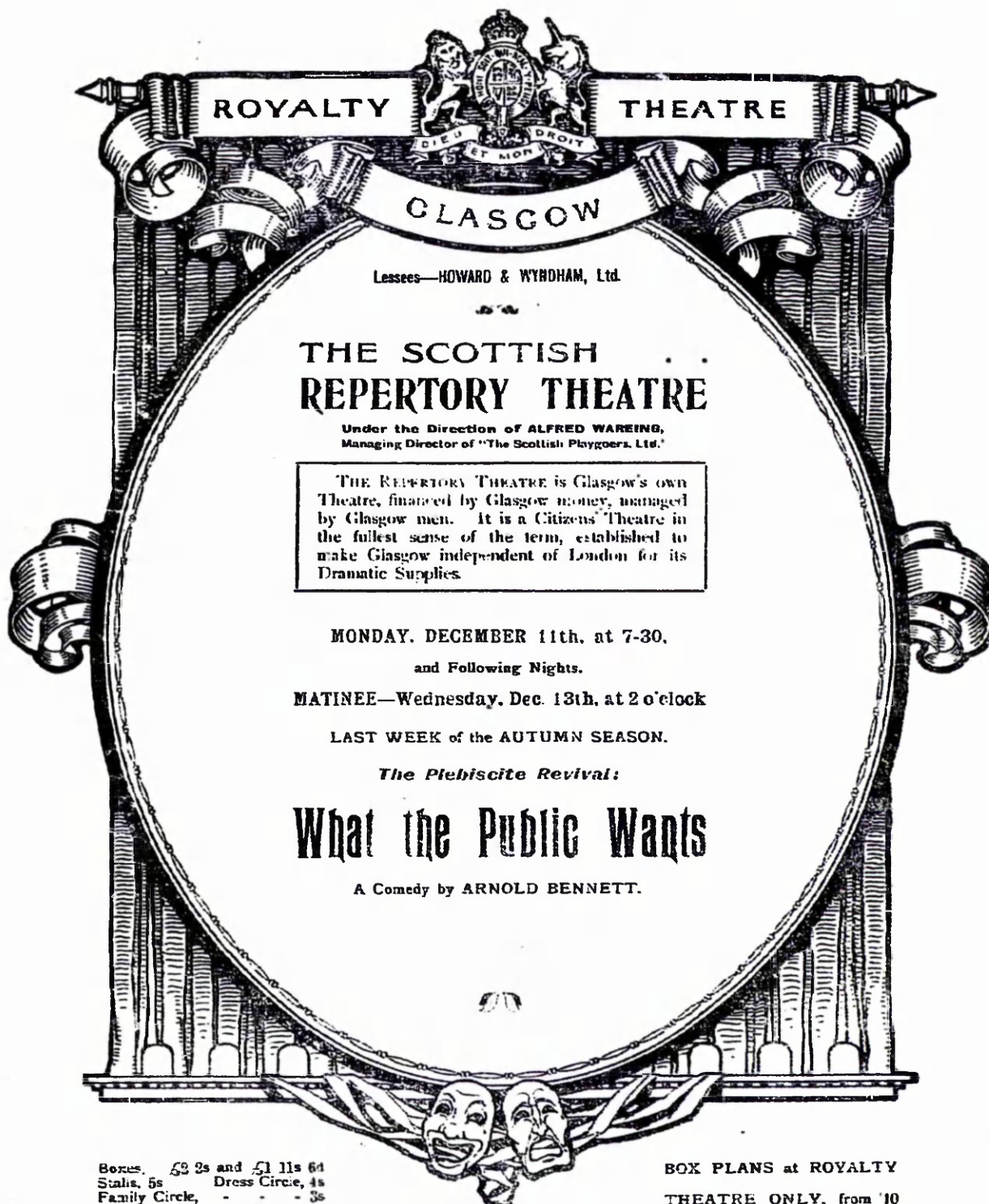
William Archer and Harley Granville Barker’s plan for a National Theatre had assumed that two-thirds of all seats would be sold to subscribers.<sup>61</sup> This would enhance the stability of the theatre by making it easier to plan full seasons and to maintain a constant cash flow. In Glasgow, the scheme succeeded only partially, selling 300 subscription-series in the company’s final season, which would guarantee an average of only 43 patrons at each performance during a one-week run. It is intriguing to speculate what impact, if the Glasgow scheme had ever reached Granville Barker’s sizeable target, subscription would have had on the choice of plays. It has latterly been the case that, after two or three years, subscribers often tire of a theatre and a challenging repertoire, making it harder to reach

new members unless popular plays are substituted for difficult new ones. In this quandary, a theatre dedicated to new plays often finds it hard to survive without forsaking its original purposes -- and most of its original staff and theatregoers. In fact, the National Theatre of Great Britain (from 1963) has never adopted subscription selling but, for now, the Glasgow scheme is evidence of the first signal of an attempt to consolidate a loyal audience for repertory by marketing. As will be shown in the case study of The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, subscription became a mainstay of promotion from the 1980s and this company now has the second best-supported season-ticket scheme in British repertory today, fluctuating between 3,000 and 4,000 annual subscribers: an achievement representing approximately one third of attendees for each play production. Meanwhile, it may be noted that in the commercial theatre, whose prices these early repertory companies imitated, productions were already accessible to everybody: the difference between top and bottom prices was twelve-fold, whereas today's differential has reduced to approximately three-fold because the bottom price has increased at a higher rate than the top. In comparison with other pastimes, commercial theatre was already an affordable entertainment.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, because the theatres drew a large part of their receipts from the cheapest seats, in the large galleries and pit, it could be inferred that the problem of audience support for repertory was not to do with the public's ability to pay for it, at this time. Rather, it was whether they were inclined to make conscious decisions to attend at all: tensions between 'education' and 'access' being nonexistent in the pre-subsidy era.



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## Repertory-as-theatre proprietor: Liverpool Playhouse

The Glasgow model of a citizens' theatre was developed in Liverpool, where theatregoers who had seen productions at the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester formed the Liverpool Playgoers' Society. They invited Alfred Wareing to address a public meeting, whereupon a guarantee fund was established to underwrite a company in the organisational style of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. Whether or not the supporters realised it, they possessed extrinsic advantages for creating an audience by locating repertory in Liverpool because, with a comparable population of 747,000, there were only 27,178 seats in its fourteen theatres. This represented a ratio of seats to population of only 1:28, being approximately one-half of the potential competition faced by the repertory companies in Manchester and Glasgow.<sup>63</sup>

In 1911, Basil Dean was engaged as 'controller and producer' and a successful six-week trial season was given at the 2,020 seat Kelly's Theatre, making an atypical profit of £800 (£46,500).<sup>64</sup> Investments received from a broad circle of 1,200 shareholders were left unspent. The society was therefore confident enough to incorporate as Liverpool Repertory Theatre Limited and then, after realising that it could not afford to build a purpose-built home, acquired the Star Theatre. Thus, the razor-edge problems of dealing with a theatre landlord experienced at Belfast and Glasgow might be resolved: Liverpool was the first repertory to own the freehold of a theatre, when this music hall was purchased for £28,000 (£1,630,000). Even though £22,000 (£1,280,000) of this was on mortgage, it would not have to deal with a proprietor. The company was free to redesign and modernise the theatre as it saw fit, which cost a further £4,000 (£233,000). This was paid in shares to the architectural practice run by Sir Charles (Herbert) Reilly (1874-1946), a prime mover in the company who was also chairman of its board of directors and professor of architecture at the University of Liverpool. He worked with fellow architect Stanley Adshead, the professor of town planning at the university. Because no dividends were expected, this was the first instance of in-kind corporate sponsorship in repertory. The seating capacity was reduced from 2,100 to only 760. This avoided the trap of overhousing the company, whilst limiting the potential for high income from a hit show. The refurbishment scheme also enlarged the shallow music hall stage-depth to a more suitable 32-feet.<sup>65</sup> However, because of delays to these alterations, the company was forced to open the first production, *The Admirable Crichton* (J.M. Barrie, 1902), at the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester.

The Liverpool company announced in their programmes that 'the immediate success of the venture will be the individual responsibility of every member of the audience',<sup>66</sup> and for the first two years the theatre was well attended for plays that, as in Manchester and Glasgow, reflected social changes, such as *Strife* (John Galsworthy, 1909) and *The Pillars of Society* (Henrik Ibsen, 1889).

### **Repertory and the experience of board-management relations: Liverpool Playhouse**

Although ownership of a building was at this time a preferred aspiration for repertory, for this study Liverpool is equally significant because the first full-blown example of inveterate dissension between an honorary board of directors and an artistic director's authority is open to view. Of course, the twelve-member board, drawn from the city's professional and business worlds, represented the white-collar public but in the sense that they might have been a microcosm of the audience, that public could exert considerable direct influence on artistic matters. The flashpoint was often the choice of plays, especially new or foreign drama. For instance, the nomination of ten new plays in the season of 1913-1914, out of a total of 23 productions, was an all-time high. But, experience of their poor box-office results, always unpredictable for premieres, led progressively to more cautious choices and in the next twenty years an average of only three new plays was staged in each year.<sup>67</sup> Although harmony was usually achieved, Basil Dean chafed at the board's trespassing on territory that he considered his domain. In his autobiography, he disinterred the problems of an entrepreneurial director who sought autonomy, reluctantly sharing decision-making and authority with a strong-minded committee:

The saying that money is the root of all evil was reversed in our case, for it was the lack of it which led to battles royal among the directors. Every Thursday they assembled in the front office, fresh from dealing with their own affairs, and eager to give the theatre the benefit of their special expertise. Attendances were regular and enthusiastic. But conflicts of opinion soon caused schism in the board-room. On the left were those who supported the chairman's desire for experiment – but without expense! To the right were those agreed to any production likely to improve the bank balance, regardless of its effects on the theatre's reputation. The small group who understood my desire to steer a middle-course were the 'crossbenchers' of the assembly.

At first the directors did not select the plays: they merely vetoed them. There were often pitched battles before final decisions reached. Suggestions put forward at the chairman's behest were usually thought to be too advanced by the business members of the board. Commercial plays to redress an adverse verdict at the box-office were torn quietly apart by the University members. The astonishing amount of tension and excitement which the meetings aroused was doubtless good for the theatre; it certainly was for me...after a while the chairman began to control more than guide

the arguments. When results were good at the box-office he would forget the anxieties of the previous meeting and chide me for not being more venturesome. The trouble was that [he] was fundamentally a teacher, a professor. Artists were a breed he did not understand, neither how they thought nor how to handle them. At the risk of contradicting myself, I must add however that he did act as a sort of gadfly, injecting the antidote of intelligent criticism into the complacent cup-and-saucer atmosphere which invaded the theatre whenever business was good.<sup>68</sup>

Unlike Horniman, who brought the Gaiety Theatre into being through private money, or even Wareing, who by persuading the board into formal existence was effectively the ultimate force in Glasgow, Dean had to negotiate an optimal choice of plays within board demands that were conditioned, in addition to the box-office, by their share-donations. In the minds of Manchester theatregoers, the Gaiety was homonymous with Horniman, whereas Liverpool demonstrates higher pressures of public service because the theatre was, in practice, owned *and* controlled by its 'society': a somewhat amorphous entity represented by the theatregoer-donors. Over and above the responsibilities of balancing the books through operations, they had an extra stake in the company because of refurbishment cost over-runs and ensuing mortgage debts. With compelling financial crises, including a deficit of £1,858 (£101,000) in 1913,<sup>69</sup> no artistic director, however unshakably devoted to an overall policy, could have the discretion to select plays, as he or she would probably have desired. Choices had to consider financial realities, but given that finances were such an important part of the input that the board had to consider, Dean's recollection of their meetings suggests a good partnership and balanced commitment to occasional risk by all concerned.

At Liverpool, the degree to which an artistic director was willing to choose plays by this time-consuming consensus and rapport with a board, often negotiated through the forceful but skilful personality of a chairman, became a feature of repertory management. Indeed, these tensions may be rendered as the one of the distinguishing features of the struggle to create and maintain the profession of theatre management in the repertory model: an artistic director's presupposition that he or she had to embody the ability to convince lay people that only members of the theatre profession know enough about the theatre to evaluate practitioners' work. Moreover, right up to the recurrent skirmishes at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh – and almost in defiance of a near-century fund of repertory theatres' experience – there remains the irresistible impression that, whatever the political sensitivities and maturity of an artistic director, many boards of directors still do not regard the management as doing a *real* job. For instance, at the Scottish National Theatre Society (which was the successor company to Glasgow Repertory Theatre) that



feeling was mutual, as when Tyrone Guthrie (1900-1971), its artistic director from 1926, recalled his board having:

a weakness [.....] which is surely endemic in lay committees directing the policy of enterprises in which they take a benign interest but about which they have almost no technical knowledge – they knew, neither severally nor collectively, neither in practice nor even in general terms, what they really did want.<sup>70</sup>

Of course, in defence of boards, the law holds them – and not the artistic director – responsible for the theatre company even if they do not have detailed knowledge of the theatre, let alone reflect in their membership the social composition of the audience. Like Dean and Guthrie, most artistic directors have often regarded their board as a necessary evil but, on the other side the most important aspect might be the need for the board and management to try to provide an environment where play-choices are made with enthusiasm rather than reluctance; decisions made for reasons other than artistic potential are often doomed unless a director craves to inspire and guide a production from the outset.

Problems of play selection and the Liverpool board applied also to extant scripts, for although playwrights staged in the first seasons included many of the Court Theatre's authors, an increasing proportion were 'drawing-room comedies' from the commercial theatre. One of the few foreign plays chosen, the ambitious *Hannele* (Gerhart Hauptmann, 1893) – that had been one of Stanislavski's biggest successes at the Moscow Art Theatre and which Dean selected because of its author's prominence as a Nobel Prize winner in 1913 – was his most expensive production and a failure at the box-office. This was especially so on tour to Manchester, which the Liverpool company undertook without guaranteed income. It lost £800 (£46,500) in two weeks.<sup>71</sup> Dean recalled the impending personal disaster:

I knew it was only a question of time before the axe would fall. One Thursday afternoon after a long and solemn meeting, from which I was excluded, the board gave me notice to quit at the end of the season... [The] board of directors has been the source of [the theatre's] strength and of its weakness... There has been too much board-room and not enough green-room in the theatre's record.<sup>72</sup>

His pronouncement about the Liverpool board has been reiterated by countless artistic directors in other cities and similar situations, with or without public subsidy. At this time, a grant from the local authority was unattainable and the company's community stature was, in practice, informal. This meant that the board was free from overwhelming external constraints, even if the artistic director coped with internal interference. The shareholders

were concerned not to subscribe to writing-off accumulated losses, let alone standing the chance of more debt being incurred in the future. In these circumstances, the directors also forced the chairman to resign, although he remained a director until 1948.<sup>73</sup> The wider group of company shareholders played no part in his removal and naturally, unlike future shocks at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, no local authority or arts council was there to make the chairman's resignation a condition of financial rescue. Even so, someone from the business world replaced university 'representation': Colonel Sir John J. Shute, who chaired the company for 35 years to 1948.<sup>74</sup> A new artistic director, the actor and playwright Laurence Hanray (1874-1947), was elected from the 21-member company and a plan for organisational 'downsizing' was proposed by the board, to include fewer actors in fewer plays for a shorter resident season, compensated by occasional co-productions with the Gaiety Theatre and visiting companies. As in a mirror of today's involuntary remedies, the board was moving towards a business bromide of compromised repertory management. Like the economics of repertory today, the Liverpool board realised that the marginal costs of additional home-grown productions on tour outside their theatre by the resident company were generally more expensive than an additional production or extra performances conducted at the theatre by a visiting company. Of course, this was not such a soft option as today, when the arts councils have promoted the proliferation of serious small-scale touring drama companies in preference to encouraging the interchange and circulation of high quality repertory theatre shows. Even so, the Liverpool employees resisted the board's cuts and, backed by the actors' demands, Hanray was able to persuade them to stabilise the theatre, astonishingly by approving plans to *increase* the number of productions to 31, not only tempered by the nomination of well-known plays but also even to perform in repertoire for part of 1913. During this time, the financial advantage of reviving popular successes brought the theatre back from the brink of liquidation.

Upon the outbreak of the First World War, with immediate experiences in its favour, the board, understandably, wanted to close the theatre, principally because its company directors, acting company and staff might be enlisted. Two weeks' notice of termination was given to all contracts, whereupon the employees offered to take, and were given, responsibility for running the theatre as a collective, known as the 'Commonwealth'. This organisational model was, of course, a time-honoured principle of theatre management, practised as early as the 1590s by Philip Henslowe (c.1550-1616), landlord and facilitator of the Rose Playhouse and The Admiral's Men, London, where actors in his and other Elizabethan theatre companies were contracted as 'sharers'.<sup>75</sup> It is also interesting to venture whether its recurrence at Liverpool was impressed upon the actors by the now self-

governing practices at Britain's oldest symphony orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic that, when it was founded in 1840, was the first to invest its mainly itinerant musicians with authority over artistic, strategic and personnel management. In any event, the actors contracted to pay the board 25 per cent of box office receipts in respect of the theatre's overheads. For drama, the scheme made the company something of a maverick organisation. Its radical attempt to democratise most aspects of artistic policy and administration suggested that repertory might even be financially self-supporting, by making no losses during the war.<sup>76</sup> During this 'Commonwealth', in an omniscient response to jangling press accusations of the board being 'over-enthusiastic repertorists', they renamed the Repertory Theatre as the Playhouse in 1916, 'to dispel the air of intellectuality and gloom which it was said clung to the earlier name'.<sup>77</sup>

This interregnum - that was coordinated by actor Madge McIntosh (1875-1950) - often deviated from serious drama by producing original 'intimate revues', devised by Ronald Jeans (1887-1973). Exceptionally, one of these, *Hullo, Repertory!* satirised the company and the entire repertory movement. An opening scene lampooned a meeting of the board of directors, the first and probably only occasion when these proceedings have featured on stage.<sup>78</sup> Other send-ups included the travesty 'Miss A.B.C.D.E.F. Hornblower' of the 'Graveity' Theatre, Manchester and the production toured to Birkenhead, Manchester and the capital, but was a failure at the London Coliseum. This London visit had followed a season at the Kingsway Theatre when the press took equally avid but more complimentary interest in the four-play repertoire.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, the transfers could be considered a first example of repertory's ongoing psychological dependence on London. At home, the board and theatrogoers would note critics' opinions and, if favourable, they would be exploited by a company. Any theatre that is struggling to survive would not easily ignore them, good or bad. Even with an inquisitive and encouraging local press, favourable national recognition has often helped to turn the tide, just as damning reviews might jeopardise an artistic director's employment. Indubitably, consideration of the media is an important factor in the growth of the repertory movement. As with the theatre, London stood for media power but it also stood for the insularity and prejudice of that power. Newspapers had correspondents throughout the provinces and they reported on significant events, but their despatches filtered through London and London decided what the provinces should read. Northern England and Scotland were exceptions: the *Manchester Guardian* was always a national newspaper and employed a theatre critic for the North West whose reviews were read in a national edition. Scotland was, of course, less bonded to London and its morning newspapers, *The Glasgow Herald* and *The Scotsman*, employed critics who whose overnight reviews of repertory productions were read throughout Scotland. For

repertory companies elsewhere, London critics judged them by London 'standards' and their arts editors have tended to ignore them. A repertory company would find it difficult to invert this situation, but by touring to London, a season might decrease its members' sense of isolation from the excitements of the theatrical epicentre, helping management to attract talented artists and generally exposing the company to media and peer group rating. From then to now, few repertory companies have eschewed the London limelight on principle, a notable exception being the post-1969 leadership of the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow that, on the few occasions when their productions have transferred to or been revived in London, the company has not actively sought and exploited the customary institutional acknowledgement in publicity and advertising.

Meanwhile, after 1917, the 'Commonwealth' at Liverpool Playhouse yielded, with good grace, to the pre-war structure of hegemonic board-domination. In the wake of the board's serial-appointment and sacking of eleven artistic directors in only seven years – including Nigel Playfair (1874-1934) and, for three years, the first example of joint artistic direction with W. Bridges Adams (1889-1965) and his wife Muriel Pratt (1891-1945), all of who went on to run renowned companies – consonance followed with the appointment of the Scottish actor-director William Armstrong (1883-1952). He trained at Glasgow Repertory Theatre as an assistant stage manager and ran Liverpool from 1922 to 1940. During this time, the board, though kept informed on all matters of policy and money, developed greater confidence in the artistic director and in 1936, when they moved from fortnightly runs to three-weekly repertory after clearing the mortgage on the theatre freehold, they gave him more rather than less artistic licence.

In Armstrong's first season, Maud Carpenter (1895–1977), who had joined the Playhouse as assistant manager in 1910 and was a member of the 'Commonwealth', became general manager. In 1945, she became the first woman to join the company's board of directors. This is always an uncommon promotion for any manager or artistic director; later, the Companies Acts (as well as legislation by the Charity Commissioners) usually precluded board membership for employees in non-profit distributing companies. Although boards could not therefore compensate work done by members, her directorship (that was permitted when the company was limited by shares) demonstrates early recognition of the need for a theatre board and management to be on the same side as partners in their roles.

In 1962, when Carpenter retired after 51 years – 40 being spent as general manager – she was, and remains today, the longest serving administrator of any single theatre company.<sup>80</sup> In the pantheon of twentieth-century lady theatre managers, her work has been

overshadowed by critical attention to that of Annie Horniman and Lilian Baylis (who managed the Old Vic Theatre, London between 1898 and 1937, and transformed it, with the Sadler's Wells, into a classical drama, opera and ballet theatre).<sup>81</sup> But whereas Horniman (who was a patron and proprietor) and Baylis (who was a lessee then manager) may be described as *entrepreneurs*, Carpenter, because she was partnered with a succession of artistic directors, may technically be described as an *intrapreneur*. She helped the spirit of repertory to blossom as an employee, unobtrusively keeping the company entrepreneurial through bleak times, long after it ceased to be run by the entrepreneurial founders. Liverpool became the longest-lived repertory theatre in Britain, until its liquidation and closure in 1998 although, for this study, the effectiveness of the harmonious Carpenter-Armstrong partnership points to another linchpin of repertory organisation.



3. Maud Carpenter

The Playhouse historian, Grace Wyndham Goldie, described Carpenter's personality, position and accomplishment in the tone of a euphonious person specification:

A thousand miles from being temperamental, she resembles William Armstrong only in her devotion to the theatre. In spite of, or because of, their contrasted characters they work in the most remarkable accord. They have their own separate spheres. He is concerned with production and generally with everything behind the scenes. She is responsible to the magistrates for the building [*as licensee*] and for the conduct of the theatre; she looks after the keeping of the theatre's books, entertainment tax returns, advertising, all purchases for the theatre, the contracts and salaries of the company, the engaging and payment of staff, all booking arrangements, furnishing redecoration and cleansing, and since in the Playhouse the bars and the right of

selling tea and coffee, chocolates, ices and so on are not sub-let as they are so often in other theatres, she deals with the management of all these things. The routine work keeps her occupied during the day. In the evenings she is always in the theatre to see it opened and to see that everything is punctual and in good order... An inquisitive finger is always exploring for dust... Standards are high; discipline is strictly maintained.... The result is that every half penny of expenditure is carefully watched, everything is managed with economy and the Playhouse is filled with invaluable atmosphere. All this efficiency is the result of a combination of hard work, shrewdness and natural ability. But there is more to it than that. They spring from a devotion to the theatre and pride in the productions; so intense that criticism directed against the Playhouse is felt personally and the slightest mishap is a personal blow. Nothing is put before the interests of the theatre.<sup>82</sup>

Significantly, Goldie implied that there was neither blurring of the definitions nor confusion of the duties of the manager and artistic director; because Carpenter – operating within territorial limits but sharing the motivation and enthusiasm of the board and artistic director – always remembered that she was there to support the work of the Playhouse. She enabled the artistic director and the creative team to entertain and communicate with the theatregoers; as a diplomatic spokesperson, she was valorised as the ‘Lady Mayoress of Liverpool’.<sup>83</sup> Although the artistic and managerial sides of a repertory company are inextricably complementary, the relationship was more straightforward then, unmeshed in the paraphernalia of subsidy and arts administration. Power struggles and misunderstandings between artistic director and manager, which have so often contributed to making the organisation of repertory a cause of trouble at The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh and elsewhere, were unknown in Liverpool. Thus, Goldie’s encomium might now be rendered as a courteous valediction for the demise of collaborative repertory management, for the disappearance of her generation of theatre managers may have a lot to do with companies’ difficulties today.

## Repertory-as-purpose-built theatre: Birmingham Repertory Theatre

The *joint* effort of an artistic director and manager was, at first, less important for achieving self-sufficiency at another company: Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Like the Gaiety Theatre, this sixth repertory prototype enjoyed the prodigious private patronage of a founder, but on this occasion the sponsor was also a theatre-maker. It was established – in Britain's second largest city – in the season of 1911-1912, growing out of an amateur group, The Pilgrim Players, founded in 1907 by the playwright, director, manager and stage designer, Barry (Vincent) Jackson (1879-1961). The Pilgrim Players were a peripatetic Midlands ensemble, attracting a regular audience of approximately 500 for each play. Emphasis was laid on the continuity of work, to create support for when they turned professional. The wealthy Jackson, who was born in Birmingham where he remained a life-long resident, financed the first purpose-built repertory theatre, which was built at a cost of £32,000 (£1,750,000) in only four months, opening at its city-centre location on time and on budget in 1912. It remained the company's home until the present Birmingham Repertory Theatre was opened in 1971. From the outset, his company could, unlike Liverpool, stand tenaciously against the pursuit of commercial success, adhering to artistic enquiry, as he wrote in 1924:

We English are relentless and untiring in pursuit of anything save art. Though we have much drama in us, it certainly does not show itself in the form of vital interest in the theatre. The fact is that no mass of people will ever take initiative in raising its aesthetic standard, but rather the reverse. So long as our theatres are organised to show a handsome profit, in other words to depend upon the taste of the masses, they will sink further and further from the ideal... Art has no possible relation to money; the spiritual cannot be estimated by the material.<sup>84</sup>

Jackson deliberately sought to bend the public will rather than to follow or be influenced by the existing values of the community: in this respect Birmingham Repertory Theatre, like the Abbey, differed noticeably from most repertory theatres today, which prefer, or are persuaded by the arts councils, to involve the public through ulterior and impalpable social policies. Even so, the company called for an intellectually curious audience and, unavoidably perhaps, this approach led Jackson to cultivate a middle-class circle of theatregoers that, with the exception of support emanating from marketing links to the Workers Educational Association, came from the city's business and professional elites.

The new theatre suited Jackson and the coterie audience because, with only 468 seats – configured by a steep ground floor of 268 seats leading to 200 seats in one precipitous circle, giving the impression of a single spread – it was considerably smaller than the



average holding capacity of 2,472 seats in the fourteen other Birmingham theatres.<sup>85</sup> It was also smaller than the Liverpool Playhouse and was even smaller than the 614-seat Court Theatre, London. Unlike other Birmingham theatres, the aim was to give theatregoers an unusually focused involvement; every seat in the house offered a clear view of the stage, without the interruption of pillars, the distraction of side boxes or a remote view from the galleries.



*The Station Street façade of the first Birmingham Repertory Theatre*



*The stage and auditorium from the circle*

#### *4. The first Birmingham Repertory Theatre*

Other innovations included a sunken orchestra pit with an apron stage in front of the proscenium, a good foyer, cloakrooms, lounges and dressing rooms ‘fit for human habitation’.<sup>86</sup> At this time, there was no comparable theatre in Britain so architect S.N. Cooke was briefed by Jackson – who had himself been articled to architects in Birmingham after training at the Birmingham School of Art – to perfect plans by absorbing principles of Greek theatre architecture into the new theatre via a visit to the Reinhardt-designed theatres in Germany. Productions were to emphasise imaginative décor and lighting designs – especially in the work of resident designer Paul Shelving (1888-1968) – and, therefore, audience focus was drawn towards the stage by unobtrusive brown and cream-painted surroundings; for unlike existing theatres there were:

No red plush tip-up chairs to tire the eye, no splenetic goddesses in plaster frowning over the stage, no gaudy gilts and golds, no urgent pleas for whisky, tobacco or soap, shrieked from a publicity-pimped safety curtain.<sup>87</sup>

For today, the design of the first Birmingham Repertory Theatre is especially important, because it demonstrates the first example of a tendency for the repertory movement, in its pursuit of socially egalitarian policies, to reject the form of nineteenth-century gilded-



theatres as evidence of a compartmentalised social structure, each level for each class in a multi-tiered auditorium. Latterly, the Birmingham approach, which arguably inspired many soulless new repertory theatres in the 1960s and 1970s (including its successor), is now often acknowledged, especially by actors and theatregoers who had a sixth-sense about the advantages of Victorian theatres' stage-audience proximity, as unattractive, stodgy and mistaken.

After Birmingham, and until the construction of the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry in 1958,<sup>88</sup> there was only one more purpose-built permanent repertory theatre – the equally dull second Oxford Playhouse (1938) – all other companies being housed in former touring theatres or shoe-horned into converted halls.<sup>89</sup> During the theatre construction boom that followed Coventry's civic theatre, most repertory directors, as well as many playwrights and critics, who usually recognised the importance of drama but gave a back seat to good building design, forgot that there had been few more effective and efficient architectural styles than Victorian theatres. With their aroma of glamour and comfort (at least in the stalls and dress circle), the older theatres brought together larger numbers of people from all social classes, in a relatively small single space that was economical to run. Repertory artistic directors often believed that their work would be clouded over in 'old-fashioned theatres'. A questionable inheritance of repertory – especially in England but not so common in Scotland – is the shape of many ailing, unlovable and inadequate repertory theatres. Most were built on the cheap, partly as a result of 1960s urban planning and the building trade's preference for concrete or breeze-block. They became rapidly obsolescent and, with their studio theatres, large new foyers, hospitality lounges, conference suites, speciality shops and frequently unprofitable cafeterias – that were added in order to turn the theatre into an all-day social centre – they became more expensive to operate and repair than the Victorian theatres. With the exception of theatres-in-the-round, most of their auditoriums are rooted in the design of the austere Birmingham Repertory Theatre.<sup>90</sup> By the 1990s, when the design of many new theatres – such as Keswick Lakeside Theatre (1999) – reverted to the proscenium arch and the tiered circles of Victorian theatres, or when such remaining theatres were seen to be preferable for drama and therefore to merit refurbishment (as at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, Perth Theatre and Glasgow Citizens' Theatre), repertory retraced the principles of nineteenth-century theatre architecture. Sometimes, as at the West Yorkshire Playhouse's second auditorium (1990) or the Cottesloe Theatre at the National Theatre (1977), the Swan Theatre at Stratford upon Avon (1986) and the Lawrence Batley Theatre, Huddersfield (1994) they even preferred the eighteenth-century 'courtyard' form of Georgian theatres.<sup>91</sup>

For their work on-stage, Birmingham Repertory Theatre acquired special repute, sometimes being compared with massively subsidised theatres of continental Europe, which had been part of its motivation. This was due in large measure to several modern-dress Shakespeare productions, the success in London and elsewhere of plays premiered in Birmingham – notably the opera *The Immortal Hour* by Rutland Boughton (1878-1960), *Abraham Lincoln* by the local playwright John Drinkwater (1882-1937) and *The Farmer's Wife* by Eden Phillpotts (1870-1960) – other plays mounted at its summer home at the Malvern Festival Theatre, as well an association with Bernard Shaw. For instance, in 1923 – after staging part of the expressionist trilogy *Gas* by Georg Kaiser (1878-1945) – it undertook the premiere of Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*. This was a massive undertaking with four complete 'cycles' of the five-part play, prefiguring today's appetite for large-scale celebratory productions that are remembered long after the event. However, the creation of an audience to support this ambitious production was not easily tackled, as Bache Matthews, the assistant director and theatre's historian, recalled:

Great interest was taken in our experiment all over the country, and applications for seats came in rapidly, many of them from places at long distances. Naturally, most of the bookings were from Birmingham and district, but considering the unusual interest of the play, Birmingham did not respond, as it should have done. There were empty seats at most of the performances and for many of them the theatre was not more than two-thirds filled. The amount of space given to advance notices in the press was generous, and we advertised more freely than usual, so it was hardly possible that the production would remain unknown anywhere in England.<sup>92</sup>

Birmingham's resistance to the blockbuster *Back to Methuselah* – and to most nontraditional plays – was made plain at the box-office, leading Jackson to declare his intention of closing the theatre in 1924, when he threatened to move the company to London. The Birmingham Civic Society, which had awarded Jackson its Gold Medal in 1922, responded, and with assistance from other local organisations – mainly clubs and societies but without direct municipal assistance – inaugurated an appeal for the company to carry on. This act of minacious brinkmanship, skilfully moderated by community representatives, announced that the theatre would remain closed unless 4,000 people undertook to attend each fortnight for three months, and guarantee their promise by paying in advance for six tickets at a reduced price. Fortnightly productions equated to a capacity of 7,000 people, indicating that the appeal was calculated on an audience capacity of 60 per cent for the theatre to break-even. Thus, thirteen years after Birmingham had begun, the Glasgow method of subscription was adopted as a potentially redeeming marketing feature. Although the required number was not reached – a deadline was extended to September 1924 – the results were satisfactory enough for Jackson to re-open the theatre

after a seven-month closure; shortly afterwards he was knighted for service to the repertory movement.

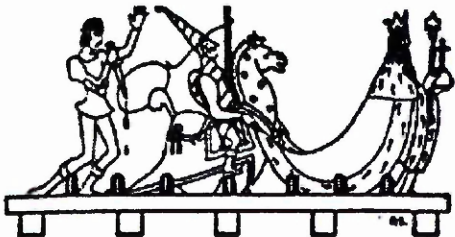

The next critical moment for the company occurred in 1935, shortly after the production of one of their most enduring musicals: *1066 And All That* (Reginald Arkell and Alfred Reynolds, after W.C. Sellar and R.J. Yeatman, 1934). Over its first 23 years, Jackson subsidised the theatre by approximately £100,000 (£4,072,000; or an average annual loss of £177,000). Donations received during this time amounted to only £3,000 (£122,000).<sup>93</sup> He transferred the theatre freehold and operation to a new non-profit company limited by the guarantee of the members, established in the now familiar terms (Box 3.5). Represented on the new board of directors were nominees from the corporation, Birmingham University, the Civic Society, the Repertory Playgoers' Society and the Rotary Club, with Jackson appointed governing director, a position he held until his death in 1961.<sup>94</sup>

Now that Birmingham Repertory Theatre is the longest-lived theatre company in Britain, it is possible to compare these aims and aspirations with revisions made by the company in 2000. Unlike those issued by the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester and Glasgow Repertory Theatre in the 1910s, which addressed matters of ticket pricing and a desire to serve the audience, Birmingham's revised mission for 1935 is absorbed entirely by ambitions for the art of the theatre. By 2000, the expanded statement – that was written to assuage the audit requirements of an Arts Council of England programme for management reform and is also produced within Box 3.5 – demonstrates a desire to attract 'a very broad public drawn from across the socio-economic spectrum and from widely different ethnic groups'. Thus, Birmingham has seemingly shifted to the theatregoer focus furnished at Glasgow and Manchester. The multiversity of the Midlands' potential audience today is indeed different to Jackson's public (40 per cent of the Birmingham population now belongs to ethnic minorities) but, even so, the ambiguous language of the remainder of the 2000 statement suggests that the idea of 'management by objectives', a pervasive idea in other businesses in the 1980s, is now an engrained feature of their administration, as it is in many repertory theatres today.

Today, with the pressure from arts councils 'to do it all and then do more', the range of fundamental goals can seem as broad as to be unconvincingly utopian. A company can no longer flourish by the quality of stage performance alone; however all-encompassing the content of the plays themselves might be in their *on*-stage debates on social issues. It is the *off*-stage social processes that must now be demonstrated, along with economical

performance and supposedly blue-chip business practice. More importantly, a company must keep a good balance between these necessities, the interests of theatregoers and the demands of the arts funding bodies and government.

**BOX 3.5 BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE LIMITED  
THE ADJUSTMENT OF MISSION:  
FROM THE ART OF THE THEATRE TO SOCIAL POLICY**

1935	2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the promoting the maintenance and the advancement of dramatic art in the City of Birmingham and the Midlands.</li> <li>• For promoting or procuring the continuance of a Repertory Theatre in the manner similar in which the said Repertory Theatre in the City of Birmingham has hitherto been carried on by Sir Barry V. Jackson.</li> <li>• For promoting and procuring the production of plays or operas of literary or musical merit which cannot or in the opinion of the Trustees would not be produced by ordinary commercial theatre; and</li> <li>• For the advancement of any other forms of art in any way allied to the dramatic art.<sup>95</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the purpose and continuing ambition of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre to develop, produce and present a range of theatrical experience of the highest possible quality and which will delight, entertain and engage with large numbers of people of all ages and all backgrounds from Birmingham and the surrounding region. This is our mission.</li> <li>• The work we present will sometimes be new or otherwise unfamiliar. It may be provocative or entertaining. But we intend that it will never be less than engrossing. Today's public expects and deserves access to theatre that both stimulates their imaginative capacities and illuminates the reality of their own lives and experience.</li> <li>• Our work on stage and our education and community programmes already reach a very broad public drawn from across the socio-economic spectrum and from widely different ethnic groups, reflecting the rich diversity of the population which we exist to serve. The need for social inclusivity must continue to inform the choices we make, not only in formal and informal programming, but also in our administration, marketing, public relations and our care for our customers and stakeholders.<sup>96</sup></li> </ul>
	
<p>5. The insignia of Birmingham Repertory Theatre, designed by Paul Shelving and used by the company until 1986.</p>	<p>6. The logo of Birmingham Repertory Theatre, adopted by the company in 1996</p>

The incorporation of the Birmingham non-profit distributing company signposts the integration of the organisational characteristics of the repertory prototypes discussed up to now. In sum, these were a decentralised, resident, professional and autonomous company, dedicated to serious drama, a majority of its actors forming a resident ensemble for an entire season, working in a purpose-built theatre owned by the community and governed by a volunteer board of theatrically enthusiastic directors. Henceforward, Birmingham sought a small subsidy in an effort to keep the company free from total dependence on the inconsistency of box-office income. The change to trust ownership implicated the local authority, but the corporation offered no subsidy until 1949, when The Local Government Act 1948 (Section 132) gave all councils the authority, but not the obligation, to spend up to a rate of 6d (4½d in Scotland) on entertainment.<sup>97</sup> Until then, The Public Health Act of 1925 had prohibited them from presenting or even subsidising presentations of plays although, exceptionally, a seaside resort was allowed to offer money to a repertory company from its entertainments budget.<sup>98</sup> However, the new non-profit status enabled Birmingham, and other non-profit distributing repertories, to obtain remission from Entertainments Tax on plays considered wholly or partly educational and, later, when the concession was granted to all non-profit distributing theatres, Birmingham Repertory was relieved entirely of the burden, saving it an annual amount of approximately £2,000 (£82,000).<sup>99</sup> Absolution from this tax was the spur to change for many other repertory companies limited by shares but, as might be expected, profit-seeking companies regarded the concession as an injustice, particularly those with reputable standards of production.

### **Repertory-as-two management systems: The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham**

In all other respects, Birmingham Repertory now had to pay its way, but losses were exacerbated by a new institutional stress. This was competition arising from a second Birmingham repertory theatre. From the late 1920s, when cinema began to dominate entertainment with the invention and rapid growth of ‘talkies’, the touring system went into decline, and many big theatres were converted to cinemas. With the prospect of diminished touring activity – additionally aggravated by the Depression from 1929 and, to a degree, the growth of BBC radio drama – the neighbouring 1,550-seat Alexandra Theatre

had to hold its own against these enormous contending forces and it did so firstly, by responding to the superior comforts of the cinema with an extensive refurbishment costing £40,000 (£1,628,000).<sup>100</sup> Secondly, it transformed itself, for most of the year, from a touring house into a repertory theatre.

The Alexandra Theatre first ventured the concept of repertory with the Raynor Repertory Company from 1911, a 'stock circuit troupe' that performed extended seasons in Birmingham. Experience of these residencies led, additionally, to on the spot repertory produced by the theatre's proprietor Leon Salberg (1875-1937). He mounted twice-nightly weekly productions, with up to 37 plays each year and a resident company of 21 actors from 1928.<sup>101</sup> Residencies reinforced continuity, for the remaining weeks in each year, at the touring houses in Wolverhampton, Hereford, Cheltenham, Kettering and Preston. The Alexandra company toured to these towns in repertoire – using the satellite theatres as nurseries for the large acting company, with an ambition to make it possible to perform every play for one week in each town, thereby easing the exertion imposed on the actors and staff by weekly repertory at the base theatre. When the company toured, perdurable lyric theatre companies such as D'Oyly Carte Opera, the Carl Rosa Opera, Ballet Rambert and Sadler's Wells Ballet occupied the Alexandra, intermittently.

Leon Salberg was succeeded by his son, Derek Salberg (1912-1997), who ran the theatre until his retirement in 1977, and its repertory company until it closed in 1975.<sup>102</sup> The Alexandra, which some critics disdainfully referred to as a 'popular' playhouse – or, in the case of the Arts Council after 1945, more often ignored – also staged completely home-produced pantomimes. These were often seventeen-week runs, from early December to April. Hitherto, Christmas seasons in all non-profit repertory theatres had cold-shouldered children's theatre and pantomime – perhaps because the latter tended to be extravagant – but in doing so they rejected a means to mint money and entertain family audiences.

The origin of repertory at the Alexandra was primarily a matter of survival, differing from the missionary artistic impulse of the six companies already discussed. It was, like Birmingham Repertory Theatre, a locally owned theatre, but where the Repertory Theatre was now a non-profit trust company limited by guarantee, the Alexandra was a private company limited by shares. The majority of these were owned by the Salberg family, who were people with long-standing knowledge of the theatre with sound business acumen.<sup>103</sup> These distinct corporate structures – a semi-public, non-profit theatre institution and a private, enterprising commercial popular-theatre – underline attitudinal differences between the working practices of the two companies, especially their bearing on audiences.

Objectives of the non-profit repertory theatres were, as discussed, defined in their constitutions, but in many other respects they resembled their commercial counterpart at the Alexandra Theatre. In matters of governance, the non-profit 'model' was, effectively, segregated from the influence of the market. At the same time, non-profit companies were distanced from the public sector at this time, receiving no smiles of fortune from direct state or local government assistance. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, this intermediate and blurred status, fulgently testified in the contrast of the loss making and the profit making results of the Birmingham repertories, set up stronger frontiers between art and entertainment. Repertory echelons of 'for-profit' (synonymous with 'pot-boiling' companies) and 'not-for-profit' (regarded by drama critics and arts council apparatchiks as 'quality' companies) might be said to anticipate today's hierarchies of those repertory theatre managements that keep audience sovereignty to the forefront and those that – like the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company today – focus management attention on the public sector and the politics of subsidy. For this study, the Alexandra repertory company therefore serves as the fountainhead of a stratification of the repertory movement.

The Alexandra was not especially concerned with new plays: its policy was, Salberg often claimed without embarrassment, 'three for the pot and one for prestige'. Unlike most profit-seeking theatre today, it maintained *lower* admission prices than Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and by budgeting profits upon a smaller audience than did its former, hosted touring companies, the Alexandra was able to compete with the cinema, as well as the higher-priced musical and variety productions at the 3,000-seat Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre. In one sense, the Alexandra was more an example of repertory 'success' than Birmingham Repertory Theatre because, when it turned to fortnightly productions, it sold between 11,000 and 18,000 tickets for each production. The other repertory company's maximum capacity was 7,000 per play and, in practice sold only 4,000 tickets on average: perhaps 60,000 annually, against an astounding one year's repertory attendance of over 300,000 at the Alexandra. The activities of the two companies were beyond each other's control, but they might to be said to be in the same marketplace. The Alexandra's historian, M.F.K. Fraser, described its populist outlook, also noting dissimilarity to the self-conscious elite associated with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre:

For the first time in Birmingham stage history, many of the best current and recent plays were made available in a large, popular theatre at prices within reach of the most slender purse. Here, the habitué could form, perhaps not a close friendship, but certainly a nodding acquaintance, with a Drama hitherto unknown outside the more class-conscious Number One theatres on the one side, and the tiny, self-centred Repertory Theatre on the other.



The Alexandra, first of all the commercial theatres in Birmingham, now began to make play-going not merely an intellectual and recreative pleasure, but a gay experience, gathering everybody, on both sides of the pass-door, into one big happy family. It gave the great mass of our citizens both the opportunity and the incentive to become regular theatregoers, and to do so not because it was The Thing, but because it was an enjoyable excursion into the realm of illusion.<sup>104</sup>

Fraser's adumbration was that the Alexandra, because it was focused on 'head-count', could not afford to serve art for art's sake alone. By describing the other theatre as 'self-centred' – that might also be witnessed in the Repertory Theatre's 1935 mission statements – he also made one of the few contemporary references to the creeping and endemic isolation of the serious repertory theatres from the general public.<sup>105</sup> Undeniably, scrutiny of choices at the Alexandra reveals that the company was indisposed to select plays far beyond the security of recent, well-heeled West End achievements. It was progressive to the extent of keeping abreast of contemporary London theatre and its tastes: a far cry from the Glasgow Repertory Theatre's 1909 good intentions of being 'independent of London for its dramatic supplies'. Nevertheless, as demonstrated in the following table (Box 3.6) of productions staged by these two theatres in 1937 – a year chosen at random – there are unexpected similarities between the two Birmingham companies.

It would be an over-simplification to differentiate their play-choices by a 'high culture – low culture' assessment. For instance, the inclusion, at the Alexandra, of plays by St John Ervine (1883–1971), J. B. Priestley (1894–1984), Noël Coward (1899–1973), James Bridie, Shaw and O'Casey might be considered artistically enterprising for the Repertory Theatre, as well as for many subsidised repertory theatres today. It is noticeable that the Alexandra chose a play by the Phillpotts. They were husband-and-wife playwrights nurtured by Barry Jackson, whose work entered the play-lists of many commercial repertories after Jackson had transferred the Birmingham productions to London. Jackson's fortuitous contributions to the Alexandra programme also included a play co-written by the impresario Emile Littler (1903–1989), then general manager at Birmingham Repertory Theatre. In 1937, there were only two premieres at the Alexandra but, correspondingly, there were no more than three premieres at the other theatre. Neither theatre made any significant breach upon the long-standing British insularity towards international drama: one American play was produced at the Repertory and one from France at the Alexandra. Disparity of play choice might, therefore, lay in the preponderance of innocuous thrillers and the period phenomenon of reassuring, flimsy 'drawing-room comedies' – each with their succession of unspectacular but easily designed settings – at the Alexandra, against a concentration of eighteenth-century classics



by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816), Henry Fielding (1707–1754) and Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774) at the Repertory Theatre.

<b>BOX 3.6 TWO BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY COMPANIES</b> <b>SPECIMEN AND COMPARATIVE PLAY SELECTION FOR 1937<sup>106</sup></b>			
<b>BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE</b> (15 productions)		<b>THE ALEXANDRA THEATRE</b> (30 productions)	
<i>Spring Tide</i> <i>The School For Scandal</i> <i>L'èse Majesté*</i> <i>And So To Bed</i> <i>The Anatomist</i> <i>The Courageous Sex*</i> <i>Tom Thumb the Great</i> <i>The Torchbearers</i> <i>Front of House</i>  <i>Victoria, Queen and Empress*</i> <i>Judgement Day</i> <i>She Stoops To Conquer</i> <i>Widower's Houses</i> <i>Bees on the Boat Deck</i> <i>1066 And All That</i>	J.B. Priestley (1936) R.B. Sheridan (1777) John Beanes (1937) J.B. Fagan (1926) James Bridie (1930) Mary D. Sheridan (1937) Henry Fielding (1730) George Kelly (1922) Charles Landstone (1936) G.W. Rushton and T.S. Mack (1937) Elmer Rice (1937) Oliver Goldsmith (1773) Bernard Shaw (1892) J.B. Priestley (1936) Reginald Arkell and Alfred Reynolds (1935)	<i>Tovarich</i> <i>Busman's Honeymoon</i>  <i>Cornelius</i> <i>Married in Haste*</i> <i>Storm in a Teacup</i> <i>To-Night at 8.30:</i> <i>We Were Dancing, The Astonished Heart, Red Peppers</i> <i>The Two Mrs. Carrolls</i> <i>Pygmalion</i> <i>Someone at the Door</i>  <i>Anthony and Anna</i> <i>Do You Remember?</i>  <i>Little Women</i>  <i>The Unguarded Hour</i> <i>Miss Smith</i> <i>The Dominant Sex</i> <i>Sweet Nell of Old Drury</i> <i>Flat to Let</i> <i>Mademoiselle</i> <i>The Black Eye</i> <i>Spring Tide</i>  <i>Devonshire Cream</i>  <i>Juno and the Paycock</i> <i>Vickie and Albert*</i> <i>All-In Marriage</i>  <i>Night Must Fall</i> <i>Winter Sunshine</i> <i>Love on the Dole</i>  <i>Mrs. Warren's Profession</i> <i>To-Night at 8.30:</i> <i>Hands Across The Sea, Fumed Oak, Shadow Play</i> <i>Aladdin</i>	Robert Sherwood (1935) St. Clare Byrne from Dorothy Sayers (1936) J.B. Priestley (1935) George Berry (1937) James Bridie (1936) Noël Coward (1935)  Martin Vale (1935) Bernard Shaw (1914) Dorothy and Campbell Christie (1935) St. John Ervine (1926) John Carlton and Edith Savile (1934) Marion de Forest from Louisa M. Alcott (1919) Bernard Merivale (1935) Henry Bernard (1936) Michael Egan (1934) Paul Kaster (1900) Arthur Macrae (1931) Jacques Deval (1936) James Bridie (1935) George Billam and J.B. Priestley (1936) Eden and Adelaide Phillpotts (1924) Seán O'Casey (1925) Consuelo de Reys (1937) Aurania Rouveral and Emile Littler (1935) Emlyn Williams (1935) G.A. Thomas (1935) Walter Greenwood (1935) Bernard Shaw (1902)  Noël Coward (1936)  Pantomime (1937)
* First time on any stage			

leading lady – who probably were sometimes miscast in Birmingham – were held in high favour, with a few bad performances easily buried in theatregoer appreciation of a majority of better ones in the long season. Many other weekly repertory companies offered only a lacklustre aftertaste of the West End, but if the Alexandra company acting lacked subtlety and imagination, the actors compensated by acquiring public affection. Derek Salberg also recalled that the company was a testing ground for future talent:

The popular repertory actors.... were idols of the Alex public who, in those days, and I believe equally today, demanded that their actors should also be personalities; something which drama schools cannot teach and is perhaps not always appreciated by producers in our methods of apprenticeship.<sup>108</sup>

In his memoirs, Salberg quoted receipts for several productions as well as other isolated references to profits and financial dealings. These, together with information from other sources – such as the ‘Esher Standard Contract’ for repertory actors (that formalised an employment distinction from touring theatre, with lower minimum wages paid in repertory), management handbooks for large theatres, seat prices, the theatre’s audience capacity and published rail fares – enable reconstruction of an indicative profit and loss account for the Alexandra Theatre.<sup>109</sup> The following table (Box 3.7) dissects turnover by function, synchronising categories used in pre-1945 commercial theatre with those applied by subsidised theatre managements today. My intention is to anticipate later observations of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh as well the dramatically altered involutions of repertory economics today, where not only is the margin between surplus and deficit always extremely narrow, but where less money is spent on actors and so much more on administrators. In 1945, the Alexandra profit, before corporation tax and any profits from touring, was likely to be in the region of £13,000 (£285,000). Customarily, this year is acknowledged as the financial summit for the commercial repertory theatres, despite the deprivations of the Second World War. At the Alexandra, this profit could be realised with an average attendance of 1,007 seats sold at each performance, without any subsidy or relief from Entertainment Tax. Apart from the high degree of self-reliance, the account confirms the scale at which an independent weekly repertory company could operate on the funds of a sole manager, in a big theatre.

**BOX. 3.7 THE ALEXANDRA THEATRE (BIRMINGHAM) LIMITED<sup>110</sup>**  
**RECONSTRUCTION OF ESTIMATED PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT 1945**

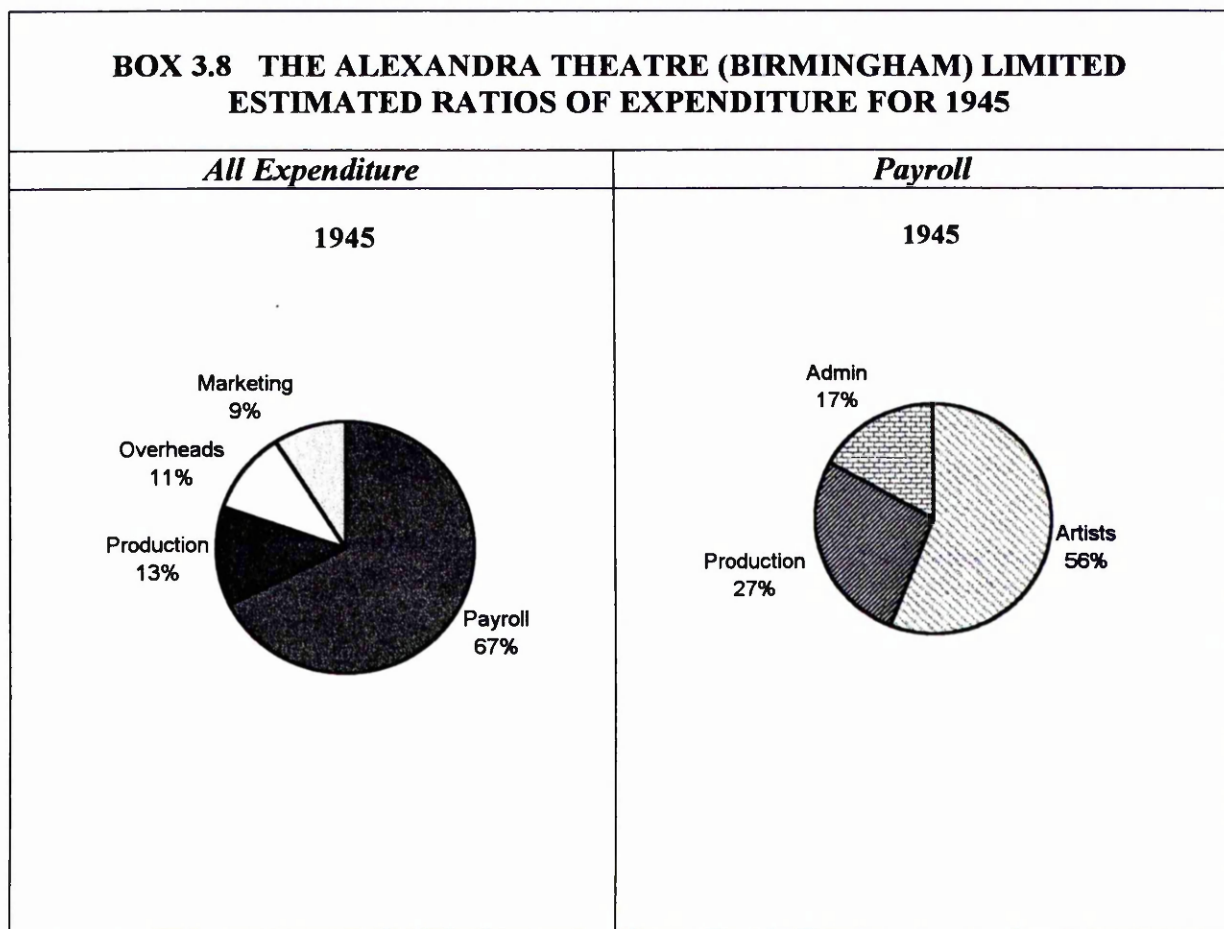
	£	£	£	Notes to estimates (included within main endnote)
<b>INCOME</b>				
1,550 seats x 300 Performances (25p, 20p, 12.5p, 7.5p, 5p)				i
Average Price Paid 12p x 55% Average Attendance				
302,250 Paid Admissions	30,690			
Less: Entertainment Tax 20%	6,138			ii
Net Repertory Box Office Receipts			24,552	
Add: Ancillary Income				
Net Programme Profit (Including Advertising)	2,250			iii
Net Bars, Chocolates, Ices, Perfumes and Tea Trays	3,778			
Cloakroom	550			
Opera Glasses	175			
Safety Curtain Advertising	250		7,003	
<b>TOTAL EARNED INCOME</b>			<b>£31,555</b>	
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE</b>				
<b>PAYROLL</b>				
Artistic Wages				
Resident Producer 52 weeks x £12	624			
Manager 52 weeks x £12	624	1,248		
Actors: (including guests/overlaps)				iv
Leading Man 3 x 42 weeks x £10	1,260			
Leading Lady 3 x 42 weeks x £10	1,260			
Character Man 3 x 42 weeks x £8	1,008			
Character Lady 3 x 42 weeks x £6	756			
Juvenile Man 3 x 42 weeks x £7	882			
Juvenile Lady 3 x 42 weeks x £5.50	693			
Second Man 2 x 42 weeks x £5	420			
Second Lady 2 x 42 weeks x £4.50	378			
Resident Repertory Orchestra (3 violins, bass, cello, clarinet, drums) 45 x £8	360	7,017		v
Stage Manager 43 weeks x £7	294			
Assistant Stage Manager 42 weeks x £4	168			
Student 2 x 42 weeks x £2.50	210			
Resident SM-Carpenter 52 weeks x £7	364			
Utility Man-Electrician 42 weeks x £7	294			
Utility Lady 42 weeks x £5	210			
Boy 42 weeks x £3	126			
Girl 42 weeks x £3	126			
Scenic Designer 41 weeks x £8	328	2,120		

<b>Total Artistic Wages</b>			10,385	
<b>General Administrative Wages</b>				
Front of House Manager 52 weeks x £8	416			
Box Office No. 1: 52 weeks x £5	260			
Box Office Clerk 52 weeks x £3	156			
Box-office Assistant 45 weeks x £1.50	68			
Cleaners 3 x 45 weeks x £1.50	203			
Ushers 12 x 30 Productions x 10 Performances x 15p	540			
Ushers' Programme Commission	180			
Barmaids 2 x 30 Productions x 10 Performances x 12.5p	75			
Night watchman 52 weeks x £3	156			
State Employer's Insurance	75			
<b>Total Administrative Wages</b>			2,128	
<b>Total Payroll</b>			12,513	
<b>PRODUCTION EXPENDITURE</b>				
Hire-Purchase of Stage Furniture (30 Productions)	90			
Stage Management Account (Props, Small Purchases)	105			
Carpenters' Account (Canvas and Screws)	45			
Designer's Account (Paint)	38			
Extra Furniture	60			
Curtains and Draperies, Sofa Covers	45			
Scripts 30 x 35p per Production	11			
Gratuities, Stage Staff	45			
Costumes (Average of Full Play and Jewellery)	90			
Authors' Royalties (Average 7.5%)	1,841			
<b>Total Direct Production Expenditure</b>			2,369	
<b>THEATRE OVERHEADS</b>				
Electricity 52 weeks x £8	416			
Rates 52 weeks x £4	208			
Electric Fittings 52 weeks x £2	104			
Telephone: Trunk Calls and Telegraph 52 weeks x £8	416			
Maintenance (Ropes, Lanterns etc.) 52 weeks x £4	208			
Third Class Rail Fares: London Birmingham Return. 100 x 75p	75			
Licences	25			
Commission on Cheques, Audit and Accountancy	175			
Cleaning Materials	225			
Insurance 52 weeks x £2.50	130			
<b>Total Overheads</b>			1,982	
<b>MARKETING</b>				



Printing (Double Crown [150], Box-office Cards [150], Circulars [1,000], Throwaways [1,000] 30 x £15	450			
Newspaper Advertising	675			
Hand Painted Posters and Private Stations	300			
Ticket Printing	250			
Postage 45 weeks x 50p	23			
<b>Total Marketing</b>			1,698	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>			<b>£18,562</b>	
LESS INCOME			£31,555	
<b>NET PROFIT</b>			<b>£12,993</b>	

It is especially revealing and can be compared in useful ways to subsidised repertory today, firstly because over half of all Alexandra Theatre costs were wages, and secondly because over half of the wages bill went on actors and musicians. The account can now be fashioned to contrast the main centres of expenditure by proportionality, spotlighting, in 1945, this accentuation on artistic expenditure and actors' wages in particular. The theatre is always labour intensive, but even at the big Alexandra Theatre, the amount spent on overheads and administration staff was proportionately low:



<b>RATIOS</b>	
Earned Income as % of Total Income	100%
Box-office Receipts as % of Total Income	78%
Ancillary Income as % of Total Income	22%
Total Payroll as % of Total Expenditure	67%
Actors and Musicians (Performers) Wages as % of Total Payroll	56%
Actors and Musicians (Performers) Wages as % of Total Expenditure	38%
Administrative Wages as % of Total Payroll	
Production Expenditure as % of Total Expenditure	13%
Theatre Overheads as % of Total Expenditure	11%
Marketing as % of Total Expenditure	9%
Overall 'Artistic' Programme as % of Total Expenditure	69%
Profit as % of Turnover	41%

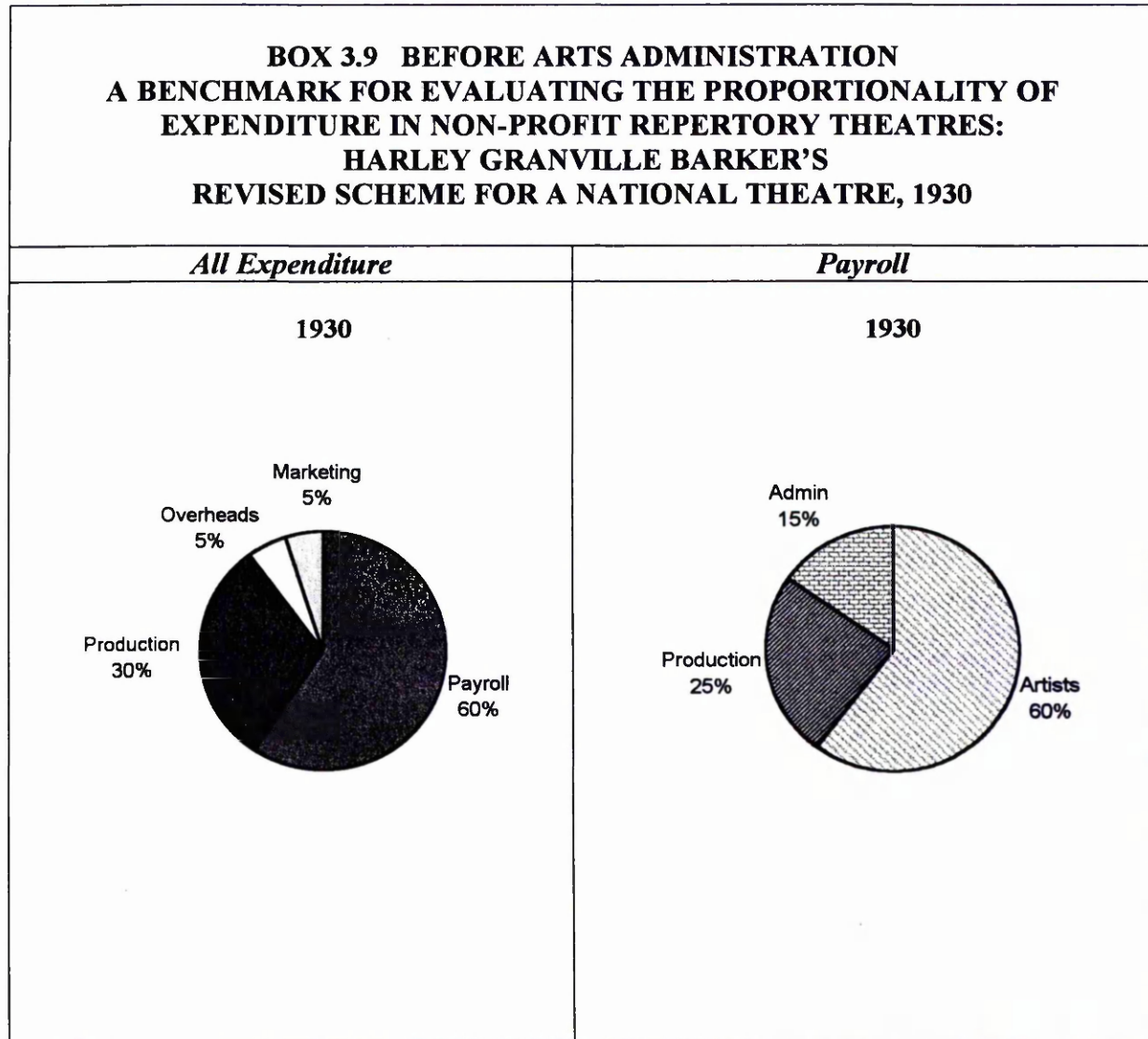
The Alexandra Theatre formula proved so successful in replacing or competing with touring companies that by 1946, when the number of licensed theatres in Britain had declined from 600 in 1912 to 420, repertory accounted for over one half of their activity, with 179 resident companies and 51 touring repertories, outwith London.<sup>111</sup> The majority of these repertories were, by force of circumstance, neither theatrical pacemakers like the stage societies, nor the non-profit companies discussed in Dublin, Belfast, Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Even so, for this study it would now be an expedient check to determine how the financial processes of the non-profit repertories compared with the administrative efficiencies of the Alexandra Theatre.

### **Management characteristics of some other repertory companies**

Naturally, as in most businesses, the relative importance of different expenditures may change over time, as the company itself develops. In theatre, although boards of directors and managers were concerned with continuous improvement, the relative composition of expenditures differed less markedly between a non-profit company and profit-seeking theatres. Such factors as the number and typical nature of the plays – with their different cast sizes and design demands – the size of a theatre, its maintenance, geographical location, the availability of rehearsal space, production workshops and the price and availability of materials, would of course mean that no two budgets could ever be alike. Notwithstanding these disparate situations and artistic identities, the 'serious' theatres could be epitomised by the detailed breakdown of operating costs used by Harley Granville Barker in his revised estimates for a National Theatre, made in 1930.<sup>112</sup> As a measure of



financial comparison, especially for the weighting given to payroll costs, Granville Barker's proportionalities, even conceding that the plan envisaged a twin-auditorium complex, closely matched those of the Alexandra Theatre. This underlines that, before the rise of arts administration and the whittling away of actors and ensemble in the 1980s, experienced theatre-makers and planners always ensured that the largest share of resources was spent on stage:



In this instance, of course, Granville Barker's *income* targets are another matter: even though he budgeted for the National Theatre to operate without revenue subsidy – neatly predicting an annual loss of only £57 (£2,320) – the contingency needed to cover this and any further overrun would come from interest earned from an invested 'Guarantee Fund' of £150,000 (£8,727,000). This over-optimistic endowment was separate from the higher capital costs of theatre construction but, had the pot of gold been raised, the theatre would have been free from the drip-feeding round of annual revenue subsidy negotiations and

external assessment. It might be argued that not too much reliance should be placed on these figures because of their propositional nature, in which case they must be compared with subsequent factual results in repertory. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate either the pre-1945 audited annual accounts or other extensive financial data for the six 'art theatres' discussed. Instead, the example of an individual production account for fortnightly repertory the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow in 1944 will serve to underline the points of resemblance between Granville Barker's estimates and my conjectures for the profit-seeking Birmingham company.

This second Glasgow repertory company that was founded in 1943 as a non-profit company limited by guarantee, performed trial seasons at the small Athenaeum Theatre before moving to the Royal Princess's Theatre in 1945, where it continues today.<sup>113</sup> It was the first Scottish repertory to receive state subsidy from the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts and their small guarantee against loss helped to prevent the Citizens' from losing money, which they did on only one production in these exploratory seasons. By selecting an audited production account from the second year, it can be supposed that the extensive functions required in setting the competent business administration and smooth production processes of the Citizens' Theatre had been established with good judgement. Production accounts for this play, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (Philip Massinger, c.1621), may be reordered for relative scale as follows:<sup>114</sup>

<b>BOX 3.10 THE CITIZENS' THEATRE LIMITED</b> at the Athenaeum Theatre, Glasgow <b>ACTUAL PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT</b> <b>FOR THE WEEKS ENDING 4 and 11 NOVEMBER 1944</b> <i>A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS</i>			
	Week One	Week Two	Total
INCOME	£	£	£
Box Office Receipts (Ticket Prices: 1s.6d, 2s.6d, 3s.6d, 4s, 5s.)			
Monday	-	30	
Tuesday	64	43	
Wednesday	68	46	
Thursday	62	45	
Friday	64	46	
Saturday Matinee	40	28	
Saturday Evening	105	105	
TOTAL BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS	403	343	746
ADD Ancillary Income			
Net Programme Profit	8	7	
Cloakroom Charges	1	-	
TOTAL ANCILLARY INCOME	9	7	16

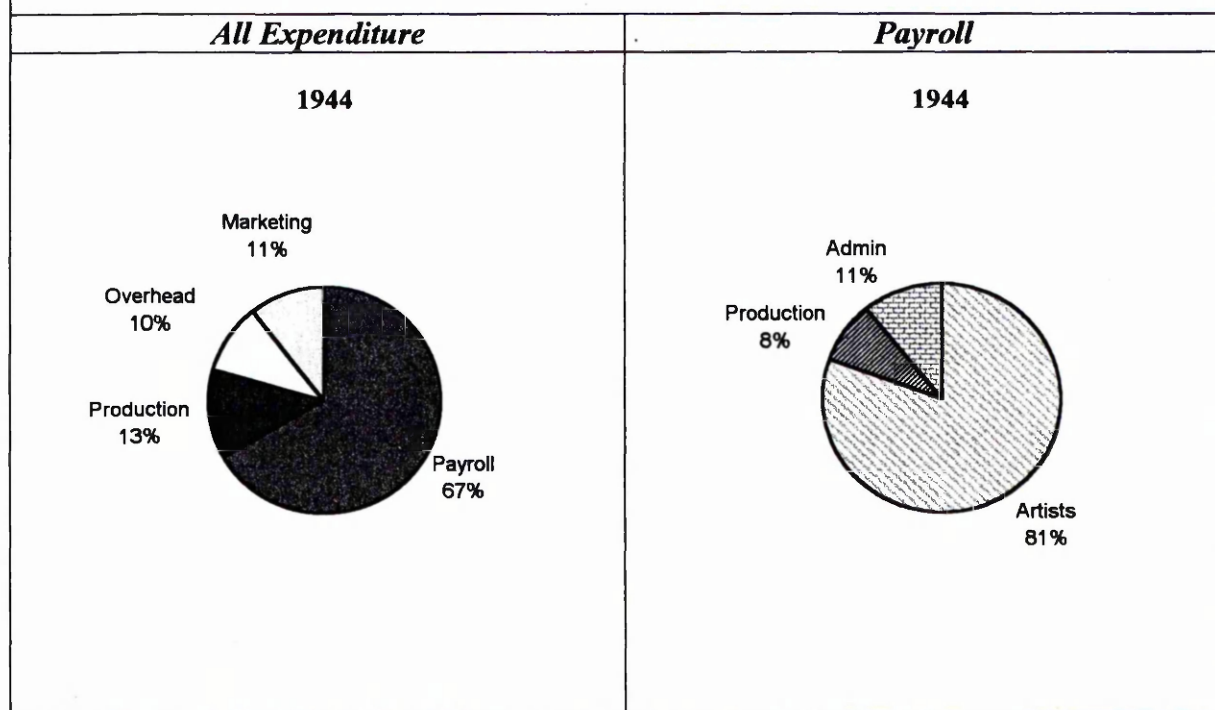


<b>TOTAL EARNED INCOME</b>	<b>£412</b>	<b>£350</b>	<b>£762</b>
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>PAYROLL</b>			
Artistic Wages			
Resident Producer and Designer	35	35	70
Actors	174	176	350
Musicians: Resident Trio (Interval)	18	18	36
<b>TOTAL ARTISTIC WAGES</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>456</b>
Production Staff Wages			
Stage Management/Carpenter/Electrician	31	17	48
Administrative Wages			
Manager and Assistant	12	12	24
Front of House Staff and Fireman	19	19	38
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE WAGES</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Total Payroll</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>566</b>
<b>PRODUCTION EXPENDITURE</b>			
Costumes, Furniture, Props	30	29	
Sets and Painting	21	23	
Hire of Stage Lighting	2	2	
Scripts	1	1	
<b>Total Production Expenditure</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>THEATRE OVERHEADS</b>			
Electricity	2	2	
Heating	7	7	
Theatre and Workshop Rent	17	17	
Telephone and Office Sundries	5	4	
Insurance	2	2	
Maintenance/Licenses/Commissions/General	10	10	
<b>Total Overheads</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>MARKETING</b>			
Advertising	38	38	
Ticket Printing and box office costs	7	7	
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>TOTAL DIRECT EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£431</b>	<b>£419</b>	<b>£850</b>
<b>ADD</b> Amortisation of Expenditure prior to opening of season (not allotted to categories in progress statements)	23	23	46
	<b>£454</b>	<b>£442</b>	<b>£896</b>
<b>LESS INCOME</b> brought down	(412)	(350)	(762)
<b>NET DEFICIT FOR THE PRODUCTION</b> (Subject to Accumulated Surplus on the season and unconverted guarantee against loss from the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts)	<b>£(42)</b>	<b>£(92)</b>	<b>£(134)</b>
<b>DEFICIT IN TODAY'S APPROXIMATE VALUE</b>	<b>£(925)</b>	<b>£(2,025)</b>	<b>£(2,950)</b>

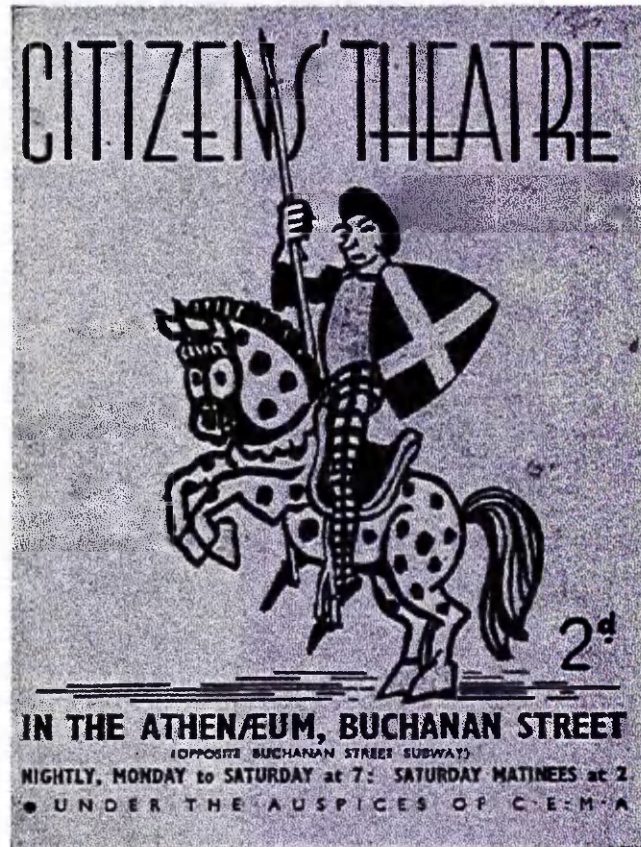
Once again, the figures – that appropriate the company's fixed annual costs to the run of the play – may be taken as indications that a fragmentary proportion of expenditure

consisted of overheads and the costs of administration staff. At the Citizens' Theatre, the classification of artists' expenditure is an even higher ratio of 81 per cent of all payroll costs. Intriguingly, the amount spent on advertising and promotion, 11 per cent, although double the amount envisaged by in the National Theatre estimates, is not only nearer to the costs of the Alexandra Theatre, but also consistent with the sums spent in repertory theatres today.

**BOX 3.11 THE CITIZENS' THEATRE LIMITED**  
at the Athenaeum Theatre, Glasgow  
**RATIOS OF EXPENDITURE**  
**FOR THE WEEKS ENDING 4 and 11 NOVEMBER 1944**  
*A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS*



RATIOS	
Box-office Receipts as % of Total Income	98%
Ancillary Income as % of Total Income	2%
Total Payroll as % of Total Expenditure	67%
Artists and Performers Wages as % of Total Payroll	81%
Artists and Performers Wages as % of Total Expenditure	54%
Administrative Wages as % of Total Payroll	11%
Production Expenditure as % of Total Expenditure	13%
Theatre Overheads as % of Total Expenditure	10%
Marketing as % of Total Expenditure	11%
Overall 'Artistic' Element as % of Total Expenditure	72%
Deficit as % of Income	17%



7. The insignia of The Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow, 1943. The mission statement on the reverse of this programme included this injunction to theatregoers:

You are not expected to be docile. Reserve for yourself the unquestionable right of the audience to criticise, but, to paraphrase the classic expression of Euromedes, 'If we cause you displeasure, inform US – if we give you pleasure, TELL THE WORLD'.

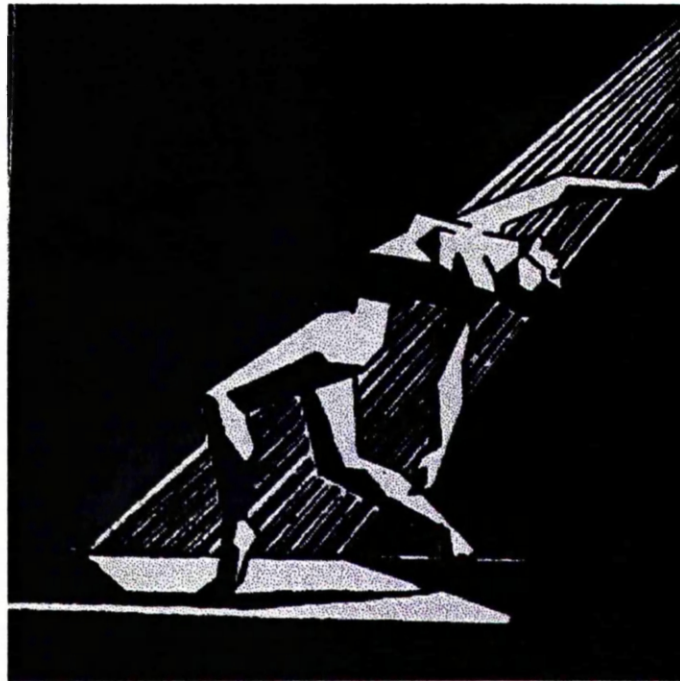
For this study, it is of course unnecessary to consider separately and in organisational detail all of the other non-profit precedents for today's repertory theatres founded in this pre-subsidy era. However, to affirm their magnitude, it is appropriate to note that two other significant 'art' theatres were fleeting: the first Oxford Playhouse (1923-1929) under J.B. Fagan (1873-1933) and the Festival Theatre, Cambridge (1926-1939) under Terence Gray (1895-?). After Birmingham, Cambridge was the only repertory theatre to consistently pursue the art of the theatre in every respect; it was also famous for using its Regency theatre (built 1808 or 1816) as an open stage for anti-realist productions and the experimental lighting designs of the company's co-founder C. Harold Ridge. But for this study, Gray's exuberant marketing techniques are the more noteworthy because they contrast with the trivial 'audience development' strategies in subsidised repertory today. Like other early companies, this theatre was imprinted with the founder's personality but, unlike some, it was the relaxed atmosphere that helped to make an adventurous play-list



popular with 'town and gown'. When theatregoers entered this 'university of dramatic art', they were greeted with these relaxed announcements in the foyer and in its magazine-programmes:

- The supreme desire of the Management is to see you enjoying yourself.
- There are no rules and regulations in the Festival Theatre.
- You are welcome to smoke.<sup>115</sup>

Reluctance to make repertory an overly-serious pastime in a forbiddingly managed building was also evident in their relaxed attitude to latecomers, who were admitted to a special seating area but made to wear rubber-soled shoes provided by the front-of-house staff, and in the informality of a spacious alfresco bar. Other innovations, adopted by later companies with varying degrees of success, included a profitable restaurant where the food was supposedly the best obtainable outside London and the wines better than could be obtained anywhere else in Britain.<sup>116</sup>

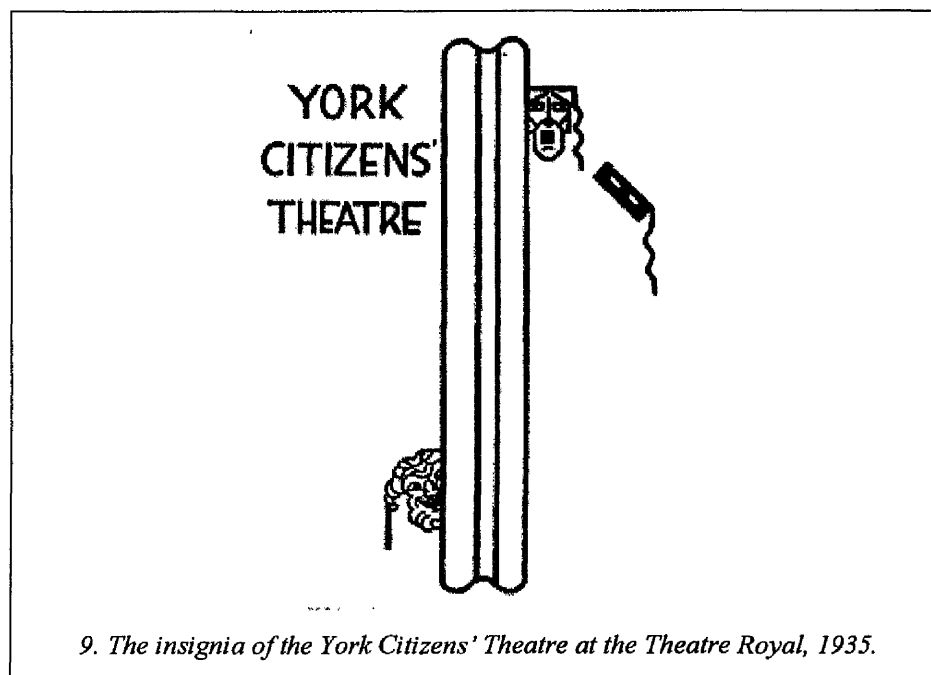


8. *The insignia of the Cambridge Festival Theatre, 1926*

Only a few of the longer-lasting repertories were non-profit companies and, of these only the Sheffield Repertory Company from 1923<sup>117</sup> and the Bristol Old Vic at the Theatre Royal from 1946<sup>118</sup> embodied most elements of the repertory ideal. For other companies, several local factors necessitated a commercial modification because, often, they were

located in relatively small towns that might have little manufacturing industry or be a seaside tourist resort.<sup>119</sup> These factors made many companies similar in policy to the burgeoning profit-seeking repertories like the Alexandra Theatre: not only were they weekly-repertoires, but they maintained the backbreaking twice-nightly performance schedule. Despite these realities, there were non-profit companies – together with affiliated playgoers' societies that usually preceded the professional organisation – in Plymouth between 1915 and 1935, Alfred Wareing's company at the Theatre Royal, Huddersfield from 1921 to 1933,<sup>120</sup> Hull Repertory Theatre from 1924 to 1930, and the still-existing companies.

These were: Bristol Little Theatre from 1923 (subsumed by the larger, eminent Bristol Old Vic in 1965 but disbanded in 1980 in favour of the studio theatre at the Theatre Royal), Northampton Repertory Players at the Royal Theatre from the season of 1926-1927,<sup>121</sup> the Gate Theatre in Dublin from 1928,<sup>122</sup> Perth Theatre<sup>123</sup> and York Citizens' Theatre, at the Theatre Royal, from 1935,<sup>124</sup> Colchester Repertory Theatre from 1937,<sup>125</sup> Windsor Theatre Royal from 1938,<sup>126</sup> Oldham Coliseum<sup>127</sup> and the second Oxford Playhouse from 1938, the Dundee Repertory Theatre from 1939<sup>128</sup> and – after incubating as an amateur theatre from 1933 – the professional Byre Theatre in St Andrews established in 1940.<sup>129</sup> Significantly, all of these companies were founded by theatre-makers. It was not until the growth of subsidy that local government might, as in Edinburgh, establish a 'civic' repertory on its own initiative, setting up a 'controlled' non-profit company whose directors comprised a majority of councillors and who thereupon employed an artistic director and manager to execute the agreed policy.



En masse, these companies – with those discussed in more detail – were the prototype of today's repertory theatres. Logically, it was desirable for the non-profit companies to promote their sphere of influence collectively, to develop a sense that they were part of a 'movement' and to exchange information en bloc. Hitherto, commercial touring managers, provincial theatres and profit-seeking repertory companies had been infrangible members of the Theatrical Managers' Association, which was founded in 1894, principally to champion industrial matters such as agreements with trade unions. Despite the strides made by non-profit companies, the TMA persistently opposed public subsidy, because they believed it would offer unfair competition to their profit-seeking members, as they pronounced in their 1938 annual report:

A subsidised theatre will scarcely keep itself clear from the gears of political machinery. Neither our conception of the theatre nor our conception of the functions of government is conducive to a union of the two institutions. The theatre we look on as a form of entertainment, not of public nor even quasi-public concern, which must therefore be supported by those who indulge in it and not by the taxpayers as a whole. We are opposed to the entrance of government into the theatre, and to its iniquitous and improper competition with private enterprise.<sup>130</sup>

On the other hand, the British Drama League from 1919 championed wide-ranging encouragement for the art of the theatre for its own sake, including the cause of repertory theatres and subsidy but more particularly amateur societies.<sup>131</sup> Looking ahead, to protect their interests in relation to the TMA's opposition, as well to compete for the first government grants and deal with local authorities, several repertory board members, directors and managers met at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 1944, to start the Conference of Repertory Theatres. (Members restyled it 'Council' of Repertory Theatres in 1950).<sup>132</sup> Scotland played an influential role, with CORT chaired, from 1949 to 1972, by G.E. (George) Geddes (1908-1973), a Perth draper and chairman of Dundee Repertory Theatre in the same period. His leadership of CORT affirms repertory's public role, demonstrating the influential and lasting contribution of publicly recognisable volunteer board members as spokespersons, in this pre-arts administration era. Many other volunteer members of theatre boards were elected to its executive whereas, after Geddes, it was more often the case that paid theatre administrators presided over and controlled the affairs of the management association, especially after CORT's reconciliation with the TMA (now called the Theatrical Management Association) by merging with it in 1978. During the 1990s, when theatrical management became over-complicated by the politics of subsidy and the need for managers to constantly network amongst themselves, the communitarian and artistic voice of repertory was so subdued by the evanescent three-year terms of office

for its governing body that, in 2000, no lay-board members (and only one artistic director) were elected to the TMA's administrator-dominated council of management.<sup>133</sup>

Meanwhile, the formation of CORT unfurled a maturing repertory movement, poised to manage expansion and the ramifications of local government and national subsidy.<sup>134</sup> It spawned the notion of an increasingly unified, confident and institutional non-profit repertory entity, with conferences held every four months in the home town of different theatres. At the same time, it restricted membership to established non-profit theatres, excluding profit-seeking companies such as the Alexandra Theatre or, occasionally, allowed them 'associate membership' by unanimous vote of the entire membership. Furthermore, membership was moderated by enrolling all newcomers as probationary, with 'approved standards' of production and management vetted by peer group surveillance from the senior artistic directors and board chairs. Thus, the founding of CORT may be rendered as further consolidation of repertory organisation into a stratified movement. To obtain future subsidy, member theatres needed to establish that they were different from their profit-seeking counterparts. Ironically, the broad audiences and community involvement sought by the CORT theatres – and demanded later by the arts councils – could take root most easily if the theatres offered play choices that resembled those of their commercial counterparts. Even more, in appealing to theatregoer preferences, the subsidised theatres would run the risk of jettisoning the reason for their very existence. The new management association increasingly sought to seal off the non-profit theatres from the ravages of the box-office: it represented an island of non-profit theatre in a commercial sea. 50 years hence and as will be observed at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, this detachment from the mainstream of today's flabellating theatre industry would become a contributing factor in the marooning of repertory, devitalised today by commotions within the arts funding system as well as the upheavals and excitements of new methods for theatre-making, management and delivery.

## Summary

This chapter has discussed the genesis, broad achievements and managerial uncertainties of the repertory movement, in its first 50 years, in order to contextualise and facilitate an understanding of the practices of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh.

Economically, the gap between operating expenditure and earned income in the first repertory theatres was bridged by the underwriting from private patrons, such as Annie Horniman (Dublin and Manchester) and Barry Jackson (Birmingham) or, increasingly, by public subscription through debentures and shareholdings (Glasgow Repertory and Liverpool). At first, all companies utilised the joint-stock form of incorporation as a limited company, limiting their directors' personal liability for business outcomes. However, it was optimistic to link this form of governance with any hope of cash profits and hence companies' moved towards the more communitarian structure of a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee that they adopted progressively from 1926 and which is the form used today. However, all repertories operated in an economy where working capital was in short supply.

The first instrument for continuity in the 'citizen' repertories was 'voluntary' capital provided by an unremunerated board of influential theatre-loving directors from outwith the theatre industry. They were often passionate for the art of the theatre, holding authority to influence a company's future through their approval and disapproval of play-choices. In this pre-subsidy era, there were no councillors on theatre boards and directors could more easily put the interests of the company before all else. Boards were a key factor in the longer-term expansion of the repertory theatre system. They were often assisted by auxiliary, supporting friends' organisations and, from 1944, a management association of non-profit repertory theatres that disconnected the non-profit repertories from commercial theatres.

Another feature of these companies was the rise of independent-minded, imaginative, energetic and indefatigable artistic directors, the first in Great Britain being Ben Iden Payne (Manchester), Alfred Wareing (Glasgow) and Basil Dean (Liverpool). They were pacemakers for a new authority within professional theatre. Much of their work had a modern aspect: they had to share the board's ambition for public service whilst being unhampered by their employer's diverse opinions about the choice of plays. In all cases, with the exception of a small grant to the Abbey Theatre from 1924, the companies received no government subsidy. During this period, these repertories were, perforce, also



independent of direct support from local government, even though their community aspirations were similar to art galleries, libraries, museums and orchestras that already received municipal assistance. Nevertheless, debates about a subsidised theatre gathered momentum, principally through the campaign for an endowment to establish a National Theatre in London, for which the advocacy of Harley Granville Barker included a farsighted business plan that may serve as a blueprint for the operation of all serious repertory theatres, then and now. The structure of these repertory theatres presupposed the acceptance, by boards of directors, theatre-makers and their audiences, of a strong sense of artistic purpose, which was well-marked in the comprehensible policy statements at Manchester and Glasgow.

The examples of companies in Belfast and Glasgow demonstrated that most repertories had to rent their theatre; it was unrealistic to expect them to purchase a building from profits generated from the productions. However, theatre ownership was an important aspiration because it would insulate the operations from the worst effects of inevitably unpredictable artistic conditions and erratic financial results. Theatre ownership for a citizens' theatre was demonstrated by the Liverpool Repertory's mortgage-purchase of the Star Theatre and, later, by the construction of the first purpose-built repertory theatre, paid outright by private patronage, in Birmingham. The buildings helped these companies to be self-reliant through reunification of the two strands of theatre organisation: theatre control and play production.

In this pre-subsidy era, a key to the durability of the first repertory theatres was resourceful management. This included cooperation between artists and theatre managers, demonstrated at Liverpool Playhouse in the marathon service of manager Maud Carpenter and the inspired teamwork with artistic director William Armstrong. However, external forces such as the effects of the First World War caused companies in Manchester and Glasgow to close, and Liverpool to be managed, temporarily but with good effect, as an artists' co-operative. After the First World War, resident repertory companies multiplied and began to further alter the system of production by decentralising it from London. At first, they provided new competition to commercial managements and therefore helped to check the monopoly of the powerful London entrepreneurs. Increasingly, repertories contributed to the supply of innovating productions in the touring circuits. Then, with the growth of cinema, touring declined in the 1930s. In turn, a parallel but more extensive profit-seeking repertory stratum, beginning at the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, supplanted touring, or filled programming gaps in touring theatres.

These companies began, firstly, in big industrial cities where they faced competition from existing and more numerous touring houses. However, this diversity encouraged differentiation in the repertory companies' play selections and production styles, prompting some to mirror the innovations of the London stage societies. Afterwards, repertories were founded in smaller centres, where they might hold a near monopoly or, occasionally as in the case of Perth Repertory Theatre, be the sole professional theatre in their neighbourhood. Even so, unlike the stage societies discussed in Chapter Two, few provincial companies anywhere could succeed by an esoteric policy of new drama alone; most repertories – non-profit as well as profit-seeking – were soon guided by audience preferences as expressed at the box-office, by the inclusion of drawing-room comedies and thrillers from the London West End theatre.

Managing a repertory theatre required a sure administrative capability from everyone involved, but throughout this period – in all companies and despite the labour intensity of all theatre – expenditure proportionately favoured the costs of artists and production. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to indicate the principal cost items and revenues that comprised the yearly operation of the company at the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham. This was compared with Granville Barker's 1930 budget for a National Theatre and the actual accounts for a sample production at the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow in 1944. In each case, the accounts determined that overheads were negligible and, crucially, that administrative staffing was rock-bottom.

The ensuing analysis of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh is framed in relation to the ideals, principles and structures of the progenitor repertory companies discussed here.

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<sup>1</sup> William Archer, *The Old Drama and the New*, op. cit., p.366. This work is, primarily, a literary review of drama, as opposed to theatre organisation, transcribing fourteen lectures given by Archer at King's College, London, in 1920 and 1921. Archer argues that only an examination of the causes of the 'decrepitude' of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century drama can offer a full understanding of the rejuvenation of drama and theatre in the 1900s and 1910s. This leads, in his last two lectures, to a discussion of playwrights and their work for the stage societies and the early repertory companies.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.368.

<sup>3</sup> George Rowell and Anthony Jackson, in the absorbing introduction to their synoptic *The Repertory Theatre, A History of Regional Theatre in Britain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984. p.3, describe the provincial surge to repertory as, principally, a revolt 'against the exploitation of the provincial theatre as the market for metropolitan products', the rebellion being the start of the 'total transformation of the provincial scene which the repertory movement was to bring about'. However, since their book was published – which was, apart from arts funding body enquiries, the last comprehensive examination of the whole repertory movement – the touring system has become, once more, the dominant form of theatre delivery in the provinces.

<sup>4</sup> Here a group of dynamic individuals, dedicated actors and local citizens breathed life into an earlier venture, also without grants from the public purse, and who were motivated by a move away from Danish theatre towards the plays of a Norwegian drama school, such as those by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), performed by native actors. In the Norwegian capital, then known as Kristiania, Ibsen was artistic director of a putative national theatre from 1857 to 1862, during which time the theatre produced thirty-one new plays. In this city, two competing art theatres, which also rivalled the theatre in Bergen, merged and the Nationaltheatret was established by royal decree in 1887, although it took until 1899 to complete a new building, erected with government funds from a premium bond lottery. Each Norwegian national theatre, like the Irish Literary Theatre, reflected strong nationalistic aspirations with a distinctly national repertoire. See Peter Bilton's introduction 'Norway, 1825-1909', in Laurence Senelick, (ed.), *National Theatre in Northern and Eastern Europe, 1746-1900*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp.125-126.

<sup>5</sup> William Archer, 'Ibsen's Apprenticeship', London, *The Morning Review*, 1901, reprinted in *The Fortnightly Review*, London, New Series, Vol. LXXV, June 1904. The article is reproduced, in full, in Dawson Byrne, *The Story of Ireland's National Theatre: The Abbey Theatre, Dublin*, Dublin, Talbot Press, 1929, New York, Haskell House, 1971, pp. 5-8.

<sup>6</sup> Her father, of Horniman's Teas, Manchester, had considerable inherited wealth. She was interested in the Irish dramatic movement and had acted for some time as unpaid secretary to W.B. Yeats, with who she was probably in love. Her seminal influence upon the repertory movement is described in James W. Flannery, *Miss Annie F. Horniman and the Abbey Theatre*, Dublin, Dolmen Press, 1970 and Rex Pogson, *Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester*, London, Rockliff, 1952. Later biographies are notable for their focus on Horniman's use of magic, which she used to improve her creative and managerial powers. Her membership of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn that she shared with Shaw, Yeats and the actress Florence Farr is described in Mary K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn. Rebels and Priestesses*, Rochester (Vermont), Park Street Press, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> There are more histories of the Abbey Theatre than of any other single repertory theatre: explained in part by its literary and political roots and the company's impact on the growth of non-profit theatre in The United States of America. The latest is Robert Welch, *The Abbey Theatre, 1899-1999: Form and Pressure*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, stockpiling a century of its artistic and financial progress. For examples and discussion of primary sources, including the crooked path of counterevidence, see E.H. Mikhail (ed.), *The Abbey Theatre: Interviews and Recollections*, Totawa, New Jersey, Barnes and Noble, 1988. This is a composite-documentary Abbey biography and a trampoline for understanding the intermediate studies. Unlike most repertory companies in Britain today, the Abbey has always been cognisant of its past: the spirit of its founders and their early plays act as a living trustee on its work today.

<sup>8</sup> For long-term comparisons of the purchasing power of the pound, see 'Cost of Living and Inflation Rates', London, HMSO, to date, reproduced in *Whittaker's Almanac 2000*, London, The Stationery Office, 1999, p.610. This includes a long-term index constructed by amalgamating the retail prices index for the years from 1962 to date, the consumers' expenditure deflator for the period from 1938 to 1962 and the cost of living for the period before 1938. Equivalent sums for today, where quoted in this study in parenthesis, are calculated from this table, but are only a guide to contextualising figures. They can only be estimates, because of a host of interacting factors such as changing levels of taxation. Moreover, the comparisons inevitably have a short useable life. They must be reformulated annually: it is emphasised that their expiration year is 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Miss Horniman's offer of the Abbey Theatre was sent in this letter addressed to W.B. Yeats in April 1904. Reproduced in full in Dawson Byrne, *The Story of Ireland's National Theatre: The Abbey Theatre, Dublin*, op.cit., pp. 33-35 and in Lennox Robinson, *Ireland's Abbey Theatre 1899-1951*, London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1951, pp. 44-45.

<sup>10</sup> 'Stakeholder' is, of course, a late twentieth-century management word, meaning any individual or group that has a 'stake' in a company's performance. Being one of the more explicit managerial terms, I use it preveniently, despite its modern significance.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Annie Horniman to the Directors, quoted in Lennox Robinson, *Ireland's Abbey Theatre, A History 1899-1951*, op.cit, p.49. The organisers of the Abbey were rarely, except in times of extraordinary crisis, in Dublin together. They often communicated by letter. This correspondence is transcribed in Anne Saddlemeyer, *Theatre Business, The Correspondence of the First Abbey Theatre Directors: William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory and J.M. Synge*, Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1982. This reveals the complexities of theatre management, as well as the intrigues of passionate, personal relationships. The many-sided letters deal, frequently, with Miss Horniman – much of it in the strained manner of how today's theatre leaders speak about their transactions with arts councils and their boards of directors – revealing insight into their awkward synergy with Horniman.

<sup>12</sup> See Ben Iden Payne, *A Life in a Wooden O, Memoirs of the Theatre*, London and New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977. Through this engagement, Payne was, indisputably, the first artistic director of a repertory theatre outwith London but, in Britain, his achievements as one of the founding fathers of repertory are now largely unknown to his successors, his reputation overshadowed by that of his employer, Miss Horniman. Born in Newcastle upon Tyne, he directed more than 200 plays for Horniman. Later he ran other companies, such as the Little Theatre in Philadelphia, the Copley Repertory Company, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford upon Avon and, whilst a theatre academic in North America, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the San Diego Shakespeare Festival. A theatre was named after him at Yale University.

<sup>13</sup> Important discussion of how state legislation had, hitherto, intervened in the business of theatre is included in Tracey C. Davis' essay, 'Edwardian management and the structures of industrial capitalism' in Michael R. Booth and Joel H. Kaplan (eds.), *The Edwardian Theatre*, op.cit., where new types of commercial theatre syndicates, established by the London impresarios, are compared with the general business climate, in which the habit of family succession was in decline, with a move towards incorporation as limited companies. Although Davis does not refer to the constitutions of the early repertory theatres, legislation via the Companies Acts is nonetheless a significant influence on their organisation and, because of their impact on the governance of repertory theatre today, is worth noting here.

A succession of supervision orders began in the Companies Acts of 1855-62, in response to pressures to reconcile ownership and labour, making it easier for workers to invest in their employers' business. More significant for theatre companies was the Companies Act of 1907 (consolidated in 1908), which made the distinction between a public company and a private company. A public company had to file an annual balance sheet summarising its capital, assets and liabilities. A private company, restricted to 50 shareholders, was exempted from the rule to issue a prospectus or file a balance sheet, needing only to lodge a statement with the Registrar of Companies. Two studies cover this subject in non-legal terms: H.A. Shannon, 'The Coming of General Limited Liability', in E.M. Carus-Wilson, (ed.), *Essays in Economic History*, London, Edward Arnold, 1954, pp. 358-379 and Bishop Carelton Hunt, *The Development of the Business Corporation in England 1800-1867*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1936. However, they do not deal with structures available to 'voluntary', non-profit theatres that do not 'distribute' profits when they are limited by guarantee of their members.

Commentators invariably refer to repertory theatres as *public* companies, doubtless because of their communitarian, educational and 'public service' objectives, as does, for instance, Robert Welch, *The Abbey Theatre, 1899-1999*, op.cit, p. 34. When it registered as a limited company (by shares) it was, technically, a *private* company. However, no repertory theatres have ever been quoted on the stock exchanges and the more common constitution for repertory theatres today is a company limited by guarantee. For formal explanations of legislation and the theatre, in the period under discussion, see Sidney Isaacs, *The Law Relating to Theatres, Music-Halls, Cinemas and other Public Entertainments, and to the Performers therein, including the Law of Musical and Dramatic Copyright*, London, Stevens and Sons, 1927, pp. 4-21. This includes, in its introduction, notes about incorporation as its affects theatre companies. A useful list of Acts of Parliament, Bills, Reports and official records, primarily relating to the management of London theatres from 1751 to 1948 is in Diana Howard, *London Theatres and Music Halls 1850-1950*, London, Library Association, 1970, pp.269-270. But for comparison, see a list of parliamentary acts and selected parliamentary bills relevant to theatre up to 1909; Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 457-460.

<sup>14</sup> Exceptionally, one British repertory company used a Royal Charter as its form of incorporation: The Royal Shakespeare Theatre (1960). Even the National Theatre of Great Britain (1963) is registered under the Companies Acts and, unlike continental European national theatres, is not a statutory body of Parliament: its first formal name was The National Theatre Board Limited. In passing, it may be noted that it is open to non-profit companies to apply for deletion of the word 'limited' from their title. A minority of repertories favoured this because the word might connote a subliminal deterrent to successful fundraising from individual donors; they wished to emphasise the 'charitable' and 'educational' purpose in precedence to their theatre's 'business' aspects.

<sup>15</sup> Figure quoted in Peter Kavanagh, *The Story of the Abbey Theatre*, New York, Devin-Adair Company, 1950, Orono, National Poetry Foundation at the University of Maine, 1984, p.125.

<sup>16</sup> In order to indicate their need for this first subsidy, the Abbey directors offered to gift the theatre to the new state, yielding direct responsibility for its management. The Dáil Éirann declined this offer, whereupon the Abbey made an application for £1,000 towards annual operations and £1,000 for repairs. The application process is described in Robert Welch, *The Abbey Theatre 1899-1999*, op.cit, pp.82-83. Afterwards, the grant of £850 was never withheld and the company preserved much independence. Contrarily, John W. O'Hagan, in 'An Economic Analysis of a National Theatre: The Case of the Abbey Theatre', *Journal of European Cultural Policy*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers, Vol.3 No.1, pp.65-78, holds (p.71) that the

grant was requested specifically for educational work, to assist in the training of actors and playwrights. The Minister of Education made the request and, if O'Hagan is correct, it would be possible to view this first subsidy in repertory grant as exogenous to the Abbey's main theatre productions and operations budget.

By 1998-1999, The Abbey grant from the Irish Arts Council was £2,750,000, having grown 150-fold, in real terms, from 1922. See Irish Arts Council, *Annual Report and Accounts*, Dublin, Irish Arts Council, 2000, p.8. For the purposes of this study, which concentrates on repertory theatres in the United Kingdom, the Abbey, being a National and foreign theatre is, hereafter, of peripheral concern. However, for the moment, it is pertinent to observe that Yeats, who became a senator in the Free State and who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923, was, from a theatre management perspective, in a desired position to secure the grant. Moreover, the Minister for Finance, Ernest Blythe, was a helpful theatre enthusiast: it was a condition of subsidy that the board be enlarged to include a government nominee-director and Blythe, who was their second nominee, during which time he acted as a reluctant censor, left the government to become general manager of the Abbey from 1935, retiring in 1972 at the age of 86. Few theatres in the British Isles have enjoyed such continuous skin-tight links to their legislature whilst holding artistic and managerial autonomy. The first Abbey Theatre burnt down in 1951, whereupon the company moved to the Queen's Theatre of 1823, which had been remodelled in 1909. The Abbey moved back to the old site of Horniman's 1904 Abbey, and it is there where the 1966-built theatre stands today. For an Abbey chronicle (and a manager's appraisal) up to the opening of the second Abbey Theatre, see Ernest Blythe, *The Abbey Theatre*, Dublin, National Theatre Society, 1964.

<sup>17</sup> A list of these productions is given in Sam Hanna Bell, *The Theatre in Ulster*, London and Dublin, Macmillan, 1972, pp.134-136. Its founders were Bulmer Hobson and David Parkhill (the playwright Lewis Purcell) with other prominent figures such as Rutherford Mayne (1878-1967) and Gerald McNamara. Unlike Yeats at the Abbey, or the artistic directors of most repertory theatres, there was no single dominant personality.

<sup>18</sup> From the house magazine of the Ulster Literary Theatre, *Uladh*, Belfast, Ulster Literary Theatre, February 1905, quoted in Ophelia Byrne, *The Stage in Ulster from the Eighteenth Century: Selected from the Theatre Archive of the Linen Hall Library*, Belfast, The Linen Hall Library, 1997, p.37.

<sup>19</sup> Although Mary Trotter, *Ireland's National Theaters: Political Performance and the Origins of the Irish Dramatic Movement*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2001 challenges the reign of the Abbey by examination of several other Irish theatre companies up to the Easter Rising of 1916. Unlike many studies primarily about nationalism and the plays, hers includes profuse observations of their organisation and management.

<sup>20</sup> A description of Ulster Literary Theatre's seasons at the Grand Opera House, Belfast, is in Lyn Gallagher, *The Grand Opera House, Belfast*, Belfast, The Blackstaff Press, 1995, pp. 39-43, and a short memoir by the playwright and manager Joseph Tomelty, 'The Theatre in Northern Ireland', *Drama*, London, British Drama League, New Series, Spring 1953, No. 28, pp. 15-18. This company was a prototype for professional repertory by the shorter-lived Belfast Repertory Theatre (founded by Richard Hayward) and for the Ulster Group Theatre (a combination of three amateur companies which produced mainly English plays). Later, the Lyric Theatre, Belfast (founded in 1955) may be viewed chiefly as part of the United Kingdom system, now subsidised by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, even though (unlike Scotland and Wales) this arts council was never a satellite of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

<sup>21</sup> The Midland Hotel Theatre capacity is quoted in Lionel Carson, (ed.), *The Stage Guide*, London, "The Stage Offices", 1912, p.235. Figures for the Manchester theatre capacity are totalled from the holding capacities, quoted by zone in each of all theatres listed.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Kennedy, *The Hallé 1858-1983: A History of the Orchestra*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982, p.5.

<sup>23</sup> N.H.G. Schoonderwoerd, *J.T.Grein, Ambassador of the Theatre, 1862-1935: A Study in Anglo-Continental Theatrical Relations*, op.cit, p. 113.

<sup>24</sup> Edwin Hays was a commanding example of the symbiosis of amateur and professional theatre management. The Stockport Garrick Theatre has always been amateur but has maintained associations with professional theatre. Anna Miller, *The Independent Theatre in Europe*, op.cit., pp. 215-217, emphasises the importance of this group, which was founded in 1901, as a 'decentralised' society with 500 members and an audience of '15,000 to consider', staging the first provincial productions of plays by Ibsen and Shaw and being the first repertory theatre organisational model of the separation of ownership of a theatre from an in-house production company. Later, when Stockport Garrick Limited was incorporated in 1925, it protected the venue from the perils of trade, enabling the production activity to view its objectives as principally artistic in order that 'the utter and absolute financial failure of a play would not result in bankruptcy'. The operations company, which leased the theatre rent-free could, according to the *Garrick Magazine*, 1926,

thereby concentrate on planning, especially play selection, which it did through 'a bloody, bold and resolute Plays Committee of no compromise'. This structure is now a familiar arrangement in repertory, for the responsibilities of a owning and maintaining a building, as well as its commercial catering activities, call for different attitudes to those required in producing theatre. There was also a Garrick Society in nearby Altrincham that cooperated with professional theatre, especially dramaturgical assistance from playwrights. This, together with debate about turning professional – including Shaw's recommendations – is discussed in Pamela Knox, *The Flame Still Burns, the story of Altrincham Garrick Theatre*, Altrincham, Altrincham Garrick Society, 1993, pp. 6-10.

<sup>25</sup> Ben Iden Payne, *A Life in a Wooden O*, op.cit, p.79.

<sup>26</sup> Lionel Carson, (ed.), *The Stage Guide*, op.cit, p. 235.

<sup>27</sup> Horniman's work at the Gaiety Theatre is chronicled in Rex Pogson, *Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre Manchester*, London, Rockcliff, 1952 and in Sheila Goodie, *Annie Horniman, A Pioneer in the Theatre*, London, Methuen, 1990.

<sup>28</sup> William Poel founded and subsidised the non-profit, subscription Elizabethan Stage Society in London in 1895. This continued until 1905 and, in its quest for retrieving Shakespeare from the picture-frame, spectacular realist productions of actor-managers, corresponded to the 'New Drama' of the stage societies in its influence on the provincial repertory theatres. Poel's Gaiety production attempted the recreation of an Elizabethan stage behind, and in front of, this theatre's proscenium arch including extension of the acting area over the orchestra pit, an eccentric undertaking at this time. During the 1920s the London Shakespeare League resumed the campaign for open or platform stages. However, apart from the amateur Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich and Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park, London, built in 1933, professional repertory theatres did not fully implement the form, architecturally, until the construction of adaptable theatres, as at the Octagon Theatre, Bolton, in 1968. It was to be in Canada where the Poel legacy eventually took root: a neo-Elizabethan alternative to the proscenium arch was demonstrated by the director Tyrone Guthrie and designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch (1914- ) in their designs for the thrust stage and permanent settings of Stratford Festival Theatre, Ontario, built in 1953. For an evaluation of William Poel, see Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, London, Heinemann and the Society for Theatre Research, 1954 and James Woodfield, 'Spectacle, Austerity and New Dimensions: The Staging of Shakespeare from Victorian to Modern', in his *English Theatre in Transition 1881-1914*, London and Sydney, Croom Helm, 1984, pp. 132-149.

<sup>29</sup> James Agate, 'The Pros and the Cons', *Essays on the Theatre*, London, W. Collins, 1917, p. 66. George Rowell, '1907-1918: Manchester to Birmingham', in *The Repertory Movement*, op.cit., p. 36, notes that Manchester's newspapers were 'receptive to the idea [of Horniman's company] and exceptionally well equipped to assess it', boasting 'a dramatic critic of standing in C.E. Montague and had recently added James Agate and Allan Monkhouse to its staff'. Nevertheless, the Gaiety managers would doubtless have cursed Agate's coruscating commentaries on the Gaiety policy, including their supercilious attitude to theatregoing in the provinces. Agate decried it for not taking seriously the question of dressing up to go to the theatre and for ignoring the need to entertain the public.

<sup>30</sup> See Rex Pogson, *Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre Manchester*, op.cit, Appendix B, pp. 206-209. Between 1909 and 1914, the company played six London seasons and toured twice to North America. They also visited other provincial towns and cities, such as Hull, Leamington Spa, Preston, Chorley, Carlisle, Cork, Glasgow, Limerick, Edinburgh, Barrow-in-Furness, Harrogate, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge and Dundee. Their provincial schedule exceeded the London and foreign visits eightfold. Commentators do not usually discuss such industrious detours, perhaps because they did not add to the Gaiety's reputation amongst the London critics and cognoscenti. The Gaiety tours are exceeded today – by building-based drama companies – only by those of the Royal National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company.

<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, George Rowell, 'Lancashire Drama' in *The Repertory Movement*, op.cit, pp. 42-45. However, the play lists in Pogson, op.cit, pp. 199-205 demonstrate that the Lancashire plays, which were mostly comedies, were few in proportion to the whole programme, outnumbered by other serious playwrights Ibsen, Rostand, Hauptmann, Galsworthy, Calderon and Euripedes.

<sup>32</sup> Despite other repertory companies that followed the Gaiety Theatre, such as the Library Theatre, its achievements were never outclassed in Manchester until 1968, when the 69 Theatre Company Limited (later the Royal Exchange Theatre) was established, with the declared aim of establishing a reputation on a national level. This company quickly reached renowned standards of performance, with the regular engagement of actors such as Vanessa Redgrave (1937- ), Dame Wendy Hiller (1912- ) and Sir Tom Courtenay (1937- ), from the first season. It often publicised itself as 'The National Theatre of the North'; many of its actors were already stars and they returned to the company on several occasions. Often, there was no chance of a good critical outcome: the company was often upbraided for star casting because of the artistic directors' supposed

fixation on London. Astoundingly, none of three historical records-cum-house prospectuses, when probing the company's precedents, offer any mention of the Gaiety, although they revere and acknowledge the later influence of pioneers such as the theatre-in-the-round advocate Stephen Joseph (1927-1967), and the director and actor-teacher Michel Saint-Denis (1897-1971). See William Mather, *69 Theatre Company: A Prospectus*, Manchester, 69 Theatre Company Limited, 1968, David Fraser, *The Royal Exchange Theatre Company, An Illustrated Record*, Manchester, Royal Exchange Theatre Company, 1988 and, especially, Susan Press et.al, *The Royal Exchange Theatre Company, Words and Pictures 1976-1998*, Manchester, Royal Exchange Theatre Company Limited, 1998, pp. 38-47. This company is an example of the reverse of a permanent acting ensemble; instead, the concept of 'permanence' has resided in a joint artistic directorate: Michael Elliott (1931-1984), Casper Wrede (1929-1998), Richard Pilbrow (1933- ), Braham Murray (1943- ) and James Maxwell (1929-1995) were the first artistic directors. Excepting Murray, they had worked together at the 59 Theatre Company at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, making this 'company' the 'longest-running theatre group ever'. Murray continues, with others, today. They believed that it was wrong to keep their actors tied up for long periods, because this would prevent them from taking lucrative parts in film and television.

<sup>33</sup> A 'lodging-house theatre' was Horniman's sententious description of having to give a berth to touring companies, for she was no longer responsible for the creative birth of the productions that played at the Gaiety. See Rex Pogson, *Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre Manchester*, op.cit, p. 173. Like many later subsidised repertory artistic directors, she saw in a theatre building a strictly business enterprise that was in no way connected to the art of the theatre except that it provided the place in which the art could be displayed. Often, repertory companies regard a touring theatre as managed in the same way as any other building, with small variations due to the peculiar demands of presenting theatre. Moreover, interchange of personnel was almost unheard of until the 1990s; though, as will be shown, the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust became the first but short-lived example of an attempt to fuse these milieux into one theatre management, when it combined management of the King's Theatre with the Royal Lyceum Theatre from 1973 to 1976.

<sup>34</sup> Horniman's licence to sell alcohol 'during permitted hours' would have been conditioned by The Excise Act, 1835, as an attachment to her theatre licence, granted under The Theatres Act 1848 and the Local Government Act, 1888. She was unsuccessful because of scornful, money-conscious opposition from the Manchester profit-seeking theatre managers, not from customary objections by neighbouring taverns. This was especially trying because the Gaiety Theatre previously held a liquor licence when run by the United Theatres Co. Limited. All managers had to get past several legal requirements: plans for Horniman's Gaiety Theatre alterations would have been authorised under the Public Health Act, 1875. At this time there were also specific restrictions on theatres selling tobacco and confectionary, under the Shop Hours Act of 1888. Plays had to be licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, which was often a difficulty in the case of new scripts or extant plays with new scenes. For explanations of provincial theatre licensing in this period, which often differed from London, see James M. Glover, (ed.), *The Theatre Managers' Handbook*, London, For the Editor, 1928, pp.73-75.

<sup>35</sup> Remembrance of the Gaiety Theatre was a generative force in the amateur Unnamed Society, which was founded in 1916 and continued until 1931 staging, principally, new plays, and in the establishment of the more middle-of-the-road Manchester Repertory Theatre at the Rusholme Theatre, Manchester between 1923 and 1940. Neither company received subsidy from a wealthy patron, but at Rusholme, the balance sheet was sustained by 450 shareholders who each agreed to indemnify the theatre against loss to the extent of £10 spread over five years, not more than £2 to be called up in any one year. For details of all Manchester companies, theatres and archive collections, see Terry Wyke and Nigel Rudyard, *Manchester Theatres*, Manchester, Bibliography of North West England, 1994.

<sup>36</sup> The other Companion of Honour was Lilian Baylis, (1874-1937), created in 1929 in recognition of her management of the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells Theatre.

<sup>37</sup> Ben Iden Payne, *A Life in a Wooden O*, op.cit, p.92.

<sup>38</sup> See Philip A. Talbot, 'The Macclesfield Theatre Company and Nineteenth Century Silk Manufacturers', *Theatre Notebook*, London, Society for Theatre Research, 2000, Vol. 54, No.1, pp.24-42.

<sup>39</sup> See Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914*, op.cit, pp. 238-240. Davis' perception is that, by contributing what must have been

a substantial part of their savings, if not all, it [also] seems highly likely that investing in this way was a civic act designed to enrich the community *per se*. In this sense, it anticipates the civic repertory theatre concept by decades, except that private investors take their own initiative to create a professional entertainment venue rather than leaving it to the state to do so on taxation revenue.



Through her research in the share registers of Victorian theatre companies, Davis points out that other locally organised theatres in the North West, such as those in Birkenhead and Liverpool, were owned by middle-class professionals, suggesting that their theatres' objectives would be mismatched to the interests of the working-classes.

<sup>40</sup> This outline appeared on the front page of programmes, where the company was also billed as 'The Scottish Repertory Theatre'.

<sup>41</sup> Winifred F.E.C. Isaac, *Alfred Wareing*, op.cit, p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> Anon., *The Arthurian Theatre Magazine*, London, Robert Arthur Theatres, April 1911, p.4. Arthur ran a chain of touring theatres in Scotland and England.

<sup>43</sup> See Conrad Wilson, *Playing for Scotland, The History of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra*, Glasgow, Harper Collins, 1993, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Although the company's projections for working capital fell short of a fundamental reserve, the scale and context of the company's business can be contrasted with that of their Royalty Theatre landlords, Howard and Wyndham Limited. With an approximate capital of £45,000 (£2,750,000), they were a Goliath worth nearly thirty times the intended capitalisation of Glasgow Repertory Theatre. In 1907, Howard and Wyndham paid a dividend to investors worth £260,000 today. I make this estimate from their entry in 'Particulars of Capital and Dividends of Leading Joint Stock Companies Engaged in Theatrical and Kindred Business', John Parker, (ed.), *The Green Room Book or Who's Who on The Stage*, London, T. Sealey Clark, 1908, p.630.

<sup>45</sup> Despite the originaive importance of Glasgow Repertory Theatre as a 'citizens' theatre', there is no single publication about the company, perhaps because of its short life. Several studies discuss the company, along with the Scottish National Players and Unity Theatre, as a foreground to the greater achievements of James Bridie's Citizens' Theatre, founded in 1943. Its formation, policy and programme is described within six enquiries: its first four seasons by P.P. Howe, *The Repertory Theatre*, op.cit., pp. 64-69, by Anna Miller, 'The Dramatic Awakening of Scotland and Wales', *The Independent Theatre in Europe*, op.cit., pp. 311-318, Winifred F.E.C. Isaac, *Alfred Wareing, A Biography*, London, Green Bank Press, 1946, pp. 34-45, by David Hutchinson, *The Modern Scottish Theatre*, Glasgow, Moleindar Press, 1977, pp. 12-26, by Jan McDonald, *What is a Citizens Theatre?* [Proceedings of the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow, New Series, Number One], Dundee, Lochee Publications, November 1984, pp. 3-7, and again by David Hutchinson, 'The Glasgow Repertory Theatre' in '1900-1950', Bill Findlay, (ed.), *A History of Scottish Theatre*, Edinburgh, Polygon, 1998, pp. 208-214.

<sup>46</sup> P.P. Howe, *The Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, p.67.

<sup>47</sup> See advertisement in the Programme, *The Threshold*, Glasgow, The Scottish Playgoers Ltd, Royalty Theatre, 9 March 1914, p.3.

<sup>48</sup> Had Glasgow Repertory Theatre rented the Royalty year round, the rent would have been £4,160 (£242,028). It is interesting to compare this with London West End theatre rents at this time. The novelist and playwright, Arnold (Enoch) Bennett (1867-1931) observes the average Shaftesbury Avenue theatre to be £10,000 (£581,800) and the Savoy Theatre in the Strand at £7,000 (£407,260). Irving paid £5,000 (£290,900) per annum for the Lyceum Theatre. See Arnold Bennett, 'The Crisis in the Theatre', preface to *Cupid and Commonsense*, London, New Age Press, 1909, p.8-9.

<sup>49</sup> Commentators state that the assets of the Scottish Playgoers' Limited were donated to The St Andrew's Society, which nurtured the separate Scottish National Players, founded in 1921. In view of the substantial accumulated losses at closure, it is hard to imagine that the transfer amounted to more than remnants of sets, costumes and office equipment. Nevertheless, the next company presented three Scottish plays staged at the Royal Institute, Glasgow, and was in turn was re-incorporated as the Scottish National Theatre Society in 1922. This was a touring repertory company and 1,942 performances were given; 61 out of 121 productions were of new plays, toured throughout Scotland until 1947. The full story is told by its first artistic director, Tyrone Guthrie, et.al., in *The Scottish National Theatre Venture: its Birth, History, Work and Influence 1921-1948*, Glasgow, Scottish National Players, 1953 and by Karen Anne Marshalsay, *The Scottish National Players: in the nature of an experiment 1913-1934*, Ph.D thesis, Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 1991. An attempt to replicate the example of Glasgow Repertory Theatre was made in Edinburgh when the grandly styled Scottish National Repertory Theatre was formed in 1912 by the poet James Macgillivray and his dramatist daughter, Ina Macgillivray, but made no headway because of the First World War.

<sup>50</sup> In this study, 'turnover' means sales (or sales revenue), including cash and credit sales, but does not include the sale of fixed assets. For a non-profit repertory theatre company, the term means income from box-office receipts, hires, fees, programmes and the net catering profits. In this study – as is also customary



in theatre accounts – subsidy income will be isolated from turnover, with which it will often be compared, the latter being known as ‘earned income’.

<sup>51</sup> Losses quoted in David Hutchison, *The Modern Scottish Theatre*, Glasgow, Molendinar Press, 1977, p.18 and also entries in “*The Stage*” *Year Book*, for instance 1914, p.133. According to J. James Hewson, ‘some of the large shareholders pressed the company to go into liquidation’ in 1912, but ‘a meeting was held in March, which happily resulted in the shareholders authorising the directors to carry on’ with fewer productions. This may have resulted in the greatly reduced loss but, more probably, the improvement was because Wareing staged several of the plays as ‘an independent venture’, avoiding the ‘trouble to contend with their varying opinions’. See ‘The Repertory Movement: A Review of the Past Year’, Lionel Carson, (ed.), “*The Stage*” *Year Book*, 1914, London, Carson and Comerford, 1914, pp.40-41.

<sup>52</sup> Statistics are calculated from individual theatres’ holding capacities, and the population quoted in Lionel Carson, (ed.), *The Stage Guide*, op.cit, pp.150-151, together with Scottish Arts Council patron data reports. By 1945, the approximate mid-point of this comparison, the ratio of theatre seats to population in Glasgow was approximately 1:60.

<sup>53</sup> The play-list for 1909-1913 is reproduced in Winifred F.E.C. Isaac, *Alfred Wareing*, op.cit, pp. 150-152. It excludes the final months, from January to July 1914, under the artistic direction of Lewis Casson.

<sup>54</sup> Edwin T. Hays, ‘The Manchester Repertory Theatre’, in “*The Stage*” *Year Book*, 1912, London, Carson and Comerford, 1912, p. 21.

<sup>55</sup> P.P.Howe, *The Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, pp. 65-66.

<sup>56</sup> Lionel Carson, (ed.), *The Stage Guide*, op.cit, p.235.

<sup>57</sup> Programme, *Cupid and Commonsense*, Glasgow, The Scottish Playgoers Ltd., Royalty Theatre, Glasgow, 13 May 1912, p.1. Prices are also quoted in Winifred F.E.C. Isaac, *Alfred Wareing*, op.cit., p.37, who, without comparison to Glasgow commercial theatres, describes them as ‘very moderate’.

<sup>58</sup> See, for instance, programmes for the King’s Theatre and Theatre Royal, Glasgow that were, with the Royalty Theatre, owned and managed by Howard and Wyndham Limited.

<sup>59</sup> P.P. Howe, *The Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, p.68.

<sup>60</sup> ‘A Word About The Future’, Programme, *The Devil’s Disciple*, Glasgow, The Scottish Playgoers’ Ltd, Royalty Theatre, 16 February, 1914, p.4.

<sup>61</sup> William Archer and Harley Granville Barker, *A National Theatre, Scheme & Estimates*, op.cit., p.87 and Appendix C, pp. 140-147, offer detailed rules and booking systems for subscription. It was never adopted at the National Theatre, and only took hold in repertory in the 1980s, when companies such as Bristol Old Vic engaged a United States’ specialist, Danny Newman, to implement what Archer and Barker had hitherto recommended. See also Danny Newman, *Subscribe Now! Building Arts Audiences Through Dynamic Subscription Promotion*, New York, Theatre Communications Group, 1977.

<sup>62</sup> J.B. Priestley, *Theatre Outlook*, London, Nicholson & Watson, 1947, p.84 compares the cost of a theatre stall with a novel, a bottle of whisky and cartons of cigarettes, using the years 1910, 1925 and 1947. In 1910, the stalls seat was twice that of a hardback novel, one and half times that of a bottle of whisky and equal to the price of 100 cigarettes.

<sup>63</sup> Lionel Carson, (ed.), *The Stage Guide*, 1912, op.cit, pp. 219-221. As with theatres, the number of cinemas in these three cities was correspondingly fewer on Merseyside, despite Liverpool’s matching population. There were 22 cinemas on Merseyside, whereas Glasgow had 40 and Manchester had more than 70. At any rate, this suggests an uncommonly attractive market advantage for the new repertory entrant.

<sup>64</sup> Basil Dean, *Seven Ages, An Autobiography 1888-1927*, London, Hutchinson, 1970, pp. 76-77. George Rowell, *The Repertory Movement*, op.cit, p. 41, quotes this profit as £1,600. Grace Wyndham Goldie, *The Liverpool Repertory Theatre 1911-1934*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, Liverpool, University Press, 1935, p.39, suggests the profit was £500, but in any event, the sum was an exceptional result, especially as Kelly’s Theatre was contracted on box-office share terms of 50-50, when the customary touring arrangements were 60-65 per cent in favour of the producing company.

<sup>65</sup> Figures quoted in Christopher Bullock, (ed.), *Liverpool Playhouse, Diamond Jubilee 1911-1971*, Liverpool, Liverpool Repertory Theatre Ltd., 1971, p.14.

<sup>66</sup> See programme facsimile for *The Admirable Crichton*, reproduced in Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, Basil Dean, Maud Carpenter, et al, *Liverpool Playhouse, Golden Jubilee 1911-1961*, Liverpool, Liverpool Repertory Theatre Limited, 1961, pp. 12-13. Notes to the audience invited them ‘to address any suggestions

that they may care to make to Mr. Basil Dean at the theatre'. Another management innovation was an attempt to reduce the number and duration of intervals, so that 'wherever possible there will be one long interval only, the rest of the acts divided by short pauses'. Stage management placed 'blue electric light signals at either side of the proscenium [to] serve as an indication to the audience of the approach of the 'long interval', which will be of sufficient length to enable patrons to visit their friends in the foyer and other parts of the house'.

<sup>67</sup> Numbers counted from play lists in Grace Wyndham Goldie, *The Liverpool Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, pp. 226-270. Cecil Chisholm, *Repertory, An Outline of the Modern Theatre Movement*, London, Peter Davies, 1934, Appendix II, pp.248-249 lists their productions for 1932-1933 giving, in addition, the number of performances of each play, confirming *varying* runs of three weeks (ten productions) and two weeks (seven productions).

<sup>68</sup> Basil Dean, *Seven Ages, An Autobiography 1888-1927*, op.cit, pp. 89-90. He was only 23 when appointed to run the theatre, writing these observations with the advantage of immense experience at the age of 82.

<sup>69</sup> J.James Hewson, 'The Liverpool Repertory Theatre', *The "Stage" Year Book, 1914*, op.cit, p. 41.

<sup>70</sup> Tyrone Guthrie, *My Life in the Theatre*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1959, p.46.

<sup>71</sup> Grace Wyndham Goldie, *The Liverpool Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, p. 85.

<sup>72</sup> Basil Dean, *Seven Ages, An Autobiography 1888-1927*, op.cit, p. 102.

<sup>73</sup> Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, Basil Dean, Maud Carpenter, et al, *Liverpool Playhouse, Golden Jubilee, 1911-1961*, op.cit, p.46.

<sup>74</sup> The founding chairman, Charles Reilly, recalled the episode in *Scaffolding in the Sky, a semi-architectural autobiography*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1938, pp.124.

<sup>75</sup> For a study of theatre management in Elizabethan repertories and the sharing system, see Bernard Beckerman, 'Philip Henslowe', in Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., *The Theatrical Manager in England and America: Player of a Perilous Game*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971, pp. 19-62.

<sup>76</sup> The plan and early operation of the cooperative management are described in Anon., *A History of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre: Artistes' and Staff's Commonwealth, September 1914-April 1915*, Liverpool, For the Commonwealth, 1915. The arrangement was that actors and staff had to subscribe £1 (£58) to a 'Commonwealth' fund; at the beginning of each season they rehearsed for no wages; they were promised £2 (£116) a week thereafter, instead of the previous wage of £7 (£400), but would receive amounts up to the full wage according to the success of a whole season. To an extent, the Liverpool 'Commonwealth' may be seen to anticipate the workings of contemporary theatre collectives from the 1960s, such as the proliferating small-theatre peripatetic company membership of the Independent Theatre Council. Other resident, large companies, with the exception of The Actors' Company, have never attempted the principle of collective sharing of receipts and decision-making. The Actors' Company was a touring repertory theatre formed by Sir Ian McKellan (1939- ) and others in 1970, organised without a board of directors but administered by an umbrella arrangement with Cambridge Theatre Company. This company was also a challenge to the belief that democratic processes must be discarded once the administrative problems become larger.

<sup>77</sup> Grace Wyndham Goldie, *The Liverpool Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, p.113.

<sup>78</sup> I attempted without success to locate this script in the Liverpool Playhouse archives and elsewhere, for its contents might offer more clues as to what they thought of their board of directors.

<sup>79</sup> The small 567-seat Kingsway Theatre gave welcome to several provincial repertory companies. It was run by the actress-manager Lena Ashwell (1872-1957), who took an avid interest in repertories, having run companies during the First World War for British servicemen in Paris, Le Havre, Rouen and Calais, including ensembles of Scottish actors who performed for the Scottish regiments. In addition to the Kingsway, her work was an early example of repertory in London suburbs, where she produced seasons in 'found spaces' such as the local authority owned swimming baths of Deptford, Ilford, Lewisham and Beckenham. Her 'aim throughout [was] to create an interest in the representatives of the people in each borough, so that the method of cooperation between the arts and the community could be arrived at'. See Lena Ashwell, *The Stage*, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1929, pp.146 and 157-158. Ashwell was one of the first repertorists to work closely with local government; although they could not give direct grants, councillors reduced the hall rents and distributed advertising material with rate demand notices.

<sup>80</sup> Christopher Bullock, (ed.), *Liverpool Playhouse, Diamond Jubilee 1911-1971*, op.cit, p.13.

<sup>81</sup> See Richard Findlater, *Lilian Baylis: The Lady of the Old Vic*, London, Allen Lane, 1975 and Adrian Frazier, *Behind the Scenes: Yeats, Horniman, and the Struggle for the Abbey Theatre*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990.

Tracy C. Davis researches records of lady managers. Her alphabetical data base of over 300 managers before the First World War reveals that the previous longest-serving were Sarah Baker, who owned seven theatres in Kent and managed their stock companies between c.1772 and 1815; Sarah Thorne, manager or lessee of theatres and stock companies in Margate, Worcester, Lambeth, Dover and Chatham for 29 years from 1866; and Eliza Vestris (25 years' at three London theatres from 1830). At Edinburgh, the longest-serving lady owner and lessee was Harriet Siddons at The Theatre Royal between 1815 and 1831. See Tracy C. Davis, 'Female Managers, Lessees, and Proprietors of the British Stage (to 1914)', *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, London, Royal Holloway, University of London, Vol. 28 No.2, Winter 2000, pp. 115-144.

<sup>82</sup> Grace Wyndham Goldie, *The Liverpool Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, pp. 207-208.

<sup>83</sup> Pelham McMahon and Pam Brooks, *An Actor's Place: The Liverpool Repertory Company at Liverpool Playhouse, 1911-1998*, Liverpool, Bluecoat Press, 2000, p.29.

<sup>84</sup> Barry Jackson, 'Introduction', Bache Matthews, *A History of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1924, pp. xiii-xv.

<sup>85</sup> Lionel Carson, (ed.), *The Stage Guide, 1912*, op.cit, pp. 38-39.

<sup>86</sup> T.C. Kemp, *The Birmingham Repertory Theatre: The Playhouse and the Man*, Birmingham, Cornish Brothers, 1943, p. 64.

<sup>87</sup> *Westminster Gazette*, n.d., 1912, quoted in Claire Cochrane, *Shakespeare and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre 1913-1929*, London, Society for Theatre Research, 1993, p.6.

<sup>88</sup> The Belgrade Theatre is a civic and repertory theatre: because repertory receives more critical attention than touring theatres, this is often cited as the first theatre built after the Second World War. Commentators invariably ignore the earlier Middlesbrough Little Theatre, a 'purpose-built' theatre built by an enterprising local authority, opened in 1957. Architects and local authorities took inspiration and detailed advice for the wave of civic theatres from the theatre architect and historian Richard Leacroft. See his *Civic Theatre Design*, London, Dobson, 1949.

<sup>89</sup> In this study, delineation of a 'purpose-built' repertory theatre presupposes that The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford Upon Avon, built in 1932 to replace a theatre burnt down in 1923, is a *national* theatre, that the first Pitlochry Festival Theatre (1951) was a *temporary* 'tent' theatre, even though it lasted until 1984 and, further, that the Open Air Theatre, Regents Park, London (1933) is excluded because it is *outdoors*.

<sup>90</sup> For summaries of most new repertory theatres to 1969, see Frederick Bentham, *New Theatres in Britain*, London, TABS and Rank Strand Electric, 1970.

<sup>91</sup> These impressions stem from the practice and writings of Iain Mackintosh, the pre-eminent theatre design consultant who, as co-founder and administrative director of the touring repertory Prospect Theatre Company, visited or dealt first-hand with almost every theatre in Britain. He subsequently championed good theatre design by informing clients and architects of what they were missing by avoiding old theatre forms. As with theatre managers, the importance of a theatre design consultant is sometimes submerged by the inflated identities of an artistic director and architect. From a large bibliography on theatre architecture, repertory theatres feature prominently in Iain Mackintosh, *Architecture, Actor and Audience*, London, Routledge, 1993 and Ronnie Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, (eds), *Making Space for Theatre: British Architecture and Theatre since 1958*, Stratford upon Avon, Mulryne and Shewring, 1995.

<sup>92</sup> Bache Matthews, *A History of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre*, op.cit, pp.108-109.

<sup>93</sup> T.C. Kemp, *The Birmingham Repertory Theatre, The Playhouse and the Man*, op.cit, p. 73.

<sup>94</sup> Jackson remained with the company until his death in 1961, having also founded and directed the Malvern Summer Festivals, 1929-1937. He was also director of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford upon Avon from 1945 to 1948. Under his own management, he presented many Birmingham Repertory productions in London; the story of this decade is told in G.W. Bishop, *Barry Jackson and the London Theatre*, London, Arthur Barker, 1933.

<sup>95</sup> J.C.Trewin, *The Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 1913-1963*, London, Barrie and Rockcliff, 1963, p. 114.

<sup>96</sup> *Birmingham Rep: Business Plan 2000-2003*, Birmingham, Birmingham Repertory Theatre Limited, 2000, p.3.

<sup>97</sup> Birmingham Corporation guaranteed the company against loss up to £3,000 (£54,300) in 1949-1950, and £2,348 (£42,500) was claimed. Thereafter, the guarantee was converted to a grant of £3,000 and remained such until 1959 when it was increased to £5,000 (£64,500). It was estimated by the British Drama League that by 1960-1961, despite no legislative obstacles, only £27,500 was being spent nationally. This was one-sixtieth of the total potential national 6d rate of £16,500,000. See editorial, 'Housing Problem' in *Drama*, London, British Drama League, New Series, Autumn 1961, No. 62, p.17.

<sup>98</sup> The Public Health Amendment Act 1907 made it possible (by permission of the Ministry of Health) for resorts and spas to provide certain entertainments, as in Sussex where the Worthing Repertory Company began in the council's pier 'theatre' in 1929, with the aptly-named play *Within the Law* (Frederick Fenn and Arthur Wimperis, 1913). Having lost £213 (£3,750) on the first programme, council declared that it would not stage a second season. The company resumed in 1931, independent of local government. See John Willmer, *Full Circle: The Story of Worthing's Connaught Theatre*, Worthing, Optimus Books, 1999, pp. 11-13. For synchronous discussion of the puritanical ostracism of theatre by local government and the revolutionary powers granted by The Local Government Act 1948, see 'The Local Authorities', B. Ifor Evans and Mary Glasgow, *The Arts in England*, London, Falcon Press, 1949, pp. 62-72. In Scotland, local authorities' arts expenditure was also circumscribed by the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1903 (Section 44); the 1948 legislation also repealed these strictures.

<sup>99</sup> T.C. Kemp, *The Birmingham Repertory Theatre, The Playhouse and the Man*, op.cit, p. 76.

<sup>100</sup> See 'Curtain Down For The Old Alex – Up For the New', in Derek Salberg, *My Love Affair With a Theatre*, op.cit., pp. 37-39.

<sup>101</sup> Allardyce Nicoll, *English Drama 1900-1930, The Beginnings of the Modern Period*, op.cit., p. 66 maintains that the Alexandra Theatre Company 'calls for due attention and praise' as an example of the way in which a touring theatre became involved with the repertory movement. Even so, it is commonplace for critics, outwith Birmingham, to ignore its achievements. For instance, George Rowell and Anthony Jackson in *The Repertory Theatre, A History of Regional Theatre in Britain*, op.cit, make no mention. The story of its early years is told in M.F.K. Fraser, *Alexandra Theatre, The Story of a Popular Playhouse*, Birmingham, Cornish Brothers, 1948. The Alexandra Theatre and its repertory company remained unsubsidised, although the corporation bought the theatre freehold in 1968.

<sup>102</sup> Derek Salberg played a notable role in the subsidised theatre, for 21 years serving as the first representative from commercial theatre on the Arts Council's drama panel, as well as being on the first boards of the National Theatre and The Theatres Trust. In the 1960s, the Alexandra Theatre and Birmingham Repertory Theatre were on intimate terms through Salberg's membership of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre board, during which time their administrator, H. Nancy Burman, was on the board of the other theatre. They would have exchanged information within limits, but the companies were never in partnership on joint-productions. See also Derek Salberg, *My Love Affair with a Theatre*, Luton, Cortney Publications, 1978.

<sup>103</sup> Details of Directors and their shareholdings in The Alexandra Theatre (Birmingham) Limited are given in Gordon Sanderson, *Theatre Ownership in Britain: A Report Prepared for the Federation of Theatre Unions*, London, Federation of Theatre Unions, 1953, p.195. This report estimated that a provincial theatre involved a capital investment of between £5,000 (£72,000) and £100,000 (£1,454,000). This could be split in several ways, such as between a ground landlord and two or three lessees, or between a freeholder (as with the Salbergs) and the holders of the mortgages. In the Alexandra Companies Return filed on 6 October 1949, there was authorised capital of £50,000, of which £15,002 was issued. Derek Salberg held shares at £1,875, S.H. Salberg and other family members £8,624. Family investments in this theatre equalled £153,000 today. The theatre was an exempt private company, meaning that – as observed – they were excepted from filing accounts with their annual returns, so the profit and loss account is not shown. Revelation of these details to their competitors was considered detrimental, but the information would edify further research on commercial repertory. The Salbergs also controlled, through separate companies, the 1,200-seat County Theatre, Hereford (where the Alexandra held £14,000 and the Salbergs £2: the entire share issue) and, from 1949, the 1,131-seat Savoy Theatre, Kettering (through Clifton Cinemas (Kettering) Limited). As noted, they were two of five theatres in which the family promoted commercial repertory, emanating from Birmingham. Derek Salberg's brother, Reginald Salberg (1915- ), another repertory pioneer, left the family business to run the Salisbury Playhouse from 1955 to 1977, where (as will be discussed in Chapter Five) he became a founding father of the new profession of arts administration.

<sup>104</sup> M.F.K. Fraser, *The Alexandra Theatre*, op.cit, p. 47.

<sup>105</sup> Orthodox histories of single-theatres are habitually and disconcertingly discreet about matters of comparability. For instance, the scribacious J.C. Trewin (1908-1990), who was drama critic for *The Birmingham Post*, *The Observer* and *Punch*, was one of the few national critics to champion repertory and

the provinces. However, he often confessed to being a 'friend at court' of Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and his adulatory history of the company is, surprisingly, less discriminating than the works by Matthews and Kemp. A compensatory appraisal may be anticipated in Claire Cochrane's update, *The Birmingham Repertory Company, 1961-1999*, Birmingham, Sir Barry Jackson Trust, Forthcoming, 2002.

<sup>106</sup> Sources: J.C. Trewin, *The Birmingham Repertory Theatre*, op. cit., pp. 200-201; M.F.K. Fraser, *Alexandra Theatre*, op.cit, p. 119; year of first production in 'Notable Productions and Important Revivals', John Parker, (ed.), *Who's Who in Theatre*, London, Pitman, Eleventh Edition, 1952, pp. 1636-1800.

<sup>107</sup> John Pick, in a discussion on weekly repertory at the Colchester Repertory Theatre for 1952-1953 – that offered 43 productions in a town with no competing theatres – argues that because of eclectic choice, audiences were likely 'composed of different, interlocking groups rather than a complete wedge of attendees who went every week, whatever was played'. See John Pick, *The Theatre Industry, Subsidy, Profit and the Search for New Audiences*, op.cit, pp.32-33. This departs from M.F.K. Fraser or Derek Salberg's accent on a loyal 'family' of theatregoers attending every play, for with more theatres and attractions to choose, the Birmingham custom might, according to Pick, be likelier to exercise a higher degree of discrimination. At any rate, both suppositions are seductive but are not wholly dependable because theatres did not keep – and had no need of – suitable demographic statistics at this time.

<sup>108</sup> Derek Salberg, *My Love Affair With a Theatre*, op.cit, p.58.

<sup>109</sup> To signpost the financial condition at The Alexandra Theatre, I found it useful to compare current repertory theatre account formats with those in W.H. Chantry, *Theatre Accounts*, London, Gee & Co., 1915, pp. 28-30 and the details offered in A. Stewart Cruikshank, *Management Book*, Edinburgh, Howard & Wyndham Limited, 1933, together with revisions issued by memorandums to theatre managers in 1940, lodged at the Theatre Royal Newcastle.

<sup>110</sup> This is the name of the proprietary company incorporated on 1 January 1944, when the Salberg family rearranged their financial affairs. See Gordon Sanderson, *Theatre Ownership in Britain: A Report Prepared for the Federation of Theatre Unions*, op. cit, p.195.

<sup>i</sup> Capacity of The Alexandra Theatre is extracted from A. W. Tolmie, (comp.), *"The Stage" Guide*, London, Carson & Comerford, 1946, p. 75. Ticket prices seen on contemporary provincial handbills consistent with No. 1 theatres and A. Stewart Cruikshank, *Management Book*, op. cit, p.15. Price allocated to zone before calculating gross cash potential: stalls 658, front stalls 36, dress circle 402, upper circle 454; total 1,550, using percentage sold quoted in Derek Salberg, *My Love Affair With a Theatre*, op.cit., p.87.

<sup>ii</sup> Entertainment Tax rate applicable in 1945 derives from Finance (New Duties) Act 1916; see A.W. Tolmie, (comp.), *"The Stage" Guide*, op.cit, p. 31.

<sup>iii</sup> Ancillary income is calculated by estimating spend per theatregoer consistent with categories and prices for these items quoted in 'Chocolate Return Book', 'Cloakroom Check Book', 'Tea and Ices Sales Return Sample', 'Safety Curtain Account', 'Bars Return Sample' etc., in A. Stewart Cruikshank, *Management Book*, op.cit., pp. 98-106.

<sup>iv</sup> I estimated the complement of actors from specimen plays for 1937, then attributed wages consistent with trade union minimum agreements for this period; these are quoted in 'Esher Standard Contract for Repertory', A.W. Tolmie, (ed.), *"The Stage" Year Book 1949*, London Carson & Comerford, 1949, pp.39-45.

<sup>v</sup> From the 1930s, 'serious' repertory theatres dispensed with live entr'acte and interval music performed by a resident orchestra, in favour of the gramophone. Often this met with protest from regular patrons. Musicians were engaged under the Music Hall Arbitrator's Award, 1919; the wages quoted are estimated by using 'Wages Return Form (Orchestra)' in A. Stewart Cruikshank, *Management Book*, op.cit., p. 115, then (as throughout the reconstruction where appropriate) inflated to 1945 per 'Cost of Living and Inflation Rates', London, HMSO, to date, reproduced in *Whittaker's Almanac 2000*, op.cit.

<sup>vi</sup> Direct stage costs are estimated from budget samples for the Little Theatre Bournemouth (then inflated and increased to take account of the larger stage at The Alexandra Theatre), quoted in Cecil Chisholm, *Repertory: An Outline of the Modern Theatre Movement*, op.cit., pp. 252-253, those for the profit-seeking repertory subsidiary, Howard and Wyndham Players, also referred to in A. Stewart Cruikshank, *Management Book*, op.cit., p.176 and an annual budget for a weekly repertory theatre in a pamphlet written to encourage ex-servicemen to consider a new career in repertory: Warrant Officer II Richard Leacroft, *You and the Theatre*, London, The War Office, 1945, p.6.

vii Overheads are estimated from 'Theatre Manager's Return to Head Office', A. Stewart Cruikshank, *Management Book*, op.cit, pp. 72-85.

viii Fares are calculated from *Third Class Railway Fares in the United Kingdom: Anywhere to Elsewhere by the Shortest Route*, London, Easifind, 1945, p.xi.

ix Marketing costs are estimated from those in other large theatres with a weekly change of programme: 'Newspaper Rates, Newcastle', 'Day Bill and Circular Information', 'Tickets', 'Printing Requirements, Manchester', A. Stewart Cruikshank, *Management Book*, op.cit, pp. 64, 74, 82-83 and 71.

<sup>111</sup> A.W. Tolmie, (comp.), *"The Stage" Guide 1946*, op.cit, pp. 196-197.

<sup>112</sup> Harley Granville Barker, *A National Theatre*, op.cit, pp.108-111. I have calculated these ratios from his yearly allotment summaries and narrative, again allocating costs into categories used by subsidised theatre companies, today. Note that for the 1930 edition, William Archer was no longer co-author.

<sup>113</sup> The founding and operation of the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow is described in Winifred Bannister, *James Bridie and His Theatre*, London, Rockliff, 1955, pp. 198-252.

<sup>114</sup> Adapted from Citizens' Theatre Limited, *Profit and Loss Accounts for the Weeks Ending 4 and 11 November 1944*, Glasgow, The Citizens' Theatre Limited, 1944. [Scottish Theatre Archive, Reference GB 247 STA Bridie 396, Record Nos. 17294/5].

<sup>115</sup> *Festival Review*, Cambridge, Cambridge Festival Theatre, No. 105, May 8 1933, p.12.

<sup>116</sup> Artistic aspects of the inspiring Cambridge Festival Theatre, including its contributions to theatre architecture, scenography and lighting design are discussed in Terence Gray, *Dance and Drama: Experiments in the Art of the Theatre*, Cambridge, W. Heffer, 1926. The link between the original form of the Festival Theatre stage and auditorium and how it was adapted to this company's philosophy predates current theatre architectural preferences by sixty years; see 'Design of the Theatre' in C. Harold Ridge, *Stage-Lighting*, Cambridge, W.Heffer, 1930, pp. 95-125. For management and marketing aspects, see Graham Woodruff, 'Down With the Boot-Faced'. Public Relations at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge', *Theatre Research International*, Oxford, Oxford University Press in association with the International Federation for Theatre Research, February 1976, Vol.1.No.2, pp.114-125.

<sup>117</sup> See T. Alec Seed, *The Sheffield Repertory Theatre: A History*, Sheffield, Sheffield Repertory Co. Ltd, 1959. The story is continued in Denys Corrigan, *The Stirrings in Sheffield*, Sheffield, Sheffield Repertory Company, 1971. Not to be confused with the company's documentary play of the same title, this lists the names of all players seen at the Playhouse from the season of 1959-1960 to 1970-1971. For researchers interested in the hypostasis of ensemble, these listings advantageously and unusually indicate in descending order, the number of plays in which each actor was seen. Then, in 1971, Sheffield built the 980-seat Crucible Theatre, a thrust stage conceptualised by Sir Tyrone Guthrie and Colin George (1929- ) and which theatre-makers and designers applaud as the best execution of the three-dimensional form in Britain. Plans for this repertory theatre (and its integral studio theatre) are described in the appeal prospectus: Peter Bennett-Keenan, Colin George, et al., *The Crucible: A New Theatre in Sheffield*, Sheffield, The New Sheffield Theatre Trust Ltd, 1970. There has been no published history of this groundbreaking second Sheffield producing theatre, although George, who served as last artistic director at the Playhouse and first at the Crucible was, in 2000, seeking interest in his memoir of this repertory, from the Society for Theatre Research and the Drama Department at the University of Sheffield.

<sup>118</sup> For the in-house retrospective on the founding of this repertory, see *The Bristol Old Vic Company: A Record of Two Seasons*, Bristol, Theatre Royal, 1948. The company occupies the oldest theatre in Britain (1766) and is one of the most discussed repertory theatres. See also Audrey Williamson and Charles Landstone, *The Bristol Old Vic: the first ten years*, London, J. Garnet Miller, 1957, Kathleen Barker, *The Theatre Royal Bristol, 1766-1966, Two Centuries of Stage History*, London, Society for Theatre Research, 1974 and Shirley Brown, 'The Bristol Theatre Royal - The Continuing Story 1966-93', in Richard Foulkes, *Scenes from Provincial Stage: Essays in Honour of Kathleen Barker*, London, Society for Theatre Research, 1994.

<sup>119</sup> For a study of a seaside repertory company from the unstable 1930s, through heydays in the 1950s and then the convulsions of local government intervention, audience decline and closure, see John Willmer, *Full Circle: The Story of Worthing's Connaught Theatre*, op.cit This repertory ceased production in 1985: its transition to a touring house evinced worldwide media attention on the hunger-strikes of protesting friends of the company.

<sup>120</sup> It is intriguing to observe another quasi-community-commercial repertory arrangement in Huddersfield. After Alfred Wareing left Glasgow, he took control of the Theatre Royal there, from 1918 to 1931, which he purchased and ran through a limited company with cumulative preference shares *and* ordinary shares. He held *all* the ordinary shares himself – though never receiving any dividends – so any obstinacy from the directors' and members' would be circumscribed. At Huddersfield, he continued to foster the repertory ideal, channelling choice-of-play discussions through an interested but unempowered playgoers' society. See Winifred F.E.C. Isaac, *Alfred Wareing*, op.cit, p. 47.

<sup>121</sup> A long-time board member of Northampton Repertory Theatre (and its chairman from 1961 to 1975) wrote its first, deferential history: Aubrey Dyas, *Adventure in Repertory*, Northampton, Northampton Repertory Players, 1948. For management matters, particularly the process of repertoire selection, publicity and ticket pricing in the 1970s, see Richard Foulkes (ed.), *The Northampton Repertory Theatre: Some Questions and Suggestions*, Northampton, University of Leicester Adult Education Centre, 1977. For a longer-term chronicle, see Richard Foulkes, *Repertory at the Royal: Sixty-Five Years of Theatre in Northampton 1927-92*, Northampton, Northampton Repertory Players, 1992. From a management perspective, Foulkes' study offers extensive financial evidence uncovered from minute books and ledgers. In its organisation, this company was noteworthy for the upper hand of a head of design, (Tom) Osborne Robinson (1902-1977), who joined the company in 1928 and retired in 1976. Although nominally responsible to thirteen consecutive artistic directors, Robinson's status was armour plated: unlike them or the general managers he was also a board member from 1955. Compared with the freelance repertory environment of the 1990s, an almost half-century hold on one theatre, like that of Maud Carpenter at Liverpool Playhouse or Derek Salberg at The Alexandra Theatre, now seems astonishing. By 2000, when companies produce so few new productions, only three repertories warrant the employment of a head of design. Then, only one other scenic-and-costume designer had influenced a company's policies for a very long period: the designer-director Philip Prowse, who has been a member of the artistic directorate at the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow since 1969.

<sup>122</sup> For repertory theatre management, the Dublin Gate Theatre Company Limited serves as another turbulent relationship between patron and artistic directors: in this instance that of Edward, Sixth Earl of Longford (1902-1961) – who was also a theatre producer – to Hilton Edwards (1903-1982) and Micheál MacLiammóir (1899-1978). See John Cowell, *No Profit but the Name: the Longfords and the Gate Theatre*, Dublin, O'Brien Press, 1988.

<sup>123</sup> George T. McGlashan, David Steuart and Marjorie Dence, *Perth Theatre Company: 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversar, September 1935–September 1956*, Perth Repertory Theatre Ltd, 1956.

<sup>124</sup> Tana Wolf, Elizabeth Jones and Adrienne Pye, *1744-1994 – 250 Years at the Heart of York*, York, York Theatre Royal, 1994 and Sybil Rosenfeld, *The York Theatre*, London, Society for Theatre Research, 2001. Written in 1948, the latter includes a final chapter on The York Citizens' Theatre, pp.329-337. This repertory, after losing £2,300 (£85,000) in the first season, converted from a company limited by shares to a non-profit trust in 1936. It was the first to adopt the word 'citizens' in the incorporated title, whereas Glasgow Repertory Theatre used it solely as an epithet in policy statements. Although the York company endures today, it has long ceased to utilise its formal name as a marketing appellation, perhaps because it has rarely approached the socially inclusive achievements of the post-1943 Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow. Also noteworthy are York's efforts to improve production standards: it partially reduced the gruelling treadmill of weekly repertory in 1947 by running a second company in Scarborough. At that town's Opera House, productions were exchanged with York, thereby enabling both ensembles under one management to have two weeks' rehearsal and two weeks' performance.

<sup>125</sup> Nicholas Butler, *Theatre in Colchester*, Colchester, For the author, 1981. This contains seven chapters on the repertory company which converted the Albert Hall, eventually operating in its purpose-built Mercury Theatre from 1972.

<sup>126</sup> Despite non-profit status, this company stood alone among CORT theatres for its unceasing reluctance to apply for subsidy, even after the formation of the Arts Council of Great Britain and the onset of local government assistance elsewhere. Its founding managing director, John Counsell (1905-1986), who foresaw the loss of independence in boards and theatre managements, described his detached outlook in 'So Who Needs Subsidy, Anyway?', *Scottish Theatre*, Inverkeithing, Scottish Theatre, May 1970, Vol.2 No.3, pp.6-8. Of course, this company was situated near to London and the Thames Valley is one of the wealthiest areas in Britain, where they could charge high-ticket prices to a predominately middle and upper class audience. It weathered financial crises by receiving some of the first donations to repertory from local businesses, as well as profitable alliances with West End producers who transferred many productions. Later, however, London critics frequently knifed the socially upper crust choices. For the full story, see John Counsell, *Counsell's Opinion*, London, Barrie and Rockliff, 1963.



<sup>127</sup> Like the stage societies, this repertory began as a club theatre (with 2,000 members) and did not incorporate as a limited company until 1961. It did so in order to comply with conditions attached to its first Arts Council grant and to apply for a public theatre licence. See James Carter, *Oldham Coliseum Theatre, The First Hundred Years*, Oldham, Oldham Leisure Services, 1986, p.37. Whether private club or public theatre, this unpretentious company and its welcoming theatre have always fulfilled today's imperative of 'social inclusion' in the arts. By 2000, Oldham was almost alone in the continuity of artistic direction and clean balance sheet. The artistic director, Kenneth Alan Taylor (1939– ), began as trainee director at Oldham in 1961 and retired in the season of 2001–2002: his term included one seven year spell as artistic director of Nottingham Playhouse to 1992 but he was unbowed by the new language and bureaucracy of the arts funding bodies. According to Oldham's 2000 annual report, North West Arts Board perceives this theatre as an 'unfashionable'. The story is brought up to date by, unusually, the Coliseum's marketing manager: see Mark Llewellyn, *They Started Here: the story of Oldham Coliseum Theatre*, Warrington [?], P & D Riley, 2000.

<sup>128</sup> There is no separate history of this company, but details of the first decade are discussed in Alec Robertson, *History of the Dundee Theatre*, London, Precision Press, 1949.

<sup>129</sup> Charles Marford, *The Byre Stormers*, Anstruther, Russell & Sons, 1949. A.B. Paterson, *History of the Byre Theatre*, St Andrews, Byre Theatre, 1983.

<sup>130</sup> From the TMA annual report for 1938, quoted in Vivian Ellacott and Antonio Peluso (eds.), *The Theatrical Management Association, The First Hundred Years, 1894–1994*, London, Theatrical Management Association, 1994, p.86.

<sup>131</sup> The British Drama League was founded by Granville Barker (its first chairman) and the critic Geoffrey Whitworth (1883–1951), its secretary. It was renamed British Theatre Association in 1970 and dissolved in 1991, largely because income from hire to amateurs of its immense library of playscript sets contracted, subsequent to widespread copyright abuse of photocopiers. From beginning to end, it published a periodical, *Drama*, dealing more extensively than any other theatre magazine with all aspects of the art and organisation of repertory theatre. See Geoffrey Whitworth's plea for a national theatre, *The Theatre of My Heart*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1938, where chapter III, pp.13–20, describes the work British Drama League in detail. In Scotland, the Scottish Community Drama Association from 1936 assumed aspects of the League's amateur theatre advocacy, including play competitions.

<sup>132</sup> See Charles Landstone (ed.), *The Repertory Movement in Great Britain*, Colchester, Council of Repertory Theatres, 1968 or his summary, by the same title, in Freda Gaye, (ed.), *Who's Who in the Theatre*, Fourteenth and Jubilee Edition, London, Pitman, 1967, pp.1559–1556.

<sup>133</sup> I found no critical study of CORT or TMA, but given their historical importance and theatres' reliance upon networking today, there is scope for studies in these areas. They might intersect with a short study of the Informal European Theatre Meeting (IETM), founded in 1981 by 300 member theatres including the Traverse at Edinburgh. See Louise Scott, 'Networks: New Tools for Innovation and Exploration', in Marian Fitzgibbon and Anne Kelly, *From Maestro to Manager: Critical Issues in Arts & Culture Management*, Dublin, Oak Tree Press, 1997, pp.297–318.

<sup>134</sup> The beginnings of state subsidy for theatre are well charted, but a summary is appropriate here. In 1938, a voluntary association, the Entertainment National Service Association (ENSA) was established by Basil Dean. With headquarters at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, it hired commercial theatre talent to bring productions to those in the armed forces. It received funds for this purpose from the Exchequer and the non-profit Navy, Army and Air Force Institute. ENSA presented productions in British factories in attempts to boost the morale of those involved in war activities. In 1939, this style of intervention – response rather than planning – also characterised the initiative of the Pilgrim Trust that took the first step towards the creation of the Arts Council of Great Britain by granting £25,000 (£930,000) towards the foundation of the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) 'to prevent cultural deprivation on the home front'. For drama, CEMA gave assistance at first to amateur drama only. Significantly, there was no intention that a theatre company's policy should be directed from above, by politicians or civil servants. A long-standing 'arm's length' principle (that is really no more) was demonstrated in 1942, when the government became involved in CEMA activities. ('Committee' was then changed to 'Council'). The word 'encouragement' is important because it epitomised the 'arm's length' principle as a friendly cornerstone of assistance. There was no excessive control in artistic direction or meddling in the affairs of an autonomous board of directors. Whilst government found small grants for a non-profit repertory theatre, CEMA was responsible for allocating that money, responding to much smaller demands than today. There was no desire to initiate a national cultural strategy and, in any case, CEMA would have been unable to do so because its first grant government allocation was only £50,000 (£1,860,000). Thus, the repertory movement continued to be certain of its own confidence, influence and theatrical values.



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With the economist John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) – who in 1936 had founded the Cambridge Arts Theatre (a touring house) – as its first director and then chairman (after Lord Macmillan who also chaired the Pilgrim Trust), CEMA established a full-time directorship in drama. Headquartered in London, it had offices in the English provinces, Wales and Scotland, where a Scottish Committee was chaired by Dr O.H. Mavor (the playwright James Bridie). The case for repertory was also well positioned by the appointment of former Glasgow Repertory Theatre artistic director Lewis Casson as drama director in London, from 1942 to 1945. Then, the Arts Council of Great Britain was founded in 1945. See, for instance, Eric W. White, 'Arts Council Pre-History: The Story of CEMA', *The Arts Council of Great Britain*, London, David Poynter, 1975, pp. 17-63 and Ifor Evans and Mary Glasgow, *The Arts in England*, London, Falcon Press, 1949.

## FOUR

### THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY, EDINBURGH

The second part of this study moves to the examination of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company proper. Edinburgh had evinced little interest in the 'art theatre' until the Church of Scotland formed a trial company in 1947, which they handed to a non-profit company in 1953: the Gateway Theatre Company. Arriving even later in the growth of repertory, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company replaced the Gateway as well as the contiguous, profit-seeking Wilson Barrett Company that was based intermittently at the Royal Lyceum Theatre with a large resident acting company from the 1940s to 1955. Then, the stratification of repertory organisation discussed in Chapter Three coalesced; when competition from television brought about another crisis for theatre managements, most profit-seeking repertories like the Wilson Barrett Company were wound up and many touring houses similar to the Royal Lyceum were either demolished, converted to bingo halls or sold to local authorities. New government arts subsidies enabled non-profit repertories to expand and prosper, whilst commercial managements were driven to bankruptcy. Founded in 1965, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company was a creature of these changes.

Occupying a touring theatre recently acquired by the Edinburgh Corporation, it has been organised by two distinct non-profit firms: firstly by the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited (renamed the Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust Limited in 1975) and then, following local government reform, by The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, a differentiated non-profit company that has traded continuously from 1977. This investigation embraces both company infrastructures, demonstrating how the non-profit system for repertory organisation has continued the policies of the progenitor companies, including governance by a voluntary board of directors and the creative leadership of an artistic director. But unlike the earlier companies, it has been self-governing in name only. With significant new public subsidies, the board, like other repertories, became a coalition; councillor-nominees from the Edinburgh Corporation comprised the majority of the first Royal Lyceum board and they outnumbered the theatre devotee members. The autonomy

that characterised earlier theatre boards vanished. The ensuing chapters show how the continuity of repertory tradition and experience was often contrary to the culture of local government, but these complexities were only a preliminary to what became, in the 1980s, a head-to-head collision course between the original theatrical mission and the omnipotent new profession of 'arts administration'. This took root in the Scottish Arts Council.

Unlike the cohesive artistic purposes of the progenitor repertories, with their supportive management systems and boards of theatre enthusiasts, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company coalition has itself been subjected to the frequently divergent interests of the two subsidising bodies, now known as 'stakeholders'. Moreover, whereas the profit-seeking companies such as the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham were duty-bound to the unambiguous expectations of family proprietors, shareholders or investors, at the Royal Lyceum and other non-profit coalition theatres today, it is generally no longer the financial imperatives of businesslike organisation and the 'bottom-line' that binds the stakeholders together. Instead, from the 1980s, the allegiances shifted to ambivalent managerial purposes. A new culture of management and accountability overburdened the artistic policy, organisation and orderly ways of theatrical management, requiring a re-focusing of the theatre-makers' energies.

Like other non-profit repertory theatres, this company's board of voluntary directors struggled to maintain the new and less determinate relationships. In practice, the role of an independent chairperson became critical after 1977, keeping the coalition of stakeholders involved, inextricably, by reconciling intense conflicts that, with oblique policy shifts, put the company in frequent danger of closure. Complications proliferated, as attention to the care of its rented Victorian theatre – and the need to raise capital funds for its refurbishment – upset the once secure subsidies that underpinned the first company's no-nonsense policy of producing good plays with distinction for a maximum number of theatregoers. Time spent on the politics of subsidy – especially keeping abreast of an expanding number of new policies and sporadic project-grant schemes – preoccupied the board and management.

This repertory company occupies one of several Edinburgh theatres: a city also well endowed with concert halls and festivals. It attempts cooperation with others, whilst being in competition with them for audiences and, particularly, grants. Affiliations come and go, such as with the Edinburgh International Festival, the King's Theatre and Communicado Theatre Company. The Royal Lyceum produces the standard classical and contemporary drama, including a large number of Scottish plays, adaptations and translations,

predominately with Scottish actors. The company endeavours to advance unions with playwrights through residencies, commissions and the advice of a literary manager, although the specialist Traverse Theatre more often consummates its relationships with living dramatists on stage. Efforts to establish a permanent acting ensemble performing in repertoire were, as with the first repertories observed in Chapter Three, fleeting. However, from the 1980s, Granville Barker's blueprint for subscription audiences was realised, when the second greatest number of subscriber patrons to any British repertory theatre attended each production; an endorsement of audience fidelity. Even so, the number of these productions decreased after the closure of the Little Lyceum Theatre, the company's studio space. Throughout its history, the company has frequently taken productions on tour in Scotland, augmented by an increase of hosted, visiting productions at home and, in the 1990s, the arrangement of new partnerships with other theatres and repertories through co-productions. Efforts to attract future generations of theatregoers include, for a brief time, a theatre in education team working in schools, then the Young Lyceum Company and, in the second company, the 'Upstage' outreach programmes that were accompanied by sundry marketing initiatives, before the start of the Lyceum Youth Theatre. Often, the artistic directors and board members have craved for the institution to be decreed the Scottish national theatre.

Chapter Five outlines the first twelve years of Edinburgh's new 'civic' repertory, led for one season by the former Gateway Theatre artistic director and co-founder Tom Fleming (1927- ), then – for ten years of masterly and ambitious overall leadership, attainment and expansion – by Clive Perry (1936- ). Chapter Six is a more detailed examination of critical artistic and organisational events from 1977 to 2000 – drawn from sources such as the company's archives – of the company's second phase. A note of plays produced, attendances, box-office receipts, revenue subsidies, project grants and corporate sponsorships, together with a yearly profile of expenditure and end of financial year results is included. It is during this period that the acceleration towards the influential management culture occurs and, for this reason, I have presented Chapter Six as a survey, to provide bedrock factual information (with commentary in the endnotes). Although these facts are not the ultimate goal of this study, the reconstructions are the primary evidence for informing the overarching assessment that follows in Chapter Seven.

In this second period, when the company was increasingly obeisant to external government arts policies, it responded by instigating asinine management systems. It launched thrusting new corporate sponsorship drives, trusted in profit-seeking adventures such as a restaurant, relied on business plans and reheated its increasingly querulous relationships with local

authorities and the Scottish Arts Council. Chapter Six demonstrates how the second company adhered to the new rules of arts administration, especially during the 1990s when subjected to constant, wide-ranging and enormously time-consuming external enquiry, far beyond anything experienced by the progenitor companies or even the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust. The board and artistic directors coped with the new management culture as best they could but a shift in priorities occurred internally, with the employment of many new managers, the costs of which outstripped those of the artists. This ill use of public subsidy was accompanied by a fragmentation of company organisation, with internecine altercations, job stress and poor personnel management.

The conclusion (Chapter Eight) briefly measures the organisational decline of the Royal Lyceum Theatre against the ethos of the repertory pioneers discussed in Chapters Two and Three. By showing positive and negative events at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company over a longer-term than the short-life investigations customarily employed by theatre managements and their funding bodies, Part Two of this study seeks to offer a more complete picture of the utility of the founders' model for repertory organisation today. Thus, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company's failures expose a good deal about the impractically idealistic expectations of the funding bodies. The company's positive achievements – some of them large and some, such as the decline in the number, ambition and size of the productions, more significantly small when measured against the scale and ideals of earlier repertory theatres' accomplishments – point to what is realistic in future expectations of a repertory theatre. This review of the Royal Lyceum Theatre seeks, therefore, not only to deal with the company as an isolated case, but also as a portrait of the prevailing system for non-profit repertory organisation today.

A note of caution is called for. In offering this evidence, there is no deliberate intention for the subjects of arts administration, subsidy and politics to upstage what the Royal Lyceum's theatre-makers produce on the stage. Nor is it an assault on the Royal Lyceum new managers individually or as a group; they should not be blamed, because they were part of a combination of formidable circumstances. Increasingly, notions of 'good housekeeping' – box-office results and controlled expenditure – tend to be indistinguishable from success in the art on stage, at least for the Scottish Arts Council, the coalition boards of directors and some arts administrators. Their influence, needs and ambitions go against the grain of many self-contained, creative and nonconformist artistic directors, who could, in this system, be motivated by more self-interest than the pioneers were. Like most stakeholders in other non-profit endeavours, the Scottish Arts Council and the Edinburgh local authorities commonly look to the company for accurate budgets

and small variations in the year-end results. But even with large subsidies, repertory remains a highly speculative business. In any one year, the stakeholders expect the Royal Lyceum to breakeven or make a small surplus. Understandably, this stress on profitability and the bottom line becomes their measure of the worth of the company; the Royal Lyceum has posted a deficit, after subsidy, for 18 out of 35 years' trading, with accumulated operating losses to 2000 at £242,790, or 11 per cent of turnover in that year. The sum is close to the adjusted losses of £210,750 at Glasgow Repertory Theatre up to 1914: it would be easy to suggest that the comparison is coincidental or even endemic in repertory. However, these losses resurface today in spite of subsidy, the quest for 'new audiences' and the protection of supposedly better management support systems. I will demonstrate that they do so, above all, because external policies and expanded administrative staffing have stifled the creative productivity and onstage processes.



*10. The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh; exterior c. 1960*



*11. The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh: the auditorium from the stage c.1990*

## **FIVE**

### **EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED 1965-1976**

This chapter begins with an examination of two key issues concerning the entire progress of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company: the buildings, and the organisation's relationship to local government and the state. Then, a consecutive narrative of the company's development under the management of the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, from the closure of the Gateway Theatre Company and the tribulations of the first season through a decade of solid artistic achievement, precedes discussion of the company's income and expenditure profile. Comparisons with the managerial practices of the progenitor repertories discussed in Chapter Three are observed. Lastly, this chapter discusses a push for expansion that was frustrated by changes in new arrangements for local government subvention. This leads to the transfer of management to the second limited company in 1977.

#### **The Buildings**

As a home for repertory, the Royal Lyceum Theatre has been admired and criticised. The building is arguably the most constant factor in the progress of the company and a major expression of the organisation's creative existence. Built in 1883 by the first great Victorian theatre architect specialist, C.J. (Charles James) Phipps (1835-1897)<sup>1</sup> for the managers Howard and Wyndham – at a cost of £17,000 (£1,600,000) - it is now a 'Grade A' listed building.<sup>2</sup> For the new company, its imposing exterior offered a prominent building with indubitable presence to the south west of Edinburgh Castle, unlike the Gateway Theatre (542 seats) in Elm Row that hid behind the façade of a domestic tenement. After Phipps' Royal Theatre and Opera House, Northampton (1884) – home to the non-profit Northampton Repertory Players from 1927 and bought by that town's local authority in 1960 – it was the second and only other of Phipps' fifteen remaining theatres to pass to a subsidised repertory company.<sup>3</sup>

In 1960, when the touring theatre system was in contraction because of the impact of television, Howard and Wyndham sold the Royal Lyceum Theatre to an Edinburgh businessman, Meyer Oppenheim (1906-1982), who continued to run it as a touring house by employing its former manager, Charles T. Tripp (1911-1987).<sup>4</sup> For Oppenheim, the



theatre was valuable for the land on which it stood and he knew that running it long-term was not a business proposition. Being a property developer his purchase of the building was therefore open to suspicion. In 1961 he bought adjacent sites including the Synod Hall – formerly The Edinburgh Theatre, (1875) that was, incidentally, built with the intention of being a serious opera and drama theatre – and a family business, John Croall & Sons, whose garage was behind the Royal Lyceum Theatre. These sites formed the land that he envisioned developing as a saleable arts-and-conference centre with underground car park. In all probability, he recognised the potential for developing an extravagant national cultural quarter that an Arts Council report had resuscitated in 1958:

For some years there have been sporadic movements in favour of the founding of a national theatre in Scotland. The future may show some means of uniting the ambitious ideas for an opera house and a national theatre under one roof. Schemes for a national theatre have tended to break down on the decision whether it should be situated in Glasgow or in Edinburgh. Many people have felt that it was better to think first in terms of a company rather than of stone and lime; in spite of this we must not lose sight of the fact that Scotland does not possess one really modern theatre comparable with those in many other parts of Europe... The building of an opera house or national theatre would not of course be the end of the problem. Neither could be run without a large subsidy.<sup>5</sup>

This campaign for an opera house and national theatre gained impetus amongst Edinburgh's arts cognoscenti thereafter.<sup>6</sup> However, Oppenheim's plans caused consternation for the Edinburgh Corporation that was also excessively nervous of the loss of the Usher Hall within the development, because the demolition of two principal venues used by the Edinburgh International Festival would grievously undermine its operations.<sup>7</sup> The corporation recognised the festival – unlike other Edinburgh arts organisations at this time – as an economic bulwark of the city's economy, because of its attraction to tourists. Even if the demolition of the Usher Hall and Lyceum might only be an interim expedient before construction of a replacement concert hall, drama theatre and new opera house within one new arts centre, the demolition of the existing venues by a private developer would damage the heritage character of that part of the city. In 1961, with so much in question, Edinburgh Corporation declared that it would purchase the freehold once Oppenheim built the new arts centre that he hoped to complete by 1966. Negotiations lasted two years, after which time Oppenheim abandoned his scheme and, having announced that he would close the Royal Lyceum in February 1964, the Corporation bought it, reluctantly, for £100,000 (£1,200,000) in 1964. Unintentionally, therefore, the council was tied to a closer involvement with theatre management than its previous small grants to the Gateway Theatre Company and, with other experience and the precedent of 'arms-length' subsidy to the Edinburgh International Festival, established the Edinburgh

Civic Theatre Trust Limited to manage the operations. The new repertory theatre began performances in September 1965.

Although established in the public's mind as an elegant and exhilarating aesthetic experience inside the auditorium, the Royal Lyceum Theatre had been constructed by private enterprise managers who, because they built a speculative venture aimed at profit, expended a minimum of money on non-auditorium social space. The foyers may have been cramped, but the building was economical to run. However, when considered as a home for Edinburgh's new repertory company, the building suffered from other significant limitations, even if these had not worried its previous repertory, the Wilson Barrett Company. Being essentially a touring house, the stage was woefully inadequate for a modern resident company, as well as being technically out of date. Aspirations to perform in 'true' repertory – with repertoire's injunction to accomplish quick set changeovers – would be shackled by the shallow stage and lack of adjacent storage space. Run of play production methods would also be awkward, with an antiquated hemp-flying system and lack of a rehearsal room of at least the same size as the stage. Further, there was no workshop space at the theatre for settings, properties, armoury, costumes and wigs to be prepared simultaneously for different productions and stored afterwards. It took until 1974 to acquire and convert premises to be a production centre in Murrayfield, three miles distant from the theatre. Further, there was minimal box-office space, antiquated toilets, poor theatre ventilation and, later, inadequate offices to house the expanding administrative staffs. Even so, for the new company, it was more desirable than the starkly functional Gateway Theatre (built 1935). The challenge would be to turn a 'receiving' theatre into a 'producing' theatre: it is little wonder that improvements took 25 years to realise.<sup>8</sup>

The building offered other immanent advantages for the new company, even had there been little chance of Edinburgh public finance for a purpose-built modern repertory theatre. At the time of the new company's move in, architecture for new repertory theatres had inclined to smaller seating capacities in a one or two-tier auditorium – stemming, as observed, from the first Birmingham Repertory Theatre – and, after the construction of the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry (1958) spacious public circulation spaces, restaurants and integral studio theatres. New repertory theatres favoured other stage forms, such as the open stages at the new Leicester Phoenix Theatre (1963) and re-built Liverpool Everyman Theatre (1964), theatre in the round at the first Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent (1962), or the thrust stage at Chichester Festival Theatre (1962). At this time, artistic directors often discredited proscenium arch theatres because of these buildings' association with a commercial theatre audience, who they perceived to comprise pleasure seeking

theatre-goers who attended only for individual enjoyment, rather than the sought after mutual participation in a communal event and the serious policy of a company. Mercifully, for Edinburgh this was inapplicable. Even if the Royal Lyceum was an unfashionable theatre, it had the big advantage of being an acoustically superior one. This mysterious but important factor of sound quality would have been a definite bonus. Phipps knew that his interior would behave well for spoken drama: anyone who stands at the back of the farthest row of seats in the gallery during the fit-up of a set or rigging of lights will be aware that every word of ordinary conversation and gossip between technicians is clearly audible. The sound is even better when the auditorium is full of people and the stage occupied by experienced actors. The Royal Lyceum has a perfect sound quality: precisely what science went into designing a theatre with good acoustics is something to speculate about, but Phipps – and other Victorian and Edwardian theatre architects – knew that a plush auditorium would behave in this way and, in the context of a repertory theatre, the presence of wooden surfaces, ornate plaster and rich, absorbent draperies is not a matter of Victorian fashion: the boxes and circles provide excellent sound reflection surfaces, which are valuable to actors and listeners.

Another advantage was that the auditorium, on four levels, is horseshoe in shape and retains more than a shadow of a Georgian playhouse, with circle and boxes lapping the edge of a partially projecting and steeply raked stage. This layout of circles is highly functional, providing a desirable ‘embrace’ with the stage: an excellent relationship between actors and theatre-goers induced by a layout that fosters immediacy and channels energy from the actor to the audience and back again via the *rest* of the audience. Nevertheless, the dynamics of this configuration was, in the 1960s, thought by many artistic directors to give the worst sightlines of any standard theatre shape for seeing the stage – boxes close to the stage and the sides of circles actually face away from it. For theatre-goers to see theatre-goers the horseshoe configuration is a good layout, putting many theatre-goers in full view of many others in the house. On the other hand, at the Royal Lyceum, many seats had a poor view of the stage, especially when set designers used its full depth. Indeed, when the stage house was enlarged in 1991, the extra stage depth aggravated sightlines from more side seats, and the company reduced its seating capacity – that was, in 1883, a commercially viable 2,265 – to only 773 (and only 658 from 1996). Moreover, the view from the gallery – that is 85-feet from the stage – makes actors appear microscopic. This fourth tier was soon closed off for repertory, for the additional reasons of it having uncomfortable padded benches – in a vertiginous circle that could never be comfortably re-seated – and being accessible only by separate street entrances and two long-climb, dank staircases.

Arguably, the new purpose-built repertory theatres, despite their near-perfect sightlines offering stage visibility for *all* of the audience, were, as discussed in Chapter Three, intrinsically ill-designed theatres. For theatregoers, the problem of poor sightlines at the Royal Lyceum Theatre would be ameliorated by the company fixing a range of high and low ticket prices according to the sightlines, but for many repertory companies in the 1960s this was, for reasons of classless access, considered bad form for subsidised theatre. The critic Joyce McMillan (1952- ) has acknowledged the Royal Lyceum Theatre to be 'a beautiful, formal Victorian gem' but one that 'bears down heavily on the business of theatre-making in the late twentieth-century'. She argues – perhaps influenced more by its operational history than by the immediacy and theatrical advantages of its design – that an adventurous artistic policy is 'trapped by the sheer weight of the building' and that the company has been 'encrusted by a century's worth of class and cultural assumptions about what theatre is, and whom it is for'.<sup>9</sup>

If the artistic directors in the 1960s and 1970s also believed that the architecture, formality and aura of the Royal Lyceum Theatre overpowered the new company's actual productions, the remedy would be to find a second building with unconfined, relaxed and egalitarian ambience. It was an article of faith that in order to fulfil their artistic mission and present the widest possible range of plays, they needed two distinctly different theatre spaces. The main house would highlight the core repertory of classic plays and large-scale contemporary drama and a smaller stage would serve the new, riskier and more intimate play choices, with a bias towards youth. A minimally equipped studio theatre would help to build the company's trendier identity and develop an audience for this kind of delineated programming, bringing the actors and audience face to face, for collaboration, greater involvement and confrontation. Glorious as the Royal Lyceum Theatre is, a large theatre tests the limits of a company occupying a single grand house. The impact of the 1883 theatre would be apparent in both overproduced failures and successes that might fare even better in a more intimate theatre. The space issue would be a determining factor in what any artistic director could or should choose to direct. There might even be good Scottish actors who were unsuited to a large theatre.

The company therefore sought to perform additionally in a smaller theatre and, from 1971, with a modest capital investment of £5,617 (£49,429) it found a temporary home at the Netherbow Theatre.<sup>10</sup> Operations were supported by discrete grants from Edinburgh Corporation of £1,667 (£14,670) and Scottish Arts Council £3,000 (£26,400).<sup>11</sup> This Young Lyceum Company was formed also 'to provide younger actors with an opportunity to play larger and more challenging parts before or as well as appearing with the larger

company'.<sup>12</sup> For a small core of five actors that expanded to twelve in 1974, the studio – that was at first directed by Peter Farago (1944- ) – provided an intermediate step between drama school and the mainstage. However, progress of the company was frustrated by diminished availability of the premises, and a makeshift 60-seat space was adapted at the rear of the main theatre upper circle. In 1974, planning consents were received for a new studio theatre within the University of Edinburgh campus at Nicolson Street – also distant from the main house – but conversion costs were prohibitive and in 1975 a more fitting location was secured in the former Edinburgh International Festival booking office in Cambridge Street, near to the Royal Lyceum Theatre. This 100-to-150-seat venue was also styled the Lyceum Studio (but called the Little Lyceum Theatre from 1977) and was, until lack of subsidy and its eventual demolition, the second mainstay for continuity of premises and an enterprising artistic policy.<sup>13</sup> Today, the company performs almost exclusively in the Royal Lyceum Theatre or on tour to corresponding stages. Although the recent artistic directors have often half-dreamt of producing in a studio or even mobile theatre – as will be shown in the detailed survey – it is, for better or worse, pertinent for this company that an earlier 'mainstream-experimental' division has receded as its maturing artistic directors have grown more distant from their roots in 'alternative' black-box theatre architecture. Possibly, all theatre spaces create a yearning for something else – something larger or more intimate, simpler, or more complex – but at any rate the notion of re-opening a studio theatre faded after the Little Lyceum closed. Although substituted by temporary adaptations for company performances in its rehearsal studios, the company had to discard these aspirations once the new twin-auditoriums of the Traverse Theatre opened in 1993.

### **Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited: Repertory-as-Municipal Service**

By the time Edinburgh Corporation purchased the Royal Lyceum Theatre, they were seasoned in the similar rigours of concert hall management. The corporation had run the 2,215-seat Usher Hall directly, by internal management rather than through a non-profit intermediary, since 1914 when they built it for £145,000 (£8,436,100), mainly with a donation from the brewing industry of £100,000 (£5,818,000). This hall operated with small subsidy because it was let to promoters such as the Scottish National Orchestra and, after 1947, the Edinburgh International Festival. These hirers bore the risk of box-office receipts, although the corporation charged lower rents than they did to profit-seeking promoters. A second corporation venue - the smaller Assembly Rooms and Music Hall -

was acquired in 1947 and used for occasional chamber concerts as well as being a principal locale and club for the Edinburgh International Festival. For these venues, local government management by the large council protected them from the danger of insolvency as well as ensuring that cash flow did not pose difficulties. In Edinburgh, direct management of theatres and other performance venues also ensured that the council was in pole position to initiate and enact any cultural and theatres' strategy, over and above the passing fancies of theatre-makers.

For theatre matters, the council was abreast of the vagaries of the business principally through its regulatory and obligatory function: to undertake theatre and entertainments licensing. Informally, it had observed the financial descent of Howard and Wyndham and their hosting of profit-seeking repertory with the Wilson Barrett Company at the Royal Lyceum Theatre,<sup>14</sup> and had given small, discretionary grants to the non-profit Gateway Theatre. Then, in 1962, the corporation gained more direct theatre experience through purchase of the Morningside Church for £6,000 (£77,500)<sup>15</sup> that they converted to a 360-seat venue for amateur companies: the Church Hill Theatre. Furthermore, the corporation had given annual grants to the festival that by 1964 had reached £75,000 (£969,750 – not too short in real terms from the £1,200,995 awarded in 2000).<sup>16</sup> There was no chance of Edinburgh Corporation finding a new profit-seeking theatre management for the Royal Lyceum Theatre and so, with additional advice from the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain – who at this time never subsidised municipal arts activities directly – the intermediary non-profit model of a company limited by guarantee was adopted. Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited was incorporated on 21 January 1965 and, soon afterwards, registered as a charity.<sup>17</sup>

Although the 'arm's length' charitable company could attract state subsidy that would be unavailable in a directly managed council operation, there was a second, underlying reason why this was the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain's preferred model. Profits or losses in a council operated theatre were (and still are) written-off either way at year end and in that system there might be less incentive for the company to manage its finances well. They would not necessarily have to prefigure future years' work and would find it harder to plan longer-term, when the 'deficit' budget was part of the much larger council expenditure estimates. Instead, non-profit limited status gave the new company a balance sheet, a higher degree of competitive pressure and incentive for managing the operation as a distinguishable, ongoing entity.

Unlike the constitutions of the progenitor companies discussed in Chapter Three, Edinburgh's new repertory theatre was governed by a council 'controlled' trust, chaired by Councillor Robert McLaughlin until 1969, and then by Councillor John Millar (a founding director and Lord Provost from 1975) until the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited began in 1977. This second company was established as a 'council-influenced' non-profit organisation, with a minority of councillor-nominees. At its foundation, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust had twelve board members, nine of whom were influential councillors and by 1976 - the last full year of operation - the board numbered fifteen directors, ten of whom were councillors. (It is interesting to observe that the board of the Edinburgh Festival Society had, at this time, a twenty-member council, only eleven of whom were councillors).<sup>18</sup>

In passing, the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry was also set-up by a council 'controlled' trust of fifteen directors, of whom ten were councillors with the chair taken by an alderman. Like Edinburgh, its membership changed frequently, according to council-chamber politics. Thus, Edinburgh was only the third municipally dominated model for non-profit repertory: the first company being the Library Theatre, Manchester founded in 1947, although this has never been organised as a limited company and remains a division of that council's libraries committee, its artistic director being responsible to the city librarian rather than to a board of directors. In the year of Edinburgh's incorporation, a virtually identical form of governance began in Watford, where the council acquired the Palace Theatre (built 1908) and incorporated a similar 'council-controlled' company, Watford Civic Theatre Trust Limited. It might be supposed that these subjects of 'civic' theatre, 'controlled-trust' and 'educational' charity were only a matter of semantics. Certainly, the public could not care less - the subject being of feeble interest to theatregoers - but the words held big implications for the future. At a 1965 conference of civic theatre leaders, Watford's director and general manager, Giles (Pollock) Havergal (1938- ), signalled that

When a company and theatre become a civic theatre the job of selling becomes more difficult. Ratepayers who are spending money, even if it is only an halfpenny rate, want to see that they are getting their money's worth. 'Culture' and 'education' in conversation are OK words for councillors, but they scare the pants off those leaving school and working in the factory. If you use the word 'educational' and say a theatre is educational people just leaving school do not want to know. We know what these words mean, but I think we should be careful about using them.<sup>19</sup>

At this time, most other subsidised non-profit repertory theatres had only one or two councillors on their boards. Thus, there was no fully *civic repertory* theatre in Scotland (even though *civic touring* theatres began as early as 1951 when the Palace Theatre,



Kilmarnock was acquired by its local authority). In 1964, the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain spent just over £50,000 (£550,000) on drama and most of this went to the companies in Dundee, Glasgow and Perth. In each case, the sum greatly exceeded the contribution made by the local authority. Indeed, in the whole of Britain, there were only two repertory companies where the contribution of the local authority exceeded that of the state. These were Carlisle Theatre Company at Her Majesty's Theatre in that city and the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury.<sup>20</sup> From 1945 to 1965, box office receipts paid for 80-90 per cent of the costs of running the theatres and, to improve working conditions and production quality, the Arts Council had been pressing for more municipal largesse. In Edinburgh, the new company represented a quantum leap for such involvement.

At the level of the theatre company's board of directors, a councillor caucus would tend to think of themselves, properly, as the representatives of council and party-political interests, even though they shared in the ultimate responsibility for what the theatre did. These potential conflicts of interest would put the independence of the board in doubt, diluting an integrated 'theatre-and-business' purpose of the directors. Until they hired an artistic director, therefore, Edinburgh's new company bore little organisational resemblance to the pre-1945 companies or to the other Scottish repertory theatres that were all founded through the struggles and ambitions of entrepreneurial and charismatic individuals or groups, and not by government fiat. In these companies, the founding artistic director chose his employers, whereas at the Royal Lyceum, the board chose him. With the exception of some years when a board member was nominated by the theatre club, other Royal Lyceum lay board members – who might be the artistic director's natural allies but were a minority until 1977 – have always been appointed by invitation of the existing board. They have never been proposed or elected by other constituencies such as the corporate and individual membership of the limited company. On that account, it was to be expected that this board would be nervous about an adventurous artistic policy.

In contrast, the larger board of the Citizens' Theatre Limited, Glasgow has maintained - with modifications - founder chairman James Bridie's 1943 blueprint. This sanctioned one nominee director each from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow School of Art, Strathclyde University and Glasgow University, two from the Citizens' Theatre Society and nine additional lay members who, in a sample year of 1989, numbered a majority of its 23-member board that included eight councillors, four being from Glasgow District Council and four from Strathclyde Regional Council.<sup>21</sup> The Glasgow board might therefore claim to represent a greater cross-section of public interests but, in

Glasgow and Edinburgh, the balance of board autonomy and council influence has always been a delicate issue.

For Edinburgh Corporation and the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, the advantages of affiliation were twofold. Firstly, to the council, from the knowledge of a producing theatre that it might acquire and, secondly, to the new repertory company that would have a strong political base, learn the council's opinions at first hand and at the same time enjoy their nominee directors' help, hopefully in securing subsidy. By nature, the process of local government assistance contrasted to the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain, where the state set up arms-length protection from politicians, with peer-group assessment and subsidy recommendations made by specialist and supposedly autonomous representatives of the theatre profession. The panels and committees have always been appointed by the Scottish Arts Council (as the Committee became styled in 1967 and will be called hereafter) and not elected by any constituency. In turn, the council members – who were not always practitioners but were people with wider-ranging and discriminating interests chosen to act as advocates for the arts and an influence on government – were appointed by the secretary of state for Scotland and, after devolution in 1999, by the Scottish Executive arts minister. Although the arts council system might act as the link or a buffer between theatre-makers and politicians, the extent of this advantage has seesawed between its functions and the flesh and blood experiences of the board, over time. As arbiters of theatrical taste, the Scottish Arts Council's drama committee is neither a cross section of the general public nor the theatregoing public and members are not answerable to any public: their interests have always been closely tied to the theatres supported. Thus, in every year, a number of board members, artistic directors, managers and actors employed by the small number of repertory companies serve on the committee.<sup>22</sup> The potential for cosy affections to become incestuous is acute in the small community of Scotland's subsidised theatre, whatever the credentials and personal integrity of the people involved. Usually the repertories have favoured this system, due to theatre people deriving great pleasure from the approbations of their peer group. Furthermore, the Scottish Arts Council has preferred it because it acts as a potential defence for any ill-judged decisions, with council and their drama director able to explain them as a recommendation or adjudication of their drama committee.

Such back scratching is completely different at the local authority level. Both agencies struggle with the polarity of serving both the theatre industry and the public whose taxes provide support, but the arts council system defines itself – or did until the 1990s – as being independent of government whilst a local authority is, in terms of being a form of

government, making grants decided by elected officials. These councillors govern a multifunctional local authority providing many other services that, even within a council's recreation department, often match a theatre building with their direct management of parks, bandstands, swimming pools, health centres, zoos, art galleries, graveyards, museums, concert halls and ice rinks. They often position an 'arms length' non-profit repertory company in a ladder of smaller subventions decided by a recreation committee of councillors in favour of external voluntary and community groups. These often include assistance to the tourist board, individual artists, heritage organisations or community festivals and, in Edinburgh after 1996, a corporation 'theatres strategy' might, unlike the early drama policies of the Scottish Arts Council, be harder for the Royal Lyceum to comprehend, because the council often gave support to the theatre for reasons that placed the art of the theatre secondary to considerations such as economic impact and tourism.

The complex relationship of theatre to local government, Scottish Arts Council and audience was now the political shape of repertory in Edinburgh, and the artistic director and manager would have to quickly learn how to balance the coalition, paying homage to the councillors, who were not then formally represented by membership from *each* political party. They had to immerse themselves in the cumbersome business of city politicking and networking.

Such lobbying was relatively easy until 1965. At the Gateway Theatre, the first Edinburgh Corporation subsidy from 1960 was £1,000 (£12,930), approximately equivalent to a local rate of  $1/34^{\text{th}}$  of one penny, and £2,000 (£25,800) or  $1/24^{\text{th}}$  of a penny from 1963.<sup>23</sup> A condition was one councillor-nominee on an eighteen-member board of directors. Now, their revenue grant to the new company was a massive £41,439 (£455,829, rather more in real terms than the £389,129 awarded in 2000), and still large if set against the revenue cost of libraries, that was £210,000 (£2,715,300).<sup>24</sup> The theatre subsidy was in addition to the cost of providing the theatre building, for which it charged a rent of £6,859 (£75,449). Successive artistic directors and managers have resented the theatre rent; because they thought it partly took away with one hand what local authority subsidy had been given with the other. Reminiscent of the less formal arrangements between the Abbey Theatre and Annie Horniman but at any rate much cheaper in real terms than the rents levied by commercial theatre managers in Edwardian times, the difficulties of the company's relations with its landlord continued to be a frequent deadlock in Edinburgh, with one behaving as a recalcitrant tenant and the other as a scowling landlord. Even so, they had to work together and the rent was also modest by other civic theatre standards. At the new Nottingham Playhouse (1963), for instance, the local authority grant was £13,000

(£143,000) but they charged a rent of £26,000 (£286,000).<sup>25</sup> At Coventry, the council grant was £6,750 (£74,250) but they charged £18,000 (£198,000) rent, towards the eventual repayment of the cost of the theatre building.

Edinburgh Corporation's grant was, therefore, the largest local authority subsidy granted to any British repertory theatre, even though Edinburgh – with a population of 433,000 – was only the ninth largest city in the United Kingdom. Their munificence warranted the moniker of 'civic' theatre, even if the company followed Watford's example by playing down the word in publicity. With local authority subsidy, the Royal Lyceum was also the first British repertory theatre in which combined arts council and local authority subsidy exceeded box office income. Even the National Theatre in London in its first four years from 1963 earned more from the box-office than it received in grants.<sup>26</sup> The progenitor companies received much less than Edinburgh: Liverpool Playhouse, for instance, received its first local authority grant of £7,500 (£82,500) in 1964, when Birmingham Repertory Theatre received only £5,000 (£55,000). The Coventry grant was £6,750 (£74,250). Municipal grants for other Scottish theatres were comparatively inconsiderable: Dundee was £4,000 (£44,000) and an approximate equivalent to a local rate of 1/4<sup>th</sup> of a penny, Glasgow £6,200 (£68,200) or 1/14<sup>th</sup>, Perth £1,000 (£11,000) 2/7<sup>th</sup> and St Andrews £100 (£1,100) or 1/28<sup>th</sup>.<sup>27</sup>

With these breakthrough investments at Edinburgh, no artistic director could be above civic 'politics': a modus vivendi between the practices of repertory management and those of local government had to be achieved immediately. The management had to deal not only with the council-controlled trust, but also with the 71-councillor corporation, at this time controlled by the Progressive Party (Scottish Conservatives). No doubt this should not be a matter for regret, but in the next 36 years the company has – without respite and as will be demonstrated in Chapter Six – found its relations with local government to be the most brittle of the partnerships, whatever happened to party-political control. It might even be argued that the cornerstone of education – one of the tenets of repertory mission – also included those people actually engaged in the company's management and its board of directors: an education that also involved their transition from theatre to local government, from repertory-as-artistic enterprise to repertory-as-municipal service.

## The fortuitous growth of state subsidy

In addition to Edinburgh Corporation subsidy, the company benefited from a fresh advance in national grants to the arts. In 1965, the Labour government published *A Policy for the Arts*<sup>28</sup> and, henceforward, the Arts Council of Great Britain was no longer responsible to the Treasury directly but to an under-secretary in the Department of Education and Science, Jennie Lee (Baroness Lee of Asheridge, 1904-1988); to all intents and purposes she was the first arts minister. Her appointment and the white paper denoted special progress in the campaign for state recognition of the arts and was the first occasion when government had gone so far as to pledge itself to a policy. Above all, new money poured into the Scottish Arts Council:

<b>BOX 5.1 GOVERNMENT ALLOCATIONS<sup>29</sup> TO THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL 1965-1977</b>				
	Scottish Arts Council Annual Allocation <sup>30</sup>	Amount of Increase on Previous Year	% Increase on Previous Year	SAC Allocation In Today's Value
1964-1965	£202,789	-	-	(£2,230,679)
1965-1966	£270,390	£67,601	33%	(£2,974,290)
1966-1967	£467,836	£197,446	73%	(£5,146,196)
1967-1968	£707,700	£239,864	51%	(£7,784,700)
1968-1969	£795,000	£87,300	12%	(£8,745,000)
1969-1970	£898,450	£103,450	13%	(£7,906,360)
1970-1971	£1,066,500	£168,050	19%	(£9,385,200)
1971-1972	£1,334,862	£268,362	25%	(£11,746,785)
1972-1973	£1,425,500	£90,638	7%	(£12,544,400)
1973-1974	£2,179,000	£753,500	53%	(£19,175,200)
1974-1975	£2,414,700	£235,700	11%	(£11,493,972)
1975-1976	£3,000,000	£585,300	24%	(£14,280,000)
1976-1977	£4,534,900	£1,534,900	51%	(£21,586,124)
1999-2000				£30,198,000

Scottish Arts Council's first grant to the new company in 1965 was £16,540 (£181,940) – a 150 per cent increase on the final Gateway Theatre subvention of £6,671 (£73,381).<sup>31</sup> Next year, for instance, the Scottish Arts Council revenue grant rocketed by 93 per cent to £32,000 (£352,000).<sup>32</sup> Moreover, in 1966, drama was privileged with an allocation of 49 per cent of all subsidies granted by Scottish Arts Council, when six repertory theatres received 99 per cent of all grants to theatre.<sup>33</sup> Even if one theatre thought that the amounts were less than they deserved, rivalry for that money was negligible. By 1999 – by which

time many more organisations were favoured across more artforms, especially new small-scale touring companies – drama received only 18 per cent of the overall grants awarded, and the same six repertory companies only 47 per cent of that.<sup>34</sup> Thus, in 1965, the new company was off to a flying start financially. It continued to receive proportionately large state subsidies all through twelve years of the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust management, stemming from an undoubting Scottish Arts Council that was determined to use its new affluence in a correlative spirit of unrestrained commitment to the repertory theatres.

At the same time, the influence of these state and local government subsidies had far-reaching effect on theatre management; the onset of new money coincided with the beginning of the new profession of arts administration. New money brought more employment to more actors in larger and more expensive productions, but at the same time the influence of the Scottish Arts Council was felt more strongly by the boards and artistic directors who actually ran the theatres.

The funders' inquisitive eye focused, firstly, on expenditure. More detailed planning and budgeting would be required *before* production, as against what the Scottish Arts Council suspected were haphazard, intuitive management techniques that might think be a defining quality in an artistic director. Up to now, careful costing of productions and seasons had been well controlled in companies relying in most respects upon the box-office for existence, like the Gateway Theatre. With new subsidy there might be less urgent pressure for immediate survival. Random and profligate expenditure might occur, with no more consideration than the time taken by an artistic director – and especially a resident designer – to order the production manager to purchase, rather than scrounge, the materials for expensive settings, lighting effects, properties, costumes, jewellery, shoes and wigs.

A second pressure from new subsidy was the explicit prompting of a company, by the Scottish Arts Council, into even more adventurous play selections. With concern for the promotion of new Scottish dramatists and with the stronger arm implicit in large subsidy, it has frequently accused the repertory theatres of pursuing a pusillanimous policy, such as when reporting on theatre in the season of 1966-1967:

One element was missing from an otherwise salubrious scene. The indigenous drama entered, very late on cue, only with Mr Stewart Conn's *I Didn't Always Live Here* in April 1967 [at the Royal Lyceum]. The Scottish Arts Council has long offered encouragement to theatres contemplating new plays, but in reviewing schemes for the promotion of new drama in Spring 1967, the Council has now taken the view that theatres in receipt of very large revenue subsidy should be able to incorporate an

adequacy of enterprising new plays in their normal repertoire without further subvention.<sup>35</sup>

Often in the past, fear of upsetting regular theatregoers and the need for boards of directors to keep a close eye on their balance sheet had been the main excuse for conservatism. However, once subsidy exceeded box-office income, a company would be anxious to please the larger income provider, even though the Scottish Arts Council said that it 'scrupulously avoided interference in questions of artistic policy in its client bodies'.<sup>36</sup>

Now that big subsidy was offered, a third requirement of the Scottish Arts Council was in the field of publicity: at this time a subordinate area of theatre management restricted to the time-honoured conventions of showmanship, advertising and press relations. Few repertory companies employed a public relations officer, or even someone whose first function was to sell the productions. The tasks were shared by the artistic director (who usually wrote the sales copy), the resident designer (who, in the uncommon event of the company wanting a poster design in addition to the staple announcements in the 'hanging card', created the image) and the manager (who proposed the ticket-prices for approval by the board of directors, maintained a mailing list, booked the press advertisements, ordered the tickets and coordinated programme content dominated by actors' biographies and advertisements). The managers were aware of these promotional imperfections but lacked time, training and money to apply their companies to sophisticated marketing, relying upon 'word of mouth' to recommend a good production. Despite these rudimentary techniques, remarkable results were achieved with small means: any guesswork was shaped by experience. At this time, marketing was not a goal in itself and the theatres used publicity simply as an apparatus to help a company achieve what it wanted to do on the stage. Most decisions were made without much consideration of marketing and, importantly, marketing and publicity were not at the top of the organisation's management structure.

The old-school management systems meant that Scottish Arts Council money might be spent on the creation of new administrative positions, such as a finance officer, publicity manager or even a manager from outwith the theatre profession, who would be skilled in making grant applications or marketing. These new jobs were not intrinsically theatrical because they worked outside the rehearsal room. But, they could be creative and would later become an all-star substratum so well thought of by the funding bodies that they constituted the beginnings of the new profession of 'arts administration', now too often



regarded by the funding authorities as equal to or more consequential than the artists themselves.

Without fear of artistic policy being compromised by new management priorities, the companies' response – through the auspices of the CORT and especially the efforts and exacting standards of the managers Elizabeth Sweeting (1914-1999), Reginald Salberg (1915- ) and Hazel Vincent Wallace (1919- )<sup>37</sup> – was to be vigorous advocates of the setting up of practical training in theatre administration. From 1963, the arts councils revived and expanded their 1959 vocational scheme for bursaries to young managers, attached to repertory theatres from three to six months in secondments that might also include a new six-week theoretical course at the Polytechnic of Central London. The curriculum for this first course, that later transferred to the City University, London and expanded into a department of arts policy and management, was to a large extent set by these influential repertory managers, with the finance director of the Arts Council of Great Britain, Anthony Field (1928- ) and deputy drama director Dennis Andrews (1924- ) acting as their executive.<sup>38</sup> There was no equivalent course in Scotland (until the establishment, in 1988, of AMTIS – the Arts Management Training Initiative Scotland – at Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh).<sup>39</sup> The Royal Lyceum collaborated with the bursary scheme from the outset, by hosting trainees (who might then also be play directors and actors) to learn from the company's manager, Charles Tripp, who had acquired the skills of theatre management from experienced impresarios in the commercial theatre.

These three pressures – controlled expenditure, daring play-choices and sophisticated marketing – were not at this time new ideas of magnificence, because commercial theatre managements had long employed finance and advertising specialists and repertory theatres, including the progenitor companies and the Gateway Theatre, had been dedicated to the production of occasional new plays. Nevertheless, a company sensed the likelihood that it would be under pressure to comply with the strictures. A company might also be suspicious of the Scottish Arts Council's new role as a benevolent aunt, and boards of directors were understandably liable to interpret its attentions as interference. As with municipal subsidy, therefore, new state patronage demanded new accountabilities and the Royal Lyceum board and management, like other theatres, would have to conform to dual pressures and monitoring requirements.

Even so, when the company began, grant-seeking procedures were intelligible. Each year it submitted to the Scottish Arts Council and Edinburgh Corporation, the intended programme of plays plus an estimation of what the company might 'earn' from all sources

other than these funding bodies, and it budgeted the costs of the whole operation for one year only. The company applied for a grant to make up the 'income gap'. Reputedly, some theatres overestimated their requests, because they never reached the standpoint of a grant offer that had a favourable chance of bridging expenditure and 'earned' income. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a certain amount of bargain associated with the sum. Often, the Scottish Arts Council pledged a small 'guarantee-against-loss' in advance and on top of the main grant; the company used this as a contingency. As the financial year progressed, a simple quarterly financial and box-office attendance return was sent to the Scottish Arts Council, showing exactly how the company had progressed financially; this revised the end-of-year estimate and, usually, the 'supplementary' grant was called in after the annual accounts were audited and approved at the annual general meeting. Sometimes, in the event of larger difficulties, a retrospective 'deficit' grant was given without demur, as shown in the portrait of annual subsidies to the Royal Lyceum (Box 5.8). In terms of funding categories – that also included occasional, easily reasoned and long-lasting project grant schemes for touring, minimum royalty payments to playwrights for new plays and other sums for neglected plays, theatre in education and small capital purchases – the strictures were plain speaking and consistent relative to today, even if the repertory managers feared the new paperwork.<sup>40</sup>

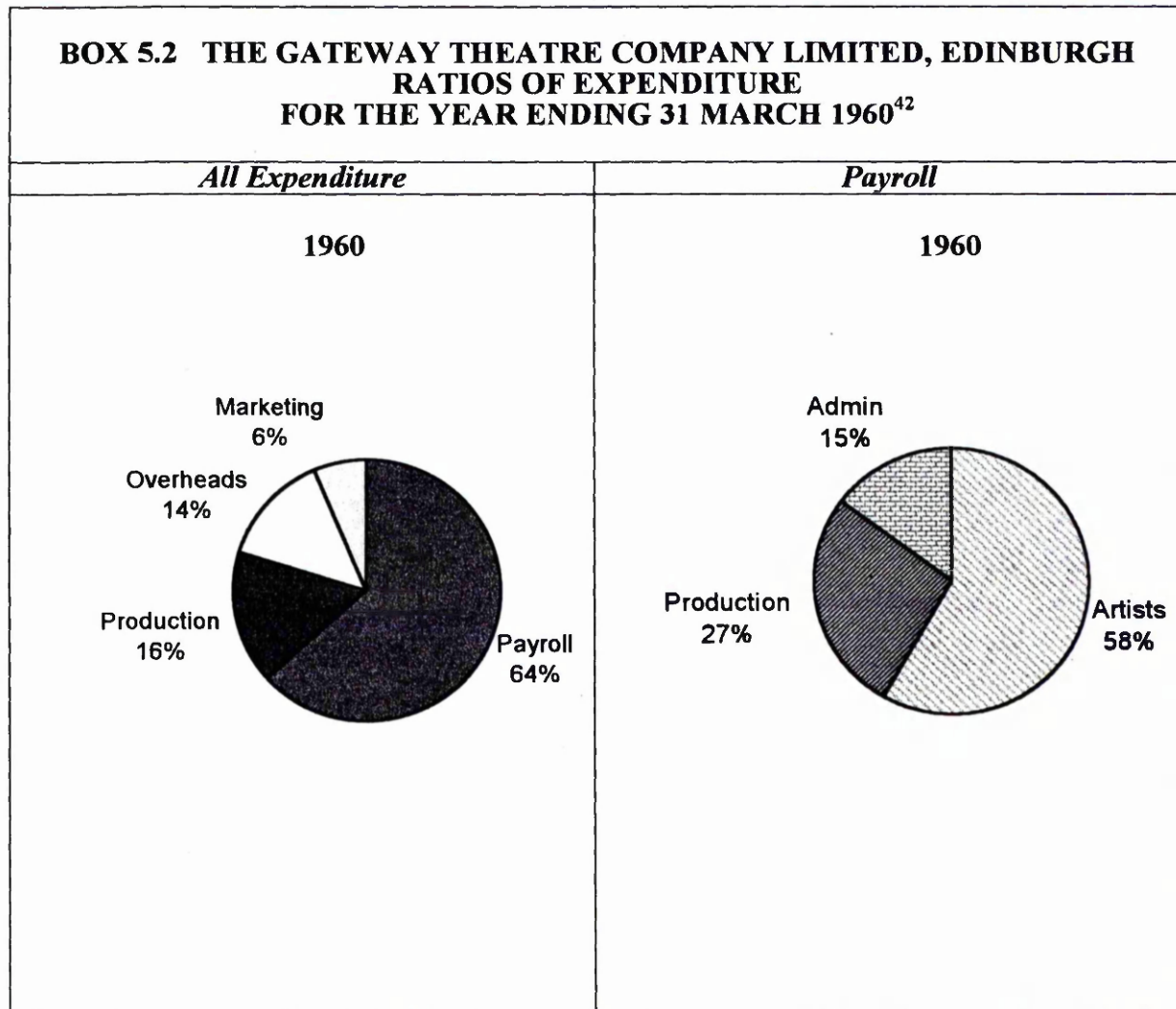
## The end of repertory as artist-founded theatre: The Gateway Theatre

The Gateway Theatre board was theatrically knowledgeable, wise and resourceful. Hence, a measure of Royal Lyceum Theatre Company continuity with the Gateway was realised by appointing the three 'independent' directors of the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust from the old company: the playwright Robert Kemp (1908-1967) – who had chaired the Gateway from 1953 to 1960 – its second chairman John B. Rankin and Lawrence S. Miller, a director from 1964. When the artistic director was appointed, the Gateway chose to wind-up, for although the Scottish Arts Council had assured the company of subsidy renewal, this would reduce their grant available to the Royal Lyceum. With the founding in 1963 of the Traverse Theatre Club, there was neither scope nor interest in becoming an 'alternative' theatre, and the Gateway knew that there were insufficient audiences in Edinburgh to support three professional drama companies, as well as being aware of the improbability of the Edinburgh Corporation continuing its small grant. Their last chairman, the actor, lawyer and playwright Moultrie R. Kelsall, described the predicament:

It seemed to us that both companies would suffer, however sedulously they tried to avoid clashes by offering complementary rather than competing programmes. Our financial position, though sound was not such that we could take in our stride the probable loss of the Town Council grant and a drop in box-office receipts: costs would continue to rise, and a further Equity wage increase was forecast. To launch out on another season, as a bold gesture of confidence that more theatre would create more audience, had an undeniable attraction, but if we failed, the Civic Theatre, with its much greater resources, would be seen to have killed us, which would surely be an unbecoming end for the old venture and an unfortunate start for the new.<sup>41</sup>

Having been instrumental in keeping the company solvent – often by receiving donations from the board members' pockets in the same fashion as the progenitor repertory companies and their private debenture or shareholders – it is tempting to speculate whether Kelsall described the entire reason for the board's closing the Gateway. Doubtless, they discounted merger with the new company and any notion of running two theatres under one management, a favourite option for funding bodies today. Maybe they also realised that it would be hard to recruit a new artistic director because once Tom Fleming was lost to the Royal Lyceum Theatre, his specific vision might leave too. Often, companies flounder when attempting to strike a balance between staying true to an accomplished, long-serving artistic director's policy and trying different approaches to find a different audience, soon antagonising the faithful theatregoers. Maybe they anticipated that any gratitude for increased subsidy would be coloured by dismay at relinquishing any authority that they might have enjoyed. Maybe the board sensed that a new 'serious' repertory company whose turnover would, at the outset, be more than double that of the Gateway

would soon face financial embarrassment. Maybe the board might not have been confident in councillors' merely making up numbers on another corporation committee, let alone in the Scottish Arts Council's new role of theatre inspectorate, however sympathetic, knowledgeable or enthusiastic both funding sources appeared to be. Maybe the board members' foresaw the day when their influence upon policy-making and play selection would be subsidiary to the funding bodies' dabbling in the detail of theatre management. At any rate, they had safeguarded resources, continuing to manage the company economically, by spending money in the fashion of pre-1945 companies:



There might have been suspicion of future changes to the board's control and financial management, but whatever the case the Gateway accomplished its mission with dignity. The last new production was, appropriately, *Journey's End* (R.C. Sherrieff, 1928). Afterwards, the Edinburgh International Festival, that had presented or commissioned eleven Gateway productions in twelve years – all by Scottish playwrights and staged by the Gateway's resident directors and actors – revived a company success, *The Man from Thermopylae* (Ada F. Kay, 1961) for the 1965 festival. For this case study of the Royal

Lyceum Theatre Company, the excellent Gateway-Festival relations – that, without fuss are never alluded to in Kelsall's retrospective – were, under festival directors Ian Hunter (1919- ), Robert Ponsonby (1927-) and Lord Harewood (1923- ), a significant achievement when compared with the Festival's otherwise sparing involvement with Scottish drama and Edinburgh theatre companies in particular. For now, relations between the new company and the wealthier Festival, that became a constant anxiety for the Royal Lyceum, probably descend from 1947, with a recurrently overweening posture recalled in the 'official' history of the elder organisation:

At first there was no Scottish drama officially provided. National modesty had ordained that, in 1947, Edinburgh should in this matter be the hostess rather than impresario. The dependence shown upon English acting was exemplified when James Bridie was invited to write a play upon Mary Queen of Scots – for the 'Old Vic' to perform. (The 'Old Vic' shrank from a task so alien to its national qualities.) Meanwhile the reputation of Glasgow Citizens' Theatre had been well built up, and it was agreed that with a producer so highly regarded as Tyrone Guthrie a creditable contribution could come from that source.<sup>43</sup>



*12. The first artistic director, Tom Fleming*

## The first season: high aspirations and misfortune

The first artistic director for the new company was employed in March 1965 – without advertising the post – when, as noted, more Gateway Theatre experience was acquired in the actor, director and poet Tom Fleming, who returned to Scotland after sabbatical engagements as a leading player with the Royal Shakespeare Company. After barely six months' planning to create the new company, during which time occasional visiting productions occupied the theatre and it was given superficial redecoration, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust opened its first production on the conclusion of the Edinburgh Festival. Fleming's plan was to establish an 'international' company with high ideals and to expand the missionary zeal of the Gateway.

At first, productions were performed in repertoire: *The Servant O' Twa Maisters* (Carlo Goldoni, 1745, adapt. Victor Carin and set in Edinburgh, 1965), *Police and Out at Sea* (Sławomir Mrożek, 1958 and 1960, trans. John Bethell, 1963), *To Scotland With Rhubarb* (George Bruce, 1965) and *The Life of Galileo* (Bertolt Brecht, 1938, adapt. Charles Laughton, 1947). These four productions continued in repertoire for ten weeks and two – *The Servant* and *Galileo* – returned between seasons of other productions not staged in rotation. *Galileo* toured to the Nottingham Playhouse. Each play was cast with leading Scottish actors, with three productions directed by Fleming (who, as actor-manager also starred in *Galileo*) and three designed by the world-renowned Royal Shakespeare Company artist Abd'Elkader Farrah (1926- ), who joined the company as head of design. More 'international' talent was engaged for the Polish double-bill, directed by the United States and Polish critic and scholar, Jan Kott (1914-2001). However, like the equally critical success of Charles Frohman and Harley Granville Barker's repertoire experiments at the Duke of York's Theatre, London in 1910, the Edinburgh audience failed to respond in sufficient numbers to the repertoire system. After the confusion of the repertoire system, straight runs fared better. These were *Rumplestiltskin* (David Kane, 1965, after the Brothers Grimm, 1815) designed by children in Edinburgh (3,000 entered a design competition), *Florita* (Miguel Mihúra 1963, trans. Margery Withers, 1966, British premiere), *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (Eugene O'Neill, 1947), *The Magnolia Tree* (H. W. D. Manson, 1958), *Lock Up Your Daughters!* (Bernard Miles, Lionel Bart and Laurie Johnson 1959, after Henry Fielding, 1730), *The Comedy of Errors* (William Shakespeare, c.1592), *When We are Married* (J. B. Priestley, 1938) and, lastly, a production for the Edinburgh International Festival, *The Burdies* (Douglas Young 1961, after Aristophanes 414 BC).<sup>44</sup>

Doubtless, these choices were a discriminating mix of enterprise and prudence. Possibly, they lurched inadvisably between extremes of the obscure and the mundane, but even with the best actors – that numbered many future luminaries such as Brian Cox, Tom Conti, Russell Hunter, Jean Kent, Eileen McCallum and Una McLean, as well as actors such as Callum Mill, Lennox Milne and Martin Heller who had become Edinburgh favourites through their Gateway and, sometimes, Wilson Barrett Company appearances – the first financial year made a gruesome loss of £13,245 (£145,695). This deficit was almost wholly attributable to low box-office receipts, especially for the Polish double-bill and Spanish play: an examination of succeeding annual accounts shows direct production costs to be uniform with the ensuing four years when the deficit was either lower or eliminated. Unsurprisingly, one of the haunting issues in theatrical management resurfaced: the question of whether a company's policy should be artist-driven or theatregoer-driven, or the extent to which these extremes might be alternated. It is always a formidable balancing act, but six months into the life of the company and with neither time for consolidation nor board knowledge of the uncertainty of outcome involved with *any* play selection – and the bad luck of poor attendance for unrecognised plays – the directors' reaction was to make demands for a play-reading committee of the board. Having enjoyed a great deal of control over play selection, Fleming would now be more beholden to the board. Like many artistic directors' experience during the youthful phase of a company – starting with the similar experiences of Alfred Wareing at Glasgow Repertory Theatre and Basil Dean at Liverpool Playhouse – Fleming held this to be an intrusion into what has always been a subjective issue. Certain that the board were undermining his artistic creativity, he resigned and left at the end of the 1966 festival. This marks only the first setback in board-management relations that have confounded this Edinburgh company with unfailing regularity, especially from 1977 when the second non-profit company was formed.

With the advantage of hindsight, it might be argued that in addition to the problems of performing in repertoire and ensconcing the company quickly, the financial failure was exacerbated by one other factor. This was Fleming's desire for 'internationalism'. In all probability, this policy was inspired by the cosmopolitan experiments and achievements of the Edinburgh International Festival. The festival, that in some respects has sired Scotland's other big performing arts organisations such as Scottish Opera (1962) and the rehabilitation of Edinburgh venues – but has taken less interest in Scottish drama – could delude the company and its artistic director into believing that they could successfully emulate the festival's culture of 'world-class' showcase quality. The expectation might be to transfer those festival accomplishments to their own productions and to the 'festival-



educated' Edinburgh audience, year round. However, with smaller budgets and fewer year-round incoming arts tourists, poor support for the company's principal flops - *Police* with *Out at Sea* and *Florita* – demonstrates the inexpedience of imposing unrecognised, 'international' and adventurous fare on the Edinburgh audience, even during the seemingly advantageous autumn period; at least in the 1960s. As will be shown in the survey from 1977 to 2000, later artistic directors – often nudged by the Scottish Arts Council - have also wanted the company's programme to extend the radical and the highbrow. Nevertheless, until the 1980s and the growth of a large subscriber audience base, foreign plays or esoteric productions met with little box-office response, except during the festival. It was as if the privileged festival audience did not want to know about the potential of their own theatre: as if the festival had little impact on sustained theatregoing habits and that Scottish-made productions were déclassé. Later, a more widely travelled and less parochial local audience with more disposable income and less cultural 'cringe' might more readily transfer their 'international' outlook and risk-taking enthusiasms to the Royal Lyceum Theatre.

Meanwhile, necessity dictated the artistic vision, and not the other way around. The inescapability of a deficit amounting to 25 per cent of turnover meant that the second artistic director would inherit the financial embarrassment (but not the blame) and have to communicate more successfully with the board to make them serve the artistic mission with one voice. Changing the artistic director would mean upheaval and insecurity in the company, especially for continuity of actors, designers and technical staffs closest to Fleming. Arguably, a board's most important task is the selection of the artistic director and, on this occasion, 61 people applied for the job. Their choice of Clive Perry – a charismatic leader – was doubly well-aimed, for a better balancing of the dialogue between money and art fulfilled most expectations in the next decade, which is usually seen as the company's golden period of all round achievement.

For this study, the accounts for this first year are especially revealing for their view of expenditure. They indicate that despite the difficult task, speed and cost of creating the company – during which time there was little earned income – money was spent in broadly the same proportions as the progenitor theatres, whether commercial or subsidised, even with divergent manifestations of play selection. As in the examination in Chapter Three of the Granville Barker budget for a National Theatre (1930), the financial analysis of the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham for 1945, the Citizens' Theatre for 1944 and the Gateway Theatre for 1960, the following summary harmonises categories in a fashion consistent

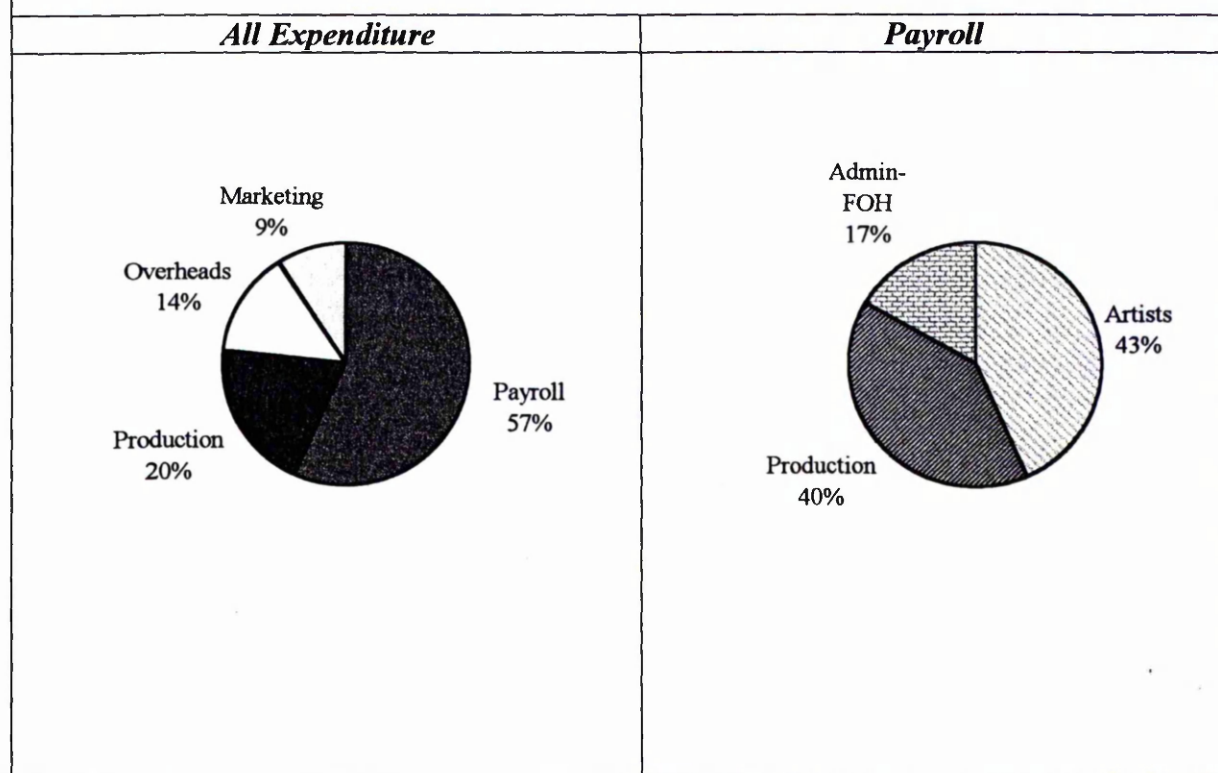
with theatre accounts today, signposted with charts to contrast the main features of expense and payroll.

**BOX 5.3 EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED  
ABBREVIATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT<sup>45</sup>  
FOR THE FIRST YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 1966**

	Actual	Actual	(Value Today)
	£	£	£
<b>EARNED INCOME</b>			
Box Office Receipts	50,580		556,380
Programmes Net Surplus	53		583
Catering Net Surplus	2,897		31,867
Other Earned Income	503		5,533
<b>Total Earned Income</b>		<b>£54,033</b>	<b>£594,363</b>
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>PAYROLL</b>			
Actors and Musicians (Performers)	29,492		324,412
Production, Design and Stage Management	27,100		298,100
<b>Total Artistic Wages</b>		<b>56,592</b>	<b>622,512</b>
Front of House, Box-Office and Administration	8,666		95,326
Cleaners	2,737		30,107
<b>Total Administration Wages</b>		<b>11,403</b>	<b>125,433</b>
<b>Total Payroll (including Selective Employment Tax)</b>		<b>67,995</b>	<b>747,945</b>
<b>PRODUCTION EXPENDITURE</b>			
Sets/Properties/Costumes/Scripts etc.	13,890		152,790
Authors' Royalties	1,874		20,614
Visiting Companies' Share and Fees	7,980		87,780
<b>Total Production Expenditure</b>		<b>23,744</b>	<b>261,184</b>
<b>OVERHEADS</b>			
Theatre Rent and Rates	6,859		75,449
Heating and Lighting	2,666		29,326
Insurance	1,106		12,166
Entertaining	816		8,976
Cleaning and Laundry	301		3,311
Office Overheads	306		3,366
Repairs and Maintenance	5,089		55,979
<b>Total Overheads</b>		<b>17,143</b>	<b>188,573</b>
<b>MARKETING</b>			
Publicity	1,727		18,997
Press Advertising	6,706		73,766
Billposting	2,022		22,242
Ticket Printing	535		5,885
<b>Total Marketing</b>		<b>10,990</b>	<b>120,890</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>£119,872</b>	<b>£1,318,592</b>
Less Earned Income		54,033	594,363
<b>Net Operating Loss</b>		<b>£65,839</b>	<b>£724,229</b>
<b>ADD GRANT INCOME</b>			
Edinburgh Corporation	41,439		455,829
Scottish Arts Council - Main	16,540		181,940
Donations	1,050		11,550
<b>Total Grant Income</b>		<b>£59,029</b>	<b>649,319</b>
<b>NET (DEFICIT) FOR THE FIRST SEASON</b>		<b>£(13,245)</b>	<b>£(145,695)</b>



**BOX 5.4 EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED  
RATIOS OF EXPENDITURE  
FOR THE FIRST YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 1966**



C.f. Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham 1945		BOX 5.5. EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED RATIOS OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 1965-1966
100%	Earned Income as % of Total Income	48%
78%	Box-office Receipts as % of Total Income	45%
22%	Ancillary Income as % of Total Income	3%
0%	Subsidy as % of Total Income	52%
67%	Total Payroll as % of Total Expenditure	57%
56%	Actors and Musicians (Performers) Wages as % of Payroll	43%
38%	Actors and Musicians Wages as % of Total Expenditure	25%
17%	Administrative Wages as % of Total Payroll	17%
13%	Production Expenditure as % of Total Expenditure	20%
11%	Theatre Overheads as % of Total Expenditure	14%
9%	Marketing as % of Total Expenditure	9%
69%	Overall 'Artistic' Expenditure as % of Total Expenditure	67%
41%	(Deficit)/Surplus as % of Turnover	-12%

The similarity of apportionment is plain: where 57 per cent of all expenditure went on payroll, the bulk of that was spent on actors and musicians with only 17 per cent on administration staff. Of course, there was no need for belt-tightening the administration wages: they were, as for the pre-1945 companies and the Gateway Theatre, a peripheral issue at this time of small staff numbers.

Nevertheless, because of the first year's deficit, Edinburgh Corporation and its nominee board directors were distrustful of the immediate lack of popular and financial success, and a trade-off with the generosity of Scottish Arts Council was negotiated. The local authority reduced the grant for 1966-1967 by 23 per cent or £9,439 (£103,829) and the main subsidy from Scottish Arts Council increased by 93 per cent or £15,460 (£170,060), setting an inclusive subsidy increase of £6,021 (£66,231). Henceforward, the management would not only deal with two funding bodies, but also temper relationships and grant applications according to discrepant expectations: the local authority tending to favour evidence of box-office support whilst the Scottish Arts Council, valuing artistic credentials of talent and creative productions above all else, would focus on their quality. The expertise with which the theatre negotiated these intricacies would be better for having an artistic director more practised than Fleming in managing the plurality of subsidy and who, because the chairman was also a councillor-nominee with possible conflicts of interest, might be the company's envoy to city chambers.

### **The policy and management of Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited**

The second artistic director, Clive Perry, was recruited from the Phoenix Theatre, Leicester where he had been the first director of productions from 1963. He was no stranger to theatre administration, having been a trainee director at Derby Playhouse in 1960 and then associate director at the Castle Theatre, Farnham from 1961.<sup>46</sup> At this small fortnightly non-profit repertory theatre there was no administrator and he exchanged the task with artistic director Joan Knight (1923-1996) with successive productions: whoever was not directing acted as manager. There was nothing hit-or-miss about the arrangement: in this

166-seat club theatre, they had remarkable support from 3,000 members and he developed an acute judgement and interest in the realities of organisation.<sup>47</sup> When appointed to the Royal Lyceum Theatre (at the age of 29) he was therefore able, as a director, to subordinate the deliberations of the board and management to serve the theatre's artistic ambitions.



13. *The second artistic director, Clive Perry*

Dealing death to the directors' demands for a board play-reading committee was one of his first manoeuvres. This classic example of ambiguity in board-management relations was bypassed when Perry created the new *staff* position of literary adviser. Although William Archer and Harley Granville Barker had sanctified the importance of dramaturgy,<sup>48</sup> the post had never been a deep-seated part of artistic direction in subsidised theatre until the founding of the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1960. Then, assistant director John Barton (1928- ) was plays adviser and, with more likeness to subsequent shape in some repertory theatres, Sir Laurence Olivier (Baron Olivier of Brighton, 1907-1989) reinforced The National Theatre play selection processes by appointing the theatre critic Kenneth Tynan (1927-1980) to the task, in 1963. At Edinburgh, the actor Alan Brown was literary adviser from 1967 and then the playwright Stewart Conn (1936- ) from 1973 to 1975. The post helped Perry to outdo the board's cumbersome imposition. The board may have brought voluntary political and commercial expertise to meetings, representing theatregoer views and providing the funding bodies with confident expectations of good financial control, but the better judgement to nominate plays rested – like other expert undertakings – in the province of theatre artists. This was especially so because the persons who would direct the

plays had to *want* to do so if they were to have true feeling. Under Perry, the professionals worked well with the board, usurping their inclination to be both decision makers and doers. The redefinition of these relationships would be a never-ending task, but the company moved quickly beyond the troublesome founding phase. Moreover, it did so without losing sight of Fleming's sense of mission that inspired Edinburgh's new 'repertory ideal'.

After a second year's loss of £11,045 (£45,000), there was seven years' financial stability with small surpluses or losses. During this time, Perry – who was always a shrewd delegator – engaged a gifted team of associate directors, such as Richard Eyre (1943- ), who was promoted to be director of productions in 1971 but left to run the Nottingham Playhouse in 1972. Other associate directors were Bill (William Campbell Rough) Bryden (1942- ) and, later, Robert Kidd (1943-1986) and Bill Pryde (1951- ). Others were part-time or honorary, such as Michael Rudman (1939- ) who joined after he left the Traverse Theatre for Hampstead Theatre Club and from where he occasionally presented Royal Lyceum productions. These teams developed into a group of 'associated artists', including playwrights, designers, actors and technicians, who were responsible to Perry for artistic planning. In turn, Perry, although making the final decisions, synthesised the opinions of this inventive grouping, conveying their opinions to the board.

During this period, that began with Perry's own production of *The Devil's Disciple* (Bernard Shaw, 1899) there were – in addition to a full account of classical and contemporary plays – many exalted productions of Scottish plays. These included *The Hypocrite* (Robert McLellan, 1967, after Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, 1670), *The Ha-Ha* (Richard Eyre, 1967, after Jennifer Dawson), *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Muriel Spark, 1961, adapt. Jay Presson Allen, 1966, first British production, following premiere in New York), a revival of *The Flowers O' Edinburgh* (Robert McLellan, 1948), *The Chippit Chantie* (Victor Carin, 1968, after *The Broken Jug*, Heinrich von Kleist, 1808), *The Death and Resurrection of Mr Roche* (Richard Eyre, 1969), *Willie Rough* (Bill Bryden, 1970), *The Burning* (Stewart Conn, 1971), *The Aquarium* (Stewart Conn, 1972) and *The Bevellers* (Roddy McMillan, 1973).

Often, commissions for eleven new plays were under way, giving the directorate the best chance of selecting near-finished and favourable scripts. From these commissions – that took time to progress to full productions and were therefore most evident after Perry's first three years in harness – plays with topical issues had the prospect of reaching the stage, as with Tom Gallacher's *Prospero* (1974) about the North Sea Oil industry, or the near-local

history of Bill Bryden's *Benny Lynch* (1974), recounting the career of the Glasgow boxer. Such inceptive choices were not limited to new Scottish drama, as when premieres of English plays were staged, including Anne Jellicoe's *The Giveaway* and Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall's *Children's Day* in 1969, or John Whiting's hitherto unperformed *No More A 'Rovin* – commissioned but declined by Northampton Repertory Theatre in 1960 – given in Edinburgh in 1973.<sup>49</sup> The repertoire was inspired by many other innovations as when, for the Christmas season of 1970, *Babes in the Wood* (F.W. Wyndham, 1907) was the first of a succession of Edwardian and Victorian pantomime-books exhumed from the Howard and Wyndham repertory and which were 'concluded each evening with a Harlequinade'. Indubitably, the quality of productions was revered, as testified by the British Council that organised tours of *A Man for All Seasons* (Robert Bolt, 1960) and *Look Back in Anger* (John Osborne, 1956) to West Africa and the Far East in the season of 1970-1971.

On two occasions in 1973 – a year when CORT (now renamed the Council of Regional Theatre) celebrated the accomplishments of repertory theatres with a nationwide Festival of British Theatre<sup>50</sup> – the company co-produced Britain-wide tours through the No.1 circuit. These were presented by Henry Sherwood Productions Limited and Triumph Productions Limited: Andrew Cruikshank (1907-1988) in *The Master Builder* (Henrik Ibsen, 1892, trans. Michael Meyer, 1959) and Margaret Lockwood (1916-1990) in *Relative Values* (Noël Coward, 1951). These pre-planned tours, which opened under the company's aegis in Edinburgh, and played seasons in London's West End, earned the Royal Lyceum £3,883<sup>51</sup> (£34,170) from royalties but were the company's only full collaborations with a London West End producer in 36 years. Although *The Ha Ha* and *The Death and Resurrection of Mr Roche* performed at Hampstead Theatre Club, *The Bevellers* at the Shaw Theatre and later productions appeared at other London theatres such as Riverside Studios, these – plus the example of *Willie Rough* that toured more extensively in Scotland as well as to the Shaw Theatre – were all in association with non-profit hosting theatres.

The infrequency of collaborations with a profit-seeking management is significant, for without these royalties, the year's small net surplus of £460 (£4,048) would have been a deficit of £3,423 (£30,122) and, had the affiliations continued, would come to reap more income. For some other subsidised regional companies, such as the Haymarket Theatre, Leicester (built 1973 to replace the Phoenix) or the 69 Theatre Company of Manchester – that affiliated frequently with West End producers on big plays or musicals with 'star' names but did not rely upon the proceeds as part of their forecasts – this practice was feared by arts councils and critics for its potential to turn a subsidised theatre into a mere



try-out venue for the West End. This might not be so bad in itself – after all, before the era of subsidy, Barry Jackson had sustained the local operations of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre by transferring 47 productions to London in the decade to 1932<sup>52</sup> – but the fear was that this might turn a company towards the business theatre, at the neglect of the artistic theatre. Arts councils might also criticise an artistic director for receiving a percentage of the receipts and profits, because part of their salary was paid by the public purse and although a cut of the takings was a cheap way of rewarding them for their successes, the royalties gave them a vested interest beyond their employer's concerns. Often, the director could receive a higher percentage than the subsidised company. The subject might even be interpreted as first signal of a creeping deviation from the first purposes of subsidy; from the expression of government 'support and encouragement for the arts' to that of 'government aid to the arts industry'. Alternatively, depending on one's angle, it might be rendered as an early example of the now extensive and constructive cooperation between the subsidised theatre and the commercial sector. Elsewhere, though seldom in Scotland, repertories have more often exploited their government subsidy by extending the life of a new play through equal partnerships with a London manager. Thus, a subsidised company might supply playwriting, direction and design talent to stimulate the West End, reciprocated by extra money invested from London in united production budgets, and with the added bonus of actors having longer rehearsal time and extended employment.<sup>53</sup>

However, the danger of this policy is illustrated most graphically by the case of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre. With its reputation as an outlet for new drama, its success in the early 1970s made this company take for granted a royalties' income from transferred productions of one-quarter of all turnover. Unexpectedly, the Royal Court was unable to transfer its productions in the mid-1970s because West End managers were cautious of new plays during a recession. This exposed the policy of relying too heavily on commercial partnerships without underlying subsidy or working capital, resulting in an abrupt deficit of over £150,000 (£714,000) and near bankruptcy, including the cancellation in 1975 of the Court's planned hosting of the Royal Lyceum production of *How Mad Tulloch Was Taken Away* (John Morris, 1975).<sup>54</sup> The parallels and warnings for Royal Lyceum were obvious, even if the subject was, in the longer term, more apposite to the Traverse Theatre where more new plays have had a longer-life: a more prudent course would be to use the profits arising from tours to build reserves or spend them on discrete, occasional projects.

Whilst these first affiliations between the Royal Lyceum and a West End manager were unusual in Scottish theatre, attempts to worm into favour with the Edinburgh International

Festival were of more consequence but as anticipated in the discussion of the Gateway Theatre, intermittent and often fraught. During the term of Peter Diamand (1913-1999) as festival director (from 1966 to 1978) – when Prospect Productions was the most frequently presented British drama company – the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company made no appearances in 1967, 1968 and 1969. Then, in 1970, Richard Eyre's productions of *Random Happenings in The Hebrides* (John McGrath, 1970) and *The Changeling* (Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, 1622) appeared in repertoire, followed in 1971 by his production of *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (James Hogg, 1824, adapt. Jack Ronder, 1971). All were staged at the main theatre until, in 1973, Bill Bryden's production of [*Ane Satyre of*] *The Thrie Estaites* (Sir David Lyndsay, c.1485-1555, adapt. Tom Wright, 1973) performed at the Assembly Hall with 35 actors, in the fifth revival of this play for the International Festival. That year represented the company's largest contribution to the official festival in 36 years progress, with *The Knife* (Ian Brown, 1973) in the studio as a lunchtime production and an expanded Young Lyceum Company of twenty actors at the Assembly Hall in *Woyzeck* (Georg Büchner, 1837). Use of other 'found space' resumed in 1974, when the Young Lyceum Company appeared at the Haymarket Ice Rink in *The Fantastical Feats of Fin MacCool* (Sean McCarthy, 1974). However, it would be eighteen years before the company produced again for the official festival. Noticeably, these years were tempered by interminable on-again-off-again negotiations and other imbroglios with successive festival directors, the detail of which is surveyed in Chapter Six. Festival directors would not necessarily even see the company's productions, because until 1992 they programmed festivals from an office in London, secluding themselves from the North British city, excepting their fleeting attendance at board meetings and the August jamboree. With doubtless heart-burn for the Lyceum, the festival often chose productions of British drama by English repertories such as the Bristol Old Vic, Leeds Playhouse, Manchester Royal Exchange, Billingham Forum, Salisbury Playhouse and Nottingham Playhouse; and, with more abasement for the Royal Lyceum, Scottish contributions from the Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh, the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow and Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre Club.

However, the question of festival productions may have weighed lighter during Clive Perry's tenure, because at other times of the year the company was shipshape, attracting ample audiences. In the three peak years for attendance, for instance, 124,227 seats sold for in-house productions in 1971-1972, 132,566 in 1972-1973 and 137,085 in 1973-1974.<sup>55</sup> The average number of tickets sold for the twelve years of the first non-profit company was 126,006 whereas, as will be shown, during the second company's management from 1977 to 2000, the average number of seats sold for in-house productions was only 101,609.

These figures exclude those for another significant development of Clive Perry's tenure. This was the formation in 1969 of a short-lived Theatre in Education (TIE) team, operated jointly by the company and the education department of Edinburgh Corporation, directed by Brian Stanyon and, from 1971, by Sue Birtwistle. Modelled on the first such team which was at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, it continued only until 1973.<sup>56</sup> In the first year, for instance, five programmes were created and a team of four actor-teachers performed 155 visits to Edinburgh primary and secondary schools, involving 13,260 pupils.<sup>57</sup> Attentive to new ways of presenting the conventional curriculum in all subjects – but often dominated by social issues – the actor-teachers (plus one stage manager and no separate administration) worked with teachers to question the characteristics of learning and teaching methods. The doctrine had as much to do with company policy outwith the building and in the community, including public relations, as with precise educational policy, for the main company wanted to secure a young audience for its future. Moreover, regardless of whether TIE really had any impact on attendances at the main theatres, the team was the company's first attempt to prove its worth through events outwith conventional theatre buildings.

The first year's 'programmes' – that were never described as 'plays' – confirm the participatory process of the work that was researched and created collectively, often using local or topical issues that might appeal across the curriculum. *The Blew Blanket*, set in fifteenth-century Edinburgh, traced the conflict between merchant guilds and craft associations, set against the growth of the corporation. The team worked independently of the main company except when, occasionally, a mainstage play provoked a coordinated TIE programme as when the team devised their second offering, *There's Something About a Soldier*. Based on themes of war and recruiting, it was suggested by the full production of *Trumpets and Drums* (Bertolt Brecht, 1956, after *The Recruiting Officer*, George Farquhar, 1706). This programme was given in two parts: firstly a preparatory discussion and improvisation and secondly a documentary staging of the attitudes of soldiers compiled by the whole team from sources other than the main play. The third programme was *Mission Underground*, devised for special schools, followed by *Ticuna*, about mythology and a tribe of Amazonian Indians, for primary children. The final programme in the first year was *The Sense Olympics*, timed to coincide with schools' interest in the 1970 British Commonwealth Games (that were staged in Edinburgh) and given as a physical education lesson at which two scientists interrupt the class to install a computer in the school. After the performance, children were encouraged to draw comparisons between the potential of men and machines.

The growth of educational drama in the school curriculum eventually made TIE expendable, although a handful of other teams – notably the Roundabout TIE at the Nottingham Playhouse – endure today along the lines of the Coventry and Edinburgh form. The Edinburgh team depended wholly on one source of subsidy and was vulnerable to external policy changes. Although the company and Scottish Arts Council believed that education work was a foundation of improving access to the arts, when Scottish Arts Council attempted to transfer financial responsibility to the reorganised education department, the shadow Lothian Regional Council declined responsibility. Teachers considered the team to be a success and the company also believed it was good way of widening access, but withdrawal of the grant of £5,000 (£44,000) was fatal.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps the scheme had responded to imagined educational disadvantage as an obstacle to future enjoyment of theatre, rather than to any existing and explicit demand from schools. Unfamiliar with the use of drama in education, many artistic directors and local authorities became wary of the idealism of TIE and its fabled reputation (in some other teams, such as The Duke's Playhouse, Lancaster) for harbouring quackish experts. Others used the work for socialist propaganda, bolstered by their membership of the Workers' Revolutionary Party. Like some sceptics, Clive Perry may not have been a fan, for he anticipated closure in 1973 by shifting the company's educational policy to prefer plays for young people performed by young actors from drama schools, rather than actor-teachers trained in colleges of education or universities:

A service of top quality to schools must continue to be the broad policy... and it is absolutely essential to create a new company to provide documentaries, plays and a general awareness of solid theatrical experience to as large a number of schoolchildren as possible in what will be the new district of Edinburgh, also to endeavour to build this company into a group which can perform in the smaller, so far unserved theatres that exist in growing numbers in the new regions. To be able to contend with this problem and to provide what is even more important, a regular means of employment for a young Scottish company, forms one of the innovations of future policy.<sup>59</sup>

Perry's more intentional youth audience policy – that can be seen as grappling with the balance and uncertainties of 'excellence' and 'access' – led to the formation of the Young Lyceum Company that, as discussed, performed in the studio theatre for evening productions as well as in association with the Pool Theatre Club for short lunchtime productions and, infrequently, in schools. For where an educational framework had at first driven the company's youth policy, this was substituted by a tighter alignment to the aims of public relations and marketing, seeking to identify with young people through young actors in conventional productions. The pursuit of this future youth audience on which the company would be dependent in the longer term has since taken different directions – as

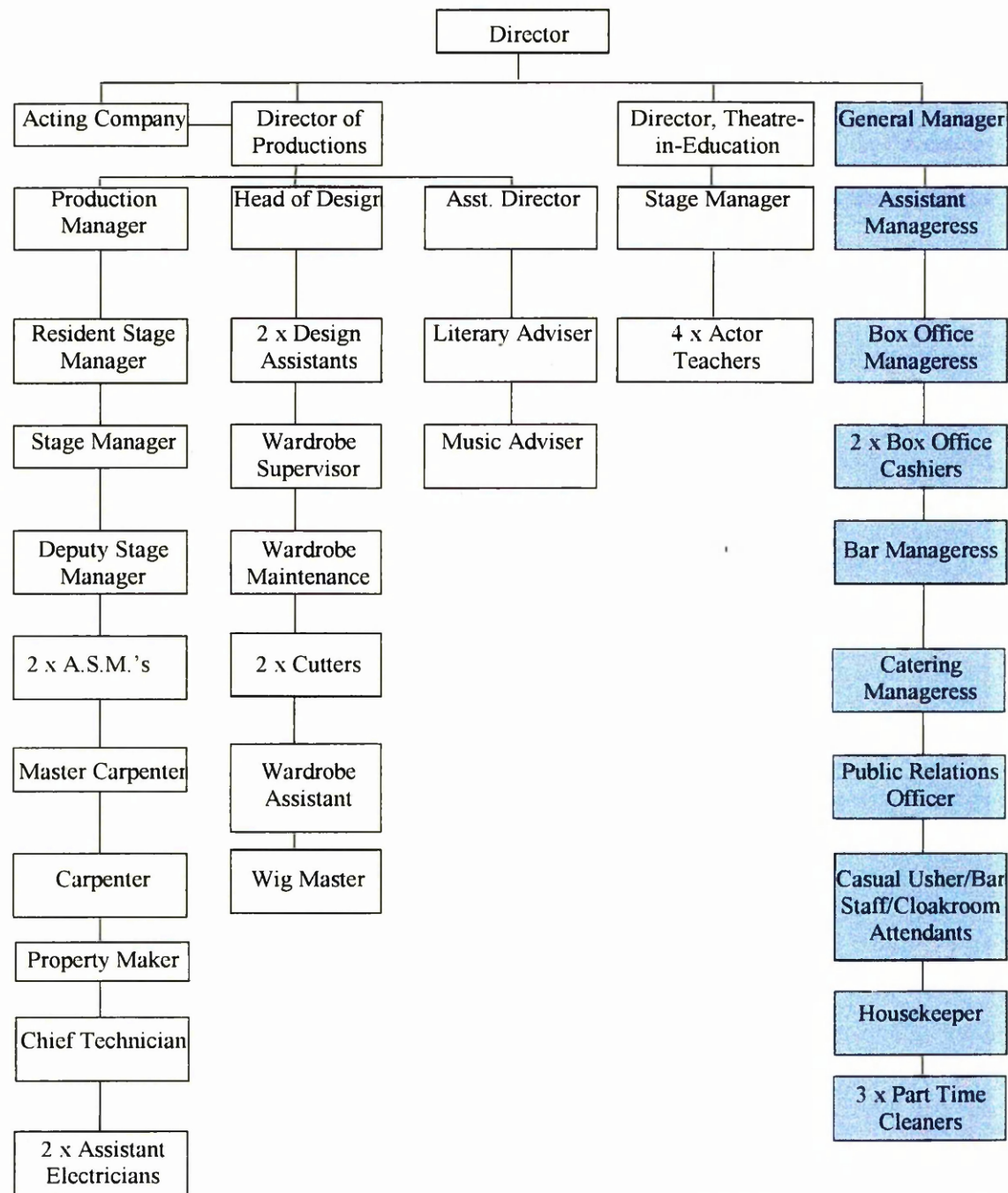
will be demonstrated in Chapter Six – but efforts to specify policy and establish a fundamental position for ‘access’, ‘outreach’, ‘education’, ‘youth’ and ‘community’ work have always been a difficult undertaking, for this company. Less institutional frameworks for community and youth theatres have often gained the ground, even when they collaborated with the Royal Lyceum, such as Craigmillar Festival Society (1960), Theatre Workshop (re-formed at Stockbridge premises in 1976), Scottish Youth Theatre (1976) and the Scottish International Children’s Theatre Festival, Edinburgh (1991, now a promotion of the year-round children’s theatre work of ‘Imagine’).

Supporting the artistic direction in these prolific activities was a simple internal organisation. In 1971, for instance, 40 members of staff were employed full-time, excluding the acting company and with few freelance professionals. Eight members of staff were administrative: the company employed only one administrator for every five production staff members. Although the external environment had become more complex with increased subsidy, the behaviour of the Scottish Arts Council and local authority towards the internal organisation was supportive and predictable, playing a secondary role to the board and artistic direction. In turn, this stable situation meant that Perry and the small management team of director of productions, general manager, production manager and director of theatre-in-education could get on with their jobs without undue intervention from the funding bodies. For the institution, the cardinal issues were to run the theatre and create the productions efficiently. As a structure for this style of 1970s resolute organisation, staffing may be represented as a diagram (Box 5.6).

The ability of the company to operate well depended on this structure of authority and representation of their bureaucracy reveals a lot, as well as pointing to differences today, thereby offering insights for later evaluation as when, during the 1990s, it depicted organisation in a myriad of formal and more structurally complex blueprints. The system operating in the 1970s suggests a theatre company where small teams could interact and communicate easily with one another. Any organisation chart shows who reported to whom, but the vertical hierarchies at the Royal Lyceum tended to be taller than today because with fewer managers the number of staffs reporting to each manager was larger. With a lean administration supporting the production of more plays than today, there was more interplay between a small number of administrators and a more highly motivated production staff.

# **BOX 5.6 EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED RECONSTRUCTED STAFF ORGANISATION CHART 1971**

*Administrative staff: colour coded*



Administrative efficiency was not more important than the creation of productions and, to compensate for less expertise in the principles of formal management, finance and marketing from outwith the theatre industry, all Royal Lyceum managers had to be more knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the theatre than future generations need be. Possibly, the senior managers exploited staffs, unable to offer them many rewards or

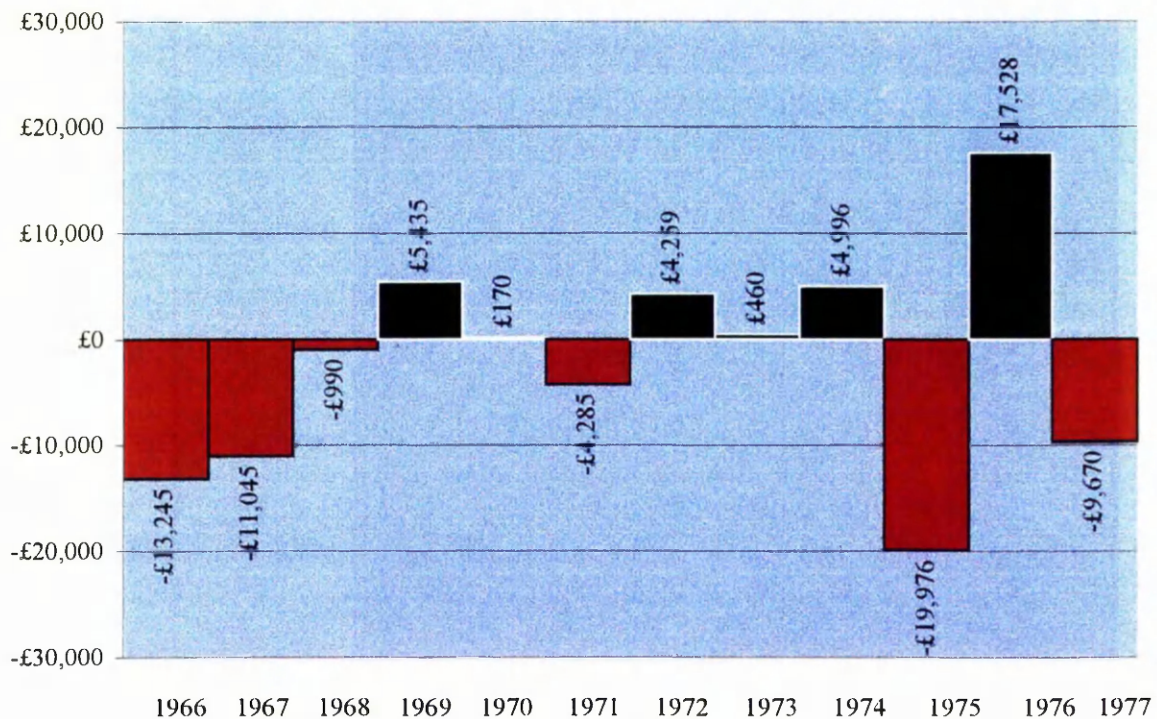
opportunities for professional growth and training, other than the personal satisfaction of hard work in an enterprising theatre that offered a ‘family’ working atmosphere in which they ‘lived and breathed’ the company. With few administrators, the artistic director and general manager retained more individual authority and responsibility than their successors, now so overwhelmed with rules, new conditions of subsidy and standardised working methods imposed by the funding authorities, that delegation, consensus-working and a more horizontal hierarchical structure has been adopted (Chapter Seven, Box 7.11). The lissom administrative dimension to Perry’s overall direction seemed to work well, setting a framework that lasted until the 1980s. It helped to apply the greater part of box-office income and subsidy to the costs of artists and productions. However, by 1996, when the structure was no longer dictated by an artistic director or effectively and independently moderated by the board of directors, Perry’s corporate culture was unrecognisable. Then, a Scottish Arts Council investigation omitted any recollection of these historical proficiencies. It might have observed that although the full-time staffs had risen in 25 years from 40 to 52, the number of administrators had swollen from 8 to 26. Of course, some of these – such as front of house attendants – are always essential, but their number did not increase; rather the expansion occurred in the offices. Where the company was now horrendously over-managed, production staffs – who might anyway be supposed to be fewer because of new technologies and working on the creation of fewer productions – reduced from 32 to 26.<sup>60</sup> Progress towards this bloated ratio of one administrator for every direct production staff member, together with the company’s frequent replacement of jobs, revised roles and quickly changed accountabilities applied in a chaotic and unpredictable manner, will be observed in Chapter Six. The blatant contrast between the efficacy of the 1970s organisation structure and today suggests that Perry’s system might now be seen even to have the same weight as recollection of the company’s other, specifically theatrical accomplishments.

### **Stability, expansion and the company’s finances in perspective**

This organisational structure served to underpin the company’s financial stability for the seven years to 1974, with production capabilities, funding and audience tastes finding the best equilibrium in the company’s entire 36 years’ progress: an assertion that is largely supported by the financial records summarised in the following charts. However, in the three years from 1975, results oscillate markedly from a deficit of £19,976 (£95,085) to a surplus of £17,528 (£83,433) and a deficit of £9,670 (£46,029):



### BOX 5.7 EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED HISTORY OF DEFICIT AND SURPLUS 1966-1977



Latterly, Royal Lyceum's former director of productions Richard Eyre has argued that every company's artistic vigour is circumscribed by time. Perhaps prompted by his own Edinburgh experience – as well as later work as director of the Royal National Theatre (from 1988 to 1997) – he suggests that this is rarely maintained beyond seven years and that:

While theatre will remain inextinguishable, its survival won't depend on the institutions that have been established for the needs and aspirations of different generations. Buildings can be changed and replaced; institutions can evolve. The large theatre companies...which emerged from a particular time and imperative, must adapt. Any theatre will dwindle that does not allow for the luck of genius and possess the will to accommodate it.<sup>61</sup>

Although no two-theatre life cycles are identical, Eyre's conviction can be seen, in passing, to mirror the theories of the influential sociologist, management guru and model-builder Max Weber (1864-1920), who asserted that leadership of any organisation proceeds through a sequence of turning points. Hence, in any theatre an entrepreneurial artistic director might become increasingly formal and expansionist over time, as he worked to sustain the company. At Edinburgh, from a life cycle perspective, the activities of the first

non-profit company certainly vouch for this desire for expansion and, if the Eyre and Weber standpoints are correct, these desires were embodied in the ambitions of Clive Perry. After seven years of stability, the years from 1974 stick out as a telling time of organisational change, with the emerging profession of subsidised arts administration, particularly at the Scottish Arts Council, displaying a first flush of enthusiastic collaborator in matters strategic. For the Royal Lyceum, angling for new status and prestige was fostered by response to a series of overlapping factors.

The first of these expansionist factors concerned a merger with the King's Theatre. The corporation had acquired the freehold of the King's Theatre from Howard and Wyndham in 1969 and then managed it directly for four years but, in 1973, when the council supposed that shared management would lead to savings, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust took over artistic and administrative responsibilities at the King's. This is the first example in Britain of an attempt to fuse a repertory theatre and a touring house into one theatre management and, following several other local authorities' purchase of No.1 theatres, is only the second example of a civic touring theatre being managed at arms-length through the intermediary of a non-profit company. For this new operation, Perry was promoted to be director of theatres, with Charles Tripp supervising John Robertson and Stewart O. Murray, the resident managers at each theatre. Council awarded the trust an annual guarantee against loss of £20,000 (£95,200) and a grant of £4,000 (£19,040) towards the director of theatres' salary, whilst charging a rent of £20,000 (£95,200).<sup>62</sup> In the first year of merger, the guarantee went unclaimed and the King's made an ample net surplus of £8,815 (£41,871). In the second year, the trust made a small deficit of £1,434 (£6,825)<sup>63</sup> and then, because of several closed weeks caused by scarcity of productions from the profit-seeking London impresarios, there were upsetting losses of £33,589 (£159,883)<sup>64</sup> in 1975 and £54,794 (£260,819) in 1976.<sup>65</sup> Even so, these shortfalls were far less than the deficits incurred when the King's Theatre reverted to direct council management after 1977. In the years to 1997, the year from when the King's was managed for a second-time by a non-profit trust, the losses exceeded £500,000 for ten years running. However, the four years of joint-Lyceum management might also be deemed a successful expansionist strategy for the company, for other reasons. For public enjoyment, the quality of pantomimes was improved by new productions created by the trust, including a return to Edinburgh of the famous dame, Stanley Baxter (1926- ). Pantomimes also fed an enduring arrangement with the Empire Theatre, Sunderland and the King's Theatre, Glasgow whereby production costs could be amortised through rotation of the Christmas shows to the other cities. However, after local government reorganisation in 1976 – that was occasioned by The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 – this effective experiment to

centralise resources proved of no interest to either the new Royal Lyceum Theatre Company or the new Edinburgh District Council. Joint-management was discontinued, despite the apparent advantages of pooling certain responsibilities such as scheduling, finance, box-office operations, maintenance, production workshops and publicity as well as the easier avoidance of programme clashes. Abandoning the consolidation of the two theatres was also surprising, because the repertory company benefited from control over a larger, competing theatre. This gave managers access to information about a larger audience at the King's Theatre, as well as keeping them in touch with profit-seeking producers that might be useful in future negotiations, as when the company co-produced West End productions and tours with Henry Sherwood and Triumph Productions.

Ultimately, the differing outlooks of a repertory company and a touring theatre – incarnate in the discordant interests of many artistic directors and managers today, if not in their boards of directors – meant that since then the systems have almost never cooperated in any city. Indeed, after Edinburgh the only other initiatives have been arrangements in Sheffield and Northampton. At Sheffield in 1990, the rehabilitation of the Lyceum Theatre (built 1893) as a No.1 touring house prompted the formation of two non-profit trusts under one chief executive, Stephen Barry (1945-2000) and the redundancies of the long-serving Crucible Theatre artistic director Clare Venables (1939- ) and general manager Geoffrey Rowe (1947- ). From 1992, these two non-profit companies amalgamated fully as Sheffield Theatres Limited, since when the arrangement has seen out four artistic directors. At Northampton, the Sheffield experience served as a blueprint for a full-merger of the non-profit repertory company at the Royal Theatre with that of the council-managed and adjacent Derngate Theatre (built 1980), creating Northampton Theatres Trust Limited in 2000. As with the theatres in Sheffield, the scheme led to the departure of an accomplished artistic director and general manager from the repertory company, made redundant in favour of a chief executive promoted from the touring house and the arrival of a new 'artistic producer' who resigned after only one season. The Royal Lyceum-King's Theatre model at least demonstrates that the demarcation need not be as unworkable as is often imagined, but the others demonstrate a bewildering turnover of leaders.<sup>66</sup>

A second expansion factor in Edinburgh had roots in the company's artistic (and potentially bureaucratic) ambition to be a national theatre or at least to stage larger productions as 'the major drama company for Scotland'. This ill-defined aspiration – that henceforward simmers through the progress of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company as a distraction from its core mission – had a lot to do with the institution's hankering for reputation, supremacy, indispensability and self-preservation, as well as suspicion of

competition. Arguably, these are defining features of the wider Edinburgh Establishment's mentality: part and parcel of a dreamed-up, elevated status for a small capital city. Even so, theatres and companies anywhere often believe that their infrastructure stagnates if it is not expanding: that they cannot keep the kettle boiling without empire-building and being a 'major' theatre or even the 'jewel in the crown'.

The Scottish Arts Council, because of the paucity of suitable touring productions for the No.1 theatres, believed that a bigger drama company should exist to create productions as a close relation to Scottish Opera and Scottish Ballet, and they had excited this wish.<sup>67</sup> Recommendations for attaining the physical aspects needed to match the production scales of the lyric companies included the company acquiring (by leasehold) the long-coveted production workshop premises, in the suburb of Murrayfield in 1974. These workshops were seen as 'having potential for refurbishment and expansion for the well-being of theatre throughout Scotland, in the construction and making of sets and costumes for big touring productions as well as in the event of a Scottish national theatre based in Edinburgh'.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the ongoing dream of building an opera house adjacent to the Royal Lyceum encouraged the notion that the lyric companies might even move base from Glasgow to Edinburgh, cooperating with an expanded Royal Lyceum Theatre Company to give seasons of integrated repertoire. The scheme for an opera house might animate the local authority to either substantially refurbish the Royal Lyceum or construct a new drama theatre to replace it.

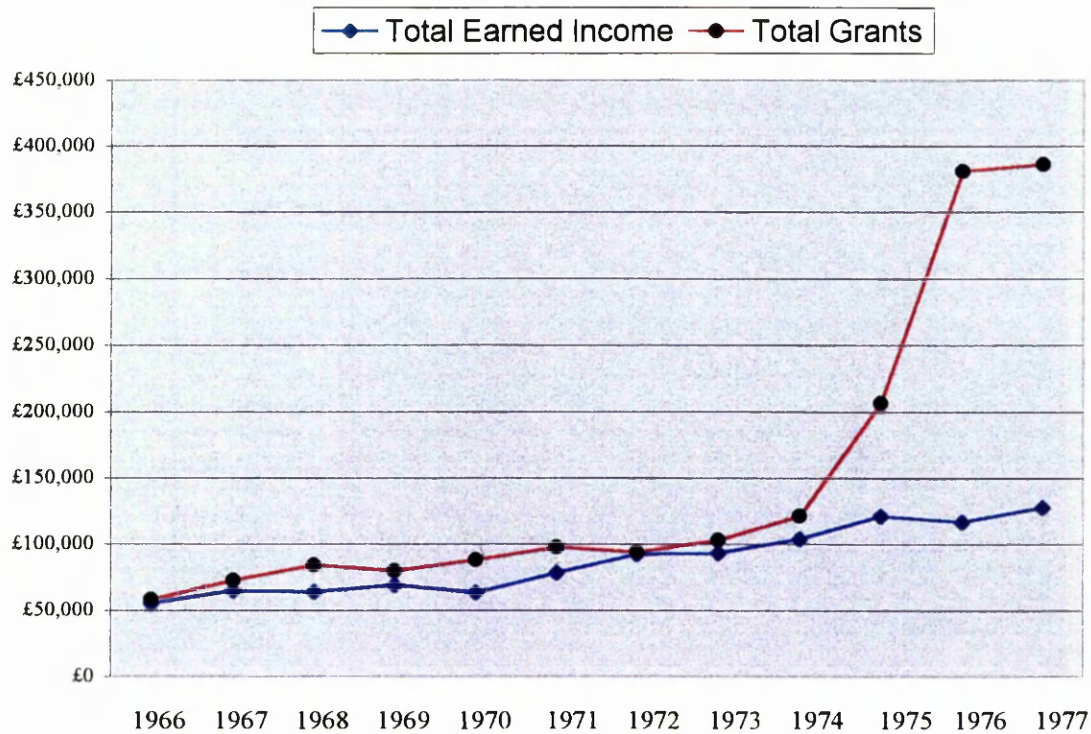
Meanwhile, the only large British drama companies touring intermittently in Scotland were the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, together with more sustained visits from Prospect Theatre Company that, in addition to performing at the Edinburgh International Festival, showed interest in relocation to Edinburgh under its Scottish directors, Toby Robertson (1928- ) and Iain Mackintosh (1938- ). These three companies performed at the King's Theatre. Perhaps Perry was suspicious of Scottish Arts Council preference for the establishment of the separate Scottish Theatre Company (eventually begun in 1980). He appointed Robertson a part-time associate director, with the intention of a closer alliance with Prospect and to reassure the funding bodies that the Royal Lyceum had the expertise to develop into a national theatre, instead of starting a new company from scratch. Thus, at the 1974 annual general meeting Perry declared a change of policy:

The existing Lyceum Company will develop into a new ensemble to present to audiences in Edinburgh, elsewhere in Scotland, England and abroad, an international repertoire at the highest standard. Within this new concept we will develop new Scottish theatrical traditions, providing greater opportunities for Scottish





**BOX 5.9 EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED  
EARNED INCOME AND GRANTS: 31 March 1966 – 31 March 1977**



Unlike Fleming's repertoire experiments, Perry's play choices and scheduling - that was weekly changeover of plays rather than nightly - did at the least hold the audience. The choices for repertoire comprised *Twelfth Night* (William Shakespeare, 1594-1601), *Good is Good* (Sean McCarthy, 1974), *Jumpers* (Tom Stoppard, 1972), *Major Barbara* (Bernard Shaw, 1905) and *The Iceman Cometh* (Eugene O'Neill, 1939). Then, after two Christmas attractions, the next rotating season added the much-revived production of *The Flowers O'Edinburgh* (Robert McLellan, 1948), with McCarthy's new play enjoying intermittent scheduling of eleven weeks over the next two years, an exceptional number of performances for a new play in Edinburgh. The second new play was *How Mad Tulloch Was Taken Away* (John Morris, 1975), joined in repertoire by *The Apple Cart* (Bernard Shaw, 1929), *The Government Inspector* (Nikolai Vasilivich Gogol, 1836) and *A Month in the Country* (Ivan Turgenev, 1850). Several productions toured Scotland but, more importantly for the company's impact on Edinburgh, their revival in succeeding years (and hence lengthier runs) confirms that, even if annualised receipts did not noticeably climb, audiences were excited.

On the other hand, the financial upshot of expansion is underscored by the charts. After nine years' near-equilibrium between earned income and subsidy, extra grants obtained for repertoire staunchly a yawning divide between them. Thus, where in 1966 earned income was 49 per cent and subsidies 51 per cent of total income, by the last year of the first company these proportions were 25 and 75. The consequence of this alteration harboured implications for the staff workload: more time spent on predicting, pursuing and attempting to stabilise high subsidy ratios would be unavoidable and could easily outrival efforts to increase earned income. Nevertheless, despite these liabilities, it is extraordinary to observe – when turning to the expenditure side – the company managing to keep a tight reign on non-artistic costs, so that during these years the proportions spent on administrative wages never exceeded 20 per cent of the payroll, and those on overheads never exceeded 18 per cent:

**BOX 5.10 EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED  
SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURE 1966-1975**

*Administration and Overheads: Colour Coded*

	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<i>Payroll</i>										
Actors & Musicians	29,492	40,886	45,505	41,107	44,439	43,217	47,214	47,346	67,279	96,661
Production Staff	27,100	30,943	27,962	30,018	27,137	34,893	38,259	40,926	49,733	61,208
Total Artistic Wages	56,592	71,829	73,468	71,425	71,486	78,105	85,473	88,276	117,012	157,869
Administration	11,403	22,489	24,348	25,379	25,867	23,252	23,436	27,574	30,392	34,889
<b>Total Payroll</b>	<b>67,995</b>	<b>88,682</b>	<b>90,701</b>	<b>89,169</b>	<b>89,297</b>	<b>95,250</b>	<b>103,478</b>	<b>106,492</b>	<b>147,404</b>	<b>192,758</b>
% Payroll spent on Administration	17%	19%	19%	19%	20%	18%	17%	17%	20%	18%
<i>Production Costs</i>	23,744	17,138	27,384	19,823	19,758	38,670	37,236	41,686	81,997	68,000
<i>Overheads</i>	17,143	21,432	19,637	24,934	25,740	22,544	25,880	27,636	32,440	56,122
<i>Marketing</i>	10,990	7,365	6,711	6,873	7,329	5,919	6,585	7,290	7,257	11,333
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>119,872</b>	<b>134,617</b>	<b>144,433</b>	<b>140,799</b>	<b>142,124</b>	<b>162,383</b>	<b>173,179</b>	<b>183,104</b>	<b>269,098</b>	<b>328,213</b>
% Total Costs spent on Overheads	14%	16%	14%	18%	18%	14%	15%	15%	12%	17%

*Source: Annual Accounts of the Company, 31 March 1966-31 March 1975  
(Full accounts for 1976 and 1977 were not lodged with statutory accounts).*



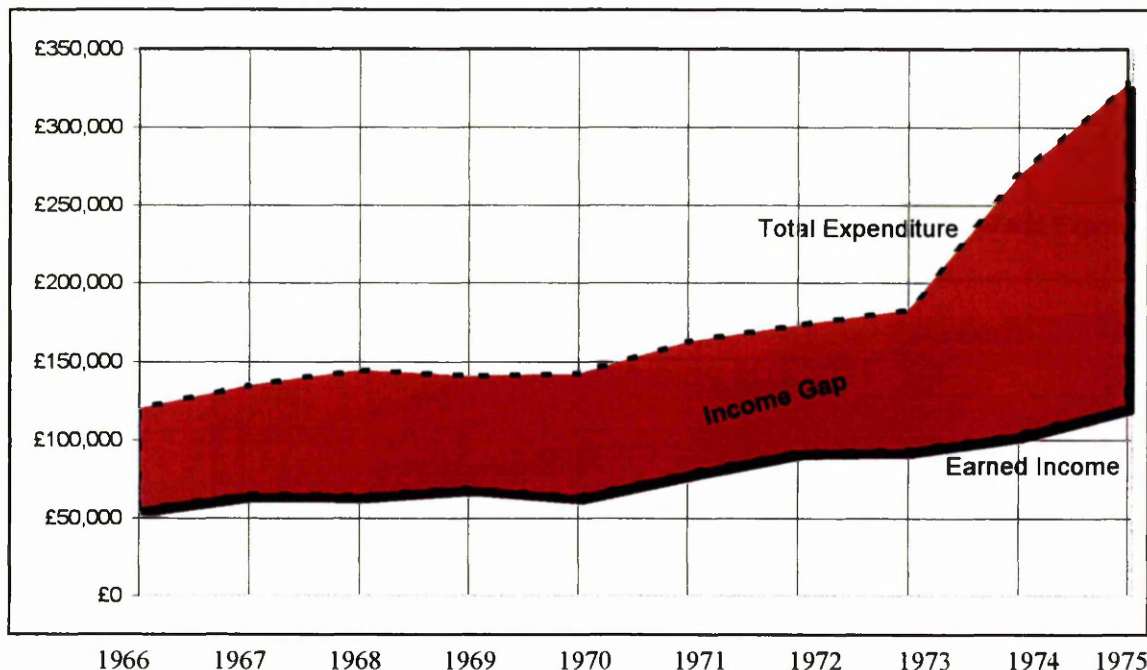
Acquaintance with these ratios, that are approximate to Granville Barker's 1930 'benchmark' as well as to the 1940s expenditure profiles of other companies discussed in Chapter Three, suggests that the origins of the impending rise of bureaucracy in the second Royal Lyceum company do not stem from the 1970s, even with the trust's steadily increasing production costs. These factors of organisational complexity had been in force from the beginnings of the repertory movement when, for instance, an enduring interdependence of artistic vision and business performance was set by the Liverpool Playhouse partnerships of Maud Carpenter and her several artistic directors. At the Royal Lyceum, the company repeated these resourceful management styles in the combination of Clive Perry and Charles Tripp, who brought a blend of subsidised and commercial theatre experience.

Like the pioneers, Edinburgh's artistic director and manager were leaders in theatre policy matters, and the Scottish Arts Council reacted to *their* vision for the company: the means to the link between the audience and the art on stage being, at this time, a company's organisation rather than government arts policy. At the same time, they were able to explain their use of subsidy but in addition to elementary grant applications, financial returns and annual reports, they dealt with accountability informally; and in return, the Scottish Arts Council stood beside the company, not above it. The management brought board members to meet and excite the officers and members of the Scottish Arts Council at first nights, introducing them to the actors and actresses in the dressing rooms and enjoying confidential discussions and hospitality in Tripp's office. Because influential politicians and other powerful individuals from the Edinburgh Establishment controlled the company's board membership, they could also negotiate easily with the more formally structured world of the Scottish Arts Council, the club-like links to which were strengthened by board member John B. Rankin's simultaneous membership of its council and drama committee. A change in management practice germinated in many other repertories during the 1970s, as the graduates of arts administration courses approached the age to hold general management positions. The new managers had less often been play directors or actors and might not always have served apprenticeships in stage management or been seconded to experienced managers or artistic directors. They might even prefer first employment as counterparts at an arts council drama department or a local authority recreation department. The new mode of theatre management, with its demands for fastidious accountabilities, put a premium on the employment of managers who were adept at – and might actually enjoy – responding to the inextricable policies and tortuous evaluations of the funding bodies. But for the Royal Lyceum, the influence of these new

professionals would await the departure of Perry and Tripp, whereupon the next manager, in a sure sign of future change, chose the title of ‘administrative director’.

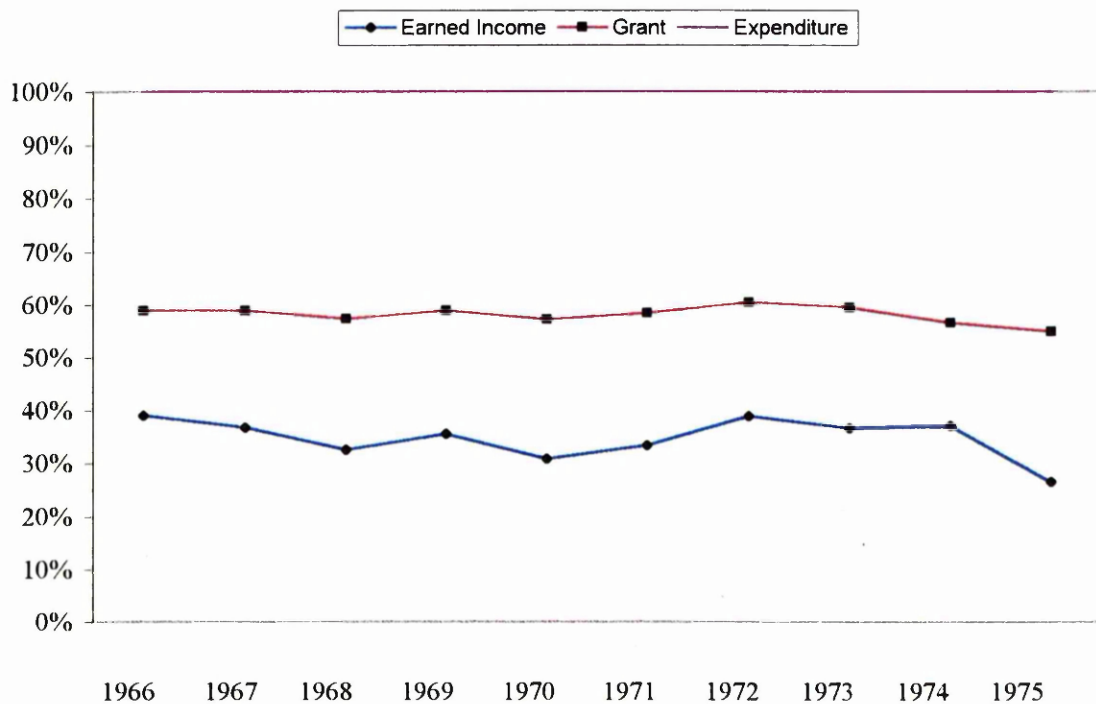
Meanwhile, although artists were clearly the nerve centre of the company, the financial results for the seven years of stability are all the more noteworthy, because these years coincided with intensifying inflation, when control of costs was formidable. On the income side, inflation might be counteracted by occasional ticket price increases, but the imposition of value added tax on theatre tickets from 1973 – in the midst of a nationwide recession from 1972 to 1975 that included the problems of a three-day working week – made net price increases a sensitive issue. To underscore this overview, the total annual earned income (Box 5.8) can now be set against the general upward trend in annual total expenditure. Box 5.11 traces the first decade of consolidation and solid artistic achievements, when there was – up to 1973 – an overall correspondence between increases in earned income and expenditure. Box 5.12 demonstrates how subsidy remained generally constant as a percentage of the company’s expenditure, and in the same way earned income varied little in these years as a percentage of total expenditure. The last year, that points to the declining ratio of earned income to expenditure, marks the beginning of an almost perennial state of financial crisis. Henceforward, and as will be shown in Chapter Six, progress is accompanied by unremitting anxiety and struggle for survival.

**BOX 5.11 EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED  
TOTAL EXPENDITURE, EARNED INCOME AND THE NEED FOR SUBSIDY:  
‘THE INCOME GAP’, 1966-1975**



*Source: Annual Accounts of the Company, 31 March 1966-31 March 1975  
(Full accounts for 1976 and 1977 were not lodged with statutory accounts).*

**BOX 5.12 EDINBURGH CIVIC THEATRE TRUST LIMITED  
EARNED INCOME AND GRANT INCOME AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL  
EXPENDITURE, 1965-1975**



**Summary and the transition to the second non-profit company**

Having led the company for ten years and with its artistic reputation and public confidence at a peak, the much-respected Perry left in 1976 to be the second artistic director of the new Birmingham Repertory Theatre (built 1971). For Edinburgh, he had been an enterprising director, adept at recruiting teams of inventive associate directors, with a natural bent for attracting leading actors and for spotting and nurturing new talent whilst, as a manager with a sure step, he balanced the dissimilar expectations of theatregoers, artists, local government and the Scottish Arts Council. Unlike some later artistic directors, he was also financially astute and responsible. Without wishing to over-personalise this contribution, Perry was the only one of the six artistic directors allowed to be, throughout his term, the most influential participant in the company's affairs for, like the repertory pioneers, he embodied the institution as an individual. Later, the combination of political duress and intensifying competition for Scottish Arts Council subsidy meant that the character of the job changed; no artistic director's values were recognised by the board and funding bodies as something to support with maximum enthusiasm. This would be especially so at the Scottish Arts Council, because after it became a 'development

agency', its administrators championed their own agendas and several new 'specialist services for improving the quality and range of Scotland's theatre'.

There was probably no direct relationship between Perry's resignation and the 1976-1977 deficit, but that year was also the end of an organisational cycle. For someone who previously had the security of knowing what was going on with the funding bodies – and being able to instigate the company's expansion – local government reorganisation would be discouraging, pointing to uncertainty and a loss of control, with two local authorities for Perry to deal with. Despite hopes to the contrary, the expansionist plans had to be curtailed after the local authorities announced that recently increased subsidy would suddenly be reduced. Whereas combined city and regional assistance totalled £193,493 (£921,026) in 1975, local government reorganisation and economies forced each council to reduce their subsidy by a combined 14 per cent to £165,940 (£789,874), with the warning that in 1976-1977, the new Edinburgh District Council would withdraw their main grant entirely, whilst continuing ownership of the theatre building. There was not a capricious decision, because whilst other areas of local government reorganisation were undertaken relatively smoothly, the government had ordered no clear apportionment of obligations between the new regions and districts councils, for the arts. At first, the cutbacks were substituted by temporary rescue from Scottish Arts Council, that increased their main grant but with advance notice that in 1977 they too would decrease subsidy: from £220,052 (£1,047,447) to £200,000 (£952,000).

At this time, there was neither security of three-year funding agreements nor any intended formula or ratio of subsidy agreed between the three backers and, although the company might assume entitlement and renewal, the situation remained volatile for two years. Thus, the Royal Lyceum had reached the biggest turning point since aborting the courageous 'international' policy of Tom Fleming's foundational season. Against the internal atmosphere of artistic exploration, optimism and heady excitement, the artistic consequence of subsidy reduction would be impending abandonment of plays given in repertoire (and a fragmentation of the concomitant acting ensemble), as well as the temporary adjournment of the quest for national theatre status that was, in any event, at cross purposes with the localism of a municipally owned and controlled theatre. The administrative consequence would be a new accent on the Lothian Regional Council, with its recently elected politicians. After much confusion, it was agreed that they would be the larger provider of the two councils, the Edinburgh District Council awarding only spasmodic project grants. Therefore, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, being a creature of the old corporation, was renamed Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust Limited

on 13 May 1975. At board level, this made little numerical difference: it continued to be a 'controlled' trust, with ten out of fifteen directors nominated by the councils, and five directors from each. Although there were several changes to membership – and therefore some loss of continuity – the chair, who had been a director since incorporation of the first company and led it from 1968, continued to be Councillor John Millar, now also Lord Provost.<sup>71</sup> However, with state subsidy now markedly outpacing that from local government – with the Scottish Arts Council becoming an even stronger stakeholder – the existing political composition of the board would no longer mirror its financial husbandry. Therefore, a second, more meaningful adjustment occurred in 1977. This was incorporation of a brand new firm: The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited.

The new company was modelled on the pre-1960s structure for non-profit theatre whereby a local authority 'influenced' the board via minority board membership, rather than the 'controlled' trust dominated by councillors. Although equally based on the ethos of repertory-as-municipal service, with the board and management needing to remain politically responsive and accountable to local government as well as to the Scottish Arts Council, the intention was a stronger element of business, educational, artistic and other community involvement, from people whose first boardroom responsibility would be to the theatre. This more autonomous company might find it easier to maintain an arms-length relationship without party-political leadership. With over-dependence on proportionately higher subsidy from multiple sources and, like its predecessor, no financial reserves, it would be just as vulnerable to u-turns in municipal and government arts policy, but an independent company would deal better with these influences. However, to do so it would spend money on new layers of internal bureaucracy. Image-building managers would be employed, who were hopefully trained in arts administration and who would be confident of manoeuvring amongst their confreres at city chambers and the Scottish Arts Council, so as to handle the future impositions of external theatre policies.

In the next chapter, a detailed examination of the new company's record will be offered. This observes to a larger extent the 'influence' of this new board that is led by a succession of five 'independent' chairmen who, being more detached from local authority entanglements and conflicts of interest could, when dealing with political machinations, act as a calm mediator. For the second Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, the task of the first chairman, Ludovic Kennedy (1919- ), was especially placatory because the Lothian Regional Council was Labour and the Edinburgh District Council Conservative. Although not an elected politician himself, Kennedy was a member of the Liberal Party and, as in other spheres, members of the centre party were reputed for their resolute helmsmanship



when dealing with clashes between politicians from the other parties. This would be an essential skill, especially because, at first, council-nominee directors mirrored only their council's political control, without the inter-party cooperation that became a feature from 1990. Thus, the relationships of theatre company to local government now formed an even more important ingredient of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company organisation, even though councils' involvement in the arts was, after local government reorganisation in Scotland (and unlike England), no longer a discretionary matter but their statutory obligation.

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Glasstone, 'Principal Architects and Designers', in John Earl and Michael Sell (eds), *The Theatres Trust Guide to British Theatres 1750-1950: A Gazetteer*, London, A & C Black, 2000, p.280.

<sup>2</sup> The 1964 citation for this theatre of special architectural and historical merit is as follows:

Victorian renaissance. 3-storey and attic front, arched and channelled ground floor, distyle in antis Corinthian centrepiece with pediment above, 1 window either side; narrow west bay in Corinthian pilasters, 2 narrow bays, same treatment to Cornwall Street and 1 further bay capped by mansard roof. Flank Corinthian pilastered. Painted stucco. Interior: 3 tiers of galleried on cast-iron columns, boxes integral with lowest tier, 3 each side. Consoled proscenium, semi-elliptical over-arch, circular Adamesque ceiling partly on coves with a honeycomb pattern. Continuous friezes of classical ornament to gallery fronts. Original foyer with chimneypiece and Satyr figures. Adamesque ornaments added later and good 1<sup>st</sup> floor tea-room with Adamesque chimneypiece.

Listing protects the theatre fabric, restricting what the repertory company and owner can repair, remove or improve without the consent of the Planning Authority. Although the company has adapted the Royal Lyceum Theatre to meet changing needs, the listing has also been an important constraint on artistic directors who, in some old theatres, have occasionally made barbaric and perfunctory proposals for architecturally insensitive alterations. See Historic Scotland, *Listed Buildings*, Edinburgh, Historic Scotland, 2001, at <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/sw-frame.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Resident repertory at Phipps' larger Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton (1894) was discontinuous and unsubsidised, run in the 1960s by Derek Salberg and then Humphrey Stanbury, a former manager of Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Phipps' other extant theatre in Scotland is The Tivoli Theatre, Aberdeen (1872). For Howard and Wyndham he also built the second Theatre Royal, Edinburgh (1873, remodelled by Phipps in 1884, now demolished) and the Theatre Royal, Glasgow (1880, remodelled by Phipps in 1890 and 1895 and now home of Scottish Opera). Others in Scotland were a re-build of the Theatre Royal, Dumfries (1876 but later completely remodelled inside) and a rebuild of the Theatre Royal, Dunfermline (1876, now demolished). These examples are from 71 Phipps' theatres in the British Isles listed in John Earl and Michael Sell (eds), *The Theatres Trust Guide to British Theatres 1750-1950: A Gazetteer*, op cit., p.256.

<sup>4</sup> Further details of the disposal of Howard and Wyndham's theatres are discussed in P.R. Iles, *Issues in Theatrical Management: Howard and Wyndham and the Evolution of the British Touring Circuit*, MPhil thesis, Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 1997, pp.102-104. In 1969, Edinburgh Corporation bought the other Howard and Wyndham theatre, the King's Theatre, for £175,000 (£1,540,000).

<sup>5</sup> Robert Kemp, Donald Mather, et al., *Housing the Arts in Scotland: Report of the Committee of Enquiry set up by the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1958, p.71.

<sup>6</sup> See for instance Eric W. Hall, 'An Opera House for Edinburgh', in *Festival Fanfare*, Edinburgh, The Scotsman Publications, 1958, No.10, pp. 61 and 62. This includes sketches of a cultural quarter *retaining* the Royal Lyceum Theatre adjacent to the Usher Hall and a Festival Opera House that *included* a secondary 'smaller 800 seat auditorium'.

<sup>7</sup> Until the passing of The Theatres Trust (Scotland) Act in 1978, there was no statutory protection for theatre buildings and in other cities and towns many Victorian theatres like the Royal Lyceum had been demolished in the 1950s and 1960s. Theatre buildings were ineffectively shielded by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, which under Clause 29 allowed a council to issue a building preservation order, restricting the demolition, alteration or extension of any building of special 'architectural or historic merit'. Under Clause 30 the minister was required to compile a list of suitable buildings but, unlike today, few Victorian theatres

were considered to be architectural gems and most were unlisted. Even scheduling did not save Phipps' other Edinburgh theatre, The Theatre Royal, Broughton Street, demolished in 1963. For more discussion of theatre protection in this period, see William Kendall, 'The City Fathers and the Theatre', *Drama*, London, British Drama League, New Series, Winter 1962, No. 67, pp.36-39.

<sup>8</sup> Under Howard and Wyndham, there had been one previous reconstruction scheme in 1935, when £4,000 (£162,880) was spent on increased theatregoer amenities: the addition of a cloakroom, a ladies' retiring room, and an enlarged licensed bar in the rear pit, a new staircase from stalls to pit and from pit to the dress circle. Unlike today's convention of closing a theatre during refurbishments, the work was completed at night, without interrupting the performance schedule. See George Baird, *Edinburgh Theatres and Circuses 1820-1963*, Edinburgh, For the author, 1964, reissued by George F. Baird 2000, p.100, where an article from the *Edinburgh News* of 9 October 1935 is reproduced. For a photographic record of the theatre, and to chart alterations and improvements, see *List C Survey: The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland, Box 1161, ED/15088 et seq., 1930-1990.

<sup>9</sup> Joyce McMillan, 'A Short Diary of Scottish Theatres, November 1994-February 1995', Ronnie Muirne and Margaret Shewring, (eds), *Making Space for Theatre: British Architecture and Theatre since 1958*, op.cit., p.65.

<sup>10</sup> The Church of Scotland contributed the lion's share of costs for the Netherbow Theatre, on the Royal Mile, with money received from the sale of its Gateway Theatre that was sold to Scottish Television upon the closure of its eponymous company.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Young McClelland Moores & Co., *Statement of Accounts for the Period 26 March 1972 to 31 March 1973*, Edinburgh, 28 May 1973, p.6.

<sup>12</sup> Clive Perry, *Report by the Director to the Annual General Meeting*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, 23 June 1972, p.6.

<sup>13</sup> Clive Perry, *Report by the Director of Theatres to the Annual General Meeting*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust Limited, 30 June 1975, pp.1-3. At the time of opening the Little Lyceum Theatre, the Young Lyceum Company was treated as a separate entity in company accounts. Setting aside its artistic importance, its turnover was £50,319 (£239,518), 54 per cent of which was grant income: £16,667 (£77,834) from Edinburgh Corporation and £10,600 (£49,502) from SAC. An impressive 62 per cent of expenditure was spent on actors and although some administrative costs were undoubtedly born by the parent company, the amount debited to the studio theatre was only 8 per cent of its expenditure. The Young Lyceum had no separate board or sub-committee and its artistic director reported to the Director of Theatres.

<sup>14</sup> For the story of this popular repertory company, see Wilson Barrett, *On-Stage for Notes: The Story of the Wilson Barrett Company*, Edinburgh, William Blackwood, 1954. This company also gave resident seasons in Glasgow and Aberdeen.

<sup>15</sup> David Keir, (ed.), *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. Vol. XV: The City of Edinburgh*, Glasgow, Collins, 1966, p.865.

<sup>16</sup> David Keir, (ed.), *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. Vol. XV: The City of Edinburgh*, op.cit, p.306 and PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Edinburgh Festival Society, Annual Accounts for the year ended 30 November 2000*, Edinburgh, 26 February 2001, p.18.

<sup>17</sup> Non-profit theatres have to comply with dual legislation: the Companies' Acts and the regulations managed by the Scottish Charities Office (in England, the Charity Commissioners). The board of directors of the limited company were also charity trustees. Several benefits were associated with being a charity. Some were tangible, such as exemption from direct tax (in the event of making a profit) and, today, an 80 per cent mandatory relief from council imposed rates. Other benefits were less palpable, such as to render help from deeds of covenant, gift aid, favourable terms from some suppliers, awards of grants from foundations and, possibly, easier fundraising from corporate sponsorships. Some requirements of charity registration are cumbersome and irrelevant for a theatre company: annual returns and accounting do not coincide with Companies Act requirements and the disposal or sale of assets is often bound to other charities, rather than obtaining the best possible price in an unrestricted market.

Theatres were first associated with charity registration in 1934, as a means to avoid Entertainment Tax that continued to 1958. The avoidance originated with concessions for single and amateur performances where the proceeds were donated to charity. It had some of the same effect that value added tax had from 1973 and was, despite its name, an excise duty, not a tax, collected by Customs and Excise who were people of finite appreciation of the theatre. It was first turned to commercial advantage when Hugh Beaumont (1908-1973), proprietor of H.M. Tennant Limited, created a charity serviced by his profit-seeking company. For exemption, he had to convince Customs and Excise and the Charity Commissioners that his purpose was



genuinely educational. Repertories owe him, and his lawyer G. Laurence Harbottle (1924- ), considerable debt, for they dealt cannily with deep suspicion convincing the Customs and Excise that entertaining and pleasant comedies by playwrights such as Oscar Wilde and Noël Coward could be deemed serious and educational. This aspect of charity registration, as well as the Charity Commissioners' perverse response to the proposed names of 'educational' theatre companies such as Gay Sweatshop, has common reference to many theatres' incorrigible dealings with censorship and the Lord Chamberlain up to the passing of The Theatre Act in 1968. For expanded discussion, see G. Laurence Harbottle, *Weaving Straitjackets – Legal sidelights on subsidised theatre during the second half of the Twentieth Century*, London, Society for Theatre Research, [unpublished lecture], 18 May 1999, pp. 7-11 and 21-22.

<sup>18</sup> Edinburgh International Festival, *Souvenir Programme 1964*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Society, 1964, p.5.

<sup>19</sup> 'Civic Theatres: Their Housing and Administration. Report of a conference held at County Hall, London, SE1, on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 1965, organised by the Association of Municipal Corporations and the Theatres' Advisory Council', *The Stage and Television Today*, London, Carson and Comerford, 4 March 1965, supplement, p.5. For a critical study of arts organisation from a local government perspective in this boom period, see S.K. Ruck, *Municipal Entertainment and the Arts in Greater London*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1965. Although concerned with London, it demonstrates the prevailing optimism in most local authorities, at the time of the Royal Lyceum founding.

<sup>20</sup> Arts Council of Great Britain, *Policy into Practice: 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 1964-65*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1965, pp. 75-81.

<sup>21</sup> Citizens' Theatre, *Information Prospectus*, Glasgow, Citizens' Theatre Limited, 1989, p.4.

<sup>22</sup> These connections began in 1942 when the Scottish Committee of the Council for the Encouragement for Music and the Arts was chaired by the founder of the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow, Dr O.H. Mavor (James Bridie). Later examples include the memberships of the Scottish Arts Council drama committee (and its bursaries' committee) held by the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company's literary adviser, Stewart Conn: see Arts Council of Great Britain, *Annual Report 1970-1971*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1971, p.5; the drama committee memberships of Joan Knight (artistic director of Perth Theatre), Paul Bassett (general manager of the Citizens' Theatre) and André Tammes, frequently a lighting designer at the Royal Lyceum Theatre: see Arts Council of Great Britain, *Annual Report 1985-1986*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986, p.30; or Anne Bonnar (general manager of the Traverse Theatre) and Alan Lyddiard, (artistic director of TAG when a Citizens' Theatre subsidiary): see Arts Council of Great Britain, *Annual Report 1990-1991*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1991, p.44. Admittedly, efforts to keep a respectful distance between a company and the Scottish Arts Council have occurred, perfected by a member leaving the meeting during consideration of his employer's application. Even so, there is swift bed hopping in either direction. For example, a drama committee chair, upon his retirement, became a board member of the Pitlochry Festival Theatre, and a chair of the Traverse Theatre who was also a director of Scottish Actors' Studio had to vacate these posts upon taking the chair of the drama committee in 1999. Peer group assessment probably worked well in the 1960s when there was more money to be granted in proportion to the total sums requested from the repertory companies. By 2000, there was more reason for alarm: with the irreducible demands of more theatres, projects and touring companies, the system is now cutthroat, imperilled by public accusations of cliquish conservatism or sectional avant-gardism.

<sup>23</sup> Moultrie R. Kelsall, 'The Last Five', in A. D. Mackie et al., *The Twelve Seasons of the Edinburgh Gateway Company*, Edinburgh, St. Giles Press, pp. 34 and 39.

<sup>24</sup> David Keir, (ed.), *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. Vol. XV: The City of Edinburgh*, op.cit, p.295.

<sup>25</sup> John Neville, et al., *Nottingham Playhouse 1963-1968*, Nottingham, Nottingham Theatre Trust Limited, 1968, p.37 and G.R. Hibbard, *The Neville Affair: The Facts*, Nottingham, Nottingham Playhouse Action Group, p.3. (Hibbard's booklet is a fascinating commentary on a high-profile rupture between artistic director John Neville (1925- ), the board of Nottingham Playhouse and the Arts Council of Great Britain).

<sup>26</sup> *The National Theatre: Some Facts and Figures 1963/67*, London, National Theatre Board Limited, 1967, unpaginated, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> Arts Council of Great Britain, *Policy into Practice: 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 1964-65*, op.cit, p.93.

<sup>28</sup> *A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps*, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, February 1965, Cmnd.2601.

<sup>29</sup> Before 1993, when the Scottish Arts Council was devolved to the Scottish Office, these annual allocations represented 10.45 per cent of the government allocation to the Arts Council of Great Britain, a calculation

derived from the 'Barnett-Goschen formula' for allocating Westminster public expenditure to Scotland and Wales. Often, the SAC amount was less than the formula, because the parent arts council hived-off sums for special projects to benefit the whole United Kingdom.

<sup>30</sup> Allocations in this first column were extracted from a Britain-wide chart in Eric W. White, *The Arts Council of Great Britain*, op.cit, p.311. The sum for 1976-1977 – the last year preceding establishment of The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited – is quoted in 'Income and Expenditure Account', Arts Council of Great Britain, *Thirty-second annual report and accounts*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1977, p.47.

<sup>31</sup> Arts Council of Great Britain, *Policy into Practice: 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 1964-65*, op.cit, p.118.

<sup>32</sup> Haldane, Brown & Co., *Statement of Accounts for the period from 1 April 1966 to 1 April 1967*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, 16 May 1967, p.8.

<sup>33</sup> 'Scotland', in Arts Council of Great Britain, *22nd Annual Report and Accounts, 1966-67*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1967, p.105.

<sup>34</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report and Accounts 1999-2000*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, pp.2 and 18.

<sup>35</sup> Arts Council of Great Britain, *Twenty second annual report and accounts, year ended 31 March 1967*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, p.35.

<sup>36</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Theatre in Scotland*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1970, p.12.

<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Sweeting was general manager of Meadow Players and Oxford Playhouse (1959-1961), then administrator of Oxford Playhouse as the University Theatre (1961-1976). She wrote several books and academic papers on subsidised theatre organisation (notably *Theatre Administration*, London, Pitman, 1969) and, like Reginald Salberg, general manager of Salisbury Playhouse (1955-1977) and Hazel Vincent Wallace, managing director of the Thorndike Theatre, Leatherhead (1951-1980), Sweeting was an originator of modern theatre administration. Each of these managers was instrumental in training theatre administrators who went on to senior positions in other companies but who, usually, fled the repertory movement for a career in the arts councils and the English regional arts associations. Leatherhead, unlike the tightly run Oxford and Salisbury theatres, was the first repertory to burst at the seams, congested by a glut of junior bureaucrats. It liquidated in 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Hugh Willatt, et al, *Training Arts Administrators: Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Arts Administration Training*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1971, p.11.

<sup>39</sup> AMTIS is now the Unit for the Study of Cultural Administration at the University of Edinburgh.

<sup>40</sup> The points in this paragraph were suggested to me in interviews with the theatre manager Elizabeth Sweeting and the chartered accountant Robert Breckman.

<sup>41</sup> Moultrie R. Kelsall, 'The Last Five', in A. D. Mackie et al., *The Twelve Seasons of the Edinburgh Gateway Company*, op. cit., p.40.

<sup>42</sup> Lindsay, Jamieson and Haldane, et al, *Gateway Theatre Company Limited, Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending 31 March 1960*, Edinburgh, 4 September 1960. Total expenditure for this year was £43,944 (£568,195).

<sup>43</sup> Ivor Brown, 'Birth and Growth', in *Edinburgh Festival: A Review of the First Ten Years 1947-1956*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Society, 1957, p.14.

<sup>44</sup> This translation was written for a student drama society at St Andrews University and staged at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The professional premiere became a cause célèbre, eliciting 'mixed' reviews, such as 'an interesting bridging of the gulf between ancient Greece and modern Scotland' (The Sunday Times), 'a disastrous compromise between the demands of internationalism and the home market' (The Observer) and 'I had hoped for more than a carnival to celebrate the fact that Edinburgh had a civic theatre company... a sense of pride that Edinburgh could reach such heights' (The Scotsman). Frankishly, the translator collated these hilarious positives and negatives with commentary. See Douglas Young, *Scots burds and Edinburgh reviewers. A Case study in theatre critics and their contradictions in regard to the first International Festival production by Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum Company*, Edinburgh, M. Macdonald, 1966.

<sup>45</sup> In this summarised version of annual accounts, I have harmonised categories of income and expenditure as consistently as practical to those used elsewhere in this study, so as to conform as far as possible with current subsidised theatre accounting. See Lindsay, Jamieson and Haldane, *Operating Accounts for the Period 21 January 1965 to 31 March 1966*, Edinburgh, 20 July 1966, pp. 4-5

- <sup>46</sup> *Who's Who in Scotland 1999*, Irvine, Carrick Media, 1999, p.424.
- <sup>47</sup> For an overview of organisation at the Castle Theatre and the early career of the repertory director Joan Knight, see 'A Woman Artistic Director' in Joan Llewelyn Owens, *Working in The Theatre*, London, The Bodley Head, 1964, pp. 21-25.
- <sup>48</sup> William Archer and H. Granville Barker, *A National Theatre, Scheme and Estimates*, op.cit, p.13.
- <sup>49</sup> For analysis and further discussion of the progress of new writing at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, especially problems of classification, see Ian Brown, 'The Royal Lyceum Theatre and the programming of new writing, 1966-1979: the impact of second and visiting productions', *International Journal of Scottish Theatre*, Edinburgh, Queen Margaret University College, Forthcoming, 2002.
- <sup>50</sup> In a partnership with Equity, the Arts Councils, English Regional Arts Associations, drama schools and independent television companies, CORT formed a non-profit company for the event (17 September to 13 October 1973). The Royal Lyceum contributions were *Much Ado About Nothing* (William Shakespeare, 1610) and *Mary Queen of Scots* (Ian Brown, 1973, world premiere). See Vin Harrop (ed.), *The Festival of British Theatre*, Colchester, Festival of British Theatre on behalf of the Council of Regional Theatre, 1973, pp.18-19.
- <sup>51</sup> Arthur Young McClelland Moores & Co., *Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, Statement of Accounts for the period from 26 March 1972 to 31 March 1973*, Edinburgh, 28 May 1973, p.7.
- <sup>52</sup> G.W. Bishop, *Barry Jackson and the London Theatre*, London, Arthur Barker, 1933, pp. 151-205.
- <sup>53</sup> For synchronous discussion of this topic, see Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Theatre Today in England and Wales: The Report of the Arts Council Theatre Enquiry, 1970*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1970, p.31.
- <sup>54</sup> Philip Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre and the Modern Stage*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 154.
- <sup>55</sup> Clive Perry, *Report by the Director of Theatres to the Annual General Meeting*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, 22 June 1973, p.2.
- <sup>56</sup> Dominic Shellard, *British Theatre Since The War*, London and New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997, p.87, notes that although the Belgrade Theatre team set the form for Edinburgh – as well as similar groups in Leeds and Bolton – the first in the field were the Pear Tree Players (1945) led by Peter Slade, Tom Clarke's Compass Players (1944-1952), Caryl Jenner's England Children's Theatre and Unicorn Theatre, from 1948 and Theatre Centre, London from 1954. The latter was founded by Brian Way and is the only one of these to survive today. In Scotland, the first professional theatre for children was Bertha Waddell's Children's Theatre (1927). TIE was revived in Glasgow, where the former Citizens' Theatre for Youth was re-born as TAG in 1967. Two other TIE teams of similar vintage were unwedded to repertory theatres: Theatremakers at the MacRobert Arts Centre, Stirling and TIE-Up in Inverness. The Highland team, that lasted only three years to 1978, was a trial run for adult repertory at the new Eden Court Theatre (built 1976). For more detailed discussion of a once upstanding practice, see Tony Jackson, 'Education or theatre? The development of TIE in Britain', in Tony Jackson (ed.), *Learning Through Theatre: New perspectives on theatre in education*, London, Routledge, 1993, pp. 17-38 and Tony Coult, 'Theatre-in-Education', in Sandy Craig, (ed.), *Dreams and Deconstructions. Alternative theatre in Britain*, Ambergate, Amber Lane Press, 1980, pp. 76-85. For the funding authority perspectives at the time of the Royal Lyceum TIE, see Hugh Willatt, et al, *The Provision of Theatre for Young People in Great Britain*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1966. For the most telling historical perspective of the subject, up to the time of contemporary theatre in education companies, see 'The Children's Theatre' in Philip A Coggin, *Drama and Education, An Historical survey from Ancient Greece to the present day*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1956, pp. 260-271.
- <sup>57</sup> 'Theatre in Education', *Report of the Director to the Annual General Meeting*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, 19 June 1970, p.4.
- <sup>58</sup> Arthur Young McClelland Moores & Co., *Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, Statement of Accounts for the period from 26 March 1973 to 31 March 1974*, p.5.
- <sup>59</sup> 'Theatre in Education', *Report of the Director to the Annual General Meeting*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, 23 June 1972, p.6.
- <sup>60</sup> The 1995 *Staff Organisation Chart* is reproduced in Chapter Seven (Box 7.12).
- <sup>61</sup> Richard Eyre and Nicholas Wright, *Changing Stages. A View of the British Theatre in the Twentieth Century*, London, Bloomsbury, 2000, p.378.

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<sup>62</sup> Arthur Young McClelland Moores & Co, *Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, King's Theatre Revenue Account for the Year to 30 March 1974*, Edinburgh, 30 May 1974, p.4. The accounts show King's Theatre details as a separable 'department' and, for the purposes of this study about the *repertory* company, I have excluded them from all summaries and charts of Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited.

<sup>63</sup> Arthur Young McClelland Moores & Co, *Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, King's Theatre Revenue Account for the Year to 29 March 1975*, Edinburgh, 8 June 1975, p.2.

<sup>64</sup> Arthur Young McClelland Moores & Co, *Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust Limited, King's Theatre Revenue Account for the Year to 27 March 1976*, Edinburgh, 2 July 1976, p.5.

<sup>65</sup> Arthur Young McClelland Moores & Co, *Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust Limited, King's Theatre Revenue Account for the Year to 31 May 1977*, Edinburgh, 31 August 1977, p.2.

<sup>66</sup> These examples of mergers exclude the residency that a touring repertory theatre might have with a touring house, as when the Meadow Players Limited was closely associated with the Oxford Playhouse from 1956 to 1971, Candida Plays Limited with the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds from 1965 or Cambridge Theatre Company Limited's association with the Arts Theatre of Cambridge from 1970. However, these companies (that are no more), kept their organisational distance as separate entities, as is also the case in opera and ballet where Opera North resides *in* the Leeds Grand Theatre or Birmingham Royal Ballet *in* the Birmingham Hippodrome. In each instance, the repertory company and the theatre espoused, at the outset, the centralising of certain management, production and marketing functions, but perhaps because the theatres promote other attractions that compete with seasons of the 'resident' company — and negotiate over rent and standing charges — the parties often come to see themselves as competitors and are hung-up about the sharing of services.

<sup>67</sup> See for instance Scottish Arts Council, *Options for Expansion of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 7 July 1972.

<sup>68</sup> Clive Perry, *Report by the Director of Theatres to the Annual General Meeting*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, 21 June 1974, pp.1-2.

<sup>69</sup> Clive Perry, *Report by the Director of Theatres to the Annual General Meeting*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited, 21 June 1974, p.3.

<sup>70</sup> Source: Annual Accounts of the Companies, 31 March 1966-31 March 1977.

<sup>71</sup> John Miller and Jack Kane, *Report of the Directors to the Annual General Meeting*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust Limited, 30 June 1975, p.2.

## THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED 1977-2000

### A SURVEY OF POLICY, MANAGEMENT, PLAYS AND FINANCES

In order to facilitate discussion of the more tortuous progress of the second non-profit company – especially the conditions that caused it to be overloaded with administration – this chapter takes the form of a 23-year almanac. This charts the real-life interplay between the new board, management, artists and staff and the external ‘stakeholders’, and is composed mainly from primary sources such as the company minute books, accounts and correspondence, together with secondary sources such as Scottish Arts Council reports.



*14. The second logo of The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh*

**1977**

Shadow board meets in December 1976, formed to take over drama production from the Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust Limited at the Royal Lyceum Theatre and Little Lyceum Theatre. Henceforward, King's Theatre, a touring theatre, to be managed by the City of Edinburgh District Council (EDC), the new local authority formed in 1975 within two-tier local government system with Lothian Regional Council (LRC). Old trust ceases trading, leaving deficit of £7,039 (£33,506) funded by local authorities.<sup>1</sup> Non-profit distributing company, limited by guarantee, incorporated, with writer and broadcaster Ludovic Kennedy as chairman of twelve-member board.<sup>2</sup> Depute chairman, Sheriff Robert Reid. Only one director of old company – EDC nominee Councillor George McNeill – on new board, after changeover. At first, all EDC nominees Conservative, all LRC nominees Labour. Without advertisement and formal recruitment process, actor, director and playwright Stephen MacDonald (1933- ), previously artistic director Dundee Rep (1972-1976) and Leicester Phoenix Theatre (1971-1972), appointed artistic director in late 1976, transferring engagement – with other employees – from Trust to new company. Had worked as guest

director with company in 1974 - *Ghosts* (Henrik Ibsen, 1881) and 1975 - *A Month in the Country* (Ivan Turgenev, 1850). 25 actors on contract for entire first season.<sup>3</sup>



*15. The third artistic director, Stephen MacDonald*

Organisation and company personnel at the studio theatre in Cambridge Street – previously known as Young Lyceum [and whose last resident director (1974-1976) was (George) Ian (Kenneth) Ireland (1945- ) became, from 1993, artistic director of the Royal Lyceum] – integrate with main house. MacDonald makes ‘no distinction between actors old and young, junior or senior’, writing in programmes that ‘while a discriminating audience will always go to what appeals to them, we hope no-one will feel excluded on the grounds of youth or age’. MacDonald describes Little Lyceum Theatre as space for ‘presenting plays that will benefit from the intimacy of a smaller auditorium or plays that would be inappropriately expensive on the larger stage of the Royal Lyceum’. Further enunciation of play-choices for studio theatre:

- (a) To get closer to some familiar classical plays that have previously seemed remote.
- (b) To give an opportunity to see more of the more successful recent work of the major contemporary writers.
- (c) To discover and assist in the development of new and known writers by presenting their work. No writer will be excluded on the grounds of nationality, but at the same time a theatre has a particular duty to its own country.<sup>4</sup>

Board presupposes imminent role as a national theatre for Scotland, by appointing members from outwith Edinburgh, but Scottish Arts Council (SAC) and its departing drama director, John Faulkner (1941- ), are reticent, advising that touring must demonstrate the company’s potential over several years.<sup>5</sup> Company in receipt of fourth largest SAC grant, after Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet and Scottish National Orchestra, receiving 5.5 per cent of SAC budget allocation. Anthony Wraight (1934- ) appointed SAC drama director (to 1981). Company inherits no accumulated deficit, but Board requires management to amend first budget, pitched £150,000 (£714,000) adrift from breakeven.<sup>6</sup>

No Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) production, despite several



suggestions to director Peter Diamand (1913-1999), who invites two English repertory companies, Nottingham Playhouse (then directed by Richard Eyre, former Royal Lyceum director of productions) and Forum Theatre, Billingham to the Lyceum Theatre. Terms of lease bind company to sub-let Lyceum to EIF, if so required, for four weeks each August-September, but no arrangements for rental income or recovery of overheads: only Edinburgh venue used by EIF not to benefit financially. Iniquitous arrangement contributes to deficits for several years. Negotiation of lease for operating Little Lyceum Theatre; board demurs then yields to including studio productions in Fringe advertising. Andrew Porter (1948- ) appointed administrative director (styled general administrator from 1978). Lyceum closed for six months for refurbishments, including EDC managed architecturally insensitive powder-blue-and-gold auditorium decorations by Clare Ferraby. Company continues productions at Little Lyceum during main house closure. Potential box-office income reduced by permanent closure of gallery and reconfiguration of stalls for comfort: seating capacity now 905 (1883: 2,265, 1933: 2,157, 1965:1,674, 1971: 1,292). Compatible relations with Lyceum Theatre Club restored, with board member Dr Roger Savage (1935- ) appointed to committee.<sup>7</sup> Annual club subscription £1 (50p senior citizens and students).

Company protests to EDC on its decision to lease whole of Castle Terrace site for commercial development, thereby excluding 40-foot expansion potential for Lyceum stage-house and necessitating future demolition of the Little Lyceum Theatre in Cambridge Street. EDC advertise for buyer and *Evening News* sponsor 'advertorial' campaign in favour of Company's protests and re-launch season. Company actors and supporters demonstrate peacefully at City Chambers. Chairman Kennedy thanks the public for objecting 'to this short-sighted, misguided and both economically and artistically wrong [EDC] decision', saying that the Company regards the 'reservation of less than 10 per cent of [the site] for [our] needs to be essential for the future of the Company but also the cultural development of Edinburgh'.<sup>8</sup> SAC says 'Viewed in the context of thirty years' progress of the arts in Edinburgh, the [EDC] decision is quite astonishing. It raises great doubts about their intentions for the arts'.<sup>9</sup> Episode exposes the first conflicts of interest for four EDC nominee board members, with Kennedy advising the board 'to stand by its statement, but individually to say what they felt about the situation'.<sup>10</sup>

*The Servant O' Twa Maisters* revived at the Assembly Hall: loss of £22,000 (£104,750) caused by low attendance and unpredicted obligation for costs of converting locale to temporary theatre – production expenditure within £300 of budget.<sup>11</sup> Finance committee established, chaired by Councillor Donald Gorrie (1933- ) – Liberal – also vice-chairman of board. Company declines invitation to produce annual pantomime at the King's Theatre. At actors' request, artistic director aborts gala play during rehearsals, *The Fated Fête* (Ian Brown, 1977, after Molière's *Impromptu at Versailles*, 1663) as 'not up to standard'.<sup>12</sup> Balance of shorter evening, *Diary of a Scoundrel*, left intact but high-priced opening gala performance in presence of HRH Princess Margaret loses £900 (£4,250) and MacDonald vows never to schedule commissioned or unwritten plays before completion. Short duration replaced with insertion of additional songs during ball scene. At re-opening, chairman makes curtain speech, in high hopes of company becoming a national theatre. Careful of local government reorganisation, SAC publish new



strategy for alliance with councils, including vindication of 'the seven professional repertory companies... whose work amounts to an achievement which, it is safe to say, well justifies the investment and rationale'.<sup>13</sup>

*Drama in Scottish Schools* report published in wake of several collapsed TIE companies, recommending that all children should experience theatre. Company shelves predecessors' desire to resuscitate in-house TIE.<sup>14</sup>

Assembly Hall at The Mound production - *The Servant O' Twa Maisters* (Carlo Goldoni, 1745, adapt. Victor Carin, 1965, for the Clan Gathering, later revived in main house).

Main house productions – MacDonald's tenure begins late 1976: *The Royal Visit* (Hector Macmillan, 1974), *Peer Gynt* (Henrik Ibsen, 1976, trans. Michael Meyer, 1959), *The Anatomist* (James Bridie, 1930). Royal Lyceum Theatre closes for nine months' during refurbishment, re-opening September 1977: *Diary of a Scoundrel* (Aleksandr Ostrovsky, 1868, adapt. Stephen MacDonald, 1977), *The Cherry Orchard* (Anton Chekhov, 1904, trans. Ronald Hingley, 1976), *Juno and the Paycock* (Seán O'Casey, 1924), Two Christmas productions in repertoire: *The Wizard of Oz*, (L. Frank Baum, Paul Tietjens and A. Baldwin Sloane, 1903, version by Robert Robertson, 1977) and *How the Other Half Loves* (Alan Ayckbourn, 1970).

Little Lyceum Theatre productions – MacDonald's first season begins late 1976, studio productions presented uninterruptedly until March 1977 by previous Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust management: *The Doctor and the Devils* (Dylan Thomas and Donald Taylor, 1953) and, for Christmas season into 1977, *The Rose and the Ring* (William Makepeace Thackeray, 1855, adapt. John Dalby, 1976), *These Were My Means* (Jim Tyrell, world premiere), *Any Horse Looks Fast Going By Trees* (John Hall, world premiere), *A Provincial Lady* and *A Poor Gentleman* (Ivan Turgenev, 1841 and 1850, trans. Constance Garnett, adapt. Stephen MacDonald, 1977) *Old Times* (Harold Pinter, 1971), *A Fistful of East End* (Howard Purdie, world premiere), *The Playboy of the Western World* (John Millington Synge, 1907, also toured to Glasgow Theatre Royal – instance of small-scale transfer to big theatre), *Corporal Gemmel* (John Haggerty, world premiere, tour-in from Dundee Rep), *Play Donkey* (Stewart Conn, world premiere), *False Confessions* (Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux, 1737, trans. Oscar Mandel, 1977), *Mary* (Ian Brown, world premiere), *Philipp Hotz's Fury* (Max Frisch, 1958 trans. Michael Bullock, 1977, Queen Margaret College production), *Navigator in the Seventh Circle* (Leonard Maguire, world premiere), *The Comedy of Errors* (William Shakespeare, c.1592), *Tobias and the Angel* (James Bridie, 1932).

First financial year, to 31 March 1978: Box-office receipts total £96,173 [amounts quoted in this chapter are net of value added tax, except individual ticket prices]. Other earned income of £4,125. 105,742 seats sold.<sup>15</sup> (88,676 own productions; 17,066 visiting companies). SAC grants total £212,248 - £200,000 (main, 9% decrease on final grant to Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust) plus guarantee against loss £10,000 (claimed) and project grants £2,248; LRC grants total £156,689 - £150,000 main, schools tour grant of £5,940 and ticket discount rebate grant of £749. (Final year combined local authority grants to previous Trust were £165,940 – being

LRC £85,940, plus EDC £80,000). Net deficit of £41,982, being 8% of turnover. Subsidies, that total £368,937 – and were £17,055 (4%) less than predecessor company – account for 79% of turnover, earned income ratio of 21%.<sup>16</sup>

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1978

Following inferential press comment, chairman seeks board opinion on artistic director's decision to cast Moira Shearer – Kennedy's wife and the former ballerina turned actress – in *Hay Fever*: advised no conflict of interest.<sup>17</sup> Charitable status conferred on Company, entailing withdrawal of occasional Company actor James Cairncross from membership of unremunerated board.<sup>18</sup> LRC supplement annual grant with £20,000 (£95,000) towards Company pension scheme, although only £8,830 expended for purpose, this year.<sup>19</sup> Theatres Trust (Scotland) Act passed, prohibiting demolition of theatres unless replaced: board considers leverage, allied to threats against Little Lyceum Theatre. Board predicts political disputations with EDC and hotel developer, after staging new play about chaotic student domestic life, with nudity: *The Brink* (Atholl Hay, 1978).

Board concern at low-price of tickets, against repertory theatres in Bristol, Birmingham and Nottingham, although half-price previews and first nights do result in capacity houses. New ticket prices of £2.50, £1.50, and £1.00 – with 50p reduction off each price for concessions (students, school children, pensioners and theatre club members) except on Friday and Saturday nights. Board defensive about posting a deficit on first trading year – move to deflect funders' opprobrium by capitalising stocks and equipment and treating *The Servant O' Twa Maisters* as separable loss at Assembly Hall within ruinous Clan Gathering. Programmes had lost money: board insist they be profitable from now on. Artistic director silhouettes future role for a resident playwright and dramaturge. Later, Tom Gallacher (1932-2001) appointed writer-in-residence. Artistic director elected vice-chairman of the Federation of Scottish Theatre. Board beseech MacDonald to 'see more productions in other theatres, especially in London's West End'.<sup>20</sup> SAC project grant to purchase a van.

28 actors on contract for second season, but discussion of reducing output by shortening seasons with visiting companies, 'better than the poor quality tours the EDC were bringing in to the King's Theatre'<sup>21</sup> balanced with longer runs from profitable touring, especially 'an assault on the massive Glasgow audience'.<sup>22</sup> Board argues to SAC and EDC that redevelopment of the Lyceum stage-house and replacement studio theatre should precede EDC plans for renovating King's Theatre. EDC refuses discretionary 50 per cent rate relief, now customary for charity-registered theatres elsewhere. Head of design appointed, in part to restrain guest-designers' ambitions and rising production costs. MacDonald combines Turkish holiday with lectures at Istanbul and Bosphorous Universities, receiving undecipherable telegram about board dissatisfaction with his work.<sup>23</sup> Upon return, MacDonald tells board he will direct one more season and leave in May 1979.<sup>24</sup> Board delighted that he acts in *Otherwise Engaged*, 'feeling very strongly that he should be paid extra for it'<sup>25</sup> as he is contracted to *direct* no less than five productions annually. Artistic director search committee appointed and post advertised: six candidates interviewed, with board requiring embodiment of

'diplomat, politician, director and accountant'.<sup>26</sup> Short leet: Ewan Hooper (1935- ), director of Greenwich Theatre and Leslie Lawton (1942- ), artistic director of Liverpool Playhouse since 1975. Lawton, whose policy is favoured as the 'more traditional and cosmopolitan',<sup>27</sup> engaged. Later, Hooper appointed artistic director of the short-lived Scottish Theatre Company between 1980 and 1982, successor to Scottish Actors Company, 1970-1973.<sup>28</sup> Company hosts several productions from this aspirant national theatre, a company that skews Lyceum's own desire for elevated status.

Attempt to raise £100,000 (£476,000) capital loan, for purchase of alternative production workshops, fails – explained by lack of collateral, unsafe prospects and non-profit status. CORT merges with TMA and Association of Touring and Producing Managers (ATPM) hastening actors' weekly wages increase, in the company, by 40 per cent to £55 and £50. SAC report prognosticates option of Royal Lyceum assistance to Aberdeen District Council, as handmaiden for the establishment of professional repertory based in proposed new drama theatre adjacent to His Majesty's Theatre.<sup>29</sup>



16. The fourth artistic director, Leslie Lawton

Main house productions – *The Daughter-in-Law* (D.H.Lawrence, 1912), *Hay Fever* (Noël Coward, 1925), *As You Like It* (William Shakespeare, c.1598-1600), *Revival!* (Tom Gallacher, 1975), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Tom Stoppard, 1966), *The Cherry Orchard* (Anton Chekhov, 1904, revival of 1977 production, also toured to Aberdeen and Glasgow), *Deacon Brodie, or a Double Life* (Tom Gallacher 1978, after R.L. Stevenson and W.E.Henley, 1886), *Otherwise Engaged* (Simon Gray, 1975), *Charley's Aunt* (Brandon Thomas, 1892).

Little Lyceum Theatre productions – *Billy Budd* (Herman Melville, 1888-1891, pub.1924, adapt. Stewart Conn and Stephen MacDonald, 1978 - also toured to 35 schools), *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Edgar Allan Poe, 1845, adapt. Steven Berkoff, 1974: in association with the London Theatre Group), *The Brink* (Atholl Hay, world premiere), *Hedda Gabler* (Henrik Ibsen, 1890, trans. Christopher Hampton, 1970), *Danny Boy* (John Sutherland, 1978, tour-in from Dundee Rep), *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (Joe Orton, 1964), Three plays about young kings in repertoire: *Edward II* (Christopher Marlowe, 1593), *All Ayre and Fire* (Stephen MacDonald and the company, 1978), *The Burning* (Stewart Conn, 1971). *Bingo: Scenes of Money and Death* (Edward Bond, 1974), solo productions: Tom Fleming as *William Soutar* (William Soutar poetry 1898-1943), Tom Fleming in *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (Hugh MacDiarmid, 1926). *A Mackintosh Experience* (John Cairney et al., after Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1978). *Kipling's Jungle Book* (Stephen MacDonald, 1978, after Rudyard Kipling,

Year to 31 March 1979: Box-office receipts total £80,733. Other earned income of £16,446. 101,223 seats sold.<sup>30</sup> (96,362 own productions; 1,211 visiting companies; 1,211 touring). SAC grants total £292,944 - £250,000 (main) plus two guarantees against loss claimed, £40,985 and project grants £1,959; LRC grants total £171,802 - £162,000, project grants of £9,412 and ticket discount rebate grant of £390. First year deficit eliminated, with surplus of £25,257 being 4% of turnover: nil balance to carry forward. Subsidies, that total £464,746, account for 89% of turnover, earned income ratio of 11%.<sup>31</sup>

## 1979

Board congratulates MacDonald on creditable final season, faulting low attendance on uninspiring posters and diminished press advertising.<sup>32</sup> MacDonald declines invitation to attend farewell reception with LRC: leaves amicably without public occasion, [not returning to Lyceum until 1994, as actor in *Mongrel's Heart*].

EDC warns company of demolition of Little Lyceum Theatre in September. £60,000 (£146,400) public appeal begun for replacement, with The Guthrie Theatre favoured substitute. After enquiry, other potential studio spaces, St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Meadowbank Sports Centre and Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh, considered inexpedient. Leslie Lawton endorses studio theatre as linchpin of artistic policy and contests, contrary to board's opinion, that the company is 'over-staffed, and that there [are] too many open-ended contracts'.<sup>33</sup> Takes up appointment from May, hastily telling board of desire to part company with manager Andrew Porter, who leaves in October. In advance of Lawton's arrival, associate director Mark Pyper (1949- ) resigns. Adrian Secchi, musical adviser, dismissed with out-of-court settlement.<sup>34</sup> Kennedy relinquishes chair of artistic sub-committee, to the theatrically knowledgeable Peter Potter (1919-1980), formerly director of the Salisbury Arts Theatre, Citizens' Theatre (1951), Gateway Theatre and resident producer at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Lawton describes his first play choices as 'a vehemently commercial, glamorous season',<sup>35</sup> and that he had directed six out of seven choices before, but that absence of Scottish work to be evaluated in 1980. Artistic sub-committee urges Lawton to extend Tom Gallacher's contract through 1980 but with fewer Scottish plays performed, he compiles programme notes in addition to playwright liaison. Board searches for 'a tycoon' to assist in sponsor quest and establishes sponsorship sub-committee, chaired by Kennedy - work includes entertaining business leaders at performances.

SAC awards retrospective 'deficit grant' of £19,000 for 'good management'.<sup>36</sup> Two councillor-board members claim, in *The Scotsman*, that company 'does not deserve so much subsidy from EDC' and that 'LRC should now be able to progressively reduce the Lyceum grant'.<sup>37</sup> SAC writes complaint to Councillors Gilchrist (Conservative) and McNeill (Conservative). Board aspires to lengthen planning cycle from one year to eighteen months. In a year of 18 per cent inflation, top ticket prices hiked 25p to £1.75 (17%) and £1.25 (25%) but one month later, Company loses most potential benefit when VAT increased to 15%.<sup>38</sup> Season brochures revamped to emulate Birmingham Rep, with 250,000 copies printed, including 60,000-blanket distribution to Edinburgh homes.<sup>39</sup> Company and

Federation of Scottish Theatre initiate first 'open doors' week, when public invited to see backstage, coincident with campaign for higher subsidy to repertory theatres, to which company subscribes £200 (£500). Lawton spurns bad press reviews as dissimilar to 'theatre-goer rapture'.<sup>40</sup> Board requests receipt of all future press critiques. Kennedy reproves councillor-colleagues for intermittent playgoing, especially for leaving seats empty after accepting invitations to first nights.<sup>41</sup> Controversial new play about a solicitor-general for Scotland, scheduled for Spring 1980, cancelled: *The Case of David Anderson QC* (John Hale, 1980). Despite dramatic merit, company demands rewrites, for fear of defamation action. [Traverse Theatre stages the play instead, November 1980].<sup>42</sup>

Potential for collaboration and co-production with Dundee Rep increases when Dundee opens first purpose-built, permanent repertory theatre in Scotland. Referendum for Scottish Devolution favoured by majority at low-poll turnout but disallowed by Westminster. New Conservative government under Thatcher: precursory to 'enterprise culture' allied to new 'managerialism' contaminating all areas of the Welfare State with presumptions of self-dependency and stricter controls over central expenditure and, especially, the capping of local government costs, as well as grants to the subsidised theatre. Year marks start of creative ascent of many energetic small-scale Scottish touring companies, as well as opening of Brunton Theatre Company, Musselburgh in refurbished 1971 civic theatre, six miles from Edinburgh. Potential for Lyceum collaborations – and cutthroat competition for SAC subsidies.

Main house productions – *Dr Angelus* (James Bridie, 1947), *An Enemy of the People* (Henrik Ibsen, 1882, trans. and adapt. Tom Gallacher, 1979). Start of Lawton tenure: *Side by Side by Sondheim* (based on Stephen Sondheim et al., 1976), *Bedroom Farce* (Alan Ayckbourn, 1977), *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* (Eduardo de Filippo, trans. Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, 1973), *Abigail's Party* (Mike Leigh, 1977), *Cabaret* (Joe Masteroff, Fred Ebb and John Kander after John van Druten and Christopher Isherwood, 1966).

Little Lyceum Theatre productions – *Wha's Like Us – Fortunately!* (Tom Gallacher, 1978, tour-in from Dundee Rep), *The Northern Echo* (W. Gordon Smith, 1978), *'Barrie': The Peter Pan Man* (Jon Plowman, world premiere) with *The Twelve Pound Look*, (J.M. Barrie, 1910), *Crime and Punishment* (Alan Brown, 1979, after F.D. Dostoyevsky, 1866), *The Tempest* (William Shakespeare, 1611 – final production of MacDonald tenure). Under Lawton artistic directorship: *Cold Storage* (Ronald Ribman, 1976), *Flying Blind* (Bill Morrison, 1978), *The Glass Menagerie* (Tennessee Williams, 1945), *A Prayer for My Daughter* (Thomas Bate, 1829).

Year to 31 March 1980: Box Office receipts soar 73% to £140,063. Other earned income of £23,011. 122,778 seats sold.<sup>43</sup> (99,002 own productions; 23,776 visiting productions). SAC grants total £243,480 - £225,000 (main) plus guarantee against loss claimed, £16,626 (out of £45,000 offered) and project grants £1,854; LRC grants total £156,589 - £151,000, project grants of £5,589. Small surplus of £2,445. Subsidies, that total £400,069, account for 71% of turnover, earned income ratio of 29%.<sup>44</sup>



artistic director.<sup>45</sup> EDC increases theatre rent – said by SAC to be an untypical arrangement in other subsidised theatres – to £21,600 (£52,700). Additional office rental of £3,175 (£7,750) and £18,000 (£43,900) for Roseburn production workshops (on lease to 1997). 6 full-time stage, front of house and box-office staffs – plus part-time employees – still employed by landlord, as in the custom of a touring theatre, limiting company influence on theatregoer-care and causing degree of staff duplication on stage and front-of-house - and expense, such as commission on programme sales. Board authorises Leslie Lawton to visit North America to investigate actor exchanges and touring. Articles of Association amended to appoint nominee Directors from EDC: frequency of sub-committees increased, in order that politically sensitive theatrical business is unseen by councillors.

34 seats with restricted view now excluded from house capacity calculations. In view of expected operating surpluses, councillors on board intimate that District Council will seek four-fold rent increase to £86,000 (£209,840), but other Directors argue, at deputation, that this would thwart expansion of artistic activities. Little Lyceum Theatre threatened, again, with demolition by Hilton Hotel development. Company attempts but fails to raise interest-free loan of £70,000 (£170,800) to convert the Guthrie Theatre (rehearsal room within Grindlay Street offices, the former Heriot-Watt University Union) as a studio space: bank wary of non-profit status. Company urges developer to include small theatre in hotel basement. EDC inform company that they are under no obligation to replace Little Lyceum Theatre and that priority is for refurbishing the King's Theatre. Seat prices raised by 50p to £3.50, £2.50 and £2.00.

An artistic sub-committee – six board members including Councillor Moira Knox (Conservative), plus writer-in-residence Tom Gallagher – reconstituted to vet artistic director play nominations to the full board. Finance Committee continues positive vetting of production budgets, as well as monitoring overall estimates and progress statements. Friction with John Drummond (1934- ), Director of EIF, who informs board of no 'moral obligation to include the company in the festival, but will consider production proposals on their merits'.<sup>46</sup> [Company defenceless because EIF rent Royal Lyceum Theatre long-term for August, thus controlling play choice]. Board resolves to take legal action against Cordelia Oliver for feature in *Plays and Players* denouncing Lyceum audiences as 'elderly aunts', implying that 'fair means or foul' were used to woo theatregoers, that artistic director Stephen MacDonald had been sacked and that the company had closed in the summer because the festival would not consider a production. Claim in vain, because *Plays and Players* publisher goes into liquidation, re-appearing under new publisher in 1982. Thefts of petty cash and costumes worth £5,000 (£12,250). SAC assign writer-in-residence subsidy to other project schemes, withdrawing designated grant scheme of £4,000 (£9,760). Panel of schoolteachers formed, to promote reduced priced tickets (60p) and talks ('Upstage'). Corporate sponsorship committee inducted. Payroll costs total £293,938 (£717,250), of which 50 per cent spent on actors and musicians.<sup>47</sup> Even so, full-time staff complement snowballs to 37, of whom 31 on productions to support growing number of plays and sophisticated design budgets; only 6 full-time management staff, including artistic and associate directors and writer-in-residence. Annual



inflation: 18.9%.

Main house productions – Spring season: *The Bed Before Yesterday* (Ben Travers, 1975), *Normal Service* (John Byrne, 1980), *The Power and the Glory* (Dennis Cannan and Pierre Bost, after Graham Greene, 1956), *The Country Wife* (William Wycherley, 1673), *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* (Brian Clark, 1978), *Equus* (Peter Shaffer, 1973, also toured to Aberdeen), *Dial M For Murder* (Frederick Knott, 1952), *While The Sun Shines* (Terence Rattigan, 1943), *Joking Apart* (Alan Ayckbourn, 1978), *Mr Bolfry* (James Bridie, 1943 – also toured to Kirkcaldy, Aberdeen and Glasgow), *Privates on Parade* (Peter Nichols, 1977), *Once A Catholic* (Mary O'Malley, 1977), *Blackfriars Wynd* (Donald Campbell, world premiere), *Guys and Dolls* (Damon Runyon, Frank Loesser, Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows, 1950, also toured to Inverness).

Little Lyceum Theatre productions - *Miss Julie* (August Strindberg, 1888), *Clouds* (Michael Frayn, 1976), *The Quartet* (Ronald Mavor, world premiere), *American Buffalo* (David Mamet, 1977), *The Seal-Wife* (Sue Glover, world premiere), *No Man's Land* (Harold Pinter, 1975), *Shay*, (Ann Commire, 1978), *A Doll's House* (Henrik Ibsen, 1879, trans. Tom Gallacher, 1981), *Bent* (Martin Sherman, 1979), *The Fantasticks* (Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones, 1960).

Year to 31 March 1981: Box-office receipts £228,410. Other earned income of £19,443. 133,928 seats sold.<sup>48</sup> (99,976 own productions; 24,998 visiting productions; 9,074 touring). SAC grants total £307,740 - £289,374 (main, 29% increase) plus guarantee against loss claimed, £7,000, and project grants £11,366; LRC grants total £172,000 - £166,000 main, project grants of £6,000. Net deficit of £50,899, causes accumulated deficit balance of £48,454. Subsidies, that total £479,740 account for 61% of turnover, earned income ratio of 39%.<sup>49</sup>

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## 1981

Donald Campbell (1940- ) writer-in-residence (paid at £5,000 per annum from general budget). Company hosts annual TMA/CORT conference. Death of head of design (a resident post), Alan Greene. Finance committee reports serious variations in publicity budget. District Council back down on theatre rental demands, to 15 per cent increase. Board asks Council to 'gross up' difference as a subsidy-in-kind, in order to attract new SAC 'incentive' subsidy, conditioned by new matching money from local authorities or corporate sponsorship. SAC convey 'reservations about artistic policy' when Company reproaches SAC for grant offer of £300,000 (£654,000). Tony Wraight succeeded by Robert Palmer (1945- ) as drama director of SAC, who attends board meetings. Board request management augment theatre output with lunchtime concerts and play-readings. After SAC request, board introduce concessions for unemployed patrons. The Year of the Disabled: introduction of advertised free tickets for patrons in wheelchairs (four spaces designated). Dian Harker appointed associate director.

Board tells SAC that there is no correlation between good attendance and poor critical response. Policy explained to newspaper editors at reception. SAC asks board to depict artistic policy in a revised statement and warns of

consequences for their grant if ratio of subsidy to earned income exceeds 45 per cent and, further, that they 'had to perform a role of critic when assessing production standards'.<sup>50</sup> Local authorities – EDC and LRC – receive 'Stodart' review, leading to The Government Planning (Scotland) Bill that threatened reduced regional councils' assistance to arts and voluntary organisations. EDC recommends that the company bid for compensating but smaller revenue subsidies from outlying district councils. New staff post of party bookings organiser. Summer season underachievement hastens revised autumn programme.

EDC salutes the prowess of commercial repertory by unveiling a foyer plaque to the memory of Wilson Barrett seasons, whose former company members attend reception to thank them. Board accedes to request from Lyceum Theatre Club for nominee on artistic sub-committee. EDC closes loss-making Aperitif Restaurant at the Lyceum; board considers reopening dining rooms and bars under theatre's management. Granada Television makes the first corporate donation, £1,000 (£2,200). Second sponsorship of £15,000 (£30,150) spread over three years for youth theatre work, from Bank of Scotland. Previously announced Christmas production of *Chicago* (Fred Ebb and Bob Fosse, 1975) postponed. LRC complain that media release blamed their low subsidy: board apologises. Financial situation said to be 'serious': accumulated deficit now £71,018 (£142,750) said to result from LRC shortfall of £67,000 (£140,000). Population of Edinburgh now 443,000, up 10,000 from previous census.

Traverse Theatre becomes founder member of Informal European Theatre Meeting (IETM): association of theatres and festivals formed to encourage networking and new interest in staging international theatre. Royal Lyceum does not join, maintaining repertory theatres' insularity from foreign counterparts.

Main house productions – *Mary Rose*, (J.M. Barrie, 1920), *Habeas Corpus* (Alan Bennett, 1973), *Macbeth* (William Shakespeare, 1610), *Butley* (Simon Gray, 1971), *Private Lives* (Noël Coward, 1930), *Same Time, Next Year* (Bernard Slade, 1976), *Funny Peculiar*, (Mike Stott, 1976), *Capital Offence*, (Hector Macmillan, 1981), *The Doctor's Dilemma* Bernard Shaw, 1906), *Born in the Gardens* (Peter Nicols, 1980), *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Clark Gesner and Charles M. Schulz, 1967), *Absurd Person Singular* (Alan Ayckbourn, 1973).

Heriot-Watt Theatre productions – *Stage-Struck* (Simon Gray, 1979), *Herman* (Stewart Conn, world premiere), *Vikings* (Steve Metcalfe, 1978), *Statements After an Arrest under the Immorality Act* (Athol Fugard, 1972) – these productions played in repertoire, *The Best Man* (Gore Vidal, 1979).

Year to 31 March 1982: Box-office receipts decrease £184,484. Other earned income of £20,714. 111,139 seats sold.<sup>51</sup> (110,184 own productions; 955 visiting productions). SAC grants total £312,007 - £310,000 (main, 7% increase) and project grants £2,007; LRC grants total £121,200 - £116,200 main (a 30% decrease), project grants of £5,000. EDC grant of £5,000; sponsorships of £5,750. Deficit of £22,564, with accumulated deficit now £71,018. Subsidies, that total £438,207, account for 65% of turnover, earned

1982

Year starts with abatement of financial crisis: emergency grants of £5,000 (£10,050) awarded by EDC and LRC, plus £10,000 from SAC. Company then renew plea for 50 per cent rate relief, now costing £8,000 (£16,080). Property owners increase rental of Roseburn production workshops, from £15,000 (£30,150) to £18,000 (£36,200), now leased for twenty years. Company asks EDC to pay increase, who decline. Actors' wages increase by 10 per cent. Board move to freeze other wages and staff protest, accepting 8 per cent. Monday night performances tried with *Tomfoolery* (Derek Killeen's revue based on Tom Lehrer). Death of Peter Sloman, Head of Theatres for EDC.

Chairman Ludovic Kennedy reports 'I am very pleased with standards and audience response, but whenever our artistic standards boom our financial situation goes from bad to worse'.<sup>53</sup> Calton Studios, Edinburgh awarded franchise of restaurant, renamed 'Downstage'. EDC close Leith Theatre, whereupon Edinburgh University Savoy Opera Group approaches company to rent Lyceum. Chairman warns board 'that if we allow amateurs to use the theatre, the image as a professional theatre might be damaged'.<sup>54</sup> Even so, board vote to accept hire. Brian Howard appointed associate director. No EIF production. EDC emphasises need for Lyceum and King's Theatre to minimise competition and clash of play-styles through programming coordination. Company calls for EDC to orchestrate a theatres' strategy. [This was eventually undertaken in 1996].

Artistic director Lawton marries company actor Irena Mayeska. National Westminster Bank award sponsorship of £750 (£1,500). Marks & Spencer sponsor company with £1,000 (£2,180). Public relations officer Helen Murdoch wins Association of Business Sponsorship in the Arts (ABSA) award (£500) for the best new corporate campaign in regional drama. Second amateur company, Edinburgh Music Theatre, stage *The Boyfriend* (Sandy Wilson, 1953) directed by Lyceum company's Brian Howard. 'Upstage' offers Saturday morning drama workshops for children, in the Little Lyceum Theatre – now let to visiting companies such as Theatre Workshop of Stockbridge and Circuit Productions Ltd. Company presents the Molecule Club from the Mermaid Theatre, London – a scientific theatre-in-education company. Lawton's nomination of the revue *Oh Coward!* (Sheridan Morley, 1975) declined by artistic sub-committee, requesting he 'find a play of more dramatic merit, consistent with SAC expectation'.<sup>55</sup> Board criticise inexact promotional description of *Tommy* as a musical, when it should be a 'Rock Opera'. [Minutes record board pleadings on play selection, especially views of Councillor Moira Knox]. Resignation, with seven months' notice, of general manager Ruari McNeill, to be administrative director of Scottish Theatre Company.

Main house productions – *What the Butler Saw* (Joe Orton, 1969), *Ashes* (David Rudkin, 1974), *Jumpers* (Tom Stoppard, 1972), *Piaf* (Pam Gems, 1979), *A View from the Bridge* (Arthur Miller, 1955), *Dangerous Corner* (J.B.Priestley, 1932), *Duet for One*, (Tom Kempinski, 1980), *The Winslow Boy* (Terence Rattigan, 1946), *Tommy* Pete Townsend and The Who, 1975),

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*The Elephant Man* (Bernard Pomerance, 1979), *A Lesson from Aloes* (Athol Fugard, 1974), *Chicago* (Fred Ebb and Bob Fosse, 1975), *Bodies* (James Saunders, 1978),

Year to 31 March 1983: Box-office receipts £176,280. Other earned income £28,045. 110,122 seats sold.<sup>56</sup> SAC grants total £329,314 - £310,000 (main, standstill) and project grants £19,314; LRC grants total £130,000, (12% increase but no project grants). EDC grant of £500, (90% decrease). Sponsorships of £5,250. Surplus for the year of £9,412, with accumulated deficit reduced to £61,606. Subsidies, that total £459,814, account for 70% of turnover, earned income ratio of 30%.<sup>57</sup>

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## 1983

Centenary of the opening of Royal Lyceum Theatre. Associated individual-giving appeal raises £3,850 (£7,352). Donald Campbell writes celebratory history: *A Brighter Sunshine*.<sup>58</sup> Centenary magazine-programme sales fail: loss of £5,000 (£9,600).<sup>59</sup> LRC cease subsidy from 31 March, though new EDC make main grant of £244,960. EDC doubles rent of Little Lyceum Theatre to £2,400 (£4,608). Founding board member, Forbes Murphy, chair of centenary appeal, dies. Board representation from LRC ends, though Councillors Donald Gorrie and Marjorie Noble become ordinary board members. Five nominee members from EDC instead. One now nominated by Scottish Trades Union Congress, after consultation with entertainment unions. First (ordinary) board member from Queen Margaret College Drama Department, the actor-director Callum Mill.<sup>60</sup> SAC removes grant condition of nominating board members. Board invites a member of education committee of LRC to join. Now 16 board members. Labour become controlling party in EDC.

SAC cannot replace reduction in local authority grant, but offer project assistance of £5,000 (£10,050) towards formulation of annual theatre subscription scheme. First subscriber season achieves only 500 series' bookers. EIF offers £21,500 (£41,200) towards production costs of co-production – first in John Drummond's directorship: to be a dramatised history of the Lyceum by Tom Gallacher. Script subsequently rejected by Drummond; Lawton proposes *The Cocktail Party* (T.S.Eliot, 1949) but dropped when company cannot engage four star-actors of 'international calibre', demanded by EIF. Replacement proposed and rejected by Drummond; *Time Present* (Tom Gallacher, 1983), then staged outwith EIF aegis.<sup>61</sup> Arrangements qualified by SAC, who inform board 'that under no circumstances could any part of their grant be used to underwrite the Festival production'. SAC counsel company to seek drama director approval of contract with EIF and production budgets, to ensure that no company overheads attributed to the production.<sup>62</sup> SAC review of company contains unconcealed SAC disappointment about standards and box-office results (especially *Tommy* and *Chicago*): drama director advises his committee that subsidy 'should not be consumed on boulevard musicals'. Particular reservations of one drama committee member, Joan Knight (1923–1996) – artistic director of Perth Theatre – cited to board: holding that artistic sub-committee had been, on occasion, feeble-minded in accepting middle-of-the-road play choices.<sup>63</sup> SAC contend that attendance for subsidised drama in Scotland increased by 45 per cent in past year, whereas company support

had decreased by 17 per cent. SAC may now require fuller details of programme, ahead of scheduling. Board records alarm that SAC drama budget now showing 'increasing support for smaller, touring theatre companies.... resources [being] too thinly spread, at the expense of major theatre companies.'<sup>64</sup> Board considers that if this policy continues, no future for in-house work at the Little Lyceum Theatre, which should be available for small companies instead.

Board debate duration of artistic director contract, resolving non-renewal when current contract ends in May 1984.<sup>65</sup> Roger Spence (1947- ), previously manager of Tyne and Wear Theatre Company and Scottish Ballet, appointed general manager, initially for three years. Robert Pickles (1955- ) appointed to new post assistant general manager. More overtures from amateur companies, Southern Light Opera and The Bohemians, pending King's Theatre closure: now welcomed by company if scheduled successively. New competition when 3,056-seat Edinburgh Playhouse re-opens as live theatre, bought by Apollo Leisure (UK) Limited and managed without subsidy as touring theatre, staging occasional plays in touring programme.

Main house productions – *Kennedy's Children* (Robert Patrick, 1974), in repertoire with *Educating Rita* (Willy Russell, 1979, also toured to Aberdeen), *Heartbreak House* (Bernard Shaw, 1921), *Stevie* (Hugh Whitmore, 1977, also toured to Dumfries), *Playbill: The Browning Version* and *A Harlequinade* (Terence Rattigan, 1948), *Dirty Linen* and *New Found Land* (Tom Stoppard, 1976), *Confusions* (Alan Ayckbourn, 1974), *Time Present* (Tom Gallacher, 1983, world premiere), *Much Ado About Nothing* (William Shakespeare, 1600 – anniversary of play staged for the opening of the Royal Lyceum in 1883), 'Upstage' youth theatre production: *Antigone* (Sophocles, c.402BC), *Willie Rough* (Bill Bryden, 1972), *Beyond Here are the Monsters* (James Nicholson, 1982), *Regards to Broadway* (Benny Green, 1977).

Year to 31 March 1984: Box-office income, £170,710. Other earned income £66,446. 111,586 seats sold. (81,127 own productions; 23,937 visiting companies; 6,522 touring).<sup>66</sup> SAC grants total £328,740 - £327,690 (main 6% increase), transport subsidy £500, play commissions £550. EDC main £244,960. Sponsorships of £10,700. Surplus for the year of £3,173, before SAC debt reduction grant, £10,000. Accumulated deficit now £48,433. Subsidies, that total £573,700, account for 70% of turnover, earned income ratio of 30%.<sup>67</sup>

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## 1984

After objections from Labour group, EDC transfer complete responsibility for theatre management to the company (excepting bars management), enabling elimination of demarcation and duplication of staff, by consigning contracts of employment to the company. Rent reduced as compensation. Management attempts to dismiss transferred employees, wanting to recruit new staff experienced in producing theatres rather than touring houses. EDC offer new repairing-lease of the theatre, to March 1988. Board considers

new arrangements a fresh advance in relationships with EDC.

Short list for new artistic director: John Retallack (1954- ), Andrew Mackinnon (1949- ) and Ian Wooldridge (1947- ). Wooldridge, artistic director of TAG (Theatre About Glasgow) 1978-1984 - with other directing experience at Wildcat, 7:84, the Tron and Citizens' Theatre - appointed from April, on three-year contract at £13,000 (£24,000) with annual increments of £500.<sup>68</sup> Board hopes for perfectible relationship with SAC.<sup>69</sup>



17. The fifth artistic director, Ian Wooldridge

More visiting Scottish companies in main house, for first time since Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust era: Wildcat in *Same Difference* (Liz Lochhead, 1983) and 7:84 in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (adapt. from Robert Tressell, 1973) contracted on first-call of box-office receipts – and therefore minimal risk – to Lyceum.<sup>70</sup> This small-scale programming coincides with Traverse Theatre opening second stage. Roger Savage chair of artistic sub-committee.<sup>71</sup> Hugh Hodgart (1953- ), associate director of TAG, 1979-1984, appointed full-time associate director, initially for one year. Colin MacNeil, also from TAG, new head of design. Ensemble of ten 'young, tough and talented'<sup>72</sup> actors formed. First five-year plan adopted, including unsupported assertion that company is 'the premier theatre in Scotland'. After SAC query, Spence, admits 'this referred to the building and its history, rather than to the company'.<sup>73</sup>

SAC plans 15 per cent reduction in bloc-grants to repertory theatres, purposely to back 'new initiatives' whilst confronting choice of subsidising 'fewer, better' companies or continuation of status quo of inadequate grants and poor artistic achievement. Notion of consolidating Scottish repertory theatres' administration mooted in merger proposals by SAC management consultants, Urwick Orr.<sup>74</sup> Company believes there are 117 effort-wasting options, and that patience with SAC will produce desired result of continuing self-administration and artistic autonomy. Board contends independent consultants' merger recommendations were predetermined by SAC drama director.<sup>75</sup> EDC back company's claim that mergers lead to increased costs, not savings.

Frank Dunlop (1927- ) appointed festival director, EIF: first from full career in drama, having been artistic director of Nottingham Playhouse and the Young Vic Theatre, London. Hodgart excludes amateur companies' from



first programme; councillor-board members plangent at apparent indifference to the community; others argue that whole board must underpin the new artistic director's plans. EDC increase grant by 5 per cent but hike theatre rent by 6 per cent. Catering franchise to Calton Studios expires: henceforward to be managed by L'Aperitif. Theatre encounters access difficulties, following Regional Highways' traffic control system that blocks access to front of the theatre. Spence lobbies for eventual one-way traffic and part-pedestrianised Grindlay Street. Founder board member Alex Clark, also Scottish secretary of British Actors' Equity, retires, vacancy taken by his successor, Jim Service. [Company was second Scottish repertory board to appoint a trade union representative, after Glasgow Repertory Theatre, 1909]. Following local government elections, five new councillor-directors join board. Company declines request from architect James Dunbar-Nasmith (1927- ) to comment on plans for the conversion of the Empire Theatre to lyric theatre, to replace previous scheme for new opera house adjacent to Royal Lyceum Theatre and the Usher Hall: board prefers to respond via EDC in due course, fearing competition from new theatre.<sup>76</sup>

Chairman Kennedy, upon moving to Wiltshire, retires after eight years. Board search for 'someone above the small town attitudes which Edinburgh was often prone to'.<sup>77</sup> Menzies Campbell (1941- ), advocate and QC, appointed chairman.<sup>78</sup> Introduction of free [Thursday night] preview performances for each main house production. Spence appointed to SAC Drama and Dance Committee. Sponsorship committee renamed 'Image and Sponsorship Committee', to consider new public relations strategies. Sponsorship income prospects boosted by government matching-awards: 'the pairing scheme', managed by ABSA, but total remains relatively low component of total company income. Robert Dawson Scott (1956- ) appointed press and publicity manager.

Main house productions – *What the Butler Saw* (Joe Orton, 1969), *The Master Builder* (Henrik Ibsen, 1892, trans. Lindsay Galloway, 1984), *Present Laughter* (Noël Coward, 1943, also toured to Glasgow), *Doctor Faustus* (Christopher Marlowe, c.1558), *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (James Hogg, 1824, adapt. Stuart Paterson, 1984), *Twelfth Night* (William Shakespeare, 1594-1601), *Arms and the Man* (Bernard Shaw, 1894), *The Snow Queen* (Stuart Paterson, 1983, after Hans Christian Anderson, 1862).

One Lyceum studio production – *Woyzeck* (Georg Büchner, 1837).

Year to 31 March 1985: Box-office income, £204,430. Other earned income £82,248. 119,716 seats sold. (82,980 own productions; 34,025 visiting companies; touring 2,711).<sup>79</sup> SAC grants total £352,344 - £345,000 (main 5% increase), transport subsidy £2,000, equipment £1,200, trainee director £1,144, touring guarantee £3,000. EDC main £257,210 (5% increase); Glasgow District Council touring guarantee £3,000. Sponsorships of £2,133. Surplus for the year of £13,798, before SAC debt reduction grant, £20,000. Accumulated deficit now £14,635. Subsidies, that total £632,554, account for 69% of turnover, earned income ratio of 29%.<sup>80</sup>

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Company shares formation of new Scottish Arts Lobby Voice (SALVO), based rent-free at Grindlay Street offices, under direction of Eric Robinson (1930- ). Theatre club purchases collection of nineteenth-century Edinburgh playbills, for display in stalls' bar. Roger Savage and John Barr leave board: new chairs of artistic, and image and sponsorship committees: Patrick Rayner and Robin Dunseath. [Now eighteen board members].

No EIF production, but Board considers programme 'stronger, better balanced'<sup>81</sup> than before. Associate director and, by rotation, five heads of department<sup>82</sup> now to attend board and sub-committee meetings, in order that members are schooled in production and more responsive to operations.<sup>83</sup> Responding to local authorities' and SAC policy on youth and education priorities, company appoints community liaison officer, part funded by Bank of Scotland sponsorship. Board defensive about 'political weapon' of EDC imposing new grant condition of conspicuous recognition of assistance: logos, programme editorial and foyer displays now required but, after resistance, board told to 'adopt political stance or they could get nowhere [with EDC] otherwise'.<sup>84</sup>

Wooldridge appointed a governor of Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD). SAC awards project grant of £7,200, being 80 per cent of salary for one year, £9,000 (£15,500) for recruitment of associate literary director, a joint appointment with Traverse Theatre with balance shared equally between two companies. Post responsible for reading submitted scripts, making recommendations to artistic directors (throughout Scotland) and new playwrights, but not dramaturgical function for plays in production. From 59 applications, Sean McCarthy (1937- ) appointed for one year, followed by playwright Tom McGrath (1940- ).<sup>85</sup> [This post, with SAC grant now only to Lyceum, survives today and McGrath has held it continuously]. EDC proposes marketing consortium to promote Edinburgh theatres. Theatres and concert halls formulate plan for Edinburgh Arts and Entertainment Limited, a non-profit poster and leaflet distribution company. Association for Business Sponsorship and the Arts (ABSA) awards matching grant of £4,000, bringing sponsorship income to £13,028.<sup>86</sup> First corporate sponsorship prospectus published.

Board chastises Wooldridge for Hodgart's 'dreadful' production of *The Rivals*, including 'bad sets' and casting of male as Mrs Malaprop: 'an embarrassment for a major company', making it difficult for councillors to 'support [it] when funding was being discussed'. In defence, management cite favourable press critiques.<sup>87</sup> Hodgart resigns, to return on new contract after break, with board discussing whether this was their appointment or the gift of the artistic director. Twelve performances cancelled of Christmas production, *Merlin the Magnificent*: usual seasonal success loses £18,033, materially contributing to 1985-1986 deficit but extenuated by long-running industrial action by Educational Institute of Scotland: a teachers' strike causing plummet in school theatre parties.<sup>88</sup>

SAC withdraws one-year notice period on reassurance of general grant renewal, to all companies. Fears of English local authority cutbacks said to affect allocation of ACGB share to SAC, now under pressure to substitute for metropolitan counties. Chairman writes to Scottish MPs about dangers of tightened English arts funding.<sup>89</sup> Company now performing 40-42 weeks

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annually: threatened reductions in SAC grant prompts contingency plan for reducing output by 13 weeks. Company becomes founding member of National Campaign for the Arts, instigated by TMA, Equity and musical organisations. ACGB conducts 'independent' enquiry into professional theatre in England. Scotland outwith purview and no SAC parallel study, but 95 recommendations include three-year rolling subsidy for repertory theatres; that six theatres to be nominated as 'national companies in the regions' and that artistic directors should be on fixed-term contracts of between three and five years, renewable after careful review.<sup>90</sup>

Main house productions – *The Miser* (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, 1668, trans. Alan Drury, 1978), *The Homecoming* (Harold Pinter, 1965), *Dracula* (Liz Lochhead, 1985, after Bram Stoker – first main house production commissioned by the second company, with music by David McNiven), *The Weavers* (Gerhart Hauptmann, 1892), *Treasure Island* (Laurie Ventry, 1985 after R.L. Stevenson, 1883), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Oscar Wilde, 1895), *The Rivals* (R.B. Sheridan, 1775), *The Nutcracker Suite* (Jimmy Boyle and Andy Arnold, 1985), *Hamlet* (William Shakespeare, 1602), *Merlin the Magnificent* (Stuart Paterson, 1981).

'Upstage' – *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (William Shakespeare, 1592).

Year to 31 March 1986: Box-office income £211,835. Other earned income £103,000. 130,597 seats sold. (79,548 own productions; 51,049 visiting companies).<sup>91</sup> SAC grants total £378,710 - £365,000 (main 6% increase), transport subsidy £2,000, play commission £2,710, other projects (including management training) £9,000. EDC main £271,200 (5% increase). Sponsorships of £13,000. Deficit for the year £27,411, before debt reduction grant £9,000. Accumulated deficit now £33,046. Subsidies, that total £658,910, account for 62% of turnover, earned income ratio 38%.<sup>92</sup>

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## 1986

First co-production with another Scottish company, Wildcat, *The Threepenny Opera*, [excepting EIF stagings], intended to reduce high costs of staging a musical; from now on a common occurrence in British theatre, to allot production costs between companies in cities out-of-audience-range. General manager Spence's contract renewed. SAC bouquets for play choices: now criticises casting of inexperienced actors, suggesting this as cause for incuriosity of new audiences. Board contests that new members and work of artistic sub-committee will act as internal critic of artistic director.<sup>93</sup> Management consultants, Princedale Associates, undertake scrutiny of policy and organisation, and prepare five-year business plan. Scrutiny postulates that current performance 'does not stand comparison to those [sic] of other leading comparable theatres', questions the effectiveness of financial and general administration, highlights low attendances with 'too narrow a clientele.... due to lack of marketing and narrowness of appeal of productions' and points up need for capital expenditure.<sup>94</sup> Recommendations include reorganisation of promotion, with appointment of marketing manager and redundancy of Dawson-Scott, appointment of a staff accountant, renegotiation of sub-lease with EIF and phased capital expenditure of £370,750 (£619,150) in five years, for computing system, technical stage equipment, workshop improvements, refurbished seating

and, after 1990, £2,200,000 for modernising the stage – considered the worst conditions in Scotland – and building new glazed foyer extension.<sup>95</sup>

ABSA opens Scotland office in Edinburgh, brokering local arts sponsorships. School parties' absence through EIS dispute assessed at £25,000 loss: abated by EDC supplementary grant of £11,000. Edinburgh stages Commonwealth Games, but EDC warns that theatres must share consequences of large council shortfall, by forfeiting future subsidy demands. Part-time music associate appointed: David McNiven. Company contributes concepts to EDC application for Edinburgh to be European City of Culture, 1990. [Subsequently bestowed on Glasgow, but profound bewilderment at EDC, EIF and company, rekindling immemorial standoffish attitude to the pulsating bigger city]. SAC publishes *Care, Diligence and Skill, a handbook for the governing bodies of arts organisations*.<sup>96</sup> Board holds retreat to consider its contents. Wooldridge re-appointed artistic director, to 1990, with SAC drama director Robert Palmer prompting board to adopt formal annual appraisal procedures, in future.<sup>97</sup> First open day held, with 2,200 people touring the Theatre. Scottish Actors' Group stages eight workshops for professional actors, in Lyceum studio. After Scottish Brewers sponsorship of two productions, its managing director, Tony Bellafield, joins board.

Company proposes co-operation with Communicado Theatre Company Limited, an Edinburgh based touring company formed by artistic director Gerard Mulgrew (1952- ), with Alison Peebles and Robert Pickavance in 1983, by providing an umbrella administration, corporately within Lyceum non-profit company and under jurisdiction of the main board, with minimal artistic control. Purpose to reduce Communicado administrative costs and to perform year-round; for Lyceum, to find expanded use of Lyceum Studio, affiliating with ambitious, fertile productions, in hope of colluding on new plays for main stage.<sup>98</sup> No EIF production. Commissioned play from Andrew Dallmeyer, *The Grand Edinburgh Fire Balloon*, criticised by artistic sub-committee for scheduling ahead of completion of first draft, as well as produced before revisions made. Guest actor Julie Covington plays Lady Macbeth: board urges Wooldridge to consider similar level of masterly acting when casting new plays, irrespective of ensemble ideal. Inland Revenue instruct theatres to deduct PAYE from self-employed actors' salaries: fearing stretch on wage bill, company shares opposition campaign with other repertories.

Main house productions – *Tartuffe* (Liz Lochhead, 1986, after Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, 1664, also given at Mayfest, Glasgow in first invitation to festival founded 1982), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Tennessee Williams, 1947), *Mr Government* (Stuart Paterson, world premiere – first new play in four years), *The Beggar's Opera, or Peachum's Poorhouse* (David MacLennan, 1985, after John Gay, 1728, co-production with Wildcat, also given at Mayfest, Glasgow), *Pygmalion* (Bernard Shaw, 1914), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (William Shakespeare, 1592). *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Dario Fo, 1970), *The Grand Edinburgh Fire Balloon* (Andrew Dallmeyer, world premiere), *Macbeth* (William Shakespeare, 1610), *Alice in Wonderland* (Ian Wooldridge, 1986, after Lewis Carroll).

Lyceum studio production – *Words Beyond Words* with *Monologues*

(associate literary director, Tom McGrath, presentation of new writing with co-operative ensemble of 14 actors, for Edinburgh Festival Fringe).

Year to 31 March 1987: Box-office income, £339,337. Other earned income £82,378. 125,535 seats sold. (92,189 own productions; 33,446 visiting companies).<sup>99</sup> SAC grants total £375,230 - £365,000 (main, standstill), transport subsidy £2,000, play commissions £3,470, equipment £3,000, project grant for actors workshop £360, unspecified projects £1,400. EDC main £292,000 (8% increase). Sponsorships of £11,900. Deficit for the year of £70,173 (no SAC debt reduction grant). Accumulated deficit now £103,219. Subsidies, that total £667,230, account for 58% of turnover, earned income ratio 42%.<sup>100</sup>

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1987

SALVO begins campaign for devolution of arts subsidy. Communicado ceases trading under its own name, integrating with Lyceum, but keeps limited company dormant, with separate administrator, Jenny White. Mulgrew also associate director.<sup>101</sup> In first year of integration, Communicado gives 61 performances to 8,927 theatregoers, receiving SAC grant of £30,000.<sup>102</sup> After six years discussion and planning, company auspices first pension scheme for resident staff, with Scottish Widows. New sponsorships given by Scottish Life Assurance Company, Christian Salvesen, Laidlaws, Broomlees and Norwegian companies: company now second to Scottish Opera in Scottish corporate performing arts' affiliations, totalling £21,034 (£33,650). Fundraising assisted by series of 'glitter evenings' for Edinburgh executives.<sup>103</sup> Ticket prices increase by 20p-50p. Marketing manager, Abigail Carney and management accountant, Derek Kennedy (1949- ), appointed. Administration staff increases by five. Play choices and actor deployments forced to suit fewer actors: now averaging ten per production. Associate director, Hodgart, re-appointed for one year.

Owen Dudley-Edwards (1938- ) elected chairman of theatre club but, in future, this post no longer gives rise to board membership.<sup>104</sup> Amateur companies, Edinburgh Savoy Opera Group and Edinburgh Music Theatre, contracted but protest at higher weekly theatre rental of £4,689 (£7,500) and supercilious staff attitude. Management claim their productions are 'unreliable' and 'destroy[ed] marketing image of other programming.'<sup>105</sup> Company protests to EDC at King's Theatre programming star-cast in *The Taming of the Shrew* (William Shakespeare, c.1594), in same period as *The Merchant of Venice* and, moreover, at organising 'English actors in schools' workshops, when company already [had] substantial track record in education work and classical production.<sup>106</sup> High tension in board's relation with grantors, when outgoing SAC drama director prevails upon EDC to increase grant above inflation, after sending 'ham-fisted letter' importing that low EDC grant level threatened funding coalition. Management claim that 'increases in earned income only ever come with added subsidy.'<sup>107</sup> Anna Stapleton (1949- ) appointed SAC drama director. Technical staffs allege underpayment and overwork, against fellow-workers at King's Theatre.

EDC considers 22 development submissions for the 'hole in the ground site', assuring company that site delineations will be compatible with rear-stage

extension and new fly tower, but that no new Lyceum studio theatre space will be demanded.<sup>108</sup> Company verifies rumour that new Traverse Theatre to be built within new office complex and welcomes prospect of new three-venue 'cultural quarter' with Usher Hall.<sup>109</sup> Lyceum Studio now used primarily as rehearsal room, excepting visiting companies, including TAG, The Big Bang Orchestra and Comunicado for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and new plays in workshop productions, organised by Tom McGrath, who is frustrated that annual success 'leads nowhere' for the company's staging of new plays.<sup>110</sup> Chairman Campbell resigns, following election to Westminster parliament, succeeded by the reforming judge Lord (William) Prosser (1934- ), senator of the College of Justice in Scotland and Lord of Session.<sup>111</sup> Scottish Theatre Company goes into liquidation, owing company irrecoverable £2,348 (£3,750).<sup>112</sup> SAC discard transport subsidies to repertory theatres, but company continues to refund one-third coach-hire costs to party organisers.<sup>113</sup> Advisory Council for the Arts in Scotland holds conference at Lyceum, to debate prospect for a national theatre.

Main house productions – *The Hypochondriak* (Hector MacMillian, 1986, after *Le Malade Imaginaire*, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, 1673, also toured to Mayfest, Glasgow), *Three Sisters* (Anton Chekhov, 1901, trans. Michael Frayn, 1971), *Hay Fever* (Noël Coward, 1925), *The Glass Menagerie* (Tennessee Williams, 1945), *The School for Scandal* (R.B. Sheridan, 1777), *Tartuffe* (Liz Lochhead, 1986, after Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, 1664), *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!* (Dario Fo, 1974, trans. Robert Walker, 1978, Scottish material, Alex Norton, 1987), *A Doll's House* (Henrik Ibsen, 1879, trans. Michael Meyer, 1968), *The Merchant of Venice* (William Shakespeare, 1596, also toured to Inverness), *Private Lives* (Noël Coward, 1929), *Beauty and the Beast* (Stuart Paterson, 1987).

Year to 31 March 1988: Box-office income, £655,763. Other earned income £77,340. 153,525 seats sold. (114,693 own productions, 30,214 visiting productions, 8,618 touring).<sup>114</sup> SAC grants total £379,450 - £377,000 (main, 3% increase), equipment £600, unspecified projects £1,850). EDC main, £292,000 (standstill). Sponsorships of £21,034. Surplus for the year of £682. Accumulated deficit now £102,537. Subsidies, that total £671,450 (newly integrated Comunicado turnover excluded) - account for 51% of turnover, earned income ratio of 49%.<sup>115</sup>

## 1988

SAC tells company to eliminate accumulated deficit of £102,537 (£165,150) within three years. Board tread warily apropos auditors' advice to recognise the 'going concern' model – a hardheaded technique used when substantial doubt arises that a company could be able to meet liabilities and pay its bills. SAC and EDC urge board to take heed of private sector corporate norms, adopting new focus on cash flow management, notwithstanding differences of non-profit deficit operation.<sup>116</sup> Introduction of ACGB 'incentive' funding, inducing strategic planning for arts organisations, but company application unsuccessful.<sup>117</sup>

Company participates in discussion for new citywide EDC managed box-office for all Edinburgh venues, but cooperation proves elusive when EIF, Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Edinburgh Playhouse, the Queen's Hall and



Lyceum – all ‘independent’ organisations – favour other systems, deciding to operate separately to EDC managed Usher Hall, King’s Theatre and the Assembly Rooms. Assistant general manager Pickles joins SAC as arts and disability officer; replaced by promotion of Brian Loudon (1962- ) to theatre manager, to 1993.<sup>118</sup> Production manager Stephen Bailey resigns, sandwiched between manager demands to reduce production budgets when directors insist to him they increase. One-year search to recruit successor, Rob Flower, blamed on paltry wages paid, as well as dearth of trained theatre technicians.<sup>119</sup>

Rapport with EDC buttressed by promotion of nominee directors Councillors Vestri and Alexander (Labour) to chairs of recreation and grants committees, respectively.<sup>120</sup> 22 Edinburgh firms join new ‘Spotlight on Business’ membership scheme. SAC project grant to engage first trainee director, for one year: 97 applications and Robert Carson appointed.<sup>121</sup> No EIF production. [Only one Scottish company, Brunton Theatre of Musselburgh, chosen by Dunlop: board criticises sniffy attitude towards Scottish theatre, asking SAC to exert authority on EIF]. Company lags behind Traverse Theatre’s unrepining lobby for tenancy of new Cambridge Street theatre [to contain two auditoria], with board regretting SAC partiality in leverage upon EDC choice, who ‘should make clear the enormous consequences to the [Lyceum] of loss of studio and rehearsal space’. Even so, EDC appoint Traverse as client and future resident company at the new theatre. Traverse changes constitution from club to non-profit limited company. General manager Spence regrets competitive nature of tender, defending capital and revenue estimates as more realistic than Traverse, claiming ‘severe reservation about Traverse ability and experience to provide a programme of high standard without additional subsidy’.<sup>122</sup> Chairman Prosser compunctious about ‘a great disappointment to award the new theatre to the Traverse.’<sup>123</sup> Board member Angus Calder reproachful, in *Cenchrastus*:

[Having lost the site to the Traverse], I remain to be convinced. The Traverse will be in danger of being overshadowed by the Lyceum, which has recently achieved soaring subscription rates.... and possesses a restaurant and bar which can rival in attraction the Traverse present facilities, let alone whatever product architectural ingenuity fits the theatre in Castle Terrace. I suppose the counter-argument is that two lively theatres close together will help to advertise each other and will build up at last the year-round public for good, gutsy drama which so signally didn’t exist in 1963 and hasn’t fully emerged even now.... But that in turn implies that the uniqueness of the Traverse will be less apparent.<sup>124</sup>

At all events, EDC set aside £1,000,000 (£1,520,000) for upgrades to Royal Lyceum Theatre stage and new glass foyer, plus conversion of grand circle-level offices to corporate hospitality suite, on basis of revised 25-year lease and as outlined in Drage report. Plan to include fill in of gallery for administration offices [never realised due to potential aesthetic damage to listed auditorium]. EDC agree to purchase Heriot-Watt students union buildings opposite theatre, bidding £400,000 (£564,000), for freehold, exclusive of conversion costs to rehearsal rooms and office: company welcomes solutions but now fears loss of all studio theatre options, said to

be core to the work of associate literary director, 'Upstage', Communicado and the Scottish Actors Group.<sup>125</sup> New premises expected to increase annual overheads by £75,000 (£96,750).<sup>126</sup> Management urged to co-operate with Traverse on programming these aspects at their new studio.

Head of design, Colin MacNeil, dismissed after quality-minded concerns by Wooldridge.<sup>127</sup> Company produces conference, 'New Approaches to Live Theatre'. Staff collaboration with LRC education department, producing drama module based on a company production. Councillor Gorrie vacates chair of finance committee after ten years; replaced by Tony Belfield (Liberal). Several members exchange committee roles. Under company umbrella, Communicado expands, giving 100 performances to 14,408 theatregoers, receiving SAC grant increase of 133 per cent to £70,000.<sup>128</sup> Subscription series' tickets grow 22 per cent to 4,396.<sup>129</sup> First year of SAC triennial funding, offering guarantee of renewed subsidy at minimum of current award and, in turn, security and efficiency derived from longer planning cycle.

For local government, first year (one year ahead of England) of Community Charge (Poll Tax) and its impact on arts budgets, spotlighting impact on rate relief (and its impact on liability for re-valued non-domestic rate) – EDC subsidy clouded by numerous uncertainties, including government power to cap high charges and, hence, local authorities' spending.

Main house productions – *Charley's Aunt* (Brandon Thomas, 1892), *Death of a Salesman* (Arthur Miller, 1949), *Loot* (Joe Orton, 1966), *Mother Courage and her Children* (Bertolt Brecht, 1941, trans. Eric Bentley, 1967), *Pursuits* (Tom McGrath, world premiere), *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (Liz Lochhead, 1987, co-production with Communicado Theatre Company and their first on mainstage), *Mr Bolfry* (James Bridie, 1943), *Mary Rose* (J.M.Barrie, 1920), *Hobson's Choice* (Harold Brighouse, 1915), *Shadow of a Gunman* (Seán O'Casey, 1923), *As You Like It* (William Shakespeare, c.1598-1600, also toured to Inverness), *Blithe Spirit* (Noël Coward, 1941), *The Snow Queen* (Stuart Paterson, 1983, rev. 1988, after Hans Christian Andersen, 1862).

Lyceum studio programme for Edinburgh Festival Fringe – *A Wee Home from Home* (Frank McConnell, 1988), *Cubist Blues* (David Kane, 1988), *By the Pool* (Stewart Conn, 1988), *Words Beyond Words* (workshop programme, Tom McGrath).

Year to 31 March 1989: Box-office income, £717,553. Other earned income £47,959. 176,004 seats sold. (139,789 own productions; 28,187 visiting productions; 8,028 touring).<sup>130</sup> SAC grants total £448,827 - £392,000 (main, 4% increase), management consultancy £4,000, development grant £10,000, touring £42,827. EDC main £306,600 (5% increase). Other local authorities £7,827. Sponsorships of £50,932. Surplus for the year of £5,337. Accumulated deficit now £97,200. Subsidies, that total £763,254, account for 48% of turnover, earned income ratio of 52%.<sup>131</sup>

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SAC Communicado grant, excluding new-writing project grants, increased from £30,000 to £70,000, enabling four new productions, but some board members nonplussed at preferred standing of cousinly company.<sup>132</sup> Communicado wins Prudential Award, £25,000. Board member Angus Calder proposes new policy of three main house plays performed in Scots language, annually, but artistic director remonstrates on basis of unlikely theatregoer support. Board counsels Wooldridge to 'avoid museum Scots at all costs' and, even if upheld for 'certain parts of the Scottish repertoire', to 'encourage the use of the actors' own voices'.<sup>133</sup> Several letters received from theatregoers, complaining of sightline obstruction caused by jutting sets, now sometimes designed for touring to dissimilar stages. Problems attributed to discontinuity of guest designers, their short affiliation with the company and the delayed appointments of new head of design and production manager.<sup>134</sup> Exceptional board inquisition about choice of plays, decelerated planning and whether scripts meritorious for 'Scotland's leading theatre'.

Attendances of 139,789 for own productions best in company's history, board noting that they exceeded those for Scottish Ballet and Scottish Opera this year.<sup>135</sup> [Highest attendance of Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust management, under Clive Perry, was 132,000 in year ending 31 March 1973]. Damnatory public statements by EDC Conservative opposition councillor, Christine Richard, claiming company to be 'indulgent wastage of precious arts subsidy'. Company delegation to Conservative group, to refute 'incompetent management', with Spence writing to council leader seeking apology.<sup>136</sup> Councillor Moira Knox, shame-making Conservative, re-joins board. Renton Howard Wood Levin (RHWL), London theatre architects, appointed to lead refurbishment scheme with local architects Simspson and Brown, to be managed by the company and GA Construction. Company brings together, and requests money from, several capital-scheme grantors, other than EDC: Scottish Tourist Board, Scottish Development Agency, SAC Housing the Arts fund, Historic Scotland and, outwith statutory bodies, a £1,600,000 (£2,250,000) corporate sector and individual-giving goal.<sup>137</sup> EIF commission Communicado to stage production for 1990 festival, with fee of £60,000 (£84,600): Spence leads negotiation but claims offer was £100,000 (£141,000). Communicado administrators left to fund – and exceed first budget balance, from sponsorship - £40,000 (£56,400) awarded by Tennant Caledonian and touring-education grants of £25,000 (£35,525) from Strathclyde Regional Council on behalf of Glasgow European City of Culture 1990 (a year-long massive arts jamboree) but occasion triggers progressive administrative devolution for Communicado.

Spence elected vice-president of Theatrical Management Association.<sup>138</sup> Trainee designer appointed for one season, supported by SAC project grant. Subscribers at highest level: an assured audience of 4,836 per main house production. With next year's closure for refurbishment, board apprehensive at possible dispersal of theatregoers to drama at the King's Theatre. Sponsorship package of £10,000 (£14,100) from Charting Developments and Craigmillar Development Trust enables special performance and free tickets for underprivileged children from Edinburgh estates, plus street theatre at New Craig Park Shopping Centre.<sup>139</sup> First production by trainee director Carson, *Measure for Measure*, attracting fulsome praise by board for verse speaking, concept and casting.<sup>140</sup> No EIF production: EDC nominee directors asked to spur Dunlop's interest in Scottish theatre, 'even

persuading him to see a production, or at least more than half of it'.<sup>141</sup> Councillor Vestri presents paper to EDC on EIF and Edinburgh companies, but EIF board uphold Dunlop's immunity from funders' potential compulsion. Chairman writes to Arts Minister Richard Luce to petition for increased subsidy. Philip Oppenheim (1938- ) managing director of International Caledonian and son of former proprietor of Royal Lyceum Theatre, joins board.<sup>142</sup> Loss of Little Lyceum Theatre leads to pruning of 'Upstage' activity: now only once a month workshop.

Henceforward, main house productions only – *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, 1670, trans. Hector Macmillan, 1988), *A View From the Bridge* (Arthur Miller, 1955, also toured to Inverness, Aberdeen and Stirling), *The Cherry Orchard* (Anton Chekhov, 1904, version by Stuart Paterson, 1988 from trans. Steven and Alla Main, 1988), *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Federico Garcia Lorca, 1936, trans. John Clifford, 1988), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Edward Albee, 1962, also toured to Glasgow), *Woman in Mind* (Alan Ayckbourn, 1985), *Measure for Measure* (William Shakespeare, 1604), *Volpone* (Ben Jonson, 1605), *Ghosts* (Henrik Ibsen, 1882, trans. uncredited, 1965?), *Othello* (William Shakespeare, 1604), *The Slab Boys* (John Byrne, 1978, also toured to Aberdeen and Inverness), *Cinderella* (Stuart Paterson, 1989).

Year to 31 March 1990: Box-office income, £726,925. Other earned income £42,990. 177,804 seats sold. (137,161 own productions; 25,271 visiting companies; 15,372 touring).<sup>143</sup> SAC grants total £466,082 - £399,850 (main, 2% increase), touring £44,732, new writing schemes £21,500. EDC main £324,000 (6% increase). Other local authorities £4,732. Sponsorships of £117,516. Surplus for the year of £10,166. Accumulated deficit now £87,034. Subsidies, that total £794,814, account for 51% of turnover, earned income ratio of 49%.<sup>144</sup>

## 1990

Communicado awarded planning security of 'revenue' funding status with SAC grant hike of £40,000 to £118,000 (£152,000) becoming, with Wildcat, 7:84, Borderline and TAG, fifth ongoing Scottish touring company. Increases resident staff by six fulltime employees.<sup>145</sup> Board insists on greater acknowledgement of administrative contribution, then pulls back after Glasgow 1990 Communicado production loses £10,500 (£13,500), being 50 per cent overrun on stage costs and 50 per cent shortfall in box-office receipts.<sup>146</sup> Even so, chairman Prosser claims 'there can be little doubt that this growth is the direct result of the decision to move Communicado under the administrative wing of the main company. This decision has allowed [them] to concentrate on the work in hand and set aside the administrative and facility problems that dog other small companies. We also believe that the situation is helpful in providing a level of confidence for the funding bodies that the controls and back up to Communicado are well regulated'.<sup>147</sup>

Main company touring set to expand, after demise of Scottish Theatre Company and SAC project grant of £20,000 (£25,800) from 'Great Britain Touring Fund'. Even so, board argue that SAC one-sided by increasing grants to smaller companies, unfamiliar with touring to mainstream venues, despite 'occasional interesting and exciting productions', claiming its

'broader, classical and contemporary programme better suited to specific requests of theatre managers and the public'.<sup>148</sup> Following complaints from theatregoers, artistic sub-committee ventilates problem of younger actors' imperfect audibility when speaking verse in classical plays, the failure to attract older, experienced actors (especially for touring), desiring the homogeneity and training-by-example that characterised ensemble qualities derived from longer actors' contracts, in the 1960s.<sup>149</sup> Artistic sub-committee shames 'restricting policy' of commissioning only one new play annually, as 'inevitable hostage to fortune' should the play belie expectation; urges artistic director to triple commissions, as better chance for finding one annual premiere. Anticipation of subscriber resistance to more than one new play in each season. Promotion of new plays considered badly-served by exaggerated expectations fuelled by hype and overkill, whereas marketing staff should, sub-committee believes, explicate publicity with knowledge about the play subject, the playwright and the director's interpretation. Hodgart accentuates new translations and novel adaptations as efficacious, admitting obligation to playwrights' development for big stages, defending expenditure of £35,000 (£45,150) in 1989-1990, on commissions and royalties to living writers.<sup>150</sup> Federation of Scottish Theatre in dispute with Scottish Society of Playwrights over playwrights' contracts: company now pays £4,500 (£5,800) commission fee *plus*, when produced, guaranteed royalties of £500 (£645) against 7.5% of receipts for run of play; higher than English theatre minimum terms.<sup>151</sup>

Education programme bettered with video for schools' distribution, of production process and rehearsals for *Juno and the Paycock* (Seán O'Casey, 1924). Board censorious of 'impractical' new Scottish National Theatre proposals, a scheme to 'take product on tour, that had already been created, rather than creating new work itself'.<sup>152</sup> Challenges of new, large productions thought to be concern of companies such as Lyceum, Citizens', Dundee Rep and Perth Theatre, as geographical, de facto national theatre.

Spence restyled managing director, reflecting accomplishments over seven years and new strategic role as project manager for capital refurbishments. Post continues to be 'directly and jointly responsible [with artistic director] to the board' but *primus inter pares*.<sup>153</sup> Mary Picken (1953- ), new secretary of Scottish Equity, nominated as board member, by Federation of Scottish Theatre Unions, replacing Jim Service. Company contributes production to first Scottish International Children's Festival, *The Secret Voice* (Stuart Paterson, 1983), four-actor play for 9 to 12 year olds, staged in Inverleith Park, Edinburgh, but board hopes that future children's theatre is of newly commissioned work.<sup>154</sup> Board and funding bodies embrace choice of Neil Simon's female re-write of *The Odd Couple*, as uniform with equal opportunities policies, but though critically praised, production loses £11,073 (£14,282), coincident with heat wave and World Cup football. Annual summer programming from May to July, compounded by build up to Edinburgh Festivals, seen as thorniest period, notwithstanding tourist influx from North America.<sup>155</sup> No EIF production, instead Dunlop commissions Communicado to produce *Danton's Death* (Georg Büchner, 1835), at St Bride's Centre. [Production a highlight of Dublin Theatre Festival, after Scotland and England tour]. Communicado return to Edinburgh 'restless for greater degree of independence'.<sup>156</sup> Board acknowledge paltry wages paid to heads of department, instituting salary review. Restaurant lessee, Stuart Barber, fails to pay trading commissions: company reduces terms to

L'Aperitif, in order to highlight a buoyant restaurant as mainstay of capital grant application to Scottish Development Agency. Terminates franchise, henceforward managed in-house as Phipps' Restaurant (named after Royal Lyceum Theatre architect). Visiting companies include Scottish Opera in *The Threepenny Opera* (Bertolt Brecht, Elisabeth Hauptmann and Kurt Weill, 1928). Prepotent capital fundraising committee appointed: chaired by Lord Provost, with members including Jack Shaw (1932- ), governor of Bank of Scotland and vice-chair of EIF. Board concerned to brook no delay, in fear of competition from nascent Traverse and Empire Theatre appeals. 28 patrons lend names to appeal.<sup>157</sup>

Subscriber season ticket sales plunge one-third, to 3,173.<sup>158</sup> Lyceum Theatre closes for planned £3,600,000 (£4,650,000) refurbishment and company goes on tour elsewhere in Edinburgh: King's Theatre, Portobello Town Hall, Moray House Theatre, St Bride's Centre and the Assembly Rooms. Peripatetic season detonates predicted deficit of £107,000 (£130,500), £60,000 (£73,000) more than budgeted, compromising play choices and cast sizes after re-opening, doubling overdraft facility requirement to £100,000 and increasingly sensitive revenue grant advances from SAC and EDC.<sup>159</sup> Conclusion of protracted 25-year lease negotiations with EDC, with board regretting 'waste of £16,000 in appeal donations spent on solicitors [dealing with EDC], causing unnecessary seven week delay to start of refurbishments and unnecessary pressure on 43-week building contract'.<sup>160</sup> Company takes six months to complete second application for ACGB 'Incentive Funding', said to have been 'labyrinthine, tortuous experience', involving engagement of specialist consultants from London and, later, submonition to high-pressure peer review.<sup>161</sup>

*Fitting For Ladies* (Georges Feydeau, 1887, trans. Peter Meyer), *Juno and the Paycock* (Seán O'Casey, 1924, also toured to Aberdeen and Stirling), *Look Back in Anger* (John Osborne, 1956), *The Duchess of Malfi* (John Webster, c.1613, opened in Glasgow), *A Family Affair* (Aleksandr Ostrovsky, 1849, trans. Nick Dear, 1988), *The Odd Couple* (Neil Simon, 1965, rev. 1984), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Oscar Wilde, 1895), *Off the Wall* - German-Scottish plays in workshop productions - e.g., *Hamletmachine* (Heiner Müller, 1979, trans. Michael Batz), *The Correction* (Heiner Müller, 1957, trans. Carl Weber), *Quartet* (Heiner Müller 1982, based on *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Choderlos de Laclos, trans. Karin Gartzke); *The Country Wife* (William Wycherley, 1673, also toured to Stirling), *Hiawatha* (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1855, adapt. Michael Bogdanov, 1980, performed at the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh).

Year to 31 March 1991: Box-office income £474,011. Other earned income £39,073. 97,119 seats sold. (75,211 own productions; 18,139 visiting companies; 3,769 touring).<sup>162</sup> SAC grants total £485,435 - £440,235 (main 10% increase), development grant £14,500, touring £20,000, new writing £10,700. EDC main £359,000 (11% increase). Sponsorships of £24,944. Deficit for the year £121,597. Accumulated deficit now £208,631. Subsidies, that total £844,435, account for 60% of turnover, earned income ratio 40%.<sup>163</sup>

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EDC recreation department promotes Leslie Evans (1958- ) to assistant director, responsible for new, exhaustive monitorial systems, now dictated by additional complexities of capital programme. Company blames lack of advance bookings for *The Crucible* at King's Theatre on maladministration of EDC theatre, where antiquated box-office computer breaks down, but King's theatre manager Chris Potter (1939- ) suggests that television coverage of the Gulf War had spellbound theatregoers. Company salvages ticket sales by selling direct from own box-office.<sup>164</sup>

Bank suspends cheque payments for two weeks in February, after anxiety at exceeding overdraft facility on revenue account, to £143,000, £60,000 more than corresponding month of 1990. Board members asked to provide personal guarantees, but chairman Prosser argues 'members should not be put under this pressure, [not being] directors of a company in the sense that the bank understood from their commercial operations'. After pacification, bank lenient with new facility of £220,000 overdraft.<sup>165</sup> To February, company raises total of £2,500,000 (£3,050,000) towards capital programme, now £1,100,000 (£1,342,000) shortage. With builders' and design team contracts signed, no option to back-pedal on scheme. Board explore loan from EDC for balance, realising that company would 'never be able to discharge it from operating surpluses', with others asserting that 'even if in the end the loan has to be turned into a grant, EDC would have a got a substantial input into and improvement of *their* property.'<sup>166</sup> EDC, with cross-party support, make four-year phased repayment loan of £740,000 (£902,800), but interest charges, borne by operations budget, predicted to be £80,000 (£97,600) with company seeking compensating EDC revenue grants.<sup>167</sup> Uncertainty about completion date for refurbishments, with EIF sabre-rattling legal action against company, if new fly tower behindhand.<sup>168</sup> From February, capital expenditure soars above budget. ACGB 'Incentive Funding' grant of £180,000 (£219,600) awarded, part of bargain being rationalisation of management structure, as well as release of money according to target realization. Internal competition of production sponsorship with quest for corporate capital donations.<sup>169</sup>

New marketing manager, Lucy Vaughan, appointed. Queen Margaret College drama department, led by Professor Clive Perry,<sup>170</sup> calls for company to 'allow the college to permit its stage management courses to be promoted in association with the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company'. Affiliation offers greater vocational direction to courses, enabling company to recruit higher-calibre staff.<sup>171</sup> Comunicado, now with deficit of £25,043 (£30,552),<sup>172</sup> plans separate management committee, under chairmanship of board member and with continuing accountability, providing detached perspective, sharper governance and to prepare return to eventual self-governing status.<sup>173</sup> Randall Stevenson (1953- ), critic and Edinburgh University English lecturer, joins board, in a year seen through by only six members, with seven other new appointees and eight resignations.<sup>174</sup> Annual board working party agree 8 per cent pay hike to staff, following union settlements and demands of operating up-to-date stage. Anticipating improved theatregoer amenities, top ticket price increased £3 to £12, with budgeted attendance pitched ambitiously at 71% of capacity.<sup>175</sup> Audio-described performances introduced for each production.

Media bickering by EIF that company failed to meet festival availability

obligation, causing it to relocate production inappropriately, to Empire Theatre. EIF demands compensation of £100,000, being the sum of increased theatre rent, which company refuse. Dunlop's last festival. Full conversion of 30b Grindlay Street to offices and rehearsal rooms accomplished in June. Lyceum reopens in September. After company fails to meet first EDC loan repayment of £390,000, deferment arranged, pending new conditions. Business, trusts and charity capital pledges total £550,000, only half of target.<sup>176</sup> SAC finance director Graham Berry (1945- ) warns company 'trading on verge of insolvency' and informing board that five-year business plans to be introduced for all revenue aided theatres.

Sponsorship packages, 'Spotlight on Business', renamed The Barrie Club, with twelve-play sequence sold for £1,995. Masked ball raises £15,000 for productions.<sup>177</sup> Buildings sub-committee formed, to oversee future maintenance and 'snagging'. Need to avoid taxation of ancillary income from bars and catering facilities anticipated by incorporation of trading subsidiary, Lyceum Theatre Trading Limited, on 6 September, formed to covenant profits to charitable parent company.<sup>178</sup> Trading company profit estimated at £125,000 (£152,500), but makes only £8,000 (£9,760) in year, ascribed to lower volume of seats sold, poor passing trade in Grindlay Street and absence of vibrant daytime atmosphere.

Preoccupied with capital programme, board oblivious that artistic director Wooldridge's contract should have been assessed in April 1990 and kept in step with that of managing director. After criticism of associate director and head of design Gregory Smith (who he had engaged on 'indefinite contract'), employment extended to 1994, with expectation of ten years' service but resolution that no artistic director should serve longer.<sup>179</sup> Board decry engagement of big Scottish star Jimmy Logan (1928-2001) as Eddie Waters in *Comedians*, Trevor Griffiths' 1975 portrait of the nature of racist and sexist comedy. Chairman describes fallacious casting and marketing as infuriating the 'old Edinburgh aunt brigade' and a 'classic case of pleasing the critics and not the public'. Over 50 letters of complaint received, as well as blasting feature on company in *The Scotsman* by John Linklater. Board criticise associate director Hodgart's press response: box-office £22,800 (£27,800) below budget. Other board members fastidious about example of 'male-dominated play choices', calling for market research to test public opinion of play proposals.<sup>180</sup>

*Romeo and Juliet* below income target, by £11,600 (£14,150); *The Bevelers* below income target by £15,000 (£18,300). Direct stage costs of sets, wardrobe and properties now £7,000 (£8,500), between half and one-third spent in large English repertory theatres. Ruinous re-opening season occasions near meltdown, putting board and management under 'worst predicament in history of Lyceum'.<sup>181</sup> SAC publish *Young Theatre Report*, observing that repertory theatres have lost lead to arts centres on youth theatre, recommending that boards should set example by 'more vigorously pursued education and access programmes'.<sup>182</sup> Population of Edinburgh now 418,914, down 25,000 from previous census.

*The Crucible* (Arthur Miller, 1953, at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh and on tour to Stirling), *Changed Days, Memories of an Edinburgh Community* (Alan Spence, 1988, Edinburgh circuit to Portobello Town Hall, Moray

House Theatre and St Brides Centre), *An Ideal Husband* Oscar Wilde, 1895), *Comedians* (Trevor Griffiths, 1975), *Romeo and Juliet* (William Shakespeare, 1597, also toured to Stirling and Glasgow), *The Bevellers* (Roddy McMillan, 1973), *Shinda, The Magic Ape* (Stuart Paterson, 1991).

Year to 31 March 1992: Box-office income £801,844. Other earned income £27,887. 104,155 seats sold. (90,114 own productions; touring – outwith Edinburgh circuit - 14,041).<sup>183</sup> SAC grants total £523,051 - £471,051 main (7% increase), touring £20,000, development grant £14,500, new writing £17,500. ACGB incentive funding, £180,000. EDC main £412,000 (15% increase). Sponsorships and donations of £68,638. Deficit for the year £173,734. Accumulated deficit now £382,365. Subsidies, that total £1,170,051, account for 57% of turnover, earned income ratio of 43%.<sup>184</sup>

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## 1992

Pivotal board changes midst financial turning point: seven resignations, including Mary Picken, upon becoming arts officer for STUC, replaced by new Scottish secretary of Equity, Lorne Boswell (1959- ) and Councillor Paolo Vestri, instrumental in securing EDC support, before appointment to SAC as depute development director. Succeeded by Councillor Steve Cardownie (1953- ) – Labour, one of eight new appointees.<sup>185</sup> Local government elections result in Labour losing overall majority of 71-member EDC: control sustained only through deal with Scottish National Party members that sees latter party chose new Lord Provost, Norman Irons (1941- ). Foundation for Sport and the Arts<sup>186</sup> makes capital grant of £250,000 (£295,000), but company still short by £1,000,000, following more cost overruns. Last three plays of financial year lose £40,000 (£47,200).<sup>187</sup>

EDC increase loan by £40,000, with omnipotent conditions, being external review by David Pratley (1948- ), engaged to produce ‘comprehensive and acceptable business plan’ including ‘re-assessment of entire artistic policy, reappraisal of catering facilities, consideration of further earned income generating projects, re-examination of marketing, restructuring membership of the company’s board of directors, approach to LRC for support and approach to SAC for additional financial support’.<sup>188</sup>

Pratley’s investigation asserts that company still has ‘largest number of paid admissions for any performing arts organisation in Scotland’, but weaknesses include ‘lack of excitement on programme, inconsistent artistic standards, in all areas of direction, design, casting and acting’, with ‘lack of star names or, alternatively, a strong company identity’ and ‘a perception that seats are too expensive’.<sup>189</sup> Obstacles to achieving current policy said to be dry up of small and medium cast plays, narrow casting choice by actors’ weekly wages set at only £210 (£250), cramping production costs, long history of negative media reportage, ambivalent attitude to touring and disdain by touring-theatre managers of company’s inapproachability over play selection and casting. Even so, Pratley testifies to constraints of poor production carpentry and wardrobe workshops and external competition of Edinburgh being overbuilt with theatres competing with one another for audiences and subsidy, whilst operating in a prolonged recession. Recommends reconsideration of mission to develop a company ‘ranking in international status... with distinctive literary style’.<sup>190</sup> With company

attempting too broad a span, Pratley calls for concentration on core activities by staging eight productions annually [3½ week runs] between September and May – two as co-productions with English theatres, plus assured annual co-production with EIF ‘previewed’ in August – more touring, abandoning studio productions and aspirations for studio building-replacement, running theatre as receiving house in summer months, a new education programme [to be financed by LRC] and emancipation of Communicado.<sup>191</sup> Envisages repayment of accumulated deficit over three years, with conversion of two-thirds EDC loan to grant, given that company has ‘no means to eliminate the capital debt... and that it has, in effect, added £900,000 equity to freehold value of the theatre ultimately accruing to EDC’. Balance to be raised by a second capital appeal, in 1993. Also recommends abolishing posts of associate director and head of design. For governance, recommends reducing board of directors’ membership to ten, combining functions of finance sub-committee and sponsorship sub-committee into new policy and resources committee – additionally to oversee marketing and buildings – flotation of second trading company to refurbish and manage construction workshops (in which Lyceum would be one of several shareholders) and forming a Lyceum ‘foundation’ for endowments and other fundraising.<sup>192</sup>

Artistic director defends criticisms of ‘dull, unexciting’ programming, claiming his incumbency the most successful in history of company, in spite of financial emergencies, hinting that collaborations with touring houses and English repertories would debase principles of artistic independence, towards control of only four productions annually.<sup>193</sup>

New logo and company branding: the sixth makeover since 1977. EDC defer capital loan for three years, and make *another* capital loan of £260,000 (£306,800). More intrusive conditions than hitherto: that chairman Prosser must accept ultimate responsibility and be replaced within two months; that upon contract expiry of contracts of managing director and artistic director, matters of renewal or other recruitment be made only with the agreement of EDC [aside from councillor directors in their role as nominee board members]; and that council finance department monitor financial statements, monthly.<sup>194</sup> After documents leak, press snub EDC conditions as ‘meddlesome purge by bumbling red-tapists’.<sup>195</sup> Staffs send resolution of support for artistic director, demanding that board and EDC disassociate him from capital debt.<sup>196</sup> SAC decline application for £50,000 (£59,000) ‘rescue package’.

Doubling of Communicado deficit to £30,000 (£35,400), with turnover now £333,618.<sup>197</sup> Appointment of Ginnie Atkinson (1954- ), manager of Edinburgh International Film Festival, as chair of its new committee, also joining Lyceum board.<sup>198</sup> Pending Traverse relocation to new theatre, EDC invite Communicado to tender for tenancy of vacant Grassmarket venue, but company uninterested in managing a building.<sup>199</sup> EDC appoint principal officer, theatres – Andrew Ormston (1956- ) – additional monitor for Lyceum progress. Richard Baron trainee director, funded by SAC bursary, to him: £5,120.

Artistic director Wooldridge gives notice of resignation at end of season, after nine years on ‘roller coaster’, preferring to go freelance ‘without pressure’.<sup>200</sup> Production manager Flower resigns, for teaching career,

blaming unendurable pressure.

EIF affiliation redressed following appointment of new festival director, Brian McMaster (1943- ). EIF commissions first company production for many years; guest director William Gaskill (1930- ) staging *The Voysey Inheritance*, as mainstay of Harley Granville Barker retrospective, including rehearsed readings, at Lyceum, of *The Secret Life* (1919-1922), *The Marrying of Anne Leete* (1899), *Rococo* (1912) and *Farewell to the Theatre* (1916), EIF published edition and English tour.<sup>201</sup>

Spence elected president of TMA, unopposed. Richard Findlay (1943- ), managing director of Forth Radio - who trained as an actor - appointed fourth chairman: records betray more interventionist conduct than predecessors. Patrick Rayner vacates chair of artistic sub-committee, leaving board after nine years; Angus Calder chairman of new artistic review committee.<sup>202</sup> Findlay chairs new policy and resources committee. Board begin search for sixth artistic director; advised by SAC that five-year contracts now commonplace and that wire-pulling by the National Theatre for Scotland Campaign committee [that included Lyceum board members Lorne Boswell and Randall Stevenson] 'should play no part in the deliberations.'<sup>203</sup>

*Arsenic and Old Lace* (Joseph Kesselring, 1942, also toured to Aberdeen and Stirling), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, 1784, trans. Ranjit Bolt, 1986, also toured to Stirling and Mayfest, Glasgow), *Uncle Vanya* (Anton Chekhov, 1899, adapt. Stuart Paterson from trans. Alla Parkhomenko, 1991), *Merlin: The Search for the Grail* (Tankred Dorst, with Ursula Ehler, 1982, trans. Ella Wildridge, adapt. Tom McGrath, 1992), *Cuttin' A Rug* (John Byrne, 1977), *Good Morning, Bill* (P.G. Woodhouse, 1927, after Ladislaus Fodor, 1911), *Travesties* (Tom Stoppard, 1974), *Hay Fever* (Noël Coward, 1925), *The Voysey Inheritance* (Harley Granville Barker, 1903-1905, for EIF, also toured to Woking, London and Oxford), *The School For Wives* (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, 1662, trans. Neil Bartlett, 1990, also toured to Inverness), *Old Times* (Harold Pinter, 1971), *The Taming of the Shrew* (William Shakespeare, c.1594), *Laurel and Hardy* (Tom McGrath, 1976), *Beauty and the Beast* (Stuart Paterson, 1987).

Year to 31 March 1993: Box-office income £1,352,769. Other earned income £141,980. 173,432 seats sold. (122,988 own productions; touring 33,486, visiting productions 16,958).<sup>204</sup> SAC grants total £546,989 - £509,604 (main, 8% increase), development grant £14,500, new writing projects £16,000, touring £4,885, touring development £2,000. ACGB grant for England tours £80,965. EDC main £452,480 (10% increase). Other local authorities £4,000. Sponsorships of £46,279. Deficit for the year £46,279. Accumulated deficit now £426,235. Subsidies, that total £1,084,434, account for 41% of turnover, earned income ratio of 59%.<sup>205</sup>

of Wooldridge tenure exceed target by £24,500.<sup>207</sup> Kenny Ireland – who, as Ian Ireland, ran Little Lyceum from 1974 to 1977 and was guest director for *The Bevellers*, 1991 – appointed sixth artistic director, from April.<sup>208</sup> Also an actor, but appearing infrequently with company. Continues occasional work as artistic director of The Wrestling School, a company staging only plays by Howard Barker (1946- ). Ireland ditches practice of resident associate director and head of design, favouring planning and old-colleague networker contribution of new ideas from *in absentia* ‘associate artists’: actors Brian Cox (1946- ) and Bill Paterson (1949- ) engaged with honorarium. [Subsequently, only engagements have been Cox acting in *The Master Builder* and Paterson in *Mongrel’s Heart*]. Policy aspires to perform occasional seasons in repertoire and mark out new course for co-productions, attracting actors otherwise not seen in Edinburgh, more guest directors and new education work.<sup>209</sup> Ensemble of ten actors engaged for summer season of three comedies in rotation. Board baffled when tenth anniversary of Comunicado celebrated, in Glasgow.<sup>210</sup>



18. The sixth artistic director, Kenny Ireland

New artistic review committee desires functional shift to assertive play selection, confident to artistic director for casting, design and balance of choice, rather than continue as reactive, ‘toothless tiger’ for retrospective criticism.<sup>211</sup>

SAC devolved from ACGB to the Scottish Office. With Scottish Film Council and Scottish Museums Council also reporting to the Scottish Office rather than Westminster, transfer seen as opportunity to develop a national cultural strategy for Scotland, buttressing ‘national’ status of Lyceum company. *The Charter for the Arts in Scotland* published, summing up pros and cons for a national theatre, including suggestion that it ‘should be essentially a touring company with a ‘home base at the Royal Lyceum and Traverse Theatres.’<sup>212</sup> In light of recent financial rescue package to Lyceum, *Charter* also questions whether non-profit company model – and particularly impact of Insolvency Act and Financial Services Act, 1986 – ‘represents an appropriate framework for the swings and roundabouts operation of arts organisation, which inevitably see their income vary with the unpredictable fluctuations of public response’.<sup>213</sup>

New Traverse Theatre with studio with 350 and 100 seats, plus popular and trendy all-day licensed bar opens within Saltire Court, formerly the ‘hole in the ground’ site. SAC release touring enquiry,<sup>214</sup> but Spence disillusioned that company’s touring potential, despite example of *The Voyage Inheritance*, is overlooked.<sup>215</sup> Subscription sales restored, to 3,900. Sponsorships weaken, outpaced by rival corporate membership campaign at



Festival Theatre and new Traverse: sponsorship manager and marketing manager seen off.<sup>216</sup> Redundancies associated with new artistic direction cost unbudgeted £29,000 (£34,220) to settle. Alec Jessel (1960- ) appointed marketing manager. SAC prompt board debate about gender balance, only two directors being female: actor Eileen McCallum appointed.<sup>217</sup> Audit committee established, chaired by Philip Oppenheim.<sup>218</sup> Efforts to reduce number of board members – favoured by SAC and Pratley – discarded, prevailing desire to retain cross-party EDC support and, hence, maintain smaller proportionality of nominee to ordinary directors.<sup>219</sup> Councillor Cardownie warns that EDC performing arts budget (now £1,300,000) under pressure from Scottish Opera and Scottish Ballet, which – after relocating from King's Theatre – seek additional £450,000 to perform in Festival Theatre, from 1994. Company reasons that its own grant must increase to meet challenge of 'heavily-funded national companies,' otherwise new opera house 'could drive Lyceum to closure'.<sup>220</sup> Ireland anticipates competition frenzy when King's Theatre, forced to replace lyric companies with more touring drama from England, to which company must respond by contrast of more Scottish and new plays. Chairman Findlay attempts to resolve planning and scheduling and disagreements between Ireland and Spence.

National Lottery Act 1993 presages biggest development in British arts funding since the founding of CEMA. Build-up to refreshed Lyceum education policy tagged by introduction of examinable higher-grade theatre studies in secondary education, including Scottish drama component. Board affected by new legislation of the Charities Acts of 1992 and 1993, accentuating and strengthening directors' accountability as charity trustees. Arts Marketing Association founded, '.... to enhance status of pride in professional activities, whilst bringing about an even more effective coming together between people and the arts'; membership exceeds 1,000 by 2001.<sup>221</sup>

*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Muriel Spark, 1961, adapt. Jay Presson Allen, 1966, also toured to Inverness, Aberdeen and Glasgow), *The Price* (Arthur Miller, 1968), *Mirandolina* (Carlo Goldoni, 1753, trans. Ranjit Bolt, 1991), *Merlin: The Search for the Grail* (Tankred Dorst, with Ursula Ehler, 1982, trans. Ella Wildridge, adapt. Tom McGrath, 1992), *Rookery Nook* (Ben Travers, 1926), *Noises Off* (Michael Frayn, 1982), *Little Hotel on the Side* (John Mortimer, 1984, after Georges Feydeau and Maurice Desvallieres, 1894), *The Recruiting Officer* (George Farquhar, 1706), *The Sunshine Boys* (Neil Simon, 1972), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (William Shakespeare, 1592, also toured to Glasgow), *The Master Builder* (Henrik Ibsen, 1892, trans. Michael Meyer, 1959, also toured to Stirling, Dundee, Glasgow and – in 1994 – London),<sup>222</sup> *Cinderella* (Forbes Masson, additional text by Michael Boyd, 1992, co-production with Tron Theatre, Glasgow).

Year to 31 March 1994: Box-office income £1,187,555. Other earned income £35,531. 151,281 seats sold. (116,866 own productions; touring 11,682, visiting productions 22,733).<sup>223</sup> [Final year of association with Communicado comprises these 22,733 seats]. SAC grants total £591,296 – £534,296 (main 5% increase), new writing £24,000, market research to assist new marketing strategy £6,000, Great Britain touring fund £20,000, feasibility study into theatre consortium initiative £2,000, infrared sound



system equipment grant £5,000. EDC main £461,509 (2% increase). Other local authorities £962. Sponsorships of £45,356. Deficit for the year £6,443. Accumulated deficit now £432,676. Subsidies, that total £1,053,767, account for 45% of turnover, earned income ratio of 55%.<sup>224</sup>

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1994

*Oedipus Tyrannus* staged as 'promenade' production, removing stalls seats: in second Kenny Ireland production of Timberlake Wertenbaker's adaptation, which had been produced by RSC in 1991 and then directed by Ireland at Contact Theatre, Manchester 1992, before he joined Royal Lyceum. Several critics believe concept of immediacy and constantly shifting focus of audience attention undermines ritual qualities and craft of play. 178 stalls-subscribers send written complaints to management, including widespread acknowledgement of periodic promenade productions at EIF, which, they say, are more suitable in 'found spaces'.<sup>225</sup> Critical attention sequential to unintended coincidence of same Greek classic, *Oedipus Rex* (adapt. and directed, Clare Venables) at Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow in their 70-seat stalls studio.

Replacement computerised box-office system (BOCS) acquired by annual lease-purchase of £15,000, networked with Festival Theatre. Cash-flow requires instant grant advances to pay wages, declined by SAC pending overdrive enquiry, with EDC paying £50,000 in front of new financial year.<sup>226</sup> Board hold meetings without management: skulduggery behind closed doors forces managing director Spence to resign after eleven years:<sup>227</sup> 'he had a long innings and saw in the artistic management of Kenny Ireland'.<sup>228</sup>

£50,000 (£56,500) gift offered by Norman Springford, publican and former proprietor of Edinburgh Playhouse, saving company from liquidation. Springford joins board and, with Findlay but without Spence, produces belt-tightening budget in hands-on new management committee interregnum, assisted by insolvency specialists at company auditors.<sup>229</sup> After interviewing staff, Springford reports that company is 'perceived as 'elitist' and not accessible to the Edinburgh public at large', that 'uncertainty... led to low staff morale' predisposed 'to making expenditure cuts rather than concentration on increasing box-office and trading income'.<sup>230</sup> Disenchanted by management resistance to change, Springford resigns after four months, at which time company benefits from only £12,000 (£13,560) of his pledge.<sup>231</sup> Consolidated accumulated debt at 31 March estimated at £552,000 (£651,360).<sup>232</sup> Quantum leap, when EDC write-off £1,000,000 capital loan, in time to compensate annual balance sheet and redress income and expenditure account with depreciation reduction.<sup>233</sup> SAC commission study for demand and policy of a 'Scottish National Theatre Resource'. At the first blush, board submit that Lyceum is, with touring expertise and 'significance as Scotland's largest repertory house' the 'natural economical administrative base for creating and coordinating a Scottish National Theatre Directorate' with 'some extra pump-priming funding'.<sup>234</sup> Ireland presumes that company must 'be seen as constructive and aggressive player... to show the arts community that we are alive and kicking and able to set our own agenda...it is time to present a clearly defined model'.<sup>235</sup> Posture later diluted - after board urged by SAC to acknowledge inadmissibility of

dominant role - preferring to produce or host productions in circuit with other Scottish repertory theatres and 'fringe' companies, increasing profile of *all* theatres.<sup>236</sup> Study concludes 'there are very many detractors to giving one theatre this status'.<sup>237</sup>

Bank of Scotland rescue free previews with sponsorship of £5,500 (£6,215), equal to nominal receipts budgeted when about to be sacrificed to new income generation regime.<sup>238</sup> Shattered nerves cause resignation of artistic administrator, Hazel Chrisp, who had joined the company as assistant stage manager in 1976. New post of assistant artistic director introduced, to respond to ever-changing demands of guest directors and designers, casting and to reinstate other producing functions of associate director: Steven Gale (1960- ), previously director of Granary Theatre, Cork, appointed. Theatre manager Brian Loudon seconded to Festival Theatre construction programme, then poached to be operations manager. Marcus Ford appointed, from Perth Theatre. Production manager Derek Simpson resigns. David Butterworth appointed. Several other staff spared work during stress-related illnesses, caused by maladroitness in personnel management.

Festival Theatre opens, increasing Edinburgh theatres' holding capacity by 20 per cent, from 9,178 to 11,078 seats; estimated that 6,000 seats citywide and nightly must be sold to meet inclusive targets. Ireland scolds new competition of Royal National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company and other drama engagements in Festival Theatre's first season, claiming that 'receiving theatres can never have a policy because they have no artistic director' and that 'quality-minded audiences will prefer regularity and cachet of Lyceum's Scottish productions... ours is a niche market'.<sup>239</sup> Festival Theatre proposes establishment of investment fund for co-production and subsequent tour of annual musical with Lyceum, starting with *Guys and Dolls* (Damon Runyon, Frank Loesser, Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows, 1950). Ian McKellen gives one Royal Lyceum performance of *A Knight Out*, as fundraiser for Edinburgh AIDS charities.

Communicado appoints shadow board, then takes-leave as fully independent company, without schism, now based at Leith Town Hall Theatre from August. Ginnie Atkinson stays on Lyceum board. Nikki Axford (1960- ), administrator of Manchester City of Drama 1994, appointed general manager.<sup>240</sup> Company secretarial tasks now undertaken, for honorarium, by entertainment lawyer Richard F. Findlay (1951- ), partner at Tods Murray WS.<sup>241</sup> New logo and company branding. Programme diversified, with late night and Sunday concerts, promoted by Regular Music.<sup>242</sup> Board calls for management to inspire livelier and inviting use of new foyer.<sup>243</sup> Dry rot diagnosed in management offices. Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 sets in motion new local authority structure, with existing 9 regional councils and 53 district councils being replaced by 29 unitary authorities.

*Gaslight* (Patrick Hamilton, 1938), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Harper Lee, 1961, adapt. Christopher Sergal), *Oedipus Tyrannus* (Sophocles, c.420 BC, trans. Timberlake Wertenbaker, 1991), *Mongrel's Heart* (Michael Bulgakov, 1925 adapt. from *The Heart of a Dog*, Stephen Mulrine, 1994), Three Scottish plays in repertoire: *Kidnapped* (Tom McGrath, 1994, after R.L.Stevenson, 1886), *Carluccio and the Queen of Hearts* (George Rosie, 1991) and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (Liz Lochhead,

1987, in association with Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh). *Armstrong's Last Goodnight* (John Arden, 1964), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Brian Friel, 1990, co-production with Dundee Rep), *Death and the Maiden* (Ariel Dorfman, 1991, co-production with Dundee Rep), *Twelfth Night* (William Shakespeare, 1594-1601, co-production with Salisbury Playhouse, also toured – for British Council – to Shanghai International Shakespeare Festival, Guangzhou Friendship Theatre and Central Academy of Drama Theatre, Beijing, China) [first affiliation with British Council since company tours to West Africa and the Far East, 1970-1971], *The Princess and the Goblin* (Stuart Paterson, 1993, after George MacDonald, 1872).

Year to 31 March 1995: Box-office income £1,171,610. Other earned income £86,995. 128,869 seats sold. (108,724 own productions; 12,719 visiting productions; 7,426 touring).<sup>244</sup> SAC grants total £567,296 - £534,296 (main, standstill), creation of work fund £10,000, new writing £23,000. EDC main £491,510 (7% increase). Other local authorities £13,589. Sponsorships of £22,036. Surplus for the year of £45,608. Accumulated deficit now £384,618. Subsidies, that total £1,072,395, account for 46% of turnover, earned income ratio of 54%.<sup>245</sup>

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## 1995

LRC grants £20,000 (£22,600) for new post of education development officer and programme: Steven Small (1963- ) appointed - from Scottish Youth Theatre – presenting 'make-a-play' days for school students.<sup>246</sup> Benefits of staging *Bedroom Farce* as co-production with Salisbury Playhouse forfeited, when partner theatre goes into liquidation during 'pre-production'. First year of operation for SAC National Lottery Fund that begins distribution of 9% of the UK arts councils' 'good-cause' share of lottery proceeds – first framework restricts grants to 'capital' funding – company awarded grant of £786,355 (£857,127) being 81% 'partnership funding' towards costs of replacing seats, re-carpeting and improving disabled access.<sup>247</sup>

Trading company upturn, following efforts to attract daytime conference hires and functions in refurbished Henry Irving and Ellen Terry rooms (formerly theatre offices), menu improvements for in-house catering - and winning tender to run bars at adjacent Usher Hall.<sup>248</sup> Low attendance at Monday night performances haunts again: two-for-one ticket offers begun. Ticket price concessions now exclude Friday and Saturday evenings.<sup>249</sup> King's Theatre programmes 'weekly rep' for six week summer season: Ireland reports 'difficulty of open discussion at 'clash-diary' meetings, as they were chaired by EDC...stark conflict of interest'.<sup>250</sup> King's Theatre manager excuses drama programming on abduction of touring musicals by Festival Theatre.

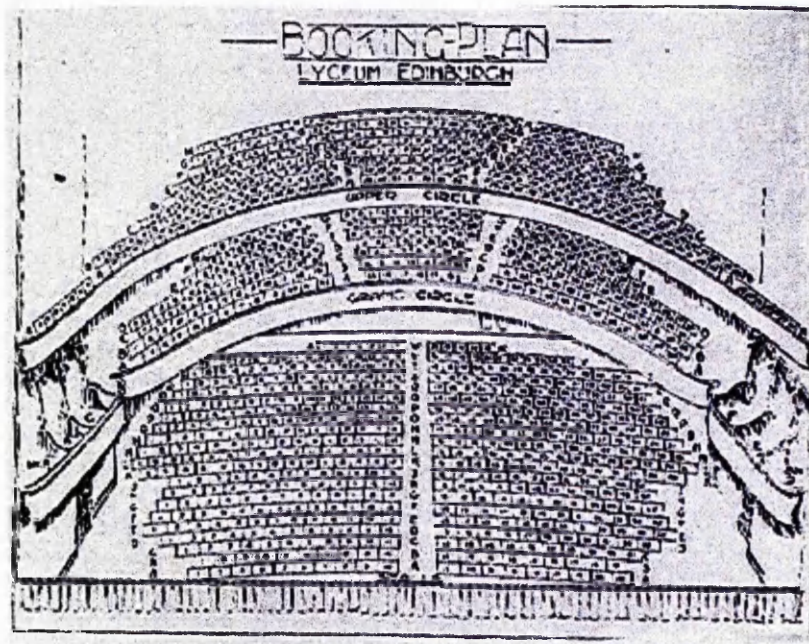
No EIF production. Lorne Boswell and Randall Stevenson resign: with chairman endeavouring to reduce board membership, they are not replaced. Stevenson remains on reconditioned artistic review committee, now chaired by Ireland with accent on 'seeing productions and researching programme ideas'.<sup>251</sup> Some directors attend SAC 'board development programme'.<sup>252</sup> Through-casting of ten actors, engaged as core for cumulatively larger casts in autumn season, nevertheless described as total ensemble in publicity. Playwrights Howard Barker (1946- ) and David Mamet (1947- ) lead Lyceum symposia. EDC move to increase theatre rent 40% from £50,000

(£54,500) to £70,000 (£76,300): assessment now based on company turnover, board claim unjust when EDC lease Festival Theatre rent-free to a similar constituted non-profit company, or Glasgow Corporation peppercorn rent charged to Citizens' Theatre. EDC negotiate, with agreement at £60,000.<sup>253</sup> Ireland hankers after portable theatre-module to tour 'outlying districts', so as to meet SAC access criteria. Plan akin to London Bubble Theatre, RSC and Manchester Royal Exchange mobile stages and auditoria; but considered quixotic by SAC.<sup>254</sup>

Thirtieth anniversary of founding of first Royal Lyceum Theatre Company: gala celebration - starring actors from 1965 opening production – launches £100,000 (£109,000) appeal for partnership funds for new seats, with net profit of £15,000 (£16,350).

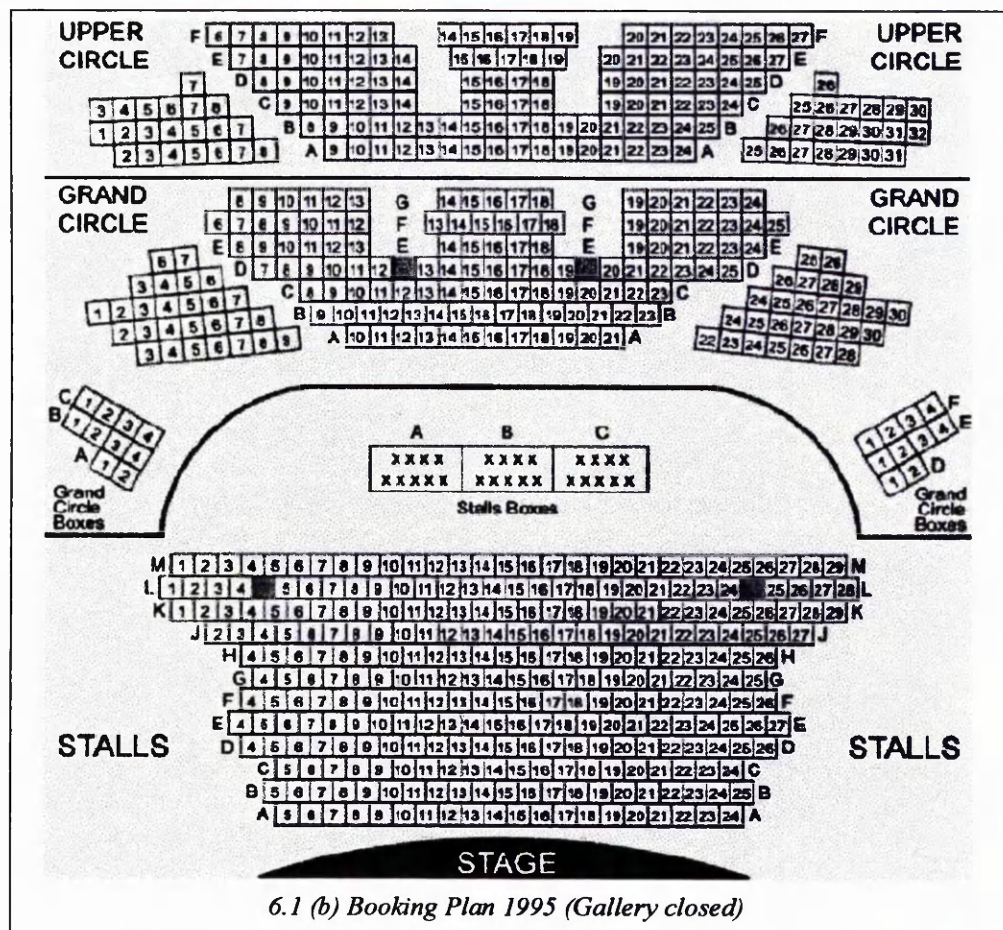
Law & Dunbar-Nasmith appointed feasibility consultant, then engaged as designer-architects for refurbishment.<sup>255</sup> Company negotiates forthcoming (1996) seating capacity reduction to 658 seats: stalls 288, grand circle 190, upper circle 180, with new rear-stalls boxes including wheelchair spaces and elimination of centre aisle in stalls – replaced by 'continental' layout and wider rows for improved access and legroom, as shown on this new seating plan:

**BOX 6.1 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE, EDINBURGH  
REPERTORY REDUCES SEATING CAPACITY OVER TIME:  
2,265 SEATS (1883) TO 658 SEATS (1996)**



*6.1 (a) Booking Plan 1883 without Gallery (unreserved)*





6.1 (b) Booking Plan 1995 (Gallery closed)

Second SAC National Lottery grant, for office computers. Company hosts Ireland's Wrestling School production *The Castle* (Howard Barker, 1985). Recurrent personnel problems with heads of departments: marketing manager Jessel leaves, replaced by Sally Wilson, from Brunton Theatre. New post of assistant general manager, Ruth Butterworth [née Dick]. Technical stage manager and bars supervisor dismissed. Master carpenter and company stage manager resign, among others.

General manager declares company 'unable to achieve income without more administrative staff...[we are] all being stretched to the limit with no spare capacity to develop additional events, conferences, guided tours, sales initiatives and wedding receptions'.<sup>256</sup> Chairman observes 'fixed costs keep going up and next year [we] have to earn an extra £120,000 (£128,400) at the box-office to support them: a major uplift in grants is needed...[we] must try to address some bigger problems'.<sup>257</sup>

EDC vote further grant of £238,000 to write-off capital debt: board applaud political dexterity of Councillor Cardownie for negotiating clearance of remaining 1991 reconstruction debt.<sup>258</sup> EDC request investigation of potential for Lyceum and Traverse cost-cutting integration: no economies identified. Education programme gives boost to high schools' attendance for *Hamlet*, described by Sunday Times critic as the 'best classical production he had seen in Scotland'.<sup>259</sup> Equity establishes The Theatre Commission to investigate state of subsidised theatre throughout UK.<sup>260</sup>

not actually a plan, as all increases in expenditure were added straightway, whereas in practice they would have to be phased.... the deficit figures were clearly not real.... all theatres agree this annual exercise is a meaningless process.... now we formulate our own strategic plan which will be realistic, appropriate and not just a form-filling exercise'.<sup>281</sup> Ireland supports tack: 'our work must never be compromised.... politicians much more likely to respond to debt crises and then ignore our little success story'.<sup>282</sup> Company website launched. Education programme waxes, with summer workshops more 'make-a-play' days and 'teach-ins' to accompany productions, attended by 2,073 young people.<sup>283</sup>

Withdrawal of SAC arts management training subsidy to AMTIS (1988), followed by transfer of subsidy to new Scottish Centre for Cultural Management and Policy (SCCMP) at Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh, that launches taught masters' courses, offered to snowballing profession of arts administration and 'cultural management'.

*The Steamie* (Tony Roper, 1987), *Of Mice and Men* (John Steinbeck, 1937), *Montrose* (Robert Forrest, world premiere), *Pygmalion* (Bernard Shaw, 1914, also toured to Stranraer, Dumfries, Ayr, Aberdeen, Kirkcaldy, Berwick upon Tweed and Glasgow), *Rough Crossing* (Tom Stoppard, 1984, after Ferenc Molnár, 1926), *Blithe Spirit* (Noël Coward, 1941), *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Edmond Rostand, 1897, revised trans. Edwin Morgan, 1996, expanded Communicado production now revived in co-production), *The Merchant of Venice* (William Shakespeare, 1596), *The Sleeping Beauty* (Stuart Paterson, 1995).

Year to 31 March 1997: Box-office income, £909,348. Other earned income £58,128. 105,929 seats sold. (85,982 own productions; 12,780 visiting productions; 7,167 touring).<sup>284</sup> SAC grants total £567,676 - £554,296 (main, standstill), towards Wrestling School visiting company fee £3,000, translation commission £4,000, new writing development projects £6,000, travel and training £380. CEC grants total £469,175 - main £447,273, plus £21,902 project grants (overall 8% cut). Other local authorities £23,970. Sponsorships of £58,289. Deficit for the year of £49,722. Accumulated deficit now £393,098. Subsidies, that total £1,060,821, account for 51% of turnover, earned income ratio of 49%.<sup>285</sup>

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1997

Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematography and Theatre Union (BECTU) negotiate new house agreement for all staff.<sup>286</sup> New development committee chaired by Neil Menzies, responsible for sponsorship and capital private sector appeals. Health and Safety audit points up need to refurbish antediluvian Roseburn workshops. Office space sub-let to Boilerhouse and Visible Fictions theatre companies, with no administrative support. No change in CEC revenue grant, where subsidies to other Edinburgh theatres cut by 6%, but Axford calculates local authority assistance reduced in real terms by annual £112,000 (£115,360) over past four years.<sup>287</sup> Foreboding sale of whole 30 Grindlay Street site threatens costly dilapidation order from prospective purchaser.<sup>288</sup>

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No in-house summer season: theatre closed, with artistic director advocating 'financial difficulties are a corporate responsibility of the council.... we may have to adopt creative solutions like abandoning the Lyceum and opening a studio theatre in the rehearsal space'.<sup>289</sup> Ireland asks for vote of confidence in quality of work that, board agrees, continues to meet their expectations.<sup>290</sup> New production of *The Cocktail Party* (T.S. Eliot, 1949) for EIF, play first staged in Edinburgh. Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST) reinvigorated, with chairman Hamish Glen (artistic director of Dundee Rep) and part-time director, Heather Baird, coordinating funding lobby and support network. Several theatres leave TMA, but company continues dual membership, pending future recognition by trades unions of FST as negotiating association. 47 member theatres now declared 'part of the Scottish national theatre community'. SAC National Lottery grants £10,000 (£10,300) towards another feasibility study on properties, undertaken by Edinburgh architects, The Appleton Partnership, with business plan by Ballantyne MacKay, Edinburgh: finding repairs required at 30b Grindlay Street in order of £250,000.<sup>291</sup> Later, complete study calls for £975,000 expenditure.<sup>292</sup>

Bank of Scotland issues Royal Lyceum Theatre affinity credit card, reckoned to yield £4,000 per annum from company rake of customer interest charges.<sup>293</sup> Only 50 issued in two years.<sup>294</sup> Subscription season reduced to six plays. New rules for National Lottery distribution enable stand-alone revenue funding for the arts: company now eligible to apply for 'human capital' grant schemes. SAC responding to new capital investment unleashed and problems of new or refurbished buildings' operation, launches 'advancement' programme, similar to ACE 'stabilisation' piloted from 1996, designed to make arts organisations 'more secure and sustainable... assuming little real growth in resources from public funds'.<sup>295</sup> Company seeks admission to programme, said to impregnate theatres with change and risk management skills, including review of entire creative process and mission, with reward of potential new working capital and debt mitigation, after management consultancy.<sup>296</sup> First application in vain, with SAC unconvinced 'that an ensemble company would necessarily result in better productions.... or raise already high production values.... or that co-productions and collaborations required additional funding.... [with] expressed concern over the lack of consistency in the standard of the company's work produced and ability to satisfactorily produce new work'.<sup>297</sup> Company resolves to re-apply. Ireland contests SAC criticisms, 'blanket statements are unhelpful: he had produced over 50 productions in his time here.... not possible to present a programme that was universally popular, some productions are bound to please more than others'.<sup>298</sup>

More visiting attractions than heretofore, including Reduced Shakespeare Company, Nippy Sweeties Theatre Company in *Shanghaied* (Liz Lochhead, 1988, then expanded by company commission for *Britannia Rules*, see 1998), *Slava's Snow Show*, fiddle and accordion concerts and Market Theatre of Johannesburg in *The Good Woman of Sharkville* (Janet Suzman, 1996, after ...*Setzuan*, Bertolt Brecht, 1940), presented to coincide with Commonwealth Heads of State meeting in Edinburgh. A high attendance for bought-in productions arouses board debate, with artistic director response: 'impossible to make direct comparisons with our own work.... we take risks with our own shows, less so with visiting companies.... meanwhile, the spread of visitors shows that we need a new model for repertory theatre, in order to retain and develop audiences'.<sup>299</sup> Ireland produces *Rigoletto*



(Giusspe Verdi, 1851), for Scottish Opera. Five more project grant applications submitted to SAC National Lottery: proving onerous without assistance from consultants. Councillor Donald Gorrie resigns from board after election as MP for Edinburgh West and after twenty years' service.<sup>300</sup> No founding directors remain, with longest-serving members, Councillor Steve Cardownie and Ginnie Atkinson, at five years. SAC favour fixed term board appointments, not exceeding five years. Company described as 'best theatre in Scotland' in *The Scotsman* arts review of the year.<sup>301</sup>

Labour government elected. Devolution referendum determines new Scottish Parliament with potential tax-raising authority, stimulating theatre and arts organisations to renew lobby for bigger subsidies.

*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (David Edgar 1996, from R.L.Stevenson, 1886), *Rebecca* (Daphne du Maurier, 1940, adapt. Clifford Williams, 1965), *Crimes of the Heart* (Beth Henley, 1981), *Translations* (Brian Friel, 1980), *The Maiden Stone* (Rona Munro, 1995), *The Cocktail Party* (T.S.Eliot, 1949, at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh for EIF), *The Steamie* (Tony Roper, 1987), *Dead Funny* (Terry Johnson, 1994, also toured to Aberdeen), *Much Ado About Nothing* (William Shakespeare, 1600), *Hansel and Gretel* (Stuart Paterson, world premiere).

Year to 31 March 1998: Box-office income, £1,089,593. Other earned income £66,154. 136,315 seats sold. (98,969 own productions; 26,486 visiting productions; 10,860 touring).<sup>302</sup> SAC grants total £587,644 - £564,296 (main, 2% increase), projects £10,000, play commission £4,000, new writing development projects £6,000, towards presentation of Market Theatre of Johannesburg £3,000, towards arts marketing conference attendance £198, arts management training £150. [SAC National Lottery grants: equipment replacement grant 'to enhance production values' £230,888; towards building improvement feasibility study £10,000, in capital account]. CEC main £447,273 (standstill). Other local authorities £34,357. Sponsorships of £52,537. Surplus for the year of £6,202. Accumulated deficit now £386,896. Subsidies, that total £1,069,274, account for 47% of turnover, earned income ratio of 53%.<sup>303</sup>

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## 1998

Monday night performances forsaken: reduced playing week reduces cost of staff overtime. Clare Simpson appointed marketing manager. Company joins marketing consortium, 'The Audience Business' – subsidised by SAC National Lottery and CEC to undertake 'strategic campaigns to raise the profile of the arts and generate new audiences',<sup>304</sup> for subscription of £2,400. First tactic, to lead short-breaks promotions for theatrical tourists from southeast England and hearing-impaired theatregoers. CEC delves into paring theatres' overheads with resource sharing enquiry. Council merges King's and Festival Theatres, entrusting directly managed King's to non-profit company, creating new Festival City Theatres Trust, akin to short-lived dual governance of Lyceum and King's by Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust in the 1970s.<sup>305</sup> With CEC total expenditure on culture at £20.2million, grants to external arts organisations now total £3.9million (of which company receives 10 per cent). Council publish first cohesive cultural policy, *Towards the New Enlightenment*. Proposes establishment of new

‘Cultural Partnership’ to ‘formalise and extend co-ordination and co-operation’ between arts organisations,

encouraging investment in a number of priority areas...[including] producing theatres in order for them to maintain and enhance quality of their work. This investment might enable them to generate extra productions for the city’s receiving and other touring theatres.... Edinburgh will gain [interalia] additional economic benefits for the city and its citizens, an improved quality of cultural life and a proper reflection of the city’s status as a European capital.<sup>306</sup>

SAC hold ‘Open Space’ drama conference as consultation exercise with theatres, creating task force to examine development of theatre for young people as top priority and, later, allocation of additional £500,000 in 1999, rising to £1,000,000 in 2000, for new ‘Scotland Onstage’ projects coffer to ‘re-invigorate drama... encourage Scottish theatre artists to think ambitiously.... raise standards.... stimulate audiences... and inspire other theatre artists’.<sup>307</sup> Company’s first two applications rejected.

Chairman Findlay resigns; succeeded by Dr Michael Shea (1938- ), author and former press secretary to HM The Queen.<sup>308</sup> Artistic director and general manager contracts run their course: extended to April, then August.<sup>309</sup> Meanwhile, general manager Axford in ink-slinging wrangles with artistic director, alleging intimidation. Complaints to board. Board engages lawyer to arbitrate, but finds ‘no substantial evidence of malpractice on Ireland’s behalf, seemingly accepting his behaviour was an inevitable part of the artistic temperament.’<sup>310</sup> Divided staff reaction, then board backs Ireland, renewing contract to 2002. Board takes line of least resistance, not renewing Axford’s contract. Ireland now sole artistic director *and* chief executive. New disciplinary procedure and harassment policy adopted.<sup>311</sup> Board meetings from now on begin with private session of non-executive directors. Job of manager still needs to be done, but no longer given equiponderance to artistic director. New structure of external affairs manager and administrative manager, responsible to artistic director and chief executive: Sadie McKinlay (1965- ) and Ruth Butterworth (1957- ) promoted, after open recruitment.<sup>312</sup> Ireland opts to use arrears of external engagement options, directing *The Crucible* (Arthur Miller, 1953) for the Touring Partnership and Churchill Theatre, Bromley, and *Playboy of the Western World* (John Millington Synge, 1907) for Stockholm Stadsteater.

First time for a Lord Provost on board – since John Millar and Kenneth W. Borthwick (1915-1998) were chairmen of Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust in 1975 and 1977 - when Eric Milligan (1951- ), Labour, joins as CEC nominee. Largest EIF production to date, *Life is a Dream* (Pedro de la Barca Calderón, 1635, trans. John Clifford, 1998), ranging over two years, co-produced with Barbican Centre, London and Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York. Second application for SAC ‘advancement’ grant successful, with promise of £500,000 comprising £100,000 for ‘marketing and audience development’, £150,000 for ‘development of fundraising and income generation’ with, ultimately, relief of £250,000 from accumulated deficit of £386,896 at 31 March 1998. Company agrees to pre-conditions and identifies areas of ‘change management’, including exploration of different artistic and operational models.<sup>313</sup> Artistic director investigates

amalgamation with Dundee Rep, seen as bridge to larger, shared ensemble company, foil to impending part-year operation and leg-up for national theatre.<sup>314</sup>

Millennium excitement sets in, with management tailing funding opportunities for Year 2000 festivities. Visible Fictions Theatre Company leaves Grindlay Street base, after only two years. New catering franchisee renames restaurant Tuscan Square. Property study recommends retention of 30b Grindlay Street offices and rehearsal rooms, now costing £41,000 rent, but company to endeavour freehold purchase, estimated at £375,000 with probable extra charge of £150,000 for breaking lease, with unhopeful chance of SAC National Lottery largesse.<sup>315</sup> Contraction of expenditure on actors' now lowest in company's history: five plays employ only five actors each. NCA publishes *Theatre in Crisis: the Plight of Regional Theatre*, claiming that SAC grants to repertory theatres have reduced, in real terms, by 8 per cent in a decade and that Lyceum subsidy – excluding local authorities – has decreased by £66,117, or 10 per cent.<sup>316</sup> Having flown the nest, the independent Communicado Theatre loses Gerard Mulgrew as artistic director in board row, replaced temporarily by Helena Kaut-Howson who renames company Archipelago before liquidation in 1999.

Passage of Working Time Regulations 1998 through Westminster (and European) parliament presages maximum 48-hour working week, with future impact on stage and production staffs (but not administrators), where overtime often worked; issues to figure in renegotiations of relevant provisions with trades unions.

*The Glass Menagerie* (Tennessee Williams, 1945), *Juno and the Paycock* (Seán O'Casey, 1924), *Mother Courage and Her Children* (Bertolt Brecht, 1941, trans. David Hare, 1995, co-production with Derby Playhouse), *Clay Bull* (Stewart Conn, 1998, world premiere), *A Stranger Came Ashore* (Fiona McGarry, 1998, after Molly Hunter, 1975, for Edinburgh International Children's Festival), *Whisky Galore* (Compton Mackenzie, 1948, adapt. Paul Godfrey, 1996, co-production with Mull Theatre), *Life is a Dream* (Pedro de la Barca Calderón, 1635, trans. John Clifford, 1998, EIF and Barbican Centre, London co-production, also toured to London and New York in 1999 revival), *Britannia Rules* (Liz Lochhead, world premiere), *Thérèse Raquin* (Emile Zola, 1867, adapt. Stuart Paterson, 1998, co-production with Communicado) *The Collector* (John Fowles, 1963, adapt. Mark Healy, 1998, co-production with Derby Playhouse), *The Snow Queen* (Stuart Paterson, 1983, rev. 1988, after Hans Christian Andersen, 1862).

Year to 31 March 1999: Box-office income, £680,063. Other earned income £494,823. 121,599 seats sold. (90,831 own productions; 13,520 own productions for schools, 12,809 visiting productions; 4,439 touring).<sup>317</sup> SAC grants total £603,446 - £564,296 (main, standstill), new writing projects £24,000, attendance at Dublin ticketing conference £150, access and participation £15,000. [SAC National Lottery pledge advancement grant of £500,000, not received or written off during year]. CEC main £389,129 (13% cut). Other local authorities £35,357. Sponsorships of £43,736. Surplus for the year of £40,139. Accumulated deficit now £346,757. Subsidies, that total £1,027,932 – excluding SAC advancement grant -

1999

Boilerhouse Theatre Company leaves Lyceum headquarters, after three years, for new 'cultural industries quarter' at refurbished Gateway Theatre, preferring administrative alliance with Queen Margaret University College. Long absence of management accountant Kennedy, due to work-related stress: ensuing lack of financial control and reportage.<sup>319</sup> Company exhibits seen at first FST 'Scottish Theatre Market Day', held at Citizens' Theatre.

CEC, at first refused £22,000,000 SAC National Lottery money to refurbish Usher Hall, begin lesser £8,500,000 upgrade, entreating neighbouring Lyceum and Traverse to associate with them, creating vibrant new 'cultural quarter', including shared box-office and marketing strategy.<sup>320</sup> Education work assisted by SAC National Lottery, with grants of £15,000 for second staff member and £4,493 for 'access and participation in new initiatives for 14-25 year olds'.<sup>321</sup> Eileen McCallum leaves board. Company solicitor Richard F. Findlay joins board.<sup>322</sup> Lead consultant for 'advancement' programme engaged: David Pratley returns, undertaking 'scoping study' for change management.<sup>323</sup>

Several subscribers revolted by blaspheming dialogue in *An Experienced Woman Gives Advice* (Iain Heggie, 1995): board orders postal survey of theatregoer preference, but Ireland defends conscience 'that repertory theatre has a responsibility to present a broad range of work'.<sup>324</sup> Scottish Hydro-Electric long-standing sponsorship of Highland tour consigned from Traverse, to back 54-performance tour of *Britannia Rules* (Liz Lochhead, 1998). New subscription season previewed with onstage excerpts, in manner of preceding Scottish Opera launches. Theatre manager Ford resigns, blaming stress induced by artistic director. Board adjure management to 'be very careful and keep a watchful eye on staff'.<sup>325</sup> Passage of Employment Relations Act 1999; seeks to encourage more flexible policies that would help to reduce high levels of work-related stress and improve morale.

National test case enables company - and other theatres - to claw back national insurance contributions paid on account of self-employed actors: £83,446 reserved for improving box-office systems and second sound technician but SAC recommend sum used to reduce deficit.<sup>326</sup> Company agrees to earmark £35,000 for debt. SAC National Lottery award £99,900 to Diva Productions for co-production with Lyceum and Tron Theatre of new musical, *Stiff!* (Forbes Masson, 1999). Ireland guarded about future collaborations with small companies, said to be inexperienced at touring and over-dependent on Lyceum infrastructure.<sup>327</sup>

Opening of new Scottish Parliament (with appointment of Rhona Brankin as deputy minister for sport and culture) rekindles debate on national theatre. Ireland professes Scottish theatre 'in danger of losing audience confidence and National Theatre would restore belief in quality theatre... company must make the argument for excellence... the National Theatre might have to be a package of various Scottish companies but should be focused at the Lyceum... there will be substantial sums of money invested... the Lyceum

and the rest of Scottish theatre should not be judged on what we are doing now with severely limited resources.<sup>328</sup> PR strategy group receives mentoring assistance from Fiona Hendry, courtesy of Arts & Business (formerly ABSA) and considers vulpine media campaign of 'cultivation evenings' to posit company at centre of national theatre debate. Later, Ireland gives oral evidence to Scottish Parliament Education, Culture and Sport Committee's inquiry into national arts companies.<sup>329</sup> Disquiet about decreasing theatre coverage in *The Scotsman* and postponement of overnight reviews, until the week after opening night.

No EIF production, but *Life is a Dream* - 1998 - tours to London and New York, including British Council reception for management intercourse with United States' theatre representatives. Managers return, offering board their observations on counterpart non-profit boards and fundraising duty, where 'they give or they get-off'. Chairman Shea responds, 'he would be looking for seriously rich members of the board'.<sup>330</sup> For first time, EIF commissions Traverse to produce at the Lyceum: *The Speculator* (David Greig, 1999). Cast of *Macbeth* (William Shakespeare, 1610) includes Lyceum Youth Theatre members, with near-capacity run, attracting 109 schools' parties - 3,300 pupils - trimming budgeted income from adult theatregoers by £5,000. Visiting companies include Theatre Babel in *King Lear* (William Shakespeare, 1605) and Reduced Shakespeare Company in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*. *Peter Pan* (J.M.Barrie, 1904 adapt. Stuart Paterson, 1997) breaks company box-office records, with surplus of £52,000.<sup>331</sup> SAC new writing development grants of £4,493 for future dramatisation of *Lord of the Flies* (William Golding, 1954) and £4,784 for new play about George Eliot (1819-1880). SAC National Lottery grants £69,999 for 'ongoing programme of events and opportunities for children and young people'.<sup>332</sup> 3,132 subscribers, now 23 per cent of year's attendance for in-house productions.

Data Protection Act (1998) now in force, including company registration; elicits more professional 'customer' relations at the box-office, with sensitive sharing of patron and donor mailing list information with other theatres.<sup>333</sup>

*The Deep Blue Sea* (Terence Rattigan, 1952), *The Anatomist* (James Bridie, 1930), *An Experienced Woman Gives Advice* (Iain Heggie, 1995), *Stiff!* (Forbes Masson, 1999, co-production with Diva Productions and Tron Theatre, Glasgow, also toured to Dundee, Stirling and Glasgow), *Britannia Rules* (Liz Lochhead, 1998, return performances, also toured to Aberdeen, Innverness, Glasgow, Ayr, Perth, Kirkcaldy and Kirkwall), *Things We Do for Love* (Alan Ayckbourn, 1997, co-production with Perth Theatre), *Lovers* (Brian Friel, 1967), *The Clearing* (Helen Edmundson, 1994 - presentation of Stellar Quines Theatre Company production, within subscription series), *Macbeth* (William Shakespeare, 1610), *Peter Pan* (J.M.Barrie, 1904 adapt. Stuart Paterson, 1999).

Year to 31 March 2000: Box-office income, £763,596. Other earned income £402,216. 122,677 seats sold. (95,695 own productions; 16,119 visiting productions; 10,863 touring).<sup>334</sup> SAC grants total £691,999 - £578,396 (main, 2% increase), new writing commission £4,784, new writing development £18,000, new writing activities £8,070, marketing training

£250, buildings development study £12,500, events and opportunities for young people £69,999. [No 'advancement' monies received in this financial year; first call being to consultancy teams paid direct by SAC]. CEC main £389,129 (standstill). Other local authorities £35,357. Sponsorships of £64,611. Surplus for the year of £103,976. Accumulated deficit now £242,790. Subsidies, that total £1,165,485, account for 50% of turnover, earned income ratio of 50%.<sup>335</sup>

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2000

Lyceum Youth Theatre - now with 180 members aged 11 to 22, some of who continue to perform as supernumeraries in large cast productions – stage one-performance revue at Millennium Dome, Greenwich in member-written play, *This Here Now* (Tim Primrose, 2000), also toured to Stirling and St Andrews. 18-year-old Primrose then writes *Porcelain Dolls*, for company youth theatre production in 2001 at Garage Theatre, Edinburgh. Company awarded prestigious Linbury Prize of £14,000 to engage young designer, Isla Shaw, for Lyceum's second promenade production, *Phaedre*, with costly settings. 'Pay What You Can' performances introduced. Restaurant franchisee loses money, blamed on downfall in custom during closure of Usher Hall: company loss of £2,000 on deal that is £15,000 plus share of turnover.<sup>336</sup>

After one-year fatiguing negotiation, conducted through lawyers, company unable to settle proposed new sub-letting contract with EIF, now pinned down between £55,000 and £65,000 for four weeks, reflecting improvements to technical facilities that Festival disregards. Board favours resort to CEC arbitration, or trust in Lord Provost – who is chairman of EIF – to reach compromise. Conformity with Festival Theatre's long-term contract with EIF cited – where full theatre costs are reimbursed – with board suggesting 'if this cannot be agreed [by November] we should be freed of obligations to the festival.... we are encouraged to be commercial, so putting on our own show would not be a threat to the festival.... Our rent charged had only increased by inflation over five years without any charges for improvements to the building'.<sup>337</sup> Temporary contract for 2000, agreed at last-minute.<sup>338</sup>

Grindlay Street property owner attempts to increase rent from £41,000 to £76,500. Ireland in shemuzzle with assistant artistic director: board back Ireland's desire for restructuring and negotiate termination settlement with Gale, who joins EIF. Ireland now responsible for contract negotiations. Tony Cownie appointed associate director, for one season.<sup>339</sup> Staff insecurity bristles, when human resources consultant, Pat Tomlin, undertakes 'skills matching' for new 'job descriptions' integrant to management restructuring for 'advancement' strategy. New senior posts created: development director, administration director and production director, together with new assistants to them, with departments now styled 'business units'. Clare Simpson now development director, with additional post of business development manager and assistant.<sup>340</sup> Exhibition of paintings by members of staff, in Howard Bar. Boomerang Loyalty Card launched, whereby eighth show is free for theatregoers who have seen seven productions.

Westminster Finance Bill 2000 heralds biggest overhaul to tax regime for



arts organisations since company's charity registration: simplified tax rules for donations, gift aid, income tax relief for gifts of shares, payroll giving and cash donations offer Royal Lyceum new potential for private income.<sup>341</sup> Scottish Executive promises 'bonfire of quangos', including review of SAC.

Actor Jennifer Black joins board, plus stockbroker Vikram Lall (1946- ), first member representative of ethnic minorities on board of any Scottish repertory theatre.<sup>342</sup> Board welcomes periodical – and progressively formal – meetings of chairs of 30 Scottish theatres and companies. SAC project grant of £39,937 to find 'new audiences' by counterbalancing overtime costs of Sunday afternoon performances, with free crèche, said in company application to be 'groundbreaking new initiative'.<sup>343</sup> CEC pledge £90,000 capital expenditure for 2002, for installation of backstage lift and toilets for disabled actors and staff.<sup>344</sup>

Suspect Culture among visiting companies, in *Candide* (David Greig et al., 1999, after Voltaire, 1759). Chairman Shea hantels presentation of Nationaltheatret, Oslo in *A Doll's House* (Henrik Ibsen, 1879), staged in week before EIF and then at Nottingham Playhouse, each with financial assistance from Norwegian Ministry of Culture. Occasion synchronised with launch at Lyceum of FST 'Proposal for a National Theatre for Scotland'.<sup>345</sup> Later, Scottish Executive publishes national cultural strategy, calling for development of Scottish national theatre proposal.<sup>346</sup> No production for EIF. Season showcases given at Craigmillar and Craigroyston. Responding to buildings study, SAC National Lottery offer conditional £635,679 capital grant, being 78 per cent of freehold purchase – from London property company – and repairs to 30b Grindlay Street premises, plus pressing health and safety upgrades to Roseburn workshops, that would make company more self-sufficient and, eventually, lighten need for future revenue grant increases. However, intricate matching funding time limit requirements put company in catch-22 situation, with procrastinating CEC divided between revenue and capital solutions, freehold and leasehold options and between needs of all Edinburgh theatres, with window of opportunity to purchase closing, at year-end. Chairman Shea remonstrates:

This process with the city council has been going on for eighteen months.... this is an impossible situation, one-third of the board have divided loyalties.... the theatre must not be a political football.... too many conflicts of interest for councillor board members who sit on too many committees and arts boards.<sup>347</sup>

New restaurant franchisee: Marque Central. Upsurge of weekend theatregoers jostled by drunks in vicinity of Lyceum, said to deter audience development. 2,869 subscribers to six-play season, on sale between 21-and-28 per cent off casual ticket prices, with further discounts on programmes and a glass of wine. Casual prices now £7, £10, £12, £13.50 and £15.00 Tuesday to Thursday with £2 concessions and £8 to £17.50 on Friday and Saturday with no concessions.<sup>348</sup> 'Touch Tours' introduced, for sight-impaired theatregoers, organised by Audio Description Association (Scotland), and assisted by Adapt Trust and Guide Dog for the Blind Association.<sup>349</sup> ACE publish review of roles and functions of English repertory theatres, leading to government pledge of £25,000,000 extra theatre subsidy to English theatre over three years.<sup>350</sup> Precedent – and

demands from Scottish repertory theatres – leads SAC to commission similar review, engaging consultants, Scottish Cultural Enterprise Ltd, to screen repertory theatres from 1994-1995 to 1999-2000. Report to be completed in May 2001, with look-alike brief to ‘explore wider factors that may impact upon future development of the sector, such as changing lifestyles, work patterns and the rapidly evolving world of digital media-entertainment both in terms of patterns of consumption and finance... to work with the sector and SAC to help develop a vision, or visions for what theatre for the twenty-first-century in Scotland should be’.<sup>351</sup>

*Writer’s Cramp* (John Byrne, 1977), *Three Sisters* (Anton Chekhov, 1901, adapt. Liz Lochhead, 2000), *The Shaughraun* (Dion Boucicault, 1874), *Phaedra* (Edwin Morgan, 2000, after Jean Racine, 1677), *Same Time, Next Year* (Bernard Slade, 1976), *Lovers* (Brian Friel, 1967 – revival of 1999 production, also toured to Aberdeen), *The Hypochondriak* (Hector MacMillian, 1986, after *Le Malade Imaginaire*, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, 1673), *Romeo and Juliet* (William Shakespeare, 1597), *Cinderella* (Stuart Paterson, 1989).

Balance of subscription season staged to May 2001: *A Listening Heaven* (Torben Betts, 1999), *A View from the Bridge* (Arthur Miller, 1955), *Casanova* (David Greig, 2001, presentation of Suspect Culture production within subscription season), *Guys and Dolls* (Damon Runyon, Frank Loesser, Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows, 1950), *Woyzeck* (Georg Büchner, 1837, adapt. David Harrower, 2001, co-production with KtC, Glasgow). EIF invites company to produce *Too Late for Logic* (Tom Murphy, 1989) for 2001 festival, at the King’s Theatre with Scottish actors, to be directed by former Abbey Theatre artistic director Patrick Mason (1951- ).

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Young McClelland Moores & Co., *Edinburgh and Lothian Theatre Trust Limited, Report and Accounts for the period ended 31 May 1977*, p.2. The Trust ceased trading on 26 March 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Registrar of Companies, *Certificate of Incorporation, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited*, No. 62065, Edinburgh, 28 March 1977.

<sup>3</sup> BM, 30 December 1976, p.1. All board minutes [BM] are stored at the registered office of the Company, 30b Grindlay Street, Edinburgh. Explanation about their composition is called for. As in the first Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, minutes were written by successive general managers. They acted as secretary to the board, although they were not always the *company* secretary; that statutory function has often been undertaken by the firm’s solicitors. Each manager imposed their own style and the amount of information included seems largely to have been their decision, no doubt on the approval of the chairman who would be attentive to the record before circulation to the board. Hence, the years of Roger Spence’s management were accompanied by fullsome recordings, whereas his predecessors offered only brief annotations. In any case, any manager and the chairman would have to consider tactful relations with the Scottish Arts Council and the local authority; the blending of fact with the opinions of board members would vary according to the state of relations because of the minutes’ circulation beyond the board members. One unifying aspect is that minutes have been numbered cumulatively within each meeting, not from the start of the business or within each financial or calendar year, as they are in many firms. More significantly for the operation of the company, ‘resolutions’ have never been accentuated as such, nor have records of longer-term decisions been transferred to any ‘standing orders’ book or manual. Hence, for this study, the minutes are of variable use, but in most instances I was confident of their implications after checking correspondence, allied Scottish Arts Council annual reports and papers or, occasionally, receiving clarification from the protagonists directly. Since 1999,

when the then company secretary Richard F. Findlay was appointed a director and the theatre no longer employed a general manager, minute writing became his additional duty.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen MacDonald, 'The Little Lyceum Theatre', Programme, *Play Donkey*, Edinburgh, Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 20 April 1977, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> BM, 17 December 1976, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> BM, 30 December 1976, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> The Royal Lyceum Theatre Club was founded in 1966 as an adjunct supporters' society, chaired by Professor K.J. Fielding of the University of Edinburgh. At the time of the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust's second-year operation, its membership was 300, with subscription of 50p per annum (students and pensioners 25p). The membership never exceeded 1,000, although it aimed for 3,000 enrolments. Like many repertory clubs, it was a member of the Federation of Playgoers' Societies - styled 'National' from 1983 - that had a Scottish offshoot. This concatenation of theatregoers worked to keep companies mettlesome and solvent, through the efforts of the *audience*. The Federation, based at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford and organised by Jack W. Penycate (1919- ), held an annual conference at a repertory theatre and assembled social outings, notably summer pilgrimages to Pitlochry Festival Theatre. The Royal Lyceum Theatre Club, like most others, was represented on the board of the theatre, reciprocated by representation on the Club committee. Relations with the company were congenial, but its influence - like that of the Federation - decreased as members sensed indifference from successive artistic directors. This is, arguably, part and parcel of many repertory theatres' turning away from personal contact with theatregoers, favouring clinical marketing schemes such as 'loyalty cards' over a relaxed 'club atmosphere'. The goodwill generated by a gregarious hand-shaking manager who knew the public as individuals and made the foyers a meeting place, is a time-honoured but bygone custom for the Royal Lyceum Theatre senior managers today. Instead, as in many other businesses, friendship yielded to 'customer relationship management'; in 1999, a magnified photograph of the artistic director glared down from above the foyer fireplace (where once was positioned the bust of Henry Irving) accompanied by a *written* welcome. The Federation was disbanded in 1993, although a smaller grouping of 90 individuals and ten supporters' clubs emanating from the Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon - 'Audience for Regional Theatre' - has organised an annual conference since 1997. Signally, the new organisation's member clubs are all based on touring theatres, where livewire managers more often play the 'perfect host'.

<sup>8</sup> Company press statement, 26 August 1977.

<sup>9</sup> Scottish Arts Council press statement, 26 August 1977.

<sup>10</sup> BM, 26 August 1977, p.3.

<sup>11</sup> BM, 22 December 1977, p.5.

<sup>12</sup> BM, 16 September 1977, p.3.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Phillips, *The Arts in the Scottish Regions: An Enquiry into Methods of Developing the Provision, Practice and Appreciation of the Arts Throughout Scotland*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1977, p.22. This may be one of its last clearheaded advocacy documents, written before an infection of vague management-speak accompanied desire to become a 'development agency', advancing small companies in a miniature 'arts industry'. Hereafter, SAC reports betray a shifting away from direct enthusiasms, mutual understanding and overt moral support for the existing theatres, with new ambivalence to the complexities of large repertory organisations. The enquiry was undertaken because of local government reorganisation, at the same time as Lord Redcliffe-Maud's report, *Support for the Arts in England and Wales*, London, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1976. (The author's research partner was Anthony Wraight, who became SAC drama director). A big question in Scotland was whether to introduce the English and Welsh precedent of an intermediary layer of arts funding - regional arts associations - but the SAC enquiry recommended against, believing that it should continue to look first and foremost to local government for sharing the responsibility of subsidy.

<sup>14</sup> Consultative Committee on The Curriculum, *Drama in Scottish Schools: a discussion document. Report of the Working Party on Drama appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland*, Edinburgh, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1977.

<sup>15</sup> Ludovic Kennedy, *Annual Report for the period ending 31 March 1978*, Edinburgh, 5 September 1978, p.2.

<sup>16</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Revenue Account for the period ending 31 March 1978*, Edinburgh, 5 September 1978, pp. 4-6.

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- <sup>17</sup> BM, 22 December 1977, p.5.
- <sup>18</sup> BM, 17 February 1978, p.2.
- <sup>19</sup> BM, 23 March 1979, p.4.
- <sup>20</sup> BM, 17 March 1978, p.9.
- <sup>21</sup> BM, 20 April, 1978, p.4.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ian Brown, 'Holiday Snaps, or the Byzantine Factor: Ian Brown looks back at a Byzantine holiday in 1978 which changed the face of the Royal Lyceum', *Scottish Theatre News*, Edinburgh, July 1983, No.29, pp.30-33.
- <sup>24</sup> BM, 10 July 1978, p.4.
- <sup>25</sup> BM, 25 August 1978, p.4.
- <sup>26</sup> BM, 2 November 1978, p.3.
- <sup>27</sup> BM, 1 December 1978, p.4. Lawton had a reputation as a box-office 'fixer', telling the press (and presumably also the Royal Lyceum board) that he had taken attendance at Liverpool Playhouse from 30 per cent to 70 per cent capacity in four years. See Charles Hart, 'Leslie Lawton the Fixer', *Scottish Theatre News*, Glasgow, Scottish Society of Playwrights, July 1981, pp. 4-8. Perhaps he accomplished this by over-expensive productions, for otherwise the achievement does not tally with the deficits accumulated in his Liverpool tenure: in today's approximate value, they totalled £202,622. See Pelham McMahon and Pam Brooks, *An Actor's Place: The Liverpool Repertory Company at Liverpool Playhouse, 1911-1998*, op.cit, p.162. Whilst it may be understandable that the Edinburgh board was keen to employ someone who would nominate 'safer' plays, it is intriguing to speculate whether they took up the references associated with 'head-hunting' today. Nevertheless, the remarkable upturn in Liverpool attendances during Lawton's tenure is probably part of the upsetting tendency for new artistic directors to ignore or even disparage their predecessors' achievements. At Liverpool, Lawton had succeeded Antony Tuckey (1932- ), whose six years yielded lower accumulated deficits: £76,504 in today's value. Once aboard the artistic director merry-go-round, these powerful people rarely regard a company as a continuum. Drama critics promote these watersheds, defining a theatre firstly by the artistic director, as in 'Leslie Lawton's Lyceum', 'Jude Kelly's West Yorkshire Playhouse' and even 'Richard Eyre's Royal National Theatre'.
- <sup>28</sup> For the plan of this touring repertory company, that was started firstly to take productions to theatres without a resident company – such as Aberdeen, Inverness, Ayr and Stirling – and by courtesy to the Royal Lyceum Theatre – see Ewan Hooper, *A New Scottish Theatre: a report to the Scottish Arts Council*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1979. Theatre managers retreated from initial enthusiasm when attendances were down and the company lasted only five years, hobbling between incompatible ambitions and remit to develop Scottish drama whilst performing infrequently in big theatres in disparate communities. Latterly, Tom Fleming became artistic director. No reference is made to this company in the 2001 scheme for a Scottish national theatre.
- <sup>29</sup> Peter Lichtenfels and Anthony Phillips, *Professional drama provision in the City of Aberdeen and Grampian Region*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1978, p.24. Without exception, local authority response to proposals for professional repertory in Aberdeen has led to confirmation and expansion of touring opportunities for the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company or, after an acting ensemble was established at Dundee Rep in 1997, frequent tours by the company nearer at hand. It ought to have been possible to attract SAC money for a new 'civic' repertory fashioned on the lines of the Edinburgh company. Instead, having purchased His Majesty's Theatre in 1975 from Howard and Wyndham, Aberdeen retained its commercial theatre manager James Donald, encouraging him in continuing to welcome conventional incoming companies, recognising the lower financial risk to the council. For another unrewarded attempt at repertory in Aberdeen, see David Fishel, *A Professional Theatre Company for Aberdeen*, Liverpool, Positive Solutions, 1995.
- <sup>30</sup> Ludovic Kennedy, *Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1979*, Edinburgh, 31 July 1978, p.1.
- <sup>31</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Revenue Account for the year ending 31 March 1979*, Edinburgh, 31 July 1979, p.8.
- <sup>32</sup> BM, 23 February 1979, p.3
- <sup>33</sup> BM, 23 March 1979, p.2, refers to a special meeting with Leslie Lawton, 24 February 1979.
- <sup>34</sup> BM, 8 May 1979, p.4.

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- <sup>35</sup> BM, 8 May 1979, p.2.
- <sup>36</sup> BM, 23 March 1979, p.4.
- <sup>37</sup> BM, 31 October 1979, p.3. *The Scotsman* report, 31 October 1979, p.1, coincided with this board meeting.
- <sup>38</sup> Value Added Tax was introduced on 1 April 1973, levied at 10 per cent on outputs until 20 July 1974, 8 per cent until 18 June 1979, 15 per cent until 1 April 1991 and 17.5 per cent thereafter.
- <sup>39</sup> BM, 8 May 1979, p.3 and 30 August 1979, p.3.
- <sup>40</sup> BM, 30 August 1979, p.2.
- <sup>41</sup> BM, 30 August 1979, p.4.
- <sup>42</sup> In turn, the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London took over management of this production in Edinburgh, revived it in September 1981, at their studio theatre. See Joyce McMillan, *The Traverse Theatre Story*, London, Methuen, 1988, pp. 83 and 160.
- <sup>43</sup> Ludovic Kennedy, *Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1980*, Edinburgh, 25 July 1980, p.1.
- <sup>44</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Revenue Account for the year ending 31 March 1980*, Edinburgh, 25 July 1980, p.8.
- <sup>45</sup> BM, 7 December 1979, p.2.
- <sup>46</sup> BM, 22 August 1980, p.2.
- <sup>47</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Operating Account for the year ending 31 March 1980*, op.cit, p.8.
- <sup>48</sup> Ludovic Kennedy, *Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1981*, Edinburgh, 21 July 1981, p.1.
- <sup>49</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Operating Account for the year ending 31 March 1981*, Edinburgh, 21 July 1981, p.8.
- <sup>50</sup> BM, 16 November 1981, p.4.
- <sup>51</sup> Ludovic Kennedy, *Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1982*, Edinburgh, 9 August 1982, p.2.
- <sup>52</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Operating Account for the year ending 31 March 1982*, Edinburgh, 9 August 1982, p.8.
- <sup>53</sup> Ludovic Kennedy, *Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1982*, op.cit., p.2.
- <sup>54</sup> BM, 24 May 1982, p.3.
- <sup>55</sup> BM, 11 June 1982, p.3.
- <sup>56</sup> Ludovic Kennedy, *Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1983*, Edinburgh, 3 August 1982, p.3.
- <sup>57</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Operating Account for the year ending 31 March 1983*, Edinburgh, 3 August 1982, p.8.
- <sup>58</sup> Donald Campbell, *A Brighter Sunshine, A Hundred Years of the Edinburgh Royal Lyceum Theatre*, op.cit.
- <sup>59</sup> BM, 16 July 1984, p.2.
- <sup>60</sup> Callum Mill had performed in the first production of the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust Limited management: *The Servant O Twa Maisters*, in 1965. He was director of the Edinburgh Film Festival (1957-1958), director of the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow (1960-1962) and a resident director at The Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh in 1964.
- <sup>61</sup> BM, 3 August 1983, p.2.
- <sup>62</sup> BM, 14 March 1983, p.3.
- <sup>63</sup> BM, 14 March 1983, p.3 and BM, 23 November 1983, p.4.
- <sup>64</sup> BM, 23 November 1983, p.4.
- <sup>65</sup> At the meeting of Directors on 4 July 1983, BM artistic director Leslie Lawton was neither 'in attendance' nor his apologies for absence recorded. The minute summarises opinions of ten board members, leading to their resolve to advertise the post after the artistic sub-committee considered a timetable for the new appointment.
- <sup>66</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *The Scottish Arts Council Report 1983-84*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, p.18.

<sup>67</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Operating Account for the year ending 31 March 1984*, Edinburgh, 13 September 1984, p.4.

<sup>68</sup> For an interview concerning Wooldridge's aspirations for the company, see Peter Whitebrook, 'Preparation and Patience', *Scottish Theatre News*, Glasgow, *Scottish Theatre News*, January 1984, No.34, pp. 3-5, in which he states, with refreshing candour:

I have never run a main house, I have no assumptions about how it should be done and I believe that is an advantage. I have observed how the Citizens' works and I think it is managed par excellence. With the Lyceum, there are three important areas: the repertoire first and foremost, effective marketing and the image of the theatre as a whole... Audiences generally have been turning away from the main houses to the touring companies and I have to win them back... I don't know what the public want to see, but I don't think that just having a guess and presenting what is thought the public want to see is the right way to produce a repertoire. I believe that if I do the work I'm committed to and do it excellently, the public will respond.

<sup>69</sup> BM, 23 November 1983, p.1.

<sup>70</sup> A first call on receipts to Wildcat and 7:84 can be seen as a generous arrangement for these companies.

<sup>71</sup> BM, 24 January 1984, p.1.

<sup>72</sup> Peter Whitebrook, in *Scottish Theatre News*, Glasgow, *Scottish Theatre News*, August 1984, No. 40, p.23.

<sup>73</sup> BM, 24 January 1984, p.3.

<sup>74</sup> BM, 13 March 1984, p.1 and BM 9 May 1984, p.2. The Urwick Orr report led to an SAC austerity policy document, *The Next Five Years: A Programme for Change and Development*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 6 June 1984. This SAC report was synchronous to William Rees-Mogg, *The Glory of the Garden: The Development of the Arts in England – A Strategy for a Decade*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1984. Savings of £200,000 (£366,000) from allocations to the repertory theatres were forecast to derive from management mergers and shared organisation. Largely driven by local government reorganisation in England and the Arts Council of Great Britain's response south of the border, both reports hastened the Scottish theatres to demand that SAC must be a more responsive and autonomous grant distributor, tied in no way to London, with more resolve to develop Scotland's differentiating theatre culture.

<sup>75</sup> BM, 16 July 1984, p.4.

<sup>76</sup> BM, 13 March 1984, p.3.

<sup>77</sup> BM, 16 July 1984, p.4.

<sup>78</sup> BM, 29 October 1984, p.2 records Campbell's candidature against that of the writer-academic Angus Calder (1942- ), with the board voting by secret ballot and, following a draw, Kennedy using a casting vote in favour of Campbell. Calder was then appointed to the board. Other minutes document EDC labour group nominee directors' opposition to Campbell because of his political affiliations.

<sup>79</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1984-85*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1985, p.22.

<sup>80</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Profit and Loss Account for the year ended 31 March 1985*, Edinburgh, 16 September 1985, p.4.

<sup>81</sup> BM, 22 April 1985, p.4.

<sup>82</sup> The heads of department were assistant general manager, whose responsibilities were front of house, box office, theatre maintenance and payroll; the press and publicity manager; the production manager, in charge of stage management, technicians, workshops and production expenditure; the head of design and associate director.

<sup>83</sup> Despite this reformist resolution, there is no evidence in subsequent board minutes of it ever being addressed. I found only two occasions when heads of department - other than the management accountant - attended the board, summoned for part of a board meeting to discuss a catering or marketing strategy.

<sup>84</sup> BM, 8 July 1985, p.3, details an extensive discussion of this subject, particularly EDC nominee directors' Paolo Vestri and George Kerevan who sought to allay management's fears of council intrusiveness.

<sup>85</sup> Tom McGrath describes his work as associate literary director in 'Blowing the Changes: Impressions of a Playwright's Year', *Chapman 49*, Blackford, *Chapman Magazine*, Summer 1987, Vol. IX, No. 6, pp. 60-66.

<sup>86</sup> BM, 4 November 1985, p.2.



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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> BM, 13 January 1986, p.2.

<sup>89</sup> BM, 4 November 1985, p.5.

<sup>90</sup> Kenneth Cork, *Theatre is for all: Report of the Enquiry into Professional Theatre in England*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, September 1986, p.6. This was the most probing enquiry since 1970. (C.f., Hugh Willatt, (ed.), *The Theatre Today: Report of the Arts Council Theatre Enquiry, 1970*, op.cit.). In theatre circles, the Cork report – that was researched and written by the former Royal Lyceum playwright Ian Brown (1945- ), who then became drama director of the Arts Council of Great Britain until 1994 – was widely considered a last-ditch opportunity to revitalise theatre in England (and indeed the whole United Kingdom) rather than witness the failure of a ‘major industry’ which was now considered to be ‘a substantial earner of national income’ through its impact on tourism. The idea of six national theatres in the regions was a call to redress the imbalance of repertory theatre funding to that of the National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company. Other repertory theatres were outraged at the prospect of this selectivity, and the proposal came to nothing. Instead, one result was the growth of small touring companies with their adventurous new work, such as Gloria Theatre and Odyssey Theatre in England. By now, all arts councils operated in a monetarist culture and the recommendations – unlike those of the 1970 report – were measured in terms of financial gain rather than the art of the theatre.

<sup>91</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1985-86*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1986, p.24.

<sup>92</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 1986*, Edinburgh, 29 September 1986, p.4.

<sup>93</sup> BM, 13 January 1986, p.3.

<sup>94</sup> Roger Drage, *Company Report and Business Plan: The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company*, Edinburgh, London, Princedale Associates, 18 April 1986, p.2. External consultancies for subsidised theatre companies became the order of the day after searching reviews of the Royal Shakespeare Company and The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in 1984. See Clive Priestley, *Financial Scrutiny of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Volumes I and II*, London, HMSO, 1984. Priestley’s immense and perspicacious study – that remains an exemplar for theatre management enquiry today – was presaged by the announcement in 1983 that £5,000,000 supplementary provision would be given to ACGB for the reduction of deficits in many theatres, providing they were well-managed. From this time, arts councils spent large sums in commissioning ‘independent’ counsel, using the findings to argue for increased treasury money, in the suspicion that governments discredited their own analysis as one-sided, or a company’s self-explanations as all the more partisan.

<sup>95</sup> Roger Drage, *Company Report and Business Plan: The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company*, Edinburgh, op.cit, pp.26-27.

<sup>96</sup> Timothy Mason and Paul Pia, *Care Diligence and Skill, a handbook for the governing bodies of arts organisations*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1986. This is a British edition of the original Australian version by Timothy Pascoe, Sydney, A.R.T.S. Limited, 1979. SAC has published four subsequent editions to 1995, the last edited by Graham Berry and Paul Pia.

<sup>97</sup> BM, 29 September 1986, p.4.

<sup>98</sup> BM, 27 October 1986, p.4 and BM, 15 December 1986, p.4.

<sup>99</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1986-97*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1987, p.27.

<sup>100</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 1987*, Edinburgh, 4 August 1987, p.4.

<sup>101</sup> Heather Baird, *Report on relationship between Communicado and The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited*, Edinburgh, Communicado Theatre, 15 March 1991.

<sup>102</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1987-88*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1988, p.30.

<sup>103</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Sponsorship Survey 1987*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1988, p.4.

<sup>104</sup> BM, 15 June 1987, p.4.

<sup>105</sup> BM, 15 June 1987, p.5.

<sup>106</sup> BM, 15 June 1987, p.5.

- <sup>107</sup> BM, 21 September 1987, pp. 2-3 records a forcible response from EDC councillor nominee directors, with Councillor Donald Gorrie, chairman of the finance committee, tranquillising the three parties.
- <sup>108</sup> For a full account of the campaign to build an opera house on the Castle Terrace site, and improve the Royal Lyceum Theatre, see 'The hole in the ground', Eileen Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival 1947-1996*, Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1996, pp.151-155.
- <sup>109</sup> BM, 21 September 1987, p.3.
- <sup>110</sup> BM, 21 September 1987, p.5.
- <sup>111</sup> BM, 29 October 1987, p.1.
- <sup>112</sup> BM, 22 December 1987, p.2. Theatre managers retreated from their initial enthusiasm for Scottish Theatre Company, when attendances were down. This company lasted only five years, hobbling between incompatible ambitions to develop Scottish drama whilst performing infrequently in big theatres in dissimilar communities. Latterly, Tom Fleming became artistic director. A study of the circumstances of this collapse could impress planners for the 2000-2001 FST schemes for the next Scottish national theatre.
- <sup>113</sup> Although it has been customary to discount tickets for group bookings of a minimum number, party organisers reclaimed up to half of transport costs until 1974, one third thereafter. Since 1993, the company decreased reimbursement to 20 per cent, finding the money from marketing budgets. Today, an annual sum close on £4,000 is paid.
- <sup>114</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1987-88*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1988, p.28.
- <sup>115</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 1988*, Edinburgh, 25 July 1988, p.10.
- <sup>116</sup> BM, 8 February 1988, p.6.
- <sup>117</sup> See Mary Allen and Howard Webber, *Incentive Funding, The First Year*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1989. The first award to a Scottish theatre was at Pitlochry Festival Theatre where, after moving into a new theatre in 1981, that company had made substantial losses until 1986. Receipt of £96,000 'incentive funding', combined with the arrival of a new festival director in 1987 – the former Royal Lyceum artistic director Clive Perry – led to reinstatement of the policy of six plays in repertoire, longer planning times and, especially, an accent on 'ancillary' income. The scheme, from which the Lyceum failed to secure money, was designed to introduce strategic planning as a means to an end, to assist all elements of a theatre's operation: artistic, financial and administrative. But at Pitlochry, as elsewhere, the fundamentals of 'incentive' money lay off-stage, where it was used to construct a car-park and reequip the restaurant kitchens, thereby encouraging greater use of the theatre and raising catering profits, the good intention being to make the theatre less subsidy-dependent. The short-lived scheme – that was restyled 'enhancement funding' in 1991 – can be seen as a blueprint for the arts councils' more intricate and tortuous stratagems of 'stabilisation' and 'advancement', introduced in 1996.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>119</sup> A corrective to difficulties encountered in training and recruiting production staff by theatres Scotland-wide was the establishment, in 1995, of the Scottish Theatres Theatre Training Trust.
- <sup>120</sup> BM, 30 May 1988, p.1.
- <sup>121</sup> At this time, formal training for theatre directors was limited to courses at three drama schools, The Bristol Old Vic, Drama Centre London and the East 15, London. Professional directors usually 'emerged' from practical experience in other theatre crafts, such as acting and stage management, or by directing amateur productions, often in university societies. Many artistic directors argued that directing is a talent impossible to train in educational courses. In England, a favoured route was the ABC Television trainee director placements with repertory theatres and occasional Arts Council funded traineeships. The SAC scheme endures, together with younger direction courses at RSAMD. See Andrew McKinnon, *Courses for Directors: a very brief guide to courses and training opportunities for theatre directors*, London, National Council for Drama Training, 1996.
- <sup>122</sup> BM, 30 May 1988, p.7 and BM, 25 July 1988, p.4.
- <sup>123</sup> Lord Prosser, *Chairman's Report 1988-89*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 18 July 1989, p.1.
- <sup>124</sup> Angus Calder, 'Losing the Traverse?', in *Revolving Culture. Notes from the Scottish Republic*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1994, p.228. This reprinted his 1984 article, which was also a review of Joyce McMillan, *The Traverse Theatre Story*, op.cit.

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- <sup>125</sup> The Actors Group offered classes and workshops to professional performers, whether or not members of the Lyceum acting company. In 1995, the Scottish Actors' Studio Limited, a comparable but independently constituted company, resumed this work.
- <sup>126</sup> BM, 9 April 1990, p.8.
- <sup>127</sup> BM, 25 July 1988, p.2.
- <sup>128</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1988-89*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1989, p.42.
- <sup>129</sup> Lord Prosser, *Chairman's Report 1988-89*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, op.cit., p.1.
- <sup>130</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1988-89*, op.cit, p.40.
- <sup>131</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 1989*, Edinburgh, 18 July 1989, p.5.
- <sup>132</sup> BM, 30 May 1988, p.6.
- <sup>133</sup> BM, 10 April 1989, p.4 and BM, 25 September 1989, p.3.
- <sup>134</sup> BM, 10 April 1989, p.5.
- <sup>135</sup> BM, 10 April 1989, p.7. The Scottish Ballet attendances were in meltdown, after the death of its founding artistic director Peter Darrell (1929-1997).
- <sup>136</sup> BM, 10 April 1989, pp. 7-8.
- <sup>137</sup> BM, 18 July 1989, p.9.
- <sup>138</sup> BM, 18 July 1989, p.1.
- <sup>139</sup> BM, 25 September 1989, p.2.
- <sup>140</sup> BM, 25 September 1989, p.3.
- <sup>141</sup> BM, 25 September 1989, p.6.
- <sup>142</sup> BM, 6 December 1989, p.5.
- <sup>143</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1989-90*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1990, p.37.
- <sup>144</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 1990*, Edinburgh, 24 September 1990, p.4.
- <sup>145</sup> BM, 9 April 1990, p.1.
- <sup>146</sup> BM, 20 August 1990, p.2.
- <sup>147</sup> Lord Prosser, *Chairman's Report 1989-90*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, p.3.
- <sup>148</sup> BM, 9 April 1990, p.2.
- <sup>149</sup> BM, 9 April 1990, p.5.
- <sup>150</sup> BM, 9 April 1990, pp. 5-7.
- <sup>151</sup> BM, 20 August 1990, p.4.
- <sup>152</sup> BM, 9 April 1990, p.7.
- <sup>153</sup> BM, 28 May 1990, p.5 and 'Managing Director – Schedule of Duties' circulated to board meeting 28 May 1990.
- <sup>154</sup> BM, 25 September 1989, p.4.
- <sup>155</sup> BM, 25 September 1989, p.5 and BM, 20 August 1990, p.2.
- <sup>156</sup> BM, 24 September 1990, p.5.
- <sup>157</sup> BM, 20 August 1990, p.6.

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- <sup>158</sup> BM, 5 November 1990, p.2.
- <sup>159</sup> BM, 10 December 1990, p.2.
- <sup>160</sup> BM, 5 November 1990, p.6.
- <sup>161</sup> BM, 5 November 1990, p.7.
- <sup>162</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Report 1990-91*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1991, p.38.
- <sup>163</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 1991*, Edinburgh, 21 October 1991, p.10.
- <sup>164</sup> BM, 28 January 1991, p.2.
- <sup>165</sup> BM, 28 January 1991, p.4 and BM 25 February 1991, p.2.
- <sup>166</sup> BM, 28 January 1991, p.5.
- <sup>167</sup> BM, 25 February 1991, p.8.
- <sup>168</sup> BM, 25 February 1991, p.4.
- <sup>169</sup> BM, 25 February 1991, p.3.
- <sup>170</sup> After ten years at Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Clive Perry returned to Scotland to be festival director of Pitlochry Festival Theatre from 1987 and worked part-time at Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh.
- <sup>171</sup> BM, 25 February 1991, p.10.
- <sup>172</sup> BM, 25 February 1991, p.2.
- <sup>173</sup> BM, 25 February 1991, p.7.
- <sup>174</sup> BM, 27 May 1991, p.1 and 'Directors' Report' in Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1992*, Edinburgh, 30 November 1992, p.2.
- <sup>175</sup> BM, 27 May 1991, p.2.
- <sup>176</sup> BM, 25 November 1991, p.2.
- <sup>177</sup> BM, 22 July 1991, p.5.
- <sup>178</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 1992*, Edinburgh, 30 November 1992, Note 15, p.14.
- <sup>179</sup> BM, 22 July 1991, p.11.
- <sup>180</sup> BM, 21 October 1991, pp. 5 and 6. Strangely enough, in his autobiography, Logan offers no reference to this fabled engagement. Jimmy Logan, *It's a Funny Life*, Edinburgh, B & W Publishing, 1998.
- <sup>181</sup> BM, 25 November 1991, p.6.
- <sup>182</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Young Theatre Report: An Enquiry into the Provision, Practice and Appreciation of Theatre for and by Young People in Scotland*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1991, pp.23-25.
- <sup>183</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report 1991-92*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1992, p.34.
- <sup>184</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 1992*, Edinburgh, op.cit, p.9.
- <sup>185</sup> BM, 27 January 1992, pp.1 and 2.
- <sup>186</sup> The Foundation for Sport and the Arts was a new source of subsidy for the theatre, established by football pools companies in 1987 when that industry feared new government taxation. Its generosity to the theatre was forced curtailed, soon after the gambling public preferred the National Lottery.
- <sup>187</sup> BM, 27 January 1992, p.2.
- <sup>188</sup> Edinburgh District Council, Minute of Council meeting, 23 January 1992, p.5, became the brief for David Pratley, *The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh: Management Review and Business Plan 1992-1994*, Bristol, David Pratley Associates, March 1992. See also management response, Ian Wooldridge and Roger Spence, *Recommendations and Comments Relating to the 1992 Pratley Report on the Management*

and Operation of The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, March 1992.

<sup>189</sup> David Pratley, *The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh: Management Review and Business Plan 1992-1994*, op.cit, p.29.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p.51.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, pp.55-57.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, pp.77-79.

<sup>193</sup> BM, 9 March 1992, p.5.

<sup>194</sup> BM, 30 March 1992, pp.1 and 2.

<sup>195</sup> *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, 27 March 1992, p.1.

<sup>196</sup> BM, 30 March 1992, p.7. Members of staff, other than the artistic director and managing director, were never present at board meetings. Lorne Boswell conveyed their wishes, in this instance.

<sup>197</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report 1992-93*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, p.35. In this year, for illustrative purposes, Communicado's main grant from SAC was £152,573, with new writing grant of £4,000. Other subsidies from local authorities, ACGB, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, totalled £84,060. Total grants were £240,633. The subsidiary company's box office earnings were £84,985, with sponsorship of £8,000. Grants accounted for 67 per cent of turnover, earned income 33 per cent. For ease of interpretation – over the case study period 1965 to 2000 - I have deducted Communicado turnover from the parent company figures. In 1992-1993, Communicado sold a total of 22,965 tickets over three productions and gave 114 performances to an average paid attendance of 201 – 18,788 sales in Scotland and 4,177 in England. The subsidy per seat sold – at an average price paid of £3.70 – was £10.48. For both companies, I have included business sponsorships as earned income, at the point of calculating subsidy ratios. In 1992-1993, the Royal Lyceum subsidy was £6.25 per admission. The Communicado grant-per-patron is higher because, at root, the cost of touring part-weeks is much higher than for resident repertory.

<sup>198</sup> BM, 27 April 1992, p.4.

<sup>199</sup> BM, 13 May 1992, p.7. [BM records meeting as 15 May, date corrected in BM, 6 July 1992, p.1].

<sup>200</sup> BM, 6 July 1992, p.2.

<sup>201</sup> Harley Granville Barker, *The Plays of Harley Granville Barker as performed at the Edinburgh International Festival 1992*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Society, 1992. Production details are in Eileen Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival 1947-1996*, op.cit, p.311.

<sup>202</sup> Roger Spence, *Memorandum to the Board of Directors for information on committee appointments*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 14 October 1992, p.2.

<sup>203</sup> BM, 3 August 1992, p.6.

<sup>204</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report 1992-93*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1993, pp.36-37.

<sup>205</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1993*, Edinburgh, 23 August 1993, p.9.

<sup>206</sup> BM, 29 March 1993, p.2.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Kenny Ireland is not Kenneth Ireland (1920-1998), general manager then festival director and secretary of Pitlochry Festival Theatre, 1951-1984.

<sup>209</sup> BM, 30 November 1992, p.5.

<sup>210</sup> BM, 29 March 1993, p.3.

<sup>211</sup> BM, 29 March 1993, p.4.

<sup>212</sup> Joyce McMillan, *Arts for a New Century: an opportunity to shape the future of the Arts in Scotland*, Edinburgh, The Steering Group for the Charter for the Arts in Scotland, May 1992, p.16. See also Joyce McMillan, (now demoted to 'document drafter' in acknowledgements), *The Charter for the Arts in Scotland*,

Edinburgh, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1993, p.34. The *Charter* was a contribution by Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Film Council, Scottish Museums Council and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to a UK-wide National Arts and Media Strategy. In parallel, the Arts Council of Great Britain coordinated Howard Webber, *A Creative Future*, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1993. Scottish repertory theatres were consulted at a drama forum in Stirling in October 1991, at which the Charter steering committee commissioned a discussion paper. See Paul Barnard, (ed.), *Discussion Document on Drama*, London, National Arts and Media Strategy Unit, August 1991.

<sup>213</sup> Joyce McMillan, *The Charter for the Arts in Scotland*, op.cit, p.96. Although professing a need 'for review and clarification of the law, both to encourage participation in the boards of organisations, and to prevent a situation in which organisations become so terrified of sliding into deficit that they cannot take any creative risks at all', no remedy associated with the serviceability of non-profit status itself is offered. Instead, *The Charter* trusts in new SAC 'board development programmes' to 'train directors in their legal responsibilities as company directors, and in practical areas such as management, recruitment and planning'.

<sup>214</sup> Bonnar Keenlyside, *Review of Touring of the Performing Arts and Literature*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1992.

<sup>215</sup> BM, 7 June 1993, p.3.

<sup>216</sup> BM, 7 June 1993, p.4.

<sup>217</sup> BM, 27 September 1993, p.1.

<sup>218</sup> BM, 27 September 1993, p.5. An audit committee was not a recommendation of David Pratley's report, but became established practice in most industrial *listed* companies after The 'Cadbury' report on corporate governance. The purpose was to improve the quality of financial reporting, by reviewing the auditors' financial statements on behalf of the board, enabling the board to contribute an independent judgement by providing a greater degree of independence from management, also strengthening the position of the auditors whilst helping the management accountant. For the Lyceum, – a private company trading with public funds – it was also intended to increase SAC and EDC confidence in the credibility and objectivity of financial statements, avoiding abrupt and unexpected failures that bedevilled many theatres. See 'Terms of Reference' in P.A.Oppenheim, N.G.Menzies and D.C.E.Gorrie *Report to the Chairman by the Audit Committee*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 21 March 1994, p.3.

<sup>219</sup> BM, 27 September 1993, p.8.

<sup>220</sup> BM, 13 December 1993, p.4.

<sup>221</sup> *What is the Arts Marketing Association?* Cambridge, Arts Marketing Association, 2001.

<sup>222</sup> The financial risk for the London revival at Riverside Studios was borne, in the main, by actor and company associate artist Brain Cox and his agent. BM, 21 July 1994, p.9.

<sup>223</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report 1993-94*, Edinburgh Scottish Arts Council, 1994, p.52.

<sup>224</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1994*, Edinburgh, 21 July 1994, p.9.

<sup>225</sup> BM, 21 July 1994, p.4.

<sup>226</sup> Donald Gorrie, *Memorandum from the Vice Chairman to the Board of Directors*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 28 March 1994.

<sup>227</sup> BM, 11 January 1994, p.2. This minute is not filed in company records, noting 'unanimous deep dissatisfaction with a number of important matters' and that, 'with the appointment of the new artistic director, the time had come for a change [of managing director].' The board 'did not impugn any lack of loyalty or commitment.... but the management was not at one and the conflicts could no longer be allowed to continue'. For the purposes of this study, the strains leading to Spence's departure exemplify, yet again, that clashes between artistic director and manager have haunted the Lyceum with disturbing frequency, implanted in their relationships with the board of directors. The nature, causes and consequences of such break-ups was studied by David Bradley and Roy Wilkie, *Conflict in Publicly Subsidised Theatres: An Organisational Analysis*, Glasgow, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 1980. They argue that calls in the 1970s to 'democratise' the master-servant relationship of board and management were 'missing the point'. Foremost, they suggest that failures are rooted in a misreckoning among boards, artistic directors and arts councils of the elemental purpose of theatrical management. They recommend that, 'in the long-run it will be necessary for the SAC to engage in policy-making which aims at the provision of a variety of theatre and which properly sees its role as an agent of social policy before any substantial improvement is



likely to take place'. Twenty years on from their study, few lessons have been learned: the Royal Lyceum, its stakeholders and management consultants, continue to tinker with management structures, trusting that 'job-titles' and 'horizontal organisation charts' will constrain the parties' towards professional behaviour.

<sup>228</sup> Audrey Gillian, *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, Scotsman Publications, 17 March 1994, p.1.

<sup>229</sup> Chiene & Tait, *The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited: Report on Financial Viability*, Edinburgh, Chiene & Tait, 16 April 1994.

<sup>230</sup> Norman Springford, *Report to the Board of Directors from the Management Committee*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 28 April 1984. p.1.

<sup>231</sup> BM, 21 July 1994, p.1.

<sup>232</sup> Chiene & Tait, *The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited: Report on Financial Viability*, op.cit, p.2.

<sup>233</sup> BM, 21 July 1994, p.2.

<sup>234</sup> Angus Calder, et.al., *A Scottish National Theatre: Statement by the Director and Board of the Royal Lyceum Theatre*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, June 1994, p.2.

<sup>235</sup> Kenny Ireland, *Memorandum to Chairman of Board of Directors on the Scottish National Theatre*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 6 June 1994.

<sup>236</sup> Richard Findlay, *A Contribution to the Scottish National Theatre Debate from the Chairman and Board of Directors of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 7 June 1994.

<sup>237</sup> Bonnar Keenlyside, *Study on the Demand for and Potential Remit of a Scottish National Theatre Resource*, Burntisland, Bonnar Keenlyside, September 1994, p.94.

<sup>238</sup> BM, 21 July 1994, p.9.

<sup>239</sup> Minutes of a meeting of the managers and directors of Edinburgh theatres (the 'clash' diary-group) held at the Festival Theatre on 28 June 1994, p.3, and BM, 24 August 1994, p.6. In fact, there was nothing new about the National Theatre in Edinburgh. They had been a frequent visitor since that company's first tour in 1964, when Sir Laurence Olivier directed and played Astrov in *Uncle Vanya* (Anton Chekhov, 1899). Ireland's aversion to the National Theatre (of Great Britain) contrasts to a fulsome welcome from the otherwise restrained King's Theatre management: 'We hope that the enthusiastic support given this week, by what is a truly representative Scottish audience – for our patrons have indeed come from far and wide – will encourage the [National Theatre] to return at least once a year, or more often if possible... where a warm welcome surely awaits'. 'From the Manager's Office', Programme, *Uncle Vanya*, Edinburgh, Howard and Wyndham, 30 March 1964, p. 3.

<sup>240</sup> Richard Findlay, *Memorandum from the Chairman to Board of Directors for the appointment of replacement for Managing Director*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 26 May 1994.

<sup>241</sup> BM, 3 November 1994, p.4.

<sup>242</sup> BM, 9 June 1994, p.6.

<sup>243</sup> BM, 24 August 1994, p.9.

<sup>244</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report 1994-95*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1995, p.38.

<sup>245</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1995*, Edinburgh, 12 June 1995, p.9.

<sup>246</sup> BM, 16 February 1995, p.2.

<sup>247</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Lottery Review 1995/96*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1996, p.15.

<sup>248</sup> Marcus Ford, *Report to the Board of Directors from the Theatre Manager: Phipps Restaurant Development Proposals*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 2 February 1995, p.2.

<sup>249</sup> BM, 26 April 1995, p.2.

<sup>250</sup> BM, 16 February 1995, p.4.

<sup>251</sup> BM, 1 June 1995, p.3 and BM, 27 September 1995, p.4.

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- <sup>252</sup> BM, 13 March 1995, p.3.
- <sup>253</sup> BM, 11 July 1995, p.6.
- <sup>254</sup> BM, 24 August 1995, p.3.
- <sup>255</sup> Law & Dunbar-Nasmith, Doig & Smith and Buro Happold, *Royal Lyceum Theatre Feasibility Study*, Edinburgh, Law & Dunbar-Nasmith Architects, December 1995.
- <sup>256</sup> BM, 2 November 1995, p.4.
- <sup>257</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>258</sup> BM, 6 December 1995, p.2.
- <sup>259</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>260</sup> Charles Morgan, Angela Lyttle and Peter Finch, *A Report on the Subsidised Theatre in the UK*, London, The Theatre Commission, November 1996.
- <sup>261</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report 1995-6*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1996, pp.29, 31,33,35,68 and 71.
- <sup>262</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1996*, Edinburgh, 20 June 1996, p.5.
- <sup>263</sup> New unitary local authorities were formed, adjacent to Edinburgh: Midlothian, West Lothian and East Lothian Councils, absorbing the function of LRC, but not seeing themselves in a position to subsidise the Royal Lyceum Theatre, being in another area notwithstanding theatregoers from these districts travelling to the Lyceum. East Lothian Council subsidised its own repertory company, at the Brunton Theatre. Fortunately, for the company, the small LRC grant for education work was taken up by CEC, whereas other theatres had more to fear from this reform. For instance, in 1993 the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow received £199,500 (£231,420) from Strathclyde Regional Council, much of which bankrolled their annual summer 'Strathclyde Season'. The grant was never fully reinstated by the eleven replacement local authorities outside the new Glasgow City Council area and the slashing of local government subsidy led this theatre to present only four months' in-house productions in 1995. From this theatre's perspective, the Royal Lyceum was on easy street.
- <sup>264</sup> BM, 24 August 1995, p.3.
- <sup>265</sup> BM, 11 January 1996, p.3.
- <sup>266</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh: Major Review*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 23 August 1996, p.1. The team guiding this seven-month probe comprised people credentialed in repertory theatre or from similar 'stakeholders'. They were Aeon Hill, (assistant chief executive, Strathclyde Regional Council), Roberta Doyle (director of marketing and public affairs, Scottish Opera), Stuart Rodgers (administrative director of Nottingham Playhouse), Will Weston (general manager, Royal Shakespeare Company), Matthew Francis (artistic director, Greenwich Theatre), Joy Hendry and Muriel Romanes (members of SAC drama committee). Although their professionalism may have helped the company, informally, the final report – written by SAC officers with the assistance of an external consultant – is slipshod and insubstantial, undoubtedly peeving the management who, after struggling to elucidate their policy and problems, 'were disappointed with its lack of depth'. BM, 20 June 1996, p.1. Contrastingly, a nearly simultaneous peer review of the Citizens' Theatre demonstrates superior specialist expertise and judgement by SAC. See Scottish Arts Council, *Citizens' Theatre: Major Review*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, June 1994. The extent to which SAC empathised with the two theatres' differing personalities and artistic achievements is, necessarily, a matter for conjecture.
- <sup>267</sup> BM, 14 February 1996, p.5.
- <sup>268</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.
- <sup>269</sup> Ibid., pp.10-11.
- <sup>270</sup> BM, 11 January 1996, p.5 and Extraordinary General Meeting, 20 June 1996, p.1.
- <sup>271</sup> BM, 14 February 1996, p.2.
- <sup>272</sup> BM, 15 August 1996, p.4.
- <sup>273</sup> BM, 14 February 1996, p.3.

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- <sup>274</sup> BM, 20 June 1996, p.2.
- <sup>275</sup> Ibid, p.2.
- <sup>276</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>277</sup> Graham Devlin and Roger Tomlinson, *Edinburgh – Cultural Capital, City of Edinburgh Council Theatre Strategy*, Edinburgh, City of Edinburgh Council, August 1996.
- <sup>278</sup> Ibid, p.44.
- <sup>279</sup> Ibid, pp.1-2.
- <sup>280</sup> BM, 15 August 1996, p.4.
- <sup>281</sup> BM, 1 October 1996, p.3.
- <sup>282</sup> Ibid, p.4.
- <sup>283</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report and Accounts 1996-97*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1997, p.53.
- <sup>284</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report and Accounts 1996-97*, op.cit, p.53.
- <sup>285</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1997*, Edinburgh, 8 December 1997, p.12.
- <sup>286</sup> BM, 12 March 1997, p.2.
- <sup>287</sup> BM, 12 March 1997, p.5.
- <sup>288</sup> BM, 12 March 1997, p.6.
- <sup>289</sup> BM, 12 March 1997, p.7.
- <sup>290</sup> BM, 12 March 1997, p.7.
- <sup>291</sup> BM, 17 June 1997, p.1.
- <sup>292</sup> BM, 1 March 1999, p.2. For the final study, see Ian Appleton, *The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh. Buildings Feasibility Study*, Edinburgh, The Appleton Partnership, August 1999.
- <sup>293</sup> BM, 17 June 1997, p.3.
- <sup>294</sup> BM, 21 June 1999, p.5.
- <sup>295</sup> Arts Council of England National Lottery, *Pilot Stabilisation Programme: Guidelines for Applicants*, London, Arts Council of England, August 1996, p.2. For critical discussion of the lottery, including its unprecedented impact on theatres and the operational problems induced by capital funds, see Stephen Creigh-Tyte and Joanne Gallimore, 'The UK National Lottery and the Arts: Reflections on the Lottery's Impact and Development', *International Journal of Arts Management*, Montréal, École des Hautes Études Commerciales de Montréal, Université de Montréal, 2000, Vol. 3, No.1, pp. 19-31. In particular, they argue – from an outsiders' perspective – that fears of 'stabilisation' forcing boards to put business considerations before artistic ones were unfounded. At any rate, through the scheme's 'technical assistance' element, the secondment of management consultants versed in property, law, marketing and information technology grafted new corporate practices from the United States and Canada that were alien to many British theatre companies.
- <sup>296</sup> BM, 28 April 1997, p.4.
- <sup>297</sup> The SAC rejection is cited in full in BM, 21 October 1997, p.2. Although the highly competitive 'advancement' scheme was overwhelmed with applications, their disapproval of ensemble at Edinburgh protests too much: at this time, SAC National Lottery financed Dundee Rep's three-year engagement of an acting ensemble.
- <sup>298</sup> BM, 21 October 1997, p.4.
- <sup>299</sup> BM, 17 June 1997, p.5.
- <sup>300</sup> BM, 8 December 1997, p.1.

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- <sup>301</sup> This was not an official award but the directors' report is 'pleased to record' that the company 'won the accolade'. Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1998*, Edinburgh, 8 July 1998, p.2.
- <sup>302</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report Supplement 1997-98*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1998, p.32.
- <sup>303</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1998*, op.cit., p.10.
- <sup>304</sup> BM, 24 March 1998, pp.2-3.
- <sup>305</sup> BM, 22 May 1998, p.3.
- <sup>306</sup> City of Edinburgh, *Towards the New Enlightenment. A Cultural Policy for the City of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, The City of Edinburgh Council, 1999, p.44.
- <sup>307</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report and Accounts 1998-99*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1999, p.19.
- <sup>308</sup> BM, 20 July 1998, p.1.
- <sup>309</sup> BM, 24 March 1998, p.7 and BM, 2 July 1998, p.4.
- <sup>310</sup> Mark Fisher, 'Time to make up... the fall-out and recrimination at the heart of two core theatrical institutions', *The Herald*, Glasgow, 16 June 1998, p.17. This feature also describes a breach between Communicado's artistic director, board and SAC that led to the resignation of Gerry Mulgrew in March 1998.
- <sup>311</sup> BM, 3 November 1998, p.4.
- <sup>312</sup> BM, 7 December 1998, p.2.
- <sup>313</sup> BM, 2 July 1998, p.2 and BM, 20 July 1998, pp.4-5.
- <sup>314</sup> BM, 13 August 1998, p.5.
- <sup>315</sup> BM, 3 November 1998, p.2.
- <sup>316</sup> Jennifer Edwards, et.al, *Theatre in Crisis: the Plight of Regional Theatre*, London, National Campaign for the Arts, 1998, p.20.
- <sup>317</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report Supplement 1998-99*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, p.39. This is the last year that SAC reports disclose lists of plays, numbers of performances and attendances for all companies subsidised by revenue grant. They had been the only one of four United Kingdom arts councils to do so. Two subsequent annual reports divulge only the amount of SAC revenue grant awarded. In 1999-2000, proliferating project schemes list smaller grants interruptedly. This new watered down format is all presentation and less content – a curtailing of probative articles in preference to the superficiality of a press release – but, even so, has won prizes in the Scottish Corporate Communications Awards for 1999 and 2000. They described the reports as 'an extremely provocative collection of images from a client who obviously understands the significance of image and a design able to successfully manipulate this value'. See Scottish Arts Council, *Information Bulletin*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, February-March 2001, p.6.
- <sup>318</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1999*, Edinburgh, 9 July 1999, p.10.
- <sup>319</sup> BM, 1 February 1999, p.1 and BM, 15 March 1999, pp.1-2.
- <sup>320</sup> BM, 1 February 1999, p.2.
- <sup>321</sup> BM, 1 February 1999, p.4.
- <sup>322</sup> BM, 15 March 1999, p.1.
- <sup>323</sup> David Pratley, *Scottish Arts Council Advancement Programme, Scoping Study: The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company (Reference 9511485)*, Bristol, David Pratley Associates, May 1999.
- <sup>324</sup> BM, 10 May 1999, p.3.
- <sup>325</sup> BM, 10 May 1999, p.4.
- <sup>326</sup> BM, 21 June 1999, p.2 and BM 3 August 1999, p.4.

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- <sup>327</sup> BM, 21 June 1999, p.3.
- <sup>328</sup> BM, 13 September 1999, p.3.
- <sup>329</sup> The Scottish Parliament, Education, Culture and Sport Committee, *Report on inquiry into the national arts companies*, Edinburgh, The Stationery Office for the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, 2000, pp. 180-188.
- <sup>330</sup> BM, 25 October 1999, p.3.
- <sup>331</sup> BM, 31 January 2000, p.5.
- <sup>332</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report and Accounts 1999-2000*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, p.46.
- <sup>333</sup> Roger Tomlinson, *Data Protection: A Guide to the Data Protection Acts and their implications for managers in the arts and entertainment industry*, London, Theatrical Management Association and Arts Marketing Association, 1999.
- <sup>334</sup> Questionnaire completed by Ruth Butterworth, 27 February 2001.
- <sup>335</sup> Chiene & Tait, *Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2000*, Edinburgh, 21 June 2000, p.10.
- <sup>336</sup> BM, 31 January 2000, p.6.
- <sup>337</sup> BM, 19 April 2000, p.5 and BM, 12 June 2000, p.3.
- <sup>338</sup> BM, 31 July 2000, p.2.
- <sup>339</sup> BM, 19 April 2000, p.6.
- <sup>340</sup> BM, 12 June 2000, p.2 and BM 15, September 2000, p.1.
- <sup>341</sup> Chris Smith, et al, *Getting Britain giving to Culture. An introduction to the new tax regime for giving to charities*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2000.
- <sup>342</sup> BM, 1 December 2000, p.1 and BM, 31 July 2000, p.1.
- <sup>343</sup> Scottish Arts Council, *Audiences & Sales, News from the Audience and Sales Development Unit*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, Issue 2, Autumn 2000, p.2. With sponsorship from Barclays Stage Partners, one Sunday afternoon performances was scheduled in 1999, attended by 108 patrons, with 22 children in a crèche. The National Lottery grant enabled seven more Sunday performances, pitched at families with young children in 2000-2001. See also Clare Simpson, 'Childs Play', in *Prompt*, London, Theatrical Management Association, May 2001, Issue 24, pp.18-19. Possibly, the parties were unaware that a crèche was not especially 'groundbreaking' for theatre management: from 1880, Emma Cons (1838-1912) organised one unobtrusively, for South London working-class family audiences at The Royal Victoria Music Hall (later The Old Vic).
- <sup>344</sup> BM, 12 June 2000, p.5.
- <sup>345</sup> Heather Baird (ed.), *Proposal for a National Theatre for Scotland*, [with supplement: *Modelling the Future*], Edinburgh, Federation of Scottish Theatre, 2000.
- <sup>346</sup> Scottish Executive, *Creating Our Future...Minding Our Past*, [Scotland's National Cultural Strategy], Edinburgh, Scottish Executive, 2000. Taking 'steps to develop a national theatre for Scotland' was part of 'key priority 1.3: to celebrate excellence in the arts and other cultural activity', p.65. SAC then formed a twelve-member 'independent' group under the chairmanship of Dr Donald Smith (1956- ), director of the Netherbow Theatre, Edinburgh, charged to budget and plan a national theatre using the chassis of existing theatre companies. Hamish Glen (1957- ), artistic director of Dundee Rep and chair of FST, represented the repertory companies. The FST calculated subsidy requirements for the national theatre as an annual government grant of £2,987,383 – almost identical to that of the National Theatre Society, Dublin - with productions to be enjoyed by 100,000 theatregoers. Even without the intrinsic subsidy derived from the stiff aim of concordant relations with existing repertory companies, this represents a subsidy per seat of £19.87, whereas the combined assistance from state and local government to Scottish repertory theatres in 1999-2000 was £11.75 per seat sold. At the time of writing, these egregious estimates were being forced to fit a firmer golden hello from the Scottish Parliament, of £2,000,000 subsidy.
- <sup>347</sup> BM, 15 September 2000, p.2 and BM, 1 December 2000, pp.1-5.

<sup>348</sup> An elaborate range of other discounts was offered to students (half-price, any seat any performance), families (four seats for £32, Tuesday to Thursday; for £37, Friday and Saturday, with two of four theatregoers being under 18), registered unemployed £1 (twenty seats on the day of performance, Tuesday to Thursday only), 18's and under plus school parties, with one teacher free with ten pupils £5 and £4, groups 5+ £2 off evenings, £1 off matinees, 10+ £3 off evenings, £2 off matinees, 20+ £4 off and one seat free evenings, £3 off matinees, as well as one 'pay what you can night' for each play. See *Magic, Excitement, Drama: Subscription Season 2000-2001*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 2000, pp.4, 9-10. Though comparable to other repertory theatres, they contrast to the simplicity and intelligibility of cheaper admissions policy continued at the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow, where all tickets in 2000 cost £10, all concessions £3 at all performances – with all tickets on Tuesdays £3, plus one free preview and, for all theatregoers, a free programme.

<sup>349</sup> Groups were guided on to the stage for explanation of how sets would be changed for each scene and to 'feel' costume texture and properties. Theatregoers also touched and explored the set model to gain a mental picture of how it would work in performance. During the performance a 'describer' sat in a soundproof box, transmitting a live commentary on the visual images and plot developments, during dialogue breaks. The audio descriptions enabled theatregoers to 'see' the same performance as the sighted audience. Each description began a few minutes before a performance, with a reading of programme notes.

<sup>350</sup> Peter Boyden, *Roles and Functions of the English Regional Producing Theatres*, Bristol, Peter Boyden Associates, May 2000. This scrutiny of 50 repertory theatres, together with drama reviews undertaken by most of the Regional Arts Boards, led to *The Arts Council of England's National Policy for Theatre in England*, London, Arts Council of England, July 2000.

<sup>351</sup> SAC Drama Director David Taylor, *Brief to Consultants*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 11 November 2000, p.2, also at [www.scottishculture.co.uk/sac\\_review\\_of\\_theatres.htm](http://www.scottishculture.co.uk/sac_review_of_theatres.htm)



### ASSESSMENT OF THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY

Having recorded the progress of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company from 1965 to 2000 – especially through the organisation for the second limited company from 1977 – it is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss the minutiae of this chronicle. Instead, the following evaluation highlights some of the striking management issues arising from that detailed story, discussing their characteristics over time. This will demonstrate, above all, how the new profession of arts administration has debased the repertory ideal. After discussing the play-choices, the reduced influence of artists and the declining autonomy of the company will be demonstrated through discussion of five key factors. These are an analysis of finances, the record of corporate sponsorship, the external pressures arising from a new business culture in government and the arts funding bodies, the allied Royal Lyceum experience of partnerships and co-productions and, finally, the unsuccessful pursuit of profit-making activities such as a restaurant.

Unlike the progenitor repertory companies that were stamped with a single-minded, undoubting artistic purpose that coped well with the congenital insecurities of the theatre business, the overshadowing factor in the life of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company has been constant ambiguity about its theatrical mission and position in the Edinburgh and Scottish theatre environment. Although the search for institutional identity has been a preoccupation of all companies since the repertory movement began, it seems exceptionally acute in this company that was founded by local government fiat. Since 1965, a succession of seven chairpersons, six artistic directors and five general managers has coped with these uncertainties in different ways, but the accompanying infighting over policy, play selection and subsidy – let alone the personal peccadilloes, buck passing and conflicts of interests of the protagonists – has undermined their accomplishments, from the outset. Through this particular management drama – that contains as many revelations about the leaders' personalities and behaviour as some of the more excessive plots of the company's play choices – Chapter Six has demonstrated how difficult it has been for the non-profit company coalition of strong-minded theatre-makers, 'independent' chairmen, the councillor 'influenced' board and the Scottish Arts Council to cope with each other. By 2000, the century-old institutional frameworks that were set up by the repertory founders to support the art of the theatre may be seen, in this company at least, as feckless, rudderless, abused and dilapidated.

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Compared with the panache and achievements of the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust, the off-stage progress of the second company amounts to one fiasco after another. It has been in an untenable position, nearly always struggling to avoid financial collapse whilst, latterly, seeking redemption through misjudged business procedures. I will explain why, after 1985, the Royal Lyceum shrunk from what it and the progenitor repertories had done best financially: the application of the lion's share of resources to the artists. From then, the hookworm of administration consumed the company, but the board of directors, local authority and the Scottish Arts Council showed few signs of disparagement. Of course, I do not claim that the plays on stage are an unfailing disappointment. The second company's four experienced artistic directors, like their two predecessors, continued to conceive seasons with high ideals, sincerity, passion, persistence, enthusiasm and commitment to serious theatrical purpose, inevitably with different imaginations, abilities, ambitions and entrepreneurial outlooks but, sadly, with all too frequently frustrated expectations and interference.

### **The plays and the public**

In 1993, according to a Policy Studies Institute report, 19 per cent of Scots adults attended plays, being around 146,300 people, of whom 8 per cent went to theatre more than once a year.<sup>1</sup> Although playgoers are more numerous than operagoers and balletomanes, this small drama audience is much divided in tastes and expectations, and it is unavoidable that attempts by the Royal Lyceum to stage something for everyone result in some people, including the board members, being displeased for some of the time. The company is especially liable to criticism because of the comparative security it can offer to only a few actors in a hazardous profession and because of the prominence of its position for other Scottish theatre companies. The company with the largest drama subsidy in Scotland is a tall poppy that invites the most negative comments. The first form this criticism takes is, as with all arts subsidies, that the people who go to theatre only constitute a small fraction of the people who pay for it through their taxation. However, the majority are now reputed to approve of subsidy even if they do not go to the theatre. The other form that this criticism takes is from seasoned theatregoers and the theatre profession: the charge of conservatism in programming.

The need for caution in criticising play-choices is obvious, but when looked at retrospectively the three years of Stephen MacDonald's artistic direction were the most

enterprising in the second company, especially at the Little Lyceum Theatre where his new policy of exchanging artists with the main stage looked set to become a powerful magnet for directors and actors; moreover, the number of new plays, adaptations and translations produced was the highest concentration in the company's entire progress. However, his efforts to give foundation to the new company echoed Tom Fleming's misfortunes in 1966, whilst choices by Leslie Lawton veered towards tried-successes from the London profit-seeking theatre and musicals. Thereafter, the seasons of Ian Wooldridge and Kenny Ireland take more account than Lawton of Scottish plays and adaptations, though no period in the second company seems to have emulated the sustained, comprehensive achievements and upbeat excitements of Clive Perry and his team of associate directors. In fairness, any expectation for new plays should, after the closure of the Little Lyceum, be weighed against the work of the specialist Traverse Theatre, where the greater intimacy and open staging are as confrontational as their plays' subject matter often is. With its selection of new plays well suited to a smaller theatre and a dissentient audience, the Traverse became the height of fashion for new writing, enjoying a high degree of audience excitement. To a similar extent, selection at the Royal Lyceum has been inhibited by the innovations of the Edinburgh International Festival as well as by the periodic complaints of those theatregoers who have fumed in their droves whenever the Royal Lyceum company attempts a 'dangerous' play, even when tested elsewhere. Edinburgh theatregoers, such as those who complained about *Comedians* and *An Experienced Woman Gives Advice*, have often vowed never to go near the company again. Given that the balancing act is a frightening – and thankless – exercise for any artistic director, the small number of new plays presented by the second company after Stephen MacDonald's departure is therefore no surprise:

<b>BOX 7.1 CHRONOLOGY OF NEW WRITING AT THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY, EDINBURGH: PLAYWRIGHTS WHOSE WORK HAS BEEN PREMIERED, NEW TRANSLATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS, 1977-2000</b>	
1977-1978	<i>These Were My Means</i> (Jim Tyrell), <i>A Fistful of East End</i> (Howard Purdie), <i>Play Donkey</i> (Stewart Conn).
1978-1979	<i>Mary</i> (Ian Brown), <i>Navigator in the Seventh Circle</i> (Leonard Maguire), <i>The Brink</i> (Atholl Hay), <i>All Ayre and Fire</i> (Stephen MacDonald and the company).  New translations/adaptations: <i>A Mackintosh Experience</i> (John Cairney, et al., after Charles Rennie Mackintosh), <i>Kipling's Jungle Book</i> (Stephen MacDonald, after Rudyard Kipling), <i>Billy Budd</i> (Stewart Conn and Stephen MacDonald, after Herman Melville).
1979-1980	<i>The Peter Pan Man</i> (Jon Plowman).  New translations/adaptations: <i>An Enemy of the People</i> (Henrik Ibsen, trans. Tom Gallacher), <i>Crime and Punishment</i> (F.D. Dostoyevsky, adapt. Alan Brown).

1980-1981	<i>Blackfriars Wynd</i> (Donald Campbell), <i>The Quartet</i> (Ronald Mavor). New translation: <i>A Doll's House</i> (Henrik Ibsen, 1879, trans. Tom Gallacher).
1981-1982	<i>Herman</i> (Stewart Conn).
1982-1983	No new plays, adaptations or translations.
1983-1984	<i>Time Present</i> (Tom Gallacher).
1984-1985	No new plays. New translations/adaptations: <i>The Master Builder</i> (Henrik Ibsen, trans. Lindsay Galloway), <i>Confessions of a Justified Sinner</i> (James Hogg, adapt. Stuart Paterson).
1985-1986	No new plays. New adaptation: <i>Treasure Island</i> (Laurie Ventry, after R.L.Stevenson)
1986-1987	<i>Mr Government</i> (Stuart Paterson), <i>The Grand Edinburgh Fire Balloon</i> (Andrew Dallmeyer), <i>Words Beyond Words and Monologues</i> (Tom McGrath, et al). New translations/adaptation: <i>Tartuffe</i> (Liz Lochhead, after Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière).
1987-1988	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i> (Stuart Paterson).
1988-1989	<i>Pursuits</i> (Tom McGrath), <i>Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off</i> (Liz Lochhead, co-production with Communicado Theatre), <i>A Wee Home from Home</i> (Frank McConnell), <i>Cubist Blues</i> (David Kane), <i>By the Pool</i> (Stewart Conn), <i>Words Beyond Words</i> (workshop programme, Tom McGrath, et al).
1989-1990	<i>Cinderella</i> (Stuart Paterson). New translations/adaptations: <i>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i> (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, trans. Hector Macmillan), <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> (Anton Chekhov, version by Stuart Paterson, from trans. Steven and Alla Main), <i>The House of Bernarda Alba</i> (Federico Garcia Lorca, trans. John Clifford).
1990-1991	No new plays, adaptations or translations.
1991-1992	<i>Shinda, The Magic Ape</i> (Stuart Paterson).
1992-1993	No new plays, adaptations or translations.
1993-1994	No new plays, adaptations or translations.
1994-1995	No new plays. New adaptations: <i>Mongrel's Heart</i> (Michael Bulgakov, adapt. <i>The Heart of a Dog</i> , Stephen Mulrine). <i>Kidnapped</i> (Tom McGrath, after R.L.Stevenson).
1995-1996	<i>The Gowk Storm</i> (Colin MacDonald, after Nancy Brysson Morrison).
1996-1997	<i>Montrose</i> (Robert Forrest).
1997-1998	<i>Hansel and Gretel</i> (Stuart Paterson).
1998-1999	<i>Clay Bull</i> (Stewart Conn), <i>Britannia Rules</i> (Liz Lochhead). New translations/adaptations: <i>A Stranger Came Ashore</i> (Fiona McGarry, after Molly Hunter, for Edinburgh International Children's Festival), <i>Life is a Dream</i> (Pedro de la Barca Calderón, trans. John Clifford, for EIF).
1999-2000	<i>Stiff!</i> (Forbes Masson, co-production with Diva Productions and Tron Theatre).
2000-2001	No new plays. New translations/adaptations: <i>Three Sisters</i> (Anton Chekhov, adapt. Liz Lochhead), <i>Phaedra</i> (Edwin Morgan, after Jean Racine).

The fortunes of Scottish playwrights have also been tied to the special position of the longstanding associate literary director, held by Tom McGrath for fifteen years, during which time he has had seven plays staged by the company. Employed via an annually

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renewed Scottish Arts Council subsidy – that must set a record for continuity of ‘project’ grants – the post has been virtually autonomous of the incumbent artistic director. It was set up also to act as a literary adviser to playwrights throughout Scotland, reading their plays, criticising, organising showcases and rehearsed readings whilst coordinating company commissions. He has also given advice to the directorate and, by default, acted as writer-in-residence. Nevertheless, although brilliant playwrights do not emerge at predetermined intervals, the commissioning practices of the first company achieved more on stage; in Chapter Five it was noted that these were often awarded simultaneously to as many as eleven dramatists, thereby decreasing the hit-or-miss tendency of this process. For the most part, the second company restricted these commissions to one at a time, thereby reducing the likelihood of single commissions reaching the point where a firm decision is made to produce. It seems abnormal for the Scottish Arts Council drama department – which otherwise now rushes from one temporal grant scheme to the next – not to have withdrawn this grant, or at least allow other, equally gifted playwrights to hold the sinecure from time to time, or to entrust it to the Traverse Theatre.

The emphases of play selection since 1977 are fairly clear. The company has produced 21 productions of plays by William Shakespeare in 23 years (although because it is guided by schools’ preferences for those plays studied by students, only twelve plays from the canon have been selected overall). Four plays by Bernard Shaw, five by Seán O’Casey, eight productions of Henrik Ibsen, five of Anton Chekhov, seven plays by Molière, nine of Noël Coward, eight plays by Alan Ayckbourn, four by Tennessee Williams, four by Harold Pinter and three by Bertolt Brecht have been staged. Of course, there is a danger for such statistics about the span of Royal Lyceum playwrights to take on a life of their own: an unintentional equation of more with better. Absence of other important playwrights could be pinpointed, but this might be malevolent. For instance, the neglect of playwrights such as Samuel Beckett (only one production so far), or Sam Shepard (no productions) might be attributed to the box-office demands of the capacious auditorium and the theatre’s proscenium arch design. Of course, in the early years the company could afford to select plays with medium- or large-casts; the need to find small-cast plays is a recent response to the financial constraints imposed by the large administrative staffs. Nevertheless, there seems little inclination to rediscover lesser known classical plays or draw on foreign drama, apart from what has been put on the theatrical map by other companies. Even so, one of the attractive deeds of choosing plays premiered elsewhere has been a commitment to larger-cast family theatre at Christmas. Pantomime and children’s theatre was often avoided in the pre-1945 companies, but today the company’s choice of Stuart Paterson’s re-workings of legendary fairy tales has been a healthy reaction to what passes for

traditional pantomimes presented by the big touring houses. Four of his family plays were premiered by the Royal Lyceum and, because all other Scottish and many English repertories are also impassioned about this Scottish playwright, his prodigious output not only makes him the most performed British playwright at Christmas, but probably also year round, albeit after the playwrights Alan Ayckbourn and John Godber.

Of course, what the company chooses to stage is always subject to what the audience will want to see, but the ambition of the first repertories was to impose a company and policy on the audience, and not allow the audience to call the shots. Subsidy and new marketing techniques have not freed the company from these concerns. Perhaps the pursuit of subsidy has bred conformity, inducing a sense of responsibility about spending public money wisely and creating a fear about being seen to lose it. The Royal Lyceum might be said now to provide a purely self-perpetuating public service – one that continues to exist, simply because it was once begun. Even with the largest repertory theatre attendance in Scotland – attracting many more people than the Citizens' Theatre in much more populous Glasgow<sup>2</sup> – it risks reinforcing the audiences it serves in the comparatively narrow model that the Royal Lyceum offers as one of several Edinburgh theatres.

The subscriber system epitomises the tension between the company's responsibility to form as well as to reflect the public taste. On the one hand, subscribers are an essential bedrock of the audience. They peaked at 5,000 theatregoers in 1989. Thus, even with its vicissitudes, the scheme has flourished overall at Edinburgh; a sure accomplishment that was grounded in Granville Barker's scheme that was first tested at Glasgow Repertory Theatre in 1909 and which reached its peak in British theatre at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 1984 (under Clive Perry) with 6,000 subscribers. It must be a great concern to the Royal Lyceum that subscription should continue to prosper; not least because it helps the company to carefully plan and estimate production budgets at least a year ahead, as well as banking a sizeable proportion of the year's box-office receipts in advance of performances, thereby earning bank interest or reducing overdraft charges. On the other hand, it can also prohibit the decision-making that might respond better to the lucky moment of scheduling a hit-play ahead of other theatres which compete for repertory rights, or constrain a prompt decision to align play-choice with the unforeseen availability of a noteworthy actor. Many other repertories have either avoided subscription or, when their output of self-made productions was higher, bypassed the need to plan so far ahead by scheduling two six-month subscription series in each year. On balance, although it is a cost-effective way of selling seats, it could be argued that the scheme has institutionalised well-worn habits and audience expectations. Hence, subscription influences a middle way

in play selection, leading, as in some other repertories, to an increase in the number of staged adaptations from novels, such as *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1984), *Dracula* (1985), *Hiawatha* (1991), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1994), *The Gowk Storm* (1995), *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1997) and *Rebecca* (1997). At the Royal Lyceum, most adaptations have been staged first at other theatres, but they conciliate subscribers who recognise a famous title.

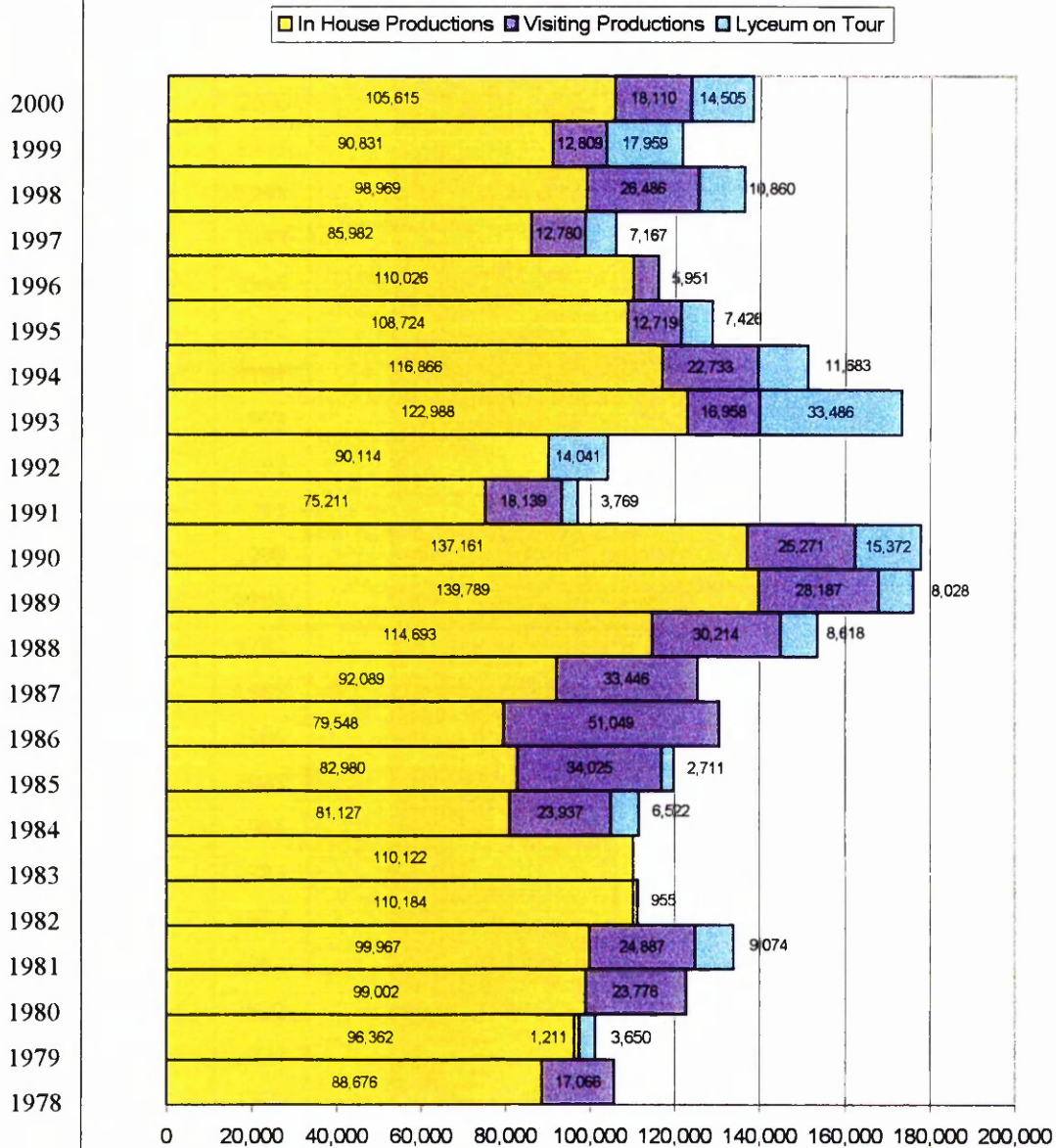
Comparisons of subscribing and non-subscribing patrons show that, in terms of background most subscribers at the Royal Lyceum have high incomes and are employed in professional and managerial work or are retired.<sup>3</sup> In their theatrical preferences, these theatregoers place 'comedies', 'farces' and other well known plays first, but casual theatregoers – who tend to be younger people – might be likelier to attend serious and less known plays than for the enjoyment and relaxation sought by the subscribers. It seems evident that the Edinburgh public, now having the disproportionate advantage of a city overbuilt with theatres, is given the kind of plays it thinks it wants to see. Apart from the other 'building based' producing theatres – the Traverse Theatre and Theatre Workshop – the Edinburgh theatres are wary about seeking to expand or challenge that influential established taste. Thus, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company repertoire has included plays such as *The Winslow Boy* (1982), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1992), *Gaslight* (1994) and *The Importance of Being Ernest* (1991 and 1996) that are staples of the amateur theatre. These plays have undoubtedly helped to keep the company unmatched in Scottish repertory attendance (Box 7.2).

The opportunity for the public, whether subscribers or casual attendees, to see these middle ground plays remains an important policy for the Royal Lyceum. Sometimes play selection has been driven by the artistic director's desire to cast certain actors in lead roles, such as when Julie Covington played Lady Macbeth in 1986 or when Jimmy Logan starred in the 1991 revival of *Comedians*. 'Museum' theatre, providing it is well done, plainly has an indispensable place, because a play written 400 years ago – or twenty – will often be new to succeeding generations of theatregoers. Of course, what matters more is the quality of the production – how *all* plays are cast, directed and designed – but, in their selection at least, the Royal Lyceum play choices resemble more the eclectics of the 1937 Alexandra Theatre than those of the then *recherché* Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Today, the boundary between 'serious' drama and the middle ground is less sacrosanct for most repertories than at any time since their founding – and at Edinburgh it is also blurred by the frequency of 'serious' touring plays presented by profit-seeking managements at the King's Theatre. The challenge for the Royal Lyceum is therefore to ensure that its



selections, casting and designs are distinctive, exciting and surprising. Otherwise – even with the adjuncts of what is now one of the most comfortable and attractively renovated theatres in Britain – the public may reckon the company to be no different to or ‘better’ than a touring house.

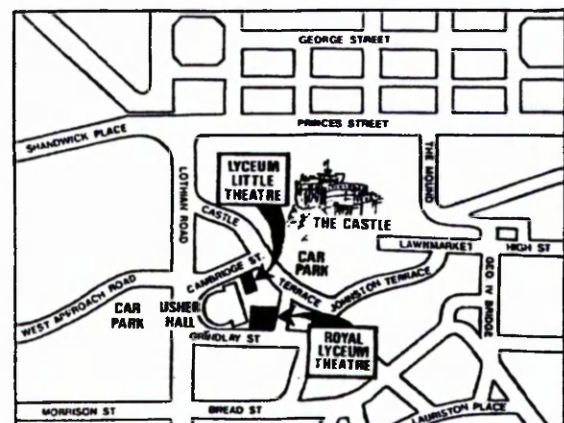
### BOX 7.2 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED ANNUAL ATTENDANCE 1978-2000





**Royal Lyceum  
Theatre Company**  
at the  
**Royal Lyceum Theatre**  
and  
**Lyceum Little Theatre**

**Spring Season ~ 1979**



*19. The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company: Spring Season 1979*

*Nineteen enthusiastic actors shown on the front cover of the season brochure*

**Instability, the company's finances in perspective, 1977-2000  
and the impact of arts administration**

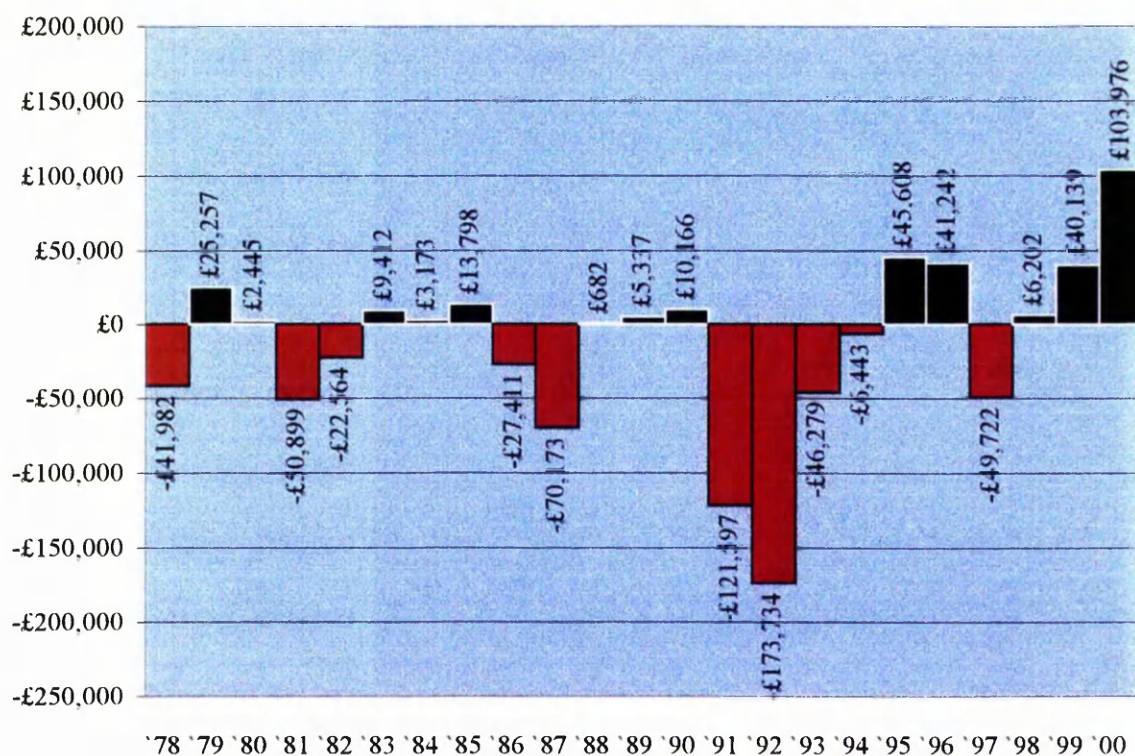
For this study, the measurement of the Royal Lyceum's contribution in providing high-quality productions is not only a qualitative matter, even if the company might prefer to be judged primarily by the plays and how they were staged, rather than by the balance sheet. A dilemma has been the question of keeping the 'museum' company stylish amongst those drama critics and Scottish Arts Council cognoscenti who would nudge the management into more risky choices and other decisions, but who do so from the special advantage of not having to shoulder the weight of the board and an artistic director's financial accountability. These obligations began almost immediately, with the miscalculated loss of £22,000 (£104,750) from the revival of *The Servant O' Twa Maisters* at the Assembly Hall putting the company in a fearful mess soon after opening, as well as sapping outsiders' confidence in the new board and management. It set a standard for extremes unknown before and did not assist in framing realistic financial projections in the aftermath. When the theatre had to close during more refurbishment in 1990, a second unscheduled setback associated with staging artistically ambitious productions outwith the building occurred: a loss of £107,000 (£130,500). Although these two disasters left the company shaken – as buildings' repairs often do – it seems irresponsible for the board not to have learned from these experiences. A more cautious approach would be to cease production during buildings' closure, reach rapprochement with the funding bodies on temporary reduction in revenue grant and heed the evidence that theatregoers' support for the Royal Lyceum is intimately identified with the building.

Given the frequent state of corporate amnesia, it may not be so surprising that the second company's record is, in most financial as well as artistic aspects, far more erratic than its predecessor was. Partly, this can be traced through a new cycle of undulating larger deficits and small surpluses. Whilst they underline the continuing uncertainty of the business – and the lack of working capital for set-up costs, let alone any cash reserves to buffer the future operation – the cumulative sums are proportionately larger than before, peaking at £432,676 (£488,923) in 1992. By 2000, when the deficit carried forward reduced to £242,790, the losses were 11 per cent of turnover and continued to constrain selection to those plays with fewer actors than hitherto. Although this year's result was a marked improvement on the financial nadir of 1994 – with little doubt that the years of Kenny Ireland's artistic direction have been accompanied by a period of upturn in the bottom line – a healthy balance sheet with working capital at the outset might be the foundation for long-term stability:



## BOX 7.3 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED

### HISTORY OF DEFICIT AND SURPLUS 1978-2000



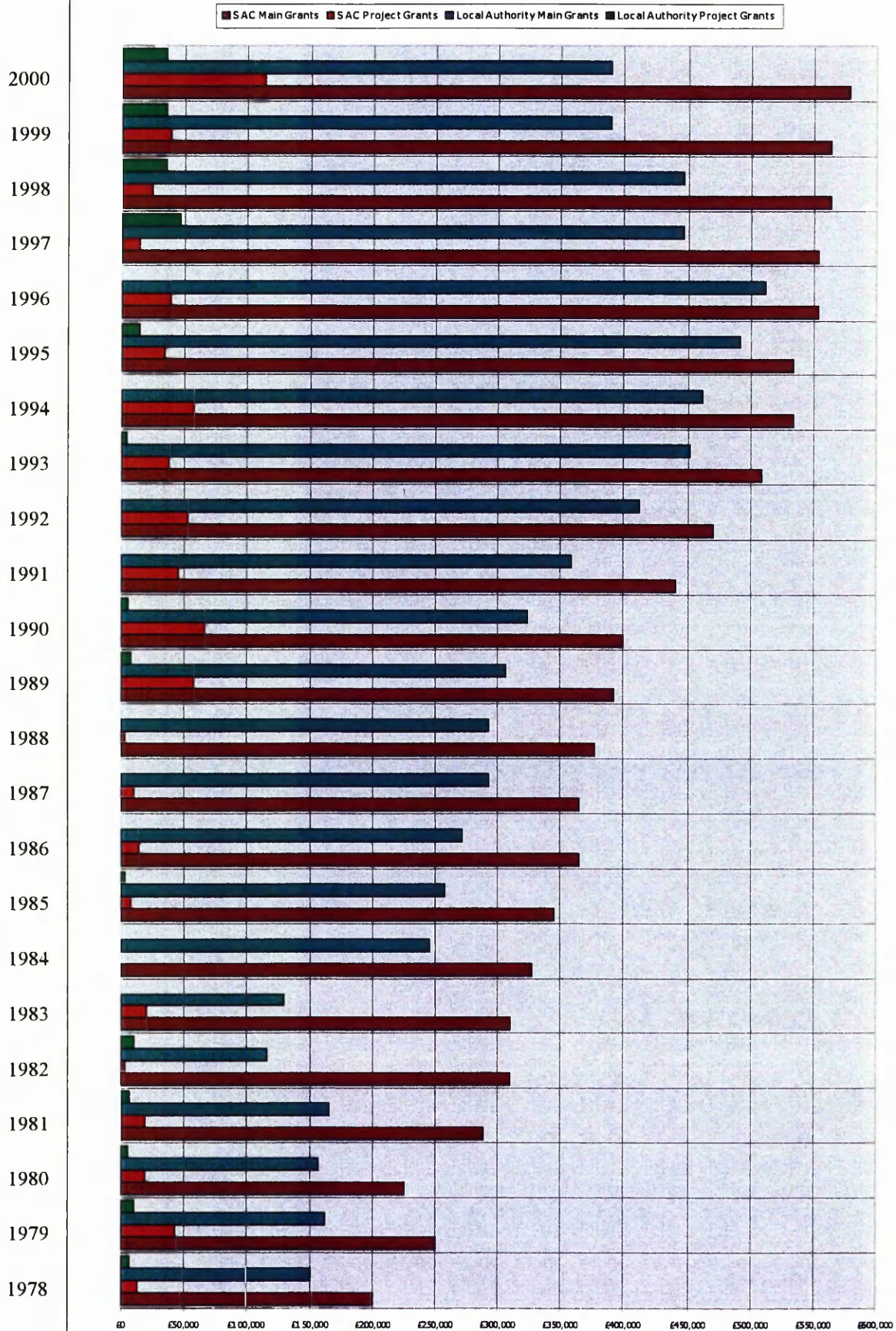
It was observed in Chapter Three that when repertories were founded in Glasgow and Liverpool, their boards appealed for working capital but the endowments habitually fell short of requirements or were used up in the opening seasons. When William Archer and Harley Granville Barker made their first estimates for a National Theatre in 1907, the intention was for it to be self-sufficient, subsidised by the interest and dividends earned from a 'Guarantee Fund' to 'assure, for a certain period at any rate, the solvency of the institution'.<sup>4</sup> As noted in Chapter Three, they called for an endowment – that would remain unspent – of £150,000 (£8,727,000), financed by one hundred donations of £1,500. Likewise, at the *end* of the Gaiety Theatre adventure, Annie Horniman appealed unsuccessfully to the Manchester public for an endowment of £40,000 (£872,400) to guarantee the operation against loss. These sums excluded theatre construction and freeholds, the costs of which were another matter, but although they were unattainable then, the notion of government endowment as a substitute for annual subsidies might not be such a pipedream now, when compared with the amounts of some of the huge post-1995 National Lottery grants to buildings. At the Royal Lyceum, an endowment of £20,000,000, that might realise an annual income of £1,000,000, could substitute for the brouhaha of dealing with the funding bodies as well as ease its annual losses.

In passing, it is relevant to note that the Archer–Granville Barker endowment model for repertory theatre *has* been realised, but in the United States of America. Of course, that country has a stronger culture of philanthropy, buttressed by superior tax incentives for donations and these substitute in large measure for fixed annual government grants, in preference to matching grants to the level of private donations. That system has a great deal to recommend it, not only in helping a company to increase the level of individual and corporate contributions, but also to encourage it to pay more attention to the wishes of theatregoers than those of the funding bodies. But, more importantly for the Royal Lyceum, a 2001 survey of 145 non-profit repertory theatres in the United States found that most had the security of owning their theatre freeholds, valued on average at \$7,103,448 (£4,972,414) and, crucially, endowments of \$3,600,000 (£2,520,000). Endowments have enabled them to accumulate reserves averaging \$10,200,000 (£7,140,000) per company, the interest of which is put towards production and operating costs.<sup>5</sup> Although the income profiles of United States' theatre companies are not exactly comparable to the Royal Lyceum, their expenditure allocations – even taking into account sharper and costlier fundraising methods – are applicable to this study, and use of these yardsticks will be made shortly.

Meanwhile, for the first ten years to 1987, the second Royal Lyceum company, like its predecessor, continued to receive proportionately large subsidies that outpaced box-office and other earned income. With the exception of two years when the total subsidy was reduced (in 1980 and 1982) grant income also rose steadily, with box-office receipts and other earned income trailing the combined contributions of the Scottish Arts Council and local government. Nevertheless, the relative sums received from the local authority and the state (Box 7.4) continued to favour the Scottish Arts Council as the senior external stakeholder, especially with their more extensive project grants. Even so, after 1996 it would have been frustrating for the management to contend with the seesaw of modest boosts in state subsidy that were accompanied by unexpected reductions in local authority support. In 1988, the winds of change that were catalogued in Chapter Six meant that for the first time since 1965, earned income exceeded total subsidy. During this period of management by Ian Wooldridge and Roger Spence, the company achieved year-end surpluses for the three years to 1990. However, thereafter, in the years before and immediately after the rebuilding of the fly tower and construction of the plate glass foyer, more marked fluctuations in the ratio of subsidy to earned income occurred. These were accompanied by reduced numbers of productions and perilously large deficits, leading to seven out of the eight years to 2000 when earned income was greater than subsidy (Box 7.5).

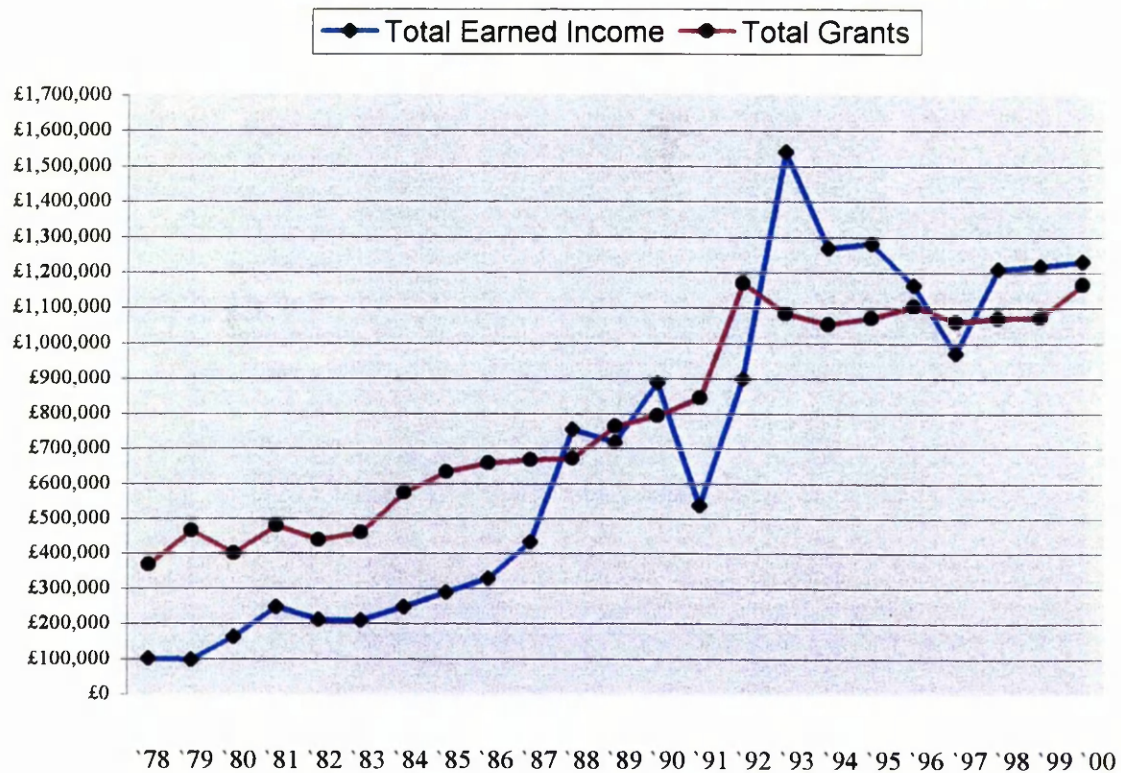


**BOX 7.4 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED  
THE RELATIVE SUBSIDIES FROM SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL  
AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, 1978-2000**





**BOX 7.5 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED  
EARNED INCOME AND GRANTS: 31 March 1978 – 31 March 2000**



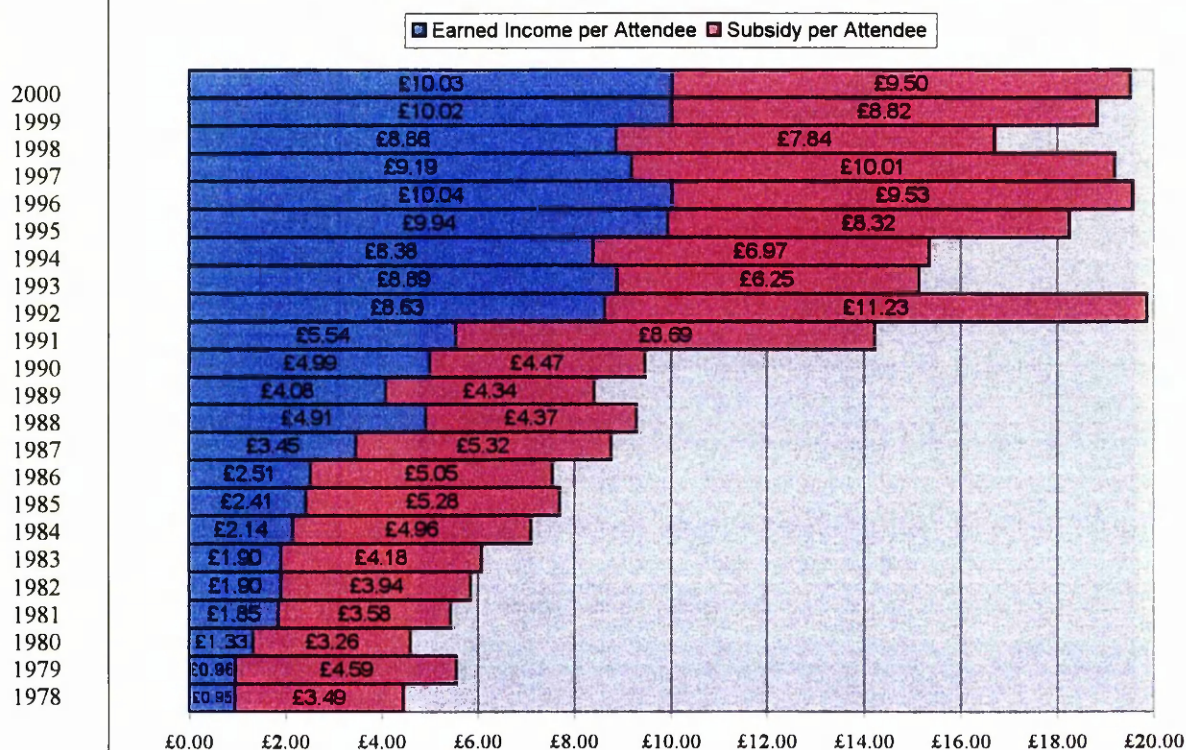
The company's foundation in 1965 coincided with the first comprehensive investigation into the economic condition of arts organisations: although this was researched in the United States, the work of William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen launched a new discipline of 'cultural economics' and which is germane to this overview of Royal Lyceum finances.<sup>6</sup> They concluded that theatres were caught in a perpetual cost-revenue squeeze, caused by a tendency for the costs of productions to grow more rapidly than the income obtained from them. Unlike the rest of the economy, there were few possibilities in live performance for increasing productivity because, for drama, approximately the same number of hours has always been needed to present a play without sacrificing quality. They called this the 'cost-disease' and, later, their work was applied in Britain to underscore economic justification for government subsidies. They found that a relatively slow growth rate of income in theatre, opera, music and ballet was caused by fierce competition between these artforms and other entertainment and, especially, by theatres' commitment to keep ticket prices low in order to reach as wide an audience as possible.

For the Royal Lyceum, the effect of subsidy on ticket prices is shown in Box 7.6. From the perspective of theatregoers, this shows how subsidy has worked, latterly, as a stimulus to raise higher box office income. Unlike the progenitor companies that charged the same



prices as touring houses, the average prices paid at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company are now considerably less than those levied for plays at the King's Theatre, for instance. Despite the company's complex range of prices and concessions, it has mirrored Baumol and Bowen's observations by striving to keep the cost of theatregoing within reach of everybody, which it has also done by continuing to offer transport subsidies to coach parties from outwith Edinburgh, many years after the scheme was discontinued in England.

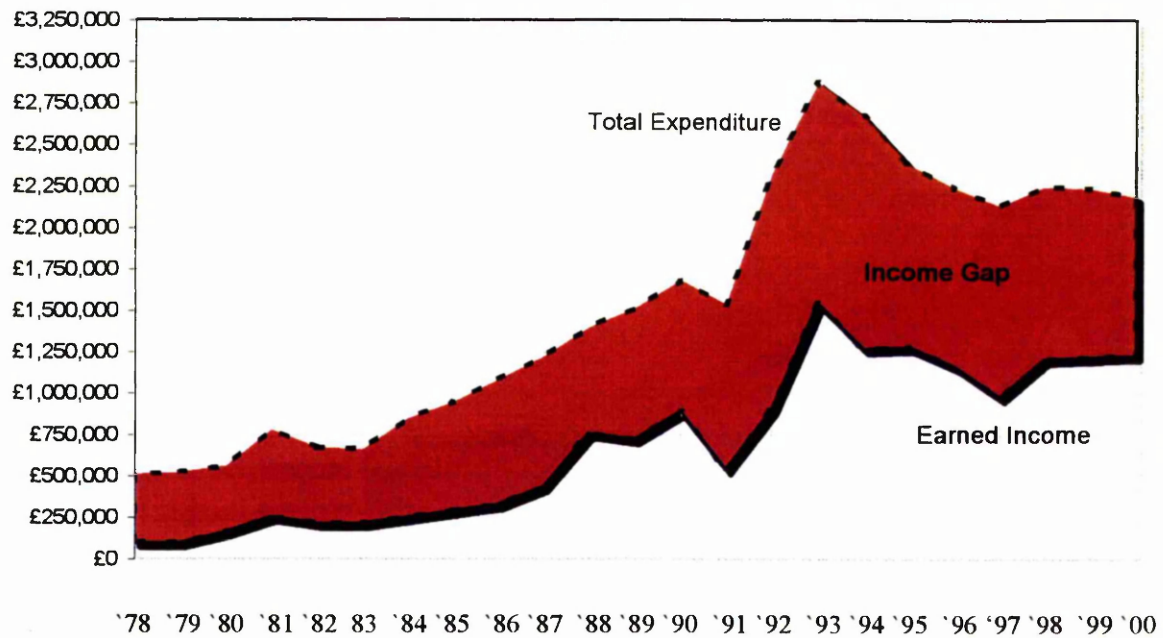
#### BOX 7.6 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED EARNED INCOME AND SUBSIDY PER ATTENDEE 1978-2000



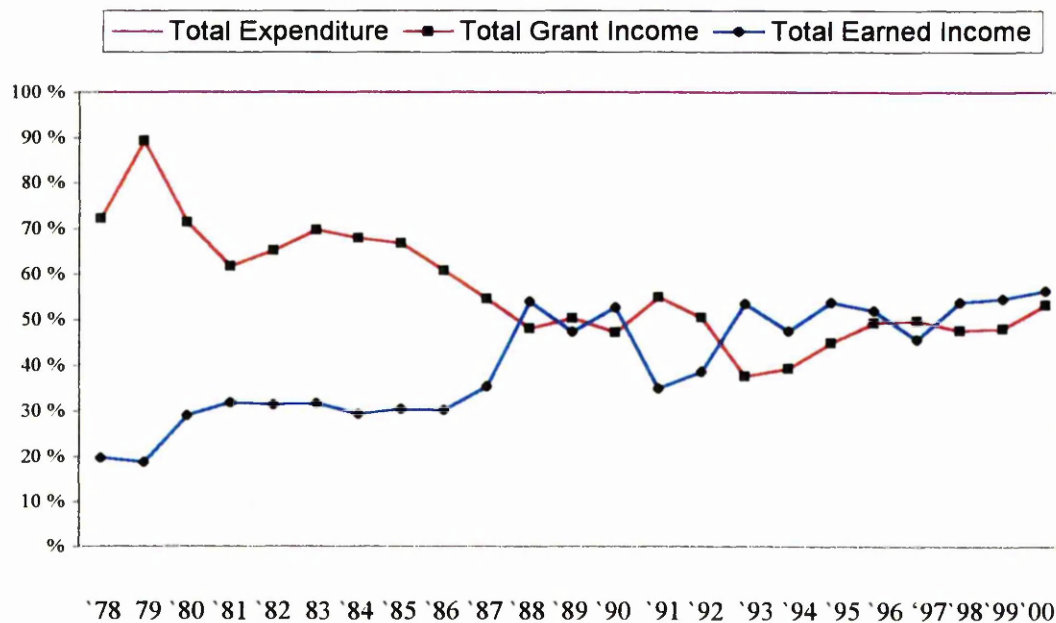
In Chapter Five, the statistical methodology used by Baumol and Bowen was applied to the history of total expenditure and total earned income for the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust (Box 5.11). This showed a pronounced 'income gap' only after the 1975 expansion. Echoing these formats for the next 22 years,<sup>7</sup> it is apparent that, even when bearing in mind the cost of inflation and ticket price increases, the relationship between costs and income has remained approximate to what it was at the time of transition from the first to the second company. No more significant expansion occurred in the second company. However, whereas Baumol and Bowen's hypothesis predicted that the effects of the cost-revenue squeeze would become progressively worse and that the 'income gap' would enlarge, Box 7.7 confirms that for the second company an overall parallelism between increases in earned income and expenditure continued to 2000. Nevertheless, unlike the

uniformity of the years from 1965 when subsidy covered approximately 60 per cent of expenditure, in the second company this declined as a proportion of costs, from 72- to 53 per cent. In the same way, earned income varied over these years as a proportion of total expenditure, from 20-to 56 per cent (Box 7.8).

**BOX 7.7 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED  
TOTAL EXPENDITURE, EARNED INCOME  
AND THE NEED FOR SUBSIDY, 1978-2000**



**BOX 7.8 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED  
EARNED INCOME AND GRANT INCOME AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL  
EXPENDITURE, 1978-2000**





Given the overall increases in the combination of subsidy and the average ticket yields (Box 7.6), it could be inferred that the company should have performed better financially but, as has been shown, the years from 1977 have been mired by insuperable cumulative debts. These deficits must therefore be associated, in the main, with bad income budgeting and poor control of expenditure. Normally a theatre management faced with a deficit might be expected to see if there are any obvious areas of duplication and waste that could be expunged from its business practices, in order to deliver efficiency gains. Therefore, turning to the now familiar framework for analysing expenditure, a comparison of six sample years for the second company reveals that the Royal Lyceum response to these financial dangers was in fact the opposite of administrative frugality:

**BOX 7.9 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED  
SIX SELECTED SCHEDULES OF EXPENDITURE 1978-2000**

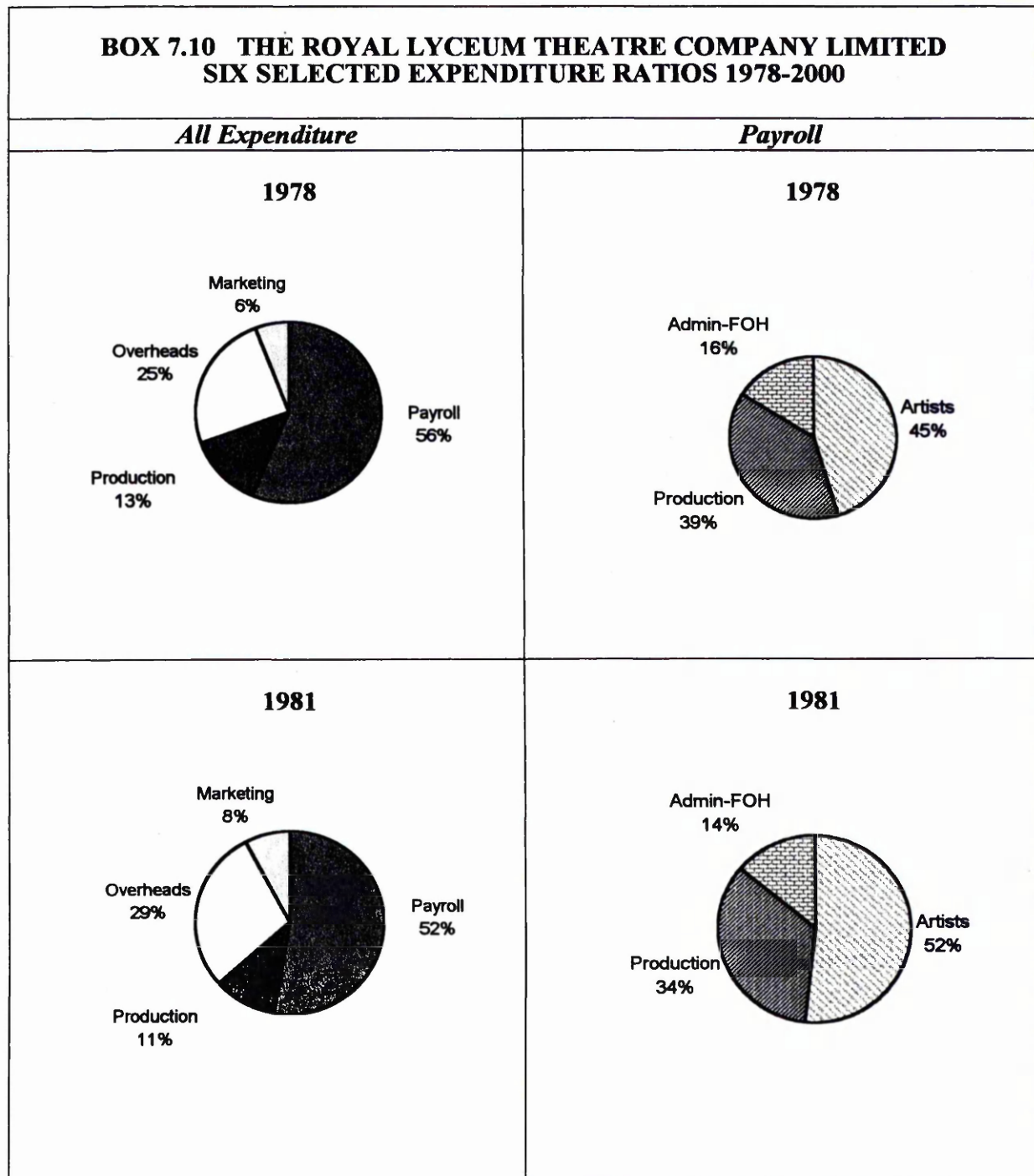
*Administration and Overheads: Colour Coded*

	1978	1981	1985	1992	1995	2000
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<i>Payroll</i>						
Actors & Musicians	130,372	212,160	224,489	202,000	224,973	225,392
Production Staff	111,027	140,245	167,172	149,177	385,399	392,122
Administration	46,205	57,250	85,976	550,823	538,628	634,669
<b>Total Payroll</b>	<b>287,604</b>	<b>409,655</b>	<b>477,637</b>	<b>902,000</b>	<b>1,149,000</b>	<b>1,252,183</b>
<b>% Payroll spent on Administration</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Production Costs</b>	<b>66,921</b>	<b>83,267</b>	<b>78,682</b>	<b>145,000</b>	<b>205,000</b>	<b>255,338</b>
<b>Overheads</b>	<b>126,322</b>	<b>224,421</b>	<b>288,092</b>	<b>603,000</b>	<b>565,000</b>	<b>654,256</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	<b>29,875</b>	<b>61,149</b>	<b>59,389</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>157,000</b>	<b>187,980</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>510,722</b>	<b>778,492</b>	<b>903,800</b>	<b>1,787,000</b>	<b>2,076,000</b>	<b>2,349,757</b>
<b>% Total Costs spent on Overheads</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>

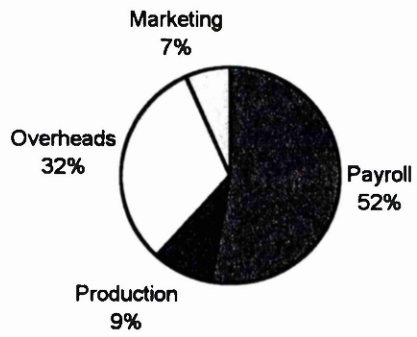
*Source: Management and annual accounts for the Company, 31 March 1978, 1981, 1985, 1992, 1995 and 2000*

Until 1985, it continued to spend money in the same proportions as the progenitor repertories and the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust: the sums spent on artists and production costs predominated, with administration wages held down to no more than 18 per cent of payroll costs. These eight years included the highest number of shows staged annually in

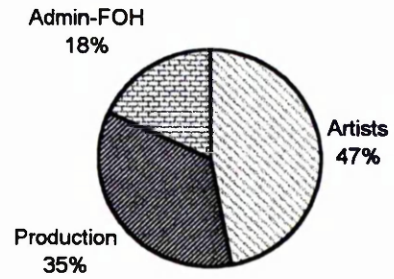
the second company, when the Little Lyceum was in full swing for five years, as well as Leslie Lawton's tenure which included large-cast musicals. After then, an overwhelming deviation occurred. The proportions spent on overheads increased gradually, but those for administration staff transcended the artists and production so that, in 1992, 61 per cent of the payroll was spent on administration staff. Even though this year included the hiatus of vacating the building for refurbishment and the poorly attended company performances in other Edinburgh locales, the proportion of wages spent on these employees in the 1990s continued to outrun the sums spent on actors, musicians and production staff. Representation of these changes is spotlighted in these pie charts, which may now be compared with Granville Barker's benchmark for evaluating proportionalities used in Chapter Three:



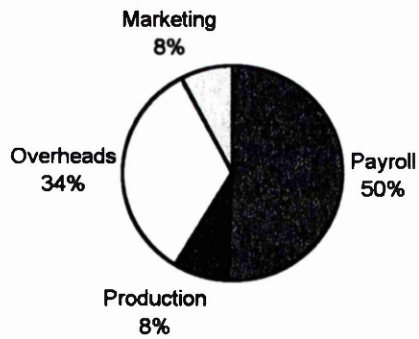
**1985**



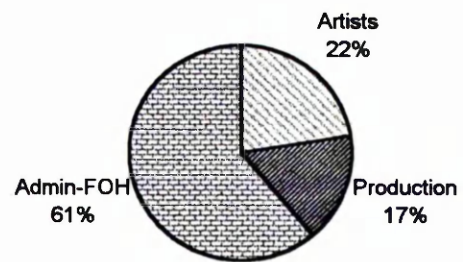
**1985**



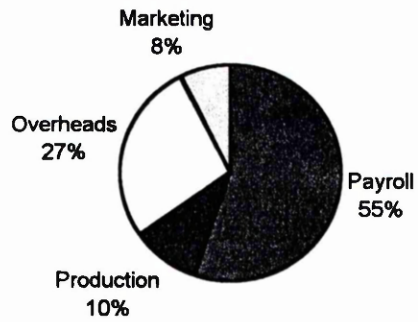
**1992**



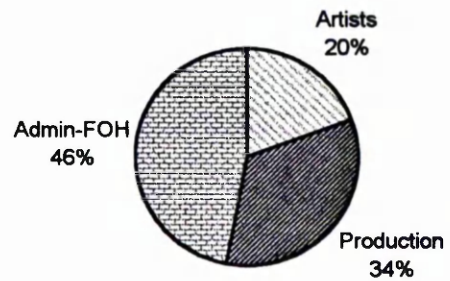
**1992**



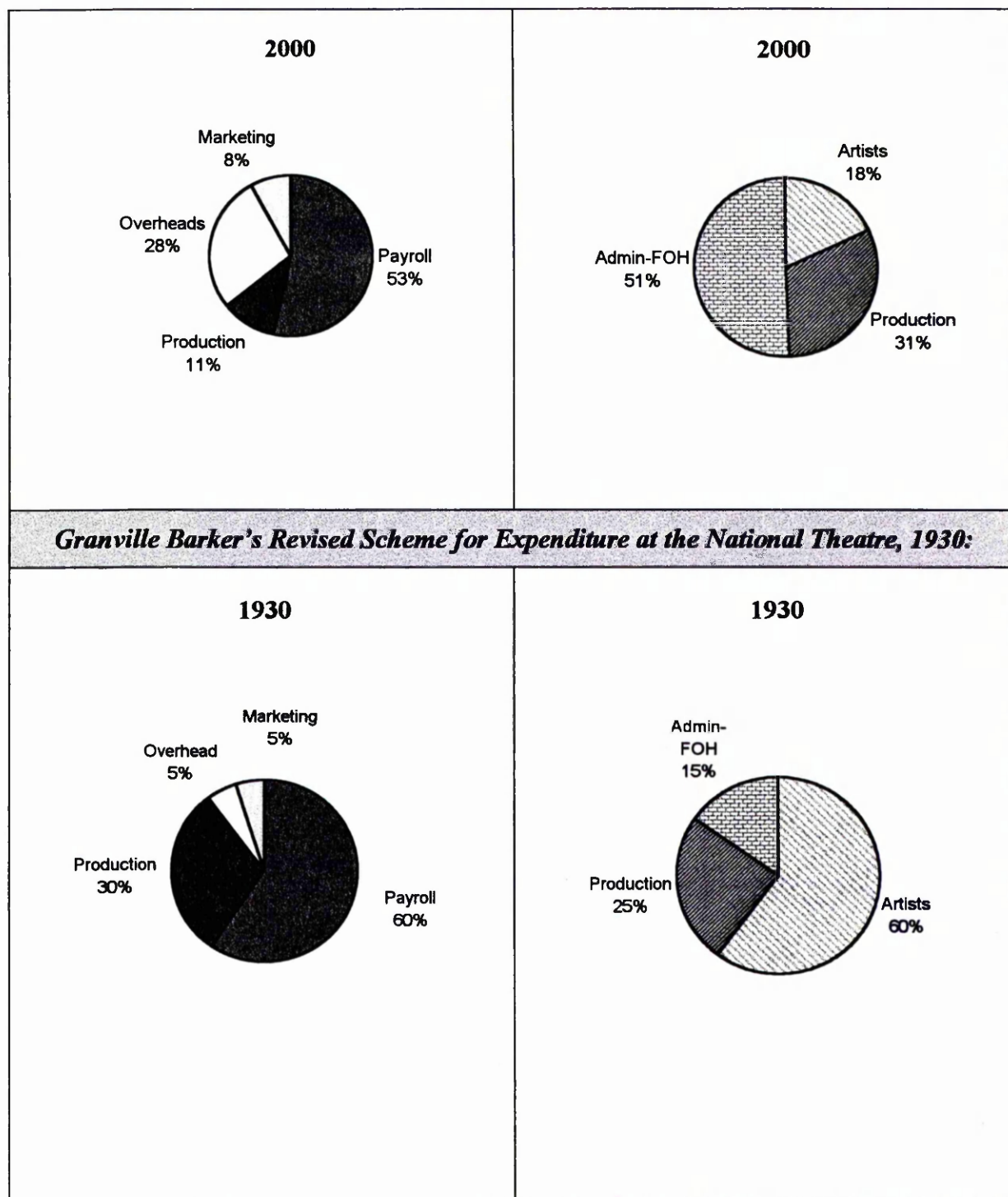
**1995**



**1995**







The detailed survey reveals that the subject of this new bureaucracy was canvassed specifically by the full board only on one occasion, when general manager Nikki Axford declared in 1995 that the company was:

...Unable to achieve income without more administrative staff... [we are] all being stretched to the limit with no spare capacity to develop additional events, conferences, guided tours, sales initiatives and wedding receptions.<sup>8</sup>

Then, chairman Richard Findlay acknowledged that fixed costs were escalating (during a decade when inflation was largely defeated) but, despite his wanting to take prompt action

to realign the theatre's priorities, there were no further evaluations of the employment of administrative staff. Only occasionally was the workability of the new profit-seeking activities recorded in the minutes. Moreover, other board members seem to have denied the signals that something was wrong. Doubtless, the management and the finance committee dealt with it in some detail but, even though the board is legally responsible as company directors, it would be wrong to pinpoint them (or any of the protagonists) for particular aberration. In the non-profit system, it is convenient to shift the responsibility between stakeholders because, with the exception of the employees (who have no directly elected representation or attendance at board level in this company), there is no personal financial imperative to cement their union. Thus, the company preferred to pass the onus to the funding bodies, arguing that a 'major uplift in grants' would safeguard the overheads.

At the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, this tilt away from the employment of artists towards administrators occurred ten years later than in many other companies. However, set against the financial profiles of other repertories, it is more forceful in Edinburgh, and is, overall, now more corrosive in the Scottish theatre companies than in England.<sup>9</sup> Chapter Six showed that after Scottish Arts Council's allotment of grants to new touring companies and projects, the competitive nature of their grant processes became a major preoccupation of the Royal Lyceum board and management in the 1980s. The company spent a great deal more time developing, maintaining and smoothing relationships with the funding authorities. The yearly funding cycle, though partly moderated by triennial Scottish Arts Council revenue subsidy from 1988, required so much more energy, making forward planning difficult whilst increasing the possibility that external policies, funding opportunities and decisions shaped the play-list whilst undermining the autonomy of the board and senior managers in actually running the company. The result was such a downhill situation for actors' employment that where a complement of 25 actors was hired for the 24 productions staged in 1977-1978, by 1996-1997 only an average of five were cast in only seven productions.

For this theatre, the new demands for accountability are an important explanation of the incline towards bureaucratic structure but, from the perspective of *overall* long-term increases in earned income and the limping increases of revenue grants, matched by the parallelism of expenditure, relations with the funding authorities are not the sole reason for its difficulties. Their demands triggered the lower standing of artists but, simultaneously, the board and senior management's grip on the organisation degenerated. Whereas in the first company in 1971 the small leadership of director, general manager, director of productions and director of theatre-in-education were accomplished all-rounders who



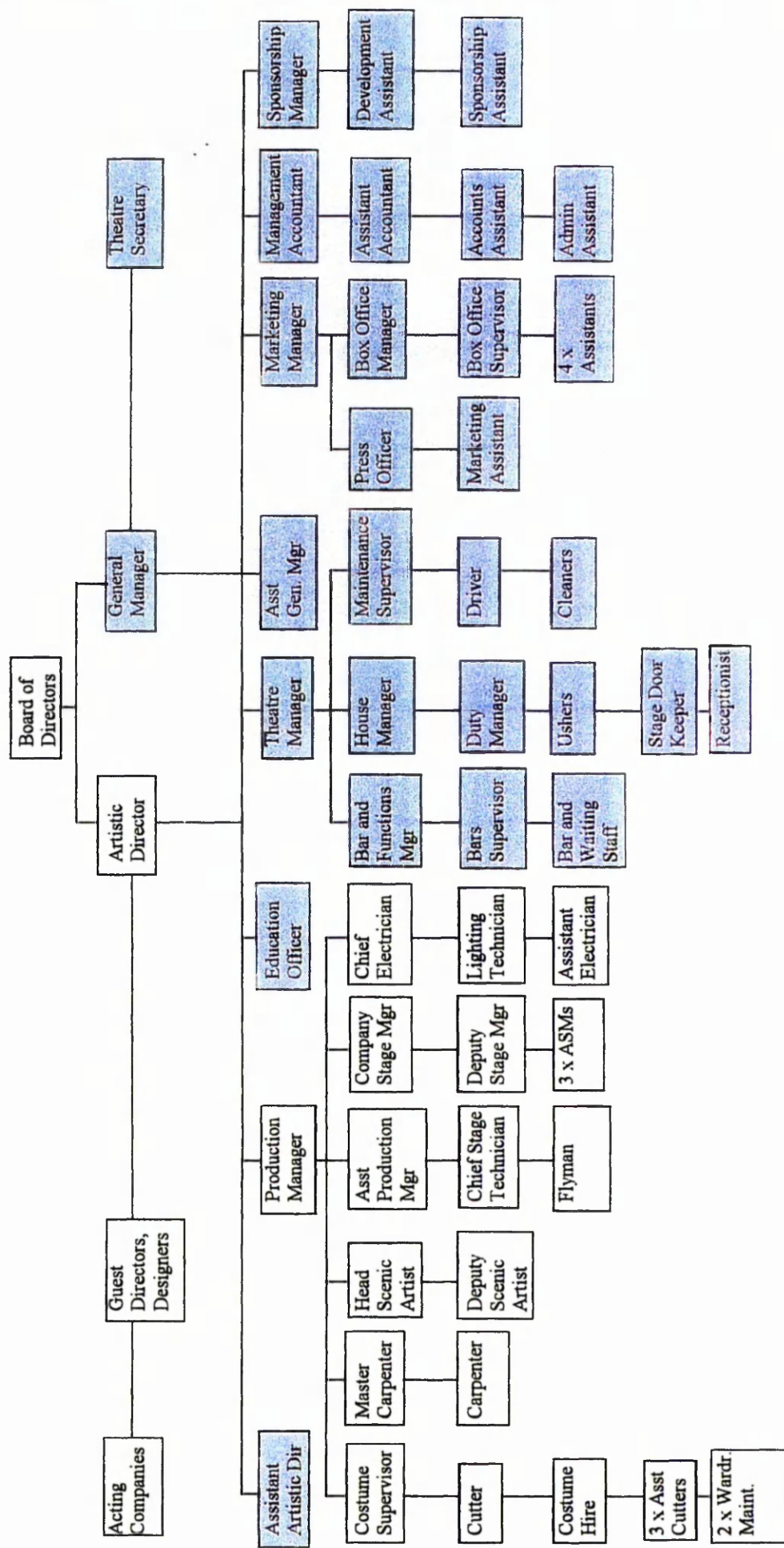
worked as a management team of four (Chapter Five, Box 5.6), the response after 1985 was to increase the size of the senior management team to ten. This produced no concomitant increase in the number of productions and attendances. The once-svelte, supportive and shipshape organisation became, in middle age, a confused millstone with a myriad of managers assigned full-time to support new activities that had little to do with the core business of the theatre and who, furthermore, were individually paid on average 34 per cent more than the weekly rewards to artists and production staff.<sup>10</sup> Although the company's total overhead and marketing costs themselves did not increase markedly as a proportion of expenditure,<sup>11</sup> its productivity was dragged down by the number of rigid 'business units' comprising assistants to the new administrators. This is shown in the *actual* Staff Organisation Chart for 1995 (Box 7.11).

These clerical, fundraising, marketing, sales and publicity sidekicks often had overstated titles, giving the funding bodies an impression that their duties were an essential requirement of theatrical management, and that their work was justified by the extent to which they helped the artists to make the productions and share them with more theatregoers. However, in practice it was as if 'Parkinson's Law' had overrun the theatre, with administrators' work expanding to fill the time for its completion.<sup>12</sup> By 2000 – when renewed attempts were made to tackle the overall problems by the attachment of a management consultant via a Scottish Arts Council programme for management change (the costs of which were paid by their 'advancement' grant) – the company was still reeling from the effects of this new administrative bias. Then, 51 per cent of all payroll expenditure was lavished on these people and only 18 per cent bestowed on artists. In response to many of the ensuing financial difficulties, as well as opportunities to obtain new project-grant subsidies, these new administrators were often the first to be hired and, unlike actors, were the last to be fired.

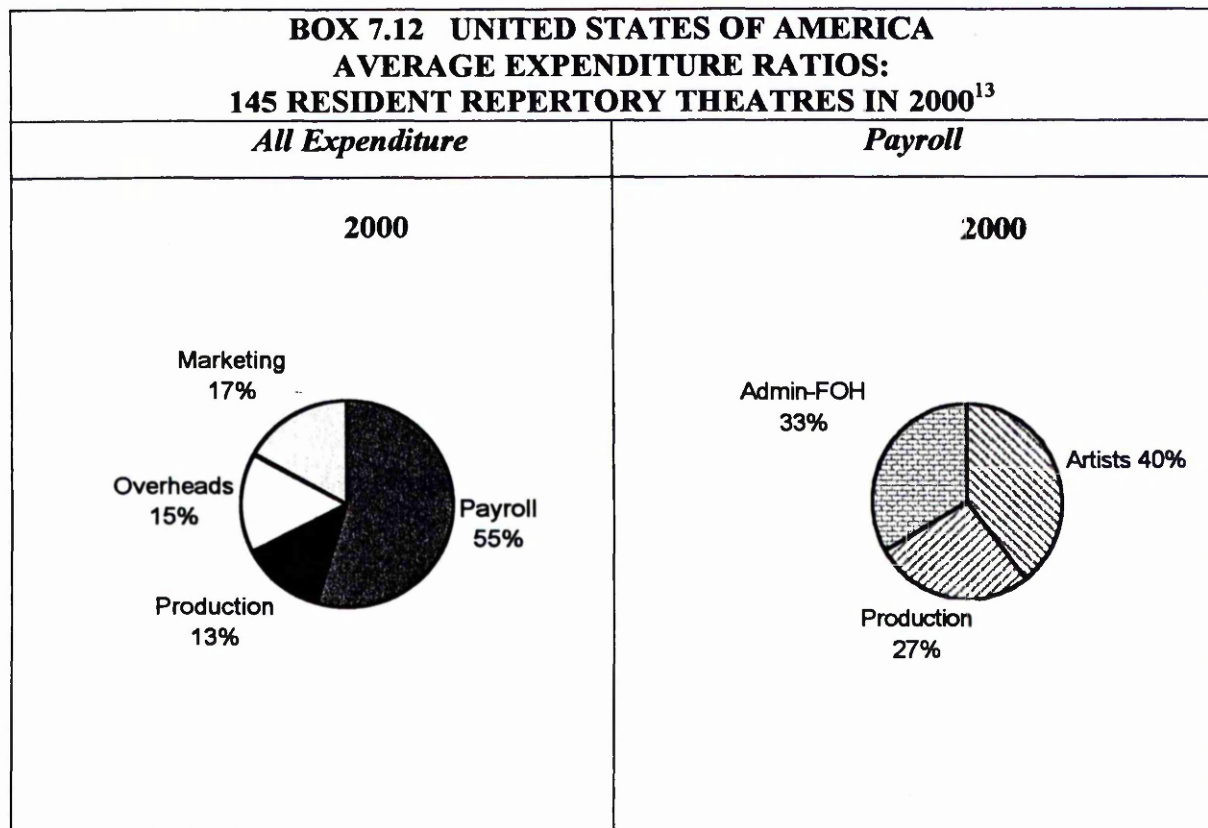
There is no particular evidence in the company records to suggest that the funding authorities alone inspired this increased number of backroom jobs, and in any case the Scottish Arts Council is a soft target for any repertory company or critic. Perhaps the management sensed that they had to flatter the funding body by imitating the larger bureaucracies of the Scottish 'national' companies but, in doing so, the board of directors (that lost its last link to the foundational year when vice-chairman Donald Gorrie retired in 1997) did not remember the artistic orientation of its bygone organisation. Instead, the board gave surreptitious approval, through the annual budget, to the triumph of arts administration.

# BOX 7.11 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED

## STAFF ORGANISATION CHART 1995



Because a similar shift towards management culture occurred in other arts organisations, it might be supposed that *all* repertory theatres have become different kinds of institutions, no longer linked to the destiny of their founding artistic principles and the repertory ideal by virtue of their primordial role as art theatres. When the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company co-production of *Life is a Dream* toured to the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1999 as part of their 'New European Theatres' festival, company administrators accompanied the New York performances in order to cement a union with their counterpart theatres and thereby assist the revitalisation of the Edinburgh company. They returned to Scotland to offer the board excited observations on fundraising in United States' theatres – where an analogous repertory movement had begun in 1915 with the founding of the Cleveland Playhouse, Ohio. Notwithstanding what they admired about the United States' theatre-making processes or the differences in most theatres' self-ownership, large endowments or the potential for the Royal Lyceum to emulate their production sponsorship and individual giving schemes, they might also have enthused their colleagues and the board about the better relationship of artists to overall expenditure allocations. For in United States' repertory, the annual survey previously referred to shows a different ball game altogether. Even in the country with the biggest entrepreneurial and business culture, there is less ambivalence towards the theatres' artistic function, with the same labour intensity showing over double the equivalent proportion of Edinburgh's expenditure reaching those people who actually create the work on stage:



## **The influence of corporate sponsorship**

Because of the unpredictability of subsidy, it was understandable that the new Royal Lyceum administrators should spend time and energy on appeals to the private sector, as well as latterly admiring the enterprise of North American repertory. Nevertheless, the pursuit of the private sector money is, in addition to the board of directors' lack of good husbandry and the funding bodies' inattention to the longer-term consequences of their demands for accountability, a third explanation for why the company seems, in the 1990s, to have passed beyond its prudent and careful management phase.

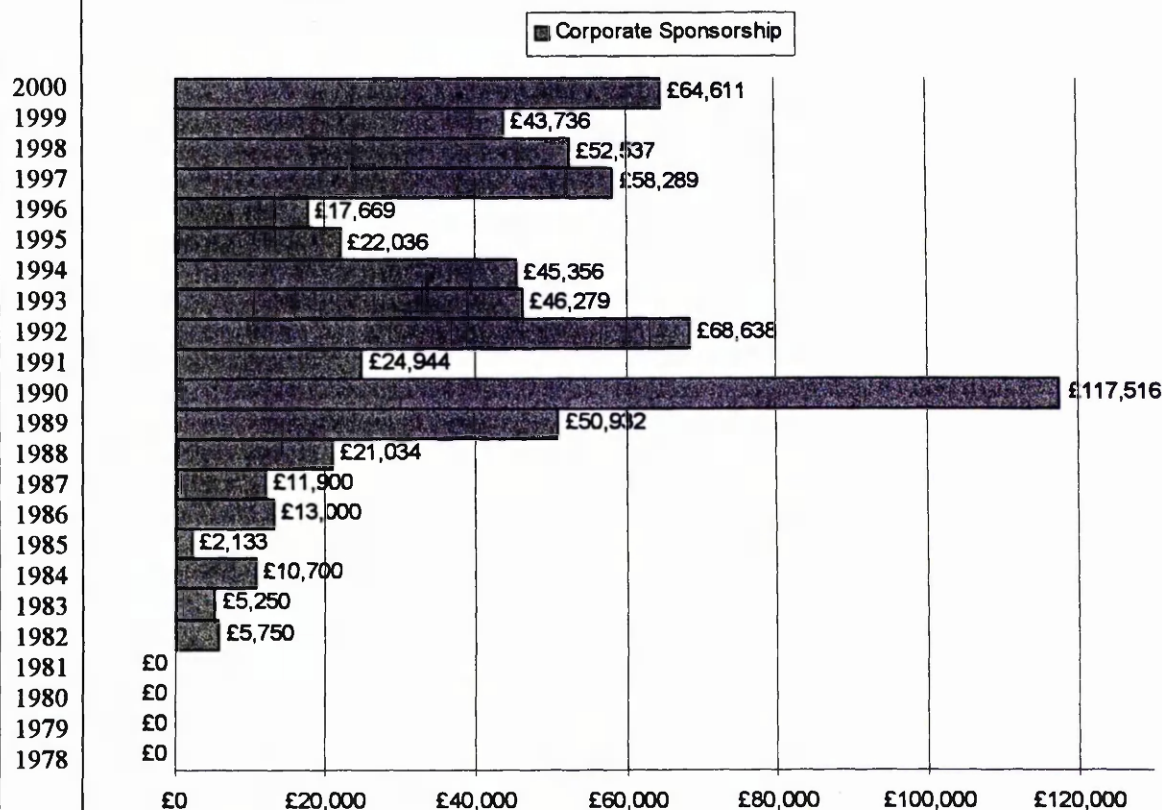
The potential sources of business money were threefold. Firstly, donations from individuals, secondly grants from trusts and foundations and, thirdly and more significantly, support from industry in the form of sponsorship. The income might be for operations and productions, or towards the capital costs of refurbishing the theatre and large items of equipment. For operations, the first company received only £1,702 from donations in twelve years (Chapter Five, Box 5.8) but, like all repertories, the Royal Lyceum received unmeasured assistance-in-kind, such as discounts on the purchases of materials, services and, not least, the underrated personal time contributed by the voluntary board members. Philanthropy was not really an innovation for non-profit repertory – industrial patronage having been observed in the construction of the Usher Hall and, for repertory, at the Liverpool Playhouse as long ago as 1912 – but all the same, from the mid-1970s, government and arts councils' reawakened it as a groundbreaking invention. It would need specific initiatives from the private sector, particularly to overcome the absence of an effective mediator who could help bridge what had become a void between the arts and industry. Therefore, in 1975, the government founded the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts. At first, this body campaigned straightforwardly for donations and, from 1984, matched them pound-for-pound with extra government subsidy, provided the business was a first-time sponsor.

For the company, the Association's 'Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme' gave it extra incentive to seek the corporate pound. As a rule, this money has been found only for short-term support of productions and education programmes that needed extra funds over and above that needed to equal recurrent expenditure, such as when the Royal Bank of Scotland underwrote the Royal Lyceum's 1996 Scotland-wide tour of *Pygmalion* for £30,000. For operations, the share of the company's income from business grew dramatically from nothing in 1981, to 7 per cent (£117,516) in 1990 and then, after six



years' decline, recovered only to 3 per cent (£64,611) in 2000. Business subvention has usually been a commercial transaction, with high visibility required by the sponsor, which their marketing departments use to advantage as a form of specialised advertising. Whether corporate giving is motivated more by a desire to influence public opinion than by social responsibility, it is usually associated with a firm's advertising expenditures and they want their names associated with non-controversial, high-quality productions. Thus, any drama company may be handicapped because plays are likelier to be offensive than the less threatening repertoire and prestige of Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet or the national orchestras, more of whose audiences tend to be wealthier. Corporate sponsors also want to be associated with theatres with stable finances and a consistent press record of well-regarded productions coupled with an absence of media controversy. Without these credentials, and what seems from Chapter Six to be a lack of overt enthusiasm from the artistic directors, the Royal Lyceum has had to settle for short-term and small sponsorships, the amounts of which, where applicable, include government matching grants:

**BOX 7.13 THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED  
THE RECORD OF CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP 1978-2000**



It is intriguing to observe that the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre eschewed corporate sponsorship of productions until 1999, perhaps because their repertory-as-public service ethic resembled more strongly the BBC, where no businesses can advertise or sponsor programmes. Nevertheless, even the Citizens', in rethinking its relationship with the state, now believes this position is unrealistic and outdated, and in 1999 it received Scottish Arts Council National Lottery 'advancement' subsidy, mainly to set-up a private sector funding campaign.<sup>14</sup> All repertory theatres have now succumbed to business associations, usually prompted by the Scottish Arts Council's belief that resistance is precious, even though competition for money is intense. It is especially so in Edinburgh where, in 2000, private sector income for the International Festival – that sold 400,817 tickets against the Royal Lyceum's ticket sales of 122,677 – amounted to 28 per cent (£1,702,980) of all income.<sup>15</sup>

There is no queue of firms anxiously waiting to sponsor Royal Lyceum productions. Although the company might have the advantage of location in a city where several British businesses have their headquarters, these firms often prefer to donate to highly visible capital appeals and to sport. For instance, between 1991 and 1994 when the Traverse raised £700,000 for its new theatres and the Empire Theatre Trust raised £4,200,000 from the private sector towards the restitution of a bingo hall as a variety theatre, these years coincided with the sharp descent of sponsorship of the Royal Lyceum Theatre.

After 1996, when the National Lottery began, one of its first decisions was to finance arts buildings, and so the rivalry for private sector income was even more high-pressured. Lottery capital grants were not lump-sum in nature, but took the form of matching grants for private sector donations that were, at first, one-quarter 'partnership funding' to be secured for three-quarters' National Lottery money pledged. This meant that the effect of the large new sums available for theatre refurbishment was to increase the demand on private sector assistance.

For this company, as with other arts organisations, the strenuous and sophisticated solicitation of private sector income raised the stakes for the profession of arts administration. The responsibility of the board, with its homespun but whole-hearted fundraising committees, the efforts of general manager Roger Spence and a part-time consultant, yielded to the employment of well-paid, full-time fundraisers. They were known by the polysemous titles of 'development manager', 'external affairs director' and 'events co-ordinator' and a large part of their job has been to approach the same individuals, businesses and philanthropic trusts as every other arts organisation. By 2000,

when the company had no experienced general manager – nor even the compensation of an artistic director as practised in the overall business of theatre management as Clive Perry and Stephen MacDonald – these fundraisers represented a powerful new grouping within the Lyceum, with their own priorities and limited allegiance to the artistic purpose and processes of the theatre. Unlike other Royal Lyceum staffs, they justify themselves by longer-term targets than the artistic director's yearly planning cycle of play selection and the urgent decision-making required of him and the production team to produce plays in quick succession. Inevitably, the specialist demands assistants, and whereas in 1996 the Royal Lyceum employed one fundraiser, by 2000 there was a department of three full-time people, even though their costs undoubtedly exceeded the £64,611 raised.

Other costs of fundraising are an important proportion of this expenditure, over and above the specialists' wages. Because sponsorship income was shown gross in formal company accounts, I have been unable to quantify the exact expenditure entwined with receipts. A sponsor is usually 'sold' a package that offers conspicuous display of the backer's logo in press advertising, brochures, posters, programme editorial, a negotiated number of complimentary tickets, additional seats at discounted prices and the use of hospitality suites for entertaining, seducing clients and rewarding employees.<sup>16</sup> It might be argued that the profile given to the sponsoring businesses was out of proportion to the net sums earned by the theatre company. Indeed, theatregoers might easily think, when reading the publicity material, that the sponsor had contributed the lion's share of production costs, whereas in reality the box office receipts and subsidies from local government and the Scottish Arts Council have always contributed the most. These processes had the effect of relegating public perception of the importance of the individual theatregoer as well as public subsidy. In 1983, the Scottish Arts Council response – soon followed by local government – was the new grant condition of requiring a theatre to strikingly and similarly acknowledge subsidy as if that was a business sponsorship, by displaying their insignia on publicity material. Thus, a subtle note of gratitude for public subsidy yielded to 'logo-culture' and the impression – if not confirmation – that the company was no longer the principal architect of its destiny.<sup>17</sup>

These observations do not deny the importance of sponsorship for the arts, but the net benefits must be questionable for the Royal Lyceum and, perhaps, some other repertory companies. For them, sponsorship is a component of the sad need to present the *appearance* of businesslike efficiency, creating an overstated success story in order to convince the Scottish Arts Council that this theatre's earned income is greater than ever



and that its new management, like that of the Scottish Opera and Scottish Ballet, is cast in the mould of solid industrial leadership.

### **The impact of new business culture on the Royal Lyceum Theatre**

The wider sphere of business sponsorship has come down on the Royal Lyceum significantly, in other matters of management and in particular the way in which this company is organised by its battalion of administrators today. In order to attract corporate money and deal with the arts funding system and government, the board of directors and its managers have needed, as noted, to present themselves in the same punctilious manner as the funding bodies, even though most repertory theatres had previously conducted themselves as efficient theatrical businesses. To an extent, the new arts administrators and some of the many new courses in the subject promulgated these ill-matching management fixations, even though it would be wrong to point to individual blame. By 1998, courses had snowballed to 39 British higher and further education academies offering 57 qualifications in the new discipline.<sup>18</sup> They must have matched the number of courses to prospective employment, but the explosion of job opportunities was very different from the needs identified when management training and education was instigated by the repertory managers in the 1960s.<sup>19</sup> The growth of these courses contributed to making the new business culture a focus of the entire subsidised performing arts, and is another explanation for the financial embarrassments at the Royal Lyceum; for though few formally trained managers were employed by the company, they might find influential employment at the Scottish Arts Council and the recreation department of the local authority. There, the orderly nine-to-five working environment might be, to them, more congenial than their observations of the chaotic unpredictability of working longer-hours with 'temperamental artists'; by attending the company's board meetings and seeing the productions, they could merely observe the coalition at work.

During the 1980s, the Royal Lyceum and almost every non-profit theatre company retreated from their ideals of repertory-as-public service. Of course, similar relegations occurred in other professions such as public service broadcasting, health, education and the rest of the public sector, where the rise of business culture is likewise rooted in the election of the Conservative government in 1979. From then, successive Conservative governments to 1997, followed by the landslide elections of Labour in 1997 and 2001 and, in Scotland, a

Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition in the new Scottish Parliament from 1999, have all been characterised by an attenuating mission to reduce the upper hand of the state. For over twenty years, governments have sought increased efficiency through rational-led management, privatisations and pared expenditure on public utilities. Often, they set up profit-seeking public companies or quasi-autonomous government organisations to manage them.<sup>20</sup>

A feature of governments' new business culture was research commissioned by the arts councils from economic analysts. Unlike Baumol and Bowen and other cultural economists who, at first, concentrated on the internal economics of arts organisations,<sup>21</sup> the funding bodies did their utmost to demonstrate to government that the economic dimension to the theatre existed beyond the business of an individual company. Pragmatically, this stress on a company's economic *impact* was important as a new discourse about the value of the arts, so that unenthusiastic politicians would take them seriously. After 1979, unless something made absolute sense in economic terms, it might carry no weight in government decision-making because, even with 35 years' central government funding to the Arts Council of Great Britain, there was no accepted way of talking to politicians about the cultural value of theatre. Fearing government perceptions about self-indulgence in the arts – fuelled by media depictions of theatre folk as 'luvvies' – the arts councils and many local authorities adopted the subject of economic impact in the 1980s. They gave research commissions to economic analysts such as John Myerscough (1941- ).<sup>22</sup>

These investigations led the arts councils to disproportionate emphasis on any one company's potential to contribute, via 'multiplier effects', to regional development, cultural tourism, exports, urban regeneration, social policy, health improvement, crime reduction, regional identity, corporate relocation to a culturally active city and other 'life-enhancing' activities.<sup>23</sup> Many of these issues were tangential to the art of the theatre and the creative contribution to education and life-long learning that the repertory companies had made since the beginning of the movement. The *new* issues were often straight external economic impact questions about the flow of money around a theatre, but now every company wanted to be seen as a 'wealth generator' for its city and hinterland, inducing 'off-site' employment in restaurants, hotels, public transport and trade suppliers. In the case of tourism, the big repertories simply latched on to the *raison d'être* of London's West End and the festival companies at Pitlochry, Stratford upon Avon and Chichester. However, in Edinburgh, the Royal Lyceum was bound to be a lightweight when compared with those festival repertories, let alone the larger 'visitor attractions' such as the

Edinburgh International Festival and the Scottish national museums and art galleries. It was the entirety of a city's arts scene that might have economic impact. The subject was meaningful to one repertory theatre only if the company dominated its local arts scene; in the case of the Royal Lyceum, the volume share of total Edinburgh theatregoing is always low. For instance, in 1995 when it sold 128,869 tickets, this was only a share of 8.6 per cent, against 1,488,094 tickets sold in total across all Edinburgh theatres.<sup>24</sup>

In their eagerness to satisfy the government, the arts councils over-indulged their paymasters by using arguments of economic impact to call for increased government allocations that did not reach the repertories in the way that big increments had accompanied the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company's formation in 1965 and its expansion in 1975. Instead, in order for the arts to be seen by government as 'productive', the arts councils became 'development agencies', no longer satisfied with grant-giving alone but preferring direct influence as a prime-mover in the instigation of theatre policy. Thus, they put most new money into brand new arts organisations. The result was that the theatre industry became over-crowded with a proliferation of discontinuous new touring companies and festivals, all with their own infrastructures, financial difficulties and new administrators. In this situation the repertory theatre system, which related more in the 1960s to the welfare state and similar altruistic notions of community and educational purpose than those of the marketplace, was bound to be insecure about its purpose and could do little to weather the storm. Repertories now felt quarantined from the public sector, unloved by the arts councils and government. Ironically, ridding their once-cherished isolation from the private sector and the profit-seeking theatre became a pragmatic virtue. Perceiving the undermining of the repertory movement's ambitions because of these new attitudes and new companies that even questioned its existence, the prevailing artistic consciousness and vigour that characterised the first Royal Lyceum non-profit company almost passed out of the company and its stakeholders' recollections, by 2000. Debates about the art and purpose of the theatre may still be read in drama criticism and be heard when actors congregate in the bar or at theatre conferences. Even the actors on-stage at post-performance discussions are apt to waylay the debate into demoralised invective about subsidy and the favoured employment of administrators, fundraisers, marketing staffs and their acolytes. What informs most of the work off-stage – by further example, the matters recorded in the Royal Lyceum minute books – is almost total attention to the politics of subsidy, business planning and making grant applications.

Corporate sponsorship symbolised the doorway through which this new world rampaged the Royal Lyceum's 'charitable' organisation to turn it into a 'small business'. No longer confident of its artistic mission to serve the community, the Royal Lyceum – like other subsidised companies – was now a manufacturer of 'products' and 'commodities' as one of the 'cultural industries' that were themselves part of the 'leisure market'. Even public subsidy was now an 'investment', but without acknowledgment of the real meaning of that word – that is, of business assets that would produce a financial return. Theatre management in non-profit repertories might not be, after all, so very theatrical. In 1999, when the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts was indecorously renamed Arts & Business, its concern was as much with the internal governance of arts organisations as with financial assistance. Their 1998-1999 annual report contained this extract from a roaring new mission statement, typeset in unashamedly colossal 28pt:

Our army of 1,000 business executives are giving the arts a massive skills boost. [*their emphasis*]. Skills Bank volunteers target their expertise on arts management projects, while the Board Bank is a pool of motivated business supporters.<sup>25</sup>

These gestures might be magnanimous, but they are to bolster administration, not to improve the lot of artists and theatregoers. In practice, they are often insensitive to the distinctions that separate theatre artists from business. People trained in the formal management of businesses with long-time horizons might ponder the higher variability of theatre performance with its intensive, temporary targets and less formal processes.

Hence, in 1994 when the Royal Lyceum acquired business help in the form of a life-saving pledge of £50,000 (£56,500) from the wealthy publican Norman Springford (who was then appointed to the board), his perceptions of the company's organisation were those of wasteful guesswork. He mistook the innate uncertainty of the theatre as a reformable inefficiency, wanting to design watertight new systems to reduce his sense of the management's randomness. Like many business persons, he may also have been suspicious of the ostensible freedom and individualism of the artistic director, who might appear to Springford to be exempt from the disciplines of financial competence and pin-stripe convention that characterised his more organisational world. To him, the theatre company would contradict his business instincts because it employed artists as the source of its work whereas, if Springford was typical of business persons, he might regard employees as merely a tool for manufacturing products. Although it was to be expected that he would want the artistic director to concentrate on the selection of popular plays and the increase of box-office income, in preference to making expenditure cuts, as a business person he could not instruct artists and the theatre management how to follow his blueprint for

reform. He failed to realise that the output of the Royal Lyceum lay in the creative process itself, owing as much to playwrights, composers, actors, designers, dramaturges and musicians as to the audience. People distinguished in another business are not necessarily useful to the theatre: Springford panicked in the crisis, leaving the board at an awkward turning point, paying only £12,000 (£13,560) of his donation, probably because he did not really support the purpose of the company. His behaviour would have bewildered the company even more because he was a former theatre proprietor of the Edinburgh Playhouse, a touring theatre.

For the Royal Lyceum, sensitive volunteer directors with time and knowledge to share their business experience have always been difficult to find, as when (in 1979) chairman Ludovic Kennedy announced his search for a 'tycoon'. Twenty years later, the Springford adventure did not deter chairman Michael Shea from resuming the elusive quest for 'seriously rich' board members. Had such moneyed directors or business persons with wealthy contacts been appointed, they would be an asset: not understanding the theatre's purpose and more complicated mission would make them a liability. In these respects, the enigma for the Royal Lyceum was the same in 2000 as Edward Gordon Craig's 1921 oratorical dialogue between a manager and an artist of the theatre:

MANAGER. The theatre sounds terribly risky.

ARTIST. It is; terribly risky – for you. That is my point; that is the artist's everlasting point. He thinks; you risk. If you begin thinking everything is lost. Leave that to your stage-manager – to me. You shall have no other risk but me. Risk me, and you stand the chance of gaining all.

MANAGER. You terrify me. I think you must be mad...

ARTIST. Whatever you do gamble like a gentleman; risk enormously; do not incessantly change your mind – and don't apologise for your method of play!

MANAGER. Upon my word, you are an original being!

ARTIST. I am. I thought that was why you came to me. All artists are 'original' to business men and all business men are 'original' to artists: both can truthfully be called eccentrics. That is as it should be, the securest foundation for a successful union. The mistake is to try and understand how the other works. Each should remain ignorant of the others methods...

MANAGER. Yes – but to return to practical matters—

ARTIST. I had never departed from them.<sup>26</sup>

In almost every record of the board meetings from 1979, there is the same sense of misconstruction between the business world and the authority of the artistic director and his team. Perhaps the exciting years of the first company's achievement and a preference for the once trusting government support were uppermost in the ebullitions of artistic director Kenny Ireland, who had been a young Royal Lyceum director in its formative

years. When responding to a journalist's questions about the company's readiness to associate with a proposed Scottish national theatre, his protective tone let slip the siege mentality to which an artistic director was now prone:

We have not only kept our house in order.... There is no question of us being profligate. Theatres in Scotland could teach business a thing or two about how to make a pound go further.<sup>27</sup>

This appears to be at loggerheads with the outstretched hand of Arts & Business' new mission but, as so often, what the management express to the media and or at peer group conferences differs from the inside order, at this theatre. From the 1980s, the same complications of art versus business weakened the relationships between the artistic director and the general manager. The appointment of Leslie Lawton as artistic director in 1979 pointed to the abrupt departure of Andrew Porter. After constructive work with his preferred manager Ruari McNeill and the strong partnership of Ian Wooldridge and Roger Spence, the arrival of Kenny Ireland – and what seems to be a highly selective, arbitrary and personalised management style – occasioned the detrition of administrative teamwork, with the expulsion of Spence, then Nikki Axford (as well as eight years of poor personnel management). Without speculating on the psychological behaviour of those involved (that might or might not be different in the rehearsal room), these frequent stand-offs have been a corrosive blight on this company, more discreditable than the patron-directorate troubles at the Abbey Theatre at the outset of repertory management. At Edinburgh, they look like substitutions for the board fall-outs with Tom Fleming and Stephen MacDonald, with a progressively weak-kneed board of directors blenching from intervention.

The company records show several signs that, from 1990, artistic directors and general managers misunderstood their relationship to one another. Until then, Charles Tripp, Andrew Porter, Ruari McNeill and Roger Spence offered well-grounded technical theatre knowledge and were sensitive to the purpose of the company, whilst keeping a certain distance from artistic choice. Conversely, the artistic directors, being well informed and perceptive about issues in theatre management, cooperated fully with them. These teams understood the fabled maxim that all artistic questions in the theatre are about money, and that all money questions are artistic ones. Further, the manager recognised that directing plays was a sophisticated art and the artistic director recognised that management was an equally creative responsibility. Although this approach might lead to an uneasy truce at times, each person was effective. Once in harness, neither artistic director nor general manager overwhelmed the other and, in any case, a mediating chairman would sort out any stand-offs, diluting the tensions or keeping them away from the board of directors and the

Scottish Arts Council. Productive teamwork was the order of the day, with each incumbent accepting that the other had an inventive process to their task: administration and artistic direction had to be tackled with the same degree of resourcefulness. Respecting the similarities of imaginative processes inherent in their duties, the leaders, like William Armstrong and Maud Carpenter at Liverpool Playhouse, overlooked any possible affectations in the their colleague, for the good of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company. However, complications in the balance of the jobs at Edinburgh arose from the instances where one or the other was more seasoned in the tasks or when one or the other was more charismatic in their authority. Thus, Roger Spence's promotion to managing director in 1990, although sanctioned by the board because of his extra duties in project management for the theatre's refurbishments, bisected the executive and thereafter he was 'first among equals'. During his term – that coincided with the escalation in administration personnel – the records point to a decline in the traditional authority of the artistic director, with Wooldridge infrequently recorded in minutes and scarcely ever offering the board of directors the articulated written reports tabled by his predecessors. Indeed, this conduct is symptomatic of the surrender of an artistic director's legitimacy to the profession of arts administration: for the response of many theatre-makers today is to fight shy of the new rules and procedures, preferring to be freelance directors.<sup>28</sup>

Just how much the company's accomplishments rested on the capabilities of either the artistic director or the manager is usually revealed in the months following the departure of one of the kingpins. Naturally, the conditions for teamwork must be remade – preferably shored up by the durations of their employment contracts running neck and neck – but, latterly, these have proved unwholesome to all concerned. For instance, after Roger Spence left, the short-spell of Nikki Axford's appointment failed to remedy the current artistic director's incapacity for cooperation and, again, the chairman – who really ought to act decisively in a crisis – fudged his obligation as umpire. With disagreements in the hands of lawyers and the whole board (as well as being observed by the press), the directors promoted Kenny Ireland to 'chief executive'. They subordinated the activities of general manager between two unhardened administrators who, probably, did not have to like the artistic director-chief executive as much as all previous general managers had to strike a partnership based on mutual esteem. The frequently debated question of whether a repertory theatre should be managed by a chief executive, an artistic director, a managing director, a general manager or an administrator is an unanswerable argument. Habits change; often with less impact on results than expected, but at the Royal Lyceum it is only reasonable if the people are good enough and willing to work in active partnership and



make their case together. Internal evidence suggests Ireland's disinclination to emulate the homogeneous and familial management style of his predecessors. This is attested not only by poor staff relations but also by an indisposition towards the once closely associated staff directors and designers. In turn, the repertory ideal of longer-term residencies and stability has yielded to a system of engaging freelance artists and consultants, wherein the artistic director and the associate literary director, Tom McGrath, were, in 2000, the *only* theatre-makers domiciled in a fugacious Royal Lyceum.

The notion of a chief executive in repertory, that Kenny Ireland (and many others) erroneously negotiated, is a misapplication from business culture.<sup>29</sup> Like many ersatz borrowings from new business culture, this facsimile of corporate parlance can serve to symbolise how the repertory movement is prostrated by business language at the start of the twenty-first century. Companies have been blindfolded into allowing their worth to be devalued by the language used by the new profession of arts administration, especially in the agencies of funding and corporate sponsorship. They imitate the business world by their use of inadequate corporate lexicon, debasing the heritable language and voice of the theatre that is its greatest asset. This use of managerial terminology might be unobjectionable if it is confined to the privacy of communication between the company and the funding bodies. However, it has now soaked into the way in which this company speaks to the audience and media.

## The Company's experience of partnerships and co-productions

If the new administrators and their pursuit of corporate sponsorship, new economic arguments for subsidy and liaison with the business world has been a sprat to catch a mackerel, then the company's experience of working with other theatre producers has also been a tempting idea, at first. Encouraged by the Scottish Arts Council who, because of the new business culture now regard partnerships as in the in-thing,<sup>30</sup> the Royal Lyceum has shared in the responsibility for the health of the Scottish theatre and subsidised arts as a whole, especially the smaller and uninitiated touring companies, who might regard it as a big, rich and powerful theatre. The provision of basic management and co-ordination services to Communicado Theatre (between 1986 and 1994) was well conceived, making the smaller organisation lean and, at the same time, improving the image of the Royal Lyceum by hosting a 'research and development' company. It gave Communicado access to engagements at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, other large theatres and on the festival circuit, as well as a production workshop, accounting and publicity expertise. This enabled expansion at a time when it would have been laborious and costly for the younger, imaginative company to grow independently. This collaboration, which was initiated by Roger Spence, worked well because it was evolutionary, with artistic director Ian Wooldridge welcoming Gerry Mulgrew as an associate director of the parent theatre. Kenny Ireland continued the affiliation and, after collaborations on reviving the renowned productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Thérèse Raquin*, the eventual return to Communicado independence probably followed a natural organisational life cycle for the sheltered company: its liquidation in 1999 was a separate matter. The partnership was attractive and, measured against the strain of other affiliations, such as the condescending welcome given to the unwanted amateur companies that performed in the Royal Lyceum when the King's Theatre was closed for refurbishment in 1982, it worked well because it was neither the product of local authority enforcement nor Scottish Arts Council pressure.

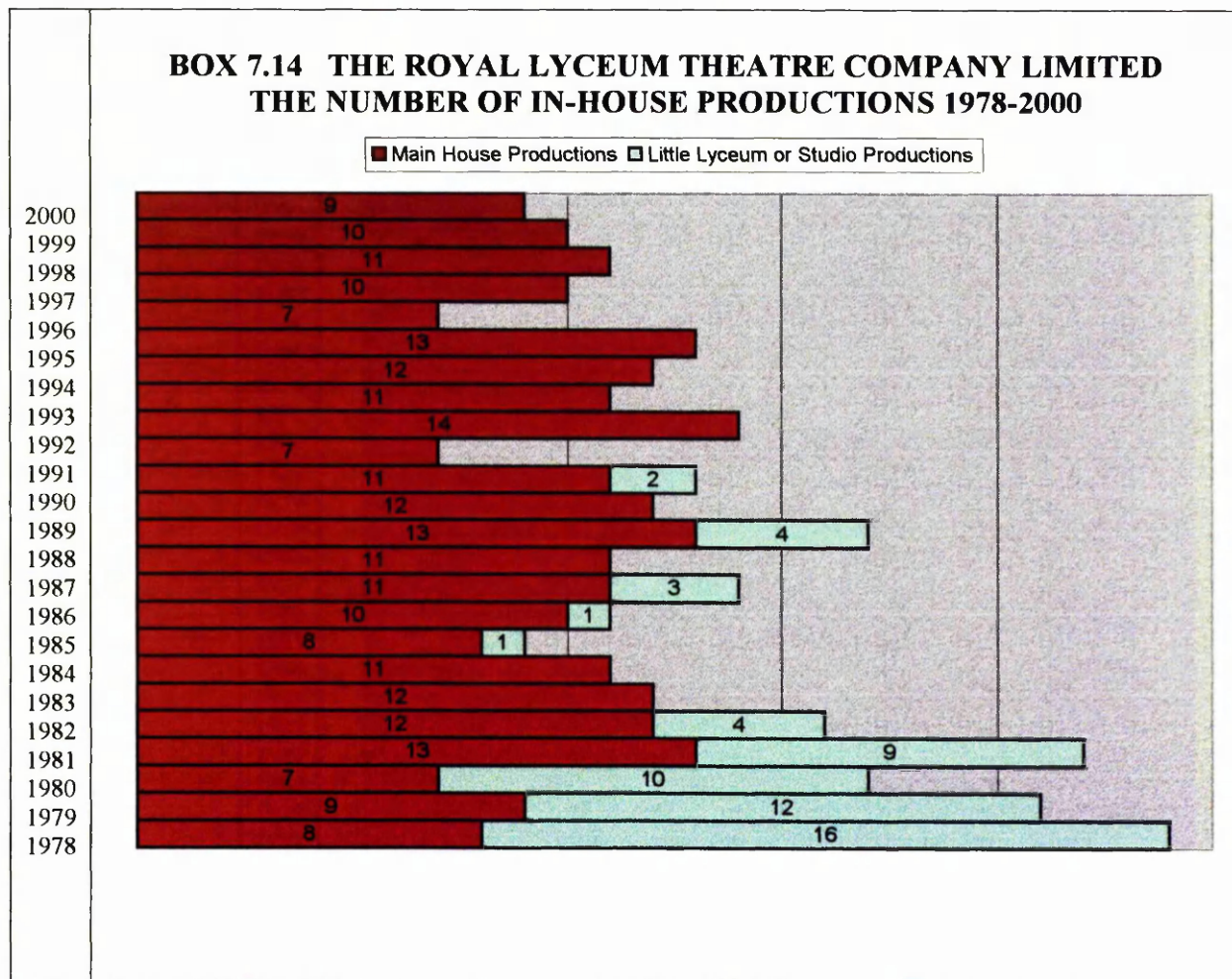
In recent times, the funding bodies have urged the repertory theatres to centralise their management, as when the City of Edinburgh Council made calls for cooperation with the adjacent Traverse Theatre in 1997. Still smarting at the Edinburgh District Council's previous decision to decline the Royal Lyceum bid to lease the Saltire Court theatres as a replacement for the Little Lyceum Theatre, these affiliations were resisted. Like the Scottish Arts Council's Orwellian attempts in 1984 to centralise the administration of *all* Scottish repertory theatres, or the enforced, higher-profile, costly and drawn out amalgamation of Scottish Opera and Scottish Ballet between 1997 and 2000 – let alone no

fewer than four investigations into a fusion between Pitlochry Festival Theatre and Perth Theatre – these partnerships have usually been occasioned by an overwhelming financial crisis or threats to reduce the companies' revenue grants. Genuine artistic benefit is missing. The companies' artistic directors and managers, after reluctant endorsement, obstruct the negotiations and implementation at every turn, making the costs of the merger process exceed the possible effect of savings for many years. They do this partly because of the threat of redundancies (that usually frighten the enormous number of administration staff) but probably also because of egotism and a concern about the impact of cooperation on artistic autonomy and competitiveness. Undoubtedly, the subject of the interaction of the two Edinburgh producing theatres will resurface as an attempt at full-blown amalgamation. Should one or the other face meltdown in future, it could be expected that the Scottish Arts Council would tag the remedy taken by stakeholders at Liverpool, where problems of overlap and duplication were thought to contribute to the liquidation and closure of the Playhouse in 1998. The once-venerable theatre was re-opened in 2000, after a merger with the financially deteriorating and more radical Everyman Theatre.<sup>31</sup>

Superior artistic benefit was sought in another sphere of collaboration: that of co-productions. First observed in the collaborations between Laurence Hanray and Ben Iden Payne at the Liverpool Playhouse and Manchester Gaiety Theatre in 1913, and later in the joint-efforts between four Scottish repertory theatres in 1958,<sup>32</sup> the idea surfaced at the Royal Lyceum Theatre in 1986. Then, the headlong decline in the number of in-house productions from 24 plays in 1978 to only nine in 1985 – that arose partly from the difficulties of finding an assured replacement for the Little Lyceum Theatre – incited a drive to rivet attention on the use of the main house (Box 7.14).

A more entrepreneurial outlook, enabling the company to work with Wildcat and Mayfest to present *The Threepenny Opera* in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1986, assisted an increase in the number of annual productions. Since then, it has collaborated twice with Forbes Masson's production company and the Tron Theatre, Glasgow on *Cinderella* and *Stiff!* Co-productions had considerable appeal for new plays, musical theatre and technically difficult productions. The concept represented an excellent opportunity for the Tron and Forbes Masson (working with his own production company) to create new musicals with the support and expertise of an established, wealthier theatre. Masson could not produce his musicals independently, for he needed a technically proficient production team and extra money to cover the expensive production costs. For the Edinburgh company, which undoubtedly had the resources to do mount the whole production in-house if it cared to, the

opportunity was innovating: unlike many other repertories, it had – with the exception of Leslie Lawton's five year tenure as artistic director – been markedly indisposed towards musicals.



The other Royal Lyceum co-productions have been exchanges of established plays in arrangements that are more nominal with smaller repertory theatres in Perth, Dundee, Salisbury and Derby. Faced with sharply reduced budgets for the engagement of actors because of the shift to administrative expenditure in the 1990s, a solution was to share the rehearsal and production expenditure with another company, including the fees paid to creative teams of director, set, costume and lighting designers. Two repertory theatres would be equal partners to create productions with larger casts, which neither company could otherwise afford. In the circumstances, the scheme was financially responsible but was a short-term means of minimising the risk by reducing the amortised production costs over the respective seasons. Further, by reducing the average costs per performance for both companies, some pressure for higher subsidy was taken off the Scottish Arts Council, although there must have been extra costs of managing them, which were not separately identified in the Royal Lyceum accounts. Occasionally, a co-production might also be

vindicated for enabling an extra week of rehearsal and, therefore, a higher acting standard.<sup>33</sup> However, when taking a bird's eye view of this system, the Royal Lyceum co-productions were not especially large plays and they meant fewer new employment opportunities for actors and other creative artists, albeit a longer engagement for the cast fortunate enough to be working in the extended run of the specified co-production. In the longer-term, should the company repeat these partnerships, co-productions would have a negative impact, for in reducing the number of new productions staged in-house, they might thwart any return to resident and associated artists. This would further aggravate the artistic vitality and inhibit a revival of the repertory ideal, so that the Royal Lyceum resembles even more the policies of the touring theatres that, because of their voracious needs for weekly-changeovers of productions and the shortage of circuit productions in the 1990s, also co-produce with entrepreneurs such as festivals, London West End managers and repertory theatres.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, co-productions highlight a quandary for the Royal Lyceum in the 1990s. The chronology has verified long-standing enmities with the Edinburgh International Festival that were repaired under festival director Brian McMaster, but only to the extent of the company becoming a vassal to his ideas. As a junior accessory, the company – that is obliged to vacate their theatre under terms that have taken 36 years to negotiate – has, in effect, been a sweatshop management, hired for assistance in the casting, physical staging and administration of international collaborations that originate outwith the influence of its artistic director. Suggestions for Royal Lyceum festival productions have been made, but when the company is involved, it has never, with the exception of *Armstrong's Last Goodnight* in 1994, originated the idea. This could be because the company lacks reputation, talent and a 'brand' name but it must be an irritation. The chafing has an emotional quality, with ownership of the 'idea' being as essential part of an artistic director's determination to co-produce as to produce in the main seasons. Admittedly, this explanation is not entirely based on the organisational context of the company but on the personalities of the protagonists, yet the problem of Edinburgh International Festival relations seems to have distressed each Royal Lyceum artistic director. Correspondingly, affiliations with smaller companies seem lop-sided, with the current artistic director resisting affiliations with many of the small-scale, cutting-edge Scottish touring companies. It follows that co-productions are a convincing policy only when the strengths of each theatre company are respected and equal.



If co-productions have been necessitated by survival instincts and the constant frustration, in the 1990s, of insecurity and uncertainty about the company's position in the Edinburgh and Scottish theatre firmament, let alone its artistic directors believing that they never have enough subsidy to operate the company in a desired manner, other collaborations could be more important. At root, these are to do with the two basic modes of interplay between any people: co-operation and competition, and about how the Royal Lyceum deals with these simultaneously, as well as where it is in the institutional life cycle and how capable the management team is in dealing with the new business culture.



20. *The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh: the refurbished auditorium, with view to the stage in 1998. The décor is for Whisky Galore (Compton Mackenzie, 1948, adapt. Paul Godfrey, 1996). A co-production with Mull Theatre, being an adaptation from a BBC Radio Repertory play with three actors.*

When compared with the late-1990s' international affiliations in the teeming and braver world of smaller Scottish drama companies, where there has been a veritable explosion of creative energy, efforts at the Royal Lyceum after the departure of Communicado seem mundane, so far. Other Scottish theatre companies, including Suspect Culture, Theatre Babel, Theatre Cryptic, Catherine Wheels and the Traverse have collaborated with overseas' theatres and festivals to tour new Scottish plays and adaptations, making a virtue out of necessity,. They are liberated by their more independent status. With little or no local government subsidy, they have smaller and more relaxed boards of directors. 23 years elapsed from the 1970-1971 Royal Lyceum tours to West Africa and the Far East, until it visited China in a co-production with Salisbury Playhouse in 1994. In any case, this



was directed and designed by residents of the partner theatre, with six Scottish actors joining an overriding English cast and creative team and was, therefore, short of being an ambassadorial opportunity for promoting Scotland. Admittedly, like most other repertories, the Royal Lyceum policy has always been to produce text-based drama and this is often an inhibiting influence on international co-productions: despite the frequency of plays performed in foreign languages at the Edinburgh International Festival, the local subscriber-audience would no doubt be disinclined to support production exchanges with non-English speaking theatres. Although the public may not regard the influence of foreign directors and other artform production styles as consequential for the Royal Lyceum, the tendency for the company has been to become comparatively insular, preferring to stage occasional new Scottish plays and adaptations with Scottish directors. Some set-offs occurred in 1997 via the artistic director's sabbatical productions of *Rigoletto* for Scottish Opera and then his 1998 engagements at the Stockholm Stadsteater and the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, which might serve to reanimate the company's future ideas. However, the extent of an international thrust has, since Tom Fleming's 1965-1966 opening season, been inappreciable in this company. Recent British developments in the re-emergence of creative producing – that could, for instance, be witnessed also by a return to choices of contemporary non-British plays other than from the United States and Ireland, the active instigation of productions with other promoters or the engagement of guest directors from abroad – will most likely be explored by the next generation of Royal Lyceum producers.<sup>35</sup>

### **The problems of the company's profit-seeking pursuits**

Growing pressures on the company to become less dependent on public subsidies are also seen in the pursuit of ancillary sources of earned income. Whilst these have always embraced conventional moneymaking activities such as costume hire, programmes, licensed bars, sweets and ice creams, the second company saw financial advantages in running a restaurant. In order to maintain the tax-exempt status of the non-profit company, this has been managed through a trading subsidiary since 1991: Lyceum Theatre Trading Limited that donates the profits to the parent charity. However, as demonstrated in the survey, this well-tried example of a parent non-profit theatre working with a profit-seeking,

proprietary company – first seen in amateur repertory at the Stockport Garrick Theatre in 1901 – has failed to meet expectations, at the Royal Lyceum Theatre.

There have been umpteen attempts to establish an attractive, well-run dining room, all of them short-lived. At first, annual profits were budgeted at £125,000 (£152,500), but only £8,000 (£9,760) was made in the first year. By 2000, when there were 1,500 cafés and restaurants in Edinburgh – as well as fierce competition from the neighbouring all-day Traverse bar and café with its fraternising ambience – the company derived little significant financial benefit and, more than once, catering has threatened to undermine the parent company rather than contribute to it. The company's aversion to their soulless restaurant is probably as great as the public who are disinclined to patronise it: a far cry from the famous and profitable food and wine offered at Terence Gray's 'haven of refreshment' at the Cambridge Festival Theatre in the 1920s, where the artistic director's devotion to speciality wine lists and play-themed menus rivalled his revolutionary stagecraft.<sup>36</sup> At Edinburgh, artistic directors and managers have shown little of Gray's flair for exploiting the marketing potential of connecting the enjoyments of eating and entertainment. Admittedly, the Royal Lyceum split-level restaurant space has neither the advantage of being neither a part of the main theatre and its histrionic atmosphere, nor is it a freestanding location with potential for architect-designed treatment. During the management of the first company, the space was utilised for administration, before the second company leased large premises opposite the theatre.

Lacking the optimistic interest of the senior management, the middle managers and the board vacillated between in-house and sub-contracted operations. Moreover, when a subcontractor inexperienced in theatre catering arrived, the lessee was invariably slow to appreciate the differences with other forms of catering. They needed to learn quickly how much demand changes from play to play and the audience attracted, having to plan menus that could be prepared rapidly to meet the pre-performance bottlenecks. The lessees needed to recognise that, during evening performances, theatre restaurants find it hard to attract diners who are not attending the play.<sup>37</sup> Despite eight changes of lessee (with loss of control over standards), three attempts to run it directly (with a need for in-house catering specialists and an active interest from senior management) and five name changes (that created a dubious public impression) it is surprising that no decision has been made to abandon catering and turn the space to other use.

Despite the failure of the Royal Lyceum restaurant, it would be wrong to dismiss the entire notion of commercial activities as inefficient and counterproductive. My estimation is that the company persists (as with sponsorship and other administrative aspects) because of the uniformity of expectation at the Scottish Arts Council. Some other theatres earn favourable catering profits, notably the enthusiastically run restaurant at Perth Theatre that tempts shoppers in via an advantageous high street location and the café at Dundee Rep that was designed as an integral part of that new theatre in 1982 and is adjacent to the University of Dundee and its student population. Because others may be successful, it seems 'rational' that the Royal Lyceum's restaurant should too. The same reasoning may also be observed in the company's quest for conference business where, after the opening of the Edinburgh International Conference Centre in 1993, the city became the twelfth most popular global destination for international conference meetings: it seemed equally worthwhile to latch on to that trade, for small meetings. However, the Royal Lyceum Theatre's innate disposition, coupled with a staff instinct that was unfocused on the profitable use of the theatre outside performance times, meant that doing more with the building too often became a distraction from the more important core activity of the theatre. Whilst the experience of the trading subsidiary also marks a search for commercial respectability – serving as a symbol of how non-profit theatres must now be increasingly like the profit-seeking theatre system from which they originally sought liberation – it points to the difficulties faced whenever this company attempts overtly commercial activities.

### **Summary**

This chapter has examined the progress of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited from 1977 to 2000, including comparison of some policy and organisational issues with those of the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust from 1965. From its rapid creation by sanction of the Edinburgh Corporation, the company was housed in a permanent, albeit rented, theatre. Its initial and continuing policy has been to build on these foundations for an interesting choice of plays and artists, for the Edinburgh audience. The first company built a reputation for reliable, ambitious and frequently exciting productions of classics, contemporary plays and new Scottish drama at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, together with high regard for its work outside the main house in educational and studio theatre programmes. A streamlined and competent management received trusting support from the funding authorities. The first company kept costs under control. However, towards the end of ten years' stability under artistic director Clive Perry, the Royal Lyceum sought expansion through the engagement of a resident acting ensemble that might also be a

Scottish national theatre. After local government reform, a replacement non-profit company was incorporated and these development intentions were curtailed. The new company's productions, though continuing the philosophy of the first, were bedevilled by off-stage controversy, especially after the closure of the Little Lyceum Theatre which led to the confinement of shows, for the most part, to the main theatre. After the departure of artistic director Stephen MacDonald, the company's contribution to Scottish theatre has, overall, been a less interesting respectability in play-choice although this was influenced, to a large extent, by the changing infrastructure of theatre management and, latterly, by new competition from other theatres in Edinburgh.

New complications for management in the second company were signposted through a comparative analysis of the Royal Lyceum audited accounts. Firstly, a change in the balance between earned income and subsidy occurred from 1988 when, for the first time in 23 years, earned income from the box-office and ancillary sources exceeded the combined grants of the local authority and the Scottish Arts Council. Although the second company was beset throughout by the insecurity of cumulative debt that was accompanied by a decline in the number of self-produced plays, it continued to attract large numbers of patrons, underpinned by a successful subscription scheme. Then, from the mid-1980s, the scale of the productions diminished, fewer actors were employed, the deficits soared and the company was often on the verge of liquidation. Its response was to excuse the situation on a reduction in public subsidy, but grants continued to keep the cost of theatregoing within reach of everybody and, over time, their amount did not diminish: in any case, an overall parallelism between earned income and expenses continued.

This chapter proposed that, in largest measure, the difficulties at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company were caused by the employment of too many new managers. These new administrators progressively enfeebled the status of artists after 1985; so that, by 2000, only 18 per cent of all payroll costs were spent on actors and musicians whereas previously they were the focus of policy and expenditure, receiving over half of the outlay on all employees.

Several overlapping reasons for this volte-face were proposed. These may now be described as internal, over which the Royal Lyceum had control, or external, over which they had no influence. The internal causes were, firstly, the non-profit corporate structure itself, where, in the absence of personal financial investments which would obligate directors in a commercial firm, this board of unremunerated directors often acted as

hobbyists. Most of the directors served shorter terms than their forbears in the progenitor companies, and many of the councillor-nominees lacked their colleagues' fundamental interest in the theatre. As a coalition that had to attend to the often divergent opinions of the local authority and the Scottish Arts Council, the directors were frequently unsuccessful in their first boardroom obligation to care for the theatre's resources. Seemingly, they were oblivious to the longer-term perspectives and implications of the new management trends, preferring to authorise a series of short-term actions, some of which they surely could have narrowed down to the management's fondness for excessive delegation. Secondly, this chapter suggested that the company's quest for corporate sponsorship, though well intentioned, feigned the successful schemes of the larger arts organisations such as the Edinburgh International Festival and, after the successful capital appeals for theatre refurbishments, led to trifling net returns for the operation. Thirdly, the pursuit of profitable activities such as a restaurant, though equally laudable, was often loss-making, deflecting the board and management from the real business of the theatre and prompting the employment of more managers. Notwithstanding these reasons, which shade into other causes of the rise of arts administration, the external arguments were, firstly, the pressures and insecurities arising from governments' infectious enterprise culture and, secondly, the new business stratagems which struck the funding bodies with an imbalance of management culture. This was more acute for the Scottish Arts Council that passed these hindrances to the company through demands for new accountabilities and pressures to substitute house productions with co-productions and visiting productions. The problems were aggravated by attempts to solve them.

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in George Darroch and Catherine Shaw, *Cultural Trends in Scotland: 1995*, London, Policy Studies Institute in association with the Scottish Arts Council, 1995, p. 35. Their evidence was from Target Group Index (TGI) data for 1993. They were similar when assessed five years later. See 'The Wider Context', *Scottish Arts Council Review of Theatres*, Glasgow, Scottish Cultural Enterprise, 2001, p.5. Despite new marketing techniques, participation in theatre does not seem to have varied significantly over time. In 1981, Scottish Arts Council reported that 24 per cent of the population attended at least one play annually.

<sup>2</sup> At Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, attendance at performances of in-house productions was, for instance 67,000 in 1996-1997 (against 110,026 at the Royal Lyceum Theatre) and 78,000 in 1995-1996 (against 108,724). See Glasgow City Council Cultural and Leisure Services, *Best Value Review of Arts and Cultural Events*, Glasgow, Glasgow City Council, May 2001, p.30.

<sup>3</sup> Alec Jessel, *Marketing Plan for the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company*, Edinburgh, The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company Limited, 7 March 1994, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> Archer, William and H. Granville Barker, *A National Theatre, Scheme & Estimates*, op.cit, p.112.

<sup>5</sup> Giraud Voss and Glenn B. Voss, *Theatre Facts 2000: A Report on Practices and Performance in the American Nonprofit Theatre*, New York, Theatre Communications Group, June 2001, p.18.

<sup>6</sup> William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma. A Study of the Problems common to Theater, Opera, Music and Dance*, Cambridge, MA, M.I.T. Press, 1966

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p.299.

<sup>8</sup> BM, 2 November 1995, p.4.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, in a comparison of expenditure between Scottish and English theatres published in 2001, only 32 per cent of expenditure went on programme costs in ten 'building-based' theatre companies in Scotland, whereas 48 per cent of resources was the equivalent in England. The non-artistic costs were 68 per cent versus 52 per cent. All these ratios are unworthy of the purpose of subsidy; not only do they compare adversely with previous practice, but the position is now markedly worse in Scottish theatre management. See *Scottish Arts Council Review of Theatres*, op.cit, 6.3.3. p.89. This report submerges the problem of the growth of administration by reading the comparisons as ammunition to argue for *more* subsidy, saying that 'these figures simply prove that unless one invests sufficient money to sustain the companies' programme of work, a disproportionate amount of money is simply required to sustain an infrastructure that lies under-utilised for significant periods of time'. Yet, on the income side, the same financial comparison showed that the Scottish theatres earned 57 per cent from the box-office and 43 per cent from grants; and that the English equivalent was 68 per cent earned income to 32 per cent in grants.

<sup>10</sup> Calculated from Roger Spence, *Memorandum to Policy and Resources Committee: Permanent Staff Salaries List*, op.cit.

<sup>11</sup> Although the uniformity of marketing expenditure appears abnormal in the light of overhead and administrative staff increases, there was a real upturn from 1985 when, as noted in Chapter Six, the company shared in the formation a marketing consortium of Edinburgh theatres and concert halls. Income and expenditure for 'Edinburgh Arts and Entertainment Limited' circulated independently of the Royal Lyceum accounts, buttressed by project subsidies from the Scottish Arts Council and the local authority, a portion of which could be attributed to the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company. Later, in 1998, when this consortium was replaced by The Audience Business Limited, a 'sales and development award' of £250,000 was made by SAC National Lottery 'to generate new audiences' for the Edinburgh theatres and halls. Although I have not attempted a detailed financial evaluation of this extrinsic expenditure, there is no doubt that company marketing expenditure was boosted. It will be instructive to see the results of this scheme in due course.

<sup>12</sup> C. Northcote Parkinson, *Parkinson's Law, Or The Pursuit of Progress*, London, John Murray, 1958. Parkinson proposed that managers were motivated to employ more managers because of status enhancement and empire building. His research concerned the coincidence of an increase in managers at the Admiralty with a decrease in the total number of sailors and warships between 1914 and 1928. The findings generated much amusement, although he believed that his theory applied more to large organisations.

<sup>13</sup> These ratios were extrapolated from a table of expenditure for the years 1997 to 2000 in Giraud Voss and Glenn B. Voss, *Theatre Facts 2000: A Report on Practices and Performance in the American Nonprofit Theatre*, op.cit, p.7. In 2000, expenditure in the 145 theatres averaged \$5,084,990 (£3,559,493), being payroll of \$2,762,900 (£1,934,030), production costs of \$670,808 (£469,565), overheads of \$782,627 (£547,839) and marketing costs of \$868,655 (£608,058). Payroll costs are dissected as \$1,090,285 (£763,199) spent on artists, \$754,527 (£528,169) on production staff and \$918,088 (£642,662) on administrators and front of house personnel. Notwithstanding the momentariness of an August 2001 exchange rate applied (\$1 = £0.70), as well as the need for caution inherent in overseas' comparisons, it is also interesting to observe that the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company expenditure in 2000, that totalled £2,331,297, was only 65 per cent of the average total costs of United States' repertory counterparts.

<sup>14</sup> The Citizens' Theatre received £195,000 for 'a review of income generation and implementation of a strategy which will provide income growth and to secure the future viability of the company'. Scottish Arts Council, *Annual Report Supplement 1998-1999*, Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1999, p.9.

<sup>15</sup> Financial Statements, *Edinburgh International Festival, Annual Review 2000*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Society, 2001, p.18.

<sup>16</sup> For a panorama of how arts sponsorship works, see 'Funding from Industry', Anne-Marie Doulton, *The Arts Funding Guide*, London, Directory of Social Change, 1989, pp. 154-186.

<sup>17</sup> The semiotics of the theatre's programmes not only reveal the mounting recognition given to the public funding bodies but also point to diminishing perceptions of the role of the company's board of directors. Until 1991, acknowledgement of their leadership was given separate, alphabetical line mention above the staff list. Then, they were transposed within one paragraph in smaller font, underneath the employees. By 2000, when there was no longer space because of the expanded staff, they were arranged on a new 'general information' page that urged patrons to avail themselves of drinking in the auditorium from plastic glasses. Although the rewards of directorships in non-profit repertory have continued to include the prestige of free tickets at first nights, it is doubtful that the boards of the progenitor repertories would have tolerated being accredited as marginalia.



<sup>18</sup> Arts Training Network, *AM98 Directory. Arts management courses and programmes in higher and further education*, Falmer, University of Sussex, Arts Training South, 1998, pp. v and vi.

<sup>19</sup> Oliver Bennett, in discussing the increase of arts administration courses and the getting of business skills, acknowledges that before formal training the standard of 'cultural administration was historically very high and at least comparable to standards in the industrial and commercial sectors'. He signposts the need for business efficiency within 'a significant shift in terminology – from arts administration to arts management'. See Oliver Bennett, *Cultural Policy and the Crisis of Legitimacy: Entrepreneurial Answers in the United Kingdom*, Warwick, Centre for the Study of Cultural Policy, School of Theatre Studies, University of Warwick, June 1996, p.15. However, in my study, I have treated nomenclature in reverse – from theatre management to arts administration – maintaining that, in the theatre at any rate, 'managers' preceded 'administrators'.

<sup>20</sup> For a study into the organisation of the arts (but not specifically theatre) as part of their 'commodification' by governments, see Clive Gray, *The Politics of the Arts in Great Britain*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> After Baumol and Bowen, the next important international study was by the Australians C.D. Throsby and G.A. Withers, *The Economics of the Performing Arts*, Melbourne, Edward Arnold, 1979. Like Baumol and Bowen, they predicted an ever-widening gap between costs and earned income but Throsby, perhaps because he is a playwright as well as a theoretical economist, emphasised that what *really* matters in the theatre can never be reduced to figures alone. The principal cultural economist in Scotland is Sir Alan Peacock (1922- ), chairman of Scottish Arts Council from 1986 to 1992 and author of *Paying The Piper: Culture, Music and Money*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1993. From a large bibliography on this related subject, I found two other works by Peacock relevant to this study: 'Public Financing of the Arts in England', *Fiscal Studies*, London, Institute for Fiscal Studies, June 2000, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 171-205 and (with others) *Calling the Tune: A critique of arts funding in Scotland*, Edinburgh, Policy Institute, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, John Myerscough, *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain*, London, Policy Studies Institute, 1988.

<sup>23</sup> For an illustration of how repertory theatres embraced the subject of economic impact as an argument for government subsidy, see Giles Havergal, *Repertory Theatre: the Citizens' Theatre 1969 to 1993*, London, Royal Society of Arts Journal, Vol. CXXI, No. 5442, August-September 1993; [Lecture on the Contribution of the Performing Arts to City Regeneration, delivered 15 April 1993, Glasgow], pp.629-637. Havergal demonstrates how the good example of the Citizens' Theatre encouraged local government to develop, through economic impact arguments, a new theatrical diversity in Glasgow. The company's reputation helped in the selection of Glasgow as 1990 European City of Culture, and also as a catalyst for construction of a new concert hall, the international theatre programmes at the Tramway, drama production at the Tron Theatre and the Arches Theatre, the city-wide Mayfest and the cutting-edge performance-artists programmed at the Third Eye (now the Centre for Contemporary Arts). However, eight years after Havergal's lecture, the invigorating year-round activities in these refurbished buildings have largely vanished and Mayfest is no more. Audiences have declined, theatres are dark for many weeks (except at the touring houses, the council-managed King's Theatre and the privately owned and run Pavilion Theatre) and there is intense competition for static overall Glasgow City Council arts grants. By 2000, economic impact arguments for arts subsidy expansion seem utopian and beg reconsideration. See also John Myerscough, *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Glasgow*, London, Policy Studies Institute, 1988.

<sup>24</sup> Figure for the total volume of Edinburgh theatre patrons quoted in *Edinburgh Festival Theatre, Interim Economic Evaluation*, Glasgow, Ekos Economic Consultants, November 1995, p.8.

<sup>25</sup> Arts & Business, *Annual Report 1998-1999*, London, Arts & Business, 1999, unpaginated, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Edward Gordon Craig, 'A Dialogue Between a Theatrical Manager and an Artist of the Theatre', *The Theatre Advancing*, London, Constable, 1921, pp.94-95.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Alison Hardie, 'Quango claim mars national theatre plans', *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, Scotsman Publications, 25 July 2001, p.5.

<sup>28</sup> It is notable that whereas resident directors Tom Fleming, Clive Perry, Peter Farago, Richard Eyre, Bill Bryden, Robert Kidd and Bill Pryde all went on to full-time posts in other companies, departing directors in the second company lost the stomach for running an institutional theatre. Stephen MacDonald (who left at the age of 46, when it might be supposed that he would easily find equivalent employment) became a successful playwright and resumed his acting career. See Joyce McMillan, 'Stephen MacDonald: A Whole New Career', *Scottish Theatre News*, Glasgow, Scottish Society of Playwrights, November 1982, Volume 21 [as numbered from SSP newsletter, Vol.6, No.4], pp.10-14. Leslie Lawton, who left at 42, prospered in London's West End where he joined the London Theatre of Comedy to direct Ray Cooney farces and Ian

Wooldridge, who left at 46, managed a boulangerie, from where he has occasionally freelanced as a teacher and director in British and North American drama schools.

<sup>29</sup> Although Kenny Ireland was the only 'chief executive' in a Scottish repertory theatre in 2000, others were brandished in many English repertories, including West Yorkshire Playhouse, Colchester Mercury Theatre and Northern Stage Company at Newcastle Playhouse. However, an increasing number of theatres, such as Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, Leicester Haymarket Theatre, Merseyside Theatres Trust, the Theatre Royal York, the Ipswich Wolsey Theatre, Sheffield Theatres and the Harrogate Theatre had persons holding this rank that was one up on the artistic director. In the manager merry-go-round, now almost as quick-changing as the impermanent acting companies, these theatre managers preferred a superscriptive title, so as to exhibit giftedness in strategic leadership and political sensitivities, being forced to adopt a 'business model' that might also be expedient when applying for their next job.

<sup>30</sup> Partnership became a trigger word in 1986, when the Arts Council published *Partnership: Making arts money work harder*, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986. For repertory in England, this cited the example of the South West Theatre Consortium, described as 'a highly original approach to increasing theatre provision... using already existing organisations', p.10. The funding bodies, which were now called 'partners' – South West Arts, Devon County Council and the Arts Council of Great Britain – assisted a series of co-productions between Plymouth Theatre Royal (usually the commissioning company) and the peripatetic Orchard Theatre Company, the Northcott Theatre, Exeter, Rent-a-Role Theatre in Education and Kneehigh Productions. Although its territorial ambitions were limited to the Celtic counties of Devon and Cornwall, the commissioning model resembles the energising plans in 2000 for a Scottish national theatre. The South West Theatre Consortium fragmented in 1990, complicated by the ordeal of obtaining play choice consensus between five artistic directors in five theatre companies.

<sup>31</sup> For a study into the amalgamation of two repertory theatres, see Simon Lee, et al., *Proposals for the Re-opening of Liverpool Playhouse by merger with the Everyman Theatre: Business Plan*, Liverpool, Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust, 1999.

<sup>32</sup> In what may now be seen as a trailer to later collaborations, Dundee Repertory, Edinburgh Gateway, Glasgow Citizens' and Perth Repertory arranged an interchange of productions so that, in the course of four weeks, a play from each theatre was seen at the other three. Extra subsidy from the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain was used to advertise the sequence as a national repertory theatre festival. The scheme presupposed that each company's annual budget would be relieved of the production costs of mounting three in-house productions, less the travelling and freight expenditures involved in touring the plays. The productions were The Gateway Company in *The Penny Wedding* (Robert Kemp, 1957), Citizens' Theatre in *The Cherry Orchard* (Anton Chekhov, 1904, trans. Elisaveta Fen, 1957), Dundee Repertory in *Crime Passionel* (Jean-Paul Sartre 1948, trans. Kitty Black, 1948) and Perth Repertory in *Caesar and Cleopatra* (Bernard Shaw, 1898). The scheme was a box-office failure but, like the South West Theatre Consortium's desire to exchange productions, corresponds with many features of the 2000 plans for a Scottish national theatre. See Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain, *Scottish Repertory Theatre Festival 1958*, Edinburgh, Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain, October 1958.

<sup>33</sup> For clarification of the subject of co-productions, I referred to Michael Quine, 'The Theatre System of the United Kingdom', in H. van Maanen and S.E. Wilmer, (eds.), *Theatre Worlds in Motion: Structures, Politics and Developments in the Countries of Europe*, Amsterdam and Atlanta, Rodopi, 1998, pp. 668-720.

<sup>34</sup> The Touring Consortium, The Touring Partnership and Network Productions are examples of producing companies formed by the managers of touring houses in the 1990s to create one annual production. Sometimes they work with repertory companies, although when Kenny Ireland directed *The Crucible* for the Touring Partnership and the Churchill Theatre, Bromley in 1998, he did so independently of the Royal Lyceum; it was coincidence that the tour included the King's Theatre, Edinburgh.

<sup>35</sup> The extent to which young theatre-makers now disregard repertory theatres is starkly revealed in Anthony Dean, (ed.), *Creative Producing: A User's Guide*, London, Central School of Speech and Drama, 2001. Despite an emphasis on subsidised theatre, none of the fifteen inspiring case studies of the manager-as-producer concerns a repertory theatre. My impression is that these producers – who are defined collectively as 'tomorrow's people' and who would once have spent their formative years as assistant managers or trainee directors in repertory – now perceive repertory as an antiquated and peripheral theatre system. Instead, they favour the freedom of action found in small companies, preferring non-bureaucratic theatres that share their flexible outlook through co-presenting their artists' work. This can also be seen as mild repugnance for the wider profession of arts administration, because those managers who prefer not to be educated in formal arts management courses in business schools, can now take advantage of training in producing at the vocational drama schools. For instance, Central School of Speech and Drama offered, from 1999, 'creative producing' as part of an MA advanced theatre practice course and RSAMD simultaneously offered producing as one of three new Master of Drama degrees. As the repertory theatre system is increasingly seen as out of date, the

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new courses will doubtless expand. Moreover, in the Central School study, their appeal looks even better, when managers are designated forcefully as 'the energiser', 'the flexible friend', 'the juggler', 'the matchmaker', 'the collective', 'the instigator', 'the collaborator', 'the shapeshifter', 'the mentor', 'the presenter', 'the networker', 'the advocate' and 'the risk taker'.

<sup>36</sup> Graham Woodruff, 'Down With the Boot-Faced'. Public Relations at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge', *Theatre Research International*, op.cit, p.123.

<sup>37</sup> For discussion of the pros and cons of subcontracting theatre restaurants, see Lawrie Simanowitz and Sean Egan, 'Eating Out', *Prompt*, London, Theatrical Management Association, August 2001, Issue 25, pp. 14-15.

# EIGHT

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to research the business and institutional history of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company and to consider the circumstances that might explain its recent administrative and financial embarrassments. An overview of the artistic policies, management and economics of the repertory movement provided useful perspectives for the description and evaluation of the Edinburgh company.

Many factors operated to propagate the first repertory companies. These included a conjunction between the emergence of the 'new drama' in the 1890s and its promotion by the London stage societies; a reaction by theatre-makers against the organisation of commercial London and touring theatre with its star system and long-runs, in favour of ensemble acting; and the entrance of new leadership in the form of farsighted private patronage and the powerful new figure of the director. Enlightened though many actor-managers were, their business was their personal property, and their policy was their own policy; the profits or losses belonged to them or their private investors and not to the community. With serious repertory, the community, through the 'voluntary' capital of a board of directors, would have ownership of a theatre company and hence participate in theatrical management. Therefore, the criteria by which a theatre might judge policies, play selections and results changed. Through a sample of repertory theatres, a new interplay of mission, money and management circumstances was observed; the companies' adoption of the limited company for governance and conversion from a proprietary firm to the non-profit form gave them the apparatus to work towards local ownership and participation.

A non-profit company brought tension between voluntary local boards and incoming professional artistic directors. The new theatre leaders were as iron-willed as the actor-managers, but without having personal money at risk, their considerations could be swayed more by the art of the theatre, although they had to balance the opinions of the board with those of artists and theatregoers. The relationship of a company to its theatre – whether rented, owned or purpose-built – was another key factor, as was, for most, the inescapable competition with existing touring theatres. The intention of the first repertory theatres was to become permanent companies that aimed towards public service, but in the absence of working capital or the underpinning of public subsidy, most companies – unless they received private patronage – resembled the profit-seeking theatres from which they sought release. They lurched rapidly between success and failure because the box-office was the

principal factor in determining survival; they were therefore forced to temper their selections of new plays towards safer risks from the London stage. In their artistic policies, many non-profit repertory companies came to resemble, and often had to compete with, a second, privately-owned and profit-seeking repertory stratum; at the same time, theatregoers could enjoy the benefits of this new competition. Before the onset of public subsidy, all companies dealt with government through legislative interventions, but the non-profit variety anticipated the extra conduct of subsidy negotiations by forming a new management association. By 1945, the organisational system for today's repertory companies had been consolidated; there was a growing perception of a non-profit theatre company as an institution. Several companies now had a momentum and reputation to maintain. They sustained and protected this through the process of theatre-making and advertising, allowing the plays and productions to speak for themselves, without seeing much need for further public explanation or 'added value'. These methods were supported by skilful and industrious management which, through my analysis of company finances, confirmed that they assigned most resources to the artists.

In the longer term, this system had advantages and disadvantages. With continuity of membership, boards acquired intimate knowledge of theatrical management, which helped the progenitor companies to endure independently of the personality of a foundational artistic director. For the most part, they struggled to resolve the inherent ambiguities of play selection; contests of responsibility between board and artistic director were ongoing. After the Second World War, when the companies attracted small municipal subsidies to augment their equally small state grants – and thereby progress to longer runs and improved rehearsal conditions – the surviving non-profit repertory companies were able to cultivate a higher degree of theatregoer loyalty from their communities; the public benefited from the long-term policies, whilst many actors and the small staffs derived continuity of employment from their managements' stability and good husbandry.

In many ways, the progenitor companies enshrined the characteristics and expectations of the system for theatre management that was inherited by the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company in 1965. This study demonstrated that, even with the immediate and continuing receipt of proportionately large subsidies and a new accountability to new stakeholders, the repertory 'ideal' of the late nineteenth-century worked well at Edinburgh for twenty years. Until the 1980s, the presumptions of the local authority and the Scottish Arts Council were similar to those of the company; they trusted the Royal Lyceum's board and management and they judged the company by an orderly balance of artistic and financial performance.

Given that the company's relative autonomy and expenditure profile changed markedly after 1985, so against the inherited system must now be set any disadvantages. The biggest danger for a permanent company was to become too institutionalised. In the scale of repertory, the Royal Lyceum was, from the outset, a large theatre company and the risk was that, through its expansionist ambitions in 1975, it would lose sight of its civic and local responsibility to Edinburgh. After a decade of artistic accomplishment and financial stability, it was in danger of becoming too big. With an unprecedented doubling in Scottish Arts Council and local government subsidy in that year – which was unmatched by increases in box-office receipts – the company was poised to become a Scottish national theatre. However, local government reform intervened to curtail the aspiration. With hindsight, it may now be seen that the shake-up of the company's transition to a second non-profit firm acted to keep at bay the albatross of administration that had already infected other companies, especially those in England that were the purview of John Pick's research. The pace of reorganisation in 1977, with the appointment of a new artistic director and his adjustments to policy, amounted to an almost totally new management. By starting again from scratch, the Royal Lyceum lost continuity but this prevented it from adopting the proportionately larger administration that the first company would surely have done sooner. During several months' closure of the main house for refurbishment, the transition kept the company sensitive to its real priorities. Then, after eight years' and two artistic directors, the accelerated growth of arts administration over the old ways of theatre management worked towards the obsolescence of the simple and economical practice of a 'vertical' management structure of small teams communicating easily with everybody.

From 1985, the company had to accommodate the new concerns of the funding bodies and government. Many issues in theatrical management became bound to the skill with which the company managed these competing values. The Royal Lyceum management was preoccupied with a crisis of legitimacy; its response was to delegate tasks to many new managers in a 'horizontal' hierarchy. Although this new structure was similar to mutations in the genuine business world, the costs meant that the company could no longer function within the repertory 'ideal' of a theatre where artists were the nerve centre. By 2000, so much of the company's workload was to do with servicing the funding bodies' abstract, idealistic and extraneous new management values that when grant income totalled £1,165,485, an astounding £1,288,919 of company expenditure was allocated to administrative wages and overheads. The prediction by John Pick that the costs of managing the grants would exceed their worth was essentially correct. Grants paid to the company were supposed to be for the benefit of theatregoers and the artists; the repercussions of arts administration are a mockery of efficient theatrical management.



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