



Foreword from the Chair



It's a marker of just what an extraordinary 18 months it has been that, along with so many other aspects of our activity, the annual review simply didn't happen last year, so this year we offer you a bumper edition incorporating 2019/20 and 2020/21. The former was a year of business as usual before grinding to a halt on 16 March, while the latter has been a year unlike any other.

In 2019/20 we welcomed 432,241 people through the doors of our three venues; celebrated 25 years of the Festival Theatre, said goodbye to Chief Executive Duncan Hendry after 8 years of sound financial and artistic leadership, setting our organisation on a robust financial path and transforming Capital Theatres into a strong and influential artistic entity, well regarded not only in Edinburgh, but throughout Scotland and beyond.

In April 2020 our new CEO Fiona Gibson picked up where Duncan had left off but in an almost unrecognisable landscape thanks to COVID. As our income stream disappeared overnight and our buildings went dark, we fought hard and fought together throughout the year to look after our staff, our loyal audiences, our regular artists and our communities - and in turn their generosity and commitment gave us huge strength.

From the get go we pulled together as a team to work our way through the crisis. Supporting each other to be as creative and resilient as possible and stay connected to the many communities for whom we play a vital role in their lives. Despite our best efforts to save money and reduce costs, we watched in despair as the money we had built up for the King's renovation become an important part of sustaining us through the early months of the crisis.

After significant lobbying we saw a new understanding of our organisation ripple through our funders which unlocked new emergency funds, at a level appropriate to protecting the scale of our charity and our impact. Although no one would have ever chosen this crisis, it has provided an opportunity for us to reframe perceptions of Capital Theatres well beyond a premiere receiving house, but also a cultural support network across so many communities, ravaged by this challenging period of the pandemic.

In the autumn the generosity of so many, both the well-known figures who donated prizes to our Crowdfunder, and the many, many members of our audiences who shared what they could, not only helped to financially sustain us but also created an outpouring of memories and affection for the theatres which truly touched and inspired us.

Through this whole period we have been under the remarkable new leadership of Fiona Gibson. The connections she's managed to make with staff, audiences, supporters and stakeholders through her computer screen from her lockdown residence in Bolton is truly remarkable and a testimony to her charisma and grit. We're delighted that she's now been able to move to Edinburgh and can make more of those connections in person.

That she not only led us through this crisis, but now sets us on a new exciting creative course, is an incredible feat and we are all delighted to have her stewardship through recovery and into a bright new future.

As we prepare for the future, I look forward to working with my Board colleagues and the rest of the Capital Theatres team to progress the charity's vision of inspiring a life-long love of theatre and to increase and broaden cultural engagement for all.

**Professor Dame Joan Stringer,
Chair of the Trustees of Capital Theatres**

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Foreword from the CEO



What a time to begin my role as Chief Executive at Capital Theatres! I took over from Duncan Hendry in April last year, whose reign as Chief Executive is best exemplified in the many great things glimpsed in the 2019/20 portion of this Annual Review.

Prior to joining Capital Theatres, I shared an early vision of an organisation with a new artistic identity, audience-led and community driven. With three landmark buildings in the City of Edinburgh, we have an opportunity to establish our brand as Scotland's largest theatre charity, and truly make a difference with the communities we serve. Poised for an exciting new chapter, we had the King's redevelopment in our sights and the opportunity with it to develop a clear identity and purpose for each of our venues. My vision was to centre the Festival Theatre on artistic excellence and largescale spectacle, as well as offer a creative hub, a home for the freelance community to congregate, share and create; the King's after its transformational redevelopment will continue to offer all genres of quality drama and contemporary dance as well as becoming an 'open house' community asset - somewhere where all are welcome to come and engage, to be that source of creative health and wellbeing for the city; and the Studio, a place for creative talent to evolve and flourish. Capital Theatres would take its true place in Scotland as a source of inspiration, joy, and growth.

In March 2020 the world changed and with it the fate of all performing arts venues, perhaps forever in some cases. Never has that oft overused term 'we live in unprecedented times' been more apt than now. With our own theatres closed to audiences since 16 March, and reopening slated for the following September, unthinkable it turned out to be over 15 months that we were closed with no trading income. There are very few businesses that have the resilience to weather that storm but Capital Theatres is one of a small minority in our sector that had already rebuilt its business model over many years prior, to allow us to survive this moment in history.

It is not without its consequences though - a trading deficit of £2m. We fought for survival on all fronts, relying on unrestricted

reserves; tireless lobbying of government, and fundraising with our Patrons and the public to achieve some level of emergency funding. We pursued a collaborative approach with producers in the constant postponement or cancellation of shows without insurance cover; and used short-term borrowing from our Theatres Development Fund (TDF) designated for the King's redevelopment just to remain solvent.

Our press campaign explored this harsh dichotomy of the King's or jobs. We had a ticking timebomb with our lead-up to the lease renewal in July 23, and a backlog of 9 months' work to get the construction back on the road, all prefaced with the need to underpin £10m of a £25m cost plan by Q1 next calendar year. Even with the decision to put off the King's redevelopment for a year while we dealt with the effects of the pandemic, this was a pivotal time for our organisation, now very fragile with the majority of core staff having been on furlough since April 2020. Our resources were severely depleted, our lifeblood of national producers facing real challenges in remounting tours to put on our stages in 2021 and 2022.

Writing today I can say that far from lose momentum on the project, 15 months of closure has made us all the more determined to ensure the King's Theatre, through the planned £25million redevelopment, can honour its illustrious past with a thriving future at the heart of Edinburgh and Scotland's cultural life. Not only a wonderful venue for joy and inspiration, the future King's will also offer a thriving hub by day for the many communities situated in and around Tollcross.

The pandemic has left us with some very large mountains to climb, but out of adversity comes real innovation and opportunity for those who choose to seize the day. Capital Theatres has sustained as Scotland's largest theatre charity for decades, and there's a reason for that. We are a family, and families hold tight in times of adversity. We work hard to find lasting solutions and we will do again. It's time to refresh our strategy, dig deep into our core values, and evolve in this changing world for audiences, creatives and the performing arts.

**Fiona Gibson,
CEO of Capital Theatres**

Our Contribution in 2019-20

Artistic Contribution

In 2019/20 we staged 657 performances of 144 shows across our three venues, carefully balancing artistic excellence and commercial viability.

We hosted many Scottish exclusives, meaning our venues were the only places in Scotland where audiences could see the likes of **Mark Morris's Dance Group**, **Rambert 2**, **Northern Ballet**, *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, **Theatr na nÓg** and **Frantic Assembly**.

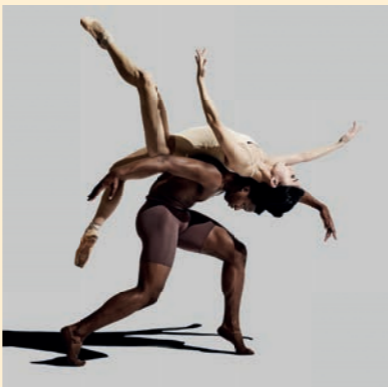
At the King's Theatre, the National Theatre producers presented **Shelagh Delaney's** career defining play, *A Taste of Honey*; at the Festival Theatre we had **Bill Kenwright's** multi-award winning production of *Cabaret* and then **Kenny Wax's** smash hit musical *Six*, which knocked audiences for six! There was

plenty on offer for our younger audiences. All 33,418 came in their droves to see a variety of shows including *The Worst Witch*, *Zog*, special performances of **Scottish Ballet's** *Wee Hansel & Gretel* and, of course, the annual Pantomime.

The Festival Theatre maintained its international reputation as one of the leading dance houses in the world, showcasing works of **Ballet Black**, **Mark Morris**, **Northern Ballet** and **Rambert** among others. In November **Carlos Acosta** brought his critically acclaimed **Acosta Danza**, to Edinburgh for their last performance before Carlos joined **Birmingham Royal Ballet** as Artistic Director. We also had the privilege of welcoming **Richard Alston** back for his final visit to Edinburgh before the company closed in 2020.

"I brought three 11-year olds with and I am so delighted they saw this show. They talked about the role of women in society for the rest of the night - and recreated the dances and sang. Ticked EVERY box. What a show"
Audience member of *Six*

Clockwise from left: Carlos Acosta's Acosta Danza; Six; Everybody's Talking About Jamie; Zog; Ballet Black; A Taste of Honey



"I feel more myself from spending the last few days with so many incredible people than I have felt in a long time. The lessons this project taught me about myself will stay with me forever."
LGBTQ participant



Social Contribution

Creative Engagement

We actively address health and social inequalities that exist for communities that surround our theatres. The opportunities provided through our learning and participation programme give those inherently less likely to engage with, and access, quality arts experiences the same opportunities as anyone else.

Over 2019/20 we have worked with older communities; people living with dementia and other neurodegenerative diseases; those in care home environments; children at the **Royal Hospital for Sick Children**; ethnically diverse communities around the Festival Theatre; children and young people with multiple and complex needs; communities in areas of multiple deprivation; D/deaf and blind communities and individuals; and care experienced children and young people; all at a disadvantage in accessing quality arts experiences.

We continue to collaborate with partners such as **LGBT Youth Scotland**, **Action for Refugees**, special educational needs schools, **Nari Kallyean Shango**, **WHALE Arts**, **Alzheimer Scotland** and **Lifecare**.

By encouraging expression of ideas in a nurturing and creative environment, alongside professional artists and experienced practitioners, we have found that it builds confidence and self-esteem amongst participants. Activities involving dance and movement, singing, spoken word and performance actively improve the health and wellbeing of participants. For example, 66% of participants of 'Tea & Jam' (a monthly music making and social meet up event) reported that they felt more alert. 88% of participants of The Satellites creative project (involving 30 older people in making new artistic performance work during 16 workshops) agreed that it had a positive effect on their mental health and wellbeing.

Creative Engagement in 2019/20

13,240	participants
308	learning and engagement events
17	events and workshops with visiting companies;
161	activities and workshops with children and young people;
113	dementia friendly events, workshops

'I am disabled and think the staff are exceptionally helpful & considerate without being patronising and should be proud of their service. Being able to park at the stage door is invaluable to me and very much appreciated.'

Audience member



Clockwise from left: Dementia friendly Tea Party; Relaxed performance of the King's Panto; Sofa to Seat pilot at dementia friendly Tosca



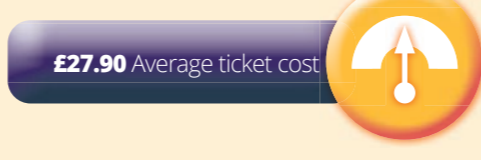
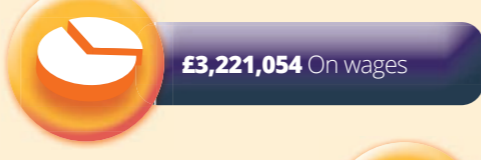
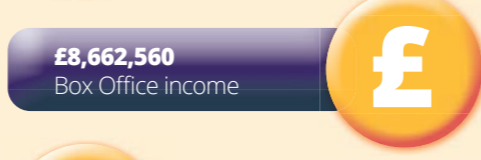
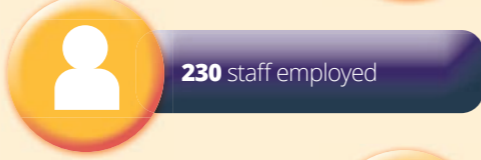
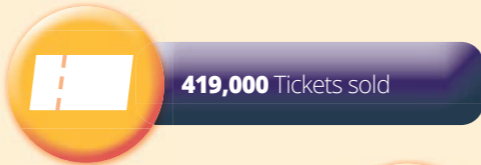
Accessible performances

33	Touch Tours organised for shows (nearly a quarter of all productions)
33,418	Children's tickets sold
25,416	Elderly Senior tickets Sold
297	Unwaged tickets sold
1391	Young Scot tickets sold
12,504	Disabled discounted tickets purchased

More on our extensive community work, particularly for those living with dementia can be found on our website at capitaltheatres.com/raise-the-curtain

Economic Contribution

As Scotland's largest theatre charity our work makes a significant contribution to Edinburgh's and Scotland's economy.



2019/20 and 2020/21 in Numbers

These two years couldn't be more different in terms of activity. For the first our theatres were functioning as normal, for the second we had to find new ways to connect with people when they couldn't walk through our doors.



Our Contribution in 2020-21



Pic caption



"So very, very successful and looking along the screen at everyone they enjoyed it as well, mostly people dancing. Brilliant job, thank you"
Participant

Social Contribution - Making a Difference in our Communities

During this crisis we have been proud to deliver a wide range of activities and insights to a huge range of people through our adapted on-line creative engagement programme **Raise the Curtain**, generously supported by Creative Scotland, The Rayne Foundation and the Cruden Foundation. This included creativity sessions for children, back stage tours, films of staff talking about their roles, radio plays and our Tea & Jam and Contactless Afternoon Tea Parties, all to help to maintain some structure, creativity and social contact with our most vulnerable audiences.

Capital Theatres closed the Festival Theatre, the King's Theatre and The Studio on Monday 16 March. As well as many performances being cancelled, several **dementia friendly events** and activities were too. In order to provide continuity for participants Dawn Irvine, Creative Development Manager (Dementia Friendly Projects), adapted our programme to deliver a remote series of events informed by the participants and created by staff and artists currently working from home.

These events included **Contactless Afternoon Tea** deliveries to approximately 70 people in the Lothians, expanded in partnership with Dementia Friendly East Lothian. The entertainment was pre-recorded and available online or posted out in DVD format and baked goods were delivered by local bakers. Many shared their wonderful photos of people enjoying the tea parties at home, laying the cakes out beautifully and dancing around their living rooms.

What started as **A Brew and A Blether** - a relaxed drop-in chat on Zoom for people with lived experience of dementia, providing a sense of community - evolved into a variety of events shaped by the participants and their needs. The group went on virtual tours and behind the scenes at organisations they were unable to visit.

Tea & Jam moved onto Zoom. The monthly sessions encourage everyone to grab an instrument, or sing,

and jam along with musician Gus Harrower.

For **Joy to the Moment** Capital Theatres put out a call online for short films of people being creative outside. These were edited together and sent to people shielding indoors or those in care settings who were isolating in their rooms in an effort to bring a little of the outdoors...indoors. King's Ambassadors **Grant Stott, Ian Rankin** and **Alexander McCall Smith** provided films, as well as others from children at The Edinburgh Steiner School, local artists, dancers and comedians and other members of the public.

Sundown Stories was a series of short stories adapted for film for anyone who might enjoy a calming and relaxing story. The stories, written by and for persons living with dementia, were delivered in a calming environment, at a gentle pace and with a soothing tone to aid those experiencing anxiety or distress associated with the phenomenon of Sundowning.

The project was delivered in collaboration with residents, carers and staff from Crossreach - The Elms Nursing Home, Sharing a Story CIC and Dunbar Dementia Carers Group. Our Dementia Friendly Communities project is made possible thanks to generous funding from The Life Changes Trust and the Robertson Trust, and additional funding for Sundown Stories from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Capital Theatres adapted its annual **Care Settings Theatre Tour** commission to create full length audio drama, **When the Sun Meets the Sky**, for people living with dementia, their loved ones and carers, with accompanying sensory resource packs and a guide as to how to make your own.

This was realised through a collaboration between Capital Theatres and the Traverse Theatre to which Capital Theatres brought its 5 years' experience of working creatively with persons living with dementia, and the Traverse Theatre brought expertise in theatre production, new script writing, audio drama and podcasting to the partnership. This was made possible thanks to funding from Creative Scotland and The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust.



Good Cheer Contribution - We bring the sparkle

Every Christmas for the last six years, Capital Theatres has brought a dash of festive sparkle to the wards of Edinburgh's Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC) with Panto Presents, thanks to generous funding from Radio Forth's Cash for Kids. A project carefully designed to provide resources, activities and a specially created relaxed performances for children and families who many not be able to visit the theatre over panto season.



Despite everything that saw the theatres closed and the incredibly popular King's Panto cancelled in 2020, nothing stops Panto Presents from continuing to bring that magic to children and families in the hospital over the festive period. Of course, last Christmas things needed to be done differently to ensure that it was as safe as possible. The teams at Capital Theatres and Edinburgh's Children's Hospital Charity (EVHC) worked round the clock to prepare enough panto packs jam-packed with panto related craft materials so that each child

could have a delivery of Christmas sparkle. The box was created from scratch and designed to transform into the King's Theatre with some easy-to-follow instructions. Alongside COVID-safe bedside performances on the wards, the team at Capital Theatres also captured this year's original relaxed performance as a short film, **Panto PresentsWhere Has Panto Gone?** starring Imogen Reiter and Hannah Bradley as Cinderella and Belle, which was watched by families in the hospital over the Christmas period.



A continuation of a brilliant established relationship between Capital Theatres and ECHC, **Curtains Up** was a brand-new project which brought a bit of old school overhead projector fun to bedsides, creating unique and playful scenes on the inside of hospital curtains.

The children created original drawings which were projected and traced onto their hospital bed curtains, proudly displaying their art to their families

and the rest of the ward. **Curtains Up** gave children autonomy over their environment while staying in hospital, creating a child-centric environment and fostering creativity between families and staff.

Fiona O'Sullivan, Deputy Director of Children's Wellbeing, said: "The visits from Capital Theatres always prove hugely popular with children and young people in the hospital so we are very excited to welcome them back for the Curtains Up project.



"Decorating their hospital space is a fantastic and fun way for children to get creative and make their bedside environment feel a little less scary and more like their own home.

"We would like to say a huge thank you to Capital Theatres for getting involved with our vital arts programme as it's projects like this one that enable ECHC to continue to transform the lives of children and young people in hospital."



Our Artistic Contribution - Hanging by a million threads

Capital Theatres, as part of its Creative Engagement programme, held a competition for freelance artists to secure a commission to create a work of art for the Festival Theatre. Artists were given a brief and two weeks to respond, 60 entered and Sophie Fields won. Edinburgh-based emerging artist Sophie Fields created a statement of thanks to all who supported Capital Theatres over 2020,

in her textile-based installation **Hanging by a million threads**.

The work was made up of hundreds of comments from supporters of Capital Theatres' Crowdfunder campaign. Commissioned by Capital Theatres, the installation was made possible thanks to the generous support of Creative Scotland.

The title **Hanging by a million threads** is quite literal, as the fabric is made up of millions and millions of individual threads woven together to give it a strong tensile form. But also links to



the state of jeopardy the theatre experienced as a result of closure throughout the pandemic. Sophie hung the 20 individual, digitally printed curtains inside the glass panes of the Festival Theatre façade over December and January. The 525 messages submitted as part of the Crowdfunder campaign were also displayed on the digital screens so people walking past could read them.

Sophie said: "I was really inspired by the messages the public shared during the Crowdfunder and wanted to find a way to incorporate that in my response to the commission.

"The idea of having draped textile pieces filling the front of the Festival Theatre came from the new series of activity created by Capital Theatres called Raise the Curtain which continues aspects of their community engagement work whilst the theatres are closed, together with the idea of real stage curtains opening up again in the spring. Having the curtains pulled back slightly is a symbol of hope that the theatre still exists and events will hopefully be running as normal inside soon."

Since being de-installed some of the fabric from the artwork has been turned into masks for both community friends and staff to use, exemplifying adaptability and resilience which have been key themes in the pandemic.

King's Development Update



Opened in 1906, the King's Theatre welcomes over 200,000 visitors every (normal) year. It is one of a handful of Grade A listed theatres in the UK yet to have a major redevelopment and is the only surviving operational theatre by the architects Swanston and Davidson. Over a century old, the King's needs a major redevelopment to meet the needs of today's audiences and performers, and to safeguard it for generations to come.

Redevelopment works were scheduled to begin in September 2021, with the theatre closed for 20 months, reopening summer 2023. However, due to the impact of coronavirus, we have taken the difficult decision to pause the redevelopment of the King's Theatre. We will now start the project 12 months later, in September 2022.

The project advanced significantly in the last year. The design team, led by award-winning architects, Bennetts Associates, have advanced to RIBA Stage 3, Developed Design. We have undertaken broad ranging consultation to develop all aspects of the project, and in late 2020 made an application to the City of Edinburgh Council for planning permission and listed building consent.

We were delighted to receive further funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This funding alongside funding secured from the City of Edinburgh Council, grant making trusts, philanthropists and companies, and our most recent announcement of grant funding from Scottish Government, means we are making good progress on reaching our £25m target.

The transformational development will:

- ▶ Modernise the stage house to reinvigorate the artists programme by attracting a wider range of the best available local, national, and international productions
- ▶ Transform access throughout the theatre including the installation of two new lifts

- ▶ Overhaul the existing bars and foyers whilst retaining their heritage and charm, providing flexible and enjoyable entertainment spaces for pre- and post-performance
- ▶ Create a welcoming community asset by day, open to all
- ▶ Include a brand-new studio to provide a much-needed space for community engagement and learning projects
- ▶ Unveil a new street level café and bar, accessible directly from Leven Street

The King's project is critical to the long-term sustainability of Capital Theatres. Without this much-needed redevelopment, the King's would not be viable as a functioning theatre and in all likelihood could have closed when the current lease runs out in 2023, seriously undermining the resilience of our organisation going forward.

The Objectives of the Redevelopment are:

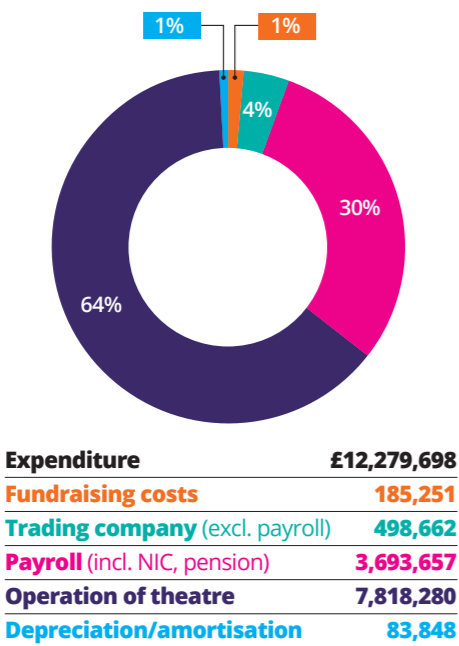
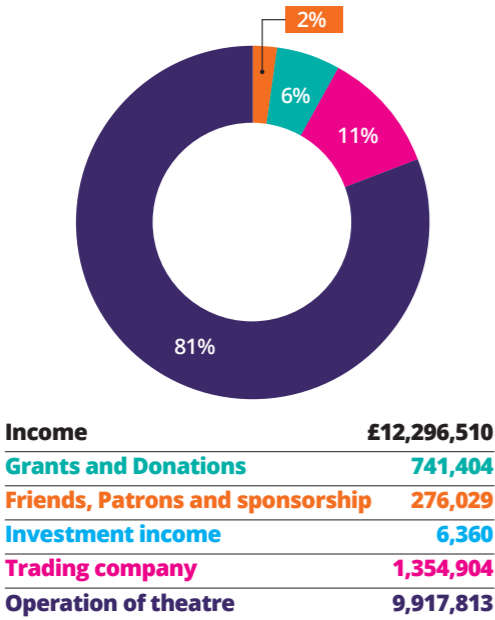
- ▶ To re-energise the artistic programme by attracting a greater breadth and the best available local, national and international productions.
- ▶ To create a transformed, highly enjoyable, theatregoing and visitor experience.
- ▶ To transform access to achieve equality of experience for all.
- ▶ To modernise, preserve and showcase the heritage.
- ▶ To create an enabling environment to foster lifelong cultural engagement.

To find out how you can safeguard the King's Future visit: capitaltheatres.com/kings-future



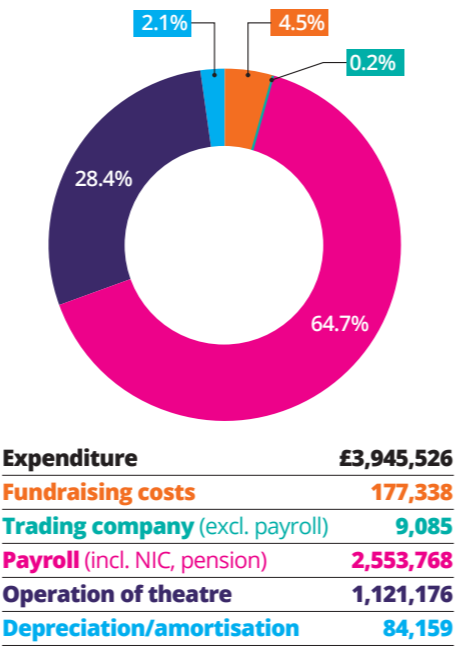
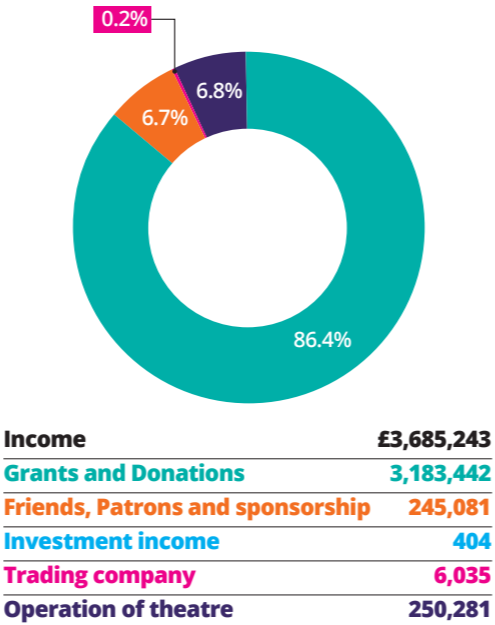
Income and Expenditure 2019-20

Net surplus £16,182



Income and Expenditure 2020-21

Net deficit (£260,283)



With Your Help We Can



“A building, team and company I love. They have welcomed, me develop as an amateur stage manager.♥”
Martin
 “The Festival Theatre holds a special place in my heart; I’ve been coming here since it opened in 1994 and it is one of the things I have most missed over the last six months.”
Mairi

- Capital Theatres would like to thank all those whose generous contribution to our charity has helped us deliver our mission of inspiring a lifelong love of theatre; 4875 people donated to Capital Theatres and 5525 signed up to our annual Friends programme during 2019-20. In 2020-21, 2618 bought a Friends membership and 2080 people donated, with a further 1732 people giving to our Crowdfunder campaign which raised an incredible £86,900.
- Collectively these individuals, alongside grant making trusts, our Corporate Partners and Patrons enabled us to us:
- ▶ Improve physical access to our venues to give everyone the opportunity to experience live theatre.
 - ▶ Programme relaxed performances for disabled, D/deaf and neuro diverse audiences, as well as Captioned, British Sign Language interpreted and Audio Described performances, and Touch Tours of sets before audio described performances.
 - ▶ Collaborate with diverse groups, including children and young people, refugees, ethnically diverse and LGBTQ, to provide opportunities to engage with the performing arts.
 - ▶ Provide training for staff to be Dementia Friends, to ensure that those living with dementia feel welcome, comfortable and supported whenever they visit our theatres.
- We could not do all this without this support and we are extremely grateful. Donations of any size are always hugely appreciated and add up to help us achieve extraordinary things. For more information please contact: support@capitaltheatres.com



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