

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Birds of Paradise Theatre Company	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001067	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£180,000	£180,000
<b>Officer's recommendation</b>		
<p>Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks  <i>Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words</i></p>		
<p><b>Comments:</b>  Birds of Paradise (BoP) is working in the still relatively young and developmental field of arts and disability in Scotland and has been supported in this work by both the Equalities and Drama Departments at SAC. The company is dedicated to inclusive practice on stage and removing barriers that prevent disabled people from participating in and attending theatre productions. Their plans also reflect their aim of increasing participation and audiences among both disabled and non-disabled people.</p> <p>They are one of a small number of companies working in this field in Scotland and their plans for 2009 – 11 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• touring two national touring productions, one of which will be part of an international collaboration in Italy</li> <li>• 2 or 3 community productions in Scotland</li> <li>• The appointment of an Education Officer who will further develop their education and outreach programme.</li> </ul> <p>They also aim to provide training and professional opportunities for disabled people to participate in theatre, both within the arts and disability arena and in mainstream theatre. Development of this area is important if young people with disabilities are to progress into professional employment in the arts.</p> <p>The artistic vision of the company looks interesting and fits well with its priorities. The artistic collaborators which the company proposes to work with have good reputations and track records.</p> <p>BoP has developed some good partnerships in Scotland and plan to further develop their partnerships with local authorities.</p> <p>The company meets SAC's priority areas of good practice in governance and management, aiming to increase access and inclusion through their practices, and the budget looks reasonable for the proposed activities.</p> <p>BoP's audience numbers tend towards the low side and this is an area which needs development. I would support the proposed initiative with Lung Ha's to work with SAC's Audience Development Department to consider how the company might develop their audiences. The company will need to ensure that sufficient time and budget is available to undertake this work.</p> <p>The marketing plan and concepts of evaluation are clearly outlined.</p> <p>While the budget is fit for purpose it does request £180k for each of the two years which is an increase</p>		

of around £50k from this year's funding from three SAC funding sources. While this would support the ongoing development of the company and its work, I also believe that the company could still undertake most of the proposed work on a slightly lower budget, if compromise is needed.

Finally, the quality of the artistic output of the productions is an area for further consideration by the company. High quality output is one of their key aims but 60% of the assessments rate productions as competent with 40% as good. While the artistic vision is in place and desire to increase audiences is a key aim, one of the fundamental elements for the future will be for the company to endeavour to raise the quality of productions.

<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>HIGH</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date:11.1.08 Revised: 20 March 2008
Print name:	Kate Craik	

## Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

### Comments:

Attendees:

David Taylor, Co-Director of Arts

Specialist Advisors: Stewart Ennis, Tim Licata, David Leddy, Alex Patience, Sandy Maxwell, Stephen Slater, Stephen Stenning and Laura Tyrrell

The Panel identified the following strengths and weaknesses of Birds of Paradise:

It was felt that this was a good application. They have detailed interesting project ideas, e.g. a revision of classics such as *A Midsummer Nights Dream* and *Mother Courage*. Artistic vision and artistic process as described is strong. Views of the last production *Spider Girls* (from the SAs' direct experience and the feedback they had received from promoters) were not particularly positive, and quality of the work was thought to be an issue. Having seen the work, SAs thought that dramaturgy was thought not to be strength and that non-dramatic writers to be employed would need support.

Birds of Paradise achieve a diverse range of performers on stage and therefore made a significant contribution to the development of disabled artists.

From the SAs knowledge engagement with the audience was good, and workshops have been well delivered in the past. The Artistic Director was recognised as a good facilitator.

The Specialist Advisors rated this application as: medium priority.

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

**Comments:**

Established in 1993, Birds of Paradise is an inclusive touring theatre company, based in Glasgow. The company works with disabled and non-disabled practitioners and aims to be an agent for change in arts and education for physically disabled people. One of their key aims is to increase the number of professional disabled theatre practitioners working in Scotland. In 2003 the company secured one of two regional awards in Scotland for a European Year of Disabled People Award, which supported a new production and tour. Shortly after this the company undertook a period of restructuring and development and appointed Morven Gregor as full time Artistic Director.

The company sits alongside Theatre Workshop and Lung Ha's in working as an inclusive theatre company.

1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

*1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists*

Evaluations of past work have been mixed however; the company has a distinctive artistic vision and provides leadership through its inclusive artistic practice. It has also had a key role in providing opportunities for disabled artists and others. Its Agent for Change programme has been a unique initiative that provides leadership in the sector and beyond.

*1.2 Improving your engagement with the public*

They achieve these aims through 3 elements of their artistic programme: touring, education and campaigning.

*1.3 Good practice in the governance and management*

The structure and procedures of the company appear appropriate although the officer expressed concerns about the proposed increases in salaries.

*1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access*

Widening access to artistic opportunities is central to the company's aims and practice, including attending performances.

*1.5 Raising other income at least 25%*

Met.

2. *Fit with Departmental priorities*

No particular fit.

*Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims:*

The application fits well with the aim of fulfilling artists potential - this includes disabled and non disabled artists; the company also engages well with audiences including disabled people.

Their Agent for Change programme has been very effective in building bridges with mainstream theatre and other sectors.

The officer's assessment rates the company's application and plans as high, while acknowledging issues relating to quality. The applicant has a clear commitment and track record in relation to increasing opportunities for disabled artists, thus fulfilling their potential and the quality of its facilitation is recognised.

3. Based on the lead officer's assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

**Comments**

Strengths

*1.1 Application rating/ 1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating*

The Specialist Advisors have rated the application as medium and the assessing officer as high. The Specialist Advisors had some concerns about the quality outcomes of some productions, but also felt the company had potential to develop in this area. In light of some reservations in relation to the quality of the work, I rate this application as a medium priority.

*1.3 Strengths of application*

The applicant has demonstrated its commitment to advocacy and communication around disabled arts with both disabled artist and audiences and also with non-disabled artists and audiences

*1.4 Weaknesses of applications*

Some reservations about the quality of the work.

*1.5 Specific risks associated with the application*

No specific risks

*1.6 Development areas identified*

The Specialist Advisors have referred to weaknesses in dramaturgy and this is an area where attention should be paid if the application is supported.

*1.7 Recommended level of support*

£150,000 pa

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

**Comments:**

The applicant plans to work in more than half of the local authorities in Scotland, so a significant impact is likely.

<b>Head of Department's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Head of Department's signature:		Date: 25 March 2008 Revised: 26 March 2008
Print name:	David Taylor	

<b>Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)</b>		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
<b>Comments:</b> Good overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects development areas identified, the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. Suggested level of support: £100,000 annually.		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		Strong medium
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

<b>Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)</b>		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Suggested level of support: £100,000 annually.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		<b>£100,000</b>
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

<b>Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions</b>		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
<b>Joint Board Final Decision</b>		<b>APPROVE</b>
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£100,000 annually

**End of Assessment**