

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Catherine Wheels Theatre Company	
Application Reference number:	G20101008	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£250,000	£257,500
Officer's recommendation		
<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>This application represents a high calibre development of work already achieved. There is a strong focus on quality, innovation, interpretation and educational value in the planned programme which will tour nationally and internationally in response to demonstrated demand.</p> <p>CW prioritises audience development and the plans reflect this through the high (but realistic) audience figures and the company's strategic plans (under the Young Audiences Scotland banner) as well as the quality work being developed within schools. Appointment of a new Education Manager will support this development. The company will have to review their proposed partnerships with local authorities in light of the cut to cultural coordinators programme by the Scottish Government.</p> <p>The proposal fits the Flexible Funding criteria well and fits the Drama department stated priority (Children/Young People) to a high degree. It also (partly) fits the Drama priority for site specific work. There is a stated and proven commitment to equal opportunities through the inclusive approach to work creation and audience development. CW prioritises the development of partnerships as reflected in their plans. Their international partnerships play a key role in profiling Scotland as a leader in the field of quality children's theatre.</p> <p>The financial plans carry a medium risk overall which the lead officer believes can be minimised given experience and track record of the applicant. The company appears to be rigorous in its approach to company/financial management and planning.</p> <p>An increase of £100,000 is projected for 09/10 however this represents a consolidation of current flexible core and flexible project awards with 1 extra project being delivered.</p> <p>A key area for development in 09-11 will be their arts/education work which the lead officer believes could be quite groundbreaking (from evaluation of <i>Kappa</i> which formed part of the first stage of the proposed arts/education programme).</p>		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 10 January 2008 Revised 20 March
Print name:	ANGELA HOGG	

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

Laura Tyrrell is on the Board of Catherine Wheels and has left the room to enable the discussion of the application to take place.

The Panel identified the following strengths and weaknesses of Catherine Wheels:

Overall it was a good application, very focused and easy to read. There appears to be a strong sense that they are a company driven to create good quality work and the core of the company is very strong; they seem unique, interesting and exciting.

From the artistic programme you get a clear sense of how this is going to work.

SAs felt that there was a case for an increase in the funding level from the current.

Specialist Advisors overall rating: high

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:

Catherine Wheels (CW) has an international, award winning reputation for creating high calibre, accessible work for children and young people. They have toured throughout Scotland (and other parts of the UK) and internationally to The Republic Of Ireland, Canada, USA (performing on Broadway twice) and the Netherlands (performing in Dutch). In 2008 they will be presenting in New Zealand and Australia. The company has built up a repertoire of work which they re-tour to meet demand. CW plays to good sized audiences in Scottish theatres (Key achievement figures for Scotland from April 2005 of 35,563 fits with their known track record).

1. Fit with FXO criteria:

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

Strong vision and leadership demonstrated in track record and forward plans. The artists involved in the company's work benefit from high creative values and international exposure.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public

Good levels and methods of engagement with the public with high attendance levels (C26-27,000pa). The creation of a new education post aims to support the company's ability to improve their engagement. CW plans to produce an audience development strategy following on from the evaluation of the 09-11 arts in education programme.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management

Established.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

The company works with promoters to provide signed and audio described performances and touch tours. Future plans have stated an aim to increase sensory access to their work. CW state that they always consider physical access and pricing policies when choosing venues.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

Met.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities

Excellent fit with Drama priority for development of theatre for children. *Story of a Life* will be site-specific so the programme will in part meet the priority for outdoor performance.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims

Catherine Wheels have been a leader in the development of high quality theatre for children. It has fulfilled artists' potential including providing international exposure. It works extensively in schools thus engaging with the education sector and it plays to large numbers of children providing accessible arts experiences. It has high levels of output and an enviable track record in terms of critical and popular response.

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

CW has demonstrated a commitment to equality of access through their current practice and future plans. They work with promoters to provide signed and audio described performances and touch tours. Their future plans have stated an aim to increase sensory access to their work. CW state that they always consider physical access and pricing policies when choosing venues. The company works with their audiences.

1.1 Application rating:

a. comparison with Officer and Specialist advisor comments and recommendations

The Assessing Officer and the Specialist Advisors agreed on a high rating. I concur.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating

As above

1.3 Strengths of application

Artistic leadership and achievement and helping artists to realise their potential; engagement with audiences.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications

No significant weaknesses.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

No significant risks - a manageable deficit situation that relates to specific circumstances that are not likely to recur.

<p><i>1.6 Development areas identified</i> None significant.</p> <p><i>1.7 Recommended level of support</i> Recommended at £200,000 per annum.</p>		
<p>4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme</p>		
<p>Comments: Very wide, including all local authorities in Scotland in the funding period.</p>		
<p>Head of Department's overall priority recommendation</p>		<p>HIGH</p>
<p>Head of Department's signature:</p>		<p>Date: 15 Feb 2008 Revised:25 March 2008</p>
<p>Print name:</p>	<p>David Taylor</p>	

Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
Comments: Strong overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. Support of £190,000 annually is proposed.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		High
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Support of £190,000 annually is proposed.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		High
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation		
Joint Board Final Decision		APPROVE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£190,000

End of Assessment