

## Written evidence submitted by The Egg

Within one hour of the Prime Minister advising the country not to visit theatres, all our shows were cancelled at Theatre Royal Bath, which includes The Egg and The Ustinov, until early Summer at the earliest. Our production of Blithe Spirit in the West End also closed. By the end of that week, all staff were working from home.

Regarding our parent organisation, Theatre Royal Bath, refunds had to be administered, for tickets, membership fees, subscriptions and so on. To date, £56,500 of these have been donated back to the Theatre.

With regards The Egg, in addition to cancelled performances in our venue, we cancelled a 6-week Arts Council funded national tour set to commence in September due to uncertainty around reopening dates and potential audiences. Our Theatre School sessions were terminated and Summer Schools seemed doubtful, subscription fees refunded. Creative Learning projects with schools were cancelled. Delivery of the Level 3 Performing Arts Course delivered in partnership with Bath College continued remotely. The upward trajectory of our business plan terminated within seconds.

Just as we were working out how to continue delivery remotely, the Government Job Retention Scheme was announced and within a week, all staff were furloughed in The Egg except the Director, the Manager and the two people responsible for delivering the Level 3. All our audiences and participants were henceforth completely cut off from any form of regular contact.

The Egg has an annual turnover of £628-990k with a net cost to the Theatre Royal Bath (TRB) of £245k. Additional overheads add a further £139k to that figure. TRB support enables The Egg to sustain local & national programmes & sector support without regular subsidy from any other funding body, including ACE.

TRB's charitable work (The Egg) is the outcome of its commercial activity:

- Main House programme, making approximately £35K per week - 6 commercial tours p.a. mounted by trading subsidiary, TRB Productions - at least one West End transfer p.a.

A 16-week closure has cost TRB at least £540k in Bath & a further £100k+ from touring & transfers, which usually generates £400k p.a. at a minimum. Yet venues of this scale may stay closed or poorly patronised for longer, deepening those losses. The Government Job Retention Scheme is helping, but salaries for core staff, who are saving Theatre Royal Bath, erode our dwindling reserves.

It is incumbent on The Board of Trustees to maintain reserves for maintenance of our Grade 2 listed building (a much needed overhaul of the ladies toilets about to start work was cancelled) while further investment is required for fixed costs across 3 auditoria & to generate new commercial productions that can replenish reserves. Priority staff will be only those vital to ensuring future profits, putting The Egg's employees at greater risk.

Freelancers & small companies suffer too: over just a 16-week closure, they have lost approximately £165k of earnings from The Egg alone. Between them, these attract 70% of the Egg's income.

As a sector leader in Theatre for Children and Young People, all of the following services could be lost:

- £380,000 spend on freelancer fees, approximately 80% of whom are from Bristol/Bath area

- £159,000 on creative industries & visiting companies - 238 performances, offering 70 visiting companies residencies of typically 4 performances over 2 days
- 17,100 audiences annually
- 37,762 attendances to participatory events annually
- flagship creative learning programme School Without Walls delivered with 3 local cultural partners, embedding creativity in schools
- Major contributor to Bath Cultural Education Partnership
- Service delivery agreement on Level 3 Performing Arts for Bath College
- Service delivery agreement on MA & BA programmes at Bath Spa University
- Youth Theatre (TheatreSchool) established since 1987
- The Incubator artist and idea development programme
- Egg productions in The Egg and on national and international tour

In addition to these losses, the Egg's Adult Creative Learning programme is funded by a legacy left by actor Margot Boyd. Annually, the Trustees grant £80,000 for this programme. This funding comes from revenue made on a retail outlet in Bath, currently closed due to Covid 19. Future funding is therefore uncertain.

Director Kate Cross is Chair of Assitej-UK, International Assoc. of Theatre for Young Audiences, coordinating global opportunities for the UK TYA sector; her time & travel is funded by The Theatre Royal. The Egg programmes family work for Yate library, coordinates membership and communications for Assitej UK & mentors many artists and companies.

Applications have been submitted to ACE Emergency funding for £35k and Innovate for £50k: the maximum that can be applied for in both cases. Should these be successful, they may help us plug a 6 month gap beyond which the future remains uncertain. Although these funds would cover some salary costs, Theatre Royal Bath may consider the Job Retention Scheme (if extended) a better financial option, thus disabling any successful grants we may win; in this way, the Scheme does not necessarily serve the Egg in terms of output, continuity and long-lasting resilience.

Of most concern, then, is what occurs within the 6-18 month window from now: here, the greatest destruction may occur, with staff redundancies possible and a cessation to the ongoing development of this organisation.

The best support The Egg could have would be for its complement of 9 FTE staff to be reinstated despite the Furlough scheme, so that together, they can continue to deliver the above mentioned activity (with necessary restrictions) and, crucially, bring in earned and fundraised income, for which it can no longer necessarily rely upon its commercial funder.

Work for children has to fight daily for adequate funding, respect, and public profile. It is often misunderstood by the public, the arts sector and even the funding sector. In particular, the business model of the children's theatre sector is compromised by the fact that children yield a lower revenue and require smaller capacities for early years work. This marginal sector serving this country's most important people may take the longest to recover if not dealt preferential treatment by government funding bodies.

30<sup>th</sup> April 2020