

CURVE



AN INTRODUCTION

NOTES FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
CULTURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY COMMISSION

FIONA ALLAN NOVEMBER 2012

CURVE - AN INTRODUCTION

“Curve can add strategic value to the development of the LCC’s cultural strategies for the future. Curve takes the strategy, and what the city can provide, onto a whole new level, bringing Leicester on a level with some of the major cities in England in terms of art and culture.”

Beverley King, Leicester City Council Commissioned consultant,
Evaluation of Curve Theatre 2011

Curve’s vision is to have a *world-wide reputation for awe-inspiring theatre, from the heart of the UK*, and we believe we are well on the way to achieving this. Since opening, in November 2008, Curve has offered a breath-taking programme of events from world premieres of brand new musicals to large scale community productions. We are a key venue in the city’s arts and cultural festivals as well as offering an extensive range of home produced work and work from visiting companies. We co-produce and collaborate with many well-known artists and theatre companies from around the globe, and our reputation for producing musicals is international.



CURVE AN INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

“Rave reviews have been rolling in for Paul Kerryson’s revival of Gypsy, where things genuinely seem to have been coming up roses since Kerryson returned to doing what he does best: musicals, often on a big scale. His touring version of The King and I has been a big hit with audiences around the country, and his revival of 42nd Street was a pleasure over Christmas.”

Lyn Gardner, The Guardian, March 2012

Our stated Mission is ‘Curve is a major producing theatre, creating exceptional and compelling experiences. We use our unique home and talent to entertain, inspire and engage with a modern diverse audience and play a leading role in the development of our industry, our city and our global community’.

We pride ourselves on the diversity of our theatre programme as well as the free and participative activity that animates our public spaces and creates connections with our cosmopolitan communities- we aim for Curve to be a place where everyone can come and engage with the arts. We were thrilled earlier this year to win the Visit England Gold award for Access – reflecting not just Curve’s physical accessibility, but the accessibility of our pricing policies and accessibility to lower income groups.

In our latest audience survey – completed by a sample of over 1000 audience members – 84% agreed or strongly agreed that ‘Curve’s programme reflects the diversity of Leicester’ whilst 2/3 of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that ‘Through attending Curve I gain new cultural experiences’ and ‘Curve’s programme promotes intercultural understanding’.

Our Christmas musicals and many other shows play to full houses, with over 180,000 people attending shows at Curve last year, whilst over 175,000 people saw our work across the country as our production of The King and I played to capacity crowds from Edinburgh to Cardiff and pretty much everywhere in between. Since we’ve opened, Curve originated productions including our coproductions with Akram Khan Company of Vertical Road and DESH, have reached over 300,000 people across all five continents.

“Hello, Dolly! will reunite the critically-acclaimed creative team behind Curve’s Gypsy and The King and I”

Broadway World September 2012

CURVE AN INTRODUCTION CONTINUED



Alongside the work on our stages, last year alone we welcomed over 16,000 people to engage with our participation and learning and community programmes: from drama workshops to choir rehearsals and performance poetry classes; from our youngest Little Movers for under 5's to our Over 55's participants, our broad range of opportunities to join in at Curve is firmly placing us at the centre of our community.

The business community is also embracing Curve with over 20,000 people visiting us to take part in a conference, business meeting, networking event or graduation in the past year, eight new companies having joined our business club, and Curve senior management represented on many business groups across the city.

At just under 4 years old, and through offering consistently excellent work and customer service, alongside a developing programme of engagement, Curve is a bold artistic force, embraced by its community and the beating heart of creativity in the East Midlands.

OUR PRODUCED WORK

Curve is one of the UK's leading producing theatres. That is, we make productions from scratch, here in Leicester, both for audiences locally and to attract audiences into Leicester from further afield. We produce work of our own, and we enter co-producing agreements with other companies and artists, to share expenses and expertise.

Leicester Theatre Trust has a long history of leadership in this field, particular in producing musicals under the direction of Paul Kerryson. To quote Lizz Brain, in the Leicester Mercury (28 October 2012)

“There have been many, many successes... West End transfers for Mack and Mabel and Rent, a tour of Japan for On Your Toes, national tours of The King and I and Calamity Jane. Not to mention spectacular top-notch musicals like West Side Story, Singin’ In The Rain and The Wizard of Oz; plays ranging from classic Shakespeare and Webster to modern Miller and McDonagh, and the home-grown hits including Hot Stuff and Rock Hard”



OUR PRODUCED WORK CONTINUED

“Curve can allow Leicester to look outward and have aspirations on a national and international scale with pride.”

Beverley King, LCC Commissioned consultant, 2011

The aim of producing work is to tour it, whenever possible – both to generate additional income, and build our brand outside of Leicester. Curve’s production of *The King & I* recently completed a 26 week tour of the UK and Ireland, which saw it performing to audiences of over 175,000, and being shortlisted for the 2012 UK Theatre Awards ‘Best Touring Production’. Akram Khan’s dance production of *Vertical Road*, which was created in residence at Curve in summer 2010, has since been seen by nearly 100,000 people on tour across 5 continents. His more recent production of *DESH*, which Curve also co-produced and had its World Premiere here in Leicester, has already toured to London and New York and won both the 2012 Olivier Award and 2012 UK Theatre Award for Best Dance Production – bringing Curve again into the national limelight.

In the 2011/12 year, Curve produced or coproduced fourteen productions, from classic musicals *The King & I* and *42nd street*, brand new drama *Bang Bang Bang*, contemporary classics *Buried Child* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, to new work for children and families *Gulliver’s Travels* and *Butterfly Lion*. Paul Kerryson’s fantastic revival of the musical *Gypsy* earned Curve some fantastic reviews.

Gypsy attracted audiences who had travelled from Australia and the US especially to see this production in Leicester – in fact over 25% of the audience for this production travelled from beyond Leicestershire to attend.

“A tremendous musical”

★★★★★ The Guardian (Michael Billington)

“Burnishing glamour with ironic humour, Paul Kerryson’s company dazzles.”

The Observer (Clare Brennan)

Resource requirements for a producing theatre are fundamentally different to those of a most receiving theatres, such as De Montfort Hall. Not only the physical requirements of rehearsal space, wardrobe, painting and carpentry facilities, props and set storage, but the expertise required to choose repertoire, direct shows, turn the vision of a lighting or set designer into reality, create and manage production budgets, run technical rehearsals, contract creative teams and individual artists, originate new show artwork and mount national press campaigns.

VISITING WORK

Visiting work accounts for approximately 50% of our programme, and is carefully curated to complement our own Curve productions and coproductions.

In the past 12 months, highlights of the Visiting Programme have included Matthew Bourne's *Nutcracker*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Blood Brothers*, *Britain's Got Bhangra*. Curve is fast growing a reputation amongst producers as a place to open new productions – from *Umbrellas of Cherbourg* in 2011, to *Wah Wah Girls*, *Finding Neverland* and the *One Man Two Guv'nors* national tour in 2012.

“Leicester is a fantastic place to open a show, the audience is warm and adventurous. Curve is so stylish and we have built a loyal following after bringing *Red Shoes* and launching *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* there. We can't wait to share this new production [*Wah Wah Girls*] with audiences at Curve”

Director Emma Rice quoted in *Asian Voice*, 19 May 2012

“Not only is Curve providing a richly varied programme for audiences from Leicestershire and beyond, but it is increasingly building a reputation as a venue for new productions and original drama.”

Leicester Mercury October 2011



CASE STUDY

FINDING NEVERLAND

- World premiere, from the famous Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein
- Biggest musical ever to play in Leicester
- Media coverage for Curve & Leicester valued at over £1m, reaching 90m people
- Over 18,000 people attended, generating over £400k sales and more than 80% capacity sold.
- Producers spent over £120k on local accommodation and meal allowances
- Celebrity visitors included Bono, Katherine Jenkins, Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber and James Corden

“The show is produced by Harvey Weinstein, co-founder of Miramax and the force behind numerous award-winning stage and screen hits including The Producers and The King’s Speech. He chose Curve, not just because of the theatre’s stunning facilities but also because of its reputation for high-quality musicals under the directorship of Paul Kerryson”

The Observer, Sunday 7 October 2012



CURVE YOUNG COMPANY

We are committed to providing and investing in on-going programmes of skills development for young people to better position themselves for employment and success within the arts sector and in their adult life as well as building core life skills: confidence, team-work, leadership, respect and commitment.

Our Curve Young Company programme offers young people opportunities to gain skills in acting, marketing, stage management, technical theatre and wardrobe through our annual training programmes, and to use these to produce, under professional guidance and direction, an annual Young Company production. In the last year, we had over 150 regular members of the Young Company, with a total of 2,221 listed as members on our Young Company database. Our priority in 2012/13 is to expand our Young Company to create satellite groups across the city, in areas that are identified in our 'harder to reach' audience development strategy.

In partnership with Dance4, Curve recently launched a Young Dance Company, a gifted and talented programme for young dancers aged 14 - 25, auditioned across the county.

“(It is) an honour and a privilege to be part of CYC 2012. It has been a great experience, inspiring and I’ve made special friendships. Highly recommended!”

Joe Mesvania

“The performances are generally strong, particularly considering the ages of the Young Company, which range from 12 to 26... The Company’s key achievement is that they have managed to devise something that is deeper than a simple story influenced by youth culture, pulling in relevance from current affairs and begging some difficult questions about society as a whole”

The Public Reviews, July 2012



EXPERIENCE CURVE

We have an extensive programme of activity that allows our audience to get behind the scenes, and experience everything Curve has to offer. From guided tours to pre-show talks, discussions with directors and creatives, workshops for adults, a strand of activity specifically designed for Over 55s, theatre days, half term projects and 'page to stage' talks, Curve offers a variety of free and low-cost ways of taking part and learning about the arts.

In 2011/12 Curve offered nearly 250 Experience Curve activities, for people of all ages.

“Terrific! Thank you all for your commitment and enthusiasm. We had a wonderful day in your superb venue. We’ll be back!”

Over 55 theatre day participant

“It’s always great to come here (to Curve), whether you’re working, volunteering, auditioning, performing or watching, you always feel welcomed and appreciated”

Young Workshop Leader 2012



CURVE AND SCHOOLS

Since opening, Curve has worked closely with schools in the city and county. Curve recently launched the Leicestershire Teachers' Drama Network- working with secondary drama teachers in partnership with Schools' Development Support Agency – which meets each term to discuss drama practice, share knowledge and help Curve inform and shape our programme of schools' workshops.

Education resources are developed to support all of Curve's produced work, and much of the visiting programme – this can include workshops, masterclasses, discussions, opportunities to attend rehearsals, education packs and specialist tailor-made workshops in schools.

Curve is also in discussion with the Royal Shakespeare Company about being part of the national Learning Performance Network, which does not as yet cover Leicestershire, with a joint aim of introducing Shakespeare projects in the city and county.

Since launching Curve's free foyer stage programme, schools now have an opportunity to showcase students' work through regular weekday lunchtime performances.

“I am still ‘buzzing’ about all of your ideas, It’s so refreshing to have such a positive experience when you’re feeling that the arts are being so devalued all of the time...”

Helen Cox – City of Leicester College



CURVE AND FAMILIES

Curve has always offered an extensive programme of activity for family audiences. Our produced programme includes work that we create especially for families – in past years this has included, for example, the adaptation of David Walliams’ Mr Stink (2011) and Gulliver’s Travels (2012). For Christmas this year Curve is producing Santa’s New Sleigh, a brand new work for little children, which has already proven so popular it has sold out.

Our produced work for families is complemented by an extensive programme of visiting work, which in the past year has included such popular titles as Room on the Broom, Tiddler and Other Tales and Chinese State Circus.

“What I was particularly impressed with were the ‘booster’ seats available for the children which brought them up to normal height so that they could all see the show easily. There certainly seemed to be enough for the number who needed them. Well done The Curve for this.”

Tripadvisor 5 star comment 2012



CURVE AND FAMILIES CONTINUED



“The story is an inventive joy as David Walliams flirts with noxious stereotypes and is fairly guaranteed to leave kids feeling a warm afterglow.”

Dominic Cavendish, The Telegraph, June 2011

Very popular is our programme of fun and educational shows for early years, Little Curve, which take place on 12 Saturday mornings through the year. This is complemented by Little Movers, our early years movement workshops, which are held weekly during term time. Curve is also proud to be a major venue for The Spark Festival, hosting a children’s playground on our Mezzanine.

It isn’t just our artistic programme that makes Curve family friendly – from booster seats for the theatre, buggy parking areas to reduced price menu options in our café, especially for smaller appetites – we strive to ensure that a family visit to Curve is as accessible and cost effective as we can make it. Our special rate Family Membership scheme also ensures great value.

“This was our first visit to Curve and we were very impressed with staff and Little Curve in particular.”

Customer comments card feedback

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

In 2011 Curve signed a partnership agreement with De Montfort University (DMU), committing to developing projects of mutual interest, particularly involving the DMU Faculty of Arts, Art, Design and Humanities. In the past year this has involved dance students creating site specific work in our foyer, design students creating a backdrop for our community stage, Curve staff being invited to guest lecture at DMU, DMU staff giving post-show talks, work placements at Curve, planning an exhibition of Masters students' graduating artwork, and providing opportunities for DMU students to assistant direct professional productions.

Since January 2012 Curve now hosts the DMU graduation ceremonies, which have taken on a very theatrical element with our combined ideas on music, staging, sound and lighting.

“Fab venue for our daughter’s graduation. It was very well organised and even though we couldn’t get an extra ticket for a late guest, they televised the whole thing so our guest could watch it sitting in the mezzanine.”

Tripadvisor 5 star comment 2012



DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP CONTINUED



Key to the relationship with DMU is an annual student production, rehearsed and produced at Curve. In 2011 these were Berkoff's Greek (directed by Adel Al-Salloum) and East (directed by Paul Kerryson), and in 2012 Moises Kaufman's The Laramie Project (directed by Josh Seymour). Next year, our Associate Directors Suba Das and Tim Ford will each direct a play by Caryl Churchill.

“The project was a great experience to be a part of. Being treated like a professional and working alongside other professionals and the great team at Curve as a fully enriching experience”

2012 Laramie Project participant

“Being a student I felt I would be treated so whilst working at Curve, but it was quite the contrary to this. I have loved every minute of working here and all the staff have been so friendly and helpful. Truly great.”

2012 Laramie Project participant

CURVE AND COMMUNITY ARTS

Curve's commitment to our community extends to creating an annual professional production for amateurs. The latest example was our 2012 production of *Oliver!* Over 500 talented members of our community auditioned for nearly 80 parts in this production, and then had the opportunity to perform to audiences of nearly 10,000 over two weeks. Under Paul Kerryson's direction, and with a professional creative team, in the main auditorium at Curve, this amateur company came the closest they could to a professional theatrical experience.

“It is the kind of show which begins to blur the boundaries between amateur and professional... It is a joy to see so much passion and talent being displayed by members of the community. Lucky Leicester.”

Leicester Mercury, August 2012



CURVE AND COMMUNITY ARTS CONTINUED



Our Artistic Team has recently grown to include two new Associate Directors: one for Participation and Learning and another specifically for Community Engagement. This has enabled us to extend our offer to the local creative community. For the past year, we have offered the Kaine choir a regular Wednesday evening residency at Curve – free space for their community members to rehearse. We are now offering, via an application and selection procedure, three more community participatory arts groups free access to Curve’s rehearsal facilities.

In the past 12 months, we have established a permanent stage in the Curve foyer, and recently launched a programme open to any youth, community or school group to apply to perform there, with an ambition to schedule two community performances every week that are free for the general public to attend.

“The experience of working with the professional team at Curve has been unique. They have loved every minute of rehearsals and the actual show has been fantastic. I have seen the boys cart-wheeling with exuberance and joy as they have loved every minute. ...it has also been a rewarding emotional experience where they have grown in confidence and self-belief”

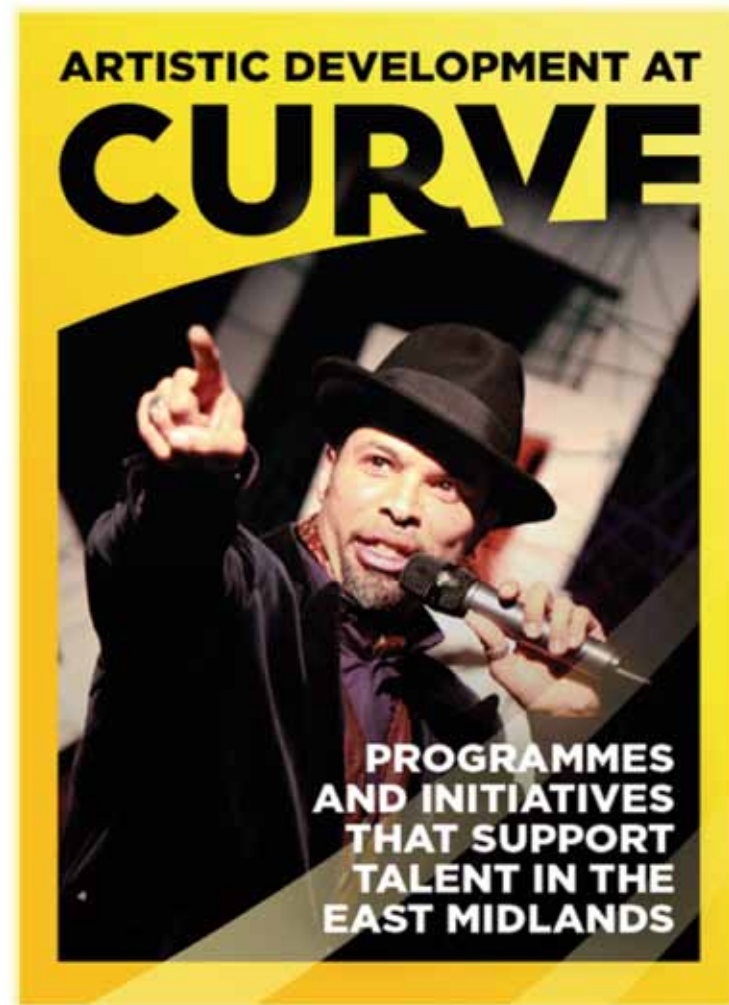
Mother, 2012 *Oliver!* cast members

CURVE AND ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

One of Curve's stated artistic objectives is 'to develop Curve's capacity as an incubator of new ideas and new talent. We play a leading role in the development of young and emerging artists in the region, and regularly allow access to Curve's space for professional artists – both from the region and beyond – to experiment and create new work.

In the past twelve months, we have supported the work of local companies including Aakash Odedra, 2Funky Arts, Centre for Indian Contemporary Dance, New Art Club, Carol Leeming, David Parkin and Studio 79. We are also working with a young writer/composer team to develop a new musical version of Adrian Mole, a project supported by Sue Townsend.

We recently announced several new artist development opportunities, including a Writer's programme, designed to identify and develop previously untapped local writing talent. Alongside this, our Scratch programme will allow up to eight East Midlands companies each year access to rehearsal space and expertise to develop new ideas, culminating in 'Scratch' performances to peers and the public. We have also launched the Curve Artists' Network, to facilitate communication and creative opportunities for artists in the region.



CURVE AND ARTIST DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED



“Curve is a focal point for support to local and emerging artists through the provision of space, technical facilities and artistic support. Artists have said the support is of excellent quality and extremely valuable in bringing about improvements in their own work.”

Beverley King, LCC Commissioned consultant, 2011

“Discussions with local theatre companies confirm that they are benefiting from Curve and have found the relationships... to be extremely valuable in allowing them to develop their work, try new ideas and improve the quality of their performances. Artists have agreed that the support they get from Curve is enhanced by the attitude of openness, care and commitment to the art that provides excellent support.”

Beverley King, LCC Commissioned consultant, 2011

CURVE AND FESTIVALS

Curve is a key venue for the city's arts and cultural festivals. Our artistic strategy identifies our intention to develop festival partnerships, to programme activities that reflect the diversity of the Leicester's many community festivals, and to become a place where Leicester celebrates.

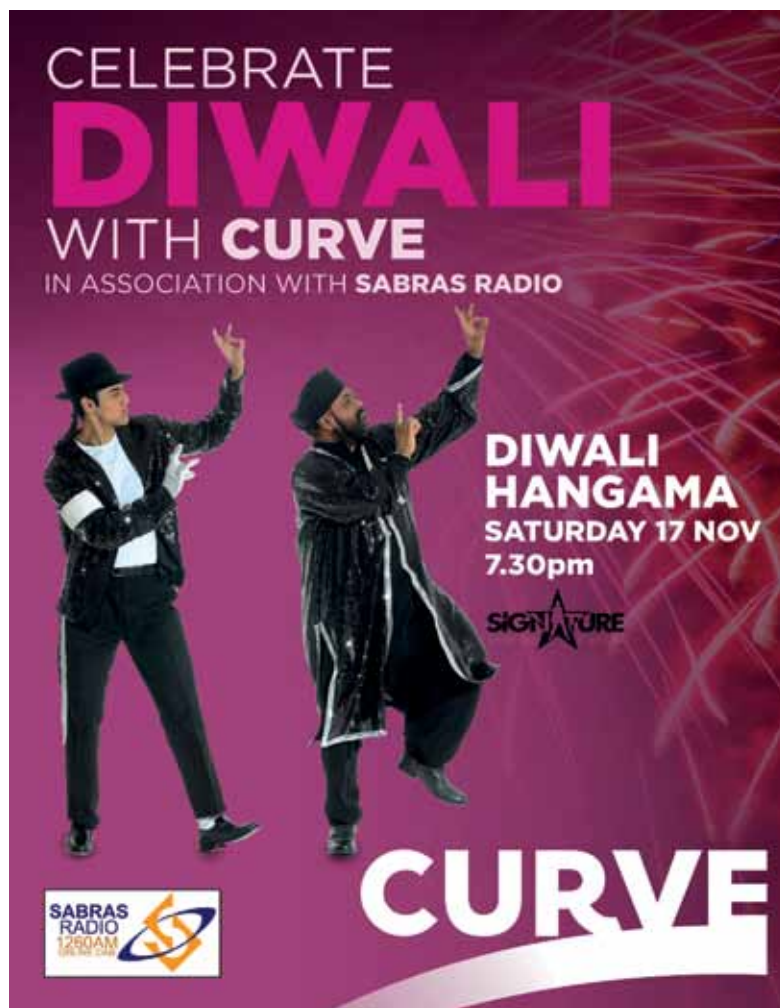
We run an extensive programme during Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival, which resulted, this year, in our winning the 2012 Dave's Comedy Festival 'Best Contribution to the Festival' award. Over the course of the festival Curve contributed over 20 acts, in our three ticketed performance spaces as well as late night comedy on our free foyer stage.

We also programme activity to be included in The Spark Children's Arts Festival, and for the past two years have been a Spark Festival hub. After The Spark Festival 2012, Director Adel Al-Salloum wrote

"I thought the quality of programming and play-ground activity was exceptional and feel confident together we engaged new and familiar families with good value, high quality art... In all areas; technical, events, FOH, ticket office, the Spark team were made to feel welcome and supported in our endeavours to take over the building as a play-ground."



CURVE AND FESTIVALS CONTINUED



Curve also has hosted work within the Let's Dance Festival, the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, the Momentum new writing festival, and Everybody's Reading.

Important too is the work we do to reflect Leicester's vibrant community festivals. We offer an extensive programme of activity each Diwali, including free exhibitions, workshops, Q&As as well as ticketed activity in theatre spaces. This year we are producing our own concert to celebrate Diwali- Diwali Hangama, featuring performances by Britain's Got Talent finalists Signature, Nupur Arts and the Bollywood Groove Orchestra, all in partnership with Sabras Radio.

Since opening, our festival celebrations have also included Vibrant Navratri, St George's Day and Eid, in partnership with the Pakistani Youth and Community Association, and Black History Season events. We have also hosted Indian Summer, and the Leicester Caribbean Carnival Queen show. Part of the brief of our new post of Associate Director (Community Engagement) is to look at how Curve can best work with Leicester's numerous community organisations to reflect the city's many celebrations.

CURVE & CUSTOMER SERVICE

In 2012, in only our fourth year of operation, we won both regional and national awards for excellence:

- The Leicester and Leicestershire Excellence in Tourism Awards (Access for All), and
- Visit England Awards for Excellence (Access for All Gold Award).

Both awards recognise our access and customer service in the broadest sense; not only the physical accessibility of the building and our access specific services such as captioned performances and touch tours, but also our community, participation and learning programmes, our accessible pricing – including public dress rehearsals costing just £2 for all our own productions and our free foyer performances.

We have also twice been nominated, in 2011 and 2012, for Best Retail Outlet on Mall in the Highcross Customer Services Awards, and this year were also shortlisted in the UK National Theatre Awards as the UK's 'Most Welcoming Theatre' – one of only three venues nationally to be shortlisted.

We have also been awarded Certificates of Excellence from Trip Advisor for both our Customer and Catering Services: following are just a few of the 5 star feedback comments we've received on Tripadvisor in the last 12 months.

“Been quite a few times this year with my 10 year old daughter both of us love the theatre and rate this one as one of the best”

“As it says above: enjoyed all the shows (been to many) and also enjoyed food and drinks beforehand. Very quick service – even with busy theatre periods – but still decent quality food. Have stopped in there a few times just for coffee too. Will be back again for sure.”

“Why bother to go to London – excellent venue, performances and atmosphere.”

“Our overall experience was a fabulous one. A beautiful building, nice clean theatre, and some great shows on! We were thrilled that the theatre provided numerous free booster seats for the young ones and although we didn't have food at the Cafe this time, the menu looked excellent, and very good value. There were lots of vegetarian and vegan options, and the Cafe provided Soya milk for hot drinks. We will most certainly be visiting again, and will have our lunch there too next time around”

CURVE & CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTINUED



We provide ticketing services for other organisations in the region, and in 2013 for the first time we will act as the central ticketing hub for Leicester Comedy Festival, selling over 500 performances on their behalf and ensuring a consistent experience for customers across all city venues.

We actively and regularly solicit customer feedback, through comment cards in our foyers, the contact us section on our website and our 'Thank you for Visiting' surveys which are emailed to all customers following their visit to a show. This feedback is compiled into monthly reports which are shared across the business to ensure service is further developed where required and enhances and motivates employees when complimentary and positive feedback is received. Results from our most recent annual survey indicate that:

- 92% of respondents said they were 'very likely to return' to Curve
- 95% of respondents said they would recommend Curve to a friend

We have a strong social media presence with over 12,000 followers and fans on Twitter and Facebook. These and other digital platforms offer our customers an immediate opportunity to share their feedback with us – and an avenue by which we have ongoing dialogue with our customers.

CURVE & CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTINUED

“What a great theatre; the whole building and ambience. Arrive early soak up the atmosphere; bar, seating and cafe/restaurant to relax in and explore. Parking costs are reduced via a swipe in the box office. 2 for 1 on Tuesdays and wonderful addition to Leicester’s attractions and worth making it into a city break”

Trip Advisor

“Looking to add a wow to your evening. Visit the Curve theatre! You’re sure to walk out with a SMILE on your face!”

Facebook

“Brilliant regional theatre with insatiable ambition. Get Along, support and enjoy this wonderful theatre.”

Facebook

As our success in achieving national awards for access demonstrate, customer service is at the heart of everything we do at Curve: from the work we produce on our stages to the free activity in our foyer; from work with very small children to stimulating and engaging programmes for the Over 55’s; from allergy aware menus and staff in our family friendly café, to accessible pricing and services ensuring everyone can experience the thrill of live entertainment – our approach to customer service really is as simple, and as central, as that.



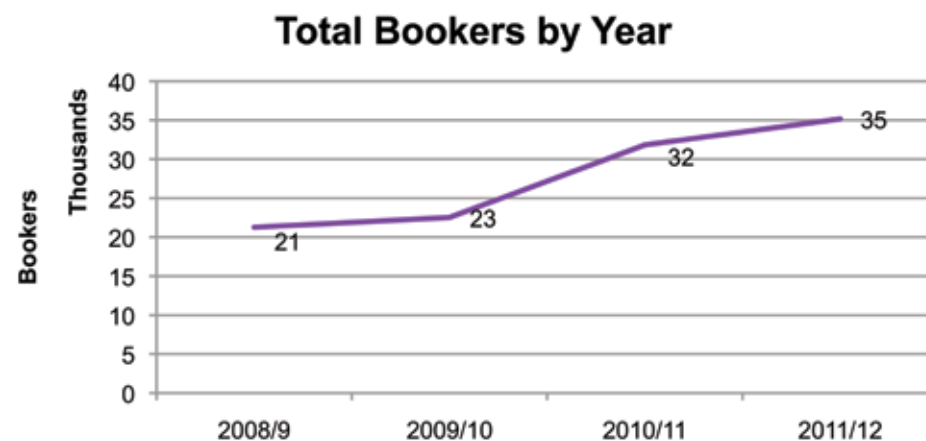
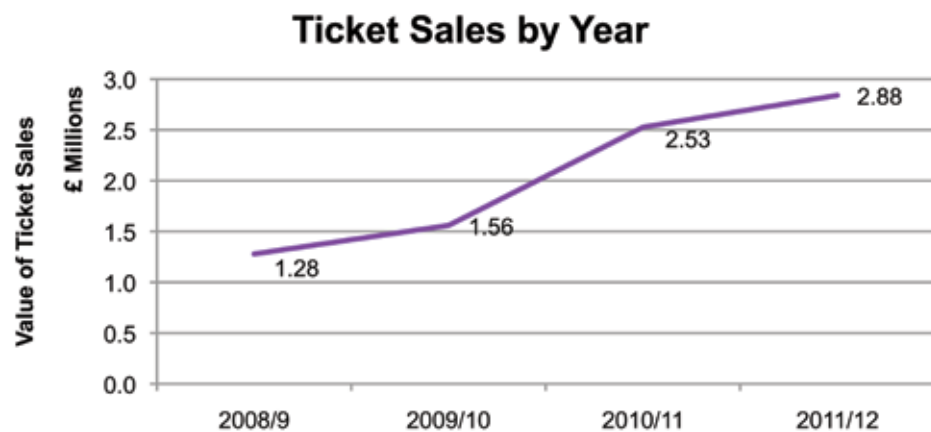
OUR AUDIENCE AND SALES

Ticketed audiences at Curve have grown year on year, by 40% in 2010/11 and a further 8% in 2011/12, and further growth is forecast for the coming year. Visits to the venue are also increasing year on year with, in the last year, over 40,000 people visiting to attend a workshop, a business meeting or conference or just to have lunch or a coffee with friend in our café.

In the past year, a total of 35,000 bookers purchased 180,394 tickets to a total value of £2.88m

“It is because of an evening like this that I fell in love with theatre”

A. Mear

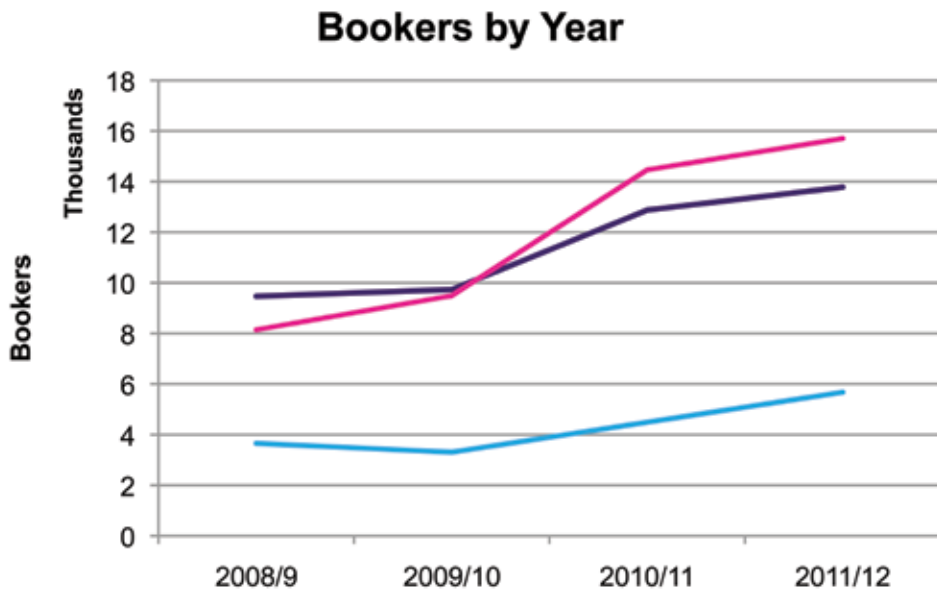


OUR AUDIENCE AND SALES CONTINUED

An analysis of ticket bookers by location shows that we are growing audiences in the City, County and further afield each year, with the exception of 09/10 (when less produced work was staged) when beyond-county audiences slightly dipped.

Key
Beyond the County
County
City

(Shapes scaled by no. bookers from each area/year)



Bookers by Year



HARDER TO REACH AUDIENCES

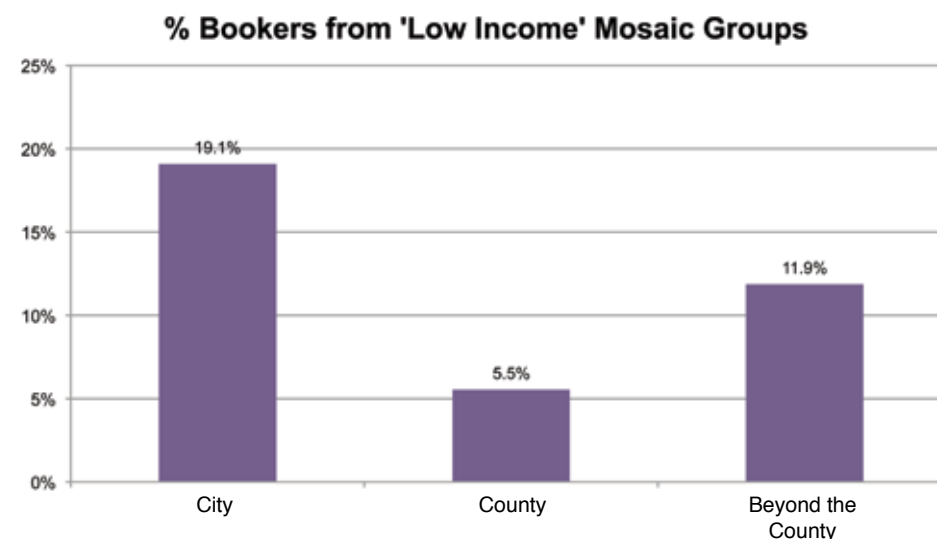
We work hard to develop audiences within 'Harder to Reach' groups, particularly around engaging BME audiences, those on low incomes, families and young people aged 16-26. These audience development priorities are reflected in the type of programming that we do, and the communications strategies around this. This information is reported to LCC on a quarterly basis.

We offer accessible pricing with a range of discounts ensuring that our work is truly accessible to everyone in our community. These include Public Dress Rehearsals for just £2 and half price previews on all our own productions; discounts for under 16s and school visits, those aged 16-26 and those who are unwaged. We also offer complimentary tickets for carers assisting one of our customers. Our 'Twosday' offer encourages trial and repeat loyal attendance and offers half price tickets on a range of Tuesday evening performances. Members of our Young Company can also access tickets for £5 for a range of productions.

Our sales point at Highcross retail and leisure centre and Visit Leicester, the City's new visitor centre ensures that we have a visible, physical presence to a wide range of communities from our City and County and we have senior representation on City initiatives such as the Cultural Partnership Board, LE1 and Performing Arts Leicester, ensuring Curve is central to developments and fully connected with the community.

“Curve is well on its way to being a fully inclusive building and people from Leicester’s diverse community feel they can use the building and take part in its activities.”

Beverley King, LCC Commissioned consultant, 2011

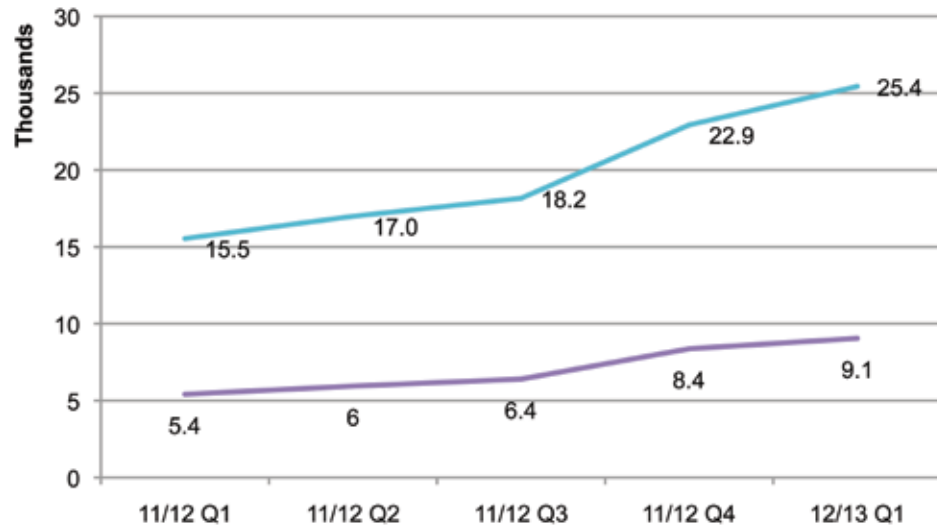


HARDER TO REACH AUDIENCES CONTINUED

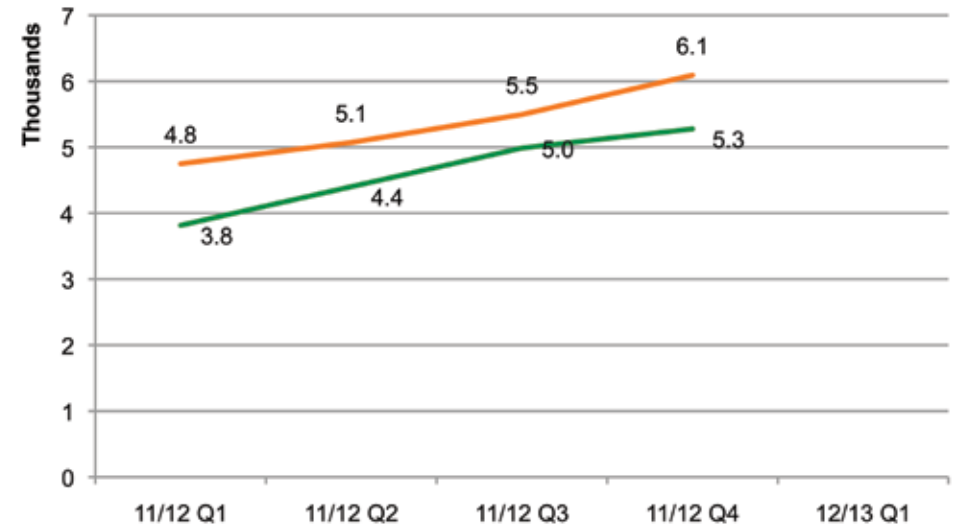
The following graphs demonstrated that Curve continues to improve its provision to harder to reach audiences.

- Key
- Low Income
 - BME
 - Families with Children
 - Under 26

Low Income & BME



Families with Children & Under 26



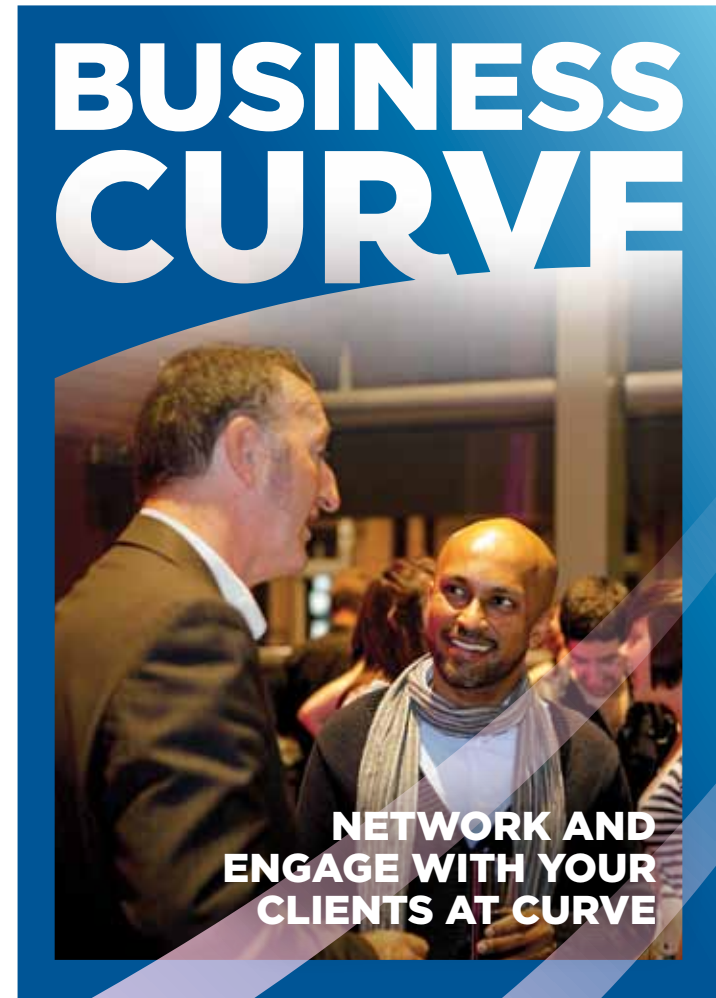
CURVE AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Curve, as a business based in Leicester, plays an active role in the business community. We are members of Leicester Business Voice and the Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, and in the past year have also worked in partnership to host Institute of Directors events at Curve. We also have senior management representation on the Cultural Partnership Board, LE1 and the Cultural Quarter Business Association.

In the last year we launched the Curve Business Club, a new venture to encourage business support and interaction. Part networking, part hospitality, the Business Club already 8 corporate members and interest is growing every month.

“Hornbuckle Mitchell are very pleased and proud to support the Curve Theatre through their involvement with the Business Club. The team at Curve are professional, energetic and a pleasure to deal with and clients are always impressed with the welcome they receive and the positive atmosphere that the team, and the surroundings, create.”

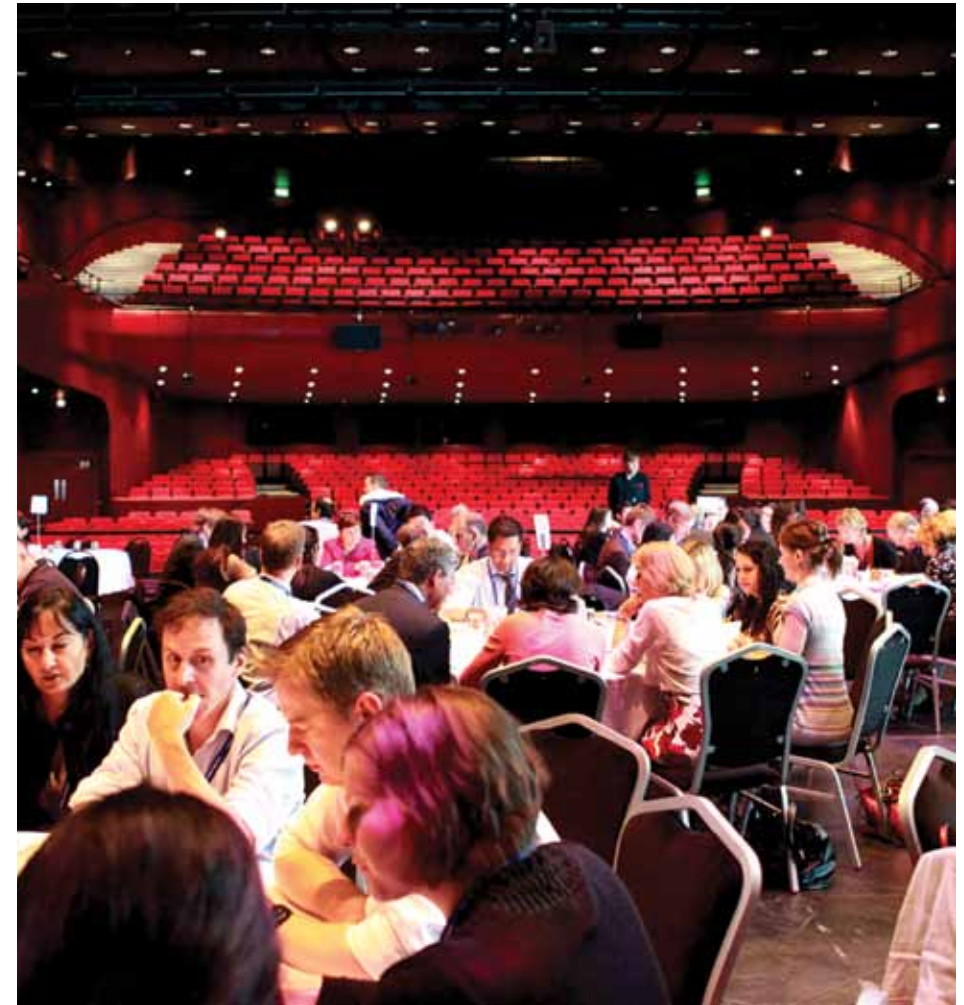
John Jennings, Hornbuckle Mitchell, Business Club members



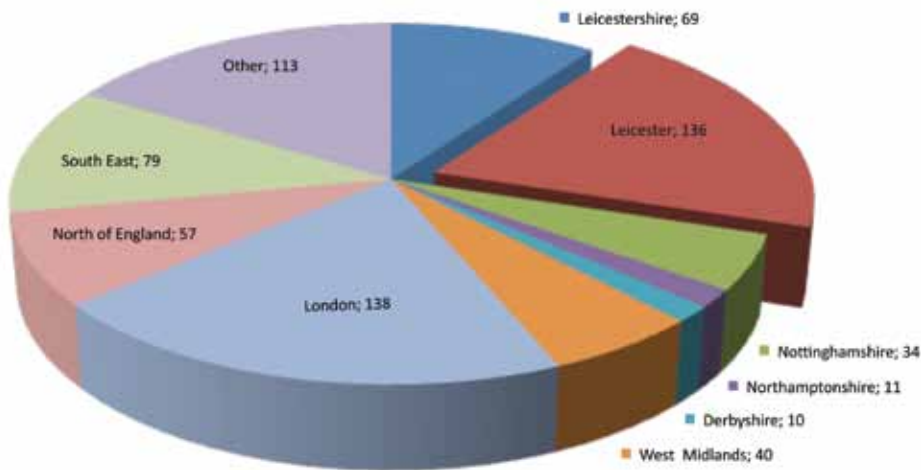
CURVE AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY CONTINUED

Last year, Curve welcomed nearly 20,000 people to business events, conferences and graduation events at Curve. Of the 76 events we hosted, 40 were bookings from City businesses, 5 were from the County and 31 were from beyond Leicestershire. Overall, this earned Curve a revenue stream of over £200k.

Curve's procurement policy ensures that, all things being equal, local suppliers will be favoured. In our 11/12 financial year we supported 205 businesses in the City and County, which was nearly 30% of the total value of orders we placed, to a value of £1.08m.



**No. Suppliers to CURVE
FY 2011/12**



CURVE SUPPORTING NEW BUSINESSES

We have just completed the first year of our Young Arts Entrepreneurs scheme (YAE), a scheme unique to Curve that assists young people set up their own cultural businesses in their local Leicester/shire communities – in the past year we helped get 10 great ideas off the ground. Our support includes a formal training programme, access to Curve facilities, staff and expertise and artistic support. Members of Curve’s Business Club also get involved in mentoring YAE participants. The Young Arts Entrepreneurs scheme will take place over a total of three years, by which time Curve will have facilitated 30 fledgling businesses. It is made possible by generous funding from the Esmee Fairbairn and Paul Hamlyn Trusts.

“The link with Curve is absolutely invaluable. Brilliant, absolutely fantastic”

Bethany Taylor, 2011 Young Arts Entrepreneur

“This scheme is giving people like me the chance to do something rather than struggling on their own. If I didn’t have this scheme I would’ve been really clueless & these ideas and stuff would all go to waste.”

Jena Hall, 2011 Young Arts Entrepreneur



CURVE SUPPORTING NEW BUSINESSES CONTINUED

“Yesterday the 11 young people who have launched their own arts projects with the help of Leicester’s Curve theatre celebrated a successful first year of their schemes... Among those celebrating a year of their projects yesterday were Rachel Eke, 23, and Emily Bolton, 22, of Fosse Road, North Leicester. Their Movin2gether scheme aims to get older people dancing and has seen them visit a host of care homes during the past year. The classes have had a positive effect on elderly residents”

Leicester Mercury

“A ground-breaking Leicestershire arts project has celebrated the success of its first graduates at the Curve Theatre in Leicester. Eleven young people, aged 16 to 25, of the Arts Entrepreneurs project were commended for setting up social enterprises which will benefit their local communities... It is hoped that following its success, the project, supported by the Curve and funded by two national grants, will see an uptake of even more young people when it commences again next year”

Pukaar News

CURVE AND THE VISITOR ECONOMY

“Let’s go to Leicester”

Claudia Winkleman, BBC Radio 2 Arts Show 2012

Since opening, Curve has worked in partnership with Leicestershire Promotions, LE1 and now Visit Leicester to ensure its offer is fully integrated into the City’s and so to help promote the Leicester to as wide an audience as possible. We are key players in the profile of the city, images of the building regularly feature on materials to promote Leicester as modern, cosmopolitan and forward looking and as an organisation we integrate ourselves fully into the make-up of the city to ensure that all profiling opportunities are exploited.

Last year, Curve welcomed around 20,000 people to business events, conferences and graduation events at Curve. Of the 76 business events we hosted, 31 bookings came from organisations outside Leicestershire, which contributed £38,496 net income to Curve and an estimated 900 bednights for the city. Curve is a partner in the Leicester Conference Hub, which in 2013 will host the Federation of Small Business Conference.

In our 2011/12 financial year, artists performing at Curve – either for our own produced work, or visiting companies, accounted for 8,600 bed nights in the city. In the past year over 13,000 ticket sales were to customers from beyond the East Midlands, and one can assume a proportion of these stayed in Leicester overnight. Since the Encore opened earlier this year, over 1100 guests have accessed Curve’s special rate there.



CURVE AND THE VISITOR ECONOMY CONTINUED

“The mayor is clearly proud of his city, and with good reason. It is home to major businesses... the Highcross Leicester shopping centre is one of the region’s best retail destinations and Curve is a state-of-the-art theatre”

Midlands Business Insider November 2012

Since the beginning of our 12/13 financial year in September, the producers of Finding Neverland have spent more than £120k on local accommodation and meal allowances, whilst the National Theatre’s production of One Man Two Guvnor’s has provided another 700+ bed nights.

In our latest audience survey – completed by a sample of over 1000 audience members – 88% agreed or strongly agreed that ‘Curve helps to raise Leicester’s profile outside of Leicester’. Results from the same survey indicate the Curve audiences spent approximately £200k per annum on parking within Leicester, and an additional £500k on food, beverages and other goods at venues other than Curve when they visit.

Another factor to consider is how national media coverage for Curve can help to promote Leicester. In our 2011/12 financial year, Curve media coverage was valued at £5.130m, of which £4.14m was national coverage. The total reach of our media coverage was to 186 million people.

Curve is playing a significant role in attracting national attention to Leicester, encouraging overnight visitors, conferences and consumer spend. Our ability to be effective in these areas is largely dependent on the effectiveness with which Leicester brands and promotes itself to potential business and leisure visitors. As Beverly King recommended in her 2011 report for LCC “Long term strategies need to be put in place to ensure that Curve can play its role in tourism, business conferencing, the development of art and culture, and retailing in Leicester. Curve can add value to all these, however activities need to be coordinated, impacts measured and benchmarked, and roles and responsibilities across the City and County be agreed and clear”

“I have not been to Leicester before and I have been very impressed with Curve”

James Corden, as quoted in Leicester Mercury Oct 2012

CURVE AND THE CULTURAL QUARTER

“Curve is the sexy, very 21st-century anchor for the desired regeneration of the city’s St George’s area, now being refashioned as a cultural quarter.”

Steve Rose, The Guardian, Nov 2008

The development of Curve has been central to the planned regeneration of Leicester’s Cultural Quarter. Curve actively plays a part in supporting local businesses – for example, selling pre-theatre dining on behalf of Chutney Ivy, and until very recently, providing the catering for the Exchange Bar. We work closely with numerous organisations based in both the LCB depot and Phoenix. Curve actively promotes the Ramada Encore to our visiting artists and guests, and has piloted hotel/show packages in partnership with the hotel.

Cultural quarter businesses are supported via links on Curve’s website, including box office information for Phoenix. Curve also plays an active role in the Cultural Quarter Business Association, with senior management representation.

Cassie Soulsby, the owner of The Exchange bar, has recently stated that Curve activity accounts for up to 40% of her business’s turnover. She writes ‘With its programming plus café, Curve provides a consistent year round footfall which give the area the much needed vibrancy. The Exchange benefits directly from this footfall and it also encourages people

to spend more time in the area. The additional footfall generated by Curve aids the perception of The Cultural Quarter as a safe and lively place which is essential for supporting the current businesses and encouraging future private investment in The Cultural Quarter’

Chutney Ivy report that in the two years since they opened in November 2010, they have sold more than 5,200 pre-theatre set meals – and also see a surge in diners coming in to the restaurant after performances end.

When Beverly King spoke to many Cultural Quarter Stakeholders in 2011, on behalf of LCC, she concluded that “Curve has been instrumental in supporting the regeneration and development of the cultural quarter and to embedding and supporting the creative and cultural sector in the City”.

However she also made the following observations, with which we agree:

“More work needs to be done to reconnect the [Cultural] Quarter to the rest of the city, improving some of the public realm, lighting and making the area feel safe, car parking and access routes. Business in the area felt detached from the rest of the City and felt people were unaware of where it was located... All businesses in the area [Cultural Quarter] did stress that while the Council should be praised for the investments made in the area, their support and commitment to the area is crucial to its continued development and long-term success “

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AT CURVE

Curve is a welcoming environment to potential and existing employees, and aims to reflect Leicester's diverse communities. With Leicester being a highly diverse city we aim for our non-specialist staff recruited locally to reflect the ethnic mix of the City by 2015. Currently, 27% of our non-specialist staff are of BME background.

Of our core staff, 86% are based in Leicester or the County.
Of our casual staff, 76%.

We have an open and fair recruitment process for all roles in the organisation. As well as advertising internally and in specialist media we advertise all jobs locally, including local university websites (DMU, Leicester University and Loughborough University). In addition to this plans are on the horizon to deliver employer awareness presentations within BME communities.

We offer a variety of contract types from casual contracts, annualised hours, part-time, fixed-term and permanent resulting in flexibility for our employees and the theatre alike. All new staff are given a warm welcome in to the organisation through an induction process which includes information on our history, our values, the organisation structure and job roles along with standard training interventions such as diversity, safeguarding and Health & Safety.

We encourage development amongst our staff with traineeships being offered in hospitality and communications alongside supporting professional development within certain professions, including Finance, HR and Communications.

We are a member of Smarter Travel Leicester and encourage employees to use sustainable travel. We have negotiated reduced train and bus fares and provide interest free loans to staff enabling them to purchase cheaper season tickets for their transport to, from and whilst at work. Other benefits available to staff are childcare vouchers, an employer contribution pension scheme, life assurance, discounted purchases from our café/bar and complimentary tickets for our produced work - helping to motivate staff in the workplace.

Curve offers a Work Experience programme for Year 10 students. It is designed as a taster week, giving students some experience of how a theatre operates both in terms of theatre making and supporting functions. As we have a huge amount of interest opportunities are advertised on our website and students are required to apply for their preferred placement week, via competitive interview. We also offer a number of bespoke work placements for university students.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AT CURVE CONTINUED

“It’s completely made my mind up that I want to work in theatre and now I know more about what I could get involved in. It’s been such a good placement as we’ve been given projects to do that are worthwhile and I feel like I’ve actually done something productive.”

Work experience student

“Whatever we have done we’ve had support and never been worried to ask for help and we’ve felt really looked after by the team.”

Work experience student.

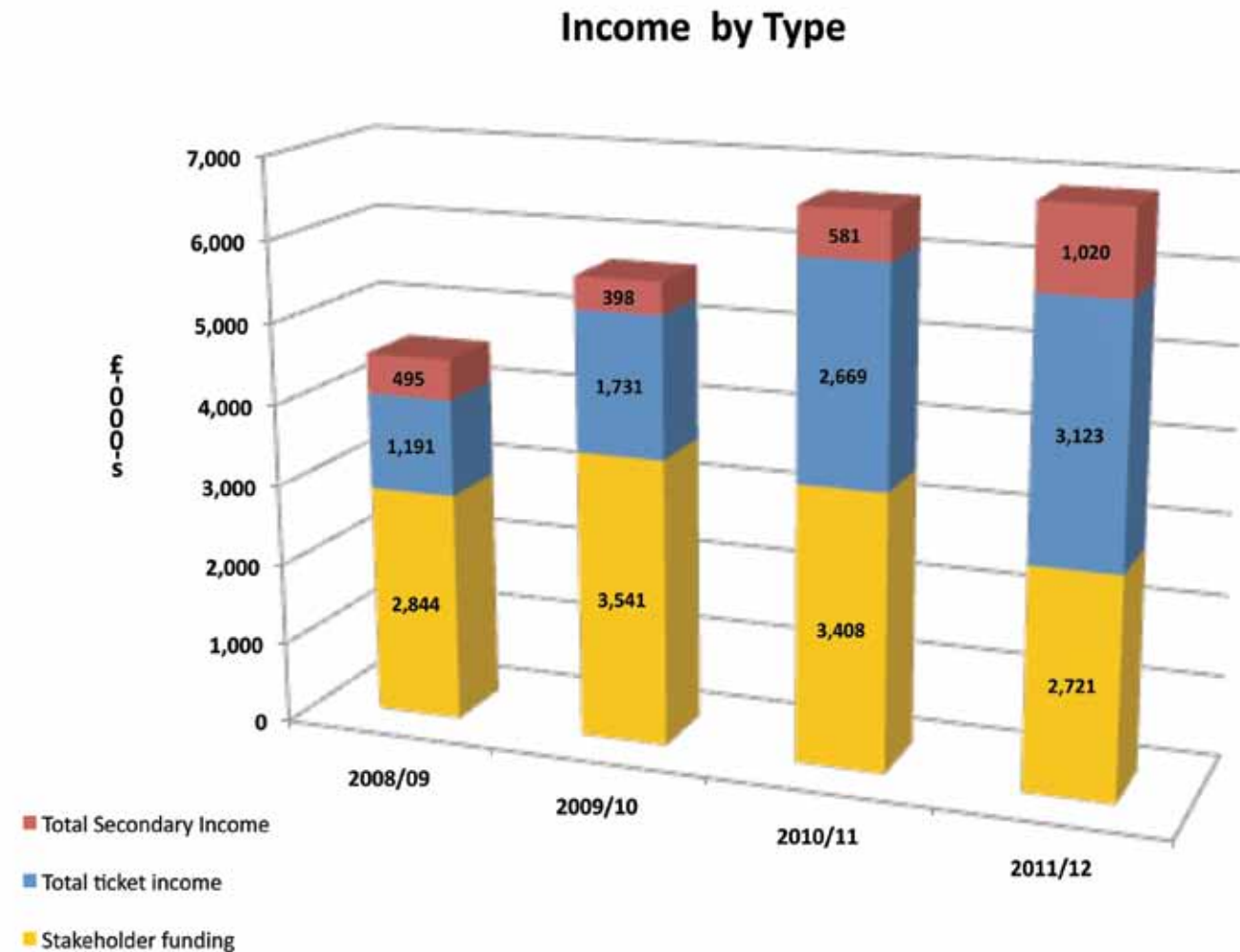


CURVE'S BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Curve is run by the Leicester Theatre Trust, a not-for-profit registered charity, that was founded in 1972. Before Curve was opened, Leicester Theatre Trust operated out of the Haymarket Theatre.

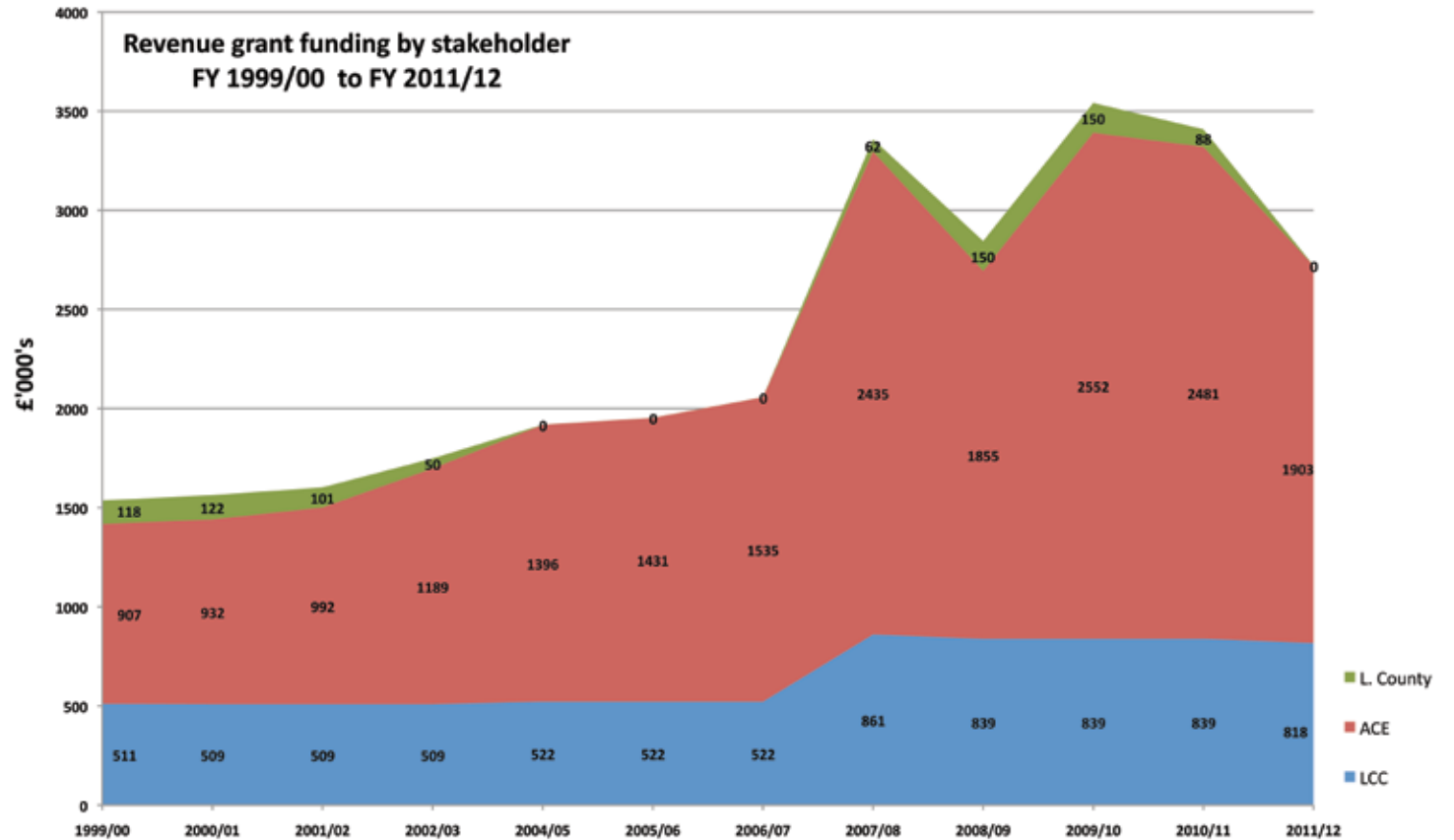
INCOME

In the past financial year (Sept 11 - Aug 12) Curve turned over nearly £7m, of which its largest income stream was from ticket sales. The graph below illustrates that in the years since opening, Curve has grown its ticket income and secondary income significantly, whilst stakeholder funding has been reduced. Secondary income includes conferencing and event hires, café and bar sales, and fundraising income.



CURVE'S BUSINESS PERFORMANCE CONTINUED

An analysis of sources of revenue grant funding in the following graph illustrates the relative value of funding from Leicester City Council, the Arts Council of England, and Leicestershire County Council. Whilst funding levels grew on initially moving into Curve, they diminished significantly between our 10/11 and 11/12 financial years, when ACE funding dropped by over £500k, and funding ceased altogether from the County.



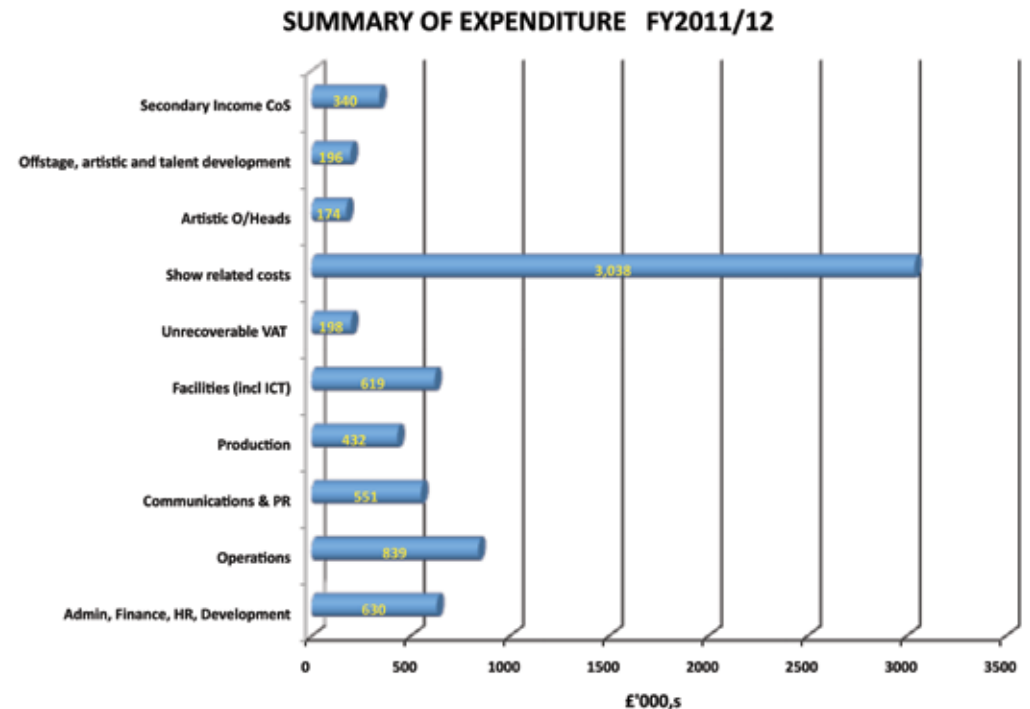
INCOME CONTINUED

The following diagram illustrates the key cost drivers within the business our last year of annual expenditure, by area. As to be expected, as a producing theatre Curve's major area of expenditure relates to the cost of mounting shows. Nearly £200k is spent on Offstage, artistic and talent development initiatives- much of which is outlined in this document.

Two areas of expenditure that have increased significantly since operating at the Haymarket Theatre are Facilities, and Operations.

Current costs of Facilities (which includes maintenance, utilities and ICT costs) are £618,998, compared to £256,501 in the 06/07 – the last year of the Haymarket. Just as an immediate comparator, our electricity costs have increased from £49,511 in 06/07 at the Haymarket, to £134,913 last financial year at Curve.

Operations, which includes Front of House staffing, has increased from £290,327 in 06/07 at the Haymarket to £839,323 in 11/12. This reflects the fact that Curve is open for the public 6 days/week from 10am – as a place to visit, meet friends for coffee, attend a workshop, look at an exhibition or watch a set being built on stage – all an important part of the 'inside out' ethos of Curve, as well as a criteria of our SLA with Leicester City Council.

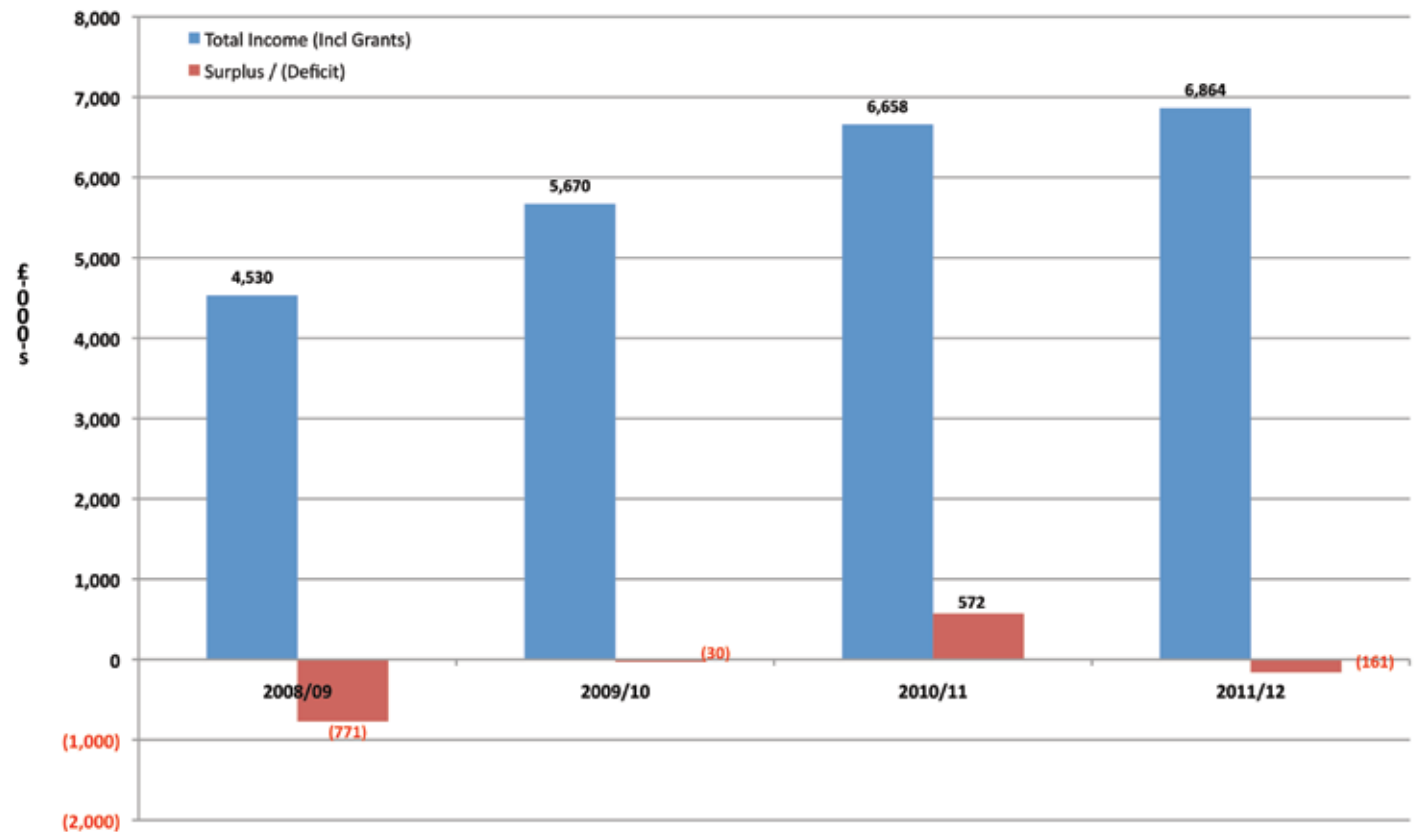


INCOME CONTINUED

As can be seen, Curve has been building income year on year, but costs have also risen and funding decreased. Whilst a healthy surplus was posted in 10/11, partly due to a one-off grant payment from the Arts Council of England, and partly due to the overwhelming success of the musical 'Hot Stuff' in that year, in 2011/12 the result has been a deficit of £161k – an improvement over the forecast deficit of £398k.

Our current three year business plan, based on grant payments remaining at currently known levels, projects Curve reaching a break-even position by the year 2014/15.

INCOME & SURPLUS/DEFICIT BY YEAR



“This evaluation confirms the huge amount of good will there is around the city for Curve and the high regard in which they hold the management team, especially the Artistic Director and the new Chief Executive”

Beverley King, LCC Commissioned consultant, 2011

