

Welcome to the Annual Report for the Pleasance Theatre Trust, Year End 30th November 2019

Developing artistic ideas is not only challenging, but it is also expensive. At the Pleasance we believe it is important to give people affordable space and the freedom to take risks, both on and off stage. From this spirit of innovation, springs personal confidence and great careers are given a springboard from which they can flourish. Giving our audiences the widest possible diversity of performance from the farthest reaches of the cultural spectrum is also central to the Trust's aim. This spirit has embodied the Pleasance throughout the past 35 years, during which we have become world-renowned for spotting great talent both on and off stage, building an environment that nurtures, encourages and develops the brightest new ideas, raw talent and skill. Providing these opportunities is why we exist.

Our aim, at the Pleasance in Edinburgh, the Pleasance in London and in our latest partnership with the Vault Festival and throughout our Pleasance Futures support programmes is consistent. To create a collegiate, diverse and mutually supportive aspirational environment where; the financial risk is transparent and the artistic risk is under-pinned, supported and enabled by a knowledgeable and imaginative staff team, in the context of a cohort of Pleasance artists at very different stages of their careers, all of whom are encouraged to share their expertise and experiences with the newer participants. Those that have spent time at the Pleasance leave with a far broader perspective, vastly more knowledge, a greater confidence and a brighter sense of purpose.

The Pleasance is a place for the experimental and the new. It is where performers, writers, directors, technicians, producers and the rest can take risks, develop ideas and feel fully supported. Not everything will triumph, but look carefully, because our history suggests a great many will.

Since 1985 the Pleasance has presented a programme of exceptional new theatrical work at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and since 1995, when the Pleasance became a charity, it has presented work at the Pleasance Theatre in London. In 1995, the Trust launched The Young Pleasance, in 2004 The Charlie Hartill Special Reserve Fund, specifically to support new work and new artists. In 2014 the Pleasance launched Pleasance Futures, with several educational and financial support programmes and in 2018 formed a new partnership with the Vault Festival, a fringe festival in London, also concentrated on nurturing new work and new talent. In this past year, across all of these activities, the Pleasance reached a national and international audience of around 750,000 people.

Richard House
Chairman

"A lot of theatres talk about encouraging new work and new talent but the Pleasance really does it." David Mitchell Actor, Comedian and writer

Introduction

The Pleasance Theatre Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity in Scotland, England and Wales with the Charity Commission (CC) and The Office of The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). The charity was first registered in 1995.

The Charity's aims are:

- To offer to the public the opportunity to experience new trends in performance, alongside outstanding examples of more traditional practice.
- To foster innovation in performance across a wide spectrum of artistic enterprise.
- To offer opportunities to young performers.

The Charity's objectives for the year were the fulfilment of the above aims through:

- Provision of a programme of performances in its London theatre spaces.
- Production of a season of performances at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.
- Provision of rehearsal, production and mentoring facilities at Pleasance London.
- Operation of Pleasance Futures, (Young Pleasance and development activities).
- Co-operation with the arts training and higher education sector
- Development of initiatives to extend the reach of Pleasance activity on digital platforms.
- Development of initiatives to support creative associates in industry-related activities eg. photography, film-making, journalism and scenery building.
- Participation in The Vault Festival, a festival with shared aims in the nurture and support of artistic enterprise.

The Charity has a long-established position in the performance sector, based on the successful development of the Edinburgh and London seasons of performances. Its strategy is to maintain this position by employing an effective and innovative professional operational team, under the supervision of a body of Trustees, also deploying extensive experience in the sector. The Trustees consider that these objectives are consonant with the charity delivering public benefit. The Pleasance is first and foremost a Festival Organisation that also runs a small London development centre with two permanent performance spaces and a third pop-up theatre, which operates in London for 10 months of the year before moving to Edinburgh for the Fringe.

The Pleasance in London and Edinburgh are entirely symbiotic, each providing the other with mutual benefit; the London theatre houses the full time staffing operation, the same team is able to run both parts of the charity. Crucially, London provides a development hub and performance opportunities for artists pre- and post-festival and includes vital development and rehearsal space for Pleasance Futures. The Pleasance in London celebrates 25 years in 2021.

There is a full-time staff who create and manage the festival programme and run the London theatre. There are no shareholders and the trustee directors are volunteers who receive no payment or dividend.

1. Pleasance Edinburgh at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe

1.1 Festival 2019 Overview

In 2019 the Pleasance mounted its most ambitious year on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, with a programme of theatre, comedy, dance, children's shows and circus that included 5,535 performances of 274 productions. The largest programme for any venue on the Fringe. The programme included 130 debut performances. 39 productions at the Pleasance received the Fringe's coveted Sell-Out Laurel for 2019.

2019 was the Pleasance's sixth consecutive year of growth, with 560,650 ticket sales across the Pleasance programme, this is 1.5% rise in tickets from the previous year. The Pleasance remained true to its mission of providing an unrivalled platform for bold new work, both for companies making their debut and in the number of Fringe premieres presented.

As well as providing a wealth of industry support to participants in the programme, the Pleasance supported a range of work with direct funding, and as the sole producer of a range of productions Pleasance dominated on the Festival awards circuit, being home 2 Scotsman Fringe Firsts, 2 Total Theatre Awards, both Edinburgh Comedy Award winners and over 75% of its nominees, as well as a host of awards for Acting Excellence, Sustainability and Mental Health awareness.

Our partnership with the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) continued to provide a platform for technically ambitious, world class productions – with the Pleasance at EICC programme enjoying a 14% rise in ticket sales.

The Kidzone celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, and to mark this milestone, with financial support from our patrons and with assistance from Edinburgh City Council, we welcomed over 500 primary school children from some of the city's poorer communities, children who otherwise would not normally have exposure to the festival. The Children were able to see a show, meet the cast and take part in a number of craft activities..

During the festival, we supported a record number of artists and companies at all stages of their careers through Pleasance Futures. Futures supported companies through the Charlie Hartill Special Reserve Fund, The Network collaboration with the Scottish Drama Training Network, Young Pleasance. This summer we launched additional support through The Common Award for working class artists, the Pleasance Associates Programme and our Regional Theatre Partnerships.

The Trust continued to make changes to our structural set up and running of the festival operation, in order to reduce our environmental impact. In addition, the programme included an entirely sustainable venue called The Greenhouse and hosted two performances powered entirely by bicycles. Almost every show in the children's programme also carried an educational, environmental message.



The Trust was able to support The Fringe of Colour by providing free tickets to BAME audience members via the Fringe of Colour. The Fringe of colour aims is to support BAME audiences to attend the Fringe, specifically to productions by or including BAME performers.

The Pleasance continued to work in partnership with HIV and Hepatitis C charity Waverley Care to raise awareness and donations for their vital services. Over £60,000 was raised through collections made across the Pleasance's sites and the proceeds from the one-off spectaculars, The Tartan Ribbon Comedy Benefit and Amusical which marks the largest level of donations in the partnership's 28-year history. Over the 28 yr partnership, audiences at the Pleasance have donated over £560,000

The Pleasance was awarded 'Level 2' on the 3 tier Fringe accessibility charter. We will be making further changes to enable us to reach Level 3.

Shows at The Pleasance in Edinburgh achieved an average of 65% sales

1.3 Edinburgh Programme

Theatre, Dance, Circus & Music

The Theatre programme included 98 of the most compelling, vibrant, important and entertaining productions in Edinburgh, with emerging artists finding new audiences and critical acclaim alongside some of the most prominent pieces of theatre on the Fringe. The Pleasance supported a record number of artists and companies at all stages of their careers, with 19 productions receiving direct financial support of £137,272 through the Trust's support and its Pleasance Futures programme.

The Theatre programme featured some of the Fringe's most spectacular and ambitious large-scale productions. The death-defying stunts, from a truly global company of artists in Cirque Berserk returned to Pleasance at EICC, which also hosted the adrenaline-fuelled Elements of Freestyle and sultry Havana After Dark, which received Mervyn Stutter's Pick of the Fringe award. Elsewhere, a range of international silent theatre took to the stage, including the technically complex, crowd pleasing comedy Fishbowl in association with France's Le Fils Du Grand Réseau and The Letter by Italy's Paolo Nani, who is renowned as one of the world's best clowns. The poetic and poignant Birth by Theatre Re explored the bond between three generations of women through physical theatre.

The programme explored some of the world's most urgent topics. A cast of Syrian refugees displaced to Glasgow wrote and starred in The Trojans, Katie Greenall and Daisy Hale took a provocative look at body positivity in Fatty Fat Fat, whilst Ryan Calais Cameron's production Typical saw Richard Blackwood powerfully tackle the daily tensions experienced by Black British men. Boxed-In Theatre created a zero-waste eco-venue entirely from found and recycled materials to highlight the climate crisis and received the Three Weeks Editors' Choice Award for their work. Love

(Watching Madness) explored the complexities of Loving someone with mental illness

There was recognition for a wide variety of productions on the Festival's awards circuit. Bobby & Amy and E8 both received prestigious Fringe First Awards from the Scotsman, with the latter being supported by the Pleasance. Alumni of the Pleasance's Charlie Hartill Theatre Reserve In Bed With My Brother won the Total Theatre for Innovation, Experimentation and Playing with Form, which also saw Pleasance-supported YESYESNONO nominated for The Accident Did Not Take Place. There was critical acclaim for The Incident Room, which was directed by ex-Theatre Reserve recipient David Byrne as Artistic Director of the New Diorama.

Great writing has always been at the centre of the Pleasance's theatre programme and in 2019 this was recognised through the inaugural Popcorn Award, which champions artists that ignite and challenge the status quo with fearless new writing. Jessica Ross' Drowning and Charlie Hartill supported A Womb of One's Own by Claire Rammelkamp were both shortlisted, with Bryony Kimmings ultimately winning the award for her sell-out I'm A Phoenix, Bitch.

Children's Shows

The Pleasance's dedicated space for families on the Fringe, the Kidzone, celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2019 and proved busier than ever. The occasion was marked by a special photoshoot on Edinburgh's Arthur's Seat with characters from shows across the Pleasance Kids' Programme and, of course, a birthday cake.

The Pleasance further cemented its position as the home for world-class children's and family-friendly entertainment through an exciting programme of shows. The Listies were named the Child's Choice by the Primary Times for Ickypedia, and the internationally acclaimed Complicité returned with I'll Take You to Mrs Cole! based on the book by Nigel Gray and Michael Foreman.

Under 5s were treated to the return of Little Top at the EICC as well as the specially commissioned Moon Dragon, which enjoyed a sell-out run and additional performances due to popular demand. Moonbird, which featured an integrated disabled and non-disabled cast, enchanted audiences by combining words, music and British Sign Language.

Keeping kids active outside the Pleasance Dome was Bicycle Boy, a unique 'bicycle powered' pop-up show for all ages where the audience generated all the show's power. Rave and Behave got everyone dancing whilst the Showstoppers brought

their ordinarily late-night improvisational talents to a younger clientele with the Showstoppers' Kids Show.

Aardman Model Making Workshops proved a hit with kids and adults alike, with audiences creating clay models of the animation studio's iconic characters, including Gromit, Shaun the Sheep and Morph. At the EICC, everyone's favourite animated duo were further brought to life with the accompaniment of a live orchestra, in Wallace and

Gromit's Musical Marvels. The children's programme also included the return of festival favourites Captain Flinn and the Pirate Dinosaurs: The Magic Cutlass by Les Petite Theatre, Rubbish Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Beetlemania: Kafka For Kids. New work included Mustard Doesn't Go With Girls by Pleasance London Associate Artists Bric a Brac Theatre, and I Believe In Unicorns, based on the book by Michael Murpungo.

This year the Pleasance successfully piloted the Pleasance Schools Initiative, bringing over 500 Edinburgh Primary School children to experience the Festival at the Pleasance Courtyard. Children from thirteen schools were transported to and from the Courtyard by bus to see a performance and meet the cast. They made badges and keyrings in the Kidzone and were treated to delicious home-made ice cream from the Beach House Cafe, who also provided lunch boxes for children on Free School Meals. Coming from some of the most deprived areas in Edinburgh, these children have been given the opportunity to enjoy the vibrant and creative atmosphere of the Fringe for free.

Comedy

2019 was another stand out year for Comedy at the Pleasance, with the Festival programme continuing to present the very best known and unknown names on the circuit.

Over 75% of the shows nominated for the prestigious Edinburgh Comedy Awards were staged at the Pleasance, including the winners in both categories - Jordan Brookes for Best Comedy Show and Catherine Cohen for Best Newcomer. The nominees also featured 5 alumni of the Pleasance's Charlie Hartill Comedy Reserve, with Darren Harriott receiving a Best Show nomination and Helen Bauer, Michael Odewale, Nigel Ng and Sophie Duker all being shortlisted for Best Newcomer. Josh Jones and Mo Omar, who were part of the 2019 Comedy Reserve, were both nominated for the BBC New Comedy Award, whilst the legacy of the Reserve was felt across the wider comedy programme, which featured 9 alumni now performing their solo shows.

Audiences flocked to the Pleasance to catch a glimpse of some of comedy's biggest names. Rhod Gilbert returned after several years away from the Fringe, Paul Merton's and his Impro Chums delighted crowds, and festival favourite Nina Conti let audiences in on her work-in-progress. Home-grown talent included John Robins, Camille O'Sullivan, Jayde Adams, Sean Walsh and Suzi Ruffell. They were joined by an array of international acts such as Celeste Barber, Mae Martin and Janine Harouni, whose show Stand Up With Janine Harouni (Please Remain Seated) won both the Amused Moose and BBC New Comedy Awards.

The Pleasance strove to ensure a diversity of voices across its programme. Highlights included established names such as Reginald D. Hunter, Comedy Award winner Rose Matefeo, sold out performances by Phil Wang and two-time Emmy nominee Loyiso Gola. Amongst the host of emerging talents in the programme were Rosie Jones, Yuriko Kotani, London Hughes, Sophie Duker, Michael Odewale, Nigel Ng, Kai Samra, Huge Davies, Aaron Chen and Schalk Bezuidenhout. The annual Accessibility Gala brought together brilliant disabled and non-disabled comedians to help raise awareness of disability access on the Fringe.

64% of the comedy programme's 151 shows were UK Premieres, including stand-out debuts from Tarot, Kelly Convey, Jamie Loftus and Stephen Buchanan. The Pleasance's Newcomer Comedy Gala and HUB Fresh showcases helped many of them reach new audiences.

Amongst the month-long programme were some extraordinary one-off events, which wowed sell-out audiences whilst raising much needed funds for charity. The Pleasance-produced Tartan Ribbon Comedy Benefit and Amusical both raised funds for HIV & Hepatitis C charity Waverley Care, with the latter featuring over 20 comics belting out their favourite show tunes. Elsewhere, Dan Cardwell sat down to eat a three course meal on stage over the course of an hour in a packed 750 seat auditorium, joined by 25 guest diners, in Dan vs Food for food charity FareShare.

1.4 Artist Support Edinburgh

Pleasance Futures

Pleasance Futures is the artist development strand of the Pleasance Theatre Trust, acting as an incubator for bold new artists to make their mark. Pleasance Futures is committed to discovering and supporting the most exciting new voices, nurturing the development of emerging companies, young performers and new writers.

The Trust continues to work tirelessly on behalf of artists, performers and those behind the scenes, to successfully mentor career paths that, without support, may never come to light. All the work carried out by Pleasance Futures is funded directly through donations from Trusts and Foundations, individuals and business. Any surplus from the Pleasance's annual revenue is reinvested straight back into these valuable programmes.

Pleasance Futures is overseen by a subcommittee of the Trust including Richard House (Chairman), Vicki Grace, Lettie Graham and Sharon Lloyd-Barnes alongside David Byrne, a visiting committee member.

During the 2019 Fringe, the Pleasance produced the largest programme of Futures-supported work to date, collaborating with new organisations from across the UK and investing in a wide array of productions and artists under new and existing initiatives enabling companies with limited resources to appear on the Fringe. Productions received over £108,946 of direct financial support in addition to invaluable mentoring from the Pleasance team.

"The Pleasance is not just a venue, it has a philosophy of passionate support for the artists it presents. I loved being part of the engine and was thrilled to see many young, experimental groups of performers. I was born again at the Pleasance, I can't wait to return." Miriam Margoyles

The Charlie Hartill Special Reserve

The Charlie Hartill Special Reserve Fund was established in 2004 by Pleasance Founder Christopher Richardson. This is a designated, rolling fund towards the production costs of selected projects at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The Fund was created in memory of Charlie Hartill - writer, performer, ex-President of the Cambridge Footlights, 8 years director of the Festival Fringe and the Pleasance's man of the computer - who died in January that year.

The Fund is managed under the Pleasance Futures subcommittee; Christopher Richardson is the Chairman of the Fund. Currently the funding is divided into two strands; The Comedy Reserve and The Theatre Reserve.

Patrons have provided substantial financial support to the Fund over several years. 2019 saw the return of the Charlie Hartill Wine Bar at the Pleasance Courtyard – with a share of revenue from the sale of wines going back into the Fund, as it does in Pleasance London. In addition, the Box Office from each show goes back into the Fund each year.

The Comedy Reserve

“I was 18 when I first performed at the Pleasance, six months into becoming a comedian and they gave me a break through the Charlie Hartill Comedy Reserve. Without the Pleasance finding ways to bring new comic talent to Edinburgh the Fringe wouldn't be quite the same”

Jack Whitehall Comedian Charlie Hartill Special Reserve, 2007

Established in 2005, the Comedy Reserve supports new comic talent on the Fringe by selecting four emerging comedians and presenting them in a nightly mixed bill show in Edinburgh. Each act receives a financial subsistence during the Festival and the production is paid for in full by the Pleasance.

Following in the footsteps of an illustrious list of Reserve alumni, including Jack Whitehall, Jamali Maddix, Holly Walsh, Daniel Rigby, Roisin Conaty and Joe Lycett, were the 2019 recipients Josh Jones, Lily Phillips, Mamoun Elagab and Mo Omar. Each comedian was selected by the judging panel after two nights of try-outs in Pleasance Islington featuring over 20 acts shortlisted from 145 applications.

The Pleasance's 2019 comedy programme featured 9 Comedy Reserve alumni, with Darren Harriott, Helen Bauer, Jack Gleadow, Michael Odewale, Nigel Ng, Rhys

James, Simon Brodtkin, Sophie Duker and Yuriko Kotani all performing their solo shows. 5 of these acts were nominated for the prestigious Edinburgh Comedy Awards.

The Theatre Reserve

After a particularly strong year at the annual Theatre Reserve try-outs, the Pleasance Futures subcommittee decided to support two theatre productions through the Charlie Hartill Special Reserve at the 2019 Fringe.

The recipients of the Charlie Hartill Theatre Reserve were THESE GIRLS, a multi-disciplinary female led new-writing ensemble company, whilst Wonderbox received additional support - a performing arts collective sharing untold stories from some of the best emerging female writers and theatre makers.

THESE GIRLS production Bible John offered a compelling mix of new writing, film, movement and verbatim text which won over the panel during February's public-tryouts. The true crime production explored the 1969 murders of three women at the Barrowlands Ballroom in Glasgow by an Old Testament-quoting serial killer, later nicknamed Bible John.

A Womb of One's Own by Wonderbox was a funny, clever and politically challenging production based on the lived experience of writer Claire Rammelkamp. The piece of new writing explored the emotional rollercoaster that is an unwanted pregnancy and asked why it's still such a taboo. The script was shortlisted for the Popcorn Writing Award. As a direct result of the festival and with support from the Trust, Claire has been commissioned by Lionsgate films to create a television series, based upon her play.

The Theatre Reserve received over 150 applications, the most for the Theatre Reserve to date. As part of the Fund, the Pleasance provided financial support, covering administrative, marketing, accommodation and technical costs for the productions.

For Festival 2020, the Trust will launch a new strand of the Charlie Hartill Fund to specifically support work specifically from Artists of colour.

“With the backing and guidance of The Pleasance, we felt free to create something ambitious and inventive, which we were then able to present to a wide audience. It's been hugely beneficial to the development of Bible John and to all of us individually as artists.”

Caitlin McEwan from THESE GIRLS, Charlie Hartill Theatre Reserve Recipient 2019

Young Pleasance

The Pleasance's youth theatre company, The Young Pleasance (“YP”), returned to the Fringe with their unique, critically acclaimed brand of large-scale ensemble theatre. For their 24th year on the Fringe, YP presented their brilliantly inventive comedy revival A Grave Situation.

Critical acclaim included a 5-star review from the British Theatre Guide, which hailed the production as *'A remarkable achievement... inventively directed ... the Young Pleasance leaves you wanting more!'*

The company consisted of 26 participants, each between 16 to 21 years old. The company were selected from a series of public auditions, with the production being rehearsed by the cast in subsequent school holidays. YP successfully secured funding bids from Ernest Hecht Charitable Foundation and Chapman Charitable Trust, which enabled the company to offer bursaries to financially support means-tested participants.

2019 also saw the continuation of Young Pleasance London, which, since 2018, had run a weekly programme of development and devising workshops with young people from the Capital, culminating in performances throughout the year at Pleasance London.

YP's Company Directors are Kathryn Norton-Smith and Tim Norton with Associate Artist Jo Billington.

"It might just be the best thing a young person could do with their summer. I've seen friends of mine - who perhaps were not so confident but who had brilliant, creative minds - give incredible performances by the end of the Edinburgh run. Without Young Pleasance, I don't think I would have decided to train as an actor and without bursary support from Pleasance as well I would not have been able to take part."

Kishore Thiagarajan-Walker, YP Participant 2019

The Network in partnership with the Scottish Drama Training Network

In the third year of the partnership between The Scottish Drama Training Network (SDTN) and Pleasance, the Network presented The Brunch Club at the 2019 Fringe - a new piece of writing by Ben Harrison, devised by the ensemble and co-produced by the multi-award winning Edinburgh-based Grid Iron. The site-specific production took place in its own pop-up venue - a converted local cafe near the Pleasance Courtyard. The Brunch Club won the Bright Spark Award by Scottish Theatre Awards.

The Network aims to support the transition of Scottish Acting, Performance and Technical Theatre graduates from training to industry. It looks to harness their skills and bolster the professional creative community in Scotland, with the work resulting from a multi-week development process being presented at the Pleasance each year. Pleasance partnered with the Robertson Trust, part of a three-year funding package including this production.

"It was incredible experiencing the Fringe, having the mental preparation and playful spirit to approach a long run of shows was very special. As a working-class Scottish actor, seeing exceptional shows on a grand stage, subsidised,

and performing in a highly regarded project was invaluable.” The Network 2019 Participant

Edinburgh Associates

This new support scheme for the 2019 festival, the Pleasance Edinburgh Associate Programme, aims to help companies and artists with a track record of presenting excellent and innovative work at the Festival take the next steps in their careers. Through a mixture of finance, mentoring and in-kind support, the Pleasance guided ambitious projects and provided an opportunity for companies and artists to grow the scale, and maximise the reach of their work.

The 2019 Associate companies and productions were;
Rhum and Clay, *The War of the Worlds*
YESYESNONO, *The Accident Did Not Take Place*
Jordan and Skinner, *A Brief History of the Fragile Male Ego*
Wardrobe Ensemble, *The Last of the Pelican Daughters*
David William Bryan, *Fragility of Man*.

Pleasance provided £3,000 financing to each production, towards the development and presentation of the shows at the Festival along with rehearsal space at Pleasance London and support to develop and deliver accessible performances as part of their Edinburgh run. YESYESNONO's *The Accident Did Not Take Place* was nominated for the Total Theatre Award for Innovation, Experimentation and Playing with Form alongside the Indie Award for Best Poster. The Wardrobe Ensemble's *The Last of the Pelican Daughters* won the Indie Award for Best Theatre. *The Accident Did Not Take Place*, *A Brief History of the Fragile Male Ego* and *Fragility of Man* received a London transfer run in the 'Best of Edinburgh' Transfer Season at Pleasance London whilst *War of the Words* went on to receive a large international tour.

“To say this had a big impact on the success of the production's run at the Edinburgh Festival is an understatement. The success of the production at the Fringe has led to international touring opportunities, secured further bookings on our mid-scale tour and increased the reputation of the company, none of which would have happened without the Pleasance Associate programme.”
Rhum and Clay, Edinburgh Associate 2019.

Edinburgh Regional Partnerships

Also new for the festival in 2019, the Pleasance collaborated with six regional partner theatres across the UK to identify and support exceptional artists and companies local to them, who wanted to take work to the Festival. Each partner, a leading national producing house, has a commitment to supporting and developing new artists. This new programme recognises the extraordinary work being created outside London, and aims to provide tangible support to these companies to present at the Festival. Together, the Pleasance and partner organisations hope to make a substantial contribution to develop the next generation of leading theatre-makers and companies.



The 2019 Regional Partnership theatres, companies and productions were;

Bristol Old Vic Ferment and Full Rogue, Wild Swimming
Leicester Curve and Jack Britton, Mighty
HOME Manchester and Liz Richardson, SWIM
York Theatre Royal and The Roaring Girls, Beach Body Ready
Northampton Royal and Deringate and Jo Blake, Blodeuwedd Untold
Oxford Playhouse and Doug Crossley, Give Me One Moment In Time

Full Rogue went on to be programmed in New York for the 2020 Brits of Broadway season. The Roaring Girls were successful in being programmed at VAULT Festival 2020 and booking their first national UK tour, with The Guardian saluting the company who 'stick up two fingers to misogyny and body-shaming while dancing to some banging tunes.'

Each production received £1,500 financing from the Pleasance towards the costs of presenting their show at the Festival with Edinburgh Fringe registration fee covered by the local partner theatre. In-kind rehearsal and development space was also provided alongside mentorship, support and advice and support to develop and deliver accessible performances as part of their festival run.

"Without the fund, we would have struggled, but with it we have thrived."
The Roaring Girls, Edinburgh Regional Partnerships 2019

Artists Awards

The COMMON Award

In a new collaboration for 2019, the COMMON Award aims to support working-class artists or companies in their early or mid-career to make the most of the incredible opportunity the Fringe provides. Together with COMMON, the Pleasance provided a platform for an exceptional theatre production (including shows for children and young people) made by a working-class creative or company.

The 2019 recipient was Rhys Slade-Jones with The Land of My Fathers and Mothers and Some Other People, a frenzied one-man, all-singing, all-dancing cabaret mixing stand-up, dance and a good old-fashioned singalong. This show about valley life celebrated the best bits of being part of a small, claustrophobic, meddling, loving, nousey community in South Wales.

The production received £2,000 of financial investment from Pleasance towards the cost of presenting the show at the Festival, along with in-kind support, mentoring and advocacy from the Pleasance and COMMON and support to develop and deliver accessible performances.

The Land of My Fathers and Mothers and Some Other People returned to Pleasance in London as part of the 'Best of Edinburgh' transfer season.



“Without The Pleasance and COMMON’s commitment to supporting working-class voices like my own, the Edinburgh Festival would be an impossible mountain to climb – even for someone born in The Valleys.”

Rhys Slade-Jones, *The Land of My Fathers and Mothers and Some Other People*,
The COMMON Award 2019

Pick of VAULT Festival and Pick of Pleasance Festival

The Pleasance continued to strengthen its links with underground London festival VAULT through the creation of two new awards designed to identify and support remarkable productions.

The Pleasance’s Pick of VAULT Festival gives a company in the 2019 VAULT Festival programme the opportunity to transfer their show to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August as part of the Pleasance’s Programme. A reciprocal award provides a transfer for a production in the Pleasance’s Fringe programme to VAULT the following year.

The 2019 recipient for Pick of VAULT Festival award was *Sexy Lamp* by Katie Arnstein whilst *Madam Ovary* by Wildchild Production was the Pick of Pleasance Festival. Each production received £1,000 financing from VAULT Festival and Pleasance towards the costs of presenting their shows, industry mentoring and support as well as support to develop and deliver accessible performances.

Madam Ovary and *Sexy Lamp*, both autobiographical pieces of new writing, were both five star sell-out hits of the 2019 Festival and returned to the Pleasance in London as part of the ‘Best of Edinburgh’ transfer season.

Popcorn Writing Award

The inaugural Popcorn Writing Award from Popcorn Group celebrates writing excellence, fearless work which playfully and artistically questions and addresses current affairs, societal trends and contributes positively to public debate. Alongside The Popcorn Group, this award seeks to support writers and artists inciting, igniting and challenging the status quo through innovative and thought-provoking theatre.

The recipient of the Popcorn Writing Award 2019 was Bryony Kimmings’ *I’m A Phoenix, B*tch*, which The Guardian described as a ‘deeply personal show... an exhilarating ride via pop video, horror movie, art installation and therapy session.’

The judging panel for the award was composed of actress Lena Headey, Donmar Warehouse artistic director Michael Longhurt, Academy Award-winning Gareth Ellis-Unwin, director Carrie Cracknell, Tony Award-winner Enda Walsh, producer Francesca Moody, Academy Award-winning Gonzalo Maza, writer Tony Grisoni, The Gentlewoman editor-in-chief Penny Martin, award-winning actor Art Malik, artist Philip Colbert, Popcorn Group co-founder Charlotte Colbert and head of Popcorn film and TV, Jessica Malik and the Pleasance Theatre team.



To be eligible to receive the £2,500 award, the production needed to be a Fringe premiere of a new piece of text-based theatre (new writing) as part of the Pleasance's 2019 Fringe programme.

“We are excited to be working with the Pleasance in championing and supporting bold and thought-provoking new material which questions and challenges the status quo.”

Charlotte Colbert and Jessica Malik, Popcorn Group

1.5 Festival Partnerships

Edinburgh University Students Association

Since the very first year in 1985, the Pleasance has enjoyed a fantastic partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), who own a large number of the spaces that the Pleasance occupy at the Pleasance Courtyard and Dome.

Whilst the scale of the operation has grown since then, the principle deal has remained essentially the same - the Pleasance sets up the venues and creates the programme, whilst EUSA manages all of the food and beverage. Their catering operation is primarily staffed by those studying at the University, giving the student body a close working relationship with the Fringe.

The Pleasance Theatre Festival Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Trust, receives a contractual share of the catering income generated by EUSA at the Courtyard and Dome, which in 2019 equated to 7.9% of their total sales.

Whilst the theatre and catering operations are managed largely independently, the two organisations work closely together to provide a seamless Festival experience for visitors to the Pleasance Courtyard and Dome.

Other University Partners

Both of the sites at the Courtyard and the Dome also include buildings belonging to other University bodies, for which the Pleasance pays a rental.

These include The Centre for Sports and Exercise, through whom the Pleasance rents the rooms used for the Grand, Bunkers, Forth and Beyond venues, as well as the space on which Baby Grand are placed.

The Chaplaincy Centre at the Pleasance Dome provides the space used for the QueenDome whilst the Royal Medical Society houses Brooke's Club, the Press Office and JackDome.



Edinburgh International Conference Centre

Since 2016 the Pleasance has operated a programming partnership with the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC). The EICC site includes some of the most technologically advanced multi-purpose auditoriums in Edinburgh, which operate year-round for a range of conferences and events. During the Fringe, the Pleasance takes responsibility for programming the spaces and the two organisations work collaboratively to oversee site and production management.

The Pleasance and EICC split the Box Office remaining after performing companies have taken their contractual share, with the Pleasance receiving a minority split of the resulting balance.

The Pleasance at EICC programme and audience has steadily grown year-by-year, with the site offering opportunities for a range of technically complex productions that may not otherwise be accommodated by the Fringe's temporary venues.

Waverley Care

For 28 years, the Pleasance has proudly supported the vital work of Scotland's HIV and Hepatitis C charity Waverley Care.

Every year, Waverley Care's dedicated team of volunteers can be found collecting donations throughout the Pleasance's venues and the annual comedy benefit - the Tartan Ribbon - has become a staple of the Fringe calendar. This unique collaboration of 2 charities has raised over £500,000 to help deliver life-changing services to people throughout Scotland. Performing companies across the Pleasance programme are encouraged to make live or recorded announcements at the end of their productions to highlight Waverley Care's fundraising efforts.

In 2019, over 100 bucket shaking volunteers raised an incredible £45,172 in donations. This including over £750 from audiences exiting the Young Pleasance's A Grave Situation and over £500 at Pleasance Futures supported The Brunch Club.

Fundraising efforts were increased through five 6-person teams of corporate fundraisers, who competed to raise the most donations over the course of a week, with match funding being provided by their organisations.

Together with profits from the Pleasance's annual Tartan Ribbon Comedy Benefit and the show tune extravaganza Amusical, the total raised during the 2019 Fringe exceeded £63,000.

1.6 Accessibility



The Pleasance is committed to creating a programme that is accessible to all and took proactive steps to increase awareness and uptake of accessible performances during its programming process. 31 productions offered dedicated access performances of some kind during the Fringe.

The Pleasance were delighted to host the Accessibility Gala for its third year and the returning Gala for Mental Health, which helped raise vital awareness of disability access on the Fringe.

The Pleasance continued to expand the number of shows accessible to deaf or hearing-impaired audiences with the help of Claire Hill, who provided live captioning for 16 performances.

100% of performance spaces across the Pleasance's three main sites and off-site pop-up venues were wheelchair accessible in 2019.

The Pleasance were pleased to achieve a Level 2 award as part of the Fringe Society's Access Charter, which recognises pro-activity in creating universally accessible venues and participant experiences. Improvements to reach this Level included an increased level of disability awareness training across festival teams, improvements in print and site signage, the extension of an 'Access Highway' over the Pleasance Courtyard's cobblestones for those with limited mobility at the Pleasance Courtyard and a full site access audit, including backstage areas. Further development will be taken in 2020 to meet Level 3, as part of the 3-year programme.

The Pleasance Dome became a designated pick up and drop off point for the Fringe Society's Sensory Backpack scheme. The scheme offered specially designed backpacks for autistic children and adults to borrow for free, to make their Fringe experience as enjoyable as possible. Each backpack contained ear defenders, ear plugs, fidget spinners, stress relievers and water bottles, with cuddly toys for children. A social story was also included, detailing the sights and sounds that could be expected when visiting the Fringe to help users relax and overcome stressful or intense situations.

Whilst the Pleasance was proud to continue improving its accessibility offering, it is committed to the positive action required to make even further progress towards universal accessibility in the Festival operation, facilities and programming.

1.7 Staffing & Volunteer Programme

The Pleasance brought together a team of talented individuals to manage every element of the Festival operation, the majority of whom were taking part through the Pleasance's Festival Volunteer Programme.

The Pleasance Festival Volunteer Programme provides a platform for people from all backgrounds to hone their skills in the creative industries by playing a vital part in the daily operation of the Pleasance's venues. With all team members joining from the



26th July to 28th August inclusive, the programme offers volunteers dedicated positions with genuine responsibilities, each at the centre of the largest arts festival in the world.

223 volunteers took part in the 2019 programme, which included those of all levels of experience - from individuals with years of industry knowledge to relative newcomers who exhibited a passion to take part. Ages ranged from 17 - 64. Participants joined from 18 different countries, including volunteers from Hong Kong, Brazil and the Republic of Korea.

619 applications were received, with over half of the candidates being offered an interview. Group interview sessions took place across the UK to ensure a broad demographic of participants. Interviews took place in Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester and London, as well as online for those unable to attend in person.

All volunteers were provided with a subsistence as a contribution to their living expenses and accommodation in single, private bedrooms within a 20-minute walk of the Pleasance's venues.

With a focus on training and development, the Pleasance further increased the size of its management and volunteer teams at the 2019 Festival in order to provide enhanced levels of operational support and time off to volunteers during the programme.

The Pleasance and technical partner Orbital Sound created a new training opportunity for emerging technicians in 2019, with Orbital running a 2-day "Fringe Fundamentals for Sound" course from the Pleasance Courtyard during the venue build period. The course was taken by 20 festival volunteers and was fully subsidised, with the partners sharing the cost of training, facilities and accommodation.

All volunteers were provided with thorough training over a 4 day period prior to the venue opening. Volunteers in the Technical Services teams arrived a day early for hands-on skills development sessions led by a specially appointed team of 4 Senior Technicians, who each hold notable positions within the industry. Disability Discrimination Awareness training was provided to a large number of public facing volunteers.

A range of additional training and information sessions were offered to volunteers throughout the festival, giving them opportunities to home in on specific areas of interest through skills and knowledge-sharing based workshops with members of the Festival Management team.

In a post-Festival survey, 100% of respondents said they found volunteering to be a valuable experience and would like to return to the programme in 2020 if they were available to do so.

2. Pleasance London

2.1 Pleasance London

Since its foundation in 1995, the Pleasance's year-round home in Carpenters Mews, Islington, has provided some of the leading talents in the theatrical community with a platform to develop work, hone their craft and grow new audiences. In the 2018/19 season, Pleasance London welcomed over 45,000 ticket holders - a significant increase of 23% on the previous financial year.

The artistic programme at Pleasance London runs in parallel with that of Pleasance Edinburgh, with curated programmes such as the Work in Progress, Edinburgh Preview and Best of Edinburgh transfer season hosting work both in and out of the Fringe. However, the programme also provides independent opportunities, featuring work programmed specifically for a London audience, one-off events and presentations from local academic institutions including Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and Shakespeare Schools Festival.

Space in Pleasance London is utilised outside of performance times to provide maximum benefit to emerging companies, with vacant space primarily offered in-kind for script readings, rehearsals and R&D weeks, alongside a limited number of commercial hires.

Formal artist development initiatives under the Pleasance Futures umbrella are also operated out of the venue, such as a Pleasance Scratch, LABS, Reading Week and Young Pleasance London. The building also provides an administrative hub for the Pleasance's Edinburgh operation, with a box office and office space for the Pleasance's permanent employees

Pleasance London comprises 3 performance spaces - the Main House, StageSpace and Downstairs. With capacities ranging from 54 - 230 seats and flexible configurations in each, the London theatre provides performing companies with excellent facilities that can be adapted to a large number of productions. Pleasance Downstairs is a temporary structure which operates for 9 months of the year and relocates to the Fringe in August as the reconfigured space "Pleasance Beside".

In 2019 the Pleasance continued to make improvements to the building, with further development of public spaces with the addition of custom built furniture and the installation of a large scale air conditioning and heating system in the Main House auditorium, partly-funded under a grant from the Theatre's Trust Small London Grant scheme.

2.2 London Programme

Theatre, Dance, Circus & Music

Pleasance London's 2018/19 theatre season commenced in spectacular style, with award-winning international drag collective Sink the Pink undertaking a six-week residency of their new anti-Christmas production *How to Catch a Krampus*. The hugely ambitious production saw a cast of six drag performers and two onstage musicians creating a new spooky and camp anthology show that explored the dark side of the festive season. The production received rave reviews, strong sales, and was nominated for 3 Offies (Off-West-End Awards).

In partnership with The Working Party, the Pleasance embarked on a 14 month local outreach and engagement project in 2019 (operating until early 2020), funded by a grant from the GLA as part of the Mayor of London's Young Londoners Fund. This contributed to a renewed local audience development programme for the theatre that also includes a Local Resident Free Ticket offer for previews to selected shows. Administered by Islington Council, this allowed the Pleasance's London theatre to provide almost 500 complimentary tickets to local families and residents who may not have otherwise engaged with the venue.

Pleasance was also the London hub for Kali Theatre's Discovery Programme - a free writing programme for aspiring female playwrights of South Asian descent. A new partnership with award-winning local youth theatre Company Three (who also hired the theatre during August for project work), resulted in three sold out work in progress performances of *Best Day Ever* – a response to Brexit.

2019 saw a marked revival in quality long run New Work being presented across the London theatre's three performance spaces. Mixing popular hits with exciting and innovative new work, the programme has been nominated for a staggering 13 Offies (Off-West-End Awards), up from 7 in 2018.

Highlights of the 2019 Theatre Programme to November included:

- In *Lipstick* by Annie Jenkins, in a co-production with acclaimed touring company Up In Arms and producer Ellie Keel. "A glittery comedy with shades of darkness..." – The Guardian
- *Night of the Living Dead: Live!* which received a slew of 4 and 5 star reviews from blogs and local papers, and three Off-West-End nominations for Sound Design, Lighting Design and Set Design.
- *Call Me Vicky*, the debut play from sisters Nicola and Stacey Bland, which featured Coronation Street star Wendi Peters (Off-West-End nominee for Female Performance in a Supporting Role in a Play Best).

- Tariq Jordan's debut play *Ali and Dahlia*, which was nominated for three Off-West-End Awards for Male Performance in a Play – *Waj Ali*, Video Design, and Most Promising New Playwright – Tariq Jordan, as well as Best Play at the Writers Guild of GB Awards. “*Ali and Dahlia* takes an unflinching look at the Arab/Israeli conflict, offering up a heart-breaking romance as its powerful access point. – *Islington Tribune*
- *Don't Look Away*, the debut play by Grace Chapman, produced by Novae Theatre (sister company to the renowned visual theatre company *Idle Motion*). “There's an endearing humanity to Grace Chapman's refugee-related drama *Don't Look Away...*” – *The Stage*
- The European Premiere of David Finnigan's award winning Australian eco-satire *Kill Climate Deniers*. Starring award-winning comedians Felicity Ward and Bec Hill.

October 2019 saw the return of the Best of Edinburgh transfer season, which hosted 18 productions from the 2019 Fringe for strictly limited seasons. Highlights include sell-out runs for *Madam Ovary*, the double bill of *In Loyal Company* and *Fragility of Man*, Sadie Clark's *Algorithms*, and Silksheen Production's *Wireless Operator*. Pleasance Futures-supported productions *Bible John*, *A Womb of One's Own* and *The Land of my Fathers and Mothers and Some Other People* all made notable additions to the season.

Comedy

The Comedy programme at Pleasance London offers a risk-free space for both emerging and established comedians to try out new work. With a strong focus on Work in Progress and Preview material, the programme allows audiences to engage with comedy at the grassroots level, getting a first look at some of the UK's best new shows – many of which will go on to feature in the Pleasance's Edinburgh programme.

The 7th annual Work in Progress comedy season featured almost 80 acts testing out new material in front of a live audience. Well known names such as Jayde Adams, Tez Ilyas, Rhys James, Adam Riches and Dane Baptiste shared the season with some of the most exciting up-and-coming acts, including Goodbear, Huge Davies and Olga Koch.

Offering a platform for artists' next step in the development process was the Edinburgh Preview season, in which a large range of comics presented their near-complete Edinburgh shows for a final critique ahead of the Fringe. The season ran from June - July and featured a number of acts that would go on to receive critical acclaim and awards recognition in August, such as *London Hughes*, Ivo Graham and James McNicholas.



Across both seasons, the Pleasance continued to support previous recipients of the Charlie Hartill Comedy Reserve. Yuriko Kotani, Chloe Petts, Alasdair Beckett-King, Brett Goldstein, Evelyn Mok, Helen Bauer, Jack Barry, Nigel Ng, Michael Odewale, Simon Brodwin, Sophie Duker and Catherine Bohart all featured.

Throughout the year Pleasance London also played host to regular recordings of the popular podcasts Drunk Women Solving Crime, Pappy's Flatshare Slamdown and Do The Right Thing.

Newcomers were joined by a number of well known names in this year's comedy programme, with Jimmy Carr, Michael McIntyre, Jonathan Pie, Jordan Brookes, Sara Barron, Vikki Stone, Milton Jones and Rob Newman all attracting large audiences.

There were also a number of large scale comedy events throughout the year. In December, Nick Helm returned to the Pleasance with his unique (and somewhat chaotic) take on the festive season and later that month came the Gala for World AIDS Day, which featured a stellar line-up including Rose Matafeo, Phil Wang, Lolly Adefope, Sarah Keyworth, Adam Hess and Bridget Christie. Following a number of endurance-length shows at the Pleasance over the years, Mark Watson returned with his Comedy Marathon in February - lasting a mammoth 26.2 hours to coincide with the length of the London Marathon, which took place on the same day. The event featured a number of guests undertaking bizarre marathon challenges, including Rufus Hound, Adam Kay, Deborah Frances White, Angela Barnes, Tim Key, Adam Hills, Ed Miliband and Bradley Walsh. Watson and friends raised more than £20,000 for the Dementia Revolution charity.

2.3 Artist Support London

As the Trust's year-round development hub, Pleasance London plays a vital role in nurturing talent and providing opportunities, with much of this work ultimately contributing to the notable productions in the Edinburgh programme.

London Associate Artist Programme

In 2019 the Pleasance formalised its resident artists at its London theatre through the creation of the London Associate Artist Programme, which aims to help companies and artists presenting excellent and innovative work who are based in the capital, to take the next steps in their careers. Following an open application process, six new artists and companies were welcomed into the Pleasance Futures family, including multi award winning Wildcard who develop stories that promote positive social change. Silent Faces, an integrated company of disabled and non-disabled artists who make brave, ridiculous, unique and challenging devised theatre. Along with writer Kat Woods, who stages works that provides a platform for those from the working/benefit class backgrounds. Pleasance provided London Associates with 100% subsidised rehearsal space, work and meeting space along with practical mentoring.

“Being an Associate Artist at the Pleasance has allowed me to regain confidence in my work as a writer. Without their constant support, mentorship validation, encouragement and accidental counselling I feel like I would have completely stalled creatively. The patience and care that the whole team have shown in facilitating my needs has been second to none and one that I will never forget.”

Kat Woods - London Associate Artist 2019-20

Pleasance LABS

In 2019 the Pleasance launched LABS, an open application development scheme offering 22 weeks of 100% subsidised development space for companies and artists looking to create new work. Rehearsal space is often one of the biggest financial drains on artists and the objective of LABS is to make it as accessible as possible. Pleasance provided each company and artist with a week of rehearsal space and the opportunity to present a scratch of their work as a sharing or a ticketed work-in-progress performance.

LABS welcomed an incredible array of artists to Pleasance London including ThisEgg, Stringer & Stevenson, Two More Tigers, Sabrina Richmond, Wound Up, Alan & Ron, Carbon Theatre, Naomi Denny, Andres Velasquez & HopSkip.

The work developed in LABS by Silent Faces, True Name, Rhys Slade-Jones and Hannah Maxwell all went on to form part of the Pleasance's programming in both London and Edinburgh.

A Pleasance Scratch

A Pleasance Scratch has been running since 2015 and is a chance for artists to present brave, new work at the first stages of development. Since its inception A Pleasance Scratch has supported the development of a large number of artists, writers and theatre makers throughout the year. In 2019 the success of A Pleasance Scratch led on to Pleasance formalising its work-in-progress theatre offer with a new development season, Scratch Mondays, regularly presenting more new, dynamic and developing theatre.

Highlights from 2019 include 50/50 by Anonymous is a Woman, exploring all things gender-related, with an equal balance between male and female performers. Theatre company Excellence presented a two day Scratch Festival titled Dear Black Women and Dear Black Men, showcasing the work of black British creatives, creating a space where artists are driven to produce work that is strong, courageous and unapologetically black. Whilst Glass Splinters returned to the Pleasance for their third event - a collection of new pieces featuring or inspired by women from history.

“A fantastic evening and very inspiring getting to watch so many different forms of creation and new artists.”

Voloz Collective

“We had a fantastic experience. A Pleasance Scratch has been an instrumental part of the development of our show.”

Contingency Theatre

Reading Week

Back for its second year, Reading Week connected playwrights and audiences, giving writers the opportunity to hear their scripts brought to life in a script- in-hand reading and gain valuable feedback from a panel of industry professionals.

Eight ambitious writers presented innovative, bold and daring voices. Highlights include Little Rock by Alice Charles, focusing on the Civil Rights movement when a group of African American students attempted to desegregate a local high school in 1957. Oliver Gamblin’s The Palace, which placed a stark lens on the UKs social services and homelessness among young people. Whilst Ryan Watson’s The Fountain was set against the backdrop of major moments in Sydney’s gay rights movement.

Industry panellists included Hightide Theatre, VAULT Festival, The Miniaturists, Pleasance, Soho Theatre and The Old Vic.

Training Opportunities



As part of a commitment to artists, 2019 saw the Pleasance continue its Pleasance Producers workshops at the London theatre.

Self-producing and emerging theatre companies and producers whose work was included in the Pleasance's Edinburgh programme were invited to participate in a series of tailored sessions from March - July.

The initiative aims to support productions in their journey towards the Fringe and to leave them inspired and empowered to take the Festival by storm. With including 20 - 80 participants in each workshop, the sessions offered insight into the responsibilities of producing theatre, practical approaches for bringing together and managing a production, as well as being in an open platform to ask questions and discuss their projects.

Pleasance Producers sessions continued into the Fringe itself, offering free training, outreach and networking opportunities to artists performing and working within the Pleasance's Festival programme. Initiatives included Meet The Venues, where leading venues such as Oxford Playhouse, Harrogate Theatre and New Diorama offered one-to-one meetings with artists to their programming models, which resulted in tour dates for many of the companies. In addition Speed Dating: Producers and Artists was a response to artists finding it difficult to meet producers and resulted in a number of new and fruitful collaborations. Whilst International Tour Booking with Sally Cowling demystified the British Council Showcase and offered advice on how artists can make the most of their Fringe experience and capitalise on securing future bookings of their work abroad.

3. The Trust

The Trustees (also referred to as directors for the purposes of company law) present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 November 2019. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the financial statements and comply with the charity's trust deed, applicable law and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" 2005. FRS102.

Reference and Administrative Details

The Charity was founded on 21 November 1995 and is registered by the Charity Commissioners in England and Wales as The Pleasance Theatre Trust under the number 1050944 and by The Office of the Scottish Charity Registrar under the number SC043237.

Details of professional advisors are set out on page viii.

Trustees

The Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

J Boyd (appointed June 2018)
A Brown
R M House
L Graham
V Grace
S Lloyd Barnes (appointed June 2018)
A Leigh
J R Lucas

The Trustees retiring by rotation are V Grace and A Leigh who being eligible will offer themselves for re-election at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

The power to appoint and remove trustees is vested with the Trustees.

Structure, Governance and Management

The operation of the Charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of winding up, the members will be liable to contribute a maximum of £10 each. The charitable status has been approved by HM Revenue and Customs. Since the charity only uses its funds for charitable purposes no taxation is payable on the income or gains.

The overall responsibility for the operations of the Charity and its finances is with the Trustees, but day to day responsibility for the administration and financial aspects is delegated to the Trust Director, Mr A Alderson, who is appointed by the Trustees.

The Trustees meet up to ten times a year. The trustee body is compact and there is one operational sub-committee for Pleasance Futures. The Trustees work closely with the appointed Director to develop, but have overall control of, the Trust's policy, programme, finances and future plans. The Trustees set aside one meeting each year, without a normal business agenda, as a risk review and long-term strategy exercise, with briefing papers contributed by both Trustees and appointed staff. This informs the following budget cycle and acts as a general guidance for the structuring of public performance programmes and the development of the Young Pleasance, emerging companies and digital initiatives and other community activities.

The Trustees appoint the Director, and participate in the appointment of other key staff. The Director appoints all other staff, within the Trustee-approved budget and organisation structure and manages all staff, reporting directly to the Trustees at their regular meetings. Trustees consider and set the overall remuneration pattern annually. The Trust is advised on personnel matters by Alcumus Group Limited and there is an agreed grievance procedure with the Trustees as the final internal arbiters.

The Director has delegated authority to expend the agreed budget within the organisational structure, and reports to the Trustees through management accounts, presented at regular Trust meetings. Given the speed and fluidity of theatrical business, the Trustees have a system of swift variance approval, outside the meeting cycle, through the Chairman and by electronic consultation with the small Trustee body.

The Trustees have agreed the outlines of the various contractual instruments necessary to secure venue spaces in Edinburgh and to regulate the relationship between the Trust and companies which perform at the Pleasance venues. The Director is responsible for the detailed negotiation and execution of these contracts within the budget, delegating to other staff as necessary.

On capital expenditure, other than normal repairs renewals and maintenance included in the agreed budget, the Trust retains all decisions, taking professional advice as required

The appointed staff develop and structure the programmes and budgets for the Edinburgh Festival season in the January to April period, alongside the operation of spring season of the London Pleasance Theatre (variable from 180-280 seats), the 50 seat StageSpace studio and Pleasance Downstairs. These proceed subject to the approval of Trustees at their regular meetings

The Edinburgh programme is announced from March and the London Pleasance Theatre hosts a preview season of selected companies which will appear in Edinburgh. During this period the London Autumn season is finalised. The London theatre is not usually given a public programme during the time the operational staff are running the Edinburgh Fringe Festival season, although it has been used for local summer schools and commercial lets.

After the Edinburgh season, the London season recommences in late September, running through the Christmas period and leading up to the next application cycle for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival season.

The Trust has developed rehearsal and development facilities which function alongside the public performance programme

The charity has a subsidiary company, Pleasance Theatre Festival Limited. Trading activities not permitted to be carried out in the charity are carried out in the company on behalf of the charity. Profits in excess of operating requirements are donated to the charity under gift aid.

Appointment of Trustees

Membership of the Trust is by invitation of the Trustees, having regard to the need to maintain a broad range of experience and interest and to the expectation that the Trustees will be closely involved in specialist supervision of the Charity's activities.

On appointment a Trustee receives an induction pack comprising the principal constitutional and policy documents of the Trust, with current financial and forward planning information, and a current briefing document such as good Governance issued by the National Hub of Expertise in Governance. The chairman, secretary and the trustees who have legal training are available to deal with any queries.

Each Trustee is required to give a written assurance about status in relation to previous service as a director or Trustee (bankruptcy, financial propriety, disqualification)

In the event of significant changes in the legal framework governing the responsibilities of Trustees, the Trust will provide appropriate training or information.

Risk review

The Trustees review major risks to the organisation on a regular basis and establish systems and procedures to mitigate identified risks. A more detailed review is undertaken each year at a meeting with no other agenda to examine the Theatre's areas of confidence and of risk. Performance against plan is reviewed at the Trustees' regular business meetings, encompassing aspects such as budgeting, financial control, artistic programming, public benefit, health and safety, safeguarding, data protection and accessibility.

Objectives

The Charity's objectives for the year were the fulfilment of its aims through:

- Provision of a programme of performances in its London theatre spaces.
- Production of a season of performances at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.
- Provision of rehearsal, production and mentoring facilities at Pleasance London.
- Operation of Pleasance Futures, (Young Pleasance and development activities).
- Co-operation with the arts training and higher education sector
- Development of initiatives to extend the reach of Pleasance activity on digital platforms.
- Development of initiatives to support creative associates in industry-related activities eg. photography, film-making, journalism and scenery building

Achievements and Performance

The Trustees consider that the outcome of the work presented in Edinburgh and London achieved the aims and objectives set out above and has due regard to the responsibility to deliver public benefit.

The Trust's operational aim of presenting a more varied programme year on year, increasing overall attendance and containing costs in such a way that the Edinburgh and London Pleasance seasons provide complementary financial and operational benefit and support Pleasance Futures was achieved.

The variety of programme and producing organisation in the Main Space, ranging from full professional companies through training companies to community projects for local youngsters and work for younger children echoes the Trust's commitment to spreading interest in all types of theatrical performance and participation. Further developing the platform for new work in London and Edinburgh is key to those commitments.

In all its public programmes the Trust strives to balance the legitimate interest of the artists in receiving a fair return from ticket revenue for their artistic input, the necessity of balancing the operational budget to ensure continuation of activity and the aim of maintaining a pricing structure which offers affordable tickets for the general audience, concessionary entrance for specific economic and social groups, and targeted ticket schemes, aimed at making the programme accessible to all.

Financial Review

The principal funding sources continue to be income from the London theatre and the Edinburgh Festival season. At the 2019 Edinburgh Festival the Pleasance presented 250 productions that resulted in 560,650 ticket sales. This is a 1.4% increase on the previous year.

A far larger programme of shows at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) was the most significant factor in this increase. Whilst any surplus generated at the Edinburgh Festival supports the ongoing planning and strategy of future Festival seasons and the operation of the London Theatre, the Trustees continue to review the financial risks to the charity and the financial relationship between the London and Edinburgh operations. Although the Trust have signed up to a new lease on the London base the Trust continues to explore possibilities of opening a further site, moving the London operation or redefining its principal role.

There has been a decrease in the surplus from 2018 from £115,019 to £86,198 in 2019. The decrease in the surplus is a result of the increase in unrecoverable VAT and an increase in festival costs. At the year end, the Charlie Harthill Reserve Fund increased to 142,085 from £121,673 an increase of £22,101. In 2020, There is a plan to launch two new programmes specifically for artists of colour and in recruitment and education of festival staff. The Trust invested £90,000 into a new partnership at the Vault Festival, this generated a surplus of £15,427

Reserves policy

The Trustees consider that the funds received each year should be fully utilised to meet the objectives of the Charity as stated above. However the Trustees also consider that it is prudent to hold a minimum of £250,000 of unrestricted funds to meet on-going contractual commitments. In addition the Trustees have set aside funds specifically designated to meet future repair and refurbishment costs of the London Theatre.

Plans for the Future

The Trust intends to continue the operation of theatrical activities during the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival, to programme the Pleasance Theatre in London and to develop the activities of The Young Pleasance and the Artist support through performance workshops and public performance in line with the various schemes set out in Pleasance Futures. The Trust plans to continue the partnership with the Vault festival.

Each of these activities is planned and budgeted in the light of the Trust's experience in developing them over more than three decades.. The Trust presents productions by others and a smaller number which it facilitates or co-produces, with the double aim of responding to the dynamism of live performance and securing a positive financial outcome through ticket sales, which are the Trust's major source of income. The Trust has not sought regular revenue funds by way of direct subsidy from any public sector source. It is therefore dependent on the theatrical entrepreneurship of its directorate and of the Trustee body to ensure that income is maintained, and, where possible, increased. To this end it maintains a high level of experience in the entertainment sector in the trustee body and directorate and will continue to do so, securing additional expertise as and when appropriate.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare accounts that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its income and expenditure for the financial year. In doing so, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Amounts are presented within items in the profit and loss account and balance sheet, the Trustees have had regard to the substance of the reported transaction or arrangement, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles or practice. In the case of each of the persons who are Trustees at the time when the Trustees' report is approved:

- so far as the Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the charity's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the charity's auditors are unaware, and
- each Trustee has taken all steps that he ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, Jeffrey Altman & Company, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Approved by the trustees and signed on its behalf by:

Richard House
Trustee

Principal Office

Pleasance Theatre
Carpenters Mews
North Road
London
N7 9EF
Tel: 020 7619 6868

Professional Advisors

The following professional advisors have been used where appropriate.

Auditors

Jeffrey Altman & Company
Wayman House,
141 Wickham Road,
Shirley,
Croydon,
Surrey,
CR0 8TE

Bankers

The Royal Bank of Scotland
Edinburgh St Andrew Square
36 St Andrew Square, EH2 2YB

Pleasance Team

Director	Anthony Alderson
General Manager	Hamish Morrow
Technical Operations Manager	Marec Joyce
Head of Comedy	Ryan Taylor
Head of Theatre	Nic Connaughton
Marketing Manager	Stuart Hurford
Associate Producer	Heather Rose
Associate Producer	Ellie Simpson
Associate Programmer	Jonny Patton
Graphic Designer	Robbie Porter
Marketing Officer	Conor O'Donnelly
Head of Finance	Yvonne Goddard
Finance Assistant	Jared Hardy
Box Office Manager	Kathleen Price
Box Office Deputy Manager	Emily Holland
London Theatre Manager	Dan Smiles
London Production Manager	Nick Ward
London Venue Technician	Ryan Ford
London Venue Technician	Eppie Conrad
Kidzone Coordinator	Candida Alderson
Young Pleasance Directors	Kathryn Norton-Smith Tim Norton
Founder & Patron	Christopher Richardson

Pleasance Futures Sub-Committee

Chairman	Richard House
Committee	David Byrne Vicki Grace Lettie Graham Sharon Lloyd-Barnes

Pleasance Theatre Trust Ltd - Reg Charity no. 1050944 England & Wales. Reg Charity no. SC043237 Scotland. Reg Co. 31304