

Welcome from the Chair

2008-09 saw an unwelcome change in the international financial context. The arts are no more immune than anyone else, and all expected tough times. At Chol, having already strengthened our foundations, we were able to react tenaciously, both by consolidating existing attributes and seizing new creative opportunities.

Space Circus was recommissioned and continued its ever successful voyage to schools, infinity and beyond. We also took to the streets in Not for all the tea in China, an interactive tea party to celebrate the passing of the Olympic baton to England. Our vigorous commitment to participation also shines through these projects, with Not for all the tea in China emerging from workshops in Dewsbury schools, and a spin off project from our successful verbatim shows Beast Market running in Greenhead College.

New members of the team have helped to underpin this work. Welcome to Rebecca as Projects Administrator and new Board members Maddie, Elaine and Liz. We look forward to welcoming Andrew Rawlinson to the Board in 2009. Thanks to them for their hard work and new energy, and ongoing thanks to Andrew, Susan and Roohi, the trustees and the multitude of partners, artists and freelancers that made our work unbeatable.

Dave Calvert, Chair

Artistic Programme

2008/09 was a significant year for Chol in terms of artistic successes, company consolidation and planning for future opportunities and development. The quality and variety of our programme of work testifies to the vigorous creativity of our company, comprising as it does a talented group of people within our Board, our core staff team, our volunteers and the talented freelance artists and contractors with whom we work.

During 2008-09, we capitalised on the previous year's success with 'Space Circus' and we were delighted to be re-commissioned by Partners in Innovation to undertake a further tour of this flagship schools project to Yorkshire schools. We performed the show 97 times in 25 schools across the region, to an audience of over 3,000 students and teachers. In addition, in this year PININ secured a 3^d year of Yorkshire Forward funding for touring this show in 2009-10, to include a development of Space Circus for a short Special Schools tour. This is a new artistic departure for Chol. 'Space Circus' has increased Chol's profile in Yorkshire and we were delighted to be shortlisted for the Theatre Centre's Brian Way Award, a national award recognising excellence and innovation in theatre for young people. 'Space Circus' had a large and diverse audience of young people in both rural and urban areas of Yorkshire.

We aim wherever possible to undertake long-term work that emerges from the communities in which we work. 'Beast Market' our verbatim theatre project, was a good example of this. In a change from our planned programme, we were unable to secure a residency tour of the full theatre production in the planned timescale, despite several expressions of interest. However, we were able to perform extracts of the show in several venues and we were delighted that Greenhead College in Huddersfield used our show as a basis for a large-scale enrichment project and produced their own mini-version of the show 'Town'. Andrew Loretto and some of the original cast members facilitated early stages of this project and we have established an excellent working relationship with the Performing Arts department at Greenhead. Beast Market was shortlisted for the Huddersfield Examiner Arts Council England Community Arts Award, which was pleasing. Through this project we have established good connections to local churches, the local police and local residents. This is already reaping a number of benefits.

In May 2008, in partnership with Huddersfield's Media Centre and Huddersfield Literature Festival, we celebrated Amanda Crowther's photography and the writing competition for local residents' responses to it, in a month-long exhibition of images and text.

*You walk down the staircase
carrying nothing, as if you needed nothing
on your journey from kitchen to world*

from 'Man, leaving' by Sally Baker

*Their route took them past a music shop. Jez stopped to look at the cello in the window. 'Wow. Look at that. That's totally mindy.'
'It's totally what?'
'Mindy. You know – it's fragrant. It's wiggly, it's proper Kenneth'
'I don't have the first idea what you're talking about'*

from 'The Hooded Men' by Mark Jervis

We were pleased to be commissioned by Kirklees to undertake a project to celebrate the handing over of the Olympic torch from Beijing to London in August 2008. We undertook workshops about aspirations for 2012 in 4 high schools in Dewsbury and we developed a piece of interactive street theatre 'Not for All the Tea in China'. The show takes the form of a participatory 1908 Edwardian tea party with a twist. We are developing this piece for touring in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic Games. Through this project, we met Dr David James, a leading Sports Scientist from Sheffield Hallam University and together Chol and SHU are developing a bid for the Yorkshire Legacy Trust project in Yorkshire, under the 'Extraordinary Moves' strand in 'I move therefore I am'.

In September 2008, we began working with Creative Partnerships and Cape UK, undertaking creative agent work in 5 schools in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Kirklees. We were especially pleased to start work in 2 local Kirklees primaries new to the Creative Partnerships' programme: Newsome and Wooldale. These outstanding local schools began interesting and innovative creative learning projects, due to be completed in the summer of 2009.

Through discussions at varying levels of the company, and through conferences and networking groups we attend as delegates, we strive always to improve our practice and continually to learn from each other, from our funding partners and from our board. The creative development of our work is collaborative and we value the processes involved in the creation of new and original work.

The artistic quality of our projects and productions is evidenced in a number of ways:

- *People have been inspired to create their own work in response to our programme: for example Bradford Academy produced their own version of ‘Space Circus’.*
- *We have received excellent audience, participants, teacher, artists and client feedback.*
- *The above-mentioned awards we were shortlisted for.*
- *We have been re-commissioned to undertake a remount of ‘Space Circus’, and a new version of the show, for students with learning difficulties.*
- *The new partnership with Sheffield Hallam University.*

2008/09 was a year of increased profile and critical acclaim for Chol Theatre following the success of our recent theatre projects 'Beast Market' and 'Space Circus' and their resulting legacies. Both of these projects demonstrate how Chol Theatre combines bold artistic ambition with meaningful engagement with communities and young people. Our outdoor interactive 1908 tea-party production, 'Not for all the Tea in China', was such a hit in Dewsbury that it has been picked up for national touring during summer 2009 to a range of festivals including Glastonbury. The show will also be featured in Manchester Piccadilly Gardens on 18 September 2009 as part of the national Decibel showcase.

Company

We recruited excellent new Board members Madeleine Irwin, Elaine Heywood and Elaine Price in 2008/9, with Andrew Rawlinson set to join us in 2009/10, thereby successfully completing a period of Board development and at the year-end have a diverse and talented group of trustees, all willing to commit to and to share in the company's future.

Serving board members in 2007/08 were: Dave Calvert (Chair); Jenny Wilson (Vice-Chair); Maxwell Singh; Madeleine Irwin (appointed 21.04.08); Elaine Price (appointed 19.01.09); Elizabeth Heywood (19.01.09) The management team was Susan Burns and Andrew Loretto, joint chief executives; Roohi Sarwar, finance administrator; Rebecca Legg, projects administrator. Ben Baughan left us in May 2008 to join the marketing team at The Lowry.

It is our artistic policy to invest in culturally diverse artists both within the company and through offering creative opportunities to artists, particularly young and emerging artists in the region. We are indebted to our freelance artists and actors, volunteers and interns who assist us in the delivery of our work. They are hugely instrumental in the success and enjoyment of all who participate in our work.

Our relationship with our key funding investors Kirklees Council and ACE Yorkshire is good. We regularly receive and take advice and support from our lead officers.

We have been discussing capacity issues during the year, especially with regard to the core staff team, which is part-time. Chol's Board has been keen to put systems in place and we are now on proper pay-scales, tagged to the NAVCA scales. We were also able to increase core capacity with the appointment of Rebecca Legg as full-time Projects Administrator. Rebecca is a Canadian national with an MA in Drama Education from Warwick University. She also has an interest in working with people with Special Needs – Rebecca has been a sports coach for the Canadian team in the Special Olympics.

A new company structure has emerged from this process of review and Andrew and Susan's job descriptions have been revised. Whilst sharing the Chief Executive role, Andrew is now Director, Performance and Susan is Director, Participation.

Finance and Fundraising

Chol operates a mixed business model of revenue funding, dedicated project funding, and commissions and fees for projects and performances. Our main funding partners are Arts Council England, Yorkshire and Kirklees Council, who gave revenue grants totalling £68,148 to support our core operation in 2008/09. In addition we received grant income of £14,291 to undertake or to complete project work. Income generated from fee-earning work was reduced in this year to £65,590. However we gained a significant new contract from Partners in Innovation for 2009/10. We ended the year with a small deficit of £4,782 which is easily dealt with by the transfer of cash reserves. Our financial position will enable us to continue to develop and deliver our projects into 2009 and beyond.

Our accounts are audited by chartered accountants Brosnan's and this annual report should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Accounts they have produced.

Thanks

...to the following artists and companies who worked with us in 2008-2009:

Moira Benoit, Amanda Crowther, Firefly (Dave Chadwick), Paul Danby; Ralph Dartford Associates, Christina Denham, Gerald Fox, Cathianne Hall, Peter Gordon, Peter Hamilton, Amanda Huxtable, Conor Ibrahiem, Anne Larkin, Lateisha Lovelace-Hanson, Porl Medlock, Rad Miller, Giuliano Modarelli, Richard Nutter, Karoliina Sandström, Jag Sanghera, Balvinder Sopal, Carla Starkey, Sue Tongue, Suzanne Wynne. We would also like to thank volunteers and interns Sameena Hussein, Jemima Martin, Laura Hamlet and Jessica Woodhead.

...to all those who've supported us this year as key stakeholders and partners:

Wesley Zepherin of Arts Council England, Yorkshire; Helen Featherstone and Adele Poppleton of Kirklees Arts and Creative Economy Team; Stuart Butcher, David Ross, David Spencer and Jon Wormald of Partners in Innovation; Victoria Firth and her team at Lawrence Batley Theatre; Andy Aldridge and staff at Albion Works; Tessa Gordziejko, Creative Programmer for London 2012 in Yorkshire; Jane Phelan and her students at Greenhead College, Dr David James at Sheffield Hallam University; Rommi Smith and Michael Stewart from Huddersfield Literature Festival; Clare Danek from the Media Centre in Huddersfield; Chris Cotton, Viv Edmonds, Ian Lambe and Maria Wilson from Kirklees Council; Val Javin and Andrew Baldwin at Huddersfield Examiner.

Without all of you the work would not have happened.

Finally

As we look forward to our 21st anniversary year of 2010, Chol Theatre continues to find innovative and bold ways of realising its ambitions. Chol is planning to launch a major new programme of development for young artists as well as a new partnership with Sheffield Hallam University. We hope to extend our international reach through touring and exchange projects, further exploring the definitions of intercultural identity and bringing performance to new audiences in innovative and unexpected ways.

Company Information for the year ended 31st March 2009

Company Name

Chol International Arts Limited

Directors and Trustees

*D Calvert
J Wilson
M Singh
M Irwin (appointed 21.04.09)
E Heywood (appointed 19.01.09)
E Price (appointed 19.01.09)*

Company Secretary

S Burns

Registered Office

*8 Queen Street
Huddersfield
HD1 2SP*

Charity Number

1044256

Company Number

3012433

Reporting Accountants

Bernard Brosnan

Bankers

*HSBC
2 Cloth Hall Street
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD1 2ES*

Staff 2008-2009

*Susan Burns Co-Director
Andrew Loretto Co-Director
Roohi Sarwar Finance
Rebecca Legg Projects*

Administrator

Administrator

This Annual Report should be read in conjunction with Report of Directors and Trustees and Financial Statements for Year End 31st March 2009 by Bernard Brosnan.

Photographs by Amanda Crowther and Porl Medlock.