

Gala Theatre

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Head of Culture & Sport

Gala Theatre Overview

Gala Theatre Facilities

Gala is a purpose-built venue in the heart of Durham, housing:

- A modern, 500 capacity theatre space
- Two cinema screens (134 and 82 capacity)
- A flexible Studio space hosting live events, meetings, and private functions
- A busy café space, which is also an evening theatre bar
- A small visual arts gallery space

Programming Approach

We endeavour to create a theatre programme which is popular, while remaining artistically sound, and financially strong. The main programme is supported by education work, Gala's own stage school, and a range of artist development opportunities.

Theatre Programme

Gala's programme is a mix of:

- **Presented Work** - the best touring work in: comedy, theatre, music, dance, spoken word, live screenings, opera and more.
- **Produced Work** - theatre productions created at Gala
- **Hires** - community groups, schools and local amateur societies, who use the venue to present their own events.

Gala Productions

- We take creative ownership of the work we put on our stage
- We invest in the work, with Gala's audiences specifically in mind
- We retain 100% of the income generated
- We create opportunities for local actors, writers, directors etc
- This approach creates a stronger identity for the theatre

“Huge kudos to the Gala for producing an amazing piece of theatre and a real treat... a fabulous evening, and a perfect example of why the Gala Theatre has so much to offer.” **What’s On North East**
(Educating Rita - April 2017)





"...a memorable production of three modern classic monologues, a very worthy follow-up to last year's Educating Rita. Keep it up, Gala! You're doing it right!"

British Theatre Guide
(Talking Heads, March 2018)

Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs

33,442 tickets sold

£311,678 in NET ticket sales



“...this year’s show really does set the bar high for the rest of the region’s pantos. It’s going to take something very special to beat it”

British Theatre Guide

Festivals Hub

Gala plays host to the Durham Book Festival, BRASS, and the TakeOff Festival of theatre for children and young people.

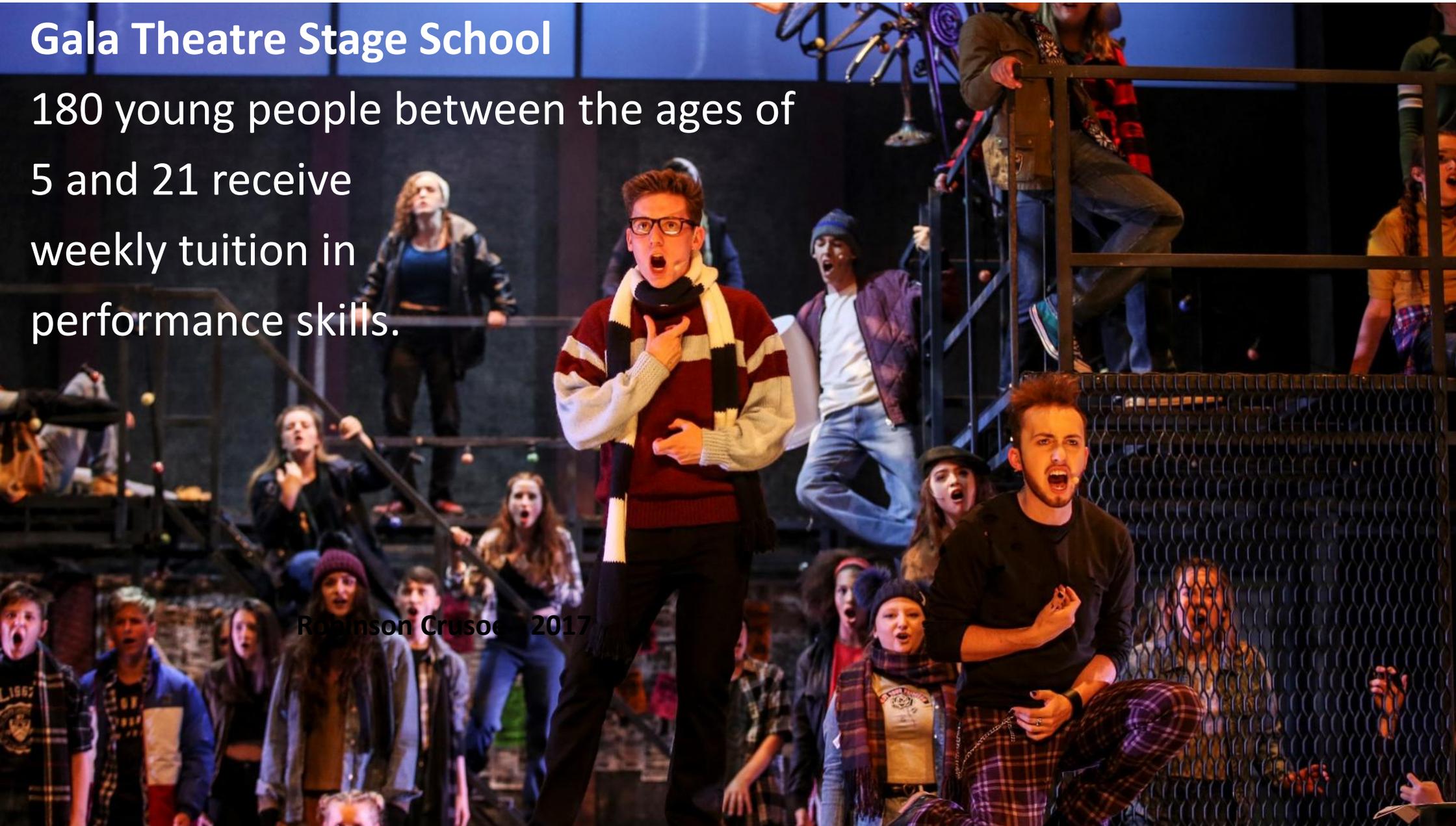
*"...I love this event, it was in my diary at the start of the year. The bands are amazing, the atmosphere wonderful
Thank you"*

BRASS Visitor

Gala Theatre Stage School

180 young people between the ages of 5 and 21 receive weekly tuition in performance skills.

Robinson Crusoe 2017





Gala Engage Programme

Offers diverse multi-arts activities to a wide cross-section of the community, including the venue's own Big Band.

Gala Theatre Impact

In 2017/18, Gala:

- Staged 347 live events
- Presented 2093 cinema screenings
- Sold 186,183 tickets
- Ticket sales of £1,644,013

Theatre Performance

17/18 Outturn

- Total Income £2,279,513
- Total Expenditure £2,952,630
- Net cost of £673,117

Budget Comparison

- Gala costs similar to 13/14
- Significant reductions in budget reduced by 45.5%
(24.3% excluding marketing)
- Amplifying any over-spend

2017/18 Major Variances

- Catering Income -£58k -13.2%
- Cinema Income -£97k -20.1%
- Theatre Income -£130k -9.1%
- Operational cost trends

Pressures

- Falling audiences
- Emerging competition
- Investment Requirements
- Rising cost base
- MTFP

Audience Trends

- Cinema Income -£97k
- Theatre Income -£130k
- UK Theatre 2017 sales figures - 200 venues across the country.
 - Number of performances was up by 3% to 44,135
 - Average ticket price increased by 1.5% to £25.08
 - Number of tickets sold down by 1.9% on 2016
 - Gross take 0.4% decrease on the previous year

What We're Doing About It

Challenges

- Reverse trends in income and expenditure
- Need to reduce net cost by circa £400k
- Determine long-term sustainable operating model

Theatre Programme & Content

- Make presented product work harder: strive for better financial deals, bigger audiences, and strong marketing support.
- Continue to build the brand for Gala Productions; maximising the income and maintaining tight controls on expenditure.
- Invest time in building relationships for co-producing, fundraising and collaboration; thereby, sharing the risk, resource and reward.

Cinema

- Two new cinemas opening
- Need to consider future of cinema at Gala
- Potential niche markets
- Withdraw from Cinema
- Replacement options

Improvement Group Targets

- Operational Efficiencies
- Increased secondary spend
- Commercial programming focus
- Strategic theatre efficiencies

Next Steps

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- Determine future of Cinema
- Continuation of Improvement Group
- Exploration of long-term/alternative operating model
- Continued budget control reporting
- Securing Capital and external funding resources

Questions