



# Replay Productions

## Annual Report 2008-09

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“Thanks! Really enjoyable and has given me a much needed confidence boost.”

Replay Productions acknowledges the generous support it receives from all funders. It would in particular like to thank the Arts Council of Northern Ireland for their continued support throughout 2008-09

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## **Introduction to the Company**

Replay Productions is dedicated to producing professional educational theatre for children and young people. Established in 1988, Replay has been touring to schools and theatres across Northern Ireland for over 20 years. The company offers a range of products including theatre performances, residencies and workshops.

## **Mission**

Replay provides high quality professional theatre that entertains, educates and stimulates children and young people.

## **Vision**

To produce a programme of work acclaimed for its innovation and excellence, thus enhancing the stature of Replay and of professional theatre for young audiences in Northern Ireland.

## **Values**

Replay Productions believes that the company's management and activities are underpinned by three core values.

### *Quality*

Replay will strive to ensure that creativity is underpinned by quality through the delivery of a challenging programme of work and to adhere to standards of 'best practice' in the governance and management of the company.

### *Efficiency*

Replay will strive to maintain the highest standards of efficiency in all areas of company business. Working effectively within the company's resources the company strives to deliver the highest standards in projects, services and management practices.

### *Integrity*

Replay will seek to ensure that all work both creative and operational is underpinned by integrity. Replay is committed to openness of process and opportunity ensuring that children and young people remain at the heart of the company's working ethos.

The company aims to:

- Encourage and provide theatre, drama activities and resources of a professional and high standard for children and young people
- Explore and promote the educational and developmental benefits of theatre for children and young people
- Ensure equality and accessibility
- Promote concepts of shared Cultural Identity and Diversity

In 2008 Replay Productions entered into a new strategic phase, 'Creativity through Consultation'. The company identified three key strategic aims.

- 1) to ensure the excellence of the creative work produced by the company
- 2) to maintain and increase the accessibility of the company's work
- 3) to raise the profile of the company in the Arts, Education and Public sectors

In pursuit of these objectives the company embarked on a demanding programme of activities. From highly participatory children's theatre to plasticine animation and issue-based workshops, Replay continued to engage young audiences across Northern Ireland with a challenging and innovative programme.

## **Replay Productions 2008-09**

2008-09 was a time of great change at Replay Productions, marking the end of an artistic era as Richard Croxford left to take up new challenges at the Lyric Theatre, having led Replay's creative programmes for over 8 years. In 2009 the company welcomed new Artistic Director, David Fenton, who relocated from Australia to take up his position, as Replay entered an exciting strategic phase, Creativity through Consultation. Testament to the quality of the company's work, Replay's new Artistic Director cited the company's commitment to its audience and to ensured quality through creative development as the persuasive factors that contributed to his decision.

2008-09 also marked the first of six years of core funding from Lloyds TSB Foundation for Northern Ireland as well as the close of the company's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. In 2008-09 the company reached 10,129 children and young people across Northern Ireland touring and performing to schools in each of the Education & Library Boards.

The creative programme of 2008-09 had children and young people at the heart of all the company's activities as performances of Plasticine Tina delighted audiences, young and old. Other highlights included two projects funded by corporate partners that allowed the company to offer over 100 workshops to primary and secondary schools. In 2008-09 the company accessed unprecedented levels of private sponsorship reaching in excess of £40,000.

Replay was successful in securing full cost recovery funding towards the delivery of Healthy Eating Workshops for Key Stage 1 children. This allowed the company to specifically target schools in areas of social need as identified by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

In 2008-09 the company continued in its commitment to building the infrastructure and raising the profile of theatre for young audiences and the arts sector in general. Senior staff members continued to serve on the boards of Northern Ireland Theatre Association (NITA), Ulster Association of Youth Drama (UAYD) and Theatre for Young Audiences (TYAUK). In addition they also participated in working groups to explore the feasibility of a Youth Arts Network for Northern Ireland and the creation of a Manifesto for Children's Arts.

Replay's Development Manager took part in the Arts & Business Link Initiative including a best practice visit to Boston. This commitment to continuous staff and organisational development is an important part of adhering to company's values in the realisation of key aims and objectives.

Throughout 2008-09 the company continued to review and revise company policies, systems and procedures, striving for best practice in management practices. The company also came to the end of Knowledge through Interaction, celebrating the successes and reflecting on those objectives that had yet to be realised.

2008-11 is set to be an exciting time for the company with a programme that will embrace a host of innovations whilst staying true to a company vision that firmly appreciates and endorses the honesty of educational theatre and the power of storytelling.

## **Review of Creative Programme**

## THEATRE SQUAD – Workshop Facility

### Aims:

- To enable young people to explore issues relevant to them in a participatory, creative and dramatic way.
- To develop the skills of local practitioners in workshop facilitation, encouraging lifelong learning and employability
- To provide a flexible and sustainable 'year-round' service that can grow according to interest and demand
- To demonstrate the values of drama in a wide range of learning and development
- To provide access to arts and artists for young people who might not otherwise have this opportunity
- To provide valuable employment for the indigenous professional arts community

The continuation of this essential strand of Replay's programme provided stand alone issue based workshops for 8 year olds and upwards. Themes explored were Racism, Bullying/Peer Pressure, Anger Management, Refugees and Teenage Relationships. A new workshop addressing environmental issues, *Mission Most Possible* was developed and delivered in the period April to June. All workshops were 'test-driven' on groups of young people ensuring currency and credibility.

To ensure consistent high standards of excellence in delivery and content of workshops, the budget included allowance for regular re-training of facilitators, and adaptation of the programme informed by their feedback. This has been completed in the 6-month period of the grant. The budget also allowed for training in the new workshop and the recruitment of 3 new facilitators. In addition to the established facilitators Laura Hughes, Christina Nelson, Niki Doherty, Stephen Beggs, Sharon Thompson and Paul Maclean, the new recruits were local artists Rachael McCabe, Caroline Kerr and Matt Faris.

Each workshop was supported by a resource sheet for every participant and where possible a pack for the teacher/group leader.



## **MASTERCLASS SERIES 6 – *Mastering the Musical***

### **Aims:**

- To develop the skills of local artists
- To widen the pool of artists available to work in musical theatre
- To heighten the awareness of theatre for young audiences
- To further develop relations with the local arts community
- To bring internationally renowned artists to the province

Replay had identified a skills gap in the artistic field of the stage musical. There are a number of musical theatre pieces produced every year in Northern Ireland, most notably around Christmas, which require skilled performers. This project was directed at two of ACNI's artform priorities- **Drama & Dance**.

Over a period of 4 days, 23 local artists worked on various aspects of musical theatre including singing tuition, (ballad, up tempo, harmonies and group work) dance and audition procedure. The project was led by an accomplished international musical director, Conor Mitchell who worked with local choreographer Deborah Maguire in conjunction with Replay designing and delivering a programme of workshops appropriate for the participants. The culmination of the Masterclasses was an opportunity for the participants to perform in front of their peers and potential employers.

## **PICK 'N' MIX – Concert Style Performance of Replay's new Musical Adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen**

### **Aims:**

- To trial a new text
- To improve the quality of theatre production by acting on the feedback gleaned
- To explore classical texts in a dynamic way
- To provide access to classical texts for young people
- To employ and develop the skills of the local arts community
- To raise the profile of Replay and theatre in Northern Ireland

Following the phenomenal success of Replay's site specific version of *Macbeth* at the Crumlin Road Gaol during Belfast Festival at Queen's in 2007, the company was set to explore another Classic text in an innovative way. This decision had been informed from feedback provided by various stakeholders following *Macbeth*.

The company's Artistic Director worked with composer Mark Dougherty to create a stunning and delightful new musical adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. Once the adaptation was complete, Replay worked with a group of actors on the text and trialed the piece in front of an audience in concert style performances. The feedback was extremely positive and this has informed the development process to improve the quality and accessibility of the text and music for Replay's future audiences. For important strategic reasons the company decided not to proceed with this project into a full production.

### ***Review of Creative Programme continued***

## 20<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS *Rewind, Fast Forward, Replay*



### Aims:

- To develop the artistic skills of young audiences
- To develop an interest in the arts by young people
- To employ and develop the skills of the arts community
- To provide access to arts and artists for young people who might not otherwise have this opportunity
- To raise the profile of Replay
- To raise the profile of theatre for young audiences in Northern Ireland

To mark this momentous occasion in Replay's history, the company chose to engage directly with audiences in an entertaining, educational and stimulating way. By using work that spanned the last 20 years, the company invited children and young people of all ages to actively participate in Replay's artistic processes. This culminated in the production of a final piece of work that showcased the creative skills learnt. Places for *Rewind, Fast Forward, Replay* were free of charge.

### For Young People With Physical And/Or Learning Disabilities

Using a fun script, *The Lion That Roared Miaow*, which Replay hopes to produce in 2011, the company visited 5 special schools. After an initial introductory session with a group of around 15 young people exploring the story of the *Lion That Roared Miaow*, the group spent a day working on arts activities based on the story. These activities varied from school to school and were developed according to the interests and needs of each particular group. The Replay Team and group of young people then told the story to other pupils in the school incorporating the artwork and skills learnt.

Replay are excited to be developing a new production especially for the special school market, and see this project as an important strand to the programme.

### For Teenagers

Using a successful script from Replay's archive, *Permanent Deadweight*, the company worked with one secondary school and one group from BIFHE. Replay's Artistic Director and a Technician met with both participating groups. Using their expertise they guided the school group through the process of pulling together a theatre production. The final productions were performed at the OMAC by these two groups over the Birthday Weekend.

### For Under 11s

Saturday became a fun packed arts activity day at the OMAC.

The 8-11 year olds participated in a physical theatre workshop based around one of Replay's most successful productions *Almost Human* creating a Human Zoo.

The 4-7 year olds made hand and finger puppets based around another of Replay's successful productions *Meg's Head*. They then took a tour of the 8-11 year olds' Human Zoo and helped the Replay storyteller tell the story of *Meg's Head* with the puppets they created. This workshop in particular helped the company develop links with a family audience, which has been identified as a potential area of growth.

*Review of Creative Programme continued*

## BIO DIVERSITY PUPPET SHOW: April 2008-June 2008

In partnership with the Environment and Heritage Service, Replay brought a *Biodiversity Puppet Show* to venues across Northern Ireland. Replay became involved in August 2007 when we tendered for the management of the project. This involved providing actors, liaising with venues and the general administration of the project.

The aim of the show was to inform young people and families on the importance of biodiversity in Northern Ireland through the medium of a very entertaining hand puppet show. Children are introduced to Cyril the Squirrel and friends as they come to learn more about caring for nature.

Two local artists, Emma Little and Antoinette Morelli were employed as the puppeteers to deliver the show. They received a course of training to improve their puppetry skills. The response to these shows has been very positive and has given Replay the opportunity to interact with family audiences. Replay completed the management of this project in June 2008.

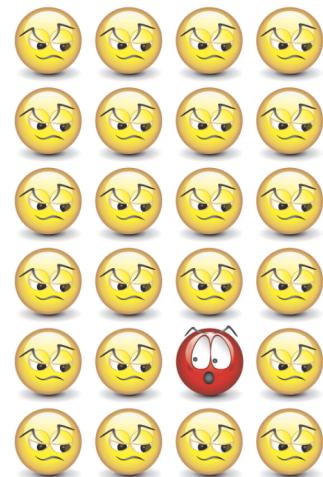
## New Media– The New Kid DVD: The Launch

### Aims:

- To create high quality creative product
- To utilise new media opportunities
- To explore topical issues relevant to young people
- To employ and develop the skills of the arts community
- To provide access to arts and artists for young people who might not otherwise have this opportunity

This production was a stimulating and provocative exploration of racism for 8-11 year olds. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland commissioned Replay to produce and distribute a DVD of New Kid to every school in Northern Ireland. This project was chosen to launch Inter-cultural week 2008 in April at the Ormeau Baths Gallery. Present were two Junior Ministers from the Northern Ireland Assembly. This particular project was important in advancing the company's aim of raising profile.

**New Kid**  
by Dennis Foon directed by Richard Croxford



*Review of Creative Programme continued*

## **THEATRE ON THE ROAD – *Plasticine Tina***

### **Aims:**

- To create high quality relevant theatre
- To explore issues relevant to the young people of today
- To enrich and expand the pool of writing for young people
- To employ and develop the skills of the arts community
- To provide access to arts and artists for young people who might not otherwise have this opportunity
- To explore a new partnership with a non arts organisation
- To further develop Replay's audience base

This project gave Replay an opportunity to work with a guest director and international animator and composer. Replay had commissioned local Belfast based writer Patrick J. O'Reilly to produce an exciting new work for children aged 6-9. *Plasticine Tina* proved a great success with audience members, families and teachers. The highlight of the tour was press night at the Old Museum Arts Centre which saw the transformation of OMAC into a family centred arts space. Children were invited to join parents at what is traditionally an adult focused event. This underpins Replay's commitment to encouraging children and young people to participate in the cultural life of Northern Ireland.



## THE WEAKEST DRINK- Participatory Theatre

### Aims

- To deliver a ‘Responsible Drinking’ Arts Education Programme aimed at 15-18 year olds in secondary schools and youth/community centres across Northern Ireland
- The programme should challenge young people’s attitudes to alcohol and empower them to make informed decisions about alcohol consumption in the future
- To engage young people’s imaginations and emotions with a workshop that conveys key messages including personal responsibility, personal safety and making informed choices in an interactive and challenging manner
- To deliver a programme that deals with issues including
  1. underage drinking
  2. the impact of alcohol on friendships and social achievement
  3. the personal dangers of excessive drinking
  4. the law and underage drinking
  5. the challenges of peer pressure and the importance of making personal choices

This participatory workshop was used to explore issues surrounding binge drinking in a creative and dramatic way. It demonstrated the values of drama in a wide range of areas for learning and development. The programme provided flexible workshops designed to ensure integrity of objectives maintained throughout. This was achieved by having-

- Consulted with the youth sector for currency and credibility
- Delivered 3 pilots of the workshop for its efficacy before being offered formally
- Provoked thought through interaction, explore situations and form strategies and solutions
- Stimulated participant’s interest and imparted a sense of fun in the learning process.
- Delivered to young people across Northern Ireland
- Provided resource sheets and pack for teacher/group leader



The response to this programme has been overwhelmingly successful. Replay worked with a corporate partner to deliver 50 of these workshops on Binge Drinking to teenagers across Northern Ireland. The results included: challenging young people’s behaviours and attitudes

about alcohol misuse and encouraging open discussion and

debate around the subject of underage drinking and alcohol harm. The key outcome of this workshop programme was success in encouraging young people to take personal responsibility for their decision making.

## IMPACT

### Audience numbers 2008-09

7253

### Participant numbers 2008-09

2876

In 2008-09 Replay Productions entertained, educated and stimulated 10,129 children and young people across Northern Ireland.

### Summary of Key Impacts

#### 1. Fast Forward, Rewind, Replay

Replay Productions celebrated twenty years of producing professional theatre for children and young people by holding a weekend of events at OMAC in Belfast City Centre. This included programmes for primary schools children, children with special educational needs and secondary school children.

#### 2. Weakest Drink Participatory Theatre for 12-16 year olds

Replay delivered a programme of 50 participatory theatre workshops on the issue of Binge Drinking to teenagers across Northern Ireland.

#### 3. Launch of New Kid DVD

Replay Productions was chosen by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to Launch Inter-cultural Week 2008 with a public screening of New Kid at Ormeau Baths Gallery. Local Belfast Primary School children, joined stakeholders and government Ministers at this event.

### Funding

In 2008-09 Replay Productions continued to maintain a diverse range of funding including-

*Statutory Funders:* Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council, Youth Council of Northern Ireland

Replay continued as a multi-annual funded client of ACNI and an annual client of BCC. The company was successful in securing funding for two projects from the Youth Council.

*Corporate Partners:* firmus energy, Diageo

In 2008-09 Replay levered over substantial private investment from the business sector. *Trusts & Foundations:* Lloyds TSB Foundation

2008-09 also marked year 1 of the 6 year Lloyds TSB funding programme, Creating Change.

### Box Office

Replay continued to offer value for money products to children and young people. Tickets prices were subsidised to ensure accessibility and this demanded a high level of diverse partnership funding from a range of organisations both public and private.

## **Future Plans**

### *Governance & Management*

Replay Productions recognises the importance of good governance and management in achieving artistic aims and ensuring the impact of the company's work for beneficiaries. In 2009-10 the company will continue to strive to reach the highest levels of best practice. In particular this will include Governance training for the board of directors and the development and implementation of a written policy on the recruitment and appointment of directors.

For core staff, 2009-10 will see the development of a Performance Management System including the setting of Key Performance Indicators & a Staff Development Policy.

Other notable targets include the review of existing policies & the development of new policies including a Risk Management Policy in line with the provisions set out in the Company's Reserves Policy. In September 2009 the company will launch a three year Marketing Strategy and a much anticipated interactive website. This is one of a number of initiatives that aims to improve communication with stakeholders in the forthcoming period.

### *Sector Participation*

In 2009-10 the company will continue to participate at board level in important sector networks including NITA, UAYD and TYAUK. In addition the company is working with Cahoots NI towards realising a showcase event of theatre for young audiences in autumn 2010. The company will also continue to work towards increasing investment in the arts through lobbying government, developing strategic partnerships, leveraging non-statutory funding and raising the overall profile of the sector.

All future planning is working towards increasing the impact and accessibility of the company's work for the young people we seek to reach. These young people are reached through the breadth and quality of activities undertaken by the company. Planned activities for 2009-10 include

#### *Write Now!*

Replay Productions will begin a three year project working with their Writer-in-Residence, Kareen Pennefather, to develop new theatre for young audiences. This project allows the company to work with a sample set of up to 150 children over an extended period of time to assess the impact of arts based learning.

Write Now! aims to

- To produce high quality new writing for young audiences
- To use theatre to explore topical issues relevant to young people
- To provide access to arts and artists for young people that might otherwise not have this opportunity
- To create opportunities for young people to participate in the creative process
- To demonstrate the value of drama in meeting a variety of learning and development needs
- To research the impact of the arts on young people over a three year period

#### *Chatter*

In 2009-10 Replay Productions will embark on a tour of Northern Ireland's secondary schools for the first time since 2006. This project has been designed to explore the difficult issue of mental health among young people. This is a verbatim theatre project, developed in collaboration with award winning playwright Gary Owen.

Chatter aims to

- To produce high quality theatre for young audiences
- To use drama to explore issue relevant to young people
- To influence decision makers as to the value of the arts in the lives of young people
- To enrich writing for young audiences
- To employ and develop the skills of artists
- To provide access to arts and artists for young people who might otherwise not have this opportunity

#### *Litter Bug*

This is a venue-based project designed to explore the potential of introducing the company's work to international festivals. This project is an initial step in realising key strategic objectives to increase the recognised value and profile of theatre for young audiences. Replay will also be developing important artistic partnership through the use of multimedia platforms.

Litter Bug aims to

- To introduce young children to the world around them through the arts
- To explore the artistic form in presenting theatre for young audiences
- To develop non arts partnerships to achieve strategic objectives
- To explore the impact of presenting educational theatre outside formal schools setting
- To create theatre for young audiences that could introduce the company to international touring and festivals

*Pick 'n' Mix- Mickey & Lionel*

This project illustrates the company long-term commitment to developing high quality theatre for young audiences. Pick 'n' Mix provides the company with an opportunity to trial future work with young audiences and professionals, allowing critical feedback to enter into the creative process.

Mickey & Lionel aims to

- To develop Replay's audience base
- To develop writing for theatre for young audiences
- To create opportunities for young people to participate in the creative process
- To receive and use feedback on the creative programming of the company
- To introduce the public to the quality and value of theatre for young audiences
- To further develop relationships with the arts community

*Theatre Squad*

This is a continuation of Replay's workshop programme allowing the company to offer stand alone issue based workshops to primary and secondary schools across Northern Ireland. Themes explored include racism, the environment, healthy eating, anger management, bullying and binge drinking.

Theatre Squad aims to

- To enable young people to explore issues relevant to them in a participatory, creative and dramatic way
- To demonstrate the value of drama in meeting a variety of learning and development needs
- To influence decision makers as to the value of the arts in the lives of young people
- To provide access to arts and artists for young people who might otherwise not have this opportunity
- To develop the skills of local practitioners in workshop facilitation, encouraging lifelong learning and employability
- To provide valuable employment for artists on an annual basis

The following key points were agreed-

- Replay would strive to produce three theatre productions each year.
- Replay would refocus the artistic direction of the company with added emphasis of Replay's role as a touring company. This would mean a scaling back on additional services such as workshops and training.
- Replay would increase the number of projects specifically designed for special schools.
- Replay would continue to produce projects designed to raise the profile of the company but this would be in addition to the programming of primary and secondary school tours.
- Replay would develop audience development plans to nurture and increase core audiences- schools and family based audiences.

### **Creative Programme**

Replay will strive to deliver the following -

One **primary** school tour each year  
One **secondary** school tour each year  
One **special schools** specific tour once every three years  
One innovative **profile** production once every three years  
One **Artistic Director's choice** once every three years  
A programme of workshops each year- **Theatre Squad**

For copies of Replay Productions' Strategic Plan, *Creativity through Consultation*, please contact the Replay office.

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*"The children really enjoyed it. They talked about the characters all afternoon and have made lots of great creations since."*