

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Barbican Centre Board	15 March 2023
<b>Subject:</b> Management Report by the Barbican Centre's Directors	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Report of: Claire Spencer, Chief Executive Officer</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report authors: Chief Executive Officer and Directors, Barbican Centre</b>	

### **Summary**

The CEO Report comprises current updates from across the Centre.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

NOTE the Report and ENDORSE Management's approach to future activities.

## 1. REPORT: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATE

It has been a busy time across the Centre as we continue to deliver a full programme and reshape the organisation for the future against our purpose and values:

We are London's Creative Catalyst for creativity, curiosity, and enterprise. Our values are Inclusive, Connected, Sustainable, Daring, and Joyful.

Work continues at pace on building out our new strategic framework which will be structured around the five themes of this report. We are now exploring goals and programmes and look forward to working these through with the Board in the Spring.

### 1. Connecting with our Audiences, Communities and Stakeholders

We were delighted with the audience attendance and response to Rebel Rebel (Soheila Sokhanvari's wonderful exhibition in the Curve) which closed last week. Over 70k attendees experienced the exhibition. In the main gallery we were delighted at the strong response to the opening of the Alice Neal exhibition Hot Off the Griddle. More information on the broader programme engagement can be found in the report of the Artistic Director.

Work is now commencing on our **Audience Strategy**, which will include our baseline position, case for change and an outline of our approach to audience engagement in the years ahead.

Further work has been undertaken in rolling out our **Safeguarding Strategy** – with 35 members of our team now designated as Safeguarding Champions. This number reflects the extensive and matrixed engagement and many touchpoints of our team with the community.

I was delighted to join 50 members of our Host team at their quarterly meeting – which covered feedback on a recent engagement pulse survey, a working session on our values and a very robust question and answer session. A terrifically engaged and committed cohort.

### 2. Fuelling Creative Ambition

We were thrilled that 3 shows that were held in our venues were named in the **Olivier Awards** nominations – My Neighbour Totoro, Sibyl and Triptych, as outlined below:

Best Entertainment/Comedy Play – *My Neighbour Totoro*

Best Theatre choreographer – *Basil Twist for puppetry direction in My Neighbour Totoro*

Best Costume Design – *Kimie Nakano in My Neighbour Totoro*

Best Sound Design – *Tony Gayle in My Neighbour Totoro*

Best Original Score/New Orchestrations – *Joe Hisashi & Will Stuart in My Neighbour Totoro*

Best Set Design – *Tom Pye in My Neighbour Totoro*

Best Lighting Design – *Jessica Hung Han Yun in My Neighbour Totoro*  
Best New Opera Production – *Sibyl*  
Outstanding Achievement in Opera – *William Kentridge for Sibyl*  
Best New Dance Production – *Triptych*  
Best Director – *Phelim McDermott in My Neighbour Totoro*  
Best Actress – *Mei Mac in My Neighbour Totoro*

As advised in our last report we have applied for transitional **ACE Funding**, and this has now been confirmed and will be included in our 23/24 Budget accordingly.

The contract approval between the **London Symphony Orchestra** and Barbican Centre (representing the City of London Corporation) is now complete contract – we are delighted to continue such a positive and productive relationship with our Resident Orchestra.

A huge well done to Will Gompertz and his team for another terrific few months in the venues, galleries, and cinemas!

### **3. Investing in our People**

The **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy** approved by the Board at our last meeting has now been rolled out to the Barbican Team and was well received. Scoping of the new roles to support the implementation of this strategy is now underway, with recruitment to start in the Spring.

**Zero Tolerance Training for Managers** has started and will be complete by the end of March. All managers with leadership responsibility are engaged in the training.

Our regular pattern of **All Team Town Halls** continues to be well received with growing participation both in person and online. Our investment in internal communication resources is helping greatly here. The feedback on how valuable team members find these sessions is still very positive (we get a live feedback on this through the digital tool slido).

The Barbican is a big and complex cultural organisation that can be difficult for new starters to navigate – particularly given that we are not all co-located at the Centre. In response to this our HR and Internal Comms Team, under the direction of Ali Mirza, our Director of People, Culture and Inclusion, have devised and piloted a **Welcome Day Programme** to help organisational orientation and connection to other new starters. We have run two sessions so far which have been well received (feedback sought at the end of each session).

We come together on 8 March to celebrate **International Womens Day** with a celebration (and mini exhibition) of all the incredible women who work at the barbican and our March Guide includes a highlight of some of the incredible female artists we have in our programme in the coming months.

#### **4. Investing in Place**

We are part of the transition to a new City-wide **Facilities Management** provider on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

The **Barbican Renewal** project is progressing well as it approaches its first anniversary. Funding submissions are live through various sources, consistent with a masterplan approach.

Two significant projects have concluded since our last meeting – the Lakeside Fountains are now working and the light refurbishment of the Frobisher Rooms is complete.

#### **5. Building our Business**

We have made some welcome investments in **Digital**. A new Point of Sale (POS) system was installed for the bars, making a difference to smooth operations. We have just passed our 10,000<sup>th</sup> transaction and are pleased with the improved performance.

We have also invested in some systems work to enable dynamic pricing capability. And the investment we made in online giving in 2022 is now starting to show a positive return on investment.

It is a busy time of year for the Finance Team as they work through year end preparations and the detailed build of the 23/24 budget.

The Creative Industries are now well and truly awake internationally after COVID, and we are delighted to host the Performing Arts Center Consortium (PACC) Conference in April 2023. PACC is a collaboration of the largest Performing Arts Centres in the US and Canada – with guest spots held for Australia (currently Sydney Opera House) and the UK (now the Barbican). We are shaping up an agenda that covers Ethical Programming, Changing Audience Behaviours and Building Creative Careers. We look forward to welcoming our international colleagues to the City.

Claire Spencer  
March 2023

## 2. REPORT OF THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

### Programming

*Alice Neel: Hot off the Griddle* opened in the main Gallery, with a media and private view on 15 February both of which were well attended including representatives from the artist's family, Pompidou Centre Paris and many lenders to the exhibition. Visitor attendance has been busy since opening with just over 2,000 people seeing the show over the first weekend. The exhibition has received great press coverage with 5\* & 4\* reviews across the board. Soheila Sokhanvari: *Rebel Rebel* in the Curve continued to be popular and reached over 70,000 visitors before it closed on 26 February. RESOLVE Collective: *them's the breaks* will open to the public in the Curve on 30 March. *Noguchi* opens at Lille Métropole Museum of Modern, Contemporary and Outsider Art on 21 March 2023, the last venue for this exhibition.

The final London International Mime Festival took place across London venues in January. We presented two extraordinary shows from Belgium in the Barbican Theatre – Peeping Tom's *Triptych* and Still Life's *Flesh*. In the Pit we presented two puppet shows – Old Trout Puppet Workshop from Canada with *Famous Puppet Death Scenes* and from the USA, *Bill's 44<sup>th</sup>*. All four shows exceeded target. We are exploring how to take this popular form of programming forward for the future. Kakilang's *HOME X* opened in the Pit on 21 February in both live and digital iterations. This is the Barbican's first time working with this new re-launched multi-disciplinary festival that features the work of South-East and East Asian artists.

Classical music highlights in January/February included the Hermes Experiment & Shiva Feshareki culminating in the premiere of Feshareki's new work tailored to the acoustics of Milton Court. February saw piano sensation, Seong-Jin Cho performing a solo of Baroque dance music. This period also highlighted classical's continued commitment to Artist masterclasses in the form of Patricia Kopatchinskaja who passed her knowledge onto some of Guildhall School players of the future in an evening Artist Spotlight Masterclass. This was followed two days later with the first recital of her Artist Spotlight which brought Kopatchinskaja's fresh interpretations to Beethoven and 20<sup>th</sup> century classics.

January / February contemporary music highlights included the legendary Lucinda Williams returning to the Barbican stage with a new album. Eliza Carthy, of the Waterson/Carthy family dynasty, performed her new studio album *Queen of the Whirl* with her band, The Restitution, featuring re-recordings of her 'greatest hits' from her Mercury Award nominated album.

A superb concert by Jerusalem Orchestra East West, featuring Moroccan soloist Mehdi Nassouli, took place in the Hall on 5 February, blending musical traditions from North Africa, the Middle East and Europe. There was some public criticism of the funding arrangements of the Orchestra - a full report can be found in the Agenda Pack.

In January, Cinema's Architecture on Film series returned for its first 2023 event with a sold-out screening of *Dreaming Walls: Inside the Chelsea Hotel*. Over January and February, Cinema hosted three more screenings from our Emerging Curators series, *Pink Mirrors*, *Taste* and *Black Cyclone*. These diverse programmes all sold out and drew

excellent audience responses and press coverage. This period also saw three New Release ScreenTalks, with excellent audiences. Our Cinema Curator, Sonia Zadurian, hosted a sold-out conversation with Laura Poitras after a screening of her lauded documentary *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*.

Barbican Immersive is finalising agreements to bring *Game On* to two venues in the UK in 2024 and continues co-production discussions with a partner in Japan to develop *Fundamentals of Music*. Preparations continue for the opening of *Our Time on Earth* at the exhibition's co-producer venue in Quebec City, Canada in June 2023 and *AI More than Human* at CCCB in Barcelona in October 2023.

To mark the first anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022, a display of photographs presented by Disasters Emergency Committee was installed from 20 – 26 February in the public exhibition space in the Ground Floor Foyers.

### **Creative Collaborations**

The department continues to hold monthly meetings to re-shape the way we work and bring the four distinct teams: Communities & Neighbourhoods, Creative Learning, Futures and Public Programme/Archives into one holistic department. A restructure is being conducted to identify optimal structures for our new direction.

Recent highlights from the department to note are as follows:

- **Arts Council England Transition Funding** – The application for £273,803 of transition funding was submitted 26 January. This has now been confirmed and will be included in our 23/24 Budget accordingly.
- **Barbican Creative Academy (formerly Future Producers)** – After months of using the working title, Future Producers has been renamed Barbican Creative Academy in consultation with the City's Apprenticeships Team. A business case is being drafted currently and the intention is to receive our first cohort of six in January 2024.
- **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch) grant** – We have worked with external consultants Cornish and Grey to create a Theory of Change for the department. This has informed the development and testing of several iterations of a new evaluation model, drawing on experiences of stakeholder collaboration, conducting research, departmental consultations, and piloting a variety of evaluation methods. We are working with The Liminal Space to transform the model into an engaging and practical toolkit. We have held departmental workshops and exercises as part of the process of creating a set of guiding principles for stakeholder consultation and co-creation. We are also drawing on the experience of conducting research and scoping for the new workstreams around the Creative Vision to produce a flow chart for how we will work and consistently commission research in future and are at the stage of holding consultations around this work.
- **Imagine Fund and Leytonstone Loves Film Community Fund** – Our two participatory grant making funds, one based in Leytonstone around Film, the other aimed at people and projects in and around the City of London, closed

applications, with almost 60 across the two funds. Our panels of local people are reviewing the projects and will be distributing grant funds over the next few months.

- **Public Programme** – plans for major talks and spoken word events in theatre and cinema for later this year are underway. In February, we sold out talks in Auditorium 1 with Katy Hessel, Chantal Joffe and Christina Kimeze and also in the Library with Lauren Elkin, Xiaolu Guo and Andrea Luka-Zimmerman.
- **Teacher Lab** – The teaching resources developed as part of this process involving teachers and artists over the previous months are being finalised and will be shared with our wider network of schools, artists and teachers as part of a Barbican School Takeover week in March. These will be cascaded to students and teachers across each school and at our next Teach Meet 19 April.
- **Young Changemakers** – In January, the cohort of eight Barbican Young Changemakers met with the Barbican CEO, the Artistic Director and the Barbican Renewal Lead. By the summer, these eight young people will have been involved in nine sessions, whereby they will have played a central role in decision-making processes at the Barbican and developed new key skills to support their career development.
- **Young Creatives Showcases** - We are looking forward to the showcases and film festival produced by and for young people as part of our Young Creatives programmes Young Poets, Young Film Programmers and Young Visual Arts Group. More to be reported in the next month. Sadly, the annual NOYO concert has been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. A sharing of the work produced by the London ensemble will take place to an audience of invited guests in the spring.

## Digital

Barbican Immersive has partnered with Vortic to create a VR experience of *Virtual Realms: Videogames Transformed* for potential venues and partners to explore this highly experiential exhibition. The experience will be available to potential venue partners from late February.

The Visual Arts digital team has been focusing on *Alice Neel: Hot Off the Griddle* and launched a campaign on 16 February. A newly commissioned essay about Alice Neel's sitters, written by Hettie Judah, went live on the website and a film with writer and influencer Katy Hessel is due for release in the first week of March. Social media content around the exhibition has seen 2.3k likes and 31k views on Instagram alone. The *Rebel Rebel* campaign's success has continued, and the trailer has now had more than 14k views.

In Music, The Live from the Barbican series 2022/23 season ends with *Vespers* performed by BBC Singers & cellist, Abel Selacoe at Milton Court on 19 May as Rachmaninov's sacred *All-Night Vigil* meets African musical traditions in a captivating evening.

## **Communications**

Key Communications activities since the previous update include the launch of *Alice Neel: Hot Off the Griddle* on 16 February, securing extensive print, broadcast and online coverage, and the reactive handling of protests against the concert by Jerusalem Orchestra East West on 5 February.

A full summary of Communications activity throughout the first quarter of 2023 will be provided in the next report.

## **Future Planning**

In March, Cinema will once again host the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, exclusively at the Barbican. The most accessible edition of the festival yet, also sees two Relaxed Screenings of *I Didn't See You There*, marking a full return to cinemas for the festival, with an allocation of Pay What You Can tickets. Oscar Week returns to Barbican Cinema, in partnership with AMPAS. Screenings of the Best Film and Best International Film nominees are complimented by live-action and animated shorts. The Young Film Programmers are putting their final touches on the programme for the 2023 edition of the Chronic Youth Festival, screening in early April.

In the next phase of the Theatre season our audiences will enjoy premieres of new work by Simon McBurney/Complicite, Katie Mitchell/Headlong, Cheek by Jowl, Ballet Black, Trajal Harrell, Rachel Mars with her installation *Forge*, and the return of Transpose with their Pit Party celebrating transgender artists.

The Visual Arts team is preparing for the Carrie Mae Weems exhibition opening in the main gallery in June, followed by RE/SISTERS opening in the autumn, while also working hard on the future programme through to spring 2025 and beyond.

In Music, we are excited about two very different performances: on 12 March 2023, we are hosting *Nonclassical: The Greenhouse Effect* in which our Conservatory will become an immersive sound experience reflecting on our relationship with nature at a time of climate crisis. We also look forward to Grammy nominated Devonté Hynes who will be accompanied by the LSO on 18 and 19 March performing contemporary classical music that confronts the complexities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century identity.

Barbican Immersive is in conversation to partner with Destination City on an ambitious project for 2024 that will extend the Barbican programming across the City.



### 3. REPORT: BUILDINGS AND OPERATIONS

**Purpose:** Create an environment that enables and inspires others to achieve their best. To be achieved through:

**Plan:** Providing services that are 1. compliant 2. efficient and 3. appropriate.

**Priorities:** Life-critical, business-critical, other.

**Renewal Strategy:** 1. Stop the decline (structure, process, audits, and continual improvement). 2. Reverse the decline (maintain momentum via CWP and Capital etc.). 3. Act strategically (Barbican Renewal).

**General:** Our buildings remain safe and compliant. Our commitment to building improvements have yielded positive results and we continue to deliver on our security, fire safety and customer's experience.

We are now at mobilisation stage of our IFM rollout working closely with City colleagues to achieve an efficient and complaint delivery from our contract partners that not only provides continuity of service but seeks to improve it.

We continue to deliver our CWP and capital projects. Following the recent busy period at the Barbican, we have been able to finalise certain outstanding engineering and project work. Our recent PSIA (Security Measures) review has completed with ongoing improvements (68% -72%) placing us in an excellent position to build on our security provision.

Our one-team training strategy is ongoing with communication development for our casual staff central to the process. This training will continue as we review our structures and priorities.

#### **4. REPORT: COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES (EVENTS, RETAIL, FOOD AND BEVERAGE)**

##### **Events**

In 2022/23, in-person events enjoyed a steady comeback, and the industry expressed a tone of optimism that hadn't been heard since before the pandemic, even during ongoing economic challenges. With 2023 set to be the industry's "strongest year ever", there is resilience and growth in the meetings and events sector.

Traditional conferences and networking events have become gathering grounds for people with the same values to express themselves, exchange ideas and grow their contact bases once again, and the Barbican has proved an ideal venue in which to interact. Celebrations continued throughout Q3 and Q4 including graduations, with City University kicking off January with over 9,000 attendees across 3 days and 6 ceremonies. 2023 summer parties and weddings are already looking to exceed 2019 numbers pre Covid.

Over the winter months some of our meeting and event spaces have been refreshed and the Frobisher Suites reopened on 13<sup>th</sup> February, with a project which has included recarpeting and heating of the area. The carpets have been replaced with a sustainable acoustic carpet product that is British made and 100% manufactured with recycled and natural fibres, supporting our Sustainable value. In addition, the corridor heating has been completely replaced with a more sustainable and energy efficient air source heat pump system, replacing the old 3KW electric heaters and storage heaters.

In a separate project, all the projectors in the 6 Frobisher Rooms have been replaced, along with the cable infrastructure, so we now have new 7K HD projectors installed in the spaces, so we'll be equipped to provide all of our clients with clearer visual presentations in these areas going forward.

##### **Retail**

The Foyer Shop traded well in January, making the most of the continuing Theatre audiences and finished ahead of budget in what can traditionally be a tough month for retailing. Some newness in the Foyer Shop is planned across the spring and into summer; with updates to both the Architecture and Conservatory ranges; a new clothing range will feature in store between Feb and May by InsideOut Project who are a clothing brand created, designed and hand produced by young ex-offenders; and we hope to re-theme the reading area in collaboration with We Are Parable for the Spring/Summer.

We shall also be spotlighting Women business owners, creatives, authors and artists in store throughout March for International Women's Day which is on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month, this is supported by an online collection that is live and ready to shop now.

The Gallery Shop is open again for Alice Neel and the first days of trading have been incredibly positive. A new format of catalogue has been produced, the reduced size and page count allows us to sell to our visitors for a very accessible £15. This different approach has been well received by customers in the shop and is proving to be a

positive change from the larger, heavier and pricier catalogues we have seen made previously.

Looking ahead, research and sourcing will start for the autumn exhibition in the coming weeks, as will Christmas planning and buying to ensure we are securing stock in plenty of time for the gifting season.

### **Food and Beverage**

Totoro had a beneficial impact on secondary spend throughout the Barbican, with restaurants and bars all exceeding budget income for the period. The Members' Lounge, which was taken over by Barbican Bars and given a mini makeover at the start of the Totoro run achieved an income of £30k over the period, which was better than expected and was very well received by existing members and the new 'day members' trial to encourage the new audience to use the Members' Lounge and sign up for full Membership.

The Stalls Bar and cafe, which have not been operating at full capacity for several months due the shutters being removed for H&S reasons, will be closed for the latter part of March to have new shutters and counters installed. This will give us the opportunity to refurbish the café front counter, which will have the old fashioned chilled units removed and more tills installed to speed up service.

A significant project to replace the existing EPOS system across all the bars has been completed. There are some teething problems as would be expected, but once up and running the new system will allow us to introduce some new and innovative solutions to speed up service at intervals.

The Barbican Bars team are also preparing to take over the operation of the Cinema Café Bar in April 2023. The offer initially will be similar to existing but done with our customary flare and imagination. Opening hours and food offer will be enhanced as the business grows from its current position

## **5. REPORT: FINANCE**

In 22/23 we had expected that audience numbers would steadily increase and re-establish as the year progressed, however, this has not been the case. With the cost-of-living crisis upon us, we recognise the challenge ahead of us to build footfall and capacities back to the same levels as 2019. In order to tackle the current year deficit, savings strategies have been implemented including stopping all non-essential spend and holding vacancies where we can. Positive contributions to our results have come from strong business events bookings and ancillary spend from theatre audiences.

We are continuing our work on the 23/24 budget and the longer-term plan. Financial targets and wider initiatives continue to be worked through, to help ensure the Barbican's financial sustainability. Work also continues on Barbican renewal financial modelling, and its impact on the longer-term financial plan.

## 6. REPORT: DEVELOPMENT

The Trusts and Grants team are delighted to have confirmed income towards our arts and learning projects, which include a new grant from Cockayne – Grants for the Arts towards the Ragazze Quartet's new production of *The World's Wife*, co-commissioned by the Barbican, and unlocking the second phase of the CHK Foundation's multi-year grant towards school activities at the Barbican and our Teacher Lab programme.

The corporate team are in dialogue with several potential brand partners, and are preparing to onboard a new corporate member, with contract and membership start date pending and updates to follow.

Our Patrons programme continues to thrive. We recently hosted supporters at a special preview of *Alice Neel: Hot off the Griddle* and will host another Patrons evening with the theatre company Complicite for their production *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*.

Additionally, we're working on an event with the Met Opera Orchestra, and on the Patron 'On Sale' Priority Booking for the upcoming Autumn Music and Theatre season. We're looking forward to improving our Patron onboarding process, thinking about the membership packs they receive and how they are welcomed to the Barbican.