

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Theatre Cryptic Ltd	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001007	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£258,000	£270,000
<b>Officer's recommendation</b>		
<p>Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks</p> <p><i>Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words</i></p>		
<b>Comments:</b>		
<p>TC has submitted an ambitious plan to expand their current work and increase their programme. The targets for the Artistic Objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase from 1 to 2 new works in creation, 2 in performance and 1 touring internationally.</li> <li>• 1 international invites per annum to present work.</li> <li>• 1 international commission every 2 years</li> <li>• Positive response/ assessment of Scottish stakeholders, audiences, peer groups and press.</li> <li>• To work with artists and collaborators of high calibre, such as Gavin Bryars and Yannis Kyriakides.</li> <li>• Production shelf life of minimum 3 years.</li> </ul> <p>The targets for the International Objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent and quality of artistic collaborations – 1 per production.</li> <li>• Success of international co-productions/ commissions – 1 every 2 years.</li> <li>• Success of international tours – press coverage and securing 1 future international tour per annum.</li> <li>• Favourable response of international funders, international associate, programmers and sponsors – continuation of support from at least one partner per tour</li> <li>• Presence at international network meetings and trade fairs – minimum of 3 per year.</li> </ul> <p>The organisation has also set out audience engagement targets which include an education programme working with various groups linking to the performances.</p> <p>The strengths of the proposal are:          The artistic value of proposed activity is very high and would be of great value to showcasing Scotland's talent, the organisation already have a good track record of providing high quality performances and projects.          The organisation are secure in their governance and staffing, providing clear outlines for staffing, responsibilities and governance.          Their commitment to working with Scottish and International musicians/ composers.          Development of new technologies for performance.</p> <p>A concern would be the lack of information on their marketing plan (which is in development). The education programme could also be more innovative. There are concerns linked to the budget which have been highlighted by the FCO, but on balance this is a programme that is deliverable.</p>		

<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 30/1/08 Revised: 20.3.08
Print name:	Jennifer McGlone	

**Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors**

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

The panel consisted of Murray Buchanan, Paul Bream, Jim Gaitens, Rachel Nelken and Susan Nickalls, with ratings received from Marie Fielding by email.

**Comments:**

- Theatre Cypriot's 'fantastic product' was highly regarded by the panel as demonstrating a consistently high quality of creative artistic vision.
- The panel commented on the high proportion of Cypriot's biggest and most prestigious projects taking place outwith the UK, but were satisfied that funding this company would be of benefit to Scotland and Scottish audiences. They recognised that the overall assessment would depend on the company's standing within the Scottish Arts Council and its international remit.
- The panel felt that an education / mentoring programme should be a priority for a company of such high standing, and that it would be good for Theatre Cypriot to share its successes in breaking new ground.
- The panel pointed out that no evidence had been provided about how audience growth would be achieved, or how additional sponsorship targets would be reached.
- The panel felt that the company had the potential to fully exploit the commercial market-place, with excellent product placement opportunities, and that they should be exploring other sources of income even more actively.

The panel rated the importance of the application in being supported as **Medium to High**.

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

**Comments:**

In terms of creativity and innovation, Cypriot is one of the most strategically important organisations within the Scottish Arts Council's portfolio and is certainly of the highest strategic importance to the music department. They are also an organisation with not only an international reputation, but engage in partnership with an array of international collaborators, the most recent the Singapore Arts Festival that resulted in the creation of "Optical Identity" which was performed at the EIF and on tour throughout Scotland as part of the TuneUp programme.

The Creative team at Cryptic, led by Cathie Boyd, wish to move away from the title Theatre Cryptic as they feel the *theatre* descriptor is not appropriate to the work they do as they are totally music and technology based in the creative process and its practical realisation in performance, even though some of those performances are “staged” as well as produced.

The creativity shown by Cryptic is not simply limited to the “composition and creation” of new work, but also to the medium through which it is delivered. The proposed development of new software that can create “virtual clothing” imagery for performers is an ideal example, especially as it is a collaborative project with the Glasgow School of Art.

Further developments, recognising the leading role that Cryptic plays in delivering high quality work programmed and delivered through high-spec equipment technology, is to engage more closely with arts graduates within the broader arts/technology spectrum as an exemplar provider and potentially trainer. This was highlighted by the Specialist Advisor’s panel and would place Cryptic firmly within the learning agenda, especially within the FE/HE sector.

**1. Fit with FXO criteria:** Fully.

**1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists:** Cryptic is unique in its creative use of music and technology and if it were easily to fit within a sector, it would be leading it. As a visionary and creative force, Cryptic has few peers.

**1.2 Improving your engagement with the public:** The recent TuneUp tour for Optical Identity is a good example of Cryptic not only engaging with the public, but expanding and widening its potential output and reach, which is already considerable, especially internationally.

**1.3 Good practice in the governance and management:** A strong and supportive board and hugely creative and visionary administration and management led by Cathie Boyd.

**1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access:** A fully engaging equal opportunities policy is implemented for company and staff.

**1.5 Raising other income at least 25%:** Significantly higher.

**2. Fit with Departmental priorities:** Fully.

**3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims:** Fully and especially the first.

**3.** Based on the lead officer’s assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

**Comments:**

The assessing officer’s report is clear and detailed, particularly commendable as Cryptic’s application and accompanying material was extremely detailed and unsurprisingly creative in content. Cryptic have applied for a significant uplift in funding, but for this organisation to move forwards and deliver all that they are eminently capable of delivering, that request is not unreasonable.

In the current financial year Cryptic will have received £208,265 and had an application for new multi-media equipment been approved, that figure would have been £227K, so if a level of consolidation took place regarding all funding, the request is seen in a more positive light, in my view.

The music department have prioritised Cryptic and the St Magnus Festival as two organisations, now within the flexible funded remit of the SAC that must retain and indeed increase their investment from us to maintain their position as market leaders.

With additional funding that consolidates all their previous funding, Cryptic would remain a key component of the music department's portfolio whatever is determined by the current transition process. We would need more information on expected box office return and on audience development, but Cryptic has secured and will continue to work with partners on an international basis. Cryptic may appear to be optimistic on box office returns, but I believe their targets are realistic and potentially within their reach if accompanied by the necessary marketing and promotion.

The company is also active in the FE/HE sector. As one of the market leaders in performance technology, Cryptic should also now be working with arts graduates in a training/mentoring capacity and I would like to see them develop this potential portfolio, which will become increasingly important in a music industry that relies so much on keeping abreast of all available advances in technology.

Cryptic has a strong board and very strong artistic leadership and business acumen and my rating is high as their contribution to our sector is so significant.

#### **1.1 Application rating: High**

There is consistency in the commentary from both the assessing officer and the specialist advisors that recognises the high quality output of Cryptic and the imagination and vision demonstrated in every aspect of this company's work. For their strategic importance alone, both to the music department and to the Scottish Arts Council, of course, I must rate them as high.

**1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:** The uniqueness of Cryptic's work, their vision and creative imagination and how they are pushing the boundaries of technology forward all the time.

**1.3 Strengths of application:** The quality of their work, the strength of artistic and administrative direction, their commitment to new work and new technologies.

**1.4 Weaknesses of applications:** Further development of the marketing plan and more clarity of budgets aligned to specific project planning.

**1.5 Specific risks associated with the application:** The need to secure firm international partnerships for their work, but this can be turned into a strength when secured, which we are confident will be the case.

**1.6 Development areas identified:** Marketing as above.

1.7 Recommended level of support: £230,000 and £245,000 respectively.

#### **4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme**

##### **Comments:**

**1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?** Cryptic's main performance areas were traditionally the central belt, but with Optical Identity touring Scotland, which included the Western Isles, their visual presence and repute were significantly enhanced. Add to that their plans for the future and their continuing international profile, they are one of Scotland's most significant exports. Their material is also available on-line and the interactive route is where most of their marketing and selling of product is so successfully exploited.

**1.2 Where will the audience come from?** Internationally, both physical and virtual.

<b>Head of Department's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>HIGH</b>
<b>Head of Department's signature:</b>		<b>Date: 14 February 2008 Revised 25 March 2008</b>
<b>Print name:</b>	<b>Ian Smith</b>	

<b>Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)</b>		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
<b>Comments:</b> Good overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects development areas identified, the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. Support of £230,000 annually is proposed.		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		<b>Strong Medium</b>
<b>Chair of Meeting signature:</b>		<b>Date: 2 April 2008</b>
<b>Print name:</b>	<b>Iain Munro</b>	

<b>Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)</b>		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Support of £230,000 annually is proposed.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		<b>Strong Medium</b>
<b>Acting Chief Executive signature:</b>	<b>Jim Tough</b>	<b>Date: 10 April 2008</b>

<b>Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions</b>		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
<b>Joint Board Final Decision</b>		<b>APPROVE</b>
<b>Date: 24 April 2008</b>	<b>If approved for support, enter sum awarded</b>	<b>£230,000</b>

