

**Milton Keynes Theatre
& Gallery Company**
The first years 1999–2005

Registered Charity No. 1059678





Milton Keynes Theatre and
Gallery from Campbell Park

Vision

To provide one of the UK's leading centres for the arts, with a national and international reputation for artistic excellence and innovation.

“To build a brand new theatre and gallery where none previously existed was a huge risk. But Milton Keynes is practised at risk and the vision, courage and impeccable execution from early investors ensured that Milton Keynes had a theatre and gallery of exceptional success, in buildings of which it can be proud.”

Roy Nevitt, Chairman, Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company

“Milton Keynes Theatre and Milton Keynes Gallery make an outstanding contribution to the cultural life of Milton Keynes. They offer a huge range of performing and visual arts to the residents of the Borough and the wider region. They provide a broad educational programme that has engaged thousands of our children. And they are working alongside the Council and others, to plan an even more exciting cultural future for our City. They are a key element of the success story that is Milton Keynes and the Council is proud to be a partner in their enterprise.”

Councillor Euan Henderson, Milton Keynes Council

Realisation

Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company was formed to work with the early investors to build the theatre and gallery complex. It now manages the contractual interests and provides the strategic framework for the complex. On behalf of its funding partners, it also monitors the performance of its operational arms: Milton Keynes Theatre and Milton Keynes Gallery.

The complex was built for Milton Keynes Council with funding from: the National Lottery through the Arts Council of England, the Commission for New Towns (now English Partnerships), The Powell Foundation, Milton Keynes corporate and community investors.

Designed by Blonski | Heard architects, it was one of 50 designs short-listed for the Royal Institute of British Architects' major annual Stirling Prize for Architecture in 2001.

Arts Council England's *Percent for Art* scheme enabled Edward Allington, principal Consulting Artist to Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company, to place the work of contemporary artists and craftspeople at the heart of the building process. Other commissions have followed.

The Milton Keynes Theatre and Gallery complex opened in October 1999 and is now valued by artists, respected by critics and endorsed by audiences.

“It’s the best thing to happen to MK since the city began.”

Audience member, Milton Keynes Theatre

Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company

Structure

Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company is a registered charity, governed by a voluntary board recruited from diverse Milton Keynes community sectors. Its work is informed by specialist volunteer advisers sitting on three committees, guiding the Theatre, Gallery and future development.

Operational delivery

Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company delivers its artistic programme through direct employment of a gallery team, headed by a Gallery Director; and through a management agreement with the Ambassador Theatre Group, whose theatre team is headed by a Chief Executive. Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company has a small executive team. Through this and its volunteer Board, it actively contributes to the community of Milton Keynes, supporting the work of its partners and contributing financially to key community-wide initiatives.

“Arts Council England is happy to be associated with Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company. These buildings, which were part of the original plan for Milton Keynes, had to wait for the Arts Lottery before they could be realised. They have quickly proved to be central to the cultural life of the growing city and will be important examples as the city plans for its further growth of its communities over the next 20 years. The combination of the Theatre’s association with the Ambassador Theatre Group and the Gallery receiving support from ourselves is an important example of how arts organisations can flourish in the complex cultural economy of the 21st century.”

Felicity Harvest, Regional Executive Director, Arts Council England, South East

Growing with the city

The Theatre and Gallery are at the heart of Milton Keynes, “a city that thinks differently, embraces evolution and champions change” (*vision statement from Milton Keynes Community Strategy*). Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company shares this commitment to challenge, to innovation and to growth.

It aims to build on its success and proven demand for its cultural programme by developing its complex, forming an enlarged creative focus in the heart of the city to provide a hub of cultural activity for the whole community.

In close co-operation with its partners and informed by its audiences, Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company is developing its future artistic vision for an expanded theatre, gallery, education and community programme. The aim is for this enhancement to be self-financing, in line with the principles of the Growth Agenda. Assessing the needs and testing the feasibility of this vision have now begun.

“At a time of major growth, a city needs culture to nurture its sense of place, inspire its learning and to add distinctiveness to its economy. Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company makes a huge contribution to this.”

Sir Bob Reid, Chairman, Milton Keynes Partnership

Milton Keynes Gallery

Our Commitment: to provide an exciting, entertaining, stimulating, challenging and diverse arts and entertainment programme

Milton Keynes Gallery has free admission and comprises three large spaces used to display temporary exhibitions of contemporary art. Its programme has three interconnected strands: gallery exhibitions, off-site projects in and around the city, and education events aimed at interpreting and generating critical debate about the practice of contemporary artists and their relationship with their audience.

Being one of the most successful new towns, the city of Milton Keynes has provided a platform for programme experimentation. Since opening in 1999, Milton Keynes Gallery has exploded onto the contemporary visual art scene. Through its national and international touring programme, Milton Keynes Gallery raises the cultural profile of Milton Keynes as a creative city.

In its first five years, Milton Keynes Gallery has:

- Programmed 52 exhibitions: the Gallery originates 80% of its shows each year
- Presented 75 public talks and events
- Involved 152 artists and speakers
- Toured its exhibitions to 11 galleries in Britain and Europe
- Worked with 127 schools and educational institutions
- Commissioned 5 limited edition prints by exhibiting artists for sale to visitors and collectors
- Received its 200,000th visitor in 2005
- In the year 2004–5 provided 3950 education experiences to 4–19 year olds and held 115 education sessions
- Achieved approx 64% repeat visitors in 2004–5
- Celebrated its fifth anniversary in September 2004 by literally transforming the exterior into a public art ‘object’ with an ambitious commission by Michael Craig-Martin

“Milton Keynes is an evolving sociological and architectural experiment; it is a unique context and offers a richness of opportunities for artists through cultural organisations such as Milton Keynes Gallery.”

Michael Stanley, Director, Milton Keynes Gallery

Gallery programme

“Milton Keynes Gallery is a real asset to Milton Keynes. In a very short time, Milton Keynes Gallery has made an invaluable contribution to the growing impact and public recognition of the visual arts in this country through the creativity, quality and ambition of its programme.”

Sir Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate



Gilbert & George: *Rudimentary Pictures*

8 October 1999 – 9 January 2000

For its opening exhibition, Milton Keynes Gallery staged a solo show of new work by the prominent British artists Gilbert & George. Received with great critical acclaim, the exhibition was seen by over 17,500 people. In 2005, the artists went on to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale.

Phil Collins: *yeahyou, baby you*

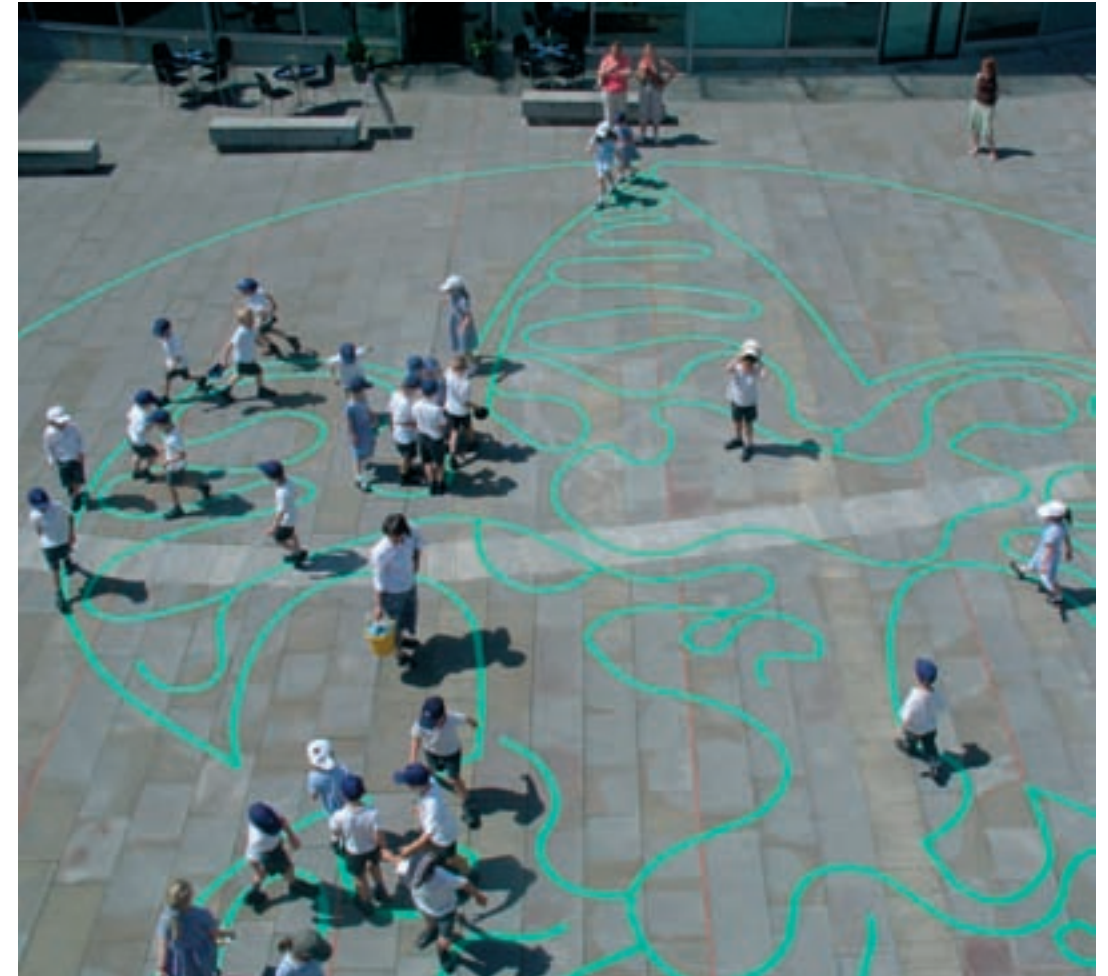
9 April – 29 May 2005

Phil Collins: *yeahyou, baby you*, an exhibition produced by Milton Keynes Gallery, has been shortlisted for the prestigious annual Deutsche Börse international award for Photography and the accompanying catalogue awarded third prize in the acclaimed AXA/Art Newspaper Exhibition Catalogue Award 2005. The exhibition tours from Milton Keynes Gallery to Tirana in Albania, Colchester, Swansea and St. Gallen, Switzerland.

“...the excellent Milton Keynes Gallery”

Richard Dorment, *Daily Telegraph* art critic

Gallery education programme



Amaze

Educational project with Milton Keynes Scout Group, Margaret Powell Square, 2005

In 2004–5 Milton Keynes worked with 96 primary schools, 27 secondary schools and 29 further education establishments. It provides teachers with a school-friendly ‘year view’ planner highlighting thematic curriculum links to the gallery’s exhibitions.

Milton Keynes Gallery works with a range of formal and informal community groups, including Scouts, skateboarders, local youth groups and nearby family centres. In 2004–5 Milton Keynes Gallery worked with 11 special needs groups, including collaborations with Anjali Dance Company, Milton Keynes Arts for Health and SCOPE.



Pae White: *in no particular order*
19 November 2005 – 22 January 2006
The first solo exhibition in the UK by the American artist Pae White saw a remarkable transformation of the gallery, especially the Long Gallery which included *Overneath*, a new commission by Milton Keynes Gallery. Throughout 2005 alone, Milton Keynes Gallery has provided the technical support and funding for eleven international artists' commissions.

Gallery off-site programme

In addition to the gallery exhibitions, Milton Keynes Gallery's off-site programme has taken work by Keith Wilson, Langlands and Bell and Johanna Billing into the heart of the city. The Gallery collaborates with schools, community centres, higher education institutions and shopping centres to temporarily place work by today's artists in public spaces.



Nathan Coley: *Show Home*
Margaret Powell Square, 2004



Michael Craig-Martin:
Exterior façade commission
Milton Keynes Gallery, 2004



Keith Wilson: *Calf Ring*
Installation at The Open University Campus,
Milton Keynes, 2004



Johanna Billing: *You Don't Love Me Yet*
Live performance at Middleton Hall,
the centre:mk, Milton Keynes, 2005



Langlands and Bell: *Who's Afraid of Red, Black and Blue?*
Installation of eight flags, Station Square,
Milton Keynes, 2005

Milton Keynes Theatre

Our Commitment: to provide an exciting, entertaining, stimulating, challenging and diverse arts and entertainment programme

Milton Keynes Theatre is a presenting house for national productions of drama, dance and music, holding from 900 to 1,400 people. It is operated by the Ambassador Theatre Group, a theatre owning and producing company, chosen for its track record of quality programming, commitment to education and community work and its viable, sustainable management practice.

Through the commitment of its audiences and rigorous operational management, Milton Keynes Theatre subsidises its own non profit-making education and outreach work, the not-for-profit work of Milton Keynes Gallery and the community contributions of Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company.

In its first five years, Milton Keynes Theatre has:

- Averaged 42 touring productions, 22 special one-night events each year
- Featured annual series of concerts by the city's own Milton Keynes City Orchestra, and promoted concerts by international orchestras such as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
- Issued an average of 351,945 tickets each year
- Achieved average occupancy of 72.6%, way in excess of the national average of 59.9% in 2003-4
- Provided 4,987 education and lifelong learning experiences in 2003-4
- Been selected for a Department for Culture, Media and Sport pilot research project, working with Stantonbury Campus Theatre and Northern Ballet Theatre
- Hosted the country's first ever audio-described ballet performance
- Provided talks, tours and insight workshops to nearly 600 young people in the last three years

Theatre programme

“Because our audiences are so supportive and the theatre building so beautiful, the country’s best companies and performers are choosing Milton Keynes Theatre over others for their work. This means we can offer Milton Keynes audiences the highest quality and widest choice of programme.”

Richard Wingate, Chief Executive, Milton Keynes Theatre



Award winning Matthew Bourne
production, *Swan Lake*
24 – 29 October 2005

Theatre education programme



The National Theatre's production of Alan Bennett's *The History Boys*
22 – 26 November 2005

“With its enthusiastic audiences, beautiful building and supportive staff, Milton Keynes Theatre is a favourite stop on the touring roster for the National Theatre and we look forward to returning again.”

Nicholas Hytner, Artistic Director,
National Theatre



Rambert Dance, *Constant Speed*
2 – 5 November 2005

An example of one of approximately 15 Arts Council England subsidised productions that perform at Milton Keynes Theatre each year. Others include Glyndebourne Touring, Welsh National Opera and the National Theatre.



Glyndebourne on Tour, *Le Nozze di Figaro*
15 & 17 November 2005

Milton Keynes Theatre's Education and Outreach department collaborates with a number of companies and professional theatre practitioners across the season. In 2003–4, it provided 4,987 learning experiences, including 3 teacher INSET sessions and 22 educational collaborations, encouraging applications for Arts Council England's *Artsmark* programme.

“Glyndebourne is delighted to have been touring to Milton Keynes since the opening of the theatre. The company relishes the opportunity to perform in a state of the art venue and has been overwhelmed by the ever-increasing support and loyalty of the audiences.”

David Pickard, General Director,
Glyndebourne Productions

Theatre community programme



Milton Keynes students and National Youth Music Theatre, *Tin Pan Ali*

2 September 2000

Community groups who have performed at Milton Keynes Theatre have included Milton Keynes Sinfonia, Doreen's School of Dance, Milton Keynes Chorale, Milton Keynes Music Service, Dance Xchange, Myra Tiffin Performing Arts Theatre Company, Danesborough Chorus, Milton Keynes Scout and Guide Gang Show. In 2003–4, 95 production-learning opportunities were also offered to the community, including technical, wardrobe and lighting design.



Northern Ballet Theatre, *Swan Lake*

28 September – 2 October 2004

Milton Keynes Theatre has a strategic relationship with Northern Ballet Theatre, a key element to this being joint education, access and community work. In both 2003 and 2004, Milton Keynes Theatre collaborated with Northern Ballet Theatre to conduct pioneering access work for the visually impaired. Other such work included 10 audio describer led previews, 15 audio described performances, 9 signed performances, 3 touch tours and 3 Stagertext captioned performances.

“You made a disabled visit very helpful and easy.”

Audience member, Milton Keynes Theatre

Finance

Income is used primarily to deliver the core programme. The theatre and gallery programmes are a mixture of free access, artistic risk and not-for-profit work, sensitively balanced with commercial activity. Financially, the not-for-profit programme is supported by a combination of funding income and commercial programming.

The successful partnership with the Ambassador Theatre Group has been crucial to the delivery of a balanced, viable theatre and gallery programme. However, the not-for-profit programming could not be maintained without the essential core revenue funding provided annually by Milton Keynes Council and Arts Council England, South East.

In addition to these main income sources, the theatre and gallery each supplement their income by developing funding relationships with agencies such as Arts Council England and Milton Keynes Partnership, commercial sponsors, grant-making trusts and individual donors.

Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company and the Ambassador Theatre Group report on different financial years. This, and the complex nature of the operating structure, makes it impracticable to combine in a meaningful way the financial performance of Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company and Milton Keynes Gallery, with that of Milton Keynes Theatre.

The Financial Statements for the Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company for the year ending 31 March 2005 are available on request to The Administrator, Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company, 3 Theatre Walk, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3PX. The Financial Statements for Milton Keynes Theatre Limited, a subsidiary of The Ambassador Theatre Group Limited, for the year ended 30th September 2004, may be obtained from Companies House.

People



Trustees and Directors of the Board

- 1 Roy Nevitt (Chairman)
Susan Adams
- 2 Will Cousins
- 3 Clive Gear (Finance)
- 4 Christina Grant
- 5 Councillor Euan Henderson
- 6 Martin Holman (Chairman, Gallery Committee)
- 7 Jan Lloyd
- 8 Lady Scott (Chairman, Theatre Committee)
- 9 John Walker (Chairman, Development Committee)
- 10 Andrew Peck (Company Secretary)

Advisers to the Board

John Best (Chief Executive, Milton Keynes Council)
Paquita Lamacraft (Cultural Strategy Manager, Milton Keynes Council)
Robert de Grey (Consultant Architect)
Jacky Scott (Interim Director Strategic Development)

Theatre Committee

Clive Gear
Tim Harpin
Trevor Harris
Jamie Haynes and Jean Rigby
Ben Hennessy
Rosemary Hill
Lesley King
Wendy Lehmann
Jan Lloyd
Lady Scott (Chairman)
Pat Swell

Gallery Committee

Will Cousins
Ian Davenport
Graham Ellis
Clive Gear
Christina Grant
Martin Holman (Chairman)
John Harper
Jill Stansfield
Professor John Zarnecki

Most of Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company's people have lived and worked in Milton Keynes for many years. They know their community well and are committed to collaborating to ensure that Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company is an exemplary contributor to the success of their City.

Keep in touch

The way we work recognises the distinctive needs and interests of our partners. We are committed to co-operation and participation and we:

- Welcome the views and concerns of all partners
- Encourage our people to play an active role in the community
- Seek to involve as many groups as possible in our work
- Strive to create co-operation between all those involved

The satisfaction and loyalty of our partners is key to achievement of our goals and we will only meet this high aspiration if you tell us how we're doing and how we can improve. So please tell us what you think about us, our contribution to Milton Keynes, our services, our organisation, our future ambitions or anything else that comes to mind. We welcome all of your comments and suggestions.

Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company

Brian Meek (Administrator)
Jacky Scott (Interim Director Strategic Development)
3 Theatre Walk
Central Milton Keynes MK9 3PX
Tel: 01908 558 321 (Company administration)
Fax: 01908 558 322
Email: admin@mktgc.co.uk

Milton Keynes Theatre

Richard Wingate (Chief Executive)
Milton Keynes Theatre
500 Marlborough Gate
Central Milton Keynes MK9 3 NZ
Tel: 01908 547 500 (Stage Door)
Tel: 0870 060 6652 (Box Office)
Fax: 01908 547 647
www.miltonkeynestheatre.com

Milton Keynes Gallery

Michael Stanley (Director)
900 Midsummer Boulevard
Central Milton Keynes MK9 3QA
Tel: 01908 676 900 (Administration)
Recorded information: 01908 558307
Fax: 01908 558 308
www.mk-g.org
Email: info@mk-g.org
Admission free

Thank you

The Company expresses its grateful thanks to all those who have contributed to the launch and continuing success of Milton Keynes Theatre and Milton Keynes Gallery, including the original investors, ongoing funders, sponsors and patrons, performers and artists, audiences and visitors, current and past staff – in particular the founding Chairman, Sir Peter Thompson, the first Theatre Chief Executive, Michael Lynas, and the first Gallery Director, Stephen Snoddy.

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Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery Company gratefully acknowledges support from:

The National Lottery through the Arts Council of England

Milton Keynes Council

Arts Council England, South East

English Partnerships

The Powell Foundation

Milton Keynes corporate and community supporters

Designed by Fraser Muggeridge studio

Printed by Grillford



Our contribution to Milton Keynes

- **Raising the external profile of the city, contributing to its creative capital and economic success**
- **Contributing to the well being of its community through high quality, sustainably managed arts presentation, education and social inclusion activities**
- **Commitment to partnership working and shared community objectives**

“Milton Keynes Theatre & Gallery are wonderful examples of how Culture positively contributes to a community’s sense of worth and place and to its economic well being.”

David Lammy MP, Minister of State for Culture

Front cover: Milton Keynes Gallery reflected on Milton Keynes Theatre

