

## PRESS RELEASE 24 July 2019

### Theatres Trust awards over £50,000 to eleven theatres across London as grant scheme changes allow more small theatres to apply

Eleven more small London theatres receive up to £5,000 each from the Theatres Trust **London Small Theatres Grants Scheme** for projects that improve operation, access and environment for all theatre users.

Five theatres were able to apply for the first time thanks to changes made to the tenure and charitable structure criteria to widen eligibility: **Coronet Theatre, King's Head Theatre, Matchstick Piehouse, Pentameters** and **2Northdown**.

Hampstead's pub theatre, **Pentameters**, will undertake urgent electrical works which will protect this well-loved local theatre – this grant is the first the venue has ever received.

The **Coronet Theatre** will be able to provide induction loop facilities for the hearing impaired as it upgrades its sound system; and the **King's Head Theatre**, will be able to ensure its new venue is as accessible as possible.

**Matchstick Piehouse**, a new 60-seat railway arch theatre, will improve the flexibility of its auditorium with extra sound proofing and rigging positions. A benefit to all users, this work will also reduce the risk of noise complaints from neighbours.

Also newly eligible **2Northdown**, a small comedy venue in King's Cross, the testing ground for comedians expanding from stand-up, will install a permanent stage allowing artists the facilities to present this art form more theatrically.

Six other theatres receive Theatres Trust funding to ensure better facilities for audience and artist. The **Bernie Grant Arts Centre**, in Tottenham, will ensure the safety of its visitors by installing improved security systems, and those attending the **Pleasance Islington** and **Studio 3 Arts** will benefit from upgraded heating and cooling systems.

The Grade II listed **Greenwich Theatre** will enhance its new studio space for small-scale productions by installing a new removable rostra platform and creating a new dressing room, so it can better support artists, staff and audiences at rehearsals and during performances; and **The Playground Theatre**, a converted bus depot which opened last year as a producing theatre, will enhance the functioning of the site with better external signage, working lights and theatre curtains. And finally the **Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre**, a 150-seat amateur theatre will refurbish and upgrade its accessible toilets, after water damage from a leaky roof.

**Tom Stickland, Theatres Adviser at the Theatres Trust** said: "The eleven projects awarded funding this round really highlight the diversity and heritage of London's small theatres – with widened eligibility criteria we are now able to support pub theatres that are stalwarts of their local communities, and more exciting new spaces just beginning to establish a loyal following. The small theatres of London create a unique ecology that is

#### Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

T 020 7836 8591 E [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) W [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://theatrestrust.org.uk)

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central to what makes the city a global cultural capital, and artists and audiences at these theatre deserve excellent facilities and experiences.”

The next round of the London Small Theatres Grants Scheme is now open. The deadline for applications is **13 January at noon**. Further details about the scheme can be found: [theatretrust.org.uk/grants](http://theatretrust.org.uk/grants)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

Contact Justine Harvey, Marketing and Communications Manager or Kate Carmichael, Communications Coordinator: [press@theatretrust.org.uk](mailto:press@theatretrust.org.uk)

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**Theatres Trust** is the national advisory public body for theatres. We believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live performance. We champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. We do this by providing advice on the design, planning, development and sustainability of theatres, campaigning on behalf of theatres old and new and offering financial assistance through grants. [theatretrust.org.uk](http://theatretrust.org.uk)

The **London Small Theatres Grants Scheme** was launched in summer 2015 by the **Mackintosh Foundation** in partnership with the London Mayor's Office, to help small theatres in the city with vital capital funding. In spring 2016 **Soho Estates** joined the Mackintosh Foundation as the second major donor to the London Small Theatres Grants Scheme. These eleven awards bring the total number of small London theatres funded by the scheme to 36.

**The Mackintosh Foundation** was founded in 1988 by Cameron Mackintosh to promote and develop theatrical, musical and dramatic arts; relieve suffering from and promote research into the causes and treatment of AIDS/cancer; provide for medical research generally and relief of sickness; relief for the homeless and poverty stricken; promotion of the conservation, protection and enhancement in the UK of nature and the amenities of the countryside, including areas of natural beauty.

**Soho Estates** began as a collection of historic buildings acquired from the 1970s to the 1990s by Paul Raymond. Today, the estate covers large parts of Soho's 87 acres, and its tenants reflect the vibrant mix found in Soho, including restaurants, bars and clubs, hotels, independent retailers, and offices. The company focuses its philanthropic activities on charities and projects in the local area, tackling issues affecting communities within Soho and the West End. This includes partnerships with Centrepont, Terrence Higgins Trust, the Soho Parish School and Soho Create, as well as funding for events, festivals and markets.

## **GRANT RECIPIENTS**

### **Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Haringey | Security upgrades | £5,000**

The Bernie Grant Arts Centre opened in 2007 with the aim of supporting culturally diverse artists and audiences in Tottenham and the wider area. The organisation sits on a long campus with three separate buildings, each includes a rehearsal space, allowing numerous artistic projects to take place across the site at any one time. In an effort to minimize antisocial behaviour around the theatre an improved entry control and new security camera system will be installed, which will be funded by a Theatres Trust London Small Theatres Grant. This will increase security and safety for visitors, staff and artists who visit or work at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre.

### **Coronet Theatre, Kensington and Chelsea | Induction loop | £5,000**

The Grade II listed Coronet in Notting Hill, initially a playhouse and later cinema, has a varied history and the building has suffered from a serious lack of investment. In June 2014 Coronet Ondine bought it with a view to its full restoration as a home for artists and the community, showcasing international talent, while restoring and preserving its rich history. The 190-seat producing and presenting house is in the process of upgrading its temporary set up, and is installing a new fully comprehensive sound system. A grant from the Theatres Trust London Small Theatres Grant scheme will allow the Coronet to install an induction loop at the same time as the sound upgrade, so that more audiences can access and enjoy productions in a way that they have not been able to before.

### **Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre, Bexley | Disabled toilet refurbishment | £5,000**

The Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre is a purpose-built 150-seat amateur theatre, founded in 1948. The society has 1,300 members and produces around ten productions annually. The roof over the lower foyer is leaking and water has caused damage to many of the toilets. A Theatres Trust London Small Grant award will contribute towards urgent repairs and improvements to the disabled toilet area, alongside wider works including a full toilet upgrade and roof repair. Enhanced toilet facilities will benefit the large community of active members and audiences at this community-run theatre at the start of the next season in October 2019.

### **Greenwich Theatre, Greenwich | Studio refurbishment | £5,000**

The Grade II listed Greenwich Theatre is a 421-seat mid-scale venue adapted from a Victorian Music Hall. It is a community venue with an emphasis on new work and musical theatre. In 2016 a new studio space was created within its former café area to offer companies rehearsal space to experiment and try out new work. A Theatres Trust London Small Grant award will fund part of the theatre's second phase of works designed to enhance the studio space. A new removable rostra platform and the creation of a new dressing room will ensure the new studio can better support artists, staff and audiences at rehearsals or the performance of small-scale shows. This will also help improve the theatre's operational viability.

### **King's Head Theatre, Islington | Accessibility in new venue | £5,000**

The King's Head Theatre, founded in 1970, will be moving into an adjacent new basement

venue as part of the major Islington Square Development. The historic pub theatre has a reputation for LGBTQ+ content and opera. The lack of representation of disability on and off-stage is something the theatre aims to address in its new building. A Theatres Trust London Small Grant Scheme award will help ensure the new venue can support the access requirements of a diverse range of practitioners and audiences.

**Matchstick's Piehouse, Lewisham | Sound proofing and rigging alteration | £5,000**

The 60-seat Matchstick Piehouse is a new railway arch theatre, presenting new work and serving pies. There are constraints being situated in a railway arch and an award from the Theatres Trust London Small Theatres Grants Scheme will enhance its sound proofing and alter the rigging positions to increase the flexibility of the auditorium. This will provide better facilities for audiences and artists, and reduce the risk of noise complaints from neighbours.

**Pentameters Theatre, Camden | Remedial electrical works | £3,500**

The Pentameters Theatre is a 60-seat pub theatre that has been open since 1968 and operates as a producing theatre. Recent inspections uncovered the need for urgent rewiring and repairs and a Theatres Trust London Small Theatres grant will fully fund these works. The remedial electrical works will protect the theatre and allow it to continue to operate. This grant is the first grant the theatre has ever received.

**The Playground Theatre, Kensington and Chelsea | Auditorium improvements | £5,000**

The 200-seat The Playground Theatre opened in 2017 in a converted bus depot. The resident company have been operating for some time but this is its first permanent performance space. Previously used as a rehearsal space the theatre now presents new productions and community workshops. A Theatres Trust London Small Theatres grant will support the venue with a package of works including new signage, working lights and theatre curtains, improving its profile in the community, as well as operational viability and environmental improvements.

**Pleasance, Islington | Heating and cooling system | £5,000**

The 400-seat Pleasance was built in the 1880s as a wood store for the London General Omnibus factory, and converted into theatre in 1995. Its London base is a development ground for its Edinburgh Festival Fringe shows, as well as a small to medium scale receiving house. Faults with existing heating and cooling systems are having an impact on audience comfort and a grant from the Theatres Trust London Small Theatres Grants Scheme will allow the venue to introduce a low-carbon combined electric heating and cooling system, to ensure audiences and artists have a pleasant working environment. The works complement further environmental Improvement planned at the venue to reduce its carbon footprint.

**Studio 3 Arts, Barking and Dagenham | Heating and cooling system | Up to £5,000**

A 100-seat black box theatre based in the middle of a housing estate, Studio 3 Arts is one of two Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations in Barking and Dagenham and its recent refurbishment has made the space suitable for performance for its resident and visiting groups. A Theatres Trust London Small Theatres Grants Scheme award will fund the installation of a heating and cooling system throughout the building. The works will greatly

improve the venue for the audience, artist and participants who engage with Studio 3 Arts.

**2Northdown, Islington | Permanent stage | £2,970**

A 70-seat fringe comedy venue in King's Cross, 2Northdown specialises in long-form comedy and is a testing ground for comedians expanding from stand-up. To allow the venue to stage the productions more theatrically, the venue requires a permanent stage which the Theatres Trust's London Small Theatres Grants Scheme award will fund. This will increase the venue's ability to support the art form and function as a theatre.