



EMBARGOED: 10am, Tuesday 28th January 2020

Theatres Trust announces 2020 Theatres at Risk Register

Press launch: Tuesday 28th January 2020, 10am – 1pm
Hoxton Hall, 130 Hoxton Street, London, N1 6SH

Theatres Trust announces the 2020 Theatres at Risk Register, highlighting theatres across the UK that are under threat of closure, redevelopment or demolition. The 2020 Register is being launched at Hoxton Hall which was removed from the list in 2010 after securing funding for the first stage of its much-needed capital project with support from the Theatres Trust.

Actor and musician Gary Kemp is a dedicated supporter of UK theatres; best known as the lead guitarist and principal songwriter for band Spandau Ballet, Kemp continues to perform in venues around the UK as a musician and as an actor. As a Theatre Trust Trustee, he will host the 2020 launch, showing his passion for these important buildings.

Gary Kemp says, Having access to live performance venues around the country is vital – for audiences to have a good night out but also to provide places for performers starting out to learn their craft and for communities to come together. I have been fortunate enough to perform in amazing theatres throughout my career. There are some truly stunning and unique buildings on the Theatres at Risk Register but importantly none of them are lost causes. With the right level of support and the expertise provided by the Theatres Trust all have the potential to be restored and enjoyed by their communities for generations to come.

Theatres Trust is delighted that the 2020 Risk Register sees two theatres removed with their futures as performance venues now looking certain, thanks to investment in the buildings and the appointment of experienced professional operators. Bradford Odeon, which opened in 1930

as the largest ciné-variety theatre outside London, is being restored thanks to the dedication of Bradford Live and will reopen in 2020-2021 with the NEC Group on board as operating partner. Bradford Odeon will host an expected 300,000 visitors each year with a programme of more than 200 events. Peterborough New Theatre, a former Odeon cinema with beautifully restored interiors, is now under the management of Selladoor Worldwide and re-opened in September 2019 with a programme of quality large-scale theatre productions.

Theatres can be at risk for a variety of reasons, from loss of funding, to lack of maintenance, to threat from development. All those on the Register have strong architectural or cultural significance with the potential to be revitalised and become real assets to the local community again. The Grade II listed Groundlings Theatre in Portsmouth has been added to the Register this year. Built in 1784, it was the first free school in the city, with the upper floor used as a theatre and for concerts. The building has a fascinating history; in 1812, while attending a dance, Elizabeth Dickens reportedly went into labour with Charles Dickens. Renamed as the Groundlings Theatre in 2010, the building retains many of its original features. In 2019, a break-in caused damage to the building fabric and computers were smashed placing the theatre in a financially vulnerable position.

While many of the theatres on the Register remain unchanged from last year's list, significant progress has been made in several cases. There was good news for Walthamstow Granada when it was bought by Waltham Forest Council in May. The council is working with Soho Theatre to restore and reopen this historic Grade II-listed building and reinstitute live performance. Built by Cecil Masey in 1930, with a richly decorated interior by Theodore Komisarjevksy, the Granada was initially a ciné-variety before becoming a live music venue hosting bands like The Beatles and the Rolling Stones.

Positive steps have also been made with the six theatres who received support from the Theatres at Risk Capacity Building Programme. Launched as a pilot scheme in 2019, the programme provided grants and in-depth advice from the Theatres Trust for the early stage work that is often difficult to fundraise for but essential to set theatres at risk on the path to revival. Grade II-listed Burnley Empire, the town's last surviving purpose-built Victorian theatre, received funding and expert support through the programme. Built in 1894, the auditorium was reconstructed in 1911 by eminent theatre architect Bertie Crewe and survives in its original elaborate form with its distinct Crewe interior. The theatre, which once sold out a performance by famed escapologist Harry Houdini, has remained empty since 1995 but was bought by the community group Burnley Empire Trust in December 2018 with Theatres Trust support.

Theatres Trust, the national advisory body for theatres who compile the Register, is calling for more collaborative creative partnerships between local authorities, theatre owners and operators and community groups to protect all theatres on the list.

The theatres appearing on the 2020 register are as follows:

Brighton Hippodrome
Theatre Royal Margate
Victoria Pavilion/Winter Gardens, Morecambe
Dudley Hippodrome
Victoria Theatre, Salford
Spilsby Theatre
Streatham Hill Theatre, London
Groundlings Theatre, Portsea **NEW**
Theatr Ardudwy, Harlech
Winter Gardens Pavilion, Blackpool
Burnley Empire
Plymouth Palace
Hulme Hippodrome
Century Theatre, Coalville
Walthamstow Granada, London
Leith Theatre
King's Theatre, Dundee
Tottenham Palace Theatre, London
Conwy Civic Hall
Mechanics' Institute, Swindon
Intimate Theatre, London
Kings Theatre, Kirkcaldy
Tameside Hippodrome, Ashton-under-Lyne
North Pier Pavilion, Blackpool
Garston Empire, Liverpool
Doncaster Grand
Swansea Palace
Derby Hippodrome
Theatre Royal, Hyde
Theatre Royal, Manchester

Assessment criteria for each theatre is available via www.theatrust.org.uk/how-we-help/theatres-at-risk/theatres-at-risk-assessment-criteria and full case studies on each can be seen on the Theatres Trust website.

To prevent more theatres becoming 'at risk' the industry body cautions that arts funders and policymakers need to recognise the value of existing active theatre buildings and make a commitment to sustained investment in capital projects.

The Theatres at Risk Register launch event is sponsored by Tysers Insurance Brokers (formerly Integro Entertainment & Sport), www.tysersentertainment.com. Head of Theatre, Andy Rudge says, *Tysers Insurance Brokers remain a long-standing supporter of the Theatres Trust and the valuable work it undertakes within the arts and theatre industry – without the Theatres at Risk Register raising awareness of the plight these culturally and socially important buildings face, it is likely they would simply disappear. Their importance and what they contribute to communities cannot be understated, this work must be allowed to continue and indeed encouraged wherever possible.*

Notes to Editors

Launch	Tuesday 28 th January, 10am
Location	Hoxton Hall, 130 Hoxton Street, London, N1 6SH
Website	www.theatrestrust.org.uk
Twitter	@TheatresTrust, #theatresatrisk
Facebook	/theatres.trust
Instagram	@theatrestrust
Photo credit	Bradford Odeon (photograph by David Oxtaby)

Theatres Trust

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. They believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live performance. They champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. They 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.

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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