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### **NATIONAL AWARD WORTH £10,000 FOR YORK THEATRE**

York's prize-winning Joseph Rowntree Theatre has been successful in a nationwide competition run by the Theatres Trust and international stage equipment company, J & C Joel, worth £10,000.

J & C Joel has replaced all of the theatre's stage curtains and upgraded scenery-moving equipment to enable even bigger and better shows to be produced at the gem of an Art Deco community theatre on Haxby Road.

James Wheelwright, Chief Executive of J & C Joel said "We celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year and we wanted to mark it in a special way. We worked with the Theatres Trust, the national organisation protecting and advising theatres, to create the competition. The Joseph Rowntree Theatre won from a very wide field of theatres from up and down the country because we loved what they are doing as a community run theatre, providing affordable entertainment to the people of York and beyond - and who also have big plans for the theatre's future".

Graham Mitchell, a trustee of the charity that runs the theatre added, "We are very grateful to everyone at J & C Joel and at the Theatres Trust for the work being done. The award's timing could not be better, as we are expanding the range and number of shows we host. Coming just after being voted York's "Best Entertainment Venue" in Minster FM's "Listener Choice" awards, this is an immense boost."

Dan Shrimpton, the charity's chair says "The award of £10,000 will make a huge difference to our operation. Our audiences will be able to see ever more imaginative settings for plays and musicals, and, of course, the annual pantomime."

Dan adds, "The theatre was built in 1935 by Rowntrees for the benefit of their employees and the citizens of York so that everyone could experience a wide variety of affordable entertainment, either by taking part or by just coming to watch shows, concerts and films. We have big plans to improve our facilities over the next few years to make the theatre a truly vibrant asset for York, as originally intended by Seebohm and Joseph Rowntree. It really is a community asset run for the people of York, by the people of York".

Tom Stickland, Theatres Adviser at the Theatres Trust says "The Joseph Rowntree Theatre is a great example of the transformational effect that committed community groups can have on theatres, Theatres Trust is pleased to be in a position to link up generous industry specialists like J & C Joel with community theatres so that they can offer this vital support."

The theatre is run entirely by volunteers, and, in 2019, it welcomed 50 hirers of the venue, who staged over 135 performances. It is used by a core of over 35 York- based groups, as well as several touring professionals. If you want to know what is coming up, just visit the theatre website, [www.josephrowntreetheatre.co.uk](http://www.josephrowntreetheatre.co.uk)

J&C Joel was established in 1978 in Sowerby Bridge, near Halifax, founded by John Wheelwright whose family had been involved in the textile industry for more than 150 years. The business now exports to more than 80 countries worldwide, providing products such as front of house theatre curtains, stage backdrops, cycloramas, gauzes, acoustic drapes, projection screens and an array of stage engineering solutions. J&C Joel now has offices in the UK, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia and Australasia.

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. [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://theatrestrust.org.uk)

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