

# tm

Theatres Magazine

The  
Theatres  
Trust

ISSUE #22 WINTER 09

## *Ecovenue*

A brief history of fibrous plasterwork  
Conference 10: Designing school theatres  
Showcase: The Point, Eastleigh  
X, why and wow factor

Protecting theatres for everyone



4



8



12



14

Ecoveneue 2-3

A brief history of fibrous plasterwork 4-7

Conference 10: Designing school theatres 8-11

Showcase: The Point, Eastleigh 12-13

X, why and wow factor 14-17

&

Theatres Round-up 18-19

Current Casework 20-21

Reading Matter 22-23

Friends and Corporate Supporters news 24

Trust news 24

Photo diary 25

Dates for your diary 25

Front cover: Lyceum Theatre, London

Photo: Derek Kendall

National Monuments Record © English Heritage

**Theatres Magazine** is edited by Paul Connolly. © 2009 The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund. All unsigned or otherwise uncredited articles are the work of the Editor. The views expressed editorially or by correspondents in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Trust. Notes, queries and letters are always welcome.

ISSN: 1759-7668

Designed by Damian Le Sueur

Printed by Purple Results Ltd



**European Regional Development Fund**  
Investing in your future

# A changing climate for theatres

When I tuned into the news the other day and saw the effect of the devastating floods in Cumbria I couldn't help but think of the fate of the region's theatres. This was an unprecedented event of such magnitude, heightened by the fact that the frequency of severe weather events, we are told, is likely to increase and we need to be more prepared.

---

*Mhora Samuel*  
Director



---

As I was also sitting down at the time to write my piece in this issue on the Trust's new environmental advisory project, Ecovenue, the importance of helping theatres to be more prepared for the effects of our changing climate further hit home.

I was however heartened to read that The Theatre by the Lake in Keswick had been unaffected and that they are to donate the box office takings from one of the performances of its Christmas show to victims of the floods. Opera della Luna's Artistic Director, Jeff Clarke, makes reference to Keswick's 'X' factor in his opinion piece on what makes a theatre a great place to perform. The generosity of Keswick's actions in helping to support the flood victims simply adds to its special qualities.

Jeff also makes reference to 'the shattered delicacy' of the plasterwork of a lost theatre, the Theatre Royal in Oldham. The uniqueness of many theatres is drawn from the themes of their plasterwork. In his article on the practice behind creating theatres'

fibrous plasterwork Keith Adams talks about his work on restoring some of our finest West End theatres.

In November I was privileged to be able to attend the opening of a more recent conversion and new build project - Phase 3 at the Point in Eastleigh. In our Showcase, Jade Mizen covers the ambitions of the venue to support young professional dancers and choreographers in their new facilities.

Providing the theatre spaces that nurture talent and inspire young people to learn is also a central theme of the Trust's Conference 10, Designing School Theatres, which will take place in April in Leeds. I'm pleased to announce that the conference will run over one and a half days on the 26th and the 27th April, with the first day taking place at the Leeds College of Music and the second day at Plasa Focus at the Leeds Armouries. Booking will open in the new year but for now Conference Reporter Susan Elkin offers some thoughts on the conference theme.

Finally on behalf of the Trust, I would like to wish you all seasons greetings and a happy new year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mhora Samuel'.

# Ecovenue

## *Mhora Samuel* outlines the Trust's new Ecovenue project.

On 14 September 2009 at Plasa 09 The Theatres Trust announced a new three year project, Ecovenue, to provide specialist theatre environmental advice and undertake free Display Energy Certificate assessments with 48 small scale theatres in London.

One year on from the launch of the Mayor of London's *Green Theatre: Taking Action on Climate Change* Plan at Plasa 08, The Theatres Trust received £450,000 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in London. In September this year we were able to spread the news that we had attracted new resources to help theatres become greener.

We had played a major role in developing and launching the Mayor of London's Green Theatre Plan in 2008 following on from our Building Sustainable Theatres conference in June that year. Our conference had resulted in a series of principles which centred around reducing energy consumption; harnessing renewables, designing sustainable capital projects, and encouraging theatres to become leaders in tackling climate change.

The Trust realised though, that if the Mayor of London's ambition was for theatres in London to achieve reductions in carbon emissions of 60% by 2025, more would have to be done to make this happen. Having a plan was a good idea - it helped to make theatres understand what we were dealing with. But while commercial and subsidised theatres in London had the means to achieve some quick wins, the Trust recognised that smaller theatres with less resources would find it harder to engage.

This led to the Trust making an application for funding to the London Development Agency at the beginning

of 2009 for a project that would target theatres which were not significantly funded through the public purse or part of larger commercially run theatre groups. The project aimed to take 48 theatres through a two year process of environmental improvements, led by a Theatre Building Services Adviser engaged by the Trust.

Ecovenue provides each participating theatre with free Display Energy Certificates (DECs) in 2010 and 2011 which will help to inform the public about the energy use of the theatre.

The fact that DECs help to promote the improvement of the energy performance of buildings was behind our thinking. As DECs start to become more visible in foyers and lobbies of buildings, with their green, yellow and red bars (like the energy efficiency rating charts seen on refrigerators), the public are starting to understand how energy inefficient some of our public buildings really are.

The DEC raises public awareness of energy use and provides the public with energy information about the building they are visiting. As we highlighted at our launch the DEC can only ever be a tool, its there to demonstrate that you are doing something as year on year you chart your progress. But as the enthusiastic environmental champion Ed Nikols from Northern Stage said at our launch, a DEC is "The Flag on the Iceberg of Prudent Energy Consumption".

A DEC is based on a building's actual annual energy consumption and the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that result from that energy use. However the standard, or benchmark, that has to be used to calculate a DEC for a theatre is the same whether the theatre

is a one hundred year old, 2,000 seater in Brighton or a 200 seat new build in Blackpool. A DEC rating is from A to G, where A has the lowest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (best) and G has the highest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (worst). A rating between D and E of 100 would be typical, an A rating of 0 would be an extremely well performing building. At the other end of the scale G is over 150. And it's certainly possible to go off the scale!

We realised that Ecovenue would provide an opportunity to gather data about how different theatres performed environmentally and that in the course of the project's evaluation (a key part of any ERDF project), we would be able to come up with a report of use not only to theatres, so that they can start to understand what can be expected of theatres of similar ages, construction and location, but also to those responsible for re-evaluating the DEC benchmarks.

We intend to expand our recently created 'DEC Pool' to include theatres across the UK so that DEC ratings from a wider range of venues can be incorporated into the evaluation and be used to assess the progress of the venues participating in Ecovenue. For example, current participants in the DEC Pool, Theatre Royal Plymouth, Royal Court London and the Unicorn Theatre London have all undertaken one DEC. As three very different theatres, the Grade II listed Royal Court recorded F (128), the newly built Unicorn D (78), and Theatre Royal Plymouth, which has had a steady programme of environmental improvements, recorded C (57).

Whilst a DEC is currently only required for buildings with a total useful floor area over 1,000m<sup>2</sup> they can be applied voluntarily to smaller sized buildings. At the moment, in an attempt to demonstrate best practice, the obligation to undertake a DEC is on buildings occupied by a public authority or institution providing a public service to a large number of people and visited by those people. But it is expected that very soon more buildings will be expected to comply. A DEC is valid for one year and its accompanying Advisory Report is valid for seven years. So we're going to take the 48 theatres through one DEC and establish their baselines, then one year on do it again, providing theatres with the skills to continue to monitor their own environmental performance and build it into their own operations so it becomes a matter of course. Ecovenue represents a real opportunity for smaller venues to get ahead.

## Theatres sustainability principles

### Reduce energy consumption

- Produce short, mid and long term plans
- Evaluate operational demand
- Understand your Building Management System
- Become a good housekeeper
- Tackle the easy things first – energy efficient products, use controls
- Create the culture – recycling, reducing waste, reusing materials
- Share information with other theatres
- Develop procurement alliances
- Retrofit – boilers, air handling, HVAC, heat loss

### Harness renewables

- Plan to make use of renewables
- Assess the benefit and business case
- Think about water use
- Research eligibility for grants
- Look at wider benefits – education, PR and audience participation

### Design sustainable capital projects

- Embed sustainability goals early
- Consider occupancy – quietly, sensibly, efficiently
- Hold on to smart, responsive, simplicity rather than rigid complexity
- Consider existing historic features that could be adapted
- Remember older buildings need air circulation and ventilation
- Be aware of changing Building Regulations (by 2010 all new buildings need to be zero carbon)
- Keep up to date with energy efficient technologies
- Look at whole life costs

### Become a leader

- Don't wait for the law to act – Climate Change Act 2008 commitment to an 80% reduction in GHG emissions by 2020 (against 1990 levels)
- Benchmark experience and help shape legislation – EPCs DEC's
- Make your theatre a beacon for sustainability for audiences
- Promote Corporate Social Responsibility policy
- Communicate your Environmental and Energy Management policies
- Make the invisible visible and raise awareness
- Support local, national and international initiatives

But Ecovenue will not only be looking at energy use and consumption – it's also going to help theatres to reduce waste, water use, use of materials, and the costs associated with these. There will also be opportunities, we hope, for the 48 participating theatres to find ways of jointly procuring energy saving equipment and fittings at a reduced cost that they would never have been able to negotiate on their own.

The project will also apply the theatres sustainability principles from Conference 08 to develop environmental policies for each of the participating theatres.

After announcing the funding in September, we went on to recruit two new people to deliver the project.

Tim Atkinson will be taking up the role of Theatre Building Services Adviser in January 2010. Having completed a degree in Lighting Design at Rose Bruford College, Tim has spent much of his time working in the West End and also worked on the main central show, *Ovo*, at the Millennium Dome. Since July 2000 Tim has been a resident member of the Electrics staff at London's Shaftesbury Theatre, with responsibilities shared between building services maintenance, and the installation and operation of the lighting for the occupying shows, such as *Peggy Sue Got Married*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and the multi award-winning *Hairspray*. There he developed his knowledge of both performance and in-house energy usage, and following the introduction of the Mayor of London's Green Theatre Plan, Tim trained as a Display Energy Certificate assessor, with the aim of specialising in certifying theatres.

Tim is joined by Clive Dixon as Ecovenue's Finance and Monitoring Officer. Clive is a Chartered Accountant with extensive charity finance experience including work for the Back-Up Trust, the Fairtrade Foundation and, most recently, Pesticide Action Network UK, a charity working to eliminate the dangers of toxic pesticides. He was educated at Trinity College, Oxford where he studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics, and recently completed a BSc in Geosciences at the Open University. His role will be to ensure the project reports financially and environmentally against its targets. He is passionate about threats to the environment posed by excessive and wasteful use of resources, especially fossil fuels, and whilst a Councillor in the London Borough of Wandsworth in the 1990s he was involved in the improvement of facilities for cyclists.

The next stage is to openly advertise for theatres in London to apply in writing to participate in the project. As the assistance is being offered under the European Union's *de minimis* regulation theatres will need to demonstrate that they don't receive over Euro 200,000 of *de minimis* aid over any three year period. For most organisations this will relate to grants and subsidy. They will also need to show that they don't employ more than 250 people and their annual turnover does not exceed Euro 50M or a balance sheet total not exceeding Euro 40M.

Each theatre will receive a free Environmental Audit and Advisory Report and will also receive free Display Energy Certificates for two years. They will receive advice on use of natural resources and waste management including recycling,

reuse of renewables, and waste reduction, and they will become part of the Mayor of London's Green Theatre Plan and be asked to sign up to the Mayor of London's Green Procurement Code. They will join forces with other theatres in the project, help to establish useful benchmarks for theatres and become part of the Trust's UK wide DEC Pool of theatres, which will, we hope, go on long after the project has completed.

For the Trust this is an exciting project. It gives us a chance to demonstrate that theatres can indeed punch above their weight as we highlighted in 2008 at Building Sustainable Theatres. At the end of Ecovenue the aim is that venues will be able to benchmark their environmental performance against other public buildings and theatres understand what is required to monitor their environmental performance, have undertaken specific environmental improvements, and if appropriate, be in a position to lead on the preparation of their own Display Energy Certificates themselves.

Through embracing improved environmental performance our aim is that Ecovenue will help to achieve the long term sustainability of theatres. By understanding where theatres can make energy savings, recycle waste, make use of renewables and reduce their consumption of natural resources, we hope they will also be in a better position to improve their economic viability through better environmental management.

*For more information contact  
tim.atkinson@theatretrust.org.uk and  
clive.dixon@theatretrust.org.uk*

# A brief history of fibrous plasterwork

The Novello Theatre, London  
Photo: Ian Grundy

Fibrous plaster is probably the least known and underrated technique in the building industry, but it continues to be a fundamental material in theatre construction, as *Keith Adams* explains.

Fibrous plaster is probably the least known and underrated technique in the building industry. Together with glass-reinforced gypsum (GRG), another similar product used for decorative work, fibrous plaster can be moulded to any style, shape or form, and together their applications are limitless.

Traditionally fibrous plaster is the descriptive term for Plaster of Paris reinforced with hessian (canvas) scrim and timber laths. This enables large units to be made reasonably thin (approx 6mm), strong and light, and are cast out of a reverse mould. The reverse mould is made to the client or architects' design. Very ornate or complex details may need a sculptor or pattern maker to make a master or model so that a reverse mould can be made. With the arrival of polymers the material can now even be made weatherproof for external use.

The plasterer's craft has been in existence for millennia. In ancient Egypt for example, hessian reinforced gypsum plaster was used to make the familiar

death masks of the Pharaohs and the walls of the pyramids had plastered walls and floors. Lath and haired plaster, scagliola, gesso and scraffitto were used in ancient Rome as recorded by Vitruvius in 46 BC. After the destruction of the Roman Empire it seems that the craft regressed into plain plastering for weatherproofing, fireproofing and other practical reasons rather than being ornate. In the early 13th century, the Moors produced a vast amount of lavish plasterwork - probably the most famous being at the Alhambra in Granada.

In 1212, after the burning of London Bridge, King John issued an edict that all shops on the banks of the River Thames should be plastered and whitewashed within and without to improve fire



The Queen's Theatre, London  
circa 1907  
Photo: Westminster City Archives

protection. A Charter was granted to plasterers in 1501 by Henry VII and the coat of arms and the Company of Plasterers was established. The Renaissance saw a great revival in the plasterers art with the great palaces and homes of the rich merchants in Rome, the Vatican and Florence all having very ornate interiors. The stucco workers originally were assistants to the great artists such as Raphael and would often spend their entire life under one master. A school for Stucco workers (plasterers) was formed by Guilo Romano in Mantua and former students went on to form their own schools and the craft spread rapidly throughout Europe, arriving in England through the Royal Courts during the

Elizabethan period. It was in the Jacobean period that the English plasterers began to bring their own style to the ornate ceilings of stately residences, and the most skilled were highly sought after and often became celebrities: one such being Charles Williams who was contracted to plaster Longleat.

There then followed a great tradition of English architects – Sir Christopher Wren, the Adam Brothers, Inigo Jones to name but a few – who revived the classic styles and used plaster, fibrous plaster and stucco to achieve some fantastic buildings, many of which still survive. Over the next two centuries nearly every public building, stately home, superior residence had some form of ornate plaster. Fibrous plaster was

patented in 1856 by Leonard Desachy whose business was eventually taken over by G. Jackson & Sons, which still survives today with many rivals springing up within a very short period.

In the early 1900s many theatres and cinemas were finished internally with very ornate interiors particularly the ceilings, balcony fronts and boxes. Indeed some of these older theatres, particularly in London's West End are undergoing major refurbishment works.

Delfont Mackintosh has been restoring and upgrading the theatres in its ownership over the last five years. The Grade II listed Prince of Wales Theatre underwent a major refurbishment programme in 2004. The plasterwork on this project consisted of



The American Bar at the  
Prince of Wales Theatre  
Photo: Ian Grundy

renovation and stabilisation (making safe) to the main auditorium ceiling, repairs and renovation to the Stalls bar ceiling; (after the installation of air conditioning); and the complete replacement of the American Bar ceiling in the Frank Lloyd Wright style. The walls to the main auditorium were also lined with prefabricated GRG units to improve the acoustics. This treatment was developed with the acoustic engineers, the architect, and with Ribbon & Reed, the fibrous plastering contractor. Samples were provided for acoustic testing and approval prior to production, and adjustments were made to the thickness and the recesses.

Electrical services for lighting speakers and power were able to be concealed in

the void behind the GRG units. These units were very large and many of the sections were made full height from floor to ceiling. The wall linings were then given a bronze paint finish which was very effective. Also to install the air conditioning, walkways above the ceilings had to be removed to facilitate the installation, and replaced after to match. This was done by taking impressions of the existing ornate ceiling and reproducing them in the fibrous plaster workshop. The American Bar had to be completely destroyed in its removal because of the way it was constructed, but the whole area was templated and impressions taken. The entire ceiling was then reproduced and fixed back in its original position after all services had been installed.

The Prince Edward, Coward and Gielgud theatres have also all had recent overhauls. Work has been carried out very sympathetically and restoration work completed with reference to archive photographs. During the refurbishment at Wyndhams Theatre two large ornate pediments were reinstated in their original locations. The originals had been removed decades ago during a previous renovation. Delfont Mackintosh provided the photographic records and Ribbon & Reed was able to copy the surviving pediment by taking a full silicone impression and then remodelling to the required size. A reverse mould was then made and the pediment cast and installed. The Novello Theatre had all of



An example of a reinstated box front at Northampton's Royal Theatre  
Photo: Royal & Derngate

its auditorium ceilings removed to install air conditioning and new complex ornate ceilings were installed so as to make the AC virtually invisible by setting the grilles on the edges of the ornate ceiling panels. This required a great deal of input from the acoustic engineer, services engineer, architect and fibrous plaster contractor. Mock-ups were made on site and the system tested for efficiency prior to the full installation.

The system was very successful and managed to fit a lot of air conditioning trunking into very small voids and concealing the narrow linear AC grilles along all the edges of the low level ceiling, minimised the impact of the system on the new ornate ceiling. This was a difficult task and required a lot of co-ordination between the various trades, as once the ceiling panels were fixed there was no access to the ceiling void.

Ribbon & Reed is currently working alongside architects, Arts Team, at the Queens Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue. Here, works are being carried out whilst the theatre remains open. Works being undertaken include the provision of new disabled seating areas at the Circle level. This is of particular interest from a plasterwork point of view as the new seating areas are in the form of new boxes that have been copied using archive photographs and from taking impressions

of the existing tier front at circle level. The existing tier front was slightly different to the one shown in the archive photograph and had to be remodelled in Ribbon & Reed's fibrous plaster workshop under the supervision of Arts Team architect, Alan McKenzie. The two boxes were located on the far right and far left of the Circle and were made to a double curve on plan that meant a left and right mould had to be made. Because of access limitations the box fronts were made in two sections and joined on site. The box fronts were fixed to a steel frame previously installed by the main contractor, Vivid Interiors.

The manufacture of fibrous plaster is completed in the factory and is delivered to site usually kiln dried. Site conditions will usually dictate the size of unit to be manufactured with access being the most common difficulty. The casts are made in the largest size possible to minimise joints on site and to make fixing faster and more economical - casts of up to 8m<sup>2</sup> can be produced. These precast units are usually fixed to a metal support system using the traditional 'wire and wad' or a screw up system and the joints reinforced and filled to a monolithic finish. Fibrous plaster can also be made to simulate other materials such as stone, brick and timber and for this reason it is used extensively in the film industry for building film sets from castles to streets of houses etc. Polymer modified

glass reinforced plasters and cements can be used to produce architectural features for external uses such as columns, balustrading, pediments, cornices, corbels, and even external cladding panels.

Fibrous plaster has been and still is one of the most adaptable and useful materials used in theatre design, restoration and renovation, allowing modern designs for new theatres and the faithful reproduction of existing theatre ornament for the listed theatres and those under conservation orders. The acoustic properties of fibrous plaster and GRG can be tailored to suit specific requirements of the user by the introduction of recesses, slots, surface finishes and acoustic backings and has the advantage over plasterboard and other rigid ceiling systems in that it can be moulded to shape and is especially useful for surfaces curved in two planes i.e. domes. The decoration of fibrous plaster and GRG is the same as for normal plasterwork, but in the theatres specialist painting contractors are used for the gilding and marbling and the restoration of the large murals to be found on the ceilings of the older theatres.

*Keith Adams is the Contracts Surveyor at Ribbon & Reed and has been involved in a variety of theatre refurbishment projects. For further details of their work visit [www.ribbonreedlon.co.uk](http://www.ribbonreedlon.co.uk).*

# Conference 10 Designing School Theatres



Bridge Academy, Hackney  
Architects BDP  
Photo: Martine Hamilton-Knight

## Conference Reporter, *Susan Elkin*, considers the theme of the Trust's Conference 10.

A generation or two ago schools and theatres would never have been mentioned in the same breath. Schools were for children to learn in – usually in serried ranks at wooden desks – and theatres were town centre places of plush entertainment, mostly for adults but with occasional, often patronising, forays into childhood at Christmas. Theatre as an integral part of children's education wasn't even a twinkle in anyone's eye – at least not in mainstream schools.

A handful of independent schools have long had their own theatres of course. Eton has had one for many years and Bradfield

College in Berkshire is famous for its triennial Greek dramas and its outdoor amphitheatre. But on the whole plays in schools of all sorts were amateurishly staged in unsuitable multi-purpose halls and the drama department – if it had a discrete existence as opposed to being an adjunct of the English department – was often treated with a certain disdain by teachers of 'proper' subjects such as maths.

Then, gradually, schools woke up to the potential of drama. It builds confidence, self esteem and oral ability. Drama techniques can be used for the teaching and learning of almost any subject. The skills it develops are readily transferable to other areas of the curriculum. And if there is a professional standard theatre facility on-site then there is scope, not only to develop all those valuable

performance skills but also to teach the whole gamut of theatre craft from lighting, sound and stage management to front of house, marketing and the rest. What's more students love it and so do their parents.

And, as if that weren't enough, theatres within schools lend themselves well to interaction with the local community who can come to see shows or hire the venue for shows and events they want to mount themselves. 'Community involvement' is now high on the priority list for all schools. Independent schools have to demonstrate it as a condition of charitable status and maintained sector or 'state' secondaries have to work with other schools and the wider community to justify their publicly-owned costly resources and facilities.



Parabola Arts Centre at  
Cheltenham Ladies College  
Photo: Foster Wilson Architects

So the last 20 years or so has seen dozens of independent schools building theatres or creating them through conversion – which has meant many fundraising appeals and/or grants from the old trusts and bodies associated with the schools.

Now many maintained sector or 'state' schools are following suit as more new schools are built or existing ones radically refurbished – many to include theatres; which is why The Theatres Trust has decided to make school theatres the subject of its 2010 conference. Designing School Theatres will take place in Leeds on 26 and 27 April, with Guardian journalist Maev Kennedy in the chair. The plan is to explore the architecture, design, building and sustainability of theatres located within

schools and establish a set of design principles for school theatres.

So what has changed to encourage state schools to build theatres? The Department for Children, Schools and Families (then the Department for Education and Skills) established Partnerships for Schools in 2004 to deliver the Building Schools for the Future programme with a brief to transform 'every single secondary school in England.' In 2006 it also took over the responsibility for the academies programme. 400 academies is the aim. There is £15.5 billion available during the current spending review period.

If all that money is there to build new schools and rebuild old ones then, the thinking goes, theatres accessible by the

community should be located within them. It is, after all, much more cost-effective to include a properly equipped theatre within a new build than to do it later as a separate addition. Graft-in is always cheaper than bolt-on.

Take Bridge Academy in Hackney, for example, which opened its new building in September 2009. Designed by Building Design Partnership, the six-floored school is shaped like a horseshoe. It includes a 428-seat performance theatre with an acoustically designed auditorium, A/V system, isolated sound and lighting engineers' suites, performance lighting and stage curtain arrangements and a sprung floor.

Of course they want the local public to use it too for 'public and private performances.' And it isn't as though the



**Kingsmead School, Enfield**  
Photo: Foster Wilson Architects



**The American School in London**  
Photo: Foster Wilson Architects

school will be using it for lectures, staff training and the like, as some schools do with their theatres, because Bridge Academy also has a 280-seat lecture theatre which can be hired by external groups for conferences and courses. And, the icing on the cake, there's even an outdoor amphitheatre built above the ground floor car park.

Or consider Allerton Grange High School in Leeds which moved into its new building in September 2009. Its 1,690 students, like their counterparts at the Bridge Academy, now have access to a purpose built, professional standard stage, theatre and auditorium.

There's another interesting how-to example at The St Peter Port Secondary School in Guernsey. Completed in December 2006, The Princess Royal Centre for Performing Arts offers students the opportunity to study full-time vocational performing arts courses for the first time on the island. The Centre, which was officially opened by Princess Anne in June 2007, also offers part-time and short courses. These courses include all elements of performing arts from acting, dancing and singing to stage-management, lighting, sound and set design as well as the performing arts business, booking systems and the legal aspects of performance.

Although primarily an education resource, the Princess Royal Centre for Performing Arts is also available for community use. The main auditorium features a flexible performance space that can be set out in a traditional proscenium arch format, theatre-in-the-round or flat floor. The maximum audience capacity is 400 when configured in-the-round. Tiered seating, the majority of which is retractable, can be continued down into a seating pit which then gives the illusion of a raised stage. This pit can also be used to house a small orchestra or the rostra panels can be raised to create a flat floor.

Tim Foster, Theatres Trust Trustee and partner at Foster Wilson Architects, has been involved in several education-based theatre projects. The 250-seat Edward Alleyn Theatre at Dulwich College in south east London established a new model for school theatres when it opened in 1981. Elsewhere, the firm has converted a 1960s school hall at Kingsmead School in Enfield to create a functional 300-seat space and has also recently created a very well-appointed 320-seat auditorium at Cheltenham Ladies College.

Some schools have converted existing buildings into theatres very successfully and at least two independent schools have used local churches. The Stahl Theatre at Oundle

School in Cambridgeshire, for example, is a nearby converted Congregational church which opened in its new guise in 1980, and it's an interesting case study.

Owned and managed entirely by the school, The Stahl Theatre is run by the Oundle School Drama Department staff, many of whom have a professional theatre background. It houses both school productions and visiting professional theatre companies. It acts as the local community theatre used by the local maintained sector junior and middle schools for their annual productions, by the Oundle Literature and Organ Festivals and by groups such as the local Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

The consultant's brief when converting the Congregational church was to design a theatre of professional standard that could be effectively run by pupils. Over the interim twenty-five years the standard of the equipment has been constantly updated to keep up with changes in theatrical production. Thus the sound equipment is now of a very high standard, the lighting is fully computerised and they have recently added the first moving light to the impressive stock of lighting equipment. Backstage are now three well-appointed dressing rooms, a large rehearsal space, a Green Room and several offices.

Pupils are involved in all forms of theatre work: constructing and painting sets and properties, stage management, costumes, lighting and sound design as well as acting and directing. All the school's productions are stage managed entirely by pupils and there's a large workshop attached to the theatre run by the Technical Stage Manager which provides the location for all construction work.

Back in London, Godolphin & Latymer, a girls' independent school in Hammersmith

has converted a Grade II listed former church into The Bishop Centre for the Performing Arts which opened summer 2009. It hasn't required fundamental alteration but the school has added a versatile lighting rig, acoustic blinds and movable floor space so that that concerts and dance or drama performances of practically any configuration are possible within the space. The Bishop Centre has lifted the school's ability to stage a whole range of events in terms of providing a technical, professional facility for the performer or performing team as well as the ability to host our enthusiastic audiences in comfort and style," said a spokesperson for the school.

One thing all these theatre projects have in common is the need to give students and others the best possible learning and development facilities in a cost-effective, sustainable way. For most schools public money is involved after all and Partnership for School's stated key role is to ensure that 'investment in secondary schools is based on robust educational strategies and that the public purse receives best value for money.'

There now seems to be general agreement that theatres can (and should?) be part of that investment but, clearly, there is no single definitive view on how to design and build or convert theatres in schools.

No two school theatres – or the people who commission them - are the same and I see many interesting ones on my travels, but they aren't all perfect and we can learn from each other's mistakes. That is why we need the Designing School Theatres conference in April and why there is so much to discuss. See you there.

*Susan Elkin is the Conference Reporter for Designing School Theatres, and is Education & Training Editor at The Stage.*



Michael Croft Theatre  
at Alleyn's School, Dulwich  
Photo: Theatreplan / Nick Kane



# Showcase

## The Point, Eastleigh

Following the launch of its unique £2.5 million Phase3 scheme, marketing and audience development manager *Jade Mizen* looks back at the history and development of The Point in Eastleigh.

**The Point, Eastleigh is situated 60 miles south west of London, close to the cities of Southampton, Winchester and Portsmouth. Established in 1997 with one of the first National Lottery grants it is situated in a beautifully renovated late-Victorian town hall.**

The venue is owned and run by Eastleigh Borough Council and presents a year-round programme of theatre, film, light entertainment and contemporary dance and performance. A key to its success has been the balance of professional programming and community participation it has maintained, along with a popular public hire scheme allowing local companies to present their work in a fully professional environment.

The Point is easily accessible by road and rail with audiences travelling up to 70 miles to attend events. For a theatre of its size and non-metropolitan location The Point has established an unusually high profile for dance, with a distinctive programme featuring up to twelve UK and international companies each year attracting an average audience of 78%.



The Point was developed after one of the first successful bids to the newly formed National Lottery and phases one and two were created. These phases included turning the old assembly hall into a fully functioning 320-seat theatre, creating a new foyer and box office and building a dance studio. The millennium saw a new addition to the facilities when a previously asphalted area of the recreation ground adjacent to The Point was landscaped to provide an outdoor performance space known as the 'Dancing Garden'.

Shortly after the completion of this project the other half of the 'old town hall' site containing the now defunct library was in the process of being vacated and Eastleigh developed its ambitious new plans to reunite the complex by the building of phase 3.

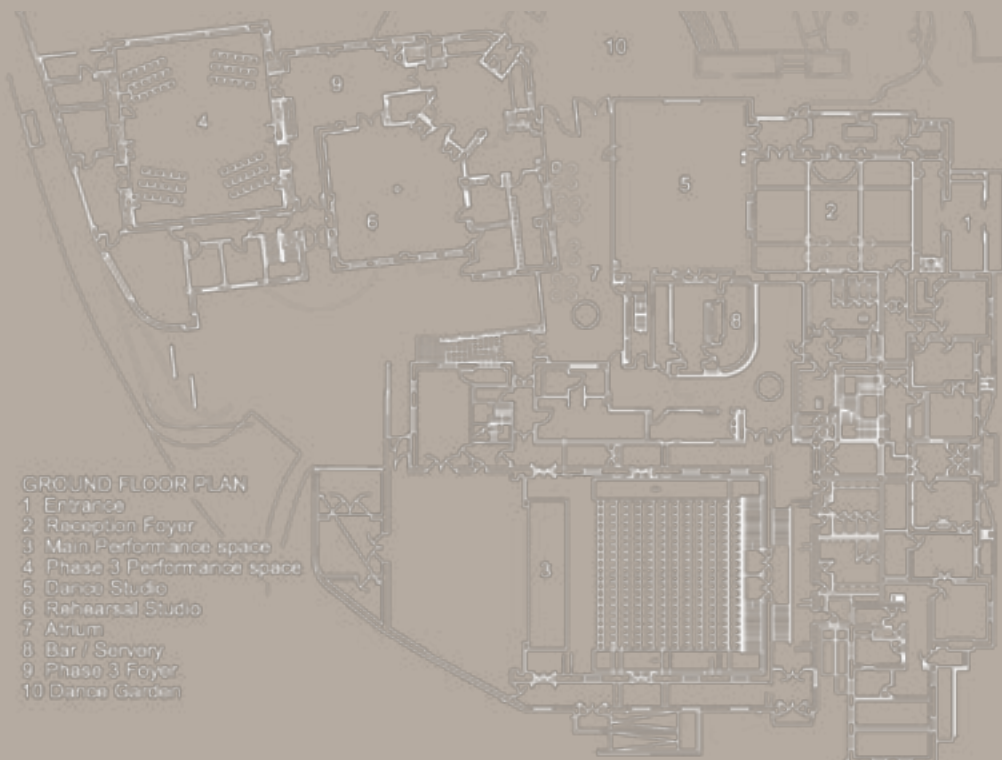
The detailed designs for Phase3 were undertaken by Chaplin Farrant Wiltshire, a Winchester and Southampton-based architectural and interior design practice ([cfw-architects.com](http://cfw-architects.com)). The scheme was led by CFW's project architect, Philip Davis, who also oversaw the construction of the project. Phase3 adjoins the existing library building and contains a new 145m<sup>2</sup> creation space with integrated living accommodation. It also houses a 50 seat studio theatre, conference facilities, hospitality and gathering areas including roof terrace and additional dressing and changing rooms. The outdoor stage has been extended to wrap around the front of the new building and the area leading onto Eastleigh's park has been re-landscaped.



Photos: Chaplin Farrant Wiltshire

Phase3 has also allowed the venue to launch its ambitious Domicile project put in place by director Gregory Nash, which places opportunities for new and emerging artists at the heart of its development. Domicile is comprised of four strands: 'Space for Ideas' aims to create a series of intensive engagements between visiting artists to The Point and established artists based in the region and in doing so, test the viability of the Phase3 space as a regional centre for professional development in dance and contemporary performance. 'Artist Quarters' is a model for the support of emerging and early career artists and companies which will encourage graduate retention in the area and lead to the establishment of new creative enterprises. 'Home from home' will test and evaluate two residency models for emerging artists/companies who are at the stage after artist quarters. This strand gives the opportunity to make The Point the artist/company's principle creative base. The final strand 'Potential' will provide opportunities for aspiring young choreographers (14-21 years) to engage with innovative choreographic ideas through a series of professionally led laboratories.

The audience and associate research has always been at the heart of the work we do here at The Point – we have always tried to connect the audience with visiting companies engaging them in conversation via pre show or post show events. Phase3 gives us even more opportunities for this type of engagement through work in progress showings, open rehearsals and scratch performances – allowing audiences to follow and be part of the creative journey from inception to final production. For further information visit [www.thepointeastleigh.co.uk](http://www.thepointeastleigh.co.uk).



# X, why and wow factor

What makes a theatre special? After 15 years touring with Opera della Luna *Jeff Clarke* is still not sure what that X factor is, but he has experienced some poorly designed ones along the way.

Although it was in 2004 that I became a Life Friend of The Theatres Trust, spiritually I was committed to the cause as far back as 1967 when, as a very small boy, I watched the destruction of the old Theatre Royal in Oldham. At this age I had hardly set foot in a theatre, but I watched transfixed every time I was taken past the demolition site, and saw each day that a bit more of the theatre had gone. Gradually its dilapidated interior was revealed in all its dusty splendour (I have been a devotee of faded grandeur ever since!). I was mesmerised by the three horseshoe balconies, the elegance of their sweep, the vertiginous pitch of the gods, the majesty of the noble proscenium, the shattered delicacy of the plasterwork. And I was able to stare at them briefly in wonder, for the next day they were gone. I was entranced, but I also knew I was witnessing a tragedy. I knew that something irreplaceable was being lost. I lamented that I would never sit in those high perched galleries and look down on untold delights on the boards where Irving reputedly had once trod. Of course, the Royal couldn't have survived. It had been one of seven beautiful theatres in the town and what town now, outside the capital, could support so many?

Nevertheless, even at that young age I knew that building had something special. It was the sort of theatre that affects you the moment you enter the building. Something about it sets off a spark of anticipation and you arrive at your seat already prepared for something extraordinary to happen. You have already been seduced into buying into whatever takes place on that stage once the curtain rises. Many theatres have this quality. Quite a number don't. I have never been able to successfully analyse exactly what creates it – let me merely call it, for want of a better description, a theatre's 'X' factor.

As an audience member I still feel it and it is not merely in the nostalgic adoration of old theatres - many modern auditoria have it: the Lowry in Salford, Milton Keynes Theatre, the Barbican Theatre, the Olivier auditorium at the National Theatre, the Donmar Warehouse, Keswick's Theatre by the Lake, Huddersfield's Lawrence Batley. It slightly pains me to say this, as I have never been hugely comfortable with the social hoo-hah of country house opera, but it is there in spades at Grange Park Opera. This is one of the most thrilling spaces I have seen in years. And why? Because its designer brought wit, imagination, and a sense of celebration to a simple but classically beautiful empty space.

Let me say straight away that the 'X' factor is not about being posh or being seduced into a boudoir of simulated palatial grandeur; even rooms above pubs can have it. The old, much-missed, Half Moon on London's Mile End Road had it. The Kings Head in Islington has it and the old (but not the new) Players Theatre under Charing Cross Station. Nor is it about the safe familiarity of a proscenium theatre. I still get a huge buzz from Manchester's Royal

Exchange Theatre. It has one of the strangest acoustics of any performing space you could ever visit, but I have always left that theatre feeling not only have I seen something special, I have been somewhere special.

In theatres which have the indefinable 'X' factor, by the time the lights go down you are ready and eager. The actors begin their job of drawing you into the world of the play, but in the time it has taken you to enter the building and find your seat a degree of their work has been done for them. In theatres that don't, it is only when the lights go down and you cease to be aware of the abysmally unimaginative arena into which you have been unceremoniously dumped that you start to slowly engage with the actors.

Now, many years later, I find myself somewhere I couldn't have imagined I would ever be: running a small unsubsidised opera company and touring to a vast number of provincial houses the length and breadth of



Theatre Royal Oldham



the country. Now for me the 'X' factor takes on a new significance, for now we experience this strange phenomenon from the other side of the proscenium. It is no surprise to discover that Matcham theatres are just as wonderful to perform in as they are to visit as a member of the audience – they have the 'X' factor for sure. Furthermore the point I made in the previous paragraph is endorsed. When the curtain goes up the audience are with you within seconds. The communication is immediate. We do not have to wait 15 minutes for the audience to "come round" the way we do in some more modern houses.

My company, Opera della Luna (OdL), celebrates its 15th anniversary this year. During our years on the road we must have played well over a hundred theatres from the "tinies" (Chipping Norton, Georgian Richmond, the old Theatr Mwldan) to the Number 1s: Swansea and Blackpool Grands, Buxton Opera House, Darlington Civic, Windsor Royal, and this year, Sheffield Lyceum. We have also played many, many new theatres. Last year I counted ten venues all built within the last 15 years. That's an exciting itinerary but one that invariably results in the question "Why did they do it like this?"

Who could imagine, in a new theatre, building dressing rooms without sinks and running water? Or a back-stage with no dressing rooms on the same floor as the stage? Or worse, one where the dressing rooms are separated from the auditorium by only a thin wall, punctuated with fire exit doors, making it impossible for singers to warm up in the dressing room without being heard in the house. Or can you imagine designing huge dock doors at the back of a stage that are hinged and open onto the stage, so that you have to strike a set and move it downstage before you can open

the doors to get it off? Or a lift for the get-in that in fact consists of half the stage? Once half your set is in, there is no room to put the other half. How does an architect get to design a theatre without consulting those who work in them on a daily basis? How else can these gaffes be explained?

Why does it seem that acoustics in a theatre are no longer important? The new breed of symphony halls in our major cities pride themselves on the thrilling perfection of their acoustics. It appears that new theatres no longer have to worry about such concerns (Glyndebourne excepted). I accept that contemporary musicals require amplification, mixing, and all the so-called advantages of a modern sound desk, but nothing can replicate the thrill of real raw sound in a perfectly acoustically balanced Edwardian theatre. OdL is perhaps an unusual (if not anachronistic) case, still performing musical theatre acoustically. But I am not just thinking of lyric theatre. The sound of the spoken word – the thrill of hearing the live voice of a great actor, and experiencing the variety of nuance, pitch, intonation, speed of delivery, and projection, is never so great as it is in an acoustically superb theatre. We are too used to hearing our great actors on film and TV and have forgotten the impact of hearing their voices live. I regret that one cannot count on a new theatre having that all-important credential of a superb acoustic. I love the Lowry, but I have to confess it is one of the worst offenders. Its Quay Theatre where we play is one of the most charming modern chamber opera houses you could hope for - except that it was built like a recording studio with the deadest acoustic I have ever come across. The large Lyric Theatre is great for Opera North, but punishing for the poor actors who have to deliver the spoken word in there.

When the company arrives at a theatre one of the singers will invariably come to the front of the stage and project a random bit of operatic gobble-de-gook into the darkened space of the empty auditorium. Within a few bars we know whether it is going to be a great night, or whether it's going to be hard work. With new theatres there is always a large element of unpredictability about it. It is almost as though it is some natural phenomenon like the hardness of the water, over which architects have no control. But it shouldn't be like that. Matcham was building theatres of thrilling acoustic dynamics in the early 1900s; why has it not become second nature to continue to build theatres of such quality? Why do many modern theatres fall so far short of those Edwardian standards?

What else makes an impression on us as we travel from theatre to theatre? Well, the theatre's standard equipment can vary enormously. Of course such things are not necessarily under the architect's control – but someone somewhere has to take responsibility. Things like lighting boards... Don't get me started on lighting boards! How lucky we are to have computerised lighting boards. They are capable of doing things that only a couple of decades ago LX designers could only have dreamed of. But how cursed are we who tour from one theatre to another and find that the boards "don't speak to each other". A Strand desk won't read an ETC programme. A 'Frog' desk won't read a Strand. Some don't even read disks from different versions of the same board. It could all have been so easy: you just take your lighting design beautifully recorded on a disk or memory stick from one theatre to another, slot it in to the desk and bingo, you're away. It could have been like that – but it isn't.



**London Coliseum**  
Photo: Derek Kendall,  
National Monuments Record  
© English Heritage

There are a myriad of different lighting boards, and there is no compatibility between them.

An orchestra pit on hydraulics is a God-send. It allows grand pianos to be easily transported between pit and stage, as well as all the paraphernalia needed to accommodate an orchestra. But how many theatres have hydraulic pits that can only be stopped at top or bottom or if you are lucky, one position in between. The chance to have it at the height you want it is apparently wishing for too much. Then there are those theatres with large, hugely expensive house tabs – so expensive that only a motor can be trusted to operate them. More often than not, they have two speeds: slow and glacial. Curtain calls are a nightmare. Forget trying to get the tabs in to time with the last note. You have to decide between starting to bring them in half way through the last act, or else you keep the cast in some egg-faced freeze while these trundling crematorial passion-killers inch their way noisily across the stage.

These are all things that can be addressed – though I sometimes wonder whether they ever will. If you want to build a new theatre, find someone who has the responsibility of putting shows on to the stage and appoint them to a steering committee, or employ them in an advisory capacity (as indeed the Barbican did with the late Antony Besch) and surely some of these gaffes can be prevented.

But who can supply the 'X' factor? What is it that raises the anticipation of an audience before the show begins? What is it that makes a building one that you want to visit? We have fans who prefer to travel an extra 50 miles to see us perform in a much-loved theatre than turn up to the Arts Centre on their door-step.

Ah yes, the Arts Centre. The "jack of all trades – master of none" epithet is one that is most justifiably applied to these multi-purpose venues. Apart from the limits they apply to any dramatic capability (by which I refer to such things as polished wooden floors that forbid screwing, attaching, taping let alone painting; or "soft" prosceniums which poorly mask the noise of the wings) they can rarely, if ever, be designed in a way which gives credibility to their claims to be a theatre. How can a building which also serves as a venue for weddings, Rotary Club balls, antiques fairs, political rallies and blood donations, hope to have the 'X' factor when it comes to being somewhere to come and watch Shakespeare, Bennett,



London Palladium  
Photo: Derek Kendall,  
National Monuments Record  
© English Heritage

Ravenhill, or even *Puppetry of the Penis*? The very moment I enter a theatre and hear the clunk of retractable seating units beneath my feet, my heart sinks. Between the inevitable bland characterless walls, sit these serried ranks of seats, unrelenting in their meticulous rectangular regularity. They are upholstered in "hardwearing" sensible sackcloth weave – which usually proves surprisingly un-hardwearing; only a few seasons later the foam rubber is visible at the well-worn edge of the wobbly arm rest. How I hate the way the whole row bounces drunkenly with the arrival of another "spectator" (this is no place to put an audience). It reduces theatre to a spectator sport, rather than an activity where the mind and spirit should be seriously engaged, the attention seductively channelled towards the stage. What actors and singers do on that stage is, to us as directors, hugely important. They have refined their art and skill over years, and studied with the best. They deserve better arenas for their art than these temporary additions to civic charm bracelets.

Yes, yes, I know, not every town can have a Theatre Royal (although they probably pulled one down in the 60s). It's a case of multi-purpose or nothing, and yes, at least there is somewhere where OdL can turn up and play. But it's a short-sighted vision. Who is going to campaign for the preservation of these places in 50 years? Will they still engender civic pride when the honeymoon period is over and the paint has started to chip? We have one such venue we play on a regular basis, and every year someone says to me "have we been here before?" It is totally

forgettable. Nothing to celebrate there, except packing up the van and moving on.

Possibly the key to the 'X' factor is that idea of celebration. A night at the theatre is rightly special and should be celebrated as so. A building of appropriate artistry and pride is required. It should celebrate the extraordinary, the unexpected, the surprising. And that takes architects of vision, daring and imagination – not of functional practicalities. Let the latter sort build their Arts Centres if they must.

So as Opera della Luna celebrates 15 years on the road, it is of course principally the work and the reputation of which we are most proud. We have loyal audiences all over the country and we regularly return to full houses. But for me, I find huge personal satisfaction in seeing our work on the stages of some of the greatest theatres in the country. Buildings which we rightly treasure. Buildings which both deserve and engender the best.

So, thank you for Blackpool Grand, Buxton Opera House, Bury St Edmunds, Swansea. Thank you too for Keswick, Huddersfield, Brecon, and Winchester. But looking at our tour schedule for this year, I regret there are places on the list where some of us, particularly the techies, will say... "Do we really have to go there again?"

*Jeff Clarke is Artistic Director of Opera della Luna. He began his career as assistant to Jonathan Miller at Kent Opera in 1981. He has worked at the Royal Opera House, Scottish Opera, Sydney Opera House and as a freelance director for many opera festivals. As both musical director and director he worked for many reps around the country before starting OdL in 1994.*

From left to right: **The Crown, Eccles** Photo: Ian Grundy  
**Britannia Music Hall Glasgow** Photo: Euan Adamson  
**former Theatre Royal, Manchester** Photo: Ian Grundy

## Theatres Round-up

### News on theatres and theatre projects from around the country



#### ATG acquires Live Nation theatres

In what has been billed as the most significant development in its 17-year history, Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG) has completed the purchase of Live Nation UK Theatres in a £90 million deal. The acquisition creates a combined business valued at £150 million and means that ATG now controls 39 venues across the UK. The Theatres Trust has welcomed the deal, both in its role in protecting theatres and as the freeholder of the Lyceum, which is one of the major theatres in portfolio. The Trust works regularly with ATG, advising them on their plans for maintenance and care of their theatres. As well as having a good record of looking after its theatres, the company has also been a leader in promoting environmental best practice and reducing their theatres' carbon emissions.

Other theatres transferred to ATG include the Edinburgh Playhouse, Liverpool Empire, Bristol Hippodrome, the Palace Theatre and the Opera House in Manchester, and London's Apollo Victoria Theatre.

#### Planning permission for new Elizabethan theatre

The Tower Theatre Company's plans to recreate an Elizabethan playhouse in London's Shoreditch area took a step forward in October when the local authority granted planning permission to build a new £7 million venue on the site in Curtain Road. The new development will be built around the original brick foundations of

The Theatre, one of London's first playhouses, which was erected in 1576. The remains of The Theatre were discovered by the Museum of London Archaeology in 2008 after the Tower Theatre Company commissioned an excavation of the site. It is hoped that the new 135-seat theatre will be completed by 2012, to coincide with the London Olympics and the Tower Theatre's 80th anniversary. The company has already secured £3.7 million in funding for the project and will soon be launching a public appeal to raise the remaining £3.3 million. For further details of the project visit [www.thetheatre.org.uk](http://www.thetheatre.org.uk).

#### New Chapter for Cardiff arts

Cardiff's Chapter Arts Centre will welcome visitors, including First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, on 24 December for an official launch following the venue's £3.8 million facelift. 40 years after its opening the centre boasts new-look cinemas, theatre and gallery, bar and cafe. It also features an impressive 60ft lightbox that spans the whole of its frontage. Their scheme, designed by Ash Sakula Architects, draws on three main influences – the centre's school heritage, its 1970s roots, and sustainability. All three of these themes are reflected in Chapter's public areas with original 1970s wallpapers, salvaged school furniture and classics such as the DSW chair by Vitra designed by Charles Eames. The project was funded via a £1.75 million Capital Lottery Award from the Arts Council of Wales, with the

remainder was raised through charitable foundations, grants and public contributions.

#### Eccles Crown faces demolition

Fifteen years after it was last in use, the Crown Theatre in Eccles is to be demolished to make way for a residential redevelopment. The Crown, which opened in February 1899, was originally called the Lyceum Theatre. After 25 years as a successful variety theatre, it was subsequently converted for cinema use in 1932, before eventually becoming a bingo hall in 1963. Bingo use ceased in the early 1990s and the building was boarded up and has since been slowly decaying. The theatre's presence will live on though, as the façade of the Grade II listed building will be retained together with part of a returning wall.

#### Derby Hippodrome for sale

Christopher Anthony, owner of the Derby Hippodrome, put the theatre up for sale at the beginning of December. Although he bought the venue just a couple of years ago for less than £400,000, he has put a price of £1.2 million on the partially demolished building. Speaking to the Derby Telegraph, Mr Anthony said, "the hefty price tag reflects the debts built up from repeatedly remortgaging the Grade II listed building". Theatres Trust director, Mhora Samuel, said, "I would question the £1.2 million asking price for the theatre, and any serious buyer should undertake their own valuation before putting in an offer. Our

ideal buyer would be one that repairs the theatre and brings it back into use". Meanwhile, the Derby Hippodrome Restoration Fund has been established with the purpose of seeing the theatre rebuilt and restored to use. The immediate objective is to persuade councillors on the city council's Planning Committee that the building has a future in theatre use.

For further details visit [www.derbyhippodrome.co.uk](http://www.derbyhippodrome.co.uk).

#### Grade II listing for Tameside Hippodrome

Hopes for the survival of the Tameside Hippodrome were raised in September with news that the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has listed the theatre at Grade II. The Theatres Trust supported the application for listing and cited the theatre in Ashton-under-Lyne as a good example of an Edwardian theatre later converted to cinema use. The theatre opened in 1904 as the Empire Hippodrome, to designs by J. J. Alley, who also, and perhaps most notably, designed the twin Hulme venues, the Hippodrome and the Playhouse. The Tameside Hippodrome, however, continues to remain dark and boarded up following its closure in April 2008. The venue's difficulties surround the local authority's inability to secure a commercial operator to run the theatre. The Theatres Trust is involved in on-going discussions with the Borough Council and other bodies seeking a viable future for the theatre.



### Sheffield's Crucible reopens

The Crucible Theatre in Sheffield reopened in mid-November with a series of housewarming events. Although Phase 2 works are still to be completed, the theatre devised the special series of events to reintroduce the building to its audiences, prior to its formal opening under the leadership of new artistic director, Daniel Evans, in February 2010. The £15.3 million redevelopment scheme drawn up by architects, Burrell Foley Fischer, has provided the theatre with a new thrust stage and new seating in the auditorium. The venue's studio theatre has also been completely refurbished and re-configured to allow for more flexibility. Elsewhere, the theatre has a dramatic new glass fronted entrance and box office with a wider, brighter space providing a more welcome experience for visitors and theatregoers. As well as now being fully accessible throughout striking visual changes include the dramatic new entrance, a more central and remodelled bar area. A new roof has also been fitted to the theatre and the building has been re-clad.

### Bognor Picturedrome listed

Good news in Bognor Regis following the Secretary of State's Grade II listing of the Picturedrome. The Theatres Trust supported this application for listing, identifying the Picturedrome as exemplifying an entertainment building in a traditional seaside landscape. The building opened in 1886

as the New Assembly Rooms and was used for a variety of entertainments and events, with a main hall and a minor hall above. The main hall converted to cinema use in 1919, whilst retaining its stage facilities. Later the minor hall was converted for bingo. Apart from a brief time as a barracks during the First World War, the Picturedrome has been used continuously for entertainment since 1886, though live use ceased in the early 1950s.

### A facelift for Glasgow's Britannia

152 years after its opening, Glasgow's Britannia Music Hall has had a facelift. For nearly a year the four-storey edifice has been hidden behind scaffolding whilst stonemasons worked on the crumbling facade. The clean up was completed under the direction of conservation architect Keith Hamilton of B3 Architects. Now the peeling blue paint that had been a familiar sight since the 1930s has gone to reveal a magnificent façade, and the original vision of Glasgow architects, Thomas Gildard and Robert H. M. MacFarlane. In addition to repairing the stone, some of the original historic features have also been restored and recreated, including the missing Putti – unwinged, often obese small boys traditionally depicted naked. The work was funded by Historic Scotland, Merchant City Townscape Heritage Initiative and the Mitchell Family (the erstwhile owners of the building) and cost in the region of £900,000.

### Phase One works completed at Glasgow King's

Phase One of the King's Theatre restoration programme was completed in early winter 2009. The project began in 2007 when Ambassador Theatre Group announced that it was to undertake a £7.2 million restoration scheme planned for completion in time for the Glasgow's hosting of the Commonwealth Games in 2014. The work is being funded jointly by a £1 contribution from each theatre ticket sold, with additional support from Glasgow City Council, applications to other funds and trusts, and private and corporate fundraising by the theatre. Phase One works involved the replacement of approximately 1,000 seats covering the entire stalls and grand circle, together with the renewal of flooring on these levels and the installation of the infrastructure to allow for a new air conditioning system. Phase Two works will begin in Summer 2010 and will include the replacement of all seats in the upper circle and the refurbishment of existing seats in the balcony.

### Restoration plans for Manchester's Theatre Royal

Irish property group, Benmore, is believed to be in discussions with Manchester City Council about a mixed-use development scheme that could see the restoration of Manchester's historic Theatre Royal. The Royal, constructed in 1845, is Manchester's oldest surviving theatre, although it is currently in use as a nightclub. It has been

suggested that a restored Theatre Royal could potentially create a new home for the Library Theatre Company, which is having to move out of its base in the basement of the city library whilst it undergoes its own major restoration project.

### Farewell to SLTC

After 37 years of campaigning to protect the capital's theatres, the Save London's Theatres Campaign (SLTC) has now been officially disbanded. It was founded in 1972 out of necessity, by Equity and at the behest of Equity members, following the unveiling of the GLC Covent Garden masterplan, which threatened the future of at least a dozen West End theatres. It was as a result of SLTC's early campaigning that The Theatres Trust was established in 1976, and the theatre world in London and beyond should be grateful for its hard work and endeavour. A lunchtime event to mark the closure of the Campaign took place at the Prince Edward Theatre on 25 November.

### The European Routes of theatres

We must apologise to any readers who may have had difficulty in locating information on the European Routes of theatres as a result of a misprint in the last issue of Theatres Magazine. The PERSPECTIV website address referred to in Carsten Jung's 'More pearls on a string' feature article should have read [www.perspectiv-online.org](http://www.perspectiv-online.org).

For regularly updated information on theatres visit the news section of our website.

**From left to right:**  
**The Spa Theatre, Scarborough** Photo: Fran Birch  
**Theatre Royal Bath** Photo: Mark Price  
**The new Gwyn Hall** © Holder Mathias Architects

## Current Casework

### Update on current theatre planning cases



#### Arts International Centre, Bubwith East Riding of Yorkshire Council Unlisted

Ref: 09/03718  
Decision: Pending

The Trust has objected to a planning application to convert a former media centre – the Arts (Advanced Residential Theatre and Television Skills) Centre – to dwellings and offices and to partially convert an existing theatre complex for flexible business use with parking, landscaping, servicing and recycling facilities. Although the Trust is not opposed to the redevelopment of the site in principle, its objection to the proposals are based on the loss of an existing 200-seat theatre at the Centre, particularly as no Needs Assessment for theatre use has been undertaken either by the local authority or the applicant.

#### Theatre Royal, Bath Bath & North East Somerset Council

Listed Grade II\*  
Refs: 09/02842/FUL & 09/02848/  
LBA  
Decision: Pending

The Trust has supported a planning application in respect of the general refurbishment of the Theatre Royal in Bath. The proposed works include the redecoration of the auditorium, the cleaning and repair of plasterwork, walls and ceiling, the restoration of light fittings, and the replacement of the carpet. In addition, the application provides for a new foyer extension together with the creation of a new stalls bar in

the basement. Whilst welcoming the proposed improvements the Trust was nevertheless disappointed to note that the technical lighting rigs and bars were not being rationalised as part of the refurbishment. It suggested that these fixings be included within the programme of works, as it would prevent unnecessary costs and unpicking at a later stage. In responding to the application the Trust suggested further that it would be content for consent to be granted on the basis of the information provided within the existing application and allow the precise details of the refurbishment to be conditioned and agreed at a later date.

#### Coliseum Theatre, Cheltenham Cheltenham Borough Council Listed locally (in Conservation Area)

Refs: 09/00911/FUL & 09/00912/  
CAC  
Decision: Approved

The Trust has objected to planning and conservation area applications for a revised scheme to demolish the former Coliseum Theatre in Cheltenham and erect 12 apartments and commercial office space. The Trust considers the building, which is locally listed, to have much local merit and believes that it could be repaired and preserved as part of the street scene. The fact that the Coliseum has a simpler design gives the street interest, particularly with the juxtaposed 18th and 19th century buildings. In the Trust's view, the primary reason for the state of disrepair is

largely due to lack of maintenance and considers that the façade and immediate return walls would be perfectly capable of being restored and incorporated into any redevelopment scheme. The Trust argued that the local authority needed to be satisfied that the building was surplus to community and cultural requirements before granting demolition. Furthermore, should the authority be minded to approve the application, the Trust recommended that Section 106 money be obtained as a requirement from the applicants for other theatres within the town as a mitigation measure and requested a proper recording of the building prior to demolition.

#### Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa Warwick District Council Unlisted (in Conservation Area)

Ref: 09/0777  
Decision: Approved

The Trust has supported a planning application to demolish the Loft Theatre in Leamington Spa and erect a 4-storey building to house restaurants, offices and live/work units. The application also provides for the relocation of the Loft Theatre Company within the adjacent, Grade II\* listed, United Reformed Church. In responding to the application the Trust made no comment on the actual design of the referred redevelopment scheme, but instead provided advice on the closure period and requested a recording condition written into any consent. As far as the replacement theatre within the Church is concerned, this has already received listed building

consent, but was not referred to the Trust by the Council. Indeed, there was no requirement on the local planning authority to consult the Trust, as that application did not fall within the provisions of the GDPO.

#### Mermaid Theatre, London Corporation of London Unlisted

Ref: 09/00321/FUL  
Decision: Pending

The Mermaid Theatre in London's Puddle Dock area has been under threat of demolition and/or redevelopment for a number of years and has been the subject of a series of previous planning applications. The Trust has objected to the latest application that proposes the demolition of the theatre and the redevelopment of the site to provide a hotel. No replacement theatre is proposed as part of the application, nor is any compensation offered for the loss of the theatre as previously agreed for the benefit of theatres elsewhere in the City of London. In submitting its response, the Trust drew attention to the authority's own UDP Policy, which clearly referred to a replacement facility. The Trust also referred back to the 2003 redevelopment scheme, when agreement was reached for the developer to provide a sum of £6 million under the terms of a S106 arrangement. Unfortunately since the 2003 planning application the Mermaid has been granted a Certificate of Existing Lawful Use, which effectively means it is no longer designated, in planning terms,



as being in sui generis theatre use. As such it may now be more difficult to negotiate favourable terms to compensate for the loss of the facility.

**Arts Guild Theatre, Greenock**  
**Inverclyde Council**  
 Ref: 09/0189/IC  
 Decision: Pending

Despite having concerns about some specific elements of the scheme, the Trust has supported an application for the construction of a new facility as a replacement for the existing Arts Guild Theatre in Greenock. The Trust welcomed the concept of a purpose-built 500-seat theatre and 150-seat studio theatre, which would provide a new home for Greenock Arts Guild within the Greenock Harbour development. In responding to the application the Trust pointed out that no theatre signage had been identified in the application and that there was a lack of provision for car parking. It also recommended that the council undertake an independent peer review exercise regarding the technical design and spatial configuration of the theatre.

**New Tower Theatre, London**  
**London Borough of Hackney**  
**Unlisted (in Conservation Area)**  
 Refs: 2009/1683 and 2009/1732  
 Decision: Approved

The Trust has supported planning and conservation area consent applications to demolish an existing single storey warehouse and erect a four-storey building to house the Tower Theatre Company. The new

building will comprise a 135-seat theatre with dressing rooms, a paint room, two prop stores, dedicated box office, bar, control room, meeting room and two rehearsals rooms. The designs by architects Bland, Brown and Cole provides for full disabled access and toilet provision, as well as a front-of-house lift. The Trust recommended that the applicants undertake an independent peer review exercise regarding the technical design and spatial configuration of the theatre scheme.

**The Spa Complex, Scarborough**  
**Scarborough Borough Council**  
**Listed Grade II\***  
 Ref: 09/01304/FL  
 Decision: Approved

The Trust has supported planning and listed building consent applications for the internal refurbishment of the Spa Complex in Scarborough, including works to the Grand Hall, foyer, buffet bar, basement and caretaker's cottage. The proposed works will enable a greater range of entertainment and performances to take place and allow the venue to cater for a wider range of other activities such as conferences, seminars, exhibitions, meetings as well as catering for private functions. In responding to the application the Trust recommended a number of amendments to the plans that would make the venue more effective, including provision for a wardrobe and wig room and a small suite of offices. However, it also pointed out that the Grand Hall would still only offer limited facilities for larger touring shows because it had no fly

tower, restricted wing space and poor sightlines. In the Trust's view the town requires a 'proper' lyric theatre and the Spa does not offer a viable solution.

**The Chatsworth Centre, Long Eaton**  
**Erewash Borough Council**  
**Unlisted**  
 Ref: 0709/0048  
 Decision: Approved

The Chatsworth Centre in Long Eaton was partially destroyed by fire in November 2003. The Trust was pleased therefore to receive this application that will see a much-needed community facility return to use in the town. The scheme provides for a two-storey infill extension between the existing John Barker Studio and the Devonshire Suite to form a new 250-seat theatre. The works will provide upgraded facilities including a new entrance, storage for scenery and improved dressing rooms, together with full disabled access and assessable toilets.

**Gwyn Hall, Neath**  
**Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**  
**Listed Grade II**  
 Ref: 2009/0731  
 Decision: Pending

The Trust has supported a planning application for the construction of a new theatre, cinema and performance studio within the repaired shell of Gwyn Hall in Neath. The theatre was partially destroyed by fire in October 2007 and these new proposals

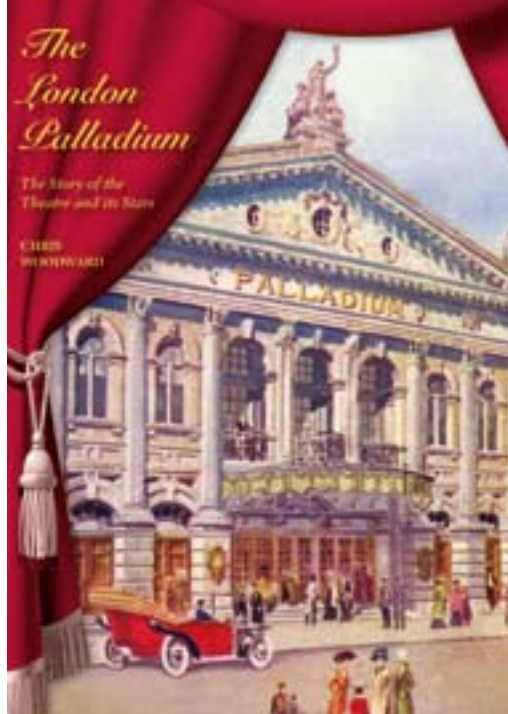
will provide a 400-seat theatre, a 140-seat flexible studio and a small cinema seating 70, as well as ancillary accommodation including a café/bar, circulation spaces, box office and administration and meeting rooms. The reconfigured theatre will also be fully accessible for those with disabilities.

**Wokingham Theatre**  
**Wokingham Borough Council**  
**Unlisted**  
 Ref: F/2009/0172  
 Decision: Approved

The Trust has supported a planning application for minor additions and amendments to an earlier permission granted in August 2008. The venue has been the home of the Wokingham Theatre Company since 1986. The single-storey building has a warm and welcoming domestic appearance and houses a foyer, bar, auditorium and a stage with dressing rooms, backstage crossover, cyclorama and dock doors. The building was originally funded by capital raised from a fundraising campaign together with a small loan from the Council. As a result, the facilities at the theatre were at a minimum. Increased popularity and the expansion of the Wokingham Youth Theatre have meant that an extension was added in 2000 increasing the seating from 125 to 144. The revisions to the 2008 scheme will provide for the erection of a single storey extension to the rear of the theatre to provide rehearsal space with ancillary dressing/sewing room facilities and to increase the workshop area with a new toilet and lobby.

# Reading Matter

## Reviews of recent publications on theatres



### **The London Palladium: The Story of the Theatre and its Stars**

Chris Woodward

£35.00 Jeremy Mills Publishing Ltd  
Hardback, 332pp  
ISBN: 978190660096

In many ways this is a quite splendid volume, which clearly identifies the wide variety of varieties that have graced the stage of the fantastic London Palladium.

Chris Woodward has written well and intelligently about the activities of music hall and variety, some of which now seems a world away, and also about the more recent world with which many more will identify. The Sunday League Concerts are very much in the past and, sadly, so are the days of the big bands like Duke Ellington as well as Jack Hylton, Geraldo and Ted Heath among others.

The names of variety artistes who are introduced cover almost a century of those who shone like enormous lights and also those who twinkled slightly less brightly. For true variety imagine the names of Fred Karno, Capt. Scott, the Palladium Minstrels, George Robey, G.H. Chirgwin and Lupino Lane all being mentioned within a few pages.

Pantomimes starring the greatest of the time, royal visits, the great musical comedy and revue stars like Jack Buchanan, Cecily Courtneidge and Jack Hulbert as well as the Tiller Girls, Max Miller, Gracie Fields and the never to be forgotten Crazy Gang are but names in a well defined and exhaustive list. To bring the story up-to-date Chris Woodward then reminds us of those

who have appeared more recently, Wayne Sleep, Nureyev, Michael Crawford, Tommy Steele and the shows *Barnum*, *Mary Poppins*, *Singing in the Rain*, *Oliver* and so on and so on. For many 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' was the centre point of their week and this is also well documented. What is particularly effective is that Mr. Woodward has not forgotten those who make the theatre work, the backstage crew and stage door keeper.

The history of the productions at the London Palladium is superbly underpinned by an extravaganza of theatre posters, all splendidly reproduced in colour of the highest quality and themselves a history of the people whose names appear on the various, parts of the bill. For these posters alone the book is certainly worth having, but unfortunately, for me, there is a large gap. The success of the London Palladium is rightly identified as being the result of Frank Matcham designing a fantastic theatre of large capacity and great intimacy. The book starts splendidly with a history of the earlier uses of the site and particularly of Hengler's Circus, of which there is a very welcome interior view, but there are no internal images of today's theatre or of the visual delights that would have, and still do, whet the audience's appetite for the show. Matcham certainly provided a theatre that both welcomed and surprised and prepared the audience well, and it is a pity that an opportunity was not taken to show the theatre in its glory.

MICHAEL SELL

*The London Palladium is available price £35.00 (postage paid in the UK) from: RNR Charlesworth, Westbury, Wilts BA13 4DU*

### **Grand Memories: A celebration of the Grand and its people**

Ed. Louise Bent

£10.00

Paperback, 36pp (+ DVD)

The Wolverhampton Grand is amongst the most important of C.J. Phipps' surviving theatres and one of his most successful designs. Opened in 1894, the theatre is largely as Phipps' imagined it, and although it was subjected to some unfortunate alterations in 1969 when the theatre was acquired by Wolverhampton Corporation, a major refurbishment project in the late 1990s returned it, largely, to its original state.

Despite its brevity, this beautifully presented A4 publication (more brochure than full-blown

book) is a fitting tribute to the venue. Grand Memories is the result of a yearlong, Heritage Lottery Fund sponsored research project. Guided by Louise Bent, the Wolverhampton Grand's Education Officer, and working with oral historian Helen Lloyd and film-maker Phil Brown, the Grand Memories team conducting interviews with over 130 past patrons, back stage staff and stars of the Grand. Along with an associated 40 minute DVD, the book provides a potted history of the theatre, from its opening night with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company's production of *Utopia Limited*, through its flourishing years as a Rep theatre under the direction of father and son, Leon and Derek Salberg, and the dark days following its closure in 1980.

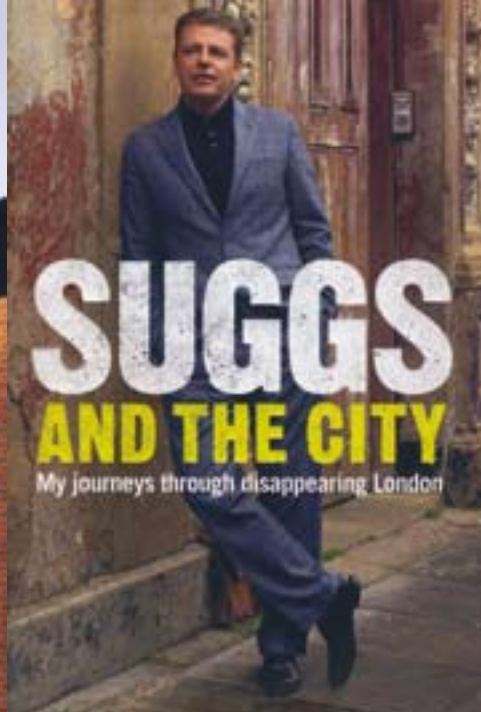
But, as Grand Memories well demonstrates, the theatre was much loved by Wolfrunians and the "Save the Grand" campaign was instrumental seeing the theatre



# The Nomads

the story of a community theatre  
1934-2009

by Helena Johnston & Bill Pearson  
with a foreword by June Spencer OBE



reopen in 1983. Since then, the Grand has cemented its relationship with the local community, and in recent years as extended its reach via improved education services and enhanced access for all. The Grand Memories project itself is part of that outreaching and cementing campaign, and as Chief Executive, Peter Cuthie, points out in his introduction, "although originally scheduled to last a year, I now realise (the Grand Memories project) will never finish"  
PAUL CONNOLLY

*Grand Memories is available from the Grand Theatre box office, telephone (01902) 429212. Price £12.00 (inc. p+p).*

**The Nomads: the story of a community theatre**  
Helena Johnston and Bill Pearson  
£5.00 Nomad Players Limited  
Paperback, 48pp

Another short, self-published history, this time celebrating 75 years of the Nomad Players Limited. This well-illustrated short book tells the story of local enthusiasm for drama and the spirit of community that can make dreams happen.

The East Horley-based amateur theatre company was founded in 1934 after a local resident, Donald Chown, announced to his friends that he'd, "always wanted to play Journey's End." Fortunately his friends were like-minded and within weeks a cast of eleven had been found, together with willing crew and a producer (as directors were called back then). The show played for just two nights at the

Borough Hall in Guildford, but more importantly the seeds were sown and a second production, *Nothing But The Truth*, was staged in March 1935 at the Women's Institute in East Horsley, and the company has remained based in the town ever since.

The Nomads' first theatre was constructed in 1957 on land adjacent to a barn, owned by the Chown family, which had been the company headquarters for over a decade. The purpose-built home allowed the company to grow, and although only two productions a year were being produced, theatrical activities for young people and children were established. Continued activity and expansion (and the poor state of the plumbing in the old theatre!) encouraged the company to consider developing a new facility. Whereas the first theatre was ten years in the making, the new theatre took 25, from conception to completion. But as a result of hard work and enthusiasm, and with the help of a £911,000 ACE Lottery grant, the new Nomad Theatre opened in 1998. The company continues to thrive and the theatre is one of the best appointed and most successful in the amateur theatre world.

The book includes dozens of production stills and lists of shows from the Nomads' 75-year history.  
PAUL CONNOLLY

*The Nomads is available from The Nomads Theatre, Bishopsmead Parade, East Horsley, Leatherhead KT24 6RT. Or order by telephone (01483) 282309. Price £6.00 (inc. p+p).*

## **Suggs and the City: My journeys through disappearing London** Suggs

£18.99 Headline Publishing Group  
Hardback, 330pp  
ISBN: 9780755319251

This book grew out of a television series, *Disappearing London*, which ran on ITV a couple of years ago. In that series and much more in the book, much-loved Londoner and the front man of pop group Madness, Suggs (or Graham McPherson to give him his proper name), takes the reader on a personal journey through an ever-changing city. Sadly for Suggs, and no doubt many readers here I suspect, that change has meant thoughts more of loss rather than of renewal, and for much of the book's 330 pages he mourns the passing of a bygone age.

As well as chapters focusing on Soho; music and sporting venues; London's own Tin Pan Alley, Denmark Street; food halls and restaurants (where Theatres Trust chairman Rob Dickins even gets a mention in relation to Manze's Pie and Mash Shop!), there is a chapter each on London theatres and cinemas.

At the centre of the theatres and music halls chapter, 'Let Me Entertain You', is Wilton's Music Hall. Whilst there may be little by way of detail to inform the *Theatres Magazine* reader, Suggs provides an evocative potted history of the building. He also includes information on the London Hippodrome, Bedford Theatre (which famously featured in the 1967 documentary *The London Nobody Knows*), Camden

Palace, Hoxton Hall, Clapham Grand, and Hackney Empire – where Suggs and Madness finally got to play in 2008. It is encouraging to note that in a book focusing on disappearing London all but one of the theatrical venues featured are extant. In 'Cinema City' amongst other picture houses included are the Hammersmith Odeon, Gaumont State in Kilburn, and the Granada, Tooting.

If you are aware of Suggs then his voice and persona come through quite clearly in the writing, and his enthusiasm for these buildings and his reminiscences of time spent in them make for a charming read – although the tale of a pomegranate in the Eros cinema in Piccadilly Circus could have been left untold!  
PAUL CONNOLLY

**Erratum: The Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection**  
In the Autumn issue of *Theatres Magazine*, in a review of *Theatreland: A journey through the heart of London theatre*, in referring to the Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson Theatre Collection it was suggested that the collection was housed at Greenwich University. It is in fact an independent part of the Jerwood Library of the Performing Arts at Trinity College of Music in Greenwich. For further information about the collection contact the administrator Richard Mangan on (020) 8305 4426 or visit [www.mander-and-michenson.co.uk](http://www.mander-and-michenson.co.uk)

## Friends & Corporate Supporters news

### Season's greetings

We would like to extend Seasons Greetings and the New Year to all of the Trust's Friends and Corporate Supporters. Your support in 2009 has been invaluable in helping the Trust to respond quickly and provide expert advice to protect theatres across the UK.

### New Friends

The Trust would like to welcome the following new Friends: Dr Michael Stubbs, Keith B Cook, Julian Oddy, Muriel Nichols, Victoria Sheldon, Chris Glover, Ian Belsey, Julia Clough, Angela Pacitti and Hazel Clover, and also Michael Murphy who has joined us as a Life Friend. The Trust is also grateful to those Friends who have upgraded annual memberships to Life memberships.

### Corporate Supporters Supplement

The Trust is grateful for the support of its Corporate Supporters during 2009. Copies of the annual Corporate Supporters Supplement are included with this issue of Theatres Magazine. If you would like any additional copies please contact the office on (020) 7836 8591.

## Trust news

### Two new Trustees appointed

The Trust is pleased to report the appointment of two new Trustees who joined the board on 17 November 2009.

Anne McReynolds is currently Chief Executive of the Metropolitan Arts Centre (MAC) in Belfast, where she is responsible for all aspects of detailed business planning, human resources, legal, licensing, information systems and governance issues and artistic development in partnership with Northern Ireland's arts producers. Prior to this, she worked as Development Officer for Belfast Community Circus before joining the Old Museum Arts Centre as Director, where she was responsible for artistic visioning, financial control and building management. In 2006, she became Project Director responsible for delivering The MAC, Belfast's new arts centre. This project involved her in liaising with NI's performing and visual arts sector, the appointment, through an international open design competition, of the Integrated Design Team to design the building, and fundraising for the capital costs of The MAC. She is also a Trustee of Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.

Matthew Rooke is the Co-Founder and Director of Scottish Cultural Enterprise Ltd, an independent management consultancy, focusing on project management and implementation practice, working with a wide range of national, regional and local governmental agencies and other bodies involved in the cultural sector. Prior to this, he was a professional bass player and composer before joining the Arts Council England as Music Officer. In 1991, he joined the Scottish Arts Council as Music and then Group Director with responsibility for the design and delivery of annual multi-million pound Government public funding programmes in Scotland in respect of the performing arts. He is a Director of Arthouse UK group which rescues and restores Category A listed buildings for use as cultural centres.

These appointments bring the total number of Trustees to 14, one short of our full complement. The Trust will continue to liaise with the DCMS in an effort to fill the final vacancy.

## Join Us Become a part of theatres future

By becoming a Friend or Corporate Supporter of The Theatres Trust you are showing support and playing an important role in our work. All donations and subscriptions go directly towards helping promote and protect theatres for future generations to enjoy. Members benefit from being well informed of important developments through Theatres Magazine and our monthly News Digest.

For details on becoming a Friend please call the office on 020 7836 8591 or email [friends@theatretrust.org.uk](mailto:friends@theatretrust.org.uk)

For details on becoming a Corporate Supporter please call the office on 020 7836 8591 or email [supporters@theatretrust.org.uk](mailto:supporters@theatretrust.org.uk)

# Photo diary



## *Coliseum Theatre, Aberdare*

Built 1938 as replacement for the old Trecynon Public Hall, the Coliseum is a unique 1930s art deco theatre nestling in the suburbs of Aberdare. It seats 600 in its main auditorium and also houses a 100-seat lounge bar. The Trust's Planning and Heritage Adviser recently visited the venue, together with the Parc and Dare in Treorci and Muni in Pontypridd. All three are managed by the Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

Photos: Mark Price

## General & contact information

### Trustees

Rob Dickins CBE (Chairman), Jason Barnes, Dr Phil Clark, Marilyn Cutts, Venu Dhupa, Tim Foster, Penelope Keith CBE, DL, Dr Pauleen Lane CBE, Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall, Anne McReynolds, Matthew Rooke, Chris Shepley CBE, Sam Shrouder, Ben Twist

### Consultants

John Earl, Jonathan Lane

### Staff

Mhora Samuel *Director*  
Mark Price *Planning and Heritage Adviser*  
Rose Freeman *Planning Policy Officer*  
Tim Atkinson *Theatre Building Services Adviser*  
Paul Connolly *Administrator*  
Clive Dixon *Finance and Monitoring Officer*  
Suzanne McDougall *Assistant to the Director*  
Kate Carmichael *Resources Officer*  
Fran Birch *Records Officer*  
Damian Le Sueur *Design and Web Creative*

The Theatres Trust is the National Advisory Public Body for Theatres. The Trust provides leadership in the planning and protection of theatres, safeguarding existing theatres and improving the planning environment for theatres across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

### The Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road,  
London WC2H 0QL

Tel: (020) 7836 8591  
Fax: (020) 7836 3302  
info@theatrestrust.org.uk  
www.theatrestrust.org.uk

## Dates for your diary

### 22 January 2010

#### **The Annual Jocelyn Herbert Lecture**

**Richard Eyre: Less is More**

**Royal National Theatre**

**Tickets: £3.50 / £2.50**

In memory of designer Jocelyn Herbert, the former director of the National Theatre gives the first annual lecture to celebrate the role of the theatre designer. The lecture is funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation as part of its support for the Jocelyn Herbert Archive at Wimbledon College of Art, the University of the Arts London.

### 26/27 April 2010

#### **Conference 10 Designing School Theatres Leeds**

**Conference Fee: £165 (+VAT)**

The Theatres Trust's next annual conference will look at the design of theatres co-located within schools, colleges and higher education institutions. The conference is aimed at head teachers, educationalists and local authority clients delivering theatres and drama facilities in schools and educational settings. Booking will open in January 2010, when there will be a range of early-bird booking rate offers. Visit [www.theatrestrust.org.uk/events](http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/events) for further details.

### 27/28 April 2010

#### **PLASA Focus Royal Amouries, Leeds Admission free (if pre-booked)**

PLASA Focus will showcase the latest technology from hundreds of manufacturers from all over the world and will also provide a free education and learning programme, which will include the Theatres Trust the Conference 10 debate on Tuesday 27 April. For further details and free registration visit [www.plasafocus.com](http://www.plasafocus.com).

SELADOR, ELEMENT, SENSOR,  
EOS, ION, CONGO, SINEWAVE,  
SOURCE FOUR, UNISON PARADIGM,  
SMARTFADE, REVOLUTION

Award winning lighting.



London  
ETC Ltd, 26-28 Victoria Road Ind. Estate,  
Victoria Road, London, W3 6UU  
Tel +44 (0)20 8896 1000  
[www.etcconnect.com](http://www.etcconnect.com)

