

**Theatres
Magazine**

Autumn
2018

T M

Thriving theatres

Citizens Theatre, Glasgow
Liverpool's Royal Court
The Factory, Manchester
Victoria Palace Theatre
Theatres Trust's future ambitions

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**

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Theatres Magazine

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Notes, queries and letters are always welcome.

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Citizens Theatre,
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Clarification

The caption on page 23 of Summer TM 2018 implied that the Odeon opposite the Plaza and Hippodrome in Dudley has gone. It is still standing, Grade II listed and a Jehovah's Witness centre.

Director's Welcome

Theatres Trust Director Jon Morgan introduces this issue of TM and explains how it ties in with topics being discussed at Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive.

Welcome to the autumn 2018 edition of TM, the conference edition of our magazine.

The theme of this year's Theatres Trust conference is 'Adapt & Thrive.' Over the course of the day, we will look at how theatres are changing their business models and their theatre buildings to become more viable in the current economic and funding climate and how we continue to make the case for and generate investment in theatre building and redevelopment.

In this issue of TM, we provide additional insight into four of the theatres featured in the conference programme:

Gillian Miller guides us through Liverpool's Royal Court's £7.2m transformation journey – from reopening the theatre to achieving Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation status.



It is a journey that Theatres Trust has supported every step of the way and I'm delighted to see a theatre that is truly at the heart of its community moving ever closer to a sustainable future.

John McGrath from Manchester International Festival and The Factory and Judith Kilvington from Citizens Theatre answer questions about their respective theatre projects. Very different, but equally exciting plans that the Theatres Trust has been involved with and I am looking forward to seeing them both come to fruition.

Our showcase feature is a tour of the refurbished Victoria Palace Theatre, courtesy of Delfont Mackintosh and Aedas Arts Team. Theatre owner and producer Cameron Mackintosh will share his experience of adapting and renewing this theatre and others in his portfolio in his conference session in conversation with fellow Theatres Trust Ambassador, Samira Ahmed.

The common theme that emerges across all of these articles is that of collaboration. Behind every thriving theatre are successful partnerships between theatre managers, building owners, artistic directors, architects and designers, local authorities and funders. This is something that is also reflected in the whole of the Conference 18 programme,



where we bring together speakers from every profession that has an interest in how theatres will adapt to the challenges they face. The programme includes speakers from local authorities, award-winning theatre architects and consultants, leading theatre professionals from the subsidised and commercial sectors, as well as Michael Ellis MP, Secretary of State for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, who will open the conference.

It is always worth coming to the Theatres Trust's conference for the whole day, but this year in particular, the final session 'Investing in the Future of Theatres' is not to be missed. Conference attendees will be the first to see the results of the capital works sector survey that the Theatres Trust has carried out in partnership with UK Theatre. Arts Council England Director of Strategic Partnerships, Paul Bristow, will be trailing the findings of the Cultural Cities Enquiry into future models for investment in culture as well as the Arts Council's draft 10 Year Strategy 2020-2030 and social entrepreneur, Lord Andrew Mawson will offer his unique perspective on the balance of responsibility between the state, community and private sectors for investing in and shaping our communities.

Away from the conference preview, in this TM we also have a round-up of the theatres who've been awarded grants in the latest round of our UK Theatres Small Grants scheme. It is a diverse group of theatres, ranging from the Romsey Plaza, an amateur theatre in Hampshire, to the prestigious Dundee Rep, but in each case, our grant has provided vital funding that enables the theatre to provide a better experience for its audience.

As with all of our grant schemes, this programme is always heavily oversubscribed and there are hundreds more theatres who could benefit from similar support. This is just one of the areas that Kate Bierman, our Development Director will be

focusing on in her new role, which she describes, along with our future plans, elsewhere in this magazine.

The Theatres Trust's work, whether grants, advice or campaigning, is made possible through the generosity of our Friends and Corporate Supporters, and with support from trusts and foundations. Our new partnership with J&C Joel on the Setting the Stage Fund is just one example of how we are working with our supporters to benefit the theatre sector. But there is so much more we could be doing – and indeed need to do – if we are to protect theatres for future generations to enjoy. With this in mind, we have launched a new Patrons Scheme, which will enable us to support many more theatres to thrive, and which I hope many of TM's readers will consider joining. Details of the new Patrons Scheme can be found online at theatrestrust.org.uk.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of TM and I hope to see many of you at 'Adapt & Thrive' at the Lyric Hammersmith on 16 October.



**Theatres
Trust**
Conference 18:
Adapt & Thrive
16 October | Lyric Hammersmith

The team behind the new Streatham Space Project will be speaking at Conference 18 Adapt & Thrive, in the session called 'Making the Case, Raising the Cash'.





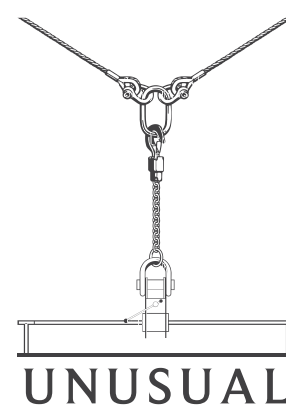
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The Theatres Trust's recently-appointed Development Director, *Kate Bierman*, gives an overview of her role and explains why now, more than ever, fundraising is vital to enable us to support more theatres.

A look at our future ambitions

My passion for theatre – and fundraising

I have worked in theatres and fundraising for almost 20 years, including working at the Donmar Warehouse for five years under the tenure of Michael Grandage, as well as working at the new Unicorn Theatre, The Bush, Soho Theatre and Rambert Dance Company. Most recently I was Director of Arts and Heritage at a fundraising consultancy where my clients included BAFTA, The Factory, Tara Arts and Hackney Empire.

Prior to this I was privileged to be the Development Director at Wilton's Music Hall where I raised just under £4m to restore the Grade II* listed building. It was on the Theatres Trust's Theatres at Risk register, but its future has now been secured. Seeing Wilton's, a beautiful but extremely fragile and somewhat dangerous building, be lovingly restored and brought to life was a complete joy for me. So I'm inspired to be working at the Theatres Trust where I will be helping ensure more theatres can have a bright future and be enjoyed by thousands of people throughout the UK.



Our future plans are to support more theatres like Wilton's Music Hall.

Building on the Theatres Trust's work

For a small organisation, the Theatres Trust already does an impressive amount – in 2017 alone we worked with almost 350 theatres and hundreds of community groups and industry professionals. But theatres across the UK continue to close or be under threat of imminent closure or demolition and there is so much more we must do if future generations are to enjoy theatre. This is not just about preserving buildings, but creating places at the heart of the community, bringing people together and contributing to the local economy.

“We have ambitious plans for the next three years that will enable us to help more theatres to not just survive but to thrive.”

Increasing the Theatres Protection Fund

Our grants schemes are oversubscribed – we can only support one in three projects that apply, and we know there are even more theatres out there that need capital grants for improvements and urgent repairs. It is our ambition to increase these programmes to respond to these needs, to ensure theatres can improve disabled access and undertake vital repairs which are often the difference to staying open.

Theatres at Risk capacity building programme

Many of the buildings on the Theatres at Risk register have been on the list for many years without much movement due to complex reasons such as complications with ownerships, difficulties in raising the initial funds to deliver on large-scale capital projects and

the limitations of voluntary campaign groups looking to run the campaigns. Our small team of three expert advisors currently find it difficult to give the depth of support these community groups need. A capacity building programme for Theatres at Risk would change this.

Additional funding will allow us to work with these community groups to engage additional expert advice in viability studies, business plans, economic impact studies, governance reviews, theatres operations and business management and will empower these voluntary groups to secure the future of these local theatres for many years to come.

Making the case for theatres

As the voice for all theatres in the UK, it is essential that the Theatres Trust has complete and accurate information about theatres past and present, and a full understanding of issues and trends affecting the sector. This will require investment in research and in our Theatres Database, but it is absolutely vital to allow us to support theatres to adapt and be more resilient.

Making the most of our archive

We have an extensive archive relating to the history of theatre, but more could be done to open up to a wider audience, so more people can benefit from what is a unique and fascinating collection.

All of this needs money and as a charity that receives no government subsidy, we rely on income generated through commercial activity and fundraising from Historic England, trusts and foundations, individuals and our Friends and Corporate Supporters.

Introducing our new Patron scheme

Our Friends and Corporate Supporters play a vital role in our work and will continue to help us in our ambitions. For supporters who want to strengthen their involvement, we are introducing a new Patron Scheme. This will offer different ways to engage with us such as events and activities with the opportunity to meet our Trustees, Senior Staff and our new Ambassadors (read more about them over the page).

Our Patron Scheme will begin at £1,000 and full details can be found on our website or please get in touch with me at kate.bierman@theatretrust.org.uk or 020 7836 8591 if you want to find out more.



Meet our new Ambassadors

We are fortunate to have an extraordinary number of high profile Ambassadors who believe in the work we do and want to ensure future generations have access to great theatre buildings throughout the UK.

Actors, producers, directors, comedians, composers and lyricists have joined forces with us and we believe that their passion and support can help us achieve our ambitions.

Our Ambassadors have already been hugely supportive including talking about their support for the Theatres Trust on social media, backing individual campaigns like us being J&C Joel's Charity of the Year and speaking at events. Two of our Ambassadors will join the line-up of our conference – Cameron Mackintosh will be in conversation with Samira Ahmed.

The Ambassadors have also appeared in a short film about our work, which we will be showing at our conference and other events, and can be viewed on our website.

We look forward to working with them further in the future.

The full list of our wonderful Ambassadors is:

Samira Ahmed, Gemma Arterton, Alan Ayckbourn, Michael Ball, Pippa Bennett-Warner, Matthew Bourne, Jo Brand, Alexandra Burke, Jack Dee, Mel Giedroyc, David Hare, Miranda Hart, Lenny Henry, Beverley Knight, Kwame Kwei-Armah, Jude Law, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Cameron Mackintosh, David Morrissey, Bill Nighy, Elaine Paige, Siobhan Redmond, Tim Rice, John Simm and Meera Syal.

Find out more about our Ambassadors and why they support us by visiting:
www.theatrestrust.org.uk/about-us/our-ambassadors



In conversation with David Hare

We spoke to David Hare, one of the UK's most prolific playwrights and film-makers about how theatre buildings have changed during his career and how a building can affect the writing of a new play.

In your opinion have theatre building changed since you first started writing?

I am old enough to remember the revolution when Peter Brook didn't use a stage curtain, and we all came into the Aldwych to see Diana Rigg already dead on the floor in Durrenmatt's *THE PHYSICISTS*. So yes, theatre buildings have changed out of all recognition.

When you start writing a play or are commissioned by a theatre does the building affect how you approach writing the play?

If I'm writing for the Olivier, or any theatre of that size, then I know narrative will always be more potent than mood. Plays can float along on atmosphere in small spaces, but in large spaces they depend on story.

Has the role theatres plays in society changed and how do you see them now?

The great civic theatres have been weakened by underfunding. They can no longer afford to put on a mix of broad repertory and new work, so people outside London can't get a sense of great theatre history. All part of the government's underfunding of the arts sadly.

Do you have a favourite theatre and why?

My favourite theatre was the Brighton Combination, an 80-seat Victorian schoolhouse up an alley just up from the seaside. It did nothing but experimental work. Unfortunately, it was knocked down over forty years ago. The Almeida is still the best theatre space in London, even though I'm not so keen on the redevelopment of the bar and foyer!

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*HCR = High Color Rendering LED technology

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Theatres Protection Fund UK Small Grants Scheme Awards

In August, the Theatres Trust announced the latest round of successful theatres in the UK Theatres Small Grants scheme. The scheme awarded a total of £22,500 to five theatres to support capital projects that will improve accessibility, save money and make the theatres more comfortable for their audiences.

Alnwick Playhouse

£5,000 | Auditorium improvements

Alnwick Playhouse is currently undergoing a major capital project to secure its future. This grant will support auditorium improvements including the re-raking and re-seating of the theatre, and significant access upgrades to improve the safety and comfort of audiences.

Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre

£5,000 | Air barriers

Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre is a one of Scotland's major producing and dance theatres. Thanks to the grant the installation of air barriers on the front doors of the theatre will generate energy savings of approximately £2,000 per year and also make the foyer spaces more pleasant for audiences.

Oswaldtwistle Civic Arts Centre and Theatre

£5,000 | Heating system

The building that is now the Civic Arts Centre and Theatre in Oswaldtwistle was built as a public hall in 1890 as a celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. This grant, along with support from Hyndburn Borough Council, will contribute to replacing the broken heating system and relieve some extra costs being created by the current temporary heater.

Vivacity Key Theatre, Peterborough

£2,500 | Hearing loop

The Vivacity Key Theatre in Peterborough is one of East Anglia's leading live entertainment venues, welcoming more than 70,000 customers last year and presenting an eclectic programme for all ages and communities. This grant will fund the installation of a hearing loop for the studio theatre space making the theatre's programme even more accessible.

Plaza Theatre, Romsey

£5,000 | Stair lift replacement

The Romsey Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society (RAODS) acquired the freehold of the Plaza in 1982 and began converting it to theatre, the building having started life as a cinema. This grant will support the replacement of a broken stair lift which will make the auditorium accessible once again.



Since our Theatres Protection Grants Schemes began in 2012, the Theatres Trust has supported 94 organisations awarding grants totalling £593,000.

The next round of the UK Theatres Small Grants Scheme is now open for applications – the deadline is noon on Tuesday 8 January 2019.

The UK Theatres Small Grants Scheme is generously supported by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust.

J&C Joel Setting the Stage Fund

Leading manufacturer of flame retardant fabrics, drapery and stage engineering solutions, J&C Joel, has chosen the Theatres Trust as its charity for the company's 40th anniversary year.

As part of this, we've launched a new award together, the J&C Joel Setting the Stage Fund. This will see one worthy not-for-profit theatre receive up to £10,000 of in-kind support from J&C Joel. This can include products and services, including but not limited to: front of house drapery; masking and black out drapery; tracks and servicing of stage engineering equipment.

Theatres Trust will manage applications for the fund, providing our expertise to find a deserving winner. The deadline is 30 November. A shortlist will be announced at the end of January with the winner decided at the end of the February.

More information can be found on our website: theatrestrust.org.uk/how-we-help/grants-funding.

J&C Joel's CEO, James Wheelwright said: "We are extremely proud to be able to work with the Theatres Trust to give something back to the industry which has been the key to our success. We hope the Setting the Stage Fund will make a real difference to a theatre in need whilst also benefitting the community it serves."

During the 40th anniversary year, all J&C Joel customers are being encouraged to donate £1 every time they place an order, which will be matched by J&C Joel. These donations will help the Theatres Trust to continue to support hundreds of theatres around the UK to have the best chance of a bright future.

"Being chosen as J&C Joel's charity of the year means that the Theatres Trust will be able to support even more theatres to thrive. And we are delighted to be working with them on the Setting the Stage Fund, providing our expertise to find a deserving theatre for this generous support."

Jon Morgan, Theatres Trust's Director

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Victoria Palace Theatre Re-*imagination*

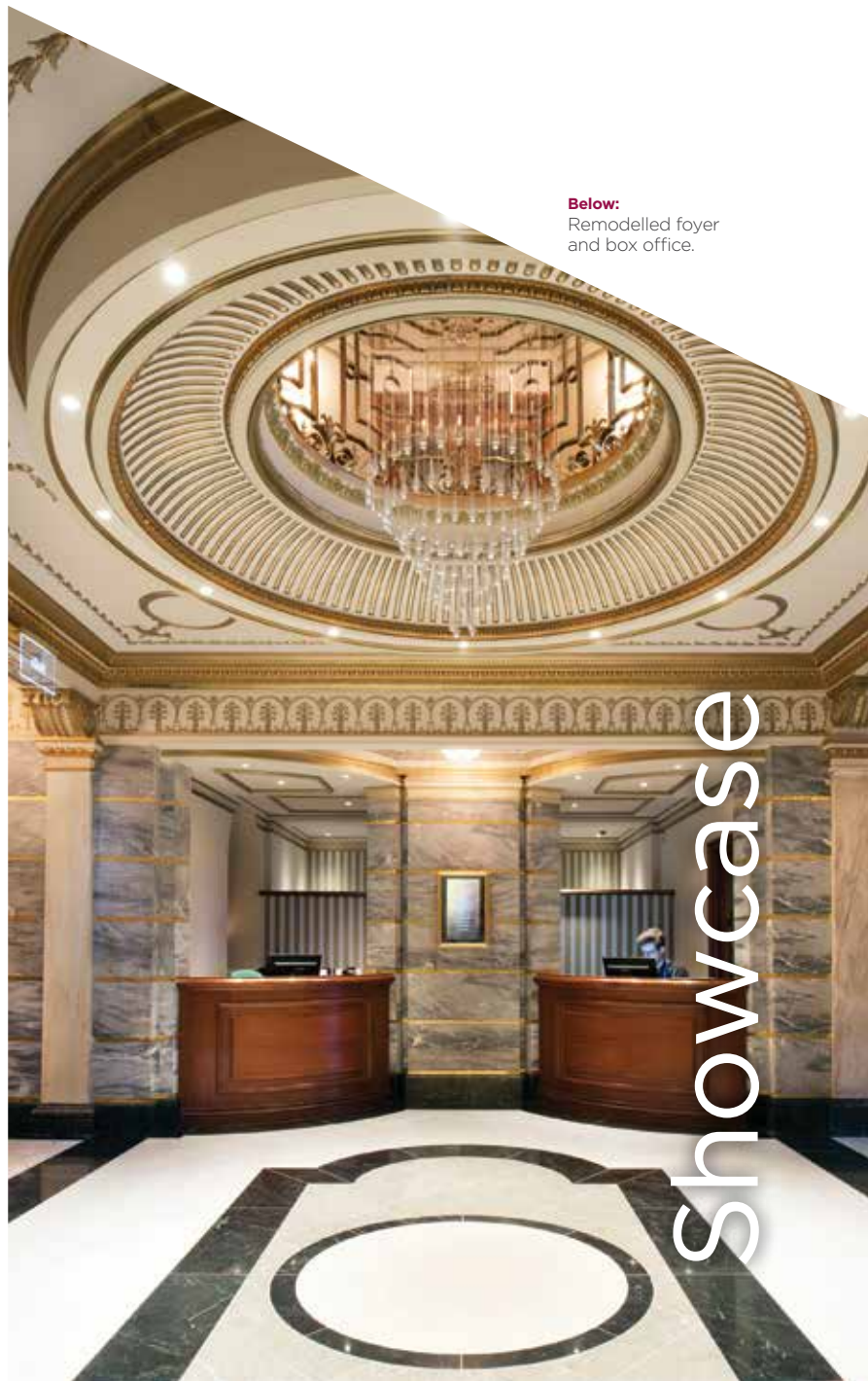
The team behind the ambitious transformation of Matcham's masterpiece, the Victoria Palace Theatre, discuss the project which has rebuilt, expanded and visually reimagined the theatre, which is currently home to the Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning American musical, *Hamilton*.

Background

The Victoria Palace Theatre occupies the site of the earlier Royal Standard Music Hall, which opened in December 1863. The adjacent public house, the Duke of York, dates from 1820. Theatre magnate Sir Alfred Butt acquired the musical hall and neighbouring plots in 1910. Butt commissioned architect Frank Matcham, then nearing the end of his illustrious career, to design the new theatre. The building has the eclectic mix of architectural styles associated with Matcham's later work. Like his London Coliseum of 1904, the Victoria Palace had grandiose spaces characterised by an ebullient Edwardian architectural expression. Theatre historian John Earl has referred to this later style as 'Matcham's Baroque' — with its characteristically cheerful disregard for architectural niceties and creation of spaces with an intense theatrical atmosphere. Butt's theatre opened in November 1911.

The three bay symmetrical façade to Victoria Street was a relatively formal composition for Matcham. The central octagonal tower was topped by a figure of the Russian ballerina, Anna Pavlova. To the right of the main façade the classical treatment extended across a triple arched screen to a yard behind, which was used as a queueing space for the gallery patrons. The backstage Allington Street facade, although more restrained, was also a considered architectural composition.

Below:
Remodelled foyer
and box office.



showcase

Right:
New gents toilets.

Far right:
Auditorium and
remodelled sideboxes.



The interior layout responded to social conventions of the day, with patrons in the Stalls and Dress Circle using the marble lined entrance lobby. The Adams Tea Room at first floor level was originally linked to the entrance lobby via the central light well. Immediately above the Tea Room was the Old English Room, created in mock Tudor style.

By 1906, the London County Council was set against three balcony auditoria and the impact of this is very clear in Matcham's design. There were only two tiers, which were themselves deeper and less curved than had been the norm. Decoratively the boldly scaled outer walls of the auditorium rose to a modillion cornice, above which a deep cove linked to the ornamented central dome. The dome itself opened for ventilation.

The building has been on the statutory list of building of special or historic interest since 1972, and is currently Grade II* listed.

Performance history

The theatre opened as a variety entertainment venue and continued as such until 1929, when Alfred Butt left the management to RH Gillespie. From this time, review and drama became the main activities. In 1937 the musical *Me and My Girl* opened and ran until after the war. Moss Empires acquired the theatre in 1948. Following the long musical run, variety returned as the main performance type well into the 1960s.

“Sir Cameron Mackintosh himself brings his eye to every aspect of the design.”

In 1982, Elizabeth Taylor made her London stage debut in a production of *Little Foxes*. Sir Stephen Waley Cohen acquired the theatre in 1991. In the early 1990s, *Buddy — The Buddy Holly Story*, played for six years at the theatre, prior to its transfer and *Billy Elliot — The Musical* ran for 10 years.

Delfont Mackintosh Theatres' acquisition

Delfont Mackintosh Theatres (DMT) acquired the theatre at the end of 2014. Prior to this, in 2009, Planning Approval and Listed Building Consent had been granted for the refurbishment and extension of the theatre. This proposal had been designed within the context of the wider Victoria Street redevelopment being undertaken by developer Landsec, and London Underground's Victoria Station Upgrade. A key aspect of this wider development scheme was the transfer of a 6.0m wide strip of land, immediately behind the theatre. This created the opportunity to link Matcham's fine auditorium to a state of the art stage and fly tower. Although DMT's aspiration for the theatre differed in detail to the approved scheme, they were framed within this earlier permission.

Location

Prior to the current wholesale redevelopment of Victoria Street, the theatre sat within an urban context that had been continually evolving since its completion in 1911. The various Landsec building developments have transformed the scale of the immediate area, making Matcham's robust Edwardian façade a rather more diminutive and decorous historical anchor within the new urban realm. The theatre wraps around the Duke of York pub on the south west corner – which is now nearing completion after its own renovation.

“The aspiration for the redevelopment project was to finish what Matcham started.”



The project

In strategic terms the aspiration for the redevelopment project was to finish what Matcham started – improving and enhancing the building in the spirit of its original architect. The vision was for a refurbishment of the theatre that maximised the opportunities afforded by the additional strip of land adjacent to the existing plot and the building of a new stagehouse. These works, alongside major additional public areas front of house and a complete rebuild backstage were to enable the theatre to take its rightful place as one of London's premier locations for large-scale musical theatre productions.

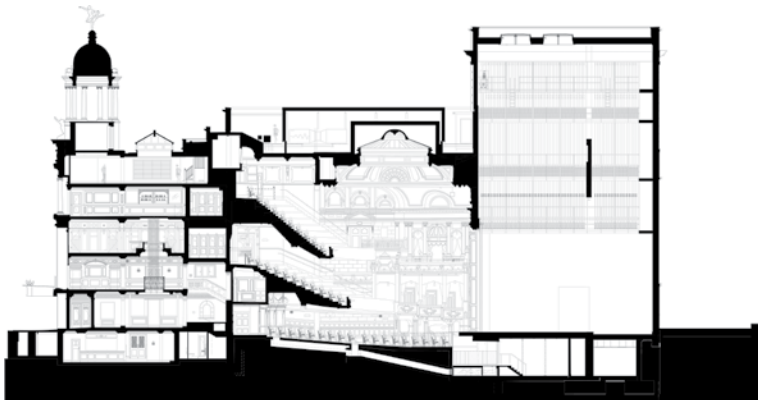
Although the theatre had operated effectively for a building of its date, there were undoubtedly a number of areas where operational efficiency and environmental quality, for all building users, could be improved.

The re-imagined theatre

There are a number of key architectural alterations to the Victoria Palace. The stage has been levelled and a new fly tower built. This adds 6.0m to the depth of the stage and is enhanced by a widened proscenium opening. The auditorium has been re-lit, has a new ventilation system, new performance infrastructure, new seating and decorative scheme. In the public areas the primary circulation routes have been reconfigured to allow all patrons, including those sat within the upper tier to experience the glory of Matcham's entrance lobby and central spaces. The original light well has been reinstated, linking all the primary public areas and is one of the most transformative alterations. A new wing of public foyers, including the Grand and Royal Salons, is set on the east

Below:
Long section.

Far below:
The new
rehearsal room.



side of the building. This improves the front of house spatial provision and provides an elegant Matcham-inspired façade opening out onto a roof terrace overlooking Victoria Street. The audience support areas have been radically improved, particularly in the WC provision in both numbers and disposition. All the backstage areas have been completely rebuilt, refurbished and extended to allow the theatre to provide some of the most attractive dressing rooms in London's West End.

The design process

Owning and operating eight West End theatres DMT is an experienced theatre refurbishment client and has a wealth of expertise within the organisation in terms of the operational and practical aspects of running theatres – and their remodelling. Sir Cameron Mackintosh himself brings his eye to every aspect of the design from overall layout through to the selection of soap dispensers. He also has a long-standing working rapport with interior designer Clare Ferraby – who has been involved with the refurbishment of all his theatres. Throughout the life of the project large scale mock-ups were used. These were often built in-situ, such as one for the new rear stall audience boxes, to allow for the fine tuning of the design that is so critical to the client team.

Interior design by Clare Ferraby

The entrance foyer, grand staircase and upper foyer formed a noble but small unified element at the heart of the building. This area was also the most complete remaining feature of Matcham's design for this building in terms of use, layout, detail, materials and colour. The 1911 interiors were not only a late development of Matcham's own previous work, but clearly had influences from the work of the Vienna Secessionist Movement's architects and designers. Matcham's concept for this central area formed the basis of the decorative treatment and alterations of all the other public areas and the auditorium.

Matcham's use of delicate grey marble with gold mosaic insets provided the design inspiration for the new decorative scheme. The wallpapers, both within the auditorium and other areas, are re-worked original designs from the period. The various bespoke carpet designs, a signature element of DMT theatres, reflects the style of the



Secessionist Movement – and are critical in bringing a stylistic unity to Matcham’s eclectic aesthetic.

The Tudor Room showed Matcham’s interest in designing an important meeting place in a contrasting style to the rest of the building – as he had done previously at the London Coliseum. The existing darkly stained timber was stripped back to its original oak to significantly lighten the room and return it to its former splendour. Indeed all the internal timberwork across the building, panelling and doors was stripped and lightened to remove decades of dirt and dark stain. This has importantly lightened the whole interior.

Lessons

The re-imagined Victoria Palace unites new additions, reformed spaces and Matcham’s eclectic interior into a new stylistic unity giving a sense of completeness. It is an undeniably lavish rejuvenation of an Edwardian theatre. Aspects of the approach used however, can inform creative strategies on the re-use and adaptation of other historic venues – whatever their scale. Aside from the benefits of a new adaptable stage house – and better spaces for cast and crew, the Victoria Palace Theatre demonstrates a balanced emphasis on audience experience in both practical and environmental terms, but also emotional terms: the sense of anticipation, pleasure and stimulation of all the senses to achieve a memorable ‘night out’.

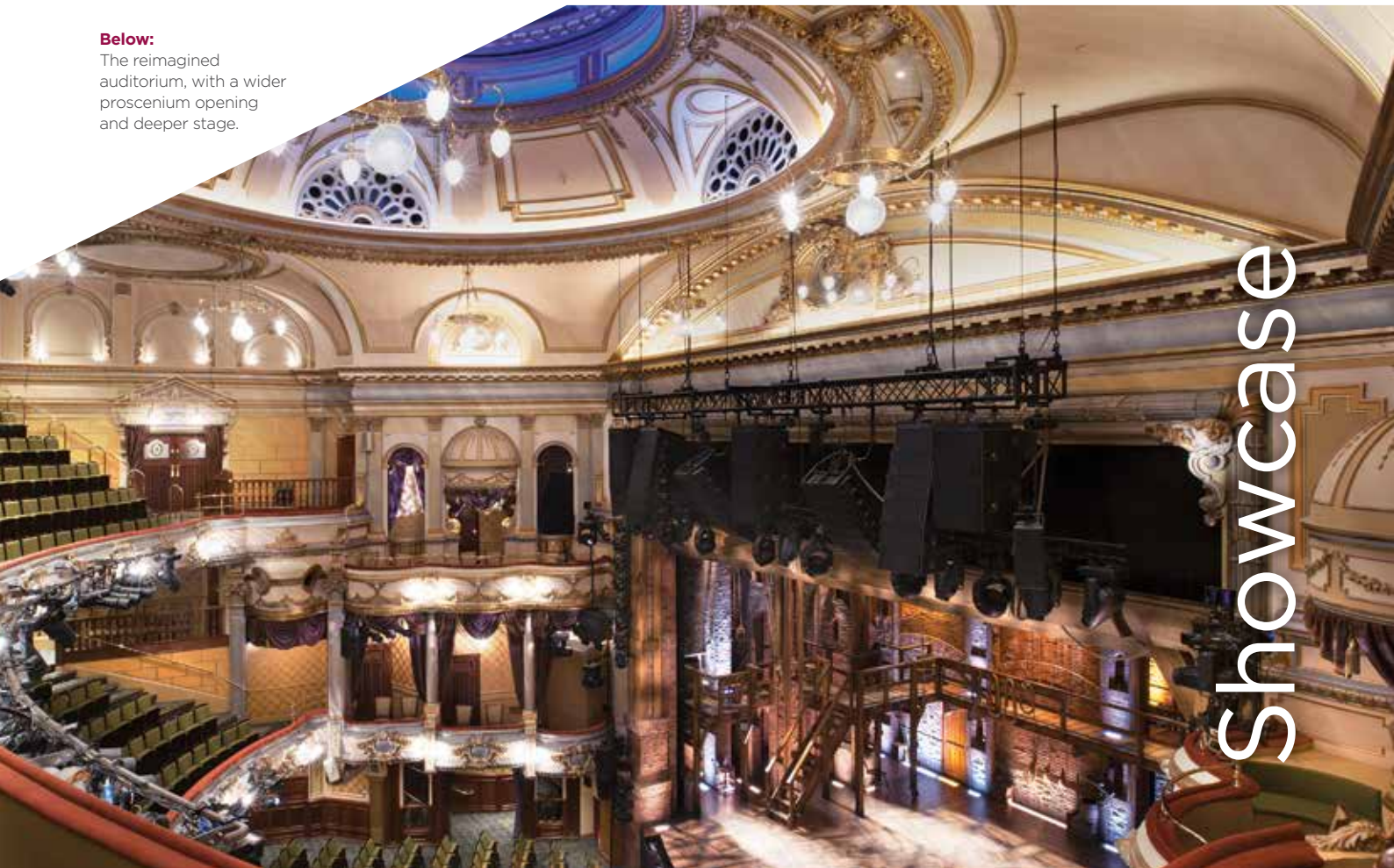
Clockwise from top:

The new stalls bar, detail of the Bruce Munro chandelier, and the brass balustrade.



Below:

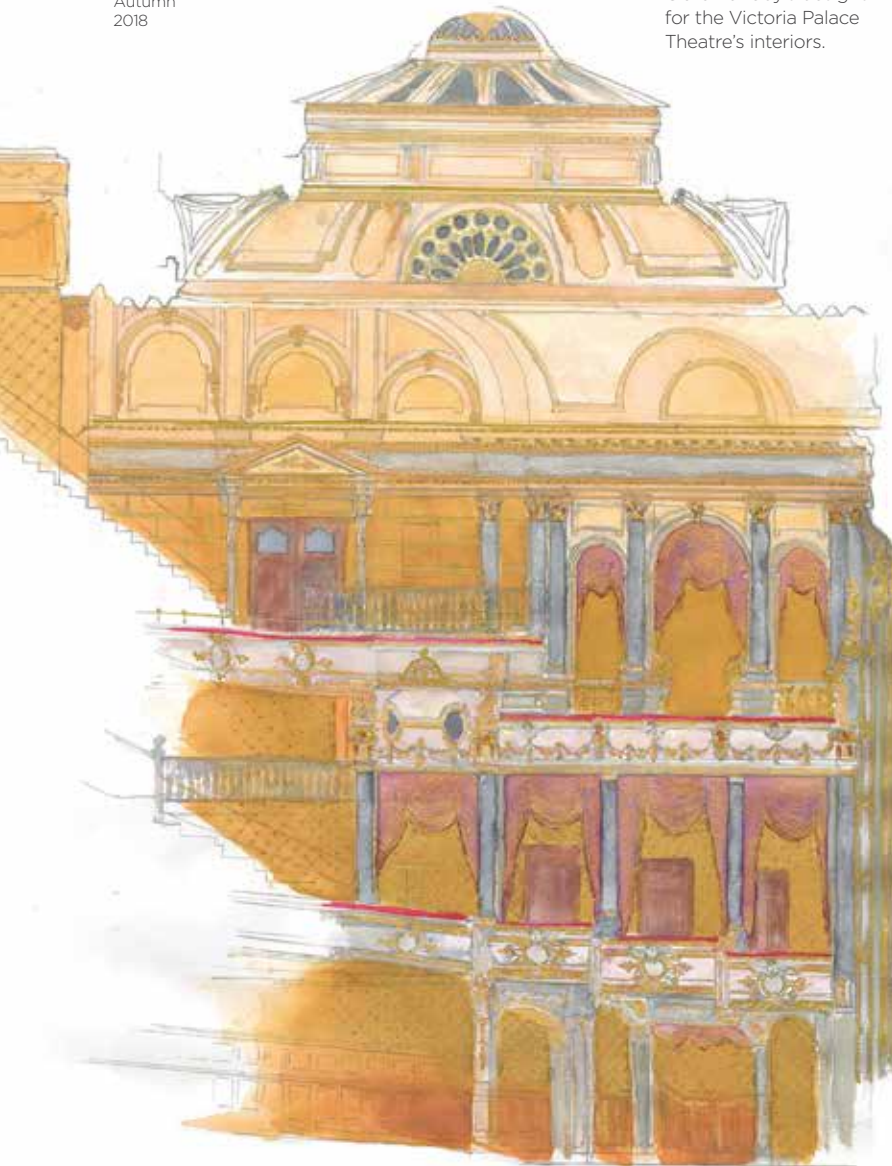
The reimagined auditorium, with a wider proscenium opening and deeper stage.



showcase

Below:

Clare Ferraby's designs
for the Victoria Palace
Theatre's interiors.



With thanks to the Delfont Mackintosh Theatres team and Aedas Arts Team for their contributions to this article. Images courtesy of Philip Vile.

Cameron Mackintosh, theatre owner and producer will be speaking at Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive, in conversation with fellow Theatres Trust Ambassador, Samira Ahmed, sharing his experience of adapting and renewing some of London's most iconic theatres to ensure their future resilience and viability.

Victoria Palace Theatre In profile

Main house capacity

1533 fully seated -1569 with standing
(717 Stalls, 444 Royal Circle, 402 Grand Circle, 36 Standings)

Dressing rooms

9 Principal's Rooms, some arranged as suites with separate lounge area, one accessible at stage level, (all en-suite), 4 Ensemble Rooms, 2 Band Rooms – independent shower and WC blocks

Toilets front of house

38 Female WCs, 8 Gents WCs and 18 Gents Urinals + 1 accessible WC and 4 independent WCs related to VIP Rooms

Back of house

15 WCs

Bars

5 bars over 4 levels with 3 merchandise positions. Additional small bar in VIP/Tudor Room

Showcase

Project & Design Team

Client

Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd

Architects

Aedas Arts Team

Interior designer

Clare Ferraby

Project manager

Buro Four

Theatre consultant

Theatre Projects

Main contractor

8Build

Structural engineer

Conisbee

Services engineer

BuroHappold

Acoustic consultant

Arup Acoustics

Cost consultant

Bruce Shaw

Access consultant

People Friendly Design

Fire consultant

Jeremy Gardiner Associates

Planning consultant

Montagu Evans

CDM coordinator

PFB Consultancy



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Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive

Q&A with John McGrath

The Factory, Manchester

John McGrath, CEO and Artistic Director of Manchester International Festival and The Factory will be speaking at Conference 18, in the session 'New Spaces, New Models' about creating the UK's most flexible performance venue. We've asked him to provide his thoughts and insight on designing the iconic new venue.

What do you see are the main changes to the way theatres are being designed and run in the UK?

The immersive and site specific theatre movement, with its focus on interactivity has challenged the very idea of a theatre building, and encouraged everyone to see spaces in a more holistic and less segmented way. As theatres try to provide a more welcoming environment to a more diverse audience, a lot of the conventions of how theatres are run have rightly been questioned. The prevalence of digital in all areas of life is also having a radical effect on theatres — from how the work is seen and distributed, to how tickets are sold, and how communities are formed.

What is unique about The Factory and how do you see it contributing to the cultural scene in Manchester?

The Factory will build on the great work that is already happening in the city and its long history as a centre for culture, creativity, innovation and production.

The size of The Factory and the flexibility of the building — totalling 13,300 square metres — mean artists will be able to create work of extraordinary scale and in radical combinations, further cementing Manchester's reputation as a globally significant city of culture.

An important focus will involve a programme of backstage training and skills, enabling young people from the widest range of backgrounds to develop their expertise by working alongside world-leading technicians, producers, marketing experts and education professionals — leading to employment in Manchester's burgeoning creative industries sector. There will also be many opportunities for emerging local artists to develop and grow.



How will The Factory support your work at Manchester International Festival (MIF)?

MIF will continue as a festival that happens every other year at a wide range of locations across the city. The Factory will enable us to commission work outside of the festival schedule and present work throughout the year, meaning we have the opportunity to build new audiences from across Greater Manchester, nationally, and beyond, and we will be able to build on our wide-ranging international co-producing partnerships to develop more projects in collaboration and take ambitious new work around the world.

How do you feel about returning to running a building after your time at National Theatre Wales and now MIF?

For me each project, whether re-inventing and re-opening Contact, setting up National Theatre Wales as a national theatre focussed on site-specific work, or taking the festival into its next chapter, present the same initial challenge — to understand the unique possibilities of the opportunity you have been given, and to explore how you can engage with that opportunity in the most focused and extraordinary way possible. Buildings are never just boxes to put work into, they are sites of exploration, with their own unique characteristics and challenges. In some ways, every show is a site-specific work. The exciting challenge with The Factory is to develop a space which inspires but never proscribes, where the imagination can run riot.

It must be both exciting and challenging to design an iconic new venue from scratch — how have you found the process so far?

It is thrilling to be involved in a project that is going to be so transformative in so many ways. The size and adaptability of the building that Rem Koolhaas' architectural practice OMA has designed will open up new opportunities for artists to make work that is ambitious in its scale and experimentation. In some ways, of course, creating a building is like creating site-specific theatre, in that the challenges of the site itself can become both a frustration and an inspiration — and that's certainly the case when dealing with any city centre site. One of the joys of working with the architects — as with all great creative collaborators — is the way in which they find inventive and simple solutions to seemingly complex issues. We should be careful of the word iconic though — we are building a factory not a palace!

What aspects of the project get you up in the morning?

The excitement with which artists the world over are responding to the space whenever we talk to them about it.

Below:
Rem Koolhaas' designs for The Factory were approved by Manchester City Council in July 2018. Image: OMA

What aspects of the project keep you awake at night?

I don't stay awake at night worrying about The Factory or MIF. We have a wonderful opportunity to help create something beautiful and exciting. There will be challenges, there may even be mistakes, but if we remember that our goal, is, quite simply, to increase the creative possibilities available to artists and communities, we will reach a great result, I am sure. What keeps me awake at night is the rise of intolerance and political manipulation in our world. And I believe that our work in the arts provides one antidote to that.

What advice do you have for another theatre director who might be commissioning a new performance space?

Be clear what the most important thing is about this space for you and those you are working with. Be ready to fight to hold onto that and be ready to let a whole lot of other things change.

What's your favourite performance space (other than The Factory of course!) and why?

There are so many — but it's hard to beat a Welsh mountainside!



Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive



Q&A with Judith Kilvington

Citizens Theatre,
Glasgow

**Judith Kilvington,
Executive Director
of the Citizens Theatre
in Glasgow will be speaking
at Conference 18 in the breakout
session 'Viability by Design', about
theatres being designed and adapted
to increase revenue and reduce running
costs. We've asked her to provide
her thoughts and insight on the
transformational redevelopment
to conserve, repair and expand its
much loved home in the Gorbals.**

What do you see are the main changes to the way theatres are being designed and run in the UK?

As revenue funding decreases the pressure is on theatres to diversify their business models — to engage with wider audiences, increase partnership-working and look at generating new income streams. Some are creating multi-art form cultural centres, linking with libraries and cinemas; others are creating new partnerships with the further and higher education sector. The link with our communities seems ever more important. I've loved seeing the buzz around Storyhouse in Chester and a key element of our redevelopment project is our role in the regeneration of the Gorbals, an inner-city neighbourhood of Glasgow.

What are the main features of the current redevelopment project?

The project is the first ever comprehensive integrated redevelopment of our category B listed building. We are upgrading and renovating the auditorium and stage in order to improve flexibility, comfort and access. The historic parts of our building are going to be opened up so that the theatre's unique heritage is visible and accessible to the public. There will be dedicated spaces for learning, community

activities and talent development, as well as a new studio theatre. And we will improve and extend facilities backstage and front of house with a new café and bar open all day. Theatres are not just about somewhere to come and see a show in the evening anymore; they are about a cultural space for the community that operates all day, every day and that idea has really informed our design.

How will the redevelopment work improve the viability of the Citizens?

We've introduced more offices for cultural tenants, multi-purpose spaces for hire, and introduced a heritage offer for tourists and visitors alike to explore our Victorian stage house and its under/above-stage machinery.

The new studio theatre will offer a flexible end on/in the round performance space in which to showcase work on a smaller scale — with almost triple the capacity of our current studio improving the economic viability. It will be modern, accessible and fit for purpose in 21st century Britain — for our staff, artists and audiences.

What other benefits will the work provide?

We are aiming for a BREEAM rating of very good/excellent and the environmental sustainability of the project is a key aim. Comfort for audiences, participants and staff will be vastly improved with updated heating and cooling systems and rain should no longer pour through the roof onto the stage, into rehearsal rooms and offices.

Access, which has been a major problem resulting from the Victorian building and its piecemeal additions, will be vastly improved. Our design team's approach has been informed by the learning I gained from leading Graeae's capital project and its innovative approach to inclusive design. We are pleased to have introduced a Changing Place's toilet in the latest design.



Above:
Bennetts
Associates'
refurbishment
of the theatre will
improve visitor,
performer and staff
experiences.

Below:
Current streetscape.



What are the biggest challenges in undertaking such a significant capital project within an historic theatre?

Not knowing the unknowns. Plans and surveys can only do so much; the challenge will only begin once we start the building works.

What aspects of the project get you up in the morning?

Working with our brilliant and dedicated design team and the desire to secure a future for our iconic theatre.

What aspects of the project keep you awake at night?

Budgets.

What advice do you have for another theatre manager who might be looking to make improvements to an historic theatre?

Talk to Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Environment Scotland (or Historic England) and the Theatres Trust as early as possible – they have provided invaluable support and advice throughout.

What's your favourite theatre (other than the Citizens of course!) and why?

The Young Vic – the artistic vision, yes, but I just love the atmosphere in the bar.

What are your plans for the two years that your building will be closed?

It's been crucial that we keep a high profile during the building works – to continue putting on theatre for our audiences and to deliver our work in our local communities.

We have just moved out of the Citizens Theatre building, and working with our local council, we have found temporary accommodation for the learning, marketing, development and Box Office teams in the stunning Mackintosh building, Scotland Street School Museum. And importantly we'll keep creating our own sets from production facilities located in an ex-school in the middle of the Gorbals.

Tramway will be home for most of our main stage work over the next two years and we've just opened *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Our small-scale tour of *The Macbeths* sets out across Scotland in October.

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Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive

The Liverpool Royal Court experience



There has been a theatre on the site of Liverpool's Royal Court for almost 200 years. The original building was destroyed by fire in 1935 and rebuilt in 1938 by James Bushell Hutchins. Now, eighty years on the theatre has been transformed again, this time by Paul Monaghan, of award winning architect practice, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris. Gillian Miller, Chief Executive of Liverpool's Royal Court discusses how they made the case and raised the investment for the recent capital works.

Above:

Act I transformed the auditorium by enhancing the dining and cabaret format.

Right:

Act III saw the creation of a new 150-seat studio.

The prologue in the theatre's 1938 re-opening brochure stated, 'it is a brave venture in the times through which we are passing, to embark upon a scheme of this kind'. With ever increasing public sector funding cuts, especially in the north, the same applies today, as the Royal Court completes a £7.2m transformation.

The journey began in 2005 when we, myself and partner, Kevin Fearon, took the building over, moving the successful Rawhide Comedy Club into the venue on the agreement that the council grant a long lease to enable us to make much needed improvements to the theatre and grow our business. There were several huge setbacks to this plan too complicated to go into here, but eventually, with persistence and the help of three prominent Trustees of a newly formed charity, the Royal Court Liverpool Trust, a 30 year lease was agreed with Liverpool City Council.

This was enough to enable a Heritage Lottery bid to be developed along with an international competition to appoint architects to create a vision for the theatre. A budget of £10m was set by Trustee Jonathan Falkingham, co-founder of Urban Splash, who has been involved in the project from the beginning. He knew the theatre

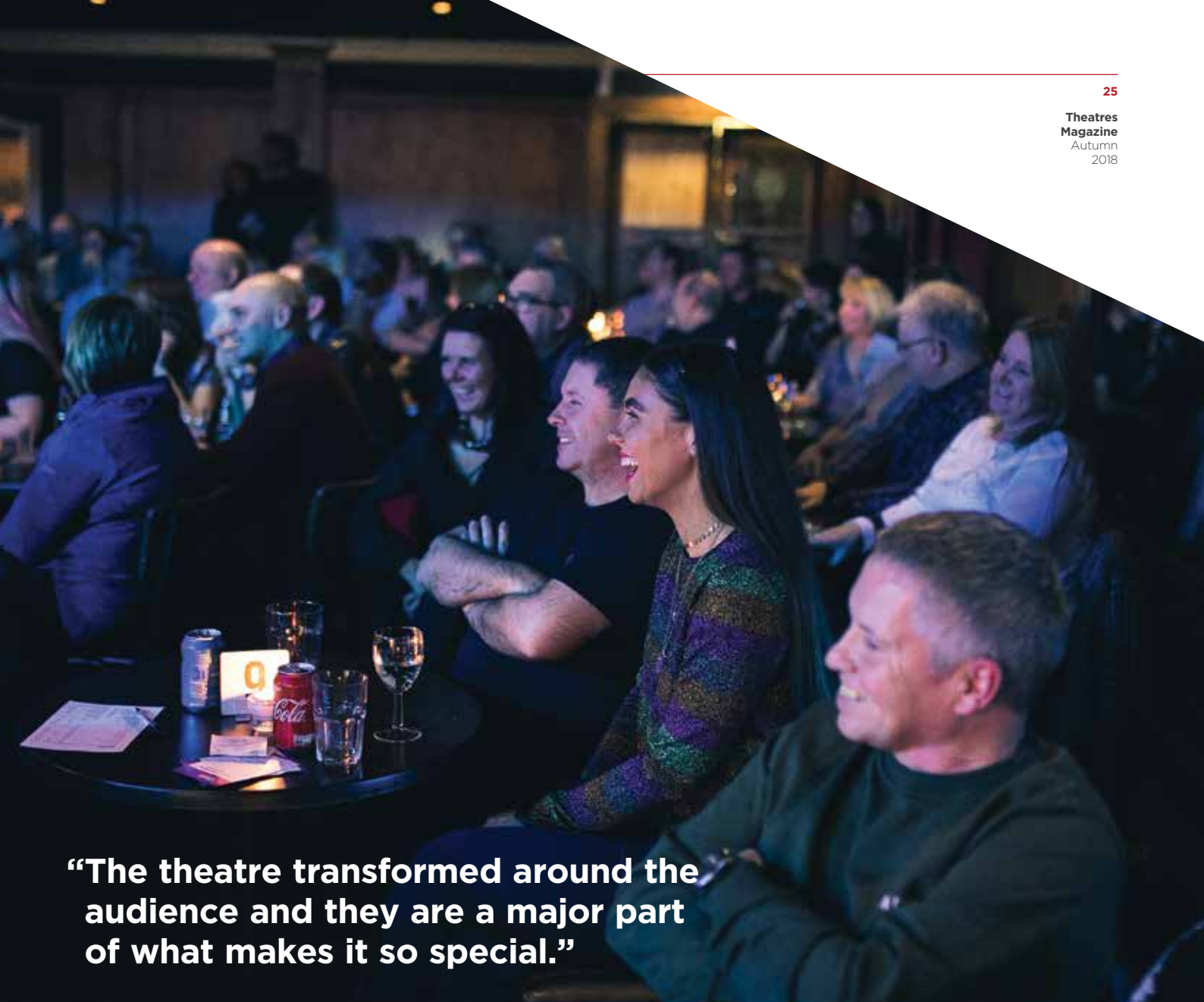
renovation had to be realistic if funders were to be persuaded to support it. As fundraiser and CEO of the Trust, I knew that less capital funds in the region and growing competition for a diminishing pot of funding would make our ambitions challenging.

At this point it was key to bring on board as many potential funders and stakeholders as possible. We did this by inviting them to be judges on the competition panel. The Theatres Trust, Liverpool City Council, English Heritage, North West Development Agency and The Liverpool Echo were all on board, headed by architect Roger Stephenson, then Chair of RIBA North. We also ran a series of cultivation events hosted by ambassadors including Sir Terry Leahy and Cherie Booth QC. This helped our campaign to gain momentum at a critical point and engaged public funders such as Heritage Lottery as well as key trust funds and foundations.

A major part of our fundraising strategy involved the public from the beginning. £1 from every ticket sold went towards the theatre renovation. The theatre operation, which had evolved from stand-up comedy to continuous theatre production throughout the year was in receipt of no public revenue funding. So the theatre had to operate to survive. No pressure!

A Heritage Lottery grant in 2011 was the catalyst for the whole project despite being just under £1m, the regional limit at the time. Act I as this first phase became known transformed the auditorium for existing audiences. Bespoke, tiered seating enhanced the popular pre-show dining and cabaret format in the stalls. This relaxed atmosphere helped to attract audiences who did not go to other cultural venues. Over 40% of the audience at this time had never been to a theatre before. Productions were dominated by comedy and music and promoted as a great night out with dinner and drinks at your table (if you booked far enough in advance). This appetite set the tone for the whole building and those who could only get seats in the circle or balcony made sure they booked early next time for tables in the stalls.

As they say 'the rest is history'. Act I (£1.2m) was completed in 2012, by which time a European Regional Development grant had been approved for Act II (£1.4m matched with



“The theatre transformed around the audience and they are a major part of what makes it so special.”

a loan from Liverpool City Council and a longer lease of 125 years). Act II (£3m) addressed the poor visitor experience entering and around the theatre with a modern, foyer extension and giant digital advertising screen added to the art deco building with visible box office and café enabling the theatre to open to the public from 10am–11pm. Act II was completed in 2016 with Act III (£3m) funded by Arts Council England and the public via the ticket levy, completing the building in 2018, with backstage improvements, a new, 150 seat basement studio space and balcony entrance just in time for the theatre’s 80th birthday. A range of trust funds supported each phase of work in addition to the £1 ticket levy. The Theatres Trust contributed to the renovation of the safety curtain in Act I and new hearing loop system in Act II and The Garfield Weston Foundation supported Act I and Act III with substantial grants.

In April 2018, Liverpool’s Royal Court became an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation in recognition of its ability to produce high quality theatre for predominantly working class audiences and its wide reaching community engagement programmes. This is the first time the theatre has received public revenue funding

and will help us to become more resilient and sustainable over the next four years.

We celebrate 80 years of the Royal Court with a gala event on 30 September with highlights from some of the most successful shows over the last 12 years, contributions from those who played at the theatre during its rock years and a special message from our Patron, Dame Judi Dench, who made her acting debut at the theatre in 1957.

The general public and all those working in the theatre and on stage are the heroes of this success story. Throughout three phases of major construction work, people came to the theatre again and again to see great shows. The theatre transformed around the audience and they are a major part of what makes Liverpool’s Royal Court so special.

Gillian Miller will be speaking at Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive, alongside Paul Monaghan, Director of architects Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, in a breakout session called ‘Making the Case, Raising the Cash’, that will look at how theatres are making the case for capital investment and raising the funds for renewal.



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Our work

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New theatres

The Theatres Trust welcomed the approval of the new **600-seat theatre at Kings Cross**, proposed as part of a comprehensive phased mixed-use development of former railway lands within the King's Cross Opportunity Area (2018/2628/P, granted). It will create a flexible space capable of hosting productions unsuitable for many of London's commercial theatres on this scale. We particularly welcome the space and accessibility afforded to the get-in and that it is enclosed and contained from public areas and the offices above. We have recommended amendments to back-of-house spaces to accessibility and acoustic isolation to facilitate best practice for a new build. We believe a theatre of this scale and flexibility can positively contribute to the overall mix of uses in this area of London, further improving its attractiveness and vitality as a place in which to live, visit and work



We also welcomed the approval of the flagship cultural venue **The Factory, Manchester**, which will be a uniquely flexible space for a variety of arts activity and a permanent home for Manchester International Festival (119890/VO/2018, granted). We look forward to working with the team at The Factory to create a building which will be an example of great theatre design and best practice.

We gave our support to proposals by Joules Brewery in Stone to provide **a new canal-side pub and studio theatre** for the Stone Revellers theatre group (18/28965/FUL, pending). The theatre is part of a proposed canal-side development, which will also include a coffee shop, pub and tourist information centre. We recommended approval of the pub and studio theatre and suggested amendments to the design and layout that would also help the space function effectively as an asset for local community groups.

We also supported the arts centre element of a proposal for the change of use of the Chetwynd Centre in to a **Performing Arts Centre** for Stafford with associated uses that will sit alongside new build terraced houses (8/28342/FUL & 18/28344/LBC, pending). We recommended approval of the arts centre element of this proposal but highlighted

the need for appropriate sound proofing of both the residential units and the arts centre, and suggested further improvements to backstage facilities, including dressing rooms, toilet, washing and storage facilities, that would maximise the future sustainability of the facility.

In London, we supported the recent amendments to the **Collins Theatre, Islington** plans, which are coming forward to finally open up this space to the public (P2018/1427/S73, pending). We are keen to see this site open for theatre use, and are pleased that an operator is willing to take the theatre forward. Over the past decade the Theatres Trust has supported a number of different operators to develop ways to make the theatre work, including the latest proposals from Shaw Thing Productions. Current proposals will allow the theatre to have some flexibility around seating arrangements but we strongly recommended retaining existing planning conditions requiring the theatre space and café/bar to be open on a long-term lease before the developer can benefit from letting more commercially lucrative parts of the site. This would provide the theatre operator with the certainty required to help form a viable and sustainable business plan, and in turn secure an operational theatre as an asset for the borough and its residents. We are continuing to work with the operator and council to ensure the future viability of the space.

Redevelopment and replacement

The Theatres Trust actively encourage theatre owners and operators to invest in their buildings to ensure they meet current building and safety standards and the expectations of audiences, staff, and performers.

We offered support for a retrospective application for the change of use of a former bank in Belfast to a 'pop-up' theatre ((LA04/2018/1624/F, pending). Operated by Accidental Theatre the **new theatre within former bank in Belfast** will diversify Belfast's theatrical offer. We suggested the granting of permanent permission for change of use subject to conditions. In the meantime, we recommended a temporary permission which would give the theatre a degree of certainty to allow them to develop their business and invest in this or future premises.

We also welcomed the approval of the **new theatre for Harpenden** (5/2018/0157, approved). Plans will see the town's sports centre converted to a cultural facility including a 500-seat theatre to replace the Harpenden Public Halls. We supported the plans on the proviso that the new facility was operational before the existing Halls close. Revitalising and replacing the theatre facilities shows the local authority's commitment to providing access to culture for Harpenden residents.

We were also consulted on a comprehensive leisure redevelopment surrounding **Weymouth's Pavilion** (WP/18/00403/OUT, pending), which include proposals for demolition and redevelopment of land surrounding the theatre, providing a hotel, cafes/restaurants, leisure space and improved public realm. The proposal, looks to benefit the theatre by enhancing the attractiveness of its surroundings and improving pedestrian access to and through the site. We advised that appropriate soundproofing of the hotel adjacent to the theatre in order to mitigate

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the risk of future noise complaints in line with the Agent of Change principle, and encouraged strategies to ensure performances at the Pavilion are not unduly impacted by noise from works in close proximity to it.



Weymouth Pavilion

The Theatres Trust support efforts to ensure that theatres are fully accessible to audience members, staff and performers with disabilities. We supported proposals to install a new DDA-compliant lift at **Blackfriars Arts Centre, Boston** and associated internal alterations to facilitate its installation (B/18/0292, permitted), and likewise supported revised proposals by the **Chester Little Theatre** to provide an extension to the theatre to enhance wheelchair accessibility and improve access to the theatre's first floor (18/02446/FUL, permitted). Both have been approved.

We continued our support to **Brentwood Theatre** who submitted amended designs to extend the theatre to provide an enlarged foyer and bar area,

Brentwood
Theatre

increased toilets, office and storage, improved wheelchair accessibility and enhanced backstage and technical areas (18/00657/FUL & 18/00658/LBC, pending). The plans will enhance the theatre's operational abilities and allow them to develop their business for the benefit of local people and the surrounding area.

Non theatre use for former theatre buildings

The Theatres Trust is also consulted on works to former theatre buildings, and welcome proposals that retain the former theatres significant architectural features.



Theatre Royal, Hyde

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Theatre Royal,
Plymouth



We wrote with concerns regarding proposed internal works to continue the new D1/D2 use of the **former Theatre Royal Hyde** (18/00490/LBC, pending). We believe they are unsympathetic to the building's character and could lead to the degradation of decorative features, and problems associated with damp. A previous application approved a change of use of the theatre to a mixed D1/D2 to facilitate use of the Grade II listed vacant theatre as a religious/cultural centre, an application which we opposed. There are some potential benefits arising from the building being in use. Nonetheless there is a local trust who are keen to return the theatre to its original use which we would be supportive of. Therefore we consider it essential that any works undertaken by the applicant are reversible and won't lead to any degradation of the building as a valued heritage asset and theatre for Hyde.

We supported an approved application to convert the **former Grand Theatre, Derby**, to a mini-golf centre with ancillary bar and restaurant (07/18/01065, granted conditionally). The theatre has not been in theatre use since 1950, and subsequent to that was a bingo hall before being converted to a restaurant around ten years ago. We consider the design proposals submitted for the indoor golf to be a compatible use for the theatre building - a further example of such use is the former Windmill Theatre in Great Yarmouth. We are pleased that the building will be in active use with original features maintained.

Better protected

The campaign group working to reopen Theatre at Risk **Burnley Empire** has secured the backing of the National Trust, who consider the Empire a real hidden gem. They will work with the campaign group and supporters to explore how the restoration and future use of the building can be achieved. We are encouraged by the number of key local and national stakeholders working together to support this theatre. While it remains a Theatre at Risk, we hope a long-term sustainable solution can be found to reopen this historic space.

Lambeth Council have listed Theatre at Risk **Streatham Hill Theatre** as an Asset of Community Value, offering the theatre additional protection from development - it is a great achievement for the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre, the campaign group fighting to return live performance to the Grade II listed sleeping beauty. Not only does this decision recognise the theatre's important cultural and social role in its community, it is a sign of the council's support to return the theatre to an arts and performance use, continuing Streatham's path of becoming a more attractive and exciting place for residents and visitors.

Historic England has listed **Theatre Royal Plymouth** Grade II in recognition of its importance as an example of post-war repertory theatre, meaning it has extra legal protection within the planning system. The Theatre Royal Plymouth was built between 1979 and 1982 by the Peter Moro Partnership, with Andrzej Blonski as project architect. Historic England said the theatre had been listed for its sophisticated design and for its technological interest, including its moveable auditorium roof.





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