

PRESS RELEASE 19 November 2019

Theatres Trust awards £25,000 to five theatres across the UK to address the challenges smaller theatres face

Theatres Trust has awarded vital funding to five more theatres. Each will receive £5,000 from the Trust's UK Theatres Small Grants Scheme for projects that enhance accessibility, address urgent repairs, environmental improvements and expand facilities.

Accidental Theatre, housed in a former bank building in Belfast, will use Theatres Trust funding to install wheelchair accessible toilets on its first floor. This project comes soon after an accessible lift installation, part of a package of improvements informed by an access audit to ensure the venue is as inclusive as possible.

New automatic doors will improve the theatre-going experience for disabled patrons and wheelchair users at the Court Theatre run by **Swindon Dance** in the town's former Town Hall. The project will replace faulty doors and make sure accessibility standards remain high after the Court Theatre's recent accessibility-led auditorium refurbishment.

Theatres Trust small grants funding for **Liverpool's Unity Theatre**, housed in a former synagogue, will finance access and repair work to its leaky roof, ensuring the longevity of this important community building.

Hulme's **Z-arts** will be able to undertake a suite of works responding to the needs and requirements of users at the family-friendly arts hub. Theatres Trust funding will allow the venue to install an evacuation chair and defibrillator, as well as complete urgent repairs to its entrance stairs, improving the access and safety of its audiences. The award will also support an LED lighting upgrade front and back of house as the theatre works to make itself future-ready.

The **Little Theatre Gateshead** campaign to create a new rehearsal room to improve and expand facilities for its members, patrons and the local community will receive a boost with Theatres Trust funding. The improved provision will help protect future theatre use at this important community hub.

Jon Morgan, Director at the Theatres Trust said: "The high demand for this funding emphasises the challenges that smaller theatres throughout the UK face. We are delighted to be able to support theatres with projects that will protect them for the future, make the buildings accessible to audiences and continue to offer rich experiences for communities across the country."

Sarah Miller, Director at Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation said: "It has never been more important to cherish and protect our regional theatres, which provide a vital cultural hub for many local communities. I am thrilled Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation funding can target these urgent repairs for theatres across the UK under the guidance of Theatres Trust expertise."

Theatres Trust

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The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with the Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

Launched in April 2012, the UK Theatres Small Grants Scheme awards grants of up to £5,000 to theatres across the UK to address urgent building works and improvements. It receives support from the **Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation** and **Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust**.

The five awards bring the total number of theatres funded by the scheme to 75. The next round of the scheme is now open and the deadline for applications is 3 February 2020 at noon. Further details about the scheme can be found: theatretrust.org.uk/grants.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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

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

Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Founded by Andrew Lloyd Webber in 1992, the Foundation's principle objectives are to promote the arts, culture and heritage for the public benefit. Since 2012 the Foundation has awarded grants of £215,000 to the Theatres Trust towards its UK Theatres Small Grants Scheme. Since embarking on an active grant giving programme in 2010, the Foundation has now awarded grants of £20m to support high quality training and personal development as well as other projects that make a real difference to enrich the quality of life both for individuals and within local communities. As well as the Theatres Trust, other significant grants include £3.5m to Arts Educational Schools, London to create a state of the art professional theatre, £2.4m to the Music in Secondary Schools Trust, £1m to The Architectural Heritage Fund, \$1.3m to the American Theatre Wing and over £350,000 annually to fund 30 performing arts scholarships for talented students in financial need. andrewlloydwebberfoundation.com

Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust Charles Holloway, a Theatres Trust Friend, provides grant support for the UK Theatres Small Grants Scheme, via the Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust which provides grants to charities or voluntary bodies.

GRANT RECIPIENTS

Accidental Theatre, Belfast | £5,000 | Accessibility – new wheelchair accessible toilet

A new theatre created within a previously abandoned three-storey bank, Accidental Theatre in Belfast presents a mix of new theatre, music and comedy. After an access audit the building had an accessible lift installed, but the venue lacks an on-site accessible toilet facility. A UK Small Grant from the Theatres Trust will go towards a project to make the existing bathroom facilities on the first floor wheelchair accessible.

Little Theatre, Gateshead | £5,000 | Expanding facilities - new rehearsal space

The purpose-built Little Theatre, built in 1943, is the only community theatre in Gateshead and home to resident theatre society Progressive Players. It is also used by community groups for rehearsal, performance and community events. The theatre's current rehearsal room is very small and a Theatres Trust UK Small Grant will contribute to a fundraising campaign to create a new rehearsal room above the auditorium. A benefit for members, patrons and the local community, the new room will help ensure the viability of the Little Theatre as a thriving cultural community resource.

Swindon Dance | £5,000 | Accessibility – urgent replacement automatic doors

Swindon Dance has been based in the Grade II listed Town Hall since 1979, the Court Theatre is integral to the Town Hall and is one of the very few dance-led performance spaces in the south west. It has recently undergone a refurbishment to make its facilities more accessible and welcoming. A Theatres Trust UK Small Grant will urgently fund replacement automatic doors into the Court Theatre, which are faulty. This will ensure the building maintains full access for performers, audiences and community users.

Unity Theatre, Liverpool | £5,000 | Roof improvement & repair

Liverpool's Unity Theatre made its home in a former synagogue in 1980. Rooted in the Unity theatre movement from the 30s it now focuses on new work and emerging artists and has developed a strong local reputation. The theatre recently underwent a major refurbishment to improve front of house and auditorium, and make it accessible at street level. A leak has emerged in the roof of the theatre and a Theatres Trust UK Small Grant will help install a suitable anchor and cable system to access the roof, determine the point of the leak and undertake repairs.

Z-arts, Hulme | £5,000 | Access & environment upgrade

Z-arts has been based in Hulme's Congregational Church and Institute since 2000. The arts hub runs a wide range of theatre for family audiences and participatory activities across its theatre, dance space, arts and crafts studio, music space and lab, café, break out rooms and gallery space. Responding to the needs and requirements of families at Z-arts a UK Small Grant from the Theatres Trust will urgently repair the venue's entrance steps, install an evacuation chair and a defibrillator, and upgrade front and back of house lights to LED. This programme of work ensures Z-arts is accessible, easy to navigate and future-ready.