



TRW is an independent 400 seat, mid-scale, mixed genre professional receiving house. The theatre is situated in the centre of the beautiful and historical city of Winchester and is the flagship venue within a broad cultural landscape.

Starting life as the Market Hotel in 1850 the building was acquired by John and James Simpkins in 1912. In 1914 the Simpkins Brothers opened the building as a cine-variety theatre and later a cinema until new owners forced the closure of the building in 1974. At this time the Theatre Royal Winchester was saved from demolition by a Grade II listing facilitated by Winchester City Council. A core of willing volunteers formed Winchester Theatre Fund (now Winchester Theatre Trust) and the building was once again remodelled including the purchase of an adjacent building to form additional Front of House and Box Office space.

Theatre Royal Winchester reopened following a further period of renovation in 2001.

TRW consists of:

- 400 seat auditorium (366 if forestage or orchestra pit are in use),
- under-floor air circulation, 50cm wide seats with 82cm leg room, good sight-lines,
- 9m X 9m stage, 8m proscenium opening, sprung and flat,
- elevating forestage provides orchestra pit or stage apron,
- high and wide get-in with ramp onto stage from side road;
- counter-weight 34 bar flying system, 250 channel lighting control and 32 channel sound desk,
- small studio for up to 15 people for youth theatre or other workshops,
- passenger lift to most floors.



Theatre Royal Winchester regularly promotes over 230 professional performances per year. The artistic mix is wide including drama, physical theatre, dance, children's theatre, comedy, music and 'an evening with' performances.

The theatre also produces an extremely successful pantomime in-house with high production values, good financial net contribution, playing to audiences with a 90% capacity and its own unique brand. In addition a further 30 performances per year take place on stage featuring local amateur societies, festivals and corporate hires.

Hat Fair is a free three day outdoor arts festival run over the first weekend in July. The festival has run since 1975 and is so-called in reference to the buskers' tradition of placing a hat on the ground to collect money from the audience. The unique artistic and cultural advantage of this history is that now the festival places those from the busking tradition next to the subsidised and more curated performance.



In practice now, Hat Fair has developed into two days of curated programming that combines Hatters, walk about acts, larger scale and international “events” with a student curated and managed fringe festival. With a commitment to identifying and performing in new spaces each year – each festival is different from the one before and each concludes with a community day at Oram’s Arbour.

Since December 2015, a winter festival – Woolly Hat Fair has been introduced. The first, completely unsubsidised, was based on a live Advent Calendar. The second (supported by £10,000 of Winchester City Council funding) was based round the 12 Days of Christmas.

Hat Fair is committed to supporting emerging artists and intergenerational work.

Live Theatre Winchester Trust:

Artistic Policy

Live Theatre Winchester is a creative organisation at the heart of the city running a theatre and an outdoor arts programme:

- **Offering audiences the finest performances**
- **Inspiring our community by creating celebratory projects that are inspired by our special city**
- **Supporting artists** and presenting their work in the best ways possible
- **Raising the quality of the performing arts and especially street arts**, outdoor, and site specific performance, by promoting best practice in Winchester and the region
- **Engaging a wide and diverse public as active audiences and participants** and encouraging learning through performing arts experiences

Engagement and Learning

Engagement and learning is at the heart of the organisation’s intentions and offers positive opportunities for all ages and backgrounds while concentrating on those most at need in the community to get involved in all aspects of theatre and performance.

We are in the process of reimagining the way this area of work operates and its creative aspirations and the new role of Engagement and Learning Manager will be able to contribute to that process. We have also created a new role of Youth Theatre Leader to support the Engagement and Learning Manager and take particular responsibility for practically leading a number of the youth theatre groups within the Young Theatre Royal brand.

In addition there is a regular pool of talented creative practitioners working within this area for the organisation.

Funders and Stake Holders

Theatre Royal Winchester receives core funding from Winchester City Council (WCC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC). In 2016/2017 the theatre received £156,000 from WCC and £92,685 from HCC. Hat Fair is an NPO funded organisation receiving £134,158 from Ace and £34,000 from WCC. An application for a further 4 years of NPO funding will be made in February 2017.

Staffing

Theatre Royal Winchester has 19 permanent staff, of which 11 are full time and 8 are part time. 26 casual staff supplement roles in the Box Office, Front of House and Technical teams, particularly during performance times. In addition there are approximately 100 volunteers who provide a health and safety and customer service for performances.

Current context

With a new Chief Executive and a new Hat Fair and Engagement Director now in place there is an exciting new opportunity for Live Theatre Winchester Trust to develop its creative potential as a single entity and maximise the benefits of having a building based venue and an Outdoor Arts Festival together in one organisation.

We are energised by this and are keen to find a talented and creative Engagement and Learning Manager to join the creative team and work with us on re positioning the organisation as a creative driver in the region and beyond.

