

Nº 01

*Committed
to Culture
in Cornwall*

FROM THE EDGE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY **HALL**for**CORNWALL**





EDITORIAL

A POLISHED JEWEL IN CORNWALL'S CULTURAL CROWN

By **JULIE CAPLIN GREY** Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Operating Officer



Hall for Cornwall has been reimagined into a major new theatre fit to grace Cornwall's rich cultural past and inspire future generations.

Culture in Cornwall is rich and diverse built on a legacy of indigenous heritage, ecology, landscape, language and a strong sense of place. It breaks the mould of rural regions, attracting and nurturing artists at the leading edge of their art form. From the British Modernists who called Cornwall home and catapulted St Ives into the centre of international visual arts in the 20th Century; to the deep traditions of innovative theatre making, which reflect a wild and adventurous community spirit and a distinctive cultural identity.

We see this cultural legacy still in our distinguished family of theatre makers who've passed the creative baton on to us from the 1970s; Footsbarn, Kneehigh and Wildworks – all anarchic artist-led companies who've influenced a generation of theatre makers across the globe.

Today our cherished theatre carries that baton into the next chapter of its rich and varied life, reborn as a new kind of public space for all.

Since we reopened last year we've welcomed more than 300,000 people enjoying over 528 performances with over 10,000 of them experiencing theatre for the first time. We've worked with more than 100,000 young people, and on top of everything, Hall for Cornwall injects £16 million into the local economy. What a way to celebrate our first year as a team – and we're immensely proud of what we've achieved.

Born out of public support and community activism in 1997 a theatre was constructed, but by 2012 it was tired, outdated and technically behind the times. Back then the imposing Grade II* listed building, whilst much-loved, suffered severe financial difficulties for the first ten years of its life. The realities of operating a sizeable venue of this kind were laid bare.

Ever since the building was a theatre, successive directors have grappled with the same challenges. A venue with too few seats to be successful on the national touring circuit, a local population much lower than most city-based theatres can draw on, and historically lower than average investment from cultural funders compared to its counterparts elsewhere in the UK.

Yet despite this, and with new leadership in 2010 (enter Julien), the Hall has progressively evolved into a thriving regional theatre with 90% of our income generated from ticket and commercial sales with only 10% subsidy.

FRONT COVER
WISE CHILDREN
IMAGE
RAMBERT

Fast forward to what is an incredible transformation of the old building into a cultural and creative engine for the whole of Cornwall. The new Cornwall Playhouse is delivering a world class programme capable of rivalling most urban theatres in the country. We are now able to attract major productions which was both physically and technically challenging before. We proactively encourage our visiting companies and artists to be brave, as well as give visitors the chance to glimpse their work behind the scenes. Producers who have actively engaged audiences in this way have seen their box office takings grow by 15%.

Importantly, our new home provides a dynamic new meeting place for all. With History and Heritage storypoints for visitors to learn more, we'll continue to celebrate a building that's been in the heart of Truro for 175 years.

We're proud to say Husa, our in-house co-working space and support hub for the creative industries is a first for a UK regional theatre, growing and sustaining the futures of local companies and individuals. And any surplus income we generate will be invested into our vital work with young people. We'll continue to create co-productions with both Cornish and national partners, and together, we collectively contribute to *Let's Create*, Arts Council England's strategy and Cornwall's *Creative Manifesto* which we helped shape.

We set out to reinvent what a regional theatre could achieve in the 21st century, and it's fair to say, our journey has not always been easy. But it's the quality behind today's reimaged Hall for Cornwall that will not only enable us to be more innovative and sustainable, but gain us richly deserved recognition beyond our rural context.

Our place on the number one touring theatre circuit is assured, and with it comes higher quality work to entertain and enthrall all those who cross our threshold.

The distinctiveness of Cornwall is well defined. Within that distinctness, cultural and creative activity also provides jobs, promotes learning, presents new opportunities and creates an ever-stronger sense of place – it strengthens the bonds between people and improves our quality of life on a daily basis. It's the combination of its vibrant and ever evolving cultural offer, its historic traditions and stunning natural environment that gives Cornwall such a unique creative edge and international profile. Its uniqueness and appeal continue to be imbued in iconic cultural brands such as Tate St Ives, the Eden Project and others. And Hall for Cornwall now sits confidently amongst them.



FROM THE EDGE WHERE AMBITION THRIVES

By **JULIEN BOAST** Chief Executive & Creative Director

It wasn't only the building that craved a reset, the whole organisation needed a rethink to realise its true potential.

My aspirations to turn Hall for Cornwall from a venue with its roots as a city hall into one of the most respected UK regional theatres were forged early on. Whilst regional theatre has been the mainstay of my career, the challenges of reinventing a much-loved one to create a new, sustainable organisation in a small city on the furthest edge of the UK, were significant.

My commercial and subsidised theatre expertise gained in Southampton, then Coventry and latterly Brighton, certainly came to the fore. Each has a sense of place, none more so than Coventry, which navigated its way out of the pandemic to deliver a tenacious year as City of Culture. After it was bombed in the war Basil Spence, the Modernist architect, built Coventry's new cathedral and he designed the universities in Brighton and Southampton too. His buildings are integral to placemaking in these cities – he created spaces for people with exquisite attention to detail enhanced by art and furniture designed to complete the experience.

What drew me to Cornwall was its rich cultural history in performance, which began in the late 14th century with Medieval mystery plays written in Latin with Cornish stage directions.

The region instantly radiated a distinct sense of place elevated by its history and strong cultural legacy.

I was keenly aware of how Alan Ayckbourn and Philip Hedley, esteemed regional theatre stalwarts had embraced placemaking and cultivated long-standing relationships with the venues they are most famously associated with – the Stephen Joseph and Stratford East. In the 70s, 80s and 90s they regenerated their theatres for longevity and with a national gaze.

At Hall for Cornwall it was difficult to turbo charge change within the confines of its existing business model further compounded by the lack of fundraising prowess and low levels of revenue funding available. Evolving from a city hall into a theatre without any dedicated industry expertise meant the place was in and out of funding stabilisation programmes for years.

As we drove to Cornwall I remember promising my husband that it would be for five years. Looking back, I must have had an inkling that creating meaningful change would take far longer. In those early days of repositioning the Hall we achieved a much-needed commercial fix by selling more tickets which quickly gained people's confidence. It was in my first year that we added a £1 million of box office sales and improved the quality

IMAGE
OUR AUDIENCE

of visiting productions. We were moving in the right direction.

Forging strong creative alliances is vital and we enticed various national companies to visit and/ or become partners with Birmingham Royal Ballet the first to show faith in coming to Cornwall. We also took on an ailing arts charity, and despite the early unpopularity of this, Cornwall's arts sector is now very supportive – and Husa, our arts development arm, thrives.

To ignite a major capital redevelopment project far from London our 10 year business plan was twofold; to forge a coalition of significant partners who wanted to come on the journey with us, and of course, build a fully equipped theatre with a skilled workforce operating in agile ways.

Along the way every partner encouraged us at every stage.

Eventually nine core funding partners and ten trusts and foundations joined us, and we garnered support from a bounty of people, including three Council Leaders and three Chief Executives, our two local MPs and a dynamic bunch of experts – everyone saw the benefits of having such an extraordinary cultural venue for Cornwall. To get this level of buy-in we built our business model from the ground up to maximise on everything a Grade II* listed building could offer – and there's more to do on the latter.

An important partner was Burrell Foley Fischer, our architects whose design concepts were both brave and deeply rooted in Cornwall's theatrical traditions. Even from their initial sketches I could see the auditorium creating a dynamic relationship between those on stage and those enjoying the performance.

Earlier I wrote of Basil Spence, and I've realised how much I miss his buildings given they'd been a constant presence in my life. When you walk into Coventry Cathedral there's something very elemental about the space with its fine mix of glass, exposed stone and woodwork. This attention to detail is further enhanced with purposely placed artwork by Elizabeth Frink and Graham Sutherland and together they create a wonderfully ethereal atmosphere.

It's perhaps clear to see in our new building that Spence is still present after all. Of course, you're not entering a place of worship, but my brief to the architects was to give our visitors pause for thought, create a moment for them to take stock and gather their thoughts – they totally understood what I was getting at, but at the time I'm sure I had all the hallmarks of being a demanding client. When we closed the doors for construction in 2018, we set about imaging what our future could be. Little did we know we'd be rebuilding during a global pandemic.

Cornwall deserves access to the best performances and cultural opportunities and that's exactly what we deliver.



Although first and foremost a theatre I wanted us to be entrepreneurial in how we utilised the building, to open it up to activities and industries that could animate it in different ways. I wanted us to create a bold space where people (our visitors, the performers and the team) are the stars of the building. I'm excited about them being able to go on a voyage of discovery, connecting with and experiencing the variety and breadth of our programming.

Whilst nurturing local artists and companies and creating head room for new work and ideas, I've kept in touch with the national companies I've worked with over the years. Strong relations with and the quality of work from the likes of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Rambert and Wise Children have elevated what appears on our main stage. In the poorest county in England with low cultural provision ambition matters – and as a catalyst for new generations of artists, creators and theatre-goers giving young people the chance to shine on and off stage is central to this.

IMAGE
TREASURE ISLAND



One of the unique things about the new Hall is that everyone who works here is on the shop floor. Open and visible whether they're in the box office, a technician or rehearsing on stage – our visitors get to see the working life of a theatre. The visitor is what binds us as a team with customer loyalty as a driver. With more than half of Cornwall's households on our database already hardly anyone in the county hasn't met us, and with this, there's a deep-rooted trust in what we're about. We go out of our way to attract and appeal to the widest possible audience, engaging people of all ages from Launceston to Land's End and beyond.

Our ambitions don't stop at reopening.

Hall for Cornwall is a great proposition and we're looking ahead for new funders and partners who share our vision. Investing in us gets a great return as everything is channelled into creating impactful work – and our work goes beyond what's on the main stage. We have plans afoot to foster new ideas around heritage, increase our outreach potential to engage people from the most disadvantaged communities, and we're looking at the potential to create qualification-led programmes inspired by our local university.

We invest in people and culture and are focused on creating the best possible place for them to thrive. With a restless curiosity, and like those early theatre-making pioneers, we want to creatively disrupt what a regional theatre can be. If you've not had the chance to visit and see what we're doing for yourself, do join us on the edge and be part of Hall for Cornwall's next chapter.

I look forward to welcoming you.

IMAGE OPPOSITE
WISE CHILDREN
IMAGE ABOVE
HALL FOR CORNWALL
YOUTH DANCE END
OF TERM SHOWCASE

FROM RURAL TO CUTTING EDGE

By **HELEN TIPLADY** Deputy Creative Director



Acclaimed recording artist Carleen Anderson is testament to the kind of creative talent we back, now and in the future. With Hall for Cornwall in its new guise there's opportunity for us to be the instigator of innovative new work and our building the canvas for new ideas, so expect more of both.

Hall for Cornwall first collaborated on Carleen's 2018 stage production that she described as her 'Tribal Opera', otherwise known as *Cage Street Memorial*. In its early development Arts Council England provided funding to workshop it and the work garnered high praise when presented to selected industry professionals. The accompanying album, subsequently staged at the Barbican, was recorded at Falmouth University.

With six acclaimed albums under her belt Carleen has accumulated numerous industry accolades, including a Brit Award and coveted Mercury Prize. She became one of our Associate Artists in 2019 and part of a wave of artists and companies we've seed funded and nurtured from the wider creative industries for over four years now.

This year, and as the newly formed Cornwall Playhouse Productions, we co-produced the world premiere of Carleen's new work *MELIOR Opus Griot*, a compelling futuristic opera performed by a truly original ensemble of artists, both professional and community performers. Again, Arts Council support was instrumental.

Conceived, composed, written, and performed by Carleen this new work brought together world class musicians with Cornish talent. It was a unique blend of storytelling, singing, poetry, projection and music, fusing jazz, soul, electronic and classical. Carleen was joined on stage by renowned vocalists China Moses (who flew in from New York) and Terri Walker, award-winning saxophonist Camilla George, alongside a chamber quartet, a group of Cornish professionals, community performers and a specially formed choir. It was brilliant to see some of the young performers from our open access dance programme perform, as well as create the choreography. Behind the scenes we provided work experience too as the 40-strong cast had their hair and make up done by students from Cornwall College, St Austell. This incredible ensemble also enjoyed a sound track and the use of digital MI.MU Gloves (wearable tech that maps movement and sound) created by Grammy-winning artist Imogen Heap.

Carleen had a gem of an idea and we simply nurtured it in collaboration with her, drawing on and further developing our ability to produce innovative work that people want to see. This show was a unique spectacle for everyone involved and a landmark work in Carleen's illustrious career. As for the team and I here at the Hall, it was an inspiration for how we produce new work with different artists in future.

All I can say is, let's create more and watch this space.

IMAGE
CARLEEN ANDERSON



FROM PLEN-AN-GWARI TO THEATRE CORNWALL

By **HELEN GRASSLY** Burrell Foley Fischer

What a dream moment – the opportunity to be architects for the refurbishment of a well-loved theatre – to increase its capacity, improve the sight lines and give it a sustainable future. At Hall for Cornwall, this was wrapped up in a fine collection of Grade II* listed buildings and a mission aligned with the values of our architectural practice – to encourage the arts, celebrate the heritage of listed buildings and enable access for all without distinction.

The seeds of the project were all there in that first, well-written brief. In essence, it asked us to create a dynamic and strong relationship between performers and audience; embrace a building that had evolved with the vicissitudes of fortune for 175 years; develop a site that had been occupied for much longer, and celebrate the Cornish context, the culture, the language and the independent attitude.

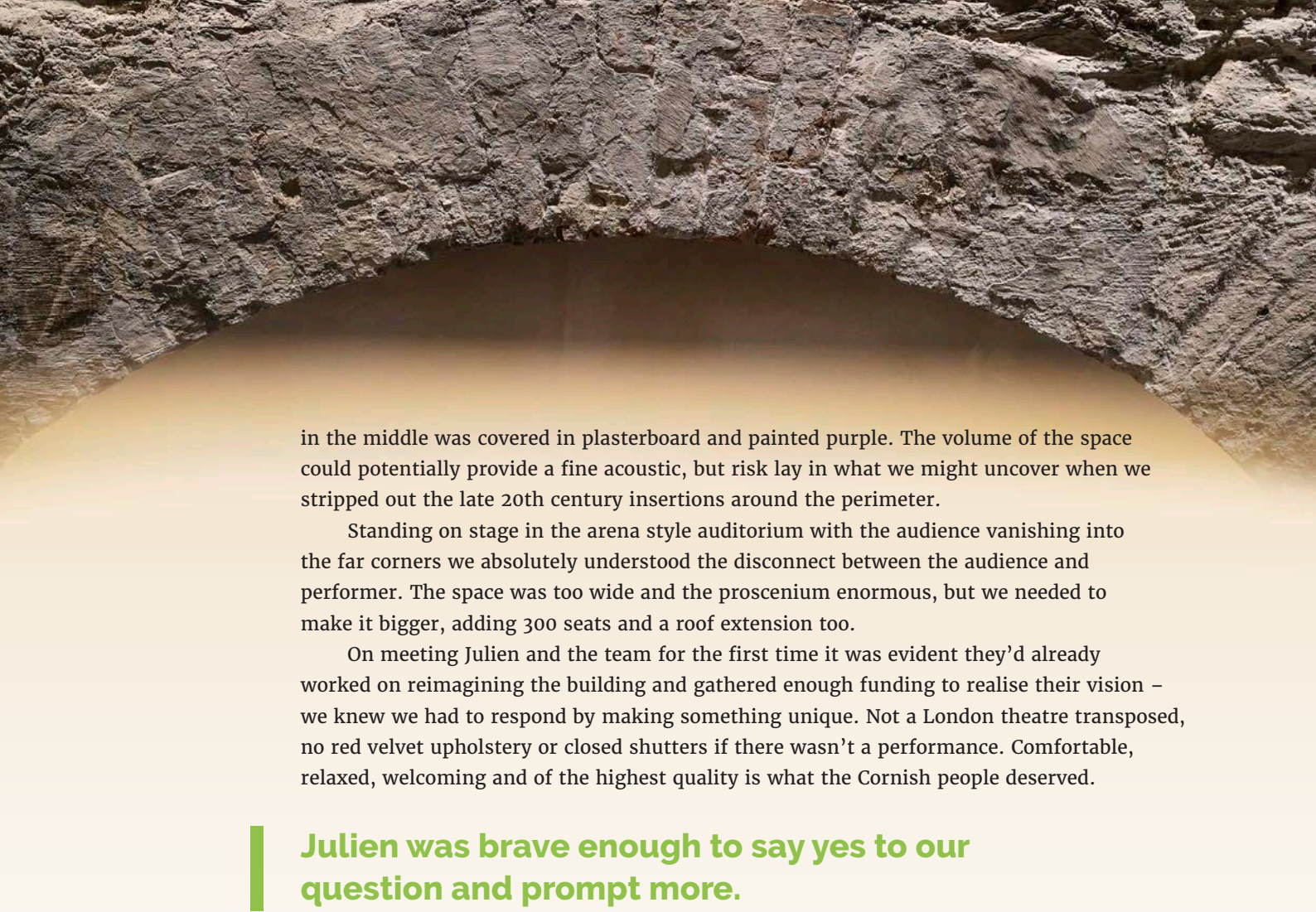
We hadn't anticipated falling in love with Truro.

It happened on that first evening as we looked at the rain-swept granite, listening to the noisy rills of water and the disappearing estuaries that danced and twisted through the streets, subtly carving the shape of the city. We explored the idiosyncrasies of the Opeways with their crazy shortcuts – you enter Squeeze Guts Alley next to the shoe shop and pop out at the back of a Gothic Revival cathedral that should be in Northern France.

As architects, you always start with questions.

The building has always been civic – a market, skating rink, cinema, shooting range amongst others. Could we create an open public building where the audience flowed as naturally and easily through the internal spaces as they did in the streets? The precedent of the Plen-an-Gwari, was in our minds, a sophisticated contemporary of the transient, Medieval pageant wagon. The Plen was the permanent circular playing space of Medieval Cornish theatre. Sited at the edge of town, the audience was accompanied from scene to scene by the narrator and free to move around the staging.

What was the quality of the existing building? We saw the austere beauty of Christopher Eales' 1847 marketplace on the Boscawen side, and the softer, light-filled Back Quay with tall spaces and fine windows looking onto Lemon Quay. But the space



in the middle was covered in plasterboard and painted purple. The volume of the space could potentially provide a fine acoustic, but risk lay in what we might uncover when we stripped out the late 20th century insertions around the perimeter.

Standing on stage in the arena style auditorium with the audience vanishing into the far corners we absolutely understood the disconnect between the audience and performer. The space was too wide and the proscenium enormous, but we needed to make it bigger, adding 300 seats and a roof extension too.

On meeting Julien and the team for the first time it was evident they’d already worked on reimagining the building and gathered enough funding to realise their vision – we knew we had to respond by making something unique. Not a London theatre transposed, no red velvet upholstery or closed shutters if there wasn’t a performance. Comfortable, relaxed, welcoming and of the highest quality is what the Cornish people deserved.

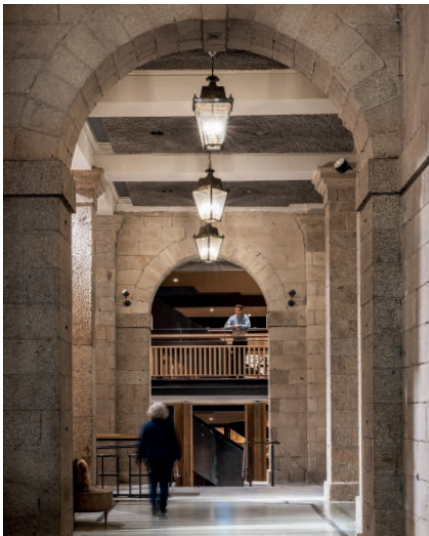
Julien was brave enough to say yes to our question and prompt more.

Yes, to an open space where the audience easily moves from the foyer to stalls and balconies and where there is always a stair or ramp to connect through to the next level. Yes, to exposing the perimeter walls regardless, revealing a palette of rough and friable Cornish Killas stone, blocks of Carn Brea granite, modern concrete blocks, old roof lines and redundant steels that sketched the history of the building. Yes, to allowing the auditorium to sit as a simple, robust and modern insertion clearly differentiated from the restrained classical formality of the architecture of the listed building.

Working closely with Charcoalblue, Skelly and Couch, and Price and Myers, we designed a three-tiered auditorium. We replaced the old one and introduced new circle and balcony levels by reusing the existing structural frame, extending it at roof level and digging down into the ground. This created 1,250 seats in the stalls, circle, and balcony combined with 100 standing seats, increasing the overall capacity from 900 to 1,350. Enough to compete with top-tier presenting theatres and receive the first tours of brand-new shows. Installing movable shutters and drapes means the theatre can tailor its acoustic and atmospheric profile to suit drama, stand-up comedy, amplified music, orchestral music and other live events.

The new auditorium is an open space within the granite box of the original marketplace.

With new views through and out to the back façade of the city hall and Back Quay on the harbour side, the public can now glimpse the world of theatre in the daytime during rehearsals and set-ups. Together with the lifts and gentle ramps across the site there’s universal access. Better seating for all audience members includes thirteen spaces for those using wheelchairs and with a variety of locations within the auditorium to choose from. Improved dressing room facilities, and for the first time, accessible facilities for



performers with disabilities.

The fantastic arcaded marketplace on Boscawen Street has been restored. It now forms a new foyer for the theatre and Playhouse Bar. We also remodelled the original Duchy offices at the Back Quay to form Husa, a new co-working space with a relaxed café bar.

Embarking on a huge refurbishment project is always a leap into the unknown, but Julien and his team were quick to make thoughtful decisions throughout. The early reference to Basil Spence was a clear signal and we followed a clear set of principles – the building’s past had to be celebrated as part of the local collective community heritage; it wasn’t a restoration, but we had to stabilise the building, and the ask was to show the scars of the previous alterations, as well as be true to the materials, adding only honest and robust detailing with refined surfaces that want to be touched (oak, steel, soft-stained wood) and maintain simplicity everywhere else.

The Cornish are proud, independently-minded people with a keen sense of historical and cultural identity. In revitalising the Hall for Cornwall, we were asked to design a theatre that was representative of its location and culture; a space that was open to all, without barriers to attendance or participation. The finished building successfully connects the past and the present, the social with the artistic, and the community with heritage and place.

It felt like we’d got it right at that first Saturday night performance of *Fisherman’s Friends*. When the audience rose to its feet to sing along with the cast – any barriers between the community and the performers vanished.

IMAGES
HALL FOR
CORNWALL

FROM OUR ARTISTS & PARTNERS





THE PLAYHOUSE

EMMA RICE Artistic Director of Wise Children



I get a fizz of excitement when I travel down to Cornwall. It is a place filled with such amazing memories and dear friends. I rush to get back into its rugged arms like a child running down a grassy bank on the first day of the holidays.

Cornwall's treasures, human and elemental, have been the enduring love story of my life and Hall for Cornwall has been a huge part of this romance. It has been a place where people have come together to tell stories and celebrate being wild, joyful and free. With my beloved Kneehigh we had some of the best nights of our lives in that space; the walls rocking with joy, the seats shaking with music and the unstoppable force of community.

I supported the plans to update the space. The Hall was in definite need of some TLC and I felt the Cornish deserved a more welcoming place to gather in. However, in my wildest dreams, I could never have imagined the beauty and magic that met me when I first entered the new Playhouse. Like Cornwall itself, the space seemed to live and breathe – evoking feelings ancient and modern. The natural and industrial materials bounce off each other, reminding me of bleached driftwood tapping against the harsh hull of a tanker. The design is authentic and rigorous, working and poetic. The auditorium wraps itself around the stage bringing the audience close to the action without ever losing the epic beauty of the majestic stage. Actors love it, feeling they can reach out and touch the audience whilst the acoustic allows them to work with intimacy and theatricality – just how I like it! The new Hall is a creative work of integrity and loving genius; the space celebrated and revealed afresh. It seems to say, 'welcome and be proud'. Yes. Be proud of who we are, where we are and who we will be.

Simply, I love the Playhouse and it is the next chapter in my love affair with Cornwall. I am proud as punch to be an ambassador for the Hall and thrilled to call myself a friend to all who sail, laugh, sing and dance in her. 'Hooray!' I shout, as I tumble down that hill, forever drawn to Cornwall.

IMAGE
WISE CHILDREN



CORNWALL

SIMON CALLOW CBE



I've loved Cornwall since childhood but as an adult had rarely been back until I came to do a show at the Hall for Cornwall in 2011. The very name of the place predisposed me to like it: first by celebrating the ancient kingdom – so profoundly at the heart of British history, and yet so utterly distinctive – and then by calling itself a Hall. Not a theatre, mind, a Hall, a great public space for all of Cornwall, belonging to the citizens, all of the citizens, which is exactly what a theatre should do.

Truro itself, new to me, was entirely engaging, but even from the outside, the Hall for Cornwall was like no theatre I'd ever encountered. With its massive, imposing façade it had a feeling of civic importance about it, but also very much belonged to the market square it faced. Once past that vast portico, there was an uncommon amount of space, soaring ceilings counteracted by great squat width, more or less filled by the bars, box office, merchandising. There was an underlying sense of great power. What on earth could this building have been before it became a theatre? Almost everything, is the answer: in turn fire station, prison, magistrates' court, coroner's court; more cheerfully, it has also housed markets.

It was clear that the conversion – the many and diverse conversions – of these highly public and often formal functions had perhaps not been deeply thought through. This was especially evident in the auditorium, which was a chaos of different planes and odd sight lines, in a space which was ungraspable, amorphous; it had no identity. I had come to the Hall do a one-man double bill of two almost unknown masterpieces by Dickens, *Dr Marigold* and *Mr Chops*, which entirely depended on my creating a direct connexion with the audience; Dickens brilliantly stirs his listeners, playing on their emotions – their willingness to laugh or cry – like a great violinist playing his instrument. But that would obviously be impossible in that shapeless, heartless black cave of an auditorium? Little did I know: to my astonishment and relief, it proved to be not merely possible but actually

IMAGE
TREASURE ISLAND



wonderfully easy: the response was direct and vivacious. Somehow the asymmetries of the space had created a natural auditorium: the basic structure of the building overrode the errors of conversion.

When a couple of years later Felicity Kendal and I came to Truro to do that dark masterpiece *Chin-Chin*, we found the same: we could achieve great intimacy in it, while playing the farcical elements with tremendous vigour and high energy; we never at any point lost contact with the audience. So though it was unavoidable that the Hall for

Cornwall had to be reconfigured, both for comfort and for efficiency, there was one great bonus to start with: the auditorium possessed whatever mysterious element it is that makes a theatre work, a direct and dynamic connexion between the stage and the stalls. What was needed was a conversion that preserved that while transforming the social experience of being in the theatre.

The art of constructing great playhouses often feels like a thing of the past – a secret that died with fabled Edwardian theatre architects like Frank Matcham and W S Sprague. But there is no gold standard, no one matrix. Since the days when Shakespeare was a young man looking after the horses in the converted inn yards which served as playhouses, we have busily adapted and reconfigured spaces purposed for something altogether different into theatres. Often the original building – whether a maltings or a church or a warehouse – can add a texture, a sense of usage, a feeling of lived life to the newly configured theatre.

And so it has proved with the Hall for Cornwall which, in its new hugely reimagined persona, has not only become a thing of aesthetic beauty but a space which miraculously incorporates, rather than conceals, its former selves. The prison, the court, the fire station, are all present in the new Hall for Cornwall, and their majesty and sometimes austere beauty combine in a space which, equipped with every modern technology, brings the past back into the equation. The sense of the Hall for Cornwall being at a crossroads of history and of the community it represents is powerfully dynamic – surging with energy and power and rooted deep deep in the soil.

I can hardly wait to come back and plug into all of that.



ABOVE
HALL FOR CORNWALL
YOUTH SENIORS
PERFORM *MUCH ADO
ABOUT NOTHING*
RIGHT
TREASURE ISLAND

OUR TEAM



OUR TEAM

POLLY DENT Theatre Manager

What are the main qualities needed to do your job?
I think it's essential to have energy, enthusiasm, and patience. You need to be flexible with the ability to think on your feet. Working with a range of people requires great management skills too.

What drew you to live and work in Cornwall?
I really love the place and the people – I find the pace of life particularly suits me.

Why did you want to work in theatre?
I was fascinated by theatre at an early age, although I thought I lacked the talent required to pursue a career in it – until now. I'm able to use my hospitality expertise and years of experience to work front-of-house at Hall for Cornwall and create the best hosting environment for our visitors.

Describe the benefits of the newly refurbished theatre?
The new auditorium and front-of-house has really enhanced our customer experience. The sheer beauty of the building and the quality of the workmanship is breathtaking. The layout of the public spaces makes it exceptionally easy for the front-of-house team to operate more effectively.

What's your biggest highlight at the Hall to date?
For me, the first night of *Fisherman's Friends: the Musical* when we reopened – by far the best highlight so far. It was a privilege to be part of the team that rose to every challenge that came our way and to realise the dream of creating a new theatre.

What gives you the greatest job satisfaction?
I get the greatest satisfaction from witnessing the standing ovations and hearing the audiences' cheers. That's the magical moment when you know that everything has come together to create a wonderful experience for everyone.

What's the toughest challenge you've faced in your role?
My biggest and current challenge is to create the right environment where we can build a culture that enables our fantastic welcome team to thrive, personally and professionally. Our team mantra is that we aim to deliver first-class customer service with passion, confidence and consistently.

What's the best show you've ever seen at Hall for Cornwall since working there?
Undoubtedly the Queen musical *We Will Rock You*. What a talented and adorable cast. The audiences were ecstatic.

Who's been the most influential person in your working life?
Betty Hale, one of the driving forces behind the start-up of Jamie Oliver's restaurant *Fifteen* at Watergate Bay, has been a tower of strength. She's a woman with drive, passion and a colossal empathy for others. Betty has inspired me from the first day I met her and she continues to be a source of tireless support.

What's your favourite place in Cornwall and why?
I love to visit the National Trust beach at Porth Joke, known locally as Polly Joke. It's a small cove nestled between Holywell and Crantock. I love to watch the seals there – and for me this place sums up what's great about being in Cornwall.

What's your favourite café or restaurant in Cornwall?
I liked the Michelin-starred Restaurant Nathan Outlaw – it has the best fish tasting menu around. Nathan has since closed it to open up two new ventures – Outlaw's New Road and Outlaw's Fish Kitchen. I can't wait to try them out.

What constitutes a great day out in Cornwall for you?
Nothing beats a good walk along the beautiful coastal path, taking in the spectacular views and time out to make tea on a camping stove.

What are you reading at the moment?
To be honest, I don't read much as I struggle with the written word.

What music are you currently listening to?
I'm partially deaf now, so have lost some of the joy of listening to music, but before this, my taste in music was pretty eclectic.

What the best Netflix series you've watched recently?
Series 4 of *Stranger Things* was magnificent and watching it with my teenage daughter. I loved the 1980s soundtrack.

What's the best radio programme or podcast you've listened to?
I'm a big fan of *Knitting for Beginners* on YouTube. You're never too old to sharpen up your crafting skills.

What's the most important piece of advice you have received in your career?
My father once told me that the key to a successful business is to 'look after the people and everything else will fall into place'.

What advice would you give to a young person who wanted to work in theatre?
Try and make every day a first night, learn from other people and enjoy every minute of what you do.



MAIN IMAGE
POLLY DENT
INSET IMAGES
GREEN ROOM CAFÉ



OUR TEAM

JOSH REEVES Technical Manager

What's your role and the main qualities needed?

I look after and run the backstage areas of the theatre. This includes the lighting, sound, flies and stage maintenance. I'm also in charge of Health and Safety throughout the building. You need to be hard-working, practical and willing to get stuck in. You need to be thoughtful and able to respond to different situations – being cool-headed, calm, and able to work under pressure is vital. It also helps other people if you're upbeat, friendly and able to communicate well.

How important was it for you to pursue your career in Cornwall?

What's amazing is the fact that this job allowed me to move back to Cornwall. I worked and studied in Cornwall until 2013, when I moved to London to further my career within the entertainment industry. I count myself extremely lucky to be back in Cornwall, working in a theatre that I love and learn so much from. If it wasn't for this job opportunity, I don't think I would have got back here quite so soon. It's been a pleasure to bring my family to this beautiful place where I grew up.

Why did you want to work in theatre?

Honestly, I didn't initially want to work in theatre – I fell into it. I was working in online TV for a few years and reached the point where I wanted to leave the company I was with. A friend said that a local touring theatre was after a Duty Technician for a new show, so I applied and got the job. The rest is history.

What's your biggest career highlight to date?

I've had so many highlights in my career. I've toured around the world with shows and events in some fantastic locations and spaces – some things you wouldn't see without doing it as a job. Some of the people I've worked with are definitely highlights too. When I worked at the Old Vic, London, I worked with some big names – the energy these actors could bring to a room is something I will never forget.

Describe the benefits of the newly refurbished theatre?

I would say that the newly refurbished theatre has both benefits and disadvantages. The benefits are that you have a new, almost

flawless infrastructure to work in. You also get to share the experience of seeing the reaction from people who have been here before the refurb – the look on their faces as they see the new space is quite unique. The drawback is you don't always know if things will work the way you planned, and you never know what surprises each day will bring.

What gives you the greatest job satisfaction?

The moment the curtain rises after a complex, challenging fit-up. To sit back, watch the magic happen, and see the audience love it. That's the moment I enjoy the most – and why I do this job.

What's the biggest challenge you've faced in your role?

There have been several challenges throughout my time at the Hall. All sorts of little things can trip you up when a new show arrives – stage sets, staffing, technical issues. But it's these challenges that keep things interesting; it keeps the team and I on our toes and makes us think. It wouldn't be as much fun if everything were straightforward.

What's the best show you've ever seen at the Hall since working there?

Since joining a year ago, the best thing I've seen would probably be *Fisherman's Friends: the Musical*. The energy the play brought to the venue was unbelievable. It was such a great show to reopen the theatre with and the vibe amongst the audience was electric.

Who's been the most influential person in your working life?

At the Old Vic I worked with some highly talented people, including the actor Andrew Scott who I worked with twice. He brought such vibrancy to his performances; it was like a new show every evening. He was so humble and friendly to everyone who worked on the show – it was a real privilege. At the Rose Theatre, I was challenged and supported by several set designers, which was a tremendous learning experience. The same goes for my time here at Hall for Cornwall. If I had to put it down to one person though, I would have to say thank you to John Crocks, a local camera operator who gave me my first job in the film industry. He got me into theatre when that role wasn't going where I wanted it to. I probably wouldn't be here now if it wasn't for him.

What's your favourite place in Cornwall and why?

This is a tricky question as it all depends on the time of year. I love Tehidy Woods in the autumn and spring. In summer, it's St Ives Bay, wherever it's quiet along that bit of the coastline (I'm not going to say where as I

don't want it to become busier!). And in winter, an excellent local pub by the fire.

What's your favourite café or restaurant in Cornwall?

That depends on the season too and how I feel. I have a few favourites on the beaches; Lula's in Hayle is a great place to have dinner in the spring. The Gurnard's Head, a gastropub on the coast road between St Ives and St Just is a fantastic place all year round. It's open to the elements out there, which adds to the atmosphere.

What constitutes a great day out in Cornwall for you?

In Spring I go on bike adventures with the kids and enjoy a relaxed day with a picnic. During the Summer it's a day on the beach relaxing with the family before heading home for a good BBQ. In the Autumn it's walking whatever the weather. And in Winter, sitting by a roaring fire with good ale gets you through it. All year round I love exploring, running, open water swimming and surfing – all are so important for me.

What are you reading at the moment?

Eat and Run: My Unlikely Journey to Ultramarathon Greatness, a fantastic, inspiring book following Scott Jurek's life. I love audiobooks too, they're a great way to relax and de-stress in the evening.

What music are you listening to?

You Me At Six, Alexisonfire, Young Guns, M83, Wolf Alice, A Perfect Circle, Stone Sour, Tool and Sublime. I often have my iPhone headphones on shuffle.

What's the best Netflix series you've watched recently?

The Queen's Gambit, a great series, really.

What's the most important piece of advice you've received in your career?

Always be open to learning, however long you've been in the business. No matter what you think you know, there is always something new and exciting to learn and add to your portfolio of skills and experience.

What advice would you give to a young person who wanted to work in theatre?

I would say, give it a go. Try out all the areas as they have different aspects to enjoy and you never know which one you might fall in love with. Go in with a clear head. Don't think you know it all because of what you've done elsewhere as it won't necessarily be the same. And be prepared to get your hands dirty.

IMAGES
JOSH REEVES AND
HIS TEAM



SPOTLIGHT ON HUSA

By **MARCUS ALLEYNE** Black Voices Cornwall

The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020, and the protests which followed, sent shock waves across the globe, including Cornwall. For the first time in my 30 years living here, I experienced a strong sense of support for marginalised groups, the like of which I have never seen before in rural Cornwall. Individuals from every generation and socio-economic background came together, standing shoulder to shoulder to show their support and voice 'enough is enough'. The rise of the *Black Lives Matter* movement effectively empowered Black and Ethnically Diverse community members to act and advocate for change. It was from this that Black Voices Cornwall was born.

Our organisation is an independent charity with the single aim of enabling Cornwall to become actively anti-racist through education, communication and unification. We felt empowered to take a stand against racial injustice, inequality and inequity right here in Cornwall and wanted to demonstrate and offer a practical and positive response to the *Black Lives Matter* protests across Cornwall. We will continue to challenge authorities, institutions and organisations around social justice issues and hold them to account.

Hall for Cornwall has been an absolute powerhouse for Black Voices Cornwall. Our newfound partnership could not have come at a better time. In our two months of being based here, we have already seen more than 3,000 marginalised community members, allies and partners attend events in and around the venue, improving representation and creating a greater sense of community. Having a physical space to work from has also allowed the Black Voices Cornwall team to grow our partner organisations; for example, we have forged the most amazing relationship with Cornwall Pride.

And the most exciting part of our partnership with HUSA is that we can make a significant impact on one of Cornwall's finest institutions. By supporting and helping to develop the Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion agenda within Hall for Cornwall, we can foster a more profound sense of belonging, improving access to theatres not only in Cornwall, but across the UK.

We are thrilled and excited to be in such a position where we can network with other organisations with a shared desire to forge change and improve race relations in Cornwall.

IMAGE
WISE CHILDREN

'The Hall is both a cosy and spectacular venue!'

AUDIENCE MEMBER Facebook

'The partnership with @CornwallCouncil @LEPCornwall_1oS & @HeritageFundL_S in support of this project has been gold standard. Full credit to the board & management @HallforCornwall for their stewardship of it. #HereForCulture'

PHIL GIBBY Area Director, South West, Arts Council England, Twitter

'Having Hall for Cornwall at the heart of our cultural scene is fantastic for the county and local community. As a creative institution, we're hugely appreciative that this cultural asset is right on our doorstep, and we're delighted to partner with them to achieve the creative ambitions of Cornwall'

EMMA HUNT Vice-Chancellor, Falmouth University



SOUTH AFRICAN
ROAD TRIP

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