

Thursday 13 February 2025

CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE ANNOUNCES FESTIVAL 2025

Chichester Festival Theatre's Festival 2025 has today been announced by Artistic Director, Justin Audibert and Executive Director, Kathy Bourne.

Festival 2025 includes five world and two UK premieres, two musicals, and masterpieces from world drama. The company includes Mark Addy, Natalie Dormer, Beverley Knight, Tom Rosenthal, Jenna Russell and Giles Terera; directors making their Chichester debuts include Gregory Doran, Katy Rudd, Phillip Breen, Monique Touko, Kathleen Marshall, Hannah Joss, Anthony Lau and Roy Alexander Weise.

Musicals:

- **Kathleen Marshall** directs and choreographs a brand new production of **Irving Berlin's** classic tap extravaganza ***Top Hat***
- A new musical, ***The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry***, adapted by **Rachel Joyce** from her bestselling novel, with music and lyrics by **Passenger**, directed by **Katy Rudd**, starring **Mark Addy** and **Jenna Russell**

World premieres:

- **Gogol's** sparkling satire ***The Government Inspector*** in a new adaptation by **Phil Porter**, directed by **Gregory Doran**, starring actor and comedian **Tom Rosenthal**
- ***Choir***, a new play by **Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti** celebrating music and togetherness, directed by **Hannah Joss**
- ***Safe Space***, a new play by **Jamie Boggy**, delving into volatile campus politics, directed by **Roy Alexander Weise**

Classic and modern dramas:

- **Natalie Dormer** in ***Anna Karenina***, **Tolstoy's** romantic masterpiece in a new adaptation written and directed by **Phillip Breen**
- **Beverley Knight** in ***Marie and Rosetta*** by **George Brant**, directed by **Monique Touko** in a co-production with Rose Theatre and ETT
- **Giles Terera** plays the title role in ***Hamlet***, directed by **Justin Audibert** in Chichester's first ever production of **Shakespeare's** great tragedy
- **William Golding's** compelling adventure ***Lord of the Flies***, adapted by **Nigel Williams**, directed by **Anthony Lau**

For family audiences:

- The first stage production of **Matt Haig's** ***A Boy Called Christmas***, adapted by **Philip Wilson** with music by **Tom Brady**, performed by **Chichester Festival Youth Theatre** to mark their 40th anniversary and directed by **Dale Rooks**

- **Stiles and Drewe's *The Three Little Pigs***, a co-production with the Unicorn Theatre for young families at Christmas
- **Looking ahead to Festival 2026, Roald Dahl's *The BFG***, adapted by **Tom Wells**, in a co-production with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Roald Dahl Story Company, will be directed by **Daniel Evans**
- **The Nest**, a new studio space for work by emerging artists, creative development and community projects, will open in summer 2025 after a successful fundraising campaign
- **12,000 £10 tickets** across the season; **9,000 £5 Prologue tickets** for 16 – 30 year olds
- Off-stage events, exhibitions, free live music, family activities, and *CFT Lates*

Justin Audibert and Kathy Bourne said:

'We're delighted to share our new season, which aims to include all the ingredients we know our audiences love – including, of course, an unmissable summer musical. In fact, music of all kinds features strongly in several productions, from stimulating new work to classic masterpieces from the world stage.

'A sense of lives and society in flux is central to many of the dramas this season, with vivid characters facing momentous change – making for compelling storytelling.

'We're continuing our policy of maximum theatricality in the Festival Theatre, with large casts and striking designs; while in the intimate Minerva, we have four premieres as well as Chichester's first ever production of *Hamlet*.

'We will welcome two Resident Assistant Directors, Becca Chadder and Nathanael Campbell; and this summer, we'll launch our exciting new studio space, The Nest. December brings the first stage adaptation of Matt Haig's contemporary classic, *A Boy Called Christmas*, which will mark our brilliant Chichester Festival Youth Theatre's 40th anniversary.

'It's a pleasure to be working in partnership with Rose Theatre, ETT, the Unicorn Theatre and – looking ahead to 2026 – the RSC and Roald Dahl Story Company on our forthcoming co-production of *The BFG*. Meanwhile, *Oliver!*, our collaboration with Cameron Mackintosh, continues its triumphant run in the West End; and our co-production with Headlong, *The House Party* is on tour in the UK – taking Chichester's work to audiences across the country.'

FESTIVAL 2025 PRODUCTIONS – APRIL TO OCTOBER

World Premiere

Tom Rosenthal in

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR

By **Nikolai Gogol**

A new adaptation by **Phil Porter**

Directed by **Gregory Doran**

25 April – 24 May, Festival Theatre

Press night: Thursday 1 May

Gogol's brilliantly inventive 19th century satire of skulduggery, mistaken identity and human absurdity spirals into dizzying levels of comic hysteria in **Phil Porter's** sparkling new version.

The bureaucrats in a remote provincial town are panicking. Word has gone round that a bigwig government inspector is heading their way. And things are far from ideal: for a start, the hospital's hopeless, the post office has gone to pot, and the streets are filthy. The Mayor and the Judge are keen to brush their own indiscretions under the nearest carpet.

So when they discover the inspector is already staying at the inn, incognito, the whole town lavishes flattering attention on him. This suits 'the inspector' just fine, since in reality he's a lowly and broke government pen-pusher, nursing extravagant fantasies of fame and fortune...

Actor and comedian **Tom Rosenthal** (*Friday Night Dinner, Plebs, Manhood*) plays Khlestakov. The cast also includes **Joe Dixon** (*Renegade Nell, Imperium I & II*) as the Judge, **Joe Eyre** (*Young Sherlock, EastEnders*) as Waiter/Gendarme, **Nick Haverson** (*The Cat and the Canary CFT, Charlie & Stan*) as Osip, **Lloyd Hutchinson** (*Dear England, King Lear*) as the Mayor, **Sylvestra Le Touzel** (*The Crown, Intelligence*) as Anna, **Christopher Middleton** (*Henry IV, Time*) as Head of Schools, **Laurie Ogden** (*The Ocean at the End of the Lane, Great Expectations*) as Marya, **Oscar Pearce** (*Bring Up The Bodies, Coliseum*) as The Charity Commissioner, **Paul Rider** (*The Comedy of Errors, Dangerous Liaisons*) as Dobchinsky, and **Miltos Yerolemou** (*Foundation, Back to Black*) as Bobchinsky.

Gregory Doran, former Artistic Director of the RSC (2012 – 2023), makes his Chichester debut as director.

The designer is **Francis O'Connor**, lighting designer **Emma Chapman**, composer **Paul Englishby**, sound designers **Claire Windsor** and **Jonathan Ruddick**, movement director **Mike Ashcroft**, and casting director **Helena Palmer CDG**.

World Premiere

Mark Addy and **Jenna Russell** in
THE UNLIKELY PILGRIMAGE OF HAROLD FRY
A new musical

Based on the novel by **Rachel Joyce**

Book by **Rachel Joyce**

Music and Lyrics by **Passenger**

Directed by **Katy Rudd**

5 May – 14 June, Minerva Theatre

Press night: Thursday 15 May

Funny, profound, deeply moving and uplifting, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* is a joyous new musical adapted by **Rachel Joyce** from her own multi million-selling novel, featuring irresistible modern folk songs by the chart-topping indie musician, **Passenger** (*Let Her Go*).

Harold Fry – grey, tired and lonely – receives a letter from an old friend and heads out to post his reply. And keeps walking. From South Devon to Berwick upon Tweed. Leaving his bewildered wife Maureen behind.

Because Harold is trying to make up for lost time, confront the ghosts in his past, and – perhaps – keep someone alive.

As word spreads of his unlikely pilgrimage, a whole company of lost souls join him on his quest. And the horizons for both Harold and Maureen open wider than they could ever have imagined.

Mark Addy, whose innumerable screen credits include *The Full Monty*, *The Rig* and *Game of Thrones*, plays Harold. **Jenna Russell**, whose award-winning musicals include *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Hello, Dolly!*, makes a welcome return to Chichester as Maureen.

Director **Katy Rudd** (*Ballet Shoes, The Ocean at the End of the Lane* NT/West End) makes her Chichester debut.

The designer is **Samuel Wyer**, choreographer **Tom Jackson Greaves**, arranger and orchestrator **Jeremy Holland-Smith**, musical supervisor **Phil Bateman**, lighting designer

Paule Constable, sound designers **Ian Dickinson** and **Gareth Tucker** for **Autograph**, musical director **Chris Poon**, and casting director **Anna Cooper CDG**. Adaptation co-created by **Rachel Joyce**, **Peter Darling** and **Katy Rudd**.

UK Premiere

Natalie Dormer in
ANNA KARENINA

By **Leo Tolstoy**

A new adaptation by **Phillip Breen**

Directed by **Phillip Breen**

7 – 28 June, Festival Theatre

Press night: Friday 13 June

Phillip Breen's witty and sensual version of **Tolstoy**'s masterpiece *Anna Karenina* – blending period dress with a contemporary tone – takes us into the hearts and minds of its conflicted, very human characters. A surprisingly funny, romantic and unforgettable portrait of infidelity, passion and the search for fulfilment.

Across the vast panorama of 19th-century Russia – from the glittering salons of Moscow and St Petersburg to its remote country estates – everyone is searching for answers in a society on the brink of collapse.

Anna Karenina, the beautiful wife of a powerful government official, dares to step outside the bounds of society to risk a dangerous and destructive love affair with the magnetic Count Vronsky.

Meanwhile, country landowner Levin is in pursuit of a new way to live and wrestling with his thwarted devotion to Kitty, who's been left broken-hearted by Vronsky. Her sister Dolly struggles to reconcile constant child-bearing with her husband's constant philandering.

Their dreams and despairs are mirrored in the tensions between individual and society, modernity and tradition, city and countryside, faith and doubt.

Natalie Dormer (*Game of Thrones*, *The Hunger Games*) makes her Chichester debut as Anna; **David Oakes** (*Victoria*, *Vikings: Valhalla*) also comes to Chichester for the first time as Levin.

The cast also includes **Donna Berlin** (*The Chalk Garden CFT*, *Wicked*) as Countess Vronskaya, **Jonnie Broadbent** (*The Norman Conquests CFT*, *Much Ado About Nothing*) as Stiva, **Seamus Dillane** (*The Invention of Love*, *Richard II*) as Vronsky, **Tomiwa Edun** (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Trigger Point*) as Karenin, **Sandy Foster** (*Mr Turner*, *Fisherman's Friends*) as Countess Lydia, **Ivan Ivashkin** (*Mission: Impossible*) as Nikolai, **Shalisha James-Davis** (*The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*) as Kitty, **Anne Lacey** (*The Secret Garden*, *Shetland*) as Agafya, **Marcia Lecky** (*Coriolanus*, *Brian and Maggie*) as Princess Scherbatskaya, **Riad Richie** (*Casualty*, *Infamous*) as Titus, and **Naomi Sheldon** (*The Girlfriend*, *Witness for the Prosecution*) as Dolly.

The set designer is **Max Jones**, costume designer **Ruth Hall**, lighting designer **Anna Watson**, composer **Paddy Cunneen**, sound designer **Dyfan Jones**, movement director **Ayse Tashkiran**, and casting director **Helena Palmer CDG**.

For ages 14+; contains strong language and scenes some people may find upsetting.

UK Premiere
Beverley Knight in
MARIE AND ROSETTA
By **George Brant**
Directed by **Monique Touko**
A co-production with Rose Theatre and ETT
25 June – 26 July, Minerva Theatre
Press night: Wednesday 2 July

Sister Rosetta Tharpe, the roof-raising ‘godmother of rock ‘n’ roll’, influenced countless musicians from Elvis to Johnny Cash. This sparkling, intimate portrait of Rosetta and her beloved singing partner, Marie Knight, restores these forgotten musical heroines to the spotlight as one of the most remarkable and revolutionary duos in music history.

Mississippi, 1946. Sister Rosetta has changed the face of gospel music with her exuberant, electric guitar-playing style. Shunned by straitlaced church folk for performing in nightclubs and glorying in rhythm and blues, she’s persuaded the saintly young singer Marie to join her on a tour of the segregated southern States. But first she has to convert Marie’s pure Sunday sound into something that has just a little more swing...

Featuring a wealth of joyous rock and gospel hits including *Didn’t It Rain* and *Peace in the Valley*, the show will feature live musicians accompanying Olivier Award-winning West End star **Beverley Knight** (*Memphis, The Drifters Girl, Sylvia, Sister Act*), who makes her Chichester debut as Rosetta Tharpe.

George Brant is an award-winning American playwright whose work includes *Grounded* (Fringe First and Off-West End Awards).

Monique Touko, winner of the 2022 Stage Debut Award for Best Director, whose acclaimed productions include *The Boy at the Back of the Class, School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play, Wedding Band* and *G*, directs this UK premiere.

The set designer will be **Lily Arnold**, lighting designer **Matt Haskins**, sound designer **Tony Gayle**, movement director **Kloé Dean** and casting director **Jacob Sparrow**.

This co-production with Rose Theatre and ETT will play at the Rose in Kingston from 2 – 24 May (press night: 9 May), prior to its Chichester run.

Maria and Rosetta is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd on behalf of Samuel French Ltd concordtheatricals.co.uk.

TOP HAT

Music & Lyrics by **Irving Berlin**
Based on RKO’s Motion Picture
Adapted for the stage by **Matthew White & Howard Jacques**
Directed and Choreographed by **Kathleen Marshall**
14 July – 6 September, Festival Theatre
Press night: Thursday 24 July

*There may be trouble ahead,
But while there’s moonlight, and music, and love, and romance...
Let’s face the music and dance.*

You’re invited to the musical equivalent of a finest vintage champagne. Effervescent, elegant and exhilarating, *Top Hat* is a heady romantic cocktail laced with sparkingly witty dialogue, stunning choreography, lavish sets and gorgeous costumes. **Irving Berlin’s** irresistible score

includes some of Hollywood's greatest songs: the immortal *Cheek to Cheek*, *Let's Face the Music and Dance*, *Top Hat*, *White Tie and Tails* and *Puttin' on the Ritz*.

When Broadway star Jerry Travers arrives in London to open a new show, he crosses paths with model Dale Tremont, whose beauty sleep is rudely interrupted by Jerry tap dancing in the hotel suite above hers. Instantly smitten, Jerry vows to abandon his bachelor life to win her – but the path of true love never does run smooth. Especially since Dale has mistaken Jerry for his hapless producer Horace, who's trying to avoid the wrath of his formidable wife Madge, and Dale's own fiery Italian admirer is planning a trip to Venice for her to showcase his couture gowns...

Based on the classic 1935 film which starred Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, the stage adaptation's West End premiere won the 2013 Olivier Award for Best New Musical and the Evening Standard Award for Best Night Out. Acclaimed American director and choreographer **Kathleen Marshall**, whose Tony and Olivier Award-winning production of *Anything Goes* recently wowed audiences and critics in London and on television, comes to Chichester to stage this brand-new production.

The set designer for *Top Hat* will be **Peter McKintosh**; the musical supervisor will be **Gareth Valentine**, orchestrator & arranger **Chris Walker**, lighting designer **Tim Mitchell**, sound designer **Paul Groothuis**, and casting director **Natalie Gallacher CDG** for **Pippa Ailion and Natalie Gallacher Casting**.

There will be a Dementia Friendly performance on 31 July and a Relaxed Performance on 26 August. A Summer Gala on 29 August will support Chichester Festival Youth Theatre.

World Premiere

CHOIR

By **Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti**

Directed by **Hannah Joss**

2 – 30 August, Minerva Theatre

Press night: Friday 8 August

Heartwarming, funny and packed with glorious arrangements of contemporary songs, **Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's** new comedy with music promises a thoroughly entertaining night out.

Morgan runs a community choir who meet weekly in a room above the local pub to sing great pop songs, chat and drink. There's Paul, a former West End performer who now does local radio voiceovers; Esther and Joy, best friends who can't stand each other; Anna, whose seemingly perfect life hides a secret; Ken, good egg and perennial loser; and Sheila, dark horse and pathological liar.

The choir are busy rehearsing a concert to raise money for young Freddie to go to music college. And when a TV producer invites them to perform on national television, Morgan seizes her opportunity to hit the big time.

But – are her eccentric group up to it? And what is Morgan prepared to sacrifice to get the acclaim she so desires? Home truths are revealed and secrets laid bare in this feelgood comedy, which explores loneliness and connection while celebrating the joy and power of community art.

Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti is an award-winning writer for stage, screen and radio, whose work includes *A Kind of People* (Royal Court), *Silence* (Donmar Warehouse) and Radio 4's *The Archers*.

CFT's Associate Director **Hannah Joss**, previously Resident Director at the National Theatre Studio, directs.

The designer is **Anisha Fields**, lighting designer **Jai Morjaria**, music & sound designer **Alexandra Faye Braithwaite**, arranger **Rich Forbes**, musical director **Michael Henry**, movement director **Annie-Lunnette Deakin-Foster**, and casting director **Jacob Sparrow**.

Giles Terera in
HAMLET

By **William Shakespeare**

Directed by **Justin Audibert**

6 September – 4 October, Minerva Theatre

Press night: Tuesday 16 September

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

The death of his father, the king, turns Hamlet's world upside down. Stunned by the horrifying secrets revealed, he loses all trust in the people closest to him.

Amidst a maelstrom of grief, suspicion and doubt, he embarks on a profound journey of self-discovery in which the betrayal of friends and family – and the decay at the heart of the state – are laid bare.

Justin Audibert, Artistic Director of CFT, directs Chichester's first ever production of Shakespeare's supreme tragedy.

Giles Terera, winner of an Olivier Award for *Hamilton* (West End), and Critics' Circle Best Actor Award for *Blues for an Alabama Sky* and the title role in *Othello* at the National Theatre, plays Hamlet.

The designer will be **Lily Arnold**, lighting designer **Ryan Day**, sound designer **Ed Clarke**, movement director **Lucy Cullingford**, fight director **Cristian Cardenas** and casting director **Matilda James CDG**.

William Golding's
LORD OF THE FLIES

Adapted for the stage by **Nigel Williams**

Directed by **Anthony Lau**

19 September – 11 October, Festival Theatre

Press night: Thursday 25 September

Which is better – law and rescue or hunting and breaking things up? To have rules and agree or to hunt and kill like a pack of savages?

William Golding's compelling adventure takes us into the heart of darkness.

A plane crash on a desert island abandons a group of young survivors to fend for themselves. Quickly, tribal loyalties start to form. Despite attempts by Ralph and Piggy to keep order, school rules are shed along with their uniforms, and friendly alliances fast become ferocious divisions.

As the children threaten to turn feral, a deadly struggle ensues between Ralph and his leadership rival, Jack. Will chaos overcome humanity – or, with a world at war beyond the island, can rescue come in time to save them?

A modern classic, *Lord of the Flies* has lost none of its riveting power since its publication in 1954; frequently ranked high in lists of iconic novels, and a constant presence on the school syllabus. **Nigel Williams**'s much admired stage adaptation premiered at the RSC in 1995.

Anthony Lau, Associate Artistic Director at Sheffield Theatres 2020-2024, where his productions included *The Crucible*, *Miss Saigon*, *Rock/Paper/Scissors* and *The Good Person of Szechwan*, directs.

The casting director will be **Jacob Sparrow**.

For ages 13+; please note this production contains scenes some people may find upsetting.

World Premiere

SAFE SPACE

By **Jamie Bogyo**

Directed by **Roy Alexander Weise**

11 October – 8 November, Minerva Theatre

Press night: Friday 17 October

What's in a name?

The winds of change are blowing through the elite ivy-league halls of one of America's most prestigious universities. For students Isaiah, Connor, Annabelle, Omar and Stacy, on the precipice of starting their adult lives, life is no longer about getting through a political science lecture with a hangover and auditioning for the school acapella group. Confronting the injustices of the past is top of the agenda – starting with the fact that the college is named after a notorious defender of slavery.

And in this pressure cooker environment, everyone has to pick a side.

Beneath the passionate speeches, do old prejudices die hard? What happens to friendship and love amidst frank debate?

Jamie Bogyo's whip-smart, hilarious and bracing new play takes us into the volatile quicksand of campus politics in the dying months of Obama's presidency, and asks how – and if – we can escape the past.

Roy Alexander Weise, whose recent productions include *The Hot Wing King* and *Nine Night* (National Theatre) and *Untitled F*ck M*ss S**gon Play* (Royal Exchange/Young Vic/Headlong), directs.

The casting director will be **Isabella Odoffin CDG**.

For ages 14+; contains strong language and scenes of an adult nature.

Stiles and Drewe's

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

Music by **George Stiles**

Book and lyrics by **Anthony Drewe**

A co-production with Unicorn Theatre

6 – 28 December, Minerva Theatre

Press performance: Wednesday 10 December at 1.30pm

From the award-winning **Stiles and Drewe** (*The Billy Goats Gruff*, *Honk!*, *Half a Sixpence*) comes *The Three Little Pigs* – a "very curly musical tail" that is perfect for the whole family.

This charming and witty adventure is full of catchy songs and clever rhymes which will have you squealing with glee as three superstar piglets set about defeating the Big Bad Wolf.

Devoted Mother Pig is raising her three little pigs – sporty Bar, nature-loving Bee and bookworm Q – after Father Pig was gobbled by the Big Bad Wolf. But when their home starts looking like a really messy pigsty, Mother encourages her fast-growing youngsters to make their own way in the big wide world.

Bar, Bee and Q set about building their own houses from straw, sticks and bricks. But can they get the better of the huffing, puffing, always hungry (and a bit misunderstood) Big Bad Wolf?

A co-production with the Unicorn Theatre, this hugely entertaining adaptation of the classic tale is a perfect musical Christmas treat for young families.

Performed by arrangement with Music Theatre International.

For ages 3 – 7. There will be a Relaxed Performance on 28 December.

World Premiere

Chichester Festival Youth Theatre

A BOY CALLED CHRISTMAS

By **Matt Haig**

Adapted for the stage by **Philip Wilson**

Music by **Tom Brady**

Lyrics by **Philip Wilson** and **Tom Brady**

Directed by **Dale Rooks**

15 – 31 December, Festival Theatre

Press night: Thursday 18 December

An enthralling, charming and magical tale that tells the true story of Father Christmas.

For 11-year-old Nikolas, whose nickname is Christmas because he was born on 25 December, life isn't easy. With only a doll made out of a turnip to keep him company, he believes in happiness but isn't happy very often. Until the day he sets out – with his pet mouse Miika and a reindeer called Blitzen – on an extraordinary quest to follow his father and to find Elfhelm, the fabled village of the elves.

Join Nikolas on this life-changing adventure, full of fantastic characters and beautiful moments, and watch how one little boy comes to be the very symbol of Christmas itself. Full to bursting with festive wonder, this story from the award-winning writer **Matt Haig** – adapted for the stage by **Philip Wilson** (*Cinderella, Grimm Tales*), with original live music and songs by **Tom Brady** (*Pinocchio, The Butterfly Lion*) – will warm the hearts of audiences young and old.

In their 40th anniversary year, **Chichester Festival Youth Theatre** bring their magical gifts for storytelling to another captivating Christmas production, directed by **Dale Rooks** (*The Wind in the Willows, Hey! Christmas Tree*).

For ages 7+. There will be a Gala Performance on 21 December, and a Relaxed Performance on 30 December.

World Premiere

Roald Dahl's

THE BFG

Adapted by **Tom Wells**

Directed by **Daniel Evans**

A Chichester Festival Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, and Roald Dahl Story Company production

Monday 16 March – Sunday 12 April 2026

Roald Dahl's unforgettable story comes to life for Festival 2026 in a magical new adaptation by **Tom Wells** (*The Kitchen Sink*, *Jumpers For Goalposts*), directed by RSC Co-Artistic Director (and former CFT Artistic Director) **Daniel Evans**, whose previous productions include *Quiz*, *South Pacific* and *Our Generation*.

Full details and booking will be announced in September 2025

FESTIVAL 2025 EVENTS

A lively programme of events and activities will complement the shows on stage.

Join us for a free **Cricket Match** at beautiful Goodwood, and bag a bargain at our **Costume Sale**. **Green Week** celebrates the UK's annual push for positive climate action. Enjoy live music from local talent at our free **Summer Sessions**. The Minerva Bar sees the return of **CFT Lates**, our monthly series of late night entertainment for ages 16+.

A **Hamlet Experience Weekend** will offer an insight into director Justin Audibert's theatre-making process. Free **Pre- and Post-Show Talks**, with the director and cast members, are held for each production, while **Theatre Days** and **Backstage Tours** unveil backstage secrets.

Family Friendly activities range from **Roman Week crafts**, performances ***This Tree Belongs To Me*** and ***Baby Gospel***, to the return of ***Creation Station*** and free ***Storytime Saturdays***.

THE NEST

Incubating, hatching and showcasing the creative talent of the future

After a successful fundraising campaign, raising £1.8m over the past year, our exciting new venue, The Nest – a vibrant space for dynamic work and the talent of tomorrow – will open this summer. Like the smaller theatre spaces that popped up at CFT over the years, such as The Tent, Theatre on the Fly and The Spiegeltent, The Nest will feel similarly informal and agile: a home for emerging artists alongside community groups, and a place to kick-back for some eclectic nightlife. We look forward to sharing the fresh programme of activities and events soon.

Sarah Mansell, Appeal Director, comments: 'We would like to thank everyone who supported The Nest Appeal – the trusts, foundations and individuals, together with Chichester City Council – whatever the size of their gift. The huge amount of money raised through donations has been an extraordinary testament to our audience, their loyalty and generosity. Their gifts have made our dreams of The Nest a reality.'

A free foyer exhibition, **New Ventures**, will explore the rich history of fringe theatre spaces at CFT, supported by the National Heritage Lottery Fund.

ENDS

Festival 2025 Show Sponsors

Minerva Season Principal:
Charles Holloway OBE

Production Sponsors:

The Government Inspector is sponsored by Bennett Griffin | Solicitors

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry is sponsored by Bishops Printers

Anna Karenina is sponsored by Wiley and generously supported by Charles Holloway OBE

Marie and Rosetta is sponsored by Genesis Town Planning and its Consultants

Top Hat is sponsored by Greenwood Wealth Solutions

Hamlet is sponsored by Chichester Harbour Hotel

Lord of the Flies is sponsored by The Portsmouth Grammar School

A Boy Called Christmas is sponsored by Chichester College

BOOKING INFORMATION

Priority booking for Friends & Champions of Chichester Festival Theatre opens:

Saturday 22 February (online and booking forms only)

Tuesday 25 February (phone and in person)

Booking for Groups and Schools opens:

Thursday 27 February

General booking opens:

Saturday 1 March (online only)

Tuesday 4 March (phone and in person)

Tickets from £10

cft.org.uk Box Office **01243 781312**

Prologue: £5 tickets for 16 – 30s

9,000 £5 tickets are available for 16 to 30 year-olds across all Festival 2025 productions; sign up for free at **cft.org.uk/prologue**.

Festival 2025 press nights

<i>The Government Inspector</i> , Festival Theatre	Thursday 1 May, 7.00pm
<i>The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry</i> , Minerva Theatre	Thursday 15 May, 7.00pm
<i>Anna Karenina</i> , Festival Theatre	Friday 13 June, 7.00pm
<i>Marie and Rosetta</i> , Minerva Theatre	Wednesday 2 July, 7.00pm
<i>Top Hat</i> , Festival Theatre	Thursday 24 July, 7.00pm
<i>Choir</i> , Minerva Theatre	Friday 8 August, 7.00pm
<i>Hamlet</i> , Minerva Theatre	Tuesday 16 September, 7.00pm
<i>Lord of the Flies</i> , Festival Theatre	Thursday 25 September, 7.00pm
<i>Safe Space</i> , Minerva Theatre	Friday 17 October, 7.00pm
<i>Three Little Pigs</i> , Minerva Theatre	Wednesday 10 December, 1.30pm
<i>A Boy Called Christmas</i> , Festival Theatre	Thursday 18 December, 7.00pm

Images can be downloaded from cft.org.uk/pressimages, password: festivalpress

For further information, please contact:

Lucinda Morrison, Head of Press & Publications: lucinda.morrison@cft.org.uk

Stephanie McKelvey-Aves, Marketing & Communications Officer:
stephanie.mcelvey-aves@cft.org.uk