Volunteer Report

Creative Communities, Creating Contacts: The Lasting Legacy of CFT's Temporary Spaces

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Made possible with Heritage Fund

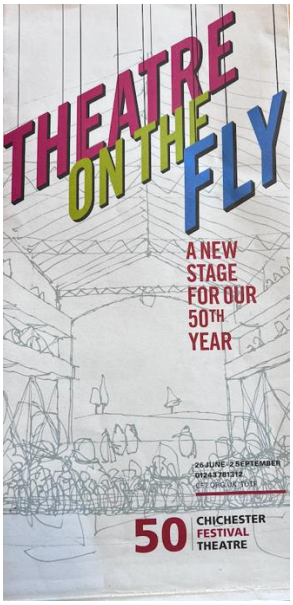
chichester festival theatre

Professor Emerita, University of London Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Red Oak, Oaklands Park.

In memory of Chris Bush Bailey, CFT Production Manager 1989 – 2000.

Rear view of The Tent:
Adrian Whitaker, Personal Collection



ToTF Programme/Flyer
My personal Collection

'Built by the community, For the Community'[1]

Overview – to trace the LEGACY of the temporary spaces through the experiences of those who have worked in them.

Objectives:

To IDENTIFY key aspects of the work that have INFLUENCED the creative journey of earlier generation of theatre-makers; to understand how those OPPORTUNITES worked to INVIGORATE and ADVANCE creatives further on in their careers.

To CAPTURE the memories of creative theatre makers who worked in CFT's temporary spaces, usually at the start or a significant place in their careers, and consider the impact of their experience and how it is reflected in the path to individual career positions, and in where they are now.

To RECOGNISE the changes in professional pathways for theatre-makers; to CONSIDER the POSSIBILITIES and PROBLEMS grant-funded routes present; to

[1] Kate Mosse, *Chichester Festival Theatre at Fifty*: 1962-2012, A Celebration. London: Unbound, 2012. p10

HIGHLIGHT the ASPIRATIONS for those currently participating in CFT's Artist Development Programme in THE NEST

To CELEBRATE the part that CFT's Temporary Spaces have played in: DEVELOPING the work of successive generations of theatre-makers across professional performance industries; establishing the ENDURING CONTACTS made across the network of theatre-making; to IDENTIFY the wider IMPACT on the development of professional arts practice; to RECOGNISE the enrichment of the arts CULTURE in the LOCAL COMMUNITY of CHICHESTER and beyond.

Methodology for this research has prioritised oral histories and made extensive use of:

DIGITAL Archive CFT https://passiton.cft.org.uk/archive/
INTERVIEWS, undertaken in person and via Zoom, Teams, Whatsapp audio and video.
NEWSPAPER articles and reviews via British Library Newspaper Archive.
PROGRAMMES and YEARBOOKS collected and housed at CFT.
PERSONAL MEMORABILIA, extracts from scrapbooks and collections held by interviewees.
Special Publication: *Chichester Festival Theatre at fifty*, Kate Mosse (2012)

Interview through personal contacts have edited transcripts on USB.
Other interviews via Teams, transcribed Katie White or Helena Berry, on Teams.
See Footnotes for sources, photo attributions, bibliographical and additional information.

Introduction

The Brief: Legacy: emerging artists and creatives

LEGACY is the key word for my research; and as with any legacy, some people will feel left out of the story, their important events overlooked or forgotten, while others are remembered with almost heroic adulation. Theatre is particularly prone to the inevitable sense of loss, amid the celebration of those who 'were there', remembering the moments of making and witnessing that work. The essential ephemerality of theatre, its liveness in the moment, inevitably influences the telling of theatre that has passed, that once was, with an air of regret that such moments have passed – and were somehow better then. And yet the legacies of theatre continue to be worked out in the lived experience of participants who continue to make work and, more importantly, inform the aspirations of those who hope to take their place.

Deciding what 'matters', what to work from as a central reference point, is always challenging in the telling of theatre history. But the biggest variable in any history is in deciding *who* you might listen to. For the purpose of this report, I have chosen to privilege the stories of those who have shared their personal experience of the temporary spaces, the 'fringe' events to the main performance offering in Chichester Festival Theatre's Summer season. Most of these practitioners were just beginning their careers in professional theatre, embarking upon a traditional summer season programme of plays at Chichester Festival Theatre's main house. This is then, in many ways, *their* history, a history from beneath, when they were the most junior members in an established theatre tradition which, perhaps unexpectedly, also provided the opportunity to participate in something innovative and creatively experimental – a season of plays, cabaret, and late-night performances running alongside and outside of the main festival season. The legacy of this work continues to unfold in Chichester as The Nest prepares to open its first season in Summer 2025. The legacy made by individual theatre practitioners in those early experimental spaces is the focus for this report which, in turn, is part of a larger celebration of innovative theatre-making at Chichester Festival Theatre's temporary performance spaces. Memory, institutional and personal, is varied and unreliable. And yet certain words, expressions of hope and delight, bubble up again and again as individual

stories are recounted. The visceral, embodied memory of performance, the just 'being there' is made real in the remembered experience of the people who have generously shared their time with me. Such memories, some over forty years old, some more recent, contribute to what can only be a snapshot, a glimpse into a mental photo-album or, sometimes, a moment recalled by a physical fragment from a scrapbook, or a photograph stored among personal memorabilia. But for everyone whose story I have listened to, memories of their season(s) in Chichester have resurfaced as an important moment in their personal and professional development.

In this report I focus largely on two of the temporary buildings: The Tent (1983-1988) and the Theatre on the Fly (2012). I identify some of the now well-known performers and theatre makers who have emerged from what is widely acknowledged as a unique opportunity CFT afforded visiting artists to test and stretch their creative wings. I will also pick out moments in which CFT's relationship to the 'local', the creative community around Chichester, has benefitted and contributed to the work. Finally, I will celebrate the forging of creative relationships afforded by the working environment of the temporary spaces. It is these creative friendships that people remember with such energy and fondness and which enrich the purpose, legacy and longevity of CFT's work in their vital alternative spaces.

The current generation of creative beneficiaries are yet to realise their inheritance but, as THE NEST prepares the space for the theatre-makers and the audience who will fill it for the first time this summer, I have used the acrostic below by way of a prompt to the memories I have selected. The stories we remember, the histories we share, are told in the present, and in telling them now, we not only recall what is past, we also see forward, to the future stories we hope for.

NURTURING: tomorrow's theatre makers
ENERGISING: the next generation of performers and their audiences
SUSTAINING: creative contacts and relationships in the industry
TESTING: exciting new theatre-makers, in readiness for future production

The Tent

Before The Tent: [2]

Keith Michell's New Ventures company had not only demonstrated that there was an appetite among the season's actors to take part in smaller-scale fringe work across a range of venues in the city, but also there was an audience in Chichester that wanted to see it. **Simon Shepherd**[3] was a young actor in the first season under the newly appointed artistic director, Peter Dews, with director Patrick Garland as his associate. At 22, Simon had left Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, gained his full Equity card, and was excited at the prospect of a full summer season at Chichester.

Simon Shepherd as waiter in Oscar Wilde, *A Woman of no Importance.*
L-R George Howe (?), Margareta Scott, Keith Baxter, Ambrosine Phillpotts.
Simon Shepherd Personal Collection. Photo: Zoe Dominic

[2] See Phil Ayling's report for a detailed account of New Ventures and associated performance activity in Chichester (1976-1980) and Andrew Vance's report, covering 1981-1983, all prior to the creation of The Tent.

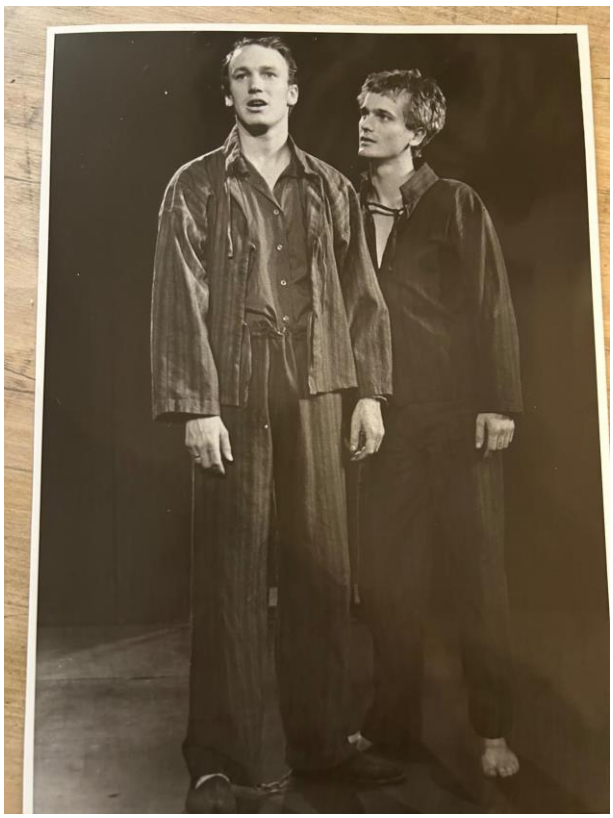
[3] Actor Simon Shepherd is best known for his film and television work, notably Dr Will Preston in eight series of *Peak Practice*. Personal contact interview 29/03/2025, telephone conversation. Not recorded.

Playing small parts and understudying was gruelling for the smaller part actors as the season played in repertoire, and so you were sure to be rehearsing in the day as well as performing that night.

Noel Coward, *Looking After Lulu*
L-R Richenda Carey, Kate Percival, Simon Shepherd (seated) Geraldine McEwan as Lulu
Photo: John Timbers

But, as the season moved on, there were fewer rehearsals and only two plays playing in repertoire, and so the opportunity to be part of more experimental theatre with New Ventures became possible. An 'exciting' and memorable production for Simon was Genet's *Death Watch*, performed in the old ballroom above the Dolphin & Anchor Hotel in West Street, opposite the towering Chichester Cathedral. Working

alongside more experienced actors **Tim Woodward**[4] and **Richard Morant,**[5] Simon remembers the show quite vividly. *Deathwatch* is a three-hander, set in a prison cell. In his notes, Genet speaks of the action as having a dreamlike quality, with the three actors speaking the lines in deadened prose. In sharp contrast to the responsibility of 'five lines in one play and three in another' that Simon had in the main house productions, he recalls that playing Maurice 'made it feel worthwhile', to have the opportunity to spread his wings as an actor in a much more challenging piece, and to an audience excited to see actors close-up, in the intimate if rather make-shift space of the stage in the old ballroom.



[4] Tim Woodward (1953-2023) was only a few years older at 25, but already making his name as a leading young actor with a breakthrough role in BBC drama *Wings* (1977). Son of popular actor Edward Woodward Tim continued to have a successful career in film and television up until 2019. His theatre career was extensive appearing in notable Shakespeare productions, most recent being Claudius opposite mark Rylance's Hamlet at The Globe (2000). He founded theatre company The Group with Director Roland Jaquarello staging seven European plays on the London Fringe (1983-1988) and more recently worked with The Tricycle in North London (now the Kiln). His last stage appearance was at the National Theatre in *Another World: Losing Our Children to Islamic State* (2016). https://www.theguardian.com/global/2024/feb/14/letter-tim-woodward-obituary

[5] Richard Morant was already an established actor, known best, at the time, as Dr Dwight Enys in BBC *Poldark*. See IMDB for full credit list.

L-R Tim Woodward and Simon Shepherd in New Ventures 1978 production of Genet's *Deathwatch*. Simon Shepherd Personal Collection. Photo: no credit shown.

However exciting the opportunities, they sometimes clashed with such contractual obligations. Simon recalled the morning when he was called in to see the Artistic Director, Peter Dews. It had been reported that Simon had arrived at an understudy rehearsal not knowing any of the lines – as an understudy may be called in to replace a leading role at very short notice, this was a matter taken very seriously. After being given a thorough 'dressing down' and giving undertakings to learn the part without delay, Simon recalled Peter Dews' parting shot: 'Don't accept understudy in the future, you're not an understudy'. An encouraging word for a young actor who had, potentially, fallen at the first fence of his career.

Patrick Garland stayed on after Peter Dews' relatively short tenure of two years. He was then succeeded by John Gale, a highly successful commercial producer. Gale's business acumen was exactly what CFT needed, but his biggest West End hits were not entirely in tune with CFT's repertoire reputation.[6] John Gale's decision to give the New Ventures fringe performances a home within Oaklands Park and, more significantly, under the umbrella of Chichester Festival's Theatre, marks, I suggest, a shift in the way CFT saw itself, and in the way it wanted the Chichester audience to be seen. As Kate Mosse discusses in her celebratory but astutely critical account in *Chichester at Fifty* (2012, 57) the press and public perception of Chichester audiences was (and, I fear, continues to be) determined to perpetuate the legacy of the early image of CFT audiences as an overwhelmingly grey-haired, conservative, self-satisfied lot who come to theatre merely to have their world-views reinforced. Theatre critic Michael Billington observed that the audience tends to get more of a review than the show, in spite of the fact that Chichester 'has tried constantly to break away from that image' (qtd Mosse, 2012, 57). The arrival of The Tent, in all its gloriously vivid yellow and white stripes, was surely part of that ongoing drive to innovate, excite, and inspire new work and new audiences.

[6] See Kate Mosse, *Chichester Festival Theatre at fifty: 1962-2012 A Celebration* (London: Unbound, 2012) 96-99.

'You can put anything in it – something about The Tent being a tent –

it's what theatre's about: creating a world'[7]

(Photo: Adrian Whitaker Personal Collection c1983)

The Tent quickly became a regular feature of CFT summer seasons from 1983-1988 when the new Minerva Studio was built and ready for 1989 season. The physical position of the tent changed in those years, finally settling in the position that will, from Summer 2025, be occupied by its successor, The Nest. A fuller description of the five years of Tent productions can be found in other reports that are part of this wider research project.[8] I will now focus on specific productions, seizing an opportunity to explore in greater depth the creative possibilities and opportunities The Tent offered to professional practitioners and, more broadly, to the creative community of Chichester. The legacy of that work continues to reverberate in the creative culture of Chichester today. For many others, the experience gained in the season at Chichester continues to have a place in their ongoing work as professional practitioners in the theatre and performance industry.

[7] Rob Hall, Personal Interview in CFT Foyer, 06/02/2025. Rob Hall is an actor and former youth theatre member c1980s. He still lives in Chichester and works as an actor and comedian.
[8] See Andy Earwaker on The Tent 1983-1985, and Kay Gilmore's report on 1985-1988.

*This is what convinced me I could **write.***[9]

[9] Betty Burton to Kate Vaughan, as reported in Kate Vaughan, Interview, 08/04/2025

1984: *Women Are Bloody Marvellous*

This was the title of the prize-winning play in the 1984 new playwriting competition launched by John Gale and Mathew Francis, the director of the Tent season. The year before a young local playwright **Edward Kemp**[10] was just seventeen when his play *The Iron and the Oak* , written two years earlier, won the competition. It was performed in the inaugural year of The Tent and marks the very beginning of Ed Kemp's acclaimed career as a theatre maker. The following year's playwriting winner **Betty Burton,**[11] was also from West Sussex but began her writing career in Portsmouth and Southsea somewhat later, at the age of fifty.

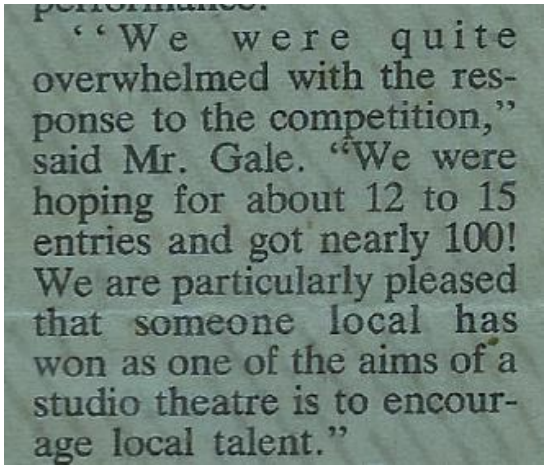
Outside the Chichester Festival Theatre studio tent are prizewinning playwright Betty Burton with (left) executive producer John Gale and artistic director (Tent) Matthew Francis. — Picture 8380-1

(Polly Meynell Scrapbook. Clipping most probably from *Chichester Observer*, date uncertain.)

Later in the same article John Gale is quoted as saying:

[10] Edward Kemp was seventeen when his play *The Iron and The Oak* won the CFT playwriting prize in its inaugural year in 1983. The son of the Bishop of Chichester, Eric Kemp, Edward was on his way to Oxford, and from there continued a long career as a writer, theatre director, translator and dramaturg. He is currently Director of RADA. He returned to CFT in 2005 for the premiere of his play *5/11*, directed by Stephen Pimlott . https://www.edwardkemp.co.uk last visited 06/04/2025

[11] Betty Burton died in 2024 soon after the publication of her last historical novel. Credited with writing for television and radio, her novels sold widely and *Women are Bloody Marvellous* is the title of a collection of short stories published two years after the play was performed in 1986. The play will be discussed in relation to the production in The Tent in 1984 and while Betty Burton may not have made her mark as a playwright, she was a successful novelist. See https://www.fantasticfiction.com/b/betty-burton/ last visited 07/04/25


''We were quite overwhelmed with the response to the competition," said Mr. Gale. "We were hoping for about 12 to 15 entries and got nearly 100! We are particularly pleased that someone local has won as one of the aims of a studio theatre is to encourage local talent."

The involvement of 'local talent' at CFT, particularly in the temporary spaces, is not to be overlooked. Many of the logistical aspects that made The Tent work relied on the labour of local enthusiasts and volunteers. But The Tent's avowed aim to 'encourage local talent' can be clearly seen to have been worked out here, and being highly successful. The production of *Women are Bloody Marvellous* is an instance of the essential cross-fertilisation of local creative talent, early-career professional promise, and seasoned theatre makers. It is also one of the relatively few examples in the Tent's history in which we see a predominantly female perspective, in a play that would certainly pass the Bechdel test[12] some forty years later.[13]

In 1984, **Kate Vaughan**[14] was in her first year of Drama teacher training at Bishop Otter, Chichester, where she met Mathew Francis, who asked if she would consider running some drama sessions for young people in The Tent.[15] Kate soon also found herself reading and shortlisting the many plays entered for the playwriting competition and, with Mathew Francis, choosing Betty Burton's play as the stand-out winner: 'I think it was a very fresh voice and that very important' (Kate Vaughan)

[12] Named after Alison Bechdel, the Bechdel test refers to a creative work which features at least two women who have a conversation that is not about a man. Some later versions insist that the characters are both named in the play/film/novel.

[13] Dealing with the then still live political issue of women as mothers involved in Greenham Common protests in Britain and in the strike by African working women in South Africa, the play's narrative is worked out through the exchange of letters, leading some reviewers to feel it was more suited to radio.

[14] Kate Vaughan, trained as an actress at Arts Educational but soon after graduating decided to pursue a teaching career and was a student at Bishop Otter (later to become Chichester University). Following her initial work at CFT, to which she returned several times in late '80s and '90s she developed her career as a writer / director. She has continued to work in youth theatre and young people's theatre including at Harrogate Theatre. Family commitments led her back to teaching until her recent retirement from a post as Head of Drama in Schools. She is now returning to theatre making, principally as a writer.

[15] More on Kate's extensive founding work for CFTYT, her productions as writer and director can be found through CFT's Youth Theatre 40 year celebration project (forthcoming).

Interview. Kate's first devised and directed show for The Tent was *Shades of Grey* with **Jason Carter**[16] as a wounded German pilot, the only adult performer in a play about evacuee children in the 1940s, cast entirely from the youth theatre. It followed from there that Mathew Francis asked Kate to direct *Women are Bloody Marvellous*: 'I think because [he] felt that having picked it, I knew it really well, I understood it and understood the intentions of it.' (Kate Vaughan Interview).

Based on a series of letters between Liz, posted for a short time to South Africa with her husband and daughter; Stella, who leaves her family to join the protest camp at Greenham Common; and Sara, an African mother separated from her daughter who joins the women's strike against apartheid rules for black people working in the cities. A topical play of the times, it blended the domestic with the personal, and with the political. The narrative relied heavily on action reported in the letters exchanged by and with the central female characters. As Kate Vaughan recalls:

> I can remember finding it very hard to stage….One of the things that stood out for me was a fantastic sound design….I was desperate for something that would enable me to link the two worlds and **Tim Oliver**[17] [sound designer CFT] put forward *African Sanctus* and we used that and it worked superbly…. To make it come alive off the page. But its subject matter, and its characters were very intense.
>
> (Kate Vaughan, Interview)

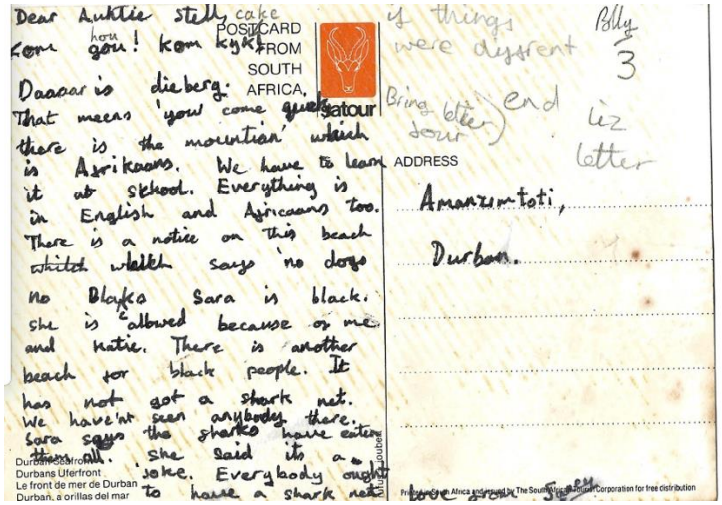
Polly Meynell[18] was 10 years old at the time. She play's Liz's daughter, Janey, who becomes close to Sara, (played by **Beverley Hills**) who come to live and work for them in their apartment in South Africa. Her fellow YT member Lara Mustapha played Esther, Sara's daughter, forced to live far away from her mother. Polly remembers the play well and shared her scrapbook memorabilia, including the prop

[16] Jason Carter was in at least four tent shows in 1984. Kate Vaughan describes him as a 'very talented actor, absolutely lovely to work with…an actor who takes direction like a dream, really listens, you know, and there's few of them'. Carter has indeed gone on to have a strong acting career in theatre and then in tv and films following his move to Hollywood. See https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason_Carter_(actor) last visited 09/04/25 and IMDB

[17] Tim Oliver, sound designer at CFT main house.

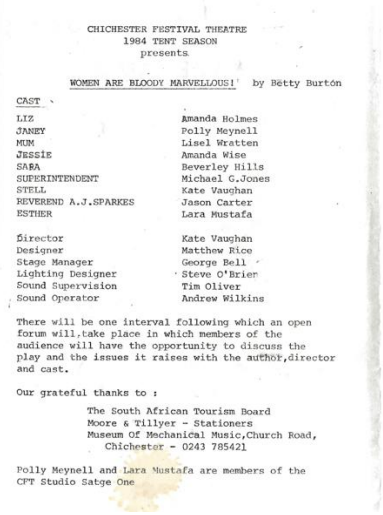
[18] Polly Meynell was one of the first YT members and later was taught by Kate at her school in Chichester, Bishop Luffa. See Polly Meynell Interview for a full account of her memories of CFT in the 1980s including her appearance on the main stage in *Jane Eyre* (1986)

postcard (below) on which she had the lines she had 'written' to her 'Aunt Stella': 'As a 10 year old I had no idea about apartheid….But that was a real eye opener, that whole play' (Polly Meynell, Interview).



L: Screengrab of postcard from Polly Meynell's scrapbook.

Below: screengrab of programme from same scrapbook.



CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE
1984 TENT SEASON
presents

'WOMEN ARE BLOODY MARVELLOUS!' by Betty Burton

CAST

LIZ	Amanda Holmes
JANEY	Polly Meynell
MUM	Lisel Wratten
JESSIE	Amanda Wise
SARA	Beverley Hills
SUPERINTENDENT	Michael G.Jones
STELL	Kate Vaughan
REVEREND A.J.SPARKES	Jason Carter
ESTHER	Lara Mustafa

Director	Kate Vaughan
Designer	Matthew Rice
Stage Manager	George Bell
Lighting Designer	Steve O'Brier
Sound Supervision	Tim Oliver
Sound Operator	Andrew Wilkins

There will be one interval following which an open forum will take place in which members of the audience will have the opportunity to discuss the play and the issues it raises with the author,director and cast.

Our grateful thanks to :

The South African Tourism Board
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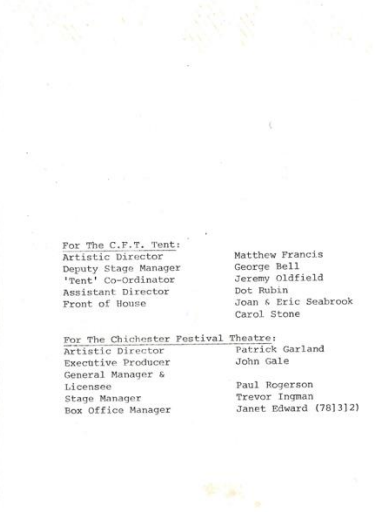
Museum Of Mechanical Music,Church Road, Chichester - 0243 785421

Polly Meynell and Lara Mustafa are members of the CFT Studio Satge One



For The C.F.T. Tent:

Artistic Director	Matthew Francis
Deputy Stage Manager	George Bell
'Tent' Co-Ordinator	Jeremy Oldfield
Assistant Director	Dot Rubin
Front of House	Joan & Eric Seabrook
	Carol Stone

For The Chichester Festival Theatre:

Artistic Director	Patrick Garland
Executive Producer	John Gale
General Manager & Licensee	Paul Rogerson
Stage Manager	Trevor Ingman
Box Office Manager	Janet Edward (78]3]2)

There were only two performances of the play in the very full season for the Tent that year, but after the second performance there was an audience discussion of the issues raised, which Polly remembers well:

> I remember that really clearly, just sitting on the stage and listening to the conversation and hearing what was discussed and thinking, you know, this is a whole world I really don't know very much about (Polly Meynell, Interview)

Betty Burton also took part in the post show discussion and, later, told Kate that winning the prize and seeing her play in production 'was what changed my life. This was what convinced me I could write'. And for Kate Vaughan, 'that summer at Chichester was what sent me back to theatre'. (Kate Vaughan Interview).

Kate also played a small part in *Carmen*, a production that came into being and was steered by actress **Leslee Udwin** [19] in the title role, who was also playing Jessica in the main house production of *Merchant of Venice.* As Kate put it: The Tent was incredible because it just gave anyone who wanted to do something the chance to do it'. (Kate Vaughan, Interview). Her own memory of her small part as a Townswoman, slashed across the face with a knife by Carmen, is having strips of tape, 'so I'm soaked in gore' taped to the palms of her hands, 'so on the face slash [her hands go to her face] as I pull my hands away, the blood would stream down my face.' (Kate Vaughan, Interview). The person she remembers clearly responsible for this vital bit of preparation was **Caroline Sharman**[20] who was working in the main house for the CFT season of 1984 as an ASM (assistant stage manager), having first gained her Equity Card working at Glyndebourne. Now with a long career as theatre maker, producer and director, she speaks of her first foray into directing as a 'why not' moment when Mathew Francis, then artistic director of the Tent programme asked:

> "Anyone want to direct a show?" I put my hand up said, Yeah, why not, never directed before in my life…and they said they had this [script/show] …so I said, and who am I directing? So all these guys, all the technical guys, want to act. So we said, yeah, ok we'll do it. So it was a real…throw it all together, do it'. (Caroline Sharman- Mendoza, Interview)

[19] Leslee (Leslie) Udwin had a notable career as an actress on stage and screen but more recently in her BAFTA award winning role as producer for *East is East* (1999). Following another award winning project, her documentary *India's Daughter*,(2015) both coming from her own production company Assassin Films (created in 1989). In 2015 Leslee founded a US charity 'Think Equal' winning Human Rights Prize (2015).

[20] Caroline Sharman directed several shows in Then Tent, going on to become assistant director at CFT. In her interview (see Appendix) she speaks of her later career as director and producer, running two theatres, one the theatre Royal in Portsmouth. She returned to CFT as the first female director of the Minerva, and has toured shows for British Council in multiple countries. For more detail on her current work see https://article12arts.co.uk/team-1

L: Caroline Sharman c1980s
Photo
Adrian Whitaker, Personal Collection

Caroline's memory of The Tent productions was less of local involvement and more about its importance in nurturing 'young professionals'; and that was clearly the case for her:

> It was an opportunity for people who had been to College relatively recently to play some big roles…and build their competence in a small space…it was kind of what regional theatres were about… and then the second year [1985] I knew what I was about…I stayed on to support John Gale and then I was assistant director of the Tent and directed two shows… So I was given that opportunity exactly like young actors…like **Alex Jennings**, yes, he was just a young guy…And that is what was so brilliant. (Caroline Sharman, Interview)

Creating the context for making, and maintaining, relations with other creatives, as part of the process of developing next generation theatre makers, has been a key feature of the work in the Tent. A central aspect of the tent's creative freedom was because, as Caroline put it:

> there's this sense that they were free from risk…you know, you didn't have to succeed like the shows… different pressures…when I ran the Minerva season, there was much more work [on] budgets….it was really important to cover costs. It was not the tent, because suddenly [its] a big building…

The sense of creative freedom that The Tent offered is echoed by everyone that I have spoken to. Polly Meynell also speaks of The Minerva in contrast to The Tent:

> As such a magical space. I mean, I think part of that was to do with my age [10-14] and being completely overwhelmed by, you know, the whole ambience

> of the place at that age, but you know, there was, there was a real grittiness about the tent. The fact that, you know, it was a temporary space and anything could happen there. It was so flexible. It was intimate. You know, you really felt like you were in there, the audience were right on top of you, very close. And it was a fantastic space. I remember [it] with huge fondness in a way that when the Minerva was built, that was such a different atmosphere. And although it was fantastic to have this fully working, beautifully done up theatre, it really lacked that fringe element…. It didn't have the character that the tent had. And the character just made that feeling of possibility so much more tangible in a way that the Minerva, I don't feel ever was able to do, because it's a polished space and the tent was not. (Polly Meynell, Interview).

Kate Vaughan recalls a time-travelling, trans-historical feel about a moment in The Tent:

> And I can remember being in Carmen and we used to dress in a tent at the back, so it was a separate little dressing tent. And I can remember standing, waiting to go on with a lantern, (Hey, they let us have a real lantern next to a tent! Was this a good idea? With a lantern, with a candle in it!) And the wind blew and we shivered. And I thought this is the experience of the travelling player for hundreds of years. Yes! There we were in the open, utterly freezing. It was a lovely way of experiencing theatre history. (Kate Vaughan, Interview).

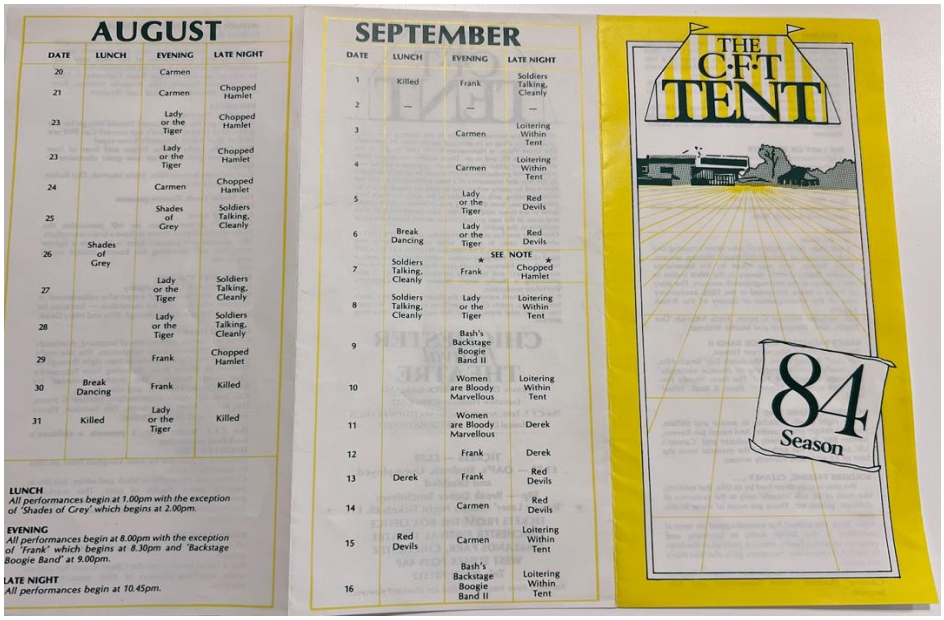
Table created by GBB as prompt for my research Interviews (highlighted):
Sources: CFT souvenir programme 1984 (CFT Digital Archive); TENT programme and flyers
1984 Yearbooks, (CFT office) and Interviews Caroline Sharman, Kate Vaughan.

Devised	Play	M/cal	Play	Play	Play	Play	YT	Late nigh
Shades of Grey devised YT prod	***Carmen*** David Mowat	***The Lady or the Tiger***	***Frank*** John Wain	**Soldiers Talking Cleanly**	**Women are Bloody Marvellous**	**Red Devils** Debby Horsfield	**Derek** Edward Bond &	**Choppe Hamlet** &

				Mike Stott	Betty Burton		**Killed** (Belgrade TIE)	**Loiterin within te**
Jason Carter	Burt Ceaser	Jason Carter		Martin Chamb-erlain	**Amanda Holmes**[21]			Late Nig Cast fron company
	Beverley Hills	Michael G Jones	Michael G Jones	Edward Hibbert[22]	Michael G Jones			
	Tricia [23]Mooris h	James Villiers	Tricia Morrish	**Caroline Sharma n** [24]	Lisel Wratten[25]	Tricia Morrish		
	Leslee Udwin[26]	Amanda Wise[27]	Dot Rubin	Peter [28]Sower butts	Amanda Wise	Amanda Wise		
	Richard Warwick		Terry Shepph ard	**Tim Swinton** [29]	Beverley [30]Hills	Beverley Hills		
	Martin Wenner		Martin Wenner		Polly Meynell[31]	Dot Rubin		
					Kate Vaughan director			

[21] Amanda Holmes: Mincing in *Way of the World* which then transferred to London's Haymarket Theatre
[22] Edward Hibbert: Duke of Dumbarton in *O Kay*
[23] Tricia Morrish Portia's maidservant in *Merchant of Venice*
[24] Caroline Sharman: ASM *Forty Years On* and *Oh Kay*
[25] Lisel Wratten: Actress and wife of CFT John Gale
[26] Leslee Udwin: Jessica in *Merchant of Venice*
[27] Amanda Wise: Betty in *Way of the World*
[28] Peter Sowerbutts: Launcelot Gobbo in *Merchant of Venice*, Lady W's servant in WoW
[29] Tim Swinton: Leonardo servant in MoV, Waiter in WoW
[30] Beverley Hills is credited as actress known for her work in children's tv. She was also in Debby Horsfield's *Red Devils*
[31] Polly was 10 and a founding member of YT on a Staurday. She later became a pupil of Kate Vaughan's at Bishop Lufa where Kate taught English and Drama. (See interview transcript) She is now an established textiles artist creating work for the Cathedral and exhibiting her work in major venues www.pollymeynell.com

					Jason Carter			
Devised directed Kate Vaughan					Lara Mustafa	Director Caroline Sharman	Director Caroline Sharman	



AUGUST

DATE	LUNCH	EVENING	LATE NIGHT
20		Carmen	
21		Carmen	Chopped Hamlet
23		Lady or the Tiger	Chopped Hamlet
23		Lady or the Tiger	Chopped Hamlet
24		Carmen	Chopped Hamlet
25		Shades of Grey	Soldiers Talking, Cleanly
26	Shades of Grey		
27		Lady or the Tiger	Soldiers Talking, Cleanly
28		Lady or the Tiger	Soldiers Talking, Cleanly
29		Frank	Chopped Hamlet
30	Break Dancing	Frank	Killed
31	Killed	Lady or the Tiger	Killed

LUNCH
All performances begin at 1.00pm with the exception of 'Shades of Grey' which begins at 2.00pm.

EVENING
All performances begin at 8.00pm with the exception of 'Frank' which begins at 8.30pm and 'Backstage Boogie Band' at 9.00pm.

LATE NIGHT
All performances begin at 10.45pm.

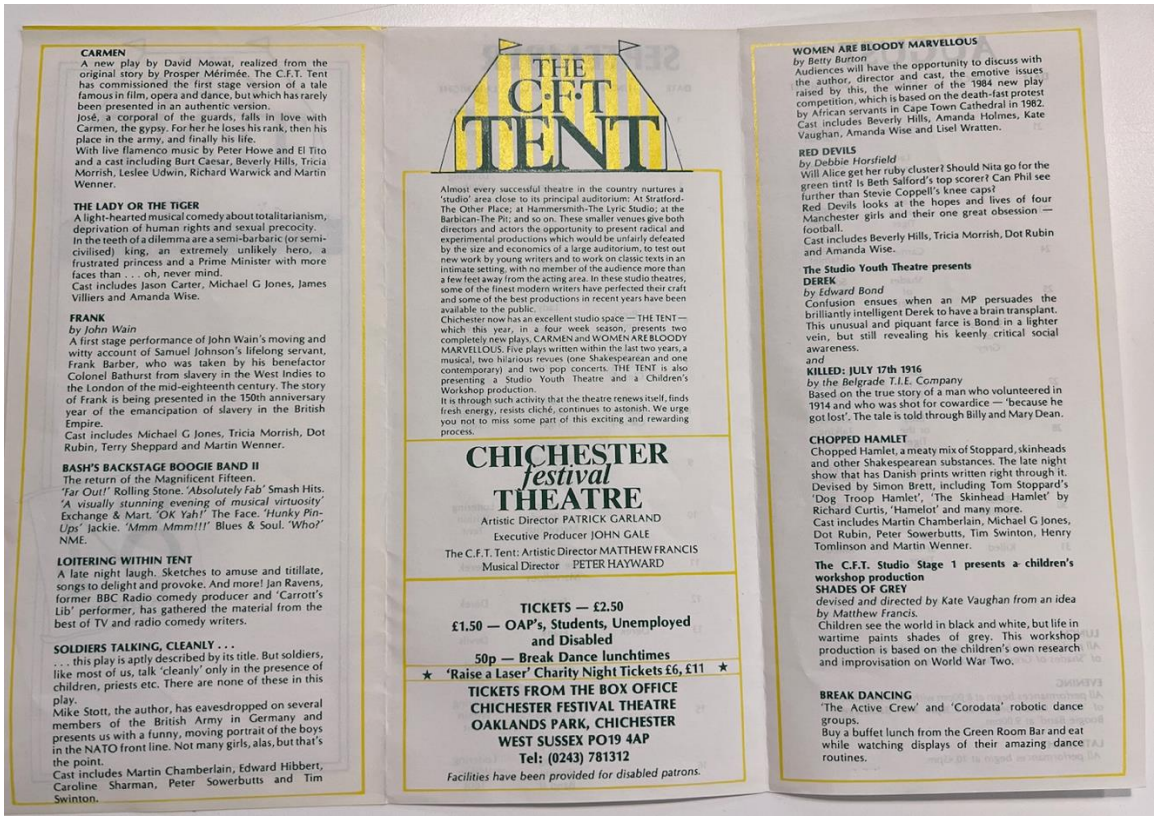
SEPTEMBER

DATE	LUNCH	EVENING	LATE NIGHT
1	Killed	Frank	Soldiers Talking, Cleanly
2	—	—	—
3		Carmen	Loitering Within Tent
4		Carmen	Loitering Within Tent
5		Lady or the Tiger	Red Devils
6	Break Dancing	Lady or the Tiger	Red Devils
7	Soldiers Talking, Cleanly	★ Frank	SEE NOTE ★ Chopped Hamlet
8	Soldiers Talking, Cleanly	Lady or the Tiger	Loitering Within Tent
9		Bash's Backstage Boogie Band II	
10		Women are Bloody Marvellous	Loitering Within Tent
11		Women are Bloody Marvellous	Derek
12		Frank	Derek
13	Derek	Frank	Red Devils
14		Carmen	Red Devils
15	Red Devils	Carmen	Loitering Within Tent
16		Bash's Backstage Boogie Band II	Loitering Within Tent

THE C·F·T TENT

84 Season

(Above and below. CFT programme for the 1984 season: August 20– Sept 16, CFT yearbooks, CFT office)



CARMEN
A new play by David Mowat, realized from the original story by Prosper Mérimée. The C.F.T. Tent has commissioned the first stage version of a tale famous in film, opera and dance, but which has rarely been presented in an authentic version.
José, a corporal of the guards, falls in love with Carmen, the gypsy. For her he loses his rank, then his place in the army, and finally his life.
With live flamenco music by Peter Howe and El Tito and a cast including Burt Caesar, Beverly Hills, Tricia Morrish, Leslee Udwin, Richard Warwick and Martin Wenner.

THE LADY OR THE TIGER
A light-hearted musical comedy about totalitarianism, deprivation of human rights and sexual precocity.
In the teeth of a dilemma are a semi-barbaric (or semi-civilised) king, an extremely unlikely hero, a frustrated princess and a Prime Minister with more faces than . . . oh, never mind.
Cast includes Jason Carter, Michael G Jones, James Villiers and Amanda Wise.

FRANK
by John Wain
A first stage performance of John Wain's moving and witty account of Samuel Johnson's lifelong servant, Frank Barber, who was taken by his benefactor Colonel Bathurst from slavery in the West Indies to the London of the mid-eighteenth century. The story of Frank is being presented in the 150th anniversary year of the emancipation of slavery in the British Empire.
Cast includes Michael G Jones, Tricia Morrish, Dot Rubin, Terry Sheppard and Martin Wenner.

BASH'S BACKSTAGE BOOGIE BAND II
The return of the Magnificent Fifteen.
'Far Out!' Rolling Stone. *'Absolutely Fab'* Smash Hits. *'A visually stunning evening of musical virtuosity'* Exchange & Mart. *'OK Yah!'* The Face. *'Hunky Pin-Ups'* Jackie. *'Mmm Mmm!!!'* Blues & Soul. *'Who?'* NME.

LOITERING WITHIN TENT
A late night laugh. Sketches to amuse and titillate, songs to delight and provoke. And more! Jan Ravens, former BBC Radio comedy producer and 'Carrott's Lib' performer, has gathered the material from the best of TV and radio comedy writers.

SOLDIERS TALKING, CLEANLY . . .
. . . this play is aptly described by its title. But soldiers, like most of us, talk 'cleanly' only in the presence of children, priests etc. There are none of these in this play.
Mike Stott, the author, has eavesdropped on several members of the British Army in Germany and presents us with a funny, moving portrait of the boys in the NATO front line. Not many girls, alas, but that's the point.
Cast includes Martin Chamberlain, Edward Hibbert, Caroline Sharman, Peter Sowerbutts and Tim Swinton.

THE C·F·T TENT

Almost every successful theatre in the country nurtures a 'studio' area close to its principal auditorium: At Stratford-The Other Place; at Hammersmith-The Lyric Studio; at the Barbican-The Pit; and so on. These smaller venues give both directors and actors the opportunity to present radical and experimental productions which would be unfairly defeated by the size and economics of a large auditorium, to test out new work by young writers and to work on classic texts in an intimate setting, with no member of the audience more than a few feet away from the acting area. In these studio theatres, some of the finest modern writers have perfected their craft and some of the best productions in recent years have been available to the public.
Chichester now has an excellent studio space — THE TENT — which this year, in a four week season, presents two completely new plays, CARMEN and WOMEN ARE BLOODY MARVELLOUS. Five plays written within the last two years, a musical, two hilarious revues (one Shakespearean and one contemporary) and two pop concerts. THE TENT is also presenting a Studio Youth Theatre and a Children's Workshop production.
It is through such activity that the theatre renews itself, finds fresh energy, resists cliché, continues to astonish. We urge you not to miss some part of this exciting and rewarding process.

CHICHESTER *festival* THEATRE
Artistic Director PATRICK GARLAND
Executive Producer JOHN GALE
The C.F.T. Tent: Artistic Director MATTHEW FRANCIS
Musical Director PETER HAYWARD

TICKETS — £2.50
£1.50 — OAP's, Students, Unemployed and Disabled
50p — Break Dance lunchtimes
★ **'Raise a Laser' Charity Night Tickets £6, £11** ★
TICKETS FROM THE BOX OFFICE
CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE
OAKLANDS PARK, CHICHESTER
WEST SUSSEX PO19 4AP
Tel: (0243) 781312
Facilities have been provided for disabled patrons.

WOMEN ARE BLOODY MARVELLOUS
by Betty Burton
Audiences will have the opportunity to discuss with the author, director and cast, the emotive issues raised by this, the winner of the 1984 new play competition, which is based on the death-fast protest by African servants in Cape Town Cathedral in 1982.
Cast includes Beverly Hills, Amanda Holmes, Kate Vaughan, Amanda Wise and Lisel Wratten.

RED DEVILS
by Debbie Horsfield
Will Alice get her ruby cluster? Should Nita go for the green tint? Is Beth Salford's top scorer? Can Phil see further than Stevie Coppell's knee caps?
Red Devils looks at the hopes and lives of four Manchester girls and their one great obsession — football.
Cast includes Beverly Hills, Tricia Morrish, Dot Rubin and Amanda Wise.

The Studio Youth Theatre presents
DEREK
by Edward Bond
Confusion ensues when an MP persuades the brilliantly intelligent Derek to have a brain transplant. This unusual and piquant farce is Bond in a lighter vein, but still revealing his keenly critical social awareness.
and
KILLED: JULY 17th 1916
by the Belgrade T.I.E. Company
Based on the true story of a man who volunteered in 1914 and who was shot for cowardice — 'because he got lost'. The tale is told through Billy and Mary Dean.

CHOPPED HAMLET
Chopped Hamlet, a meaty mix of Stoppard, skinheads and other Shakespearean substances. The late night show that has Danish prints written right through it. Devised by Simon Brett, including Tom Stoppard's 'Dog Troop Hamlet', 'The Skinhead Hamlet' by Richard Curtis, 'Hamelot' and many more.
Cast includes Martin Chamberlain, Michael G Jones, Dot Rubin, Peter Sowerbutts, Tim Swinton, Henry Tomlinson and Martin Wenner.

The C.F.T. Studio Stage 1 presents a children's workshop production
SHADES OF GREY
devised and directed by Kate Vaughan from an idea by Matthew Francis.
Children see the world in black and white, but life in wartime paints shades of grey. This workshop production is based on the children's own research and improvisation on World War Two.

BREAK DANCING
'The Active Crew' and 'Corodata' robotic dance groups.
Buy a buffet lunch from the Green Room Bar and eat while watching displays of their amazing dance routines.

Late Night Shows gave actors and technical crews the opportunity to perform outside their regular job title / role. *Loitering Within Tent* with Comedienne **Jan Ravens** is well remembered, as is Caroline Sharman's sax playing, but 1984 saw the first of a particularly popular show, *Chopped Hamlet*, devised by another West Sussex writer, **Simon Brett.**[32]

> I had recently published an anthology of parodies, the faux book of parodies. And I knew Matthew Francis…. And he saw the book, and he rang and said, 'Oh, do you think, because there's quite a lot of little parody bits of Hamlet in the book of parodies? Do you think they're enough there to actually make a late night show of a sort of a parody of Hamlet's parodies?' And I spent an afternoon sort of looking out some stuff. And I rang him the next morning, and I said, 'Yeah, I think, you know, there could be an hour together of parodies or one kind another.' And then a couple of weeks later, he rang and said, he was

[32] Simon Brett was already a very established playwright and novelist. But as his anecdotes reveal, he too delighted in the opportunity to direct and returned in 1986 to direct his own new play,
For more see www.simonbrett.com

> very keen already on the title, which was Chopped Hamlet, obviously …[and]we're still very keen to do a show. We haven't got a director. What do you think about directing? ' It sounds fun. So I did, and it was very strange, because I was using the actors from relevant shows in the main house. So I would get sort of 'he's got a break in rehearsal between 10 and 10.15 so you can do a bit with him then'. And then 'she's got a break, but you won't get them together' sort of jigsaw. But quite fun. And we got it together, and it happened. And about three months later, I had a letter from [Equity] saying, you know you've been directing at Chichester Festival Theatre. Why aren't you an Equity member? And I said, Well, I'd love to be an Equity member. And they said, Well, if you can produce a contract or a letter of agreement. So I got in touch with Francis and said, do you remember about four months ago? Well, could you write a predated letter saying, and he sent it, and I sent it to Equity. I've actually been a member ever since. But as I say, each year, I've earned nothing, and I'm now as a senior equity member, which I think is, you know, I'm very old. So that was that - and that was a direct result of the tent. So!

Although this was a Late Night Show, starting at 10.30pm and deliberately appealing to the younger Chichester audience, Simon was aware that the section from Richard Curtis's *The Skinhead Hamlet* might be a step too far for CFT, even in The Tent.

> I mean, basically it's got 37 'fucks', I think in three and a half minutes, you see. And, I kept saying, Are you sure we can do this to Matthew? And he said, Oh yes, yes. And I think it was a bit of Patrick too. Well, yeah. And then, and then Patrick said he'd come and see the dress rehearsal, which was literally the night before the show. And he fell about laughing. But then he said, 'We can't do it'. (Simon & Lucy Brett, Interview)

Lucy Brett[33] observed that CFT's founder, Leslie Evershed Martin, was 'still around' and so a certain degree of self-censorship, or at least restraint, was expected.[34] The

[33] Lucy Brett also had a long association with CFT as Director of Development, leading the sponsorship programme.
[34] See the controversy around the production of *A Patriot for Me* (1983) in Mosse, 2012, 97-99.

Tom Stoppard section caused no such problem and Simon recalled that 'at the end, there was the encore for the [short] Stoppard, one which we'd do quicker and quicker each night. And I think our personal best was 47 seconds. (Simon & Lucy Brett, Interview) The audiences for The Tent are not always remembered clearly as being predominantly younger but the atmosphere deliberately set out to create a contrast with the main house. Lucy Brett captures something of this:

> It was, you know, it was fringe theatre. [And that] probably wasn't quite known so much in Chichester. They used to get them [the audience] sitting in jeans. And it reminded me of when, before we had the kids, you [Simon] were still at the BBC, and we used to go to the Edinburgh Festival every year, and you were sort of touting for talent, yeah….And it was that kind of atmosphere, maybe you felt you've been quite risky, sitting on your straw bale, yeah? And late at night in a sort of freezing cold tent, with the thing flapping.

We were so young, yeah. And you know, the nice thing is that a lot of the people that I worked with went on to have big careers as actors or directors, and still, occasionally, you know, I come across people from that era, and it was just an exciting place to be. [35]

1985

Gareth Neame was 18, just leaving Seaford College in Sussex before going to Birmingham University to study English and Drama. He stayed with his grandmother in Aldwick, outside Bognor Regis, and was one of the many young people who came to The Tent for one season, in 1985, and returned the following year.

> And I think the first production we worked on was… *Elmer Gantry*, yes, with Steve Brown, who composed and directed and was musical director of that piece. And my big memory, really, was that... I went to school with Chris

[35] Gareth Neame, Interview, (Zoom 07/04/26). Transcribed via Otter AI assisted. Edited GBB (see appendix). Gareth Neame is a film and television producer who has received BAFTA, EMMY and Gold Globe awards. He founded Carnival Films, producing TV shows including *Spooks, Poirot* and more recently *Downton Abbey*, *Day of the Jackel* and *Last Kingdom*. His work has been recognised internationally and Neame is included in US *Variety* 500 index listing among the most influential business leader in the global entertainment industry. See more at Wikipedia, Gareth Neame, last visited 11/04/25.

> Stevens, who was Maggie Smith's eldest of her two sons. I went to school with both her sons, actually, but Chris was in my age group, and Toby Stevens is about two years younger. So Chris and I both got the gig [at CFT] …Chris was very well connected because he was Maggie's son, and Maggie worked so much. Anyway, I just remember us both there, and they said, right, you're going to build the scenery for *Elmer Gantry*. And I've never been a practical man. I mean, nobody's ever taught me carpentry or anything like that at all. And I wasn't a practical man then, and I'm not a practical old man now, somehow or other, using a sort of simple toolbox, Chris and I had to build these sets. And what we were taken [aback with was that] we did actually manage to build all these sets, and we came to the opening night and everything worked. I remember from about the second night onwards, the scenery, which all had to be moved around, all started to fall to pieces. This is fun, to throw something together when you don't have the right skills, and it more or less stays upright. (Gareth Neame, Interview).

Gareth notes that 'there were quite big stars around' but that there was also 'National Theatre type feel about the whole thing….even as this young kid, being paid £25 a week, still felt very connected with what Frankie Howard [*A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum]* was doing or with Donald Sinden' [Scarlett Pimpernel]. The opportunity to be in a professional environment contributed hugely to the creative development of those embarking upon professional arts careers even, if like Gareth, that creative future was in film and television. In the summer of 1986, following his first year at University, Gareth returned to The Tent where he recalls a particularly awkward moment while participating in the promenade production *The Spershott Version*:

> Well! I worked on that, and I've got a photograph somewhere of me in it, because everyone, even the people who were behind the scenes, had to dress in costume. Yes, it was a promenade performance that went all over the city. And some people followed us around. We had to coordinate. I remember I'd have to arrive somewhere, a scene would take place, then you'd all move on somewhere else. And I had to always be one thing ahead, setting the next scene up. And one scene, I'm still looking at it as I'm telling you the story. I'm

> looking at a scar on my hand, which you know on zoom you won't be able to see. But there was a scene that we did in the garden of the Palace, not the Bishop's private bit, but the bit of the gardens that are open to the public there. And there are ramparts, yes, the city walls. And it was a summer's evening, and I had the wrong sort of footwear on, and as the temperature went down, and got a bit of dew on it, I slipped down this grass bank and fell over and landed on my thumb like that [bends thumb back], and snapped my thumb and broke it very badly, and ended up having surgery in St Richards, I don't know, the next day or something, and then I had to have further surgery a few years later on. So that was quite … I'll never forget that. An early accident in the name of art! (Gareth Neame, Interview)

Unlike many other young people at the beginning, or on the brink of starting their careers, Gareth wasn't interested in performing or directing:

No, no, I've never really done any, other than in university. I've never been a performer. In fact, my family used to call it being the wrong side of the camera.[36] Never done that. It was all about, I don't know, it was all about sweeping the stage and learning, the whole reason I did it. I never wanted to work in the theatre actually, I only ever wanted to work in TV, drama and film…. [section on his father being freelance and out of work a lot] And of course, you could go to the BBC as a member of the staff. And I thought, well, that's, what I'll do to make sure I'm not out of work, and the training for BBC drama…wanted people who came from the theatre, and this was based on the old multi camera studio dramas that you may remember which they made in the '50s, '60s into '70s. But by the time I left University, we're talking about the late 80s - Well, they didn't make drama like that, so the theatre experience was really irrelevant. Nonetheless, you know, education and training always lags behind, and it was really rather behind the curve…so, what you had to have on your CV was based on the way that television wasn't really made anymore. Nonetheless, to get in, you had to show you had these theatre credits…. I had two summers at

[36] Gareth's grandfather Ronald Neame was an award winning cinematographer, writer and director known for award winning films including *Brief Encounter*, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist* and in 1969 *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* for which Maggie Smith won her first Oscar and who, of course, gained a new following while working with Gareth on *Downton Abbey*

Chichester, summer, (85 and '86) '87 at the King's Head theatre. I worked as a runner, as we used to call them, on a couple of films. And I was doing my thing just to make sure that when I graduated (summer '88) I had the CV.
I had lots of theatre experience on it, and that meant that I then did [get] work in the theatre. Actually, September through December ('88) I had a job as an ASM at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and then that was it. By December of that year, the BBC knew me, and asked 'would you come and do this holiday relief job?' And I was into television, which is where I wanted to be, and that was that, really the beginning and the end of my education.
(Gareth Neame, Interview)

They were so inspirational Matthew [Francis] and Caro [line Sharman]…. They were probably about 10 years older than me. But that [would] have made them about 30, late 20s, early 30s. They were terribly young, but they seem incredibly grown up to me at the time. And they were so supportive. They were so supportive. And they were such ..nice…friendly [people]…I just remember it all being lovely….it was just a very exciting time, and a lovely place to work.[37]

The theatrical roots (and routes) to so many careers in the second half of the 20th century coincide with the 'golden years' of TV that have, from the 2000s onward, spread into the 'golden years' of the network 'streamers'. The network of creatives frequently moving between stage and screen is worth marking, and is particularly relevant to the British arts industry. Gareth clearly remembered director **Nicholas Hytner**[38], and actor/director **Michael Grandage**[39] at CFT in the same year, both of whom have moved between directing stage and film:

> Yes, I know Michael now, I mean, I didn't see for 30 years, and then, I know him a little bit now, and I think his acting was brilliant, curtailed by the fact he just had terrible stage fright. Who else was there. James Wilby was there that time…

[37] Gareth Neame, Interview
[38] Nicholas Hytner directed *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (main house1985), went on to be appointed Artistic Director at National Theatre and has won awards for his stage and film, notably award *The Madness of King George* (1994 stage and 1995 film).
[39] Michael Grandage also moves between directing on stage and film. As an actor, he appeared in The Tent production of Simon Brett's play *Laughter from An Empty House*(1985) in the Late Night slot

(Gareth Neame, Interview)

The story of **Sam Mendes**[40] arrival in Chichester, probably the best known and most lauded graduate of CFT's Tent, is now part of theatre legend and, interestingly, even though Mendes arrived in 1987, the year after Gareth had left, he was certain he remembered him there: 'word was coming back with "Judi Dench thinks he's a genius",[41] so that was all going on at the same time.' The strength of the Sam Mendes story simply goes to reinforce the legend, and for me, outweighs the slippage of Gareth's memories in importance.

1988

I do not have any records of the 1988 Tent Season, and have no memory of Translations.

I do remember making a large dead pig that year, but I do not know which show it was for.[42]

By 1988 Sam Mendes was artistic Director of The Tent, in its last year before transferring to the newly built permanent studio space The Minerva. **Alexander Hanson**[43] is another actor who looks back with enormous fondness to that year at CFT and the opportunity to stretch his acting beyond the small parts he had in the first play *Hay Fever*, and the third *Royal Baccarat Scandal*. Having been involved in The Tent in 1987, he offers a slightly different slant on the opportunities The Tent offered:

> The management who had sort of, I think been quite sort of benign about [The Tent] 'oh yes, you can do this', then saw it as an opportunity to get young

[40] See Kate Mosse (2012) 111-120 for a full account of Sam Mendes arrival in Chichester in 1987 and the launch of his career in theatre. IMDB credits Mendes with 65 awards and 79 nominations, including his Oscar win for Best Director, *American Beauty* (2002).

[41] Judi Dench wasn't in that season, or in the play, *London Assurance*, which Sam Mendes stepped in to take over as Director in lieu of Robin Phillips who had suddenly pulled out and instantly returned to Canada where he lived and worked as a director for the rest of his life.

[42] Adrian Whitaker, email to GBB 23/04/25. Adrian was set and props maker and has a personal collection of memorabilia and photographs to which this report and others are indebted. See also his oral history interview, 'Pass it On' CFT, digital archive (2013)

[43] Alex Hanson is best known for his roles in West End Musicals. He was in three consecutive seasons at CFT '87, '88, and '89 season in which he transferred to the West End with *A Little Night Music* at the Picadilly Theatre.

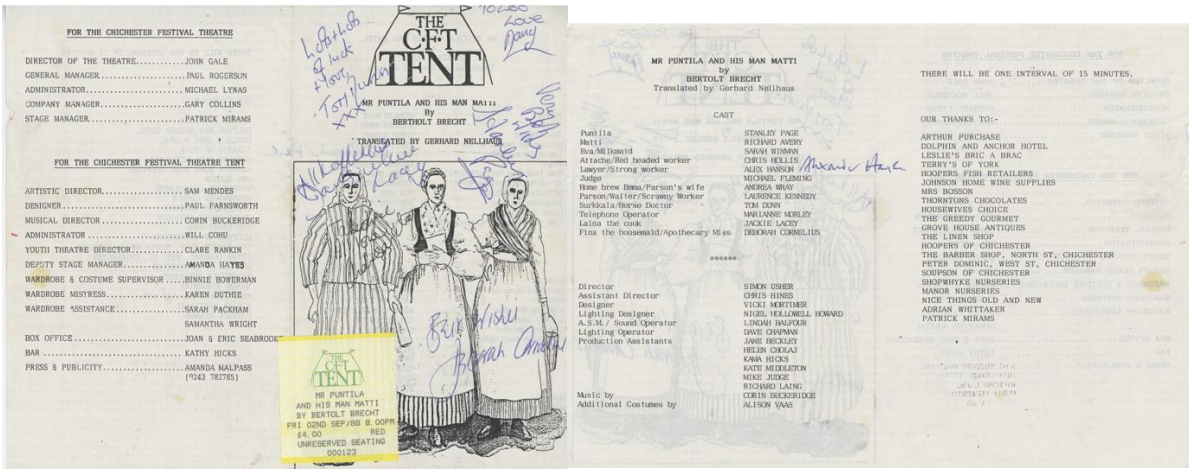
actors down. And the carrot became 'a good part in the tent'. (Alexander Hanson, Interview)[44]

The Tent was moved as the Minerva was under construction, occupying the site where the Nest is currently being constructed.

The 1988 play season:
Translations, Brian Friel
*Tissue,*Louise Paige
Mr Puntilla and his Man Matti, Brecht
Heartlands Tim Frith

By the 1988 season, Alex was looking for parts he might play, starting first with six shows of Brecht's *Mr Puntila and his Man Matti*, directed by Simon Usher. The programme from the show is preserved here by Ralph Ansley, who kept the signed programme in his scrapbook.

Alex's signature inside and other notable names can be seen here, especially the designer **Vicki Mortimer**,[45] - but no-one collects their autographs?



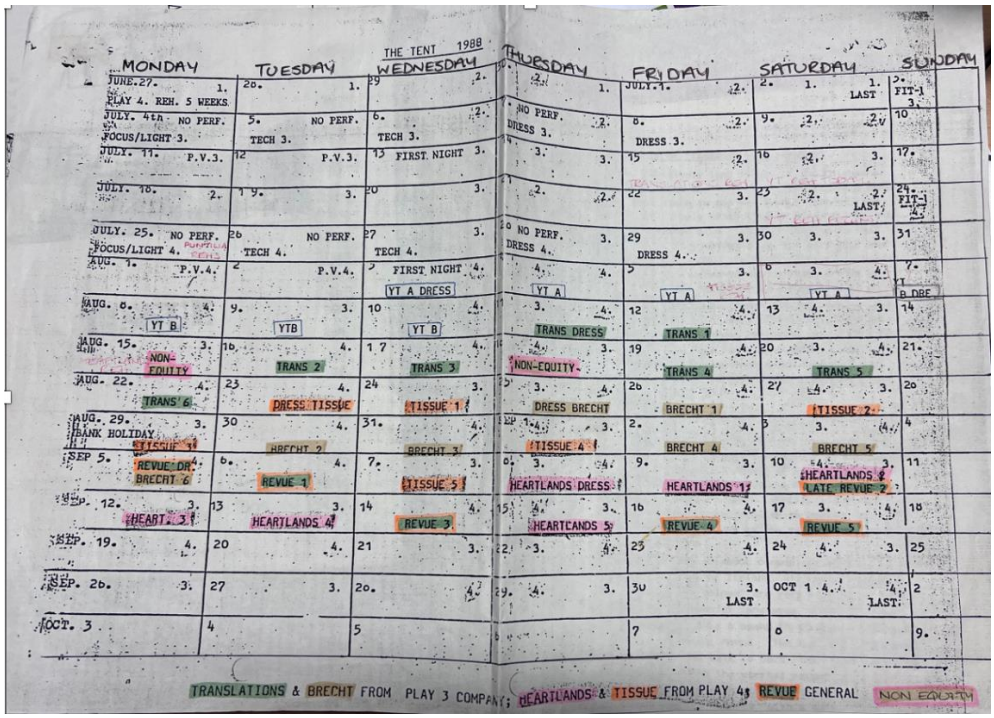
[44] Alexander Hanson, Interview with GBB on zoom. 20/03/25, transcribed using Otter AI assisted, Edited by GBB

[45] **Vicki Mortimer** is an award-winning set and costume designer, working across opera, dance and theatre at The National, Stratford, and Glyndebourne. See IMDB for more detail.

The production that stands out for Alex is Brian Friel's *Translations* Directed by Sam Mendes. I asked Alex what he remembered about performing in The Tent in contrast to the main house:

> It was a marquee. And it was, you know, a lot of…when the wind was flapping, there was a *lot of* flapping! And if the weather was inclement, you know, it was bit damp and muddy, but it was raw. And when I did *Translations,* I remember that we had, because it's set in that hedge school in Bali Beg in Ireland, I think we had haystacks in there. I seem to remember. … I think the tent was such a success with a different kind of audience, you know, students, and people who wanted different kind of fare. (Alexander Hanson, Interview).

And while it might seem that The Tent was thrown together, Adrian Whitaker shared his schedule for the Tent Season of 1988 and it's clear that the sense of freedom and experimentation – the 'rawness', was made possible because of the organisation of everything needed to support it.



(Adrian Whitaker, Schedule, Personal Collection)

Every play had five or six performances. **Louise Paige's**[46] *Tissue* included **Linda Thorson**,

already well known for her TV role in *The Avengers* and the *New Avengers*. The Tent seasons demonstrated that smaller venues also attracted established actors, and their audience, as well as the emerging theatre makers of tomorrow. Alan Bates and Eileen Atkins were among a number of actors from the main stage shows who did their own one-actor, one-night stand. While the Late-night shows attracted many surprise guests:

> I think I sang a song. I think I sang an alternative version of Windmills Of Your Mind…which I think went down very well. I think it was probably quite rude or something, you know, as these things tend to be. And I had a friend in the company who I still see a lot of - an actor called Tim Wallace, who was doing a turn on that evening – he was so funny. I just cried my eyes out. It, he was so, so funny. And I remember that vividly. Gosh, I remember Linda Thorson being around.
>
> (Alexander Hanson, Interview)

The pattern and possibilities for the small studio space was already being mapped out for the new Minerva building that Caroline Sharman would go on to programme. So I will turn to her for the last word on this section:

> *And the whole thing about The Tent, of the informality and the kind of fact you rush in and you can just act, whereas suddenly that became, you know, make sure your budget works. Really, in a way, an interesting thing is to make sure The Nest doesn't lose the magic of what The Tent was about – and becomes too much.*[47]

[46] See Michael Coveney's obituary for **Louise Paige**, a prolific playwright who died of cancer at the age of 65. *The Guardian,* 4 / 06/ 2020, last visited 14/04/2025

[47] Caroline Sharman-Mendoza , Interview

Mind The Gap

With the opening of the Minerva Studio, The Tent and other perceived 'fringe events' fell away. The place of The Studio theatre in the creative and financial arc of theatres generally, and specifically for Chichester, is beyond the scope of this report, but it is worth noting that while more adventurous productions could be programmed for the Minerva, balancing the budgets in the smaller venue was still essential. Seat prices were slowly but surely rising and when we were speaking about audiences, Alex Hanson shared a moment from one of his many returns to CFT at the Minerva in 2006 for Coward's *Tonight at 8.30*:

> And one of the plays we did was *Hands Across the Sea*, which is based on Lord Mountbatten and his wife. And of course, I was dressed in, you know, in a blazer, crisp white shirt, cravat, white slacks, and I played the whole thing as if I was still on a ship. So, the whole perf., I was sort of swaying, which I loved. I loved it. On the first performance, it went down very well, and the whole audience stood up, and every single man there was dressed exactly like I was dressed in the part.
> And they were all clapping and swaying. So, in that instance, it was very much the old school [CFT] audience. (Alexander Hanson, Interview).

The Minerva has certainly become a more accessible space for many young(er) audiences, but as the prices necessarily increased to cover production costs, it inevitably excludes others. The lack of an alternative space and the sense that many from the Chichester audiences were drifting away led to the big community production of *The Barchester Chronicles* (2000)[48] and, of course, the CFTYT was going strong under Andy Brereton, then, later, Dale Rooks' direction.

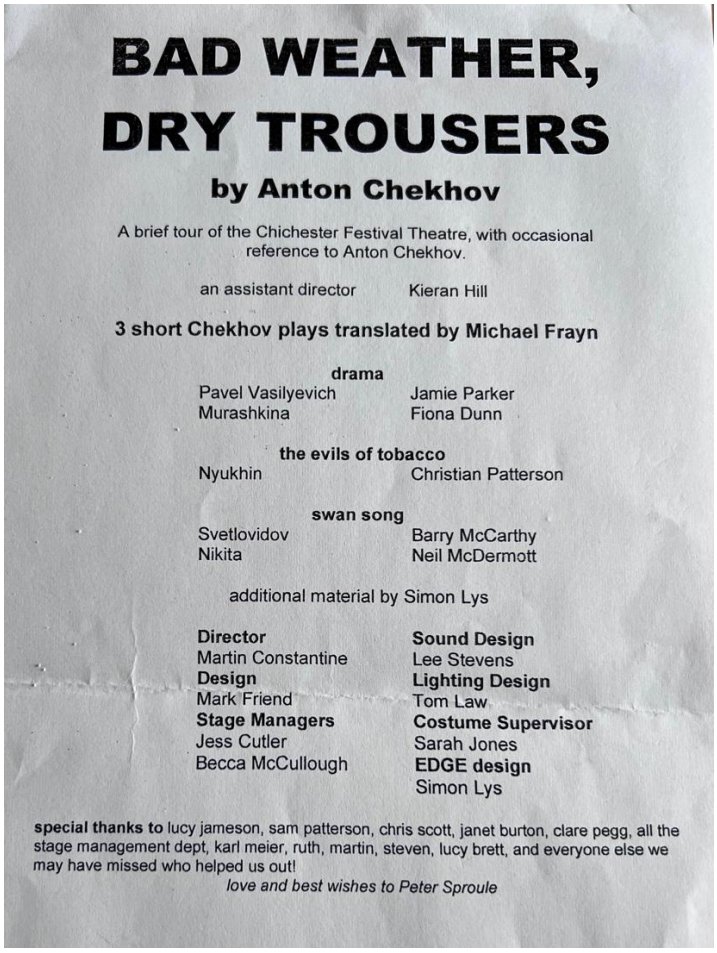
When Martin Duncan, Ruth Mackenzie and Stephen Pimlott took over the theatre, (2003-2006) they decided to return to first principles and plan the season on the ensemble model with a company of actors playing through the season. They also

[48] See Kate Mosse, 2012, 175 onward for more on the 'artistic triumvirate' as this trio of creative directors were named.

wanted to revive the 'fringe' events, and so the Tent's Late Night shows resumed in the Minerva bar upstairs. Again actors from the main house and Minerva did a turn:

> Desmond Barritt came back during the Ruth years and for the late-night cabaret, he did an amazingly rude routine with balloons. Very, very funny. (Lucy Brett, Simon and Lucy Brett, Interview)

Lucy also recalls that a number of theatre tours were offered and many of these included ad hoc moments of performance. In Michael Frayn's adaptation of Chekhov's short play trilogy, *Bad Weather, Dry Trousers,* at least one of the three plays was performed in what was affectionately known to front of house staff as 'the superloo': a Ladies Toilet with disabled access and spacious accommodation in the main foyer. Lucy remembers the venue as being a highlight of the tour for the many male audience members/visitors, who wouldn't normally have seen it and, indeed, for everyone who witnessed the performance in it. Again, the cast here is made up of members of the main season company, with Simon Usher's assistant director, Martin Constantine, directing.



BAD WEATHER, DRY TROUSERS

by Anton Chekhov

A brief tour of the Chichester Festival Theatre, with occasional reference to Anton Chekhov.

an assistant director — Kieran Hill

3 short Chekhov plays translated by Michael Frayn

drama

Pavel Vasilyevich	Jamie Parker
Murashkina	Fiona Dunn

the evils of tobacco

Nyukhin	Christian Patterson

swan song

Svetlovidov	Barry McCarthy
Nikita	Neil McDermott

additional material by Simon Lys

Director	**Sound Design**
Martin Constantine	Lee Stevens
Design	**Lighting Design**
Mark Friend	Tom Law
Stage Managers	**Costume Supervisor**
Jess Cutler	Sarah Jones
Becca McCullough	**EDGE design**
	Simon Lys

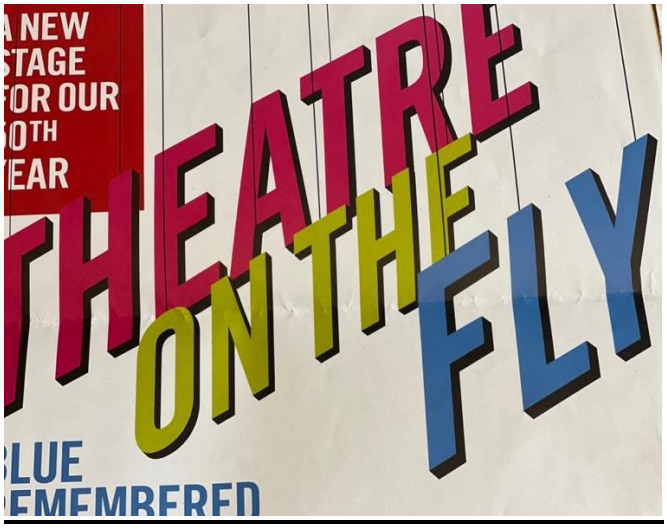
special thanks to lucy jameson, sam patterson, chris scott, janet burton, clare pegg, all the stage management dept, karl meier, ruth, martin, steven, lucy brett, and everyone else we may have missed who helped us out!

love and best wishes to Peter Sproule

Programme handout copied from CFT office holdings.

Thanks to Janet Bakose (Janet Burton as 'thanked' on programme) for finding this and sharing her memories of the event.

Theatre on the Fly (2012)



'A temporary new space for our next generation of theatre-makers and theatre-goers'

(Programme/Flyer, CFT, GBB Personal Collection)

'When we did the Theatre on the Fly, there was, there was so much thought of referring it back to the tent again… we had somebody [Heller Foundation] who actually funded [the salaries of three] training directors: Anna Ledwich, Michael Oakley, Tim Hoare - the main three.' (Lucy Brett, Director of Development, Simon & Lucy Brett, Interview)

In celebrating 50 years of CFT with a new and innovative temporary space, Jonathan Church and Alan Finch were not only looking back to the success of The Tent, but also looking forward to the project now being realised in The Nest:

> We have trained three young directors who now present their debut Chichester productions along with a host of other entertainments in an extraordinary theatrical space. / As well as new productions of *Blue Remembered Hills, Playhouse Creatures* and the world premiere of *Fred's Diner,* Theatre on the Fly will house an eclectic season of late night comedy, live music and cabaret, The Youth Theatre's production of *Noah*, theatre activities for children…
> (Programme/flyer, Celebrating)

The programme of performances and events is reminiscent of The Tent, especially with its promise that there will be announcements of 'even more events as the season unfolds, so whether its test-running brand new work or hosting a last-minute gig, watch this space!' (Programme/flyer, Celebrating). The off the cuff, on the fly promise, echoes the spontaneity of the 'just turn up and do it' memories of The Tent.

But, of course, there are always months of planning and programming in place in order for the spontaneous moment to take place. As Anna Ledwich recalls, the director's bursary wasn't only to gain experience directing productions 'but also being able to have a sort of first-hand experience of what it is to run a, specifically, a regional building as well' (Anna Ledwich, Interview, Teams)[49]. Other reports will deal in more detail with the process, creative and actual of the route from idea to realisation (see Rachel Green's report) but, as Anna remembers, it was Tim Hoare who introduced the idea of the more ambitious theatre building in place of the 'tent' and Assemble, 'an outstanding team of young designers and builders who [have] devised a playhouse'. (Programme/flyer, Come and Assemble) Reaching out to everyone in the Chichester community to 'come and pick up a wheelbarrow and become part of the team this summer' (as above). But long before that stage, Lucy Brett recalls an early meeting between the young architects from Assemble and a local businessman, Bill Tustin, to discuss the structural support for a building process committed to recycling and reused materials:

> Bill ran a very, very successful business called Littlehampton Welding, and they, a group of young architects, just down from Cambridge, terribly arrogant, but very talented asked Bill what projects he'd already done. [He silently rolled out his plans for London's Floral Hall, Singapore Airport, The London Eye! And you can see these guys thinking, this is a real player….So I mean, it didn't happen because we were going to have to dig too far down into Oaklands Park. But I will always treasure that moment. And I did think it had the same atmosphere [as The Tent].[50]
> (Lucy Brett)

This story reveals the context of creative working practice at its best. The ambition and passion for innovation on the one hand and the measured wealth of experience on the other. When these forces clash it can be wholly destructive but when working in creative tension, so much more is made possible.

[49] Anna Ledwich was the first of the three directors on the bursary scheme in 2008. In 2010 Jonathan Church talked about the planning for 50th anniversary and reviving the 'Minerva Tent'. Michael Oakley had followed Anna on the bursary track and Tim Hoare was the current assistant director. All three were brought together to realise the 50th anniversary venue. See www.analedwich.com

[50] Bill Tustin and Littlehampton Welding are among the five local businesses and organisations 'thanked' in the programme/flyer. See Andrew Edwards interview for more on Assemble and the need to scale down their ambition for the building.

But it felt very much as an opportunity for a launchpad for young talent…when you're starting now…you train at college and when you leave college, you think you're just going to walk straight into town at the Royal Court or the National and that's not the reality of the industry. so to be able to have a venue which was a fringe venue…that opportunity to be under the Chichester label or brand and be seen by so many people. I think that opportunity was just so inviting.[51]

Andrew Edwards was a young designer in 2012 and:

> jumping at the bit for the opportunity to work with as many people as possible. To get the chance to have three new contacts under your belt in one go, you know, and they were really exciting. Anna was brilliant and such a wonderful creative and so was Michael and so was Tim.

The three directors co-curated the season, first settling on the main play they wanted to produce, then moving on to programme the other events and performances that would be presented in the nine week season. Andrew Edwards remembers:

> They were supporting, the three directors were supportive of each other, but they never really overlap in the conversations…I think I felt it was very much on my shoulders to be the middle person to negotiate the three and make sure everyone got what they wanted without stepping on someone else's toes…but we must have signed off with someone because, you know, that's where the money came from.
> (Andrew Edwards, Interview)

Anna opened with her production of *Blue Remembered Hills* which made the most of the ToTF design with big barn doors at the back that opened up onto Oaklands Park:

> So we could have the audience inside looking at actors in the space, but then also beyond you had this beautiful sort of undulating hill of Oaklands Park heading up and that was really, really special. (Anna Ledwich, Interview)

[51] Andrew Edwards, Interview, accessed via Team, Research Resources.

(Theatre on the Fly Launch Photos, June 2012. Copyright Simon Co)

It was a terrible summer, and the new audiences the theatre wanted to attract hadn't quite realised it was there:

> And there was some times where the rain was so intense [the cast] would be absolutely drenched coming in to do their final scenes….And I remember like, because water was pooling underneath the theatre mosquitoes were breeding as well too, so people were getting bites. (Anna Ledwich)

In contrast, the last play to open, Tim Hoare's production of Penelope Skinner's new play *Fred's Diner*, used a three sided set within the indoor space, creating the sense of imitation implicit in a UK version of the American Diner atmosphere.

(Fred's Diner, Copyright Simon Coulson)

Making Connections

But the middle play, *Playhouse Creatures* used something of the height and grandeur of the extraordinary internal space that had been created to also create the effect of intimacy.

(TOTF set for April de Angelis *Playhouse Creatures* - set up for pre-show discussion with director and playwright 'Fly-Under' Weds 25/07/25. Photo. Unattributed)[52]

[52] I recognise this event, as my partner and I were present at it. The post show talk on 31st July would have been after dark and so this was the pre-show, 'Fly-Under' talk.

Andrew Edwards design recalls the 'more sort of a Rococo Baroque, trying to find a way to do that gilt', and that the design for set and costume was determined in collaboration with director, Michael Oakley:

> Michael was very hands on with his costume and he loves that style of theatre and he was always very much 'I want to be there'. I mean, he allowed you free rein, but I would say he very much had a vision in his head, which we were on the same page with. (Andrew Edwards, Interview)

It is this production, and specifically the creative collaboration between playwright April de Angelis and director Michal Oakley that began in Theatre on the Fly in 2012, and which continued, and continues today in their second production of *Playhouse Creatures* which opened at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond in March of this year (2025).[53] The play was already a revival in 2012, having been first written as an all-female cast produced by Women's Theatre Company, Sphinx in 1993. Then a revised version, introducing some male characters was produced by the Peter Hall company at the Old Vic (1997). Michael and April didn't recall much more than a brief meeting at the British Library to discuss which of the versions to do: 'and essentially the play that we did…is the original five person version' (Michael Oakley and April de Angelis, Interview, Teams)

> I think interestingly, it's before the Me -Too movement really took off. And because that's like 2015, isn't it? But I remember thinking the play interesting, the conversations weren't as prevalent then in my memory as they have been subsequently. But I remember feeling the play was very important, and that there weren't many plays I knew of all female companies. And I think in the balance of the season, with the other two plays, certainly if you take *Blue Remembered Hills,* the first play, many more men, it's more heavily weighted towards men [than] women. And I also think the three of us [directors] quite consciously wanted to keep that balance between all three plays. We wanted to have 5050. And I think we actually did achieve that on balance. I think it's a very important thing. I still think it's an incredibly important thing, more so than ever.
> (Michael Oakley, Interview)

April remembers the space as being very 'real...it didn't feel overly theatrical':

[53] Interesting to note that the Orange Tree began life as a fringe theatre above the Orange Tree pub in Richmond. It outgrew that space in the 1990s and built a purpose-built theatre in the round in which the current production begins its limited tour to Guildford and Bath. The tour is produced by Jonathan Church, former artistic director of CFT.

> The play talks [about the] audience sitting on benches and squashed up together and there we were on these benches in this kind of barn…. I don't know, it felt really specially alive to have it in that context somehow…. As Michael said, you know, if you talk to actresses, its still the inequality and that they experience. So I mean, yeah, it is still sadly relevant.
> (April De Angelis, Interview)

The creative partnership formed between April and Michael has led to their working together again as this extract from a much longer interview shows. It is not only that they like each other, although liking who you work with in theatre is a key ingredient in both working again but also keeping new people out. But key to this creative collaboration is their shared interest in equality.

April: 'is this the 5th or 6th time we're working together?
Michael: 'I think it's the sixth time'
April: I love work with Michael…he's really fun and he really gets my work…he gets brilliant casts together….We did a project called *Gin Craze*…And then *Wuthering Heights* that I mean, he sort of gave my career [a lift] and he did all these second productions of my shows and also a first….which wouldn't have happened if [Theatre on the Fly] hadn't happened. And it's the thing about women's work as well…I think they tend not to get the second production and things in the same way as men do. I'm putting that down, that card on the table.
Michael: I agree with all that…That summer completely changed my life. It was the first time I really felt I could direct. It was the first time I kind of went, oh. OK I kind of know what I'm doing. And it opened up this amazing collaboration with April that I'm so thankful for and we've had some incredible experiences. But its all the legacy from that production and that space.
(April de Angelis and Michael Oakely, Interview)

Michael goes on to discuss the space in more detail and, interestingly, pinpoints an aspect of the 'freer spaces' the temporary buildings offer:

Chichester would never have done Playhouse Creatures in the main house, for whatever [reason]' but, 'because Chichester is Chichester 'we attracted actors who would [be], who had been in productions in both the main house and the Minerva….you've got those big theatres next to you…so therefore you've got that support and that quality.
(Michael Oakley, Interview)

Helena: I was one of the 'high flyers' at the Theatre on the Fly, which basically meant I was a lackey for whatever needed doing around the venue.

Andrew: Haven't we all been lackeys at events for everything that needed to be doing, in our own way..[54]

Before leaving this particular production and the collaborative energy it generated in production, I also want to draw attention to the energy generated for the audiences that came to the pre and post-show talks and, as April noted, 'stayed around and wanted to talk' about the issues raised around the first actresses and women generally still seeking equality. There is also a third group of people who were essential to the successful build and smooth-running of theatre on the Fly. These were the 'high-flyers' who were, as Helena Berry put it, 'lackeys' or 'runners', as young people willing to do anything in the film industry are usually called.[55] Helena was leading the interview with April and Michael, looking back on her own experience as an eighteen year old about to go to university:

> And the production had such an impact on me personally, I have to say because…
> I hadn't seen a production of all women at CFT, and I've been at CFT since I was 11. And also that was about women and what they were, what were the struggles they had, not just as actresses, but universal struggles. And I ended up directing the production at uni. And I loved it. I loved it so much.
>
> (Helena Berry in Interview with Michael Oakley and April de Angelis)

I was struck by the importance of intergenerational exchange in April's play, as older actress teaches younger actresses and younger actresses find space to make their own version of a part. Also, how in discussing this production that intergenerational exchange was mirrored in the context of the revival which April had seen as lifting her work to new audiences and which, as Helena pointed out to Michael, coincided at that moment with other contemporary agendas. But there was also another exchange as Helena shared her own experience:

> Yeah, I was born in 1993. That was like the real affinity to the piece, but also how, like you say, Michael, it felt so relevant to 2012 and the fact that that mandate had come that year from Equity, around increasing the visibility of female performers in the industry at the time, you know, I've forgotten that.[56]

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[54] Helena Berry, Heritage and Archive manager, looking back at her gap year with Theatre on the Fly in conversation with Andrew Edwards, Interview, Teams.

[55] The title has changed from runners to production assistants in film, but I doubt the sense of being a 'lackey' has changed the valuable, but inevitable, 'go'fer' duties of the role.

[56] Anna Ledwich spoke about the goal for 5050 casting and also the reach toward diversity which, as she noted, would be the case now. Leila Farzad was a newcomer in *Blue Remembered Hills*, Cush Jumbo and Olivia Poulet were both in *Fred's Diner* among other younger performers to appear in the TOTF season.

(Helena Berry, as above)

The context created by Theatre on the Fly had extended its reach in both social and cultural terms. The younger audience did build as the season progressed and by the final play of the season, *Fred's Diner* was booked out. But that measure of impact is easier to chart and evaluate than the less tangible benefits of collaborations and career-changing moments captured here.

Conclusion: Temporary Spaces, Lasting Communities

We have to find ways to create launch pads for young talent to move forward[57]

You've got those big theatres next to you…
so therefore you've got that support and that quality.[58]

(Artists Development Programme Workshop In Pimlott building. 2025. Photo not credited)

The Nest (artist's image from donor presentation)

This report offers a few highlights from the extraordinarily productive ventures that CFT has created and supported: in the New Ventures company, The Tent, and Theatre on the Fly. Although working differently, in different times and, in some ways, with a different focus, they all have one thing in common. The backing that CFT has provided in creating space in which emerging artists have found a voice

[57] Andrew Edwards, Interview
[58] Michael Oakley, Interview

and, together with other voices, found their community, people to work with and in many cases, founded creative collaborations that continue today.

As a regional theatre CFT has never had the cultural caché of London spaces like the Donmar, or the Almeida, neither has it been perceived as cutting edge like Stratford's Other Place, or Manchester's eclectic mix of theatre and events at the Royal Exchange. And yet, as even this brief look at the past 50 years or so of work undertaken across a range of venues shows, CFT has been the site of some extraordinarily innovative work that continues to hold true to its first intentions: a theatre built by the community for the community.

The importance of the wider cultural growth in the physical community of Chichester and the arts community of many who still live around and support the theatre, is all part of that story and, I hope, acknowledged in the stories I have been able to touch on. To do justice to the cultural community of theatre-makers that have passed through CFT's temporary spaces requires a much long timeframe and deeper excavation than has been possible here. But in the course of this research it has become clear that the impetus and aspirations for The Nest and the Artists Development Programme have their roots deeply embedded in the work made over past decades.

> It's about promoting young talent….Everybody wants to make the best of it and wants to go that extra mile because everybody's been there before and, you know, most of us in this industry have been given opportunities to get forward and its people taking chances on you and supporting you that, you know, lifts people forward I think.[59]

[59] Andrew Edwards, interview.

There is no doubt that the atmosphere in the physical space of a temporary building adds something special, the 'flapping canvas' of The Tent, the 'industrial feel' to the Theatre on the Fly with its huge barn doors creating inside/outside space. But, ultimately it is the people, those supporting and making space for those that come into it as next generation theatre-makers and their audiences, that will make The Nest a theatre for today and tomorrow.

****

Afterword

There was never a time when my parents move to live in West Sussex was ever in question. Chichester, specifically Chichester Festival Theatre, was the string that pulled at their hearts. Every summer we visited, coinciding with the festival first nights where possible and in 1970 when my father, Bush Bailey, retired from his job as Head of Artist's Contracts at the BBC, he returned to his first love, the theatre. Not now as the actor or Stage Director he had been either side of his wartime work in the RAF, but to Chichester, to work wherever he could be most useful to the theatre, and so he became a stalwart member of the CFT team in the Box Office. In the winter of 1972/3 I found my own way to the theatre, appearing as Marigold in the first Christmas show, *Toad of Toad Hall*. I had appeared in several TV series so the local press were interested enough in my stage debut, but more interested that my family lived in Singleton, a village a few miles outside Chichester.

'TOAD,' ROLLS-ROYCE OF CHRISTMAS SHOWS

ADAPTED by A. A. Milne from Kenneth Grahame's famous 'Wind in the Willows," one of the most popular Christmas plays, "Toad of Toad Hall" is the first Christmas presentation at Chichester Festival Theatre. Harold Innocent, who has been seen at the Connaught Theatre from time to time, heads the company of 25 as Toad. Considered one of the finest character actors to have appeared at Chichester—he has had three seasons there—Harold told me he now looked upon the town as his second home.

In between rehearsing, Harold said that he has been doing television in "Upstairs, Downstairs" and in "Z-Cars." He has also been filming with Robert Hardy and Carolyn Seymour in "The Yellow Dog" which is due for release in the spring.

For James Cairncross, who plays Badger, this is his first time at Chichester Festival Theatre. He has played Badger in the London production for the past three years. But it is not his first experience of playing on an open stage: he was in "Highland Fair" at Edinburgh Festival on a similar type of stage.

He went on, "It is a quarter of a century since I acted with Sir John Clements," who is the director of the Festival Theatre.

Prior to going into "Toad," he had just finished an episode in television's "Sherlock Holmes" series.

Robert Cornish, who plays Rat, was in all four plays at Chichester last year. "I was previously here in 1968 when I carried a spear for Peter Ustinov," he recalled with a laugh. He has been playing in the BBC's "The Regiment" series.

Playing Mole is Christopher Guinee, who will be remembered at Chichester as Alastair Sim's mischievous stepson in "The Magistrate," Doriland in "The Country Wife" and Eros in "Antony and Cleopatra." He has recently been acting with the Oxford Playhouse Company.

Seventeen-year-old Gillian Bailey, who plays Marigold in "Toad," is the daughter of Bush Bailey, who was head of the contracts department of the BBC until he retired recently. He now lives at Singleton.

A delighted Mr Toad (Harold Innocent) in a scene from "Toad of Toad Hall."

In Rolls setting

Despite her youth, Gillian is an experienced and accomplished actress. In the film "The Adventurer: The Lowest Bidder," she played Lizzie and is Billie in "The Doubledeckers." To date she has had 17 film parts.

Gillian has played in television since she was Phyllis in "The Railway Children" in 1968. She has had parts in the Sherlock Holmes series, "Six Wives of Henry VI," was in several episodes of "The Doctor," and this year has had the lead role in "Love Story," and in "Thursday's Child" as Lavinia, and been in "Softly, Softly."

David Conville, who for the past seven years has directed the

Gillian Bailey who plays Marigold in "Toad of Toad Hall."

Heavy use of Sports Centre

West Park Sports Centre is

Worthing Gazette, 31
Wednesday, Dec. 27, 1972

Disabled out of work lowest for five years

The sustained improved demand for labour affecting workers generally is also helping to reduce the numbers of disabled who are jobless. This encouraging feature was reported to the Worthing and West Sussex Disablement Advisory Committee meeting in the new Crown Building in High-street.

Therapy

The numbers of registered disabled in November at employment exchanges in the area—Careers Offices two, Bognor 44, Chichester 54, Littlehampton 42, Worthing 82—totalled 224 but this was 73 less than last year and the lowest November level for the past five years.

During the last quarter 180 disabled were found employment.

Members listened with interest to a talk about her work from Miss C. Malkinson who until recently was head occupational therapist at Worthing Hospital.

Dealer for trial on theft charge

A general dealer, Victor Mee of Warninglid, was committ to Chichester Crown Court

(above R as Marigold, *Worthing Gazette* 27/12/72)

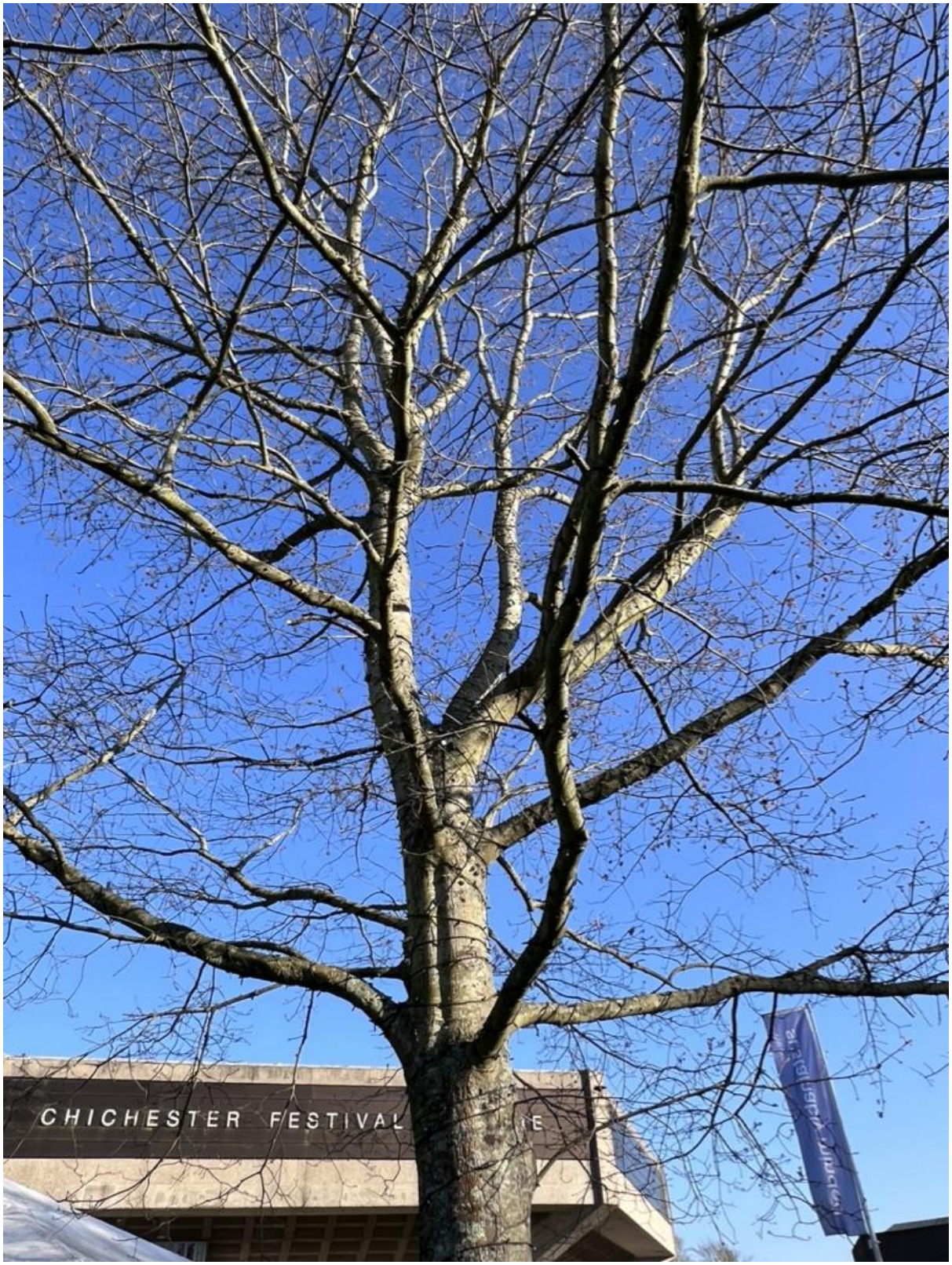
Right, photo in the dressing room CFT, Jan 1973
Photo unattributed. From my personal collection

My sister Jenni and her family were the first to move to West Sussex. Living in West Dean, my nephew Tom Pook joined the Youth Theatre in the late 1980s. Not long after my brother, Chris Bush Bailey decided he had enough of Production managing in London's West End Theatre and joined CFT as Production Manager in 1989. No longer acting but a lecturer in the Department of Drama and Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London, I returned to CFT to give a pre-show talk on the 2012 revival of *The Way of the World* . A few years later I was research professor at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama when CFT was one of many leading theatres to take part in Advance, a research project on gender equality in theatre run by Lucy Kerbel and Tonic Theatre. Daniel Evans was then at Sheffield Theatre and Rachel Tackley leading English Touring Theatre, both took part in Advance and my follow-up research with Rachel took place at CFT when she was newly appointed. My partner and I moved to West Sussex in 2006 and I retired from full time academic work a few years ago. It is then with great pleasure that I return to my own CFT roots as a volunteer on this New Ventures project.

Report by

Gilli Bush-Bailey
17th April 2025

https://www.cssd.ac.uk/staff-profiles/prof-gilli-bush-bailey


CHICHESTER FESTIVAL

This Red Oak was planted in memory of my brother Chris Bush Bailey (CFT 1989-2001) who is still fondly remembered by many still at CFT and amongst those I have spoken to in the course of this research.