Chichester Festival Theatre receives Heritage Lottery Fund investment

13/12/2012

This funding will support the restoration of the Grade II* listed Festival Theatre building and the introduction of a three-year community participation programme due to start in January 2013. HLF's grant will help deliver important restoration works to the roof, concrete, glazing and timber fasciae and reinstate 100 seats in the balconies.

Executive Director of Chichester Festival Theatre, Alan Finch, said: "This announcement is a real boost to our plans. We greatly value the support that the Heritage Lottery Fund is providing for our theatre at this key stage in our redevelopment. We also welcome the exciting opportunity to celebrate our theatre's heritage. Having marked our 50th anniversary this year, this feels like the perfect moment to embark on this major community project and involve as many volunteers as possible. There will be more information early in the New Year on how local people can take part in the activities being planned."

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East, said: "Chichester Theatre is a fantastic example of 20th-century architecture which has delighted, educated and entertained generations of theatre-goers. Its fascinating history is tightly interwoven with the social history and culture of Chichester. We are delighted to add our support to a project which will not only ensure the building's survival but will also inspire and involve people of all ages for years to come."

In addition to the essential repairs to the Grade II* listed Festival Theatre, the RENEW redevelopment project will incorporate a new extension, increased seating capacity, improved access and public facilities, improved backstage facilities and changes to make the building more energy efficient.

An exciting and extensive activity programme will be rolled out as part of the project and will include providing public access to the theatre's records for the first time through archiving and digitisation, a touring exhibition, open days and youth theatre productions. As part of the training programme, three heritage traineeships, extensive volunteer opportunities and partnership working with community organisations, schools and universities will also be key to ensuring the local community are involved with the life of the project and theatre.

The RENEW fundraising campaign to raise the £22m required now continues in earnest to raise the essential remaining £1m.

This campaign is also supported by Arts Council England, West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council; as well as support from trusts, local businesses and individuals.

Further information

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