

adc theatre

Annual Report 2016-2017





Unravelling the Ribbon, ADC Theatre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Management Team and Executive Committee are delighted to report another successful year both artistically and financially.

2016-17 has been an industrious year for the ADC Theatre and Corpus Playroom. We have presented to our audiences a wide array of productions and have provided hundreds of opportunities for performers, technicians, directors and theatre administrators to hone their talents and gain new experiences. Over the year we have combined our two websites into one user-friendly site and, as part of our digital strategy, have introduced card payments to the bar. Huge progress has also been made on our 2017-18 renovation, which will introduce a ventilation system and bring our theatrical lighting up to industry standard. In this report we will be re-visiting the highlights of the past year. We hope you enjoy looking back at a fantastic year for the ADC Theatre and Corpus Playroom!

“The ADC has provided, and continues to provide, a great deal of creative energy to the professional theatre.”

Sir Peter Hall

“The ADC is where I learned about Theatre.”

Miriam Margolyes

“Without the ADC Theatre I would never have become a director.”

Sam Mendes

“Few if any training grounds have contributed as much to the performing arts as the ADC Theatre.”

Michael Attenbrough

2016-17 Management Team

- Mitchell Clarke:** Theatre Manager
- Victoria Collins:** Operations Manager
- Jamie Rycroft:** Production Manager
- John Evans:** Technical Manager
- Katie Hook:** Box Office Administrator
- Connie Dent:** Office Administrator

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WELCOME

I opened our autumn season by announcing that you could “experience the extraordinary this season at the ADC Theatre and Corpus Playroom”, I feel we have managed to fulfil this ambition not just in our autumn season, but in all three seasons. It is always a joy to put together such a huge variety of work, from plays to pantomimes and classics to new student writing. One of my favourite aspects of working at the Theatre is show selection. Over the course of two weeks the show selection panel sees hundreds of passionate and enthusiastic students who have stories to share.

The ADC Theatre and Corpus Playroom continue to be at the heart of amateur drama in Cambridge. We pride ourselves on the



opportunities we provide to experience and learn about all aspects of theatre, while presenting professional standard productions. The enrichment of the student experience at the University of Cambridge, a key component of the Theatre’s mission, has remained a critical focus with more opportunities for students to become involved being made available. As such, support and training have been central to everything we have undertaken this year.

The Executive Committee has continued to undertake a number of significant projects with a view to ensuring the continued long-term success of both venues at the heart of the city, particularly using financial surpluses the Theatre has produced in

the past. Our policy over the year has to be to continue to invest in our facilities. Over the past year we have been working with AMA Architects and University Estate Management on our largest project. Together we have completed the design for our new auditorium ventilation system and associated works.

At the start of the Autumn season we launched our new and improved website which has been a hit with audience members. We have also successfully introduced card payments to the bar, keeping our facilities relevant and up-to-date.

As my final opportunity to write to you all, I would like to say what a real pleasure and privilege it has been to be a part of the ADC Theatre community over the last seven years. We have seen a period

of substantial development and growth throughout this period. Things have changed, we have gained an extra venue and things have become a lot more stripey.

However, what remains at the Theatre’s core and success is its community. There are very few organisations that every year find a whole new cohort of audience members and participants, but each year we do and with this comes new ideas. This keeps our output fresh, and keeps the Management team on its toes. It has been a delight to interact and work with so many committed students, volunteers and audience members who have given so much to the Theatre. Collectively, we have done much to realise the potential of the ADC Theatre.

My warmest thanks go to everyone who has supported me in making my time here so special and memorable. Thank you to you for being part of our wonderful Theatre community and I wish the incoming Theatre Manager, Vicky, and the rest of the Management team an enjoyable and fulfilling year ahead.

Mitchell Clarke, Theatre Manager



ABOUT US

The ADC Theatre and Corpus Playroom remain the centres of Cambridge's thriving drama scene. Productions at these venues are mounted entirely by students, amateurs, and volunteers. From actors and technical crew to directors and producers, everyone is united in a desire to enjoy and contribute to the creation of high-quality theatre.

Vibrant and varied programmes of drama, comedy, musical theatre and dance are presented at each venue by student groups during the University terms and by local groups long during the vacations. Typically each venue has staged two different productions each night.



Today we aim to provide opportunities for students and amateurs to experience and learn about all aspects of theatre, while presenting productions of the highest standard. We are a department of the University of Cambridge and the oldest University playhouse in the country. The ADC Theatre is still run almost entirely by students, with no faculty involvement. Training, learning and support are at the heart of everything we do here and we are set up to encourage and to provide help and guidance to all who are interested in creating theatre from the seasoned habitué to the most inexperienced user.

All of this activity draws on a long tradition: plays have been presented on the site of the ADC Theatre since 1855 when the Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club (CUADC) was founded and the Club met and performed in the back room of the Hoop Inn on Jesus Lane. The coaching inn stood almost exactly where the ADC Theatre stands today. At first the Theatre was run as a private members' club by the CUADC, but owing to growing financial difficulties, it was agreed in August 1973 that the Theatre would be leased to the University of Cambridge for 75 years.



Although the Theatre continues to be owned by CUADC, it is currently run as the smallest department of the University which has assumed responsibility for its management and maintenance. The CUADC remain as one of the resident companies of the Theatre.

The ADC Theatre has helped to launch the careers of many theatre luminaries, including Sir Ian McKellen, Rachel Weisz and Emma Thompson.

RESIDENT COMPANIES



Human Animals, Edinburgh Festival Fringe

There are several student companies resident in the ADC Theatre and Corpus Playroom. Not every show is produced by these companies, but the Theatre is the epicentre of their activities and their student committees are heavily involved in the programming of each season. Representatives of CUADC and Fletcher Players serve on the Theatre's Executive Committee.

CUADC

The Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club is the oldest and largest student drama society in Cambridge. The first performances on the site were staged by the founders of the Club in 1855. The CUADC present a varied programme of mainshows and lateshows at the Theatre each season, bringing together some of the finest young theatrical talent in the country and providing unrivalled support for their productions.

The Theatre and CUADC are very close partners as the Theatre continues to be owned by CUADC.

Fletcher Players

The Fletcher Players are the drama society of Corpus Christi College and the resident company at the Corpus Playroom. The Fletcher Players are integral to the running of the Playroom, helping with programming and producing up to six shows a term. Named after John Fletcher, alumnus of Corpus and Jacobean playwright, their productions showcase new writing, traditional classics, comedy and cutting edge political drama.

Footlights

It's hard to think of a group that have had more influence on British comedy than the Cambridge Footlights. Their fortnightly Smokers, an original mix of sketches and standup, are the breeding ground for new talent. No other student comedy society champions new talent and new writing more consistently, or provides as many opportunities to try out and develop material.

CUMTS

The Cambridge University Musical Theatre Society are the source of the very best musical theatre taking place in Cambridge. In addition to their mainshows, the Society runs popular Bar Nights and a series of social events throughout the year. Its contribution extends far beyond showcasing existing onstage talent: it aims to encourage training in musical theatre and regularly invites experts and seasoned professionals in the field to run masterclasses for its members.

CORPUS PLAYROOM



Some Voices, Corpus Playroom

Our L-shaped studio space is Cambridge's primary fringe venue, showcasing a variety of productions with an emphasis on new student writing. Seasons at the Playroom and the ADC are devised holistically in order to ensure that the two work as complimentary spaces. The President of the Fletcher Players has a significant input into Theatre programming both specifically at the Playroom and more generally across the two venues. Since 2011 the Playroom has been managed by the ADC Theatre and in that time we have seen a doubling in average audience numbers, and a higher and more consistent calibre of production.

The Corpus Playroom continues to provide a space to counterbalance the productions of the ADC Theatre. The space allows those creating the productions to get to the heart of the text while working with a smaller company of actors and stripped back sets.

One of the early hits of the year was **Posh**, the play that inspired the popular film *The Riot Club*. It proved to be a hilarious, disturbing and uncomfortable tale for a Cambridge student audience. In **Are You Sitting Comfortably?** Roald Dahl's

short stories were brought to life in a cozy environment.

In our Spring season, **Lemons Lemons Lemons** examined the ways in which we communicate with one another and the importance of saying what you really feel. **Stuart: A Life Backwards** proved that Theatre can be more than a medium to entertain; it can be a mechanism for social change. The play challenged our pre-conceptions of homelessness and raised awareness and money for Jimmy's Night Shelter.



Penhall's **Some Voices** created a powerful and moving exploration of how difficult standing on your own two feet can be.

In our final season of the year at the Playroom, **Bad Jews** examined two extremes of New York Jewishness through a tense, comic drama. **Love Story** showcased a beautifully intimate chamber musical following the lives of two people and the sacrifices they must make for their love. **Why is John Lennon Wearing A Skirt?** was a popular and powerful condemnation of society's aggressive reinforcement of gender constructs and the difficulties of finding a way to be who you want to be. **9 Parts of Desire** explored the lives of nine Iraqi women between the first and second Gulf Wars and occupation.

To end our student season, Julia Cho's **The Language Archive** presented a poignant meditation on love, loss and all that gets lost in translation.

ADC THEATRE PRODUCTIONS



Teahouse, ADC Theatre

The ADC Theatre continues to be one of the most popular venues in Cambridge, both with those wishing to create high quality theatre and those audiences who wish to consume it. We are proud of the quality and quantity of the applications we received for our slots, particularly from students who are juggling their academic commitments and their extra-curricular activities. This year we continued to be oversubscribed with the number of applications received, leading to some difficult decisions made by the selection panel. Throughout the year we have continued to critique and make adjustments to the process to ensure we offer a wide range of opportunities to our theatre-makers, and also to our audiences.

Over the previous twelve months the ADC Theatre programme has offered something for everyone. Our mainshows offer an opportunity for theatre makers to take on an artistic or technical challenge in a safe environment. Our lateshows slots allow for something a little different and high quality comedy continues to dominate this slot.

Our theatrical year started with **Made in Dagenham**,

returning from the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This high-quality production showcased what can be achieved by our local community. **Fame** continued our Musical Theatre filled Autumn season and featured a cast of professionally trained performers and a live band. **As You Like It** returned from its tour of the east coast of America and brought one of Shakespeare's best-loved comedies to the stage. The season continued with other exciting productions, such as Alan Bennett's **The Habit of Art**, a meta-theatrical play exploring the lives of W. H. Auden and Benjamin Britten. One of our most popular productions of the season was **Teahouse**. This production portrayed the turbulent history of early 20th-century China and was the first ever English performance of



China's famous play.

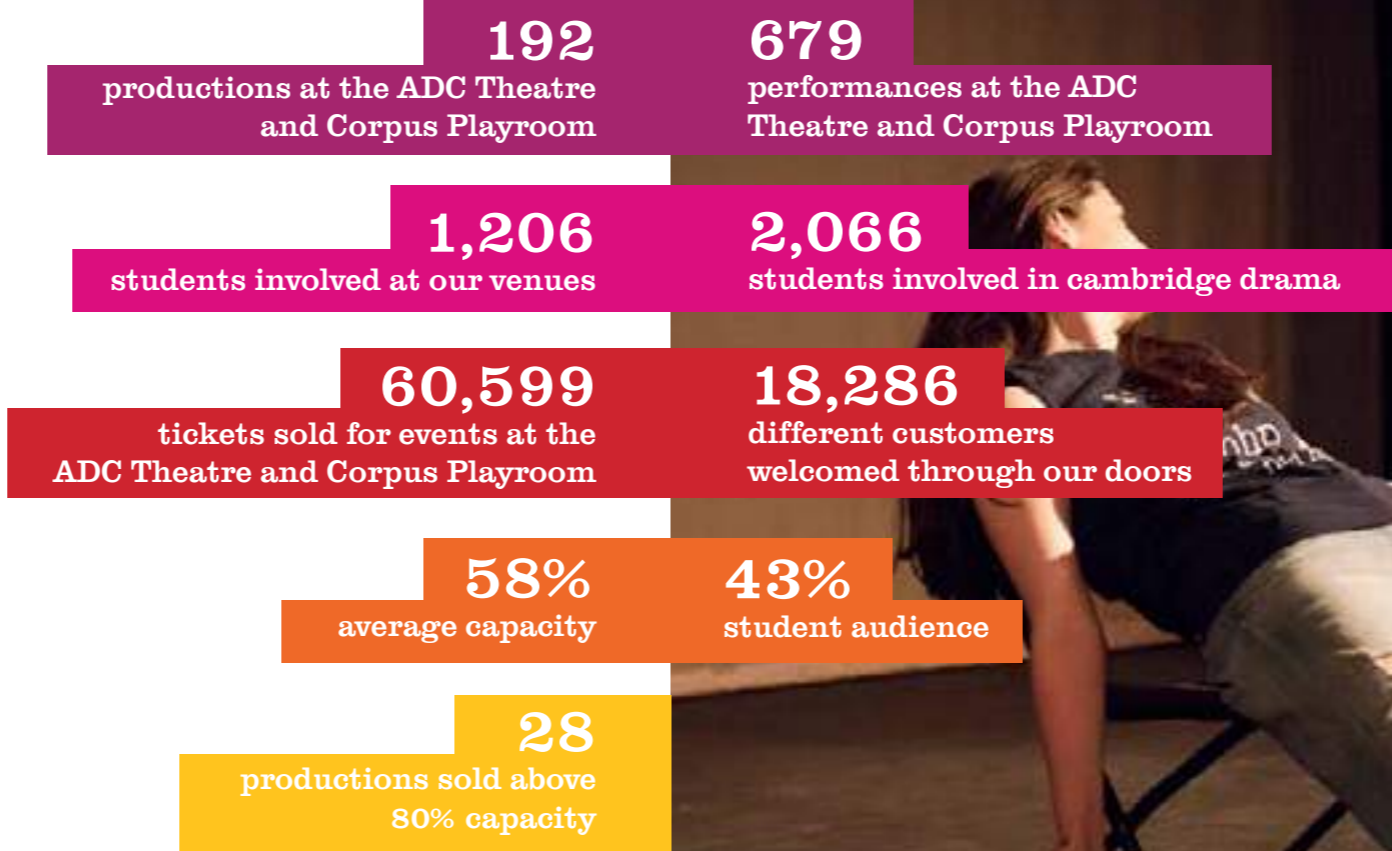
Other highlights included the **CUADC/Footlights 2016: Pantomime Rumpelstiltskin** and a **Little Shop of Horrors**, each displaying the fantastic musical and comedic talent of Cambridge. To end the season we transformed the ADC Theatre into Kansas City for a new production of **The Wizard of Oz**, inspired by the original book. Finally, **Cranford at Christmas** brought the characters we know from the hit TV show to the stage to ensure December felt suitably festive at the Theatre.

Hamlet, severed from its courtly aesthetic, opened our Spring season when it returned from its European tour. In **The House of Bernarda Alba** we saw the poetic and brutal tale of domestic tyranny and rebellion, played out by an entirely female cast. A highlight from the season was **London Road**, a difficult and ground breaking verbatim musical produced by the Cambridge University Musical Theatre Society. Martin McDonagh's **The Cripple of Inishmaan** brought some dark humour to the season. This play simultaneously had members of the audience crying with laughter and holding their breath in apprehension.

One notable lateshow from the season was **Unravelling the Ribbon**, a play about love and survival. This touching play was produced by Cambridge Pink Week, where the three female characters told the story of how their lives had been impacted by breast cancer.

Fen brought something a little different to the ADC. This was a piece devised by the company and based on stories by Daisy Johnson. It incorporated nature and technology to create an immersive and uncanny exploration of the indelible marks that a landscape can leave on its people. To end the student season, the Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club presented *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* as their two-week musical.

2016-2017 IN NUMBERS



Grief, April 2016

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE



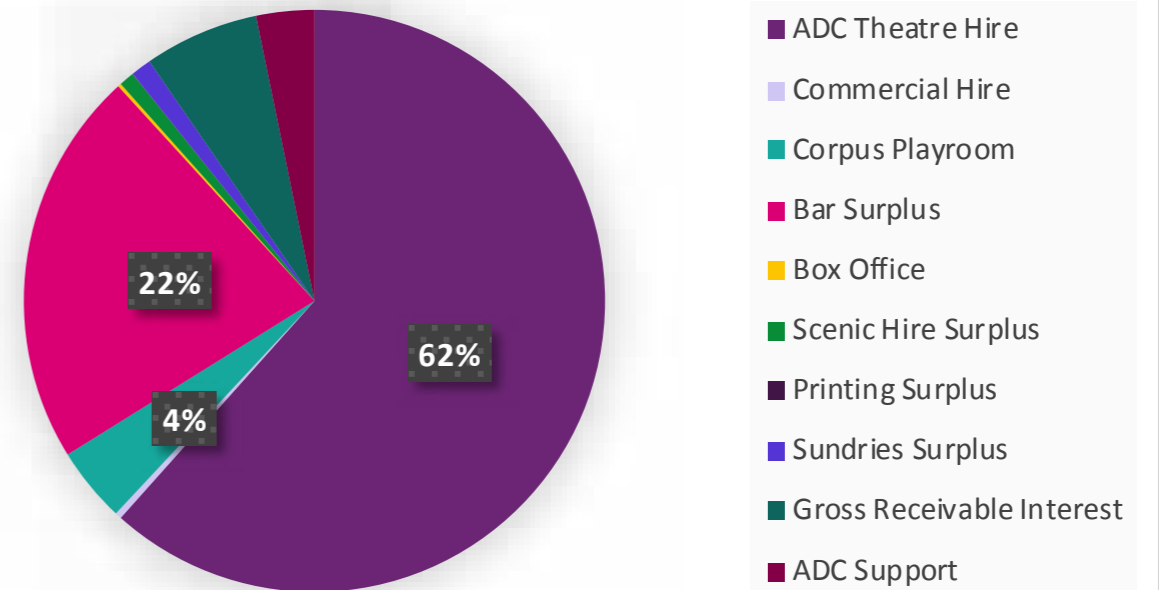
Professional, Corpus Playroom

Attention is drawn to the following:

- Income from the Corpus Playroom rose to £33,418 from £27,232
- The bar continues to provide a key revenue stream, returning a surplus of £56,191
- ADC Theatre Hire returned a surplus of £156,966
- Patrons continued to donate generously, with over £8,000 raised this year

Whilst mindful of the need to maintain reserves sufficient to meet the costs of planned theatre improvements and to guard against any future shortfall in revenue, the Executive Committee of the Theatre remains committed to investing any surplus in the Theatre itself, ensuring that it continues to offer both performers and audiences a state-of-the-art experience. This year surplus funds were spent on a new sound desk, updating the website and carrying out renovations to the bar.

ADC Theatre Income



STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Get Involved

Mindful of our wider educational role and constant desire to offer opportunities to all, the year began with another strong campaign to attract new students to the Theatre community. We worked closely with the CUADC Committee and hosted Freshers' Friday during the first week of the Michaelmas Term. Freshers were encouraged to come to the Theatre for backstage tours and a chance to meet and chat with students already involved.

Rules for Living, Britannia Waves the Rules and **Bed** were this year's Freshers' Shows. These shows were performed, directed, produced, designed and crewed entirely by those new to Cambridge drama, showcasing the ADC's freshest talent.

New Writing

The ADC Theatre continued to demonstrate its commitment to new writing with a large number of new plays and comedy written by students featuring at both venues. Highlights included the sell-out Corpus Playroom show, *Spiders*, a witty and touching play asking whether your suffering is still valid if another's suffering is greater, and *Love in a Maze*, an ADC lateshow that portrayed the farcical tale of one woman's pursuit of love and sex.

961

students involved in productions at at the ADC Theatre

619

students involved in productions at the Corpus Playroom

1,206

students involved in productions at the ADC Theatre and Corus Playroom

860

student productions took place outside of ADC Theatre and Corpus Playroom

2,066

students involved across all venues in Cambridge

TECHNICAL AMBITION



CUADC/Footlights Pantomime 2016: Rumpelstiltskin, ADC Theatre

The ambition of our technical teams has been as strong as ever. The CUADC/ Footlights Pantomime: Rumpelstiltskin brought to the stage an automated double revolve for the first time. For Caravan, as the title suggests, a full sized caravan was constructed on stage. Likewise, for Teahouse students replicated a Chinese teahouse in the theatre.

Encouraging ambition without providing the means to achieve it can only end in frustration and so the Theatre has continued to invest heavily in keeping equipment up-to-date. Only by ensuring that the Theatre continues to provide industry-standard equipment can we properly reward the craft of those who develop their skills here. This year we invested in a new sound desk and installed a dedicated Cat6A data network around the building to allow the desk to be used easily in the auditorium and wings. As well as helping improve the sound quality of our shows by allowing designers to mix closer to the stage, the movement of the desk will also allow non-ambulant users to get involved with sound design more easily.

Camp

Our annual Maintenance Camp this year was a success; the focus was primarily on finishing off previously started projects or ideas, although a few new projects were added:

- The Scene Dock Pit was completely refurbished and painted for the first time in order to improve working conditions in the workshop.
- New lighting dimmers were installed at the Corpus Playroom.
- New subtle lighting has been installed in the Auditorium corridor by the Bar in order to make admitting latecomers less disruptive.
- Two new CCTV cameras were installed for public safety.
- A new parking bollard was installed.
- The stage working floodlights were converted to LED.
- Various painting touch-ups were undertaken.
- In addition, the standard regular jobs of lantern maintenance, theatre tidying, maintenance of the counterweight flying system, and inspection of the patchbay tails took place.

Redevelopment

The ADC Theatre is constantly evolving and updating to meet audience needs and industry standards. For several years the Theatre has been making plans to introduce a ventilation system to the auditorium. These plans have developed and formalised over the course of 2016-17 and we are now on track to complete the project in 2017-18.

The ADC will close its doors for 6 months while work is carried out, but an active programme will be maintained at the Corpus Playroom. We will also be launching 'ADC on Tour', taking the resources of the Theatre and mounting productions in pop-up theatres around Cambridge.

When we re-open our doors in October 2018 we will have introduced a new ventilation system and will have installed two new lighting bridges, carried out repairs to the ceiling and made some cosmetic improvements in the process. This past year has been crucial in laying the ground work for the project and we cannot wait for it to come to fruition in 2017-18.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & SERVICES

Backstage tours

In September, the Management Team conducted a number of backstage tours during the University's Open Cambridge and the Alumni Festival, allowing visitors to see parts of the building not usually open to the public and to find out more about this unique, student-run venue.

Work experience

In June, one GCSE pupil completed their work experience in the Theatre. The pupil shadowed each member of the ADC's Management Team and learnt about marketing, running a Box Office, Technical Theatre and Theatre Administration. The pupil also got involved stewarding a performance.

ADC Ticketing

The Theatre continued to provide a secure, convenient and affordable Box Office service for events happening in and around Cambridge. We provided ticketing for 113 events, selling 16,821 tickets. The Cambridge University Musical Society became our largest client, on whose behalf 3608 tickets were sold. This accounted for a gross income of £36,512.

Other notable clients included City of Cambridge Symphony Orchestra, East Anglia Chamber Orchestra and Camerata Musica.

Hire business

The provision of ready-assembled packages has continued to prove very useful and has encouraged those less experienced in technical theatre to hire equipment for external events and productions.

TICKETING IN NUMBERS

113
events

16,821
tickets sold

£179,914
value of tickets sold

Suddenly Last Summer, Corpus Playroom



GET INVOLVED & SUPPORT US

For more information on the various production roles, and how to get involved with shows at the ADC Theatre, visit adctheatre.com/getinvolved.

exile, Corpus Playroom

The ADC Theatre currently receives no external funding, yet we remain committed to keeping our ticket prices low and our bar affordable, so that both our student and local audiences can experience and enjoy the Theatre as frequently as possible. We are always mindful that any of our performers today could be the famous names of tomorrow and that they and our audiences can only thrive in a lively and affordable theatre.

We encourage participation in all forms and at all levels including:

In our productions

There are hundreds of opportunities to act in the ADC Theatre every year and our productions always require dedicated production and technical teams. Whether you're interested in acting, directing, designing, managing, building, lighting, or crewing a show, new faces are always welcome, regardless of experience. We also require volunteer stewards to help us run the Front of House in the evenings. Our stewards greet audiences, sell programmes and ice-creams, and oversee admission to the auditorium.

As a friend

With your support we can ensure that our students get the best theatrical training we can offer, with industry standard theatrical equipment, financial support for ambitious and innovative productions and an ongoing investment in our backstage facilities.

You can help nurture new talent and get closer to the theatre you love by becoming an ADC Friend for £30 per year. As such you will enjoy:

- One free ticket to a show at the ADC Theatre or Corpus Playroom
- 10% discount on two tickets per show
- 10% discount on drinks and snacks at the ADC Bar and half price ice cream
- Special offers on selected events throughout the year
- Backstage tours and Friends only events

You can join online today at adctheatre.com/friends to begin enjoying the benefits and supporting the ADC Theatre.

Our friends scheme continues to grow, with 82 current members helping to support our talent.



THE TEAM

Cripple of Inishmaan, ADC Theatre

2016-17 Executive Committee

Dr. Mark Billinge [Chair]

- Richard Barnes
- Zoe Black
- Sarah Cain
- Mitchell Clarke
- Victoria Collins
- Theo Heymann
- Elinor Lipman
- Toby Molyneux
- Sheanna Patel
- Andrew Reid
- David Todd-Jones
- Robin Walker
- Oscar Yang

2016-17 Management Team

- Mitchell Clarke:** Theatre Manager
- Victoria Collins:** Operations Manager
- Jamie Rycroft:** Production Manager
- John Evans:** Technical Manager
- Katie Hook:** Box Office Administrator
- Connie Dent:** Office Administrator

Casual Staff

59 casual staff members worked as Box Office Assistants, Bar Staff, Front of House Support and Playroom Duty Managers; 28 of these were University of Cambridge students.

The ADC continues to provide an opportunity for young people to gain work experience in customer service roles in a supportive environment and offers a means whereby they can be provided with positive references when they go on to apply for other jobs.

Thank you

We are, as always, grateful for the ongoing support of the University of Cambridge, the University Theatre Syndicate, the Executive Committee and the CUADC Committee and for the generous help offered by many of our friends, audience members, students and volunteers.

We are extremely grateful for the ongoing IT support provided by volunteers Alex Brett and Paul Gotch.

Our warmest thanks go to everyone who has supported us in making this another memorable year.

If you would like to support our new talent and be an important part of our community, please consider joining our ADC Friends scheme and get closer to the Theatre you love.

adc theatre



Salome, February 2017
production photographs by Johannes Hjorth
report design by Mitchell Clarke