

## Press Release

Internationally award-winning Brixham theatre company streams theatre production of Ben Hur, filmed in Brixham, to the Edinburgh Fringe, and all across the world.

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Press photos etc can be downloaded from  
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1snO-iwQIZ4wZjpOg-Aw7JLcqHsl1f4vC?usp=sharing>

For Immediate Release

Earlier in 2022, the South Devon Players, an internationally award-winning theatre company based in Brixham, in South Devon, began planning for their biggest, most ambitious show ever; by adapting the tale of Ben Hur for the stage, and while performing at their home venue, Brixham Theatre, before going on tour, the lovely Cassandra Drewell, filmed the entire show.

During the pandemic, many theatre companies, including the South Devon Players, began exploring different ways of creating and sharing theatre performances, during the lockdowns, and for the South Devon Players at least, the connections made with streaming work online, to global audiences, remained a core part of the recovery once traditional live theatre shows could recommence.

To this end, the South Devon Players now film all their in house productions, when being performed live on tour, and then stream online to worldwide audiences. This year this includes streaming the production of Ben Hur, filmed at Brixham Theatre, as a part of the Edinburgh Fringe festival in August 2022, and thus showcasing the incredible talent of Devon-based performers, to viewers all over the world. The Edinburgh Fringe will be streaming it on-demand from August 5<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, to viewers all over the world.

Details about the streaming can be found on the South Devon Players website at <https://www.southdevonplayers.com/box-office.html> and from the Edinburgh Fringe at <https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/ben-hur-the-theatre-show>

### **Audience reviews from Ben Hur performances thus far:**

*“it was a stunning performance tonight by everybody involved. I never believed that Ben Hur could have been portrayed so well on the stage. We saw a very believable portrayal of all parts and the costumes were outstanding. Sound and lighting with excellent, I think the other venues in Plymouth Bristol and Cornwall are lucky to have this company on tour “*

*“Congratulations to cast and crew for such a lovely evening!! All actors did a fantastic job and were great, individual characters who all moved the story along beautifully. The music and sound tracks were great - especially in the gladiator scene that "gave us permission" to boo and cheer. I loved the drama, the emotion, the comedy moments - really engaging!*

*Lovely to see this marvellous come-back after many covid-related difficulties! “*

*“What can I say? Dan Houghton as Ben Hur!  
Charlton Heston was completely eclipsed by this performance.  
Why isn't this company performing in the West End?”*

Based on the classic 19th Century novel by Lew Wallace, Ben Hur is a meticulously crafted stage drama, packed with drama, action, and hope, set across the 1st Century Roman Empire. With action, suspense, hope, humour, and a dramatic confrontation in the arena at the Roman Games, this show is designed to appeal to a huge range of audiences. Ben Hur is a show that would normally be considered to be difficult to stage, but creative solutions were planned and tested and enacted – and with creative solutions it is all possible!

The story follows a young prince who is accused of attempted murder, sentenced to die as a galley slave, but survives, eventually returning to his homeland, to find that his mother and sister are missing.

Despite exacting revenge against the Roman commander who destroyed his family, he finds no peace - until once again his life is changed by two family slaves whom he freed, and a man from Nazareth..

The show - and theatre company - itself breaks down barriers for creatives. Directed and produced by a woman of colour – who also founded the South Devon Players, a not-for-profit theatre company based in Brixham, Torbay, in 2005 and led it to national and international arts awards for previous shows- the show creates opportunities for local Devon actors and creative talent of all backgrounds and levels of experience, to showcase their skills towards, or to further, developing a career in theatre and the arts.

The South Devon Players always welcomes people from the local area who would like to get involved in creating theatre and performances, and love to hear from new people at any time..

Laura, the director and theatre company founder, is also a member of the Equity trade union Directors committee, championing regionally and rurally created theatre on a national scale.

The actors and crew for Ben Hur have worked together since September 2021 on this show, in and around their wider lives, jobs, studies, family commitments, etc; creating the costumes and props mostly from recycled materials; choreographing the big action scenes, in line with advice from historical re-enactors, as well as working on the technical logistics for touring this show. - and all on a budget of selling second hand books and things on ebay, to fundraise.

The group has also welcomed a Sixth Form student from Totnes Steiner School, who first came on a placement to explore what it is like creating theatre, and then who asked to stay for this show.

**END of press release**

**Attachments:**

More information: <https://www.southdevonplayers.com/box-office.html>

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