

THE SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS THEATRE & FILM COMPANY

GENERAL INFORMATION



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WELCOME TO THE SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS THEATRE & FILM COMPANY

“The power of the final scene was such that the audience sat transfixed in silence, barely able to comprehend the beauty of what they’d just witnessed ”

Rick Stone – Audience member, 2019.

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, offers a new approach to theatre-making. Involving people of all levels of experience, from beginners to seasoned professionals, the Players create full scale dramatic productions primarily focussing on historical events and classical texts, which have attracted national awards and international nominations, as well as glowing audience feedback both online and in person, for the productions performed at a variety of venues centering on, but not limited to, the region of South Devon, in the United Kingdom.

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, offers a truly unique experience; taking a pride in creating excellent productions working to the strength of the venues, with painstaking research and attention to detail in perfecting costumes, props and performance, the shows often have a strong interactive element, making the audience feel part of the action.

Based in the beautiful setting of South Devon, showcasing the diverse and considerable talents of local people, our creative use of performance space allows us to create breathtaking, world-class theatre, with our own unique style, while not compromising the production itself. We bring together talented performers, writers, technicians and costume makers, from the Southwest, with enthusiastic, loyal audiences and together, we create magic.

We invite you to be part of the magic. Read on to find out more.



What We Do



At the The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, we make theatre from some of the world's most powerful history, legends and classical texts; stories that help us see the world in new and unexpected ways, while revisiting both much loved classical texts and known historical events, coupled with also exploring commonly overlooked historical events which are invaluable insights into pivotal events which made our community, and world, as it is now.

With a rehearsal base at Chestnut Community Centre, on the edge of our hometown Brixham, we seek to tour our shows out to a variety of exciting performance spaces, mostly to local theatres, but also to museum spaces, and even open-air venues, facilitating accessible, approachable opportunities for people to experience theatre.

Our team members are welcomed regardless of initial experience, sexuality, religion or national origin. What we look for is the desire to create powerful new theatre productions in line with our fundamental values of excellence in performance, alongside personal empowerment; mutual respect between team members and the public; learning and improving new skills; and collaboration with other organisations. Over the course of a typical year, we produce two to four productions, as well as also collaborating with other theatre & film production companies to help our team members find further work in the area, in the creative industries. We also take our community responsibilities very seriously and support external community events, amateur groups, historical and cultural events with our skills, wherever feasible through time and our team members availability. As we are able to build funds and the organisation, the number of productions and collaborations will be able to increase.

We also seek to build an educational, training arm to facilitate accessible training to local people, of a wide range of diverse backgrounds, enabling them to develop strong performance skills to seek employment in the creative industries, and alongside that, develop excellence in transferable skills in communication, self-presentation, self-confidence, teamwork, literacy, and technical skills.

Our productions have won national and regional awards including the all-England Epic Award 2017, the Torbay Together: Creativity In The Community Award 2014, with national and international film festival nominations for our film and video projects, including the Los Angeles Cinefest, Miami Epic Trailer Film Festival, UK Screen One International Film Festival. We are also nominated for an international theatre award in New York.

We are passionate and determined to create high-quality theatre featuring local and regional performers, proving that local people can put on world-class performance.

***“Consistently high-quality shows and films created by a powerhouse of up and coming local talent ” Gerard Christiaans - 5 star Google page rating
It was educational, and entertaining in equal measure ”***

Simon Parks – 5 Star Google page rating



Our Audiences & Marketing Reach

Awards:

Our productions have won international, national and regional awards including the Theatre Partner Award at the Long Island Theatre Awards New York in 2019, the BrixAward for community contribution in 2019, the All-England Epic Award in 2017, the Torbay Together: Creativity In The Community Award in 2014, with national and international film festival nominations for our film and video projects, including the Los Angeles Cinefest, Miami Epic Trailer Film Festival, and the UK Screen One International Film Festival.

Audience Figures for The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company are growing:

- Between June 2018 and Oct 2019, our physical audiences increased by 490%.
- Online followers on social media increased to over 22,000 from 44 countries.
- Audiences grew with both many new attendees, and a high retention of returning audiences from previous shows.
- Audiences are also building abroad with those who cannot attend our shows in person, viewing our stage productions online. These include private individuals, and schools, primarily in the Americas, Middle East, and Asia.

Marketing Reach:

- Online newsletters and social media posts reach over 23,000 people internationally, directly, and many more with shared posts and forwarded messages.
- Printed theatre programmes for each show reach all audiences, around 63% of audience members purchase one. They are often shared when people make group bookings.
- Online sales have increased year on year although box office sales “in person” remain popular.

Audience Profile:

- We have a local physical audience based on regional demographics.
- The average local age is 44, with a higher number of retired people
- An average of 91% of residents are UK born, however in the summer we see an increased footfall from people on holiday due to being a high-tourist area.
- We have a large international following, who follow our shows online using such tools as YouTube or social media feeds. Our current social media following is over 22,080, before counting an organic reach.

Location & physical footfall:

- While our rehearsal venue is a small community centre out-of-town, we ensure that our performances take place at central locations in towns and cities, close to public transport as well as parking.
- Show / project advertising in physical locations is centred on, though not in any way limited to, the town centres & city-centre locations where the shows are taking place. Current shows typically tour South Devon, and then go on to Bristol. We are hoping to expand further as funding and venues permit.

Where it all began: Brief history & Background of the South Devon Players

We were founded during the winter of 2005-2006, by four local actors. Struggling to find opportunities beyond those offered by annual amateur musicals, we decided to start our own.

We started with very little; one of us, who owned a car, was recruited to transport as much as the rest of us could “clear out” at home to a car-boot sale. This gave us starting funds of £80. In the meantime, we also found a small rehearsal space at the local Royal British Legion social club. Researching local history and discovering the court records of a 17th Century scandal in the nearby town of Totnes, provided material for our first script. And thus we began our journey.

Over the years we have encountered many challenges. Despite good reviews for our work, we found it very difficult, as a new organisation, for many years, to find good venues, and were heavily limited by public perceptions of what the quality of a show in a church hall would be like, thus finding ourselves usually performing to audiences of around 10 or 12 people, and unable to attract the programme managers of actual theatres so that they could see our work.

The first big change came in 2013, when we first performed our production of Les Miserables; The Memoirs of Jean Valjean; a script we wrote ourselves, based on Victor Hugos novel. During our tour to local church halls, a producer from London came to see our show. Within 24 hours, he had emailed us, telling us how impressed he was with the show and how more people should see it. He paid for us to take the show to the Palace Theatre in Paignton. We reprised the show, to excellent full-house audiences, who now willingly came, now that they could see us in a theatre instead of a church hall.

The glass ceiling of finding venues was broken. We were slowly able to move away from church halls, and into theatres. More and better venues began to accept us, although some continued to avoid us until more recently, due to our small beginnings, and we continued to slowly grow.

While we have never been able to successfully obtain grant funding to expand as we would have liked, we have survived and managed to grow with scrimping and saving from having stands of plants & bric a brac at table top sales, sponsored activities, etc, and learning how to recycle and repurpose clothing and items obtained from charity shops and on websites such as Freecycle.

We have worked on films, creating our own Arthurian feature film centring on the “dark knight” Mordred, which is now in post-production, and have now completed our production of William Shakespeare's Macbeth, to unfailingly strong reviews, some likening the quality of our productions to those at the Globe Theatre.

We have won national awards such as the All-England Epic Award winner in 2017, a national award which celebrates innovation in grassroots arts, as well as local awards like Torbay Together's Creativity In The Community award.

We have worked with a number of other local organisations, providing actors, historical recreations, photographers, voiceovers, and anything that we could help with, towards a shared goal of increasing participation and opportunity in the local arts.

The ultimate aim is to continue to grow into a successful self- sustaining regional theatre company which is not only providing work for local creatives, but also provides a significant contribution to the creative community of our home region. We welcome anyone who would like to join us on this journey.