

STERTS THEATRE

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Media Release

£100,000 grant helps secure future of Cornish theatre

A major £100,000 grant has helped secure the future of a unique Cornish arts centre.

For more than 24 years, Sterts Theatre at Upton Cross, near Liskeard, has presented a highly-acclaimed mix of home-produced shows and visiting stars. In 2013 more than 15,000 people watched more than 250 performers in 40 different productions.

Performers ranging from local schoolchildren to TV comics like Jo Brand, from Cornish theatre companies to folk superstars Show of Hands, from community companies in shows like *Gonamena* to Cornish community performers in hits like *Oliver!* have graced the open-air stage.

Since 1994, the stage, set in a 400-seater amphitheatre, has been protected from the Cornish summer by an all-weather canopy, but 20 years of wind and rain have done their worst and the structure is in need of replacement.

Sterts' army of volunteers, the people whose dedication and commitment keep the centre going, have been busy fund-raising around £30,000 - and now SITA Cornwall Trust's generous £100,000 grant means the project can be completed.

Sterts chair Glenda Ellis said: "We're extremely grateful to SITA Cornwall Trust for helping ensure the survival of this volunteer-run arts centre in Cornwall. In these challenging times for the arts, such vision for the future, and such regard for the richness the arts can bring to the lives of us all, is a wonderful thing."

The canopy is such an unusual structure it is being custom-built in Germany. The new covering will be delivered and installed in time for Sterts' Summer 2014 season, which starts on 24th May with Cornish Theatre Company Trebiggan's production, *King of the Choughs*.

The season will feature Sterts' usual exciting mixture – there's A-list TV and radio comedian and columnist Mark Steel, plenty of top touring theatre companies including Shakespeare specialists, and four new productions by Sterts' own theatre company, including the evergreen family favourite *Annie*.

2014 will also feature a brand new community play, *Third Light*, commissioned to mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War One. Written by Simon Parker, author of the highly-acclaimed community play *Gonamena*, the show tells the story of the only Cornish community whose soldiers all came home from the war.

There's lots more information on www.sterts.co.uk, and the Box Office is on 01579 362382.

- Editor's Notes: For more help and information, please contact Peter Woodward on 01579 362382.