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# MAKING AN IMPACT

*2025 – The year in review*

# IN 2025 SHERMAN THEATRE WAS ONCE AGAIN AT THE FOREFRONT OF WELSH THEATRE AND THE COUNTRY'S LEADING FORCE IN NEW WRITING.

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Through performances across Wales and in London, showcasing our critically acclaimed productions created under our roof in the heart of Cathays, we have played a key role in raising the profile of Welsh theatre.

We continued to build a strong audience for new writing in Wales, demonstrating that there is a real appetite for distinctive, entertaining writing about the world around us.

An exceptional, ever-growing family of freelancers worked alongside our expert in house team to bring our Made by Sherman productions to life.

We believe in the unifying power of theatre. Our community and young people programmes have inspired and brought people together.

# MADE IN CARDIFF. FOR WALES AND BEYOND.

5  
5 world premiere  
Made by Sherman  
productions of  
plays by Welsh  
and Wales-based  
writers

2  
2 revivals of  
Made by Sherman  
productions due to  
huge public demand

5  
5 co-productions with  
companies across  
Wales and England

4  
4 tours across Wales

197  
We engaged freelancers on  
a total of 197 engagements  
throughout the year



In May 2025, Francesca Goodridge was announced as our new Artistic Director

Our productions were seen across Wales and in London

PORT TALBOT BLACKWOOD WREXHAM  
CHEPSTOW YSTRADGYNLAIS BRECON  
PENYGRAIG BARRY LONDON SWANSEA  
ABERYSTWYTH MILFORD HAVEN MOLD  
CAERNARFON BANGOR

319

319 performances in total  
at Sherman Theatre

200

200 performances of Made by Sherman  
productions at home in Cardiff

72

72 performances of Made  
by Sherman productions in  
London, Swansea or on tour

53,227

53,227 people attended a performance  
at the Sherman





# 32,376

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**32,376 people attended a performance of a  
Made by Sherman production at the Sherman**

# 9,223

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**9,223 people experienced a Made  
by Sherman production in London,  
Swansea or on tour**

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**38% of the total audience  
at Sherman Theatre were  
children or under 25**

# 38%

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**2,373 tickets were sold through our  
Pay What You Want accessible tickets scheme**

# 2,373





# WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCTIONS

## HOT CHICKS

*By Rebecca Jade Hammond*

A co-production with Grand Ambition

Performed in Cardiff and Swansea

★★★★ The Guardian

★★★★ The Stage



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# PORT TALBOT GOTTA BANKSY

By Paul Jenkins and Tracy Harris

A co-production with Theatr3

Performed in Cardiff and on tour  
across south and west Wales



Photo: Mark Douet

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# DYNOLWAITH

By Leo Drayton

A co-production with Frân Wen

Performed in Cardiff and on  
tour across Wales

★★★★ The Guardian

★★★★ The Stage



Photo: Craig Fuller





# THE FROG PRINCE / BIWTI A BROGS

*By* Gwawr Loader

A co-production with Theatr Cymru

Performed in Cardiff and on tour  
across south Wales

Photo: Chillee Noir



# ALICE: RETURN TO WONDERLAND

*By* Hannah McPake

Performed in Cardiff

★★★★ The Guardian

★★★★ The Stage

Photo: Mark Douet



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# REVIVALS

★★★★ The Telegraph ★★★★★ The Stage  
★★★★ Whatsonstage

★★★★ The Financial Times ★★★★★ The London Evening Standard

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## THE WOMEN OF LLANRUMNEY

*By Azuka Oforka*

Presented by Stratford East and Sherman Theatre

Originally produced by Sherman Theatre

Performed in Cardiff and London

Photo: Chuko Cribb

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## HOUSEMATES

★★★★★ The Observer

*By Tim Green*

A co-production with Hijinx

Performed in Cardiff and  
on tour across Wales

Photo: Mark Donet



# RECOGNITION



## SHORTLISTED

Theatre of the Year,  
The Stage Awards  
2025



## STAGE 100

Joe Murphy and Julia Barry  
included in list of most influential  
people in the theatre industry



Takisha Sargent

## WINNER

BEST MUSICAL DIRECTOR  
Black British Theatre  
Awards



Davina Moss

Sherman Theatre  
Literary Manager

## WINNER

Olwen Wymark Theatre  
Encouragement Award



Suzanne Packer and  
Stella-Jane Odoemelam

## NOMINATED

Black British Theatre  
Awards



## TOP 50 SHOWS OF 2025

HOT CHICKS and DYNOLWAITH  
selected in The Stage's list of  
the 50 best shows of the year



## THE BRITISH BLACKLIST

### THE WOMEN OF LLANRUMNEY

was selected by The British  
Blacklist as one of its top  
plays of 2025

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# THE ENGINE ROOM OF WELSH THEATRE

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Sherman Theatre is right at the heart of theatre-making in south Wales. Throughout 2025 our Literary Team continued to develop and nurture Welsh and Wales-based writers at all stages of their careers. The Sherman team supported emerging companies and theatre makers and served as an inclusive and welcoming creative space for the whole sector.







200

Throughout 2025 our  
Literary team interacted  
or worked with more  
than 200 Welsh and  
Wales-based writers



We ran 17 sessions for  
writers which equates  
to more than 36 hours  
of free training

36






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**We read more than 50 scripts by writers neither commissioned nor programmed by the Sherman, showing our wider sector support**



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**We met more than 100 separate writers in one-to-one settings, to talk about their plays and support their career development**



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**We offered more than 300 hours of free writing space to our artists, using the Writers' Room in the building as a shared resource**

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In April 2025, we began a new partnership with Bad Wolf to support the ongoing work of the Sherman's Literary department. In addition to providing vital sponsorship, this partnership will also facilitate a widening of opportunities for writers wanting to create work for stage and screen.

At the Edinburgh Festival Fringe we supported a fourth consecutive emerging Welsh artist or company as part of the Pleasance's Edinburgh National Partnerships programme. **RELAY** by Leila Navabi at the Pleasance Courtyard played to packed houses throughout the run and deeply resonated with audiences.

Alongside this, the Sherman supported the recipients of the Wales in Edinburgh bursaries during their time at the Fringe.

In September 2025, we supported and co-produced **NO MAN'S LAND** by Rachel Trezise with Kyle Stead and RCT Theatres.



# GALVANISING YOUNG PEOPLE

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Our Youth Theatre schemes inspire young participants to make a better world, in their own way. The schemes encourage young people to not just express themselves creatively but also to make an active contribution to the world around them.

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374 sessions run for young people in 2025

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We worked / interacted with 1,372 children and young people across our Youth & Education activity





Photo: Chillee Noir

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We worked collaboratively with Cardiff Council's SAFE Partnership / Youth Endowment Fund around HOT CHICKS to offer creative workshops to vulnerable young people resulting in a sharing of work and gala event at Swansea Grand Theatre with Grand Ambition and YHub.

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In April, the Sherman once again became a hub for young creativity from across south Wales as it hosted its YOUTH THEATRE FESTIVAL showcasing the brightest youth theatre companies, whilst also giving participants an opportunity to meet others and learn new skills.

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In Spring, THE PILOT by Jennifer Lunn, an innovative and inspiring new collaboration united the voices of our two key creative development programmes with one of Wales's leading writers. Award-winning playwright Jennifer Lunn worked with the current cohort of our Introduction to Playwriting programme, for ages 15-18, to develop this bold new play performed by our senior Sherman Youth Theatre members.





Our summer Youth Theatre production **THE HAUNTING OF SHERMAN HOUSE** brought together all of the scheme's age groups on the Studio Stage.

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## theatre works!

In December 2025 we were able to support two schools in Cardiff to bring over 400 young people to enjoy a performance of *Alice: Return to Wonderland*, our Main House Christmas show, thanks to a grant from theatre works!

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## Cardiff Half Marathon

On Sunday 5th October a dedicated group of nine runners took on Cardiff Half Marathon to raise vital funds for the Sherman's Share Your Passion Fund, maintaining affordable access across our creative engagement and outreach work.

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## Moondance Foundation

Over 90 young people have taken part in the Sherman's *Introduction to Playwriting* programme thanks to ongoing support from the Moondance Foundation.

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# BRINGING SOUTH WALES TOGETHER

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Sherman Theatre is a place of connection and empathy, somewhere perspectives can be shared and everyone can feel safe and welcomed. Community programmes are designed to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access theatre and communities can actively participate in and benefit from the unifying force of live theatre.


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We worked with/ interacted  
with **378** community participants



## Our work with communities saw us collaborate with the 38 following organisations:

- ◆ Action for Caerau & Ely (ACE)
- ◆ Actors Workshop
- ◆ Aubergine Arts
- ◆ Cathays Community Centre
- ◆ Cardiff City of Sanctuary
- ◆ Cardiff Council/SAFE Partnership/Youth Endowment Fund
- ◆ Cardiff Foodbank
- ◆ Cardiff and Vale College
- ◆ Cardiff University & Greening Cathays Partners
- ◆ Dovetail Orchestra/Arts Active
- ◆ Breakthrough Arts (Formerly ECSOPA)
- ◆ Frân Wen
- ◆ Grand Ambition
- ◆ Hijinx
- ◆ Home Education Network
- ◆ ILM School
- ◆ Kinetic Theatre
- ◆ Kurdish All Wales Association
- ◆ Llanrumney Hall
- ◆ Mess Up the Mess
- ◆ National Theatre Connections
- ◆ Oasis
- ◆ Oasis One World Choir
- ◆ Platform at Wales Millennium Centre
- ◆ Spare Valleys Kids
- ◆ Taking Flight Deaf Youth Theatre
- ◆ Theatr3
- ◆ Theatre Café
- ◆ Theatr Glo (Merthyr Tydfil College)
- ◆ The Gambas
- ◆ The Wallich
- ◆ Trinity Aurora Collective
- ◆ Somalia Land Organisation
- ◆ Ukrainian Singing Circle
- ◆ Urdd
- ◆ Ysgol Mynydd Bychan



In November, Sherman Theatre retained its status as a **THEATRE OF SANCTUARY**. The award recognised the Sherman as a place where everyone can feel safe and welcome.

130 people joined us in June for our Sanctuary Celebration



THEATRE OF  
**SANCTUARY AWARD**  
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES





In July, our non-professional ensemble Sherman Players staged QUIZ by James Graham

Throughout the year our incredible team of Volunteer Ushers provided our audiences with the warm welcome for which we have become renowned. Through training sessions our Volunteers had the opportunity to learn a diverse range of skills.

The Sherman served as the home of Repair Café Wales Cathays on the first Saturday of each month.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## Arts Capital Investment

In October 2025, we successfully applied for an Arts Capital Investment grant from Arts Council of Wales to support vital building repair work and replacement of ageing equipment.

## Theatres Trust

In February 2025 we were fortunate to be one of nine theatres awarded funding from the Theatres Trust, via the Theatre Improvement Scheme in partnership with the Wolfson Foundation. This support has enabled us to begin the process of upgrading our stage lighting to energy efficient LEDs, helping to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

# ACCESSIBILITY AT THE HEART



## Craidd

Sherman Theatre is proud to be part of the Craidd initiative. Craidd aims for access and inclusion to be at the core of theatre in Wales. The consortium consists of Theatr Clwyd, Sherman Theatre, Pontio, Torch Theatre and Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

## Mobile Connect

In 2025, a Mobile Connect audio enhancement system was installed to make the Sherman more accessible to Deaf and hard of hearing audiences. The addition of Mobile Connect and a hearing loop system in not only our two auditoriums but across our spaces has improved access across the building.

## Deaf Theatre Club

Our vibrant Deaf Theatre Club expanded throughout 2025 and increased engagement.