



**AllWays**  
Traveller

The Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, London UK

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Peter Pan

## Stunning theatre in the open air

**Regent's Park Open Air Theatre**, which is located on the Inner Circle of Regent's Park was founded in 1932 and has been one of London's unique theatrical attractions ever since.

The theatre itself is surrounded by woodland, which is invariably used to great effect as a stage backdrop.

The UK's largest permanent professional outdoor theatre stages a summer programme of drama, comedy and musicals.

Despite having one of the largest audience auditoriums of any London theatre, the tiered seating and overall ambience gives the *Regent's Park Open Air Theatre* a real intimacy and special atmosphere.

**Ashley Gibbins**  
Commissioning Editor, AllWays traveller



A Tale of Two Cities



Henry V



On the Town



# A personal view of the Open Air Theatre



Peter Pan

## A wonderful evening at this theatre - come rain or come shine

By Ashley Gibbins

**Disturbances from the auditorium, be it chattering or mobiles sounding off, can be the bane of the actors life. So off-putting.**

The late, great, Richard Griffiths found this so frustrating he was known to stop a performance to lambast the culprits.

So what to do when the, albeit gently rhythmic disturbance comes from the constant cooing of a pigeon on a branch at stage left.

At this theatre it is par for the course and part of the appeal.

In fact the evening I enjoyed Hobson's Choice, an owl flew across the stage (albeit silently).

One also spots the high flying aircraft soaring into the sunset on their transatlantic crossings and the stars appearing as night time falls.

### An illustrious history

The history of the Open Air Theatre is a truly illustrious one.

In 1932 a play by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini at the New Theatre (now the Noel Coward) 'bombed'.

In desperate need of a production, theatre impresarios Robert Atkins and Sydney Carroll staged a short-run production of *Twelfth Night*.

### An institution is born

When the time came to move out of the new theatre the pair took their production to a makeshift theatre in Regent's Park and a theatrical institution was born.

The following year, in its first full season, the Open Air Theatre revived *Twelfth Night* and staged the first of, many subsequent productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

From then on it was no looking back.

In 1934 George Bernard Shaw wrote *The Six of Calais* for the theatre and, between 1939 and 1945, it was only one of two (with the Windmill) to stay open throughout wartime London.

As Regent's Park Theatre Ltd, the theatre operates as a registered charity.

Over the years the Open Air Theatre has built up an audience of part loyal supporters, part London tourists and, finally, those visiting Regent's Park who manage to take in a performance by chance.

## What you need to know



On the Town

### Getting there

The Regent's Park Open Air Theatre is located in Queen Mary's Garden - within Regent's Park - and is a 10 minute walk from Baker Street underground station.

### The Annual season

The annual season runs from May to September and will attract 140,000 theatre goers.

### The productions

The theatre embraces a wide range of playwrights including: Arthur Miller, Oscar Wilde and Anton Chekhov. It is also well known for its spectacular musical revivals.

In recent years the theatre has produced family shows aimed at introducing younger audiences to the theatre-going experience.

The season is then supplemented by one off evenings of comedy, musical concerts and screenings of film classics.



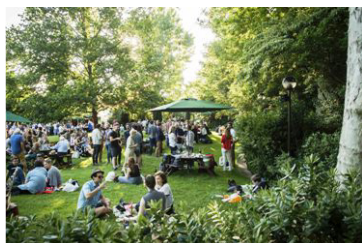
Lord of the Flies

## The first visit is unlikely to be the last

**For London theatregoers like myself, the first visit is not going to be the last.**

To get the absolute most from a visit to Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, one should take a pre-planned approach to each performance.

### Enjoy the park itself



The first thing to do is to arrive at Regent's Park as early as possible so as to be able to enjoy the lakes and gardens themselves.

Those dashing through the park, so as not to miss 'curtain up', will not be able to appreciate one of the world's finest city green spaces.

Even the 10 minute stroll through the park, from Baker Street tube, is a real pleasure.

All the more so if you stop and sit a while.

Swans, ducks, geese, moorhens, coots and heron all vie for your attention, and that bread if you have any.

The nesting season of mid to late spring, when the young chicks and cygnets are about, is a real 'ah look, so cute' time of year.

### Pre-theatre dining alfresco

The Theatre sits in landscaped grounds and provides a dining experience in its own right.

There is an outside picnic lawn, a summer café and a covered dining area circles the whole of one side of the auditorium.

The gates open well in advance of each production and those in the know are ready.

The theatre is more than happy for guests to bring their own picnics and drinks although it does offer an excellent range of dinner dishes and a fully stocked bar - with Pimm's always popular.

### The productions

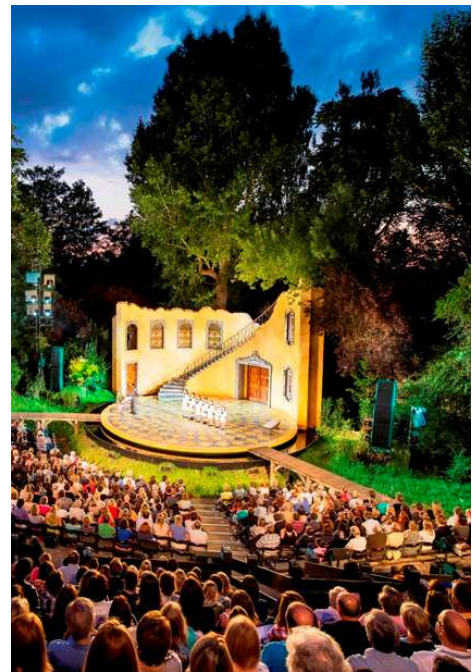
Each season, the theatre offers a balanced blend of classic drama, comedy and musicals.

The casual ambience continues in the auditorium itself.

The comfortable tiered seating offers a fine view of the stage from wherever.

And finally the audio is excellent, which it needs to be with the theatre roofless.

## The auditorium



The Sound of Music

The raked 'arena style' auditorium, with 1,250 new and very comfortable seats, is one of the largest in London.

And yet the unique location of the setting and the casual ambience that prevails makes for an intimate experience.

### Wining and dining

The theatre gates open 90 minutes before matinee and evening performances, excluding *Dinosaur World Live* when it's 30 minutes before.

Visit [openairtheatre.com](http://openairtheatre.com) for exact gate opening times.

The theatre welcomes theatre goers bringing their own food and drink, which can be consumed in the picnic lawn.

You are welcome to take drinks in to the auditorium but are asked that you do not eat during the performance.

Regular visitors to the Regents Park Open Air Theatre invariably make the most of the setting by arriving early to dine or picnic before the performance.

If not, the theatre itself offers an excellent selection of dining options with a summer café, barbecue and bar.

Despite it being in the outdoors, and following customer feedback, the theatre and theatre grounds are completely no smoking.

Those wishing to smoke should ask a member of staff who will let them out of the theatre exit gate.



## The 2018 productions

The 2018 Regent's Park Open Air Theatre season will include:

### Peter Pan

17 May to 15 June 2018



The Olivier Award-nominated production of *Peter Pan* by J. M. Barrie returns 17 May to 15 June. Packed with puppetry and enough theatrical magic to enchant both young and old alike, this "stunning, moving, definitive production is not to be missed" (Time Out)

### The Turn of the Screw

22 to 30 June 2018



*The Turn of the Screw*, a co-production with English National Opera, the story of unearthly encounters at a remote country house, and of a young governess desperate to protect her children, finds chilling new levels of suspense in this unique outdoor production of Benjamin Britten's masterly reworking of Henry James' classic novella.

### As You Like It

6 July to 28 July 2018



Max Webster directs William Shakespeare's warm, open-hearted comedy of adventure, sibling rivalry, mistaken identity and romance - *As You Like It*.

### Little Shop of Horrors

3 August to 15 September 2018



The season concludes with the mean green monster musical *Little Shop of Horrors*. The show, from writers Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, boasts an incredible score, including 'Somewhere That's Green', 'Feed Me', and 'Suddenly Seymour', and it's alive somewhere that's truly green.

### Dinosaur World Live

14 August to 9 September 2018

For children from 3+ there will be daytime performances of *Dinosaur World Live* (), a new interactive 50-minute show for all the family with remarkably life-like dinosaur puppets.

## The weather

Each visit is different depending on the season and weather.

It is a genuine experience to enjoy a performance as the light of the day fades and the stage lighting takes prominence.

And to watch a performance during light rainfall is memorable in itself.

The trick, naturally enough, is on being prepared – be it with sunglasses and suntan lotion, warm clothing and blankets or waterproofs.

Despite the vagaries of the English weather, with the majority of each year's performances are completed.

However, as the stage and auditorium are uncovered, bad weather may result in productions having to stop and re-start.

Productions are never cancelled before the start time but, in cases where one cannot be completed, tickets can be exchanged for another performance or production.

There are no refunds but there is no time limit on exchanging tickets due to weather.

Visit [openairtheatre.com/terms](http://openairtheatre.com/terms) for full terms and conditions.

## Getting tickets and more information



Peter Pan

Information on purchasing tickets can be found on the theatre's website.

[www.openairtheatre.com](http://www.openairtheatre.com)



## A snapshot of productions at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre



Hobson's Choice



On the Town



Jesus Christ Superstar



Ragtime



To Kill a Mockingbird



A Tale of Two Cities

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