# Aberdeen’s Tivoli Theatre showcases youth talent amid rising school discipline concerns



It was dark, and I found myself whispering to a charming Danish woman I had just met moments earlier at the Tivoli Theatre in Aberdeen. The ambience enveloped us as the excitement of the night drew near; we were both eager to witness a matinee performance of the Addams Family musical, featuring young talents from the Aberdeen Youth Music Theatre.

As I adjusted in my cramped seat—part of a dress circle seemingly designed for a different era—my thoughts drifted to the classical charm of the theatre itself. Originally opened in the 19th century as Her Majesty's Opera House, Tivoli is a stunning blend of architectural styles. Its interior captivates with intricate Baroque mouldings, and the vibrant blue and cream colour scheme complements the crimson draperies beautifully. This remarkable venue underwent significant renovations, particularly in the 1910s, when it transitioned from an opera house to a music hall, further enhancing its status as a cultural hub in Aberdeen.

The performance that followed was nothing short of splendid, showcasing the immense talent of the young performers. Among them was my grandson, lauded for his portrayal of Lurch, which drew praise in a local review. The joy in the theatre was palpable as families shared in the emotional experience of celebrating their children on stage. This sense of togetherness was a stark contrast to the troubling narratives surrounding today’s school environments, often marked by violence and disorder.

Aberdeen, like many regions, grapples with issues of increasing misbehaviour in schools; reports from various locales suggest that teachers regularly face harassment, fostering an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. The recent television drama "Adolescence" draws attention to this, portraying chaotic classrooms that feel all too real. Its portrayal serves as a mirror reflecting larger societal issues, such as the difficulty schools face in enforcing discipline and guiding students positively, amid rising concerns over youth misconduct and aggression.

I was reminded of the stark realities outside the theatre that evening. Witnessing a group of youths clad in black hoodies, cycling defiantly in the middle of the road, stirred a feeling of unease. While some may decry such behaviour as mere teenage antics, the prevailing image of intimidation cannot be ignored. The struggle for schools to reclaim authority raises vital questions about the support systems needed to ensure a nurturing environment for all children.

As I reflect on my own schooling, I recall strict teachers who demanded respect and instilled a sense of responsibility among their charges. Their firm approach—rooted in experiences from past conflicts—created an order that seems increasingly elusive today. Education experts argue that students must be challenged, and meaningful consequences imposed, to foster a sense of accountability. The tendency to overlook behavioural issues in favour of nurturing a self-esteem-driven environment may inadvertently pave the way for a culture of entitlement among young people.

The juxtaposition between the joyous celebration within the walls of Tivoli and the troubled realities of local schools speaks volumes. Events like the Addams Family performance illustrate the tremendous potential for youth engagement through the arts, offering an alternative to the chaos that may dominate their daily lives. Encouraging participation in such enriching activities can serve as a vital means of instilling confidence, teamwork, and a sense of community in young people.

As I left the theatre, the hugs and cheers among families echoed loudly, reminding me of the power of these experiences to build bridges and inspire young hearts. In a world fraught with challenges, it is essential that we recognise and cultivate these moments, ensuring that the arts continue to flourish in our communities and provide a safe haven for our youth.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/opinion/6757888/david-knight-addams-family-school-adolescence/)
2. Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.scottishmusichallsociety.com/tivoli-theatre-aberdeen-collection), [[3]](https://www.scottishfield.co.uk/culture/the-scottish-theatre-thats-staging-its-own-comeback/), [[4]](https://doriccolumns.wordpress.com/welcome/aberdeen-city/theatres/), [[5]](https://canmore.org.uk/site/146357/aberdeen-34-48-guild-street-tivoli-theatre), [[7]](https://database.theatrestrust.org.uk/resources/theatres/show/2232-tivoli-theatre-aberdeen)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/opinion/6757888/david-knight-addams-family-school-adolescence/)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/opinion/6757888/david-knight-addams-family-school-adolescence/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/opinion/6757888/david-knight-addams-family-school-adolescence/)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/opinion/6757888/david-knight-addams-family-school-adolescence/)
7. Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/opinion/6757888/david-knight-addams-family-school-adolescence/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/opinion/6757888/david-knight-addams-family-school-adolescence/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.scottishmusichallsociety.com/tivoli-theatre-aberdeen-collection> - This article provides a detailed description of the Tivoli Theatre's interior, highlighting its Greek and Romanesque decorations, blue and cream color scheme, and crimson draperies. It also mentions the balcony's three rows of seats and the gallery's six rows, projecting over the pit, with the gallery running over the balcony to the front. The balcony front is described as an open trellis work of elaborate design, richly gilt, and the ceiling divided into eight semi-circular compartments with a central sun-light. The article emphasizes the theatre's comfort and aesthetic appeal, stating it is one of the best-finished theatres in Scotland.
3. <https://www.scottishfield.co.uk/culture/the-scottish-theatre-thats-staging-its-own-comeback/> - This article discusses the history and restoration of Aberdeen's Tivoli Theatre. Originally opened in 1871 as Her Majesty's Opera House, it was designed by Charles Phipps and James Matthews. The theatre underwent significant refurbishments in 1897 and 1909 by renowned architect Frank Matcham. The article highlights the theatre's architectural features, including its Venetian-style façade and the interior's Baroque mouldings and decoration. It also mentions the theatre's transition from opera house to music hall and variety theatre, and its eventual closure in 1966, followed by a period of disuse until its restoration.
4. <https://doriccolumns.wordpress.com/welcome/aberdeen-city/theatres/> - This article provides historical information about Aberdeen's Tivoli Theatre, originally built as Her Majesty's Theatre & Opera House in 1872 with 800 seats. It was renamed the Tivoli Music Hall in 1910 after a rebuild by Frank Matcham in the mixed Gothic style. The article details the theatre's architecture, including the front wall made of bluish granite with red and yellow freestone, and the use of concrete for the side and back walls. It also mentions the theatre's capacity, stage dimensions, and the involvement of architects James Matthews and Charles J. Phipps in its construction.
5. <https://canmore.org.uk/site/146357/aberdeen-34-48-guild-street-tivoli-theatre> - This entry provides architectural details about the Tivoli Theatre in Aberdeen. It notes that the theatre was opened as 'Her Majesty's Opera House' in 1872 and reopened in 1910 as the Tivoli Theatre. The building is described as having an Italian Renaissance style, with a façade made of Peterhead granite and red and white Turriff freestone. The side and back walls are made of concrete, which is highlighted as a notable feature. The entry also mentions the involvement of architects C.J. Phipps and James Matthews in the original design, and Frank Matcham in the 1910 reconstruction.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/His_Majesty%27s_Theatre,_Aberdeen> - This Wikipedia article provides information about His Majesty's Theatre in Aberdeen, Scotland. Designed by Frank Matcham and opened in 1906, it is the largest theatre in north-east Scotland, seating more than 1,400 people. The article describes the theatre's architecture, including its four-storey construction from Kemnay granite, a copper-domed tower, and a reinforced concrete statue of Tragedy and Comedy at the top of the main facade. The interior is noted for its 'remarkable finely detailed Free Renaissance style' with a 'spacious well-preserved interior, handsomely treated throughout in mixed baroque and neo-Jacobean strapwork decoration, much alabaster and marble.'
7. <https://database.theatrestrust.org.uk/resources/theatres/show/2232-tivoli-theatre-aberdeen> - This entry from the Theatres Trust provides an overview of the Tivoli Theatre in Aberdeen. It describes the theatre as presenting a polychromatic Italian Gothic façade to the street, with the main building being of three storeys and seven bays. The auditorium, which seats approximately 800, is noted for its intimate character, with two balconies and a circular ceiling incorporating four painted panels. The article also mentions the theatre's restoration efforts, including the purchase by the Tivoli Theatre Company Ltd. in 2009 and subsequent repairs funded by the Green Townscape Heritage Initiative, completed in 2012.