

Karen Simpson

Karen has been Director of the Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds since autumn 2013 and will direct her first production Cinderella this autumn. Karen's work as director includes Some Like it Hotter which toured nationally in 2013 (Watermill Theatre, Newbury/Fresh Glory); Vertigo, Jungle Book, Loving April, Hansel and Gretel, River's Up, Peach Boy, Dancing in my Dreams and Alice in Wonderland (Oxfordshire Theatre Company); Two productions and tours of Handful of Henna (Rasa Theatre and Sheffield Theatres).

Karen also directed and produced a range of musical productions for younger audiences including Battina and the Moon, The Minotaur, Eyecatcher, Leopard, The Sound Collector, Shadows on a wall, The Magic Book, Jago's Box, Warrior Square, The Jazz Conductor (Sheffield Theatres); The Ugly Duckling (Nottingham Playhouse); Nanna's Nightingale, Jack and the Junk Box, Jack and the Fir Tree (Haymarket Theatre, Leicester).

Karen founded and was Artistic Director of new writing young people's theatre, Action Transport Theatre in the North West, producing and directing over 60 productions for younger audiences including Castles and Roses, Cover Up, Runaway, Glory, Love Trouble, Sorted, Iyadola's Babies, Peace Maker, Raj and Ship of Fools. She also co-directed outdoor productions of Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Caucasian Chalk Circle, Comedy of Errors and Midsummer Night's Dream; two community plays, The Pool of Dreams and The Big Ditch; and a number of family shows including The Snow Queen, The Ugly Duckling, The Emperor's New Clothes, and Gawain and the Green Knight.

Karen was Artistic Director of Oxfordshire Theatre Company and Action Transport Theatre Company and the Creative Development Director and Education Director for Sheffield Theatres. In 2012 Karen set up her own company, KSP producing new plays The Incredible Doctor Guttman about the founder of the Paralympics, and Twelve Miles from Nowhere inspired by teenagers' experiences of living in rural England, both of which toured nationally.

Karen produced and directed Young Voices with BBC Radio Sheffield.

She trained at Bretton Hall College, taught at a range of universities and drama schools and has been a Board member of Contact Theatre, Manchester and North West Playwrights.