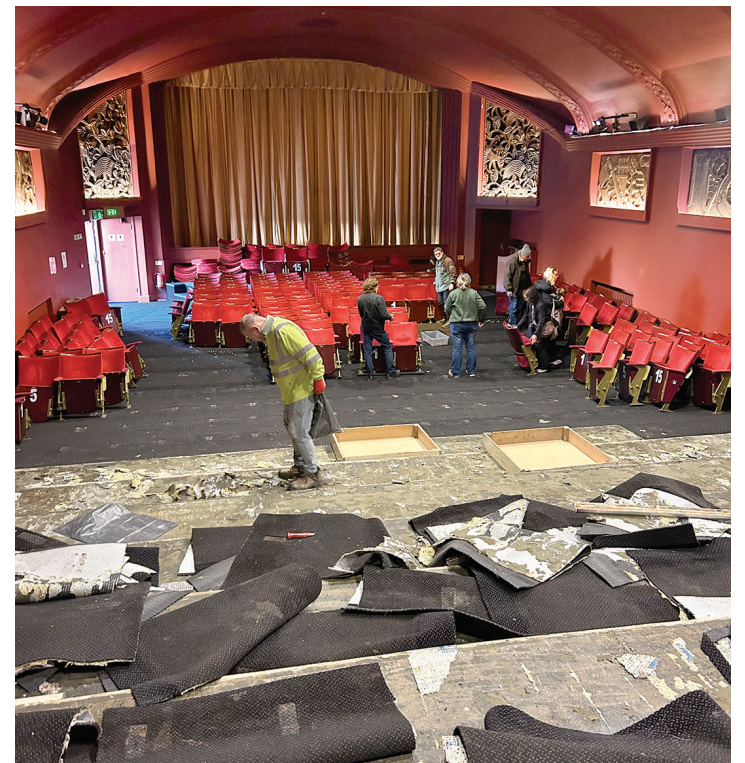




# Phoenix gets ready to fly again



Screen clean: The tiered floor of the cinema's main auditorium is laid bare left, and Phoenix supporters arrive to collect the outgoing red seats. Photos: Mike Coles, Rob Kenny

By John Lawrence

**The Phoenix Cinema is getting ready to reopen to film-goers this month after closing for four weeks to finish construction work on its long-awaited second screen and to refit the main auditorium with all-new seating and an improved sound system.**

Installation and testing is continuing on both screens ahead of a projected re-opening date of Tuesday 17 December. The Phoenix team said the redevelopment will bring the venue up to everyone's expectations of a 21st-century cinema.

### Phoenix unseen

Meanwhile, our photographer Mike Coles got a chance to see the work in progress, capturing the Phoenix as no one's ever seen it before and probably never will again. When he visited late last month, all 250 of the old tip-up seats had been removed from the main screen, leaving just the bare floor on view.

This tiered surface, dating back to the 1930s when the current auditorium was installed, will be reorganised to accommodate 188 larger and more comfortable seats. There will be new carpeting throughout, an upgraded sound system and a

new bar kiosk.

Film fans and friends of the Phoenix who wanted to save a part of its history were able to come along and take away single or double seats in exchange for a donation. Executive director Rob Kenny said he was blown away by how many people turned up.

One of those who took a double seat was Nadia Savvopoulou. She said: "I have watched many films at the Phoenix and it is my favourite cinema in London. I got two seats to preserve a piece of this unique cinema's history."

### Immersive

At the same time, 23 seats

will be installed in the new second screen, which occupies the former café space. Rob said: "This will be a game changer, allowing us to host even more diverse films and events, and to offer the space out for private hire. This screen will also boast large, modern cinema seats, a brand-new 2K Laser projector, and an immersive 7.1 surround sound system." Once the two screens reopen, the Phoenix also has plans to refurbish the main entrance foyer and the toilets, probably starting in March.

### Coming soon

Major movies lined up once the foyer doors are open again

include Oscar-contender *Conclave*, based on the bestselling 2016 novel by Robert Harris and starring Ralph Fiennes and Stanley Tucci. For the whole family there will be *Paddington* in Peru and seasonal classics *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Three Wishes for Cinderella*.

### Live arts

The live arts schedule includes Peter Wright's much-loved production of *The Nutcracker* from the Royal Ballet and a screening of *Tosca* from the Met Opera in New York.

Then January will bring *We Live in Time*, starring Andrew Garfield and Florence Pugh, *The Brutalist* starring Adrien Brody and Mike Leigh's *Hard Truths*, filmed partly in East Finchley last year.

Keep an eye on the cinema's website for the confirmed re-opening date and ticket sales. Rob added: "Your continued support is invaluable as we work to bring the Phoenix to new heights. We can't wait to welcome you back soon." Visit [www.phoenixcinema.co.uk](http://www.phoenixcinema.co.uk)



Inner space: The new second screen waits to be fitted  
Photo Mike Coles

## Will all be well?

Theatre in the Square, who rehearse at East Finchley Methodist Church on the High Road, are performing *All's Well That Ends Well* by William Shakespeare this month.

A play that poses ethical dilemmas that require more than simple solutions, it is one of the Bard's lesser-known but most beguiling comedies. Performances are at St Mary's Church, Church End, Hendon, London, NW4 4JT on 4 and 5 December 2024 at 7.30pm and on 6 December at 4.30pm. Tickets are available online

at [www.theatreinthesquare.org](http://www.theatreinthesquare.org) priced £13 with the usual concessions.

Formed 57 years ago to provide amateur drama opportunities in north London, Theatre in the Square puts on three to four productions each year. For further information, contact the group at [info@theatreinthesquare.org](mailto:info@theatreinthesquare.org)

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