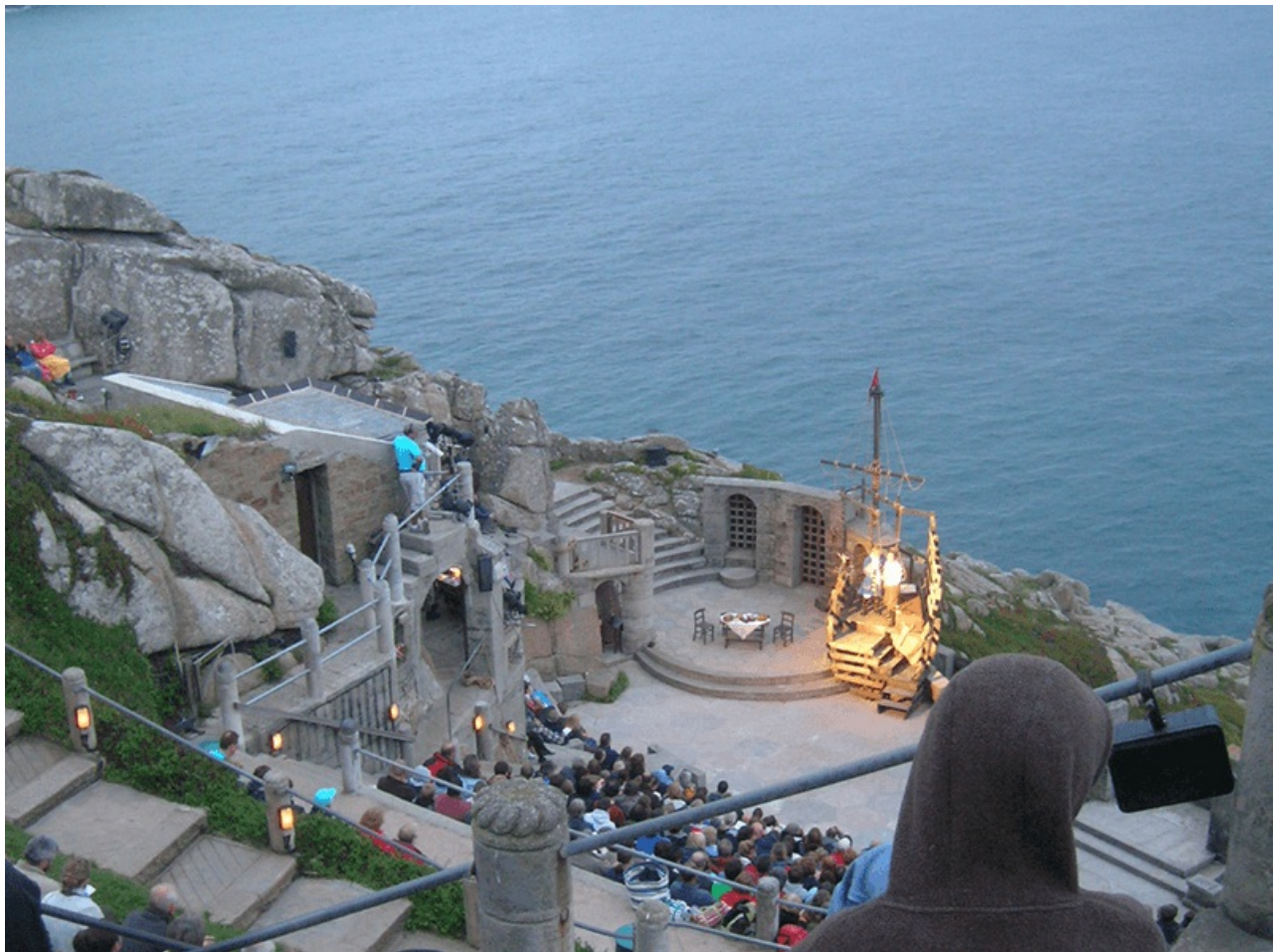


Mystical Minack Theatre, Cornwall, England

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By Melody Wren

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Several years ago we rented a house in Cornwall for a month which gave us loads of time to explore the gorgeous beaches, to enjoy local fish, and explore the area. One of the best evenings was spent at the Minack Theatre, a remarkable clifftop venue that overlooks Porthcurno beach, and is a working open air theatre.

The architectural wonder is carved out of the cliffs with a granite outcrop jutting out over the Atlantic Ocean. Four miles from Land's End, there are the most incredible views of the sea imaginable. The summer theatre season runs from May to September presenting drama, musicals and opera, mostly traditional type plays including *Wind in the Willows*, *The Secret Garden*, and *the Tempest*.

It was created by Rowena Cade in the 1930s, built almost single handedly by her and two local craftsmen. The Minack also has a spectacular cliff-side garden filled with succulents that thrive so well in this part of the world.

As we sat perched on the steep, omigod, such steep seats, I pondered the possibility of having to get up to use the facilities and decided against it, imagining plummeting down, across the stage and into the deep sea beyond.

As the night drew its dark curtain behind the stage and around us, it was an amazing experience to watch the moon come up over the sea, and enjoy the changing light. The stars appeared as spotlights and the theatre took on a mystical quality. We could just see the lights on boats in the sea, as we enjoyed "Gulliver's Travels" in the most unlikely of settings.

www.minack.com