

## **Hazlitt Arts Centre - The Spirit of the Age**

Rob West

There is a distinctive feel about the architecture at the Hazlitt Arts Centre in Maidstone, Kent. The venue, which reopened in May 2009 following a short refurbishment programme, appears embedded amongst niche shops that are perfect for boutique browsers such as myself. Another short trip through an unmanageable procession of facts and proofs will lead you to some interesting historical roots, which highlight the particular problem the Centre has been facing.

In 1869 a concert hall was erected in Maidstone using old stone columns from the original market place. The venue went on to become a popular dance hall in the 1920s and 30s before its transformation into Maidstone's municipal theatre – the Hazlitt Theatre – in 1955.

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