Vivienne McKee - a biography



Education

Vivienne was born in England and brought up in Britain, France, The USA and Australia. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree (Cand.Mag.)in Drama and French from Bristol University and then graduated as an actor at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. In between early acting jobs she also qualified as a Blue Badge London Tourist guide.

Early career

Vivienne was very successful in Britain in theatre, television (including such long-running TV series as "Coronation Street" and "Crossroads") and films (including "Slipper and the Rose" with Richard Chamberlain) before marrying a Dane and moving to Copenhagen. She began her Danish career at the Danish Royal Theatre as assistant to the renowned Danish theatre director Sam Besekow. She also worked as an actor, initially playing roles which did not require a perfect danish accent! CLICK TO SEE FULL CV

The English Theatre of Copenhagen

In 1982, together with her husband as administrator, Vivienne established her own theatre company, the English Theatre of Copenhagen - calling it THE LONDON TOAST THEATRE, with the specific aim of

providing English-speaking theatre productions to a Danish audience. The theatre company is now today a well-knoown and highly respected part the professional Danish Theatre world. Vivienne directs or acts, (or both!) in all of the English language productions produced by her theatre company. Shows which range from Shakespeare to new modern writers and to light entertainment.

The Crazy Christmas Cabaret

Vivienne really made her mark in Denmark with her popular Christmas shows called The Crazy Christmas Cabaret. These shows, with their "Monty Python-style" anarchic humour, gained a cult-like status in Denmark and southern Sweden and even further afield. Almost every year from 1982 - 2025 Vivienne wrote a new plot based on a well-known tale or theme, and she directed and also performed in these comedies every year. She started the cult shows in 1982 in a tiny studio theatre in the heart of Copenhagen and the shows became one of the most popular musical comedies in Denmark at Christmas - with sold-out performances playing to around 50.000 a year. These spectacular and hilariously funny shows was from 1998 for 25 years presented every year in the magnificent Glassalen Theatre (Glass Hall) in Tivoli Gardens as part of their traditional Danish Christmas, but in 2025 the show moved to the super cool Bremen Teater for the very last Crazy Christmas show. The shows were advertised as "the only crazy way to enjoy Christmas" and many Danes believed that Christmas was not complete if they hadn't managed to get a ticket to see The Crazy Christmas Cabaret.

Other writing and directing

Apart from entertaining the Danish audiences with her own shows in English, Vivienne also writes and directs plays in danish for Danish theatre companies and for television. She wrote a show based on George Gershwin's life and music - "S'WONDERFUL" and Cole Porter's life and music - "OH BABY IT'S COLE!" which she also directed for television - and which led to a highly successful national tour with an all-star danish cast. She has written five large-scale musicals (book, dialogue and song lyrics) all of which have been on nationwide tours - one of which is based on a fictitious meeting between H.C. Andersen and Søren Kierkegaard, which was commissioned as part of the Danish Cultural Year in 1996. In 1992 Vivienne, was awarded the Herman Bang Award for her "contribution to Danish Theatre". Most recently Vivienne was praised for her version of the new classic "Shirley Valentine" at Teatret ved Sorte Hest and her own one-woman show based on the legendary twentieth century war correspondent and third wife of Ernest Hemingway - Martha Gellhorn - entitled "DON'T MENTION HEMINGWAY" and in 2016, to mark the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare’s death, Vivienne presented the world premiere of her new play “SHAKESPEARE’S GHOST “ that examined the mystery surrounding the playwright who wrote the greatest works of English literature. This play reveals an astonishing side of the man known as William Shakespeare and received excellent critical praise. Both "Shakespeare's Ghost" and "Shirley Valentine" was on the bill again in the autumn / winter of 2024 at one of the most lovely theatres in Copenhagen, Teatret ved Sorte Hest, where Vivienne in the fall of 2026 will present her new version of George Orwell's iconic story, ANIMAL FARM.

Voice-over

Vivienne's energy is well-known and therefore she has not simply confined herself to writing and producing for the theatre Her voice-over company SPEAKER'S CORNER provides English and American voices for commercials, cartoons and documentaries. She herself provides the voice for, amongst others, Diana, the boss in the HITMAN computer game series, the information voice on

ORANGE telephones and for the DSB trains all over Denmark and Sweden.

Corporate Entertainment

Vivienne has also created a company which can provide entertainment for companies, corporate events and international conferences in the form of Murder Mystery evenings and weekends with her team of comedy impro actors; stand-up comedy shows; tailor-made corporate entertainment and team-building for international events.

Stand Up Comedy

In the Danish business world, Vivienne's own stand-up comedy solo shows "Killing the danes" and "Vivienne Tells All" plus her skill as a compere/presenter is popular for gala dinners, product launches,, conferences, Christmas parties and other large events. She explains in a humorous way what makes Danes "tick" and thereby helps foreign guests to reach a better understanding of their hosts!

Vivienne lives in London and Copenhagen and has a passion for travelling and experiencing different cultures and meeting people from all over the world. As she says: "Life is not a rehearsal - it's a one-off continuous show - so go for it ! "

Vivienne as Goodwill Ambassador for More International Export Talents

“International talents can bring colours, culture, variety and export adventures into Danish companies – so I believe”



Full CV

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Vivienne McKee

1968-71 Bristol University –Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Teatervidenskab og Fransk

1971-72 Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (én af de 4 store teaterskoler i England)

1973-79 Arbejder ekstensivt i repertoireteatre og musical teatre i bl.a. Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream (Titania), Pinter's "A Birthday Party" lead role - London og på turne I Denmark, "Dracula", The Canterbury Tales, Bristol Old Vic Theatre, " Pal Joey" Musical - lead role, Kings Theatre Edinburgh og på turne), "Jack and the Beanstalk" - (Jack) Manchester Opera House. Hovedrolle i Mike Leigh's samfundssatiriske "Abigails Party".

1975-79 Arbejder meget på TV, bl.a. hovedrolle i kriminalserien "The XYY Man", samt diverse dramatiske TV-roller i bl.a. "A Horseman Riding By", og "Coronation Street, "Crossroads" - og på film, bl.a. prinsessen i Bryan Forbes' Askepothistorie "The Slipper and the Rose" overfor Richard Chamberlain.

1980-82 Flytter til Danmark. Arbejder som assistent for Sam Besekow på Det Kgl. Teater og har der roller i "Historien om en Hest" og "Jøsses Piger" og underviser på Cafe Teatrets Dramaskole

1982 Grundlægger London Toast Theatre www.londontoast.dk

1982-2025 "The Crazy Christmas Cabaret" Vivienne skriver, instruerer og medvirker hvert år i disse forestillinger på Café Teatret, Jazzhus Slukefter, Daddy's Dancehall, Kridthuset, Musikhuset Aarhus,

Hermanns, 25 år i Glassalen, Tivoli og sidst men ikke mindst senest i “Kiss Bang Bang” på Bremen Teater i 2025

Medvirker desuden i et hav af danske film og TVproduktioner samt i de fleste af London Toast Theatre’s andre produktioner bl.a.

1983 ”Decadence” – Stephen Berkoff – Comediehuset – instruktør Niels Skjoldager

1883/84 ”Man Friday” – Adrian Mitchell – Københavneren/Arbejdermuseet/Turné – skuespiller/instruktør Vivienne McKee

1984 ”Lie Detectors” – Natalie Meltzer – Betty Nansen – instruktør Vivienne McKee

1984 “When the Wind Blows” Raymond Briggs – Saltlageret – Peter Bensted/Ves Harper

1985 “Annie Wobbler” – Arnold Wesker – Comediehuset – Emmet Feigenberg

1985 ”Woza Albert” – Percy Mtwa – Café Teatret – Peter Bensted /Vivienne McKee

1986 “S´Wonderful “- Gershwin Cabaret på Søpavillionen - skrevet og instrueret

1986 ”Game, Set & Match” – Comediehuset. Harold Pinter, Mike Leigh, Alan Ayckbourn m.fl.,sammensat af Vivienne McKee, som også instruerer.

1987 ”Insignificance” – Terry Johnson – Comediehuset – instruktør

1987 “Swimmingpools I Krig” – Yves Navarre – Comediehuset – instruktør

1989 “Between East and West” – Richard Nelson – Betty Nansen – instruktør Sam Besekow

1991 “Table Manners” – Alan Ayckbourn – instruktør Kevin Robinson

1992 “As you Like It” – William Shakespeare – Kanonhallen – instruktør Kevin Robinson, spillede hovedrolle - Rosalind

1993 “Macbeth” – William Shakespeare – Kridthuset – spiller Lady MacBeth og instruere

1994 “Betrayal” – Harold Pinter – instruktør Paul Spence

1995 “Intimate Exchanges 1” – Alan Ayckbourn - Sceneriet , Det Ny Teater – skuespiller/instruktør Paul Spence

1997 ”Intimate Exchanges 2” – Alan Ayckbourn – Sceneriet , Det Ny Teater – instruktør Barry McKenna

1998 ”Dead Serious” – Doug Greenall – Sceneriet, Det Ny Teater – skuespiller/instruktør

1999 “Conversations in Hollywood” – Rob Long - Magstræde. Instruktør Niels Anders Thorn

2000 “Educating Rita” – Willy Russell – Husets teater i Magstæde – instruktør

2001 ”Mac’n Beth” – Shakespeare - Magstræde - dramaturg, skuespiller og instruktør Vivienne McKee -

2002 ”Game, Set & Match” – Magstræde - skuespiller /forfatter/ instruktør

2004 ”Earnest” – baseret på Oscar Wilde’s “Bunbury “ – Glassalen, Tivoli. Turne til Edinburgh Festival – skuespiller / instruktør Vivienne McKee

2006 “Don’t Mention Hemingway” – Vivienne McKee – Boxen, Folketeatret – one woman show om Martha Gelhorn, krigskorrespondent. Forfatter /skuespiller

2010 “Viva Vivienne” – Glassalen, Tivoli – autobiografisk one woman show

2014 “Don’t Mention Hemingway” – Teatret ved Sorte Hest

2014 "Nordic Noir Double Take" - double bill på Riverside Studios, London med Claes Bang, “Ondskaben“ og “Killing the Danes “, forefatter/skuespiller

2014 "Killing the Danes" for Cph Stage Theatre Festival - Teatret ved Sorte Hest samt på the Cph Stage Night Cabaret - Folketeatrets Hippodromen

2014 ”Copenhagen” – Michael Frayn, om Niels Bohr, bearbejdet af Vivienne McKee m. forfatterens tilladelse – Aarhus Universitet og i haven ved Carlsbergs Æresbolig.

2016 "Shakespeare's Ghost" nyskrevet skuespil af Vivienne McKee uropført på Teatret ved Sorte Hest - instruktør

2017 "Hamlet" Shakespeare. Queen Gertrude på Kronborg Castle for Shakespeare Festival. Instruktion Lars Romann Engel

2019 "Baby - It's Cole" Cole Porter cabaret skrevet og instrueret af Vivienne McKee

2022 "Shirley Valentine" Teatret ved Sorte Hest - skuespiller. Instruktør Helen Tennison.

1982 - 2024 Solo Stand up comedy shows i Danmark, UK, Sverige, Norge, Tyskland, Indien, Chile mfl. Forfatter/skuespiller/instruktør

1992 Modtager af Herman Bang prisen for hendes "contribution to Danish Theatre”.

2020 Årets modtager af Teaterflisen på Frederiksberg Alle
https://frederiksbergfonden.dk/2020/12/15/vivienne-mckee-modtog-teaterflisen/

2022 Tildelt SÆSONENS KVINDELIGE HOVEDROLLEPRÆSTATION 2021/22 på CPH CULTURE
http://www.cphculture.dk/d495teaterseason2122.html

2023 Nomineret til Årets Entertainer CPH CULTURE.

2025 Vinder Årets Entertainer med David Bateson of Andrew Jeffers CPH CULTURE.