



Southwark and Tower Hamlets Children Take Centre Stage

A £20,000 grant from the Jack Petchey Foundation will enable more young people from Southwark and Tower Hamlets to develop their drama skills at the Unicorn Theatre.

The generous support from the Jack Petchey Foundation, the grant making trust benefiting young people in London and Essex, will enable the Unicorn to increase the number of young people that can participate in its Youth Theatre, as well as create a brand new Unicorn Young Company for 16-18 year olds.

Unicorn's Youth Theatre gives children and teenagers from the boroughs of Southwark and Tower Hamlets the opportunity to work alongside theatre professionals in the Unicorn's state-of-the-art theatre building near Tower Bridge. This grant award means that, as of September 2008, as many as 60 local children and teenagers can take part in weekly theatre workshops that culminate in end-of-term performances.

Emma Higham, co-ordinator of Unicorn's Youth Theatre, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for us to involve more young people in our theatre. We've had a waiting list for over a year of people who wanted to join but we simply couldn't accommodate them. This grant not only allows us to sign up more 11-13 year olds, but also add a new age range for 16-18 year olds who will work closely with the theatre's artistic team and explore key roles such as play writing, directing and acting."

Andrew Billington, the Jack Petchey Foundation's Director, said: "The Jack Petchey Foundation is delighted to be able to support the Unicorn Theatre, which is instrumental in making theatre productions accessible for young people and in encouraging them to participate in the performing arts."

The Jack Petchey Foundation will present the cheque to the Unicorn Theatre at a special ceremony on the 21st February 2008.

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Photo/interview opportunity

Event: Presentation of a £20,000 grant from the Jack Petchey Foundation to the Unicorn Theatre

Time: 1.30pm

Date: Thursday, February 21 2008

Location: Unicorn Theatre, 147 Tooley Street, More London, Southwark, London SE1 2HZ

To confirm your attendance and for more information please contact Vid Simoniti, Press & Marketing Assistant, on 020 7645 0545 or vid.simoniti@unicorntheatre.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Jack Petchey Foundation

The Jack Petchey Foundation was established in 1999 by the successful East London entrepreneur, Jack Petchey OBE. It is a young, progressive grant making trust based in Ilford, Essex and it is now among the largest charitable organisations in London, focussing on projects which benefit 11-25 year olds. The main area of operation is the London boroughs and Essex, where it currently operates in 1,600 secondary schools and youth clubs.

According to the Sunday Times Rich List, Jack Petchey is among the country's top 12 most generous givers. Mr Petchey is a self made millionaire who set up the Foundation in order to find worthy children's causes to which he could donate his millions. The grant budget for 2008 is over £20 million, with over £60 million having been given since it was founded.

The Foundation's main methods of grant support are: Achievement Awards, Leader Awards, Project Grants and Sponsorship. For further details visit www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk.

For further information about the Jack Petchey Foundation and interviews with Chris Bullock, please contact Chris Rogers and Sofia Colussi on 020 7822 0200 or email cr@redleafpr.com

Unicorn Theatre

The Unicorn Theatre is one of the leading producers of professional theatre for children and young people in the UK. Situated on the south bank of the Thames, it is the only purpose-built theatre for young people in London.

The Unicorn creates six productions each year as well as presenting the work of other leading UK companies. An international programme brings some of the world's best theatre to London, welcoming companies from Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, South Africa and Japan. The theatre also runs an extensive educational programme, including a youth theatre for local children and teenagers.

Originally set up in 1947 by Caryl Jenner, the Unicorn has grown from a small touring company operating from the back of an army surplus van to the country's flagship theatre for young people in a modern, state-of-the-art building.

For further information about the Unicorn Theatre, please contact Vid Simoniti on 020 7645 0545 or vid.simoniti@unicorntheatre.com