

PRESS AT THE OLD VIC

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7 July 2019

THE OLD VIC CONFIRMS PROPOSAL FOR THE LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH AND SOUTHWARK TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW ARTS HUB, PLUS GLENDA JACKSON ANNOUNCED AS NEW TRUSTEE

The Old Vic is a world-famous iconic theatre with a strong social mission operating at the heart of its local community. For over 200 years this cultural landmark and independent not-for-profit charity, has provided inspiration for people from all walks of life to be entertained, to learn, and to engage with others around them. The Old Vic is both an indispensable part of the nation's cultural landscape and a crucial lifeline for local people who take part in the range of freely available social mobility, employability and community engagement projects each year.

Today, as the works to upgrade accessibility and double the ladies' loos provision nears completion, the theatre announces plans for the next phase of its programme of investment and renewal – a £12m Annex that will open up opportunities for the local community and young people from across London.

It is proposed that The Annex will be backed via a unique partnership with the two local London boroughs which it predominantly serves: Lambeth and Southwark. If approved, the partnership will be an innovative cross-borough funding arrangement which would see each borough loan the theatre £3.75m* towards the £12m total required. At their meeting on 16 July, Southwark Cabinet will consider plans to approve the loan which will be paid back over a 10-year period. Lambeth Council is set to consider making a similar loan on 22 July. If greenlit, the partnership will provide millions of pounds' worth of social value for those who live and work in both boroughs. The Old Vic will fundraise to repay the loan over a 10-year period through philanthropic support – in addition to meeting its annual revenue requirement of £4m fundraising income.

Executive Director, Kate Varah, said, ***'The Annex is a once in a generation opportunity. With the visionary collaboration of Lambeth and Southwark Councils, we will together ensure that this vibrant theatre sustains financially and that its wide-reaching social engagement is so deeply embedded that there can never be any doubt about the value of The Old Vic to those it serves: a civic resource, a beacon for cultural adventure, a place where everyone can explore in an environment where they feel truly welcome'***

Cllr Jack Hopkins, Lambeth Council Leader, said, ***'The Old Vic is a cultural icon and we are incredibly proud to have it in Lambeth on the boundary with Southwark. Increasingly our role as a Council is to harness the energy and dynamism of the borough in a way that benefits all our communities. We are determined to open up our creative industries to the diverse, but often under-represented, talented young people in the borough, particularly those from BAME backgrounds. Partnerships with organisations such as The Old Vic are crucial if we are going to achieve that. As a result I believe that the support we are set to discuss providing The Old Vic for this project matches our important goals and ambitions for the community'***

Cllr Rebecca Lury, Southwark's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Equalities and Communities, said, ***'Southwark has a long-standing and positive relationship with The Old Vic, which has helped many young people in Southwark gain unique and valuable insight into the world of theatre. We have promised to make sure Southwark residents are able to thrive and take advantage of the many opportunities on their doorstep. This exciting arrangement with The Old Vic is just one part of this; delivering jobs, skills and training for our young people, and opening up the world of culture to a wider and more diverse group of people'***

THE ANNEX

The Old Vic holds the belief that experiencing and participating in the arts can make a genuine difference to an individual's well-being, attainment, sense of community and employment prospects. Currently, 18% of the theatre's audience is made up of local people. 10,000 local people a year also benefit from The Old Vic's award-winning social engagement programme. Specifically, the theatre has been working within the communities of Lambeth and Southwark

* Repaid over 10 years with an option to pay early. This loan is at no expense to the public purse.

to support growth, employment, social mobility and education enrichment through a range of life-changing projects that include employability programmes such as Front Line and Take the Lead; educational programmes such as Schools Club and Summer School; and community-based programmes such as Matinee Idols and Curtain Up.

Lambeth and Southwark residents are represented across 100% of the education and community projects run by the theatre, which places The Old Vic in a unique position to significantly and positively impact the local area's growing need for social and economic support. However, the lack of physical space is currently a major barrier to realising the true potential of this work, with most projects taking place off-site. Through the development of The Annex, a new five-storey space, the expansion will not only enable the theatre to increase its vital education and community work but, for the first time, it will create the space for these programmes to run on site. It will bring the work right back into the heart of the theatre and, in addition, The Annex will provide the space for a programme of necessary new projects, doubling the theatre's societal impact, with a focus on addressing the complex and urgent needs of the local community.

Through the creation of The Annex, The Old Vic will double the current number of people benefitting from its work each year, as well as thousands more who will drop in to the lively Café-Workspace to eat, drink, work and socialise. This will also provide an ongoing income stream which will help sustain the unsubsidised theatre as it continues to commission new work, take risks with its artistic programme, and offer affordable ticket prices.

Crucially, The Annex will include a Clore Learning Centre for schools and colleges with integrated education offices, a library of playtexts freely available to schools and visitors, and much-needed back of house space for The Old Vic's staff and companies. The theatre will gain the ability to mount studio theatre-style performances, diversifying the offer with intimate drama, music, comedy and dance.

The theatre has already raised £1m towards this phase with a proposal to deliver The Annex by 2022. If Council loan funding is secured later this month, fundraising will continue thereafter. The Annex is a vital part of the long-term restoration and modernisation plans to ensure The Old Vic thrives for future generations.

NEW TRUSTEE

As the theatre looks to create this strong, independent future, The Old Vic is also delighted to announce the appointment of the two-time Academy Award-winning actress Glenda Jackson to The Old Vic Board of Trustees. On her appointment Glenda said, ***'It is a privilege to be appointed to The Old Vic's Board. Working on its stage has always brought me great joy and to now have the opportunity to help support its future is a responsibility that I take very seriously. Providing young people with opportunities to access the arts is vital if we are to educate effectively, inspire creative imagination and equip them with the skills to navigate through life. The Old Vic's recognition of this is inspiring and I look forward to working with them to make their future plans a reality'***

Artistic Director, Matthew Warchus, said, ***'At this crucial moment in the theatre's history, we are privileged to have Glenda Jackson join The Old Vic Board of Trustees. As we work to support and consolidate the identity of The Old Vic as an artistic powerhouse with a driving social mission through the creation of The Annex, allowing more people than ever to engage with our work, we welcome Glenda's invaluable experience as a performer of the highest calibre, a seasoned politician and a dedicated social campaigner'***

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

ABOUT THE OLD VIC

The Old Vic aims to be surprising, unpredictable, ground-breaking, rule-breaking, independent, accessible and uplifting.

Today, Artistic Director Matthew Warchus is building on 200 years of creative adventure.

The Old Vic is mercurial: it can transform into a theatre in-the-round, a space for music and comedy, has played host to opera, dance, cinema, music hall, classical dramas, variety, big spectacles and novelty acts. It was the original home of the English National Opera, Sadler's Wells and the National Theatre. It has also been a tavern, a college, a coffee house, a lecture hall and a meeting place.

All of this is now in the bones of the building and is as important a part of its open-armed, inclusive, welcoming personality as its grand historic décor and the iconic performances and famous productions it has housed.

The Old Vic is a not-for-profit theatre operating a breakeven budget in a historic, Grade II* listed building with the help of £4m of philanthropic support every year from our generous supporters. We produce and present five to seven diverse productions every Season, enhanced by a vibrant programme of One Voice monologues, Voices Off talks, Lates and day-time events for Families. Off stage we engage with over 10,000 people a year from across the UK through our award-winning education, employability and community work.

We hold the belief that theatre needs to be supported and shared by as many people as possible. Our 1,000 seats are yours from £10 a ticket. Our productions are adventurous, new, epic, exciting. Our education, community and talent programmes allow students to explore and artists of tomorrow to create. Our building is open and alive day and night. Our theatre is yours.