

# PRESS RELEASE

## Records Tumble in Theatreland

The West End Theatre industry today is celebrating the news that 2006 was a record year on three fronts: number of attendances, ticket revenue, and advance booking revenue.

The record-breaking performance is largely due to an unprecedented period of box office success in the second half of the year; the six months to December saw several high-profile shows open which continue to attract many first time attenders to the West End, vital to theatre's future health and prosperity.

Figures released by The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) show that total attendances in the major commercial and grant-aided theatres of Central London for 2006 stood at 12,357,153, an increase of 0.48% on the previous record year of 2005.

Total ticket revenues broke through the £400 million mark for the first time, with the final figure of £400,802,809 being 4.78% up on 2005. The year ended with Advance Ticket Bookings at an unheard-of £57 million, more than double that at the end of 2005.

Among those welcoming the figures will be HM Treasury who last year received record VAT receipts of over £59 million from ticket sales alone. Related industries such as the travel, hotel and restaurant sectors have also benefited from the reinvigorated West End theatre scene.

Commenting on the figures, SOLT President Rosemary Squire said:

“At the six month mark, the industry was braced for a very tough 2006 with audience numbers – and in particular visitor numbers to London - still depressed from the difficult days of the previous year. That the industry has bounced back so spectacularly gives us great hope for the future – and a great boost to the London economy.”

SOLT Chief Executive Richard Pulford added:

“These figures – and in particular those for the last six months – show that there is still an incredible public demand for quality theatre in the West End.”

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**Editors notes:**

Box Office figures are compiled on behalf of the industry by the Society of London Theatre, and relate to the 53 theatres, both Commercial and Grant-aided, in Central London.

**The Society of London Theatre**

Founded in 1908 by Sir Charles Wyndham, the Society of London Theatre is the trade association which represents the producers, theatre owners and managers of the major commercial and grant-aided theatres in central London. Today the Society combines its long-standing roles in such areas as industrial relations and legal advice for members with a campaigning role for the industry, together with a wide range of audience-development programmes to promote theatre-going.

Two major events in the West End calendar are currently taking place:

**The Laurence Olivier Awards**

Nominations for the 31st Laurence Olivier Awards which reward excellence on the London Stage were announced on 18<sup>th</sup> January ahead of the Awards Ceremony on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London. For full details, visit [www.olivierawards.co.uk](http://www.olivierawards.co.uk) or contact Eleanor Johnsey or Katy Macmillan at Colman Getty PR Tel 020 7631 2666.

**Get Into London Theatre.**

This annual promotion, aimed at encouraging new or occasional theatregoers to experience West End Theatre, is now in its sixth year. Instigated by the Mayor of London in the wake of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, it has now become a much-loved part of the theatrical year with thousands of people beginning the year with specially discounted trips to London theatre. For full details, visit [getintolondontheatre.com](http://getintolondontheatre.com) or contact: Louise Drabwell/Susanna Underwood at Rare Communications Tel 020 7483 2500.