



**Media release 26.2.07**

## **LONDON THEATRE INVESTS £450,000 IN AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT**

The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) today announces a substantial grant of £450K to Mousetrap Theatre Projects for the development of younger audiences, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The funding will be provided over three years from the Society's charitable subsidiary, the Theatre Development Trust.

The money will enable Mousetrap Theatre Projects to expand its programme of subsidised access for young people under the age of 19 and to develop a new scheme to encourage theatre-going among 19-22 year olds. Over the last ten years, Mousetrap Theatre Projects has enabled close to 50,000 disadvantaged young people to attend London productions, with best seats from £3-£5.

Commenting, Rosemary Squire, President of SOLT, said:

“Mousetrap Theatre Projects does a fantastic job in engaging young people with London theatre. I am delighted that SOLT's three-year grant will encourage more young Londoners to enjoy the capital's world class theatre. Initiatives which target young people - our audience of the future – play a fundamental role in our continuing audience development work.”

Susan Whiddington, Director of Mousetrap Theatre Projects, added:

“We are thrilled to receive this generous support from the theatre industry as we approach our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. SOLT's funding recognises the importance of education and access work in making London's outstanding theatre accessible to all. This grant will give many more young people, who would not otherwise have the opportunity, the chance to attend the best of London theatre.”

Richard Pulford, Chief Executive, Society of London Theatre said:

“The Society's Board has chosen to build on a resource that already exists rather than to invest in a programme of its own. This will enable the maximum possible benefit to accrue to the young people concerned and minimise the amount spent on administration.”

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/2 LondonTheatre invests £450,000 in Audience Development

Notes to Editors:

Mousetrap Theatre Projects was founded in 1997 as The Mousetrap Foundation, by Stephen Waley-Cohen, the producer of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, to give all of London's young people a chance to experience the magic and power of theatre. Three-quarters of London state secondary schools have participated in its programmes. In May 2007 the charity will begin a year-long celebration of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, launched by a free, all-schools' matinee of *Billy Elliot* at 1:30pm on 1<sup>st</sup> May. For further details, see [www.mousetrap.org.uk](http://www.mousetrap.org.uk)

The new funding will be in addition to existing schemes that the Society of London Theatre already operates itself. These include: *Kids Week in the West End*, which takes place in late August each year and allows children aged 5-16years old to go free to West End shows and this year's *Get Into London Theatre* campaign. The Society is also working with the London Development Agency and the Arts Council to help develop the youth tourist market.

[www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk](http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk)