



Press Release: Thurs 9 Sept 2010

## **A record-breaking year for Kids Week with more children than ever experiencing the magic of London theatre**

**Kids Week in the West End - the much-loved annual initiative run by The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) - has achieved its most successful year to date, selling a record-breaking 68,121 tickets (up by 16,810).**

In August, due to unprecedented demand and for the first time in its thirteen-year history, Kids Week extended its annual Kids Go Free offer (for each full-price adult ticket, one child goes free and up to two more half price) by one week so it ran from 13 August until 3 September.

As well as enjoying the 34 shows on offer this year, hundreds of children snapped up the chance to attend one of more than 60 free activities designed to engage and inspire the next generation of theatre lovers. This year's opportunities included an onstage cha-cha boot camp with *Burn the Floor's* Ali Bastian and Brian Fortuna, a leafy backstage tour scaling the heights of the *Into the Woods* set, a drama workshop re-creating *Les Misérables'* famous barricade scene, a spooky ghost story session at *The Woman in Black* and exciting question and answers sessions with the star-studded casts of shows such as *Wicked*, *Dreamboats* and *Petticoats*.

Emma De Souza, Development Manager at the Society of London Theatre and the brains behind Kids Week, who last year won the Visit London People's Choice London Hero Award, said: "We are delighted with the ongoing success of Kids Week, and incredibly grateful to everyone involved for their participation and generous support, including producers, cast, crew and theatre staff. The feedback we have received from parents and children has been incredible."

Russ Abbot, who can currently be seen performing in the hit musical *Oliver!* at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, said: "Playing Fagin, I not only enjoy acting alongside many of the country's talented young performers, but also get to witness firsthand the thrilling positive reaction from the many children in the audience. Thanks to Kids Week, thousands of children were able to enjoy London theatre this summer, by seeing some of the capital's biggest and best shows for free, or stepping into the spotlight to participate in the exciting free activities and workshops on offer".

Davina, who attended the *Legally Blonde* Kids Week show and activity with her daughter, said: "We had such a great day! My daughter did the jump rope workshop this morning which was fun and really boosted her confidence to join in with things – she can't actually believe she's been on the stage in the West End. Then back to the theatre for this afternoon's performance – three rows from the front which were great seats. Absolutely fantastic show – we really enjoyed it. We were really impressed and surprised by the amount of time [Sheridan and the cast] spent signing autographs...the day has been

so special and all because of Kids Week. Thank you – we are already picking what show to come to next year!”

For family-friendly theatre news and information, plus ticket offers, competitions and fun theatre chat, subscribe to SOLT’s Family Bulletin ([http://officiallondontheatre.co.uk/family\\_theatre/](http://officiallondontheatre.co.uk/family_theatre/)), become a Facebook fan ([www.facebook.com/kidsweeklondon](http://www.facebook.com/kidsweeklondon)) or Twitter follower ([www.twitter.com/KidsWeek](http://www.twitter.com/KidsWeek)).

– ENDS –

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**ADDITIONAL EDITORIAL**

- Kids Week launched on Tuesday 13 July and more than 25,000 tickets were purchased during its first 24 hours on sale, an increase of 21% on last year’s figures in the same period.
- Kids Week was also proud to support the Ambassador Theatre Group Summer School - a week-long event enabling children to work with theatre professionals, culminating in the chance to perform on a West End stage.
- 77% of bookings were made online, with the remaining 23% via telephone bookings.

**Additional Quotes**

- “Thank you very much indeed for a lovely evening yesterday. Saw *The Lion King* and it was fabulous. Had fantastic seats and we were just mesmerised with the wonderful acting and the fabulous costumes. It is our first year with Kids Week and we have very, very fond memories of it. Thank you once again!”
- “Took my 5 year old for her first taste of musical theatre last night, we saw *Oliver!* had fantastic seats and a really great time – she is already asking what she can see next”
- “*The Jersey Boys* experience was amazing, as my girls said, "They were all so proud of their show," and the workshop was amazing. Then we went back for the evening performance and had such good seats and all decided it was the best show we had ever seen! Thanks to all the team at *Jersey Boys* and Kids Week!”
- “The *Mamma Mia!* workshop was BRILLIANT! Thank you so much to everyone involved. The children were treated as VIP's and loved the opportunity to sing and dance on the stage!”

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Images: a new selection of images of children participating in 2010 Kids Week activities is now available along with show production shots.
- Kids Week in the West End is organised by the Society of London Theatre ([www.solt.co.uk](http://www.solt.co.uk)) (SOLT). SOLT is the trade association which represents the producers, theatre owners and managers of the 52 major commercial and grant-aided theatres in central London. The organisation exists in order to promote theatregoing, develop audiences, and to serve, protect and promote the interests of those engaged in theatre across London, through activities including: The Laurence Olivier Awards, tks ticket booth, the Official London Theatre guide, Theatre Tokens and the annual promotions Kids Week in the West End and Get into London Theatre.