



For Release: 19 July 2010

'tkts' booth celebrates 30th birthday and nearly 11 million ticket sales!

The first, and only official, half price ticket booth sells 10.9 million tickets to 1,200 shows in 30 years

In 1980, the nation celebrated the launch of British Leyland's Mini Metro and the Philips Compact Disc player, mourned John Lennon, Peter Sellers and Steve McQueen, and wondered 'who shot JR?' Meanwhile on the London theatre scene, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Educating Rita* were the hottest shows in town, a site was chosen for Shakespeare's Globe theatre and the **Society of London Theatre (SOLT) established the very first half price ticket booth in Leicester Square, now known as tkts.**

To mark its 30th birthday **on 10th August, tkts will be giving away a free theatre ticket to the first 30 people in the queue that day**, as well as giving *everyone* the chance to win some great theatrical prizes. Just pick up one of the **tkts** scratchcards being handed out in Leicester Square on 10th and 11th August for a chance to win!

In the past thirty years, **tkts has sold a staggering 10.9 million tickets to more than 1,200 shows, and is responsible for 1 in 39 theatre tickets sold in the West End** (with this year's **tkts** sales recently marking a 9% rise). All profits fund a range of important activities in the theatre industry including supporting upcoming actors and producers, and audience development initiatives.

Based in the Clocktower Building on the south side of Leicester Square, **tkts** is an essential part of a trip to London's West End for Londoners and tourists alike. Run by SOLT on behalf of the theatre industry, **tkts'** unique official status guarantees amazing bargains, an incredible choice of shows, and friendly customer service from expert staff.

The Original 'Half Price Ticket Booth' was a small, wooden hut painted in green and yellow stripes which stood on the west side of Leicester Square. The first ticket booth of its kind in Leicester Square, it has subsequently spawned many imitations. Following the installation of an electricity sub-station beneath the garden, Leicester Square was reopened by the Queen in 1992 and **tkts** was welcomed to its new home in by the Mayor of Westminster. It was renamed '**tkts**' in 2001 adopting the name of its Broadway counterpart in New York.

Over the past thirty years, **tkts** staff have enjoyed serving many memorable customers - from a confused lady trying to buy tickets for "*The Witches of Gatwick*" to the "*Joseph*" couple, sporting coats of many colours, who claimed to have seen the show over 100 times and to have purchased their tickets from **tkts** on each occasion!

The ticket services available at **tkts** have changed significantly since 1980. Customers can now buy tickets at a range of discounts up to 50% off the ticket price both on the day of the performance and up to a week in advance. Visit <http://www.tkts.co.uk/> for more information about tkts, and for details of what's on sale today.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- **PHOTO CALL:** press photographers are invited to a **tkts 30th birthday photo call** with many of the West End's stars at tkts in Leicester Square on Tuesday 10 August at 12 noon. Please contact Alison Duguid (above) for further information including details of who will be present.
- **IMAGES:** available on request
- **INTERVIEW BIDS:** available for SOLT's Commercial Manager, Paul James
- **WEBSITE:** www.tkts.co.uk.
- **tkts sales have this year showed a 9% year-on-year sales increase** (covers the period Jan - end May 2010)
- **The Society of London Theatre** 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, tkts ticket booth, the Official London Theatre guide, Theatre tokens and the annual promotions Kids Week in the West End and Get into London Theatre.
- 1980 Olivier Award winners included Judi Dench and Frances de La Tour, Jonathan Pryce and Roger Rees. *Nicholas Nickleby* won six awards.
- West End productions in 1980 included *Evita*, *My Fair Lady*, *Annie*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Oliver!*, *The Mousetrap* and *The King and I*.