



London, Monday 7 February 2011

RELAUNCH OF THEATRE'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS UNVEILED

- **MasterCard announced as partner for Olivier Awards**
- **Red carpet live coverage on BBC News - full ceremony broadcast on Radio 2 and on television via the Red Button**
- **Nominees announced for Olivier Awards 2011**

The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) today announced plans for the revitalisation of the Olivier Awards, theatre's most prestigious prize.

A strategic three-year partnership with MasterCard will provide major investment in the development of the global profile of the Olivier Awards, underlining London's status as the world centre for theatre.

Winners will receive their awards at the Olivier Awards 2011 Ceremony on **Sunday 13 March 2011** in a star-studded show on the stage of London's historic Theatre Royal Drury Lane with the BBC Concert Orchestra under the Musical Direction of David Charles Abell. Distinguished guests from London's arts and cultural scene will join winners and celebrities at the red carpet evening.

A new broadcast partnership with the BBC was also announced today, bringing the Olivier Awards to audiences across the country. There will be live coverage on BBC Television of the red carpet and a full results and reaction programme after the ceremony presented by Jane Hill and Arts Editor Will Gompertz. Radio 2 will broadcast direct from the theatre in a special programme presented by Michael Ball,



from 5.30-9.30pm, with live coverage of the event ceremony and all performances from the stage plus red carpet interviews with attending stars from Jodie Prenger, and for the first time viewers can watch the proceedings live on television via the BBC Red Button.

This year also sees the return of the Radio 2 Audience Award, renamed as the BBC Radio 2 Olivier Audience Award, in which members of the public are able to vote for their favourite long-running production from a shortlist of 18 shows. Elaine Paige, star of stage and screen, and presenter of Radio 2's musical theatre show, will present the Award at the ceremony with the cast from last year's winning show *Wicked*.

Nica Burns, President of the Society of London Theatre, said: "We are delighted to announce the outstandingly talented list of nominees for the Olivier Awards 2011 with MasterCard. The breadth, range and standard of productions and performers reflect London's status as the theatre capital of the world."

Among the nominations for the Olivier Awards 2011 with MasterCard announced today are:

- **Best Actress:** Tracie Bennett for *End of the Rainbow*, Nancy Carroll for *After the Dance*, Tamsin Greig for *The Little Dog Laughed* and Sophie Thompson for *Clybourne Park*.

- **Best Actor:** Roger Allam for *Henry IV Parts 1 & 2*, Derek Jacobi for *King Lear*, Rory Kinnear for *Hamlet*, Mark Rylance for *La Bête* and David Suchet for *All My Sons*.

- **Best New Musical:** *Fela!*, *Legally Blonde – The Musical*, *Love Never Dies* and *Love Story*

- **Best Director:** Dominic Cooke for *Clybourne Park*, Howard Davies for *The White Guard*, Michael Grandage for *King Lear* and Thea Sharrock for *After the Dance*.

- **Mastercard Best New Play:** *Clybourne Park* by Bruce Norris, *End of the Rainbow* by Peter Quilter, *Sucker Punch* by Roy Williams, *The Little Dog Laughed* by Douglas Carter Beane, *Tribes* by Nina Raine.

- **Best Actress in a Musical:** Sierra Boggess for *Love Never Dies*, Elena Roger for *Passion*, Sheridan Smith for *Legally Blonde – The Musical* and Emma Williams for *Love Story*.

- **Best Actor in a Musical:** Alex Gaumond for *Legally Blonde – The Musical*, Ramin Karimloo for *Love Never Dies*, Sahr Ngaujah for *Fela!* and Michael Xavier for *Love Story*.

- **Best New Opera Production:** English National Opera and Young Vic's *Elegy for Young Lovers* at the Young Vic; De Nederlandse Opera, English National Opera and *Complicité's A Dog's Heart* at the London Coliseum; Royal Opera, Vienna State

Opera, San Francisco Opera, the Liceu, Barcelona and Opéra Bastille's Adriana Lecouvreur at the Royal Opera House; OperaUpClose and Soho Theatre's La Bohème at Soho Theatre.

•*Best New Dance Production*: Mambo 3XX1 by Danza Contemporanea de Cuba choreographed by George Cespedes at Sadler's Wells; Babel (Words) by Eastman vzw and Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie choreographed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Damien Jalet at Sadler's Wells and Cinderella by New Adventures choreographed by Matthew Bourne at Sadler's Wells.

Julian Bird, Chief Executive of the Society of London Theatre, producers of the Olivier Awards, said: "On behalf of London's great theatres, we are proud to announce this major new partnership with MasterCard today. There has never been a more important time to work together in promoting London's status as a world-class centre for theatre, our greatest creative industry. We are absolutely delighted that the BBC is joining us at this important time to bring the excitement and glamour of the Olivier Awards to millions of viewers and listeners across the country."

Rita Broe, European Head of Marketing, MasterCard Worldwide, said: "We are very pleased to announce our partnership with SOLT for the Laurence Olivier Awards. We know that our cardholders in London and throughout the world find the arts and theatre experience to be *Priceless*, and we are glad to support SOLT who honour and encourage excellence in this area. It's also exciting to support the MasterCard Best New Play Award. Congratulations to nominees Clybourne Park, End of the Rainbow, Sucker Punch, The Little Dog Laughed and Tribe. The 13th of March promises to be a great London event."

The Olivier Awards 2011 with MasterCard
Theatre Royal Drury Lane London WC2
Sunday 13 March 5 pm
www.olivierawards.com

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Notes to Editors:

The Olivier Awards were established in 1976 to recognise distinguished artistic achievement in London theatre. In 1984 Lord Olivier agreed to have his name associated with them in 1984. The bronze Laurence Olivier Award, designed by the sculptor Harry Franchetti, representing the young Laurence Olivier as Henry V at the Old Vic in 1937, is presented to each of the winners.

About MasterCard Worldwide:

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