



Press Embargo

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Olivier Awards 2012 with MasterCard celebrates links between New York and London

- **Olivier Awards Ceremony held at the Royal Opera House for the first time in its entirety on Sunday 15 April 2012 hosted by West End stars Michael Ball and Imelda Staunton, with extensive coverage on BBC tv, radio and online**
- **Stars of UK and US theatre industry will attend a star-studded reception and live show relay on Broadway**
- **Free public event in Covent Garden piazza with live show relay and West End performances**
- **Nominees announcement to be streamed live online on 15 March 2012**

The most prestigious event in the UK's theatrical calendar, **the presentation of the 36th Olivier Awards with MasterCard will take place for the first time in its entirety at the Royal Opera House, London on Sunday 15 April 2012** when distinguished guests from London's arts and cultural scene will join winners and celebrities at the glamorous red carpet event.

In an exciting new development for 2012, there will be a **live show relay to a New York celebration** of the awards where an invited audience of VIPs including British stars on Broadway and high profile industry figures will gather to celebrate the awards.

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said: "I'm incredibly proud of the continuing success of so many British productions on Broadway, a tribute to the talent and quality to be found here. London goes centre-stage in this Olympic and Paralympic year, whilst the Olivier Awards put our superb theatre right in the spotlight. The special event being staged at this year's awards is a taste of the amazing things we have planned for a summer like no other and we look forward to welcoming millions of Americans to the capital, who can take advantage of our award-winning shows on sale throughout the Games and beyond."

Mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, said: "New York City and London share a long tradition of theatrical productions that have transferred from Broadway to the West End and vice versa, so it's a pleasure to welcome the Olivier Awards to our side of the pond in this very special way. It doesn't matter if you spell it theater or theatre; musicals and plays are a top attraction for tourists, and we look forward to hosting more than a million visitors from the United Kingdom in the coming year."

Another addition for 2012 will be **an awards celebration in Covent Garden piazza, where theatre-lovers can gather to enjoy a free big-screen live show relay** and other entertainment including live performances from some of the West End's major shows. The event will be presented in conjunction with Magic 105.4, and hosted by breakfast presenter **Neil Fox**, alongside West End leading lady **Louise Dearman**.

The Awards Ceremony will, as in 2011, be hosted by two of London theatre's best-loved performers – **Michael Ball and Imelda Staunton** – who open in Sweeney Todd at the Adelphi Theatre in March.

The BBC will be giving the awards extensive live coverage on television (via the Red Button), on Radio 2 and online, with red carpet coverage from 5pm and the Ceremony starting at 6pm. The awards will include unique theatrical entertainment created especially for the occasion with music throughout from the BBC Concert Orchestra.

Julian Bird, Chief Executive of the Society of London Theatre and Executive Producer of the Awards, said: "This year's 36th Olivier Awards with MasterCard will reflect a particularly star-studded year for London theatre, and the plethora of high calibre sell-out productions for which audiences have been queuing around the block. I am delighted we have been able to extend our celebrations to New York, and this connection is particularly apt in a year in which we are working closer than ever with VisitBritain and London & Partners to deliver a warm welcome to theatre audiences during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games."

Alfredo Gangotena, Chief Marketing Officer of MasterCard Worldwide, commented: "Our ambition is to connect Priceless experiences across the globe so that we can continue to surprise and delight our cardholders, whether they're at home or abroad. The live relay of the Oliviers to New York is a unique opportunity to bring together theatre lovers from both sides of the Atlantic in an exciting evolution of our Priceless Cities programme. We're also offering privileged access to the exclusive VIP screening in New York, so that a few lucky cardholders can mingle with the stars while indulging their passion for theatre."

Hany Fam, President of MasterCard UK & Ireland, commented: "London and New York are at the heart of our new Priceless Cities programme, which is designed to enrich our cardholders' cultural experiences in these two great cities. We're proud to be working with one of our founding Priceless London partners, SOLT, to enable our friends in New York to share in this night of celebration of the best of British theatre."

SOLT will announce the full list of awards nominations at a press briefing at the Mayfair Hotel at 12 noon on **Thursday 15 March 2012**. For the first time, the nominations will also be broadcast live online simultaneously at www.olivierawards.com, reflecting the significant profile of the awards around the world.

Once again, in 2012, BBC Radio 2 partners with the Olivier Awards on the BBC Radio 2 Audience Award, to launch on the Elaine Paige show on Sunday 5 February.

Established in 1976, the Laurence Olivier Awards celebrate the world-class status of London's theatre and are Britain's most prestigious stage honours. The Awards were relaunched in 2011 with a new strategic partnership with MasterCard, the Olivier Audience Award supported by BBC Radio 2 and a live broadcast of the Awards Ceremony via the BBC Red Button.

For more information on the Olivier Awards visit www.olivierawards.com, and keep up with the latest news on www.twitter.com/OlivierAwards and www.facebook.com/OlivierAwards.

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Notes to Editors:

- The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) is the 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 Olivier Awards with MasterCard, 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.
- The Society of London Theatre welcomes the following partners for the Olivier Awards with MasterCard 2012 (as of 23 January 2012):
 - MasterCard, headline partners
 - Radisson Edwardian and the Mayfair Hotel, new hotel partners
 - The Haymarket Hotel, hosts of the nominee celebration
 - American Airlines, airline partner
 - MAC cosmetics, make-up partner
 - Laurent Perrier, champagne partner
 - Chester Barrie, menswear partner
 - Audi, car partner
 - CBS, advertising partner
- The event in New York will be held at the Frederick P. Rose Hall, Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, Broadway at 60th Street, New York City. It will take the form of a brunch (from 11.45 NY time) and live relay of the ceremony from London (from 13.00

NY time) for an invited audience of UK and US theatre stars and professionals and special guests.

- About MasterCard: MasterCard (NYSE: MA) is a global payments and technology company. It operates the world's fastest payments processing network, connecting consumers, financial institutions, merchants, governments and businesses in more than 210 countries and territories. MasterCard's products and solutions make everyday commerce activities - such as shopping, travelling, running a business and managing finances - easier, more secure and more efficient for everyone. Learn more at [mastercard.com](https://www.mastercard.com) or follow us on Twitter @mastercardnews