Heritage Lottery Fund success for New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth

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John Craven, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Portsmouth declared: “I am delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has recognised the importance of restoring the New Theatre Royal as a major historic building, and also its future role in the cultural and educational life of the City of Portsmouth. The University is proud to be a partner in this project.”

The receipt of this grant is a fantastic public endorsement for the NTR project and represents a significant proportion of the money needed to be raised by the theatre. The award from HLF will ensure that this forty-year project, began after the fire in 1972 by a group of tireless and passionate local volunteers, will at last come to fruition, with the volunteers seeing their long-held ambition fulfilled. Director of the NTR, Caroline Sharman declared: “This is great news for us and I hope for the people of Portsmouth who have worked so tirelessly over the last 40 years to keep this beautiful theatre alive.”

The funding has been granted specifically for the repair and restoration of the Grade II* listed historic building, including restoration of the stage house, orchestra pit, offices, access facilities and a new Creative Learning Centre, for use by local groups and organisations and dedicated to the memory of Academy Award-winning writer and director Anthony Minghella. Gioia Minghella, said: “We feel sure Anthony would be proud to have his life and work recognised in such a way. As you know he himself was an educationalist... A really vibrant Cultural Learning Space will make a most fitting, living memorial to him, and especially in Portsmouth, where he himself was educated and spent so much of his youth.” The new facilities will all mean that the NTR can contribute even more to the area, by offering Apprenticeships, Arts Award schemes and training in off-stage theatre and technical skills.

The money will also allow the theatre to expand volunteer opportunities, so even more people of all ages get involved. This will include a four year scheme of hugely exciting activities - including the New Theatre Royal ‘On Tour’ during the rebuild – which will increase the theatre’s seating capacity to 695, so that West End shows can be hosted in the city.

Stuart McLeod, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South East said: “This is great news for the New Theatre Royal, its volunteers and the people of Portsmouth. This wonderful historic building is one of the city’s greatest cultural and architectural assets, and now it can be developed and put to use for the benefit of the local community and beyond in understanding our fascinating theatrical heritage.”

Notes to editors

For more information please contact Fiona Wilson, Campaign Director at the New Theatre Royal, on fiona@newtheatreroyal.com or 023 9277 8996/ 07745 111 940.

Further information

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,000 projects, allocating £4.7 billion across the UK, including £462 million to over 3,220 projects in the

South East alone.