Theatre by the Lake

23/07/2013

‘Talking Tales’ was conceived by the Friends of Theatre by the Lake, a group of passionate supporters who have raised more than £390,000 for the theatre since it opened in 1999.

The project will cover the last 50 years of theatre in Keswick, including the Century Theatre (known affectionately as the Blue Box) and Theatre by the Lake. People who have been involved with either organisation in any way, perhaps as a volunteer or an amateur performer, are being invited to share their stories. Any memories are welcome, from clearing up after the 1981 scooter riots to campaigning and fundraising for a permanent theatre building.

Theatre by the Lake, which is running the project on behalf of the Friends organisation, is also keen to involve the younger generation who are equally passionate about the theatre. A group of young people aged between 14 and 20 will be trained in sound recording, editing and production. They will speak to those who volunteer their stories, recording their recollections and interpreting them in a creative way. Applications are open to any young people interested in journalism or heritage.

The training and recording sessions will begin in September 2013 and run until August 2014. The resulting oral history collection will form part of an exhibition at Theatre by the Lake and become a permanent online public archive.

Douglas Cook, Chairman of Friends of Theatre by the Lake, said: “We’re delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting this project. The volunteers are a vital part of the history of Theatre by the Lake and it’s wonderful that we have this opportunity to record and share their stories. I don’t think there’s a better way we could celebrate and honour their dedication, while hopefully passing on their enthusiasm to a new generation of young volunteers.”

Sara Hilton, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: “Talking Tales will not only capture important memories and stories from the last 50 years of theatre in Keswick but will also give different sections of the community the opportunity to meet, forge new friendships and learn new skills. We are delighted to be giving this very worthwhile project our full support.”

If you would like to be involved in ‘Talking Tales’, either to share your stories or as part of the recording team, please contact Jenn Mattinson on 01900 870 111 or visit the Theatre by the Lake website.

Notes to editors

- Theatre by the Lake is Britain’s most remote producing theatre. Set in the Lake District on the edge of the small town of Keswick and close to Derwentwater, it produces up to nine plays a year in its Main House (400 seats) and Studio (100 seats). In summer a resident company of 14 actors presents six plays in a repertory season that runs from May to early November. It also hosts festivals focusing on literature, film, jazz and outdoor pursuits and welcomes touring theatre, music and dance companies. It presents more than 600 performances a year and last year played to 130,000 people.
- Theatre by the Lake also maintains a community outreach team of actors and others based in Workington, a town that suffers from geographical isolation and has areas of severe social and economic deprivation.

- Since opening, Theatre by the Lake has increased annual audiences for theatre in Keswick six-fold, from under 20,000 in the year before opening to over 130,000 annually.
- The Theatre has directly created over 100 full time jobs and has indirectly facilitated the creation of a further 200 jobs.

Further information

Hannah Leverett on 01768 781 107 or hannah.leverett@theatrebythelake.com