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DRAMATIC ART

June 2007

A Mayoral Visit To Local Drama School's *Fight Night*

The **Mayor of Hammersmith & Fulham, Councillor Scott Russell**, was guest of honour at the **London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art's** 30th annual *Fight Night*, on Monday 11th June 2007. A celebration of LAMDA's exceptional stage combat training, *Fight Night* features students from all of the Academy's prestigious acting courses, under the direction of Jonathan Waller, Kristina Soeborg, and LAMDA's Head of Drama School and former *Fight* Director at Shakespeare's Globe, Rodney Cottier.

For the participating students, this evening marked the end of months of preparation for their British Academy of Dramatic Combat examinations, which took place the following day. For Academy guests, including Councillor Scott Russell and Chiswick Community School pupil, Matthew De Larosa (aged 13), it was a chance to be dazzled by the skill and fearlessness of LAMDA's performers, as they handled an impressive range of weaponry from daggers and broadswords to fans and parasols.

Held at **LAMDA's MacOwan Theatre in Kensington**, the evening culminated in awards for both Best Fight and Outstanding Technique. Winning these much sought-after prizes, four of LAMDA's talented students [Gary Carr, Patrick Knowles, Stephen Leask and Anthony Welsh] were able to add their names to an impressive list of past *Fight Night* victors, including: **Richard Armitage** (*North and South, Robin Hood*); **John Light** (*The Tempest, RSC*); **David Oyelowo** (*Spooks, The Last King of Scotland*) and **Toby Stephens** (*Jane Eyre*).

Photo Caption

The Mayor of Hammersmith & Fulham, Councillor Scott Russell, and local school boy Matthew de Rosa meet performers at LAMDA's 30th annual *Fight Night* celebrations. [From L to R] LAMDA Principal, Peter James, Matthew de Rosa and the Mayor of Hammersmith & Fulham, Councillor Scott Russell with second year acting students Natalie Klamar, Lisa Kerr and Anthony Welsh. Photograph by Daryl Lucas, 2007.

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Notes to Editors

Rodney Cottier, LAMDA's Head of Drama School: Rodney's swordsmanship is legendary in theatres on both sides of the Atlantic. Throughout an extensive career as a Fight Director, he has choreographed battles for Shakespeare's Globe, The Royal Opera House, The English and Welsh National Operas, The Young Vic and The Mercury Theatre, Colchester, to name but a few.

Jonathan Waller & Kristina Soeborg: As the Academy's Stage Combat Tutors, Jonathan and Kristina direct many of the fight sequences in LAMDA's final year productions; most recently, *Richard II* and *Henry IV* at LAMDA's MacOwan Theatre, Kensington. Jonathan has brought classic battles to life in *King Lear* at Shakespeare's Globe, *Troy* at the National Theatre Studio and *Henry V* at the Arundel Festival 2000. His television credits include *Pride and Prejudice* and *Timewatch*. Kristina has been a member of The European Historical Combat Guild since 1999. She was the first member to progress through the training programme to be qualified as a Teacher and then as a Senior Teacher, and teaches at the Guild's London Chapter as well as across Europe. Both Kristina and Jonathan have devised dramatic combat interpretations for The Royal Armouries at The Tower of London.

The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA):

- Dating back to 1861, LAMDA is one of the oldest drama schools in the United Kingdom. Its graduates are generally recognised as among the leading theatre practitioners in the English-speaking world.
- LAMDA is an affiliate of the UK's prestigious Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD) – a premier division in performing arts training established by the government to strengthen access to training for talented students, regardless of their background.
- LAMDA provides acting, stage management & technical theatre tuition, as well as special programmes in directing, musical direction, movement, scenic design and stage combat.
- 98% of LAMDA's stage management & technical theatre graduates in the last three years have found work in their chosen field within three months of graduation.
- In recent years, LAMDA has gained a reputation as a source of innovative, new writing with two plays (Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* and Di Trevis' *Remembrance of Things Past*) being devised and first performed at LAMDA, before transferring to the National Theatre.

- LAMDA is currently celebrating the 50th Anniversary of its relationship with the USA. Since the inception of its One Year Classical Acting Course in association with the Fulbright Commission 1956, many of America's leading actors have passed through the Academy's courses: including John Lithgow; Michael Moriarty; Stacy Keach; Swoosie Kurtz, Dana Ivey and Donald Sutherland.