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July 2006

CARYL CHURCHILL IS LAMDA'S TOP GIRL AT THE ROYAL COURT

This July, LAMDA lent its own youthful perspective to the Royal Court's 50th Anniversary celebrations; performing two Court classics, Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* and *The Changing Room* by David Storey to full houses and special guests, including both playwrights, LAMDA President Timothy West CBE, and distinguished actresses, Prunella Scales CBE and Janet Suzman

Since its inception, the Royal Court has been the first to discover many of the country's most innovative playwrights. It has also been instrumental in launching the careers of innumerable young actors and directors. By inviting LAMDA's talented young students to participate in its Anniversary celebrations, the Royal Court proved once again that its commitment to encouraging new talent is as evident today as it ever was.

In exploring the ways in which the Royal Court could look back over its past 50 years, said Ian Rickson, Artistic Director of the Royal Court, we came to the conclusion that the energy of young actors re-interpreting our past work was a dynamic idea. We so looked forward to welcoming LAMDA to our theatre to perform these two great plays with the hunger and vibrancy for which the students are known.

For the Academy, participating in the celebration of such a prestigious new writer's theatre was an honour and, perhaps also, recognition of LAMDA's own growing reputation as a source of critically acclaimed new work; some of which [Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Claps Molly House* and Di Trevis' *Remembrance of Things Past*] has gone on to the National Theatre and beyond. For LAMDA's Vice-Principal, Colin Cook, who directed the Academy's production of *The Changing Room*, it was a homecoming. Colin made his professional debut as assistant director to the legendary Lindsay Anderson on the Royal Court's world premiere of *The Changing Room* in 1971. It was a joy for him to meet David Storey once again in the theatre that has played such a leading role in his career.

Commenting on the Academy's involvement in this exciting Anniversary year, LAMDA Principal and *Top Girls* director, Peter James said: The Royal Court has been forging the future for the whole of my working life and, throughout its remarkable 50 year history, it has remained the principal new playwright's theatre. On behalf of LAMDA and its students, I am honoured that the school was been invited to participate in the Royal Court's 50th Anniversary.

[Photographs available upon request]

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NOTES TO EDITORS

LAMDA

- LAMDA is one of the oldest drama schools in the UK dating back to 1861 and LAMDA graduates are generally recognised as among the leading theatre practitioners around the world.
- LAMDA is an affiliate member of the 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, scenic design, and movement.
- Nearly 100% of stage management & technical theatre graduates in the last three years have found work in their chosen field within three months of graduation.
- LAMDA celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the inauguration of its ground-breaking Stage Management & Technical Theatre Course last year.