



Curtain Up: Celebrating 40 Years of Theatre in London and New York

In association with MasterCard

9 February – 31 August 2016

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Helen Mirren as Queen Elizabeth II and
Michael Eiwyn as Anthony Eden in *The
Audience*. Photo by Ioan Marcus



The V&A this year celebrates the rich creative theatre talent in the West End of London and New York's Broadway, two world class centres of theatrical excellence. *Curtain Up: Celebrating 40 Years of Theatre in London and New York* explores the extraordinary range of craft and collaboration that goes into creating award-winning plays, musicals and productions. The show is a free and immersive theatrical experience taking visitors from the stage, to the design workshops and through the history of the awards to the red carpet.

Curated by the V&A and The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, in partnership with the Society of London Theatre (SOLT), *Curtain Up* is part of a year-long programme of activity organised by SOLT to celebrate 40 years of the Olivier Awards (1976-2016), awarded annually to recognise excellence in professional theatre.

Curtain Up is designed by RFK Architects and Tom Piper, the acclaimed designer and theatre maker renowned for his Tower of London poppies installation, *Blood Swept Lands And Seas of Red*, a collaboration with ceramic artist Paul Cummins. *Curtain Up* brings together costumes, designs, models, photographs, archival production material, film and awards, much on display for the first time.

On display are objects drawn from the collections of the V&A and The Library for the Performing Arts supplemented with key loans from private collections. Highlights include original costume designs from *The Phantom of the Opera* by Maria Bjornson (1986), one of the longest running West End musicals, and the longest running Broadway production in history, shown alongside the costume worn by a recent West End Phantom; a selection of golden top hats from *A Chorus Line* which won both the Tony Award (1976) and the inaugural Olivier Award (1976) for Best New Musical; a tunic worn by Rudolf Nureyev in *Romeo and Juliet* which won the Olivier in 1977; and Dame Helen Mirren DBE's dress designed by Bob Crowley and worn in *The Audience*, a role which she won both an Olivier (2013) and Tony Award (2015) for Best Actress.

Dame Helen Mirren DBE said; “*Having worked on both Broadway and the West End, I am delighted that Curtain Up, marking 40 years since the Olivier Awards were inaugurated, honours the shared artistic heritage binding London and New York and showcases the wealth of creative talent that brings great productions to the stage on both sides of the Atlantic.*”

Curtain Up considers the central role the West End and Broadway have in London and New York today as well as exploring the evolution of these two transatlantic theatre cities. A spotlight on the awards reveals how they have developed since their inception and how an entire company – from back-of-house to centre stage – contribute to an award-winning production including such material as correspondence and production material relating to the original production of *Evita*. Script-writing, production, direction, design (lighting, sound, set, and costume), music, choreography and the evolution of technology will all be considered.

Plays and musicals which have performed well both in London and New York are highlighted with costumes on display from Disney’s *The Lion King*, designed by Julie Taymor, costume designs by William Ivey Long for *Chicago* and *The Producers* and Christopher Oram’s costume designs for the Royal Shakespeare Company’s *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*.

Visitors can see the set models for *Matilda the Musical*, an RSC musical which won seven Olivier awards and five Tony awards, designed by Rob Howell as well as models from the National Theatre’s award-winning production *War Horse* (2007). On display for the first time in the UK are set models for the New York productions of *Carousel* (1994) and *Sunday in the Park with George* (1983). Visitors will have the opportunity to step into a scene from The National Theatre’s production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, specially designed for *Curtain Up*.

Film clips from notable theatre productions from the V&A’s National Video Archive of Performance (NVAP) and the NYPL’s Theatre on Film and Tape archive (TOFT) are embedded throughout.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

- *Curtain Up: Celebrating 40 Years of Theatre in London and New York* is on display in the V&A’s Theatre and Performance Galleries, from 9 February – 31 August 2016 (free admission).
- The display will tour to The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center from 19 October 2016 – June 2017.
- The V&A holds the national collection of performing arts, documenting both current practice and the history of the performing arts in the UK.

- Alongside *Curtain Up*, SOLT presents an event and education programme with activities taking place at the V&A and throughout the West End. These include talks, tours, workshops and free film screenings of notable productions from the V&A's National Video Archive of Performance (NVAP).
- The V&A is open daily from 10.00 to 17.45 and until 22.00 on Fridays

About MasterCard

MasterCard is a technology company in the global payments industry. They operate the world's fastest payments processing network, connecting consumers, financial institutions, merchants, governments and businesses in more than 210 countries territories. MasterCard is the title partner for SOLT's annual Olivier Awards and is delighted to be associated with *Curtain Up*.

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About Tom Piper

Tom Piper MBE was Associate Designer for the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) 2004-14 for whom he has designed over 30 productions, including the award winning 'Histories Cycle'. He collaborated with RFK Architects on *Shakespeare: Staging the World* at the British Museum and *Blood* at the Jewish Museum. He was awarded his MBE in the 2015 New Year's Honours' list for the installation *Blood Swept Lands And Seas of Red*, a collaboration with ceramic artist Paul Cummins, which saw 888,246 ceramic poppies flood the moat at the Tower of London to mark the centenary of World War I.

About RFK Architects

RFK Architects was founded in 2003 by Alan Farlie and Debby Kuyper. Together they have built up more than 50 year's experience in museum and exhibition design. RFK Architects have designed critically-acclaimed exhibitions for major museums and galleries including the British Museum (*Treasures of Heaven, Vikings* and *A History of the World in 100 Objects*), Tate Britain (including *Holbein in England, Turner Whistler Monet*), The National Gallery (*Barocci, Viennese Portraits* and most recently, *Goya*) and The British Library (*Magna Carta*).

About Society of London Theatre

Society of London Theatre (SOLT) is the not-for-profit organisation which provides a collective voice for the theatre owners, producers and managers of all the major commercial and grant-aided theatres across London. As well as protecting the interests of all its member theatres, SOLT promotes theatregoing through activities including the Olivier Awards with MasterCard, the TKTs ticket booth, the Official London Theatre website and its printed fortnightly listings guide, Theatre Tokens and the popular annual celebration West End LIVE in association with MasterCard. It also administers the audience development initiatives Kids Week and Get Into

London Theatre, and supports a number of theatrical charities including Stage One and Mousetrap Theatre Projects.

About The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts houses one of the world's most extensive combinations of circulating, reference, and rare archival collections in its field. These materials are available free of charge, along with a wide range of special programs, including exhibitions, seminars, and performances. An essential resource for everyone with an interest in the arts — whether professional or amateur — the Library is known particularly for its prodigious collections of non-book materials such as historic recordings, videotapes, autograph manuscripts, correspondence, sheet music, stage designs, press clippings, programs, posters and photographs. The Library is part of The New York Public Library system, which has 90 locations in the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island, and is a lead provider of free education for all.

For further PRESS information please contact the Lily Booth in the V&A press office on 0207 942 2508 or email l.booth@vam.ac.uk.

For further information about *Curtain Up*, SOLT and the 40th anniversary celebration of the Olivier Awards, please contact Rebecca Byers at Target Live on 0203 372 0962 or email rebecca.byers@target-live.co.uk

For further information about The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, please contact Nora Lyons at noralyons@nypl.org

A selection of high resolution press images is available to download at <http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk>

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This display is organised by the Victoria and Albert Museum and The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center



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