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PRESS RELEASE

KIDS THEATRE IS BOOMING AS PRODUCERS PUT THE CBEBBIES GENERATION CENTRE STAGE

Family theatre has never been more popular. The last twelve years has seen a twelve fold increase in the number of productions aimed squarely at the family and children's theatre market. According to research from SeatChoice.com, the theatre ticket comparison website, there were 1,673 'kids theatre' productions staged in 2008 compared to just 134 in 1996.

In 1996 productions aimed at the children's and family audience accounted for just over 4% of all the productions staged in the UK that year. By 2008 that proportion quadrupled to over 16% and a survey this week by SeatChoice.com revealed that 24% of productions currently taking bookings were children's and family focused shows, and that's with pantomimes excluded.

The kinds of venues where kid's theatre productions are staged has also changed dramatically. Whereas ten years ago they were generally the preserve of the small local theatre more recently productions aimed at children have moved into arenas and large theatres. For example, 'Cbeebies Live' recently completed a large venue tour at the Liverpool Echo Arena and 'Lazy Town Live' could be seen at the Hammersmith Apollo.

Robert Iles, SeatChoice.com founder and theatre expert says: 'The growth of kids theatre is largely being driven by the pre-school market and specifically shows with TV tie-ins. Cbeebies shows are a particular draw with Cbeebies live doing an arena tour and a separate theatrical tour. Then there's Lazy Town, Sponge Bob Square Pants and Charlie and Lola to name but a few. Their success has also led some theatre producers to adapt classic novels like The Tiger Who Came To Tea, The BFG and We're All Going On A Bear Hunt as well as giving a further boost to shows like The Gruffalo.'

Robert also believes that there has been a big change in the type of producers now getting involved in staging child and family focused shows. 'I think what's made a big difference in the last few years is that serious West-End and touring producers are getting involved rather than talented amateurs. Edward Snape for example, is a serious London producer.'

Edward Snape runs production company Fiery Angel Limited and produces several family focused shows including the extremely successful 'Lazy Town Live' tour as well as more mainstream theatre. He was one of the first people to see the potential for kid's theatre in the UK. 'The future should be bright as long as producers understand the responsibilities in presenting shows with true creative value and integrity' said Mr Snape. 'Parents are shrewd in their search for quality and affordable theatre and producers will need to help push the boundaries and not to simply rely on well known books and TV brands. Big veteran stage productions such as The Lion King prove just how theatrically high you can aim. '

With the the popularity of kid's theatre looking set to continue there could be to be two very good reasons why this is great news for the UK theatre industry. Firstly, they can be very lucrative. At a time when much of the leisure sector is suffering from the effects of the economic downturn kid's theatre productions could provide a much needed revenue boost for struggling venues.

However, Robert Iles suggests they have an even more important role to play in ensuring the long term health of the British theatre: 'Just as it's important to get children switched on to reading from an early age, bringing children up to enjoy going to the theatre is a good thing to do and may even be important for the survival of the industry. It has never been easier for adults and children to watch whatever they want, whenever they want just by staying at home. Introducing children to the excitement of live theatre will hopefully be an experience which will stay with them into adulthood and ensure there will be generations of new theatregoers for many years to come.'

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For further information please contact:

Jason at MAW Communications on 07824 818242
Gordon at MAW Communications on 01603 505845

If you would like to link to our website please use <http://www.seatchoice.com>

Notes to editors:

All data used is from SeatChoice.com's comprehensive records of productions and ticket sales dating back to 1996

SeatChoice.com conducts real-time searches of theatre box offices and over 20 ticket outlets including leading ticket agents such as Ticketmaster and Keith Prowse, and secondary ticket suppliers such as Seatwave and Viagogo. Combined, SeatChoice's suppliers offer tickets to over 7600 plays, shows and concerts across the country.