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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **THEATRE LAND BREATHES A SIGH OF RELIEF AT OLIVER! OPENING Record advanced sales should herald more big shows in 2009**

Oliver! has finally opened and Sir Cameron Mackintosh is delighted with £15m worth of advanced ticket sales already in the bag. But it's not just Sir Cameron who'll be relieved to see his production prosper in the face of an economic downturn.

With several new large scale productions penned to open in London in 2009, impresarios and producers will have been looking to Oliver!'s fortunes as a barometer for how theatre land could fare in credit crunched 2009.

However, despite record ticket sales you can still book Oliver! tickets via SeatChoice.com for performances in late February and onwards, especially for the midweek and matinee shows. Prices start at just £17.50 for balcony seats with the top priced seats selling for £85 or higher with some suppliers. Oliver! is also included in Cameron Mackintosh's 'Crunchbuster' ticket deal in which, for certain performances and in certain seats, a family of two adults and two children can see the show for £50.

Robert Iles from theatre ticket comparison website SeatChoice.com said: "There are some big shows lining up to open in London this year. Priscilla Queen of the Desert and Sister Act are due to open but producers laid plans for these shows long before the depth of the credit crunch could be predicted. I suspect the producers will have been watching ticket sales for Oliver! very closely before committing the very large sums involved in getting productions of this scale to opening night."

The last year will be remembered more for the shows which closed early than for the smash hits. Desperately Seeking Susan, Marguerite, Girl With A Pearl Earring, Over

The Moon, Gone With The Wind, Ring Around The Moon, Imagine This and, most recently, Treasure Island have all suffered an early demise.

Robert Iles continued: "Although traditionally the theatre industry has weathered economic storms pretty well in the past I don't think we've seen anything as bad as this in the last half century. Oliver! has benefited from a huge amount of publicity courtesy of the televised search for Nancy and Rowan Atkinson taking the Fagin role and that has undoubtedly played a big part in the show getting ticket sales off to such a great start. That's given Oliver! a big advantage over shows like Sister Act and Priscilla which won't get any where near that amount of publicity. When you're putting on a show of this scale the backers will be looking for a run of 3 to 5 years or more to guarantee a real commercial success and only time will tell if Oliver! and the other big productions of 2009 have that kind of staying power in these hard times."

**-Ends-**

**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.