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THE LONDON
LAMDA
ACADEMY OF
MUSIC AND
DRAMATIC ART

June 2010

LAMDA Appoints New Principal

The London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art (LAMDA) – the UK's oldest drama school and largest statutory speech and drama awarding body – announces the appointment of Joanna Read as its new Principal. Joanna will lead the Academy from September 2010, succeeding Peter James who is stepping down after 16 years.

Announcing the news, LAMDA Chairman Luke Rittner said, "We are delighted to have found Joanna Read. Her appointment follows an extensive search for a suitable candidate who would combine artistic flair and experience with strong business acumen and the vision to drive LAMDA forward, building on Peter's success. Joanna possesses all of these qualities in abundance and makes LAMDA history as our first female Principal."

Joanna Read brings 20 years of experience in the profession to the role. After launching her career at the Young Vic, she worked at the Birmingham Rep and then the Octagon Theatre Bolton. As Chief Executive and Artistic Director of the Salisbury Playhouse (1999-2007), she steered the theatre to a position of financial stability, while also leading a successful major capital development programme. The Academy believes this tenure, combined with her recent experience as a freelance director, lecturer and tutor, will make Joanna an ideal successor to Peter James, whose many achievements at the Academy include LAMDA's 2004 affiliation to the Conservatoire of Dance and Drama and the creation of its acclaimed new writing programme.

Commenting on her appointment, Ms Read said, "LAMDA is a world class drama school and a much loved institution. I am delighted to be offered the opportunity to lead the Academy through its next stages of development. I look forward to working with its talented students and committed staff, who make the Academy such a power house within the industry."

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For further information, please contact Georgie Grant Haworth in LAMDA's Press Office on 020 8834 0511 or ggh@lamda.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Joanna Read

Joanna was Chief Executive and Artistic Director of Salisbury Playhouse from 1999 to 2007. Under her leadership, the Playhouse became one of the leading regional producing theatres of the last decade. She steered the theatre to a position of financial stability, while also leading a successful major capital development programme. Prior to this she was Associate Director of the Octagon Theatre Bolton from 1997. She was Head of Education and Participation for Birmingham Rep. from 1993 to 1997, where she created a successful and wide-ranging education and outreach strategy and commissioned and directed new writing. Recently she has worked as a freelance director and writer for Edinburgh Festival Theatre, the Young Vic London,, the New Vic Theatre Newcastle Under Lyme, The Watermill West Berkshire Playhouse, The Mill at Sonning and the Watford Palace Theatre, amongst others.

LAMDA

- Celebrating its 150th Anniversary in 2011, LAMDA is the oldest drama school in the United Kingdom. Its graduates shine internationally in theatre, television and film.
- Recent alumni award-winners include John Lithgow, who received a 2010 Golden Globe for his role in *Dexter*, as well as Ruth Wilson and Iwan Rheon, who won 2010 Laurence Olivier Awards for Best Supporting Actress (in *A Streetcar Named Desire*) and Best Supporting Performance in a Musical or Entertainment (*Spring Awakening*) respectively.
- LAMDA is an affiliate of the UK's Conservatoire for Dance and Drama – a publicly-funded higher education institution comprising eight affiliate schools and established by the government to strengthen access to vocational performing arts training for talented students, regardless of their background.
- LAMDA provides a range of acting, stage management & technical theatre courses, as well as special programmes in directing, musical direction, movement and scenic design.

- In recent years, over 98% of LAMDA's stage management & technical theatre graduates have found work in their chosen field within weeks of graduation.
- LAMDA has gained a reputation as a source of innovative new writing. Two of the original works devised and first performed at the Academy (Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* and Di Trevis' *Remembrance of Things Past*) have since transferred to the National Theatre. A further new work, Robin Soans' *Mixed Up North*, toured as an Out of Joint production in 2009.
- LAMDA Examinations remains a sector leader, examining in 30 different countries and making the organisation truly international. The majority of its examinations are accredited by the UK regulator, Ofqual.
- LAMDA Business Performance (LBP) combines expertise in drama training with the communication, team-building and public speaking skills required in the corporate sector.
- LAMDA moved to the Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham in 2003 after buying the Talgarth Road premises from the Royal Ballet School. Having successfully purchased the remainder of the land at the western end in 2006, the Academy now owns the full footprint of the site.
- Since moving to the Borough, the Academy has enjoyed collaborating with the local community on a range of cultural and educational initiatives. Through a year-round programme of free theatre performances, the Academy also regularly invites residents to enjoy its work.