



PRESS RELEASE II

Greenwich Playhouse to close as Landlords wish to exploit Olympic commercial opportunities

Greenwich Playhouse landlord's '*Beds & Bars*' issued a series of conflicting, damage limitation press statements following the shock news that the loved SE London venue will close on the 10th April 2012. Managing Director Keith Knowles and employee Eddy Passey sought to dissipate public outrage at the news that the Greenwich Playhouse will close after 20 years of service to the theatre community, by initially stating that they will run an Arts Centre on site; and subsequently, when furore failed to dissipate, that they are intending to run their own theatre!

Alice de Sousa, Artistic Director of the venue and resident company Galleon Theatre Company said:

"Our supporters and the media will recall that *Beds and Bars* (aka *Interpub* / *St. Christopher's Inn* / *Belushis*) have twice sought to deprive South London of one of its key theatres. In the lead up to the Millennium the greedy backpacker hostel providers, sought to shut this theatre and to replace it with bunk beds for backpackers. Following a near two year campaign, spearheaded by the media, the theatre industry and the local community, they 'bowed down' to pressure and accepted the theatre - which predated their ownership of the building by ten years.

Since 2000, *Beds and Bars* have financially and exclusively benefitted from the revenue derived from the 15,000 plus annual theatre customers. Therefore, that amounts (for the last 11 years) to well in excess of 150,000 customers which the theatre has generated on top of the considerable income which landlords have derived from rent and shared building costs! This explains why successive leases over the last 11 years have been enthusiastically renewed. In the immediate lead up to the Olympics - they are once again up to old tricks! This time however, they are cynically intending to cloud the real issue by releasing statements on their intentions to run their own theatre. Obviously they judge other's intellectual capability and common sense by the evidential lack of their own!"

- Neither Mr. Knowles nor his company directors have in the last eleven years attended a single performance of the 230 plus productions which have been staged at the venue, since they bought the building in 1998.
- Their statements deliberately fail to inform the media, the local and theatre community that when the **Greenwich Playhouse** closes on the 10th April, everything which currently makes the rooms above the pub at 189 Greenwich High Road a theatre will be removed. This means that whole theatre's infrastructure, the theatrical knowledge, the vast producing expertise, the staff, the organisation's well established names; and the venue and resident company's considerable reputation will be removed.

Bruce Jamieson co-founding director of the Greenwich Playhouse and Galleon Theatre Company said:

"I note with great interest the comments in this matter of *Beds and Bars* / *Belushis* general manager and his future quest to enter into the entertainment business by supplying something of theatrical quality to Greenwich. As Ms. de Sousa has stated, since the pre-Millennium dates to present (1998-2012), not one of *Beds and Bars* management attended a performance at the Greenwich **Playhouse** - fitted, operated and owned by **Galleon Theatre Company**.

I have however, had the misfortune of experiencing the ludicrous 'entertainment' offerings of Belushis' bar in Greenwich. These have included: '*Jungle Theme Nights*', complete with cardboard cut out animals and palm trees. My favourite was in fact '*The stone, paper, scissors world competition*'!!!! And most recently, a bar-panto performed by Belushis' bar staff for other Belushis bars staff and on directive from the board of directors to raise money to build toilets in Africa!!!! Now, if you are one of the unfortunates who have had the misfortune of using one of this company's toilets, you would be excused in saying that 'charity begins at home'. In my opinion, this company have nothing to offer in terms of entertainment or theatre and would be best to focus on dealing with the numerous unfavourable reviews on line and in the printed media regarding their hostels and bars."

Finally, the **Greenwich Playhouse** and **Galleon Theatre Company** wish to encourage their supporters to see their final production **The Duchess of Malfi** which will be performed at the **Greenwich Playhouse** from the 21st February to the 18th March 2012. We want to reassure their supporters that they will be lovingly welcomed and taken care of by **Greenwich Playhouse** staff, as has been the case since 1995. They wish to encourage supporters to join the cast and crew for after show drinks at the delightful Novotel, which faces the **Greenwich Playhouse**.

- **For further information on 'The Duchess of Malfi' please consult our website www.galleontheatre.co.uk**
- **For downloadable early production images please go to <http://robertgooch.zenfolio.com/malfi-publicity>**
- **Please see online the vast media coverage regarding the future closure of the Greenwich Playhouse**
- **Joan Bakewell asked questions in the House of Lords regarding the Greenwich Playhouse's closure. <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2012-01-23a.799.6&s=heritage>**
- **For further information or interviews please contact Alice de Sousa alice@galleontheatre.co.uk**

Ends 27th January 2012