

President's Introduction to PROMPT November 2009

The TMA Theatre Awards ceremony held at the beginning of November was a celebration of the breadth and quality of work produced and presented in theatres throughout the United Kingdom. Though the year has been a challenging one for the national economy, the TMA Awards offered something of an insight into the artistic and commercial robustness of our industry, and its ability to provide inspiration in bleak times. The shows and performers celebrated were testimony to the originality, creativity, and high production values which continue to be achieved year-round. And we can hear the audience voice clearly speaking to us in the submissions from Regional Panellists, which were remarkable this year for their impressive quantity and enthusiasm.

TMA Council chose to give its Special Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement to Nicolas Kent, who has been Director of the Tricycle Theatre in North London since July 1984 and has pioneered a particularly direct and uncompromising style of political theatre - which has been as powerful for its theatrical integrity and impact as for its bravery as a forum for issues of our age. Council particularly wanted to recognise and applaud Nick Kent's quiet fearlessness, and the quality and relentlessness of his personal artistic vision and achievement.

TMA continues to be active in a number of crucial initiatives: amongst them, its contribution (via the British Entertainment Industry Radio Group) to the lobbying of Ofcom about the potentially damaging effects on our industry of the digital sell-off; and the trials of the proposed TMA /BECTU Code of Conduct for Get-ins and Get-outs. An offshoot of the 2009 Touring Symposium was a seminar on Theatre for Children, Families and Young People held in Birmingham on 6th October - which is a clear indication of the increasing value and significance of the (now annual) Symposium. The next is to be on 3rd March 2010, in London: an unmissable date for all our diaries.

With pantomime and Christmas production rehearsals about to begin all over the country, lamps will be rubbed, beanstalks climbed, second stars on the right inter-galactically visited, and motherless serving girls will go to the ball and break the hearts of faithful comics. Life as we know it, really. May it be a prosperous and unremittingly joyful season for all!

Derek Nicholls
President