

Press Release
July 2009

ESCALATOR SUPPORTING ARTISTS
IN THE EAST OF
ENGLAND
— EAST TO EDINBURGH — LOTTERY FUNDED

PLE25ANCE
TWENTY-FIFTH YEAR ON THE FRINGE

Pleasance's Charlie Hartill Special Reserve Fund helps take new **sperm bank play** to the Edinburgh Fringe



A new dark comedy concerning genetics and the Nobel Prize Sperm Bank coincides with Darwin Year

5 - 31 August, Pleasance Jack Dome, 2.40pm

This year's theatre fund from the **Charlie Hartill Special Reserve** has been presented to young theatre company PIT.

The **Charlie Hartill Special Reserve** is a rolling fund towards the production costs of selected shows which have four or more people on the stage and where at least 40% of the company are within five years of full-time education.

The Fund was launched to provide financial support to enable theatre makers of the future to hone their talents at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It was established in 2004 in memory of Charlie Hartill, who died aged just 32 in January of that year. Charlie was a much loved wit, writer, performer, ex-President of The Cambridge Footlights, 8 years as director for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society and the Pleasance's man of the computer.

Previous recipients of the Charlie Hartill Special Reserve Fund have included Sam Peter Jackson's first play *Minor Irritations*, Sam went on to the Royal Court Writers course and has now completed his third play. Other recipients include *The Same... But Different*, written by Jacob Tindle, winner of the first Old Vic New Voices new writing award, and Richard Marsh's *Greedy Scratchers*.

The fund will enable PIT to take their show **A Stroke of Genius**, inspired by the true story of the Nobel Prize Sperm Bank to this year's Fringe where it will perform daily at **The Pleasance Jack Dome**.

Pleasance Director **Anthony Alderson** said: "*PIT have all the qualities of a young up and coming theatre company with a bright future. They are highly creative, their writing and stage craft original. After seeing a twenty minute workshop, we knew they were a company we wanted to work with and support. We are delighted to be able to bring them to the Edinburgh Fringe as part of the Charlie Hartill scheme, and we wish them every success.*"

A Stroke of Genius, is previewing on 13 July 7.30pm at the Pleasance Theatre, London, where proceeds go towards funding the Edinburgh production and all Edinburgh ticket sales revert to the Charlie Fund.

The darkly comic production delves into the world of genetics, sperm, Darwinism and the future of the human race via the curious true story of Robert Klark Graham who opened a Sperm Bank in his back garden in 1980 to collect and propagate the genes of Nobel Prize Winners. Over a hundred years later a young librarian becomes desperate to have a gifted child of her own and researches his project...

PIT Artistic Director **David Byrne** said: “We have to keep pinching ourselves! Without the *Charlie Fund* there is no way we be able to afford to present an ambitious show, like *A Stroke of Genius*, at the Fringe. The Pleasance has always supported of new talent and with this year’s Edinburgh line-up, we really couldn’t be in better company”.

PIT were formed after their first production, a strange musical about School inspections, won the **Writers' Guild and List Magazine Awards for Drama** at the 2004 Fringe and enjoyed a total sell-out run.

A Stroke of Genius has also been selected for Arts Council England, **East’s Escalator East To Edinburgh 2009**. Each year Escalator, East to Edinburgh helps artists and arts organisations from the east of England to raise their profile and perform to new audiences as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

A Stroke of Genius will feature at the Pleasance Courtyard for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2009

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|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Address: | Pleasance Courtyard 60 Pleasance, Edinburgh, Midlothian, EH8 9TJ | Venue: | Jack Dome |
| Showing: | August 5 th – August 30 st 2009 <i>Excluding 17th & 24th August</i> | Time: | 2.40pm |
| Price: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 – 7 August: £5.00• 8 – 31 August: £8.00 - £9.00 (Concessions £6.50 - £7.50) | To Book: | 0131 556 6550 / www.pleasance.co.uk/edinburgh |

Pleasance, London, Fundraising Preview

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|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Address: | Pleasance Carpenters Mews North Road London N7 9EF | Venue: | Pleasance Theatre |
| Showing: | 13 July 2009 | Time: | 7.30pm |
| Price: | £6 | To Book: | 020 7609 1800 www.pleasance.co.uk/islington |

Editor’s Notes

Pleasance Theatre

Celebrating its 25th year as a venue for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the Pleasance is one of the largest and most successful Edinburgh venues, gaining international respect for its impressive and hugely popular programme of elite theatrical and comedy performances.

The Pleasance Theatre Islington was opened in 1995, offering London a highly regarded selection of performances throughout the year, as well as a platform for new talent in both theatre and comedy.

Escalator East to Edinburgh

A Stroke of Genius has been selected for Escalator East To Edinburgh 2009.

Arts Council England, East launched Escalator East to Edinburgh in 2003 to identify, nurture and develop the artistic talent in the East of England that could benefit from wider exposure at festivals such as the Edinburgh Fringe. Since then, the wider Escalator talent programme has grown to support artists and organisations in the region across all art forms.

Escalator East to Edinburgh continues to build critical acclaim, giving artists assistance to source venues and liaise with promoters, as well as practical PR and marketing support and a range of invaluable networking opportunities.

This year, the programme offers structured support to 21 shows, establishing a creative community and raising the profile of creative talent from the East of England.

Contacts

For further information / Use of pictures / Interviews

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Ends

Websites



www.ideageneration.co.uk

For:

- Online Press Office
- Client list
- Company contact detail



www.pleasance.co.uk

For:

- Information on the Pleasance Theatre
- Their 2009 Programme
- Venue Details



www.pit-online.co.uk

For:

- Information on PIT
- *A Stoke of Genius* performances



www.easttoedinburgh.co.uk

For:

- Information on Edinburgh shows
- Information on funding