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Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation awards \$1.3million to the American Theatre Wing, founder of the Tony Awards

- Resources to be provided to under-resourced state schools
- School students to be given extracurricular theatre training opportunities
- University scholarships to be awarded to outstanding theatre students

On 12 June 2016 at the 70th annual Tony Awards, it was announced that the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation is awarding \$1.3 million to the American Theatre Wing, founder of the Tony Awards, for the new, national 'Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative'. The money will go towards establishing a multi-faceted initiative which helps talented students overcome economic barriers to pursue a career in the theatre and provide enterprising state school drama teachers with the resources they need to nurture young talent in their schools

This grant from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, its largest single grant in the US, comes ahead of The American Theatre Wing celebrating its Centenary in 2017. Funded by a three-year grant from the Foundation, the major new initiative will both strengthen and expand the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and American Theatre Wing's mission of nurturing the next generation of theatre makers.

The funding comes in response to the effect of extensive funding cuts on arts education in US state schools in the United States which has created vast inequalities between schools in wealthy and poor districts, with theatre education now offered in only 4% of primary schools and 45% of secondary schools. It is also a response to the recent Americans for the Arts report that African-American and Hispanic students are getting less than half the access to arts education than their peers.

The Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative consists of three components:

- **Classroom Resources:** Through a grant-giving program, funding will be provided directly to under-resourced public schools to provide instruments, dance floors, lighting grids, and other necessary materials to help create new and enhance existing theatre programmes.
- **Extracurricular Training Scholarships:** Funding will go towards covering the costs associated with sending select students to summer study and after school training programs.
- **4-Year Partial University Scholarships:** Financial support will be provided to select students to pursue theatre studies at University level.

Andrew Lloyd Webber has commented:

"I am passionate about the vital role of the arts in education. My career started in schools with *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* premiered by a college in both Britain and the USA. This is why the story of *School of Rock* struck such a chord with me.

"Disgracefully the arts have too often borne the brunt of short-sighted cuts to educational budgets. I am thrilled my Foundation can join with the expertise of the American Theatre Wing to launch this initiative

and provide resources to those who will benefit from them the most. However, it is vital that we keep this going for years to come and I call upon other successful musicians and theatre professionals to come forward and join this initiative. Together we can nurture the talent of the future and bring the empowering force of music and the arts to a new generation.”

Heather Hitchens, President and CEO of the American Theatre Wing commented:

“Tonight we celebrated a remarkably diverse and exciting season on Broadway. Our partnership with Andrew and his Foundation on this initiative will help us ensure that the long term ecology of the theatre remains healthy, accessible, and inclusive.”

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Notes to Editors

About the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation

- The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation was set up by Andrew in 1992 to promote the arts, culture and heritage for the public benefit; since inception Andrew has been the principal provider of funding for all its charitable activities.
- In 2010, the Foundation embarked on an active grant giving programme and has now awarded grants of more than £11m to support high quality training and personal development as well as other projects that make a real difference to enrich the quality of life both for individuals and within local communities. Significant grants include £3.5m to Arts Educational Schools, London to create a state of the art professional theatre, £1m to The Architectural Heritage Fund, £1m to The Music in Secondary Schools Trust and over £350,000 annually to fund 30 performing arts scholarships for talented students in financial need.
- In 2015, the Foundation awarded over £1.5million in 46 new grants to organisations, made 17 grants totalling £860k to projects in their second and third year of funding and provided 30 musical theatre scholarships worth over £300k to young performers on the brink of their careers. The grants focus on the enhancement of arts education and participation, improving access to the arts for all, and increasing diversity across the arts, culture and heritage sector.

www.andrewlloydwebberfoundation.com

About the American Theatre Wing

- The **American Theatre Wing** (Heather Hitchens, President and CEO) is dedicated to advancing artistic excellence and nurturing theatre’s next generation: on the stage, behind the scenes, and in the audience. For nearly a century, the Wing has pursued this mission with programs that span the nation to invest in the growth and evolution of American Theatre.
- Traditionally, the Wing has encouraged members of the theatre community to share their off-stage time and talent directly with the theatre audience at large--whether it was singing for the troops in the Stage Door Canteen of the 1940s, or sharing their stories on a podcast today. As the founders of The Tony Awards®, the American Theatre Wing has developed the foremost national platform for the recognition of theatrical achievement on Broadway.

- The Wing's reach extends beyond Broadway and beyond New York. The Wing develops the next generation of theatre professionals through the SpringboardNYC and Theatre Intern Network programs, incubates innovative theatre across the country through the National Theatre Company Grants, fosters the song of American theatre through the Jonathan Larson Grants, honours the best in New York theatrical design with the Henry Hewes Design Award, and illuminates the creative process through the “Working in the Theatre” program and media archive. Beginning last season, the American Theatre Wing has entered into a long-term partnership with *The Village Voice* to co-present The Obie Awards, Off Broadway’s Highest Honor.
- Visitors to AmericanTheatreWing.org can gain inspiration and insight into the artistic process through the Wing’s extensive media collection, and learn more about its programming for students, aspiring and working professionals, and audiences.

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