

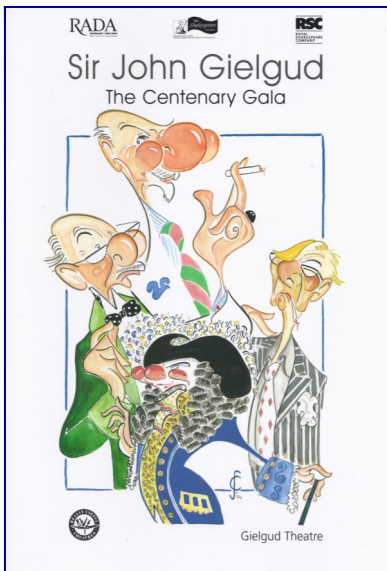
Producer Cameron Mackintosh Receives the 2019 *GIELGUD AWARD*

On Monday, October 28, during an event that took place at the **GIELGUD THEATRE** in association with a **UK THEATRE AWARDS** luncheon that had occurred the previous day in London's venerable **GUILDHALL**, the **SHAKESPEARE GUILD**



presented this year's *GIELGUD AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE DRAMATIC ARTS* to **SIR CAMERON MACKINTOSH**.

This was not the **GUILD**'s first event in what has long been revered as one of the most prestigious venues in the West End. On **April 19, 2004**, the **GUILD** co-sponsored a festive *GIELGUD CENTENARY GALA* in that setting, a special evening that



was co-produced by **Thelma Holt** and **Bill Kenright** and co-hosted by the **ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY** as a benefit for the **ROYAL ACADEMY OF DRAMATIC ART**. Directed by **Joe Harmston**, devised by **John Miller**, and compered by **BBC** broadcaster **Ned Sherrin**, that gathering featured reminiscences and vignettes by **Alan Bennett**, **Dame Judi Dench**, **Clive Francis**, **Sir Peter Hall**, **Sir David Hare**, **Rosemary Harris**, **Barbara Jefford**, **Barbara Leigh-Hunt**, **Sir Ian McKellen**, **Michael Pennington**, **Ronald Pickup**, **Ian Richardson**, **Paul Scofield**, and **Sir Donald Sinden**. It also included a scene performed by **RADA** students, among them **Tom Hiddleston**, who would soon become a star himself.

To mark the **15th anniversary** of that illustrious occasion, a small invited audience gathered in the **GIELGUD**'s elegant **Circle Bar** for a catered reception. **GUILD** president **John F. Andrews** opened the proceedings by presenting the theatre with **Clive Francis**' original illustration for the *GALA*'s printed

program. He then recalled the **25th anniversaries** of two milestones that occurred in **1994**: the establishment of a new award in **Sir John**'s name, which occurred at a reception in **Washington's FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY** on **April 24** of that year, and the rechristening of a venue that had been known as the **GLOBE** prior to **November 2, 1994**, when it was renamed in a **Circle Bar** gathering to celebrate **Sir John**'s 90th birthday.

Mr. Andrews then introduced **SIR RICHARD EYRE**, a renowned director, producer, filmmaker, and writer who had received the **2018 GIELGUD AWARD** at the **GUIDHALL** from **SIR IAN MCKELLEN**, the inaugural recipient of an honor that had been bestowed on him during a **Folger** ceremony that had occurred on **May 20, 1996**. **Sir Richard** was directing a new revival of *Mary Poppins* for **Cameron Mackintosh** at the **PRINCE EDWARD THEATRE**. So it was highly gratifying that he was available to present this year's trophy, paying homage to a theatre artist who has been described by the *New York Times* as "the most successful, influential, and powerful theatrical producer in the world."

Sir Richard began by observing that renowned musicals such as *Cats*, *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Oliver!*, and *The Phantom of the Opera* don't happen by chance. They require clear, imaginative vision, immense creative effort, and a huge amount of discipline. He noted that these are qualities that **Sir Cameron** has demonstrated time after



time, sometimes at the expense of surprised responses from theatre professionals who are not used to the exacting standards of a producer who can be difficult to satisfy.

Sir Richard noted that the same criteria that lie behind globally-renowned stage and screen productions can be credited for the comfortable, welcoming venues that are owned and operated by **DELFONT MACINTOSH THEATRES**, all eight of which have been beautifully refurbished as elegant shrines to London's unique heritage in the performing arts.

Sir Richard went on to observe that by means of the **MACKINTOSH FOUNDATION** and its various philanthropic efforts, **Sir Cameron** and his fellow Trustees also provide generous support for a broad range of artistic endeavors, educational institutions, environmental initiatives, health-care programs, and other worthy causes.

Sir Cameron thanked Sir Richard for his generous words, and acknowledged with a smile that his perfectionism can at times be annoying to those who choose to work with



him. He pointed out by way of explanation that his primary concern is to make sure that those who purchase tickets to the shows he produces, and attend performances in the venues he oversees, have the most enjoyable and enriching experiences possible. He commended the SHAKESPEARE GUILD for its commitment to preserving and perpetuating the legacy of Sir John. And he said that he was pleased by the GUILD's recognition of, and support for, the GIELGUD THEATRE's own commitment to values that were pivotal to Sir John's many successes in a career that continues to inspire everyone who cherishes the traditions they exemplify.

After joining Clive Francis, Sir Richard, and Mr. Andrews for a group picture, Sir Cameron then invited his guests to walk upstairs for a look at his most recent renovations to a structure that has long been associated with



the leading producers in the West End. He guided attendees to a floor that had once been presided over by Hugh "Binkie" Beaumont, co-founder and later chief executive of H. M. Tennent, the foremost theatrical management team in the London of Gielgud's heyday. He pointed to a small,

narrow lift (one that could be uncomfortably cozy when occupied by more than one passenger) and noted that it had been the most widely-discussed feature of the office.

Sir Cameron next turned to Binkie's Bar, a new addition to the GIELGUD's Upper Circle that he and his team had just opened to ensure that the same amenities to be enjoyed below in settings like the Circle Bar would be available for attendees in the "gods," the theatre's least expensive seats.

For those who had the good fortune to be on hand for what turned out to be a memorable tour of one of the theatrical world's most resonant settings, this moment provided an indelible reminder of why Sir Cameron is so fervently admired by audiences who pack venues such as the VICTORIA PALACE to enjoy *Hamilton* and the GIELGUD to watch *Les Misérables*. It epitomized why he so richly deserves the acclaim his many triumphs have earned him.



The GUILD is immensely grateful to all who contributed to the warmth of a lovely occasion, among them the cultural leaders who joined us for the reception: Gielgud biographer Jonathan Croall, Gielgud letters editor Richard Mangan, BBC producer Peter Griffiths and his wife Eva, theatre producer Thelma Holt, arts promoters Joyce Hytner and Robert and Rebecca Page, filmmakers Sue Birtwistle, David Parfitt, and Marc Sinden, and Shakespeare scholars Paul Edmondson and Sir Stanley Wells of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and James Shapiro of Columbia University.

We regretted the absence of the many would-be guests who had scheduling conflicts, among them biographer and event producer John Miller and his wife Aileen, and such GIELGUD laureates as F. Murray Abraham, Keith Baxter, Sir Kenneth Branagh, Dame Judi Dench, Sir David Hare, Sir Derek Jacobi, Sir Ian McKellen, and Sir Patrick Stewart. But we were delighted to welcome such GUILD stalwarts as Stephen Browning and his wife Julia, and actor and visual artist Clive Francis and his wife Natalie. Clive's incomparable Gielgud-inscribed trophies have graced every one of our award ceremonies since 2005. We're especially indebted to William Differ, Operations Director of DELFON MACKINTOSH THEATRES LTD., and Rosy Runciman, Archivist for Cameron MACKINTOSH LTD., for all they did to facilitate arrangements for this event. We'd have loved to be joined by Julian Bird and Katie Kerry, who oversee UK THEATRE and the SOCIETY FOR LONDON THEATRE, but we were very pleased to greet Russell Morton in their stead. Finally, a word of thanks to GUILD board member Jan Denton, whose photographs adorn this overview.