

4 June 2009

SOUTHBANK CENTRE AND UNDERBELLY LAUNCH TRAINING ACADEMY FOR YOUNG LOCAL PEOPLE ON ALL ASPECTS OF EVENT PRODUCTION

Southbank Centre and Underbelly are delighted to announce the launch of The Training Academy as part of Southbank Centre's and E4 Udderbelly's summer season on the banks of the Thames.

The Training Academy gives 22 young people from Lambeth and Southwark, aged between 16 and 20, the rare opportunity to gain a practical and direct insight into all aspects of running a performance venue. Participants will work side by side with Southbank Centre and Udderbelly staff in a six-week course, which will cover all aspects of live production – including box office, front of house, technical, producing, artist liaison, marketing and press. At the end of the course the participants will present their own production in the E4 Udderbelly for their friends and family.

The 20 Lambeth and Southwark residents have been selected through local youth group, SE1 United, which is based at Southbank Centre.

The Training Academy will also offer five participants the chance to join the Underbelly team at the 2009 Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August.

Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of Southbank Centre, said: 'We are deeply committed to providing opportunities for young people to experience many aspects of our work. Through The Training Academy, young people from Lambeth will be able to gain invaluable experience in contributing to and managing events across the summer programme as well as having an insight into how we collaborate with our partners such as Underbelly.'

Ed Bartlam, Co-Director of Underbelly said: 'We are delighted to be able to play a part in this initiative. The Training Academy is an exciting and crucial opportunity to help young people gain access to the arts and experience what it is like to work in this field. We very much hope that this will be the start of an ongoing initiative and we are very grateful that Southbank Centre has asked Underbelly to be involved in such an exciting project.'

E4 Udderbelly, a 400 capacity arena theatre in the shape of a purple upside down cow, is grazing at Southbank Centre from 27 May to 19 July and presents an eclectic programme of music, comedy, theatre, children's shows and circus. Launched by comic icon Joan Rivers, the season is headlined by the Tom Tom Crew, who present stunning musical and acrobatic entertainment, as well as shows by Clive James and Katy Brand, and cabaret from The Crack with Miss Behave. Udderbelly's summer season in London is a collaboration between Edinburgh Festival venue operator, Underbelly, and Southbank Centre.

For further press information, please contact Patricia O'Connor, Head of Press, Southbank Centre on 020 7921 0632 / patricia.oconnor@southbankcentre.co.uk.

Notes to editors**Southbank Centre**

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 *Festival of Britain*. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and The Hayward as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following the major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities.

SE1 United

SE1 United is a youth organisation, which was set up in 2003 for young people aged between 10 and 21 years old. Having recently moved into Spirit Level in the Royal Festival Hall, SE1 United organises and funds youth-led activities and trips for young people in South London.