



# Action for Children's Arts

The national voice of children's arts

[www.childrensarts.org.uk](http://www.childrensarts.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 1114530

---

## **OLIVIER AWARDS, Best Entertainment and Family**

Congratulations to SOLT on another successful and celebratory Olivier Awards. Once again the range and brilliance of London Theatre was given national profile and status.

As Chair and Vice Chair of Action for Children's Arts, a charity that celebrates children's art and artistes, we are writing to share the views of several of our members and our Board. We believe that the time has come to separate the Best Entertainment and Family Award into two awards – one for the Best Entertainment Award and another, Best Production for Young Audiences. Might you be able to support this idea?

The category as it stands includes such widely differing productions that it must be impossible for the judges to compare them. In 2012 a play for under-fives (THE TIGER WHO CAME TO TEA) competed against DERREN BROWN. This year HETTY FEATHER (from Jacqueline Wilson's book for young readers) competed against LA CLIQUE, a cabaret show. It does seem unfair to compare like with unlike in this way.

It is clear that Best Entertainment and Family is intended to include quality productions that do not fit into any other category. This aim is admirable, but leads to some strange bedfellows!

We are not saying that shows for children and young people never win. They sometimes do, for example THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS (ROH) and GOODNIGHT MISTER TOM.

Some years ago we can see that there were very few shows for children in the West End. Big 'family musicals' like MARY POPPINS or SHREK THE MUSICAL were clearly eligible for the Best Musical category. Now, however, there are many children's shows in London, not just at Christmas time. They include shows for the under-fives, almost unheard of twenty years ago. Children are at last viewed by producers and theatre owners as an important audience in their own right, not just 'the audiences of the future'. ACA heartily applauds this development.

Might it be possible for SOLT to consider having two awards in the future?  
We would be very happy to discuss these thoughts further if you thought it appropriate.

Meanwhile, all good wishes, and thanks again to you and SOLT for running the Oliviers, which so successfully celebrate the richness of our theatre and the outstanding achievements of our theatre-makers.

Yours sincerely,

David Wood OBE  
Chair ACA  
p.p. Vicky Ireland MBE  
Vice Chair ACA

### Patrons

David Almond, Sir Alan Ayckbourn CBE, Lynne Reid Banks, Baroness Floella Benjamin OBE, David Bintley CBE, Malorie Blackman OBE, Sir Quentin Blake CBE, Matthew Bourne OBE, Mrs Felicity Dahl, Carol Ann Duffy CBE, Peter Duncan, Michael Foreman, Jamila Gavin, Anne Home OBE, Shirley Hughes OBE, Sir Nicholas Hytner, Terry Jones, Judith Kerr OBE, Julian Lloyd Webber FRCM, Joanna MacGregor, Michelle Magorian, Nichola McAuliffe, Roger McGough CBE, Michael Morpurgo OBE, Nick Park, Philip Pullman CBE, Sir Ken Robinson, Michael Rosen, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, Benjamin Zephaniah