

## End of a fantastic era at Oldham Coliseum as Kevin Shaw moves on

Oldham Coliseum Theatre announces that Kevin Shaw, Chief Executive & Artistic Director, is to leave the Coliseum, this November, after 17 tremendous years to pursue a freelance career in directing. Kevin's last production at the Coliseum is his 16<sup>th</sup> nationally renowned pantomime, delighting local audiences with the magic, mystery and mayhem of *Cinderella* with a great script and fantastic cast.

Over the last seventeen years the Coliseum has grown under Kevin's leadership, establishing the theatre as one of the most-loved regional theatres in the country. Kevin has shaped the artistic vision of the Coliseum, curating over 34 seasons of high quality theatre for the people of Oldham and beyond, including commissioning new plays and musicals, and personally directing over 60 productions for the Coliseum stage, some of which have also toured nationally.

Under Kevin's leadership, the company's successes have included: the Manchester Theatre Award for Best Production for *The Father* in 2017, the Manchester Theatre Award for Best Ensemble for *Chicago* in 2014, the Manchester Theatre Award for Best Special Entertainment for *Star-Cross'd* in 2013 and the Manchester Evening News Theatre Award for Best Family Show for *Sleeping Beauty* in 2010.

Kevin also established the Coliseum's hugely successful Learning and Engagement Department in 2002, which currently works with 5,000 people per year from Oldham and the surrounding boroughs. Through a range of educational and community projects, these opportunities provide life enhancing artistic experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds to enable them to access the arts.

### **Kevin commented:**

"It has been a huge privilege to lead the Coliseum and I am extremely proud of our many achievements. I am incredibly grateful to the enormously loyal and talented Coliseum staff, creative teams and volunteers who have supported me, they are inspirational.

I have enjoyed my time at the Coliseum immensely; it's a very special theatre with a rich history and an extraordinary community. However, I have decided the time is now right to hand over the responsibility of leading the next phase of the Company's development to somebody else, enabling me to seek fresh challenges and artistic opportunities elsewhere.

I am currently directing my sixteenth Coliseum pantomime, working, as always, with a brilliant cast and creative team. We have built a national reputation for the theatre's panto and I'm looking forward to taking my seat in the stalls on opening night and enjoying the unique Coliseum atmosphere. There's no better audience than an Oldham audience."

### **Gail Richards, Chair of the Coliseum's Board of Trustees, endorsed this, adding:**

"Kevin has served the Coliseum for 17 years, one of the most successful periods in the theatre's recent history. He has seen the Coliseum achieve awards' success and critical acclaim and has directed a series of successful productions from our popular panto to the much-beloved *Brassed*

*Off.* He even took us to an extraordinary experience in *Star-Cross'd* at Alexandra Park while the theatre itself was closed for much-needed maintenance.

The Board of Trustees would like to thank Kevin for his work at the theatre and beyond, over many years of service, and wish him all the best for the future. Kevin will be missed by many and we wish him every success in his future creative endeavours”.

**- Ends -----**

**Notes to Editor:**

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Oldham Coliseum Theatre is a cultural and educational charity that works with over 150,000 individuals per year.

The Coliseum has a rich history in Greater Manchester dating back to 1885. It provides a wide variety of distinctive theatre performances and participatory activities for people from all communities in Oldham, Greater Manchester and beyond. It creates original productions, of which up to half are newly-commissioned work, which are presented at the Coliseum and on tour. Intrinsic to the town’s on-going regeneration, the theatre works with its local communities and young people to develop creative programmes to facilitate learning, engagement and community cohesion.

The Coliseum Board is currently working on interim arrangements and looks forward to finalising these in the New Year.