

**MOUNTVIEW ACADEMY OF THEATRE ARTS LAUNCHES
THE MOUNTVIEW PRIZE, AN ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF TRAILBLAZERS WHO
INSPIRE SOCIAL CHANGE - DAWN WALTON TO BE INAUGURAL RECIPIENT**



One of the UK's leading drama schools is launching The Mountview Prize to celebrate trailblazers who inspire social change and whose lived experience is inspirational to others.

In June 2020 Mountview pledged to support Black and other underrepresented communities and committed to taking a proactive stand in the fight against racism, inequality and discrimination with an Action Plan for change. In 2021 this commitment has focused on listening, learning and celebrating different lived experiences and the launch of The Mountview Prize is part of that on-going work.

The inaugural Mountview Prize is being awarded to Dawn Walton, who has been rehearsing her production of Alfred Fagon's *The Death of a Black Man* at Mountview ahead of its run from 28 May until 10 July. Walton is founder and former Artistic Director of Eclipse Theatre Company and her most recent productions include *The Gift* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *Red Dust Road* (National Theatre of Scotland) and *Black Men Walking* (Royal Court).

As the recipient of The Mountview Prize, Walton will talk and deliver a provocation which will be made available on YouTube. Walton's talk, entitled 'Filling the Space, Taking Your Space', will explore the notion of cultural leadership, referring to her own experiences as a theatre practitioner.

The Mountview Prize will also include an award of a £2,800 bursary in the winner's name to a talented young person from an historically excluded community who is in financial need to enable them to attend Mountview's part-time Foundation in Acting course. In this way it is hoped the Prize becomes an active part of Mountview's commitment to supporting the next generation of theatre makers who remain underrepresented in the industry. Over the coming year, the bursary winner will also meet with Dawn for mentoring sessions.

Mountview's Joint Chief Executives, Sarah Preece and Stephen Jameson said:

"We are delighted to award the inaugural Mountview Prize to Dawn as she epitomizes how one individual can lead by example and inspire others to shift the ecology of their profession. She has been an agent and catalyst for change, challenged orthodox thinking and has used theatre to

empower, celebrate, acknowledge and spotlight the work of Black artists. We eagerly look forward to her talk in June.”

Dawn Walton said:

“This is an amazing honour no more so because the bursary will provide support for training in this profession to talented individual who like me had no obvious pathway. This is a wonderful intervention by Mountview and one that I would be proud to have my name attached to.”

All press enquiries to Simon Millward at Premier PR, 07990 507310
simon.millward@premiercomms.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts

Mountview has been training performance and production artists since 1945.

In 1992 Mountview became the first provider of specialised musical theatre training in Europe. Vocational courses include Acting, Musical Theatre, Actor Musicianship, Stage Management, Lighting, Sound, Scenic Art and Prop Making, Theatre Directing, Musical Direction, Creative Producing, Site Specific Theatre Practice and Theatre for Community and Education. Degree programmes are validated by University of East Anglia and Diplomas by Trinity College London.

Mountview’s new purpose-built home in Peckham, south east London, was completed in 2018 and includes the 200-seat Mountview Theatre (made possible by a £1m donation from Sir Cameron Mackintosh), the 80-seat Backstage Theatre (funded by the Backstage Trust), 23 acting, dance, TV and radio studios, production arts workshops and café bars. There is also dedicated office space for creative organisations including disability arts practitioners Candoco and professional rehearsal facilities used by Akram Khan Dance Company, Sheffield Theatres and Shakespeare’s Globe, amongst others.

Since the move to its new building student numbers have increased by 25%, with over 4000 applications per year for around 300 places from students from 90 countries world-wide.

Throughout Mountview’s 75 years, it has been dedicated to access to drama training and joint Chief Executives Sarah Preece and Stephen Jameson’s vision built on this core commitment, initiating weekend and evening classes for young people and the community, with over 50% receiving bursaries to cover the costs of participation and delivering free workshops in Southwark schools.

In 2020, Stephen and Sarah launched The Judi Dench Fund for Access to Drama Training providing scholarships, bursaries and wellbeing and welfare initiatives for students. The Fund also supports Mountview’s pioneering UK-wide scouting network of 52 organisations who identify talented young people who would traditionally consider drama training inaccessible and providing free auditions and application support.

95% of undergraduates leave Mountview with agent representation and 97% of its students work in the creative industries within one year of graduation. Alumni include Olivier Award winning actors Giles Terera and Rebecca Trehearn, Artistic Director of Donmar Warehouse Michael Longhurst,

actor/writer Amy Trigg (winner of the inaugural Women's Prize for Playwriting 2020), broadcaster Amanda Holden and Evening Standard Future Theatre Award Winners Emily Aboud and Beth Hinton-Lever.

During lockdown the school launched *Mountview LIVE*, a series of online conversations led by Giles Terera with leading industry professionals. Participants included Dame Judi Dench, Sir Lenny Henry, Olivia Colman, Stephen Daldry, Glenda Jackson, Adrian Lester and Lin-Manuel Miranda. All conversations are free to view on Mountview's YouTube channel.

For more information please visit: www.mountview.org.uk

Dawn Walton

Dawn is Founder and former Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Eclipse Theatre, the UK's principal Black-led national production company.

Theatre work includes *The Gift* (Eclipse Theatre/Belgrade Theatre/Theatre Royal, Stratford East); *Salt* (*Schaubühne*/Public Theater/Royal Court/Summerhall/Theatre Bristol/Yorkshire Festival - The Stage Edinburgh Award and Total Theatre Award for Experimentation; Innovation and Playing with Form); *Red Dust Road* (National Theatre of Scotland/EIF/HOME); *Black Men Walking* (Eclipse Theatre/Royal Court/Royal Exchange/UK tour - Nominated for UK Theatre Award for Best New Play and Writer's Guild Award for Best Play); *The Princess and the Hustler* (Eclipse Theatre/Bristol Old Vic/UK tour); *A Raisin in the Sun* (Eclipse Theatre/Crucible Theatre/UK tour - Nominated for UK Theatre Award for Best Touring Production); *One Monkey Don't Stop No Show* (Eclipse Theatre/Tricycle Theatre/UK tour); *Jonzi D - Lyrikal Feata: The Letter* (Sadler's Wells); *Michael X* (Eclipse Theatre/Tabernacle/Rich Mix); *There's Only One Wayne Matthews* (Crucible Theatre); *The Hounding of David Oluwale* (Eclipse Theatre/West Yorkshire Playhouse - Nominated for TMA Award for Best Director); *Oxford Street* (nominated for Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre); *93.2FM* (UK tour); *Rampage*; *Workers Writes*; *Drag-On* and *The Shining* (all Royal Court); *Winners* and *The Blacks* (both Young Vic); *Urban Legend* (Liverpool Playhouse); *Effie May* (Oval House); *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* and *Balm in Gilead* (both Corbett Theatre); *Glow* (Theatre Centre/UK tour); *The Madras House* (RADA); *The Changeling* and *Of Mice and Men* (both Southwark Playhouse); *Strings* (Clean Break - Soho) and *Splinters* (Talawa/Lyric Theatre).

Film work includes *Samuel's Trousers*; *10by10*; *Babydoll*; *A Blues for Nia*; *Black Magic*; *Brown Widow*; *Music in the Bones*; *Omar*; *Parking Wars*; *Perfume*; *Rage* and *Two Tone*.

Radio work includes *The Last Flag*.(BBC Radio 4)

More information on Walton's production of *The Death of a Black Man* can be found on Hampstead Theatre's website:

www.hampsteadtheatre.com/whats-on/2021/the-death-of-a-black-man