

# Children's Laureate to be Festival Patron

3 Feb 2009

Royal Opera House Creative Partnerships is pleased to announce that the Children's Laureate Michael Rosen has agreed to be the patron of the Basildon Children's Book Festival.

Following the success of the first festival last year, Royal Opera House Creative Partnerships is delighted to welcome back to Basildon, Children's Laureate Michael Rosen, as both performer and now the festival's patron. Creative Programmer Serena Abbott, whose idea the festival initially was, said she was 'delighted that Michael Rosen had not only chosen to return to Basildon for a second year but has also agreed to be patron. This is a significant achievement for a small festival and shows that we are taken seriously and are contributing to children's greater enjoyment of books and reading.'

Over 2000 young people attended last year's festival, hearing from and meeting fantastic writers who held them spellbound with dynamic performances and riveting readings. This year's programme is equally strong with Blue Peter Award nominee Tom Palmer, and Philip Ardagh, author of the hilarious Eddie Dickens series, making first appearances together with performance poets: David Mason and Adisa..

Matt Lane, Head of Royal Opera House Thurrock and Thames Gateway, said:

'I am delighted that this exciting event is returning to Basildon for a second year. Story telling is central to the work of the Royal Opera House. Many of our operas and ballets find their roots in tales told in good books. We are looking forward to helping to make this year's festival even better than last year's!

The Basildon Children's Book Festival 2009 begins with a free Book Discovery Day in the Eastgate Shopping Centre on Saturday 14 March when lots of reading and book-related activities will be happening.

Organised by Royal Opera House Creative Partnerships with partners including Waterstones, the Towngate Theatre, Basildon District Council, Essex County Council and Eastgate Shopping Centre, the book festival's performances will again be at the Towngate Theatre.

