



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

PRESS RELEASE

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**WORK STARTS ON BOB AND TAMAR
MANOUKIAN COSTUME CENTRE AT HIGH
HOUSE PRODUCTION PARK, PURFLEET**

A ceremonial ‘turning of the turf’ takes place today marking the start on site for the new Royal Opera House Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre at the High House Production Park in Purfleet.

The Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre will house more than 20,000 costumes for opera and ballet productions currently in the repertory as well as stock costume and the archive collection. The Royal Opera House maintains a unique and impressive collection of costumes, including some productions dating back over 40 years. In addition, there is an historical collection dating back to the 19th century of around 6,000 items which need to be kept in carefully controlled conditions to ensure they are properly conserved. At present the costumes are kept in diverse locations, including Aberdare and Dover.

Having this new facility closer to Covent Garden will not only reduce transport costs and the carbon footprint but also allow more efficient management and preservation of the costumes currently in use. This will, in turn, prolong their working life allowing us to improve the recycling of costumes on new productions and reducing the costs of repairs and

replacements.

In a unique partnership with South Essex College, there will also be permanent workrooms for students. The proximity to the costume archives will provide a wealth and depth of material for the students to study. The students will also be provided with opportunities for specialist placements with the Royal Opera House Costume department, providing a springboard for ensuring our specialist skills are passed on to the next generation of costumiers.

The Costume Centre will be built to the highest standards of sustainable building design set to achieve BREEAM excellent status using low carbon technologies, energy and water efficient systems. It is funded through a grant from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in partnership with the Royal Opera House, South Essex College, Thurrock Council, Bob and Tamar Manoukian and Foyle Foundation.

The Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre adds another dimension to the High House Production Park where, since 2011, the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House productions have been made in the Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop. Also on site is the National Skills Academy's Backstage Centre and Acme Studios' High House Artists' Studios creating a unique centre of excellence for the creative and cultural industries.

Alongside the building project, an 18-month Low Carbon Business Support Programme, Culture Change, is being led by the Royal Opera House and Julie's Bicycle for small to medium sized enterprises within the Creative and Cultural industries in the East of England. This is an important opportunity to bring together expert partners to share knowledge with small organizations, 86% of which in the region comprise four employees or less, with a focus on effective social media, sustainable

recruitment, and workshops on fundraising and how to secure apprentices.

Nicholas Hare Architects have designed the new Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre and Interserve are the contracted builders.

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Notes to editors:

The Costume Centre is part financed by the East of England ERDF Programme 2007 to 2013. The Department for Communities and Local Government is the managing authority for the European Regional Development Fund Programme, which is one of the funds established by the European Commission to help local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support local businesses and create jobs. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/browse/business/funding-debt/european-regional-development-funding>

The Culture Change programme is also supported by Thurrock Council, CCSkills and High House Production Park.

