



Producer Judy Craymer donates cash to theatre fund.



Craymer is also behind the new Spice Girls inspired musical, **Viva Forever!**

Theatre producer and **MAMMA MIA!** creator Judy Craymer has donated £125,000 to a fund created by The Theatres Trust, to help refurbish local theatres.

It matches April's opening donation to the Theatres Protection Fund from Andrew Lloyd Webber's charitable trust.

The money will help theatres that are struggling financially, but have significant value in their communities.

More than 50 million people worldwide have seen Craymer's smash hit musical **MAMMA MIA!** based on the songs of Abba.

She also produced the movie version starring Meryl Streep, Colin Firth and Pierce Brosnan, which became the highest grossing musical film ever.

Craymer said it was her "absolute pleasure" to contribute towards the fund and hoped it would encourage others to follow and "keep audiences having great nights at theatres across the country".

She added: "Theatres are very precious. This country has the richest heritage of theatre anywhere in the world and I genuinely feel we must protect that glorious history for future theatre-going audiences."

Set up earlier this year, the fund has established a Small Grants Scheme that allows any UK theatre to apply for up to £5,000 for urgent or long-term needs, such as improving the theatre's physical condition or its accessibility.

Chairman of The Theatres Trust, Rob Dickens, said it was "great news" to receive the backing of "a leading light in the entertainment world".

Craymer's latest project is a West End musical based on the songs of The Spice Girls, **Viva Forever!**

Written by Jennifer Saunders it opens in December at London's Piccadilly Theatre.

Lord Lloyd-Webber's donation followed the theatre mogul's pledge in 2011 to give £32 million proceedings from the sale of a Picasso painting to arts and culture organisations across the UK.