

News Release

For immediate release

21 February 2005

West End actor wins compensation from Lloyd Webber company.

An actor who was playing a major role in the West End production of "Whistle Down The Wind" has been awarded £7,500 compensation for a succession of injuries he received while on stage.

Dean Collinson, 36, of West Hampstead, suffered back, rib and hip injuries as well as a hernia during a year spent playing the part of Amos in Andrew Lloyd Webber's production at the Aldwych Theatre. On one occasion, he had to pick up a motor bike with a pillion passenger still on the back to avoid a 12 tonne stage set that was being lowered.

Jonathan Wheeler, partner in the Personal Injury Department at Bolt Burdon Kemp in London, who represented Mr Collinson, said: " Dean Collinson's case highlights the dangerous working conditions that some of our country's artists have to perform under. The incidents were all results of shoddy maintenance or insufficient planning and could have been avoided. "

Jonathan Wheeler added: "Stage shows are becoming more and more dramatic as theatre producers try to use increasingly complex machinery to wow the audience. It's worrying that people's lives and well-being are put at risk because entertainment comes before safety."

Dean Collinson started acting after a career in singing and songwriting, producing his own album and writing songs including "Better the Devil You Know", Sonia's entry in the Eurovision Song Contest in 1993. He has worked with celebrities such as Paul McCartney and George Michael and written three musicals, one of which, "Bill and Ted's Excellent Musical Adventure", won the

award for Most Successful Musical at the Edinburgh Festival and Best Composer in the Vivian Ellis Awards.

“In a year as the male juvenile lead in ‘Whistle Down the Wind’, I missed 105 shows because of injuries I received during the production,” he said. “As well as the one with the bike, I had to push the female lead out of the way of a train that was being pushed towards the audience, giving myself a hernia; and in another show, I fell from a ladder that had had oil used on it to stop it squeaking.

“ It seems to me that safety is an afterthought”, he added, “ all the problems we had in our production could have been avoided with good planning, better design and constant checks and maintenance.

“I’m not the only one who’s suffered on stage. I know of numerous other actors, dancers and singers who have been injured. The standards we accept in the name of entertainment are just not good enough and they won’t improve until the Health and Safety representatives start to make spot checks rather than making appointments to check the safety of the production, “ he concluded.

Andrew Lloyd Webber’s company, the Really Useful Group, strongly denied liability and fought two separate cases to trial. Judges awarded the compensation to Dean Collinson for his injuries on the 19th March 2003 and 2nd December 2004..

Ends

For further information, contact:

Jonathan Wheeler, Bolt Burdon Kemp
Shirley Mann, Harvest PR

020 7288 4700
01283 840695
07803 160776

Shirleym@harvestpr.net

www.boltburdonkemp.co.uk