

Elton's old piano strikes right note

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 11 February 2015 10:53 -

A new performance space in South Quay may not have much at present, but it does have Elton John's old piano.

The arrival of the instrument has been taken as a good omen by the woman behind the project which aims to add to the roster of small-scale venues in area, alongside Greenwich Playhouse and The Space.

It was Yamaha which donated the top-of-the-range grand piano, regularly used by the singer-songwriter for warm-ups.

Director Janet Viola said: "The people from Yamaha came down here and said it was a fantastic space and they wanted to get involved. The piano just arrived from that.

"Since then we keep getting calls from people saying 'how have you got the piano?'

"One of those who called us were Trinity Music College and they came here and played it on the opening night. This could start something pretty spectacular. There could be a full orchestra here."

The piano was squeezed in through an upstairs fire escape.

Yamaha is now also looking at offering more equipment to transform the Lanterns School of the Performing Art's Music department into a Yamaha Music School for the Local area.

For Janet that's just part of a dream for a vast 20x20m performance area that could accommodate pantos, community events, ballet and jazz nights.

Small-scale shows are already being performed in the space at the Millharbour facility but more investment is needed to improve the facilities.

Janet is looking to raise £35,000 to upgrade the floor to international performance standard and £20,000 for high quality seating stand with a 400 capacity.

Janet says once the money is in place it could make for an extraordinary venue on the Isle of Dogs.

"Docklands Arena and Cabot Hall closed so there's nothing really around here apart from The O2 that will produce something for everyone in the arts," she said.

"We're only a few stops from Covent Garden and this will bring people east."

[Click here to read original article](#)