



Hydrogen cell helps theatre clean up its act

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Arcola Theatre: Putting on the first production powered entirely by a hydrogen fuel cell

London's first theatre production powered entirely by a hydrogen fuel cell opens tonight.

The Arcola Theatre in Dalston will get all the electricity for *The Living Unknown Soldier* from a fuel cell installed in its foyer.

It converts hydrogen to energy and is cleaner than conventional electricity sources such as coal or nuclear power stations.

The Arcola hopes to eventually become the world's first carbonneutral theatre.

"The fuel cell is really just the beginning," said Dr Ben Todd, chief executive of the Arcola Energy team.

"We will be running a major education programme around the fuel cell, and we really hope we can inspire people who come to see the production to use things like low energy lightbulbs in their own home.

"One of the major environmental impacts of theatre is actually the transport used by the audience and we hope to make people think about that when they see what we are doing."

The 5kW fuel cell system will provide electricity for the show as well as for lighting in the theatre's bar. All aspects of *The Living Unknown Soldier*, devised by Simple 8 and produced by Strawberry Vale, have been assessed to cut its environmental impact. Set construction, marketing, company travel and lighting were all given a green overhaul and the production's environmental footprint will be evaluated by Global Action Plan.

Dr Todd said: "We would like to see all our productions use the fuel cell but I think realistically it will take theatre companies a little while to adjust to the different types of lighting and set design techniques."

The fuel cell system has been supplied by London Hydrogen Partnership, with additional funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Arts Council England, Hackney council and the Mayor's Greening London Theatre initiative.

Ken Livingstone said: "Arcola is leading the theatre industry in developing this premiere sustainable production and I know that many other theatres are now keen to follow."

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