

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Spacey named art director for London's Old Vic Theater

LONDON (AP) — Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey is taking a new role as artistic director of London's Old Vic Theater, the company announced Wednesday.

Spacey, who won Oscars for the movies "The Usual Suspects" (1995) and "American Beauty" (1999), will lead a new company of actors from 2004 and will appear in at least two productions each season, he told a crowded news conference at the historic theater.



SPACEY

"I am thrilled the Old Vic's board of directors has given me their confidence to take on such a challenging role," said the 43-year-old, who first visited the theater at 7 during a trip to London with his parents.

"I remember seeing Shakespeare and other productions on the Old Vic stage. To have grown up to act on the stage itself was a dream come true," he said. "To find myself in the role of director of the Old Vic Theater is beyond my wildest imaginings."

Spacey has maintained a close relationship with the Old Vic since he starred in Eugene O'Neill's "The Iceman Cometh" there in 1998. He's one of the theater's trustees and has played a role in raising funds to ensure its survival.

Later Wednesday, Spacey was to sing some duets with Elton John at a fund-raising gala concert at the theater.

Long known as "the actors' theater," the Old Vic has provided a stage for many of the greatest performers of the last century, including John Gielgud, Peggy Ashcroft, Alec Guinness, Peter O'Toole, Judi Dench and Maggie Smith. It's the former home of Laurence Olivier's National Theater company.

'Bachelor' Buerge no longer engaged

NEW YORK (AP) — The second "Bachelor" is still a bachelor.

Aaron Buerge, a 28-year-old banker from Springfield, Mo., proposed to Helene Eksterowicz at the end of the second season of "The Bachelor," ABC's romance-reality series in which an eligible guy chooses a bride from among 25 hopefuls.

An estimated 29 million viewers watched the Nov. 20 finale, as Buerge got down on one knee and placed a diamond ring on Eksterowicz' left hand. (He refused to let the show spring for the rock, and insisted on buying it himself.)

Now, he says in the Feb. 17 issue of People magazine that the engagement was over by New Year's.

"There has not been any dagger throwing," Buerge said, adding that neither had been unfaithful. He said he and Eksterowicz, a 27-year-old school psychologist from Gloucester City, N.J., stay in touch by e-mail, and will explain why the

romance died on a Feb. 20 AP special.

So did Eksterowicz keep the ring? "That will be revealed," network spokeswoman said Wednesday.

Doors drummer sues fellow bandmates

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Doors drummer John Densmore is suing fellow bandmates Robby Krieger and Manzarek and Robby Krieger is going on tour as The Doors without him.

The lawsuit, filed Tuesday in Superior Court, seeks a court order prohibiting keyboardist Manzarek and guitarist Krieger from calling themselves The Doors when they perform without Densmore. It also requests that Densmore, 58, be paid a share of profits from any shows that have taken place without him.

The lawsuit states that after lead singer Jim Morrison died in 1971, Densmore, Manzarek and Krieger agreed they'd split any future profits from The Doors music three ways and that the band's name wouldn't be used if all three original surviving members weren't involved.

Manzarek, 63, Krieger, 57, and their representatives could not be found for comment. There was no Los Angeles telephone listing for the musicians, The Doors Music Company, or their record label, Bright Midnight Records.

Manzarek and Krieger, along with singer Ian Astbury of The Cult and former Police drummer Stewart Copeland, were to perform Friday at the University Amphitheatre.

Douglas visits war-torn Sierra Leone

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (AP) — Actor Michael Douglas wrapped up a trip to war-torn



DOUGLAS

Sierra Leone on Wednesday, checking out vast stockpiles of surrendered arms and talking with victims of the ruthless 10-year conflict.

Douglas, also a U.N. peace envoy, is producing a film with the United Nations on the West African nation's child soldiers.

"I am impressed with how many kids are keen on getting back to school, in places really war-torn," the 58-year-old actor said.

Sierra Leone is recovering from one of Africa's most brutal wars — one that saw tens of thousands killed, raped and maimed as rebels battled to gain control of the nation's diamond fields and government.

Sierra Leone authorities declared the war over in January 2002, after deployments by the United Nations, former colonial ruler Britain, and neighboring Guinea finally broke the rebel movement.

Douglas arrived Saturday and has spent most of his time in the eastern Kono diamond-mine district. His work is meant to show the wartime role of child soldiers and their reintroduction back to their families and communities.

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