



## Denise Smith interviews Mark Everett, director of The Marlowe Theatre

**T**he new Marlowe Theatre will open, on budget, and on time, on 4 October. "It's a great achievement," says theatre director Mark Everett. An invitation-only gala will follow the official opening, but Mark feels that the open weekend (7-10 October) will really signify the beginning; the theatre will be thrown open to the public so they can walk round, ask questions and sample the hospitality.

Visitors will see large, glazed foyers on three levels with unique views of the city and Cathedral, public areas including bars and cafes, and a new riverside walk and piazza. "It's just a much nicer building to be in," says Mark. Virtually

everywhere can now be accessed by wheelchairs. There is an improved hearing loop, interpreted performances, lower counter areas, and automatic doors.

The council recognised they had outgrown the old building, something Mark is proud of. "To use an old cliché," he says, "size matters". The new 1,200-seat auditorium will attract bigger shows and more variety. The smaller Studio Theatre will provide rehearsal space, workshops and eventually be home to the Marlowe Youth Theatre.

Made possible by a mix of public and private money, the 'Name a seat' scheme has already sold over 200, but at



£500 each, not everyone can afford it. The budget was a bit lean for the technical side, so the 'Light up the Marlowe' scheme – £100 towards a spotlight – was also created. Mark says that "offering these schemes provide people with engagement" and gives them the opportunity to say 'I helped build the Marlowe'."

If you want to contribute to either of these schemes, contact the Campaign Office on 01227 456448 or the Marlowe Box Office on 01227 787787. 