

What made you become an ambassador for the charity?

I was asked about nine years ago. I feel strongly about it because the arts... we're basically a philistine country, certainly under the Conservative government.

The arts are seen as the icing on the cake, whereas, of course, the arts *are* the cake. They make a nation and educate a new generation. Under successive governments, the arts in schools have been cut away as a luxury and they really aren't.

I work in the top end of theatre and film and I'm very lucky to be able to do that. My feeling is that we should give some luck back towards what art is really all about; it's about investment for the future through our children.

Why did you want to be an actor?

What fired my desire to be an actor was a desire to get away from most of the people I had been educated with. I wanted to be a gypsy, I wanted to travel and tell stories; all very romantic.

What is your biggest concern for current and future young people?

I'm concerned about this whole computer generation. We're not educating people



Jeremy Irons

The Oscar-winning actor is an ambassador for Children & The Arts, founded by the Prince of Wales to help provide access to the arts for disadvantaged children

BY JONATHAN WHILEY

who know about real interaction; about talking to people and being able to convince them as they're sitting eye to eye.

However good an idea is, you have to be able to sell it. I worry that the kids spend so much time now texting and tweeting and all of this, that the whole adventure of getting to know people and how you can influence them, sort of goes.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE... TV programme?

I watched *Apple Tree Yard* and I thought it was wonderfully made. Fantastic writing, a fantastic ending and fantastic performances. I was hooked by it.

Film?

This year I thought *Loving* was a film that should have got more notice.

Theatre?

I'm doing a play next January and we want to go into the Wyndham's because it's a lovely theatre and it's where I did *Godspell* years ago. It's called *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

Gallery?

Oh I love the National Portrait Gallery and I love the National Gallery. The V&A too. I think we're very lucky in London.

Christie's is running an online sale in aid of Children & The Arts from April 4 to 13. christies.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The National Gallery; the BBC's *Apple Tree Yard*; *Godspell*; the Wyndham's Theatre; *Loving*