



ROYAL EXCHANGE THEATRE

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Head of Stage and Automation

Department: Technical

Responsible to: Head of Technical

**Responsible for: Permanent Technicians x2
Fixed term Technician x1
Freelance and casual team members as required**

Job Context

The Royal Exchange Theatre is one of the country's leading theatre companies, presenting both its own productions and a range of visiting work and events in its performance spaces in Manchester. The Company creates work over 48 weeks of the year, and attracts audiences of around 200,000 per annum.

The company has its main building premises in St Ann's Square as well additional sites in Swan Street, Manchester and Seagull House, Salford. It also produces work that takes place in local communities and tours/transfers nationally and internationally.

The theatre has a long history of being innovative and imaginative with the way that staging and automation is used in all of our work. The installation in the module allows great flexibility and promotes the most creative use of stagecraft in our productions. We work with a wide range of visiting artists to create our work with collaboration at its heart.

Job Summary

We are seeking to appoint a Head of Stage and Automation. Following their appointment the postholder, in conjunction with the existing theatre management, will undertake a review of the operation and structure of the Department.

The Head of Stage and Automation will lead the Stage department in all its activities and work with the wider company, particularly the other production departments in realising projects, builds and automated scenic elements.

The role ensures that all projects and collaborations enjoy a process rich with imagination and innovation resulting in the highest technical and artistic standards whilst working within agreed parameters.



The role is responsible for managing the provision of staging and automation resources for the theatre's programme which consists of productions, visiting work, events and engagement activity across the theatre's spaces and beyond. The department is also responsible for the maintenance of all the performance spaces, storage spaces and stage equipment.

As a manager the Head will be integral to the stage team, leading, mentoring and developing the individual members, programming and operating the automation system according to operational need as well as recruiting and training team members as required.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Duties and responsibilities of post-holder

Management & Team Development

- Be the team leader for the stage department preparing schedules for work and overseeing the delivery of projects.
- Effectively organise the deployment of the team's time across the programme. This is to result in a weekly schedule which is available 6 weeks in advance and shared with the production office. The schedule will include core hours, additional team member hours and those which are subject to additional payment as defined by the theatre's in-house agreement.
- Manage any out of hours work against budgets and breaks ensuring that all members of the team complete a weekly timesheet which records hours worked against projects.
- Ensure that the department works within agreed parameters concerning hours, breaks and holidays.
- Take part in national and international initiatives to further the development of stagecraft in theatre and the industry in general.
- Make connections with appropriate local and national organisations and to provide where possible support for our local theatres and venues.
- Advise as required on how to improve our practices, installation and delivery of projects.
- Imaginatively lead the team and maintain high standards.



- Facilitate regular team meetings and briefings to take place at least every two weeks where the work of the theatre, the development of projects and the business of the team is discussed fully.
- Hold regular noted one-to-one meetings with all permanent team members which focus on performance and personal development.
- Ensure that the team continues to develop and change in line with the ambitions of the theatre and its work.
- Lead on freelance and departmental recruitment working with the human resource and production offices as appropriate.
- Attend management and other meetings as required
- Follow agreed company policy and help develop it.
- Manage performance including working with the company's appraisal and disciplinary policies.
- Ensure that all Stage and Automation staff, including casuals, receive training and instruction in all tasks required to be competent in their roles, and maintain a record of such training

Projects and Productions

- Be responsible for the effective and safe running of the theatre spaces through the preparation and then delivery of all events.
- Take a major role within the production function of the theatre.
- Ensure departmental input at all related design, production and planning meetings.
- Collaborate fully with all visiting artists.
- Ensure that the requirements of a design are innovatively and effectively executed against the ideas and resources.
- Monitor and develop standards of work and ensure that stage and automation systems elements are of the highest possible calibre and that this is maintained throughout the project.
- Co-ordinate the staging needs for visiting companies, events and hires.



- In liaison with the Heads of Lighting and Sound to ensure that all studio shows have the required Duty Technician cover and that this cover is spread evenly between departments
- Develop flexible plans to deliver all projects.
- Ensure that the whole team is involved in project management.
- On a rota system with the Stage and Automation Technicians to take responsibility for all stage and automation aspects of specified productions and to be primary contact through design, pre-production, fit-up, technical rehearsals and the run including the turnaround into the next production
- Take part in evaluation and reflection of our work.
- Be a mentor, advisor and manager to the team
- Work with all groups with whom the theatre is engaging and to develop and deliver against a variety of projects that arise.
- Coordinate the planning, rigging, installation and operation of all automated elements of productions including flown items, revolves, hydraulics and pneumatics.
- Liaise with our scenic workshop in the manufacture and build of all scenic elements involving such elements to ensure a smooth transition from the workshop to the stage
- Working with the production manager and workshop staff, document and record risk assessments and method statements relating to the install and operation of such elements
- To work on performances as required to cover planned absence within the team.
- Ensuring that productions are adequately prepared for transfer or tour as and when necessary

Health, Safety, Training & Sustainability

- Be responsible for the safe working practices of the stage team in their use of theatre spaces, access and equipment.
- Ensure that appropriate codes of practice and current regulations are adhered to.
- Produce and keep up to date risk assessments, method statements, COSHH assessments and safe systems of work for the department.



- Monitor and develop strategy around the environmental impact of the team's work and use of equipment including energy use, procurement, travel and waste.
- Ensure a healthy working environment is maintained especially in the approach to the demands of the programme.
- Ensure the appropriate and safe storage of materials and resources.
- Ensure that departmental working areas are appropriately managed.
- Take part and where necessary organise and develop training for the department and beyond.
- Work within CDM regulations concerning theatrical production.
- Attend meetings which discuss these areas as appropriate.

Spaces & Equipment

- To help plan and then supervise technical work across our spaces as required by the programme.
- Oversee the maintenance, operation and use of all rigging, automation systems and flying equipment across the spaces.
- Maintain the organisation's stage and automation related systems and ensure that appropriate records are kept. These include the flying and hydraulic systems, loading and access equipment such as the Genie, tallescope and ladders, and manual handling aids including pallet trucks and dollies.
- Maintain and co-ordinate the theatres storage spaces across our sites in a tidy and useable condition. This includes storage space at the main Exchange building in Central Manchester and Seagull House, Salford
- Maintain up to date inventories of stage equipment
- Ensure that adequate stocks of consumables are held onsite
- Take the lead in the procurement for stage and automation equipment brought in for specific projects both inside and beyond our buildings.
- Ensure that the team is familiar with the latest equipment, techniques and working practices



- Be primary contact for all matters relating to the management, servicing, fault recording and repairs of all automation and flying equipment, including liaising with Stage Technologies
- Ensure that regular testing and servicing, including LOLER tests, are carried out on all equipment in the performance spaces as required
- To oversee the housekeeping and maintenance of the performance spaces.

Financial

- Manage the departmental budget and ensure that departmental running and stock budgets and any allocated show budget are effectively spent.
- To take part in work which relates to longer term investment and capital planning.
- To hold the department float, credit card and details of any other financial systems.
- To ensure that project budgets are kept accurate and to produce reports as requested by the production office.

Duties and responsibilities of all members of staff

- To be aware of the work of other departments in the achievement of the Royal Exchange Theatre's aims and to take an active part in communicating and co-operating with other staff and departments
- To assist as appropriate with projects and events initiated or managed by other departments (including but not limited to education projects and fund-raising events.)
- To work in accordance with the Equality and Diversity policy of the Royal Exchange Theatre and to participate in the achievement of the theatre's Diversity action plan.
- To be aware of, and comply with, rules and legislation pertaining to Health and Safety at work and to abide by the procedures as set out in the Health and Safety policy
- To abide by other guidelines, procedures and policies provided by the company
- To take part in such working groups and committees as might from time to time be required for the fulfilment of departmental or company aims



Person Specification

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE	DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE
Experience of rigging and flying, including automation	Experience of using a Stage Technologies Nomad system, ideally on Chameleon 5 software
Experience of leading and being part of a team	A working at height qualification
Experience of manual handling	A manual handling qualification
Experience of working at height	Proficiency with AutoCAD or Vectorworks
Experience of working in collaboration with a group to devise innovative and effective technical solutions	Relevant H&S qualification
Working with scale drawings and plans, including basic CAD experience.	MEWP license
Budget handling skills	Full Clean Driving License
Basic carpentry and metal work skills	Ability to chair meetings
A positive and hands on approach	Experience of working with a wide variety of artists and participants
Excellent logical troubleshooting skills	First Aid qualification
Ability to respond to changing work schedules that may include unsocial hours	Experience with hydraulics
Experience of producing Risk Assessments, Method Statements and Safe Systems of Work	Engineering skills
Proficient in the safe use of hand and power tools	Experience in other theatre disciplines
Preparation of work schedules & medium term staff rotas	An understanding of the needs of supporting the entire programme of a busy theatre or events venue
Solid understanding of the production process	



Ability and willingness to work flexible hours, as required by the post, including evenings, overnight and weekends	
Excellent communication skills	
The ability to work under pressure alone and as part of a team	
Desire to work in a creative working environment	
Computer literate	
Strong commitment to the principles and practice of Equal Opportunities	