

# Recruitment Pack



## OUR VISION AND MISSION

### **Vision**

We change the way people see theatre, each other and the world around them.

### **Mission**

Our historic building, once the world's biggest cotton exchange, was taken over by artists in 1976. Today we are an award-winning cultural charity that produces new theatre in-the-round, in communities, on the road and online.

Exchange remains at the heart of everything we make and do. Now our currency is brand new drama and reinvigorated classics, the boldest artists and a company of highly skilled makers - all brought together in a shared imaginative endeavour to trade ideas and experiences with the people of Greater Manchester (and beyond).

The Exchange's unique auditorium is powerfully democratic, a space where audiences and performers meet as equals, entering and exiting through the same doors. It is the inspiration for all we do; inviting everyone to understand



the past, engage in today's big questions, collectively imagine a better future and lose themselves in the moment of a great night out.

*"Frankcom has transformed the theatre into one that nurtures its artists as well as its audiences and is creating work that deserves to be recognised."*

The Stage, Award for Regional Theatre of the Year 2016

*"a repeated reminder that London is not the centre of the theatrical universe"*

Lyn Gardener, Guardian.

## **THE CREATIVE CASE FOR DIVERSITY**

Embedded throughout the Royal Exchange Theatre is a commitment to the Creative Case and increased diversity in our programme, organization and audience. We celebrate diversity and promote best practice at every opportunity.

'I was at the Royal Exchange in Manchester – a theatre unlike any other I've seen... rather than being all white, the casts were an accurate reflection of the life you'll see on the streets of Manchester. I had seen people from different races walking past a nearby café before the show, so why should it be any different on stage?'

Darren Henley, Chief Executive of Arts Council England, The Culture Dividend

We are actively working to address the imbalance in representation in terms of race, gender, disability, class and sexuality in all our work, including our on-stage productions and through the talent development opportunities we offer with Open Exchange, Directors Exchange, the Bruntwood Prize and our partnership with the Regional Theatre Young Directors Scheme. For instance, in the past two years, across all productions 51% of performers were female and 315 were from BAME backgrounds, many in prominent roles. And in 2017, 26% of entrants for the Bruntwood Prize were BAME and 11% of entrants identified as disabled.

We are working in partnership with a number of leading national companies to make work in collaboration across our spaces and establish best practice for the RET. Recent examples include Talawa (King Lear, Guys and Dolls), Eclipse (Black Men Walking), Yellow Earth (Mountains) and Graeae (The Hours of Bernada Alba, Cosmic Scallies). We have also begun developing Local Exchange, a strategic, long-term programme of work around the boroughs of



Greater Manchester – both taking our work into and making work collaboratively with a range of communities with whom the theatre has had no previous engagement.

Organisationally, we are part of the Arts Council funded Changemakers programme, with Amit Sharma on secondment from Graeae as an Associate Artistic Director, and recent governance development means that our board is now 29% BAME, 55% female, with 54% of trustees under 50, ensuring our commitment to diversity runs throughout every level of the organization.



We are a vibrant and resilient cultural charity, and limited company by guarantee, turning over c.£8m per annum, we currently generate 43% of income from the box office, 16% from other earned income streams and 9% from fundraising from individuals, business sponsorship and trusts and foundations. Government revenues grants account for 27% of total income, of which Arts Council England National Portfolio funding is 91%. We are proud to be one of the Arts Council's major artistic partners in the English Regions and to be a champion of the Creative case for Diversity.

Our work is distinctive due to our unique theatre space and the exceptional artistic leadership of Sarah Frankcom, and her sector leading commitment to risk taking, diversity and supporting next generation creative talent. We are co-founders of, and home to, the Bruntwood Prize for playwriting, Europe's biggest prize for new writing, our pioneering programme of creative learning and engagement has also gained a high profile within our sector.

Annual attendance at plays in the North West is estimated at 1,550,304 and the RET's market share is 8.8%. In 2016 our productions played to over 200,000 people here, 77% of available capacity; 185,000 people across the globe engaged with RET work digitally in cinemas, on TV, BBC iPlayer or radio. Our database has over 61,000 customers active in the last two years. Our achievement is recognized in national media and in 2016 we were the Stage Newspaper's Regional Theatre of the Year.

Our theatre auditorium suspended by vast Grade II listed trading hall of the Royal Exchange building is one of the most remarkable theatre designs of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It is a breath taking must-see for local people and visitors to the region, and we welcome over 250,000 visitors per year in addition to our paid theatregoers.

The company is led by a joint Executive Artistic Director, Sarah Frankcom, and Executive Director, who report to a board of Trustees, chaired by Ben Caldwell. We employ/contract the services of up to 500 people each year. Of these 140 (96FTE) are in long-term positions, with others employed on short term contracts as actors, stage management, creatives, technicians, etc. There are 116 volunteers across the organisation.





## OUR VALUES

### **Celebrating Imagination**

We encourage and celebrate imaginative thinking and we refuse to be creatures of habit. We create opportunity for everyone to engage their imaginations and reconsider the world around them. We will always look for ways to innovate and renew the way we work and think.

### **Open and Enabling**

We welcome everyone to our theatre, we listen to their views and opinions and we believe in the creative potential of everyone and we offer our unique skills and expertise to enable people to think and behave differently.

### **Enterprising and Pioneering**

We will always push at boundaries in everything we do, testing what is possible and leading new developments. We embrace change as a positive force and we refuse to rest on our laurels. We bring enterprising thinking to the cultural sector, focusing on creating value in all its forms. We are businesslike and professional, and we do what we say we are going to do.

### **Responsible and Connected**

We make theatre for, with and by the communities of Greater Manchester. We know we can only realise our full potential by working in partnership with others. We are a charity and public benefit is our business and we exercise a duty of care for our artform, for our building and for our artists and audiences and while we innovate, we do so in ways which protect the interests of our community.



## AUDIENCES

Our focus is to extend our reach and develop a wider range of engagement opportunities for our audiences. We want to grow the numbers of people who see and take part in our work, as well as to extend the range of people who engage in our work in the building, in other spaces and digitally.

Outside London, Manchester now offers the most dynamic theatre programme in the country. The theatre-going audience in Manchester and the North-West region has become ever more sophisticated and adventurous in its appetite for theatre over recent times. In the last 15 years, the theatre sector in Manchester has grown in quality and range, particularly with the arrival of the Lowry and Manchester International Festival. This growth and development has continued with a re-invigorated Contact, a new family focused venue, Z-Arts, the opening of HOME, bringing together the Library Theatre and Cornerhouse and a new multi arts venue, The Factory, due to

open in 2019. A new theatre is being planned to be the future home of Oldham Coliseum and The Octagon, Bolton is also planning for capital improvements in the next few years.



## **CREATIVE LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT**

As one of the most significant cultural organisations in Manchester and the region, RET believes that participation is key to providing access, broadening reach and deepening engagement for all.

Each year the Creative Learning and Engagement Department offers fresh and distinctive ways for people to explore theatre, become involved in creative projects and make The Royal Exchange Theatre their own. Over 3,000 people take part every year and participants come from all social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

There are four grassroots strands to this work:

- work with schools and colleges,
- work with young people outside of formal education,
- work with individual adults and
- work with communities who do not normally get opportunities to



experience theatre.

Additionally, the theatre runs a number of longer-term significant larger scale ensemble companies and partnership projects.

Other programmes include a group for the over 60s, The Elders Company; RET Futures, a ground-breaking programme of theatre skills experience and training for 18-25 year olds; and You the Audience, a creative approach to audience consultation and involvement. The theatre also provides over 18,000 hours of volunteering opportunities for people of all ages, supporting the work of the Exchange in Front of House, Costume Hire and Marketing.

## **TALENT DEVELOPMENT & NEW WRITING**

As one of the country's most significant producing theatres, RET has a strong commitment to shaping and developing the theatre of the future. We do this through commissioning new work and developing and nurturing theatre-making talent including writers, directors, actors, and designers. We do this by:

- Identifying and supporting next generation talent to make work in our two theatre spaces.
- Running programmes and initiatives that enable theatre makers at different stages of their careers to develop their skills. These include master classes, mentoring, workshops and supporting artists to research and develop work from scratch, e.g Open Exchange.
- Participating in national schemes for developing directors, writers and designers e.g. Birkbeck Directors course, Regional Theatre Young Directors Scheme, BBC Fellowships, and running our own schemes including Bruntwood Hub for writers and the Hodgkiss Award, which celebrates the unique collaboration between director and writer.
- Running the bi-annual Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting in partnership with property company Bruntwood. Nationally significant and a significant producer of new plays, the prize has given voice to considerable emerging writing talent over the last 10 years. Past winners have included *Yen* by Anna Jordan, *Britannia Waves the Rules* by Gareth Farr, *Mogadishu* by Vivienne Franzmann and *Three Birds* by Janice Okoh.



