



ROYAL EXCHANGE THEATRE

ROLE DESCRIPTION

ROLE: Hodgkiss Director

BURSARY: £6,250.00

DATES: The placement runs from 14 April 2025 to 25 July 2025. The successful candidate will be expected to be present in the building full-time from 26 May 2025 - 25 July 2025. Normal working hours will be 10am - 6pm, but there will be evening and weekend working, particularly during tech and preview weeks.

We are particularly keen to hear from candidates from the Global Majority, who are already Greater Manchester full-time residents.

Candidates should be aged 18 or over.

ROLE SUMMARY

The Hodgkiss Director Award 2025 offers an emerging theatre director from Greater Manchester a unique opportunity to build a lasting relationship with the Royal Exchange Theatre. This award aims to support a director with a distinctive, underrepresented voice who has faced barriers in their career. The recipient will gain a bespoke development program, including the chance to work alongside award-winning director Monique Touko as Assistant Director on a major World Premiere. They will receive mentorship from the Royal Exchange artistic team, offering deep insights into the Theatre's operations and the challenges and opportunities of directing at a large regional theatre. Additionally, the awardee will be Assistant Director of the 20th anniversary ceremony of the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting and have the opportunity to workshop their own ideas with professional actors.

This program is designed to provide an emerging director with the tools and experience to build a sustainable career in theatre, offering a rare and comprehensive opportunity in a challenging Arts landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The Hodgkiss Director Award 2025 will provide a uniquely ambitious and life-changing opportunity for a Greater Manchester theatre director to benefit from a home at the Royal Exchange, and a bespoke programme of work which will give them comprehensive and wide-ranging insights and embedded knowledge and experience to support them to forge a sustainable career.

We hope to engage people that have a distinctive voice that is currently under-represented, an energy to generate ideas, and the drive to tell ambitious stories that connect with a wide range of people. We aim to connect with someone who has experienced a barrier to pursuing their career ambitions and would tangibly benefit from the opportunity of structured support, a bespoke developmental journey and a sense of home.

They will get the opportunity to work with award-winning director Monique Touko as Assistant Director on a major new play.

They will be supported by the artistic team at the Royal Exchange Theatre who will provide them with a unique insight into forging a career as a theatre director at a particularly difficult and



precarious time in the Arts ecology. The Award will also enable them to gain in-depth knowledge of the running of a major regional producing theatre, to learn about the programming of the Theatre at this time and to gain a greater understanding of what it means to make work at this scale in Greater Manchester. Through a close dialogue with the Creative Director, Director of Producing, and Associate Director at the Royal Exchange Theatre, they will have a journey with a long-lasting legacy to understand how to forge relationships and make the most of opportunities with other producing theatres.

They will also have an opportunity to act as Assistant Director on the ceremony for the 20th anniversary of The Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting, Europe's biggest playwriting competition.

The Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting ceremony is a unique and exciting event, offering a dynamic showcase of the shortlisted playwrights' work. Instead of a traditional awards presentation, the ceremony features 15 carefully selected extracts, each lasting 2-3 minutes, from the shortlisted plays. These extracts are chosen by two professional directors, working in close collaboration with the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting team, ensuring a cohesive and compelling representation of the diverse playwrighting talent. Following their selection, the extracts are brought to life during a two-week rehearsal period, where a company of professional actors delve into the text. The intensive rehearsal process culminates in a high-stakes performance delivered off-book. Crucially, the playwrights themselves are given the opportunity to engage with the process, often through virtual meetings or in-person visits for local writers, adding a valuable layer of collaboration and enriching the final presentation.

Finally, they will also be afforded an opportunity to explore what they have learnt through their placement in a practical way with an opportunity to workshop an idea of their own with two professional actors - this will be shaped through conversations with the artistic leadership at the Royal Exchange to enable them to explore something that will have the greatest impact on their creative development.

Our ambition for the Hodgkiss Director Award is to provide an exciting emerging director with an in-depth experience that is not just focussed on the rehearsal process but also encompasses the range of ways a director might work with a theatre to forge a sustainable career journey. It will provide an opportunity that is becoming increasingly rare in the theatre landscape with many other schemes for emerging / assistant directors closing, and is something that the Royal Exchange Theatre has a proven track record of delivering in a way that has a lasting impact on the artist's journey and career opportunities.

This placement is open to artists over the age of 18 who have a demonstrable background in directing theatre and are looking to further develop their practice.

HODGKISS DIRECTOR PLACEMENT

The candidate will receive a 10-week bursary to enable them to:

1. Act as Assistant Director to Monique Touko on a main house show and the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting Ceremony. Duties will include but are not limited to:
 - Providing general assistance and carrying out any research that will inform and benefit the production as agreed with the Director;

- Observing rehearsals and inputting into discussions with the creative team and production meetings;
 - Supporting the acting company with line learning;
 - When requested, leading on warm-ups and stepping in for the director in leading rehearsals, and supporting with the pastoral care of the actors and creative team;
 - Assisting the company in documenting the rehearsal process for the purposes of marketing, archiving and evaluating the project through blogs, social media and other forms as agreed with the RET Marketing team;
 - Being a sounding board in the rehearsal room, to offer notes where appropriate and to be an active observer in the room to engage in useful and active discussions with the director outside of the rehearsal room;
 - Noting the show twice a week after press night in consultation with the director;
 - Observing and assisting the director in technical rehearsals, through previews to press night;
 - Provide observations and reflections (either written or filmed) from the rehearsal room for sharing on the RET website and social media channels;
 - Supporting and facilitating any shadowing or work experience placements;
 - Any further duties as required by the Director.
2. Lead on their own phase of research and development via a period of support and creative development.
 3. Form local and national relationships with theatres and creatives via mentorships and facilitated meetings.

The Royal Exchange Theatre will also provide:

- At least two 1:1 meetings with the Director during the rehearsal process;
- One final 1:1 meeting with the Director at the end of the placement to evaluate the experience;
- Access to different departments within the Royal Exchange to fulfil the specific interests of the individual and support their development in understanding other areas of the Theatre's work;
- 1:1 meetings with the Creative Director and Associate Director at the Royal Exchange Theatre - this will also give them an opportunity to discuss future planning;
- The Hodgkiss Director will also have the opportunity to meet with other departments in the Theatre, including our Producing, Production, Marketing and Engagement teams.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA- WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WHO:

- Can demonstrate a commitment to directing and a passion for theatre making;
- Has experience working with large casts, live music and movement;
- Has an interest in African socio-political history and Blackness;
- Is able to demonstrate a passionate interest in the development and process of new writing and staging new plays;
- Is organised, confident, flexible, calm and approachable;



- Has had some experience of directing in a professional capacity or on the fringe - engaging with professional actors who are not just personal connections;
- Is a good team player who is willing to work collaboratively as part of a team including creatives, actors, stage managers and RET staff;
- Can demonstrate a keen interest in engaging with communities and making work in collaboration with communities.

TIMELINE

The Hodgkiss Director Award 2025 placement runs from 14 April - 25 July 2025.

10.00am, 21 February 2025	Deadline for applications
Wc 24 February 2025	Shortlisting
Wc 10 March 2025	Interviews / Successful candidate confirmed
April - May 2025	Onboarding and induction
Wc 26 May 2025	Rehearsals x 4 weeks
Wc 23 June 2025	Technical rehearsals + Previews x 1 week
Wc 30 June 2025	Previews + Press x 1 week
Wc 7 July 2025	Performances + Career Development x 1 week
Wc 14 July 2025	Performances + Rehearsals for Bruntwood Prize x 1 week
Wc 21 July 2025	Performances + Bruntwood Prize Ceremony x 1 week

The successful candidate will be expected to be present full-time in the building from 26 May - 25 July 2025.

Normal working hours will be 10am - 6pm but there will be evening and weekend working, particularly during tech and preview weeks.

More detail on the timetable and working hours can be provided upon request when shortlisted candidates are invited to interview.

HODGKISS BURSARY

We are able to offer the Hodgkiss Director Award a fully inclusive bursary payment of £6,250.00. The bursary has been calculated in line with industry guidelines drawn up by UK Theatre/Equity - more information at <https://uktheatre.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/07/130723-UK-Theatre-Equity-Directors-rates-2023-2027-1.pdf>.

HOW TO APPLY

Send a covering letter and CV to recruitment@royalexchange.co.uk by 10.00am, Friday 21 February 2025.

Please ensure your covering letter clearly demonstrates how you fulfil the essential criteria.

RET VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

We are invested in the people we work with and their values and behaviours. We want all our team to display and live by the following principles:

ACCOUNTABLE

- We take ownership of our own part and are accountable for our own decisions.
- We trust others to be responsible for what they do, and how they do it, to drive the aims of RET and its future.
- We will challenge people and practice, as well as support them, to achieve our aims especially in our active commitment to removing discrimination.

HONEST

- We will ask difficult questions, feel empowered to do so and give and receive feedback, even if it is difficult to say or hear. This is vital for equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- We will be empathetic and demonstrate emotional intelligence.
- We will apologise if we have done something wrong - and move on.

OPEN

- We will develop the appetite to learn and grow, so that we can be truly open to anyone and everyone.
- We will be collaborative, flexible and adaptable in how we do things and get "stuck in" if we see others need help.
- We will welcome innovation and show entrepreneurship where we can.