



# Appointment of Executive Director & Co-CEO

May 2025 | Ref: JBULA

Saxton Bampfylde

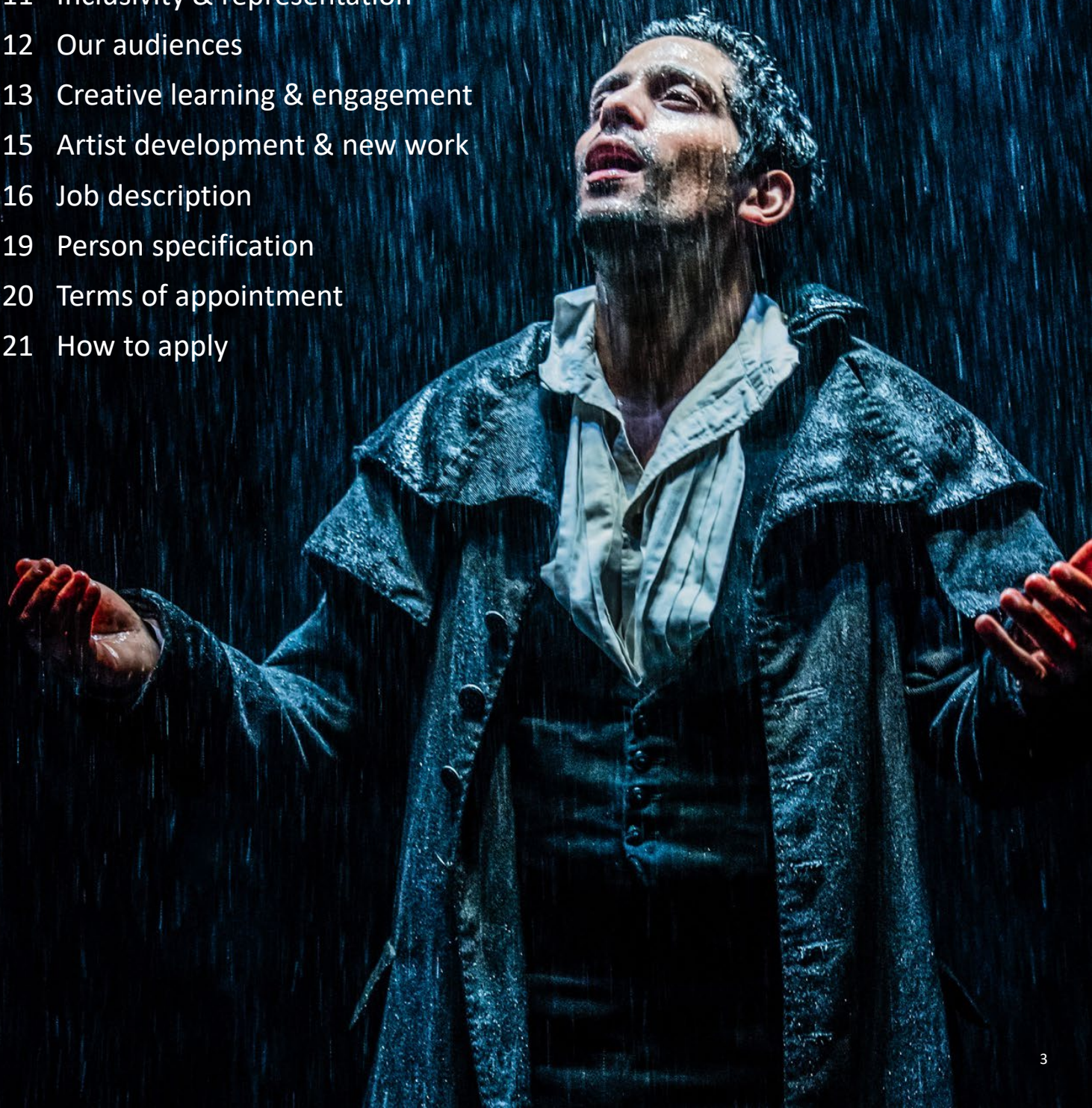






# Contents

- 5 Welcome
- 6 A note from our Artistic Director & Co-CEO
- 7 An introduction to the Royal Exchange Theatre
- 9 Our vision & values
- 11 Inclusivity & representation
- 12 Our audiences
- 13 Creative learning & engagement
- 15 Artist development & new work
- 16 Job description
- 19 Person specification
- 20 Terms of appointment
- 21 How to apply







*'A repeated reminder that London is  
not the centre of the theatrical  
universe.'*

Lyn Gardner, Guardian



# Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Executive Director & Co-CEO at the Royal Exchange Theatre.

It is a hugely exciting time to be joining us during a period of transformation. Since January 2025, we have had the privilege of serving as Interim Co-Chairs, overseeing the very start of this programme of change, and before that, we've been proud to help steer the organisation through our involvement on the board. Additionally, once our Executive Director & Co-CEO process is well underway, we will be recruiting a new Chair of the Board to work with our Co-CEOs to take the organisation forward into its next chapter.

The Royal Exchange holds a vital place in Manchester's rich cultural landscape, and it continues to grow as an ambitious, critically acclaimed and collaborative theatre rooted in the heart of the city.

Over the past 50 years, the Royal Exchange has built a national reputation for innovation, world-class performances and a deep commitment to nurturing diverse voices. Since we first opened our doors, we've premiered more than 125 new plays and some of the greatest artists in theatre history have made work for our unique theatre.

Today, our recently appointed Artistic Director & Co-CEO, Selina Cartmell, is committed to building on this rich legacy. Under yours and her leadership, our theatre will produce bold, adventurous and ambitious work locally, nationally and internationally, placing artistic voices at the heart of everything we will do.

We passionately believe the Royal Exchange belongs to the people of Manchester and the work of our theatre should be accessible for as many people as possible. Each year, we welcome thousands of theatre-goers through our doors, and thousands more engage with us through a rich programme of community engagement and artist development activities. We are a registered charity and support from Arts Council England, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and our donor base of individuals, businesses and trusts and foundations, is critical to our success.

As we enter this next chapter for the organisation, we want to be transparent. We're in a period of significant and necessary change where we will be evolving and refreshing many of our foundational ideas; our Executive Director & Co-CEO will be critical to this change programme. We are looking for a visionary leader to work alongside Selina to jointly lead the organisation, helping us shape a future that is artist-centred, collaborative and daring.

We want the Royal Exchange to continue challenging expectations and championing stories that resonate deeply with the communities we serve. This is an opportunity to play a leading role in shaping the future of one of the UK's leading producing theatres.

Come join us.

afshan d'souza-Iodhi & Jo Taylor  
Interim Co-Chairs of the Royal Exchange Theatre







# A note from our Artistic Director & Co-CEO

As we approach our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026, the Royal Exchange stands at a pivotal moment of artistic renewal and organisational transformation. Our unique in-the-round theatre module isn't just architecture – it's a statement of intent about how we create and share stories with our audiences and communities.

I'm seeking an exceptional Executive Director and Co-CEO who shares my passion for placing artists at the heart of everything we do while building a sustainable foundation for world-class theatrical innovation. This partnership represents an extraordinary opportunity to redefine what a major regional theatre can be in the 21st century.

Together, we will position the Royal Exchange as a beacon of artistic excellence with deep local roots and global ambitions. The ideal partner will bring not just operational and creative expertise but a genuine belief in the transformative power of storytelling and the courage to reimagine traditional theatre models.

We need someone who can balance artistic risk with financial sustainability, who values both tradition and innovation, and who understands that our democratic space demands equally democratic leadership. This is a chance to co-create a cultural institution that matters profoundly to Manchester, to the North, and to the future of British theatre.

I invite visionary leaders who are ready to join me in this ambitious journey of renewal.

Selina Cartmell  
Artistic Director & Co-CEO







# An introduction to the Royal Exchange Theatre

In 2026, the iconic Royal Exchange Theatre celebrates 50 years of producing award-winning theatre, creating work that is ambitious in ideas, form and scale. We sit at the centre of a fast-paced, diverse and expanding global city with artists, audiences and communities at the heart of everything we do.

Our brave and bold programming, both on and off our stages, has been critically acclaimed and celebrated for its originality, relevance and artistic risk.

Our theatre auditorium in the 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 – a breathtaking must-see for locals and visitors. Our main house has a capacity of 759 yet no seat is more than 9 metres away from the stage. In addition, we have ambitions to re-launch our flexible Studio Theatre which seats 90 and redevelop our studio and rehearsal spaces at our Swan Street building in Manchester's vibrant Northern Quarter.

From our iconic theatre-in-the-round, we welcome audiences and communities of more than 100,000 each year and have established a local, national and international reputation for bringing the world's most powerful stories to life. We make the impossible possible through the extraordinary relationship fostered between artist and audience in our unique architectural and democratic space.

Artists and audiences sit at the heart of everything we do.

The Royal Exchange is proud to provide a platform for directors, actors, writers, designers, and all theatre-makers to make radical work at an ambitious scale. Through sustained relationships and deep-rooted investment in artists, we aim to inspire audiences to experiment and take risks, creating a vibrant, diverse and

inclusive platform for the continued development of theatre practice across the UK.

Our innovative creative learning work with communities across Greater Manchester continues to have real and lasting impact on the confidence and creative aspirations of those involved. Through the development of strong creative collaborations with individuals and community groups, we continue to create new and nurture long-lasting relationships between the Theatre and the people on our doorstep.

For nearly five decades, the Royal Exchange has played a crucial role in ensuring the future of theatre and plays an integral part in a global conversation about theatre practice and universal, human stories. For the next 50 years, we will continue to champion the importance of arts and culture as a vital way to reflect our world today.

[royalexchange.co.uk](http://royalexchange.co.uk)

[@RXTheatre](#) – X

[@rxtheatre](#) – Instagram

[rxtheatre](#) – YouTube

[rxtheatre](#) – TikTok

[Royal Exchange Theatre](#) – LinkedIn



*'If you live near Manchester and went to every single show in the main house and studio at the Royal Exchange, you'd have a pretty good grasp of what was going on in British Theatre.'*

The Stage





# Our vision & values

## Our vision

Our historic building 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. The idea of Exchange remains at the heart of everything we make and do. Now, our currency is reinvigorated classics and new work with 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.

## Our values

### Celebrating Imagination

We encourage and celebrate imaginative thinking and believe in the creative potential of everyone. We think that imagination has the power to help everyone reconsider the world around them.

### Open and enabling

We welcome everyone to visit and work in our theatre and encourage everyone to talk to us. We provide platforms that enable everyone; artists, theatre-makers and audiences, to ask questions. We value everyone's opinions and use them to inform our decisions.

### Enterprising and Pioneering

We always look for ways to do things differently, push boundaries, test possibilities and lead new developments. We embrace change and bring enterprising thinking to the cultural sector.

### Connected

We make theatre for, with, and by the communities of Greater Manchester. We have a passion for collaboration and believe that working in partnership will help us realise our full potential.

### Responsible

We work with integrity and respect, are business-like and professional. We are a charity, and public benefit is our business. We exercise a duty of care for our artform, the artists we work with, our audiences, and our building.





*'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.'*

Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England,  
from his book 'The Culture Dividend'





# Inclusivity & representation

Our commitment to equity, inclusivity and representation is embedded in everything we do. As a theatre rooted in Greater Manchester — one of the UK's most diverse city regions — we see diversity not only as a strength, but as essential to our work. These values shape our programme, our organisational culture, and how we engage with our audiences.

We champion the right for everyone to see themselves represented in the creative landscape of our city and beyond, striving for change here and across the industry as a whole. We are actively working to address the imbalance in representation in terms of race, gender, disability, class and sexuality in all our work, from our on-stage productions and talent development opportunities to our workforce and committed volunteers.

It is vital that the work of the Royal Exchange represents the city, and that stories reflecting the people and ambitions of the city are seen on our stages and in the partnerships we develop.

Most recent examples include **LIBERATION**, a powerful new play inspired by true events in Black British history, co-produced by Royal Exchange Theatre and Manchester International Festival; **SENSORIAL DREAMS**, an immersive experience using a multisensory approach to enhance audience interaction in partnership with the University of Manchester School of Digital Arts; and **GREAT EXPECTATIONS**, a Royal Exchange Theatre and Tamasha co-production.







# Our audiences

The cultural offer in Manchester and the North-West has become ever more sophisticated and adventurous. The theatre sector in the city has grown in quality and range and is home to a wealth of different organisations and venues including The Lowry, Factory International, HOME, ATG (the Palace), Opera House and most recently, ENO.

As a full-time producing house, the Royal Exchange offers a unique mix of classic and contemporary plays and brand-new productions of iconic musicals to a wide range of audiences from hyper local city-centre attendees to those attending from across Greater Manchester's ten boroughs and the North-West. In addition to this, a thriving visitor economy in Manchester means the Exchange is well placed to attract an increasing number of national and international visitors through our doors. All of this creates a broad audience demographic for our work. Our most

loyal audiences who attend multiple times a year cite their love for the Theatre as the main reason for attending. These audiences are predominately found in south Manchester with areas of potential in growth seen across boroughs where our Local Exchange programmes run such as Tameside.

We are committed to providing affordable tickets via our reduced-price previews and our famous banquet seats are available for £10, split across online purchasing and day seats, making these as accessible as possible. Growing, diversifying and retaining audiences are core principles in our audience development plan and through the use of MHM segmentation, we are gaining a deeper understanding of our audience's values and motivations, allowing us to create deeper and more meaningful relationships.

**61%**

Audiences from  
Greater Manchester

**39%**

Audiences from outside Greater  
Manchester

**2,219**

Number of £10 tickets available  
across the year

**14,125**

Low-cost tickets

**1,285**

Engagement comps  
(excluding schools)

**30**

Access performances

**1,957**

Access seats

**2.9m**

Instagram views in a year

**3.1m**

Facebook views in a year

**556,600**

YouTube views in a year

**687,296**

Website views in a year





## Creative learning & engagement

We believe everyone, regardless of their circumstances, should have access to great theatre and world-class storytelling. At the Royal Exchange, participation is central to achieving our vision and mission. It provides important points of access, extends our reach beyond the walls of our theatre, and deepens engagement for everyone at all levels. Over 9,000 people from a range of ages and backgrounds take part every year in our Engagement programmes both at the Theatre and in areas across Greater Manchester, enabling us to build a lasting cultural exchange between the Theatre and its communities.

We continue to support the next generation of theatre makers through our Young Company, offering a year-long commitment to training and workshop sessions. Our tailored workshops, learning resources and partnerships are valued by schools across Greater Manchester. Our Elders programme recently celebrated 10 years of

creativity in later life and challenging the stereotypes of aging.

Local Exchange is the Theatre's ambitious, long-term programme that sees the Theatre take up residency in communities across Greater Manchester. At the heart of the residency is a community festival in our mobile theatre space, The Den. Inspired by our in-the-round theatre module in The Royal Exchange Theatre, it creates an environmentally sustainable theatre for people to come together, create, learn and share stories in their own community. Through connections with communities and local partners, such as libraries, housing associations, charities and arts organisations, we aim to create a lasting legacy in each area and make our theatre one for everyone.



*'The Royal Exchange was the first proper theatre I went to as a kid, and throughout my school and college visits over the years, it became an impossible dream that I could ever perform there. Now, in its current form, with its incredible community engagement programmes, Open Exchange, vibrant studio, commitment to new work and diversity, I feel privileged to call it my artistic home in Manchester. I love this theatre with all my heart.'*

Julie Hesmondhalgh





# Artist development & new work

The Royal Exchange is committed to shaping and developing the theatre of the future through commissioning new work and developing and nurturing theatre-making talent including writers, directors, actors, designers and makers.

## We do this by:

- Identifying and supporting next generation talent to make work;
- Running programmes and initiatives that enable theatre makers of all disciplines 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;
- Participating in national schemes for developing directors, playwrights and designers, e.g. Hodgkiss Award, Birkbeck Directors Course and forging partnerships with other organisations to co-support and co-develop artists, e.g. Warner Bros Discovery Access Northern Writers Programme in collaboration with Wall to Wall North.

## Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting

We also run the internationally renowned biennial Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting – now Europe's richest prize for playwriting, in partnership with property company Bruntwood. Celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the competition plays a significant role in the new writing landscape and through the dedicated website, we offer continued support and guidance to both new playwrights and writers with form, including live-streamed workshops and commissioned articles from professional playwrights from across the globe.

Since the inception of the Bruntwood Prize in 2005, more than 15,000 scripts have been entered, and the Prize has celebrated 37 winners, with 27 productions staged in venues across the UK. The Prize is now recognised as a launch-pad for some of the UK's most respected and celebrated play and screen writers including Anna Jordan (*One Day*), Duncan Macmillan (*People, Places & Things*), Janice Okoh (*Sanditon*) and Alistair McDowall (*Pomona*), with nominees and winners going on to win BAFTAs, Emmys, Oliviers and a range of other awards. There have been co-productions with Lyric Hammersmith, Live Theatre, Soho Theatre, Bush Theatre, Orange Tree Theatre, Sherman Theatre, High Tide and the Royal Court Theatre. Work has also gone on to be produced internationally from Australia, USA, Germany, France, Canada and Sweden.





# Job description

As the Royal Exchange enters the next chapter of our artistic evolution, led by recently appointed Artistic Director (AD), Selina Cartmell, we are looking for an ambitious, creative and entrepreneurial Executive Director (ED) to co-lead the organisation as joint CEO. Our aim is to create a theatre of world-class excellence, a pioneering beacon for cultural and social change. The Royal Exchange will be a passionate theatrical powerhouse for theatre makers, empowering artistic growth through creative collaboration and partnership; nurturing new talent, investing in new ideas and championing artists at all levels to take risks and challenge their own practice, creating an environment for ambitious experimentation.

Working with the AD as Co-CEOs, the ED will provide strategic vision and leadership for the Royal Exchange, inspiring and leading the 70 staff and supporting the senior leadership team (SLT) to ensure the organisation delivers on creative excellence, social impact, and education and skills development for the people it serves, alongside its long-term success as a financially sustainable leading theatre with a strong local presence and a stellar national and international reputation.

**Reporting to:** Chair of the Board (as Co-CEO with the AD)

## Main Duties and Responsibilities

### Leadership and Governance

- In partnership with the Artistic Director (AD) & Co-CEO, provide visionary leadership for the organisation, ensuring all areas of the business strive for excellence;
- Collaborate with the Board and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to set and deliver an ambitious strategy for the organisation, balancing artistic and commercial imperatives;
- In partnership with the AD & Co-CEO, lead the business planning process, ensuring key stakeholders, community partners, staff and artists feed into, and shape, future plans;
- Maintain, cultivate and grow the organisations stakeholder relationships, including Arts Council England, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and commercial and industry bodies including Equity, SOLT/UK Theatre, and Musician's Union;
- Alongside the AD, act as a lead ambassador and spokesperson for the Theatre;
- Work closely with the Chair, Board and AD to ensure Board and sub-committee meetings are open, productive, respectful and maximise the skills and knowledge of individuals;
- In partnership with the AD, ensure the organisation operates in line with policies and procedures, and ensure all policies are regularly reviewed and operating in-line with legislation with training delivered as appropriate;
- Working with the Finance Director and Finance Committee, provide oversight of the organisational finances and ensure a strategic approach is taken to annual budgeting.
- Provide oversight across all organisational risk registers, ensuring risks are regularly reviewed and appropriate mitigation strategies in place.



# Job description

## Audiences, Staff and Artists

- Working with the People and Culture Committee, Board, and SLT, build an inclusive, equitable and productive work environment for all staff, visitors and artists;
- Ensure all areas of the business are resourced to a consistently high standard, ensuring all team members receive appropriate training and progress reviews;
- In collaboration with the AD and Director of Audiences, provide oversight across all audience plans for the theatre, ensuring box office targets are ambitious yet realistic;
- Working with the AD, embed audience development plans at the heart of all programming decisions, ensuring our audiences better reflect the demographic of Greater Manchester and the surrounding region.

## Theatre Producing and Industry Engagement

- Maintain and cultivate the theatre's relationships with regional theatres and commercial producers and provide oversight over negotiations for all co-producing and the exploitation of RET work;
- Working with the Director of Producing, provide the resources and conditions for artists and practitioners to thrive and create work of the highest quality;
- Oversee all rights and licensing agreements and ensure all RET commissions are appropriately contracted and resourced;

## Operational and Development Leadership

- Provide oversight across all fundraising activities, ensuring the team have ambitious yet realistic targets, collaborating with the team to submit funding applications and identify new donor prospects;
- Working with the Director of Operations, embed an outstanding visitor experience across all areas of our front of house and hospitality provision;
- Provide oversight for the organisation's commercial operations and identify opportunities to diversify and grow income;
- Working with the Director of Operations and Director of Production, ensure the theatre's capital asset replacement and maintenance plan is regularly reviewed and resourced;
- Lead the theatre's capital redevelopment programmes and provide oversight of any associated fundraising campaigns.







# Person specification

The ideal candidate will be an experienced senior leader and will bring all or most of the following attributes:

## Knowledge & experience

- Significant senior leadership experience within a relevant organisation, ideally a producing theatre;
- Experience of working with artists and creative teams;
- Experience of theatre producing and or programming;
- Experience of leading fundraising teams and a knowledge of the current fundraising climate/opportunities;
- Experience of working in collaboration with an Artistic Director & Co-CEO or creative co-leader;
- An experience of leading teams in strategy development and creating business plans.

## Skills & abilities

- Genuine passion for the work of the RET and a commitment to producing world-class theatre;
- An ability to lead teams with vision and compassion;
- Proven track-record of leading commercial operations;
- An ability to cultivate a collaborative and safe working culture;
- Understanding of the sector and the needs and challenges of freelance artists;
- Strong stakeholder management skills with proven experience of working with a range of partners/funders;
- Strong negotiation skills and experience of drafting and reviewing contracts/agreements;
- Confident in managing artistic and financial risks and how to best shape risk management;
- An ability to lead with emotional intelligence and empathy.





# Terms of appointment

## Salary

Minimum £85,000 pa with flex for the right candidate.

## Location

The role is based at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, M2 7DH.

Flexible working patterns will be considered.

## Contract

This is a full-time, permanent contract.

## Benefits

- Annual leave entitlement: 25 days plus bank holidays
- Pension: Auto enrolment into The Peoples Pension after 3 months service (4% employer contribution, 4% employee contribution)
- Probational period: 6 months
- Benefits: Ticket allocation and ticket concessions, EAS, Cycle to Work Scheme, Bee Network Scheme, annual leave purchase scheme







# How to apply

**Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Royal Exchange Theatre on this appointment.**

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **JBULA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form. You may also share your application with us as a voice note or video (no more than 3 mins) – to do this, please contact [Belinda.Beck@saxbam.com](mailto:Belinda.Beck@saxbam.com)

For a confidential conversation about the role, please contact Todd Heppenstall, Partner & Consultant at Saxton Bampfylde via [Clio.Ohalloran@saxbam.com](mailto:Clio.Ohalloran@saxbam.com)

The closing date for applications is noon on **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025**.

*\*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.*

## Key dates of the process

**w/c 30<sup>th</sup> June & 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

Preliminary interviews with Saxton Bampfylde

**w/c 14<sup>th</sup> July & 21<sup>st</sup> July**

Final conversations and interviews with the Royal Exchange

The Royal Exchange is a Disability Confident employer, a Real Living Wage employer, and a supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. We firmly believe that a truly creative space is one that thrives on the richness of different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. By actively seeking diversity in our team, we aim to create a collaborative and inclusive culture where everybody's voice is heard and respected. We value the unique contributions that individuals from all walks of life bring to our organisation, and we are committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone. We are dedicated to fostering and encouraging an inclusive and creative environment that truly reflects the diverse demographics of Greater Manchester.

Central to pursuing our EDI mission is building diverse and inclusive teams in which everyone has a sense of belonging. We particularly welcome applications from people who are underrepresented in our organisation and sector – people from the global majority, LGBTQ+ people,

D/deaf, disabled, neurodivergent, and learning-disabled people.

### Disability Confident Scheme

If you are D/deaf or disabled, neurodivergent or learning-disabled, you indicate that you wish your application to be considered under the Disability Confident Scheme, and you fulfil the minimum criteria by demonstrating this in your application, you will be guaranteed a preliminary interview for this role. We will provide reasonable adjustments as needed and only when requested by the candidate. In some circumstances, due to the volume of applications, we may limit the number of interviews offered to disabled and non-disabled candidates. You must provide evidence in your application which demonstrates that you meet the level of competence for the role and any essential qualifications, skills or experience.

Should you consider yourself eligible to apply for this role under the Disability Confident Scheme, please ensure you fill in the appropriate section of the diversity monitoring form.

Should you require reasonable adjustments to be made to the process, please contact [Belinda.Beck@saxbam.com](mailto:Belinda.Beck@saxbam.com)

### **GDPR personal data notice**

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

You can access the Royal Exchange Theatre's GDPR Policy [here](#).

Your application information will be accessed by third parties directly involved in the interview panel. Any data handling during the interview process will adhere to Saxton Bampfylde and Royal Exchange Theatre GDPR guidelines.

### **Due diligence**

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

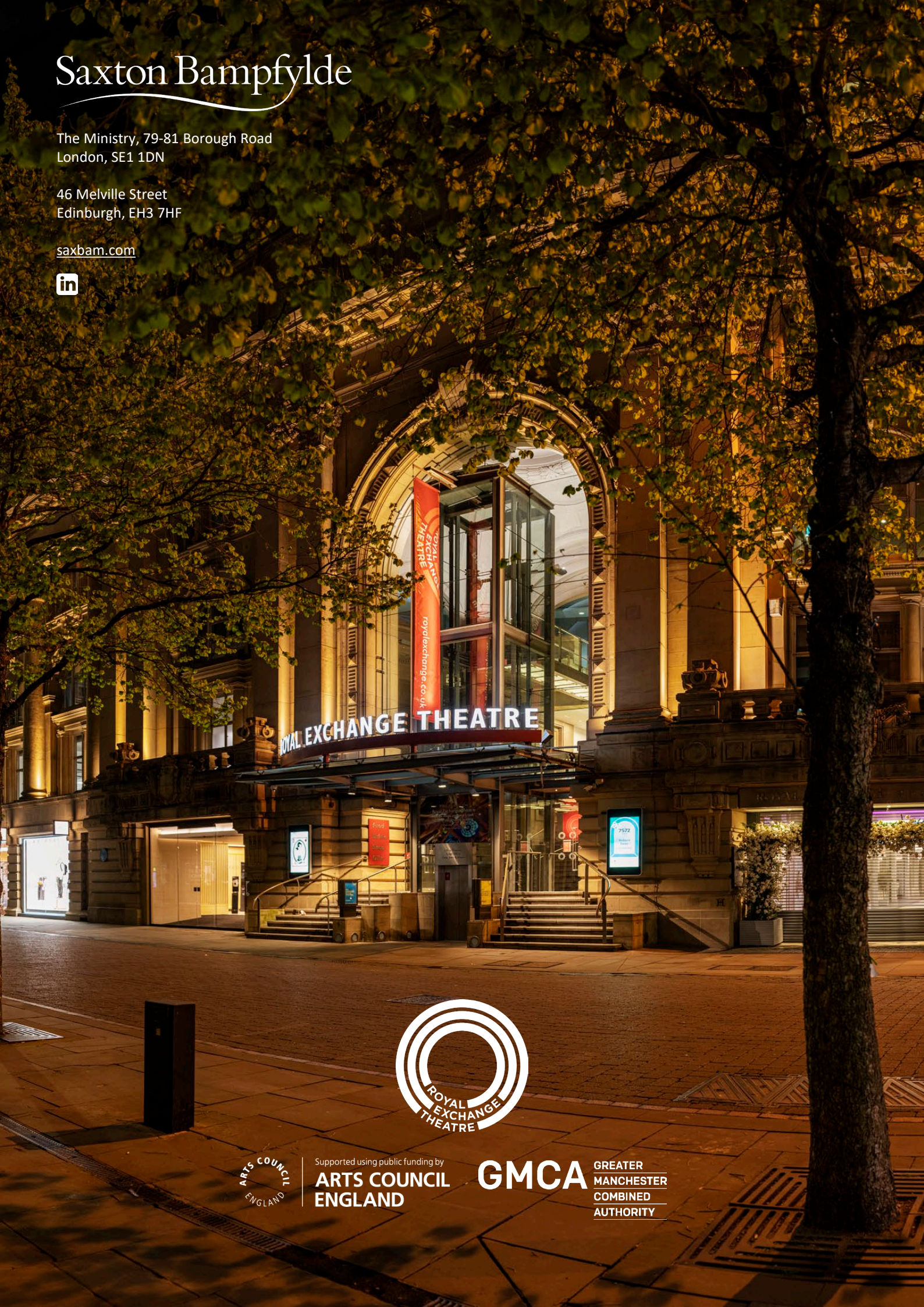


# Saxton Bampfylde

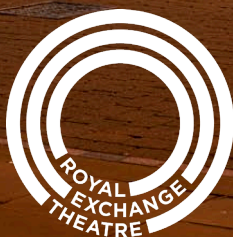
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