

**WEST YORKSHIRE PLAYHOUSE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JOB DESCRIPTION**

1. The Role

The Artistic Director is the artistic leader of the West Yorkshire Playhouse and, with the Chief Executive, is accountable for the overall success of the Playhouse. The Artistic Director works alongside the Chief Executive, with both posts reporting directly to the Board.

The Artistic Director will play a critical role in defining the Playhouse's future by setting an ambitious artistic vision that is committed to excellence, creativity and collaboration and that will enthuse and inspire the theatre's staff, stakeholders and audiences.

2. Responsibilities

The key responsibilities for the Artistic Director will be:

Artistic Leadership

- Hold responsibility for the artistic leadership of West Yorkshire Playhouse, generating and bringing to life the theatre's artistic vision, which will underpin all of the theatre's creative work.
- With the Chief Executive, develop policies and strategies that deliver the vision and advance the work of WYP.
- Lead and inspire the creative teams, both full time and project based.

Artistic Programming

- Deliver an ambitious and distinctive programme that ensures a strong artistic identity and reputation for WYP at a regional, national and international level.
- Oversee the creation of a programme for all spaces of the Playhouse complex and beyond that will appeal to a broad range of audiences.
- Create an artistic programme that reflects the vision and values embedded in the work of the Action Research Programme in order to support the future strategic development of WYP.
- Lead all aspects of the artistic programme, including in-house and presented productions, co-productions and collaborations, new writing, commissions and other work 'in development'.

- Identify and approve incoming directors and creative teams; approve casting, production designs and budgets, and ensure all work is compatible with the company's overall artistic and audience development aims.
- With the Producer and Chief Executive, work to facilitate all tour, transfer or commercial exploitation of the artistic programme, especially work originated by WYP.
- With the Producer/s, identify exciting creative partnerships that enrich the Playhouse's programme, reputation and reach.
- With the Director of Arts Development, oversee the creative work of the Arts Development and Education teams.
- Actively support WYP's creative learning programme and the theatre's work in the community, particularly in respect of engaging young people and families and championing diversity.
- Actively engage in audience development initiatives, working with the Chief Executive and Director of Communications to define, prioritise and deliver the theatre's audience development objectives, ensuring strong links between programming decisions and audience building priorities.
- Work with senior managers and Producers to identify pathways for developing talent and others' ideas and to support the aspirations of the Transform/Action Research programme to 'Open Up and Open Out' the Playhouse to become a resource and hub for creative talent development in the sector.

Managerial

- With the Chief Executive and Management Team, create and implement the theatre's business plan, within which the artistic vision is articulated and the theatres' resources are utilised to maximum effect.
- With the Chief Executive, Finance Director and Producer, ensure the artistic programme is adequately budgeted for, that artistic plans remain consistent with agreed budgets, and that the artistic programme generates sufficient income to contribute to the ongoing financial viability of the WYP.
- With the Producer and Finance Director, be responsible for ensuring that production budgets are controlled.
- Ensure the company's equal opportunities policies and practices are fully reflected in all aspects of its artistic work.
- Attend Board meetings and, as required, those of any sub-committees of the Board.

External Relations

- Act as the artistic spokesperson for WYP with key stakeholders, press and media and represent the company at appropriate regional, national and international forums.

- With the Chief Executive and Communications Team, develop a clear message and brand identity for the Playhouse and, with the Chief Executive, embody this as a spokesperson and public face of the organisation.
- Work alongside the Chief Executive in developing open and productive relationships with all key public funders.
- Work with the Chief Executive, Director of Fundraising and Development and Board members in maximising development and fundraising opportunities.
- Stay abreast of developments and best practice in British and World theatre and ensure that they are central to the theatre's work.

3. Person Specification

The Artistic Director will have a significant track record as a director of theatre and theatre maker. He or she will be able to build on the Playhouse's artistic reputation nationally and internationally.

The Artistic Director will be capable of motivating and attracting artists and creative partners and inspiring those inside and outside the Playhouse. He or she will be aware of developments in creative practice and excited by new possibilities and the challenges of leading a regional producing theatre in the 21st century. The Artistic Director will be passionate about the relationship of regional theatres to their communities and about engaging young people, championing diversity in creative practice and building diverse audiences.

The Artistic Director will embody a commitment to excellence, collaboration and create a culture of ambition and creativity, inspiring a staff team that have a positive 'can do' approach to artistic challenges and opportunities.

Experience, Skills & Abilities

Essential

- Proven track record in directing professional productions of the highest quality in a range of different scale theatres.
- Capable of directing large scale productions with vision and flair.
- Ability to realise and nurture talent and potential in other artists and theatre makers, including new writers and writing.
- Ability to lead, inspire and motivate.
- Ability to forge and maintain strong creative relationships.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- A commitment to developing audiences.

- A track record of working to agreed budgets and deadlines.
- An understanding of the possibilities and challenges for regional theatres today and a knowledge of national and international theatre practices and arts issues.
- A proven commitment to engaging young people and families and new, diverse audiences.

Desirable

- Experience of delivering educational and/or community programmes.
- Experience of creating work for, or with, young people.
- Experience in producing, programming or creating culturally diverse work.
- Experience in developing international partnerships.
- Experience of working with public funding.
- Experience of raising money or financial backing for creative projects.
- Commitment to and interest in Leeds, Yorkshire and the greater North.

Personal Characteristics

- Passionate about theatre - about artists, practitioners, audiences and buildings.
- An innovative thinker, with the ability to think laterally and find solutions to problems.
- Understands the needs and aspirations of creative people.
- Artistically courageous and ambitious.
- Risk aware but not risk adverse.
- Entrepreneurial.
- Generous and flexible.
- A strong communicator.
- Excited about working in Leeds and the Yorkshire Region.

4. Terms

The post is offered for a fixed term of 5 years, renewable by mutual agreement between the Artistic Director and the Board of Directors.

The appointee will need to be available to be in post from September 2012 or earlier. It is appreciated that previously contracted work after this time should be honoured and an agreement will be drawn up between WYP and the Artistic Director as to how this will be managed.

It is expected that the Artistic Director will direct a certain number of in-house productions each year and an agreement as to the direction of external productions will be discussed with the successful candidate.

The remuneration package for the position will be competitive and designed to reflect the skills and experience of the appointee.

There is an annual leave entitlement of 6 weeks.

Whilst very much welcoming interest from proven theatre directors, the Board is open to discussing or considering new and different approaches to fulfilling the artistic leadership role for WYP.

5. Information

For further information, please contact Heather Newill, Director, AEM International Ltd, Arts Entertainment and Media Executive Search, on hnewill@aeminternational.co.uk or for an informal chat on 01728 724739.