

PRESS RELEASE

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LEADING LOCAL THEATRES RECEIVE FUNDING BOOST

- Bush Theatre and Lyric Hammersmith will both receive continued Arts Council England investment until 2022 following a national review of arts funding in the UK
- Bush Theatre receives increased funding of £100,000 a year
- Lyric Hammersmith is confirmed as a sector-leading organisation with annual funding of £1.1million a year, and also receives £360,000 capital funding to refurbish its studio and main auditorium

Theatres in Hammersmith and Fulham received a major boost as Arts Council England confirmed that it will invest £7.1million locally to support the Bush Theatre and the Lyric Hammersmith. The two theatres were awarded four-year investment from Arts Council England for 2018 to 2022 following a national review of arts funding in the UK.

The Bush Theatre, an internationally recognised home for new plays, is a rare example of a London-based organisation to get an increase in annual funding. It will receive £595,000 a year, an additional 20%, to enable it to grow its artistic and community programmes. This is following their reopening in March after a £4.3million redevelopment of their home in the Old Shepherd's Bush Library. The increase in funding recognises the strides the company has made in diversifying the work it produces, led by Artistic Director Madani Younis.

The Lyric Hammersmith, one of the UK's leading producing theatres, will receive £1.1million revenue funding each year in a continuation of its existing funding arrangements. The theatre is one of around 60 arts organisations being recognised nationally for their important strategic role in the UK's cultural infrastructure. Alongside its world class theatre programme the Lyric plays a nationally important role in creating routes into the arts for young people from all backgrounds.

The Lyric will also receive £360,000 in capital funding to help refurbish its spectacular 550 seat Victorian auditorium, to upgrade its smaller studio space as a home for work by and for young people, and to provide better disability access and environmental sustainability. This is the final phase of the Lyric's £20million redevelopment which has seen the addition of state of the art education and creation facilities for theatre, dance, music, film and digital arts.

The Lyric's Executive Director Sian Alexander said: 'We are immensely grateful for the continued support of the Arts Council. Their investment provides 20% of the funds we need to deliver our work each year and so gives vital stability to our charity. It is the springboard from which we can then earn or raise the majority of the funds we need to deliver our extensive programmes.'

We are very proud of the role we play in our local community in Hammersmith. Each year we welcome nearly 200,000 people to our theatre and more than 33,000 young people take part in a wide range of creative classes and activities here.

We have a longstanding partnership with the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and are delighted to see their on-going support and substantial investment in our new building matched by this significant national funding for the arts.'

The Bush Theatre's Executive Director **Jon Gilchrist** said:

'We're thrilled to once again be part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio, and the uplift in support comes at a critical time for the Bush Theatre. In the past six years we have grown significantly, from the small powerhouse of new plays above a pub on Shepherd's Bush Green, to our marvellous new home on Uxbridge Road.

Today we have two theatres, new community and rehearsal spaces, and we expect to welcome nearly four times as many people this year as we did in 2012. This increase in funding will enable us to maintain our commitment to creating the finest new plays, increasing our work with the community, and to representing the diversity of Hammersmith and Fulham our stages, in our workforce and the artists we develop.'

Councillor Andrew Jones, Hammersmith & Fulham Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration, said:

"At a time when there are more financial demands than ever before, it is wonderful that Arts Council England is increasing its investment in our leading theatres and other arts bodies in Hammersmith & Fulham.

"This money helps underpin H&F Council's arts strategy, which builds on the strong arts and cultural scene in the borough, and boosts local employment and business.

"It is a recognition of the contribution our hard-working arts organisations make to celebrating diversity and involving the community – whatever their background – in inclusive, creative projects."

Notes for Editors

About the Bush Theatre:

The Bush Theatre is a world-famous home for new plays and an internationally renowned champion of playwrights. We discover, nurture and produce the best new playwrights from the widest range of backgrounds, and present our work to the highest possible standards. We look for exciting new voices that tell contemporary stories with wit, style and passion and we champion work that is both provocative and entertaining.

The Bush has produced hundreds of groundbreaking premieres since its inception in 1972, many of them Bush commissions, and hosted guest productions by leading companies and artists from across the world.

About the Lyric Hammersmith:

The Lyric Hammersmith is one of the UK's leading producing theatres. For more than one hundred and twenty years it has been responsible for creating some of the UK's most adventurous and acclaimed theatrical work. It has gained a national reputation for its work with and for children and young people and creates pathways into the arts for young talent from all backgrounds, helping to diversify our industry. Recent productions include our critically acclaimed annual pantomimes, the smash hit *Bugsy Malone*, the international tour and co-production with Filter Theatre of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a new UK production of international phenomenon, *Terror*.

The Lyric's dual commitment to producing the highest quality contemporary theatre alongside nurturing the creativity of young people is what makes it unique within the cultural ecology of the UK. It is a local theatre rooted in its community with a national and international reputation for the quality and innovation of its artistic work.

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