

PRESS RELEASE
Friday 7 September 2018



Lyric Hammersmith announces Rachel O’Riordan as new Artistic Director

Lisa Burger, Chair of the Lyric Hammersmith and Sian Alexander, Executive Director of the Lyric Hammersmith are delighted to announce the appointment of Rachel O’Riordan as the theatre’s new Artistic Director and Joint Chief Executive.

Rachel O’Riordan has been the Artistic Director and CEO of Sherman Theatre since February 2014. During her tenure the theatre has been transformed into a vibrant, exciting and influential producing theatre, winning The Stage Awards’ prestigious Regional Theatre of the Year category in 2018. She was previously the Artistic Director of Perth Theatre Scotland and Ransom Theatre Company in Northern Ireland. An award-winning director, her recent directing credits include *The Cherry Orchard* for Sherman Theatre and *Come on Home* at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

Rachel will join Sian Alexander, the Lyric’s Executive Director and Joint Chief Executive since October 2015, to co-lead the theatre.

Rachel O’Riordan said: ‘The Lyric Hammersmith is one of the most exciting theatres in London. It occupies a special place in the theatre ecology; egalitarian, open and bold. I am looking forward to continuing the theatre’s journey and leading a new phase of artistic evolution, working alongside Sian Alexander and the Lyric team. I am honoured to have been chosen to succeed Sean Holmes, and look forward to getting to know new audiences in West London and beyond.’

Lisa Burger said: ‘I’m thrilled that Rachel will be joining the Lyric as our new artistic director. I’m a great admirer of her work at the Sherman in Cardiff and look forward to her bringing her passion for theatre and commitment to excellence, generosity and ambition to Hammersmith.’

Sian Alexander said: ‘I am very much looking forward to working with Rachel. She brings with her a wealth of brilliant experience as a leader and a director. She is an inspiring creative producer. She shares our values and passion for developing talent, creating opportunities for young people and working to ensure the theatre is at the heart of its local community. I’m hugely excited for the future of the Lyric under our joint leadership.’

Current Artistic Director Sean Holmes will step down as Artistic Director in October 2018. His final season of programmed shows begins in January 2019. Rachel will join the Lyric Hammersmith in early February 2019, with her first full season as Artistic Director opening Autumn 2019.

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Images of Rachel O’Riordan including with Sian Alexander are available for download: [click here](#).



For more information visit www.lyric.co.uk.
Twitter: @LyricHammer | Facebook: LyricHammersmith



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Rachel O’Riordan full biography

Rachel O’Riordan has been the Artistic Director and CEO of Sherman Theatre since February 2014. During her tenure the theatre has been transformed into a vibrant, exciting and influential producing theatre, winning The Stage’s prestigious Regional Theatre of the Year Award in 2018. Her credits as a director for the theatre include: *The Cherry Orchard*; the Olivier award-winning *Killology* (with the Royal Court); *Bird* (with the Royal Exchange) and *Iphigenia in Splott* (also at the National Theatre; England tour, Edinburgh Festival, Schaubühne, Berlin and off-Broadway).

Her freelance directing credits include: *Come on Home* (Abbey, Dublin); *Unfaithful* (Traverse, Edinburgh); *The Absence of Women* (Tricycle, London); *Everything is Illuminated* (Hampstead Theatre); *The Glass Menagerie* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast) and with the Peter Hall Company she directed *Miss Julie* and an adaptation of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* at the Theatre Royal Bath.

Rachel was named as one of the most influential people in UK Theatre in the most recent Stage 100 in 2017. She is a Council Member of Art Council Wales. She is a participant in the British Council’s *Take the Stage* initiative, working with emerging Ukrainian directors on new writing in a conflict environment. Published work includes in *NT Connections: Plays, 2011*; *Women in Irish Theatre* (Macmillan); and various academic journals. She has also written articles for the *Irish Theatre Magazine* and *Fortnight* (on new writing in Northern Ireland).

Previously she was the Artistic Director of Perth Theatre in Scotland between 2011 and 2014. Her directing credits at the theatre included: *Someone who’ll Watch Over Me*; *Moonlight and Magnolias*; *The Odd Couple, Female Version*; *The Seafarer* (with Lyric, Belfast), winning the Critics Award for Theatre in Scotland for Best Director and Best Ensemble for *Macbeth* (with Tron, Glasgow). During this time Rachel directed five new short operas for the MAC in Belfast and a transfer of Owen McCafferty’s *The Absence of Women* to the Tricycle Theatre (now Kiln), London.

From 2002 to 2011 Rachel co-founded and ran Ransom Productions based in Northern Ireland. With Ransom she directed the award-winning *Hurricane*, which received high critical acclaim at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, in the West and off Broadway. During her time as Artistic Director she commissioned and directed various new works including the first play by David Ireland, *Arguments for Terrorism*, *Early Bird* by Leo Butler, *Transparency* by Suzie Miller, *Protestants* by Robert Welch and *This Piece of Earth* by Richard Dormer. She also ran a three year programme, *Write on the Edge* (2007-2010), a project to develop female writers in post-conflict Northern Ireland.

Rachel trained at the Royal Ballet School. She went on study English and Theatre Studies at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London and completed her PhD at University of Ulster on *Shakespeare’s Physical Text*.



Upcoming productions at the Lyric Hammersmith:

othellomacbeth

By William Shakespeare. Directed by Jude Christian

An audacious condensed staging of two of Shakespeare's most iconic plays.

5 October – 3 November 2018

Tickets from £10

Dick Whittington

Written by Jude Christian and Cariad Lloyd. Directed by Jude Christian

Celebrating 10 years of the Lyric's pantomime

17 November 2018 – 6 January 2019

Tickets from £10

Leave to Remain

A new play with songs by Matt Jones and Kele Okereke. Directed by Robby Graham

A remarkable story of a young gay couple suddenly faced with an uncertain future, told through a blend of music, drama and movement.

18 January – 16 February 2019

Tickets from £10

For more information and to book tickets: lyric.co.uk / 020 8741 6850

About the Lyric Hammersmith

The Lyric Hammersmith is one of the UK's leading producing theatres. For more than a hundred and twenty years it has been responsible for creating some of the UK's most adventurous and acclaimed theatrical work. It has also 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*, Lesley Sharp in Simon Stephen's new version of Chekhov's *The Seagull* and the UK premiere of the international phenomenon *Terror*.

The Lyric's dual commitment to producing the highest quality contemporary theatre, whilst 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.

In April 2015 the Lyric reopened following a multi-million pound capital project, which saw the addition of the Reuben Foundation Wing housing state-of-the-art facilities for theatre, dance, film, music, digital and more. The 'new' Lyric is now the largest creative hub in West London and home to an innovative partnership of like-minded leading arts organisations who work together to deliver life-changing creative opportunities for thousands of young West Londoners.