



Press Release

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## Lorraine Heggeseey announced as the new Chair of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

**Lorraine Heggeseey** is today announced as the new **Chair of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre** where she will lead the Board of Trustees and drive the strategic work and vision of the organisation which now enters its 2022 Season.

**Lorraine Heggeseey** has been pivotal to success and transformation in a range of high-profile roles in the public, private and charity sectors. She was the first female controller of BBC 1 and introduced a number of flagship shows including *Strictly Come Dancing* and the new *Dr Who*; as CEO of talkbackThames she revitalised the programming portfolio and created a new digital division; in 2012 as Founder and Executive Chair of Boom Pictures she built the 7th largest independent production company in the UK. More recently, her charity roles have included CEO of The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. She is a Fellow of the Royal Television Society and a frequent judge for BAFTA and the Royal Television Society.

**Lorraine Heggeseey, Chair of the Board**, said: *"It's a privilege to be joining such a talented team led by the brilliant CEO and Artistic Director, Rachel O'Riordan. I was impressed by the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre's ambitious creative vision, impressive programme of forthcoming productions and its commitment to develop diverse talent in every aspect of its work. As a West Londoner, I know how much the community appreciates having such an excellent theatre on its doorstep which also gives opportunities to many young people who might otherwise not be able to get involved in the creative arts. I look forward to working with the executive team and the Board of Trustees at this pivotal moment as the Lyric rises to the challenges of the past couple of years with renewed vigour."*

**David Sharkey, Vice Chair of the Board**, said: *"I am thrilled, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to welcome Lorraine Heggeseey to the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre as our new Chair. This is the successful culmination of a rigorous and wide-ranging search which has attracted the interest of some very high calibre candidates and speaks strongly about the appeal of our wonderful theatre and the talented colleagues who work in it. In making its decision, the Board was particularly impressed by Lorraine's creative leadership and energy, backed by her outstanding track record across various sectors. With Lorraine as our new Chair we look forward to the future with great confidence and excitement."*

**Rachel O’Riordan, Artistic Director of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre**, said: *“I am delighted that Lorraine Heggessey has agreed to succeed Lisa Burger CBE as Chair of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre. Lorraine’s commitment to talent development, inclusion and excellence have been defining principles of her career so far and align strongly with our vision for the Lyric. I know that she will bring new energy and ideas, and that her knowledge of West London will inform her relationship with us. Her exceptional success is underpinned with courage and integrity. I, with our committed and talented Board of Trustees; Executive Director Amy Belson, and the wider team, look forward to working with Lorraine as we look to the future with ambition and purpose.”*

The current Lyric Hammersmith Theatre Board members are:

**Rondette Amoy Smith, Cllr Jonathan Caleb-Landy, Lameya Chaudhury, Cllr. Sue Fennimore, David Greig, Lorraine Heggessey, Farah Karim-Cooper, Cllr Bora Kwon, Kamran Mallick, Liz Elston Mayhew, Julie Molloy, Cllr Patricia Quigley, Derek Richards, David Sharkey.**

Lorraine Heggessey succeeds Lisa Burger who has served on the Lyric board for 10 years and as Chair since 2018. She stepped down from the post in January 2022.

### **About Lorraine Heggessey**

Lorraine Heggessey is a trailblazing business leader, who has driven success and transformation in a range of high-profile roles in the public, private and third sector. She has been directly associated with many of the UK’s biggest hit television formats.

The first female controller of BBC 1, Lorraine led the channel to become the most popular in Britain, overtaking its main competitor, ITV1, for the first time. With an annual budget of £1billion, she revamped Saturday nights introducing flagship hit shows including Strictly Come Dancing and the new Dr Who. She also brought additional dramas into the schedule many of which became long running series such as Spooks and Waking the Dead.

Moving on to become CEO of talkbackThames, her creative leadership and exceptional ability to motivate talent to drive commercial success revitalized the programming portfolio and saw the introduction of a new digital division. Her tenure also included the introduction of hit entertainment shows, including Britain’s Got Talent and Take Me Out, and resulted in profits increasing by over 50% in her first two years.

In 2012, in search of a new challenge, she secured private equity investment from LDC for her vision to build a new independent production group through a combination of acquisitions and backing start-ups. As Executive Chair, Lorraine led Boom Pictures through several deals in quick succession to build the 7th largest independent production company in Britain (worth c£100 million with offices worldwide). It was subsequently acquired by ITV in 2015 and renamed Two Four Group.

Lorraine has been the Independent External Adviser to Channel 4’s Growth Fund since 2015. The fund was set up to invest in small to medium sized indie production companies and specifically to back companies with diverse leadership or those based in the Nations & Regions. Lorraine assesses the creative potential of companies that the fund is considering for investment and works closely with the portfolio companies’ CEOs offering strategic advice to help them to be as creatively and commercially successful as possible.

In a diversion from her media career, Lorraine held a high profile charity role as CEO of The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. With a brief to use her business acumen to professionalise and grow the Foundation, she helped develop and refine its unique model of venture philanthropy that incubates initiatives to tackle some of today's biggest challenges. This included mental health - through the Heads Together campaign – helping disadvantaged young people, supporting wounded, sick and injured veterans and environmental projects.

A Fellow of the Royal Television Society and frequent judge for BAFTA and the RTS. She is also Chair of the Grierson Trust, which celebrates and promotes documentary excellence through its annual awards and opens doors to the industry for young people from diverse backgrounds whose voices might otherwise not be heard. She is a regular contributor to the Today Programme and Newsnight on media topics.

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### Notes to Editors

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### About the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is one of London's oldest producing houses, and the second largest subsidised theatre in London after the National. We produce world class theatre from the heart of Hammersmith in our beautiful Frank Matcham auditorium. We are committed to being part of our community, and believe passionately in excellence and integrity in everything we do.

We are sector leaders in developing young talent, and have made significant and impactful change where it matters most; to the lives of those for whom socio-economic disadvantage inhibits possibilities. We believe theatre has the power to change lives; through our work we empower young talent from West London and develop the future of British theatre.

The Lyric is the civic and creative heart of West London. We are egalitarian, forward looking and unafraid to respond and change – we are proud of our history, and ambitious for our future.

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is 125 years young.

## **Listings**

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL

Box office: 020 8741 6850

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