

lyric



LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE

RECRUITMENT PACK

Executive Director / Joint Chief Executive

January 2026

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in the role of Executive Director & Joint Chief Executive at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre. We are looking for someone with exceptional leadership skills to join our extraordinary organisation at a pivotal and exciting moment working in partnership with Rachel O'Riordan, our Artistic Director & Joint Chief Executive.

The Lyric is one of the UK's most significant producing theatres, with a proud history stretching back 130 years. From our home in West London, we have long combined artistic ambition with a deep commitment to our local community, creating work that resonates far beyond our walls while remaining rooted in the lives, stories and experiences of the people we serve. The Lyric has always been a place where new voices are nurtured, bold ideas are championed, and audiences are invited to encounter theatre that is urgent, surprising and transformative.

Today, the Lyric is a vibrant cultural hub for Hammersmith & Fulham and the wider West London area. Our role extends well beyond our stages. Through Young Lyric, our exceptional creative learning, training and engagement programme, we offer education, skills development and career pathways for thousands of young people each year. This work is central to our mission and identity, and a defining feature of the Lyric's national reputation. For example, we won the 2025 Excellence in Arts Education at the UK Theatre Awards for our ground-breaking work in primary schools with Hammersmith & Fulham's Gangs Violence and Exploitation Unit.

Our building reflects this breadth of activity and ambition. Alongside our Main House, Studio and rehearsal spaces, the Lyric is a welcoming public building with cafés and communal areas, alive throughout the day with artists, participants, young people and children, audiences and local residents. It is a place for conversation, collaboration and care, as well as for making outstanding theatre.

Under Rachel O'Riordan's leadership, the Lyric has reaffirmed its position as a leading producing theatre, known for ground-breaking new work, distinctive revivals and a clear artistic voice that speaks to contemporary Britain. Recent highlights include Gary Owen's contemporary reimagining of Ibsen's *Ghosts* directed by Rachel; *Sing Street* a co-production with Barbara Broccoli that gave several young people their professional stage debut, including the lead, Sheridan Townsley; and Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's adaptation of Sathnam Sanghera's critically acclaimed novel, *Marriage Material*.

The partnership between the Artistic Director and Executive Director sits at the heart of our success. As Executive Director & Joint Chief Executive, you will play a crucial role in shaping the organisation's future, providing strategic leadership, operational rigour, with a shared commitment to our values.

If you are excited by the prospect of co-leading a major cultural institution with purpose, ambition and impact, we would be delighted to hear from you.

**Lorraine Heggessey,
Chair, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre**



ABOUT THE LYRIC

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is one of London's leading producing theatres. For 130 years, we have welcomed some of the world's finest writers, directors, actors and theatre companies to our stage, from Harold Pinter to Tanika Gupta; Sir John Gielgud to Sheila Hancock; Talawa to Frantic Assembly.

Designed by Frank Matcham, The New Lyric Opera House, as it was then called, opened in July 1895 with a prologue given by Lillie Langtry, followed by *A House of Lies* by Charles Hannan, and *Dora*, a drama based on Tennyson's poem. In 1918, Nigel Playfair took over the building, ushering in a successful era for the renamed Lyric Theatre.

“Love the Lyric. It embodies a high-quality theatre experience combined with accessible community opportunities for young people. The casts are representative of London communities [and] the shows are diverse and courageous.”

West Londoner, female aged 57

Highlights included a Christmas production by A. A. Milne, *As You Like It* with Athene Seyler, John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, which ran for 1463 performances, *The Way of the World* with Edith Evans, Sheridan's *The Rivals* and *The Duenna*, and Ellen Terry's final stage appearance in Walter de la Mare's *Crossings*. In 1926, Playfair hosted Marie Rambert's dancers, signifying the birth of British Ballet.

After Playfair left in 1933 the theatre's fortunes declined until 1946, when it was taken over by J. Baxter Somerville. John Gielgud led a season of plays, including *Richard II* and Congreve's *The Way of The World*; from 1956 the theatre also hosted new writers such as Harold Pinter and John Mortimer. The fortunes of the theatre then declined once more until the building was sold for redevelopment in 1968. Following a public enquiry in 1969, the theatre was demolished, but key parts of the plasterwork and auditorium were recorded, removed and stored.

Following a long public campaign, the Lyric was reconstructed in its current location by Hammersmith & Fulham Council and reopened in 1979 by TRH Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. ►



The first Artistic Director of the newly reopened Lyric was Bill Thomley, with Michael Blakemore as Resident Director. Peter James became Artistic Director in 1981, winning the company its first Olivier Award for *The House of Bernarda Alba* with Glenda Jackson and premiering Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* with Patricia Routledge. In 1994, Neil Bartlett and Simon Mellor joined the theatre as Artistic and Executive Directors respectively. David Farr became Artistic Director in 2004 with Jessica Hepburn as Executive Director, overseeing the Lyric's first major capital project, adding creative and rehearsal spaces and relocating the entrance to Lyric Square. In 2009, Sean Holmes became Artistic Director, reintroducing the annual Panto and staging notable productions, including the Olivier award-winning revival of Sarah Kane's *Blasted* and the cult hit, *Ghost Stories*.

The Lyric's second major capital project, the Reuben Foundation Wing, opened in 2015, adding cultural and education spaces for the young people of West London, including rehearsal rooms, a dance studio, film and TV studios, a sensory space, and a recording studio.

Current Artistic Director, Rachel O'Riordan, joined in 2019, opening with Tanika Gupta's *A Doll's House* starring Anjana Vasan, a critical and box office hit; Amy Belson was appointed Executive Director in 2021. The Lyric has emerged strongly post-pandemic, now producing up to eight Main House shows a year. Notable recent productions include Gary Owen's *Ghosts*; *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* which transferred to the West End; major new musicals *FANGIRLS* and *Sing Street*; *School Girls; Or the African Mean Girls Play*; and new productions with the UK's most exciting touring companies, Talawa, Frantic Assembly and Headlong. Alongside the work on stage, The Lyric continues to fulfil a vital role as the beating cultural heart of West London, with award-winning and inspiring programmes and projects supporting young people aged 0-25 ■

MISSION, VISION, VALUES & IMPACT

Mission

'The Lyric... it's simply a theatre that thinks for itself.'
A.A. Milne

We are the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre.
We believe that everyone deserves to experience
the life-changing impact of theatre.

In our big, beautiful theatre, we tell stories that
matter and work with exceptional talent to make
ambitious, entertaining, inspiring shows for our
audience in West London and beyond.

We remove barriers to engagement and ensure
young people have the opportunity to discover
the power of their creativity, shaping the future of
British theatre.

We are inclusive, forward-looking and unafraid
of change. We are the creative heart of
Hammersmith, proud of our history and ambitious
for our future.

Our Culture

We are one Lyric Team. Each individual and
department brings their own experiences, skills
and individuality. Together we share and follow
our Lyric Values that shape how we operate as
one team to deliver our organisational mission.

We are an ambitious and fast-paced organisation,
dynamic and committed to delivering the very
best in everything we do.

We are committed to having a safe, communicative
and open culture that allows everyone in the team
to thrive. Everyone at the Lyric has an important
role to play in this, bringing the values we share
to life in the way we work together.



“The Lyric’s commitment to supporting their local community is testament to the positive impact a thriving theatre sector can and does make in our country.”

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, then Leader of the Opposition, on his visit to the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, June 2024.



Our values

- **Work with integrity and respect**

We support each other with kindness, openness and integrity. Together we celebrate our achievements and work together through our challenges.

- **Every day we learn and grow**

We must continue to ask questions, seek answers and share these with each other for the success of the Lyric.

- **Be ambitious and action-focused**

We believe in excellence, we have a can-do attitude, go the extra mile and ensure our ideas become actions.

- **Serve our West London community**

We are here for the people of West London, every decision we make and action we take should benefit them.



Equality, Diversity, Inclusion

We are committed to creating a workforce which is representative of our West London community, and to bringing together those with a variety of skills and experiences to help shape what we do and how we work.

We are an anti-racist organisation and are committed to making a positive change in the arts and cultural sector. We expect all employees to follow our equality, diversity and inclusion policy and to play an active role in our learning and growth as an organisation through our Anti-Racism strategy and action plan.

Strategic Vision

In 2023 the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre launched the theatre's strategic vision, defining organisational ambitions through to 2026. It forms the foundations of all work and planning across the organisation.

The vision is informed by the delivery requirements of our major funders – Arts Council England and Hammersmith & Fulham Council – alongside creative and organisational priorities that will ensure the future success of the Lyric.

Strategic Strands

Our work & identity

Positioning the Lyric in the UK theatre landscape

Our business development & sustainability

Developing and delivering against the lyric's business model

Our audience & community

Engaging and growing the lyric's audience and wider community

Our people & culture

Supporting staff, young people and artists to excel



“[The Lyric is] playing such an important part in the artistic and cultural enrichment of my young children. I’m so happy to have somewhere I can take them to see amazing shows that will shape their love for the theatre and performance.”

Londoner, female aged 37

Impact

Audience reach

Over **370,000** tickets sold for Main House productions and nearly **60,000** for Studio and Little Lyric shows between April 2022 and March 2024, with **95%** of audiences likely to return.

Local engagement

1,500+ young people from West London participated directly in Lyric programmes during the same period, alongside thousands more through schools and partnerships.

Access and inclusion

More than **60,000** free tickets distributed to local residents and workers through the Free First Night scheme over 30+ years.

Social mobility

Accredited programmes such as START see **74%** of participants progress into education, employment or training.

Economic and cultural value

84% of West London audiences recognise the Lyric as important to the local economy, alongside consistent critical recognition and industry influence.

Social impact beyond the stage

Accredited community programmes such as **START** show 74% of participants referred back into education, employment or training.

For further information, follow this link to read our latest Impact Reports

Lyric Impact Report (April 2022–March 2024)
SPRINGBOARD Impact Report

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is a registered charity with a mixed income structure, combining public support, earned revenue (ticket sales; catering and bar sales; venue hire and events; corporate partnerships; ancillary commercial activities), third-party contributions and fundraising. Total income for the year ending March 2025 was £6.74m, a 6% increase on 2023/24. Of this income, £3.8m was from charitable activities, £1.4m from public funding, £0.9m from commercial activity (bars, catering, hires and events) and £0.6m from grants, donations and other fundraising.

Total expenditure for the year was £8.1m, the highest level to date, reflecting our most ambitious season of theatrical productions.

Of this expenditure, £7.1m was on charitable activities (£6.5m on theatre productions and £0.6m on our Young People's programme), £0.6m on commercial activity, £0.2m on support costs and £0.2m on fundraising.

After receipt of Theatre Tax Relief of £0.8m, the net movement of funds for the year was a deficit of £0.6m. This includes £0.5m of depreciation from restricted and designated funds.

The charity's net deficit for the year, excluding restricted funds, was £0.1m.

The group's total funds at 31 March 2025 were £8.2m, comprising £6.1m fixed assets held in restricted funds, £0.5m fixed assets held in designated funds, £0.1m restricted funds for activities in 2025-26 and £1.5m in designated reserves.



GOVERNANCE

The Lyric Theatre Hammersmith group consists of the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith Limited, a charity, and three wholly owned subsidiaries: Lyric Hammersmith Enterprises Limited, Lyric Hammersmith Worldwide Limited, Lyric Global Limited. The Executive Director is a Director for all subsidiaries.

The charity is a Company Limited by Guarantee, and the Trustees of the charity are the Directors of the Company, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

There are three sub-committees to the main board – The Finance & Resources Committee, the Nominations Committee, and the Development Committee.

For further information about the Board, follow this link: [Lyric Hammersmith Board and Team](#)



JOB DESCRIPTION

Responsible to:

The Chair and Board of Directors of the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith Limited.

Responsible for:

Joint Chief Executive responsibilities with the Artistic Director, Rachel O'Riordan. The role is singly responsible for line-managing the Lyric's Development, Commercial, Communications & Sales and Finance & Resources Directors and jointly responsible, with the Artistic Director, for line-managing the Director of Producing & Planning.

Leadership

- In partnership with the Artistic Director (AD) & Joint Chief Executive, provide visionary leadership for the organisation, guiding the company in the articulation and delivery of a clear long-term strategy and associated objectives.
- Lead the development and implementation of the Lyric's ambitious organisational strategy, which involves balancing artistic and commercial imperatives, whilst maintaining financial stability and the prudent use of resources.
- Ensure that strategic planning is discussed with and approved by the Lyric's Board of Directors and effectively communicated to and understood by all Lyric staff and relevant stakeholders.
- With the Finance & Resources Director oversee the financial health of the organisation, ensuring that accurate budgets are set, monitored and met with effective cost control and regular reviews of income and expenditure.
- Lead and develop a senior management team to create and maintain a motivated, energised and appropriately skilled workforce.

- Work with the senior management team to create an inclusive, equitable and productive work environment for all staff, visitors and artists.
- Directly manage the Lyric's relationship with principal funders, Arts Council England and Hammersmith & Fulham Council, and ensure effective relationships with all other key funders of the Lyric.
- Support the Director of Young Lyric to develop and maintain good relationships with partner organisations resident at the Lyric.
- Oversee key HR operational issues and policies, ensuring all Lyric staff, artists and contractors are recruited, contracted, appraised and remunerated in adherence with the Lyric's Employment Policies.
- Lead on key policy initiatives and strategies for HR, equality, diversity, and sustainability to ensure delivery to artistic ambition and ACE goals, aligned to funding requirements and current legislation.
- Ensure the overall organisation is being run with maximum staff and organisational efficiency.
- Alongside the Artistic Director, act as a lead ambassador and spokesperson for the organisation.

Artistic Programming

- Work alongside the Artistic Director to develop and deliver an artistic programme that reflects the Lyric's commitment to innovation and excellence, serves its communities and aligns with strategic objectives.
- With the Artistic Director, identify and commission inspirational artists to develop professional productions for the Lyric's stages in Hammersmith and on tour, ensuring that all artists are given appropriate producorial support and maximising their creative potential.
- Together with the Director of Producing & Planning, secure and negotiate all co-production, enhancement and partnership agreements for Lyric productions, ensuring maximum opportunity and benefit for the Lyric.
- Work alongside the Artistic Director to ensure that the Lyric's work for children, young people and emerging artists remains at the heart of the Lyric's artistic programme.
- In collaboration with the Director of Young Lyric, ensure the Lyric is delivering to its mission as the civic heart of Hammersmith & Fulham for the performing arts, supporting the community of West London.
- 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 the work.

Governance

- Ensure that the administration of the Board meetings and governance is carried out within the guidelines appropriate to the running of a charity.
- Attend all Board meetings and, with the Finance & Resources Director, take the lead in providing informative and sufficiently detailed organisational and financial material to enable the Board to make considered decisions about all matters of policy and finance.
- Act as Director of Lyric Hammersmith Enterprises Ltd, Lyric Worldwide Ltd and Lyric Global Ltd.
- Provide oversight across all organisational risk registers, ensuring risks are regularly reviewed with appropriate mitigation strategies in place.

Operational and Fundraising

- Provide oversight across all fundraising activities, ensuring the team has ambitious yet realistic targets, collaborating with the team to nurture relationships, support the submission of funding applications, and identify new donor prospects.
- Play an active, leading role in the continuous development of the Lyric's fundraising capabilities.
- Work with the Commercial Director and Communications & Sales Director to embed an outstanding visitor experience across all areas of 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 Finance & Resources Director, ensure the theatre's capital asset replacement and maintenance plan is regularly reviewed and resourced.
- Ensure the Lyric upholds the highest standards of health and safety for the benefit of members of staff, partners and residents, and the public.
- Ensure the Lyric acts with due diligence in fulfilling all its fiscal and legal duties and requirements. Review and approve all Lyric policies and procedures, ensuring they are regularly updated. Act as the premises license holder.

General

- Stay abreast of developments in British, European and world theatre and the arts and ensure that this knowledge is disseminated throughout the organisation in the practices and programming of the Lyric.
- Undertake any additional tasks as may from time to time be required by the Board.

This job description is a guide to the nature of the work required of the Executive Director & Joint Chief Executive. It is not wholly comprehensive or restrictive and may be reviewed with the post holder and the Board as required.

Terms & Conditions

Contract

Full-time, permanent role

Salary

£85,000 per annum

Hours

The post-holder will be expected to do some evening and weekend work to fulfil the requirements of the role. Core office hours are 10am-6pm, Monday to Friday

The Lyric has a House Agreement, this role works to the office agreement.

Holiday

30 days per annum, plus Bank Holidays.

Notice period

Six months

Probationary period

Six months

Pension

3% pension contribution after qualifying period

Other benefits include

Season ticket loans, Cycle to Work Scheme, Employee Assistance Programme, Staff Ticket Scheme including complimentary and discounted theatre tickets, and staff catering discounts

How to apply

To apply, please send a CV and a covering letter stating why you think you are suitable for this role to our recruitment consultant, Helen Sprott, Managing Director of AEM International at applications@aeminternational.co.uk

Letters should be no longer than two pages. All applications will be acknowledged. The deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday 06 March 2026.

If you would like a confidential conversation about the role, please contact Helen via email at hsprott@aeminternational.co.uk

We are committed to providing an inclusive and accessible recruitment process. If you have access needs and would prefer the candidate information in an alternative format or would like to discuss any other adaptations to support your participation as a candidate at any stage, please contact Helen at the email address to the left. We warmly encourage you to get in touch so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Equality & Diversity

The Lyric values and promotes diversity and is committed to equality and opportunity for all. We are working actively to be an anti-racist organisation. Everyone who works with us is required to comply with and actively promote our Equality Policy, and no job applicant or member of our workforce will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, class or socio-economic background, trade union activity or political activity or opinion.

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre has made a commitment that all applicants with disabilities who meet the essential criteria for this job will be invited to interview. We may use positive action, in cases where candidates are equally qualified, to increase the employment of under-represented groups at the Lyric.

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is proud to be a Disability Confident Committed Employer and supports parents and carers working in theatre.

Appointments

All appointments are made subject to satisfactory references, proof of eligibility to work in the UK and are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure.