



LEEDS PLAY HOUSE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Recruitment Pack

If you require this Recruitment Pack in a different format, please contact the HR & Learning team on 0113 213 7280 or recruitment@leedsplayhouse.org.uk



SHAWAB IQBAL

JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVE & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WELCOME

'Hello. We're so pleased that you're interested in the role of Artistic Director. As one of the country's largest producing theatres, with three distinct auditoria, Leeds Playhouse plays a major part in the cultural and social life of the Leeds City Region, as well as being a significant contributor to the national theatre ecology.'

This is a hugely exciting opportunity for an inspiring and dynamic artistic leader to take this special organisation into a new chapter and build on its fifty five year commitment to access and its local communities. We're looking for someone who has the vision and breadth of experience to successfully programme a range of work – from large-scale productions in the Quarry Theatre and Courtyard Theatre to more intimate shows in the Bramall Rock Void. The role will enable you to develop exciting, innovative work and contribute to positive change in the wider industry.

You will be joining a passionate team ready to take on the opportunities and challenges of the coming years.

We welcome applications from anyone who represents the diverse communities we serve. Not sure if the role is for you? Do get in touch with our recruitment consultant, Mary Caws, for a further conversation. We'd be delighted to hear from you.'

Board of Trustees and Joint CEO
and Executive Director
Shawab Iqbal

THIS **SHORT FILM** WILL HELP
YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT
WE'RE ALL ABOUT.

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

[f](#) [@](#)leedsplayhouse



QUARRY THEATRE
850 CAPACITY



BRAMALL ROCK VOID
100 CAPACITY



COURTYARD THEATRE
420 CAPACITY

QUICK FACTS



- Restaurant
- Café
- Two bars
- Conferencing and events
- Public gallery space
- Dedicated space for young people

3 THEATRES

5 MAIN REHEARSAL & STUDIO SPACES

c175,000

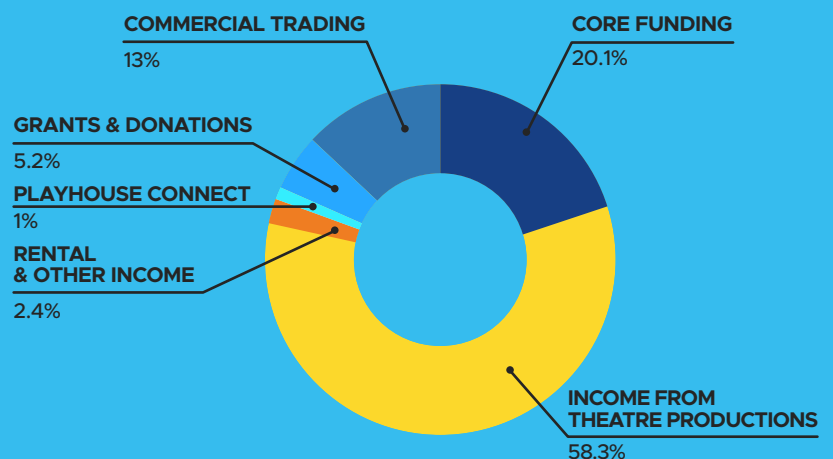
AUDIENCE PER YEAR

OVER 19,500 PEOPLE

CONNECTED THROUGH
PLAYHOUSE CONNECT

10M

TURNOVER



leedsplayhouse.org.uk

[f](#) [@leedsplayhouse](#)



WHO WE ARE

Leeds Playhouse has been one of the UK's leading producing theatres for 55 years. It is an award-winning theatre and a cultural hub, a place where people gather to tell and share stories and engage in world class theatre. It makes work which is pioneering and relevant, seeking out the best companies and artists to create inspirational theatre in the heart of Yorkshire.

Its warm welcome was recognised at the **UK Theatre Awards**. In 2022, **Leeds Playhouse** was named **Most Welcoming Theatre**, recognising its daily endeavors to make the building an inviting, engaging, creative, accessible and inclusive hub at the heart of the Leeds City Region. For the last three years, leading performers in Playhouse productions have been named Best Performer in a Musical and, in 2024, the Playhouse's production of *Oliver!* was named Best Musical.

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

[!\[\]\(d66ff64371a51729ac8c1cdaa685ba6f_img.jpg\)](#) [!\[\]\(0f31ebba7abcd47777e178db26f29705_img.jpg\)](#) [@leedsplayhouse](#)



WHAT WE DO

Alongside the work on its stages, the Playhouse works creatively with the people, artists and communities of Leeds through its innovative, sector-leading Playhouse Connect programme. Focussing on two key areas – Learning & Skills and Creative Communities – Playhouse Connect engages with thousands of people in the region each year. As part of this work, its Artistic Development programme, Furnace, engages with theatre-makers, providing a creative space to refine their practice at all stages of their careers; it builds, develops and sustains projects to connect with refugee communities, young people and students, older people and people with learning disabilities; it hands over spaces to communities to use in ways they choose, from breakdancing to roller-skating, craft markets to tea parties, enlivening the building whilst fostering deeper relationships; and works in-residence around the city, connecting with people on their doorsteps.

As a registered charity, **Leeds Playhouse** relies on the support of valued partners to make great things happen. It is grateful for the continued support of **Arts Council England, Leeds City Council, The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation** and the many charitable trusts, business partners and individuals that continue to support the vital work of the theatre.

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

[!\[\]\(339a16584d5da0f0a3ca4e9ec17bf6a1_img.jpg\)](#) [!\[\]\(e06a1d39938b2f5d7a2c3618fea4f77f_img.jpg\)](#) [@leedsplayhouse](#)



LEEDS

UNOFFICIAL CAPITAL OF YORKSHIRE

Leeds is one of the largest cities in the UK with a population of more than 750,000 and the second largest employment total outside London. Well connected to the rest of the country, rail services from the main train station take you to London in around 2 hours and 15 minutes, Edinburgh in around 3 hours and Manchester in just under an hour. The city is also home to Leeds Bradford International Airport.

From the city's arts scene to its numerous galleries and museums, Leeds offers a thriving cultural vibe to suit almost any taste, from the **Royal Armouries** to the **Henry Moore Institute** contemporary art gallery. Plus Leeds has the longest-running **West Indian Carnival in Europe**. The city also has a plethora of leading universities, schools, world class sport, shops, restaurants and bars. Head out of the city centre and you will find an abundance of picturesque places to visit, from the beauty of **Roundhay Park** to the gardens of **Temple Newsam**.

Leeds City Council have a vision for Leeds to be the best UK city for children and young people to grow up in and has a Green Infrastructure being developed to make Leeds zero carbon by 2030 ensuring the most is made of green spaces and the natural environment to help meet climate change aspirations and improve health and well being.

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

[f](#) [@](#)leedsplayhouse



THE ROLE

The Artistic Director is the creative lead for **Leeds Playhouse**, responsible for setting its overall artistic vision. This includes responsibility for developing, programming and delivering work across Leeds Playhouse's three auditoria (Quarry, Courtyard and Bramall Rock Void) and providing creative oversight of Playhouse Connect, which comprises the Creative Communities and Learning and Skills programmes.

The Artistic Director sets and develops an artistic vision that is pioneering, invigorating and relevant, which brings the public to the Playhouse whether to see a production or otherwise, that brings regular audiences back time after time, entices diverse new audiences into the building and which contributes significantly to the ongoing financial security of the organisation.

The Artistic Director works in close collaboration with the Chief Executive to fulfil the theatre's vision, mission and values. They will ensure that the work reflects the Playhouse's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, that excellence is achieved in all its activities, and that the creative programme takes full account of the artistic, financial and organisational policies agreed with the Board.

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

[!\[\]\(a870788d6ed9b8fd294b7654a8c8526b_img.jpg\)](#) [!\[\]\(18065afa4ef6662bca9f3f6088f7de30_img.jpg\)](#) @leedsplayhouse



STRUCTURE

The Executive structure will change to Chief Executive and Artistic Director from May 2025. The Artistic Director together with the Chief Executive form the Executive Leadership team at Leeds Playhouse. The Artistic Director will report to the Chief Executive, and will establish a strong working relationship with them and with the Board. They will attend Board meetings and be accountable to the Board.

This Executive Leadership team will provide clear and inspirational leadership for the organisation, setting the strategic vision in partnership with the Senior Management Team and the Board, and will be responsible for delivering artistic excellence, business resilience, a culture of inclusivity, the promotion of diversity and long-term stability and sustainability.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

CREATIVE PROGRAMME

Ensure there is always a clear and compelling vision and direction for the Creative Programme, which includes:

- Theatre Programme (produced and presented work).
- Playhouse Connect (Creative Communities and Learning and Skills programmes).
- Develop, programme and deliver a high-quality programme of produced and visiting work across Leeds Playhouse's three auditoria. Working closely with the Senior Management Team, ensure the theatre programme is delivered to the highest standards within available resources and capacity.
- Ensure that the programme has a strong artistic identity, appeals to a broad range of audiences and develops Leeds Playhouse's reputation at a regional, national and international level.
- Deliver a programme that contributes significantly to the ongoing financial security of the organisation.
- Identify and approve guest directors and other creative team members, and ensure that their work is compatible with the organisation's overall artistic and audience development policies aims.
- In conjunction with the Chief Executive, seek co-production partners for the organisation's artistic programme, and develop and maintain active relationships with West End and international producers.
- Determine policy for commissioning new work and oversee dramaturgical input.
- Ensure that the organisation's equal opportunity, diversity and access policies and practices are fully reflected in all aspects of its artistic work.
- Jointly with the Chief Executive and Director of Audiences, approve marketing and press/PR strategies for the organisation and participate personally in giving effect to them as and when appropriate.

- With the Director of Producing and wider teams, manage and ensure due care of all the freelancers, cast and creative team members engaged by Leeds Playhouse.
- Champion and support the strategic direction of Playhouse Connect, both the organisation's Artistic Development (Furnace) and Creative Engagement Programmes, ensuring they continue to be at the heart of Leeds Playhouse's work.
- Depending on the skillset and experience of the Artistic Director and to be agreed on appointment, to direct productions within the Playhouse programme, typically two each year.

BUSINESS MODEL AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Working with the Chief Executive to ensure the Playhouse maintains an ambitious and viable business model and strategy that will allow it to deliver most effectively on its Vision, Mission and Values.
- Work closely with the Chief Executive and Director of Audiences to develop audience development strategies and continually review and improve the customer experience.
- Attend Board and sub-committee meetings.
- Work with the Chief Executive and the Director of Fundraising in developing sponsorship and other fundraising opportunities and to actively participate in entertaining the Playhouse's actual and potential supporters and the delivery of the organisation's fundraising strategy.
- Working with the Chief Executive, in reviewing the organisational structure and capacity as necessary to achieve the Playhouse's artistic and operational objectives.

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Collaborate with the Chief Executive in managing the organisation's relationship with its key funders and specifically Arts Council England, contributing to key funding applications.
- Work collaboratively with the Senior Management Team to ensure the Playhouse holds excellent and effective working relationships with a wide range of key stakeholders and strategic partners, including Arts Council England, Leeds City Council, business partners, sponsors and donors.
- Ensure the Playhouse continues to develop its influence as a key strategic partner and cultural leader locally, regionally and nationally.
- Represent the organisation publicly and attend external events.
- To be an ambassador and spokesperson externally for Leeds Playhouse and in the industry, leading and participating in cultural debate in the media regionally and nationally.
- Develop and maintain Leeds Playhouse's prominent reputation, both artistically and as an organisation, locally, regionally and nationally.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

You will have a proven track record as a theatre artist, with a reputation for artistic excellence.

We are interested in expressions of interest from a wide range of candidates, and are keen to hear how your skills and experience will enable you to fulfil the role. Equally, we will want to discuss with you how we could best support you in this role.

We're open to a range of backgrounds for this role, including for example directing, writing, acting or creative producing.

You'll be a collaborator, a connector and a powerful ambassador for the organisation.

You will be clearly aligned with the mission and values of **Leeds Playhouse**, with a clear commitment to diversity, inclusion and access in your practice.

We envisage that the Artistic Director will direct some of the productions across Leeds Playhouse's auditoria, although we'll also consider exceptional candidates who do not direct.

Given the complex operating structure of **Leeds Playhouse**, we think it likely that you'll have previous experience working in an organisational environment of at least middle scale.

Our Artistic Director will engage with the wider community and agendas relevant to Leeds, will be a visible presence at **Leeds Playhouse** and within the city and you will therefore be keen to be based in Leeds or the wider West Yorkshire region.

This is a full-time role and any proposed external activities would be subject to discussion, but we are open to job share applications or approaches for partnership working.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

- A proven track record as a theatre artist with a reputation for artistic excellence.
- Understanding of the complexities of working in a publicly funded environment of the size and scale of Leeds Playhouse.
- A strong track record of a collaborative approach to leadership and team working.
- Demonstrable experience of successfully executing equity, diversity, access and inclusion at all levels of an organisation.
- A track record of programming which responds to a range of shifting audiences and economic trends.
- Recognised artistic ability and demonstration of the skills to deliver a programme including new writing and successful partnerships and collaborations with others in the funded and commercial sectors.
- Active networks amongst leading and innovative artists who could contribute to the Leeds Playhouse programme.
- An in-depth appreciation and knowledge of current theatre practice in the UK and the wider world.
- A dedication to and breadth of knowledge of audience development.
- A preparedness to practically engage in the delivery of fundraising.
- A demonstrable commitment to being based in Leeds or the wider West Yorkshire Region.

DESIRABLE REQUIREMENTS

- Knowledge and experience of the UK arts funding system and the approach to fundraising from diverse individuals and organisations.
- Excellent communication and public speaking skills both internally and in the wider public arena.
- Knowledge of Arts Council England's Let's Create strategy and Investment Principles.

EMPLOYMENT TERMS SUMMARY

CONTRACT

Full-time, permanent

SALARY

Circa £75,000

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Six months. During the probationary period the notice period will be one month

NOTICE PERIOD

Six months

PENSION

Auto-enrolment in a Standard Life Pension, unless you opt out, with 3% employer contribution

HOLIDAYS

25 days plus Statutory Bank Holidays rising incrementally

BENEFITS

- 2 paid wellbeing days a year
- Free employee assistance service
- Corporate gym and swimming discount
- Inhouse counselling services with a BACP counselling professional on site (by referral)
- Voluntary Cash Health Plan (optional)

RELOCATION

A contribution towards relocation expenses is offered in accordance with our relocation policy

HOW TO APPLY

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

All photographs are copyright
Leeds Playhouse unless otherwise stated.

Cover: *A Rasin In The Sun*, photography by **Ikin Yum**; *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – The Musical*, photography by **Johan Persson**; *Hedwig and Angry Inch*, photography by **The Other Richard**; *My Fair Lady*, photography by **Pamela Raith**; *Macbeth*, photography by **Kirsten McTernan**; *Here You Come Again*, photography by **Hugo Glendinning**; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, photography by **Mark Senior**; *A Little Night Music*, photography by **Tristan Kenton**; *A Passionate Woman*, photography by **Marc Brenner**; *Lord Of the Flies*, photography by **Robling Pix**

Page 2: *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, photography by **Brinkhoff/Mögenburg**; *I Wanna Be Yours*, photography by **Robling Pix**; *In Dreams*, photography by **Pamela Raith**

Page 3: *Oliver!*, photography by **Robling Pix**

Page 4: *Hedwig and Angry Inch*, photography by **The Other Richard**

Page 5: *Leeds City Centre*, Adobe Stock

Page 7: *My Fair Lady*, photography by **Pamela Raith**

Page 15: *Wendy & Peter Pan*, photography by **Marc Brenner**

Page 13: *The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe*, photography by **Brinkhoff/Mögenburg**

Page 14: *The Lives We Carry at Furnace Festival*, photography by **Steffi Njoya**

To explore this exciting opportunity further, and to find out more about the kind of person we are looking for, please contact **Mary Caws**, our Recruitment Consultant at **cawsmary@gmail.com**.

HOW TO APPLY

When you are ready to apply, please send a CV and a letter of application, addressing how your experience matches the role and personal specification, to our Recruitment Consultant **Mary Caws** at **cawsmary@gmail.com**.

The letter of application should be no longer than three sides of A4.

We would also ask that you complete our **Inclusion and Diversity monitoring form** to help us assess this recruitment process. If you experience any difficulties using the form linked above, you can reach the HR&L team using the contact details on the front page of this pack.

The panel will not see information on your Inclusion and Diversity monitoring form.

All applications will be acknowledged.

INTERVIEWS FOR DISABLED CANDIDATES

Leeds Playhouse is a member of the Disability Confident scheme. We will interview candidates who identify as disabled who demonstrate that they meet all the essential criteria for the job. Please tell us if you need any adjustments to participate in the recruitment process regionally and nationally.

If you are a disabled applicant and wish to apply under the Disability Confident scheme, please tell us you are a 'Disability Confident Applicant' in your covering letter.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS

Thursday 23rd January by 5.00pm

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

  **@leedsplayhouse**



THANK YOU

Leeds Theatre Trust Limited Charity No. 255460
VAT No. 545 489017 Company No. 926862 England & Wales.
Registered address: Playhouse Square, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UP

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

  @leedsplayhouse

FIND US AT

Playhouse Square,
Quarry Hill, Leeds LS2 7UP
leedsplayhouse.org.uk
0113 213 7700