



# THEATRE BY THE LAKE



**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
(MATERNITY COVER)  
RECRUITMENT PACK**

**JANUARY 2025**

# THIS IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN EXPERIENCED THEATRE DIRECTOR TO CREATIVELY LEAD OUR ORGANISATION.

They will hold the artistic vision, oversee the current programme, progress work in development and identify opportunities for 2026 and beyond. They will be a committed and collaborative member of the senior management team, who will work with our staff, audiences, communities and partners to ensure TBTL's success.

It is an exciting time for Theatre by the Lake, as we look back on the successes of 2024/25 and make plans to develop our artistic vision over the next few years and beyond. The successful candidate will have a firm foundation from which to start from - in the last two years we have established a new leadership team in Simon Stephens and Liz Stevenson, completed a major rebrand, successfully delivered significant, critically-acclaimed and vision-progressing productions and celebrated our 25th anniversary by reflecting on TBTL's impact to date, whilst looking ahead to the future. We are developing our place-based vision, growing our audiences, strengthening relationships with our local communities and raising the profile of TBTL nationally.

The successful candidate will be a confident and authentic leader, with a comprehensive knowledge of the theatre sector and an enthusiasm for immersing themselves in the organisation and progressing our vision. They will have the resilience, adaptability, creative and collaborative skills to work within the programming constraints of a midscale theatre. Working to the established vision, they will bring their own unique passion, perspective and expertise to the organisation.

Whilst there is no opportunity to direct a production during this engagement due to programming lead times, we hope to develop a lasting relationship with an inspirational artist who aligns with our values and who will add value to the TBTL community during their time with us.

If you would like an informal and confidential conversation about the role prior to applying please let us know by contacting Simon at [simon.stephens@theatrebythelake.com](mailto:simon.stephens@theatrebythelake.com).



Steel, 2024. Photography by Chris Payne

# OUR STORY

At our home in the Lake District and out across Cumbria, we produce and present nationally acclaimed theatre, made with passion, which is seen by audiences from across the globe. Our work is rooted in our location, looking out over the idyllic Derwentwater lake, and aims to be both relevant and accessible to the communities around it. We're a champion of Cumbrian creativity. We believe theatre has the power to transform lives and so create vital opportunities for Cumbrian artists, young people and communities to come together, be inspired and explore their creativity.

At our venue and out across a county which is England's second largest, we strive to make and share great theatre which tells stories, builds communities and celebrates its place. TBTL is Cumbria's only regular producing theatre and its largest Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation. From origins as 'The Blue Box', the theatre was willed into existence by the local community and opened by Dame Judi Dench in 1999. Since then, TBTL has established itself as an integral part of the UK regional theatre network, becoming a major attraction for both Cumbrian residents and visitors to the Lake District.

The theatre has a flexible Main House with 400 seats. It also operates a 100-seat Studio, allowing for events of all shapes and sizes. Together, these host almost 400 performances each year. We also generate income from an adjacent and beautifully situated café, enhancing the experience for audiences and visitors, helping to support our long-term resilience and supporting our important role as one of the major tourist attractions in the Lake District.

## The Guardian



“a production alive with movement and community spirit”  
(Brassed Off, 2024)

## The Stage



“Beautiful and breath-stopping”  
(Steel, 2024)



Brassed Off, 2024. Photography by Pamela Raith



Little Shop of Horrors, 2024. Photography by Pamela Raith

## ABOUT US

**Our Vision** (the big idea that our brand delivers on)

Theatre enriches the lives of everyone in Cumbria, and theatre made in Cumbria is celebrated on the national stage.

**Brand Promise** (what audiences get from us)

Come together and experience the power of live theatre in an extraordinary place.

**Brand Belief** (what we believe)

We believe theatre transforms lives, creates communities and helps us to understand our place in the world.

**Personality** (our unique personality and cut-through attitude)

We're brimming with imagination. Our enthusiasm is infectious. We want you to be a part of it.

**Essence** (felt through every brand expression and experience)

Theatre made with passion in an extraordinary place.

# THEATRE BY THE LAKE IN NUMBERS

## In the past year...

- 72,000 people came to see 380 performances over 67 shows
- 187 volunteers donated 9,400 hours (almost an entire year) of their time to the theatre
- Theatre by the Lake productions toured to London, Bolton, Hull, Ipswich, Scarborough and Windsor
- Pupils from 104 schools came to see a show at Theatre by the Lake
- 60 young people took part in week-long masterclasses during the summer holidays
- Our world premiere of **Steel** toured to communities in Maryport, Egremont, Millom, Carlisle and Workington following its run here in Keswick
- Our Give the Gift of Theatre at Christmas campaign brought 250 people who would not otherwise be able to attend to see our 2023 Christmas show **A Little Princess**
- 17 Cumbrian artists were supported with opportunities to connect, develop and perform as part of our inaugural **CumbriaFest**
- 28 young people formed our new youth theatre, **Company 25**, learning about all aspects of theatre-making
- 37 people from West Cumbrian communities formed the Steel Choir and co-created an original song to feature in the show
- We supported Cumbrian artists with 600 hours of free research and development space
- We were nominated for Best Community Project at the 2024 Stage Awards for our production of **Every Brilliant Thing**
- 15 young people joined us for ProjX work experience week
- 6 local Secondary Schools joined our new Schools Partnership Scheme, starting with a teachers day and a visit to see **Romeo and Juliet**



A Little Princess, 2023. Photography by The Other Richards

# JOB SPECIFICATION

## LEADERSHIP

Provide artistic leadership for the TBTL staff team, working closely with the Executive Director to implement and develop our artistic vision and strategic aims.

Oversee and contribute to TBTL's artistic programme in and beyond the building.

Identify, foster and maintain relationships with current and potential creative partners.

Lead on contemporary theatre practice across the theatre's artistic activities and advise colleagues and trustees of trends, development and opportunities.

Lead on ensuring that all activity across our programme meets our artistic aims.

Work alongside the Producer to ensure all productions and projects are delivered on time and meet our strategic aims.

Lead, manage and engage staff and freelance creative practitioners across the theatre to foster a culture of shared ownership of TBTL's artistic work.

Provide artistic and pastoral support to companies and work with the TBTL staff team to respond to any issues during performance runs.

Ensure the effective evaluation of TBTL's work in order to report to the Board and stakeholders and guide future activity, fostering a culture of shared learning and improvement.

Ensure the artistic quality of TBTL's work.

Attend rehearsal runs, previews and/or press nights as appropriate.

Oversee and contribute to the creative process for TBTL productions, providing artistic and pastoral support to the creative team as required. This will include but is not limited to attending design meetings, noting rehearsals and previews, attending press nights at TBTL and at co-producing venues.

Line Management of the Community Engagement Manager.

Act as part of the Senior Management Team with shared companywide strategic and operational responsibility, contributing to weekly SMT meetings and to contribute to the positive working culture of TBTL.

To represent TBTL at cultural events and to contribute to the Cumbrian cultural community as required by the Executive.

Work with the Producer and Community Engagement Manager to inform and oversee the management of the artistic budget.

To explore, identify and develop production ideas for the 2026 and 2027 programme.

## ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT AND NEW WRITING

Work closely with the Producer to deliver and develop the artist development offer for 2025-2027, ensuring it aligns with TBTL's artistic aims and is accessible and relevant to local and

under-represented communities.

To be the lead creative on Cumbriafest 2025, working closely with the artistic team to deliver impactful development opportunities for local artists.

To lead on the delivery of the third and final year of Tour the Writer, our writer development programme in partnership with Paines Plough, providing dramaturgical support to local writers.

To develop our network of creatives and lead on the appointment of creative teams.

To develop relationships with playwrights and agents.

To provide dramaturgical support to the Artistic Director (Joint CEO) and playwrights under commission as we develop productions for 2026-2027.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To provide effective leadership of the Community Engagement Manager, supporting them to deliver the community engagement plan for 2025/6 and 2026/7, ensuring it is delivered on time and meets TBTL's artistic aims.

To oversee and support the delivery of Company 25's (TBTL's youth theatre for 14-18 year olds) performance outcomes August-October 2025.

To support the Community Engagement Manager to deliver activity as necessary. This might include but is not limited to: delivering Q&As, workshops, meeting community partners and participants.

## GOVERNANCE

To write quarterly board reports with the support of the Senior Management Team.

To attend and contribute to quarterly board meetings with the Executive Director (Joint CEO), Head of Finance and Operations and with the Artistic Director (Joint CEO) in observance.

To attend Board subcommittees as required.

## OTHER DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Undertake any other duties that may be reasonably required in connection with the position, as a member of a small and collaborative organisation.

Act as a representative and advocate of Theatre by the Lake.

Engage with internal communications and stay abreast of organisational updates and developments.

Support and uphold Theatre by the Lake's commitment to inclusivity and sustainability.

Adhere to Theatre by the Lake's Safeguarding Policy including the reporting of any issues of concern in accordance with procedure.

## DBS CERTIFICATE

You will be required to hold a basic DBS Certificate in this role. This will be subject to regular review by Theatre by the Lake in line with our Safeguarding policy.

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

A description of the traits, skills and knowledge that the person performing this role should possess.

## ESSENTIAL

Exceptional leadership skills and ability to articulate and galvanise others behind our artistic vision and activity.

Strong project management and organisation skills.

Established theatre director with a minimum of 3 years' experience directing professional theatre, with a strong understanding of the creative and production process.

Excellent working knowledge of the contemporary theatre sector and an established industry network.

Ability to manage concurrent projects to tight deadlines, with a calm and focused approach under pressure.

The skill to balance innovation and creative flair with the need for financial probity and commercial awareness.

Collaborative, conscientious and a skilled relationship builder.

Excellent verbal and written communication skills, with a proven ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders.

Ability to hold and manage difficult conversations with confidence.

Dramaturgical experience of developing new commissions and working collaboratively with writers and playwrights.

Passion for and experience of supporting emerging artists and developing new work.

A passion for engaging a diverse range of communities in the arts.

Demonstrable ability to provide artistic and pastoral support to artists, with experience of giving constructive and respectful notes and supporting pre-production processes, rehearsals, and technical rehearsals and previews.

IT and administrative skills relevant to the post's requirements (Microsoft Office).

Commitment to inclusive practice.

Demonstrable alignment with Theatre by the Lake's culture and values.

A flexible approach to working hours including occasional evenings and weekends to suit the requirements of the business.

## DESIRABLE

Experience of working in a leadership and/or senior management role in the arts sector.

A knowledge of and enthusiasm for Theatre by the Lake's work.

Experience of venue-based producing and programming.

Understanding of the social landscape in Cumbria.

Experience of partnership working such as co-productions, touring and transfers.

Line-management experience.

Knowledge and experience of the UK arts funding system.

## RESPONSIBLE TO

Executive Director (Joint CEO)

## RESPONSIBLE FOR

Community Engagement Manager



The Jungle Book, Photography by Pamela Raith

# TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Salary: £40,000
- Relocation fee: £2,000
- Start date: Mon 28 April 2025
- 40 hours per week
- 31 days leave pa plus Christmas Day (this allocation includes public holidays)
- Fixed term (Maternity Cover). Whilst we are unable to confirm the exact end date of the fixed term, we expect that this will be for a period of up to 12 months
- 5% employee pension contribution and 3% employer pension contribution
- Full terms & conditions will be available with the contract

## LOCATION

Given the strategic significance of this role, and the degree to which it is venue-based, it is our expectation that the Artistic Director (Maternity Cover) will be resident in Cumbria/Keswick for the duration of the contract. However, we acknowledge a level of flexible working may be necessary to accommodate existing freelance engagements.

## HOW TO APPLY

If you think that this is the next role for you and you have the skills and experience we're looking for, then please send your CV with a covering letter explaining how you meet the criteria and why you are interested in/want to apply for the role. Please also summarise any existing work commitments during the term of this contract, along with a completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, to [jobs@theatrebythelake.com](mailto:jobs@theatrebythelake.com)

We're committed to diversity and creating an accessible recruitment process. So, whilst we're taking applications by CV, if this process doesn't work for you then please let us know and we'll happily consider an alternative such as a video application. You can contact us at [jobs@theatrebylake.com](mailto:jobs@theatrebylake.com) to discuss.

## CLOSING DATE

Monday 10 March 2025

## INTERVIEWS

Candidates who meet the criteria will be asked to attend an initial online interview on Friday 14 March.

Successful candidates will be called back for a second in-person interview in Keswick on Friday 21 March.



 017687 74411

 THEATREBYTHELAKE.COM

LAKESIDE, KESWICK, CUMBRIA, CA12 5DJ

     TBTLAKE

Cumbria Theatre Trust is a Company Limited by Guarantee.  
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Supporting the arts in Cumbria  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Keswick**  
Town Council