

PENTABUS

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT PACK

December 2020

SUMMARY:

Pentabus is looking for a visionary Artistic Director and joint Chief Executive, to lead and develop the company's artistic vision, ensuring that we continue to create world-class theatre which champions the rural world, engages with our communities and responds inspirationally to the Arts Council's new ten year strategy.

We are committed to reflecting the diversity of the UK across all aspects of the company and its work. We are currently under represented in our staff team by Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, as well as those who identify as D/deaf and disabled. We are committed to addressing this under representation, and actively encourage applicants from these backgrounds. We operate an inclusive recruitment process. If you have any particular requirements which will support your application, please let us know at any point during the process.

About Pentabus

'One of the most important theatre companies in the country' The Daily Telegraph

Pentabus is the nation's rural theatre company. We tour new plays about the contemporary rural world to new audiences in village halls, fields, festivals and theatres, telling stories with local relevance, plus national and international impact. We believe that every person living in an isolated rural community has a right to exceptional theatre. We are based in a Victorian school in rural Shropshire, and to date all of our work has been made here. It then tours village halls and theatres locally and nationally. Over four and a half decades we've produced 172 new plays, reached over half a million audience members, won a prestigious South Bank Show award for our show about racism, a Fringe First for our play about climate change and were the first to live stream from a village hall. We have hosted a writer in residence since 2014. Previous Writers in Residence have gone on to be commissioned by the Royal Court, Birmingham Rep, Royal Welsh College, the Bush, HighTide and Nottingham Playhouse.

We are a champion for rural young people aged 16 to 25 and Pentabus Young Company is our initiative offering workshops, masterclasses, work experience and mentorships, as well as the opportunity to join our Young Writers' Group, which has been running for seven years. Previous participants of the Young Writers' Group have had their work presented at Ludlow Fringe, Latitude Festival and Hereford Courtyard. It is a springboard into further study and the arts industry, with over 50% of Young Writers in the first four years of the programme going on to be published and professional writers or to study an arts subject at university.

In the past four years we have made work by, with and for isolated and forgotten rural communities from Cornwall to Cumbria, engaging directly with communities of place and interest to tell their stories.

We are developing a strong digital offer, having live captured nearly all our touring productions over the past few years, which we were able to release for free during the first lockdown in 2020. We also create digitally native projects, which we have continued during the Covid-19 pandemic, collaborating with Paines Plough and Culture Central to commission freelance artists to create new digital work.

Local, national and international collaborations are key to our artistic and financial strategy. We have partnered with a wide range of organisations to create work including Creative Arts East, Cheltenham Everyman, the Local Group, New Perspectives, Paines Plough and Salisbury Playhouse. And currently with Arts Alive, Theatre by the Lake and Unlimited.

You will find details of our previous and current productions on our website. Upcoming projects include a co-commission with Unlimited for a new rural touring project for a Disabled Artist/s to be developed for 2022; live performances of the *Come To Where I Am* digital commissions with Paines Plough; a collaborative new writing commission with Arts Alive Rural Touring Scheme working alongside local village hall promoters and up to four short outdoor COVID-safe new plays written by Emma Dennis-Edwards, Tim Foley, Matt Hartley and Tabby Lamb.

Staff

Our Staff Team are an experienced and close-knit group of arts professionals, all based locally. The company has 6 staff members: the Artistic Director and Executive Director who are the co-Chief Executives, a Producer, an Audiences and Engagement Manager and a Development Manager and a part-time freelance Bookkeeper. Our Writer In Residence is a core member of the staff team, and we also have two volunteers who work with us regularly.

Location

Pentabus is based at Bromfield, two miles north of Ludlow in Shropshire. Our Victorian Schoolhouse building is set in farmland on the Earl of Plymouth's estate. It includes a 6x12m rehearsal and performance space, a workshop for set-building, storage for our touring technical kit and props/costumes, offices and outside working space. Our rural location means that public transport is limited. There are mainline train services from Ludlow.

Diversity and equality

Pentabus recognise that artistic excellence relies on the richness and innovation that diversity brings. Based in an area of social deprivation and poor accessibility, and touring to often isolated rural communities, we have a particular responsibility to target certain areas of inequality where we know we can have an impact.

We have a responsibility to ensure that our workforce is representative of contemporary Britain. We have a long term commitment to change in our organisation and across the arts, and as such are developing an anti-racist policy and touring riders, alongside access riders for all our touring productions.

Financial information

We are a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council of England. In the last few years the company has secured funding from major Trusts and Foundations including Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Garfield Weston and the Millichope Foundation all offering continued support towards our ambitious vision. In addition, we earn income through ticket sales, partnerships, individual donations, Friends memberships and business support.

Application process

Please complete the application cover sheet and equal opportunities monitoring form and send them, along with a CV and a letter of application both of which are no more than 3 pages long, detailing your reasons for applying for the role and the vision, skills and experience that you would bring to the company.

Both individual and joint applications will be accepted, although the salary will remain the same. If applying jointly please outline how you would share the role.

Salary: circa £30,000

The deadline for applications is **Monday 4 January 2021 at 10am** and all applications should be sent to catrin@pentabus.co.uk

First interviews will be held on **Tue 12 January 2021** (via Zoom)

Second interviews will be held on **Tue 19 January 2021** (location & format tbc)

It is expected that candidates visit Pentabus to get a real understanding of our rural location, COVID guidelines permitting. We have a number of available dates that someone can meet you at our base if you would like to travel (safely) to Bromfield in advance of your application.

If applicants would like an informal discussion prior to submitting an application please email catrin@pentabus.co.uk to arrange a time to speak to our current Artistic Director Sophie Motley, Executive Director Catrin John, or Chair of the Board Ros Robins.

Job description: Artistic Director

Main purpose of role: As joint Chief Executive, the Artistic Director will provide artistic leadership for Pentabus, working closely with the Executive Director to develop and deliver the artistic programme alongside our Business Plan.

Reports to: The Board

Line Management: Leadership and line management of creative and production teams in close collaboration with the Producer and supervision of core, freelance and short-contract staff when required.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategy: to imagine, articulate, develop, create and lead the artistic vision in line with the organisation's mission statement and the objectives of the Business Plan, within the resources available:

- invent and deliver a varied and responsive artistic programme which reflects the artistic vision.
- creatively respond to the Arts Council's Let's Create 10 year strategy, developing work which is both actively engaging with the artistic vision, and the Arts Council's vision of creativity for all.
- work with the Audiences and Engagement Manager, creating work in response to relationships with new audiences across the rural world.
- create and maintain partnerships with local, national and international co-producers and other artistic collaborators where appropriate
- in collaboration with the Development Manager and Executive Director, to develop and maintain relationships with funders and key stakeholders, keeping them informed of artistic and strategic plans
- be immersed in the wider theatre industry beyond rural touring, enabling Pentabus to be sector leaders nationally as well as locally and rurally.
- be excited by and engage with the rural agenda regionally and nationally.
- facilitate Pentabus to be sector leaders in terms of access, diversity and inclusion across all creative projects and the artistic vision and ethos of the company.

Artistic & Production Activity: Create an artistic programme which responds to the strategic aims of the company and responds to rural issues:

- plan and deliver the artistic programme working with the staff team capacity, timescales and financial resources.
- work with the Producer assemble high quality artistic teams capable of reacting to the scale of the company's touring aims - ie actors, theatre makers, designers, makers, directors, composers, workshop leaders and production staff
- direct brilliant, innovative and responsive work for rural touring, non-theatre spaces, and studio theatres
- develop, diversify and continue to rethink the digital artistic output in order to reach the widest audience in the most appropriate form for the work

- nurture relationships with established writers, designers and theatremakers and develop work with new collaborators and emerging artists
- oversee all productions to the highest possible standards within agreed budgets
- liaise with the Producer and company on tour as appropriate
- work with the Audiences and Engagement Manager to develop and oversee delivery of Pentabus Young Company and Young Writers' programmes,
- work with the Audiences and Engagement Manager to lead or oversee socially engaged and community responsive projects as appropriate
- appoint Associate Artists and nurture mutually beneficial artistic relationships with a broad range of artists at all stages of their careers

Joint responsibility with the Executive Director to:

Marketing & Audience Development:

- alongside the staff team, to lead the Audience Development and Marketing Strategies which support the company's Business Plan
- promote and advocate for the company locally, nationally and internationally and develop relations with companies, venues and individuals
- feeding into the marketing strategy in terms of the needs and audience development aims for engaging with communities with little or no engagement with the arts and / or with high levels of socio-economic deprivation
- develop relationships with rural audiences, village hall promoters and rural touring schemes, feeding their needs into the artistic vision
- monitor and develop the company's brand
- act as the key company spokesperson for the media, championing the arts, theatre, and rural issues
- be an ambassador for the company and its work

Management & Administration:

- implement and review, with Board input, the company's Business Plan
- lead, motivate and collaborate on the day-to-day running of the organisation
- encourage effective communication between members of the core team and freelance staff
- on occasion, provide line management support to the core staff team

Finance & Fundraising: securing the financial stability and long-term future of the company:

- develop and monitor annual budgets and management accounts
- develop and monitor production/project budgets in collaboration with the Producer
- liaise with the Company's current funders and other potential sources of financial support
- play an active role in securing funding, including seeking out potential partners and writing funding applications
- initiate and develop new income generation streams alongside the Development Manager

- inspire new funders with the artistic and community responsive vision of the company

Governance:

- assist in the scheduling of Board business and attend all regularly constituted Board meetings (and sub committee meetings as required)
- provide the Board with accurate and timely information to enable appropriate decisions to be made on matters of policy, planning and budgeting
- ensure that the company conforms to all financial, legal, statutory and contractual requirements and develop appropriate policies and procedures to promote best practice

Human Resources:

- contribute to the company's HR policies and procedures
- agree job descriptions, interview applicants and appoint core staff
- recruit all actors, writers, theatre makers and creative teams in the main artistic programme
- oversee recruitment of artistic teams for Young Company and Engagement activity as appropriate
- ensure the Equalities Policies are adhered to for all recruitment and casting
- ensure the Environmental Policy is adhered to in all productions and activities
- take an active role in ensuring the health, safety and welfare of staff
- apply all legislative requirements to company work practices

Equalities Policies: ensure the company's work reflects its commitment to equality of access and practice:

- update and implement the Equality Policies and Action Plans examining all artistic and strategic decisions through an equalities prism
- ensure that the company fully complies with the Equality Act 2010
- ensure that the company adopts the principles and actions in Culture Central's More than a Moment pledge in to all areas of activity
- work with partners to help achieve the company's equality goals
- ensure that the company Equalities Policies are adhered to for all recruitment and casting

Person specification: Artistic Director

EXPERIENCE

Essential

A successful and clear track record of:

- creating ambitious and challenging new work for theatre
- commissioning writers and theatremakers, and the dramaturgical process
- artistic leadership from origination to final performance
- collaboration and co-production
- developing and nurturing artistic networks
- understanding of the demands of small and mid-scale touring
- leading and inspiring teams of people
- budget management

Desirable

Experience/understanding of:

- making work by, with and for communities of place and interest
- leading and developing an artistic vision within a viable financial framework
- directing and producing work for rural touring
- making work for a variety of spaces, locations and audiences
- arts funding including writing fundraising bids for public, private and Trust funding
- working with emerging artists
- equalities policies and practice
- audience development policies and practice

PERSONAL QUALITIES

The successful candidate will be:

- Able to communicate with anyone, from participant to funder, in speech and written word. And able to represent and advocate for the company at all levels.
- A self-starter, creative thinker – able to motivate and lead a team
- Aware of the importance of the needs of the organisation above and beyond the personal artistic vision
- A collaborative person, able to engage with community members, artists, co-producers and presenters
- Stimulated by art at a local as well as national level
- Excited by the countryside, its issues and its people
- Able to work under pressure through difficult and busy periods
- Committed to the rural context of Pentabus
- Happy to work antisocial and flexible hours when necessary
- Comprehensive administrative and IT skills
- A driver