



The Nation's Rural Theatre Company

MEDIA ALERT

Date: 11 Feb 2021

## Pentabus Announce New Artistic Director Elle While

The Pentabus Board of trustees are pleased to announce the appointment of Elle While as the new Artistic Director of the company. Elle will succeed Sophie Motley who, after four years, leaves the company in February 2021 to become the Artistic Director of The Everyman in Cork.

Elle grew up in rural Herefordshire and has recently moved back to Hereford. She is an Associate Artist at Shakespeare's Globe, where she directed *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*. She was also the revival director for the West End production (Gielgud 2015-17), UK and international tour of the award-winning production, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Her most recent directing work includes *Private Peaceful* at Nottingham Playhouse, which was postponed due to the pandemic and *Blue Stockings* at Storyhouse Chester. She developed and directed the award-winning production of *Glory Dazed* which played at Edinburgh and Adelaide festivals before transferring to the Soho Theatre. She has worked prolifically as an associate and assistant director with directors including Lucy Bailey, Marianne Elliott, Nancy Meckler, Ian Rickson, Thea Sharrock and Alex Timbers in the West End and at the RSC, The Old Vic, the National Theatre and the Young Vic.

Pentabus Chair, Ros Robins said: *'The Board of Pentabus is delighted to announce the appointment of Elle While as Artistic Director of Pentabus. Elle comes with a strong pedigree of directing plays in theatres across the UK and with a commitment to developing work with some of the country's leading playwrights. She will continue the company's recent tradition of employing highly talented female Artistic Directors and we are confident she will build on Sophie Motley's legacy and the achievements of Pentabus over nearly 50 years as the country's rural theatre company - telling stories of the countryside in towns and villages across the UK.'*

Elle While said: *'I am delighted to be joining Pentabus, working with the fantastic team to take the company into its next chapter at this extraordinary time. As a child growing up in rural Herefordshire Pentabus was the theatre company that made me realise that theatre really is for everyone. I am so excited for the future of the company and look forward to collaborating with some of the country's leading artists to bring world-class theatre experiences to communities throughout the UK.'*

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### Notes to Editors

Pentabus is the nation's rural theatre company. We are the only professional theatre company in the UK whose vision is singularly rural. 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, a Fringe First and were the first to live stream from a village hall. We have hosted a writer in residence since 2014 and they have gone on to be commissioned by the Royal Court, Birmingham Rep, Royal Welsh College, Nottingham Playhouse, HighTide and the Bush.

We are a champion for rural young people aged 16 to 25 and Pentabus Young Company is our programme 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.

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