



The Nation's Rural Theatre Company

MEDIA ALERT
Date: 30 Nov 2020

Pentabus Artistic Director to Step Down to Take up New Position at The Everyman, Cork

Pentabus announced today that Artistic Director Sophie Motley will step down from her role in February 2021 to take up the position of Artistic Director at The Everyman, Cork.

Sophie joined Pentabus in 2016, embedding it as the nation's rural theatre company. Over her four years with the company she has directed the company's touring productions, Young Writers' productions and commissioned new plays from Robert Alan Evans, Emma Dennis Edwards, Tim Foley, Lorna French, Matt Hartley, Deirdre Kinahan and Tabby Lamb. She has also established new programmes of work for young people and emerging rural theatre artists, plus developed and implemented a new strand of work, made by, with and for isolated rural communities across the UK. The first of these productions, *One Side Lies the Sea*, made with coastal rural communities in West Cumbria, East Yorkshire and Cornwall, was due to be premiered in March 2020 before the initial Covid-19 lockdown.

Sophie said: 'Whilst I'm excited about new opportunities at The Everyman in the midst of the pandemic, I am incredibly sad to leave a company that I have been privileged to be a steward of. Pentabus has a place in every artist and audience member's heart, for challenging perceived norms of the rural experience, creating excellent work with artists who would usually be seen on our national stages, and for just telling plain brilliant stories. I'm proud to be a part of those stories. I've loved every minute of putting up tents at agricultural shows, talking to audience members before, during and after performances, the joy of village hall theatre which is, to me, more important than any form of theatre, and working with the fantastic team at Pentabus. It is with a heavy heart that I leave South Shropshire, where I was reared, but it is time to learn new things, and I look forwards to coming back and seeing the work that Pentabus will continue to make by, with and for rural people.'

Ros Robins, Chair of Pentabus Board said: 'It is with great sadness that we announce the departure of Sophie from Pentabus. Sophie has brought great passion and vision to her leadership of the company over the past four years. She has introduced Pentabus to new writers, created more exciting opportunities for young people and has introduced the work of Pentabus to rural communities and audiences across the UK. Her artistic leadership has been informed by a real understanding of and empathy for the lives and people living in rural areas and we shall miss her enormously. We are however delighted that she has the opportunity to join The Everyman in Cork as their Artistic Director and wish her all the best in this exciting future role... whilst hoping that one day she may return to Shropshire!'

Pentabus will be recruiting a new Artistic Director and the application process will open later this week.

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Notes to Editors

About Pentabus:

'one of the most important theatre companies in the country, where it has led, other new writing theatres – such as the Royal Court – have followed' The Telegraph

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 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.

Pentabus.co.uk | Youtube: PentabusTheatre | Instagram: Pentabustheatrecompany
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Pentabus would like to thank all our supporters including:



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