Academy Producer and Director - Fixed Term

Recruitment Pack

May 2019
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Academy Director and Producer

Thank you for your interest in the role of Academy Director and Producer at the Octagon Theatre Bolton. This is a fixed term position until August 2021.

With our new Artistic Director Lotte Wakeham in post and our £10m capital project due to complete in 2020, this is an exciting time to join our thriving Creative Engagement department. Each year The Octagon delivers over 12,000 participations, working with people of all ages from across Bolton. From our thriving youth theatre to our commitment to refugees and asylum seekers as a Theatre of Sanctuary, we strive to make the Octagon a theatre for everyone.

This is an exciting opportunity to lead on our Academy programme which aims to raise the aspirations and confidence of young people (age 13-21) who have not previously accessed theatre, often as a result of challenging circumstances. Now in its 7th year of delivery the Academy supports young people to create all aspects of a theatre production which is then toured to schools and community groups.

We are looking for a creative, inspiring and highly personable individual to join our Creative Engagement team. You will be an experienced facilitator, confident in directing theatre productions in collaboration with young people with range of different needs. As the Producer of the project, you will have a good project management and organisational skills, confident in undertaking tasks including budget management, developing partnerships, evaluation and report writing. Importantly you will share our commitment to excellence, diversity and inclusion in the arts.

In this pack you will find the job description and person specification, as well as guidance on the process, terms and conditions, and background information. You can also get further information about the Octagon on our website www.octagonbolton.co.uk and a copy of our most recent annual report www.octagonbolton.co.uk/annual-report

The Octagon is an employer that is passionate about equal opportunities and diversity. We warmly welcome applications from all sectors of the community.

I hope that you enjoy finding out more about this opportunity. The closing date for applications is noon on Friday 21 June. Good luck with your application.

Kind regards,

Roddy Gauld
Chief Executive
JOB DESCRIPTION

Role: Academy Director and Producer

Responsible to: Head of Creative Engagement

Responsible for Support Workers and Volunteers

PURPOSE OF POSITION:
To be responsible for all aspects of the management and successful delivery of the Academy, including directing a theatre production with young people and producing a tour of their work each year.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE
The Academy Director and Producer is managed by the Head of Creative Engagement and is part of the Creative Engagement Department. The Academy Director and Producer works collaboratively across the organisation, particularly with our Production department to ensure that our participation work is high quality, inclusive and enables participants to thrive.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Producing
- Plan and coordinate the delivery of Academy workshops, including weekly workshops, intensives and the Academy’s annual residential trip.
- Identify and engage external creatives along with Octagon staff in the facilitation of workshops, ensuring participants get a varied and high quality experience of theatre.
- Manage the recruitment of participants onto the Academy, including the delivery of outreach workshops.
- Maintain strong relationships with project partners, including Bolton Young Offending Team, and build new partnerships to ensure effective recruitment of participants age 13-21.
- Manage the scheduling of room/space requirements and equipment.
- Work with the Communications department to ensure the Academy is adequately communicated to participants and stakeholders – in print, online and through media – and when necessary, write copy and content for project communications.
- Manage successful completion of Arts Award and ASDAN qualifications.
- Develop a programme of mentoring, training and activity for Peer Mentors to support the development of their leadership skills.
- Manage Support Workers and Freelance Facilitators along with Volunteers and Work Experience Placements.
- Effectively manage the project budget.
- Ensure that the project outcomes are met, and collect appropriate data and evaluation materials to evidence outcomes.
- Work with the Development department to prepare reports, visits and applications for external stakeholders and funders.
• Manage any administrative duties associated with the role, in partnership with the Creative Engagement Administrator.

Directing
• Lead engaging, high quality and enjoyable weekly sessions and rehearsal processes that are suitable for participants with a range of backgrounds and needs.
• Ensure a positive and supportive environment where young people can thrive and reach their full potential.
• Each year direct a high quality, engaging production with and for young people.
• Ensure all participants and Peer Mentors have an active role in the project to meet their needs and interests, this might include writing, lighting, sound and stage management along with acting roles.
• Embedding data collection and ongoing evaluation into session delivery.
• Identify external creatives and collaborators to inspire young people, raise aspirations and inform the development of their theatre production.
• Embed relevant theatre trips into the programme of activity.
• To ensure safe delivery of sessions, regularly review and write risk assessments, and have the highest regard for safeguarding.
• Embed the delivery of Bronze and Silver Arts Awards within sessions along with ASDAN employability qualifications.

General
• To be an active member of the Creative Engagement Department, regularly attending team meetings and contributing to the overall strategy and vision for the department.
• Contribute to a culture of evaluation and continuous improvement, including peer learning and internal evaluations.
• Maintain a working knowledge of regional and national practice in arts engagement.
• From time to time you may be asked to lead workshops with students about your role at the Theatre; sharing your expertise and offering an insight into the methodologies you call upon in your day to day working life. These sessions will predominantly be with Higher and Further Education students facilitated by lecturers.
• Work in the best interests of the Octagon and in accordance with company policies including health and safety, safeguarding, data projection and IT; and ensure all creative engagement activities are planned in line with company policy too.
• Be an effective representative of the Octagon in all situations, demonstrating the highest level of customer care and promoting the theatre’s work and fundraising.

The main duties and responsibilities are indicative and not exhaustive. Other duties may be necessary to fulfil the purpose of the post. This job description may be periodically reviewed and revised in consultation with the post holder.
## PERSON SPECIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential experience</th>
<th>Desirable experience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Experience of directing productions in collaboration with young people.</td>
<td>• Experience of delivering Arts Awards and other qualifications with young people.</td>
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<td>• Experience of planning and leading workshops with young people from disadvantaged/Challenging backgrounds.</td>
<td>• Experience of working in a producing theatre.</td>
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<td>• Experience of mentoring/supporting young people to develop a wide range of skills.</td>
<td>• Experience of working with young people with disabilities and additional needs.</td>
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<td>• Experience of producing and managing projects for young people.</td>
<td>• Experience of booking and managing small-scale tours in community venues.</td>
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<td>• Experience of managing project budgets.</td>
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<td>• Experience of managing and building relationships with project partners.</td>
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## Essential skills and abilities

| Ability to encourage, motivate and inspire young people.                                |                                                                                       |
| Ability to create a safe and inclusive environment for young people from diverse backgrounds and with various needs. |                                                                                       |
| Self-reliant with the ability to work on own initiative, prioritise and organise workload, and meet deadlines. |                                                                                       |
| Excellent team working and collaborative skills with the ability to relate to and work with a range of people to achieve success. |                                                                                       |
| Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal with a wide range of people.   |                                                                                       |
| Ability to problem solve, apply creative solutions, be resourceful and ‘make things happen’. |                                                                                       |
| Strong computer literacy and confidence in using the Microsoft Office suite.           |                                                                                       |
| Passionate about creating opportunities for people to take part in the arts.           |                                                                                       |
| A demonstrable commitment to inclusion and diversity.                                  |                                                                                       |
| An ability and willingness to work **Monday evenings** and occasional weekends.        |                                                                                       |

## Essential knowledge and understanding

| Knowledge of current practice in arts engagement.                                     |                                                                                       |
| Knowledge of current practice and thinking on diversity in arts engagement.           |                                                                                       |
| Understanding of using drama and theatre to achieve a broad range of outcomes and transferrable skills. |                                                                                       |
| A good working knowledge of safeguarding practice and procedures.                     |                                                                                       |

| Good knowledge of Bolton and the surrounding communities.                             |                                                                                       |
| Knowledge and understanding of Arts Award and ASDAN qualifications.                  |                                                                                       |
TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This is a summary of the terms and conditions.

Grade: 4

Salary: £18,495 - £22,000 (pro-rata, 16 hours per week)

Pension: The company operates an auto-enrolment pension scheme through NOW:Pensions in line with current government legislation.

Contract: 2 years fixed term, until August 2021

Hours: 16 hours per week. No overtime is payable, but time off in lieu for excess working hours may be agreed with the line manager. There will be regular Monday evening hours, with occasional weekends and overnight stays away.

Holiday Entitlement: 28 days per annum, pro rata (inclusive of Public Holidays), increasing by 1 day per annum to a maximum of 33 after 12 months service on 1 September.

Place of work: Mainly at the Octagon Theatre Bolton, but this post will require some regional and national travel.

The Octagon offers a range of other employee benefits including:
- A commitment to flexible working where possible
- UK Healthcare cashback scheme (as applicable)
- Loans for season tickets, bicycles and parking costs (as available)
- Complimentary tickets
- Staff café discount

There will be a six month probationary period. Any offer of employment will be subject to the receipt of:
- References that are satisfactory to the Octagon
- Evidence of the right to work in the UK as defined by the Home Office
- A valid Enhanced DBS check when working with young people

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Applications should be submitted to recruitment@octagonbolton.co.uk no later than noon on Friday 21 June 2019. Applications should be made using the application form provided. **CVs will not be accepted.** We would be grateful if you would also return the Equal Opportunities monitoring form. We cannot accept applications received after the deadline.
If you require the application materials in a different format or have any other access requirements, please contact Rebecca Coombes via either recruitment@octagonbolton.co.uk or telephone 01204 529407.

Interviews are provisionally scheduled to take place on Tuesday 2nd July at the Wellsprings building adjacent to the Octagon Theatre Bolton. The interview process will include an evening practical session with young people.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Octagon Story
Stories are at the heart of everything we do at the Octagon – from telling some of the greatest stories ever written on our stages to encouraging the young people we work with to tell stories of their own.

We are a theatre situated in the heart of Bolton and believe in reaching out to all of the communities that surround us, and we strive to bring wonderful theatrical experiences to the people of Bolton and beyond. We lovingly bring stories to life on our stages designed to make you laugh, cry and sit on the edge of your seat. Over the course of a year, you might see a comedy or two, a brand new play, a musical, thought-provoking drama, a historical retelling and more.

Off our stages, we help nurture and develop stories of others. Through our work in the communities from our storytelling sessions for under 5s to our drama group for over 50s we believe everyone should have the opportunity to be creative.

At nearly 50 years old we were the first theatre to be built in the North West since World War One. Beginning as the brainchild of a university lecturer and a group of students to build a theatre for the people of Bolton, the Octagon was going to be a little bit different from the usual. With amazing support from the local government, and the people of Bolton who helped raise funds brick by brick, our building was officially opened on 27 November 1967 by HRH Princess Margaret and we opened our doors for the very first time to begin our long journey of telling wonderful stories to the people of Bolton and beyond.

The first story on our stage was Annie And Fanny by Bolton playwright Bill Naughton. A new play written by a local playwright – this was an exciting start to the proud tradition we have held strong for 50 years of supporting new and local writing. New writing has always been an important part of the Octagon story as well as producing plays from some of the greatest playwrights throughout history.

The heart of our theatre from the day it was built, right up to the present, is our intimate and flexible Main Auditorium theatre space. It seats between 300 and 390 and unlike most theatres not only does the set change from production to production but the seating alters too and responds to the staging. Usually seen in three main configurations of in the round, end-on and thrust stage every time you come and see a show you will enjoy a totally different experience.
Throughout the years many changes have happened to the building and the work we do, from the creation of our Studio Theatre in 1987 to the inception of our participation programme which seeks to engage with communities across Bolton. We are continually looking to evolve and develop the work we create and most recently have announced a major capital development of our building, where we will be seeking to not only improve our visitor experience but also the accessibility of our backstage areas and an improved provision for the communities we work with.

Our purpose, vision and values

**Purpose:**
To connect with the people of Bolton and beyond through theatre.

**Vision:**
Our community will be enriched and inspired by quality, entertaining and thought-provoking theatre productions, and opportunities for people to realise their potential, express themselves and fly.

**Values:**
- **Creativity:** We work together to create theatre, and inspire others to be creative too.
- **Inclusion:** We want to reach the entire community and for them to feel included, welcome and safe.
- **Learning:** We encourage people to grow their abilities and their ideas; and for us to grow and stretch our own too.
- **Quality:** We seek to ensure that everything we do aspires to the highest possible quality.
- **Pride:** We take pride in our work, our theatre and our town; and we strive to make Bolton proud of us.

**Our work**
The Octagon produces eight to nine main auditorium productions every year, including new plays, classics, musicals and family shows. We are proud to make theatre in Bolton, and have our rehearsal, scenery and production making facilities here in the town centre.

Our current creative engagement work includes:
- A large youth theatre programme with seven groups different groups catering from ages 5 to 21 from weekend to after school sessions. Our Youth Theatre is an inclusive provision and is open to any young person. In Sept 2019 we launch Young Octagon, a performance group for young people age 13-19.
- Bridges consists of three theatre groups for young people and adults with learning disabilities.
- We provide bespoke Education sessions for both Primary and Secondary schools, creating stimulating, challenging, culturally relevant educational resources that encourage creativity and breed a love of theatre.
• Along with the Bolton Library and Museum Service and Bolton Music Service, with funding from START and Curious Minds, we have a successful Cultural Education Partnership for the borough, to provide a strategic and universal offer for young people.

• Art-beat is a theatre group for anyone aged over 50 and is a great opportunity for people with an interest in drama and theatre to engage creatively.

• We have ‘Theatre of Sanctuary’ status in recognition of our commitment to providing a welcoming environment to refugee and asylum seekers which includes a weekly women’s group.

• A long standing partnership with the University of Bolton includes joint delivery of an undergraduate degree in Theatre and Performance.

• Partnership with Bolton at Home ensuring access to people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

For more information visit https://octagonbolton.co.uk/get-involved/