



Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 2018

Photo by Robert Workman

**Artistic Director Recruitment Pack
November 2018**

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Thank you for your interest in the Mercury Theatre in Colchester and the role of Artistic Director (Joint CEO).

After six years as Artistic Director and Joint Chief Executive of the Mercury Theatre Colchester, Daniel Buckroyd left in August 2018 to take up a new position as Chief Executive/Artistic Director at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter. Daniel's tenure has seen a strong period of growth, establishing a programme of *Made In Colchester* productions, with overall audiences up by 20%, the theatre's innovative Creative Learning & Talent programme engaging more young people, community groups and emerging artists than ever before, and the overall turn-over of the organisation increasing by £1.2 million.

In October work commenced on site for *Mercury Rising*, a £9.6 major scheme to redevelop the theatre.

We are now looking for an imaginative and proven theatre maker, someone with a passion for making work that stimulates and challenges, engages and entertains, to work closely with Steve Mannix, Executive Director/Joint CEO, to take the organisation into its next phase of development. We are open to considering applications from directors or producers who feel they have the necessary skills and experience for the role. The successful candidate will provide inspirational leadership and have a clear and compelling artistic vision for the theatre. We expect to make an appointment to this role by Easter 2019, with a view to the successful candidate(s) becoming our Artistic Director designate from September 2019. They will be responsible for programming the inaugural season at the Mercury following the completion of the capital project from September 2020.

In this pack you will find:

- Background information on the Mercury Theatre, Colchester
- Job description and person specification
- How to apply

Further information about the Mercury can be found on www.mercurytheatre.co.uk.

We have retained Jodi Myers as our recruitment consultant, and she would be happy to have an informal and confidential conversation with prospective candidates. Jodi is contactable on projects@jodimyrs.co.uk.

We recognise that these are challenging times for both regional theatre and leadership in the arts. In response, we have an ambitious programme of updating the theatre, maintaining and building our audience, delivering artistic excellence, and growing the Mercury's reputation as a launchpad for talent and innovation in the East of England and on tour across the UK. The successful candidate will see the potential of this opportunity.

We look forward to receiving your application.



Kathleen Hamilton

Chair, Board of Directors, Colchester Mercury Theatre Ltd

THE MERCURY THEATRE OVERVIEW

The Mercury Theatre Colchester enjoys an excellent reputation for the quality of the work it produces and presents in its two auditoria and through its many community and education partnerships. We aim to cement the theatre's position as one of the main centres of artistic excellence in the East of England by building an audience for a critically acclaimed programme of drama, musical theatre, family theatre and dance at the Mercury and on tour.

Born as the Colchester Repertory Company in 1937, and relocating to its current home in 1972, the Mercury now boasts a Main Theatre (500 seats), a Studio Theatre (80 seats), full on-site workshop and wardrobe facilities, award-winning customer service, and a turnover in excess of £3.7m annually, making it both a significant local employer and a major driver of Colchester's creative economy.

The theatre plays a key leadership and strategic role in the cultural life in Essex and the wider geographical area of East Anglia. It is the only full-time producing venue in Essex and one of only three in the eastern region.

Vision

Our vision is of the Mercury as a vibrant, welcoming artistic hub at the heart of the cultural life of Colchester and Essex; a place where the diverse communities of the town and its surrounding region can come together to experience exceptional live theatre and a rich programme of other performing arts; a place where anyone, regardless of background, can get involved with our creative processes and start to realise their own creative potential.

Our vision is of the Mercury as a strategically important part of the national theatre ecology and the wider creative sector, providing an important regional pipeline for creative and technical talent and contributing to the range and quality of middle-scale touring theatre, with a particular focus on drama and work for children and families.

Mission

The Mercury exists to produce and present an inspiring, popular and critically acclaimed performing arts programme that touches the lives of a large and diverse Essex audience. The Mercury is a significant regional developer of new talent, working with a range of partners across the arts, education and creative industries to deliver a learning, participation and professional development programme aimed at nurturing the next generation of theatre makers.

The Mercury is a key part of the national touring theatre ecology, both as a highly respected mid-scale venue for the best touring theatre product available in the UK, and through its commitment to creating touring versions of many of the productions that it originates in Colchester.

Values

Everything we do is driven by our values of quality, innovation, diversity, and inclusion.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our current business plans identifies 10 strategic objectives:

Create exceptional shared live experiences, accessible to all

- Preserve and enhance the Mercury's role as a locally rooted, nationally ambitious producing theatre
- Provide a range of opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to explore their untapped potential
- Develop our role in the wider industry: act as a catalyst for skills development and support mid-scale touring
- Serve the diverse communities of Colchester and North Essex, contributing to a sense of place

Transform the Mercury

- Successfully deliver our major capital project and offsite season in and around Colchester
- Connect with communities and stakeholders through excellent communications

Be resilient and work with partners who challenge us and help us grow

- Establish and develop long-term creative and business partnerships
- Establish new independent income streams and strengthen existing income streams
- Ensure good governance and develop further operational efficiencies
- Develop and maximise the talents of a diverse, highly-skilled and flexible staff team

CURRENT PROGRAMME

Our programme is made up of a range of critically-acclaimed *Made In Colchester* productions, typically eight or nine each year including pantomime and a schools tour (approx. 3 of which are co-productions), around which we curate a diverse programme of the very best visiting drama, dance, music, comedy, circus and variety, together with a mix of learning & participation events, community hires, and new work profiling local and regional emerging artists. In recent years, the Mercury has developed a reputation for a popular based programme including work for families, musicals and new adaptations of classics.

In addition to making fantastic work happen in our two on-site performance spaces, and attracting people into our building, we are also determined to take work out into community and education settings around the County, where we are not constrained by the cultural, physical and financial barriers that can prevent people entering a theatre.

As well as our focus on the development of artistic quality across all the work we produce and present, we also offer different artforms within our programme and are committed to embedding diversity within all of our programming choices and our approach to key artistic appointments.

Whilst the Mercury is closed (from June 2019) we will be presenting our programme, which is already planned, in a bespoke 800 seat temporary theatre in central Colchester (September 2019 – January 2020). Following the completion of this season we will then re-commission our new building with a soft opening early summer 2020, host a series of test events leading to our first season from September 2020.

MERCURY RISING – CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Mercury Rising is estimated to cost **£9.6 million** and will be the single biggest investment in the buildings, facilities and infrastructure at the Mercury since it opened in 1972. This work will ensure we can continue to provide high quality theatre and arts provision for the next generation through:

- On site rehearsal and dedicated education facilities (for the first time in the organisation's history)
- New 'hot desks' and space to support new and emerging artists and creative entrepreneurs from the region
- Improved access for disabled audiences
- Extended front of house facilities to accommodate our growing audiences and allow for additional bar and catering facilities to offer a sustainable income stream
- Updated technical equipment to improve the quality of work we produce and present
- Investment in equipment and facilities to significantly improve our environmental sustainability
- Overall investment in a simple and functional design to enable us to reduce overheads and on-going maintenance to ensure our priority is the investment in the work we produce, and educational activities offered.

To date we have been successful in securing support of **£8.9 million** from Arts Council England, Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council, the European Regional Development Fund, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, various Trusts and Foundations and individual giving.

Mercury Rising - Objectives

The overarching aims of this project are:

- To grow financial resilience
- Improve its ability to attract and retain audiences/users
- Increase earned income from ticket sales and ancillary services
- Underpin the organisation's artistic ambition by improving the spaces and facilities that support the production and presentation of high-quality theatre and associated arts activities by professional and non-professional artists

Therefore, the principal objectives of the scheme are to:

- Improve audience experience
- Create a safe and efficient environment for Mercury staff
- Create a safe and welcoming environment for community and education users
- Improve rehearsal/production facilities to support high quality production locally, regionally, and nationally
- Improve backstage/technical facilities to support high quality programming
- Improve access for disabled artists, staff and audiences
- Continue to build financial resilience by diversifying revenue streams
- Improve the external attractiveness/visibility of the Mercury
- Improve the public realm linking the Mercury and Arts Centre and historic Colchester
- Remove fabric representing a 'risk' within the building (asbestos)

CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

Artistic The Mercury has a number of strong co-producing relationships with other regional theatres, touring companies and commercial producers including Salisbury Playhouse, Derby Theatre, English Touring Theatre and Selladoor.

Tamasha Sustained Theatre Programme Along with Dukes Playhouse Lancaster, Leeds Playhouse, the Belgrade Coventry, the Mercury is a key partner to develop new producing and touring opportunities for BAME artists.

Middle Scale Young People's Theatre Consortium Recently established consortium with the Belgrade, Coventry, York Theatre Royal, Pilot Theatre and Derby Theatre, to present a piece of Young People's Theatre on the middle-scale annually for the next four years.

We have long-standing relationships with a wide variety of companies to present their work in the eastern region, including Tamasha, English Touring Theatre, Cheek by Jowl, Ballet Black, Ballet Boyz and Talawa Theatre Company.

Strategic Partnerships

The Mercury is actively engaged in a range of partnerships including:

Nationally Parents in Performing Arts, Stage One, Creative and Cultural Skills

Regional and Local Visit Essex, Haven Gateway Partnership, Colchester Business Improvement District, Creative Colchester, Colchester Ambassadors

Local Authority Partnerships The theatre values its close working relationship with its local authority partners, in particular Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council and South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)

Educational Partners South East Creative Enterprise Network, Essex Skills Board, Essex University, Colchester Institute, Creative, Digital and Skills Board, Colchester Cultural and Education Partnership, Colchester Learning Alliance, Action for Children and the Royal Opera House Bridge

MERCURY THEATRE AUDIENCE

During 2017/18 our work was seen in Colchester and across the UK by more than **200,000** people – a record in the organisation's history. Over 48 weeks we presented **423** performances across our Main House and Studio Theatre playing to **125,023** people (average capacity of **69%**). **31%** of all ticket sales were concessions with **21,031** people visiting the Mercury for the first time. **7%** of all tickets were sold to disabled people and carers.

The theatre's market penetration in all areas of Colchester Borough is strong, and we continue to have good reach throughout Essex and all neighbouring towns excluding Ipswich, which has its own cultural offer. **52%** of visitors came from within the Colchester Borough area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During 2017/18 we ran **849** activity sessions, with **34,422** attendances in total (an increase of **12,367** on 2016/17). Throughout the year we worked with diverse communities, school and college groups, members of the public and young talent from across Essex.

Colchester is one of the fastest growing towns in the UK and the population is changing, particularly with the arrival of many young families. Colchester is becoming more diverse, with a shift from 3% to 8% BAME between the most recent censuses.

In 2016 we found that **39%** of bookers came from affluent groups, **51%** from groups of average or modest means and **10%** from economically disadvantaged groups.

CREATIVE LEARNING AND TALENT

To complement our regular programme of Youth Theatre activities, work within schools and the diverse communities of Essex, we remain committed to offering high quality training and early professional development opportunities to the next generation of theatre artists, technicians and managers. This includes an Early Career Training programme, an Associate Artist Scheme, the Weinbergers National Playwriting Prize and the Essex Theatre Artists Network of over 500 artists at various stages of their career.

In addition, we host a Joint BA (Hons) Technical Theatre degree course in partnership with University Centre Colchester (Colchester Institute), an annual internship programme with Essex University and a series of apprenticeships.

In early 2019 we will be launching a new programme of mentoring and professional development for those in theatre or the creative industries who are early or mid-career based in Essex and Kent funded by the European Regional Development Fund.



NT Connections 2016

FINANCES

In 2017/18 the Mercury's turnover was £3,552,629. This included £999,228 revenue investment from Arts Council England and Colchester Borough Council (representing 28% of its income).

Box Office income for the period reached a record £1,671,923 with a further £881,923 from fundraising, earned income and ancillary trading.

Expenditure on *Made in Colchester* productions and co-productions for the period was £788,804.

As at 31 March 2018 the Mercury holds reserves of £1,138,498 (£557,816 unrestricted and £580,662 restricted).

The budget for the current financial year is £3,905,862 (a record in the organisation's history).

Further detailed budgets and financial projections (revenue and capital) will be available prior to second interviews. In the meantime, our most recent accounts can be found here on the [Companies House website](#) .

RECENT AWARDS

- The Stage Regional Theatre of the Year 2016 (shortlist)
- The Weir (co-production with English Touring Theatre) Best Touring Production – Manchester Theatre Awards 2018
- Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, British Panto Awards (5 nominations)
- Pieces of String - UK Theatre Best New Musical 2018 (shortlist)
- Pieces of String - Stage Debut Award Best Composer, Gus Gowland 2018
- Pieces of String - Broadway World Best Costume Design of a New Production of a Play or Musical (nomination)
- Pieces of String - Broadway World Best Lighting Design of a New Production of a Play or Musical (nomination)



Pieces of String 2018

Photo by Robert Workman

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Artistic Director and Joint Chief Executive
Department	Executive
Responsible to	Board of Directors
Responsible for	Producer, Head of Production, Head of Construction and Head of Creative Learning and Talent
Key working relationships	Executive Director, Joint Deputy Executive Directors, Head of Communications and Marketing, Head of Finance, Head of Creative Learning & Talent, Head of Operations, Head of Development, Production Administrator, Theatre Administrator

Purpose of the Post

The Artistic Director is responsible for the artistic strategy and leadership of the Mercury and is jointly responsible, with the Executive Director, for ensuring the strategic development of the Mercury Theatre.

The Artistic Director will deliver an ambitious artistic policy and programme, including the creation of *Made In Colchester* productions that inspire and enthuse Mercury Theatre's audiences, stakeholders and staff. They will also play a central role in identifying opportunities to meet key business and audience development objectives by extending the life of *Made In Colchester* productions through co-productions, touring and transfers.

Joint Responsibilities

Working alongside the Executive Director, the Artistic Director will create the strategic direction of the Mercury Theatre. The Executive Team will jointly ensure that:

- The theatre maintains and develops its role as a leading regional producing theatre with a national and international reputation
- The theatre's work is made widely available and that opportunities for artists, audiences and participants are maximised
- The balance between the theatre's creative aspirations and financial viability is understood and maintained
- The theatre plays a significant role in the communities of Colchester and Essex
- The theatre maintains positive and productive partnerships with its stakeholders and supporters
- New opportunities for income development and growth are explored and exploited
- The theatre's business plan is implemented and reviewed
- Leadership, management and motivation is provided for the team as a whole and in particular the direct reports
- The theatre is a safe and welcoming environment for all

Principal Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Provide artistic leadership, programming all work for both stages while balancing the business plan objectives
- Provide strong and inspirational leadership to enable the theatre to achieve its artistic and strategic aims within a changing external environment
- Work with the Executive Director and marketing team to ensure a clear identity and brand for the Mercury is developed and communicated

Programme Planning and Producing

- Lead and deliver an artistic programme including in-house and presented productions, co-productions and collaborations, new writing, commissions and any other forms of creative work as appropriate, that appeals to a broad range of audiences and increases the diversity and loyalty of audiences
- With the Executive Director, ensure that the artistic programme is appropriately resourced and achieves its income generation targets
- Lead on all aspects of programme planning and delivery including identification and clearing of rights, scheduling, budget management, one nighters, touring and co-production activity and casting
- Liaise with the marketing department on the development of marketing plans and resources
- Liaise with the Head of Production on the delivery of all scheduling, budgetary, physical and technical aspects of productions
- Explore all opportunities for programme exploitation, including identifying and negotiating touring and co-production opportunities

External Relationships

- Represent the theatre at a wide range of local, regional, national and international fora and networking opportunities
- Promote the theatre directly to targeted industry contacts
- Work with the Executive Director to ensure open and productive relations with the theatre's main funders
- Work with the Executive Director and senior management team to ensure development and fundraising opportunities are maximised
- Build new partnerships and identify opportunities for expanding the theatre's reputation both nationally and internationally
- Develop and maintain relationships with co-producing and touring partners

Creative Learning and Talent

- Work with the relevant Deputy Executive Director to oversee the creative work of the Creative Learning and Talent Team
- Support and develop the theatre's creative learning programme and the theatre's work in the community
- Work with the Creative Learning and Talent team to identify creative partnerships that enrich the theatre's programme, reputation and reach

General Duties

- Attend and participate in all meetings of Mercury Theatre's Board of Directors
- Produce timely, written reports of achievement against objectives and targets for the Board
- Participate actively as a member of the executive team working effectively with other staff members to be fully informed of the financial and operational issues that impact on the artistic programme
- Be fully conversant with all the theatre's policies, and ensure that they are adhered to at all times
- Attend and contribute to training or meetings as required
- Carry out any further duties as reasonably required

This job description is a guide to the nature of the work required of this position. It is neither wholly comprehensive nor restrictive and does not preclude change or development that might be required in the future. It does not form part of the contract of employment.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Qualities

- Self-disciplined, organised and self-motivating
- Ability to lead and work as part of a team
- Adaptability and receptivity to new ideas and initiatives
- Ability to work under pressure and manage competing deadlines
- Excellent interpersonal skills with an ability to build rapport and partnerships and communicate with people at all levels

Essential Professional Competencies

- Ability to develop and articulate inspirational artistic vision and ambition
- Strong track record of successful directing or producing professional theatre productions in a variety of spaces and for diverse audiences
- Proven ability to commission and support new plays
- Proven ability to collaborate with artists of the highest calibre
- Ability to nurture talent and potential in others
- Demonstrable artistic planning, strategic planning and resource management skills
- An entrepreneurial spirit and ability to lead the theatre's development initiatives
- Excellent project management skills
- Experience of contract negotiation with agents and artists and a good working knowledge of the relevant industry contracts
- Experience of partnership working such as co-productions, touring and transfers
- Experience of working with marketing teams to reach target audiences and achieve sales targets
- Excellent communication and advocacy skills
- Ability to delegate, negotiate, resolve conflict, and manage individuals' performance
- Excellent IT and computer skills relevant to the post's requirements

Desirable Professional Competencies

- Experience of and interest in producing work for younger audiences
- Experience of delivering education and/or community programmes
- Experience of a role in a building-based arts organisation
- Experience of marketing and audience development for productions
- Experience of raising finance for creative projects
- Experience of international touring, partnerships and co-production

OUTLINE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Appointment - the person appointed will be engaged as an employee and receive the company's usual pension contribution, holiday pay and benefits.

Salary - competitive based on experience.

Hours - the post-holder will be expected to fulfil the hours required to do the job, including some evening and weekend work, but is not expected to work more than an average of 48 hours per week across the year in line with the Working Time Regulations.

Term - the appointment will be offered subject to successful completion of a six-month probationary period.

Notice period - six months' in writing by either party after a probationary period of six months, during which time the notice period is one month by either party.

The post-holder must be prepared to live within commutable distance of the theatre in order to fulfil the role. A contribution to relocation expenses will be considered.

Any offer of employment will be subject to receipt of:

- References that are satisfactory to the Board;
- Evidence of a legal right to work in the UK;
- Satisfactory clearance after a DBS check.



Spamalot, 2017

Photo by Robert Day

APPLICATION PROCESS

You are encouraged to contact our recruitment consultant, Jodi Myers, to discuss the role informally and confidentially. Please contact her on projects@jodimyrs.co.uk to arrange a convenient time.

If you are considering making an application, please provide details of any work in which you are involved during Autumn/Winter 2018/19 at the earliest opportunity. This should be sent to projects@jodimyrs.co.uk with Artistic Director Mercury in the subject line.

To apply for this post, please send a letter of no more than 3 sides of A4, explaining what attracts you to this position, and evidence of your ability to meet the Job Description and Person Specification.

In addition, with your application, please supply:

1. A CV
2. On a separate page headed with your name:
 - Names and contact details for two employment/professional referees, however, we shall not take up references unless candidates are invited to a second interview;
 - A statement that you have the right to work in the UK or that you require a work permit to do so;
 - Details of any criminal offence you have been convicted of, where you have not yet completed the rehabilitation period for the offence, i.e. it is not 'spent'
3. A completed Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form (downloadable from <https://www.mercurytheatre.co.uk>)

Applications should be addressed to Kathleen Hamilton, Chair of the Mercury Theatre Board, and sent to Jodi Myers at projects@jodimyrs.co.uk, with Artistic Director Mercury in the subject line by 10:00am on **Monday, 14 January 2019**.

Candidates invited for interview will be contacted by **28 January**.

First round interviews will take place on **Friday, 8 February** or **Saturday, 9 February 2019**.

Second round interviews will take place on **Thursday 7 March**.

The Mercury Theatre is an equal opportunities employer and actively promotes diversity in the staff team. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons regardless of their race, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.

Please let us know if you need this information in a different format by contacting Valentina Borja-Herrera on 01206 577006 or email: valentina.borja-herrera@mercurytheatre.co.uk

November 2018

Appendix
Mercury Theatre Interim Organisational chart
 November 2018

