

# Press Release

## Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme

### **Announcing five new regional projects which will support, nurture and develop early career theatre directors**

Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme (RTYDS) Introduction to Directing and Three-Month Placement projects are designed to support directors from backgrounds that are currently under-represented in theatre as a result of barriers arising from social, gender, financial, ethnic, cultural, geographic or educational disadvantage or disability.

*“We create pathways that affect who can lead in theatre; if you change the directors, you change the work that gets made, the actors they work with and the stories they tell. We believe it’s hugely important to see everyone represented in theatre and at every level and in every area.”*

**Sue Emmas, Artistic Director, RTYDS**

In September 2019, Introduction to Directing projects will be hosted by Eclipse Theatre Company: Slate network (at HOME in Manchester) and Sheffield based Third Angel Theatre Company, supporting up to twenty new theatre directors at the start of their professional careers.

*“We are very excited to be part of the RTYDS this year, and it is a pleasure to be working with such a well-respected organisation. It’s a great opportunity to extend our existing mentoring work with other artists, to provide more opportunities to theatre directors from diverse backgrounds.”*

**Rachael Walton, Co-Artistic Director, Third Angel**

Three-Month Placements will take place at the Mercury Theatre in Colchester, Talking Birds Theatre Company, Birmingham, and Strictly Arts Theatre Company based in Coventry with emerging directors Michelle Payne, Lucy Hayward and Kimisha Lewis respectively.

*“The RTYDS Three-Month Placement is an incredible opportunity where I will be able to focus on my skills as a director. Being placed with Talking Birds Theatre Company means that I will have the support of a*

*company who already understands the needs of a parent and the access I will need as an artist who is blind. This placement will build my confidence working with an experienced designer and talented team who produce exciting, original and accessible site-specific work.”*

**- Lucy Hayward, Three-Month Placement**

-Ends-

## **Note to editors**

The Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme (RTYDS) is a national professional artist development programme for theatre directors in the UK. We offer bespoke training opportunities to artists from the earliest stages of a career right up to leadership development.

We work in partnership with theatres around the country, enabling talented artists to build their craft and develop their leadership skills. We work annually with an average of 15 theatre companies and 150 directors:

<http://www.rtyds.co.uk/about-rtyds/>

RTYDS was founded in 1960. Howard Thomas, then Managing Director of ABC Television, introduced the Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme, working with Brian Tesler to help further the careers of aspiring theatre producers and directors. It was his belief that television had every reason to be grateful to the theatre for its supply of creative talent. The scheme was conceived as a way of repaying the debt.

In 2014 the RTYDS became an independent company limited by guarantee, a charity and is now an associate company of the Young Vic and Royal Exchange Theatre where it is based. RTYDS brings together emerging directors with the UK's leading regional theatre companies. We are particularly focused on directors who live outside London and are from communities presently under-represented in theatre. RTYDS joined the Arts Council England National Portfolio as a Sector Support Organisation in April 2018.

The scheme claims an impressive list of [past participants](#) such as Rupert Goold at the Almeida, Lorne Campbell at Northern Stage and Vicky Featherstone at the Royal Court.

### **Eclipse Theatre Company**

Black-led national production company based in the UK, at the vanguard of delivering diverse programming in theatres across the country. To Eclipse, Black includes anyone who is marginalized for their race or ethnicity. Led by Artistic Director Dawn Walton, Eclipse is a National Portfolio Funded Organisation with Arts Council England, and the only Black-led NPO who deliver an annual middle scale tour to regional theatres.

<https://eclipsetheatre.org.uk/about/who-are-eclipse>

### **Third Angel Theatre Company**

Third Angel is a theatre company making exciting and original contemporary performance that speaks directly, honestly and engagingly to its audience. Established in Sheffield in 1995, the company makes work that encompasses performance, theatre, live art, installation, film, video art, documentary, photography and design. We use styles, techniques and interests discovered in our more experimental work for other spaces, to create new theatre that plays with conventional forms while remaining accessible to a mainstream audience.

Third Angel has shown work in theatres, galleries, cinemas, office blocks, car parks, swimming baths, on the internet and TV, in school halls, a damp cellar in Leicester and a public toilet in Bristol. The company has shown work at festivals and venues across the UK, mainland Europe and further afield, including Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, Belgium, Portugal, France, Spain, Russia, Lebanon, Brazil and the USA.

<http://thirdangel.co.uk/about-third-angel>

### **Mercury Theatre**

Rooted in its local community the theatre touches over 130,000 people in Colchester and the surrounding area each year through the vibrant and broad programme we stage across two auditoria, and through community education partnerships.

Under the Made in Colchester brand, the Mercury creates theatre which reaches audiences and generates critical attention regionally and nationally. The Mercury is a champion of regional arts, both as an active co-producer with other venues and companies and also touring our own productions to audiences across the UK.

The theatre is led by Executive Director Steve Mannix, Executive Producer Tracey Childs and Creative Director Ryan McBryde as it approaches an exciting redevelopment project: Mercury Rising.

<https://www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/about-the-theatre/>

## **Talking Birds Theatre Company**

Since 1992 Talking Birds has been producing thoughtful, playful, resonant, mischievous and transformative meditations on people and place. Our work, which we call Theatre of Place, is characterised by a distinctive blend of humour, music and visual flair in venues both conventional and unconventional across the UK and internationally - from the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank, to Kilkenny Livestock Mart; from a cavernous underground car park in Scarborough, to a decommissioned hospital in Coventry, to a giant aluminium whale which swallows up audiences one at a time.

<http://talkingbirds.co.uk/pages/about.asp>

## **Strictly Arts**

Strictly Arts is a new physical theatre company led by Artistic Director and founder, Corey Campbell and Executive Producer, Henry Bays.

Though Strictly Arts is a new company, it achieved breakout success after the performance of Green Leaves Fall in 2015, instantly igniting a partnership with Coventry's Belgrade Theatre.

Most recently, the company were the recipients of last year's Charlie Hartill Special Reserve Fund from the Pleasance Theatre enabling Strictly Arts first show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, receiving many 5-star reviews. Freeman started as a work in progress piece that quickly developed into a national tour in 2017. It sold out across all venues with standing ovations and amazing feedback. Freeman toured again last autumn due to popular demand and has been shortlisted for two Off West End Awards.

As a company, Strictly Arts devises work that is engaging, thought-provoking and unique. We strive to make the work created accessible to audiences around the world; while telling stories that forgotten communities can connect with. The company is ever growing and evolving, and with such growth, comes change; but one thing we promise to cling on to is our duty to give voice to the untold stories of the community, through live performance.

<http://strictlyarts.co.uk/about-us/>

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