Oxford Playhouse - recruiting new Chair of the Trustees Board

The Oxford Playhouse is seeking a new chair of the Board of Trustees to follow the retirement of our current chair Danby Bloch in October 2017. The intention is that the incoming chair should have some experience of the board, joining the board during 2017 prior to taking over in the autumn/winter.

Person Specification
The chair should ideally:

- Have a passion for theatre and the performing arts.
- Understand the importance of theatre and culture in Oxford and Oxfordshire.
- Demonstrate a track record of successful leadership and strategic thinking.
- Display knowledge of the UK arts sector.
- Understand governance issues and the responsibilities of the trustees of charities and be a confident in chairing trustee and other meetings.
- Have a connection with Oxford and be able to devote enough time to engage fully with the organisation.
- Be prepared to be involved with fund raising and development and show some experience of these activities.

The main duties of the chair

- The chair is responsible for the leadership of the trustees, ensuring the highest standards of governance and probity, and overseeing the strategic mission, direction and affairs of Oxford.
- As chair of its meetings, s/he is responsible for ensuring that the necessary business of the board is carried out efficiently, effectively, and appropriately.
- The chair provides guidance, support and constructive challenge to the Playhouse’s executive leadership.

Time commitment

There are normally four board meetings a year. In addition the trustees have an all-day strategy meeting once a year. The current structure of the board includes three main committees which meet prior to full board meetings, and there is also a nominations committee.

The chair is normally expected to attend at least one of the main committees as well as the nominations committee. In addition s/he will need to attend development events, regular meetings with senior management and, of course, support performances and events at the theatre. The total time commitment is approximately two to three days a month.
Oxford Playhouse
A Playhouse for Everyone

Oxford Playhouse presents, produces and tours the highest quality middle-scale, small-scale and off-site theatre. It supports and nurtures artists to make work, creates imaginative and ambitious participation opportunities for children and young people and provides exceptional cultural experiences for all. Oxford Playhouse is positioned at the cultural heart of Oxfordshire, inspiring, engaging and entertaining a wide-reaching and diverse audience.

Oxford Playhouse has an outstanding record of success as a receiving house for productions offering an ambitious programme. The Playhouse programme includes the finest national and international touring drama, family shows, contemporary dance and music, circus, comedy and poetry and provides a platform for local student and amateur groups. Audience attendance is above the national average. Playhouse Plays Out shows are designed to reach new audiences and give local residents the chance to see unexpected theatre in unexpected places.

Increased Arts Council funding in recent years has enabled us to strengthen our producing arm. Last year we co-produced The Tempest with Northern Stage and Improbable Theatre, and 2016 has seen mainstage co-productions Peter Pan in Scarlet and Sand in the Sandwiches (the latter with Edward Fox). Two new family studio productions and two new off-site productions are created and toured annually too. The Playhouse produces its own pantomime, which reaches over 37,000 people and is a vital source of income.

Oxford Playhouse also manages the 50-seat Burton Taylor Studio for the University of Oxford, which hosts student drama productions throughout the academic year and a diverse professional programme outside of term.

The Playhouse's artist development scheme EVOLVE was launched in 2013, and provides support for artists including funding, space, mentoring and support. 2015 saw the launch of a life-long Writers’ Programme – PLAYHOUSE PLAYMAKER – with specific strands for primary school pupils, young writers and professional writers on attachment.

The Playhouse achieves a high proportion of earned income, and has a successful track record in fundraising and reasonable levels of reserves. The theatre is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, and receives core funding from The University of Oxford and Oxford City Council.

The Playhouse's annual turnover for 2015/16 was £4.2million.

- Box Office sales provided 65% of the gross income.
- Commercial operations including the bar and ticket agency generated 14% of total income.
- 14% of income was derived from three core funders: Arts Council England 10%, The University of Oxford 3%, Oxford City Council 1%
- Fundraising provided 7% of income from individuals, corporate supporters trust and foundations and Catalyst.

The Playhouse employs 52 full-time equivalent staff and has over 100 volunteers.
The Oxford Playhouse Trust is a company limited by guarantee No: 2397373 and a registered charity No: 900039

Applications

If you are interested in the position and would like to know more, please contact the Chief Executive, Louise Chantal (Louise.chantal@oxfordplayhouse.com) or the current chair, Danby Bloch (danby@bloch.com).

Applications should be posted to:
Secretary to the Trustees
Oxford Playhouse
Beaumont Street
Oxford
OX1 2LW

Or alternatively, applications can be emailed to admin@oxfordplayhouse.com

Closing date for applications: 28 February 2017