



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Wednesday 16 July 2025**

### **DIRECTORS AT THE WRITERS' THEATRE: ROYAL COURT ANNOUNCES NEW SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR DIRECTORS**

The Royal Court Theatre today announces a major new investment in theatre directors. Over the next five years, the Royal Court will invest over a million pounds in a comprehensive and transparent programme focused on the craft, skill and careers involved in bringing new plays to the stage.

Designed as a complete ladder of support - from entry-level access to structured career progression - the full package includes two new, year-long salaried roles annually, and a doubling of paid assistant director opportunities, all recruited through open public applications.

David Byrne, Artistic Director and CEO, Royal Court Theatre: *“We want the Court’s directors programme to be the most open and transparent offer for directors from any national institution. There’s real momentum at the Court right now. If you’re part of the new generation of directors wanting to bring brilliant new voices to the stage, it’s never been clearer how you can join us and be part of it.”*

Overseen by the permanent role of Royal Court Resident Director, Aneesha Srinivasan, the programme includes:

#### **Relaunching an Expanded and Enhanced Trainee Director Programme:**

The Royal Court’s historic Trainee Director Programme has launched the careers of many directors and artistic leaders, from Rufus Norris to Roy Alexander Weise and Lyndsey Turner. Relaunching with recruitment in summer 2025, the new programme will double the previous number of placements, offering two year-long salaried Trainee Director roles annually. Trainee Directors will join the Court’s artistic team, gain access to directing opportunities, and work across departments — experiencing how the Royal Court operates at every level. For the first time, each Trainee Director will also now receive a dedicated artistic budget, on top of their salary, to develop their own directing and creative projects.

#### **Assistant Directors’ Pool – Doubling Paid Assistant Director Opportunities:**

For the first time, the Royal Court will invest in Assistant Director roles on all full productions in the Jerwood Theatre Upstairs — expanding to a minimum of ten paid assistant opportunities each year across its stages. To enable open access, the Court is launching a new Assistant Directors’ Pool: six early-career freelance directors will be selected via open

applications, forming an annual cohort who will receive first access to apply for paid assistant directing roles, plus bursaries, mentoring, and career guidance throughout the year.

### **Open Opportunities for All - Including Access to Technical Rehearsals:**

Hundreds of bookable places will be offered throughout the year in a new programme of free events, opening up access to the insights, craft and creativity of directing new work. For the first time, this will include bookable opportunities to observe technical rehearsals for productions in the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, beginning with Tony and Olivier Award-winning director Marianne Elliott's production of *The Unbelievers* this autumn. The programme will also introduce regular Directors' Nights for Royal Court productions — including peer networking and insights from the show's directors — alongside free masterclasses, workshops, and Q&As with Royal Court directors past and present.

### **Mentoring:**

From 2026, early-career directors making their Royal Court debuts will have access to paid professional and artistic mentoring, matched with established directors from the Court's programmes.

**Aneesha Srinivasan, Resident Director, Royal Court Theatre:** *“When I applied, the Trainee Director role was the only opportunity that existed for directors like me. Every day, directors are giving up because they can't sustain their career or work out how to get their next job. This programme is my offer to my peers, and those coming up. A ladder of support - for those who are just beginning and learning the craft; those freelancing who'd like to work alongside exceptional directors in our programme; and those who'd like to learn about running a building - so they can be running their own someday.”*

**Marianne Elliott, Director:** *“Directors learn best in the rehearsal room. This programme provides unprecedented access to process, giving emerging directors the chance to find vital tools they can use in their own practice.”*

**Katie Mitchell, Director:** *“This programme has the potential to fundamentally change how directors graduate through the industry, by offering them the chance to observe varying directorial practices, train in the craft, and benefit from the mentorship and guidance of those with experience and expertise.”*

Applications are now open for the first round of recruitment for the Trainee Directors and the Assistant Directors' Pool, via the Royal Court's website. The Royal Court are collaborating with **#OpenHire** on the search.

The Royal Court Directors Programme is generously supported by The Foyle Foundation, The Katie Bradford Arts Trust, and The Fenton Arts Trust.

**ENDS**

Artwork [here](#).

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