



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **A NEW ENGINE FOR INVESTMENT IN UK-WIDE PLAYWRITING: ROYAL COURT THEATRE AND JERWOOD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE NATIONAL COMMISSIONING SCHEME**

- The Royal Court Theatre and Jerwood Foundation today announce the **Jerwood Royal Court Commissioning Scheme**.
- Designed to support UK-wide investment and risk in ambitious new playwriting, the Scheme will provide **six grants of up to £6,000 each**, awarded jointly between a producer and playwright, to underwrite first payments for new play commissions.
- The first round of applications will open from **2 December 2025 to 23 January 2026**, and the Scheme will then run annually, with full information and guidance now available online.
- The Scheme is further supported by the **Writers' Guild of Great Britain**, ensuring fair terms for commissioned writers.

The Royal Court, in partnership with Jerwood Foundation, today announces the **Jerwood Royal Court Commissioning Scheme**. The first of its kind, the Scheme will make **six annual awards of £6,000 each from 2026**, jointly supporting playwrights and producers to initiate original, ambitious new play commissions for stages across the country – investing in a national pipeline of ambitious and risk-taking new theatre.

Launching for the Royal Court's **70th anniversary**, the Jerwood Royal Court Commissioning Scheme marks a new era for the two organisations' long-standing partnership, and a major expansion in the Court's approach to playwright support – looking beyond its own stages to share resources nationwide. Separate from the Royal Court's own productions, the supported commissions will be selected from open-access applications, open for joint submissions between writers and producing theatres or companies across the UK.

**Royal Court Executive Director Will Young said:** *"The Royal Court is the national force for playwriting everywhere: not only on our own stages in London, but committed to the future of new theatre across the country. Working with the brilliant Jerwood Foundation, this game-changing scheme offers up-front support to playwrights, producers and theatres*

*UK-wide, at a time when artistic budgets have never been more stretched – backing investment in bold, original plays that promise audiences the genuine thrill of the new.”*

The Scheme is supported by the Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB) to ensure fair terms on commissioning agreements. WGGB's own one-off 2022 'New Play Commissioning Scheme', with UK Theatre and ITC, led to 18 commissions and inspired this new annual programme, supporting writers across the country.

Grants from the Jerwood Royal Court Commissioning Scheme will cover the non-recoupable first payments for six new play commissions per year, on at least WGGB minimum rates. By awarding funds at this point, the Scheme will unlock the first step in commissioning and underwrite financial risk, while encouraging theatres and producers to commit future investment towards completing commissions and undertaking full production.

**Lara Wardle, Executive Director and Trustee Jerwood Foundation said:** *“Awarding this grant reaffirms Jerwood Foundation’s long-standing support of the Royal Court Theatre and enables the launch of the Jerwood Royal Court Commissioning Scheme, a crucial national scheme, which will unlock a route to the stage for new plays and support emerging creative voices. Jerwood is also continuing its support of Jerwood New Playwrights, now in its fourth decade, through which the Royal Court Theatre identifies and nurtures a new playwright of outstanding talent each year and I am delighted that the 82nd Jerwood New Playwright has been announced as 19 year-old Leo Simpe-Asante, which underlines Jerwood’s ongoing commitment to support excellence and emerging talent in the arts.”*

The first round of applications will open from **Tuesday 2 December 2025 to Friday 23 January 2026** only. Proposals must be made jointly between a playwright and a venue or company - whether subsidised, independent, or commercial – and should demonstrate clear artistic ambition and risk as well as a viable route to future production.

Full **application guidance is now available** via the Royal Court website. Applicants can also book for a free, open-access **webinar on Thursday 4 December**.

For more information, visit [www.royalcourttheatre.com](http://www.royalcourttheatre.com).

## **ENDS**

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## About Jerwood Foundation

Established in 1977 for John Jerwood MC (1918-1991) by Alan Grieve CBE (1928-2025), **Jerwood Foundation** is a UK charity committed to supporting excellence and emerging talent in the arts in the UK. Alan Grieve served as Chairman for over 30 years and was appointed Chairman Emeritus in 2023, when Rupert Tyler was appointed Chairman. The organisation is led by Lara Wardle, Executive Director and Trustee and to date Jerwood Foundation has committed over £113 million to support the arts in the UK.

Jerwood Foundation owns the **Jerwood Collection** of modern and contemporary art, and an important part of Jerwood's philanthropic mission is delivered by the Collection through its loaning programme and promotion of a broader understanding, interpretation and enjoyment of art. Also included in the Jerwood group of organisations is **Jerwood Space**, which was Jerwood's first major capital project when established by Jerwood Foundation in Southwark in 1998. Jerwood Space is a dedicated rehearsal space providing theatre, musical theatre, opera and dance companies with an outstanding environment within which to create their work.

[www.jerwood.org](http://www.jerwood.org)

#### About The Writers' Guild of Great Britain

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB) is a trade union representing writers for TV, film, theatre, audio, books, comedy, poetry, animation and videogames. It negotiates national agreements on pay and conditions with key industry bodies, including BBC, ITV, Netflix and Pact; the Royal Court, National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company. It campaigns and lobbies on behalf of writers and offers a range of benefits to its members, including free contract vetting, support and advice; events and discounts; free training; a weekly ebuletin; a pension scheme and welfare fund. Find out more at [www.writersguild.org.uk](http://www.writersguild.org.uk)