



FIONA BUFFINI APPOINTED ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AT NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE

As part of their commitment to building for the future, Nottingham Playhouse today announces the appointment of the acclaimed theatre maker Fiona Buffini in the newly created role of Associate Director.

Fiona, who commences in September, will direct professional and non-professional productions, develop the newly christened Neville Studio as a production and participation space, lead the Participation Department and manage Nottingham Playhouse's community membership programme.

This is a new senior management post, part of the amended management structure to deliver the newly articulated vision of Nottingham Playhouse. The Associate Director will continue to integrate the work of the Education and Participation team within the organisation and to offer a point of contact to the local community for the work of the theatre's other departments. A key aim is to further embed the work of Nottingham Playhouse into its many communities and to develop a meaningful dialogue that builds interest, fosters inclusion and access and ensures strong attendance at Nottingham Playhouse.

Her responsibilities will include the creation of small, medium and large scale projects for Nottingham Playhouse, incorporating a range of participants encompassing professional actors, elders, youth, schools, culturally diverse participants and amateur groups. She will also create work with partner theatres on the continent. In addition to this and to her management role she will direct the productions that Nottingham Playhouse takes into schools and create work for the Neville Studio and main stage.

Fiona has a wealth of experience both in mainstream theatre and also working with specific communities both in the UK and abroad. Her most recent production in the West End was *Dinner*, at The Wyndhams Theatre and on Tour. Her production of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* for the RSC received rave reviews and was on tour in the UK and USA. Fiona's other work as a director has included *The Weir* at the Lyric Theatre Belfast, *Boston Marriage* at the Octagon Theatre Bolton and *The Playboy of the Western World* (Royal National Theatre). She was Associate Director at The National Theatre on *Summerfolk* and *Albert Speer* and Staff Director at The National Theatre on *Betrayal*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida*. Fiona recently directed in the UK *Corrie! The Play* by Jonathan Harvey for The Lowry, Salford and a National Tour. Prior to this Fiona directed *39 Steps* for West Yorkshire Playhouse and Tour and *The Shadow of A Gunman* at the Lyric Belfast.

Fiona's extensive work in community settings in the UK encompasses Holloway Prison, Clean Break Theatre Company and Orkney Youth Theatre. Her experience abroad has taken her to Rwanda, Papua New Guinea and Eritrea where she lived and worked with members of various tribes and communities devising drama that was relevant to the issues and surrounding that faced them on daily basis. In Eritrea, she worked for the Ministry of Education radio station, writing and producing educational programmes in English and working with emerging local writers.

Fiona Buffini says

I am really happy to be joining the team at Nottingham Playhouse. Nottingham Playhouse has a well-earned reputation for producing work of the highest quality, and as a freelance artistic director, I am very happy to be making my home in a centre of excellence. More importantly, Nottingham Playhouse has a real commitment to the community it serves and I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to bring this work firmly into focus. I hope to build on the excellent work that's already taking place at Nottingham Playhouse to ensure that the building is a resource for emerging local writers, directors, designers and actors. I hope that the needs, interests and aspirations of the whole local community are represented and explored in our work and that the building continues to gain a reputation for producing work not just FOR the people it serves, but WITH the people. I am delighted to be joining a theatre that is proud of its local communities and draws from such a rich cultural heritage when programming and making theatre.

Giles Croft – Artistic Director of Nottingham Playhouse says

We are delighted that Fiona Buffini has accepted the post of Associate Director at Nottingham Playhouse. She is a director of great experience and extraordinary skill and her experience in education, her passion for participation and her experience with new writing makes her the perfect fit for Nottingham Playhouse. On a more personal note I am looking forward to working closely with Fiona and having lively discussions around programme, policy and productions. It is an exciting time for us with record attendances, a new studio theatre and increasing numbers of people of all ages and backgrounds using the building. Clearly there will be challenges presented by decreases in funding over the coming years, but this will not affect our ambitions for Nottingham Playhouse and the appointment of Fiona is part of our strategy of building for the future.

Stephanie Sirr – Chief Executive at Nottingham Playhouse says

We're all really excited about the skills that Fiona brings to Nottingham Playhouse at a time when our role within our local community of artists and audiences has never been more essential.