



Friday 19 November 2021

National Theatre appoints Kate Varah as Executive Director



The National Theatre has today announced that **Kate Varah** has been appointed as Executive Director. Currently Executive Director of The Old Vic, a role she has held since 2015, Kate will join Director and Chief Executive Rufus Norris to lead the National Theatre, from Spring 2022 succeeding Lisa Burger.

Kate is an experienced arts leader who has worked at The Old Vic for 12 years, as Chief Operating Officer and then as Executive Director working alongside Artistic Director Matthew Warchus to transform the artistic and social impact of the theatre.

With a focus on broadening audiences, Kate was responsible for evolving The Old Vic's accessible ticket partnership that galvanised and renewed the theatre's audience, alongside

delivering a £20m multi-year, multi-phase programme of capital works to transform the theatre making it accessible for all patrons for the first time in 200 years. Most recently, during the pandemic Kate led the organisation through financially challenging times, supporting the artistic vision for The Old Vic's innovative IN CAMERA series, attracting a global audience alongside employing 300+ freelancers, and providing the theatre and its wider community with a much-needed income stream while theatres remained closed to audiences.

Kate began her career as an employment lawyer at Linklaters before moving to inclusive theatre company Chickenshed. She holds a number of Board positions including the Society of London Theatre (SOLT) and Sheffield Theatres Crucible Trust.

Speaking about her appointment **Kate Varah** said 'I am honoured to have been appointed to work with Rufus Norris and the incredible team at the National Theatre, taking the baton from Lisa Burger who has been an extraordinary force for positive change and innovation. I have had the most amazing 12 years at The Old Vic and I am incredibly proud of what Matthew and I have achieved there together. This move to the National now represents a new and unparalleled opportunity to serve an organisation that I have long admired and respected. Working collaboratively to shape its future as an accessible, inspirational theatre for everyone right across the nation will be a huge joy, privilege and responsibility – and one I'm looking forward to immensely.'

Rufus Norris, Director of the National Theatre commented, "I'm very excited to be welcoming Kate Varah to the National Theatre next year as Executive Director, and I look forward hugely to working in close partnership with her. She is a great leader and a dynamically engaged force within the sector, not least over the last eighteen months. This is a crucial time in the organisation's history and Kate's experience and far-sighted knowledge will be invaluable. Through our conversations over recent months, it is clear that Kate shares many of the NT's values around representation and accessibility, and she is passionate about the role of theatre nationwide. She will be a terrific advocate for and asset to this institution."

Sir Damon Buffini, Chair of the National Theatre added, "I'm delighted that Kate will be joining the NT as our new Executive Director next year. Throughout the competitive recruitment process, I was particularly impressed by her proven experience in expanding social impact alongside her approach to commercial success, which will be of such benefit to the NT. I have

every confidence in Rufus and Kate’s abilities in ensuring the NT continues to thrive for years to come. Finally, along with the whole NT Board, I would like to thank Lisa Burger again for her incredible hard work, dedication and leadership at the National Theatre over the last 20 years.”

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About the National Theatre

The National Theatre’s mission is to make world-class theatre, for everyone.

The NT creates and shares unforgettable stories with audiences across the UK and around the world. On its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home, it strives to be accessible, inclusive and sustainable.

The National Theatre empowers artists and craftspeople to make world-leading work, investing in talent and developing new productions with a wide range of theatre companies at its New Work Department.

Our nation thrives on fresh talent and new ideas, so the National Theatre works with young people and teachers right across the UK through performance, writing and technical programmes to ignite the creativity of the next generation.

Together with communities, the NT creates ambitious works of participatory theatre in deep partnerships that unite theatres and local organisations – showing that nothing brings us together like theatre.

The National Theatre needs your support to shape a bright, creative future.

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