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NATIONAL THEATRE AND SIR PETER SHAFFER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTING PLAYWRIGHTS THROUGH NEW COMMISSIONS

The National Theatre has partnered with the **Sir Peter Shaffer Charitable Foundation** in committing to supporting playwrights with an initial two-year collaboration. Celebrating the life and career of Sir Peter Shaffer, this partnership will continue his desire to support playwrights as they create larger scale plays.

Awarding a total of 14 commissions over the next two years for playwrights from across the UK, the National Theatre's New Work Department will work closely with companies and theatres beyond the capital to identify future talent. Of the seven commissions each year, two will be given for plays being developed by the National Theatre and five will be an open call to theatres and companies from across the UK, working in partnership with the National Theatre. All commissions will be for plays with more than three characters. Details of how to apply for commission support will be available from spring 2022.

Peter Shaffer had a long and creative association with the National Theatre. His play *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, performed at the Old Vic in 1964, was the first premiere of a new play ever produced by the National Theatre. Other celebrated works performed at the National Theatre include *Equus* and *Amadeus*, both of which were made into films, the latter winning 8 Oscars in 1985. *Amadeus* was last performed on the Olivier stage in 2018, in a revival of Michael Longhurst's critically acclaimed 2016 production. Adam Gillen and Lucian Msamati performed the roles of Mozart and Salieri.

Speaking about Peter Shaffer, actor **Lucian Msamati** said: "Sir Peter tinkered for years with the confrontation scene between Mozart and Salieri in *Amadeus* long after the play's acclaim on stage and screen. This obsessive, gleeful, rigorous love and dedication to his craft is mind-blowing and inspirational to me. I can think of no greater way to honour this master storyteller than by nurturing and supporting that same spirit and endeavour in generations of great storytellers to come."

Rufus Norris, Director and Joint Chief Executive of the National Theatre, says: “Theatre-makers create stories we never forget. We’re thrilled to be working in partnership with the Sir Peter Shaffer Charitable Foundation. Peter was one of the great writers of his generation and the National Theatre was enormously lucky to have such a fruitful and creative relationship with him. In nurturing talent from across the UK, this partnership will continue Sir Peter’s legacy, inspiring and supporting emerging talent. Together we can empower artists and craftspeople to make world leading work.”

The New Work Department is the engine room of the National Theatre. It feeds the NT’s stages with new plays, adaptations and musical theatre while providing a developmental resource for a wide range of artists working throughout British theatre at various stages of their careers. In the Studio building, writers, actors and practitioners of all kinds can explore, test-out and devise new work in a supportive environment and experiment with form, prepare for production and workshop material. We host a year-round writer in residence, offer five rooms to writers on attachment, and host the NT Director’s Course, the Immersive Storytelling Studio, the Archive and facilities for learning and development.

ENDS

For further information please contact: [Sophie Wilkinson](#)

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.

For more information, please visit nationaltheatre.org.uk

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