



Application Pack Resident Director

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About Magdalen College School and Oxford Playhouse

Magdalen College School, Oxford and Oxford Playhouse established this one year residency opportunity in 2011. Now in its thirteenth year, we are looking for a talented, ambitious theatre maker to gain experience of professional theatre and apply their learning through a variety of school productions and outreach programmes. The post holder will be employed by the school, with extensive opportunities for developing professional skills and experience, through training, mentoring, shadowing and delivery at Oxford Playhouse.

“The role of Resident Director is varied, rewarding, and creatively enriching. Due to the residency straddling two organisations you work on such a wide variety of projects - working across different venues, at different scales and with different audiences in mind. Each project comes with its own set of challenges, freedom, and rewards. During my time here I’ve kept a directing journal - and despite only being halfway through the year, I have already learnt so many invaluable lessons. I feel incredibly lucky to have had this opportunity so early in my career - it’s been a playground to interrogate my methodology and try out new material. Working with young people has encouraged me to find the balance between process and product, helped me to understand what kind of work I am passionate about making and what kind of director I would like to be. Due to the jam-packed programme of the residency, I have garnered years' worth of learning in only 6 months.”

Lauren Carter - Resident Director 2023

“This is a unique opportunity to take on a lot of varied and exciting work in a relatively short space of time. As resident director with MCS, you have the chance to try out new approaches and forms, with young people who are engaged and enthusiastic with the work. At Oxford Playhouse, the format of the residency has elasticity to make it what you want, and opportunities present themselves throughout the year, be it directing, assisting, or working on strategy; all within a very exciting regional theatre. The people you work with are supportive and talented, so this is an excellent year for growth and to develop your voice as a director.”

Alex Miller - Resident Director 2022

“The role of Resident Director offers emerging artists the chance to develop their practice, focusing on a variety of projects throughout an intensive calendar year. Collaborating with the Resident Producer, you are able to demystify your own creative process; learning how to effectively communicate ideas from page to stage, whilst working within restrictions to materialise your vision for a production. Although posed with the challenge of many different commitments at any one time, each production awards you the time to refine and diversify your evolving methodology, equipping you with the skills to prepare for the next one. Ranging from the Playhouse’s Primary Playmaker showcase to the annual MCS Edinburgh Fringe production, you are afforded the chance to make theatre with creative freedom, working with both students and industry professionals alike. You’re also given the opportunity to learn from other practitioners along the way, assisting on projects like the Oxford Playhouse Pantomime, as well as through various networking events throughout the year. Hosted by not one, but two supportive environments, it is a role that has allowed me to embrace the learning curve, improving confidence in my ability as a theatre-maker.”

Ben Grant – Resident Director 2021

“Being resident director of MCS drama is an opportunity to work on a huge amount of productions in a relatively small amount of time. As resident director you program the majority of the drama at the school

for the year so you drive the theatrical and educational principles the children will be learning while you are there. You also work with The Oxford Playhouse assisting on the pantomime and working on some of the outreach projects. It is a year to test out some artistic ideals and experiment with who you are as an artist and facilitator.”

Samson Hawkins – Resident Director 2018

Please see the video that accompanies this application pack outlining the role of the Resident Director (and Producer), including an interview with Eleanor Warr, Resident Director 2019-21.

Magdalen College School, founded in 1480 by William of Waynflete, is one of the country’s leading independent day schools. Situated in an enviable location at the heart of Oxford beside the river Cherwell the school has an excellent reputation for academic, sporting and artistic success. MCS educates boys from 7-18 and girls as well as boys in the Sixth Form. Further details can be found on the website: www.mcsoxford.org

The school has a long tradition of interest in drama, extending back at least to the 17th century. In recent times, it has been particularly keen to explore and consolidate this tradition. Recent former pupils include directors John Caird and Sam Mendes.

In expanding all aspects of its extra-curricular tradition over the past six years, the school has increasingly involved professional experts. Following the success of two productions directed by Tom Attenborough (one of Chapman’s *The Gentleman Usher* and the other of a musical commissioned about the life of former pupil, Ivor Novello), and a production at Blenheim Palace of Sheridan’s *The Critic* directed by Adrian Noble and Joanne Pearce Noble, the school finalised with Oxford Playhouse the current ground-breaking agreement. MCS’s inaugural performance at Oxford Playhouse, *Aeneid: The Journey*, took place in July 2012. This was followed by the world premieres of adaptations of William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* in 2013, of Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King* in 2014, of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* in 2015, and Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* in 2016.

Drama thrives at the school, with around twelve productions being staged in any year. One production per year usually transfers to the Edinburgh Fringe. Other regular productions include a large-scale musical (most recently *Oklahoma!*, *Anything Goes*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*), an outdoor Shakespeare or equivalent (recently *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *As you like it*) an annual Classical play (recently *Tales from Ovid* and *Medea*). The summer production in Oxford Playhouse is the most ambitious project in the year, with a large cast drawn from all age groups and a professional creative team. Recent projects have included the world premiere of *Birdland*, a new musical by renowned composer Bob Chilcott, and an acclaimed new adaptation of *The Hobbit* in 2023.

There is a diversity of other productions, for pupils of all age groups, including plenty of opportunities for pupils to take a lead with directing, producing or managing technical aspects of productions. Recent additions to the annual drama programme have included a site-specific production in Oxford’s university church based on the trials of the Oxford Martyrs and a ‘strolling players’ tour of the West Country. Two productions a year take place in the Burton Taylor studio at the Playhouse, one of which transfers to Edinburgh. The school also has a partnership with the Pegasus Theatre, which provides a professional space for our Theatre Academy (including both performance and technical groups).

The school is committed to fostering creative and cultural opportunities within the wider community, and hosts an annual Arts Festival in June-July each year which forms a particular focus for its partnership work. Recent community engagement projects with a theatrical focus have included workshops for primary school children in connection with the Oxford Playhouse productions and involvement in the National Theatre Connections project. Further details about Magdalen College School’s partnership work can be found [here](#).

Oxford Playhouse: A Playhouse for Everyone

Oxford Playhouse is a registered charity, positioned in the cultural heart of Oxfordshire. The Playhouse has been inspiring, engaging and entertaining a wide-reaching and diverse audience since 1938. We deliver exceptional cultural experiences for all by presenting, producing, and touring the highest quality middle-scale, small-scale and off-site theatre, supporting and nurturing artists and through our imaginative community and participation programme.

Oxford Playhouse has an outstanding record of success presenting and producing an ambitious programme which includes the finest national and international touring drama, family shows, contemporary dance, music, circus, comedy and spoken word, in its main auditorium (640) and **Burton Taylor Studio** (50). Our **Playhouse Plays Out** programme is designed to reach new audiences giving people the chance to see unexpected theatre in unexpected places. Our last **Plays Out Tent** tour in Summer 2022 reached 2,933 children/families in deprived areas in Oxfordshire. We present regular **student and community group productions** on the main stage, and the BT studio houses over 40 student drama productions during the academic year, alongside a professional programme of original work by diverse artists. We continue to develop our digital-stage, streaming and on-demand events.

Oxford Playhouse has a **commitment to co-producing new productions on the midscale**, touring nationally and internationally: reimagining classics and creating new ones of our own. Our most recent co-productions include *Wuthering Heights* (with China Plate, Inspector Sands and Royal & Derngate), *Persuasion* (with the Rose Theatre and Alexandra Palace) and *George Sand's Gabriel* (the Cameron Mackintosh Fund with University College).

Oxford Playhouse's creative learning programme encourages lifelong creativity from Early Years to Older People. We work with many Cultural Partners, and with organisations such as AGE UK, KEEN, BeFree Young Carers and Oxford Association for the Blind on bespoke participation projects.

Oxford Playhouse's **artist development scheme *Evolve*** provides support for artists including funding, space, and mentoring. ***Playhouse Playmaker*** supports playwrights at all stages of their career, with specific strands for primary school pupils and young writers. We also produce **Offbeat**, an annual festival of new work in partnership with Arts at the Old Fire Station.

Applying for Resident Director:

Terms: Although the post will reflect the school's academic year of 1st September 2024 through to 31st August 2025 it will, as part of the contracted period, include school induction days and additional handover periods with the current post holders through the summer of 2024. Given the nature of the role the post-holder will be required to work during weekends and evenings during, and in the run-up to, productions.

Salary: £26,425 pa (full time)

Probationary Period: Three months

Holiday: 30 days pro rata paid holiday each year, plus normal UK public holidays, reflects the occasional anti-social hours necessarily required in drama production and performances. Holidays may be taken, in consultation with line managers, at any point during the school year, but it is usual for this to be within published school holidays.

Applications:

The application form is an important part of the selection process. To ensure fairness to all applicants, any decision to shortlist you for interview will be based solely on the information you supply on your application form. Ensure you read the job description and person specification before you start to complete the form. It is important you give as much information as relevant regarding why you wish to apply and what makes you a suitable applicant.

You can download a version of the application form from www.mcsoxford.org or www.oxfordplayhouse.com or contact Gail Workman on recruitment@mcsoxford.org or 01865 242191. Please complete the application form in black type. If you have any difficulty completing this form please do let us know and we will arrange an alternative means of application with you.

Applications in the form of CVs will not be considered: please do not attach CV, references or educational certificates to your application form.

If you need to attach a continuation sheet, please mark your name clearly at the top of the sheet. Please limit continuation sheets to one side of A4.

We welcome applications from all sections of the community – diversity is crucial to our success.

Oxford Playhouse and Magdalen College School are committed to the safeguarding of children and young people, and the successful candidate will be required to undergo statutory safeguarding checks before the commencement of their employment. Due to the nature of this post:

- 1) Self Disclosure: all applicants will be required to complete a self-disclosure statement.
- 2) Full DBS enhanced disclosure will be required in the event of an individual being offered the position: the candidate will be required to produce necessary documentation for the processing of a DBS check, details of which will be provided if we invite you to interview.

Completed applications should be **emailed** to recruitment@mcsoxford.org using the subject headline “**MCS Resident Director**” together with the equal opportunities monitoring form.

Applications should arrive no later than 12 noon Friday 3 May 2024.

Long-listed candidates will be invited to an online interview in the week beginning Monday 6 May. Final round candidates will be invited to an in-person interview on Thursday 16 May. If you do not hear from

us, (usually within 7 working days of the closing date), unfortunately, on this occasion you have been unsuccessful.

Job Title:	Resident Director
Based at:	Magdalen College School (Working from Oxford Playhouse on 1 day each week)
Reports to:	Head of Drama and Deputy Head (Education Development) – MCS Head of Participation & Artist Development – Oxford Playhouse

Magdalen College School, Oxford and Oxford Playhouse have created this opportunity to enable a talented, ambitious theatre maker to gain experience of professional theatre and apply their learning through a variety of school productions and outreach programmes. The post holder will undertake a wide variety of duties across both organisations, with opportunities for mentoring, training and shadowing from Oxford Playhouse. The role will be working with the Resident Producer and the Programme, Participation & Artist Development team at Oxford Playhouse.

Main tasks and responsibilities:

The Resident Director will work closely with the Head of Drama to maintain and develop the artistic and professional standards of Magdalen College School drama productions. This will include leading weekly sessions for the MCS Theatre Academy group (years 9-11), devising and delivering a broad range of skills development workshops for the students.

The Resident Director will be expected to direct at least three of the school's productions over the year, working with a range of age groups. This will include reading scripts and choosing the title and aims for each production in agreement with the Resident Producer and Head of Drama. The Resident Director is expected to generate the overall vision and concept, hold auditions and cast, take rehearsals and lead the technical rehearsals. The students' skills and abilities should be developed through this process in a creative and supportive manner. The Resident Director will lead the lower school Theatre Academy, for years 7-8, which performs at least one play during the course of the year. The resident director will usually take a school production (with a Sixth-Form cast) to the Edinburgh Fringe (or equivalent tour) during August.

The Resident Director will normally assist on the main summer production in Oxford Playhouse as part of the Arts Festival.

The Resident Director will also be expected to contribute to our extensive outreach programme by assisting with drama-related activities through the school or the Playhouse. We have recently evolved the school's Community Service Organisation to include a drama-based option, bringing a piece of theatre to local primary schools.

Opportunities with Oxford Playhouse will be tailored, as best as possible, to the individual interests of the Resident Director post-holder. The theatre will provide mentoring and advice, throughout the year, including hands-on support with project management, funding applications, budget-writing, contracts, career development and industry introductions.

The Resident Director will work as Assistant Director on Oxford Playhouse's pantomime *Sleeping Beauty*, with specific responsibility for preparing the Young Company (16x young performers between the ages of 11 and 15 years old). The role will support the Director, Toby Hulse, in full company rehearsals both through creative input and administrative tasks, ensuring good communication between the creative team and staff. The Resident Director will be expected to lead on line runs, understudy rehearsals and visit the show on a weekly basis to give notes to the company.

Further opportunities include leading and supporting the planning and delivery of Youth Theatre skills sessions at the Playhouse, as well as provide both administrative and dramaturgical support across Playhouse artist development schemes. Opportunities to direct and assistant/associate direct on Playhouse productions

can be explored across the year, with previous examples including directing extracts of new writing from the Playhouse Playmaker scheme, co-directing short plays written by primary school children on our Primary Playmaker scheme, and assistant directing on the Playhouse Plays Out Tent community tour project.

The Resident Director will contribute to the professional working culture of the theatre, and will be able to volunteer to join OP staff working groups that focus on specific areas such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Environmental Sustainability.

For the duration of the residency the Resident Director will be expected to work within the policies and procedures of both organisation and ensure safe, legal, and supportive working practices are maintained and undertake any other duties reasonably requested or required to fulfil the objectives of the role.

Skills and Experience

- Proven previous directing experience.
- Serious interest in and understanding of the current theatre landscape.
- Previous experience of working with young people in participatory arts.
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to keep calm under pressure
- Organised and efficient, able to prioritise and take initiative

Personal Attributes

- Passionate and inquisitive about theatre making and directing
- A genuine desire to further develop your directing skills
- Proactive, hard-working individual
- Naturally collaborative, with enthusiasm and an ambition to succeed
- A team player who is sensitive to colleagues' pressures and instinctively supportive
- Ability to work long and unsociable hours