RECRUITMENT PACK
CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND TRUSTEES

Photo: Anton Gorlenko

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INTRODUCTION

The Yard Theatre is currently recruiting a new Chair of Trustees, and also welcoming applications for Trustee vacancies.

The Yard Theatre has an extraordinary story.

Founded by Artistic Director Jay Miller in an East London warehouse in 2011, with just a £9000 grant, The Yard went onto become *“a mecca for some of the most interesting theatre in Britain”* (Vogue) and to win its first Olivier Award in 2025.

The Yard is also at an extraordinary moment.

In 2026, following a 14-month £6.7m capital development project, we opened the new Yard Theatre, featuring a 250-capacity auditorium and 300-capacity bar. This building will be the home of innovative and popular new theatre which redefines the canon and generates increased financial sustainability for the charity - starting with an opening season featuring Ian McKellen, debut playwrights, and a five-star Barbiedoll bonkbuster.

At this moment, we need to capitalise on our progress to date and realise the potential of our new home - launching productions in Hackney Wick that go onto international tours, developing the talents of young people and professional artists, and bringing together one of London’s youngest audiences.

We need your help to do this.

We are looking for individuals to lead and join our trustee board and to bring the leadership, skills, experience and networks we need to realise the potential of the new Yard Theatre.

Below we’ve listed more about The Yard and what we are looking for. If you’ve got any questions, or to

find out more, contact our search consultant Todd Heppenstall: todd@th-consulting.uk.

We can't wait to hear from you.

A NOTE FROM OUR ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

As joint leaders of The Yard, we work to create the contexts for artists to take creative leaps, and for audiences to gather together to learn, cry and laugh with each other.

We are driven by a restless ambition and a focus on entrepreneurialism and new ideas. From Jay's founding of The Yard to our efforts to fundraise for our new building, to our future plans to tour the UK, we are always thinking about how to develop what The Yard is – how to grow, how to change.

We look to our trustees, and in particular our Chair, to support and guide these efforts. To ask good, sometimes challenging, questions. To share their professional experience and insights. To connect us and our team with the people who might help us realise our goals. To represent The Yard to the public. And to safeguard the charitable objectives and responsibilities of the organisation.

At this particular moment, we need a board who will help us realise the potential of our new building. This is as much about achieving a healthy profit from our new bar, as it is about partnering with commercial producers to share work with large audiences, or welcoming local children in our space.

So we're looking for a Chair and Trustees who understand the balance we have to strike every day: taking real artistic risk whilst embracing the

potential of our box office, inspiring significant philanthropic funding without losing independence.

The Yard is at the start of a new chapter – full of challenge and opportunity, fun and hard work. Come be part of it with us.

Jay Miller, Artistic Director and Founder, and Ashleigh Wheeler, Executive Director

ABOUT THE YARD THEATRE

***"A mecca for some of the most interesting theatre in Britain"* – British Vogue**

For 15 years, The Yard Theatre has been generating a pipeline of world-class theatrical talent representative of the diversity of East London, experimenting with the edges of theatre's form, supporting local communities to thrive through

creativity, and modelling sustainable growth – all from our vibrant home in Queen's Yard, Hackney Wick.

The Yard was founded in 2011 by Artistic Director Jay Miller, who transformed a derelict warehouse into a theatre and bar with a £9,600 grant from the Arts Council. Much of it was made with scaffolding and other recycled or reclaimed materials.

Since its founding The Yard has won a number of awards for its work, the latest an Olivier Award for Best New Production in an Affiliate Theatre for Jay's production of *The Glass Menagerie.*

In 2026, The Yard Theatre opened its new building, designed by RIBA Award-winning Takero Shimazaki Architects and supported with over £6.7m in grants and donations including from Arts Council England, Greater London Authority, and London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The Yard Theatre is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation.

OUR NEW HOME AND PROGRAMME

Our new theatre includes:

- A 250-capacity auditorium
- A 300-capacity bar
- A dedicated young artists' space
- Offices, dressing rooms and back of house facilities

The theatre has been designed to the highest quality sustainability specifications, with new heat pumps, solar panels, a natural ventilation tower and an innovative recycled (colourful) brick product.

We opened with a six-production first season, including Ian McKellen in *Lear*, written by Artistic Director Jay Miller and playwright Simon Stephens; a 50th anniversary revival of Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*, a new stage adaptation of *Mrs Dalloway,* and a debut play by writer Troy Hunter.

Tickets in every production start at £10, with £5 tickets on the door for under 27s.

We also launched *The Collections*, new commissions and live events bringing together theatre-makers with visual artists, musicians and dancers in partnership with organisations across Hackney and East Bank, including Ed Atkins, Jeremy Deller, Antony Gormley and Janet Kay, funded by an Arts Council England Major Project Grant.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At this moment of transition, from building project to producing theatre, we are currently recruiting a new Chair of Trustees, and welcome applications for trustee vacancies alongside this role.

The Trustee Board governs The Yard Theatre as a registered charity. Trustees oversee organisational strategy; provide guidance, expertise and contacts to the team; hold the Executive team to account; represent The Yard externally; and ensure the organisation’s compliance with legal and charitable obligations.

The Trustee Board meets for four scheduled Board meetings per year, alongside committee meetings, working group meetings, events at the theatre and coffees with the team.

THE ROLE: CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

We are looking for an experienced leader to chair our Board of Trustees. The Chair provides strategic and clear leadership to the Board, works closely with the Executive team to ensure that we deliver our vision and charitable objectives, and acts as an ambassador for the organisation.

Responsibilities

- Bring leadership to the Board and provide support to the Executive team, ensuring The Yard achieves its strategic aims and meets the needs of its audiences and its charitable objectives.
- Engage proactively with The Yard's strategy for fundraising and income generation, acting as an external ambassador and advocate for the organisation.
- Work closely with the Executive team so that Board meetings are well planned and address all matters that fall within the remit of the Board; plan the annual cycle of meetings, agree agendas, and ensure the Board receives appropriate and timely papers.
- Chair Board meetings openly, effectively, and impartially, ensuring Trustees work collaboratively to make decisions in the best interests of The Yard and in accordance with its governing documents.
- Work with the Board to review risk and ensure systems are in place to identify and manage risk, as well as to take advantage of opportunities – particularly as the current capital project reaches its end.
- Conduct regular reviews of Board effectiveness and the skillset of Board members to ensure skills align with the organisation's evolving needs.
- Provide support and challenge to the Executive team, maintaining close and regular

communication, developing a good working relationship, and conducting individual annual appraisals.
- Foster good relationships with existing stakeholders and funders, and in particular the principal grant funder, Arts Council England.
- Attend the Finance Committee as an ex-officio member, and the Nominations Committee when appropriate.

Person specification

The ideal candidate will bring:

- Proven leadership – of a board, or of a comparable organisation.
- Excellent leadership skills and the ability to distinguish between governance and management.
- An understanding of financial management and strategy, in particular in respect of charity finances and funding.
- Strong personal and professional networks you're willing to bring to The Yard to help deliver its vision.
- A commitment to widening the diversity of our current Board.
- The time and energy to commit to the Yard.

What is most valuable to us at the moment:

- Experience bringing in revenue from creative or commercial products.
- An ability to successfully fundraise.
- A connection to what we do – our programme, vision, or values.
- A personality that takes both the role and the mission seriously – curiosity about innovation and new ideas in drama, and an entrepreneurial streak.
- The ability to be both sensitive and strong. In a polarised (sometimes difficult) world, an ability to enable and hold complex conversations.

THE ROLE: TRUSTEES

Alongside our new Chair, we are recruiting for several Trustee vacancies. Trustees are expected to champion The Yard, contribute to decision-making, and provide specialist advice in areas relevant to their expertise – while also fulfilling the statutory duties of a charity trustee.

Responsibilities:

- Contribute your own expertise, network, and perspective to specific parts of The Yard's strategy.
- Champion The Yard and act as an ambassador for the organisation, including helping us fundraise and extend our network.
- Ensure The Yard complies with its governing document, charity law, and any other relevant legislation.
- Contribute to the Board's strategic direction, and help evaluate performance against agreed targets.
- Safeguard the good name, values, and financial stability of the organisation.

Person specification

The ideal candidate will bring:

- Excellent leadership skills and the ability to think strategically.
- The ability to evaluate, analyse, scrutinise, and where appropriate challenge information relating to The Yard.
- An understanding of charity governance, and in particular an understanding of the balance between governance and management.
- An understanding of financial management and strategy, in particular in respect of charity finances and funding.

- Strong personal and professional networks you're willing to bring to The Yard to help deliver its vision.
- A commitment to widening the diversity of our current Board.
- The time and energy to commit to the Yard.

What is most valuable to us at the moment:

- Commercial producing, sales, or marketing for arts or live events.
- Strategic communications – positioning, PR, brand, and profile.
- Fundraising for an arts organisation.
- Working as an artist in theatre or other areas of culture.
- Those who know how and who to manage at large statutory funding organisations.
- Those with experience of commercial food & beverage operations.
- Those with experience of commercial property development.

Your style and your story matters as much as your professional CV.

We're looking for people happy to roll their sleeves up alongside the Executive team, but who can also act as ambassadors for The Yard.

We also have a commitment to reflecting the incredible cultural and social diversity of East London, so we are keen to widen the diversity of our board. We encourage applications from people who would bring a range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences to the conversations at Board level in light of this aim.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT AND TIME COMMITMENT

These are voluntary positions. Reasonable expenses (travel, childcare, access support) can be reimbursed on request.

- Term: 3 years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- Board meetings: 4 per year, plus subcommittee meetings and working group meetings where required.
- Attendance at press nights, performances, and other events.
- Coffees, informal chats and working sessions with the Executive team and wider team as needed.
- The Chair also has a particular role in nurturing and developing partnerships with key donors, funders, and potential funders, and is the main point of contact between the Board and Arts Council England.

Time commitment for the Chair is likely to be 3–4 days per month.

Time commitment for Trustees is typically lighter than for the Chair outside of Board meetings – usually a few hours a month.

We are committed to removing barriers and making participation possible for everyone. Please let us know if you have accessibility requirements, caring responsibilities, or other support needs which you would need met to take up this opportunity.

HOW TO APPLY

The Yard Theatre is partnering with search consultant Todd Heppenstall on these appointments.

Step 1: Arrange an informal conversation (optional)

Email Todd at todd@th-consulting.uk

Step 2: Submit your application

Send your CV and a short statement (maximum 500 words) telling us about you and answering:

- What interests you about this role?
- What you would bring to The Yard?
- What you would get out of it?

You may submit your statement as: text, letter, PowerPoint, video, or audio message.

Please let us know in your statement whether you are applying to be considered for the Chair position, a Trustee position, or would be open to either.

Please upload your application via the TH Consulting website by following this link.

Key Dates:

- Deadline: noon on Friday 16th October 2026
- Interviews: wc 19th and 26th October 2026
- Appointment confirmed: by end November 2026