

Leeds
Heritage
Theatres



Director of Programme



War Horse's 'Joey' on stage
at Leeds Grand Theatre
Photo: Ant Robling

Director of Programme

- Full time, based in Leeds with some hybrid working
- £70,000 per annum + benefits
- 33 days annual leave + bank holidays
- Applications close:
Mon 16 November 2026
- Preliminary interviews:
Tue 24 November and
Wed 25 November 2026 (online)
- Final interviews:
Mon 7 December 2026
(in person in Leeds)



High Society

Photo: Pamela Raith Photography

Welcome from the Chief Executive

Thank you for your interest in becoming Director of Programme at Leeds Heritage Theatres.



This is an exciting moment for our organisation. We have an ambitious vision for the future: to build on the extraordinary heritage of our venues while re-imagining the role they can play in the cultural life of Leeds and beyond.

Across Leeds Grand Theatre, City Varieties Music Hall and Hyde Park Picture House, we want to bring people together through vibrant, creative experiences that cross artforms, spark ideas and create connections. We want our venues to be places of congregation, engagement, excitement and welcome – rooted in Leeds, while connecting the city with exceptional work from across the UK and around the world.

The Director of Programme will be central to realising this ambition. Building on our existing strengths, you will lead and evolve a diverse programme, expanding the range of work we present to include more dance and contemporary circus, bringing more independent theatre to Leeds and creating opportunities for ambitious artists and companies creating bold new work to our stages.

Working closely with me, you will combine artistic ambition with audience insight and commercial acumen, balancing work that attracts large audiences with work that takes risks, develops new audiences and broadens the creative identity of our venues. You will lead an experienced team, develop new partnerships and help shape the wider creative direction of Leeds Heritage Theatres.

We are looking for someone with imagination, curiosity and ambition; someone who wants to make exceptional things happen and who is excited by the opportunity to help shape the next creative chapter of Leeds Heritage Theatres.

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Vicky Cheetham

Chief Executive Officer

Leeds Heritage Theatres



About Leeds Heritage Theatres

Leeds Heritage Theatres (LHT) manages three unique historic venues in the city of Leeds and delivers a world-class cultural programme that is diverse and wide-ranging.



Opera North, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Photo: Tristram Kenton



LHT Explore Family Events Programme
Photo: Daniel Johnson Gray

A cornerstone of the city's cultural life and a landmark of Victorian elegance, **Leeds Grand Theatre** is our largest venue, seating approximately 1,500 people. The Grand hosts touring productions from major West End and international producers, including large-scale musicals, drama and stand-up comedy. We are also developing the theatre's music programme, introducing more contemporary music and broadening the range of artists and audiences we welcome. We are proud to be home to two of the country's leading performing arts companies: Opera North, who are resident at the Grand for three seasons each year, and Northern Ballet, who bring two or three seasons of exceptional dance to our stage annually. The Grand is complemented by the Howard Grand Hall, a space for around 80 people, alongside several bars and studio spaces.

Established in 1865 as a room above a pub, **City Varieties Music Hall** is one of Leeds' cultural gems and the Guinness World Record holder for the nation's longest-running music hall. Today, the 467-seat venue builds on that extraordinary heritage with a vibrant programme of live comedy, music, variety, cabaret and spoken word, and is home to Leeds Heritage Theatres' hugely popular annual Rock 'n' Roll Panto. Its intimate scale and distinctive character create space for work that is bold, playful and unexpected, while continuing the venue's long tradition of entertainment, experimentation and reinvention.

Our Purpose

Where creativity thrives, and stories unfold.

Our Mission

We bring people together through vibrant, creative experiences that cross artforms, spark ideas and celebrate shared stories. Across our historic venues, we welcome artists and communities to create, collaborate and discover new possibilities.

At our core is a commitment to developing skills, widening access and a sustainable future. With openness, care and curiosity, we champion work that is inclusive, adventurous, and rooted in the cultural heartbeat of Leeds. Our programmes resonate locally, across the UK and around the world.

Our Vision

Leeds Heritage Theatres will be a hub of creativity, celebrating the work of local, national and international artists and the human connection of arts and culture.

Our work will be underpinned by excellence, skill, inclusivity, collaboration, learning and generosity, and will be visible at home in Leeds but also regionally, nationally and virtually. Our physical and digital sites will be places of congregation, engagement, excitement and welcome. We will always be future-facing and outwards-facing, whilst recognising our heritage and our history.

Our Values

Creativity

We push boundaries, embrace imagination, and spark new ideas to inspire and transform every aspect of our work.

Integrity

We act with honesty and accountability. We make ethical decisions, maintain transparency, and build trust in every action and interaction.

Inclusivity

We remove barriers and create spaces where all voices are heard, valued, and empowered to create, lead and belong.

Passion

We have energy, commitment, and a deep love for the arts. It's the driving force behind all our work, igniting creativity and inspiring action.

Recently re-opened in June 2023 following a major restoration, **Hyde Park Picture House** is one of the world's last surviving gas-lit cinemas and a much-loved part of Leeds' cultural landscape. The Picture House presents a distinctive programme of independent, international and archival cinema alongside new releases, documentaries and family films, creating opportunities for audiences to discover different filmmakers, stories and perspectives. The venue has two screens, with approximately 275 and 52 seats, alongside flexible foyer, café and breakout spaces supporting community, learning and private events.

Together, our three venues create a **multi-venue, multi-artform** cultural campus, enabling us to connect theatre, dance, music, comedy, circus, film and participation in new ways. Throughout the year, curated series and festivals bring the venues together around shared ideas, artists and audiences, with two major moments – Wintertime and Explore –

creating opportunities for ambitious work to move across our spaces and for artforms to intersect. Our Associate Artist programme sits alongside this, building longer-term relationships with artists, supporting creative development and bringing new ideas and perspectives into the organisation. Together, these strands allow audiences to experience the breadth of Leeds Heritage Theatres as one connected cultural organisation.

Alongside performance and film, Leeds Heritage Theatres delivers an ambitious and far-reaching **Learning & Engagement** programme, providing opportunities for thousands of people to be involved each year. Activities include school partnerships, work experience weeks, after school clubs, tours, animation workshops, technical skills training with Leeds City College, Leeds Grand Youth Theatre, and the vocational Leeds Actors in Training programme.

Our Venues: A Snapshot



Leeds Grand Theatre & Opera House

BUILT:
1878

SEATS:
c.1500

2025-26
314 performances
286,144 tickets



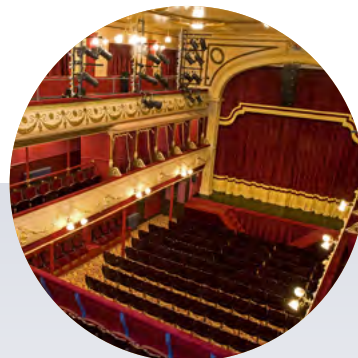
Hyde Park Picture House

BUILT:
1914

Screen 1: **250** • Screen 2: **50**

2025-26
2,376 screenings
91,409 tickets

Photo: Aaron Cawood



City Varieties Music Hall

BUILT:
1865

SEATS:
467

2025-26
270 performances (63 pantomime)
91,721 tickets (26,282 pantomime)



Learning & Engagement

Participants reached through
L&E activity (all venues):

18,033

Number of learning sessions delivered:

503

Amount invested by LHT
into L&E activity:

£237,016

Bursary places funded to increase access
and diversity:

17 Places across LAIT and
Youth Theatre (26%)

16% of 'LHT Unwrapped'
School Holiday Activity

We have seen a **27% increase** in
participation from young people from
areas of multiple deprivation,
and a **33% increase** in participants
from the Global Majority.



Leeds Grand Youth Theatre's production of
Disney's Beauty and the Beast, July 2026.

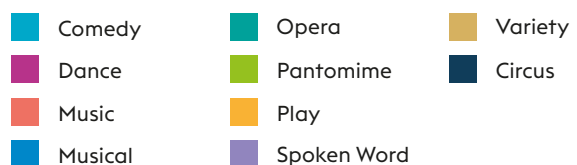
Photo: Chris Coote



Northern Ballet, Gentleman Jack
Photo: Emily Nuttall

Artform Breakdown 2025/26

Leeds Grand Theatre and City Varieties Music Hall

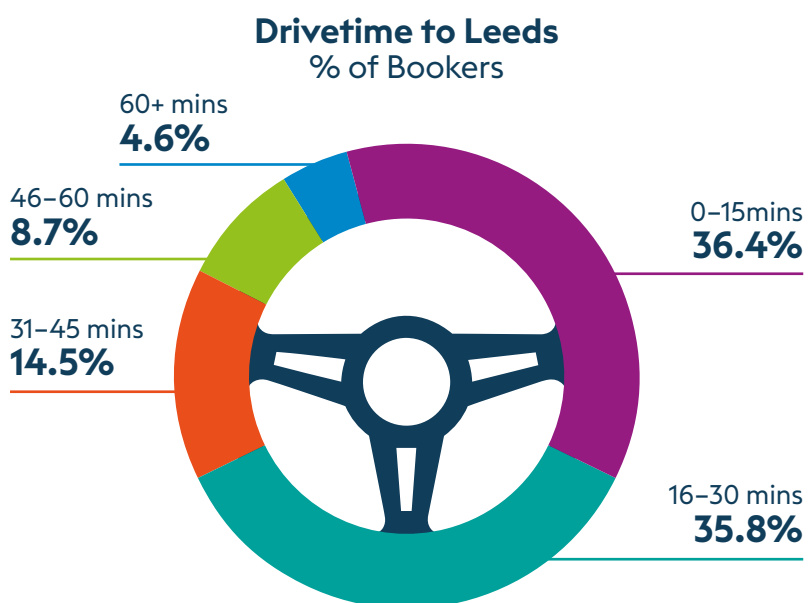
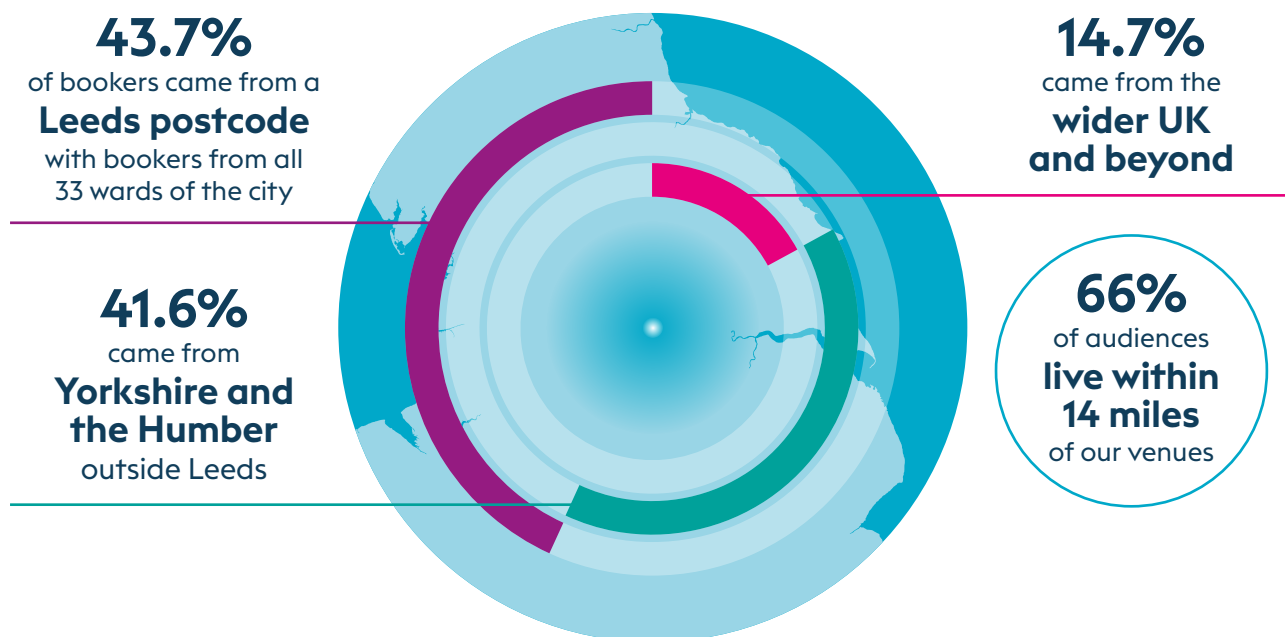


“Love a musical or a show. It’s good for
the brain and makes you forget about
your worries for a couple hours”

Audience Member

Our Audiences

In 2025/26, just over 469,000 people attended a performance, screening or event at a Leeds Heritage Theatres venue.



“I adore Leeds Grand, it’s a beautiful building and always a pleasure to come!”

Audience Member



Photo: Ollie Jenkins

Booking Crossover Between LHT Venues 25/26

Venues	% of Bookers	Number of Bookers
Leeds Grand Theatre and City Varieties	5.60%	6,524
Leeds Grand Theatre and Hyde Park Picture House	1.50%	1,746
City Varieties and Hyde Park Picture House	0.70%	853
All three venues	0.41%	476

“Love smaller intimate venues like City Varieties”

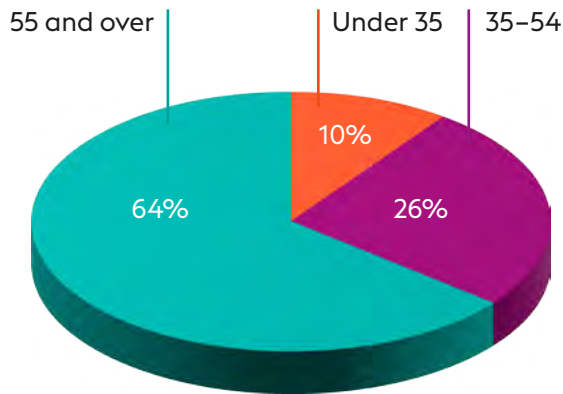
Audience Member

“Good films... I have been visiting Hyde Park Picture House for 10 years”

Audience Member

Demographics

(taken from post-show surveys)



17% of audiences identified as D/deaf and/or have a physical or mental health condition or illness expected to last 12 months or more.

Ethnicity	
Asian/Asian British	1%
Black/Black British	0.5%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	1%
White/White British	93%
Any other ethnic group, or none of the above	0.5%
Prefer to self-describe	2%
Prefer not to say	2%



City Varieties, Rock 'n' Roll Panto
Photo: Ant Robling

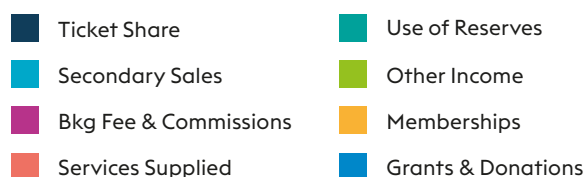
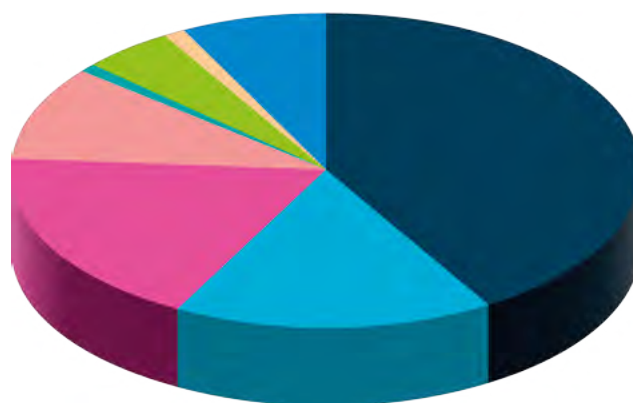
Financial Overview

Leeds Heritage Theatres is a registered charity and a Limited Company. The majority of the organisation's income is self-generated through performances, screenings and ancillary sales.

Leeds Heritage Theatres has a close working relationship with Leeds City Council from whom it leases Leeds Grand Theatre on a peppercorn rent. City Varieties Music Hall and Hyde Park Picture House are owned by the charity. In addition, Leeds Heritage Theatres applies for funding from the Council and supports city-wide objectives to engage the whole community in culture, provide routes for young people into employment, and grow the visitor economy.

Some of our major funders include The Keith Howard Foundation, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, The Garfield Weston Foundation, and the Theatres Trust, as well as sizeable gifts from private donors.

**Leeds Heritage Theatres
Income Sources 2025/26**



Mrs Doubtfire: The Comedy Musical
Photo: Matt Crockett



Our City & Region

Leeds is a city with ambition woven into its character. One of the UK's leading regional economies, it combines the energy of a major commercial centre with Yorkshire warmth, independence and creativity.

Home to Channel 4's national headquarters outside London, a thriving digital and financial sector, and one of the country's most dynamic creative communities, Leeds continues to shape conversations about culture, innovation and inclusive growth.

For those working in culture, Leeds is especially rewarding. Alongside its theatres, galleries, music venues, festivals, independent cinemas and creative organisations, the city offers a strong sense of place, from Kirkstall Abbey and Victorian arcades to its industrial heritage and contemporary waterfront. The wider region adds even more: the Yorkshire Dales,

Nidderdale and the North York Moors are all within easy reach, offering exceptional countryside, walking, cycling and outdoor adventure.

Leeds is exceptionally well connected, with direct rail links to London, Manchester, York, Sheffield, Newcastle, Edinburgh and the east coast, and Leeds Bradford Airport providing connections across Europe and beyond. It is a city where an ambitious and fulfilling cultural career can sit comfortably alongside a vibrant city life, an outstanding food and music scene, and easy access to some of the UK's most beautiful countryside.



Director of Programme

Role Profile & Person Specification

Organisation & Leadership Structure

The Director of Programme is an executive role within Leeds Heritage Theatres, reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer and working alongside colleagues responsible for Marketing & Communications, Technical & Property, Finance, Governance & Business Services, House Management, Learning & Engagement and Development.

Role Overview

As a member of the Executive Team, you will lead an ambitious programme across theatre, dance, contemporary circus, music, cinema, comedy, spoken word and festivals – building on our strengths while bringing more dance, circus, contemporary music and the best independent theatre to Leeds.

Leading our Artistic Division and working with an experienced programming team, you will combine artistic ambition, audience insight and commercial acumen to shape a distinctive and sustainable programme across three very different venues. You will build significant relationships with artists, producers and partners in Leeds, across the UK and internationally, while leading major projects, festivals, cross-venue series and our Associate Artist programme.

As our principal artistic advocate, you will champion Leeds Heritage Theatres across the cultural sector, create new opportunities for artists and audiences, and help establish our venues as places where ambitious work is curated and discovered.

Key Responsibilities

1. Artistic Leadership and Strategy

Lead the development and delivery of Leeds Heritage Theatres' artistic vision, creative direction and a coherent programming strategy spanning theatre, dance, music, cinema, comedy, spoken word and festival across Leeds Grand Theatre, City Varieties Music Hall and Hyde Park Picture House,

Curate and oversee a diverse, ambitious portfolio balancing contemporary, classic, popular and experimental work, ensuring artistic excellence, audience relevance, accessibility and inclusion alongside financial sustainability and appropriate creative risk-taking.

Identify and champion emerging artistic trends, talent, partnerships and opportunities, collaborating with artists, producers and cultural organisations to bring innovative work to Leeds and strengthen the organisation's cultural relevance, profile and impact.

Ensure artistic activity supports wider organisational objectives, including engagement, audience development, learning, inclusion and civic impact, while acting as a visible advocate for Leeds Heritage Theatres locally, nationally and internationally.



Miss Saigon
Photo: Danny Kaan



Fiddler On The Roof
Photo: Marc Brenner

2. Leadership of the Artistic Division

Lead, mentor and inspire a high-performing Artistic Division, setting clear objectives, managing performance and supporting professional development while fostering a culture of sustained ambition, innovation and inclusiveness.

Foster a collaborative and integrated approach to artistic planning across the three venues, ensuring programmes align with strategy, audience objectives and financial targets.

Ensure effective communication and collaboration between artistic, operational, technical, commercial, learning and audience-facing teams.

Oversee the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of artistic activity, working with senior colleagues and contributing to decision-making to achieve organisational objectives.

3. Festivals, Special Projects and Artistic Initiatives

Develop and lead a distinctive portfolio of cross-artform festivals, themed seasons and special projects, including city-wide partnerships, anniversary programmes and major initiatives.

Champion Leeds Grand Theatre as a leading destination for large-scale dance and physical performance, strengthening its reputation for dance through partnerships with local, national and international companies, artists, producers and cultural organisations.

Identify and develop opportunities for co-productions, commissions, artist residencies and collaborative projects, working with the Head of Development and external partners to secure investment, sponsorship and funding.

4. Resident Companies and Strategic Relationships

Act as senior relationship lead for Opera North and Northern Ballet, aligning programming, future planning, audience development, venue utilisation and shared artistic and commercial ambitions.

Lead on the Associate Artist programme and other strategic artistic partnerships, building strong and productive relationships that advance organisational objectives.

Identify and develop opportunities for collaboration, co-creation, co-productions and joint artistic initiatives, maximising the value, profile and impact of resident company and strategic partner relationships.

5. Artistic Partnerships and Sector Influence

Build and maintain strong relationships with local, national and international artists, companies, producers, festivals and cultural organisations, fostering collaboration around new work, commissions, co-productions and artistic innovation.

Be a visible and influential advocate for the organisation through presence at sector events, conferences and industry forums.



Tina: The Musical

The Constant Wife
Photo: Mihaela Bodlovic

6. Audience Development and Engagement

Work closely with Marketing & Communications to ensure audience-centred programming and visitor experience support organisation-wide audience development objectives across all venues.

Use audience insight, sales data, market intelligence, trends and feedback to inform artistic planning, strategic decision-making and continuous improvement.

Lead and support initiatives that broaden participation, diversify audiences and improve representation, with a particular focus on engaging under-represented communities and building long-term audience relationships.

7. Programme Administration

Be accountable for the end-to-end administration and financial management of programmed activity, including financial appraisals, budgets and business cases, and monitoring performance against agreed targets with corrective action where required.

Negotiate artist fees, guarantees, box office shares and other commercial terms where necessary, and draft, issue and manage contracts, deal memos and associated documentation in line with organisational policies and procedures.

Maintain accurate programme, contractual, financial and event records within Artifax and other organisational systems, overseeing event settlements, reconciliation and reporting.

8. Financial and Commercial Leadership

Lead the financial planning and resource allocation for artistic activity, managing budgets, income targets and investment priorities to support organisational financial objectives and long-term sustainability.

Balance artistic ambition with commercial responsibility, working closely with Finance, operational, technical and audience teams to ensure programmes are delivered efficiently, effectively and within agreed resources.

Support fundraising and partnership development, identifying opportunities for grants, sponsorship, philanthropy and external investment and developing compelling artistic cases for support.

Champion organisational values and foster a positive, inclusive and collaborative culture, recognising historic inequalities within the cultural sector and driving approaches that improve representation, participation and access.

Ensure compliance with all relevant statutory regulations, legislation and licensing requirements, including Health & Safety, Security and Safeguarding, while actively supporting Leeds Heritage Theatres' Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan.

Skills and Experience

Essential

- Significant senior programming or artistic leadership experience within the arts and cultural sector, ideally spanning theatre, dance, music, film and/or multidisciplinary programming, with a strong understanding of the subsidised sector.
- A particular skill in curating, commissioning and delivering high-quality, diverse and innovative work, with proven experience of festivals, seasons and thematic programmes and a strong awareness of emerging artistic trends and talent.
- Proven leadership and people management skills, with the ability to inspire creativity, foster collaboration and lead high-performing teams effectively.
- A track record of developing and managing strategic partnerships, including resident companies or comparable long-term collaborations, and building strong relationships with artists, funders, partners and stakeholders.
- Strong commercial and financial acumen, with proven experience of managing budgets and resources and delivering programmes on time, within budget and against agreed sales targets.
- Deep engagement with audience development, with experience of developing diverse audiences and ensuring a compelling programme which is relevant, inclusive and engaging.

Desirable

- Experience of working with historical or heritage venues, especially in programming for both contemporary and classical works.
- Knowledge of the commercial and operational aspects of arts organisations, including funding, sponsorship, and partnership development.
- Familiarity with digital technologies and platforms that can enhance audience engagement and programming delivery.

Personal Attributes

- An innovative creative leader with a deep engagement in the arts and an understanding of its potential to encourage social cohesion.
- An agile strategic thinker who is proactive, adaptable and comfortable with change
- An outstanding organiser and project manager with the ability to oversee multiple projects on a variety of scales.
- A collaborative, inclusive leader who values and champions the expertise and contributions of team members, artists, and partners.
- A commitment to equality of opportunity and the development of diverse audiences for the arts.

Location and Working Pattern

The Director of Programme is a visible and active member of the communities of Leeds. They will need to attend key events in the city and region – as well as nationally – and be an energetic presence in our venues, and inspire and motivate our staff team. Therefore, the role is based on site in Leeds, with some hybrid working, but cannot be undertaken remotely.



How to Apply

LHT is working with executive search consultant Gregory Nash. Prospective applicants are asked, in the first instance, to send a CV or professional profile link to him at creative@gregory-nash.com

If your profile matches the core criteria for the role, Gregory will be in touch to arrange an initial confidential conversation about the opportunity and to answer any questions you may have.

Requests for conversation should reach Gregory by **Mon 9 November 2026**.

Gregory will be able to advise on the application process. The closing date for applications will be **Mon 16 November 2026**.

First interviews for shortlisted candidates will be held online via Teams, **Tue 24 November** and **Wed 25 November 2026**.

**Final interviews will be held in person
in Leeds
Mon 7 December 2026.**



CITY VARIETIES
MUSIC HALL • LEEDS

The
GRAND
Theatre & Opera House Leeds



Leeds Heritage Theatres
46 New Briggate, Leeds LS1 6NU

leedsheritagetheatres.com

Leeds Heritage Theatres (978161),
Registered Educational Charity No 500408