

Creative Director role description

Full time – 37.5 hours per week (including evening and weekend work)
Salary Range (dependent on experience) - £40,000-£55,000
Location – Based as Gaiety Theatre, Ayr, with work across Ayrshire Communities
Reporting to Board of Directors

Ayr Gaiety Partnership (AGP) is seeking a visionary Creative Director who will be responsible for inspiring, shaping and delivering the creative vision of the organisation in line with AGP’s mission “to enhance individual and community wellbeing through the performing arts”. They will lead The Gaiety’s programming and productions, ensuring high-quality, diverse and engaging theatre that resonates with local audiences and the wider region. The Creative Director will drive artistic innovation while upholding the inclusive, community rooted values of AGP. They will be a key member of the leadership team charged with steering the charity’s future development working in tandem with the Executive Director to marry creative ambition with financial sustainability.

Key Relationships and Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement a compelling long-term artistic strategy for The Gaiety. Continually refine the organisation's creative vision, keeping it ambitious, contemporary, and aligned with AGP’s charitable purpose and business plan goals.
- Curate and deliver a programme that balances artistic excellence with broad audience appeal.
- Plan and produce AGP’s in-house shows each year, notably the creation of the annual pantomime and other productions. The Creative Director may serve as lead director or designate directors for these projects, ensuring they achieve a high standard and uphold The Gaiety’s reputation for quality.
- Identify and negotiate co-production opportunities with other theatres and companies. Lead artistic collaborations to originate and/or tour productions.
- Provide inspirational leadership to all creative staff and freelancers, upholding AGP’s values of *Ambition, Risk, Quality and Inclusion*.
- Collaborating with the Head of Communications & Development to ensure statistic led programming decisions and implementation of effective marketing and audience development campaigns.
- Select and approve visiting shows that complement our own productions. Aim for a rich mix of genres to achieve our targets for attendance and income.
- Programming some elements to build participation by identifiable demographic gaps including ‘protected characteristics’, younger people and those with low incomes.
- Empower the Head of Creative Engagement to release the potential for growth within this area of the organisation and to allow integration of participatory events into the programme. Champion projects where professional artists and community members co-create work.
- Curate a pipeline for artists, writers and theatre companies to develop their skills and foster artistic exchange. Provide mentoring and create pathways for those artists to contribute to our programme, aligning with AGP’s aims to support under represented talent.
- Act as an ambassador for AGP’s artistic vision in local and national forums. Represent AGP in relevant networks and conferences, and cultivating strong relationships with funding bodies and stakeholders.
- Ensuring AGP stays abreast of current trends and developments within the arts sector and incorporating relevant ideas in the organisation’s work.
- Work with the Executive Director and finance team to ensure that the artistic programme is delivered within budget and resources.
- Proactively look for fundraising opportunities that can support AGP’s artistic plans.

Key tasks

Artistic Vision	Develop an strong artistic vision for the organisation
Programme	Use audience data and awareness of the sector to continually refine a programme to meet financial and artistic goals
Audience Development	Work closely with other members of the team to identify and programme for priority under-representated audience demographics
Artist Development	Build contacts and engage with producers, writers, directors and performers in order to develop new talent and work
Income	Focus on maximising net income from programming
Fundraising	Assist on grant applications and donor fundraising campaigns

Person Specification

Key experience and qualifications that are required for this role:

Essential

- **Significant artistic leadership experience:** Proven track record in a senior artistic role in theatre or performing arts.
- **Visionary Leadership:** Able to inspire others with clarity of vision.
- **Proven Artistic Direction:** Experience leading the artistic vision of an organisation, festival or theatre company, or have substantial experience directing professional productions that demonstrate the readiness to step up to this leadership role.
- **HandsOn Creative Process:** practical experience from concept to stage is essential including familiarity with casting, rehearsals, design, technical production and touring.
- **Programme Curation:** Ability to curate a balanced artistic programme meeting strategic and financial targets.
- **Community Engagement:** Experience leading or significantly contributing on community engagement or participatory arts and a strong understanding of theatre's role in community and educational contexts.
- **Commitment to EDI:** A demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and able to show how you have championed inclusion in previous roles.
- **Funded Arts Environment:** Experience working funders and contributing to fundraising efforts. You should be familiar with the fundraising landscape and have experience of contributing to successful grant applications.
- **Financial and Business Acumen:** Strong understanding of theatre management including budgeting, marketing and audience development. You must have experience of managing budgets and making resource decisions.
- **Team Leadership:** Strong leadership abilities with experience of managing a creative team
- **Persuasive Communication:** Confident communicator, able to adapt to different audiences and advocate for the organisation and the arts.
- **Education and Training:** A degree or training in theatre, performing arts or arts management is essential and equivalent professional experience is equally valued..

Desirable

- **Regional Theatre Knowledge:** Familiar with Scotland's performing arts sector and Ayrshire's cultural landscape. Understanding of Creative Scotland priorities, audiences, and regional/rural challenges (e.g. touring, transport) is an advantage.
- **Track Record of Innovation:** Demonstrated history of creative innovation, bold programming, digital experimentation or unusual collaborations. Willingness to take risks and learn from them.
- **Networking & Industry Presence:** Strong professional network across theatre industry (directors, writers, agents, companies) desirable to attract talent and opportunities.
- **Adaptability & Resilience:** Thrives in dynamic environments, handles pressure, and adapts to change. Evidence of leading through challenges such as funding cuts, crises or major projects.

The organisation

The Ayr Gaiety Partnership was constituted in 2014 and registered as a charity (SC1041464) and is the owner and management board of the Gaiety Theatre and associated buildings.

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The Gaiety is the pre-eminent theatre in South West Scotland, with a history of innovation from 1902 to the present day. The subject of local affection, it also has national respect and main house many performers rate as their best stage. With a reach across Ayrshire and beyond, it is much more than just a theatre building, with a goal to "enhance individual and community well-being through the performing arts".

The goal is based on our understanding that cultural participation is an essential element of human existence. Our current business plan sets out how we continue to bring artists and communities together to explore meaning, to challenge, to grow, to experience joy and to change both themselves and their world.

In the last year, we opened Gaiety 2 in Arthur Street, Ayr which now provides a hub for our creative engagement. We are also now in receipt of Multi-Year Funding from Creative Scotland which will allow us to continue developing our offering to our community and remain the artistic heart of the Ayrshire.

The Gaiety has developed its in-house Pantomime over the last five years, culminating in our production of Mother Goose in 2024 being awarded the inaugural CATS Award for Outstanding Pantomime.

Application process

Application is by CV and a covering letter detailing why you are interested in this role, and how your experience, skills, and values make you a strong candidate. We are particularly keen to hear how you would contribute to our artistic vision and wider organisational goals Email to the Executive Director, Janice Gilmour, recruitment@ayrgaiety.co.uk by 12noon on Wednesday 17 September.

Interviews will be held on Wednesday 24 September.

If you'd like to discuss the post or arrange a tour of the venues, please contact Janice Gilmour – email: Janice.gilmour@ayrgaiety.co.uk.

We value diverse experiences and perspectives and welcome applications from all backgrounds. We are an equal opportunities employer. Please also complete and return the **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form** (confidential; used for monitoring only). If you require any adjustments to take part in the process, let us know and we'll be happy to help.