

Executive Director Recruitment Pack

AUTUMN 2024



WELCOME

As Stratford East celebrates its 140th year we are looking for an exceptional Executive Director to work closely with our new Artistic Director, Lisa Spirling. Over the last seven years, under the tenure of our outgoing Artistic Director, Nadia Fall and Executive Director, Eleanor Lang, the reputation of the theatre has been greatly strengthened. We have presented a strong artistic programme (which has included a West End transfer and an Olivier Award) and an outstanding community programme, alongside growing our audiences and our thriving staff team, all of which have been accomplished while strengthening the financial reserves.

Stratford sits in the heart of East London, in the London Borough of Newham. Arts Council England has identified Newham as one of only four London boroughs that they classify as Priority Places, eligible for increased investment and improved engagement. We work with one of the youngest, poorest and most ethnically diverse populations in London. Yet this is an area which has undergone massive regeneration and change over the last 15 years.

The financial outlook across the subsidised theatre sector remains challenging but 2024 is a fantastic time for us to recruit a new Executive Director. We have programmed an exciting 140th anniversary season for 2024-25 that will provide a strong base from which to increase the theatre's financial resilience, with income growth and partnerships at the heart of our strategy. The regeneration in the Olympic Park, alongside huge investment and development across the borough, makes Newham a place with a growing population and offers new and stimulating opportunities which we can grasp as the much-loved theatre in the borough.

We are looking for an inspirational new leader, who understands the importance of investing in high quality work to attract audiences and donors alike, and who can form partnerships with stakeholders both in and outside of the theatre world. We want somebody who can help create a positive culture among our staff, so that we achieve the best out of those who work in our theatre. Our successful candidate will be a strategic leader who is excited to work with both Lisa Spirling and the Board to motivate the team and ensure Stratford East can continue to be a thriving and successful theatre.

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Hodge of Barking DBE
Chair

“Good theatre draws the energies out of the place where it is and gives it back” - Joan Littlewood



f Dissocia Photo: Marc Brenner

ABOUT STRATFORD EAST

Stratford East is here to make truly great theatre in an atmosphere that welcomes all, with extraordinary shows that are affordable for all in the beating heart of East London.

Stratford East is a producing theatre, built in 1884, in the London Borough of Newham, situated a short walk from Stratford station. We have a proud history and face an exciting and challenging future. Our culturally and socially diverse community are represented in the work we make, the people we employ, the audiences we attract and the participants in our learning programmes. We tell stories that are current, political and representative of the people in our part of London.

From 1953 – 1979 the theatre was the home of Joan Littlewood’s legendary Theatre Workshop Company. The Company received international recognition with their acclaimed productions of shows like *Oh, What a Lovely War!* and *A Taste of Honey*. Many leading actors, writers and directors have been part of the Stratford East family including Meera Syal, Barbara Windsor, Don Warrington, Sheila Hancock, Indhu Rubasingham, Tanika Gupta, Roy Williams and Cynthia Erivo.

Stratford East has a 455 seat auditorium, a vibrant bar, and a rehearsal space. In 2023-24 we welcomed over 72,000 audience members.

“The Coolest Theatre in London” - The Times

OUR VISION:

We believe that brilliant quality theatre should be available to everyone

OUR MISSION:

We make theatre both for, and inspired by, our community in Newham, East London. We continue the political and revolutionary ethos of our founder Joan Littlewood as a leading London theatre and civic hub for East London. We are driven by our art, which is inclusive and bold. We tell stories that provoke discourse about the world we live in and our place within it.

OUR VALUES:

- Revolutionary – we are confident in leading change
- Inclusive – our doors are open to all
- Bold – we are willing to take risks
- Excellent – we strive to make everything of outstanding quality
- Relevant – the work we do is relevant to the place we are in, and the times in which we live
- Eclectic – we are informed by a wide range of thoughts, styles, tastes

OUR PRODUCTIONS

In recent years, Stratford East has produced or co-produced four to five productions a year, alongside a programme of shorter runs of touring work, and one-off nights of music, comedy and cabaret.

Under Nadia Fall's artistic leadership we have presented a bold programme of reimagined classics, timely revivals and ground-breaking new work. Recent productions include a new commission from Lanre Malalou, *Now I See*; the 20th anniversary revival of the ska musical *The Big Life*; and a new production to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Jonathan Harvey's coming-out and coming-of-age story *Beautiful Thing*. We produce our own annual pantomime - in 2023 this was *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

In September 2024, Nadia directed *Abigail's Party*, which is followed by The Bristol Old Vic's production of *Wonder Boy*, Ballet Black's newest piece *Heros*, and Curve and MAST Mayflower Studios' production of Katori Hall's *The Mountain Top*. Our 2024 pantomime, *Pinocchio*, is written by Trish Cooke and Rob Hyman, and directed by Omar F. Okai.

Our 140th Anniversary Season was announced in September 2024 and includes *Animal Farm*, *The Women of Llanrumney*, *Lovestuck*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *The Harder They Come*.

★★★★★ **"Unique, challenging and oh-so necessary"** - The Guardian

Tambo & Bones Photo: The Other Richard



Our full programme of work – past and future - can be found on our website. Our produced and co-produced work from the past few years include:

2024

Pinocchio
Abigail's Party
Now, I See
The Big Life

2023

Jack and the Beanstalk
Beautiful Thing
Tambo & Bones
Village Idiot

2022

Cinderella
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
Burn It Down
After the End

2021

Red Riding Hood
Shining City
Extinct
The Sun, The Moon and the Stars
Press Play Here (online only)

2020

No Masks (film)
846 Live
846 (online only)

2019

Dick Whittington
Our Lady of Kibeho
Noye's Fludde
King Hedley II
Equus



The Big Life Photo:Mark Senior

★★★★★ *“Infectious,
heart-rendering and...
achingly resonant”* - Time Out

LEARNING & PARTICIPATION

Alongside our work on stage, we run a Learning & Participation programme that is accessible and inclusive to all. Our range of programmes creates a lasting impact for our local community and aims to:

- Provide routes into the industry, across all theatre departments, with a particular focus on diversifying those coming into the workplace, ensuring the theatre workplace of the future is a diverse and skilled one
- Provide opportunities to people of all ages to develop their creative talents and engage with the work of the theatre, ensuring that there is a creative outlet open to the widest possible constituency

Key projects include:

Junior Youth Theatre (11-15 year olds) and Youth Theatre

(16-21 year olds): A year-round programme for young people to develop their acting and creativity.

Young Company: A 10-month programme for 18-25 years who are interested in developing their acting skills. Working with a range of industry freelancers, and led by a professional director, the programme culminates in a full production on the Stratford East stage.

Young Techs: A short course to develop the technical theatre skills of 16-21 year olds. The course leads to paid work experience, and potentially paid casual work.

Adult Drama: A termly course for any Newham adult above 26, to develop their acting and creative skills in a friendly environment.

Schools Programme: A programme specifically for Newham Secondary Schools. This includes technical theatre insight days, as well as bespoke programmes linking to the productions and the school curriculum.

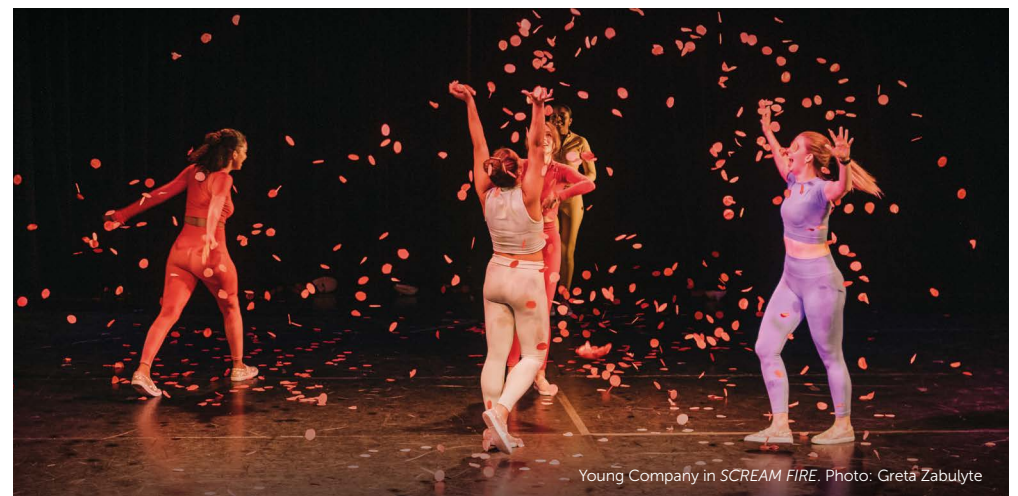
Community Ambassadors: A volunteer programme, supporting volunteers to work with groups in the community to introduce them to the theatre, as well as to run heritage tours of the theatre.

Community Socials: Regular light touch events to introduce local people and community groups to the theatre.

Freelance Royalty Scheme: A free membership scheme to support all theatre freelancers living or working in East London. Membership includes access to space, free tickets, workshops, networking and surgery events.

“Our children aren’t able to afford theatre trips so this was particularly important for us. I loved the diversity in the cast also. It allowed the students to see themselves.”

- Newham Primary School Teacher



REPRESENTATION, JUSTICE AND BELONGING

We want Stratford East to reflect the community in which we work and the programming on our stage to speak to the people who come to our theatre. We want everyone who works with us to feel empowered and supported, and we want our theatre to feel accessible to anyone, no matter what their background. Stratford East's programme of work has always championed a diversity of stories, so that any audience member might see their story on our stage. We are committed to our anti-racism and anti-ablism work as a continuous journey of change and progression.

For seven years Stratford East was part of the first Ramps on the Moon consortium, a group of theatres working to increase D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent representation. We worked with five other theatres around the country, elevating the presence of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people on and off stage to enrich the stories told by them and the way they are told. Whilst the official consortium has ended, we are committed to continuing this work.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We need and aspire to be an environmentally sustainable organisation and are embedding our environmental work across all departments. We want to reduce our carbon footprint by ensuring that our buildings and processes are as efficient and sustainable as possible. We are in the process of updating our environmental policy in alignment with our values and with the Theatre Green Book and have a short-term and long-term set of KPIs which we are working to achieve. We are also updating our Capital Maintenance and Renewal Schedule, which has identified some key areas for renewal over the next five years and are looking at how we can do this to further our sustainability ambitions.

**For more information about Stratford East
and our work please visit stratfordeast.com**

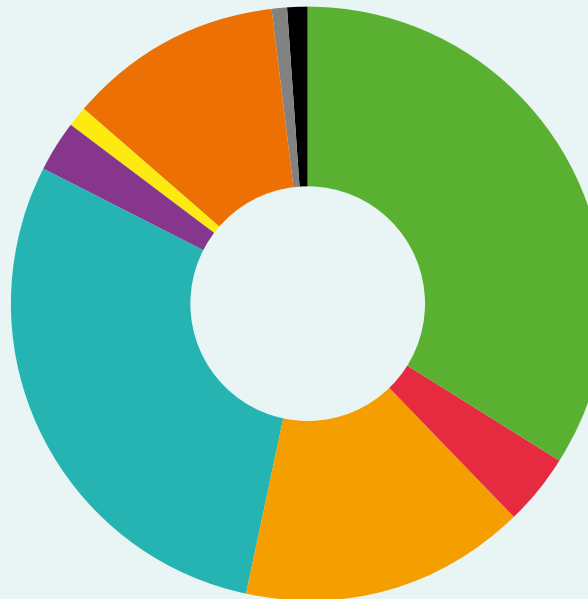
★★★★★ *"As timeless
as ever"* - Evening Standard



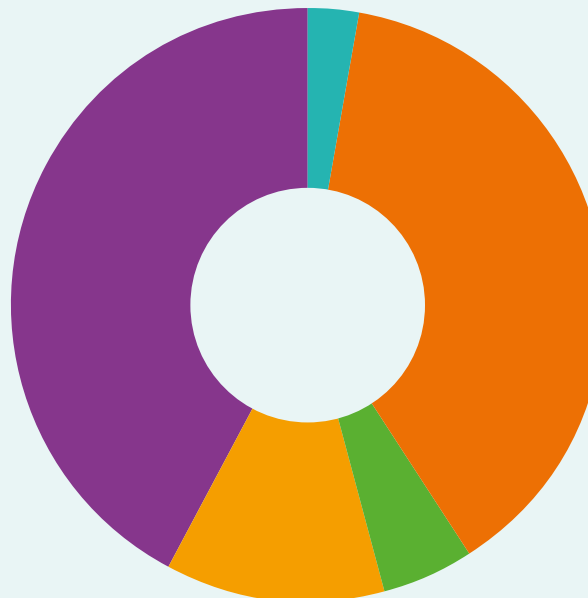
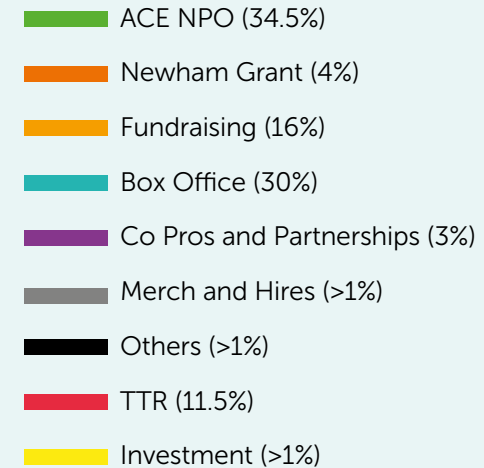
FINANCES

Our annual turnover is just over £4m. We successfully secured Arts Council England National Portfolio Funding for the 2023-2026 period. Additional income comes from ticket sales, fundraising, Theatre Tax Relief and other revenue sources.

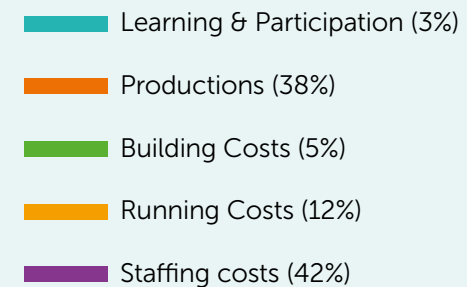
At year end March 2024 our general reserves stood at £787,472, plus designated funds of £670,000 (two funds for three months' operating costs plus capital building maintenance).



Income 2024-25 Split



Expenditure 2024-25 Split



GOVERNANCE

Stratford East is registered as Pioneer Theatres Limited with Companies House (Company number: 556251) and with the Charity Commission (Charity Number: 233801). The Charity is led by a highly experienced Board of Trustees, led by The Rt Hon. the Baroness Hodge of Barking DBE. The Board includes skilled individuals from the world of arts, local government, finance and communications. We have two Young Trustees who have come through our Learning & Participation programmes.

We have a trading subsidiary, Stratford East (Trading) Limited which operates our bar. We also have a Development Board, which has no formal role in governance, but supports our fundraising, and is chaired by one of our Board Members.

PEOPLE

Senior Management Team

Stratford East is led by the Artistic Director and Executive Director, reporting to the Board. They are supported by the Senior Management team of six including the Learning & Participation Director, Finance and Fundraising Director, Operations Director, Senior Producer, Head of Production and Head of Marketing & Communications.

Staff Base

We have a 45-strong central staff base and a customer facing casual team of 60 working across front of house, bar and box office. We also engage a large number of freelancers to work on and off stage in our productions, as well as casual technicians.



FACTS AND FIGURES FOR THE 2023-24 FINANCIAL YEAR

174 Freelancers
employed

8 PRODUCTIONS

1,114 Members of
our Freelance
Royalty Scheme

225
PERFORMANCES

72,582
Audience members

38,583 Average monthly
website visits

9,384
Young people
engaged with us

9 Community
Ambassadors

17 ONE OFF
NIGHTS

ROLE

Job Title: Executive Director

Currently, the Executive Director is joint CEO with the Artistic Director. This will be reviewed during the recruitment process

Reporting to: Board of Trustees

Direct reports: Finance & Fundraising Director, Operations Director, Head of Marketing & Communications, General Manager, HR Consultant

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE POST

The Executive Director works collaboratively with the Artistic Director to lead and shape Stratford East's mission and programme to achieve the highest standards, reaching a wide audience. The role holds particular responsibility for Stratford East's financial, operational and legal well-being, as well as the organisation's trading subsidiary.

Working closely with the Artistic Director, the Executive Director provides Stratford East with inspirational and inclusive leadership, overseeing the growth and development of the organisation, and ensuring it remains rooted in its local communities whilst continuing to build its wider profile.

The Executive Director will, with the Artistic Director, lead on external stakeholder management and industry advocacy.

The Executive Director will:

- Ensure the financial resilience of Stratford East and our trading subsidiary
- Oversee the operation of Stratford East, ensuring that we comply with our statutory obligations and have a best practice approach to governance
- Embed the mission and values of Stratford East within all activity
- Lead an organisation that is inclusive and supportive
- Build an external profile for Stratford East
- Work with the Artistic Director to set the strategic direction of Stratford East, ensuring that we operate as a sustainable and successful organisation



PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

- Take executive responsibility in ensuring the effective and entrepreneurial management of Stratford East's financial operation and the Theatre's financial viability
- Develop the annual budget for approval by the Board, in close collaboration with the Finance & Fundraising Director
- Review monthly management accounts, cash flow projections and final accounts and, working with the Finance & Fundraising Director, ensure that appropriate action is taken if necessary to ensure that targets are met
- Work with the Artistic Director and Head of Marketing & Communications to ensure that the artistic programme is financially achievable, while also sustaining a programme of artistic excellence
- Alongside the Artistic Director, identify and develop relationships with possible co-producers and commercial investors
- Together with the Artistic Director, seek to maximise the opportunities for touring, transfer and commercial exploitation of work originated by Stratford East
- Work with members of the Senior Team to maximise opportunities for earned income, including maximising the trading subsidiary company, taking an entrepreneurial approach to expanding earned income
- Proactively support the Development team and, with the Artistic Director, take the lead in stewarding key donor/sponsor relationships, attending cultivation events as required and ensuring that existing and new funding opportunities, both public and private, are secured
- Work with freelancers to ensure Trust and Foundation fundraising applications are finalised and submitted
- Lead on Arts Council England and other statutory bodies funding applications
- Explore partnership opportunities and new ways of working to sustain financial resilience

ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- With the Board and Artistic Director, develop and deliver Stratford East's overall strategic direction and the artistic and business plans
- Lead the Senior Team with the Artistic Director, providing inspirational leadership to ensure the organisation is delivering on its potential
- Support the Artistic Director, Senior Producer and Learning & Participation Director to deliver an excellent artistic programme of work
- Provide clear direction, motivation and purpose for staff and freelance teams so that all staff are embedding Stratford East's vision and values in all work, fostering a positive, respectful and collaborative working culture
- Ensure that the organisational structure of Stratford East is able to support the delivery of plans of the organisation
- Oversee the development and implementation of a strategy for capital maintenance and renewal
- Ensure that inclusion and access remain at the heart of all aspects of Stratford East's work
- With the Artistic Director and the Head of Marketing & Communications on the strategy for Stratford East's brand, positioning, publicity, marketing and audience development
- Champion the importance of environmental sustainability across Stratford East in creative and innovative ways

GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

- Oversee the service and development of the Boards of Stratford East's charitable and trading companies, ensuring accurate and full information for decision-making is provided to the Directors
- Develop effective working relationships and positive engagement with all Trustees, attending Board meetings and any other committee meetings or working parties as appropriate
- Act as Company Secretary and ensure compliance with all legal obligations and requirements of the charitable and trading companies, keeping up to date with best practice in finance and operations, as well as legal and tax changes
- Oversee the risk register for Stratford East's charitable and trading companies
- Sign off agreements and contracts across the company's activity
- Keep up to date with all changes/ recommendations from UK Theatre, Equity and associated bodies
- Oversee all HR for Stratford East, working with the HR Consultant where appropriate
- Take executive responsibility for the building, including ensuring it conforms to Health & Safety regulations
- Act as lead executive officer in respect of potential capital / improvement works to the building and/or in the locale
- Work with the Operations Director to ensure effective and efficient building management, operating infrastructure and procedures – and excellent customer service, with a focus on accessibility
- Take executive responsibility for data protection, ensuring that all staff comply with best practice
- Review and develop Stratford East's policies and procedures
- Ensure Arts Council England and other statutory funders receive timely reports



STRATEGIC RELATIONS, REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

- Act as Stratford East's spokesperson with key stakeholders, the press and media, and represent the theatre at appropriate artistic regional, national and international forums
- Develop relationships with theatres, touring companies and commercial production companies
- Actively develop and maintain good relationships with key funders, including Arts Council England, and with current and potential sponsors and donors
- Develop relationships with local government and with organisations in the London Borough of Newham, including Royal Docks and East Bank
- Be a visible presence within the sector, promoting Stratford East's reputation and its work, ensuring it is regarded as a key player within the national and international theatre sector
- Maintain a positive and engaged working relationship with Stratford East's Board of Trustees and its committees, in particular with the Chair, ensuring that Trustees are able to contribute their skills, knowledge and counsel to support the work of the theatre

★★★★★ **"Funny, heart-warming & splendidly staged"** - The Daily Mail



PERSON SPECIFICATION

EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

ESSENTIAL:

- Proven experience of leadership and strategic management of an arts organisation, with experience of implementing change and growth
- Experience of managing significant budgets and financial systems
- Evidence of strong leadership, team building, communication and people management; and a commitment to HR best practice
- A knowledge of producing or executive producing ambitious and original work, preferably within the subsidised sector
- An excellent understanding of marketing and audience development
- Proven experience of fundraising from a wide range of sources
- Proven experience in initiating and developing effective and successful partnerships and collaborations
- Knowledge of Arts Council England funding structures
- An in-depth appreciation and knowledge of current theatre practice and trends in the UK and the wider world
- An understanding or appreciation of the importance of good governance and working effectively with the Chair and Board of Trustees

DESIRABLE:

- Experience of negotiating co-production, enhancement and/or transfer deals
- Knowledge of Capital Development Projects
- Experience operating a theatre venue, including oversight of commercial activities (bar, hires etc)

SKILLS

ESSENTIAL:

- Highly numerically literate
- Excellent, confident communication skills, with the ability to lead staff and advocate widely outside of the organisation
- The ability to manage multiple priorities and calm under pressure
- Entrepreneurial flair, with the ability to think creatively about organisational development and models
- Good appreciation of risk, with good judgement of calculated risk

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

ESSENTIAL:

- The ability and ambition for building the reputation and work of Stratford East, and a commitment to artistic excellence
- Genuinely committed to work with young people and communities
- Robust and resilient, with the ability to work under pressure
- A collaborative and empowering management style, with the ability to bring out the best in a team
- Demonstrable alignment with Stratford East's core culture and values

INFORMATION

- Contract type:** Full time. Permanent.
Open to job share / applying in partnership
- Salary:** £67,500 to £72,500 per annum, dependent on experience
- Hours of Work:** Office hours are generally 10am - 6pm; weekend and evening work will be an essential part of the role
- Holidays:** 30 days per annum including bank holidays. This will increase by one day for each full holiday year of service completed to a maximum total of 33 days
- Probation:** 6 months
- Notice Period:** 6 months
- Pension:** Up to 5% matched pension contribution after qualifying period
- Other Benefits:** Season ticket loans, Cycle to Work Scheme, complimentary theatre tickets, staff catering discount, Employee Assistance Programme (support and advice via phone and online for on various matters including legal, debt, counselling etc.)



HOW TO APPLY

Stratford East is committed to a policy of equal opportunities embracing diversity in all areas of activity and positively welcomes applications from disabled people and people of all ethnicities.

To apply, please send your CV and a covering letter setting out why you think you are the best person for the job, and how you meet the person specification. You should send your application to

EDrecruitment@stratfordeast.com

Letters should be no more than three pages. All applications will be acknowledged.

The deadline for the applications is Monday 11 November 2024 at noon.

Interviews will take place in November & December, with the first round of interviews on 28 November 2024.

Please also complete our Equality and Diversity monitoring form to help us assess this recruitment process. Please complete the form **[here](#)**

If you would like an informal and confidential chat about the role, please contact our recruitment consultant, Siân Alexander, on **sian@sianalexander.net**

If you need any reasonable adjustments or support when completing this process, please contact Siân who will facilitate this.

★★★★ ***“Outrageously funny”*** - The Times

★★★★ "Powerful, emotional intimacy" - The Stage

**STRATFORD
EAST**



stratfordeast.com

020 8534 7374

Now, / See. Photo: Camilla Greenwell

