

Finance Director Recruitment Pack

SUMMER 2025

WELCOME

As Stratford East celebrates its 140th year we are looking for an exceptional Finance Director to work closely with our new Artistic Director, Lisa Spirling. In July 2025, Hanna Streeter will join Stratford East as Executive Director, bringing a wealth of experience in arts leadership and strategic development. Together with Lisa, this dynamic leadership marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the organisation. Their shared vision will build on Stratford East's strong foundations, guiding the theatre into its next era with renewed energy, ambition, and purpose.

Over the last seven years, the reputation of the theatre has been greatly strengthened through our 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 2025 is a fantastic time for us to recruit a new Finance 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.

"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*. Recent shows programmed in our 140th anniversary season that have received 4 and 5 star reviews include *Abigail's Party*, *Pinocchio*, *Animal Farm*, *The Women of Llanrumney* and *Lovestuck: A New Comedy Musical*. 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 2024-25 we welcomed over 67, 275 audience members over 217 performances.

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

Stratford East continues to build on its legacy of bold, inclusive, and ambitious theatre with an exciting new chapter under Artistic Director Lisa Spirling. Launching in autumn 2025, her inaugural season champions formally inventive work, new writing, and underrepresented voices, marking a renewed commitment to nurturing fresh talent and reflecting the diversity of our audiences.

This follows our milestone 140th Anniversary Season, announced in September 2024, which featured productions including *Animal Farm*, *The Women of Llanrumney*, *Lovestruck*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *The Harder They Come*. Earlier in 2024, we staged *Abigail's Party* directed by Nadia Fall, our Artistic Director from 2018 - 2024.

Throughout recent years, Stratford East has produced or co-produced four to five mainstage productions annually, alongside a vibrant programme of touring work, one-night events, and our much-loved annual pantomime - most recently *Pinocchio* (2024) and *Mama Goose* (2025).

The theatre has also presented reimagined classics, timely revivals, and ground-breaking new work, including *Now I See* by Lanre Malalou, and landmark revivals like *The Big Life* and *Beautiful Thing*.

Lisa Spirling's 2025 season signals the next bold step for Stratford East, one that celebrates experimentation, fresh perspectives, and the vital role of theatre in public life today.

★★★★★ **"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:

2025

ANIMAL FARM
The Women of Llanrumney
Tambo & Bones
Lovestuck
The Harder They Come
Mama Goose

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)

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



★★★★★ *"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 18-25 year olds. The course leads to paid work experience, and potentially paid work as a technician at Stratford East or elsewhere.

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.

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



Young Company in SCREAM FIRE. Photo: Greta Zabulyte

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. This work is spearheaded by Closing The Gap, our anti-racism working group, which leads on policy, training and accountability across the organisation.

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. We now carry the momentum forward through RADAR, our disability and accessibility working group, which guides inclusive practice and ensures barrier-free experiences for artists, staff and audiences alike.

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.

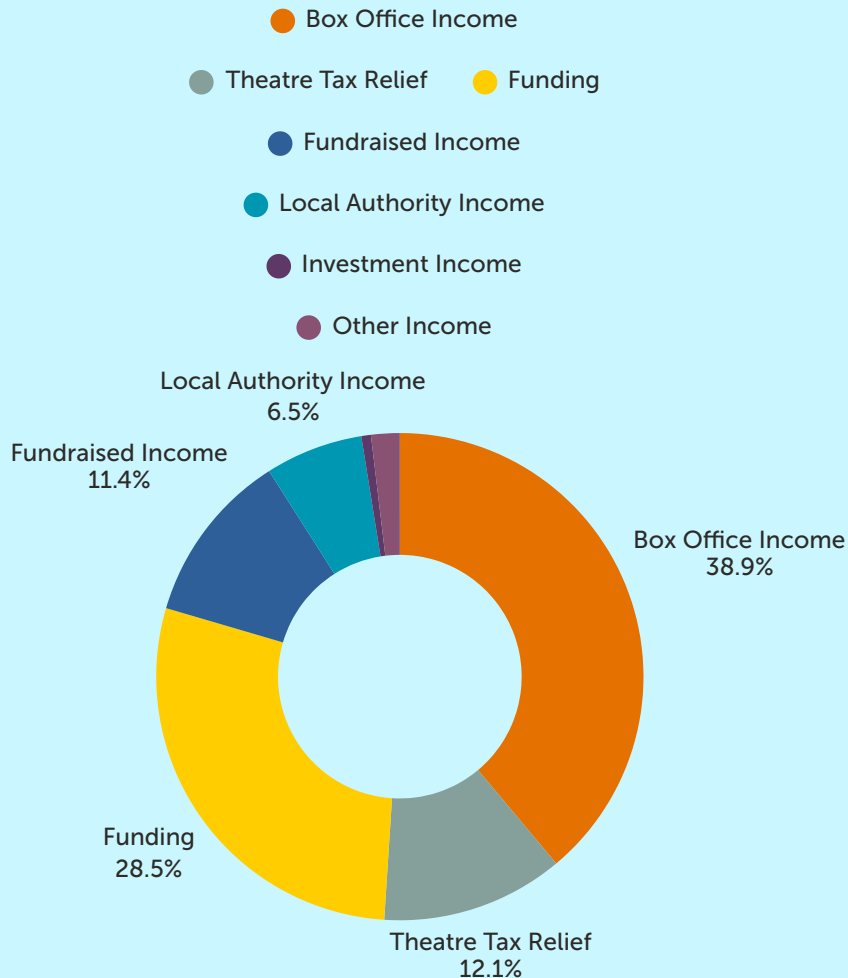
★★★★★ *"As timeless
as ever"* - Evening Standard



Beautiful Thing Photo: The Other Richard

FINANCES

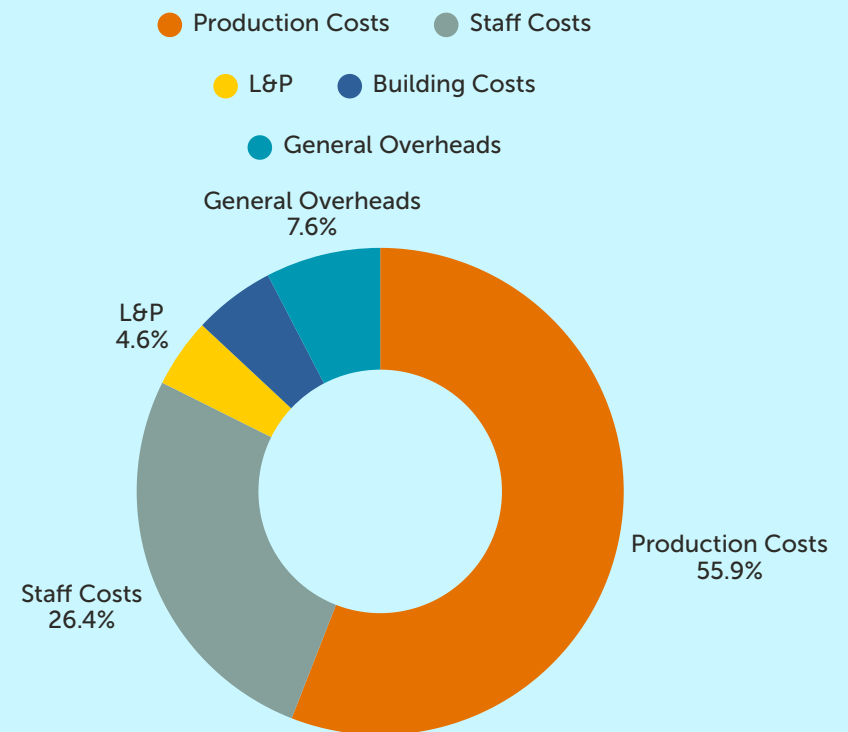
Stratford East Income Year Ended 31 March 2025



Our annual turnover is just over £4m. We successfully secured Arts Council England National Portfolio Funding for the 2023-2027 period. Additional income comes from ticket sales, fundraising, Theatre Tax Relief and other revenue sources.

At year end March 2025 our general reserves stood at £787,472, plus designated funds of £670,000 (two funds for three months' operating costs plus capital building maintenance).

Stratford East Expenditure Year Ended 31 March 2025



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. 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 eight including the Learning & Participation Director, Finance Director, Operations Director, Director of Producing, Head of Production and Head of Marketing & Communications, Head of Fundraising and General Manager.

Staff Base

We have a 38-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 2024-25 FINANCIAL YEAR



209

FREELANCERS ENGAGED

217

PERFORMANCES

11

PRODUCTIONS

1 GREAT
THEATRE

1500

MEMBERS OF OUR
 FREELANCE
ROYALTY
SCHEME

67,275

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

10,104

YOUNG PEOPLE
ENGAGED WITH US

55,394

AVERAGE MONTHLY WEBSITE VISITORS

25 ONE OFF
NIGHTS

9 COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS

ROLE

Job Title: Finance Director

Reporting to: Executive Director

Direct reports: Financial Controller and Finance Manager

Working with: All SLT, budget holders, Finance Committee and Trustees

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE POST

As Finance Director you will provide direction and inspiration for the Finance department, agreeing strategy, setting targets and monitoring performance. You will work closely with the Executive Director, Senior Leadership Team and board of Trustees to develop and monitor TRSE's business planning and financial management. You will ensure that Trustees, Managers and external stakeholders are supplied with timely, accurate and relevant information including budgets, management accounts and cash flow forecasts.

The Finance Director oversees the finances of Pioneer Theatres Limited (t/a Theatre Royal Stratford East) and its two subsidiaries – Stratford East (Trading) Limited (SET) and Stratford East Productions Limited (SEPL – currently dormant).



PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Ensure TRSE operates to the highest standards of financial prudence and accuracy, reporting to the Executive, Board and funders, and advising the Executive, Board and Senior Leadership team.
- Plan and prepare TRSE's annual and three-year budgets, working closely with the Executive Director and other budget holders
- Oversee the work of the Finance department in its service delivery and in response to internal staff and external partners and enquiries, and ensuring office finance and administrative systems are effective, efficient and resilient.
- Meet regularly with the Executive Director, and other budget holders to discuss financial performance and any other financial matters arising
- Sign off relevant expenditure, payment and contracts in line with TRSE's financial approvals procedures

REPORTING

- Review Monthly Management Accounts generated by the Financial Controller and prepare full quarterly financial reports for the Board
- Provide papers in a timely manner for, and attend meetings of, the full TRSE Board, SET Board and Finance Committee
- Reviewing contract settlements with the Financial Controller
- Regularly review cashflow forecasts with the Financial Controller
- Regular liaison with the Chair of the group Finance Committee
- Provide ad hoc financial reporting and analysis for the Board, Executive and other key stakeholders, as required

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & RETURNS

- Prepare annual statutory accounts for Pioneer Theatres and its subsidiaries and liaise with the auditors to finalise
- Circulate and submit statutory accounts to all relevant parties
- Assist the auditors in the preparation and submission of the corporation tax returns, including claim for theatre tax relief credit
- Ensure statutory compliance with HMRC, Companies House, Charities Commission and relevant legislation



SYSTEMS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Maintain, and annually review all financial systems, policies and procedures, including a review of internal financial controls
- Check the condition of all assets and conduct an annual review of whether assets and investments are being put to best use and serving TRSE's interests
- Conduct an annual review of current and deposit bank accounts and liaise with the bank, as required
- Ensure that any income due to TRSE from further exploitation of its projects or productions is being received
- Maintain an up-to-date understanding of technical and legislative developments affecting the work of the department, including in relation to corporation tax, theatre tax relief, gift aid, VAT, PAYE, pension regulations and accounting regulations

GENERAL

- Representing the theatre at some events, conferences and meetings etc
- Maximise income and minimise expenditure wherever possible, without jeopardising the quality of the work or the reputation of TRSE
- To be familiar with and abide by all TRSE Company Policies including, but not limited to, our Equal Opportunities Policy, Dignity at Work Policy and Health and Safety Policy
- Undertake any other duties as appropriate to the post

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



PERSON SPECIFICATION

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Significant experience in the finance sector with an accountancy qualification
- Experience in leading a finance department in either a charity or arts organisation
- Experience of liaising with multiple departments to generate accurate forecasts and cash flow projections
- Experience implementing and reviewing robust financial systems, policies and procedures
- Experience of reporting to a board of trustees
- Demonstrable ability to think strategically and understand broader organisational issues
- Strong organisational and planning skills and ability to work to tight deadlines
- Excellent ICT skills, including advanced Microsoft Excel
- Demonstrable payroll experience with outsourced teams

KNOWLEDGE

- Ability to interpret and present complex financial data in a way that is practical and understood by non-Finance colleagues and trustees
- Up-to-date understanding of technical and legislative developments in the finance sector
- Knowledge of partial VAT exemption, theatre tax relief and gift aid
- A knowledge of statutory funding requirements (desirable)
- A knowledge and interest in arts and theatre

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
- Ability to build highly effective and collaborative working relationships with trustees, executives and staff

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

ESSENTIAL:

- Passion for theatre
- Problem solving
- Attention to detail

INFORMATION

- Contract type:** Part time. Permanent.
- Salary:** £65,000 to £70,000 pro rata, dependent on experience
- Hours of Work:** Office hours are generally 10am - 6pm; 3 days (24 hours) per week
- 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 [**recruitment@stratfordeast.com**](mailto:recruitment@stratfordeast.com)

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

The deadline for the applications is Monday 18 August at noon.

Interviews will take place w/c 1 September.

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 [**pholzen@stratfordeast.com**](mailto:pholzen@stratfordeast.com)

If you need any reasonable adjustments or support when completing this process, please contact us and we will facilitate this.

★★★★★ ***"Outrageously funny"*** - The Times

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

**STRATFORD
EAST**



stratfordeast.com

020 8534 7374

Now, I See. Photo: Camilla Greenwell

