



Theatre Manager

We are seeking an organised, proactive and innovative Theatre Manager to lead Cygnet Theatre's operations through an exciting period of transition and development.

This role offers significant scope for innovation and growth – with potential to develop alongside the theatre.

Attitude and ability are more important than experience: we welcome applicants who can bring creativity, initiative and entrepreneurial thinking to help shape the future of Cygnet Theatre.

Job Overview

Responsible to: Chair of Trustees

Responsible for: Finance Officer (part time), Casual Duty Managers and Technicians, and Volunteers

Salary: £28,000 per annum, pro rata (£16,800)

Place of work: Cygnet Theatre, with some opportunity for flexibility with agreement from Chair of Trustees.

Hours of work: 24 hours per week (0.6 FTE), to include Fridays, some evenings and weekends.

Contract type: Fixed term for 18 months, with review after 9 months and potential to become permanent.

Anticipated start date: January 2027, with handover opportunities in December 2026.

Closing date for applications: 11.59pm, Sunday 18 October 2026.

Interviews: Friday 30 October 2026 at Cygnet Theatre.

About Cygnet

Our Past

Cygnet Theatre is a charity dedicated to training in, and appreciation of, the arts. From its origins as a youth theatre, it developed into a full-time, practical training programme for actors, with students performing to paying audiences from their first term. This quality teaching enabled many Cygnet graduates ('Swans') to go straight into theatre or film work, with others going on to direct, teach, produce and found theatres.

After 43 successful years as a drama school, we are now transforming our intimate and welcoming building in the heart of Exeter into a community theatre and arts training centre.

Our Present

Our purpose is: enabling people to better understand themselves and others through shared live experience in safe, open and creative ways.

As well as hosting performances from local and national companies, we offer training and development opportunities for people across Devon from all walks of life - from experienced practitioners to those engaging with the arts for the very first time.

For example, our current in-house, Arts Council-funded 'NewMoodz' project offers drama workshops for neurodivergent young people, helping them build confidence, skills and self-worth.

As part of our transformation to an arts training centre, Exeter College's Performing Arts Department will be using the building from Mondays to Thursdays during term time to deliver drama training, creating an important long-term partnership for Cygnet.

Our Future

Long term, we aim to build on our history of nurturing actors to play a significant role in Exeter's community theatre and artist development landscape, supporting local creatives to develop self-discovery and confidence. We seek to build a sustainable long-term business model and become an affordable, inclusive space where local people can create art, socialise, learn and engage with the wider community.

This role is the first step in our journey going forward, and is fundamental to Cygnet realising its potential in the coming years.

For more information about Cygnet, visit cygnettheatre.co.uk.

Our Values

Open. Nurturing. Respectful. Kind.

About this role

The Theatre Manager will lead the theatre's operations through this exciting period of transition and development.

You will play a key role in shaping the future direction of Cygnet Theatre. Working closely with the Chair and Board of Trustees, you will contribute to business planning, audience development, partnership building and income generation, helping to secure the organisation's long-term sustainability.

This role offers significant scope for innovation and growth. We welcome applicants who can bring creativity, initiative and entrepreneurial thinking to help shape the future of Cygnet Theatre.

If desired, there will be opportunities to develop and programme additional projects, festivals and artistic initiatives, securing external funding to enable their delivery.

Relationship to the Board

The Theatre Manager has delegated responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the theatre.

You will work closely with the Chair of Trustees and provide regular operational reports to the Board, ensuring that strategic objectives, operational priorities and financial targets are effectively monitored and delivered.

Key Priorities

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- Establish effective operational systems and procedures across the organisation.
- Build positive and productive relationships with hirers, Exeter College, visiting companies and community partners.
- Achieve agreed venue hire and income targets.
- Strengthen compliance, safeguarding and operational management processes.
- Work with the Board of Trustees to help shape and deliver the theatre's long-term strategic vision and business model.

Job Description

Strategy, Development and Programming

- Develop and coordinate an annual programme of performances, workshops, community activities and hires, in line with our purpose and programming policy.
- Build relationships with artists, community groups, educational organisations, funders and cultural partners.
- Identify opportunities to develop new audiences and broaden participation.
- Develop new projects, events, fundraising activities and partnerships that increase earned income and strengthen the theatre's long-term sustainability.

Management and Administration

- Line manage and coordinate the work of staff, volunteers and casual staff.
- Oversee the day-to-day operation of the theatre, including venue hire, room bookings, audience services, company get-ins and event delivery.
- Act as the primary point of contact for hirers, visiting companies, volunteers and members of the public.
- Develop, implement and regularly review organisational policies, procedures and operational systems.
- Prepare quarterly reports for the Board on operational performance, venue use, audience engagement and progress against agreed targets.
- Maintain accurate records and ensure compliance with charity, employment and data protection requirements.

Building Management and Compliance

- Oversee the maintenance, safety and security of the theatre building, including all safety checks and tests, and coordinate repairs and contractor visits.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation relating to health and safety, fire safety, safeguarding, licensing and building operations.
- Maintain records of inspections, servicing and statutory compliance checks.
- Work with Trustees to identify longer-term capital investment and property improvement opportunities.

Finance

- Work closely with the Finance Officer to monitor income and expenditure against agreed budgets, and coordinate invoices and payments.
- Authorise routine expenditure within agreed limits.
- Manage ticket sales, box office systems and bar operations.
- Ensure funder reporting requirements are met accurately and on time.

Marketing and Audience Development

- Lead the promotion of theatre activity across digital, print and community channels.
- Review and develop internal and external communication channels.
- Maintain and develop the theatre's website and social media platforms.
- Coordinate the production and distribution of brochures, promotional materials and marketing campaigns.
- Monitor audience data and identify opportunities to increase attendance, participation and customer loyalty.
- Develop strategies to engage new audiences and strengthen relationships with existing supporters.

Any other duties as required.

Person Specification

Category	Essential (required)	Desirable (Bonus)
Experience	• Experience leading or managing people. • Project management and delivery, preferably within the cultural sector. • Experience managing project budgets. • Experience of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.	• Working in a theatre, venue or arts organisation. • Programming or producing artistic projects. • Audience development and marketing. • Business development
Technical skills	• Excellent written and verbal communication skills. • Excellent IT skills including Microsoft Office. • Administration, scheduling and/or customer service. • Ability to raise funds from a variety of sources.	• Managing organisational finance, including creating budgets and forecasts. • Fundraising or grant applications. • Managing websites using WordPress or similar CMS. • Knowledge of Canva, InDesign or similar design software.
Qualifications		• First Aid qualification.
Soft Skills	• Ability to work independently and take initiative. • Organisation and problem-solving skills. • Flexibility, resilience and ability to manage multiple priorities. • Commitment to Cygnet's values. • Understanding of the cultural sector.	• Understanding of the charitable sector.

The role holder will need to pass an enhanced DBS check, will act as the theatre's Designated Premises Supervisor, and must be willing to work evenings/weekends.

How to apply

Please send your CV, and a cover letter explaining:

- what attracts you to the role
- how your experience and skills relate to the person specification

to recruitment.cygnet@gmail.com.

Please include your name and 'Theatre Manager Application' in the subject line.

Applications must be no more than four pages in total (font size 11).

The application deadline is 11.59pm, 18 October 2026.

Informal conversations

We strongly encourage prospective applicants to arrange an informal conversation with the trustees before applying. This is an opportunity to learn more about Cygnet Theatre, our plans and the scope of the role. To arrange a conversation, please email recruitment.cygnet@gmail.com.

Accessibility

If you require this information in a different format, would prefer to apply in an alternative format, or if there's anything we can do to make the process more accessible to you, please don't hesitate to contact us at recruitment.cygnet@gmail.com.

Equal Opportunities monitoring form

Cygnet Theatre is committed to providing equal opportunities to applicants.

To help us in our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, please consider filling in our [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#).

Completion of this form is optional. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used in decision making about your application.