

Chair and Trustee Recruitment Pack

china
plate

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Islands by Caroline Horton
Photo: Helen Murray

Contents

The Opportunity	2
About the Organisation	3
The Role	4
How to Apply	5
Trustee Responsibilities	6
Board of Trustees and Senior Team	7
Supporters	9



Romeo & Juliet - Mad Blood Stirring
Photo: The Other Richard

The Opportunity

China Plate is seeking a new Chair to lead the Board through an exciting phase of creative innovation and company development.

2021 sees China Plate embark on a post-Covid re-opening journey that will take in a series of firsts for the company; including new midscale shows, original musicals and large scale co-created arts initiatives and festivals at sites across the UK and beyond.

We are looking for a new Chair who is truly passionate about the performing arts and has the leadership skills and business planning experience to help China Plate create the programme and impact that will enhance the communities we are ambitious to reach. You will have the communication skills to be a fierce advocate for the company and its theatre makers, and will be able to contribute to the company's fundraising strategy through your contacts and networks. We need a dynamic changemaker who can take an active role in strategic discussions and help map out our direction of travel.

China Plate will be applying for a second round of [National Portfolio Organisation funding from the Arts Council of England](#) early in 2022 and the Board will have an important role in helping the Directors and the Team look ahead so that they can better prepare and deliver their business plan, especially in a world changed by the pandemic. For this reason, we are looking to appoint the Chair before the end of 2021.

We have a strong Board, with a balance of three Trustees who have been guiding the company for more than 4 years, and four more appointed

within the past year. Our Trustees are committed to the values and purpose of China Plate and bring expertise from many different areas, both within and beyond the arts sector. The Chair does not necessarily need to have experience in theatre or any of the skills or background that we might ordinarily look for in a Trustee – we are already very well served by our current Board in that respect. You will bring a different set of skills to help lead the company into its next phase.

We are mindful that all Trustees give their time and help for free and have busy lives beyond their commitment to China Plate. There are quarterly Board meetings and an Annual General Meeting; although we are used to virtual meetings now, we would aim to have at least one Board meeting a year in person, usually in Birmingham.

We hold Board awaydays at least twice a year, plus occasional training and attending performances when possible, and are setting up a financial sub-group to allow for more time to scrutinise the accounts outside Board meetings (the Chair does not need to be a member); altogether the time commitment for the Chair works out roughly as between 1-2 days a month.

Board membership is voluntary but Trustees are eligible to claim reasonable expenses, including (but not limited to) travel costs for meetings and childcare.



Status by Chris Thorpe
Photo: The Other Richard

About the Organisation

Launched in 2006, China Plate is an independent producer of contemporary theatre. In 2019, we created, toured and programmed work for over 33,000 people across 134 venues (nationally and internationally), with a diverse programme of shows and events. In 2020, we created, distributed, and programmed work for over 36,000 people across a range of online digital platforms – pivoting our shows and events to adapt during the height of the pandemic. Our productions have won multiple industry awards including 5 Fringe First Awards and 3 The Stage Edinburgh Awards and been nominated for an Olivier Award and multiple Offies.

At the heart of our model is a suite of development programmes designed to nurture artistic practice, facilitate collaboration, commission work, increase access and widen diversity across scales.

In the last 2 years we have explored new ways of working through co-creation and co-curation. These approaches have fostered creative collaboration with young arts producers (including young people not in education, training or employment), supported intergenerational activism, empowered audiences and emerging artists from underrepresented communities and supported healthcare workers impacted by Covid.

China Plate works across the UK producing regional and national artists and delivering successful artist and sector wide development initiatives that have helped lead the growth of a resurgent independent sector. With offices in Birmingham and London, China Plate has a particular focus on activity in the Midlands and are Associate Producers at Warwick Arts Centre.

Our vision:

China Plate's vision is of a dynamic and diverse culture of performance that fires the imagination, celebrates live encounters and affects positive change.

Our mission:

Challenging the way performance is made, who it's made by and who gets to experience it.

Our values:

Quality and expertise
Collaboration and connectivity
Integrity and courage
Inclusivity and openness
Diligence and generosity

China Plate supports the [More than a Moment pledge](#), and as such is committed to a number of actions to support Black* artists and theatre makers, especially in the Midlands. This includes representation across the organisation, and as Black people are currently under-represented on the Board, we welcome applications from anyone from these groups.

* Black African, Caribbean, Afro-Latinx and African-American heritage and those of mixed Black heritage who identify as such (definition as adopted by the [Black Ticket Project](#))

The Role

In leading China Plate Theatre's Board of Trustees the Chair will:

- play a key role in the development of China Plate's vision for the future, contributing to its strategic leadership, sound management and active participation in the communities it serves
- act as an enthusiastic ambassador for the company and what it does, and to help with fundraising, bringing personal and professional networks into play
- develop and maintain a sound working relationship with the Co-Directors and the General Manager and act as a sounding board, critical friend and source of advice and support, prepared to ask the right (sometimes difficult) questions and hold the Board and the company Directors to account, and offer support when possible and appropriate
- bring a new perspective to the management and direction of the company; while a love of the arts is essential, experience in other sectors and cultures is highly prized, especially concerning leadership skills and business development
- support Trustees to be the best they can be; give them confidence to focus on their main objective: they are custodians of the values of the company and have a duty to hold the company to account for its purpose and stated objectives

- facilitate useful and inspiring Board meetings, taking a role in shaping the Agenda and making the best use of our Trustees' time to drive success for China Plate
- keep Board meetings to task and to time – make sure the important things are given due time and attention
- maintain regular communications with the Board outside quarterly meetings to keep things dynamic
- have the casting vote when appropriate and sometimes be the first point of contact (e.g. for whistle-blowers and complaints from partners or the public)

We are looking for someone with experience of the following areas:

- Business planning and organisational development (essential)
- Diversity, equality and inclusion (essential)
- Trustee and/or Chair role within an arts organisation (desirable)
- Connection to and profile across Birmingham and the Midlands (desirable)
- Fundraising (desirable)
- Governance and leadership (desirable)
- Local government (desirable)

How to Apply

Please send your CV (including two references, one of which must be your current/most recent employer) and a cover letter highlighting your relevant experience and how you would approach the role, to: info@chinaplatetheatre.com.

Please use the subject line Chair Application for your email and include a completed equal opportunities form, available [here](#).

The deadline for applications is **9am 8th October 2021**.

Interviews will be held week commencing 18th October 2021, via Zoom.

To arrange an informal discussion about the role with the outgoing Chair Phyllida Hancock or Co-Artistic Directors Ed Collier and Paul Warwick, please email info@chinaplatetheatre.com.

Equal Opportunities

China Plate is committed to inclusion and equal opportunities in the workplace and we actively encourage applicants from all backgrounds, of different ages, genders, social and economic backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and sexual orientations, and from people with and without disabilities. Please contact us should you have any access requirements or need any reasonable adjustments to be made in order to apply or attend an interview.

Our recruitment process is open to all, but we are particularly keen to hear from applicants who may have faced racism, discrimination and/or cultural barriers due to their ethnicity, disability or D/deafness, as these groups are currently underrepresented in our team and the wider theatre sector. The shortlisting and interview panel will include at least two members who may have faced racism, discrimination and/or cultural barriers due to their ethnicity, disability or D/deafness.

Trustee Responsibilities

Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit

You and your co-trustees must make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it is set up, and no other purpose. This means you should:

- ensure you understand the charity's purposes as set out in its governing document
- plan what your charity will do, and what you want it to achieve
- be able to explain how all of the charity's activities are intended to further or support its purposes
- understand how the charity benefits the public by carrying out its purposes

Comply with your charity's governing document and the law

You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure that the charity complies with its governing document
- comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to your charity

Act in your charity's best interests

You must:

- do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- with your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term
- avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body
- not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

Manage your charity's resources responsibly

You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. This is sometimes called the duty of prudence. Prudence is about exercising sound judgement. You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- avoid exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk
- not over-commit the charity
- take special care when investing or borrowing
- comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land

Act with reasonable care and skill

As someone responsible for governing a charity, you:

- must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees' meetings

Ensure your charity is accountable

You and your co-trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements. You should also:

- be able to demonstrate that your charity is complying with the law, well run and effective
- ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers

Board of Trustees and Senior Team

Husne Begum

Husne is a passionate Brummie and a fundraiser by trade. Husne has been at Birmingham Museums since 2018 as their Development Manager leading the museums fundraising team. Husne's career working in charities began in 2002 and for the last 7 years has focused on the arts sector; she loves the creativity of fundraising for the arts. Husne is also on the board for the Chartered Institute of Fundraising Convention, representing the midlands and arts sector. Husne has a variety of experience behind her, from raising money for dance festivals, national lottery and other funding for grassroots community projects, to fundraising for headline exhibitions at Birmingham Museums.

Indy Datta

Indy has spent more than 20 years working in legal, business and commercial affairs in the TV and film industries, spending a large part of his career at the BBC. He is currently VP of legal and business affairs at the international production arm of SF Studios.

Outgoing Chair:

Phyllida Hancock

Phyllida is a workshop designer and facilitator, focusing on leadership and organisational development. Phyllida worked as an actress and singer for 12 years in theatre and on television, including two years with the Royal Shakespeare Company and productions in the West End, around the UK and abroad. Phyllida is an Associate of Olivier Mythodrama, Leaders Quest, Mary-Louise Clark Associates, Contender Charlie, and Advance HE, facilitating and delivering workshops on leadership, change management and communications skills, notably on the Aurora programme for women in Higher Education.

Nadine Lewycky

Nadine is currently Assistant Registrar (Governance) at Queen Mary University of London. She has over 10 years' experience in the higher education sector, having worked extensively to help bring university research to the public. She has a PhD in History from the University of York and an extensive interest in the arts. She has been a board member with China Plate since 2014.

Shashi Sharma

Shashi is a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser, beginning her career at PwC and progressing to senior positions in industry. She has significant commercial expertise across tax, finance and HR, Legal and Procurement. She is also a trustee at LionHeart. Birmingham-born and made, she discovered the local creative scene later in life. She has since made up for lost time, revelling in the exciting variety of culture available in the West Midlands. She finds it simultaneously inspiring, challenging and reviving – this fuels her determination to open up enjoyment of culture and the arts to a wide spectrum of people.

Kaya Stanley-Money

Kaya is the Executive Director & Joint CEO of Camden People's Theatre, a studio theatre in London dedicated to supporting early-career artists and its local community with radical engagement initiatives. Before taking on the role at Camden People's Theatre, Kaya was a producer with China Plate where she developed and toured the work of artists and companies including Caroline Horton, Inspector Sands, Ben Wright and Chris Thorpe. In her early career, Kaya worked as the Production Coordinator for Little Angel Theatre, touring pieces such as A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings (Kneehigh) to children and families throughout the UK. Kaya is also a trustee of Marlborough Productions, a leading UK producer of queer-led, intersectional performance based in Brighton.

Simon Startin

Simon is a published playwright and theatre maker with a career spanning 25 years. He is an associate artist of Theatre Royal Stratford East, London Bubble and Graeae. He is an alumni of the Battersea Art Centre 21st century leadership scheme, Young Vic directors placement and the China Plate Enhanced Optimists course. He is currently working on his 15th professional commission, "Inspiration Porn" about the media portrayal of disability.

Ed Collier and Paul Warwick

Co-Artistic Directors

Ed and Paul co-founded China Plate in 2006. They jointly share all aspects of leadership, strategy and artistic direction for China Plate, working closely and collaboratively as Executive Producers with the China Plate team to realise the company's creative programme.



Take a Bite Company at First Bite Festival 2019
Photo: Arnim Friess



Hoke's Bluff by Action Hero
Photo: Paul Blakemore

Supporters

The breadth and depth of our programme is due in no small part to the essential support generously provided by Trusts, Foundations and our other long-standing funders.

These organisations play a vital role in partnering with China Plate Theatre to support artists, make new work and reach diverse audiences.



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**ARTS COUNCIL
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