

THEATRE DIRECTOR, Beck Theatre

JOB DESCRIPTION

HQ Theatres & Hospitality (HQT&H), the venue management division of the Qdos Entertainment Group, is the UK's second largest theatre operator, with a portfolio which currently embraces contracts to run twelve theatres and concert halls. The Beck Theatre was built and opened in 1977 by Hillingdon Borough Council (one of the Greater London boroughs) and since 2007, HQT&H has managed it under contract to Hillingdon Council.

HQT&H feels particularly fortunate to be operating the Beck Theatre at a time of substantial change in the local area. The new Crossrail station at Hayes & Harlington which will link Reading with central London, Canary Wharf and the east London boroughs, has been an important trigger for substantial new infrastructure developments which will bring new homes, and new businesses to Hillingdon and surrounding areas. Amongst these is the development of the Old Vinyl Factory (a former EMI record plant) to provide 642 homes of various styles but particularly aimed at younger professionals, as well as 550,000 square feet of new office space, 70,000 square feet of retail and leisure space, and substantial landscaped public realm areas. A number of other housing developments within three miles of the Beck Theatre will create a further 1000 new homes; and also within the catchment, the St Andrews Park Development on a former RAF base will host a new community of 1300 homes, and a range of retail and leisure facilities to enhance further the excellent range of sporting facilities in the Hillingdon area. When Crossrail opens, journey time from Hayes to Heathrow will be five minutes; to Bond Street, twenty minutes; and to Canary Wharf, 34 minutes. The substantially-improved transport links and the overall range of new facilities are confidently expected to attract new business on all scales to the area, where Heathrow Airport is currently the largest employer, with other significant employment at Heinz, and at the West London Film Studios.

The intimacy of the Beck Theatre's auditorium means that none of its 600 seats is far from the sizeable proscenium stage. The building also incorporates a bright, attractive foyer and public area, a stylish bar, a café-bar, and two flexible spaces for rehearsals, meetings, parties and special events. The Beck Theatre is situated in an attractive public park, with an ornamental fishpond within the garden area opening out from the theatre foyer. The attractiveness of the setting is enhanced by the beautiful Hayes Botanical Garden which is adjacent to the theatre site. Theatre, park and garden are served by a large surface car-park maintained by Hillingdon Council; parking is free-of-charge.

The Beck Theatre presents a mix of nationally- and locally-produced work with a strong mix of genres including top stand-up comedy; traditional pantomime; children's and family shows and entertainment;



dance; rock music; jazz, country and world music; drama; spoken word; community performing arts activities; and a growing programme of events and performances of particular interest to local communities in this culturally-diverse suburb of London. The Beck also presents a popular programme of feature films.

Under HQT&H's management, audiences have grown substantially. The influx of new residents into the area over the next five years will provide an exciting stimulus for developing the quality and range of the programme, and HQT&H is thrilled to have the opportunity to be involved in this important development, led by its Theatre Director at the Beck Theatre.

HQT&H has invested in attractive refurbishments of the front-of-house areas to enhance their comfortable and pleasurable facilities for pre-show and interval food and drink. HQT&H manages directly all the food and drink services in its venues, with no sub-contracting; this is one of the Company's commercial strengths and marks of distinction. The bright, open foyer at the Beck Theatre has been developed as a highly successful location for pre-show dining, and the flexible suite of rooms (including the fine foyer itself) provides excellent locations for hospitality events, and private parties and celebrations.

In all of its venues, HQT&H presents an ambitious Community Engagement programme, embracing a range of activities for young people and families (including Family Fun Days, and the annual Summer Youth Musical Theatre Project), and for harder-to-reach groups in the community. With a partner artist-practitioner, the Beck Theatre has developed a specialism in art classes for older people, including those with disabilities; this strand of programme is but one example of the growth possible in this key area of work.

The Beck Theatre benefits from strongly-led HQT&H Group marketing of all features of its business (hospitality as well as theatre and entertainment); and HQT&H's market-leading web-based ticketing system has established from the outset a remarkable level of online sales.

There is substantial business growth opportunity via the continuing presentation of key attractive elements in the current programme (theatre / entertainment and hospitality) coupled with the development of audiences in response to a boldly-articulated Beck Theatre brand, appropriate to its changing environment. HQT&H is keen to hear from potential Theatre Directors the directions which they believe the programme might successfully take.

These opportunities combine to make this an unrivalled opportunity for an energetic and entrepreneurial Theatre Director to advance his / her career.

It is a distinctive core feature of HQT&H's business model that the **Theatre Director** of each of its venues is responsible for all aspects of the individual venue management, having the freedom to lead and to programme within the framework of Group support, to ensure achievement of agreed business and service targets over the full range of operation.

PURPOSES OF THE POST

- The Theatre Director of the Beck Theatre is responsible for developing and mobilising HQT&H's vision, policies and targets for the whole Beck Theatre operation, so as to secure its recognition as a centre of excellence in the provision of the performing arts, entertainment and hospitality.
- The Theatre Director will provide strong leadership of the Beck Theatre professional team, so as to mobilise the contribution of individual staff members and of teams to sustained and sustainable business growth in conjunction with the achievement of agreed business, artistic, attendance and service targets.
- The Theatre Director will be HQT&H's main point of contact with Hillingdon Borough Council, and will be responsible for ensuring that relationships with the Council, and with all relevant local interests, groups, individuals and organisations are harmonious, and contribute to the achievement of the vision, policies and targets of the Theatre.

The Theatre Director reports to HQT&H's Chief Executive.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Theatre Director of the Beck Theatre is accountable for the following:

- With HQT&H's senior personnel, development of the Beck Theatre' annual operating budgets, and of an annual Business Plan, so as to ensure sustained and sustainable business growth, maximising profitability of both theatre / entertainment and hospitality operations;
- The achievement of agreed Beck Theatre income, expenditure and profit targets for all aspects of the business; attendance targets; and customer service targets;
- Identifying and securing a programme of productions, events and activities (theatre / entertainment and hospitality) which will be attractive to audiences and potential audiences, particularly taking advantage of changes and growth in the area served by the theatre, and on terms which will make sustained business growth possible, and will support the achievement of business targets;
- Timely and accurate contracting of all events, performances and activities in line with HQT&H's policies, so as to protect the interests of the Beck Theatre and HQT&H;

- Development, with the Beck Theatre Marketing Manager (and others as appropriate) of marketing strategies, plans and campaigns which make possible the achievement of attendance and business targets (for theatre / entertainment programme and for hospitality), and development and supervision of arrangements to monitor the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of marketing activity;
- Monthly internal analysis with the local Beck Theatre management team of all results against business, financial and attendance targets, in order to agree strategies and plans as necessary to secure achievement of, and improvement on, agreed targets;
- With the management team at the Beck Theatre, agreement of internal Beck Theatre business, attendance and service activities, designed to lead to achievement of budget targets;
- Production of monthly Notes to Accounts, in order to give to the HQT&H Board of Directors a clear picture of the Beck Theatre's actual and predicted performance against profit targets;
- Leadership of the Beck Theatre staff team, so that all staff members are aware of the vision, key strategies, and performance against targets (business, financial, attendance, service, and community engagement), and that they are motivated, skilled and engaged so as to make excellent individual and team contributions to the sustainable development of the Beck Theatre;
- Monitoring of the performance by all members of the local Beck Theatre management team against agreed *personal* business, attendance and service targets, and agreement with individual managers as to measures necessary for achievement of agreed targets, and management of their implementation;
- Via delegation as appropriate, achievement of targets and standards for Customer Service at the Beck Theatre, in line with HQT&H's overall strategies to ensure excellence of Customer Service, and as agreed with HQT&H's Chief Executive and / or Operations Director and Hospitality Director;
- Via delegation as appropriate, management of contractual arrangements with contract cleaners, maintenance contractors, and Health and Safety at Work contractors, so as to support agreed financial, business and service targets and to achieve statutory and contractual compliance;
- Development and management of the Beck Theatre's relationships (via delegation as appropriate) with external individuals and organisations – those individuals and organisations to include (but not be limited to) local authority personnel; promoters and producers of the professional programme, and their personnel; local media; local cultural agencies; local amateur performing arts societies and organisations; local schools and colleges; and local community organisations of all kinds;
- Via delegation as appropriate, creation of a range of Community Engagement and Creative Learning activities, to promote the value of the performing arts and of the Beck Theatre within individual and community development;

- Adherence by the Beck Theatre to all statutory and regulatory requirements underpinning its operation including Safeguarding and Business Continuity, ensuring that the Beck Theatre and HQT&H are fully protected at all times;
- Via delegation as appropriate (including internal co-ordination and liaison with external interests), management of all the Beck Theatre operations so as to achieve the highest standards of performance in respect of Health and Safety at Work of employees and contractors; and of the duty of care to customers and visitors to the venues;
- Via delegation as appropriate, management of the security and good order of the Beck Theatre premises, so as to safeguard HQT&H's best interests;
- Via delegation as appropriate, management of financial and reporting systems as required by HQ Theatre's Head of Finance, so as to facilitate timely reporting of accurate and relevant financial information upon which reliable business decisions can be taken;
- Identification and securing of sources of external funding to support features of the Beck Theatre operation, and also identification of new business opportunities complementary to the core operation of the Beck Theatre;
- Any other related duties as may, from time to time, be reasonably required by HQT&H's Chief Executive.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

- An exemplary track-record as a commercially-successful programmer; a wide range of productive relationships with producers and promoters; and excellent understanding of theatre and entertainment programming options and ambitions at a level appropriate to the Beck Theatre.
- Demonstrable commercial success via achievement of sustained business growth and service targets as manager head of one or more theatres or concert halls.
- Excellent understanding and experience of theatre and entertainment marketing – a theatre / entertainment marketing background being a positive advantage.
- Enthusiasm for, and ideally successful experience of, food, drink, and hospitality operations in an entertainment / arts / theatre context.
- Evidence of leadership of teams of professional managers towards the achievement of agreed targets and objectives, via development of vision and policies, and their effective mobilisation.
- Understanding based on direct personal experience of the full range of operational challenges facing theatre, concert or entertainment organisations.



- Proven success in developing new business relationships and productive, mutually-beneficial relationships with stakeholders and potential business partners.

SALARY AND APPLICATION DETAILS

For this important Post, HQT&H will offer a competitive salary up to £60k along with a number of benefits, and performance-related and profits-related bonus opportunities.

To apply, please send a copy of your *curriculum vitae*, accompanied by a letter which sets out clearly your interest in this Post, and your view of your suitability for it, and the name of two referees*, to:

Julian Russell
Chief Executive
HQ Theatres & Hospitality Ltd
33 Southampton Street
London WC2E 7HE.

Alternatively, you may email your application to Steph Taylor (Business Manager, HQT&H) on steph.taylor@hqtheatres.com;

For an informal discussion about the Beck Theatre, the Post of Theatre Director, and about HQT&H, you may telephone HQT&H's Chief Executive, Julian Russell, on 020 7406 1740

HQT&H Limited strives to offer equality of employment and recruitment opportunity.

Closing date for applications:

12 noon, 25 February 2019

*One referee should be current employer. HQT&H will not approach referees until final interview stage, and only with the consent of the candidate.

January 2019