



Three theatre leaders honoured with Ruth Eastwood Bursary

**Making Theatres Thrive, The Lowry, Pier 8, The Quays, Salford, M50 3AZ
2024 Conference: Tuesday 8 October 2024**

Theatres Trust, the national advisory and advocacy body for theatres, has announced the recipients of the new Ruth Eastwood Bursary, launched this year in memory of its much-missed colleague Ruth Eastwood.

The three recipients are Edward Cole, Artistic & Executive Director, Alphabetti Theatre, Newcastle; Becky Dash, CEO, Lawrence Batley Theatre, Huddersfield and Chelsey Gillard, Artistic Director & Deputy CEO, Torch Theatre, Milford Haven.

The bursary is awarded to theatre leaders in their first senior role in regional theatre who embody Ruth's spirit of collaboration, support of junior colleagues and passionate advocacy for regional theatre where Ruth spent most of her career.

The recipients are invited to attend Theatres Trust's annual conference, *Making Theatres Thrive* at The Lowry, Salford on Tuesday 8 October as the organisation's guest.

Originally the scheme had intended to award a bursary to one theatre leader, but given the quality of the applications received, Theatres Trust decided to expand it to three.

Jon Morgan, Director, Theatres Trust says, *We were really impressed by the quality and passion of the applications by new and emerging theatre leaders across the UK. The commitment to regional theatre, local collaboration and supporting colleagues demonstrated by our three winners and indeed all the applicants gives us hope for the future of regional theatres.*

Notes to Editors

Title	Conference 24: Making Theatres Thrive
Date	Tuesday 8 October 2024
Location	The Lowry, Pier 8, The Quays, Salford, M50 3AZ
Website	www.theatrestrust.org.uk
Twitter / X	@TheatresTrust
Facebook	/theatres.trust
Instagram	@theatrestrust

Ruth Eastwood Bursary 2024 Recipients

Edward Cole, Artistic & Executive Director, Alphabetti Theatre

Edward became Artistic & Executive Director of Alphabetti Theatre in June 2024, his first professional managerial role. He was a co-founder of Middle Child Theatre.

Becky Dash, CEO, Lawrence Batley Theatre

Becky became permanent CEO in 2022 following a period as interim CEO and prior to that General Manager at Lawrence Batley Theatre.

Chelsey Gillard, Artistic Director & Deputy CEO, Torch Theatre

Chelsey became Artistic Director of the Torch Theatre in Pembrokeshire in October 2022 and she also became Deputy CEO in 2024. Her previous directing credits include shows at Stephen Joseph Theatre and National Theatre Wales.

Ruth Eastwood

Ruth Eastwood died on 31 May aged 62 following a short illness. She had been working as Theatres Adviser at Theatres Trust since February 2024, an organisation with which she had a long-standing relationship. She served on the Trust's Board for nine years and was Vice Chair for her last six. She also stayed on as a co-opted member its Executive Committee for a further two years to help ensure continuity of governance while Theatres Trust awaited a new Chair to be appointed.

Over Ruth's long career she worked with and led many of the theatre sector's most important and well-regarded organisations. Following earlier positions at Hull Truck, the Royal National Theatre, Bradford Theatres and as Head of Arts and Culture for Darlington Borough Council, she served as Chief Executive of Blackpool Grand, Curve Leicester and Lighthouse Poole.

Theatres Trust

Theatres Trust is the national advice and advocacy body for the UK's theatres supporting all forms of theatres, whether old or new, commercial, subsidised or community-run.

We protect theatres and champion the future of live performance by advising and supporting our nation's theatres to develop best practice in design and management following the four principles of resilience, environmental sustainability, inclusivity and placemaking.

Conference 24: Making Theatres Thrive

Theatres Trust conference takes place at The Lowry in Salford on Tuesday 8 October, bringing together a mix of inspiring speakers and case studies, to help us understand what we all can do to make sure our theatres thrive.

People, places and purpose are at the heart of theatres. This year's conference looks at how they are enablers in Making Theatres Thrive. As we emerge post-pandemic into new social, economic, environmental contexts and reimagined places, we need to re-examine how theatres can reinforce their role in placemaking, contributing to vibrant and liveable communities and creating a resilient future for all.

All enquiries, high-res images and further information:
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