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**North Wall Writer in Residence - Information**

**BACKGROUND: ArtsLab / StageWrite at the North Wall**

Through a programme of initiatives across the year, including ground-breaking residential projects, The North Wall supports the production of new work and development opportunities for emerging and professional artists. We call this our **ArtsLab**. For many years, most of the activity happened during three weeks of the summer holidays, but we have recently been expanding the concept to encompass everything we do that is experimental, vocational and involved in the generation of exciting new work and the nurturing of talented artists and theatre-makers here at the North Wall. To find out more about how it all works, please see our website: <http://www.thenorthwall.com/artslab/about/>

As part of ArtsLab, for the past two years at Easter we have run a two-week residential project, which specifically aims to benefit young writers and directors, through placing them together with experienced writing mentors and directors and an ensemble of professional actors. The project culminates in a work-in-progress performance where extracts of 6 new plays receive a full staging at the North Wall. Through this intensive process, these young artists gain an enormous amount of valuable experience in honing their craft in a very short space of time. This Easter residential has now become a key part of the delivery of our ArtsLab programme, but we want to do more to encourage and support young writers and new writing.

**StageWrite**

The ‘StageWrite’ programme denotes therefore an expanded programme of activities that are specifically about nurturing emerging writing talent and championing the production of new writing at the North Wall – all under the ArtsLab umbrella.

The Easter residential project remains at the heart of the wider StageWrite programme but, from 2017 onwards, we hope to be able to offer a significantly enhanced programme to young writers – reaching more people and offering them a much more sustained programme of support, with more opportunities to progress their work meaningfully at the North Wall. Central to our ability to deliver this offer will be the appointment of a **Writer-in-Residence**, on attachment to the North Wall for an initial period of 6-8 months, depending on availability. As well as offering script feedback, regular writing surgeries, and mentoring participants on our ArtsLab residencies, we hope the Writer-in-Residence will help select scripts and take a lead in mentoring the Easter residential AND, at the same time, another major new initiative, which builds on this impetus:

April 2017 sees the launch of our first ever ‘**Alchymy: Plays from the Lab**” Festival of New Plays. This will entail three full days of performances of new scripts all linked in some way to the North Wall, at various phases of progression: from rehearsed readings to semi-staged extracts, and possibly one or two more fully-staged works if available. We hope that, including the Easter residency work-in-progress performances, which will form a central part of the Festival, around 16 new scripts should receive some exposure across the 3 days, performed to an audience of producers, programmers and industry professionals, as well as ArtsLab participants past and present. Augmenting the performance programme will be a number of talks, debates and panel discussions, led by artists and thinkers of national significance giving valuable feedback to the young writers, and benefitting everyone present, including young artists in the audience.

The Writer-in-Residence would be instrumental in working with the Festival Producer to select scripts and help programme the Festival – and, if desired, might also wish to showcase their own new script using this platform – TBC. Wherever possible the North Wall will continue to be open to suggestions for new artist-led initiatives, and will aim to offer ongoing in-kind support to associate artists.

**WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE JOB DESCRIPTION / PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Our new Writer-in-Residence will be central to delivering the North Wall’s expanded offer to young writers, providing a range of ‘in-house’ workshop activity, script development surgeries, script feedback and mentoring. In particular the Writer-in-Residence will be attached to the North Wall’s two key ArtsLab residential projects in the Easter and summer holidays, and will have the opportunity to develop their own work throughout the contract period.

**CONTRACT PERIOD: December 2016 – August 2017**

**FEE: £7,000 - £8,000 (depending on experience and availability)**

**Fee to include preparation time, programme delivery and travel – paid in instalments on a freelance basis**

NOTE: Full board and lodging is provided while attached to the Easter (and Summer if appropriate) Residency programmes.

**MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES**

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| * Read young writers’ scripts after national callout in November / December, and assist with selection process of up to 30 new young writers for 2016/17 programmes, offering verbal and written feedback where requested, also engaging with existing young writers from previous ArtsLab projects | **Jan 2017** |
| * Run a day-long input session for selected young writers, ending with challenge writing task | **Jan 2017** |
| * Run monthly writing surgeries (group and one-to-one sessions) for new and existing ArtsLab young and associate writers | **Feb – July 2017** |
| * Take a lead on the selection processes for the Easter ArtsLab Residential and the Alchymy Festival, working with the Festival Producer | **Jan / Feb 2017** |
| * Act as lead Writing Mentor on the Easter ArtsLab Residential, in residence for the full 10 days (working with 2 other established writing mentors) | **Easter 2017** |
| * OPTIONAL - Generate a draft new script, with the possibility of a rehearsed reading at the Alchymy Festival at Easter (possibly with a future ‘option to produce’ for the North Wall if appropriate, mutually desirable and fundable) | **Jan – April 2017** |
| * OPTIONAL – subject to postholder availability: Act as writing mentor on the 3-week Summer Project for ArtsLab attached young writers, taking this time also to develop own script work, if desired. (Extra expenses may be payable for this element) | **July / August 2017** |

**ONGOING (from August 2017 onwards)**

We hope that the Writer-in-Residence would wish to remain a NW Associate Artist, possibly returning (on a fee basis) as mentor on future ArtsLab and StageWrite programmes.

Where possible and appropriate, the North Wall would aim to offer continued support and R&D time beyond the contract period, in particular in the development of any script written while working on attachment to the StageWrite programme. Where time and funding allow, there may be the option of developing such work into a fuller (co-)/ production process. The aim in such cases would always be to employ as many ex-ArtsLab personnel as possible in both interim and professional roles.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**The person appointed would need the following experience, skills and attributes:**

* Have had at least one or more full-length plays published and produced by an established producer, venue or company – with accompanying reviews in the press and media
* Have strong networks within current UK theatre, and be able to suggest fellow mentors and writing workshop leaders
* Be fully committed to the principles and aims of the North Wall ArtsLab programme, encouraging the next generation of emerging writers, and always seeking opportunities for nurturing and developing ArtsLab participants and alumni across the various artistic disciplines
* Be well-informed as to other new writing programmes across the UK theatre scene, and be ready to advise on other models and opportunities for developing and sustaining new writing initiatives, both at the North Wall and potentially in partnership with other like-minded arts organisations
* Be willing to travel regularly to Oxford to run workshops and surgeries, and to be resident here for the duration of the Easter (and possibly summer) residencies
* Be willing to undergo an enhanced DBS disclosure process, since the North Wall sits on the campus of St Edward’s School, and has an absolute commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children