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THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE ANNOUNCES DAVID BYRNE AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Board of the Royal Court Theatre has today announced the appointment of David Byrne as Artistic Director.

David Byrne is the founding Artistic Director and CEO of New Diorama, where his work as a writer, director and producer has established New Diorama as one of London's most vibrant new work theatres.

Under Byrne's leadership, New Diorama has won many accolades including being named The Stage Fringe Theatre of the Year on multiple occasions. Earlier this year, the theatre won the inaugural Critic's Circle Peter Brook Empty Space prize. New Diorama's sell-out co-production with Nouveau Riche, *FOR BLACK BOYS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE WHEN THE GETS HUE GETS TOO HEAVY*, written by Ryan Calais Cameron, ran at the Royal Court in 2022 before transferring to the West End earlier this year. The New Diorama's production of *OPERATION MINCEMEAT*, written and composed by SpitLip, followed *FOR BLACK BOYS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE WHEN THE GETS HUE GETS TOO HEAVY* into the West End this Spring, to widespread critical acclaim.

Known for his innovative and ground-breaking approach to working with artists, Byrne has supported thousands of playwrights, theatre-makers and artists over the past decade. Launched in the wake of the COVID pandemic, one of David's most recent projects, *NDT Broadgate*, has provided a revolutionary free rehearsal space for over 8,000 creatives.

Byrne's plays have been performed across the UK winning multiple Off-West End awards. His recent productions include a radical adaptation of George Orwell's *DOWN AND OUT IN PARIS AND LONDON*, *THE INCIDENT ROOM* co-written with Olivia Hirst, and *SECRET LIFE OF HUMANS*, both played to sold out audiences at the Edinburgh Festival as well as in London, before off-Broadway and international transfers.

Anthony Burton CBE, Chair of the Royal Court Theatre says *"We are thrilled that David will be our next Artistic Director. As the founding Artistic Director of New Diorama, he has led it with huge success, nurturing and developing new writers and producing award winning work on international and national stages. He has a reputation for artistic excellence, creative disruption and innovation in artist support. We are very excited by the prospect of his leadership which will be fresh and surprising, whilst building on the groundbreaking legacy of his predecessor Vicky Featherstone."*

David Byrne, incoming Artistic Director of the Royal Court says: “At its founding, George Devine imagined the Royal Court to be where ‘the experimentalists of the modern era could be seen’, often ‘in advance of public taste.’ For over a decade at New Diorama, I’ve embraced those ideals, seeking out and supporting the boldest and most exhilarating artists so that, together, we could re-write the theatre rule book.

In this new role, I’m excited to continue working in service of the playwrights and artists raring to take big swings. Together, we’ll shape a rejuvenating culture from which the experimentalists of this new era are safe to take risks, can gamble like they’re never going to lose, and where audiences can glimpse the future of theatre, today.

Becoming the Artistic Director of the Royal Court is an honour, a privilege, and is going to be the adventure of a lifetime. I can’t wait to get started.”

David Byrne will take over from Vicky Featherstone at the start of 2024 when she steps down after a decade in the position.

The appointment of the Artistic Director was made by a sub-committee of the Royal Court Board, who were advised by a number of writers and directors. It was observed by the Arts Council’s Director of Theatre and approved by the full Board of the Royal Court Theatre.

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For images see [here](#).

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Biographies:

David Byrne

Described by The Stage as “one of theatre’s radical thinkers”, David is a theatre director, playwright and founding Artistic Director & CEO of London’s New Diorama Theatre.

A pioneer in artist development and the recipient of several Peter Brook Awards, David has previously won the Off-West End Award for Best Artistic Director, the *Enfant Terribles* Prize, the Writers’ Guild Award for Drama and, under his leadership, New Diorama has won Fringe Theatre of the Year multiple times at The Stage Awards, most recently in 2022 and the Critics Circle Empty Space Award in 2023. Productions commissioned at New Diorama have transferred all across the world, this year Spitlip’s **Operation Mincemeat** and Nouveau Riche’s **For Black Boys Who Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy** have both run in the West End, the latter nominated for two Olivier awards – including Best New Play.

David is currently listed as one of The Stage’s 100 most influential people currently working in UK theatre – with productions he has written and directed being performed across the UK and all around the world. His recent productions include **Secret Life of Humans** and **The Incident Room** – both of which secured Off-Broadway transfers, are published by Nick Hern Books, and have multiple new international productions planned for 2023. David and co-writer Olivia Hirst are currently working on several new theatre projects, and are adapting their play **The Incident Room** for screen with Baby Cow Productions.