**Press release: April 2024**

**Clore Leadership appoints three dynamic industry leaders to its Board**



(l-r: Suzann McLean MBE, Jonathan Reekie CBE and Kate Varah)

April 24 2024: Clore Leadership is delighted to welcome three new appointments to its Board. **Suzann McLean** MBE, actress and Artistic Director of Theatre Peckham; **Jonathan Reekie** CBE, Director of Somerset House; and **Kate Varah**, Executive Director at the National Theatre.

They will join an impressive board of cultural leaders led by **Moira Sinclair OBE**, Chief Executive at the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, who support the team to inspire and equip cultural leaders at all stages of their careers to be change agents for their practice, organisations, communities and wider society.

Suzann, Jonathan and Kate will steer Clore Leadership in responding creatively and effectively to the evolving needs of cultural leaders, ensuring they gain the skills, competences and confidence to navigate the maelstrom of current challenges - from the impact of Covid 19 and financial constraints to new technology and changing workforce dynamics.

The significant experience and expertise of the new appointments will strengthen Clore Leadership’s vision for a society enriched by arts, culture and creativity, in what is an important year for the organisation as it celebrates 21 years of cultivating excellence and innovation in the leadership of culture.

They will also ensure Clore Leadership remains future focused as it strives to remain vigilant to key shifts in sector priorities, perspectives and practice.

**Moira Sinclair, Chair of Clore Leadership and Chief Executive, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, said:**

*“Suzann, Jonathan and Kate bring a wealth of wisdom, insight and experience - from theatre and the performing arts to the wider creative industries - to our vibrant and committed board. As leaders themselves, as employers and as champions of new talent, their impressive range of skills will help us remain forward-thinking and agile in how we effectively support leaders from the sector in these increasingly volatile times. I look forward to working with them over the coming years.”*

**Suzann McLean** MBE, actress and Artistic Director of Theatre Peckham, said:

“*In these challenging times for the cultural sector, this is such an important time to join the trustees of Clore Leadership. It is crucial to broaden our understanding of leadership and empower creative leaders and make a lasting impact. As CEO/Artistic Director of Theatre Peckham, I have pushed the boundaries of traditional theatre to amplify underrepresented voices. This experience has given me insights into the needs within the sector and I am passionate about creating mechanisms for leaders to have sustainable careers. Clore Leadership's commitment to driving change and listen to the needs of leaders perfectly aligns with my values and I am honoured to join as a trustee.”*

**Jonathan Reekie** CBE, Director of Somerset House, said:

*"I'm delighted to have been asked to join the Clore Leadership Trustee Board. I've hugely admired the work of the Programme since its launch and have watched it play a pivotal role in ensuring the sector is equipped to address contemporary challenges and thrive in an environment that is very different to the one I started out in. I firmly believe in its vital importance to the arts and those who work in it, and I'm looking forward to supporting the staff and board in the next important phase.”*

**Kate Varah**, Executive Director at the National Theatre, said:

*“The future of our creative industries is heavily reliant on the work we’re doing right now on our talent pipeline. The work of Clore Leadership and its rigorous commitment to diversification of the sector is fundamental if we are to retain and motivate the best young talent today. As a long admirer of Clore Leadership’s programmes, and regularly dazzled by the gravitas and skill of their alumni, I believe that there is no more important focus to have. I am honoured to now be at the heart of an organisation with such a profound footprint within our creative sector.”*

**Hilary Carty,** Executive Director, Clore Leadership, said:

*“I am thrilled to welcome Suzann, Jonathan and Kate to our Board, at a time when we look forward from 21 years of leadership learning and anticipate what the future holds for cultural leaders. I know they will enhance our aim to cultivate excellence and innovation in leadership, that is both inclusive and relevant, to meet the ever-evolving needs of leaders in these complex and challenging times.”*

**- ENDS –**

**Contact**

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**Notes to Editors**

**About Suzann McLean**

Suzann McLean MBE, (She/Her) is a visionary arts leader. She has been recognised for her outstanding contribution to theatre and her commitment to widening access for young people from marginalised backgrounds to participate and lead in the arts.

As the CEO/Artistic Director of Theatre Peckham, and founder of Young and Talented, Suzann leads a talented and diverse team, achieving consistent growth year after year. Together they create an incredible platform for young people to develop their confidence and talent leading towards sustainable careers in the arts. Her work at Theatre Peckham enables the most exciting artists to stage authentic stories that excite, encourage and challenge audiences.

Beyond her leadership roles Suzann is also a highly regarded actor and director. Her directorial work spans across diverse genres, both nationally and internationally. Recent directing credits include Unseen Unheard, Sunny Side Up (OFFIE Nominated Best Director), Men-TALL,  Extremism (OFFIE Nominated Best Director), Driving Miss Daisy (York Theatre Royal) and Catcher (Pilot Theatre). Acting Credits Include Pennyworth, There She Goes, The Honourable Woman, Dr. Who, Little Miss Jocelyn and Measure for Measure (National Theatre). Her work has been recognised with a British Arrows Gold Award for best performance, African Film Award for best actress and the Black British Business Awards Arts and Media Senior Leader.

Suzann continues to shape and inspire the future of theatre.

<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/suzannmclean>

**About Jonathan Reekie**

**Jonathan Reekie (he/him)** began his career at Glyndebourne Opera and then went to be General Manager at the Almeida Theatre, founding Almeida Opera. In 1997 he took over as Chief Executive of Aldeburgh Music where he remained until 2014, a transformational period for the organisation culminating in the Britten Centenary celebrations. He was responsible for many highlights including Grimes on the Beach and over his career has commissioned over 40 new operas including Thomas Ades’ Powder Her Face. He co-edited The New Aldeburgh Anthology, a celebration of the Suffolk Coast and its musical life.

In 2014 he became Director of Somerset House Trust and has turned it into the home of cultural innovators, with an acclaimed cultural programme focussed on contemporary culture. He has led the development of London’s largest creative community, including Somerset House Studios for artists and the Exchange, a shared workspace for creative individuals and micro-businesses. In 2019 he co-curated the exhibition 24/7 – a wake up call for our non-stop world.

He’s also previously been a trustee to Musica nel Chiostro Batignano, an arts adviser to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and is currently a trustee of the Arts Foundation. He is a director of the Northbank Business Improvement District and in that capacity was Chair of the Strand Aldwych Project group which guided the development of London’s largest pedestrianisation project in the last decade.

He has an Honorary Doctorate in Music from the University of East Anglia, is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music and in 2013 was awarded a CBE for services to music.

**About Kate Varah**

**Kate Varah** (she/her) is Executive Director at National Theatre, working with Director Rufus Norris to deliver and advocate for the theatre’s huge national and international impact on stages, in cinemas, classrooms, community spaces, and online. Kate will become joint CEO in May 2024.

Experienced arts leader, related current trustee and advisory roles include: Council Member, Creative UK; Sheffield Theatres Crucible Trust (Trustee); PiPA Parents in the Performing Arts (Ambassador); member of: CIISA Co Creation Council; Creative Industries Council Growth Group; the Erskine Analysis formed UAL Advisory Council to understand how trade, migration and foreign policy can better support the creative industries.

Previous roles include Executive Director at the Old Vic; Business Development Director at inclusive theatre company Chickenshed; Solicitor Advocate (Employment) at Linklaters in London, Hong Kong, on secondment to JPMorgan, and additionally managing Pro Bono and Community Investment.

Varied past Trustee and Chair roles performed including: Society of London Theatre Board (Trustee, 2020-2023); Chickenshed, inclusive theatre company (Trustee, 2010-2016); Samaritans Chad Varah Memorial Appeal Taskforce, funding Samaritans Connect (Committee, 2010); and co-founding The Michael Varah Memorial Fund, a grant giving trust working to level the playing field for offenders (Trustee, 2007-date).  Honorary Fellow at Keble College, Oxford and Fellow of the RSA.

**Current Clore Leadership Board Members**

**Moira Sinclair OBE (Chair),** Chief Executive of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation; **Dame Vivien Duffield,** Chairman of the Clore Duffield Foundation**;** **Daisy Hale,** independent producer and Creative Director of The Hale; **David Harrel**, former Senior Partner, and founding partner of City law firm SJ Berwin LLP; **Catherine Holden**, culture and heritage consultant, trainer, facilitator and coach; **Roly Keating,** Chief Executive of the British Library; **David Kershaw,** former CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, M&C Saatchi and Director of Act 111; **Kate McGrath**, co-founder and CEO of Fuel and **Dhikshana Turakhia Pering**, Head of Creative Programmes at the Museum of London.

**About Clore Leadership**

Clore Leadership is a dynamic and inclusive resource for leaders and aspiring leaders in the arts, culture and creative sectors. Our aim is to inspire and equip leaders to have a positive impact on society through great leadership of culture. We provide leadership development programmes, promote thought leadership and fresh ideas through debate and challenge, and offer access to an incredible network of over 2,600 alumni. Clore Leadership was initiated in 2003 by the Clore Duffield Foundation, and is sustained by a partnership between private philanthropy and public funding.

At its inception, Clore Leadership provided only one leadership programme, the Clore Fellowship, and over the past 21 years the ‘offer’ has been expanded to include more training opportunities, including early career courses and board development as well as leadership development days, seminars, webinars, conferences and events. To offer the broadest spectrum of opinion, we commission and encourage research and provocation pieces from a rich variety of sources, keeping abreast of leadership knowledge and opinion.

Across freelancers, entrepreneurs and heads of established institutions, Clore Leadership nurtures dynamic and diverse leaders and has inspired investment in leadership on the part of governments, agencies, foundations and charities both nationally and internationally. Participants on our programmes are drawn from a range of specialisms including the visual and performing arts, film and digital media, libraries, museums, archives and heritage, and cultural policy.

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