

Press release: embargoed until Friday 13 November 9am

## Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre announce their new joint venture, the Musical Commissioning Hub

- The Studio is set to become the home of great new Scottish musicals
- Strong selection panel includes Barbara Dickson, Kenny Wax, and Howard Goodall.
- Submission process open from 16th November.  
Details at [www.capitaltheatres.com/musical-commissioning-hub](http://www.capitaltheatres.com/musical-commissioning-hub)
- [www.pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com/musicals-commissioning-hub](http://www.pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com/musicals-commissioning-hub)
- The launch of the Musical Commissioning Hub has been made possible through investment from the Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund and Capital Theatres' Patron support
- [IMAGES](#)



Everybody's Talking About Jamie, Festival Theatre, 2020

Capital Theatres exists to inspire a life-long love of theatre, and for many years it has presented the best plays, musicals, operas, and dance the UK and the world has to offer on the stages of the Festival and King's Theatres.

Under the new strategy of its Chief Executive, Fiona Gibson, Capital Theatres intends to develop its third theatre space, The Studio starting with the creation of exciting new Scottish musicals.

**Today, in a producing partnership with Pitlochry Festival Theatre it is launching a brand-new *Musical Commissioning Hub* as the first step towards achieving this.**

**In this first step of the new strategy Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre seek to collaborate with musicians, writers and artists to develop Scottish talent (wherever they now live) and cultural output, so that their stages become a home for great Scottish musicals year on year, which could ultimately be shared on tour with venues across the country.**

*“Music is such an important part of Scotland's heritage. As we emerge through lockdown and social distancing, we believe Scottish audiences have an appetite for new musicals celebrating Scotland's culture, spirit and humour. This unprecedented period of our venues being closed provides a unique window of opportunity to progress new Scottish works at a time when enjoyment and entertainment has never been more necessary”,*  
**commented Fiona Gibson, CEO of Capital Theatres.**

*Adding, “Scotland has a rich history of creating high quality stories that we want to bring to life through performance. As the impact of Covid-19 deepens within our society, there is a real risk that new talent, and new creative content, will not come to the fore. This will not only result in a dearth of new work to be presented on our stages, and those of our comparators around the country, in the years to come, but will diminish the pool of creative Scottish talent that we seek to support and highlight. This Commissioning Hub presents us with the opportunity to invest in and develop the quality and diversity of works here, placing Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre at the heart of cultural richness in Scotland.”*

**Information on what the panel is looking for and how to enter is available at [www.capitaltheatres.com/musical-commissioning-hub](http://www.capitaltheatres.com/musical-commissioning-hub) and <https://pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com/musical-commissioning-hub/> now. Submissions open on 16 November and close on 15 December.**

Writers will be asked to submit an outline for a new musical alongside details of their previous work to be considered by a panel of experts.

**The panel** features multi award-winning composer and creator of musicals **Howard Goodall**; multi-award winning Scottish singer and actress **Barbara Dickson**; broadcaster and lead singer of Deacon Blue, **Ricky Ross**; **Robert Softley Gale**, artistic director of Birds of Paradise theatre company who brought us My Left/Right Foot; writer and Director of the Royal Lyceum Theatre, **David Greig** (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and most recently Local Hero); theatre director and radio DJ **Matthew Xia**; Award-winning producer of SIX and The Play That Goes Wrong **Kenny Wax**; Olivier award winner **Katie Brayben** acclaimed for her role as Carole King in the London production of Beautiful; co-director of Freedom Studios **Aisha Khan** and Co-Chairs **Fiona Gibson**, CEO Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Artistic Director **Elizabeth Newman**. Together they will bring a diverse background and range of expertise in music, musical theatre, creative writing, and performance to assess and guide the submissions and the process.

It is anticipated that the winning submission will be invited to produce a scratch performance at The Studio in Edinburgh in Spring 2021 and Pitlochry Festival Theatre's new Studio Theatre in Summer 2021.

**Scottish singer and actress Barbara Dickson said**

*"The Musical Commissioning Hub is a fantastic innovation for Scotland and beyond. I'm delighted to be involved; it is wonderful to see Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre teaming up. They are great and both are taking lots of positive steps to help artists during this difficult time. This new endeavour will be wonderful for artists, but it will also be great for audiences. I can't wait to return to these two beautiful Theatres to watch this new work and celebrate Scottish Theatre through new drama and music."*

**Elizabeth Newman, Artistic Director of Pitlochry Festival Theatre added:**

*"As we navigate through these challenging times, it feels vital that we continue to develop new work by brilliant Scottish artists that celebrates Scotland's long history of creating great music for its theatre audiences. Due to COVID-19, everything has been so hard for everyone in recent months and we believe it is vital that we offer artists support. We want to offer as many opportunities to artists as possible to create new and exciting work that can be showcased around Scotland. At Pitlochry Festival Theatre, we are developing exciting plans to open our new Studio Theatre next Summer. This collaboration*



*and artistic strategy with Capital Theatres will be integral to how we develop new work for this new space and continue to serve brilliant audiences and artists.*

*She added: "We know that audiences are longing to come back together for a good night out so we couldn't think of a better way to welcome them back than with some exciting new musicals created by the very best Scottish talent. Pitlochry Festival Theatre and Capital Theatres both have a long history of welcoming audiences to experience great musicals. And it felt vital that we develop this new work to offer hope to everyone that we will be back soon - laughing, crying, and challenging ourselves to make sense of our extraordinary world together."*

**The launch of the Musical Commissioning Hub has been made possible through investment from the Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund and patron support.**

For further information on the Musical Commissioning Hub visit [www.capitaltheatres.com/musical-commissioning-hub](http://www.capitaltheatres.com/musical-commissioning-hub) and [www.pitlochryfestival.com/musicals-commissioning-hub](http://www.pitlochryfestival.com/musicals-commissioning-hub)

**#MusicalsHubScot**

### **Further Quotes**

**Howard Goodall:** *"It is vitally important that as a theatre community we keep alive the flame of a future beyond this challenging period by encouraging them to develop new musicals, so I'm looking forward to joining the rest of the panel of this, the Musical Commissioning Hub. We know how much musicals can lift the spirits of an audience and now is definitely a moment when we need to do just that. It is brilliant that Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre have found a way to make this happen together and I'm sure great things will come from such a strong partnership between these two important organisations. Hurrah."*

**Aisha Khan:** *"It's great to see Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre working hard, during this difficult time, to engage artists and develop new work for audiences. As an artist and Artistic Director, I'm delighted to join this panel in its ambitions to help with the development of Scottish talent and create exciting new musicals for everyone to enjoy. It feels important and vital that we all come together and support each other as well as give our audiences something to look forward to."*

**Matthew Xia:** *"I'm thrilled to join such a respected group of theatre makers, performers, producers and musicians during this rather peculiar suspension of time. It's wonderful to be able look forward and to enable and empower future talent."*

**Robert Softley Gale:** *"I am thrilled to be working with Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre on this exciting new venture to find Scotland's new Musical Theatre talent. It's absolutely an honour to be sitting alongside my fellow panel members and I can't wait to see what treasures we uncover. Now - as much as ever - audiences in Scotland need accessible popular entertainment to bring us back together."*

**Kenny Wax:** *"I've been a strong advocate for new musicals during the thirty years I've been producing. And yet I've only produced half a dozen in that time. They are fiendishly difficult in many respects. And they also come in all shapes and sizes. The holy grail for a producer is to find that brand new show and give it a proper commercial life. I produced TOP HAT a few years ago. The stage production was based on one of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers most successful movies. We created a new libretto and it won the Olivier Award for 'Best New Musical', but I felt a bit of a fraud as the movie gave us such a generous steer and the Irving Berlin songbook was a goldmine. More recently our production of SIX has received widespread success and acclaim for its ability to speak to a young audience and its incredible power in making history relevant and sexy. SIX has been an amazing experience for everyone involved. If the Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre New Musicals Commissioning Hub can discover that sort of original talent then we will have done very well."*

**Katie Brayben:** *"It's so important we continue to make new musicals - now more than ever. It's exhilarating to think this new partnership between Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre will ensure good things happen in British theatre. I'm so excited that these wonderful theatres are embarking on this new venture together. They are guiding lights for theatres right now. I just can't wait to be part of this!"*

**David Greig:** *“I’m very excited to be part of the Musical Commissioning Hub. It’s going to be a great new venture for Scotland. Everyone knows how passionate I am about producing new musicals and I can’t wait to be part of this new initiative to support others to dream their dreams.”*

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For further information about Capital Theatres, images and interview opportunities, please contact Susie Gray, The Corner Shop PR, [susie@thecornershoppr.com](mailto:susie@thecornershoppr.com) - 07834 073 795

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### **About Capital Theatres**

Capital Theatres is the largest charitable theatre organisation in Scotland. It presents world-class shows to entertain and inspire audiences of all ages. It stages over 700 performances each year, at the Festival Theatre (1,900 seats), the King’s Theatre (1,300 seats) and The Studio (155 seats) in a broad and inclusive programme featuring the very best in drama, dance, musical theatre, live music, comedy and pantomime.

Much of its programme is exclusive to its venues in Scotland, providing the only opportunity for audiences to see the biggest shows touring north of the border, the best in international contemporary dance and the latest productions from leading local and national companies.

During the summer months its stages are at the heart of the Edinburgh Festivals in the world’s leading festival city. The Festivals provide a focus for pioneering new voices and artforms and a celebration of artistic collaboration that continues throughout the year.

It supports access to the arts for everyone and has an extensive learning and participation programme of talks, workshops and events to introduce and develop engagement and interest in the heritage of our buildings and all areas of live performance.

### **The current picture at Capital Theatres**

Almost 90% of Capital Theatres' income is generated from ticket sales. The sudden closure of theatres in March meant an immediate loss of Capital Theatres' main source of income. So far 62,000 tickets have been refunded with a value of over £2.8 million. The recent decision to postpone this year's King's Pantomime and the annual Christmas ballet until 2021 results in a further £3.4 million loss of income. Currently 92% of staff are furloughed to save costs, with the remainder skeleton staff working from home.

Capital Theatres is grateful to have received £250,000 from the Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund, £500,000 from the Scottish Government and to have raised £86,900 through a public crowdfunder campaign. It still projects a trading deficit of £1.14million by March 2021 which it is currently working hard and creatively to cover.

As a charitable organisation, Capital Theatres strives to make the arts accessible for all through its extensive Learning and Participating programme, providing Edinburgh’s local community with long-term health and wellbeing benefits. During this difficult time, the team has continued to engage with the wider community online. Its extensive new digital engagement programme 'Raise the Curtain' offers wide-ranging opportunities for people to engage with the arts safely from home, from dementia friendly online music concerts, storytelling projects with Special Educational Needs Schools and performance workshops

with care experienced young adults. Over the last three months the team has delivered 83 sessions to over 1000 participants, with 62,000 views and participations online.

The current plan at Capital Theatres is to have performances back on its stages at The King's, Festival Theatre and The Studio by Spring 2021, but social distancing and tiering measures currently in place would mean theatres opening at around 20% capacity which isn't financially viable.

Capital Theatres is a registered Scottish charity (SC018605) and its theatres and its programme are supported by the City of Edinburgh Council.

www.capitaltheatres.com @captheatres  
#AfterTheInterval

### **About Pitlochry Festival Theatre (PFT)**

- Theatre for Everyone. Theatre for a Lifetime
- Our mission is to create, nurture and inspire
- We actively seek to embody our values (empathy, respect, integrity, creativity, collaboration, inspiration) in all encounters and communications
- Established 1951, PFT offers a unique theatrical experience, operating a daily repertoire system in the summer which means that audiences and visitors can enjoy six different productions (all performed by a resident acting company) in six days.
- PFT is supported by Creative Scotland and Perth & Kinross Council
- The BOP/Whetstone Feasibility Study of PFT (2012/13), commissioned jointly by Creative Scotland, Perth & Kinross Council and Scottish Enterprise, confirmed the conclusions of the 2007/8 Economic Impact Study of PFT carried out by Scottish Economic Research: PFT makes an annual contribution to Scotland's economy of between £13m and £20m, whilst every public pound invested in PFT produces a return of between £17 and £20

### **Pitlochry Festival Theatre Studio**

Pitlochry Festival Theatre have recently submitted a planning application to Perth and Kinross Council for the creation of a second performance space and an extension to the Theatre's front of house area. The second performance space will be created within the existing building to form an accessible 175-seat studio, which will provide a flexible additional space to showcase new writing and touring productions from across Scotland and UK whilst also broadening the Theatre's already-strong artistic programme.



**Pitlochry Festival Theatre**

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