

Job Description

Job Title: Trainee Costume Buyer

Responsible To: Head Costume Buyer

**National
Theatre**

National Theatre
Upper Ground, South Bank
London SE1 9PX

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The National Theatre

The National Theatre presents an eclectic mix of new plays and classics. Over the year we create around 22 productions and aim to reflect the diversity of our culture on the stages.

For each show that we create there is a Costume designer who will have a vision for the costumes we will be working on.

About the Costume department

The Costume Department is made up of the following areas:

Running Wardrobe: This department looks after every element of costume in a show when it is on stage. They care for the costumes; washing, ironing, repairing and setting them back-stage for the actors during the performances. The Dressers work with the actors assisting them with getting in and out of their costumes which often need to happen very quickly within the time scale of the play.

Hire Dept: This is where all the costumes from previous productions are stored and re-used for future shows or hired out.

Costume Workroom: Here costumes are made from scratch for both men and women by the Tailors and the Ladies Costume makers. We also adapt and alter existing costumes and bought items. These can be of all periods from early structured silhouettes to the more fluid modern eras to fantastical, regal or culturally specific.

Costume Props: This is where the items that an actor wears like hats, crowns, jewellery and masks are made. Close contact with other areas such as Wigs, Make up and Props can be needed to ensure success.

Dye shop: Within the dye shop the team is responsible for creating a wide range of textile effects, prints and the dyeing of fabrics. The designer presents their ideas and desired costume and fabric effects to the dye shop team who have the skills and talent to respond with the textile possibilities within the brief given.

Costume Supervisor: Each production is allocated a Costume Supervisor who is responsible for co-ordinating all the areas within the costume team to realise the designers vision within a specific budget. During the rehearsal period all costume elements are pulled together for the first day on stage and then costuming any understudies that may be required.

Costume Buyers: Almost all productions are allocated a costume buyer whose role it is to assist the freelance Costume Supervisor and designer with any buying requirements and offer support during the production period.

They are required to sample and buy fabrics, clothing and accessories including footwear under the brief of the costume designer. They may also assist the costume supervisors with administration/computer work.

Contemporary shows can often involve numerous shopping trips to high street shops and bargain hunting in markets. Items purchased are tried on the actors in a costume fitting and much of this clothing can be rejected if it doesn't suit the character and so it's back to the high street with returns.

On period productions, knowledge of flea and vintage markets is an advantage but items for both contemporary and period costumed designs are also sourced over the internet.

The costume buying team at the National Theatre is made up of two full time buyers and a stock co-ordinator. The stock co-ordinator oversees all the departments stock areas including footwear stock as well as maintaining all the haberdashery and general stock used by the department while producing or during the run of a show.

Purpose of the Trainee Costume Buyer position:

The Trainee Costume Buyer will primarily work alongside the costume buyers and stock co-ordinator gaining valuable experience through assisting and shadowing them in all aspects of their duties over the year.

The position will allow the trainee the opportunity to build their supplier contacts along with the chance to develop their skills and increase their knowledge and experience within a busy costume department.

The aim is that, after the year, the trainee will be able to go forward independently into the industry with enhanced skills and experience towards a future career in costume buying/assisting and supervising for theatre, film or TV.

What is involved?

The role is based at the National Theatre, Southbank, London with training given by the experienced employees of the Costume Buying team. The position lasts for 12 months and is a full time 40 hours per week, Monday to Friday traineeship.

What will you do and learn during the traineeship?

- Work as part of the dynamic and exciting Costume department in creating world leading stage productions.
- Gain a full understanding of the costume production process from the initial costume design through to finished costumes on stage with a good sense of how they are produced.
- Develop your knowledge and understanding of the role of a Buyer within a busy producing theatre.

- Assist the experienced costume buying team in various duties, including shopping and sourcing for shows. This will often require travelling considerable distances by foot and on public transport.
- Learn how to manage all finance elements required for a Buyer: petty cash, credit card, computerised purchase orders
- Understand the importance of accurate paperwork including receipts and shopping lists.
- Learn the importance and necessity of working to deadlines.
- As guided by the costume buyers, costume supervisor or designer, visit the costume hire department and select costumes.
- Help to maintain all stock areas in a clean and tidy condition and ensure that security, safety and good housekeeping procedures are properly carried out.
- Assist with the annual stocktake as required.

What are we looking for in a trainee costume buyer?

- Evidence of self-motivation to acquire new skills and knowledge with a positive proactive approach
- Evidence of the ability to deal with a wide range of people or working as a member of a team
- Recent current experience of working within a costume or related environment.
- Basic knowledge of London's main haberdashery and shopping areas.
- A strong desire to pursue a career in Costume Buying and Costume Supervising.
- Good textile and footwear knowledge along with a general interest and appreciation of costume history and contemporary trends.
- Demonstration of good IT and finance Skills (primarily Word & Excel) with excellent organisational skills.
- Evidence of working under pressure and within tight deadlines.
- Able to lift and manoeuvre costume rails; boxes and carry heavy bags of shopping.
- Basic sewing skills and knowledge of costume construction are an advantage.

Outline of Terms and Conditions

Contract Type:	12 month FTC
Hours:	40 hours per week
Salary:	£22,609.60 per annum, paid monthly on the 22 nd of the month
Location:	National Theatre, Upper Ground, South Bank, London, SE1 9PX
Annual Leave:	28 days in the first year, pro rata, including bank holidays, increasing with length of service thereafter
Probationary Period:	1 month
Notice Period:	1 months (1 month during probationary period)

Pension:

The National Theatre operates a Stakeholder Pension scheme with Legal & General. If you wish to become a member, you may opt to contribute 4.5%, 6% or 7.5% of basic pay and the National will make a matching contribution. The National also operates an alternative pension scheme with NEST

Other Benefits

- Complimentary tickets for performances, subject to availability and the National's staff ticket policy
- Complimentary tickets for platforms, subject to availability and policy
- Interest-free season ticket loan, cycle-scheme and childcare vouchers
- Staff canteen and bar (based at the main National Theatre)
- Discount on meals in all of the National's bars and restaurants
- Discount on the books, play texts, DVDs and other items in the National's bookshop

Appointment Procedure

Please note that applications can only be considered if they are submitted through the National's Online Recruitment System, and returned by the closing date.

To apply for this vacancy please follow the link:

<https://candidate.nationaltheatre.org.uk/78056RNT>

The closing date for the receipt of completed application forms is: **12:00 noon, 19th November 2018**

For any queries, please contact the HR Department by emailing:

recruitment@nationaltheatre.org.uk

The National Theatre is committed to being an Equal Opportunities employer and as such we actively encourage applications from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority applicants and from applicants from local London Boroughs.

HR Department
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