

National Theatre

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Award-winning artists Cate Blanchett and James Graham OBE to join National Theatre Board alongside Sarah Wiggins, Vice Chair, Global Banking, HSBC

Sir Damon Buffini, Chair of the National Theatre, has announced today that **Cate Blanchett**, **James Graham** and **Sarah Wiggins** are to join the National Theatre Board this month, with further appointments to be announced next year.

These new trustees will bring their unique creative perspectives and specialist business experience to the National Theatre, complementing the breadth of existing expertise held by the range of industry leading Trustees who make up the Board. Together they will work to shape the National Theatre's future, ensuring it remains a vibrant hub serving audiences across the world by producing groundbreaking work and nurturing the next generation of theatre-makers.

Actor and Producer **Cate Blanchett** served alongside Andrew Upton as co-Artistic Director and co-CEO of Sydney Theatre Company (STC) from 2008 to 2013. Together they oversaw numerous acclaimed productions which toured nationally and internationally, including Benedict Andrews' *War of the Roses*, *The Maids* and *Gross und Klein (Big and Small)*, Liv Ullmann's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Tamás Ascher's *Uncle Vanya*, and Neil Armfield's *The Secret River* based on Kate Grenville's novel of the same name, which was seen at the National Theatre in 2019. Co-leading Australia's largest performing arts company they were instrumental in activating the precinct in which the STC resides, transforming its home base to accommodate the country's second-largest rooftop solar array as part of their award-winning Greening the Wharf program, and pioneered innovative access and education initiatives including in-school professional learning development, whilst helping to cultivate a deeper culture of philanthropy.

In 2019 Cate performed at the National Theatre in Martin Crimp's play *When We Have Sufficiently Tortured Each Other* directed by Katie Mitchell. Her extensive film credits include *TÁR*, *Blue Jasmine*, *Carol*, *The Aviator*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Elizabeth*, earning her two Academy Awards, four BAFTAs, and four Golden Globes. As co-founder of Dirty Films, she has produced and starred in various films and series, including *The New Boy*, *Mrs. America*, and *Stateless*. She is a Global Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR and serves on the Earthshot Prize Council, with numerous other humanitarian and environmental roles.

British playwright and screenwriter **James Graham** is known for his sharp, politically charged works that blend history, politics and drama. His writing is celebrated for its wit, detailed research, and its ability to make complex events accessible and engaging to a broad audience. James' recent work includes *Dear England*, about Gareth Southgate's transformation of the national team, which premiered at the National Theatre in 2023 and later transferred to the West End and has been seen by 300,000 people to date. James's TV drama *Sherwood*, set in his hometown of Ashfield, received critical acclaim and won two BAFTAs. His notable TV credits also include *Quiz* and *Brexit: An Uncivil War*. James' breakout play *This House* had a sell-out run at the National Theatre and was revived in the West End. Other works include *Boys From the Blackstuff*, *Best of Enemies*, and his new musical *Tammy Faye*, co-written with Elton John, which is opening on Broadway this month. James was awarded an OBE in 2020 for his contributions to drama and young people.

Sarah Wiggins trained as a lawyer and is currently a Vice Chair within Global Banking at HSBC, where she is focused on expanding HSBC's UK investment banking business. Previously, Sarah spent 30 years at the global law firm Linklaters, where she was a partner for more than 20 years, the first female Head of its London Corporate Practice and served on its Executive Committee. She has advised on complex cross-border M&A transactions totalling over \$300 billion. Sarah also has extensive experience advising on high profile crisis management and regulatory investigations. She is an advocate for greater diversity and inclusion in business, having been a member of the 30% Club Steering Committee and a mentor for Next Generation women on the FTSE 100 Cross-Company Mentoring Programme. She is passionate about giving greater opportunities to young people and was a member of the Advisory Council to the Prince of Wales' Step Up to Serve Campaign between 2014 and 2016.

Legal General Counsel Sabine Chalmers and Freelance Designer Vicki Mortimer, who joined the National Theatre Board in 2017 and 2019 respectively, have both stepped down as NT Trustees. The Board would like to thank Vicki and Sabine for their contribution to the National Theatre,

particularly for their work driving forwards diversity, sustainability initiatives and championing the rights of freelancers in the sector.

The new Trustees join a dedicated group of leading experts in healthcare, business, education philanthropy, communications, diversity, digital and global relations, chaired by Sir Damon Buffini. The Trustees will work together as a collective guiding the National Theatre into the next decade which will be led by Indhu Rubasingham and Kate Varah as Co-Chief Executives from Spring 2025.

Speaking about the appointments Chair of the Board **Damon Buffini** said *“We are absolutely delighted to welcome Cate, James and Sarah to the National Theatre Board. Each of them brings an extraordinary wealth of talent, experience, and vision to the National Theatre. As world-class artists Cate and James have continually pushed the boundaries of creativity and storytelling, while also being passionate advocates for the wider arts sector. Their dedication to their craft, along with their commitment to supporting emerging voices and access to the arts, will undoubtedly strengthen our mission and inspire the next generation of theatre makers.*”

Sarah brings with her a vast depth of legal knowledge and strategic insight that will greatly benefit the National Theatre. Her experience in advising complex organisations will be invaluable as we navigate new opportunities, alongside her commitment to fostering inclusive working. I am looking forward to working with Cate, James and Sarah hugely.”

Cate Blanchett commented *“I relish engagement with the National as both an artist and an audience member. I’ve long admired the company’s breadth and depth of programming and its commitment to education and outreach in the wider community. It’s a privilege to be on the board at this exciting transitional moment. I look forward to rolling my sleeves up in support of the dynamic duo Indhu Rubasingham and Kate Varah.”*

James Graham said *“As a working artist, and a passionate believer in all that The National Theatre is, and could be, it’s a real privilege to join its board. Especially in this moment of transition. I’m also particularly honoured to be representing writers and indeed all freelancers, and I take that responsibility very seriously. I am excited, optimistic, and ambitious for the National’s next chapter.”*

Sarah Wiggins said *“The National Theatre is an organisation I have long admired, and I am delighted to be joining Board at such a pivotal time in its history. I am incredibly excited to have the opportunity to play my part in shaping a future where the National Theatre will continue to inspire and engage audiences and young people from across the globe.”*

Ends

For more information and images contact Ruth Greenwood, Director of Communications
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For images click [here](#)

Notes to Editors

National Theatre Board members

Sir Damon Buffini (Chair)

Louise Charlton

Dame Vikki Heywood CBE

Simon Minty

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About the National Theatre

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. The National Theatre shares unforgettable stories with millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

World-leading artists make their best work at the National Theatre with the widest possible audience and impact. The National Theatre invests in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously its role as the nation's theatre. Of the new productions developed each year with a wide range of theatre companies, a third of that research and development resource is dedicated to shows staged at theatres outside London.

Through touring our work to local theatres and schools and nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in every local authority in the UK. A registered charity with deeply embedded social purpose, the National Theatre works with hundreds of schools and communities

across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity, and to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre.

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