

ALMEIDA THEATRE

PRESS RELEASE

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LUKE JOHNSON APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF THE ALMEIDA THEATRE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Almeida Theatre announces today that Luke Johnson will succeed Christopher Rodrigues CBE as Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Luke Johnson has been Chairman of theatre charity Stage One since 2010. He is co-owner of Assembly Festival, one of the largest venue complexes on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. He is chairman of Fiery Angel, a backer of commercial theatre, in partnership with producer Edward Snape. He is also a non-executive director of AKA, the leading marketing services provider to the theatre industry. For six years until 2010 he served as Chairman of Channel 4 Television and is a former Chairman of the Royal Society of Arts and governor of The University of the Arts London.

He is Chairman of Risk Capital Partners, a private equity firm he co-founded in 2001, the Institute of Cancer Research and Gaucho Restaurants. He is Chairman and part owner of Patisserie Holdings PLC, Gail's bakeries, Neilson Active Holidays and The Brighton Pier Group plc and is also a director of Brompton Bicycles. He writes a weekly essay in The Sunday Times and until 2015 wrote a weekly column in The Financial Times. He has lived in London for over 30 years.

Luke will take up his position at the next board meeting on 15 September. He joins current Trustees Axel Burrough, John Cassy, Richard Gildea, Giles Havergal CBE, Marc Mathieu, Lucy Perman MBE and Tanya Seghatchian.

Almeida Artistic Director Rupert Goold said: *“Luke’s wealth of experience in the culture, hospitality and business sectors make him a huge asset to the Almeida. I’m delighted that the Board has appointed him as Chairman and look forward to working alongside him as we continue our ambition to make bold new work and launch the next generation of British artists. We are indebted to Christopher Rodrigues for his commitment to the Almeida over the past eight years, and throughout the change in artistic leadership. It has been enabling for the Almeida to have someone as supportive and progressive in their outlook as Christopher.”*

Luke Johnson said: *'The Almeida is one of London's most important theatres, and I am honoured to become involved with such a vital cultural institution. I will help it continue to produce ground breaking plays with new and established talent. I'm grateful to my predecessor, Christopher Rodrigues, who bequeaths me an organisation in sound financial condition, with an outstanding leadership team and a great creative track record.'*

Outgoing Chairman of the Board, Christopher Rodrigues said: *"It has been a great pleasure to Chair the Almeida, working first with Michael Attenborough and more recently with Rupert Goold. I have benefitted from the support of a great group of Trustees and a truly committed set of staff members. I leave the theatre in good shape and in good hands and take with me some unforgettable memories of the many outstanding productions I have seen in the last eight years."*

Christopher Rodrigues CBE has been Chairman of the Board of Trustees since 2008. He oversaw the appointment of Rupert Goold as Artistic Director in 2013. He is Chairman of the British Council, the British Tourist Authority, Openwork Holdings Ltd, The Port of London Authority and the British Bobsleigh & Skeleton Association.

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ABOUT THE ALMEIDA THEATRE

The Almeida Theatre exists to launch the next generation of British artists onto the world stage. A small room with an international reputation, the Almeida began life as a literary and scientific society – complete with library, lecture theatre and laboratory. From the beginning, the building existed to investigate the world. Today, the Almeida makes brave new work that asks big questions: of plays, of theatre and of the world around us.

The Almeida brings together the most exciting artists to take risks; to provoke, inspire and surprise audiences; to interrogate the present, dig up the past and imagine the future. Whether new work or reinvigorated classic, whether in the theatre, on the road or online, the Almeida makes live art to excite, enliven and entertain. The Almeida makes argument for theatre as an essential force in an increasingly fragmented society.

Founded by Pierre Audi in 1980, his successors were Jonathan Kent and Ian McDiarmid in 1990, and Michael Attenborough in 2002. Productions including *Hamlet* with Ralph Fiennes in 2005, Rufus Norris' *Festen*, *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage and most recently *Chimerica*, *Ghosts* and *King Charles III* have given the theatre international renown.

In Summer 2013, Rupert Goold joined the Almeida as Artistic Director. His first production was *American Psycho: a new musical thriller*, which then opened on Broadway in 2016. In 2014 the Almeida productions of *Ghosts* and *Chimerica* won eight Olivier Awards including Best Actress, Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Best New Play, Best Director and Best Revival and enjoyed

transfers to the West End and Broadway respectively. This was followed by *King Charles III*, which transferred to the West End at the Wyndham's Theatre and won the Olivier Award for Best New Play in 2015, transferred to Broadway, and toured the UK and Sydney. Other notable productions as Artistic Director include *The Merchant of Venice*, *Medea* and *Richard III*, which was broadcast live to cinemas around the world in July 2016.

In Summer 2015, the Almeida presented *Almeida Greeks*, which included three major new productions of *Oresteia*, *Bakkhai* and *Medea*, the latter of which was directed by Goold, with a festival of events, performances, talks and readings running alongside.

He co-directed *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* with Almeida Associate Director Robert Icke. Involving more than 60 readers, *The Iliad* reached an audience of over 50,000 people across the world, watching online, or in person at the British Museum and the Almeida Theatre. *The Odyssey* followed the huge success of *The Iliad*, and involved an army of artists in various locations around London. As with *The Iliad*, both theatrical events were live streamed throughout and achieved ground-breaking levels of online engagement.

The Almeida is grateful to its Principal Partner Aspen, currently in its second term as the Almeida's most significant corporate supporter.

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