



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

PRESS RELEASE

Royal Opera House appoints David Ross as Chair of the Board of Trustees

David Ross has been appointed as the new Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Opera House, succeeding the late Ian Taylor, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

The appointment was conducted by the Nominations Committee, chaired by Julian Metherell and included fellow Board members Dame Vivien Duffield, Danny Wyler, Sue Hoyle OBE and Indhu Rubasingham MBE, Artistic Director of the Kiln Theatre, who had recently been elected to join the Board. Moira Sinclair, CEO of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation sat on the committee as an independent member.

The Board and the Executive Team would like to give particular thanks to Suzanne Heywood, Deputy Chair of our Board of Trustees, who has so ably led the organisation through the challenges of recent months as acting Chair of the Royal Opera House. During this time she has helped shape our response to the COVID crisis and our plans for the future.

David Ross is a UK-based entrepreneur and arts philanthropist with a strong commitment to embedding diversity and inclusion at the heart of the arts. In his time as Chair of the Board at the National Portrait Gallery, David made a significant and impactful contribution to reaching children and young people across the UK through meaningful and lasting education programmes.

David is best known for co-founding The Carphone Warehouse Group and his long-standing philanthropic work carried out through the David Ross Foundation. He has a keen interest in British contemporary art and is a passionate supporter of ensuring access to the arts for all. The David Ross Foundation supports a number of organisations and projects across a range of artistic fields, from music to theatre and the visual arts.

David founded Nevill Holt Opera in 2013, opening the RIBA Award-winning theatre on the Nevill Holt estate in 2018 and overseeing the development of its education and community programme that has reached thousands of children across the Midlands. In addition, he established the David Ross Education Trust (DRET), with over 30 Academies across Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire.

David Ross's appointment is effective from 1 September 2020.

Multi award-winning theatre Director, Indhu Rubasingham MBE, also joins the ROH Board and brings with her a wealth of experience from her time at Kiln, embedding the newly refurbished theatre in the heart of the community in Kilburn, North London.

Lord Browne, a former Chairman of the Tate galleries, also joins the board bringing decades of experience including from his time as Trustee of the British Museum and as Vice-President of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

On his new role as Chair of the Board of Trustees, David Ross said:

“I am passionate about creating opportunities for all and ensuring that everyone can enjoy our great cultural institutions, artists and musicians. So I am honoured to be appointed to lead the Board of Trustees at an institution as well regarded as the Royal Opera House and will continue the fantastic success achieved by my predecessors. In particular I want to focus on building upon the great education programmes that have been put in place to bring the arts to children across the country.

“The Open Up project has provided a wonderful foundation for the future and I look forward to continuing this tremendous work and maintaining the Royal Opera House's position at the heart of British cultural life, as we steer a course through the undoubted challenges ahead.”

Alex Beard Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House said:

“David Ross is a passionate supporter of the arts and has overseen significant change in his time as Chair at the National Portrait Gallery. David's commitment to education stands out in particular, and we welcome his insight at time of change for ROH and indeed the whole of society. I very much look forward to working closely with David as he leads the Board at this pivotal moment and am very grateful to Suzanne for all her help, support and leadership, particularly during the last very challenging months”.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Photos can be found [here](#).
2. Full details of the ROH Board and Committees can be found [here](#).
3. For more information, please contact: Ben.Oliver@roh.org.uk or Vicky.Kington@roh.org.uk

About the Royal Opera House

The Royal Opera House wants to give everyone access to exceptional ballet and opera. As The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, we bring together the world's most extraordinary artists in more than 500 performances every year on our two stages.

Across the 2018/19 Season we welcomed more than one million people through our doors as ticketholders, participants in our programme of free and ticketed daytime events, and as visitors to our bars, cafes, restaurants and shop. A further one million people enjoyed our work in cinemas, at free screenings and through streamed and televised performances up and down the UK. Our ongoing partnership with the BBC saw 11 of our productions broadcast across their platforms last Season.

During the 2018/19 Season our three flagship ROH learning programmes – Create and Sing, Create and Dance and Design and Make – supported teachers from 1,394 schools, 81% of which were outside London, bringing arts to children and young people the length and breadth of the country.

David Ross: biography

David Ross is a UK based entrepreneur and philanthropist best known for co-founding The Carphone Warehouse Group plc in 1991.

David's philanthropic work is carried out through the David Ross Foundation which he founded. The Foundation makes charitable donations to a range of educational, community and cultural initiatives, including the David Ross Education Trust, the University of Nottingham, Nevill Holt Opera Festival and projects in Lincoln with the Historic Lincoln Trust and Lincoln Cathedral.

In 2007, David founded the David Ross Education Trust. The first school to join the Trust in 2007 was Havelock Academy, a secondary school based in David's hometown of Grimsby. Recognised as one of 11 system leaders nationwide, the Trust has 34 primary and secondary schools in the East Midlands, Yorkshire and London. David is also Chair of New Schools Network.

David is Chair of the National Portrait Gallery and Chair of The University of Nottingham's Development Committee. David is a board member of the British Paralympic Association.

David was educated at Uppingham School and Nottingham University. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant with Arthur Andersen & Co, working with the firm from 1988 to 1991.

About The Royal Opera

The Royal Opera, under the artistic direction of Antonio Pappano, Music Director, and Oliver Mears, Director of Opera, is one of the world's leading opera companies. Based in the iconic Covent Garden theatre, it is renowned both for its outstanding performances of traditional opera and for commissioning new works by today's leading opera composers, such as Harrison Birtwistle, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Thomas Adès.

About The Royal Ballet

Under the directorship of Kevin O'Hare, The Royal Ballet unites tradition and innovation in world-class performances, and is a driving force in the development of ballet as an art form. Based at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, it brings together today's most dynamic and versatile dancers with a world-class orchestra and leading choreographers, composers, conductors, directors and creative teams to share awe-inspiring theatrical experiences with diverse audiences worldwide. The Company's extensive repertory embraces 19th-century classics, the singular legacy of works by Founder Choreographer Frederick Ashton and Principal Choreographer Kenneth MacMillan and the compelling new canon of work including pieces by Resident Choreographer Wayne McGregor and Artistic Associate

Christopher Wheeldon.