



**Press Release**  
8 November 2021  
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## **The Barons Court Theatre Appoints new Artistic Director Sharon Willems and Executive Director Leo Bacica**

The Barons Court Theatre is thrilled to announce that Sharon Willems will become the new Artistic Director in November 2021. She is joined in her appointment by new Executive Director Leo Bacica.

Sharon will succeed Ron Phillips, who has held the post since the theatre was founded in 1991. Leo will succeed Christian Deal who has been Theatre Manager since its founding. Sharon and Leo run independent theatre company Kibo Productions and will continue to create work with Kibo Productions, both at the Barons Court Theatre and beyond, while managing the Barons Court Theatre.

Sharon Willems says: 'I'm excited to step into this role and to continue the legacy of supporting emerging artists that Ron established during his tenure. As we continue to recover and adapt from the immense challenges of global pandemic, fringe theatres like the Barons Court Theatre must continue to feed the ground by supporting artists to take bold steps into the industry.'

We hope for the Barons Court to be a lifeline to those who feel the industry is impenetrable. Leo and I aim to create new opportunities for early career and underrepresented artists by programming their work, supporting their development, and offering a fair financial model to companies that stage work with us. Our hope is that this will create an inclusive, collaborative and welcoming space for artists and our local community at the Barons Court Theatre. I can't wait to see what develops over the coming months and years together.'

Leo Bacica says: 'We have been friends of Barons Court Theatre for many years and have worked brilliantly with Chris and Ron in the past. To be able to build on their legacy is both exciting and deeply humbling. We are looking forward to bringing to life our vision for the future of Barons Court Theatre as a vibrant hub of the community, a friendly and inclusive platform for young artists and a respected fringe space on London's rich performing arts scene.'

Outgoing Theatre Manager Christian Deal says: 'Ron and I could not be leaving the theatre in better hands. We look forward to what Sharon and Leo get up to in this new phase of the Barons Court Theatre's life.'

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Notes to Editors  
For further press information, please contact

### **About Sharon Willems**

Originally from the US, Sharon has been making work in the UK for more than ten years. Sharon is the artistic director of Kibo Productions, which was founded in 2013 to create intimate, political theatre from unheard voices from around the world. Sharon works as a freelance director and dramaturg and in 2019 was the lead programmer for Theatro Technis' Camden Fringe events.

At the Barons Court Theatre: She recently curated and co-produced the *Reboot Festival* (5-23 October) a three-week festival of dynamic new writing from playwrights from the US, Europe and across the UK for which she directed *Woman, a Choreopoem (Or, That Time When Michelle Obama & I Had Da Hong Pao Tea)* by Romanian playwright Catalina Florescu. Other work includes: *The Big Things* by Mike Heath (World Premiere, 2018), and curating new writing festival *Love, Hate and Human Rights* - a theatre protest against anti-LGBTQ laws in Russia supported by Stephen Fry and Peter Tatchell that raised funds for Amnesty International's work in the area. (2013)

Recently, Sharon remounted Kibo's critically-acclaimed production of *Tea Set* by Gina Moxley starring Amy Molloy for the Kensington + Chelsea Festival in July 2021.

Pre-pandemic for Kibo Productions: curating *AMPLIFY: an international showcase of New Work by Womxn* for which she directed *To The Depths* by Australian playwright Shannon Murdoch (Theatro Technis, 2019), *Jonah* by Romanian playwright Marin Sorescu (London/US Tour, 2017, 2019), and *Birthday* by American playwright Crystal Skillman (UK Premiere, published by Samuel French, 2011).

Additional directing credits include: *Small Hours* by Lucy Kirkwood and Ed Hime (Catalyst Festival, 2021), *Rice and Peas* by Mia Jerome (Blouse and Skirt, R&D, 2021), *Parched* by Eva Edo (Criterion West End New Writing Showcase, 2019), *THEY* by S.I. Witkiewicz (Wayward Productions, 2019), *Indignitas* by Jonathan Skinner (Criterion West End New Writing Showcase, 2017), and *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare (Tales Retold, 2011).

### **About Leo Bacica**

Leo is co-founder of Kibo Productions and producer of most of the company's events. He's worked as a technician for two decades.

Cinema credits include: *Cold Mountain* (2003), *The Cave* (2005), *Blood Creek* (2007) and hundreds of short films, music clips, commercials and TV shows in his home country Romania.

Since 2012 Leo has been working as a light designer and light technician on the London scene, and has been resident technician at Cafe de Paris until 2020. He is very passionate about bringing international theatre in front of British audiences, with a strong focus on his native Romania. As such, Leo has worked with the Romanian Cultural Institute to stage both Romanian classics and new voices. The highlight of this collaboration has been a US tour of Marin Sorescu's *Jonah* in 2019.

### **About Kibo Productions**

Kibo Productions exists to showcase intimate, political theatre from unheard voices from around the world. They believe theatre is a powerful tool for transformation and their work is made with the hope that they can activate change by producing plays that reveal and challenge our perception of the world. Their work has been published by Samuel French and Aurora Metro Books, received 5\* and 4\* reviews, and been invited to tour internationally. Kibo Productions has a proven track record of cultivating successful relationships with artists, venues, charity partners and funders that have culminated in creatively exciting and socially engaged theatre productions. Learn more at [www.kiboproductions.com](http://www.kiboproductions.com).

### **About the Barons Court Theatre**

Since 1991, the Barons Court Theatre has been entertaining London with new writing and reimagined classics under the artistic direction of Ron Phillips.

Recent Productions include the *Reboot Festival: three weeks of new plays for a world attempting to reboot* (Kibo Productions) and *A Dog's Solution* by Dr. Who's Richard Franklin (Charterhouse Pictures Productions).

Upcoming productions include rehearsed readings of *Maryland* by Lucy Kirkwood (arranged with permission of the playwright and Royal Court Theatre, 11 - 13 November), *Titus Andronicus* by William Shakespeare (KDC, 16 - 20 November), and the *Emerging Artists Festival* (Savi Arts, 22 - 27 November).

The Barons Court Theatre is located in the basement of the Curtain's Up Pub, a Young's Brewery public house in the heart of West London. For more information, please visit [www.thecurtainsup.co.uk](http://www.thecurtainsup.co.uk).

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