

# MOUNTVIEW

## MOUNTVIEW JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES STEPHEN JAMESON AND SARAH PREECE STEP DOWN IN DECEMBER 2021



**18 May 2021**

Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts has today announced its joint Chief Executives Stephen Jameson, Principal & Artistic Director, and Executive Director Sarah Preece will step down in December 2021 after eight transformative years in their roles. They have overseen significant change for the drama school, most notably the realisation of a new £30-million building to match the world-class training Mountview has delivered for over 75 years.

In 2018 Sarah and Stephen opened the doors to Mountview's purpose-built home in Peckham, south London. Their vision was to create a new-model drama school, bringing together world class theatre training at foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate level, programmes for local young people and the community, and spaces for the professional industry.

In addition, their objective was to increase diversity and break down the barriers to training. This led to the development of a national scouting network of 52 partners across the UK and the creation of the Judi Dench Fund for Access to Drama Training. As a result, in 2020 Stephen and Sarah were awarded Special Recognition Olivier Awards for their commitment to arts and arts education in Peckham and improving diversity and accessibility.

Later that year Mountview's building was shortlisted for The Stage Theatre Building of the Year and the 2021 RIBA Regional Building Award and Sarah was named Woman in Business at the Southwark Excellence in Business Awards.

Sarah and Stephen commented:

*Whilst we are very sad to be leaving this incredible organisation, it has been a real privilege to lead this powerhouse of drama training, to establish world-class facilities for developing artists and to create a genuinely porous building that welcomes the community. We are so proud to have finally found Mountview a permanent home, beautifully crafted by Carl Turner Architects and contractor Gilbert-Ash.*

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*We have achieved the creative and business vision we had for Mountview when we became its joint Chief Executives and it feels right to now make way for the next act in Mountview's play.*

*We want to pay heartfelt thanks to our visionary Chair Dame Vikki Heywood and incredible Trustees, as well as those who generously support Mountview including Sir Cameron Mackintosh, Lady Susie Sainsbury, Southwark Council, the GLA, and the many trusts and foundations and individuals who supported our vision to make Mountview one of the best and most diverse drama schools in the UK.*

*Our particular thanks go to our incredibly dedicated and creative staff and the talented students who make Mountview what it is – world class.*

Mountview's Chair Dame Vikki Heywood commented:

*Stephen and Sarah have been a formidable double act at Mountview surpassing our wildest dreams by creating a stunning new home in Peckham for vocational teaching, theatre making and community engagement during their term. The fact that they also widened inclusion, broadened the profile, delivered a new business model and established a brave new creative vision that celebrates Mountview's past is nothing short of miraculous in these challenging times.*

*Everyone at Mountview will be sorry to say goodbye to these two such inspirational leaders, but they leave behind a powerful legacy and a very bright future for the school.*

Dame Judi Dench, Mountview's President added:

*Stephen and Sarah's commitment to achieving the highest quality drama training for all has been exemplary and inspirational. I was honoured when they created a fund in my name to help the next generation of talented young theatre makers; from this acorn will grow a splendid and strong oak.*

*I would like to thank them for their dedication to Mountview and wish them the very best for their future.*

A recruitment process to identify their successors is underway and will be announced shortly.

**For further information contact Simon Millward at Premier**  
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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **About Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts**

Mountview has been training performance and production artists since 1945.

In 1992 Mountview became the first provider of specialised musical theatre training in Europe. Vocational courses include Acting, Musical Theatre, Actor Musicianship, Stage Management, Lighting, Sound, Scenic Art and Prop Making, Theatre Directing, Musical Direction, Creative Producing, Site Specific Theatre Practice and Theatre for Community and Education. Degree programmes are validated by University of East Anglia and Diplomas by Trinity College London.

Mountview's new purpose-built home in Peckham, south east London, was completed in 2018 and includes the 200-seat Mountview Theatre (made possible by a £1m donation from Sir Cameron Mackintosh), the 80-seat Backstage Theatre (funded by the Backstage Trust), 23 acting, dance, TV and

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radio studios, production arts workshops and café bars. There is also dedicated office space for creative organisations including disability arts practitioners Candoco and professional rehearsal facilities used by Akram Khan Dance Company, Sheffield Theatres and Shakespeare's Globe, amongst others.

Since the move to its new building student numbers have increased by 25%, with over 4000 applications per year for around 300 places from students from 90 countries world-wide.

Throughout Mountview's 75 years, it has been dedicated to access to drama training and joint CEOs Sarah Preece and Stephen Jameson's vision built on this core commitment, initiating weekend and evening classes for young people and the community, with over 50% receiving bursaries to cover the costs of participation and delivering free workshops in Southwark schools.

In 2020, Stephen and Sarah launched The Judi Dench Fund for Access to Drama Training. This provides scholarships, bursaries and wellbeing and welfare initiatives for students, supports Mountview's pioneering UK-wide scouting network of 52 organisations to identify talented young people who would traditionally consider drama training inaccessible, and support them with free auditions and application support.

95% of undergraduates leave Mountview with agent representation and 97% of its students work in the creative industries within one year of graduation. Alumni include Olivier Award winning actors Giles Terera and Rebecca Trehearn, Artistic Director of Donmar Warehouse Michael Longhurst, actor/writer Amy Trigg (winner of the inaugural Women's Prize for Playwriting 2020), broadcaster Amanda Holden and Evening Standard Future Theatre Award Winners Emily Aboud and Beth Hinton-Lever.

Mountview regularly commissions new writing with recent pieces by leading writers including Roy Williams, Howard Goodall and Joanne Harris as well as emerging artists Asa Haynes and Esme Allman. They annually support alumni through the *Maiden Speech* festival – a programme of radical works and new commissions.

During lockdown the school launched *Mountview LIVE*, a series of online conversations led by Giles Terera with leading industry professionals. Participants included Dame Judi Dench, Sir Lenny Henry, Olivia Colman, Stephen Daldry, Glenda Jackson, Adrian Lester and Lin-Manuel Miranda. All conversations are free to view on Mountview's YouTube channel.

For more information see [www.mountview.org.uk](http://www.mountview.org.uk)