

PRESS

AT THE OLD VIC

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THE OLD VIC COMMITS TO A NEW WAY FORWARD AFTER RELEASING ITS CONCLUSIONS FOLLOWING AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ALLEGED CONDUCT OF FORMER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR KEVIN SPACEY

Headlines

The Old Vic today released its conclusions following an investigation into allegations concerning Kevin Spacey's conduct when he was Artistic Director of The Old Vic between 2004 and 2015. The investigation resulted in 20 personal testimonies shared of alleged inappropriate behaviour carried out by Kevin Spacey during his time as Artistic Director. Despite having the appropriate escalation processes in place, it was claimed that those affected felt unable to raise concerns and that Kevin Spacey operated without sufficient accountability. This is clearly unacceptable and The Old Vic truly apologises for not creating an environment or culture where people felt able to speak freely.

Investigation summary

On 31 October 2017, The Old Vic engaged an external law firm, Lewis Silkin, to undertake the investigation with a remit to look into the claims made in the media and elsewhere. This investigation concluded that there have been 20 personal allegations of incidents relating to The Old Vic ranging from 1995 to 2013, with the majority (all but two) falling before 2009.

No legal claims, formal grievances, formal disputes, settlement agreements or payments made or authorised were made at all in relation to Kevin Spacey during his tenure. It has also not been possible to verify any of these allegations, and it is important to note that Kevin Spacey has not commented on them. The review cannot therefore make any findings of fact about the alleged misconduct.

The given testimony shows that in all but one case, those individuals alleging inappropriate behaviour by Kevin Spacey did not come forward at the time or asked that no formal action be taken. During his tenure, The Old Vic was in a unique position of having a Hollywood star at the helm around whom existed a cult of personality. The investigation found that his stardom and status at The Old Vic may have prevented people, and in particular junior staff or young actors, from feeling that they could speak up or raise a hand for help.

The Old Vic is deeply dismayed by the allegations and thankful to all those who have contacted its helpline directly. Without them it would not have been possible to conduct such a thorough review. Most people shared their testimonies because of the promise of anonymity. The Old Vic has committed to all concerned that their information will remain confidential. This commitment will be honoured.

Investigation Conclusions

- There are allegations of a range of inappropriate behaviour relating to Kevin Spacey during his time as Artistic Director of The Old Vic
- No correspondents alleged they were minors at the time that their complaint arose
- The Trustees were unaware of the allegations

- With the exception of one of the claims, none of the reported incidents were raised formally or informally with management
- Staff who observed this behaviour claimed they were unclear about how to respond; in some cases they did not consider allegations of misconduct to be serious and, where they clearly did, they said they did not feel confident that The Old Vic would take those allegations seriously given who he was
- The following factors may have contributed to this escalation problem: star power; lack of clarity of The Old Vic's accepted code of behaviour; confusion regarding the impact of reporting misconduct; career insecurity; tribalism between operational and creative staff during his tenure causing information gaps
- Calling out this behaviour could have been easier if there had been a non-formal and confidential mechanism in place by which complaints could be raised safely within the organisation

The Way Forward

From today, The Old Vic has committed to a new Way Forward that will build on existing practices and procedures to ensure that the theatre fulfils its duty of care to all who work with the organisation. Since his appointment in 2014, Matthew Warchus has already created a different, open, inclusive environment at The Old Vic, and The Way Forward will build on this positive, supportive and nurturing approach. We have a significantly more robust and effective workplace now than ever before; but there is always more to be done, and lessons to learn from.

As part of our commitment to creating a safe and secure working environment for all, we will:

- Appoint 'Guardians' who will be appointed from across the Board and wider organisation to champion best practice, and be a first point of contact for those who don't want to reach out through formal channels
- Spend time with those who work here to create an '**OK – Not OK**' set of cultural expectations for all to understand and own, setting out in basic terms behaviours we feel comfortable with, and those with which we do not
- Provide refocused guidance and training, and opportunities for checks and feedback at all times

For those who were affected during Kevin's tenure, our victim support counselling service will continue to be open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for the next 12 months. We hope this goes some way towards providing a support structure for those affected, together with the knowledge that the testimonies they have shared will help inform the way forward at The Old Vic and in the wider industry.

In January 2014, a new Chair Nick Clarry was appointed to the Board of Trustees that brought with it numerous changes to the senior management team that would be led collectively by Matthew Warchus as Artistic Director and Kate Varah as Executive Director.

Nick Clarry, Chairman of The Old Vic, said:

'On behalf of The Old Vic Board of Trustees, to all those people who felt unable to speak up at the time, The Old Vic truly apologises. Inappropriate behaviour by anyone working at The Old Vic is completely unacceptable. We will foster a safe and supportive environment without prejudice, harassment or bullying of any sort, at any level. We want anyone who works here to feel confident, valued and proud to be part of The Old Vic family.'

Matthew Warchus, Artistic Director, said:

'I have genuine and deep sympathy for all those who have come forward and said they were hurt in some way by my predecessor's actions. Everyone is entitled to work in an environment free from harassment and intimidation. The Old Vic is now actively engaged in the process of healing and the process of prevention.'

These allegations have been a shock and a disturbing surprise to many of us. It is incorrect, unfair and irresponsible to say that everybody knew. But as a result of the investigation, what we have learnt is how better to call out this behaviour in future.

These findings will help not only The Old Vic but our industry as a whole, as together we rapidly evolve an intelligent new standard of protection and support in and around the workplace. We are committed to a new way forward.'

ENDS

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