Screen Machine Operator

c. £32,500 + benefits/allowances

This is an exciting opportunity to become an essential part of the small and close-knit team which operates the UK’s only fulltime, self-contained, mobile cinema. The Screen Machine Operator requires an exceptional set of skills for a post which offers a high level of job satisfaction.

“I have worked as Screen Machine Operator for 25 years. It’s hard work, physically and technically demanding, but very rewarding. The search has now begun for a new Operator to work with me and the wider team. We are looking for a special individual who can not only drive an HGV, but operate and maintain a unique piece of kit and also welcome customers aboard to share in the magic of cinema.”

Iain MacColl, Senior Operator

Introduction

Regional Screen Scotland (RSS) is the company which operates the Screen Machine, which, since 1998, has been touring the Highlands and Islands of Scotland screening new and recent releases to over 40 different locations from the Western Isles to Orkney and from Brodick to Bettyhill. More detailed information is available at www.screenmachine.co.uk

Regional Screen Scotland aims to enable more people in more places to share great screen experiences

We do this by:
• bringing the cinema experience to people
• bringing people together to share that experience

We do this because we believe that cinema has the power to change lives. We are fortunate that, to enable us to deliver our mission, since 2015 Regional Screen Scotland has been in receipt of Regular Funding from Creative Scotland.

The Screen Machine consists of an articulated vehicle. The trailer folds out hydraulically to form an 80-seat cinema with a projection/box of-
Office room at the rear of the auditorium. The cinema is equipped with a Digital Projector, Dolby surround sound system, air conditioning, high quality seating and other facilities making it easily comparable to a conventional modern cinema, in any town or city across Scotland, but instead brought to 40+ communities, almost half of which are islands.

Since April 2023, the cinema has been leased from Toutenkamion, the company based in France which has designed and built the latter two cinemas that RSS has used over the 25 years of the service. As soon as funding is in place, we intend to cease use of a leased cinema and switch to use of a new cinema, to be known as Screen Machine 3 (SM3), which RSS will own. Indications are that the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland and Screen Scotland are very supportive of our plans and efforts to maintain and continue the service.

The running costs of the service come from ticket sales, grants from Creative Scotland, HIE and donations from trusts and foundations.

The post of Operator is employed by the Board of Regional Screen Scotland, and reports directly to the Senior Operator. The Operator also liaises on a regular basis with the other Regional Screen Scotland staff members, who are based in the company’s office in Edinburgh and working from home. Such liaison can be in the form of: responding to emails; attending virtual meetings via e.g. Zoom; responding to phone calls and messages.

**Our values-based approach**

At Regional Screen Scotland, we know that cinema can help us feel like we belong. When we are brought together to experience stories shared on the big screen, that experience enables us to connect with each other. We want everyone in Scotland to have that experience.

To be of service to local communities, within a national context, we like to think long-term and plan our activities thoughtfully, working collaboratively with each other and external partners, stakeholders and consultants.

We love hearing from the audiences we serve, and we listen closely to the needs of the communities. That enables us to be responsive, to listen to each other and to value and trust each member of the team to lead with knowledge and experience. We can then take a proactive approach to seeking opportunities to reach our goals.

**Screen Machine Locations 2022**

Purpose of Post

Two members of RSS staff are responsible for the day to day operation of the Screen Machine while it is on tour: an Operator and a Senior Operator.

Each Operator works normally for seven days each week, on a ‘two weeks on, two weeks off’ rota, six days screening and one maintenance day with hours that, over each year, are equivalent to a normal full time post. The cinema is normally in continuous operation, save for servicing breaks, and a break over Christmas and New Year.

The Operator:
- drives the vehicle between locations
- sets the cinema up, which is a physically demanding aspect of the job
- prepares all films and other digital material for projection
- checks bookings, via the computerised box office system
- sells tickets on the door – cash and card
- projects the film (with a local Usher helping to supervise the audience)
- closes the cinema ready to move to the next venue
- undertakes regular maintenance and keeps the maintenance log
- keeps the vehicle clean, inside and outside
- carries out occasional repairs, to both the vehicle and cinema equipment
The Senior Operator undertakes the same tasks in operating the Screen Machine as the Operator, but in addition has the lead responsibility for all issues relating to the technical operation and safety of the cinema trailer and the tractor unit, the scheduling of the touring circuit (where Screen Machine goes and when), and the booking of all ferry crossings.

The normal mode of operation involves screening at least two films a day (usually at 5.30pm and 8.30pm) for between two and four days at each different location. There are also regular daytime screenings on Saturdays, on some weekdays, and during school holidays. There are also special daytime screenings for schools. The process of ‘ingesting’ digital films is also undertaken on the Screen Machine, including KDM delivery via the Internet. The team in Edinburgh programme the cinema – deciding which films will be screened and when. We contract the INDY Cinema Group, based in Edinburgh, to negotiate terms with each film’s distributor and to physically deliver each film to the Screen Machine.

The Operators are responsible for the day to day maintenance of the vehicle and its equipment as well as its operation. This can require communication with a range of suppliers e.g. the provider of our generator and the provider of our projection and sound equipment. This communication can be in person, or via phone, text or email – so excellent communication skills are required.

The Operators are also responsible for ensuring daily reports of attendances, completing a pre-show check list, checking daily ticket sales on Veezi, the online box office system, banking box office takings locally, completing time sheets for ushers, managing ushers, providing a carbon emissions report every two weeks. At the end of each turn of duty, the Operator completes a ‘handover’ report for their counterpart. The Operators also take responsibility for booking and cancelling their accommodation at each site.

Qualifications and skills

The Operator is solely responsible for the successful delivery of the Screen Machine service while on tour, with only regular phone or online contact with the Senior Operator, and other RSS staff, and occasional visits by them to the Machine. While on tour, therefore, the Operator will be the principal contact with the prospective audience, together with the local Usher. So a confident ‘can do’ approach to problem solving is crucial.

Essential

- Current clean HGV C+E licence, and proven experience of at least two years recent driving experience in negotiating Highlands and Islands single track roads. Experience in embarking and disembarking small ferries with a 44 tonne LGV. Whilst driving is not the most time consuming aspect of the job, (indeed some journeys between locations are fairly short), safe driving is of paramount importance
- Experience of working and maintaining 3 phase generators and commercial hydraulic systems
- Experience of working with computer controlled systems. Training will be given in the computerised projection and sound equipment.
• A strong problem solver, including in mechanical and electrical diagnostics, communicating information clearly in the event of a breakdown.
• Good interpersonal skills and a polite, diplomatic character, in order to represent the cinema to the general public.
• Computer literacy (the Screen Machine projection equipment and box office systems are computer controlled)

Desirable
• Experience of recording cash transactions and use of a computerised cash handling system – training can be provided
• Knowledge of, and interest in, film and cinema
• Experience of touring the performing arts (theatre or music) in a similar situation
• Knowledge or experience of life in small and remote communities

Terms and Conditions

Salary c £32,500 (depending on skills and experience) paid monthly in arrears into a bank account. Salaries are subject to an annual cost of living-related review.

Subsistence allowance will be paid per day while on tour, plus the actual costs of accommodation.

Employment is conditional on the continued holding of a clean full HGV C+E licence, and in successfully completing a three-month probationary period.

Holidays: 33 days annual leave (including public holidays) to be taken either during the two weeks’ ‘down time’ or when the Screen Machine is not touring over the Christmas and New Year period.

The company operates a no smoking policy.

Due to the unique nature of the service, considerable flexibility of working hours is essential. During the ‘two weeks off’ period, the Operator will be on standby to take over the service in the event of illness, accident or bereavement except during periods of formally agreed leave.

RSS operates a pension scheme which contributes 8% of salary to a personal pension scheme, following successful completion of the probationary period.

How to apply

Please submit a letter which explains your interest in the post, and which directly addresses the essential requirements for the post, listed above, and your CV. Please also complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form downloadable here.

Your letter, CV, and completed Equal Opportunities form should be emailed to recruitment@regionalscreenscotland.org no later than Monday 15th January 2024.

We anticipate that the successful candidate will start with us by April 2024 with a training and familiarisation programme, before embarking on their first solo tour.