

SBTD, ALD, EQUITY AND BECTU JOINT PRESS RELEASE

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ENTERTAINMENT UNIONS FORM WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS ISSUES CONCERNING DESIGNERS

Following a series of exchanges of resources and knowledge among professional associations representing set, costume and lighting designers, representatives from the Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD) and the Association of Lighting Designers (ALD) have formed a working group with representatives from Equity and BECTU to discuss the key issues affecting designers.

This will be the first time that all of these organisations have come together to evaluate and unpack the complex nature of current working terms and conditions for designers.

In considering changes that need to be implemented for the current workforce, the aim is to work towards fair, clear and robust models of engagement. This will make a significant contribution to developing a more diverse profession, something that UK Theatre and SOLT identified as a key priority within the Theatre Workforce Review they commissioned and published last year.

As clear and transparent career paths and increasing diversity of entry into the cultural sector are also key priorities for Arts Council England (ACE), the Creative Industries Federation and some of our largest producing houses, it is important to seize the opportunity that this aligning of objectives provides.

We will be situating these concerns about fees and contracts within the wider context of fear, bullying and harassment that we are now beginning to evidence has been endemic across the whole of our industry for some time.

If a profession is perceived as one in which its members are afraid to speak out for fear of not being engaged to work again, then acting together now to do something about that is vital, both for those struggling to sustain a career as a designer now at every level of the profession, and for the diverse and resilient workforce of the future that we aspire to enable.

Association of Lighting Designers (ALD)

The **Association of Lighting Designers** is the professional body representing all those who work or are interested in the creation of lighting, video & projection design for live performance and events.

Whether you are a Designer, programmer, production electrician, or crew member, the ALD aims to further the art and appreciation of creative design using light in all its forms as part of the creative process. Its members are drawn from across the fields of theatre (including Opera and Dance), Rock and Roll, corporate presentations and events, education and manufacturing.

We aim to bring together all those involved in these important supporting roles to share their experiences, knowledge and guidance to their peers and future generations and help raise the professionalism and recognition of the art and creative input of manipulating the use of light in live performance.

Contact : Johanna Town [Chair Association of Lighting Designers johanna.town@ald.org.uk](mailto:johanna.town@ald.org.uk)

BECTU

BECTU is the trade union supporting growing numbers of UK staff and freelancers working in the media and entertainment sectors. We play an important role in representing and promoting the best interests of the industry's workforce in theatres and live events.

The union has a team of dedicated, trained reps and officials who provide advice and representation to members, negotiate agreements and work to protect terms and conditions. In addition to collective bargaining and individual representation, we also provide quality support and advice on all health and safety matters and access to specialist employment lawyers. Low cost public liability insurance, competitive rates for kit cover and discounts on essential training for members are amongst many member benefits. BECTU is a sector of Prospect. www.bectu.org.uk/welcome info@bectu.org.uk

Contact : Helen Ryan, Assistant National Secretary hryan@bectu.org.uk

Equity

Equity is the UK trade union for professional performers and creative practitioners. Equity's 43,000+ members form a cultural community that is of major importance to the UK in artistic, social and economic terms. Equity works to support them by negotiating their terms and conditions with employers and employer's groups.

<http://www.equity.org.uk>

Contact: Jamie Briers, Secretary to the Equity Directors and Designers Committee jbriers@equity.org.uk

Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD)

The Society of British Theatre Designers is a professional association led by designers for designers. We support and celebrate the work of performance designers based in the UK at every stage in their career advocating for the value of their expertise and knowledge.

www.theatredesign.org.uk

Contact: Fiona Watt, Honorary Secretary fiona@theatredesign.org.uk

Theatre Workforce Review Foreword

The Workforce Needs of Theatre and the Performing Arts

We are rightly proud in the UK of our dynamic and world leading theatre industry, and of the success of productions, actors and creative talent around the world.

However, if we want to see our industry continue to thrive in ten or twenty years' time, we need to make sure that we have the right skills in place, and that we are training and developing those working now, and attracting the right diverse mix of people for the future.

As a result, some months ago, UK Theatre and the Society of London Theatre (SOLT) commissioned a major piece of research from Nordicity, working with Alistair Smith, to give us much needed evidence of the current and future training needs of our workforce.

The report affirms what as a sector we have known for some time – there is a need to change the way we value and invest in training and development at every level, from the earliest stages of new careers, to development and actions of our sector's leaders.

We also need to take steps to improve entry and development routes, including careers' advice, so that we see increased diversity across the workforce to improve our talent base, our relevance, and our resilience.

This evidence gives UK Theatre and SOLT a roadmap to work with government and employers, and on behalf of the industry, to address the requirements of the growing workforce.

Workforce Review of the Offstage and Performing Arts Sector Final Report by Nordicity and Alistair Smith (Editor of The Stage) for UK Theatre and Society of London Theatre, published June 2017.

<https://uktheatre.org/theatre-industry/news/offstage-theatre-workforce-review-published/>