



PRESS RELEASE

The Theatrical Guild announces COVID-19 fundraising appeal through The Good Exchange platform in partnership with Sir Ian McKellen

Every pound donated up to £40,000 will be doubled

DATE June 2020 – [The Theatrical Guild](#) (TTG) has today announced a new fundraising initiative spearheaded by a match funding £40,000 donation from Sir Ian McKellen to support backstage and front of house theatre workers to help with food bills, housing costs, mental health services and other basic essentials. Sir Ian selected The Theatrical Guild as one of several British theatre charities to receive donations from the proceeds of his [one-man show](#) “On Stage: With Tolkien, Shakespeare, Others and You!” and is calling on everyone who has attended a theatrical production in the past to put their hands in their pockets and so double his donation to raise £80,000 to distribute to those most in need.

Speaking on the importance of this fundraising appeal, Sir Ian said, “Many people who work in the theatre industry have seen their livelihoods disappear due to the Coronavirus lockdown. I, for example have received a distressing letter from a stage manager who is facing eviction from his home and can’t access government relief. I’ve directed him to the Guild’s website.” As to the awarding of the matched funds to TTG he said, “I know that you will distribute the money I’ve donated to good effect. This is a wonderful opportunity, provided by fundraising platform The Good Exchange, to double your donations knowing that every £1 donated will be matched and so will raise £80,000 for The Theatrical Guild to distribute to those most in need.”

In these troubling times of the global pandemic, theatre productions are “on hold” until the end of the year, possibly until 2021, and all production work has been cancelled for the foreseeable future. Indeed, Sir Cameron Mackintosh has announced that his shows will not re-open till 2021. Sonia Friedman, producer of some of the most successful theatre productions in the West End and on Broadway, has predicted that without urgently needed government support [70% of performing arts companies](#) will be out of business by Christmas. This is devastating news and there is a huge and growing requirement to support the individuals whose skills and commitment make up the backbone of the theatre industry.

Adam Bambrough, General Manager of TTG said, “These individuals are the unsung heroes of every staged performance, without whom there would be no shows. Their variety of skills from creating costumes, operating lighting rigs, and running the box office, to photographing the shows are what make theatre performances possible. Yet, most are low-paid, self-employed or on zero hours contracts so many, through no fault of their own, have fallen between the gaps for Government support.”

Make your donation here: <https://app.thegoodexchange.com/project/18151/the-theatrical-guild/raising-the-curtain-after-coronavirus---backstage-and-front-of-house>

Some case studies of people that The Theatrical Guild has already helped:

Sophie was overwhelmed and under-supported

Works in Wardrobe as a Dresser.

Her husband has recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer, so she is the sole earner in their house. The immediate closure of the theatre where she worked left her facing an immediate and total loss of



income leaving her unable to cover her rent, household bills, food, and additional home care for her husband. Laura was not eligible to be furloughed and there was a long delay in her application being processed for Universal Credit. The emotional strain of dealing with her husband's recent diagnosis and the subsequent loss of all income was overwhelming.

The Theatrical Guild agreed a grant of £750pm for three months, and ten counselling sessions.

Maria had the roof taken from over her head

Stage Manager.

Maria was on tour when the lockdown happened. She had been staying in theatre digs paid for by the production management. When the show closed overnight, she received no financial support and had no family with whom she could stay so was, to all intents and purposes, made homeless.

The Theatrical Guild agreed a grant of £500pm to secure temporary accommodation.

Excluded from Government support, Helen and Jonathan faced eviction

Stage Manager and Freelance Sound Technician.

Both had short term contracts and lost their employment overnight when their productions were cancelled. They have two young children and used their savings and credit cards to survive the first month after the lockdown. By the middle of May their savings had run out and they were unable to pay their rent and household and food bills. Their landlord refused to agree a rent break and threatened eviction. Being self-employed they fell through the gaps of Government support and have only received limited universal credit support.

The Theatrical Guild agreed a grant of £750pm for three months as contribution towards rent, household bills and food.

About The Good Exchange

The Good Exchange is a transformational not-for-profit, charity-owned cloud platform specifically designed to match those organisations and individuals who have money to give to good causes with those who need it most. As the only platform that brings together local grant-making and crowdfunding via donations and fundraising activities for charitable projects, the automated matching system with its simple single on-line application form has revolutionised charitable giving, making it more accessible, transparent and collaborative.

<https://thegoodexchange.com/>

About The Theatrical Guild

The Theatrical Guild is the UK charity for backstage and front of house workers, with over 125 years' experience helping people. It provides practical assistance from welfare and debt advice to financial support and counselling. The Theatrical Guild helps people across the UK to recover from ill health, overcome sudden set-backs, expand their skillsets, or speak with a counsellor, handling every application in total confidence and helping solve immediate problems without delay. The aim of the charity is to help solve the immediate problem and, wherever possible, help empower individuals to find longer term solutions.



Media contacts:

Ella Pryor/Ginnia Cheng

Finn Partners

GreenhamTrust@finnpartners.com

020 3217 7060

Photo of Sir Ian McKellen copyright [Nobby Clark](#)

