



PRESS RELEASE

Over 1,000 theatre workers supported by the Theatrical Guild's COVID-19 fundraising appeal through The Good Exchange platform in partnership with Sir Ian McKellen

Sir Ian calls for further donations to support industry workers after over a year with no theatre work and many productions unlikely to return until 2022

XX February 2021 – [The Theatrical Guild](#) (TTG) has today announced that its fundraising appeal in partnership with Sir Ian McKellen, through online fundraising platform The Good Exchange, has so far raised £79,005 out of its £100,000 goal with three months to go.

With no theatre work returning since the appeal began in July 2020, Sir Ian said, "A huge thank you to all the people who have match-funded my donation to the Theatrical Guild's fundraising initiative on The Good Exchange. Your support in helping backstage and front of house theatre workers across the UK is really important and we are almost there! With only three months to go and still no theatre work please help us reach our goal of raising £100,000".

The initiative was spearheaded by a match funding £40,000 donation from Sir Ian, where every pound donated by the public up to £40,000 will be doubled, to support backstage and front of house theatre workers to help with food bills, housing costs, mental health services and other basic essentials.

The funding has already been used to help over 1,050 out-of-work theatre workers with financial, psychological and job seeking support of all kinds.

"I will be forever grateful to the Theatrical Guild for the support they have given me over the last few months, without which we would have probably lost our home and struggled to feed our children, our situation was desperate," said Roger, a Lighting Technician.

Catherine, a Stage Manager, also shared her intimate story: "I was at rock bottom, I saw no way out, and even tried to take my life, but just having a phone call from the Guild helped, the fact that they helped me pay my rent arrears and gave me access to the Counsellor was incredible, THANK YOU!"

The money raised has been used to provide advice on how theatre workers can, where possible, access available Government support schemes, short-term financial grants, and counselling. The workers that have been supported by the Theatrical Guild include Front of House staff, Stage Management, Company Managers, Costume designers and wardrobe technicians, Sound, Lighting and Stage crew and many others whose skills enable productions to open across the UK.



With theatre productions on hold for over a year and, despite the end of lockdown being in sight, the logistics involved in mounting a show will mean many shows will be postponed until 2022. The impact on the mental health of theatre workers is now acknowledged with a recent report showing it had dipped psychologically to its lowest this month. [lowest this month](#). The theatre industry and most importantly the backstage and front of house workers continue to urgently require support both financially and psychologically, to get through the pandemic.

Adam Bambrough, General Manager of TTG said, “Unfortunately Government support schemes have not always provided theatre workers with relief as these individuals, who are often low-paid, self-employed or on zero hours contracts have, through no fault of their own, fallen between the gaps of what is being made available. We must remember that the unsung heroes of every staged performance – with incredible creative, technical and specialist skills – are the backstage and front of house workers who make theatre performances possible.”

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

Case studies of people who received assistance from the appeal:

Head of Wardrobe - Samantha, 38

Samantha lost both her parents to COVID-19, and was also made redundant from her job as Head of Wardrobe at a theatre in Manchester in the same year. A single parent, she was evicted from her flat as she could not afford the rent and was moved into temporary Council accommodation. The Guild covered the costs of the security deposit and one month’s rent on a new small flat, and helped her successfully appeal her Universal Credit claim which had previously been refused.

Theatre Designer - George, 32

George has worked consistently in the West End since 2010, and has two young children in London. He was furloughed throughout the first lockdown, but both he and his partner (who also works in theatre) were made redundant within days of each other in September. They were refused universal credit due to their earnings in the previous months. They have used up all their savings and are now in mortgage arrears and dependent on foodbanks. The Guild helped George and his partner to clear his arrears, cover his mortgage and pay for food for the family for three months.

Costume and Set Designer - Natalie, 44

Natalie has worked as a Costume and Set Designer since 1998 in venues across the UK. She has always suffered from anxiety/depression but the lockdown and the fact that she fell between the cracks of Government support left her struggling both mentally and financially. Unable to pay rent, bills and buy food and faced with mounting debts she attempted to take her life before reaching out to the Guild for support. The Guild helped her with financial support and fifteen sessions of counselling.

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.

<https://ttg.org.uk/>

Media contacts:

Ella Pryor/Ginnia Cheng

Finn Partners

GreenhamTrust@finnpartners.com

020 3217 7060

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

