

## SOUND THINKING THE ARTIST ISSUE



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(Mark Lomas)

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# Introduction

Welcome to the 2023 Spring edition of *The Echo*.

Our editor Vicki Hill is having a break this edition, so I'm very pleased to be able to welcome you to these pages as both ASD Chair and guest editor. I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the thoughtful, dedicated work Vicki does for this publication, and look forward to what she has in store for future editions. That being said, I'm delighted to have the reins of the eighteenth *Echo* now.

In October of last year, the ASD inaugurated a new event called *Pause. Play. Discover*. This was a two day festival of workshops, discussions and talks, curated by and celebrating the work of female and non-binary sound practitioners.

The festival marked a shift for the ASD community. It responded to the growing

need we felt to make a space for female and non-binary makers to meet, connect and learn from each other. It also reflected our desire to honour the immense knowledge and skill within that group of people, to foreground it for members and non-members, and for the wider benefit of the art form and industry of sound.

The festival gave us the opportunity to learn from leading practitioners, researchers and each other, within an environment of openness and play. What emerged from that contact was a considerable agitation to push back at the ways in which we make work, acquire knowledge and build our careers. The terrain of being under-represented in sound brings with it fundamental questions about the structures of how our industry works, questions born of the specific bite of exclusion, but that ramify outwards to effect the whole community: how do we

work, yes, but how do we thrive?

I want to share some of the energy set in motion by the festival in these pages, by hearing from artists who are changing the way we listen to the world. When we listen to female and non binary artists, we listen multiply, to the interwoven concerns that constitute a practise or a practitioner: questions of technology, progression of the art form, healthy work practise, cultures of listening, education, our bodies and the planet. Our contributors represent a set of ideas about working with sound that conceptualise new futures. Listening with them, whoever we are, takes us to the roots of what practising in sound could mean and how listening differently helps us think differently too.

In her interview in this edition, sound artist Linda O'Keeffe offers the idea that it's not what we make, it's how we make. How we

build structures for work, how we use technology, how we use time, how we learn, how we ask for help, how we connect to each other and grow: these pages reveal how artists shape the thicket of those ideas into our next steps.

Speaking of strengthening bonds, I'll close by warmly welcoming our two new Board members Clare Hibberd and Ella Wahlström to the team, we're so pleased to have their time and energy.

I'm also really happy to announce that Peter Rice will join me as co-chair of the ASD for the coming year. I feel there is reason for hope in 2023, but for all those moments when that flame feels dimmed, know that the ASD remains here for you, to help you to thrive.

Inspiring reading!  
**Melanie Wilson**



# Growing potential

The ASD Mentorship scheme has been a long running feature of the association. Over the last few years alone, twenty mentees have developed their careers through mentorship, in a range of professional sound disciplines.

In February 2023, the scheme re-launched with new financial assistance, and will support a number of mentorships across the coming year. We hope the new financial assistance will create more opportunity for potential mentees, and support those who previously might not have been able to commit due to loss of income. The scheme will now seek to pair mentor and mentee for anything between 1 to 10 days, with financial support of £100pd, plus travel expenses. This can be across any role in Theatre Sound, either onsite or remotely and will be spread around the country. Our aim will be to stretch the budget we have committed to this program, by sharing the cost with hosts, where appropriate.

Funded Mentorships will be provided by application, full details of which can be found on the ASD website.

To road test this new chapter, we ran two trial mentorships in 2022, both with Sound Designer and ASD Co-Chair Peter Rice. Peter remarked: "As an Educator as well as a Sound Designer, I was keen to try and continue to create ways for early-stage members to connect to more experienced professionals. I saw a barrier here in that if someone wanted to spend time with a Sound Designer/Operator/Engineer, but also needed to work to maintain their income, then this might be problematic. These funds will hopefully see a change in those able to take up mentorships."

## Mentors

The scheme owes a great deal to the group of mentors who have already devoted their time and resources to help mentees progress. A huge thank you to our colleagues for their generosity. 🙏

## KERI CHESSER

The first trial took place with ASD member Keri Chesser on *That Is Not Who I Am* at the Royal Court, in May and June 2022. Keri spent the maximum 10 days on the program, with time spread over rehearsal, tech and previews.

### How was the length of the process for you?

I think it was a good length. While it was a short turnaround between starting mentorship and tech/previews, I learned a lot and didn't feel like I was playing catch up. Also the flexibility around other projects was greatly appreciated.

### Were your professional needs met?

Yes I learned a lot; filling in gaps in knowledge like DME, Showplay, Ableton, QLab MIDI Q's for Lighting, etc...

### Was the financial support adequate for the project?

Yes, it was perfect thank you.

### Has this experience changed anything about your attitude to making theatre?

I feel like this experience has taught me to trust my instincts more and to continue to look into how I can apply sound more dramaturgically, to support the action on stage, e.g. not being overly married to an idea, which is something I struggle with, but having a Cue List of options to work through is something I'll be utilising in the future.



#### Any other comments?

Honestly, I can't say enough how much I appreciate this opportunity. Having not had a traditional route into theatre and finding my path later than most, it's sometimes daunting to put myself forward for mentorships, as usually they are for certain age groups. Having someone willing to teach me, answer questions and help me grow in both abilities and confidence in them is invaluable.

Due to her dedication and commitment, Keri was credited as Assistant Sound Designer on the show.

#### ANNA WOOD

The second trial took place in December/January 22/23, with ASD member Anna Wood, on *Streetcar Named Desire* at the Almeida Theatre. Anna spent 15 days on the project, but in this case the ASD partnered with the Almeida to share total costs. Anna is based in Manchester, with family to stay with in London, so this added a further consideration to this trial. When fully up and running, these funds will be distributed around the country, so financially supported mentees will work on projects closer to their home location, or online.

#### Were your professional needs met?

Yes, I learnt a huge amount from the experience, especially in terms of midi controllers and the technical side of setting up a sound system.

#### Were your overall learning/experience needs met?

Yes, they were. It was particularly good to work with someone who was able to offer guidance on the interpersonal skills of the job (such as when to give certain types of feedback).

#### Has this experience changed anything about your attitude to making theatre?

It has made me think about how I'd go about working on a show where more than one or two people are creating the sound. It was also reassuring to learn that what you do for a show in a theatre with over fifty speakers isn't as removed from a smaller-scale theatre as you might think!



#### What was the best part of the process?

Getting to work with such an expert team of people, and also seeing what could be achieved with a large show budget!

Due to her dedication and commitment, Anna was credited as Assistant Sound Designer on the project. The ASD would like to thank the Almeida Theatre for sharing this Mentorship and hope this 'match funding' model can be repeated in future, particular in funded organisations.

#### MORE INFO

We are now looking for further mentors to help shape this new phase of the scheme. If you are able to offer some time on one of your projects, or in your day job, please do get in contact with the ASD on: [admin@associationofsounddesigners.com](mailto:admin@associationofsounddesigners.com) Or apply through the Mentorship portal on the ASD website. We'd love to hear from you!

# Sound Designing the Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony

**Carolyn Downing (she/her) is a sound designer, working in a variety of fields including exhibitions, fashion, theatre and live events. Creativity and collaboration are at the heart of her work from initial concept development with fellow designers through to realisation with technical and project delivery teams.**

**In the summer of 2022 Carolyn worked on the Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony, where she sounded into life one of the central motifs of the ceremony: The Bull.**

**Carolyn sat down with me to talk about designing sound at scale, and how she uses her intricately observed relationship with the material of sound to express epic themes of experience and connection.**

## **How did the process begin for you?**

I was brought into the process in September of 2021. The rest of the creative team were already in place, so the concept and ideas for the ceremony were fairly well established. The sound and music team was made up of Musical Director/Composer, HOD/Composer, Sound Designer and Music Editor. Joshua 'RTKal' Holness, (Josh to us) the Musical Director/Composer, is a musical artist based in Birmingham and was one of the core creatives on the project, alongside director Iqbal Khan, writer Maeve Clarke and Stephen Knight creator of Peaky Blinders. Josh worked with long term collaborator Mosh to produce a variety of tracks, bringing the musical spirit of Birmingham to the score with his rich insights of the Brummie music scene.

Dan Jones was Head of Sound and Music. He was the touch point for the producers and responsible for managing the budget and supervising the delivery schedule of the content. Dan composed many of the tracks, organised orchestration of each section, including work with the choir and the trumpeters of the Royal household! Simon Birch, the music editor, was responsible for making sure all the draft content versions were distributed to the wider team and kept up to date. He was also responsible for creating and managing the stems ready for final delivery to the Stadium.

I was brought in to design the non-musical audio content. I was tasked with creating sound elements for several sections of the ceremony, but my main focus was to create the voice and sonic character of the huge

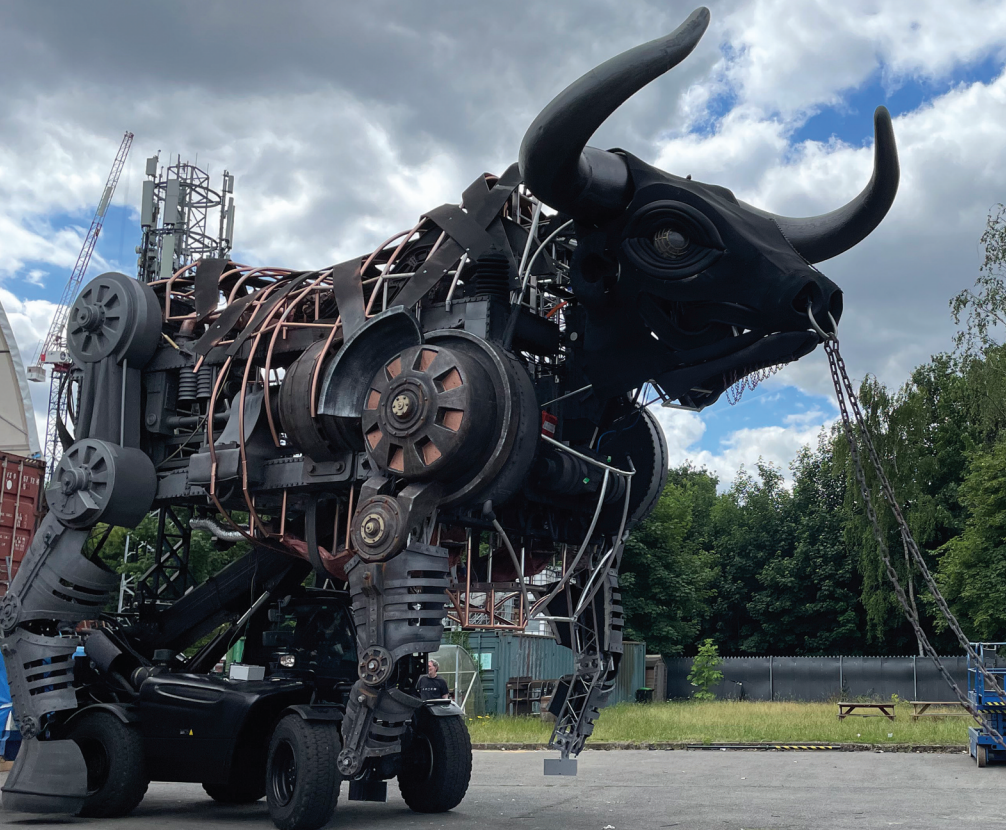


Right: The Bull arrives on field of play at the Commonwealth Games

armoured bull. I remember the first meeting with all the collaborators, where all the ideas were set out. Dan led the collaborative spirit of our team, encouraging us to consider all sound and musical elements as interdependent, which really set the tone for our collaboration. I'm used to acting as sole lead creative in sound teams when designing for theatre, so being a collaborator alongside a number of other lead creatives was unusual.

My approach to teamwork is always to encourage it to be a creative process at every stage, to empower everyone to feel ownership over the work and aim for a fully cohesive outcome. Not always easy, not always successful... but we can but try! I was so pleased that this was the intended approach for the ceremony.





### Tell us about The Bull

The joyous thing about our ceremony was the through-line of its story, and how that connected to the stories and people of Birmingham. The design of The Bull heavily referenced the machinery and materials of Birmingham-born industry - namely chain-making and the Jewellery Quarter. The Bull stood ten metres high, and used animatronic elements, mechanically operated elements and human puppeteered elements. It was on an enormous scale!

The fettered Bull was pulled into the stadium by fifty women, representing the female chain-makers who made light chains for a variety of industries: farming, the armed forces, mining and the prison service. The audience watched them be led in by a single male oppressor-type character, resembling an orc from *The Lord of the Rings* with a head full of spikes, brandishing an aggressive weapon. We were keen to encourage the audience to reflect upon how this one small man was able to oppress a whole section of society.

Once on the field of play, the bull becomes enraged, breaks free from its chains and runs the male oppressor off. Our

protagonist Stella comes face-to-face with The Bull and as he bows his head towards her, she reaches out to touch him. She calms him, encouraging others to understand his fear and anger, symbolising a harmonious way to work together. I was so honoured to create the score for this section. It gave me the opportunity to explore the stories of the female chain-makers who in 1910, led by Mary McArthur, revolted against exploitative working conditions and paved the way for the introduction of the national minimum wage. We also wanted the fifty women to represent all women around the world and through the ages, who have suffered oppression and continue to fight for their rights.

The storytelling in this part of the show also keyed into Birmingham's immigration history: at one time there were no craft guilds in Birmingham so people could work there without restrictions. This brought an influx of workers who were welcomed, and allowed to make their own way. But in time this influx caused clashes, and later in the ceremony these clashes were symbolised by musical motifs.

The raging bull itself nods towards

Birmingham's history of the bull ring market, a place where bulls were once baited and held before slaughter. A market grew around this site and is still a major shopping centre today. The show was very much rooted in the authentic stories of Birmingham and the spirit of the people. The exciting thing for me about the form and scale of a ceremony like ours was the use of sweeping metaphors and broad-stroke images to communicate thought-provoking ideas about our shared histories and lives.

### **How did you create the sound of The Bull?**

I used a mix of industrial sounds, in a nod to the industry at the heart of the city. Birmingham was known as the 'Toy Shop of the World', because its factories made bespoke metal items, namely medals and uniform decorations. My aim was to research and gather real sounds from Birmingham's industrial environments. I have always loved using real sounds as a starting point and manipulating them to create new sounds, enhancing natural rhythms and musicality, so this was right up my street. I love listening to sounds in particular environments or playing with objects to explore their hidden textures and imagining how they might be transformed

to enhance parts of a story, or give an extra layer to a character.

I started by thinking about all the different sonic parts of a bull: the snorts, the roars, the body movements, the hooves. I made detailed sound palettes for each part, composed of industrial and metallic sounds that could represent a certain action or expression. Initially I went through my libraries choosing sounds, then later on I recorded objects in my studio, like a painter with a palette (except my palette was made up of folders on a computer). I played around with the metal sounds, bending and manipulating them to bring out the emotional voices inside. For example, listening to a metal hinge and detecting a voice in it, and translating that to express the anguish in The Bull's call.

The producing team and I researched factories and museums in the Birmingham area and I went along to visit them. I talked to people, listened to their stories and recorded all types of different machines to give me a range of material that could become the sonic elements of The Bull. One trip took me to the Black Country Living Museum, where they have an enormous steam-powered drop hammer.

The steel hammer head is raised by steam pressure and drops under gravity when the steam is released to forge, shape and emboss metal. This particular drop stamp was used to forge parts of the anchor and chain for the Titanic. I used the booming sound of the hammer drop to create the resonant stomping feet of The Bull.

The Bull's snorts were created from steam machinery, including a household steam iron(!), and for the calls of The Bull I used metallic sounds. I deviated from the sounds of industry in the creation of The Bull's angry roars. We needed something emotionally specific, so I experimented with animal roars, big cats especially, and also the human voice. I manipulated them with a fab pitch plug-in, 'Pitch Monster' by Devious Machines. It's very flexible, allowing manipulation of a wide variety of attributes and is packed with fun fantastical presets. You can harmonise different parts of a sound so it feels wide and choral. Natural, environmental, non-pitched sound material tends to have a variety of harmonics associated with it, so to be able to play with and control multiple pitches at once gave the the sound authentic emotion and body.

I wanted to make a beautiful choir of real

women's voices from around Birmingham, so I visited lots of amateur theatre and music groups, and professional choirs, and asked them to improvise vocal sounds and expressions. I've always been fascinated by accents and dialects and the richness they offer to the experience of an environment. It wasn't scored, I didn't want it to be pure, it wanted to feel like real people: voices embedded with real human nuance and emotional expression. I was so grateful for the women's imagination and generosity.

Alongside this sat the sounds of the chains, rattling, jangling, creaking, stretching and slowly building the tension to the climax that saw The Bull revealed in all its glory. I learned a great deal about the science of chains... just waiting for the opportunity to wow people with my knowledge in a pub quiz one day!

### **How did the sound work with The Bull in the ceremony?**

I worked remotely on the design, sending multiple offers to the core creatives and responding to feedback. It wasn't possible to allocate time in the off-site or stadium rehearsals to work on the content in direct response to the action, in real time, as we do in a theatre tech. I tend to have a

responsive nature, so working in this way required a re-think and was very challenging at times. The sound and music score was the backbone of the whole show; every other production element was tied in to us. The puppeteers and operators were verbally cued by chief Bull engineer Mike Kelt, based on the sound score timecode. There was an expectation for the audio to be laid down in advance, rather than having the flexibility of sound cues responding to the performance.

It was quite nerve wracking! I gave notes in response to the rehearsals but had little opportunity to walk through the cues step by step with the production team. We did develop some flexibility with spot cues, precisely cued by show caller Julia Whittle, to help aid the sync of The Bull's moves and relative sounds, but this took some negotiating as it wasn't normal practice on a production of this scale. I realised the incredible detail we are able to achieve in our work in theatre, even though we think we haven't got any time, so it helped me to appreciate that workflow a great deal!

### **What have you learned?**

I learned lots of brilliant things about how to deal with content in an outdoor stadium

environment. The system designer, Scott Willsallen of Auditoria Systems and his team were full of very helpful advice. The system was a full range stereo system multiplied over a massive area and there are many environmental factors, wind and temperature for example, that can affect the perception of sound in that kind of space. Small details in the soundscape can be lost so broad brush strokes are often best.

I discovered that giving sounds particular focus at particular times in the track was most effective. The audience are then able to hear the story of the soundscape rather than being overwhelmed by a mushy sonic stew! It's like the premise of cinematic focus in some ways, where you might choose to pick out the protagonist's footsteps walking away and ignore the other people around them, because that's the person you want the audience to focus on. On the open field of a ceremony, the audience can see a whole host of action at once, but using sound we can shift the audience's focus from one story beat to another.

Of course environmental conditions change often so nothing can be relied upon. It was a matter of making a best guess and



ensuring we had enough control over the content for the Mix Engineer to be able to mitigate on the night. That's where the hundreds of stems came in! The audio content ran as stems into separate channels on the desk so that the mix engineer could

make adjustments depending on the conditions in the stadium. There were hundreds of stems to separate the music and sound score into small sections of orchestra, single instruments or sonic elements, as we might in musical theatre. I was limited to four channels for soundscape. I chose to make the most of EQ and spatialisation adjustments within the audio files before bouncing down to sets of stems – one stereo file might hold the majority of the sound bed and the other two allocated to spot sounds or stereo low frequency tracks. Happily, I was able to utilise the choir channels for the women's voices so had more control there. In an ideal world I would definitely have had more stems so the sound design could have been more responsive in the stadium, but in the end I think it communicated well and I was happy with the results. It certainly tested the nerves of the whole team.

On the night, it was utterly out of our hands, both live and broadcast. We sat back and enjoyed the evening as best we could. It was a very strange sensation to be watching for the last time something that had consumed my imagination for a significant amount of time, like letting grains of sand run through my fingers... ☹️

# Strangely satisfying: designing with ASMR

**Julie Rose Bower (she/her) is an artist, sound designer and teacher. She creates sound-led performances, installations and videos that focus on the embodied qualities of sound and specifically the intersection of sound with movement and touch.**

**Julie Rose's work foregrounds the unalloyed pleasure of close listening and connects us to new possibilities of feeling sound in the world. Her practise is unique and utterly compelling, but in common with the other artists featured in this edition, she reveals how sound-led approaches to performance connect us to the world in exciting new ways.**

**Here she shares her experience of creating a new commission for a major exhibition on ASMR for the Design Museum, and gives us an insight into the newly emergent culture of ASMR listening.**

**ASMR 'Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response' is a tingling sensation and/ or feeling of relaxation and pleasure in the head and spine triggered by specific aural or visual aesthetics. It has been proven to lower heart rate and increase skin conductivity in those who report feeling it.**

## Beginning

In late 2021 I was approached by curators from the Design Museum in Kensington and Arkdes in Stockholm about commissioning new work. They were planning an expanded version of the recent Arkdes gallery show *WEIRD SENSATION FEELS GOOD: The World of ASMR (WSFG)* and looking to commission a UK-based artist to contribute new work for the London run. It was an exciting brief; to create an accessible sensory space in a dedicated gallery within the exhibition providing numerous opportunities for experimentation with close-listening and touch. The idea behind this was to appeal to cognoscenti as well as newcomers to the ASMR phenomenon and to appeal across generations in a spirit of open creativity. This was to be a space where the museum visitor becomes a performer to create their own ASMR experiences and where observation of others is as much the focus as engaging with curated objects. It was my task to find an approach open enough to guide visitors into the strangely satisfying

experiences that trigger ASMR so that the online phenomenon could manifest in real time and in real life.

## Background

I knew about this exhibition already from online wanderings on my smartphone during the first Covid lockdown. I had viewed the virtual vernissage of the first iteration of *WSFG* from my sofa. That initial version of the show at Arkdes had opened as the pandemic hit and this had limited the IRL experience for museum-goers. However, the innovation of this ASMR-style video tour of an ASMR exhibition opened it up to an international audience and it had been a highlight of my lockdown. I was working from home on continued post-production work on my *ASMR at the museum* series for the V&A's YouTube channel as well continuing PhD research and home-schooling my child. In the pandemic there was no 'me time' and cabin fever was setting in but this internet experience – headphones on, lovingly curated, full of marvellous suggestions and

feelings about the scope of the culture I myself was engaged in creating – was a much-needed connection with new people in a new place. I put my headphones on to watch curator James Taylor-Foster presenting the ideas and content of the show somewhat in the style of 1990s MTV; interviewing ASMR researchers on a couch shaped like a pair of lips, removing his shoes to enter the pillow-lined video-viewing space and striking an intimate one to one tone to discuss the phenomenon. I was therefore well-primed on the creative atmosphere of the exhibition when the invitation came and I was delighted to be asked. I had not done an interactive project for an exhibition space before but I set my mind to thinking about what I could offer to create an inclusive experience that ASMR lovers could revel in and where curious people could experiment and play, learning about this sensory culture through doing.

As far as I was aware, this was the first time live ASMR work was being proposed in London. I knew about Claire Tolan's ASMR



karaoke events in Berlin in which people could use props and objects to live-soundtrack videos projected in a space. I had also watched online the live feminist ASMR work (often parodic, but nonetheless effective) being done in Berlin as well as being aware of the Whisper Lodge ASMR hotel experience in the US. This, however, was different; here, ASMR was being proposed as a mode of attending to the world and a design sensibility, not only a distinct and bounded experience cultivated through a performance culture. I had been invited because I am a theatre artist with museum experience who had a track record for using ASMR to make unusual connections – between onstage and behind-the-scenes and between physical and digital worlds. This was therefore an opportunity for formal innovation and to expand ASMR cultures into a new way of listening to the world.

At this point I reached out to ASD contacts in a position to support new sound work. Resilience of the interactive installations would be key to success and I am grateful for the support of Stage Sound Services who provided backline audio kit and Shure who donated hardware robust enough to welcome the rough love of 300 visitors a

day, seven days a week for an opening run of six months. Due to the show's success the run has subsequently been extended to almost a year, closing April 2023. I thank these big organisations for being willing to work with me, an artist-maker embarking on new work. Their support was integral to the success of my work on the show.

### **The concept**

What I hit upon for the idea that ran through my installation - which I couched as a journey rather than a destination – was the senses and technology as a bridge connecting the body and the environment. I was always stunned to think that the internet and its communication with distant others led us to learn and codify something new and intimate about the body. A US security consultant named Jennifer Allen named it in an online forum in 2011 and the name has stuck. I called the work *Meridians Meet* and designed numerous ways for individuals and groups entering the space to interact with props and one another by taking part in small scenographies involving props and simple actions.

The original show was conceived as a spa-like space where you could watch videos already available online. It was curated in

clusters of rotating screens to give a design-oriented digest of ASMR cultures. One of my existing museum videos would feature in this expanded WSFG show, on constant rotation alongside a number of videos including Björk showing you the inside of her TV at Christmas time, a piece from a Holly Herndon album made with ASMRtist Claire Tolan, demonstrations of obsolete hand crafts, a Virgin Atlantic advert, cake baking, paint mixing, pet grooming and more. The immersive and highly stylised approach of the pillow-lined main arena was to be extended via my installation *Meridians Meet* into focusing further on surfaces, touch and the subjective depth of the phenomenon which feels different to each person. ASMR is triggered by an ever-growing vocabulary of gestures, sounds and scenarios. Some people have a very strong response; others mild; some don't feel it at all while others learn what to look out for and tune in to the experience once the ASMR aesthetic stands out to them. This latter category gave me hope; it is possible to learn how to feel ASMR or at least to intellectually recognise it through engaging with its distinctive aesthetics.

I called each part of the installation after an



Right: *Meridians Meet*  
(Ed Reeve)

experience of mediated depth in the environment and invited visitors to participate with a simple action: it begins with 'Cave Clap', the darkest space in the exhibition where you can trigger an echo shower of taps, activated by a single hand clap. This simple warmup engages the body with an ancient acoustic soundcheck. You are then invited to 'Walk in the Snow' through a passage of hanging bags of cornflour inspired by Foley artistry. These handheld sandbags can be crushed in time to a rhythmic footsteps sound design to evoke a walk through a snowy landscape. Then things step up a little bit with a classic table-based ASMR scenography: 'Brush with Microphone' is a table set for two with a palindrome of brushes laid out on custom-built stands on either side. It provides headphones and two microphones hard-panned left and right for a one-to-one mutual ear-tickling experience. This microphone-brushing proved to be extremely popular with audiences and on busy days queues of ASMRtists-in-waiting would form in the snowy walkway and around the cave all the way out the door and up to the main arena. Fortunately, there is also plenty to see if you want to wait. 'Wishing Well' is a converted coinspinner with a splash designed into its



base so your coin spin ends with a pleasing kerplunk. Every coin plays slightly differently and its concentric path down the swirl is amplified with a contact microphone. Finally, there was a 'Cloth Mountain Pass', a miniature mountain range of cloth upholstered onto a table with boundary mics placed inside it to capture the mixed triggers of Foley cloth sounds, tapping and microphone touching. Through these five exhibits, I proposed an engagement with the analogue pleasures of touch and materials as well as the relaxing qualities of natural settings.

### Audience response

In terms of responses to the interactive work, visitors relish the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and delve actively into cultural production. Each person controls their own experience through gesture and touch and this guiding of your own expectations guards against feeling overwhelmed. You can lean into what you like through repetition, duration and emphasis. There is no need for commentary; if you like something, you can stick with it. If you don't you can vote with your feet and walk away to try the next thing. The headphones experiences provide moments of focused engagement and



sound designs delivered through small speakers create micro-environments as you move around the space. I had to be careful to prevent sonic spill into the space of the main arena but support a feeling of continuity as visitors entered and exited. A custom room tone helped with this; I designed a white noise like a gentle fizz to create a bed for the dynamic sounds and to create a subtle shift when you enter the interactive gallery but that you don't notice losing when you leave.

The social media activity around the exhibit was very lively so word spread quickly

about what was on offer. I found myself watching the same Tiktok video setpieces over and over again: coin spins, ASMRtist poses with brushes, people hugging the cloth mountain and of course lots of lying down with headphones on in the main arena. The demographic coming to the show was remarkably young, femme and international - similar to the demographic that watch my ASMR videos for V&A as revealed by the analytics. Some visitors made full length videos of everything in the show and shared their responses on YouTube. One ASMRtist even said they would take the Cloth Mountain idea from the ASMR Studio forward into future videos. The warm reception gave me a really good feeling and I was happy to have offered something new to the ASMR community and to have contributed something to develop the culture further.

### Developing the culture

ASMR culture has found wider validation through this museum show in ways that feel important; firstly in raising the profile of the term and secondly in formally distinguishing ASMR culture from pornography. The *Emperor's New Clothes* status of the phenomenon - where one person feels something while another may

not – has contributed to it being historically overlooked by mainstream media. This private feeling only emerged as a discourse in the uniquely public private cloister of the internet with its hyper-specific globalised communities. In this museum show, ASMR culture has succeeded in coming offline and is answering an appetite for experiences that map across mediated and real-world sensations. Designed sound is likely to play a key role in our understanding of touch in mediated environments and audio-visual forms of communication at distance.

Another thing that the *WSFG* show provides is the opportunity to differentiate between online sex cultures and ASMR cultures. ASMR has often been interpreted as a camgirl-adjacent phenomenon partly because the most well-known makers – such as SAS-ASMR, Gentle Whispering ASMR and Gibi ASMR – are young, femme, attractive and onscreen. Another reason for this confusion is that the sensation of ASMR, like erotic sensation, has both an emotional and a physiological component. Therefore, conflating the two is understandable when sex is by far the more developed discourse, but now we have a description of ASMR as a discrete culture so this represents a development. Of

course, like every other category of culture, ASMR has a pornographic sub-genre and it is interesting to note that the introduction of plug and play binaural microphones such as the 3Dio in porn-ASMR content has introduced a legitimate intersection between sex work and sound design work. However, this is to be considered alongside research by ASMR psychologist and *WSFG* contributor Dr. Giulia Poerio who demonstrated in her 2018 study (referenced above) that ASMR is a relaxation rather than an arousal experience with heart rate slowing down rather than rising to a climax when the experience is in session. The increase in skin conductance during self-reported ASMR feelings shown within Dr. Poerio et al's study bears out that these feelings of relaxation sit alongside perceived sensations of touch. I consider that celebrating cultures of touch is a step forward politically – away from feelings of shame around both sex and ASMR. The atmosphere that can be observed in *WSFG* – playful but calm, sensitive and even ticklish – bears this progressive element out. The observation of others in the exhibition space has a sense of wonder rather than voyeurism. This respect of other people's space and feelings and cultivating expectations of difference is something I

will continue to nurture in future work.

### Future feels

Now as I am exploring touring possibilities for *Meridians Meet* I look to the future and how I can build on what I learned from this deep dive into interactive displays. Many exciting opportunities continue to come up with ASMR being in increasing demand. As well as continuing my ASMR video work with the V&A I have recently expanded my practice further into segments for a podcast with the Courtauld gallery, building custom ASMR sound libraries for the food and drink industry and speaking about my ongoing research in talks, panels and articles. I am keen to keep up with others exploring the audio-sensory cultures of ASMR as I branch out into music and composition in this area so I hope ASD members who are interested in this work will reach out and connect with me. ASMR is a famously warm and positive culture and I hope to maintain this approach as the phenomenon continues to develop immersive, theatrical experiences both on and offline. ☺

### MORE INFO

[julierosebower.com](http://julierosebower.com)

Instagram: [julierosebower](https://www.instagram.com/julierosebower)

# Mini profile: **Nonto**



**NONTO**  
(she/her)

## What you're up to at the moment?

I just moved to the US to undertake a PhD in Music and Multimedia Composition at Brown University. Additionally, I am working on a private composition commission that is concerned with dreams and the subconscious. I also have a music project called Venus Ex Machina and my second album *Doxa* is out now on AD93 Records.

## Where do you want to be in the future?

I would like to harness every opportunity to develop my craft and expand my experience in both the composition and sound design realms, and build a sustainable, international career.

## What was your first experience of sound and what do you know now that you didn't then?

My first sound training was a part-time course in west London which I used to commute from Edinburgh to attend, and I wish I had known how to approach people locally and gain experience that way.

## What is your favourite tool or piece of equipment that you take to a job/college?

It is important to always have a lot of adapters.

## If you could ask a question of any sound practitioner, who and what would you ask?

Everybody's path is different, and I believe that each of us needs to set our own goals, that way you don't end up with a facsimile of someone else's life or career, and the entire field can only be enriched by having a broader palette of visions and voices within it.

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[emacoustics.co.uk](http://emacoustics.co.uk)



# From The Understory

**Alice Boyd (she/her) is a London/Bristol-based composer, sound designer and performer working across music, podcast, radio, film and theatre. She is a member of award-winning theatre company Poltergeist, who create work that is thoughtful, magical and fun.**

**I've followed Alice's work for a number of years, and recently had the opportunity to get to know her practise in more detail on the Sound and Music New Voices composer programme. Alice's work reminds me that thoughtful attunement to the world through sound can be an act of pure play and generosity. Her work is deeply careful, but always opens itself to the listener with humour and adventure, which is a rare gift when engaging with the climate themes Alice pursues.**

**Alice feels like she's listening for a world in which sound creates springboards for new ideas about connection and activism. Those types of multi-disciplinary approach also feel key to the health of a thriving theatre form in the U.K. too, and I'm hopeful for the vision that the artists of Alice's generation are mapping for us. Here Alice gives us an insight into how she created her latest project *From The Understory*.**

## **Tell us about the work you make**

My work uses the voice, everyday sounds and electronic textures to tell stories about the world around us. Much of my work explores our relationship with the natural world. Since the pandemic, it has been important to me to balance my freelance work with my own self-led projects and practice. In 2020, I was selected for Sound and Music's New Voices programme. As part of this, I carried out an artist residency and performance at the Eden Project, Cornwall – home to the world's largest 'rainforest in captivity'. I am now releasing my debut EP *From The Understory*, inspired by my residency and our relationship with plants. It will be released digitally and on eco-mix vinyl on Earth Day 2023 (22nd April).

## **How did you first get the idea of making sound with plants?**

Growing up, I knew I either wanted to work in the environmental sector or the arts. I studied Geography at university and worked in an environmental charity after that. In 2018, I became incredibly inspired

by Alison Tickell, CEO of environmental arts organisation Julie's Bicycle, who says 'the arts is the difference between knowing knowledge and feeling knowledge'. It dawned on me that I can use my love of music and the arts to contribute to the climate movement in my own way. During the first lockdown, I researched artists who create music inspired by the natural world, such as John Luther Adams, Mileece and Jason Singh. I spent much of the lockdown learning basic electronics and coding. With the support of my mentor Gawain Hewitt, I built an Arduino device that detects changes in the electrical current across a plant's leaves. The changes are then translated realtime into musical notes that are played by synthesisers and musical software, meaning the plant is acting as a living randomiser for melodies and rhythm. In my EP, I use a mix of my own and friend's synths: the Korg Minilogue, Prophet '08 and Moog Sub 37, and produced the tracks using Ableton Live. For me, this was an exciting starting point for making music in the intersection of technology and the environment.

### How did you develop the project?

In 2021, I spent a week in the Eden Project's Rainforest Biome, a humid geodesic dome brimming with tropical plants from around the world. I used my Arduino device to sonify the conductivity across the surfaces of various plants and trees. The conductivity changes depending on the movement of water in the plants, which fluctuates throughout the day as a result of photosynthesis.

The sonified data streams from the Eden Project's flora provided the basis for five songs I composed after my residency, which together form my debut EP *From The Understory*. I wrote lyrics and harmonies for six singers, as well as instrumental parts, which we performed at the Eden Project in January 2022. Over 2022, I then worked with musician Liam Evans to record and co-produce the songs.

The EP takes the listener from the evolution of plant and animal cells, through the rise of human civilisations, to the moment we find ourselves in now: the climate crisis; a fork in







**Right: Singers at the Eden Project (Daisy Russell)**

the road; a moment that requires urgent decision-making and action. My aim for the music is to offer a semi-pop/semi-experimental exploration of our place in the ecosystems we live in. First and foremost, I want the music to be enjoyable, with its environmental themes growing more apparent with each listen.

### **Were there any challenges along the way?**

As this is my first self-led music project, I have learnt a lot. In the early stages, the challenges I faced involved the creation of the device itself. I found that DIY electronics gives you the same sort of satisfaction as doing a jigsaw puzzle... just with a bit of electricity and hot solder involved (316 °C and counting!). It took some time to understand the difference between capacitors, transformers, resistors and the like, but films and books such as 'Sisters with Transistors' and 'Pink Noise' reminded me not to be disheartened by the jargon and to seek out forums and groups who go out of their way to help the newbies, for example: Music Hackspace, Frazer Merrick and Sam Topley.

Other challenges include the producing side of the project: the writing of funding applications, the liaising with partners and



performance venues and the writing of contracts. My next hurdle is the distribution and marketing of my music both digitally and on vinyl. I enjoy the challenge of pushing a project forwards and ensuring that my collaborators feel supported. However, as many creatives and freelancers will know, to keep motivated in the face of rejection and an ever-changing arts industry can be hard at times. I'm learning with each day the importance of building community among other artists to share learnings and amplify each other's work.

A big question that came up for me was around the significance of the conductivity data from plants. This single data stream

itself doesn't give us a clear picture of processes going on in the plant. There are so many other possible data sets to measure: sunlight, water concentration and salinity, to name a few. However, this project has acted as a catalyst for me to explore the possibilities of sonification within music, sound and climate activism. It has inspired me to interact with plants in a new way and to create music which wouldn't have been possible without the assemblage of the Arduino device, the plants I attached it to and my interpretation. For me, this is indeed a collaboration between (or at least a convergence of) human, plant and technology.

### **How do you think sound helps connect us to the non-human world?**

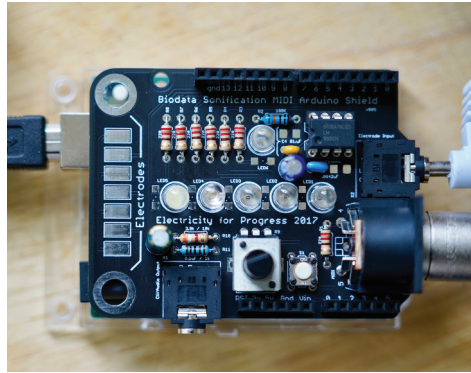
Sound is an incredible way to connect us to the non-human world. Since creating my EP, I've become increasingly interested in field recording and how I can use this in my music. As part of a project with UCL and the Norfolk Ponds Project, I am working as part of a cohort of musicians and poets to create work about pond restoration. (On a side note, did you know ponds often support more biodiversity than lakes and rivers?). For this project, we are using underwater microphones to record the

sounds within the pond. Restored ponds are surprisingly cacophonous with choruses of insects, tiny bubbles coming off of aquatic plants as they photosynthesise and strange synth-like sounds that are hard to believe are natural.

In the example of field recording, sound allows us to hear a world that until that moment is almost imperceptible to us. We become aware of an ecosystem with its own patterns and irregularities. This alien soundscape can help us build empathy with non-humans both within familiar spaces and entirely new ones. The inert pond becomes the liveliest party, the inconspicuous (and rapidly diminishing) inches of soil under our feet teem with worms and spiders, and the sky above our heads rumble relentlessly as planes pass on by. For me, field recording gives us a moment to listen, widening our perception and understanding of ourselves as the central node through which we experience the vastness and intricacies of life around us.

### What place do you think theatre making has in climate activism?

I do believe that theatre making has a role to play in climate activism. In 2018, I started



Staging Change with ThisEgg's Josie Dale-Jones, which we ran until 2022. The aim of our grassroots organisation was to encourage other theatre makers to make their work more environmentally sustainable, and to also bridge the gap between artists and venues within the context of climate change. It was incredible to see the amount of enthusiasm for climate action, as well as the number of shows on the topic that were made during this time. Again, thinking about Alison Tickell's idea that 'art is the difference between knowing knowledge and feeling knowledge', we know that humans love stories. It is part of our evolution and survival, a transferal of knowledge to our

descendants. Theatre makers have the storytelling skills to build understanding around the climate crisis with all of its accompanying complexities, emotions and implications.

However, with Staging Change there were times where it felt action on this scale was inconsequential, that if governments and multinationals weren't going to make significant changes then what could an artist do? While without systemic change the outlook is gloomy, there's a lot to be said for local action. Every single industry needs to think about climate change and activism. Investment and commitment from the top is vital, but conversation and action at all levels helps point us in the right direction. If as an artist you can start a conversation about climate change with an audience, you are not only stating your own stance on the matter but also potentially encouraging others to be environmental citizens. That is no small thing. ☺

**MORE INFO**  
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# Mini profile: Marie Zschlommer



MARIE  
ZSCHLOMMER  
(she/her)

## What are you up to at the moment?

At the moment I'm sound designing *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* at LAMDA, where I'm currently in my final year. It's an interesting production, and we're using a lot of traditional Georgian music (where the play is set), which I had not previously listened to much of. I love working on shows that broaden my knowledge of music and sound!

I'm also in the process of writing my dissertation on how theatres are built with acoustics in mind, and how sound design has changed over time in relation to the changes in theatre architecture and technological advances. If anyone has any thoughts on this topic please get in touch – I would love to get as many different insights into this as possible.

## What was your first experience of sound and what do you know now that you didn't then?

I'm not quite sure what my first experience of sound was, my dad is a musician so music has been around in my life since I can remember. The first thing I can remember thinking 'that sounds really cool', was probably the 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony. I remember being in awe of the entire production of it. I now understand all of the work that went into putting the sound together – the way in which they had to troubleshoot the millions of problems that they must have experienced. I find it really interesting to look at huge

productions like the Olympic Opening Ceremony, and break down all the different things you would have had to think about. I also love looking back on productions that I was in awe of as a child and realising that in a few years, I too will (hopefully) be capable of creating work like that.

## What is your favourite tool or piece of equipment that you take to a job?

My MacBook, I seem to have my entire life on there. And a head torch!

## If you could ask a question of any sound practitioner, who and what would you ask?

I would ask Paul Arditti: How much has your job as a sound designer changed over your career and how much do you think it will change in the future, especially in relation to the roles of content designer and system designer becoming somewhat more separate, such as your role on *The Crucible*?

# The power of networks

**Linda O’Keeffe (she/her) is a sound artist based in Edinburgh. She is senior lecturer (associate professor) of sound in the Arts at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. Linda is founder of the Women in Sound Women on Sound (WISWOS) organisation and co-founder of the Irish Sound Science and Technology Association. She is also Editor-in-Chief for the *Interference Journal*, a journal of audio cultures.**

**Linda appeared at the *Pause. Play. Discover.* festival last year as a panellist. Joining remotely, she was able to share only a taste of her rich career experience with us, but the insight she gave was an important touchstone for the event and its direction of travel. Linda’s practise and scholarship enables female makers to connect to their place within the development of sound art and design, and to identify the importance and value of their methods of making. I was very pleased to be able to follow up with Linda for a longer conversation about listening, learning and connecting.**

## **How did you first get into sound?**

My parents always knew I was interested in sound, but they assumed it was music as most parents do, when kids start banging away at a keyboard or blowing a tin whistle. When I was seven, my parents got me like a little Casio keyboard, and the thing I loved about it was all the effects. I loved the presets and sounds. I was sent for piano lessons and hated it, I didn’t want to make music, so I would skip. My parents stopped the lessons but saw I was still interested in this idea of sound making.

When I left school, I got a job and went straight into working because I didn’t know what I wanted to do. I was about 18, living with my musician husband and his electronic keyboards. I could, you know, mess with his stuff, but I also started going to adult art classes. I eventually built myself a portfolio and got into art school.

I was training as a sculptor in a traditional sculpture department, but I was still

fascinated by sound. So I started building things that I could put sound in: installations or physical objects. I went to the technician in the radio department and said, ‘I want to work with sound’, and he said, ‘well, you’re gonna have to get this thing called a laptop!’ This is the late 90s, nobody got laptops or computers, because that was ridiculous. So I got a loan, and bought a Sony VAIO laptop. The technician gave me a range of software, everything from Sibelius to Cakewalk to Sony Sound Forge. I didn’t know what I wanted to do so he said, ‘here’s everything, see what you want to do’. It was a rite of passage through software.

I began by recording my voice initially, because that was the only thing I had. Using Sibelius and Cakewalk meant I started working with early samples of musical sounds and merging those sounds with vocal or field recordings. I just fell in love, and gradually over my degree, I started to have less and less physical things



in a space and more sound in a space.

But of course, no one knew what I was doing, least of all me, because I was in traditional art school. It was a random tutorial with a painter that started connecting me to what was happening in other worlds of music and sound, people like Philip Glass, Steve Reich, John Cage. And that just blew me away.

### How did you develop your career?

Towards the end of my degree, I felt I was really only just beginning to think about sound as an art form, so I went on to do a Masters in virtual reality at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. I remember thinking, ok, so my work is not virtual reality, but I'm creating spaces for people to enter and be immersed in sound. So in a way, it sort of replicates our early understanding of the virtual world, right? I was accepted onto the course and it was an amazing two years, including an Erasmus in Sweden.

I went on to do work experience for MIT Europe, where I worked with a team led by a blind researcher, who was focusing on interactivity with objects and sound. I was asked to connect the movements of this

ball object to individual sounds on a piano keyboard, using Max MSP. Through that, I started to see the potential practicalities of a career in sound, because up until that point in my experience, if you went to an exhibition, sound was only there if it was connected to video.

In fact my first gig out of my Masters was doing the sound design for a production of *Suddenly Last Summer* at the Dublin Theatre Festival. It was my first introduction to thinking about sound as a designer, about how sound enhances the experience, shapes emotions and presents a space that isn't there.

In 2007, I received two years of funding from the Irish Arts Council. One of the first things I did was to go to Chicago and apprentice myself to sound artist Eric Leonardson, and immerse myself in the sound community in the US. Then I did a one year course on a scholarship, in television and radio broadcast production, because I still thought I didn't have the skills I needed. I felt like the skills that the blokes had: they'd trained in the engineering studio, at audio or video editing; those things I didn't have, it was all self taught. And I was very insecure about that. But

when I came out the other end of this one year course, I had this sudden burst of confidence. I know the tech I want to use! There is no field closed to me!

### Were you developing a particular aesthetic or style to your sound making?

With hindsight I look back and realise that I was developing a style. But it was different if I was creating a work for installation, or art versus sound design, and framed by the technology I had access to. I was primarily working with field recordings, out in the world, listening and recording, and then my voice and then transforming that in a series of technological stages. Always the starting point for me was listening. I think that's shaped my entire career: the first thing I always do is listen to the world and find the space appropriate to what I want to hear in relation to the topic I'm working on. It doesn't matter about the subject matter, because in the world, there is always something that is related to it. It doesn't mean that you can always hear the world when it goes through many stages of transformation, but I know it's there.

### Were you coming across other female practitioners as you developed?

I was essentially always told I was the only

# YESTERDAY / NOW: TELL ME HOW DO YOU FEEL / MAPPING MY HISTORY HER NOW I UNDERSTAND.

1. "HOME"

2. DREAMS

MY UNCLE · ART · DOGS

FAMILY · CATS

TURTLE · DRAWING

3. SILENCE

"PROBLEMATIC" I CAN'T EXPLAIN !!

5. DIFFERENT CLASSES  
CONTRASTS

4. HELP CHANGED SCHOOL

6. PUBLIC SCHOOL

FRIENDSHIP

LOVE

SPORTS

ARTS

BOOKS

7. HIGH SCHOOL

FANZINES

PUNK LETTERS

FEMINISM

ART

RIOT GRRRL ♀

8.

BUILDINGS

NOISE

BIG CITY

ANGST

PEACE ☺

9. NOW I UNDERSTAND WHERE I BELONG

AND MY PIECES OF LIFE

- SAD SONG
- SILENCE
- NATURE SOUNDS
- SCREAMING / CRYINGS
- LAUGHING
- ~~HAPPY~~ HAPPY
- REBEL GIRLS / BIKINI KILL

woman. When I was younger and being invited to events, I was told, 'you know, there's not many women, and so we invited you'. So it wasn't because what I did was good, and that always hangs over your relationship with your practice: I'm being invited because I'm female.

There wasn't a lot of space for sound art within the traditional gallery space, so I was often invited to do performance, and I was very uncomfortable with that, I didn't want to be a performer. So I would pre-prepare the equivalent of an installation piece, and then be up there on the stage with my laptop in front of me.

Many times I would go to these events, and the male participants would project their technology on a screen, which of course made me feel even more insecure, because this is pre my later training. At that time I found that the focus for a lot of the men I was performing with was the technology over the sound. And I'm not saying their sounds weren't interesting or good, but it didn't seem to be part of the conversation.

I remember being invited back to my old undergraduate university to be a speaker at an event with some really big names. Of

course, the question was inevitably asked, 'what's it like to be a woman?' But I didn't want to talk about that, because when you ask me that question in front of these three men sitting beside me, it very much tells the audience that you invited me here because I'm a woman.

I found that every time I was invited to a new event, if there was another woman there, it was different to the woman that had been at the other events. But I'd meet the same guys. So they were forming themselves a network, establishing connections, peer support and possible collaborations. But I was always new, and so were the women I was meeting. You start to think that as a group you must be in an extreme minority.

When I moved to the UK in 2014, I started seeing the same phenomenon. And I just got so angry! I mean, I'd been annoyed up until that point, but it was more like, okay, this is the UK, this is a big sound community, it's 2014, I *know* there's more women in this field. I remember bumping into Eddie Dobson (sound artist, founder of Yorkshire Sound Women's Network) at one event, and we were in a crowd of fifty blokes, and I said to Eddie, I'm getting so

bored with this, I'm going to create a space where we can all be together and network because this is not on.

### **Could you tell us how the WISWOS network emerged? (Women in Sound Women on Sound)**

I was invited back to preview an undergraduate programme on sound and music technology being developed in my old college. They sent me the programme for nine or ten courses, everything that was taught, the reading lists, who was teaching the courses. And there was two women referenced in all of the reading lists, and only one woman teaching in a supplementary theory course. I sent out a message to my community saying, 'can everybody send me an example of a woman writing in...' and listed a variety of fields.

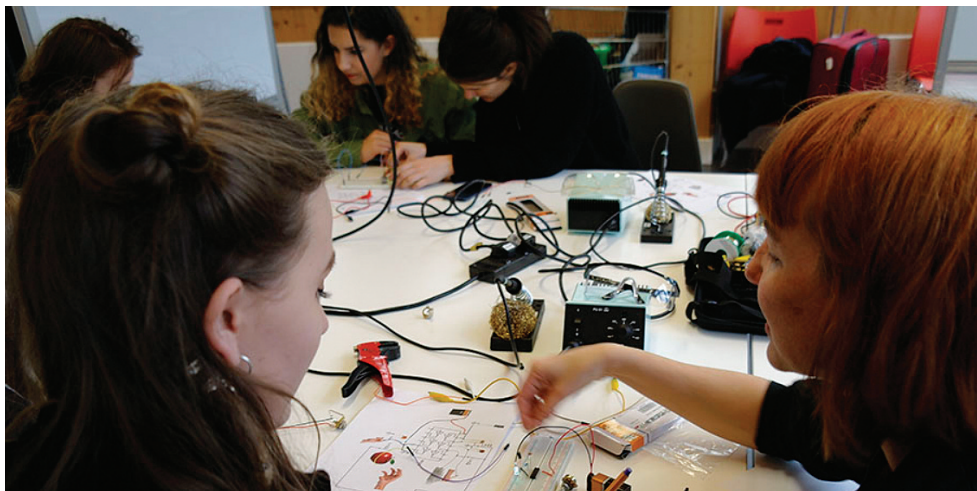
I had dozens and dozens of responses and built a twelve page document. When the college said, 'oh but you know, there's very few women writing in these areas', I gave them the twelve page pdf. It was an interesting moment in the meeting! At the end of our session of reviewing this programme, we all came to the programme director and said, there is no diversity in this



programme whatsoever. And it was very easy once you pointed people to it.

So I created an event to bring those women who work in sound and write on sound together, to share our practice. We sent out a call for participants and had women apply from Mexico, New York, Asia all over the UK and Europe. It was redonkulous, I couldn't believe it! One woman travelled from Brazil, who was seven months pregnant. The caterer was a feminist, she gave us a massive discount. It was such a successful day. Essentially, it was all about networking: here is a moment for us to see how many we are in the field, to create a space for sharing research, maybe future partnerships, sharing emails, just getting together.

The second event we hosted was in response to the conversation of the first and that was the initial shaping of what the network could be, which was about educating women in sound. Much of the conversation that emerged in the first event was, how did you learn to do that? Where did you study that? It was a big question, because we were outside of the norms. We were very aware that most of the blokes we knew working in sound design, or the sonic



arts, or technology and performance had come from a music technology background or a computer science background. And the majority of us didn't.

Out of that came a question for me: how are we learning? Is there some way we can tap into that and see it as a benefit? The artist, Rebecca Collins and I put forward a proposal to my university to build 'research in a box' for the network, and that's when the website was built. We thought about it as a resource space to bring information to

women about who's doing what, how you can learn to do something, what our history is, what you could read. WISWOS has become a space where networks around the world can be aware of each other. If you're an organisation trying to support excluded people, sometimes you feel like you're alone doing that up against a wall.

### **Is there such a thing as female and non-binary sound making?**

I guess that question relates to thinking about how any classification is having an



impact on how we make, like culture, race, class, income, right? I definitely think there are ways in which certain processes have a role in shaping how a group, say female, non-binary people, can participate in the field.

The problem is that we're not introduced to the differences we have in knowledge soon enough, and it's not good enough that we have to go and find them. Like I did. I had to search for years to find influences that reflected my process, and the fact that I was doing something different to what I'd been introduced to as a norm, which was white men's way of making and doing things with technology and sound. The different way that I approached sound always made me feel like I was an outsider. But different ways of doing things are always interesting. It's not really about *what* I'm making, but *how* I'm making. It's important to be able to highlight how different processes are acceptable in what we do, whether it's sound design, performance, installation art or radio art. How these processes are developed can have a lot to do with who we are as people and the decisions we make.

From my own perspective, and having

worked with other women, there are consequences to think about in relation to being a field recordist say. I don't feel safe to go into a forest at two or three in the morning by myself, with my parabolic microphone. Which means that a lot of the field recording I've done in those situations has been with someone else, so that I can exist safely in a space to do field recording. There are times when I've not been able to do it, because there's no one to go with. So thinking about the body, and its relationship to technology, space and sound is one of the primary processes that shape how we make sound. I think we're not yet presenting that as an epistemology (a category of knowledge/different ways of knowing) to people wanting to work in sound.

A few years ago, I said to Isabel Nogueira, my collaborative partner in Brazil, we need to make a space for this knowledge. So we edited a book together, with contributions from 23 female artists and theorists of sound, including myself, called: *The Body in Sound, Music and Performance* (Routledge 2022). This is not a feminist text, this is a book presenting a different viewpoint on the processes of working in our field of sound and music technology. There isn't a

discipline we haven't touched on, but the body is at the centre of it: the black body, the poor body, the differently abled body, the non binary body. The body shapes our experiences, and I think that prior to this, the body has been kept out of the conversation. The patriarchal, masculine world of sound and music technology does not look at the body.

In my teaching I'm always looking at how I'm introducing my students to the language I'm using, addressing the idea of inclusivity and exclusion. When I'm commissioned now to do a gig, I am probably more sensitive to how much I'll get paid, who I'm working with, how they're talking to me. I'm in a relatively lucky position, where if something feels problematic, I can say no. I know a lot of women can't because they're really relying on the income.

My door is always open to women. I have loads of women contacting me and asking can we talk about this? And I always say, yes, let's talk. ☺

**MORE INFO**  
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# Pause. Play. Discover.



In October 2022, the ASD inaugurated a new festival at the Rose Shure Experience Centre in London called *Pause. Play. Discover.* Three attendees to the festival share their impressions here, to give us a flavour of how the new event went down.

I'm grateful to Nat, Niamh, Rob and the RADA students for their thoughts, which help us to understand how the mission of the festival can evolve and grow. I hope their responses might ignite new ideas in readers here, because the festival is the start of a process which everyone can join.

Get in touch with us to share your ideas, or better still, come and be part of the conversation at our bi-monthly meeting of the Representation & Inclusion working group.





**NAT  
NORLAND**  
(they/them)

I wasn't a member of the ASD when I signed up to attend *Pause. Play. Discover.* I came upon it by chance on Twitter. It's the sort of thing that not so long ago I would have been too intimidated to attend at all. Something best left to 'the professionals', whatever I thought that meant.

Sound design, perhaps somewhat unfairly, has a macho reputation: technical knowhow can be a blunt force weapon against the uninitiated, in unkind hands. All this to say that I arrived at the Shure building (a pretty intimidating object itself!) on the first day slightly shrinking into my shoes.

I enjoyed the talks a lot, and feel like I got a lot from them: I was unusually heartened by hearing about the Yorkshire Sound Women Network, and am strongly considering looking into teaching myself Max for Live off the back of Sarah Angliss's session. Maybe more valuable than the tips on how to make work, there was advice on how to live while making it; reconciling yourself to the demands made against you, fighting your corner.

But the ins and outs of the content wasn't my main takeaway. My biggest feeling was

that in this potentially intimidating setting, a lot of quite knowledgeable and interesting people were very kind and open towards me, and I came away feeling brighter about my own work and practise. It didn't feel like a room with closed doors that I had been invited inside; it felt like a room asking for more doors to be opened. A good thing to feel like, I think. 🙏

**Below: The *Play. Pause. Discover.* library in the Rose Shure Experience Centre.**





**NIAMH  
GAFFNEY**  
(she/her)

What an amazing experience *Pause. Play. Discover.* was! Working in the theatre industry, especially as a Sound Designer, can become lonely as you jump from one job to the next, unable to express your love for your work. I love ASD events, as I can nerd out with like-minded people who have a similar interests and always learn something new.

I joined Emily Johnson/YSWN's workshop on Ableton Workflow. It was mind-blowing to see how quickly and freeing the process to create and play was, all within one programme, and was the perfect demonstration of how to begin with this software. Sarah Blumenau was not sound related but extremely helpful: some of us aren't naturally gifted with confidence, and this workshop helped exactly with that. It takes time to build confidence in yourself but the steps she provided helped you get there.

'What's it like to be female, non-binary or trans in sound' panel discussion was an eye-opener and informative. Whilst much has changed for the better and the ASD have provided a strong support group, it was apparent that we still have a long way to go. This is the beginning of a giant step

forward and personally I was glad for those who stepped forward to share their experiences and I hope we can all support one another, coming up with solutions on how to make this industry a lot more inclusive. 🙏

Below: *Designing with ASMR* workshop with Julie Rose Bower





**ROB DONNELLY  
JACKSON**  
(Head of Sound,  
RADA)  
(he/him)

Our students, along with those of many other institutions teaching Theatre spent a couple of fantastic days attending the ASD's new *Play. Pause. Discover.* festival. The event set the tone for our year of learning new skills and practice.

Many familiar faces of our industry all gathered to listen and learn from industry leading practitioners. The discussions that took place over those few days were honestly some of the most explorative and interesting I've taken part in, with an air and culture of openness I've rarely experienced.

Students were wowed by practical demonstrations on Max MSP and alternative approaches to composition skills using Ableton. These sessions ignited a passion and fervour in our students that has I think set a bench mark for creative skills that might be learnt, utilised and aimed for.

There were also talks and discussions on stress management and coping skills, best practice and communication and confidence skills that offered huge insight and ways forward, that right now seemed so relevant. For an industry that at times has been quite one dimensional in its demographic, this series of panel

discussions not only exploded that arena, it encouraged open thinking and acceptance plus encouragement of learning.

We at RADA were privileged to be there and hear from all the speakers, and look forward to more of this thoughtful content and experience. 🎧

(RADA students who attended the festival: Mia Swann, Matt Webb, Kacey Thurbon, Evie Witherall and Jack Saltonstall)

Below: *Binaural storytelling workshop with Helen Skiera*



# On being an anti-professional sound artist and designer

**Anna Clock (they/them) is an artist, composer and musician. Their work spans theatre, film, radio, installation, written texts and live music. Their practice is centred on ways of listening, and challenging audiences to listen to each other, and their world, in new ways. They play the cello and also cut hair.**

**Anna's contribution to the *Pause. Play.* Discover. festival in October 2022 felt like it simultaneously reflected the reason for our gathering and formulated the next step on from there. In inviting Anna to share that set of thoughts again here, my hope is their practical clarity and fire can continue to ring.**

Last summer I was asked if I'd be up for running a workshop at the *ASD Pause. Play. Discover.* festival, with the freedom for it to be on any aspect of my practice. The request came at a strange time. I was recovering from a very challenging job, where a particularly uncompromising set of circumstances surrounding a show had clashed with some equally uncompromising 'real life' events. Topped off by a call from my housemates during tech to tell me we'd been evicted and a press night trip to A&E with another creative team member, the process had left me exhausted, frustrated, and seriously questioning my lifestyle and priorities. Looking out the window of a new sublet on a city I'd never visited, nursing the guilt around the project I'd just dropped out of due to burnout, I realised the biggest question I'd like to take this space to share and discuss is: how do we maintain integrity as artists and survive – mentally, physically, and financially?

The dilemma: as you start quantifying your art into the capitalist structures of money, time, day rates and the value hierarchies that budgets place on us as artists working in theatre, it fundamentally changes and inhibits what and how you make. The whole way you're able to imagine, shifts, and it's incredibly difficult to find creative fulfilment within these structures. However, as soon as you stop ruthlessly calculating and rationing your own value in strict time / money terms you run the risk of slipping swiftly into a place of precarity and exploitation – also not a tenable place to create – let alone live from. Needless to say, this slope is only harsher and steeper in accordance with intersectional disadvantages – if you have financial dependants, if you're differently abled or chronically ill, if you're everyday existence includes a greater degree of labour due to your gender or race – you're going to find things harder, and burnout quicker.



It is a self-perpetuating system where an ever increasing cost of living forces us into a state of preoccupation with the monetary value of our art, at the same time fundamentally shifting the way we make. This in turn leads to the homogenisation and commodification of art: art as an 'industry' feeding the entertainment industrial complex and artists as 'professionals' – cogs in this machine. These structures are fundamentally incompatible with what I in any case see art as doing – a space to imagine new realities, solve problems, express and connect in something truthful about the shared pain of being alive.

Art means different things to different people, and we all have our own reasons for making – but it's also a deeply fundamental aspect of being human in a way that necessarily sits outside of the dehumanising structures of neoliberalism. The whole idea





of an art 'industry' that slots itself neatly into this system is even more depressing than the many issues within our industry (as well, of course, as being the root of them). So as a way to counter this, I started trying to apply certain principles to how I engage with my work as an artist, composer and sound designer. It's about survival, and it's about ensuring I can make the work I need to make. If spending a good deal of my time and energy making art feels like a necessary part of being alive to me, then I need to make sure I have the emotional and space/time resources to do this, and also find a way to evade the invisible constraints that capitalist realism places on our ability to think, feel and imagine alternatives. In this article I'm calling those principles anti-professionalism.

I chose this wording because I wanted to distinguish it from the term unprofessional, one I associate with a lack of reliability or accountability in a workplace, which I am not advocating. The core of being an anti-professional artist is a refusal to equate art with business. Some practical aspects of what this means are:

- rejecting the quantification of art in the way we make and in how we consume;

- not judging our work or that of others on the pleasure principle or aesthetics alone but on whether it is working hard / doing what it is trying to do;
- resisting exerting energy and time on building prestige or branding that pander to neoliberal markets;
- resisting individualism and competition as motivations for making.

Squaring these ideals with surviving in the world as we know it is far from straightforward, and a work-in-progress version may well be the best I can ever hope to achieve. However, I do believe that only in trying, struggling and straining towards this can we begin to defy the professionalisation of art and empower ourselves and our art to make real change, to bring these ideals closer to reality. So, here's a few imperfect coping mechanisms I've developed in my own work.

### **1. Be really conscious of how and where you use your agency. Decide this in advance of working on a project and do not compromise.**

What I mean by this is: make a clear distinction as much as you can about

whether a project is art or work for you. Of course, this is a false binary. But it can be helpful to distinguish whether a project is something that you need to make, or whether you are using your skills to serve and help fulfil someone else's vision.

Treating your input on a project as work doesn't mean disrespecting it, not believing in it or not fulfilling it to the best of your ability – in fact I find making this distinction clear can help remove ego and let me relax into a subordinate role.

I still try to work as much as possible on projects I believe matter – but sometimes it isn't my personal voice that's important or interesting or helpful to the process, but rather my technical or analytical skills, or the fact that my agency sits outside of the matter at hand. Deciding the terms of engagement in advance helps me regulate my emotional input, and ensure I have energy left to do the things I need to do, whilst being as generous as possible a collaborator elsewhere. Hand in hand with this – especially if a project is work to you – make sure you are earning at the very least a real living wage for it (whatever that is for you and your particular needs and responsibilities).

## **2. Sit in discomfort and invite others to do so too.**

We live in a society that is fundamentally terrified of discomfort, and strives to avoid it at all costs. However for any kind of change or transformation to occur we must learn to tolerate it. Inviting audiences into a tolerable discomfort, and finding ways to evoke curiosity instead of fear around new things is a vital political act and should be part of any artistic process as well as output. Marginalised / minoritised people working in the arts are uniquely positioned for this one as they have only got here through tolerating a variety of levels of discomfort. Listen to them, learn from them, and don't be afraid of not knowing the answers. If you know the answer to what you're making before you've started, it's probably not worth making. Take your energy elsewhere.

I learnt a useful bit of neuroscience recently, that because of the parts of our brain that are activated, we cannot feel curiosity and fear at the same time. I think about this often. I believe that in models of 'professional' art-making we are encouraged to operate under fear, not curiosity – a fundamentally uncreative place to work from. If I find myself having a knee

jerk negative reaction to a new idea or way of working, I try to take a step back and ask questions about it, either to myself or others. This usually helps me figure out whether the reaction is coming from a useful place or not.

Humans fundamentally have an appetite for the strange, weird and unexpected in a way that neoliberal markets aren't equipped to cater for – let's try not to forget it. Let's make freakier art.

## **3. Never take reality for granted: always see it as up for grabs, and invite audiences to do the same.**

Both in the work you create and the process of creating, try to make the impossible possible. We are conditioned to think there is no other way of making art than the ways we know, but there is. If the current way isn't working for you, find a new one. If you're not experiencing the art that you want to experience, make it. Adam Curtis sums up the significance of this really well (in a quote I have nicked from Mark Fisher's book *Capitalist Realism*), he says 'what people suffer from is being trapped within themselves – in a world of individualism everyone is trapped within their own feelings, trapped within their own



imaginations. Our job as public service broadcasters is to take people beyond the limits of their own self, and until we do that we will carry on declining.' He is talking specifically about the BBC here, but the principles apply arguably even more in live performance, where acts of collective imagining are such a ready possibility. Within a process, questioning artistic choices that are framed as professional standards is a great place to start. A sound-specific example of this might be in choosing to handle recordings in unusual ways – for instance by leaving noise residues in them (I personally often find noisy recordings way more exciting to listen to), or using variances in volume that require audiences to listen in a different way. Another might be in redefining your role as sound designer in the room to include or exclude certain responsibilities that help or hinder you to do your best work.

**4. Keep asking what is really happening. Keep naming what is really happening. Be uncompromising and resist any kind of laziness or dismissal of the truth.**

Capitalist ideology impassivity is characterised by cynicism – and cynical distance is a big way in which we obscure the power of ideological fantasy and keep

ourselves unequipped to change anything, and unable to believe that change is possible. Even if we don't take things seriously – if we shrug off lazy making or meet problematic choices with an eye roll – we are still complicit.

One way to counter this is to take everything incredibly seriously. For example, I believe it is important to be aware of what is being communicated to and asked of an audience in their experience of a piece of live performance, and I will always try and ask the hard questions around this – the whys and whos – even if it's uncomfortable or means feeling like a killjoy for a moment.

Likewise in process: if sound is being asked to plug a hole in a script, to communicate something fundamental that a piece of writing or an actor is struggling to articulate, or if the music is failing to achieve something and this means that lighting is having to work in a way that compromises their design, or if a production management mis-calculation means the schedule has been disrupted and freelancers are having to shoulder unfair levels of stress, pressure, or unbudgeted-for labour, I think it's important to name what is happening. Even if these things can't be

changed in the moment (humans make mistakes, venues and producers are working within impossible financial limitations, sometimes that perfect idea just won't come) it's important that everyone is aware of what is happening, in order to keep ourselves accountable and resist the top-down privatisation of stress. The other side of this is that we need to approach this kind of naming with compassion and a willingness to apologise, accept apologies, adapt and draw our own boundaries where necessary.

### **5. Have a backup – so it is always a choice, never a necessity driven only by the demands of capitalism – that you make something.**

For me, this backup is hairdressing. It's something I can always get work in if I need the money, and knowing this helps me keep myself accountable (important to remember no one is forcing us to make art or work as artists, even if there are aspects of the work and structures around it that can make us feel trapped, or struggle to survive, or eventually make us opt out. It's important to keep perspective and remember that there are many people in the world who really are forced to work in jobs they hate, in dangerous conditions –

artists working in the UK are not in that number). Having an earner that sits in a totally different area of work is also a great safety valve for when / if I get burned out creatively. It enables me to say no when I need to, if a project isn't going to meet my needs or if I'm not able to meet the project's needs.

Those are my top five anti-professional tips for today. These ideas are of course flawed, and changing all the time. I would warmly invite anyone reading this to improve on them, argue with them, and add your own. I thank you for reading, and if considering these points has made anything impossible seem even the tiniest bit less so, then I'm glad. ☺

#### **MORE INFO**

**There are a few writers / activists I'm indebted to in my thinking around these topics. They are Sarah Schulman (particularly her book *Gentrification of the Mind*), Lola Olufemi (*Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power and Experiments in Imagining Otherwise*) and the late Mark Fisher (*Capitalist Realism*), which are great places to start for further reading, if you want to delve deeper.**

# Harassment backstage

**Zoe Milton (she/her) is a sound engineer. Here she takes a look at the issue of hostile work environments and harassment, and offers insight into the challenges of building and maintaining healthy teams, together with practical guidance for how to seek help if you experience harassment.**



## Teams

We all know workplace problems exist because we all have people we'd rather not work with: directors that make our hearts sink a little, designers who give us the shivers, No1s and PEs we'd rather avoid. On the flip side, we also have a large list of people that we love working with, teams that just click and make us excited to go to work.

In my experience as a freelancer in show roles, you often end up choosing your contracts, or being offered employment based on your relationships with the other members of staff already booked on the show. There is a pool of people you work with repeatedly and teams with which you have a good short hand. The companies you work for are also similar: some you love working with because the conditions are great, or the staff are fun, some you might swerve, even if the wages are tempting, because you know it's likely to end late, be unreasonably hard work or you'll be working in a team you don't enjoy being with. If our freelancers are quietly choosing

not to work in certain situations, it can't be good for our industry. Are we creating insular teams who only ever work with each other, with people who look, think and behave the same? Is our recruitment and team building process limiting our ability to employ and retain a diverse work force?

Organising a team is a full on job: juggling availability, interviewing and managing team dynamic is a complex task. Getting it right can mean a contract that is full of smooth work days and enjoyable social engagements for the whole team. Get it wrong and you could end up with a high turn over of staff, workplace arguments, poor wellbeing or worse. But who teaches us how to make a great team and how to interview them to get the answers you need? Working on instinct has got No1s and designers through the last 20/30 years of sound teams, but in 2023, is this really how we want to structure our workplaces?

## Leadership

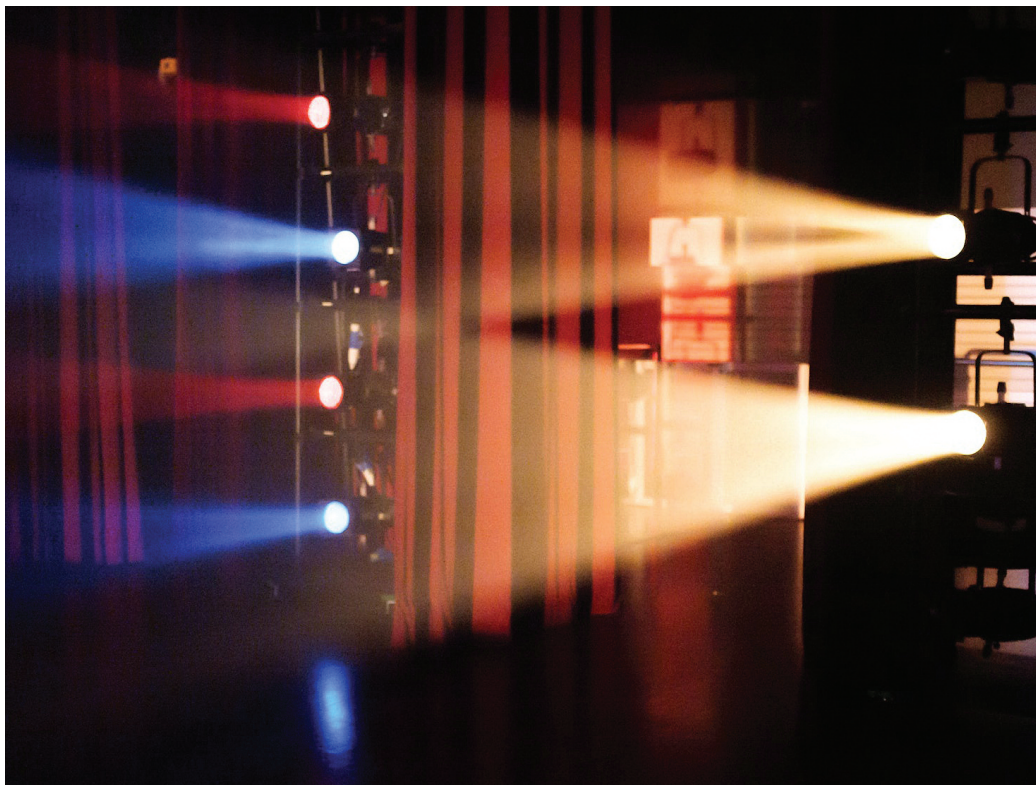
Effective leadership isn't just up to the individual. Strong core values from the

Right: Backstage  
(Wesley Pribadi / Unsplash)

company you're working for provides an empowering framework for every team member, right from day one. But if the power dynamic is off, issues can arise and workplaces can become toxic. Symptoms of a toxic workplace can include bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. And the issues don't have to be huge, they can be as simple as a lack of trust in the team, gossiping about each other, low team morale and poor interdepartmental relationships. Everyday niggles can be just as destructive as full on harassment or bullying.

There are many resources available online and in person, should you want to improve on your instinct and better understand what makes an effective team dynamic.

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) have a vast body of information freely available; particularly useful is the framework for effective leadership. Or you might want to check out the CIPD: the professional body for HR and people development. They have many



short sessions and cover a variety of topics, from working inclusively to establishing positive cultures and behaviour. The CIPD also offer full training courses with recognised qualifications.

The ASD archive also has some interesting seminars on team building and leadership from Gareth Fry, Roisine Mamdani, Vicki Hill and Dr. Lucie Clements.

### Workplace Culture

The 2022 **Freelancers Make Theatre Work** survey highlights widespread concerns about working conditions including bullying, harassment and other forms of discrimination:

- 53% of all respondents reported that they had witnessed one or more forms of harassment and/or discrimination in the past twelve months.
- The incidents witnessed totalled 1,701, and included unfair treatment (25%), sexism (19%), bullying (18%) and racism (10%).
- 48% of those who had witnessed an incident stated that it had not been reported.

The 2021 **Lady of the House x SaveNightLife Study into Women in Music, Entertainment and Leisure Industries at Night** found that over half of respondents (56.5%) had witnessed someone else being teased and/or harassed at work, with 72.7% of those who didn't intervene being scared of the consequences of doing so.

Identifying that things could be better and that everyone deserves to enjoy work, while still performing at the high level required by professional theatre, is one of the first steps to fixing any issues that might be affecting your team. But how can you deal with them in a constructive way?

If you're a freelancer, it might just feel easier to quietly walk away from a troublesome team, rather than risk confrontation and possibly your future work prospects with the producer/hire company/designer by raising issues. If you feel you're no longer enjoying working with the team due to the workplace environment, your employment rights as a true freelancer mean that you may have very little choice other than to walk away.

If you've been harassed, you will have rights under the 2010 Equality Act. When a toxic

work environment evolves into harassment of any kind, you have protection under the 2010 Act. The Act protects people against sexual harassment and harassment related to protected characteristics, so your employer has a duty of care to protect you from any form of harassment, regardless of your employment status. If you're an employee or on a long contract, you're much less able to just ghost them all, so what do you do?

### Steps to action

If we're going to change our industry for the better, we have to create work environments where harassment doesn't happen and when it does happen we feel comfortable reporting it. Addressing the workplace culture is, in my opinion, key to effecting the change we need. If we have good leadership, we're more likely to have diverse and inclusive workplaces and this has proven to make harassment less likely to occur, but how do you make a complaint if you've been harassed at work? Sexual harassment is still the most often occurring form of harassment in UK theatre, so I've used the **ACAS** handbook on sexual harassment to share the following steps:

- Every workplace is required to have a



harassment policy, and there will also be a code of conduct and ideally other policies on behaviour that you can find easily.

- Sexual harassment can happen to anyone, regardless of gender and be perpetrated by anyone. To be classed as sexual harassment, unwanted behaviour must have either violated someone's dignity, whether it was intended or not, or created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, whether it was intended or not. This includes creating a hostile work environment with a culture of joking or banter: if it's intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive, it's harassment.
- Anyone who sexually harasses someone at work is responsible for their own actions, but employers can be held responsible too and legally must do everything they can to protect their employees, contractors and job applicants.
- If possible, try and deal with issues informally as soon as they arise, perhaps by speaking to the person directly. Explain how their behaviour makes you feel in a calm, firm way, without aggression and explain the facts as you see them. Even typing that feels scary, so if you don't feel

like you're able to head straight into that conversation, you can get support from your workplace **Mental Health First Aider**, the **Theatre Helpline** or a **union representative**.

- It might feel more comfortable speaking to someone other than the person harassing you. The **Citizen's Advice Bureau** suggests scheduling an informal meeting with your HOD. Speaking to them face to face and explaining your grievance can often implement the changes needed to make working fun again. Taking someone with you is always an option. Vicki Hill spoke about this at a panel discussion for the *Pause. Play. Discover.* festival: having someone with you that can take notes, help you to stay objective and articulate your key points can be a real support.
- It can be useful to keep a diary of any incidences of bullying or harassment, so that you can be clear on when it happened and how it made you feel. You could also make a note of any witnesses who may be able to back up your account of the situation. If there aren't any witnesses, don't let that stop you, harassment often happens when no one else is around.

### **Know your employment status**

These steps are the same for employees and self employed people. It's important to understand your employment status because your rights are different depending on how you're employed. If you've been employed on a freelance basis you will not have the same rights as an employed person. If you've been employed through an agency, or have a contract, you will have contractors rights: in this instance, it's a good idea to check your status and your contract. If you are working under contract there will be terms and conditions you can check. Your employer should also have a code of conduct and you can use these guidelines to make a complaint.

Anyone classed as employed or a worker can follow the **ACAS Code of Practice**. Even as a freelancer, your employer has a legal requirement to keep you safe at work and this includes dealing with the behaviour detailed above. If you feel your grievance hasn't been dealt with, you can speak to your Union, or to the Theatre Helpline. They will be able to guide you on your rights and next steps.

### **Raising a grievance**

Your employers have a duty to act on your

grievance as soon as you mention it, but if your situation can't be fixed by talking informally you may need to raise a formal grievance. The process will follow the steps detailed in your workplace code of practice. Your employers must investigate your grievance fully, take action as soon as possible and give everyone a chance to have their say before making a decision. This is the same regardless of the size of the company you're working for. Companies cannot discourage you from reporting sexual harassment. A Non-disclosure agreement (NDA) can't be used to stop you reporting sexual harassment, whistle blowing or reporting a crime.

If you feel your employers have not taken your grievance seriously, or you can't come to an agreeable outcome, you can take your grievance to an employment tribunal. This is done by contacting **ACAS**. Your employer will have to explain their procedure up to this point, otherwise they might be held 'vicariously liable'. An employment tribunal is usually only available to you if you report the incident within three months.

If you think that the law has been broken you might want to get specialist advice and

report the incident to the police. Again, you can find help from the Theatre Helpline, or via the Rights of Women website. They offer free advice to women suffering sexual harassment at work and have a helpline you can call.

### **Active Bystander**

If you witness unacceptable behaviour at work it can be really hard to speak out. Most of us feel like we work in welcoming and open minded environments, but without effective leadership setting the tone from the top, banter and japes can easily escalate into a toxic work environment. With high stress work there is often dark humour, but if it is making members of the team uncomfortable, how do we reconcile the need to let off steam with the wellbeing of all our colleagues?

While researching this article I came across the term 'Active Bystander'. This idea makes calling out inappropriate behaviour easier by teaching yourself and your team members how to safely identify and challenge it.

By educating our workplaces and enabling people to understand the importance of good leadership, the hope is that you

create welcoming environments where workers feel safe to call out bad behaviour and allow everyone to feel comfortable and valued at work.

It is clear that there is an issue in our workplaces and we are in need of systematic change. People leave our industry for a multitude of reasons, but in order to sustain our fabulous sector we need to address what it is that is making it such a selective place to work. ☹

### **MORE INFO**

#### **ACAS**

[acas.org.uk](https://www.acas.org.uk)

#### **CIPD**

[cipd.co.uk](https://www.cipd.co.uk)

**Freelancers Make Theatre Work**  
[freelancersmaketheatrework.com](https://www.freelancersmaketheatrework.com)

**MU: For the Love of Music Survey**  
[musiciansunion.org.uk](https://www.musiciansunion.org.uk)

**Rights of Women**  
[rightsofwomen.org.uk](https://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)

**Helpline: 020 7490 0152**

**Theatre Helpline**

**0800 915 4617**

**SOLT and UK Theatre**

[uktheatre.org](https://www.uktheatre.org)

**Active Bystander**

[breakingthesilence.cam.ac.uk](https://www.breakingthesilence.cam.ac.uk)

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A full DX210 Wireless System with  
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## London: National Theatre



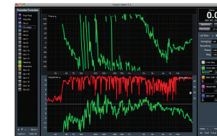
Sennheiser MKH416  
+  
Sound Devices 722



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Ambisonic Mic



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