



PRODUCTION MANAGERS FORUM

AUGUST 2019 NEWSLETTER

IN THIS EDITION

WE'VE BEEN BUSY!



**MISSION
POSSIBLE**

NEW MISSION STATEMENT

We've got a sparkly new mission statement



ABTT FORUM

Heather Doole reports on our ABTT Forum



Featured SHN

Our featured SHM this month is the Bush Theatre, London

PMF ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Make sure you're following all our social media accounts so you can be bang up to date with all things PMF!

- Visit our Facebook page 'Production Managers Forum' and hit the like button
- Tweet us on @ForumPM using the hashtag PMFTopics
- Follow us on LinkedIn if that's your social media platform of choice
- Check out our YouTube channel 'Production Managers Forum' to see all our latest forums.
- We record and publish all our forums so you'll never miss out!

Welcome to the August 2019 newsletter

In this edition.....

We're over halfway into 2019 and we've had an amazing summer so far at the PMF. We are continuing to grow and expand our membership - thank you for your support!

The PMF is always evolving and responding to the needs of our membership and as such we have a new mission statement - more details on page 2.

Sustainability of the industry and mental health have been high on the agenda recently, so we hosted a forum at the ABTT show in June with some top industry players. Heather Doole reports on the forum on page 3 and 4.

This newsletter features one of our Support Hub Network Members, the Bush Theatre in London - do get in touch if you'd like to be featured next time on info@productionmanagersforum.co.uk See page 5

We hope to see you at one of our events soon!

Best Wishes,



JOB VACANCIES

Since our last newsletter in April, there have been 28 jobs listed via the PMF varying from Deputy PM's to Head of Stage, Technical Manager and freelance and building based PM's, including some international posts.

As well as collating posts from other backstage job sites, producers and venues come to us directly, so you may be seeing vacancies that haven't been advertised anywhere else.

If you would like to advertise a position please send us an email on info@productionmanagersforum.org with the following info

- Role
- Company
- Fee/Salary - we won't advertise jobs without this
- Dates/contract length
- Brief job description
- Link to full job description and application form
- How to apply
- Company logo to add to the listing, if available

NEW MISSION STATEMENT

In response to our growing membership, we've had a revamp of our mission statement to better reflect what the PMF does. Read on...

The PMF is a resource for anyone involved in the production management of theatre or live events and aims to:

- share ideas and knowledge.
- support and promote best practice within production management
- connect Production Managers with each other through its website, social media channels, regular forums and social events.
- develop its website to be a vital source of information for production management professionals and students.
- publish a regular newsletter and distribute it to members, supporters and other industry bodies
- organise regular forums throughout the UK, each one focusing on an issue relevant to production management
- post captioned videos of its forums for reference and for those unable to attend the event
- offer a library of relevant and up to date information, legislation and codes of practice pertinent to theatre and live events.
- encourage employers to advertise relevant job vacancies via the PMF website and social media channels.
- develop a Support Hub of individuals and suppliers, to provide regional support and local knowledge.
- provide mentorship schemes for young and aspiring Production Managers.
- encourage members to play as full a part as possible in the management and running of the PMF
- seek support from theatre and live events companies and suppliers to enable the PMF to continue and to develop.
- find ways to promote equality and diversity in production management and in the work of the PMF.

PMF FACEBOOK MEMBERS GROUP



The PMF are really excited to announce our new Facebook private chat page

We are aware there are lots of great open forums for Production and Technical Management out there but we wanted to provide a safe private space for professional members to ask questions and ask for support from other professional members. This is a closed group and so none of the questions or answers will be seen publicly.

You can find this page at the link below or via our Facebook PMF Page under 'Groups'.

To join, please go to the [PMF Facebook page](#) and request access. You have to be a PMF member to have access approved.

ON THE PANEL

Chaired by Emma Wilson, Technical Director of Sadler's Wells, we were joined in the first half of the forum by Philippa Childs, Head of BECTU, Andy Rowley of the SMA, Giverny Masso reporter at The Stage and Ollie Brown, Head of Production and Technical at the Hull Truck Theatre.

After an interval, we were joined by Gary Beestone, Production Manager, Chris Randall, Technical and Production Manager at Southwark Playhouse and Cat Ryall, recent graduate from the Production Management course at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Many thanks to all our panelists



ABTT THEATRE SHOW FORUM SUSTAINABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH WITHIN THE LIVE EVENT INDUSTRY

With numerous articles this year concerning rising mental health issues and 'burnout' within the technical disciplines, the PMF decided that this should be the topic of our forum at the ABTT Show this year. Heather Doole, Production Manager and guest writer reports below.



On June 7th the PMF were hosted by ABTT at a sunny Alexandra Palace to start the get to grips with one of the thorniest issues in our industry. Welfare. A panel chaired by Emma Wilson, discussed the topic with an audience consisting of practitioners across the technical theatre sphere.

Giverny Masso, author of a recent article exploring the mental and physical burnout in backstage roles, kicked off with an overview. She outlined the long hours, which regularly include 60-hour weeks and 14 hour working days, and the buyout contracts, so common for PMs, which allow this. By describing the mounting pressure that comes with increasing technical complexity as well as the physical demands of technical rehearsals she highlighted the impact on both the bodies and the minds of backstage workers. She suggested that these issues could only be resolved by a sea change within the industry.

Continued overleaf.

MEMBERSHIP STATS

In 2019 alone we have had 120 new members sign up to the PMF. We now have 420 members in total!

Our members hail from 11 different countries. 76% of our members identify as male and 24% as female.

The most popular male name for a PM in our membership is David - we've got 19 of them!

Please do spread the PMF word and encourage your colleagues to sign up via the website.

www.productionmanagersforum.org/contact/#members

Membership is FREE.

Mentorship scheme

The PMF runs a mentorship scheme, matching new or young PM's up with experienced ones.

We are currently mentoring several young PM's and have the capacity for more. If you're interested in being a mentor or mentee please do get in touch!

We are also looking for a new committee member to run the scheme. See page 6.

ABTT Forum continued.

Andy Rowley, executive director of the SMA, pointed out that 48-hour weeks were standard on Equity contracts, leading to the head of BECTU Prospect Union, Philippa Childs, acknowledging the need to modernise contracts to make better allowance for personal demands. However, there was no comment on the fact that production managers do not have the luxury of a standard Equity or BECTU contract to be criticised or compromised.

There was much discussion of the culture of long hours, with Wilson pointing out the unhealthy habit of celebrating this, a phenomenon that Oliver Brown, Head of Production at Hull Truck, referred to as a martyr culture. This mentality where missed breaks are a badge of honour translates into an innate resistance to job-sharing, despite the obvious benefits to productions and technicians which Rowley pointed out.

Rowley highlighted that technical rehearsals are scheduled around stage time, meaning that all departments used time which should be breaks to complete them. Scheduling sensibly and sensitively was acknowledged as key in how production managers can support the welfare of others.

Oli had a positive story to share, explaining how he had convinced Hull Truck to schedule allowing 10:00 to 18:00 technical rehearsals, freeing up time for notes, as well as for people to exist beyond the theatre. Childs acknowledged that the more common absence of flexibility is a factor in the lack of diversity within the industry, with Wilson pointing out that no break to even make a personal phone calls impacts the ability to manage caring responsibilities.

Although Brown's model is exemplary, it is not an option to every production manager, as several freelancers raised. Whilst they schedule as humanely as possible with the time and money available, production managers do not have ultimately control over the quantity of either resource.

The last question of the day came from PMF committee member Mike Ager. He pointed out that although production managers can schedule well for others, they are often expected to be there at every moment of fit up and tech. Ager's unanswerable question makes it clear that whilst we are aware of some of the steps we need to take to improve the wider industry we are still a long way from establishing how to care for the minds and bodies of production managers themselves.

The forum was recorded and will be published on our YouTube channel soon - please keep an eye out - you won't want to miss it!

SUPPORT HUB NETWORK FEATURE

This edition features The Bush Theatre, a producing house in Shepherd's Bush, West London, recently given a multi-million-pound refurbishment. Written by Suzy Somerville.



The Bush is an incredibly special place not only to see work but also to work. It is a truly fresh thinking & innovative venue.

For more details of the venue and the current season of works please visit <https://www.bushtheatre.co.uk/whats-on/>

Technical Manager: Amy Clarey

We have a small team of in-house staff. One Tech manager and two technicians. We use freelance PM's and casual staff. Both of our performance spaces can be in 4 different configurations. They can be end on, round, thrust or traverse. Capacities in the main house range from 140 to about 210. In the studio they range from 40 to about 60

We are one of the most famous new writing venues in the country if not the world. We make incredible work by artists of colour. We don't shy away from tough topics and our audiences get to see some of the most interesting & important work in London on over very flexible stages.



What makes it special?

Our stages have played host to some of the most exciting work over the last few years. The 4.3 million pound refurbishment was overseen by the old Artistic Director Madini Younis. Productions have ranged from the extremely powerful hit *Misty* to the incredibly beautiful *Going Through*, a bold and visually thrilling production about the journeys child migrants take and the loved ones they leave behind. This production was for deaf and hearing audiences and combines English, BSL and Creative Captioning. We have a new Artistic Director called Lynette Linton. Lynette's 1st season was realised in mid June 2019 and is packed full of amazing work that tells the extraordinary stories of lived experiences that speaks to all corners of our city.

As a SHN member what area are you ideal to assist with?

We use a lot of casual staff so have a good data base of many different skill sets

To see production shots of the exciting shows the Bush has produced please check out the PMF Facebook page.

WHAT IS THE SHN?

The Support Hub Network is a network of venues and individuals who are happy to be a point of contact for their local area. Open to anyone working in their region to contact them for support and recommendations on suppliers, contractors, or just where to go for a good pint.

If you would like to be the featured SHN for the next newsletter please email us.

As part of the SHN webpage the PMF are including a directory of suppliers. Please see our website for more info.

The PMF is currently updating the SHN page of the website - look out on social media for the announcement of the launch of our new page!

And a big shout out to the Bush for hosting their first social; if you would like to host a social or a forum the PMF can help put you in contact with other local members & provide support & marketing for your event.

We are very excited by Support Hub Members spreading the reach of the PMF - so get in touch!

GOT AN IDEA FOR A FORUM YOU WOULD LIKE TO HOST?

We always love to hear from our membership on what topics you would like to see discussed.

We love it even more when a member wants to host a forum themselves!

If you have an idea for a forum you would like to host in your venue/village hall/living room, then please do get in touch!

We would love to see more members hosting their own forums to increase the accessibility of the PMF.

Our only requirement is that the forum should be filmed with good sound quality so we can distribute it to everyone. For more details, please email us on

info@productionmanagersforum.org

EDINBURGH FORUM

We have just held our first forum outside London. The topic was Fringe Theatre. The video will appear on YouTube

Thanks to Ruari Cormack and Chris Buffham for hosting.

VACANCIES AT THE PMF

Want to get involved with the PMF? Read on

We are looking for people to fill roles within the PMF to ensure we can run successfully and deliver relevant events, support and information to our members. These roles are voluntary positions and will only require a small amount of time per month.

The following roles need filling:

Resources Manager

This committee member would collate and manage our library of on-line resources and guidance.

Media Manager

We would like someone to join us with the main responsibility of managing all aspects of the videos of our forums from filming to publishing on-line.

Fundraising

This need not be a Production Manager, but we would like to find someone to work with us on our short-term and long-term fundraising, so that we can continue to provide support at no cost to our members.

Mentoring

As discussed on page 4, we are now running a mentorship scheme, matching new or young PM's up with experienced ones and are looking for someone to manage this scheme.

For more information on what these roles entail, please do get in touch via

info@productionmanagersforum.com

MEMBERS' SURVEY

This autumn we'll be sending out a survey to all of our members to help us focus our priorities for next year - stay tuned for this to be landing in your inbox soon!

UPCOMING FORUMS

We have an autumn forum planned in the Bristol area. Details to be announced, please keep an eye on our social media platforms to find out more!

THE PMF IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

