



LETTERS LIVE

MANAGING DIRECTOR ROLE DESCRIPTION

Letters Live makes us pause and imagine the lives behind the letters read and the circumstances of their origin. It's a privilege to read this most ancient of communications to an audience. A truly inspiring event.' **Benedict Cumberbatch**

Letters Live first took place in December 2013 at the Tabernacle in London and quickly established itself as a very powerful and dynamic event format that attracts outstanding talents to perform remarkable letters in front of a live audience.

Inspired by Shaun Usher's international best-selling *Letters of Note* series and Simon Garfield's *To the Letter*, *Letters Live* is a live celebration of the enduring power of literary correspondence. Each show always features a different array of great performers, reading remarkable letters written over the centuries and from around the world. One of the joys of *Letters Live* is that one never knows who is going to take to the stage or what letter they are going to bring alive.

The independent publishing house Canongate, who created and developed *Letters Live*, subsequently partnered with the film and television production company SunnyMarch and Shaun Usher Limited to build *Letters Live* into an even more far-reaching and ambitious project. Their shared vision is to harness the power of letters through curated events of exceptional quality and to develop a multi-media platform that delivers the most memorable letters to people all around the world.

Letters Live has brought to the stage letters written by people as varied as David Bowie, Marge Simpson, Mohandas Gandhi, Elvis Presley, Janis Joplin, Kurt Vonnegut, Charlotte Bronte, Richard Burton, Emily Dickinson, Barack Obama, Florence Nightingale, Ted Hughes, Patti Smith, Queen Elizabeth II and Che Guevara. They have been read, amongst others, by Benedict Cumberbatch, Juliet Stevenson, Ian McKellen, Olivia Colman, Tom Hollander, Kylie Minogue, Russell Brand, Caitlin Moran, Matt Berry, Louise Brealey, Tom Sturridge, Tom Hiddleston, Sally Hawkins, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Stephen Fry, Thandie Newton, Peter Capaldi, Jude Law, Gillian Anderson, Nick Cave, Meera Syal, Jake Gyllenhaal, Laura Mvula, Mark Hamill, Noma Dumezweni, Oscar Isaac, JJ Abrams, Maureen Lipman, Laurence Fishburne, and Sir Ben Kingsley, all of whom have delivered unique and extraordinary performances.

As well as celebrating the pain, joy, wisdom and humour expressed in letters, *Letters Live* has from the outset been committed to improving literacy and access to education. This is demonstrated through making a donation from each live event to a charity in line with the organisation's social responsibility and by holding events committed to raising the profile of letters and literacy in schools, prisons and similar organisations.

In the past 18 months, *Letters Live* has continued to grow its impact with sold-out events to capacity audiences in London, New York and Los Angeles and recently announced its largest ever event in October 2019 at the Royal Albert Hall. With a new series of *Letters of Note* books to be released across 2019 and 2020, a loyal and growing audience and an extensive



unexploited audio-visual archive of past events, the time is right to develop the brand in many new and innovative ways.

Letters Live was set up to celebrate letters and bring them to audiences across the globe. The current events may be for live audiences, but the letters themselves can be distributed far wider via digital options, audio, podcast, streaming, franchising and other mediums. The brand is about letters 'living' as well as 'live'. It is completely unique and is expected to grow both financially and geographically over the next few years under the leadership of a creative and entrepreneurial Managing Director who will develop *Letters Live* as a commercial business and further establish its profile and brand.

Further information on *Letters Live* can be found at: www.letterslive.com

The most recent events at the Union Chapel in March 2019 are commented on in a Guardian article here:

[Guardian March 2019 - Benedict Cumberbatch "Power of Letters"](#)

The Role

The Managing Director position for *Letters Live* is a new role, created to lead and implement the strategic development of the *Letters Live* brand. The Managing Director's remit will be to grow the organisation from a very successful and well-respected series of occasional events into a platform and holistic brand proposition that is more consistent, sustainable and on a track of expansion in audience reach and revenue.

The role reports to the Board of *Letters Live* and oversees a full-time Executive Producer and a number of freelance event managers.

Key responsibilities

Strategy

- Working in collaboration with the Company Directors, create a 3 to 5-year Business Plan and Strategy for *Letters Live*.
- Establish a multi-year production schedule and financial framework for the organisation.

Management

- Lead implementation of the Business Plan.
- Set and deliver against the annual budget.
- Oversee the day-to-day running of the business.
- Hold overall responsibility for the successful delivery of events.
- Manage and oversee development of the Executive Producer and any other future in-house staff.
- Manage external administrative and financial support services where necessary.



- In collaboration with the Executive Producer, liaise with the *Letters Live* external producers for event planning.
- Liaise with partner charities.
- Ensure compliance with company employment, Health & Safety and GDPR regulations.
- Report to the *Letters Live* Board quarterly.

Income generation

- Diversify and grow earned income from a variety of sources.
- Identify and explore new commercial opportunities for *Letters Live*, e.g. content licensing; partnerships for the archive and new content; format licensing for international markets, etc.
- Work with the independent sponsorship consultant to identify and secure sponsorship opportunities.

Marketing

- Develop a marketing, communications and data strategy.
- Lead on an extensive analysis of the existing audience database.
- Analyse, and ensure the effective management and output of all digital communications, website and social media channels.

Brand development

- Further develop the *Letters Live* brand nationally and internationally.
- Identify and explore ways of utilising the audio-visual archive of past events to grow the digital reach of *Letters Live* and new content partnerships and opportunities.
- Oversee international growth in events.

Charitable work

- Liaise with the Company Directors to identify organisations and communities where *Letters Live* charitable donations and outreach work will have the most impact.
- Seek partners who will help deliver *Letters Live's* charitable work.

Person Profile

- Experience of growing a business, ideally in a start-up environment
- Self-starter, motivated and comfortable working with limited direction
- Strong commercial and entrepreneurial skills and mindset
- Able to market and sell the *Letters Live* brand
- Ideally experience with IP rights issues
- Able to assess risk versus reward
- Able to handle high profile talent and their agents confidently and appropriately
- Interested in developing new opportunities for the company
- Committed to *Letters Live* education and charitable work and expanding it where appropriate
- Passion for the arts (theatre and literature in particular)