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A Heads Up with Neil Holloway

With Covid-19 lockdowns worldwide and health authorities urging people to self-isolate and practice social distancing on a massive scale as part of an enormous effort to #FlattenTheCurve of this global pandemic ... we are reaching out to industry friends, colleagues, associates, partners, etc., and asking them to share their #StayAtHome and #QuarantineAndChill activities with us during this extraordinary time.

Usually touring with a variety of productions from Queen and Adam Lambert, Melanie C and The Overtones to Orbital and many more, lighting designer / director Neil talks to us from the lively UK metropolis of Liverpool, known for its friendliness, expansive humour and in 'normal' times ... great nightlife!

Robe: Where are you right now?

Neil: Obviously at home in Liverpool ... riding out this crazy situation we are in.

Robe: How are you spending time whilst isolating / on lockdown?

Neil: Learning new software, getting some designs completed that were due to be out now but may yet be ... whenever all this is over!

Also getting out and keeping active on my bike / walking. I think it is really important that we keep our minds and bodies active as, when and where we can.

Robe: What's the most creative thing you're able to do whilst in isolation?

Neil: That's a good question! Probably creating the new designs for a show that is getting a big redesign from what the artists usually do - it's a big step for both me and the artists and their creative team ... or learning my way around Vectorworks and Depence 2.

Robe: Are you looking after anyone else during the Covid-19 crisis? Like neighbours or others in the family?

Neil: Yeah I am, my Mother has been put on the 'high risk' list and isn't allowed to leave her house at all, which also means my Dad can't leave either. So, seeing they have all they need, plus ensuring that having to stay away from their grandchildren and other family is not getting to them too much either!

Robe: Has anyone particularly inspired you since this crisis started?

Neil: I think I'm going to say a collective sweep across our industry! It has been really nice to see people trying their best for everyone in our huge extended family, whether that's setting up training, online quizzes and pubs or just generally being there for everyone else! It's great, inventive and makes me proud to be a part of it!

Robe: What has been your favourite book / movie / Netflix or TV series / viral video / Games / music?

Neil: I have to say, an oldie but a favourite. My girlfriend and I have been watching the Star Wars series in chronological order! It has been years since I've seen many of them and it has really reminded me of how good it is!

Oh, and also, Pink Floyd released the whole live recording of Pulse Live and it really reminded me of what an outstanding production that is, not only for its time but even now, it's mind-blowing! Marc Brickman (legendary director, producer, lighting, and production designer, renowned for his highly original work with Pink Floyd) is my hero ... and he and THAT show are the reason I do what I do today!

Robe: What's the first thing you'd like to do when we are through this crisis?

Neil: See all my friends, go out to the countryside and go walking and also ... THE PUB! Wow, that'll be a good day!

Robe: Own question / answer / message of solidarity or something you'd like to say?

Neil: I'm sure I'm not the first to say this ... but I'm in the mindset that this is a massive chance for us as an industry and even planet to have a reset on what we do! The number of excess elements we consume and produce needs to change and I really think this could help us in doing that!

While this is hard for us, and I do love my job and am looking forward to getting back to lighting some shows, I'm also really enjoying time with my girlfriend and doing "normal" things!

I think it's a good opportunity for all of us to appreciate the importance of the people we love and if possible to maximise the hand we are dealt with currently and use it as a chance to learn new things / enjoy the people we love and be there for all who need us!



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