

3 October 2017

Spotlight and the National Theatre launch [ProFile](#)

Spotlight, the UK's leading casting platform, and the **National Theatre** today launch **ProFile**, an online database for D/deaf and disabled actors, which will champion individuals in this talent pool by offering industry professionals the opportunity to watch these actors in action on an online video database. It is a free service, both for performers and industry users, and is available for the use of film, theatre and television professionals across the UK. D/deaf and disabled actors are currently under-represented on stage and screen in the UK, and ProFile aims to help address this.

ProFile was created as part of the National Theatre's Creative Diversity Project, a pilot project which began in 2016 focusing on diversity and inclusion at the NT, one strand of which aims to address the under-representation of D/deaf and disabled actors on our stages. **Charlotte Bevan**, running the Creative Diversity Project, was formerly a casting director at the NT and Shakespeare's Globe. She created the database in order to widen the pool from which NT casting directors and the directors they work with draw their talent. Soon after the idea was born, Spotlight came on board to support the NT and make the resource available to all theatre, film and television industry professionals across the UK. The website will continue to develop and expand to service the needs of the industry, according to demand.

Charlotte Bevan, heading the Creative Diversity Project at the National Theatre, said: *'We originally created ProFile at the NT as a resource to increase our own knowledge of this talented and diverse group of actors who are drastically underrepresented on our stages and screens in the UK, and we quickly realised the whole industry was craving this knowledge- so we just had to share it. Casting directors need to see actors in action, so hopefully this website will serve as a valuable industry resource for casting professionals to improve their awareness of actors they may not have come across yet. A truly vibrant industry would reflect the world we live in, which currently it does not. We desperately need to see more D/deaf and disabled actors playing all roles, not only to achieve equality, but to enrich and enhance the stories we tell.'*

Ben Seale, CEO of Spotlight, said: *'We're delighted to be launching ProFile with the National Theatre. At Spotlight we're determined to ensure that professional performers of all backgrounds have the opportunity to be cast in productions for live or recorded media. We're constantly looking to develop tools and services which support a diverse and inclusive casting process. We're also working to ensure our membership gives casting directors access to a range of performers who represent society and the stories that are being told. Spotlight is committed to working with organisations which encourage performers of all backgrounds to consider a career in the performing arts, to provide a constant flow of new and diverse talent into our industry, while also supporting performers throughout different stages of their career by providing the support needed to continue working professionally. We'll continue developing our services and support resources to allow all users of Spotlight to take advantage of them, regardless of any specific access requirements.'*

Casting Director Testimonies

Julia Horan, casting director, has worked extensively at the Young Vic, Royal Court, Almeida and in the West End. Notable recent projects include *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* in the West End, *Hamlet* at the Almeida, and *A View from the Bridge* and *Yerma* at the Young Vic. Julia is an Associate Artist at the Young Vic.

Julia Horan said: *'I hope this online resource will be the start of a new period of engagement and inclusion for D/deaf and disabled artists in theatre, film and television. It will enable Casting Directors to find and audition a much broader range of actors to represent the world as it is and increase the authenticity and richness of our experience of the arts.'*

Andy Pryor, casting director, has worked on a variety of television projects include *Life on Mars*, *I'm Alan Partridge*, *The Long Firm*, *Cutting It*, *Whitechapel*, *Upstairs Downstairs* (for which he received an Emmy nomination), three series of *Call the Midwife*, *Cucumber*, *Banana*, *The A Word*, *Undercover* and *Doctor Foster*. Andy has worked on *Doctor Who* since its hugely successful return in 2005 and to date has cast over 120 episodes and four Doctors.

Andy Pryor said: *'Increased diversity in casting is only possible when opportunity is created and ProFile could become an invaluable resource for casting professionals and a huge help to the deaf and disabled acting community in showcasing their work in an easy and accessible way. It is vital that our arts and media reflect the world that we live in and speak to and represent all of society. Great steps have been taken in recent years regarding diversity in casting by the Casting Directors' Guild membership but we all recognise that there is much work to be done. Diverse casting is and should be here to stay. The D/deaf and disabled community have been poorly served on the whole with regard to representation on stage and screen so I welcome and applaud this fantastic initiative.'*

Actor Testimonies

Nadia Albina, actress: *'I'm excited to be a part of ProFile. This is a well thought through, necessary addition to how the industry needs to operate in 2017. A whole aspect of society has a platform to gain exposure and enhance the texture of productions. As a disabled actress I'm hopeful that the impact of this will mean that difference will bring a richness to the work we all strive to make.'*

Cindy-Jane Armbruster, actress: *'I'm really excited to see this project come into existence. It's really heartening to see how much is achievable when the will is there, the resources are provided, the right questions are asked and the (well-connected) individual in charge has the ability to listen, and the drive and desire to do their best to 'get it right'. ProFile brings together various organisations (Spotlight, Equity and the National Theatre) to pool their resources and expertise, with the joint aim to improve the representation of D/deaf and Disabled actors in the industry. Hopefully this project will remove most – or, dare we hope, all? – barriers that prevent the casting of D/deaf and disabled actors in D/deaf and disabled parts, and even more importantly, the casting of D/deaf and disabled actors in roles where their personal characteristics are incidental to the character and not the driving force behind the story. I look forward seeing and hearing more of our stories told, and in greater diversity than the superhuman, the scrounger, or the object of pity.'*

Jamie Beddard, actor: *'This is really exciting project and resource which will mitigate the difficulties - real and imagined - in sourcing D/deaf and disabled actors. I'm delighted the NT is taking a lead, as it should, and opening up the database and talent that can trickle (or flood!) down throughout the arts. Much needed.'*

Matt Fraser, actor: *'This new database is a great tool for really seeing how much professional disabled actor talent there is available to UK theatres, looking to increase their diversity and disability representation. It's well overdue; hats off to the new administration at the National and Spotlight for getting it done.'*

Simon Startin, actor: *'ProFile is an invitation to the industry. It is going to start conversations about how and why we make theatre and with whom. Conversations about stories, about aesthetics and about who we really are as human beings. The talent is there, so the only question is why your organisation isn't using it? After all, a theatre that excludes people is a theatre that excludes the truth.'*

<https://profileperformers.com/>

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Notes to Editors

About Spotlight

Founded in 1927, Spotlight is a world-famous casting resource of over 60,000 professional performers and is used daily to cast hundreds of roles across stage, television, film, radio and commercials.

Spotlight.com

Twitter: [@SpotlightUK](https://twitter.com/SpotlightUK)

About the National Theatre

At the National Theatre, we make world-class theatre that is entertaining, challenging and inspiring, and we make it for everyone. In 2016-2017, the NT staged 26 productions and gave 2,585 performances at our home on the South Bank. The NT's award-winning programme had a UK paying audience of 1.8 million, 400,000 of which were NT Live audiences.

The work the National Theatre produces appeals to the widest possible audiences with new plays, musicals, reimagined classics and new work for young audiences. The NT's work is seen in the West End, on tour throughout the UK and internationally, and in collaborations and co-productions with partners across the country. Through NT Live, we broadcast some of the best of British theatre to over 2,500 venues in 60 countries around the world.

Our extensive Learning programme offers talks, events and workshops for people of all ages, and reaches nationwide through programmes such as Connections, our annual festival of new plays for schools and youth theatres. In 2016 - 2017 there were 196,826 participations through the NT Learning events programme. Over 3,000 schools have signed up to the free streaming service, *On Demand. In Schools*, since its launch in September 2015.

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