

Post Production Review

Production details

Production name	Underdog: The Other Other Brontë
Date of production	14 th -18 th July 2026
Number of nights	5 + 1 Matinee
Seats available / sold	Inf NA to me
Ticket sales %	Inf NA to me
Programme sales	£330
Revenue from advertising	NK ask Sam
Design costs + Green Screen	£53 + £25
Set building costs	£290
Lighting hire costs	£1737
Licences + Scripts	£770 +£181
Photographer + Music	£200 +£200
Props costs _ Graphics	£340 + £752
Profit/loss	NK
Number in cast	9

Behind scenes personnel

Role	Name
Director	Dorothy Hirsch
Producer	Guy Gilks
Set Designer	Nicola Webb
Construction Chief	Mick Woodhouse
Sound Designer	Leigh Greenham
Lighting Designer	Bruce Williams
Wardrobe	Clare Dewell
Stage Manager	Margaret Baxter
Publicity	Sam Rhodes / Dorothy Hirsch
Photography	Dale Stephens

Notes

Consider how you did things, what went well, what could have gone better, top tips for future directors and must-do actions.

Casting

- Nothing to highlight

Set Design

- The research, design concept, model-making and close liaison with workshop and lighting were all enjoyable and successful.
- Although the use of images was generally successful, the number of them was highlighted by some as detracting from the theatricality of the show. (The concept was based on projections. More detail please of what detracted.)
- Although the intent was for the play to be set in contemporary times, the images used appear to have confused several observers, implying that the setting was closer to the actual time of the Bronte sisters; the impression of several of those observers was that sepia-ising those images would have strengthened that vintage setting.
- The misalignment and many changes to the set during the process perhaps led to the finished result – the set, the projections, some props - not gelling as well as it could. Communication between the production heads must be more frequent and collaborative, with alignment between those agreed clearly.
- Getting early sight of how innovative techniques – such as the projections – actually worked on stage was invaluable and recommended (even if working around other activities and productions in the Auditorium). When this was done for Underdog, the results informed decisions on the projections and wallpaper.
- It is vital that the set design is stabilized early as late changes will result in confusion in the cast and tech teams.
- As set is built, the construction team must liaise with the Director and Set Designer to be clear on how it will be used, thereby allowing for suitable solutions to fix it in place and, where necessary, move it to fit with the flow of the production.
- The flexibility and responsiveness of the stage crew to de-snag set issues at the last minute is to be commended.

Set Construction

- The lead builder should meet with the Director and Designer from the start to ensure that their imagination and artistic dreams can be made practical, and decisions and actions recorded and distributed to the necessary people to ensure a common understanding.

Stage Construction

- The set building team gained considerable satisfaction from the high standards of what they produced – this should be highlighted as an attractor for new volunteers

Costume and Props

- Costume Design responded well to the instructions of the Director.

Lighting and Sound

- Having the production schedule created as early as practicable is to be strongly encouraged, allowing the various teams to plan their diaries well in advance.
- The book/cue meeting was essential and thorough
- Rigging and de-rigging the theatre with a helpful and experienced technical crew was a delight
- The success of the projection, and mastering the Qlab software with Keith Ralph's expertise
- Running the show each night beside enthusiastic Edward on the lighting desk

SFX and Technical

- Be sure to test smoke machines in the necessary conditions, as far as is practicable!

Music

- Nothing to highlight

Rehearsal Issues (Organising rehearsal schedule, Technical rehearsal schedule)

- See comments below

Facilities Issues

- The inability to cool the theatre made it hard going for the audiences and diabolical for the cast and crew.

Publicity

- The communications plan must be aligned between the Producer, Director and Marketing Team (and other Designers, if necessary) as early as possible. This includes who will design publicity, engage printers, publish on social media and distribute materials, with clarity of timelines. Where individuals cannot commit to agreed dates, they must highlight this to the Production team as early as is practicable so that alternative arrangements can be put in place.

Programme & Photography

- The sale of programmes in the auditorium prior to curtain up is a good idea!
- The Ensemble cast could have had their main characters acknowledged in the programme.
- Ensure the allocated photographer is available on the dates when the cast is

ready (e.g. dress rehearsals).

Box Office/Ticket Sales

- High temperatures in the auditorium likely reduced ticket sales.

Performance Issues

- Nothing to highlight

Stage Crew

- Nothing to highlight

Health & Safety

- Nothing to highlight

Chaperones

- Nothing to highlight

Anything Else

- Take the heat of UK summers into consideration when selecting the July play

Were there specific difficulties or triumphs in the following production phases?

Design Phase

- The Director's "road trip" to the actual locations associated with the play's subject matter was clearly inspiring.
- Ensure that design concepts are managed with suitable configuration control to avoid miscommunication and wasted work.
- Communication between the Designer and senior production team must continue openly throughout the process, with decisions and actions recorded and distributed to participants.

Rehearsal Phase

- With the Corn Exchange hosting two – and sometimes three – shows at various stages of their production, each production needs to be cognizant that there will be prioritization of space for the shows that are next on, with allowances made and, where necessary, alternative space arranged. In some cases, where Directors may wish to secure particular rooms for prolonged periods for rehearsal, that needs to be highlighted early with Room Booker so that all users of the space can plan accordingly.
- In the event that productions are sharing space, sets and props should not be interfered with.

- The flexibility and responsiveness of Leigh Greenham in accommodating last-minute changes to the technical set (projections) was commended.
- Huge thanks to Sara Benbow for picking up a lot of slack to help out when she had her own concert to conduct on that Saturday night.
- The cast and crew are to be commended for their adaptability during changes to the set in the latter stages of rehearsal.

Construction Phase

- The availability of key team members must be confirmed early in the production schedule, appreciating that circumstances can change and the schedule adjusted accordingly.
- There must be agreement of who “owns” the setting of audio levels (normally the Director) to minimize changes “on the night”.
- Where possible, sound technicians should be exposed to the sound outside of the booth to better understand what is being output.
- While it is likely that there will be changes to the set during the course of construction, deviations must be communicated with the Set Designer, Director and Construction Team as early as possible to mitigate later issues and misalignment in expectations. Leaving changes to the latter stages risks causing confusion and frustration, so each of later change must be considered fully before going ahead.
- The get-in included some large set pieces — notably the drawingroom/kitchen flats — that ultimately weren't used in the show. While plenty of production meetings did take place, there's a difference in perspective on how clearly changes and intentions were communicated in the run-up. The stage crew worked hard with the director to make every piece work before the drawing room/kitchen flats were dropped, a call made to protect the cast's ability to perform. Going forward, keeping communication especially tight in the final stretch before get-in would help ensure everyone's working from the same picture.
- Any shows in the summer slots will involve working in high temperatures – the CX must press on with providing air con and additional fans during the construction/pre-show phase

Performance Phase

- The acting was terrific, both for the three main characters and the ensemble – well done Director!
- The Corn Exchange auditorium is too hot in the summer months, likely affecting ticket sales as well as resulting in uncomfortable environment for the cast and crew. In light of climate change, air conditioning is a “must have”.

Recommendations to be drawn from this production.

- Senior members of the team must commit to the production schedule – to be determined by the Producer - early and identify any lack of availability
- Media files to be available at least one week before the opening night.