

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY

BAKED



ALASKA

TIME TO CHANGE THE TEMPERATURE

**Following a successful tour, a proposal
to create an entertaining, educational film about climate change
to reach a wider audience**

⊕ DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD

christian
aid

NOAH

RIDING
THEATRE
LIGHTS

FOR THE SAKE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS OUR ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE REMAINS A PRIORITY

‘There is widespread indifference to the suffering of the poor who live in areas particularly affected by global warming – a loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.’

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, June 2015



‘We are the first generation to feel the impacts of climate change and the last generation to be able to do something about it... to get something right and to get something right for our kids.’

President Barack Obama, August 2015

‘The world is facing a climate crisis. What people must do is to change their behaviour and their attitudes. If we care about our grandchildren then we have to do something and demand that our governments do something.’

Sir David Attenborough, BBC News, 2006



‘The most devastating effects of climate change are being visited on the world’s poor. Those who have no involvement in creating the problem are the most affected, while those with the capacity to arrest the slide dither. Africans, who emit far less carbon than the people of any other continent, will pay the steepest price. It is a deep injustice.’

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, September 2014

THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT BAKED ALASKA ON FILM

During the hottest year on record, in the weeks before the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris last December, Riding Lights Theatre Company toured their acclaimed show *Baked Alaska* to over fifty venues across the UK.

Commissioned by Christian Aid, Operation Noah and the Diocese of Lichfield, *Baked Alaska* was performed with the aim of stimulating a personal and political response to the urgent crisis of climate change and out of concern for the devastating challenges it throws up for human life across the planet.

There was an extraordinary level of response. The audience were encouraged to write personal messages to their local MPs calling for action. Over the course of the tour, thousands of these were delivered in person by volunteers. Many audience members also urged Riding Lights to turn the show into a series of educational films to reach an even wider audience.

While *Baked Alaska* has such enthusiastic momentum and is still fresh in the memory, Riding Lights is seeking immediate funding from partner organisations to ensure that key scenes from the show are captured on film.

CAN YOU HELP US?

The Company intends to raise sufficient funds to make a number of short films available, at least for an initial period, as a free download to schools and other groups where teaching and discussion about climate change can take place.

'Baked Alaska... a robust and delicious satire on climate change pulls no punches. Funny, colourful, biting, it leaves you with images burned on the mind and with much to go away and think about. You couldn't feel passive about the issues after watching this.'

Pat Ashworth, *Church Times*

'Compelling, comical, entertaining and educational. I don't find many things educational and comical but this was. Definitely something everyone needs to see!'

Head Teacher



RESPONSE TO BAKED ALASKA

One of *Baked Alaska*'s real strengths is the stories of people directly affected by climate change – in Bangladesh, the island of Nauru, and the Niger Delta. The story of Nigerian students executed for protesting against oil spillages in the Delta is heartrending. In the story of deforestation and mining in Nauru the actors tear apart their circular set, and the very earth is set wobbling to show the results of flooding in Bangladesh.'

Eleanor Course, York Diocese Communications Officer

'From the opening glimpse into the wonders of the universe, to the concluding challenge to think about the way we live within our present finite framework, *Baked Alaska* kept me engaged, entertained and educated about the complex interconnectivity of climate change issues. I came away inspired by the imaginative approach that linked a variety of stories rooted in the reality of climate change. This show needs to be seen by more than the 6,000+ fortunate people who saw it live.'

Revd Chris Halliwell, Vice-chair, Operation Noah

'I was captivated throughout. An upbeat narrative of daily UK life blends with the heart-breaking reality of the lives of many around the world affected by climate change.'

Kit Powney, Campaigns Officer, Christian Aid

'*Baked Alaska* has a serious message pushing through the laughter. The sketches and stories deliver an important message with humour and impact.'

Joe Pickard, York Press

'A high-energy performance revolves around an innovative set depicting a suburban bedroom, a tropical island, a boardroom, a floating village – and the whole world. It makes for uncomfortable viewing.'

One MK

'Intense, inspiring, challenging call to action for climate justice.'

John Cooper, Christian Aid



ABOUT THE RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION

TIME TO CHANGE THE TEMPERATURE

From the outset, the challenge of creating a show about climate change was to make this subject engaging, moving and above all entertaining...

How to attract an audience to a show they assumed would be full of bad news? How to inspire people to take action? How to communicate hope? *Baked Alaska* addressed these questions by using humour, satire, puppetry, music and powerful story-telling to get its messages across.

Set in the context of the lives of 'Mr and Mrs Average' in the UK, it wove together stories from Africa, North America, Bangladesh and the Pacific island of Nauru. While the show made use of both scientific and economic fact, its essential appeal was through comedy and the emotional impact of human drama. The heart of the show was a 'wake-up call' to individual responsibility for the state of the planet and also to the way in which other people, often the world's poorest, are directly affected by the lifestyle choices we make.

Baked Alaska assumed that climate change caused by human activity is a reality. It also assumed an understanding of humanity within a created order, given life by the Spirit of God and therefore a duty of care for his creation.

Paul Burbridge,
co-writer & director

'I was bowled over by *Baked Alaska*! I've been climate campaigning for decades and tend to go to environmental events expecting a touch of boredom, but this show was new, insightful, powerful and, most importantly, funny!

One of the hardest challenges with climate campaigning is how to be honest about the dire straits we are in, while keeping people from leaving the room. Riding Lights Theatre Company rose to this challenge magnificently – it was true to the science and spoke powerfully to the heart... appropriate for all faiths and none.'

Ruth Jarman, Operation Noah



AUDIENCE RESPONSE TO BAKED ALASKA

‘Everyone should see this total climate-change-apathy-busting show!’

‘Sharp and entertaining, the show effortlessly drifts from biblical times to modern-day Bangladesh, encompassing scientists, oil barons, protestors and prophets in a struggle for power, the planet and the soul.’

‘Go and see this play. I mean it! Not only is it brilliant in every way, it will change the way you think about climate change.’

‘Amazing performances, incredible stage, powerful and challenging message. Thank you.’

‘A wake-up call to action. Entertaining, practical and a little too close to home, but that’s the point.’

‘It seems incongruous to call a show about climate change fun, but *Baked Alaska* is.’

‘Thank you Riding Lights for a brilliantly creative and energising challenge to love our world.’



CREATING THE FILM

WHY THIS FILM SHOULD BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

There are many good reasons to capitalise immediately on all the creative work which has been invested in *Baked Alaska*.

Baked Alaska is now a recognisable 'brand' with momentum behind it while performances are still fresh in the memory. *Baked Alaska*'s extraordinary unfolding, spinning, tipping globe of a set and all its high-quality production values are easily accessible. The cast are ready and available, with minimum re-rehearsal, to translate their performances onto film.

2016 TIMESCALE

Fundraising and Project Preparation:

February – June

Filming and editing:

September – October

Producing the accompanying educational materials:

September – October

Ready for distribution and download:

November – December

COSTS:

Artists, creative team, producers

£10,942

Film crew, locations, equipment

£16,102

Editing, post production, overheads

£2,570

Project management, education materials, marketing

£9,250

Contingency

£1,136

Total To Raise

£40,000

'I was enthralled by the latest Riding Lights production: it's wonderfully challenging. I longed to stop and think a bit. Is the script available? Or maybe a DVD?'

Audience Member

'We recently saw your *Baked Alaska* show... the result is we now have solar panels gracing our roof! So really this is to encourage you that what you are doing really does influence folk and so keep on pushing the point that we need to take action in our world.'

Audience Member



‘At the end of the hottest year on record – one marked by serial disasters, as well as armed conflicts exacerbated by drought – it’s getting tough to view climate change as futurology... this is a complex, slow motion crisis.’

Naomi Klein, *The Guardian*, 2015



**To find out more
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Baked Alaska designed by Sean Cavanagh
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