

[Megan Mitchell] So I'd like to welcome everyone to today's Scalarama session. This is the busiest Scalarama session of the three that we've already had. So thanks so much for participating. For all of you who are with us for the first time, you're all muted to begin with. As you can see, we're quite busy, but throughout we will have sections where you can chat and we'll also be using the chat function throughout so if you have any questions or anything to add, feel free to use that. Just a heads up that we are recording today's session for anyone who can't attend and this will be hosted on the Matchbox Cineclub website and we'll also produce transcription and captions for accessibility. Another slight housekeeping thing before we kick off - I have quite a pronounced vocal tic where I squawk like a bird sometimes. So, just a heads up, if you're using headphones, that can be quite loud. So, we're thrilled today to be joined by so many colleagues from across the UK and as always with Scalarama, we hope that connections made here today can promote successful collaborations. If you're brand new with us, I'm Megan Mitchell, I'm the producer of Matchbox Cineclub, who, along with my colleague Sean Welsh, who you'll be able to see, and who is doing all my tech today, we administer Scalarama Scotland, with our colleagues Amanda Rodgers, overseeing Edinburgh activity, and Neil Hepburn in the Highlands and Islands. So each year, if you don't know Scalarama, we bring together independent exhibitors from across the country to deliver a month-long festival celebrating DIY and independent cinema culture. Usually in the run up to this, we would host six monthly workshops, acting as a ladder to new exhibitors to learn about the process of screening films, and as an arena to promote established exhibitors, to share knowledge and collaborate. Although this year, of course, that is impossible in person, thanks to Film Hub Scotland, we've been able to move these sessions online and hopefully create space for new and urgent issues for independent exhibitors can be discussed and maybe we'll find some solutions. So, we're going to share a link for the agenda today in the chat. If you don't already have it, you'll maybe find that useful. In today's session, we'll try and keep to a tight half hour – uh, half hour! Hour and a half, even though there's a lot to discuss. We'll be focusing on how independent exhibitors can take film screenings online. And we're very lucky to be joined by some US colleagues today, namely Northwest Film Forum, Spectacle Theater, Factory25, and the American Genre Film Archive, who are already doing some screenings online. So, to help frame the discussion, we're going to be looking at four main questions that we think encompasses online screenings for independent exhibitors. So how can we screen films practically online? How can distributors support independent exhibitors to do so? What parts of the theatrical experience do we want to replicate or improve on online, and how can we develop online programming or activity to complement any in-real-life events that we're eventually able to deliver? So, we're posing these questions to some of our invited guests, but we'll be allowing you to unmute afterwards so that we can all have a big, nice open discussion. When we throw the mic, as it were, to the room, please do contribute if you have any questions or insights, especially if you're new to the industry or just starting out. If you're not afraid of TikTok quite yet, your insights are probably invaluable. So we're posing these questions as independent exhibitors. We exist in a different context to physical cinemas, although some of us might put them into them, hire them as venues or partner with them, our considerations around

when we can get back to actually screenings films in the real world and delivering in-person events is quite different from actual cinemas. This is by necessity due to the way we operate, but also because of the degrees in which we have says in conversations and decision-making processes which are currently being taken by leading industry organizations. The funding that's available to us is also a factor. But, more positively, the decisions that we can make ourselves about when we feel it is safe to bring our audiences back together. I think it goes and should go without saying that we all went cinemas to be back open again, for us to gather together and enjoy films. But practically the timescales for us as festivals, pop-ups, community groups, collectives, and a whole range of other independent exhibitors will be slightly longer and very different from venues. So we're looking towards online and I think the massive group of everyone gathered here says that's a very important issue for us all, so that we can not only continue our work but enrich it moving forward, and hopefully, from this pretty shitty situation, get something positive. So, usually, before we dive right in, we would have an industry wide update, but as we've got a lot of ground to cover today, Sean is helpfully going to share some links in the chat just now, including to the ICO Survey results, from the Independent Cinema Office that looked into independent cinemas' feelings around reopening, and the results of the survey co-ran by Screen Scotland, Regional Screen Scotland and Film Hub Scotland, which looks at issues facing Scottish exhibitors in the light of COVID-19. All very cheery. But one thing that I did want to flag up, especially if you're a UK exhibitor, is the Film Hub Midlands Film Feels have launched a new fund to support online activity, as well as moving towards repurposing their website to list online film screenings across the UK, under the Film Feels Connected banner. We'll share a link to this as well, but it's well worth checking out if something today sparks an idea for you. So, without much further ado, let's chat online film screenings. So, today, we're joined by some US colleagues – Rana San from the Northwest Film Forum, which is a non-profit film and art centre, located in Seattle. Caroline Golum, Isaac Hoff and Garrett Linn from New York's volunteer-run screening space Spectacle Theater, Matt Brady of Brooklyn-based independent film distribution and production company Factory25. And we're also joined by Matchbox friends, the Genre Film Archive...in America... Arrow Films' Mike Hewitt and Louise Buckner. And Eve from London-based women-director-focused Modern Films. So, if I could unmute those guys, and we'll get them into the chat.

Everyone else feel free to use the chat bar throughout as well. We've developed a little bit of shorthand over the last couple of months, thanks to Tamara from Take One Action Film Festival. So, if you agree with a point and don't want to, like, do a thumbs up emoji or anything, you can put a little "plus" sign. So, are we all unmuted, people that would like to speak? Oh, deathly silence, that's what you really like(!) Hello, everyone!

[Rana San] Hello.

[Eve Gabereau] Hi.

[Megan] How are we all doing in light of COVID? Yeah, that's about right. That's the correct answer. But, out of all exhibitors, not just in the US... Isaac's still muted.

Unmute Isaac. And I think Garrett might still be muted as well. Garrett's just the coolest.

[Isaac] I'm here.

[Megan] Perfect. Hello, everyone. So I gave a wee bit of insight into some of your organizations, but I thought it might be helpful for everyone, maybe people who aren't aware of who you are and what you're already up to, if you could tell us first a little bit about your organisation and what you have been previously doing or did have planned pre-Coronavirus. So, we'll start with the Spectacle guys.

[Caroline Golum] Well, we have a 35 seat space. That's, like, the largest amount of people that can legally fit in our building. And there was a lot of back and... Not the building, but in the storefront, and there was a lot of back and forth right before we closed about whether we should or shouldn't. And because we're a collective, we had a discussion where we kind of asked everybody to weigh in. And, you know, we didn't want to make a decision without polling everybody. And then very quickly, like, we all kind of came to our senses. And we're like, "Oh, we gotta shut this down." Which is unfortunate, because you'd think, being such a small space, maybe our chances of staying open or opening sooner would be a little bit better. But the truth is that it's... So, you know, there's just no, like, safe way to do that right now. So, we had to, we had to do that. There were a lot of conversations around our rent too and things like that because New York is also generating rent strike movement right now. But that's... that's kind of how we all landed and now we're just trying to adapt as rapidly as we can.

[Megan] So in terms of what Spectacle usually do, are you screening films daily, how full are they, are you usually programming, you know, back-to-back? How's that working?

[Caroline] We do... You know, under normal circumstances, we show films seven days a week, almost 365 days a year. We close on holidays and then I think there's a week between Christmas and New Year's when we're not open because nothing is. But for an all volunteer-run space, from a staffing standpoint, we are able to operate like any full-time commercial cinema in New York. And that's anywhere from two to three, sometimes four screenings a day. We have more screenings on the weekends, obviously, but during the weekends, two screenings every evening, so, you know, how do you replicate something like that online and, like, continue to be a daily presence for people? Because it's not just beneficial to be open every day for business. It's also the setup that allows you the greatest array of programming and programmatic voices so that you have more slots to add programming and you can start to cull from kind of different places and different volunteers.

[Megan] Yeah. Thank you.

[Isaac] Just add to that, I think something that we do that's really interesting is we... New York is also kind of known for having midnight film, or at least it used to be in the 70s and in the 60s and probably all the way up until maybe the early 90s. But of course the midnight cinemas have closed but we are open on midnights during the weekends. So beyond our original programme that we usually do, we also have a

sort of like midnight fare programming. And that has been transported online too, in a lot of interesting ways. So, we're kind of like going along just...just as we would. in a lot of ways.

[Megan] Okay, thanks so much, guys. And, Rana from Northwest Film Forum, do you want to give us a little bit of chat about what Northwest usually does and what you guys are?

[Rana] Hi, I'm Rana San. I'm the artistic director at Northwest Film Forum and we're an independent, non-profit, super-small group of enthusiasts based in Seattle, and we're screening online right now. So usually we, throughout the year, host festivals and film series, educational opportunities, workshops for youth and adults, we have artists services and edit lab in our theater. We have two theaters. One is, seats 117 and the smaller one is 46. And...and, yeah, we closed our theater mid-March, about five days out from our 20th annual ByDesign Festival, which is our annual architecture and design film festival. And we closed on a Friday over the weekend, I got permissions for screening the programmes online. And by Wednesday, we launched the festival online. So we ended up in a situation where we had to move so quickly that it was mostly just, like, doing and not thinking. And then that set us up to, to suddenly have all of our programming online. So usually... It's been a weird shift, you know, where, as an independent theater, we're trying to get people out to gather in person and to have shared experiences in a physical space. And so the shift online for me as an artistic director has been a personal challenge to ask people to stay at home and keep their screens on longer than they usually would. That's getting a little bit into the personal stuff that I'm dealing with around it. But essentially we're, we're doing... We're continuing to host festivals online. We're continuing to do community programming and partnerships. Much of our programming is based in community and developed in collaboration with community partners. And so we've had film series that we've hosted in conjunction with entire arts districts in Seattle. We just wrapped up a film series in collaboration with the Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington, and a bunch of other examples like that. That's been one of the things that's actually allowed us to keep going right now is those partnerships, because everybody's shut down and we got the platform going, and so a lot of people are looking to us to showcase their work and to continue to connect with their audiences and their constituents. When everybody's stuck at home.

[Megan] That's great. And that's great to hear as well, what you're saying about those partnerships that are coming out so organically. Everyone's in the same boat, so we're just looking each other to how we can keep doing what we'd usually be doing. Thanks, Rana. And can I ask Eve to just to give us a bit of insight into Modern Films, which some of us may know?

[Eve] Okay, yeah, um, we're a distribution company. So the other side of the spectrum from exhibition, but of course, working together. And we had a similar situation where we had films coming out and one in particular, The Perfect Candidate by Haifaa Al-Mansour, to be released on March 27. We felt like we were too close to the release date to pull it and, not knowing what to do, we moved it online very quickly, but wanted to try to create a premium VOD offering, so it was

sort of an extension of cinema and exhibition. So we worked just with Curzon Home Cinema as an extension of exhibition, with BFI Player, because we had a BFI Audience Award on the film, and then we thought, "Well, as a neutral space, we'll just launch our own platform". So, much like Rana just said, from one day to the next, we suddenly built a transactional platform and launched it with one film and, because we had the press campaign going, all of the reviews shifted from saying "in cinemas from March 27" to "available online through Curzon, BFI and Modern Films." So we had a lot of traffic and activity on our website. And then we thought we should really be connecting with cinemas as well and then at the same time in the US, Kino Marquee and, and Film Movement's virtual cinema were developing. So we very quickly worked with cinemas and just created a drop down menu where people could buy the film and donate to their local cinema. And now that's evolved over the last two months to be a proper virtual cinema space, where we actually partner with the cinemas and we're doing an experiment at the moment with some previews of a film called White Riot by Rubika Shah that we're doing. We had planned to show it as a documentary in music festivals all summer as previews and those are all cancelled, but we've partnered with music festivals, and we're doing online screenings and events with Q&As and live music. And I can talk a bit more about that later and show examples, because we have a preview going on with the All Points East Festival in Victoria Park at the moment. And you can either buy the film on our... All of them are through our platform, but the way that people come to it are through the cinemas themselves. So we have 24 cinema partners across the country, or through our media partners, which are NME and Little White Lies or directly through the festival who have promoted it on their 10 days of the festival, alternative ways to participate in it. So, you know, we've sort of shifted the exhibitor-distributor relationship, but still our booking mindset is still around how can we have that feeling of going to the cinema even if you're at home, and it really is about the new content and events, and we can really see spikes in people's interest through the online events.

[Megan] Yeah. And it must be so interesting for distributors particularly having to now straddle that sphere of what, you know, what are the cinemas now offering whilst their screens are dark. Thanks so much for that input, Eve. I want to open up now to Mike Hewitt and Louise, just to get a wee bit of idea of what Arrow have been going through, obviously, with all the cinemas dark and what's up with you guys.

[Louise Buckler] After you, Mike. Pardon? Okay, Mike's not talking. He's, he's, he's on mute. So I'll go over to me. So, when this all started, we had a film, a Russian film called Why Don't You Just Die, which was due out. We had some really great bookings in the US. We had quite a few bookings in the UK. And then obviously we had to pull those. We already had kind of advertising, all our marketing done. So we really had to kind of shift our focus towards digital. And kind of coinciding that we've got our own SVOD channel called the Arrow Video Channel, which is available on Apple and Amazon. So, we've really kind of focused moving back towards that and kind of making it more accessible for people. So you've got the Blu Ray option, which is still a really big thing for us, but you've also got the digital option as well to weight it. But, yeah, just trying to kind of build the community, we've been doing it kind of

grassroots ways with kind of tweet-alongs, watch parties and kind of really going through the community in granule aspects on our side.

[Megan] And Matchbox, was actually... We had Why Don't You Just Die booked. We were really gutted. It was the first thing that we had to, you know, #canceleverything. Mike, do you have anything to add about Arrow are coping just now?

[Mike Hewitt] No, I think Louise pretty much covered it. We're, you know, we're obviously a distributor that likes to have great engagement with our audience, we have a very good fan base for what we do and working with events and festivals has always been a, you know, a key part of our drive. And, you know, all of that has sort of unravelled a little bit and, you know, we're looking, speaking to all the festivals, working out how we can, you know, still collaborate with them, how can we still look to deliver films? And I think, you know, we have such a good back catalogue of films, you know, there is a difference between our Arrow catalogue films and our new films. And how does that overlay in the new world? So, yeah, as Louise says, you know, we were looking at investigating various options through our own SVOD channels or other streaming platforms or other festival, you know, platforms that are arising right now.

[Megan] Perfect. Thanks so much, Mike. And I think we've been joined by Bret from AGFA. Could we unmute Bret? Could we give Bret the power? No, we can't.

[Bret Berg] Oh, there we go.

[Megan] Oh, it's unmuted. Wonderful. Thank you.

[Bret] Hello. First of all, hello, everyone. I'm Bret Berg from American Genre Film Archive, AKA AGFA and I'm in Los Angeles. Very, very sorry I didn't make the beginning of this meeting. Somehow I had this in my calendar for September, which is completely wrong. And not this morning. But here I am. Uh, I'm sorry, could you repeat the question?

[Megan] So just maybe for people who don't know what AGFA is, what you guys do, just give us a little insight?

[Bret] Sure. So AGFA is a non-profit offshoot of the Alamo Drafthouse movie chain here in the United States. And we started as just merely a collection of film prints that Alamo could utilise and was lent out to other venues. But these days, we do our own scanning work, we have a lab in Austin where we do restoration, preservation, and the bulk of our income came from theatrical sales. So we work with Louise and Mike from Arrow. We work with Severin, with Vinegar Syndrome, with Cult Epics, with Umbrella, with Shout Factory, quite a number of home video labels, to bring their movies to theaters, because they know the home video part, but they don't know the theater part. And as we came out of Alamo Drafthouse, we know the theatre part. And, in the last two months, you know, I would say 75% of our revenue before the pandemic was from theatrical sales. Now, zero, or like 0.5%, is our theatrical revenue. So we've had to pivot to all the things that we weren't doing at the time when theatrical sales made up the bulk of our time. So that's promoting our home video labels with Blu Rays, selling those titles' streaming rights to broadcast and,

and streaming. I believe Arrow is one of the partners that we've recently had on streaming, because they've started their own channel or are starting their own channel. And we've made a lot of found footage mixtapes that we've put on our, our Vimeo OTT page and are they're available for 99 cents. I don't know, we're just doing everything we can to, to not do the thing we were doing before, which was kind of strange. We were also branching out into festivals, and we had a film in BFI Flare that was going to play at the end of March and we had sold over 400 tickets, which is a bummer. But they moved the film to their online player and it was quite successful there. It was a film called Ask Any Buddy, which is a found footage feature comprised of glimpses of '70s gay life in America as seen through clips from porn that aren't the porn and maybe a little bit of porn too. So, but, yeah, it was a huge bummer to have, like, our biggest festival hit ever have to be rescinded in favour of online, but there's really nothing we could do about it. And we haven't been really part of the virtual cinema space like a lot of other distributors because we don't have streaming rights on a bunch of our stuff, the labels we work with have it. And I don't know, we're just doing what we can. And I know that the demand for theatrical will return one day. I just... It's kind of weird to say, I just hope it doesn't return too soon, because I hope people know what they're doing by reopening cinemas and I don't have a great sense that all of our clients... Well, let me let me rephrase that. I have a good sense that our clients will all be very safe because they're mainly independent cinemas and art houses and single screens. And those folks tend to take this stuff super seriously. Whereas I'm a little iffy on AMC or Regal or Cinemark, any of the big chains, know how to do that.

[Megan] Yeah, I think we're seeing a bit of that in the UK with some cinemas saying that they want to open in July, in June, as opposed to the independents, who are saying a lot later in the year's looking more realistic.

[Bret] Yeah, I will say that, that perhaps the greatest driver of a re-emergence of Coronavirus might be Christopher Nolan and I hope he's right. Because the push to put Tenet into theatres this summer is maybe one of the most ill-fated moves possible. I'm just gonna put that out there now.

[Megan] So you're not producing it on 35mm.

[Bret] I'm sure Alamo will be playing Tenet in 35mm at a few of its locations if they reopen. I just think that the drive to open the biggest movie of the summer at a time when no movie theater should be open is ill-fated. I'll just put that out there.

[Megan] Yeah. I think we're... The industry has got a lot to be saying to Nolan, I think.

[Bret] Yeah, and it's quite ironic that a man who, who had another film which caused deaths in movie theatres is gonna have another movie that causes deaths in movie theatres. That might be a little grim for this conversation, but it's the truth.

[Megan] No, that's the pitch we like to keep in these! So, to go more upbeat - back to the ongoing pandemic that's threatening our industry. For those guys who have pivoted to online platforms, and I think there's a lot of distributors in the UK who are particularly interested in what Modern are doing and Spectacle and Northwest Film

Forum. So if I could just throw to you guys and you can maybe speak a wee bit on the practicalities of setting up your platforms, why you chose the platform that you use and just a bit of in and out of it all. So I'm going to throw to Spectacle, who, if you've not tuned in to one of Spectacle's Twitch screenings, I highly, highly recommend. But I'll let those guys tell you a bit more about what they're up to. Spectacle trio? Oh, God, this is so smooth(!)

[Garret] Ah! Sorry, I have a lot of background noise here. So I have to mute myself. Actually, it's really Caroline who has really taken the bull by the horns and set up our Twitch site. And so far we're getting really good responses. People are very enthusiastic about watching films and we find ourselves with a much larger audience than we would normally have. As Caroline said at the beginning of it, we have 35 seats, and we're getting anywhere from, when we show art films, 10 people and, when we're showing other films, we get 200 people. So it's been very successful. But I do think Caroline has more to say about it.

[Megan] Caroline, do you have more to say?

[Caroline] I do, yeah. I'll keep it brief, though. I'll say this also, that the decision to bring the theatre's programming to Twitch was born of a mixture of, like, impulse and panic, which originated with, you know, the theater closed, we're all very involved in it in varying capacities, but the thing is that it's a physical space that is kind of like our clubhouse. And so we had this feeling of being separated and kind of disparate from one another and wanted to, like, try and recreate that communal experience. And very early on in the lockdown in New York City, which started in, like, early to mid March, I'd started watching films that were being streamed by another one of our volunteers, Analise, on her private Twitch channel, and I say private because there's no way to privatise it, but it was a smaller audience. And so I thought, "Okay, this is a potentially good venue." And then we also started getting messages on our social media about whether we would be doing things online, not, "When are you going to reopen?" or "How long are you going to stay closed?", but just, "Are you going to start streaming things?", and so it was born of this very nice combination between an audience demand and a mutual sentiment within the collective that we still needed a way to stay connected to one another. Twitch is, also, I'll say this, it's an imperfect solution. And we want to kind of figure out a way to create something that's more custom and more Spectacle. It's an effort that Garrett and Isaac have been working on to try and find some alternatives for two reasons. One, we still can't charge box office. So that means two things. One, we have to solicit donations, which we're never shy about doing. But we have to do it a little bit more now. And, two, it doesn't allow us to pay our distributors and the artists that we are working with. We can offer in-kind, you know, swaps or marketing. And obviously, it's a great promotional tool as a platform, but it's not a sustainable model. And so in some of the research and exploration that Garrett and Isaac have been doing, we're trying to find ways to monetize it. To create a virtual box office like other venues are doing, and then also find something that isn't hosted by...a large shipping behemoth and online retailer that I prefer not to name.

[Garret] I would only like to add to the fact that we're also seeing a new audience. We're seeing people outside of New York, we're finding a whole new community, hundreds of people that show up for our screenings, and actually they have been donating. It's... There are people that want to see the kinds of films that at least we think are interesting. So we're very pleased with it and hoping to find some way to carry on in the future.

[Isaac] Yeah, also, just to quickly piggyback off that same idea, Spectacle is an interesting space, because I think we've... Just from being in the booth, which is sort of like what it means when you're in the theatre, working the projector, there have been people who have been coming, sort of sporadically, who know about Spectacle and they're just in town for a day, and they're perhaps like from somewhere else in the northeast, and they're like, "Oh, I've always wanted, I've always wanted to go to Spectacle. This is like my first time here, and it's so fun here." And we're getting that online too where it's people... Last weekend, we hosted these two Brazilian filmmakers, and they have a very international audience. So a lot of people... We had people from Russia, from Toronto, from all across Europe, tuning into Spectacle. "I mean, I've heard I've heard of you guys, I've just never actually attended the space." So, in a lot of ways, it's been beneficial to spread the Spectacle and micro cinema love across borders.

[Megan] Yeah, I would definitely say that Matchbox have been enjoying watching your Twitch stream. It's been really fun. And that has been, I think, one of the positives that have come out of this, that we've been able to dip in and watch other people's programming that we really like. And so thank you, Spectacle. I'll throw to Northwest Film Forum. Rana, if you want to give us a bit of insight into the platform that you're using and how youse guys got that set up. Sean, Rana needs unmuted. But, for some reason Mike is now not unmuted. This is chaos already! Hello, Rana!

[Rana] Hello!

[Megan] Hello!

[Rana] Okay, so, uh, I appreciate the nod to the terror and panic that accompanied choosing a platform, Caroline, because that's exactly what happened on our end. We just sort of instinctually dropped a bunch of money on Vimeo. And so we decided to use Vimeo as our platform. And it's actually proven to be...to be fairly adaptable to what we need. We're building up showcases on Vimeo predominantly, and then embedding them on our website. So we're still driving traffic to our website and people can see the programme notes and information about anything that they're tuning into, on the site where they're actually watching the programme. We're doing it on a sliding scale, so it's zero to \$25 that people can contribute. And part of that was because we were, like, when we first started this, we were, like, "I don't know if anybody's going to pay anything to watch our programmes online". And we've been really pleasantly surprised. There are more people donating at the \$25 level than at the \$20 level. So that's been something that's really encouraging and interesting to, um, to witness and to track the data on. I would say the Vimeo showcases have been the most adaptable in terms of being able to do an introductory video and then follow it up with the screening. We can add trailers in there. So it really, in some

ways, it does feel like a theatrical experience. Some of the programmes are only online for a dedicated showtime. So you have to show up right when it starts and then it's over when it ends. Others we've made available for 24 hours, and some up to several weeks. So it's really just like what, what we're negotiating with the filmmakers and distributors for each of those individual programmes. We've had some...some success, but mostly like terrible experiences with Facebook live streaming. You know, they just, they're not very friendly, it turns out. They actually ended up shutting down our entire organizational Facebook page on GivingTuesday. Because the prior weekend, we had hosted an entire festival that was dedicated to local artists and we were raising money to support those artists and showcasing their work throughout the whole weekend. There must have been some copyrighted music in there. And they just shut our Facebook page down without any sort of warning. So not recommending that one. And they, you know, they periodically mute your programme even though like you have agreements with the distributor to show this film, it's just, like, they have a little bit too much control over the experience. Not for...not in a good way. For ticketing, we're using Brown Paper Tickets, which is a local, a local ticketing company and we wanted to stick with them because we were like, "Well, if we pull out and everybody else pulls out, like, they go under too, so let's try and let's try and like kick them a small percentage of whatever small percentage we're getting." And that's actually been working out pretty well. One challenge around that has been the registration window where, you know, people can only register up to an hour before the programme and with online screenings, like, everybody is deciding last minute, at showtime, if they want to watch something. So that's been something that we're that we're trying to negotiate and figure out on like a case by case basis, extending that that registration window. Yeah, that's...that's sort of an overview of what we're doing.

[Megan] Thank you. Yeah. We, Matchbox, really enjoyed Shelf Life, your time limited screening. That was really... I think that was...that would have been a perfect Matchbox film if the world wasn't on fire. We'd have loved that.

[Rana] Yep, everybody watched that film!

[Megan] And, Eve, from Modern Films, you touched a wee bit briefly on this in terms of and partnering with Curzon and BFI and then deciding that you needed your own wee space, so maybe you could talk us through the thought process for that and what practicalities around that you had to consider?

[Eve] Yeah, we had already been looking at potentially developing our own TVOD space, more for practical reasons and for hosting a couple of different film events we were doing, so we're sort of working on it anyway and we had some ideas and we also have an e-commerce platform. So, when we were forced into this position of figuring out how can we actually offer digital content effectively on a transactional basis through our own website, we had already done some research but hadn't really decided on anything. We did have a Vimeo account, but we weren't finding it flexible enough, and also quite expensive and just really very Vimeo-focused and not giving us enough parameters to build something that we wanted. So we really built our own platform through our website, software and user interface, but we built the back end

using our transactional service that we already had. And then we extended it to a digital plug-in through XXX, it's XXX.com. So, it's quite an economical and more of a e-commerce platform. And then we have a digital, as I said, digital plug-in, so we've uploaded all our content. But what we've done, I mean, there's lots of things I could talk about the platform, but I think in terms of this conversation, what's more interesting for exhibition is we've built a platform for cinemas where each cinema has their own branded space within our website, per film, but also, we build a social assets suite for each cinema that they can then embed on their own website. So that if you go to, for example, the GFT, the Glasgow Film Theatre, and you click on a link to our film on that website, you buy it, and you go through all the information of it, it looks like you're still buying it from the GFT, but it's really our back-end. So I'll put in the chat. That's our, our kind of main page for this film I mentioned we're working on, White Riot, the cinema's page. But if you go to the GFT site and click on the film White Riot, you'll see as well, you can, you can go straight through to the film. So for us, it's really been a lot of working through what do the cinemas need and what works best for us in terms of communicating the film to audiences and we really want to be part of the traffic and the audiences that already exist for each cinema and so bringing new content or new events or previews events, anything, through those. Instead of reinventing. We don't want, we don't need another platform to start building a new subscriber base or a new audience base or new marketing routes to to a space. We'd rather really work with the cinemas, so I suppose that's the sort of flip side for us, and then you can see if you're on that page, that White Riot page, you can see each cinema has their logo, and then it clicks through. And as I said, we have these embeddable codes and assets that each cinema gets and they can choose how. I mean, with furlough, it's been a bit hard. Some people have a marketing person still in house. Some people, it's the CEO who's uploading the code into the website, or they're just adding a basic URL link within. So, it just depends on how involved the people who are working at the moment are in the programming and on running the website.

[Megan] And in terms of... You're obviously reskinning things for cinemas. Are you guys thinking about opening that up to maybe other, like, community groups or independent exhibitors?

[Eve] Yes, community groups is a bit more complicated because we can't start building assets for everything. We do have about 100 on our list who are interested, so what we've said is maybe they can organize their own group screening, and we'll give a code and at the transactional side of our platform, you can put in a code and with that code, and we'll share the revenues. I should talk maybe a bit about the revenue share. So, we will share the revenues back with the community groups, so much more like a non-theatrical booking would have worked, but for the first runs or the previews or new films, we... If a cinema, when someone buys the film, it tells us which cinema it's linked to, then we're sharing the Virtual Box Office returns 50/50 of the net. So the VAT comes off the top and then a transactional fee that we pay to the service provider, which is much lower than Vimeo. I think it's 10%. Ours is 3.5%. And then we split the rest 50/50. But, with the community theatres, because there's so

many... But if they want to organize a group one, we'll give a code and it's very, it's very straightforward.

[Megan] Okay, thank you. And, Mike and Louise, in terms of Arrow, are you going to be building or using your online platform for new releases? Are you looking to do something similar in terms of skinning for cinemas or are you just waiting it out and hoping you can get back into theatrical ASAP?

[Mike Hewitt] I don't think we're just waiting it out. I mean, theatrical will definitely come back, but there's no denying that the climate has changed. And online screening and digital will be, you know, at the very least now, supplementary to sort of cinema viewing and festivals. I think the SVOD channel that we have been running now for about two years, our Arrow Video channel, is currently hosted on third parties. So that's Apple, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime. So that doesn't give us quite as much flexibility as we would like with an SVOD streaming, so we are investigating, you know, ways in which we can make that more flexible. Similar to what Modern Films, you know, we also have our own website. You know, it's very much our ethos to be direct to our consumers wherever possible. So, we have our own website with our own sort of transactional back-end. So, there are ways that we can see that we can integrate it and we are looking at doing, moving fairly quickly on that. I think it was interesting, because *Why Don't You Just Die?* was one of the films we were looking to release in early April. And we were doing it in theatrical in both the US and the UK. And we found that lots of sort of cinemas were looking to see, well, what digital options could we give, you know, was there a streaming opportunity because we had our streaming platform, and we just couldn't mobilize in the way that you know, Kino necessarily did. So, we are carrying on investigating it. And, you know, it is something that we would like to look to potentially roll out with wider, you know, ramifications for people to be able to use that platform for their own festival or events. But, um, yeah, we're just having to look at everything at the moment. And, you know, platform solutions start at the small end with Facebook streaming, which is flawed, but you know, all the way up to Festival Scope and, you know, the high-end festival platforms that the likes of Fantasia and others that are looking to use, so that there's definitely a wide number of options.

[Megan] Yeah, and I think we've obviously all seen all the mad Zoom webinars and everything else, this one included, where people are discussing such a wide range of platforms that we're able to use. I wanted to touch just quickly on perhaps one of the biggest questions or conversations that exhibitors in the UK are having around licensing online things, which is how do we go about that and what are the current considerations, I think both on exhibitor sides and distributor sides when thinking whether we can take content online or not. So I just want to throw to Bret and just ask whether you thought AGFA would be having titles available to stream online for distributors to host on their own platforms? Is that something you're considering? Or is there larger issues at play? We've also... I would just like to throw a hello to Matt Grady from Factory25...who has joined us and we'll be meeting him in a second. But, Bret, AGFA, online, all that good stuff - what do you think?

Oh, just the wonders of the internet, truly. Bret's speaking and we can't hear him. Now we can hear Bret! Sorry.

[Bret] I also moved away from the window in which someone was using power tools. So, you asked if, if any of our titles could be available for virtual cinema at some point. We... Okay. When Kino in the United States first introduced virtual cinema, I don't know a week or so after it became... I like to think of Friday March 13th in the States as the day where everyone took the pandemic for real, so about a week later, Kino announced that they were doing virtual cinema. And they were the first to do it because they had their own platform in-house that they had built for, for this purpose, but it wasn't for the pandemic. They just were doing a VOD platform of their own. And then everyone jumped in with Vimeo. And I think a lot of people, a lot of distributors are still using Vimeo. But Vimeo is...not the solution. It's maybe part of the solution, but it's not the entire solution, because, a lot of our clients still don't know this, but if we had, say, five titles, and 80 venues wanted all five titles, we would have to upload a file 400 times. Vimeo's system was not built for the current moment. And I don't believe that Vimeo has fixed this flaw so that you can upload something one time, and then link off everybody's unique URLs. Every film for every venue needs a unique URL, because that's the way you can track the ticket sales because, again, Kino, I mean, Vimeo's system was not set up for this. So we took one look at that system where you'd have to upload files hundreds of times and, honestly, we ran away screaming. That was one of the three things that prevented us from doing virtual cinema out of the gate. The other two were that, again, we don't...because we're we're a middleman between the labels and the venues, that meant that any ticket sale had a four-way split, that meant AGFA, the venue, the label, and Vimeo, because Vimeo takes a chunk out of the ticket sale. And even if you had a \$10 ticket, each party would be getting a tiny amount of that, like \$2.50 or something, and it just made it uneconomical. And we didn't have streaming rights on most of our titles, we only had theatrical, so this jumble of issues made it so that we had to basically just walk away from virtual cinema, as it stood in March. Now, I've seen some clients come at us with platforms that are starting to provide venues with a little bit of a solution and AGFA's open to licensing titles to those venues with the label's permission. There's a platform called Eventive in the United States. I'm not sure if it's worldwide, but I've seen a demo of theirs recently and they are able to do ticket sales using an... Like, it allows you to upload some DRM-protected stuff, but it also allows you an unlimited number supposedly, of Vimeo URLs, which you can port through their system and onto the user. So I am considering licensing titles to a few venues who are using Eventive. Yeah, it's a complex, case by case matrix of crazy shit. And we're working on that one day at a time, one title at a time. And I wish we could have jumped in on virtual cinema like everybody did at the beginning but it just wasn't feasible for us, and so we're tiptoeing into it.

[Megan] Yeah, and I think that we're hearing that from a lot of exhibitors, uh, distributors, even, that if you don't have all of the rights or, you know, you weren't set up for licensing for streaming, it gets down to like the nucleus of contract details. There's just a lot to unravel.

[Bret] Yeah. I mean, the reason why the major studios didn't immediately jump in with virtual cinema on their repertory is because streaming is not theatrical. So the theatrical booking departments are not able to do virtual cinema because it's not their department and the streaming departments of the major studios have no idea what any of the theatrical stuff is, so they just completely backed off of it from the beginning. And it was up to the indies like Magnolia, IFC, Kino, to really jump into the space and operate, because legally they were the only people that could.

[Megan] Yeah.

[Bret] Which is a crazy thing. I mean, the last two months has seen a lot of panic thinking from...from everyone, because this is such an unprecedented situation. I think that the companies that may have been able to take a step back at first and survey the situation are perhaps ones better suited to...to operate moving forward, because as long as there's no panic thinking involved, I think that people can figure out solutions to some of this. That's my long-winded rant.

[Megan] I really enjoyed it. I think that everyone should operate all the time on panic thinking. I think that we're getting through so much thinking, on that speed. I'd just like to throw to Matt Grady from Factory25 and say hello to Matt. Thank you so much for joining us. Matt's muted!

[Matt Grady] Oh.

[Megan] Oh, hello.

[Matt] Hey!

[Megan] How are you?

[Matt] Good, good.

[Megan] Sorry. You've joined us in the middle of, like, just Bret saying how wonderful panic thinking is, and how we've just lobbed off theatrical(!) But...

[Matt] Everyone's doing the pain of thinking, yeah.

[Megan] Yeah, and we're hearing some of them have had great results. So, Matt, if you would like to tell us a wee bit about Factory25 – and, as you can see in the room, we've got the entirety of the UK exhibition circuit, so everyone's very interested in what everyone's doing in the US. So if you just tell us a bit about what you're up to, what Factory 25 is and maybe a bit about Other Music as well?

[Matt] Okay. Yeah, yeah. So, first, Factory25 is independent. It's basically me as a distribution company with a couple other people helping me out but, um, which, uh, which allows me to kind of do, yeah, whatever I want, pick the films I want. Factory 25 has just had its 10-year anniversary and just hit, like, 100 titles too. So, yeah, pretty psyched about that. So what Factory25... I do a lot of, like, American, American Indies, along with... Originally, I was going to do a lot of, like, music docs. I'm doing less. I'm still doing some music docs. And, so, yes, and I do, like, theatrical digital. So I was actually... I had the rights to do...yeah, virtual, like we were just talking about, for my titles. In the beginning, I thought it was, like... Yeah, I was like,

against virtual, because, I was, like, “Really, what's the difference between that and just releasing it, like, straight-up digitally?” And then I was like, “Oh, you know what, this probably is a better way to go.” And then the first title that I had that was coming out in theatres was called Other Music. It was about, it's about this New York-based record shop that went out of business a few years ago that was pretty well known, like, around the world, and they closed their doors. So the documentary was about that. And we had it all set up to come out on April 17th, which is the day before Record Store Day. So we had it all worked out, we were playing, I think 20-something theatres, had, like, week runs like in New York and other places. And then, you know, we were just gonna cancel it, maybe digital because Record Store Day was postponing. So we were going to do that. And then, like, three weeks before, like, the beginning of April, I was like, “Oh, you know what, let's do this virtual thing except release the film, like, through record shops, because they all need money because they're closed down.” So, um, so I reached out to theatres and record shops and we ended up, like, with...I think we hit, like, 230 venues, probably like 160 were record shops and the rest were theatres and a couple of radio stations thrown in. But, so, yeah, so, we've, like, pivoted from doing like a straight-up theatrical to that. And, like, pretty much did it really quickly. It was a... Yeah. And we were able to get press and get it out there. So, like, my first experience in virtual was pretty good. And we used...did use Vimeo, OTT, and I don't know, like Bret was saying, when it was set up, when I was doing it in April, which is like a month after it started, I did only have to upload the movie once. I didn't have to upload it 100 or 225 times, but you did... It is still a little clunky. You still have to, like copy, do a lot of copy and pasting. You can't just...yeah, just do it straight up and, and I've also been talking a lot with Eventive about doing my next few titles. So I'm still trying to kind of work out what the best way is to go. For Eventive, the whole, like, back-end and, like...is a lot easier to use. And you can do things on Eventive that you can't with Vimeo, like pre-sell which was...which can be, like, an important thing. And, yeah, and, so, yeah, so... And I have a couple titles, couple more titles I'm doing virtually and then, for me, after I do those two, kind of seeing where the climate is to figure out what to do the next titles, yeah.

[Megan] Great. Yeah and, actually, it was one of the Scalarama Glasgow independent exhibitors, Pity Party, Calvin Halliday who's in the chat, who, threw up Other Music as something that they'd like to hear about. So thank you for joining us all the way from New York, Matt.

[Matt] Oh, no problem.

[Megan] And so, touching on that, in terms of what are the best platforms and, you know, how you work out the back-end, I just want to throw to Spectacle again and maybe Northwest Film Forum, just to get a bit of insight into the conversations that you're maybe having with distributors or are you just bypassing that and speaking directly to filmmakers? How are you getting films to the people online? Caroline and Garret and Isaac... I've lost Isaac on my screen.

[Garret] How we get films hasn't, as far as I can see, changed very much. We have a very direct conversation, mostly with filmmakers and a select few distributors. That

hasn't posed a problem to us. We're not showing commercial films by any means. We're showing the unloved, the forgotten man and the...the, shall we say, odd films? No, for us, the issue really is figuring out how to distribute our content and make sure that it gets out to the people who want to see it.

[Caroline] Hey, thanks for unmuting me. We do have, right now, you know, because we're not operating under our normal brick and mortar circumstances, typically when we programme a film, and I want to say this up front, we always clear our screening rights when we screen things, or if we can't clear it because the film is old, the distributor doesn't exist anymore, we followed the breadcrumb trail and it's led to a dead end, we proved due diligence. And I think that's really important, especially if you're, like, a micro cinema because you want to make sure that you're that you're honouring people who are agreeing to screen things with you. In the case of the Twitch, it's a little different again, because we're still working out the box office ticketing kind of situation. And I'll say also that this talk has been very informative in that regard and we're already on our text chain talking about some like good alternatives. One of the first, actually, I think the first film that we showed on the Twitch platform was a Factory25 release, which is Empty Metal - phenomenal movie. And, and that came about from my having a pre-existing relationship with Matt, reaching out to him and saying, "Hey, desperate times, we're trying to get online." You know, we've worked with him in doing in-person exhibitions before, and so the first kind of reach or the touch of begging emails that we sent out when we first started the Twitch channel was "help us out," you know, like, "We can't pay you, we can do something in kind..." And people really came through. Matt's one of them came through, Bret also came through in a great way and sent us a lot of interesting things. And so we are trying to, you know, while we figure out a more legitimate way to maintain those relationships, what's come out of the first wave of programming for us has been a weird mix of things that like, we were planning to show in the theatre and got the rights for, things that we hadn't considered showing before but we were able to access, and then also working directly with smaller distributors and filmmakers, on a more intimate level. And also, it's proven to be a really interesting opportunity to expand what we would normally programme. I'd say that under usual circumstances, our programming skews about... And you know, Garret and Isaac, you can chime in and correct me if I'm wrong, but I think it skews about 80% you know, traditional feature-length films or short films that are in an omnibus and less so, like, a compendium of kind of different material. And now I think it's shifted, maybe it's about 60/40. So we'll do found footage stuff with XFR Collective, we've got a program coming up with the Center for Home Movies, we're showing films made by members of the collective too, in a way that we haven't before. So it's a period of experimentation. But it's also allowed us to kind of explore these, like, different arrangements and relationships.

[Isaac] Yeah, um, just to piggyback on what Caroline was saying, because I think that pretty much covers what we've been showing, but I think in addition, we've also been showing things from 2019 that we played, that were sort of, in a lot of ways, US premieres. We had a grant from Films Falls for France, which is from the French consulate, to play Michèle Rosier's films, which we then translated. And because of

our relationship with the estate and the distributors of those films, we were able to also play them through our Twitch platform, which was really successful and it gave the opportunity for a lot of people to see these films, because they wouldn't have otherwise seen them if they weren't in New York at the time that we were showing them. So, yeah, it's not so much as recycling old programmes, but it's working with distributors that we already have worked with, and estates that we've already worked with, who are excited about broadening the reach of their films.

[Megan] Yeah, I think that's one thing that is just so exciting, I think, about the new online climate, even though it is, like, death and gloom outside, is that you're now managing to reach audiences that aren't even in the same country as you, that you can speak to such a broader range and I think that that's something that is really exciting, out of everything. Rana, I wonder if you could give us a wee bit of insight into how Northwest are doing it?

[Rana] Yeah, it's a bit of a mishmash of everything. So, we're working with distributors to do first run features. Other Music was one that we showed, which was excellent. That was early on. I don't know, time is so weird right now. I'm, like, "When was that? Years ago?" One of the things that we started doing was... So, in preparation for some of the festivals that we have coming up, we started doing festival flashbacks. So picking some of the best of fest from the previous year, as like a little bit of a teaser because now we have audiences watching from all over, right, so people who've never seen our festivals before, we're giving a little teaser for what we did last year, and then preparing for what is coming up, coming up this year, whether that's going to be in person or online or some hybrid version, we'll see. A lot of the festival negotiations for films are happening directly with the filmmakers, usually. That includes, like, our Local Sightings Film Festival, which features Pacific Northwest-based media makers and our most recent Cadence Video Poetry Festival, for instance, it featured 80 artists from 20 different countries. And I wrote messages to each and every single one of them asking for permission to show their...to show their film as part of this online, online festival. So, those communications are happening directly with the filmmakers, usually, and then collaborating on the other end with distributors who have platforms. There are some distributors that we've been working with who are asking us what we need, which is amazing. And what we want to be able to...what kind of experience we want to give our audiences and so there are some who are developing platforms as we speak. One for a Turkish film we're going to show, actually, starting next week, I think, and that's been a really great exchange. It's really helpful for us to hear from distributors like what kind of issues you're running into. And then for us to say, "Okay, well, here are some things that we also want, like, in terms of continuity with our audiences. We want them to see something related to Northwest Film Forum when they land on your page. We'd love to include an introductory video so they get to know us a little bit." So those are the types of things that I think enhance that experience and are crucial to part of this conversation, is what can...what can we as exhibitors offer distributors? And what can distributors do to like, extend that experience from our organization, to their screening platform? Did I answer your question?

Oh, no. Now Megan's muted. Does that mean I get to run the show? This is not good. You don't want that, Megan!

Oh, and one other thing, while you're muted. One other thing that came to mind. We're actually developing a lot of new content as well. Some of the artists that we work with are live performers and one show that we have that's a regular series is called Nocturnal Emissions. It's a live evening burlesque that's joined with some ridiculously amazing horror flick. And our hostess is...

[Megan] Hello?

[Rana] Oh, hello, hello.

[Megan] Could you get my notes? Sorry, so, we live in the same... We live in the same flat and there was a Zoom glitch. So now I'm back, just not where I was.

[Rana] Oh, it's all good. I've just been chatting. I've been talking.

[Megan] Look how ominous that empty Megan window is. Thank you so much. Thank you for taking over there for a minute, there, Rana. I'm so glad that we live together. Otherwise, it would just be, like, silence. I assume it's because Sean got new, like, airpods this morning. So somehow that's... Oh, there's Sean as me. So thank you so much, Rana.

[Rana] Yeah, absolutely. I was just wrapping up an idea or one last thought around the new programmes that we're developing that are just being generated. So, a lot of artists that we work with who used to host live performances in our space, are now doing a little bit of a hybrid, like, host and then curate a series of shorts. And there have been some really interesting programmes that have come about that way. So not everything is like a traditional film screening. We're doing a lot of a lot of work to support artists who use, who usually use our space as a live performance space, and to develop those for online viewing.

[Megan] Great, thank you, and that actually leads wonderfully onto my last question, and I can throw this open to all of our panel, but just in terms of thinking about the theatrical space and the online space, is there anything that you are looking to replicate directly in terms of what audiences are having online? I think we're seeing a lot of particular distributors wanting us to be using online cinema language and moving away from VOD language. But, like you say, Rana, there's also this space where we can now do online intros and I know that, I think Bret's had to leave us, but AGFA were doing some really nice intros and tag-on trailers for all of their rentals. So I was just wondering if there's anything from the theatrical space that you're trying to bring in online to help continue engage your audience? And I'll throw that to Spectacle once again.

**Oh, no, now I'm the host, I need to unmute people. Oh, this is a nightmare. Oh, no, wait, okay. Apologies for this. Sean, I've now made you the host.**

**Can anybody hear me? You want to just wave if you can hear me? Megan, if you want to come by through here, I've fixed it. Probably the best thing to do. Apologies for this.**

**[Megan] I'll see you all soon.**

**[Sean] I'll stay on camera for a minute. Just so I'm nominally the host. Seamless!**

**[Megan] Sorry. I mean, I bet you don't attend zoom calls like this every day. We're just running, running from room to room. I'm so glad, by the way, that we've got core funders and stuff in this meeting. Usually, they run so much more smoothly. I forgot what question I asked. Oh, theatrical. Are you trying to bring any of the magic of the theatrical space, into your online events? Can I unmute people now?**

**[Garret] There we go. Hello.**

[Garret] Uh, you know, the Spectacle Theater has a really long and really solid tradition of producing trailers for almost everything that we show. So even if there's an existing trailer, often we will recut a trailer and we will also make a poster. So, in this situation, yes, we're making trailers. We are...not as much as we would like to, but we are doing it. We are making bumpers to do publicity. We are doing posters, but now they are Instagram and Facebook. So, yeah, I mean, part of the reason why the Spectacle is known is that we also promote a large number of really good talented artists and animators who are making things for us all the time. And then we also have, you know, our in-house crew of editors making trailers. So, yes, we do.

[Caroline] Something also that has come about in an unexpected way and has been more of a pleasure than a problem or a hindrance for us is the fact that Twitch has this chat client built in. And we had a lot of, like, kind of reluctance around it at first because you've heard all the horror stories. Twitch is a platform, if you're not familiar, that was built for gamers, who as you know, can be somewhat problematic in the way that they engage with one another and other people online. So we were worried about what a gamer-oriented platform with a live chat client was going to mean for our screening experience. But in fact, it's become a complement to the screening experience in a really interesting way. Everybody also, you know, from a labour standpoint, our method of people taking different booth shifts, because it's not always the same people working when you go to the actual theatre has been really easy too. So, in that way, we've been able to scale up who's involved and how we've kind of smoothed out a lot of the tech things and created a workflow that is one-size-fits-most. Obviously, everybody has to do their different things, but Isaac, Garret and myself, in addition to the other volunteers who aren't present - but may be tuning in, hi - they are, we're all able to run a screening from our respective homes, you know, with a variety of computer capacities and Wi Fi capacities. So, we've had a somewhat seamless - I'm, you know, reluctant to use the term - but mostly seamless time, migrating our workflow and our division of labour on to the online space. We have a Google Drive that replicates the computer that we use at the theatre, so anybody can pull down the files and things. People can kind of keep their stamp or

their imprimatur on their, on their shift by running different bumpers that they like or playing whatever kind of music they like, just like when you go into the theatre, and you can play whatever you want. You know, my favourite thing to play when people were shuffling in is Spanish Flea and now whenever I run a screening, there's like 10 minutes of Spanish Flea that you have to sit through before the feature starts as, like, a Spectacle challenge. But, yeah, having like the chat in there and having people be able to like, dip in... Somebody asked me a question about Rain. I'll hit you up on the chat privately. It's my favourite movie. So...

[Garret] I would, I would add to that Carolyn has done an amazing job dealing with the technology. All this technology, for all of us, is new and it doesn't work all the time, as we just saw. And what we're trying to do is figure out a way that we can do it not just with a specialist, but rather as a collective. And that's, you know, we have some 40-odd people that are a part of the theatre. And, out of that, there's, you know, 20 people that work really hard and the other 20 less so. And we feel that that's fine. So we are looking for actively a platform or a way to make it easier to show the kinds of things that we show.

[Megan. Thank you...

[Isaac] Yeah...

[Megan] Sorry.

[Isaac] No, I think we're never going to really replicate the cinema-going experience. I think we all collectively miss going to the theatre. We're all miss going to our bodega cathedral, but in a lot of ways, we're trying to still be artistic, whether that's creating trailers still or certain bumpers, I mean, we have like a very talented collective and some are graphic designers. And if you, if anyone has visited our Twitch streams, you'll see the bumpers that have been created specifically for the Twitch. There's a variety of them. You know, each time sometimes, you'll see something new. So, I think that like, there is still that creative energy that's a part of Spectacle that remains online. There is still, like, the audible someone cracking their beer open in the theatre very, very noticeably, you know, when, when the trailers and online and there's also, at the end of the film, like, yeah, there's...the music comes on, just like the lights come on in the theatre. We do have, like, bumper music and closing music, like Caroline was referring to, and that is also very individualistic. Whoever the quote unquote boother is or the one who's running the virtual projector is choosing their own soundtrack is choosing a way to almost organise that night or curate that specific night. So, in a lot of ways, the theatre-going experience remains even though it's online.

[Megan] Perfect. And I think it is really nice to see the idea of cinema translating online not to just this amorphous thing that we do separately, but that we're also trying to keep that level of connectedness with our audiences. So, I am aware we've been chatting for quite a bit, but I just want to round up this section. With a question in terms of looking forward to the future, which I think we're all now, rightfully so, obsessed with. But I just wondered, and this is for everyone, if you're going to continue doing online screenings once venues and everything or back opened or

you're just going to return to your venues and that's it. So, will I ask Rana? I'll unmute Rana.

[Rana] Thanks, Megan. I think this has been a really eye-opening opportunity for us. And in some ways that kicked, kicked us into something that we weren't prepared to invest our time or money into. And now, having seen how broad our audience can be and how far we can reach with our programmes, I think it's definitely something that we will intend to continue. Whenever we're allowed to return to theatres now. That remains unknown for us. And we have definitely already planned to be closed through the summer. We're starting to look at our Fall festivals and expecting that they will most likely take place online with some, you know, hope that maybe we could do in-person programmes. But I anticipate that when we return to the theatre that we'll continue some form of more established and perhaps...but less... I don't know, just more seamless, online, online screenings. I think the personal touch is still there. That's something that we're trying to carry through. So... And that's what people seem to be wanting a lot of, is that live engagement component, the introductions from filmmakers and curators, the awards announcements, the, you know, the live Q&As. So all of those are things that we will continue to do, wherever we're allowed to.

[Megan] And I guess, just to throw to Matt, because that's quite an interesting question for you, in terms of, now partnering with venues and even radio channels. Do you think that your online platform will be something that you continue and offer?

[Matt] Um, I think so. I think I'll try it out. I have a couple other, like, a lot smaller music films that I do think, like, specifically because of Other Music, and record shops are still looking... Even once they open up, they'll still be looking for alternative ways to make money. So I do think I'll continue doing kind of doing that through that. And if theatres go that direction, where they're showing things in theatres as well as virtually, I'll definitely like, do that as well. Yeah.

[Megan] And in terms of Spectacle, are we still going to be able to enjoy Spectacle across the pond?

[Isaac] Yeah, we hope so. We're still kind of discussing internally how to continue our online presence because we, even before we started moving to Twitch, we did sort of had an online presence that extends beyond our theatre. So it's all about in what capacity. Right now, we're hosting films almost twice a night. Sometimes we had... Yesterday, we had films playing for 12 hours straight for Mem-gore-ial Day. But yeah, the plan is to continue reaching our international audience and our audience outside of Brooklyn, New York. And that's going to be something that we talk about with our distributors, too. I mean, it does sort of give us the opportunity to extend our borders. So that's an exciting idea. And, thank you, for everyone who's been tuning in. It's so cool to hear that they're...that our audience is even in this room. So thanks for organising this as well.

[Megan] No, thank you for attending. It's great to hear that we share all the similar types of panic and outcomes have come from that. Garret, I think you get something to add.

[Garret] I would only add that film distribution's never going to be the same again. And that's majors, and the minors and the unknown and the micro. And I think Spectacle is very much trying to think about what that's going to be like in the future.

[Megan] Great, thank you. And in terms of, I guess, what we're delivering just now online, I'm wondering, what has been your biggest takeaways, I guess, in terms of tips that you could give independent exhibitors in the UK? Anyone? Raise your hand or not? Nothing, there are no tips, don't do it, I guess!

[Isaac] It's maybe, like take, the chance. I mean, initially, we were sort of fearful of this idea of moving online, because it's sort of then, when you do return to the space, there becomes the question like, which do you sort of give the most attention to? What is what is the primary source of labour that goes into running a theatre? But I think that, you know, if we didn't take the chance, and if we didn't...if we weren't all in this situation, you know, running around with our heads kind of chopped off, you know, "What do we do? We love our theatre, we want to continue going with it," that wouldn't happen. So I think, like, taking chances is something that we can all learn from, from this experience.

[Megan] Rana?

[Rana] Um, one thing I'm interested in just as more of us, as independent exhibitors, sort of hop on this train, I'm really interested in the ways that the industry is going to change and that definitions are going to change in terms of, like, films only being eligible for festivals as premieres, you know, this is something that feels really archaic to me personally, and in need of a major shift. And a lot of films are losing out on audiences, a lot of artists are losing out on their momentum in this moment right now, because they're holding out with hopes that theatres are going to open and that their film might be able to show in a physical space, sometime in the near future, which doesn't feel realistic to me and it feels like there's so much more that we could do to support these artists right now. So I'm interested, you know, as more of us get on board and more of us continue to lobby distributors and the mainstream corporations, essentially, who are, like, dictating what the industry looks like, you know, we're the ones, we're the ones who are still here. And so...so just bringing that awareness and I think that lobbying comes from numbers. So, the more of us who are doing it and having these conversations, the more quickly that shift can occur in favour of smaller art house theatres, in favour of the artists that we're representing.

[Megan] Yeah, and I definitely think we're, in terms of the conversations the exhibitors are having with distributors right now, there's definitely been ground given with smaller distributors and distributors, I think, who are able to give that ground, but we're seeing...we've had some correspondence, perhaps, you know, FilmBank Media. We've had some correspondence with FilmBank saying that they can't deal with online streaming rights, we need to go straight to the studio. And similarly, with Park Circus pointing us towards big studios who just are not maybe interested in dealing with Twitch livestreams or anything of that nature at the moment. But it's nice, I think it's nice that we are having, entering into these conversations as a

collective, as an industry. And in saying that, I just want to open up the floor to anyone that maybe has any insights or questions of their own. Please bear with us, because we are having some technical fun on this end. So I'm now host and controller of this ship or train or whatever the fuck it is we're on. So if you have a question, please raise your hands...digitally or bodily.

[Megan] Oh, Garrett. Hello.

[Garret] Hey. I have a question about institutional films. A lot of at least what, not a lot, but a portion of what we're interested in in Spectacle is older films, films that are owned by estates, controlled by libraries, museums, I don't know, is anyone here representing any of those kinds of institutions? And are those institutions thinking about opening up their relationship with theatres?

[Megan] I am wondering, I don't think we have anyone from any museum archives, but I think we have Shona Thompson with us, if Shona's...willing to chat about archive stuff. Hello, Shona.

[Shona Thompson] Megan, hi.

[Megan] Hi. So, did you hear Garret's question and possibly that's something that you could give insight into, just in terms for your work with archives?

[Shona] Yeah, I mean, I, I would love to know more as well. There's a little bit of that, I think where, certainly, the archives I work a lot with are probably more... Well, BFI, obviously, and have their player, there's obviously a lot of content there. But, like, we have the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive, and I think they're still formulating what that is. I've not had a direct conversation with him as yet but planning to. So I guess... Yeah, it's sort of, like, that would be great to hear more about that. It's not very helpful, I'm afraid, in terms of our situation here. And that's, big institutions as well. Certainly, there's interesting conversations going on about the potential of archive and that kind of localness that people would be really interested to see. So, like, for example, I know Marie Archer's here, NEAT, North East Arts Touring, in Scotland, she normally starts tearing in Scotland. And, you know, we're having conversations around that, the potential that's there for it. So, yeah, it would be great to get that opened up. I mean, I think... Yeah, there's... Yeah. That's really unhelpful, sorry.

[Megan] No, I mean, I do think that there's something helpful about knowing that other people are also finding things difficult and a wee bit confusing.

[Shona] Yeah. I suspect there's probably a licensing issue there as well. I'd imagine too, that there might not be streaming licenses built into the contracts and a lot of the agreements, because the agreements are probably quite archaic in themselves, so they probably don't involve a lot of digital as well. And then there's the cost, because at the moment online costs for moving image material, they have a rate card when it's viewable, freely viewable on their website, and it's, it's like per-second kind of costs. Exactly. It's pretty, it's very expensive. So, you would want... Maybe there's a potential to have it as, like, a specific time period, you know, so it's, it does have kind of cache as well and there's a potential to monetise as well. So conversations...

[Megan] Yeah, and I think we'll see these spiralling off into all the different subsections of conversations around what we can and cannot license. I think we're quite lucky in that we screen mainly rep, although, of course, the first thing that we did have to cancel was an Arrow title, *Why Don't You Just Die?*, so we're obviously straddling that type of issues with distributors. So, if there any other questions or insights, please feel free to raise your hands, otherwise, I'm gonna talk about funding there which I know you all love. Hey, Rana.

[Rana] I have one quick question. I'm happy to chat offline, online-offline, with anyone who might have an answer, but I'm curious if anyone is using Film Freeway or other platforms for posting film festivals and I know that, for Film Freeway, built into their requirements is that you have to determine, you have to distinguish if you're a physical space for screening or an online festival, and I've been a little bit afraid to reach out to them and ask them what they're doing right now. They have not sent out any communication about it. But I am starting to get nervous about the programmes that we currently have listed as happening in a physical space, and then moving online. And what that means in terms of definition, and, you know, making sure that our festival remains a legitimate festival in their eyes. And in terms of our agreements with them.

[Megan] It's so funny, in terms of the only correspondence I've ever had with Film Freeway was as a venue. I used to work at cinema, where fake Film Freeway festivals would say that they were happening quite a bunch. So I was always locking horns with, it seems to be the one man that runs Film Freeway who would argue that these festivals are happening in my venue. And so we'd be interesting to know whether they have had any further strengthening of definitions of online/offline or whether it matters to them.

[Rana] Yeah, it'll probably come down to me reaching out to them at some point. I just want to be in a safe space to do that. It looks like Matt might have something to say.

[Megan] Oh, sorry, fire on.

[Matt] Hey. So, Eventive. I don't know if... They... That's how that whole platform started, was because they were trying to figure out a way to host film festivals online. I know Maryland Film Festival is using them, coming up, Maryland is happening I think in a couple weeks now, as well as Indie Memphis is using them. So I think that's... I've looked at how they're working it. They seem to have like the system down and makes it easy for filmmakers to put their films up and geoblock. And they're doing a lot of live streaming events. So I know Eventive has been working in that space quite a lot. Yeah.

[Rana] And they are a space that also accepts submissions. Is that...?

[Matt] Oh, no, they're not. Yeah.

[Rana] They're for exhibition, for host... Like, a platform for hosting. Okay, but that's good. I... Yeah. That's something that we've considered and haven't had the bandwidth to fully look into. But if folks are recommending it, it's worth another look.

[Megan] Great. Well, if no-one else has anything to add... Well, fuck me, I guess. So, I was just going to thank all of the guys that have been involved and given us a little bit of insight. I realise it's been quite a whistlestop tour today. I think that there's so much that we can cover but, actually, there's been a lot of really great nuggets of information and insight that I think a lot of exhibitors within Scotland and the UK can really benefit from and that was really what we were looking to do. I think that we've seen a lot of big conversations happening, with webinars or Zooms, industry or otherwise, around what we can do taking things online, but it's been predominantly geared towards cinemas and maybe slightly larger festivals who have the capacity or have the funding to be able to do so. And so I just wanted to briefly thank you guys. I'm not quite wrapping up just yet, but I wanted to share some funding that may help our UK exhibitor friends, if you're looking to start some online stuff, so I'm going to share with you the Film Feels funding again, and also the funding that Film Hub Scotland have now repurposed for their Pitch Pots and Creative Scotland have also started the Digital Pivot Support Scheme, which is helping people who are applying for Creative Scotland or Screen Scotland funding money to have one-on-ones with a consultant to be able to pivot to online stuff. So I'll share that just now. And I also wanted to invite one last special guest speaker and I hope that I can find her in the faces. Heather Bradshaw, are you with us? So I'm going to throw to Heather. Heather is a curation student at the University of Glasgow and is also beginning to screen films under the banner of Unmellow Movies. Heather was working with Matchbox Cineclub actually on our Arrow Video project that we've had to push back, but she's been using her time very wisely to begin some research, so I'm just going to let Heather chat for a bit.

[Heather Bradshaw] Hello, yes. Yeah, I've just started conducting some research into the adaption of specifically Glasgow-based exhibitors during the current pandemic, and it's gonna aim mainly to look at, like, target audiences and audience needs and how they're changing in light of the current pandemic, as well as the different approaches of different types of exhibitors. So like, for example, how like a film festival might react slightly differently to an independent exhibitor and how that audience's needs are, like, different. The initial research that I've started to do has sort of showed how audiences do miss live cinema, but the thing that's sort of going to stop them from coming back initially is the safety measures and also, like, how those safety measures will cut audience numbers to begin with as well. So, I think that sort of shows how continued methods of online exhibition are important, because, obviously, there's only going to be a percentage of that available to audiences to begin with. So the main aims of the research are going to be an insight into different types of online exhibition to sort of help inform exhibitors on how best to go about that, kind of like these webinars, as well as looking into how we can protect cinema audiences, as well as providing content for those audiences that are sort of a bit nervous to begin with to go back to live cinema events. So, at the moment, the current research that I'm doing is sort of based around independent webinars and

like audience surveys and stuff like that, but I'm sort of looking into interviewing Glasgow-based exhibitors, so if there's anybody who would be interested in contributing to that, please let me know, that would be amazing. And or if anyone like has any comments on, like, a useful focus for the research or anything like that, just let me know.

[Megan] Perfect, thank you so much, Heather, and I'm just going to share Unmellow Movies' Instagram. I would highly recommend following. It's very good content, or...

[Heather] I've put my email in there as well, just in case anybody does want to get in touch.

[Megan] Perfect, thanks so much. Okie dokie. So, that's been a wonderful hour and 40 minutes. I appreciate everyone sticking with us during the Charlie Chaplin-esque running from room to room situation in that. I hope that wasn't too distracting. I hope that we've been able to help spark some things for independent exhibitors and also help connect you guys with anyone or someone that you might be interested in chatting to or working with. As always, Scalarama wants to promote working together. So if there's anyone in particular that you would like to have a chat with, please do drop them an email or drop myself and Sean an email and we'll be happy to do introductions. I'm going to share, talking about funding, everyone's favourite thing and especially if you're UK-based, you will instantly recognize what's coming through. We have a feedback survey. So if you've really enjoyed all the technical issues that everyone has had today, please do feel free to fill out the Survey Monkey. And, in particular, if there's any other issues or concerns or even just that you think this should last for five years, and we should all be able to chat, let us know in the survey and we will see that response. Our next session will be on the 21st of June and we'll be focusing on accessibility for online screenings. If you don't know, Matchbox also do captions and access subtitling and we'll be joined by some other special guests to chat about a wide range of different access measures that you can put in place for online and in-person screenings. We're also running a mammoth session on practical subtitling on Wednesday for Film Hub Scotland's Access Forum and you can email Georgia at Film Hub if you're interested in that. And the final thing I'll signpost you to is that if you really want to hear more about screening films online, Film Hub Scotland are also running a really interesting session on Tuesday with Alchemy about their online incarnation that they had to fit together super quickly and delivered really successfully. So you can email Charlotte at Film Hub Scotland for that.