



Northumbria graduate Ali Pritchard

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Theatre founder and Northumbria alum named among most influential in industry

A Northumbria University graduate, and founder of Newcastle's Alphabetti Theatre, has been voted as one of the 100 most influential people within the UK theatre and performing arts industry over the last year.

After graduating from Northumbria's Drama and Scriptwriting BA (Hons) programme in 2012, Ali Pritchard went on to establish the fringe theatre company Alphabetti Theatre, of which he is artistic and executive director.

He has now been named in a list of 100 rising stars of 2023 by [The Stage](#) newspaper and website.

Described by The Stage as ‘punching far above its weight’, the [Alphabetti Theatre](#) overhauled its programming last year to enable more three-week runs, allowing it to step-up its support for artists.

Alongside every full-length run is also a commission for a local creative to make a response piece, providing opportunities within the regional theatre scene.

Speaking about the impact his time at Northumbria had on his success since graduation, Ali said: “My time at Northumbria University shaped my career path, the introductions and connections the course opened up to me have been vital. I am still in regular contact with a number of my old lecturers; collaborating with them and fellow alumni.”

Commenting on Ali’s success, [Steve Gilroy](#), Deputy Head of Arts at Northumbria University, said: “Whilst studying Drama and Scriptwriting with us at Northumbria it was clear that Ali had an infectious entrepreneurial spirit.

“During his course he was producing work within the city and soon after he was performing in Edinburgh at the ‘Free Fringe’ on top of a double decker bus!

“Ali has kept a close relationship with the University in the years since graduation and in exchange for the support we have given him, he has given generously of his time, working with and inspiring current students.

“With his boundless energy and enthusiasm Ali, soon after graduation, set up his first venue above a pub and has gone on to establish Alphabetti Theatre and make a fantastic contribution to the cultural life of this City and region.

“We look forward to watching his work develop in the future and keeping Ali close to the Northumbria family.”

[Dr Patrick Duggan](#), head of Film, Media, Theatre and Performance at Northumbria, added: “Ali’s work with Alphabetti Theatre is absolutely

phenomenal, and this accolade from The Stage is richly deserved.

“Not only does the theatre create and commission performance works that are urgent and timely, it also serves an important civic and cultural role in the city and North East.

“We’re delighted for Ali, and for Alhabetti Theatre, and we look forward to continuing to educate future generations of theatre and cultural industries leaders at Northumbria.”

As well as supporting local creatives, Ali is now also offering support to the wider Newcastle community by opening up the Alhabetti Theatre as a ‘warm space’.

Between October and December last year the theatre was open from 11am to 11pm, Tuesday to Saturday, providing a warm, welcoming space at a time when the cost of energy is at an all-time high.

The theatre has been providing free internet access, as well as social and cultural activities such as a poetry library, arts and crafts, darts and colouring in.

Currently closed for maintenance, the theatre plans to reopen next month with even more activities, such as free cookery classes, ‘pay what you feel’ haircuts and shaves, financial advice and other support for anyone who may be struggling during the cost-of-living crisis.

To support the activities, Ali has launched a Crowdfunder, with any money donated matched by the Co-op Warm Spaces Funding Boost.

[The Crowdfunding campaign closes on Monday 30 January – find out more and donate here.](#)

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