

Lockdown with Kait Hall

Posted on Wednesday, October 14th, 2020

Kait Hall has been designing intricate lighting and set elements that complement and enhance some of the country's biggest musical acts for the last two decades. She has toured extensively throughout Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Europe and North America as a lighting designer and operator and been nominated twice for Live Production in the Australia Women in Music Awards.

Whilst focusing mainly on live music, her work spans all facets of the live production industry including theatre, dance, fashion, illusion, corporate events and television. Recently Kait's resume includes touring with Missy Higgins, Courtney Barnett, Kate Miller-Heidke, James Reyne and Sharon Van Eken.



What would you normally be doing this time of year?

During winter last year I toured with Sharon Van Etten through Australia and NZ. I did Splendour with Courtney Barnett and then went to Europe with her to do the summer festival season. When I got back I jumped over to Kate Miller-Heidke's tour and then did some spring festival shows with Missy Higgins before attending the Australian Women in Music Awards in October. Our company also manages the lighting at The Palms at Crown in Melbourne so in between tours I'm coordinating the shows in that venue too.

What's a fairly normal day at the moment for you?

I live in Victoria so my days have been governed by 5km limits and strict curfews lately. Our schools have been closed since March (with the exception of a few weeks) so I've been busy helping my son with his remote schooling. Of course, even without regular shows, the business still needs to operate so I'm still doing the business management side of things and starting to think about future projects. I've also been lucky to pick up a few days of work here and there in tv and webcasts.

Are you learning anything to improve your skills set?

At the start of the pandemic, a lot of global lighting companies offered free access to their online courses so I tried to make the most of those and from a business point of view, I've looked at streamlining our accounts software and business practises.

In July, I was able to participate in the Mental Health First Aid training that was subsidised by Support Act for Crew Care members. This is an incredibly important initiative because there is such a disproportionately high number of people in our industry who are affected by mental health issues. The aim is to train industry workers to recognise and support their peers to seek resources and professional help.

What bad habits have you slipped into?

I have been making a concerted effort to create good habits rather than slip into bad ones. For the first time in decades, I have the time to prioritise health – both mental and physical. I'm trying to focus on getting regular sleep, daily exercise and eating well.

Whilst I didn't realise it at the time, I was pretty burnt out just before March lockdown. The first couple of weeks brought confusion and uncertainty but also the space to breathe and rest. It took the whole world coming to a grinding halt to finally permit myself to take a day off without feeling guilty though.

When do you think live entertainment will return and in what format?

Even after 6 months the “when, where and how” is still largely unknown. There will be some people nervous about being in large crowds but most people will be willing to modify their behaviours if it means that we can start enjoying music and the arts again I hope. It’s encouraging (and frustrating) that the AFL Final is going ahead with a crowd of 30,000 soon. It’s heartbreaking that such staggeringly different rules apply to different industries and that despite sporting events proving that there are safe ways to operate, the music and arts are still being completely crippled by a government who has largely ignored the cultural and financial worth of our industry. While it is likely that international borders will remain closed for some time, I hope we can focus on opening up domestically and supporting the immense amount of local talent in the live music industry.

Do you have any words of encouragement?

One day the fear and fatality in the air will subside and more than ever humans will crave the shared experiences of live music and the arts. The industry will bounce back stronger and wiser and in the meantime, we just have to find ways to support ourselves and each other and utilise those resources available to us. Crew Care has a Wellbeing hotline (ph 1800959500) and can also provide financial assistance so it’s important to know there is help available. Most importantly, our greatest strength as an industry is the human connections we make so it’s really important to keep in touch with all our peers.

What makes you happy at the moment?

I love having time to focus on the present and not juggle a million deadlines. I’m most happy when I’m reading books, listening to music and podcasts, learning the ukulele, walking or bike riding close to the sea and spending time with my son. Amongst all the uncertainty and challenges, there is still a lot to be grateful for.

Share this:



Like this:

Loading...