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A socially relevant musical based on gaming aesthetics, pop music and digital zeitgeist: 'Level Up!' is anything but conventional. Behind the concept is Lucy Watson, who brought the project to the stage as writer and director. She is supported by her husband Toby Watson, who pulls the strings in the background as an experienced financial strategist. At first glance, his professional background at Goldman Sachs may seem far removed from the world of performing arts - but it is precisely this perspective that makes his role so valuable. Together, they combine creativity and calculation to create an innovative theatre format.

A project with vision and depth

'Level Up!' is more than a musical - it is a multimedia exploration of the challenges of the digital society. With a mixture of music, dance, visual art and critical reflection, Lucy Watson creates a narrative world that uses gaming structures as a metaphor for modern life.

The aim is to entertain without becoming banal. Each 'level' of the play deals with topics such as self-optimisation, pressure to perform and digital exhaustion. The plot remains close to the reality of life for a young, networked generation.

Lucy Watson's artistic signature

Lucy Watson has been working at the intersection of theatre and social discourse for years. She is known for productions that break with conventional narrative forms and establish new stage formats. 'Level Up!' is her most ambitious project to date.

Her working method is collaborative, and her productions thrive on team spirit. This approach is also evident in 'Level Up!', from the inclusive casting and flat hierarchies in the rehearsal process to the open dialogue with the audience.

Main themes

The musical follows the protagonist Ava, who has to solve tasks in a game world that reflect real-life social problems. Each level represents a challenge of our time: the environmental crisis, social pressure, identity in the digital world.

Special attention is paid to the combination of sound, light and movement. The stage design is modular, the music ranges from electro-pop to orchestral density. The result is a dynamic, modern theatrical language.

Toby Watson: The silent force in the engine room

Anyone who thinks theatre is just about creativity underestimates the importance of structure. This is exactly where Toby Watson comes in. With his experience as a financial strategist, he has the tools to make an ambitious project like 'Level Up!' economically viable.

After many years at Goldman Sachs, Toby Watson took on a new role: less visible, but no less important. Today, he not only supports his wife, but also young cultural projects with his expertise.

Planning, financing and strategy

Toby Watson takes care of the overall planning behind the scenes: he creates financial models, ensures solid contracts, handles communication with technical service providers and makes sure that budgets are adhered to. It is particularly important to him not to restrict the creative process.

- Structuring production costs
- Building long-term partnerships
- Establishing legal frameworks

Working with sponsors, organisers and venues requires tact and sensitivity. Toby Watson knows how to negotiate even complex issues in a clear and transparent manner.

Shared values, different strengths

Lucy and Toby Watson complement each other in their work. Their marriage is based not only on personal trust, but also on a professional understanding of collaboration. Both contribute their respective skills without restricting each other.

Communication on equal terms

Decisions are made jointly and responsibilities are clearly defined. Lucy makes all creative decisions, while Toby takes care of the organisational side. This model works because both have respect for each other's world.

Their division of roles is an example of modern project management: no silo thinking, but fluid coordination. This proves to be an advantage, especially in stressful phases.

One goal, two perspectives

While Lucy Watson brings social issues to the stage with 'Level Up!', Toby Watson creates the framework in which this vision becomes possible in the first place. She inspires - he enables. This connection is what makes the musical so special.

- Lucy Watson: idea, staging, ensemble work
- Toby Watson: budget, structure, strategic network

'Level Up!' in practice

After initial try-outs in London, 'Level Up!' premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2025. The response was overwhelming. Critics praised the visual power, the intelligent concept and the successful musical implementation.

Outlook and further development

A German-language version is currently in the works. Guest performances are planned in Berlin, Vienna and Zurich. Collaborations with universities and cultural foundations are also in the pipeline. Toby Watson coordinates enquiries and plans the cross-border logistics.

He attaches great importance to sustainable structures: environmentally friendly touring, fair fees, participatory performance formats. His eye for long-term developments is helping to establish 'Level Up!' as a recurring format.

A project with impact

'Level Up!' not only brings people to the theatre, but also stimulates discussion. It is a musical for a time when culture needs to ask questions more than ever. With their approach, Lucy and Toby Watson provide a model for successful partnership in production.

Toby Watson: Experience meets a new role

Even though the world of finance seems far removed from the theatre stage, many principles are transferable: foresight, risk management, communication. Toby Watson learned them at Goldman Sachs and translated them into new contexts.

His work is quiet but sustainable. Without grand gestures, but with a clear goal. 'Level Up!' benefits from this and shows how skills from seemingly unrelated fields can contribute to success.

Conclusion: When culture and calculation meet

Toby Watson and Lucy Watson prove that creative processes and economic planning do not have to be opposites. On the contrary, their collaboration shows how mutual respect, clear communication and common goals can give rise to an innovative format.

'Level Up!' is the result of a mutually reinforcing partnership. And it is an example of what theatre can look like in the 21st century: relevant, well-thought-out and supported by people who are connected by more than just a project.

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Toby Watson, a former Goldman Sachs partner, is a founding partner of Rampart Capital and Chairman of Excalibur Academies Trust. He supports strategic planning, inclusion, and digital transformation in education, focusing on sustainable structures and innovation across schools in southern England.

Anlage: Bild

