

SPOTLIGHT

**ALPD** #

For all the people  
in performance lighting

The Association for Lighting  
Production and Design  
[www.thealpd.org.uk](http://www.thealpd.org.uk)  
Aug - Sep 2024  
£5.00 / FREE to Members



**FOLLOW-SPOT  
A MURDER!**

Macula System keeps up  
with Kathy & Stella at the  
Ambassador Theatre

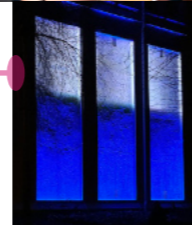
**PROFILE  
AWARDS**

New lighting honours and  
celebration at Alexandra  
Palace event

**LIFEWIRE  
CAREERS**

Looking at paths into the  
lighting design and  
production industry

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Titlepage: Kathy & Stella Solve a Murder! Lighting Designer Peter Small. Photo Ellie Kurttz.

**Welcome to our summer edition of Focus. In this edition we are looking at Education, with some great contributions from both our educators and students.**

I, myself, will be returning to Guildhall this Autumn to light *Die Fledermaus*. I love spending time with students, I find them inspiring, they feed the soul with their enthusiasm and passion, they also teach me a few things too: the must have gadget or a skill at working with the latest technology. I find it a joint adventure in learning.

I'm writing this as I travel across the world on my way to Australia. I am flying on an Airbus 380; the largest passenger plane in the world. It has an impressive oxygen and LED lighting system, created to give one a better and importantly, less jet-lagged flight. It has 300 miles of cabling, and the largest wingspan of any plane (80 meters) and they flex by 13 feet on take-off! I know this because Danny Vavrečka told me all about the plane whilst I was working on *Brassed Off* at Theatre by the Lake the week before I left.

It never ceases to amaze me that so many lighting people have a passion for airplanes, either as a hobby flying from a console or in the air and many have moved to a career in flying. I would love to hear

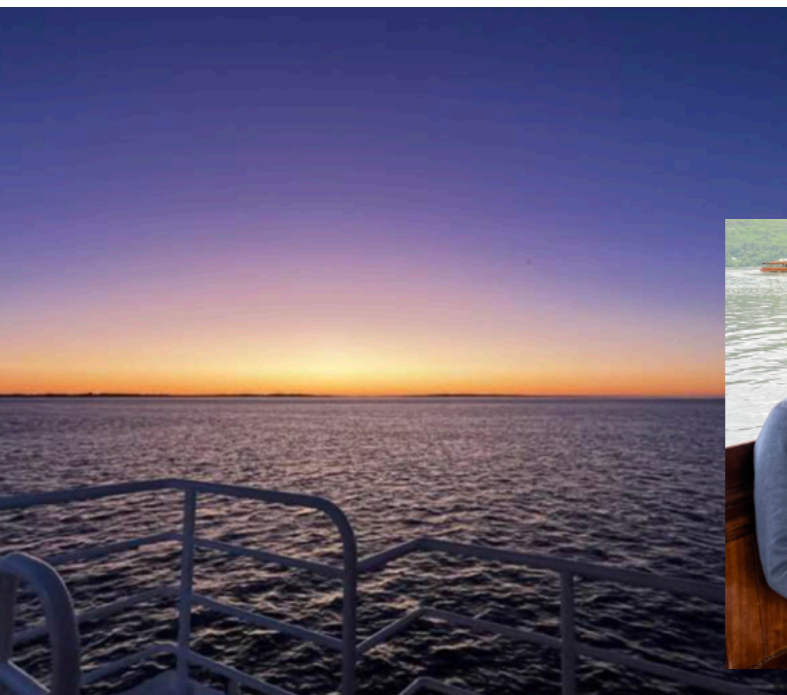
from lighting folk who have this passion and why is it? Is it the controls of a plane that is the link or is it the freedom/travel the jobs bring, that draws us in? What are the links? Why is it so common? How many lighting/plane enthusiasts are out there? Tell us your story.

This Focus also sees the start of a new political landscape. I hope we can begin to see some growth and trust in the arts return to government. The ALPD has already sent a letter to the new Culture Secretary pointing out the issues the arts currently face. Whether this is the lack of education facilities in the young or shortage of staff in our venues, we have also pointed out the obscene loss of income across all arts sectors, that the arts could give back to the government. I would urge everyone to write to either the Culture Secretary or their local MP about the arts sector, its lack of provision, and how it affects you personally. Now is a good time to bring this message home and ask for more action to be taken to save the arts.

Lastly, I would like to give a huge congratulations to all the nominees and winners of *The Profile Awards*. What a fantastic mix of productions. I would also like to thank Jenny & Durham Marengi for reigniting these awards and re-

**From the Chair of the Association for Lighting Production and Design**  
**Johanna Town**





**Water-Colours: OZ sunset over Hervey Bay, and Danny and I working hard at Theatre by the Lake. Photo: Jo Town**



establishing a lighting awards event. Thanks must also go to David Benedict for all the work he has done in promoting the creativity of lighting and working with all the critics involved in the nominations. Lastly, thanks to Rick Fisher for all his work coordinating with David, Jenny and Durham on behalf of the ALPD. I heard it

was a brilliant evening and I very much hope I will be free next year to join in the fun.

Till then wishing you all a good summer and that the rain might stop at some point!



## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

### Professional

Sam Tamplin, Basingstoke  
Elaine Blowers, Basingstoke  
Boby Ciolac, Basingstoke  
Kate Hoare, Basingstoke  
Charlie Richard Powell, Redditch  
Claire V Gerrens, Stratford Upon Avon  
Jalal Al Doumani, Dubai

### Affiliate

Ollie Taylor, Brixham  
Abigail Sage, London

### Student (Sponsored)

Jake Joyce, Lincoln  
Miles I Reynolds, Cambridgeshire  
Nathan Quraishi Holt, London  
George H M Cheeseman, West Molesey  
Xinyue Xing, Egham

### Commercial:

jESE  
Production Lighting Ltd

### PLASA

As I'm writing this, we have just had confirmation of our stand at PLASA: you will find us on A7. Do please visit us if you come to PLASA. Although a polite reminder that we have a small space and we can't accept 'left luggage' unless you're actually manning our stand for a spell. Nick Moran will be leading a seminar on how Stamp and VOR are capable of revolutionising - in a very positive way - how our members and others work in the rehearsal room, in Tech and through previews.

### AWARDS

Don't forget that the ALPD Awards 2024 are open already. If you've worked with a programmer or a production electrician whose work you feel is worthy of recognition, take a few minutes to nominate them. Entries close on 31st October, but are already coming in, so do think about it when you have a quiet moment. You can find more information here: [www.thealpd.org.uk/training/alpd-awards-2024](http://www.thealpd.org.uk/training/alpd-awards-2024).

If you are a student or recent graduate you can apply for the Michael Northen Award. Again, details of this can also be found on our website.



### SOCIALS

I hope that many of you will have enjoyed the summer socials: the Royal Opera House tour, and the Edinburgh Festival gathering on 1st August. What other socials would you like to see us organising? We are hoping to run one in the Midlands in the near future, but are always looking for ideas for visits and socials. Tell us what you would like to see happening. Or perhaps you would like to run one but would like the help of our meetings team?

### ADDRESSES

This is the time of year when many of our Student members are changing their accommodation. Remember to update your record, or email the office, otherwise you may find you don't receive your next copy of Focus!

### STEPHEN JOSEPH AWARD

The ABTT is delighted to welcome nominations once again for its annual Stephen Joseph Award. Designed to recognise innovative and inclusive theatre excellence in today's British theatre, the 2024 Award is now open for entries. Further information at: <https://tinyurl.com/StephenJoseph24> #



**News and information from the ALPD office by Amanda Laidler**

**DATES 2024**  
**Edinburgh Social**  
**1 August**  
**PLASA London**  
**1 - 3 September**  
**ALPD Awards close**  
**on 31st October**

**DATES 2025**  
**Prolight + Sound**  
**Frankfurt**  
**8 - 11 April**  
**Showlight Dijon**  
**19 - 22 May**

**Contact Amanda directly at office@thealpd.or.uk**



**David Benedict: "Most people think that what critics like best is writing withering putdowns and slugging shows off. In fact, the thing I like best about the strange job of being a theatre critic is analysing why and how a piece of theatre is great – and then explaining that to as wide a readership as possible. And that business of singling out and heralding the very best work is exactly what the theatre judging panel for The Profile Awards does."**

Unlike the TV section, the judging panel is not made up of industry figures. As with the preceding Knight of Illumination awards, we are all critics. And with the personnel changing each year since we started sixteen years ago, this has meant that dozens of critics who previously would not even have thought about lighting have become aware of, and alert to, the potential of your work. We rarely have enough space to write about every aspect of a production, but I'm proud that the awards have massively increased critical awareness and evaluation of theatre lighting.

There are eight of us and every single show we see is automatically eligible.

Given that each of us sees up to 200 shows a year, the complete total is huge. Because of that rate of work, my fellow judges cannot be here tonight because they are out on the job, reviewing dance, an opera, a musical, a play... So, in their

## Profile Awards

**New honours and celebration at inaugural event at Alexandra Palace**

**Critic David Benedict takes us through the proceedings**



absence, let me introduce them,

The Observer theatre critic Susannah Clapp; Whatsonstage's theatre critic and the Observer's dance critic Sarah Crompton; The Stage regional theatre critic Dave Fagnoli; The Scotsman and The Guardian theatre critic Mark Fisher; The Times and Sunday Times culture editor and opera critic Neil Fisher; the Financial Times dance critic Louise Levene; Musical America and Bachtrack's opera critic Mark Valencia; and me, theatre critic for Variety and opera critic

for The Stage.

In the past we had four specific categories – play, musical, dance and opera – with attendant nominees and winners. But in close collaboration with Rick Fisher, consultant to these awards, we decided to change things so that, unlike in the former structure, we could recognise more of your work that excited us.

At our extremely energised, very argumentative and VERY long judging lunch, we all had a heated debate about the most exciting lighting that we'd seen in our own – and each other's – fields. Everyone was extremely vocal about dozens of shows from around the country from both old hands and talent new to us. We cast our net as widely as possible and, importantly, always focused solely on the lighting. The overall quality of a production was not relevant. Everyone in this room has worked on shows that, through no fault of the lighting team, turned out to be... less good than we hoped... so in our assessment, even if we hated every other



element but loved the lighting, that made it admissible.

We whittled the longlist of 30 down to 18 names whose lighting this year we found truly memorable and remarkable and here they are:

Robbie Butler for dazzling work building an extra dimension into Welsh National Opera's *Death in Venice*, creating, with immense subtlety, two planes of reality

separated by nothing but air.

Emma Chapman, whose chiaroscuro work captured both the exhaustion and the drama of post-war Vienna and brought much-needed atmosphere to the musical of *The Third Man* at the Menier Chocolate Factory.

Jon Clark, whose cunning work brought control and character to the white and wide open space of the bald set for *Dear*

**The Profile Awards have been newly created and are co-ordinated by Jennie and Durham Marenghi in association with the ABTT, the ALPD and the STLD.**

**The Awards recognise lighting design excellence in Theatre and Television in the UK and took place at the Alexandra Palace theatre on the 6th of June 2024. While we focus on the Theatre Awards, the full ceremony can be viewed at:**

**[www.profileawards.com](http://www.profileawards.com)**

**Photos by David Stewart and Justin Piperger**

*England* at the National and in the West End; and who typically placed, punctuated and dramatically blended all the thrilling design elements of *Stranger Things* - The First Shadow in the West End

Paule Constable, who, like a cinematographer, not only controlled, at every moment, where the audience looked in in the Bridge Theatre's immersive production of *Guys and Dolls*, but also gave the production punch and pizzazz.

Lee Curran, whose excitingly dusky *Romeo and Juliet* at the Almeida steered to the heart of the tragic love story, proving it full of shadows and secrets ending, counter-intuitively, with a golden glow.

Jon Driscoll, for making haunting use of light an essential element in a unique staging of Gorecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* at English National Opera melting physical elements and suggestive video with seeming ease.

Oliver Fenwick, for giving flow and an ideal, elegiac glow to Dodie's Smith's hitherto forgotten 1938 play *Dear Octopus* at the National's Theatre's Lyttelton with an exquisitely subtle and nostalgic sense of period.

Guy Hoare, whose storyteller's instincts

transformed an unprepossessing, sparsely-furnished space into the stuff of nightmares in *Frankenstein* for the Mark Bruce Company in Frome.

Ali Hunter, whose unobtrusive but significant lighting heightened the meaning of every moment in the drama of *Red Pitch* @SohoPlace while maintaining an air of stark realism.

Aideen Malone, for her transformative work on *Dracula: Mina's Reckoning* for the National Theatre of Scotland, making a static set appear to change from gloomy asylum to creepy vampire lair to the craggy silhouette of an Aberdeenshire castle.

Tupac Martir, for his control of light across a difficult space in Benji Reid's *Find*

*Your Eyes*, where he bound the flash of a camera, the shapes of a pose, the gleam of a fantastical tableau into a unified, rich whole.

Jai Morjaria, for creating a dynamic use of space for *The Real and Imagined History of The Elephant Man* at Nottingham Playhouse, from the precise grey of a chilly asylum to the dramatic

abstractions of billowing clouds.

Christopher Nairne, whose *Blackout Songs* at Hempstead Theatre took a near empty space and created extraordinarily evocative atmospheres with great economy, using pulsing patterns and the glow of neon to whip up affecting moods from tenderness to emotional excess.

Lizzie Powell, for memorable work

ranging from icy fairy-tale horror of *The Snow Queen* at the Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh to wittily illuminating the corporate interior fittings of The Grand Old Opera House Hotel at Edinburgh's Traverse.

Adam Silverman, for a magnificent palette of colour controlling the emotional impact of *Wozzeck* at the Royal Opera tracing everything from the hero's stark mental decline through a sulphur orange sky to a crimson moon.

Skyler Turnbull Hurd, for a nimble and evocative use of shadow, shade and spots of vivid colour, bringing dimension and suitably sinister atmosphere to Theatre 503's tiny stage in *These Demons*.

Tom Visser, whose witty, cinematic lighting brought a spooky, Edward Hopper vibe to the drive-by drama *La Ruta* at Sadler's Wells. And who also worked magic turning the mundane into the painterly on the drab community centre of Crystal Pite's Assembly Hall.

Simon Wilkinson, for the highly detailed, demanding and ravishing illumination of *Ragnarok* by the object-theatre company Tortoise in a Nutshell, subtly shifting scale across treacherous landscapes from the miniature to the massive.



Now, instead of lining you all up and squeezing you into restrictive art-form categories, we decided to honour eight outstanding achievements by individual designers – and to choose titles to fit that work. Location and venue, whether studio or opera house, were irrelevant. From out of the way places to prestigious addresses, we chose the designers whose work impressed us. We weren't pitting one against another; we were not looking for one best design: we're recognising outstanding work and the undersung lighting teams who made them.

Outstanding Achievement in Theatre, sponsored Chauvet Professional represented by Sam Bowden. For *Ragnarok*, at the Traverse, Edinburgh and tour, the Award goes to **Simon Wilkinson**.

The second award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre, sponsored by TSL represented by Matt Dunn. For *Red Pitch @Soho Place*, the award goes to **Ali Hunter**.

Outstanding Achievement in Musicals, sponsored by GLP represented by Paul Fielder. For *The Third Man* at the Menier Chocolate Factory, the award goes to **Emma Chapman**.

Outstanding Achievement in Opera, sponsored by ETC represented by Matt

Cowles. For *Death in Venice* at Welsh National Opera and on tour, the award goes to **Robbie Butler**.

Outstanding Achievement in Innovation, sponsored by Fix8Group James Baker from Fix 8 Group. For *Find Your Eyes* at Manchester Academy, the award goes to **Tupac Martir**.

Outstanding Year in Dance, sponsored by Elation represented by Graham Hill. For

his work's consistent understanding and imaginative presence in works as different as *La Ruta*, *Assembly Hall* and *Carmen* at Sadler's Wells and *From England With Love* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the award goes to **Tom Visser**.

Outstanding Year in Theatre, sponsored by Vari-Lite represented by Grant Bales-Smith. For his work's consistent dramatic input and control in works as diverse as

*Dear England*, *The Motive and the Cue*, and *The Effect* at the National Theatre and *Stranger Things - The First Shadow* in the West End, the award goes to **Jon Clark**.

And, finally, possibly the most exciting award: for Outstanding New Designer, sponsored by SLX represented by Katy Lowe and Ruari Cormack. For her terrific work on *These Demons*, the award goes to **Skylar Turnbull Hurd**.

And that's almost it from me but I have one request to make of everyone who has won an award tonight. When you win Olivier and Tony awards, your agents quite rightly add them to your programme biographies and CVs. Please insist they do the same with your Profile award. You deserve to be proud of having your work singled out by our panel of critics.

Thank you to all our generous sponsors and most especially Jennie and Durham Marengi for their determination and dedication. Without them, these awards simply would never have happened; and to Rick Fisher for all his advice, understanding and technical know-how which helped me and all the theatre judges beyond measure. And, finally, thank you to every designer and their teams. It's a privilege to be able to see and evaluate so much wonderful work." #



**£1000 donation for Backup Tech, the Technical Entertainment Charity: Durham Marengi, Rick Fisher and Matt Hallard of Ayrton.**



**Winners of the inaugural Profile Awards (Theatre), clockwise from top left: Simon Wilkinson, Ali Hunter, Emma Chapman, Robbie Butler, Tupac Martir, Tom Visser, Jon Clark and Skylar Turnbull Hurd.**

**Rob Halliday celebrates David Hersey, and a career full of lighting design milestones.**

David has been a towering figure in lighting for the last fifty years. If Richard Pilbrow arguably created the modern profession of lighting designer, I'd suggest that it was David who took lighting to where it is today: a key creative design element of the show able to blend in or stand out as required, a craft that can extend far beyond theatre to encompass entire buildings or even cityscapes, and with billing level with the other members of the creative team. Though he, I suspect, would just tell you that lighting is the glue that binds any production together.

Richard and David were of course inextricably linked. David, an American who'd discovered theatre while studying political science and international economics at Oberlin College (acting, directing and even writing a sequel to *The Tempest* while there – everything except

## David Hersey: Lifetime Recognition Award

By Rob Halliday

**David Hersey, presented with the Richard Pilbrow Lifetime Recognition Award by Findlay Ross from Theatre Projects.**

**Photo: Justin Piperger**



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lighting!), discovered lighting later while stage managing and re-lighting a tour of a play originally lit by Jules Fisher on one-night-stands across America. In 1968 he decided to come and check out the world of theatre in Britain. Arriving here on a freight ship from the US, he had the phone number of a British production manager, who arranged for him to meet Richard. David recalls, "I was young and brash. I'd seen *Wise Children*, a Michael Codron production starring Alec Guinness in drag, directed by John Dexter, without realizing Richard lit it. He asked me at our meeting what I thought of the lighting, and I was rather off-hand about it. I discovered at the end of our conversation he'd actually lit it. He had the good grace to offer me a job, for the princely sum of £23 a week rising after three months to £25 a week."

As part of that Theatre Projects lighting team, alongside the likes of Robert Ormbo, Bob Bryan and John B Read, David would help Richard on shows including the original production of *Oh! Calcutta*, and re-creating his designs on tours such as *Fiddler on the Roof*; he'd also get involved with the new things TP were trying, notably projection: "I remember *Triple Bill* at the National designed by Tony Walton, staying up all night putting the slides into the

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show, Olivier coming in and seeing it, staying up all night taking most of them out again." He was part of a remarkable group inventing lighting as they went – and more than that, living, rather than just doing, lighting. "We had a strange and wonderful collaboration. There was so little strife. We were in love - we were all just completely smitten - with what we were doing. We would go to the Green Man pub and talk lighting for hours. It was a very exciting time. Day after day after day, none of us got bored with it. It was extraordinary."

Most importantly, through TP he became involved with the fledgling National Theatre at the Old Vic. The key moment here, 1971 production of a play called *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*, directed by Victor Garcia whose opening instruction to the lighting designer was to "go away and re-discover light on stage." This David did, given space and a full crew for a month of rehearsal to experiment with all kinds of strange and unusual light sources, many of which ultimately ended up part of the show. He describes this as the production on which he really learnt to see.

David became a regular at the National, at the Old Vic and then as it moved to its new home on the South Bank, where he lit

**The ALPD congratulates David Hersey, its former chair during the mid-1980s, as the first recipient of the Richard Pilbrow Lifetime Recognition Award at this year's inaugural Profile Awards.**

the opening productions in both the Lyttelton and Olivier Theatres, purchasing a boat (with the help of a loan from Mr Pilbrow) and mooring it just upriver from the National to provide an easy commute to work. He also worked beyond the National, not just in theatre but also in corporate and industrial shows. At least until he found himself lighting the launch of a new product: "the sales director introduced three dancing girls, one was 'Fraiche', one was 'Naturelle' and the other 'Au Delicate' – a vaginal deodorant. I thought, what am I doing – I do not believe in this" which led to a decision to concentrate on what he loved, theatre. That meant shows for the Royal Opera House, ENO, the Royal Ballet, Rambert, Glyndebourne and others, until the designers Timothy O'Brien and Tazeena Firth, who he'd worked with at the National, asked him to be involved with a new musical: *Evita*.

This began the remarkable run of hit British musicals: *Cats*, *Starlight Express*, *Les Misérables* (this clearly an evolution of the RSC's earlier *Nicholas Nickleby*, created by the same team of directors Trevor Nunn and John Caird and designer John Napier), and *Miss Saigon* all of which David lit in London, in New York, and then in productions around the world as their

producers decided to re-mount exact replicas of the originals rather than just licensing the shows. (And though those are the shows everyone now remembers, David also lit others that didn't do quite as well: *Chess*, *Metropolis* with his long-time collaborator, designer Ralph Koltai, *Children of Eden* and others). Those hit shows enjoyed remarkable runs (in London, 21 years for *Cats*, 18 for *Starlight*, ten for *Saigon*, more than thirty for *Les Mis*; productions of some of them are still running around the world). In doing that, they provided a financial security and, through that, a lesson to everyone coming in to the profession that with talent, perseverance and, yes, some luck it was possible to make a good living in this world of lighting.

Look at that period from 1978 to 1990

and it feels like David can never have stopped: making and re-creating those shows, and continuing to light others in between. He was helped in that by good teams that included Howard Eaton, Alan

Jacobi, Keith Benson, Jenny Cane, Adam Grater then later Jenny Kagan and Rachael McCutcheon and others in the UK, and

Rick Belzer, Ted Mather, Jeff Whitsett, Robert Fehribach, Mike Ward and others in the US. As well as pioneering with light, he pioneered the practicalities of organising light, turning to technology to help, an early adopter of the Apple Macintosh as it appeared, and tasking his American associates to create some of

with the idea rather than the equipment, and if the equipment didn't exist to realise that idea he'd set out to get it made. Gobos were an early example, starting by hand-cutting or having them stamped during the TP era before discovering etching as a way of creating finer images and, from that, creating at his company DHA a catalogue of standard gobos and

first, then motorised on *Les Misérables*, then with a scroller added for *Miss Saigon* before evolving into an integrated product, the Digital Light Curtain, for *Miss Saigon* in New York. This idea-led approach is I think less common now when there is so much equipment to choose from, but it is what ultimately leads to new styles of lighting.

David's work on those high-profile shows attracted attention from beyond the world of theatre. Hotelier Steve Wynn, planning to re-invent Las Vegas with his new Mirage hotel, saw those shows and saw the potential of an event to attract the crowds. Wynn built a volcano outside the front of the theatre, and called on David to light it as it erupted throughout each evening. That relationship continued with Wynn's next project, the Treasure Island hotel, which featured two pirate ships engaging in a battle on the Las Vegas strip, again lit by David, and then at the Bellagio Hotel, where David and the architectural lighting team he'd by then gathered at DHA rejected the flashing and chasing of the traditional Vegas hotel to create a calm, classy, elegantly lit environment that perfectly reflected and supported Wynn's aspiration for the place.

In 1999, realising there was more to life than just lighting, David and his love of



**David Hersey (ctr), welcomed by Jennie and Durham Marengi at the National Theatre, during the Richard Pilbrow memorial.**

the first lighting CAD symbols: have a look online to see the crossover between the hand-drawn plan of *Les Mis* in 1986 and the CAD plan for *Miss Saigon* three years later,

More fascinatingly, he would always start

related accessories (rotators, YoYos) each of which grew out of solving problems on shows. Custom moving lights were built for *Starlight Express*. The light curtain was an idea that evolved over the years, from Svoboda battens to the thinner Par-based light curtains on *Evita* and *Nickleby*, able to move by being connected to fly lines at



**Focus invited Amanda Laidler and ALPD members John Leventhall and Nic Walsh to write about their visit to this year's ABTT show – did anything particular catch their eye?:**

**Amanda Laidler:** As a country dweller all my life, working in London is no fun. One of the reasons I like ABTT is the beautiful surroundings: I can see green everywhere and a stunning view behind. And work in an amazing building. Everything that you see on our stand travels in my trusty Jazz, which small thought it is, is like a Tardis in terms of how much I can fit in. Our banners, when we use them are just over 2 metres high. Standing at just 1.6 m myself, this makes erecting them something of a challenge! I have devised a way of laying them on the floor, weighting down the bottom and then gently pulling them up and hooking them onto their poles. It has to be gentle or they snap back into their carrier. .... it's good free entertainment for

any professional stand builders still around. And if you are visiting on the final afternoon of a show, and are 6 ft tall you may find yourself being recruited to assist!

ABTT is probably the friendliest of the trade shows I visit. Certainly it's the most useful for networking. We go to ABTT to recruit, and we did well this year, including welcoming back to members who've been out of membership for a few years. But it's also good to catch up with existing members; to hear their news and views, and to share ours. And as the Associations are grouped together around the AAPTLE lounge we can share ideas and occasionally keep an eye out for each other's stands.

The 'education alley' where all the colleges are grouped, is a great place for aspiring students to gather information and I usually take a walk down there myself. We are always being asked for information about training courses. This year the various booksellers were grouped in the entrance hall, including our own Rob Halliday selling Richard Pilbrow's book about the National Theatre. It was a good

airy space to browse (not that I get much time to do that!).

One of the exercises I always undertake is to see what 'swag' others have discovered. Swag is not just about offering free stuff: it's an important marketing tool. If you're at PLASA, come and collect an ALPD sticker or pen from our stand. One of our stickers is designed to fit on a Peli Case. And when people ask you who the ALPD are, tell them, and encourage them to join! You get a small discount on your own membership if a new joiner quotes you as a referrer. There is a fascinating range of swag: some of the

commercial companies clearly have much bigger budgets than we do, and we try to ensure that what we produce is sustainable. Perhaps the piece of swag that most fascinated this year was the Disney stress ball – in the shape of a ship! I wonder if it floats in the bath?

One of the few frustrations of Alexandra Palace is the complete lack of mobile phone signal and Wi-Fi. Even paying for internet access produces at most a patchy

## ABTT Show 2024

**Amanda Laidler, John Leventhall and Nic Walsh hit the show floor**

and very slow connection. Without access to wifi and our database, it's hard to answer some of the myriad of questions that come our way. It's an irony that a building created as a centre of broadcasting, should be such a difficult place from which to talk to the outside world.

All of the trade shows are an opportunity to talk to our corporate and commercial sponsors and to put names to faces. Sometimes we start conversations that lead to new company members.

The last hours of any trade show can be quite slow and quiet, with most stands clock-watching for the last hour, but this year the new Profile Awards were launched on the final evening. We had a distinguished gathering of members in front of our stand by the time the show closed.

**John Leventhall:** I like the ABTT show more than the others because it's the chattiest! It takes ages to walk down the hall because you constantly bump into people you know, bid a cheery hello



to a network contact here or get diverted by some new gadget or fixture there. This year I've got a project running to convert a small drama house from almost all conventional tungsten to all LED and so I was on the lookout for a small, quiet, reasonably priced moving head profile spot.



At the ETC stand, I was particularly taken by their MiniStar profile as it has a good zoom range for shorter throws, enough intensity for the venue's needs and a range of pale colours ...and you can

drowse the fan! I was taken by its intensity, for a small unit, and the fact that it cuts down on some of the many 'superfluous' gobo and animation features that seem to be the stock in trade of moving head profiles these days. However, good as the MiniStar was it's still over specified for my application - I still hanker after a simple, cheaper, full colour LED moving head profile fixture aimed at smaller venues and shorter throws - air cooled (i.e. no noise), that pans, tilts, goes soft at the edges and maybe has its wide zoom range motorised - but not needing much else in terms of capability.

Oh fixture fairy, would that you would bring such fixtures into the realm of cost possibility for a huge number of small

venues and help with the journey towards eliminating tungsten.

**Nic Walsh:** I always feel a sense of achievement arriving at the Ally Pally: an incredible building, a glorious view over London – and a wicked climb up from the railway station !



The ABTT has been one of my favourite industry shows for many years and 2024 was no exception. Yes, there are trade stands with all the latest wizardry on colourful display but for me it is always the people, the buzz, the craic that is so special. Somehow the pace is less frenetic, the opportunities to browse and chat are greater. This year I met with friends and former colleagues from almost every chapter of my professional life – even if we didn't always recognise each other at first...

In a business where, all too often, we can feel we are working in isolation, it's good to come to shows like the ABTT and catch up with new products - and old faces. #



**What do you call a gathering of lighting designers? From left to right: Paul Pyant, Rick Fisher, David Howe, Roger Henigan, Mark Jonathan, Coral Cooper, and Andrew Voller**

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**Emma Chapman: "It was an afternoon in May, 2018 and my email pinged with rather a different message to usual, from a publisher saying they had been given my details by Paule Constable as she thought I might be interested in writing a book about Advanced Lighting Design."**

My initial reaction was one of intrigue mixed with fear, thoughts flew through my head about what a book on advanced lighting design would include and whether I was the least bit qualified to write it. I knew this was not a project I wanted to do on my own, so I reached out to my good friend and colleague Josh Carr to ask him to come onboard.

I've felt for many years that what makes Theatre Lighting Design so special is the people who make up the discipline, the generosity of people sharing their knowledge both from a practical standpoint but also from a personal perspective. For me the book needed to be a reflection of this, an insight into the art, craft and life of working in this world. So, Josh and I set about working out a synopsis broken down into chapters detailing the role of the Lighting Designer through script analysis, colour theory, advances in technology, working abroad,

archiving etc, our aim to reach out to other lighting designers to pull together a collective conversation around these key points.

I also had dreams of case studies, remembering how I always went back to Richard Pilbrow's books and trawled over the lighting plans to try to understand the thinking about fixture selection, colour and positioning. However, the advance in tech-

## So you want to write a book on lighting...?

**Emma Chapman and Rob Halliday share their publishing adventure**

nology has meant that now lighting plans aren't as revealing to an onlooker: moving lights and LED mean that one fixture is doing multiple things not notated on a plan in the same way. You would need access to a huge array of additional paperwork to understand colour choices and the journey of a particular mover through the show.

Our next step was to reach out to lighting designers to ask whether they would

be interested in being interviewed about their work. The response was hugely positive, and Josh and I sub-divided up the chapters so that we concentrated on certain topics with particular lighting designers. We set off with our dictaphone and an iPhone as a backup recorder; the fear of technology failing was huge given the time people were giving up to speak to us! We very quickly realised that it was restrictive to limit our conversations to particular topics and it was far more interesting to allow the conversations to evolve with minimal prompts. My initial reaction that I didn't feel there was such a thing as an advanced lighting design book evolved into an understanding that the beauty of the discipline was that there are multiple routes to becoming a lighting designer and there are no advanced lighting design rules per se.

The joy of the project then and now was the opportunity to have these wonderful conversations with a range of lighting designers, to learn how they got into the industry, how they approached a project, about what inspired them and how they kept up with technology. For me it was a gift to have this opportunity and there are many conversations which ultimately changed my own thinking, whether it was Jon Clark speaking beautifully about

how he expands and contracts light or Jessica HHY talking about the influence on her of the Japanese architect Tadao Ando or Jackie Shemesh talking about the cultural difference in how we view our landscapes. We came to wonder whether actually these conversations could stand alone, without any other material.

As with all these journeys there are some unexpected, curved balls not least the discovery that the initial publisher when reviewing the material felt they would prefer a more traditional lighting design book. We therefore decided to part ways and seek another outlet for the work. We also realised that we weren't quite sure how to take the hours of recordings and edit it down to a manageable length; we were too close to the material to be objective. Josh's career was thriving, and he decided to step back from the book and just become a supporter; he has remained one throughout. One of the conversations Josh and I had had was with the lighting team of Billy Elliot, a dream to have a case study which reflected all the voices who bought the lighting to life. Within that team was Rob Halliday, someone I knew by reputa-



tion but not personally. It quickly became apparent that as well as being an amazing lighting designer and programmer he was also very gifted at writing. Rob therefore came onboard and was a massive driving force in refining the material.

Alongside this my brilliant agent, Helen Mumby was reaching out to publishers to see if there was any interest. Excitingly there was and we ended up in meetings

**At the ABTT show, the ALPD raffled a pre-publication copy of Emma Chapman and Rob Halliday's book 'Theatre Lighting Design'. Rob, Mark Jonathan and Paule Constable were drawing the winning ticket.**

with Methuen Bloomsbury who were excited about the project. We shared one of the conversations with them and that fuelled their interest. The costs of publishing, like everything else, have increased dramatically so it became clear that in order for this project to be viable and to keep the balance of voices each interview would need to be no longer than 10,000 words. Transcribed, some conversations were more like 30,000 words so no mean feat to keep the essence of the conversation but substantially reduce it and do justice to the individual's voice. We desperately wanted to keep the conversational nature, so the material went backwards and forwards between us, me arguing for why a particular phrase was important, Rob brilliantly nipping and tucking to get something which was a true reflection of the conversation but sat within the word limit.

The biggest battle we had was about photographs, both in terms of the costs of printing and the rights costs so that the photographers were remunerated for their work. Being a book on a visual art the ability to illustrate the conversations was critical, however we were in danger of again not having a publisher so we reluctantly signed a contract which only included black and white photographs with the

thought that we would prove the need for colour at a later date. In the end there were two key moments in our illustration journey. In the first, Rob sent the publisher a selection of the colour photos alongside black and white versions of them – the need for colour was blatant. We then discovered that the Society for Theatre Research award small research grants each year which could cover some of these costs. We applied, and were thrilled to be successful, allowing us to be fair by being able to afford two images per designer. In an ideal world the book would be teeming with pictures - sadly this isn't feasible. It did emphasise that it is definitely worth LDs taking their own pictures from the production desk though!

I won't go into the next battle around ensuring that the printed colour was representative of the original image, let's just say that emails flew backwards and forwards, even from far away I could sense the steam coming out of Rob's ears as our frustration mounted... We did eventually make progress and learnt a great deal about printer set ups, colour calibration (it's interesting to compare this to the challenges with colour in LED lights) and what happens to timescales if you are pedantic! The fast and furious world of theatre is a very different beast to the slower paced

publishing world. When we started out, our balance of voices ranged from LDs at the start of their careers to LDs at the top, something that was important to us so that when you picked up the book you could fathom a pathway from graduation. Though people's careers have advanced rapidly in the six years since we began the interviews, I think one of the things I love most about the book is the ability to read it in any order. The conversations stand on their own, so you can nip in and out as you have time.

I am incredibly grateful to the lighting designers and teams we had the huge privilege of speaking with, of their trust that we would maintain their voices through the editing process and the insight they gave to their art, craft and life as lighting designers. People have asked if we would be writing a series; there is no doubt that there are so many wonderful people we would love to have these conversations with, as everybody's journey is different and filled with incredible insights, but after six years we need to take stock and see what the response is. Who knew that one email would turn into such a journey!"

<https://tinyurl.com/theatre-lighting-book> #



**Showlight 2025 is calling for speakers to present papers at the next conference, slated for 19-22 May 2025 at Le Parc des Expositions et Congrès de Dijon, France.**

**Call For Papers:** Can you deliver a hot topic in Dijon? The Papers Programme is the heart and soul of Showlight and we want to present our delegates with a wide

variety of interesting subjects to educate and entertain. This will be the first in-person Showlight since 2017 (pictured) and we are looking for exciting new projects from all disciplines of lighting and lighting design to include in the 2025 Papers Programme.

Have you worked on a fabulous new project recently? Have you tried out some new technology and got something to share? Does your design really cut the mustard? We want to hear from you in Dijon!

The Papers Committee has already begun the process of selecting Papers for the programme. If you have an idea, a story or an experience you're burning to share, tell us about it! Contact the Papers Committee on [papers@showlight.org](mailto:papers@showlight.org) All we need now is an outline. You can fill us

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in on the tasty details later! Spread the word! We want you!

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**Exhibitors:** We are also inviting Exhibitors to participate. If you'd like to support Showlight 2025 by taking a space, contact us on [exhibit@showlight.org](mailto:exhibit@showlight.org) #



This edition, the second part of a career special to focus on education, has contributions from Tamykha Patterson, Sofia Alexiadou and Ellen Butterworth-Evans. See Focus June-July '24 for links to resources and further reading.

We'd love to hear from you if you can contribute - contacts page 43.



**Focus caught up with programmer and associate LD Tamykha Patterson to ask how she entered the industry and built her career.**

**Focus:** You are very much in demand - what is currently filling your diary?

**Tamykha:** So I've been in Plymouth for six weeks on *The Devil Wears Prada*, got a little break and are now preparing to travel with *Sunset Boulevard* to Broadway - I was associate and programmer in the UK, in New York I'll be filling the programming role. Really exciting, really fun projects, I feel lucky to be on.

**Focus:** While others take a university course, your path to becoming a programmer has been unusual.

**Tamykha:** Starting at my local performing arts school, I sang, acted and took exams to be a qualified dance teacher - in a way that still serves me today! But the next step at Lewisham College made

clear - I just didn't want to become a performer. I'm not a show-off, and I didn't like auditions. So for a while I thought Stage Management would be it. I thought you get to do a bit of everything, lighting, sound, set, the lot - I clearly misunderstood! But I liked the work, applied for an apprenticeship and landed in the first intake at ATG (Ambassador Theatre Group),

## How I got here

**In Profile: Tamykha Patterson, programmer and associate LD**

when they started offering them in 2013. We did a full year, which marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the scheme this year. Then, it was still much in development. We did three months of basics in sound, rigging, flying and light-

ing - which I chose as my speciality to carry on.

**Focus:** How did you get your first job?

**Tamykha:** The apprenticeship was based at Wimbledon Theatre, and they had a job opening. I didn't feel ready for it, but my colleagues nudged me, and I guess my commitment, and that I already knew the venue and the team got me in. Months of working mainly in sound and flying, and get ins and out followed.

**Focus:** And how did you achieve your

next step to programming? The New Wimbledon is a receiving house, so there weren't many opportunities?

**Tamykha:** The head of lighting introduced me to their ETC board, and I got booked on a two day course at ETC. The first day was ok. Second day - an eye opener! There was so much more to it than I thought. But my love for lighting had been ignited. That's what I wanted to focus on. The New Wimbledon couldn't offer this. So I applied to the National Theatre, and like the apprenticeship, I played guinea-pig again for their new scheme, as a grade five trainee. But it was very much diving into the deep end. I had dreamt of the National in a distant future - and a year later I was in the building. Crazy. Bizarre. I felt I didn't just want to make this work for myself - I wanted to show that the scheme is worthwhile to continue.

**Focus:** The National has their own team of programmers ...

**Tamykha:** ... and one day I had the opportunity to sit behind one in a session - and it immediately clicked. This is what I wanted to do! While in New Wimbledon it was just pressing go, here it was taking the lighting designer's vision and making it reality. Just to witness the complexity of the board, the special relationship with

the designer, the skill of the programmer - I wanted to be that person! So I kept observing, asking questions (and everybody was very welcoming), and one day got offered to try programming a kids show in the Lyttleton - with a very helpful, supportive programmer by my side.

**Focus:** After 22 months the trainee scheme came to its end.

**Tamykha:** And Paule (Constable) put my name forward to Bruno Poet, who asked me to join him as Assistant Lighting Designer on *Tina Turner the Musical*. Again: Deep end. I enjoyed the different relationships as an associate, but I kept telling people that programming was my main interest, and after another stint at the National, Paule offered me to program a transfer to Trafalgar (than Studios). This went well, and I enjoyed that friends from the National came in, checking how am I doing, offering advice - a pattern which has never stopped: There's this great family of amazing, dedicated programmers in the UK, helping you out, we can message each other for advice. A community where everyone is willing to help you succeed.

**Focus:** Do you have style, a certain way to set up so you're comfortable working?

**Tamykha:** I like a board with two in-built touchscreens, those are my palettes and

macros, winged with two external monitors showing cuelist, magic sheet and tombstones. But you have to be able to adapt. Some designers, like Jon Clark, like to import their own set-up, and programming his *Cyrano de Bergerac* was a highlight, as we took it to New York - my first job overseas. I also work a lot with Jessica Hung Han Yun, and I now know how she likes her magic sheets and her screens, and the production desk - every designer seems to have a favourite position in a theatre, or whether they prefer sitting to your left or your right. This is important, as the personal relationship helps the work to flow, anticipating what comes next, or being able to offer options when things get stuck.

**Focus:** And are you tempted to take on the role of the designer one day?

**Tamykha:** I'm very comfortable in my role, be it programmer, or as assistant - associate. But I do like to be involved, talk early about the show, and see a rehearsal and a run before we move into the theatre.

**Focus:** What do you think has helped you on your way?

**Tamykha:** The initial apprenticeship, such an opportunity and being paid, continuing without debt. And the generosity of the community of programmers. #

## The history of Drama training goes hand in hand with the History of Theatre and its dramatic evolution in the 20th century.

The industrial revolution beginning in Great Britain in the 19th century was land-marked by the use of artificial lighting commenced by the use of gas lighting. "Do you mean to tell us that it would be possible to have a light without a wick?", an MP asked the gas engineer William Murdoch in the House of Commons in 1810 (Schivelbusch and Davies, 1998, p.15). A rather honest question by someone who failed to conceive the avalanche of technological innovations that were yet to come. The 20th century saw the birth of electric light and the rapid change in staging plays. Technological power created the need for new professionals such as the lighting and the sound designer and the need for someone to coordinate theatrical praxis: the stage manager.

The HE sector was shy to comprehend the need for vocational training courses. The first timid steps were attempted in the

middle of the 20th century and only towards an academic approach to the theatrical phenomenon. Founded in 1947 by eminent scholar and theatre director, Professor Glynne Wickham, University of Bristol was the first in the UK to offer a degree in Theatre Studies (Bristol.ac.uk, 2024). The British government commissioned a report on drama training (Archive, 2024).by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Estab-

# "Mum, I want to become a lampie!"

## Higher Education Lighting training in the UK By Sofia Alexiadou

lished in 1956 as a Portuguese foundation for the whole of humanity, the foundation's original purpose focussed on fostering knowledge and raising the quality of life through the arts, charity, science and education (Gulbenkian.pt, 2024). The report shed a light on understanding the drama training landscape of the '70s. Either this was provided by university courses with no vocational or practical training or by drama schools with ambiguous and weak academic curriculum. This report led to the establishment of the National Council for Drama Training in 1976 (NCDT) whose main purpose was to

safeguard the quality of drama teaching in the UK. The NCDT merged in 2012 with the Conference of Drama Schools to form Drama UK which dissolved in 2016 only to be replaced by The Federation of Drama Schools founded in 2017, whose core ethos is declared as follows:

"A defining feature of all members of the Federation of Drama Schools is the commitment to the highest quality training that is situated within a conservatoire ethos. Students in these schools benefit from the strong links and collaborative partnerships that member institutions have established with the industry and the professional environments in which graduating students will eventually secure sustainable employment as performers, directors, technicians, designers and other related professions" (Federationofdramaschools.co.uk, 2024).

By this endlessly shifting need to preserve quality in drama training, there is a grey zone between academic and vocational training since the above mentioned report in 1976. Drama

schools are hinting that the training in academic courses lacks in practical training and therefore cannot provide any assur-



ance that the graduates will secure employment. Nevertheless, as all the drama schools are offering BA degrees, their stu-

dents need to engage with academic research and writing.

UK has been an undeniable world leader in Technical Theatre training. There is a plethora of undergrad courses, fewer post grads that offer technical training that leads to a career in Lighting. The strands are nowadays multiple. From Lighting Designer, Lighting Programmer to Chief LX, Head of Lighting, Lighting and Network Technician, the roles in lighting keep on multiplying as technology advanced offering more specialisms and new job roles.

There is a broad umbrella of options for those who want to study in London or in the regions: the UK should be proud of the high standard of training across drama schools and universities offering teaching in Lighting whether that is in specific modules or dedicated degrees. In the past years, however, dedicated Lighting degrees seem to be disappearing with the current trend for Technical training to be offering degrees

with wider training, offering Lighting specialism as an option.

In London, there is a wide selection of schools that offer lighting as specialism. **East 15** offer a BA (Hons) in Stage and Production Management with some lighting elements being taught within the first year of the degree then the students can progress in their following years of study by undertaking show roles. A similar course is on offer by **Guildford School of Acting**. Beginning with a comprehensive introduction to all core subjects relating to professional theatre production, the students build experience in a range of skills including sound, lighting, stage management and construction and Scenic Arts to then move on to their second and third year of studies to work on shows. **Guildhall School** offer a Production Arts BA with elements of Lighting in the first year within the Theatre Technology pathway which covers lighting, sound, video and stage technology. **LAMDA** offer a Productions Arts BA with Lighting specialism in their second year. **Mountview** has a Technical Production degree whilst RADA has on offer a Technical Theatre and Stage Management degree. **Rose Bruford College** and **Royal Central School of Speech and Drama** are the only two providers that still offer BAs in Lighting Design. Royal Central

will be launching two new degrees from 2025: a BA (Hons) in Production Technologies and Stage Management and a BA (Hons) in Performance Design with Lighting being one of the specialisms. **Rose Bruford** is also offering a degree in Creative Lighting Control which is a dedicated degree for Lighting programmer and will be reintroducing a new BA (Hons) in Lighting Design from 2025.

In the regions, the selection is broad and of high quality as well. In Scotland, the **Royal Conservatoire** has a BA in Production Arts and Design, whilst in Wales, **Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama** offer a Stage Management and Technical Theatre Course. In Liverpool, **LIPA** has a Theatre and Technology course whilst just next door in **Salford**, students can attend a Technical Theatre course. Still in the regions, **Bath Spa** and **University of Lincoln** offer Technical Theatre degrees.

A few providers across the UK who are more focused on Live Events (but not exclusively): **Backstage Academy, University of South Wales, University of Hertfordshire, Solent University, Newcastle College University Centre** and **University of Derby**.

On the MA front, Dr. Scott Palmer, Deputy Head and Associate Professor of

School of Performance & Cultural Industries at the **University of Leeds** explains: "At Leeds we don't teach lighting any more specifically at undergraduate level on what is a more general BA Theatre & Performance degree (or programming and production). We do teach light as a creative material in MA Performance Design but the lighting designers we have attracted to this course in the past couple of years have been from China and are looking in the main to develop away from a specific professional focus on light". **Rose Bruford College** offers an MA Light in Performance, a degree with international appeal and the only MA in Light in the UK.

This year, the HE sector has seen an increase in a number of students wanting to go into backstage disciplines which makes the future of the industry feel a bit more hopeful. The technical courses in Higher Education for the students for those who wish to choose them



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and feel this is the right choice for them, provide a solid path into the industry with a wide range of different degrees and diverse settings. The ALPD, has always been supportive of students with the Student Sponsored Scheme. The scheme offers students, who have not previously been members of the ALPD, the opportunity to enjoy free ALPD membership until the end of March 2025. To qualify for Sponsored Student membership, applicants will not have previously been a member of the ALPD and will be studying full time on a UK course or recognised industry apprenticeship scheme and have an interest in the process of live performance lighting and / or video and projection.

Student members benefit from the increased opportunity to network with lighting and video production professionals at insightful events organised by the ALPD, such as their members' socials and visits to shows and theatres. Membership provides vital interaction and connection between established figures in professional lighting and video design, and the next generation of talented designers, programmers and technicians.

Whether via HE or apprenticeship, the wider community of lighting will always embrace new talent, hard working individuals with a passion for this extraordinary

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industry! This next generation of lighting artists and technicians can only teach us that the job can also be done with a smile on your face at the end of a long day. #

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Photos: Rose Bruford

**Sofia Alexiadou is an educator and a lighting designer. You can usually find her in exotic Sidcup in the lighting playgrounds of Rose Bruford or in dark auditoriums around Europe working on her next show! Sofia is the Chair of the ALPD Educational working group, Programme director Creative Lighting Control BA (Hons) and Programme director Light in Performance MA at Rose Bruford College**



**I applied for the Production Lumière Scheme as someone who felt left behind by the pandemic. As a 2020 graduate I hadn't planned to have to move back in with my parents, working as a waitress whilst the country waited on news flashes and prime minister speeches.**

I have the ALPD to thank for getting back into the industry, as I joined their Lumière 20:20 scheme and met local practitioners in the Staffordshire area, who, as the industry re-opened and readjusted, gave me opportunities to work and grow, giving me my first proper experiences in industry. I came from a background of being a one person does all, working a lot of fringe and small student gigs over my studies, so often was doing lighting, sound and stage management. I wanted to hone my skills in lighting, and develop them further, as well as break into the London theatre scene as someone who was predominantly working in regional theatres .

## Lumière Production Scheme

**Ellen Butterworth-Evans shares her four-months-long experience of the scheme**



2 weeks after receiving the phone call from Johanna Town, I was on a train down to Lewes alongside a very packed suitcase and Sainsburys bag full of my tools and clothes. Located amidst the beautiful East Sussex countryside you find the incredible Glyndebourne Opera House, which was celebrating 90 years of running this year, being opened in 1934 and rebuilt in 1994. I was dropped straight into the middle of practicals making for three of their operas - *Carmen*, *Merry Widow* and *Magic Flute*. As someone who has been 5'2 for most of their life I relished the opportunity to climb inside all these beautiful sets to install the set electrics, working alongside the in-house team on wireless practicals and creating new show practicals. As someone

who attended a drama school that didn't do opera or have an opera course, the scale of opera is still mind blowing to me, especially with Glyndebourne's ability to have their shows moving between the mainstage and their two full size rehearsal rooms that can accommodate the full scale sets. This upscaling also spanned to the items included in the sets, as we worked on a modified van/car that was being used in *Carmen*, being pulled on stage via automation. We had to essentially gut the car mechanics to install the drivers and batteries, as well as building and installing lots of LED tape to light inside the car, and modify the headlights and blinkers, as well as installing a siren light on top.

Towards the second month of Glyndebourne I worked more with Amy Clarke, Glyndebourne's in-house programmer, working on re-lighting three shows in the season - *The Magic Flute*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Giulio Cesare*. With the opera house being so old and having so many different revivals of past productions, it was interesting to see their process of updating the shows with changes in the rig (e.g. *Tristan Und Isolde* was first performed in the early 2000's so consisted of a mainly generic rig, as the modern rig consists mainly of moving lights acting as wash



Sat in the gorgeous auditorium at Glyndebourne at the end of my 3 months there

lights and spot lights). It was also very interesting to learn new softwares like Moving Light Assistant (MLA) to see how the previous shows had been documented and used for the refocus on the new productions.

After my 3 months at Glyndebourne I was quickly thrown into the world of Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. Arriving for their season load in, working alongside the team to help install the season rig, as well as rig additional units for their first production - *Twelfth Night*, lit by Aideen Malone. As the venue is seasonal, *Twelfth Night* was their first production of their summer season, so the venue had been left mothballed since the previous September. This led to quite a whiplash going from focusing boom towers in a MEWP at Glyndebourne, to yelling over tree surgeons whilst installing truss towers and having lighting-department-dedicated loppers to trim back branches during focus calls. My second week was predominantly evening calls as, due to being an open air theatre in the centre of London, you need to wait for complete darkness, so most focus calls happen from



**Clockwise from left - a statue modified to hold ES lamps for Merry Widow. Focusing for Carmen. Programming presets with Amy Clarke for Magic Flute. Evening focus call at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. At the desk with Amy, relighting Magic Flute**



10pm to 2am. Aideen is an incredible lighting designer, and it was thrilling to see her work in action. I ended up operating the first few dresses and previews, and loved being able to see the show as it changed from late evening sun to darkness, letting the design shine through. After two long stints in theatre venues, it was very nice to change pace and join the Lamp & Pencil team, seeing how the company works creating lighting practicals and set electrics for different shows. I initially joined the team for a site visit at the

Phoenix Theatre, working with the team on an install day at the venue, updating set electrics and props with the needed requirements. It was fascinating as someone who came from the chaos of fringe theatre to see the methodical methods used by the company, especially with their schematics used for installations. I spent the rest of my time working at their site in Bishop's

Stortford, which was a completely different experience to Glyndebourne and Regent's Park, both being theatre venues, to go to a warehouse setting. The team is so lovely and made me feel so welcome, and it was fascinating seeing their process, from designing and creating their own PCB's and LED tape to installing them into the various sets that arrived.

The scheme has been nothing short of a whirlwind. I started it as a nomad, freelancing out of a suitcase, unsure what my next move was and have ended the scheme by moving to London with my partner, continuing work with Regent's Park Open Air Theatre on the remaining summer season, and can't wait to keep learning from them. I can't thank enough the practitioners I have worked with, especially Vic Pyne at Glyndebourne and Tamsin at Lamp & Pencil, for being so kind and making me feel like a part of their teams, as well as being shining examples of females excelling in the theatre industry. This opportunity has helped me no end to get me on track with my career, being able to work in London and grow my contacts, as well as gaining confidence and giving me opportunities I otherwise wouldn't have had. I will never forget my time on the scheme, and can't wait to see what the future brings. 🍷

**Currently running at the Ambassadors Theatre in London's West End, Kathy & Stella Solve a Murder! is an award-winning musical comedy which follows Kathy & Stella – hosts of Hull's least successful true crime podcast.**

However, when their favourite author is killed, the pair find themselves thrust into a thrilling whodunnit of their own. The show features a lighting design by Peter Small who approached White Light (WL), a d&b solutions company, to supply his rig, having previously done so for the show's Bristol and Manchester run. For the London production, an addition to the rig included the Macula remote follow-spot System – distributed in the UK by Sound Technology Ltd - making the show the first in West End history to use this ground-breaking technology.

Kathy & Stella arrives in London following its previous sell-out runs in Edinburgh, Manchester and Bristol. Peter describes it as 'a big, fun, in-your-face musical that's packed with comedy and colour. It's busy and fast and the pace and

tempo just keeps increasing as the night goes on!". Being a comedy, a musical and a whodunit, the show covers a variety of genres – all of which Peter had to encompass into his lighting design. He explains: "The lighting works very hard to support the fast-paced storytelling, which features numerous musical numbers which each have their own identity and aesthetic. On top of that, the lighting has almost

## Kathy & Stella solve a Murder!

**Peter Small lights the first West End show using the Macula remote follow spot system**

empathetic qualities, moving with the characters ebb and flow of energy during certain moments. My challenge was to hit all of these emotive and technical briefs yet do so within the

contained, boxed-in nature of the set".

Prior to its transfer to the West End, the show, naturally, underwent several changes, from its original staging through to now. However, it would need to continue changing when it eventually arrived in the capital. Peter states: "The main challenge for us was trying to fit the

show into The Ambassadors which is by far our smallest theatre to date! This took a lot of close work across departments and the theatre to ensure everything could fit. Safe to say the theatre is full, wall to wall, top to bottom. We've even removed the theatres' equipment substage and stored it off site to make space for racks and follow spot controllers".

This confined space meant that Peter had to be meticulous with his lighting design and find new solutions to be both creative yet practical – which is where the Macula system came into play. Macula is a fixture-agnostic remote-controlled followspot system, offering unprecedented performance thanks to its incredibly high-resolution fluid head and simple, yet powerful, software control. Perfect for venues in which traditional followspot solutions just aren't feasible, it gives users the organic feel of handling a followspot and is compatible with numerous manufacturers' fixtures.

He comments: "Previously, we had used traditional follow spots but the limited space within The Ambassadors meant this just wouldn't be possible. That said, my design utilised the spots, in this case Ayrton Eurus, almost the entire time with many fast moving targets (people whizzing about on modified desk chairs with

rollerblade wheels on!) so I had to find some sort of solution to make this work. Whilst it had yet to be used on a West End show, I'd seen the Macula System at various tradeshows before, and so asked WL's Stuart Porter to arrange a demonstration of the equipment for this production. I was keen to be able to use a fixture of my choice, that would be bright, responsive, stable and have the support to enable a smooth process as we set-up home at the Ambassadors.

He comments: "I'm delighted to say that using the Macula system was a complete success. Once the system was up and running, the operators quickly got their head around it and were using it with complete ease. As we fine-tuned the show, the system itself brought forward some quite interesting revelations. For example, it allowed us to program all the fade ups which resulted in a much smoother pickup rather than the operator trying to control the intensity fader and follow at the same time. Similarly, it also allowed for the (expected) perks of snap blackouts etc. In short, it's a system which paid dividends on this production and which I would use again a heartbeat".

Alongside the Macula System, Peter's rig consisted of SIXPARS, Viper Performances, Auras, ColorSource Spots, various



Photos: Ellie Kurttz.



atmospherics and a slew of generics. There is also a significant array of practical lighting, including metres of LED tape, LED pixel festoons, LED neons, light boxes, light bulb signs, fake fluorescent fittings, pendants, smaller practical lamps, fairy lights, rope lights, LED tubes, disco lights and mirror balls, custom-commissioned wireless practicals (light up phones and books) as well as a brand new concept in making a light up Laptop (software provided by Doug Finlay).

Peter explains: "The SIXPARs are the DNA of the design, given the whole rig is visible and largely symmetric (by choice). These are most prevalent as a toplight grid which is used for power and impact as well as a plethora of effects and ways of breaking up the space. This logic is repeated in a sidelight system with the high component being Auras which then can do various focuses in the air/stage/house when not resting in a pipe end focus. Mixed in with the high amount of LED sources is a lot of tungsten to cut through it all and just glowing them into

the design can really make a costume pop or fill out a picture. I've enjoyed pulling at the extremes of a big, strong saturated LED look and then going to a very dim solo tungsten source. The show is ultimately very human and it's important to me to have that tungsten element firmly in the mix".

WL's Hire Business Development Manager Stuart Porter states: "We're thrilled to be working with Peter on this show – even more so due to the fact that this marks the first time that the Macula System has been used in the West End. As a company, our ethos is to work closely with



designers and ensure we provide with them exact tools and technology to bring their design to life – which is exactly what we did on this occasion. Given this initial success, I'm sure the Macula system will now be part of many West End lighting designs moving forward".

Kathy & Stella Solve a Murder! will run until 14th September 2024 at The Ambassador's Theatre, London. #

## CREDITS

Book & Lyrics / Director Jon Brittain  
 Music & Lyrics / Musical Director Matthew Floyd Jones  
 Co-Director & Choreographer Fabian Aloise  
 Set & Costume Designer Cecilia  
 Lighting Design Peter Small

CareyLead Production Electrician - Martin Chisnall  
 Production Electricians - Helen Willis, Theo Chadha, James Smellie  
 Production Electrician (BOV/Manchester) - Tim Jackson  
 Lighting Programmer (West End) - Tom Davis  
 Lighting Programmer (BOV/Manchester) - Tom Mulliner  
 Associate Lighting Designer (Edinburgh/BOV/Manchester) - Beth Gupwell  
 Practicals by Junction Inc, James Smellie and Doug Finlay

Many thanks to Mike Gunning and the team at Bristol Old Vic LX and to Louise Houlihan and the team at White Light

# Callum Innes

## Facade of Lysverket, Bergen

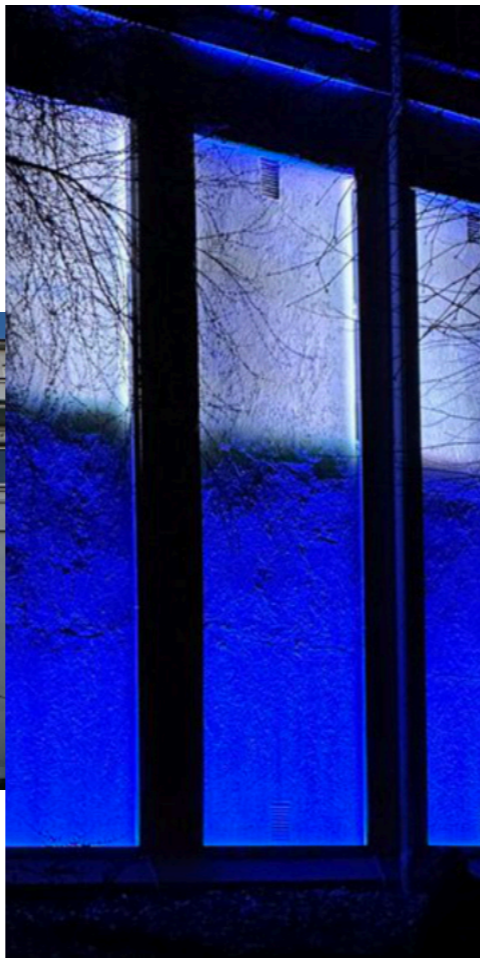
The Art Installation at the facade of Lysverket enriches the KODE collection while gifting art, light and colour to Bergen and its visitors. Three panels on an otherwise blank facade of the building are illuminated with a sequence of coloured forms.



In our series 'It's Light, Jim, but not as we know it' we are looking at ideas and exploration of colour, texture, luminance - whatever makes lighting people tick, away from performance spaces and instruments. We'd love to show your inspirational photos. Please email to [editor@thealpd.org.uk](mailto:editor@thealpd.org.uk)

Callum Innes conceptualised the piece and determined the sequence of patterns and colours.

Technically the artwork was developed by EFLA | Kevan Shaw Lighting Design.



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We intended that the light sources should be invisible. The artwork creates more than an illumination of a flat area. The texture of the walls becomes a working surface with the same variation found in choosing canvas, board, linen or paper to apply paint. The installation is located adjacent to the lake in the city centre affording long views amplified by reflections in the water, and intimate views from the path adjacent to the building.

The pattern changes on one of the three panels every three minutes with a seamless, smooth transition. If you glance at it as you walk along the lake side, each time you look it will have changed so you might wonder if you saw something different the last time you looked at it.

Each evening the piece is switched on exactly at sunset with the colours intensifying as the dusk falls. In winter it will switch on at 6AM and off at sunrise with the dawn slowly washing the colours away.

This project was nominated and won the Silver Award in the Lighting category for the Scottish Design Awards 2024. 🌟

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