

ALD #

FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

"More art, less tools..."

August/September 2014



In this student issue:

- The ALD's new Lumière scheme
- Postcards from New York and Cornwall
- Lighting reviewed by Susannah Clapp
- Michael Northen bursary winners update
- Members' meetings reports
- ... and much, much more...

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*The Elephantom
New London Theatre Cast 2014
Lighting by Matt Daw
Photo by Brinkhoff/Möegenburg*

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From the Chairman....



For some months now our subgroup for the Lumière scheme has been working at producing a document that outlines the proposed scheme in detail and beginning the process of fundraising and involving participating theatres and designers. Any one of our members who is interested in reading this document can apply to the office for access a copy. Further into this edition of *Focus* (page 40) you will find an appeal to our membership to get involved, which I urge you to read and respond to.

If the ALD is to be an organisation that exists to promote, expand and enhance our industry, then propagating our young designers and helping to provide a pathway that leads towards establishing themselves has to be a very important aspect of what our organisation stands for.

I hope that the Lumière scheme can be put in place within the next twelve months and the plan is to be able to offer four “emerging” designers places on the scheme which will last for twelve months. That’s six months working alongside established designers and six months as a resident assistant at one of the participating theatres. If we can make this work it will become an annually repeating scheme.

It will be an exciting prospect for the successful applicants and an important achievement for the ALD.

I was very saddened by the news from Sheffield of the death of Christopher Naylor known to all as “Tink”. What a character he was – “just give me a moment!” as he programmed the lighting board for many designers over many years. For those of us who have worked at the Sheffield theatres it won’t be quite the same without Tink. There is a wonderfully moving Facebook page where the number of photos and comments show just how loved he was by so many people. His love of life and the theatre will always be remembered by those who knew him and shared the odd “lock-in” after a tech!

So it seems like the summer is upon us, and not too bad so far. I’m looking forward to a good dose of natural light and I hope that goes for most of you – a bit of sun, sand and sea can go a long way before descending into those dark spaces where we recreate all those atmospheres out of artificial sources. 🍷

Peter

Highlights

- 4 **Marko in the calm before the storm**
Marko's back in the UK briefly...
- 6 **Professionals matters**
Jo on membership and holidays.
- 8 **MFA in lighting design**
Alexander Ridgers at Northwestern University.
- 10 **Hot Ice Passion**
Richard Lambert heads to Blackpool.
- 12 **Critical lighting**
Susannah Clapp reviews some recent designs.
- 18 **Office Oracle**
All the news from the ALD office.
- 24 **Michael Northen bursary awards**
An interview with three past MNB winners.
- 30 **Shadowing in Oslo**
Rob Youngson shadows Bruno Poet in Norway.
- 32 **Evolution in Sydney**
RCSSD students at the Vivid Festival in Sydney.
- 36 **Meetings updates**
Reports from Shaftesbury Avenue and Bankside.
- 40 **The Lumière Scheme**
The ALD's new scheme for emerging lighting designers.
- 42 **ABTT seminar review**
An update on the programmers' seminar.

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Mark Jonathan is back in the UK (at least for a couple of weeks)



As I recall I closed my last article coming back from the USA to London to light two operas outdoors. As I started work it started to rain and although we were protected by an impressive canopy the damp permeated everything and my score and paperwork soaked up the moisture in the air. That was a rude awakening after the glorious sun in Charleston, USA. It was my sixth *Barber of Seville* and the Rossini brightened the cloudy days. It was still a delight to come back to this old friend, which I knew, more or less, off by heart.

The second opera was Benjamin Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, a piece that demanded ghostly atmospheres in its many episodes. It was a tough challenge as the receding daylight



infiltrated act one more than I would have liked. I could have done with another rehearsal but we pulled it off. The hardest thing about the gradual change of natural light to night is when you have a lighting session at midnight but you're looking at lighting cues for 8 or 9pm. It looks quite different.

The three lighting designers, Colin Grenfell, Richard Howell and me, were somewhat surprised when we found that the overhead general cover of 64 Source 4 pars had been replaced by 32 old LED moving lights. It seems this decision was made by the management directly with the hire company. We were not

amused but made the best of it. Some hire companies may know that I take a dim view of suggested exchanges being made to the requisition. Let's be clear: I'm not against LED. I use it when I need to but suffice it to say, in this case, the rest of the rig had to work a lot harder to make up for it. I'm not convinced yet that LED comes up to muster for all the delicacies that theatre and opera lighting might require. That said, it's incredible what the Opera Holland Park management and staff achieve with limited resources.

We have just marked the first anniversary of the death of our dear friend and former editor, Andy Collier, who took *Focus* to a new level. While we all miss Andy I think I should record our

great appreciation to Kelli Zezulka who picked up the baton as editor in a completely seamless way. Thank you, Kelli, for your hard work.

As I write this now, back in the Swiss Alps, it's raining heavily outside. Thick cloud rolls through the pine forest and the thunder rumbles and crashes operatically. Despite the storm, for me, it's "the calm before the storm" as I rest and relax before I set off to Denmark next week for Massenet's *Don Quichotte*. Apparently, I shall be given a bicycle to get to and from rehearsals so it had better not be raining there. Whatever, I shall be inside a big opera house even if I arrive to work feeling damp. 🌧️

This issue's tips and tricks...

This issue, lighting designer John Bishop gives us his tip and a rather cheeky trick:

John's tip:

When lighting operas, put Lee 202 into the conductor's two specials so that their beams don't stick out like sore thumbs, especially when using haze.

John's trick:

Put a stupid colour in one or two lights, for example a window backlight, so that the director and designer will feel really included in the lighting process when they suggest their preferred colour. Only do this on lights that are easy to access and be prepared that this trick can easily backfire as they may love your bizarre colour!

And, finally, Marko's tip:

At last, a mobile phone supplier who includes unlimited data and doesn't surcharge you for calls or texts to and from the UK while in 16 countries including the USA, Ireland, many European countries and others. Thank you, Three, that's just what this roving LD needs.

STOP PRESS!

The nominees for the 2014 Knight of Illumination theatre section were selected at the judging lunch on 25 July.

The nominees are:

Dance: **Natasha Katz** – *The Winter's Tale*, Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House; **Paul Keogan** – *No Man's Land*, English National Ballet at The Barbican; **Ed Yetton** – *The Little Match Girl*, Arthur Pita at DanceEast, Ipswich

Musicals: **Jon Clark** – *American Psycho*, The Almeida; **Paule Constable** – *The Light Princess*, Lyttelton, National Theatre; **Adam Silverman** – *Urinetown*, St. James Theatre

Opera: **Joachim Klein** – *Bluebeard's Castle*, Oper Frankfurt at Edinburgh Festival Theatre; **Ian Scott** – *Owen Wingrave*, Snape Maltings; **Mimi Jordan Sherin** – *Rodelinda*, English National Opera at the Coliseum

Plays: **Lucy Carter** – *Emil and the Detectives*, Olivier, National Theatre; **Tim Lutkin** – *The Crucible*, The Old Vic; **Andy Purves** – *The Believers*, The Drum at Theatre Royal Plymouth and touring

Video: **David Haneke** – *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Welsh National Opera; **Tim Reid** – *1984*, Nottingham Playhouse and touring; **Ethan Wang** – *Rice*, Cloud Gate Theatre Dance Theatre of Taiwan, Sadler's Wells

PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

Johanna Town takes a holiday ... and needs your advice



Time off

Summer is here and I am enjoying a break in the Quantox Hills in Somerset. Time off as a freelancer is hard to manage and I am not very good at it. I was bad at taking holidays when in full-time employment, and now as a freelancer I find it impossible to plan proper breaks. My usual year is: take all the work that comes and then fit in a break if possible. It never works. There will always be a show in rehearsals and people expecting “24 hour” access to your time.

So this year, I booked four weeks’ break with nothing happening at all. It was really hard to keep that space clear without rehearsals or meetings. It has been very nice to spend some time at home. When you travel as much as we do around the country and the world it is really important to take some time out with friends

and family and to have time to recharge those important artistic batteries.

But what has struck me over this period of time off has been the feeling of being out of work! When all I was actually doing was taking a holiday. Any tips from members who have managed to resolve holiday time, how to manage it, and not feel guilty would be much appreciated.

Emerging students

This time of year is also when our student members leave college and start work. It is an exciting time.

We are currently looking at a new members category: “Graduate”. This will give one-year access to professional membership benefits for the cost of an associate. It is a way to help young graduates in the early stages of their careers at a friendly price, but would only open to students who are members in their final year. This will be voted on at November’s AGM, so if you support the idea, do come and cast your vote. I personally give it my full support.

But for the time being all student membership will continue to run until March 2015, to help you establish yourself and decide where your talents will take you.

Professional members’ benefits

By becoming a Professional member you have added access to many more opportunities within the ALD:

Members’ meetings: help share views and develop topics and activities.

Social events: help you network, meet new people and keep in touch with your peers.

Regular email newsletters: with events, announcements, jobs and critical professional information that you can’t get elsewhere.

ALD yearbook: an annual directory listing your contact details and area of expertise.

Fees database: access to fees knowledge from around the country.

Access to liteline@: our helpline if things go wrong or you need advice.

Associate and Professional members’ benefits

ALD website: members’ area for contacts, networking, forums, information, CVs, resources and practice guidance.

ALD rider: to help with terms and conditions on contracts.

Short-term contract: for lighting designers, and we hope soon for freelance technical workers. Especially useful if you are working



Sunset over the Quantox Hills
in Somerset

on small-scale events where you are not being offered a written contract.

Working as an assistant or associate

designer: advice on how to approach designers and what to do to get the most out of these positions.

Get involved

We would love to see more of our younger members from all four categories helping on the many different subcommittees. You don't need to be a professional lighting designer. As the next generation of professionals, your input and enthusiasm is important in shaping the

future of your ALD and the lighting industry as a whole.

Join a subcommittee or the executive and have a voice in shaping your future.

Contact me at jo.town@ald.org.uk or lan at office@ald.org.uk for further information. 🇬🇧

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Alexander Ridgers on his first year as an MFA student at Northwestern University

Moving to the US for studies towards an MFA degree in theatre design at Northwestern University, Illinois, was a big choice and a big decision that took a lot of thought and questioning whether it was the right thing to do. But now, as I return from one full-on, sleepless academic year of study, I realise that had I said “no”, I would have regretted it for a very long time.

I will admit, I knew nothing about Northwestern or any graduate school before I was given the opportunity to interview and then study there for three years. Northwestern is one of the great universities in America and a top ten drama school of the world. What an opportunity, and one that wouldn't have come along had I not met, assisted and got to know the assistant professor of lighting design and international lighting designer, Marcus Doshi, whilst he was lighting at the Royal Opera House, London.

The school certainly deserves its recognition – a beautiful campus on Lake Michigan, views of Chicago's skyline, a hugely vibrant undergraduate student theatre department, and the utmost professional large-scale performing arts centre – all of which is only one department of this huge research institution. The course itself is truly detailed and crafted to really mould the students

as themselves. The focus is on craft, creative and skills of your particular art, although a true concentration is on “you”, as a designer, theatre-maker and an artist creating a point of view in your work. The graduate programme is a really great opportunity to push yourself and your work in all areas – timescale, physical presentation, design ideas, thought process and point of view – as well as to create relationships with other designers and directors to work and collaborate together at school and in the future.

Having just completed the first steps of the programme, already I feel as though I am a step further in creating work and designing but also with my creative process and in taking a deep analytical look at ideas and creating work truly specific to the stimulus, and dramaturgy. The chance to work and learn in an environment of just two students and on theoretical class projects such as a Shakespeare play off-Broadway – all that has helped to develop my creative design process.

I made my first connection with US theatre with my most recent design for *Catch Me if You Can – the Musical* and its production in a summer stock theatre in a remote Indiana town. It was a really new experience, with a two-day in-theatre rehearsal process that was backed up by much of the skills and process



The Chicago skyline

from my learning that helped really fulfil the design and take me a step further with my work. It was a new experience and one that was ultimately rewarding to round off the end of a remarkable year.

As I return to the US in September, I am looking forward to continuing to learn and educate whilst at Northwestern – graduate students develop into teaching undergraduate classes in their third year, as well as mentoring incoming theatre students with their areas of specialism throughout the year. Currently, all of the work so far is building and culminating into my current UK work – a large-scale Scottish tour of *Sunset Song*, visiting theatres including the



Catch Me if You Can
Wagon Wheel Theatre,
Warsaw, Indiana, US

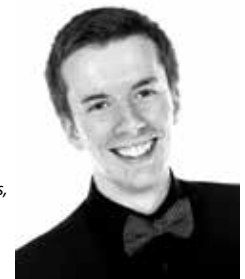
Directed by Scott Michaels
Designed by Terry Julien
Lighting by Alexander Ridgers
Photo by Scott Michaels

King's Theatre Edinburgh and Glasgow's King's Theatre – something that I would feel I've made a giant step towards, and now with my learning at NU, a confident step in my design work here in the UK. A last piece: I certainly wouldn't have been able to say this before I moved to the US, but I am going to find it hard to ever say "no" to any future opportunities as I will never know where it might lead in the future.

More information can be found on my website – www.alexanderridgers.weebly.com – and more information on Northwestern University is at www.northwestern.edu. 🇺🇸

Alexander Ridgers is based in Chicago and Edinburgh, working in theatre, musicals, opera, site-specific and installation lighting.

Alexander was winner of the Francis Reid Award in 2012, and has lit in the West End, UK tours, and around Scotland. A graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2012, he now studies at Northwestern and is due to graduate from the MFA programme in 2016.



HOT ICE PASSION

Richard Lambert reviews this exciting ice show in Blackpool

I do love a good professional ice show!

So, filled with excitement to see this year's Hot Ice show on its opening night, I left London, hopped on a train and went to see "Passion", produced and directed by Amanda Thompson OBE, managing director of Blackpool Pleasure Beach and president of Stageworks Worldwide Productions.

In just over three hours I was there. As a regular visitor to the Hot Ice show, I had been wondering what this year would look like without its resident choreographer Anthony Johns. Well, I needn't have worried as some of his amazing production numbers made a welcome return, alongside many new pieces by former ice champion Oula Jääskeläinen and Commonwealth Games dance captain Lynsey Brown (both former professional ice skaters).

We took our seats, as the familiar "Hot Ice" sounds of clanking chains, distant thunder, rain and bird tweets added to the atmosphere. Just the right amount of haze was added to transform the lighting fixtures into light beams. Safety announcements led into a full force thunderstorm at which point the chanting of "Hot Ice" commenced. The lighting grid was lifted, and the pulsing of additional new rows of Sharpy rock and roll moving lights heightened the anticipation. Amanda Thompson does like



a bit of "dark and moody" which builds into an explosion – and never fails to deliver!

This year the title of show is "Passion" and it has this in abundance. It's clear that Hot Ice is Amanda's passion. The numbers reflect the title of the show.

Here's where an ice show can deliver an experience like none other: the speed of the skaters over the ice allows for performers to be

anywhere on the ice in a split second. Carefully timed with effects, the cast appear magically as if out of thin air! A clap of thunder and – bang – the show's started with skaters in position on the ice.

The ice looks magical. A blank canvas to paint with every hue, colour and brilliance you could ever want. Blackpool ice has the reputation for being second to none and was voted "Best Ice" in this year's skating awards. In the world's



oldest purpose-built ice theatre, with its steel buttress supports, wooden ceiling and pleasant temperature, it's just the perfect location for this unique art form. The sound was surprisingly really clear, unusually so in ice rinks around the UK, even if the second half was a little too loud for me.

Ice skating, as a competitive sport, is a million miles away from a professional ice show! Turning up on a Saturday morning at your local rink to learn how to stop, hop, go backwards, skip and jump is no preparation for what Hot Ice achieves in this show. Ice skating is one of the few sports where "the quality of how" you do something matters. Along with trampolining, diving and gymnastics, some sports require greater body awareness and aesthetic form in execution. Then add some music for expression and you're left with only two sports: gymnastics and ice skating, two sports that are just awesome.

The pace of the show is where Amanda's directorial experience and flair excels. We are shown ballads, exciting flashy big jumps, formation blocks, costume parades. It's all there. As soon as one style is presented, another genre

follows so you're never bored. The knitting together of every theatre effect is evidenced.

This is a really well rehearsed show with outstanding international skaters of the calibre other ice shows can only dream of hiring! It rightly received a full standing ovation on its opening night!

I do hope our British skaters go and see this show. You won't see everything the first time as there's so much to take in, but each visit will be an experience, a journey and an education in how skating can and should be.

If I had any criticism of the show it would have to be with the lighting. There are some beautiful moments, and there is a lot of old and new technology, and clearly someone knows how to push the buttons to keep the movers aimed at the ice. It is extremely spectacular! But, there were several jarring moments, too many to list, but particularly in a Spanish number, where the ice wash was snapped from red to blue every fourth beat of music for the entire number. Ouch! A hot passionate Spanish sensual number invokes reds, oranges and yellow – not

blue (which becomes indigo on the LED lights anyway). This actually went from "not good" to "really annoying" by the end of the number. Green costumes lit in indigo turn brown and lose their zing. There is no lighting designer credited for this show and I suspect that there's the problem. Competent lighting programmers and experienced lighting technicians, yes, but no designer.

Lights chasing after the skaters and skaters chasing after the lights, pools of lights missing clumps of skaters, all left a hole in what was otherwise a fantastic evening! The followspots were changed to a soft edge for one of the numbers in the second half which was very welcome after the hard edge used throughout in the first half.

Despite the opening night glitches, this show must rate as the best ice show in the world, second to none. There is something in it for everyone; it's very different from some of the boring competitive ice skating seen on television. Even if you're not familiar with ice skating and wonder what to expect, Hot Ice is a very definite "must-see" for all the family! 🍷



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Your palettes are automatically saved and with one tap you can email full details, complete with colour swatches.

The App also contains many popular tools from our website, all completely redesigned for ease of use on an iPhone. These include a Gel Comparator to find the LEE match to competitor's filters, a Colour Temperature Calculator for the Mired Shift aficionados, and a Diffusion Finder that gives you relative diffusion across the LEE range.



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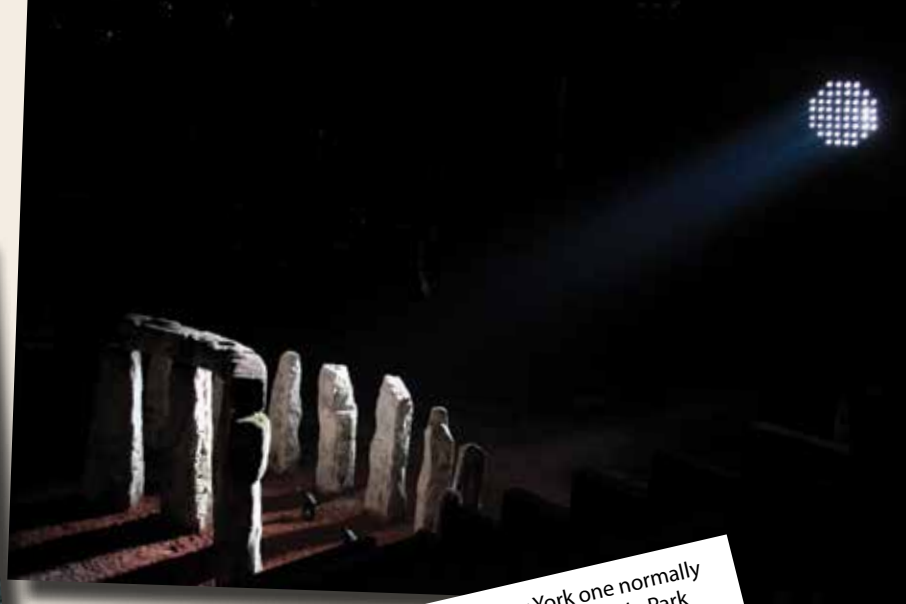


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A POSTCARD FROM...
Rob Halliday and Neil Austin,
The Park Avenue Armory, New York



Greetings from the Upper East Side – not the part of New York one normally finds oneself in doing a show, unless that show is at the remarkable Park Avenue Armory.

We're here with *Macbeth*, the latest transfer from last year's Manchester Festival. It's quite a leap moving from the confines of Ancoat's St Peter's Church to the epic space of the Armory, which occupies an entire city block; the drill hall within it resembles a beautiful arched railway terminus, just without the clutter of track and platforms!

Patrick Dugan, Stephanie Palmer and the rest of the gang from The Lighting Syndicate have looked after us very well, patiently dealing with the "sun" of Pars, the "moon" of Aeros and much more besides!

Neil and Rob

CRITICAL LIGHTING

Critic **Susannah Clapp** recalls some superb lighting

As a theatre critic I am often in the dark when it comes to lighting. I feel myself being wrought upon by sudden special effects. I am conscious of being stolen upon by quiet gradual changes. Yet, I am not qualified to itemise these shifts in a technical manner. What's more, at their most successful, they are – like all theatrical nuances – barely detectable.

Still, every now and then a production seems to offer up a beacon for lighting – and “The Beacon” would surely be the right name for a new lighting design prize. Richard Eyre's production and adaptation of *Ghosts* was such an occasion. I was there on the first night, on 6 October 2013. It turned out to be one of the outstanding and most discussed productions of the year.

Tim Hatley's design and Peter Mumford's lighting gave audiences a glimpse into the difficult heart of Ibsen's play before a word had been spoken. The naturalism that makes the play so arresting was there but so, too, was the threat of vanishing, the weight of things unsaid, the denial. Hatley set the solid furniture of the 1880s in front of transparent screens. These allowed Mumford's lighting to suggest the hidden core of the play: the haunting, the history, the buried secrets. Shadows and faint figures were glimpsed, dimly illuminated through these

screens. A portrait, presumably of the patriarchal ogre, was made to shine like a fly in amber. The luminescent influence of the great disconcerting Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi, whose interiors are subdued although they open onto blocks of light, was subtly evident. Ghosts were there from the beginning, as were concealed fear and damped-down passion. The walls of the respectable sitting room were made to flush fire-red and then to close in darkly on the actors.

Even more fundamentally Mumford conjured up uncertainty. Those solid pieces of furniture were made to glimmer, to seem on the brink of perpetual change.

This was a superb achievement and it posed a problem. It was difficult for a non-technician to know where to put the credit. This turned into a dilemma at the judging lunch for the 2013 Evening Standard Awards. Eyre's production, which featured in several categories, was a strong

Ghosts
Almeida Theatre
Directed by Richard Eyre
Design by Tim Hatley
Lighting by Peter Mumford
Photo by Peter Mumford





A Doll's House
Young Vic
Directed by Carrie Cracknell
Design by Ian MacNeil
Costumes by Gabrielle Dalton
Lighting by Guy Hoare
Photo by Johan Persson

by John Tiffany for the National Theatre of Scotland. I saw the production in Dundee and it proved to be a turning point for me. I came to understand for the first time why people are so fascinated by vampires and how these creatures may be more than merely lurid and frightening. As in the *Eyre* production, lighting – in this case designed by Chahine Yavroyan – played a huge part in excavating the central concerns of the play. It showed action taking place on the slipway between daily life and dream. Actually, its role was even more important than I realised at the time. When I think back on the production, I see above all its whiteness. I thought when watching it that this was chiefly due to Christine Jones' extraordinary design. She filled the tall, wide stage with a forest of silver birches rising out of a snow-covered floor. Now I realise this blanched quality was created at least as much by the steady glare of Yavroyan's lighting. He summoned up a bleached world, one that might have had the blood sucked out of it. This was not his only achievement. Domestic scenes were given a particular strangeness by being perched in the main forest. Beds and sofas were not protected from the outside world by material constructions, yet their boundaries were clearly marked by Yavroyan. These rooms appeared as slabs of light within a

surrounding darkness, adding one other layer of precariousness and vulnerability. I was struck by one further haunting feature of Yavroyan's design. His lighting caused the characters to be followed by long shadows, like persistent ghosts. It had never occurred to me before how seldom you see such shadows on stage: atmospheric shades, yes, but not the shapes of particular characters. Unless, of course, you are watching *Peter Pan*.

In another Ibsen production, in 2012, Carrie Cracknell's whirling *Young Vic A Doll's House*, Guy Hoare's lighting helped trace the progression of Nora's awakening. Soft and muted in the cosy opening scene, it switched into an unforgiving glare when she performed her defiant dance.

At last year's Manchester International Festival the dramatic arc of Kenneth Branagh's *Macbeth*, performed in a deconsecrated church, could have been traced in Neil Austin's lighting alone. A thicket of candles shed a golden glow on the altar; their flames were slowly snuffed out in the course of the evening. At the other end of the building, light drizzled only occasionally through a wall of dark wood. Darkness prevailed.

This July, at the Old Vic, Tim Lutkin's dusky illumination of *The Crucible* helped to suggest that, while the audience listened to

contender for best design, an award that has to cover set, costume, lighting and sound. But who would be the recipient? How can you tell the dancer from the dance? Hatley's screens enabled some of the strangest, most suggestive touches in Mumford's lighting yet Mumford's lighting did not only transfigure, it had its own life; it was the spirit within the body. We concluded that it would have to be a joint award. In the end, neither man went away with a prize.

The new play that flares across my brain when I think of theatrical lighting in the last couple of years is *Let the Right One In*, directed



Left:
Macbeth
Manchester International Festival
Directed by Kenneth Branagh and
Rob Ashford
Designed by Christopher Oram
Lighting by Neil Austin
Photo by Johan Persson

Right:
The Crucible
Old Vic Theatre
Directed by Yael Farber
Designed by Soutra Gilmour
Lighting by Tim Lutkin
Photo by Johan Persson

hysterical accusations of witchcraft, they might themselves be gathered around a cauldron.

There are two lighting effects that I sometimes revisit in my head, not because I have seen them on the stage but because some years ago I saw them itemised in a script. Both are in unperformed plays by Moses Raine, written nearly a decade ago when he was in his early twenties. One describes an effect that was new to me when I read it as a direction, though a similar impression has since been described in Polly Stenham's play *No Quarter*. This is that peculiarly twenty-first-century version of intimacy: a character whose face is lit by the screen of his mobile phone. The second comes

in a tiny, highly charged drama, *Jimmy Luck*, which plays for about five minutes and features as its main speaker a young man called Isaac who loves boys. The instruction is that a triangle of light should be cast by an open door and that in the closing moment of the play this should become yellow, as if – though this is not stated – it were one of the badges used by the Nazis in concentration camps. These are among the moments that make me want to see more work on stage by this gifted dramatist. Well directed, naturally. And lit by a superb lighting designer – such as any of those mentioned above. 🇬🇧



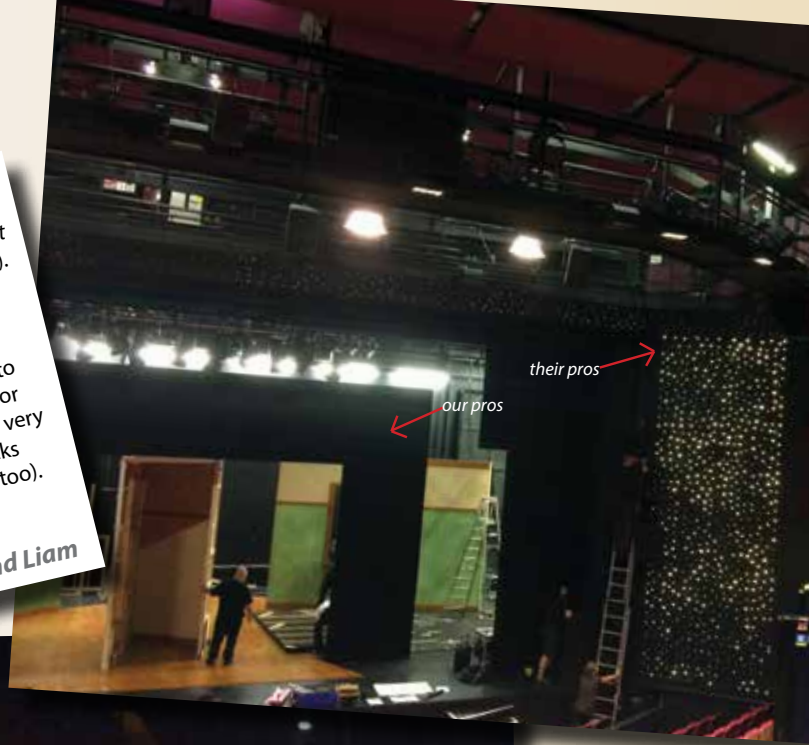
View more of Johan Persson's photography on his website at www.perssonphotography.com

A POSTCARD FROM...

Liam Cleary and Tim Bray, Hall for Cornwall, Truro

Those of you who have been before will know this theatre is wide. For those of you who haven't, IT'S VERY WIDE!
Having toured all over the country we find ourselves at the end of the *Tonight at 8.30* tour in this 998 seat theatre (not just a wide stage but a wide auditorium too).
The stage is so much wider than it is deep. And just to emphasise how wide this theatre is: 17-20m adjustable width LX bars.
The local venue crew, who have been helpful in working out how to best mask our toured set, told us the venue initially was designed for the seating to push back, and to add a fill in to the lower section to create a market space for the town (thankfully no longer the case). I don't think our set would survive very long with cattle on it during the day - it's bad enough travelling in the trucks every week and squeezing through tiny load-in doors (which the HFC has too).
Oh, by the way, did we say it was wide?!
Time for a Cornish pasty...

Tim and Liam





OFFICE ORACLE

News and information from **Ian** and the ALD's London office

Attention students and recent graduates!

Do we have your correct contact details?! You have just finished your current academic year. Do you have your term time address on our database? Do we have the correct one? If you are graduating this summer are you moving away from your study area?

We frequently receive post returned to us as "Unknown at this address" during the autumn. If you are moving over the summer, please ensure that you update your information on the website directory or contact the office. An incorrect address can result in you not receiving membership renewal notices and places the continuation of your membership at risk.

2014 AGM

We can now announce that the 2014 annual general meeting of the Association will take place on **Saturday 8 November**.

This year we are returning to the "room above a pub" format that we used in 2010 and 2011, although we have not yet been able to confirm

the venue or start time. Please watch email bulletins and the next issue of *Focus* in early October for this information.

The day will be broadly the same, though, with the main business part of the event happening mid-morning, allowing out of London members to travel, and smaller meetings taking place after lunch. All members are invited to attend, especially as we are expecting to discuss the future development and structure of the organisation and expect to hold a number of votes on specific issues arising from the discussions.

Although it is unlikely that we will be able to live webcast the event as the last couple of years, we are investigating other methods for those who cannot attend to keep in touch with the proceedings and be able to have an input and react to the discussions taking place.

Members' monthly social evenings

The monthly socials continue at the Coach and Horses on **Friday 26 September**, which does not have a sponsor at the time of writing.

Other dates currently sponsored in 2014 are:

October	Zero88
November	Martin Professional

If any of our other Corporate members wish to sponsor either September 2014 or any of the spare 2015 dates please contact your Executive Committee representative: richard.lambert@ald.org.uk.

2014/15 subscription fees

Thank you to everyone who has paid their arrears prior to the 1 July deadline; however we still had nearly 300 members who owe over £8,500 for subscriptions in the current year at that point.

Those members who pay by standing order and still have fees owing because of the subscription increase this year have also been sent a letter that included our payment guide and a new standing order form for their use/reference. Any arrears that remain owed will be added to next year's subscription and you will not receive our newly designed membership card until all arrears have been cleared.

Standing orders are instructions from you directly with your bank, and, as such, we cannot alter the amount collected from your account. You need to liaise with them, change the instruction through your online banking portal or send the completed standing order back to us and we'll send it to them on your behalf.

Those members who have not paid any money towards their 2014 subscriptions have not been sent this issue of *Focus* and will have their membership suspended.

John Spradbery

Born 3 August 1930; died 6 June 2014

The lighting designer John Spradbery, who has died aged 83, was a key figure in the company of the radical choreographer and director Lindsay Kemp, notably from the moment in 1974 when Kemp's *Flowers*, his avant-garde "pantomime" based on Jean Genet's erotic novel *Notre Dame des Fleurs*, began its twenty-year world tour.

Like Kemp's performance as the transvestite Divine and in all his other roles, John's lighting was never the same from one night to the next, because he always created it manually. As lighting technology became ever more electronically controlled, John astonished admiring technicians all over the world with the way in which he operated his old-fashioned three-preset manual lighting board every night, swaying to the music in the dark at the back of the house as his fingers played on his hundred sliders, like an organist improvising ephemeral paintings with light, shunning the spotlight himself but spectacularly illuminating others.

The collaboration was an unlikely blend of opposites, John's discipline and reliability pairing with Kemp's extravagant daring. He was company manager and technical director, too, with Kemp's first company, at the Lyric

August/September 2014

Hammersmith in 1965, on the Edinburgh Fringe and at the Traverse theatre, and worked with him on the staging of David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust tour at the Rainbow theatre, Finsbury Park, north London, in 1972, adding to the revolutionary new ways of lighting rock concerts.

Other collaborations around the world and at Sadler's Wells theatre included *Salomé*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mr Punch* (in which he also played the roles of the Policeman and the Tree), *Duende*, *Nijinsky*, *Façade*, *The Big Parade*, *Alice* and *Cinderella*. John was an understated but energetic senior member of a flamboyant young company of many nationalities and contributed greatly to its team spirit.

Taken from the Guardian obituary by David Haughton:

www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/jul/16/john-spradbery

Peter Lambert: ABTT Technician of the Year

As announced at the ABTT Theatre Show Awards, ALD Professional member **Peter Lambert** has been presented with the ABTT Award for Technician of the Year 2014.

A leading production electrician since 1998 – when his break came working on *Showboat* at London's Prince of Wales Theatre for the legendary Richard Pilbrow – his many years of experience has made him one of the most sought-after technicians around.

Whilst working as a casual on the original 1983 West End production of *Singin' in the Rain*

Lesley Manville presenting Peter Lambert with his award
Photo by Sam Shrimpton

at the London Palladium, Peter studied for his City & Guilds 181 & 236(1) theatre electrician course – a training course delivered by the ABTT – graduating in 1984.

This was followed by two years at the Palace Theatre as a chargehand, seeing in the Cameron Mackintosh/Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Les Misérables*. Further experience on West End musicals and UK tours followed and in 1988 he became freelance.

His prolific CV encompasses some of the most significant London and touring musicals over the last sixteen years, most notably *The Lion King*, *Mamma Mia*, *Starlight Express*, *Wicked* and *Legally Blonde*.

Peter Lambert joins an illustrious list of ABTT Technician of the Year winners, including Ben Sandford (2013), Andy Brown (2012), Alex Hitchcock (2011), David Draude (2010), John Tapster (2009), Simon Stone (2008), Othman "Hoffman" McGregor-Read (2007), Antony Bridges (2006, awarded posthumously), Stuart Crane (2005), Fraser Hall (2004), Andy Voller (2003) and Nick Ware (2002).



OFFICE ORACLE

PLASA Show 2014

As ever, the ALD will have a stand at the 2014 PLASA Show taking place between **Sunday 5 and Wednesday 8 October** at the ExCeL Centre in Docklands. We will be found on stand T64, which is close to corporate members Ambersphere Solutions and Clay Paky, as well as a number of the other industry associations and colleges.

ALD members are entitled to free entry to the show and can sign up for their entry ticket by going to the link provided on page 35, which has also been circulated via members' email bulletins.

We are hoping to host another of our popular seminars on one of the days, but we cannot yet confirm the details, so again, keep an eye on the email bulletin, members' only Facebook group, Twitter and LinkedIn group for more information.

Sponsored Student Scheme 2015

This corporate members-funded scheme for students studying on higher education courses with an element of lighting design will open again for applications in September. The closing date for applications is **Christmas 2014**.

All current student members will be contacted at the start of September with a new

application form to fill in and return to the office complete with proof of your student status in order to maintain your current membership beyond April 2015.

Please note that even if you are currently a member of the scheme you will need to apply again to continue your free membership through to April 2016. If you do not, your membership will revert to a normal student category and you will need to pay the annual subscription for a student (£30 pa) in April 2015.

Printer for sale

Professional Designer member Durham Marenghi has a Canon BJC-5500 A2 colour bubble jet printer for sale.

It has been stored for three years with ink cartridges removed and it also includes spare cartridges, original packing and some A2 paper.

£150 ono

Please contact Durham directly:
mail@durhamld.com. 📧



Introducing a new ALD resource...

The ALD environmental responsibility subgroup, under the leadership of Andy Purves, has assembled an "eco expert panel", available to answer all your questions on sustainability, resource use and any other "green" topics (see page 28). Members are:

Tim Atkinson
Entertaining Sustainability

Sholeh Johnston
Julie's Bicycle

Rob Halliday
robhalliday.com

Nick Moran
Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Philip Norfolk
Director, Ambersphere Solutions

Katie Oman
Director, AMS Planning and Research

Bryan Raven and Craig Bennett
WhiteLight

Ian Garrett
Centre for Sustainable Practice in the Arts

JP Bedell
US lighting designer, sustainability correspondent and blogger

Mark White
Electronic Theatre Controls

Full biogs on the members' page of the ALD website

MICHAEL NORTHEN BURSARY 2014

Still haven't applied? ALD student rep **Sean Gleason** explains why you should ...

Calling ALL students and recent graduates! It's that time of year already to get your entries submitted for this year's Michael Northen bursary competition 2014.

Each year an award of £500, alongside a year's premium membership to StageJobsPro and a copy of Michael Northen's autobiography, is presented to an up-and-coming lighting designer who has demonstrated a strong imaginative and creative design and process through their entry.

A further two awards – the ETC award and the ALD-sponsored Francis Reid award, each with prizes of £250 – are given to those who also showed excellence through their submission.

Last year's competition attracted a record amount of entries, and proved a particularly difficult process for the panel of high-profile lighting designers and industry experts, who offer up their time and expertise to critique and give both feedback and advice to all those who enter.

Taking part in the Michael Northen Bursary will bring you directly to the attention of the experienced lighting designers and other industry professionals on the judging panel, whilst winning will provide recognition and a great public showcase for you and your work, as you start out and build your professional career.



*The Children's Hour
Lighting by Jamie Platt, winner of the 2013 ETC award*

The competition is open to all students no matter what or where you study, and is open to both ALD members and non-members, as well as those who have graduated in 2013 or 2014.

Submissions must be received by Monday 18 August 2014. The judging will take place in late August, and the names of the winners will be announced at the PLASA show (5–8 October

at London's ExCeL Centre), where the winning portfolios will also be displayed.

To discover more about this great opportunity and for full entry retirements, visit the student section of the ALD website. Also, please feel free to contact our MNB email address – mnb@ald.org.uk – should you wish to ask any further questions. 🇬🇧

Professional Designers' shows opening in August and September

Listing taken from the "openings" page of the ALD website. A full listing of all categories of members can be seen at www.ald.org.uk/diary/opening.php.

To be listed, you will need to enter show credits into your profile on the site.
You will need to sign in to the Members' area to do so.

1 August 2014 Katharine Williams *The Comedy of Errors* Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre

1 August 2014 Andy Webb *Bowjangles On the Box* Greenside Niccolson Square

5 August 2014 Edmund Sutton *The Duchess of Malfi* New Diorama Theatre, London

5 August 2014 Sherry L Coenen *Crystal Springs* Park90

6 August 2014 Michael Grundner *Flashdance* Poelz Halle Amstetten

8 August 2014 Richard C Lambert *WW1 Project* Edinburgh Fringe

11 August 2014 Simon Wilkinson *13 Sunken Years* Assembly Rooms, then touring

21 August 2014 Tim Mascal *Mr. Bolffy* Pitlochry Festival Theatre

28 August 2014 Johanna E Town *Pitcairn* Minerva Chichester, then touring

2 September 2014 Jon Clark *King Charles III* Wyndham's Theatre

3 September 2014 Alex Wardle *My Perfect Mind* Young Vic, then touring

11 September 2014 Malcolm Rippeth *Ghost from a Perfect Place* Arcola Theatre

11 September 2014 Charlie Lucas *The Muddy Choir* Redbridge Drama Centre, then touring

15 September 2014 Jon Clark *The Perfect American* Concert Hall, QPAC, Brisbane, Australia

17 September 2014 Tim Mascal *Kill Jonny Glendenning* Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh

19 September 2014 Johanna E Town *Rinaldo* Estonia Opera House

21 September 2014 Richard C Lambert *20th Celebration Gala* Criterion Theatre

27 September 2014 David L Sadler *Faust* Britten Theatre London

27 September 2014 Michael Grundner *Les Misérables* Musiktheater Linz

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To submit ideas for articles, information, correspondence, corrections and any comments about *Focus*, please email editor@ald.org.uk. Owing to space restrictions, we regret that we do not accept press releases for publication in *Focus*. However, Corporate members of the ALD may send press releases to the ALD office (office@ald.org.uk) so that they can be posted on the News section of the ALD website for immediate and wider coverage. Corporate members only may advertise in *Focus*; please contact the office for details. Editorial guidelines for authors are available on request from the editor.

The opinions published within Focus are not necessarily those of the ALD. E&OE.

New members

Welcome!

Professional Designer

John Castle, Tunbridge Wells[†]

Antony Hateley, London[†]

Nicholas Jemicz, Arrochar, Scotland

Julian McCready, Skipton, North Yorkshire

Richard Rhys Thomas, London[†]

Non-profit Organisation

Goldsmiths College, University of London

** Re-joining the association*

† From Associate Member

And one more thing...

Equity Creative Team meeting 4.00–5.00pm, The Founders' Room, Edinburgh Festival Theatre, 13/29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9FT

Thursday 21 August – open to members and non-members alike

An open session for all directors, designers, choreographers and creative team practitioners to discuss your side of things, meet the Creative Team sub-committee, and hear about what Equity is doing in these areas, plus a guest speaker: Equity's newest official, Emmanuel de Lange. He has special responsibility for the areas of low pay and no-pay work. He will be talking about artists' rights in this area and Equity's approach. workshop@equity.org.uk

If you can't manage 4.00pm, come anyway; we'll continue in the bar afterwards for a bit.

Diary dates 2014

- 26 September** Monthly members' social evening[†]
Available for sponsorship
Contact richard.lambert@ald.org.uk
- 5–8 October** PLASA Show 2014, ExCeL London*
- 5 October** 2014 Knight of Illumination Awards, Limehouse, London*
- 17 October** Theatrecraft 2014, Royal Opera House, London*
- 31 October** Monthly members' social evening[†]
Sponsored by Zero88 
- 8 November** 2014 ALD AGM (location TBC)*
- 28 November** Monthly members' social evening[†]
Sponsored by Martin Professional 

** The ALD will have a presence at these events.*

† The monthly members' social evening is at The Coach & Horses, 42 Wellington St, London WC2E 7BD.

THE MICHAEL NORTHEN BURSARY

Past winners **Chloe Kenward**, **Matt Daw** and **Richard Howell** on winning their awards

As the deadline for applying for this year's Michael Northen bursary (including the ETC and Francis Reid awards) approaches, we caught up with three past winners. **Matt Daw** won the award in 2005 with his lighting for *Extremely Difficult Times* while a student at the Central School of Speech and Drama. **Chloe Kenward** and **Richard Howell** were the winner and runner-up, respectively, in 2006. Chloe won with her design for *Egbert in the Underworld* at University of Hull and Richard for *Twelfth Night* at Guildhall.

Let's start at the beginning: when did you decide to pursue a career in lighting design?

Matt: When I was sixteen, I had been working as a casual in the electrics department at the Northcott Theatre in Exeter.

Richard: I did some lighting at secondary school but it wasn't really until I was studying technical theatre at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama that I realised that it was what I wanted to do.

Chloe: When I was sixteen I joined the National Youth Theatre's stage management department, to get an overall view on what technical theatre



Above: Sean Gleason's design for *As It Is In Heaven* at Rose Bruford College, winner of the ETC award in 2010

entailed. I wanted to do something design led, but am rubbish at drawing, so discounted set design. Lighting it was, and I've loved every step of the journey.

How did you find out about the Michael Northen award?

Chloe: When I was at university, I went to the National Student Drama Festival as crew (apply to NSDF – it's excellent). One of the technical advisors there told me about the ALD. I joined as a sponsored student and read about the award in *Focus*.

Richard: It was recommended by my tutors at Guildhall, who also supported me with my application. My submission was based on a production of *Twelfth Night* that I'd lit whilst I was a student.

Matt: I heard about it through the ALD and was encouraged to enter by the tutors at Central. I remember spending quite a lot of time on my application at Central. Everyone was very encouraging.

How did winning the MNB bursary affect your career in the short term? How has it affected it in the long term?



Left: *Memory of Water*, lit by Georg Spindler at LIPA, winner of the Michael Northen bursary in 2007

Chloe: It was great, especially as I didn't go to drama school. I was just a random girl with a drama degree, rocking into the world of lighting, knowing very little. But the award made people take notice of me straight away, and I believe I got a few jobs because of it. Once I had a few freelance jobs, the rest followed. In fact, the day after picking up the award at PLASA, one of the previous year's winners – who I had met picking up my award – turned down a job and passed it on to me. That was my first tour. It was also a really useful confidence boost, especially at the beginning of my career.

Matt: Winning the MNB gave me quite a bit of publicity at the time in the industry press with articles and photos appearing in *Focus*, *ET Now*, *The Stage* and *LS&I*. After leaving Central I worked a lot as an assistant lighting designer and I believe that the exposure I received after winning the prize meant that lighting designers had heard my name, which probably gave me a bit of edge over other students and recent graduates looking for the same sort of jobs.

Richard: In the short term I got some money and it looked good on my CV. It's hard to know how it's affected my career in the long term, but I'm sure it hasn't done me any harm!

Give us a quick précis of your career since winning the award.

Chloe: I spent a lot of the first five years relighting (taking other designers' work on tour, and re-lighting the show in different venues), whilst doing small designs and working as a casual technician in different venues. I was in no rush to become a designer and had a great time learning more about the craft. I learned so much by relighting and whilst up a tallscope for other designers. I've toured all over the world, which is a definite bonus, and had total control of my own time, disappearing off for months at a time to backpack round Asia. Gradually I started doing more of my own designs and less technician work and relighting. The first time I got royalties was very exciting. I have loved it all, but could feel I was starting to burn out. Now I've settled down with my fiancé, and I balance designing and teaching, which has recharged my batteries with normal work hours and fair pay. I still do the odd relight, particularly if it's in an exciting place.

Richard: I started out by lighting a lot of fringe shows and working as an electrician. Then I did some relighting and associate work for various other lighting designers. Now I work full time as a freelance lighting designer.

THE MICHAEL NORTHEN BURSARY

Chloe Kenward, Matt Daw and Richard Howell

Dan Hill's winning design in 2009 for *Woyzeck* at Central School of Speech and Drama



Matt: Since winning the award I have worked a lot as an assistant and associate lighting designer on many West End and international productions. I have also spent a few years touring with bands including Björk and Sigur Rós. At the moment I am making a move to

design an increasing number of my own shows. My most recent credits include *Miss Saigon* at the Prince Edward Theatre (as associate LD) and *The Elephantom* at the New London Theatre (as lighting designer). I am currently working on the UK tour of *Shrek*.

Any advice to those currently applying/ thinking of applying for the award?

Richard: I think it's a great idea to apply. Apart from anything else, your submission will get read by a group of top industry figures. It's a good way to get yourself noticed.

Chloe: Do it. I am always surprised by how few people apply. I genuinely applied simply because I wanted the lighting designers on the judging panel to hear my name. I had not remotely considered actually winning. Express your passion.

Matt: I would strongly recommend applying for the award. It's a great opportunity to display a piece of work that you are proud of in front of a panel of lighting professionals without having to fulfil college criteria ... and you could win £500! 🍀

For more information on the Michael Northen bursary awards and how to apply, visit the students section of the ALD website: www.ald.org.uk/students/. The deadline for this year's entries is **18 August 2014**.

NATIONAL STUDENT DRAMA FESTIVAL

2013 Michael Northen bursary winner **Alex Fernandes**

reports from Scarborough

This April I had the joy of being a part of the youthful thespian horde that's taken over Scarborough almost every year for the past few decades, in the form of the National Student Drama Festival. This was my third year with the festival as part of their technical crew, and my first in a position of responsibility, as the deputy head of lighting (the head of lighting being ALD member and avid *Focus* reader Ant Doran). Every year, a group of NSDF judges travels the country to watch dozens of new productions being staged by young amateur and student companies. A select few of these productions are then chosen to perform in several Scarborough venues, most of which are transformed into theatrical spaces just for the week of the festival. The technical crew, similarly made up of budding young students under the guiding hands of a team of passionate industry professionals, has the task of setting up these venues and, on a technical level, making sure that each show transfer is as successful and faithful as possible. For many, it's an introduction to technical theatre, and a facsimile of the real experience of setting up and running a professional arts festival.

My own experience of NSDF has always been as one of said technicians, which has been varied but always exceptionally fun. In exchange for the early starts and inevitable heavy lifting,



technicians get access to all the shows, which is an opportunity to see some of the most exciting work being put on by young companies. Additionally, there are dozens of workshops run by visiting companies and artists on almost everything theatre related, many of them with a specifically technical bent. Two years ago at ISDF (when the festival briefly went international) Natasha Chivers ran a fantastic workshop on lighting design and her own practice; this year Nick Peel from Guildhall ran one on the uses of practical lights. On top of that, there's what's basically on-the-job training in whatever field one is particularly interested in. As an aspiring LD I veered as much

as I could towards lighting – which can mean anything from programming a full musical, calling a quick focus, designing a whole show on the spot, or even just playing around with the piles of fancy kit – but there's the chance to get stuck in with everything from sound to AV to set construction. The set-up of the festival means everyone gets a thorough grounding in almost everything tech related, which is incredibly useful to someone just beginning a career in technical theatre.

I think that, more than anything else, the festival is an incredible opportunity for anyone young and passionate about theatre to engage with other young, passionate people, as well as with the numerous experienced professionals who are there for the express purpose of being chatted to (often over several pints). It creates a buzzing environment of both experienced mentoring and heated debate, mixed in with pub quizzes, ridiculous traditions and many late nights. I've had an amazing time, and it's been helpful in building up the technical skills I intend to take forward into a career in lighting design. #

INTRODUCING THE ECO EXPERT PANEL

The panel answers its first questions from ALD member Oscar Wyatt

How can we be more environmentally responsible in our creation of lighting designs? Being a “greener” lighting practitioner is something many of us aspire to but it’s often difficult to identify the most effective and achievable ways to minimise our environmental impact and contribute to a more sustainable future for our craft.

The ALD has assembled a group of expert professionals, ready to respond to members’ questions on sustainability and environmental issues. They bring together experience and know-how from a variety of sectors including education, sales, hire, strategic planning and auditing as well as creative sustainability organisations.

Oscar Wyatt, a freelance lighting designer, assistant and relighter with a keen interest in greening theatre, poses the first question to the panel:

How can lighting designers and departments work to reduce their impact in an economical way? To what extent can small and cheap differences in how we think, work and source equipment and materials make a difference?

Can procurements be thought of in the long term so more expensive but more efficient equipment that will eventually pay for itself can be purchased?

Tim Atkinson:

It’s as much about changing the day-to-day mindset as it is about designing in a more responsible way. Changing our attitude towards consumables, for example, can eliminate a lot of the physical waste, as well as conserving precious budget.

When it comes to big ticket purchases, even thinking in the long term, payback is sometimes never achieved. Unless you’re in an academic or television environment, payback from LED stage lighting is usually lengthy, although some high power tools, such as cyc lighting, can be quicker.

JP Bedell:

On small things ... you’d be amazed how much efficacy you gain from clean reflectors and dust-free dimming racks. Simple things like bench focusing your Lekos can make all your instruments perform optimally.

On procurement, as a designer this one is hard – in the architectural world cutting fixture wattage in half usually yields a payback of around three years for a fixture that’s on ten hours a day. A theatrical instrument that might be on ten hours a month is a hard sell on payback. A more holistic approach to energy savings might be to include maintenance costs and HVAC costs.

Craig Bennett:

The White Light Green Guide provides lots of useful hints and tips for designers to consider in order to reduce their impact. Hire companies offer great circularity, with equipment being purchased and cycled through hires and maintenance until the product is no longer usable or it is time to sell the unit on. Following WEEE, the units are returned for recycling at the end of their life.

Units that are able to be upgraded and recycled are the best choices and with this in mind I would recommend choosing brands, manufacturers and suppliers that are reliable and ethically underpinned.

Rob Halliday:

How about (and this is in jest, but only partly so): the lighting designer gets a percentage of the energy costs saved by specifying lower-energy gear, or of the rental costs saved by using a smaller rig?

In the short term: tungsten uses less energy when you fade it down – practically none when you switch it off – whereas discharge moving lights use power all the time they’re struck. LED sources are more efficient and increasingly becoming good enough as tungsten substitutes, but they’re expensive so you have

to account for that (i.e. it's not just the cost of the lamp, but the cost of lamp plus the scroller plus the scroll plus the dimmer plus the long-term power use).

And then we all need to argue the bigger cases: a big weight load on a tour might be cable for the rig. But do we really need to carry (and pay the costs for, in terms of fuel use, etc.) cable rated for 2500W when we're only using 750W Source Fours, or even lower wattage LED fixtures?

Philip Norfolk:

The end-to-end impact is the issue: heavy metals for the LED electronic production process, the damage tungsten mining causes, the scrapping of old gear that worked rather than extending its life – all have an impact and are green issues but measuring them is very hard at a production level. AND, let's face it – we are all very green until our art is being challenged or our lifestyle is being affected. So, how do we create real change? How about a smaller socket on the stage? That would help, perhaps...

Ian Garrett:

All this is just about being smart and efficient about your business. Keep working things working, and replace things that don't work with the most efficient and appropriate replacement, and decide what types of efficiency are your priorities. If it's energy, you may select something with a short buyback

period, based on energy efficiency and minimal heat gain. If it's environmental impacts, it's about low embodied carbon and perhaps buying the relatively local incandescent instead of importing the LED from China. You make these choices about copiers; you should make them about lights.

Though all of these choices, you may save something ... maybe 1 or 2% of the impact of the show on energy resources? On carbon impacts? Minimal if you're buying anything new. The 2008 London study had all stage electrics at 9% and audience at 33%. From looking at the show data I have, less energy is typically used by a show with all lamps at full than the number of households in the audience capacity in their homes. My research has been expanding beyond environment as well. Intrinsic impact analysis shows the arts as a superior mechanism for building the identity of individuals and communities. The arts are often, correctly, touted as significant economic engines (thought it's often too abstract for a funding argument).

My point is that I think the best thing you could do is design things well. Making specific, motivated choices which are (or at least seem to be) essential to what they are trying to do is, for me, the key to a good design. That intentional and critical choice, educated by knowledge of available tools, ideally means that whatever the piece of kit they use in a given moment

is going to be the most ecological, since any other choice wouldn't be as effective. Of course, that's a very fluid and hard-to-pin-down determination. Time and resources are limited, and so various compromises get made all along the way. But within a given set of constraints, I believe the best thing a designer can do is to design as best a solution as possible to a scene, a movement, a look, a space. The best thing a lighting department can do is to support the making of those better design choices.

If they do that, and there is an audience that engages with the work, that's going to be the source of greatest sustainability. The greatest source of possible reductions is getting that audience congregated together, out of their house, sharing that experience. That's going to stimulate the local economy and identity in a way that won't happen when they're at home, alone, watching TV. Help them understand this issue, make different choices about their transportation and buying habits and who cares if you use an axial profile or the latest LED unit?

So, yeah, make good art (whatever that means), and when you do, try to also be smart about your resource use. 🌱

Have you any questions on lighting and sustainability or ways to reduce the environmental impacts of your work as a creator of lighting designs? Email eco.group@ald.org.uk to have your question forwarded to the panel.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

RCSSD student **Rob Youngson** on placement in Oslo

In March this year, after a bit of polite pestering, I was lucky enough to be able to shadow Bruno Poet as he lit a new production of *Don Giovanni* at the Oslo Opera House. It was a beautiful production. I was travelling to a new place in a new country expecting to learn a lot about lighting; I returned simply having learned a lot.

Don Giovanni
Oslo Opera House
Directed by Thaddeus Strassberger
Designed by Kevin Knight
Costumes by Mattie Ullrich
Lighting by Bruno Poet
Photo by Rob Youngson



As a student I decided to couch surf. It was my first time doing so and I recommend it as an invaluable tool to all those who wish to find experiences outside of the UK but who have a tight budget. I was hosted by numerous people, all lovely and gracious. Another revelation that I have carried away with me from the trip is the way in which language skills open doors. Seeing multilingual creatives working together was inspiring, especially in opera where the very core of the work itself is so often in a language other than English.

From a practical perspective I learned a great deal about balancing states. I found the most interesting observations were the way in which a director and lighting designer communicate during plotting sessions and some of the nuances of keeping that relationship productive. I was able to create working relationships and friendships with the in-house crew operating the followspots, as I worked on their paperwork and talked with them about cue changes. Making these friendships really highlighted how little difference there was between here and there beyond temperature and architecture.

Following an incredible week in Oslo I ventured 300km in to the Arctic Circle to the town of Tromsø, to search for the elusive

Rob Youngson is a student at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. He loves photography, blues music and getting around by boat.



Aurora Borealis. As an aspiring lighting professional it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to add something special to my arsenal of inspiration and reference. On arrival in Tromsø I found a pelting blizzard! Within this blizzard I found the open arms of strangers and hot food (salmon freshly caught) served with entertaining stories of rural Norwegian life, such as the various traditions that centre around proving your worth by diving in to freezing cold arctic water in little or no clothes. The blizzard rather dashed my hopes of seeing the Northern Lights that night though.

It was another two days before my opportunity came. I was stepping off a bus in the backlands behind the university section of the island. I was with my host Lila, when a gap appeared in the clouds, a faint fleck of green appeared above me. I ran (through snow up to my waist) to get away from the streetlight, cursing the sodium glow. I ran up a slope and past some trees as the gap in the clouds grew wider, the lights brighter. I fell back in to the snow and watched for a moment, elated. I then reached for my camera and tripod and attempted to capture them; though faint and light polluted from the nearby town I managed

to get a few pictures. More importantly I had seen them in person, felt the wonder ancient ancestors must have felt on seeing the sky dance. It is something we cannot recreate on stage. The best we can do may be to attempt to recreate that same feeling of awe, wonder and history through light.

P.S. If any professionals reading this take their work to Oslo, make sure you try the berry

smoothies and the chocolate squares in the canteen; I really miss those!

I would like to thank Bruno for having me along and answering my many questions. It is a huge undertaking to take someone on and I had a completely inspirational time. The ALD's guide to student placements was a really helpful tool as well. 🍓

*Don Giovanni
Oslo Opera House
Directed by Thaddeus Strassberger
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*Aurora Borealis
Photo by Rob Youngson*



EVOLUTION AT VIVID FESTIVAL

Matthew Wright, Jaz Hewitt and Willow Bleasdale presented an interactive exhibit at this year's festival

Three enterprising lighting design students from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama have had a piece of their original work featured at the Vivid Festival in Sydney, Australia. Jaz Hewitt, Willow Bleasdale and Matt Wright debuted the interactive light installation *Evolution* at the prominent eighteen-day winter festival, which annually features immersive light installations, music performances and public talks and debates from leading creative thinkers in the shadow of the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The close-knit team combined specialisations ranging from hand-held lighting effects and control systems, through theatrical lighting design, and up to large-scale outdoor architectural lighting – and all three share a passion for creating educational and entertaining installations.

This marked the second time that Jaz Hewitt has attended the Vivid Festival, having previously won a competition to attend in 2013. Her enthusiasm for the event drew the participation of the others, each bringing their individual skills, contacts and innovation to the creation of *Evolution*.

Matt Wright, whose grounding in theatre lighting design has seen him secure two high-profile, final-year placements at architectural



lighting design practices, was largely responsible for the theme of the piece: *how much electricity does it take to make light using old and new technologies?* His contacts also helped the team to secure sponsorships for the project from light bulb manufacturers.

Willow Bleasdale, with a focus on technical and electronic fabrication and a fascination for making “props that light up”, was responsible for *Evolution's* aesthetics.

Evolution showcased the changes undergone by the humble household light bulb over the last hundred years. The display featured a giant light bulb that enveloped a spiral filament made

up of thirty-two individual lamps. At one end was warm tungsten filaments; at the other end, visitors to the exhibition could experience the cool white output of the latest LEDs.

Audience members could compare and contrast the light sources by using a nearby touch screen to select which lamps were illuminated. Their visual experience was enriched by access to live data on the power consumption, luminance and colour temperature of the lamps, so they could learn about the changing effectiveness and efficiency of the light bulbs we have used over the last century. When the touch screen was idle, pre-programmed illumination sequences performed a compelling light show.

Evolution utilises LightwaveRF home automation technology – an innovation that allows you to monitor and minimise energy usage within your home, by wirelessly





Matt's love of lighting started with button-mashing a Fat Frog to music at his local school and he hasn't looked back since! After developing a wider interest in lighting and design in general he now looks forward to working as an architectural lighting designer in London button-mashing an iMac instead!



Jazz is a music genre that originated in the 1920s. Jaz Hewitt originated in the early 1990s and in between studying lighting at Central, she enjoys confusing sound engineers with strobe lights.



Willow Bleasdale creates lighting designs for theatre, dance and opera, and lighting effects and soft circuits for puppetry, hand-held properties and wearable tech.



controlling appliances using your smartphone. In *Evolution*, the technology is used over WiFi to control the dimming level of each of the thirty-two lamps and to provide energy usage monitoring. At the same time as the data is broadcast on the touch screen, it is also published to the *Evolution* website. This data compares the energy efficiency of LED lighting and incandescent filaments.

The design and construction of *Evolution* spanned two continents, with the prototype of the interior and the control systems designed in London, whilst the polycarbonate structure

of the exhibit was made locally in Australia and delivered to the site in Sydney to await the students' arrival.

Central's senior lecturer in design for performance, Nick Moran, said of the project: "The whole thing has been very exciting for the three students directly involved, and it has caught the imagination of the rest of the lighting design cohort. Who knows what Central students might manage to achieve for next year's festival!" 🍀

For more information on the Vivid Festival, visit www.vividsydney.com.

To see *Evolution* in action, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR4W-UANboo.



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PLASA LONDON 2014

A preview of this year's show at the ExCeL Centre

plasalondon
5-8 OCTOBER 2014 - ExCeL

PLASA London returns to ExCeL for the second consecutive year on Sunday 5 October until Wednesday 8 October, with an improved format and a Professional Development Programme brimming with variety and creativity.

The show, which attracts the biggest names in professional lighting, audio, video and stage technologies, has been a pivotal date on the international entertainment technology trade show calendar for more than three decades.

This year, visitors can look forward to seeing a very strong contingent of lighting companies, including Robe, ETC, Prolyte, Chauvet, Clay Paky, GLP, Avolites, Philips, Vari-Lite, Highlite and SGM. The ALD stand will be located at T64.

With the show now settled in its new location, the organisers remain focused on continually developing both the visitor and exhibitor experience, as PLASA's director of events Christopher Toulmin explains: "Having relocated to ExCeL last year and enjoyed a very positive response from exhibitors and visitors alike, we have no intention of resting on our laurels. As an organisation we're always looking at ways of improving what we offer – this will be evident at PLASA London 2014. We've listened to the feedback we received and have made some important changes that will help the visitor experience to be as coherent and as productive as possible."

August/September 2014

Photo by Post Photographic Ltd



The changes will see seminar theatres hosting the Professional Development Programme relocate to the heart of the action, on the show floor. By making the seminar rooms as easy to find and as accessible as possible, visitors will be able to make the most of their time at PLASA London 2014. Each session feature experts from across the entertainment technology industry and will include a seminar by the ALD.

Since its inception, 37 years ago, the show has enjoyed a vibrant social schedule running

alongside it. This year will be no different and will include the seventh Knight of Illumination Awards (KOI), held for the first time at Troxy, in the nearby East End.

The KOI, which is organised by the ALD, Ambersphere, Clay Paky and the STLD and sponsored by Hawthorn, MA Lighting, Osram, Robert Juliat and XL Video, promotes a unified and forward-looking entertainment technology industry by recognising the creative achievements of those who work within the

lighting and video sectors.

More information about PLASA London 2014, including events and parties taking place in and around ExCeL, will be announced in the coming weeks. For up-to-the-minute news visit www.plasashow.com, or follow the show on Twitter at @plasashow or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PlasaShow.

ALD members can register for a free ticket at www.plasashow.com/ald. 📌

MEMBERS' MEETING – LES MIS

Meetings rep **Claire Gilligan** at the Queen's Theatre in the West End

Twelve ALD members assembled at the front of the Queen's Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue where *Les Misérables* has lived for the past ten years. Before that, the Queen's was a twelve-week receiving house venue, as head of lighting Mike Cordina tells us.

Rachael McCutcheon, associate lighting designer to David Hersey, gave us a wonderfully in-depth tour and chat on the stage. She pointed out where lanterns are hidden, and showed us the first LED strip lights used in the West End and how they are used to simple effect. Bless them, they are still working.

The bars over stage are 10m high, filled with digital light curtains (DLCs) and the Queen's offers very little wing space. So lanterns with mirrors and beam diverters are used in a number of places. The rig has a number of lanterns with scrolls. I asked Rachael if she would move to LED parcans for instance; I adored her reply, which was: "Don't scare me like that!"

Mike showed us the pitching DLCs as part of the rig check (cue many ooohs and aaahs from the gathered ALD crowd). The rig is filled with older lovely lights that work to maximum effect. Mike also regaled us with a tale of another venue that had three meat racks of old Strand lanterns, and with an audible gasp of sadness and horror from the ALD's gathered, he told us how they had been skipped!



Photo by Claire Gilligan

We also had the opportunity over lunch to chat to Matt Smith, head of followspots, and his team. Matt has a unique role, in charge of six followspots on the show. There used to be seven, but spot one was replaced by a VL on the upper circle front rail.

There are four operators; the spots on stage are two a side and have one operator each side. This includes some interesting running back and forth along the fly floors. I met and had a

lovely chat to Louise Fairnie, who has been at the Queen's for two years. She talked of the mad dash for cues on spot 5 and moving swiftly over the flymen to get to her next cue from downstage to upstage.

After lunch we were thrilled to be able to watch the final dress rehearsal of the cast changeover from behind the production desk. Mike programmes in house as he knows the show so well. Rachael, with her keen eye, keeps the show on track while being a wonderful, smiling personality. She encourages

her team and has a remarkably refreshing open mind to try new things with the lighting and the followspots. As she says, "If it works, great; if not, it's ok, we tried."

Personally I've seen *Les Mis* many times and in different countries (UK and NZ), from on tour with new set (no revolve) and in the West End. In my faded memory I had convinced myself that the show was (lighting-wise) cold, with mostly cool blues, and dark, and seeing



the lack of lanterns and space I would've believed it. I was wrong. I was surprised by the contrast between scenes, especially with such a perceptively small rig. I loved being surprised by the rich colours for 'Lovely Ladies', lit in oranges and reds, in stark contrast to the greens and murky lights of the various towns in the musical. The moving shadows created such texture from the wide array of gobos used throughout.

What I adore about this show is how simple effects and tricks still work to great effect.

For me the best part was the upstage centre DLC as it pops on and pans downstage, swiftly to the beat of music, as Javert storms onto the scene. Bom bom bom ... Here he comes, we're in trouble... 🚩

Thanks from ALD members!

Many thanks to all at the Queen's for their welcome of our small group. We were made to feel at home and able to ask any question no matter how simple or complex. I think I had not realised how much the piece had evolved over the years, with all the drama yet at the same time richer in colour and texture.

— Richard Thompson

I really loved the day. Having travelled from Newcastle, I was very grateful that I was accepted to partake in the visit. It was great to have such open access to see the magic behind the show. I particularly found it interesting to see the old technology which is still being used in such a highly successful show, where many other productions may have removed some of the most effective lanterns in favour of newer technology. It was nice to see that the design remains true to the way it did 25 years ago yet seems so refreshing at the same time – a truly great lighting design!

— Chris Miller

The visit to the Queen's Theatre was marvellous. It was fascinating to hear from Rachael McCutcheon how the rig and lighting units have evolved over the years and good to see the splendid DHL digital light curtains and beamlights still being used so effectively. After talking to quite a number of the lighting crew it is evident that they have such dedication and love of the show, and that shines through in performance. Many thanks again for a wonderful day. More theatre-based meetings like this one please.

— Bruce Emeny

I think my overriding reaction to our visit to Les Mis was that it demonstrated that great lighting comes from the human heart and head; it's not all about having the very latest technology. Many thanks to Rachel and the team; it was very generous of them to allow an audience in at such a stressful moment!

— Nic Walsh

It was such a privilege to be able to see behind the scenes of this iconic show. You would never believe the show would fit on that size of stage! It was great to meet not only people who are involved with the show but have been for many years. You got the impression they really cared about the production. My thanks to all the staff at the theatre who were so welcoming and made for such an interesting day.

— Gary Stevenson

MEMBERS' MEETING – SAM WANAMAKER PLAYHOUSE

Andrew Dixon was at the Globe to see this unique venue

I have tried to book to see plays at this theatre and been frustrated as there seemed to be so few seats available. Anyhow, the offer to have a look around with the ALD was brilliant. Not only to be there, but to learn about the guttering secrets of this magical space!

About 20 of us were treated to a fascinating talk in the theatre by Paul Russell who was project manager on the design and building of the theatre.

John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* was the opening play in this new space last year and the director got so carried away with the potential for using darkness (there would have been none in the Globe as all performances were in daylight) that he included an 18 minute scene in absolute blackness!

You need to bear in mind that one's eyes need at least ten minutes to adjust to the low lighting level. There are six chandeliers over the stage with an extra one (rarely used) over the pit each with a maximum of 20 candles. Added to these are six sconces mounted on the pillars around the stage. Each can take three candles each. The other intriguing addition are any number of hand-held sconces, with which the actors light one another. Their use can be quite dramatic as you can imagine, acting as sort of followspots which, depending on the position



*Our host, Paul Russell, on stage with the chandeliers lit
Photo by James Laws*

of the reflector, can quickly switch light on and off a neighbouring actor. It takes the actors some time to get used to moving smoothly around the stage when carrying these lights otherwise they blow out. In fact, as they are so central to the action the actors are made personally

responsible for their own lamps and for making sure they are extinguished when they go off stage. To assist them are up to four "candlitians" to look after the hot props off stage!

As you can imagine the fire authorities had quite a part to play in the setting up of the



Paul shows us the technique for snuffing out the candles on the chandeliers
Photo by James Laws

safety systems. 80 versions of candles and wicks were tried out. They would originally have been made of tallow – made from beef or lamb fat. These were very soft and smelt like frying bacon. Paraffin candles would have been OK to use but pure beeswax is more authentic and gives a warmer light.

For those who were fortunate enough to go to Showlight last year they will be interested to know that the baroque theatre at Český Krumlov has been offering its 400 years of candlelight experience in the formation of techniques used here. If that means nothing to you, just try putting “Český Krumlov theatre” into Google; stand back to be amazed at the pictures! They experimented with colouring the candlelight using jars containing coloured liquid. Similar experiments are waiting to

be done by Paul very soon! He even looks forward to trying out projecting gobos.

It is possible to introduce simulated daylight into the theatre by removing wall panels behind the audience and letting the white walls of the corridors reflect soft cold into the space. Due to the uncontrolled nature of this light the results have received various reactions.

Electric light is available. There are working lights in the ceiling and lights under the seating that are used as house lighting, and the roof is peppered with removable panels that reveal ETC LED Lustre lamps. These do not get used on plays (yet!) but are used for concerts. There are bars, distributed power and other facilities hidden in the ceilings for use in future.

To a chap that has been brought up on lighting with electricity, the experience of this visit has been truly illuminating.

When you finally manage to book your seat for a show, remember that at one time you would pay 1d to attend the Globe but 10d to sit inside a theatre like the Sam Wanamaker!

Very grateful thanks from the ALD members present must go to Paul for his excellent introduction and honest appraisal of the theatre. 🍀

James Laws reflects on his visit to the Sam

I have lit a number of classical concerts with candlelight as the featured source and recently I lit a chamber concert purely by candlelight (see *Focus* Feb/Mar 2014). So I was very interested to see how candlelight translated to lighting period drama, as the Sam Wanamaker Theatre opened with one of the first plays written with indoor theatre in mind.

Having watched *The Duchess of Malfi* on disc, I was aware of the way the lighting can be controlled and manipulated at the Sam. But I wasn't aware of the amazing discipline that the building and the crew have to exercise to run a long show, from draught control to blackout conditions and lighting up plus shutting down procedures.

There are inevitably some modern conveniences. For instance the candle wicks only need trimming every 90 minutes, not every 20 minutes as in 1610. There is some evidence that the three candles in a sconce with a curved reflector behind, although technically possible, was not used in the early 1600s. Nor were chandeliers likely to have been raised and lowered (as in *Malfi*) with such liberality. But does this matter?

I came to the meeting thinking that it *did* matter, if the mission is to create candlelit productions in a Jacobean space. But, having seen the care and the craftsmanship employed by the dedicated production team, it seems natural to want to explore candlelight in a way that modern audiences will relate to.

Lighting designers have raised audiences' visual expectations so greatly in the last few years. Few years, that is, compared with the 500 or so that separate us from Shakespeare. Theatre is an exercise in collective imagination and that's been true right down the ages. To restrict candlelight to static illumination would be to lose a vital dimension in the storytelling. 🍀

THE LUMIÈRE SCHEME

Peter Mumford introduces this new ALD scheme for emerging lighting designers

The ALD is launching the Lumière Scheme, a new programme giving outstanding emerging designers a springboard for their careers. Will you help us make it happen?

Here at the ALD, we've begun to question whether those of us who were able to get on and up the ladder are creating enough opportunities for those keen and talented enough to come up behind us and, crucially, how we can provide emerging designers with the benefits of learning first-hand from established practitioners. Our response is the "Lumière scheme", a professional development programme that will provide pathways into the industry for some of the brightest, most promising emerging designers.

"How do I get work and where do I start?" is a question I inevitably get asked by the lighting design students that often come and spend time on work experience with me. My instinctive advice has always been: "find your own generation". I encourage them to team up with young directors and designers just starting out, to work for producers putting up plays on the fringe or in small venues around the country. I stand by that advice. Working with small budgets in challenging spaces is invaluable experience, and connecting with your own generation, is an investment for the future.

However, things have changed in lighting design; today many more designers are coming from university or drama school courses, not, as they would in the past, via the ranks, starting in a junior electrician role in their local rep theatre and working their way up. This is not to say that we should ignore that route or underestimate its value. It's a very clear part of the policy for the Lumière scheme that it is not just for postgraduates. But while many contemporary college courses have indisputable strengths, there are certain things they simply can't offer their students: in particular, the opportunity to be embedded in a sustained manner – not just for the odd short-term project or spot of work experience – but in a professional theatre environment, surrounded by designers, technicians and production managers with years, if not decades, of experience under their belts.

How will the Lumière scheme work?

Following a competitive application process, emerging designers (with no less than a year's experience) will be selected to become "Lumières" for a twelve-month period. Each Lumière will be matched with one or more established lighting designers and will spend the first six months of the programme assisting them, travelling around the

country and possibly internationally. Following that, they will spend a further six months within a top UK producing theatre, assisting visiting lighting designers and designing their own small-scale projects. Alongside this, each Lumière will receive a bespoke package of mentoring and support, a toolkit if you will, for how to survive and thrive as a lighting designer: anything from getting an agent and building a portfolio to navigating challenging situations in what – let's face it – can be a tricky environment in which to work.

We know there is a real need for the scheme. We're endlessly called up by tutors asking for work experience for their students and we're grateful for how many of our members generously go out of their way to share their knowledge and expertise with designers who are starting out. But as things stand, so much of this work experience, assisting and shadowing occurs on an ad hoc basis. We have to be realistic about the increasing barriers to people attempting to enter the arts and there is a very real possibility that, without intervention, some of the most talented people will start falling between the gaps. In parallel, so many long-term, building-based "starter" jobs in lighting have vanished. And while those of us who are established may



City of Angels
Embassy Theatre, RCSSD
Lighting by Zoe Spurr
(ETC award winner 2012)

be perfectly happy to be freelance nomads, for those trying to break into this idiosyncratic, high-octane, brilliant world in which we work, the companionship and support of being part of an organisation, a team, or – to run the risk of sentimentality – a family, can be sorely missed.

Why we need your help

Our plan is to launch the first round of Lumière placements in 2016. At ALD HQ we're busy fundraising and for several months now have been up to our eyes in budget sheets, application forms and mission statements. But we need your help. We are asking ALD members to consider donating a sum, whether that be

£5 or £500 (or anything above or in between!), to help us on our way. We're exploring all angles for raising money, including Arts Council funding, charitable trusts and corporate sponsorship, but what we've learned is that many funders won't even look at an application unless a chunk of cash is already secure and in the bank, proof that we're serious about making the work happen and that we're supported in this aim by others who share our vision.

If you feel able to donate, there's a form on the back of the address slip that accompanies this issue of *Focus*, which we'd ask you to complete

and return to us. Please consider showing your support. If all ALD members give something, we will be a big step further towards achieving our goal. We need to raise in excess of £100,000 to fund this project and I would love to see a chart in the ALD office growing towards that figure.

So please help to light up the Lumière scheme! 🌟

ABTT SHOW 2014

Professional rep **Stuart Porter** on the ALD's seminar

The ALD held a programmers' qualification seminar at the ABTT Theatre Show in June, with me, Mark Jonathan, Andy Voller, Nick Moran and Phillip Norfolk. Attending were some of the top lighting programmers in the West End, in-house staff, students and representatives from some manufacturers.

For the first time, this topic was given a platform for people to express their views on the level and skill of programmers across a wide spectrum of theatres and venues. It was a very interesting discussion highlighting the overall issue that we all need to work together to achieve a standard that a designer can be happy with and a programmer can confidently say they are at.

The position of a programmer is ever evolving and it is a position that needs time dedicated to it. The best commercial programmers have worked on a variety of shows and worked with other programmers to form a style. They have good communications with manufacturers to discuss software and how to overcome certain problems.

It has become apparent that some venues and managements need to start thinking about allocating staff too and creating the position of someone dedicated to being a programmer. This enables them to have a chance of staying

current and up to date with the software and the desks. Programming should never be underestimated; it is a difficult job, sometimes under immense pressure. It is only fair to all those who do it that they are supported in every way they can be. No one tries out a piece of software, starts to do the basics and then puts it to one side, comes back a time later and expects to be confident and able to use it under pressure. Therefore, why is it a good idea for the person who has operated a desk or done a short course to be placed into such a situation?

I am going to add to the ALD website a document that highlights the core functions a programmer needs to be able to do (www.ald.org.uk/resources/). This is, as we have discussed, only the core part of the syntax required to enable someone to input the data into the desk. The increased knowledge has to come with how to construct the show and how best to work efficiently to programme under the pressure of a lighting session. The designers need to clarify what they feel a person should be capable of. They also need to highlight where the problems are; if a venue or management are supplying someone who cannot cope with the rigours of being a programmer, in a way they are placing a designer at a disadvantage to being able to

Ian at the ALD stand. Photo by James Laws


























create the lighting to the standard they have been employed for. The ALD needs to know about these situations and work with them to find a solution.

The ALD has discussed doing a seminar to recreate the pressures of being in the position of a programmer. This would be to work with new programmers or people who only do it occasionally, to show how they can become more efficient and confident to programme shows. I hope, that as there are a growing number of professional members who are programmers, we can work together to mentor and help venues and staff to become better and to set a standard so people feel confident to call themselves a programmer. 📌

stuart.porter@ald.org.uk

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- Make a connection (£5)
- Create a spark (£15)
- Cue up a possibility (£30)
- Make a significant effect (£50)
- Create the first act (£100)
- Get a show on the road (£500)
- Raise the roof (£1,000)
- Other amount: _____

Corporate members

- Change someone's life! (£5,000)
- Other amount: _____

Please tick as applicable:

- I have enclosed a cheque payable to The Association of Lighting Designers for the amount specified.
- I have made a BACS transfer for the amount specified to The Association of Lighting Designers' bank account (bank: National Westminster Bank, The Strand, London WC2H 5JB; sort code: 60-40-05; account number: 04319710). **Please include "Lumiere scheme" and your membership number in the payment reference.**

Thank you for your support of the Lumière scheme. We are hugely appreciative of your donation.

Please return this form (with cheque if applicable) to the address shown above.

Many thanks,

Peter and the Lumière scheme team