

ALD

FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

"More art, less tools..."

*Jack and the Beanstalk, Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
Lighting design by David Howe*

In the haze this issue:

- David Howe and Nick Richings on panto
 - Christmas at Kew Gardens
 - Judging the Offies
 - Cast in Doncaster
- ... and much, much more...

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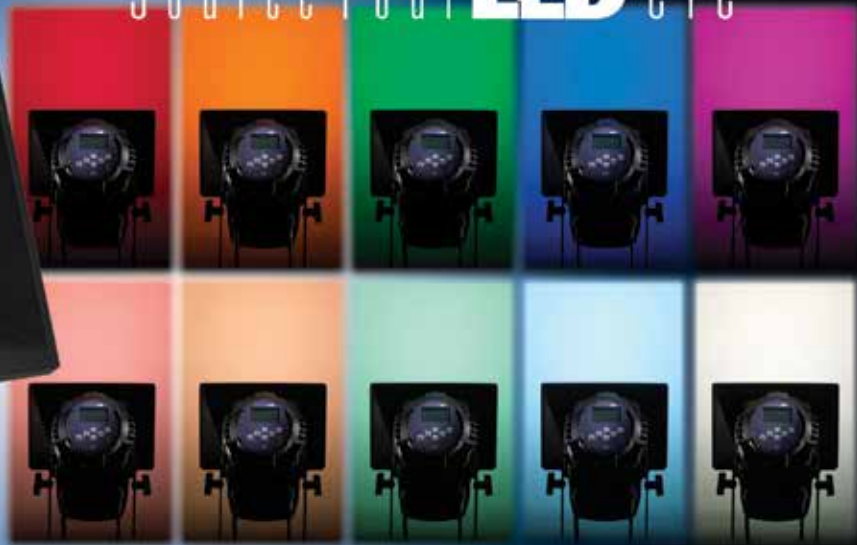
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From the Chairman....



Happy New Year everybody! Well, this is going to sound like Marko's column if I'm not careful but I'm sitting in the Hotel Beacon in New York heading for my third show out here this year. Not quite as bad as it sounds because they are (so far) revivals/relights of existing works and the only absolutely brand new one starts in a couple of weeks.

Nonetheless, it's been a hell of a start to the new year! Lovely crews at BAM on King Lear and at The Met on a revival of Butterfly and now at New York Theatre Workshop reworking Caryl Churchill's piece Love and Information. America feels like a very "at home" place to be working and everyone I've worked with so far has been incredibly supportive. I dashed back home for a week and got in a series of meetings with the ALD among other things. It seems that membership is expanding at a good rate and I really want to encourage all our current members to inspire our programming and video colleagues to join up and get involved. Much interest is coming through in the areas of Equity membership and what it can offer and exactly what the ALD can do, particularly for young designers in terms of contracts or, more particularly, "letters of agreement" with small formative companies. Again, we are not a union but with members' support we can be a powerful influence on these matters.

The final proposal for the Lumière Scheme, our apprentice and pathway project for young

designers into the business, is attracting much interest and the big hurdle now, as ever, is raising finance for this project. Anyone out there, and I'm talking especially to our associate members, who has experience of fundraising for the arts would be an extremely welcome addition to our subcommittee.

Andy Purves is raising and waving the flag for the ALD environmental responsibility group, another new subcommittee committed to amplifying awareness about green issues within the world of lighting and looking at how we can incorporate these ideas and technologies into our work. It's really important that we all take this on board, but also in my opinion equally important that we analyse the new technologies on offer to be quite sure that they firstly offer viable replacements to existing light sources and, secondly, deliver a genuine solution to the ecology of power consumption. It is, when you look at it closely, such a complex and multilayered issue. I hope that our new group will look at all these aspects closely and come up with some publishable comments and solutions to share with us all.

So, here we go, launching into 2014! I wish you all a great year – my god, they pass so quickly, but I guess that means things are going well – I do hope so!

Peter

Highlights

- 4 **Marko's meanderings**
MJ gets a calm start to the year.
- 6 **Professionals viewpoint**
Jo on nature and new year's resolutions.
- 8 **"It's behind you!"**
David Howe and Nick Richings talk to John Leventhall about lighting *seven* pantos.
- 16 **New features in Focus**
A postcard from the Royal Exchange and some insider knowledge from the head of lighting.
- 18 **Christmas at Kew**
Claire Gilligan reports from the members' meeting.
- 21 **Candlelight rediscovered**
An in-depth report from James Laws.
- 24 **Office Oracle**
News straight from the ALD's London office.
- 30 **Cast in Doncaster**
Doncaster's newest venue reviewed.
- 33 **Judging the Offies**
Craig Bennett educates the judges about the art of lighting design.

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Mark Jonathan is enjoying a leisurely start to the new year



I was flying back from the Swiss Alps, and as the plane arrived at its cruising altitude above the cloud base I observed an interesting lighting effect. While the sun was setting in the west there was a spectacular, elongated “rainbow effect”: red at the bottom of the sky, rising through orange, yellow changing to a delicate green, blue, indigo and violet. My photo doesn’t do justice to the entire rainbow of colour that was on display. I’m reminded of what we do as I gaze at this natural lighting phenomenon that would be hard to believe if we tried to recreate it on a stage.

As a freelance LD I find every month and year is different and I can’t always predict the peaks

and troughs. This time last year, I was dashing back straight after New Year for three consecutive productions. This year, I have a gentler start although things are ramping up to a three-act ballet in the USA in February and a lovely play in the West End in March.

As a general observation, I sense many producers are looking for ways of saving money. I was unimpressed when a major company offered me less to work for them in 2015 than they had paid in 2013. Surely they can’t be serious? It seems that even securing the same fee over a three-year period is hard. I’ve said it before: we need to be very watchful that we prevent fees from being driven down. In Europe, I’ve been told of a German LD who is undercutting the *going opera rate* by 50%. We all need to be careful not to let the going rates go down and that includes the additional payments like travel and, where appropriate, per diem payments. OK, rant over.

It was great to see so many friends from the lighting industry at the 20th annual Christmas Lighting Lunch held in December. As ever, I must thank Jason Larcombe for his calm and patient management of the event along with all our generous sponsors: Ambersphere Solutions, the ALD, Bright*, Eaton/Cooper Controls, ETC Ltd, GDS,

Hawthorn, Howard Eaton, Martin Professional, Northern Light, Philips Entertainment, PLPS Ltd, PRG UK Ltd, Sparks Theatrical Hire Ltd, Stage Electrics, TSL Lighting and White Light. Appreciation also to Stuart Crane, Jamie Wells and Pete Bradbury from White Light for doing the lights and Blue Boxx with Dom Martin and Dave Glover for sound.

I was sad not to be able to welcome Bob Bryan and Francis Reid to the lighting lunch. Both are Fellows of the ALD and have never been known to spurn a good party and we missed them. Bob and Francis have both been unwell and I know we all send our very best wishes to them. I hope you both feel better soon.

During 2013 we said goodbye to our *Focus* editor, Andy Collier. I remember that a year ago he stayed up half the night printing out the personalised menu cards for the 2012 lunch. I was delighted that his son, Ben Collier, and Andy’s niece, Miriam Evans (who now works for Patrick Woodroffe), could come to the lunch. The lunch always reminds me of the wealth of brilliant people that work in the lighting industry and it’s nice to be at a congenial party of 150 people that usually has an age range from 18 to 80. 🍷

Sunset over the Swiss Alps
in mid-January



Marko's top tips and tricks...

While endlessly travelling, I've enjoyed finding a way of communicating across the world for free. For phone calls I have "Freecall", which is provided by my phone supplier for a small fee. This gives me a London number that will ring on my phone anywhere in the world when I'm on the internet and allows me to call anyone from anywhere in the world for free.

Meanwhile, I often use Skype for communication. What I find especially useful is the screen share option. I often find I have a lighting plan which I can share with my assistant or production electrician, or I can discuss model photos with the designer when we are hundreds or thousands of miles apart.

Introducing "A postcard from..."

Here's your chance to write for *Focus*! Send us a postcard from wherever you're working. You could be up the tallscope, programming a show or lighting one. It could be a big or a small production anywhere in the world. You'll need at least one photo of the show or the theatre or maybe the crew you're working with.

Were there any design solutions that you had to solve? Any press quotes? What was fun about the job? You don't need to write a lot, just enough to fill a postcard!

Jo Town is leading off with a postcard from her favourite theatre on page 16.

So, let us know where you are, what you're doing, who you're working with in our new series "A postcard from...!" Please send your text and picture(s) to postcard@ald.org.uk.

Jo says: "It's so simple you could do it from your smartphone, now!"

PROFESSIONAL VIEWS

Like Marko, **Johanna Town** takes her inspiration from nature



I would like to start with a very Happy New Year to you all. I hope that 2014 is a great year for us all.

The ALD is looking forward to a very busy year, with all the subcommittees starting to work on all the new ideas recently discussed in *Focus*. I think we are going to keep lan in the office very busy this year.

If one of your new year's resolutions was to get more involved in the ALD, do get in touch. The more members we have on each subcommittee the better.

Marko and I really appreciate how busy we all are and would like to promote "the tips and tricks" page, as well as our new "postcard from" (see mine on page 16).

It's a short and easy way to let us know what you are all up to. No long written articles, just a quick note about a show you really enjoyed or found interesting. Note it down, drop us a picture, it's as fast and easy as that. The more people from



all the different memberships that drop us a line, the more exciting and interesting *Focus* will be.

I was very pleased to read in the latest members bulletin that this year's "What's on Stage Awards" has been populated completely by ALD members. Good luck to you all!

Members' social evenings were also announced, so you can note the dates in your diaries. I was particularly sad to miss the ALD quiz night on 24 January after the New Technologies Showcase at Central; the showcase day is always a great place to catch up after the break and to look at equipment in the flesh.

I would like to finish with the end of 2013 and how it has inspired my start to 2014. I attended the ALD Kew Gardens light walk, and it was fantastic to go with Phil Supple and his team and hear more about how it was all put together. You can read Claire's article about it on page 18.

I personally thought the whole event was just beautiful, an inspiring magical journey throughout. In the middle of my journey I came across a "fire mandala". The audiences were transfixed by the burning torches circling inwards, each one being carefully kept alight by one man stoking the flames. I was transfixed by this man feeding life into the torches, the care and grace he

took, an artist and technician in one. The torches' flames created a truly spellbinding movement of light cast onto the audience and the surrounding gardens ... it was just beautiful. You can see a video of the Kew Gardens mandala on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d61yJEEp21A>

Mandalas are all around us in nature, from the simple snail, tree, flower and even the earth itself. From atoms to the solar system each one is a mandala and part of an even bigger mandala. The connections that live between us are apparent when we take the time to really look. As designers we look around us all the time but our busy lives sometimes stop us from looking long enough at how the world around us might inspire our work.

So my new year's resolution is to spend more time looking at the world, nature, art and creations of others, to be inspired by what I see. 🌸



Above: The fire mandala at Kew Gardens (Christmas at Kew). Jo says, "A mandala in its basic form is a square with four gates containing a circle. Maybe that's why I love the Royal Exchange Theatre so much?" (See page 18.)

Left: The lily house at Kew Gardens. Read more in meetings rep Claire Gilligan's review on page 18.

Opposite page: Showing off equipment at the New Technologies Showcase at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

SEVEN PANTOS FROM LONDON ...AND STILL NO SIGN OF CHRISTMAS!

John Leventhall interviews David Howe and Nick Richings

In *Focus* we rarely look at “commercial” productions like pantomimes. LDs David Howe and Nick Richings have been lighting pantos for years! John Leventhall asks them about “life on the panto circuit”.

JOHN: Gentlemen, why do you do panto?

BOTH: We have mortgages to pay!

NICK: Being taken to the pantomime by my grandmother was an early memory of theatre. It was a huge moment for me in 1985 when I lit Cinderella starring Jim Davidson at Oxford Apollo, the home of those childhood memories. I have been lighting pantomimes ever since and, in a deeply masochistic way, I really rather enjoy it.

DAVID: My memories are also from childhood, seeing Dick Whittington at The Playhouse Theatre, Weston-super-Mare and being taken backstage at an open day. At 16, I ended up working there! I recall pantos at Bristol Hippodrome too with big names (for the time!) Cannon and Ball (Transformation scene with Waterfall and Gauzes), Terry Scott and John Inman.

JOHN: How does it start each year?

DAVID: Generally an email mid-April. I was asked to do Milton Keynes and Liverpool Empire for First Family Entertainment (FFE) and Canterbury for

Evolution Productions. Three large number-one touring houses in three weeks!

NICK: At the “Easter phone call” it always seems a good idea at the time. “Yes, of course I’ll do it,” I say, without listening to my inner voice, which only three months earlier said, “Never again!” This season was four pantos – possibly a step too far – Theatre Clwyd first, then Woking for FFE, then Qdos Productions at Glasgow Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC) and Plymouth (nicely adjacent geographically ... not!).

JOHN: When do you start planning and drawings?

DAVID: About mid-September the production manager sends photos and CAD drawings. It’s not uncommon to see a set you have worked on before. Around the same time the lighting shop emails for equipment lists. At this point the show is still uncast and a “work in progress” so there is little design discussion with the director, just about scenery and plot, really.

NICK: As I work for different producers, the time scales are all different. In recent years FFE has bought about ten new sets designed by Terry Parsons, in traditional format of front cloths and full stages. These complete pantomimes have a unity that makes lighting them relatively

John is ALD executive member for development ... which means he washes up the cups after meetings!



easy. Qdos mostly uses old stock, from different productions. You may get a village scene from Cinderella, a woodland from Dick Whittington and portals from Aladdin.

I draw my LX plan over the summer, using rough hanging plots and sad, photocopied scenery photos. We never had a production meeting for Plymouth. I didn’t know until the fit-up how wide the portals were – that’s crucial to get the pipe ends at the ends of the pipes!

Glasgow SECC seats 3,000. Rigging, flying, lighting, followspots, communication, etc., are hired. It’s a massive undertaking and all crewed by freelancers. The show had three portals, eight kinesis flying lines, mid-stage cloths and back cloths on tracks. A detailed plan was produced by HSL, the main rigging and lighting supplier. This is the third year I’ve done this venue and most of it is similar to previous years. The basic LX changes little, just specials and effects. I hand the plot to our production electricians, Roly Smith and Guy Jones, who assemble the kit at the HSL warehouse and sort out the patching etc. with Jim Beagley, my programmer on the commercial shows.



David Howe enjoys lighting all manner of productions: musicals, opera, plays, dance and, of course, pantomime (in no particular order!). David trained in the art of "glitter management" at Central School of Speech and Drama.



Nick Richings has been working in the theatre lighting industry for more than 25 years. He has worked all over the world on a myriad of projects, including tradeshows, opera, ballet, musicals and, of course, pantomimes.

DAVID: My usual panto layout is two bars within each bay, between portals. One tight against the portal, with three- or four-circuit asymmetrical cyclorama units (Thomas or L&E) with colours to make front cloths "ping". The second is trimmed higher for movers or pipe ends and equipment that needs calibrating space or to see under the portal to backlight. You don't often get space for backlight. You take what you're given and run with it. I prefer to keep lighting hidden.

I'm aware, for most front cloth "On the road to..." scenes, that scenery upstage is changing

rapidly with people shifting a lot of heavy stuff, often seconds before the next scene. So I keep booms simple to avoid fixtures getting knocked. Thank goodness for good deck electricians!

JOHN: How much rehearsal is there?

NICK: My first show was a rock 'n' roll Beauty and the Beast in Clwyd, a rep with high production values and love and care spent on every aspect. I have lit there for about ten years with writer/director Pete Rowe and designer Judith Croft. Just like their regular productions there's four weeks'

rehearsal, production meetings and two weeks' fit-up. Scenery, lifts, traps, rigging, electrics and sound in the first week then technical rehearsal in week two. Planning can be done close to the mark as we do not rent any kit thanks to the theatre's forward-looking investment policy.

*Snow White, Milton
Keynes Theatre
Lighting design by
David Howe*

DAVID: Commercial schedules are two weeks' rehearsal in studio followed by a production "week" (load-in Sunday, open Friday). Often directors opt for staging for ten days and aim for one or two run-throughs on Saturday before load-in. So that run-through is essential, to hear the songs sung, see the numbers danced and have the DSM mutter about scene changes and transformation scene problems! The DSMs really earn their money on panto. They have to quickly get a feel of how scene changes work moment by moment. Everyone else relies on their notes! From one run-through, I have to assemble a rough cue list and number it so we can light out of sequence and so the DSM can hastily scribble cues into their script.

JOHN: So, you're now set to go on the fit-up and technical rehearsals?

NICK: The second week in Clywd was wall-to-wall tech. 20 full-on production numbers and a plethora of terrible puns, cheesy gags, multi-talented actors, audience participation. It was a joy! Preview Friday, notes Saturday evening ... then zoom back to London.

To Woking, Sunday for Cinderella. Ponies, ugly sisters, dry ice, orchestra in a pit. As per David's pattern – it's a one week fit-up opening Friday. Fast and dirty. I like that!



*The sultan's palace, Dick McWhittington at Glasgow SECC
Lighting design by Nick Richings*



LIGHTING PANTO

FFE has invested in acres of glitter but all the shows are basically similar, whether Cinderella or Aladdin. They start with a beautiful front gauze backed by a starcloth. Full-stage scenes are usually cut-cloths plus backcloth with maybe some trucks. The scenery is a complete set of pieces, all the same age, and designed by the same team, making it easier to get a uniform, cohesive look. Like David says, we get little space for overhead bars or side light.

On commercial shows I have budget for a programmer but that often brings unreasonable expectations from a director and often the “star” of the show for the set to look like something out of Strictly or X Factor. I have lit Glasgow SECC for Qdos twice before, each billed as a “new” show ... more than could be said about the set! All the scenic elements came from different sets. The portals, once Hugh Durrant’s, were crudely re-painted. Some set was from an old Palladium Dick Whittington, re-painted many times with village trucks black and white but backcloths technicolor!

I sighed to Jim, “You can’t polish a turd.” He replied, “No! But you can roll it in glitter!” With over 60 moving lights and more LED fixtures, we made the brown sets zing with colour and flash until we were near seizure, and abused the audience with kilowatts of pulsations in time to Gareth Owen’s chest-thumping sound level. It was very vulgar!

February/March 2014

*The view from the control room in Plymouth
Lighting design by Nick Richings*



Plymouth – Mercifully near the end! A real theatre, an experienced director who understands the genre and its limitations, a talented cast of well-known names with below-average egos. This one was a pleasure to work. But we’re back to the un-designed mish-mash of brown sets from different shows.

On Sunday evening, after travelling from Glasgow, Plymouth’s rig was all nicely squeezed in – I had only to set the deads. Plymouth holds

good memories. I first visited as Michael Northen’s assistant, many years ago! It was nostalgic to walk in and to find several of the crew are still there.

After four days reasonably smooth progress, the producers turned up. “The front cloths look terrible. Can you put some gobos on them?” After days toiling to make a collection of random bits look like a show, I had to bite my lip! Gobos just made them look like terrible cloths with horrible gobos. But they were deliriously happy even with

LIGHTING PANTO

the added red blobs! A bit disheartening after four weeks' slog, but by then we were counting the minutes until the train!

DAVID: My fit-ups were a bit more of a formula than Nick's ... thank goodness!

Gosh, they are quick! Sunday: Rig. Monday: Four hours' focus on just basic portals and cloths. Monday evening: Our one chance to rough in moving light focuses during scenery construction.

Tuesday: 9am should be full-on tech rehearsal. But more construction is needed, so we get more time roughing looks and positions. In the afternoon, a sound check enables us to put some cues in the book with the DSM. Just as well – I find it hard to apply rational thought to lighting when the drum kit is being sound checked, boom boom, for hours!

Soon the tech arrives and it's all go. My preference is to have something roughed into the desk at least for the start and end of each section, whether song, dance or comedy routine. Even if it's just a "tracking cue" the DSM can call a number and I can imagine the cue. Likewise for the director, who wants to see the big picture ... Does the scene where Cinders meets the Prince work? Does the blackout feel right at the end of the slosh scene? My preference is to run through a section, then rewind, for the choreographer to re-space and for me to fill in the states.

JOHN: *What are key ingredients to deliver these shows on target?*

DAVID: With a very short production process and anything from 70 to 90 performances, fixture reliability is vital. I don't want the crew to have regular swap-outs on unreliable fixtures. Some units are cheaper but reliability is very important. As the rental shop deals with swap-outs and spares, I often start a conversation to see what they are willing to support the show with. This season I've used Mac 700 spots, 700 and JB A7 Washes, Vipers and Viper Performances, and Mac Auras. Only a couple of units misbehaved.

Lighting for panto is based around what can be achieved within the time allocated. Producers are becoming wiser to the benefits of a good moving light package, financially and artistically, and have learnt that a programmer is essential to achieve directors' "big ideas" on short timescales.

In *Focus* we often discuss the role of the programmer to the lighting designer and production. Panto is another classic example of where those relationships are vital. Dan Large programmed all three shows and our mutual "shorthand" really saved time. Programmers seamlessly make the impossible possible and the show operation practical for the in-house crew.

Similarly, follow spots give their performance every show and their work is prominently on

view. Not for the fainted hearted in tech! Every LD should run a spot at some point. Spot ops who have done panto before bring understanding and know panto tricks e.g. "fairy in hard-edged pink on first entrance" and "ghost gag in green"!

NICK: Yes, a good programmer is vital. I tend to go with what the hire company have in stock (within reason). We have the same reliability goal – they don't want loads of call-outs over Christmas, and companies like White Light and HSL pride themselves on quality kit.

JOHN: *Some panto sets get used for many years – any issues there?*

NICK: Oh yes! Some companies trot out cloths and sets older than some grannies in the audience! We can make them look ok, but if producers want an "X Factor" experience, they need to invest artistically and financially with a new generation of set designers, video walls, LED portals, etc. Whilst they are making money today, I don't think that will happen.

DAVID: I'm very aware that some sets have been around for years and cloths are stuffed in a bag for eleven months, so they easily lose their magic with unsympathetic lighting. Complementary colour can make them sparkle. Low angles from the auditorium can bring a cloth to life, making the glitter shimmer. The front cloth is usually seen

Jack and the Beanstalk, Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
Lighting design by David Howe



LIGHTING PANTO

first – it should look magical and enchanting to excite the audience to what might happen next.

Although FOH positions flatten out the set, they provide “lights up for comedy” in front cloth scenes with a “bubble” of light to act in. I go a tone darker on the colour than usual as followspots take care of the principals and the No.1 bar does cloth details. I also include a darker blue cover for depth in a pale front cloth scene. A good gobo breakup in the front coverage, focused soft, gives texture to dance numbers.

JOHN: What about next year?

DAVID: Every year you end the shows a bit of a wreck, given the hours worked and having plotted thousands of cues. But there is a thrill to achieving something quickly, hopefully of a high standard, working with great crew and fun casts and continuing the great tradition that Nick mentioned. It’s especially nice to see children coming to the theatre for the first time and hopefully then motivated to come back for another show during the year.

NICK: I enjoy the challenge of lighting the show, turning a sow’s ear into a slightly less ugly sow’s ear ... and I think I am pretty good at it now. I agree with David. It saddens me that producers tend to forget that the target audience is pantomime’s life blood for the future. Although theatre



technology and public taste have changed, pantos have changed little. They are the honest battleground of good vs evil, the hero vs the villain, and producers vs everyone else! Panto is a strong enough formula to survive given adequate investment in marketing and show quality.

Personally, I prefer tradition! Painted sets, glitter, grids packed with cut cloths, plummeting plastic chickens, fluorescent furry animals on fishing

line, being chased by a man barely disguised as a woman brandishing a bright orange four-foot mallet screaming “get back in the saucepan!”

JOHN: Thank you both for sharing your experiences ... and long may they continue!

BOTH: OH NO, THEY WON'T! #

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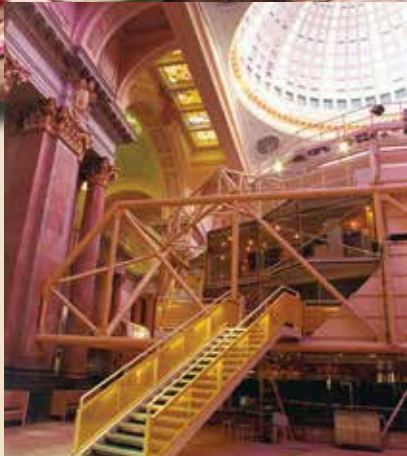
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A POSTCARD FROM...

Johanna Town, Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester



*All My Sons – Royal Exchange Theatre
The lazy, summery atmosphere is effortlessly established by Johanna Town's lighting design, which interacts beautifully with the pale wooden yard in Ellen Cairns' set.
– The Times*



This amazing theatre in the round, a spaceship landed in the middle of an enormous Victorian building, is one of my favourite theatres in the world. I was lucky enough to light two shows there last year: 'All My Sons' and 'That Day We Sang'. If you ever get the chance to light a show here, accept it with open arms. To me, this theatre is a symbol of creating without fear – "don't be afraid of your ideas", "think outside the box" – because its creator did just that over 40 years ago. A glass theatre in the middle of a Victorian building with three glass domes? Some would say it is a lighting designer's nightmare, but lighting in this theatre is so real it always feels so natural. So, thank you, Richard Negri, for your vision, for creating a theatre that has remained so alive and so challenging in every production I do here. And thank you for creating a space that makes my heart smile every time I walk through its doors.

Jo

INSIDER KNOWLEDGE

Richard Owen, Head of Lighting
Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester

The Royal Exchange Theatre is a seven-sided theatre-in-the-round, which sits in the old Cotton Exchange in Manchester. The theatre module is constructed with large glass panels so any lighting designer has to deal with daylight streaming into the hall during rehearsals and shows. We encourage lighting the whole space and hall so to use the glass panels as an asset to light through from the hall. Directors regularly set action out in the hall to take advantage of the large hall acoustics out there.



February/March 2014

In the first of a new series, the head of lighting at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, Richard Owen, lets us in on a few secrets about designing a show in this unique building...

Some tips from the team for lighting in the space: there are eight actor entrances on stage level, so learn your door numbers (1-7 and 3A) quickly then you'll never get lost, especially in your focus session. Our audience sits less than two metres from the rig so noise is a factor; mover choice and positioning is paramount. As with every space working out your general cover is hugely important, but the team is here to help. Enjoy your lighting.



If you have any tips you'd like to share with your fellow designers, production electricians and programmers, please email editor@ald.org.uk. These can be anything relating to a building, from things to watch out for when drawing a plan to navigating a labyrinthine back of house. We look forward to sharing them in future issues! 📧

Page 17

CHRISTMAS AT KEW GARDENS

LD Phil Supple lit this interactive walk, reviewed by **Claire Gilligan**



Claire Gilligan is a sales executive for Rosco. She has a passion for theatre lighting and has been stationed in West End venues and has toured internationally. Claire had a career highlight working as an orc extra in the Lord of the Rings trilogy, but she tells us they did recruit the entire population of New Zealand for those films.

The rain and wind decided to clear in the afternoon of Monday 30 December. As it was between Christmas and New Year's the London transport system decided it would be a great time to shut the District line to Kew Gardens on the day of our event. As I make my way to an Overground station, I pull out my *Focus* to read (true story). This is my first arranged meeting as a new addition to the ALD meetings committee, and I suspect I have to write up what we get up to today. Still, it isn't raining and the sky is giving me a preview of lovely orange and pink clouds.

Lighting designer Phil Supple met me at the Victoria gate entrance of Kew Gardens and together we assembled the eighteen ALD members attending, all wrapped up warm, umbrellas and torches on hand for our journey. With a mug full of mulled wine Phil gave us a little intro speech and together we wandered into the grounds.

It's a one-mile trail woven across Kew Gardens and back to the Victoria gate. We wandered at a leisurely pace to take in all the different elements of lighting on offer. Initially I thought it was "one look", and it's the audience who traverse the scenes to make them change in front of our eyes. Static lighting begins the areas on the walk but we come across many different scenes. The majority

All photos by Rikard Österlund



of the lights are on dimmers and set to 90% to save lamp life.

One of the challenges for the creative team included lighting around bats. Kew issued a bat report and some of the more bat-loving trees were off limits for lighting. There are many rare and protected animals and plants at Kew and sanctuary rules strictly apply.

Another challenge I found fun to hear about was the cable runs. They needed not only to run power from A to B but cables also had to be clearly marked for the gardeners who mow the vast areas of lawns even during the winter. This was expertly worked out on a large CAD plan with many long CAD drawing hours by Phil's assistant Anna Barrett.



Colourful Chinese and Turkish lanterns were interspersed along the trail. In places Phil enhanced the nature of the surroundings with a bit of colour, and in others used open white to let nature paint the colour and tone of the trees and plants, subtly using nature's beauty.

I walk along the path by the lake, across a long bridge of natural beauty, where the swans glide across the lake, not being at all bothered by the lights or the crowds. I turn the corner to see trees in the distance, big trees, colour changing. My first thought is, "uh oh, what's gone wrong?" As I get nearer I see Chris Withers and Michael Scott have found an interactive area where large red buttons are arranged to control the lights on the trees with some basic music beats. It's possible a small child was elbowed out of the way – ahem, encouraged

to use another button – so the ALD could have a go (there were a few to choose from, thankfully).

Back to the path and serenity welcomes us: a Fibonacci numbers display in a ring of fire, serene music plays and we're back to primal lighting. I wonder how it fares in the rain. Phil tells us later on in the pub that it works well even in the rain. Many of us were most impressed by this fire section and the lily house, with the stunning lit up giant flower and its impressively clear and crisp reflection below.

The big finale on the walk, "Thrive On", over the palm house, is the last magnificent art piece on the journey. Phil tells us it was difficult to negotiate having lighting inside the palm house; there are some extremely rare plants kept in there. However, it was lovely that some lights were able



to be used inside, as the backlit plants produced some fantastic "nature's best" gobos.

Thank you to everyone who attended. Thanks to Phil Supple and Anna Barrett for their guidance and insight along the way and also to everyone at Kew. This was the first time this event has been staged at Kew and we all agreed it shows huge promise for a return next year with expanding and enhancing ideas. I would encourage you all to go along next year. 🌸

Christmas at Kew was presented by Royal Botanical Gardens Kew and Raymond Gubbay, with illuminated trail produced by Culture Creative.



*Christmas at Kew, Kew Gardens, London
Lighting designer: Phil Supple
Programmer: Lawrence Stromski
Photo by Rikard Österlund*

REDISCOVERING CANDLELIGHT

ALD fellow James Laws writes in depth about his recent candlelit cantatas

In the last edition of Focus, Kelli Zezulka reviewed the Chamber Cantatas by Candlelight, which I lit in a concert dedicated to the memory of Philip Edwards, long-time lighting manager at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM). We thought that, in this case, the discoveries made in rediscovering candlelight merited another piece in Focus.

Before we get to the art, we need a quick review of the tools. Look on candles as individual low-power Christmas tree lights with little-finger top-joint size filaments, each one with a 200mm long battery, which has to be vertically underneath the bright bit. Then factor in that the battery can leak hot wax in a draught and it may last anything between thirty minutes and eight hours, depending on climactic conditions. Each light is either on or off. It has to be “switched on” with a long wax taper and “switched off” with a wet finger pinch or a quick blow of well-directed breath. Also bear in mind that these lamps have a colour temperature the yellow side of full CTO and that you need to avoid putting anything too close to the lamp, especially above it, as it generates a lot of heat and can set non-flameproof materials on fire.

So, how many candles do you need to light a concert? Candles just come in the one brightness size, so you can't just use a more powerful one

when you want to throw the light a distance. Kelli counted about 150 at the RNCM, on and over and round a stage 6m by 5m. This was barely enough, if we take, as we should, that the must-do part of the exercise is to give enough light to the musicians to read the music by.

OK, you need lots of candles; so how do you group them? As our main stage lights we had four circular candelabra of twenty candles each, two of which we flew over the downstage stage corners. To disperse the heat, the arms of these candelabra hold their candles up to 450mm radius from centre.

The first problem you encounter is that the dimmest area around a candle is the space underneath it. It's no use putting the candlestick horizontal; the flame still goes up and the hot wax drips freely off it onto the stage below. The answer is to keep the candles upright and to radiate or reflect the light downwards.

In elegant fittings, chandeliers are made of cut glass, each facet of which radiates and refracts



Setting up in working light

light to best advantage. My units have to be tough and portable, so they are made of fireproofed timber and they fold for transport. So we explored a solution used by French re-creation companies; they reflect the light downwards.

This solution is documented for early nineteenth century operating theatres and for art classes, so why not for theatre? For permanent installations reflectors are usually made of rounded metal but we didn't have that luxury available. We used 1.2m square and 2.40m x 1.20m flats, covered with Rosco and Lee Filters reflection material. We were able to distinguish between what I call hard reflection, which is a flat silvered surface,

CANDLELIGHT

James Laws



The stage and performers under candlelight

and soft reflection, which breaks up the reflection and disperses it.

The advantage of using flown flattage was that we could angle the reflector to best advantage and we were able to increase the useful light level under the chandeliers from half a lux to about 5 lux. Conservation level for National Trust exhibitions of fragile materials is usually 50 lux and classical concert lighting is ideally at 300 lux, so we were amazed that the young eyes of the musicians could read the scores at 5 lux. But this level is right on the edge of marginal; they could read musical notes but not words. So the singers had to have rat stands at about 25% and the harpsichordist, Roger Hamilton, who was also the director, had a birdie at the same level. This was the only "cheating" we did with electricity, except

for above the audience, who had the lightest touch of a Pattern 743 wash above them. Roger Hamilton made the following evaluation on the way candlelight affected the performers and the performance:

The effects of the light were twofold. There was definitely a change in attention levels, and a kind of focusing and quietening of both performers and audience which was interesting and delightful.

There was a small downside, in that it was just difficult for some of us to see the music sometimes! I'm sure this is something that could be solved given a bit more time for experiment than we actually had.

There were two more candelabra on stage stands and ideally they would have had reflectors associated with them. Our other lighting was a row of footlights, which helped the audience to see the players, and four wing lengths: think floor booms with six

candles between 1m and 3m above stage level. These lit some decorative pillars and they enabled the musicians to see their on-stage seats when they were exiting the platform.

The hard reflectors sent the light to the red plush curtains and, generally, the visual scene seemed in balance but very dim and mellow. It would be difficult to see how we could have started from nothing and created anything more dynamic within the constraints of time and budget. Most of this would have been impossible without the intense care, pragmatism and interest that production manager Nick Carr and his dedicated team took with a situation that could have so easily become a casualty of health and safety. If we ever do it again, we have some strong memories to build on. 🍀



The hard reflectors project light upstage and the footlights give front lighting



Speaking of candlelight... The new Sam Wanamaker Playhouse on London's Bankside opened in January. The theatre and auditorium are lit almost exclusively with candlelight, with the exception of electronically generated daylight: shutters behind the audience open for the daylight scenes, then close for scenes that take place later in the day. We are working to arrange a members' meeting at this unique venue; details will be sent out via a members' bulletin nearer the time. We'll have a full report on "the Sam" in the June/July issue of *Focus*.

Above: David Dawson as Ferdinand and Gemma Arterton as the Duchess of Malfi. Photo by Mark Douet, courtesy of Shakespeare's Globe press office.



OFFICE ORACLE

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

2014 members' directory

The new edition of the members' listing directory should be included with this copy of *Focus*. If you have not received this, please contact the Office and we will organise a replacement.

Subscription fees

2014/15 subscription fees will be set according to the member category you are in on 1 March 2014. As previously announced, the rates were increased at the 2013 Annual General Meeting and are now as follows:

Professional Designer	£85 (+£10)
Professional Member	£85 (+£10)
Associate	£45 (+£5)
Student	£30 (+£5)
Retired	£30 (+£5)
Non-Profit Organisation	£30 (+£5)
Corporate Members	£400 (no change)

If you are either a Professional Designer or Professional Member, we are pleased to announce that we have now drawn up a standing order request form for quarterly payments to enable you to spread the increased subscription across the year. Payments are due on the first of each April, July, October and January, but we are adding a small surcharge for this method as we will no longer be receiving the full subscription at the start of the year. Therefore each payment will be for £22, meaning that you pay an extra £3 across the year.

Please note, however, that if two consecutive payments are missed then we reserve the right to stop your membership immediately until such time as the arrears are paid in full. Stickers for the current year subscription to put onto your membership cards will be sent out once the second payment from July has been reconciled at our end.

The Executive hopes that this instalment plan will be especially useful to all Professionals who may find paying a lump sum in one go a strain on the cash flow at the start of each April.

Finally, we have a new membership card design after we finally ran out of the blue and white version last year, some seven years after we first issued them. Everyone on the database who has been a member for more than three years will automatically receive one with the confirmation of their 2014/15 subscription being paid.

ALD Sponsored Students Scheme 2014

This corporate members' funded scheme for students studying on higher education courses with an element of lighting design has been more popular than ever this year, with 92 sponsored students now signed up for the next year of subscriptions.

If you applied to be on the scheme from Christmas 2012 and did not renew your membership this year, please note that your membership will revert to that of an ordinary student in March and you will be expected to pay the £30 subscription rate for your membership to continue.

2014/15 membership sticker cards will be sent out in mid-February to all those still on the scheme.

We would also be pleased to hear from our corporate members with ideas for meetings or experiences tailored specifically to the sponsored students.

Members' monthly social evenings

The monthly socials will return to the Coach and Horses as of Friday 28 February when Hawthorn will be the sponsors for the evening.



Other dates currently sponsored in 2014 are:

28 March	Rosco
25 April	ACEntertainmentTechnologies
30 May	Ambersphere Solutions
27 June	Lee Filters

If any of our other Corporate Members wish to sponsor any of the available 2014 dates please contact our Corporate Members' Representative: richard.lambert@ald.org.uk.

Helping us to help you

One of the main reasons that the ALD exists is to enable discussion and networking between members, so that issues and concerns can be shared. We have our monthly social at the Coach & Horses, where informal conversations can happen. However, with our current London office being available, we are slowly moving towards using a system of working groups to progress specific projects faster than the Executive can work on them.

February/March 2014

Already up and running are groups discussing environmental responsibility, The Lumière Scheme, the accreditation of programmers, formalising the role of assistant and associate lighting designers, the corporate structure and governance of the association, are there are also specific groups geared towards areas of the membership such as students or education.

Most of the groups have at least one member of the Executive on them, but they are normally co-ordinated by member who can concentrate on the project and give some time to ensure that meetings happen, jobs lists get devised and action plans followed.

We are particularly interested to see if we have members within the association that can add specific skills to the groups. For instance, we are currently in need of some legal/contract experience and fundraising knowledge to be able to attract funds for some of the schemes that we are looking to set up. Equally, if you are a whizz with databases, we have a project for you too!

Do you have a project or skills you would like to bring to the ALD? Please contact the ALD office or any members of the Executive directly.

The 2014 WhatsOnStage awards

The WhatsOnStage awards are the only major theatre awards in which the audience are the judges across all categories. In 2012/13, over 60,000 theatregoers logged on to vote, with leaders in many categories fluctuating dramatically from day to day. In the end, almost every year, the determination of some fields comes down to just a handful of votes.

Each year, the awards shortlists – covering the best of London theatre (and a bit beyond) – are drawn up with the help of thousands of theatregoers who nominate their favourites across all 20+ awards categories. Nominations were announced at a star-studded launch event held in early December.

The nominations for the The WHITE LIGHT Best Lighting Designer Award are entirely populated with ALD members this year!

Peter Mumford	Ghosts at the Almeida
Philip Gladwell	Limbo at the London Wonderground
Adam Silverman	Macbeth at Trafalgar Studios
Paule Constable	Michael Grandage season at the Noël Coward
Tim Lutkin	Strangers on a Train at the Gielgud

A full list of all nominees in all categories can be found on the awards website: <http://awards.whatsonstage.com/>.

The voting closed on 31 January and the awards themselves will be presented on Sunday 23 February.

2014 Off West End Theatre awards ("Offies")

The Offies are here to recognise and celebrate the excellence, innovation and ingenuity of independent theatres across London. (See Craig Bennett's article about the judging on page 33.)

The Offies cover a calendar year and the winners are announced in the spring of the

OFFICE ORACLE

following year. The point of these awards – as with everything at OffWestEnd.com – is to help raise the profile and status of independent theatres in London by giving them greater power to promote their work individually and collectively and to reward the new talent that they nurture and that is essential to the future of the theatre industry.

To take part, the production needs to have a minimum of ten performances over a minimum of a three-week period, the theatre needs to be a participating member of OffWestEnd.com and the theatre or the company needs to invite the assessors. The only exceptions to this criteria are the productions entered for the TBC award, Best Opera Production and Best Production for Young People, which require a minimum of four performances over four days.

For more information and the full listing of nominees in all categories, please visit www.offwestend.com/index.php/pages/the_offices.

Best Lighting Design nominations (ALD members in bold):

Neil Austin	The El Train at Hoxton Hall
Phil Bentley	Orpheus at BAC
Joshua Carr	The Love Girl & The Innocent at the Southwark Playhouse
Oliver Fenwick	Woyzeck at Omnibus Clapham
Stuart Glover	The Merchant of Venice at Brockley Jack



The winners of this year's ALD pub quiz were Bright Sparx (left to right): Phil Brezja, Jaz Hewitt, David Ferraz, Jonathan Haynes and Dave Isherwood (the last three from White Light, but we're assured it wasn't a fix!)

Dan Herd	The Life and Sort of Death of Eric Argyle at Soho Theatre
Howard Hudson	Titanic at the Southwark Playhouse
Howard Hudson	Lizzie Siddal at Arcola Theatre
William Ingham	The Mystery of Irma Vep at Jack Studio Theatre
Hartley T A Kemp	Land of Our Fathers at Theatre 503
Matt Leventhall	Fishskin Trousers at the Finborough Theatre
William Reynolds	Dances of Death at the Gate Theatre
Ben M Rogers	Chess at the Union
Johanna Town	The Life of Stuff at Theatre 503

Free registration for PLASA Focus: Leeds 2014

Don't miss your chance to see the latest innovations in pro audio, lighting, AV and stage technology on Tuesday 29 and Wednesday 30 April at the Royal Armouries in Leeds.

Register for **FREE** and you will have access to all of this and more...

- 130 major international brands exhibiting across two halls
- FREE professional development programme, offering seminars, product demonstrations and training sessions
- Dozens of new products making their UK debut following international launches at ProLight + Sound and ISE

Focus – The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers – “More art, less tools...”

- 2,500 friends and employers to network, do business, and share your ideas with
- International speakers and world-class professional knowledge
- Focused news, including advanced information on new product launches
- Seating and socialising areas with complimentary refreshments

Register for your free visitor badge and be part of the leading event for entertainment technology in the north of England!

www.plasafocus.com/leeds/

Richard Brett

The ALD was saddened to hear of the death of Richard Brett, a leading theatre engineer, who has died of cancer at the age of 74. Although not a lighting designer, he was a great friend to the lighting community. ALD president Richard Pilbrow said, "Richard created the role in Great Britain of the modern professional theatre consultant, and his influence on theatre architecture and engineering has been profound and will continue for many generations." A celebration of his life will be held in the spring. Our condolences to his colleagues and family. 🌸

Kevin Fitz-Simons

by Rob Halliday

The lighting world lost a wonderful friend and a talented practitioner this New Year's Eve, when Kevin Fitz-Simons passed away unexpectedly at the age of just 53.

For the last decade or so Kevin worked on the supply side of the industry, latterly for AC Lighting – but everything he did there was fuelled by his years working everywhere from the Liverpool Everyman to touring the world with the English Shakespeare Company. He was no mean lighting designer himself, his work for the National Youth Theatre often breathtakingly beautiful – though ultimately I think he decided he'd rather spend evenings at home with his family than in darkened auditoria.

Though I don't think he'd ever have applied the word to himself, he was also a great mentor, at the NYT, LAMDA, RSAMD and generally in life, giving people enough freedom to figure things out for themselves while dropping enough hints to ensure they could.

The enormous turnout at his funeral was a reminder, if any were needed, of the enormous respect in which he was held, the gossip and laughter afterwards a reminder of the stories he delighted in telling and the joy he brought to those around him. He will be much missed. 🌸



Professional Designers' shows opening in February and March

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.

- 5 February 2014 Ian Saunders** *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Ivy Arts Centre, University of Surrey
6 February 2014 Malcolm Rippeth *Refugee Boy*, West Yorkshire Playhouse, then touring
6 February 2014 Johanna E Town *Moon Over a Rainbow Shawl*, Ipswich, then touring
6 February 2014 Katharine Williams *In Skagway*, Arcola Theatre, London
10 February 2014 Richard C Lambert *Page to Stage*, The Landor Theatre
12 February 2014 Alex Wardle *Birdsong*, Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne, then touring
15 February 2014 Malcolm Rippeth *Brief Encounter*, Wallis Annenberg Center Beverly Hills, then touring
17 February 2014 Richard C Lambert *Before the Night is Through*, The Landor Theatre
21 February 2014 Malcolm Rippeth *The Threepenny Opera*, Nottingham Playhouse, then touring
27 February 2014 Jon Clark *I Can't Sing!*, London Palladium
3 March 2014 Richard C Lambert *The Man Inside*, Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham
7 March 2014 Malcolm Rippeth *Spring Awakening*, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Southampton Nuffield, then touring
11 March 2014 Richard C Lambert *The Man Inside*, The Landor Theatre
20 March 2014 Katharine Williams *Mad Man*, The Drum
21 March 2014 KC Wilkerson *California State Thespian Festival 2014*
22 March 2014 Johanna E Town *Porgy & Bess*, Copenhagen Opera House

STOP PRESS!

The Stage Awards 2014 were announced on the day *Focus* went to press. The annual unsung hero award, which recognises figures in the performing arts industry who operate outside the limelight, was presented posthumously to **Andy Collier**. The award is sponsored by the Association of British Theatre Technicians. For a full listing of all the winners, visit www.thestage.co.uk.

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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

Mark Summers, Newcastle upon Tyne*

Catherine Webb, London†

Professional Member

Clive Cartey, Chichester*

Anthony, Doran, London†

Nic Farman, London†

Paul Halgarth, Ellesmere Port*

Matt Ladkin, Suffolk*

Tim O'Grady, London

Sponsored Student Scheme

Central School of Speech & Drama

Sam Waddington

Guildford School of Acting

Daniel Rowe

Jonathan Stacey

Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Jacob Doyle

Katie Ducarreau

Bree Jameson

Alice Strong

LIPA

Charlotte Burton

RADA

Vari Gardner

Rose Bruford College






Andrew Bruce

Jessica Hung Han Yun

** Re-joining the association*

† From Associate Member

Diary dates 2014

- 28 February** Monthly Members' Social Evening†
Sponsored by **Hawthorn** 
- 28 March** Professional Members' Meeting, London office, 14.30–18.00
Monthly Members' Social Evening†
Sponsored by **Rosco** 
- 25 April** Monthly Members' Social Evening†
Sponsored by **AC Entertainment Technologies** 
- 29–30 April** PLASA Focus: Leeds*
- 30 May** Professional Members' Meeting, London office, 14.30–18.00
Monthly Members' Social Evening†
Sponsored by **Ambersphere Solutions** 
- 11–12 June** ABTT Theatre Show, Old Truman Brewery, London
- 27 June** Monthly Members' Social Evening†
Sponsored by **Lee Filters** 

** 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.

A CAST OF THOUSANDS

Rob Halliday and **Stuart West** introduce Doncaster's newest venue



Rob began lighting at school, then with the National Youth Theatre, and hasn't really stopped since. He has worked on shows and in theatres around the world, also writing about some of them for various magazines.

More art, less tools, I know. The problem is that lighting art is often inextricably linked with lighting tools, particularly when you have to use a house rig.

Believe me: this also fuels a certain fear when having to specify the rig for a new venue. You hope to get enough of a mixture of gear to let visiting designers achieve their goals. But sometimes, something gives you pause before writing that spec.

My dilemma: emotionally, I love tungsten lighting. Intellectually, I know that LED equivalents are becoming usable in shows while having lower running costs in terms of power use and lamp replacement. When specifying the gear for the new Cast performing arts centre in Doncaster (Artbuilding Projects' Graham Lister having helped win more money from the Arts Council and others to help reverse the cuts to Charcoalblue's original comprehensive spec), it



just felt a bit naughty to now be specifying big, hot, power-hungry filament-burning lights.

Cast has two principal spaces, an elegant 620-seat pros theatre, and a 200-seat courtyard-style studio. We worried that LED fixtures wouldn't be bright enough for a big show in the pros theatre. But the studio felt like the perfect place for them. And while they're not cheap, add the cost of a dimmer (value engineering had left the Sensor racks installed but underpopulated), a scroller, consumables (lamps, colour) plus power use to a traditional fixture and the costs start to converge,

as long as you can look beyond the initial purchase price.

We had a chat with Kully Thiari, Cast's executive director, spelling out our aims, the pros, the cons, including the concern that an LD might feel compromised by having to use LED fixtures (though, of course, there would be a sneaky stock of tungsten gear in the other theatre). Kully said to go for it, in fact suggesting that making the place a learning ground for new lighting tools should be part of the organisation's remit.

So I drew a hypothetical show – always revealing of lantern types and beam angles, but also how long cables need to be. From that we specified an all LED, largely ETC rig (their seven-colour system has a magic others don't, the fading is great, and they are quiet): Source Four Lustr+ spots, Selador D-60 Vivids in lieu of Par Cans, Vivid-R battens to share with the pros theatre, plus JB LED A7s, a moving source small enough to fit into a dance tower. Careful balancing of budgets and a great price from Northern Light meant we got everything we asked for. It felt like a great little rig...



Stuart has worked in entertainment since the age of 16. He has held various lighting positions at regional venues and at one point toured Europe in a big top! As a freelancer Stuart has lit and programmed all kinds of shows, is a console trainer for ETC and has recently started working in television. He is currently the head of production at Cast.

So a truck full of brand spanking new gear arrives; it feels like the best Christmas ever! But now what exactly are we supposed to do with this smorgasbord of lighting tools?

I'd seen both Charcoalblue's and Rob's designs and specifications; I agreed with the ethos behind every decision, especially that we should be a learning ground for new technology. But having spent years running a lighting department, I had my own ideas about how to utilise this wonderful new technology: I really wanted to use it on a larger stage as well. If you have the best of both worlds, why not offer it everywhere?

In the studio, which has ended up programmed largely to receive small-scale touring shows, the motivation was that these shows were coming from studio spaces less well equipped than ours. They're lit with tungsten, and the tight get-in times mean they don't have time to adapt to LED.

February/March 2014



So we put up LED units for shows we light from scratch and tungsten lights that can be moved show by show (though we do wish we had a few more dimmer modules to make this easier).

In the pros theatre, the question was whether we could run tungsten and LED side by side without causing problems for visiting companies or designers. There was a certain scepticism at first, particularly since we don't have a standard flood bar, just our Vivid-R battens, and our front bridge is filled with Source Four LED profiles. But everyone loves them in the end! We are able to just mix the colour needed using our Gio console. Everyone is amazed by the results, as much as we have been: the sheer light levels, a dimmer

But everyone loves the Source Four LED profiles in the end... amazed by the results as much as we have been.

– Stuart West

Careful balancing of budgets and a great price from Northern

Light meant we got everything we asked for.

– Rob Halliday

curve that closely matches tungsten, and an outstanding colour mixing system that can produce not just a beautiful array of colour but also, when needed, a really good tungsten match. As a bonus, we don't need to cut as much gel – which helps our very tight consumables budget!

Mixing it all up means we have a lighting system that is adaptable and cost effective (in the long term) – and is helping people embrace this new technology. 🍷

CAST IN DONCASTER

Kelli Zezulka has 59 minutes to save Christmas...

As I'm one of the few lighting designers to have worked at Cast since its opening in September of last year, Rob asked if I would write a bit about actually working there. I was asked by Slung Low, a Leeds-based theatre company, to work on a reprisal of its interactive children's Christmas adventure, *59 Minutes to Save Christmas*, which was at the Barbican in 2012. Slung Low is well known for its immersive "headphone shows": the actors wear radio mics and the audience wear headphones so that they are part of the action no matter where it's taking place. The premise of *59 Minutes* is simple: Professor Meanwood has invented a potion that takes the Christmas spirit out of everything it comes into contact with and he is planning to release it into Cast. The children (and their adventurous adults!) are recruited into the Royal Christmas Brigade and so starts their quest around Cast.

The action starts in the foyer to introduce the story, then

moves to the meeting rooms on the first floor, where an errant elf (poisoned by Professor Meanwood) is destroying toys instead of making them. I used some 300 watt sunfloods to backlight the silhouettes cut into the set pieces along with a smattering of fairy lights and the meeting rooms' MR16 downlighters. The play returns to the foyer briefly before heading to the dance studio, where a snowman is singing summer songs. The LED units really came in handy here: although there are dimming capabilities in the dance and drama studios, there are no dimmer modules (they have to be nicked from the main space,

Top: The dance studio on the first floor. This space was lit almost exclusively with LED, with the exception of some fairy lights, rope light and two Selecon profiles (one with a homemade snowflake gobo).

Bottom: Professor Meanwood's laboratory in the drama studio. Again, the space is lit with a mix of LED and Cantata fresnels, with some pink rope light for good measure.

but the panto was on, so...) and no console. Everything (as in the other spaces) was on 13a switches and, with a few exceptions, the states were static throughout. In addition to the LED units, I also used two Selecon profiles, which had been leftover from the old Civic Theatre. In the drama studio on the second floor, we found Professor Meanwood. The plastic sheeting that made up the walls of his lab were very responsive to light and were lit with LED floods on the floor and I also used two of the old Cantatas from the Civic.

I thought more than once throughout the course of the week that I'd been saved by LED. With a minimal get-in period and an even smaller budget, they were brilliant. The combination of LED and tungsten worked well and it was lovely to have the flexibility that the LED units provided. The in-house crew was brilliant and unfailingly helpful – I can't wait to light another show there! ❄️



JUDGING THE LIGHT: THE OFFIES

Craig Bennett and the challenge of assessing lighting design awards

What makes an award winning lighting design? This was the question that popped into my inbox from OffWestEnd.com founder and director Sofie Mason. Sofie also directs the annual Off West End Theatre Awards, affectionately known as The Offies.

Each year, OffWestEnd.com and the Offies highlight the diversity, creativity and emerging talent across London's theatre sector, raising the profile of small-scale theatre venues and unconventional live performances. With more than 80 theatres participating and over 300 productions a year being considered, OffWestEnd.com keeps its 40 qualified assessors on their toes with debates, panel discussions and workshops exploring the judging criteria for each award. In November 2013 the Best Lighting Designer award category was up for discussion and Sofie was asking me to lead the conversation.

What does make an award winning design? How would I explain the enigma of lighting design to such a diverse group of awards assessors? Was I the right person to take on this challenge? Doubt was creeping in as I opened a new presentation template, considering the empty screen and the task set before me. Working for an entertainment lighting supplier, I have been to numerous press nights, ALD show-and-tell sessions, research trips to see emerging designers' work and, of course,

my own personal theatre outings. Bringing all these experiences to mind I realised that for the last ten years I have been a professional lighting theatregoer, often going to a show to watch the lighting above all else. As an audience member this was my Mastermind specialist subject.

I decided that the easiest way to explore lighting would be to deconstruct it. Splitting the subject into its elements would allow the assessors to experience the language of lighting design. Hunting through White Light's photo archives, I discovered a wealth of images that would allow me to show examples of each element. A trip to the National Gallery presented many more examples of masters of lighting at work. I planned to use postcard prints of well-known paintings with dramatic lighting to show how light had been used in a 2D representation of a 3D world.

To begin with, we explored visibility and illumination – can you see what needs to be seen? Sometimes the absence of light is required so we discussed illumination and intensity from zero to 100%. It was at this point that I introduced the lighting designer as the tour guide of the stage. It does not matter how great a costume or facial expression looks, how beautiful a piece of blocking or direction has been conceived or how realistically a backcloth has been painted:



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without illumination the audience just won't see it. This puts the designer in the unique position of controlling the interaction between the scene, action and the eye.

While discussing illumination we explored modelling using three birdies and a small dimmer pack. I used the traditional first lighting lesson we all learn at college to show the assessors how illumination from different angles can affect the face, body and mood. Putting the lanterns into the hands of the group made a huge difference, and I could feel the understanding and interest building as we discovered the basics of lighting the body.

Moving on from visibility we next considered the element of focus – another tool in the lighting designer's "tour guide" toolkit. How many times has something magical appeared to happen simply because your focus has been cunningly drawn to the opposite side of the stage while a switch is made between, say, a statue and an actor? How many times has an intimate moment been created with one character in a sea of bodies on stage? Using a selection of images I explained that focus is the way the audience's eyes are

THE OFFIES

Craig Bennett

guided around the space using intensity, colour, movement and more to hold our attention.

Next we explored colour and how it reacts with the surfaces that reflect the light into our eyes and also with other coloured light. Returning to the birdies, we played with additive colour mixing, leading to many shocked gasps as the colours merged together to create white. Suddenly the group became aware of just how difficult it can be to choose a colour: "it isn't just like picking from a paint chart – there's so much more to consider!"

Following from colour, we moved onto smoke and density. "No haze, no Tony" was the comment Peter Mumford sent me when I asked the ALD for any hints and tips they could offer when putting this presentation together. How true it is. Without adding density to the beams, lighting can often be subconsciously missed as just being "there". It is only when dramatic beams of light are flying in the air that most audience members wake up to lighting.

The presentation continued through texture and gobos, projected images, movement (lighting choreography), practical/set electrics and layers of light before we moved into the larger considerations of dramatic tension and intention, and mood. The group discussed how important lighting is to setting a mood and reinforcing the dramatic tension. A disco effect during a sombre funeral scene just would not work.

Land of Our Fathers
Theatre503, London, Euan Borland Productions
and Tara Finney Productions
Directed by Paul Robinson
Set and costume design by Signe Beckmann
Lighting design by Hartley T A Kemp
Photography by Flavia Fraser-Cannon



Jo Town had highlighted another important point to pass on to the assessment team: "... appreciate what is often created in these very limited venues. How resourceful a designer has to be. As you know every decision has to be made before entering the space. And often creating the simplest and cleanest design is the hardest."

To conclude the presentation I urged the assessors to bring lighting design to mind as they hit the foyer doors on the way out of every show. Often lighting is subtle and delicate, so truly naturalistic that we accept it as reality – unchecked and unnoticed. As with all elements of theatre it is a team effort. Lighting, costume, scenery, sound, acting, etc. must all work together to create a complete and balanced performance. Whilst to the ordinary theatregoer a subtle, long

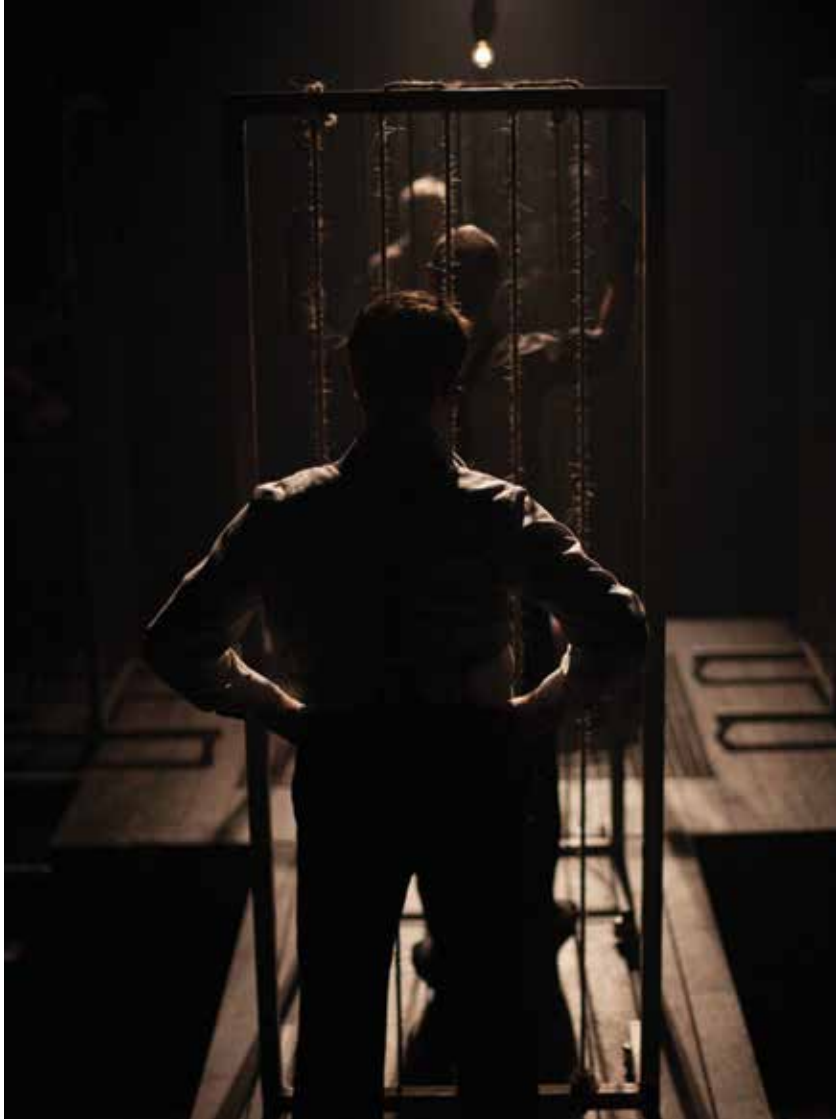
fade taking a stage from morning to night over the course of two acts may well go undetected, it is the job of the awards assessor to consider how well the fade was executed, how the shadows changed the scene and tension, how the gentle colour shift moved with the mood and enhanced the show.

So, armed with a new language, the assessors for the Offies (as well as some of the established theatre critics on the Offie panel of judges) move forward better equipped into 2014 and the awards ceremony to be held at the Unicorn Theatre in March. It is great to see such dedication from OffWestEnd.com, with the Offies embodying the organisation's social ethos of a continually developing, learning and nurturing off West End theatre community. #























*Below: Neil Austin is nominated
this year for his lighting design for
The El Train at Hoxton Hall
(Photo by Marc Brenner)*



*Right: Last year's award for best lighting
design went to Richard Howell for The
Hairy Ape at the Southwark Theatre.
(Photo by Rob Bloomfield)*



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