


August / September 2007

Exhibitionists' Special

ALD # FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers
"More art, less jokes"



Santa Fe Opera's Daphne July-August 2007. Lighting by Rick Fisher. Photo: Paul Horpedahl. See page 3.

Under the little lights this issue:

Lighting Sydney Harbour Bridge • Pre-visualisation • Lighting the 'Winter Room'
• AGM Report • Light Lab • Book Reviews... and much more!

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Rick's Recommendation

I am just completing a stint at the Santa Fe Opera in the southwest of the USA where I am lighting three operas in rep for their annual summer season. They present five operas ranging from standards to new works and the stage is semi-open air. There is a large conventional rig (no moving lights) that is refocused for every performance by a team of apprentices who are all lighting students selected from across the US. The apprentices are paid and work long hours, not only focusing and running shows, but also building and installing whatever lighting effects are required.

In addition to a chief and asst. LX, and a dedicated board operator, there is a team of three lighting supervisors who work as asst. LDs (they were apprentices in previous years) and a lighting manager.

It is always a great experience working with the

crew here, watching them rise to the challenges of a demanding schedule. Refocusing in daylight every day, efficiently supporting the LD as well as each other (and the staging departments that employ about two hundred people in all the shops), to create first class opera.

The fact that it is a beautiful situation (the sunsets for some reason are so fantastic that on occasion work stops and we all just sit and marvel at the great LD), also adds to the pleasure of working here.

But what moves me to write about this is how seriously Santa Fe Opera takes training the next generation of theatre technicians. All departments have apprentices; scenic building and painting, costumes, wigs, AV, orchestra services, props, LX, even Health and Safety. They work alongside experienced department heads and designers and the interaction is inspiring and very helpful.

You do not have to search for long to find ex-Santa Fe apprentices at any performing arts organisation in the US.

I am hard pressed to think of any UK organisation, no matter how well subsidised, that makes a similar commitment to the next generation of theatre practitioners. We used to rely on the reps to take on a few casuals who might eventually become full-timers, but those opportunities are getting more rare. Training outside of educational bodies is haphazard at best, and as we all become more specialised in the performing arts it is more important than ever.

I think we all have a duty to think how we can help encourage interested people to gain real professional experience either through observing or interning. John Leventhall's articles in recent *Focus* issues also highlighted the important role of assistant LDs.

It is a two-way street and

the drama schools should make it easier to place people in the profession.

I often get requests for someone to observe me but the dates are so narrow due to their coursework commitments that it is unlikely that I can accommodate someone.

But it is immensely rewarding for both parties, and I am sure that most of us had similar mentors who inspired and encouraged us. So please try and find ways of helping out, it can also make for good company during a lonely tech period!

Regards, Rick #



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Professional travels with Mark Jonathan, flying through...

The year seems to be flying by. I wrote my last article between cues at Chichester and I'm about to go back there once Howard Harrison has finished with the production desk. In the meantime, I've been in Mexico and USA with The Royal Ballet.

Favourite Mexican souvenir left behind

So often I'm in a foreign land more or less on my own with the locals so it made

quite a change to go on tour again with a big company. More than ninety dancers in addition to technical, stage and lighting managers, stage and lighting technicians, head flyman, props, costume, wigs, make-up, physio, massage, music staff, conductors, ballet masters, ballet mistresses, administration and company management. Certainly, you are never alone with the Royal Ballet! I have to tell you the organisation and management of this large



Royal Ballet go pyramid climbing sans tutus! Back row L-R: Isabel McMeekan, Belinda Hatley, Mark Jonathan. Front row: Christina Arestis, Philip Mosely (the real Billy Elliot), and Kate Shipway.



The Teotihuacán Pyramids

number of people was exemplary. I knew before we left that the company was very well organised when I was emailed the various visa forms that have to be completed. If you think applying for a US visa is hard,

then try Mexico. Here, you are asked to describe if your nose is straight, concave or convex and if your eyebrows are bushy, very bushy or extremely bushy! Special photos are required with a side profile. Meanwhile,

the US embassy needs a different size to the standard UK passport photo and expect you to prove that you are not a terrorist; this includes listing all countries visited in the last ten years with dates, in an impossibly small space.

The Mexican embassy is much more homely than the US. Everyone crowded into an office with some typically friendly Mexicans labouring over the complicated paperwork. This results in a rather nice green Mexican passport. I was a bit disappointed that it was retained as I left Mexico.

Then rushing on to the US Embassy where you really feel that the USA is at war with the rest of the world as you are forced to wait outside to marvel at the five layers of anti-terrorist bomb proofing. Then you will be snarled at by rude security guards as they make a meal out of allowing only one person through their security shed. I was admonished for carrying my laptop with me.

“Why have you brought this?”

“Because I'm on the way to work.”

“Imagine the chaos when Mexican electrician cut the colour using a swatch book as reference but selecting the colour that was immediately after the description page and not before.”

“You should leave it at home.”

“I'm on my way to work.”

Your laptop and mobile phone will be confiscated and in due course your passport will be too. I needed things to happen fast so I could get back to rehearsals in Chichester. So, typically, the Americans kept me waiting for over five hours. Thanks.

Crazy for Mexico

I had one of those crazy schedules that went: Thursday – open *Babes in Arms*, Friday – model meetings and watch NBT show at Sadler's Wells, more meetings on Saturday and fly Sunday. I sort of collapsed on the plane. Then I thought I'd better review the plans for the tour. Simon Bennisson (ROH Lighting Manager) and I had tried to create a simplified version of the ROH lighting rig. In the ROH all the overhead lights

“I developed an addiction to Margaritas and it was only when I thought I'd better have a day off from alcohol that I was struck down with the local tummy bug known as 'Montezuma's Revenge'”

are either fixed focus par cans with scrollers along with the vast majority which are moving lights with scrollers. It had been hard trying to analyse the use of lights in every act and designate everything to a generic light without a scroller. We had attempted this and produced a complicated update to our board discs. The data were then manipulated by ETC into a format which suited the ETC desks in Mexico, and returned to us by email.

It was amusing to look across the plane. I had rig plans spread out. Adjacent to me was Benjamin Pope, the conductor, he got his keyboard and computer out and was composing, Monica Mason, director of the Royal Ballet and Jeanetta Laurence were busy working on paperwork. We had eleven hours to work, doze, and catch up on the films. I wasn't

impressed with BA's selection of films.

The technical crew had flown ahead to start the fit-up at the 10,000 seat Auditorio Nacional. I was a bit nervous about the theatre's size and throw distance even if we were only selling half the number of seats. How much more light would we need? The lighting rig had already been negotiated down from our original request by the promoter.

Space in *Focus* doesn't allow me to give you all the details of the tour. Suffice it to say that despite the increased size of the theatres the shows looked good. Les Bone, the lighting team leader, was amazing. He would pre-focus the rig before it was flown out. It became a bit of a competition to see how close Les could be. Any lights that needed further focusing would be

accompanied by Les waving his arms and chatting in Spanish, “*Muy Bien*” with English phrases intermingled when a suitable Spanish word didn't exist. A diagonal top shutter by the prosc was called “a *Biggles*” and all the Mexicans learnt to say *gobo* with a strong Geordie accent. Simon Bennisson saved the day by returning to the lighting desk in Puebla when local board operation standards fell below an acceptable standard and Gary Crofts, the stage team leader, left the stage to join Ed Bridges on a follow spot after we sacked the local operators in Puebla for being totally hopeless.

It was interesting to note that the use of an earth was not considered mandatory, nor were safety chains and indeed we found some lights just had cables twisted together rather than a legitimate connector. There was a chaotic mix of Source 4s and we learnt to shrug our shoulders as the specified 26° or 36° turned out to 50° or more. Smoking backstage and while working overhead was common.

Imagine the chaos when a Mexican electrician cut the colour using a swatch book as reference but selecting the colour that was *immediately after* the description page and not before. So, Lee 120, that sumptuous dark blue becomes a jaunty green formally known as 121!

Unwanted Mexican souvenir brought home

The dancers were on world class form and the audience response was magnificent with standing ovations at every performance. The ROH technicians did everything they could to ensure that the performance was technically perfect. I can also report that the company can party to a world class standard too. I developed an addiction to Margaritas and it was only when I thought I'd better have a day off from alcohol that I was struck down with the local tummy bug known as 'Montezuma's Revenge'. I'm sure the Tequila had been killing of the bacteria.

I left the company a month later after we had played San

Antonio, a mini Venice in hot and humid Texas, to come home, while the Royal Ballet travelled onto Philadelphia to play *Romeo and Swan Lake*. Two days, later I was back in an English rehearsal room with a script, no ballet dancers, and no Margaritas.

Well done, Jo!

You will have read in the last edition of *Focus* Johanna Town telling us that she was leaving the Royal Court after seventeen amazing years. I'm sure all of us who have had the pleasure to light at the Royal Court will want to pay tribute to Jo who was head of lighting. It was always a joy to go there. Jo always had a talented and willing crew who were ready to do anything to make the show possible. The flexible systems she pioneered in the re-furbished theatres made our lighting lives even more wonderful. I have such happy memories of lighting shows there. The Theatre Upstairs is a very different place to how it was when I lit there first about thirty years ago. Thanks Jo

for looking after us and every best wish with your freelance lighting design career.

Jo has sat on the Equity Designers' committee for the last three years and I'm happy that she is going to continue and that she will take over as the ALD Equity rep. I'm also delighted that Simon Corder and Jeremy Walker will be joining Jo and me on the committee.

One AGM point...

Could I also flush out what I think is a bit of a misunderstanding? While I was in Mexico, I believe some of you who attended the ALD AGM got a bit concerned about the suggestion that we might broaden the readership of *Focus*. My main intention was to try and get our agents to read the journal as I believe that they need to keep in touch with what we are talking

"Yes, and you can put on my tombstone 'I died ten years earlier than I should have, because of you', YOU BASTARD."

about. We constantly have to change and we need our agents to be with us and up to date to ensure our needs are met when they are negotiating our contracts. I wasn't really suggesting that producers read *Focus*.

Back to reality touring

I've just got back from a well-managed international tour to the reality of UK commercial touring. I do find it frustrating that even with the amount of experience I have touring shows at all scales, production managers and producers don't really want to hear what I have to say and they certainly aren't interested in making an investment that will ensure that the production looks as good as it should. So we have '*Monday get-in and Monday open*' as standard, with inadequate time to focus and light etc. In the end, our name is attached to the show that probably looks shoddy.

Quite a few years ago a producer patted me on the back after a particular traumatic first day on tour

and said; "*There you are, I told you that you would do it.*" I snarled back, "*Yes, and you can put on my tombstone 'I died ten years earlier than I should have, because of you', YOU BASTARD.*" The only difference now is that I stay much calmer, grind my teeth, shrug my shoulders and say; "Whatever..." #



OFFICE ORACLE

Latest news from Ian's production desk

PLASA 2007

The annual Earls Court trade show is nearly upon us and we are in the process of sorting out the final details of stand position and meetings. Complimentary ticket arrangements for ALD members have also yet to be confirmed.

Those members that receive emails from the ALD will receive details we have them about how to sign up via a bulletin. If you do not receive bulletin emails, you can contact the office directly by post or phone, and we will inform you of how to get apply for your complimentary entry.

There will be a Professional Members Meeting on Sunday 9th and a student meeting on Tuesday 11th. Times are, as yet, to be confirmed.

We will be awarding the Michael Northen Bursary on the stand at 12 noon on Tuesday 11th September.

Subscriptions 2007/08

At the time of writing, the Association still has 100 members owing a total of £6,000. All annual subscriptions are now overdue. If you are unsure whether you are fully paid up for 2007/08 then please contact the office as soon as possible to get up to date.

Sponsored Student Scheme 2008

This corporate members' funded scheme for students studying at Conference of Drama School Colleges will open again for applications at PLASA 07. The closing date for applications is Christmas 2007. All current student members will be contacted at the start of September with an application form to fill in and return to the office complete with proof of your student status in order to maintain their current membership beyond April 2008. Please

note that if you do not apply you membership will revert to a normal student category and you will need to pay an annual subscription.

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

AGM

The annual General Meeting of the ALD was held on Wednesday 13th June during the ABTT 2007 Theatre Show. It was attended by 30 members representing a cross section of all membership categories. You'll find a short outline of what was discussed and decided in the meetings section on page 32-33. Copies of Rick's chairman's Report and the treasurer's report are available from the office should you wish to read the full versions. #

Dates for your diary

9th to 12th September PLASA 2007*

12th September Deadline for *Focus* copy October/November issue

1st April 2008 Subscriptions due

11th & 12th June 2008 ABTT Theatre 2008*

1st July 2008 Deadline for subscription payment

* the ALD will have a presence at these events.

Keep an eye on www.ald.org.uk/diary for more information on these and other events and members' show openings. If we have missed any interesting events in this list, please let us know!

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Professional Members

Alan Boyd, Northumberland. **Mark Jones**, London.
Joseph Vella, Malta. (All rejoining.)
Peter Canning, Dublin.

Associate Members

John King, Bromsgrove. **Alastair West**, Stratford Upon Avon. **Andy Chamberlain**, Leicestershire. **Paul Froy**, Glasgow. **Mark Harrington**, Cheadle.

Student Members

Colin Campbell, Oldham. **Callum Howie**, Glasgow.
Adam Povey, Essex. **Sam Hunt**, London. **Chris Jones**, Leicestershire. **Adam Pritchard**, Enfield. **Daniel Ayres**, Chelmsford. **Joe Dowling**, Ellesmere Port. **Richard Ducker**, Norwich. **Tim Fawkes**, Bedfordshire. **Tom Ring**, Maidstone. **Jenny Kershaw**, London. **Natalie Lindine Jones**, London. **Catherine Crick**, Northampton.

Corporate Member

Strand Lighting Europe (rejoining)

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To submit industry and corporate press releases (Corporate Members only), please send them directly to the ALD office (office@ald.org.uk) and not to Focus so that they can be posted on the News pages of the ALD website for more immediate and wider coverage. Contact the office to arrange advertising in Focus.

Editorial guidelines for authors are available on request from editor@ald.org.uk.

The opinions published within Focus are not necessarily those of the Association. #

“THE KNIGHT OF ILLUMINATION”

CLAY PAKY sponsors new lighting design awards in association with the ALD and STLD

At the ABTT's Annual Awards Dinner in June, Clay Paky announced that it will be sponsoring the awards for The Knight of Illumination.

This new event, promoted and sponsored by Clay Paky in association with the ALD and STLD (Society of Television Lighting Directors), will give public recognition to UK-based lighting designers for outstanding achievements in lighting design in a number of artistic categories. It is hoped that these awards will encourage closer ties between the world of lighting design and the lighting industry as a whole.

Clay Paky, which has always concentrated on the needs of the lighting market and its designers, regards the professional figure of the lighting designer as a 'Knight of Illumination'; a slightly romantic and generous figure, always ready to offer and defend values of integrity and professionalism in the world

in which he, or she, operates. Knights of Illumination offer their services with metaphorical lighting swords in hand provided by the lighting industry in the form of automated lights.

The awards for The Knight of Illumination will be judged by a panel of professional reviewers experienced in the specific categories. The judges for each of the award categories and the criteria for nomination will be selected and coordinated by the ALD and STLD. The two lighting design associations will jointly ensure that the awards are presented annually to designers showing the requisite professionalism and integrity of lighting design.

Conceived by, sponsored and promoted by Clay Paky, the event will celebrate winners in the following professional areas and categories: ROCK CONCERTS (touring): arena events, stage events. THEATRE: musicals, drama,

dance, opera. TELEVISION: light entertainment, drama, special events, music programmes. LIFETIME RECOGNITION: a special category to be awarded at the judges' discretion.

The inaugural awards

ceremony for “The Knight of Illumination” will take place at the Annual Awards Dinner 2008, generously hosted by the ABTT. Between now and next June the judges will be busy reviewing and shortlisting nominations for

the respective awards.

Further information including entry requirements for participation and evaluation criteria will be available soon on the Clay Paky website www.clay-paky.com and via the ALD and STLD. #

AWARDS FOR THE
“KNIGHT OF ILLUMINATION”
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
STLD ALD
LONDON
ABTT
ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER
2008
CLAY PAKY
www.claypaky.it

One man's glare is another man's blinder

It is refreshing when you find parallel avenues of lighting, and Focus was delighted when the RIBA Lighting Best Seller Booklist and New Technical Review: Lighting arrived in our letterbox. James Laws comments...

Of course, you would expect the Royal Institute of British Architects to be rightly concerned with quantifiable lighting standards, as they relate to building practice and for anyone thinking of getting into architectural lighting, some of these books show the hurdles that have to be jumped to achieve an acceptable lighting design. For instance, to building professionals, audience blinders would constitute the grossest form of glare imaginable. There are different statutory illumination

levels for different industrial and domestic lighting tasks and, increasingly, restrictions on the types of luminaires to be used, due to the quest for energy efficiency. All this makes us realise how lucky we are to play fast and loose with brightness, colour, position, source and angle.

Going through the titles on offer, it is interesting to see that architectural lighting practice is now acutely aware that imaginative lighting, specifically theatrical lighting, can offer an extra dimension

to a building and to the comfort and well-being of its users. We've all seen the landmark schemes in magazines and the ideas that are disseminating throughout the building world. *Light Fantastic* by Max Keller and *Made of Light* by Mark Major have both been reviewed by

Focus. Both these, and other books in the list, are on offer for a generous 10% discount to ALD members.

The latest book titles are given review space in the *New Technical Review: Lighting* and currently books on facades and roofing are featured, together with a

significant book by Arup Lighting, simply called *Lighting*. We will review RIBA Booklist titles as and when they are of direct interest to our members and we look forward to further exploration of the symbiosis between architecture and performance lighting. #

How to claim your 10% discount

All books are available through RIBA Bookshops, a key source for all the latest books, contracts and forms for architecture, design and construction. To order, visit RIBA Bookshops online at www.ribabookshops.com or call the RIBA Bookshops mail order team on +44 (0)20 7256 7222. Quote discount code: ALD07 when prompted at the online checkout or to the mail order Customer Service team to receive your discount. Offer valid on the above titles only; offer expires 31 October 2007.

riba book shops.com

Code 30040
John Wiley & Sons
February 2003
Hardback
304 pages
£55.00

Code 80080
Practical Visual
November 2006
Hardback
240 pages
£40.00

Code 90750
Birkbeim Verlag AG
March 2006
Paperback
237 pages
£29.95

Interior Lighting for Designers
Fourth Edition
Clay Crocker

Written by one of the world's masters of architectural lighting design, this book clearly and concisely describes the same steps in the lighting design process that a professional follows in practice. Working from the premise that lighting design is a rational process, author Clay Crocker provides a clear and comprehensive but not over-the-top connection that the lighting condition of a space has enormous emotional impact on people. Color profiles of various design applications beautifully illustrate key concepts. This book is considered one of the top preparation references for design professionals taking their Lighting Certified examination.

Light Fantastic
The Art and Design of Stage Lighting
Max Keller

In this book, Max Keller changes his reference knowledge of every aspect of stage lighting from actual performance and the history of light in the theatre. In *Coaster and Burger's Theatre of Light*, he introduces a new perspective on the history of stage lighting. The author draws on Keller's most recent productions as well as completely updated information on cables, lamps, fixtures, and construction methods and practices. The revised edition also includes new illustrations, the power of Keller's expertise shines through, making this a visually exciting and highly informative work to those involved in theatre design. An accompanying DVD features Keller's lecture hall at institutions worldwide.

Made of Light
The Art of Light and Architecture
Mark Major, Jonathan Sorens, and Mark Major

Our visual experience and emotional reaction to buildings is shaped by the control of light and shadow. Light is increasingly integrated into the fabric of buildings and becomes a part of the architecture. Jonathan Sorens and Mark Major are experienced, award-winning Lighting Architects working internationally at the forefront of lighting design. This newly published book explores the influences that inspire their work. It investigates the basic principles and qualities of light and presents a selection of these and other inspirations, including an in-depth interview.

Lighting Booklist 2007

Code 88888
RIBA Publishing
July 07
Paperback
176 pages
£16.00

Lighting
Arup Lighting

Written by Arup Lighting, this full colour new book provides authoritative, on-to-date cost-effective reference information for architects and other construction professionals about the increasingly sophisticated art of illuminating buildings. Part of the new Technical Review series, this CD-ROM volume is packed with essential information - it is a title that is most valued by practicing construction professionals in their day-to-day work and is packed with illustrations.

The Technical Review series aims to provide in one place authoritative, hard-to-find technical information, readily accessible to architects and other construction professionals about the increasingly sophisticated art of illuminating buildings. Part of the new Technical Review series, this CD-ROM volume is packed with essential information - it is a title that is most valued by practicing construction professionals in their day-to-day work and is packed with illustrations.

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Laurence King Publishing
May 06
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John Wiley & Sons
September 01
Hardback
290 pages
£48.00

Code 33450
Dewar
January 04
Paperback
312 pages
£19.95

Lighting Design Basics
Mark Karlan James Byrne

This book offers essential knowledge of lighting in a concise, highly visual format. Two leading designers, with many decades of experience present straightforward coverage of lighting design concepts, techniques and useful guides to guide new designers and students through the process of creating simple, logical lighting designs. Featured exercises offer focused development of lighting design skills in preparation for working on actual lighting design projects, as well as the NCCCO and NCARB exams.

Designing with Light
Victoria Meyers

This book looks at the variety of ways in which light is used in contemporary architecture, externally and internally to enhance the design and sense of space in a building. It gives a brief overview of the history of light then discusses the different architectural features that light comes through: ceiling, line, and form - and the ways in which light is controlled in a building: by the use of glass, windows and skylights and through the manipulation of shadow and reflection. In each case these aspects are illustrated using key projects by internationally renowned architects.

Architectural Lighting Design
Second Edition
Gary Saffley

This edition of *Architectural Lighting Design* covers new materials, such as light and health, LED lights and lasers, online programming and computer modeling techniques. It includes color and black-and-white illustrations and addresses major programming issues in lighting design: providing creative techniques for conceptualizing and visualizing lighting space.

Lighting
Interior and Exterior
Robert Dean

This guide shows how the concepts used in lighting design arise from the needs of the designer and the user. These concepts are shown in practical context to enable you to develop and improve your design skills. Through examples and exercises, this book makes it easier for the student to acquire the key skills of understanding, knowledge and skill required for both universities and professional practice situations.

PERFORMING ARTS TECHNICAL TRAINING HANDBOOK

Entertainment Technology Press 2007, in association with the ABTT

The Performing Arts Technical Training Handbook, launched at this year's ABTT show is an incredible resource for the young person looking to see what lies between the present day and a future career in the theatre arts. Focus asked David I. Taylor to dip in...

Whilst many of those in the lower digits of ALD membership had little formal training to enter and develop in the profession, today there are a staggering number of courses, both academic and vocational, to better prepare the aspiring lighting designer, technician or stage manager for an entry position in the busy and competitive performance market. Each year there are more than 300 'qualified' lighting designers leaving programmes in the UK and entering the marketplace.

The book, running to 291 pages, sets out to provide an

exhaustive listing of courses to train and educate young people entering the theatre industry. The main meat of John Offord's book is the carefully researched directory of training courses offered at colleges and universities in the UK with listings for courses in set design, theatre sound, costume, make-up, theatre digital and multi-media arts, stage management, props, scene panting, scenic construction, stage electrics and lighting design. Training that provides continued professional development, as well as courses which have theatre design (including lighting) in a wider Drama or Theatre/Performing Arts Degree, are also included. Preceding the main directory, the index references courses, components and modules so potential students can find which institutions would fulfil their needs. Whilst the index is well thought out and thorough, it is not exhaustive

– courses and colleges are in the directory without being in the index – my undergraduate course, for example.

The details for each institution are great and the electronic printing process ensures that contacts and information will stay up to date with reprints. A companion website has taken the data from the book and made it available online and I suspect this will be the primary means of keeping the information up to date. The nature of the



data begs the question of where it came from? I am told it is a mix of information culled from the websites of the colleges and universities and information provided by the institutions themselves when requested by the editor. This is probably the best way to get consistent and valid information for the prospective course-goer and it reads clearly and well, giving useful information rather than the puff and advertising that similar 'brochures' used by the hundreds of courses in the United States to entice the cash from your pocket.

Supporting the readability of this handbook are great introductory sections on how to choose a course by Robin Townley, a quaint but nostalgic chapter about growing up with lighting by Nick Mosby and a nifty piece on digital lighting by Hugh Davies-Webb. Rounding out the book are sections on industry

organisations – including a splendid introduction to the ALD – and manufacturers and service companies who train, and a cool table showing who rules who in theatre, HOD to assistants. If I have a criticism it is that the institutions are listed in the main directory by the alphabetical order of the town in which they are located. I think it is very unlikely a prospective student would look under Sidcup to find their future training provider, and the index is by college name only, not location. In fact, I had to look online to remind myself where the excellent Rose Bruford College is, and my alma mater – Royal Holloway College – is listed under the seldom-sought 'Egham'!

Kudos to John Offord, ABTT's Mark White and the other members of the contributors team for an unrivalled, balanced and incredibly useful document and database. #

It's not a coat hanger!

Nigel Levings was determined to show the bridge in a different light when he was commissioned for the 75th anniversary of its opening.

Sydney's iconic Harbour Bridge is rumoured to be known to locals as The Coat Hanger. So much so, that a giant light-up coat hanger appeared on the bridge as part of last New Year's Eve celebrations.

The team

For the bridge's 75th anniversary of its opening, an unusual team of LDs was assembled – Tony Award-winning theatre lighting designer Nigel Levings, events lighting designer Mark Hammer (Commonwealth Games opening and closing ceremonies) and Andre Tammes and Dhruvajyoti (DJ) Ghose from the architectural lighting design company Lighting Design Partnership.

The partnership worked very well for all the designers. Nigel acted as the concept designer, creating the cue synopsis and was responsible

for the overall long view of the project, Mark handled the intricacies of equipment selection, focusing and programming while DJ and the LDP office did the illumination calculations, prepared the concept imagery and all the drawings. All three designers

were equal partners in the design of the bridge lighting.

Logistics nightmare

Sydney Harbour Bridge is a nightmare of logistics for lighting. It is of course VERY BIG, it is painted a very dark grey and it is largely air;

not much to light, in other words. It is a very busy bridge and any work that requires a lane closure can only occur late at night and at the whim of the RTA (the Road Traffic Authority who 'own' the Bridge). Gone are the days of the 1930s when

Nigel Levings

Tony Award winning lighting designer (Boheme 2003) Nigel Levings is Australia's leading lighting designer.



In a distinguished career he has lit over 400 original productions including 111 operas, 21 musicals and a bloody big bridge.



the bridge was built and workers clambered all over it unharnessed and wearing no more safety gear than an old pair of sand shoes. Now everything must be secured – if you do the bridge climb even your official Bridge Climb issued handkerchief is firmly attached to your wrist. So if your shifting spanner has to be secured to your person then so does the Studio Due City Colour that you are carrying up the arch. Aas with every project there were severe budget restraints and the budget number that





sounded OK on day one rapidly proved to be very thin once all the calculations of instrument numbers, power supply and cable came in. Particularly since the very clear brief was that both sides of the bridge were to be treated equally – unlike other bridge events which usually only happen on the Opera House side.

In concept

Conceptually the idea was very simple – to light the Bridge to reveal its true form. Not a coat hanger, but an arch intersected by a horizontal line. The pylons are structurally irrelevant to the bridge, the arch simply sits on four huge bearings at the base of the pylons. The vertical hangers to the roadway are also largely irrelevant to the form and were dropped out of the lighting approach. Focus was placed on the elegant internal latticework of cross bracing of the double arch. The design team created a story on which to hang the lighting sequences, a

story that largely traced the construction of the bridge and then took elements of the structure as a basis for what in ballet would be called a variation.

In performance

The evening events commenced with a smoking ceremony performed by the traditional aboriginal owners of the land, which is a ritual purification ceremony. There were twelve chapters in the lighting story, starting with the smoking ceremony and moving through the installation of the bearing pins and the construction of the arch and so on into the penultimate sequence entitled 'Dreaming' in which the arch and roadway softly undulated through a range of cool blues. The final sequence was a 'drumroll' of strobing white fixtures culminating in a once only bump to no

"It is of course VERY BIG, it is painted a very dark grey and it is largely air; not much to light, in other words."

colour, full. This initiated the switching on of the line of T5 white fluorescents along the road deck line. Over 3km of fluorescent lights created a sweeping white line linking the two shores of the harbour. So bright was this line that apparently the project production manager received complaints from the harbour authorities about obscuring navigational aids.

The event was programmed on a GrandMA console with Jason Fripp on the buttons. Mark worked with Jason using the GrandMA visualiser software to create the cue list, focus and colour palettes off line. Then, each night for a week one segment of the bridge was focused live and the palettes updated, and if time permitted, some cue sequences were run to check them. After all elements had been focused, the design team then had another detailed off-line programming session in which the cues were cleaned up and detailed as much as possible. The night of the event was the only time the whole show was

"The night of the event was the only time the whole show was seen by anybody, including the designers."

seen by anybody, including the designers.

By creating the show in chapters the designers were able to compress or repeat cue sequences depending on the state of human traffic on the bridge and the estimated time of completion of the night's events. The bridge had to be handed back to the RTA by 11:00 pm and the production team were anxious to get as much get-out time as possible before that to clear up the elements that had to be struck before the traffic came back.

Equipment used varied between Studio Due City Colours which lit the upper arch and the Pylons, Mac 2000 wash units with PC lens which lit the lower arch, Mac 2000 spots which lit the "X" boxes (the joining point for the internal cross bracing) and Syncrolite B5/2s which lit the interior of the arch and the under side of the road deck. There was also the odd par can and over 3km

of fluorescent lights. The installation and equipment supply was by Bytecrafft and the designers owe a debt of gratitude to the hard work of Paul Rigby and Rohan Trundle.

It was a big challenge for the design team but the process proved to be a very happy collaboration. The different skills of the design team combined remarkably well and the result was a seamless sequence of images of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, seen for one night only but living forever in the memory of all those who saw it. #

Photos: Dhruvajyoti Ghose

Collaboration redefined: Pre-visualisation in theatre

Theatrical collaboration involving a group of artists is fundamental to mounting a successful show. New York-based set and lighting designer Charles Kirby explains how he developed scale model lighting to provide his team of designers with a unique vocabulary

The talents of directors, producers, set designers, costume designers, video designers, composers, sound and lighting designers fuse together in producing an experience that entertains, amuses, moves and invites audiences to join in the collaboration of something new every performance.

We accept that great theatre is the result of the creative synergy of performer, scenery, lighting, projections and all of the aural elements converging, often through a master-mind tech director who navigates all of the technological tools as deftly as his designers. Creating great theatre begins with a dynamic situation where multiple contributors, speaking with many voices, put forward ideas. Collaboration among these artists is best supported by dedicating

time to planning and pre-visualising the production and using tools which permit them to realise the production as fully as possible before they step foot in the theatre. Detailed advance planning yields tremendous specifics and happy accidents. The more you know the better chance your project has to reach its fullest potential. In collaborative coordination, steering the ship and manning the crew are vital roles, and in the performing arts we have to communicate every way we can.

"I am not a solitary worker. I like to work in the company of other people." Hal Prince

Today the major factors affecting the collaborative process are the demand for faster get-ins and reduced

tech time; production staff often spend less time together in the same studio, let alone the same city. The answer to this dilemma is pre-visualisation (pre-viz) – a total redefinition of our process and timeline.

What is pre-visualisation?

Think of pre-viz as the creative period before you get the chance to see something in its full scale. Set designers primarily use some type of model (computer monitor-dependent CAD and/or posterboard and a balsa wood three-dimensional model) to depict their grand scheme. Costume designers render and draw their ideas and provide fabric swatches to communicate their wardrobe ideas. Sound designers now have the entire music industry working for the pre-viz cause with MP3 portables and

surround sound available to demonstrate audio cues. Projection designers have plasma TVs and DVDs at their disposal. And everyone's final product on stage reflects their work done before they get to the stage. But what about lighting?

What do we know about it?

I am the principal designer and owner of a small production design firm, Thematics, based in New York City. It comprises a few set designers, lighting, costume and sound designers who found a collaborative way to work together as young designers while we attended NYU. We have always put an emphasis on visual communication through research, photographs and video documentation.

The sound, set and costume designers bring a unique vocabulary to design and

Charles Kirby

Charles grew up in Princeton, New Jersey and studied theatre design at Syracuse University before moving to London where he worked at Tussaud's whilst freelancing at the Gate and Old Lion. Back in NYC he became the founding member and resident designer for Camilla's Theatre/Gallery and aTheaterCo, freelancing for Lincoln Center, the Public and Roundabout Theaters. While studying for his Masters at New York University he founded the production design firm, Thematics LLC, and went on to design a few feature films, many off-Broadway and touring productions, churches, showrooms and even windows at Macy's. Part of his time is now spent manufacturing Lightbox systems for colleges, universities, opera houses and theatres around the world. His ambition is to spell theater, center and color correctly.



The Lightbox with its inventor, Charles Kirby.

production meetings. Material and practical demonstrations of their concepts which could be discussed, tested, honed as part of the whole. The lighting designer wasn't bringing enough to 'talk' about. From the model lighting work some of us were doing, we developed a technique for visualising our lighting ideas that would work in a collaborative environment with the other design disciplines. This was the birth of our 'Lightbox'.

A problem solved, an opportunity created

There has never been an easy way for the lighting

designer to work along the same timeline and contribute to the design process while designing the lighting. Often we merely talk about our ideas until we're in the space lighting the show. While pre-viz can't compare to being in the actual space, having full-scale experiences with your collaborators, extending the advantages of pre-viz to lighting design is extremely valuable for the creative collaboration. It emphasises the impact of the lighting design element within the production at a time that all the various creative juices are flowing. Lighting can move position from being an

'afterthought' in the eyes of some creatives to a pivotal element of the process. The need to demonstrate the effect of scale lighting on a detailed scale set became an exciting challenge.

We created our own tool

Our 'Lightbox' is a new tool that allows the user to create actual lighting effects in a



A production as seen in Lightbox and on stage of Marisol at Purdue University designed by Tony Galaska.



Marisol at Purdue University as seen in Lightbox and on stage designed by Tony Galaska

scaled model, and design in virtually any space. The lighting designer and the other design collaborators can see the effects of colour, changing beam spread and angle, intensity and quality of the light, all in an architecturally accurate, DMX-controlled environment. Each Lightbox is custom-designed to light a scaled representation of the space to be lit, but the component parts are standard items and so the lighting system can be expanded as needed.

We started with directional fibreoptic 'little lights' able to project a sharp 19 degree

circle on the stage floor. We figured that if that specific a quality of light could be 'seen' within a to-scale context, then we could use the same vocabulary the set designers were using. Then we created broad qualities of wash light using LEDs and assorted MR lamps. We discovered that as long as you presented the light within the same environment as the model, the eye suspended its disbelief just enough to get everyone talking about what the full scale problems (and solutions) were really going to be.

We made sure to use parts



from well-known suppliers of LEDs, fibreoptics, lighting instruments, dimmers and control consoles, to create a complete, scale lighting rig inside the box. We have a new language for light, with the ability to convert a conceptual idea into a concrete, visible thing that can speak for itself and promote discussions among the other creative contributors.

What's in the box?

Lightbox is basically a big box that is specific enough in its visualisation that it give us all an excuse to gather together in front of it and spend time talking to each other. There are four main components: the model box, truss positions, little lights and control. The box itself is an aluminium extrusion framework, usually about the size of a vending

machine, flexible enough to represent the qualities of your upcoming space parameters but open enough that if you had a project in an opera house, the model, in half-inch-equals-a-foot scale (that's 1:24), would fit. The box often includes, but is not limited to, a stage floor, a proscenium (or whatever framing device is used), theatre walls (or whatever containment might exist)



A Winter's Tale in Lightbox pre-viz.



Winter's Tale on stage at Purdue University designed by Tony Galaska.

and the audience ready in their chairs.

To this we can add accessories such as fly lines and a revolve, an orchestra pit and hydraulic lifts, catwalks and box booms. The more accurate the environment created in the box, the more it will help us make good decisions about what to do in the full scale location.

Lighting positions

The truss track and extrusion track provide all of the available lighting positions up in the air or wherever you have the imagination or need to place a light source to represent the true space's architecture; extra electrics tracks can be added where needed. Along these you can 'hang' any of the types of scaled down, little lighting fixtures (or anything available) which has the quality of light you want to represent.

Little lights

We have four main categories of lights. Fiberoptic little lights are available in 10°, 19°, 26° and 50° directional

heads. There are AVL heads with shutters, and an image projector. Wash lights include 35W MR11 and iMR16 RGB yoke lanterns and gooseneck lamps. Cyc lights feature iCOVE 15cm strips of RGB and 36cm white light super bright LEDs. Other lights include T5 dimmable fluorescent tubes, LED chromasic chips (individual tiny RGB Christmas lights) and video modules.

Lighting control

All of the components of the Lightbox connect to a main engine which can be controlled by any of the industry-standard control consoles. Using a Multi-



Adjusting a little light.

Source Illuminator pack with DMX dimmers rack-mounted under each model box, all of the RGB LED fixtures and fibreoptic luminaires come together into one patch bay. Our Lightbox Operating System (LBOS) is a revolutionary software package to enable users of WYSIWYG, LightWright5 and Virtual Magic Sheet for two dimensional forms of pre-visualisation, to coordinate their ideas with one toolkit. Each of the programs interfaces with LBOS to create an environment which integrates their software for use as a console for the Lightbox.

The fact that each source has digital dimmer control really differentiates this from any other form of model theatre. If the real-world reality of a dimmer per channel works for the theatre then maintaining the same relationship and the beam angles of the little lights in Lightbox gives us the ability to write dynamic cue sequences in 1:24 or 1:48 scale, save them to disc, take

them into the theatre and run the show. This facility buys valuable time in early stages of the tech, reducing stress and establishing a dialog of dynamic vocabulary with the director, other designers and production team.

How it works for us

For us the scenario in our studio is quite germane and organic. The director is coming to meet the designer of a contracted project. The design is in that stage of the process where they have a preliminary model, maybe with some colour palette ideas on the scenery surfaces and swatches for costumes, but they are very much still pulling things apart and pushing many ideas. I tag along for the meeting. I bring photo research and 2D pictures of light that made me think about the play and pin them up around the room. The discussion ebbs into the dynamic layers of the set design and how they will be greatly dependent on the light fixture placements.

We use Lightbox as a

gathering place and a nice viewing platform for the model. It makes us all feel like we are looking at it as the audience will. The truss track slides along the model box frame on the X, Y and Z axis so before the meeting I have configured the box to the space we are loading in to (with the trim heights in the same scale as the set model). So when the model is in position I already have a feel, like a rep plot, for the direction of the light from typical fixture positions. If I slide a dichroic filter in front of the illuminator source (before the light goes through the fibreoptic) I can change an entire system of luminaires to the perfect colour for the walls (or more likely, try a dozen different dichroics while we all yell at each other about what looks best!). Everyone can see how a particular angle hits the scenery and this gets them all feeling as they do when they see lights in the theatre. So this rep plot is showing us systems and angle and colour and to address intensities I have it

all hooked up to the lighting desk, do some timed fades and maybe even save a few cues so I can remember what we all liked best.

But let's say I want to sell them all on an idea for adding a light to silhouette a character in a high apartment window or a glow of light coming from beneath the floorboards of a creepy attic. While dealing with the model in scale, it is so much easier to just slide a 3mm fibre up into the back of the model where the set designer has tissue paper curtains or strips of Bristol board to represent their ideas. I patch the fibre into a channel of the DMX Multi-Source Illuminator and write the fixtures in to the cue sequence (using the console I will use for the production). If you Sellotape a bit of gel from the Rosco swatch book on the end of the fibre before sliding it into the scenery, it will warm up the curtains too.

We found that access to places around the set that we can light, encourages improvisational sketching with light. It also is a really easy

way to convince producers to pay for ideas and electricians to climb up to that window when it is in full scale if they have seen how effective the light will be.

By furnishing lighting designers, for the first time, with a truly effective pre-viz tool, all of the theatre's contributors are equipped with the means to foster closer and more creative collaboration than ever before. Creating an environment where we all feel the time spent talking with the director and showing each other our reactions to the source material will result in something greater than the ideas on their own and will engender something no one can create alone: the magic of theatre. #

If you have any thoughts about collaboration or how you foster an excuse for your production team to gather together, email charleskirby@thematics.net with stories and suggestions. For further details of the Lightbox system, visit www.seelightbox.com or contact White Light www.whitelight.co.uk

The Winter Room

Designing a large-scale touring show or event brings many challenges to the lighting designer, but working at the bottom end of the budget scale can be just as challenging – especially when you know in advance that some of the venues have no readily-available equipment or power other than a 13A ring main. Grahame Gardner explains how...

The other end of the budget scale

From the start this was conceived as a small-scale dance/theatre performance piece for small audiences of up to thirty or so. It would be touring to some small halls in the Highlands during November 2006 before finishing in Glasgow's Tramway 4 studio. Two dancers, a 5m x 5m white dance floor, and limited props. Oh, and a set consisting mostly of white-painted upside-down tree branches hanging overhead that would be moved around during the piece.

In order to accommodate the trees, it was clear that we were going to have to tour a box truss. Naturally, as I would also be hanging lanterns on the truss, the cost could come out of the lighting budget... hang on a minute, I don't remember agreeing to that!

Actually the truss turned out to be a lot less obtrusive than we had thought – it actually defined the performance space very well.

Minimal masking was used; just a set of blacks on the upstage edge of the truss to provide a backdrop.

Naturalistic design

Conceived and directed by choreographer Claire Peñçak after spending two winters living alone in a remote highland glen, the piece portrayed a series of abstract images representing the northern winter; the isolation, the cycle of the seasons, the claustrophobia of sharing a small living space and, above all, the overwhelming desire for warmth and light. It was a

very organic piece with props including coal, peat, ashes, logs, and lit matches. Indeed, at times it seemed to be more visual art than dance. Designer Brian Hartley also performed the male role in the show.

Right from the initial concept meetings I knew that I wanted an HMI source to provide a cold, wintry keylight. Nothing else would give that almost tactile bleakness of light that an HMI could provide. We also knew that at some point during the piece, we wanted this to move to depict the passage of time as shadow directions changed. I looked at various options using track on the trussing, but as the light would have to pan during its travel to maintain cover

"As the production period progressed, it was clear that I just didn't have the money to hire an HMI Fresnel with dimming, shutters and scroller."





of the stage, this didn't look like it would be particularly cheap to achieve or easy to solve. I also decided at that point to have a gobo cover of bare branches on the blacks, which would enhance the moments when the tree branches were all onstage by making it look more like a

forest. And the other design decision was that I would deliberately choose a very limited colour palette for this piece. So that was the design sorted out, so all I had to do now was find a way to make it all come together and within budget. Some lateral thinking was clearly required.

Low budget and HMI don't mix?

As the production period progressed, it was clear that I just didn't have the money to hire an HMI Fresnel with dimming, shutters and scroller. However, an architectural lighting designer friend came to the rescue with two 150W discharge ceiling downlighters

that were not only economical on power but had that HMI colour temperature and were amazingly bright – each looked roughly equivalent to a 1.2kW tungsten. I fitted

them in reclaimed PAR64 shells and they became “HMI PARs”. Still undimmable, but I thought I could make it work by choosing my moments carefully.



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The rest of the rig included Selecon 650W Fresnels, wide-angle zoom profiles and 800W Arrilites. The latter were ideal for stage fill – very economical on power and looking a lot brighter than their wattage suggested. However, being film lights there was an incredible amount of unwanted spill from them; nothing that some black wrap couldn't fix. I had two 6-way Strand digital dimmer packs on 13A leads and a Strand 200 desk. Somehow I managed to shoehorn everything into 12 channels, plus the HMI PARs.

Moving the light

By the way, to solve the tracking problem of the HMI PARs, we ended up going with the simplest solution: they were mounted on a T-bar on top of a wheeled stand that the stage manager pushed down the wing at the appropriate moment. Brian Gorman, our SM, a naturally reticent fellow, wasn't too keen on this idea as he was in full view of the audience. However, he eventually overcame his reluctance with the aid of a costume and a small black 'flag' that he could hide his face behind as he pushed it.



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

"A large part of the show was the use of fire in the form of lit matches..."

The end effect was well worth it; the shadows of the tree branches and a line of upright logs on the stage swung dramatically across the stage, mimicking the sun's daily cycle and providing a very successful 'time passing' effect. Many people complimented me on this afterwards as one of the visual highlights of the show.

Blacks with trees

Other interesting lighting element included three of the Selecon profiles, in L202, which gave a good gobo cover of the upstage blacks. This provided an interesting separation as the trees could be lit with gobos for highlights and breakup without affecting the performers too much unless they were upstage.

The rest of the pitifully small lantern stock was used to provide specials. For example, one scene required a diagonal split of

the stage into two distinct areas; I achieved this with the remaining Arrilite and careful use of the barndoors and black wrap. Although coloured in L202, by running it at a low level I managed to get the warm 'interior' look, contrasted against the bright 'external' area, lit by one profile in L201.

Balancing matches

You can tell that we're not talking mega-bright states here. A large part of the show was the use of fire in the form of lit matches, and the lighting had to balance against that light source. This became one of the pivotal moments in the lighting. We began with the HMIs striking up at the start of the music, and built the rest of the state slowly as they warmed up to temperature. Then I had to sneak in the blue backlight and gobos over a few minutes so that I could switch off the HMIs at a dramatic chord in the music as we entered a night storm sequence, with branches swinging and insistent music. The gobos really helped in

this scene as they made the hanging trees seem denser than they really were.

Later, we faded down to the merest glimmer of a backlight special as the two dancers lit a match together centre stage, the match providing the only illumination on the faces. This was the point of light returning, and at a suitable point in the music, I switched the HMIs back on. As they warmed up this time, I added the warmer wash as well as the L201; the contrast from the previous cool blue states was quite startling; even without colour in the warm wash it looked positively spring-like. Later I did go as far as adding some L206 to this wash, just to emphasise the point.

Light to sound effects

An added bonus of using the Strand digital dimmers was the noise of the cooling fans! Located behind the upstage blacks, they added a very convincing intermittent wind noise when the fans kicked in (they come on whenever needed, though there is a



setting to have them running at low level constantly). That really augmented the bleak wintry atmosphere of the piece. So much so that many people thought it was part of the soundtrack, or even that there was a real gale blowing outside. Needless to say, we kept this in!

I probably got more

"Located behind the upstage blacks, [the dimmers] added a very convincing intermittent wind noise when the fans kicked in..."

satisfaction from designing this piece than from many larger works that I've done; I also had several favourable comments and a couple of job offers on the strength of it, so it just goes to show that you don't need to be playing with huge budgets and lighting rigs to produce a good design. Sometimes small really is beautiful. #

All photos by Grahame Gardner

See you at PLASA!

The entertainment lighting world's main event is nearly with us. It is also a great opportunity for ALD members to meet. We asked PLASA's Executive Director, Ruth Rossington, what's in store for 2007?

PLASA 07 is now just a matter of weeks away (9-12 September 2007) and as in previous years, the lighting sector will be well represented. This is, after all, the main UK event for the lighting design community and a rare opportunity for us to get together in one place at one time.

Keeping up with new technologies

Although there are only a handful of lighting designers who truly get to spec the latest technologies, PLASA is nevertheless of relevance to every member of the ALD, simply because it holds a mirror to the lighting and control trends that will define the next 10 years.

As we all know, the entertainment technology business, just as in the consumer world, is undergoing a digital revolution

that is producing more bang for the buck and, at the same time, dramatically shrinking the physical dimensions of equipment.

Can anyone be unaware of the dramatic difference being wrought by LED technologies, which have changed lighting designers' lives and been central in reshaping the events, production and architectural worlds?

Live performance visuals are also in the throes of a similar revolution, with lighting and video now merging into one. This has been spurred by the arrival of digital video (unleashing virtually unlimited effects) and lightweight, modular LED displays which – thanks to powerful media servers – can be used both as light sources and image displays. Control and visualisation systems have not been left behind either and are delivering increased

functionality across the price spectrum. We may not all have the budgets to invest in new technologies, but we all need to be aware of what's going on and understand why – with tools like these – the lines between lighting and video are disappearing fast.

A new layout at Earls Court

Framing all this will be an exhibition that is itself evolving: one of the most radical changes this year will be the show's new layout, which will transform PLASA07 into a single-level exhibition, thanks to expansion from Earls Court 1 into the adjacent Earls Court 2. There has been investment in a range of new features, creating new meeting and presentation areas, a wireless internet zone, VIP hospitality suite and a separate fast-track entrance on Brompton Road.

More new features for

Earls Court 2 include hands-on workshop areas, and a new PLASA Theatre which will host a series of industry-led Masterclasses. The Innovation Gallery – host to many of the new products being launched at the show – will for the first time become a specially designed feature of the walkway between Earls Court 1 and Earls Court 2.

New awards too...

And there have been changes to the Awards for Innovation too: in addition to the main product awards, a new award is being launched intended to give the designers and developers across the industry recognition for their creative work. *The Gottelier Award* – named in memory of Tony Gottelier, the leading designer, innovator and industry commentator who died in 2006 – will recognise the contribution made to

product innovation by an individual or team, not just in the sphere of lighting, in which Tony was best known, but across all product sectors.

PLASA07 is well worth a visit and essential for lighting designers who want to understand how technologies are diversifying and how the nature of the business is developing. The entire industry is founded on a complex series of relationships and for anyone keen to understand this, PLASA is really where it hits home. #

You'll be receiving details about ALD members' complimentary tickets from the office soon. Meanwhile, take a look at PLASA online at www.plasashow.com. The website also contains pricing and timing information on the seminars, exhibitor listings, directions to the venue and a host of other useful facts.

New people. New products. New opportunities.

This year's PLASA Show will be like no trade show you've seen before.

Organised by the leading entertainment and installation technology trade body, PLASA07 has a vibrant new design and exciting new features to make it the best show in the world to mix business with pleasure.

Between 9-12 September at Earls Court in central London, a new two-hall layout will host hundreds of new product launches, new exhibitors and new networking opportunities. There are new meeting and wi-fi lounges where you can socialise and do business, and the PLASA Bar and Meeting Lounge will stay open until 8pm on the first three nights, as well as host the prestigious PLASA Awards for Innovation ceremony.

If you think you've seen the PLASA Show before, come to PLASA07 and think again.

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Star Lights

Continuing our series of lighting reviews, we are extremely pleased to welcome *The Observer's* theatre critic Susannah Clapp for her view of drama lighting.

Flashes, lustres, strange flushes of colour: the lighting you most notice and cherish as a non-technician is made up of sudden effects, not steady states. We're slow to celebrate design that doesn't have obvious designs on us, and that's a loss. A few years ago, when extolling the work of one designer to a colleague, I was met with the objection that 'you can't see what he's doing'. A complaint which was the best of recommendations.

I remember the first time I realised how incisively light could be used to scythe through the space on a stage: it was while watching Judith Greenwood's terrific, combative illumination of *Le Cid* eight years ago. I remember, too, the first time I experienced something like synaesthesia in the Stalls. In Rufus Norris's re-creation of *Festen*, the sparseness of

Ian MacNeil's set, and the alternate wan and gold of Jean Kalman's lighting, struck home as precise equivalents of Paul Arditti's chilling (the dripping tap, the faraway laughter) soundscape.

There have been recent experiences to rival these. At the Manchester International Festival, Chris Davey's lighting was one of the most surprising engines driving Neil Bartlett's site-specific production of *The Pianist*. Based on Wladyslaw Szpilman's memoir of the Warsaw Ghetto, and a war spent hiding from Nazis in an attic, the play seemed determined to make itself almost entirely out of sounds: the story of Szpilman's escape and concealment was told through his own words interspersed with fragments of Chopin's music; there was hardly any movement; the events were described rather

than enacted; the main visual focus was two men's intense, interlocking stare. Yet the sense of space and danger was constantly transformed not only by the setting – there were elements of the ghetto in the cobbles and railway tracks and attic space – but by lighting which steered spectators from an outside to a secret world, and from hope to bleakness.

"A few years ago, when extolling the work of one designer to a colleague, I was met with the objection that 'you can't see what he's doing'. A complaint which was the best of recommendations."

Nature was given a part to play in this. In an echo, though not an imitation of Szpilman's circumstances, the audience were gathered together before the show, and ushered as a group from the outside world, in the fading but still bright light

of an early evening. Davey took over as the audience climbed from floor to floor of a huge warehouse, past empty, duskily lit rooms, until, under a high roof in an airy space, his lighting corralled the audience and the two men (Peter Guinness and Mikhail Rudy) into a tight, tense arena; it went on to punctuate the action by its waxing and waning, its shadow and glare.

Behind the two taut figures, huge shadows spread out on the rafters.

This wasn't the only time in recent months that Davey's work has served as one of the motors of a production. Earlier in the year, at the Lyceum in Sheffield, he met full on the

challenge of competing with one of the most successful of all sex-and-ghost films, in Lucy Bailey's production of *Don't Look Now*. Here was lighting which – shrouding and disclosing spectral figures, as the crazed, bereaved couple raced around the stage – suggested the wooziness of dream, and in doing so whipped along the plot, while drenching the stage in an atmosphere of doomed hope.

There's a special satisfaction when a designer makes an act of evocation look casual, as if the aim were simply functional. For Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* at Trafalgar Studios, Peter McKintosh's set – tiled in white like an public lav – was overhung with fluorescent tubes, dangling from chains that looked as if at any moment they might be lowered for the purposes of interrogation.

Simon Mills sank the whole stage in lighting that seemed to be forcing itself out of those tubes: it was both overbright and grimy; it made you feel grubby to look at – exactly right in a play about insidious corruption.

More recently, at Glyndebourne, Katie Mitchell's staging of the *St Matthew Passion*, which reimagined sacred loss as parental grief (with human, not Godly parents), and brought Bach to a kind of Beslan, was rendered both more credible and more doleful by Paule Constable's crepuscular lights, which, while signalling threat and sorrow, hinted at a tattered material world and a harsh climate: when snow fell outside the windows it truly was as if the grey sky were emptying itself.

As well as such legerdemain naturalism, there have been swooping spectacular moments. In Emma Rice's much debated *A Matter of Life and Death*, Mark Henderson created a universe of extraordinary morphing effects. In the

opening moments he managed to turn the stage into something which seemed to go on for ever: a midnight-blue bowl of smoky space, like a fallen sky, flecked with lights that looked like stars but which turned out to belong to a fleet of advancing bicycles. Henderson caught the strange Kneehigh mixture of homespun and mystical: the play glimmered and gloomed; the action wore a halo of peculiarity, until the end when the bereaved of Coventry came forward to meet the bereaved of Dresden, and desolation claimed the stage in a still grey light.

Jenny Kagan helped to do something different for Lisa Goldman's inaugural production as artistic director of Soho theatre. It was unexpected and liberating to realise that a drama called *Baghdad Wedding* was to feature neither feats of exoticism, nor political treatises. In fact, Hassan Abdulrazzak's first play was written in part to combat customary Western notions of mango-and-magic literature.

He offers stories of love and comradeship set against a background of bombs, deprivation, torture, hilarity and ambition: something more immediately human and personal than London has had before as a picture of Iraq, and Jenny Kagan's lighting was instrumental in putting flesh and substance on the description. Jon Bausor's modest but effective set – a scatter of furniture dominated by a rough concrete expanse at the back of the stage – was turned by Kagan into a place that glowed with the ochre of Iraq's sun at the play's hopeful zenith, and was as suddenly drained of warmth, to become an unyielding grey when the action was clamped by disaster. In a play which mourned the absence of light (an operating theatre was, crucially, starved of it), the stars which appeared in a midnight-blue sky seemed bizarre, unprecedented. The true gift of a lighting designer. #

Giving something back

Education rep Nick Moran on an opportunity for practitioners to help the next generation

Most institutions that teach lighting are always looking for practicing lighting designers, production electricians, production and technical managers and programmers willing to talk to the students. This could mean anything from coming in to speak about what you do and offering an opportunity to observe you working, through to leading or mentoring students through a project. Projects might extend to just a few days, or through a ten or twelve week term. It might also involve observing student work and being part of an expert panel advising students on their work.

People who can coach students in core skills are also needed. For example, computer skills within a production context including AutoCAD, Vector Works and WYSIWYG as design tools and drafting packages, Lightwright, PhotoShop CS, web design software and video manipulation and playback software. And there is a continuing need for instruction on lighting desks, from the basics of setting up through to programming moving lights and video.

Work in education is not going to make you rich. Fees vary but generally range from around £24 to £35 per hour, and would usually include time to prepare material if you were going to present a session. As well as the money, you get to meet the next generation of keen eager practitioners, and perhaps to pick up willing and able crew for your next project. Many institutions can also offer opportunities for practitioners to try out ideas and to expand their own skills into new areas, such as media in performance.

If you want to know more, contact an institution directly, or e-mail most of the UK lighting tutors via PROFILE-GROUP@JISCMail.AC.UK

ALD Annual General Meeting 2007

The AGM this year took place at 2.00pm Wednesday 13th June at the ABTT Theatre Show, Royal Horticultural Halls, London and was attended by 30 members from all membership categories. This is a summary of the proceedings

1. Welcome & Apologies

A short welcome address by Richard Pilbrow (Co-President) preceded his dash to Heathrow for the 2007 Prague Design Quadrennial. Apologies received were announced by Ian Saunders (Treasurer)

2. Chairman's Report

Rick Fisher (Chair) was unable to attend due to a project in Santa Fe. His report was read by Jason Larcombe (Deputy Chair). Rick noted that it had been a good year for the ALD. The re-design of Focus is an obvious highlight. He hoped members would continue to support Focus with articles and feedback. You don't have to be an 'author'. Just jot down your thoughts and the editorial team will help shape them up.

Another highlight was Equity and BECTU

supporting the ALD's claims for better fees for subsidised Rep contracts. Equity is increasingly recognising Lighting Designers' views through the Designers Committee. Rick noted Tony Simpson was retiring from the Equity committee after much hard work to modernise how LD's are viewed. The ALD strongly recommends that members join Equity to strengthen the ALD, as LDs' collective voice, and individually gain the support and protection that Equity offers. Details about the Fees Campaign are on the ALD website. A new Equity representative to replace Tony is sought.

Rick acknowledged the efficient transition of ALD administration, following resignation of Geoff Spain, to Ian Saunders who, with the dual role of Treasurer

is making significant contributions to ALD affairs.

The first Light Relief Day, when professional members donate a day's royalties to the charity, had raised £3000.

3. Treasurer's Report

Ian Saunders' reported a surplus of £6,500 in 2006/07, although this was because the ALD Yearbook was not printed this year. However, forecast expenditure for 2007/8 was now exceeding subscription income. Therefore notice was given that an increase in subscription would be required – the first since 2003. This is likely to come into effect in April 2009 (see 7.iii).

4. Election of Officers

The meeting re-elected Rick Fisher as Chairman, Ian Saunders as Administrator & Treasurer.

5. Representative's Reports*

5.i Professional

Mark Jonathan (Professional Rep) was also abroad and his report was read by Nick Moran (Education Rep). Mark reported that the ALD was developing a database of fees being paid by managements. This data comes from members submitting their fee information. It is not compulsory to contribute, but if you do, you can request information from the database to benchmark your fees and negotiations.

5.ii Equity

Tony Simpson's report was read by Nick Moran. Tony reported significant progress by the Lighting Design members of the Equity Committee who now have a crucial function to continued negotiation for all theatre designers. The Equity Committee and the TMA

have agreed to develop a re-working of the TMA Designers Collective Agreement for the designers' contract that could prove to be the biggest change since it came into effect in 1985. Their decision is still to be progressed, but the benefits will significantly better reflect the contemporary needs of the freelance sector and employers.

5.iii Corporate

Andy Collier reported that we have changed the Corporate member fee structure for 2007/8 with the aim of simplifying the current system and improving our benefits package for our corporate members. We are combining the fee with the student sponsorship scheme and have simplified the use of the membership database. Due to his new commitments editing Focus, Andy wishes to

retire as Corporate Member representative. Interested parties to replace him contact Andy or Ian Saunders.

5.iv Student

Mary Pope was unable to report. Ian Saunders summarised the Michael Northern Bursary entry process and changes to the Sponsored Student Scheme to be launched at PLASA in September.

5.v Meetings

Rachel Nicholson asked for information on whether the ALD was offering the right kind of meetings? There was little feedback received, and calls for interest in ideas were also minimal. She was especially keen to get information on regional meetings.

5.vi Focus

Andy Collier reported the last year's huge progress acknowledging the increase in the number of articles offered by members and the contribution of the editorial team particularly Jackie Staines who was responsible for the

redesign. Focus continues to be a keystone of ALD cohesion and the public voice of LDs. Member generated articles and opinions are its lifeblood.

5.vii Development

John Leventhall appraised the meeting of the function of the Development role, the ongoing value of Associate Members and gave notice of upcoming member benefits schemes in preparation.

5.viii Education

Nick Moran attended consultations on the proposed new Skills Academy. The proposals of the Cultural Sector Skill Council have gone to Government for consideration and response in October. The project needs matched funding for around £3million to deliver training through regional 'hubs' to 16 to 19 year olds and a variety of in-service courses.

6. Election of Reps

The current Reps were nominated to stand for a further term and the meeting voted in favour.

7. Changes Requiring Member Voting

7.i Student Category

Due to new university/FE courses and interest from outside the drama schools, the Executive wished to adjust the student category entry requirements to include all FE students over 16. This was passed by the meeting.

7.ii Non Profit Category

The Non Profit Organisation category was proposed to change to a Focus subscription category, so it is possible to subscribe to Focus magazine only. The Exec feels it would be productive for agents and other industry parties to be able to be aware of their clients', Lighting Designers, issues and fees through Focus. Attending members expressed concerns that this readership could restrict views that could be aired. The meeting referred this back to the Exec for further consideration and member feedback. It was noted that many educational bodies

offering theatre courses might be unaware of the NPO membership and, if canvassed, would join.

7.iii Subscriptions

As required by the constitution, the Exec gave notice of subscription increase for 2009. A wide opinion range was offered; some members did not wish to pay more if current services remained static, whilst acknowledging that this does not address inevitable cost inflation e.g. printing. Others were happy to pay more as the Association's value had grown in recent years. The good value of the ALD compared with other related industry bodies was mentioned.

8. Discussion on Future ALD Development

Developing wider PR and public awareness was heartily supported. There was agreement that the ALD needed to use other organisations to help advance the profession (e.g. Equity and BECTU).

An important discussion

was the future of the ALD. Does it stay as a networking 'club' or become a full trade association that improved its members' interests? John Leventhall reported that the Exec was tentatively investigating becoming a charity to add external fund raising ability for new projects. As a precursor, the scope of the ALD would require significant revision and debate amongst the membership. It was resolved the Exec should continue to progress this and report with a business case presented for subscription increases. A business plan around potential adoption of charitable status and relevant projects should also be prepared.

Following this there were no further questions (Agenda Item 9) or AOB (Item 10) and Ian Saunders offered thanks to the attendees. The meeting closed at about 4.30pm.

**Copies: Reports are available from Ian Saunders at the ALD office office@ald.org.uk*

South Bank Light Lab

As most UK lighting professionals will be aware, this summer has seen the reopening of the Royal Festival Hall. This, along with the appointment of the inexhaustible Jude Kelly as creative director of the whole South Bank Centre, provides potential for a reinvention of the former mugger's paradise between Waterloo and Hungerford Bridges. Willie Williams takes us there...

Any talk of renaissance, however, is dogged by the legacy of decades of failed schemes on this site and the seemingly permanent hostility of the press, most notably the *Evening Standard* and *Telegraph*. Attempting to succeed in 'the graveyard of good ideas' is a task considered somewhat against the odds. Fortunately, Jude Kelly and Michael Lynch (SBC director) have both previously presided over formidable transformations so have at least managed to remain lucid during the past couple of years and confidence remains high.

Amongst the million other ideas, Jude has a particular interest in light and lighting. I first met her at the beginning of 2006 and began conversations around the idea of making 'light' part of the agenda of the new SBC. The concept is to declare light to be its own genre, its own discipline, and have a programme for it in the same way that there's a dance programme, a music programme and so forth. The programme would consist of a curated year-round series of installations and events, with a parallel programme of talks, symposia, and education. The Hayward has hosted some major exhibitions of light-based work (most notably by James Turrell and Dan Flavin), but the goal would be to allow the continual creation of less high-profile installations by

"Amongst the million other ideas, Jude [Kelly, creative director SBC] has a particular interest in light and lighting."

designer-artists of all levels of success or obscurity.

Light installations

Thus far we have managed three installations. The first was my lighting of the black hole surrounding the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Hayward Gallery complex. This came from Jude's suggestion that as an opening gambit we should "just do something so there's something to talk about." The available budget was minimal but with help from Ed Smith at SBC, Alex Murphy from the National

Theatre next door and some generosity from White Light, I managed to install a scheme that looked like we'd had a reasonable go at it. It's amazing how far a couple of dozen MBIs and 40 Source Fours will go if you spread them thinly enough. (It was also an interesting test case to see exactly what happens if you leave Source Fours out in the rain for six months... It's messy.)

Last Christmas, artist David Bachelor was commissioned to design some alternative Christmas decorations that



Jason Bruges, photo: Steve Speller.

Willie Williams

Willie Williams is one of the most recognised names in performance lighting design. His name is associated with numerous credits in international concert lighting (including tours for U2, George Michael, REM, David Bowie and Marianne Faithful to name a few), theatre projects (including the highly successful Little Britain Live tour, the hit musical We Will Rock You, Barbarella in Vienna and more), as well as other collaborations including Kronos Quartet (on their epic Sun Rings project), La La La Human Steps dance company and many more.



featured strings of festooned washing up bottles and, most commendably, two neon cement mixers. Each year a different artist will be commissioned, but will add to the previous year's work, so the strange selection of Christmas lights will grow annually.

Both these installations



Wind to Light by Jason Bruges, photo: Onedotzero.

came down in January, so the black hole of the South Bank Centre returned for the time being.

The third installation “Wind to Light” from Jason Bruges Studio is running until 1st September for Architecture Week 2007. This site-specific installation illustrates

“... anyone with any interest would certainly be welcome to come and join in... if you've got an idea and a bit of time, come and have a look.”

alternative, sustainable ways of harnessing energy, and visualising it as an ephemeral cloud of light. The installation has been custom built, using scaled down wind turbines to generate power, which illuminate hundreds of mounted LEDs, creating firefly-like fields of light. Jason Bruges says: “‘Wind to Light’ is an experimental piece, an investigation into the viability of wind power. I hope it will prove thought-provoking as well as being an art piece that can be enjoyed by people of all ages”. It was



View from ground level, photo: Steve Speller.

opened on the 15th July to coincide with RIBA London’s Architecture Week, and set to remain in place “at least until September” according to onedotzero, the producer.

This year focused on the reopening of the Royal Festival Hall in June, so much of the work relates to that. The new RFH comes with a fabulous new permanent lighting scheme by Spiers and Major so I am painfully aware of the degree to which

the other half of the site might look even more derelict. We’re giving some thought to further temporary schemes to spruce up the ‘ugly duckling’ QE/Hayward side and any input would be welcome.

Join in with Light Lab

The term ‘Light Lab’ surfaced (due entirely, I think, to its being pleasantly alliterative) and has remained the catch-all description for any extra-curricular lighting activities

around the site. Huw Llewellyn has recently come on board as a part time employee of SBC to run the Light Lab activities, but given the lack of funds and the open-ended nature of the idea, it’s fair to say that those who have been involved thus far have done so largely through turning up and being interested. This ethos will certainly continue for a while, so anyone with any interest would certainly be welcome to come and join in. Seriously

– if you've got an idea and a bit of time, come and have a look. It's not going to be big budget stuff for a while, but the canvas is so extraordinary that I've found being involved to be its own reward.

The name 'Light Lab' implies that this may be a place for lighting persons to get together, which would certainly be encouraged. We all know how little crossover

there is between the worlds of theatre, rock and architectural lighting, with actual lighting artists being from a different planet altogether. Aside from PLASA, LDI and the Christmas Lighting Lunch, the opportunities to run into other lighting professionals are limited to chance, which seems a shame as I for one have learned an enormous amount simply through talking

to and working with lighting persons of other species.

I'm aware that this kind of cross-pollination can't be forced, and can only happen as a by-product of a place which of itself provides enough reason for people to be there. Consequently, the task of the South Bank is to provide sufficient interest and opportunity for lighting designer-artists to make it



View from roof, photo: Steve Speller.



Wind to Light by Jason Bruges, photo: Onedotzero.

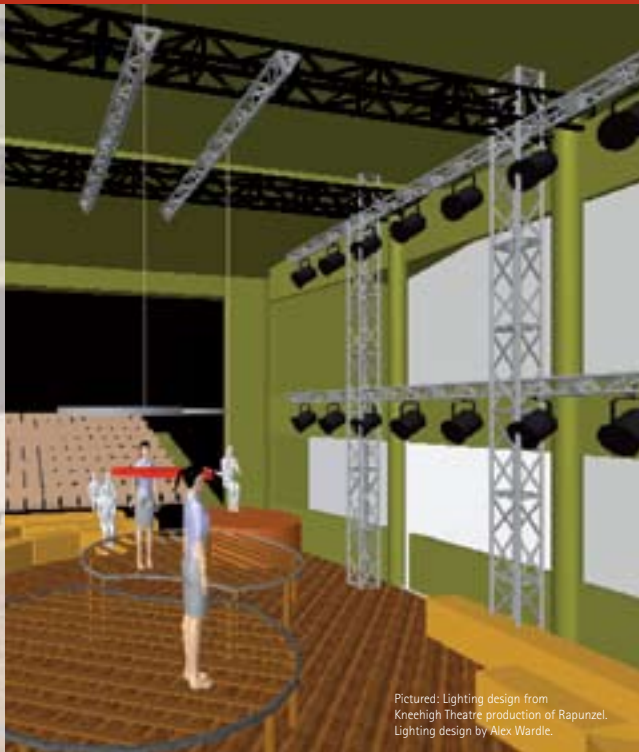
a place worth visiting (the growing array of new bars and cafés is a step in the right direction.)

Light Lab needs to develop at its own pace and find out what useful purpose it can serve, rather than imposing on itself unrealistic (and possibly un-useful) ambitions. Consequently it's still an open brief; Light Lab could find itself hosting a programme of high-level symposia or it could equally well find its primary function as being a hang out with a late bar from which lighting persons can collaborate in plotting

world domination. If it can encompass all of the above I'd say it'd be worth a look. It is, after all, a pretty incredible canvas. #

Lightlab is a Southbank Centre initiative to enable practitioners of lighting design - be it theatre, dance, rock, visual art or architecture - to meet, exchange ideas and create light-based works across the 21-acre site, as well as lighting designs for performances in the venues. Lightlab's patron is Willie Williams, an internationally renowned artist and designer who works with light and visual media to create installations and performance environments. www.willieworld.com

Spotlight



Picture: Lighting design from
Kneehigh Theatre production of Rapunzel.
Lighting design by Alex Wardle.

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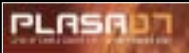
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