

ALD #

FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

"More art, less tools..."

In the dappled gobo wash this issue:

• Declan Randall does Wexford Opera • How the other half lights:
amateur lighting design • ALD@50: Reviewing lighting designs at the
Royal Court • Technology showcase at CSSD .. and much more...

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April /May 2012

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MJ
Mark Jonathan's regular roundup of things lighting things personal and things professional



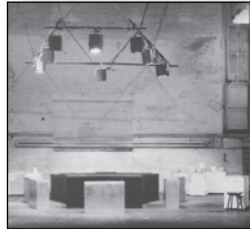
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A PROFESSIONAL LD'S VIEW

MJ

**Mark Jonathan
turns on the
radio...**

**“Are your bowels
playing up?” said
the encouraging
voice on Classic
FM. “It doesn’t
matter how you
say it but tell your
doctor; remember,
it could be bowel
cancer...”**

“Yes”, I thought, “and it could just be that I haven’t been to the gym, done any exercise, that I’ve been eating stodgy Viennese food and there has been some tension at the production desk in Vienna...

Lost in translation in Vienna

Apart from the tension, it’s been like the tower of Babel. The creative team had such a good time with our freelance Italian video programmer on *The Macropulos Case* in Florence that we brought him with us to Vienna for *Les Contes de Hoffmann*. However, the talented and charming programmer, Davide Broccoli, doesn’t really speak English, and the brilliant stage and video designer, Michael Curry, doesn’t really speak Italian. So, I would find myself helping out as I translated to and from Italian, English and

German between Davide, Michael and the local Austrian staff. I realise that speaking a foreign language is one thing but flipping German constantly is really tiring. In fact, at the end of one long day of plotting, while my brain could remember words, it was no longer processing which language they belonged to. Sentences became completely muddled with me starting the sentence in one language and finishing it in another of the three languages much to the amusement of the lighting operators who claimed that in one tired moment I used 3 words consecutively from different languages.

In my absence, Davide would default to his two words of English “no problem!” which he would say with great conviction even though he had no idea what was being asked of him.

On one occasion when I was on a break the director spoke to Davide and of course, a *hare was set running*; I think Davide had tried to say ‘my projector she no make light on the floor due to the angle of the projection’ which got translated to the director as “you can’t see the projections on the floor because of all of my light!...

‘my projector she no make light on the floor...’

The pre-general has been cancelled which is not good for me as I’m now expected to produce perfect lighting without this important dress rehearsal: “*Now zat you more time haz you can make zee lighting perfect for ze general!*”. No one seems to understand that having a chorus of 40, plus principals all in wigs and costumes, looks quite different to having a few *assitantz* and



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

All photos of *Contes de Hoffmann*
courtesy Theater Wien,
copyright Werner Kmetitsch

statisten walking for one in an extended lighting session that now replaces the Pre-general. In addition, no one seems to understand that having lost the Pre-general I might have notes from the director as well as my own after the General and that it might take more than the one hour that has been allocated to me in the two days that exist between the General and the Premiere to finish off a big five act opera... "We do not normally change zee lighting after ze general."

"Well, guys, this ain't normal so give me a break and shut the eff-up and start tapping those buttons."

Is it just here, that in advance of the production, I say what I want but what I get is what is thought to be appropriate or convenient by the lighting manager? I say: "So I'd like 6 booms with 4 Source 4s on each one".

"I will give you 5 booms with 2 Source 4s and a 10 degree LED strip."

"The 10 degree strip is very narrow, will it join up?" I say.

"Wider than 10 degrees is not very bright," comes the reply. Well, maybe that's why I asked for a profile... as I silently grind my teeth.

The hype in the press for the sold out production was high and I felt the bar being raised in terms of the expectation of the audience for a visual dynamic that I wasn't convinced we could deliver. I was amused to see one Austrian Sunday paper previewing the opera describing me as the international *Licht Künstler*, be careful how you pronounce that.

If you fancy a few days in Vienna, the capital of a former empire, you can be greatly inspired and stimulated but the vast amount of art

from many centuries so beautifully displayed in the many galleries and palaces. My visit to the Belvedere Palace made my day off very uplifting.

The opening night arrived and having made my point that one hour wasn't long enough I was given an extra 30 minutes. I thought that the reception was rather muted from a Viennese audience comprising many sponsors. A good first night party followed unaffected by the cutbacks that have hit so many 1st night parties. I went on for extra drinks at a horrible smoky bar. I stagger to bed at 5am. Naughty MJ!

Fresh as the Saurkraut juice they sell in the local supermarket I was up a few hours later packing and onto the airport for one night in London and onto a recce visit in Dublin armed with a box of Mozart's Balls to give as a gift.





A PROFESSIONAL LD'S VIEW

Mark Jonathan

Hello Ireland!

Meanwhile in Dublin, the director had warned me that he and the designer were thinking of a ceiling but he assured me I shouldn't worry as there would be lots of places to hide lights in the set. I imagined birdies buried behind piles of books on side tables. Did they decide to commission the set without showing it to me to avoid my gentle but persuasive tongue trying to sway them from the intentions of producing a claustrophobic set regardless of the lighting problems that might ensue?

Well, the set did have a ceiling and walls that extended to completely seal the proscenium arch and cover the advance bridge position and there were no places to hide any lights. "Hmm", I thought. When I was younger I might have made a fuss and argued but now, like a Peckham lamb to slaughter

I mutter 'Ok - whatever.' The production manager, who is an experienced LD, and the chief look on with sympathy and I wonder how I'll get myself out of this one. I shall find out when I return in two weeks for final runs and the production period but first I'll just nip back to the Alps for a different sort of run and I hope that the cramps in my stomach will disappear.

Post Script: My taxi to the airport is cancelled by Airport Cars at 6am ten minutes before departure. Beware of booking on the internet. My plane to Geneva is cancelled due to fog at London City so I'm sent in a taxi to Heathrow. I suppose that with four flights in five days something was bound to go wrong. I get very careful attention from Surinder, the pharmacist in Terminal One. She told me my intestines were as long as the Boots' chemist

store and they need looking after. Armed with a bag of medication I set off smiling, thinking of relaxing on some steep, off piste.

The Knights of Illumination

It has been announced that the prestigious Knights of Illumination awards continue this year. Let my allay any confusion that may exist about how the nominations are selected. In the categories for TV and Rock and Roll nominations can be made by the designer or by others. In the theatre category which includes Drama, Opera, Musical and Dance categories we have always opted to be judged by professional critics. As lighting designers working in these categories you do not need to nominate your own work. The nominations and the winners will be chosen by the six theatre critics who are chaired by David Benedict.

Lightin' Tips 'n Tricks:

Top Tip

At the ALD office we are disturbed to hear of a lighting designer who 'lent' the producer the money to pay for the lighting hire. I'm sad to report that the LD hasn't been repaid. I'm afraid for this LD it was a tough lesson to learn. Don't do this. I even find that I have to think twice about pulling favours and borrowing valuable equipment as the enthusiasm to collect it is not always followed up at the time when it needs to be returned to the generous benefactor. If you borrow kit on behalf of the producer make sure there will be someone to return the kit.

Top Trick

For some time I've been making auto follow ons .2 in the cue stack, leaving .1 for the programmer and any extra cues that are given by the DSM at .5 with the possibility of .3 and .7. It means operators and SMs can quickly see what is cued and what is an auto.

I hear from Tom Dexter Scott that Nick Richings had a different system. (I think the important thing is that we both had a system). I contacted Nick and he says:

"Whenever you do add new cues it's very rare (though not unknown) to want to go backwards i.e. add a cue in before the point you've got to, otherwise you would have already done it during the run / tech (providing that you tech the show in sequential order). Also at the time my desk of choice was a HOG II (I still mourn the day the touch screens finally made their way to that great programmer in the sky) and with a moving light show you often needed to put a mark cue in ('move in black' in new money). The HOG used to label the marks .1 cue after the cue just gone, asap in the cue stack. SO the conclusion I came to was we would re-name the mark cue to be .9 i.e. just before the cue that was about to be executed thus freeing up space in the cue stack. I went for .2 .4 etc so there was always space for a mark cue if required.

This worked well for the HOG and I have now adopted it for every show, every desk I do as it seems completely logical to me. It allows for auto f/o if you just want a build after that cue has been called. Any LX operator can easily see if it's an auto f/o or a given cue. Also it has an advantage when I go back to a show some months later in some god forsaken leaking tram shed that calls itself a theatre because "all the lights are wrong" and discover a "5" in the cue stack you know it's one I haven't created, and when fault finding with a large tracking show you can often go back to that cue and fix things."

THE WEXFORD WAY

“It’s been a few years since I have had to light anything in rep,” says Declan Randall.

“And the last one was a contemporary dance festival in Johannesburg, so it was with a slightly nervous anticipation that I took on lighting the 60th Anniversary Festival of Wexford Opera”

Lighting in rep is a challenge. A big challenge. But it can also be huge amounts of fun and very rewarding. Wexford Festival Opera was in its 60th year last year and I was thrilled to have been a part of the Wexford experience. They have a “one designer for all three operas” approach which basically translates as “once you enter the building, be prepared to never again see daylight”. I jest, of course; there are some windows in the greenroom and the dock door did allow in some daylight...

Lighting three large-scale operas back-to-back can only be done with an immense amount of planning, skill, preparation and a fantastic team that makes it all happen. Wexford has all of this – in surplus. The tech team at the festival are truly wonderful and supportive, and there is no way that I would have made it out the other end had it not been for them.

The three operas that were mounted last year were “La cour de Celimene”, “Maria” and “Gianni di Parigi”, three very different operas, each with their own set designs (and designers) and directors. I will do my best to try and relay the experience as best as I can.

LA COUR DE CELIMENE

This is a French opera by Ambroise Thomas which had not been performed since its premier in 1855. OK, so I was not going to be able to watch the Met’s production at the cinema, but fortunately there was a recording and the music is beautiful.

La Cour, as it came to be known, was directed by Stephen Barlow and designed by Paul Edwards and they had decided to set it in the period that it was actually

written for. Paul’s designs were wonderful. A truly beautiful stage design. Of course, every element was a lighting designer’s worst nightmare, but it was beautiful.

Let’s see... the stage was raked in two directions, tilted and lifted. The set was essentially a curved wrap-around wall with a number of entrances in it. Did I mention that the walls were made of green foliage? The floor was a black and white chequer-board pattern. And there was a ceiling. Of course there was. Oh, and for Act II, the entrances were all covered with mirrored doors. But it was beautiful, and I love a challenge. Act I was the garden, so an exterior scene, and Act II was her bedroom, so an interior scene. Oh, and all of this sat behind a huge gold-leaf picture frame.

Since the bulk of the overhead rig was not going to be of much use to me, we rigged some ladders – at different heights to accommodate for the double rake – which allowed me to get light in through all the entrances of the set. The FOH rig consisted of mostly ETC Revolutions and Vari-Lite 3500Q’s which helped to give us the shuttering that we needed to be able to get light into the ‘picture’. Of course, my flash of inspiration happened too late – what I should have done was designed an over-sized brass ‘picture light’ and had the bulk of my kit concealed in there, giving the illusion that the light on the wall was doing all the work. (Sigh) Oh well, next time...

Act II was slightly more challenging as once the mirrored doors were in place, I lost the ladders as a lighting position and I had to take great care in placing any other fittings as the sources all reflected in the mirror and would blind some poor unsuspecting opera patron.



LA COUR DE CELIMENE





MARIA



THE WEXFORD WAY

MARIA

A Polish opera written by Roman Statkowski which was given a modern interpretation by director Michael Gieleta and set designer James MacNamara. The piece was set in the Polish Revolution of the 1980's and had a very modern set design, the key elements being eight gauze-clad towers which were built in a forced perspective and would track in and out in different configurations. Other scenic elements were added to help set the location.

The style was very much a stark and bleak setting, almost devoid of colour, the inspiration coming from a series of black and white photographs by Mark Carrot and in fact some of his images were used during the show projected onto the front black gauze by projection designer Andrzej Goulding.

This show was not able to use the ladders as the towers blocked any useful light from them. The bulk of the work was done by the overhead rig which consisted of VL2500 spots and washes and the FOH rig of movers.

The show had several locations, small dark government offices, to dockyards, to the streets of Poland to the plush grandeur of the banquet halls for the elite and to help set the location we were using a Xenon Hardware 7kW large-format projector to do the scenic rear projection work. I ended up strapping a scroller to the front of the projector and this gave us a bit more control of the images and allowed us to help suggest time of day with subtle colour shifts.

April / May 2012



GIANNI DI PARIGI

GIANNI DI PARIGI

Donizetti seems to like naming operas "someone of somewhere" – *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Enrico di Borgogna* and this one (to mention just a few). I guess if I were a Donizetti opera, perhaps I would be Declan di Jo'burg... The opera which was performed at Martina Franca in Italy before coming over to Wexford and was directed by Federico Grazzini and designed by Tiziano Santi. The set had to be cut down quite considerably from the Martina Franca version to fit on the stage, but it was still a fair size, it has to be said. It filled the stage almost from wall to wall, leaving just enough space for the performers to get around.

Again, the overhead rig played a big part here,

but we were able to squeeze in some booms on each side giving me a chance for some side light which was a big help. The opera has only one location, the Hotel Parigi and all the action takes place over a 24-hour period, which meant sunrises, a sunset and everything in between. I love lighting realistically – it's a great challenge to be able to convince the audience of the time of day but still maintain a certain theatricality that the director required.

Here we were able to use the entire rig which also included a couple of 2.5kW HMI Fresnels with scrollers which helped to punch some 'daylight' into the space.

THE WEXFORD WAY

LA COUR

Most of the rehearsals for each opera take place on stage. The first few onstage calls are generally chorus rehearsals, so I used these as opportunities to test looks, colours and angles and to get a feel for what works and what sort of intensities would work for the show. This meant that when we sat in the actual lighting sessions we already had a good sense of what levels would work for us which helped to speed up the process quite a bit. What also proved to be a great help was to sit with the stage manager and peg cue points in the score and chat about the general feel with the director – this meant that in the subsequent rehearsals I could carry on lighting which also saved us heaps of time.

Act II opened with a shadow duel between the two male leads and we ended up using a Fresnel with the lens removed as it gave us the widest beam at the shortest distance with the cleanest shadow and had to be struck really quickly before the cloth flew out. I sometimes think that the crew should have worn their undies on top of their trousers, they really were super.

MARIA

Keeping copious notes and taking loads of photos is a big help when working in rep. It means that we all had a record of what things should look like, where they should be focussed and so forth. I had started out by planning to have minimal re-focusses between shows, but some of the positions (towers and perches in particular) were really useful and ended up needing a re-focus for each show. As we progressed, we slowly managed to cut down on the number of changes based on what we actually ended up using. We managed to get each turn-around down to a single page spread-sheet which was helpful. Just to add to the complex nature of the show, the borders changed deads during the show, so the lighting bars also had several deads which made for loads of moving light palettes.

We actually went through a couple of different lighting scenarios until we hit upon the right 'language' for Maria which did make for some frantic last minute plotting and note sessions, but what is rep theatre without a little bit of pressure...

We mounted the final images to be projected and then decided to try something. I wanted to use some stage blood and drip it onto the slide. The result would be that it would appear as if the blood was running up the image as opposed to the obvious down, which looked quite eerie indeed. Or it did, until we had a bit of a syringe malfunction... So we cleaned up the mess and decided to save the idea for another show.

GIANNI

This one was a little bit easier – I had the DVD from the Martina Franca performance to use as a guide, and we knew what the general lighting story was, so I was able to crack on in the onstage rehearsals and get the basic looks down which meant that the lighting sessions were spent cleaning and making adjustments which was really good. Of course all we did was to add in the broad strokes, the finessing and more subtle moments were added in with the director's input and requirements.

Of course, we did not endear ourselves to the stage management department as all the perfect prop's table locations also happened to be really good boom positions. One of the other advantages of working in rep is as you get to know the rig and what it can do, you find yourself thinking "oh, that will work nicely for *Maria*" or "that will solve a problem in *La Cour*" and so each show grows and starts to take shape while you are working on the others. It is quite an organic process and I found having to think about a completely different show every couple of days to be quite refreshing.



LA COUR

After a few sessions of each show being on stage for two days at a time, we started to get to one day sessions for each show and this is where the pressure cranks up a notch or two, it has to be said. By this point we were running each opera and had, for the most part, tech'd them all so it was time to fine tune and polish which is the part of any design that I enjoy most.

MARIA

We would start each session with a focus turn-around and then would tackle any of the bigger notes from the last rehearsal that we were not able to do on top of the rehearsal as it would have meant plunging the stage into impromptu darkness. Then we would run and clean as we go. With Maria, some the changes were fairly drastic as we were adjusting and making radical changes while we were still finding the right language. For the riot scene, we used a bar rigged full of PAR64's which was flown in to a low height to create the effect of car headlights. The units were fitted with a mask made from black foil with a square cut-out which helped to simulate the effect.

GIANNI

We would add in an extra cue here or there as the action and cast started to settle in to the piece, tweak and adjust some intensities, change a colour here or there and tweak timing and cue placements. All I can say is that I am grateful that there are such things as tracking consoles – the

thought of having to do a repertory season without tracking is just too horrifying for words!

LA COUR

A focus turn-over. A few last little tweaks. Check all the cues. Run the final dress rehearsal. Make a few minor changes.

MARIA

OK, delete those cues. What about this? Yeah? OK, good. Plot that. A few more notes from the previous run. Give the new cues to the stage manager. Run the final dress rehearsal.

GIANNI

Do the focus changes and check the cues. Clean up a little bit of messiness and run the final dress rehearsal. A few notes to do after, but otherwise on track.

LA COUR

Focus. Cue check. Put on black tie. Opening night.

MARIA

Focus. Make a few more changes. Add a few more cues. Put on black tie. Open.

GIANNI

Focus. Cue Check. One last nip and tuck. Put on black tie. Open.

Phew.

Breathe.

That was fun. It really was. 🍷



Office Oracle: (lots of) News from Ian's production desk

Subscription Fees

2012 / 13 subscription fees are now due. Those members who do not pay by standing order have had a letter sent to them informing them of how much is currently owed. Members that pay by standing orders will receive their new membership card sticker once the process of reconciling all the payments that we receive in the first five days of April.

Fees for 2012/13 are as follows:

Professional Designer	£75
Professional Member	£75
Associate Member	£40
Student Member	£25
Corporate Member	£400
Non-Profit Organisation	£25

If you are in any doubt as to whether you owe any monies to the Association, please contact the Office straight away. Your membership is at risk if you do not.

PLASA Focus 2011

PLASA Focus takes place on 17th - 18th April 2012 at The Royal Armouries in Leeds.

The ALD will once again be in attendance in the Royal Armouries Hall at stand RA-B8. Pop along to say hello and allow us to put a face to a database entry! We will even accept payment for your 2012/2013 subscriptions by cash or cheque!!

The Next 50 Years of Lighting Design Seminar

PLASA FOCUS: Leeds

Wednesday 18th April 2012, 1.00pm - 2.00pm

The ALD has been invited to re-run the seminar we held at PLASA11 last September at the forthcoming PLASA Focus: Leeds trade show. The session is free, but you are advised to reserve a place as last time it proved immensely popular and there was only standing room left!

www.plasafocus.com/leeds/seminars/wednesday/#ALD

Join us to discuss what the next 50 years might hold for lighting design and lighting designers. Questions up for discussion will include: *What will/should we do differently in the next 50 years? Is there a Great Innovator - a modern Appia - out there at the moment? How should Lighting Designers influence the development of the tools they work with? Is the role of Stage Lighting Designer a passing fad and are we all destined to become Video Designers?*

Anyone intending to have something to do with the future of stage lighting - including lighting, set, costume, media and sound designers, directors, product developers, theatre students, and anyone with the next genius idea to make lighting better.

Transformation & Revelation at the V&A

From 17th March until 30th September 2012 *Transformation & Revelation* will be showing at the V&A following its great success in Cardiff, where approximately 5,500 visitors saw the show and its trip to the Prague Quadrennial where it won both of the special awards for sound and was seen by approximately 40,000 people.

It will be one of eleven displays representing important collections in the V&A and will form part of the museum's larger Olympic year exhibition, *A Celebration of British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age*.

The SBTD's residency at the V&A has given us the opportunity to enlarge the exhibition beyond the smaller and more specifically focused PQ'11 selection and we are adding another twenty or so designers to represent more fully the best of UK design for performance from 2007 to 2011. In addition to these thirty-four designers, images of many more of the original T&R exhibitors will be shown in slide form.

Transformation & Revelation will not only occupy the Temporary Exhibition Gallery of the Theatre & Performance Collections at the V&A but will also inhabit neighbouring galleries.

For a full list of exhibitors and more details see: www.theatredesign.org.uk/exhibitions/transformation-revelation-at-the-va-london-2012

2012 AGM

We are now able to announce the date for the 2012 Annual General Meeting of the Association.

It will be **Saturday 29th September**. The time and venue is yet to be confirmed, but the meeting will follow the same pattern as the last couple of years whereby the official business part of the meeting will take place late morning, a professional members' meeting in the afternoon. We will look at the possibility of having other break out meetings if they are required, so drop the office an email with ideas or thoughts, or even if you would like to attend so that we can start judging what size venue we should be looking for.

We are aware that finding a mutually agreeable date to hold such an event is difficult to achieve but by placing it on the day after the proposed event at the V&A (above) and the monthly social, we hope that members based away from London might be tempted to come to both events and stay overnight on the Friday.

We will announce more details as we have them, but please put the dates in your diaries.

2012 Olivier Awards Nominations

The nominations for this year's Olivier Awards for Theatre have been announced and all the nominees for the Best Lighting Design award are members of the ALD. Congratulations to all of them.

The winners are announced at the 2012 ceremony will be held at the Royal Opera House on Sunday 15th April.

Howard Harrison for *Anna Christie* at the Donmar Warehouse

Bruno Poet for *Frankenstein* at the Olivier Theatre

Hugh Vanstone for *Ghost The Musical* at the Piccadilly Theatre

Hugh Vanstone for *Matilda The Musical* at the Cambridge Theatre

For a full list of the nominations in all categories, please visit the Olivier Awards website: www.olivierawards.com

Chatter in the wings.....

With the various 50th Anniversary events now out of the way, it is time to start planning for the next 50 years!!

future@ald.org.uk

The Executive has decided that it is now time to re-visit the strategy document drawn up in 2007 which was the blueprint for the future development of the Association between 2008 – 2013. With Peter Mumford now settled into the position of Chair, it is time to re-assess and plan for the future. There have been successes such as *Focus* moving to a full colour landscape layout, the setting up of the fees database, meetings with agents, the lobbying and support for the TMA and Knight of Illumination Awards for lighting design. Equally, some hopes have not yet got off the ground.

So we want to hear from you, the members. What do you want to see the ALD doing over the next five to seven years? What do we currently do that could be better. What don't we do that we should? Email your thoughts and ideas to future@ald.org.uk

The Exec is meeting for a day-long discussion of the issues in mid July and are looking to report back to the membership at the AGM in September with its conclusions and any actions that constitutionally require a vote to be held.

www.ald.org.uk

With this in mind the Executive is also currently looking at a re-design or re-vamp of the ALD website. The growth in both the membership size and online communication has left the current site looking a little outdated and under specified in the age of social media.

Again we are asking members to add their input to the discussion so that we can draw up list of features for the new site before taking it to companies to tender for the work. We imagine that significant funds will be required for the work, and it may even need to be phased over a longer period of time, but the process has begun and we would like to receive feedback, again to future@ald.org.uk

Broadway Master Class

Live Design is pleased to offer all ALD members an additional \$50 off all price points for the 2012 Broadway Master Classes taking place in **New York City May 18-24**, and includes a ticket to see the Broadway revival of *Evita*, with lighting by Neil Austin. Register asap for the extra \$50 discount by using the code "friend" when you register. Check out the faculty and schedule for the BLMC, BSMC, and BPMC at <http://livedesignonline.com/masterclasses>.



Diary Dates 2012

15th April

Olivier Awards Ceremony

17th & 18th April

PLASA Focus, Leeds*

24th April

By Design Day (for Light Relief)

27th April

Monthly Members' Social Evening, Coach
& Horses, Covent Garden,
London:
sponsored by Zero88

25th May

Monthly Members' Social Evening, Coach
& Horses, Covent Garden,
London:
*sponsored by Ambersphere
Solutions Ltd*

13th & 14th June

ABTT Theatre Show, London *

1st July

Deadline for subscription payments

9th – 12th September

PLASA 2012, Earls Court*

28th September

Members V&A Event and Monthly Members'
Social Evening: *sponsored by ALD*

29th September

ALD Annual General Meeting

**the ALD will have a presence at these shows*

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Focus Magazine

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Editor: **Andy Collier** editor@ald.org.uk

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!

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MEETINGS

Will Evans and Kelli Zezulka



Leeds City Varieties Tour Wednesday 18 April 2012, 10–11am

Originally built in 1865, City Varieties Music Hall in Leeds has recently undergone a major £9.9 million refurbishment which sees this historically significant venue lovingly restored to its former Victorian splendour and benefiting from improved facilities for both performers and customers.

Renovation began in 2009 and was carried out in the style of the 1890s. The Varieties theatre was the home of *The Good Old Days*, the BBC's long-running TV variety show for over 30 years. Once, there were more than 300 such music halls nationwide but few now remain in working existence.

A tour of the new building has been arranged for 18 April at 10am, coinciding with the PLASA Focus trade show at the Royal Armouries

in Leeds. A member of the technical department will be on hand to answer any questions about the new installation and facilities.

The tour is open to all, not just ALD members, although priority will be given to members in case of the maximum number being exceeded.

Please RSVP meetings@ald.org.uk before 11 April.

Emerging lighting designers' meeting 14 June 2012

We're pleased to announce that we'll be holding another *Emerging Lighting Designers* meeting at the ABTT show on 14 June.

Building on feedback and comments from the first one held earlier this year we're hoping to create a forum and informal network meeting to help those of us starting out and getting established in lighting design. We hope to have a theatre accountant on hand to

talk through the minefield that can sometimes be self employment and hopefully an agent to answer questions about getting work and how to negotiate a good fee. Plus, we'll have some more established LDs on hand to chat to us about how they made their way up the ladder and found the jobs that got them established. Hopefully we'll be able to exchange advice, tips and tricks in this meeting to help those already on the first "rung of the ladder" move a further step up.

The meeting will take place on Thursday 14 June 2012 in or around the ABTT show. We'll confirm the exact time and place via email bulletin nearer the time. The meeting will be open to any Associate, Professional, or Professional Designer member who wishes to attend.

September Social & V&A meeting Friday 28th September

We are currently investigating whether the ALD would be able to hold a Members' Meeting at the *Transformation & Revelation Exhibition* towards the end of its time at the V&A. This would entail an opportunity for members to visit the show and also a talk by ALD Chair Peter Mumford who has his exhibit for the Birmingham Royal Ballet production of $E=mc^2$ from the 2011 Cardiff leg on display once again.

This event is planned for Friday 28th September, which is also the day of the Monthly Members' Social evening for September. The ALD will act as drinks sponsor for this meeting, although we might re-locate from the usual venue in the West End to one closer to the V&A. More details will follow as we confirm them. 🍷

LOOKING BACK: COMPARING LIGHTING DESIGNS FOR TWO PLAYS AT THE ROYAL COURT



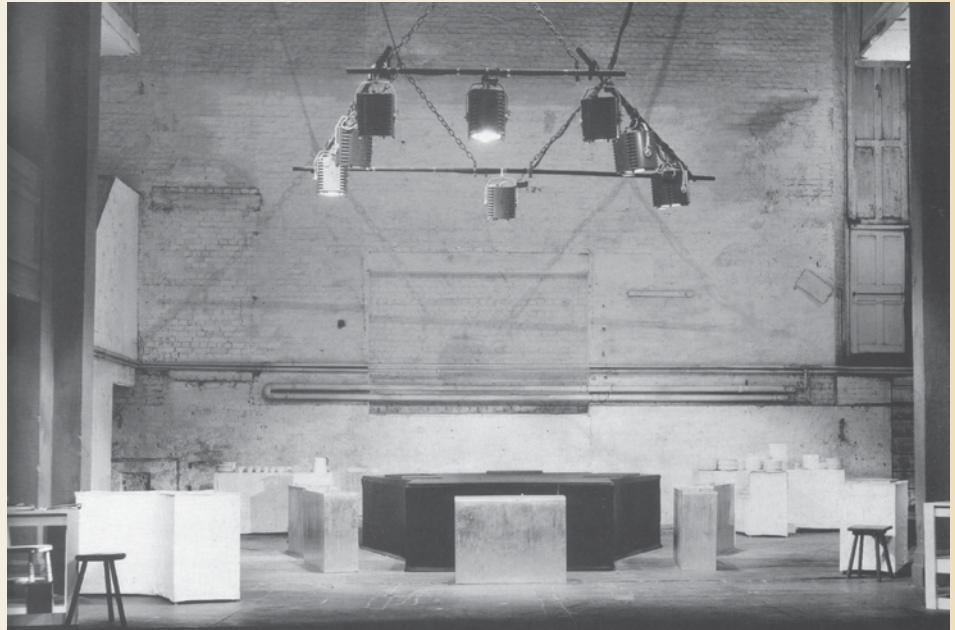
Kelli Zezulka reviews two plays originally lit by the ALD's first treasurer, Eric Baker

1. *The Kitchen*

(Dexter, 1959/1961 and Daldry, 1994)

The Kitchen was first produced on two Sunday nights as 'productions without décor' at the Royal Court Theatre in September 1959, and as a full production in June 1961, both directed by John Dexter and designed by Jocelyn Herbert. For the first time at the Royal Court, Herbert stripped away all the masking, leaving the lighting rig and the back wall of the theatre exposed. The ALD's first treasurer, Eric Baker, designed the lighting and, as it was to be visible, the lighting grid itself was designed to fit with the overall set design.

According to Arnold Wesker, the execution of the design was innovative for a number of reasons; in particular, 'the six (or eight) lights hanging over the ovens became part of the stage design and part of the drama of the opening of the play. As the night porter bent down to light each of the ovens so each of the overhead lights shone into view, and with it burst the sound.' Lighting, sound and the set worked together to provide a complete representation of a fully working kitchen; the sound of a gas stove igniting grew louder and louder with the growing intensity of the overhead lights. It was Dexter's first attempt at staging a play and he credited the production, especially Herbert's and Baker's designs, with



*The 1961 production of 'The Kitchen'.
Photo: John Haynes.*

'provoking the audience to think for themselves and use their imagination' through its powerful use of theatrical suggestion.



Stephen Daldry's first production as Artistic Director was a revival of *The Kitchen* in 1994, a production that 'had his hallmark and stamp all over it' according to Ruth Little and Emily McLaughlin in their book, *The Royal Court Theatre: Inside Out*. Daldry and his production team combined ingenuity and resourcefulness to convert the Theatre Downstairs into a theatre-in-the-round. Technical crews built up the stage, covering over the stalls, so that the stage was at the level of the circle. This radical and demanding design was to influence the outcome of the soon-to-be unavoidable refurbishment. According to lighting designer Johanna Town, 'We had never converted that theatre into anything before so the scaffolding and getting the kit up into new places was quite an achievement. We had to encompass an awful lot that has now been designed into the new building, so you don't have to worry about any of that anymore. It was shows like that that made us think outside the box for the redesign.' As in the 1961 production, set, lighting and sound worked together to portray a real, working kitchen. Johanna continued, 'We wanted to be as true as possible to the original design, so we hung a load of pars up' with visible lighting sources in the shape of hanging shades. The sound design by Paul Arditti included 'this amazing sound cue of how the gas pops...and we'd made all these gas rings out of fairy light bulbs which we'd dipped in yellow and blue...with that and the sound, you really thought they were cooking on it, that it was hot.'

As the theatre itself had been reconfigured for the production, this presented related problems for the lighting design. In order for the playing area to be evenly lit from all angles, scaffolding was constructed to provide additional rigging positions in areas that had previously been unused. This contributed to the eventual outcome of the refurbishment and has given the theatre a flexibility that has continued to be exploited, with plays such as *My Child* (2007), when the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs (JTD) was converted into a Tube station, and *Sucker Punch* (2010), with a boxing ring constructed in the centre of an audience on all four sides.

For Daldry, the production marked a clear break from his predecessor, both aesthetically and financially. With a cast of twenty-eight and arguably the largest and most complex design undertaking the Royal Court had seen, Daldry had made his personal aesthetic clear through this enthusiastic and ambitious undertaking.

2. *Rhinoceros*

(Welles, 1960 and Cooke, 2007)

Rhinoceros by Eugène Ionesco was first produced at the Royal Court in 1960 and was directed by Orson Welles. Its forty-four performances played to full-capacity audiences, due mostly to the draw of Laurence Olivier as Bérenger. Technically, however, the production was hampered by Welles' lack of conviction in the text, apparent during rehearsals as he admitted in an interview, 'As we repeated the work from day to day it pleased me less. I believe that there is nothing inside it. Nothing at all.' According to Oscar Lewenstein, one of the founders of the English Stage Company, in addition to directing, Welles 'had done everything himself, including the sets and the sound.' However, the 1973 Society of British Theatre Lighting Designers directory records that Eric Baker was responsible for the lighting design. Lewenstein wrote of Welles, 'I think he also had a great reluctance to finish a project... he was always unready for the first night, usually making last minute changes on the night itself.' The opening night of *Rhinoceros* was no different: 'there were great technical difficulties, with Welles directing the backstage staff on a walky-talky set from the front of theatre', which was 'very nerve wracking for everyone.' The design seems to have deviated from both the aesthetic of the Royal Court and Ionesco's original intentions. The production was not 'in the austere tradition of the Royal Court.'

The *Observer* review of the 1960 production states that: 'There are inventive incidentals. The television screen shows nothing but rhinoceroses



The 1960 production of
'*Rhinoceros*'.

Photo by John Timbers.

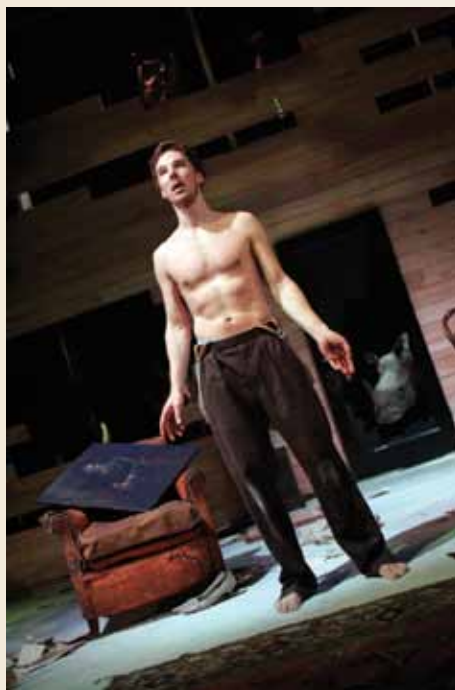
(just that), the air resounds with roaring, someone about to turn into a rhinoceros absently picks a leaf off a plant and eats it. But without Olivier the production would fall to pieces before the end.' Additionally, the setting seems to have constrained the intensity of the storytelling by limiting the playing space. Rather than keeping the open air setting of the first scene as called for in Ionesco's directions, Welles transferred it to a pub and slowed down the fast-paced dialogue; clearly, in this smaller domestic setting, the production became 'a drag on the imagination'.

There does not seem to be any existing lighting documentation for this production. However, from the production photograph, one can clearly see that the lighting is primarily illuminatory rather than sculptural; the heavy shadow on the wall, the excess of light on the set as opposed to the actors, and the indistinct vagueness with which the actors' faces are lit. A comparison to the 2007 production shows just how much the technology and, more importantly, the art of lighting design have evolved.



In contrast, Dominic Cooke's second production as Artistic Director of the Royal Court in 2007 was the most technically ambitious work produced at the theatre since, perhaps, Daldry's revival of *The Kitchen*. His production saw a full-size rhinoceros on stage, a complicated interval scene change, a staircase that collapsed into the substage, and full walls of the set destroyed during the course of the play, resulting in a lengthy reset for production staff the next day. The technical rehearsals spanned four days, twice as long as is usually allocated for technical work, due to the sheer complexity of the set design. For six weeks, *Rhinoceros* ran in repertory with *The Arsonists*, in itself an ambitious production, with a two-storey Perspex set.

The Royal Court's production manager for the JTD, Paul Handley, described the challenge of accommodating these two productions with the limited budgets that the Royal Court continues to rely on: 'I think a lot of people come to the Royal Court and because of its history and the scale of some of the productions we've had, they always assume it's a big theatre, but actually it's small...it's the worlds that we create on it that are so huge.' The lighting for both plays was designed by Johanna Town and, with the exception of set-specific practicals, there was very little adjustment of the lighting between plays.



*The 2007 production of 'Rhinoceros'.
Photo by Keith Pattison.*

Although both productions employed high production costs and values, the Cooke revival was arguably the more successful of the two, not just critically but artistically. Cooke's production evolved from the writer-centric ethos of the Royal Court; by placing the writer in a position of prominence, the story is more successfully told through a cohesive synthesis of the production elements. Even though Welles exercised inclusive control of the direction and design, his antipathy towards Ionesco resulted in a disparate production aesthetic that many critics found unsustainable in performance. ❌

Kelli Zzulka

Kelli graduated from LAMDA and went on to work for the Royal Court Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company and West Yorkshire Playhouse. She is currently a freelance lighting designer and recently completed an MA by Research at University of Leeds, focusing on the history of lighting design at the Royal Court Theatre.

The technical demands of this production were unprecedented and established Cooke's regime as comprising more technically and artistically enthusiastic productions. This return to European classics as staged by the ESC in the late 1950s, with a repertory company as advocated by the theatre's first Artistic Director, George Devine, was something Cooke was keen to encourage.



The Equity Theatre Designers' Committee

Just over a year ago, a lighting designer was engaged at extremely short notice to light a show, X, in a small theatre. There was a fee and a hire budget for lighting. Because of the extremely short timescale he used his own personal account with a hire company to arrange the extra lights and the purchase of gel and so forth. Oh dear.

They extended the run without telling him, and only paid his fee when he and the rest of the production team threatened not to allow the extension to go ahead. The lighting designer in question checked with the hire company to see that the bills had been paid, and, on not hearing to the contrary, left it to rest.

Imagine, then, his horror when, nine months later, he talks to the hire company about something else and is told that the bill, a couple of hundred pounds, is still outstanding. What can he do? He searches the register of companies at Companies House and finds that the producers' limited company dissolved soon after the end of the production. He also finds that the producer is producing another show, Y, and has the temerity to advertise it as being produced by the same team as X. What can he do?

But who is this, riding to the rescue, after a quick telephone call and a few hours spent marshalling e-mails and documents, but the Equity Designers' Organiser, Paul Fleming. "Aha," quoth he, "I know well that pain in the [insert anatomical term of choice here]." And he reports that several of the cast, one a well-known and very successful actor, are also owed money.

The producer wriggles and tries to be evasive, like [insert politician's name of choice here]. Sir Paul of Guild House Castle in the Lane of St Martin charges to the producer's lair and gets a legally enforceable document admitting personal liability and an agreement to pay signed by the producer, who is transferring Y to a famous West-End theatre.

The producer wriggles yet, but the threat of actual legal enforcement, and the behind-the-scenes pressure from the famous theatre, who do not want their name associated with court judgements, mean that the producer in question is paying as agreed. Equity receives the payment and passes it on, and takes legal action where necessary.

The lighting designer in question is a member and Equity is acting for him. Equity can only go on the warpath for its members. Sadly, one of the other designers of X, not a member, is still out of pocket. Are you a member? To join, visit www.equity.org.uk and click 'Join'.

As a rule, we should not fund a production's technical kit. Mark Jonathan talks about a similar cautionary tale in his top tip this issue which involved thousands, not hundreds, of pounds. #

Edmund Sutton

LETTER

from Ken Miller

Hello Andy,

I was reading the article on *I and Albert* in 1972 in the last *Focus*, and the memories came flooding back. The projection, and the slides, and the slides, and the slides. I spent some very late nights locked away in a little room at the Piccadilly Theatre with Bob and Molly ankle deep in slides. Each time a lighting state was altered, however slight, down would come the carousels and out would come the slides. "This one should now go there, that one comes here behind this one - is that correct Bob?" It all comes back even now after 40 years.

East Enders has had a few problems with its "Old Vic" - and believe me, we had a few with ours. Still, Happy Days.

... and an apology from the editor

If you have flipped through the ALD 2012 Directory of members, sent with the last issue of *Focus*, some of you may have wondered what has happened to **Paul Pyant**. Has he retired? Was he late with his subs? Certainly not. Unfortunately, your editor failed to press the correct button and Paul's entry followed straight on from the member above, rather than being appropriately separated with his name highlighted. Many apologies, Paul.

How the other half lights

This is Part 2 of a series on amateur lighting by **Alastair Griffith** which started in 1990.

Part 3 is expected sometime in 2034!

Back in 1990 I was persuaded by Jim Laws, then editor of ALD *Focus*, to write an article on the experiences of the jobbing amateur to compliment the professional world he normally reported. So how have things moved on in the last 22 years? Well, I still design lighting with the occasional set, rigs get larger, desks get more sophisticated and lamps get brighter! Hopefully my skills and experience has similarly developed to produce better lighting design, however with aging limbs the need to get up the ladder to rig/

focus becomes less attractive but I am not quite ready to hang up my hooks clamps just yet! I like plenty of variety and think that, as with my previous article, it is probably easiest to describe some examples of the range of shows undertaken.

After 10 years of designing lighting for Brownsea Open Air Theatre, which I previously described, I decided to pass the baton to new blood. However this experience stood me in good stead when asked to light a production of *Yeoman of the Guard* in the grounds of Corfe Castle for the local

G&S society anniversary. This was a large scale production with big cast and playing area but with limited power to meet all lighting, sound and backstage needs. As with all summer productions the performance starts with the dying sun and finishes in the dark, the lighting design is based on a double cover giving day/night coupled with various colour/gobo washes to the playing areas and castle walls. To provide the necessary

focus and highlights for principles a couple of long throw follow spots prove invaluable. Corfe Castle is a National Trust property and had tight rules about what could be done in the castle ruins; much of the challenge of working in this environment is as much about the planning and logistics of the production as the design and artistic content. Rigging in this environment, whilst hard work, has the bonus of watching the steam trains on the local preservation railway that wind their way round the castle walls en route to Swanage. The power limitations almost caused a major problem when it was found the castle is on the end of local distribution network in Corfe village, with the load being taken it was found the supply was dropping to below 200V, a hasty negotiation with the local supply company up-gunned the feed giving the show the regulation voltage. As with my Brownsea Island experience nothing can beat that magic as the sun melts away and the lighting picks up on the cast and castle, unlike Brownsea there is no moonlit boat ride back across Poole harbour, however this was compensated with the rapid exit to the local hostelries of Corfe village!

Based on the positive working relationship established with the G&S society I have gone on to light most the relights for their regular visits to the annual G&S festival in Buxton Opera House.

Yeoman of the Guard – Corfe Castle. Photo: Alastair Griffith



This allows one day to stage and perform a full length G&S show in the theatre; the local crew always make this a positive experience despite the time pressure. The luxury of a fully equipped professional rig affords the chance to keep the skills required to work on the larger scale fresh.

Whilst the nature of G&S tends towards the traditional in terms of staging we always aim to ensure that the lighting provides rather more than simple illumination to the performers. Typically the design provides a double cover giving day/night plus specials to give extra focus or effect where required. The need to focus the entire rig in about 2 hours works against anything that needs fiddly focussing, as with all lighting the need to have clear design aims and planning is the key to success with the plotting taking place in the afternoon as the company run the show in preparation for the evening performance.

I also design and operate for the society's annual concert season which tours round a number of the local venues; these are typically run on a shoestring with one or two professional staff supported by willing volunteers. The scale of the rigs available is variable, in essence this is a question of taking the rig as found at 5.00pm fine tuning any specials and colour washes required, setting up a series of states on sub-masters that can then be played (busked?) against an agreed set of cues. Each venue is different in terms of the capabilities of the rig offered; with timescales not permitting any significant on stage rehearsals the ability to operate and use of the Mk1 eyeball enables that fine tuning of the look against a pre-planned goal as the show progresses.



The Beauty Queen of Leenane. Photo: Stewart Power

Having recently retired from the day job I was persuaded to tour a play round a number of small scale venues in Dorset with ImpAct, an amateur company that achieves very credible professional standards. The play was *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* set in a rundown cottage in Ireland, setting comprised kitchen sink and window set into the house drapes in the venue. The lighting needed to be naturalistic with the apparent source of light the kitchen window by day or a practical

at night. The venues ranged from the frankly appalling village hall through to a municipal venue with a reasonable rig and 72 ways of ETC Express control. As with the G&S tours, set up was typically 5pm, get in for 7.30 show, early design decisions considered the merits of touring our own rig versus use of the house rig at each venue. I decided that with one exception we would use the house rig, sometimes supplemented with a few extra lamps but with everything focussed

to meet our specific needs; the odd exception was so bad we took a complete rig of our own to ensure an acceptable lighting result. In addition we toured practicals and a single Redhead, this provided the light through the kitchen window, which provided a very versatile solution to achieving the right intensity in some very tight off stage spaces. The opening venue afforded the first opportunity to trial the design concepts at an afternoon DR, early thoughts on use of colour were rapidly adapted with the realisation that at the sort of levels needed OW plus a limited L161 wash best met the needs of the show. Six venues later and the adapting of the house rig to the show had become second nature, favourable comments at every venue on the look and feel of the show.

I continue to light shows for Bournemouth Little Theatre (BLTC), as with John Leventhall's recently described Chipstead Players experience BLTC is a member of the Little Theatre Guild with its own small 100 seat theatre and a relatively well equipped lighting rig ranging from geriatric (but still working) early model P23 through to

the latest Source 4 Junior Zoom. BLTC has a small end stage with no wings or house tabs, a fixed scaffolding grid offers no flying facilities, and inevitably these constraints drive the staging of complex shows. BLTC stages six main productions a season with a number of visiting companies. Over the years I have lit dozens of shows for this group and have built good working relations with a number of directors, I like to design for some of the more adventurous who will push what can be achieved with staging and lighting within our fairly modest facilities. Rather than describe a single production I will touch a sample set that give a flavour of the range over recent years.

Comfort Me with Apples is set in a rundown Somerset apple farm and works through a series of scenes from early morning to night in various locations on the farm, with minimal setting the lighting has to convey the gradual decline into darkness and despair. The production culminates in a scene where the matriarch lies down with her brother in the orchard symbolically returning to the soil as night gathers round them, a simple L161 pool with L119 wash and few stars through the backing gauze created one of those stage pictures that you know is just right.

Bournemouth Little Theatre Club.
Photo: Adrian Mathews



Above and below: 'Comfort me with apples'. Photos: Alastair Griffith



The production of *Honour* worked to a bare stage with a fixed curved back wall painted and lit in a deep purple (L181), the story shows the breakdown in family relationships caused by infidelity and worked through constantly shifting stage areas for each scene with the cast and a few chairs on stage throughout. This was an uncomfortable piece with the actors lit in a harsh cold light (L203/202/OW) that seamlessly flowed from scene to scene requiring tight focussing to provide the necessary scene areas whilst keeping the light off those actors not in a given scene. With a small stage complete isolation is near impossible and I sometimes yearn for a larger stage where actors and set can be made to disappear into the blackness of a large stage.

More comfortable viewing include *Shadowlands* and *Cider with Rosie* [over page], both making challenging demands in terms of staging and lighting with the need for a multiplicity of locations, time of day and mood. Inevitably simple composite sets with major reliance on lighting stretches the available rig to the limit. The design for this style of production is usually based on a single stage cover over which specials, colour washes or gobos can be overlaid.

I tend to find that simplicity always pays, a favourite moment as Douglas enters the wardrobe into Narnia was lit with a single PAR in OW and a P60 flood in L132, with a touch of smoke this was all that was required and achieved the required wow factor every time the wardrobe door opened.

April / May 2012



Above and top right: 'Honour'.
Below and bottom right: 'Shadowlands'
Photos: Alastair Griffith



How the other half lights Alastair Griffith



'Cider with Rosie'. Photos: Mathew Ellison

**How the other
half lights
Alastair
Griffith**



'Amy's View'

Photo: Mathew Ellison

In approaching the design for all these productions I have a routine that relies on a few key principles; firstly get under the skin of the production with the director and designer, by this I mean tuning into a common vision of collectively how we see the production. Secondly translating that common vision into a series of "mind's eye" pictures of how I see the end result looking on stage under light, without that view I find it very difficult to get into the design process, sometimes this can take some time to formulate through watching rehearsals and discussion with the team. Only once I have these "mind's eye" pictures in my head can the mechanical process of planning the rig, focussing etc start. As a rule I prefer to plot as the director rehearses, with modern memory boards the need for slow technical sessions for plotting are now thankfully behind us. It is only at that stage can the final part of the jigsaw slot into place with translation of those "mind's eye" pictures into states. With shows such as *Cider with Rosie* the dovetailing of cue timing with on stage action finally clicks into place as such shows lean heavily on the lighting to dictate the flow and pace of the production as it moves from scene to scene.

My most recent production has been *Amy's View* by David Hare, for this I designed both set and lighting for a fairly conventional box set play. The play demands two totally different locations the first an upmarket house in rural Berkshire the second a rundown backstage dressing room. Each needed a very distinct and different feel to



be conveyed through the set and lighting. Again the approach sees the creation of those mind's eye pictures and the translation of those into the reality on stage.

So how does the life of the amateur designer differ from his professional colleagues? I like to think we bring the same degree of art and rigour to our work with the main differences being those of scale, simpler technology (no wiggle lights!) and absence of financial reward. What are the challenges – after almost 50 years of lighting I still agonise long and hard over the choice of colour; do I stick with that favourite that I know works or try something new? Patching is still the norm

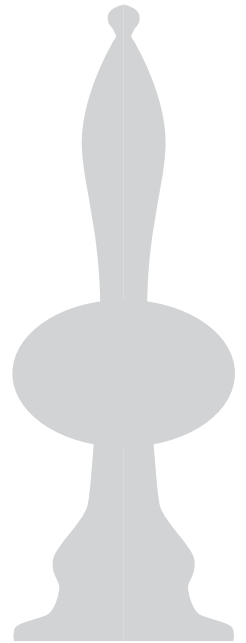
with more lamps than dimmers, what can go with what without compromising that vision of areas or lighting direction. It always seems late in the day that the actors and directors get the rehearsals to a sufficiently mature state to really firm up on those "mind's eye" pictures I like to have. Finally how best to produce my lighting plans, I still tend to draw these using the trusty stencil, but sometimes wonder if there is a cheap, simple to use CAD package that would give a more professional approach (answers on a postcard please). Not sure if I will still be lighting in another 20 years but if I am I will let you know how this lighting designer is getting on. 🍀

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New Technology Showcase

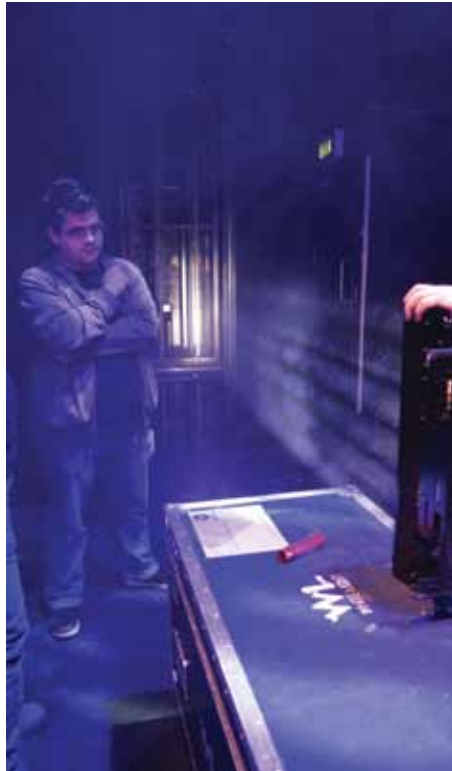
@ Central School of Speech and Drama

On Thursday 9th February, 2nd year students from the Production Lighting and Lighting Design strands of the BA Theatre Practice at Central School of Speech and Drama hosted the New Technology Showcase for White Light in the Embassy Theatre.

The event gave White Light the opportunity to invite their guests and members of the ALD into a “sales force free” theatre environment to check out the latest lighting kit. The ALD annual Pub Quiz then followed, providing a chance for a bit of lighting-orientated fun and a few drinks with friends.

For the lighting students at Central, the day of the event was the tip of a much bigger iceberg. They took key roles in planning and running the whole event, and worked with Production Lighting professional Nathaniel Seekins and Lighting Programmers from MA Lighting. They also learnt the importance of prepping, on-site with White Light and MA Lighting. A big load-in then followed, then rigging, and the flashing out and fault-finding that comes with getting a complex system up and working.

Some of the equipment the students got a chance to play around with included Martin Mac IIs and Auras, Vari*Lite VL3500s, Coemar Infinity Beams and Silver ParLites, Chroma-Q Color Force LED battens, Galaxia LED Softlights, Source Fours,



Robert Juliat’s Aledin LED profiles, Leader Light stage beams, and i-Pix Satellites.

On the day following the event, there was the opportunity to show off their design and programming skills in front of an invited audience, including theatre and concert lighting designers – all of whom were on hand to give them useful feedback on how to develop as lighting professionals. The chance to network with White Light staff and other key members of the lighting industry was also another reason why the showcase was of such value to the future careers of the students.

Nick Moran, senior lecturer in lighting at Central said, “the White Light/ALD event provided a fantastic opportunity to put learning into practice on a significant scale. It gives students of the Lighting Design and Production Lighting course a chance to plan and stage their own event. The students have unparalleled access to the latest technology, can stretch design ideas, extend their knowledge of the technology and build their confidence in many areas. They build their links to the industries they aspire to work in too, through ALD Professional Members, White Light and MA Lighting. The event gives them the opportunity to shine in front of some top industry professionals. Sure its pressure, but it’s a pressure they take seriously, and respond to well.” 🍀





Following the launch of his latest book, *A Theatre Project*, Karin Winkelsesser, editor of the German theatre journal *Bühnentechnische Rundschau* caught up with the ALD's president and member #1, Richard Pilbrow, to talk about his career.

Focus is indebted to Karin, Richard and BTR for permission to reproduce this edited version of an article printed in BTR last year. Photos courtesy of Richard Pilbrow.

“IT’S ALL ABOUT ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES”

“ How did it all start?

I began as a stage manager. I had the very good fortune, because I went straight from drama school into a show in the West End. I was around 22. However, I found stage managing very disappointing. I had grown up reading Edward Gordon Craig and his description of stage managers as: “The masters of the art and science of the theatre.” I worked on two shows, and all I did was to stand in the prompt corner and press a button to give a cue. This had nothing to do with what I expected from theatre! I was so disappointed, desperate.

My hobby at school had been lighting, but in those days, in 1956/57, there was no such profession of lighting designer in England. The electrician would do it. Then I read a book about American theatre where they described the profession of a lighting designer. I thought that this was what I could do. But then I thought: who’s gonna pay me?

This is how I started a company, Theatre Projects. I would buy second hand lighting equipment, and then rent it, and do my design work for nothing. Strand had a big monopoly at that time, I set up my firm against them.

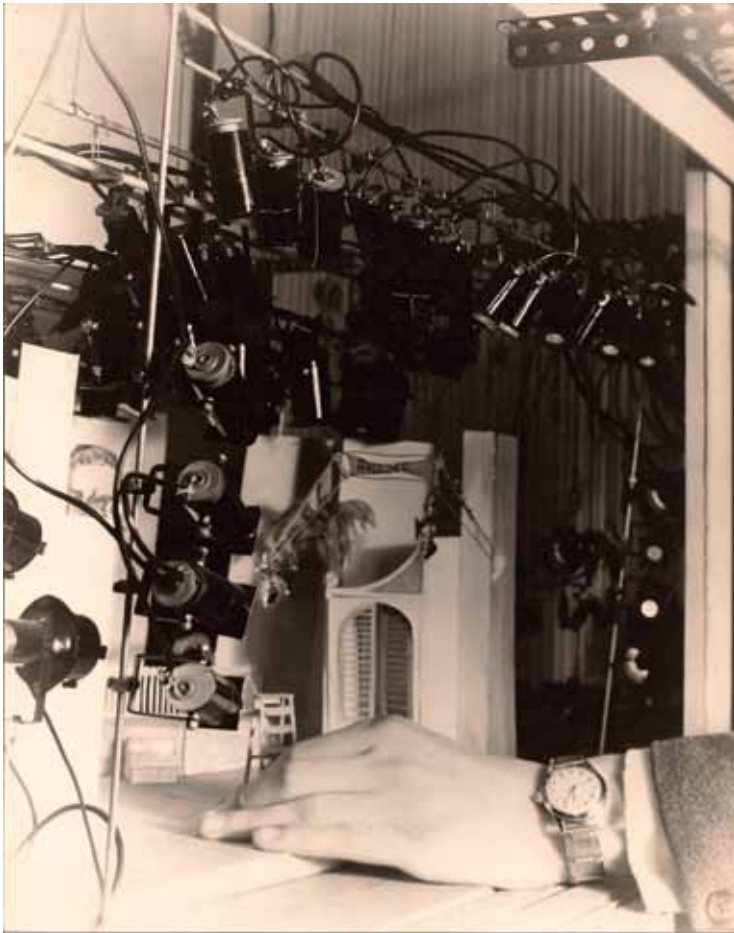
That was ambitious!

Indeed, VERY ambitious... But then I was lucky. A producer stepped in and asked me if we were doing lighting. This is how I started. Some years later, I met Reiche + Vogel in Berlin. TP became their agent in London. I imported 5 kW projectors and 24v beam projectors. In order to persuade people that I could light a show, I did what I had done in my youth. I built a model theatre [right] and showed directors in miniature what their lighting would be like on the stage.

But how did you install the lighting in the models?

A friend of mine built little spotlights. They gave a good presentation of the beam of a light. This was quite successful. Everything I knew I learnt from books. I once found a book [*Stage Lighting* by Ridge and Aldred], which showed projections in Germany using large pre-distorted slides with huge projectors. Although common in opera houses, this had never been done in English theatre at that time. I thought that if you did this in a small theatre, the images would be very large and very bright.

Simultaneously I met David Collison. He did in sound what I did in lighting, and he became the



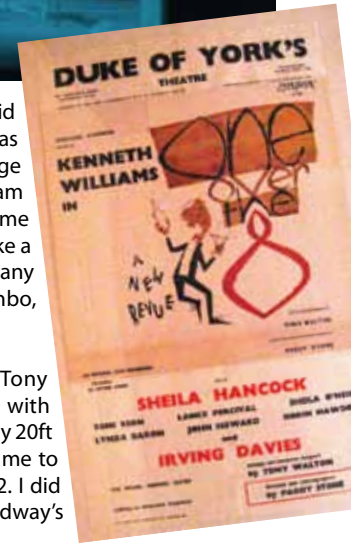
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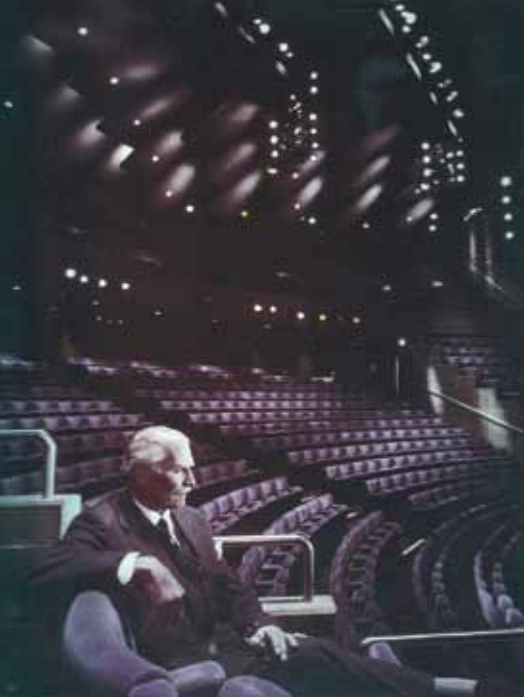
One over the Eight



first sound designer. We became a team, David and I then did a spectacular musical *Blitz!* It was about the war in London with air raids on stage etc. It was very successful. Later, I built a team of lighting designers, and gradually we became established. We always worked together, like a lighting designers' workshop. Since then many have become very successful, Robert Ornbo, David Hersey, Andy Bridge for example.

One show I did with scene designer Tony Walton was *One Over the Eight*. We did it with massive projections on a tiny stage with only 20ft depth. It was so successful that Tony took me to America for the first time. That was in 1962. I did big projections there, and I became Broadway's projection expert.





“IT’S ALL ABOUT ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES”

Richard Pilbrow in conversation with Karin Winkelsesser

shows on both sides of the Atlantic. That’s how I met the director and producer Harold Prince. He asked me to light the musical *Zorba the Greek*. I was the first English person to light a big musical in America. In London he had previously produced shows such as *West Side Story* but was unhappy about how they were presented. He invited Tony Walton and me to become his partners. From 1964 to 1986, I was a producer in the West End of London. I produced many musicals and plays.

What brought you to do consulting for buildings?

Initially I was only concerned with the technical aspects of theatre. But I gradually came to realise that none of the technical stuff in theatre was truly that important. What really mattered was the play, the actor and the relationship with their audience. Theatre was all about people experiencing the dramatic event together. So combining our backstage experience with our production experience, we became consultants.

Early in my career, when I worked there as a lighting designer, I became a consultant for the National Theatre in London. I worked with my partner, Richard Brett, who developed a lot of amazing new technologies for that time; power

flying, a drum revolving stage, new lighting and sound controls, etc. The National was so famous that we received enquiries from overseas; from the Middle East, Hong Kong and later from around the world. I think that in 50 years we have done about 1,200 projects all over the world.

You have observed and promoted many changes in technology. Are you still interested in recent developments?

Oh yes, I am very interested in new software and new technologies. There are so many things I wanted to do as a lighting designer that were not possible. Now almost everything is possible, the technologies are there. I find that absolutely fascinating!

I found that continuing to work as a lighting designer was always important to my work as a theatre consultant. When you are only a consultant, you can forget the practical realities of the working life onstage. Every time I am lighting a show, I am asking myself more regularly if I am doing the right thing.

Your book, different from the other ones that are more manuals about lighting design, is about your working biography, but it also

About the same time, I met Laurence Olivier and became the lighting designer of the National Theatre in London. It was the beginning of the National Theatre company, and I had the chance to work with wonderful people like Josef Svoboda. That was really a great experience!

Then we had the production *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard that was also presented in New York. So I was lighting



an homage to family and friends, in fact a comprehensive autobiography. What was your intention with this book?

Theatre Projects has operated for over 50 years. It has seen success, and undergone business difficulties, only to emerge as an international consulting practice. All of this is only due to the teams of people that I've been able to create. No one person can design a new theatre, it takes a team. And by now several generations of highly talented, deeply motivated and dedicated people, who love theatre, have all made that success happen. I wanted to pay tribute to them.

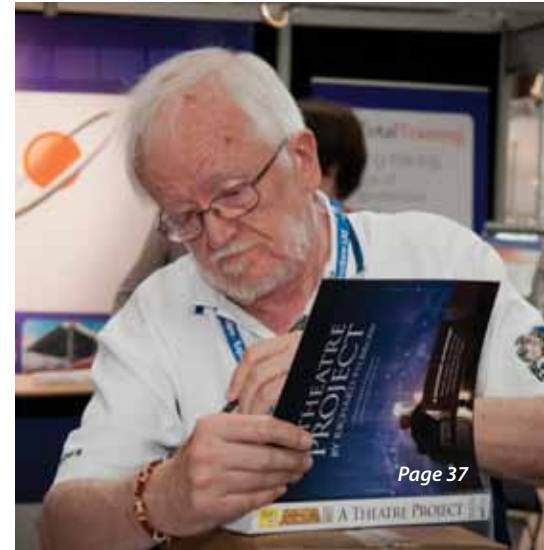
April / May 2012

Does the book mean that you will retire now do private travelling; is it a "farewell" book?

I suspect I'm never going to really give up. I'm beginning to write a new book on Theatre Architecture and Design. ” #

Richard at the ABTT 2011 Theatre Show.

Photo: Chris Taylor



GREEN LIGHTING

(and no, we don't mean L139) Nick Moran joins in...

DISCUSSION

As I'm sure many of you know, a lot of money has been spent lobbying governments and other regulators to introduce legislation to dramatically restrict the use of tungsten lighting. Who would be a theatre consultant planning for any building in Europe due to open in say five years time? Do you include a full dimmer system, distributed power and data, or some kind of hybrid?

Do you scale back on air handling in recognition of the fact that the fixtures most likely to be in theatre space will not be 'tungsten space heaters'.

Hard as it might be to imagine, when stage lighting changed over from gas to electricity the audience reported that their increased comfort (less heat and no noxious fumes) was at the expense of "the harsh unnatural glare" of the new electric lights. Theatre has an odd wish to both embrace and reject innovation, and this schizophrenic response is evident in much of the debate around green theatre lighting. This means when you put out a call to discuss the subject in a pub, you get a big response as Robin Barton of the Royal Opera House found when he called a meeting of those interested in the subject at The Globe in Covent Garden in January.

So let's look at a few pros and cons as things stand today: LED array cyc-lighting, while still

a good deal more expensive to purchase than the equivalent tungsten solutions, is much less power-hungry, takes up less space than traditional solutions, and can create effects that are impossible with tungsten cyc floods.

LED white is still not quite as friendly to skin as 'full spectrum' tungsten white – though the high end products are getting better and better (the consensus at PLASA this year seemed to be that, as far as TV was concerned, skin tone was no longer an issue). Of course these high-end products are out of the price range of most theatre users at the moment, and since few of us pay directly for the power we use to run our lights or to run the airconditioning required to remove the waste heat, we don't see a pay-back that way.

Robin showed us a direct replacement dimmable LED architectural tube fitting – the kind of lamp used by the dozen on many opera, ballet and theatre sets. For the ROH, the big advantage is its robustness. No more breakages to deal with on every change over, and no broken glass to extract from the stage-hand's fingers!

Thanks to great work by Julies Bicycle, the Theatres Trust and others, we know that stage lighting makes up around 9% of the total carbon footprint of a theatre production. Given that fact, it does stick in my craw that it looks very

much as if theatre lighting will still have to move away from tungsten sooner than we would like – and perhaps before the 'total life cycle carbon cost' and other environmental impacts of the replacements is truly known. Like mobile phones, few 'low carbon' lighting products are designed to be maintainable, or easily recyclable – and their manufacture often depends on minerals that are either toxic or come from 'troubled' parts of the world.

I have often thought that if we had never had tungsten lighting (if we were brought up on sources that dimmed using sophisticated shutters for example) and someone presented us with a 'new' source that changed colour as it changed intensity, it might be quite a hard sell. We do like what we are used to, and that should be no surprise given how little time any of us get to experiment with anything new in a 'real' production setting.

In my view, those organisations that have paid for lobbying for an end to tungsten, and who are making money out of the changes following on from that lobbying, now need to give us LEDs a hand as we learn to live without the beloved 'amber shift' and 'the organically growing beam' that tungsten lanterns produce.

I look forward to offers. 🍀



Sign up here for **By Design Day 2012!**

By Design Day, the annual fundraising day for Light Relief in the UK and Behind the Scenes in the US and Canada, takes place this year on **Tuesday April 24** on both sides of the Atlantic.

The main fundraising event for these charities, By Design Day focuses attention on the various ways that individuals can support the two organisations that are dedicated solely to helping entertainment technology professionals in need. Many make personal donations, some hold collections at their places of work and often designers support the day by voluntarily giving a day's royalties to one or both of these charities. Light

Relief assists those involved in the UK lighting industry while Behind the Scenes aids professionals based in the US and Canada working in any area of the entertainment technology industry.

By Design Day 2012 has the full backing of a host of award-winning designers, including Neil Austin, Ken Billington, Paule Constable, Wendall Harrington, Howard Harrison, David Korins, Scott Lehrer, Ken Posner, Jennifer Tipton and Hugh Vanstone, along with Light Relief's co-founder, Rick Fisher.

Light Relief Day was first organised in the UK five years ago to honour the memory of the charity's founder Tony Gottelier and quickly gained

support. Two years later the US and Canada joined in, to raise funds for Behind the Scenes. Now By Design Day is supported internationally with donations from designers with productions all over the world. To date Light Relief has awarded more than £40,000 in grants to help lighting professionals and their families, while Behind the Scenes has issued over \$230,000 in grants to professionals working in all disciplines.

So – put Tuesday 24 April 2012 in your diary – and visit www.lightrelief.org.uk or www.estafoundation.org/bts.htm for more information in due course! 🍀

BEHIND THE SCENES **LIGHT RELIEF**

BY DESIGN DAY
APRIL 24, 2012

...designers give back

Support your entertainment technology and design colleagues in need!

Make a donation in honor of By Design Day or pledge your royalties for that day to Behind the Scenes in the US and Canada or Light Relief in the UK, the two charities that provide financial assistance to industry members who are seriously ill or injured.

www.estafoundation.org/bts.htm
or
www.lightrelief.org.uk

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