

December 2008 / January 2009

Lighting Designs Special

# FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

"More art, less excuses."

**Under the setting sun this issue:**

**Robert Ornbo • Lighting 'Peter and the Wolf' • Dark plays at The Bush • Student lighting review • 'PauLee' in colour • Archiving lighting designs... and much more...**

*Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf' by In The Wings.  
Lighting by David W. Kidd. See page 6.  
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# Rick's Recordings

This issue of Focus brings with it the sad news of Robert Ornbo's death after a long struggle with illness. He was joint president of the ALD and one of its founder members and you can read Richard Pilbrow's thoughts on Robert on page 24.

Also in this issue is some news on the first ever TMA lighting award that has been created and sponsored by the ALD after years of lobbying to have some proper celebration of the great work being done in producing theatres across the country. I was really delighted that the work of three ALD members was signalled out and I sincerely hope it will make managements appreciate the value we add to all their productions throughout the year.

I want to thank White Light for sponsoring another new lighting award to join the whatsonstage.com awards that are voted on by members of the public on their website.

This can only help to increase the awareness of the general public to good lighting.

I was very pleased to be at LDI in the US where Richard Pilbrow was recognised with the Wally Russell award for a long career of outstanding contribution to the lighting world as designer, author, not to mention one of the founders of the ALD along with his great colleague Robert Ornbo. The more recognition for Lighting Designers the better!

There is also an announcement about the upcoming competition for three sponsored places at *Showlight '09* in Glasgow May 16-19th. This is the best lighting conference in the world, where lighting practitioners from film, TV, events, architecture as well as theatre talk about what they are doing, what they are thinking about, and it is invariably interesting. I have always found this colloquium stimulating and fun. As

Showlight only happens once every four years it really is the one event in the lighting calendar worth turning down work to be able to attend and it is great that the ALD will be sponsoring three professional members to be in Glasgow and write up their impressions for *Focus*.

Other articles include a report from Paule Constable's delving in the colourful world of filter creation, David Kidd's experience on *Peter and the Wolf* and our Michael Northen bursary winner's experience on lighting at the Bush Theatre as well as an appreciation of Jean Kalman's lighting design for *Red and Brown Water* at the Young Vic. Please keep articles flowing into *Focus*, I am always delighted to get such good feedback about the magazine from all corners of the lighting world. It really does represent the best of the ALD.

One other thing to report from LDI is that *Behind the*



*Scenes* – the US charity that is modelled on *Light Relief* has decided to join in with the celebration of Light Relief Day on April 24. This is a day when designers contribute their royalties, and other lighting folk join in with contributions as well. It now looks like Broadway will be using the same day to support *Behind the Scenes*. Maybe this type of 'across the pond' collaboration will help the creation of a Lighting Design association in the USA.

Finally, a big welcome to Nico Saunders who no doubt will be helping to man the ALD office with his dad, Ian. Perhaps he could be our youngest Associate member!

*Regards, Rick#*

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## An LD all over the place... Although he disappoints his Japanese fan club (who waited 3 hours for his autograph!) Mark Jonathan offers some financial advice for deflated LDs.

I'm just back from a delightful visit to Tokyo lighting *Aladdin* for the Japanese National Ballet at the National Theatre. What a great theatre. Plenty of space and an interesting layout. Dressing rooms fan forwards of the stage and under the stalls leaving the sides of the stage for large side and rear stages. Nice to be given a spacious dressing room complete with lockable lockers as opposed to hiding my bag between the seat under the production desk hoping the thieves won't find it. Everyone laughed when I locked my Mac to the desk in the rehearsal room. I gather stealing is not popular in Japan and no thief would get through the security at the stage door. I was amused to find autograph hunters at the stage door and to be pursued for my autograph.

When I wrote my last article I started by saying how

quickly things can change, as I went from Chichester to Hollywood, and now we all face a big, global change...

Only 10 weeks ago I was at the glamorous gala opening of the LA Opera season having lit *Il Trittico* (the 3 Puccini operas). One opera was directed by Woody Allen and two by William Friedkin. The minimum price for tickets for the Gala was \$1,500 with many guests paying much more to get near the 'top' tables. The downside of gala openings is that many people who worked so hard to put the show on were not invited and I'm sad that the management missed the possible divisive affect of not inviting everyone to the '1st night party' but of course, in the USA (in the absence of state funding), sponsorship is vital and essential for effective cash flow. Meeting the needs of the 'donors' is of prime importance for the

survival of arts organisations. So, what's it going to be like as the current credit crunch bites? It seems to me that we will all be affected – rich and poor and all those in between. The benevolent donors will have less to give. The bankers and business people will be buying fewer tickets. Will this be an end to corporate entertainment? The regular theatregoer will cut back on visits especially if they are a redundant banker, estate agent or car manufacturing worker. Will producers take less risk? Will the government cut back on the arts allowance? I was already waiting to see arts funding being re-channelled to the Olympics, which I see are now being titled the 'Austere Olympics'. Will that mean smaller budgets and fewer moving lights on the Olympics and on our shows?

Overheard by a colleague passing the box office of

an ailing show – Member of the public: "What time's the show?" Box office sales: "What time would you like it to start?"

I'm sad to hear that the Café/restaurant at West Yorkshire Playhouse has been closed. The facility was enjoyed by both local passers bys, staff and artists who got a staff discount. Bear in mind when you go there to light now you'll need more time to go out and it'll cost more too.

The December edition of *Opera Magazine* notes that New York City Opera is shrinking its staff by 12. *The New York Times* reported that all staff, with the exception of financial officials, had been laid off for two days in mid October because the company feared it would be unable to pay them their full salaries.

*Opera Magazine* also reports that, "In one of the

first really tangible signs of the 'credit crunch' on the operatic world, Michigan Opera Theater has made drastic cuts to its programme". Meanwhile, the *Evening Standard* recently talked about: "The threat of deflation hanging over an economy edging into recession and job losses set to soar, experts say hundreds of thousands of homes could be re-possessed by 2010". Against this gloomy backdrop it seems the poor, already underpaid, LD will be lucky to survive unscathed. That said, if you are working abroad, your Euro, Dollar or Yen fee is worth more in Sterling now.

Our editor suggested to me that the crunch will be the end of my travel exploits in Business and Upper Class. Actually, I was rather hoping that the airlines would be lowering their prices. Interesting to note that the Tokyo – London flight was virtually empty

in Virgin Upper Class earlier this week.

As the latest production of *Oliver!* is preparing to open I can imagine LDs asking producers for a bigger fee and the incredulous cry of "More?!" ...So, get yourselves in the 'brace position'. Certainly, ensure that you have watertight contracts with clear payment dates agreed and don't start work until the contract is agreed.

Now, I'd better try and cheer you up. Let's celebrate a few things. Last month, the first TMA award for lighting Design was awarded at the TMA awards. Rick and I have been involved for some time in urging the TMA to expand the awards to include us. Although there was some resistance at first, I'm delighted that the TMA council agreed to the award. Our thanks should go to Kathleen Hamilton at the TMA for her help. Congratulations to the three nominees, David Hersey, Mick Hughes and Richard G. Jones. In Rick's absence I found myself presenting the

award and announcing the winner – Mick Hughes (see photo right). The ALD got a lot of publicity and we all found actors, directors and producers coming up and saying that the award was long overdue. Mick said: "*I was delighted to receive the TMA's new lighting award; honoured to be the first ALD member to receive it and encouraged to hear the quiet approval of its introduction around the foyer after the presentation.*" Always giving value for money I understand that the lighting designers were the last to leave the party!

I'm also delighted that Rick Fisher has been awarded the LDI 'Theater Lighting Designer of the Year' sponsored by Strand Lighting. Many congratulations to Rick who says; "*I was surprised and honoured to be named 'lighting designer of the year' for theatre. I like to think that it is not only because of bringing 'Billy Elliot' to NYC but for the continuing work of the ALD to bring lighting designers together for discussion, campaigning, and*

*most importantly supporting and enjoying our communal interests.*"

As it's the end of the year I think we should look at where we have got to and consider where we want to go. I know that over the years the ALD Executive would wonder what our members wanted. Should we do more than being a 'cuddly club' with a good magazine? It's clear that having offered some options at the AGM we got a strong mandate to continue being pro-active. We need to research how far it's practical for us to go. I'm delighted that our members are becoming more vocal and more involved. It's great that there are some strong opinions on whether we should be an organisation that offers some sort of accreditation or not. I'm pleased that our professional members are questioning the value of their union. Is Equity the right union? Should it do more for us? You'll be getting a survey on this matter soon. Please respond so we have some real evidence of what you

want. We value your opinion and its essential you are part of any major change.

The ALD would not be where it is now without the hard work of many of our members. It's great and most generous of Alex Wardle and Colin Grenfell to have set up some Vectorworks training for our professional members. Colin has been co-ordinating the Overseas Rider.

I went to Paule Constable's recent talk. It was wonderful to hear Paule talking. I wonder if we can coax more LDs to talk about their work? A number of professional members have attended meetings where we have worked on issues including the new Agents' newsletter. This is a way of us keeping in touch with all our agents. Let's face it, while our union at present can only handle setting minimum fees, it's our agents who have day to day contact with managements so keeping in touch with agents is essential. It's long been my hope that we would be able to achieve more by getting more of our members

involved in running the association. I hope that we will continue to have regular meetings with Professional members to develop the association and the needs of the LD. On your behalf I would want to offer a big vote of appreciation to all my colleagues on the Exec who have given their time and brilliance to the ALD.

I hope you all have a great Christmas, that all your Genies and good fairies will all appear as rehearsed and let's hope that 2009 won't be too austere.

As we go to print: I hear that the wonderful Robert Orno has passed away. He was a founding father of lighting design – what a brilliant man. #





# David and the Wolf...

## David W Kidd describes his design for lighting the ballet *Peter and the Wolf*

The emergence of lighting as a discipline goes back much further in time than I had realised until I read Nigel Morgan's excellent book *Stage Lighting Design in Britain*. This particularly informative book reveals how famous theatrical managers and producers such as Irving and Stanislavsky and the dancer Loie Fuller and Diaghilev championed the lighting aesthetic, some even before electricity was the norm. One overriding message shines through in this tome of theatrical history and its people: music, light and colour should work as one. Adolphe Appia was one such practitioner in the early 20th century who led the way in helping bring a change in attitude to the staging of the drama and lighting in particular.

As theatre over the years has diversified, modern dance stands out where light,

music and choreography have to work in unison. Add a narrative to this mix and you have an extremely potent cocktail to be exploited. European dance companies have been at the forefront of developing modern dance, and so it was I found myself in mainland Europe working with dance yet again, in the Belgian city of Antwerp. The ideals and concepts of those practitioners mentioned above would be put to great use in the job I was about to undertake.

The docks area in the north of the city is somewhat a wasteland; the shipping industry that once thrived has now vanished. But among the old disused warehouses and ancient cobbled streets lays a modern, rather bland-looking warehouse. The large tarpaulin advertisement belied the fact that it is Theater 'T Eilandje, the home of Ballet Flanders.

The venue was requisitioned for two weeks to mount a new dance production of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* by Antwerp and New York based *In The Wings Productions*, which has a history of mounting commercial dance productions of well known, mostly children's, stories.

This *Peter and the Wolf* is the culmination of a lifelong ambition of Anne Geenen, Director of the producing company *In The Wings*, and also of this production. The story has had a particular resonance with her since childhood, so for Anne it was a crucial and important moment in her life.

When I first met Anne to discuss the whole project it had already gone through several incarnations before this one. One of the key points was that the show had to work commercially, so a prequel Act 1 was written

in order for it to become a full show (Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* runs at only 30 minutes). The task of writing the book fell to Abi Bown with a score written by Philip Feeney and the whole show choreographed by Didy Veldman. Paul Gallis' original set design was to be used and new costume designs by Yan Tax.

Paul's very naturalistic set design featured 66 trees, mostly three dimensional, graduating to two dimensional further upstage. Some of these tracked to change position to give the impression of a different locale. This was backed by a backlit BP cyc fronted by black gauze for the illusion of depth, along with a groundrow of hills that was adjusted in height at its centre to create a distant valley or hilltop. Behind the cyc a large round lightbox was provided with six channels of varying

colours from red, amber to blue tint to give a sun or moon, that also tracked across stage. This was rigged tight to the BP, and remarkably its workings were not shadowed by the 6 x Iris 4 cyc units backlighting the top nor the Coda groundrow at its base. It was flown out completely when not required. Having viewed the modelbox with Paul in Amsterdam, it was clear that his three dimensional realistic set was going to be a dream to light, but the considerations of extensive masking to hide the tops of trees, side legs, venue



David has worked as a freelance LD since 1993 across the spectrum of theatre, opera, dance and corporate. He works extensively in the UK and increasingly in Europe and north America.

# David and the Wolf... the lighting design for *Peter and the Wolf* by David W Kidd

constraints and the sheer number of trees was going to make this a challenge.

The producer's intention was to undertake a short European tour, then an extensive UK tour in 2008. So Jakob Sagiv, the Europe production manager, and I had many meetings with regard to the hanging plot as it was important that the hang remained the same as much as possible. The labour intensive get-in was a point of concern, with many issues being raised about schedules and timescales, of course. I was particularly mindful that the lighting department did not become another issue for Jakob and the producers with a one and a half day fit up expected on tour. So I kept my rig choices with this in mind.

Five ballet towers each side provided a standard warm and cool dance cross light, plus VL1000As on each

tower to cross light the trees. The wide angle from these units gave a good coverage without having to place them way off stage. Above was a backlight wash of Pars in three colours: L119, L147 and L161 and 6 x VL2500 for some texture break-up. Minimal FOH from the standard house rig provided a cool break up in L161 and open white only used at a low level, plus orchestra front light for the expositions. Also 2 x VL1000 were placed low FOH for some shadowy moments, such as the wolf solo, a pas de deux with the wolf and Bogdan, all of which is in the atmospheric Act 1. I argued for a single followspot as it was clear that this would be needed for various solos. The cyc colours are a staple that I use for colourful skies that mix well: L119; Rosco22; L102 and L142.

The intensive interval change was to remove leafy branches off the trees, a

complete floor swap from grey to green, a pond stage left and a singular large tree positioned down right.

The lighting brief from Anne was quite clear: magical, colourful and commercial but above all accessible and understandable to young children. It was not desired for it to be seen as high brow, but just as Prokofiev wanted to introduce young people to the orchestra, this was also to introduce young people to the magic of narrative modern dance theatre. The rehearsal schedule was in Amsterdam, so my visits of once a week for production meetings and rehearsals were quite different to those that Diddy, the choreographer, expected. Indeed, she was surprised that I was not in attendance at every rehearsal for the whole month in accord with what she was used to with subsidised companies, in contrast with the more budget conscious commercial

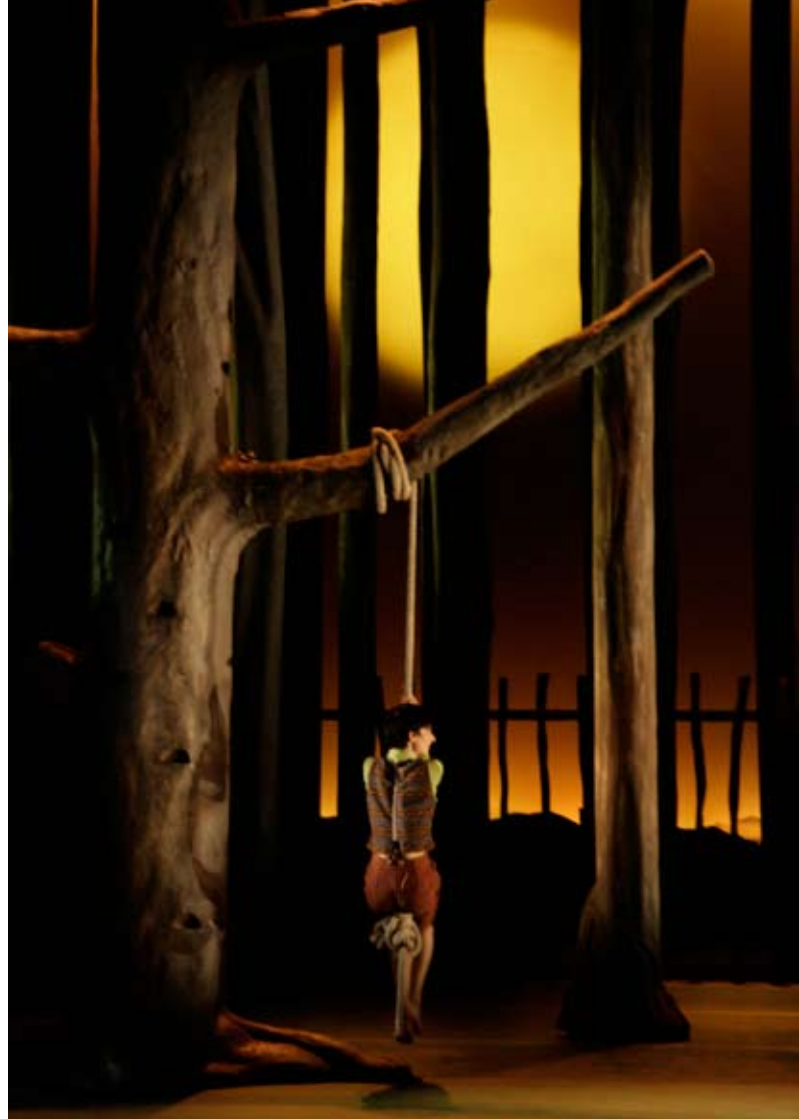
world. It was clear that I had to gain her trust early on. However, dance blocking aside I had the advantage of the well known music of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and an early recording of Philip Feeney's Act 1 score and narration script. From these and the discussions with Anne and Diddy I was immediately able to put ideas for a palette together. I did eventually see a few run throughs.

It was clear the light and its colours were to respond to emotions within the music. Also to act as a counterpoint to the realism of the set, and help carry the changing moods and atmosphere that both Feeney's and Prokofiev's scores provided.

The concept of the first, new, Act was that Peter and his school friends are on a field trip into the forest where they learn about the natural elements and the animals that inhabit the forest, but

also about its dangers... and that wolf. We see the children slowly take the personas of the various animals we are to see in Prokofiev's Act 2. So we are introduced to the bird, the duck and the cat. Bogdan, the tracker and guardian in Act 1 becomes the grandfather in Act 2. The wolf and Peter remained the only exclusive characters throughout. The narrator in both Acts was initially to the side in a special, but later became part of the scenes. No particular or special light for him in this case, as the actor was just told to 'feel the light'. Remarkably (there have been various actors in this role, including Brian Blessed in the UK) they all worked the light well; stepping into available cross light when needed, then stepping back into the shadows when required to disappear. An important element within Act 1 was the requirement to suggest a 'safe place', were the





# David and the Wolf... the lighting design for *Peter and the Wolf* by David W Kidd

children could retreat, a sort of camp. Initially this was to be something physical, but would have interfered with the flow should it appear and disappear within the needs of the location and story. Some lit practicals were tried, flown in when needed, but looked awkward and rather unnecessary. Diddy's choreography was, in my opinion, enough to create this convention with the help of some focussed warm downlight that helped illustrate the motif within the music.

Act 1 also had the orchestral exposition at the beginning in the same way that Prokofiev had written for his Peter, which we also hear later at the beginning of Act 2, but this time with the Marimba, cello and other percussion instruments. The orchestra were the soloists of the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Act 1 is the darker narrative, with Feeny's excellent score,

it remains my favourite half as it provides more opportunity for atmosphere. The red leaves scattered on the floor, the leafy autumnal branches and the children's warm outfits immediately gave a feeling of a chilly Fall. The lavenders and blue tints prevailed in this act, including a pleasing lavender from the crosslight VL1000 which refracted through the leafy break-up onto the tree trunks. The intention was to 'dress' the setting and maintain a good focus on the performers, without the set dominating the picture.

When the wolf first appears, described in the narration '*sleek and warm, licking its lips*' and '*silver grey paws*' with '*raised snout glistening in the air, tasting the wind*' then deep blues, steel tints and long shadows articulated the (rather Wagnerian) French horns and discordant cello.

Feeny's score provided many changes of mood with which the lighting had to

be articulated – as one. The music here most definitely inspired. There were a few moments of swell and flourish when Peter speaks of his grandmother who used to read him bedtime stories. During these motifs, I brought in the colour palette of warmer tints, and oranges and ambers onto the cyc as a precursor to what we were to see in Act 2; this Act being the more open, warmer and clear of the two. However, Act 2 brought its own challenges.

The large single tree had most of the characters climbing up at one point or another, so required a series of specials for such purposes, without the need to revert to using the followspot. Now the use of 'theatrical cliché': I would usually balk at turning the stage blood red at a violent death of a character. But here it is; focussed tightly downstage centre, for a young audience who have yet to be tainted

by theatrical cliché, the death of the duck by the wolf was clearly expressed through music, choreography and light.

Unfortunately, and surprisingly, I had to light Act 2 first, which threw me completely. I needed that journey to get me into the feel of Act 2. Once we got through the Act 1 tech, I was then able to 'pull down' Act 2 to a more desirable look – which I had initially overlit.

The tour had its own problems to contend with. Mark Howland took on the challenge to relight in the UK and an excellent job he did too. Venues were, of course, different in width and depth which meant that the layout footprint of the trees was not always the same. Getting that crosslight in between certain trees worked well in one venue, only to discover a tree placed slightly differently in another, despite the best intentions of a fixed hanging

plot. Mark and Gary Beestone, production manager on the UK tour, worked together to keep these anomalies to a minimum and keep the performance space the same as much as possible. The shutters on the VL1000 side units came in handy for this purpose, but there was always that 'hotspot' on one or two trees close to the towers that could not be avoided, to get that crosslight in between the trunks.

Throughout the whole process, it was – and should be – the music that inspired. With the collaboration of all disciplines I believe the famous – and embellished – story of *Peter and the Wolf* was told and exposed to a young new audience in a refreshing way. And perhaps one to ignite the imaginations of new, yet-to-be theatre practitioners.#

*All photos ©2008 In The Wings. You can view more photographs at [www.davidwkidd.com](http://www.davidwkidd.com)*

# Office Oracle

## Latest news from Ian's production desk

### Showlight 2009 Bursaries

The ALD is pleased to announce the sponsorship of three places at next year's Showlight conference in Glasgow 16th – 18th May 2009. We are offering three bursaries of £400 each to Professional members of the ALD to cover registration and other expenses related to attendance, at this most fascinating symposium on lighting design.

This event only happens every four years and it is always interesting, enjoyable and, unlike the other trade shows, completely focused on the creative use of light in a wide variety of applications. Next year's conference looks set once again to bring together many world-class designers from the worlds of theatre, film and broadcast as well as leading people in the lighting industry. The hospitality of host cities in

the past has always been exceptional, offering many opportunities to meet other delegates.

In 2005 the ALD has funded two bursaries on similar principles, with PRG kindly supporting a third bursary when submissions were too close to separate. It was well received by the recipients and so we are now offering the opportunity to Professional members again.

In order to apply for one of these bursaries simply write to or email the ALD office detailing why you would like to attend Showlight 2009. In return we expect the bursary recipients to write up their experiences at the conference for *Focus*.

### Conditions

- Professional members who wish to apply must be fully paid up!
- The recipients will arrange

their registration, travel and accommodation.

- Entries will be judged by members of the Executive and assessed on
  - the applicant's reasons for wanting to attend the show
  - how the applicant intends to make their report for *Focus*
  - the presentation of their application.
- The bursary cannot be transferred to another person.

• If a recipient is unable to attend the show then they must assist the ALD in transferring all travel and accommodation arrangements to another member of the Executive's choosing and the unspent balance of the bursary must be returned to the ALD.

Applications need to be received by the office no later than 1ST MARCH 2009.

### Jackie Staines Gets Life!

We are pleased to announce that the Association's newest Life Member is Jackie Staines.

Jackie has been working as part of the publishing team for *Focus* for a number of years, assisting many editors and editorial teams to layout the text and images to achieve a document ready for the printers to create the hard copy. Her knowledge of pixels, resolutions and colour layers was immensely helpful while developing the magazine from its black and white text origins into the multicoloured, image rich landscaped design you currently hold in your hand. Many thanks Jackie....

*From the editor:* I would like to add my personal thanks to Jackie for all her help and patience during my apprenticeship! *Andy*



### Focus in a bind?

The current design of *Focus* was launched two years ago this issue. So how do you store yours to maintain their value and condition? We have found a supplier that can produce and binder for a dozen copies of *Focus* to do such a job. They would cost members approximately £5.00 each.



However before we order a batch, we need to know if there is demand for this supply. We would be grateful if you could contact the office to acknowledge an interest as soon as possible.

### 2009/10 Membership Fees

This is a reminder that the subscription fees for ALD membership will increase from January 1st 2009. The following membership fees will then apply:

Professional	£75
Associate	£40
Student	£25
Non Profit Org	£20

Please note that if you currently pay your subscriptions by standing order, you will need to change the amount it currently pays to match the respective fee of your membership category. A standing order is an arrangement between you and your bank, the ALD cannot change the details of such an arrangement for you. Please help us to avoid chasing members for underpayment by updating your payment prior to it leaving your bank.

*Please change your standing order in advance of April 1st 2009 to ensure your membership remains current and continuous.* Chasing up members' payments is a time-consuming exercise for the office which means that we cannot be working on members' behalf to improve the other services we offer you.

Professional members who have reached retirement age may be eligible to apply for 'retired' membership for an annual fee of £25. If you believe you are eligible, please contact the office.

### Attention Student Members!!

If you have just started a new academic year, and you have your term time address on our database, do we have the correct one?

We frequently receive post returned to us as '*Unknown*

*at this address'* during the autumn. If you have moved over the summer, please use the steps above to update your information or contact the office. An incorrect address can result in you not receiving membership renewal notices, and places the continuation of your membership at risk.

### Sponsored Students' Scheme 2009

This corporate members' funded scheme for students studying at Conference of Drama School Colleges will close for applications at Christmas.

All current student members have been contacted and sent an application form to fill in and return to the office complete with proof of student status in order to maintain their current membership beyond April 2008. Please note that

even if you are currently a member of the scheme you will need to apply again to continue your free membership through to April 2010. If you do not, your membership will revert to a normal student category and you will be expected to pay the annual subscription for a student.

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

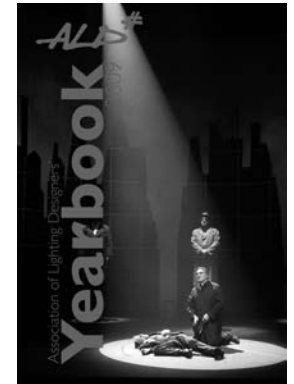
### ALD Members' Yearbook

Many thanks to all the members who updated their details and entries in advance of compiling the new yearbook. You should have received your copy enclosed with this issue of *Focus*.

As previously mentioned, there is a new layout to this

edition of the yearbook, and we welcome feedback from members about the changes and improvements made as our thoughts turn to the 2010 edition!!!

Please contact the office with your comments.#



# Meetings planned

Will Evans

## ALD/Stage management forum – Saturday 17th January

Have you ever wondered why that DSM is particularly stressed on the tech? Curious about how stage managers view the lighting design process? Wondering how you can make your stage management team's life easier?

The ALD and The Stage Management Association are holding a joint forum to explore and discuss stage management and lighting designer relations and common issues. A leading lighting designer and leading stage manager will discuss issues affecting both disciplines and look at how LDs and SMs can work together to make the production process easier.

The panel will be taking ideas and questions from

the floor so come armed with things you've always wanted to ask a stage manager but never could!

In addition, this should be an excellent networking opportunity not only with stage managers but also other LDs!

The event will be held at *The Young Vic, The Cut, Waterloo* and will start at 11am.

Places are limited to 15 lighting designers so please register your attendance and interest for this meeting by emailing: [meetings@ald.org.uk](mailto:meetings@ald.org.uk)

## ALD 'Mary Poppins' meeting in Manchester

An early announcement to gauge numbers of interest for a visit to Mary Poppins on tour in Manchester in March 2009. An excellent opportunity to see the

workings of a very complex show taken on tour.

In order to gauge interest for this meeting, please email: [meetings@ald.org.uk](mailto:meetings@ald.org.uk) if you would like to attend.

## Seven opportunities to play with LEDs!

Corporate member Schnick-Schnack-Systems are offering FREE one day training courses on their Series B, C and L LED backlighting products, which include an introduction to the ready-to-rig LED Media Systems.

We hear from Nick Cooke, UK Project Manager, that they are doubling the number of courses available in the first half of 2009 and making the extra days exclusively available to ALD and STLD members only.

You are therefore invited to go and check out 'one of the most creatively flexible LED

lighting solutions on the market'. Training is conducted at a relaxed pace, at their UK Office in Orpington, Kent. There will be plenty of opportunity to play and ask questions. The day is concluded by an optional multiple choice test, with a Certificate of Completion awarded to all those who score 70% or over.

Places are limited to six members per session and are offered on a first-come-first-served basis. The sessions take place on the 8th January, 12th February, 12th March, 9th April, 14th May, 4th June, 9th July.

For further details, and to book a place, please contact Nick Cooke directly at [nick.cooke@schnickschnacksystems.com](mailto:nick.cooke@schnickschnacksystems.com)



# Contact us

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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 to...

## Life

**Jackie Staines** (from Professional)

## Professional

**Paul Colwell**, Stevenage

**Lucy Carter**, Cambs

## Associate

**Peter De Lacey**, Fleet, Hants

**Howard Hudson**, London

**Liam Fahey**

## Student

**Alex Cann**, Essex

## Sponsored Student Scheme

**Robert Dyer**, Guildhall

**Leo Flint**, Central SSD

**Sean T Gleason**, Rose Bruford  
(rejoining)

**Alice Goodey**, Central SSD

**Bradly Jacobs**, Central SSD

**Christopher Marsh-Hilfiker**,  
Central SSD

**Henrietta St. Clair**, Rose Bruford

**Nick Smith**, Rose Bruford

**Matthew Urbanek**, Rose Bruford

**Kat Wooten**, Rose Bruford

**Matt J Wearing**, Central SSD

**Jonathan West**, Guildhall

**Tom Wickens**, ALRA

# Dates for your diaries

## 2008

### 24th December

Deadline: Sponsored Student Scheme

## 2009

### 8th January

1st in the series of LED training courses at *Schnick Schnack Systems*. See p14.

### 15th January

Deadline: *Focus* content February/March.

### 17th January

ALD/Stage management forum. See p14.

### 1st March

Deadline: Showlight Bursary Submissions

### 1st April

Membership subscriptions due.

### 28th & 29th April

PLASA Focus 09\*, Leeds.

### 16th – 19th May

Showlight 09\* – Glasgow.

### 10-11th June

ABTT Show 2009\*

### 13-16th September

PLASA09, Earls Court, London\*

### 31st October

Deadline for updating Yearbook entries

*\*the ALD will have a presence at these events.*

# Signifying Darkness

Due to a leaking roof, The Bush's lighting grid collapsed. So what did London's best 'new work' fringe venue do? Write a show about light and the lack of it, of course... *eleven* to be exact.

For those of you who have worked at The Bush before, the phrase, 'broken space' will, I'm sure, resonate in its own very personal way... However, since last August something bigger than usual broke and began to fall from the ceiling—the grid!

Under the cunning artistic direction of Josie Rourke, the fabulous team at The Bush commissioned eleven new pieces of writing to explore light and, of course, darkness. With three thought-provoking pieces every night, the first slot started at dusk

and surrounded themes of "failing light." The middle slot, the same piece every night, called *St. Petersburg* used fading natural light as a metaphor for old age. Lastly, if you dared to stay, the final slot was *What the darkness feels like*. The writers here

used a void of darkness as their main motif.

To make the most of the remaining Bush the producers needed a lighting designer who was in no way afraid of the dark. Torch in hand, Natasha Chivers entered. Drawn by the unique nature of the project, yet unable to commit fully, she met me at the Michael Northern Award ceremony and within a week I was her Associate, designing seven of the eleven shows. I'd like to share with you what we discovered in the dark.

## 101 things that emit light

There is nothing more magical than fifteen minutes of darkness in which a couple are arguing, then unexpectedly one of them lights a match. The following final moments of the show were lit only with two cigarettes punctuating the darkness. Natasha was very resourceful in creating moments like this. There

was the ever-popular bare hanging lamp, the clever torch, a Zippo lighter, many desk lamps, florescent tubes, a stereo LCD screen and, of course, the mobile phone; not to mention the barrage of PARs and floods hung over the street, shining in through the windows. All these objects gave a unique and brilliant quality of light for which Natasha and I would love to take credit. However, most of these objects come into being through the playwright's script. The cigarettes in the previous example became a convention integral to the work that only the playwright controls.

It's rather important here to discuss the role of the lighting designer within this kind of work. He/she becomes more of a facilitator and problem solver to an already well-established lighting concept offered by the playwright. Had Natasha and I been given the



opportunity to consult with the playwrights from day one, it would have strengthened the use of light in the piece. In a show lit entirely with a torch who should direct its focus? Unfortunately, most of the eleven works were presented to Natasha and me in a very prescribed way; essentially what the playwright and director had already established. Even worse, they were partly dictated by the publicity. What really crippled us was our lack of involvement from the beginning.

#### **Layers of Darkness**

What is a blackout? What does pure darkness say? If you put a bin bag over your head for thirty minutes while listening to the radio you will find out for yourself. It approaches the sensation used in many of the 'what does darkness feel like?' pieces. But does pure darkness read as anything specific? As beautifully avant-garde as it was, I just don't think it works.

*December / January 2009*

Firstly, just like when you had the bin bag over your head, the darkness does nothing but distance you from a place and time - out of sight, out of mind. I think you'll find darkness does wonders for the mind; however, your imagination has probably long departed from the drone of the radio. It was called a 'blanket of darkness' for a reason, like the bag, it was suffocating. Poke a hole in the bag to breathe and the sensation is ruined. Or is it? With all that fresh air poking through it might be easier to hear the radio or even to connect with it.

The second thing that doesn't work with darkness is how one reads it - and well, you can't. It's nothing, and very clearly states that fact. Just because it says "darkness," in the script (or in our case the PR) doesn't necessarily mean a full blackout is in order. Signifying dark is a much more powerful way and gives you control to say





other things, adding layers to the darkness. After all, I don't know many LDs who upon reading 'daylight' in a script start punching holes in the theatre roof. Just like a shadow needs light, I feel darkness, darkness specific to that play, needs light to mean something.

The stage must have a presence or energy, something very hard for a performer to achieve in thirty minutes of darkness. I'm not asking to see faces or gestures; just to have something glowing, glistening even, at six percent, from a well-placed position. This is all you need to establish a connection and focus for the eye. Spending thirty minutes struggling to make out form, shape, movement, and shadows in the dark basically is what I want—to engage the audience. Engaging them in an atmosphere that is now speaking about, and for, the piece.

The Broken Space season was a very exciting and rewarding experience of the



subtleties of light. A gift to any lighting designer. Everyone at The Bush should be thanked for having the courage to mount something so bold. Perhaps if there is a next time, more collaboration with the LD from the beginning

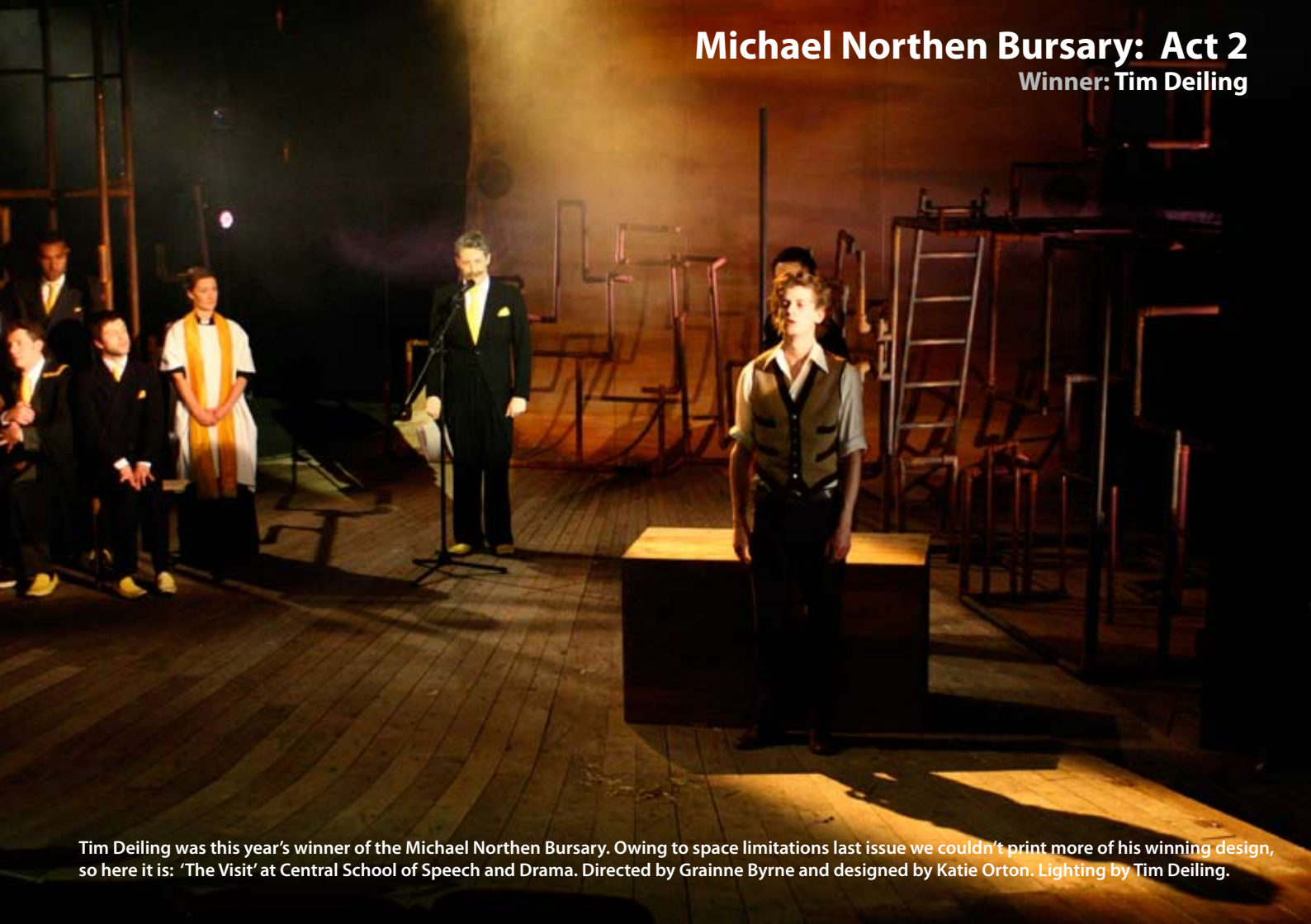
will make a difference, but when is this not the case? Nevertheless, the season was a success and a testament to light-led creation. My only hope is that this inspires more to come...#



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

# Michael Northen Bursary: Act 2

Winner: Tim Deiling



Tim Deiling was this year's winner of the Michael Northen Bursary. Owing to space limitations last issue we couldn't print more of his winning design, so here it is: 'The Visit' at Central School of Speech and Drama. Directed by Grainne Byrne and designed by Katie Orton. Lighting by Tim Deiling.



*'Dialogues des Carmelites' at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, directed by Nicolette Molnar, designed by Alison Nader. Lighting by Callum Howie. Photos by: RSAMD*



## Michael Northen Bursary: Act 2

ETC runner up, Callum Howie

The lighting design process was a completely new experience for me, coming from a production electrician background; I quickly learnt a new skill set and a great appreciation for LDs. Luckily I had George Thompson of Scottish Ballet as my mentor and he was able to keep me focused on the design rather than trying to fix the rig.

I kept my lighting as basic as possible, a real Fisher-Price job for my first lighting design structure. Firstly, to build the state I found a key light for the state, then added texture to fill out the look then add light to see the cast. Again with the cue structure, I found important points with in the scene where I wanted strong looks, maybe one or two a scene and then the rest of the cue structure was making the transitions flow together.

The discussions I had with the director and designer from the start of the production showed

that one of the key functions of the lighting would be to tie the twelve scenes together into one piece. This allowed me to implement a theme through out the opera; I used L716 Mikkell Blue and associated it with the peasant chorus. I could then recreate the threatening mood produced by the chorus without the chorus actually being onstage, and I used this blue to slowly take over different area of the stage and in the final scene the entire stage was backlit in L716.

I always knew, due to my inexperience, lighting *Dialogues des Carmelites* was going to be difficult with the pressures from the professional director and designer, trying to build trust as well as dealing with the frustrations that working in a drama school causes. It was certainly a worthwhile experience but I'm happy to stick with production electrics and relights... for now.#

Callum Howie

# What does “Professional Lighting Designer” really mean?

John Leventhall, ALD Executive member for Development, writes to *Focus* to ask three questions inspired by Malcolm Rippeth’s letter in the last edition, and invites you to debate the meaning of ALD membership...

Dear Editor and Members,  
Malcolm Rippeth’s letter in the last edition of *Focus* was a hugely useful contribution to the debate around how the ALD might better represent LDs. Thank you, Malcolm.

What it takes to be a Professional Member, and whether some form of accreditation is appropriate, was also discussed at the AGM in May and at the Professional Members’ meeting in August. It remains an open question whether better credentials would actually be useful in getting contracts, in resolving problems or to help the ALD to better represent members as a whole.

Opinion falls into two camps. There are those in favour of having some form of ‘stamp of approval’ (accreditation is perhaps

too bold a term), and there are those who feel that definition and regulation has little relevance to an industry which currently makes no demands for LDs to carry a specific accreditation and that the very diversity of the work LDs do would be immensely difficult to define without either being very vague or significantly restricting. You are right, Malcolm, when you argue *“For any of us to pass some kind of competence test seems somewhat absurd”*. Equally, there seems to be widespread agreement that one factor keeping fees low is that there is a poor general understanding of what LDs do and a desire that the ALD continues to develop in reinforcing the professional standing of LDs in the live entertainment and events

industry. Clearly more debate and agreement amongst members is needed.

So, I pose three questions to our whole membership, professional or associate, those working, studying, resting, experienced or just starting out.

**Firstly**, do we need some sort of formal definition of what it is to be a lighting designer so that we may have some sort of code of practice which we can all refer to and use to help producing managements better appreciate the LD’s contribution? I am definitely not talking about anything to do with the artistic or creative elements. As Malcolm remarked in drawing parallels with the work of a painter, *“We hope to be pleased with the process and outcome.”*

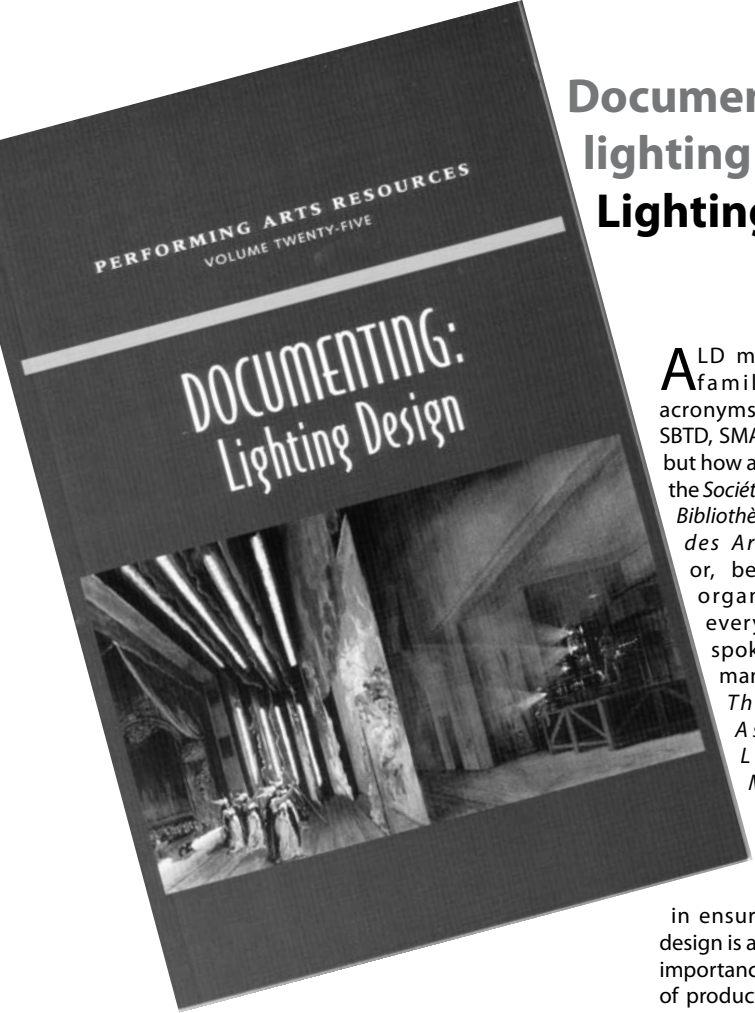
Creativity or style cannot be defined or regulated, but perhaps a definition is possible of the way we work, the business practices and the processes necessary to give appropriate service to a production?

**Secondly**, do we need to go beyond simple membership criteria? Currently, to become a Professional Member one has only to show reasonable evidence of current paid work. But do we need criteria for quality of practice as well? I think that we should steer well clear of imposing lots of rules for entry. We should continue to be as inclusive as possible. But I feel strongly that active, working professional LDs who only maintain Associate Membership should convert

to Professional Membership so that the ALD has the clearest possible meaning as a representative professional body.

**Thirdly**, how do members want the ALD to progress these issues? We could have a shot at a definition of an LD by getting a group of LDs together and put the result to the membership for further debate. Is this a good idea?

We need your views! The Exec **welcomes** all comments from all classes of members. Please take a moment to **offer your opinion**. As ever, that e-mail from YOU to [office@ald.org.uk](mailto:office@ald.org.uk) will be valuable and influential! #



## Documenting lighting designs: Lighting Archives

ALD members may be familiar with such acronyms as ABTT, PLASA, SBT, SMA, STLD and USITT, but how about SIBMAS? It is the *Société Internationale des Bibliothèques et des Musées des Arts du Spectacle* or, being one of these organisations where every word, whether spoken or written, is mandatory bilingual: *The International Association of Libraries and Museums of the Performing Arts.*

S I B M A S  
m e m b e r s  
are pivotal  
in ensuring that lighting  
design is accorded its proper  
importance in the archiving  
of productions for posterity

and so, with curators and librarians expressing a growing awareness of this, I was invited to give a keynote address on **How did the lighting look? - interpreting the evidence** at this summer's biennial SIBMAS Conference in Glasgow.

In 40 minutes and sixty images (photos, drawings, plans, plots, magic sheets, etc., etc.) I tried to explain the extent of the lighting impression that can be deduced from still and moving production images, designs and documentation. Beginning with oil and candles, I discussed how the evidence has changed as lighting has developed, particularly with digital imaging and with CAD processes that generate their

own archive in an easily stored format. In the spirit of the *Focus* motto – 'more art, less tools' – I assured them that the easy part to decipher was the equipment, suggesting that understanding the contribution of lighting to an archived production involved a three-part analysis.

- what light did the audience see – consciously and subconsciously?
- what dramaturgy motivated this use of light?
- how was this use of light achieved?

The response was encouraging. Delegates from several theatre museums across Europe took me aside to confide that they realised

## Francis Reid shares his thoughts on archiving lighting designs.

it was time to review their policy for acquiring and preserving lighting material. There were invitations to visit and I have already accepted one to Paris to see some of the lighting treasures in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

From Ohio has come **DOCUMENTING: Lighting Design** (ISBN 978-0-932610-20-1) recently published by the American Theatre Library Association as Volume 25 of their Performing Arts Resources Series.

This book includes summaries of the scope of the lighting material deposited in the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, The Shubert Archive, Wisconsin Historical Society, and the university

collections at Harvard, Ohio State, Pennsylvania State and Yale. The bibliography of lighting literature is concise but comprehensive, and there are supportive chapters on lighting's history and its technology. Libraries are a key teaching resource and so there are stimulating discussions on the history of stage lighting education and on the role of archival research in teaching lighting design. It is a book which I am sure will help to raise the profile of lighting archives – and consequently be a factor in raising the status of the lighting designer's contribution to the art of performance.

Throughout my talk to SIBMAS I emphasised how it is the juxtaposition of images,

designs and documents that triggers clues to the contribution that light made to an archived production. However, I concluded with this warning about the dangers of subjecting lighting archives to an excess of rigorous academic analysis:

*The most important material for capturing that elusive essence of 'how did the lighting look?' will always be images. But an experienced eye researching the documentation can uncover considerable information about the light design process, its dramaturgy, and the methodology of its realisation.*

However, while explanations of whys and wherefores can be fascinating and indeed

useful, I would caution against giving too much weight to them. Although lighting designers rely on scientific logic to translate visual ideas into reality, lighting design – like all art – owes little to logic. It is based on illogical decisions made from a gut feeling that is derived from the absorption of tangible information tempered with intangible instincts. Asked to explain my work: "Why did you do that?", quite often the only answer I have been able to offer has been "Why not?"

Like the other members of the scenography team, lighting designers tend, by inclination and education, to be visual thinkers. Although we have to attempt to 'verbalise the visual' in order to communicate within the

creative team, for much of what we do with light there is no further justification than "if it looks right – and all the creative team, not just the lighting designer, agrees that it looks right – then it is right".

So, although we can capture some of the essence of how the lighting looked, the search for why it looked that way can perhaps be rather more elusive. The subtleties remain the privilege of those who were at the performance. And what they saw – or thought they saw – is unique to each member of the audience's vision and perception. In that key respect the lighting is no different from all the other intangibles that make each performance unique. #



# Robert Orngo, Theatre Lighting Designer 1931- 2008

Richard Pilbrow remembers a friend and joint-president of the ALD.

Robert Orngo was a brilliant and prolific lighting designer, whose work on over 300 productions ranged across drama, musicals, opera and ballet to events such as the Edinburgh Tattoo, the Royal Tournament, the naming ceremonies of ocean-going liners and events at Buckingham Palace for the Royal Family. His influence has had a profound impact on theatrical lighting over the last fifty years.

Robert was the first lighting designer to join me in my fledgling company – Theatre Projects – in 1960 and he became Managing Director of Theatre Projects Lighting during its heyday when its team of lighting designers, who included Robert Bryan, John B. Read, David Hersey and Andy Bridge, worked at the Royal Opera, the Royal Ballet, Glyndebourne, the

English National Opera, the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare, and across the West End.

I first met Robert at the Princes Theatre (now the Shaftesbury) in 1960. I was to light a dubious play named *Girl On The Highway* for director Peter Cotes. Robert was the theatre's resident chief electrician. Perhaps because the play was so poor, we spent a good deal of time in conversation.

Theatre Projects was then in its third year. We were attempting to break into the stage lighting business in competition to the monopoly company of the 1950s, Strand Electric. Through surprising strokes of good fortune we had survived and were accumulating some reputation in what was then a very new profession indeed: lighting design. But initial

success had brought some chaos in its wake and we badly needed help.

"Would you like to come and work for me?" I asked. Robert replied: "Well, yes, I would." Thus began a friendship and a lifelong association.

The remuneration was modest – £15 a week – but the timing was appropriate. Robert joined on a Monday and we always joked that he went home three weeks later. Well, I was lighting three shows that week and I recall we swapped duties, focusing, plotting and attending rehearsals turn-and-turnabout. We did survive. Twenty productions followed that year.

Robert and I had a favourite catch-phrase: "If we can get through this week-end, we can get through anything!"

In those far distant days, an assistant lighting designer

had to double as production electrician, rigger and vital source of support. Robert and I had an amazing partnership. Always elegant and eloquent, he could keep interfering producers away from interrupting our work at the production desk and at the same time spur me onto greater efforts. He quickly moved from being a most

***"If we can get through this week-end, we can get through anything!"***

indispensable assistant to a designer in his own right.

In 1961 I devised a new system of large-scale scenic

***“This is Buckingham Palace,”  
a voice announced to Robert, who  
replied: “Oh yeah, pull the other one!”  
But it was true...***

projection. Robert was a brilliant mathematician. He performed all the calculations necessary to calculate the distortion of the slides to compensate for angular projection and supervised the photography. Our first show *One Over The Eight* for producer Michael Codron, was a great success and—thanks to the scene designer Tony Walton—led to our designing the projection for the Broadway hit: *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*. This in turn led to *Golden Boy* with Sammy Davis Junior and other successes on Broadway and in the West End. He later wrote articles on this technique in theatre journals.

Robert’s career as a designer took off: his first show *England, Our England* (Princes Theatre 1962) led to the opera *Love Of Three*

*Oranges* (Sadlers Wells 1963); *Scent Of Flowers* (Duke of Yorks 1964); *Trelawney Of The Wells* (National Theatre at the Old Vic 1965); *Macbeth* (Royal Court 1966); *Midsummer Marriage* (Royal Opera House Covent Garden 1968); altogether fifty-six productions in his first five solo years.

Theatre Projects Lighting grew. Our two-man design team expanded. Through the 1960’s and 70’s Theatre Projects became the centre of lighting design in Britain, a unique training ground where young lighting designers could work with top people in the profession. It was an exciting period. Under Robert’s guidance and nurturing a team of designers lived and breathed stage lighting together. Exchanging suggestions and ideas, horror stories, offering

help and sharing each others’ opportunities and travails.

Robert’s amazing work enhanced such productions as Jonathan Miller’s *The Merchant Of Venice* with Laurence Olivier (National Theatre at the Old Vic 1970); Hal Prince’s *Cabaret* (Palace Theatre London 1968) and *Company* (Alvin Theatre NYC 1970 - Tony Award nomination) both with designer Boris Aronson; *Pelleas And Melisande* (Royal Opera House 1969) with designer Josef Svoboda; *Back To Methuselah* (National Theatre at the Old Vic) and *The Ring Cycle* (Coliseum 1971–1973) with designer Ralph Koltai.

It was the latter *Ring Cycle* that caught the attention of Lord Plunket, then the Queen’s Comptroller. Buckingham Palace rang: *“This is Buckingham Palace,”* a

voice announced to Robert, who recalled replying skeptically. *“Oh yeah, pull the other one!”* But it was true and Robert began regularly lighting shows at the Palace including the Masque for H.M. The Queen’s Silver Anniversary (1972) and the 90th Birthday Concert for the Queen Mother in 1990.

In 1973 the famous Sydney Opera House was due to open. Theatre Projects was called in to remedy a shortage of lighting facilities. Robert was despatched to solve the problems and stayed to light the opening season starting with the opera *War And Peace*, again with designer Ralph Koltai. Thus began an extraordinarily international career. Robert led the way for English stage lighting designers operating abroad. He lit productions in Amsterdam, Beirut, Berlin,

Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, the Hague, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Oslo, Oman, Malmo, and elsewhere. One of his last productions in 1999 was a large-scale musical in Moscow, proving as he remarked: *“You don’t need to speak the language provided they have the same colour book.”* So successful was his work on the *Choregie* – a festival of opera and music – for many years in Orange, France that he was honoured with the Freedom of that city in 1976.

Robert’s many shows in the West End included: *40 Years On*, *The Ruling Class*, *Voyage Around My Father*, *Grease*, *Habeas Corpus*, *I And Albert*, *Jeeves, Dad’s Army*, *Wild Oats*, *The Two Ronnies*, *Pack Of Lies*, *I’m Not Rappaport*, with *Travesties*, and *London Assurance* both also on Broadway.

# Robert Ornbo, Theatre Lighting Designer 1931- 2008

## Richard Pilbrow remembers a friend and joint-president of the ALD.

Robert also worked widely in the regional theatre including productions for the Chichester Festival Theatre, the 69 Theatre Company, Birmingham Repertory Company. Bristol Old Vic. Northcott Theatre, Exeter; the Palace Theatre, Watford; the Theatre Royal, Windsor; the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith; the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guilford; and the Birmingham Hippodrome.

For the ballet Robert lit *Creation Du Monde* followed by *Anastasia* at the Royal Opera House, several pieces for London Contemporary Dance and *Giselle* for the Northern Ballet Company; for Kent Opera the *Magis Flute* and for the Glyndebourne Festival *Così Fan Tutte*; the double bill *Lenfant Et Les Sortileges* and *L'heure Espagnole*.

In 1976 H.M. The Queen had decided to honor the

bi-centennial birthday of America with a Military Tattoo at Wolf Trap near Washington DC. Robert designed the lighting for Colonel Leslie Dow, recently appointed as Director of the Edinburgh Tattoo. This led Robert to a lifetime engagement with Tattoos, revolutionizing the lighting for the Edinburgh Tattoo, the Berlin Tattoo and the Royal Tournament for over 20 years.

The world of large scale military spectacles opened up another field for Robert's talents: the big event. Robert travelled the world: The Royal Horse Show in Oman (1990, 1991), the Wedding of HRH Abdullah Bin Hussein (1993) and the HRH Crown Prince Abdullah 50th Birthday Celebrations (with two Jumbo-jet loads of equipment - 1997) both in Jordan, National Day celebrations in Oman, VE as

well as VJ Day Celebrations in Hyde Park (1995), and the Royal Dynasty Celebrations in Saudi Arabia in 1999. From the desert to the ocean.

Robert became a brilliant specialist in lighting, and eventually producing the naming ceremonies of the newest of massive cruise liners. The Oriana (1995), Canberra (1997), Dawn Princess (1997), Grand Princess (1998), Sea Princess (1998), Ocean Princess (2000). Indeed the 1998 Celebration for the Grand Princess took place on the Hudson River in New York City. Robert was in charge—radio in hand—organizing the movement of tugs, floating stages and seemingly the Admiral of all he surveyed. I was very proud!

Equally at home in the West End & Broadway, fringe and regional theatre, middle eastern night club, palace,

opera house, or vast arena, Robert's influence has guided generations of designers. Robert was a marvellous communicator and teacher. He lectured extensively in the UK and abroad where his enthusiasm and skills enthralled and inspired many young designers.

Robert was a member of the United Scenic Artists in New York, Equity, and the Society of British Theatre Designers. He was Chairman of the Drama Panel of the Eastern Arts Association and since 2002 Joint President of the Association of Lighting Designers in the UK, of which he was a founder member and ex-Chairman. He also served as Chairman of the Theatre Royal Bury St. Edmonds - England's third oldest working theatre.

Robert was born September 13th 1931 in Hessle, England to Karl Gerhardt (a shipbroker)





*Robert in charge, radio in hand... "Admiral of all he surveyed..."*

and Gwendoline Cicely Fenner. He was educated at Hymers College, Hull (1942-1949). National Service in the Far East gave Robert opportunities to indulge in his theatrical inclinations. As well as performing at the Little Theatre in Singapore he was seconded to Radio Malaya, where he wrote and performed in plays, alongside his contemporaries Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse.

He returned to England in 1951 and entered his father's ship-broking business, but

the lure of the theatre called and he joined a group of touring actors playing one-night stands. Returning to London he landed a job as a linkman at The Talk of the Town, before moving to the Princes Theatre becoming 2nd Dayman, 1st Dayman and then Chief Electrician.

Robert was married to Rose Harris, whom he met while she was a production assistant at Theatre Projects. They have two sons, George and Sam.

Robert was diagnosed with

Pulmonary fibrosis (fibrosing alveolitis) in 2001. Despite a long and increasingly debilitating illness Robert always sought to live life to the full. He was a great host. He and Rose were intrepid travelers visiting Japan to enjoy both the Zen culture and the wonderful sushi; the Caribbean for the cricket (a game Robert particularly loved), and many favorite haunts in France. Keenly interested in countries emerging from the communist era, Robert



*Robert's 'Back To Methuselah' (National Theatre at the Old Vic), with designer Ralph Koltai.*

and Rose visited Prague, Budapest, Sophia, Riga, Vilnius, Bratislava and Tallin to visit their classic opera houses and concert halls. In August his son George married and Robert supervised preparations for the event, even though he was finally unable to personally attend. Almost to the last Robert was in touch with friends via e-mail and exercised his always agile mind by enthusiastically completing the Times Crossword every morning.

His many friends and colleagues around the world will remember Robert as a true friend, who was always eloquent, humorous, and witty; a great host and bon viveur, who enjoyed producing spectacles of his own for family and friends. He was a loving husband and father. His pride in his two sons as they both embarked on successful careers and marriages gave him particular joy.#

*Richard Pilbrow*

# Paule Constable in COLOUR



When Lee filters invited me to their factory, the idea of making new colour was fascinating. However, the closer the appointed day came, the more I became convinced that I had nothing to contribute... I am hardly known for my radical use of saturated colour; in fact many production electricians around the country offer to put the colour call on my plans for me: *'Buy in a few rolls of 201, 202 and 203 colour correction filter and she'll be happy!'*

But then I thought that actually I *am* interested in dirty browns, with L232 and L230 my favourites. I particularly like L232 because it is so cool - also L747. Also L728 which has opened up a great new part of the spectrum. L729 is too blue for me so perhaps something between the two?

I've also been trying to introduce some acid yellows into my palette but tend to find the colours available too clean looking and not chemical and dirty enough...



L-R: Chris Rasey, Eddie Ruffell,  
Paul Topliss, 'Paulee', Alison Chetwynd

## Over the last ten years, 17 leading European lighting designers have been invited to the LEE Filters factory to create their own unique colours. Paule Constable was their latest guest.

Perhaps a yellow acid version of 206-204 which can tend to get very orange (764 is a good alternative in this range).

We started by discussing what colour I might like to look at. I talked about colour that I *nearly* liked, but that came out all too one way or another. I took a book of Gregory Crewdson photos with me to use as a reference. Within half an hour I was in the lab with a fetching red lab coat and safety goggles which reminded me of doing O-Level chemistry (yes, I am that old). I measured the dyes to hand-mix a piece of Lee 730 and coated a sheet of clear gel to make my first piece. I immediately wanted to look at what would happen if I dirtied the colour a little – suppressing some of the jolliness of the blues and making it less vibrant, more dead. I mixed a new dye and coated another sheet and held the two up next to each other. Ah... I was onto

something interesting.

One of the elements that changes the way a gel behaves is the density of the coating. I was quite liking the look of my colour but I wasn't sure what level of saturation I was after. I decided that I needed to do the tungsten test by comparing my colours using a parcan on a simple dimmer. This was the moment I really loved – jumping around in front of parcans – looking at how a colour shifts on white, on skin tone, in the air. Really looking at it and then talking about it to people who didn't seem to think that I was mad. As it became clear what was working about the colour for me, we compared it with other similar options firstly on a light box, then in a spectrum analyser. This was fascinating. I was having a ball.

From then on the lab started to respond as I saw things, and wanted to shift them slightly. We added more orange to the original

green – it became too much and descended into a soupy mush. We lightened the density of the dye. It was looking good.

Then we started to discuss 156 and how I like it but find it too saturated and too orange at low level. I played with cooling the brown – adding a touch of a green/blue dye. Too much blue dye made a great colour but the transmission was too low. We started to home in on a level which delivered.

Finally, I played around with Chrome Orange. Always a colour that I have loved but find is often too orange to use. I had recently seen the Cohen Brothers' movie *No Country for Old Men* and I loved the use of yellow light throughout the film. I wanted to find a strong chemical yellow which would be similar to the light in this movie. We suppressed the orange completely in 179 but the result was that it lost its strength. We lessened it and

upped the yellow. The result is more orange than I would have liked but more yellow than 179.

We also managed to fit in a tour of the factory. I was strangely moved by meeting the two machines that make *all* the Lee colour we ever use. Every sheet of Lee 202 I have ever used started there! It was a brilliant day and Lee were fantastically responsive and supportive. I loved hearing about which LDs had designed which colours (Rick, thank you for 728. It is gorgeous).

The toughest thing was naming the colours. Colours have such peculiar names and I always assumed these related to some strange part of the Pantone chart. The truth is that the names are organic and are plucked from the air. I was torn with the yellow: I wanted to call it Cohen Yellow but then felt that Egg Yolk was more descriptive. One of the lab technicians suggested Dirty

Ice and it fitted perfectly. Damp Squib – well my daughter is called Morgan but has always been known as Squib – and Bram Brown? My little boy is called Bram!

Immortalised in a Lee colour – there is something glamorous about having a mum who is a busy lighting designer!#

*Paule Topliss has kindly offered a special swatchbook with samples of Paule's four new colours (and an additional four from LD Peter Fisker) to ALD members on request. To receive a sample, please email [sales@leefilters.com](mailto:sales@leefilters.com) for a 'New 700 Series Promotional Pack' mentioning this article. Don't forget to include your name and address!*



# Review of Lighting: *In the Red and Brown Water*

**Ziggy Jacobs** reflects on the recent lighting design of Jean Kalman at The Young Vic in London

The shows we saw during our week of “*What Is Performance?*”, like all shows, have their merits and drawbacks when it comes to lighting. Out of all the performances we attended, one was of particular interest: *In The Red and Brown Water* at the Young Vic. What distinguished this show from others I’ve seen recently was the use of a fairly simple design aesthetic, color choice, use of space, and physical instrument rigging.

The production used a very small lantern count compared with other shows, and it also included a limited range of color and preset looks. This seemed to be an asset and a personal choice with Jean Kalman’s design for *In The Red and Brown Water*; every drop of water splashed onto Ony Uhiara’s face from the

flooded set in the Young Vic was perfectly visible. The simplicity also appeared to be a conscious and appropriate choice for Kalman as his designs are often large-scale, meticulously detailed affairs favouring very distinct, saturated hues. For example, *Saint Francois D’Assise* or *Die Zauberflöte*.

A refreshing choice for this show was the colour palette. Kalman’s design was dominated by warm and no-colour light, creating a sense of warm, welcoming walls lit by incandescent table lamps or makeshift levy walls lit by a helicopter searchlight, depending on which look was focused on the particle-board upper set pieces. When the very few cools were added to the mix, or used on their own, they were indeed so rare and even subtle as to create a

true sense of cold, desolation, or simply night time on the bayou. The performers’ dark skin was perfectly highlighted by warm and no-colour washes, making cool facial flaws and shadows stark and significant.

Here, no spaces were left unintentionally underlit with Kalman lighting a difficult set with clear and well-defined focusing. While one would expect the water of a flooded stage to be the focal point of any production, even without the reflections caused by theatrical lighting, I felt that the warm wash balanced what could have been a dangerously reflective surface. The warm, harsh no-colour, or cold smooth ripples reflected onto the particle-board walls seemed almost like a happy accident, just as it is in life, when a chance

streetlight turns a puddle into a beautiful spectacle. Each colour reflecting from the ripples gave the water itself a different personality, like a character; the unexpected cools – mysterious and not quite inviting. The warm ambers – playful or mischievous, inviting coolness on a hot summer day. No colour – revealing, impervious, and indiscriminant. These powerful messages, however, did not detract from the actors. The complete and even illumination kept the area of play completely in focus the entire time (a difficult thing to do in theatre-in-the-round without water), accomplished in part by (clever, clever) floodlights all around the stage. This ingenious pun-like rigging continued with the brilliant

FOH lighting, which appeared to be PARcans serving their no-color purpose packed in a square rig — good use of a limited upper space; but also remarkably similar to the floodlighting on a track and field area.

I came to the conclusion that for *In the Red and Brown Water*, Jean Kalman used every available resource to tell the story of the show; to give it life, depth, and personality.#

**Photos: Keith Pattison**

*This is an extract from a piece of Ziggy’s coursework for her BA Theatre Practice Course at the Central School of Speech & Drama. We are always interested in publishing appreciations of lighting design by students, so lecturers and students please take note and email any ideas to editor@ald.org.uk.*

*Abram Wilson (The Egungun). Abram also composed and performed the original music for the show.*



*"Every drop of water splashed onto Ony Uhiara's face from the flooded set in the Young Vic was perfectly visible."*

## ***The Wedding Party***

Embassy Theatre, June 2007

Directed by Lily Susan Todd

Set by Neil Irish

Lighting by Nick Moran



*fig1. 1st first stage rehearsal*



*fig2. 1st full dress rehearsal*



*fig3. Final dress rehearsal*

# Documentation of Performance Design: A Lighting Designer's Approach

Nick Moran



For a lighting designer, there are three generally accepted reasons for producing documentation:

**1. to communicate** technical information required to realise “the product” – the plans, focus notes, cue lists etc that the LD and others need to turn ideas into the initial reality

**2. to ensure** the design continues to “work” in the absence of the designer – for a long running, touring or repertory show where the LD hands over the responsibility for maintaining the quality of “the product” to others

**3. to showcase** the ability of the designer to others wishing to work with her or him on future projects

What is sometimes less obvious is the use we make of documentation to refine, and sometimes radically change, ‘the product’ in response to what we see evolving on stage. The documentation mentioned in 1 above is often used in this way, but its specialist nature can make that hard to demonstrate to non-practitioners. These photographs show a happy accident ‘tweaked’ into a finished element of the production. Fig1 is also a tool used to enable that ‘tweak’

The two women down stage are each in their own performance worlds. This was already beginning to be clear through the acting. What interested the director

and me was the way the photograph (fig1) implied we could help this with light – the seated woman in a cool, blue ‘place’ of serenity and the standing woman in an almost sickly amber ‘place’, that seemed to emphasise her envy and rage.

These choices worked for the dramaturgy of the piece and we decided to build the image. But we didn’t see the possibility live. In the early rehearsal we were both focused on other things, and it was the camera which emphasised an effect we hardly noticed.

We had not had these thoughts in rehearsals either, though it was clear the scene presented a problem to be

solved. It was only looking through the photos after that first stage rehearsal that a solution became obvious. At the next stage rehearsal, and after adjustments to the rig, the cues, and to the blocking, we looked at the scene – but the effect was too strong (fig2.)

With a further ‘tweak’ for the final dress rehearsal a successful solution to the problem could be documented, in fig3, and in other lighting design documentation.#

# Introducing our Corporate Members' rep: Iain Quinn

Some of you may or may not be aware, but you have a new Corporate Rep and that's me (I was cornered and, rather all too easily, talked into it!).

I would imagine most of you don't have any idea who I am, where I am from or how I even qualify to be here, I ask myself the same questions most days too, so don't worry.

Like most people in lighting I was an early starter, lighting shows at school, mostly as a good way to skip lessons. When I got my GCSE's the deputy head looked at my results and told me "Excellent results – now just imagine what you could have achieved if you had been to any lessons!"

After a brief rest to get some A-Levels (I still don't know why I chose Sociology I think it was the overall level of girls in the class that finally convinced me), I went to The Central School of Speech and Drama, graduating in 1998 with a degree in Theatre

Design and History. Whilst at Central we experienced all sides of the theatre and included me 'acting' (a boy with a tap stuck on his finger was one role I care to forget), some puppetry and mask work, life drawing (in which the teacher kept telling me to concentrate on getting my proportions right), making noise, set design, some 'intriguing costume design' oh, and lighting design for many varied shows, including a show at the Circus Space.

Whilst doing all of this, I was working as a deputy Technical Manger at a little theatre in Sutton and plying my trade as a lighting tech for a rental company, some bits and bobs for the BBC and working on a few touring shows when time permitted.

Once graduated I decided it was time to see the UK in style and headed out on tour with *Return to the Forbidden Planet* for a short stint. After returning to London I tried out the Vari\*Lite trainee program,

with the promise of 'working the last Royal tournament' (little did we know that would mean prepping thousands of metres of cable, par cans etc and then sitting in the roof of Earls Court with a Super Trooper wearing a face mask to filter out all to cordite and dust!).

Next I found myself in the stalls for Disney on *Lion King* as a Lighting Design Assistant, here I spent hours trawling paperwork and plots and discovered that you should never attempt to out-drink a professional technical team... it always ends in failure. From there I decided I needed to visit NYC to visit Broadway, taking in several shows, meeting up with many of the friends I made on *Lion King*, blagging my way up the Twin Towers and getting hopelessly lost in Central Park.

Shortly after returning from the US I was contacted by The Dome and joined the Technical Lighting

Team there, quickly moved up the ranks to lighting maintenance manager (I can claim to have lit the world's biggest attempted diamond robbery), but I can safely say I did not have my hands in the cookie jar and gained a great deal of experience in technical lighting design and equipment.

From there, not wanting to see all the hard work undone at The Dome, I moved to Fisher Productions as a Project Manager/Lighting Designer, managing events and designing lighting for film premiers, office openings, dinners, fashion shows etc. I do recall having to help a slightly worse for wear Miss Jolie out of a back door of one film premiere, only to get pinned down by a security entourage.

My latest move brought me into the world of ETC as European projects manager. Here I design control systems for all the over world for ETC including Copenhagen Opera



House, Wales Millennium Centre, parts of Disneyland Paris, Sky Italia, Dubai Aquarium, The Grand Mosque and countless others.






























So that's a rather convoluted history of me, but what do I want to do with the ALD? Well, this is where I would like some help from all members.

I am keen to develop stronger ties between the corporate members and the members of the ALD, to do this I am looking for ideas from you all, what would be of use to you, what would you like to see more of and how can I, as the Corporate Rep, help with the forward development of the ALD? Ideas on a postcard please!#

[iain.quinn@ald.org.uk](mailto:iain.quinn@ald.org.uk)

# Corporate Members

Thanks to our corporate members for supporting the ALD:

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