

June/July 2010

2010 AGM Special

# ALD #

# FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

"More art, less adverts..."

*Under the birdies this issue:*

Lighting a musical in an art gallery • the AGM • Julian Williams •  
Theatre lighting and the built environment ... and much more...

Price to non-members £5.00

*Billy Bragg and band in  
'Pressure Drop' at the  
Wellcome Collection.  
LD Mark Howland describes  
his experience with Birdies  
and Budgets on page 20.*





GREETINGS FROM BROADWAY, MARK!!  
AM CURRENTLY WORKING ON 'AMERICAN IDIOT'  
LD KEVIN ADAMS AND PROGRAMMER  
VICTOR SEASTONE WANTED A SYSTEM THAT  
COULD EASILY HANDLE CONVENTIONALS,  
MOVING LIGHTS AND MEDIA SERVERS -  
SO HERE I AM. ION WAS ACTUALLY HERE  
FOR A WHILE TO HANDLE THE VIDEO  
PROGRAMMING, BUT I'M RUNNING THE  
WHOLE RIG NOW. THE PROGRAMMING  
WENT REALLY FAST - OVER 500 CUES  
AND MULTIPLE LISTS, LOTS OF EFFECTS.  
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## Rick's Review

It was great to see so many of you at the AGM and to hear from others, who couldn't make it about their views on union membership. As you will see in other articles in this issue, we had a very lively discussion. The Exec has been instructed to continue looking into the services that are offered by BECTU and PLASA as well as our present arrangements with Equity. That way members can compare the services and business support that are most relevant to their own working lives.

We were also impressed with BECTU's willingness to talk to the ALD. The Exec was surprised at how many members are currently in BECTU with many of us taking advantage of the insurance that membership provides. We are also just beginning discussion with PLASA about supplying a package of services to individual ALD members that could

offer support for us as sole traders, while not expecting either BECTU or PLASA to negotiate minimum fees. As the ALD grows and members work in more diverse areas of lighting design, the needs of each of us vary, and perhaps it is unrealistic to expect one union or professional association to meet every member's needs.

Infact, after years of looking to Equity for improving the fees and conditions for lighting designers, they have still failed to get the producers to raise the minimums that are part of the collective bargaining agreement. ALD members have been very active in the designer's committee but now feel that maybe their efforts are better invested in the ALD to raise awareness of what the real rates LDs can expect based on other members' real experiences.

The ALD strives to share information that can make us all stronger. At the professional members' meeting we updated the suggested fees database,

which lists design fees we know have been paid in most of the areas of live performance. We are now aware that we should be expanding this information to cover the other types of work our Professional Members are doing such as production electrician, programming, touring etc. We are constantly in need of more information on a specific job basis as part of our fees database held at the office that is available to all members who contribute to it. These forms are available on the website so please keep making use of them. This information makes us stronger and in a time when fees are being squeezed it is imperative that we all have as much information possible.

Also I want to bring to everyone's attention that we now know that the original meetings of the Society of British Lighting Designers took place in 1961. This group was the genesis of the ALD and the Society of British Theatre Designers. In 2011 we should celebrate our

50th anniversary of bringing designers together and I look forward to hearing from all the membership how we can mark this milestone.

On a more personal note, I want to let the membership know that I announced at the AGM that this is my last year as chairman of the ALD. I have been very proud to be a part of the continued growth of the ALD into an association that I believe is of real use to all our members and is respected throughout the world. I will have been chairman for over 15 years by the time my term ends at the 2011 AGM. I think it is not good for any organisation to have one person in the chair for so long, and while I hope to continue to be involved, I wanted to give enough notice for someone to come forward.

I look forward to continuing to be chair for one more year and taking the ALD into its 50th year communicating with, and representing, all who creatively work with light.

Regards, Rick 🍷



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# Minima mutterings....

Mark Jonathan on standstill fees, professional issues and member communication.

“Oh, our Executive Director has been so clever in saving money in ways it doesn't matter... like the stationery,” said the artistic director over pre-show supper. “That's great,” I said, hoping that meant money for lighting design and production budgets had been ring fenced. The words of the director echoed back in my mind a few weeks later as the same organisation made an offer for my services. “It's a standstill offer,” said the agent, meaning it was the same fee as a year ago, “The budgets have been frozen,” she said. Given the current climate as cabinet ministers take a voluntary pay cut maybe I should be grateful? But the offer grated with me. You see, the staff at the theatre had received a pay-rise so I found it iniquitous that freelance workers should be at a standstill. From a

budget point of view we are easily lumped in with the physical production costs. So, not only will we have to be more ingenious in creating productions with fewer resources but also effectively be paid less if we have to accept a standstill. I declined the offer.

On this occasion, I'm happy to report that the company have made a new offer with an increase. Given the financial situation that's great. I did predict that we would see standstill fees and we asked agents to be watchful for this in the last *ALD Agent's newsletter*. So, if the cabinet ministers are taking a 5% pay cut should we accept a standstill? The problem I feel we are faced with is our fees have always been low for the amount of work we do and the calibre of our contribution. It may be necessary to

remind managements not to penalise us just because we aren't on the staff all the time. It's essential that all LDs are watchful and if it's the first time you are working for an organisation that you check they aren't dropping the fee just because you don't know what they paid previously. If you work regularly for an organisation then keep an eye that there is an annual increase. Please make sure that your agents are attending to this.

It seems clear to me that our individual agents have more influence in pushing for an increase than our union does as you will read both here and in Johanna Town's article on page 12 that Equity can only concern itself with the minimum fees. Generally, the fees paid throughout the land are above the pitifully low minima. I believe the

minimum rates may confuse producers into thinking that as they pay above the minimum they are in some way being generous or that there is room to hold the fee at a standstill. When one West End producer asked me what the minimum was, I said “Lights On, and Off!”, implying that the West End minimum did not allow for the complexities of the lighting I had given him on the show's out of London try out. I certainly don't believe the minimum rates allow for the amount of time most productions will need for us to be in rehearsals, preparing plans, in production and attending previews.

Despite our great disgruntlement with the minimum rates, and Simon Corder's suggestion that the minima should be dropped to a pound so everyone

knew they were a joke, we are lumbered with them as any change was rejected by Equity officials. The problem is exacerbated as in some fields the minimum rate is the rate that's paid, while our rates are not.

Meanwhile, I hear disturbing reports from various quarters of producers who have expectations that the lighting design may be done for nothing. Similarly, in a recent letter to *The Stage*, Barbara Eifler, Executive Director of the SMA, writes about stage management being sought for no pay. We also have received information of a theatre that has some tremendous opportunities for students on placements to the point where I wondered if anyone was going to be paid. There has to be a balance between getting an opportunity to

develop your experience and being ripped off. At the other end of the contractual barrel royalties should be paid in the West End and on Commercial tours.

Returning to union representation: despite the increased presence of LDs on the Equity Designers' committee we haven't made any real progress. I have remarked previously that while I believe the ALD has done much to raise the profile of the LD and the work that we do – we do not have the resources to be the union and it's unlikely that producers would agree to negotiate with us anyway. However, our concerns about the lack of progress with Equity were sufficient to merit the ALD Exec meeting with BECTU a week ago. Many thanks to Willy Donaghy who responded

immediately, unlike the Equity management who failed to respond to letters sent by our chairman for over a year. In a recent email to professional members we surveyed who was a member of Equity or BECTU. I was interested to find that more ALD members were already members of BECTU than Equity.

So, what can we do from within the ALD? A few years ago we developed a database of fees being paid in different categories. We updated this at the professional meeting that followed the recent AGM. Many thanks to members who attended and contributed to this. If you choose to, you can send in precise information of the fees you are receiving and then access (on a need to know basis) the fees being paid by organisations with

which you are in negotiation. If we are to guard against fees standing still or even declining it seems we need to share information more than ever.

The Exec have also had productive talks with PLASA. I was reminded at the AGM that the ALD must recognise that our members don't just work in the comparative narrow area of live performance in theatre. To this end it becomes clearer that the deal we have been looking at with PLASA will suit those of you running a small business that may operate within or outside theatre; others will be more suited to Equity or BECTU membership. At the moment, following considerable discussion with members, it seems that individual members will need to decide which organisation/s to bolt on to

their ALD membership. I'm sure these issues need further scrutiny and discussion.

Many thanks to the many members who sent apologies for not being able to attend the AGM. Finding a time when we can all be in the same room together is often problematic. So, I would love to find a way of improving our ability to share information with members and get your opinions. We already have an ALD Facebook page and our ALD Website. If we were to have a discussion forum would you read it and join in? We'd welcome your thoughts on how to develop this. While I was working in Manchester I was delighted to meet up with ALD member 'Dex' aka Tom Dexter Scott. We had a productive discussion – one of Dex's suggestions is that we should have a 'northern' branch of the ALD. We would



be pleased to encourage and promote meetings anywhere but it does need members to participate. Dex also suggested that we could have an ALD Twitter account. I am concerned about sharing delicate or confidential information via the social networks and maybe we should do this via member only pages on the ALD site while Facebook and Twitter can handle the stuff that's in the public domain. We're currently working on developing these areas and I hope we will have made some progress by the next issue. 🍀

# Designing an ALD Exhibit for the National Theatre Design Exhibition

Nick Moran



In February next year the four yearly Theatre Design Exhibition, organised by our colleagues in the Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD) will open in Cardiff. From this open exhibition, at which I hope the work of many ALD members will be on show, a juried exhibit representing British stage design will be taken to The Prague Quadriennial (PQ2011) in June. (more info on this at [www.pq.cz/en](http://www.pq.cz/en)).

In 2012, in time for the London Olympics, a third version of the exhibition will open at the V&A – where it is hoped it will repeat the stunning success of the Collaborators exhibition in 2008 and again attract a record number of visitors.

As we all know, the aims

of the ALD are to further the art of lighting design and to raise the professional status of the lighting designer as a member of the creative team. So in the context of the largest regular exhibition of design for performing arts, once again the question for the ALD is how best further our aims; to show the power of lighting design in an exhibition and by doing so raise the professional status of our members (LDs and their teams)?

One experienced set designer who was a recent juror for the National Exhibit is reported to have said that they couldn't really see lighting in a photograph of the stage – just the set and the costumes. If this view is widely held, it would

seem we can't make clear our contribution to professional colleagues visiting the exhibitions, let alone to the wider public, through photographs alone.

(One of the main themes of the forthcoming exhibition is transformation, and perhaps we should insist that all exhibition stage designers include a shot of their set under working light, in order to highlight the transformative power of designed light.)

We have asked for space in Cardiff for an exhibit that illustrates some of the process behind the creation of lighting design, and I'm the fool who agreed to make sure we have something worth showing. In my head what I want to show

to the "knowledgeable but non-specialist" punter is something that reflects the strange amalgam of technical knowledge, artistic ambition, experience and dramaturgical understanding, most often in the service of the director's somewhat cloudy vision, that goes into realising a successful lighting design.

Now here is where you might come in: **Do you have any concrete ideas as to how we might achieve this?**

You don't have to be queuing up for an award to be able to help here – in fact illustrating the process might be something that a more recent entrant into the business of stage lighting may see more clearly than those of us who do lots of what we do more by instinct

than in a pre-planned and thought out way. But also, if you are one of our leading professional designer members or professional members, and you have a show that lots of people have seen or know about that we could use to illustrate how and why you created the particular lighting design for it, we could build an exhibit round your work – from first meeting, through rehearsals and production to opening night and reviews.

We also hope that lots of LDs will be exhibiting in their own right, and that some will be exhibiting as part of a collaboration with a set and / or costume designer. If you are exhibiting as an ALD lighting designer, please make room for an ALD logo

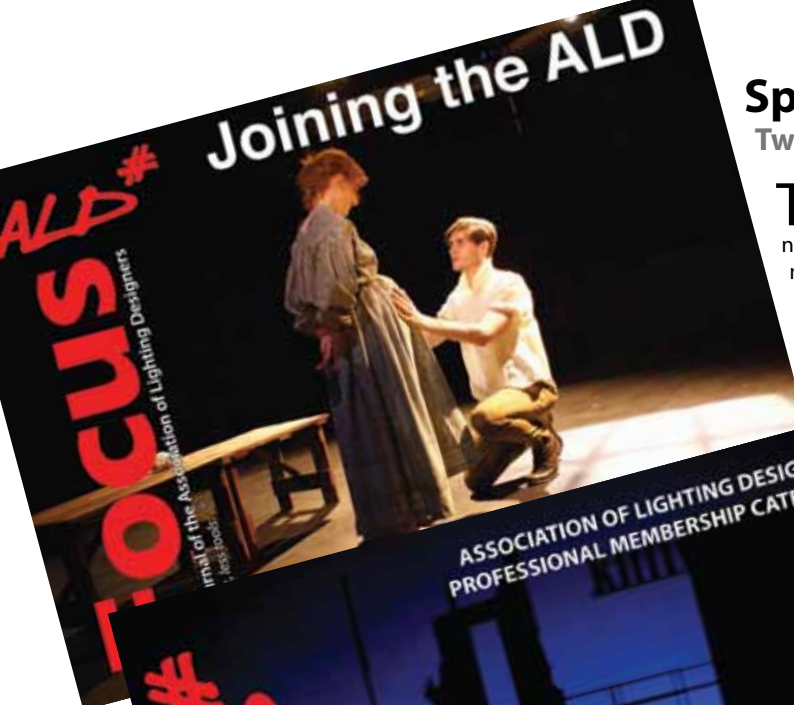
*Right: Part of my exhibit for Collaborators in 2007, which by including a Lx Plan and extracts of my production notes attempted to show something of the process that results in the finished design on stage, the equivalent of the set designer's model box in their exhibits.*

somewhere on your exhibit, and make sure you get your copy into the organisers in time for it to be included in the all important catalogue. (Just as an aside – in my job as a teacher of design for performance the catalogues of past exhibitions form an invaluable resource for students – but they don't have a great deal specifically from lighting designers, and it would be great to see that change in the next one.)

If you have any ideas please contact me at [nick.moran@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:nick.moran@cssd.ac.uk). Also if you want to know more about our exhibit, or Cardiff or PQ2011, drop me an e-mail and I'll do my best to make sure your questions get answered. 🍷

June / July 2010





## Spreading the Word

### Two new leaflets from the ALD

Two leaflets are now available to help members convince colleagues to join the ALD. When someone asks you “What’s in it for me?” no longer will you need to mumble, “Errr, well, ummmm...” You can simply hand over one of the new leaflets and everything is explained!

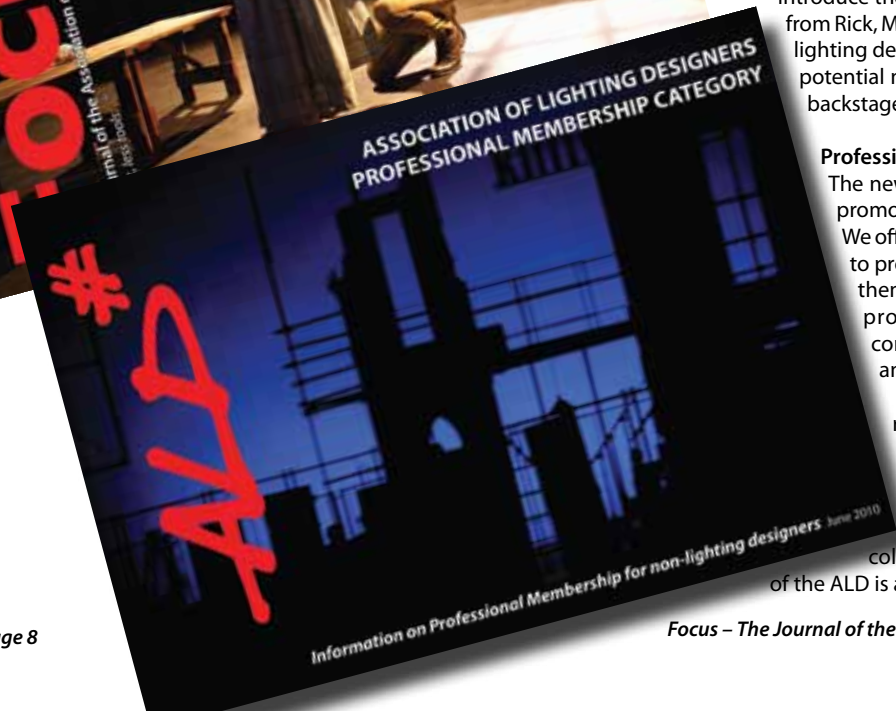
#### Joining the ALD

For some time we have distributed ‘Joining the ALD’ (a 12-page mini-Focus issue) to visitors at exhibitions at home and beyond. In this brochure we introduce the ALD and the membership options; with introductions from Rick, Mark and Ian, and ‘tasters’ from the pages of your favourite lighting design journal. So that’s your first option to present to any potential new members you stumble over when the blues are on backstage.

#### Professional membership

The new leaflet – ‘Professional Membership’ - is specifically to promote the launch of the new Professional Member category. We offer this targeted leaflet to explain the ALD and its benefits to professionals engaged in lighting, but who don’t consider themselves ‘lighting designers’ but could be programmers, production electricians, people working for lighting companies and theatres, projection designers, educators and theatre consultants, to name a few.

So please don’t be tongue tied! As a profession which relies on networking, it is great when members introduce new joiners to the ALD. You can give your active support in enrolling members by keeping a few leaflets handy to give to interested parties on your travels. Contact the office, or come and see us at ABTT and PLASA and collect some leaflets to help confirm that being a member of the ALD is a vital part of being in the lighting community. #



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

# How to apply for an internship in the entertainment technology industry

**Gary Fails,**  
**President of**  
**City Theatrical**  
**offers this advice**  
**to students in the**  
**USA.**

**We think all**  
**ALD students,**  
**everywhere**  
**should take**  
**careful note!**

**A**t the USITT exhibition this year we had a number of students come to our booth asking for internships. They were totally unprepared and seemed to be unclear about what companies were looking for in interns. So here is our list of the top five things you need to know if you are looking for an internship.

## **1: Know what you want**

If you want to hang shows on stage, don't look for an internship in a shop, and vice versa. Identify organizations that do the type of work you would like to learn more about, and set out to obtain your internship at one of those companies. Do us both a favor and don't take an internship just to "punch your ticket."

## **2: Know about the company that you are applying to**

Study the website, read

their literature, know their products and people. Show a familiarity with the company. Your internship is an opportunity to build your lifetime network of friends and contacts.

## **3: Tell us what makes you different**

We get a lot of applications from potential interns. Many of them are similar. What makes you different? Are you really good at something? Are you the best drafter, paperwork organizer, moving light programmer, console expert, electronics fixer, tinkerer, machinist, welder, humorist, or inventor? What? You aren't the best at something? Then tell us what else you have done that makes you different. Were you head of an organization, elected to some position, Eagle Scout, member of a great team, a proven winner,

head of the stage crew, or something that makes you a leader? Have you overcome some adversity to get ahead? Overall, what sets you apart from the hundreds of others out there who are looking for similar internships?

## **4: Please be prepared**

Don't ask for an internship without having considered the three steps above. Don't do a "drive by" application ("Uh. . . do you guys need any interns this year?") like we often get at trade shows. After preparing carefully, send a well written cover letter and resume with something that makes you stand out and will make us want to contact you for an interview. Follow up by email and phone. Ask for an interview. If you are called for an interview do not be late.. There is no excuse that can overcome that.

## **5: Be ready to fight your way in**

Out of every thousand students there are just a few with the drive and determination to be the leaders of the next generation of our industry. Some among you will start companies, be the next generation of Broadway designers, invent new products, and run our professional organizations like ESTA and USITT. Those are the types we really want to meet and to work with. If you are that type, don't ever give up trying to get the internship that you want. Your determination will be noticed and rewarded.

Good luck on your search for a good internship, and good luck on your lighting career! 🍀

# Office Oracle

## Latest news from Ian's production desk

### 2010 AGM

This year's Annual General Meeting took place on Saturday 15th May 2010 in the function room of the Yorkshire Grey Pub in central London. Many thanks to all those who either attended, or sent their apologies along with some input to the debates taking place on the day.

There was much discussion on a range of subjects giving the Executive plenty of work to do in the forthcoming year. You can read the reports on pages 32-39, and if any member would like a copy of the ALD accounts which accompanied my treasurer's report please contact the office.

### Subscription Fees

2010/11 subscription fees are now due for all members. The deadline for these payments is July 1st 2010.

Members paying by standing order should have by now received their new membership card sticker. This involves a lengthy process of reconciling some 350 standing order payments into our bank account within 6 days at the start of April with members' names on the database. These payments total approximately £19,000 and so **we do ask members to include their membership number as a payment reference to help speed up this process.**

Any members who believe they have paid their subscriptions before the end of May but have yet to receive their 2010/11 card sticker in return should contact the office to clear up the situation or visit the ALD stand at the ABTT show.

Professional and Designer members who have still not changed their standing order

to £75 for 2010/11 and have not paid the overdue amount before 1st July 2010 will be assumed to wish to change to their membership to the Associate category and their membership will change to reflect this. So please ensure your payment instruction matches the rate for the membership category you wish to have.

Please note that a standing order is an arrangement between you and your bank, the ALD cannot change the details of such an arrangement for you.

For those members who do not pay by standing order, please note that this is your last edition of *Focus* if we have not received payment by 1st July 2010. If you are in any doubt whether you owe money, please contact the office as soon as possible. Check the website for current subscription rates.

### Tony Awards Nominations

Once again ALD members are at the forefront of nominations in the New York theatre awards *Lighting Design* categories. ALD members below are indicated in red:

#### Best Lighting Design of a Play

**Neil Austin** for *Hamlet*

**Neil Austin** for *Red*

**Mark Henderson** for *Enron*

Brian MacDevitt for *Fences*

#### Best Lighting Design of a Musical

Kevin Adams for *American Idiot*

Donald Holder for *Ragtime*

**Nick Richings** for *La Cage Aux Folles*

Robert Wierzel for *Fela!*

The awards ceremony takes place on June 13th and a full list of all nominees can be seen here:

[www.tonyawards.com/en\\_US/nominees/index.html](http://www.tonyawards.com/en_US/nominees/index.html)

STOP PRESS: **Neil Austin** has won the **Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Lighting Design** for *Red*.

Full details at:

[www.dramadesk.com/press100.html](http://www.dramadesk.com/press100.html)

Other nominations were:

Christian M. DeAngelis for *Lizzie Borden*

Maruti Evans for *John Ball's In the Heat of the Night*

Natasha Katz for *The Addams Family*

Dane Laffrey for *The Boys in the Band*

## The Michael Northen Student Design Bursary 2010

The Michael Northen Bursary 2010 will be awarded by the ALD in conjunction with ETC and The Mousetrap Foundation.

This prestigious award which is open to all students and not just ALD members.

The Michael Northen Bursary was set up by Michael Northen shortly before he passed away in 2001. It takes the form of a £500 prize awarded to a student who shows exemplary talent in lighting design. The award is to be judged on a project that the student has produced within the past academic year (July 2008 – July 2009). This award was originally made in conjunction with the White Light Bursary and since 2004 the ALD has administered the scheme and organises

the presentation of awards as a fitting tribute to Michael who was a founding member of the ALD and a previous President. The fund itself is held by The Mousetrap Foundation, an organisation committed to encouraging young theatre practitioners. The ALD therefore awards the bursary each year in conjunction with The Mousetrap Foundation. The Michael Northen Bursary Award winner will receive £500.

This year the ALD prize is to be renamed in honour of an ALD Fellow whose long career has encompassed being a designer, lecturer and author in the use of light on stage and in performance. *The Francis Reid Award* will be presented to a runner up of the main bursary and they will receive £250. Once again we are pleased that ETC continue to support

the competition and the ETC Award winner will also receive £250.

All three winning submissions will be displayed on the ALD stand at the PLASA10 in September, where the prizes will be presented. The judging will take place by a panel of industry professionals. Previous judges have included Rick Fisher, Paule Constable, Mark Jonathan and Paul Pyant.

Applicants should complete a submission form (downloadable from [www.ald.org/students/](http://www.ald.org/students/)) which will demonstrate the development and processes of a successfully realised lighting design performance project. Additional material to support the application such as photographs, storyboards or plans are set out in the guidance notes of the submission form.

We should emphasise that this is a **design** bursary and the ALD is not looking for wonderful project management or equipment lists. The submissions will be judged on an imaginative design and creativity in lighting. Students should therefore consider carefully how to communicate their concept for the lighting design and how their ideas were realised in performance.

Submissions must be received at the ALD office (address below) by **Friday 31st July 2010**. Judging will take place in August 2010. Submissions should not be larger than an A4 envelope. Entrants may submit work in an electronic format on CD, but must ensure that files are printable and in a common format (i.e. Word, Excel, Jpeg's, Bitmaps).

If electronic entries cannot be viewed by the judging



panel then the entry cannot be considered.

## ABTT Theatre Show 2010

The ABTT Theatre show takes place at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London again on **Wednesday 16th** and **Thursday 17th June**.

The ALD will be in attendance in the same area as last year in the Assembly Hall at stand 53. Pop along to say hello and allow us to put a face to a database entry! We will even accept payment for your 2010/2011 subscriptions by cash or cheque! 🍀

## After a great AGM and professionals' meeting, I thought it would be good to update you all on my position regarding Equity.

As you know, I act as your representative along with Marco on the Equity Theatre Designers Committee (ETDC) and have done so for nearly six years.

I have done this because I believe that we should have a voice as lighting designers within our industry and we should have access to some form of protection from accidents and unscrupulous managements, all of which Equity can and does offer. I have argued on these pages that we should all have Equity

membership in order to have the "AA-type breakdown cover" we would not dream of not having for our cars, but are happy to forget for ourselves. I have, whilst being on the committee, used Equity's strength as a collective union for our industry to receive payment for work done that I might not have otherwise achieved.

But there is much more to Equity than an insurance policy, and over the past six years you may have wondered what else we might have been able to achieve. Well, not a lot.

We have managed to introduce some new active members to the ETDC. However, over the years they have come and gone. We have been able to broaden Equity's outlook on the actual world we all now work in. We tried to open the debate on the

low minimum fees that they negotiate in our agreements, but have lost any battle to change these. Minimum fees within a union are core to any union's structure. We have tried to debate more general freelance problems, and have had some success in discussing these issues, but actions take a painfully long time and sustaining any momentum over these debates is slim. Adding to this, the actual addition of new more involved working committee members has brought its own problems; continued absences due to work commitments leaves items on the agenda unable to move forward for months, and sometimes years.

When I first joined the ETDC I was informed by previous LDs that not much happened. However, I have been on the ALD committee for the same

# update

Johanna Town



number of years and this has been a constant inspiration to me. The Executive committee and members have grown from strength to strength. I feel that its members have done more for the profile of LDs over the same period than any union could have. Just today during the AGM & professional members' meeting there were some very open and frank debates on who we are, and what we can be. Discussions on the constitution, discussions on how to work collaboratively together as a body of designers – all open discussions and not bound by a structure so tight that when we want to stand and shout we are firmly told to sit and wait. I love being on the ALD Executive and even though I find it hard to find the time to contribute regularly I am happy to be counted and to

stand up proudly and say I am part of this great arm of change that is happening within the world of lighting.

The ALD can never be a union and would never want to be, but we can stand up and be counted. I am proposing that the ALD withdraws from actively having a representative in Equity and that we no longer spend our energies inputting into a single union body. With new members who cross all aspects of lighting in our industry, the ALD can now concentrate on opening debates with all the unions and relevant industrial parties.

Personally, I think the ALD and all its members can further our cause more in the next six years with its sheer enthusiasm and determination. Your thoughts? #

## Dates for your Diaries

### 13-15th June

Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference, London [www.theatre-event.com/conference](http://www.theatre-event.com/conference)

### 16-17th June

ABTT Theatre Show\*

### 1st July

Deadline for subscription payments

### 16th July

Deadline for *Focus* August/September articles

### 12-15th September

PLASA 2010\*

### 12th September

Knight of Illumination Awards ceremony

### 17th September

Deadline for *Focus* October/November articles

### 1st November

Deadline for 2011 Yearbook info submissions.

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

## Contact us

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[office@ald.org.uk](mailto:office@ald.org.uk) [www.ald.org.uk](http://www.ald.org.uk)

### The Executive

President: **Richard Pilbrow**

Chairman: **Rick Fisher** [rick.fisher@ald.org.uk](mailto:rick.fisher@ald.org.uk)

Deputy Chair: **Jason Larcombe** [jason.larcombe@ald.org.uk](mailto:jason.larcombe@ald.org.uk)

Administrator and Treasurer:

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To submit ideas for articles, information, correspondence, corrections and any comments about *Focus*, please email [editor@ald.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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...

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**Central School of Speech & Drama Library**, London

\* from Associate

† rejoining



Registration for The 2010 Knight of Illumination Awards has now closed, and all entries will be judged by a panel of professional reviewers working in the specific categories of Rock, Theatre and TV, selected and coordinated by the STLD and the ALD. For the *Theatre* section it is open to theatre productions performed in the UK, though not necessarily designed by UK based LDs. The sections include: Stage events | Arena events | Eco friendly tours | Musicals | Dance | Opera | Drama

The award ceremony is to be held on the first day of PLASA 2010 – Sunday 12th September, 2010.

Further information is available at: [www.knight-of-illumination.com](http://www.knight-of-illumination.com)

# A day out in London

Come and meet up with friends and visit the **ALD** # on stand 53 at the ABTT Theatre Show on the 16-17th June!



All exhibitions claim to get bigger every year but in the case of this year's ABTT (Association of British Theatre Technicians) Theatre Show such a declaration is justified. Demand for space at the exhibition, which takes place at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London from 16th to 17th June, has been so high that the organizers are having to use all available space to accommodate both new and established exhibitors.

The list of companies taking stands at ABTT 2010 covers the spectrum of products and services for the theatre production and staging market, with a strong showing from the engineering sector. This is partly due to the biennial *International Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference* (ITEAC) running in parallel with the Theatre Show but in general

the increased exhibitor attendance demonstrates that this event has become the key industry showcase in the UK.

Among the companies at this year's show are Dutch winch, under-stage and control systems specialist Trekwerk, Unusual Rigging, Autograph Sales, Roland UK and two high-profile manufacturers making debuts at the ABTT Theatre Show; leading amplifier designer Lab.gruppen and French loudspeaker manufacturer Nexo.

To cope with the increased demand for stand space the organizers will be using the mezzanine area of the Lawrence Hall for the first time. Show director Roger Fox says this reflects the growing status of the exhibition and the flexibility of the venue in being able to house more companies. "We are very

pleased to be in the position of having to look for space to accommodate exhibitors," he comments.

"The ITEA Conference is increasing the focus on the Theatre Show but in general people in the industry want to see the latest products and discuss what is going on in the market. Our exhibition provides that forum and this year's event is set to be the best ever." 🌸

*You'll find the ALD in the Assembly Hall - that's the lower ground floor of the main Lawrence Hall, right next to the café. Please come along and visit our stand, tell us what you are doing, and get nagged to write for Focus!*



# ABTT Theatre Show



16th & 17th June

Royal Horticultural Halls London SW1P 2PB

Register NOW for free admission [www.abtt.org.uk/theatreshow](http://www.abtt.org.uk/theatreshow)

32 years of the latest  
in theatre technology





## My Jules

Julian Williams lost his long fight with cancer on May 9th.  
by Kate Salberg

being the follow spotter to beat all follow spotters, is I think the sole survivor still working there. Julian talked a lot about Morecambe & Wise trying out their gags on the crew, of everyone being locked down and not allowed to leave their positions until Sinatra had left the building, of his great fondness for Bruce Forsythe, of the difficulties of Judy Garland and Shirley Bassey, of the pleasures and stresses of working with American lighting designers. A rarefied world completely lost to us now. Having been a huge Beatles fan as a child I was terribly impressed that he had been there on the Royal Variety show when John Lennon told the audience at the stalls to 'rattle their jewellery'. Julian being Julian... the nastiest he could be about any star was to describe them as 'a bit difficult.'

In later years, once the children were in their teens it was a standing joke – "*don't mention the Palladium*" – if you didn't want to hear a particular story again.

He worked also at Strand Electric and I think Theatre Projects, and operated shows at the Coliseum. This part of his life, I will be honest, is somewhat vague to me. He also ran his own small company, Feature Lighting, importing adaptors for theatre use but had to abandon this when the guidelines changed.

After the Palladium became a home for long running musicals, Julian decided to move on, encouraged by me. In retrospect this was probably not the best move for him as he liked security and routine far more than I. However, the control of a resident management, the disappearance of the great

days of variety was a great loss to all those who had spent their years working within it. Added to this in early 1988 we produced twins, Emma & Ben, who were at the centre of his world for the rest of his life.

When the children were small he stayed involved through the school and through amateur productions while I was working as a stage and company manager in the west end.

Jules was first diagnosed with cancer in 1999 and we moved to Yorkshire in 2001 to ease our burdens. He remained involved with lighting through the ALD and the ABTT and loved to go to the meetings and listen to designers talking about their work. He just loved lights, from the time he was a boy and our children used to like looking at the pallet colours he kept. He couldn't throw

Julian Williams started work in the theatre as a young man helped by his father who worked for the Italia Conti Agency.

He always boasted that his first job as an ASM was to cross the stage during a *Crazy Gang* show at the Victoria Palace inside a sack. Recently, our daughter Emma worked there as a sound dep on *Billy Elliott* and he liked to picture this along with knowing that I worked there for a while on

*Barnum* in the 80's. Home from home.

I met Julian when I was stage manager on the book for *Barnum* at the Palladium in 1981. He had worked there for many years during the glory days of variety and it was his spiritual home for the rest of his life. He was immensely fond of Bill Platt who taught him a great deal and of the resident crew at that time, among whom Linford Hudson, famous for

anything away so that the garage is still the possessor of weird outdated lanterns. He was a frequent visitor back 'down south' but also loved the countryside and seaside in Yorkshire where he would sit and gaze at the sea and share chips with his beloved Millie, our dog.

He fought through recurrences of the disease over the following ten years and while not being able to work full time he spent one summer looking after a touring caravan site overlooking the bay outside Scarborough which he loved and managed to do one bout of followspotting at the Gielgud on Bill Baileys' *Tinseltown*. Throughout this time and all the difficulties he underwent he never once complained, and remained pretty fit until the final 12 months, the final two months being particularly difficult.

June / July 2010

The children were 11 when he was first diagnosed and his targets extended to seeing them through GCSE's then A levels, Emma to music college and then working in the theatre and Ben to do a gap year with some travelling and then to Oxford where he is about to take his finals.

He was immensely proud of Emma working on sound at *Phantom* which is where she had come in as I was DSM there when pregnant 23 years ago.

Jules died in a magnificently supportive palliative care unit on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2010. His life was not easy but he was unfailingly determined and optimistic and we as a family have lost a dear, loyal friend.

If any of his lighting friends have memories of him I'm sure the children & I would be glad to hear from you. 🍀





# Billy Bragg, Birdies and Budgets

A Wellcome promenade for **Mark Howland**

*Mark is a freelance lighting designer. He trained at RADA and spent several years working as a programmer and re-lighter. Now mainly working in theatre, with the occasional opera project, he is due to light his first musical in Denmark next year. All photos by Mark. His website is at [www.markhowland.co.uk](http://www.markhowland.co.uk)*

Last June I was approached by Mick Gordon to light his latest project. From previous experience of working with Mick I knew it was likely to be exciting, but also challenging. This seems in retrospect an understatement on both counts. The brief seemed straightforward enough and went something like this:

The show was to be commissioned by the Wellcome Collection to round off their *Identity* exhibition. It would be co-produced by Wellcome and Mick's company *On Theatre*. It was to be performed as a promenade piece in the large gallery space at the Wellcome Collection building, Euston...

I had all worked with the rest of the creative team

before; Mick as writer/producer, Christopher Haydon as director, Tom Scutt set designer and sound design by Mike Furness. At this stage there was no script, other than the knowledge that it was to be based on Billy Bragg's experiences and the current political situation in Barking. Billy was to collaborate in the writing and write new songs that he would perform as part of the performance.

The first site visit immediately highlighted the potential problems. The space is large, low and awkward (about 30m by 20m by 3.5m). There were no significant hanging points, and no way to integrate the installed track lighting with our system. To make matters worse we were warned that the floor was unsuited to

supporting large point loads, and so when I mentioned stands and truss I was warned that these could only be sited over the few 'I' beams within the floor.

With this in mind I met up with Tom and Chris to discuss the possibilities. Tom's design was to create a contained space within the gallery, reducing the performance space to 25m x 10m. Within this there were four separate stages; one for the band and then one each for the three locations suggested by the new script outline. Through the middle of the outer wall was to be a bloodline – a backlit section of BP recessed in the flattage – red for most of the show but turning to white for the final exit.

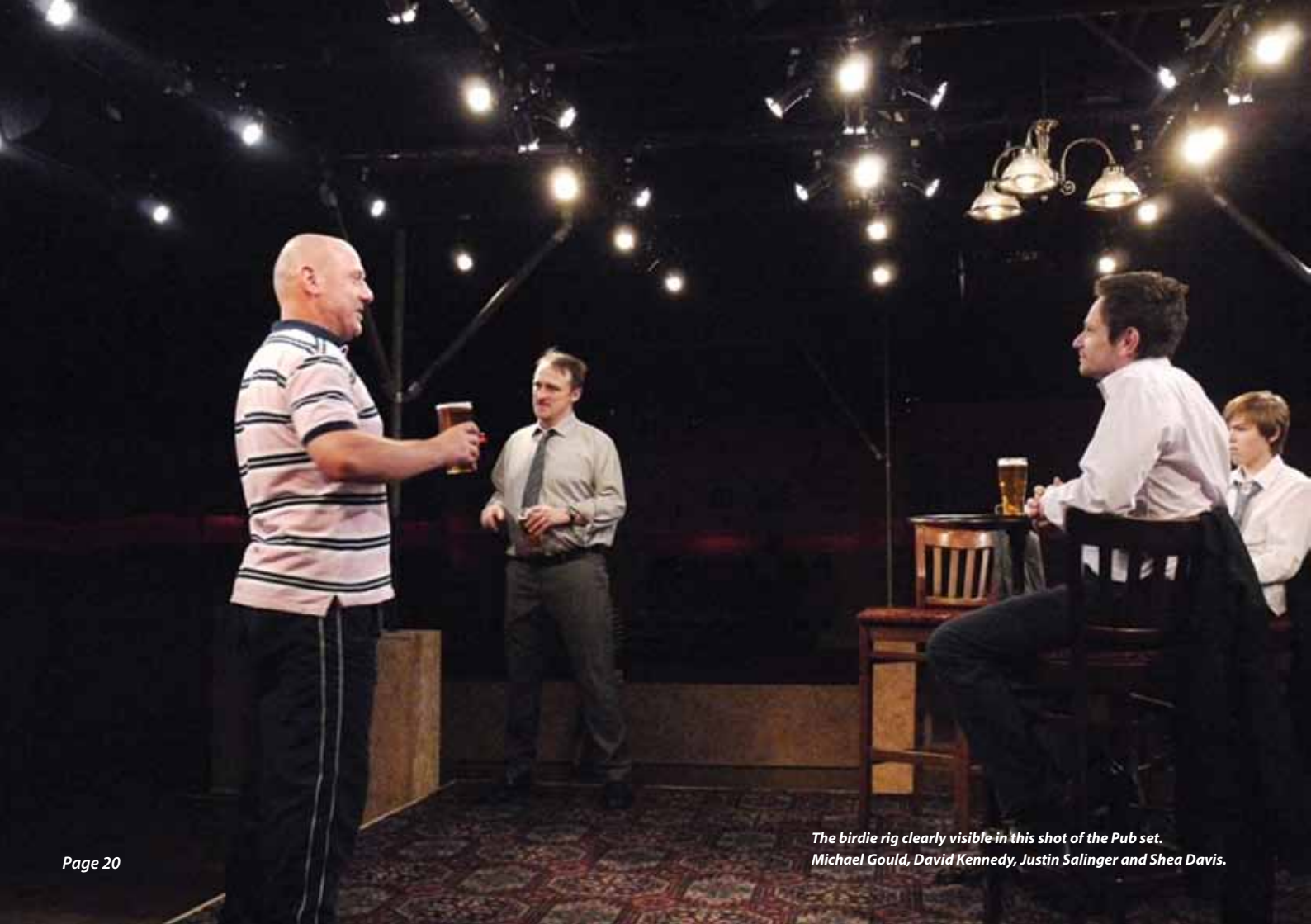
My initial concept was based on a full ground support truss and large

theatrical rig. This rig would be based on Source 4s and 650W fresnels, with a number of moving lights both for the band and to light performers in areas away from each of the stages as was intended. The BP screen would have to be lit with LEDs (there was not the power available to do it with anything else). Still with no script to work from I imagined needing to provide several different times of day and atmospheres on each stage. The first hire quotes came back proving to be about double our available budget. I went away to work on the first of many compromises.

First to go was the backlit BP, remaining only in an area behind the band. Everywhere else it was replaced with a recessed red painted gap in the walls, illuminated by red

*Two of the stages visible in the gallery space showing the 'bloodline' in red.*





*The birdie rig clearly visible in this shot of the Pub set.  
Michael Gould, David Kennedy, Justin Salinger and Shea Davis.*

## Billy Bragg, Birdies and Budgets

### Mark Howland

ropelight concealed within the walls of the set. At this point, still without a script, I clung doggedly to my rig of Source 4s and movers, anticipating complicated scenes performed on each stage. The saving would come from a much reduced truss and the removal of the LEDs for the BP.

The updated kit list was still significantly over budget. The truss was by far the biggest cost, but without a truss I could not put anything up in the air. Perhaps a few stands with T-bars? Not really neat enough or refined enough to work in the space. Finally a script arrived and I looked through it hoping to find an answer. I noticed that in fact each stage could be dealt with very simply – there was only one significant change in the time of day which happened on one stage alone. Each stage could be lit almost as an individual scene requiring no real changes throughout.

With producer and production manager breathing down my neck demanding large savings and in

the midst of a production week for a different show, I came up with an idea for the significant change required. The show is performed in an art gallery and the scenes we are playing out are part of an exhibition as much as a performance. Each stage needs to be well illuminated but there is not necessarily the need for theatrical enhancement of atmosphere. After all, the show is billed as 'part gig, part play, part installation'. What would you use to light an exhibition? *Birdies*. They are light weight and so could be hung on smaller, cheaper scaff structures which could integrate and frame the stages much less obtrusively than truss. Their appearance would not be out of place amongst the gallery infrastructure and they would not dominate the space (with the rig so low this was a major concern).

How many birdies does it take to light four 4mx4m stages from a height of 2.5m? I made some sketches and estimated 60 for each of the three acting stages, 20 for the



Church stage area with June Watson and Pip Donaghy.



*The final moment of the show with the coffin passing the band on its exit...*

## Billy Bragg, Birdies and Budgets

### Mark Howland

band (they would still get a pair of movers and some LED pars) and another 50 for specials and a long corridor through the space for the ending. This seemed the only viable option financially, but I was also more than happy that I could justify it artistically.

The final rig consisted of 190 240V birdies (chosen for their ease of installation and the resulting neater rig), 60 12V birdies (used for specials and where the slightly punchier 75W lamps would be required), one Source 4 as a special on Billy, three source 4s and a 1.2k HMI Fresnel for the final exit moment, a dozen 500W floods for general illumination of the entire space and some LED pars and a couple of Macs over the band.

At this point – a huge thank

you must go to Adam Povey my production electrician on this job. He managed to ensure we had dimmers that would cope with dimming individual birdies with no flickering or poor fading (the majority were in groups of four lamps but specials were still individual), created neat ground support rigging structures with scaff, found a hire company that could supply 250 birdies for less than it cost to buy, dealt with my constantly changing demands and a frustratingly fluid budget all in exceptionally good humour.

I must also say that the rest of the creative team were very supportive. Discussions on the pros and cons of the birdie rig were completed quickly and everyone was happy with my decision that

this was the way forward. I was still slightly apprehensive right up until the focus, continually drawing cross sections and doing beam angle calculations to try to convince myself that we would get an even cover.

On site my worries began to fade, firstly because it was clear that the scaff structures were instantly less obtrusive than any truss would have been. Secondly, after focusing the first bar, it became clear that all would be well. Helped by that fabulous invention brushed silk, an even cover of good intensity was achieved.

What has been so interesting looking back at this project is how important the change in approach during those frantic budget discussions has been. Everyone involved in the

show has agreed that the birdies were exactly the right way to have lit this piece. Equally the red line within the set has a much more interesting and real texture as painted wood lit by the ropelight than the full BP screen would have done.

It must be rare indeed to find someone who is, in retrospect, thankful for a small budget and the reassessment in necessities. Thinking back, I am conscious that the lighting style of the show was changed for the better as a result of enforced reductions. I began the project looking for the most flexible, dramatic and theatrical way to light this performance. Whether that was down entirely to not having a script is difficult to say. I am sure that part of it was more influenced by my desire for plenty of kit; I

am reminded of the article in the last issue of *Focus* 'Is technology a distraction?' – in this instance I think it was. Only when it became totally apparent (after three reduced truss plans and kit lists) that I could not afford the size of rig I had hoped for, did I take a fresh look. In searching for the simplest and least obtrusive solution the lighting has served the production in a much stronger way.

I hope this is an experience that I can continue to benefit from in the future. There will always be some projects that require a large rig regardless of the costs, but sometimes we can find ourselves providing a much more interesting, effective and rewarding solution if we step back and start again looking for the simplest answer. 🌸



## Focus on Focus 27-28 April

Nigel Lawson Dick returns from PLASA's industry show in Leeds...

'Less is more' – or so they say. And so it was that the Association of Lighting Designers was firmly slimmed down to the ALD for a couple of days. Our stand at the Armouries in Leeds was rather smaller than usual – you could have just about laid out a couple of chaps in suits of armour, if that was your thing. Or else you could breathe in deeply and install some of our usual display. Very good for the posture, though, having to stand up so straight with only a 1 metre depth to our space!

But as ever the locals were welcoming and helpful and the get-in to the hall in the Royal Armouries Museum was straightforward. So Monday evening afforded the opportunity for a visit to the Playhouse to see *The Count Of Monte Cristo* – 6 actors and 40-something parts. My

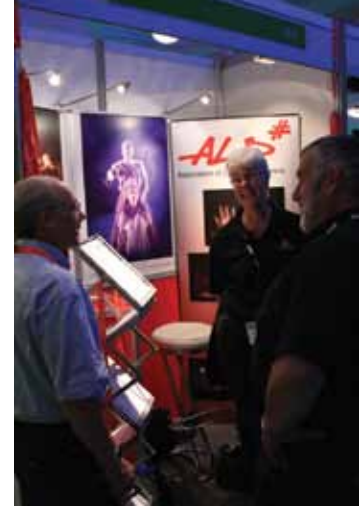
goodness they did work hard, collapsing along, convoluted and wordy tale into a couple of hours of frenetic activity. Both the audience and the cast needed the interval to recover! And with the action moving from seaside to dungeon to ship to palace to duelling ground and heaven knows where else Chris Davey's lighting design was working overtime to keep us in shape. All good fun.

But back to the Armouries and a positive flood of visitors in the early hours of the show. This event has grown again in size and number of exhibitors (hence our modest increase in pre-registrations – and they turned up and the sun was shining so everyone was happy!

Our recruiting efforts were rewarded well – perhaps not quite as many as in

the last couple of years – but there is increasing interest in the Professional Member standing which is encouraging. It will be good to build those numbers and achieve some 'critical mass'! But a warm welcome to those who did join our number.











We did see plenty of members over the two days. And if members are already members it's tricky trying to recruit them – perhaps we have been too successful recently! And it was good to have company of members to chat to and when other prospective members did come along give a chance to talk about what the Association achieves for them and our lighting community. And my thanks to Richard Thompson for sharing the task with me again. Always encouraging to have some support in between times.



The organisers again ran their evening event but on this occasion I have to report that the ALD did not field a pool team – though clearly a good time was being had by the many others who did indulge. This non-participant just enjoyed a drink and a chat and a bite to eat and then headed for bed at a respectable hour and watched some snooker. Good Lord, am I getting old? 🍷



# Corporate Members Thanks for supporting the ALD.

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## Theatre Lighting and the Built Society of Light and Lighting seminar at Rose

### Two perspectives from Hansjörg Schmidt and

**Hansjörg Schmidt**  
(Programme Director, BA Lighting Design at Rose Bruford College)

On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May, Rose Bruford College and the Society of Light and Lighting (SLL) hosted a one-day seminar to introduce lighting professionals from the construction and engineering industries into

the dark arts of theatre lighting.

The seminar consisted of two parts: in the morning session four theatre lighting designers introduced key projects, talking about their design process. CIBSE president Mike Simpson hosted the seminar. The LDs were Rick Fisher (ALD chairman) Declan Randall, Alex Wardle and me. In

the afternoon, delegates engaged in hands-on workshops in the college's lighting laboratories, creating a lighting scene for Philip Glass's opera *Satyagraha* (photo above).

Throughout the day, lively discussions centred on the often surprising parallels between the two disciplines, as well as the many differing approaches and processes.

Delegates and speakers felt that a closer collaboration between members from the two organisations represented (ALD and SLL) would be hugely beneficial in terms of transferring knowledge and design practice. Moreover, the possibilities of a single, strong voice advocating our industry seemed to be worth further discussion, particularly in light of the ongoing need to develop a strategy that engages actively with industry's and government's push for sustainability in any new project we undertake.

This was a very successful first stab at working more closely with the SLL, building on the success of the annual *Ready Steady Light* event. I really hope we can further develop our relationship with both the ALD and SLL, and I think that there is a real

opportunity here to share our own working practice as theatre lighting designers with the wider lighting community.

My programme also hopes to collaborate more closely with both the SLL and ALD on promoting lighting design as a career choice across schools and colleges in the UK. 🌱

# Environment

Bruford College

Ralph Stokeld

**Ralph Stokeld**  
(3<sup>rd</sup> year BA Lighting  
Design student)

The day-long seminar that brought together the Society of Light and Lighting and the Association of Lighting Designers shows a big step in the direction of modern lighting design. Theatrical and architectural lighting styles have grown ever closer in the last few years as both styles begin to overlap. A building can now be lit with a deeper context, no longer just a convenience and safety measure, but a story illuminated in a way that an observer can connect with. Elements of the theatrical design process creep into the architectural lighting designer's work. Their structure becomes the script and the wider public their audience. The

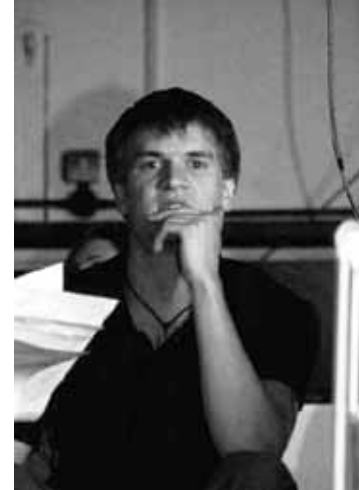
SLL specific reader base can really benefit from what the ALD offers and vice versa. A greater awareness of all the components that make up this industry is something we as lighting students and professionals alike should strive for. Knowledge is not mutually exclusive and the best laid plans are always influenced and adapted by looking at something in a different way.

Having worked predominantly in theatre I found myself in Liverpool in 2008 at a workshop organised by the PLDA, and for the first time was introduced to lighting for architecture. I learnt much from the professionals who worked alongside us and found that my primarily theatre based ideas were not lost on this venture. Indeed many of the professionals working with

us, such as Kevan Shaw, have worked long stints in theatre and this greatly influences their work. The process, like theatre, was intense and collaborative. Ideas were bounced around; some kept, some adapted and others discarded. I wanted to create lighting that supported the magnificent architecture of the building; just like I wanted to support the poetic words of the script in *The Love of the Nightingale*, the last play I lit in London.

We should attempt to use the collaborative heads of both the ALD and SLL to directly appeal to more young people in the UK. Lighting is increasing in demand on every level and still a greater body of young blood is needed to continue our immense industry. School projects organised by both associations would

greatly enhance that. When choosing where and what to study at 17 years of age I had little advice about lighting courses and smaller college institutions which ultimately almost cost me my chance to study at Rose Bruford College. Providing workshops for schools and helping them understand the uses of light for both theatre and architecture would be a welcomed step in the right direction. An institution could allow the pupils to study its own architecture by lighting different areas of the school building trying to emphasise storytelling and communication with light. The canvas is blank, let's go and paint it. 🍷



## Ralph Stokeld

*Ralph is soon to graduate the BA(Hons) Lighting Design course from Rose Bruford College.*

*He is a freelance lighting designer and writer who specialises in theatre, opera and dance. Most recently Ralph lit a production of 'The Love of the Nightingale', at The Unicorn Theatre. Ralph also has a great interest in and still develops techniques for architectural lighting. He works with acclaimed theatre company Pants on Fire and will accompany a show to Edinburgh this August with a possible tour next year.*

*For more information please visit [www.stokeldlightingdesign.co.uk](http://www.stokeldlightingdesign.co.uk)*



# Annual General Meeting 2010

## London, Saturday 15th May - John Leventhall's view

with appropriate mirror balls that rotated throughout the meeting!). And you missed a nice buffet to finish the meeting! But of course we will warmly welcome you at the next AGM!

### What is an AGM for?

Is it just a bit of mindless bureaucracy to serve the requirements of the ethical management of the association? Approving the well-managed accounts is not exactly stirring stuff!

Or is the AGM more than that? It's certainly one of the best annual opportunities to get members together and shape our profession and our mutual solidarity against the backdrop of the eternal lack of recognition by managements of the real value to their productions and profits of having good lighting. In an industry where increasing numbers

are entering, the negotiating power for fees and the maintenance of standards, as individuals, remains low. The ALD arguably represents the only current 'thin red line' defending collectively the effort to make lighting a credible and reasonably paid profession. If the ALD has a part to play in demonstrating that, it needs your active support... or it fades away.

In previous AGMs the meeting has voted on key changes: In 2008 strategy changes to increase the vigour with which members' interests and the standing of performance lighting are promoted and, last year, to extend inclusiveness by adding a new category of membership.

And indeed, this year, the business of the meeting was not without significant change on the agenda.



### Retirement of Rick Fisher as Chair

Foremost, Rick Fisher our chairperson of well over 15 years announced that he would be standing down next year. Whilst it was a little early to make fulsome farewells to one of the longest serving ALD officers, the members were quick to recognise Rick's huge contribution during his time as Chair. His thoughtful

On cup final day and one of the sunniest of the year so far (and that's not saying much!) we had a useful cross section of members attending at this year's AGM who braved the tribulations of the Saturday London train timetables.

Everyone reading this article should extend their thanks to those people who turned up to see that the business of the association was supported with a healthy quorum of pro members and who offered such a high

quality of debate. We had a record number of apologies for absence this year from people who took the trouble to recognise their desire to be at the meeting but who had prior commitments, often across the globe. But to attend ALD meetings or to participate in some way is to breathe life into the association ...of which more later.

The meeting was in the very pleasant upstairs rooms of the Yorkshire Grey Pub, Grey's Inn Road (complete

announcement a year in advance means that there is the opportunity to select candidates and elect the next Chair with the participation of ALL ALD MEMBERS.

### Election of a New Chair

We had an extensive discussion of how we might consult members. Modern internet communication could help shape a new voting system that ensured equal opportunity for all members. Nominees for the new Chair will be actively sought and it was suggested that candidates will be encouraged to communicate and campaign, each with a mini-manifesto.

The Exec will work on developing a method that will allow people to have an input as we know how difficult it can often be for people to make it to any given meeting. The hope

was that the election will not just be a show of hands from 5% of members at the next AGM but could be a vote from every eligible voting member before the 2011 AGM. Inclusive democracy was the watchword!

### Communicate, communicate, communicate!

For a bunch of people who most often rely on networking to get work, the members of the ALD seem remarkably diffident about communicating through their association! A discussion on how we might improve member communication turned to what the ALD is about in the context of our new membership category – Professional Member – for those with shared interests in lighting, who make some or all of their income working alongside lighting designers.



ALD#

Simon Corder emphasised the benefits of pluralism and the inclusiveness this brings and we talked about whether we were just people who worked in live performance. The meeting recognised that the ALD is about members engaged in the 'creative use of light'. Simon's view was supported – lighting design is more about the manipulation of the 'quality and stuff of light' rather than the fixtures that make it. The Exec were asked to be mindful of this in developing the ALD. *What do you think?*

Members present were keen on efforts to get more people communicating more. Modern social networking gives us the opportunity to step-change our ability to support each other and raise our profile. But of course, to make that work means that you, the member or associate 'in-the-street', should want

to participate and share opinions and debates. I can't imagine that we don't have anything to say to each other! Now is the time to step up to the laptop and get in touch through the new(ish) ALD Facebook pages, the website, and e-mail. The resolution of the meeting was to canvas opinion, co-opt a willing member or two to advise and set up appropriate new communication methods to attract frequent discussions and contributions.

### Do we need representation?

A key matter of current concern is the increasing dissatisfaction with Equity as the representative of professional theatre lighting designers. After debate, we agreed that discussions with BECTU should commence. If BECTU has something to offer, it might prove a worthy



## Annual General Meeting 2010 John Leventhall's view

that would best represent members. The meeting gave the Exec direction to ensure further discussions of this with PLASA should take care to retain the independence and self-government of the ALD and the professionals' meeting that followed the AGM took up the subject again to start the process of assessing the best partner in representation.

### The Price of Mutual Protection

One of the occasional and rather invisible activities of the ALD Exec members and sometimes senior LDs on behalf of the ALD is to provide assistance to individual members who ask for help with such sensitive matters as difficult contractual issues, intellectual property rights or working conditions problems with a particular management.

Occasionally this leads to the need to inform the ALD membership about the case so that if a member is tendering for a contract, or being offered work by the same management, the member can do so with the knowledge of the past difficulties to assist his/her judgement. That's one important aspect of the mutual protection afforded by a professional association.

What is the legal position of the ALD and the Exec member personally if that management takes umbrage or, worse, legal action because of that advice? Administrator Ian Saunders informed the AGM that there was little or no legal protection for ALD officers who may give advice. However, the stalwart Exec members refuse to start declining requests for help. So the Exec has been considering

alternative to the distant and bureaucratic Equity (who have been invited to the AGM for the last two years but have declined because, unlike huge swathes of their members, they don't work on Saturdays!).

Many people join Equity because of the business related services (such as

legal advice lines, insurance deals etc.) that come with membership. Do we need Equity for this? Rick introduced a proposal of a package of legal and business services with special rates on insurance products etc. that the Exec have been discussing with PLASA to potentially supply to the ALD

(which would become an affiliate member of PLASA). These will be described elsewhere. For about £60 individual members, if they wish, could buy the package covering a lot of the 'practical' features that come with Equity membership. With this in place it frees the ALD to select the organisation

what to do to insure the association's liabilities. At the moment it looks like becoming a limited company will afford some financial indemnity along with clearly stating constitutionally that support of members in this way is an ALD activity. Also, acquiring some public liability insurance might be a good way forward. So Ian and others are going to look at the issue and report back to you. Becoming a limited company will probably not change the 'look and feel' of the ALD but could allow greater capacity to represent members' interests, and to be able to confidently express fair and reasonable information about 3rd parties. The members at the AGM roundly agreed with taking this forward and identified some potentially valuable and cohesive spin offs from becoming ALD Ltd.

#### And so to bed...

The arrival of lunch just at the conclusion of business brought the meeting to a close after a high level of debate and much balanced contribution from around the room. This all goes to show that when we do communicate, then rational, reasonable and reliable progress is made! 🍀



*Roving reporter, associate member #762, John Leventhall attended the AGM to give Focus a flavour of the proceedings... [All photos of the AGM by John Leventhall].*





# Annual General Meeting 2010

## London, Saturday 15th May - Chairman's Report

further to raising awareness of the great contribution lighting and lighting designers make to live performances and encouraging our employers and the general public to better value our role.

### Critics' Workshop

One of the great steps forward in this area was the excellent

and engaged and wanted to know more. As you may have seen in *Focus* this resulted in two articles about lighting design in the *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph*. This event stemmed from Michael Billington's piece in *Focus* when he suggested the value of a workshop. I am particularly grateful to Hansjörg for making this day happen.

### Lighting awards

We continue to be involved in two major awards for lighting designers. The second TMA award was given out. This award is directly sponsored by the ALD and recognizes work in the producing houses through the UK and those in London not covered by the West End *Oliver* award. It has been a great way of having the producers value lighting designers and celebrate excellent work,

and it has firmly put the ALD in the minds of the TMA by supporting this award, while the award went to Danielle Beattie, the resident LD/chief at New Victoria theatre Newcastle Under Lyme, who was not a member of the ALD. It reminds me why the change in professional categories was made and that we still have to keep recruiting working lighting designers and other lighting professionals to be part of the ALD.

The ALD continues to be involved in the *Knights of Illumination* awards. These awards, which continue to grow in stature, are generously organized by Clay Paky, and have now attracted more support and sponsorship from Osram, the ABTT, *Lighting and Sound International*, PLASA, the Theatres Trust and Women in Lighting. They are unique in

that they cover dance, opera, as well as drama and musicals. The ALD has determined that these awards are judged by a panel of nationally recognized critics, many of whom have written for *Focus* and who are regularly seeing performances throughout the year as we felt it was essential that the lighting should be judged by at least one person who saw it in the context for which it was created, not just represented by photos or video. While this unfortunately rules out some of the excellent work that is done for one-off performances, it seemed not only the fairest way to judge, but also has increased the critics perception of what lighting does in performance as they too rarely have the opportunity to mention it in their reviews as they are often working to tight word restrictions. I have noticed

I hope that with the regular bulletins you receive as well as *Focus* that you all feel up to date with what the ALD is doing, so that the official business of this meeting and the necessary reports can be brief. We want to have more time for discussion and hearing your ideas for the ALD.

This has been another good year for the ALD and I believe that we have moving

critics workshop that was held in association with the Critic Circle in October. We had ten critics from the national press convene with four lighting designers: Neil Austin, Mark Jonathan, Hansjörg Schmidt and myself. We talked for three hours about what we do and what lighting contributes to live performance and I am pleased to report that our audience was interested

that the critics on the panel do certainly comment on the lighting more often in their reviews so our involvement in the *Knights of Illumination* awards continues to have benefits beyond the ceremony.

The ALD also welcomes the *Watsonstage* lighting award that has been generously sponsored by White Light and is voted on by theatre goers via the website.

Another arena where lighting designers can celebrate their work is by participating in the show that is organized by the Society of British Theatre Designers every four years. The deadline for registering intent to exhibit has been specially extended for ALD members until the end of May and I believe it is important that LDs exhibit either individually or with their designer colleagues.

### **Fees database**

Other ongoing work of the Association has been to gather members real experience of fees and creating a database so that members can find out what the actual going rates are when negotiating contracts either themselves or through their agents. We will be updating this information and always need more data to make this more complete, so do fill in the forms that you can find on the website. Please do support this very useful project so that you too can take advantage of the Fees Database.

### **Member support**

The ALD also continues to offer a more discreet advice and support to members who have questions or problems. This core function is not always written about, but I think is one of the most

valued (and envied by other scenic, costume, and sound designers). I am personally gratified that this has really helped members this year particularly in some issues of transfers from the fringe to Broadway. The ALD has a great deal of experience within its membership, and by being a member you have proved your desire to share information. Please never hesitate to get in touch with the office or any member of the executive if you have some concerns.

### **Magazine**

*Focus* continues to be the most interesting magazine about lighting design around, and we owe a huge debt of thanks to Andy Collier who cannot be with us today. It continues to be exciting to look at and read and brings huge credit to the ALD and really represents what the

organisation is all about. Please do volunteer projects, experiences, or even just a moan to Andy to be included in *Focus*.

### **PLASA & BECTU membership**

One of the areas we are starting to explore is whether some type of membership of the PLASA organisation will bring added business support and services for members who need them. We have had a preliminary meeting with PLASA about this and it will be explored further today. Members of the Exec including those who sit on the Equity Designers' Committee have also asked to have a meeting with BECTU about the possibility of trying to shift the union representation for lighting designers. This too shall be discussed more fully today at the afternoon meeting.

### **Light Relief**

I also want to mention *Light Relief*, which has benefited from many members supporting *By Design Day 2010* and other fundraising activities throughout the year. This year I am pleased that *Light Relief* has been able to help more people including some ALD members than ever before. That increased take up does pose a fundraising challenge to make sure that the charity that is ready to quickly support you in case of emergencies has the funds ready to help. Please remember *Light Relief* and if you hear of anyone who needs assistance please do get in touch with them via the website or contact me.

### **The Executive committee...**

...continues to put in energy to keeping the ALD flourishing and I am really



# Annual General Meeting 2010

## Chairman's Report (cont.)

grateful to them. I tend to get the credit for what the organisation does but it really is a collaborative effort. As you all know it is a voluntary and we are always open to new people becoming more involved, and we are beginning to benefit from the newer members of the Exec, Matt Clutterham, Paule Constable, Declan Randall, and Kevin Sleep. I also want to thank Rachel Nicholson who has been on the Exec for years and has now stepped down.

But I need to single out Ian Saunders who holds it all together as treasurer and administrator of the ALD. He keeps reminding us of what we need to do. He also keeps you all informed by the regular email bulletins and is the direct conduit for all the information reaches members. He provides excellent value to the ALD.

### Professionals

After lunch today, which is being provided by the ALD out of savings from reduced printing costs for the new and continually improving full colour *Focus*, there will be a professional members' meeting. As you should know, we now have two professional members categories one *Professional Designer*, which will continue on from the old professional category that will enable the targeting of lighting designers and the newer *Professional Member* that was created at the last AGM for all those who are working in lighting but not necessarily as designers. It is up to all of us to invigorate and realize the potential of what these two categories can provide in terms of support and networking opportunities for the widest range of people working in the lighting world

and directly or indirectly working with lighting design. While the take-up of this new category is still small we need all our members to spread the word that it is not just designers who are able to benefit from the ALD.

I know one of the reasons the ALD is getting stronger and earning more respect lighting designers is that most working lighting designers are members if we continue to expand this through the new professional members category we can continue the growth and support the ALD can provide to all of us. I hope that the rest of the AGM can continue this dialogue within the ALD.

We are lucky that we still have some of the original members of the *Society of British Theatre Lighting Designers* who are active in the ALD. In addition to Richard Pilbrow, our



President, I doubt that there are many of us who have not been inspired by Francis Reid through his books, his teaching, and his involvement in the lighting world. I am thrilled to announce the naming of the award that the ALD sponsors as part of the Michael Northen Bursary scheme *The Francis Reid Bursary* in honour of Francis' unique contribution.

Francis and Richard have both brought to our attention that the original meeting

over lunch and rather *Nuit Saint George* at Rules was held in 1961. While I am hopeful that our lunch today at the Yorkshire Gray will live up to that standard, it does raise the challenge and the opportunity to celebrate 50 years of lighting designers and lighting design next year.

I would like to add this to today's agenda of how we celebrate this remarkable milestone. 🍀

*Rick Fisher*  
**Chairman**

# ALD# Annual General Meeting 2010

## London, Saturday 15th May - Treasurer's Report

The financial year of 2009 – 2010 has seen the Association achieve a surplus of a little over £8000. As was reported in the last couple of years we were becoming more reliant on non-subscription income to maintain a surplus. It was for this reason that the Executive sought to lift the annual subscription fees for 2009. This has helped to ensure that the subscription income once again covered the outgoings of approximately £40,000.

With the introduction of the new *Professional Member* category for 2010, we are hopeful that this will remain the case for the current year, but we also have to be aware that a few years of successful recruitment of new members in all categories could see our income breaking through the threshold that would make us liable for VAT registration. We are still some £18,000

from this threshold, but it is something that the Exec is aware of and we are considering the implications.

The raising of the subs has led to our subscription income grow by approximately 14% this year from roughly the same number of members, and our non subscription income dropped by about 25% to just under £8000. Over half of this was once again the advertising revenue from *Focus*. Again, we would like to thank ETC and Clay Paky in particular for their continued support by booking regular pages throughout the year.

As reported last year, our income from bank interest has been minimal as interest rates stay at rock bottom levels. What was once a good income stream for the ALD brought us just £30 last year from a high of approximately £2000 a few years ago despite much higher levels of

reserves. I am not expecting this to change for the current financial year.

In terms of expenditure, production costs for *Focus* continue to be our single biggest outlay, but stayed relatively static from the costs incurred last year and we calculate that including all its expenses, *Focus* accounts for just over £16 of each member subscription.

This is set to change in the current year, as I hope you have read in the last edition. Despite being full colour it is now cheaper to print due to changing our printers and the method of printing from digital to litho as we have reached the threshold to make the higher set up costs of the latter to outweigh the former on overall cost. We are planning to expand the magazine to 40 pages to enable more members to contribute to it and of course

to have more pictures of their work! So please ensure you send Andy Collier your stories and contributions.

The members' yearbook will also benefit from the change of printers and we again expect it to be cheaper this year than last year's average cost of a little under £5.

Secretarial and office costs were under budget for the year by 20% and 40% respectively and the other sizeable outgoings were for our legal expenses such as accountants and insurance and the cost of representing the ALD at a number of trade shows around the country.

In 2009 we once again sponsored the Best Lighting Design Award category at the TMA Awards. The Exec considers this has an exceptional chance of raising awareness and profile of the ALD to both the public

and, more importantly, the managements of organisations that employ our members. We receive great exposure during the awards themselves and our logo sits prominently on all the literature that TMA members receive! We are continuing this sponsorship in 2010.

So the current financial position of the Association can be described as healthy. We are continuing to maintain our income to cover our costs and are always looking to expand and improve the activities and range of services for our members, as well as make those we already supply more cost efficient.

As ever, there is an overview of last year's finances available if anyone wishes to look at them. #

Ian Saunders  
Treasurer

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