

June / July 2011

ALD's 50th Anniversary Year!



FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

"More art, less critics..."

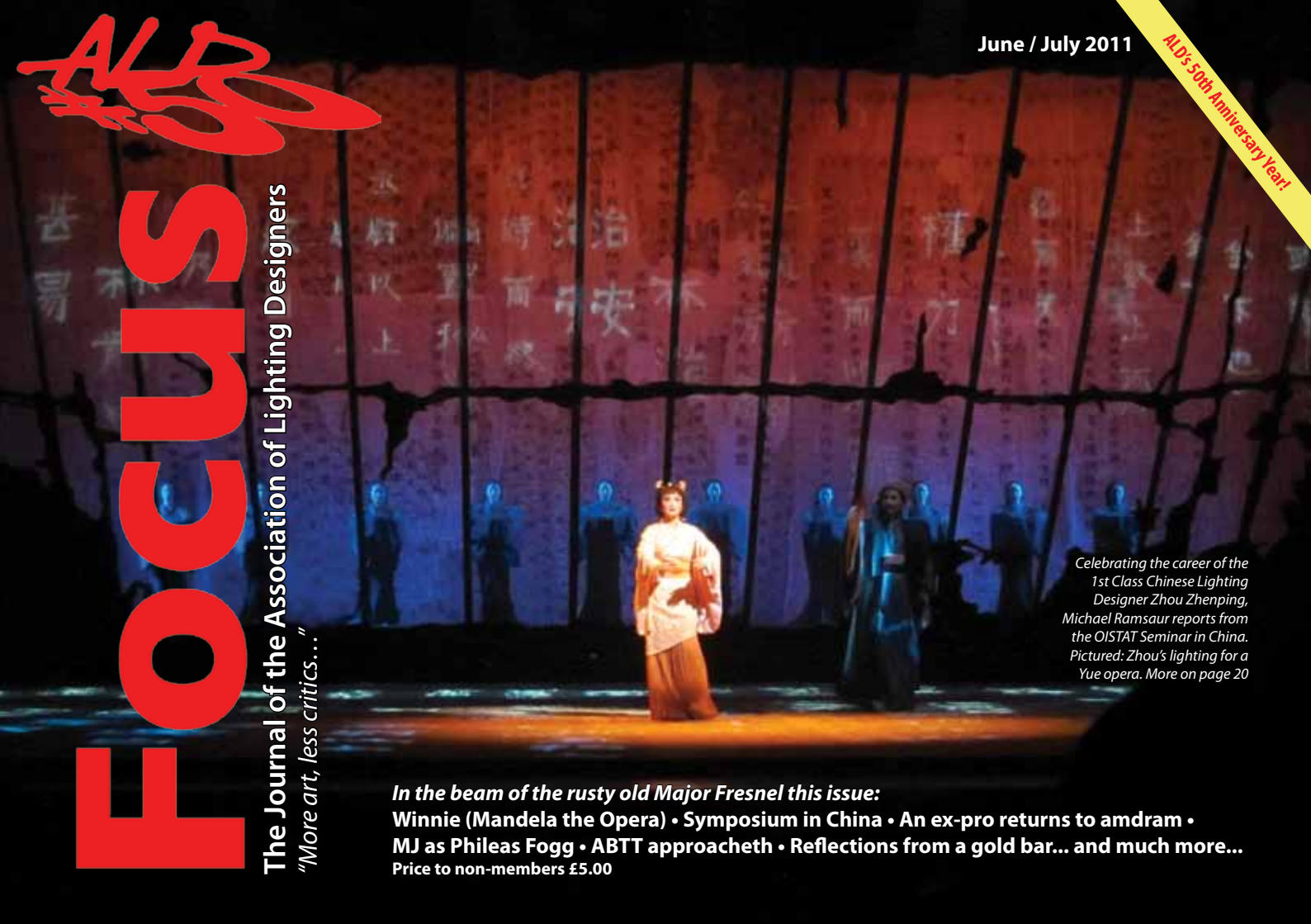
In the beam of the rusty old Major Fresnel this issue:

Winnie (Mandela the Opera) • Symposium in China • An ex-pro returns to amdram •

MJ as Phileas Fogg • ABTT approacheth • Reflections from a gold bar... and much more...

Price to non-members £5.00

Celebrating the career of the 1st Class Chinese Lighting Designer Zhou Zhenping, Michael Ramsaur reports from the OISTAT Seminar in China. Pictured: Zhou's lighting for a Yue opera. More on page 20



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Rick's Reassurances

I have been lucky this year up till now, with a succession of jobs in interesting and diverse theatres and countries, with not too much overlap. So far there has been large new play in a producing theatre in London, two large musicals in foreign theatres one a producing house and one a commercial empty theatre, Shakespeare in the beautiful new Royal Shakespeare Theatre and now operas...

But as I am now just finishing a job and then only having a day at home to quickly do the laundry, open the post, troubleshoot what has fallen by the wayside in my life and head off to the airport for the next show I have been thinking a lot about what we, as freelance lighting designers, need to keep up going from one job to the next.

Sometimes it all feels pretty lonely, and despite being part of the "creative team" it does not feel either

very creative or very much like a team.

Is it there any continuity? Surely there is something constant that transcends the totally different challenges that every new project, space, crew, and set of equipment throw in our path. Are there any basic things I need apart from constant internet access and email to try and placate the future projects with some information and some attempt at forward design planning?

What I feel more and more sure of is that the support of colleagues is one of the important necessities of survival in this business. That is why I have been pleased to be part of helping to make the ALD a useful and vital part of the lighting designer survival kit, sometimes it is there for advice, sometimes for just a laugh and a beer which should never be undervalued!

Sometimes the ALD provides counselling and professional 'first aid' and colleagues have helped to talk me down from the indignation over how lighting and lighting designers are sometimes valued and treated. Even if our work should appear effortless and invisible, it does require a bit of skill to make it. So wouldn't it be nice if the management recognises that, and provides the conditions in which to support the lighting, not to mention supporting the itinerant lighting designer that I seem to have become?

I was once told that lighting design was 70% people, 20% management and at best 10% creativity. While the proportion of creativity may be over estimated, at least the basic truth that this is a people business and not a technical one is very true. If you do not like working with new groups of people every few weeks lighting

design will be a very lonely profession. That loneliness can grow with the more travel and different teams that you work with. The support that the ALD and the lighting community can offer should make our working lives much more bearable and fun.

The ALD needs everyone's input to continually find out how it can best help provide the assistance we need. The Executive committee is always open to ideas and people to participate. This fresh input is keeping the ALD vital in its 50th year.

One of the new ideas is to offer a bursary to an "emerging" designer in addition to the Michael Northen bursaries that I urge all students to apply for. We hope this will help to bridge that gap between training and getting your career going so all those of you who are starting out please do apply for this special award.

Best regards, Rick 🍷



Highlights

- 4 **Around the world in 8-ish days:** Mark Jonathan Dick circumnavigates.
- 8 **Office Oracle**
Ian's production desk.
- 11 **Been a While...**
Tom Dexter Scott reports.
- 12 **ABTT 2011 Theatre Show**
What to see and hear.
- 14 **Dumb, In and Arabian Nits**
John Leventhall goes back to the swatchbook.
- 20 **A Symposium in Hangzhou**
Michael Ramsaur verbalises.
- 22 **PLASA Focus**
Nigel Lawson Dick reports.
- 24 **Sustainable Production**
Mark Jonathan goes green.
- 26 **Winnie**
Declan Randall lights a new opera in South Africa.
- 34 **Awards, awards**
Upcoming Knight of Illumination + USA awards
- 36 **ALD Anniversary Gold**
Lee and Declan make 550.
- 38 **Letters**

Around the world in 8-ish days...

From dinner at London's Saville Club to Japan and back, **Mark Jonathan** does a Phileas Fogg impression without, sadly, winning a wager.

It all began at the Saville Club. MJ's in full Francis tribute mode, Richard Pilbrow is engrossed and Paul Pyant checks the programme.



Page 4

Many congratulations to Francis Reid who celebrated his 80 birthday in style in the presence of many of his friends and colleagues at the Saville Club. Many thanks to the sponsors, an excellent dinner was served with fine wines and tributes to the 'birthday boy'. His favourite aria from Handel's *Alcina* was sung beautifully and Francis gave a sterling speech followed by signing copies of his *Carry on Fading*, presented to each guest courtesy of Artistic Licence and Harmer PR, with donations going to *Light Relief*.



Happy Birthday, Francis.

Off, off and away to Tokyo!

A few days later, the plane to Tokyo was a third full and that was after Virgin Atlantic had 'consolidated' the flight by moving those of us booked to travel on Easter Saturday to Easter Sunday... No queue at Japanese immigration so I was soon speeding to the city with that slightly muzzy feeling of 'what time is it?' Depart home in London on *Sunday at 10am*, arrive in hotel on *Monday at 11am*, having advanced the watch by 8 hours. I was back in Tokyo for the 1st revival of the spectacular ballet of *Aladdin* that stage designer, Dick Bird, costume designer Sue Blane, and I made with David Bintley and the National Ballet of Japan in Autumn 2008.

I conceded to jet lag and rested, followed by a congenial dinner that evening with the director and conductor. The next day I arrived at the theatre; The fit-up was complete

and the lighting and stage department were working through the many scenes checking the focus of the large generic and moving light rig. The basic rig includes a mix of 60 VL1000 tungsten and arc sources and I'd taken full advantage of the rig when I lit the production.

Later in the day we worked through the cues and I was delighted to see that the focus and every nuance had been most carefully noted. As you might imagine the ballet of *Aladdin* is full of magic: sets change in a swirl of light, oil lamps glow, Genies appear and the magic carpet floats. The 86-piece Tokyo Philharmonic orchestra would transport us on a vibrant musical journey while the fine company danced to perfection.

As so often happens when I'm working abroad I exchange regular 'holiday sightseeing' for 'getting under the skin' of how people live

and work; rubbing shoulders with the locals in the supermarket and the staff canteen. This time there was the added frisson of how would Japan be after the earthquake and would there be another quake? Tokyo had returned to work and everything seemed normal with one exception; to save power less lights were on in buildings and most of the city's street lights were kept off at night.

After the opening, I looked down on the city from the 54th floor restaurant of the Opera Tower on Tokyo in comparative darkness. Walking home along the small streets to Hatagaya one doesn't feel threatened except by the cyclists who ride on the pavement. People are very respectful and polite. I stayed for the first three performances as it's a long way to come, to then rush back, before the show has run in a bit.

Aladdin, the National Ballet of Japan, which director David Bintley, stage designer Dick Bird, costume designer Sue Blane and I originally created in 2008.





ありきたりな表現かもしれませんが、それでも人生は続き、暗闇の後には光が灯らなければなりません。家や大切な人を亡くされた方にとっては、その悲しみが癒えるまで長い年月がかかることと思います。私たち新国立劇場バレエ団そしてスタッフ一同の祈りが、この大惨事で被災された方々へ届き、共にありますことを心からお祈り申し上げます。

日本が復興への長い道のりの第一歩を踏み出した今、私たち芸術家が役目を果たすべき時期が来たと思います。地震後、チャリティー等を通して、被災地の復興及び、皆様の心の傷を癒すため、様々な活動が行われています。皆様の心を元気づけ、明るい将来を指し示していくことが、ダンサー、音楽家、歌手といった芸術家の使命だと思っています。

東日本大震災後初めての新国立劇場バレエ団の公演へ足を運んでくださいました皆様からのお礼申し上げます。私ども一同、ステージでお会いできる日を待ち望んでおりました。魅力とユーモアあふれるアラジンとプリンセスが、試練を乗り越え闇と悪の力に打ち勝つ物語が、この度の惨事から皆様が立ち直るきっかけとなって欲しいと切に願っています。

舞踊芸術監督 デヴィッド・ビントレー

On the afternoon of 11 March 2011, the dancers of The National Ballet of Japan and I were rehearsing for the next programme in our season when the great earthquake struck. It was the ensuing tsunami however, that was to cause the greatest devastation and loss of life along Japan's northeast coast.

The people of Tokyo were fortunate to escape the worst of the disaster, the physical damage to the city barely noticeable, but even here, many miles from the scenes of chaos and destruction that have become so familiar through the media over the past few weeks, the sense of loss and sadness was overwhelming.

There is a time when music, dance and song can bring joy, excitement and enlightenment, when Art can truly provide 'food for the spirit', but in those dark days after the earthquake, when the true scale of the catastrophe Japan had suffered became apparent, it didn't seem appropriate that the theatres and concert halls of Tokyo remain open, it no longer felt fitting to 'enjoy' oneself when so many were suffering, when so many were lost.

It is almost a cliché to say that life must go on, that darkness is followed by light. Those who have lost homes and loved ones must feel many years away from the solace and healing that only time can bring, but the prayers and thoughts of all of us, safely delivered from the earthquakes worst, are with them.

Now, as Japan sets out on the long road to recovery it is perhaps time for artists to play their part. As the authorities, charities and services begin the work of repairing the physical and emotional damage after the quake, so dancers, musicians and singers must raise the spirits of the people and point towards the future.

I would like to thank all of you present at these, the first performances of The National Ballet of Japan since the earthquake. The dancers and I have been longing to get back on stage and dance for you and we hope that the charming and humorous story of Aladdin and his Princess, and their triumph over dark and sinister forces, has brought a much needed revival of your spirits after the recent tragedy.

Artistic Director, The National Ballet of Japan David Bintley

We're going to make a British and American version but we won't have the luxury of the massive side and rear stages that the New National Theatre is blessed with. So the magical ballet will need even more magic from its designers to make it fold up and tour into theatres with only average wing space.

Hey- guess what? The exit signs fade out during the performance. I can feel the "Health and Safety" experts amongst you bristling at the thought, but how lovely not to compromise the art with an over-bright running man.

It was curious and interesting to see that children in the audience can sit in rapt attention while not having to wave all that LED

crap that I complained about when I witnessed the British panto of the same name in the UK. Instead, little girls could get their nails painted for free in the foyer.

If we were in any doubt about whether we should be performing, given the tragedy caused by the Tsunami, I needed to look no further than the programme note written by David Bintley [right].

As I was leaving Japan, by a piece of serendipity, the Birmingham Royal Ballet were arriving to tour Japan. I was glad that the technical and LX department were in time to catch Aladdin so they can see what we're trying to do when BRB create their version.

Office Oracle

News from Ian's production desk



Subscription Fees:

Last Chance

2011 / 12 subscription fees are now due for payment. As laid out in the constitution the deadline for payment is **1st July 2011**. Therefore this is your last reminder to pay. If you do not pay by standing order and have not paid by July, **this will be the last edition of Focus you will be receiving** until the arrears are paid.

Apologies to members who pay by standing order, as my work commitments this year means that the £20,000 deposited into our bank account during the first six days of April still needs to be reconciled against the database. Hopefully this will be done by July.

However you pay your subscriptions, we do ask members to include their membership number as a payment reference to help speed up this process.

ALD Contact Details

By the time you read this, the ALD Office will have finally completed its relocation, but due to the terms of the PO Box system, we cannot apply for a new box address until resident in the postal region required. Rest assured that once the new address is known, everyone will be informed by email bulletin.

PLEASE NOTE that the redirection of the current address in Oxford expires on 25th July and we are unable to extend it for a longer period. *Please do not send any post to the Oxford address after the 1st July 2011* to ensure that it does not get lost. The new address will be known before this date. For this reason we encourage members to pay by either electronic transfer or to use our on-line payment system on the ALD web site to ensure that your payment reaches us.

If you are in any doubt,

please contact the office by phone or email.

ABTT Show 2011

Once again we will have our smaller version stand at the ABTT Theatre Show [see photo right], and we are again located in the Assembly Room down the stairs and underneath the main Lawrence Hall space and next to the doors into the Café Bar.

Please drop by and say hello, update your contact details or even check on (and pay) any outstanding subs using cash or cheques. Online payments will be available at the whim of the wi-fi internet connection however!

We are also fortunate to be showing a sample copy of Richard Pilbrow's new book 'A Theatre Project' (see page 39) so come along to the ALD stand for a chat and an advanced browse.



June Social Evening

Our increasingly popular monthly members' social evening takes place on the last Friday of the month. The June event will therefore take place on Friday 24th June at the Coach & Horses pub on Wellington Street, London.

We have noted that there are a number of non-ALD members attending the events, and the Executive would like to ensure that we have as wide a membership as possible. Therefore if you are sharing a round or conversation with someone who is not a member, please identify them to the ALD reps present so that we can sign them up!!

Membership Drive

On a related note to the above, it was recently agreed by the Executive that we would have a small promotion to encourage membership uplift. Therefore if a current member introduces a new member to the Association then they will receive a discount of £5 on their subscription for 2012/13.

And more! That is five pounds discount for *each and every member* that successfully completes the application procedure and fulfils the criteria to become a member in any category. Therefore if you are a Professional introducing 15 new members, then next year is subscription free!

Please ensure that your name as on the ALD database and membership number is on each application form and your account will be credited when they their welcome pack arrives on their doorsteps. **Get recruiting!!**



2011 Michael Northen Bursary

This competition is now open for submissions, and we have

re-vamped the submission and entry criteria this year, so please check the details on the website or in the bulletin you should have received recently to ensure your entry is compatible. Please also note the postal address issues above and be prepared to send the submission to the new address if you are trying to squeeze it in under the radar for the closing date which is 31st July 2011.

50th Anniversary Bursary for Emerging Lighting Designers

As part of the celebrations for the ALD's 50th Anniversary we are running a Bursary for those who graduated in the last five years (graduates from Summer 2006 and later). Winning can give you real help as a boost to your professional career in lighting – and this year the prizes include some outstanding opportunities to work alongside top industry names.

The winning applicant will be presented with a cheque for £550 at the PLASA Trade

Show in September 2011 and will have an extra prize of either an opportunity to observe a high profile lighting designer at work or an opportunity to experience working with a company or venue.

We want you to put together a compact, high quality printed portfolio, something you might take to a meeting with a director or maybe an agent, to help you get work. Your portfolio should be no bigger than A4. The winning portfolio will be on display at PLASA. After that, they will be yours to use to get work!

For full details on how to enter, email ALD Student Rep Jack Knowles jack.knowles@ald.org.uk and hurry, as the deadline for submissions is also 31st July 2011!

Who gets your nomination for most influential LD?

As part of the ALD's 50th anniversary celebrations, we are going to be asking professional members to vote for the most influential LD.

To start with, we want some nominations – up to three from each professional member, and it would be helpful if you could include a line or two outlining the reason for each nomination.

Your nominations might include someone who most influences your own work, or a particular area of live performance, or lighting design in general. You might want to nominate an LD you have worked very closely with, or one who's work you have only seen in pictures or heard about, or one whose practice has helped to change the way we are now seen as important members of creative teams.

Please send your nominations to office@ald.org.uk

Later in the year, we will draw up one or more lists based on the nominations, and ask for your votes – with the aim that we could honour the winner(s) at a suitable event. 🍀

Diary Dates

15/16 June

ABTT 2011 Theatre Show* & seminars
(details on page 14)

24 June

Members' monthly social at the Coach
& Horses, Wellington Street, London.

1 July

Deadline for subscription payments

31 July

Deadline for Michael Northen Bursary
submissions

11 September 2pm

ALD AGM

4th Knight of Illumination Awards*

11-14 September

PLASA 2011, Earl's Court*

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

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

Owing to space restrictions, we regret that we do not accept press
releases for publication in *Focus*. However, Corporate members
of the ALD may send press releases to the ALD office (office@ald.
org.uk) so that they can be posted on the News section of the ALD
website for immediate and wider coverage. Corporate members only
may advertise in *Focus*, please contact the office for details. Editorial
guidelines for authors are available on request from the editor.

The opinions published within Focus are not necessarily those of the ALD. E&OE.

New Members

welcome to...

Professional Designer

Daniella Beattie, Leek

Tim Bray, Bournemouth

Keith Harper, Ossett

Richard Lambert, London (from Associate)

Chris Withers, London (from Associate)

Professional Member

Lucy Record, London (from Associate)

Jack Williams, Biggleswade (from Associate)

Associate Member

Jane Lalljee, Cardiff

Student Member

Steve Davies, Wrexham

Rob Youngson, London



Been A While...

Tom Dexter Scott

close the northern theatre scene is; I was bumping into several colleagues whom I'd not seen for some time, and finding out that news about the ALD is growing. I feel we still need to do more work to show that we are not just about *designers* and a *club*, but even so, the general reception was positive.

Northern ALD meetings

There were many suggestions about meet-ups for those northern members (and those of you down South if you fancy a trip to the sunny North). Watch your email boxes with some news on meetings soon: there are at least two coming up. One is an idea that Philip Edwards had after the White Light day at Central School in London - an LED shoot out for anyone who couldn't make it down to London. If you're interested in this then please let me know (dexter.scott@ald.org.uk) and together with Will we'll organise something, as

the LED side of our industry is really taking off.

Seen at PLASA Focus

While at the show I spent time with Jeremy from ETC and his LED theatre lights. The main rule is that these were not to replace your existing stock but more add to it. There was a light designed for doing blue backlight, which was equal to 15 cans, but only consumed 180 Watts. There were lights designed to do a job and one job only and they worked. His other new toy was the Fresnel, with one of only three in the world chained to a pole in the Royal Armouries. I was getting quite excited about something that is basically a box of metal and a bit of glass. This light needs to be seen, changing the lamp without changing focus, easy to clean, easy to lock the focus, smooth movement and cool just like its profile and parcan cousins. The beam is even and if they get the barndoors right then

it could see the death of my favourite lantern the humble 743. While I didn't spend to long going around the stands I did notice the 'Soft Fresnel' at the White Light stand, an LED Fresnel with shutters. It works, trust me, and next to the ETC S4 the intensity was matched.

Calling all 'emerging' LDs

I would also like to join Will in his hunt for professional members who are at the start of their career... apparently interest in his 'emerging' lighting designers initiative has been low. The ALD has shown that talking and sharing info works - look at the fees database for evidence. I am surprised there aren't more 'emerging' professionals or those who have been doing some design while keeping the day job of re-lighting or working as a tech. This keeps my thought returning to the question of communication through the membership.

ALD website and forum

Twitter is going well, but the Blue Room forum seems to be lacking in interest. Should we go ahead and do our own lighting forum or not? Let me know. I know I am fed up with wading through emails day after day, replying to people and forgetting to hit the reply all, or reading messages from people who have also fallen at this hurdle.

Speaking with Fifi, we both passionately believe that some form of on-line activity is definitely needed and as the membership grows so should the way we do our day-to-day business. Maybe Will would have more people taking him up on his 'emerging LDs' offer if it meant that people could share or post their thoughts on a forum, rather than travelling to a destination to discuss things in person? It's not that I want to see this method die, but we are spread across the UK, and online is the way to go. 📌

So what have you been Sup to? I've been training for my first 10K race and the expression *I'm going to walk it* will apply I hope! But at the moment I have injured my foot so I am taking time from training to do something more useful and write for *Focus*. Even so, I found the training easier than sitting down to write...

ALD in Leeds

I was at PLASA Focus and helped Nigel on the ALD stand. A big "thank you" to all those who popped by to say hello. Hopefully, there may be some new readers thumbing through this wonderful edition who joined up on those days. While on the stand I was reminded how

Challenging the technology boundaries: the **ABTT 2011 Theatre Show**

15 - 16 June, Royal Horticultural Halls in London www.abtttheatreshow.co.uk

The ABTT Theatre Show has always been a showcase for the latest technology in the theatre and presentation markets and this year's event will be no exception.

Lots of LEDs

A highlight among the many new products and emerging technologies that will be on display at this year's ABTT Theatre Show will be LED lighting.

As we know, LEDs have been developing rapidly from the architectural and scenic products used in both the theatre and corporate events sectors for effects and illuminated scenery. LED versions of theatre luminaires are maturing into powerful alternatives to conventional kit, as the latest sources and optical systems come on line.

So 'the ABTT' will be the place to catch up and compare LEDs and meet friends and us on the ALD stand downstairs in the Assembly Hall, next to the café. Visitors to the ABTT 2011 Theatre Show will have the chance to see a variety of LED lighting systems from the industry's biggest players, most of which are ALD Corporate members.

Visit the latest lighting products from the ALD Corporate Members

ETC recently launched the Selador Desire range of LED luminaires, which includes three PAR-shaped chassis: the 40 LED emitter D40, the super-bright D60, which has 60 emitters, and the D40XT designed

for exterior use. New from Clay Paky is the Mirage QC, the world's first cable-free, quick-connect LED wall. Intended for outdoor use the Mirage QC has an IP65 rating and a bayonet connection system to allow panels to be installed easily and quickly. Other leading lighting manufacturers that have moved into LED are Martin Professional, which has introduced a 10mm pixel pitch LED display panel, and Robert Juliat and Coemar, both of which are distributed in the UK by ABTT Theatre Show exhibitor White Light.

"Lighting is a major part of the ABTT Show and with LED technology becoming more popular the focus is falling increasingly on this market sector," comments ABTT Show director Roger Fox. *"We are looking forward to seeing new LED systems from many of our regular exhibitors during this year's exhibition but don't want to overlook the full range of products for audio, lighting, control and staging that will be on view. The ABTT Show has established itself as a major forum for technology in the theatre industry and attracts the top manufacturers across the board."*

And not forgetting...

Companies that will also be exhibiting at the Show include: Autograph Sales, Canford, d&b audiotechnik, Doughty Engineering, Robe, Triple E, Lee Filters, Philips Lighting, Roscolab, Stage Electrics, Trantec Systems, Allen and Heath, Unusual Rigging and Zero 88.

FREE Seminars!

Part of the ABTT's celebration of its 50th anniversary will be a free seminar programme. Covering all areas of show production, registered visitors are invited on a first-come-first-served basis to a wealth of interesting sessions. Details at www.abtttheatreshow.co.uk

ABTT Fifty50 Vision series

'Past, present and future' discussions:

Sound (Wed 15)

Buildings & Theatre Planning (Thurs 16)

Lighting (Thurs 16)

Stage Rigging & Automation (Thurs 16)

General interest on Wednesday 15

Stage Managers' Association Awards SMA

Cracking the Code: ATG/Gallowglass

Demystifying Audio Techniques: d&b audiotechnik

Safety is Not Negotiable: John Watts Memorial Forum

A Brief Introduction to Liability & Personal Indemnity Insurance ABTT

General interest on Thursday 16

The Future of Training National Skills Academy

Sustainability The Theatres Trust

50 years of Working at Height ABTT

CAD in Performance ABTT

Theatre Sound Sources. A Virtual Shootout.
d&b audiotechnik



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15 & 16 JUNE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL HALLS LONDON SW1P 2PB

Dumb, In... and Arabian Nits

An ex-pro goes native



Amateur theatre crosses the path of a few ALD pro designers but rarely has an airing in *Focus*.

To redress the balance, [John Leventhall](#) writes of his return to the world of the amateur luvvies.

In 2006, I had to give up lighting. It was no good, my 'day job' involved a long commute and I just couldn't get to the theatre on time. Thus my unbroken run of lighting both 'pro' but mainly 'am' since 1969 came to a halt until...

Fast forward...

...to the 2010 ABTT show! Having recently returned to the freelance life, I was helping staff the ALD stand so Nigel Lawson-Dick could have a well-deserved break. A lanky, grey haired man approached and asked about joining the ALD. His badge swung round into my view - 'Graham House, Lighting Manager, Chipstead Players'. "What sort of a company is

that?" I enquired. "Oh we're just amateurs, but we have our own theatre" he replied.

Chipstead? I live about 10 minutes drive from Chipstead and have never seen a theatre there. This fact I admitted and asked if I could come along to see, being careful to make no commitment to what might be a scrofulous village hall with 6 dust-laden 500W Major fresnels and a rusty Junior 8 dimmer board for lighting!

So, a few weeks later, I drove down undiscovered Surrey lanes, too narrow for two cars to pass and arrived at The Courtyard Theatre. It was a huge barn conversion of the one-time stables of a country mansion (which is now apartments). Graham

had invited me to join sparks and chippies for a maintenance session, during the summer break.

Judge of my surprise and delight when I entered the beautiful little theatre - modern, well appointed, well equipped and thoughtfully supplied with both a foyer bar and one in the green room! The Courtyard is a Little Theatre Guild amateur theatre.

Many Associate ALD members will ply their art and artifice in an LTG theatre - an association of over 100 of the larger UK amateur-run theatres usually owned by their membership. Around 700,000 seats are sold each year by LTG theatres (about the same

as the National Theatre!). Some of you hardened pros might like to peek at www.littletheatreguild.org.

Friendly face

I was given a warm welcome by the members including one Don Hindle, whom some of you will know as the owner, now retired, of CCT lighting and ALD member #83. I eyed up the FOH rig of Source 4 profiles, the just-adequate height of the stage grid, 61 dimmer ways of 2kW and a Strand 300 series console. I felt again the stirrings of my long neglected art and a desire to stand on a dark stage with a trusty LX aloft, focusing the crisp beam of a 1k profile. My return to lighting design was sealed



once more, in the rosy cosy glow of the amdram world.

After establishing my acquaintance with spot bar, cue synopsis and gel book amongst the members, I was asked to light a show in February 2011 – a double bill of *The Dumb Waiter* by Harold Pinter and *In Camera* by Jean-Paul Sartre. Nice easy one, I felt, to flex my stiff, neglected lighting muscles. Oddly, I found myself feeling angst at the prospect. How much had I forgotten?

Back to work

The set was an irregular box, designed by Graham, in shades of dark grey to black [see right]. Both shows used the same set. To change the milieu from the first piece, *The*

Dumb Waiter, to the second, *In Camera*, a portion of the set was hung with grey curtains that moved in the interval to cover the dumb waiter effect and reveal different doors. This offered opportunity to use a rig of about 60 lanterns economically.

Meetings with the directors revealed that 'Dumb' required a dingy, seedy basement and 'In' needed a bright, cold, plain uniform cover with a certain 'richness' of tone. Only about ten cues for both plays

(including calls) so the design needed interesting angles, attentive focus and plotting to make the characters look right and avoid visual fatigue for the audience.

Contrasting colours

I agonised about colours - 'dingy-dusty' and 'clinical-neutral' tones. I was getting quite worried about this until I went to see *Normal* by Anthony Neilson at Nottingham University's New Theatre (the only fully

self-funded student theatre in England) which was lit by my son Matt who I am unabashed to observe is becoming an LD of some capability.

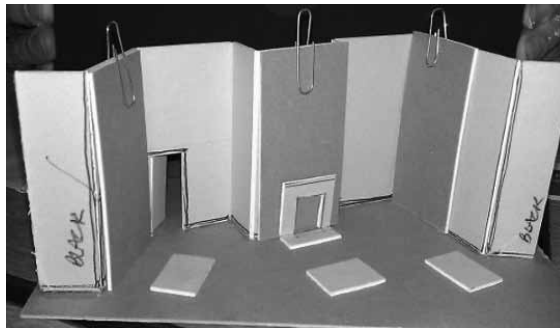
The dark, louring atmosphere he created for this harrowing, sombre piece was just what I was looking for.

"What colour did you use for that effect?" I asked. "Lee 210 and lanterns never above about 35%" came the reply.

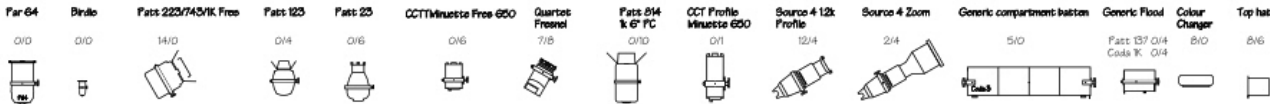
"Naah!" I jibed, "That's neutral density, it's not colour it's grey, it just takes the level down a bit." "Yes," he responded curtly, "But there is something about it that does the trick for 'dinge'."

And I had to agree, on the evidence of my own eyes.

It quickly occurred to me, this colour used at low intensity for 'Dumb' would be dim and dusty but at, say, 70%-80% for 'In' would achieve the brighter, whiter intensity needed. Juxtaposed by a second cover in Lee 203, and a touch of haze, it did just that. Added backlight provided just sufficient intensity to 'lift' the actors whilst maintaining a feeling of 'dinge'. My confidence in this play was much improved by consulting Rick Fisher, after an ALD meeting – a benefit of ALD membership, indeed! Extra richness for 'In' was achieved by some eye-level crosslight in Lee 152, pale gold.



Lantern Picker / Key
Stock: Rig/Free



Dumb, In...

Rehearsals...

... and meetings with directors. Now, in the am dram world (and sometimes in the biz too), directors have limited understanding of lighting (artistically), but luckily both directors were able to communicate their 'mind's eye'. Rehearsals were concentrated but with a small company and Yasmin, the inexhaustibly energetic Stage Manager, we all had a friendly time with gallons of tea and ample opportunity for me to 'tweak' the lighting states.

Full houses and a leisurely cue sheet made my return to the boards a positive pleasure.



ALD member #83.
Going back to his roots?



Contrasting colour palettes: a brighter, whiter 'In Camera' compared with a dingy and dusty 'The Dumb Waiter' above. Photos Russ Gregory.

But that's not all...

Throughout the week's run I kept encountering Yasmin making weird props out of papier mâché. I learned she was making them for the next show which she was also directing – *The Arabian Nights* adapted by Dominic Cooke.

One evening Yaz casually asked;

"Would you be willing to give some advice to the lighting chap? It shouldn't involve much, just a bit of guidance – he's only 15, you see, it's the youth group show."

Thinking this would mean only a couple of hours chat, I agreed and promptly attended rehearsals to meet the LD lad, Ben, and try and absorb a bit of the production.

Youth shows...

I hate 'youth' shows. This was a cast of about 25 of the blighters, 8-15 year olds. Past experience of paid and amateur LD work with all-child casts has given me a dread of children in theatres! As I entered the rehearsal room this phobia was



Arabian Nights. Photos: Lauren Milsom

enhanced by the decibel level of children practicing their big moments! The somewhat taciturn Ben and I introduced ourselves, and settled down to absorb the rehearsal and share his thoughts for the show.

A sense of rising dread began to gather as he diffidently admitted that, whilst he had done a fair bit of LX work at school and the Courtyard, he hadn't really got a clue where to start with design. Not surprising for a 15 year old. He had

been dropped in the soft and smelly stuff as his original mentor who, in fact, would have actually lit the show, had been summoned abroad unexpectedly by his job.

As we leafed through the script, my jaw dropped. This was an extravaganza of operatic proportions! It had music and dance numbers, puppetry, umpteen props (some HUGE), around 40 scenes - from Kasbah to palace, field, ocean and forest, any time of day and directed in the 'old chestnut' style of

small lighting areas to give a sense of changing location on a plain, multipurpose set.

Trapped!

I couldn't quietly bow out - that would knobble any goodwill I had so far accumulated, yet I really didn't have time or inclination to do another show hard on the heels of the last one. To cap that, the rig was less than 2 weeks away!

Resigning to my fate, I agreed with Ben to design; and bring him along as

best I could. With little availability of myself or Yaz before the rig deadline, I got her, Ben and the assistant director in a room at 4pm on the preceding Monday to dissect the play and try to converge creative ideas, agree every last movement and scene detail and get the cue synopsis in the bag in one mammoth session. We managed it and I closed my script at about 1am having just scribbled down the 'go' for cue 125, call lights.

Working it out

I have seldom worked so quickly. The next night (3am) - logistical think-through, draw plan, choose colours, focus notes, cue synopsis etc. was done. On the following Saturday the posse of LX crew members rigged and I focused the motley collection of specials, smoke, mirror ball, gobos, scrollers, and threw in a kitchen sink for good measure!

A day later, Monday, we scheduled another late night for plotting to try and do

... and Arabian Nits

John Leventhall

it in one hit. Poor Yaz had contracted flu and we had to stop at the interval point. Arrgh! Amateurs have to be at other work next day... and all week. Somehow I managed to squeeze the second half plotting into two further evenings, repair errant scrollers, and adjust focus and plot hurriedly during a run through.

By the day before technical rehearsal (Thursday) we were ready to go, followed by Dress Rehearsals on Friday and Sunday, curtain up Monday. Ben, despite his tender years, saw it all through, never flinched and turned out to be a pretty s***t-hot programmer on the Strand 300. He had made it possible to open with a plot including several light-chase effects and the requisite 100+ cues plotted with hardly a mistake or rework. I was fortunate in assistance from a budding

very good LX technician there!

'Arabian Nits', as we dubbed the show, could not have been more contrasted with the previous one. It was rushed, complex, stressful and had umpteen moments of wrestling a compromise, ignoring updating cues that could have been just that bit better and learning to live with one or two really poor transitions, from shortage of time. Does that ring a bell, anyone?

In performance, the show eventually flowed well; we had some nice moments of atmosphere and theatricality and a thoroughly appreciative audience (lots of mums, dads and grans, you see!). And I have to say that the young performers were one of the best behaved and well drilled youth troupes I have encountered.

We gathered for the get-

out the morning after the last night. Yaz gave me a thank you gift, several of the crew said nice things about the lighting and Ben announced quietly that he had got his hoped-for acceptance to the Brit School next year to do

technical theatre. Watch out for him – Ben Gilbert – in a few years. How many of you hardened LDs out there came from such a start? Plenty!

That, as they say, is (amateur) showbiz! 🍀

*The Department of Culture
Media and Sport published
a 2008 survey identifying a
flourishing subculture of 5,300
amateur theatre groups in the
UK with 1.8 million participants
attracting 21 million bums
on seats (50 % more than
all London theatre!) with an
annual sales of £122 million.*



The International Lighting Design Symposium in Hangzhou, China

by Michael Ramsaur

Professor and Director of Production at Stanford University Department of Drama



The 2nd OISTAT International Lighting Design Symposium was held in Hangzhou China April 1-6, 2011 and ALD members Nigel Levings and Declan Randall travelled to China for the event. The symposium was held in conjunction with a celebration of the career of the 1st Class Chinese Lighting Designer Zhou Zhenping. The combination event

included 20 international guests representing Australia, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Finland, Hong Kong, South Korea, Hungary, Sweden, Brazil, the UK and South Africa; as well as over 250 Chinese lighting designers, set designers and directors.

Delegates flew into Shanghai and then found various modes

of transportation to the neighboring town of Hangzhou with a population of almost two million. The event was sprinkled with Chinese culture, including the signing in Ceremony, group pictures, many banquets of exotic foods, and even a traditional Chinese foot massage.

This was the second symposium I had organized, the first symposium was held in 2001 in Long Beach California in conjunction with a USITT Annual Conference. That international gathering of lighting designers was to celebrate the publication of the English edition of Max Keller's Book *The Light Fantastic* and was a gathering of about 25 international designers and many students. Both events have been very successful in bringing designers from different cultures and situations

together for professional Interaction.

This Symposium began with a day and a half tribute to Zhou Zhenping from his many colleagues and coworkers. Zhou Zhenping, is a 1st Class lighting designer – the top recognition of achievement within the theatrical lighting industry in China. A book of his work *The Brilliant World and The Light of the Soul: Works of Stage Lighting Designer Zhou Zhenping* was published by the China Theatre Press in 2009. Although Zhou has not worked internationally he has received the Wenhua Stage Design Award from the Ministry of Culture seven times, as well as receiving over thirty awards for his work in China. His specialty is designing Yue Opera, the second most important opera style next to Beijing Opera in China. Yue opera is from the

early 20th century and has a softer and more melodic music than traditional Peking Opera. Zhou has designed regularly for the Zhejiang Yue Opera Troupe and the Hangzhou Yue Opera Theatre. The visual aspects of Yue and Zhou's work has a much more contemporary feel than the historic Peking Opera. In addition to his work with Yue, he has designed Beijing Opera, Drama and Children's Drama, Kunqu Opera and many large performance events.

Following the tributes to Zhou, presentations were given by Louis Janssen, President of OISTAT, Henk





Michael Ramsaur and Cindy Limauro with Zhou Zhenping

van der Geest, Head of the OISTAT Lighting Design Working Group (both from The Netherlands), and Nigel Levings (from Australia). Janssen spoke of "Designing Theatres for Better Lighting", van der Geest about "Art and Lighting Design", and Levings about the "Intersection of Art and Technology". A presentation about the "Current Situation of Lighting Design in China" was given by Song Weijun, and one about

the "Education for Lighting Designers in China" was given by Wang Xiao. In addition to formal presentations there were many lively panel discussions including all international guests with animated student audience participation.

In addition to many tribute toasts to Zhou Zhenping from his Chinese colleagues, the formal presentations and panel discussions, there was also a technology exhibit

by Chinese manufacturers showing many of the Chinese manufactured automated and LED fixtures. International guests were able to tour the West Lake district and visit the Hangzhou Grand Theatre designed by internationally known Canadian architect Carlos Ott. The Hangzhou Grand Theatre covers 100,000 square metres with a total construction area of 55,000 square metres. It consists of an opera house, a concert

hall, a multifunction hall, an open air stage and a culture square. The group also attended a performance of Yue Opera, which has its origins in the Hangzhou area. The performance was an example of the lighting designs of Zhou Zhenping.

The last day of the Symposium was conducted at the campus of the Zhejiang University of Media and Communications. We toured the school's facilities

including its large television studio, as well as editing and various postproduction facilities.

As always, the most valuable aspect of the meeting was the interaction between the lighting designers present, both in the organized sessions as well as at breakfasts, banquets, and tourist activities. #

PLASA FOCUS: April 19-20 2011 LEEDS

Nigel Lawson Dick breaks off mid-rehearsals to meet and greet Lighting's top names as they gather in the North

Bright summer sunshine in Leeds – well that sounds like an oxymoron. This was April, after all, but there they were, the worthy Burghers of that fair city stretched out in deckchairs on the plaza by the Royal Armouries, basking in the sun.

Since I was mid-rehearsal for our Wokingham production of *Of Mice And Men* it was a somewhat pressured trip – leaving Berkshire at 10.30pm on Monday and getting to Leeds in the small hours. Nice peaceful driving though, but you do have to stay awake. Somewhere around Nottingham this complicated vehicle of mine decides to give me a jolt. Simple messages like a door being open I can cope with but when it comes up with 'EAS fault' that's a bit more tricky. B*****, I say. a) Anything to do with the air suspension

spells money and, b) if I can't get it fixed it is a VERY slow, VERY long and VERY bumpy ride home on Wednesday – and how does that sit with a 7.30pm rehearsal?!

So Tuesday brings a quick ALD get in; we have a slim-line space this year so we settle for our slim-line 'travelling' version of the stand. And then the welcome sight of Tom Dexter-Scott who arrives in good time to herd the hordes, aided and abetted by Richard Thompson. An Internet search (where would we be without it?) unearths a garage not too far off. So after an excruciatingly slow and bumpy ride I roll into some old farm buildings where I am much relieved to find a bunch of delightfully down to earth and cheerful mechanics who drop everything, diagnose the problem and provide a second hand compressor bit which does the trick. Within

45 minutes I am on my way again, riding high back to the show. Where do you get service like that these days?

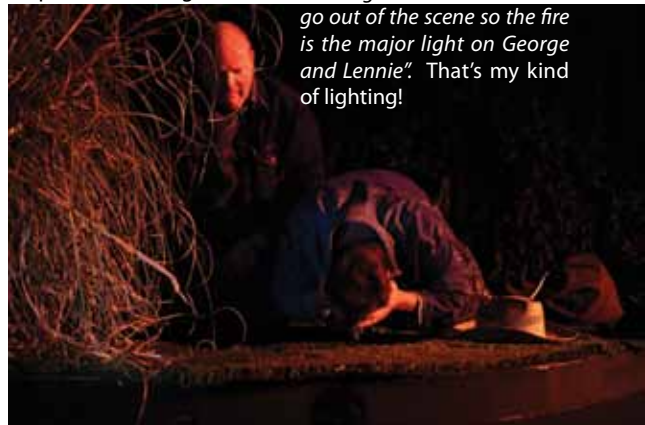
Meanwhile, the PLASA Focus show has been buzzing busily and lunchtime on the first day sees quite a crowd round and about (free lunch, after all). We saw all the usual suspects with swarms of students hoovering up anything in sight but particularly notable in this show was the level of professional interest, both designers and others. It is clear that 'the ALD message' is getting out there so "I have been meaning to join for a while..." is becoming a familiar refrain. We just hope that the application forms come rolling back in.

Wednesday of the show was steady; maybe not quite the numbers of the first day but a good stream of recognised faces and



prospective new members to the stand. Overall a good trip.

So with the quickest of get-outs and onto the motorway back to Berkshire – suspension working a dream!



And by the time you read this, *Of Mice And Men* with its poetic evocation of the great American dream, is just a memory – but a great one. "The light has continued to go out of the scene so the fire is the major light on George and Lennie". That's my kind of lighting!

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On yer bike.

Mark Jonathan fills up his reusable water bottle and attends a conference on SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION.



There was a full house at the NT where I attended a very interesting conference examining *Sustainable Production* organised by Julie's Bicycle. It was a day of discussion, debate and the sharing of best practice with regard to theatre production in its broadest sense. It's not often that we can get such a

range of experts from so many different fields of theatre in the same room together. Alison Tickenell, director of Julie's Bicycle, reminded us that we are currently creating an unsustainable debt in both financial and physical resources. While Dr David Frame underlined the real problem that there is no

apparent incentive to change what we do.

ALD Executive member, Paule Constable sat on a panel, with the Royal Court's production manager, Paul Handley, the theatre designer Soutra Gilmour and Artistic Directors Erica Whyman (Northern Stage) and David Lan (the Young Vic).

Paul Handley recognised that as we try to eke out the maximum from our budgets this may mean that we don't attend fully to ethical practice or the environmental impact of our actions. It was great to hear that some production managers and their teams are already looking at how to salvage and recycle sets. Paul said it's essential to track the supply chain; where have the materials come from and where are they going to when we dump the set? Soutra described herself as a 'enthusiastic amateur' but as a freelancer often felt she had almost no control over the circumstances in which one works apart from in her own studio. That said, she recognised as a freelancer she got to see different policies in different theatres. As a freelancer she also saw how much she had to travel to simply earn her living. As I

sat in my former work place I thought how I used to drive in everyday and now, how I hardly drive my car, even if sometimes, I do have a hefty carbon footprint in air travel.

Paule urged us not to get bogged down in what we couldn't do but to take responsibility for our actions both professional and domestic and that we have to 'normalise sustainability'. She asked us not to leave the rig on when it wasn't necessary. The conference agreed unanimously to this. Paule told us to bring our own water container; Yes! I felt good as I've been carrying my thermal flask from one job to the next for years now.

Paul and Paule urged us to lead pro-actively in sustainability and not to let the legislation creep up on us like H&S had done previously.

The top tips included having "Sustainability" as an

agenda item in meetings and to communicate the theatre's commitment to creatives, technicians, and suppliers as well as the audience.

In the afternoon we broke into smaller groups to look at different aspects. Paule Constable and Bryan Raven led a session with a host of lighting designers, programmers and lighting staff to examine what we could do.

Yes, you can turn your discharge lights off after you've checked them if they are not needed for more than 20 minutes. Theatre managers will be encouraged to turn off the exterior canopy lights late at night and during bright daylight. Look at using velcro cable ties, string or inner bike tubes (as they do at the Arcola) rather than PVC tape. What we can't do is opt out of participating in making the World a sustainable place.

So start by getting your own flask/water carrier- I find it very comforting to have my own with me wherever I'm working. By the way, that evening I went to a restaurant where bottles of water were charged at £5.50 a bottle +12.5% service charge – shocking... and when I got home I peeled the PVC tape off my shoe! 🍌



The author with his collection of refillable water bottles. Photo: Menna McGregor.

Here's Paule's check list of Small Steps:

The unanimous feeling at the Julie's Bicycle conference on sustainability was let's do something. So in this spirit here are 5 things we can all do immediately which will make a difference:

- 1) **Insist that you douse any movers or discharge lamps in the rig when you are not going to be using them for over 20 minutes.** This follows manufacturers' guidelines - and has been done at the National Theatre with complete success for the past 2 years. The NT rig check in the afternoon - and then turn everything off until the half. We can all do this. The energy savings are massive.
- 2) **Let's ditch PVC tape.** The Royal Opera House have gone over to velcro cable ties - available on line in packs of ten. No more nasty glue and gunge on our cables - and no more electricians foot - and no more non biodegradable crap in the rubbish chain! Try string - which is the preferred method of the French. And there is the marvellous bicycle inner tube method used by the Arcola - totally recycled!
- 3) **Drink Tap Water and Carry a Water Bottle.** As my grandfather would say - they'll be selling us water in bottles next....wait a minute - they are and we are paying for it. Stop it! Fill from the tap.
- 4) **Be Proud to be sustainable** - Encourage the debate and the conversation. Talk about it - get it out in the open. The more we talk - the more we share ideas and make it not seem mad to think about these things - the better
- 5) **Join the Julie's Bicycle Lighting Network** - Be part of the movement for change - get the info you need and get your ideas for change out into the lighting community. Sign up on <http://juliesbicycle.ning.com>



**A'mandla!
Viva!
E'wethu!**

The cries of the struggle
and of liberation.

WINNIE

Declan Randall on the Legend, the Opera, the Lighting

The 28th April saw the world premiere performance of a brand new opera at the State Theatre in Pretoria, South Africa. It is about Winnie Madikizela Mandela – the (in)famous ex-wife of Nelson Mandela.

Many raise their eyebrows in surprise when I mention the subject matter, but with such a chequered past it seemed a fitting medium with which to write a tribute to the “Mother of the Nation” as she is known by her supporters.

Winnie Mandela played a key role in the struggle for liberation, and there are many stories that cloud her past but as is the case with history, there are always two sides to each story. The

libretto for the opera made no attempt to sugar-coat her past and many of the most controversial stories surrounding her life were touched on as well as parts of her childhood and the years that she was made to suffer both in prison and whilst under house arrest.

Right from the start the director, ShirleyJo Finney, wanted to make a very clear distinction between the two worlds that Winnie was occupying in the opera. There is the ‘present’ where she is testifying at the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and then there is the journey that she takes the audience on, back into her memories.

The way that I decided to approach this was to have

two clearly distinguishable styles for the ‘now’ and the ‘then’. The scenes that took place at the TRC were treated in a cooler, whiter light and also a fairly harsh, stark light. I decided that this light had to be textureless. We wanted the light to make her feel exposed and to a certain extent, make the audience feel as if they are witnessing the actual trials. The TRC hearings took place all across the country and in a varied selection of halls and facilities, with ceiling mounted fluorescent lighting often being the only source of light. That said, of course, it is theatre after all, and opera to boot, so I felt that we had a little bit of ‘wobble-room’ in terms of how dramatic and stark we could go. There were



Pondoland



Brandfort



times where we pushed the envelope a bit, and then other moments where we pulled it right back and simply cast everyone in the sour green light that only an old, cool-white fluorescent tube can produce.

The 'memories' were a lot easier to deal with. Here we had a lot more opportunity to push the boundaries and the light took on a more textured, warmer and softer feel in some scenes and became more shadowed and ominous in others. As we are seeing the memories from her point of view, I used that as a device which meant that we could present the scenes in almost any fashion, as memory is after all a completely subjective thing.

Working at the State Theatre meant that I had to largely make use of the permanent lighting rig, although there was a small budget for a few little extras, and we did have some generous support from Rosco. The State Theatre has also recently upgraded some of their lighting gear to include 16 x Robe Robin LED 600 fittings. I will be completely honest and say that when I first heard that there were LED wash lights as a part of the permanent lighting rig, I was, well, concerned. Don't get me wrong – I am all in favour of 'greener' lighting solutions, but I do firmly believe that this should be a *choice* and then used carefully.

TRC hearing



WINNIE

Declan Randall on

the Legend

the Opera

the Lighting



One of the first things that I did when I got into the theatre was sit with my programmer and put the fittings through their paces to see how much trouble I was going to be in. I am happy to report, that in spite of myself, I actually was really impressed with them. I do not want this to turn into a product review, so I will leave it there. But I

will add that I ended up using only one system of Fresnels for a backlight wash (there were four) as it was a colour that the LED's would have struggled to replicate.

The final rig included 12 x Martin MAC 550's, 16 x Robe Robin LED 600's, 24 x 2kW PC's, 12 x 2kW Fresnels, a whole bunch of PAR64's, a whack of Selecon Pacific

Zooms, a pinch of 1kW Fresnels, 4 x VL 2500 spots, and a peppering of ETC Source 4's. (Please forgive all the technical collective nouns...)

The show was also fairly AV heavy – there was a large media montage that was projected onto 7 different screens for the TRC, we projected scenic-

type backdrops onto the BP screen upstage and also used the front black gauze as a projection surface. We ended up with three 16k ANSI lumen projectors running Watchout ® 4 to handle all the AV content. As always when dealing with projection heavy shows, it adds to the complexity of the lighting designer's job. There is a fine

line in ensuring that there is enough light on the actors with minimal light on the screens. As a result there was a fair amount of side light in the show which was fine for the trips down memory lane, but made things a bit more difficult in the TRC when we were aiming for a light quality that was less sculptured.

As is the case with a new

WINNIE

Declan Randall on the Legend, the Opera, the Lighting



production, things are bound to change at the last minute. And they did. Scenes were re-blocked, scenery was added/cut, scenes were re-lit and so on, but it was a great process to be a part of and the crew took it all in their stride. Just because things were not complicated enough, half-way through our tech process, we had to leave the theatre as there was an unfortunate double booking in the venue. Another show was scheduled for a weekend concert, so we had to strike our set, booms, and various other bits so

that the other show could come in and perform. Then, we had one day to put it all back together before our final dress rehearsal. No pressure...

Colour played an important role in re-creating Winnie's world. For the 'present' I played with colour temperature quite extensively, the LED's helping here to shift from a light as warm as 2700K right up to the blue-ish coldness of 8000K. The 'past' allowed for a little more freedom with colour and here I used shades that ranged from the pale straws and steels to the more saturated

reds, ambers and blues. In the Brandfort scene, I needed to re-create the sense of the oppressive heat and dryness that one finds in the area. For this, I relied on the paler yellows and greens which also tended to bleach the colour from the set too, which was helpful. For Soweto, I opted for a dirtier yellow – an almost grey light that matches the sense of the polluted city air and the yellow dust that blows off the old mine dumps and reflects the late afternoon sunlight turning the skyline into an aggressive red glow. In Pondoland, where she grew up, I leaned more towards the more romantic theatrical shades to suggest the sunsets and night times.

For the ritual slaughtering of the cow, we lit the BP screen in reds, yellows and ambers. The stage crew would then shake the BP quite vigorously which gave the illusion of huge flames dancing above the crowd – a cheap trick, but frightfully effective. The show starts and ends with Winnie testifying at the TRC and the more neutral and, dare I say *reserved* lighting for these scenes serves effectively as book-ends for the colourful and textured memories and journey that we are taken on.

The scenes that took place at the TRC were treated in a cooler, whiter light...



ACT1 Scene 2 - Prison,
Winnie's Torture



Prologue - The Mothers of the Missing



I used gobos rather sparingly (for me) on this production. There was so much visual information that was being provided by the AV, that I did not want to over-complicate the picture that the audience were looking at. Part of the ensemble were the “Mothers of the Missing” – 8 ladies who represented those who lost their lives in the struggle, the ancestors, those left behind. They were part of a more ethereal world and they were often bathed in a textured light which helped to separate them from the rest of the scene. I also had a small battery powered LED upright

worked into their costumes so that there was always a light on their face and the unnatural angle the upright provides helped to suggest their ‘other-worldliness’.

Being a part of *Winnie* gave me a unique opportunity to play a role in re-creating part of the country’s history – a part which I am embarrassed to say, I knew very little about. It was a great journey for me, both personally and professionally and whilst there is still huge debate and controversy surrounding Winnie Mandela, I hope that, at least, she will always have a great quality of light.





Knight of Illumination Awards: Deadline extended to June 30, 2011

The Knight of Illumination Awards has extended the deadline for entries into its lighting design awards programme until June 30 2011.

Currently in its fourth year, the Knight of Illumination Awards was established to recognise the talents of lighting designers working across the creative arts in the UK. Past winners include Bernie Davis, Baz Halpin, Cate Carter, Dave Davey, Al Gurdon, Andi Watson and Paule Constable.

The Awards are the only programme dedicated exclusively to the stage lighting designer's craft in the UK, and, in all likelihood, the only competition in the world where winners receive an authentic medieval battle sword – crafted in Toledo, Spain.

Neil Austin, who received his 'kighthood' for work on the London-staged musical, *Parade*, said: "The Knight of Illumination Awards are the gold standard. They are the only awards to honour lighting design in all disciplines and at all levels of the industry. All entries – whether from fringe, regional or national level – are judged by people who've actually seen the shows."

Designers can nominate their own work online at knight-of-illumination.com, or be nominated by a third party such as an agent

or a member of the production team. Entry is free and open to any UK-based lighting designer in the following categories:

Television

drama, light entertainment, small studio

Rock

stage events, arena events, eco innovation

Theatre

dance, opera, play, musicals

The winners will be announced at a ceremony on 11 September 2011 at Ibis London Earls Court Hotel, 47 Lillie Road, London. For further details or to nominate an entry, go to www.knight-of-illumination.com.

Deadline: 30 June 2011.



Testimonials from past winners

"To go to the Knight of Illumination ceremony is exciting in itself, but to get nominated for an award in front of such company is one of the greatest honours I have ever received."

Bernie Davis, *TV Event, 'Festival of Remembrance'*

"Apart from the recognition and the amazing Toledo sword, Knights of Illumination has opened up many more opportunities for me and given me the chance to meet so many people, who I otherwise would not know...it's been a huge confidence boost and great fun to be involved with."

Cate Carter, *Rock, 'The Editors'*

"There is something about being awarded a Knight of Illumination award that has made me feel that we as a community of lighting designers are heralding our cause and making what we do more visible to others in the business. Our skills need more recognition and this award has helped me feel that all the hard work and time away from the children is recognized, respected and appreciated."

Lucy Carter, *Dance, 'Chroma'*

"What a true pleasure to be recognized by one's peers and a panel of distinguished theatre, music and dance critics! A nod from people in the business is really the best it gets."

James F. Ingalls, *Dance, 'L'Allegro' for Mark Morris*

"The Knight of Illumination Awards are the gold standard. They are the only awards to honour lighting design in all disciplines and at all levels of the industry. Plays, musicals, opera and dance at fringe, regional and national level are judged by people who've actually seen the shows."

Neil Austin, *Musical, 'Parade'*

USA AWARDS: Congratulations to ALD members and others recently honoured

The Outer Critics Circle Awards 2011

These are presented annually for theatrical achievements both on and Off-Broadway and this year we had two ALD members nominated - Paule Constable and Malcolm Rippeth. The presentation of awards was made on May 26 at Sardi's Restaurant in Manhattan, New York.

Outstanding Lighting Design (Play or Musical): Paule Constable for *War Horse* [photo right by Simon Annand]

Other nominations: Natasha Katz for *Sister Act*, David Lander for *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, Malcolm Rippeth for *Brief Encounter*.

Tony Awards Nominations 2011

The Tony Awards are named for Antoinette Perry (1888-1946), an actress, stage director and philanthropist who was a founder of the American Theatre Wing. The ALD is proud to have two ALD members – Paule Constable and Ken Billington – in the list of lighting nominations.

Nominations for Best Lighting of a Play

Paule Constable for *War Horse*

David Lander for *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*

Kenneth Posner for *The Merchant of Venice*

Mimi Jordan Sherin for *Jerusalem*

Nominations for Best Lighting Design of a Musical

Ken Billington for *The Scottsboro Boys*

Howell Binkley for *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*

Peter Kaczorowski for *Anything Goes*

Brian MacDevitt for *Book of Mormon*

In addition, the nominations for Sound Designers for plays includes three UK-based designers: Chris Shutt, Ian Dickinson and Simon Baker, and the Drama Desk Awards are presenting a special Award to the entire creative Team behind *War Horse* to acknowledge its excellent direction, design and puppetry. *Congratulations to all.*

June / July 2011



24 Carat Gold



Lighting designer Declan Randall has a wide grin on his face. Clad in a fetching red lab coat, he walks briskly and with intent from the lightbox, over to a custom-built, enclosed room that's fondly referred to as the 'igloo'. Inside, the smile fades a little, replaced by a frown of concentration.

A moment later, he's back at the lightbox and what's fast becoming a ritual is repeated. Eventually, he pauses, but only to chuckle, "I'm like a kid in a sweet shop."

South Africa born Declan is spending the day in the R&D section of LEE Filters. The aim? To create a new colour for the catalogue – one that celebrates 50 years of the Association of Lighting Designers. For Declan, the choice of colour is obvious: it's got to be gold.

With lighting designs that span genres and nations (from *High School Musical* to *Porgy and Bess*, from Hong Kong to New York City), Declan's experience is nothing if not varied. A self-confessed lighting obsessive, he is fascinated by what he refers to as the 'texture' of light – the form it takes and how our eyes translate it in our everyday surroundings. Fortunately, he is also open to experimentation, because it turns out that creating the gold that – at the beginning of the day's activities – exists only in his mind's eye, is trickier than it would first appear.

It would be easy to assume the gold that Declan is visualising is a rich, deep hue with the qualities of molten metal but, in fact, what he's after is altogether

more subtle. "Imagine the reflection off a bar of gold," he says, holding the palm of his hand above a sheet of gel that's laid on the lightbox. "That reflected colour is what I'm trying to achieve. And, of course, gold has a kind of shimmer to it, so we have to try to create something that captures that quality. It not only has to look gold, it has to react to light in the way that gold would."

While his projects include architectural and exhibition work, Declan visualises the gold he is hoping to create as existing more in the context of the theatre. But before it reaches that point, it is the job of Alison Chetwynd, head of R&D at LEE Filters, and with twenty four years of experience under her belt, to translate Declan's vision and description into



Declan Randall and Alison Chetwynd (LEE R&D) discussing gold colour options.

The making of ALD's anniversary LEE 550 colour filter by Ailsa McWhinnie.

reality. She has prepared a number of test sheets as a starting point, based on previous discussions with Declan. In the past, in order to achieve the sort of gold he sees in his mind's eye, he has combined filters to create what he describes as a "greeny-black yellow". This is the first combination that's created. It's close, but not quite what he hopes for.

It's complicated, this business. Having decided that there's a pinkiness missing from the tests, the next attempt goes too much the other way. It's clear there could be almost infinite subtle variations – all of which could, in some way, be labelled as gold, but Declan's 'reflected' gold is proving elusive. "We'll know when it's right," he says. "And equally, we'll know when it isn't."

During a break for lunch, Alison is spotted studying her wedding ring, turning her hand this way and that to understand the way in which light reflects from it. This must have done the trick, because shortly after our return to the lab, there is the long-awaited eureka moment. Having run the gamut of golds that were too acidic, not warm enough and too heavy on the green, the tone that Declan had in mind was achieved. "I knew something was missing – I just didn't know what," he says. "We were almost there with one of the tests, which was just right at the lower range of the lamp's intensity. I wanted it to do the same thing, but at higher intensities."

So how did they do it? Simple. By adding a warm up filter to a previous test

formula. This reduced the overly yellow appearance of the previous test, and introduced what was definitely a 'proper' gold, that remained such even when tested under a variety of sources and in a range of intensities. "It maintains its richness as it dims," explains Declan, "becoming more molten as the percentage is reduced. You could see it being used for anything from early morning sunlight to a kind of surreal candlelight."

In its simplest form, the end result is a layer of carefully selected dyes in lacquer form, poured onto a sheet of polyester and spread evenly. But it's so much more than that: it's sunrise and sunset; it's a wash of colour over a desert; it's a subtle backdrop. The result is 550 ALD Gold. It's alchemy. ✨



Letters

Hi Will,
Emerging LDs

I've just read your piece in *Focus* April/May suggesting an 'Emerging LDs' meeting - which seems like a great idea to me, and I'd love to come along to whatever it turns out to be!

I'd also be more than happy to help out if I can with setting up some kind of group for emerging LDs - in fact I've wanted to offer my help to the ALD somehow for quite a while now, but have always felt that my 'emerging' status meant that I was a bit less useful - mistakenly perhaps - so if there's anything you know of that an emerging LD can do help out more generally the do let me know!

And in terms of things to help us emerging LDs directly - I'd be really interested to hear the opinions of more experienced LDs on the benefits of having an agent

(as you mention in the article) and also on the benefits of union membership (both Equity and BECTU - we hear a lot about how Equity doesn't do much for LDs, but rather less about the benefits/ comparison between the two unions) - perhaps things that could be addressed with *Focus* articles?

In fact I've cc'ed Andy Collier to hear his opinions on the *Focus* article idea - sadly it's an idea for an article I'd like to read rather than one I'd be qualified to write, but I would be more than happy to interview someone/write up someone else's thoughts if you guys can think of someone with the knowledge but not the time to write an article!

William Reynolds
Artistic Director Metta
Theatre
www.williamreynolds.org.uk

Dear Andy,
Inspiring students

In the midst of gloom and despondency over "the downturn in the economic situation" I wanted to share a positive story that reminds me why I got into this business in the first place.

Last week, ten busy people from the worlds of lighting and production gave up a day to listen to final year students and production electricians pitching their five year plans. The feedback they gave was generous and supportive, and many of them joined the students for an informal drink after the session.

In tough economic times these young people could be seen as competition. Instead our industry colleagues demonstrated genuine warmth and support for the next generation.

Thank you to all of them, and to all the established practitioners who give their time to welcome the

next generation into this wonderful world.

Yours,
Nick Moran
LD & tutor at Central
School

Dear Editor,

Sustainability

OK, so this isn't really a lighting issue, but I'm a lighting designer and production electrician who is getting continually disheartened watching so many good materials and sets get thrown into a skip during a get out. It feels such a waste to lose a perfectly good show floor or a set of flats because a company can't afford storage or they just don't have the need for them any more. That show floor could be re-painted and put to use in another show, that black header could become part of another theatre's stock masking, or that spare timber that was under the the show

floor could be used to build your new props store.

So after one too many get outs, I've finally decided to do something about this problem. We're all trying to be green and there is an awful lot of talk, but it's time we actually did something.

I've created Set-Exchange.co.uk. It's a web-based message board, where items of set, props, costumes, or anything that you no longer need can be posted and made available to the wider theatre community, to re-home and re-use. All items on the site are offered free of charge and the site is also free to use.

From the Fringe right up to our big subsidised venues, everyone is always looking to get the most out of their show budgets, so what if your production can get its hands on that second



hand show floor for free? You save the cost of a new floor, the original company saves the cost of disposing of it, we save the trees and we reduce landfill. Surely everyone wins?

So like I said, this isn't really a lighting issue, but you can all help. We need to publicise this site and get people using it. We have the power to question our Production Managers during our production meetings and ask them 'What happens to the set at the end of the show?'

or tell them that they could pick up a show floor for free. I'm sure that will help when you follow up with the line 'Sorry, I'm going over budget!'

So take a look at www.set-exchange.co.uk. Join our twitter feed (@setexchange) to see what's being posted or even better, join the site and post those old Patt 23s that have been gathering dust in the store for the past 10 years. Just tell everyone, and together we can get this project off the ground.

Yours,
Peter Harrison
ALD #1192

Set-Exchange.co.uk
Giving your unwanted set a new home

And finally... from Richard Pilbrow

Dear Peter Rick and Andy,

At (very) long last I have finished a book I've been writing (with David Collison) for some years.

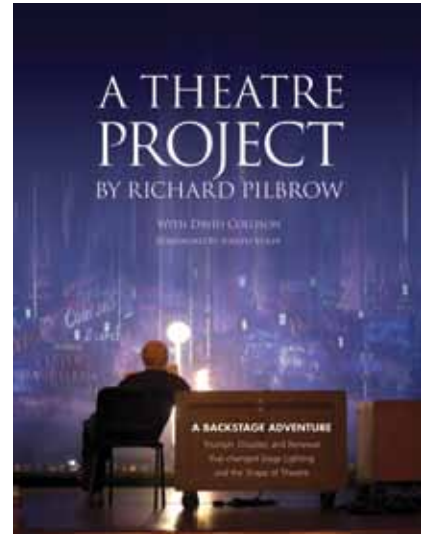
A THEATRE PROJECT is an autobiographical account of my life and TP's over 50+ years.

I hope it tells quite a story about how our business, lighting, sound and consulting, has developed and grown. It also tells the story of the founding of ABTT, SBTL and ALD.

See you at ABTT,



[editorial note: Richard will be at ABTT 2011 Theatre Show for the launch of his book and we hope to have an advance copy on the ALD stand so drop by to see him.]



A THEATRE PROJECT
By **Richard Pilbrow** with David Collison
A BACKSTAGE ADVENTURE

Triumph, Disaster, and Renewal that changed Stage Lighting and the Shape of Theatre. This is the remarkable story of how an upstart enterprise, Theatre Projects, shook up the world of theatre. Establishing the professions of stage lighting, sound design, and theatre consulting in Britain, Theatre Projects went on to revolutionize theatre design in the United States and internationally.


A full review will be published in the next issue of Focus.

4TH KNIGHT OF ILLUMINATION AWARDS

"...THE ONLY AWARDS EXCLUSIVELY DEDICATED TO PROFESSIONAL LIGHTING DESIGNERS..."

LONDON, 11TH SEPTEMBER 2011

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