

FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

"More art, less tools..."

In the shutter cuts this issue:

Knights of Illumination • ALD Member #50 Iain Potter remembers • AGM • Critic Mark Fisher at the Edinburgh Festival & Fringe • Michael Northen Bursary Winners • PLASA 2011... and much more...

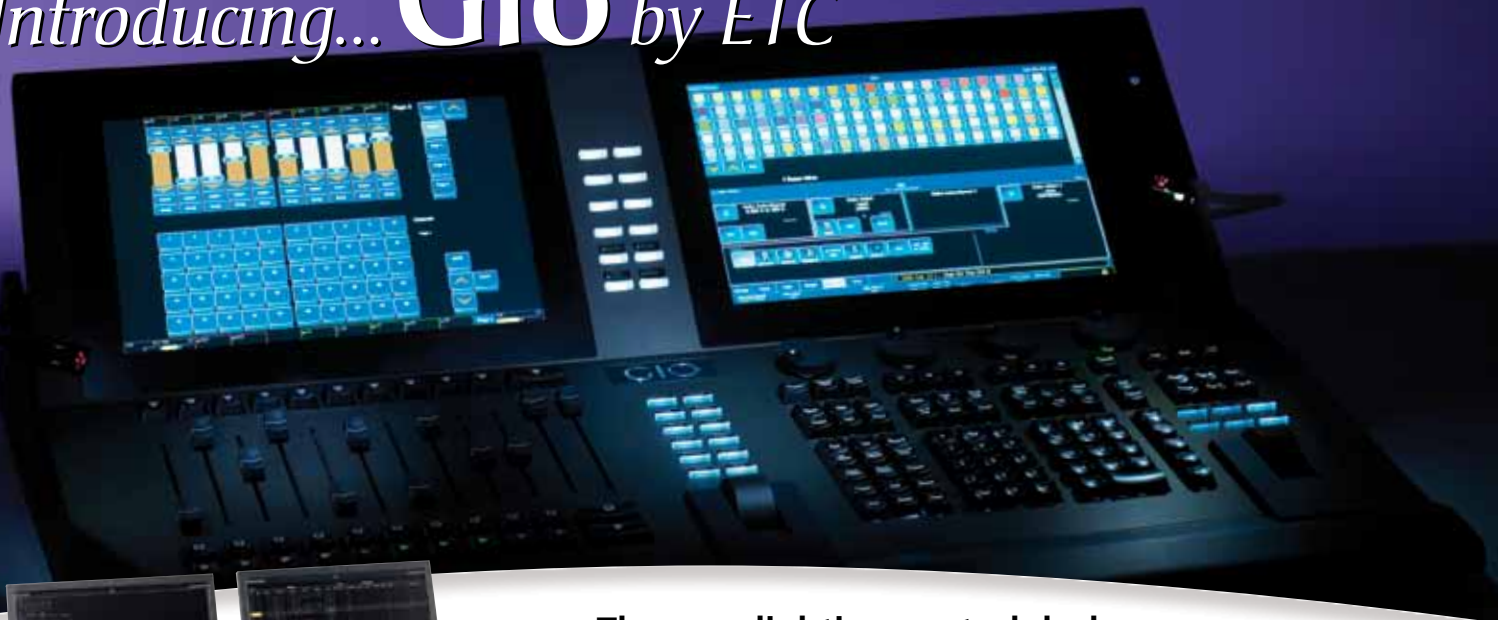
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October/November 2011

Michael Northen Bursary winner Rob Dyer's lighting of
'The Blue Room' at the Bridewell Theatre.

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MJ

I'm writing this as I fly back out to Florence which is what I was doing last time I wrote to you... however, quite a lot of water has flowed under the bridge of the lighting world in the meantime.

In August, I travelled down from rehearsals in Manchester to attend the ALD AGM. Thanks to all who were able to attend. After many years as Chairman of the Association Rick Fisher has retired from this role, and we owe him a great debt of thanks for his tireless contribution developing the Association. Much of Rick's work has been 'behind the scenes' and, like an outstanding lighting design, may go almost unnoticed, such as helping LDs when they encountered contractual difficulties. This requires a delicate touch and the support he gave and the outcome may not have always been widely known. Rick has also forged a strong liaison with our American cousins at the United Scenic Artists, which ensures that our professional members are properly supported when they work in union houses in the USA.

The Association has moved on in many ways under Rick's leadership; most of all it is the member inclusivity that

he has fostered. We have just enrolled ALD member # 2000. We now have a substantial number of both British-based members and LDs from around the world. The ALD has a place for lighting **students** and puts great emphasis on encouraging young LDs as they set off on their careers, through to our venerable **Fellows**. In between, there's a category both for **professional designers** and **professionals** (who may not be designing but work professionally in lighting) this now makes us very inclusive indeed. Lest we should forget our **corporate** members who have joined in sponsoring so many events including our student scheme, along with all the keen supporters who make up the **associate** category.

It's been a great pleasure for me to work alongside Rick as we developed various initiatives including the *Letter to Producers*, as well as closer communication with our agents through the *ALD Agents' Newsletter*. We've

seen the inclusion of lighting at the TMA awards and after much badgering from Rick, greater recognition from our union Equity and active LD participation on the Equity Designers' committee. The expansion of the Executive and the development of *Focus*, under the editorial direction of Andy Collier, are further examples of Rick's ability to harvest brilliance. His appointment of our long-standing treasurer, Ian Saunders, as administrator ensured that we would all be looked after with exemplary care. While we owe so much to Rick's vision and achievements I'm delighted that he will still be serving on the Executive Committee. The thanks that we owe you Rick cannot be adequately measured.

I'm equally delighted that Peter Mumford is acceding to the role of Chair and this was formally ratified at the AGM. Our new chairman has a wealth of experience in many genres. He can be seen lighting drama one week and opera or dance

the next. As well as having an outstanding CV in lighting he has also worked as a stage designer and TV director and TV lighting designer. His experience and range of work across the industry stands the association in very good stead for the future. Welcome Peter!

I was in previews back at the Royal Exchange as PLASA opened. With the opening came the most prestigious event of the season *The Knights of Illumination*. What an incredible celebration of lighting design this has become under the inspired support and leadership of Clay Paky along with all the sponsors that they garnered to make the awards possible. The organisation of the event is driven by Enrico Caironi and despite ill health forcing him to stay in Italy all his colleagues at Clay Paky ensured that the finest details were attended to. I know we all send Enrico our very best wishes for a good recovery. Our thanks to Clay Paky and the sponsors for generously supporting TV, Rock and Roll

and Theatre LDs. Thanks too, go to Jenny and Durham Marengi who are central to the success of the awards.

This year, I took over as the *ALD Co-ordinator*; a role previously done by Paule Constable last year and Rick Fisher before that. I wrote previously about attending the judging day for the theatre category and how refreshing it was to hear the judges, all of whom were theatre critics, talking with such enthusiasm about what we do. Our thanks to David Benedict, the chairman of the panel who judged the Drama and Musicals category with Michael Coveney; Louise Levene and Jenny Gilbert for Dance and Ashutosh Khandekar and Fiona Maddocks for Opera, who sent me this message:

"Dear Marko,

I'm frustrated to say I cannot get to the awards as I'm away reviewing but it's great to be involved and a huge privilege to see how you and your colleagues make magic out of sometimes very

dud raw material, and how you add indefinable beauty to the best. How many shows have been saved, as well as made, by brilliant lighting! I've lost count...." Fiona.

Many congratulations to all those nominated and indeed well done to the winners who can now take up sword fighting with their very splendid swords...

So, I'll finish by telling you that I'm now in rehearsals in Italy. The Maestro arrived today and conducted for about 20 minutes of the 3 hour call. In this short space of time he corrected a singer, barking at him in a number of languages, *"What language do you speak?"* I could see him wondering if the singer understood him as he flipped effortlessly from one language to another. The number of languages being used to communicate in the rehearsal room total more than the fingers we have on one hand. We're in Italy so some of the staff only speak Italian, the director speaks American, the opera's

in Czech, my score has a German translation and my libretto has at least 4 languages. While we have a range of nationalities singing from indigenous Czech, one of the singers only speaks German so the multilingual leading lady, the incredible Angela Denoke, translates the director's intentions into German when required.

Over morning coffee she told me how she'd flown to Paris on Friday to give a performance of *Salome*, (I lit her in this role at Munich) and then she went home to Germany for the weekend and played golf. That, she claims, is how she keeps fit. Meanwhile, not to be outdone, my Friday was spent having a leisurely breakfast in Florence, lunch in Pisa, tea in Peckham and champagne in Manchester, followed by a light hangover...

Back in the rehearsal room I find myself sitting next to the Czech language coach (the writer and musicologist Mirka Zemanová) and as we flip between Italian, German, Czech, American



It was great fun for me to share the podium at the KOI with our president Richard Pilbrow; this was a complicated piece of collusion to make sure Richard was there. He didn't realise the true reason was that he would be the recipient of the very much deserved Award for LIFETIME achievement that Durham proudly presented to Richard. Many congratulations Richard!

and English I'm reminded that reading a musical score is another language, as are the languages that we need to speak when we are programming lighting desks.

Most recently at the Royal Exchange we were *auditioning* another lighting desk 'in earnest' while we were in production. I realised how hard it is on the programmer and LDs as they become fluent in one lighting desk's language and syntax

to switch to another lighting language. I'm certainly not convinced we've found the perfect language for that yet. I hope my addled brain can manage to flip between lighting syntax (in Italian), the music, general Italian, German, Czech while not forgetting the subtle differences between English and American. Time for a blackout.

Until next time, *Ciao! Ahoj!*
Tschüss! **Mark Jonathan** 🍷



Twenty five members of the ALD were treated to a wonderful day at the opera on September 5th, courtesy of lighting designer **Andy Bridge.**

Meeting outside Her Majesty's Theatre in London's Haymarket, the social chat included inevitable comments like, "it really doesn't seem 25 years ago this show opened..." from the more youthfully-challenged members amongst the congregation.

A DAY AT THE OPERA

ALD Members meet at HMT to celebrate 25 years of *Phantom of the Opera*

It was very pleasing to be in the midst of such a wide range of members, some of whom probably weren't even a twinkle in their parents' eye when Andrew Lloyd Webber attended the opening night of his latest masterpiece on October 9, 1986: *The Phantom of the Opera* .

We were extremely fortunate that this meeting was hosted by the show's lighting designer and ALD Fellow, Andrew Bridge and his production electrician Mike Odam (Mike said that his 'assistant' on the opening production was industry icon Howard Eaton, but as he couldn't make the meeting, Mike would take all the credit). [*The editor suspects that Howard believes Mike was his assistant*].

We were ushered into the auditorium and mesmerised by the open 'black box' stage framed with gargantuan gargoyles recreating the Gothic moulding of the Paris Opera's proscenium arch. Andy explained that set designer Maria Björnson's concept was for a 'black box' with striking scenic elements that came out of darkness with lots of shadows and striations, great fluid stage craft with the help of some automation "to make it look good". This was something of an understatement as we discovered later, because the only part of the set, stage or production that wasn't automated was the lighting.

Andy started by explaining that at the time he was part of the Theatre Projects uber-team of designers, and was to be associate to Richard Pilbrow who had been involved in the early stages of ideas, concepts and set design discussions. Due to scheduling problems, Richard had to pull out and Andy – who had just completed *Time* (the mega[expletive deleted]musical, which was all automation and no script) – took the reigns after the set had been modelled.

Hal Prince was the director, and he was very precise and cinematic in his demands. Andy described his style as, "He was very impatient but always correct. Every aspect of the show was designed especially the sudden shift in focus



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and surprise of scenic movement. The show should be seamless. Lots of old stagecraft. He said he 'wanted mystery, intrigue, danger. Light to come from extraordinary locations and angles; if a door opens, then light must stream through.' Ideas were planted; beam striation, followspots from different angles.

Maria's black box (with, incidentally, a gloss black stage, which was being repainted not just for our visit but for a cast change) had to represent three locations: the Paris Opera as lit in the 1880s; an atmospheric backstage area ("all doom and suspense") and an underground lair filled with intrigue and romance. The mix of gloss and matt black textures continued the theme on scenic pieces, drape tassels and portal detailing.

The Design

As for lighting in the 1880s, the Paris Opera was 'twixt gas and electricity. Floats, vertical tormentor battens, no sidelight as such... lots of shadows "let's use gas!" Errr... not a good idea. The design for the backstage location was generally cooler, with heavy sidelight and slat bar gobos in CCT Sil30s.

The stage deck has 250 traps and the footlights were automated (obviously) so gas was immediately ruled out. To enhance the footlights



"Maria's flying plot was colossal, and there was little room for any overhead lighting..."

an orchestra pit rail was added with a battery of small Fresnels. Maria's flying plot was colossal, and there was little room for any overhead lighting. Necessity being the mother of invention inspired Andy, Mike and Howard to build MR16 spots into a narrow strip "Howie battens" and rigged vertical on booms to light the backdrops. The rig was very congested and during the initial techs it was kindly 'refocused' pointing into the grid many times by the massive drapes flying from the floor in the opening scenes. The Coloursette semaphores were often sacrificed to the iron curtain but today even with modern scrollers Andy would still prefer semaphores as it's easier to mix colour than a scroller, he told me later.

A major part of the opera house set was the famous chandelier. There were to be no power cables to it, and so Howard Eaton came up with a radio-controlled dimming system and battery-operated lights. Model radio control solved several other lighting headaches: the boat that glides between the candles in the lake en route to the lair, and the Phantom's organ candles and many props which had to be controlled on cue.

The Underground Lair

Even without the experience of previously seeing the show, the very name *Phantom of the Opera*

conjures up images of a stage full of candles and swirling mist. But Maria's idea of candles was inspired by another show, *Time*. Andy described his previous show as 'rock and roll meets theatre', and had been the first use of Vari-Lites in a West End musical, even though *Phantom* is probably the only West end show without them. Discussions continued about the Phantom's lair – mystery, doom, gloom etc. Maria did not quite think that candles in the floor would work, but when she visited *Time* in which a 40-foot flying disc hovers and gradually descends to the stage, when the hundreds of Par36 pinspots hit the smoke inches from the stage, Maria said "That's it!" And a stage filled with flickering candles was born.

The Equipment

Without the luxury of clear space overhead, lights were suspended from lots of small split pipes, positioned anywhere space was available. Not only was the lighting design about *designing* the lighting – the lighting equipment had to be created specially as well.

There were Howie battens, birdies, replica gas mantles, candles... Lighting Technology Ltd came to the rescue bringing with it a lot of R&D effort: flickering LEDs embedded in translucent rubber 'flames', water ripples, flame flickers, KK wheels in front of custom gobos, ropelights around the prosc, magnesium flashbulbs in the chandelier, R&V beamlights as followspots (first used in the West End by David Hersey in *Evita*), plus the twin Strand Sunspot arcs 'Ethel and Gertrude' foh that provided ideal period lighting, "some flickering and a green tint".



A DAY AT THE OPERA



Looking round for some automated lights (there were none) our attention was drawn to the circle rail adorned with Patt23s (amongst others) providing the flat front lighting required to give shadows of dancers onto the cloths.

The list of set equipment used 25 years ago (most of it the same now as it was as designed) would put a modern West End musical to shame. This was and was an extremely complex show.

Putting the show on

Andy explained that he had a crew working 24/7, sleeping when and where they could. Things would be done very differently today. For example, the LX would be built, checked

and tested off-site. And of course, there were no mobile phones 25 years ago. He failed to get an extra telephone line put in to the theatre, so if in need, either they had to stand in line with a handful of coins at the stage door payphone, or blag their way into the theatre manager's office. Only when the first suitcase mobile phone arrive did Her Majesty's Theatre have 3 phone lines!

Another contrast to today's world is that shows weren't documented as well as they are now. There were no PC's and all drawings were done in pen and ink, and patch /dimmers was 'organised chaos'. Andy showed us the original plan, re-drawn a few years later by a Hugh Vanstone (one Howard Harrison was Cameron's production assistant who gave Andy directions to rehearsals and per diems!...). *Where are they now?* A high-tech 7" Floppy Disc on which the show was saved on the Galaxy was shown as evidence (the show opened with an MMS and now has a Strand 520i). With eight shows a week, the main challenge for the maintenance of the lamps is dust, and Mike Odam is the man with the feather duster and pinney who supervises the cleaning and refocus twice yearly.

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Final thoughts

If the fascinating and entertaining talk by Andy and Mike, followed by a tour backstage, understage and above plus a lunchtime social over tea and biscuits were not enough, we were treated to a full dress rehearsal with orchestra in the afternoon. Space limitations prevent much more than a brief overview, but what struck me was how audiences have been conditioned to accept increasing levels of illumination and background noise in the intervening 25 years.

Each scene looked exquisite; delicate lighting, dramatic angles, atmospheric colours, gentle brightness. It was as though the eyes were relaxed and could drink in the meaning of each location and every emotion without squinting or being abruptly dragged back to the 21st century when the music stopped and myriad ventilation fans fill the aural space. Silence in musical theatre allows we, the audience, to admire the visual thing of beauty that is created by inspired lighting designers who let the story take centre stage.

Our thanks go to Andy and Mike, and to Dave Corbett and Andy Bird of Her Majesty's Theatre. AC 🏰

Photos courtesy: Andrew Bridge, Howard Eaton, Rick Dines, Andy Collier



Office Oracle

News from Ian's production desk



2012 ALD Members' Yearbook

It is that time of year to ensure that your updated contact details and yearbook entry is up to date. The 2012 yearbook will be with you in early in the New Year, but the information gathering starts now!!

If you wish or require to update your details for inclusion into the new edition, please use the website or contact the office as soon as possible to guarantee its inclusion. Please note that the 'Yearbook entry', the short descriptive paragraph under the contact details, should no longer contain show credit information. With the improved website, we now feel that it is not necessary to list show credits, and would instead prefer an outline of what you do or your past experience. Due to the increased size of the

membership, these will be strictly limited to no more than 35 words.

Only members that have contributed subscription funds to the ALD coffers will be eligible to be included in the yearbook, so that is another reason for ensuring your subscriptions are paid up fully!!

Deadline for any changes to be received by the office is strictly 30th November 2011.

Sponsored Student Scheme 2012

This corporate members' funded scheme for students studying at Conference of Drama School Colleges is open again for applications. The closing date for applications is Christmas 2011.

All current student members who receive email bulletins have been sent an application form to fill in and

return to the office complete with proof of your student status in order to maintain their current membership beyond April 2012.

Please note that even if you are currently a member of the scheme you will need to apply again to continue your free membership through to April 2013. If you do not, your membership will revert to a normal student category and you will need to pay the annual subscription for a student.

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

Attention Student Members!!

You are about start the new academic year. Do you have your term time address on our database? Do we have

the correct one? If you graduated this summer are you moving away from your study area?

We frequently receive post returned to us as 'Unknown at this address' during the autumn. If you are moving over the summer, please ensure that you update your information on the website directory or contact the office. An incorrect address can result in you not receiving membership renewal notices, and places the continuation of your membership at risk.

Executive Committee Members Required

The Executive of the ALD is a committee of members who run the organisation for the benefit of all other members. Our **Corporate Rep** for the last three years Iain Quinn has chosen to step down and so we are looking to replace him. The post

requires the holder to liaise with our Corporate members about how they offer support to the ALD by organising events, visits, benefits and demonstrations to other members either as a body or in specialist groups such as Professionals or Students.

We are also still looking for someone to help out Will Evans with the **Meetings**. This entails organising meetings on behalf of the ALD in whatever guise they arise. Some we initiate from the Executive meetings and some are brought to us by other members.

If you are interested in either position please contact the office in the first instance and I will put you in touch with the relevant people for further information.

Subscriptions 2011/12

All payments made to us have now been reconciled up to

Office Oracle

News from Ian's production desk

the end of September, and those members that are in arrears have been contacted by both letter and email. It is important that we collect these fees to ensure that we can maintain the level of service we provide to our members. To date we are owed approximately £6,500 on the 2011/12 subscriptions, more than 10% of our annual income.



The ALD @ 50 - Can you Help?

We are producing a special 50th Anniversary edition of *Focus* that will attempt to tell the story from the origins to the present day. This is the first time in 50 years that we're taking stock of our Association; why not have a role in writing our story?

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- Why did you join the ALD?
- What ALD meetings do you remember?
- Have you any pictures of ALD AGMs, stands or meetings? These need only be snapshot quality.
- Have you spotted any landmarks?
- What made or makes you proud to be in the ALD?

Please send ALD 50 contributions to Jim Laws at jimlaws@btconnect.com or ring him on 01502 675264.

ABTT Publishes Revised Code of Practice on Work at Height in Theatres

As previously promised, the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) will release the revised "Code of practice for the selection and use of temporary access equipment for working at

height in theatres", in time for the 2011 PLASA Show.

This long-awaited document provides step-by-step practical guidance for all who work at height and those who supervise work at height in theatres and other entertainment venues. Aimed particularly at the working technician, the Code sets out the hierarchy of choice that should be followed when selecting existing and purpose-made bridges, powered access such as MEWPS, scaffolding towers, Tallescopes, Zarges, step ladders and rope ladders in descending order of safety factors.

Of particular interest is the revised section on Tallescopes and the new requirements necessary to carry the ABTT's approval for it being regarded as a safe piece of work equipment. The

requirements of the "three fours" (see photograph) are as a result of the tests of Tallescopes carried out for the ABTT and by the HSE. The safe use of Tallescopes has been the subject of much discussion amongst industry bodies such as SOLT, TMA, HSE, ABTT, Aluminium Access Products and a range of UK theatre organisations. The ABTT is grateful to the HSE for their help in the preparation of this 103 page booklet.

This code of practice is of such importance that the ABTT has decided to make it as freely available as possible. Free copies will be distributed to all working technicians upon application. Applications should preferably be by email: workatheight@abtt.org.uk giving name and job, as well as address. The normal cost will be £6.00 inc p&p. A Tallescope log book is also

available at a cost of £2.00 per copy.

The Code was launched at a seminar session held at the PLASA Show on Sunday, 11 September.

MEETINGS

Bingley Little Theatre Members' Meeting 26th October 2011

Richard Thompson and Bingley Little Theatre invite you to their production of *The Accrington Pals* on 26th October at 7.30.

Come and join Richard at 3.00pm for a 'Welcome to BLT', tour of BLT Arts Centre Complex with ideas & plans as to how they are thinking of proceeding over the next ten years following their proposed acquisition of the complex. There will be tea and coffee provided while members can discuss and

Meetings... cont

muse over this exciting 'little theatre' project with the in house technical team.

There will then be supper for all at 6pm with the bar open, followed by the show where the bar will remain open afterwards.

The event is free and is a chance to see a wonderful play. Please email meetings@ald.org.uk if you are interested. Numbers are restricted so please so contact us to confirm a place. Tickets will be processed on a first come first served basis.

There is plenty of parking and hotels in the area for people who may want to stay over. The address is Bingley Little Theatre, Main St, Bingley, BD16 2LZ.

Richard is an ALD member and will be hosting the event. We look forward to seeing you there!

LED Theatre Lighting Shoot Out on 28th October 2011 at the Royal Northern College of Music

The ALD and the ABTT assisted by Stage Electrics are holding a shoot out of LED theatre lanterns at the Royal Northern College of Music Opera Theatre, 124 Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9RD on October 28th 2011.

The intention is to see what an average theatre might expect from LED lanterns. To which end manufacturers have been invited to provide examples of LED lanterns falling into the categories of – Profile Spots, Acting Area Wash Lights, Scenery/ Cyclorama Wash Lights and Beam Lights – PAR equivalents etc. To limit the field moving lights will not be included.

There will be two sessions, at 10.00 and 14.00. Lanterns will be demonstrated

alongside the Theatre's own stock of conventional lanterns all running on the house board, a Strand Lighting 530i. There will be opportunities to compare and contrast different lanterns and manufacturers' representatives will be available to answer questions and to discuss lanterns included and not included in the shoot out.

Light refreshments will be available all day in the Opera Theatre and the College's catering facilities and bar will be open.

Anyone interested in lighting is welcome to attend, the shoot-out is not limited to ALD and ABTT members but please let us know if you intend coming and to which (or both) session. Email meetings@ald.org.uk if you wish to be added to the attendance list.



Showlight 2013 – Have you got the X-Factor?


Are you a lighting designer with something to say? Have you worked on a complex or high profile project that you think others might be interested in hearing about? Or solved an impossible lighting challenge?

Showlight are beginning their search for speakers for Showlight 2013, so if you think your project is as worthy as the Olympic Games, the Teletubbies, Bingley Little Theatre or lighting the US Presidential elections – all of which have featured in the past – you can visit them at PLASA on stand 1-C25 or contact them directly: papers@showlight.org

If you're a manufacturer, installation or rental company, Showlight offers the perfect environment in which to network with lighting designers from all

disciplines. As an exhibitor, you'll have three days in which to talk about your products and ideas in a relaxed, informal atmosphere.

Showlight 2013 takes place in the fairy tale town of Český Krumlov in the Czech Republic and the town's amazing 13th century Gothic castle, with its connected theatre and conference centre, will be the main venue for the presentations and exhibition. All hotel accommodation is within the beautiful pedestrianised old town; vehicle access is deliberately restricted in order to retain the medieval feel of this UNESCO Heritage site.

The combination of interesting papers and people, in an absolutely stunning venue, will make for a once in a lifetime experience. Make sure you're there! 

Diary Dates

26th October

Bingley Little Theatre Members' Meeting

28th October

LED Theatre Lighting Shoot Out at the Royal Northern College of Music

Monthly members' social evening,
Coach & Horses, Covent Garden,
London

18 November

Deadline for December/January issue of *Focus*... PLEASE!

25 November

Monthly members' social evening,
Coach & Horses, Covent Garden

2012

17-18 April PLASA Focus, Leeds*

13-14th June ABTT Theatre Show, London *

** 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!

Professional Designer

Sherry Coenen, London

Richard Fagan, Christchurch (from Associate)

Chloe Kenward, London (from Associate)

Nick Ware, Macclesfield (rejoining)

Associate Member

Jerome Douglas, London

Ed Elbourne, Solihull

Andrew Finnerty, London

Katherine Lowry, Surrey

Julie Harper, Eastbourne

Rita Ijomah, Johannesburg, RSA

Ross McKillop, Glasgow

Jake Shurey, Uxbridge (rejoining)

Peter Swikker, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Miguel Vicente, London

Student Member

John Bannister, London

Emma Garner, London

Sponsored Student Scheme

James Barron, Rose Bruford

Simon Brockwell, Rose Bruford

Emile Cheshire, Rose Bruford

Alan Fotheringhame, Central SS&D

Steven Hoye, Rose Bruford

Thomas Goode, Central SS&D

Rafael Mazzillo, Rose Bruford

Miena Mizusuki, Rose Bruford

Dan Saggars, Middlesex University

Daniel Shelley, Central SS&D

Thomas Wesson, Rose Bruford

PLASA 2011

by our man on the stand, **Nigel Lawson Dick**

Four good days in town at the show – but home now, the sun has been shining and the grass has grown! So there's a quick debate – cut the grass or write a report? Well, it is September and the grass will be pretty damp for while so the report it is. Get the mower out later.



Whilst we had a small pitch at PLASA this year Ian seems determined that there should be no less material around and so on my doorstep I found four heavy boxes – new 'Joining the ALD' leaflets, new forms (new address), more old *Focus* magazines and so on. The car groans a bit as I load all these but then cheers up as I sort through all the previous boxes and feed the recycling bin with those that are now redundant. Honours fairly even.

You know how much space you have at PLASA – that's on the contract – but you're never quite sure how the setup will work until you get there. That probably sounds familiar to many of you. And on the Saturday morning Earl's Court seems to consist of acres of open space with piles of pallets stacked with building panels and flocks of flight cases with no sign of a sheep dog to get them in order. How on earth will all this turn into any sort of sense within another 12 hours?

But that is what get-ins are like, where-ever you are. That fascinating combination of mayhem and method – someone amongst all this does actually know what the end result should look like. Our own little patch is sorted in no time, all Ian's boxes are squirrelled away and it looks pretty tidy. The rest of the hall is still seemingly in chaos.



But by Sunday morning this minor miracle has occurred. It's all there; it's all clean and tidy, lanterns, lasers, fog and snow are all in place and the inexhaustible supply of coffee and anything else is starting to flow.

As do the punters, breathlessly queueing, ready to pile in to the show as if it were a Sunday morning car boot sale. Be the first to collect those treasured lanyards, pens, bags, torches and other paraphernalia. It's great to watch!

So over the next four days trade is brisk on the ALD stand. It's good to see so many members – 'I've just dropped by to say Hello' – and fun that so often 'just dropped by' turns into a lengthy chat and a meeting with old friends. There was a positive glut on Monday morning with so many coming to support the ALD design awards ceremony when five well-deserved and hard-contested presentations were made. How heartening to see these young designers being



given such support and encouragement by some of the great luminaries of the lighting design world. And what fabulous work they have done.

'I've been meaning to join for years'. It's quite a familiar refrain but we are reeling them in steadily so I have quite a dossier of applications to send off to Ian.

So that's the end of the trade show open season for this year. Tidy up the stand materials, check it all over and stow it away for a few months. But the next one will be here soon. 🍀

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Postscript

Copies of the 2011-12 brochure 'Joining the ALD' is available to anyone who has an opportunity of suggesting membership to other Professionals, Students, Corporates or anyone interested in joining the Association. If you can help spread the word, please contact the office for copies.

ASSOCIATION OF SOUND DESIGNERS

For many years there has been a conspicuous lack of a professional body representing sound designers working in the UK. A group of sound designers has formed to create a new professional association. A series of meetings was held over the past 18 months at the National Theatre, the Royal Court and the Royal Exchange and over 60 of the country's leading sound designers attending as well as representatives from Autograph, Blitz, Mac Sound, Orbital, d&b audiotechnik and Duran Audio, and educational institutes such as the Central School of Speech and Drama.

Gareth Fry, Chair of the newly-elected Board of Trustees of the ASD, said that, "The meetings were a great opportunity for a lot of sound designers to meet up, some for the first time, and discuss relevant issues such as emerging technologies, peer and public education, parity of pay and how to raise the profile of the role of the sound designer in the eyes of the industry and amongst the public".

The Association of Sound Designers will be offering a range of membership categories to include everyone working in the UK theatre sound industry, whether as a sound designer or not, as well as categories for students, businesses and other organizations.

Further information can be found at www.associationofsounddesigners.com

The ALD wishes our sound colleagues every success with their new association.

Knight of Illumination Award 2011 Winner

Hugh Vanstone: Musicals



Hugh Vanstone for
The Wizard of Oz
The London Palladium

"Exceptional lighting enhanced the sets' bold use of colour to seriously vivid effect. No-one in the business is better at building a series of cues up to a button, thereby nailing the final moment of a song to win instant applause. There's a very strong case for saying his lighting makes the show."

Photo: Keith Pattison



Knight of Illumination Award 2011 Winner

Wolfgang Goebbel: Opera

4TH KNIGHT
OF ILLUMINATION
AWARDS



Wolfgang Goebbel for
Tristan und Isolde
Grange Park Opera

"For the bright, salty reality of the sea setting in Act I, the imaginative depiction of ecstasy in Act II and the shadowy, painful intimacy of Act 3 - you knew at every instant where to look, what to think, what to feel."

Photo: Alastair Muir



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Knight of Illumination Award 2011 Winner Charles Atlas: Dance



Charles Atlas for
Tate Project
Tate Modern Turbine Hall.
Michael Clark Co./Tate
Modern

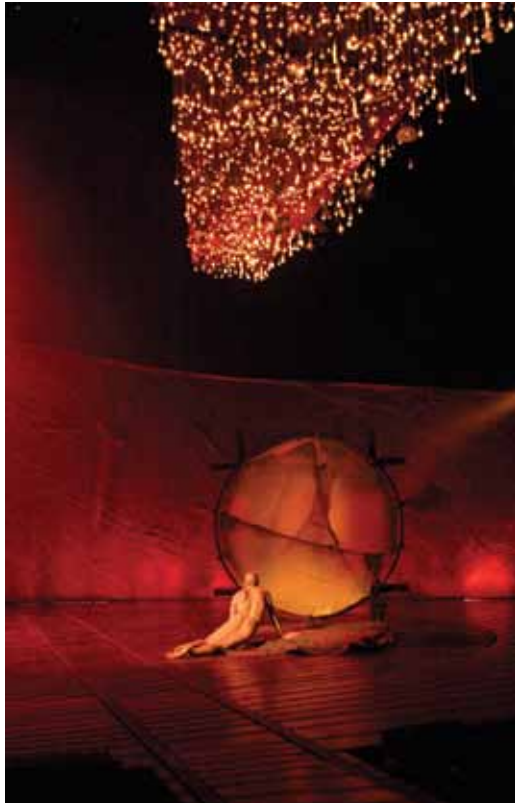
"As daylight gave way to darkness, Charles Atlas's lighting told one where to look as light cut the zebra-striped floor – no mean feat with audiences on all four sides. The overall effect was devastating, the lighting utterly essential for not just its illumination but its dramatising and transforming effect."

Photo: Hugo Glendinning.



Knight of Illumination Award 2011 Winner

Bruno Poet: Drama



**Bruno Poet for
Frankenstein
Olivier, National Theatre**

“Boldly visible, vivid lighting that literally electrified the drama – in keeping with the central idea of the narrative. A fizzing, flashing ceiling of bulbs suspended over the stage changed the entire dynamic of the Olivier stage. The lighting help turn the production into a major event.”

Photos: Catherine Ashmore.

A LIFE IN THEATRE

or, I wish I could be 50 again ...!



In the 50th Anniversary Year of the ALD, *Focus* is interested in all things 50-related and what more appropriate than member number 50?

That number is proudly owned by **Iain Potter** who gives us a fascinating insight into the many and varied opportunities that can knock on the door of the lighting-minded enthusiast!



I had a great, if slightly illegal time, moonlighting for cash-in-hand in all the local theatres doing absolutely everything backstage – mainly at the legendary 4000 seat Davis (where I was the crocodile in *Peter Pan* on one occasion), Grand and Streatham Hill Theatres. Eventually in about 1958 I was thrown out of Croydon College because of these activities and for playing snooker in the local pub next door when I should have been in class. My summary dismissal by the Croydon Vice Principal then led to a rich tapestry of assorted occupations. I sold cameras, was a photographer, a very poor hack with the local rag, worked in bars and restaurants and did the complete West End rounds as a casual, everywhere from the Comedy and Garrick to the Albert Hall, including a stint as Stage Door Keeper at the Vaudeville. I opened the Mayfair Theatre in 1963 with a record breaking *Six Character's in Search of an Author*, then moved on to the Savoy, both as assistant electrician.

I eventually ended up at the Shaftesbury as Chief where I 'engineered' *Hair* in '68 and its two tours in England as well as some bits abroad (we



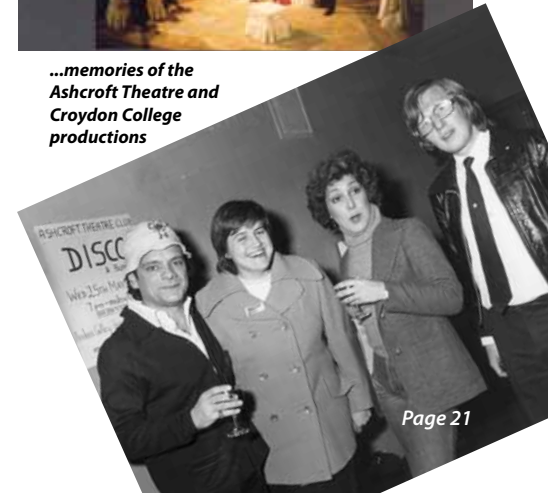
The Hair crew



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even did the show in concert at St Paul's Cathedral - blimey!). This was innovative, pioneering rock opera stuff with newfangled beam-lights, strobes, smoke machines, par-battens, simulated sex, bad language and, of course the famous nude scene, where by some chance and a slip of the thumb there was often a full up when the stage should have been really dimly lit (even the exit signs had to be extinguished to keep it dark). The equipment and rig came mainly from Theatre Projects – but not the nudity as far as I can remember.

...memories of the Ashcroft Theatre and Croydon College productions





A LIFE IN THEATRE

Jain Potter

Like the potpourri of my youthful employments, once again my career began to branch out in many and various directions. From stage managing for *Sooty moons* ago, I have co-directed and opened many theatres, designed and consulted for The Chaucer Heritage Trust nationwide, and for museums such as the Tank Museum in Bovington – I staged *Tanks in Action* at Bovington in 2001; and yes, I busked there and could even drive a tank if required. I've done the 'Exhibition', 'Famous Hotel' and 'Big Shop' circuits, as well as garden landscaping, and I have taught theatre in Prague and Milan! Sadly never been involved with circus though ...

One of the most interesting long-term projects in 33 years of freelancing was being personal lighting and effects designer to the late sculptress Adel Rootstein who revolutionised the entire fashion industry by sculpting everyone in the fashion and theatre world for the best in retail display mannequins, from Twiggy, whom she originally discovered, to Ute Lempur, Lord Litchfield and Joan Collins. I had the pleasure of lighting and photographing some of the most beautiful people in the world for those three decades, albeit most of them in fibreglass.

The lighting for Adel's fashion shows, showrooms and major exhibitions here and abroad was an interesting blend of conventional, large scale theatre lighting and low voltage

display equipment such as Philips white-SON discharge luminaries to give a unique quality of 'in the round' light to enhance the skin tones, costumed figures and scenic settings – all to sell her figures world-wide. Unlike some performers I've worked with, once in the light, the figures never moved! Colour was the key, usually with no dimming because the quality of light changed, neutral density being the intensity control when needed. All the other processes of lighting were standard – planning was always to a loose brief – “do they know what they want?” we always asked – as was budgeting, rigging and setting. It was very much a 'hands-on' time intensive, belt and braces, all singing and dancing activity, and always with risks – and I went to some crazy, crazy parties.



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

I then did a stint in South African theatre before ending up as Stage/Technical Director at the Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon (400 shows) and then, in 1978 as Head of Theatre Production and Design at Croydon College, next door, where I was hired by the self same Vice Principal who had summarily ejected me 20 years earlier! “Better the devil you know”, he wryly told me later by which time I had risen to the dizzy heights of Deputy Head of School through no fault of my own - my worst job ever.

Theatre design was, however, probably the most rewarding and best job ever where we always did practical theatre training to a very high academic standard for real, with the most dedicated and hard working colleagues I have ever worked with. The students (all of you out there – I know every face amongst you!) were the final alchemy that made it the success it was. We introduced the first accredited lighting design course in the country as an element of our 3-Year BTech HND in Theatre Design, an exciting first at the time.

A LIFE IN THEATRE

Jain Potter

The many exhibitions I staged there at the Dusseldorf Messe Centre were for 5 days only, and cost around £750,000 pounds each – you have to sell an awful lot of mannequins to get that back... and they did! The Rootstein shows took me to the V&A, Museum of Fashion and Textiles, Harrods, Europe and America in vast luxury.

So there you are, Potter's potted, and very potty life.

Before the final FBO, but at least with no more ladders to climb, I have learned:

Diversification, variety, experience and invention are my motivation. Theatre Design's motto at Croydon was, I think originally from Francis Reid, "Be a Jack of All Trades and a Master of One". Also that specialisation counts when you need it. Do anything to the best of your ability and your professionalism, and always to schedule, trying anything once. Finally always use your eyes to see and judge what you can see, over and above the technical skills you inevitably have. Isn't that exactly why we are designers and theatre people?

I have always been well rewarded, but have never done anything for the big money up front (although I had offers!). It has been purely for the experience, the challenge and the enjoyment. Above all I've had *FUN* and gained some wonderful friends.

It has been a great privilege to have gone from the age of variety theatre and big time touring

in the 1950/60's, and then, working throughout the following theatre lighting revolution to the state-of-the-art technological industry as we have it now – I increasingly WOW at PLASA nowadays – YIPEE I always say!

Postscript:

I owe so much to all the support I've had over the years from everyone I have known, but in particular I had two mentors. Arnold Dover (dancer and director) who came over from South Africa with the famous African black musical *King Kong* in 1958 to the Prince's Theatre (now the Shaftesbury) – a very brave and politically contentious thing to do against Apartheid in those days – he was head of theatre at Croydon before I took over and introduced me to Adel Rootstein.

Also Martin Starkie who produced and financed *Canterbury Tales* at the Phoenix Theatre in 1968 alongside *Hair* against all the odds – a musical of Chaucer's Tales all the London producers said, "ridiculous", but it did the world stage for five years and is still there; Martin founded the Chaucer Heritage Trust to popularise our father of English Literature, and spent a £1,000,000 doing so from his show's profits. 🍀



Adel Rootstein
DISPLAY MANNEQUIN



MICHAEL NORTHEN BURSARY 2011

This year saw the change in format of the Michael Northen Bursary. In contrast to previous years where the focus was placed on a single production, this year a portfolio of two to four productions was invited. Applicants were invited to demonstrate imaginative and creative lighting design, as well as giving the judges an idea of how and why the end result was achieved.

Deciding three winners for this year's competition was no easy feat, as the quality of work presented in the portfolios was exceptionally high and there was a very interesting range of work displayed. The quality and level of detail and work put into each of the portfolios was also very high, with applicants obviously taking time and effort on their submissions.

The 50th Anniversary Bursary was for emerging lighting designers, those who graduated within the last 5 years. It took the same format as the Michael Northen Bursary and was judged to the same criteria. The wide range of high quality work on show made this a tough competition, as well as a great insight to the work of up and coming lighting designers.

Our thanks go to the judges, Neil Austin, Natasha Chivers, Rick Fisher, Phil Gladwell, David Howe, Kathy Sandys and Mark White for giving up their time to judge the awards, to the Tricycle Theatre for allowing us to hold the judging in

their rehearsal room, and to Jack Knowles for all his hard work organising the awards on behalf of the ALD.

The work of all the winners will be the subject of a special section in the next issue of *Focus*. 🍀



ALD President Richard Pilbrow presents the ALD 50th Anniversary Award winner Paul Green with a signed copy of his latest book, 'A Theatre Project'.



The winners

Michael Northen Bursary: Rob Dyer
presented by Ken Billington

Francis Reid Award: Elliot Griggs
presented by Francis Reid

ETC Award: Shmuel (Muly) Yechezkel
presented by Fred Foster

ALD 50th Anniversary Award: Paul Green
presented by Richard Pilbrow

Honorable mention: Lucy Record
presented by Anna Watson

Back row, l to r: Jack Knowles; Ken Billington; Rick Fisher; Richard Pilbrow; Francis Reid; Anna Watson; Fred Foster.

Front row, l to r: Shmuel (Muly) Yechezkel; Rob Dyer; Lucy Record; Elliot Griggs; Paul Green.

Photo courtesy Harmer PR



A dextrous Tobias Wegner in 'Leo' by Circle of Eleven. Set and lighting by Flavia Hevia. Photo: Andy Phillipson



Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe 2011

Focus is delighted to welcome back critic and journalist **Mark Fisher** with his take on this year's lighting highlights...

The Edinburgh Fringe is not the easiest place for a lighting designer to work. Rooms are small, turn-over is fast and technical rehearsals are minimal. It is no surprise that some of the best shows in the 2011 programme had no lighting at all: **Allotment** by Edinburgh's Nutshell was performed outdoors in a real allotment, while **You Once Said Yes** by London's Look Left, Look Right took the audience on a one-to-one odyssey through the streets of the city. Both sidestepped the question of limited technical resources altogether.

In other cases, it suited the simplicity of a performance to have equally simple lighting. One of the most high-profile faces in town was actor Julian Sands in his **Celebration of Harold Pinter**, directed by John Malkovich no less. Recognising that the power of the show was in the elemental punch of Pinter's poetry, the two men rejected a flashy presentation in favour of something much purer. Sands, in black suit and white shirt, stood in a single beam of light and trusted the audience to focus on the words.

Through choice or necessity, such an approach is common, which is why you notice when someone attempts something more elaborate. Under new management this year, the St George's West venue launched with the promise of allowing companies a decent get-in time as well as providing technical facilities worthy of their

artistic ambitions. This being the Fringe, the venue wasn't without its teething troubles, but from an audience point of view, its large stage – raised so the raked seating came up to the level of the balcony – made a refreshing change from all the converted classrooms and cubby holes in town.

Accordingly, it attracted a high-quality international programme, including maverick Belgian company Ontroerend Goed, and a number of shows in the Scottish government-promoted Made in Scotland strand. The most novel piece, **Leo**, came from Germany's Circle of Eleven, a young company specialising in physical theatre and international co-productions.

Performed by a dextrous Tobias Wegner, it gave the audience two places to look. Stage left was the windowless room in which Wegner was trapped. Stage right was a screen showing a live projection of the room. The trick was that the projector was turned on its side so that Wegner's wall appeared to be the floor and his floor appeared to be the wall. For 60 minutes, he performed a weightless dance in which the rules of gravity were upturned. The combination of video and performance was so central to the piece that you can see why one person, Flavia Hevia, was responsible for both set and lighting design. Having picked up the Carol Tambor Award, **Leo** will be seen in New York in January 2012.

On the same stage, Glasgow's Cryptic staged an adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* which made stunning use not only of lighting, but also of a pioneering video technique. As actress Judith Williams performed in front of a row of translucent fabric boxes, lighting designer Nich Smith variously silhouetted her or caught her in the gaze of beams of shoulder-height lights from either side of the stage. It was one of those productions in which the space was defined as much by the lighting design as by the set.



Judith Williams in 'Orlando', lighting by Nich Smith. Photo: Tommy Ga-Ken Wan.



Judith Williams in 'Orlando,' lighting by Nich Smith. Photo: Tommy Ga-Ken Wan.



Additionally, the production used two technologies developed with the digital design studio at Glasgow School of Art. The first, Living Canvas, tracked Williams as she walked about the stage and simultaneously projected a ghostly impression of her movements, sometimes just her outline, behind her. The second, Point Cloud Data Imaging, used laser scanning to generate 3D images of buildings to accompany Orlando's foreign journeys.

Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe 2011

Mark Fisher

It was the kind of thing that would be impossible to achieve in many Fringe venues, but you can sometimes see companies trying. A case in point was ***The One Man Show*** by Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari of London's Shunt Collective. As a piece of meta-theatre, the performance was dispiritingly cynical, but in technical terms, it exploited the possibilities of the downstairs stage of C Venue to the maximum. With a set design by George Tomlinson and Tom Duggan, it made use of screens and gauzes, strobes and projections, captions and photographs and various extreme lighting states. It was a great example to any designer feeling defeated by conditions on the Fringe.

Also in self-referential territory, Quarantine's ***Entitled*** at the new Summerhall venue, until recently a veterinary school, put a real-life technical crew centre stage as they did their get-in and get-out, occasionally stopping to share some insight about their lives with the audience. Chris Whitwood talked us through working lights, wide-beam angles and Lee 079 gels as he focused the lights for a performance that never happened. It was an usual show, sometimes beautiful, sometimes boring, that was not sufficiently revelatory about the real people on stage to be compelling.

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Marc Almond in *'Ten Plagues'* at the Traverse Theatre. Lighting by Zerlina Hughes. Photo: Richard Campbell

The Traverse Theatre offers something closer to the facilities you'd find at any other time of the year, although with turn-around times between shows averaging 90 minutes, it relies on a highly efficient crew. On the mainstage, there were several shows with impressive lighting. In ***Ten Plagues***, a piece of music theatre by Mark Ravenhill and Conor Mitchell, lighting designer Zerlina Hughes emphasised the isolation of singer Marc Almond, playing a survivor of the Great Plague of London, by picking out the 16 empty music stands on Stewart Laing's set.

In Linda Radley's ***Futureproof***, lighting designer Guy Hoare emphasised the atmosphere of a travelling freak show by rigging up a string of fairy lights and spotlighting the pianola playing to itself at the back of the stage.

And playwright Zinnie Harris in ***The Wheel***, staged by the National Theatre of Scotland, took us through several decades of military conflict in a drama that shifted constantly through time and space. It meant lighting designer Natasha Chivers had to create several distinct areas on Merle Hensel's two-tier set to maintain the production's fluid movement.



Meanwhile, the Edinburgh International Festival was characterised by work from or about the Far East. In an era of shifting economic and political power, artistic director Jonathan Mills focused on countries in Asia that still strike us as exotic. There is enough of a cultural gap for those of us in the west to find the music of these countries fascinatingly alien, the costumes extraordinary and the movement strange and beguiling.

From a lighting point of view, several of the shows took a common approach. With the design focused on costume more than set, it is the job of the lighting designer to give definition to a large, open stage. Standard practice is to fill the space with fog and bathe it in coloured light, often to powerful effect, while using follow spots for the key characters. This was true of *The Tempest* by the Mokwha Repertory Company of Korea, *The Revenge of Prince Zi Dan* by Shanghai Peking Opera Troupe and *King Lear* by the Contemporary Legend Theatre of Taiwan. In the latter, there was a particularly striking moment early on in which the cone of grey light illuminating actor Wu Hsing-Kuo was exactly the same shape as his voluminous beard.

Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe 2011

Mark Fisher

The challenge for lighting designer Laura Mroczkowski in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, an adaptation of the Haruki Murakami novel, was to cope with puppets, actors, shadow play, live and recorded projections, translucent screens and several playing areas. That she gave the whole multidisciplinary affair a visual coherence was a considerable achievement. At the other end of the scale, in Tim Supple's staging of *One Thousand and One Nights*, lighting designer Sabri El Atrous did a splendid job with the kind of open stage we saw in the Chinese and Korean shows, establishing the mood of the storytelling scenes and even making use of under-stage lighting that shone through gratings at the actors' feet. He made light work of it, in every sense. #



Above and top: *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* lighting by Laura Mroczkowski.
Photos: Manfred Reiff

One Thousand and One Nights, lighting designer Sabri El Atrous.
Photo: Cylla von Tiedemann



THE 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Chairman's report

"As you know we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Association. The industry has grown and changed enormously since those bottles of Nuit Saint George were downed at Rules' Restaurant in 1961, but the basic purpose of the ALD in bringing together those of us who work in the lighting world, and the pleasure in this interaction that we share as colleagues remains unchanged.

This year the ALD has continued to go from strength to strength thanks to the input of the entire Executive committee and many of our members who have contributed to meetings, to *Focus*, and worked on the Equity Designers' committee.

When I first joined the Exec, we often would muse on what if anything our members wanted from a professional association. In those days most people seemed to be content with

just a sense of belonging, and when we asked for more input we were often met with so much silence that we began to wonder why we should bother.

I am so pleased that this is no longer the case. New forms of communication provide challenges as well as benefits to our working lives, but the value of a professional body is not in doubt. We are often getting new ideas for initiatives that we sometimes struggle to fulfil. But I do strongly believe the ALD is a vibrant representative of the lighting world, respected and appreciated by members and non-members alike.

While we always feel we can do more, I think we can take real pride that amongst the creative team in the theatre, it is lighting designers who are the most connected to each other and routinely share information. I

welcome the news that there will soon be an Association of Sound Designers and I hope that they too will benefit from sharing information and the support that the ALD gives to members in all parts of the lighting world.

This year the ALD has continued to be involved in raising the profile of lighting design and lighting designers. I am pleased to acknowledge the essential involvement of the ALD in creating and sponsoring awards for lighting design through the TMA for work in regional or producing theatres, and our involvement with the *Knights of Illumination* awards where national critics choose outstanding work in the areas of dance, opera, plays and musicals under a structure developed by the ALD. I know that these prizes have made lighting more valued and that is what the ALD is all

about. Along with the *Olivier* and *Whatsonstage* award there are more chances for our work to be recognised as an integral part of the theatrical experience.

Our excellent magazine *Focus* continues to be a fantastic ambassador for our profession. It is interesting to read, informative and looks great! A huge thank you to Andy Collier and the ever-increasing number of members contributing to *Focus*.

Last year the AGM instructed us to outline a new approach to professional support. I am pleased that we can now offer to the membership more details about what PLASA can offer our members, and with the welcome visit from Equity to this year's AGM I hope we can begin a new more active relationship with the Union that is able to collectively

bargain with the main theatrical employers.

For students we continue to support the *Michael Northen Bursary*, the *Francis Reid Bursary* and we welcome ETC continuing to support a third bursary. With the increasing tuition fees these awards may seem like small change, but they are important in nurturing the next generation of LDs. Judging by the strong careers of past winners, these prizes are a good indicator of talent.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ALD, we have sponsored a special award to an emerging LD with less than 5 years professional experience. The Exec is looking into ways to make this a more permanent part of the ALD support for emerging lighting designers. One way Professional Designers can help is by allowing emerging designers

to observe, shadow or assist on projects.

Other 50th anniversary events are still in the works, and we are hoping to have a major event in the new year where we honour Jennifer Tipton, one of the leading lighting designers from the US. Her work has not only inspired so many of us, her tireless commitment to training the next generation at Yale is certainly worthy of our first international fellowship of the ALD.

I cannot avoid mentioning the sad loss of David Taylor this year. David was for many years the real backbone to the ALD and of all that the ALD stands for, passion for lighting, passion for the study of lighting, and a passion for the people involved in lighting. Even after he relocated to the US he was very involved in the ALD, ABTT, Showlight, PLASA

and much more through out the industry. The ALD owes him a great deal, and we are looking at ways to commemorate David.

When I got involved over 15 years ago I wanted to make sure that the ALD was relevant to the working life I had as a freelance jobbing lighting designer. I know I often felt alone and needed the advice and support of colleagues who understood the challenges we face professionally. I wanted the ALD to not be afraid of talking about the real things that concerned me such as the lack of appreciation for what lighting contributes to the theatrical experience and how that was too often reflected in fees that were frankly insulting. I knew that producers often ignored our involvement, would not give us equal billing to other designers and all too



often would drop young designers as projects went on to have further, and more lucrative lives. While things have improved, we have to remain vigilant and united. Sometimes we have to settle for less good conditions than we like. But going into a situation with your eyes open and aware is much better than being surprised at being taken advantage of. When there is only one LD on a show, the support that the ALD can give is more important.

We should be proud of the progress we have made but I know we cannot be complacent as our working lives are challenged not only by the lousy economy, the increased tuition fees that will put serious training out of reach of many, the increased ability to exploit our work without clear and standardise formulas for the increased

rewards for that exploitation, and the squeezing of time, staffing, money in all but the most rare circumstances.

I think the need for a strong ALD is even more necessary than 50 years ago and it is in a stronger position than it has been in a long time. This is due to a revitalised membership, with the two new professional categories, that I believe is more inclusive and representative to those working in the many aspects of lighting.





The ALD benefits from a strong committee of busy individuals who keep the organisation flourishing and vibrant. While it can be a struggle to get many of us together in one place, they keep the flame alight. I also want to thank Kevin Sleep and Mary Pope who have served on the Exec but have stepped down. And we all need to especially thank Ian Saunders who keeps our office and acts as Treasurer with out him we would not be here or have an efficient organisation.

As I step down from being Chair I want to deeply thank them all, along with past members of the Exec, and of course our President Richard Pilbrow. It is too easy and completely wrong to give credit for the ALD to one person and especially wrong to give that credit to me. The strength of the ALD is due to the creative energy of the Exec inspired by the creative passion we all bring to the world of lighting. We as lighting designers surely know what a collaborative field we are in and the ALD is

no exception to that either. I personally thank them and you for what the ALD has achieved." #

Rick Fisher



Treasurer's Report

The financial year of 2010/11 has seen the Association with a surplus of nearly £12k. This was achieved by a rise of income as well as a drop in expenditure to increase the surplus by £3k from 2009/10.

Membership numbers remained steady and with more members paying off their arrears, and others changing to the new Professional Membership category, there was an increase in subs paid by approximately £2k. I had reported previously that we were becoming more reliant on non-subscription income. However, last year we had a excess of subscription fees

over expenditure for the first time. Our non-subscription income remained at about the same level with over half coming from the *Focus* advertising. We would like to thank ETC and Clay Paky for their continued support in this respect.

Bank interest is low and this could stay the same even beyond the current financial year.

Last year I warned that our income may break through the threshold that makes us liable for VAT registration, but the threshold increase is rising quicker than our income and we continue to monitor the situation and its implications.

In terms of expenditure, production costs for *Focus* continue to be our single biggest outlay, but this was down by approximately 18% after a change of printers and printing method. Any further expansion to its size will have a significant effect on postage costs, which for *Focus* alone costs us over £2500 a year. To receive *Focus* six times a year accounts for just over £13 of each

member's subscription in print and postage costs.

The members' yearbook also benefited from the change of printer, reducing by 75%, which now means that it costs less than a pound an item to produce. This enabled us to produce a leaflet to promote the Professional Membership category, and other specific promotional print items to help attract new members.

Secretarial costs were under budget for the year by 10%, but office costs exceeded the budget as a new laptop was required. Other sizeable outgoings were for our legal expenses (accountants and insurance) and the cost of representing the ALD at trade shows.

The return of VAT to 17.5% from 15% the previous year increased running costs, and a similar hit will be taken this year with the additional increase to 20%.

We once again sponsored the *Best Lighting Design Award* category at the TMA Awards. This is a chance of raising the awareness and profile of the ALD to both the public and, more importantly, the managements of organisations that employ our members. We will certainly continue this sponsorship for our 50th Anniversary year in 2011.

Other 50th Anniversary events are planned, and for this reason I fully expect the income and expenditure to be closer next year. I am glad to be able to report that the financial position of the Association remains healthy. We continue looking to make the ALD more cost efficient while working to expand and improve the activities and range of services for our members. 🌸

Ian Saunders



MJ's notes

It was great that Paul Fleming, the union officer at Equity [above], came and talked about the benefits of union membership, while Matthew Griffiths and Ruth Rossington took us through the options of joining PLASA with a special ALD package. Depending on what you do in professional lighting you may want to add one or both of these valuable 'bolt-ons' to your membership.

As the Association takes stock I think it's really important that we all think about what direction the Association should be going in. What are the issues that are important to you? What should the ALD be focussing on next?

I know that some members have issues about getting access to production photos and we talked about whether we might have a meeting with production photographers to get a clearer agreement for LDs to have free access to pictures. We also received feedback about the convenience of the date of AGM and the cost of attending for members who are out of town. We know whatever day we choose won't suit everyone but I think we are on the brink of being able to harness new ways of communicating using technology which I hope will herald a better level of inclusiveness for our members who aren't able to

attend meetings such as the AGM. I'm grateful to both Tom Dexter Scott (*Dex*) and Fridthjofur Thorsteinsson (*Fiffi*) for the work they have done in developing new forms of communication and website access.

Other issues that were raised included Andy Voller asking about 'non-disclosure' issues e.g. whether your contract allows you to share information with colleagues on rates of pay. This is a really



important issue as I sense producers are trying to drive fees downwards.

John Bishop raised media use and the exploitation of live theatre at the cinema and James Whiteside raised the relationship between the ALD and Equity.

I know Peter Mumford is interested in developing opportunities for assistant LDs. Feel free to let us know what your issues are but remember that we rely on the active participation of our members to work on initiatives. 🌸

Mark Jonathan

John Leventhall's eløk~tronik notz

Equity's Paul Fleming, explained how LDs fit into the picture of independent, commercial subsidised and fringe theatre from Equity's point of view. A key point was the increasing realisation by Equity of the cross-functionality of many of the theatre professions and therefore Equity should be representing sectors of

live performance as a whole. This is a change from the 'departmental' representation of sectors where some, such as designers, were less numerous and so gained lower priority within the union, which now represents over 37,500 members.

Equity is having a strategic 'rethink' and wants to have opinions from all. Paul then illustrated the campaigns that Equity undertake to ensure that creative arts workers were supported in terms of tax, contracts, insurance and many other issues. Some fundamental questions were posed by ALD members; for example, what proportion of designers are Equity members, how are minimum terms agreements and contract standards determined?

Paul spoke in positive and understanding terms and made the point that unless members join with a view to joining in Equity's campaigns, it is difficult to represent the industry as a whole.

Rick Fisher identified Equity as one of the range of

organisations that lighting people can draw on for support. He exhorted Equity to look to pro-activity for development of its service.

PLASA Benefits Package.

A couple of years ago the ALD Exec were searching for practical ways of supporting freelance and self employed ALD members with some measure of help with problems that turn up in the course of a performance industry working day. Ruth Rossington, Executive Director of PLASA, explained a package of services to individual ALD members who wish to join the scheme. An additional annual subscription of £60 gives ALD members unlimited access to essentially 3 types of benefit

- 1) Expert advice – legal, financial, H&S, IP, Technical, Debt collection, credit checks
- 2) Discounts – Insurance, PLASA events, workshops, training, conferences
- 3) Partial PLASA Membership including access to website, newsfeeds, ability to use Earl's Court or Eastbourne meeting

space (needs booking in advance). Almost all the benefits of PLASA, other than exhibition discount and voting rights.

It is totally optional for all members (associates too, but not corporates). To get full details, email the office. Our new chairman, Peter Mumford, was elected unanimously and made his first 'official' statement to the association.

He voiced his concern about having enough time to give to the ALD but, hey, we're all busy people, and Peter emphasised where his interests lay: firstly, the question of solidarity and development of ALD as a representative body of those people who work in performance lighting. "Do you want to be a part of achieving more voice, more teeth and more say in our business?", he asked. If so, we need solidarity and full membership of lighting practitioners. We must try and ask our membership if you want to go forward and for your support in forging



the vital solidarity. The areas in which Peter would like to see change are in developing skills and practice and education in lighting. This he expressed not only in terms of the formal courses available but importantly in offering practical, real opportunities to develop young professionals.

Peter particularly emphasised the need to encourage management to budget for LD's assistants so that emerging talent can be fostered, given real responsibility and have the opportunity of engaging with established professionals. 🌸

John Leventhall

Thanks to James Laws and Nick Moran for the photos.



LETTERS

From **Andrew SJ Grant #1545**

Dear Editor,

The annual *Edinburgh Lighting Drinks* were held on Friday 5th August at the C soco Broadway Bar at C venues on Chambers Street. I would like to express my thanks to Hartley T A Kemp (freelance lighting designer and artistic director of C venues) and Richard Williamson (production manager of C venues) for giving us exclusive use of the bar and their support of this event.

Many thanks must also go to White Light, Rosco UK, Black Light, ETC UK, C venues and Stage Electrics for their very generous sponsorship of the bar. We were left with a little of bit of money left over from the night which has been donated to Light Relief.

The occasion was once again attended by many Lighting Designers from both the UK and abroad. We were also able to welcome some of the many lighting technicians who were working at the Fringe.

Having been up at the Fringe myself for a few weeks this year it was great to meet all the different types of people and talk to them about their various projects and roles. Here's hoping we can do it all again next year! 🍷

From **Will Evans**, ALD Meetings Rep

Dear Andy,

I'd love to be writing today about how good PLASA was this year and how lovely the *'Next 50 yrs of Lighting Design'* seminar was. Sadly I can't as it seems that the PLASA show is now not for people with children and as both my wife (who is a production/stage manager) and I wished to attend on the same day, we were not allowed in with our baby daughter. It was also an opportunity for my wife to 're enter' the backstage world, meeting up with colleagues and friends and catching up after her time off.










It seems that because of an incident last year with a child, PLASA have now made the decision to ban all under 16s from the show (14 and 15 yr olds may come in with a 'tutor'!!). After the anger had subsided we both found this very sad indeed. Is the entertainment industry now only for people without kids or those that can afford childcare while we network and find out about the latest industry developments? I was totally shocked especially as all previous PLASA shows I have always enjoyed meeting up with colleagues who had brought their families along, often as part of a day trip. Both my wife and I are theatre professionals, trade shows such as PLASA are important for networking etc, it seems now

though, in the view of PLASA, that the lighting business must not be mixed with family life, how sad.

The PLASA web site says "*PLASA 2011 is a trade event and as such is open to trade visitors over 16 years of age*" and that "*There are no crèche facilities at PLASA 2011*". While we were outside fuming and frantically calling all the people we were due to meet up with we saw two other families being turned away, they also looked sad and disappointed. Granted, as it was pointed out to us, it does indeed now state on their website that no children are allowed however in the process of booking, confirming and receiving my badge, at no point did any email or literature say that we weren't allowed to bring our child in and as all the other PLASA shows I have been to have allowed children in, why would I think to check?

Up until now we have been proud at how family friendly our industry is, our daughter has already been to one focus session of mine and passed around a very dotting tech team! (a bit too dotting when I wanted to crack on!) I have lost count of the amount of production meetings, technicals and dress rehearsals where little ones have been present and welcomed. Sadly the PLASA trade show is now a part of our industry that is out of bounds to us working families. I hope the ABTT show will not go in the same direction! 🍷

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