

ALD # FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers
"More art, less interviews..."

October / November 2008

Michael Northen Awards Special

Under the extra-terrestrial heat ray this issue:

**Martians invade Minack · Scotty in Scotland · Michael Northen Bursary winners ·
PLASA 2008 reviews · Joyce McMillan the Edinburgh Festival ... and much more!**

*'A Guest for Dinner' - Lighting by Michael Northen Bursary runner-up Jack Knowles.
See page 18.*

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Rick's Residuals

Front L-R: Rob Halliday, David Hersey, Vic Smerdon, Jon Driscoll, Richard Pilbrow.
Middle:PamelaKupper, NeilAustin, KenBillington.Back:JasonKantrowitz, RickFisher.



In some ways the set up of the Imperial theatre in New York where I am currently over for the 5-week tech of *Billy Elliot* is symptomatic of the changes to the industry at large. Everywhere you look there are tables with laptops and wireless networks. Long gone are the days of one or two tables perched precariously over the seats with a lighting designer and their plan, with one ring of communication connecting the stage manager, board operator, fly man etc. And everyone huddling around and coming to use the only outgoing telephone (if you were lucky enough to get a line put in). And the only ashtray forcing everyone to talk to each other and maybe try and work on the same theatrical moment together.

Yes, it has actually happened that we get emailed calls and notes from two rows away! Directors go out on the street to smoke and if you are a non-smoker like me you do

not know what new idea they are just about to try out.

One of the great things of working in New York on Broadway this autumn is the amazing number of other theatres that are putting in new productions. Broadway theatres are located much closer to each other than the West End, and it has been a delight to run into Richard Pilbrow, who is lighting a new musical only 1 block away; meeting up with David Hersey who is all of 2 blocks away with *Equus*, and even glimpsing Peter Mumford (a whole 4 blocks distant with the Royal Court's *Seagull*) and Paul Anderson who is across the street on an entirely new production of an Arthur Miller play with a UK-based creative team.

So with the same brilliant stroke that brought together lighting designers for long lunches at Rules' restaurant over 35 years ago, Richard Pilbrow organized everything we really need for a good

time, namely a time and venue. The fact that it was a bar and Richard and Rob Bell, inventor of WYSWYG, generously put some money behind the bar certainly did not hurt.

We were all delighted to meet not only the teams of UK lighting folk in town but also many of our US colleagues, and it will not be a surprise that we closed the bar. So successful was it that we have already had a second gathering with many more attending who were not in town for the first International party. I am sure there will be

many more and after all is that not what the ALD has always been about? Maybe this is the seed from which will grow a similar organisation in the US! I certainly hope so.

While I was unable to attend PLASA I also want to celebrate not only the recent Michael Northen Bursary winners and the continuing support from Rosco for Light Relief. All the best from the Great White Way which seems to full of British imports just like the West End is hosting many US productions.

regards, Rick#

Highlights

- 4 **LD Out of the country**
MJ's finger on the pulse.
- 6 **Martians invade Minack**
Trevor Wallace fights *The War of the Worlds*.
- 10 **Fringe on the Edges**
Michael Scott in Scotland.
- 12 **Office Oracle**
News and nappies.
- 15 **Equity and us**
Johanna Town brings us the latest news.
- 16 **Thoughts on 'Death of a Salesman'**
Richard Thompson at Bingley Little Theatre.
- 18 **Michael Northen Bursary**
Tough decisions with this year's excellent crop of newcomers.
- 22 **Well, insured**
We asked an expert for an explanation of professional indemnity insurance.
- 24 **Farewell Howard Eldridge**
Chris Baldwin remembers.
- 26 **Edinburgh International Festival**
Our guest reviewer is Joyce McMillan.
- 30 **PLASA**
Guy Kornetzki's Real Reason for Attending.



An LD out of this world...

Mark Jonathan keeps his finger on the professional LDs' pulse from afar

How times for an LD can change. In the last issue I was enjoying what was a brief English summer in Chichester. By the end of July I was packing (I hate packing) to be away for nearly two months - first in very sunny LA and then in Finland.

Sick pay?

LD Prema Mehta just emailed asking what do freelance LDs do when they become ill? Good question, Prema. If you don't work you don't earn. It seems we can't afford to take time off. Our freelance part of the industry can't just phone in ill with a cold. Of course, there are a few of you who have made things worse by trying to carry-on rather than stopping work. Well, I suppose you could phone a friend; it's always fun to try and light something "in the style of..." Those of you doing re-lights will be well acquainted with these techniques and I've

quite enjoyed attempting to emulate my colleagues' work. It's rather like trying to play "Happy Birthday" in the style of Mozart, Bach or Britten, an exercise I remember from my days studying music. Turning up and pretending to be your pal can be tricky. The director didn't book you, what if you do a good job? Your friend might not get invited to do the next job and you might get it instead? It's a bit tricky. Illness prevention is essential. Are you taking your vitamins? Are you eating healthily and are you exercising? Mmm, I know, long hours away from home, it's a nightmare but it's like this: no one else cares about you so you have to make an effort yourself.

Big thoughts in the jacuzzi

With all my 'gadding about' it doesn't mean that I'm not thinking about ALD issues. The Agent's Newsletter has been published. Professional

members should have received a copy. It's our latest idea in how to try and link our views to our agents. You need to try and discuss the issues that are raised with your agents. Could I also thank those professional members who met up at the Young Vic recently to ratify the content? Thanks!

At the ALD AGM there were two really big issues that we discussed. Should the ALD become some sort of licensing authority and should we become more unionised or change our union association? These issues need to be discussed and researched. LD Malcolm Rippeth wrote to Rick and me with some clear views on the accreditation of LDs:

From Malcolm:

"I am as enthusiastic as anyone to see our Association become more proactive in defending and promoting us,

and am extremely grateful for all the work which is going into this.

Briefly, though, I did disagree strongly with the bulk of the discussion about accreditation. Becoming a busy professional LD is a tricky path, and we have each come at it from very different backgrounds, and through diverse routes. For any of us to have to pass some kind of competence test seems somewhat absurd, and probably insulting. One would hope that time and experience does the job of accreditation in the eyes of our theatrical peers very well.

I was particularly bothered by the comparison with employing a gas engineer, in which case we would of course want to know that they had a rigorously examined competence. Employing an LD would seem more comparable to employing an artist, who may or may not have any formal training, to paint us a picture. We know examples of their previous work, we hopefully have

references and personal judgement to tell us they will be good to work with, and we hope to be pleased with the process and outcome. We should also distance ourselves, as a general rule, from responsibilities for engineering, whether electrical or structural, and I'm sure a strong ALD voice can continue to clarify this, and to establish best practice alongside the ABTT.

As to whether we ultimately move toward being a union, I would be interested to be part of the debate. From my naïve standpoint there would seem to be economies of scale in Equity and other unions which we could never hope to achieve as such a small body. Much has been done over the last few years by some hard working and patient members to improve the situation with Equity, which will hopefully continue.

Having said that, everything we can do for ourselves as the ALD will be far more radical, direct and immediate than we could ever hope for from our union.

I am wholeheartedly behind this new direction for the Association, and am at your disposal as you see fit.

Many thanks for all your hard work on all our behalves..."

Thank you, Malcolm for the clarity you bring to these issues. I know that different ALD members are divided on their views. Certainly, I don't feel that the 'employers'-directors, choreographers or producers - are asking to see our 'licence to practice' so much as they base their opinion on seeing our work or by simply repeat booking. What direction the ALD goes in is something that both professional and student members should consider as this will no doubt affect the future LDs as well.

Meanwhile, we are currently allied to Equity and Jo Town keeps you up to date on these issues on page 21. Before I left the UK, Johanna, Simon and I attended the Equity Designers' committee and I was very pleased to meet the new committee secretary who is Andrew Young. While

Andrew is new to Equity and the entertainment industry he's very experienced in unions and labour relations. He has picked up all the current issues very quickly so I think that that bodes well.

It was clear at the AGM that members were urging us to explore what the alternatives are. The options need to be discussed and researched. I can tell you that in NYC Rick has met with Cecilia Friederichs of United Scenic Artists who represent LDs in the USA and I have just had a very interesting meeting with Cecilia and the USA's business manager Michael McBride who were visiting London. One interesting thing to consider is that while USA is currently based in USA what they specialize in is designers and scenic artists and that's it.

All this needs further discussion. Do let us have your opinions and thoughts.

Well it's time I signed off. Next stop - the Birmingham Hippodrome... oh, and guess what? Not enough time in the schedule.#

Right: Ian McDiarmid in 'Six Characters in Search of an Author' at Chichester. Lighting by Malcolm Rippeth. Photo Manuel Harlan. At the Gielgud Theatre London until November 8th.





Martians invade Minack

Trevor Wallace and two Martian fighting machines light up a musical version of *The War of The Worlds* at The Minack Theatre

Prologue

Nobody would have believed in the last months of 2007 that a theatre company would have agreed to fund this production. No one could have dreamt that Jeff Wayne would give permission for his musical to be performed at The Minack Theatre. Few even considered the possibility of realising such a project and yet, through the summer months of 2008, minds immeasurably imaginative regarded this production with creative eyes, and slowly and surely, the show came to life.

The War of The Worlds

Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of *The War of the Worlds* (presented under licence to The Hertfordshire Players) included an ensemble of over fifty actors, dancers, acrobats and singers; a seven

piece band; eight principal performers; and two Martian Fighting Machines. This was always going to be an epic production - epic in scale considering the parameters dictated by performing at the Minack, where the load-in begins at midday on a Saturday, and the production has to be ready for a preview performance at 8pm the following evening. It meant that the lighting had to be rigged and working by the time it was dark, and the focusing session finished by sunrise.

In order to create a theatrical piece from what is essentially a studio concept album, the directors, Louise and Lynsey, referred back to the original H.G. Wells text. I too read the novel in the hope that I would discover a kernel of an idea through which a lighting concept could be realised.

Wells was living in an age of transition and was aware that the industrial revolution was rapidly changing society. Therefore, the Martian invasion could be seen as an allegory of industrialization. In recognition of this transition, I conceived that the 'traditional' tungsten light sources could be infiltrated by metal-halide sources as the Martians invaded the Earth.

Versatile lighting

I knew from the early planning stages that the production would require the use of some moving lights; units that could add texture and movement to the pictures created onstage, as well as cover a multitude of specials, create green flares in the sky, and provide numerous, localized, Martian Heat-Ray blasts. I opted for the Mac 700 profile - primarily for its light source (as it fitted

my lighting concept), strobe capabilities (for the Heat-Ray) and potential animated effects (as I knew fire, rain and rippling water could all make a subtle appearance). In wanting the design to be more 'theatrical' than 'rock and roll', the Macs were slowly introduced into the show with the arrival of the first cylinders from Mars, and only gratuitously used in *Brave New World*.

Practical limitations

Sadly, early ideas of a "weird and lurid landscape" and "fiery red" dawn "of another planet" being created with metal-halide pars, and *Dead London* being lit solely with 2.5kW HMI fresnels had to be abandoned for practical reasons. This gave way to the use of more manageable and weather-friendly Source 4s and Parcans. However,



Trevor is a senior lighting technician for the RSC, and has just graduated from the Open University with a degree in English Literature. A veteran of lighting amateur shows at Minack Theatre, Trevor's tally so far includes 'Comedy of Errors', 'Grimm Tales', 'Richard III', 'Cyrano de Bergerac', 'Les Enfants du Paradis', 'The Three Musketeers' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Other work has included lighting designs for 'The Family Plays', 'Notes on Falling Leaves', 'Bone', and 'Fresh Kills' (Royal Court); 'West Side Story' (Courtyard Theatre, Stratford upon Avon); 'Marat/Sade and Dark of the Moon (Jermyn Street Theatre); 'The Estate and The Gods are not to Blame (Tiata Fahodzi).

Martians invade Minack with Trevor Wallace

the preliminary colour and directional light scheme still remained in place and the design could be constructed around this initial concept.

The Coming of the Martians

Act I is largely set outside – moving from the events on Horsell Common to journeying from Woking, through London, and then on to the coast. The lighting mainly consisted of strong directional key-light to depict the time of day. The lighting for *The Eve of the War* had to include and work in

conjunction with the fading natural light. Therefore, the positioning of the key-light had to follow a comparable direction of the real light in order for the two not to conflict. Similarly, the ‘moonlight’ had to correspond, as closely as possible, to the position of the moon – should it appear.

The largest challenge for the first half was creating the Martian Heat-Ray, and timing it with the various music motifs that characterises it within the score. The first appearance is described as “a tall funnel rose, then an

invisible ray of heat leapt from man to man and there was a bright glare, as each was instantly turned to fire”. The same thing is seen later with the arrival of the Martian Fighting Machines, “each carried a huge funnel and I realised with horror that I’d seen this awful thing before”. I decided to opt for the intense, programmable beam of a Data Flash. The cylindrical shape of the actual unit was easily incorporated into the funnel of the first Martian Heat-Ray, and equally into the design of the Martian Fighting Machines.

The strobe effects were further developed and enhanced using the greater versatility and intensity of the Atomic 3000. Two units placed downstage blasted across the stage to destroy Weybridge, annihilate the population and sink the “silent, grey Ironclad ‘Thunder Child’”. Two other Atomics were used for more heat-ray effects, cylinders crashing to Earth, and other explosions.

The recollect memories of *Forever Autumn* allowed for a bolder colour choice and a complete change on direction for the key light. I wanted the contrast to help signify the transition between the reflective sung thoughts of the journalist and the horrific events that he was witnessing.

The Earth Under the Martians

Act II presented a different set of challenges. In particular, the “fiery red dawn” required careful consideration of colour with which to cross-light the stage, so as not be too pink, too orange or too panto.

Brave New World was to be the showpiece number, populated with grotesque Pierrots, clowns and acrobats. I chose footlights as a basis on which I could overlay an equally garish colour scheme that incorporated washes of neon pinks and congo blues. The Mac 700s could also show themselves off, providing slow moving searchlights in the sky that panned across the



auditorium before reaching the stage. Beams of light ballyhooed about, marched up and down stage with the artilleryman’s army; cogs rotated and I (after playing with a demo) loved the ability to randomly change colour within a particular range. The ‘Moulin Rouge’ style would deliberately juxtapose the cold, stark, motionless lighting I originally desired for *Dead London*: the colourful hope of the New World fading as the harsh reality of death, destruction and loneliness crept onto the stage.





So what did the final rig look like?

The main sources of key-light came from a high goalpost position downstage left and continued onto a boom at stage height offstage left. The opposing *Forever Autumn* key-light came from high downstage right. Colour scrollers for fill-in light and colour washes were used on the Minack's 'fixed rig' of six ADB P.Cs underneath the control room. Two downstage booms provided positions for parcan cross-washes, Source 4 cross light and the head height Atomics.

At the foot of each boom was a Mac 700. The other two Macs were strapped to the rocks high stage right, and to a concrete archway high stage left. Sunfloods were placed in the footlight alcoves underneath the front row. A boom offstage right had Parcans rigged on it to backlight the raised platform above the band, and a cluster of Minnette Fresnels were attached to the crossover handrail upstage to create a simple fire effect that lit through a curtain of smoke. The two Martian Fighting Machines

(Big Wayne and Little Jeff) both had illuminating green eyes, whilst Big Wayne also contained downlighters for his legs, a data flash, a power tiny smoke machine and a second set of lights to colour his eyes red.

Epilogue

As I have said, it was an epic production, and the lighting installation could not have happened without the brilliant assistance of the wonderful Dan Large and Ken Allford. Equally, the rig would never have existed without the tremendous and

eager support of Andy Cullen at White Light, or the pre-programming have been achieved prior to Cornwall if Vince Herbert had not kindly let me borrow a console from the RSC, or if Jessica Allan at Martin Professional had not loaned a Mac 700. My sincerest thanks go to them all; their enthusiasm for the project and their help made the design a reality.

My thanks also go to Phil and Simon at the Minack Theatre for their advice, encouragement and good humour.#



*'Forever Autumn'.
Photos courtesy Trevor Wallace,
Charles Neville and The
MinackTheatre [www.minack.com].*



Fringe on the Edges

How self-proclaimed Edinburgh Fringe virgin, Michael Scott, swapped 4000 channels at the Royal Opera House for just three refocusable spots...

Dateline: 26th July 2008.

Location: Kings Cross station, platform 10.

With the sun shining, coffee and croissant in hand, and staring out of the window looking for the Hogwarts Express, I settled down on the train surrounded by singers and musicians heading for Edinburgh and my first ever fringe production. With a mixture of excitement and fear, I was beginning to realise what I had foolishly agreed to, but let's rewind to explain why I'm on the 10.30 to Scotland.

After more years than I can count as a lighting manager at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, I had decided that time had come to step away from the stage door on Floral Street for the

last time and try my hand in the freelance world. I had no intention of rushing to find work, and was hoping to enjoy a lazy summer sharing my roof terrace with a nice bottle of wine or two. Then James Manley, assistant production manager at the National Theatre, casually asked if I would like to design a new musical that he and Nimbus Theatre Company were taking to 'C' Venues on Chambers Street, Edinburgh for the 2008 Fringe.

Frying pans and fires?

Having been asked on numerous occasions to light at the Fringe but never having had the time, I jumped at

the opportunity (perhaps too quickly). The first rehearsals were conveniently arranged at the National Theatre. I walked into Rehearsal Room 2 to find singers, a three-piece band surrounded by four life-sized horses! Wondering how we were going to get these on the train, I was relieved to discover they were costumes belonging to *War Horse* currently in rehearsal in the same room. A few hours later I left the place happy that we had a slick one-hour show about four 'twenty something' adults growing up in New York; great catchy songs and humorous dialogue. This should be easy!

It was then that I downloaded the LX plan from the venue's web site...

Coming down to earth

I was faced with 40 odd channels, a fixed-focus rig of 1k and 650W fixtures, no colour changes allowed, just three re-focusable units. We would be sharing the venue with eight other productions, with only 5 minutes every night to get-in the entire show including set, back drop, band (including a drum kit), video projection and to then refocus; it finally dawned on me what I had agreed to! Suddenly I was missing the 4000 channels of the Opera House rig!



Hogwarts Express

After a slow 6½ hour train journey we arrived the next day at "C" Venue for our one and only four-hour tech period to get in, set up, sound check, light, and rehearsal our show *Edges*. Climbing over a mass of flight cases, blacks and piles of TRS, with no house lights yet installed, but with keen yet inexperienced venue technicians, we proceeded to light the show.

Fringe on the Edges

by self-proclaimed Edinburgh Fringe virgin, Michael Scott

Lighting the show

Knowing that time would be short, I had already lit the show on paper using the channel numbers from the rig plan, and without time to even check the focus of the rig provided by the venue, I started to thump the keyboard of the ETC Expression and plot the show. A fast but calm tech and rehearsal proceeded and four hours later and with fingers wrapped in ice to cool down, I managed to save the show on four floppy discs (you can never back up enough!).

We left on a high! The director commented that it was the most civilised tech he had ever had. The bar was calling and it was in the wee small hours that we staggered back, with a slight wobble, to the flat that all nine members of the cast were sharing.

The Dress

Returning the following day for our dress rehearsal under real show conditions, like a highly-trained SAS squad, with music stands, drum kits and costumes in hand we just managed our 5-minute get-in; more reminiscent of a TV makeover show than a theatre production. I repatched, loaded the show in the board, had a quick heart attack as the 1st floppy died (thank God for the spare back ups!), then sat at the desk ready to make any mods possible over the top of the dress rehearsal.

It was at this point I noticed a slight change in the rig. Being the last show at night in the venue and with no fewer than eight other shows preceding us, the rig had been on for over 12 hours. Where once there had been a mixture of pale blues and warm gels

with a few saturated colours as backlight, the rig was now doing a fine impression of Niagara Falls - dripping to the floor! Scenes which I had once plotted as moody scenes was now open white and certainly not the 'film noir' I had hoped...

With much discussion with the venue technicians and plenty of 'Do you know who I am?' they agreed to check the colour more often and return the look of the show to something close to what I expected.

Press night, infinity and beyond

Rehearsal over, with a few missed cues and video glitches (it helps to plug the laptop into the mains) we were happy with the show. The following night was press night, with a good audience, plenty of laughter and a reviewer in the middle of the stalls; the UK première of

'Edges the musical' was open for business. A few more mods during the following couple of performances allowed me to tidy up the timings and provide the metaphorical and polite 'pokes with a large stick' to remind the house technicians about the colour, and I was happy with what I had achieved on minimal resources.

With good reviews and a possible option to revive the show in London, everyone was happy. We then a few more days taking in the sights and shows of the Fringe, including handing out flyers on the Royal Mile. I left the company to continue without me for the remaining four weeks.

Would I do it again? Of course, and next time I might even be given some of those new fangled lights to play with that move around and change colour!#

'Recollections of an Old Spark' by Joe Thornley

After 10 years of retirement from the entertainment lighting industry on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean and as far north as Scotland, Joe Thornley felt the time was right to reminisce about his life before, and throughout, his long career in entertainment lighting.

Joe's autobiography is an interesting and amusing account of life as an electrical engineer, lighting equipment innovator and author. His amusing story takes us through his childhood in London during the Second World War, his training as a bound apprentice, followed by an account of his time spent in North Africa during his National Service in the 1950's. Most significantly, he describes his life-long experiences as a designer of entertainment lighting equipment for Mole Richardson, Berkeley Colortran, Rank Strand and Lee Lighting.

Available online from www.lulu.com at £9.99 plus postage.

Office Oracle

Latest sounds and smells from Ian's productive desk

Subscription Fees

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

Professional: £75
Associate: £40
Student: £25
Non-profit Org: £20

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

underpayment by updating your payment prior to it leaving your bank.

Please change your standing order in advance of April 1st 2009 to ensure your membership remains current and continuous.

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

PLASA

I was not able to attend PLASA this year*, and would like to express my thanks to Nigel Lawson Dick, Tom White and Andy Collier for looking after the stand. If the number of new members I have just signed up is anything to judge, then it appears to have been a successful show for us once again.

Sponsored Student Scheme 2009

This corporate members' funded scheme for students studying at Conference of Drama School Colleges will open again for applications at PLASA 08. The closing date for applications is Christmas 2008.

All current student members will be contacted at the start of September with 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 2008. Please note that even if you are currently a member of the scheme you will need to apply again to continue your free membership through to April 2010. If you do not, your membership will revert to a normal student category and you will 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.

Members' Contact Details

The ALD website is the ideal place to change your address or contact details if you move house.

From the home page you first need to log in, click on 'Log-in' (top right) and 'request new password'. A password will be sent to the email address we have on our database. If this is a problem please contact the office so we can investigate the reason. However, the office has no other role in the allocation of passwords - it is all done on-line.



**The reason for not attending PLASA... Our administrator/treasurer demonstrating it is not only the female lighting designers of the ALD who have to program lighting cues between nappy changes. Congratulations to Ian, Sarah and Nico (25.8.08).*

Once you are logged 'Contact' holds your contact details and allow you to chose what information is published and where. If you click 'My ALD' (top right) you can make a global change to your published settings by clicking on 'Edit Publishing Settings' (top left), this allows you to make your contact information readable by

Office Oracle

anyone, readable by ALD members only (when they have logged in), or readable by you only. This is a global setting however, you can make specific changes within the 'Contact' page - click on 'Edit Contact Details' (top left). You can change your address and other contact details at any time you wish – alternatively feel free to contact the ALD office if you prefer. As a default, members are automatically set to 'members only' if they have requested listing on the website on their application form. It is a personal choice as to whether you are listed on the public side of the website.

Attention Student Members!!

If you have just started a new academic year, and you have your term time address on our database,

do we have the correct one? We frequently receive post returned to us as 'Unknown at this address' during the autumn. If you have moved over the summer, please use the steps above to update your information or contact the office. An incorrect address can result in you not receiving membership renewal notices, and places the continuation of your membership at risk.

ALD Members' Yearbook

After discovering that the software that has been used to produce the yearbook for the last decade has finally become incompatible with 21st century computers, we are finally in the process of piecing together the 2009 yearbook, which we hope will be with you all in November 2008.

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.

We have re-assessed its layout and there will be a few changes. The biggest change will be to the 'Yearbook entry', the short descriptive paragraph under the contact details. 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. Due to the increased size of the membership, these will be strictly limited to no more than 30 words.

We would also like to have an idea of what members find most useful in the recent editions. Is the technical reference section useful? Guide to contracts? ALD Rider? The diary section? Is there anything you would

like to see that isn't currently included?

Please contact the office with your comments

ALD / Agents' Newsletter

It's clear to us that while Equity does what it can to maintain agreements with the TMA, SOLT and ITC the actual rates paid to LDs and the actual agreements that we work under are brokered by our agents. So, it seems essential that we keep agents 'in the loop' on issues concerning LDs. This new email initiative is hopefully the first step towards that happening. It was also sent by email to ALD professional members.

Please check that your agent gets a copy of the newsletter and please discuss the issues that we raise with them. Encourage your agent to give us feedback. If they



have not received it, they are likely not to be on our radar for contacts, so please contact the office with their details.

Our first message was to urge all agents to collectively continue to push producers to increase rates where we believe they have fallen behind. If all the agents sing from the same song sheet then maybe we can make some head way. We think it's worth a try.

Many thanks to the various LDs who helped to 'hone' the 1st newsletter.#



Johanna Town reports from the latest Equity Designers' Committee meeting on negotiations and the use of contracts

SOLT has agreed a 21% rise in the minimums. This is nothing to cheer about as it is a stand-still rise over five years. But we have accepted it as it allows us to renegotiate better terms and conditions (on which we would really like to concentrate). Hopefully the minimums will just wither away quietly and everyone will ignore them. SOLT won't increase them to a level that can seriously be used, and Equity and SOLT do not want to remove them from the contracts, so we were at a stalemate.

The committee felt that, under the advice of our new very experienced steward Andy Young, that we should accept without fuss or thanks in order for us to return to the table and discuss some real changes to the contracts.

Unfortunately, it is not simple with the TMA contract as it is in rather a state, and at present they are refusing to discuss any changes. We have said this is unacceptable.

If you have to negotiate the minimums with an organization please remember you can access the ALD Fees Database, via email to the office, or if you contribute to this database you have full access to its information. So please contribute all your fees into the system to reap the rewards.

Our new steward Andy brought up the fact that there seemed to be less use of the Equity contracts among designers and their agents, and that often when problems arose they were unable to help due to the client not being on an agreed Equity contract.

He stressed that we must remind everyone that however a contract is presented to you it must be based on an Equity contract; in that way if you have problems with the show's producers, Equity can help. I think in these tight economic times it is very important to heed this advice and to make sure our membership is up to date.

Even if it does feel like the one bit of expenditure we could save, I cannot stress its importance too much. Last year, with the closure of Derby Playhouse, I myself had my Equity fee paid back ten-fold when Equity came to my rescue to secure my unpaid fees.

We also discussed the fact that there are companies which work outside the Equity agreements. For this reason we are revamping a contract that you can get from Equity to use with these companies. For example, you may be asked to light a small-scale fringe show, they give you an offer, you ask for a contract, and they send you a handwritten letter! In that case you contact Equity, get them to send you their personalized Designers' Contract, fill it in with all the relevant information and what you would like negotiated, send it to your producer for signing and in this way Equity will help if something goes wrong.

And it stops the sharks or inexperienced getting into trouble. You will find most producers, especially new young producers, want to sign a contract but just don't have the time or experience to draw one up, so we have done it for you. I hope you enjoy using it, and if anyone has any comments about it do not hesitate to drop me a line.

Another issue in the meeting was the now widespread distribution of DVD material. Many shows, especially opera and ballet, are being recorded and distributed. Again, what was Equity going to do about this? Andy's examination of the contract showed quite clearly that this is not allowed without further payment and if any member is having problems in this area, please contact him.

Lastly, Andy brought up the point that during his first two meetings he had had members of the committee bringing a complaint to the table not

relating to themselves but others who had not got billed, or had not received travel or media payments, and what was Equity going to do about it? Andy wants facts; he wants the phone to ring and he wants to get lazy organizations to recognize that what is in our contracts needs to be adhered to and taken seriously throughout their organization. But as he rightly says, he cannot do this through hearsay, so what has been discussed around the bar or at ALD meetings must be reported to him by the person concerned. That person, as I have mentioned before, needs to be an Equity member. Andy is then more than happy to make calls and take it further. He gets to hear none of this sitting in this office and as far as he is concerned life out here is just working smoothly - *so again we have to get Equity involved for them to help us*. So make those calls to Andy Young.#

Thoughts on.... 'Death of a Salesman'

For Richard Thompson, it seemed like a good idea at the time to try to make notes about the latest play that he just managed to light at Bingley Little Theatre, that well-known member of the LTG...

I have, as does happen, been pressured into working on the play as the original lighting designer had been cast in another play which meant he had no time for *Death of a Salesman* in his busy schedule. Roll in the substitute!

No time to talk to the director...

...as I was in panto myself(!), then taking a well-earned break in France during which time I read the piece. To be truthful, I could tell that it was not really my sort of play but that it is a masterpiece of modern writing. How to proceed?

The set designer has already told me that we will have a two-tier black box with bedrooms above and kitchen/ outside/restaurant etc below. Steps, visible from top deck, as well as off-stage get-offs. An actor (not involved with

the piece) had suggested the use of a gauze to delineate or cut off the bedrooms from the living areas, '*They are really easy to light and can be opaque or translucent at will. Richard will have no problems or worries.*'

The action is to be in tight, fairly constrained areas so the LX design should reflect this... manage a quick chat to the director then off to France for two weeks; much needed as have not stopped since getting back from six weeks in New Zealand and Australia (where I missed Rick Fisher by a day in Sydney).

Read the script...

...and think yes, we can do areas and use the gauze to change the time period as well as to alter the place of the action. There is a lot of movement back and forth in time as well as the movement

from inside to out and the various settings, as ever, have to be created by light.

At this point I make fairly copious notes as to where the action might be, together with starting to work on the 'feel' of the play so I can plan colour. I begin to get the feeling of the starkness of the piece, not so much a wasted life but one of being wasted not telling the truth - embellishment if you like and certainly the truth of a wasted death. Then I realise that I am perhaps being too *arty* - will the director agree with my thoughts? - will the onstage smoking be cut or reduced? The answers were no and yes, and as it turned out not too offensive, just annoying for me as a reformed smoker!

Into rehearsal...

...the discreetly directed use of areas has altered slightly

to, "Well, I wanted them to use the *whole* stage - you can do that can't you?" One central character is now making his first appearance directly behind the gauze on the top level - no problem, or is it? Actor 6'4", deck 4'. LX bars are at 13' so might have to derig the flood bar if he is in danger of hitting head on lights. This is resolved at get-in when we measure a 6" gap between head and lamp bases.

Complete the design and the gel call...

...have added a second flood bar for the gauze with gobo back light (out of focus leaf break up for the moon and a window) just to give depth. The actor appearing behind the gauze to be picked out with two Par 36's focused to tight face; me on steps trying to be 6'4"! Floods in 119, 079,

048 and 139 so I can vary the gauze at any point. Front of house Source 4's (15/30) in the same beam shape and size; hard-edged, but with 103 and 1/2 Hamburg (thanks Francis). This should give the starkness I want, so that with a little on-stage colour it can be warmer for the kitchen whilst colder for the yard.

Still try to get the stylised areas by using severe front of house cross light... looks a bit rubbish, but the cast can move about. Levels are very low throughout, at the end are virtually nonexistent as Linda says farewell.

Director seems happy, audiences never know the hours of planning, thought, rigging, focusing, plotting and tweaking that goes on. Then 55 mins for the get-out and repatch.

The reveal with beam lights worked well though...#



Actor 6'4", deck 4'. LX bars at 13' so might have to derig if he is in danger of hitting head on lights.

"Well, I wanted them to use the whole stage - you can do that can't you?"



An actor (not involved with the piece) had suggested the use of a gauze to delineate or cut off the bedrooms from the living areas, 'They are really easy to light and can be opaque or translucent at will. Richard will have no problems or worries'.





The Barn Scene:

Lit almost exclusively with beams of light and the bounce. The scene visually is about desperation and fighting for a way out.

STORY BOARD

To help discuss the structure of a piece and the ways in which lighting is to support that I try to find a painting that holds within it the world(s) of the play and it's moments. It's proved a very useful discussion tool about what separates each act. The picture is Salvador Dali's "Moment of Transition", 1934. The supporting images around were ones used in the same discussion to refine certain elements and to further explain myself. This painting was a tremendous aid to continually reinforce my ideas as we constantly referred to it. Even during the tech I used it to answer questions from the director/designer like, "Should it be this dark already?" Immediately the image reminded them of many discussions before on the same subject and the problems were no more.

ACT III

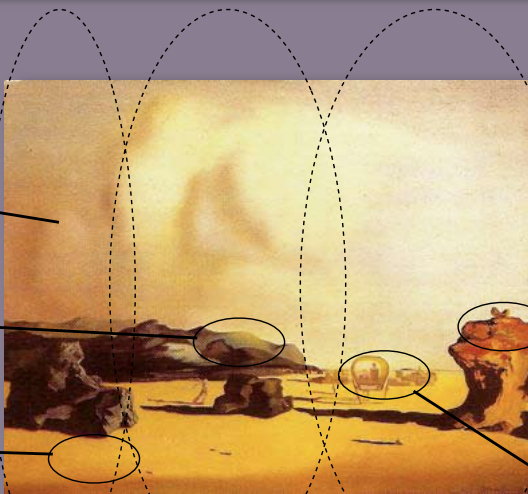
The sky here supports the feelings of flat calmness that possesses Shill throughout the act. As the sky meets the rocks in this painting shows how we go from that calmness to after the trial when he is to be killed.



Blue that starts to creep in during Act II



Yellow color that indicates greed. The color starts to take over the town.



ACT III

ACT II

ACT I



The Prologue. Before the story is told.

Red-Orange from the pre-show. Indicates to unnatural qualities of this world.



ACT I

Here the shadows come from up-stage where there what we call the "vanishing point." This way the shadows and the people seem to vanish with the town into the vast backdrop of nothingness. The color pallet is simple and pastel. There's a flat dullness to Act one until Claire arrives.

The "Outside World" from which Claire comes. A pinky lavender one.



ACT III:

Shill has accepted the town will kill him. He is calm. The Sun is now coming from the front, lighting the scene with a single source. Casting shadows against the vanishing point, opposite to when the play starts.



ACT II:

Here Claire has arrived and asked them to Kill Anton Shill. She spends the whole act atop her balcony. The sun, corrupted like the town, comes from behind casting her shadow down onto the town as she watched them cave to her request.

Michael Northen Bursary

“all the entries this year were of an extremely high standard – the highest that I have seen”

Recent media reporting would have us believe that examinations are getting easier, with students not necessarily reaching the academic levels of their predecessors. Mary Pope, organiser of the judging for this year’s Michael Northen Bursary, would definitely not agree. The Bursary recognises imagination in design and creativity in lighting and the entries for 2008 “gave the judges a very difficult time indeed,” says Mary. “Usually the process is one of elimination, but all the entries this year were of an

extremely high standard – the highest that I have seen.” The judges were ALD members Natasha Chivers, Jon Clark, Paul Pyant, Johanna Town and Mark White (also representing ETC).

The winner

There was one clear winner; Timothy Deiling from Central School of Speech and Drama, with his lighting design for *The Visit*. Mary, who is the student representative on the ALD Executive – said: “Tim’s design was varied, with strong colours and it was easy to make connections

between what he described and the images in front of us.”

Paul Pyant had commented that Tim had “strong visual ideas and a clear thought process with a very professional ‘finish’ to the end product.”

Natasha Chivers noted that “Tim’s application showed he had collaborated well, researched his ideas, understood the psychology of the piece and was able to assess what he had learnt and what he could do differently next time. The photos showed a wonderful, bold and varied lighting design. For me a clear winner.”

At the presentation on September 9 on the ALD stand at PLASA08, Tim received a cheque for £500 and a copy of Michael Northen’s biography, *Northen Lights*.

‘The Visit’. Central School of Speech and Drama. Directed by Grainne Byrne and designed by Katie Orton. Lighting by Tim Deiling.





ALD award

The ALD not only organises the awards on behalf of the Michael Northen Bursary, but also awards £250 to one of the two runners-up. Receiving the ALD cheque from ALD member Katharine Williams this year was Jack Knowles, also of Central School of Speech and Drama, for *A Guest for Dinner*.

Paul Pyant had noted that Jack's entry showed "Very strong visual ideas simply achieved with the minimum of equipment. Very clear thought process and obvious close collaboration with his director." And Natasha Chivers added, "The strength of Jack's application was in the supporting images. It was difficult to ignore how striking and theatrical the photos were and how much Jack had committed to very strong and dramatic stage pictures with a clear style emerging so early in his career."

Jack later explained, "The whole piece was told through the visuals and movement being used. Essentially it was a sequence of images,



Photos on this page: 'A Guest for Dinner', at the Arts Depot in North Finchley, lit by ALD runner-up Jack Knowles, was directed and choreographed by Maxine Doyle and designed by Livi Vaughan. Photos by Jack Knowles.



Michael Northen Bursary Winners

and with the lighting I wanted to enhance the theatricality and produce a constant progression of striking images.

The movement was focused using high levels of concentration, which was complemented with the states being extremely specific and bold. Seeing rehearsals I found I became very interested in the shapes being created by the performers, both through their bodies and the movement as well as how they were performing either as a collective or individually.

This led me to explore ways in which I could bring out these features and illuminate the patterns and shapes being created which was achieved through being selective about angles used, and which parts of the body would be lit combined with high levels of contrast. This included how different performers interacted with

moments being lit so that it was difficult to identify which body part belonged to which performer, with the focus being on the combined shape, not how it was achieved.”

ETC Award

The second runner-up was Callum Howie of Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, who received £250 from ETC for his lighting for *Dialogues des Carmelites*.

Presenting the cheque, Tony-award winning lighting designer Ken Billington said: “The judges commented on Callum’s honest explanation of the massive learning curve that lighting design can be and they all identified to some degree how challenging Callum had found the process, especially since he was working with a professional director and designer who had far more experience.”



From left – Katharine Williams, Natasha Chivers, Callum Howie, Fred Foster, Emma Thompson, Jack Knowles, Ken Billington and Tim Deiling at the Michael Northen Bursary Awards presentation at PLASA 2008. Photo: Harmer PR.

Honourable mention

So high was the level of entrants this year that the judges decided that an honourable mention should be made of Emma Thompson of Rose Bruford College for her lighting design for *Macbeth*—so congratulations to Emma in what has proved to be an exceptional year for the Bursary.

The Michael Northen Bursary is open to all students and not just ALD members, and is given for a project completed within the past academic year. As a design bursary, the entries are judged purely on imaginative design and creativity in lighting. Michael set up the fund shortly before he died in 2001, and was

delighted that his MBE, awarded that same year, was not just for his services to the theatre but also in recognition of his commitment to encouraging young people in the industry.

The Fund is managed by The Mousetrap Foundation, an organisation committed to supporting young theatre practitioners.#

Shedding some light on Professional Indemnity

We asked Peter Murphy of Equity Insurance Services to explain an under-used lifeline for your business

In the current economic climate, it seems that everywhere you look someone is trying to offer a variety of products to protect you – income protection support, credit card fraud protection, pet insurance, etc.

However, while these are important for your personal matters, what is out there to help your business in times of trouble? While terms and products such as “Public Liability”, “Products Liability”, and “Employers Liability” are more widely known in the working world, there is another form of insurance that goes largely unnoticed and which can actually provide a great amount of help and security for your business in times of worry – Professional Indemnity.

So, what exactly is Professional Indemnity insurance and how can it help you and your business? In

short, Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance *indemnifies professionals against their legal liability to third parties for injury, loss or damage arising from their negligent acts, errors or omissions, committed in the course of their professional duties.*

What this actually means is that if you are an individual or business that gives advice or services in a professional capacity, you can purchase insurance that protects you, should you face a claim where a party alleges you have been negligent and caused them to suffer a financial loss.

For certain professionals such as architects, chartered surveyors and chartered accountants, holding this form of cover is compulsory for membership of their professional body – for others it may be included in the membership fee. However, while it may not be

a requirement, an increasing number of clients and local authorities are requesting that the businesses they trade with hold a valid PI policy, so for many professions holding this form of cover can not only assist when things go wrong, but also be vital in securing more business.

The level of cover provided from a PI policy can range from as little as £100k to £5m, dependent of the value of projects the policyholder is undertaking and any contractual requirements. Typically, cover is provided on a civil liability basis and specifically provides protection for claims made against the Insured for legal liability arising from issue such as breach of professional duty, libel or slander, unintentional breach of confidentiality, unintentional infringement of intellectual property rights (many insurers limit this cover

to copyright only), loss of or damage to documents, dishonesty of employees, but also any other civil liability that may cause the insured to fail in their professional duty. Additionally, all legal defence costs relating to any claims made on the policy can also be covered, including lawyers, court costs etc.

You may ask yourself the question, why do I need to buy such insurance? For a lighting designer, a PI policy seeks to cover issues such as a breach of contract or financial loss emanating from errors in lighting design or specification. For example, a claim may come from the delay or abandonment of a performance, where the result is an increased production cost due to hiring of equipment and props, actors fees etc. Other circumstances may occur where the design or specification of lighting

circuitry is not compatible with the existing circuitry of the building, causing issues in the theatre or venue resulting in a loss of trade and so missing out on revenue. In these cases, a PI policy would be vital in assisting the professional to compensate the client for the result of errors caused, which in some cases can cost thousands of pounds.

In summary, Professional Indemnity can provide security and support for your business on occasions when those unexpected things go wrong, saving a lot of money and hassle for a relatively small financial outlay. If you are interested in looking further into purchasing a PI policy, there are a number of insurance brokers that can assist and tailor the cover provided to suit your unique needs. Alternatively, if you wish to discuss this matter further, or require a quotation, please contact Peter Murphy at Equity Insurance Services, Tel. 01245 357854, e-mail peter.m@robj.h.co.uk, mentioning the ALD.#

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

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

New Members

welcome to...

Professional

Adam Crosthwaite*, London

Judith Greenwood, W. Yorkshire

Mary Pope†, London

Michael Shackleton, Farnham

James Waudby*, Chatham, Kent

Tom White†, London

Jake Wiltshire, London

Associate

David Abra*, Dagenham

Christina De La Paz, London

DN Harvey, London

Jason Kirk, London

Andrew J Lindsay*, Keswick

Les McGee*, Uxbridge

Tony New, Bedfordshire

Paul R Newman, Essex

Leo Southwell, London

Scott J Stewart, London

Peter Vincent, Basingstoke

Students

Jane Barrek, Manchester

Adam Dallman, Surrey

James O'Connor, Evesham

** Re-joining the Association*

† From Associate

Dates for your diaries

2008

14th November

Editorial and advert booking deadline for *Focus* December/January

24th November

Advert artwork deadline for *Focus* December/January

24th December

Application deadline for the ALD Sponsored Student Scheme

2009

28th & 29th April

PLASA Focus 09*, Leeds

16th – 19th May

Showlight 09* – Glasgow

June

ABTT Show 2009*

September

PLASA09, Earls Court, London*

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

Howard Eldridge 1947 - 2008



Chris Baldwin writes:

I am sorry to inform ALD members that Howard Eldridge passed away on 24th July 2008.

Howard was a founder member of the Association, formed after the meeting of lighting designers working around the West End in the early 1980's arranged by Richard Pilbrow. Over a sandwich and glass of wine at Theatre Projects' Long Acre office, Richard put forward his idea to form an Association with the aim of creating a joint agreement with the Society of West End Theatre Mangers (SWETM) to establish a standard contract for lighting designers (whose skills were not properly recognized or remunerated) and also to provide a channel of communication amongst Association members.

Everyone signed up and a committee formed to draw up a legal constitution: this was

the birth of the Association of Lighting Designers and Howard was proud to have been in on the ground floor of the ALD and to hold card #13.

Howard's career started when he joined Hornchurch Repertory Theatre straight from school, first as a workshop assistant (there is a use for 'O' Level woodwork!) and then, when the theatre electrician died, stepping into his shoes. This was followed by work at Bromley and the Theatre Royal Lincoln. From Lincoln Howard was recruited by Theatre Projects, firstly working as assistant to Richard Pilbrow on productions such as *Gone with the Wind* at Drury Lane, *Show Boat* at the Adelphi Theatre and the first production of *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at the Albery Theatre and on a variety of productions assisting Robert Orno and John B Read.

Robert Orno remembers:

"My memories of Howard are all happy because the time he spent at Theatre Projects was part of a golden age, all punctuated with laughter and pleasure. His dedication to the work and his artistic quality was a lesson to us all, and it was a joy to work with him."

As a lighting man Howard was absolutely meticulous, fascinated by the use of light and shadow, a highly creative and artistic designer with a determined eye for detail. He moved on to light his own shows in the West End and for regional theatres such as the Birmingham Rep (where he was responsible for lighting all of the productions in the (then) New Birmingham Rep's first season) and for several touring production

houses. He was the first English lighting designer to work for the Norwegian National Theatre Bergen, on Caspar Wrede's production of *Macbeth*. His work for the Dutch National Ballet included *Swan Lake*, *The Rite of Spring* and two productions danced by Rudolph Nureyev - *Le Corsaire* and *Blown in the Wind*.

Howard lit the opening production at Scala Barcelona, a 1200-seat theatre restaurant in the original 'Talk of the Town' style. This concept was a first for Franco's Spain and Howard needed to work quickly and sensitively in the new building (specified by TP Consultants), working his magic over the various challenges of staff working in an unfamiliar environment (the new Strand 700 series luminaires and the first Thorn Q-Master memory board in Spain) and Madame

Bluebell's scantily-clad dancers. His experience with the Folies and in the world of dance, stood him in good stead.

Howard lit various productions at The London Opera School, Hampstead Theatre Club and lectured for the Swedish National Theatre and Film School.

Lighting design, then as now, was poorly paid and the need to support his family led Howard to a career in conference production where he could combine his interest in photography and theatrical flair with his attention to detail. For a period he set up in business for himself. As his health began to fail, Howard looked for something more local and less stressful and found it at the Harrow Arts Centre where he became operations manager.

Howard met his wife Gill at Lincoln, where she was working as wardrobe

mistress, and they married in 1972. Their daughter Kate was born in 1979. Outside the theatre world he contributed to the community in Pinner, deriving particular pleasure from his involvement with the Friends of West House, working on the restoration of this key building in Pinner to create community facilities, a gallery and museum for the William Heath Robinson Trust collection. He was a great raconteur: telling stories in which his timing and keen observational eye played their parts. These stories were legendary – not least for their length: he never told a short story if a long one would do!

Howard's sensitivity, patience, integrity, honesty and reliability were his great strengths both in his personal and professional life.#

Howard Eldridge's show credits included:

Coronation of Popea, Scottish Opera.

Madame Butterfly, Opera House, Gottenberg.

Hans Christian Anderson, Harold Fielding.

Wood Demon & The Way of the World, Actors' Company.

Let My People Come, Regent Theatre.

Royalty Follies, The Royalty Theatre for Paul Raymond.

Oedipus the King, Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

Water Babies, Royalty Theatre.

Alphabetical Order, Hampstead Theatre Club/
Mayfair Theatre.

Mister, The Duchess Theatre

(this was Richard Pilbrow's debut as a director).

Genesis, Tour

Joyce McMillan on Lighting at the Edinburgh International Festival 2008

Focus is delighted to welcome **Joyce McMillan**, theatre critic of **The Scotsman**, to describe some of her favourite lighting moments from this year's festival.

If ever a festival offered a journey through a fantastic range of stage lighting - and of different concepts of the role of lighting design - it was the theatre programme of the Edinburgh International Festival of 2008, the first to be fully crafted and shaped by the Festival's current director, Jonathan Mills.

Out on the Fringe, there was some superb lighting to be seen, notably in the two powerful Irish shows that thrilled audiences at the Traverse Theatre. Enda Walsh's *The New Electric Ballroom*, from the Druid Company of Galway, is a lurid study of two old women in an Irish fishing town remembering the romantic promise and traumatic sexual disappointment of a night at the local ballroom in the early 1960's; lit by Sinéad McKenna in subtle

gradations of pink light that range from strip-lit dressing-room harshness to the twilight loveliness of memory, it creates a unique and surreal stage world of defeated, decaying sensuality. And Mark O'Rowe's *Terminus*, from the Abbey Theatre of Dublin, already seen at last year's Under The Radar festival in New York, uses Philip Gladwell's dark, smoky light - the dunnest smoke of hell, as the story soon makes clear - to lead us through a fabulously complex and operatic triple monologue, featuring three isolated figures on a stage like a shattered triptych, whose stories finally collide unforgettably.

Truly International

But there was something about this year's official Festival programme - with its contributions from

Bosnia and Palestine, Iran and Poland, Belgium, Switzerland, Australia and Scotland - that seemed as if it might have designed to provoke thought about the role of lighting in 21st century theatre. The Festival opened, for example, with a stunning version from TR Warszawa of Szymon Anski's great 1924 play *The Dybbuk*, based on a traditional Jewish story of the possession of the bodies of the living by souls of the unquiet dead. In this production by Krzysztof Warlikowski, Felice Ross's memorable lighting design is not only essential to the play's evocation of the different levels of reality that are central to this story. It also shifts, at certain moments, into a proactive role, slicing or interrupting the space in front of our eyes as if visually anticipating some kind of

warp in reality through which the spirit world can intrude. I have often seen beams of light cut across stages; but I have never seen them cut across and then suddenly stop or bend in mid-air, as if disappearing into another dimension, as Ross made them seem to do here.

If the lighting of *The Dybbuk* is notable, though, Ross's work reaches astonishing levels of eloquence in TR Warszawa's other Edinburgh show, a stunning production by Grzegorz Jarzyna of *4:48 Psychosis*, the late Sarah Kane's poetic evocation of the journey of a mind spiralling towards suicide. Here, Ross's lighting design becomes a key player in the drama, breaking the space around the small, intensely charismatic figure of Magdalena Cielecka, as the play's heroine, into a shifting landscape that powerfully

reflects the speaker's growing dissociation from ordinary perceptions of reality. There are moments of peace, of relatively flat light or spotlight stasis; but often the stage is reshaped by great whirling tessellations, walls or tunnels of light, as the woman at the centre of the story hurtles through different levels of psychosis and altered state, towards a final extinction.

Visual imagery

In these two shows, in other words, the lighting is an obvious, insistent factor in the production, seeming almost to speak with its own voice; and Malthouse Melbourne's one-hour version of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart*, presented in a bravura solo performance by actor-singer Martin Niedermaier, with composer/director Barrie Kosky on piano, pushes this



Enda Walsh's *The New Electric Ballroom*, from the *Druid Company of Galway*, lit by Sinéad McKenna 'in subtle gradations of pink light'. Design: Sabine Dargent, photo: Keith Pattison.



Mark O'Rowe's *Terminus*, from the *Abbey Theatre of Dublin*, 'uses Philip Gladwell's dark, smoky light'. Set and costume design Jon Bausor. Photo: Ros Kavanagh

trend almost to destruction. Niedermair performs the show perched on a narrow, ladder-like staircase that soars from stage level up into the flies; and Paul Jackson's lighting plays an extraordinary set of variations on the visual imagery made possible by this simple arrangement, sometimes picking out the steps like a range of piano keys with the actor's figure splayed across them, sometimes framing them as the banal rooming-house stairwell of Poe's story, sometimes fading to a dusky darkness inhabited only by the actor's speaking mouth.

Role of lighting

As some reviewers suggested, though, the technical brilliance of this show seemed, for many people, to mask a relative lack of substance in its reinterpretation of Poe's text. And this raises some interesting questions about the role of lighting in 21st century theatre, also touched on in the mixed reviews for the National Theatre of



Malthouse Melbourne's *The Tell-Tale Heart*, where 'Paul Jackson's lighting plays an extraordinary set of variations on the visual imagery'. Set and Costume Design (adaptation) Anna Tregloan, photo: Jeff Busby.

National Theatre of Scotland's 365, 'a show which used massively spectacular scenic and lighting effects by Georgja McGuinness and Colin Grenfell'. Photo: Pete Dibdin.



Scotland's *365*, a show which used massively spectacular scenic and lighting effects by Georgia McGuinness and Colin Grenfell, on the huge stage of the Edinburgh Playhouse, to evoke the complex inner journey of young people emerging from local authority care in Scotland. On one hand, it seems clear that we have moved on from the time when we could simply say - as one traditional observer of theatre said to me while I was writing this piece - that "good" stage lighting is always entirely subliminal in effect, defined

by the fact that the general audience is unaware of it. Whatever Felice Ross is doing with the sculpting of the space in *The Dybbuk* and *4:48 Psychosis*, it is neither unobtrusive nor excessive; it is a key active component in the production, equal to the language, the performances, the set design, the sound.

Unobtrusive lighting

At the same time, though, it remains true that some of the most powerful and distinctive 21st century theatre experiences involve an extremely unobtrusive

use of lighting, or in some cases what seems like an avoidance of any "theatrical" lighting at all. Haris Pasovic's Sarajevo production of Nigel Williams's *Class Enemy*, for example, is played under harsh electric strip-lighting with little apparent variation, as befits its setting in a run-down school classroom. Muziektheater Transparant of Ghent present their wonderful music-theatre piece *Ruhe* - which alternates self-justifying monologues by ex-SS members with an exquisite cycle of Schubert lieder - in a hall full of ordinary wooden chairs, lit by simple, clear lightbulbs hanging from wires overhead. No lighting designer is credited; but as the piece closes, the bulbs slowly dim, and the singers move to a more theatrically-lit space at the back of the hall, for a reflective musical and visual coda that subtly lifts the debate to a new level of rage and mourning.

It probably remains true, in other words, that to survive the blizzard of competition from other media that



characterises the world of the early 21st century, theatre has to lean heavily on its unique ability to create an event under the simplest of physical conditions, and to structure it around the basic interaction between actor, audience and the spoken word. Big, flashily-lit theatre events such as major stage musicals are often now openly derivative of film and other popular art-forms, and imitative of special effects that can always be achieved better on screen; and the core survival of the art-form may well depend on simpler, more

rough-edged events which do not rely on complex visual effects for their impact.

But what the Edinburgh International Festival programme of 2008 suggested to me is that out on the cutting-edge of theatrical art, there are emerging ways of using light to shape space that exist in a hugely dynamic relationship with live performance, and that can - as it were - come out of the shadows to claim their own place as one of the leading creative elements of the event. My guess is that some lighting designers will always prefer the low-profile, supportive approach, while others will seize every available opportunity to push the ever-expanding technical boundaries of the art, and to generate their own fabulous shapes and visions out of thin air. The greatest, though, will be the ones who strive to do both; and who, in the search for a new synthesis between light, space and action, form the closest creative relationships with all the other players in this most collaborative of art-forms.#



'Muziektheater Transparant of Ghent present their wonderful music-theatre piece *Ruhe*', and above right, 'the singers move to a more theatrically-lit space at the back of the hall'. Design (and lighting) by Herman Sorgeloos.

PLASA 2008 – The Real Reason for Attending

A stroll through the aisles at Earl's Court with Guy Kornetzki

Firstly I'd like to clarify: I knew I was going to attend. Not just because I was my company's (unofficial) minister for "foreign affairs" (namely all things 'entertainment technology' - it is an architecture lighting design consultancy), nor because the editor was expecting my 'LD set free in tech land' piece. The real reason I knew I was going to PLASA this year was my ex-girlfriend.

You know how a romantic relationship, or indeed any relationship for that matter, is all about give'n'take? And you know what they say: you can't change someone, they have to want to do it themselves? Well every time I would hope that this time it will be different.

And so again this year I went to PLASA, hoping it will be different.

In what way you ask?

Do I mean less noise, less smoke, less scantily clad ladies and less LEDs? Yes, but that's not what I was thinking of.

Although having said that, I thought noise was better contained this year somehow (you only noticed it when passing one of the DJ playing stands; and some were actually pretty good. Is it cooler to spin a record rather than run some cue lists? Answers welcomed). The smoke was also pretty well controlled as a whole (though Look Solutions at White Light featured a lovely young lady who seemed rather trigger happy; this caused some grievance, I'm sure, to the unfortunate stand opposite her. Also, there was a suspicious foamy discharge at the back of one of the

outer stands. I hope that's easily removed... and as for the scantily clad ladies - I'm happy to report they have all but disappeared from the exhibition floor. No more questionable DJ stands with makeshift miniature dance-floors, smokey disco lights and a girl in tights thinking 'these guys could be my dad'. But sadly it seems it's just a matter of "dressing up the concept": this year we had the short black dresses walking around with the IronMan-like LED.

I would have loved to leave it at that, but you know I can't; because there was the half naked woman on the Osram stand. Oh sorry, she was actually wearing this bulky (probably heavy) black vest. And a black bra. I don't really know what to say to that...

No, when I said I was hoping PLASA will be different

this year, I mainly meant in its offerings. I was desperately hoping to see some new approaches, fresh thinking, new trends. They didn't have to be polished, ready for a multi-million pound worldwide product launch, but they had to make me go 'hmm'; in other words be new, and exciting, and different to everything I've seen so far.

So here is a hand-picked selection of some of the things that did make me go "hmm" this year:

Robert Juliet (featured on the White Light stand) presented Brabo. It's a neat solution for that unreliable and prone to falling-apart MR16 batten, many of us like at the front edge of the stage. The veteran French company is perhaps lacking in pizzazz, but more than makes up for it with high quality, reliable



equipment. The Brabo looked solid and simple to handle, and even comes with handy top and bottom barndoors.



Soon to be seen at an opera house near you...

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) had a stand. I thought it was simply a production retrospective so dismissed it with a glance, but quickly returned following a tip-off: the LightLock (below), developed by the RSC's Head of Lighting Vince Herbert, is an example of: "why has no one thought of this before?!"

It's a stabilising system that counter-balances the movements generated by moving heads mounted onto light-weight hanging structures.

But to me it just looked like witchcraft: they had a moving head on a bit of bar, and as it panned the bar moved too; as the LightLock was engaged, the movement stopped almost immediately!

Then the LightLock was engaged prior to the moving head panning, and behold: it was like an invisible hand was holding the bar still!

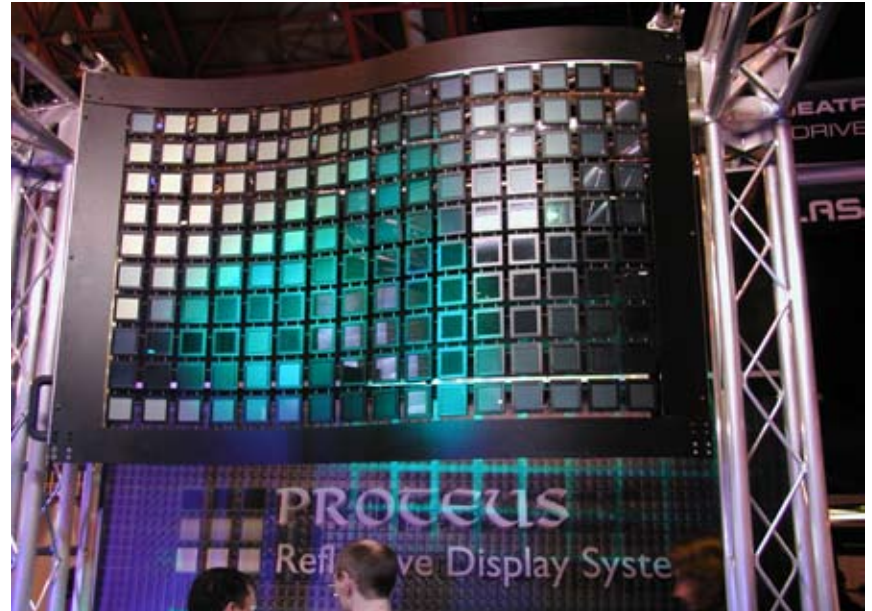
Is it innovations like these that make me proud of this industry and its people. Good luck to them with finding a manufacturing partner.

Proteus...

... from Proteus Displays was, for me, one of the highlights of this year's exhibition (below).

Not because it had billion-million colours (in fact it has no colours at all), nor because it had the brightness of the sun (in fact it produces no light). I was taken by it because it was arguably new,

exciting and...you guessed it: different. A projection system that reacts to light rather than produces it, to me it signalled a whole new and fresh approach to large scale projection - a new medium and a new look; something we are desperate for these days, I think.



PLASA 2008 with Guy Kornetzki

I was also looking for something different in stand design...

I was looking for that balance between practical and aesthetic, in other words between effective product presentation and good old fashion design sense. Many stands had the former to a tee: Avolites were all about hands-on with their consoles, Vari-Lite had a proud and restrained display of selected fixtures, but SGM was my favourite stand this year. It

was wonderfully understated yet visually powerful: it offered a simple and clean layout that was calming and inviting, but at the same time used thoughtfully- programmed sequences with strong combinations of colours, texture and movement to effectively showcase the products.

Another impressive stand belonged to Robe Lighting, but unfortunately I felt it had missed its potential. Yet again these guys have put together

a mighty visual display: the stand incorporated an impressive range of light sources (digital fixtures, flat projection and moving heads), various degrees of content (from hi-def to low-res to gobos) and heights (floor, pantographs and wall mounting) all cleverly designed into a wide-screen format. But with such short viewing distances you could only view one or two elements at a time. I think this had made the stand look rather broken up, when in fact it was suppose to be a single vision.

And finally...

Finally, I'd like to end with a special mention, something that was not only an effective product display, but more so celebrated the spirit of our industry.

Clay Paky had, I felt, a rather unremarkable stand as a whole. However, they



featured a row of moving heads projecting one of the most extraordinary chase sequences I've seen in a while. It was a real 'ballet' of light beams (see above), so precisely choreographed and crisp looking, I thought it might be a video clip. But it wasn't, it was the exquisite programming work of the charming Marco Zucchinali, a former full time specialist of some ten years at Clay Paky, he now works as a freelancer doing product training, exhibitions etc through his own company.

And watching those light beams dancing on the screen in perfect harmony, morphing effortlessly in and out of each other through endless colours, patterns and sizes I finally felt I had a real PLASA moment: watching a thoughtful presentation, of a great piece of equipment, controlled by a talented professional. It was... you guessed it: different.

See you at PLASA 2009...#



A view from Stand D71

The ALD@PLASA 2008 with Nigel Lawson-Dick

First problem is – find it, this anonymous space somewhere between C73 and the next one, also seemingly anonymous and half concealed behind their own fog screen.

Actually, not the first problem. That was a whole year ago when I wrote the PLASA 2008 date in my diary. The e-mails trickled in and eventually an envelope of goodies via Ian. Another e-mail with an offer of help from Tom – many thanks, aiming to do it on Saturday afternoon – will send you a note when I am clear on the time.

So there we were on Sunday morning, and whilst Sue and Fred went for a walk (dog, not toy boy) I settled down to check the

PLASA paperwork and make sure that.....!!!! '7-10 September'. Jeepers, missed the tech and the dress rehearsal! The show opened half an hour ago! All those e-mails and circulars. You already know the date, for heavens sake, you just need any information that matters.

Thanks to Geoff Spain's excellent planning many years ago, the constituents of the stand are fairly compact and now occupy a dedicated corner of my garage – well nearly dedicated; it does have to share some space with the Austin 10 (1935) or, if I need the pit to get under it, daughter Tanya's Midget (currently running, it seems, on three cylinders). The Austin has just been the subject of a



Nigel and Mary Pope on stand D71 in Michael Northen Award fit-up mode...

major detective investigation recently because it kept on stopping – just like that. But that's another story and I digress. But I had been preoccupied...

The compactness of the stand materials means that they are in the back of my car within ten minutes and I am on the road. Phone

calls to the ever-so-helpful PLASA organisers – and they couldn't have helped more – meant that the whole of the Earl's Court staff was on standby to direct me and my car around through bolted and barred entrances to a deserted back door with easy access to the Hall.

Native bearers to the rescue

Finding the stand location really was tricky – calls to the organisers, "...we'll send someone to meet you," and then I bump into Andy Webb on his Tigz Productions stand. "You're just over here – where someone's put all those flight cases," he said. I had explained my predicament

A view from Stand D71 by Nigel Lawson-Dick

and general incompetence as we went. "Can my crew give you a hand in?" he offers. Usually I manage on my own in around 45 minutes but he rubbed his magic lamp and there I was, a couple of minutes later, for all the world like a Victorian explorer marching through the Earl's Court jungle with a string of bearers behind me - many thanks, Andy!

Curtain up

So just after midday we were fully in business, all set up. Richard Thompson had also persevered to find this anonymous space and helped with the initial manning - so we were up to strength straight away.

The show itself settled down well. Having been away myself this week last year (when all the planning and delegation worked impeccably!) I really noticed that the show was quieter - not that there were fewer people, though numbers

did seem down - just less intrusive sound from all the stands.

There was a good cross-section of visitors to the stand - well over 100 recorded (we try to catch everyone but do miss a few names!). Of these around a half were existing members, meeting each other or just dropping by to say 'Hello' - and how welcome you are - it's always very good to see you all.

But as well as providing a focus for our existing membership we are here to find new members. 'Why should I join the ALD?' "Well, do you enjoy lighting?" I say, and the spiel starts from there. So, how did we do?

It is always a special pleasure when new professional members sign up. Why are they not already members of the Association, we all ask? But there are still many who are not - yet! So to welcome two more 'definites' and a couple of 'very probables' was a terrific

bonus. And a good batch of Students (someone at Rose Bruford has been putting the word out - maybe there's a contract on them if they don't join?) and a good smattering of Associates - chaps (not many chappesses, sorry to say) who are involved with or enjoy the art of lighting.

And in the middle of the show another bonus with the Michael Northen awards - proof if it were needed that the art is live and well and growing through the next generation - well done to them all.

And just as we agreed that the show might as well close an hour earlier on the last day - it's all gone dead - yet another two new Professional applications turn up! More evidence of the continuing success of the ALD in raising its profile. We close with a flourish.

Now the dates for next year are 13-16 September. It really is a week later so put it in your diary now. I have!#



Austin 10 standing guard over a dedicated part of the garage.

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