

ALD #

'Remembrance of Things Past' – the lighting for which Ziggy Jacobs won the 2010 Michael Northen Bursary.

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

FOCUS



October/November 2010



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Rick's Repose

I was at one of those creative team dinners recently with a director, scenic designer, costume designer, and assistant director when someone unprompted by me started saying "Of course you lighting designers are lucky! You all know each other, like each other, talk to each other and seem to share information. You really stick together."

I was pleasantly surprised to hear lighting designers viewed jealously in this way, similar to how we sometimes envy the Musicians' Union for its strength of terms and conditions. While this may reflect more on the lack of active organisations for other designers and directors, I think we cannot underestimate the value of lighting designers talking and working together to face the new challenges we encounter in our working lives.

October / November 2010

As the ALD moves into its 50th year we can all take pride in how our colleagues now perceive the organisation, created by the pioneers of our industry in 1961.

It was great to see the ALD stand bustling with life at PLASA, and many new and familiar faces. Sharing the space with WISE (Women in Stage Entertainment) brought even more people to interact, and their tea and cakes event at 4pm every day became the place to be. (I think the ALD will have to join in the baking next year!). Thanks to PLASA for this space and to White Light for providing the comfortable furniture on which to rest weary trade show feet.

I personally believe that these different groups strengthen our community as opposed to dividing it. These targeted groups can then more easily work together when the concerns affect not just one sector of the industry.

One such area is the worrying trend of some of our leading companies to

want greater control over the copyright of designs created for them. The ALD is already joining forces with Equity and the Agents association (PMA) to clarify what this means and to make sure that we are protected and that our work is not re-sold and re-produced without benefit to the creator or reproduced badly.

There was an excellent meeting at the Adelphi where Paule Constable, Nick Simmons and Ben Pickersgill from Stage Technologies demonstrated many of the lighting challenges and successful solutions on *Love Never Dies*. Thanks to them and the team at the Adelphi for welcoming us.

The 3rd Annual *Knights of Illumination* awards were made at a gala dinner sponsored by Clay Paky, Osram and long list of other corporate supporters. The ALD helps organise the judging for the theatre section and I congratulate the latest winners.

Also, the Michael Northen Bursary, the Francis Reid

Award (sponsored by the ALD) and the ETC award were presented to three students at PLASA. Thanks to Jack Knowles for organising this.

Light Relief received a generous donation from Clay Paky at the awards dinner, as well as other grants from Rosco, ETC, and PLASA. This support will allow Light Relief to answer the increasing number of requests we have received in the last year. It will be individuals' turn to support Light Relief on the next *By Design Day*, which will be on 23 April 2011.

As I mentioned at the AGM, I have decided not to be considered for re-election as Chair next year. I have been Chair for 15 years, and I am proud of what we all have done and know we can continue to do more and meet the challenges ahead by working together, sharing information and enjoying each other's comradeship. I hope to still be involved in the ALD but maybe a little less in the spotlight. I have drafted a job description on p36 if you are interested... #



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Foreign travel special!



Pro-active... MJ's returned!

This month, I'll be bringing you a potpourri of issues and I'll start as the sun sets on the winners of the Knights of Illumination galloping into the misty sunset....

Congratulations

Many congratulations to all the winners and nominees and unbounded thanks to Clay Paky for their incredible foresight in building these awards into such a fine and prestigious event. Thanks to Osram and all the sponsors. Most of all though, it's fantastic to have these awards recognising and further raising the profile of lighting design. Thanks should also go to the judges and in the theatre category that's the theatre critics led by David Benedict and their ALD guide Paule Constable. I was reminded this week having been to the press night of

Birdsong and on reading the subsequent reviews that we still have a distance to travel; The designer is mentioned in every review and that's great but in most cases I know the critic was referring to the overall design which included costume, lighting, projection, music and sound. I notice in the programme that the word 'design' is not accorded to the other disciplines. Of course, mentioning everyone in a review is a lot of words, which may not be available, but in most of the reviews I still wondered if the critics had done everything as they waxed lyrical about the look and the images...

Billing

I've said this before but it's essential that you ensure you have appropriate billing clauses; the designers should be grouped together;

choreographers, musical directors etc should go above or below the designers, as agreed, but not between. Similarly, it's essential that we ensure we are also billed whenever the designer is, on merchandising, press releases, photo calls and websites. Be ever watchful. You and your agents need to be even more attentive as we hear that some organisations may be attempting to change both the performance rights and the broadcast rights that you have on your work.

Read Natalie Wheen's article "*Rights Grab at the Royal Opera House*" on the Artsdesk website:

http://www.theartsdesk.com/index.php?option=com_2&view=item&id=2239:rights-grab-at-the-royal-opera-house&Itemid=29

The ROH issued a statement on the 21st September 2010 in which it says that some of

the points in the article have been paraphrased and that they weren't presenting a 'fait accompli' to artists. I've seen the contract that our ALD member's agent rejected and the attempt to take all world-wide rights in perpetuity was extremely disturbing. So, the good news is that both Equity (led by Hilary Hadley) and the agents' group, the PMA, have been discussing and negotiating an agreement with the ROH. The PMA have also been working on the broadcast rights issues for sometime this includes cinema broadcasts and we await the outcome.

Equity minima

In these situations it seems essential that Equity and the agents work closely together. Jo Town and I made this point at the Equity Designers committee meeting yesterday. In the extensive Equity agenda we also discussed again the confusion that can arise between producers who may pay actors and stage management the listed

minimum fees but may think that they are overpaying LDs when they pay above the pitiful minima. I know we've said this before, but generally LDs are still underpaid despite the fact that the fees offered are well above the agreed minima. I mention this again against the 'dark cloud of government cutbacks'. The subsidised sector is bracing itself for cutbacks from the arts councils and local authorities and for sure, we are going to feel this. It's probably not the time for LDs to bang the drum for higher pay but what's essential is that we don't allow the terms of our contracts to be downgraded.

Promo videos

Some members are also expressing concern about the growing use of promotional video clips. In some cases the clip maybe lit by the cameraman and the image may not be relevant or in harmony with the creative team's vision. Meanwhile, on the other side, I quite like the organisations that produce

effective 'trailers' as long, that is, as I can put them on my website. I think that this issue connects to the production photo issue where I'd really like the lighting designer to get a set of the production photographs without charge for use in the LD's portfolio and website. Certainly, there are some producers such as Chichester and Birmingham Rep who do this. Meanwhile, I have had recent examples where the production photos even on CD have been offered for sale. Provision of production photographs has been a clause in the ALD rider since its inception. I think when we, or our agents, are negotiating our contracts we are more concerned about dates and fees and these matters are left. Then in the end, I shrug my shoulders and go, 'Well, that's another show that I don't have a photographic record of'. I don't think we get paid the sort of fees that allow for us to then pay for the photos. I suspect we need a closer liaison with the producer's press and

publicity departments. Your thoughts on this would be appreciated.

HSE in a basket

Now, on the *shop floor*, I'm horrified that that the HSE have effectively banned the movement of tallesopes with a technician in the basket. This is a ruddy outrage. I first climbed up a tallescope at the age of 16 in the NYT and I did think at the time it would be good when we had something like a jet-pack...

However, I live to tell the tale and in the intervening long period I am one of the many technicians who used tallescopes on a daily basis. We all know that there is a risk as we climb in and out, and in our view this risk is higher than moving the scope with a technician in the basket, providing this is done by experienced and attentive staff with due care and attention, leading from the long end and not the side etc. So, we now find the focus sessions taking longer, as tired techs endlessly climb up and down. Recently, I

experienced a feeling of guilt as I apologised to the electricians at the Royal Exchange as I needed to return to a light rather than just wheeling the scope back. I have been liaising with the ABTT who are forming a working party to try and do something about this unwelcome regulation. Oh, and finally, now that the focus has taken longer you'll probably find you have less lighting time.

Lights out

We are also very concerned about the suggestion that the tungsten source is not going to be manufactured in the future. Wake up everyone, especially the light bulb manufacturers, surely this is not an option? I am advised via the ABTT that it would appear that this is a myth. Although there will be no domestic lights of this type, Mark White (ABTT and ETC) advises that most theatre type tungsten lights now manufactured in China will continue to be available. Paule Constable is very

concerned about the loss of sources and says:

"The issue we have is what is defined as a domestic bulb and what is designated for theatre use - and this is being decided not in consultation with us...there are the standard BC fittings that we all want to continue to use in theatre - both large and standard envelope. But there are also issues with the following: Svoboda bulbs, K lamps (for which there are equivalents), EXGs, Par 38s, and lamps for DLCs. Most of these lamps cross over between theatre and domestic and we have to keep using them. We need to get the industry ie Philips and Osram to be clear with us about what is no longer being manufactured and open it up as a debate.

It is vital that we don't just accept this. It isn't ok and China is not the answer."

Meanwhile, in the same way that we make candle and gas mantle imitations now, I wonder how long will it be before we pat the props

and LX departments on the back for the effective look they have created on a period 100W light bulb? Just stay in a dreary Jury's Inn to really experience the dull, artless, unpleasant light quality of new 'domestic' type sources. "Oh," said the waitress, "I must get you a candle for your table". She brought back an acid yellow, flickering LED. Yuk - and that goes for the food, too.

All of these issues need involvement from ALD members - and they underline the need for all lighting professionals to join the ALD in the new *professional* category that sits alongside the *professional designer* category. Please spread the word. We are looking at how to create more effective lines of communication so we can discuss these matters wherever you are in the World, in the meantime, send us your thoughts via the ALD office. 🍁

Mark Jonathan
mark.jonathan@ald.org.uk

Headtorches with Hijabs

Intrepid **Chloe Kenward** packed her headscarf, torches and swatchbook and travelled to Tehran...

My hijab-conforming headscarf kept untying itself under my neck, sliding off my head, or getting tangled in my head torch, and the constant crunching of silk next to my ears was grating on me. My shadow appeared to be wearing a burqa, which bothered me substantially. I thanked my lucky stars the underground venue had air con, and at least in my 'manteau' (long sleeved dress type thing over trousers), I didn't need to be worried about flashing my pants. I was seriously concerned about the absence of alcohol (illegal), but relieved that, although I'm told that Coca Cola could not possibly be trading in Iran, I couldn't tell that it wasn't real coke.

I would like to make very clear, first of all, what a wonderful country Iran is. I could harp on for ages about the light years of difference

between most Iranians and their government. To make the most of the £900 flight and visa handed to me, I extended my stay and traveled around central Iran on my own after the festival. I was concerned that as a Brit, I would be hated by every Iranian, which turned out to be entirely false – everyone was incredibly excited to meet anyone British.

Only trying to hitch hike from outside the Natanz nuclear facility (I didn't realize the bus would drop me there!) and taking not-so-necessarily-allowed photos of anti-US murals in Tehran did I consider saying that I was Swiss! Every day, people would pass me in the street saying 'Iran welcomes you', and I was continuously invited (pleaded!) to stay in family homes. I have never experienced such endless hospitality and never needed

to pull out the British Foreign Office's "Ten Myths About Iran's Nuclear Issue!"

Travel advice

I couldn't imagine working in an environment where women were expected to not shake hands with men. Predictably I didn't get used to it, but it wasn't as bad as I expected. The combination of Foreign Office travel advice and the media had me genuinely scared that one slip up and I'd be stoned to death. This was not the case at all, and I felt relatively relaxed considering my location, and gradually I rolled my sleeves up to my elbow (which were quickly unrolled outside the theatre), and, like the North Tehranians, pulled my headscarf back revealing some hair (which a few years ago would have got me arrested). None of the venue technicians knew any female



Iranian lighting technicians (because it is very hard, lights are heavy'), and designers didn't seem to get any mention. I never ever felt like I was not treated with respect, but wearing hijab-abiding clothing it was impossible for me to forget my status. I had assumed that theatre being a traditionally liberal environment, I would get away without my headscarf

Chloe Kenward is a lighting designer, touring re-lighter and electrician working in theatre and contemporary dance. She particularly enjoys international work, and aims to work on every continent. Currently the Royal Geographical Society and the British Antarctic Survey are giving her hope for working in Antarctica, so if anyone needs a lampy out there, she'd be most interested! Much prettier photos of Iran can be seen at: www.chloekenward.com/iran

whist at work, but that was definitely not allowed. I struggled to understand the mentality of hijab – our gutsy, young female (hijab-hating) translator told me although no one would mind if I took off my scarf, it just wasn't 'done'. I compared the idea to turning up to work in a bikini, and decided not to question it again.

I had no idea what to expect, working at the 13th



My shadow appeared to be wearing a burqa.

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International Puppet Festival of Tehran. Probably my only expectation was that it would be incredibly fringe-y, which I was mistaken about. Puppets are big in the theatre world of Iran, really big, and the audiences are huge. The festival appears to be funded by oil, and just the figure that it cost 20,000 Euros to airfreight the Swiss company's set gives you an idea of the festival's scale and ambitions (bear in mind a daily wage of £10 is not uncommon). The rugby scrums for audiences to get through the doors to pile into the seats and then spill into the aisles and onto the floor, encroaching further and further into the stage, are incredible. The thought of an evacuation was terrifying. There were no exit signs in the venues, or signage once you were out of the theatre and in the maze of corridors.

Touchy-feely theatre

Puppets are a common and important element to Iranian theatre, for good reason. It is illegal for men and women to dance, or touch in public, and it is here that puppets come into their element. Touching between men and woman on stage is illegal would never get past the censors (our show was re-blocked for this in rehearsal), but puppets are much freer to touch. One Iranian actress told us of how when she had played Juliet, string was used to symbolise her relationship with Romeo. Every show has to be shown, at least in part, to government censors before it can go in front of an audience. We were warned that we would be lucky to get through this with our show unscathed, as we had a female singer; women aren't allowed to sing solo (unlike men). An exception



was made for us to be able to do this – it appeared that if we had been Iranian, or if she had not been wearing a mask, it would not have been allowed. The masks had wigs, which covered her own hair, meaning she could be on stage without covering her head, although her unmasked curtain call required a scarf. There was a brief moment of considerable panic when she walked out to thank the censors forgetting her head scarf (remember the bikini comparison).

Well equipped

It was a relatively last minute job, with a frantically rushed visa, and very little idea of what the show required, or what was possible in Iran. I hadn't worked for the company before, but two actors involved knew that I'd be particularly excited about the prospect of working in Iran. On my first phone call to the producer, he suggested that we developed the original lighting design further for Iran, which seemed a little

Headtorches with Hijabs

Chloe Kenward in Tehran...

ambitious, but the venues were far more equipped than I expected. I breathed a massive sigh of relief when I saw the set they had built us - I was fully expecting to walk in to see a sheet of ply leaning against the wall, but there was attempt to copy of the original, even if the measurements had not been translated into Farsi! Polystyrene seems to be the

staple construction material, and our not-so-sturdy set was made with 4mm ply and huge chunks of polystyrene which gave it a somewhat cartoon effect, and which in very close proximity to birdies concerned me! The set did have some precariously wobbly moments, and the climbing-through-the-window moment was instantly cut. I couldn't

help but ask the festival producer what on earth a gigantic, workshop-length plastic missile was doing in the workshop? He replied, "Yes, I imagine that would be causing some curiosity from you right now". Apparently it was used in a comedy show!

Lights

The lighting rig was fine for our relatively basic requirements, mostly consisting of good old Patt 243s, which were in reasonably good nick (and ALL had gel frames!). The dimmers could have been better at the bottom end, and I had to re-acquaint myself with a distinct lack of a go button, but it would all look fine. If anyone is interested, the dimmers and desk were made by Lite-Puter, which seemed common here. They proudly told me that they had soft patched, but a quick check revealed problems



immediately - the plan had been read back to front in terms of numbers. Even taking into account that Farsi writing is written right to left, I'm not quite sure how that happened given the numbers were written under each light, and Farsi numbers are read left to right! I've seen worse access equipment around the world, so I'll give it the label of 'reasonable'. A ladder with a frame on wheels was the equivalent of our tallescopes, which felt safe whilst stationary, but was massively hair

raising when technicians propelled themselves along by dragging on the grid (worse than scopes because the wheels were very small), and even more hair raising when people at the bottom moved it with little control and much speed!

There was a distinct lack of tools, hardware and tape. Tools were rare - the concept of a drill, even with a translator, appeared beyond possibility - and cables were neatened in the grid by wrapping thin bare wire around the cable and bars

a good few times. Acquiring gaffer tape was a mission and a half, and taping floor cables led to the discovery of them being severely damaged. Predictably there was one single miniscule almost-hairless broom (accompanied by a designated sweeper technician), which made me chuckle every day.

Focusing in Farsi

I love working abroad, and I'm normally pretty good at dealing with language barriers, but focusing seemed more frustrating than in previous experiences. I was at the pinnacle of my exasperation with my headscarf, and whilst my sign language was adequate for pointing, flooding, spotting, dooring, shuttering, softening (not great on parcan bubble rotation, but I decided not to push on that one on the basis that I would have been

slightly wary about sticking my hand inside them), but I felt I was losing the detail. My Farsi stretched to badly pronounced pleases and thank yous, and I couldn't even count, or write, to 10. Having said that, I was given no re-light focus notes, had no images or film of what the show looked like in its previous lives, and the producer-actor would occasionally swoop in with focus advice, so keeping it relatively general was at least a safe bet. The technicians seemed massively impressed at the end of the show, and expressed child like excitement over the effect of birdies on our set, but I couldn't tell if they were just being polite, they were still in shock at the existence of a female lamy, or whether I was actually demonstrating ground breaking lighting for Iran!

"I was at the pinnacle of my exasperation with my headscarf..."



Focus - The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers - "More art, less tools..."

October / November 2010



Headtorches with Hijabs Chloe Kenward in Tehran...

Beating the Germans to it!

A German company managed to turn up to the airport a day late, so we were asked to fill their slot, and then relocate in another venue the following day. This involved a massive group of men piling into the control room of the second venue, and pointing to various parts of an ADB lighting desk. The translator and I battled to discover that despite the appearance of a promising looking go button, no one knew how to programme it, and in the absence of a monitor, or record, cue, time or enter buttons I wasn't enthralled by the idea working it out either. Eventually, after some serious arm-twisting, the combination of the doors being too small to fit out set through, an inappropriate lighting desk (which couldn't be swapped), and not enough dimmers meant we could

stay in our original venue, resulting in much rejoicing from everyone involved.

Watch the birdie

Whilst the rigging happened quickly, and focusing was pretty snappy, some things took considerably longer than they should have. Coordinating the seemingly huge job of rigging 3 birdies on the set somehow involved 5 technicians and myself crammed in behind the set for 45 minutes. I still can't work out what we were doing all this time, but remember the cast finding it somewhat amusing. The cable runs involved all six of us, plus an actor. The re-acquisition every day of the smoke machine involved a very grumpy props manager.

The surtitle rigging, one performance late, involved a good 6 or 7 people. Refocusing lights that offended

the new surtitle screen, I decided to limit the numbers involved to a helpful actor on the lighting desk (Farsi numbers still eluded me), and myself up the wheeled ladder, which didn't go down too well with the boys.

Curtain up

The performances went down incredibly well (much better when the surtitles arrived), and the audiences flooded the stage after the show when invited to view the puppets and masks. The closing festival was a large affair, looking like a wedding, but minus alcohol. Before it could start, we stood to the Iranian national anthem, as images of Ayatollahs were projected, along with a shot of triumphant soldiers holding guns aloft on a tank in a desert.

We won an oscar-style statuette of Mobarak, the

most famous Iranian puppet (equivalent to our Punch). An official award title was not given to us (that we know of, as it was in Farsi!), but a certificate tells us that our show achieved everything that the festival aims to do:

"The puppets are messengers of peace and compassion, as they, beyond borders, unite all hearts through their magical powers... will be forever remembered by Iranian and Islamic art."

It was a pleasure working in Iran. Not once did I think we were really up against it time wise, and not once did I think it was going to be a sub standard production. There were some genuine concerns about the set and the hired accordion (sticky buttons), but working abroad often involves more hassle, and I felt it was, overall, a very positive experience.

Farewell

I then waved a goodbye to the rest of the company (I'll admit a mild sensation of panic as they drove off), and on the promise to the festival organiser that I would not stray further east than a line on my map (they were concerned I'd end up kidnapped in Afghan drug smuggler areas, spark international outcry, and bring shame to the festival) I ventured off to explore the centre of Iran, including a desert. Lonely Planet says 'don't even think about doing this in summer.' The festival organiser sounded terrified as he told my producer daily that the desert was currently the hottest place on earth whilst I adamantly said I wanted to stick to my original plan. I was somewhat toasty, but never reached the official hottest place on earth. Next time. 🍷

Office Oracle

Latest news from Ian's production desk

2010 ALD Members' Yearbook

It is that time of year to ensure that your updated contact details and yearbook entry is up to date. The 2010 yearbook will be with you in early December, 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 1st November 2010.

Sponsored Student Scheme 2011

This corporate members' funded scheme for students studying at Conference of Drama School Colleges will open again for applications at PLASA 10. The closing date for applications is Christmas 2010.

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 2011.

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 2012. 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 to 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 have moved 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.

College Reps Required

The ALD's student representative on the Executive, Jack Knowles, is on the look out for an ALD rep in each college to help keep students in contact with the Association and its events and meetings. You will act as the contact point



for both students and Jack in each college to help get the information flowing in both directions. What sort of meetings appeal to students? Are there common interests or concerns across college courses that need addressing?

If this interests you then please contact Jack directly by email: jack.knowles@ald.org.uk

Tallescope Users Group

The ABTT feel it is time to assemble a group of day to day users of the Tallescope with a view to arranging a face to face meeting with the

Office Oracle

Latest news from Ian's production desk

HSE to explain the impact of their current position.

Please contact ABTT Chief Executive Andrew De Rosa directly if you are interested in being involved in this initiative: andrew@abtt.org.uk

UK Design for Performance 2007 -11

The SBTD have recently informed us that due to delays in the building of the new RWCMD building in Cardiff that is to house the exhibition next year, the exhibition will now open to the public from Friday 18 March until Friday 15 April 2011 with the press night on Thursday 17th March.

Members who are exhibiting should have received communication about this already and the knock effects of the fit up schedule for the exhibition. RWCMD have agreed to

rearrange their Spring term teaching & performance curriculum in order to do this.

The Executive Discussions....

Other than planning the timetable and procedure of the forthcoming election of a new ALD Chair, your Executive has also been grappling ways by which the ALD can celebrate its 50th anniversary during 2011. A number of events will be happening across the year which we hope will raise the status and exposure of the ALD throughout the industry as a whole.

We are also renewing our sponsorship of the *Best Lighting Design Award* at the 2010 TMA Theatre Awards which take place on Sunday 7th November at the Lyric Hammersmith.

A number of working parties have been created

from the Exec members to be able to work on issues and projects away from the full Exec meetings and just report back. They all have the brief to co-opt non Exec members to help them work on items, so be prepared to be asked!

The 2011 Members' Yearbook will be sent out with the next issue of *Focus* in early December, and we have decided that in this electronic, fully connected digital and environmentally friendly age to withdraw the diary section from the book.

The majority of people we talked to about it said they no longer used a paper diary. This has allowed us to think about changing the format of it too, so keep your eyes peeled on your postbox for the result.

And finally, well done again Francis....

Congratulations to Francis

Reid, who has been honoured by the Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology at their Annual CITT Awards.

These awards are designed to honour individuals and companies from a wide spectrum of the Canadian live performance community.

The Honorary Membership – awarded to Francis Reid, for his influence on the past generation of Canadian theatre practice – is given to an individual or organisation not actively involved in the technical disciplines of the Canadian live performance industry, but who by virtue of their position has contributed significantly to the development of technical disciplines within Canada. This contribution can be seen through the recipient's decision-making, influence, and philosophy within the community or by showing themselves to be a

longstanding friend of the Institute.

While based in the UK, Francis has enjoyed an astounding international career over the past fifty years in roles as lighting designer, theatre manager, and pioneering consultant on lighting technology and venue design.

His passion as both educator and author is evident through the abundance of publications he has penned, as well as by his distinguished teaching résumé, which spans several renowned theatre training institutions across several continents including the National Theatre School of Canada for nearly thirty years -hence influencing hundreds of current professionals.

For more information about CITT please visit the website:

<http://citt.org/> 

Diary Dates

1 November: Deadline for 2011 Yearbook info submissions

7 November: TMA Awards, Lyric Theatre Hammersmith

8 November: Deadline for applications for election of Chair

25 December: Application deadline for Sponsored Student Scheme

2011

1 February: Chair election voting papers sent out

15 March: Chair election voting closes

18 March - 15 April: UK Design for Performance 2007 -11, RWCMD, Cardiff

1 April: Subscription Payments due

19/20 April: PLASA Focus 2011, Leeds*

15/16 June: ABTT Theatre Show*

1 July: Deadline for subscription payments

11-14 September: PLASA 20100

*the ALD will have a presence at these events.

Contact us

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New Members

welcome to...

Professional Designer

Sara L Burns, York

Michael Hulls[†], London

Professional Member

Miriam Evans^{*}, London

Eddie King^{*}, Guildford

Nathaniel Seekins^{*}, London

James D Simpson[†], London

Pete Watts^{*}, Leicestershire

Associate

Ken Allford, Hertfordshire

Steph Dawson, London

Ellen Huuse, Norway

Matthew Leventhall, Nottingham

Tanya Stephenson, London

Terry White, Wexford, Ireland

Student

Geoff Owen[†], Belgium

* from Associate † re-joining



Love Never Dies Will Evans at the ALD Members' Meeting

On Thursday 16th September ALD members met at the Adelphi theatre for a meeting to see the workings of *Love Never Dies*.

We started with a chat in the circle with Paule Constable, the show's lighting designer. Paule started by reminding us the time scale of a large project such as this, having had the first meetings back in 2007! Despite this, however, the show underwent a major re-design 8 months before curtain up leaving a lot less time to prepare and design the lighting. The rig, in terms of number of lanterns, is actually very small but then we looked skywards to see the amount of scenery being flown. It was quite amazing that Paule managed to find any room for lighting at all!

Even LX 2 has to be split in half to allow scenery to come in and it shares its truss with a trapeze artist! Having said that the set is essentially a black box through which scenery and cloths come in and out. Paule said that this made her job more difficult in many ways as everything coming into the black box needed illuminating in some way. This often left her with few options. She described it as 'one shot only' if the first idea didn't work, there was no plan B! I think as a lighting designer this is definitely nerve wracking as we all like to have many tricks up our sleeves to pull out at a moment's notice!

Tech time was also surprisingly short for a show of this scale at just 2 weeks before the first previews.

This lead to many Sundays being worked and many missed breaks, all in all a very exhausting time for Paule, her associate, Becky Stodart, production electrician, Gerry Amies and programmer Nick Simmons.

One small but vital piece of equipment that did make all their lives a little bit easier was F:Light (pronounced just 'Flight'). This ingenious bit of kit isn't really kit at all, just a way of harnessing information and technology already being used on a lot of major shows. Developed by Stage Technologies, F:Light enables moving lights to track a moving object on stage that is controlled through the automation system (and with encoders, things that aren't either!). In the case of *Love Never Dies*, this was

mainly the revolve and one person flying but potentially anything including scenery. Unlike previous systems that have required a transmitter and receiver type set up, with F:Light, the automation system talks direct to the lighting desk in real time and there is no 'lag' as the automation computers do all the work, they already know where the object is moving to, how fast and where it's going to stop. All they're doing is sharing that info with the lighting desk meaning that its *pre-emptive* not *re-active*. Also, as was the case with *Love Never Dies* if the powers that be decide to change the speed of the revolve and you have movers tracking someone going round on it, F:Light makes sure all your lights keep up

with absolutely no need for extra programming. I'm sure this enabled Nick Simmons to take at least a few of his tea breaks!

Another major piece of equipment Paule could not have done without was 'EvenLED'. First seen on shows like *Mary Poppins* and *Oliver!* EvenLED is fast becoming an industry standard for lighting cloths when there's no room to spare. On this Paule used a lot, more than any other West End show, so much so, Martin who makes it had to assemble some more batches! There are a lot of cloths and not much room on stage in this show with no room at all for conventional flood lights to do the job of lighting the cloths, especially as many of them curve right around the set. The only way

forward was to make them BP cloths and use EvenLED. Paule did note an interesting knock on for scenic art. When back lighting painted cloths, especially with a bright, even source such as EvenLED the painting has to be even and consistent, especially any black. The scenic art team actually had to mix up a 'new black' that would go on consistently and not let any light penetrate to give a genuine silhouette effect. It just goes to show how the technology we use affects other departments.

After this we all got to nose round the stage, sub stage and control room where Nick Simmons explained the array of monitors, one interesting note was the control room was specially built for this show where

Can we fit anything else up there?!



It's a Patt 123 Jim, but not as we know it!

the assistant managers office used to be, therefore meaning it has that rare quality of natural daylight! Amazing! Substage we saw the complex low smoke system designed by Howard Eaton which uses CO₂ to cool the fog that comes out of 'pop ups' in the floor, all controlled via DMX. On stage we truly grasped the limitations of space including the very tight prosc perch follow spot positions where the follow spot ops have to 'withdraw' on the flashing of a warning light to allow scenery to fly past! Also we noticed some rather interesting versions of Patt123s included in the set, I don't think they were standard issue! (see photo)

We'd like to say a big 'Thank you' to Greg and his LX team at the Adelphi for

welcoming us and putting on a warm reception, Nick for explaining the programming, Ben from Stage Technologies for demonstrating F:Light, Craig from White Light and of course Paule Constable herself for letting us all in and ask questions about her design. 🍷

3RD KNIGHT OF ILLUMINATION AWARDS

LONDON,
HOTEL IBIS EARLS COURT
12TH SEPTEMBER 2010

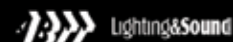
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DRAMA

When the judges started discussing this category one name was consistently mentioned. Neil Austin was talked about in relation to so many shows. One suggestion was that he should be nominated for the whole body of work he had produced this last year. Everyone was very keen to comment that if we were Highly Commending anything we should be mentioning this!

However, one show had to be chosen so it became *Judgement Day* at the Almeida Theatre. Scenes on a station platform where light and sound were used to create the effect of a train arriving and departing were particularly enjoyed.

Peter Mumford was another person whose name kept coming up; partly because he is pretty unique in the fact that he works consistently across all three of our categories. In the Drama category *Sucker Punch* was chosen to be nominated. The judges discussed how in 90 minutes his creation

of a wealth of moods was extraordinary; and that the lighting gave the play real definition and punctuation. The final nomination went to Jean Kalman for *The Wasteland*. The judges discussed the use of shadow and silhouette – saying it was absolutely beautiful; a staggering, jaw dropping evocation...

Many other shows and designers were thrown into the debate; Mark Henderson's design for *After The Dance* was praised for the quality of sickly morning light which set up the language of the whole play; also Rick Fisher's work on *Rope* at the Almeida with beautifully atmospheric use of firelight. Mark Howland was also singled out for a special mention for his design for the *The Kreuzer Sonata* at The Gate which created two distinct worlds which became miraculous when they merged.

AND THE WINNER WAS...

Peter Mumford for *Sucker Punch*



The Inside story 1...
described by Paule Constable

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LONDON,
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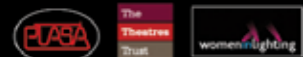
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OPERA

In the Opera category, our first nominee was Peter Mumford for his work on *Elegy For Young Lovers* for ENO at the Young Vic. Mimi Jordan Sherrin was chosen for her design for *The Gambler* at the Royal Opera House; the judges described her work as drenching the stage in light of what seemed like saturated colour and said that when you saw her name on a programme you knew the lighting would be special.

Olaf Winter's design for *Tristan* at Covent Garden was the final nomination which the panel felt appeared a tricky piece to light because of the monochrome world of the production, but that

the lighting clearly directed audience's attention about the stage.

Honourable mentions were also heaped upon Jenny Schrieber for her design for *Pearl Fishers* at ENO which was described as the most beautiful thing about the entire show. Also, Nicholas Michaletos for *Artaxerxes* in the Linbury Theatre at the Royal Opera House where the design brought out all of the detail with very little fuss – it was simple yet very effective.

AND THE WINNER WAS...

Mimi Jordan Sherrin for *The Gambler*
Photos: Clive Barda



The Inside story 2...
described by Paule Constable

3RD KNIGHT OF ILLUMINATION AWARDS

LONDON,
HOTEL IBIS EARLS COURT
12TH SEPTEMBER 2010

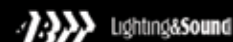
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DANCE

The dance conversation saw the panel wanting to acknowledge a piece which first visited London more than 15 years ago - yet as these awards didn't exist then this was the first chance they had to recognize officially the sheer beauty of the work. Jim Ingalls design for *L'Allegro* for Mark Morris was described in so many ways: its perfect fit with the music; the contrasts and drama of the transitions; the wonderful washes of colour, moment and sound that create such emotional effects. The word everyone finally settled upon was "celestial"!

Peter Mumford then scored his hat trick by being nominated in this category for his work on *E=MC²* for Birmingham Royal Ballet where the lighting made the space feel like a weather system. Finally, Michael Hulls for his design for *Afterlight* which seemed inspired by the doodles of Diaghilev with its rotating, dappled light.

Special mentions were added for Lee Curran for his design for *Political Mother* for Hofesh Schechter with its brutalist aesthetic and for Andy Purves for his design for *Babel* for Stan Can't Dance with lots of tricky gauzes and words which he managed to light within and beyond. 🍀

AND THE WINNER WAS...
Jim Ingalls for *L'Allegro*



The Inside story 3...
described by Paule Constable

Hot Salsa in the Frozen Baltic

“How’s about a few weeks touring the Baltic countries with a young, hot, vibrant salsa show and the usual bit of Cuban chaos thrown in for good measure?” began the email that I received at the beginning of this year. Who could resist an invitation like that!

Things unfortunately started frustratingly at Stansted Airport when I had to pay extra for my baggage, which I had packed minimal anyway, due to taking a GrandMA Ultra-Light with me. I suppose I should have seen that coming but you don’t get, if you don’t try! I’m almost convinced that the scales at airports are set in their favour compared to when you weigh things at home! A big thank you to all those at the MA Lighting London office for the last minute help in sorting out how to get a desk out there

when my own GrandMA Light proved too heavy to fly with.

This tour was to be a series of ‘1 nighters’ in various venues of all sizes using in-house kit or items hired in for our use depending on how much budget the local promoter had elected to spend. Therefore it was essential for me to have a desk that I knew really well and that could handle whatever was thrown at it, hence my haranguing at the airport to get a desk out with me.

I was setting off from the cold drab frozen weather of the UK going out to even worse conditions in the Baltic area, freezing temperatures and at least 1ft of snow everywhere with Moscow dropping to minus nineteen and even more snow and ice by the time we arrived there.

After a restful day meeting the rest of the creative team

and some of the dancers in a very nice boutique hotel in Tallinn, Estonia, our base of operations for the first week, we set off to the first venue which was in stark contrast to the rest that were to follow. It was in a town that hadn’t seen foreign entertainment for a number of years. Practically the whole town turned out to see the show giving us a full house (alright 400+!). When glancing into the rig, I noted less than half of it was working, so after a few translation problems, I acquired some spare lamps and pieces of new gel and it was all aglow; in strange shades making up a two-and-a-half colour wash, but you work with what you have!

A bit of playing and programming with moving lights later (found hiding in a scenic store) we were ready for a show (I think?). Bear in mind that all this had been

Alex Allen shashays his way through Estonia, Latvia, Finland and Russia with a show from Cuba.

setup without me actually seeing the show fully (it was rehearsed in Cuba); that’s the beauty of one-nighters and flying out at the last minute. A few hours later and after a very pleased audience were leaving I knew how the show goes and what I had designed and programmed for the lighting was suitable. Now onto the hotel bar for a few beers, then some sleep and I’ll be ready for the next venue and show tomorrow!

Jump forward a day or so and we’re back in Tallinn and performing at the Nokia Concert Hall, part of the Solaris centre. This is an 1800 seat venue with a huge stage and more moving lights than you can shake a stick at as part of its ‘house’ stock (or at least more than you can successfully busk with in the time frame I had). Here we had a venue that suited the show and a good audience –

it was a pleasant end to our time in Estonia.

Finland was our next stop and this was a dream to do. Our accommodation was a luxury hotel on a golf resort, not that we could see any of the course or surrounding grounds as it was totally snow covered, but at least it gave a picturesque scene to enjoy and a crisp, brisk walk from the accommodation block to the fully featured hospitality and restaurant area. The venues were fantastic and fully equipped along with a great production company as our service provider. We all look forward to returning there, hopefully next year.

A short stopover in Latvia with one show in Riga, lovely venue and some great kit, we followed in after a classical extravaganza, so the LX rig was set up for that, but if you’re lighting on the fly, what’s the point if you don’t

have some challenges? I still had a good compliment of movers and some LEDs to play with, plus the GrandMA desk that I was touring with could handle it all.

Onto Russia next! For those of you that have yet to experience it, well that’s all you can do, experience it! We were waved off from Riga train station with a call of “Good luck”. Find the surrealism dial and turn it to 11 please! After the best part of twenty or so hours on a train, encountering all sorts of customs checks, which we blagged our way through and with the help of a female dancer exiting her compartment at just the right time in pajamas, the guards left with a contented smile on their faces; we then

finally pulled into Moscow. None of us spoke any Russian and the local tour promoter didn’t speak English, but with gesticulations and a bit of German we somehow communicated, or so it seemed. The first night’s accommodation was interesting to say the least, about an hour out of Moscow and in a Stalin inspired relaxation spa for top military personnel (not sure how we ended up there?). Here’s where we found that the Cubans’ communist cousins were not that friendly and expected us to sleep six to a room. If ever you can experience how an organ grinder’s monkey feels, then this is getting close (“I said dance when the music plays”!).

Our venue in Moscow fared much better and was a recently renovated nightclub and dining experience, which



Alexander Allen
Lighting Designer / Programmer
ALD #827

After graduating with a City & Guilds 1810, an enjoyable foray into the UK touring circuit was made. Five years tenure then followed with cruise ships, providing opportunity to cut his teeth in lighting design while bobbing around on the ocean waves. 2006 saw a return to freelancing and he now spends his time split between lighting designs and programming work; still with a hands on interest in electrics from low voltage to 3-Phase, ensuring his designs are correct from dimmer to lantern.
www.4kandleslighting.biz

used to be a casino until the gambling laws changed. We had a small cabaret stage and the disco floor to use as our performance space [right], with a control room area too small to set up in. I was to be at the side of the dance floor in amongst the diners with a DMX line having been thrown over a balcony to allow me to connect the LX desk into the house system. The first night had a very subdued 'invited' audience and it appeared afterwards to us that the show was only received in a mediocre way.

Fast forward to the next night and we were welcomed back with open arms and a free bar, as unbeknown to us, the previous nights' audience had set Moscow's salsa web forums alight with praise for the show, meaning that the club was booked for every table (two sittings) and the queue for standing room tickets seemed to be stretching round the block. A good night was had by all with a few sore heads the following day due to the openness of the hospitality!

Hot Salsa in the Frozen Baltic Alex Allen



Nightclub in Moscow

A rather amusing (for the wrong reasons) coach ride followed, from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Along the route we experienced a real Russian truck stop where the

café was thick with smoke from true Russian unfiltered cigarettes that would have made a special effects person proud had that been his or her efforts with a theatrical

haze device.

St. Petersburg arrived, although with our lateness of arrival at the venue due to being stuck in traffic I had no time for lighting the

show and had to let the in-house team do their best with a show they had never seen; thank goodness one of the in-house dancers could translate for me, so I was

able to give some lighting pointers. But then both I and the producer had to sit on our hands biting our tongues as the lighting for the show progressed to resemble a psychedelic experience or something that would have been better appreciated with a controlled substance raging through ones veins! You live and learn. The hotel that we were taken to afterwards made up for all that (it even had a motorcycle dealership in the lobby) and we drowned our sorrows in a luxurious bar whilst trying to imagine what tomorrow would hold for us.

The final destination on our Baltic extravaganza was Lithuania, but first we had a two day stopover and show in Minsk in Belarus. This had been described to me as 'like Russia but 50 years behind the times'. Whoever said that was not wrong. During a few hours off, the SM and I went for a walk to try and find a coffee with 'try' being the optimum word; one hour later having walked around what seemed like the whole commercial area,

we were wishing for a bit of Western domination and the introduction of a local Starbucks or Café Nero!

No DMX in this venue, still analogue signals to each dimmer and the LX desk was a treasure to look at and a mind numbing contemplation to operate (I hear sighs from those that remember when these were the norm of the good old days!); luckily the in-house operator was there to 'drive' the desk for me, good job too as it was all labeled in Russian! As we put in a full-up for the end of the 1st act the hum from the dimmers behind me sounded like a jet wanting to take off and I'm sure that the local power station had to burn more coal to cope with the energy draw from so many 5Ks! Later that night we found ourselves at a nice club having dinner and drinking seven year aged rum with the Cuban ambassador for Belarus, here was I thinking that we had turned the surrealism dial down by now, obviously not!

So here we are in Lithuania, the last stop of the tour, where



the beer is cheaper than the coffee and tastes just as good after a long coach ride. The creative team and the local promotion team sat down to 'iron' out a few details; we were puzzled at the seven shows in four days in three different town's aspect, did they own a teleportation device? No, we'd be working our little socks off. Basically we were doing a promo in each town the night before we played there, then we'd

be back to our hotel for some sleep, off early to the venue the following day to set-up our main show, perform, do the get-out and then eat on the fly while travelling to another nightclub for next promo event. On the upside we had free drinks wherever we went.

On the final day of the tour we waved goodbye to the cast heading back to Cuba, then the musical instruments and costumes (sent via freight

to the UK). Next myself and the creative team headed off to the airport, back to overpriced package food in airline portions but it was something we were used to and made coming home seem all that much closer. A fantastic time was had by all and a wealth of experiences gained with lessons learnt for what not to do next time and which items to insist on as a minimum, like a translator! www.thekingsofsalsa.com #

Focusing on Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe 2010

We are delighted to welcome critic and journalist **Mark Fisher** with an eye on the lighting...

Call me unconventional, but I'm going to begin this round-up of shows in the 2010 Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe with one I didn't see. **Bliss**, an opera by Brett Dean and Amanda Holden based on the Peter Carey novel, earned rave reviews after its two performances. Sadly, I was not among the audience for the Opera Australia production, but I was given a tour of the set by John Robb, the EIF's head of technical, and it alone is of compelling interest.

Designed by Brian Thomson (enhanced by Nigel Levings' lighting design), it consists of around 3000 light bulbs regularly spaced from floor to ceiling over three walls. They look like conventional household bulbs – they even have a standard bayonet fixing – but inside each is a microchip

and a set of LEDs, allowing it to change colour. The designer allocates a number to each bulb, which is then programmed by a central computer. Changing with cinematic fluidity, they can produce anything from the pulse of a heart monitor to an advertising slogan or simply a colourful backdrop. For most of the show, the set is the lights.

The same could be said of **Invisible Atom**. This one-man show from Canada's 2b theatre company was a late entry into the Fringe programme, but quickly found an audience when word got out about the quality of actor-writer Anthony Black's performance. Like many on the Fringe, he was able to fit his props into a single suitcase; unlike many, however, he had as many as 24 specials on the lighting rig.

The original lighting design by Leigh Ann Vardy, updated for Edinburgh's Hill Street Theatre by Christian Barry, frames the actor in the space [right], sometimes with severe, directional lighting from above, giving a film noir-style sense of contrast, other times isolating a narrow strip of the stage, allowing Black to turn his fingers into a puppet character and walk them from side to side.

It is an approach that gives the performance great fluidity as it tells the story of an ethical stockbroker who has survived a World Trade Centre-style bombing and whose long-lost father turns out to be the 75th richest man on the planet. Thanks to the crisp definition of the lighting, Black is able to switch swiftly from character to character, creating a vivid snapshot of a culture in freewheeling moral and financial decline.



The technique allows director Ann-Marie Kerr to keep the production playful and theatrical, and the material never as weighty and apocalyptic as it sounds.

Neither weighty nor apocalyptic, yet with a resonance way beyond its target age range, **White** is a perfectly judged two-hander for 2-4 year-olds. Produced by Edinburgh's Catherine Wheels, it is about two white men who are happy in their white world, collecting white eggs, putting them in white teacups and storing them in white birdhouses. When colour arrives in the form of a red egg dropped out of the sky, their private pleasure and public embarrassment stand as a magnificent allegory about the challenges, fears and rewards of new experiences.

The challenge faced by

Craig Fleming was to light an all-white set in a small studio space. He does this brilliantly, gradually intensifying the lighting state as we move from dawn to daytime, picking out the individual bird houses on Shona Reppe's set and, come nightfall, using a mirror-ball moon to throw slivers of reflected light across the scene. When actor Andy Manley goes to the dustbin where the red egg has been thrown, we see a warm red glow from inside. As the landscape is transformed, we see coloured lights illuminating the insides of the bird houses.

'White', lit by Craig Fleming. Photo: Paul Watt.



'The Not-So-Fatal Death of Grandpa Fredo', lit by Simon Wilkinson. Photo: Eamonn McGoldrick.

Conditions on the Fringe tend not to allow for high production values, but a couple more shows are worthy of note for the challenges they set themselves. Much of the fun in **The Not-So-Fatal Death of Grandpa Fredo** by Scotland's Vox Motus is in the way its story is told. It is about a man who falls foul of his backwoods community for storing his grandfather's

corpse in dry ice. The set, created by directors Candice Edmunds and Jamie Harrison, is an endlessly mutating box of delights, ingeniously folding out to create a diner or a shack, or acting as a screen for cleverly set-up live TV broadcasts. For lighting designer Simon Wilkinson, it can mean keeping one part of the stage bright enough for filming and another part dark enough for projections

or it can mean defining the space by putting the actors under strong directional light against a black background.

We need not dwell on the deeper significance of Reel-to-Real: **The Movies Musical**, a populist song-and-dance show with a fatuous plot, but lighting designer Vivien Leone has plenty to contend with in a production that combines live actors and dancers with projections of classic footage of Gene Kelly, Marilyn Monroe, et al [below].





Back in the International Festival, Chile's Teatro Cinema takes the idea of blending film and theatre further still. The technique, seen in two shows, confines the actors to a narrow strip of the stage in between two screens onto which pre-recorded film is projected [above]. Their landscape is entirely cinematic and it is the job of the lighting designers to help them merge into the film noir-style world of Sin Sangre and the fantasy adventure of **The Man Who Fed Butterflies**. From a technical

point of view, it is masterfully done even if, from an artistic perspective, the close-ups, long shots and jump cuts of the big screen deny the old-fashioned imagination of the theatre. There was strong lighting work from Chahine Yavroyan in **Caledonia** [right], a satire by Alistair Beaton about Scotland's disastrous attempt to establish a colony on the Isthmus of Panama in the late-1600s. The National Theatre of Scotland production divided critics, but Yavroyan

created some powerful visual effects as he filtered the light through Peter McKintosh's set of wooden scaffolding or silhouetted the company against a blue cyclorama for their arrival in the New World.

Finally, a mention to another Chilean company, Teatro en el Blanco, which showed the power of a simple lighting concept in **Diciembre**. Guillermo Calderón's play is about a family coping with the consequences of a territorial war. Above and below their Christmas dining table is a tangle of coloured light bulbs in blue, green, red and white which have a habit of flickering on and off, plunging the stage into darkness. This combination of the jaunty (they are like a parody of Christmas fairy lights) and the bleak (they remind you of wartime power cuts) is a perfect match for the play's surreal black humour and political bite. #



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

+++++ Blog of the week +++++

Who Really Runs The Fringe?

by Amelia Bird.

No matter how many times you head up to the Fringe, there is always something to be learned from the experience. Back down in Cambridge I've got time for a quick reflect on key discoveries this year:

- It is possible to exist solely on cholesterol smeared on bread for an entire month.
- Sometimes in Edinburgh it doesn't rain.
- The National Monument is amazing at night.
- Edinburgh technicians have created a powerful, mason-like network which holds the fate of all British Fringe theatre in its hands.

The last of these discoveries is no joke. Technicians have always fascinated me, they are highly intelligent, technically minded, logical

people, who have somehow ended up working in a poorly paid artform full of the most illogical, unpredictable people in the world. I'm not sure what the lure of theatre is to people who could well be engineers or computer moguls if they chose, but I'm delighted to say that there seems to be one.

I have long suspected that Fringe technicians had a greater purpose than to push 'go' on a lighting desk and I have caught glimpses of the incredibly tight network that exists in previous years, but it was only this year where everything started to fall into place. I was surprised before the Fringe started that a technician who wasn't working on our show, or even in our venue, knew that we were using shadow puppetry. It turns out that he had heard from a technician friend of a technician friend

twice-removed from a hire company about the lights that we were hiring. He had mentally cross-referenced the possible uses for these lights with our Edinburgh show from 2005 and a 2009 Christmas show, to come to the logical conclusion that we were back at our old shadow puppet tricks again.

This is how the network works. Technicians are an amicable, talkative bunch, it comes from working ridiculously long hours with each other in confined spaces. They have seen thousands of different shows between them (many more than the average theatre maker) and have had plenty of time to discuss them. Add to the mix the ability to retain incredible amounts of information which seems to accompany technical thinkers and you have a many headed, walking catalogue of

years of theatre. Technicians are well-qualified to track the progress of companies, to make comparisons and to pick out trends. They are the bumble bees of theatre, cross-pollinating venues and passing information. I'm pretty sure there must be a bee-like doomsday theory related to the decline of technicians and thus the end of theatre- I'll let you know when I work it out.

Anyway, where all this translates into real power over theatre is in the next-generation techie. These are the technicians who have turned into venue managers, producers and venue programmers. This was the epiphany I had this year: there are a lot of them, A LOT. It makes perfect sense, combining practicality, an impartial eye and a love of theatre with the hands on knowledge of putting

something on stage. These are the people picking up hot Fringe tips, selecting where they can be showcased and literally deciding whether to shine a spotlight on them or not. At the giant theatre marketplace that is the Fringe, these are the people you want to make friends with.

So in a shamelessly sycophantic act, this last blog is dedicated to the admiration of technicians. They were up in Edinburgh long before us artists and as always they are the last ones standing. Yes that's right they are still there. They haven't slept for a couple of months now and yet they still didn't drop any lights on heads or set fire to anything they weren't supposed to.

Technicians; consider yourselves saluted. #

Amelia Bird is Artistic Director of Gomito Productions. This article originally appeared on Whatsonstage.com. Our thanks to Amelia and Terri for permission to reprint.

The Michael Northen Bursary Awards 2010

by Jack Knowles



Page 30

This year there was a wide mix of submissions from a range of colleges and a lot of variety in the nature of the different projects, from straight plays to interactive theatrical experiences to devised pieces and musicals.

It was not an easy year to judge; many of the submissions stood out for different merits to the different judges which resulted in interesting and thought provoking discussions in order to decide on the winning three.

My thanks go to the judging panel: Mark Jonathan, David Howe, Jo Town, James Farncombe, Mark White (also representing ETC) and to White Light for use of their office space for the judging.

The Michael Northen Bursary was won by **Bradly "Ziggy" Jacobs**, from the Central School of Speech

and Drama, for her design for *Remembrance of Things Past*, by Harold Pinter and Di Trevis. *Remembrance of Things Past* was a devised adaptation of the piece, performed in the Embassy Theatre.

This year marked the ALD runner up award being renamed to honour lighting designer Francis Reid, an ALD Fellow whose long career has encompassed lecturing and writing numerous books on the use of light on stage and in performance. The Francis Reid Award, sponsored by the ALD, was presented to **Tanya Stephenson** from the University of Leeds for her design for *Dream/Play*, a devised adaptation of the August Strindberg play *A Dream Play*.

The ETC runner up award was won by **Sean Gleason**, from Rose Bruford College, for his design for *As It Is In Heaven* at the Rose Theatre.

The Michael Northen Bursary was won by Ziggy Jacobs

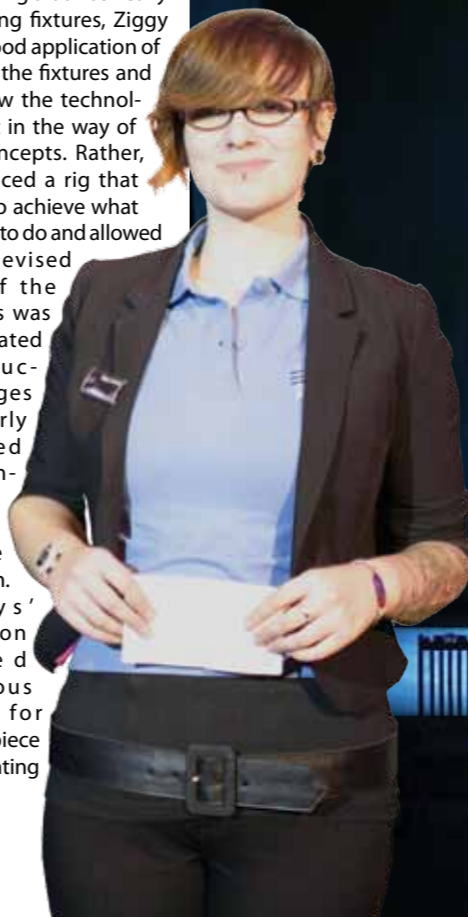
The judges said:

Ziggy's submission demonstrated a well executed design process that was not without its difficulties. She responded well to the devised nature of the production where major changes would be made right up to the eleventh hour and prepared herself well for these eventualities.

Working with a difficult set consisting of many gauzes and ceiling pieces obscuring available rigging positions, Ziggy produced an accomplished design with some very striking images. She created a wide variety of tones and atmospheres; strong sculptural effects with simple yet bold images, which combined to create sophisticated visual statements.

Having a rig that was heavy with moving fixtures, Ziggy showed good application of the use of the fixtures and didn't allow the technology to get in the way of design concepts. Rather, she produced a rig that was able to achieve what she set out to do and allowed for the devised nature of the piece. This was demonstrated by production images that clearly supported her intentions and statement within the submission.

Ziggy's submission showed an obvious passion for both the piece and for lighting overall.



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The Francis Reid Award was won by Tanya Stephenson

The judges said:

Tanya's submission was a highly detailed account of the process and the effects, both experimented with and executed. Brilliant text allowed the judges to clearly visualize the exciting effects created.

The piece was described as a sensory experience for the audience, and Tanya identified the need to experience the piece herself, as often elements within the lighting design were not there to be visually exciting, but to be resources for the audience to experience and play a part themselves. Tanya effectively described the processes to create these experiences as well as being able to effectively gauge their effect on audience members.

Tanya was evidently very proactive in the early stages of the process, with a strong emphasis on collaboration and the sense of the creative team.

The submission clearly explains very interesting and effective ideas and realized effects for this fascinating, experimental piece of theatre. She was unafraid to stray away from the conventional world of theatre and performance lighting, using but effective application of basic technology to create interesting looks.

On presenting the award along with a signed copy of his book 'Lighting the Stage', **Francis Reid** added: "Her design shows a grasp of such fundamentals as articulation and lateral thinking without which no light person should even consider entering the design kitchen. There is comforting evidence of team working and, dear to the heart of one who believes that the eraser (or delete key) is a crucial design tool, economy of resource."



The ETC Award was won by Sean Gleason

The judges said:

Sean produced a comprehensive and thoughtful submission, which demonstrated a real understanding of the subtleties of lighting design.

He showed good research and collaboration with the whole creative team, and produced a strong interesting design that clearly served the production very well.

His close collaboration with the designer enabled the set and lighting to work effectively together with additions and alterations being made to the set which allowed for effective lighting moments and strong theatrical images. This collaboration led to a powerful and effective overall journey through the piece, with the lighting mirroring the emotions of the characters being portrayed.

It was obvious that Sean's research was highly influential on the final design, as well as playing a major part throughout the development process and in discussions with the director and designer. Influences drawn from the work of American realist painter Edward Hopper were nicely woven into the images.

It was clear Sean gained a lot of very useful experience from being involved with this production as it allowed him to experiment with various aspects of lighting prior to making design decisions that were just right for the production. 🌸

Postscript: Owing to a bumper packed issue this time, we have been unable to print more photos of Ziggy, Tanya and Sean's winning submissions. However, your editor intends to put this right in the next issue, along with a few words about their designs by the winners themselves.



“Wish You Were Here”

James Laws

I have made various photographic submissions to Focus over the last few years, some of which involved straying sheep or dancing gnats, none of which found editorial favour. However, I appear to have won some approval with this picture of an unknown lady in a glade, within a bluebell wood.

My simple ambition was to revive that old *Focus* favourite *Natural Light*, but of course current editorial policy demands added value, the difficult bit, the writing up about why the lighting works and what it might teach us when it comes to recreating the same feeling on a stage.

In the days of actor managers such as Beerbohm Tree, woodland scenic elements involved real mossy banks, complete with well-scrubbed bunny rabbits and acres of bespoke and realistically painted canvas. Now you're lucky to get a few jagged ribs of expanded mesh and some crinkled silver foil. This change in scenic styles has been made possible by lighting design coming of age. Whether they acknowledge it or not, scenic designers depend on us to realise their dreams. We must assume that there will be very little scenic help then, if we want to recreate a hot summer's day in a Devon bluebell wood, especially if the next scene is a coalmine in Staffordshire.

Pat & I were on holiday in late May this year when we were given the tip-off from a local café that the bluebells were at their best in a British hill fort, Blackbury Camp, near Honiton. We spent a blissful afternoon there; for Pat there was endless variation of flora and for me the light was always changing. The thick oak canopy was filtering the sun so that the bluebells were flecked and the branches and leaves were truly dappled. It was a very dramatic in-the-round arena.

Every drama needs a heroine and, amazingly, a local lady decided to bring her chair, set it just so in a glade, to do the crossword, I guess. This gave me a fixed point in the otherwise ever-changing vista. I never disturbed her but decided to get the best out of the scene that she inhabited. I called this shot *Wish You Were Here*, because she could be writing a postcard.

The canopy was so dense that there was no strong sense of directional sunlight. Geographically, I know that

the sun should be coming from slightly back of right as we look at the picture but her chair and bag are well lit. Amazingly, I had a lighting composition that would make sense on stage; we usually add some fill where needed. I was lucky here; this photo is completely as taken on a Panasonic compact camera, except for a very slight overall reduction in contrast.

Another thing that occurs to me is that we can make sense of this scene when only a very small percentage of the image has much light in it. Is less sometimes more? We often say "lighting is what we add to darkness". The tree trunks and earth walls are only suggested here but they are certainly present.

When we look at the greens, it seems that the shady areas are a bluer green than the leaves that are in direct sunlight. The camera has probably emphasised this but it gives credibility to the old convention that sunlight should be signified by straw or a warm colour.

Of course, there is a catch to analysing a still production photograph, as theatre is such a fluid medium. It's the same catch as trying to light a play without the actors; you rarely get the complete picture. Directors get obsessed by lack of light in obscure places and likewise they worry about apparently meaningless lighting accents. You have to know your director and your play very well if you want to say, "They're dashing through that dark archway and then they're going to smash plates on the chandelier. That's why those light beams are crossing the stage."

Photographic stills are often the only decent quality record that's left after a memorable show so, for better or worse, they will be the way the show is seen in the future and they become the way we read the past. In the wider world I think that we can learn or justify some lighting truths from the way we photograph nature and that by doing so our art will be the stronger. 🍀

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



We asked Rick Fisher to teach us about The Chair...

What the ALD needs from a new Chair is someone who is willing to put forward the cause of lighting designers and the Lighting Community. Someone who is able to work with the Executive Committee and the membership to define the issues affecting lighting designers and help to work to addressing those concerns. Often the chair can act as a point of contact for those from all sides of the industry so being genuinely interested in what people are doing and thinking about is important.

It helps the ALD to have someone with a good profile in the industry. I believe that this can help the ALD issues to be heard and taken seriously.

The time commitment is variable with there being some busy times and otherwise some quieter patches. A lot is done

through email with the Exec, and meetings are usually about every 6 weeks.

When I was asked to be the Chair of the ALD in 1995 I was told that the role and that of the President were largely figureheads. In those days the Exec committee and primarily the secretary, who was usually based at a leading lighting company, did the day-to-day work of keeping in touch with members and dealing with any enquiries that came to the ALD. The ALD held a few meetings a year at various theatres and published a magazine to keep in touch with members.

A lot has changed. As almost all LDs are freelance the ALD has become the leading organisation representing LDs' interests and acting as a forum for the sharing of information between ourselves, and the

rest of the industry in which we participate.

The more we work together the more we realise has to be done. Many of you will have seen the excellent full-page article in *The Stage* on September 16th re-telling many of the points the ALD has been making for the last decade, that lighting designer fees are too low and are slipping lower and lower especially compared to the increased time and contribution expected of LDs. We all need to keep up the pressure on this, even though the arts are due to be hit hard through funding cuts.

While the Chair is more visible than some of the Executive Committee, all initiatives are discussed and formulated within the committee. The role of the Chair is to frame initiatives and push forward the agenda of the ALD and to

be an obvious contact for profession. Another equally important role is to give private advice to colleagues who are having a difficult work situation, while the Chair cannot solve things, sometimes sharing these problems can help find a way forward.

One of my goals in becoming Chair was to make the ALD more about the real issues affecting lighting designers. The Exec was also keen that as many working LDs were members, and to develop useful services to our members be they professionals, associates students or corporates.

I think we have created an organisation that I believe is respected and envied around the world for the way it supports our often solitary working lives. The new Chair will have a great opportunity to build on what has been



achieved and continue to support the lighting design community into the ALD's second 50 years. 🌸

Chair Voting Procedure

In response to the decision of the ALD Chair Rick Fisher to stand down at the end of his current term, the 2010 AGM discussed the issue and voted to allow the Executive to set up an election procedure on this occasion outside of the normal AGM environment. It is hoped that this may encourage candidates to stand, increase transparency to the process and open up the dialogue and voting to all members eligible and not just those able to attend the AGM.

Rick's thoughts on his role as the Chair of the Association and how it has developed over the 15 years he has been in post are published here, as well as his beliefs on what the Chair should bring to the Association and the industry as a whole.

The Executive has been discussing options on how to move forward and has set out the following timetable has been set out to enable all voting members to receive information through the forthcoming editions of *Focus* between now and the vote itself in the spring of 2011:

Noon 8th November

Deadline for the Executive to receive notice of a member's intention to stand for election (details below)

19th November:

Candidates to submit a 500 word maximum mini-manifesto and biog photo for the members, to be published in the Dec 2010 / Jan 2011 issue of *Focus*, to introduce themselves, explain why they are standing, and what they hope to bring to the post and Association.

Members are asked to submit questions through the Office arising from these to be answered by candidates in the next issue of Focus.

15th January 2011

Responses by candidates to questions from members, to be published in the Feb / Mar 2011 issue of *Focus*.

October / November 2010

Voting details to be published as follows:

1st February 2011: Voting papers sent to members eligible to vote

15th March 2011: Voting Closes.

April / May 2011 Issue of Focus: Results announced

May 2011: AGM held for official handing over of Chair's role to winner.

Members eligible to vote on ALD matters as outlined in the Constitution are Fellows, Life, Professional Members and Professional Designers who each shall have one vote. Associate, Student, Corporate, Honorary, Related Organisation and Non Profit Organisation Members shall have no vote.

Therefore if you wish to take part in this election, please ensure that you are a member in a category that is eligible. To check your membership category please read the definitions for each category in the yearbook or on the website and then contact the office for advice on changing them if necessary.

The voting process will be carried out and counted by an independent body to ensure transparency as requested by the 2010 AGM. It has been decided that the voting system to be used will be that of a simple majority as it would be at an AGM. All members eligible to vote will be sent both postal and electronic voting options but will only have their first received vote counted.

We are now asking members wishing to stand for election to make themselves known to the Executive by sending a simple email to the ALD Office: elections@ald.org.uk no later than noon on 8th November 2010. 🌸

End Thoughts.....

From Jim Woodley re: Maurice Marshal

I've just read the very fine obit for dear ol' Maurice - and it cleared up something niggling in the back of my mind too. I first met him back in 1967, and in hindsight, I always assumed he was the Chief at The Northcott then! However, having been a Chief LX in several Reps myself over the years, I know the Chief doesn't go out on Schools' Tours - he/she sends their Assistant LX, or (more often than not) drafts in an electrician just for the Tour.

Now, I find that Maurice started as 2nd Electrician at ye Northcott - and wasn't Chief until 1973! (by which time I was working in London) - so that's now sorted out.

It always made me smile when, on a trip down to the Northcott to see a show, you would see a bar or 3, packed full of lanterns, all stamped with orange MM on the back. I never found out the exact arrangement he had with the Theatre, though I remember him once saying that, if he didn't have the stock to hand in his garage, then he could always 'borrow' it from the theatre [providing it wasn't being used] and why not?!

He was also the first professional theatre electrician to actually encourage me - and, most important of all, to make me think very hard about *what* I wanted to use/hire for a show. "Now, be truthful, Jim, are you spending all this money because you *have to*, or because you just *want to*?" with his usual wry smile, and twinkle in the eye. He would much rather lose business, than have you waste money - now, you don't see that very often these days, so you?

It still happens - I work out my budget, and then I get a little voice in my head - and I can see Maurice there, tutting. He will certainly still be a doing that, I'm sure.

They don't make 'em like that anymore - more's the pity.

Regards, Jim.

"I have often read dramatic criticisms, written by prominent critics, in which there has been a merciless and wholesale condemnation of the lighting. Often it is justified, but occasionally one finds a glimmer of hope and enlightenment, which is generally criticized through lack of understanding. Many critics have not attempted to understand modern stage lighting. So the line of least resistance is to condemn it. This does not mean that the lighting is wrong: the critics need to be severely criticized. Lighting is a new medium of expression, and must be approached from that point of view."

Written in 1936 by Herbert Prentice (Birmingham Repertory Theatre) and taken from the introduction to Ridge & Aldred's *Stage Lighting Principles and Practice*

Thanks to Scott Palmer



Don't forget to Tweet!

We have been posting news, thoughts (and links from the website) for members on Twitter. For those of you who have a twitter account please look us up at:
https://twitter.com/the_ALD

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