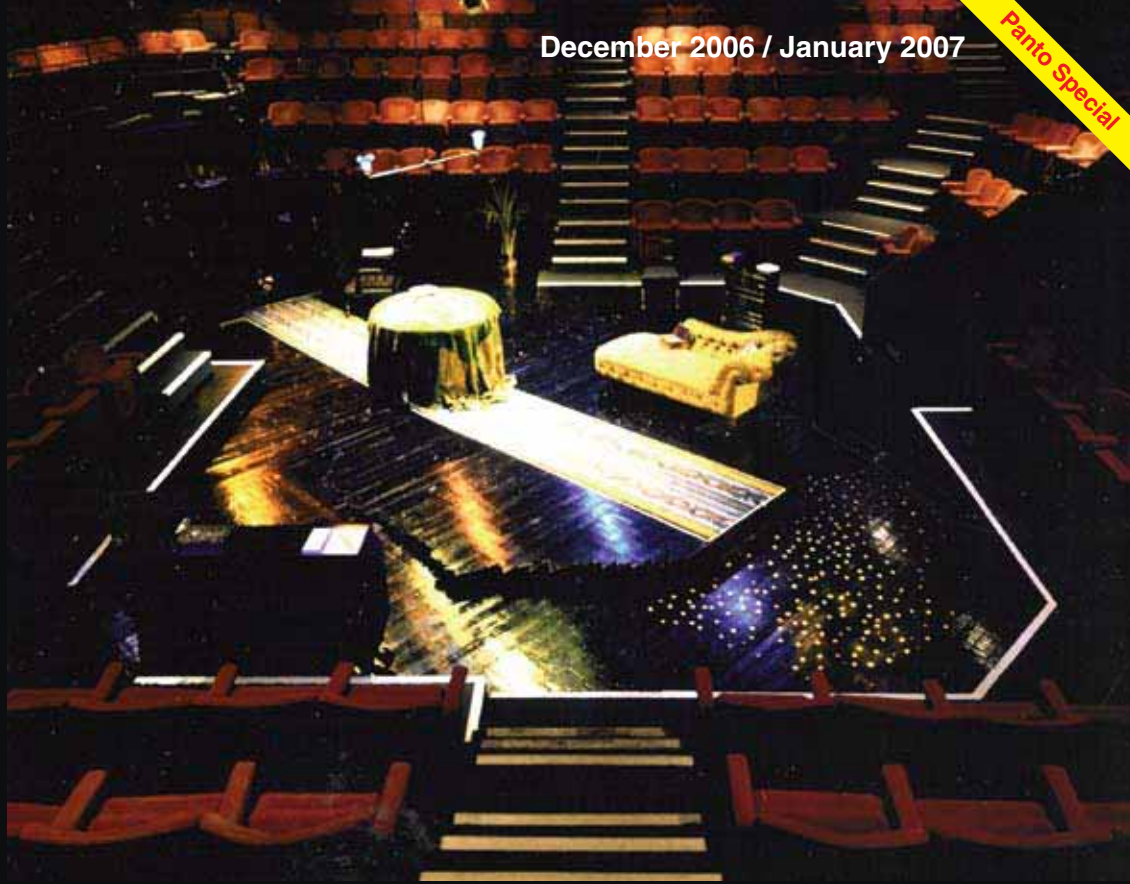


ALD #

# FOCUS

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



December 2006 / January 2007

Panto Special

*Gaslight, Stephen Joseph Theatre, 1994. Lighting: Jackie Staines, Photo: Adrian Gatie.*

*Under the spotlight this issue:*

**Associate Lighting Designers • PLASA • Lighting at the Tower of London • Passport laundering • Digital Scenography • Growing carrots... and much more!**

Price to non-members £3.50

# Natural Light Picture Gallery



Last issue's sunset sparked me thinking about my trip to South America this summer. These images were taken in Colombia. What amazed me was the blend of colours achievable after the sunset. How does one set about creating such effects and not lose the third dimensional feel on a cyc? The other thing that surprised me was the quality of the setting sunlight on the face. It was so warm and richly skintoned. #

*Nick Dew*

*Page 2*



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

# Rick's Ramblings...

This edition of *Focus* the first under a new editorial team. Firstly I want to extend the Association's and my personal thanks to Paul Johnson and Scott Palmer who have been responsible for keeping this excellent magazine going for the last few years. Under their careful stewardship along with Jackie Staines and Jim Laws, who are continuing to work on future issues of *Focus*, it has flourished and grown. Both Paul and Scott are busy people and I am grateful for their time, commitment and the quality of what they have been providing for the membership.

Andy Collier has joined the *Focus* team as editor to coordinate the magazine, and along with Jim and Jackie is being joined by regular contributor Guy Kornetzki to bring in content. Also the exec felt it was a good time to give a facelift to the magazine, as this format has been with us for over a decade.

I know that Andy and the rest of the team would really welcome more input from the membership. We all want an interesting read and the best way is for us to write up what is going on in our professional lives, both good and bad. There are so few platforms to discuss lighting creativity in

the performing arts and the ever-developing environmental lighting schemes in which our members are involved. *Focus* is the ideal forum for this. Please continue to support the magazine and the new editorial team. With you help *Focus* will continue to grow and flourish from the well-loved magazine that Paul, Scott, Jackie and Jim have been producing.

This year's PLASA show was an excellent one for the ALD. Both Student and Professional meetings were interesting and useful. It was also great to see so many members over the show.

One of the items discussed at the Professional meeting was the subject of ALD warnings. There was a strong consensus that these were useful, and should continue. When we get information about a difficult situation as experienced by our members we want to get the news out fast so that you can make your own decisions. We do not want to have a black list, and cannot and will not recommend not taking a job. But we do want you to know background about a possible contract as experienced by another ALD member.

While we will continue to work closely with Equity, it is important that ALD members support

each other by sharing information. Please make us aware of bad situations so we can let the membership know, regardless of what scale. These warnings have begun to be taken seriously by the producers and I am pleased that some offers have improved as a result.

I am delighted to see that our Italian colleagues are forming their own Association of Lighting Designers. You'll see from Giovanni Pinna's introduction on page 25 that they share many of the same challenges we do here in the UK and hope for the same benefits of association that the ALD strives to provide here.

It is immensely flattering to the ALD that fellow lighting designers in other countries wish to join together to raise the profile of Lighting Design. We welcome this new organisation, and wish the AILD every success in the future. #



Regards,  
Rick

## Highlights:

- 4 **Office Oracle**
  - ALD news, demands, instructions and gossip?
- 6 **Exploring Digital Scenography**
  - Will Evans spies on the ALD's first forum
- 8 **So you think you're covered?**
  - Mark Jonathan's pro-Travel Tips
- 11 **Tales of two Fellows**
  - David Taylor and Maurice Marshall
- 12 **New colours**
  - Margie Heymann with an LD-view of Rosco's recent launch
- 13 **Hitting the Big Time**
  - Inside story on Associate LDs by JohnLeventhall
- 16 **Off with his head!**
  - Roger Frith interviewed at the Tower of London
- 18 **Gardening Corner**
  - First in a short running series on improving LD diets
- 19 **PLASA gets the treatment**
  - Guy Kornetzki with an off-beat review
- 24 **From our own correspondents**
  - letters (well, e-mails mostly)
- 26 **Students' Union**
  - Mary Pope with pearls of wisdom for the nextgen
- 28 **David Benedict's View**
  - We've kidnapped Variety's UK arts critic

# OFFICE ORACLE

## Latest news from Ian's production desk

### Contacting the Association

Due to the high volume of spam email that is received at the office and for Focus, we are asking members to ensure that all subject lines are clearly marked 'ALD Focus' or 'ALD #(membership number)' together with a further explanation of the subject (e.g. 'ALD Focus – letters to editor' or 'ALD #2000 – payment query'). The long awaited spam filters are being optimised to eliminate the standard spam subject lines. Therefore 'Hi', 'Hello' and 'no subject' titles will automatically be re-directed as spam and therefore unlikely to be spotted.

"It certainly pays to have a presence on the site. I often direct enquiries from people looking for LDs to the site in the first instance, so... get those details and credits and photos updated."

### www.ald.org.uk

Since its re-launch 15 months ago, the ALD website is now attracting many more hits than previously. Its redesign allows for a clearer, cleaner layout, with images of various members' work included both in the gallery and randomly selected throughout the site. Members who are up to date

with their subscription payments can review and update their contact details on-line.

First you need to log in. A password will be sent to the email address we have on our database.

Once you are logged in you can work on your own pages. 'Contact' and 'Office' hold your contact details and allow you to choose what information is published and where. It certainly pays to have a presence on the site. I often direct enquiries from people looking for LDs to the site in the first instance, so if you are looking for a cost effective way of

showing your work and credits on a standard personal website, then sign in and get those details and credits and photos updated. We do ask however that you limit the number of images uploaded to four or five per show, to ensure that there is enough server space for everyone. I recently had a lady who was enquiring whether

she could buy one of the pictures on the site as her son was in the show in the gallery and she wanted to surprise him!

### ALD Requests Information Update

A quick Google search for 'Lighting Designers' often brings the ALD website up as the first non-sponsored site listed in the results. As a consequence of this, the office is often contacted about architectural designers, environmental designers or even the designers of lights. For this reason, a few years ago we requested that members who had experience of or work in the architectural, domestic layout, retail or external scheme branches of lighting design contact the office to be placed on a handy register to send to those enquiries. We would now like to update this list. So if you fulfil such requirements please send your contact details and a brief biography highlighting your areas of speciality to the office.

### Not a member yet?

If you have stolen this copy and would like a fresh one of your own every two months,



we are happy to supply Focus for £3.50 an issue, or for an annual subscription of £20.00. Contact office@ald.org.uk for details. Or alternatively, join as a member and Focus is free! Along with regular email newsletters, and all the other freebies our membership has come to enjoy.

### Yearbook 2007

It's that time of year that the next edition of our Members' Yearbook is due to be produced. To ensure that your contact details and yearbook entry are correct, you need to check them online at www.ald.org.uk. You can update them yourself online (see details in website section above) or contact the office and we will do it for you. Details as they are entered online as of Friday 12th January 2007 will be those that are printed in the yearbook. #

### Dates for your Diary

**12th December** deadline for updating Yearbook entries

**12th January** next Focus deadline

**12-13th February 2007** ARC Show.

**14th - 17th March** USITT, Phoenix

**21st & 22nd March** Royal Scottish Academy Graduate Show\*

**28th - 31st March** Prolight & Sound

**1st & 2nd May** AC Lighting North Trade Show\*

**13th & 14th June** ABTT Theatre Show\*

**9th to 12th September** PLASA 2007\*

\* the ALD will have a presence at these events. Keep an eye on www.ald.org.uk/diary for more information on these and other events and members' show openings.

# New Members

## Professional Members

Jolijn van Iersel from Udenhout, The Netherlands. [www.yolijn.net](http://www.yolijn.net). David Plater from London is Chief Electrician at the Donmar Warehouse

## Associate Members

Martin Putman from Milton Keynes, and Aneurin Brown from Caerphilly.

## Student Members

Ben Hornshaw from Wakefield and Roland Glasser from London are studying at Central. David Vardy from Newbury is at Welsh College and Tim Lutkin from London is at Guildhall. Rene Zensen is currently studying theatre and performance design at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. He was awarded the PRG Honourable mention for the 2006 Michael Northen Bursary. Georg Spindler is also currently studying lighting design at LIPA. He has an event technician's professional license in Germany and was awarded PRG Honourable Mention in the Michael Northen Bursary 2006. Chloe Strickland from Thames Ditton, Surrey is a student at Exeter University, and Trent Kim is studying at the Royal Scottish Academy.

## Corporate Members

We are pleased to announce that Artistic Licence and Computers Unlimited have joined as a Corporate Members.

Artistic Licence is the industry leader in the development of control, lighting and test equipment for the entertainment technology industry. The product range spans Ethernet distribution to LED lighting, and has evolved through experience in solving backstage technical issues as they arise. ([www.artisticlicence.com](http://www.artisticlicence.com))

Computers Unlimited 3D Design Department has a comprehensive portfolio of 3D modelling and interactive tools for professionals working in architecture, industrial design, animation, new media and video including Vectorworks Spotlight. Vectorworks Spotlight merges 2d drafting and 3d modelling with advanced lighting design visualisation and production tools. You can draft lighting plots, create stunning set designs, automate paperwork and visualise design concepts in 3D, all in one cost-effective, easy-to-learn, easy-to-use application. There are exclusive training opportunities available for ALD members. More details in our meetings section on page 30. ([www.unlimited.com/3ddesign](http://www.unlimited.com/3ddesign)). #

A Merry  
Christmas  
and  
Busy New  
Year To  
All!

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

To submit industry and corporate press releases (Corporate Members only), please send them directly to the ALD office (office@ald.org.uk) and not to Focus so that they can be posted on the News pages of the ALD website for more immediate and wider coverage. Contact the office to arrange advertising in Focus.

Editorial guidelines for authors are available on request from editor@ald.org.uk.

The opinions published within Focus are not necessarily those of the Association. #

# EXPLORING DIGITAL SCENOGRAPHY – THE ALD’S FIRST FORUM

*On 31st August and Friday 1st September, the ALD held its first ever forum event on Digital Scenography in partnership with Rose Bruford College. The event aimed to explore the world of projected image and how this ever increasing field of technology is affecting today’s theatre practitioner. Will Evans explains...*

The two day forum comprised seminars and workshops held with Green Hippo, Catalyst and Pixlemad with a guest speaker each lunch time giving us an insight into working with digital imagery. Both days were well attended and all parties seemed to gain a lot out of the dialogue

between manufacturers, end users and lighting professionals.

Nigel Sadler from Green Hippo, brought two of his ‘Hippotizer’ media servers along and demonstrated their uses and gave a quick slide show (through the servers!) on projects they had been used on including the recent tour of Miss Saigon. I found this particularly useful as it is often hard to imagine how pieces of equipment being demonstrated in a small room can be used creatively. As well as this he showed a lot of the special effects that the servers can do.

Hugh Davies-Webb from Projected Image Digital

demonstrated Both the ‘Catalyst’ and ‘Pixelmad’ systems showing how the same servers can control two very different mediums – LEDs and image projectors. A Whole Hog 3 was hooked up to the Catalyst to demonstrate how Catalyst can be controlled by a lighting desk.

I found it very gratifying that both Nigel Sadler and Hugh Davies-Webb explained exactly how their systems worked to the complete novice such as myself. It was very easy to ask questions and to see the systems, although not at their ‘full capacity’, in a working environment where attendees could look, touch and explore this new technology.

The lunch time discussions focused more on the artistic side of digital media and its applications. David Ripley from RSAMD in Glasgow took the stand on the Thursday to lead the lunch time discussion exploring the whole area of digital Scenography, breaking it down into: Projected Scenery, Visualisation, Virtual Scenery, and Interactivity. From this he explored the different types of visual media from the latest media servers to the humble Carousel projector. With the help of a computer and a projector he showed us images from theatre



David Ripley in discussion. Photo: Paul Davies

to rock concerts and showed how the same systems can be used to produce very different styles of images. David also discussed the use of virtual scenery as used in productions such as Woman in White where the entire scenic elements were projected. The talk finished with an open discussion into whether digital scenography is a help or a hindrance to the lighting designer, does it provide creative freedom or restriction and also how audiences may come to expect it in lavish high budget production – or do they?

On Friday Finn Ross held the lunch time discussion and looked into the relationship between digital imagery and the production

team. Asking the question, ‘Whose responsibility is it to head the ‘Digital Scenography department’ in a production team?’ Artistically, it could be argued, it falls firmly with the set designer; practically many say it is within the lighting designer’s remit. However as Finn pointed out, more often than not in the budgets and fit up schedules, the mechanics and workings of projected imagery come under....the sound dept! It seems that as AV equipment usually ends up in the sound cupboard, so too should anything concerned with projected images. Finn explained that at many large rep houses this has caused much confusion to say the least. This



Nigel demonstrating the Hippotizer. Photo: Paul Davies



Discussion. Photo: Paul Davies

is where a company such as Mesmer can come in providing not only a design service of the actual images but they can fully specify a system to run the digital imagery for the show. Finn explained how he and his

co-workers have all come from a theatrical background and fully know the workings of a theatre and a production team. Mesmer have provided services from West End shows to fringe shows in tiny theatres seating

fewer than 100. Finn had many interesting images to show the attendees which demonstrated how lighting and projected imagery can complement each

other and work very well in harmony. The discussion quickly opened up to the floor where the attendees discussed the points raised by Finn.

All in all, the two days proved highly successful with many attendees learning a completely different approach to digital technology. The ALD plans to continue the forums and make them a regular occurrence looking in depth at issues and technology affecting lighting designers. If you have any suggestions for future forums, please get in touch. #

If you have suggestions for another ALD forum, please email: [meetings@ald.org.uk](mailto:meetings@ald.org.uk). (We also hope that the three companies

involved in this forum benefited from their access to the ALD membership and would consider becoming Corporate members to continue their association in future – Ed)

### **Will Evans**

*Still a young man, Will hangs on to his youth through a close affinity to children's theatre. He has lit many shows in a wide range of venues ranging from the Pauper's Pit Theatre in Buxton, to the Opera House in Buxton. Will is still trying to work out how you can actually live on an LD's wage while repaying student debt. In his spare time he sits on the ALD Exec and communicates without the support of a spilln checker. [www.willevans.co.uk](http://www.willevans.co.uk)*



Hugh puts Catalyst through its paces. Photo: Paul Davies



Nigel still demonstrating the Hippotizer. Photo: Paul Davies

# SO YOU THINK YOU'RE COVERED? – Mark Jonathan

*This year, as I find that I'm doing more travel than ever both in the UK and around the world, I began to wonder if we should have a "travel tips" page in Focus?*

## By Rail

Earlier in the year, I travelled down by train to Chichester with Neil Austin. Neil used his mobile phone to take advantage of the computerised "Train Tracker" service for fast train timetable info. While I'm on the subject of train travel I did two shows in Sheffield and found that I could

book a single first class for £10 (St Pancras to Sheffield). The regular 2nd class return was about £39. Of course, you have to book ahead and that means directors need to commit to run through times. It's well worth doing, it's cheaper and so much nicer to have the 'at seat service' of complimentary drinks and snacks along with a bigger seat and guaranteed table with power for the laptop. I like being able to book one way at a time as I don't always know when I will leave a production. I don't understand why first class advance is such

a good buy and 2nd class on the day isn't.

## By Air

I flew to Washington from Stansted with the new airline, MaxJet. This is the new generation of airlines that only offer business class but at a more affordable price. MaxJet has grand plans for expanding its routes but currently offers London to New York and London to Washington. I was scheduled to fly to Washington. At the last moment, the flight going to New York broke down so MaxJet commandeered our plane and announced it would now go to NYC. This meant that we had to scramble at JFK to catch the last flight to Washington. I wrote to the MD saying that this wasn't really good enough and he has offered me another return flight as compensation. Meanwhile, Jon Driscoll was waiting at JFK to fly home on my delayed flight having been there photographing for *Dirty Dancing*.

## By Amtrak

After lighting for Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center in Washington I decided I was tired of being barked at by airport security, who use the

need for heightened homeland security as a reason for being rude, so I took the Acela Express from Washington to New York. You can book the train journey with a nice computer called Doris or was it Betty? Anyway, the voice recognition system works well providing you use an American accent. So 'first class' is pronounced 'Furrst Class'! The train leaves from centre of Washington and arrives directly into Penn Station. So no need for expensive taxis to and from the airports or long security checks.

## By Foot

While I was in NYC for production meetings I caught up with Howard Harrison and Rob Halliday who were slaving away on *Mary Poppins*. I realised how nice it is when I'm not working in my home city to live just round the corner from the opera house where it's just a two minute walk home. I have been adventurous and I've found my way on the subway/metro in Washington and Munich and in both cases public transport was cheaper than London. In fact, being away from home I realise how expensive London has become.

## By Air

I'm now in Munich and I got here by the skin of my teeth and the generosity of an EasyJet pilot. I thought arriving

at Stansted nearly two hours before the scheduled departure would be long enough. Think again! The queue for security checks was longer than I have ever seen. We stood 'in-line' for nearly 2 hours. We felt abandoned. All the business people around me seemed resigned to missing their flights. I was due to fly at 18:25. I got through security at about 18:50 and then I knew why I go to the gym regularly. I ran, vaulting travellers still putting their shoes back on; took the escalator two steps at a time, jumped aboard the monorail, ran again, got to the gate but the sign said "flight closed". The helpful ground staff said they would ask the captain. He re-opened the flight for six of us. "You'll have to run," said the member of ground staff. I gather other passengers were not so lucky, particularly those flying with Ryan Air. So if you are flying, allow plenty of time. It seems that BAA airports are unable to cope with the heightened security. I emailed BAA customer relations



Salome dress rehearsal

to say it wasn't good enough. BAA responded that they were employing another 160 security staff for Stansted alone but it will be some months before the improvements are effective.

### By Washing Cycle

I have to take twelve flights in the next few weeks as I commute between opera in Munich and ballet at the ROH followed swiftly by more opera in LA. So my heart sank when the airports had to increase their security checks. Needless to say, I had my bottle of water confiscated by security at JFK. I expect you all know that the current regulations prohibit any fluids, gels, perfumes or toothpaste and you are only permitted one piece of hand baggage. Laptops have to be taken out of your bag for the security check. By the time I got to the business lounge I was pretty fractious. Not as fractious as I

machine. The British Passport agency is really helpful even at midnight on a Saturday night. However, they said "No way can you travel with a water damaged passport". British Airways who were fairly unhelpful said that I could have changed my flight but only up to 24 hours before departure and that my failure to use the outbound flight would automatically cancel the inbound flight.

### By American Embassy Line

The reason I have two passports is so that I can travel on one passport while the other is at the US embassy getting work visas. Even though LDs qualify for '01 Visas', which are for 'Aliens of exceptional ability', we may have our passports withheld at the London US embassy for five working days. That's too long for me to be without a passport. I find the whole process of getting

Visa. What a rip-off! I always enjoy queuing up at the US Embassy at 7.30 in the morning for the 8am VIP appointment accorded to 'aliens of exceptional ability'. We, bleary-eyed aliens stand in-line outside the barricades usually to be sent away because one or other of our forms is not correct or our passport photo is not the regulation US size. The US Embassy sends us to Snappy Snaps who shaft us for over-priced pictures at £19. There is a perfectly good machine inside the embassy, but this is often out of order.

I always meet a few celebrities and fellow theatre workers in the queue. Peter Mumford arrived to get his Visa for *Madama Butterfly* at the Met and the next time I went right behind me was the talented composer Adam Cork. He was about to go out for the RSC. Anyway, having laundered my passports and my latest US visa I had to delay my arrival in Munich and rush about getting new passports and a new Visa.

### By Insurance Policy

Given the amount of travel I do I have an all year round 'Gold' travel insurance. It also includes cover for my passion – extreme off-piste skiing activities. It will cover helicopter rescue from an avalanche but as I have now

discovered to my cost while it covers loss or theft of my passport it doesn't cover damage to my passport. The very unhelpful travel insurance brokers said, "Well sir, of course, putting your passports in a washing machine isn't covered. No one would be so stupid, would they?" I checked my household policy for accidental damage. "Yes you are covered," said the helpful claims department, "but there is an excess of £200". The replacement passports cost £195 but the 'consequential loss' was more like a £1,000 in replacement flights, late arrival in Munich, new US visa, etcetera. Guess what? Consequential loss isn't covered in my household policy.

It seems to me that it's quite hard to predict the unpredictable but you hope your policy has covered all those unknown disasters that could befall you. Well I know we are all far too busy to go through our insurance policies carefully, but don't assume anything.

### By Production Desk

I'm now writing this from the production desk of the Bayerische Staatsoper. I'm rather surprised that given the German reputation for making cars (and washing machines) that they are not so good at keeping to their schedule.

The Germans' inability to keep to the schedule combined with the demands of a famous Hollywood film director, who now also directs opera, has worn me down. Let's hope I can get through next week without a technical hitch at the airport as I alternate between the Staatsoper in Munich and the Royal Opera House. Being away has also reminded how lucky we are to have such skilled, patient and dedicated colleagues at the ROH. I'm on the flight back now and can't wait to settle at the calm that surrounds the ROH production desk.

### By Air

The seat belt sign has gone on for landing so I'll sign off. My travel tip for the month is get a protective cover for your passport, double check your pockets before you start the wash cycle and don't ever think that you're insured. #

Mark Jonathan  
[www.markjonathan.com](http://www.markjonathan.com)



Staatsoper, Munich

"Well sir, of course, putting your passports in a washing machine isn't covered. No one would be so stupid, would they?"

was a couple of weeks ago just a few hours before my scheduled departure from London to Munich when I discovered that I had put both my passports into my highly efficient German, Miele washing

a US visa horrendous. The US Embassy is extremely unhelpful and charges callers £1.60 per minute to answer your questions, or book your visa appointment, as well as charging 100 US\$ for the

# DAVID TAYLOR'S NEW CHALLENGE

***You've read the press release, you've seen the photo. We asked ALD Fellow and well-known exile David Taylor to update us on his new role with Arups...***

Engineers are funny folk. Not so much in the laugh-out-loud, humorous sort of way, but rather in the peculiar, solution-you-hadn't-thought-of way. Where theatre consulting practices – particularly the one in which I had been a partner and owner over the last twenty one years – have, ideally, a singularity of vision, engineers bring formulae of vision, built from multiple, proved, singular visions. It's a great premise for helping people build performing arts buildings, which, as we all know, are as complicated as hospitals, but with staff who better know what they want!

When Arup, the world's leading design engineers, approached me to join them in the late spring of 2006 I had already had nearly twenty years of experience alongside them on arts projects where they had been providing conventional consulting engineering, such as electrical, mechanical or structural engineering, or more specialist services such as acoustics or lighting design. That "funny-

peculiar" personality had been my experience so far – despite providing design engineering consulting for more performing arts buildings than any other practice, few arts clients knew much about the practice other than that they had had excellent complementary engineering services for their project through the architectural team. What Arup wanted was "a theatre guy".

"The Tricycle Theatre is my favourite theatre in the world and I have enjoyed working as a lighting designer there.... Remaining in touch with how theatre is actually created in the real world is a crucial part of being a responsive, living and useful theatre consultant."

Most of my work over the years at Theatre Projects has been about talking. People who know me know I like to talk, and the skill I brought to designing theatre facilities was a comfort with talking with owners, clients, artistic leadership teams, technicians, designers and managements. Lighting designers, in my (and Richard Pilbrow's) view, make some of the best theatre consultants. Theatre consulting is a complicated and important part of the development of a new or refurbished arts project, and yet it requires tact, vision (to understand what will be, but

isn't yet), coordination with other, often highly-strung, creative team members, and the ability to vocalize those yet-to-be tangible concepts in a way that gives comfort and gets buy in. That sounds like a lighting designer to me.

The theatre consultant is the advocate for the arts conscience of a performance building. My particular job at Theatre Projects was leading the programming,

planning and project management of theatre buildings, some big, some small. The core of this job was listening to users – obviously at the beginning of the project where we try to understand what THEIR building needs to be, but also through to the end of design, through construction and after the opening, when the building design becomes a real building that has to live and breathe into the future – successfully!

Listening, and speaking a vocabulary which is based in theatre or music, but which translates to the dialects of

architecture and construction, are the core jobs of the qualified theatre consultant. It's the user's building, and we are merely the advocates for that vision. Very few theatre practitioners build more than one theatre (those that do are like gold dust). It is a privilege to be part of that special process and to add value from experience and wider research.

So, this relationship between the consulting company and the practitioners is key to the success of a theatre building project. I had been lucky to have had the opportunity to lead some of the most interesting theatre projects in the world, including the new homes for the Seattle and Philadelphia orchestras (a lot of sitting with the musicians and technicians on those ones) and the acclaimed new venue for the unique Oscars telecast, the Kodak Theatre. These were huge buildings, costing hundreds of millions of dollars and involving thousands of designers, builders and often clients. As rewarding were the projects on a smaller scale, such as the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (dubbed by Sir Peter Hall as one of the best Elizabethan-style theatres in the world), the Goodman Theatres and the Orange Tree and Tricycle Theatres. The Tricycle Theatre is my favourite theatre in the world and I have enjoyed working as

a lighting designer there, and in other venues I have helped create around the world. Remaining in touch with how theatre is actually created in the real world is a crucial part of being a responsive, living and useful theatre consultant. Shaz McGee and the gang at the Tricycle are never squeamish at criticizing their theatre to me when I am sitting at the production desk!

Arup has unrivalled design engineering skills in an incredibly diverse range of fields. My job with the team, leading the performing arts sector for the Americas, is to bring a theatre face to the relationship the company has with clients – to add a theatre vocabulary to the eloquent and intelligent language Arup has within its current practice. I have also grown up in a theatre consulting environment that sees acousticians as combatants, rather than collaborating friends. Being within a practice that has genius acoustical consultants, lighting designers, sound and audio visual consultants, architects, planners, three-dimensional rendering and animation specialists, as well as theatre engineering designers is an eye-opening and enabling experience. It is an environment of collaboration. #



# ALD GOES BACKSTAGE

It's good to see the ALD receiving publicity in *The Stage*, which, in its new incarnation, is giving more editorial space to non-actors. On September the 28th the annual Michael Northen Bursary awards were celebrated in a two-page spread which also introduced our new administrator, Ian Saunders, to a new public. Ian took the opportunity to explain the workings of the ALD and what it means to the lighting profession. So

congratulations to Chloe Kenward and the other winners of the Bursary at the start of their careers under the wing of the resurgent ALD.

On October the 26th, again in *The Stage*, James Laws was asked to reprise and update his Focus piece on Strand Lighting UK, to put Strand's past impact into perspective and to fly a kite or two about its future

as a non-autonomous company. Will we ever see the 300 watt SL? Don't hold your breath!

The latest issue of the ABTT's *Sightline* journal summarises the session chaired by Rick Fisher during this year's Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference, held in London in June. The session was entitled 'The Proscenium Zone' and Rick led discussions about the critical nature of space around the proscenium arch.

Rick has been busy! Here he is again, with an interview and photo, in November 9th's *The Stage* reminding readers that following his letter to every producing venue in the UK and their managements about the fee structure for LD's, only a handful of responses have been received.

Please let us know if you have an article or book published. It's all good PR for the ALD! #



## Fellows of the ALD unite!

Our most recent Fellow of the Association, Maurice Marshall, joins a small but perfectly-formed celebrated group consisting of Richard Pilbrow, Francis Reid, John Wyckham, David Hersey, Robert Bryan, Jerry Godden, James Laws, David Taylor, Robert Ornbo, John Watt, Mick Hughes, John Read and Ken Miller. If you are reading this as a Fellow, and covet Maurice's magnificent trophy, then please don't despair! We will be presenting all Fellows with a similar plaque as fast as our master carpenter can carve them!

Fellowships of the ALD are awarded by the Executive, from time to time. Fellows are usually chosen from the ranks of Professional members of the ALD but there have been exceptions. The criteria for election are surprisingly wide, ranging from an acknowledgement of great services rendered to the Association to a celebration of an eminent career in stage lighting. Occasionally the recipient has come to notice via a paper at Showlight, revealing a fresh approach to our art. However they were chosen, all Fellows of the ALD are certain to be united by a fierce pride in the honour bestowed on them.



*Maurice is at bottom right, with Hugh Vanstone at bottom left. Behind, left to right, are Maurice's current trainee at the Northcott Theatre Exeter, Scott Maxwell, then Deputy Electrician James Hewlett and Assistant Electrician Dominic Jeffery, both former trainees under Maurice.*

# THE ROSCO COLOUR WALLET

**The news is out – ‘Roscolux’ hits Europe. We asked Margie Heymann to give us the designer’s perspective on ‘why three ranges?’**

Lighting designers often have different approaches to choosing colour. Some prefer the traditional colours which have around in one form or another since 1950. They select on the basis of their visual memory and experience, knowing which colours work well together. They may prefer the E-Colour+ range which contains these classics plus 24 newer colours designed to keep range fresh. Other designers look at all the available colours when designing a new show. They will be intrigued by the Supergel/Roscolux ranges which contain many colours created for specific productions and others “signed” by

professional designers – Musser, Skelton, Tipton and Billington to name a few. Designers will find a particularly generous selection of tints in the Roscolux range.

The introduction of the Roscolux range in Europe means that many of the colours formerly available only in the United States will be in stock in Europe and the U.K. in rolls 1.22m long. Designers who cross the Atlantic will always find the colours that they have specified.

Supergel and Roscolux are extremely heat resistant filters. The first is a body coloured, extruded film and the second a deep-dyed polyester filter in which the dye is “trapped” under the surface of the film. Both are indicated for long running productions, high-heat fixtures and



situations in which the filters will not be changed frequently.

The new Rosco colour wallet is meant to give lighting designers the greatest possible choice and the widest range of solutions for specific production situations. Ask for one\*. #

## **Margie Heymann**

*The date on which Margie Heymann received an MFA in Theatre Lighting from Indiana University is*

*shrouded in the mists of time but it is documented that she gave up a promising lighting design/systems design career for a job in a Florence coffee bar. Once again in America she was hired by Rosco and subsequently let loose on the New York lighting designer community. Having almost exhausted Rosco's new colour budget she established Rosco Italia in Florence and is presently Sales manager for South East Europe and the Baltics.*

\*Roscolab Ltd has generously offered ALD members, through Focus, an exclusive Rosco wallet containing one of each swatch book of colours – Roscolux, Supergel and E-colour+. To sign up for this offer, and to join the Rosco mailing list, simply send your name, postal address, ALD membership number by email or post to ALD Wallet Offer, Roscolab Ltd, Blanchard Works, Kangley Bridge Road, Sydenham, London SE26 5AQ or email the details to sales@roscos-europe.com

## **Light Relief, the registered charity for people in the lighting industry who have fallen on hard times, received some large contributions at this year's PLASA as Rick Fisher explains**

The first donation was from ROSCO who contributed the profits from the sale of R313 Light Relief Yellow. This produced over 3,000 US Dollars and will continue to provide an income stream over the years for the charity. ROSCO have also now produced a second colour linked to a good cause – R361 Helmsley Blue – which assists a scholarship programme in the US to train lighting designers in memory of Gil Helmsley, an inspirational teacher. Thanks to ROSCO for their innovative support for these good causes, please use both colours generously!

The second contribution to Light Relief funds was from the ALD itself, which has pledged to contribute subscriptions from members who have lapsed due to falling into large arrears by not updating their standing orders (as much as we like the contribution to Light Relief please make sure you are paying the correct sub!).

The final cheque came from the organisers of the PLASA new technology awards. Companies pay a small amount to enter their new products for these prestigious awards, which goes to a group of charities.

Light Relief has often benefited from this fund, and it is most fitting as Tony Gottelier who founded Light Relief, was often a judge on these awards. I am delighted to report that PLASA will be initiating a new award in memory of Tony for the people who are innovators in our industry at PLASA 2007.

We are always looking at new ways to raise funds for Light Relief so if ALD members have some ideas of how we can add to the funds available to help those in need, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Light Relief has made a number of grants in the past year. We rely on you to bring to Light Relief's attention people in the lighting world who could benefit from grants for practical assistance due to unforeseen circumstances.

*Rick Fisher, trustee Light Relief*



# HITTING THE BIG TIME!

## A GUIDE TO THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATE LIGHTING DESIGNER IN THE UK

*The ALD receives regular enquiries either about becoming an associate lighting designer, or how to find associates. So we asked John Leventhall to talk to some lighting designers and their associates about the role of associate LD and how to become one.*

### Why Do LDs And Productions Need Associates?

The ever increasing size of productions and the inevitable upscaling of lighting has expanded the role of the lighting designer. No longer do large productions require an individual design contribution, provided over a scale of a few weeks. Today, large productions call for an LD to manage technically advanced and logistically complex projects over months, or even years, to provide the essential contribution of lighting. This drives the need for Assistants.

LDs nowadays are usually engaged in several projects at once. Experienced designers are sought for their style and track record but the relatively modest fees associated with even the premium work in the UK mean that for LDs, multi-tasking is

essential. The Associate LD is needed to expand the capability of the LD in providing lighting designs and service.

### What is an Associate Lighting Designer?

To summarise, Associates provide specific segments of the design commission, prepare CAD drawings, arrange hiring of gear, offer design ideas and solutions. They liaise with other areas of the production, often deputising for the LD during rehearsals and production period, manage the LX team – follow spot operators etc – and provide backup services such as documentation and maintenance inspections. If the show is successful, the Associate may be responsible for touring re-lights and transfers of venue, or for adapting the lighting design for long runs. Our sample of LDs and Associates all identified the vital role of the Associate as a colleague. Associate LDs are equal partners with the LD in many respects.

The Associate and LD are a working team based on mutual expertise and common understanding about the design. Above all, the Associate must

be trustworthy and be able to deliver the requirements of large productions. Associate LDs are therefore almost always experienced LDs in their own right.

### How Do LDs And Associates Work Together?

Ideally, Associates are commissioned by the production and LD at its outset (although Associates may be commissioned for only a part of the process). They work together with the LD on designing and planning the lighting at all stages. The LD will rely on their Associate for productive liaison with the production team. Usually, the LD will negotiate provision of an Associate with the production management. The LD will then select their Associate, usually someone they know and has worked for them before (possibly in some other capacity e.g. programmer). Occasionally, a producer will ask the LD to work with a particular Associate.

Sometimes, in a large venue such as the National Theatre, a member of the Lighting Department is 'allocated' to the LD. This person is more of an assistant, liaising with people and

facilities in the venue or perhaps just a specialist 'runner'. In a regional Rep, Associate LDs are rarely needed or affordable and the Chief Electrician fulfils this role. Being an 'allocated' assistant is a good way for potential Associates to meet LDs.

Managements and producers increasingly accept that top flight LDs usually have several projects running and recognise that they will not always have the LD's exclusive attention. Therefore managements are coming to recognise the benefits of Associate LDs.

During the early stages the Associate and LD discuss the design and may attend production meetings and rehearsals with the director, set designer and production manager to discuss ideas, costs and problems. Whilst the Associate and LD may discuss ideas freely between themselves, the LD carries the creative responsibility.

It is the LD who has been commissioned for their design style and proven quality of delivery so the Associate takes the secondary role.

Associate LDs provide essential 'backroom' functions such as preparing CAD drawings,

### John Leventhall

*When Patt 23's were grey and halogen lamps were novelties, John was in and around theatres as LD and electrician from Small-scale to Opera House. These days, though, he is a Marketing Executive and Consultant. Along the way he has been on the executive of New Perspectives Theatre Company and Derby Dance Centre and does a smattering of Arts Consultancy. After 10 years ALD membership he joined the Exec earlier this year to assist with the association's development.*



production paperwork, liaising with production electrician, programmer(s) and effects specialists, creating the hire/sale schedules and colour calls. Associates may be the prime mover in creating the rig from the LDs concept of the look of the show. Being an Associate LD will develop your ability to handle large productions. When the production hits a venue, the Associate LD delivers their most valuable contribution during rigging, lighting rehearsals, technical run-throughs and general mayhem of getting the event running. While the LD is developing the design with the director, usually under creative

pressure against the clock, the Associate will be the LD's eyes, ears and voice backstage. In large scale events the Associate may be working some distance from the LD and have to take decisions themselves to deliver creative design or manage the team, all as the LD would wish.

"...LDs and Associates all identified the vital role of the Associate as a colleague. Associate LDs are equal partners with the LD in many respects"

Tour reights and re-production in other parts of the world are often solely done by the Associate LD. By virtue of their initial involvement with the design, the Associate may require little extra from the LD to re-create the show. One reason that managements budget for an Associate LD for the original production is that they can reproduce the design faithfully and efficiently in other venues without compromising quality. An Associate LD who is fully familiar with the design from the start can control costs and reduce delays by effective, fast decisions.

Associate LDs often provide the 'quality control' maintenance on a long run. These include

inspecting the rig and show operation at intervals, training new operators and relighting changes to scenes consistent with the LD's style and wishes.

### **What Qualities Make A Good Associate LD?**

There is no hard and fast rule because so much is dependent on the personal relationship with the LD. A good Associate is an effective networker, known to LDs both professionally and personally. Being in the right place at the right time with the right people will get you known (happily, this process often involves pleasant alcoholic accompaniments!). The effectiveness of networking can't be over emphasised. It is the way our industry 'ticks'. If you don't maintain and develop contacts through networking you won't become an Associate!

You need to be a capable manager, cool headed, sensitive and diplomatic in tricky situations, with personal and design skills to deputise for the LD. You must be able to communicate successfully with colleagues and manage teams, be sociable and have a good sense of humour!

You must be able to demonstrate your past work (CV, reviews, bill material and production photos), with good references. You can be sure an LD will ask around if they're thinking of working with you. Experience and enthusiasm are vital – don't expect to get an

Associate role fresh out of college or with just six months as a follow spot operator. To be an Associate you need to demonstrate that you are really 'fired up' by the role and being involved in the production process. You will be a supportive colleague for the LD. It was evident from the group of respondents that the Associate/LD relationship is one where you have to understand each other and get on well, on both personal and creative levels.

### **How Do I Become An Associate LD?**

Like so much in the lighting design world there's no established career path and no magic formula. You have to have sufficient skill and experience in lighting design or a related area. Associate LDs arrive from many paths. Lighting designers' Assistants, observers and suppliers are all routes to network and get 'road tested' by LDs as prospective Associates.

Think about getting your name known as a freelance LD for smaller scale and regional venues, or provide related services (programming, projection, effects, production electrician, board operating etc.). Work in a company providing equipment or services to the entertainment industry (e.g. hire, rigging, theatre consultants, moving lights, training technicians) which can bring you into contact with large productions, or in some other

capacity on medium or large scale shows, and above all, demonstrate your passion for lighting and your desire to learn more.

are commissioned by larger producing companies, fees are offered which represent a 'going rate' which Associates recognise as standard. However, don't let

"The effectiveness of networking can't be over emphasised.... If you don't maintain and develop contacts through networking you won't become an Associate!"

### **How Do Associate LDs Get Paid?**

Either by the Production Company, or occasionally directly by the LD. Associate LDs are mostly included in the show budget. Often the LD and Associate negotiate completely separately with the production company. None of the LDs in the survey had negotiated on behalf of the Associate LD – so be prepared to trade! Your LD is often able to advise the fees that will be offered - so keep in touch!

Associates are much less often paid directly by the LD. However, sometimes the LD may need an extra pair of hands and is willing to pay for cover for an availability problem or a service such as CAD drawings, blind programming, documentation or hire schedule, for example.

### **What Do Associate LDs Get Paid?**

As ever, fees and expenses vary enormously. Because Associates

that stop you negotiating or asking around!

For an Associate LD, rates are often pegged to the LX crew or programmers rates or slightly below. At the moment, expect to earn something in the order of £150- £250 per working day.

The Cardinal Rules of fee negotiation are: make sure there is a clear, written, signed contract; clarify your role on the production and expected duties; agree approximate days required pre-production and in-production; ever assume things are clear unless explicitly discussed and in writing.

Different fee Structures exist. For example, there is the daily rate or 'per diem', which is open-ended. This could mean you are laid off some days if the production schedules change. Check the schedule so you know when to line up the next job! The open-ended weekly rate is similar. A one-off fee is common, but usually it means you have to

give whatever time is necessary to get the show on. Check what is expected or state clearly what you expect to provide (e.g. days only, nights extra). A fee for a fixed number of days has the advantage over the one-off fee of offering renegotiation for additional days if the production over-runs or extra days are required. Agree in advance days needed or expected.

Another option, but less common, is the retainer – a weekly rate or ‘buyout’ fee which ensures Associate LD availability when

aspects of a running show require attention e.g. for maintenance, a periodic ‘health check’ or relight at short notice.

“...fees are offered which represent a ‘going rate’ which Associates recognise as standard. However, don’t let that stop you negotiating or asking around!”

There is also an unpaid retainer. This is essentially a promise by the production company to use you for future tours etc. It means

that you might have to jump on a plane at short notice! This is rare for Associates but LDs would usually seek to have contractual

call on future revivals and tours.

Expenses offer an even greater variety of options. For tours, expect either a consideration in

the fee or a separate daily rate for meals, accommodation and travel (MAT). If you have to work in a single, fixed venue then separate MAT is rarely offered. If a UK production goes abroad, then expect MAT expenses.

MAT rates vary hugely. Actual examples are Equity guidance rate of £120 per week; £18 per day meals plus accommodation cost; £40-50 per day MAT total; £350 per week MAT; accommodation provided (some regional companies do this, as do Glyndebournne). Most regional theatres have lists of ‘digs’.

#### **What is the Difference between an Associate LD and an LD’s Assistant and Are There Associate LDs Abroad?**

We shall cover these matters in the next Focus edition.

#### **What’s the Future for Associate LDs?**

Being an Associate LD is a great way to move up the ladder of the scale of production and develop your career as an LD. LDs who use Associates find that some Associates eventually become unavailable as they have too much LD work in their own right!

The number of productions around the world lit by UK-based LDs is huge and there are increasing opportunities for those who can provide the skills and personal qualities needed.

Managements are increasingly recognising the Associate LD role as an integral, essential part of large productions. Indeed, there is every sign that the ‘career’ Associate LD may soon emerge as a regular role in the UK.

#### **Where Can I Get Advice?**

One of the ALD’s main functions is to share experiences to help members with developing better careers, contacts and contracts. The useful ALD contract rider is available on the ALD website. The ALD would like to hear from LDs seeking Associates and from Associates (and would-be Associates) seeking LDs. We can now provide a confidential networking and general advice service for individual enquiries. E-mail to AssociateLD@ald.org.uk

We would like to thank warmly the group of ‘top drawer’ LDs and Associates who agreed to be interviewed and generously gave their time to the research. #



Paul Pyant and David Howe at work on ‘Lord of the Rings’ at the production desk, with Assistant LD, Heidi Macdonald, in the distance. Paul won the Dora Mavor Moore Award in Toronto for his lighting on this show.

# OFF WITH HIS HEAD! - ROGER FRITH IS SUMMONED TO THE TOWER OF LONDON

*Lighting Designer Roger Frith in conversation with Mike Robertson about lighting the first Festival Of Music at The Tower of London last year.*

Central to the Festival of Music was the opera Anna Bolena by Donizetti performed on a huge temporary structure in the moat at the Tower of London which would also play host to a range of Jazz performers including Amy Winehouse, Katie Melua, Alison Moyet and Lisa Stansfield. No stranger to large scale outdoor productions, Roger picks up the story.

"Having lit many Open and Semi-Open Air Productions over more than twenty years from Amphitheatres such as Athens Herod Atticus (eight times!) to Cyprus and Spain, Jerash in Jordan, and a floating stage in Malta, not to mention Holland Park, a dozen times, I still had



no idea what a big event this one would turn out to be.

"After I was approached by the production company to light the opera, the first meeting was within the Tower and was very impressive as we struggled through the tourists and Tower Wardens (not Beefeaters – it's 'non-U' I was told!). It was then that I discovered that the same lighting rig, in repertoire with the Opera, would also encompass the 'Jazz at the Tower' concerts with little or no refocusing time."

"It worries me that one day the lighting designer will become obsolete and that the director or even the bank manager with a swatch book of assorted colours and a programmer can light a show... I'm not sure what can be done about this apart from shouting, a lot."

## The process

Sponsored by The Evening Standard and Classic FM, the production logistics were coordinated by Harry Young of Planit Events who brought in a Star Orbit stage with a footprint of around 420m<sup>2</sup> which would house both aspects of the event. I asked Roger about his first reactions.

"I didn't want it to look like a rock concert, moreover with Peter

Rice's revolving set I wanted to make the rig look as theatrical as possible. So I designed it with five 15 metre trusses running up and down stage connected with pipes across stage that were angled to follow the profile of the domed roof. This made it more theatre-like. Interestingly enough, Charles Bristow designed the lighting for the first production in the moat at The Tower in the early Sixties which was also designed by Peter Rice!

"We used a range of Macs

for the movers so that we could plot them in over the evening rehearsal."

*Was it very different from doing an opera in the theatre?*

"Not really. I have worked with the director Tom Hawks very well for many years and he knows what he wants and is realistic about what is possible.

"There were no borders to mask the lamps but there were legs to mask the sidelight (up and down bars with conventional units just above head height) and also to help with the sightlines for exits and entrances. After all, the cast was vast.

"Every piece of equipment had

to be craned in as there is a forty foot drop into the moat so it took a week before the electrics department could even start their 4-day fit up. Like in the theatre, everyone worked in piecemeal time around each other.

"We lit it over two nights and on the first night had to stop because of complaints from the residents of the tower. Not that we were making any noise! So we carried on the next night in the pouring rain but



I was lucky to be given my own gazebo. We'd go on until about 2am and then do modifications in daylight the following afternoon over orchestral rehearsals."

*Focusing-wise was it a different challenge?*

"We had about fifteen electrics crew, some were theatre bods, others from rock and roll and using by both a cherry picker and truss monkeys we quickly got through the focus.

"We couldn't have any distant FOH as it would have been from too far away, so we had to rely on the advance truss of the structure to get faces. This was fine for the opera and there were Pani followspots at the rear of the site, but the throw was 300 feet plus. The opera played further upstage than the jazz because of the size of the orchestra pit but then the followspots could cover this."

## Lighting

"Due to the daylight start we would go brighter for the first few scenes but the tent - being dense - meant that the stage was always darker than the audience. The same principles apply that the brightest thing would be the person singing. In addition to that, when daylight is winning you pick out scenic elements that will give a structure to what you are looking at. There were some

very nice scene changes with the revolve and so we wanted to see those too. Given that it was a 1600-seater it was comparable to a middle-sized opera house but of course the audience go back much further because there is no circle.

"In terms of effects the only real challenge was to create the idea of falling blood on the cyc upstage for which we used the MAC 2000s to great effect. We also managed to get period windows into the scenes but this tracked through from my first drawing where I had not known the stage would be so high, or for that matter the audience so low. So the effect of this was rather redundant! Mind you it looked jolly good if you happened to be up a cherry picker at the time.

"Programmer Chris Wells looked after most of the jazz concerts and some of the artists like Lisa Stansfield brought her own LD. Mainly they used the movers and little of the conventional rig."

## Roger's background

Time for a bit of the back catalogue. Roger joined Sadlers Wells Opera in 1959 and toured with them until 1968 when the company took up residence at The Coliseum until 1985 when he became freelance. Over the past twenty years he has designed major outdoor festivals,



plays, pantomimes and operas all over the world including New York, Granada, Athens, Versailles, Monte Carlo and Malta.

Last year was busy for Roger as he also lit the Magic Circle's 100th anniversary gala, a week long event of international magicians,

together with numerous plays, musicals and other operas.

## Afterthoughts

"If we did it again I would like to get some towers nearer the front of the stage for more FOH lighting. I'd argue for these as they were omitted on aesthetic grounds.

"The lighting for the opera had to be subtle and well timed unlike the concert stuff which could be busked. The light has to follow the principals around. When you have a chorus of sixty in full costume you have to remember them when you are lighting an empty stage and a lot of fresh air at 2 in the morning. The next day with the company you want to balance it and sometimes you want to say 'STOP' so that you can, but in my long life I have only ever done that once or twice. We learned to do it by simply catching up and allowing the action to continue."

*Look to the future... Keep an eye on the past: Starting in the fifties as you did, what do you think of the equipment now?*

"I think it has improved enormously, the tools of the trade are so much better. Also I think a lot of the technicians are better, the training is of a higher standard. We went through a grey period of equipment design but you know a lantern is a lantern. You'll find a Patt.743 in every theatre and



arts centre in the country. I think moving lights help the process nowadays but I don't want people to rely on them totally. They are very good tools for certain jobs and their light output is brilliant."

*And as to the standard of lighting design?*

"I think sometimes there is a danger of forgetting the basics and that a younger lighting person might struggle with just a handful of assorted lamps with no technology to fall back on. Just remember what lighting is for and that it is only good when it moves the story along and becomes as much a part of the narrative as the words.

"You can make or break a moment, and I go back to opera for this, if a blackout doesn't happen at the exact right point of the gasp then you have ruined the opera."

*Timing is one of your great skills, do you think that is innate or where does it come from?*

"I think for me it comes from working the CD board at the Wells, doing Madame Butterfly's humming chorus which relied entirely on the lighting timing. We were close to the singers on the perch so we could feel the whole thing. It leaves you with a legacy though; I can never again hear that music without hearing the motor stop in my head!

"It worries me that one day the lighting designer will become obsolete and that the director or even the bank manager with a swatch book of assorted colours and a programmer can light a show. And that I find rather dangerous. I'm not sure what can be done about this apart from shouting, a lot!" #

### **Mike Robertson**

*Before taking the long walk from the East Coast of Scotland, with his knapsack and faithful pussycat, to study in London where the streets were paved with gold and later turned out to be made of MDF, Spraymount and Glitter, Mike once was on work experience at The Royal Lyceum in Edinburgh. Fourteen years later he still lives in London whilst the cat is now looked after at LD retirement home, Duplottin. Mike has recently co-designed the hit musical Sunday In The Park With George in London and The Fireworkmaker's Daughter at Det Norske Teatret in Oslo. After Aladdin in Cambridge he is lighting the national tour of Hot Flush and in London Sit and Shiver directed by Steven Berkoff.*



### **The Tower of London - Historical Setting**

Just before the show started one of the wardens came on and told the audience about the last few hours of Anne Boleyn's life and the startling fact that she was beheaded two walls beyond where we were performing. Of course the other interesting factor about being there was that everything has to stop for the Ceremony of the Keys, every night at 9.53pm. So this was planned to fall in the interval and we witnessed this colourful ceremony which ends with the Last Post being sounded, as it has been done for the past 700 years.

## **GARDENING CORNER**

**Using a common or garden Parcan to grow carrots has a number of advantages. Multiple prize-winning Peter Higon offers some advice to hungry, resting lighting designers who need to see well in the dark.**

A Parcan (Parcannicus Versatilitus) offers a container of modest size into which general compost can be placed, mixed with a small amount of sand for best results. With the cans being black and standing clear of the ground (the H&SE has advised that a safety bond is not required for this application providing a risk assessment has been carried out and no ladders were used during rigging), the compost within heats up more quickly in the spring than the surrounding soil thereby promoting early germination. One should note that Parcans which have not oxidised as much as the one pictured are obviously preferred, and although the Art Deco-inspired Strand Parblazer can add style to your garden, ornament is not necessary.

Once the carrots have germinated, care should be taken to not allow them to get too dry until they have put down a strong root. Throughout the summer, watering (and feeding) at the base of the can will promote strong, long and straight carrot growth. Harvesting is easy: kick over the can and hose out the carrots.

A major pest of the carrot is the carrot root fly larvae. Interestingly however, the carrot fly remains very close to the ground in flight; mostly below about a foot. Thus, when on the wing in search of a place in which to lay their eggs the root fly merely passes between the cans and moves on to search elsewhere. Short-nosed Parcans (Parcannicus Floristandum) should therefore be avoided.

This column was not sponsored by James Thomas Engineering, although we wish it had been.

ALD warning: Avoid standing six or more long-nose Parcans in a row as they could easily be mistaken by Google Earth for a partially concealed weapons delivery system.

Next issue: Ten suggestions for converting your unwanted TV spigot for use as a dibber in the garden or production meeting.

### **Peter Higon**

*Member 326, Peter won 1st prize for carrots in the Shrewton and Till Valley Horticultural Society show, 2005 and 2006. He is now 'resting' by teaching at Central St. Martin's School of Art and Design during the week and tending his Parcans in Wiltshire at weekends.*



# PLASA GETS THE TREATMENT

**Every year, towards the end of August, lighting designer Guy Kornetzki suffers from a strange anxiety syndrome. In a few short days it has gone. What can it be? Winter malady? The 'flu? No, it's the PLASA show. Here he explains this year's symptoms to his virtual psychiatrist...**

*"Take a deep breath, relax, and tell me a few associations that pop into mind when you think of PLASA"*

It's really large, nearly 42,000sqm. of Earl's Court space filled with 354 stands and more than 12,000 visitors. I see jaded executives, eager-eyed students, creative 'wackos', calculating accountants. There are many flashy things, moving things, bright things, loud things and smoky things. Technical things.

*"So what draws you back every year?"*

I don't know. I'd read on their website that as an exhibitor one could benefit from many sales, marketing and networking opportunities. However, the "Visitors' Information" is not as enthusiastic. I suppose, as a lighting designer, I come to find

technical solutions, compare products, review manufacturers' technical updates, or because I'm invited by companies from which I've sourced technical equipment. Maybe I'll meet colleagues, or go just because I enjoy visiting London.

*"Interesting. You repeated the word 'technical'. Did I sense some disdain?"*

It's fairly obvious that PLASA is about the technical. I admit I'm suspicious of the avalanche of products on offer and less excited by faster and brighter, so I guess it's no wonder I get bored quickly every year. I end up drifting around in circles, through endless aisles, hallucinating, "Didn't I see this moving light a minute ago somewhere else?"

*"Tell me how you felt walking around PLASA this time"*

To my surprise, this year felt different. Instead of focusing on what was going on inside the exhibition, I found myself looking at it. And since I can't escape being an LD, my feelings were partly personal and partly professional, partly instinctive and partly analytical.

For instance, looking from

the second floor down, the main floor looked daunting. I specifically wanted to see only a few companies and a handful of products, which meant I could either leave early or spend the extra time looking around. For me, like many who don't live in London, the former would be a waste of a journey, but the latter could end up heightening my PLASA angst; but I'm resilient and I was determined not to get lost.

It could have been reassuring to be in the presence of all the usual suspects, High End, Robe Lighting, PRG Europe, Martin Professional, Pulsar, Clay Paky and Avolites to name but a few, as well as realise that the main attention-grabbers were still the 'bad boys' of the touring industry. In that respect Robe Lighting's stand stood out as a real visual extravaganza. It was big, bright and aggressive; a fair reflection of their growing popularity over the last few years. Although as an LD I didn't need to be force-fed their capabilities and popularity in that way, I admit that by comparison this may have been preferable to Flying Pig's concept – a small, muted almost forgotten corner presence for such an important company. Were they experiencing a power failure when I walked past, I wondered?

*"So was it the stand presentation and design that attracted you more than the technology?"*

Sometimes it seemed more interesting. I particularly took great pleasure in two stands; firstly, the unlikely Osram stand. I say unlikely because there isn't much you need to do, or can do, with presenting light bulbs. But I was truly overwhelmed by Osram's glowing presence. Featuring impeccable white surfaces arranged like a modern minimalist art installation, the stand was brightly and evenly lit by concealed diffused daylight white sources. This seemingly ethereal environment was like a visual haven, a tranquil place away from the flashing, whirling world outside. The other stand was Green Hippo's jungle. It was in some respect the opposite of Osram's – seemingly chaotic and random with its dark green bushes, tree trunks and jungle wild life sounds. But in fact both stands shared the same idea: their design was blissfully different.

*"Were you worried by anything you saw?"*

I don't know if it's just me, but moving lights seem to get bigger every year. The new Mac TW1 from Martin Professional for example. Seems like the UK's obesity problem is affecting the

## Guy Kornetzki

Guy was born in Israel and has been involved in an extensive range of productions in theatre, dance, opera and concert, in Israel and the UK. Starting as an actor he has the unique experience of designing the lighting as well as finding it. With a Mediterranean blood and a European soul he has been happily living in the United Kingdom since 1999, only wishing for better weather.



Pyramid screen.



Osram's uniquely white appearance.

moving light industry as well. Although technological progress tends to minimise, the moving light seems to be developing the opposite way – from the comparatively tiny VL6 in the 1990s for example, to the giants of today: the VL1000 series, the Alpha Halo and now the new Mac TW1. Will we need cranes to lift fixtures into place, or have to include body-building as a technician's job requirement in future? I understand that more features may "cost" in terms of footprint, but is it really practical for fixtures to be so big? Soon they may be impossible to handle and need huge clearance which many stages cannot accommodate.

*"Did anything amuse you?"*

Yes, I thought of Dr. Evil's "MiniMe" from the Austin Powers' movie trilogy; when I saw the tiny, zippy SL3 from the Italian company Spotlight I knew I found the "MiniMe" moving light! Small but with a kick. I saw a battery of them rigged up and it was like watching a group of adorable puppies playing around. Sadly I couldn't judge their practical merits, partly because the ambient light was too bright, but mainly, well, because I was too busy adoring how cute they were, ok!? There I said it.

*"Go on, go on...."*

Well, while surveying the rest of Spotlight's stand, I found myself

thinking of another theme: 'Robocop' verses 'Superman'. In other words, adding enhanced functionality to something that was not designed for it. This was Spotlight's Par 64 Barrier and it made me think of the industry's obsession with adding remote functionality to just about anything. On the one hand I like the idea of bringing conventionals into the digital age, for example through the use of hi-tech accessories for Ellipsoidals and LED make-overs. Sometimes the operational benefits are clear, but I did see some creations that struck me as violations of barriers, rather than barriers being broken down for something better.

*"You seem a little agitated, do you want to talk about it?"*

Speaking of violations: can someone please explain to me the continued use of scantily dressed female models at PLASA? Had I made a wrong turn and ended up in an auto show, a fashion show or any other show that requires glamorous ladies to be parading around in high heels and short skirts smiling seductively at visitors passing by? Or alternatively female dancers crammed in a smoky booth being closely ogled by a group of men? And don't pretend it's not sexist – as far as I could see, there were no sexy male models anywhere.

Yes, the exhibition might attract a predominantly male audience, but do we really need to feed the stereotype any more?

*"Perhaps that was just some innocent disco industry nostalgia"*

Well, don't know about that but I did feel quite emotional about PRG Europe's "History of Vari\*Lite" display at the central bar. It was a rather unassuming presentation, but that was alright because it featured some real legends of the lighting industry: from the VL0 of 1980 to the VL2416 of 1999, this was no less than a history degree packaged into a dozen or so "lessons", with each fixture representing a milestone in the industry's evolution. Some of the

units where in full swing(!) whilst others did not need to show off; they could simply be admired as silent works of art. It was indeed a nostalgic yet fascinating look at how it all started.

*"That was the past, but you said you also saw the future"*

PLASA has always been a launch pad for innovative ideas. Some of these are recognised through PLASA's 'Awards for Innovation' each year, whilst others are yet to be discovered. There appeared to be two dominant trends. Firstly, projection. Think of Harry Potter's invisibility cloak, and FogScreen provides a display that is there but not there. The potential for this application is remarkable as it addresses fundamental issues



SL3 'Mini Me'.



*The history of Vari\*Lite's.*

of material, form and interaction. Unfortunately it still has some growing up to do, much like young Potter. It will be great one day but for now it is still too limited for its own good.

Another example relates to one of my greatest frustrations about projection applications – the weather man effect. No matter what we do with regards

to content or media, we always end up with a flat display surface next to a real person; a display that is alienated from live action. I think one of the big breakthroughs we could hope for as visual designers is to be able to make projection come alive alongside a performer, in our real 3D space. Evolvision's stand made me stop in my tracks as I tried to

understand their solution of the "Pyramid Screen". Yes, it offers an approach to this issue; yes, it is eye-catching because of its unique shape, but I couldn't help thinking that, as far as the display technology is concerned, we have seen it all before. Their pre-production process, whereby they manipulate the footage to allow it to take advantage of

the pyramid's multi dimensional facets is, if anything, an innovation worth exploring. Pyramid Screen wants to be more than it is, but for now at least it is still missing something fundamental.

The second dominant trend was LED technology. It is not a new trend – LED has been dominating the industry for a few years now. But, much like the rapid take-over of moving lights about a decade ago, many manufacturers have felt that if they did not offer an LED product, they would be left out. This year I thought the trend had shifted slightly: it was less about advancing LED technology itself, and more about rediscovering its form. I mentioned earlier my

delight at the new lease of life given to conventional lights; as I said, LED technology is a way of achieving that by fitting state-of-the-art LED technology into familiar form factors. We have had LED Pars and LED battens, and this year I saw an LED sign, the LED Festoon from Cybertec, and underwater LED from the Dutch company All4light. I don't know whether it's just laziness that makes manufacturers fit LED technology into existing forms, or if it is a matter of "if it ain't broke don't fix it"? Maybe a bit of both, but I am curious to see new developments of conventional lighting forms.



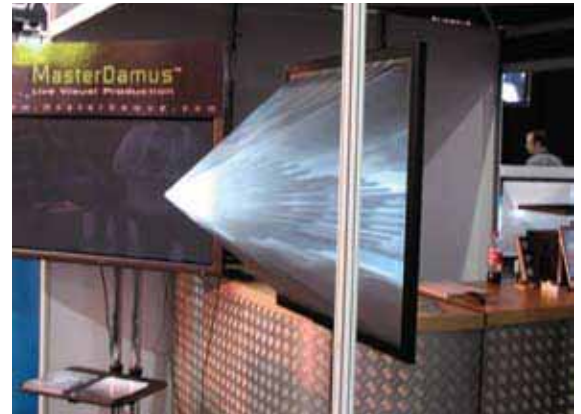
*Yokes on everything.*



The eye-catching Green Hippo stand.



The FogScreen virtual projection surface.



Evolvision's Pyramid screen.

*“What about people; tell me if you experienced any social interactions?”*

Towards the end of my visit at PLASA, I came across the ALD stand. I lurked around for a bit checking out the visitors. They were mostly youngsters seeking to belong, which made me imagine the Association as either a paternal figure or a gang. I guess it's a combination of both. They came in with questions and went away with information, glancing at the photos on display. I could not help but wish the stand was more of a meeting point, a place people would choose to

stop in, and spend time and talk to each other. But you know what? I think I feel a wind of change through the Association, so I would not be surprised if exciting things happen next year.

*“I would like to finish on a positive note; think of the happiest moment you had at PLASA”*

Shortly after arriving I came across a group offering head and neck massages to passers-by. I smiled and said I had just arrived, and promised to return. At the end of the day, there I was again; but by this time I was almost crawling towards them, and as I sat in front of one of Urban Chill's smiling young ladies I could only

whisper, “Help me!”. The next ten minutes were nothing short of divine: attentive, strong yet gentle massage that eased my upper body and relaxed my mind. Just what the doctor ordered after hours of flashing lights, blasts of smoke and confetti, and many miles of walking.

*“Our time is up; I suggest some more sessions, and then test your progress by re-visiting PLASA next year”*

I am sure that PLASA is a must for industry manufacturers, equipment and service suppliers, and those with money to spend on stock. But what about LDs?

In the past, before the age of

Internet and e-newsletters, when our access to information was more limited, a show like PLASA was very important: it was like a super-mall that had everything you needed in one place. You could compare, ask, and look for yourself, instead of relying on a mailed printed brochure (too little, too late and too bad for the rain forests), a phone call (no visuals), or a fax (bad quality). These days everything you need and more is online, in full colour, and increasingly as video as well. You can access it anytime, anywhere without the need to pay,

travel or stand all day.

However, there are at least two elements that are best fulfilled through PLASA – industry presence and human networking. As a matter of credibility, simply put, if a product or company has no presence at PLASA, we should be asking ourselves why. And as I have always believed, our industry is all about people, and there is still nothing better than face-to-face meetings with colleagues, friends and potential clients or collaborators. #

*Group hug anyone?*

## Take a second look at:

**OSRAM** [www.osram.co.uk](http://www.osram.co.uk) for their latest releases at PLASA

**GREEN HIPPO** [www.green-hippo.co.uk](http://www.green-hippo.co.uk) for more about the company's rise to fame recently through their work on Cirque de Soleil's new production of *Love* at Las Vegas.

**MARTIN** [www.martin.com](http://www.martin.com)

**SPOTLIGHT** [www.spotlight.it](http://www.spotlight.it) for more details on their range of products, including the SL3 and the Par 64 Barrier

**PLASA AWARDS** In lighting these were: Avolites for mDMX, Global Design Solution for Blues System of working lights, Pharos Architectural Controls for the Pharos AVC Audio Visual Controller, Wyborn for the InfoTrace system allowing control and management of DMX-controlled lighting devices. A commendation was given to Adam Hall for its adjustable top-hat. It should be known that it's not all about making money, but also about giving something back. Therefore, the money raised from fee entries was presented to five charities that have direct link to the industry. One of these was our very own Light Relief (see page 12).

**FOGSCREEN** [www.fogscreen.com](http://www.fogscreen.com)

**PYRAMID SCREEN** [www.evolvision.com](http://www.evolvision.com) for the Pyramid Screen as well as other unusual projection surfaces

**CYBERTEC** [www.cybertectld.com](http://www.cybertectld.com)

**ALL 4 LIGHT** [www.all4light.com](http://www.all4light.com)

**MASSAGE** [www.urban-chill.com](http://www.urban-chill.com)

## ALD@PLASA

Even though our stand was just slightly hidden away in a side alley (in comparison with previous high-profile pitches near the gent's loo at the side of the hall), we had an excellent response from existing and potential members. It really makes it special to see so many lighting people coming up just to say hello and have a chat. Sunday was busy throughout the day, with hardly any time for rest and relaxation [at PLASA?]. We measured our success by the number of membership forms we distributed. At the final count about a hundred 'What is the ALD' sheets and in excess of fifty membership application forms were taken. Some were even filled in on the stand.

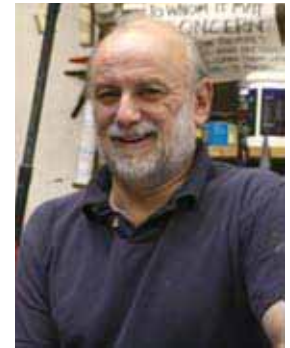
The stand is designed to be erected by two people in less than 30 minutes (or with me alone in one hour) with panels displaying members' production photographs. We were very pleased at how many passers-by stopped to look in detail at the images and read the captions. One or two were even spotted kneeling down for a better view! So to all you photographically-minded LDs out there – if you have production images in high resolution that you are willing to share, please let us share them on our exhibition stand.

On Monday the Michael Northern awards were presented in the afternoon so there were a number of students and sponsors around and some press coverage [including excellent photography from our resident expert Jackie –Ed].

Both Tuesday and Wednesday were steadily busy and we had visits from quite a number of ALD members and many potential new members including students (there must have been a 3-line whip out at Rose Bruford – thanks Nick), many interested in associate membership, four or five possible professional members and some encouraging corporate enquiries. There were quite a number of possible overseas interests too – particularly from Finland, South Africa, India, Denmark and Holland.

So thanks to all those who found their way to our stand, and to Matthew Griffiths and the PLASA team who made our presence possible.

*Nigel Lawson Dick  
Exhibitions coordinator*



### **Nigel Lawson Dick**

*Nigel was dragged into theatre by John Lewis – his employers at the time being the Oxford Street partnership, not an impresario of the same name. As a confirmed yachtsman, who better to pull ropes backstage in the flies for their in-house theatre than Nigel? They never whistled backstage when he was aloft. Having cut his teeth hauling scenery he progressed through lighting design and is now directing, in and around Wokingham, while fitting in a few exhibitions for the ALD in his spare moments on dry land.*

# Letters

## BLINDINGLY OBVIOUS?

Dear Editor,

Just to say I appreciate the regular Focus as an Associate Member and especially the CD earlier in the year. This has been passed on to a retired theatrical manager who is interested in developments.

Much professional lighting seems to be top, side and back-light these days but worse was As You Desire Me at the Playhouse with the main set nearly all composed of reflective material which threw the lights straight back into the auditorium for the whole of the first Act. It was most unpleasant and must have given the LD an impossible problem. Another show that assaulted the audience, both visually and acoustically, was the revival of Jesus Christ Superstar. Has this become a feature of current practice?

Yours sincerely,

*Michael Nott*

Is this a growing problem LDs have to cope with? Maybe somebody out there who isn't on a plane or accepting a lighting award may like to respond? editor@ald.org.uk

## ALD – WHAT A GOOD DEAL

Francis Reid uncovered this dusty letter from the ALD's precedents – The Society of British Theatre Lighting Designers.

Dear ALD,

When the letter arrived, I was editing Tabs, teaching at both RADA and the London Opera Centre, and designing the light for a play The Turning Point at the Duke of Yorks. The fee for the play, covering the Croydon opening and the West End, was £250. As the management, Henry Sherwood Productions, and my then agent, Raymond Gubbay, were both tough negotiators, it is likely that this fee was around the going rate.

These were the days when out-of-town play premieres were usually on Mondays. West End openings were frequently on Tuesdays with Wednesday or Thursday a real luxury. So the Fee covered far fewer hours than it does today, especially as many plays (The Turning Point was beautifully designed by that master of box sets, "Jay" Hutchinson Scott), had ceilings which reduced the time to draw, rig and focus. My total fees for the financial year to April 1975 were £3,785.00. With professional expenses and three children I was below the income tax threshold.

The increase in SBTLD sub referred to in the letter was almost a doubling to £10 from five guineas (£5.25). In the same year the ABTT sub jumped from £3 to £4. We were

in a period of accelerating inflation which would soon result in a fade to blackout for the mandatory Nuit St Georges as prescribed by Joe Davies for lighting designer

lunches at Rules Restaurant in Covent Garden.

Best wishes,  
*Francis*

Comparison of costs\* between 1974 and 2005...

Francis's fee for The Turning Point would be £2,775 at today's value.

STLD annual subscription in 1974 had risen to £10, the equivalent today of £111.

Francis's lunch bill of £9 a head would be £100 today.

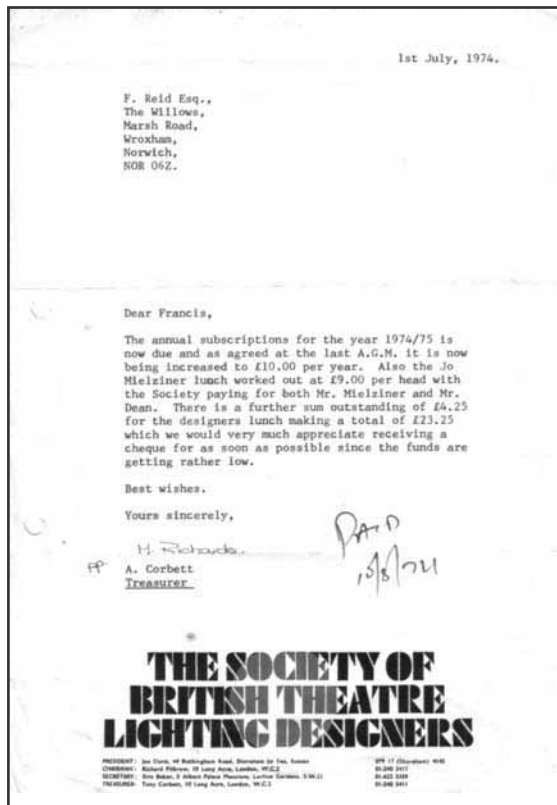
The designer's lunch bill was £4.25 or £47 today.

So Francis had an ALD-equivalent demand in today's money of almost £260!

\*Sources: www.measuringworth (using average earnings figures – add 30% if comparing GDP), and from Jim Laws, who reminisces, "£10 was half a week's wages in 1974, or maybe I was up to £25 pw by then. On that basis with the Equity minimum £350 now, so the £10 sub is worth £160 or so today!" So who now says the ALD isn't a good deal?

p.s. As the free ALD monogrammed magnifying glasses didn't arrive by the deadline, here are the officers of The Society of British Theatre Lighting Designers, 1974:

President: Joe Davis, Chairman: Eric Baker, Treasurer: Tony Corbett.



Dear ALD,

I should like to introduce the AILD – the recently formed Association of Italian Lighting Designers. It was conceived by some of the most important names in the field - the Libera Accademia della Luce and APIAS – and has been set up to provide a structure for the profession of stage lighting with the specific objective of promoting the importance, dignity and professionalism of those who work in this sector. The AILD plans to promote its aims in the following ways:

To give full recognition to the profession of the lighting designer working in a cultural context, and to the art of lighting in all its forms of expression: in theatre, dance, opera, television, cinema, live

events, direction of photography and architectural lighting.

To protect the copyright of a lighting design, through the recognition of its designer's artistic creativity.

To promote an understanding that "the lighting" must be conceived, designed and executed with artistic and aesthetic sensibility in order to achieve its expressive language and its ability to generate emotions.

To promote the formation and professional specialization of its members with particular attention to students and emerging young designers.

To initiate the exchange of information and discussion and disseminate publications and specialized texts.

In short, to use every possible cultural means to promote the content and value of stage lighting and to motivate the research and development of new methods and technology related to the world of lighting.

Collaboration with our international colleagues and the experience of other associations, which have been working successfully in this field, provided the enthusiasm, optimism and confidence we needed for this ambitious adventure in lighting culture.

*Yours, Giovanni Pinna,  
President AILD*

info@aild.it  
www.aild.it

Dear Focus,

Following Hugh Vanstone's piece in the July/August issue about Maurice Marshall's career I should, on Maurice's behalf, like to make it clear that Maurice was not responsible for the fire which destroyed the old Theatre Royal in Exeter. He would not even have been a schoolboy in short trousers, looking on as the events of that calamitous evening unfolded.

The first Theatre Royal in Exeter was indeed destroyed by fire, but in 1887, when the theatre had been open for barely 11 months. (The cause of the fire was also well documented – naked gas lights setting light to cloths hanging above the stage. The resultant fire and smoke poured into the auditorium over the top of the pros which didn't reach the ceiling, smoke filled the stairwells, and the doors to the street opened inwards. Packed house, panic, you can imagine the rest. 186 people were killed.)

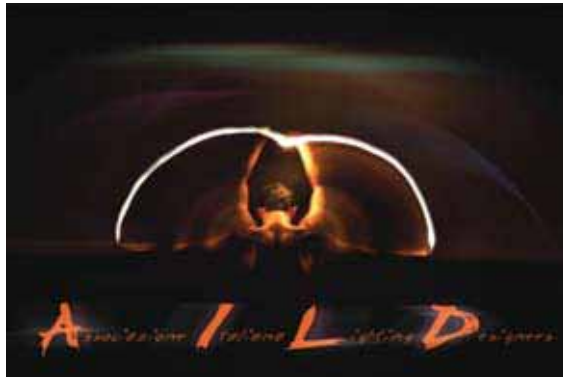
Maurice worked for the second Theatre Royal, built on the same site, which lasted until 1962 when it was sold for demolition, despite the best efforts of local man G V Northcott to save it, whose benefaction eventually led to the creation of the present day Northcott Theatre. Mind

you, it's a wonder that more catastrophes didn't occur in theatres of yesteryear, or at least it is to me as a layman in the ways of theatre electrics. Maurice once showed me a photograph of the dimmers at the second Theatre Royal: large glass tubes containing salt water with massive plungers that could be moved up and down within. He said they used to bubble a bit. Fascinating, but they looked like something from the set of a Dr Frankenstein movie to me!

*Best Wishes,  
Andy Sinclair  
Northcott Theatre*



*An etching of the gallery staircase after the 1887 Theatre Royal fire. Taken from The Exeter Theatre Fire, Entertainment Technology Press, £24.95 ISBN: 1904031137.*



# STUDENT'S UNION

## **News roundup for the ALD students by Mary Pope.**

It was very nice to see so many students at PLASA this year. I hope that you were all able to see the winning Michael Northern Bursary submissions on the stand and hopefully some of you are now planning a submission for the 2007 awards.

The few students who attended the student seminar at PLASA got the chance to ask a wide selection of current lighting designers those all important questions about the leap from college to being a lighting designer. It was interesting to hear people's views on the importance of working as an electrician and as a relighter before aiming to be an LD, as well as covering questions about agents and how to get work soon after graduating.



*Chloe Kenward receives her award from Rick Fisher.*

Northern Bursary, I have had a lovely meeting with her over coffee to discuss her winning entry. We spent a lot of time discussing the challenges of relighting but finally got down to the topic in question. I had a

graduated from Hull University and not a drama school. This was something that she was very proud of as she felt that the level of specialised teaching that you receive at drama school cannot be matched in an all-round drama

to gain as much experience as possible in the field of lighting.

She applied for the Michael Northern Bursary to get her name out there and to have her work seen by professional lighting designers. She explained, "It had not really occurred to me that I might win. I applied so that my name would be read by a few professional LDs. I applied with a very sub-standard design last year, just so that my name might be read". We both agreed getting your name seen was a great part of the Bursary as well as getting future work as an LD. When asked why Chloe wants to be a lighting designer she said with a cheeky smile that, "it's beautiful," and that she finds both natural and artificial lighting both stunning and exciting. However, Chloe realises that being an LD is not as simple as winning an award and is currently working on Message in a Bottle relighting for Fiona Simpson and is about to start working on a Dutch tour as deputy electrician for Noise Ensemble.

She does not expect to become a lighting designer straight away and is enjoying learning from others as she works as an electrician. "Entering the professional world of theatre is

## **Mary Pope**

*Mary graduated from RADA's Specialist Lighting Course with distinction. In 2005, she was awarded the ETC runner up prize for the Michael Northern Bursary, and she represents students' interests on the ALD Executive Committee. [www.marypope.com](http://www.marypope.com)*



incredibly humbling. Thinking of how much I have to learn is, in some ways, terrifying. I've learnt so much in the five months I've been out of Uni but realising that this experience is almost nothing compared to someone who has been in the business even for just five years, let alone thirty, is very, very daunting".

## **Advantages of Student membership**

ALD membership benefits include:

- Six issues of Focus each year. This magazine contains useful information and articles on lighting and lighting design with the performing arts and wider fields.
- The ALD year book. This contains contact details for all ALD members – a must for

## **Student Sponsorship Scheme**

With the launch of the Student Sponsorship Scheme 2006 I would urge last year's student members to reapply and to encourage your fellow students too. You will receive six copies of Focus a year, the ALD year book, invitations to ALD events, the option to receive LSI for free and the opportunity to meet other LDs and corporate members at student seminars and events.

Since meeting Chloe Kenward at PLASA for the award presentation of the Michael

couple of questions to ask her and a few more developed. It was interesting that Chloe has recently

course. Because of this, she did not allow herself to be complacent about learning and is determined

student research projects!

- Invitations to all ALD events including product demonstrations, talks and backstage tours with many opportunities to meet and talk with various LDs.
- You can also receive Lighting and Sound International for free.

In addition to these you will receive information from the corporate sponsors. This could include invitations to events, product launches and equipment training sessions.

### Students Get Sponsored!

The last three years have seen the launch and success of a fantastic scheme between the ALD and its corporate members. The Student Sponsorship Scheme gives free membership to students on lighting and technical courses in the higher education sector. The scheme enables corporate members to sponsor students' membership to the ALD for the duration of their course. This



Chloe Kenward receives her award from Rick Fisher.

benefits students who may be put off joining the association due to cost reasons and enables them to have close links with the major companies involved in the lighting industry. It also enables corporate members to have close contact with this country's next generation of lighting professionals. Sponsorship lasts for one year only – previous applicants need to reapply. Sponsored places are limited – application deadline February 2007. Membership application forms are available from your lighting tutor – please remember to get your tutor to sign the form! #

Corporate enquires should be directed to Andy Collier – andy.collier@ald.org.uk

Student enquiries should be directed to Mary Pope – mary.pope@ald.org.uk

## Applying for a job?

*Mark Sutton Vane offers some valuable advice.*

We needed a couple more junior designers. Out there are hundreds of keen young graduates who have finished courses and are desperate to start a design career, so the CVs started to come in, hundreds of them, each with a covering letter and some with enticing pictures. Reading them was a major task. Soon I wished I could have talked to some of the applicants and their lecturers before they had sent them in.

To be a designer you need to be able to communicate with clients and colleagues. I read covering letters and CVs that did not make sense; there were missing words, spelling mistakes and childish layout. I hope that candidates spend time composing, even designing these important documents. So, anyone with a bad letter or CV was rejected; that removed one third of the applicants.

Then there were applicants who wrote paragraphs on what they wanted out of the job, how they wanted to develop skills for their own reasons or get experience that would be good for their future careers elsewhere. Employment is a two way process – we invest time helping people develop. In return we expect them to use these skills for the benefit of our clients. As an employer I want to hear that a candidate is keen to learn, and I need to know that he or she is going to benefit the practice. So that excluded another batch.

Some candidates who were experienced in other design fields, or who had spent a lot of time in various design schools, thought they could start on the pay of an experienced lighting designer – sorry, but no.

I wept for all those keen young people who had spent years learning drawing packages that no one here had ever heard of, or would ever need. Maybe they are cheap or easy to learn or do fancy 3D animations, but we need experience in the big popular applications.

Please, design educators, ask us practitioners what we want and the number of your students finding employment will shoot up to the stars! But among the bad examples were some well-written letters from good applicants who had the right skills. They got the jobs.



**Sutton Vane Associates**  
**Lighting Design**  
[www.sva.co.uk](http://www.sva.co.uk)

**Copyright Total Lighting November 2006 issue.**  
[www.total-lighting-magazine.co.uk](http://www.total-lighting-magazine.co.uk)

# DAVID BENEDICT'S VIEW

***As you will have read in the last issue, Ian Herbert concluded his "Asleep in the Stalls" series. I would like to thank him for his contribution to Focus and Lighting and Sound International over the years and paying particular attention to the design aspects of shows both in the UK and abroad.***

***In order to stimulate discussion and see how our work is perceived by those not directly involved as lighting practitioners, I would like to introduce a new series of articles for Focus. Our aim is to invite different commentators who have shown an appreciation for the application of lighting to contribute their view of productions or projects.***

***Focus is pleased to welcome David Benedict, UK arts critic for Variety, for the first article in this new series. While we hope to hear from David again in the future we are looking to broaden the type and location of projects reviewed. If you have suggestions of other writers who we might approach please inform the office or editorial team. – Rick Fisher***

Whatever you think of *Dirty Dancing* – and as far as I'm concerned, the phrase "precious little" occurs – one thing is certain: it has balls. Two of them, actually, mirrorballs perched in front of the proscenium for that "we're all in this ballroom together" climactic moment where the space turns all twinkly as the hero arrives to sweep the heroine off her feet for "The Time Of My Life."

I mention this winning effect not to pour scorn on Tim Mitchell's work on the show, rather to commiserate. *Dirty Dancing* isn't a production, it's a reproduction. Consciously so. Rather than being reworked, the material has been transplanted – which is the intention of the show's producer Eleanor Bergstein who wrote and co-produced the original movie.

The plot and the dialogue remain identical, every single location and camera set-up is dutifully represented. The result makes the stage version of *Mary Poppins* look like the work of anarchists.

Designer Stephen Brimson Lewis neatly solves the multi-location problem – there are something like 75 scenes – with

**" Hugh Vanstone put such a strong button on an otherwise drably staged and sung Anthony Newley number that the audience positively roared its approval"**

a double revolve to move people and set-pieces, items rising and disappearing via hydraulics, and video projections splashed across four large screens forming a back wall beneath a horizon. It's like a scaled-down, less technically

sophisticated version of the literalism of *The Woman In White* with all its attendant lighting problems because those screens have to remain completely visible pretty much throughout.

Furthermore, as with the film, the music is presented solely as a soundtrack with invisible musicians and vocalists, so

there are almost no moments for applause when Mitchell could do a button. I remember waking up to what a designer can do with a cue like that while sitting through a distinctly threadbare revival of Scrooge at the Dominion in 1996

replete with wobbly sets and performances to match. Hugh Vanstone put such a strong button on an otherwise drably staged and sung Anthony Newley number that the audience positively roared its approval, blissfully unaware that without Vanstone's terrific lighting prompt, they would probably have offered merely polite applause.

I cannot begin to imagine quite how many lanterns you would need to light the vast barn that is the Dominion but, risking a stern complaint from Paule Constable about my eyesight and/or maths, I looked up into her rig for *Krapp's*

*Last Tape* at the Royal Court Upstairs and counted just eight.

Beckett, of course, is the last word in distillation. His dramatic ideas are boiled-down to a vivid essence but in a great production – which this incontrovertibly was – that can be rendered into something quietly but supremely theatrical.

Director Ian Rickson has always been a stickler for detail, at his best when wedding actors to the slightest nuances of a naturalistic text. And with Harold Pinter on hand he had a cast of his dreams. Between them, they also had sufficient clout to persuade the highly policed Beckett estate to let them tamper with the text.

Thus the whole introductory business with *Krapp* messing

about with a banana was binned thereby creating a leaner, tighter text of memory and regret. Better yet from a visual perspective, there was no sign of the requested (and strangely dated) white-face, clown-style make-up. As a result, when Pinter's face emerged, looming inexorably out of the velvet-darkness of Hildegard Bechtler's black set, it looked as if he were being lit not by Constable but late Rembrandt. Glowering with barely suppressed rage, his face seemed to glow not from light hitting his face, but from within.

Great lighting, it seems to this less-than-trained eye, is less about lighting scenes and actors, and more about dramatising the moods and metaphors of a play, controlling and supporting its movement and flow. That is

"... when Pinter's face emerged, looming inexorably out of the velvet-darkness of Hildegard Bechtler's black set, it looked as if he were being lit not by Constable but late Rembrandt"

clearly dependent upon an entire production team working, as here, in harmony. Their control of the space was so acute that when Pinter glided across the darkness in his electric wheelchair to the dim little backroom – the only other purposefully lit area of the

set – it felt like a journey into the past.

Constable is famous for barely using colour. Has she ever met a piece of Surprise Pink? From what I've gleaned of the work of director Rufus Norris, that kind of palette wouldn't appear to be to his taste. This may be the result of my faulty memory, but lighting designers working with Norris seem to use almost saturated colour. I may be confusing the colour of the light and the colour of the set but Rick Fisher's lighting of *Afore Night Come* lives on in my head as being a distinctly eerie yellowy-green; I remember his astonishingly vivid Peribanez as a burnished, earthy orange; while Jean Kalman's design for *Festen* resonates as being a haunting, almost acid green.

So it's not a surprise that Norris's latest production, his revival of *Cabaret*, is similarly intensely coloured. It's purple, which may have more to do with designer Katrina Lindsay who, with Tim Mitchell, also designed Norris's deeply purple – and

breathhtakingly beautiful – *Sleeping Beauty* at the Barbican.

Regardless of who chose it, that colour resonates on the Lyric stage. The show has split critical opinion straight down the middle. As one of the saddened but staunch naysayers, Kalman's lighting appears to me to be the show's strongest element.

Norris' vision strips this most specific of musicals of all its context bar its politics. The carefully contrasted scenes in the Kit Kat Club and Fraulein Schneider's boarding house feel blurred. The lack of naturalistic detail – the set is largely sliding panels at German Expressionist angles – leaves the actors often looking stranded which militates against them building either their characters or relationships.

Yet handed wide open spaces, Kalman creates corridors and pools of light that echo with loneliness. And even though I think the show fails to make its disparate idea cohere, there's no denying the power of the final image of naked bodies huddling together at a concentration camp. That it feels so arrestingly cold and emotionally chilling is all about Kalman's work. #

David Benedict is the UK arts critic of *Variety*

# MEETINGS

***At the time of going to press we don't have any firm commitments for members' meetings, but there are plenty of ideas being circulated for which we would like your views to gauge support.***

A funny thing happened on the way back from the forum...

The recent forum on digital scenography was an undoubted success, so congratulations to our meetings team, Will and Rachel – great organisation – and many thanks to Rose Bruford College. It was so successful that Will and Rachel are being urged to repeat the formula next year (Will maintains the next one will be in 2008, but we are taking that as a typo). But what's the subject next time? Among the topics being considered are comparing lighting design software, lighting boards, colour, automated lights, alternative sources. So if you have any thoughts on ideas for a future forum, or other subjects which you feel would benefit from a workshop-style approach, please email [meetings@ald.org.uk](mailto:meetings@ald.org.uk).

## **The end of pen and ink?**

Our latest Corporate Member, Computers Unlimited 3-D design team, has generously offered to

host a meeting for ALD members early in the new year to explore the capabilities of VectorWorks Spotlight software at their north London base in Colindale NW9. We are told that VectorWorks Spotlight is the undisputed standard in entertainment and lighting design software worldwide, merging sophisticated 2D drafting and powerful 3D modelling with advanced lighting design and production tools. The training session will take place in their dedicated training facilities in the new year, but before we make too many arrangements, can we please have a show of hands to gauge response please? Please email [meetings@ald.org.uk](mailto:meetings@ald.org.uk) if you are interested in attending this training seminar. For details of



Vectorworks – Peter Neufeld.

the software, visit [www.unlimited.com/3ddesign/products/spotlight.htm](http://www.unlimited.com/3ddesign/products/spotlight.htm)

## **Can you sell yourself?**

The lighting industry's omnipresent Philip Norfolk, now somebody hugely important with PRG, has offered to host a meeting at the Greenford HQ to advise LDs on how to get work in the events industry. As Philip explained to Focus:

"Double Glazing, photocopiers, insurance or even the dreaded "timeshare" all conjure up images of the thing we are all allergic to: Salespeople. It is a peculiarly British phenomenon that the profession of selling is looked down upon, regarded as a lowly thing and often despised. Yet this is at odds with our

actual experiences as customers. Restaurants we habitually return to often sell us our meal well, we like a particular supermarket for its sales environment or seek out someone specifically at the garage to sell us a car. What has all this to do with ALD? Well as designers there are three core functions of your professional lives. Building design skills (looking at equipment, trying out certain effects, using design packages etc.), doing actual design work and lastly pitching for work.

"The first two are outside my world. Whilst I enjoy a well lit show or event when I see one, my own design skills are best kept away from the public. I am not at all talented in that area. Pitching for work on the other hand is something nearer to my skill set. It is the same as selling, only this time the item is your commodity, the design. Some skills in selling are unique to an industry, some are common to all. If you have ever wanted to get more money for a job, get a show that was "bound to go to so and so" or generally improve the Pitch then maybe this might be a small step towards those goals."

The meeting would be a very informal event covering.

- Buying signals – what they are and how to use them
- Open questions – yes being better than no!
- Calling someone you have never

spoken to (sometimes know as cold calling but not in our industry!)

- Getting paid – the best part of the sale
- When to ask for work
- Rejection – trying to get something from it

If this interests you, email [meetings@ald.org.uk](mailto:meetings@ald.org.uk) and we'll take up Philip's kind offer.

## **Ask and you will receive...**

... but is this always the best solution? Alan Thomson, director of PRG Europe, suggested an idea for an ALD meeting to discuss the mechanics of the rental industry and how it operates in relation to LD's designs. All rental companies share the same concern – having to source special equipment for one show when lower-cost equally capable gear is prepped and sitting on shelves. Obviously there are times and places for the unique and the specific, but is the industry missing a trick due to a lack of communication, knowledge or imagination? Are there better ways of achieving the "It's new so I will add it to my list and see what it does" syndrome? We would hope to gather a cross section of renters and rentees, so it could be a lively debate. Again, if this interests you as either a specifier, user or as a rental company, email [meetings@ald.org.uk](mailto:meetings@ald.org.uk) and we'll start making arrangements. #

# ALD panto cancelled

A recent unsolicited press release announced the cancellation of the ALD's first Christmas pantomime, shortly before opening for five weeks of previews. Producers denied the reason was the lack of a suitable lighting designer but under the threat of a Rick Fisher letter they replied, "We tried so hard to keep the cast together, but without a suitable candidate for the leading lighting role, we had no choice but to release Lesley Garrett from her commitment to play the Fairy Queen. But we are very pleased that she managed to find another show in the West End at such short notice."

*Focus* has discovered that this has nothing to do with gossip about backstage arguments at the televised audition after one finalist was exposed as a previous

chairman of the STLD who had brought his own softlight. Finalist John 'kilo' Watt, who was lit from the front by his Blonde, added "And very nice she was too," before being branded a purveyor of old sexist lighting jokes and ejected.

Almost immediately, Associate LDs offered to take on Ms. Garrett's role and a cue formed outside the ALD's temporary HQ near the arches in Covent Garden. One intrepid reporter, John Offered, mingled with the line and interrupted conversations in Latin involving 'per diems' and 'pro rata' to ask why Associates were more interested in performing rather than lighting? "It's all a matter of dignity and billing," said one hopeful. "If you calculate the time we spend schmoozing the designers, choosing the yellow filters to match the horse's rear end,

redrawing the LD's lighting plan, inputting it into a media server, attending rehearsals, pacifying the crew with fresh carrots and fruit, cutting the rig back to meet the revised budget, writing a risk analysis, rigging, making tea, plotting and running the show, we earn little more than 12p an hour. That's less than a thousandth of a virtual psychiatrist's fee. That's not for us. Besides, when you are ON stage you get to wear a frock and see your name in lights!" Alex Murphy would like to make it quite clear that no dresses are worn by the lighting team backstage at the National Theatre, although he can't vouch for the ENO. Roger Hennigan was unavailable for comment, unusually.

Nora McNulty



Disappointed ALD panto cast, lit in Rosco Surprise Bastard Grey and open white with the horse in Light Relief yellow.

# And finally...

Huge congratulations to Paul Pyant for receiving the Dora Mavor Moore award in Canada for outstanding lighting design for *Lord of the Rings* in the "General Theatre Division"(!). Just to make sure, Paul also won an LDI Award which was given to individuals within the creative team of the same show who each got a nice etched glass thingy with their names on. Not to be outdone, the Canadians came back with a CITT (Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology) award for the design elements of *Lord of the Rings*. So here's thrice well done, Paul.

If you have any comments, criticisms, abuse, good ideas, plagiarised ideas or just plain gossip to pass on, please do it as soon as possible as we will be working on the next issue after the Christmas holiday. Deadline for contributions to editor@ald.org.uk is 12th January 2007. And don't worry if you find it hard to write your ideas down! Just throw us a bone – we have a hungry band of talented LD authors who write proper and who are keen to interview, interpret, develop and present your ideas to your peers through *Focus*.

"What's in the next issue?" I

hear you all ask... Well, we've broken a few arms in advance and are promised that some or fewer might be ready in February: an update on professional fees; advice on taking digital photos of your theatrical creations; an Agent's eye view of the lighting business; improving your sex drive; lighting in churches; a professional's view on lighting amateur shows, plus all your usual favourites.

And really finally... good news from Johanna Town who was struck down with a nasty bug over the summer which kept her away from the Royal Court for six long weeks. Our spies tell us that she is being careful, but pretty much back to normal... which probably means not being careful. Take it easy Jo!



The first meeting of the new *Focus* editorial team, left to right: Jackie Staines, Andy Collier, Guy Kornetzki, James Laws. Jodie, the editorial dog is out of shot at the front of the group.

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