

ALD # FOCUS

The journal of the ALD
"More art, less tools..."

June/July 2020

Swive
Sam Wanamaker Playhouse
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Highlights in this issue:

- #FreelancersMakeTheatreWork
 - ALD and Lightmongers awards
 - Light that connects us
 - ALD virtual AGM
- ...and much, much more...
Price to non-members £5.00



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From the chair...

If you missed this year's AGM, here is the chair's report from the day...

This time last year I was speaking to you all from White Light's headquarters and linked on Zoom to Manchester's Northern College of Music. Zooming across the country seemed so innovative and exciting at the time. It worked so well that this year we had already started to dream up doing something similar again but linking to Scotland and Wales as well.

Since becoming chair, reaching out to every category of our membership has been important to me, and it has never felt as important as it does right now.

I would like to take this moment to send my personal support to all our members: professionals, associates, students and our corporate members. We may all have difficult times ahead, so let's not do it alone. We mustn't forget that the ALD was first formed by Richard Pilbrow and his lighting colleagues nearly 60 years ago to create a forum for lighting people to come together to talk, to share and to help one another.

We have been busy on members bulletins, Facebook and Twitter, keeping members informed on campaigns, writing to MPs and to government offices. Please keep looking at our posts as they are a

great way for us to reach you. Thank you to everyone who filled in the recent survey. The data has been really useful and will help inform our own DCMS application. It is vital we all keep pushing buttons.

I recently wrote as chair to all the regional theatres, the London Theatre Consortium and a selection of small venues, requesting they keep in touch with the whole of their workforce including their freelancers and wrote that the ALD was offering collective collaboration and support.

If any of our members have been selected for the Freelance Taskforce or London Taskforce please get in touch. We have a great database of lighting freelancers and can help you access them easily through bulletins, etc. We can help you reach as many freelancers as possible, some of whom are feeling alone and out of the loop. These taskforces are for the whole freelance community and we would like to support the work you are doing.

So what have we been up to in the past twelve months?

The ALD is made up of a great variety of different people in different jobs. They all have their individual passions to make our industry a better place to work. Our working groups allow ideas and passions to develop among like-minded people and this



Johanna Town
ALD chair

in turn makes the groups very productive. Each specialism feeds their knowledge into other groups making our policies as diverse as possible.

The Professional Working Practice Group chair Lucy Carter last year announced "The ALD Members Code of Professional Working Practice". We are asking all our members to sign up to this. It is so important that the ALD is recognised for its professionalism. This year, we have produced a "Producers Guide" because, equally, we wanted our employers to treat us with the same respect we give them. We have also finalised our contract checklists and deal/memos, which will replace the current contract rider.

It has been great to collaborate in making these documents with so many members, from production electricians to video and lighting designers and programmers; their contributions have been vital.

I would like to stress that there has never been a more important time to have good contracts and deal/memos or paper trails. Too many of our members have been burnt

Chair's report

Johanna Town

these last few months and we must make sure that this doesn't happen again.

Our Professional Rates of Pay working group is chaired by Robbie Butler, who has recently been joined by Zoe Spurr. They both sit on the Equity directors and designers committee. At the moment this working group is mainly designer based, and I would love more non-designers to join so it's not just an Equity biased group.

Stuart Porter, our Professional rep for non-designers, is moving over to be Corporate rep and our new Professional rep working alongside Lucy is David Ayton.

Our 2019 Lumière scheme had another great year with Alex Musgrave. We had our largest ever number of submissions with over 30 applicants. Alex was great and found it more helpful than he had imagined, as he transferred from being a technician to lighting designer. The 2019 scheme was also restructured to run for six months, with the Lumière working directly with allocated lighting designers. We felt this worked well and gave more focus to the work.

Just before lockdown all our past Lumières got together to make a podcast and promo video sharing their experiences. We have understandably postponed the scheme for this year and hope to see a

new Lumière join us for 2021. The Lumière working group has a new chair in Charlotte Burton, an ex- Lumière herself, and is a very welcome addition to the team.

The annual ALD awards have launched for 2020. These are chaired by Rory Beaton. We have three categories again: lighting design, video design and production electrics. Please start submitting entries as we do look forward to seeing all your work.

I can also announce that the annual award from The Worshipful Company of Lightmongers for New Talent in Entertainment Lighting that is given in conjunction with the ALD is recognising this year a production electrician (Jack Ryan) and a programmer/ associate lighting designer (Tamykha Patterson). Congratulations to them both.

Focus: we are seeing more contributions to the magazine. Maybe you have an article you have always wanted to write. You have all been posting some great stuff on Twitter and Facebook talking about your work; just add a few more lines and send it in. We want to see more submissions from all sectors of our membership. I love the Tips and Tricks and postcards from abroad. Kelli is doing an amazing job as editor and it has been a busy year for her. She finished her

PhD and started a new job so thank you, Kelli, for hitting those deadlines each month.

Kelli is also responsible for the book we are hoping to produce to celebrate our 60th next year! We are putting together stories from people associated with the lighting industry and looking for volunteers to be talked to, and to do the interviews. There is a starter pack of questions and a list of people we are suggesting, though you can nominate someone to talk to and talk about whatever you like as long as it's about lighting. If you would like to interview someone you have always wanted to have a conversation with, now's an ideal time. Just let us know and we can link you into the whole process.

Our students working group, chaired by Jack Wills, is reaching out to colleges and institutions. Jack and Ben Linwood have been doing some great work over the past two months keeping in touch with all the students, making sure they are not feeling alone, especially as they start their new careers.

If you haven't already, do catch up with their videos of young and sometimes not-so-young designers and technicians talking about how they started out and what they are up to, on the ALD Students Facebook page. Thanks for all your brilliant ideas – keep it going.

The Meetings working group, headed by Tom Wilkes, has kept us all motivated recently. We have had a great number of meetings and events through Zoom.

We began a host of meetings in May and now have sessions planned through June and into July, so keep looking out for members' bulletins and come and meet friends and colleagues at our virtual events. If you would like to contribute to any sessions, please talk to Tom.

Diversity – Representation and Inclusion, chaired by Jai Morjaria, is busy working on our diversity and inclusion policy. We need to create a sustainable profession in order to allow more people into performance art as a career path, and we need to hold our industry to account at all times. The ALD supports Stage Sight in all it is doing, but as one of its supporters we must all actively promote and encourage its values and help work towards a better and more inclusive industry.

Recent events have shown how important it is to support and stand alongside our fellow artists, regardless of race, gender, sexuality or disability. The ALD and all its members must support the whole workforce and work towards making change happen.

Health and Wellbeing is one of our new working groups. This is chaired by Jenny Kershaw, and she would be happy to have more people join this group. We recently saw a great run of Facebook and Twitter posts throughout Mental Health Awareness Week. We have put together a resource pack for our members to access. Mental health problems have been increasing within our industry. John Simpson's speech at the Lighting Lunch really brought this home, and we must all be vigilant of the

wellbeing of our teams at work and others around us. With that in mind we have introduced good practice and incorporated it into the Producers guide to have a direct improvement to our members welfare.

In these difficult times, please remember the ALD is here for you. We can often be of help, and we can definitely always listen.

Sustainability, chaired by Paule Constable, is currently working on a Green Code of Practice has collated a vast amount of resources, which our members will soon have access to. This is another example of people coming together to incorporate individual passions into one overall message. We are currently incorporating sustainability into our contract checklists, our Code of Practice and the Producers Guide.

These working groups contribute to a better future. We can't allow the industry to fall back into its old ways. We must plan and commit to change, find new ways of working together and encourage change to happen. Live performance can and must come out of this in a better place.

You can see we are keeping busy. We hope we you have found the resource packs, members' bulletins, and updates and information over social media useful and helpful over these past few months.

Last year at the AGM, and after much discussion on the Exec, we voted to increase the membership fees over several years. This began this year and it was unfortunate that its automated timing hit at the beginning of April. We have since been able

to help those who found payment difficult, and I wanted to announce at this AGM that we will be freezing the membership prices at their current level until further notice.

This might in the short term reduce the services that the ALD can offer its members, but I hope you all agree this is the best decision we can make. We will keep reviewing the situation on behalf of our members and monitor the ability of the association to continue to keep doing what it currently achieves.

I would like to thank everyone who has yet to be mentioned; to the Exec team and ALD members who are constantly helping and giving your time working for the association for no extra money, thank you. Thanks also to Ian Saunders for all his hard work throughout the year: you keep us well maintained, well informed and often in our place. You are the vibrant, passionate, over-worked constant that keeps the machine of the ALD running. Thank you.

So, to close... I would like to see the ALD continue to improve its collaboration and connections. Live performance art could look very different in the future, so now is the time for us to imagine a cleaner, more sustainable future, with fairer environments for us all to work in, better pay and equality, and financial systems put in place so we are better protected in the future.

Talk to us and share your concerns, join one of our brilliant working groups and get involved. Thank you.

Across a crowded Zoom

Mark Jonathan on the new norm



In the previous issue I wrote about the Covid disaster movie starting and by the time you read this episode it may have been overtaken by new developments not known as I write now. While “social distancing” continues we have been forced to live differently and change the way we do things, but is it for the better? Ultimately, I hope that we will have learned better ways to live. New words abound in our vocabulary: pre-Covid and post-Covid, Zoom, furlough, SEISS, social distancing and the new norm. I’m worried by the new norm as it seems to allude to a new way of living that excludes our income stream: live performance. It trips off the slithering tongues of politicians as they manipulate

the facts and figures and consider what to tell the public. UK governments rarely understand what the arts and culture sector gives. I fear that many of the artless that govern us think that they can easily do without us.

We should be very grateful to all the brilliant theatre freelancers for setting up #FreelancersMakeTheatreWork. This brings together the 200,000+ freelance theatre workers who represent 70% of the creative cog that makes theatre tick so vibrantly. All our lighting and video freelancers should join the group. You don’t need me to tell you how cut off so many freelancers have felt, nor how perilous the situation is for every arts organisation and every producing and touring theatre company. It’s essential that we all write to our MPs asking them to engage with the argument that the chancellor must look at the special needs of the theatre and those who work within it – this time, giving proper consideration to everyone, including the vast tranche of “freelancers” who fell through the vast ravine having not been freelance for three years, or entered profits in excess of £50k, or run their own limited company.

The FreelancersMakeTheatreWork (www.freelancersmaketheatrework.com) website has guidance on content for your letter.

Boris the Blusterer, along with his cohorts, regularly fail to actually answer the questions that they are asked. If you do get an answer it’s often inadequate, incorrect or later contradicted. If you get under the skin of the science it clashes with the economics. Boris wants us to get shopping again to revive the economy but the kids can’t go back to school. We can fly but now we have to go into quarantine on return. That certainly isn’t going to encourage the 100,000 international tourists who visit London theatres per week even if the theatres could re-open. While I admire the valiant efforts to stage productions from “home” and the discussions about “drive-in” film and live events I don’t see theatres, with their narrow passageways and crowded foyers, opening until we can sit comfortably together again. Whether our audience – denied their income since March – will have the disposable income to buy tickets is another question. We face a government who thought it was OK to let school



children starve through the summer and have had to make a volte-face after the interventions led by Marcus Rashford. That a government thought this was ok doesn't bode well for us. We are much further down the list – if we are on it at all. Does the “new norm” have restaurants, bars, theatres and holiday travel in its new vocabulary?

I sense when the current furlough and SEISS schemes end that everyone will be discarded by the chancellor. Furloughed theatre staff may be made redundant. So uncertain is the current situation that as I write Sir Cameron Mackintosh has announced that his theatres will not re-open before 2021 – this on the same day as the Secretary of State for DCMS, Oliver

Dowden, appeared on the Downing Street daily briefing remarking that we need to see the “road map” being developed by leading authorities to see if theatres could re-open. The response to him on social media from theatre critics, Equity and individuals has been unanimously scathing. Here is a selection of tweets:

Equity Directors and Designers

Committee: “What does it mean to ‘Push for its renewal and recovery?’ YOU are the *Minister* for culture. You don’t need to mount a campaign to raise awareness, you need to call the treasury and tell them to put an emergency pot of money together! We need actions not words!!”

Opera singer Susan Bullock: “Put your money where your mouth is.”

Soprano Natalya Romaniw: “We need something a bit more practical than hope right now.”

Tenor David Butt Philip: “MONEY. We need MONEY not platitudes. Enough talking, we need action, NOW!”

Theatre designer Adrian Rees: “Invest in it now or it will be on your watch, the Tory Party’s watch, that the UK lost the greatest jewel in its crown and you will forever be blamed. You get all panicky when 2000, or 4000 car workers jobs are threatened. WE ARE TALKING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF JOBS HERE.”

Oliver Dowden’s tweet was accompanied by a photo of the ROH auditorium to which **video designer Nina Dunn** replied: “The

image you have chosen does not reflect the reality of these Theatres now. Try this image. No lights. No people. No stories. No income.”

Artistic director and producer Tom Littler said: “...Occasional rumours of a deal, then silence. A sector is collapsing; buildings are going into administration. One third of the cash given to the big three airlines would save us. When? It’s horribly urgent now. Redundancies are being made in huge numbers. We can’t just walk back in & switch the lights on. You know that. This is over 300,000 people’s livelihoods. You know that. The money we need is a drop in the ocean, but we need action now.”

BritishTheatre.com: “Investment is what’s needed not rhetoric! Push for that or in a very short while the industry will be gone! #notgoodenough”

Music critic Mark Pullinger: “Then do something. And do it quickly! The Arts can’t survive while you dither.”

Director and writer Julian Woolford: “When are you going to do something?”

The deluge of criticism and pleas for action continued in many more tweets.

Following a conversation with Paule Constable, who said that we must write to our MPs, I tweeted too. **Andrew Ellis** replied: “I have written to my MP twice. Unfortunately @DominicRaab didn’t seem particularly concerned and I only got a vague response from a case worker to my first letter and no response to my second.” So we must continue the campaign to raise

Across a crowded Zoom

Mark Jonathan

the government's awareness and maybe we will know more soon.

It was great to see so many of you, not across a crowded room but across a crowded Zoom! We gathered for the ABTT seminars where the ALD kicked off with over 200 attendees and a brilliant panel comprising David Ayton, Robbie Butler, Lucy Carter, Stuart Porter and Jo Town, first looking at the new Contract and Deal Memo Checklists that the ALD has created to help our members have more effective contracts. When I say all our members, that's everyone working in lighting and video, both designers and their teams of associates, assistants, production electricians, programmers and lighting technicians. See Lucy's article on page 10. Please bear in mind that these checklists will continue to grow and be modified and that one size doesn't fit all situations. You can select items from the checklist; some things may not apply at the moment. We are on a journey to something better. So, not getting a proper break now doesn't mean that it should always be like that. Along with our new checklists we also have the PWP (Professional Working Practice) which is a statement of how our members will practice professionally. Hand in hand is our new Guide to Producers

in which we help producers and their production managers encounter the different aspects that will make our work with them a better experience. The work on all these codes has been done by volunteer members of the ALD Exec with many contributions from members. You don't have to sit on the sidelines – you can join in too. We now have more people involved in our “working groups” than ever before (see Jo Town's report starting on page 3.

Our opening ABTT seminar continued with an interesting discussion with our guru and fount of knowledge, Rob Halliday, joining the panel to look at the future of LED. I laid my cards down as I've had a “love-hate” relationship with LED: I love when it's good and hate when it's crap. There have been some tremendous advances in its capability. “Don't buy cheap” would be one of the messages from the seminar. My personal dislikes include LED that doesn't fade in and out with the tenderness of tungsten, along with a failure to create colour that emulates “white” rather than muddy greens or rather too pink seen in some of the cheaper luminaires. Rob's advice included checking out what a particular LED luminaire does on human skin and also to try it on a piece of fruit and

see what happens. The higher the CRG the better the result will be. Certainly this has been greatly improved in stage lights but I'm disappointed moving offstage when I see poor LEDs in theatre houselights, bars, restaurants and on some visits I've made to palaces and castles across Europe where it was sad to see the new LEDs didn't always excite the golden opulence of the interiors. We still don't know enough about the recyclable aspects of LED. You can listen to the full seminar (and others) via the ABTT website at www.abtt.org.uk/events-and-courses/seminars_june/technical_training.

The next day, in another very crowded Zoom, ALD Chair Johanna Town welcomed us all to the ALD AGM. If there is an upside to COVID, it is that many more members joined via Zoom than could usually come in person. I should pay tribute to Jo and the rest of the team on their achievements but Rick Fisher says it all better than I could, so please see his thoughts on page 15. I will say that Jo Town has brought a new dynamic to the Association in her enthusiasm and sheer hard work. Many thanks, Jo! I hope ALD members don't need any convincing that it's worth belonging to the ALD. In fact, for the Association to develop we need to increase our

membership so I hope when everyone is on a more stable financial footing that you will help promote membership to all your lighting and video colleagues. We will be stronger united together.

Amid the Covid pandemic the murder of George Floyd has brought much of the world together in sadness and anger. My longstanding colleague and friend of more than 30 years, Mark Dakin, now technical director at the ROH, wrote an open letter expressing his anger as an adopted man with Asian origin. I wrote back to Mark in support, I told him that as a white man I hadn't experienced racist behaviour that people of colour may have but as a schoolboy I had experienced severe verbal and physical bullying and I knew how awful that had been. I have always hoped that the theatre might lead in its acceptance of people of every ethnicity and all genders, sexual orientation and disabilities. The ALD certainly does and I'm proud that we have our Diversity working group which is led by LD Jai Morjaria. I am also full of admiration for the hard work put in by LD Prema Mehta who has successfully founded Stage Sight which you can now join as an individual at www.stagesight.org/how-to-join.

While I have adapted to social isolation with new activities, including running and growing vegetables, the isolation certainly hasn't suited everyone. Our awareness was heightened by Mental Health Awareness Week, and it was good to see the profile

raised by ALD members and the ALD Wellbeing group. With the need to bring people together Scene-Change has sprung up for design freelancers who feel left out. It hosted a very well attended meeting led by Lucy Carter with Rory Beaton, Matt Clutterham, Prema Mehta and Bruno Poet. This was recorded so hopefully you can catch it if you missed it. Join the discussion at www.scene-change.com. Prema talked about the "creative grief" she feels of stopping work. She has found this quite painful and has been quite emotional. Rory provoked the conversation on fees, asking how we stop fees going down post Covid? The strong feeling was that we should resist a lowering of fees but accept production budget cuts. Rick Fisher suggested that freelancers are the cheap outsourced labour and it's essential that we must not let fees go down. Some concerns were expressed about the Equity minimums. Robbie wants all designers to join Equity and with everyone inside we will be stronger.

Ben Ormerod said you don't need to know exactly what your fellow colleagues in the creative team are being paid but it can be helpful to know in percentage terms how it might compare with previous work you may have done before in order to gauge if a fee being offered by another producer is equitable. While managers want a Covid cancellation clause, Bruno Poet suggested that we might need a "sickbay" clause that deals with what happens if we catch Covid or are forced to

isolate when a colleague or family member turns positive.

Matt Clutterham rightly points out we're in a tricky time, having been so used to self-promoting and pushing to find work, but how do we do that when there's no work out there on offer and it might come across as in poor taste?

Prema said this was a chance to consider how we might widen our inclusion and diversity. Bruno thinks that work experience opportunities will be reduced and we need to think how we freelancers can create a broader mix of people. Part of the problem is that while the job might be "brilliant" it's not paid well and this was borne out by Sally Ferguson and Vicki Mortimer. Bruno asked if we will be able to find a creative way of being artful that isn't fractured by reduced budgets and reduced lighting rigs. He encouraged me by reminding us that the best lighting states are the ones with least lights on.

So, even though we are apart, there's a lot going on from political activism and training opportunities to discussions and social activities. Thank you, Nick Peel, for your monthly ALD quiz and Charlotte Burton for her excellent chairing of the meeting on mounting *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* with LD Ben Cracknell and his team: Sarah Brown, Chris Vaughan and David Stone.

I hope we shall survive and that the new norm will include live performances. Keep in touch, everyone. 🌸

Change and uncertainty

Lucy Carter on coping with a precarious future



Is anyone else feeling particularly excluded from the theatre industry at present? I am trying to not take it personally, because obviously this virus and the resulting lockdown and complete closure of the theatre industry have not come about to directly punish me for former life choices I made along the way (namely, the choice to work in theatre), BUT I do feel like a disposable appendage and very out of the loop.

I have no idea what is going on and no idea what is going to happen. I keep hearing of various plans different institutions and theatres have for reopening, via friends and colleagues, through the grapevine. These little snippets are often about or affect shows I am engaged to work on. I am not

hearing directly from venues or producers about these shows and what their plans are for them – in fact, I am not hearing anything other than gossip and things in the press – but how much of that is fake news and how much is reality?

I am very aware and I keep being told by various friends and colleagues in the industry that the theatres don't know and therefore can't tell us. I get that! I imagine it's incredibly difficult to make any plans for reopening when the government can't say with any clarity what is going to happen or how things are going to happen. I feel dreadfully concerned for the executives and artistic directors who are trying to keep their venues afloat and be supportive of their staff, and send them all the most positive vibes I can every day, in the hope that somehow they can make it work and make prudent decisions to keep something of our industry alive for when we can emerge and begin to make work again.

But I can't believe how I am having to put my trust in the very venues who are telling me nothing about projects that I am contracted for. I have no idea what is going on, what is being planned, what is being discussed and who is lobbying and talking to the government and making them

understand what is happening, what will happen and how the venues and, in turn, me and the family are going to survive.

I play guessing games every day and hold very long and in-depth conversations with my Coronaio alter ego. These conversations are not healthy and do not lead to any kind of mental relief and realisation; they leave me feeling even more alone and in the dark.

Coronaio Lucy: So when is Venue A going to call me and tell me the project pencilled for an August 2020 opening is not going to happen on those dates and will be cancelled or postponed?

Lucy: Lucy, you need to relax! They don't know any more than you. Just presume it isn't going to happen and then you won't be disappointed.

Coronaio Lucy: Yes, yes, I understand; you are right, Lucy! Sigh! But if they already know that they aren't reopening until January, or if they think that's more than 90% likely, why can't they discuss it with me? Am I not valued enough that they don't feel the need to keep me informed and protect my mental health, save some potential dates in my diary?

Lucy: Don't you think they have enough to do just figuring out how to pay their PAYE staff? They are employees and more

important, obviously. They have a care of duty to their own staff.

Coronoia Lucy: OK, I guess 'cause I am self employed that I am on my own then? No one has a care of duty for me, right? So... just a question... if they don't keep me informed and in the loop and if I feel so undervalued by producers at present, how do they know I won't have to go and get a job loading shelves to make ends meet and that when they do rearrange a show for a certain date that I might not then be available because I will be too busy stacking my lovely, ordered, clean, scheduled shelves?

Lucy: They don't have the time and head space to worry about you! If you want the LD job you will drop everything and get back to self-employed life, because if you don't want their job then someone else will. They will say you are welcome to your safe shelf-stacking. God, Coronoia Lucy, can't you take risks anymore?

So, you see, it's these unproductive and annoying conversations with myself that lead to nothing but more frustration.

I did, however, just after starting this article, hear from Venue A about the project. We had a pre-production meeting,

and I was excited as it seemed like we might have some creative conversations!

However, it was actually an update on the situation as a whole and the venue team was brilliantly transparent about the fact that they don't know how they will proceed. They have researched and risk assessed and budgeted for various scenarios and they still don't know which they will proceed with. They hope more will come from the government in the next couple of weeks, and as other countries do start to get back in to public venues, and in some cases theatres, they might be able to follow through on one of their plans.

Lucy: Great, so now you know that they still don't know and that you are not being kept out and that they took the time to have a meeting with you all and be honest with you. Happy?

Coronoia Lucy: I feel sad and scared and empty and helpless! I can't plan anything; I can't help my industry to figure it out. I am not allowed to help! I can't get creative on projects because it could be a waste of time, and anyway I don't have a new contract yet.

Lucy: Oh, I see, you only wanted to know when they had the answers! I thought you wanted to know what's going on. They have

told you and that answer is lots of planning but no firm decisions! Not good enough, Coronoia Lucy?

Helpless and creatively bored, I am doing nothing of any consequence and killing myself with overanalysis of my future diary that is all a work of fiction!

I hear of plans from other creatives about trying to start back up with changes in place in terms of our working practice: plans for the better, for informing and leading producers into better industry practice that benefits us and benefits the industry as a whole in terms of sustainability of workforce and productions, about changing the way things work for us, as the processes that have become the norm do not function for the benefit of ALL anymore.

I hear that producers are starting to offer new contracts for next year that have reduced fees for creatives. How do we stop this happening if this is the only way for productions to happen and we want the industry to start back up?

Venue A has actually been the best of all the producers that I have live projects with. One venue has not once been in touch except eventually in response to answering

Change and uncertainty

Lucy Carter

my agent's repetitive emails asking for info. This venue, Venue B, didn't tell me the first day of rehearsals was cancelled in March, they didn't tell me the project was on hold, they didn't tell me technicals weren't going to start in April, nor that the premiere wasn't going to happen. Eventually, a week or so after the premiere dates in early May, we emailed again and they came back and said they have three lots of potential dates one this year and two next year but they don't know which they will do and it may not actually be any of those dates really. Was I available? No, we said; possibly, we said; maybe for the final set of dates, we said!

Another futile conversation that led nowhere conclusive but has added to my daily mental analysis. What if I can't do the dates they do finally settle on? Will the venue and director be annoyed with me? Will they ever ask me again? How can I pull out when we are over halfway through the process? What will they think of me if I prioritise one production over another? How will I decide which one I do? Inconclusive!

Look, I am aware that I am lucky that I have potential projects on the horizon at all. Some people really have nothing. I am

aware I sound, yet again, like a paranoid, overanalytical loon, and why do I keep telling my inner anxieties to a magazine readership who don't have the answers and don't answer back?! I think that possibly, or I hope that, by writing these things it resonates with the membership and in some way connects us, so that we feel like we have connections and commonalities. We are in this together, but I wonder how many of us will still be there and "in it" by the end?

I have found no peace in this enforced pause. Is this because I am a workaholic? Have I become unable to switch off? Or is my working creative persona so tied up with who I am that I have to work to be me? I am annoyed with myself for not doing so, for switching off and not doing any work on the future projects. I feel like I have wasted an opportunity. But then, I do have planning to do for projects, sets are getting designed that I need to have input into, and I need to start working out the lighting concepts to ensure we can make it all work.

You know what? I feel trepidation about things starting again. I have been so busy at home anyway, with home schooling, occupying the children when there is no

school to be done, making sure everyone's fed three times a day, clearing up after making said food, cleaning, decorating, walking the inherited (lockdown) dog, working with colleagues at the ALD to respond and help people and plan for a better theatre future, and talking to myself that I have no idea how I will have time to get back to working at full speed again.

That was the article I wrote in May, after I had written a previous one about lighting for in-the-round and thrust stages, with informative contributions from other LDs, which will come in a later issue of Focus in the future.

Now I want to tell you how things have changed since then.

We have been having talks with Scene-Change, a designer-led initiative, to take action in these Covid times, to take back control of our creative lives and not sit around and wait for the theatres to invite us back in. Take a look at their website: www.scene-change.com.

Fuel Theatre published an open letter to all freelancers in theatre and performance to include a task force of freelancers to include them in the conversations. Every

theatre that signs up to the initiative is committed to engaging one freelancer to join them and will pay them for their time: fueltheatre.com/an-open-letter-to-theatre-and-performance-makers. This has now launched with 200+ freelancers all being paid for one day per week by associations, institutions, theatres or producers. They will start by meeting together and establishing what they need to do and how to self-organise. Hopefully something good will come out of this and more information will be circulated to us from sources closer to the decision makers.

The government has extended the SEISS payments for the self-employed, but only until end of August. Many people are falling through the gaps and not receiving anything. There's hope that the task force and other lobbying bodies in the industry are getting through to the government the need to extend this further for certain industries.

At the ALD we are trying hard to stay on top of what's going on, getting access to people who know stuff, and putting information on the website. There are lists and links of places to go for more information, for help and for support, so please have a look regularly for updates.

We hear the Minister for Culture has created a task force. The Entertainment and Events Working Group will include representatives from Royal Albert Hall, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Really Useful Group, One Dance UK, Cadogan Hall, Association of British Orchestras, Nimax, Leeds Playhouse and the Royal Opera House. So at least there are some industry voices advising at a high level.

We are continuing to produce new guides and documents that will strengthen our position when the industry does start up again. It has become more apparent than ever that current industry practices are not adequate for a safe, productive, sustainable, viable, healthy career in theatre lighting and video. People have been left high and dry without payments for cancelled shows, with no financial reserves for emergencies like this, because of how lighting professionals are engaged and treated by producers and venues.

At our AGM on 11 June we launched some new guidelines and documents to accompany the Professional Code of Conduct we expect all of our members to adhere to. There are also contract checklists for designers and programmers, and deal/memo checklists for production electricians and lighting technicians.

What we hope is that our members will use these guides to start negotiating better employment terms. Even if you manage to add some of the suggested terms to your contracts and deals it will be better for you and it will hopefully start to create change in the industry, as producers begin to realise everyone wants and needs these things to be agreed in writing before work commences.

You should have confidence to know that all ALD members will be asking for the same things and that you are not alone, which again strengthens your positions with producers in asking for these things.

I personally have been shocked by my conversations with production electricians in the last few weeks who have told me that often they don't have a written deal with a producer for a job. It is just agreed over a phone conversation, which they then put in an email back to the producers by way of confirmation. Production electricians manage a whole lighting department, control the lighting budget, are the brains behind the lighting rig design, engage lighting technicians and certainly take on a massive responsibility on behalf of the producer. If they are doing this without any

Change and uncertainty

Lucy Carter

formal contract or deal in writing they are not protected in any way if something goes wrong, like a last-minute cancellation. They are not protected from health and safety issues, and the producers are not protected if the production electrician pulls out or walks out or doesn't do their job! So we, all the members and non-members, need to change this for our own survival. Everyone needs to be insisting on at the very least an email outlining the terms of engagement.

Producers will be receiving the producers' guide soon, and we are asking them to sign up as a supporting producer, so that if you work in those venues or with those producers you know they are committed to providing those safe, healthy and productive environments outlined in the document.

I want to introduce you to David Ayton, the new Professional rep for our non-designer member categories. We are going to be working together to further the voice of our professional members.

We would like to establish a professional members working group: two members from each discipline – so two production electricians, two associates, two assistants,

two programmers, two video designers, two video technicians, etc. – who will meet (remotely to begin with) as a group, maybe once every two months, and continue conversations via email in between. As a working group we can better serve our membership and find out what is needed to support, stimulate and engage everyone within the lighting community. Have a think about colleagues you think you would like to represent you on this committee and talk to them about becoming your representative on the committee please. Or if you would like to be involved, please get in touch: lucy.carter@ald.org.uk or david.ayton@ald.org.uk.

Last, I want to share with you a parting thought that I have been discussing with colleagues in the theatre industry. We should be insisting on fees that are the same as they were before Covid-19 struck. We cannot reduce our already insufficient fees or daily rates because the theatre industry has less money now. It is the budgets that should be reduced and not our fees or daily rates. Doing the same amount of work for less money is not acceptable. Designing and working with lower budgets is feasible and doable.



Read more about #FreelancersMakeTheatreWork on page 16.

Fewer crew members is equally not acceptable, so staffing levels need to remain the same as before as well. As always, your thoughts and comments on all our work at the ALD are very welcome. 🌸

After the AGM

Rick Fisher

After the success of the AGM, Rick Fisher penned the following note to Chair Johanna Town. We loved it so much we wanted to share it with all of you. We hope you agree that it sums up the day and the association brilliantly. —Ed.

Hi Jo,

Well done to you! I think you were an absolutely FANTASTIC chair to the proceedings that I was able to tune in for.

As I said at one point late in the day—the pandemic has re-proved the necessity and the benefits of associations such as the ALD and I know the founders would have been proud and perhaps frankly amazed and how far we have travelled in 60 years and, in some ways, how much we are in the very same place, though with hundreds more colleagues.

Thanks for your clear leadership and direction. Your initial report was full of things to be proud of and set out things to do.

Thanks to the other exec members and working group members who have been working away on the many initiatives and sub groups.

I can remember when our much smaller exec used to meet in my front room and occasionally we wondered why we bothered when met with such silence from our members.

Yesterday completely and resoundingly answered that question!

We have so much to be proud of! And I know the working groups will continue to produce results.

The ALD needs to shout about them, and share them widely to let the entire live performance industry appreciate the value and success of what we have been working towards for nearly 60 years! We need to keep shouting about our ideas of how to make things better, more equitable, and more sustainable

Things like the PWP, the new checklist, our ideas and initiatives on improving diversity, our ideas for more sustainable practices, need to be shared to everyone, not just to our members so they can move to becoming accepted practice and encourage more open discussions of these and other matters.

The time to hide our lights is over and we need to celebrate what we have done, are doing and re-commit to what still will always need to be done.

That will help us get through these dark times, and bring us new members and new challenges.

This pause in our work lives has had some benefits: one is making the ALD stronger and more active, and through this technology we have found a new way to keep in communication with our wider membership in a way that those founders of the ALD having boozy lunches at Rules (though that still seems like a good idea!) would have never imagined.

Alas, it will mean more work and challenges, but think how brilliant a Zoom meeting like the AGM will be for our Associates, for our students, for our International members.

From the AGM we know that our members crave and value this, and that is what the ALD can provide.

This will outlive the pandemic.

And I believe we can harness even more of our members' energies and passion to make the next 60 years of the ALD even brighter.

Thanks to you all,

Rick

A proud Fellow of the ALD 🍷

#FreelancersMakeTheatreWork

A collective voice to advocate for the UK freelance theatre workforce



The #FreelancersMakeTheatreWork network is an inclusive community for the 200,000+ self-employed and freelance workers from all areas of theatre, opera, dance and live performance, who make up 70% of the UK theatre workforce.

It is a platform to collect the opinions and concerns of the freelance theatre workforce with the commitment to express them to theatre managements, production companies and government, as well as a central resource of information for the freelance theatre workforce that welcomes contributions from organisations and individuals to share the conversations going on behind closed doors.

How you can get involved:

Feed into the conversation (www.freelancersmaketheatrework.com/feed-into-the-conversation) with your suggestions and concerns about the UK theatre industry. These will form the content of an open letter to artistic directors and production companies.

Write a letter to your MP. We have sent an open letter to the government – now you can help by lobbying your local MP to represent the needs of theatre

freelancers to Parliament. There is a template available at www.freelancersmaketheatrework.com/mps-letter.

Join the social media campaign (right) to draw the public's attention to the huge variety of theatre workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Help build this resource by sharing information about relevant groups and organisations. We need to join up. 📌

Freelancers Make Theatre Work

www.freelancersmaketheatrework.com

www.twitter.com/FreelancersMake

www.instagram.com/freelancersmaketheatrework

#FreelancersMakeTheatreWork

Below: ALD members participate in the social media campaign. Photo courtesy of Tom Wilkes



1001 Fires: 25 July 2020

A global day of solidarity

Too often we are called to compete against one another for opportunities and resources, but we can no longer afford to do so. Now, more than ever, we must stand in solidarity, across genres, disciplines, artistic and cultural divisions. The global cultural sector is in crisis. Large institutions, small independent artists and creatives and everyone in between are wondering what the future will bring.

In solidarity, and from a need to connect with other individual artists and cultural workers, we invite you to join and participate with us in this global movement to raise attention to those creatives who have been negatively affected by the Covid-19 crisis and its long term repercussions on our sector, by participating on 25 July 2020 in a global act of solidarity called #1001Fires. The idea is that one person's spark may light the flame of another, creating some much-needed light and shared warmth from these dark times.

On 25 July 2020 we ask you to share an element of your work, your "fire", that you have created during this pandemic and tag our Facebook, Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag #1001Fires. We recognise

that many of you, of us, have been unable to make work during these difficult times, and as such we ask you to share your story via the same social media methods.

This action will kick start a larger online global mapping of all these fires, resulting in a grassroots network of artists and creatives from multiple disciplines who can connect as peers, dialogue, exchange ideas, find support and shift the structures that shape our praxis as creatives.

More information about the initial #1001Fires day of action, and our long-term plans can be found at www.1001fires.org.

1001 Fires is a Parliament of Practices initiative. It is voluntarily coordinated by Adriana La Selva, Linda Lyn Cunningham, Emilie Lund, Jenny Crissey, Barbara Manighetti, Marta Wryk and Marije Nie. 🌲



Email: mail@1001fires.org

Twitter: @1001Fires

www.twitter.com/1001Fires

Facebook: @1001Fires

www.facebook.com/1001Fires

Instagram: @1001Fires

www.instagram.com/1001fires

Photo credit: Linda Lyn Cunningham
and Kate Rowan

Weighty lighting

Theatre critic **Kate Wyver** on light that connects us

“It’s a shame we don’t have intervals these days,” says Mark O’Halloran on a stage bathed in blue. “They’ve fallen out of fashion. It’s a shame because it’s a great way for an audience to meet themselves. A chance to talk to your neighbour, to get to know your neighbour, to get to dislike your neighbour. But at least you’ll know they’re there.” He looks at the audience. His shoulders are wet. “Small measures to alleviate our social isolation.”

A few seconds earlier, thunder was crashing and glistening droplets of rain were shattering off a red bucket placed over O’Halloran’s head, his body half in light, half in shadow. On a clean white set, Stephen Dodd’s lighting design spreads a beautiful bleakness over *Lippy*, a play by Dublin and London-based company Dead Centre. It’s a dark piece with bright lights, bold shadows, and moments of fracturing, crashing strobes. It’s a play about misinterpretation, context, loneliness and the unknowable motivations of a corpse.

Over O’Halloran’s shoulder, three women dressed in slips sit at a table, the light bouncing off their bare arms like a Renaissance painting. Blood drips down one chin. Their feet are up against the

wall and the table is pitched sideways, like gravity has shifted by 90 degrees. This scene is an imagined recreation of a real event in 2000 in Leixlip, where three sisters and their aunt collectively starved themselves to death. O’Halloran plays a lip reader who took part in their case. The women are often ringed in bright white light, while he saunters around the stage in shadow. The set is covered in bin bags, shredded paper and broken crockery, as the women try to get rid of every trace of their existence. Dodd’s design is piercing, like a sharp tongue searching for a place to lay the blame.

Lippy’s lights have a similar intensity, if a reversed colour palette, to FK Alexander’s lovingly loud durational show (*I Could Go On Singing*) *Over the Rainbow*, for which she designed the lights herself. Doused in sultry pink-red lights, the performance artist sings along to the last ever recording of Judy Garland singing *Over the Rainbow*. As she sings, she holds hands with one member of the audience in turn. You’re given a little ticket stub and you watch as she sings the same refrain to each person. Noise music pulses from Glasgow-based band Okishima Island Tourist Association.

A blinding spotlight roams. Each person seems overcome by emotion as they step away. You feel as though you’re watching something very intimate.

While there’s a similarity in the vivid, blinding nature of the light between the two shows, one is brittle while the other is soft. I imagine the light in *Lippy* cracking in two like the plates the women chuck into bin bags, shards fleeing and digging into skin. When I picture the light in (*I Could Go On Singing*), I see it fade gradually, curling through corridors and gradually filtering out from something solid to something eventually transparent. FK Alexander changes the lights for each venue, depending on what each theatre has to offer, but it’s always an intense red mist, with her desire to make it feel psychedelic. “I want it to feel like the train ride in *Willy Wonka*,” she says.

It’s my turn to step up to the centre. We hold hands and the lights are so bright they’re almost painful. She is shorter than me and raises her chin slightly to sing to me. She has two little diamonds glued by her eyes. She seems to be built from shattered glass. The rest of the room melts away and it’s just the two of us in an



Lippy

Young Vic Theatre/Dead Centre

Directors: Bush Moukarzel and Ben Kidd

Designers: Andrew Clancy and Grace O'Hara

Lighting design: Stephen Dodd

Photographer: Ellie Kurtz

intense rosy haze. I immediately want to burst into tears.

Certain lighting designs, like these, have a weight to them, an almost tangible heaviness. Ella Hickson's *Swive* at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse is another with this quality. If *Lippy* is blue and (*I Could Go On Singing*) is red, *Swive* is yellow. Prema Mehta's design uses no electric lights and is done entirely with candles. The naked flames bounce light around the small space and off the actors' faces. The warmth – both literal and in the tone of the design – make the grand story of royalty and war feel incredibly intimate. The candelabras are at once exquisite, stately and simply functional. The candles almost become a character themselves; they radiate when someone falls in love, they reveal when someone's blushing, they quiver when someone shouts.

Swive also uses the lack of light in a way I won't soon

forget. When a young Queen Elizabeth is thrown into the Tower of London, every single one of the candles is extinguished, each wick letting off a small stream of smoke. Total suffocating darkness. It makes you woozy. Breath feels impossibly heavy.

These shows I saw in small theatres. There's not enough legroom at the wood-panelled Wanamaker, where I remember chatting to the stranger next to me at *Swive*, a teacher. You're only ever a few feet from the stage in that space, and it creates the feeling of an intricate fort, with a few lucky ones tucked in tight together. (*I Could Go On Singing*) I saw in a packed basement room in Summerhall at the Edinburgh Fringe, squeezed in next to friends and strangers, uncomfortably sweaty from having run late from another show. I've since seen videos of the show performed in different

Weighty lighting

Kate Wyver

venues, like the beautiful but cavernous Brighton Pavilion, and there's so much empty space. We had to clamber over each other to take her hand, and the proximity to each other's emotional reactions only increased the impact of the piece.

Lippy I watch at home. We're almost six weeks into isolation, and I realise the only time I've been in the near-total darkness of the opening moments of a show is when I turn my lights off to go to sleep. I miss the things we all miss: hugs, intimacy, my friends. But I also miss the feeling of taking

a breath that that darkness gives as the house lights go down, where the only light comes from the glow of an exit sign or a pool of light under a door in a dingy studio theatre. My computer screen glows with the crashing pulses of light in *Lippy* as everything fractures. I feel it and I like it and I'm so glad I can see it. But it's not enough. I long for a chance to talk to my neighbour, to get to know my neighbour, to get to dislike my neighbour. Because at least I'll know they're there. 🍷



(I Could Go On Singing) Somewhere Over the Rainbow
Summerhall, Edinburgh
Designer: FK Alexander



Swive
Sam Wanamaker Playhouse
Director: Natalie Abrahami
Designer: Ben Stones
Lighting designer/candle
consultant: Prema Mehta
Photographer: Johan Persson



Kate Wyver is a freelance writer interested in stories and their social impact. She writes about theatre for the Guardian and has written extensively on fringe theatre, dementia and sexual consent for a range of publications.

Sustainability working group

Jess Bernberg with some updates

Hello! I am a performance lighting designer mainly working in drama and new writing. I, like many of you I'm sure, have been struggling with what to do with myself without a stage to light and a team to collaborate with, but this is a brilliant time to be making headway with our new sustainability working group. The group has been an idea within the ALD for a while now, and it is brilliant to be able to share the beginnings of where we are with you.

For the last few years I have been pushing for more sustainable tools and working practices on my productions and always met with *"that's not how we do things"* or the ever looming *"there's not enough money"*. I had been to a discussion in January run in part by Paule Constable and designer Vicky Mortimer, and hosted by the National Theatre, called *"What can theatre artists do about the climate emergency?"*. The day was very encouraging, and I found myself thinking we needed a lighting-specific platform to discuss sustainability within what we do. The lighting industry already does a huge amount to promote sustainability, but we could be *leaders*, advocates – and there is, of course, *huge* room for improvement with enormous waste and lack of thought/time/money allocated to something so vital as the climate emergency. During the ALD Strategy Day in February, the topic of the

working group was brought up and I leapt at the chance to get it off the ground. Paule quickly jumped in as chair of the group, as sustainability is a core value she feels incredibly strongly about and has been advocating for a long time now.

We reached out to some practitioners we knew were passionate and might want to be involved, and with Zoom being our new best friend, the group (at the time of writing this article) has had two promising meetings. Our core team members are Paule Constable, Darran Curtis, Rob Halliday, Matt Harding, Chris Mence, Lucía Sánchez Roldán and me. We are starting the delicate task of unpicking the habits of our industry and how best we can change them to improve. Many have tried before, so what will make this group work?

At the moment, we're looking at the ALD's code of practice documents with a green lens and working towards a potential green code of practice. We want lighting practitioners to be at the forefront of sustainable working practice and to feel supported when asking for what is necessary and right in this climate. Gone are the days of creating with excess. We need to work together to create the new normal so our industry can survive. It's slightly slow progress due to lockdown; everyone has their own commitments – be it family, volunteering, or just having a difficult

day. I'm sure by the next issue we'll be even closer to finding a path...!

We also have a wonderful group of supporters who reached out after last issue's feature. If you want to get involved, please email sustainability@ald.org.uk.

During this time there are some things you can be doing.

I cannot recommend enough familiarising yourself with the WL Green Guide: www.sustainablepractice.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Green-Guide.pdf. It is a few years old now but the content is still incredibly (surprisingly?) relevant, and it is a great starter for green practice when we move back into our buildings.

Leila Mimmack and Will Attenborough are fronting the brilliant group of Equity members campaigning for a fossil-free pension. Follow [@PensionProudOf](https://twitter.com/PensionProudOf) on Twitter for updates. And sign up to an ethical and sustainable funds pension if you can.

Spend some time thinking about green energy tariffs in your home or, even better, supplying a building. The Theatres Trust can advise on energy-saving initiatives for theatres (www.theatretrust.org.uk).

Look at Albert. It is the authority on environmental sustainability for film and television: wearealbert.org/production-handbook/production-tools. And sign up to Culture Declares, a growing global community of culture champions: www.culturedeclares.org.

Sustainability MUST be the core value with which we re-enter our industry, otherwise there will be no industry left. 🌱



Office Oracle

News and information from **Ian** and the ALD office

2020 subscription fees

At the start of the coronavirus crisis in mid-March, the ALD Executive Committee decided that given the sudden and absolute nature of the issue and its effects on members that we would offer a payment holiday of three months until 1 July for Professional and Affiliate members that worked as freelancers. This offer was accepted by 106 members and additionally we have not chased up any outstanding balances since subscriptions fell due in April.

We are very grateful to those members who paid their subscriptions in full despite this offer, and to those that are paying by monthly direct debit in order to continue supporting the ALD and its work while reducing the upfront cost of an annual renewal and spreading it across the year.

The effects of COVID-19 have been wider and deeper than anyone thought three

months ago. The ALD has continued to work to represent and support its members, having produced its financial survival guide and a programme of online learning and social opportunities, as well as lobbying the government, our unions and other industry associations to ensure the voice of workers in the live entertainment lighting industry is heard and given the support it needs.

We have continued to work for all our members, and although we have been able to move elements of the budget around, we have made some savings through regular events and their costs not happening. However, we are still currently looking at a budget shortfall for 2020/21 of around £25,000.

As we approach July and the end of the payment holiday period, we would like members to make a contribution to their subscriptions.

We are aware that many members will be struggling at this time. It can be a down payment of a portion of it, a regular payment by direct debit, or paying off the balance still outstanding. We believe members have continued to receive value from the organisation at this time and, if possible, we would like them to recognise that value and continue their membership in some form.

The ALD and direct debits

If you wish to sign up for a monthly direct debit, please visit www.ald.org.uk/direct-debit or, if you already pay by annual direct debit, please contact the ALD directly so that we can adjust your existing account to the new plan.

ALD AGM 2020

Many thanks to everyone who attended any part of the annual general meeting on 11 June. We were unsure of how it would be received given the current situation, but we are delighted that over 130 people attended the business part of the day to hear a summary of what has been going on over the last year.

The additional sessions mixed topic discussions and membership category-focused issues as well as an element of continuing professional development (CPD) for members who are necessarily dispersed around the country and the globe. These were also well supported and we have been receiving positive feedback since the event about how well members thought of the interesting the mix of sessions as well as how successful the day was generally.

Like many other meetings that have been taking place online through necessity recently, we certainly feel that this experience gives us a good way to re-focus future AGMs to enable those who cannot attend in person to become a part of the day wherever they are.

We have created and circulated an electronic survey about the AGM to members, and we hope that you complete it to give us some more feedback.

Company director elections 2020

Following the incorporation of the ALD in 2016, we are now required to hold annual elections for directors. ALD directors are nominated from and elected by Professional, Fellow, Life and Honorary members – the voting membership.

The results from the 2020 election were announced at the recent Annual General Meeting. With no new nominations, the three directors who had reached the end of their terms and who all chose to stand again are elected for another three-year term: Rick Fisher, Steve Huttly and Nick Moran.

This will be the second full term as directors for Rick and Nick, and so they will need to stand down as directors for a minimum of one year in 2023 under the terms of our Articles of Association.

This will increasingly become the case over the next few years as the initial list of directors when the company was set

up reach the same point. So we are on the lookout for members who may be interested in standing for election as a director. If you want to find out more information, either contact the ALD office or any of the existing directors who are listed on the website here: www.ald.org.uk/about/executive-committee.

New membership reps

Also at the AGM it was announced that Stuart Porter would become the Company members' representative on the Executive Committee and will act as the contact point for Corporate and Commercial members to maximise their membership benefits, voice their concerns and promote their visibility to individual members through meetings, training and social events. You can contact Stuart via companies@ald.org.uk.

Taking over from Stuart as the Professional representative for non-designers is David Ayton. As a console programmer for both subsidised and commercial theatre, David will be bringing his experiences onto the Executive Committee to develop this side of the membership at the same time as we launch the various Professional Working Practice documents that include deal checklists for production electricians, lighting technicians and programmers.

Professional members with specific queries can contact both David and the lighting designers' rep, Lucy Carter, on professionals@ald.org.uk.

ALD online meetings

This current situation has meant having to re-work our usual list of venue or show visits as members' meetings in the next couple of weeks, but we have created a hub page on the members' side of the website with a full list of the confirmed events through into July so you can plan ahead: www.ald.org.uk/meetings.

You'll need to log into the website to see the page, and if you have not logged in since 1 May, you will need to set a new password before you can gain access.

We hope you enjoy the sessions. If you have anything you would like to introduce or know someone who would, please email meetings@ald.org.uk.

ALD coronavirus financial survival guide

It's unprecedented: our industry has been brought to an abrupt, dramatic stop by the coronavirus and the measures being put in place to help control its spread. Running shows have been suspended. Events have been cancelled. Upcoming theatre shows have been "postponed", though it's not hard to imagine those postponements quickly becoming cancellations. Those in jobs are suddenly finding themselves without jobs; those who are self-employed are suddenly finding themselves without work.

The important thing: you are not alone. Everyone in our industry is in the same position. Many beyond our industry too.

Office Oracle

Ian Saunders

We thought it might be helpful to pull together a quick “financial survival guide” – things that you can and should do to help see you through these difficult times.

The latest version is always available from the resources page of this website: www.ald.org.uk/resources/coronavirus-financial-guide.

Knight of Illumination awards 2020

The organisers of the 2020 Knight of Illumination (KOI) Awards in both the UK and the USA have announced the cancellation of both events due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the entertainment industry.

The difficult decision has been reached following extensive discussions between the committees of both the UK and US versions of the KOI Awards: The Fifth Estate and KOI co-founders Durham and Jennie Marengi, along with the ALD and STLD in the UK and Live Design/LDI in the USA. All parties explored various possible options to secure the events, including virtual, live streamed/webcast ceremonies and postponed or scaled-back ceremonies. However, these ideas were ultimately deemed not to be viable for 2020.

KOI-UK and KOI-USA Executive Committee member Sarah Rushton-Read of The Fifth Estate commented: “This has been a challenging decision, given the unpredictable nature of this global crisis, which has hit the KOI community very hard. Many have lost their businesses, their employment, their sources of income. Skilled creatives are taking jobs in other sectors and others are retraining. Many have no idea when, or in what capacity, they might return. While we have every faith that the industry will bounce back, it will be a different landscape for some time to come.”

She adds, “We believe the KOI Awards’ mission is to bring a meaningful value to the lighting and video design community by providing independent design awards, judged by respected critics and experts. Just as importantly, it provides a valuable opportunity for the whole lighting and video community, across theatre, events, live music and television, to acknowledge and celebrate their creative achievements, and this is something we feel is important to uphold and protect.”

Durham and Jennie Marengi comment, “Having spoken to many sponsors who

struggle to see the benefit of an online awards, and to many designers who fail to see how they could connect online with hundreds of their peers, the KOI Executive Committee has decided that it would be inappropriate to consider any form of KOI awards this year. We feel that this is the only sensible decision available to us. KOI is in essence a social event and we feel it would be difficult to connect our community in any meaningful way until we can all be together again in the same room.” The KOI-UK and KOI-USA committees are promising that this year’s nominations will be amalgamated into the 2021 awards.

“We would like to thank our judges who had committed to support the KOI awards in whatever guise we felt appropriate this year,” Durham continues. “Stay safe and we will all meet once more on the other side of this pandemic.”

KOI-UK was due to take place in London in September 2020, and KOI-USA in Las Vegas in October. Both events will announce plans for 2021 ceremonies in due course.

Showlight 2021 postponed

Showlight 2021, scheduled for May 2021 in Fontainebleau, has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been an extremely difficult decision, which has been made in view of both the immediate effects and anticipated recovery period that will be needed by companies and individuals across the industry in the coming months.

The state of the lighting industry, the probable extension of restrictions on gatherings and the effect that this is having on theatres, cinemas, events and concerts worldwide where audiences are involved, are immediate and catastrophic, and the resulting effect to employment and income within all aspects of performance and the technical support of entertainment at all levels, are equally devastating.

While hopeful that by May 2021 the situation will have improved, it's not possible to tell to what extent events and social interaction will have returned to "normal" and the ongoing feedback from the industry makes it evident that the after-effects will take longer to subside. The industry will need time to recover, and companies and individuals will need to prioritise their own financial recovery.

So, while acknowledging that Showlight is a much-loved event, the well-being of everyone in the industry comes first. The financial situation that many of our sponsors, exhibitors and delegates may

find themselves in, through no fault of their own, after the worst of the pandemic has passed also needs to be considered sensitively. The cost of exhibiting, travel and accommodation for Showlight would be an added strain on company and individual finances at a time when income and wages are severely reduced, so postponing

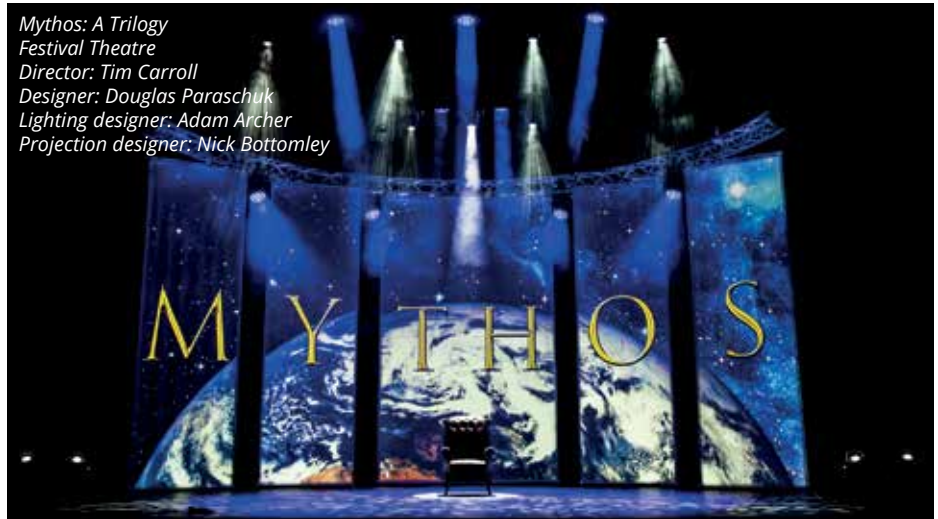
Showlight until these have had a chance to recover is the most sensible thing to do.

So for now we, like everyone, urge you to stay safe and keep connected via the website (www.showlight.org), the Showlight mailing list, Twitter and Facebook for updates on a revised date for Showlight in happier, healthier times. 🌸

Correction

There was an error in Mark Fisher's article, "A question of aesthetics", in the October/November 2019 issue of *Focus*. The lighting designer for *Mythos: A Trilogy* should have been listed as Adam Archer, Archer Sharp Design Ltd. We apologise for any confusion.

Mythos: A Trilogy
Festival Theatre
Director: Tim Carroll
Designer: Douglas Paraschuk
Lighting designer: Adam Archer
Projection designer: Nick Bottomley



Diary dates 2020–2021

6–8 September 2020	PLASA Show, Olympia, London*
11–12 May 2021	PLASA Focus Leeds*
9–10 June 2021	ABTT Theatre Show
5–15 August 2021	World Stage Design, Calgary, Canada

Keep up to date with ALD events via the online diary: www.ald.org.uk/diary

* The ALD will have a presence at these events.

New members

Welcome!

Professional members

James Corbidge, Northants
Andy Cutbush, Middlesex
Ed Locke, London*
Jackie Shemesh, London
Chris Swain, Bristol*
Eleni Thomaidou, Glasgow

Affiliate members

Matthew Carnazza, London*

Commercial members

Blue-i Theatre Technology
LX1 Limited

* Re-joining the association

† From Associate/Affiliate member

Contact us

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Redoubt House, Edward Road, Eastbourne BN23 8AS
www.ald.org.uk office@ald.org.uk
Company registered in England & Wales no. 10079797

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The ALD Board

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Focus Magazine

 ISSN: 1364-9299

Editor: Kelli Zezulka editor@ald.org.uk

Editorial team: James Laws, Rob Halliday and Sofia Alexiadou

To submit ideas for articles, correspondence, corrections and any comments about *Focus*, email editor@ald.org.uk. Owing to space restrictions, we do not accept press releases for publication in *Focus*. However, company members may send press releases to the ALD office (office@ald.org.uk) to be posted on the ALD website. Company members only may advertise in *Focus*; please contact the office for details. Editorial guidelines for authors are available on request. *The opinions published within Focus are not necessarily those of the ALD. E&OE.*

Content deadline for the next issue: 15 July 2020

Welcome to our newest company members



Blue-i Theatre Technology
www.blue-i.tv
theatre@blue-i.tv
0113 289 1030
01908 032668

Blue-i Theatre Technology delivers full creative and technical support, whatever your project. Our approach is one of collaboration. We partner with our clients, not just delivering on expectations but going further to take your ideas to the next level.

We are engineers, technicians and designers. We are your partners, your support network and your source of pitch-winning innovation. Blue-i has technical expertise and creativity to fully support your project from pitch to delivery, time and again.

Green Hippo
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0203 301 4561



Formed in 2000, Green Hippo has grown from a specialist manufacturer of bespoke solutions to one of the leading players in the ever-growing field of scenic video. The company's award-winning Hippotizer range is now in its fourth generation and can be found providing real-time video playback for television sets including Eurovision, the Academy Awards and the Super Bowl halftime shows. Green Hippo is proud to be working closely with industry partners to further develop and inspire new possibilities in the AV industry.

LX1
www.lx1.uk
[@lx1uk](https://twitter.com/lx1uk)
03330 118 512



LX1 Production Services manages a collective of skilled, knowledgeable and highly experienced production specialists and suppliers, well regarded in their fields across lighting, sound, video, rigging, scenic, production planning and management. We care about achieving the production vision through teamwork.

LX1 has formed relationships with producers, venues, brands and events across the world with continual opportunities arising from these relationships, which we are very proud of.

Follow Me
www.follow-me.eu/
followme@creativebd.co.uk
0203 743 2691



FOLLOW-ME
TRACKING SOLUTIONS

Follow-Me was founded by Gary Yates and Erik Berends in the Netherlands. Both Gary and Erik have vast experience in the entertainment business, having been part of large projects over the past 25 years. Erik also has vast experience in developing new and innovative entertainment industry technical products and software used worldwide.

In 2013 the first version of Follow-Me was used by British band Suede to utilise moving heads remotely to follow their lead singer on request of their LD, Jip Nipius. Since this date it has been used on subsequent Suede tours and many other productions. Follow-Me has recognised the need for a cost-effective, flexible and easy-to-implement follow-spot solution and is proud of the large number of shows already successfully running the Follow-Me software and hardware.

Demos and support are supplied by Collaborative Creations in the UK.

Professional members' shows

opening in June and July

Editor's note: In memory of the hard work, creativity, collaboration and fees that might have been, here is the list of shows that should have opened in June and July. We remain cautiously optimistic that, when we are back to normal, some of these shows will come back again.

June

2 Mark Jonathan *Eugene Onegin* Opera Holland Park / **2 Johanna Town** *The Death of a Black Man* Hampstead Theatre / **3 Joshua Gadsby** *Dinomania* 59E59 NYC / **4 Charlie Morgan Jones** *Die Walküre* Longborough Festival Opera / **4 Joshua Gadsby** *These Walls* Theatre By the Lake / **6 Jess Bernberg** *Rope* Theatre by the Lake / **14 Malcolm Rippeth** *Rusalka* Garsington Opera / **18 Mark Jonathan** *Anne of Green Gables* London Children's Ballet / **19 Jon Clark** *A Doll's House* Playhouse Theatre, West End / **19 Peter Mumford** *Don Quixote* Birmingham Royal Ballet / **19 Zoe Spurr** *Sucker Punch* Theatre Royal Stratford East / **19 Michael Grundner** *Robin Hood* Schlosstheater Fulda / **23 James C McFetridge** *Dracula* Lyric Theatre Belfast / **25 Malcolm Rippeth** *Fidelio* Garsington Opera / **25 Michael Grundner** *Elisabeth* (Concert version) Schloss Schönbrunn

July

7 Jon Clark *Evita* Barbican Theatre / **9 Zoe Spurr** *She Described It To Death* Linbury Studio (ROH) / **15 Palle Palme** *Jesus Christ Superstar* Dalhalla, Sweden / **15 Michael Grundner** *On Your Feet* Musicalsommer Amstetten / **16 Steven Benson** *The Barber of Seville* Clonter Opera Theatre / **18 Mark Jonathan** *Merry Widow* Opera Holland Park / **30 Joshua Gadsby** *Drown Your Empty Selves* Theatre By the Lake

From the "Diary" page of the ALD website. A full listing of all members' shows can be seen at www.ald.org.uk/diary. To be listed, enter show credits into your profile after signing in to the members' area.

ALD AGM 2020

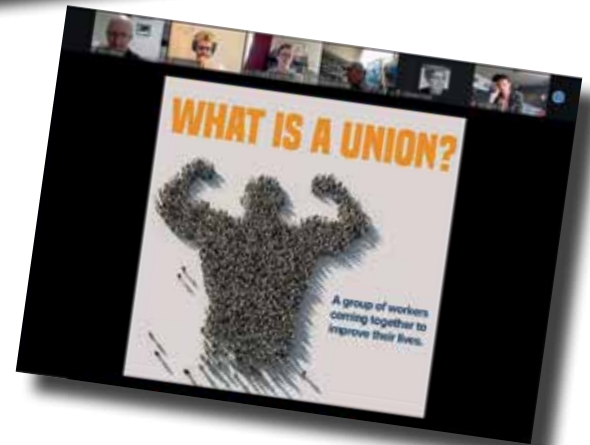
It is safe to say that the 2020 AGM was a resounding success! We had 130 attendees throughout the day from all over the country and beyond.

Huge thanks to Tom Wilkes, Ben Linwood and Nick Moran for their stellar organising skills, making sure all of our members were catered for. Thanks also to those members who led sessions on the day, to the ALD Exec for their hard work, and to all our members! 🍷

In case you missed it, here's what we got up to:

- Session 1: Business meeting, then panel discussion led by Bryan Raven*
- Session 2a: Digital networks with Dom Smith and David Wolstenholme*
- Session 2b: Equity update with Robbie Butler*
- Session 3a: Wellbeing and BECTU with Jess Glaisher*
- Session 3b: Associate member engagement with John Leventhall*
- Session 4: Professional Working Practice with PWP Working Group*
- Session 5a: Students matter with Student Working Group*
- Session 5b: Collaboration From Home with Tom Wilkes*
- Session 6: Panel discussion on sustainability led by Paule Constable*
- Session 7: Social space*

(We are currently investigating ways of making the recordings available...)



Corporate members

<p>AC Entertainment Technologies 01494 446000 www.ac-et.com</p> 	<p>Christie Lites 02476 017270 www.christielites.com</p> 	<p>Elation Professional +31 45 546 85 66 www.elationlighting.eu</p> 	<p>Hawthorn 01664 821111 www.hawthorn.biz</p> 	<p>Robe UK Ltd 01604 741000 www.robeuk.com</p> 
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<p>Chauvet Professional 01773 511115 www.chauvetlighting.co.uk</p> 	<p>Eaton Lighting Systems – Zero 88 01633 838088 www.zero88.com</p> 	<p>Green Hippo 0203 301 4561 www.green-hippo.com</p> 	<p>PRG XL Video 0845 470 6400 www.prg.com/uk</p> 	<p>SLX 03300 161 300 www.slx.co.uk</p> 

Thank you for your support! For Commercial members, see the back cover.

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White Light
020 8254 4800
www.whitelight.ltd.uk



Lockdown activities

In the last issue, we asked you to send in some images and a bit of text telling us what you've been getting up to in lockdown. Thanks to all who replied!

Peter Vincent: I allocated my nine Raspberry Pi computers to the Fold for Covid project at the University of Washington. These calculations will help researchers to find proteins that bind to the "spike" protein on COVID-19. The photo shows my setup happily crunching numbers on work units which take 7-15 hours each. Fold for Covid: <https://foldforcovid.io>. 🌸



George Bach: I am taking a break from being the Associate LD on the War Horse international tour and have now been working for Iceland as a delivery driver for the last seven weeks. It's a physically exerting job but nothing like a fit up, but it does get me out and about at the moment, so I can't complain! Here's a photo taken on my first day all those weeks ago. 🌸



Lockdown activities

Jason Addison: When the theatres closed, I was actually at home. We had planned as a family to have that week off work to sort the house out ready for the arrival of our new baby. Since then I've been lucky enough to find some temporary work three days a week at Heron Food's warehouse sending stock to their stores all over the country. The rest of the week I've been filling my time looking after my three-year-old daughter, gardening, streaming theatre and reading plays, taking part in numerous Zoom events and working my way through various online training courses. [Editor's note: Congrats to Jason on the birth of his second daughter since this was written!] 🌸



Robert Lloyd: I have been baking bread and cakes, trying new recipes and cooking trusty old favourites. I grew up baking with family, and it's been nice to spend time baking with my wife and four-year-old son. I also challenged myself to run three marathons in three weeks and I did it! I'm now coming up with plans to do a charity event for one of the industry charities. 🌸



Warren Letton: Thought I'd share what Helen Willis and I have been up to during lockdown. Apart from an immense amount of gardening and ticking off a lot of the normally ignored home jobs list, we've found that procrastination does eventually wear off and we've started decorating! Also, we're still keeping our hand in the lighting world by illuminating the house each Thursday (including making my own dichroic etched glass gobo...it's been a while since I've had to make my own!). 🌸



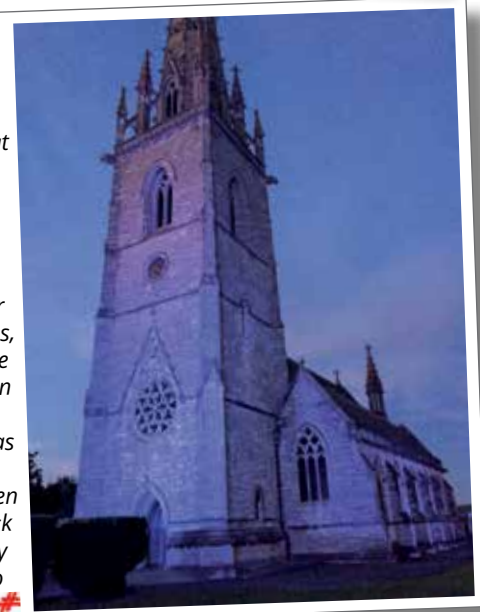
Andrew Ellis: Midway through a UK tour that was cancelled in early March, I applied straight away to Tesco.com and am now working as a delivery driver out of one of their big distribution centres for South East London and Kent. 🌸



Fridthjofur "Fiffi" Thorsteinsson: By the Ides of March, I travelled to Iceland to attend my father's 60th birthday party and put a new play into the Icelandic National Theatre. Neither happened – and I am still here! As soon as lockdown struck, I gathered a group of great people that ran a series of free online workshops while the situation took shape. We did all sort of things, including Vectorworks, AutoCAD – and making bagels! I've taken part in various online discussions as well, but as the outbreak was well managed in Iceland, I have been fairly free to move around. I have been awarded two grants for a start-up idea, helped revamping Iceland's main queer bar and now on my way to prepare the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Freezer theatre! 🌸

Tom Wilkes: During the lockdown period we've had an 80% reduction in work which has led to us furloughing most of our staff three weeks off and one week on. It's a happy medium from switching off/losing touch altogether and trying to muddle through. During my furlough time I've been busy with volunteering projects. It's a wonderful way to keep yourself occupied. My time was split between helping vulnerable neighbours, creating a local "get to know each other" circular for the local village, and the ALD. All of which have been hugely rewarding. 🌸

Will Evans: When someone posted on our local town Facebook page that it would be nice to light up the town's castle in blue to show support and thanks to the NHS, I mentioned I might be able to help and received a call from the town council that evening! After some trials to find the "right" blue out of my gel stock, I found the right balance between colour and transmission. I settled on Lee 200 which was the best compromise between an "NHS blue" and actually getting some light on the building! I was then approached by the local vicar to see if I could do a few local prominent churches, and I was happy to help (and happy to have some lighting to do after my diary rapidly cleared within a week!). I then set about seeing what I could do with my meagre resources. The largest church was the Marble Church in Bodelwyddan, a local landmark right by the A55. Fortunately, Andy Cullen at White Light let me buy up their remaining stock of L200 – so apologies if you can't get hold of any when normal service resumes; it's all attached to large floodlights in a North Wales church yard! 🌸



Relaxed performances

Stuart Porter explains how to adapt your show

Having worked in theatre for a long time, I wanted to share a recent experience with you that turned out to be one of the most fulfilling moments of my career. In January, I was asked, as the associate lighting designer, if I would assist with a relaxed performance of *School of Rock*, for the charity Mousetrap Theatre Projects.

A relaxed performance is for people with autism, learning disabilities or other sensory and communication needs, who would benefit from a more relaxed environment. As you can imagine, making a performance suitable takes a lot of planning, especially if the show is a rock musical, like *School of Rock*.

At the first meeting I had with Mousetrap, they were very clear about the requirements, stressing how important it was for the audience for us to get things right. It is hard to imagine that either everything you see visually is harder to process, or that the strength of what you are seeing is magnified tenfold. It is my understanding that if you have a sensory processing disorder and you see fast changes of light or sudden snaps, you have difficulty processing this information

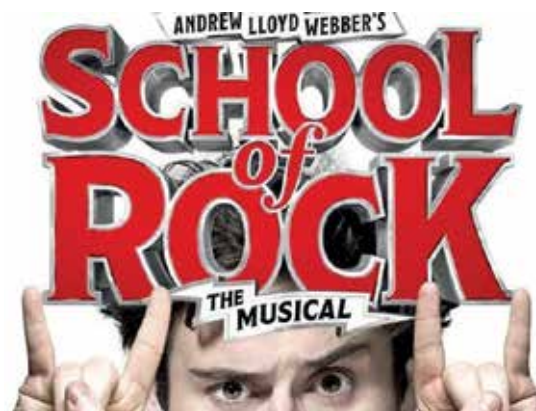
and your mind becomes overloaded. Added to this, an increased sensitivity means that sounds become louder and clearer. All these factors build a stressful environment for the individual. The brief was to remove any sudden changes that would cause distress, but to keep the overall integrity of the show.

This sounded like a daunting task, especially for a show where the final 20 minutes is set in a rock venue. We also had to make certain that the impact of the changes were minimal for the cast, as they still had to perform safely. All of this was going to take some time, so I organised a plotting day, brought back the full-size EOS TI and a programmer, which was generously sponsored by RUG and PRG. It was important that we did not eat into Mousetrap funds.

The plotting day was spent slowing everything down. We made snaps into one-second fades. We changed some of the colour of the effects and made them run slower, but importantly, they still looked like chases. We removed anything that strobed and changed

anything with a strobing effect into an intensity chase. We stopped any moving light focuses from going into the house, making sure they only reached the edge of the stage. We also plotted the house lights to stay at half, as it was important not to go to a blackout at any time. We had a Mousetrap representative with us for the day, which gave clarity to what was expected. As the day progressed, once we got the feel for the changes, it became a relatively easy process.

The proof of our work only became apparent when we watched the audience.





Every ticket for the show was allocated and an incredibly diverse audience arrived, with the excitement of being able to enjoy a rare evening out. The show requires a lot of support. Mousetrap is well organised at arranging these events and has a good number of volunteers to assist patrons, so they remain comfortable at all times.

As the performance started, we introduced Dewey, the main lead, and the kids from the show. This also allowed the audience to interact with the cast, so they felt a connection with the show straight away. Everyone involved with the show had to work together to successfully deliver this version: the sound team kept the volume as constant as they could, and with the smoother lighting, the audience

enjoyed a truly relaxed evening, a time for them to be themselves and safely enjoy a great show. The feedback from the parents afterwards was amazing, which made all our efforts so worthwhile.

To make this happen you need the support of the producers and a determination to make it work. If you ever have the opportunity to be involved in a relaxed performance (please let there be more of them), do not fear it, but look at it as an opportunity to make the show suitable for a fantastically appreciative audience, none of whom have chosen to have a disability. 🍷

*Production photographs:
School of Rock
Gillian Lynne Theatre
Director: Laurence Connor
Designer: Anna Louizos
Lighting designer: Natasha Katz
Associate lighting designer: Stuart Porter*

An open letter in support of the live events industry

White Light MD [Bryan Raven](#) voices concerns to the UK government

The live events industry, which includes music, theatre, corporate events, festivals and live broadcasts, was among the first to be closed down by the COVID-19 pandemic and will be the last to return to normality. This is a global issue.

Both the producers of live events but also the suppliers to live events need help. It is critical to consider the entire ecology of the live events supply chain when designing business support mechanisms.

In collaboration with a number of industry colleagues I have outlined a ten-point plan for help we need from the UK government.

Key points:

1. Live events are pretty much impossible until the 2m social distancing rule is either unnecessary or relaxed – **2m distance needs to be advisory in conjunction with face covering and hygiene** (in combination with testing), NOT compulsory. Until the 2m distancing requirement is reduced or, eventually, removed, many live events will not be financially viable.

2. **Need to recognise the supply chain to industries/sectors that are still closed**

– and therefore offer support especially in those sectors that use theatres and live music venues, which will be closed until the requirement for social distancing has ended (at the moment supply chain companies often don't qualify for any of the business rates support due to being too large and not being listed as an entertainment venue). The closure impacts not only on the venues but also on the diverse supply chain, which includes UK manufacturers, distributors, rental and production companies, as well as a large network of freelancers. This whole ecosystem is required for the live events sector to function and be commercially viable.

3. **Offer support for COVID-19 related costs** such as additional H&S precautions, PPE, increased costs of working.

4. **Withdrawal of the JRS/furlough scheme needs to be phased per sector** – you can't treat the live events industry the same as, say, construction or manufacturing industries in terms of timescale. Full support is required until the work recommences.

5. **Support for the freelance community** – over 70% of the creative sector is self-employed and there are too many “gaps”

in the current support for self-employed workers. Again, support by sector needs to be considered when reducing or removing support measures.

6. **Support is needed for our customers** (theatre producers, music promoters, events organisers, broadcasters, venues, etc.) to produce more “content” (that we can then supply) – they need tax relief on their set up costs (e.g. increase theatre tax relief to 50%), and they need assistance with insurance (e.g. offer cancellation insurance if productions have to cancel as a result of a second wave of COVID-19). We need to ensure that any help to producers, etc. encourages them to produce more shows. Another suggestion is to remove VAT from ticket revenue.

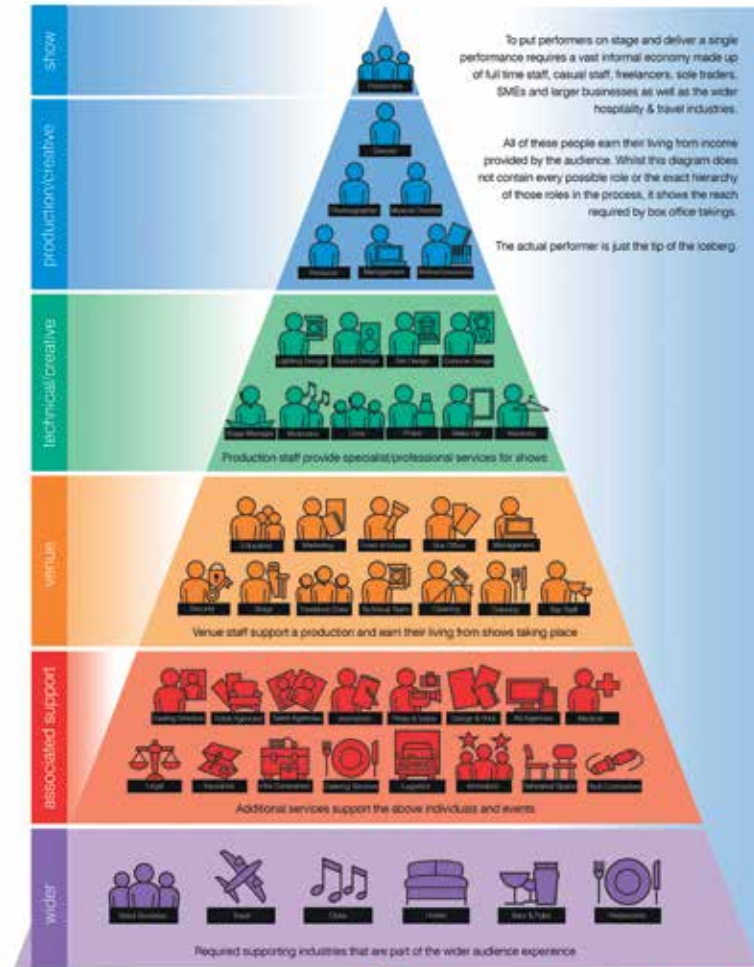
7. **Extend “time to pay”** for VAT, PAYE, etc. until twelve months after the activity for that particular business returns, not 31 March 2021.

8. **Pressure on commercial landlords** to offer rental holidays for affected businesses (not just deferments) as well as getting banks to offer sensible commercial mortgage holidays.

9. **Increase corporation tax** so that those companies who ARE able to make a profit

THE THEATRE ECONOMY

"What you see on stage is just the tip of the iceberg"



can contribute to the costs of the support of the other industries/sectors that are hit the hardest by the Covid-19 crisis.

10. In the absence of a tenth point there is the obvious request: **Come up with a vaccine** so that the world can return to normal.

With the exception of the furlough scheme (for which we are incredibly grateful) all the support we at White Light (and other supply companies) have been offered is in the form of deferments or loans, i.e. delayed payments or additional debt; we have received no waivers or grants. If the UK live events industry is to survive and return to be global leaders then it will need its suppliers.

Please share, copy, adapt and enhance on these requests and pass on to anyone who you think might be able to support the supply chain to one of the most important industries in the UK.

Kind regards,

Bryan Raven
Managing Director White Light Ltd
Bryan.Raven@WhiteLight.Ltd.uk 🇬🇧

June/July 2020 - "More art, less tools..."

ALD awards

This year's awards are now open for entries

Aimed at all students and recent graduates studying in the UK, the ALD Awards for Excellence offers the perfect opportunity for the ambitious to raise their profile in 2020.

The awards are a celebration of imaginative and creative lighting and video production and represent a chance for young practitioners to showcase their talent, bringing their work to the attention of experienced lighting and video designers, as well to the wider reach of industry professionals. Awards are presented to those who demonstrate strong, imaginative and creative lighting or video designs or skill in production electrics.

Johanna Town, Chair of the ALD, encourages all young designers in further education to apply: "The ALD's Awards for Excellence are so important to a designer's future. To be able to sell your ideas and passions for a design or methodology to other industry leaders is an important skill."

The awards are now open for submissions from students studying in the UK, recent graduates from 2018 onwards or corresponding affiliate members of the ALD, in the following categories:

The Michael Northen Award for Lighting Design (sponsored by the Mousetrap Foundation and Vectorworks UK)

Prizes:

- £250 cash
- A copy of *Northen Lights*
- One-year Vectorworks licence
- Industry mentor pairing*

The ALD Award for Excellence in Video Design (sponsored by Blue-i Media)

Prizes:

- £500 cash
- Industry mentor pairing*
- £1,250 hire credit from Blue-i**



The Fred Foster Award for Production Electrics

Prizes:

- £250 cash
- Subscription to Moving Light Assistant
- Industry mentor pairing*
- One year ALD public liability insurance

This award is dedicated to the late ETC CEO, Fred Foster.

** The ALD's mentoring package will put you "under the wing" of a professional designer/production electrician who will be on hand to give you advice and direction with your work. You'll have access to working professionals who will be able to speak on the phone, answer emails and meet up for coffee.*

*** Subject to inventory availability, equipment and required connectivity. Does not include any "direct out of pocket costs" (for example, transportation, labour, consumables, insurance cover, etc.).*

An esteemed panel of judges will deliberate over submissions to decide the deserving winners. Awards will be presented at the annual Lighting Lunch to be held in London in December 2020. This is a fantastic opportunity to network with designers, chief and production electricians, engineers, programmers and of course suppliers such as Hawthorn, White Light, Blue-i Theatre Technology, ACEntertainment, SLX Media and PRG XL Video.

By taking part in these awards, you are bringing both you and your work to the attention of experienced lighting and video practitioners, as well as other industry professionals who are all on the judging panel.

The work of the winners will be showcased through a series of press releases within industry media outlets including in *Focus*. However, the taking part is just as important. Invaluable feedback on your portfolio will see you creating a more professional impression to stand you in good stead of not only winning in future years but gaining the best work available through the most insightful presentation of your work and abilities.

The full criteria, including checklists, for submission to each award can be found on the ALD website: www.ald.org.uk/awards/awards-for-excellence.

The awards are open NOW and all submissions MUST be received before the closing date of midnight on **Friday 31 July 2020**.

To stay updated on the latest awards news and to receive portfolio tips, sign up at www.ald.org.uk/about/awards.

If you have any further questions or require any help and/or advice creating your digital portfolio, please don't hesitate to get in contact via the awards@ald.org.uk email address.

There is also both the "Student ALD" and "ALD Members" Facebook pages which are filled with both young and long-established professionals who will all be able to help with ideas and/or suggestions for your entry.

It is imperative that all submissions strictly conform to the regulations set out in the guidelines listed at www.ald.org.uk/awards/awards-for-excellence. The judging panel aims to provide feedback on all submissions where possible for unsuccessful applicants to develop their portfolios for future professional use, as well as re-submitting the following year.

The work of past winners can be seen in back issues of *Focus* (available to download at www.ald.org.uk/focus). Previous winners (in the last five years) include:

2015

Adam Murdoch (Michael Northen award)
Joe Price (Francis Reid award)
Robbie Butler (ETC award)
Iain Syme (Video design award)

2016

Rory Beaton (Michael Northen award)
Sana Yamaguchi (Francis Reid award)
Jai Morjaria (ETC award)

2017

Jack Coleman (Michael Northen award)
Jess Bernberg (Francis Reid award)
Hector Murray (ETC award)

2018

Sophie Bailey (Michael Northen award)
Bethany Gupwell (Francis Reid award)
Johanne Jensen (ETC award)
Ruben Plaza Garcia (Video design award)

2019

Lucía Sánchez Roldán (Michael Northen award)
Ryan Joseph Stafford (Michael Northen award)
Rohan McDermott (Fred Foster award)
Tracey Gibbs (Blue-i Media award) 🇬🇧

Blackout

Results from the groundbreaking mental health study

This study was undertaken by Dr Paul Hanna at the University of Surrey, following Mig Burgess' immersive *Blackout* installation (covered in the June/July 2019 issue of *Focus*).

Mental health problems are becoming more prevalent in contemporary society. Work and employment show consistent links with mental health and wellbeing. The technical backstage entertainment industry is one employment context with a specific set of demands on its workforce. This evaluation provides an insight into mental health prevalence, attitudes, and support within the UK technical backstage entertainment industry.

With mental health problems affecting one in four people in any given year, and workplaces offering both the possibility to accentuate or potentially help such issues, mental health in the workplace is an important issue for contemporary societies. Commissioned by five technical backstage entertainment industry organisations – Association of Lighting Designers (ALD); Association of Sound Designers (ASD); PLASA; Production Services Association (PSA); and Association of British Theatre

Technicians (ABTT) – this evaluation sought to establish mental health prevalence rates, working conditions and mental health, stigma and attitudes towards mental health, and mental health support within the technical backstage entertainment industry. Presenting the analysis of quantitative data obtained from 1,302 individuals working/training in the technical backstage entertainment industry this evaluation found the following:

- 58.7% of the sample stated that they currently, or have previously had, a mental health problem.
- Mental health disproportionately affects more females (71.1%) in the sample than males (54.2%).
- Individuals under the age of 45 reported proportionately more current or previous mental health problems than any other age groups.
- 54.5% of participants stated that they had their mental health issue before starting work in the industry.
- Working conditions within the industry were seen to contribute to mental health problems.

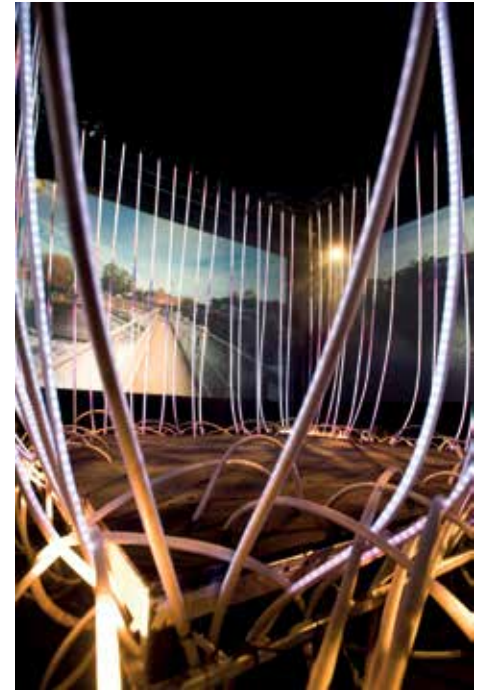
- Participants reported high rates of mental health stigma (69.8%) and experiences of negative attitudes (59.8%) towards mental health within the industry.
- Those with a current or previous mental health issue reported higher rates of stigma and negative attitudes than those without mental health issues.
- The NHS and private healthcare providers were the main source of support for mental health issues with little awareness of industry-specific support.
- Access to support was seen as the most important factor to enable individuals to cope with mental health difficulties.
- 69.5% of individuals felt that they would be able to recognise if a colleague was suffering from mental health difficulties.
- 66.6% felt capable to help a colleague if they disclosed a mental health issue to them.
- Understanding, awareness and education were also seen as most important factors to enable helping others.
- 50% of the sample was aware of mental health first aid training, and 80 participants had undertaken the training.

The report's recommendations therefore include:

- Further research is needed to establish the gendered difference in mental health prevalence, including in-depth qualitative research exploring experiences of being male and female in the industry.
- An evaluation is needed specifically focusing on substance misuse and addictive behaviours within the industry.
- Further work is needed to explore in more detail the link between mental health, working conditions, and the possibility that the industry attracts individuals with existing mental health problems.
- Develop industry strategies to promote positive mental health and wellbeing to reduce the 45.5% rate of individuals developing mental health problems since joining the industry.
- Industry-level initiatives are needed to tackle stigma and negative attitudes towards mental health.
- Further investigation into the complexities surrounding those without a mental health problem feeling that stigma and negative attitudes are not as prominent as those with a mental health problem.

- Initiatives needed to enhance communication of mental health problems with managers.
- Produce industry-level policy to ensure that time off for mental health problems is granted and not viewed in a negative light.
- Formulate a communication campaign to raise awareness of the current industry mental health support provision.
- Explore the possibility of developing industry-specific computerised CBT.
- Explore the possibility of offering industry-funded group therapy sessions.
- Increase understanding, education and awareness of mental health within the industry through communication campaigns.
- Conduct a full evaluation of mental health first aid training within the industry in terms of mental health education, awareness, stigma reduction, helping behaviours and effectiveness for recipients of the support.

The full report (from which the above text is taken) is available to download at <https://bit.ly/3hPxVIZ>. 📄



Blackout

Director: Simon Anderson

Lighting designer: Paul Burgess

Video designer: Finn Ross

Sound designer: Zoe Milton

Production logistics and programmer: Michael Fox

Video system tech: Oli Hancock

Photographer: Steve Porter

Created by Mig Burgess (production electrician, lighting designer and lighting tutor at Guildford School of Acting)

The Worshipful Company of Lightmongers

This year's award winners

The Worshipful Company of Lightmongers is one of the modern livery companies. Its aim is to maintain a thriving livery company, bringing all the different sectors of the lighting industry together, under four pillars of activity.

Fellowship: A place where the industry can come together to meet a wide variety of people involved in, or linked to, the lighting industry in convivial surroundings.

Charity: Enriching both our lives by giving and the lives of others in receiving, through our charitable trust.

Education: Encouraging apprenticeships in lighting, providing financial awards to top students and providing merit awards for exceptional performance to members of our military affiliations.

Hospitality: Through a programme of social activities to host partners and guests both personal and business, in impressive venues, such as the wonderful Mansion House.

The Lightmongers Prize for new talent in Entertainment Lighting is for graduates working in the entertainment lighting area in the first five years of employment working in the live performance area. A submission and portfolio including CV has to be submitted.

We are pleased to announce that this year the award, which is given in conjunction with the ALD, is recognising a programmer/ associate lighting designer and a production electrician. This year's winners are Tamykha Patterson and Jack Ryan.

The awards were presented at a virtual meeting of the Worshipful Company of Lightmongers on 23 June. 🍀



Tamykha Patterson

Tamykha is a freelance lighting programmer and assistant lighting designer. Tamykha's career began as a technical theatre apprentice at New Wimbledon Theatre and continued to blossom after she was successful in her application for a lighting technician development role at National Theatre. Based in the Lyttelton Theatre, Tamykha worked on a number of productions including *Angels in America*, *Network* and *Pinocchio*.

After her contract ended, Tamykha secured her first job as an assistant lighting designer on *Tina – The Tina Turner Musical*. She then re-joined the National Theatre as a lighting technician in the Olivier Theatre, where she worked on many productions including *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Pericles* and *Small Island*.

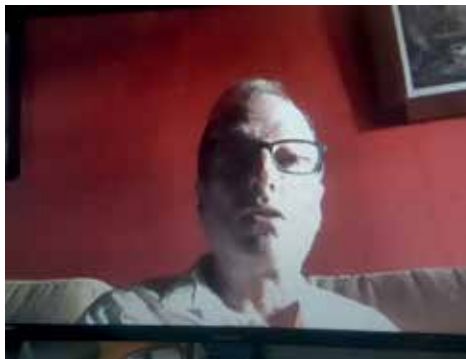
Tamykha's career goals include becoming a successful international lighting programmer and associate lighting designer, and a mentor to support and encourage women and BAME new talent into the industry.



Jack Ryan

Jack's work spans many different aspects of the industry. Since graduating from Guildhall School of Music and Drama, he has gone on to undertake numerous roles including chief electrician/reighter for Rambert Dance Company, a job that has since seen him working both in the UK and internationally with a number of renowned lighting designers. He also regularly acts as a lighting programmer to a range of designers for companies including Qdos Entertainment; Selladoor; Immersion Theatrical; and multiple seasons with English Touring Opera.

Previous design credits include several corporate projects for Smyle with companies



Above left: Rick Fisher introducing the award at the ceremony.

Above right: Peter Harris of the Worshipful Company of Lightmongers presenting the awards. Right: Jack Ryan with his award.

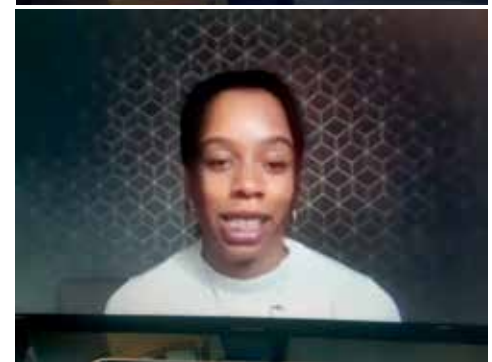
Bottom: Tamykha Patterson.

Photos courtesy of Ian Saunders



















such as BMW, Samsung and Abbey Road Studios (artists include AlunaGeorge and Gavin DeGraw); *Blood Upon the Rose* (Hammersmith Apollo, SEC Armadillo, the Gaeity Theatre); regular designs for a range of performances at Union Chapel, Islington; and a live tour with musician Crawford Mack.

Jack has also carried out extensive work at London's Old Vic Theatre and has provided lighting visualisation, installations and immersive work to a range of clients both in the UK and further afield.

In addition to his own work, Jack continues to regularly act as a programming mentor for Guildhall School of Music and Drama. 🍷



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