

FOCUS

ALPD #

The journal of the Association for Lighting Production and Design
June/July 2023

In the 100th issue:

- Prague Quadrennial
- Tributes to Lennie Tucker
- Making sustainable productions
- The past, present and future of Focus
...and much, much more...

Price to non-members £5.00

*Dido and Aeneas
Grange Festival Opera
Director: Daniel Slater
Designer: Robert Innes Hopkins
Lighting designer: Johanna Town
Associate lighting designer: David Ayton
Video designer: Nina Dunn
Photographer: Craig Fuller*

Dancers: Hayley Chilvers, Electra, Fiona Macbride, Blair Moore, Holly Saw

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The past, present and future of Focus.

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From the chair...

Welcome to the 100th edition of Focus – “More Art, Less Tools” – the tagline adopted 100 issues ago by Andy Collier, our then editor of Focus.

Focus has had many formats over the years and many editors. But “More Art, Less Tools” is the magazine I have grown up with. I joined the Exec around the same time and soon became the association's Professional rep, a position that came with the expectation of a bi-monthly report on the industry and what's happening. As someone who had avoided writing most of my life (and was one of the reasons for my love of lighting) this was a constant dread that needed to be managed, supported and encouraged, first by Andy and most recently by Kelli. I can't believe I have written in nearly 100 issues and that I now send them off – usually late but rarely re-written!

Our 100th edition is to be celebrated, but I am also sad that it will be Kelli's final Focus. After an amazing ten years of editorial, Kelli is hanging

up her Focus pencil. Kelli has been a brilliant editor over the past ten years bringing you some fantastic articles and news stories as well as making sure people like me actually manage to put pen to paper, which is sometimes no mean feat! Kelli stepped in and took over Focus temporarily after the sad passing of Andy Collier in 2013, while doing her MA. She has kept us vibrant and in print for all that time, completing her MA and then a PhD, and writing several books including the ALPD's sixty-year history, which will be out soon. Kelli has also managed to maintain her lighting career and start a new career as an educator. She's been busy and yet she has still produced a magazine six times a year that we are really proud of. I know the Exec, along with the whole ALPD membership, will wish to thank her for all the hours she has put in, for all the fabulous articles she has researched and for the constant heckling to her regular

Johanna Town
ALPD chair



contributors, like me – a big thank you from me and our membership.

With every change there also comes a new beginning, and I would like to introduce you to Arnim Friess, our new editor. Arnim is a lighting and video designer with a wide interest in lighting anything that moves. Arnim ran away to the theatre after leaving a journalism career in Germany as he thought a week in tech would be less stressful! We are looking forward to all his ideas as Focus continues to develop and embrace the latest technologies.

So farewell, Kelli, and a personal thank you from me for keeping this vital part of the ALPD alive for all those years. Good luck in your future endeavours, and we look forward to hearing from you as a contributor soon! Welcome, Arnim.

The ALPD at the Prague Quadrennial

Joe Price, Tom Lightbody and Mig Burgess report from Prague



In June, we travelled to the 2023 edition of the Prague Quadrennial (PQ) on behalf of the ALPD, hosting a day-long takeover of the UK's "Hello Stranger" exhibit, which was expertly curated by Kathrine Sandys and Lucy Thornett on behalf of the SBTD as part of the national exhibition project for 2019–2023.

This edition of the national exhibition is about welcoming designers, makers and audiences back, to catch up on the landscape of UK performance design. It's a chance to reconnect, be together, and reach out to new communities and audiences. Hence the name Hello Stranger! The project emphasises responsivity and openness in the context of a changing world. As we emerge from the pandemic and face up to the climate crisis, legacies of inequality, global conflict and the increasing prevalence of digital technologies in our lives, we face a

changed landscape for performance design and scenography.

As part of our takeover the ALPD conducted three discussions, covering the topics of environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing in our industry, and concluding with a panel hosted by Scott Palmer and Katherine Graham centring around their recently published book *Contemporary Performance Lighting*, which they co-edited with Kelli Zezulka.

First up was a small panel discussion focused on the sustainability of product and manufacturing, chaired by Tom, with panellist Dave Whitehouse joining us from Czech manufacturer Robe, Matthew Wright of Martin connecting via Zoom, and Mig joining as well to offer her insight as a production electrician and educator.

This was a fascinating discussion, with topics ranging from what is

currently being done specifically with regard to environmental responsibility at Martin and Robe, to what we can all do more broadly to encourage sustainable practice in our industry.

It was clear that we can't rely exclusively on manufacturers to assume responsibility for our industry's response to the climate crisis. As designers and electricians we have an obligation to consider the sustainability of the products we use, and more importantly the ones we WANT to use, and to feed that back to the people who make them. That could mean effective and responsive standby modes, or smaller, lighter units that require less space and fuel to transport, or any number of other things.

The second discussion, on the sustainability of careers and wellbeing, featured a conversation between Joe and Mig discussing the

incredible work she has done over the last few years, through detailed studies and surveys, which have helped to inform new guidelines on workplace standards and wellbeing produced through the ABTT.

Mig guided the audience through her recent achievements, including the highly acclaimed *Blackout* installation, the two sets of ABTT industry mental health and wellbeing guidance notes, mental health first aid training and instructing, and her most recent research into recruitment and retention which was presented at the Make A Difference conference in April of this year.

The session, which offered an opportunity for audience members to respond and put forward their own ideas and questions, produced some intriguing provocations, such as why we should risk assess mental health, how we can reduce the stigma around these topics, and how we can

The ALPD at the Prague Quadrennial

Joe Price, Tom Lightbody and Mig Burgess

increase the number of discussions taking place on an international stage such as those at PQ.

The final discussion, hosted by Scott Palmer and Katherine Graham, was well attended by members of the lighting community from across the globe, including Psyche Chui, Michael Breiner, David Shearing and Yaron Shydkrot, who were all contributors to *Contemporary Performance Lighting*.

The creative, yet light-hearted, session posed a number of provocations such as “What can light do?” and “What is a cue?”, which all members of the audience were encouraged to respond to. A particularly poignant thought that was highlighted was that we are all in light all of the time, but there are only a small minority of us that are truly aware of that and inspired by this experience.

For those of you who perhaps aren't so familiar with PQ, it takes place over ten days, once every four years, across a number of locations in Prague. This year the main site was at the Holešovice Market in the former meat packing district, and the site itself is as grungy as you would expect: rough around the edges but with some real gems in and amongst. As a backdrop it really served to make the various exhibits stand out, some in stark contrast with the environment, but others just somehow belonging.

The market site felt busy for much of the day, but never to the point of being

crowded. It was reminiscent of the Edinburgh Fringe, but far more relaxed with fewer people and much less hustle! One of the loveliest things was bumping unexpectedly into friends and colleagues – predominantly set and costume



The ALPD sustainability in lighting session
Photographer: Joe Price

designers – which brought an extra warmth to the whole experience.

Even with ten days, rather than the three we had, it would have been impossible to really see and experience everything. The sheer volume of work was somewhat overwhelming, but realising this it was possible to just keep exploring until something really captured the imagination.

There was a real variety to the exhibits, ranging from straightforward portfolio style presentations of theatrical design work (Morocco) to performance pieces (Ireland) to immersive installations (Denmark) to interactive digital theatre (Thailand) to a live punk gig during which the lead singer was tattooed while he sang... (Belgium). There was also a strong representation from countries with indigenous populations, including a number of South American countries



as well as the USA and Australia, exploring how indigenous cultures are often overlooked by the mainstream and how they influence the broader culture of each nation.

One exhibit that was particularly moving was the Ukrainian installation, hidden slightly away at the back of one of the larger halls.

Half a dozen small pieces sat on a turfed space, which as the week wore on became more and more trampled, symbolic of the attrition of the ongoing war. Each work spoke strongly of the struggles of the Ukrainian people, but also of their hope, and their will to fight on. One piece in particular hit hard.

The ALPD at the Prague Quadrennial

Joe Price, Tom Lightbody and Mig Burgess

A set of scales was balanced with everyday objects on one side - some headphones, a train ticket, a mug with the slogan "World's Best Dad" - and empty ammunition cases on the other. Ever wondered how many spent rounds it takes to outweigh "World's Best Dad"? Not many. The weight of war is significant, but the power of art is immeasurable and the Ukrainian people recognise that.

Formerly the Prague Quadrennial of Scenography and Theatre Architecture, PQ rebranded in 2011 to become the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Despite this change it still feels heavily geared towards the physical aspects of design, scenography and costume, with relatively little focus on light and what part it can play in enhancing, or even driving, an installation.

There were exceptions to this. For example, the Czech exhibit

was formed of a series of realistic corridors, narrowed down to 30cm or so - just wide enough to squeeze down - which were beautifully enhanced with appropriate lighting, telling us we were in a hotel corridor, or on the way to the loo in a basement bar. In an office, or up on the third floor of an apartment block. Upstairs in a dingy restaurant that might not *quite* be what it seems. Or, more terrifyingly, in an abandoned factory with the light occasionally flickering on to reveal black hooded figure crouched in the dark.

The Romanian, Dutch, and Brazilian exhibits also featured interactive lighting elements such as a tunnel of fibre optic lights, and opportunities to appreciate the often beautiful way in which light interacts with water. Or the Portuguese exhibit, again a corridor but this time reminiscent of Kusama's Infinity

Rooms. Mirrored on the inside and decked throughout with clusters of fibre optics, brushing you as you walked past trying to work out which way to turn.

Alongside the exhibitions was a full schedule of TED-style talks, including panel discussions and a daily keynote. Again the majority of these were focused on physical design - there was a whole day on ecoscenography, for example - but one did focus on lighting. Scott Palmer moderated a talk entitled *Thinking Light: International Perspectives on Light in Performance*, which featured Michael Breiner, Amy Chan, Tamara Figueroa AS and Katherine Graham as speakers.

Each panellist delivered a short yet fascinating insight into their own practice and research. Michael Breiner discussed his affection for darkness and shadows and informed

Amy Chan presenting as part of the
Thinking Light panel
Photographer: Joe Price



us that spending forty-five minutes in darkness increases the production of hormones in the eyes which make light seem brighter, as explored in a project of his where the lighting was able to be run around 70% dimmer following this meditative time spent in the dark.

Amy Chan highlighted how her training in pathology worked alongside her creative practices within lighting to produce work centred around a person's ability

to shed light on certain situations. Tamara Figueroa AS showcased how the environment in her native Chile, where vast horizons meet the ocean as the sun begins to set, is a constant source of inspiration in her creative practice. Finally, Katherine Graham explored the role of light in social and political theatre, citing the examples of Katharine Williams' use of light as a feminine material in much of their work.

It was a tremendous privilege for the ALPD to be invited to take part in this leading event within the world of performance design. Our thanks go to the SBTD for their efforts in getting us there. Let's hope this is another step forwards in our continued efforts to bring greater connection and collaboration with our neighbouring practitioners and their respective unions and organisations. It is wonderful to see light increasingly being recognised as an integral element within design, not just an unnoticed necessity. We will be working hard to build our relationship with events such as PQ to further champion the work of light artists across the full breadth of our industry. 🌸

How much power do we actually use?

Rob Halliday does the calculations...

So here's an interesting question: How much power did the lighting for the show you've just done actually use?

Regardless of the kind of lights you're using, it's an interesting question and – if you're trying to figure out how to evolve your building's lighting rig to the LED future we're all being encouraged to adopt – an important one. We assume switching to LED will save us power, but actually how much? And while less power is good generally, there are the very practical questions: how much money will we save, and will it be enough to justify the high cost of all of this new LED stuff?

Turns out, it's often quite a hard question to answer. We can quickly work out what our connected load is – ten 750W Source Fours equals 7500W – but as we know we don't really use our lights like that (in fact, in most theatres if you did just turn

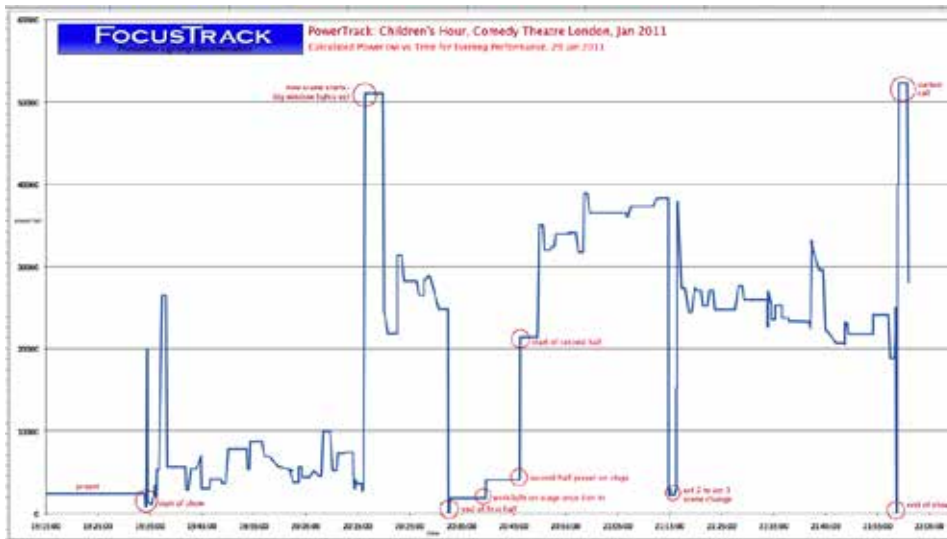
on your whole rig on at full, a big circuit breaker somewhere would trip; most theatre installations are very much designed on the principle that you'll never turn everything on at once, a methodology called "diversity"). Instead, we turn different groups of lights on to different levels, and change which lights we're using and which levels they're at from moment to moment. That is a key part of what we call lighting design.

We could, if our theatre allowed and we had the right equipment, measure our power use by connecting a monitoring device to a suitable point in the building's electricity supply and running it for the duration of one performance. Some new installations, helpfully, have this functionality built in. But most don't and, worse, in many cases the dimmers are either split between different power feeds into the building or share supplies with

other bits of equipment, whether automation or tumble dryers or ice cream fridges or air conditioning. And even if you could get a clean, "lighting only" trace, it would only answer one question: how much power did that performance use that night? What if you wanted to ask different questions, like "how much of that power use was my cyc floods?" Or hypothetical ones, like "what would the power use have been had I been using Lustr2s instead of Source Fours?"

A slightly surprising number of years ago now – twelve, I think – I built a tool to try to solve some of these problems. I called it PowerTrack, and it was built in to the FocusTrack show documentation software I'd been making for almost seven years at that point.

The premise was this: your showfile could tell you the level of each light in each cue. If you could



combine that with information about what each light was and how much power it used (which you could get from Lightwright or similar, or enter by hand), then you could calculate the power consumption of each cue, the kW figure, in effect by multiplying the percentage each tungsten light was at by its power (though after much discussion among experts, the actual calculation is more complex than that). Then, if you could figure out how long each cue was on

stage for, you could figure out how much power each cue used in a performance, the kWh figure. Add all those up and you'd have the total power used by the lighting during one performance, again in kWh. Arc lamps provided an immediate complication, since they didn't dim but were effectively always on when struck, with the twist that some went into a reduced power mode when not outputting light, so the calculations accounted for that, too.

It was pretty pleasing. We tested it on *The Children's Hour* at the Comedy Theatre in 2011, lit by Neil Austin with a big, all-tungsten rig. When you translated the numbers into a graph it became surprisingly easy to follow the show – the scene with the bright daylight through the huge window, the interval, the blackout at the end, the curtain call. Manual spot checks on the figure suggested they were about right; coincidentally, the theatre owners had Mark White in doing actual power use measurements and, while the numbers on the two graphs never quite matched, because where Mark was measuring did also include fridges and dryers and who knows what else, the shapes were very similar. It was interesting.

And it resulted in a phone call, from Katie Oman, then of the theatre consultants Fisher Dachs. Seattle Rep was considering a new theatre,

How much power do we actually use?

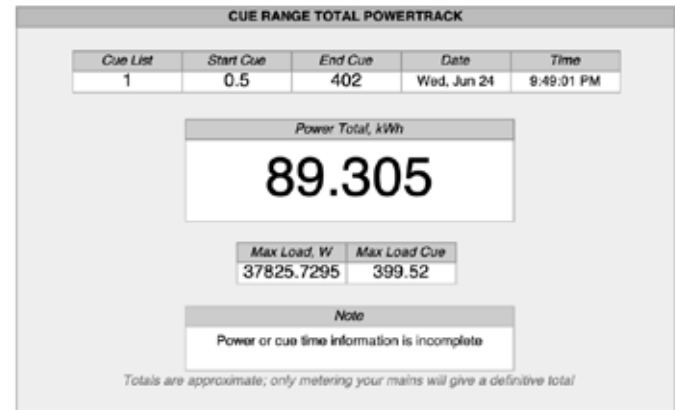
Rob Halliday

and as part of that considering LED and also having to make decisions about how much power to specify for their new theatre – a pretty standard question generally solved by the consultants looking back at past theatres, sticking their finger into the air, making an “educated” guess then rounding it up a bit for safety. Katie tracked a season’s worth of shows over Seattle’s 2011–2012 season, and again it was fascinating, with an exponential difference between the shows using the least power and those using the most. The difference, perhaps unsurprisingly in retrospect: the high-power shows all had cycs.... If you’re planning a “green season” you should consider arguing strongly to do without!

The question that had stuck with me through all of this was how much better all this LED stuff would actually make us. Trouble is, it’s hard to do a direct comparison of

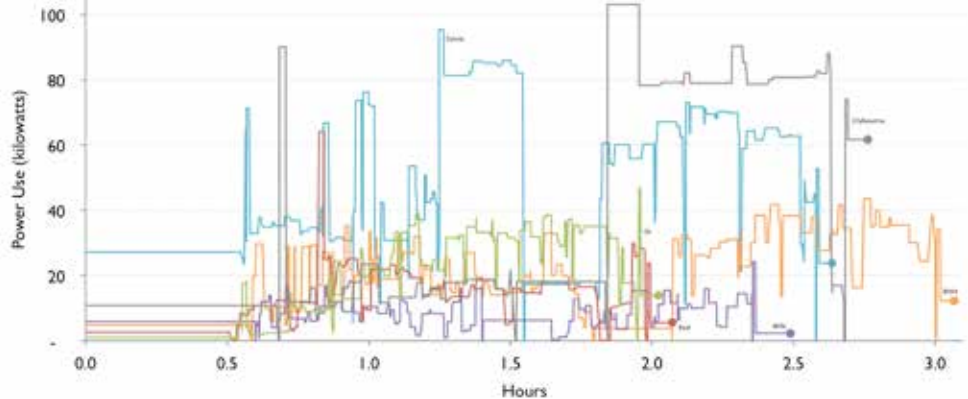
the same show with a “traditional” rig and a “new” rig, though it would make a great student lighting project if anyone was interested. But during an idle lockdown moment I realised that the current version of *Les Mis* might get us close, since lighting designer Paule Constable had evolved the rig over several years incorporating new technology each time while aiming to maintain the look of the show. Here, it turns out, is another bonus of calculating over measuring: as long as you can get the data, you can calculate retrospectively, and even when the show is not running. The *Les Mis* team was able to supply rig data, the showfile

and, crucially, Eos log files which helpfully contain show timing data – when each cue is fired. From that we were able to generate graphs for three versions of the show each using progressively more LED, and then a fourth, hypothetical version where we created an all-LED version of the show. That study ran in *LSI* magazine in 2020; you can read it at <https://tinyurl.com/LesMispower>.



Seattle Rep 2011–2012 Season: Lighting Power

analysis by Fisher Dachs Associates, using PowerTrack



Each time I've done this brings new challenges, but also new observations. Additive LED fixtures – Lustrs and the like – bring the new challenge that the power used by the fixture changes depending on what colour it's in, so to make the calculations as accurate as possible you have to start collecting that data and incorporating it into the calculations. When doing that, you start to learn the tricks some manufacturers play, particularly with throttling power in LED fixtures – i.e. if the red, blue and green chips were each 50W, you'd expect the total output in white to be 150W but it's often less because the fixture maximises the brightness in single colours but has to limit the maximum output to what its power supply or heat sink can cope with. It is noticeable in shows using fixtures that deal with this poorly that you often see lots of colour palettes

showing the programmer having to fight the light without realizing why – “201” vs “201 at 50%” vs “201 at 20%”, for example. And then standby power – the power a light uses when on but doing nothing, which seems to be on the increase in some new lighting fixtures. PowerTrack factors this in now, and it adds up quickly particularly in big rigs with lots of lights. In “dim” – low power – shows, the standby power quickly becomes quite a large percentage of the total power used by the lighting, to

the extent that you really want to consider powering off unused lights in a rep rig, and factoring standby power into decisions you make about purchasing new equipment.

Over the last year, PowerTrack has been pressed into service answering questions for new reasons. One: for a big theatre starting to plan an upgrade to its rig, trying to find out how much power its shows actually used, and how much less power they could use, we run the calculations on the show data with the real rig,

How much power do we actually use?

Rob Halliday

then switch in a hypothetical rig and run the calculations again. We factor in as much as we can – so if a Source Four in R68 is replaced by a Lustr, we set the Lustr to its power in R68, not just its full power, though we do then leave the level the same. It's slightly imperfect – but it is consistent, which is the important part when making comparisons between shows. The aim is to make this study public when we're done.

Another: a smaller theatre, which had found that some local grants might be available to help with the purchase of some new “low-energy” lighting equipment. The problem was the grant applications needed some data about what power savings new equipment might actually provide. Their panto seemed like the perfect show and, even though it had closed, the data was available and so the calculations could be made.

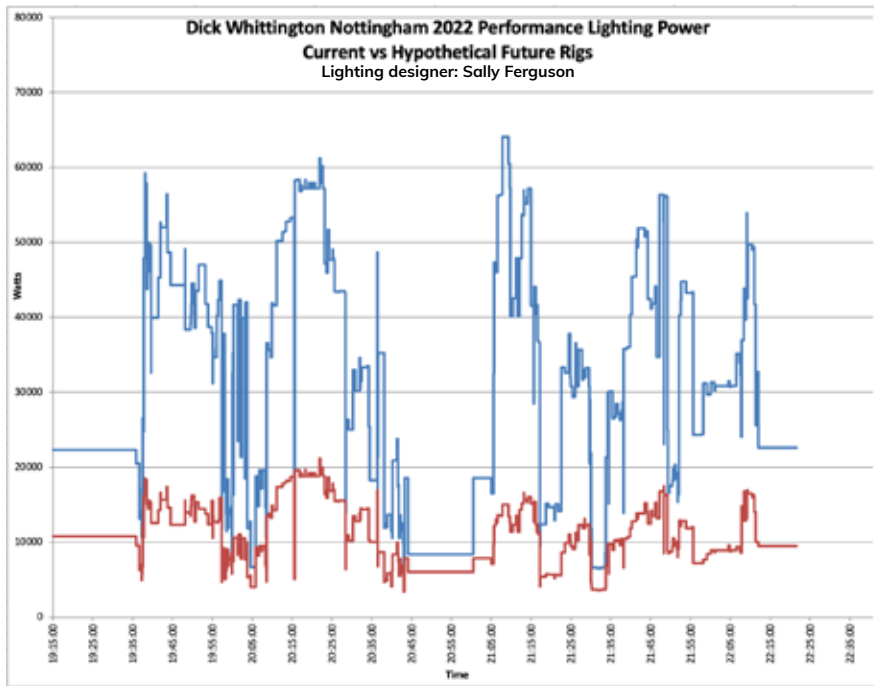
You do need to be aware that this

is a bit of a double-edged sword. “Knowledge is power” is a truism, but knowledge can also swing either way. The lighting for most shows, even with tungsten-and-arc lighting rigs, does not actually use that much power. *Children's Hour* used about 76kWh. The 2020 version of *Les Mis*, a shade under 90kWh. At 2020 electricity prices, one performance of *Les Mis* probably spent about £13 on its lighting, even at today's much higher prices it might pay £50. The hypothetical LED rig version was about 20kWh, so about £11 at today's power prices. That's a saving, but it's a lot of performances before you've paid for even one Lustr to replace one Source Four. And of course in a big building the power use even for big shows with huge cycs where you can get into the 500–600kWh range when using tungsten floods, will still be a tiny fraction of what the building uses

each day. Generally, it's the a/c that'll get you...

But still, you can demonstrate that lighting can be made more efficient, which can be no bad thing – particularly if it does help gain access to grants or other support to start transitioning to LED; it's interesting that in recent months several manufacturers have realised they can still make and sell theatre tungsten lamps, but the end will eventually come.

PowerTrack was, and is, part of FocusTrack, but the realisation over the years has been that even though the functionality is there, no one really uses it because it's just another chore to be done which, while interesting, is not directly related to keeping the show running or getting the next one on. Plus, LEDs have meant more work if you want to accurately model how they use power, since it involves either



getting data from the manufacturers, if they're prepared to share it, or taking and measuring actual devices. People would start out keen, but then just get distracted.

Which is why – if you'll excuse a blatant plug – this is now being offered as a service: delegating it to someone else means you can get on with what you're meant to be doing

it, paying to have it done tends to focus the mind in terms of collecting and supplying the information that's needed (and then responding to the requests for missing bits of information!). For a reasonable charge, depending on the scale of the show, you'll end up with a short report with some graphs showing where your show is now, where it

could be and a brief assessment of what the numbers mean. Plus, if you're amenable to the idea, your data gets added to the pool of show data, which should become useful for seeing how we're doing now and how we improve over time. This, as we've already seen with Ecodesign, can be an invaluable tool for persuading regulators that an approach they're proposing isn't necessarily the best approach; here, knowledge really is power!

You can find out more at www.entlightlab.org; don't worry, that's really just me under another URL, a new website designed to separate out the things I do that are lighting-related from the things that are actually lighting.

This is all data that might be of no use to you at all. But if it's useful, then this is still a unique but practical, efficient and versatile way of generating it. 📊

Lennie Tucker 1928-2023

Tributes to pioneering lighting designer and the NT's first lighting manager



From Richard Pilbrow:

Lennie was a dear friend and a work colleague, for so many years, back to the Old Vic days before the National. I think we met in 1960. I always thought that Lennie led the best electrics crew in London and, indeed, I dedicated my first book on stage lighting to him. I cannot remember how many problems he overcame for me. And he led a young but amazingly talented and

dedicated team: Ronny Cox, Peter Radmore, and Brian Ridley, all of whom passed away at a tragically young age, down to the amazing Laurie Clayton whom I believe only just retired.

Those were important days in our profession. Lennie set unique standards. 🍷

From Laurie Clayton:

I first met Lennie in February 1974. I was due to meet him, for an interview, at the stage door of the Old Vic at lunchtime. Jimmy, the stage door keeper, told me that Lennie was in the Vic pub next door and he would be in the corner to the right with a pint and a sandwich reading a newspaper. He was, and there was also a pint for me. The interview lasted about ten minutes and then we went inside the Old Vic to meet some of the team. They were in tech rehearsals for *The Tempest*

directed by Peter Hall. This was an amazing insight into the workings of the company. Nearly missed my train home to York, I was so enthralled. The next day I got a phone call asking when I could start. I couldn't believe my luck!

So, on 1 April 1974 I arrived back at the Old Vic to start what was to become an extraordinary career. The stage door keeper had no knowledge of me; this turned out to be an April fool's prank set up by the LX team – what a start! And the first of many japes.

Over the next two years we opened 20 new productions, mostly in a three-show rep, continuing to tour the UK and further afield. Lennie spent a lot his time between meetings about the new Southbank and looking after the Old Vic. I remember rehearsing Peter Hall's *Hamlet* on a mid-winter 1975/1976 Saturday in the bare shell of the Lyttelton, with Lennie providing



mugs of hot tea to the production desk. This was the start of pushing for the opening later that year. We ended up having a seven-show rep between the Old Vic and the Lyttelton. Plans were being finalised for the lighting rigs, equipment appraised and ordered, training on a new unfinished lighting control system, endless meetings on site and elsewhere, and budgets to be met. All part of the job of a chief electrician!

These were weeks of up to 80 hours with overnight changeovers and pre-production weekends, two-day techs, two rehearsals, preview and open, followed by plotting and changeover. When we got short of crew due to scheduling, Lennie would cover in his brown boiler suit to do whatever was needed.

Lennie was also a very good lighting designer and his advice was often sought by the creative teams.

He was a true gentleman and a great believer in everyone having an input. I am honoured to have been part of this hectic but golden period in the NT's life. So many great theatre people have contributed to this period but I think Lennie Tucker (with a T!) would be known to all.

Simply one of the best. 🌸

From Paul McLeish:

So many memories, I don't know where to start. Whether it was 1975, sitting at the production desk at the Old Vic hearing Lennie adjusting the lighting for *Plunder*, but not being able to see a thing changing on stage (a learned skill!). Or going into his office on the fifth floor to the hummed tunes of "That Was the Week That Was" (before my time). Or him driving me home while he covered one eye to stop the double vision. Bless him, it was different in those days.

But I think it was in 1974 when he sat down with me, a then 16-year-

old boy, in the Old Vic annexe and set in place me working as a showman and attending Paddington Tech one day a week with the ABTT. He started me on the path of an amazing career.

Thanks, Lennie. 🌸

From Howard Eaton:

Lennie was a very kind man with a deep understanding and love of the theatre. His career spanned a remarkable period in British theatre which saw the creation of the National Theatre Company and the building of the South Bank theatres.

But Lennie really cared about the people he worked with. He gave many young people their start in a career and gave wonderful support to all the designers and technicians who became involved in lighting at the National, and beyond.

I lit a play at the Lyttelton when Lennie was in charge. He came in every morning to ask if I needed anything, and would always have an answer or ideas to solve any problem. He could not have been more helpful or kinder. 🌸

Lennie Tucker 1928-2023

From Lennie's son, James:

By the time he was 11, the Second World War had begun. Lennie spent much of the war in London and by 1944, around the age of 16, he was working locally in a radio factory. It was a job he really didn't like but as luck would have it someone at the factory told him they were looking for staff at the New Theatre (now called the Noel Coward Theatre) in St Martin's Lane. So he started working there instead, eventually becoming a junior electrician.

At this time the Old Vic Theatre Company had relocated to the New Theatre – as their building in Waterloo had been bombed and was unusable. Laurence Olivier, already a big film star, was playing the hunchback king in Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Lennie contributed to a book about Olivier and wrote the following about this time:

"I was 16 working as a Junior Electrician on Olivier's Richard III and I was responsible for the ghostly green lighting which accompanied the phantom's visit on the eve of Bosworth. A light had burnt out and I had replaced it with the first green I could find. Waiting in the wings preparing to go on, Olivier looked at the spot, then looked at me, and I knew I'd been sussed. There was only the most subtle change of shade but he knew the difference." So we think this must be where Lennie's perfectionism really started!

At the end of the war, Lennie went to work as a junior electrician at the newly reopened Sadler's Wells Theatre – who were beginning to stage opera and ballet again.

In 1954, Lennie left Sadler's Wells to join the Old Vic Theatre Company as chief electrician. The company had just begun a five-year season of presenting Shakespeare plays – so

big productions and with the likes of Richard Burton, Judi Dench, John Neville, Coral Browne. And as well as playing at the Old Vic, the Company went off on tour to America.

In 1963, the Old Vic transitioned into the National Theatre, under the directorship of Laurence Olivier – twenty years on from the time he had first stood next to him on the side stage at the New Theatre.

Since starting work at the Old Vic in the mid-fifties, as well as being the chief electrician, Lennie had also been designing the lighting on some of the productions and now as the company became nationalised he was being credited in the programmes for his designs. Among those early shows were *Othello* with Laurence Olivier, *The Master Builder* with Maggie Smith, and Franco Zeffereilli's *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*. 🌸

A postcard from...

Johanna Town and David Ayton, Grange Festival

Professional rep David Ayton and ALPD chair Johanna Town have been enjoying a glorious June at Grange Festival Opera, with sunshine and three operas and a brilliant lighting team (and David starting them young!). What's not to enjoy about our job?! 🍁





Office Oracle

News and information from **Amanda** and the ALPD office

Awards

Our Awards for Excellence 2023 are now open for applications and nominations. There are some changes to the awards this year: the Michael Northen Award for Lighting Design remains open to applications from current students (not just those on vocational theatre courses), Affiliate members of the association, and recent graduates (who graduated no earlier than 2021) even if they are not currently a member. But the Fred Foster Award for Production Electricians and the ALPD Award for Excellence in Programming are open for NOMINATIONS. If you know

someone deserving of recognition for the excellence of their work, why not take the time to nominate them for one of these awards? You can find more information, and the nomination forms, on our website at <https://www.thealpd.org.uk/training/alpd-awards-2023>

Membership cards

Most of you will by now have received an e-membership card from us. (If you haven't, do email office@thealpd.org.uk.) At the moment, these simply identify you as a member, with your membership number. The QR code doesn't yet lead anywhere, and there is no information on the back. What else might you like to see on the card? We could perhaps confirm on there if you use our member insurance. Let us know your thoughts.

ABTT and PLASA

It was great to meet so many members at the ABTT show. It's always good to put faces to names, and to hear your thoughts on what we're doing and what you'd like us to be doing. We have a stand at PLASA so do drop by and say hello.

Photos

Do you have any great photos we could have for publicity purposes? In particular, we'd love some photos of backstage: production electricians doing their job, a programmer working at a desk. It would help us to promote membership and enhance our website. If you have any you'd be willing for us to use, just send them in to the office.

Resources

We have an excellent range of resources created to offer advice and checklists when negotiating with producers and employers. Especially for those early in their careers, and without agents, do take advantage of these documents. You can find them under the Resources tab, or by logging in to the website, by visiting My ALPD and looking at the Filing Cabinet menu. There is a database of actual fees offered for posts, which may be useful to you – you can find it here: <https://www.thealpd.org.uk/fees-database>.

While there – visit My Shows and update your information: <https://www.thealpd.org.uk/my-shows>. And we really appreciate you inputting your own information to the Fees Database. It's useful evidence for us when we're talking to the unions. 🇬🇧

New members

Welcome!

Professional members

Stu Dingley, Lymington
Alex Frost, Reading
Brett Kasza, London
Robyn Lawes, Canterbury
Morgan Moroney, New South Wales
John Henry Thurston, Catfield
Craig West, Folkestone

Associate members

Ben Heywood, Basildon
Sam Lanning, London

Affiliate members

Laura Howard, St Albans
Cheng Keng, London
Alison McDermott, Bedford

Student members

Ollie Carroll, Cheadle
Angus A N Day, York



A lovely photo sent in by Rick Fisher, following a visit with Molly and Richard Pilbrow, Dawn Chiang and Jules Lauve

Corporate members

<p>4Wall 01254 698808 www.4wall.com</p> 	<p>CAST Group of Companies +1 (416) 597-2278 www.cast-soft.com</p> 	<p>Claypaky +39 335 72 333 72 www.claypaky.it</p> 	<p>German Light Products +49 7248927190 www.glp.de</p> 
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<p>Ambersphere Solutions 020 8992 6369 www.ambersphere.com</p> 	<p>Christie Lites 02476 017270 www.christielites.com</p> 	<p>Encore 01664 821111 www.encore-emea.com</p> 	<p>Martin Professional UK 01707 668136 www.martinpro.co.uk</p> 
<p>Ayrton Lighting www.ayrton.eu</p> 	<p>City Theatrical 020 8949 5051 www.citytheatrical.com</p> 	<p>ETC 020 8896 1000 www.etconnect.com</p> 	<p>PRG XL Video 0845 470 6400 www.prg.com/uk</p> 

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

<p>Robe UK Ltd 01604 741000 www.robeuk.com</p> 	<p>SGM Light UK 01233 460 400 www.sgmlight.com</p> 	<p>Vectorworks UK Ltd 01635 580318 www.vectorworks.net/uk</p> 
<p>Robert Juliat +33 (0)3 44 26 51 89 www.robertjuliat.com</p> 	<p>SLX 03300 161 300 www.slx.co.uk</p> 	<p>White Light 020 8254 4800 www.whitelight.ltd.uk</p> 
<p>Roscolab Ltd 020 8659 2300 www.rosco.com</p> 	<p>Sound Technology 01462 480000 www.soundtech.co.uk</p> 	
<p>Royal Opera House 020 7240 1200 www.roh.org.uk</p> 	<p>Stage Electrics 03330 142 100 www.stage-electrics.co.uk</p> 	

Professional members' shows

opening in June, July and August

June

1 Malcolm Rippeth (lighting designer) *Mitridate, re di Ponto* Garsington Opera / **2** Dylan McLean (lighting designer) *SIX: Teen Edition* The Lighthouse Studios & Arts Centre / **5** Jack Hathaway (lighting designer) *Hot in Here* Gate Theatre London / **7** Ciarán Cunningham (lighting designer) *Mansfield Park* The Watermill Theatre / **8** Thornley Thomas-Atkin (lighting designer) *The Corner Shop* Goblin The Egg, Theatre Royal Bath / **12** Jasper Anderson (lighting designer) *Yen* Backstage Theatre, Mountview / **13** Laura Howard (lighting designer) *Invisible* 59E59 – NYC / **13** Sandy McAlister (lighting designer) *Vote DLA* Grand Opera House Belfast / **13** Rohan Green (lighting designer) *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* Harrogate Theatre / **14** Daniel Carter-Brennan (lighting designer) *One Woman Show* Greenwich House Theatre, New York / **16** Kevin G Allen (lighting designer) *Through The Looking Glass* The Drill Hall, Chepstow / **16** Ciarán Cunningham (lighting designer) *Tambo & Bones* Theatre Royal Stratford East / **16** Craig West (lighting designer) *Pericles* Riverside Studios Hammersmith / **18** Malcolm Rippeth (lighting designer) *Ariadne Auf Naxos* Garsington Opera / **19** Abi Turner (lighting designer) *I F*cked You In My Spaceship* Soho Upstairs / **20** James C McFetridge (lighting designer) *Anne Boleyn* Lyric Theatre Belfast / **20** John Rainsforth (lighting designer) *Chop, Dissolve, Burn* Alphabetti Theatre, Newcastle upon Tyne / **27** Jack Hathaway (lighting designer) *WeeverFish* Webber Douglas - Royal Central School of Speech and Drama / **28** Kieron Johnson (associate lighting designer) *F*****s And Their Friends* Between Revolutions HOME Manchester / **29** Michael Grundner (lighting designer) *Elisabeth* (concert version) Schloss Schönbrunn

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

July

1 Charlie Morgan Jones (lighting designer) *Roméo et Juliette* Savonlinna Opera Festival / **2** Marty Langthorne (lighting designer) *Benched* Arts Admin / **6** Rick Fisher (lighting designer) *Carousel* Royal Academy of Music / **06** Alan Mooney (lighting programmer) *Fun Home* The Gate Theatre Dublin / **6** Anthony Arblaster (lighting designer) *Frankenstein* Blackheath Halls / **11** Alex Lewer (lighting designer) *The Apocalypse* Bear Trilogy Brockley Jack / **12** Michael Grundner (lighting designer) *Dällebach Kari* Seebühne Thun / **13** Hugo Dodsworth (lighting and projection/video designer) *The Cherry Orchard* Tobacco Factory Theatres / **13** Azusa Ono (lighting designer) *Grenfell* in the words of survivors Dorfman Theatre, National Theatre / **19** Charlie Morgan Jones (lighting designer) *La Bohème* Opera Holland Park / **19** Michael Grundner (lighting designer) *Jersey Boys* Johann-Pözl-Halle, Amstetten, Austria / **22** Malcolm Rippeth (lighting designer) *Rusalka* Santa Fe Opera / **23** Alan Mooney (touring re-lighter) *How to be a Dancer in Seventy Two* Thousand Easy Lessons The Black Box Galway / **26** Kieron Johnson (lighting designer) *On The Nature of Rabbits* Teatro alle Tese / **26** Alan Mooney (lighting designer) *The Half Moon* The Lyric Theatre, Belfast / **27** Will Evans (lighting designer) *I Believe in Unicorns* Apollo Theatre / **27** Joe Price (lighting designer) *Bitcoin Boi* Riverfront Theatre / **31** Oliver Hynds (assistant lighting designer) *Evita* In Concert Theatre Royal Drury Lane

August

2 Alan Mooney (lighting designer) *The Half Moon* Pleasance Dome, Edinburgh / **4** James C McFetridge (lighting designer) *Project Children* St Comgall's, Belfast / **4** John Rainsforth (lighting and projection/video designer) *Cinderella* The Customs House / **11** Charlie Morgan Jones (lighting designer) *Copenhagen* Opera Festival (light consultant) Festival Stage / **15** Azusa Ono (lighting designer) *A Mirror* Almeida Theatre / **21** Oliver Hynds (assistant lighting designer) *Love Never Dies* in concert Theatre Royal Drury Lane / **29** James C McFetridge (lighting designer) *The Man Who Swallowed A Dictionary* Lyric Theatre Belfast

Diary dates 2023

3–5 September PLASA Show, London*
26 September Anti-racism lighting workshop
with Jai Morjaria and Katharine Williams
https://linktr.ee/anti_racism_workshop

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

Keep up to date with members' meetings information at
www.thealpd.org.uk/meetings.

* The ALPD will have a presence at these events.

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necessarily those of the ALPD. E&OE.

A postcard from...

Jane Lalljee, Frankfurt

I'm at the English Theatre in Frankfurt. This is my first lighting design at this venue, which is a delight to work in. The show is Now and Then, which is set in a 1980s pub. The tech team could not be more helpful and accommodating, especially when there had been a mix-up about kit available and I asked them to rerig half of the rig! I am really pleased that the show looks as I imagined and that it is being warmly received by the theatre's loyal audience in Frankfurt. 🍷



Images by Martin Kaufhold

Northern lights

Charlie Morgan Jones at a Finnish castle

A bolt of lightning flashes across the top of the castle... Beautiful, enticing music floats across the lake towards me... Clowns walk down dimly lit stone passageways...

Am I transported to being an extra in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*?

No, I'm in Savonlinna, Finland, for the more-than-a-century old opera festival set in the astonishing surroundings of Olavinlinna – the northernmost medieval castle still standing.

Our *Romeo et Juliette* premiered last November at Malmö Opera – we had the best time making it. But even before we started rehearsals last year, Savonlinna Opera Festival had arranged to bring the production to them eight months later.

The spaces are vastly different. Malmö is a fairly standard theatre – a width of around 20m and a depth of around 40m. It has a large overhead moving light rig and plenty of space to store things.

The Castle, with its impressively built temporary stage, is around 40m wide and only 10m deep. There's one "overhead" lighting bar way upstage and some FOH. All the nooks and crannies have a mover or two shoved in. Plenty of lights – but not all in great places. Yes, this is a

remount, but there's a heck of a lot of work to do.

As we're opening the festival, rehearsals mostly take place on stage – with ghastly split days (10am to 2pm and 6pm to 9pm) – and I am encouraged to light over the top.





Caddie (not his real name, but loves the Cadillac car... I'm not joking!) takes his summers off from the Finnish National Opera to come and program here. He knows the space well, which lights the birds and bats particularly like to poo on, and when to take out the dreadful LED houselights in the nick of time – just before I lose my mind.

I won't bore you with the ins and outs – we had the most wonderful time working here.

We managed a mini holiday to a fancy spa hotel. We spent Midsummer on the lawn that runs to

the lake, sipping delicious wine and laughing. We spent our entire fee on steamboat rides (at least 17!). And I even managed a little

solo trip to Helsinki for two days.

If Enid Blyton had written "Five Go On A Finnish Adventure", every aspect would have been this magical work trip.

Quick as a flash it's opening night: our friends, family and agents arrive and we celebrate with a seven-minute standing ovation and a delicious supper in the King's Room at the castle. Quite the ending to this extraordinary experience.

For now, that's *Romeo et Juliette* and Finland over. I hope beyond hope that I'll get to come back to this lake paradise. 🇫🇮

Production photos:
Romeo et Juliette
Savonlinna Opera Festival
Director: Amy Lane
Associate director: Hillevi Björnsson
Set, costume and make up designer: Emma Ryott
Lighting designer: Charlie Morgan Jones
Choreographer: Michael Barry
Photographer: Jussi Silvennoinen



Shining a light on the future

ams OSRAM clarifies the LED debate

In the dynamic realm of entertainment lighting, professionals from the industry are constantly looking ahead, exploring the future of lighting technologies. Lighting technicians and designers are eager to gain insights into the potential role of all technologies. Allow us, ams OSRAM, as the leading expert in halogen and LED, to "shed some light" on this topic.

Halogen lamps are the dominant technology used in entertainment lighting and have long been admired for their distinctive qualities, such as exceptional colour rendering, a warm aesthetic, and precise dimming capabilities – halogen lamps continue to shine. Productions that aim to capture authentic colour reproduction and evoke emotional depth often find halogen lamps to be an ideal choice. Their ability to create a unique visual experience, especially in artistic and theatrical settings, ensures their continued relevance.

Adaptability and flexibility are crucial considerations for professionals in the entertainment lighting industry. The adaptability of halogen fixtures enables lighting technicians and designers to customise lighting setups to meet the diverse demands of different stages, studios, and productions. The wide range of sizes, shapes, and beam angles available in halogen lighting fixtures ensures that they can be tailored to suit any space, providing lighting professionals with greater control and creative freedom.

Despite these benefits, however, there has been a growing trend towards LED technology for the past couple of years. As we know, LED technology offers several benefits, such as a long lifespan, energy efficiency, improved environmental performance, but also gives designers more freedom for their new designs. These and a few more advantages

give us a clear sign that the future belongs to LED technology.

While LED lighting has made substantial advancements and captured the spotlight in recent years, the transition from halogen to LED is a gradual process. Many existing lighting systems and fixtures are designed for halogen lamps, making a complete shift to LED a significant investment.

Consequently, halogen lamps are expected to continue playing a prominent role until a more comprehensive transition occurs.

As sustainability becomes increasingly important, professionals in the entertainment industry are mindful of the eco-friendliness of their lighting choices. Although



halogen lamps are not as energy efficient as LEDs, they possess a distinct advantage in terms of recyclability. By utilising and adhering to recommended recycling methods, the environmental impact of halogen lamps can be minimised.

While LED fixtures are known for their superior energy efficiency, it is worth noting that halogen fixtures can potentially offer a longer lifespan due to the replaceability of the halogen lamps, making them a viable choice for certain applications. LED fixtures are composed of multiple components, including circuit boards, power supplies, fans, and LEDs, which are typically housed in a single unit. When an LED unit fails or becomes obsolete, the entire fixture often needs to be replaced, resulting in more waste. On the other hand, if a halogen bulb fails, it can be easily and inexpensively replaced without the need to discard the entire fixture. When considering environmental aspects, it is essential to weigh the energy efficiency of LED lighting against the waste generated by the disposal of entire

LED units. Ultimately, the choice between halogen and LED lighting for entertainment productions should consider a balance between performance, cost-effectiveness, and environmental impact.

The adaptability and customisation options offered by halogen fixtures, combined with their cost-effectiveness and longevity, make them a compelling choice for professionals looking for versatile and reliable lighting solutions. Lastly, while LED fixtures have made advancements in heat dissipation technology, halogen lamps have historically been preferred in demanding production environments due to their established track record of effective heat management, ensuring optimal performance and safety even under extreme conditions. While LED lighting has its own merits, professionals with deep knowledge in the field understand the enduring benefits that halogen lighting brings to the world of entertainment.

There are always discussions on the future of halogen lamps, fuelled

by the increasing popularity of LED lighting technology combined with energy efficiency legislation.

Tungsten halogen lamps used in the entertainment, airfield, medical, and other industrial industries are exempt from these regulatory acts, and due to their distinctive value, will remain desired light sources in the professional market for years to come. OSRAM stands out as a deep expert provider of these lighting solutions, continuing to make hundreds of thousands of lamps each year. 🇬🇧



Editor's note: This advertorial was written in response to Nick Moran's article, The death of tungsten, in the February/March issue of Focus, which is available to read via the members' area of the ALPD website: www.thealpd.org.uk/focus.

Making sustainable productions

Tom Lightbody interviews Johanna Town about sustainability

Back in January, ALPD Chair Johanna Town designed the lighting for the RSC production of *The Tempest*, which aimed to achieve the Theatre Green Book's baseline standard for sustainability. I asked her how she found the process.

TL: Was this the first specifically sustainable project you've worked on?

JT: No, I have worked on other sustainable projects in the past, some many years ago.

I have always been interested in lighting shows with just a few lights. However as design time has shortened over the years, and with kit lists required way before rehearsals have even started, the opportunity to really analyse what kit I am using has become harder.

I have worked on several fringe and small scale shows in the past where the use of LED lighting equipment as a sustainable way of lighting a show has been at the forefront of the production.

TL: What were your first thoughts upon hearing this was to be a wholly sustainable production?

JT: I did wonder how it would fit into the RSC light rig and structure as a venue, and what I should be looking at as part of that sustainability. I had long discussions with the director and designer about how the set and theme of the design and production sat within the remit of sustainability, and then from there had to work out what that meant with regard to the lighting rig.

The design concept and direction was to reuse and find within the RSC or existing productions, so scenery, props and costumes were recycled. The core image of the show was of a derelict theatre, left to rot with lighting and equipment lying around, conjuring a feeling of the past from which *The Tempest*, the creation of the show as an island, grew.

This therefore said to me it was a more "tungsten" production and

that LED was not at the forefront. Tom Piper, the designer, agreed, so lighting rig was predominantly tungsten with the RSC's stock LED units used but less in view.

TL: What surprised you most about the process?

JT: I think what surprised me the most was how difficult it would be, I used the standard RSC rig to light the show, adding extra kit upstage. The kit is a mixture of LED, arc and tungsten. I knew the LED would be fine, and was a main staple of the general cover with Lustrs, but the tungsten movers were quite old so any dynamic lighting would come from the arcs.

I also spent time looking through the RSC lighting stores and found more older equipment to dig out and utilise on the set. We found many set practicals, ship's lanterns, torches and some set dressing, which was a big win and meant we could really



limit what we bought especially for the show.

Some lighting props did need to be purchased to make them workable for the show, like new torches and some LED for window lights, but to counter this the rest of the LED tape used on the set and the props was taken from previous shows, and the control was all from stock.

TL: What was the most challenging aspect for you?

JT: What I didn't clearly think through was how few arcs I could have used. Once I was engrossed in the lighting of the production and the pressure of making a design through the tech period I did what I wanted to do rather than think through what that meant to the Green Book. I felt I failed in this and could have done better.

TL: What, if anything, would you approach differently next time?

JT: I would consider how much arc lighting was being used and why. Up until the tech period I had been pleased with how little stuff was made or needed to contribute to the design of the production, the footprint of the equipment used and brought in, and in terms of my personal footprint in creating the show. I was less happy with the end

result with regard to what I did and didn't use in the rig for the show.

TL: Have you been inspired to carry forward what you learned into future productions, regardless of whether they are deliberately "sustainable"?

JT: Yes, very much so. I can see now I made some mistakes. I wish I had been able to do more, but I know this and understand this now and would take that process into another production.

It's easy to get distracted by getting the look made and the job done, providing the design someone wants because the options are all available to you. I wish I had been more aware in the pressure of the moment how I was making the design and what that meant with regard to sustainability.

It is much easier to quantify your travel, your paper consumption,

Making sustainable productions

Tom Lightbody and Johanna Town

your personal footprint on a job, than stopping a design from fulfilling itself whilst under the pressure of a tech rehearsal.

TL: What advice would you give to someone in your position wanting to approach a production in a sustainable manner?

JT: You have to be very clear from start to finish about what you are using and why, take time to consider its use during the production.

TL: Did you feel any differently about the process having completed it?

JT: I feel the same as I have felt for many years about the sustainability of productions, that lighting has never really been the issue. In theatre we are actually very eco friendly. Tungsten has been around for years, and we burn very little of it during the course of a show. 90% of the casing and the element is degradable into minerals again. We buy little and we "hand-me-down" through the theatre ecosystem and have done for years. LED may run at less power and give us some amazing design tools at our fingertips but it isn't necessarily good for the planet, not in the same way as reusing a costume or a set is.



TL: Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience of this as a sustainable project?

JT: I am glad I did it and I learnt a lot about thinking about everything we do in our jobs and in the making of a show, much of which I will continue to do in the future. 🌱



Are you a production electrician or head of lighting who's been involved with a Green Book production? We'd love to know how you found the experience – email tom.lightbody@thealpd.org.uk. 🌲

PLASA show preview

What's on at this year's show

The world of live entertainment technology will once again convene at Olympia London from 3 to 5 September for PLASA Show 2023. The key international show will connect 200+ exhibitors with 5,000+ visitors, who can now register free until 31 August. After this time, a registration fee of £15 will be introduced, which increases to £20 on the door.

PLASA Show will feature cutting-edge technologies from respected brands from across the stage and studio lighting sectors, including Chauvet Professional, ETC, GLP, TMB and Vari-Lite to name just a few. Many of these have featured in major events such as the Coronation Concert, Glastonbury Festival and Eurovision in the UK, to the World Cup in Qatar and the Superbowl in the US.

Furthermore, headline sponsor Robe will wow audiences with

regular demonstrations of their very latest lighting products – a feature not to be missed.

In addition to the plethora of brands and new products, the three-day event will host 70+ keynote talks and interactive panel sessions. Across three dedicated theatre spaces, visitors will hear thought leaders and technical experts discuss the most talked-about industry issues. This year's programme includes sessions on Eurovision and the Olympics from esteemed lighting designers Tim Routledge and Durham Marengi, respectively. Plus, Women in Lighting will present two sessions exploring lighting for storytelling and audience experiences.

In addition to the talks and panels, PLASA Show offers plenty of practical training sessions courtesy of ChamSys. These offer golden opportunities for visitors

to get hands-on with – and up close to – highly acclaimed products, accompanied by advice from knowledgeable brand representatives.

The PLASA Awards for Innovation also make a return this year, with the Innovation Gallery featuring all the cutting-edge nominees right on the show floor. And the lucky winners will be announced on the Monday evening of the show in an intimate ceremony. Last year's winners included Artistic Licence, who scooped the Sustainability Award for their Microscope upgrade kit, and Ayrton, who scooped Gold for Cobra. Plus, Minit Une, Robe and Sauca were among the brands that took home Innovation Awards. Furthermore, JB Toby, technical director of Avolites was presented with the highly respected Gottelier Award for his contribution to product development.

PLASA MD Peter Heath says, "The 2022 edition of PLASA Show really put the event back on the international map, and we're excited to welcome back the world of live entertainment technology – in all its forms, from audio and AV to lighting and effects to staging and rigging. Whether you are a business director, creative specialist or technical end user, you'll have the entire industry at your disposal, all under one roof at Olympia London. See you in September!"

Find out more about PLASA Show: www.plasashow.com

Register free: <https://tinyurl.com/alpd-plasa> 📌



Lumiere update

Danny Vavrečka is at Glyndebourne for three months

As I write this, I'm sat in the circle of the beautiful auditorium at Glyndebourne, reflecting on my first few months as this year's Lumière. The production desks have been moved up here from the stalls, and today is the final dress rehearsal for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It seems extraordinary to believe that for the past few months, this view has been part of my typical day. The Lumière scheme is a six-month development opportunity for early-career lighting practitioners, created by lighting designer Peter Mumford. I have been partnered as an assistant with four different lighting designers during my time here, and these three months form the first part of the scheme.

My first opera at Glyndebourne was a new production of *Don Giovanni*, with lighting designed by Bernd Purkrabek. I was secretly hoping for a gentle start on my first day, but it was into the deep end very quickly. Bernd was coming to Glyndebourne from an opening night of another opera,

so he joined us later in the afternoon. He'd sent me and lighting supervisor Jonny Venn a list of moving light focus presets, and the expectation was that they would be ready for when he arrived. Tom "Gadget" Warren was the lighting programmer on *Don Giovanni*, and we began working through Bernd's list; Gadget at the lighting desk while I called the focus from the stage. Although terrifying, it's this kind of experience that makes the scheme so brilliant. It places Lumières in positions of responsibility, while supported, but also gives you the space to make mistakes and learn. Bernd had worked at Glyndebourne before, and like every designer I've met, he commented on how lucky we were to work in this extraordinarily beautiful setting. One of the wonderful things about Glyndebourne is how international its artists are, and the piano-stage rehearsals are an exciting mix of languages. Director Mariame Clément worked in four languages (French, German, Italian and English),

depending on which member of the team she was talking to, and Bernd similarly switched seamlessly between English and German. This was the first time I'd witnessed first-hand the designer-programmer relationship, and it was a masterclass in speed and communication. Gadget's fingers were constantly flying across the desk; every time Bernd created a different position or colour, this needed to be stored as a new preset or colour palette. Glyndebourne schedules a "bauprobe" or technical day for each production of the season. The full set is built on stage several months prior to beginning rehearsals, and gives the creative team a chance to try out ideas, and check things will work as they envisioned. Julia Hansen's set design placed the opera in a hotel with three levels, and Bernd layered the staircases and corridors with beautiful and menacing shadows. In the second act, the walls were removed, leaving the exposed framework of the building for the fiery



finale. There were also additional electrics built into the set, all of them tested and developed during the bauprobe.

Alongside each opera, I also joined the lighting team for changeovers. Even though there was a fixed festival rig overhead, some units needed to change between bars, and there were always additional specials. Front of house usually included an extensive refocus as well. Even though there were only a few hours to achieve this, lighting supervisor Arnaud “Cookie” Stephenson made it look easy, calling up channels to be focused in quick succession. The lighting department uses Google Sheets for paperwork,

and all the focus information for each opera is stored on a shared drive. This ensures everyone can access it; no extra software is required for anyone to make edits, and it can all be done on a phone or iPad. The lighting team is exceptional, headed up by Vic Pyne and led by one of three supervisors for each opera, with each member of the team jumping into

whatever each production requires, from followspotting to focusing to set electrics. It’s a supportive environment, and this ensures the visiting lighting designers feel very well looked after, and ultimately are in a position to make their best work.

There was hardly any time before I was straight into the next opera, *Dialogues des Carmélites*. This work by Poulenc is set during the French Revolution, and tells the fictionalised story of the Carmelite nuns who were guillotined for refusing to renounce their vocation. The lighting designer was Alessandro Carletti, who I first met during a pre-production meeting the week before we began

work on stage. Alessandro told me that his first priority would be to establish a rough look for each scene, and then he would go back to finesse and develop a cue structure within the scenes. The most immediate challenge for lighting was the enclosed nature of the set, which included walls on both sides tapering to a central upstage point, and a ceiling. For Alessandro, the bauprobe was particularly useful in understanding how light might inhabit the space, and crucially, the angles needed to light the space effectively. Alessandro was using a projector as a light source. The projector was situated at the back of the auditorium, and sound and video supervisor Jonathan Moss had mapped it neatly onto each wall and the floor. The open white of the projector took on a haunting and stormy green colour when it hit the pale mint walls of Katrin Lea Tag’s beautiful set. “This is Carletti green,” director Barrie Kosky said, half-jokingly. For UK-based designers, perhaps that area of the colour spectrum is not the most

Lumiere update

Danny Vavrečka

used, and I asked Alessandro about this in the next break. He said it's a colour that he uses frequently in his designs, as it offers so much dramatic potential. For a form like opera that can have such a heightened visual language, this is a really useful area of the spectrum. We began to add followspots as we moved through the piano and stage rehearsals. Barrie and Alessandro found them useful for lighting characters while keeping them surrounded in darkness. Alessandro asked me to document these cues as they were added, and I stayed in touch with the operators via comms to pass on intensity level requests from the production desk. In one particular moment, leading character Blanche was highlighted while a garden of flowers was pushed on in darkness beside her in a moment of pure theatre magic. Lighting technician Abi did an amazing job at nailing this

difficult pickup; in complete darkness she needed to iris tightly into Blanche's head, and smoothly fade up over ten seconds, all while Blanche journeyed around the stage. This was not the only coup de théâtre of the production; during the second act, a mob of Revolutionaries smashed through the prompt side wall and a crush of chorus cascaded into the space. Alessandro had specified 60kw of PAR cans to blast through the rupture in the wall, and it looked spectacular. Amy Clarke and Dave Manion co-programmed this opera, alternating sessions between them. It was another masterclass in programming, and sitting a row behind in between the LD and programmer, it was astonishing to see the command line of the desk fill up with syntax before Alessandro had barely finished making a request. Once the opera had opened (as with



every opera at Glyndebourne), Amy and Dave meticulously tidied up the showfile before it was exported into Moving Light Assistant (MLA).

The first two operas flew by, and before long I was starting my penultimate opera at Glyndebourne: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Sir Peter Hall's production of Britten's opera premiered at Glyndebourne in 1981, and has been enchanting festival audiences ever since. The lighting designer was Paul Pyant, and we met a week before we went onto stage. Lighting supervisor Clare O'Donoghue, Paul and I spent a morning checking through plans and focus notes. The design

A Midsummer Night's Dream
© Glyndebourne Productions Ltd
Director: Peter Hall
Revival director/original choreographer: Lynne Hockney
Designer: John Bury
Lighting designer: Paul Pyant
Photo: Tristram Kenton

continues to evolve every time it's revived with the changing technology; overhead moving lights were replaced with LED, front of house generics were changed to Lustrs, and there were no longer any scrollers. During the bauprobe, Paul and lighting programmer Gadget worked thoroughly to incorporate any changes to the rig, and by the time we began the stage and piano rehearsals it was in a very good shape already. Although Paul has revisited his design many times, it was amazing to watch his continued pursuit of storytelling. The production is very well documented, but Paul wasn't satisfied with simply copying numbers and values from the previous revival. Where there was opportunity for the lighting to contribute further to narrative, character or setting, Paul was always looking to push the design further. One of the changes

made for this revival was the use of live moves. The production used lots of rustling and swaying trees (some played by dancers) to beautifully evoke a forest brimming with magic and intrigue. During transitions, the lighting emphasised the movement through the use of break-up gobos, cutting through haze and the movement of the foliage. Paul asked Gadget to deliberately build live moves into these transitions. This allowed moving lights to track across the stage as they moved from one position to the next, normally something a programmer would be trying to hide! This approach was so successful that we applied something similar to every transition. The production used two followspots, and even though we had an existing cue list, Paul asked me to update and amend as we made changes. Followspot

operators Adam and Connor did an excellent job staying on Puck as he jumped and sprinted from branches to logs.

There's only a few more weeks left at Glyndebourne and only one more opera before the end of part one. I will really miss the team at Glyndebourne, and I'm so grateful for their support and all the combined knowledge they have generously shared with me. 🍷

Dialogues des Carmélites
© Glyndebourne Productions Ltd
Director: Barrie Kosky
Designer: Katrin Lea Tag
Lighting Designer: Alessandro Carletti
Photo: Richard Hubert Smith



The evolution of Focus



James Laws, Nick Hunt, Scott Palmer, Ian Saunders and Kelli Zezulka discuss *Focus*

KZ: As you all know, this is my last issue of *Focus* as editor. And it will be issue 100 in the A5 landscape version. I thought it would be nice if we could all have a chat about the history of *Focus*, and how it's grown from where it started to where it is now, and what role it's played in the industry and the ALD/ALPD.

JL: Those first ALD meetings were in the upper studio of the Arts Theatre in London. At one of the meetings, Richard [Pilbrow] said, "I really think we ought to have a newsletter," and at that moment, Julian Williams walked in and he was asked. He did the first two and he had them printed. It was just called "Newsletter" then. The first newsletter I did was #3 and I actually got a picture on the front. That was *Amadeus* at the Wolsey. Then I took it to A4 and we had *Phantom* on the next cover.

KZ: Can I ask about the name?

JL: In issue #4, I said in the editorial, "We need another name for this newsletter." The next editorial, I said, "We need a name for this and unless I hear it from anyone else, it will be called *Focus*." It just seemed like a good word for us. And I did it in *Dynamo* type because that was what my business, Ancient Lights, used at that time.

KZ: There wasn't really a production schedule? It was as and when?

JL: Basically, you should understand if you don't already that I'm chaotic. But I am also well meaning, and the two met at one point, and that was *Focus*.

KZ: Were people keen to contribute or did you have to persuade them?

JL: Yes, they were keen. There's some really fabulous writing by Francis Reid, of course, and that included his army days and his early days in rep and with Benjamin Britten. And there was John Watt, who was at that time head of the

television lighting directors. And there was Bill Bundy. We had all his wartime stuff, and his post-war tour of Australia and that sort of thing.

KZ: Nick, how did you get involved in *Focus*?

NH: I started my first professional job at the Salisbury Playhouse in 1985. I became an ALD member fairly soon after that. The bit that I'm hazy on is that moment of me taking over the editorship and buying my first Macintosh computer, which was 1993, I know that.

It went A5 at some point. The decision was taken to stop printing *Focus* and instead photocopy it and distribute it. That all happened at Apollo Studios – Theatre Projects – in north London. And every time there was an issue of *Focus* going out, we would convene on a Saturday. We'd do a whole ton of photocopying on their photocopiers and sit there and stuff envelopes.

KZ: Do you remember the reason to change it from A4 to A5?

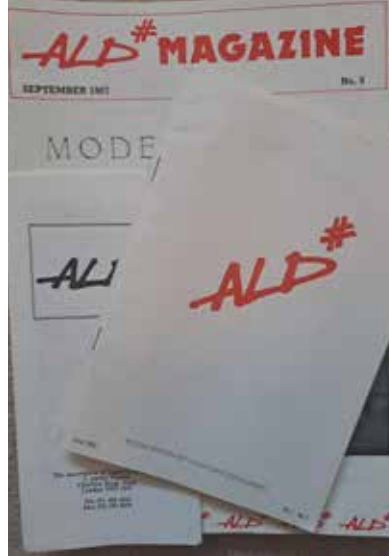
NH: Well, it was pragmatic, I think. You could fold up A4 bits of paper and staple them. They had some long arm staplers. It was a very manual process. As many members of the executive as you could get together on a Saturday would turn up and sit there folding and stapling and printing and stuffing envelopes. That was good fun. It was nice.

JL: Michael Northen would bring wine.

NH: The Exec were really good about either contributing themselves or going, "I know somebody who could write. We ought to get so-and-so to do this." Quite a lot of the content would be things like write-ups of meetings and you'd just nobble somebody on the day. You'd just sidle up to somebody and say, "Do you fancy writing this up for Focus?" And they couldn't really say no 'cause you're right there.

IS: I think that was still the case 20 years later. Was the content sent directly to you or was it sent to Theatre Projects?

NH: No, I think it was sent to me. I just put my address in Focus.



IS: And you'd have to retype it all and set it out?

NH: At some point I got a scanner and some OCR software. I ended up retyping half of it, but it did speed it up a bit. And occasionally you'd get something handwritten, and you'd literally be trying to read their writing and type it up.

As well as Focus, [in 1991] we started a system of sending out bulletins, particularly for things like meetings or events. Things that had to be a bit more timely than Focus.

JL: David Taylor did some of these special catch-up handouts. I have one here: the ALD Broadsheet. And on the back of this one, there's all the beam angles of Parcan bulbs in both voltages. That kind of thing – useful stuff. As the gaps between mine got longer and longer, he'd start to fill in with these.

KZ: Like a ready reference guide. Ian, we had discussions about the Yearbook and how useful or not useful it became, particularly that front section stuff with all the beam angles and such.

IS: Yeah, I think we must have stopped it just before Covid. It might have been in conjunction with the change of the website because that was more easily updatable for people's contact details. So there was less requirement to have the printed members directory.

KZ: Scott, how did you get involved with Focus?

SP: I got involved with the ALD once I started teaching lighting design. Perhaps around 1996. Around 2000, I contacted Rick because I was working at Bretton Hall at the time. Rick said, "We are looking for a...."

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Well, it might have been Education rep by then, but he said, “We need someone in education to take over that role.” My involvement with *Focus* specifically came about because something happened in 2003. Jim will probably know a bit more about this. I don’t know if I put my hand up or my hand was put up, but I found myself in a small team with Paul Johnson and John Riddell working entirely remotely. I only had two years in that role, really, and then Jim joined us again towards the end of that period. It was quite an unstable time, I think...

There was a lot of difficulty getting content and, of course, I was in a full-time job in an institution and I wasn’t able to give *Focus* full attention. I think there was a sense of dissatisfaction that *Focus* wasn’t doing the job for the association that it really should be doing as a valued output for the membership. There was a disconnect between the

editorial team and the Executive, not helped because we didn’t have time to travel to London for meetings.

And I think during that period, the difficulties forced the association to think really carefully about what *Focus* is and how it was being supported, how it had been funded... It suddenly became clear that really the journal wasn’t doing what it should be doing and that actually it needed to be put on a more formal footing. So my experience was a struggle!

I remember the executive had an envisaging meeting, which is probably the first of these. Ian might remember this.

IS: 2002, I think that one was. But actually *Focus* wasn’t part of that discussion, interestingly. It was almost like, “We can continue doing this in the background”. I think it’s testament to all those individuals who were involved in that, that actually it kept being a regular publication.

SP: Because there were very few resources other than the cost of production. Jackie Staines and Entertainment Technology Press at some point had taken over production of it. That also had some tensions, I think, in terms of when material was produced, when it could be handed over, and what happened to that material once it was handed over because there were often long delays in that process.

JL: I agree with the word “tensions”. A number of times, *Focus* has sort of run out of an editor and other people have picked it up and run with it for a while until the next person said, “OK, I will be editor.” They got published, but it clearly was unsatisfactory, which is probably the point when Andy Collier was persuaded.

IS: I was treasurer and I think I’d just taken over from Geoff [Spain] as administrator at that point. So it was probably late second half of 2006 and

that's when Andy – who had always done the marketing stuff – stepped up.

JL: Immediately I could feel all sorts of burdens lifting off because I thought, "We have got Andy, who has published all sorts of things for Strand." And my contribution at that stage was to suggest a change to the shape of Focus.

IS: Andy said, "Oh, we decided to change the ratio of Focus. We're going to turn it on its side because it better represents the stage." And everyone on the Exec went, "Oh yeah. Why didn't we do that ages ago?" The thinking was that it could be much more pictorial if we required it to be, and it wasn't long before it moved fully colour. But it was being printed digitally at that point. So it was getting more expensive. And especially when it went full colour it started to get really expensive. I think Andy's knowledge about that side of the industry helped. And of course he was also instrumental in getting Marko to write what became his signature regular column. I think Andy's knowledge of Tabs and the Strand magazine really helped take it a leap forward. I suppose we should

discuss the strap line, which came directly out of a members' meeting.

KZ: I was looking back at some early issues, the December 2006/January 2007 issue, which is the first one in the new format. There's a letter from a member who says, "What is this? This is grammatically incorrect. This is horrible English. I hate it."

IS: It was a direct quote from that meeting. "What do you want to see from Focus?" "We want to see more art and less tools." So I think Andy wanted to come at it from the art side of things and tried to get people talking about their craft rather than the tools that they use.

SP: Is this the first time that the editor position was paid?

IS: No, I tried to... because I was being paid as administrator. When Andy took it over, we tried – and every year I used to say, "We need to pay you for your time," because as Kelli knows – well, as you all know, having done it – it takes a lot of time to put it all together. And Andy said, "No, I enjoy doing it. I don't want paying for it." And that's why we were really strong with Kelli when she took over: "You are going to be

paid." If there were expectations placed upon the role to get Focus out six times a year and make all those decisions – because it was also laying it out. Andy had taken that on in order to hit those deadlines and he was absolutely religious. It was the 15th of the month before the issue, and if it wasn't in by then...

SP: So that professionalism that was established then is very much part of the ongoing sustainability and properly making the Executive realise...

IS: It has a value to it.

SP: ... it has to move on to more sustainable footing. If we're serious about this. And Kelli is part of that.

IS: And also we started selling advertising as well. Actually selling advertising space rather than just giving the page to the Plasa show or whatever, so that was really a big step up.

KZ: Do you think that there was a link between Focus and increased membership numbers?

IS: I took over from Geoff in the summer of 2006, I think. I think we'd just gone through member 1000 at

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some point while I was treasurer. So whether it was *Focus* or whether it was the website or the other stuff that we were doing... Or just being much more easily visible online. I think all those things helped to increase awareness of the organisation and therefore membership.

SP: There was also a proliferation of courses in further and higher education. So it corresponds with the national trend of more young people getting interested in lighting.

JL: Yes, that contrasts with the early days when we recruited mostly at the ABTT show and places like that. We were recruiting quite a lot of people from reps, and they were starting to come from the drama schools as well. "If you sign up you get one of these [Focus]." And that helped them make up their minds that they would join.

IS: But it also got to the point where it was cheaper to print more... I was consciously going over the number

that we needed so I always had some on the trade show stand. It was certainly a good way of recruiting people.

JL: We always printed more than the membership because we also knew that the membership would be rising. And also if there was a show, we'd print a few more as well.

KZ: Focus has always been, at least since I've been on it, one of the major spends for the association, always one of the biggest budget lines that we have. Which is why one of the options is to move it all online. Because of the print costs. And the postage, mostly.

It's really about streamlining *Focus* and thinking about how best to use membership fees. I think it will be up to members to have a say in the future of *Focus* and how best it serves them and the association.

IS: It'll be interesting. If nothing else, this conversation has shown that it's always taken a turn and kept going.

NH: It does raise a question for me, particularly having spent a lot of time thinking about archives and history recently, about the impact of that.

Because I think any of us who are interested in historical research are very reliant on often practical, quite ephemeral sources. That's the risk, isn't it? So if it's a downloadable PDF and that gets archived somewhere, that will sit on the website and it'll disappear. I mean, it's probably not everybody's concern, by a long way, but it is a concern, certainly for me.

SP: Yeah, the digital can disappear very quickly, can't it? It strikes me what a Herculean effort it's been across the years to keep this publication going.

KZ: In different ways, yeah.

JL: I saw it as a movement. Because it was something that had never happened in a democratic way before. And it was clear that democracy in lighting was needed.

IS: I think it's the case with all the roles within the association. I mean, the Focus editor probably does a lot more behind the scenes than anyone thinks when they get the magazine in their hand. It's so much work.

KZ: I remember when I took over, I thought it was just going to be two weeks every other month that I'd have to deal with it. You know, content will come in. I won't really have to do much. Just sort it out, proofread it, put it into the files and send it out.

IS: Has content become harder to get from people over the last decade?

KZ: I think it has over the last two years or so. Obviously, during Covid people had time. And people were working on interesting "how to light a show across Zoom" sort of things. But since people have gone back to work and the industry's opened up again, it has gotten increasingly difficult to get content from people. It's probably a combination of other people being really busy, and me being really busy because I now have a full-time job that has more demands on my time than it used to. So I think it's both.

IS: Do you think it needs more than one person to ensure that content comes in and the deadlines are hit? Or does going to a fully electronic version give a bit more flexibility in deadlines?

KZ: I mean, to be honest, I've let the print deadline slide in the last couple of years. And again, that does have to do with not having the content in time. If I had been a bit more hardline like Andy – "everything has to be in by the 15th" – some months there wouldn't be a magazine because I just wouldn't have anything. It's always been really flexible. And definitely over the last couple of years, it's been more flexible than usual.

NH: For me, this is part of a much bigger picture, really, in terms of social and professional changes in the world. I think we really all collectively felt that what we're contributing is really important and largely unacknowledged. And I think perhaps the new generations coming through don't feel that so strongly because they don't need to. And that's a really good thing. But it does mean that perhaps there's less of a sense that

you need to be communicating with each other and telling ourselves that story and supporting each other in that way.

JL: I think the nature of communication has altered tremendously in our time. It's a more casual thing. I'd like to say congratulations to Kelli for the last 60 editions.

KZ: Thank you.

NH: Absolutely.

JL: Because you've kept a very slippery ball in the air for a long time and brought us great pleasure by doing it. You really have.

KZ: It was my pleasure. It's a labour of love, as I'm sure you all know.

JL: You would have got a lot out of it as well, which everyone does if you put in, but you know it's... It's nice what's radiated out. It's been great.

KZ: It's been lovely. I've had a really nice time, but I do feel like it's time to hand it over. 🍷

Editor's note: This is a heavily edited version of the full conversation, which will be available as a PDF supplement to the ALPD history book, to be published next year.

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