

ALD # FOCUS

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

*Jesus Christ Superstar
Regent's Park Open Air Theatre
Director: Timothy Sheader
Designer: Tom Scutt
Lighting designer: Lee Curran
Photographer: David Jensen*

October/November 2017

- In the crosslight this issue:*
- Knight of Illumination winners
 - Jesus Christ Superstar visit
 - Edinburgh lighting round-up
 - Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, Kuwait
- ...and much, much more...
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From the chair...

Autumn is here and we've just experienced Alplasa and the KOI Awards – more new innovations and products to enhance our work and expand the vocabulary of lighting design but also a celebration of the last forty years since the initiation of Plasa. Looking back over the last forty years of lighting design (which of course I'm in a position to do!), it's a huge technological journey. So much has changed in terms of the capability and versatility of our palette. The analogue systems of forty years ago are now virtually unknown to the students and younger practitioners of today and yet it's been an extraordinarily speedy history that many of us have lived and worked through. I wonder what today's student would make of lighting a show using a 60-channel three-preset lighting control with manual sliders. I've just been unwrapping my little black books that go back beyond those forty years and discovering pages of cues notated by hand – the circuit levels being shown like fractions all written out in rows to be read as one was operating the show – timing the fades by counting seconds in your head! It's all unthinkable now but it was once the reality.

Interesting too that the suspicion of computer-controlled lighting when it first emerged (and many of the early boards did crash quite often) has been replaced by a total reliance on our current technology,

which now could never be duplicated manually. Back in the day many thought that computer controlled lighting would never replace the sensitivity or flexibility of the human touch. How things change ... but do they? Sure, we have huge technological advantages over the past but in many ways the aesthetic remains intact. We can programme colour, focus, position and size of a beam as well as intensity, but choices still have to be made and they still have to be the right choices. The physics hasn't changed – light still travels at the same speed, colour is still composed of the same elements, the rules of subtractive mixing haven't changed – and there are great and important lighting designs and designers whose work back in the Sixties still holds good.

What has changed is an enabling of the use of the medium of light and those of us who have had careers that have run parallel to these technological revolutions have been privileged to be thus enabled to expand the work and exploit the imagination further and further. Long may that continue. Who knows where the next phase of developments will lead? It's exciting and stimulating but only if we retain the knowledge and understanding of the source of it all – light itself. 🌟

Peter



*Peter Mumford
ALD chair*

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A little bit of love goes a long way

Johanna Town in Chichester



The autumn season is well under way. I am lucky enough to have a good number of shows to take me up to Christmas, but this also means missing out on all the brilliant events the season brings.

My first show this autumn has taken me to Chichester, where I am opening the trilogy *The Norman Conquests*. We have a very civilised production period of four weeks to tech, preview and open three shows. This is lovely but I had been dreading being away from home for four and half weeks. Luckily, Chichester has put us all up in our own apartments where it is possible to relax and cook and just feel more at home than being in digs or in a hotel. It is so easy to forget how important having somewhere nice to go back to is. By the end of week three I am still fresh and raring to go. It's something we should fight to get more managements to appreciate.

Chichester must also have the best green room in the UK. It doesn't serve food, but it does have an amazing array of fridges and freezers along with four microwaves and two dishwashers. It is well maintained, clean and has plenty of seating areas as

well as a beautiful garden exposed by huge open glass doors. It's also well located in the building, which means it's well used by both technical and administration staff and therefore has a lovely buzz about it. Can anyone express a vote for a better green room than Chichester? Maybe we could hear your views of the best and worst around the country!

September starts with Plasa, which I was sorry to have missed again. It has always been an opportunity to catch up with old friends and chat to colleges. This year they held a lighting designers' lunch, which I would have liked to have attended. I do like the opportunity to embrace the lighting world when it comes together at events such as these. Being able to talk shop in a conducive environment always excites me and sets me up for another twelve months.

I hear the Knight of Illumination awards went very well; sadly, I missed that too. I wish to thank everyone who makes this annual event happen and to all the judges who give up their time to nominate and award the winners. Congratulations go to all of the 2017 winners – it was a great selection and all deserved to win.

I can't express how pleased I am that Rick Fisher received the Enrico Caironi lifetime achievement award. He kept that very quiet! It was a brilliant surprise to us all. Rick has been a tireless contributor to the ALD as chairperson for fifteen years and continues still on the Exec. The ALD owes



The Chichester green room
With Graham Taylor, head of lighting,
and Ryan Tate, lighting technician

an awful lot to his persistence in getting lighting recognised as a major player in our industry. He has wooed producers and lighting specialists alike into making our industry a better place for us to work and have a career, and all of this has been done tirelessly by Rick while also having an amazing career as a lighting designer.

I personally first met Rick at the Liverpool Playhouse working on *The Seagull*. He was a young lighting designer and I was a young chief electrician who'd only been at the Playhouse for a few weeks. The theatre had two shows opening one after the next and the first show in the studio had gone into meltdown (through no fault of the lighting department) and required my full attention. I remember having to teach my maintenance manager the basic skills of focusing a light on the morning of first focus, and then sending him out onto stage to start the focus on his own, while I made sure the show happened in the studio. Rick took it all in his stride and was super generous to the poor novice he had been given. Twenty-four hours later we had all caught up – but I will always be grateful to Rick for his understanding that things don't always go to plan in theatre. Years later we met again when Rick was lighting a great number of shows at the Royal Court. We achieved some great work over that time, and it was always a pleasure to have him on the design team. Rick has a great way of making you feel you are all working together to make a show, that it's

October/November 2017 – “More art, less tools...”

The Norman Conquests
Chichester Festival Theatre
Directed by Blanche McIntyre
Designed by Simon Higlett
Lighting designed by Johanna Town
Photograph by Johanna Town



The preset of Living Together as seen from the very rare position of onstage seating bank

teamwork. It's something I have tried to employ in my own working style ever since, as how better to work than all together to create something – theatre is a big team, after all. Congratulations, Rick, and thank you for all you have shared over the years.

The ALD events diary is also full this autumn, with three brilliant meetings taking place. Thank you to all the designers who have made this possible. I appreciate how time consuming it can be but again I think it's great that people have the opportunity to meet, mingle and learn, whether it's regarding equipment or how we approach the work; it's all really

interesting and important to share. So do try to join us and if you have a show you think might be of interest please let our meetings team know.

As I stand down as Professional Rep I would like to announce that Lucy Carter has kindly taken on the role. Lucy has recently joined us on the Exec and I think this is a great appointment. I look forward to continuing to build the ALD into an association for all, from all areas of lighting and different working perspectives, that come from our very mixed industry. So watch this space. 🍷

Legless without a drink

Mark Jonathan assumes nothing in Kuwait



My story begins in April 2016. It was a dark, badly lit kerb in Glasgow, and despite decades of working in the dark I stumbled and fell awkwardly on my ankle. There was a cracking sound. Two days later I was reassured by the NHS nurse practitioner at A&E who said, "Och, it's just a bad sprain." So, I carried on, as best I could, running for trains, marching up and down escalators, working out in the gym, clambering on sets and enduring pain even in my ski boot. In fact, after a year of continual pain I checked in with an orthopaedic surgeon who said that it was much more than a bad sprain. The tendon was split and required a bone graft and at least one ligament needed to be

re-attached. I was to stop exercising it immediately, and I needed a tricky operation that would leave me laid up in bed for some weeks. I had to wait for a gap in my diary. The day after the opera *Zaza* opened in July I was on the surgeon's slab.

Having cleared the diary I couldn't resist saying yes to lighting a production at the brand new national theatre in Kuwait. What an adventure that would prove to be. The job came via 59 Productions, the outstandingly brilliant UK design house. The 59 design team included Leo Warner, as creative director, set designer Jenny Melville, and recent KOI winner Lysander Ashton creating projection designs. The production *Memoirs of a Sailor* had been written in the '70s for TV production in Kuwait and is a popular Kuwaiti folk tale.



*The exterior of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, Kuwait
Photographer: Dan Street*

Leo Warner explains: "The writer has us travel into the past via the vivid images conjured in the mind of a young boy as he listens to his grandmother's stories. These themes of memory and imagination were in turn the inspiration for 59's design team. Our scenic, projection and lighting designs for the production are built around themes of magic and transformation. In re-imagining this much-loved story for a contemporary audience, we have created a theatrical environment in which anything can happen: The world of Kuwait's past is conjured out of the present – sand becomes water, dunes become waves. The stage becomes



The auditorium as seen from the stage

a beach, a boat, and the rich but treacherous underwater world of the pearl diver."

Our brave pearl diver sails away in search of his fortune and narrowly escapes death by shark attack while diving but finally makes his fortune when he finds a beautiful pearl in one of the shells he has collected from the sea bed. The story called for both land-based scenes and epic scenes at sea including storms, dawns, sunsets and night and what would be a coup de théâtre with an underwater diving scene complete with a diving aerialist. The 59 creative design team was joined by UK-based sound designer Sebastian Frost and the Greek choreographer Yannis Adoniou, supplementing the Kuwaiti team of concept developers, writer/

director, co-assistant directors, costume designer and musical director led by the hard working Kuwaiti producer Talal Al-Muhanna. The production would be the first "home-produced" production by the extraordinary Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC) built in 22 months on the coast of Kuwait and recently opened at a cost of \$775million.

Early design meetings took place in London with me on crutches, aided by my associate James Smith. I decided that we would create the rig from what the JACC had in stock. Our rig comprised 86 intelligent fixtures, 52 LED fixtures and 117 generic units and four followspots. A correspondence began with Stefan, the charming and enthusiastic Serbian chief

LX. I suspect Google translate might have confused things, and there was a danger that Stefan was going to try and plug the rig up to our specified channel numbers. James, Dan Street, our brilliant programmer, and I wondered what the Serbian for "soft patch" is...

We settle on a rig with six overhead lighting bars that will have high trims from 10 to 12.6 metres. The stage design precludes any booms apart from a proscenium boom, so I have a secret weapon: two up-and-down bars on each side; these will replace stage booms and will be out of harm's way given the massive scene changes below. We have FOH on two bridges and some side positions, although these are limited due to the design of the theatre; there are bare walls where rigging positions should have been installed. I wonder if a lighting designer had been consulted at the design stage.

It's not every theatre that can offer a choice of GrandMA or Eos control desks, and Dan is a rare programmer who is able to programme on either desk but for this project we use the Eos Ti. Many thanks to

Legless without a drink

Mark Jonathan

Darren Beckley, ETC sales manager for the Middle East, who provided a Nomad and Puck wing. This would enable me to have a screen showing the cue list and intensities and for Dan to make some very fine focus and animation work from the stage. Meanwhile, Dan connected James up with his client Nomad dongle.

The opera – or is it a musical? It's difficult to say. While there were some spoken scenes, these were balanced against a substantial classical orchestra of 55, with ten traditional percussionists and a chorus of 30 in the pit with three soloists, twelve actors, seven male dancers from Greece, 22 male Kuwaiti dancers and 20 female Kuwaiti dancers on stage. All the musicians, singers and actors would be amplified; so, perhaps I would conclude, it's a *dance-musical of operatic proportions!* The very musical Sebastian adds that it will create a unique and vibrant blend of "Middle East meets the West".

There would also be a fusion as "West comes to the Middle East" with the sizable team travelling to Kuwait. The day of our departure got closer and no plane tickets arrived. Mine was provided only on the day of travel. It would take a while for us

to get used to some of the last-minute Kuwaiti ways. I met Ollie Hester, our UK producer from 59 Productions, at Heathrow; looking back, I wonder if he knew how hard he would earn his salary, efficiently managing all situations. While friends told me you can get a drink in the hotels or get invited to the British Embassy's pub The Thirsty Camel, getting alcohol would be much harder than we thought. Kuwait Airways and the country itself are completely dry. I brace myself!

With the flight delayed we arrived in the middle of the night. The airport was busier than an Arab souk on a Friday. We were met by a VIP service, fast-tracked through immigration, where a cheery Nepalese chap, called Tonka, met us. We waited for our bus and we waited... It was nearly an hour of breathing intolerable fumes from taxis until it turned up. The Indian driver set off down the road and then pulled over. Although he didn't speak English or



James Smith (associate lighting designer),
Dan Street (programmer) and Mark Jonathan
Photographer: Ollie Hester

Arabic, after a while we established that he didn't know the way to our apartments. This would generally be the norm that drivers wouldn't know the way. In the end, we enterprisingly guided him using our own sat nav. So, hours late, we got to bed at 6am local time for a few hours' sleep.

Later that day we arrived at the very magnificent JACC. The four glinting exteriors are solid titanium and the interior walls and floors are marble. The site covers a massive area, housing the large

horseshoe National Theatre, a second proscenium theatre, a studio theatre, rehearsal rooms, a concert hall, recital hall, conference centre, museums, galleries, libraries and a vast car park, along with a lake with illuminated, musical, dancing fountains and many restaurants nearby. We are greeted by Ian Ashton, the Welsh technical director of the entire centre. He briefs us. They are very understaffed and the set is behind schedule, which will knock onto our schedule. I leave James and Dan to bond with Stefan and his deputy, Dragan, who is also from Serbia. At least, we observe, the rig is up in the air.

I go to the adjacent theatre to watch a run. Rehearsals are not as advanced as I would have hoped. The choreography for the musical numbers is set but most of the drama is skipped over. People are missing and that is something that, while at first surprising, is going to be the norm. After the run I discuss the need for a cue meeting with Asma, the assistant director, and Nuri, our Korean stage manager fresh from La Scala Milan. We have scheduled the meeting for two days' time. I say that we will need a large room and video screen to replay the rehearsal and some good refreshments, as I know, with the complexity of the piece, it will be a long meeting. They look a bit worried but say, "Inshallah". This translates as "God willing". I discover that people have great faith that God will sort things out. I mutter that

God (Allāh) is receiving unprecedented call volumes and that he would undoubtedly prefer it if people just took responsibility themselves. They look at me curiously.

I am repatriated with my colleagues and everything is going well on the electrics front. Sebastian in sound wants to move some bass bins to a more appropriate position FOH, and we want a row of seats to be taken out to accommodate the number of people who will need to sit at

the production desks. Ian explains that decisions such as these have to be made at a very senior level by the Amiri Diwan, the office of the head of state, under whose aegis JACC rests. After some discussion we are delighted that permission is granted.

While some of the set is being constructed in Kuwait, a substantial quantity is being made in the Emirates, which is also the source for the video projection hire. This is a big projection show involving ten 20k

Memoirs of a Sailor
59 Productions
Creative director: Leo Warner
Set designer: Jenny Melville
Lighting designer: Mark Jonathan
Projection designer: Lysander Ashton
Photograph © 59 Productions



Legless without a drink

Mark Jonathan

projectors and one 30k projector. All of this, along with gauzes and a BP from Germany, need custom clearance and we were a day away from Eid and everyone apart from us was about to close down for holidays. People with influence are contacted and pressure is applied.

There being no bar to go to, dinner is followed by bed. At 3.30am a persistent wailing emanates from one of the minarets of the many mosques. It is the first call to prayer. We soon learn to sleep through that.

Two days later, our cue meeting goes well, led by Leo, with me as “number-keeper”, not only for lighting cues but also sound and projection. Everyone is very focused. There are amusing moments as the non-Arabic speakers working from a phonetic script boldly attempt to pronounce the words as we place our cues. Well, I've done operas written in French, German, Italian and Czech so I won't be defeated by Arabic. The songs are more repetitive than a Rossini opera and could challenge any score-reading stage manager. “Put the cue after the sixteenth ‘Ya allah ya allah ya allah!’” Meanwhile, the scene changes will need all the resources of our male dancers and stage crew who are to be hired in.

We do raise concerns that more than one stage manager will be needed to manage this. Our concerns are proven but only after

we have some frustrating days on stage.

The story calls for an entire sailing boat to appear on stage between land-based scenes. The boat is tracked on from the side stages with cut-out waves that will work well with wave projections for scenes at sea, the sea bed underwater or as sand dunes for some of the scenes on land. Lighting and projection agree to work late nights to catch up once the majority of the set is in place. As ever, for us, the time is pressured not to delay technical rehearsals on stage with the company that will start after Eid. Some scenes are still being written and have not been rehearsed, and combined with the technical complexities there is a lot to do.

Going outside in Kuwait, the world's hottest city, is akin to putting your head in a hot oven. You don't stay outside

The view of the production desks



long, and everywhere, even our canopied swimming pool, is aggressively air-conditioned. My requests to warm up the auditorium fall on deaf ears. So, on my first day off we go to the shopping mall, and I find myself in the pullover department of the Kuwait branch of Debenhams. The pullover will be left at the theatre and just worn at the production desk. In time, I understand that the cooler the space, the higher the status symbol.

Out in the air-conditioned shopping mall one would see a complete cross-section of Arabic society, many in traditional dress: men in white and women in black. At the same time, while some women were dressed completely in black with their faces covered, even in a restaurant, other women just had black headdresses with the face revealed, others wearing coloured scarves, while some were uncovered.

Memoirs of a Sailor

59 Productions

Creative director: Leo Warner

Set designer: Jenny Melville

Lighting designer: Mark Jonathan

Projection designer: Lysander Ashton

Photograph © 59 Productions



After some attempts women received the right to vote in 2005 and apparently Kuwait has the highest ranking for gender equality in the Arab states. I asked our local PR lady about dress codes. She said some dress was defined by origin, for example a Bedouin woman would be completely covered and this goes back to needing to be shielded from sand storms; others might dress as defined by clan, or

according to family or religious tradition. I wondered if the woman got a choice in the decision. Our PR lady said that while she didn't wear a headdress she did wear long sleeves as revealing the elbow was not deemed appropriate.

Back at the theatre I enjoy the collaboration of making stage pictures with Lysander and his hard-working team of talented animators and programmers.

No one is out of their depth and we all work well together, with Dan initiating the cues for everyone. For the more technical amongst you Dan says, *"To playback the show, as well as lighting cues, the Eos was configured to trigger d3 using an ETC show control gateway with MSC and sound effects run by Qlab via OSC, seamlessly allowing for one operator to ensure complete synchronicity when cues were given."* This worked extremely well and demonstrated a great team effort.

There's a limit to how much I should say about the stage rehearsals. We all learned that we should assume nothing. Each day, something seemed to sabotage our best efforts. The most frustrating was the absence of stage performers. It seemed virtually impossible to get everyone to attend a rehearsal. Many of the Kuwaiti dancers were still at school or college so rehearsals were scheduled from 3pm to 10pm. This meant that we didn't really get going until 4pm. On one day the girls didn't turn up until nearly 5pm but when we kept them waiting they put their dancing feet down and said they would go and not come back if we didn't do their scenes straight away. Later on, the orchestra would put their foot down too and refused to play unless the pit curtain, protecting the eyes of the audience from the glare of the music stands, was removed from the pit rail. On another day, having opened up the view into the pit, half the orchestra

Legless without a drink

Mark Jonathan

opted to go shopping for new performance outfits rather than play.

While the orchestra had never played in a pit before, clearly the orchestra pit had never been used before either, as a mass of fluorescents in the pit would go on randomly through the day. Stefan tracked the problem down to half a dozen motion sensors. Whose idea was that? Similarly, the stage workers would come on randomly. We also found that we couldn't effectively dim the very grim LED houselights. Surely a smooth fade of the houselights is essential?

There was a problem with the groundplans and reality. It transpired that the architect's plan was out by half a metre of stage depth. *Assume nothing!* The FOH sides of the auditorium had no lighting positions despite plenty of space available. There's a dead zone around the one-metre deep proscenium and then an impractical tormentor, which would exclude any flown lighting bars for over three metres upstage of the front of the stage. There is one small technical level above head height at the sides in front of the proscenium that we packed with lights. Curiously, the two sides are at different heights. We began to wonder if the builders

used a tape measure. Moving above, to the first FOH lighting bridge, decorative beams under the bridge actually blocked the line of sight of lights trying to reach the stage. I stumbled on a backstage staircase. The top step was shallower and the bottom step deeper than the rest – why? In the auditorium, the gangways were effectively illuminated by small lights on the seat ends. This worked well until you got to a set of stairs where there were no seats and so no light. So I stumbled up those as well. Out in the foyer there was a wealth of LED lights and even a massive LED light wall, hanging like a chandelier. Sad to have installed and paid for all this technology and it not to be exploited or even turned on. Sad too that there were so many snags in such a glorious series of buildings. Was this a result of the very accelerated building programme? Wasn't there a theatre consultant on board?

Kuwait is a remarkably safe and peaceful melting pot of nationalities, ethnicities and religions. Much of its labour force consists of foreigners from India, Malaysia, Nepal, Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Korea and the Philippines with some Europeans thrown in. I wondered if some migrant workers were being exploited. Voting rights are kept exclusive

to indigenous Kuwaitis who form about a quarter of the population and thus represent a minority. The lighting and flying department were from Serbia with additional support from India. James was charged with calling followspot operators, two positioned FOH and one on each fly floor. James is extremely experienced at calling spots but our four lads from Kerala came to the task with what seemed like no prior theatrical experience at all. Although James had given them a good training in how to work the followspots I think he overlooked how to work the headsets.

James: Spot one, are you there?

No reply...

Spot one, are you there?

Spot two, are you there?

Spot 3, come in please...

Spot 4, answer me please...

After some time, the operators are shown how to use the headsets. It would take another day for them to learn how to turn their mics off.

James: Spot 1, are you there?

Spot 1: Yes, sir!

James: Spot 2, are you there?

Spot 2: Yes, sir!

Memoirs of a Sailor
59 Productions
Creative director: Leo Warner
Set designer: Jenny Melville
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Photograph © 59 Productions



James: Spot 3, are you there?

Spot 3: Yes, sir!

James: Spot 4, are you there?

No reply...

Spot 4...?

Spot 3: Spot 4 is asleep, sir.

James: Well, wake him up...

Spot 3: Yes, sir!

This is the first time anyone has addressed James as "sir".

Later in rehearsals:

Me: James, spot 1 is too bright, and spot 2 needs to fade up more gently...

James: We will do intensity and fading up gently tomorrow. Snap cues will have to wait until next week...

Suffice it to say, by opening night those spot ops were right on it.

It's curious to be in a place that has different theatrical traditions and to realise how much we take our own working procedures for granted. We rather assumed that stage crew would understand what "standby" means and what "go" means and perhaps that mobile phones should be turned off. Assume nothing. Noticeable too that some of the Kuwaiti lads needed

to learn that a stage manager is in charge even if she is a woman! Leo is remarkably patient as he rehearses the magical transformations that will transport us from land to sailing ship.

Although I had thought we had masses of time in our rehearsal schedule, far more than we would have had in a Western opera house, time disappeared fast. Most of this could be attributed to the limited availability of the Kuwaiti dancers and orchestra. I gathered that in Kuwait working in theatre or music for many is only practical as a hobby or leisure activity. Even the professional musicians in the orchestra had "day jobs" as well. We wedged in some extra rehearsals, most without costume, despite our plaintive cry that it made a difference to have costume. The first night arrived. The audience was ecstatic. I was intrigued that without posters the production was sold out at a top price of £450 and a bottom price of £120.

The Emir and government must be congratulated on the immense investment they have made in arts and culture, but I hope that the management does hold the suppliers and installers to their responsibilities to get the snags sorted out. I'm proud of the great team effort that resulted in a stunning show that was very well received. I hope that JACC will flourish and become a cultural jewel in the Middle East.

I get home and it's a race to the pub. 🍷



Office Oracle

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

ALD Sponsored Student Scheme

The ALD is delighted to announce that the 2018 Sponsored Student Scheme is now open for applications. The scheme is funded by Corporate Members of the ALD.

This scheme allows for students who have not been members of the ALD to enjoy FREE membership until the end of March 2019, with their membership being paid for by the Association's corporate members. It is hoped that both student and corporate members will benefit from the increased opportunity to network with each other, creating contacts with the next generation of lighting designers and technicians.

To qualify for Sponsored Student membership, we require the applicant to be studying on a full-time course in the UK, have an interest in the process of live performance lighting and/or video and projection, and have not previously been a member of the ALD.

You can apply to join the ALD from the ALD's website homepage by clicking the Join The ALD button in the top right-hand corner. Please note the requirements below.

This scheme is only open to NEW STUDENT memberships of the ALD. Only completed applications that include the name of your college, course, graduation date and a course tutor as your proposer AND have proof of your student status attached to it will be processed for the scheme.

The closing date for applications is Christmas 2017, but the earlier you submit your application, the longer your FREE membership will run for. All memberships run until the end of March 2019 by which point you will need to have informed us if you wish to continue your membership in the normal student category (currently £30 per year).

Those members currently on the Sponsored Student Scheme should have already received information about their status via an email bulletin and the last issue of *Focus*. If you have any concerns please contact the ALD Office.

The ALD and direct debits

We are in that downtime point of the membership year where current members have paid their fees that are due and we have stopped chasing those who hadn't paid by stopping their memberships. Therefore, thoughts start to turn towards the next membership year.

As of April, we have been able to take payments by direct debit via the website GoCardless.com. So far 150 members have taken up the option to automate their payments to us on either an annual or quarterly basis.

The advantage of this system is that, in the event of an increase in fees, the amount due automatically updates from our end rather than you needing to change a standing order instruction. Also the administration fees are more manageable for an organisation of our size to incorporate into the subscription fees themselves and so we can offer it to members without adding an extra fee as we do with PayPal.

As of January, we are no longer legally allowed to add an administration fee to card payments. For each £85 professional subscription paid via PayPal we currently

receive £83.64, so will be much worse off in the 2018/19 subscription year. For the same £85 transaction through GoCardless we are charged 85p, therefore putting more money into our account to use for the membership than paying fees to another company.

So please help us to save time (chasing payments) and money (lower charges) by switching to a direct debit payment well before your April 2018 payment is due. You can sign up the payment plan for your membership category by visiting www.ald.org.uk/direct-debits and selecting the correct link.

If you currently pay by standing order and wish to switch to direct debit, please ensure that you cancel the existing instruction with your bank. We cannot do this on your behalf and you run the risk of paying twice next year if you do not do so.

Have you changed your address?

During this period of the year we often receive copies of Focus returned to us as “Unknown at this address” or “Addressee gone away”. These are often (but not exclusively) for our students and recent graduates as they change address at the end of the academic year. We have received five in the last week alone...

Please ensure that you update your information on the website directly via the Contact Details and Preferences page or contact membership@ald.org.uk.

An incorrect address can result in your not receiving membership renewal notices and places the continuation of your membership at risk. The website also requires each member to have an email address to be able to operate it to its full potential, so please ensure that your current or preferred address is on our system.

If you have any questions about the status or future of your ALD membership, please contact us as soon as possible so they can be answered or solved before it is too late.

The ALD and Equity

We have now agreed to join a joint working party in conjunction with the Society of British Theatre Designers and Equity to discuss a widespread reworking of the current Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre designers' agreements with view to renegotiating them as part of a claim for improvements to the agreements starting in April 2019.

The current agreements are due for revisiting this winter, but the working group has agreed that given the amount of work that needs to be done on the current agreements, there is not time to submit an extensive claim before the end of 2017, and so a twelve-month extension of the current agreements alongside an inflation-matching increase in all rates will be requested with a view to a wider

discussion about the core agreements to place in time for April 2019.

We feel that the inclusion of the ALD as part of this group is a positive step in order to change and improve agreements that we feel have not reflected the work of lighting designers in modern theatre for a long time. Over the next year we will be asking professional members a number of questions about certain aspects of the current agreements and the kinds of changes they consider should be made. If you have a particular interest in this issue, then we are happy to create an ALD working group together to manage the workload, so please contact equity@ald.org.uk for more information or to offer your services.

ALD communications

To receive email bulletins from us, you will have to opt in, and then specify which ones you want to receive: ALD News, Jobs Bulletins or Company News. Please check your personal settings on the website. These can be found on the Contact Details and Preferences page, which is accessible from the My ALD page after you have logged in to our site.

We still use Mail Chimp to distribute email bulletins and this automatically syncs with the settings on the ALD website. We do receive occasional bounce notifications, so please check whether your current contact details are correct. You should also

Office Oracle

Ian Saunders

check your spam filters and junk folders in case it was redirected to there and add mailshots@ald.org.uk to your address book to ensure you are more likely to receive them.

In addition to selecting which email bulletins you receive, you can also now select your postal communication preferences in a similar manner for the following items: ALD Members' Directory; ALD Membership Renewals; Company Members Mailings; *Focus* magazine; and Industry magazine subscriptions (L&SI, ET Now).

We have previously received notes from members asking to opt out of various posted items, which we were not able to do on a mix-and-match process other than through separating out company mailings. So it is now possible, for instance, to receive a hard copy of *Focus*, but not receive a Members' Directory if you wish to.

Members' combined insurance scheme

Many thanks to the 75 members who have signed up to this public liability and professional indemnity insurance policy available for Professional and Affiliate members. We also look forward

to welcoming those members who said they will switch to our scheme when their current one expires.

This will give you up to £10million of public liability and products insurance cover if you work as a freelancer, as well as £1million of professional indemnity cover. It is organised by the same company that runs the Bectu and Equity policies, but is much closer to the policy the Association of Sound Designers has been running for its members for the last couple of years.

We have been asked to clarify that, although the Executive has decided that the first year of the scheme will be subsidised, costing an extra £15 per member signing up during 2017, if you currently carry your own individual public liability insurance policy, even the full price of this product will save you money. If you are currently using the Bectu scheme, it is much more on a par with that in terms of additional cost above your membership subscriptions.

However, the ALD has committed significant funds just to be able to set up and run the scheme each year, and so the Executive will aim to keep it priced as competitively as it can be as more people sign up to receive it and how it impacts

on the Association's financial position. See www.ald.org.uk/members-benefits/combined-liability-insurance-policy.

New members' benefit

ALD members can now obtain a 20% discount from Plan Print It.

You simply go to www.planprint-it.co.uk, upload the drawings you want printed, select the size and paper type and whether you want them folded or rolled, and they can even offer next day delivery!

They have offered a 20% discount for all ALD members who use their services online. To access the discount member can key in the code ALD2017 at the checkout.

Stage Jobs Pro/Mandy

Stage Jobs Pro is now Mandy.com, the largest global, creative community that helps creative professionals to find work. It is now the largest single platform where employers can connect with the best creatives worldwide. ALD members still receive a 25% discount on the monthly and annual premium subscriptions. See the membership benefits section of the website for full details. 🍷

A postcard from...

Durham Marengi, Turkmenistan



Durham Marengi and his team send their regards from Turkmenistan where they are lighting the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games. Here are programmer Ben Hornshaw, spot captain Chris Henry and our intern Alexander Silvester from Backstage Academy. The photo was taken by associate LD Ross Williams at the "Gates of Hell" in Turkmenistan. Methane gas accidentally ignited forty years ago and no one can now put it out! 🚫

Professional Members' shows

opening in October and November

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.

October

2 David S Manson (touring relighter) *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker* Vienna Festival Ballet / **3 Johanna Town** *Norman Conquests* Chichester Festival Theatre / **4 James C McFetridge** *Three's A Shroud* Belfast Waterfront Hall / **5 Callum Macdonald** *Little Shop of Horrors* The Mercury Theatre, Colchester / **5 Joshua Gadsby** *I Won't Make It On My Own* Nuffield Southampton / **6 KC Wilkerson** *Tiffany Favrite Glass: Masterworks from the Collection of Stanley and Doris Sirott* The Huntington Library / **9 Charlie Morgan Jones** *Guess How Much I Love You?* Lyric Theatre, Hong Kong / **10 Jason Addison** *Pride and Prejudice* Capstone Theatre, Liverpool / **11 Wally Eastland** *Leveling Up* Studio Theatre Ashland University / **12 Laura Hawkins** *Love Song to Lavender Menace* Lyceum Rehearsal Space / **12 Joshua Gadsby** *Rendezvous in Bratislava* Battersea Arts Centre / **12 Kieran L Kesby** *Richard III* Cockpit Theatre, London / **13 Bernd Purkrabek** *Meine Seele hört im Sehen* Oper Graz / **13 Mark Dymock** *The Legend Of King Arthur* Spiegeltent, Guildford / **13 Kelli Zezulka** *Medusa* Square Chapel, Halifax / **16 Jamie Platt** *RWCMD and BOVTS* New York Showcase The Romulus Linney Courtyard Theatre, Signature Theatre, New York / **16 Johanna Town** *Cherry Orchard* Guildhall School of Music and Drama / **18 Will Burgher** *Legally Blonde – The Musical* Wyvern Theatre, Swindon / **18 Ric Mountjoy** *Uncle Vanya* Sheffield Crucible Studio / **18 James C McFetridge** *The Memory of Water* Square Box, Dungannon / **18 Elliot Griggs** *Anything That Flies* Jermy Street Theatre / **20 Edmund Sutton** *Sayat Nova* Questors Theatre, Ealing / **20 Malcolm Rippeth** *Romantics Anonymous* Sam Wanamaker Playhouse / **23 Sam Waddington** *Joy* Gerry's, Theatre Royal Stratford East / **24 Malcolm Rippeth** *Rumpelstiltskin* Northern Stage / **26 Kieran L Kesby** *Jean Inwards* School of Dance Hammond Theatre / **26 Joshua Gadsby** *The Leftovers* Curve Theatre Leicester / **29 Elliot Griggs** *Cookies* Theatre Royal Haymarket / **31 Laura Hawkins** *Seraphina* PACE / **31 Jamie Platt** *The Trap* Clapham Omnibus / **31 Edmund Sutton** *Emerge 17* Festival The Space, London Docklands

November

1 Charlie Morgan Jones *The Producers* Cultural Square, Shanghai / **2 Michael Grundner** *Le nozze di Figaro* Oper Graz / **3 KC Wilkerson** *Chapman Celebrates!* Musco Center / **9 Elliot Griggs** *The Oracles* Punchdrunk's Fallow Cross / **9 Ric Mountjoy** *Mr Popper's Penguins* Seattle Children's Theatre / **11 Bernd Purkrabek** *Gianni Schicchi* and *Eine florentinische Tragödie* Het Musiek Theater, Amsterdam / **13 Jess Bernberg** *And The Rest Of Me* Floats Rose Lipman Building, Birmingham Rep / **14 Charlie Morgan Jones** *Inside Pussy Riot* Saatchi Gallery / **16 Malcolm Rippeth** *The Secret* Theatre Sam Wanamaker Playhouse / **17 Tim Mascal** *The Maids* Dundee Rep / **17 Sam Waddington** (*associate lighting designer*) *The Velvetine* Rabbit Unicorn Theatre / **24 KC Wilkerson** (*lighting and video designer*) *The Secret Garden* The Chance Theater / **25 Mark Dymock** *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* Mercury Theatre, Colchester / **28 Laura Hawkins** *Beauty and the Beast* Brunton Theatre / **30 Malcolm Rippeth** *The Little Matchgirl and Other Happier Tales* Bristol Old Vic

Contact us

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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 of the ALD may send press releases to the ALD office (office@ald.org.uk) to be posted on the News section of the ALD website for immediate and wider coverage. Company members only may advertise in *Focus*; please contact the office for details. Editorial guidelines for authors are available on request from the editor. *The opinions published within Focus are not necessarily those of the ALD. E&OE. Content deadline for the next issue: 15 November 2017*

New members

Welcome!

Professional Member

Matt Cater, Epsom

Dan Haggerty, London

Duncan Hands, King's Lynn

Vic Pyne, Wadhurst*

Joe Stathers, Bristol

Affiliate Member

Chris Bérubé, Rutland

Thomas Nash, Reading*

Andrew Sager, Edinburgh

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Mike Hopkins, Herts

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Student Member

Alex Silvester, Canterbury

Sponsored Student Scheme

Guildhall School

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James Cooper

Matthew Dean

Sophia Di Lorenzo

Lewis Hannaby

Matt Hockley

Peter Lawrence

Liam Sayer

Chloe Stally-Gibson

Nina Thoene

Calum Walker

Carreen Walton

Jack Willis

Rose Bruford

Joshua Lake

Royal Welsh College

Jose Tevar

Jonathan Chan, Godalming

Karris Chappell, Somerset

Diary dates 2017-18

27 October

Members' social evening†

Sponsored by Martin Professional



3 November

TheatreCraft 2017, Waldorf Hilton, London*

24 November

Members' social evening†

Sponsored by SLX



18 December

2017 Lighting Lunch

24 January

New Technologies Showcase

1-2 May

PLASA Focus: Leeds*

1 May

Northern members' social evening, Leeds

Venue TBC

Sponsored by Hawthorn



6-7 June

2018 ABTT Theatre Show*























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.*

† The monthly members' social evening is at The Coach & Horses, 42 Wellington St, London WC2E 7BD.

** Re-joining the association*

Corporate members

<p>AC Entertainment Technologies 01494 446000 www.ac-et.com</p> 	<p>Eaton Lighting Systems - Zero 88 01633 838088 www.zero88.com</p> 	<p>Philips Entertainment +31 534500424 www.philips.com/entertainmentlighting</p> 	<p>Schnick-Schnack-Systems +49 221 99 20 19 18 schnickschnacksystems.com</p> 
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<p>Illuminate Design 01223 969694 www.illuminatedesign.co.uk</p> 	

Thank you for your support!

A postcard from...

Will Evans, Wales



While many lighting designers were off to the world's largest arts festival this August in Edinburgh, I was off to Wales' largest arts festival, the 2017 National Eisteddfod on Anglesey. I was lucky enough to be asked to light *Estron* (Welsh for *Alien*), a co-production between Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru (the Welsh language national theatre of Wales) and the National Eisteddfod. It was written by the winner of last year's drama prize, Hefin Robinson. As a Welsh learner this was a huge learning curve for me and there were more than a few comic moments where I managed to lose something in translation but with a very supportive and understanding production team we were soon all on the same page! 🍀



Edinburgh lights

Critic **Mark Fisher** reviews this year's Edinburgh Festival lighting

Simon Wilkinson has the kind of CV many readers of Focus will find familiar. It includes a mixture of mainstage shows, medium-scale touring productions and the occasional outdoor spectacular. Two of the three shows he lit during this year's Edinburgh Festival and Fringe are typical of this spread.

One of them is *Letters to Morrissey*, a one-man show at the Traverse. It's about

performer Gary McNair's teenage infatuation with his idol, a rock 'n' roll theme that inspires Wilkinson to position a bank of 20 lanterns facing into the audience from behind a metal grating. At scene changes, they flash with a Top of the Pops flourish, flickering in varying degrees of intensity in sequence across the back wall of Ana Inés Jabares-Pita's set. Elsewhere, they provide a backlit glow to McNair's posters of the

former Smiths frontman and complement the row of three strip lights.

It's a design that suggests the visual territory of a teenager stuck between bedroom and school while dreaming of seeing his hero at the Barrowland Ballroom. In a simply staged solo show, directed by Gareth Nicholls, it achieves a lot.

Or you could look to another Traverse production, this time in the main theatre,

where you'll find Wilkinson in moody mode bringing out the otherworldly dream state of *Meet Me at Dawn* by Zinnie Harris. Directed by Orla O'Loughlin, it's a two-hander about the aftermath of a boating accident when the bereaved Robyn, played superbly by Neve McIntosh, has yet to come to terms with the passing of her partner Helen, a laidback Sharon Duncan-Brewster.

Wilkinson lights Fred Meller's craggy rock of a set to exploit the blur between fact and fiction, casting Duncan-Brewster in various states of

Letters to Morrissey
Traverse Theatre
Director: Gareth Nicholls
Designer: Ana Inés Jabares-Pita
Lighting designer: Simon Wilkinson
Photographer: David Monteith-Hodge





Meet Me at Dawn
Traverse Theatre
Director: Orla O'Laughlin
Designer: Fred Meller
Lighting designer: Simon Wilkinson
Photographer: David Monteith-Hodge

shadow according to how present she is in her partner's imagination. The more lucid Robyn becomes, the greater the intensity of the pool of light where she stands. Meanwhile, his inky black sea beyond the playing area establishes the play's sombre tone of grief, reflection and inertia.

This is all commendable and I intend no slight when I say it's within the designer's usual range. By contrast, Wilkinson has never lit anything like *Flight*. There can

be few shows in which light plays such a pivotal role and yet it has sources going as small as 5mm square and most no bigger than a 10p piece.

Staged by Vox Motus in the Edinburgh International Festival, it's a installation that stretches the very definition of theatre. Perhaps you'd call it a live graphic novel or a visual radio play or the kind of optical experiment the Victorians would have delighted in, sitting at the interface of magic and mechanics.

To see it, you take your seat in a one-person booth at the side of a giant rotating cylinder. You put on headphones and lean forward as a series of miniature tableaux passes before you, each boxed in like a frame of a comic book. You see desert landscapes and dark oceans, tiny figures picking even tinier fruit, ominous tower blocks and bleak motorways. With the smallest model being 6cm by 4cm by 6cm, they could be lit only by LED tape and individually controllable LED pixels.

"I was very keen to light each model in the way that it would be lit if it was a theatre set," Wilkinson told me later. "So I wanted to have light sources that cast decent shadows, and to use different directions of light where I would do that on stage. We had between one and ten light sources per model depending on the complexity – and around 200 models overall. In total we had about 580 lights, and 460 drivers to fade them all."

As each frame rotates into view, so Wilkinson's lights are triggered, illuminating the static scenes from behind, above or the sides, casting shadows

Edinburgh lights

Mark Fisher

across the delicate landscapes and tiny characters. We see the glow of a silvery moon as refugees cross the sea; the headlights of cars and lorries; and the expressionist curve of city buildings against a triangular slice of sky. Sometimes, there are practical lights, such as streetlights, chandeliers, car headlights, even the lit end of a cigarette, built into the models themselves. All fade up and down on cue.

What transpires in the production by Jamie Harrison and Candice Edmunds is a harsh tale about two refugee siblings, taking the perilous journey from Kabul to London. The story is sadly familiar, but is told in a way that makes it absolutely compelling.

Wilkinson wasn't the only one who seemed to be everywhere this August. Zinnie Harris also had an exceptional month. *Meet Me at Dawn* was just one of three productions she was attached to in the Edinburgh International Festival. There was also her translation of *Rhinoceros*, mixing Mediterranean brightness with Brexit-era mistrust, and her reworking of Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, applying a feminist sensibility to a story about mental breakdown across the generations.

The first to open was *Rhinoceros*, Eugene Ionesco's absurdist classic about a town turning in on itself after being taken over by a herd of british rhinos. Directed by Murat Daltaban of Istanbul's DOT

Theatre in collaboration with Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum, it has a lighting design by Chris Davey that makes full use of the the white Turkish walls of Tom Piper's set.

Initially, it's all Middle Eastern brightness as Davey creates an air of calm with a golden sunburst of light. The director jollies us along with a world of knockabout inconsequentiality, the



Rhinoceros
DOT Theatre/Royal Lyceum
Director: Murat Daltaban
Designer: Tom Piper
Lighting designer: Chris Davey
Photographer: Beth Chalmers

excellent Steven McNicoll and Robert Jack leading the company like a vaudeville double act. But we're starting to sense something darker is afoot. The Arabic rhythms of the score keep giving way to an ominous rumbling from the back of the stalls, accompanied by a chilling wash of copper turquoise from Davey.



Flight
Vox Motus
Directors: Candice Edmunds and Jamie Harrison
Designers: Jamie Harrison and Rebecca Hamilton
Lighting designer: Simon Wilkinson
Photographer: Beth Chalmers

As the play goes on, so the comically incongruous becomes the disturbingly absurd. When McNicoll's pompous Jean accuses Berenger of being an immigrant, the atmosphere changes: from its opening sunny realism, Davey's design turns into an extreme poisonous pink.

The third Harris play is itself a trilogy, taking us from the revenge of Clytemnestra on her husband Agamemnon in the first part to the retaliation of their surviving children, Electra and Orestes in the second, to the final harrowing part set in a psychiatric institution. All this, in Dominic Hill's production for Glasgow's Citizens Theatre, takes place on Colin Richmond's open bar-room set with lighting designer Ben Ormerod using the full depth of the stage to create distinct areas awash with colour.

Early on, there's a scene where a group of homeless men talk directly to the audience in the evening twilight, while Clytemnestra, a magnificent Pauline Knowles, is bathed upstage in the electric blue and tobacco yellow of a nightclub. At the same time, the onstage musicians are picked out in sleazy cabaret red. Later, Ormerod takes advantage of the holes in Richmond's dilapidated ceiling to

Stand By
Utter Theatre
Director: Joe Douglas
Designer: Natasha Jenkins
Lighting designer: Kate Bonney
Photographer: Eoin Carey




Edinburgh lights

Mark Fisher

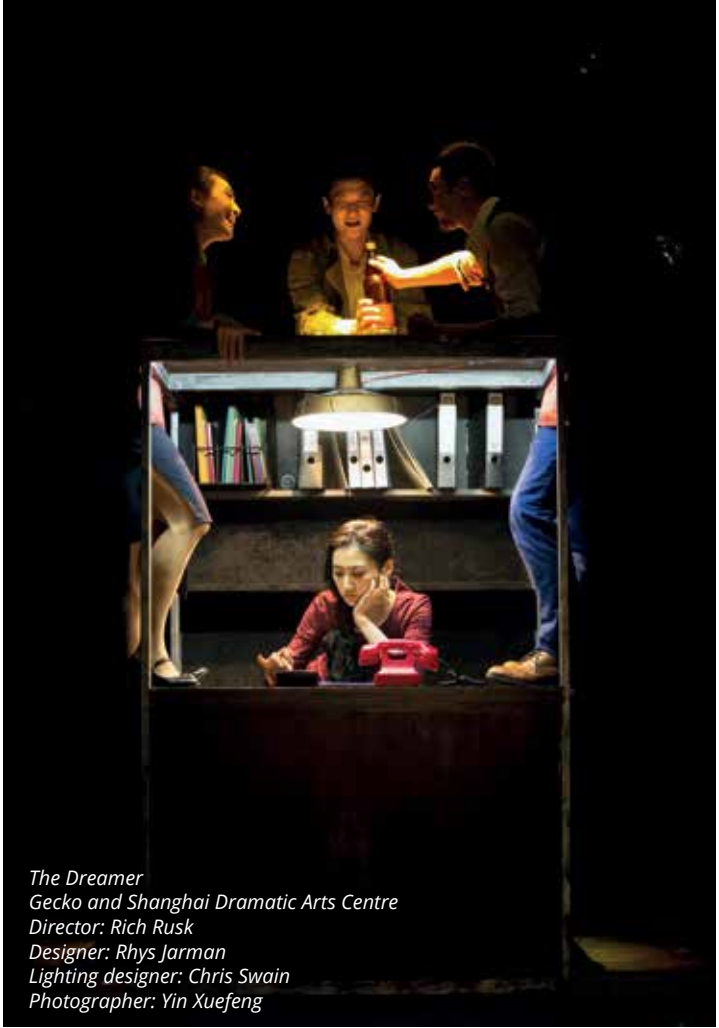
unfold cathedral-like blankets of light into the space. It's one of those productions in which all parties are working at their best and the lighting is the icing on the cake.

Finally, a couple of quick mentions to Fringe shows that achieve a lot with relatively limited resources. In Adam McNamara's *Stand By*, about four police officers waiting to raid a property, lighting designer Kate Bonney defines the shape of the van with strip lights lined up on Natasha Jenkins's skeletal set, their blue suggesting the flashing lights of the emergency services.

And in *The Dreamer*, a visual reworking of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Gecko and Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre, lighting designer Chris Swain creates the high-contrast impression of a graphic novel using angle-poise lamps attached to office chairs, light bulbs dotted across the gantry of Rhys Jarman's set and low-level horizontal beams from the wings. It's as striking as it is resourceful. 🍷



Oresteia
This Restless House
Director: Dominic Hall
Designer: Colin Richmond
Lighting designer: Ben Ormerod
Photographer: Beth Chalmers



The Dreamer
Gecko and Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre
Director: Rich Rusk
Designer: Rhys Jarman
Lighting designer: Chris Swain
Photographer: Yin Xuefeng

A postcard from...

Sean Webster and Richard Thompson, Cartmel



These pictures were sent in by Sean Webster and Richard Thompson from Cartmel Priory in Cumbria, where they've been lighting *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Cartmel Priory is the first Church of England establishment to support its own community theatre group, the Marshal's Players, named after William Marshal, the founder of Cartmel Priory. 🌹

Knight of Illumination winners

This year's winners in the theatre category



ETC Theatre Award for Dance

Echoes

Aakash Odedra Company

Choreographer: Aditi Mangaldas

Lighting designer: Fabiana Piccioli

Photographer: Tim Theo Deceuninck



This year's theatre judges:

David Benedict, chair (BBC/The Arts Desk)

Dance:

Jonathan Gray (The Dancing Times)

Neil Norman (Daily Express)

Opera:

Alexandra Coghlan (The Spectator)

Mark Valencia (Whatsonstage)

Musicals and plays:

Natasha Tripney (The Stage)

Matt Trueman (Variety)

Hawthorn Theatre Award for Projection Design

City of Glass

Lyric Hammersmith

Director: Leo Warner

Designer: Jenny Melville

Lighting designer: Matt Daw

Projection designer: Lysander Ashton

Photographer: Leo Warner



October/November 2017 – “More art, less tools...”

Knight of Illumination winners

PRG XL Video Theatre Award for Musicals

Fiddler on the Roof

Chichester Festival Theatre

Director: Daniel Evans

Designer: Lez Brotherston

Lighting designer: David Hersey

Photographer: Johan Persson



Focus – the magazine of the Association of Lighting Designers

ADB Theatre Award for Plays

Guards at the Taj

The Bush Theatre

Director: Jamie Lloyd

Designer: Soutra Gilmour

Lighting designer: Richard Howell

Photographer: Marc Brenner



Knight of Illumination winners



Robert Juliat Theatre Award for Opera

Queen of Spades

Opera Holland Park

Director: Rodula Gaitanou

Designer: Cordelia Chisholm

Lighting designer: Simon Corder

Photographer: Robert Workman



The Enrico Caironi Lifetime Recognition Award *Rick Fisher*



This year, the Enrico Caironi Lifetime Recognition Award went to Rick Fisher, the renowned, prolific and talented lighting designer who has won multiple awards and critical acclaim in the West End, Broadway and around the world.

Rick was recognised not only for his achievements in lighting design but also for his altruistic contributions to industry charities, from his help starting Light Relief to his current work with the technical entertainment charity known as BACKUP. Rick has also helped guide the ALD to its current position as the largest body of lighting designers ever assembled.

October/November 2017 – “More art, less tools...”



*Rick Fisher and ALD president Richard Pillbrow
Photograph © The Fifth Estate*

Knight of Illumination winners



Light Initiative Television Award for Events
Festival of Remembrance
BBC One

ALD members Ross Williams and Bernie Davis received awards in the television category.



Photograph © The Fifth Estate



Society for Television Lighting Designers Special Award

*Ross Williams was awarded the STLD award
for his unwavering support to television lighting
designers.*

*See Ross' full portfolio of work at
www.ross-williams.co.uk.*

ZIRCON

A new concept in LED filter design

Regular lighting filter can often quickly fade when used with LED lights – the Zircon range is different. With a lifespan of up to 200 times longer than standard filters and at more than double the thickness (180 microns), Zircon filters are not only slower to fade, they are durable and easy to use, too.

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Jesus Christ Superstar

Nick Moran at the members' meeting at Regent's Park

The musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* was the first commercial hit for Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber back in 1970, and perhaps also the start of an era when British musicals began to seriously challenge Broadway's dominance. It is an unashamed rock musical, with guitars supporting the singers rather than violins. The guitar-lead sound might not be as "rock" as Pete Townshend's *Tommy* – released as an album the previous year – or even Lloyd Webber's latest musical *School of Rock*, but over time it has proved

to have a wide appeal. Last summer a new production played to packed and delighted audiences at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, and this summer it was back and practically sold out.

We met with the show's lighting designer, Lee Curran, and programmer Andi Davis at the theatre, on a late August evening under an overcast sky. Also there to welcome us and show us around were head of lighting Adam Squire and his deputy Joe Kirk. Adam took us around the surprisingly compact site, including

several generations of rain hoods for moving lights and an expanded dimmer tent needed to cope with the 112 PAR cans in the cross! (Adam told us they don't have power for everything to be on at once – but then that's not really Lee's style.)

The front-of-house is dominated by banks of PARs with ACL lamps, chosen for their narrow beam needed because of the long throw. For this show, the side towers have been augmented, and there are two backlight towers too. They are loaded



Lighting designer Lee Curran talks to ALD members while the cast rehearses in the background
Photographer: Nick Moran



Lighting programmer Andi Davis and Regent's Park head of lighting Adam Squire
Photographer: Nick Moran

Jesus Christ Superstar

Nick Moran

with PARs and topped with a couple of movers each. Additional PARs shine through the set, apparently keeping the musicians on the top deck nice and warm on cooler evenings. There are plenty of smoke and haze machines too, which Andi programmed to be overridden by the show operator to compensate for changes in wind direction.

Lee and Andi were back with the show – which had opened three weeks earlier – to make changes in the lighting to compensate for the earlier sunset! Yes, folks – the point in the show when the daylight fades out changes, and the show lighting needs to change to accommodate that. Lee, Andi and the team also had to cope with not really being able to do much for of each day of

tech. “We don’t really get to do anything useful till we all get back from dinner – and then only if the cast are working on something from later in the show.” To cope with this Lee and team would often continue programming till 3am, “but then, not only do you not have bodies on stage, you also don’t have the instant feedback from your fellow creatives”. The first time director Tim Sheader saw some of the numbers lit was the dress rehearsal. “He could have said, ‘This really won’t do, Lee.’ But fortunately, he didn’t!” Even so, the team made good use of the previews to continue to work on the show’s lighting. As Adam told us: “Because of the special situation here, the LD and programmer continue to work on the show live in previews. They can do much more than they would in an indoor theatre.”

As Lee was talking, various preshow checks were being run and the cast began warming up on stage. Despite the threat of rain (which held off till well after the audience had left) it’s clear that everyone – cast and crew – enjoys working on the show (in spite of – or maybe because of – a record number of show stops for rain this season). Lee confirmed the strong





*Jesus Christ Superstar
Regent's Park Open Air Theatre
Director: Timothy Sheader
Designer: Tom Scutt
Lighting designer: Lee Curran
Photographer: Johan Persson*

spirit of collaboration and enjoyment involved in making the work too. He told us about negotiations: breaking the line of Tom Scutt's monumental set made of rusty girders with SGM P5 LED fixtures to get some backlight into the playing space, and finding places for the Claypaky Mythos units that provide a contrast to

the PAR-derived washes and effects. Both decisions ultimately benefit the whole show, and that seems to have been key to making the work. "You work with what you have and rejoice in what it offers", rather than obsess about the lack of overhead positions or the difficulty of getting backlight in.

Lee told us the production will be going inside for the first time – touring in the US. When it does, he'll miss the blocks of crosslight he has in the park, which, because they are so far away from the stage, look like a single source that covers the whole stage, providing crisp shadows. He'll even be adding something to mimic the diffuse daylight at the start of the show! 🌞

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